THE YORKLANDS IN GUELPH: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF A LANDSCAPE SHAPED BY POLICY AND REFORM

by

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ABSTRACT

THE YORKLANDS IN GUELPH: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF A LANDSCAPE SHAPED BY POLICY AND REFORM

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Formerly home of a provincial prison, “the Yorklands” in Guelph, ON, is now a popular, passive green space. Guelph is exploring adjacent intensification, which it must balance with local climate change mitigation, food security, and community goals. This study explores the potential for adaptive-reuse at the Yorklands that would implement urban agriculture to address those goals. A landscape narrative method provides the basis for this by combining archival data, public policy context and site analysis to interpret and highlight the layered past at the Yorklands. Findings highlight the Yorklands’ unique history of prison labour (and cultural heritage features), current opportunities within planning policy, and local community stakeholder goals. This research is an example of understanding a historic landscape through the creation of a narrative prior to adaptive-reuse. At the Yorklands, it will provide crucial background for holistic landscape design intervention.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Located in Guelph, ON the Yorklands is a landscape that was uniquely shaped by the Ontario Reformatory (OR) prison farm that operated there between 1909 and 2001. The institution was founded with the purchase of 800 acres of farmland, woodland and wetland and grand plans to develop the site into a new reform prison that focussed on incorporating rehabilitation and skilled labour training into incarceration. The OR was the result of *The Special Committee on Prison Labour* (1907) and a subsequent report that stated:

> Idleness in a prison is subservient to discipline, and hurtful to the moral, intellectual and physical well-being of the inmates. Experience appears to have been that while labor is absolutely essential as a means of reformation, unproductive labour has a harmful effect … More, the effect [is] to degrade, to discourage and brutalize the prisoner, and widen still further the breach that separated him from orderly society. (Waines, 1975a, p. 2)

The prison farm and training centre produced food and other manufactured goods for Ontario's institutions using inmate labour to make a prisoner's sentence meaningful and rehabilitative rather than punitive. Today, the Yorklands is a unique, picturesque and beloved Guelph landmark that remains accessible for passive recreation and solitude in a landscape with both designed and natural beauty (Figure 1). Since the prison's closure, locals have wondered what could be next for the Yorklands, and in recent years, the provincial government has decided to sell the entire property in parcels. While presently uncultivated the Yorklands was historically a site of significant food production through its prison farm operation. There is legitimate potential for it to return to those roots, serving a role in bolstering local food security.

Figure 1: City of Guelph municipal boundary
Adapted from Google Earth, 2019 and MMAH, 2006

Regarding future use, the site is valued by a non-profit citizens' group, The Yorklands Green Hub (YGH) that seeks to purchase or lease Parcel 2 of the Yorklands which covers approximately 70 acres (28.3 ha) of the landscape. This is an area of the site that contains both heritage features and an adaptive-reuse designation from the City (Figure 2). YGH seeks to develop Parcel 2 into a sustainable centre for renewable energy, education, conservation, land stewardship and food production (Yorklands Green Hub, 2018). Food production there would be complicated by the current state of soil contamination on site – a remnant of heavy manufacturing operations over the years. Soil remediation efforts have taken place (Infrastructure Ontario, 2016) and YGH has explored alternatives to in-ground crop production in order to safely grow food at the Yorklands. Their bold proposal has garnered public and municipal support in recent years. As the group continues to explore options for securing Parcel 2, and how to execute its vision there, pressures on the planet and its resources continue to evolve, making the YGH proposal more intriguing.

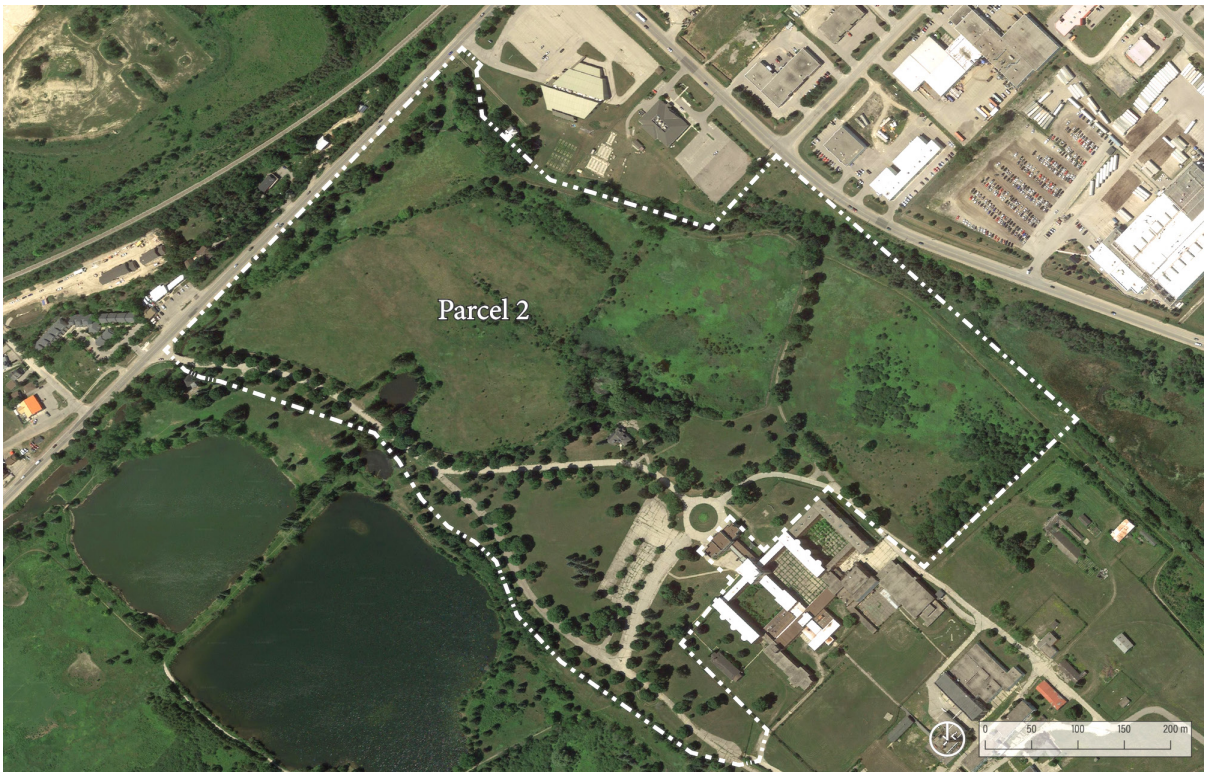

Figure 2: Parcel 2 boundary
Adapted from Google Earth, 2019 and Infrastructure Ontario, 2016

As human activity continues to drive unprecedented climate change, scientists warn that systemic change is required to slow its damaging impact on the planet. To do this would include changing or making concessions to almost every human activity, from travel to shopping to employment. It would require a sincere reconsideration of the way many humans live and how they think about or view the earth. The pressures from climate change on land use, ecosystem services, and the loss of biodiversity "are unprecedented in human history," as warming has increased beyond the global mean ranges and has had a notable negative impact on land (Arneth et al., 2019, p. 79). The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has outlined the specifics of mitigation in its reports, and notably, a significant culprit driving the problem is a global food system that contributes at least a quarter of worldwide greenhouse gas

emissions (Mbow et al., 2019). At the same time, climate change also threatens the food supply as crop yields are drastically impacted by lower precipitation and changing temperatures (Mbow et al., 2019).

While issues of crop loss and food security are particularly acute in regions like Sub Saharan Africa, they can also be felt in Canada. A 2016 public health study of the Guelph-Wellington-Dufferin region found that roughly 14% of households experienced some level of food *insecurity* (Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2016). Guelph-Wellington-Dufferin is a region that continues to grow rapidly, which could further increase pressures on land-use and social supports. While the City of Guelph population is approximately 132,000 currently (Statistics Canada, 2017), Ontario's growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe region (Figure 3) *A Place to Grow Act* (2020), has provided guidance that the Guelph population should increase to 191,000 by 2041 – a massive increase in just 20 years. The City is planning for this with strategies to absorb, house and employ up to 60,000 more people, with measures that explore changes to density and rezoning including a redevelopment area called the Guelph Innovation District (GID) (Figure 4). The GID is envisioned as a mixed-use district characterized by innovation, research and technology as outlined in the *Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan* (2017), which details how development can proceed in the area. The lands within this particular planning area are owned by the Ontario Government and include the Yorklands and the many buildings that remain from the OR. Infrastructure Ontario is currently working towards the sale of this land, having completed the necessary assessments to complete this process. Any prospective buyer will be subject to the zoning outlined in the *Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan* (2017) that gives targets for densities, building heights, housing units and employment. While all of this will occur nearby, it is unlikely that Parcel 2 could be deemed suitable for major development as it is zoned for adaptive-reuse and is predominately made up of cultural and natural heritage landscape. If anything, the zoning at the Yorklands strengthens the YGH case for Parcel 2 as something that should be carefully considered moving forward.

The emergence of the *Our Food Future,* a proposal to create a circular food economy in Guelph-Wellington, adds a new and intriguing layer to the YGH plans for

the Yorklands. *Our Food Future* is the result of a winning proposal that will combine the significant technology and education resources in the area to create new efficiencies and partnerships within the local food system (City of Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019). With a $10 million budget and some of the foremost thinkers in food policy and technology on board, *Our Food Future* is poised to have a meaningful impact on local food security and innovation. How it will deploy those funds to do so is currently an evolving process. While there is no direct affiliation with YGH or specific plans for the Yorklands within the *Our Food Future* proposal, there is significant overlap in the goals of these two organizations that seek to support local food production. There is legitimate partnership potential should *Our Food Future* look for an agricultural pilot project within city limits.

Figure 3: Greater Golden Horseshoe Region
Adapted from Google Earth, 2019 and MMAH, 2006

Figure 4: Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan Boundary
Adapted from Google Earth, 2019 and City of Guelph, 2017

This goal of this research is to construct a cohesive landscape narrative of the Yorklands to explore the opportunities for adaptive-reuse and the development of urban agriculture. Food production is one of the goals that YGH has for the Yorklands, and this thesis will explore the viability of that purpose on the site. This goal will be achieved through several objectives:

1. to understand the environmental and social histories of the Yorklands,
2. to identify and synthesize relevant planning and stakeholder goals that impact its future,
3. to identify key themes at the Yorklands to aid in organizing the data, and,
4. to construct a landscape narrative to assess the potential for implementing urban agriculture at the Yorklands.

The following chapter includes a review of the literature that discusses climate change and food security, urban agriculture, food hubs and food systems, prison farm history in Canada, City Beautiful landscape design, and cultural heritage to provide context for this research.

Figure 5: Overlooking the Yorklands' ponds in the fall
Author, 2019

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the literature on climate change, its relationship with food security and the state of food security in the Guelph-Wellington region. Community food systems, the incorporation of urban agriculture and some of the keys to the success of those initiatives are discussed. Finally, it introduces the history of prison farms and reform in Canada as it relates to the Ontario Reformatory and the social conditions of the early 1900s that led to the City Beautiful movement in landscape design are reviewed. This context is presented in the literature review as it is useful for understanding the Yorklands as a cultural landscape, which is specifically discussed in section 2.5.

2.1 Climate Change: A Social Imperative

In 2019, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) compiled a comprehensive, peer-reviewed report on the state of global climate change and its implications on land use. *The Special Report on Climate Change and Land* (SRCCL), also known as the *Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems*, is a landmark study with 107 coordinating lead authors from 52 countries, who were supported by an additional 96 contributing authors (Mbow et al., 2019). The result packages extensively peer-reviewed research into an accessible format. The message of the report is clear: pressures on current land use will continue to increase so long as global temperatures continue to rise, and we need to understand those pressures in order to alleviate them, moving forward.

Of the many reports put together by this arm of the United Nations (UN), this particular report should be of specific interest to landscape architects and planners because of its focus on land use. When it released this report on August 9, 2019, the IPCC sent out a simple message on its Twitter feed, stating: “Land is where we live. Land is under growing human pressure. Land is a part of the solution. But land can’t do it all” ([IPCC], 2019).

With a growing global population and finite amount of land, sustainably managing land is critical to mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. Land and its associated water bodies are the basis for human life and well-being; they supply food, freshwater and other ecosystem services that, according to the IPCC report by Arneth et al. (2019), are under significant threat as global temperatures rise. There are significant pressures on land use, ecosystem services, and the loss of biodiversity as warming has increased beyond the global mean ranges and has had notable negative impact on land (Arneth et al., 2019).

Changes to growing seasons and precipitation patterns are reducing crop yields and biodiversity, increasing stress on the supply of fresh drinking water and increasing tree mortality, all as a result of a seemingly small (1.53°C) temperature increase between the sample periods of 1850-1900 and 2006-2015 (Arneth et al., 2019). The findings of the IPCC reports, available to the public, could be seen as dire and alarmist, but the breadth of research behind this information - peer-reviewed and graphically modelled within the reports - demands the world's attention. Very few have responded the way teenage environmental activist Greta Thunberg of Sweden has, leading climate strikes, challenging global heads of state at the U.N. and sailing across the Atlantic Ocean to deliver her message to North America. She is contrasted by many climate sceptics and also by those who are, at times, unsure of how to meaningfully put ideas into action. Thunberg, the *Time* magazine 2019 Person of the Year, has noted that the world is moving far too slowly with mitigation efforts saying: "Of course something is happening, but basically nothing is happening" (Alter et al., 2019).

At this point in time, it appears that there is an option, an alternative to some sort of doomsday scenario. But, as the IPCC has made clear in its report, reversing the effect of a warming planet will require massive global effort and change: "Urgent action to stop and reverse the over-exploitation of land resources would buffer the negative impacts of multiple pressures, including climate change, on ecosystems and society" (Arneth et al., 2019, p. 79). Arneth et al. (2019) explain that drivers of land-use change are largely socioeconomic (technological development, population growth, demand on ecosystem services etc.) and are projected to continue; these drivers amplify existing

challenges such as rapid urbanization and the conversion of natural ecosystems into human-managed land. The report's bottom line is that immediate action is absolutely necessary; it outlines several ways to do this.

Increasing the sustainability of the food supply, on a local and global level, is of particular interest to this thesis project. The issues that arise when addressing climate change are vast and at times overwhelming. Already a serious problem, food insecurity is expected to worsen over the years to come. Addressing this should be part of the multifaceted approach to mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. According to Arneth et al. (2019, p. 80), a sustainable food supply based on nutritionally-balanced and diverse diets "would enhance food security under climate and socioeconomic changes" by improving food access, quality, and safety, enhancing nutrition and lowering emissions. These are significant modern challenges that need to be addressed, and both climate change and food security are questions of not only science but of national and personal economic prosperity, and social justice and equality.

Food security, as it is connected to climate change, is an important lever according to the IPCC, as it dedicates an entire chapter of the report to the issue. The reasoning is clear: globally, "an estimated 821 million people are currently undernourished, 151 million children under five are stunted, 613 million women and girls aged 15 to 49 suffer from iron deficiency, and 2 billion adults are overweight or obese" (Mbow et al., 2019, p. 439). Population and income growth, high demand for animal products and climate change are increasingly pressuring the global food system. The result could be a significant (up to 29%) increase in global cereal crop prices by 2050, which would disproportionately impact low-income consumers (Mbow et al., 2019). The food system and how it operates is a significant piece of the climate change puzzle. Mbow et al. (2019, p. 439) have found that "21-37% of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are attributable to the food system" coming from "agriculture and land use, storage, transport, packaging, processing, retail, and consumption".

Food system responses will need to occur at a policy level, changing supply-side action, reducing food loss and waste, reducing overall GHG emissions and enhancing food system resilience; public health policy could change demand, improve nutrition

through awareness campaigns, school programs and incentives (Mbow et al., 2019). Ultimately, change will require "comprehensive food system responses in broader climate change policies" in order for adaptation to succeed and for food insecurity outcomes to be mitigated (Mbow et al., 2019, p. 440).

2.2 Food Security in Canada: An Issue of Public Health

Food security is often overlooked despite being a significant public health issue, as attention-grabbing issues like addiction and mental health, infectious disease and even smoking (now "vaping") tend to capture the headlines. However, the food that we eat, its nutritional value, and how much of it we can comfortably afford is critical to our ability to live healthily, happily and without the stress that hunger and poverty evoke.

Food *insecurity* at the household level, a "significant social and health problem in Canada", is defined as: "inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints" (Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2016, p. 2). Conversely, a person who is considered "food secure" has physical and economical access to enough safe nutritious food to meet their dietary requirements and preferences (Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2016). As part of a 2016 special report put together by PROOF, an interdisciplinary research team investigating household food insecurity in Canada, Tarasuk & Mitchell (2016) determined that 1.3 million households in Canada, or roughly 1 in 6 children, experienced some level of food insecurity. Of those households, 11.9% are in Ontario. This designation ranges from severe food insecurity (skipping meals, sometimes for multiple days) to marginal food insecurity (worrying about running out and limiting selection due to lack of money to purchase food) (Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2016) (Figure 6). The national averages are skewed by data from Canada's northern territories where food scarcity and costs can be extreme. However, that almost 12% of Ontario households experienced some level of food insecurity in 2014 shows that the issue exists in the south and more prosperous areas of the country as well.

