

# **REZONE AND REURBANIZE:**

## **Toronto's Vulnerable Vernacular Urban Main Streets and Maintaining the City's Local Culture**

by

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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## ABSTRACT

It is the position of this thesis that the large scale condominium (condo) market in the City of Toronto is reinforcing the eradication of Toronto's vernacular fabric. There is a growing sense that this is leading to the loss of the unique feeling of *city-ness* within Toronto, especially when it comes to the streetscape and culture within the main streets of the City. This thesis will focus on exploring alternatives to the existing and growing condominium typology in Toronto that is eradicating the small grain vernacular fabric along the main streets of the City and answer the question: How can we prevent the large scale takeover of Toronto's evolved vernacular fabric, while still providing a means of growth and intensification of urban land use and building density without sacrificing the distinctive street culture of that area?

Similar to Christopher Alexander's findings of identifying patterns in *The Timeless way of Building* and *A Pattern Language*, I wish to identify a way to create better community, diverse streetscapes, and a more typologically differentiated densification, enabling higher quality architectural interventions. Toronto's existing architectural vernacular types will be examined and a more diversified network of possibilities and solutions will be established than is presently offered by the development industry. The current one-size-fits-all approach of densification detracts from the streetscape and culture of the neighbourhoods they are put in and is cause for a disconnect between the existing neighbourhood fabric and the new. This thesis will emphasize the importance of learning from existing fabric and conditions in an effort to provide the growing city with a means for intensification without getting rid of the qualities of the city that makes it Toronto.

This thesis has five sections providing evidence, research and data to support the need for a new, neighbourhood-centric residential typology that will provide the means for city-wide intensification. The purpose of the developed design strategy is to illustrate a design approach that sets out to be a neighbourhood-centric intensification carrier, whose design principles can be used as a guideline for further development in other neighbourhoods within the city. The main goal is to better design residential types according to a set of guidelines that will cohesively bring the culture of that area together with a means for intensification and growth. Ultimately, the thesis looks to create a manual or list of guidelines for future intensification that can be easily translated and applied all over the city.



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# 0.0

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter's focus is to introduce the issues that have influenced the creation of this thesis, the thesis itself and any literature that is of significance.

## 0.1 THE PROBLEM



*Fig. 0.1.1: Side by side comparison of the Toronto skyline, Left shows the 1996 skyline and Right shows the 2012 skyline (above)*

Most of the original City of Toronto's housing was built after World War I, at a time when the idea of living in the dense city was an unpopular one. The single-family home dominated as the most popular dwelling type and still accounts for one of the major types of residential dwelling in the expanded contemporary city. However, with the dramatic increase of the city's population since the Second World War, economic prosperity, and diversification of social and cultural factors, a new housing type that would accommodate a quickly growing and densifying city was needed – cue today's high-rise condominium typology. With the lack of new single-family dwellings being built in the city core today, and with Provincial and Municipal land intensification policies such as Ontario's Greenbelt Plan, there has been a shift away from downtown low-rise development. Today, high-rise condominiums spring up in the core of the city with the need for denser residential dwelling fabric.

The deindustrialization of the core of Toronto during the mid-to-late 1970s, a process that has continued until more recently, opened up large plots of vacant land in the city centre. These industrial sites were unlike most of the traditional city fabric which was composed of small-grain, parcelized lots, typically very narrow and long, only suitable for single-family homes or small commercial storefront buildings. The uniquely large sites asked developers to rethink their usual methods of development, needing a building type that could provide a larger return on investment to cover the cost of a larger, and thus more expensive, site. This trend slowly took off during the late 1990s and early 2000s, when Toronto saw the beginning of the condominiums boom.

Demographic projections for the Greater Toronto Area or GTA estimate that the population will increase by 3 million people to 9.4 million by the year 2041, making it the fastest growing region in the province of Ontario<sup>1</sup>. This means that the city has to plan accordingly and provide itself with suitable intensification building types in order to accommodate the expected growth. In October of 2011, there were 231 high-rise buildings (between 35 and 100 meters tall or 12 to 40 storeys) under construction in Toronto<sup>2</sup>, with the greatest number of building permits being issued for multi-unit housing<sup>3</sup>. Today, high-rise condominium or “condo” units make up 60% of the new home sales in the GTA<sup>4</sup>, more than double the amount from 2000, with 118 buildings in pre-construction phase waiting to be built. Although there is a clear new supply for condominiums, the single-family home/single-detached home still represents the largest proportion of housing in the City of Toronto<sup>5</sup>. Due to this finite number of such homes however, the demand for them is causing their prices to skyrocket, making them unaffordable for many families<sup>6</sup>. Instead, families are turning to smaller apartment style condominiums due to their lower price tag in comparison to the single-detached home. Often a condo will be over \$100,000 cheaper than a single-detached house in the same area<sup>7</sup>. This means that families are sacrificing space and community amenities for the smaller price tag of a condominium unit, even though the size of condos is shrinking – on average, a new condo is 120 square feet smaller than one built only five years ago. The jump in building multiple-unit housing in Toronto has also generated warnings from policy makers about overbuilding<sup>8</sup>. Inventory studies of unsold units show that the number of these units at a high, similar to when the last time the market crashed in the early 1990s. This reinforces the fact there is a strong need for an alternative to the condominium typologies, both for families and for the City of Toronto, that will still allow the city to accommodate its future need for intensification but also appeal to the residents of the city.

Although the rise of the condo boom has allowed for the intensification of Toronto's residential fabric and population, the high-rise condominium typology has failed to address several important factors such as: the streetscape, the ability to accommodate different family structures, and the need for public community space. Instead, the condos are completely eradicating the vibrancy of Toronto's existing street culture. The developers of the new projects are getting rid of pieces of the city that are responsible for giving Toronto its *city-ness* and unique cultural neighbourhood qualities. That being said, this thesis is not a plea to save all of Toronto's historic or vernacular fabric; city fabric must be judged based on factors other than historic age. Just because a piece of architecture or city fabric is historical in nature doesn't necessarily mean that it needs to be kept, especially in an evolving and changing city that needs to be able to carry intensification factors that these older, vernacular typologies aren't designed for. This thesis is also not an anti-condominium polemic; it is a reaction to the effects of the poor design of this typology on the vibrancy and culture of the Toronto city fabric and the thesis aims to create a design solution for urban intensification that addresses the above issues.

## 0.2 THESIS PROPOSAL

The streetscape and small-grain culture of the City of Toronto is beginning to disappear due to the large scale condo market that is slowly displacing Toronto's vernacular built fabric. This thesis will focus on exploring alternatives to the existing and growing high-rise condominium typology in Toronto that is eradicating the small grain vernacular fabric of the city by answering the questions: How can we prevent the ongoing, large-scale overbuilding of Toronto's diverse and existing main street fabric, while still providing for a means of growth and intensification. How can this be done without sacrificing the lively culture of the city's neighbourhoods and streets? Similar to Christopher Alexander's findings of identifying patterns in *The Timeless Way of Building* and *A Pattern Language*, the thesis looks to identify a way to create better community, streetscape, while allowing ongoing urban intensification and enabling architectural interventions through the use of networks and/or patterns. This thesis seeks to create building typologies that tie together the already existing vernacular fabric and culture of the City's main streets with the ability to accommodate future intensification needs.

The current one-size-fits-all approach for Toronto's intensification, in the form of high-rise condominium towers, detracts from the streetscape and culture of the neighbourhoods in which the new towers are placed. The excessive jump in building scale is cause for a disconnect between the existing neighbourhood fabric and the new. Such a loss of fine grained street culture as part of the normal process of Toronto's main street intensification and the sterilization of the streetscape needs to be remedied by taking a more neighbourhood-centric approach to the design and ensuring that the existing culture of the neighbourhoods can be preserved or even bettered. This thesis will emphasize the importance of learning from the form and diversity of existing fabric and conditions in an effort to provide the growing city with economically viable and practical means for intensification without getting rid of the qualities of the city streetscape that mark Toronto's unique character.

This thesis has five sections providing evidence, research, and data to support the need for a new, neighbourhood-centric residential building typology that will provide the means for city-wide intensification. The first section, entitled **Toronto**, is dedicated to introducing the readers to the City of Toronto. First, it briefly outlines how the city grew, analyzing its urban morphology, and examines what factors helped to shape the city as we see it today. Then, it looks at the informal networks and anonymous architecture of the City's fabric that make up the unique character of Toronto and observes the implications of these types of building for future City growth and intensification. Finally, the issue of vulnerability of the City's main avenue streetscapes is addressed and defined to help readers understand this as an issue of development and intensification. The second section, entitled **Tools**, first focuses on a mapping and urban analysis of the City of Toronto. City-wide maps examining the GTA, as well as morphological maps will be looked at in this section. This is followed by a typological analysis which looks to illustrate a variety of housing typologies present within the City and compares five different low to mid-rise urban building precedents. These typological studies will influence the design outcome by informing the hybrid design typologies that are ultimately created. The third section, entitled **Speculation** looks at creating a dialogue that revolves around issues regarding density and development of Toronto as it pertains to this thesis. It first outlines how density and development are influencing the current state of intensification at a city-wide level and answers the question: why condos and why now? It then examines the City of Toronto's Official Plan

and the Condominium Consultation Recommendations Report of January 2014. The first uncovers the plans and guidelines already in place within the City of Toronto and the second illustrates issues current condominium residents are facing, as well as giving solutions to these problems. The fourth section is focused on the neighbourhood of **Trinity-Bellwoods**, which is the final thesis case study design site. First, we look at why this neighbourhood is both typical and unique, making it an ideal spot to explore new avenues of development. Following this are design site maps which look first at the morphological change of the area and then at the current fabric. Finally, the current conditions present within the main street of Dundas Street West through Trinity-Bellwoods will be examined to give a thorough understanding of the culture and streetscape.

The fifth and final section, called **Outcome**, contains the final designs that set out neighbourhood-centric intensification development strategies and whose design principles can be used as a guideline for further development in other neighbourhoods within the city. This section begins by outlining the Vision and Guiding Principles which contain the overarching ideals that will shape the way intensification is approached in this design thesis on Dundas Street on the edge of Toronto's historic centre. Following this a Demonstrative Intensification Study will be carried out within the case study design site to visually demonstrate how the Guidelines and Principles can be put into practice. This section will contain architectural drawings to illustrate the final vision of the neighbourhood-responsive intensification design, as well as the guidelines used to conceive the types. The section ends with a conclusion which contains images of the Future Potential for Dundas St West using the guidelines and principles as development intensification building blocks.