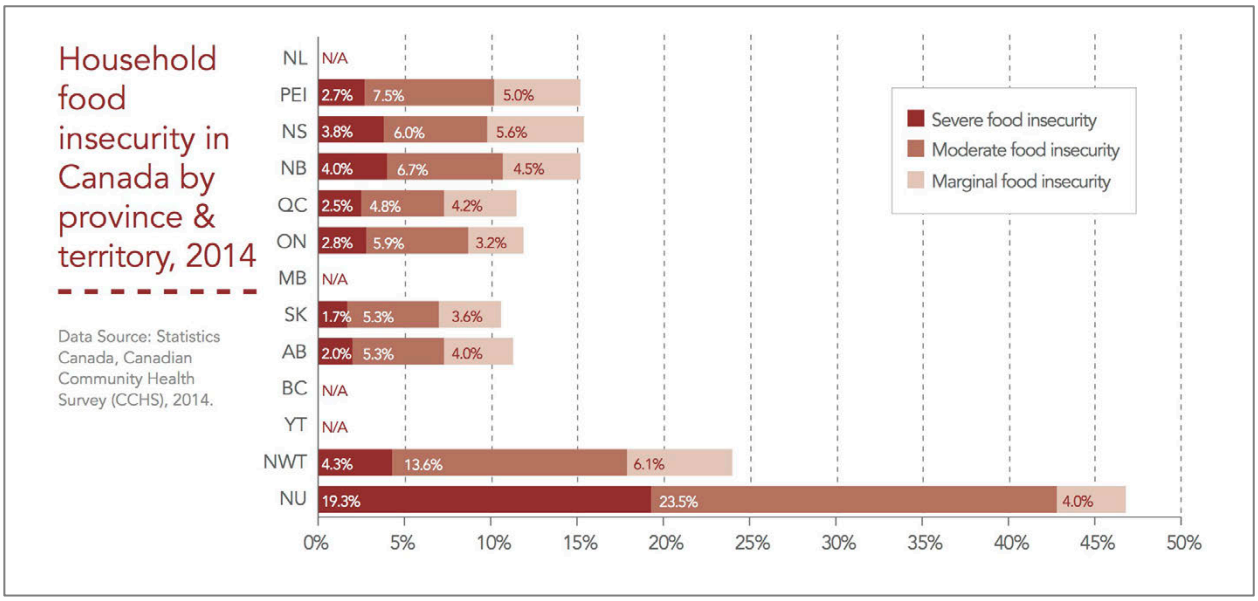

Figure 6: Household Food Security in Canada by Province
Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2016

2.2.1 Food security in Guelph, ON

When considering the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (WDG) Public Health catchment, which includes the Yorklands and the City of Guelph as well as the surrounding area, the numbers regarding food security become slightly more disconcerting. The population of WDG includes the City of Guelph, Wellington County and Dufferin County, with approximately 290,000 residents combined. A 2014 survey found that 14% of residents experienced food insecurity (2% higher than the Ontario average), and that there are at least 38 local organizations that provide some kind of emergency food supply in the area (Needham & Estill, 2018). For researchers Needham and Estill (2018, p. 4), being "food secure" means being able to access adequate, healthy food within one's financial constraints; the inability to do so is "a highly sensitive measure of material deprivation because food is a basic necessity."

The work of the local health unit includes tracking the cost food of through the *Nutritious Food Basket* program, which determined that it would cost a family of four $210 per week to purchase enough healthy food to meet their nutritional requirements. This is an issue of public health as this cost is beyond the means of many area families,

who then skip meals or must choose lower-nutrition options (Needham & Estill, 2018). Further to this, Needham and Estill (2018) argue that nutritional deficiencies create a greater risk of mental health problems, disproportionately threaten low-income families and can only truly be solved by income-based solutions. Charitable programs that provide staple foods for those in need can be helpful but do not get at the root cause of food insecurity, which is the inability to afford ample, nutritious food.

2.3 Community Food Systems, Food Hubs and Urban Agriculture

Terms like “urban agriculture”, “food hub”, “food systems” are becoming more prevalent within discussions of food security, climate change, city planning and community improvement. While these ideas are undoubtedly increasing in popularity, there can be confusion about what they mean; they vary depending on location, context and goals of the individuals or organizations doing the work. This section outlines what some of these ideas mean and how specific terms will be used for this project.

2.3.1 Community food systems

A community food system (CFS) describes the interconnected web of food from the producer to the consumer, to the distributor operating within a given community. Gail Feenstra of UC Davis has researched community food systems extensively; her *Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program* helps to facilitate and fund start-ups in the field. Feenstra (2002, p. 100) defines a community food system as:

> a collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies – one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption is integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place.

These systems aim to improve their communities in many ways beyond food production, and are often driven by grassroots efforts that employ urban agriculture and a central food hub.

2.3.2 Urban agriculture

Many different scales and definitions of urban agriculture have been utilized globally for thousands of years. While these ideas may be experiencing a re-emergence of late, growing food in the city to feed the population dates to the beginning of cities. In 1325 CE, the Aztecs founded Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City) and were required to implement clever technologies in very undesirable growing conditions in order to feed a massive population of 200,000 citizens (Evans, 2015). In more recent history, the emergence of victory gardens at war times (especially during the Second World War) renewed a push to expand small-scale agriculture into the cities and towns in order to bolster local food supplies and support the war effort (von Baeyer, 1986). In the current global context, with the current outbreak of COVID-19, a significant pandemic that has closed countless businesses and forced humans to isolate from each other, one cannot help but be concerned about supply chain issues and wonder if we are far too reliant on incredibly distant sources of food. Urban agriculture is not a new idea or movement; for the purpose of this research, it is defined as the act of producing, processing and/or distributing food crops within an urban boundary for local populations. This includes small-scale interventions as simple as backyard garden projects or organized community garden projects that offer small plots of land for personal food production. It can also include large-scale ideas, with commercial or broader community goals such as a commercial urban farm or a food hub.

2.3.3 Urban agriculture and food hubs

A community food hub (CFH) can be structured as a non-profit, a business, a social enterprise, a cooperative or some hybrid of these on a variety of scales (Nelson & Landman, 2015). Its goals might include simply growing and distributing local food or broader goals such as training programs and education, social justice, environmental action and food security. More goals, services offered, and activities performed within a food hub make it more complex to operate and tend to indicate more mature or established systems (Nelson & Landman, 2015). Regardless of the organizational

structure or scale, these hubs have the potential to be incredibly valuable to communities as not only a source of healthy, local food but of community social and educational space.

Feenstra (2002, p. 101) has discussed the outcome of these spaces as "civic agriculture," as a successful food hub brings great benefit to its community through "cooperative agricultural market programs that educate consumers about eating regionally and seasonally while building the supply of locally produced and processed foods." They also often work with school districts to teach children and supply fresh, local foods; provide composting opportunities; run community gardens of community shared agriculture (CSA) programs; run small farms; and advocate for local food, food security and their links to a sustainable CFS (Feenstra, 2002).

2.3.4 The invisible food system

A Community Food System can be a grassroots vehicle for creating change. In North America, the shift to industrial scale, highly processed, lowest-cost imaginable, convenience-based food production has created an invisible food system in which producer and consumer have become disconnected, and in which many consumers have no idea where their food comes from or about the quality of that food (Kokoszka, 2014; Feenstra, 2002). Globalized or market-dominated food systems prioritize profit through the implementation of highly specialized, technological growing practices and vertically integrated food distribution. While that may not seem inherently wrong, the industrialization of the food system has negative ramifications for consumers due to the nutritious quality of their food and its carbon footprint, and for producers due to the value of their crops (Kokoszka, 2014). Operating in lowest common denominator fashion, the current structure that produces the bulk of the food sold in North America threatens the long-term sustainability of the food system (Feenstra, 2002). The standardization and industrialization of food leaves out small-scale farmers (and their unique crops and livestock), and makes their products more expensive than industrial options, which in turn has negative implications on local community health (Kokoszka,

2014). The degradation of the food system has led to the disintegration of what Feenstra (2002, p. 100) calls the "social and spiritual fabric," critical connections between producer, consumer and local businesses that are part of a healthy local food system. Of particular concern in this system is the lack of nutrition, the quality of the food that is offered to consumers, the amount of processing that occurs between farm and table, and the implications for public health.

2.3.5 Urban agriculture and nutrition

Implementations of local, even small-scale, urban agriculture programs have been found to improve nutrition amongst participants. The results can be especially effective with children for whom "food preference and eating habits established during childhood are believed to predict lifetime dietary behaviour" (Ober Allen, Alaimo, Elam, & Perry, 2008, p. 434). In a Flint, Michigan study, Ober Allen et al. (2008) showed that neighbourhood youth garden programs positively influenced healthy development and nutrition by increasing nutritional awareness, exploring new foods, teaching food preparation and facilitating mentorship. The ability of urban agriculture to not only help to feed a population but to do so in a physically and socially healthy manner cannot be overlooked.

2.3.6 Urban food production and climate change

Urban agriculture has an important role to play in climate change mitigation. The IPCC's *Special Report on Climate Change and Land* (2019) identified urban agriculture as a mechanism for reducing carbon and land footprint. Urban areas are home to approximately half the global population (and counting) but a very small proportion of food production, giving cities a potentially critical role in changing food demand (Mbow et al., 2019). Further to this, Mbow et al., (2019) have noted that urban agriculture can have many positive impacts on the reduction of carbon emissions and ecology including: reducing food transport distance, recycling organic waste and wastewater, reducing urban heat island effects and increasing water filtration. Urban agriculture also

improves biodiversity and ecosystems when it is managed sustainably (Mbow et al., 2019). Finally, urban agriculture can directly improve local food security by injecting quality produce (and sometimes certain animal products) into the local food supply. According to Mbow et al. (2019, p. 519) the "four pillars of food security" are access, availability, utilization and stability, all of which are affected by climate change because extreme weather, threatened biodiversity and commercial market fluctuations create conditions that threaten the food supply. Local implementation of urban agriculture has significant potential to offset these threats by localizing some of the production of food.

2.3.7 Community food systems: Keys to success

The success of a community food system is a complex equation of people, policy, economics, willpower, resilience and more. During discussions with key informants who had created these systems, Kokoszka (2014, p. 20) found that the first step in their creation is often just to bring people together around a "shared vision and values, be clear in what is wanted, and provide a clear way for individuals to get involved" as sustained interest is critical to a project's long-term success. Engaged participants are far more likely to endure the ups and downs of this type of work, such as a loss of funding, for example (Kokoszka, 2014).

Feenstra (2002) has observed that having trained staff, often affiliated with a university, college or municipality, aids a successful CFS. However, they should primarily be a facilitator for community members and work to "create space" for a community driven project; successful ventures have "social space", for rich social interaction (ex., farmers markets, gardens); "political space", for policy change (ex., land use or Official Plan amendments, school programs); "intellectual space", for crafting project vision and for reflection; and "economic space", for fundraising and connecting to the local economy (ex.. shared land tenure, CSAs, employment) (Feenstra, 2002, p. 102). Of these spaces, social space is critical and needs to be established early and must not be overlooked. Feenstra (2002, p. 102) describes social space as the "glue that allows the new community food system to hang together or not. The stronger the

glue, the more solidly rooted the community food system. Celebrations help to grow roots." Communities will value these social spaces and infrastructure so long as local people are genuinely involved in the planning phase and are able to be key components of the operation.

2.4 Prison Farms, Reform and Social Engineering

While the context is completely different, there is a link between ideas about community building, food security, community food systems and The Yorklands, with its history as a prison facility and specifically its landscape and farming operations. Criminal justice and reform ideas have drastically evolved throughout Canadian history, influencing and shaping the prison landscapes on which they were implemented. Criminal punishment in pre-Confederation Canada was a harsh practice that often focused on public display and torture in order to shame guilty parties. Ideas began to change in 19th century England with new reform theories and the concept of the "penitentiary", which could house and reform prisoners while keeping them away from society (Correctional Services of Canada, Communications, 2014). In Canada, the Provincial Penitentiary of Upper Canada (also known as Kingston Penitentiary) in Kingston, ON, opened in 1835, making it Canada's first penitentiary (Correctional Services of Canada, Communications, 2014).

Labour in Canadian prisons dates back to its earliest facilities and was often a fundamental component of successful penal operations because, in many cases, prison labour was a significant contributor in facility and cellblock construction (Correctional Services of Canada, Communications, 2013). Fully completed in 1853, and operating until 2013, Kingston Penitentiary is one of the most famous examples of a historic, prisoner-built facility. The early days of prison labour there focused on the reform idea that hard work, often on the land, could improve or completely change the mindset and moral composition of a prisoner, making them less likely to reoffend (Correctional Services of Canada, Communications, 2013).

A similar mentality existed at this time in the United States, where the productivity of farming was considered the “backbone” of the penal system by providing opportunities for work and employment potential upon release, and by providing the system with a self-sufficient supply of food, labour and materials (Coppedge & Strong, 2013, p. 116). Likewise, in Canada, early prison farm operations were a significant component of penal reform as they provided the opportunity for hard work and training, and could help meet the economic demands of a growing prison population. These farms were able to provide food and other supplies to multiple prison facilities by requiring prisoners to tend crops; raise slaughter and butcher animals, collect and package eggs (Correctional Services of Canada, Communications, 2013; Goodman & Dawe, 2016).

Aside from farm work, several other occupations were practiced, even in the very early days of Canadian penitentiaries. In his 1842 travelogue *American Notes for General* Circulation, British author and social critic Charles Dickens visited several Canadian facilities, including Kingston Penitentiary. It appears he was impressed by the conditions and reform ideas at the time:

> There is an admirable jail here, well and wisely governed, and excellently regulated, in every respect. The men were employed as shoemakers, ropemakers, blacksmiths, tailors, carpenters, and stonecutters; and in building a new prison, which was pretty far advanced towards completion. The female prisoners were occupied in needlework. (Dickens, 1842, p. 380; Correctional Service of Canada, Communications, 2013)

The legacy of vocational training, and specifically agricultural training, at Kingston Penitentiary continues to the present day. While prison farms were closed by the federal government in 2010, they are presently being resurrected after great efforts from activists who have argued that the value of these operations lies in their ability to develop skills, reduce recidivism and provide therapeutic connections between prisoners and animals (Pfeffer, 2019). Early 20th century prison reform ideas continue to shape the structure of some Canadian prisons to this day.

This history is important for understanding The Yorklands, as it was this criminal justice framework under which the Ontario Reformatory at the Yorklands was created in

the early 1900s. Like many of its counterpart facilities, the Ontario Reformatory operated a very successful farm for decades and trained its inmates in a variety of occupations. The correctional system in Canada (and the United States) has shifted over the years from a focus on labour as punishment to vocational training and industry as rehabilitation under the influence of social work and psychological theory (Coppedge & Strong, 2013; Correctional Service of Canada, Communications, 2013). At the Ontario Reformatory, the reform ideals that guided operations were the beginnings of many efforts to do things differently there and to create an improved incarceration experience and more positive outcome.

2.4.1 Social conditions of the early 1900s: City Beautiful design and reform

The remnant architecture and landscape found at the Yorklands today are products of a period in city building that emphasized urban beautification and a push to clean up streets and improve social conditions. In the United States, the City Beautiful movement was most popular between 1900 and 1915 (Meek, 1979). In 1893 the Chicago World's Fair displayed an architectural (and landscape architectural) marvel of white classical buildings that inspired ideas of reform and city building – a huge contrast to America's grimy, grey industrial streets of the time (Meek, 1979; Von Baeyer, 1986). City Beautiful design emphasized not only city layout and particular arrangements for streets and monuments, but also parks and the importance of green space. Parks with great vistas and focal points were created as a place where a city dweller could find refreshment and "soothe the spirit and calm tired nerves with peaceful outlooks and views" (Meek, 1979, p. 24). The Ontario Reformatory was designed in this fashion, likely as a modern reform prison and landscape. According to City Beautiful ideas, beauty was psychologically uplifting, good for health and "inspired children to become better adults" (Meek, 1979, p. 28). Might this have been thought to have an effect on prisoners as well? According to Meek (1979), Canadian design and planning journals featured City Beautiful ideas, and they were often employed in design between 1910-1913 which

lines up with the construction of the Ontario Reformatory and the ongoing development of the surrounding landscape at that time.

The duty to clean up the streets, and often "ugly environment," in order to improve social conditions "bolstered reformers sense of duty" and often focused on small-scale, grassroots efforts (Meek, 1979; Von Baeyer, 1986, p. 3). Reform ideas were rampant from the late 1800s into the 1920s, as optimistic organizations hoped to address a range of issues such as public health, child welfare and government reform (Von Baeyer, 1986). According to Meek (1979), a lot of comprehensive, municipally funded improvement efforts began with small "civic improvement societies" that eventually inspired the larger effort. Horticultural societies were proliferating in Canadian cities by 1900, and even promoted vacant lot gardening as City Beautiful projects that could uplift the working poor and "mean so much for the moral and financial improvement of the dwellers in the slums…" (Von Baeyer, 1986, p. 6). In a fascinating example from Guelph, the *Agricultural Gazette of Canada* noted that, in 1917, the town had 1600 vacant lots, only two of which were uncultivated (Von Baeyer, 1986). Local horticultural societies would have played a big role in "beautifying" the many vacant lots across town. The reform ideas of the early 1900s played a role in the design of Canadian towns and cities; as a result, they played a role in how the uniquely landscaped Ontario Reformatory came to be as well.