A glossary of important terms used throughout the thesis will follow in the **Back Matter** section so that the reader has a clear idea of what is meant by certain terms, designations, and descriptions. An **Appendix** of texts is also located within this section.

## 0.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Several texts have influenced the writing of this thesis; two primary and four secondary. Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* and Neil Smith's *The New Urban Frontier* serve as the primary driving texts for this thesis outlining many of the key ideas and ideological positions that have influenced the thesis design approach. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* is a critique on the short-sightedness of modernist planning that has plagued urban planning in the last century. In the book, written in 1961 just after the destruction of America's traditional neighbourhoods by large public housing projects, Jacobs examined solutions to the problems that she thinks will be able to give life and spirit back to the cities that have been robbed of this from poor planning practices. The American-born Jane Jacobs moved to Toronto and lived there for the latter part of her life and she had an enormous influence on Toronto's urban thinkers from the 1970s to the 1990s. Her work helps to inform this thesis by giving a critical framework for the problems in the city of Toronto and, using her proposed methods and ideas, offering an outlook on how to create viable solutions. Jacobs discusses the abstractness of new building projects: of the modernist post-war era:

*“One of the unsuitable ideas behind projects is the very notion that they are projects, abstracted out of the ordinary city and set apart. To think of salvaging or improving projects, as projects, is to repeat this root mistake. The aim should be to get that project, that patch upon the city, rewoven back into the fabric – and in the process of doing do, strengthen the surrounding fabric too.”<sup>9</sup>*

This idea of Jacobs regarding scale and abstraction directly influences the manner in which existing city fabric is being examined within this thesis, aims to guide the design of new forms of building so that they can strengthen the neighbourhood fabric around them and not act as isolated entities as they are now. Better integration of existing and new urban diversity in the fabric, the magic of mingling buildings of different types and ages, and the adaptation of buildings into entities that “*have vitality and are responsive to human needs*” are the main ideas of Jacobs which have greatly influenced this thesis' final design outcome.

*The New Urban Frontier*, on the other hand, discusses the issue of gentrification through a Marxist political lens. While geographer Neil Smith primarily focuses on the issues surrounding a gentrifying and changing New York during the 1990s, the factors and dilemmas he outlines are universal. This source inspired the need in this thesis to examine catalysts of change that are more politically influenced, and not only the ones that can be directly seen. Together, these two sources provide an excellent framework of both architectural and political factors regarding the intensification of cities.

Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language* and *The Timeless Way of Building*, Alison Bain's *Resisting the Creation of Forgotten Places*, and James Corner's *The Agency of Mapping* serve as the secondary driving texts for this thesis. *The Timeless Way of Building* was the catalyst for the start of this thesis. It is the first book in Alexander's series on Pattern Language; a term he coined used to define the informal patterns that work together to build a language of building networks in towns or cities. Expanding on these ideas, *A Pattern Language* further discusses these phenomena and outlines various examples of it, primarily drawing on the fact that the strength in these patterns are their ability to work with each other and their deeply embedded nature in traditional human relationships with architecture and city life:

*“No pattern is an isolated entity. Each pattern can exist in the world, only the extent that it is supported by the other patterns: the larger patterns in which it is embedded, the patterns of the same size that surround it, and the smaller patterns which are embedded in it... This is a fundamental view of the world. It says that when you build a thing you cannot merely build that thing in isolation, but must also repair the world around it, and within it, so that the larger world at the one places becomes more coherent, and more whole; and the thing which you make takes its place in the web of nature, as you make it”<sup>10</sup>*

Building on the more critical ideas of Jane Jacobs, Alexander is a useful example of creating an informal network to help define a city and give it the diversity, vitality and that feeling we strive for our cities to have – a direct influence on the approach taken in the thesis design.

*Resisting the Creation of Forgotten Places* is an article written by Alison Bain, a Professor of Geography at York University, that contains interviews with several Toronto-based visual artists while they discuss the relationship of art, memory and place. It focuses on three specific neighborhoods in downtown Toronto that are being threatened to be forgotten places: Yorkville, King Street West, and the Junction. Although this outlook is less based on architecture and more on visual arts, the article is compelling on how it deals with the relationship between memory and place, and how this is an important factor in the vitality of a city.

Finally, in *Agency of Mapping*, landscape architect James Corner speaks about mapping and its uses, and describes the agency of mapping and the integral difference between mapping and tracing. Corner discusses how mapping can identify hidden potential and forces hidden within the maps:

*“Agency of mapping suggests ways in which mapping acts may emancipate potentials, enrich experiences and diversify worlds... Mapping may thus retain its original entrepreneurial and exploratory character, actualizing within its virtual spaces new territories and prospects out of pervasive yet dormant conditions.”<sup>11</sup>*

This serves as a precedent in the creation of maps for this thesis. Corner goes in-depth to describe, specifically those aimed in uncovering already existing potential within the map-able fabric of the city. Together, these secondary sources influence the methodologies taken within the thesis and serve as significant sources of inspiration for the final design outcome.



## CHAPTER 0.0 ENDNOTES

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- <sup>2</sup> Brendan Kennedy. "Highrises? We're tops on the continent." *The Star*. October 05, 2011. [http://www.thestar.com/life/homes/2011/10/05/highrises\\_were\\_tops\\_on\\_the\\_continent.html#article%3Cbr](http://www.thestar.com/life/homes/2011/10/05/highrises_were_tops_on_the_continent.html#article%3Cbr) (accessed May 2015).
- <sup>3</sup> Greg Quinn. "Building permits rise for fifth month on spike in Toronto multi-units." *Financial Post*. July 08, 2013. <http://business.financialpost.com/personal-finance/mortgages-real-estate/building-permits-rise-for-fifth-month-on-spike-in-toronto-multi-units> (accessed May 2015).
- <sup>4</sup> Brendan Kennedy.
- <sup>5</sup> Government of Canada. "Condominium dwellings in Canada". *StatsCanada*. January 14, 2014. [http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-014-x/99-014-x2011003\\_1-eng.cfm](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-014-x/99-014-x2011003_1-eng.cfm) (accessed May 2015).
- <sup>6</sup> Government of Canada.
- <sup>7</sup> Government of Canada.
- <sup>8</sup> Greg Quinn.
- <sup>9</sup> Jane Jacobs. 1961. *The death and life of great American cities*, ed. William Dendy. New York: Vintage
- <sup>10</sup> Christopher Alexander. 1977. *A pattern language: Towns, buildings, construction*, eds. Christopher Books. Alexander, Sara Ishikawa and Murray Silverstein. New York; New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- <sup>11</sup> James Corner. 1999. *The agency of mapping: Speculation, critique and invention*. In Mappings., ed. Denis E. Cosgrove, 213-252. London: Reaktion Books.



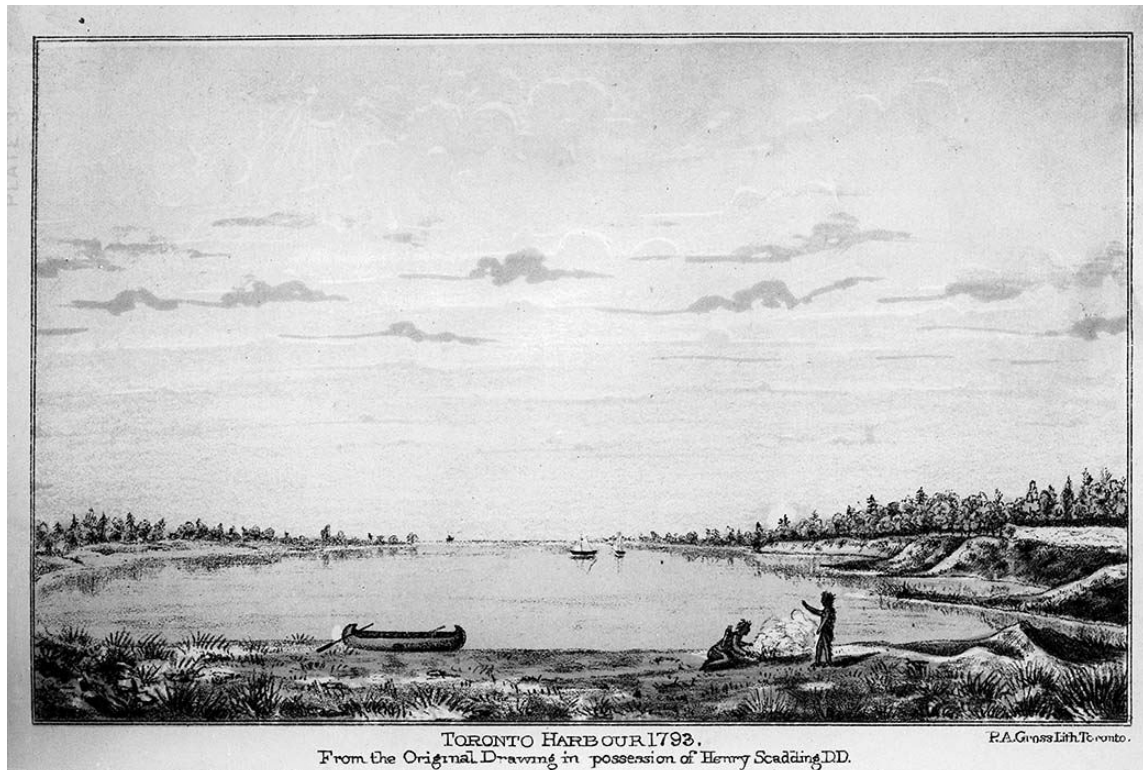
# 1.0

## TORONTO

The focus of this chapter is to provide the reader with valuable background information regarding the City of Toronto and how it came into being the city it is today, as well as focusing on key issues that frame this thesis.

## 1.1 TORONTO'S INFORMAL NETWORKS AND VULNERABLE VERNACULAR FABRIC

*The purpose of this thesis is to present a more neighbourhood-centric, vernacularly-sensitive, alternative to the growing condominium typology that will carry density and allow for sustainable, future intensification. In order to better understand how this can be accomplished, one has to understand the city's past, its growth, urban morphology, issues of density, and the key components of Toronto's City-ness that make the city unique. Section 1.1 will briefly outline the history of Toronto; how it was planned, the vernacular buildings that resulted out of these planning and growth patterns. It will look at the city-specific housing typologies that evolved, and the influence of bigger urban patterns and networks on the city's neighbourhoods. This will give readers a basis of knowledge needed to fully understand the state of the city as it is today, as well as the importance of the key issues being tackled by this thesis.*



*Fig. 1.1.1: Drawing of the Toronto Harbour, 1793 (left)*

## TORONTO AND PLANNING

The City of Toronto has grown tremendously over the last few decades, with a population closing in on 6 million in the Metropolitan area and 2.8 million in the City. The national and regional advantages of the location of the City have facilitated continuous rapid growth, with little evidence of slowing down in the foreseeable future<sup>12</sup>. In order to better understand the social and built potential for the Toronto of tomorrow, one must first understand the Toronto of yesterday: how the city first came into being, how it grew, what growth patterns were utilized, and the types of resulting structures that have shaped the City we see today.

In 1787, the British acquired a portion of Southern Ontario from the Mississauga Indians under the “Toronto Purchase”. The site of present-day Toronto was then called “York” and offered the British a protected harbor and good distance from the American border. York became the area’s administrative and military centre in 1793 and was selected as the capital of Upper Canada by John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada. At this time Simcoe employed surveyor Alexander Aiken to perform a survey of the important site and begin planning out the structure of the newly forming city. Aiken set out Toronto’s now characteristic rectilinear grid as the basis for the city’s pattern of development<sup>13</sup>; a ten-square concession grid along the shore in the city’s present east end became the foundation of York. The blocks of the original development were laid out on a two-kilometer grid of concession roads. Many of these streets have remained the main arteries of today, such as Queen Street, Bloor Street, Yonge Street and Bathurst Street, with some since being added such as King Street and Dundas Street. The original square blocks were located south of Lot Street and ran down to the Lake Ontario shoreline, dividing the urban area into blocks of 80 square kilometers which were then subdivided into building lots 20 meters wide and 40 meters deep laying out the foundation for the present day block pattern of Toronto. As for the architectural state of Simcoe and Aiken’s York, the buildings were concerned with simply providing means of shelter for the military and working residents of the city.



*Fig. 1.1.2: Muddy Streets of a Growing Toronto, King St E, 1856 (above)*

*“The first structures that lined those unpaved streets of ‘Muddy York’ were unassuming detached wooden dwellings responsive to little more than the fundamental task of architecture, that of shelter.”<sup>14</sup>*

By the early 19th century, Toronto had outgrown its prescribed boundaries, extending north to Lot Street (present day Queen Street) and west to Fort York (built just east of present day Bathurst Street). Aiken’s ten-square grid was expanded by a more haphazard and irregular expansion due to the unexpected growth of the city. An attempt by the city powers to reassert control created the ‘Park Lot’ system of planning developed for the areas north of Lot Street. This new land system systematically divided land into long and narrow parcels of 100 acres in size, intended as large states for military uses and to attract wealthy British elites to York. These lots were set out to be independent from other urban development at the time<sup>15</sup> and ran from present day Queen Street to Bloor Street, which was the northern boundary of the city until 1880. At the time of the City’s incorporation in 1834, Lot St ran from the Township of Scarborough in the east, to the Humber River in the west, and had become a new baseline for dividing lands according to the

existing grid-plan set out by Aiken and Simcoe, 40 years earlier<sup>16</sup>. North of Bloor, the original grid structure of the area was kept but the lots were larger in size and referred to as “farm lots”. It was there that farmers supporting the city settled and maintained their farms. The village of Yorkville was a farm centre and stage point on Yonge Street north of Bloor. Later, as the city grew, these large farm lots were subdivided and sold for urban use and villages like Yorkville were incorporated into the City.



Fig. 1.1.3: Map of the City of Toronto, 1857 (above)

In terms of mobility, the city was developing as a pedestrian city at this time. First development occurred around the lake front to ease transit between places of work and dwelling for the city's residents, since primary employment was mainly around the port. There were small amounts of public and private transit at this time but, due to the poor conditions of the streets, the main means of mobility in York was by foot or horse. In the areas south of Lot Street, the city's architecture remained centered on providing shelter for workers and people who worked in that area. The Park Lot areas north of Lot and south of Bloor were owned by military personnel or the newly wealthy British elites of York, and built out as estates with mansions and accompanying buildings. The more northerly farm lots, however, remained relatively rural.

By the mid-1800s, however, landowners had largely abandoned the guidelines set out by Aiken and began selling their land to respond to Toronto's increasing urban growth. At this time, there was no governing body in charge of this development so landowners were free to buy and sell as they pleased. It is here that the diversity of Toronto's main avenue streetscape began due to the lack of central oversight in planning and building. Large pieces of land were typically subdivided and sold wholesale to developers, resulting in an ad hoc practice of real estate and planning which created diverse lot conditions within the originally rectilinearly-planned Park Lot boundaries. As these parcels were developed, housing types evolved in relationship to the lot on which they sat and, as the city grew, land was further divided to accommodate housing for the influx of new residents<sup>17</sup>. Furthermore, changes in transport mobility and better street paving expanded the main streets and aided in the growth of the city.

The first Toronto streetcar system was put in place in 1861 and consisted of a small, horse-drawn streetcar system. By 1894, the system was fully electrified and serving the residents of the city. The insertion of the streetcar system set the tone of the character of building and how development was approached – one of the foremost factors responsible for shaping main streets. Streetcar transit along the wide and flat main streets were reinforced by the insertion of retail opportunities creating shopping corridors along transit lines. Although these retail streets were served well by transit, Richard Harris points out that, due to the streetcar system being privately owned at this time, streetcar related sprawl could not occur because the system being satisfied with its monopoly concessions would not keep up with the demand of new development.

Between 1861 and 1941, Toronto grew from a small commercial and industrial centre of less than 50,000 people to a significant city of close to a million people<sup>18</sup>, resulting in the Park Lots being further subdivided and sold to private developers. Subsequent land surveys established a system of predominately residential streets and lots that ran between the original major rural concession roads while the subdivision of lots continued to change ownership resulting in smaller and smaller parcels of individual sales and developments. As a result of the small-scale private nature of the city's development, unique conditions emerged as the local streets running east and west between the park lots typically ceased to meet one another causing irregular jogs in the city fabric. Those land subdivisions which remained bounded by the larger concession grids were able to maintain a higher order and consistency among themselves, particularly those streets running north and south. These subdivisions were largely uncoordinated developments, meaning their order and consistency emerged out of chance. A general pattern to emerge in the city – efficient use of the available land was made by using long, narrow detached or semi-detached single-family houses, typically up to three or four storeys in height, which were arranged in long north/south blocks with a network of back laneways inserted to facilitate the removal of refuse. Emerging out of the Park Lot



*Fig. 1.1.4: Horse-Drawn Streetcar, Toronto, 1890 (above)*

heritage, the generic yet classic Toronto residential city block was formed as a long rectangular block with a perimeter of single-family houses, divided into a capital “I” by a laneway in the center and fronting onto main streets on the two ends<sup>19</sup>.

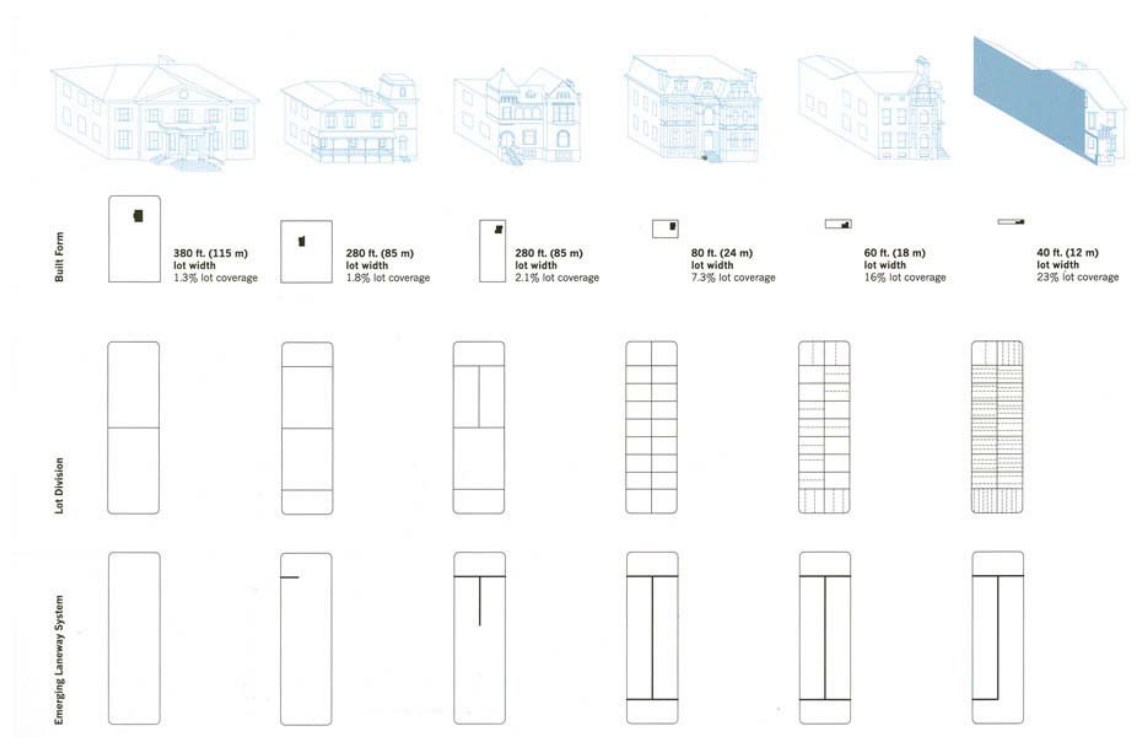


Fig. 1.1.5: Toronto Block Type Morphology and Housing Types (left)

The above image depicts the influence the morphology of the Toronto Block type had on the residential fabric. As the lots became smaller and further subdivided, the homes reflected this change by also becoming smaller. The housing types became longer and narrower and eventually caused for the semi-detached or row house condition to be born.

To accommodate the growing population of the city, an apartment boom occurred in the 1910s and 1920s. At this time, the walk up three to four storey apartment was both a highly fashionable and highly controversial housing type<sup>20</sup>. Some people viewed the apartment types as a ‘modern’ dwelling opportunity which lent itself to “*efficient, scientific management and employment of the latest domestic technology*”<sup>21</sup>. Critics, however, claimed that apartments were synonymous with ‘slums’ and could never be ‘homes’ for families and residents<sup>22</sup>. For the most part, apartments were seen as efficient and modern housing, resulting in many luxury block developments close to the downtown, such as Alexandra Palace, denoting signs of “*growing metropolitan sophistication*” value<sup>23</sup>.