2.5 Cultural Landscapes

Having operated as a provincial prison facility for almost a century, the Ontario Reformatory is now well established in the socioeconomic fabric, and lore, of the City of Guelph. Today, while no longer active as a prison, many buildings remain on site (including the cell blocks) as a stark reminder of its history, and the area continues to be frequented by locals as a place to enjoy green space in relative solitude. The shift that began on this landscape more than 100 years ago (building the prison facilities and surrounding it with parkland) was the beginning of a new era and story. The Yorklands is a cultural landscape, meaning it is a product of human imposed change on the site on

which it exists. It has been identified as a Cultural Heritage Landscape (CHL) of Provincial Significance under Ontario Regulation 10/06, and is subject to the Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan (City of Guelph, 2019, p. E-4).

The City of Guelph *Cultural Heritage Action Plan* (2019) defines a cultural heritage landscape as:

> a geographic area that has heritage significance, has been modified by human activity and is valued by a community. CHLs can include a range of features, such as buildings, structures, natural features or landforms, where the whole is greater than individual features. CHLs are valued for the important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, an individual and/or a community (p. B-3)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the U.N. that maintains a World Heritage List of global sites with significant cultural or natural heritage. While the Yorklands is not in the tier of a UNESCO landscape, these standards provided guidance for Guelph's *Cultural Heritage Action Plan*. UNESCO states that cultural landscape is a broad term, which can be divided into categories and subcategories in order to encapsulate the numerous ways by which humans have interacted with the natural environment. Cultural landscapes "often reflect specific techniques of sustainable land-use" or "enhance natural values in the landscape" and thus tend to be important sites for the maintenance of biodiversity (UNESCO, 2005, p. 84). The unique prison landscape at the Yorklands reflects a combination of natural and cultural values, having historically provided space for productivity (the farming components), aesthetics (water features and stone walls) and leisure (views, grassy slopes and trails).

Originating from the study of human geography, the term cultural landscape was popularized in design fields by J.B. Jackson who edited the interdisciplinary magazine *Landscape* between 1951 and 1968 (Blankenship, 2016). In an overview of Jackson's work at *Landscape*, Blankenship (2016) explains that Jackson was a highly influential writer for designers of the time, pushing them to understand the layers of social, ecological and historical components of landscape in order to design effectively. Jackson often addressed landscape architects directly in his writings, seeing the

discipline's ability to tackle the "the complex environmental and social issues of the new millennium" by way of protecting what was old and, thus, preserving the right to experience nature (Blankenship, 2016, p. 169). Were Jackson to walk the grounds at the Yorklands today, he would be intrigued by the complex cultural and natural history of this site, and the ominous presence of the remaining boarded-up buildings. But what would he implore the landscape architect to do with this place?

Understanding the Yorklands as a cultural landscape is critical for any successful future design intervention there. Writing about his design process, Woltz (2016) argues that any successful design implementation requires the support of the local community. This support can be achieved through a rigorous design process that involves extensive historical research across the temporal and physical scales of a design site (J.B. Jackson would surely approve.) For Woltz (2016, p. 237) any urban land that is considered vacant is not, in fact, a blank slate, but a product of the layers of human occupation over generations and understanding it in this way can create "an authentic bond between people and the places that they live," which can lead to rich community stewardship of the land. The research of a site creates "a narrative design framework that engages the public by highlighting specific characteristics of place in ways that reinforce civic identity"; it suggests to designers "physical forms, geometries, and program elements that connect meaningfully to the site, conveying an authentic sense of place" (Woltz, 2016, p. 237). What Woltz is getting at here, and what makes understanding the Yorklands as a cultural landscape critical, is that the strategies that uncover and interpret history build support for the long-term survival of a project by involving the public and strengthening a community's bond with a new design. This argument mirrors the one for supporting a thriving community food project: The community must be a critical stakeholder, and they need to be a part of creating and maintaining the project in order to feel connected to it and to keep it going.

The Yorklands, in its current passive state, is a well-used, beloved landscape in Guelph. Any changes made there and to the other areas within the Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan boundary will need to address the cultural heritage of this place and to find a way to balance its rich history and natural features with the demands of a

growing city. According to Blankenship (2016), scholars and practitioners may disagree on the precise meaning of the term cultural landscape and the best way to plan and design with cultural landscapes, but most agree that landscapes are complex with many overlapping layers of culture, history and ecology; this demands careful interpretation by the designer. In the context of a changing climate, local food insecurity, the history of the site and increasing development pressure, the question must be asked: What is next for this landscape? Once a productive, reform prison landscape, can it now address a new era of social need? In order to even hazard a guess, we need to understand its unique story.

Chapter 3: Methods

3.1 The Creation of a Landscape Narrative for The Yorklands

Any design intervention at the Yorklands is subject to a host of local and provincial policy goals and development targets such as Ontario's *A Place to Grow* growth plan (2020) and the City of Guelph's *Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan* (2017). The Yorklands is a well-loved community landscape and any intervention there must include a community-driven process of consultation before any potential site modifications are implemented. A local, citizen-led, registered non-profit organization, the Yorklands Green Hub (YGH), seeks to repurpose part of the former Ontario Reformatory grounds to create a public hub of sustainable experimentation through educational programming, food and energy production. The goals of the organization are broad and ambitious with the vision of promoting sustainable food production, wetland restoration and alternative energy, and increasing "citizen engagement in building strong, safe, healthy and inclusive communities through education and recreation" (YGH, 2018). The YGH also seeks to exhibit and celebrate the history of the site, beginning with the "stewardship of the Mississauga First Nation" and continuing the showcase "the spirit of reform" that was established by the Ontario Reformatory (YGH, 2018). It was through the YGH that I first became aware of the Yorklands' rich history and developed a personal interest in this landscape's future. The goals of the YGH and my current understanding of the socioeconomic pressures on residents of Guelph - from food security to climate change to a rapidly increasing population - led me to the research goal:

To construct a cohesive landscape narrative of the Yorklands in order to explore the opportunities for adaptive-reuse and the development of urban agriculture.

To achieve this goal the following research objectives were developed:

1. Understand the environmental and social histories of the landscape and its transition from farmland to a unique reform prison, to a pastoral, historic green-space

This required the collection and interpretation of historical data including: Archival materials; historical media; a literature review to understand the social context; and biographical accounts from key figures affiliated with the prison.

2. Identify, analyze and synthesize relevant planning and stakeholder goals that impact the future of The Yorklands.

Planning goals were assessed by conducting a document analysis of relevant municipal and provincial policy. This included Ontario's *A Place to Grow Act* (2020) and *Provincial Policy Statement* (2020). Locally, it included the City of Guelph's *Official Plan* (2018), *Official Plan Amendment Number 54: The Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan* (2017). It also considered the City of Guelph and County of Wellington's joint proposal to create a circular food economy in the region, as highlighted in *Our Food Future: Smart Cities Challenge, Final Proposal* (2019). The YGH (and its vision) is used to represent stakeholder goals for the Yorklands. This local, non-profit organization has been invested in the future of the site since 2013.

3. Identify key themes at the Yorklands to aid in organizing the data

Key turning points and themes emerged that identified critical pieces of the Yorklands' history and contextualized physical changes to the landscape over time. This aided in the creation of a three-part narrative framework that begins with the physical shaping and resources of the landscape, follows with a profile of some key figures involved, and finally explores the policy currently affecting future interventions at the Yorklands.

4. Construct a landscape narrative to assess the potential for implementing urban agriculture at the Yorklands

The narrative describes the landscape and its stories from the point of becoming a reform prison farm in 1911 to the present day, identifying the different layers of its history to provide a basis for sustainable future transformations. Figure 7 illustrates the research strategy for this project, beginning with the attendance of YGH public meetings.

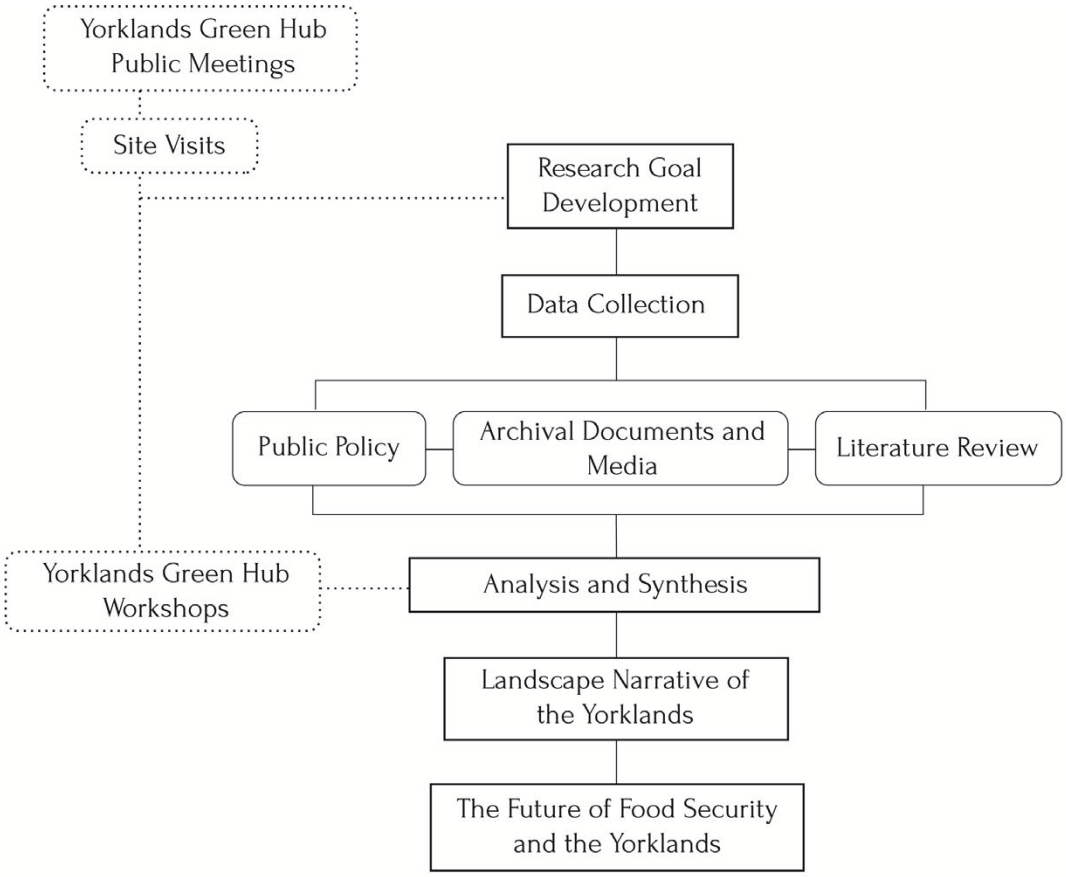

Figure 7: Research Design Flow Chart
Author, 2020

The creation of a cohesive landscape narrative for the Yorklands was chosen as the primary methodology for this research because it allowed for the interpretation of its complex biophysical, historical, social context and policy composition. The research goal necessitated methods that could incorporate the histories of the site with current policy levers, creating a footing for interpretation and future predictions.

3.2 Landscape Narrative as a Method

Landscape narrative is an interpretive research strategy drawn from approaches in historiography. According to Deming and Swaffield, historiography is an "interpretation of the historical record of human actions and events," and the conversion of this into a "recognizable narrative" (2011, p. 165). Historiography assembles concrete historical evidence and then relies on the researcher to dictate the tone and structure of that narrative through inference and interpretation (Deming & Swaffield, 2011). Landscape narrative as a method draws from the interpretive aspect of historiography to craft the story of a landscape by capturing a chosen period in time, rather than the comprehensive environmental history of a place. In *Landscape Narratives*, Potteiger and Purinton (1998) describe the intertwined relationship between landscape and narrative, noting that places directly affect and organize their corresponding narratives. Landscape functions not only as the background for narratives but is also in itself a process that evolves and creates them. Landscape narratives "accumulate as layers of history" on a given site, becoming a part of its "materials and processes," which makes them both product and process (Potteiger & Purinton, 1998, p. 5). At the Yorklands, these layers begin with a landscape identified for its resources that is then shaped and honed to become a model reform prison. Over time, multiple forces have crafted the landscape and its story, including natural resources, government policy and human personality. These forces and the Yorklands' stories will be further discussed throughout Chapter 4.

3.2.1 The value of landscape narrative

Landscape narratives are valuable for envisioning, designing for and establishing a future of a place. They help to unpack and make sense of complex environments by considering many layers of a landscape, including the biophysical, historic, social context and policy structure (Spicer, 2017). Landscape narrative has been an atypical approach to learning about and designing landscapes that explores beyond standard mapping and survey work (Potteiger & Purinton, 1998). In discussing his in-depth, research-first approach to design, Woltz (2016) has pointed out that "the goal is not to display an exhaustive inventory of a site, but to glean revelatory information that triggers a specific design response" (p. 237). The objective of landscape narrative is not to create a complete environmental history, or landscape biography. A basis for future design interventions can be reached using a narrower, focused narrative approach that includes multiple voices and societal forces that have impacted the landscape. On this, Potteiger and Purinton have discussed the importance of understanding a place through its contextual history and how that can be achieved through landscape narrative: "It is through narrative that we interpret the processes and events of place. We come to know a place because we know its stories" (1998, p. 4).

This heightened understanding of place is especially useful for revealing landscape change over time, including its socioeconomic and institutional dynamics, regional and local heritage and historical narratives (Deming & Swaffield, 2011; Kolen et al., 2017; Spicer, 2017). With the increasing volume of data available to researchers and designers, landscapes are increasingly understood to be complex, layered places that linear, chronological histories cannot adequately represent; landscape narratives can be a useful tool for sifting through and synthesizing key information and then setting the stage for informed design work (Kolen et al., 2017, p. 120). Uncovering layers of the past and creating a landscape narrative is particularly useful for bringing "histories and memories of landscape and place to the attention of relevant societal actors in an appealing way" that can provide the roadmap for future design and development (Kolen et al., 2017, p. 121). Landscape narrative values local knowledge and therefore can

inject community goals into a broad conversation about development. This approach is particularly useful for the Yorklands, a site currently in the crosshairs of policy and development-driven land-use change, with valuable embedded history.

3.2.2 Writing a landscape narrative

Amongst the relatively small body of literature that has discussed landscape narrative as a research method, it is established that a narrative must have a focus and a framework. According to Deming & Swaffield (2011), the investigator (or designer) becomes a social actor when using interpretive research strategies, as they must recognize and then understand meaning in the data that they gather. The conclusions of the research can never be completely independent of the lens of the investigator. Woltz has discussed this, noting that the designer, working with collaborators and stakeholders, and the available data, "has the responsibility of editing, curating, and communicating relevant narratives" through design (2016, p. 238).

For landscape narrative research, this is a limitation in that it is a highly interpretive process and an opportunity, as the researcher can focus on a particular place, object or region, and then organize and interpret the data as they see best to answer the research question. It is an inherently subjective process that relies on the compilation of objective data and facts. Potteiger & Purinton (1998) favour the idea of an open landscape narrative, featuring the many stories and voices of a place that intertwine to make up its story. They argue that controlled designs can displace or silence the voices of a landscape, rhetorically asking us to think about what is lost when the industrial waterfront is replaced by a shiny, commercial redevelopment, for example. Spicer (2017) has also discussed a similar strength of narrative inquiry in its ability to include a plurality of voices in the research, as it is able to span interdisciplinary data, spatial and temporal scales. With the complex social, policy and biophysical history of the Yorklands, landscape narrative is a useful tool for understanding and synthesizing a broad range of data types and sources and exploring its multiple stories.

The framework of a given narrative can help to create this open, or more inclusive, format and provide the contextual information required to understand the place. Chronological, thematic, and character-based approaches are typical but there is no definitively correct strategy as this depends on factors such as research goals, timeline and available data. Deming & Swaffield feature a chronological example from Roymans et al., (2009) in which the authors used "three periods of critical transformation" of the south Netherlands region and then presented the narrative as a "sub-regional biography" (2011, p. 169). The Roymans et al. (2009) landscape biographical approach spanned an extensive period of time, from 700BCE to 1950CE. Given the comparatively short period of time for this study of the Yorklands (1909-2020), the narrative framework is instead organized more thematically, beginning with the landscape itself as the central, enduring figure and exploring its social and physical changes over time. The second section of the narrative focuses on people who were involved in the creation and the ongoing evolution of the Ontario Reformatory and, subsequently, the Yorklands. It considers how people shaped and may have been shaped by the landscape. The third and final section of the narrative uses document analysis to explore policy initiatives, including grassroots community initiatives as well as municipal and provincial policy in order to understand the setting of the Yorklands' story today.