Many residents who already owned single-family houses in lower-scale residential areas were concerned with protecting the value of their individual investments and felt that inserting apartments into areas with single-family dwellings would overshadow adjacent homes and ignore previous customary agreements, such as plot to dwelling ratios and set-back rules. The dilemma for planners thus became planning a city that could accommodate growth while still maintaining the value of individual small single



home investment<sup>24</sup>. The result was the creation of ‘residential districts’ that protected certain areas reserved solely for development of the single-family home and constrained apartment and other development to Toronto’s avenues and main streets<sup>25</sup>. In addition to this, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) was established in 1921 and took over the streetcar development that had begun in the city nearly 60 years prior. Progress and the expansion of public transit, as well as the addition of private vehicle travel and street services, aided city dwellers to be able to move and live in a home outside the downtown core while being able to travel into the city to work on a daily basis. At this time, the sprawl moved into the fringe districts and municipalities surrounding the city but prior to the 1960s remained in the area we know today as the City of Toronto; true suburban sprawl into today’s GTA did not occur until the 1960s and 1970s.

By this time, the emergence of main streets as transit and retail arteries had become a clear Toronto urban pattern. These original concession roads had now become the support system for the city. Although the built context of the main streets was typically unevenly built, the block layout, tracing back to the original grid development of York, helped to define main streets with a fine-grained sequence of typically compact, and continuous building. The emergence of neighbourhood patterns to the buildings along the city’s main streets can be seen – long and narrow lots, with buildings sharing a similar height and level of development, varying in building type, use and lot coverage, became the staple of the City of Toronto main street which bordered the residential single-family neighbourhoods that filled in between the main arteries.

*Fig. 1.1.6: Queen St W, 1931 (right)*

The photograph to the right shows Queen St W in its early stages of becoming a main street transit and retail artery. Small-scale shops lined the street which had become home to one of the many streetcar routes within the City.



## VERNACULAR

In a quickly developing and intensifying city, the emergence of patterns and norms is not constrained solely to the physical street grid or layout of the city but also occurs in the built form of the city itself. The term “vernacular” was originally used by linguists to describe “the native language of a region” and can mean many things such as “vulgar”, “the bearer of folk wisdom”, or “common”<sup>26</sup>. The term has since been borrowed by architectural historians when describing traditional forms of architecture in a city, town, or country<sup>27</sup>. According to the Vernacular Architecture committee of ICOMOS Canada:

*“The Canadian Vernacular are a class of buildings that are the result of direct responses to the daily physical and spiritual needs of its inhabitants. These constructions tend to be informal and are not self-conscious. Within each district, regional traits can be discerned that distinguish the vernacular of one district from any other. In its materials and in its form the vernacular reflects skills under the influence of local climate, geology, geography, culture and economics; while initially the ethnic origin of the builder plays an influential role, the vernacular is, in fact, constantly incorporating changes that are response to particular situations. The vernacular in Canada is a very innovative building discipline. It has not only mirrored the changes within each area but has also proved itself to be very accommodating even in so far as to employ materials of mass production.”<sup>28</sup>*

Christopher Alexander shares this notion of vernacular by adopting a similar usage for the word when he states that: “a pattern language is the medium of humane building design”<sup>29</sup>; a building that responds to the needs of the builder and community is the core idea of what vernacular architecture is. In Toronto, there are many different types of vernacular buildings. During a large portion of Toronto’s history, vibrant industry helped to shape the city – the resulting industrial buildings are a prime example of vernacular Toronto architecture. On a smaller, more fine-grained scale, the bricked semi-detached three storey middle class homes that housed the workforce of the city are a trademark of a type of residential vernacular building of the city. Many of these examples serve as instances of living tradition and the fact that they are still standing in the city show that we have a lot to learn from them, particularly in the case of intensification and building of the city<sup>30</sup>. In areas like 1960s Cabbagetown and Leslieville recently, they have been the backbone of Toronto’s gentrification.

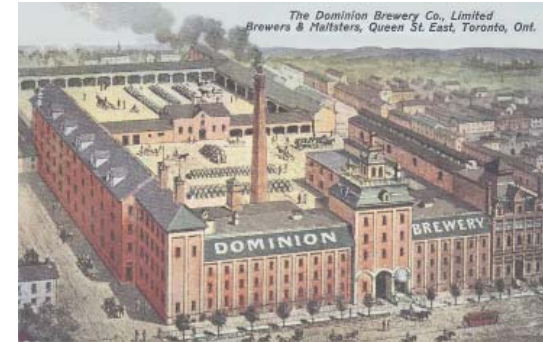


Fig. 1.1.7: Industry in Toronto, The Dominion Brewing Co., 1910 (above)



Fig. 1.1.8: Red and White Brick Middle-Class Homes in the Cabbagetown Neighbourhood of Toronto (above)



Fig. 1.1.9: Laneway now used for servicing and parking (above)

## TORONTO'S MAIN HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

The building boom driven by the intensification of Toronto's population between 1906 and 1912 established Toronto as a "city of homes". The detached and semi-detached housing types were successful in absorbing intensification in the city and became the standard of dwelling for speculators, developers and potential homeowners<sup>31</sup>. The Ontario Housing Committee reinforced this ideal in 1919 by promoting the family house as the physical embodiment of healthy family values, knocking down the apartment type which was becoming more and more popular in other expanding North American cities<sup>32</sup>. Not only was the single-family home highly promoted by the OHC, it was also a political goal: *"It should be possible for every Canadian family to have a convenient house substantially built, with sufficient ground to admit ample light and air and in more cases to provide a garden plot."*<sup>33</sup>. The vernacular of the single-family home evolved but managed to maintain the same fundamental ideals that perpetuated the popularity of the type.

As previously mentioned, the morphology of the Toronto block demonstrated the ability to accept more density in the quest to accommodate urban growth. This evolution, in turn, typologically resulted in the Toronto house<sup>34</sup>. Laneways were originally intended to compliment the large urban blocks to service the arteries in larger estates of the park lot nature. The development and scaling down of lot sizes that occurred during the growth and intensification of the city resulted in the use of these laneways in the back-lot servicing of residential blocks. By allowing for residential services to be constrained to the area behind the houses, Toronto's distinguishing textured streets were able to flourish. Ideal frontages on streets were able to be maintained and there was little loss of valuable outer frontages to servicing and parking due to the laneways<sup>35</sup>. Eventually, an alternative to the detached single-family home needed to be brought forth in order to make home ownership a more achievable reality. The semi-detached home, or duplex, became that alternative due to its ability to maintain the ideal attributes of a single family home while doubling occupancy, economizing lot size and maximizing street frontage; an ideal type to suit the needs of an intensifying city population<sup>36</sup>. The "Toronto Duplex" as described in Site Unseen as:

*"...long and narrow with a typical height of two storeys above grade. A party wall separates one family from the next; a single porch provides two separate entrances to each home. Sitting close to one another, multiple homes appear continuous along the street. The duplex fronts a street and backs onto a lane, resulting in distinct public and private facades."*<sup>37</sup>



Fig. 1.1.10: Laneway and Duplex Housing (above)

The laneway, which had emerged out of the formation of the street block, the urban lot and the associated duplex housing typology, together became an intrinsic set of components that were highly effective in maximizing density while maintaining established living ideals. During the course of the next few decades, little changed in regards to these components and their importance in the residential fabric of the city of Toronto.



*Fig. 1.1.11: Row of Toronto Duplexes in the Trinity-Bellwoods Neighbourhood (above)*

## **TORONTO'S PATTERN LANGUAGE AND URBAN STREET NETWORKS**

For over two centuries, the underlying rectilinear grid layout of Toronto has been divided, subdivided, and further subdivided until the resulting lots and parcels could not be subdivided any more. It is notable that little to none of the resulting properties, as well as most of the roads, were not created or built by any sort of government agency. As Mark Fram, an author of the book *East/West*, puts it: "*The map of Toronto may be among the proudest expressions of 19th century laissez-faire capitalism on the continent.*"<sup>38</sup> Somehow the rigidity of the grid set out in the 1793 foundation morphed into the resulting fine grained,

narrow frontages of the main streets that bound residential blocks which are then bifurcated by laneways, forming the unique and characteristic network of patterns that is the City of Toronto. This is the source of the city's "*Torontoness*" mentioned earlier.

A pattern of residential networks running in between the main arteries of Toronto can also be clearly seen. Christopher Alexander explains the structure of a network, in his book *The Timeless Way of Building*. He states that "*When we use the network of a language, we always use it as a sequence, going through the patterns, moving always from the large patterns to the smaller, always from the ones which create structures, to the ones which then embellish those structures, and then to those which embellish the embellishments...*"<sup>39</sup>. Similar to Alexander's notions regarding pattern languages, the components which make up the residential fabric of Toronto can exist only when all pieces exist together. When these pieces all exist at once, networks of residential areas begin to emerge; linked by main arteries, these connections result in the unique fabric of neighbourhoods which make up the overall City of Toronto.

As well as the growth of Toronto's street network, villages continued to be annexed between 1834 and 1914, and followed the same underlying development pattern or network as the rest of the city. During this time, Toronto saw a rise in residential developments that grew in between stretches of the main streets. These main streets were often also transit corridors and typically consisted of retail strips that mixed at-grade retail uses (which address the street and sidewalk) with residential uses on the upper two to three storeys. The buildings are typically long and narrow and are built right up to the property line, sharing party walls with neighbouring buildings. The main street Toronto buildings form a continuous street wall with little to no interruptions between buildings except where there is a cross street. It is this continuous blocking of mixed-use buildings that characterize the Toronto main streets. By the early 1900s, the city's area had doubled and the networked pattern of growth began to create the multi-centered, city-of-neighbourhoods and main streets that is evident today and can be called "*city-ness*" or in the local case, "*Torontoness*".

## 1.2 URBAN VIBRANCY AND CRITICAL LOCAL CULTURE

*Section 1.2 examines this issue of “city-ness”, how this impacts Toronto’s neighbourhoods, vernacular memory and its relation to urban vibrancy, and the impact of Jane Jacobs. This will establish the importance of city-ness, a quality that is being washed away by the growing condo typologies.*



*Fig. 1.2.1: Small-Scale building along a Toronto main street showing the unique critical local culture of that area (above)*

## CITY-NESS

What qualities give a city its unique character? If cities are built using similar spatial elements, how does one city differ from another in terms of characteristic qualities? The term *city-ness*, coined by architect and critic Saskia Sassen, can be used to describe the elements that work together to create the feeling of a particular city<sup>40</sup>. Certain spatial qualities, in conjunction with the specific configuration of particular elements together create the unique feeling of cityness – a distinctive sense of identity. In the article *Mapping Scales of Urban Identity* author Ricky Burdett, Professor of Urban Studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science, argues that cities are becoming more spatially fragmented, socially diverse and environmentally destructive at a macro scale<sup>41</sup>. As public agencies, and the private sector are driving change aimed at improving the living conditions of both existing and new city residents, Burdett argues that the changes being formally built could do more harm than good when it comes to the city's sense of identity. The changes that occur on a micro scale, often caused by the forces of the city's residents, are those that will have a greater and more positive impact to the improvement of living within a city and directly relate to the development of the city's identity. Burdett refers to the changes at a micro scale as 'petits projects', and states that they are what ultimately help define and improve the *city-ness* of the city<sup>42</sup>. Development aimed at the improvement of future living for city's residents needs to be made at a smaller, micro scale in order to preserve and improve such *city-ness*. The network of resulting 'petits projects' will strengthen and improve *city-ness* while allowing for the city to grow and change as needed with the residents in mind.