3.3 Data Collection

For the creation of a landscape narrative of the Yorklands, efforts were made to compile and analyze all available data relevant to the research goal. This included archived primary-source material and media, secondary sources and current planning policy documents as detailed in Section 3.1. Site walks and photographs provided insight into the Yorklands' current condition. Participant observation with YGH provided insight into the group's vision and goals, as well as several leads to useful resources.

Throughout this research project, I attended three public meetings held by YGH. These meetings took place on March 12, 2019; April 4, 2019; and October 28, 2019;

they were an opportunity for YGH to reach out to members and the community to discuss organizational goals and community outreach strategies. My participation in these meetings was as a participant observer, with the goal of learning about the Yorklands and understanding the organization.

In addition to these earlier meetings, I later participated in two invitation-only workshops on February 4th, 2020 and March 10th, 2020 that included a variety of community leaders to develop a cohesive vision for YGH and strategies for land acquisition at the Yorklands. Again, my primary motivation for participating was to gain information that might be useful to my research. However, I found that at these workshops I was able to contribute to a discussion about the path forward for the organization and the landscape, largely due to the research focus of this project.

3.3.1 Primary and secondary-source materials

A variety of source materials were used to understand the history of the Yorklands and the Guelph Correctional Centre, as well as the social-historical context in which it evolved. Background research into Canadian prison reform policy and social reform of the early 1900s was helpful for understanding the uniqueness of this particular prison and landscape. Archival and primary source research proved to be informative and, frankly, fascinating given the organizational structure of the Ontario Reformatory. Historic correspondence between the prison administration and the University of Guelph regarding the farm operation, government booklets, media articles, biographical accounts and images were included.

3.3.2 Planning policy and community initiatives

The Yorklands is subject to a host of policy mandates from multiple levels of government addressing land use through development, intensification, and natural heritage and identified heritage resources. With parts of the landscape designated for adaptive-reuse (City of Guelph, 2017), the Yorklands should also be in the conversation with forward-thinking policy initiatives such as the City of Guelph and County of

Wellington's joint proposal to create a circular food economy in the region as well as the City of Guelph's climate change and energy initiatives. It is a landscape that provides an opportunity to address a variety of local needs. Document analysis was conducted in order to identify the relevant goals and the corresponding opportunities and limitations for the site.

3.3.3 Participatory observation

In the case of the Yorklands, this component of the research strategy has been useful for affirming theories about how people currently view the landscape and its future, as well as filling knowledge gaps about its history and generating future research leads. As Deming and Swaffield (2011, p. 202) explain, this type of research method:

> ... can be broadly applied to many situations in landscape architecture where the landscape 'problem' lies amidst complex social conditions. It demonstrates a strategy that acknowledges all people (including clients and users) as researchers, as agents of change, and as co-constructors of landscape knowledge.

3.4 Synthesis and Recommendations

Based on opportunities and limitations identified within the data analysis, and upon the synthesis of this with historical data, a landscape narrative was written for the Yorklands. From there, it was possible to assess its potential to feature some form of urban agricultural intervention or even a more developed food hub on site. This chapter has outlined the process of data collection for creating a landscape narrative of the Yorklands. Chapter 4 presents the results of that process: A landscape narrative of the Yorklands in three parts, beginning with the story of the landscape since the founding of the OR, and its social and physical changes over time. The second section features some of the people who shaped or were shaped by the landscape. The third and final section explores policy initiatives at the municipal and provincial level, as well as some of the community goals that together, reveal the setting of the Yorklands today.

Chapter 4: A Narrative of the Yorklands

This chapter will introduce the reader to the Yorklands and changes that occurred there from the time of its purchase by the Ontario government in 1909 to the present day through a narrative approach. Prior to the time period captured within this narrative, from the time of European settlement, the land was privately-owned farmland. Before that, it may have been of significance to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation of the Anishinaabek Peoples on whose traditional territory the Yorklands is situated alongside the Eramosa River. In 2016, a "Stage I and II Archaeological Assessment was completed on the GCC" which, according to Infrastructure Ontario (2016), revealed no significant artifacts or further "archaeological concerns" (p. 9). This assessment was an essential and important first step, but it will be the work of the City of Guelph and any future purchaser of this landscape to acknowledge the historic stewardship of the Mississaugas of the Credit and to include them in the process of envisioning the future of this landscape. According to the *Official Plan Amendment Number 54: Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan*, city-planning staff consulted with local Six Nations as part of the community outreach phase of this secondary plan (City of Guelph, 2017).

4.1 The Landscape: An Ideal Site for the Ontario Reformatory

The Ontario Reformatory (OR) was founded as a prison farm and manufacturing institution, a novel concept in Ontario at the time. Based on Ontario government research and new models emerging from the United Kingdom and the United States, the facilities were designed to reform criminals and improve their character through labour and training; under this model, prison sentences were intended to be rehabilitative rather than simply punitive (Durham, 2017). It was believed that prison labour needed to be productive (rather than aimless) and, preferably, to take place out in the open air to better rejuvenate the character of criminal offenders (Waines, 1975a). The early operations at the OR reflect this idea with the establishment of extensive

farming operations and with a remarkable early push to construct buildings and shape the grounds. This massive effort was made possible through the economical use of forced inmate labour and the plentiful supply of stone in the landscape. The Ontario Reformatory was considered the first in Canada to take steps towards "the reform of reclaimable prisoners" at this time, a considerable shift from existing incarceration methods that were largely punitive (Durham, 2017). Its establishment marked a shift in criminal justice in Ontario and a recurring theme at the Yorklands of being a place of innovation and experimentation. This can be seen in the programming and work-based training for prisoners, industrial operations, staffing and careful management of the landscape and farming operations – all of which, at different points in the history of the prison were considered state-of-the-art, and at the forefront of criminal justice reform. There is debate about the success of rehabilitation and reform programming at The Ontario Reformatory, a matter for a more sociological exploration of its history. What matters for this narrative, for understanding something about the way humans have changed and been changed by the Yorklands, is that it is a landscape that provided the resources and an opportunity to do things differently in the prison system and it did so for almost 100 years.

In 1909, the Ontario government purchased 800 acres (almost 324 ha) of farmland and invested $1.2 million over the course of 7 years to construct the new prison (Durham, 2017; Waines, 1975c). The site was chosen "after an exhaustive examination of a number of properties in different parts of the Province" and was approved by the Lieutenant-Governor in December of 1909 (Government of Ontario, 1911, p. 4). The original landscape is nearly the size of Central Park in New York City (roughly 340 ha) or twice the size of High Park in Toronto (161 ha). It is a large property with a high degree of landscape and topographical variation including meadowlands, some wetland areas, streams and ponds in addition to its designed landscape areas. In selecting the site for use as a prison farm, officials had very specific criteria that were met by the Yorklands:

> …there were many qualifications which were requisite, namely: good agricultural land; an inexhaustible supply of stone suitable for road and building construction;

> sand and gravel for building purposes; proximity to the centre of population, so as to minimize as far as possible the cost of transporting prisoners; convenient railway facilities; and a building site which would have good drainage and a plentiful supply of pure water. (Government of Ontario, 1911, p. 4)

From this, it is clear that the Yorklands was chosen primarily for its resources that built an economical and practical argument for the reform prison. Construction began in 1910 with early work projects including actively cultivated farmland and orchards, raising livestock and establishing several initial industrial operations including “an abattoir, wood shop, broom shop, tailoring shop, shoe shop, woollen mill, mattress factory, and a machine and paint shop” (Figure 8) (Durham, 2017, p. 195). A group of 14 prisoners were initially transferred to the site on April 11, 1910; within weeks there were 150 prisoners on site and by that November the population had swelled to 800 prisoners housed in temporary accommodations (Figure 9) (Waines, 1975b; Government of Ontario, 1911).

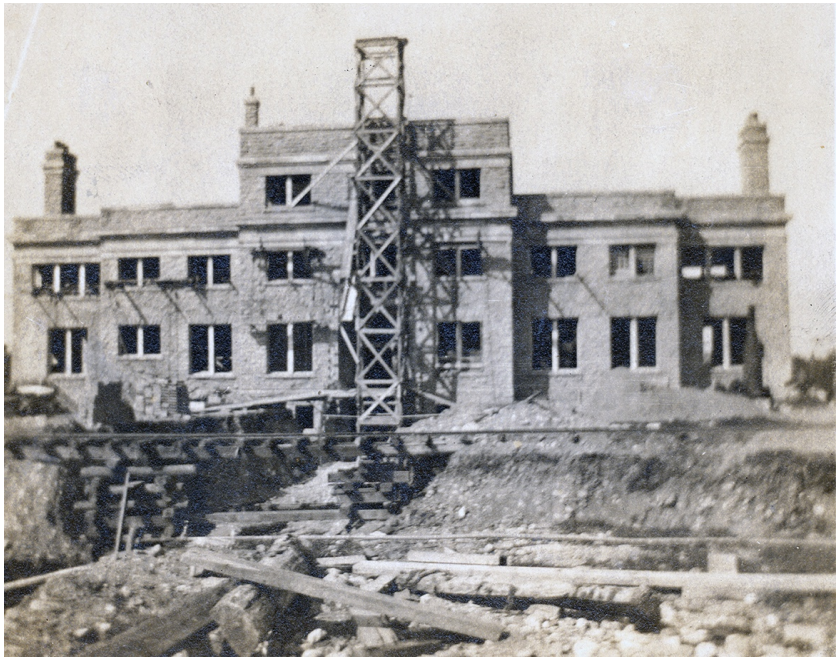

Figure 8: Early construction of Administration Building c. 1915
Designed by Canadian architect John M. Lyle

Courtesy of Guelph Museums, object 2004.14.2

Figure 9: Man in front of temporary sleeping quarters, c. 1911
Courtesy of Guelph Museums, object 2004.14.16

The facility ran as expected until a drastic shift occurred in 1917 when the federal Military Hospitals Commission (MHC) agreed to lease the Ontario Reformatory for the purpose of caring for, retraining and reintegrating wounded Canadian veterans of World War I (Durham, 2017). The war was taking a toll, with 1600 soldiers returning to Canada in need of care each month; officials believed the rehabilitative ethos of the OR, with the farm, labour and skills training, could help to heal, demilitarize and reintegrate Canada's sick or wounded veterans (Durham, 2017). The facility was aesthetically converted, with fresh paint and rugs for the prison cells, and the addition of lounge areas, a concert hall and a smoking room; veterans were given training and jobs just as the prisoners before them, raising farm animals and learning woodworking techniques (Durham, 2017). Speedwell Military Hospital was considered a noble and innovative pursuit, but it had serious practical shortcomings as the Ontario government relied on the supplies and

financial output of the OR's prison operation; wounded or ill soldiers were no match for the efficient productivity of an incarcerated workforce (Durham, 2017). Durham (2017) notes that perhaps the most significant issue was that the facility remained at its core a prison and aesthetic changes could not mask its architectural intent. Eventually officials had to give up on the ideal version of a grand educational centre for wounded soldiers. They also found the need to hire civilian help to meet production demands and by 1919 the facility was transitioned again into one of the nation's largest tuberculosis sanatoriums hosting veterans with TB who lived there for months or even years while fighting the illness (Durham, 2017). Figures 10, 11 and 12 show soldiers at Speedwell Military Hospital in both work and leisure time.

Figure 10: Soldier building furniture at Speedwell Hospital, c. 1919
Courtesy of Guelph Museums, object 1978.6.5

Figure 11: Soldiers taking notes in the greenhouse at Speedwell Hospital, c. 1919
Courtesy of Guelph Museums, object 1978.6.6

Figure 12: Soldiers shooting pool in the cellblock at Speedwell Hospital, c. 1919
Courtesy of Guelph Museums, object 1978.6.4

Durham (2017) has written extensively about the history of Speedwell Hospital and determined that it was ultimately a poor facility for these veterans both mentally and physically; it was too damp and cold for tuberculosis rehabilitation and the tensions between civilian workers and veterans combined with the production demands of the operation generated hostility. Speedwell closed in 1921 and was returned to the Ontario government, which quickly re-established the Ontario Reformatory onsite (Durham, 2017). Even if Speedwell Hospital underachieved as a rehabilitation facility, Durham (2017) has highlighted its successes in trades training. It marks another point in the Yorklands' history when it was looked to for a rehabilitative purpose but this time outside the criminal justice system.

With its brief tenure as a hospital in the past, prison farming and manufacturing operations continued at the Ontario Reformatory and would ebb and flow over the years to meet the demands of the labour market as well as the manufacturing demands of the Ontario government. Prison labour and skills training remained core principles throughout its tenure as policy changes over time led to an increased focus on vocational training and extracurricular activities such as physical education (including an annual track and field competition), talent shows, theatre productions and art classes (Grottenthaler, 2010). According to Mann (1976), a former chaplain at the institution, in 1961 it was the "largest manufacturing centre in the Provincial Department of Reform Institutions" in addition to the farm and dairy herd (p. 27).

Farm operations were discontinued in the 1970s despite pleas from the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) at the University of Guelph who were especially connected to the prize-winning dairy herd on site. In a 1971 letter to C.J.S Apps, Minister of Correctional Services, University of Guelph President and Vice-Chancellor W.C. Winegard wrote:

> Faculty of the University of Guelph in Animal Science and Veterinary Medicine have asked me to contact you regarding the preservation of their excellent working relationships with the Department of Correctional Services. Over the years, herds of beef cattle, dairy cattle and swine within your Department have

> made important contributions to the general welfare of the livestock industry in Ontario. (Howell, 1971, p. 2)

Winegard argued that the dual use of using herds for teaching and research allows for large-scale programs “at low cost to the taxpayer” (Howell, 1971, p. 2). Winegard presented the Minister with the research, education and economic argument. So, why did the highly successful farming operation close at the Ontario Reformatory? Axford (2017) has conducted a heritage assessment of the site and states that the reason for closing farm operations might be that the prison reform movement was again changing at this time. OVC correspondence with the Ontario government notes a key retirement of the Reform Farm’s administrator in 1971, E.G. Wright, with whom the University appears to have had a strong connection (Howell, 1971). This shutdown also coincided with substantial changes to farm labour at this time, as mechanization shifted the demand for labour and the increased corporatization and consolidation throughout the agricultural industry put immense pressure on small farm operations across North America (The National Farmers Union, 2005). Finally, Grottenthaler (2010) wrote that around this time there was a significant fire in the dairy barn that destroyed a large amount of animal feed and rendered it unusable. A ruined feed storage barn remains on site today (Figure 13) as the only apparent evidence of agricultural activity at the Yorklands. For an operation that was at least in part driven by profitability, these factors may have just landed at the same time and sealed its fate.

Figure 13: Ruined feed storage barn from the prison farm operation
Author, 2019

Renamed the “Guelph Correctional Centre” (GCC) in 1972, the prison carried on without its agricultural component for another four decades, marking several more notable progressive moves and tests along the way, including the hiring of the first full-time female chaplain in a prison in Ontario, Connie Shaw - and the establishment of the Native Sons support program for First Nations inmates that led to the first sweat lodge in an Ontario prison (Grottenthaler, 2010). In 2001, the Province of Ontario decided to streamline operations, decommissioning the GCC and transitioning inmates to larger, more modern facilities (Axford, 2017). It was at this point that the province, and many onlookers began the process of evaluating the historic property and considering its future.

4.1.2 City Beautiful and the designed landscape of the Ontario Reformatory

The Yorklands is located within the Guelph Drumlin Field and features loamy topsoil with underlying red shale. Its deposits of glacial till make it particularly stony in many areas that have high concentrations of large surface boulders (Axford, 2019). The Yorklands was well equipped to provide raw materials with an ample supply of fresh water, arable land and stone. Walking the site today, these features are pillars of the landscape, especially the stonework, as the remains of major building projects are seen throughout the site. Stone walls (Figures 14 and 15), constructed waterfalls (Figures 16 and 17) and many of the institution's original buildings remain standing, some of which date to the earliest days of the Ontario Reformatory when building stone was sourced in the fields and at the quarry (Axford, 2019; Caron, 1978; Durham, 2017). The Ontario government has identified many of these architecturally significant, Beaux-Arts buildings as "cultural heritage resources" including the administration building (Figure 18), the cellblocks, the Superintendent's House (Figure 19) and the Better Beef office building at the main entrance to the site. At this time, several structures at the Yorklands are listed on municipal or provincial registers, and there is an identified cultural heritage landscape, but none of the heritage resources are designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* (City of Guelph, 2017, p. 49). Figure 20 shows a heritage features map from the *Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan* (2017) that locates significant buildings and the cultural landscape area at the Yorklands.