Understanding how patterns in cities work together to form unique networks of *city-ness* is important when trying to uncover which elements are responsible for giving a city its particular feeling. In Christopher Alexander's work he describes a way of viewing cities which is directly related to *city-ness*. By understanding the way cities work as such self-organizing networks, we can better understand how cityness functions and how it can be improved. A fundamental view brought forth by Alexander is relayed in his text: "*No pattern is an isolated entity. Each pattern can exist in the world, only the extent that it is supported by the other patterns: the larger patterns in which it is embedded, the patterns of the same size that surround it, and the smaller patterns which are embedded in it.*"<sup>43</sup>. This passage states that when you build something, specifically something in a city or town, it cannot be built in isolation. It must take into account the world around it, and also within it, so that these places can join together to form a coherent and whole city; a web or network of pieces that make up a vibrant whole<sup>44</sup>. *The Timeless Way of Building* attributes the wholeness and aliveness of a society to its own unique and distinct pattern, or pattern language as Alexander refers to it. In this sense, in order for a city to be whole, alive and vibrant, it must exhibit patterns of networks containing city-specific element which are only present in that city. When the city tries to accommodate for future growth by injecting larger and out-of-place initiatives, this hurts the city and weakens the connections between the existing elements working together to form the network of unique patterns forming the sense of the city. This is Toronto's problem today with the building of the recent gentrification of high-rise condominiums.

## NEIGHBOURHOODS, CULTURE AND VIBRANCY, AND VERNACULAR MEMORY AND VIBRANCY

In order to better understand these networks that form the *city-ness* of a place, we have to understand the factors that contribute to this feeling. Places, neighbourhoods, and cities are made up of networks that are more than just tangible material realities. These areas are founded on, what York University Professor Alison Bain calls, vernacular memory. In her article titled *Resisting the Creation of Forgotten Places*, Bain discusses the relationship between vernacular memory and geographical places while examining the narrative of selected visual artists who live, work and thrive in these Toronto neighbourhoods. Although Bain places a great deal of importance on artists as the catalysts for the improvement of forgotten places or neighbourhoods, the distilled idea behind what she is arguing is more important: “*Urban neighborhoods function as vernacular memory systems... A repository of shared memories and tradition that exemplify the character of a city*”<sup>45</sup>. When a city has forgotten places that no longer work within the overall network of the city, it causes the breakdown of the network of elements responsible for overall *city-ness*. In order to have a thriving, whole, city, the people in an area must share the memory of the place through vernacular memory and the simplest way of connecting with the vernacular memory of a place is to connect with the vernacular built form, or architecture, of that area. The problem with this, however, is that vernacular architecture is greatly undervalued today – the theme of the Vernacular Architecture conference, held in 1992. Although these buildings hold vernacular memory, they don’t have any other “big value”<sup>46</sup>. Commercial spaces such as storefronts in mixed-use main street buildings, have a tendency to be rundown and forgotten. The heritage or historic value that these building possess isn’t recognized because these buildings aren’t monuments or notable examples or architecture. They do, however, contribute to the unique and rich sense of community and *city-ness* that is brought forth by their vernacular memory.

“*Why is it that neighbourhoods with older, smaller buildings often seem more vibrant than those with larger, newer ones?*”<sup>47</sup>. Such a connection between older, vernacular buildings and neighbourhood vitality has been an important topic argued by many people associated with urban studies, most notably Jane Jacobs. She often argued in her work that when older, smaller buildings are demolished and replaced with large-scale projects, the small-scale vitality and life in those neighbourhoods gets significantly drained by the new larger structures. “*Successful urban revitalization is seldom about the one big project. More likely, it is about a lot of little projects that work together synergistically to create a place where people want to be.*”<sup>48</sup>. A study conducted and released by the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Preservation Green Lab corroborates Jacob’s ideas and states that “*older buildings draw more shops, restaurants, entertainment venues, {and} small businesses owned by women and minorities and jobs than newer neighbourhoods*”<sup>49</sup>. The study, entitled *Older, Smaller, Better: Measuring How the Character of Building and Blocks Influences Urban Vitality*, found evidence that supports Jacobs’ claims. When comparing neighbourhoods with small-building street corridors to those composed of skyscrapers, the study found that, on a per-square-foot basis, the smaller, older buildings have a larger concentration of jobs, business and creative-sector employment<sup>50</sup>. This study was not centered on preventing any new building from occurring however, but focused on testing Jacob’s long respected, but untested, philosophy of: “*diversity breeds vitality*”. The study concludes that older, mixed-use neighbourhoods are more walkable and vibrant; that nightlife is most alive on streets with a diverse range of building



Fig. 1.2.2: Mingling of old and new buildings in the Distillery District, Toronto (above)



ages; that older business districts provide affordable, flexible space for entrepreneurs; and that the creative economy thrives in older, mixed-use neighbourhoods. Older, smaller buildings provide space for a strong local economy; and older commercial and mixed-use districts contain hidden density providing for more jobs per square foot of building. The study helps give importance to the smaller, older, forgotten buildings that often become swallowed up by bigger, newer developments. Vernacular memory, vernacular buildings and diversity all breed vitality and life into neighbourhoods, contributing to the overall *city-ness* of a place.



*Fig. 1.2.3: Mingling of old and new buildings along the vibrant College St, Toronto (above)*

Although there is a discrepancy in how Canadians from different parts of the country view the history of Canada, there is a desire from many residents to commune with the past while they see Canadian architectural heritage as an asset to our cities<sup>51</sup>. While many of these older buildings may not always be shiny examples of perfect architecture, they are still vital pieces of the city. Jane Jacobs insisted that aged structures are desirable and vital for the maintenance of a healthy diversity within a city, contributing to the integration of the city's past with the present and future. The next section will focus specifically on Jane Jacobs and her ideals concerning neighbourhood vitality.

## JANE JACOBS

As already noted, Jane Jacobs was an American-Canadian journalist, author, and activist, most popular for her work in urban studies and urban planning. She began living in Toronto in the 1960s and during her time in the city, exerted a great deal of influence on the urban planning and urban affairs of the City of Toronto. In the 1960s and 1970s she initiated a re-evaluation of urban planning in the city through the way her critique of modern planning practices affected the citizens and municipal reform based city councils. Although she was not the sole cause for the advent of planning reform, many attribute her as one of the main causes. Her book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, analyzed the reasons for the ongoing vitality of cities and offered a critique of the impact of modern planning on that preexisting vitality. The book remains relevant today and many of the ideas that were presented within it have become common ideas within the City of Toronto's *Official Plan*.

*The Death and Life of Great American Cities* looks at the conditions, systems, and structures that must be in place in order to sustain a city with economic and social vitality. Jacobs examines existing cities to understand such structures and systems; how they work together in creating whole, vibrant networks within cities, specifically regarding urban form. Her approach goes past the surface effects of vernacular or historic forms, and looks at them through their functional performance in relation to scale, form, uses, and diversity so as to better illustrate their effect on the character of the streets and the makeup of urban areas. She narrows down four conditions that are necessary in generating diversity and vitality in a city's streets and areas:

- 1. The district, and indeed as many of its internal parts as possible, must serve more than one primary function; preferably more than two. These must insure the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different purposes, but who are able to use many facilities in common.*
- 2. Most blocks must be short; that is, streets and opportunities to turn corners must be frequent.*
- 3. The district must mingle buildings that vary in age and condition, including a good portion of old ones so that they vary in the economic yield they must produce. This mingling must be fairly close grained.*
- 4. There must be a sufficiently dense concentration of people, for whatever purposes they may be there. This includes dense concentration in the case of people who are there because of residence.<sup>52</sup>*

Jacobs argues that the importance of these four conditions and is the most imperative point of her book. These four conditions, in combination, effectively generate diversity but the absence of even one of the four will lessen the area's potential<sup>53</sup>. These conditions can be applied to existing neighbourhoods in cities that have become forgotten places, with the potential for regeneration and a resurgence of vitality reconnecting the neighbourhood to the existing network of already thriving neighbourhoods. Jacob's principles can be applied when examining neighbourhoods under threat of intensification by over scaled new buildings.

*Fig. 1.2.4: "...leave room for the corner grocery store.", Dundas St W (right)*



Jacobs further illustrates the immense importance attached to the mingling of buildings that vary in age and condition<sup>54</sup>. She goes so far to say that the aged buildings are needed so badly that it would be impossible for vibrant streets and areas to grow without them. When city areas only contains new buildings, it limits the types of enterprises that can exist there due to the high costs of new construction. Small businesses and local producers are automatically cut out of the equation when only new buildings are available because they can't afford a lease within the building. An intermingling of both old and new is vital to maintain, or in some cases, encourage, street and neighbourhood liveliness. As Jacobs puts it: "*We must leave room for the corner grocery store*"<sup>55</sup>. A flourishing neighbourhood has a mingling of high, middle, low and no-yield businesses. An area is not a failure because it is old, but rather, it is old because it is a failure. One does not necessarily mean the other. An older, run down building requires less income to run than one that has not yet paid off its initial capital costs. These spaces give tenants the ability to adapt old buildings for new uses which add vitality and energy to the sidewalks and streets of the city. The minor changes, adaptations, and new uses that are constantly occurring within aged buildings, tend to happen where city neighbourhoods or districts have vitality and are therefore responsive to the needs of humans, particularly the residents of that area.

By applying these conditions to the intensification plans and strategies of the city, it will ensure that these evolving neighbourhoods remain vibrant, relevant and a strong part of the network of neighbourhoods within the city. Jacobs also speaks to the unsuitable nature of calling a project a project, causing for it to be abstracted from the rest of the city and set apart from the neighbourhood it will live in. She advocates the reworking of the project, as a "*patch upon the city*", reweaving it back into the fabric of the rest of the city. By doing this, Jacobs states that it will strengthen the surrounding fabric as well, adding to the *city-ness*, vibrancy and vitality of the whole entire city.

## THE STOREFRONT AND STREET SIDEWALKS

The energy of Toronto's streets comes from the scale, mix of retail, residential and entertainment uses, and blend of people that live there<sup>56</sup>. In the late 1990s, the City's Smart Growth initiative surfaced, which directed its efforts at countering sprawl and making more livable downtown Toronto neighbourhoods as an alternative. Similar to the Toronto of Jane Jacobs, in the 1960s and 1970s, the 1990s offered a renewed interest in the existing neighbourhoods and buildings within the city; a push to understand their patterns, successes and failures, in order to better preserve and perpetuate them<sup>57</sup>. One of the patterns that contributes to the life and vitality of Toronto streets is the storefront – one of the basic units of main street building types. The Toronto Planning and Development Department describes the storefront: "*..all of Toronto's commercial streets have one component in common – the storefront. In terms of the scale of the urban landscape, the individual storefront is relatively insignificant, but in terms of the vitality of the street, its contribution is invaluable.*"<sup>56</sup>. The storefront adds vitality to main streets by giving residents a reason to populate the sidewalk and streets but is not solely responsible for this life. Rather it's the mixed-use buildings, pedestrian sidewalks, range of building types, styles and uses, and combination of residential main street dwellings, in combination with the residential neighbourhoods that they border, that make main streets vital parts of Toronto's city fabric.



*Fig. 1.2.5: Storefronts on Bloor St W, Toronto (above)*

Bloor West Village does a good job of maintaining an active streetscape, giving residents reason to populate the sidewalk.

According to columnist Don Gilmore's article entitled *The Death of a City Block*, Queen Street West has "always possessed a vitality that is essential to the city's culture and provides proof of Toronto's tolerance, hipness and diversity"<sup>57</sup>. After a fire devastated a portion of Queen Street's vernacular fabric in February 2008, new developments were slated for insertion into the existing built form. Gilmore, like Jacobs, suggests that the "hodge-podge" context of Queen Street isn't terribly clear but does, however, create a quality of vitality and energy on the city's street. Fearful of new developments robbing Queen Street of this character, Gilmore goes on to state that any the new developments need to respect the context around them<sup>58</sup>.

This brings about the question: can main streets maintain their character and vitality while facilitating growth and intensification along them? Main street fabric is quite vulnerable to redevelopment, primarily due to the ability for the street to maintain vitality while hosting aged and depreciating buildings. Gilmore takes a pessimistic view and argues that any efforts to preserve, or in the case of the Queen Street block, restore character to a street is too-little-too-late in approach, "the fire is a reminder of how much has been squandered"<sup>59</sup>. Gilmore further argues otherwise; intensification and redevelopment efforts must present a variety of mixed-uses, a mingling of different building types, sizes, and age, attractive pedestrian sidewalks, and residential uses, all to provide a steady concentration of people who will active the street at all times of the day, or night, making the street a vital and vibrant place of *city-ness*.



*Fig. 1.2.6: Storefronts on Queen St W, Toronto (above)*

## 1.3 WHAT IS VULNERABLE ON THE STREET?

*Section 1.3 looks at the issue of vulnerability in the city's history, catalysts and potential of change, and the current state of vulnerable fabric in Toronto. Vulnerability plays a large role in being able to establish where growth and change will occur within a city and will help readers understand why certain areas are being examined. This background needs to be understood in order to be able to move forward in exploring alternatives to the condo typology; an understanding of the city's past and present needs to be made in order to be able to plan for the city's future.*

### THE PAST

By preserving their historical urban streets intact and ongoing cities help to keep the *city-ness* of their place. An approach based on pure heritage conservation, however, does not take into account the need for the city to plan for future growth and future urban intensification. Focus only on heritage stagnates, and the vitality and progress of the city are stymied. Neighbourhoods become more concerned with the past than the future.

*"Preservation is now seen as being in the forefront of urban regeneration, often accomplishing what the urban-renewal programs of twenty and thirty years ago so dismally failed to do. It has grown from the activity of a few upper-class antiquarians... to a broad mass movement engaged in battles to preserve 'Main Street', urban districts, and indeed whole towns."*<sup>60</sup>

As a contrast to a heritage based focus, in *How Buildings Learn*, futurist Stewart Brand states that "Good obsolete design forces good new design"<sup>61</sup>; obsolete buildings bring forth the opportunity for designers to utilize existing vernacular fabric for new uses whose needs are represented by the changing city. The deindustrialization of Toronto during the 1970s brought forth an array of vulnerable, obsolete, industrial buildings in the core areas of the city. These large buildings on large sites gave developers an opportunity to take advantage of rare large land assemblies and use them for intensification efforts, often utilizing the existing industrial built form and transforming it into a new use. The main line of renewal was the conversion of obsolete factories into trendy loft housing units. At present, these vulnerable and valuable industrial sites have largely disappeared, so where are the new vulnerable sites of future development?

### CATALYSTS AND POTENTIAL

Larry Bourne, a leading expert on Canadian urban issues and Canadian academic geographer, believes that the key ingredients in explaining the process of residential intensification have to do with the several things:



*Fig. 1.3.1: Before, Distillery building under renovation to be converted into a restaurant (above)*



*Fig. 1.3.2: After, Distillery adaptively reused and turned into a restaurant (above)*



*If there is wealth available to generate a sufficient new housing demand;*

*The implementation of aggressive local policy framework that is directed at land use intensification especially regarding public transit;*

*The availability of a balanced pool of jobs within the central area of the city;*

*The absence of social and racial issues within the city.<sup>62</sup>*

If a city shows a desire for a growing housing stock, such as Toronto presently does, then the demand will result in a need for new residential intensification within the city. Along with new dwelling developments, the city's governing bodies must make a policy framework to ensure the recurring development and intensification efforts run in parallel with the city's concurring developments. The job pool available in the central area must also be diverse enough to provide jobs for residents who are currently or newly relocating to the city. This would push the city's needs for more efficient and better transit, to help alleviate private vehicle traffic and make commutes to and from work shorter for residents.

In the last five decades of the twentieth century, the growth of Toronto's metropolitan areas was characterized by decentralization and suburbanization<sup>63</sup>. The residential population of Toronto's inner core, or downtown, declined overall since the 1940s<sup>64</sup>. Bourne attributes this decline to the smaller average household sizes, rising affluence and the dramatic increase in the consumption of housing space per capita<sup>65</sup>. These reasons, along with the expanding non-residential uses of city fabric in and around the downtown core pushed residents out into the expanding post World War II suburbs. New housing construction continued in the city proper during the 1960s and 1970s but the supply was not enough to compensate for the continuing population loss<sup>66</sup>. The 1970s brought about zoning changes, density transfers, and density bonuses. Residential construction became more competitive and mixed-use projects became more financially feasible. Lands previously used for industry had become vacant and available and were used for residential purposes though the avenues of adaptive reuse, urban redevelopment and intensification<sup>67</sup>. The result was a shift in demand for more urban housing, especially from developers who could now make new mixed-use residential/commercial developments<sup>68</sup>. These trends continued and by the mid-1980s the population of Toronto was back up to the levels during the 1950s despite the ongoing massive expansion of the GTA.

After the recession of the 1990s and with demographic shifts in house and lifestyle preferences, there was a push for further reurbanization of Toronto that required a reexamination of social, economic and environmental costs of the previous development trends<sup>69</sup>. Development was no longer able to be made on a clean slate of land. It was at this time that the need to redesign, reuse, and redevelop the physical fabric of the city became evident<sup>70</sup>. Recently, over the last decade, the maturing of the baby boomers, as well as the changes in the basic household spending unit and labour force have been catalysts of lifestyle change which have driven up the desirability of living in the City of Toronto itself<sup>71</sup>. The resurgence in the desire for reurbanization has altered the urban fabric of development for Toronto. Due to the lack of vacant or empty land available for urban development, redevelopment and reconstruction of the older, already developed,



*Fig. 1.3.3: New suburban neighbourhood of Kipling Heights in the GTA during the 1950s (above)*

landscape must occur; a slow gentrification and intensification of older neighbourhoods.

There are a few conditions necessary to make this shift towards reuse, redevelopment and intensification. First, the political agenda of the City must argue for the redevelopment and revitalization of its city, policies, and frameworks should be set in place, in the form of an Official Plan, to ensure proper and cohesive development<sup>72</sup>. The City of Toronto has, over the last decade or so, created such frameworks within the Official Plan regarding reurbanization and redevelopment of Toronto city fabric in a very positive light.

Employment, lifestyle, and demographic catalysts also support the need for intensification of this type. The proportion of small, childless, two-earner, professional couples has steadily increased, causing a demand for higher-density, alternative, urban housing types. As well, the growing amount of single working professionals has affected the desire for urban high-density housing<sup>73</sup>. Recently, in the latest demographic evolution, couples have grown into families with children and the single professionals have become couples themselves. Toronto's population makeup has shifted and the suburban dream of past generations has lost its attraction. This recent shift is causing another change in housing needs, as more people are finding that small floor area high-density, condominium dwellings aren't ideal for the family. The single-family housing type is gaining desirability again but the limited stock of this type of dwelling in the City of Toronto proper is preventing a demographic changeover of the type accomplished by earlier generations.

Finally, the last catalyst for renewal and reurbanization to accommodate the above demographic shift, deals with transportation, commuting, and public transit<sup>74</sup>. Traffic congestion for private vehicles, within the streets of Toronto has been worsening steadily. As well, commute times for workers travelling from the GTA suburbs to Toronto every day have been increasing. These difficulties, in conjunction with the availability of diverse jobs within the city, have caused workers to desire dwelling closer to their places of work pushing intensification of both public transit and higher-density dwellings must be made in order to accommodate this evolution. It appears that a new type of housing that combines the ideals of the single-family house with the intensification and density abilities of the condominium is necessary to ensure the social success of Toronto's future.

## **VULNERABILITY**

As the City of Toronto continues to grow, plans must be made in order to accommodate the new imperative for rapid growth. Until recently Toronto has been known as a city of homes and neighbourhoods, with the primary housing stock being the single-family home in its semi-detached or detached form. Due to the inability for the city and the GTA to continue to grow outward and the new desire to live in the core area and the larger city proper, combined with the lack of new land available for building, single-family homes are in great demand, but there is little supply. This demand for city centre houses has driven house prices up and has made owning a single-family home unaffordable for most people. The result of such pricing out is that high-rise condominium developments have tried to supplement and even replace this need for new urban dwellings but have come up short. Condominiums still have a hard time accommodating families. Large sites are in relatively short supply due to the historical urban morphology of the city, and the only places left for these developments to be built are by replacing the

existing small-scale, fine-grain vernacular fabric of the city's main streets. These are the vulnerable areas and this vulnerability is framed by the very reasonable sounding urban intensification policy of Smart Growth promoted by the City itself and the Province of Ontario.