Figure 14: Stone wall near the Yorklands' entrance drive in September
Author, 2019

Figure 15: Stone wall on the northeast corner of Parcel 2
Author, 2020

Figure 17: Clythe Creek waterfall flowing in April
Author, 2020

Figure 16: Main driveway bridge and waterfall
Author, 2019

Figure 19: The administration building, designed by Canadian Architect John M. Lyle
Author, 2019

Figure 18: The Superintendent's house
Author, 2019

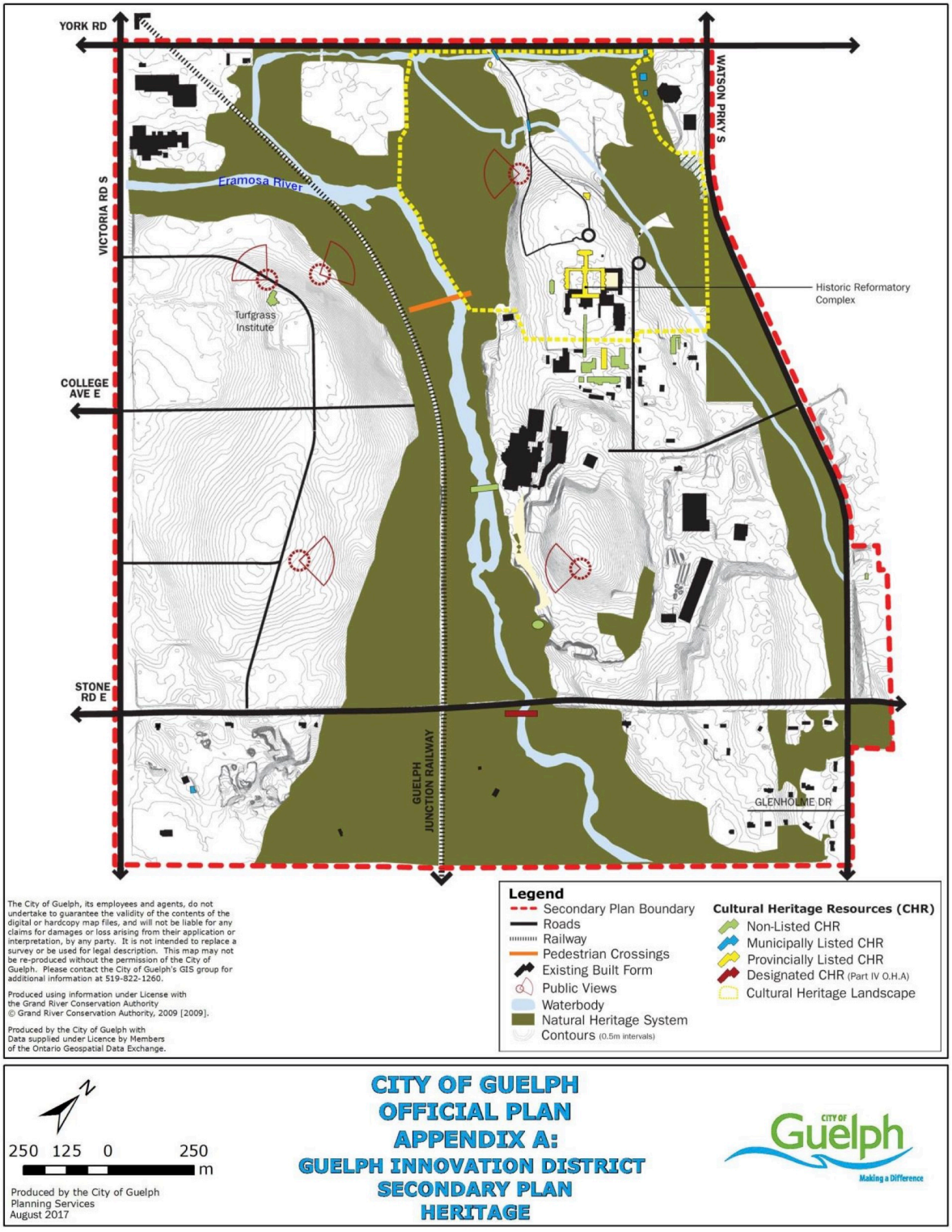

Figure 20: GID Heritage designation showing listed buildings and CHL
City of Guelph, 2017

The landscape design at the OR is a result of the combination of reform ideals, both from public discourse (City Beautiful and societal reform) and from prison reform (rehabilitation through labour and training). Believed to be psychologically uplifting and to inspire good character, City Beautiful principles were used to design the landscape, a process that was planned and managed by reformatory officials and experts at the Ontario Agriculture College (OAC) (Axford, 2017). There is also evidence of citizen involvement with the Yorklands landscape. The work there received approval from the Guelph Horticultural Society (GHS) in a 1927 *Guelph Evening Mercury* article written by its president:

> At the Ontario Reformatory splendid work has been done – under Mr. Neelands and staff, the rough lands have been improved, the low marsh transformed into a beautiful sunken garden and planted with native materials. The small creek was used to advantage, stones from the grounds being used to advantage by the inmates. A close liaison has always existed between the staff and the Society. (Carter, 1927, p. 1)

This excerpt from Carter is part of a list of GHS "Co-operative Efforts and Accomplishments" that also includes the OAC campus, Homewood Sanatorium and the Woodlawn Cemetery (1927, p. 1), three other Guelph landscapes that show evidence of thoughtful horticultural design and the benefit of time. Grassroots involvement at the Yorklands is not surprising, as City Beautiful efforts were embraced by both citizens groups and government at this time (Meek, 1979). Grassroots efforts will also be very important if the Yorklands is to evolve in the future.

The Yorklands is characterized by its long, tree-lined entrance drive that winds past the Superintendent's house to the main administration building (Figure 21). The sweeping lawns offer pleasant vistas that overlook open spaces, slopes and the landscaped ponds fed by the Eramosa River (Figures 22-24). This landscape has always been a scenic, relaxing getaway for locals, who, even when it was a prison facility, travelled to the grounds to enjoy picnics outside the main prison area. A 1940 *Maclean's* article about the City of Guelph, describes the Yorklands as a prison without walls, where "children picnic and swim…while inmates of the Reformatory are hard at work in the adjacent fields" (Edwards, 1940, p. 60). Prisoners also took note, as

described by former inmate Roger Caron in his memoir *Go-Boy!: The True Story of a Life Behind Bars* (1978, p. 17):

> The first glance was deceiving because all the exterior ugliness was masked with ivy and lush green lawns. There were attractive flower beds, large stately maple and fir trees, two beautiful miniature lakes with little corrugated ripples playing to and fro, even apple orchards and red barns with cattle grazing in the open fields.

This juxtaposition, between a beautiful landscape and prison buildings, gives the Yorklands its distinctive character today. Created through the combination of City Beautiful design, prison farmland, manufacturing operations and the ample resources of the landscape itself, the Yorklands is truly unique.

Figure 21: Entrance drive leading to the administration building
Author, 2019

Figure 22: Trail alongside one of the Yorklands' ponds in late fall
Author, 2019

Figure 23: Old pasture in spring with administration building in the background
Author, 2020

Figure 24: Open lawn space by the ponds
Author, 2019

The early days of the Ontario Reformatory were characterized by prisoners clearing the land for farming and construction and assembling the buildings and landscape features that remain today. A lot of this work was completed by 1923 (Waines, 1975c). Construction was slow but economical at the hands of prisoners who completed the difficult tasks of clearing, draining and cultivating the land, opening a stone quarry, and building a lime kiln, concrete bridge and new rail line (Waines, 1975c). All of this work was considered state-of-the-art and novel, in both the deployment of labour and technology and its rehabilitative potential. The entire facility was designed to be self-sufficient, supported by a clean spring water supply and "thirteen thousand gallon tank" that relied on gravity for distribution throughout the grounds, and by electricity generation from the "power house" built in 1911 (Grottenthaler, 2010, p. 5; Government of Ontario, 1911, p. 9). This was a real feat in its time, as was another key component to self-sufficiency at the Ontario Reformatory: agriculture.

4.1.3 Agriculture and food processing

Of particular relevance when considering a future of food production at the Yorklands is its agricultural past. The prison farm was central to its operational success and self-sufficiency for 60 years as its productivity led to manufacturing spinoffs including the abattoir and the cannery on site. According to Grottenthaler, 2010, the cannery even outlasted the farm through a privatization model, briefly becoming a pet food plant and later a trout processing facility. The abattoir, also privatized, became Better Beef Limited and was eventually bought by Cargill, one of the world's largest meat-packing corporations that continues operations there today. The many accounts of the prison farm paint a picture of rich, productive land and a herd of dairy and beef cattle as well as other animals such as pigs and horses.

According to a provincial government booklet from 1911, food production was implemented in that first year of prison operations in a massive cultivation effort that included orchards, field crops and pasture:

> An orchard of eighteen hundred apple, cherry, pear and plum trees and fifteen hundred small fruits was planted in the Spring of 1911. As the Prison Farm has superior agricultural land, good pasture on the low lands, the best of water, plenty of shade, and possibilities second to none for producing hay, fodder and root crops, dairy farming will be made a feature of the work, with profit to the Prison Farm and with advantage to the other Provincial Institutions.
>
> The dairy herd now consists of over one hundred and twenty-five Holsteins, and a thoroughly modern dairy barn is in course of erection, which, when completed, will provide accommodation for eighty [milk] cows. In designing this stable, special care has been taken to secure one that will be absolutely dry and will have an abundance of fresh air and sunlight. (Government of Ontario, 1911, p. 11)

In describing the potential of the Yorklands in these early days of the Ontario Reformatory, this document makes it seem ideal for agricultural production. According to another government document from 1924, the farming operation came to be an incredibly productive and "major part of prison operations," with an output of "many tons of fruits and vegetables each year" that supplied many other government institutions with fresh and canned foods (Provincial Secretary's Department, 1924, p.1). In 1924,

the Provincial Secretary's Department produced a book of canning recipes from the Ontario Reformatory (Figure 25). These high-quality products supplied the province's hospitals and prisons and were known to Ontarians but not legal for public sale; as an offering to the public, the government offered up the O.R. recipes instead (Provincial Secretary's Department, 1924).

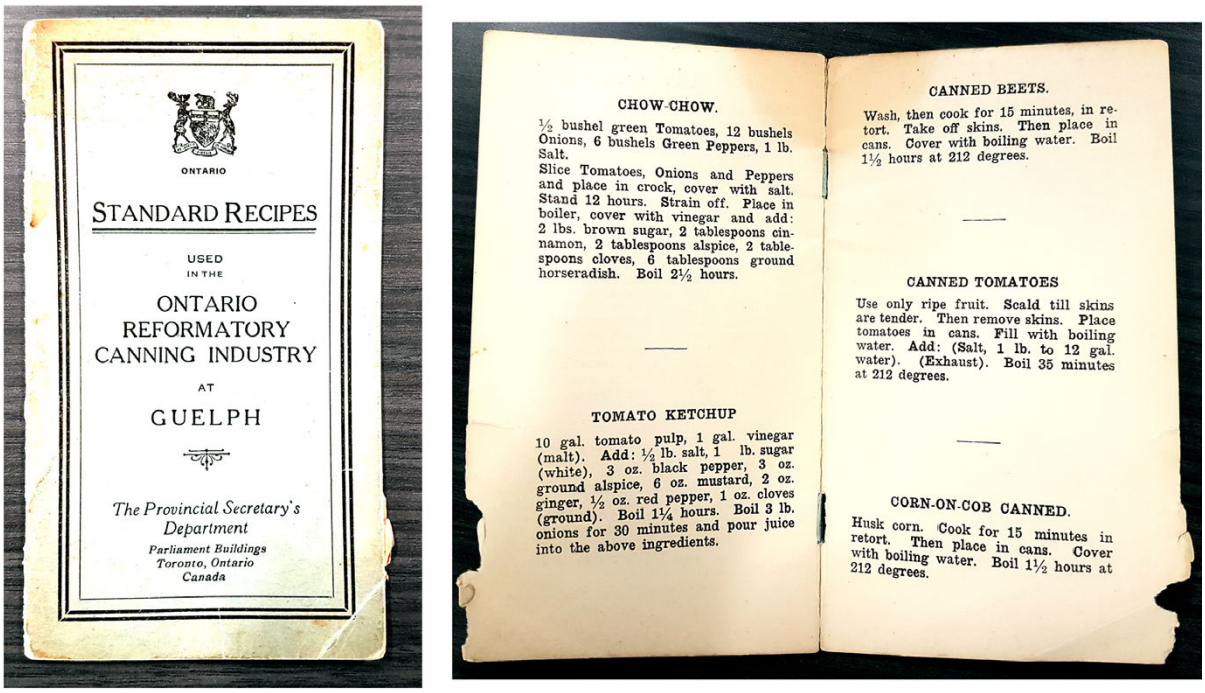

Figure 25: Ontario Reformatory Canning Industry recipe book, c. 1924
Courtesy of the University of Guelph Archives Cookbook Collection
(Provincial Secretary's Department, 1924)

Of the 800 acres owned by the Ontario Reformatory, approximately 10% was dedicated farmland, and included the dairy, piggery, horse barns, vegetable production gardens and a 1000 square-foot greenhouse (Grottenthaler, 2010). Karl Grottenthaler's (2010) history of the Ontario Reformatory includes excerpts from a 1962 report that highlights impressive annual crop yields:

> 25 tons of onions
> 17 tons of cabbage
> 10 thousand bags of potatoes
> 200 thousand pounds of apples
> 50 tons of rhubarb, squash, cucumber, lettuce, corn and beet roots (p. 15)

It is clear from these numbers that the upfront investment into cultivation, a sizeable orchard and greenhouse continued to pay dividends well into the 1960s. As Grottenthaler, who was Chief Engineer First Class at the facility from 1972-1993 writes: "the production figures tell their own tale" (2010, p. 15). Animal operations remained significant right up to the farm's closure, with a herd of 225 cattle, half of which were dairy; they were led by prizewinning "Jenny" and produced 633,769 quarts of milk per year as a herd (Grottenthaler, 2010, p. 16). This was no hobby farm.

A 1940 *Maclean's* feature by Frederick Edwards provides a description of the productive prison farm:

> Outside the workshops almost every branch of agriculture is practiced. The men raise root crops for the Reformatory and for shipment to other institutions, milk cows and churn butter for their own use. They operate an abattoir, smoke and cure hams and bacon, make sausages. They run a canning plant and a piggery, They do their own landscape gardening, grow flowers, maintain lawns, keep up their own roads. (Edwards, 1940, p. 60)

Edwards (1940, p. 60) observed, that the men were held "under conditions that apparently are as humane – even generous – as they possibly could be, and still be punishment" with "no fence or wall" enclosing the prison. While Edwards may not have understood the happenings inside the cellblocks, it is clear from this and other accounts that the prison farm at the Ontario Reformatory was a successful operation that was made possible by the landscape, and also played a role in shaping it. The number of arable acres had been expanded through manual prison labour in those early years, as

men cleared the “swamp, stony and rough lands” (Waines, 1975c, p. 1). This upfront labour allowed the farm to operate successfully for 60 years and to produce annual yields that fed the Ontario Reformatory as well as the rest of Ontario’s prison system. It is a pivotal chapter in the Yorklands’ story.

4.1.4 Manufacturing operations and the economics of rehabilitative labour

From the very first days of the Ontario Reformatory, efforts were made to establish the prison farm and manufacturing operations. By 1923 prison Superintendent C.F. Neelands identified the need to expand manufacturing operations as after 13 years, even with the elaborate and difficult tasks at hand, the landscape work was nearing completion; he foresaw that soon, beyond annual cultivation, little outside work would be available to prisoners (Waines, 1975c). He appealed to expand manufacturing operations reporting “industrial output had increased to the point where the institution must have an assured market,” and proposed that it come from Ontario’s other prison and hospital institutions (Waines, 1975c, p. 1). The increased industrial capacity helped to absorb the diminishing landscape labour needs maintaining the directive that prisoners remain employed useful labour while serving their sentences.

While there was undoubtedly a strong belief in the rehabilitative value of labour, government documents reveal that a secondary incentive ran parallel at the Ontario Reformatory. The farming and manufacturing operations generated significant revenue and offset incarceration and hospital costs for the province. According to Waines (1975b) the use of prison labour presented a significant economic efficiency for building the prison and may explain the ability to rapidly expand operations in the early days. That prison labour was to be used to offset costs was no secret and provincial administration believed strongly in both the healing value of occupational training and economic value of the Ontario Reformatory as a whole (Provincial Secretary’s Department, 1924).

The importance of the OR’s revenues was made clear during its previously mentioned tenure as Speedwell Military Hospital. During the transfer from provincial to

federal control in 1917, operations and manufacturing at the Ontario Reformatory were suspended when its prisoners (the labour force) were transported to other facilities (Durham, 2017). With live animals and untended crops, this transition spelled certain disaster for the farm; in order to save the operation, local farmhands and labourers were hired to tend the fields and herds (Durham, 2017). Those tasks were temporarily filled while Speedwell accommodated a new labour force of veterans, but, as Durham (2017) notes, in the end veterans never fully staffed those farm positions and the civilian hires became permanent positions. The same was true of manufacturing tensions at Speedwell Hospital; there was a tokenism to the veterans' involvement there. This speaks to the aforementioned tensions at Speedwell between veterans, who were ostensibly meant to be retraining and meaningfully contributing at the facility, and civilian workers, who were hired to meet the real demands of the operation. It also underscores the importance of cheap, prison labour to the revenues of the operation.