An initiative that surfaced in the late 1990s, the Smart Growth initiative was directed at countering urban sprawl in order to create more livable communities that were to provide opportunities for a more controlled urban intensification<sup>75</sup>. The initiative outlined a few core principles that can also give some insight into possible places of development vulnerability within the city. The first principle was to establish an urban growth boundary, meaning that there would be no new development allowed beyond an established point. This principle illustrated a need for new intensification efforts aimed at effectively and efficiently using already available developed land. Development efforts would need to shift from creating new uses on empty land to new uses on already serviced and built up land.

The second Smart Growth principle pressed the need for more transit-oriented developments with provisions for light rail or bus routes which would alleviate car dependency. The desire for transit based development creates more density on the existing Main Streets of the City of Toronto.

The third, and final, principle states that development should be compact and built to higher densities than is typical for suburban development. This principle is necessary, partially to accommodate new proposed transit intensification but also accommodate for the inability for the city to continue to grow outward forever. Smart Growth and demographic and lifestyle shifts have combined to generate a speculative atmosphere for urban development that is City oriented and continues to gain momentum as it slows in the larger GTA.

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- <sup>49</sup> Edward T. McMahon.
- <sup>50</sup> Edward T. McMahon.
- <sup>51</sup> L. S. Bourne. 1991. "The roepke lecture in economic geography recycling urban systems and metropolitan areas: A geographical agenda for the 1990s and beyond". *Economic Geography* 67 (3) (Jul.): 185-209.
- <sup>52</sup> Jane Jacobs. 1961. *The death and life of great American cities*, ed. William Dendy. New York: Vintage Books. 197.
- <sup>53</sup> Jane Jacobs. 197.
- <sup>54</sup> Jane Jacobs. 197.
- <sup>55</sup> Jane Jacobs. 197.
- <sup>56</sup> John Dakin. 3.
- <sup>57</sup> Don Gillmor. 2008. "Death of a city block". *Toronto Life*. May 2008. 58.
- <sup>58</sup> Don Gillmor. 61.
- <sup>59</sup> Don Gillmor. 52.
- <sup>60</sup> Stewart Brand.
- <sup>61</sup> Stewart Brand.
- <sup>62</sup> L.S. Bourne. 198.
- <sup>63</sup> L.S. Bourne. 190.
- <sup>64</sup> L.S. Bourne. 196.
- <sup>65</sup> L.S. Bourne. 196.

<sup>66</sup> L.S. Bourne. 196.

<sup>67</sup> L.S. Bourne. 196.

<sup>68</sup> L.S. Bourne. 197.

<sup>69</sup> L.S. Bourne. 186.

<sup>70</sup> L.S. Bourne. 187.

<sup>71</sup> L.S. Bourne. 194.

<sup>72</sup> L.S. Bourne. 194.

<sup>73</sup> L.S. Bourne. 194.

<sup>74</sup> L.S. Bourne. 194.

<sup>75</sup> Larry L. Lawhon. 154.





# 2.0

## TOOLS

This chapter introduces the tools used to analyze Toronto, such as mapping and cartography, urban morphological studies, and a typological analysis.

## 2.1 MAPPING AND URBAN ANALYSIS

Using James Corner and the *Agency of Mapping* as a reference, this thesis is based on a two-step process that first, develops a series of analytical maps, and second, develops a set of design guidelines and hybrid types, that have been influenced by the findings of the analytical maps. This section of Chapter 2 is devoted to the development and analyzing of urban maps that will be used in order to better illustrate the fabric of the city in a visual manner, as well as facilitate in the educated creation of hybrid typologies that will act as new forms of density carriers, in Chapter 5. The maps developed in this section are broken up into two sub-sections: City Wide maps, and Urban Morphology and Historic maps.

### CITY-WIDE MAPS

The first sub-section of mapping to be analyzed is the City-Wide Maps. These maps were developed to give readers a better understanding of the conditions present throughout the entire City of Toronto, specifically in regards to property values and the distribution of high-density residential apartment buildings around the city.

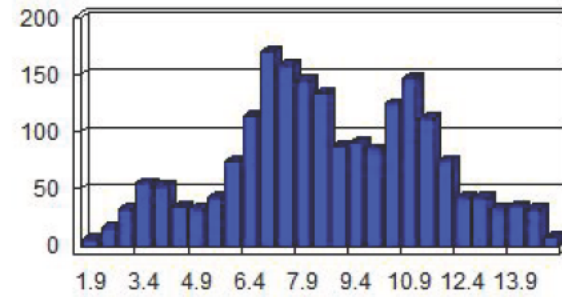
M-1 illustrates the dispersion of High-Density Residential Apartment buildings around the entire City of Toronto; data was taken from the City of Toronto's Open Data website and is the most up-to-date data currently available, depicting the year 2013. Each black dot represents one high-density residential apartment building, totaling 3,512 buildings spread out through the city. There is a high concentration of buildings in the downtown core, particularly in the Yonge-Dundas neighbourhood, the Bay Street Corridor, and the Church-Wellesley neighbourhood. Further outside the core, a concentration of buildings is noticeable in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood and further north around Yonge Street in the Willowdale and Newtonbrook neighbourhoods. There is also a fair distribution of buildings north of the waterfront stretching from South Parkdale in the west, all the way to the Distillery District further east.

M-2 colour-codes the high-density residential apartment buildings into height ranges using the building height data contained within the information from OpenData Toronto. According to this data, building heights range from 2m to 259m tall, with a mean height of 23m. Looking at Map 02, it is visible that most of the taller buildings are located around the downtown core of the city, and the buildings located further outside of the core are generally lower in height.

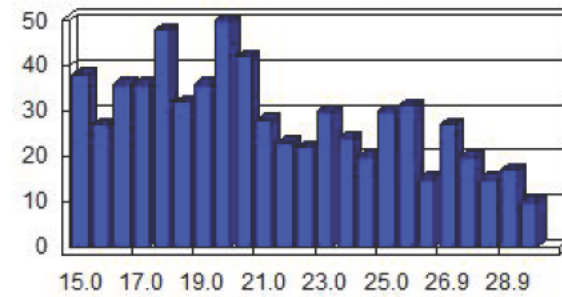
M-3, the final map in this sub-section, takes property value information from The Globe and Mail and represents it visually by neighbourhood. The values range from Flemingdon Park neighbourhood, the lowest average at \$225,695, to the Bridle Path neighbourhood, the highest average at \$4,087,600. There is a high concentration of properties that are valued at over \$1,000,000 in the centre of the map and, generally, the property values are lower the further you move away from the city core. When referenced with the dispersion of high-density residential apartment buildings, there is a correlation between the neighbourhoods in the downtown core that have lower property values with those that have a higher concentration of apartment buildings. This data corroborates the idea that condominium apartment buildings are more affordable than single-family residential dwellings.

These are graphs generated from the Maps created within the ArcMap GIS software. They illustrate the breakdown of High-Density Residential Buildings in terms of their height categories. The vertical axis looks at the total number of building while the horizontal axis looks at the building heights in meters.

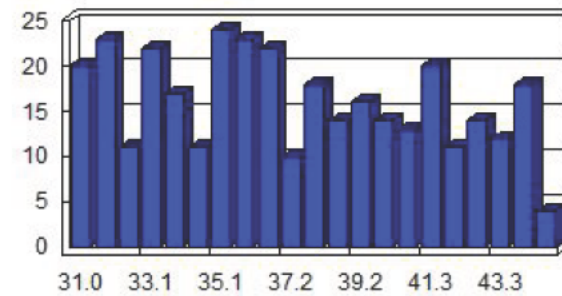
*Fig. 2.1.1: Graph showing Distribution of High-Density Residential Buildings from 0m - 15m in Height (right)*



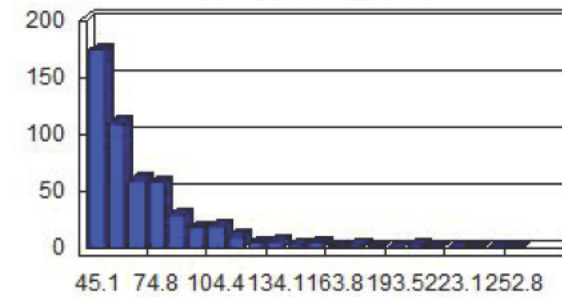
*Fig. 2.1.2: Graph showing Distribution of High-Density Residential Buildings from 15.1m - 30m in Height (right)*



*Fig. 2.1.3: Graph showing Distribution of High-Density Residential Buildings from 30.1m - 45m in Height (right)*