There is little information available about the actual costs and revenues of the OR's industrial operations over the years, but we can glean a few snapshots from Mann (1967), a former chaplain whose work describes inmate life at the reformatory in 1960. In 1925 the OR generated $333,750 in revenue (Mann, 1967, p. 27), or the equivalent of $5 million today (Bank of Canada, 2020). By 1960 annual revenue had reached $1,918,958 (Mann, 1967, p. 27) or the equivalent of roughly $17 million today (Bank of Canada, 2020). Not only was the facility generating significant revenue, it created supply and demand efficiency by producing products for other provincial institutions. Its output was made possible by the economics of prisoner labour and depended on the resources of the Yorklands' landscape in many cases. From 1909 – 2001, the Yorklands was characterized as not only a prison landscape, but also a productive landscape, as shown by the history of its farm, manufacturing industries and labour force.

4.2 The People: Legislators, Prisoners, Soldiers and Employees

Throughout the history of the OR, various people played prominent roles in shaping the direction of the facility and had direct implications on the landscape and people there. This includes the early politicians who believed strongly in changing the prison system, the prisoners themselves and staff members. The Yorklands is a landscape that was uniquely shaped by policy; this section focuses on some of the people who were a part of that change over time. It is by no means exhaustive but is a snapshot or sample of human involvement there.

4.2.1 A politician and a superintendent with big ideas

The OR was a product of an innovative reimagining of incarceration practices in Ontario and an administration that believed in the capability of newly emerging reform ideas. In 1908, Joseph Downey, the Conservative MLA for South Wellington was appointed the Chairman of the Special Committee on Prison Labour. His visits to American prisons and his study of those in New Zealand and Australia led to his rethinking the "whole question of prison labour" and inspired the implementation of the new, more rehabilitative system (Waines, 1975a, p. 1). Documents from the early years of the OR show that leaders in administration and government, like Downey, really believed in the reform mission and alternative forms of punishment. *The Downey Report* (1908) argued:

> idleness in a prison is subservient to discipline, and hurtful to the moral, intellectual and physical well-being of inmates … Unproductive labour has a harmful effect … this effect was to degrade, to discourage and brutalize the prisoner, and widen still further the breach that separated him from society (Waines, 1975a ,p. 2).

Superintendent C.F. Neelands who took the role in 1916 reported that the establishment of the OR had abolished the "walled prison where inmates served their sentences in idleness" (Waines, 1975c, p. 1), it prevented the "worst kind of sweat shop" as no longer could commercial manufacturers contract prisoners at low rates to produce manufactured goods for open market (Waines, 1975c, p. 2); it even abolished the

standard “striped suit for prisoners” (Waines, 1975c, p. 2). Neelands implemented measures to increase basic education at the prison recommending the appointment of a teacher and establishing classes for inmates. By 1928-1929 a “school of letters” was established and “illiterate and near-illiterate prisoners were required to attend day-school. Night school classes were available for others who wished to improve their education” (Waines, 1975c, p. 2). The goals and actions of prison administration during Neelands’ early tenure there were true to the reform ethos that was foundational to the OR, but over time there was a wide range of experiences and successes had by prisoners.

4.2.2 Roger Caron and the infamous Bull Gang

The landscaped areas of the Yorklands demonstrate careful design with a long-term vision. With the exception of some invasive species moving in, the setting has aged beautifully despite minimal maintenance in recent years. Its core components, the fieldstone walls, lawns, ponds and waterfalls remain intact today and, on a nice day, the Yorklands’ vistas provide stunning views of the landscape. Most, if not all of this landscape work was done by the Bull Gang. Also known as the Buller, it was a notorious crew of prisoners who worked outside in all seasons moving earth and stone by hand, clearing the land for agriculture and creating drainage in the fields (Mann, 1967; Waines, 1975b; Grottenthaler, 2010). The gruelling work of the Bull Gang shaped many parts of the Yorklands, including the two large ponds along York Rd, which were dug by hand, despite advances in technology that would have allowed for the use of machinery (Caron, 1978). Mann (1967) wrote that a job on the Bull Gang was sought after, implying that time spent outside was preferred by inmates. It is odd for the former chaplain to have written this, as all other accounts paint the Bull Gang as one of the worst work crews to find oneself on as an inmate at the OR.

Roger Caron, a former inmate who wrote a biography about his life as a criminal, spent time at the OR in 1954 and 1955. He described the “legendary Bull Gang” as “a segregated unit within the institution that harboured fifty or sixty of the toughest and

most desperate prisoners in Canada" (Caron, 1978, p. 43). Caron was himself put onto the Buller crew for bad behaviour in 1955 in February. He wrote:

> Toiling on the Buller at this time of year was enough to make a guy wish that he had never been born or at least that he had never committed a crime. However, in the long run all it really accomplished was the production of hard and bitter men anxious to have their turn up at bat to even the score. (Caron, 1978, p. 44)

Despite Superintendent Neelands' apparent concern that landscape work was running out in the 1920s, it seems that workers continued to break rock in the quarry well into the 1950s while Caron was serving his sentence at the OR. The work of the Bull Gang by then would have been a lot more punitive than rehabilitative based on his accounts. Caron (1978) wrote that the work in the quarry was so dangerous and terrible that men would intentionally injure themselves in order to get a few days break from the crew and that the clothing they were given to wear in the elements was "primitive to the point of being a cruel farce" (p. 49).

Did the attitude towards labour and rehabilitation change at some point at the OR? The founding principles appear to have been sound and the early intentions of the administration appear to have been earnest. But the descriptions from Caron (1978) reveal a great deal at least about his own attitude towards labour at the OR:

> Behind the main buildings, paved roads led to large clusters of industrial buildings: shops like the 'Markers' where vehicle license plates were punched out by huge presses and also, where fingers were lost on a routine basis … Farther back was the large slaughterhouse were prisoners bled as often as the animals they were instructed to kill. Way out in the fields was the quarry, a sixty-foot pit where the legendary Bull Gang toiled year-round under heavy guard to supply the material for the man-made landscaping (p. 17).

Caron's opinion was that many of the job "opportunities" available at the OR were undesirable. It may also have been that there were good and bad opportunities, and different streams or channels depending on a prisoner's behaviour or sentence. The findings of a 1937 investigation into unrest at the OR shed light on this possibility:

> As to the work to which an inmate may be assigned … Upon entering, he is interviewed, and particulars of his past employment or occupation are obtained. As a matter of practice, however, if his sentence is for a long term, he is assigned

> to the bull gang or some other outside gang where safe custody is the dominant factor, and he has little or no opportunity of being placed in one of the industries. This practice is entirely wrong and should be discontinued. (Madden, 1937, p. 19)

The report declares that more consideration needed to be given to the education and training of each individual inmate upon entering the facility and that each inmate should be allocated to "whatever work or occupation may be most desirable for him" in order to best train him and prepare him for release (Madden, 1937, p. 19). As for the Bull Gang (depicted in Figure 26), the report suggests that this particular crew be reserved for "incorrigibles" and those who will not apply themselves to other training; it might also be used for punishment (Madden, 1937, p. 19). It demonstrates the complex nature of reform labour at the OR over the years, and raises questions about how the darker side of imprisonment might be acknowledged and recognized at the Yorklands in a future design.

Figure 26: Sketch of the Bull Gang in winter, c. 1970, artist unknown
Source: Courtesy of Guelph Museums, object 2007.41.4

The Bull Gang is of particular interest in a landscape-focused study of the Yorklands because its members shaped the landscape. In many discussions and histories of the Yorklands, the landscape is often at the forefront of conversation as it is so significant and unique. But it is also important to understand that the way that this landscape came to be is a complex part of its history. The worst of all jobs available at the OR,

undeniably punitive work, created the lasting beauty that remains there today. While there was undoubtedly a lot of good rehabilitation and reform that happened at the OR over the years, the rehabilitative experience was clearly not universal. House (1998) wrote “histories of work and labour are inseparable from the history of imprisonment” because the economic and rehabilitative case for labour “formed the foundation of the modern penitentiary” (p. 11). The production of goods and subsequent revenues accrued at a facility like the OR complicate the question of reform success and ask: To what gain? At the OR, rehabilitation through labour may have been the overall goal but not a universal experience. This is certainly true of work on the Bull Gang that shaped the Yorklands landscape, and likely true of other industrial pursuits at the OR as well. Some work placements at the OR were surely better than others, and one of the good ones was a job at the farm working with “the herdsman.”

4.2.3 The herdsman and Jenny

One hundred Holstein heifers were purchased for the prison farm in 1910, with plans to grow the herd and to build what would become a state-of-the-art dairy barn on site (Government of Ontario, 1911; Grottenthaler, 2010). Dairy production was central to the prison farm and, according to Grottenthaler (2010), it was the “pride and joy of the farming operation” (p. 17). Its success in later years can be attributed to Gordon Ferguson, also known as “the herdsman” whose tenure marked a turning point in production and quality of the OR herd; Ferguson led the feeding, breeding and milking program from 1941 to 1964 (Grottenthaler, 2010). The program had a close connection with the University of Guelph, as the OVC used Ferguson’s dairy herd for joint research projects and practical training for students. Based on correspondence between the OVC and provincial officials, it is clear that the herd was highly valuable both economically and educationally for the University (Howell, 1971).

Led by Ferguson and prize-winning matriarch “Jenny” (Figure 27), the OR herd at one time produced 633,769 quarts of milk per year from 114 milking cows; Jenny yielded 34 quarts per day on her own and her six daughters are said to have been

remarkably productive as well (Grottenthaler, 2010). Ferguson was known to be a humble man who often pointed out that many contributed to the success of the OR herd, including “the thousands of young men that worked for him in the ORG barns over the years”; referring to inmates:

> he would be talking about the problems, the patience required to have his beloved cows cared for by young men who couldn’t care less. But then he would smile and remember how after a few months on the job these ‘City Boys’ had developed a genuine interest in the cows and in the process, a new interest in life. (Grottenthaler, 2010, p. 17)

Inmates who worked with Ferguson “learned all aspects of dairy production including feeding and care, hoof trimming, dehorning, and the operation and maintenance of the machinery” (Grottenthaler, 2010, p. 16). Compared with working in the abattoir or in the quarry, it is easy to see that joining Ferguson in the dairy barn (Figure 28) would have been preferable. The useful skills gained working with a prize-winning dairy herd were true to the founding of the institution and working outside with the animals may have been one of the more therapeutic tasks on site (Figure 29).

Figure 27: The Herdsman and Jenny, c. 1960
Courtesy of Guelph Museums, object 2010.38.15

Figure 28: Ferguson in the dairy barn, from *Good Farming Quarterly*, Spring 1961
Courtesy of Guelph Museums, object 2010.38.19

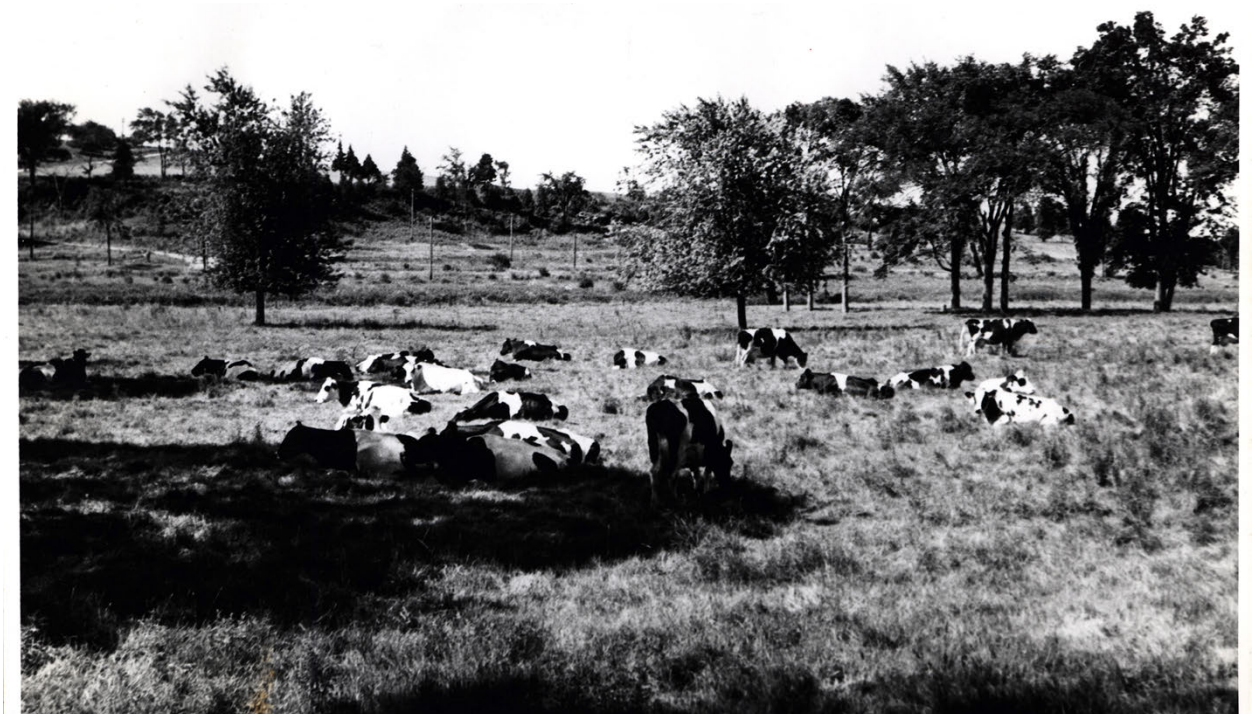

Figure 29: Dairy herd at the OR, c. 1960
Courtesy of Guelph Museums, object ID: 2010.38.21

4.2.4 "We did what we could": Staff and programming in 70s, 80s and 90s

Grottenthaler's (2010) book highlights some of the surprising prison programming at the OR during his career as Chief Engineer spanning 1972 to 1993. The OR had been renamed the Guelph Correctional Centre (GCC) by then. There were recreational options for inmates as it was felt during this era that these opportunities were critical for proper development and rehabilitation. This included classes in subjects like dog obedience, effective speaking and theatre. The demand for music classes exceeded the ability of the prison to provide them as it relied on volunteers for extracurricular training. Sometime in the 1970s, an inmate wrote recreation staff member Frank Dobias to preach the value of his musical training at the GCC:

> Dear Mr. Dobias,
> I'd like to thank you for giving me these pictures and for making my stay there a pleasant one. Sorry I took so long but I've been working with a big show band across Canada. I hope you will keep the music department going. It made all the difference in the world to me.
> Sincerely yours,
> George [Clarkson] (Grottenthaler, 2010, p. 22)

The GCC held local benefit shows, inmate talent shows, art and hobby instruction and sporting events. Intermural activities for inmates included an annual track and field meet and weight training, outdoor education activities like rock climbing, ecology and orienteering, survival training and first aid (Grottenthaler, 2010). Grottenthaler's book - *House on the Hill: Ontario Reformatory – Guelph Correctional Centre 1910 –* 2002 - has a remarkable collection of images showing some of these events and people from all around the facility. It is a text that shows humanity within a prison - something that is often too easily overlooked.

At an October 2019 public meeting hosted by the Yorklands Green Hub, former staff members of the GCC spoke about their time working at the facility. Connie Shaw, a former coordinating chaplain there, described the GCC as a "place of firsts" (Nieuwland & Shaw, 2019). Her position at the GCC had made her the first female chaplain in Ontario and she shared some of her challenges and successes on the job, making it

clear that she sincerely cared about the prisoners and her fellow staff members there. Grottenthaler (2010) wrote about Shaw in his book:

> She is heavily involved in social work and counselling, talking to the community at large about prisoner support in jail and integration into the community upon release. Her previous work with the John Howard Society was a great experience for this kind of work. (p. 23)

According to Shaw (Nieuwland & Shaw, 2019), the chapel built outside of the cellblocks at the OR in the 1960s was the first to be placed outside of a prison structure (Figure 30). She visited inmates in the cell blocks when necessary but for the most part her services were provided outside of the walled, barred prison structure (Nieuwland & Shaw, 2019). This is one of the many advantages to a minimum or medium security prison like the GCC - it allowed for some movement around the facility during the day.

Figure 30: The chapel, within a security fence but outside of the cellblocks
Author, 2019

Another “first” that Shaw told the audience about was the “Native Sons” program at the GCC. Disproportionately high numbers of Indigenous inmates led to the creation of the “Native Sons program,” a support group for these inmates (Nieuwland & Shaw, 2019; Grottenthaler, 2010), which then led to the implementation of the first sweat lodge in an Ontario prison facility (Nieuwland & Shaw, 2019). According to Grottenthaler (2010), the Native Sons were assigned a room in the assembly hall and given exclusive access; apparently many of the murals they created on walls still remain in that room today (Figure 31).

Former chaplain Doug McCarthy worked with prison authorities on the “radical idea” to build a sweat lodge for the Native Sons (Grottenthaler, 2010, p. 25). According to a report by Henk Dykman, another former chaplain there, “the first sweat lodge was in operation in the early eighties [located] close to the chapel … the ceremonies were led by an Elder who came from Toronto” (Grottenthaler, 2010, p. 25).

Figure 31: Mural seen in the Native Sons' room
Grottenthaler, 2010, p. 25

Another GCC employee who spoke with Shaw was Arend Nieuwland, former director of the creative arts program. Nieuwland was hired out of university as a part-time art instructor in 1975 to run classes for inmates in a studio setting; he spoke of pushing for that studio setting and lower security measures in order to properly facilitate teaching art (Nieuwland & Shaw, 2019). Prior to Nieuwland arriving at the GCC, inmates were limited to simple crafts within their cells, but his drawing instruction quickly grew in popularity and had an unexpected, strong positive response amongst inmates (Elora Arts Council, 1992). This led Nieuwland to push for a better art therapy program at the institution; a new studio facility was built at the GCC and Nieuwland became a full-time employee (Elora Arts Council, 1992). He spoke about the atmosphere within the studio as one of minimum-security (without guards) and of giving inmates an opportunity to express themselves on a personal level – an opportunity to regain pride and self-confidence (Nieuwland and Shaw, 2019). The work of Shaw and Nieuwland at the GCC demonstrated a willingness to experiment with programming and the organizational structure in order to improve the prisoner experience. In this regard, the ethos of innovative rehabilitation continued at the facility well into its later years.

4.3 The Policy: Planning Goals and the Future of the Yorklands

There are many policy directives and goals that shape the Yorklands, both in the present and the future. It is a layered framework with provincial guidance on top of more specific and detailed municipal policy. While the land is provincially owned, it falls within the City of Guelph municipal boundary and is subject to the City's *Official Plan* (2018) as well as the area-specific *Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan* (2017). Ontario and the City of Guelph have guidelines, goals and targets relating to use of resources, climate change, food and water policy, development and built form, to name a few. In order to focus on the stated research goal of this thesis, this section will focus on relevant policy from the Government of Ontario, City of Guelph and the Yorklands Green Hub that pertains specifically to issues of urban agriculture and cultural heritage. See Table 1 for a list of policy documents that open the door for exploring opportunities for adaptive-reuse and the development of urban agriculture at the Yorklands.

Table 1: List of Policy Documents Examined

Author, Year	Document Name	Document Type
City of Guelph, 2017	Official Plan Amendment Number 54: Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan	Official Plan (Amendment)
Yorklands Green Hub, 2018	Our Vision	Strategy
City of Guelph, 2018	City of Guelph Official Plan	Official Plan
City of Guelph, 2019	Cultural Heritage Action Plan (DRAFT)	Strategy
City of Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019	OurFoodFuture: Smart Cities Challenge, Final Proposal	Strategy
Province of Ontario, 2020	Provincial Policy Statement	Act
Province of Ontario, 2020	A Place to Grow	Act

The Yorklands Green Hub (YGH) vision for the Yorklands is of a public centre of sustainability, education and research that invites people from all disciplines and demographics to become stewards of the "land, food, water, cultural heritage and our overall wellbeing" (YGH, 2018, para. 1-2). "Local food production and security" as well as "cultural/natural heritage preservation" are a focus for the future as demonstrated by these envisioned outcomes:

- Preservation of the unique cultural and natural heritage of the GCC lands through adaptive-reuse
- Diffusion of local, sustainable and affordable food initiatives throughout Ontario.
- Creation of educational demonstrations to help citizens and businesses choose low impact and carbon neutral energy alternatives
- Increased engagement of citizens in building strong, resilient, safe and inclusive communities (YGH, 2018, para. 4)

YGH is currently in the process of refining this vision as well as their strategy to purchase or lease Parcel 2 of the Yorklands. The goals are inspiring and ambitious, but are also true to the history of the site such as creating an operation run by sustainable renewable energy and food production that is in keeping with the Ontario Reformatory but with a different labour force. In addition, the YGH commitment to not only preserve but also feature the history of the Yorklands is valuable from a cultural heritage standpoint. The following section explores how local food and heritage conservation policies align with the vision of YGH.

4.3.1 Food policy and Provincial guidance

Included as part of the Provincial Planning Act, The *Provincial Policy Statement* (PPS), 2020 states:

> the long-term prosperity and social well-being of Ontario depends upon planning for strong, sustainable and resilient communities for people of all ages, a clean and healthy environment, and a strong and competitive economy …
> strong, liveable and healthy communities promote and enhance human health and social well-being, are economically and environmentally sound, and are resilient to climate change
> (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2020a, p. 5).

The *Provincial Policy Statement* is provincial policy with which municipalities must comply. It gives direction on issues such as land-use, economic prosperity and environmental protections. In Section 1.7.1 regarding economic prosperity, the PPS states that long-term growth should be supported by:

> sustaining and enhancing the viability of the *agricultural system* through protecting agricultural resources, minimizing land use conflicts, providing opportunities *to support local food***,** and maintaining and improving the *agri-food network* (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2020a, p. 22)

Municipal planning documents must comply with the PPS and it is the responsibility of the municipality to implement land-use policy at the local level (Landman & Blay-Palmer, 2017).

The *A Place to Grow Act* (2020) is a growth strategy for the Greater Golden Horseshoe in Ontario. Guelph is included in the boundary and is subject to its population growth target of 191,000 residents within the municipal boundary by the year 2041 (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2020b, p. 94). It is the guidelines for managing the type of significant growth that are relevant for the Yorklands. Section 2.2.1 of the Act highlights policies that "support the achievement of complete communities that … expand convenient access to … healthy, local, and affordable food options, including through urban agriculture" (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2020b, p. 14). In Section 4.2.6, it also gives specific language regarding the agricultural system, encouraging municipalities to implement regional agri-food strategies to sustain and enhance the agricultural system by:

> providing opportunities to support access to healthy, local, and affordable food, urban and near-urban agriculture, food system planning and promoting the sustainability of agricultural, agri-food, and agri-product businesses while protecting agricultural resources and minimizing land use conflicts (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2020b, p. 46)

While there is legitimate concern about the projected levels of population growth in the Guelph area, the provincial government has outlined strategies for mitigation of the negative impacts of the potential pressures on land-use and quality of life. As some of these strategies use specific language supporting food production, food systems and

urban agriculture, the case for YGH and its vision can be aligned with provincial guidelines.

4.3.2 Food Policy in Guelph

The City of Guelph *Official Plan* (2018) responds to the PPS and the *A Place to Grow Act,* in discussing "Planning a Complete and Healthy Community" in Guelph; there are many objectives laid out by the City for creating a complete community and they include supporting "*urban agriculture* in appropriate locations throughout the city as a means of encouraging local food production and distribution, reducing transportation needs and fostering community spirit" (City of Guelph, 2018, p. 12).

With regard to urban agriculture, the City of Guelph has specific planning guidelines as outlined in the *Official Plan*, Section 9.1.3 Urban Agriculture Objectives. Its stated goals are:

> a) To encourage *urban agriculture* throughout the city in appropriate locations.
> b) To support a local food system including the cultivation of food within the urban environment (City of Guelph, 2018, p.174).

The following policies from Section 9.1.3 are particularly relevant to YGH and the future of the Yorklands:

1. Urban agriculture including community gardens may be permitted in all land use designations with the exception of Natural Areas and Significant Natural Areas unless otherwise limited by the provisions of this Plan and will be subject to City by-laws and guidelines.

5. The City is supportive of a local food system that includes access to healthy foods at a neighbourhood level, the Guelph Farmers' Market, temporary farmers' markets and community gardens.

6. The City promotes the use of underutilized sites and long-term development parcels for urban agriculture where appropriate and feasible, without limiting the potential for future development.

9. The City may partner with community stakeholders to develop mechanisms to promote urban agriculture and to mitigate or remove barriers to urban agriculture.

10. The City may collaborate with appropriate stakeholders and local partners to develop strategies that advance a healthy, sustainable, secure, resilient, accessible, economically vibrant and equitable food system. Such strategies may address the following, among other topics:

i) planning for locations for food production, processing, distribution, storage and waste management;
ii) planning for food security; and
iii) pursuing opportunities for education and community building around local food (City of Guelph, 2008, p. 175).

At the municipal level, the Guelph *Official Plan* makes it clear that urban agriculture is encouraged and will have the support of the City of Guelph so long as it meets the guidelines of land-use. As to where urban agriculture can happen in the City, while it is specified that natural areas and significant natural areas are restricted, Section 4.4.1 “Floodplains” clarifies that urban agriculture (without the addition of buildings or structures) is a “passive” land-use and may be permitted in one and two-zone floodplains in Guelph (City of Guelph, 2018, p. 75). As the Yorklands is partially within the floodplain and partially designated as natural area by the City, finding a specific location for urban agriculture there would require inventory, analysis and mapping and complying with the approval process. The following map adapted from the *Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan* and Grand River Conservation Authority’s open geospatial data shows the current floodplain areas and the adaptive-reuse areas at the Yorklands (Figure 32).

Figure 32: Designated floodplain and adaptive-reuse areas at the Yorklands
Adapted from City of Guelph, 2017 and GRCA, 2006

In Guelph, the Yorklands falls under the specific jurisdiction of the *Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan* (2017), an amendment to the *Official Plan*. The Guelph Innovation District (GID) is envisioned as a "compact, mixed use community" and "innovation centre" supporting local employment, housing and connecting to the University of Guelph; this vision includes reflecting on Guelph's history and celebrating "the rich heritage resources of the District, including the stunning river valley, dramatic topography and views, and historic reformatory complex" (City of Guelph, 2017, p. 6). This first principle of the GID plan is to "protect what is valuable" stating the objective to "connect surrounding land uses with the Natural Heritage System and *cultural heritage resources* and provide opportunities for compatible research, educational, recreational and urban agricultural uses" (City of Guelph, 2017, p.7). The GID is seen as a "knowledge-based innovation cluster" that could include "agriculture, environment, information technology, advanced manufacturing, health and related science sectors, making connections to the Downtown and the University of Guelph campus (City of Guelph, 2017, p. 9). The City of Guelph has an overall planning interest in supporting urban agriculture, as seen in the *Official Plan* as well as a more explicit interest in the GID. The proposal for urban agriculture from YGH at the Yorklands fits into this planning

framework outlined by the GID Secondary Plan perfectly as an innovate intervention that could raise the profile of the district while preserving its history and cultural heritage.

4.3.3 Cultural heritage and the history of the Yorklands

With respect to cultural heritage preservation and development, the PPS has guidance for municipalities stating that "long term economic prosperity should be supported by," amongst other things, "encouraging a sense of place … and conserving features that help define character, including built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes" (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2020a, p. 22). Speaking specifically of development near these sites, the PPS warns that:

> Planning authorities shall not permit *development* and *site alteration* on *adjacent lands* to *protected heritage property* except where the proposed *development* and *site alteration* has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that the *heritage attributes* of the *protected heritage property* will be *conserved*. (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2020a, p. 31)

The Yorklands contains several heritage-listed buildings and as areas of the GID are slated for development this type of policy language is particularly important from a heritage conservation standpoint. The PPS also specifically mandates the conservation of "significant cultural heritage landscapes" (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2020a, p 31). In tandem with this, the *A Place to Grow Act* discusses cultural heritage resources as fostering a sense of place and a benefit for communities in growth areas; it mandates municipalities to work with stakeholders, "as well as First Nations and Métis communities" in developing plans and strategies that impact cultural heritage resources (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2020b, p. 47)

The City of Guelph *Official Plan* describes cultural heritage resources as "the roots of the community," listing the many tangible and intangible manifestations of such a resource (City of Guelph, 2018, p. 96). According to the *Official Plan,* "Cultural Heritage resources paint the history of the city and provide identity and character while instilling pride and contributing to economic prosperity"; the City aims to "promote and

foster the preservation, rehabilitation and adaptive-reuse or restoration of built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscape so that they remain in active use" (City of Guelph, 2018, pp. 96-97). The GID Secondary Plan includes language specific to the Yorklands aiming to "respect and emulate where appropriate the Beaux-Arts design of the cultural heritage landscape component of the historic Reformatory Complex (City of Guelph, 2017, p. 8). This aligns directly with guidance from the PPS and *A Place to Grow Act* and aligns with the stated goals of YGH as it hopes to preserve and feature cultural heritage features at the Yorklands.

The City of Guelph is also currently in the process of developing a *Cultural Heritage Action Plan* (CHAP) that will "create a community-wide implementation framework for the conservation of cultural heritage resources including recommendations and strategies" (City of Guelph, 2019, p. A-2). The CHAP has identified the Yorklands as a high priority for conservation, given "exposure to risk" and its heritage significance and character-defining features such as the buildings, the Eramosa riverscape and designed landscape features (City of Guelph, 2019, p. 210). This work is currently an evolving process and any future interventions at the Yorklands would occur in concert with the City and could leverage the findings of the CHAP for support.

4.4 A Circular Food Economy for Guelph-Wellington

The County of Wellington, with its agriculturally rich landscapes has a longstanding reputation for food production. The City of Guelph is home to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). The University of Guelph is well known for its research and training in agricultural production and food science, housing the nearly 150-year-old Ontario Agricultural College (OAC), and the Arrell Food Institute, that lead in all types of food science, innovation and research. The University campus has a highly productive urban farming project, the Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming (GCUOF) and the University's Honey Bee Research Centre which was established in 1920. Food is ingrained in the identity of this region.

This conversation was amplified recently as a partnership between the City of Guelph and County of Wellington, with support from the University of Guelph and many other sponsors and stakeholders, led to a successful campaign for the funding to create a "Smart City" based on food and agricultural innovation. The proposal is titled *Our Food Future, Guelph-Wellington: Canada's first food smart community*, and won the Smart Cities Challenge earning Guelph-Wellington $10 million in support from Infrastructure Canada. This will aid in the creation of a circular food economy through innovations in technology and partnerships. The Smart Cities Challenge Statement reads:

> Guelph-Wellington will become Canada's first technology-enabled Circular Food Economy, reimagining an inclusive food-secure ecosystem that increases access to affordable, nutritious food by 50%, where "waste" becomes a resource, 50 new circular businesses and collaborations are created, and circular economic revenues are increased by 50%: 50x50x50 by 2025.
> (City of Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019, p. 1)

The collaborators at Guelph-Wellington have identified the opportunities for further innovation in food research as a way to address the need to improve the local food system. Roughly 1 in 6 families in the area experience food insecurity and 67% of Wellington-Guelph families do not consume a healthy diet; in addition, roughly 1/3 of food in Canada is lost or wasted due to inefficiencies in the system, resulting in

unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions at landfills (City of Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019, p. 1).

The plan is to transform the Guelph-Wellington food ecosystem into a living lab with three primary goals:

1. Increase access to affordable, nutritious food by 50%
2. Create 50 new circular businesses and collaborations
3. Increase circular economic revenues by 50% by unlocking the value of "waste" (City of Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019, p. 4)

Each of these goals is attached to multiple projects that will contribute to the Our Food Future's success. The proposal aims to assess and better understand food systems and waste streams through the harnessing and sharing of open data. It is complex and highly detailed, leaning on cutting edge technologies like blockchain and artificial intelligence to share open-source information between all stakeholders (City of Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019, p. 38). There are also simple, tangible proposals such as increasing rural broadband internet access (p. 37) and better tracking of waste streams (p. 33) to identify opportunities with "waste" products (City of Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019). The proposed "newcomers pilot" will partner with the GCUOF to increase the diversity of food production for Wellington-Guelph's growing immigrant population by offering agricultural training and space for culturally appropriate food production; the long-term plan of this pilot is to scale it up and hand control over to these immigrant populations giving them greater food security and access to nutritious foods that may not currently be available in local stores (City of Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019, p. 61).

Our Food Future is seen as a community-driven initiative that relies on the many community partnerships that have been established to include local restaurants, non-profit food security groups, the University of Guelph, large utility companies and more. The engagement process included farmers and food producers, residents, local business leaders and investors, community groups, social service providers, regulators at all levels of government and Indigenous leaders and community experts (City of

Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019, p. 53). The governance structure is such that it is intended to succeed with a true community based collaborative effort.

There are far too many planned projects and initiatives to list in order to fully elaborate on the amount of thought, planning and creativity that has gone into the Our Food Future initiative. With more than $16 million in funds, (City of Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019, p. 2), Our Food Future will have a drastic impact on reshaping our current linear model of food production into something more sustainable. The architects of the plan hope to do away with the old model of "take-make-dispose," and "envision a food system inspired by nature's circular approach that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable" (City of Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019, p. 3). Circular economies minimize waste and maximize resources, keeping as much energy, nutrients and materials as possible cycling through the system (City of Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019. The outcome could be "truly transformative" and will be scaled beyond the boundaries of Guelph-Wellington:

> By reimagining the food system, we can reimagine the world: reduce our carbon footprint, use the planet's resources more sustainably, drive an inclusive green economy and create food security for a global population predicted to hit 9.1 billion by 2050. (City of Guelph/County of Wellington, 2019, p. 12)

Our Food Future is a timely and relevant initiative for an organization like YGH that has been lobbying to develop a local food hub in Guelph for several years. Surprisingly, the Smart Cities proposal includes very little explicit reference to urban agriculture. In fact, term appears just two times in the City of Guelph/County of Wellington (2019) proposal document: once in a section about digital agriculture strategies that aim to map assets and test new technologies (p. 41) and once in reference to key partner The Seed, a local food security non-profit that is listed as an "expert advisor" on urban agriculture (p. 51). There may be thought and planning for local interventions involving urban agriculture beyond what is discussed in the proposal document as further plans have likely developed in the last year. But the other piece that is currently missing from the proposal is specific locations for some of these initiatives. Where does it all happen? For the Yorklands and a stakeholder like YGH, an

urban agriculture pilot program as a project of Our Food Future could present a significant opportunity. At the very least, Our Food Future fortifies the notion that there is an appetite for food systems innovation and change in the area.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This thesis has used a landscape narrative approach to consider the opportunity for adaptive-reuse and the implementation of urban agriculture at the Yorklands. The old stories and current policy context of the Yorklands are critical for understanding what could be next for the landscape. The historical narrative about the landscape and how it came to be used for incarceration revealed themes of innovation and technology, agriculture, reform, labour and societal improvement. These themes were complicated by some of the unpleasant realities of the criminal justice system despite the apparently good intentions of early reformers and prison staff. While these themes speak to its past and will help determine a historically appropriate intervention there, the Yorklands policy story is perhaps the best predictor of its future. That policy reveals that it is not only a landscape with a history of contributing to public policy goals but that it can continue to do so moving forward.

5.2 Interpretation: Themes from the Yorklands' stories

The founding of the Ontario Reformatory (OR) as a different type of prison focussed on rehabilitation started an undercurrent of social reform that ran throughout the history of the institution. The Yorklands was chosen for the site of the OR because of its ability to contribute to reform goals. It had natural resources on site that provided building materials and training opportunities, fields for cultivation, and a picturesque river valley setting that may have consciously or subconsciously eased the minds of prisoners and employees alike.

5.2.1 Design and reform

It cannot be overlooked that the grounds at the OR were designed in conjunction with the City Beautiful movement in Canada that introduced a new design standard to

cities. The work at the OR shaped the Yorklands because officials believed that the landscape around a prison mattered and could profoundly affect the psyche of people. While the City Beautiful movement originated in cities, it was also applied to this prison. That those prisoners were seen to be worthy of serving their sentence in a pastoral, scenic setting to aid in their rehabilitation is quite remarkable. From the beginning, the design of the landscape was central to the OR, and that landscape was paradoxically shaped *by prisoners, for prisoners*. The farm closed in the 1970s and the prison operation was shut down 30 years later, but their mark on the Yorklands is central to its identity today. And even today it continues to be an important place for locals who wander the grounds to explore its historical landmarks and resulting beauty, catch fish in the ponds and view birds, wildflowers and waterfalls. Visitors continue the legacy of families who picnicked on manicured lawns in front of the prison dating back to the 1940s. Axford (2019) completed a cultural heritage study of the Yorklands and noted "the site, while functioning visually and historically, is a landmark that is a cherished space for the inhabitants of Guelph and the surrounding area" (p. 7).

5.2.2 Agricultural production

Agricultural production was central to the founding of the institution and a key component of operations there for more than 60 years. Remarkable quantities of fresh food were once produced there, and highly successful cattle operations led to a famous dairy herd of immense value. Even as the farm closed, the canning facility and abattoir remained in operation. The abattoir evolved into Better Beef Ltd and was eventually absorbed by Cargill, a multinational corporation that is a far cry from the humble beginnings of the OR but continues to operate next door to the prison's old cellblocks.

Today, soil quality is compromised in some areas on-site from various industrial operations, but remediation work has also taken place in the years following the closure of the prison (Infrastructure Ontario, 2016). Contamination complicates future food production on-site but would by no means prevent it. Continued remediation efforts might be able to open new possibilities for in ground food production. In the meantime,

vertical growing techniques that keep plantings to contained, above ground environments are commonly used in urban farming and could provide safe space for crop production on site at the Yorklands.

5.2.3 A complicated history of labour

While the physical makeup of the Yorklands facilitated its productivity over the years, the efficiency and revenue generated from this was also made possible by the use of inmate labour for farm and manufacturing operations. The ability for these operations to justify themselves economically was clearly viewed as crucial to the institutions' overall success. The OR produced a surplus of food and manufactured goods for Ontario's other institutions at low cost. This was made clear in 1917, during the Speedwell Military Hospital era when outside labour was hired for farm and manufacturing operations because the veterans were unable to meet the demands of the work (Durham, 2017). This demonstrated the importance of production at the OR in those days and moving forward, much of which would not have been economically viable without the extremely low cost of inmate labour.

That the landscape, for which the Yorklands is well known, was shaped by the Bull Gang is perhaps the best example of the paradox of rehabilitative labour at the OR. Difficult, unpaid and at times, unsafe work carried out by the most troubled inmates resulted in its picturesque design elements. This paradox complicates the rehabilitative value of some of the work that was carried out at the Yorklands over the years and flags an important and complex question to which a future design implementation will need to respond: How does one address historic power imbalances, and memorialize the good with the bad of a place like this?

5.2.4 Potential in the policy

The policy context of the Yorklands today demonstrates that it can contribute to a wide variety of local goals, from community building to climate change mitigation. However, given its agricultural history and the vision of its main community advocate

YGH, some form of food production would be an ideal focus there and would make a significant contribution to municipal and provincial policy goals regarding local agriculture. The City of Guelph *Official Plan* (2018) is explicitly supportive of urban agriculture in Section 9.1.3, outlining the many benefits of urban agriculture for Guelph, appropriate locations and the forms it can take. Further to this, the *Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan* (2017), specific to the Yorklands' neighbourhood in Guelph, seeks to create a technology and innovation hub that supports employment, research, education and housing; it describes the area as a unique heritage district. Incorporating urban agriculture into adaptive-reuse planning within the Guelph Innovation District (GID) is an opportunity to create something unique and is aligned with the stated goals of the secondary plan. For example, food production would surely contribute to "innovative, sustainable employment uses" while celebrating "the rich heritage resources of the District" (City of Guelph, 2017, p. 6).

5.2.5 From the past to the future

The historical context of the OR, a self-sustaining enterprise with its own water, power and food supply, could point to several noble future interventions. A grand vision of a food hub might be able to incorporate all of this together, and there are many successful precedents worldwide that could give insight to such a venture. Whatever the scale or ambitiousness of the next steps there, designers and planners cannot overlook food production, which is prominent in the Yorklands' history. It is also incredibly relevant today as food security is becoming increasingly acute as a local and global issue, amplified by the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that has shaken the world, its supply chains and labour force.

As a whole, the City Beautiful design of the site, the associated reform goals and prison farm history create a historic land-use that should continue to be embraced and elevated at the Yorklands. That its history is unique and complicated presents an interesting design challenge, and that this well-loved place is currently for sale creates an opportunity for adaptive-reuse that simply cannot be missed. The Yorklands has long

been tapped for its productive and rehabilitative potential and should be allowed to continue this tradition.

5.3 Implications: Food Security Before and Now

As outlined in the literature review of this thesis, food security is a global issue that affects the Guelph-Wellington region. While the Ontario rate of food *insecurity* is approximately 12%, the local rate is slightly higher, at 14% (Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2016). Food systems and food security are inherently connected to climate change because the food transport, packaging and production methods can increase greenhouse gas emissions, especially in food systems that are dependent on supply from imports (Mbow et al., 2019). Climate change has long been central to landscape architectural discourse, and while food security has been there too, it is time for it to be further elevated in that discourse. Climate change and food security were an inspiration for this thesis project that aims to raise awareness of these issues in Guelph-Wellington. COVID-19, having emerged several months after the work for this thesis began, has given it new meaning and implications. The virus has infected more than 4.6 million people globally to date (as of May 18, 2020), a number that will continue to climb over the coming months (World Health Organization, 2020). The response to the pandemic has disrupted supply chains across the globe, closing borders and places of work.

This pandemic is a mirror, forcing us to look closely at many of our economic and healthcare support systems, and some of the things that have shown up in that mirror are unpleasant to see. COVID-19 has revealed the inequities of Canadian society, even with its relatively strong social safety net. Seniors and others in long-term care have been disproportionately infected by the disease (Tubb & Wallace, 2020), and the job of care workers in those homes is underfunded, insecure and generally underappreciated. Through this, Canadians have faced the reality that the care system for elders and the disabled in this country is in many cases woefully inadequate. The same can be said of Canada's criminal justice system that has been slow to respond to extremely high infection rates in prisons; it has in turn taken drastic, and according to Canada's prison

watchdog, unethical measures of confinement to prevent the spread of the virus (Desson, 2020).

The virus has also highlighted existing flaws in the food system. In the United States, where the social safety net is much weaker, the COVID-19 death toll is currently the highest on the planet, and food banks have seen demand surge at least 40% with frequent line-ups of thousands of people in need of support; it is well beyond the ability of these organizations to meet demand (Luhbby, 2020). Canadian food banks are under increased pressure as well and are struggling to keep up as operators predict demand will continue to increase; at the same time, supply chains and funding may be further disrupted (Britneff, 2020). As governments scramble to respond to the sudden loss of jobs worldwide and the stresses of unemployment, social isolation and health fears, they are taking incredible, previously unimaginable socioeconomic measures locking down their countries and funnelling money into support systems. This is an opportunity to rethink social security, economics and healthcare. And it is an opportunity to reconsider the food system as suddenly, conversations about the supply of food - how it comes to be and where it comes from - are happening every day.

Many Canadians with no previous concern about being able to purchase groceries now find themselves lining up outside of grocery stores. For safety, these stores have reorganized the shopping experience by reducing occupancy and directing traffic inside. On top of this, staple products that seemed infinite and dependable, such as flour, yeast and many non-perishables are unavailable at times as distribution shifts from unoccupied restaurants and closed cafeterias to grocery stores. There has also been concern about the fresh food supply in Canada as many farmers are unable to plant and harvest crops without the temporary foreign workers (TFWs) that travel to Canada each year to work in the agriculture industry. These workers fill roles that Canadians generally do not want and are not trained for, and the Federal government has exempted TFWs from current travel restrictions; still, farmers worry that the delays in the arrival of TFWs and a mandatory two-week quarantine will lead to widespread crop loss (Malbeuf, 2020). Canadians will continue to become more aware of how this system works as they look for explanations about availability and the rising cost of food.

A current outbreak of COVID-19 in a Cargill beef plant in Alberta, one of McDonald's Canada's two primary suppliers, has infected at least 950 workers and is linked to 1500 cases (Dryden, 2020). It has become a macabre example of a food industry workplace that could have controlled its outbreak far sooner. Staffed largely by "essential service" migrant workers, who do not receive sick leave, it has deeply affected the Filipino community in Alberta and revealed an ugly truth about the bottom-line nature of industrial meat production (Bragg, 2020). Food workers of all types are suddenly understood to be "front line workers," essential because they maintain the food system on which we all depend. From farmers to truck drivers to grocery store clerks, COVID-19 is increasing the awareness of how important these jobs are, and what it might look like if they went away.

As terrible as things might be, these circumstances create a perfect opportunity for change. The Ontario Government recently deemed community gardens an essential service after several petitions urged officials to exempt them from COVID-19 restrictions. Community gardens are critical in times when food systems are under threat, much like historic victory gardens were implemented to bolster the food supply in wartimes. There is also a psychological element to their importance, and it aligns with the ideas of the City Beautiful movement: In stressful times, people need to have nice places to go outside. So the question is: What else is critical in these times and what needs to change? The UN has urged countries to keep critical food supply chains open at all costs, arguing that the risk of this system falling apart will be disastrous; food shortages lead to health compromised individuals who are even more susceptible to viruses like COVID-19 as well as a host of other wellness issues (UN News, 2020). A sure way to bolster the local food supply is to relocalize production where possible. This not only reduces supply chain uncertainty in times of crisis and but the overall carbon footprint of the food system.

If neighbourhood community gardens are essential, we must ask: What else might be considered? What would be the next step or local intervention that is practical to implement with a substantial impact? Perhaps local food hubs with both grassroots initiatives and government support are the next essential service as a building block for

securing Canada's food system. The Yorklands' stories are important in this renewed conversation about food security because there is an opportunity to draw on the landscape's historical role and agricultural function as a place that once fed, educated and employed people. The Yorklands Green Hub's vision for the site, to create a place of community food production, training and demonstration, has become even more compelling as COVID-19 puts additional stress on food systems in Guelph-Wellington and around the world. What exactly this would look like remains to be seen, but there are many models that could work and precedents and experts that could provide inspiration and guidance. There is a strong policy framework in place that encourages urban agriculture to bolster local food security, and gives clear guidelines as to how it can occur. For funding and expert support, one could hardly imagine a better partner than Our Food Future, Guelph-Wellington's winning Smart Cities Challenge that has elevated the food conversation and created a motivated network of researchers and community leaders. In the trying times of COVID-19, Our Food Future is needed more than ever in Guelph-Wellington to support the community with its resources and expertise.

For the implementation of urban agriculture at the Yorklands, it seems that everything is in place, from the grassroots initiative of the non-profit YGH to the support of local governments and an eager team of food experts with the funds and partnerships to reorganize the system. Were the Yorklands to become a part of this movement, the landscape would once again find itself on the cutting edge in a new state-of-the-art experiment. It has been successful in this way before, and it is a perfect time to resurrect the agricultural and rehabilitative components of its past.

5.4 Limitations

This thesis used a landscape narrative approach to assess the implementation of urban agriculture at the Yorklands. Early in the research process, it was determined that this approach would require an understanding of historical land-use, current site conditions and the current government policy that applied to the Yorklands. It was also

essential to incorporate a community element or voice into the research that was represented by the goals of YGH and the Our Food Future campaign. YGH, Our Food Future and the City of Guelph have consulted with the public and garnered support for these initiatives showing that there is a unified appetite for food-related infrastructure. Constructing a narrative has facilitated the synthesis of these elements (history, policy and community initiatives) to create a true picture of the Yorklands, past and present.

A landscape narrative is not intended to create comprehensive historical overview of a place. While it attempts to use a more holistic approach to landscape research, landscape narratives all have a particular focus such as history, ecology, the built environment, types of change or the religious or political ordering of space (Kolen et al., 2017). Because of this, questions will remain unanswered by landscape narrative research that has focussed primarily on agriculture and reform. Another researcher might ask a different question about the future of the Yorklands that explored the rising cost of housing, for example. A narrative must be understood through the perspective and interpretation of its author; Potteiger & Purinton (1998) have noted that we must question and understand the lens through which a story is being told, why it is being told and the belief system that gets established through that story.

Understanding policy data has been a challenge and a true learning opportunity. The analysis of policy used within this thesis is somewhat rudimentary but has been integral to the process. While a planning professional might be able to describe the current policy affecting the Yorklands in much greater detail, every effort has been made to adequately represent the policy story of the Yorklands including help from the thesis advisory team and informal discussions with professionals to substantiate findings.

Like all thesis projects, time is perhaps the most significant limitation. The 8-month window for the project prevented early plans to include case-study, suitability analysis and a formal interview process. During the process of uncovering the stories of the Yorklands, it became apparent that while there is a vast quantity of information available about the place, no landscape-focussed history currently exists, and building that became a primary focus of the research. The process of doing so was extensive.

Archival materials were used to reveal these stories and proved to be one of the fascinating elements of writing about the Yorklands. While efforts were made to thoroughly comb through archival data, there is undoubtedly more that could be incorporated. The Guelph Museum has an incredible archival repository of artifacts, letters and books and would be an excellent starting point for further research on the Yorklands.

5.5 Recommendations

This thesis has compiled data that can be used to further develop the vision of what the Yorklands could be in the future. It has argued that the incorporation of urban agriculture is logical, given its historical land-use, local policy initiatives and the current pressures on the food system as a whole. Future research can build on this by developing a detailed, technical vision of what this could look like by establishing a framework of relatable case studies and interviewing the landscape architects involved in those projects. Over the years, many University of Guelph students have pondered the future of the Yorklands in design projects, and it would now be possible to combine that work with the narratives that emerged from this project to further develop some of those ideas.

This project has incorporated site history, planning, social reform and design, demonstrating the ability of landscape architectural work to include a variety of disciplines into its process. There is also an extensive public health connection at the Yorklands. To tackle issues of today and future, such as the climate and food security, more landscape architects will need to strengthen their working relationship with public health agencies and planning professionals; significant change requires extensive collaboration that, fortunately, is a strength of the landscape architecture and planning professions. Landscape architects can prioritize food production in design, much in the way they think about climate change. This could, in turn, contribute the increasing affordable access to nutritious food at the local level. At the Yorklands, revitalizing the landscape with urban agriculture could set a new, local precedent for adaptive-reuse

that would honour the productive, progressive social histories of the site. It presents Guelph-Wellington with an ideal opportunity that cannot be ignored, given the pressing need for action. In 1908 reformers chose the Yorklands as the perfect landscape for a radical pilot project that changed the prison system in Ontario. In 2020, the Yorklands is ready for its next pilot, offering its rehabilitative potential once again as it is poised to be a key partner in the process of supporting the local food system.

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