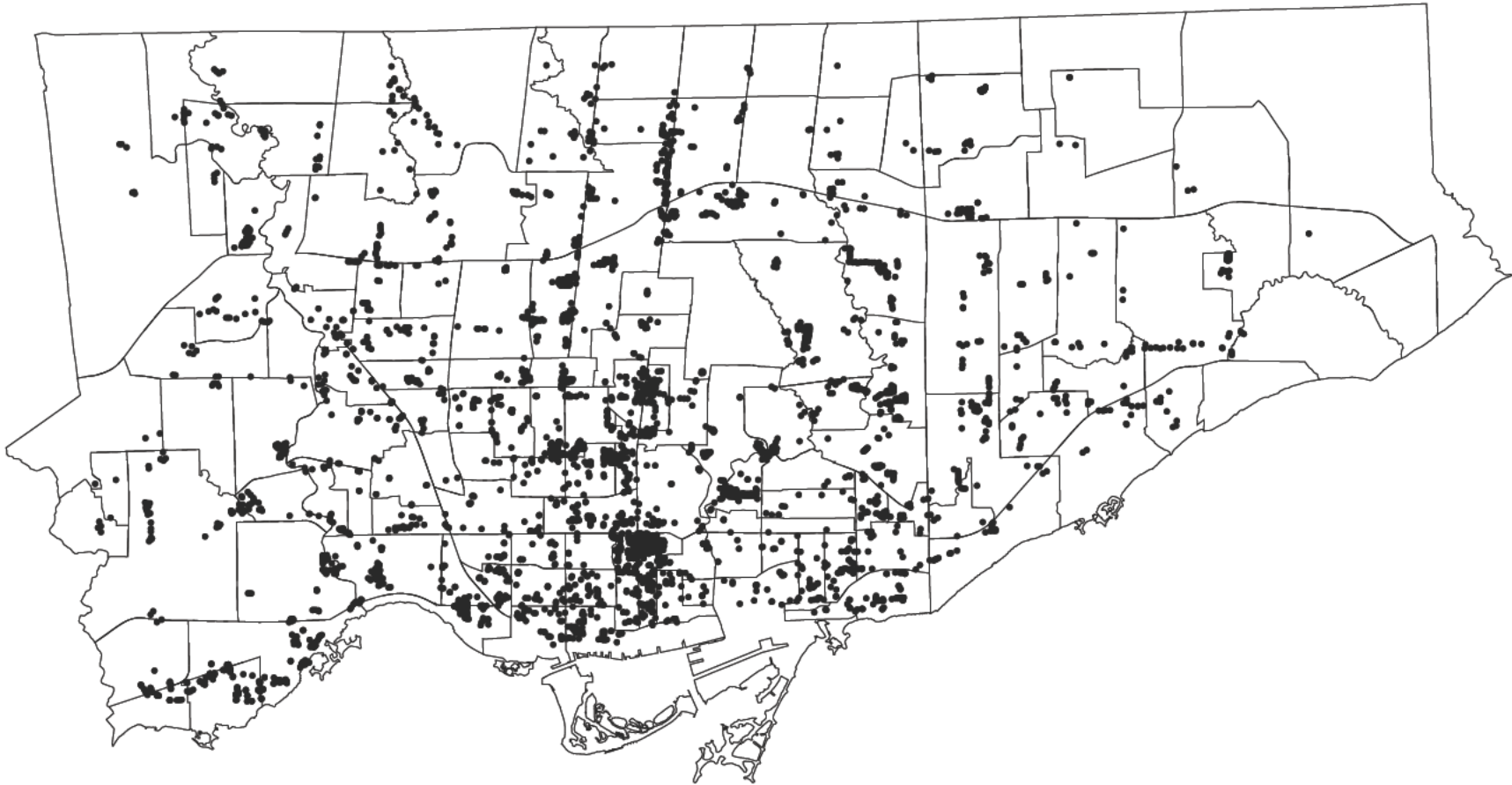


*Fig. 2.1.4: Graph showing Distribution of High-Density Residential Buildings over 45.1m in Height (right)*



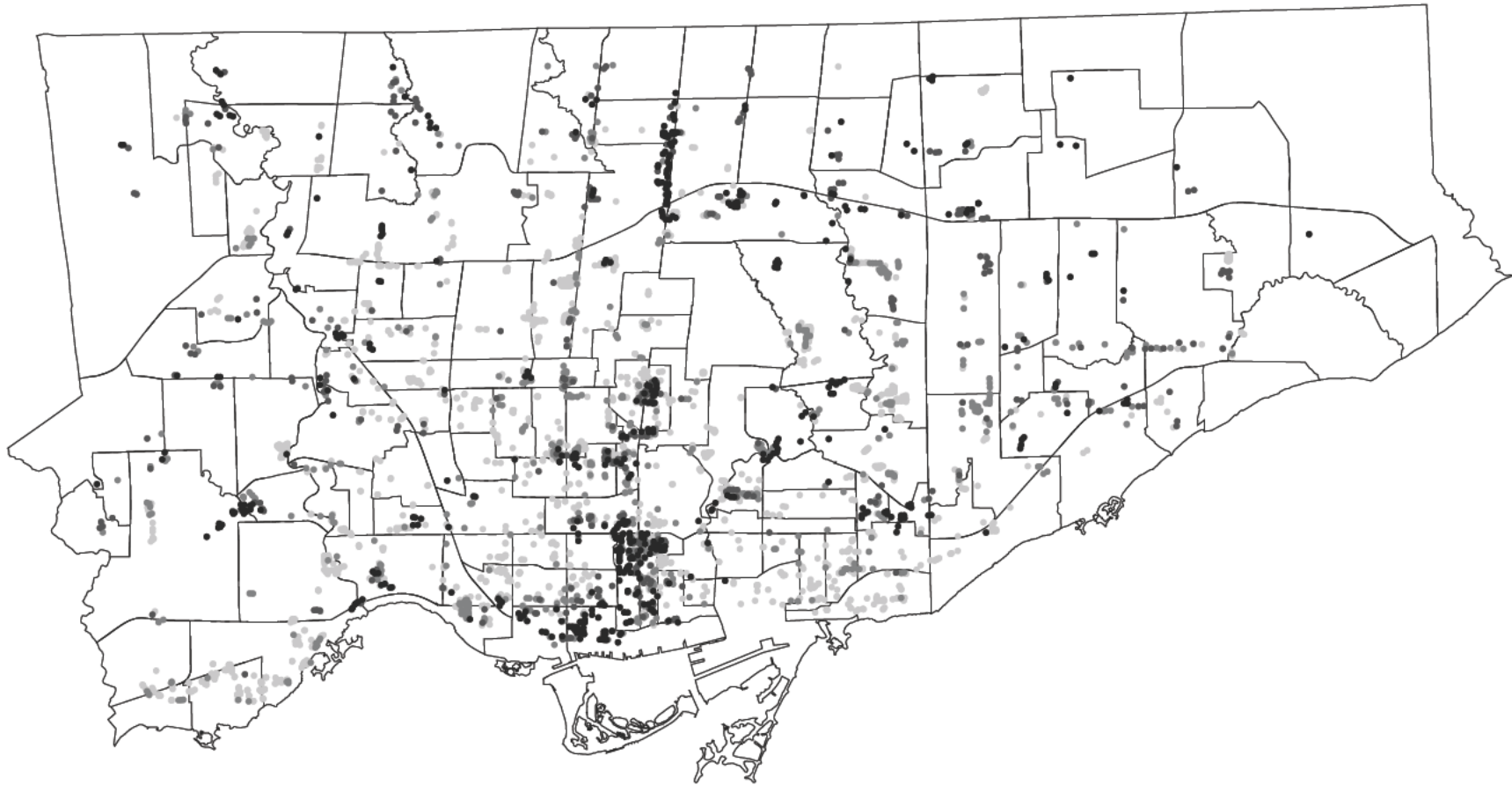
## M-1 HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

This map shows the dispersion of the High-Density Residential buildings in the GTA. The majority of buildings are located within the downtown boundary of the city or along main transportation routes, such as the subway line.



## M-2 HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS BY HEIGHT

This map shows the dispersion of the High-Density Residential buildings in the GTA, and is color-coded by height. It is important to note that most of the highest buildings are located along the subway line or in the downtown core.



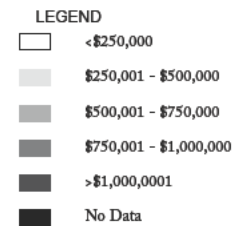
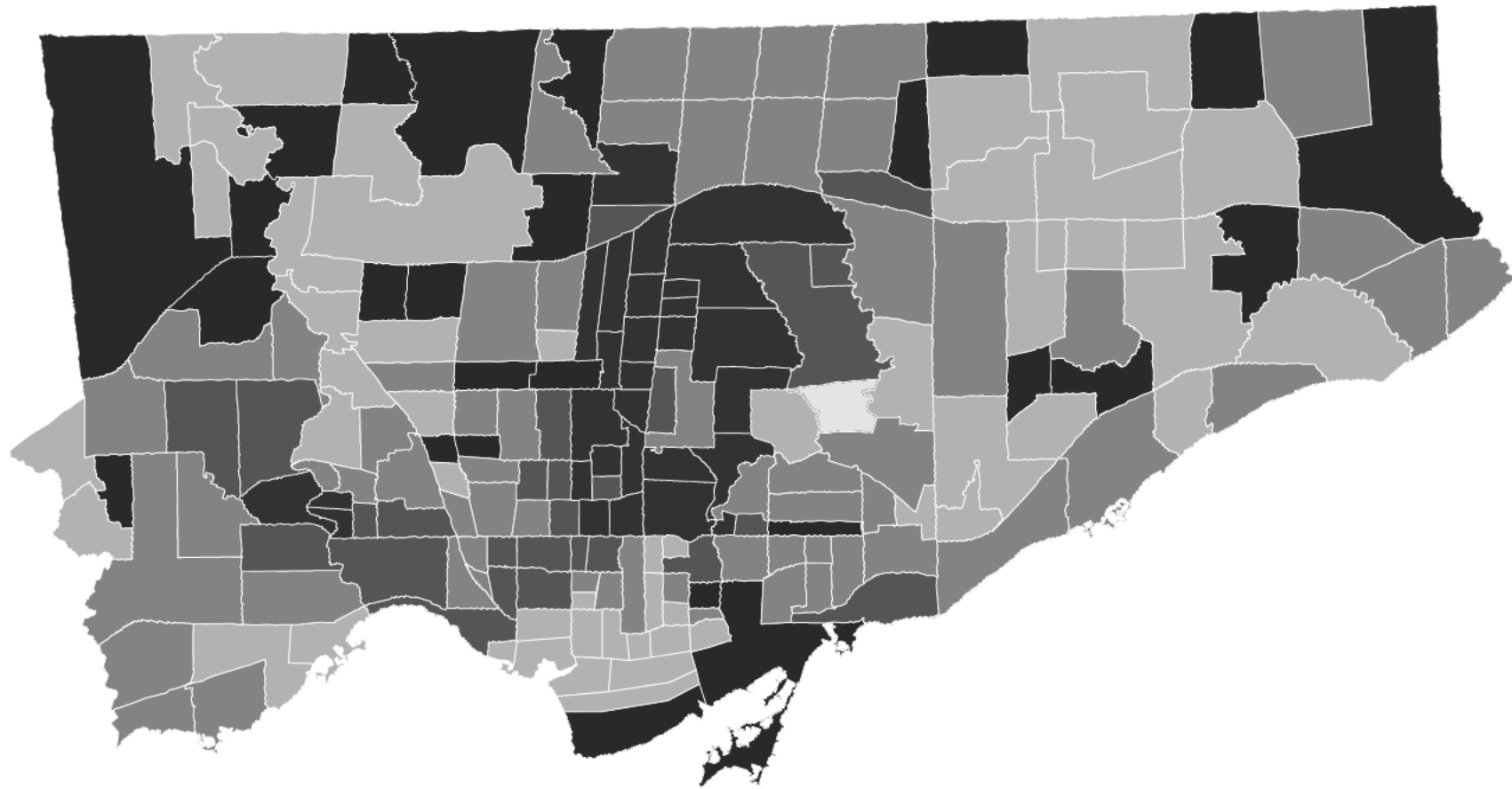
### LEGEND

- 0m - 15m
- 15.1m - 30m
- 30.1m - 45m
- 45.1m - 65m

### M-3

## PROPERTY VALUES BY NEIGHBOURHOOD

Here we see the correlation between property values and neighbourhoods. Many of the neighbourhoods with higher property values are those that contain a high percentage of the single-family housing typology, which are highly desirable but of a finite stock.



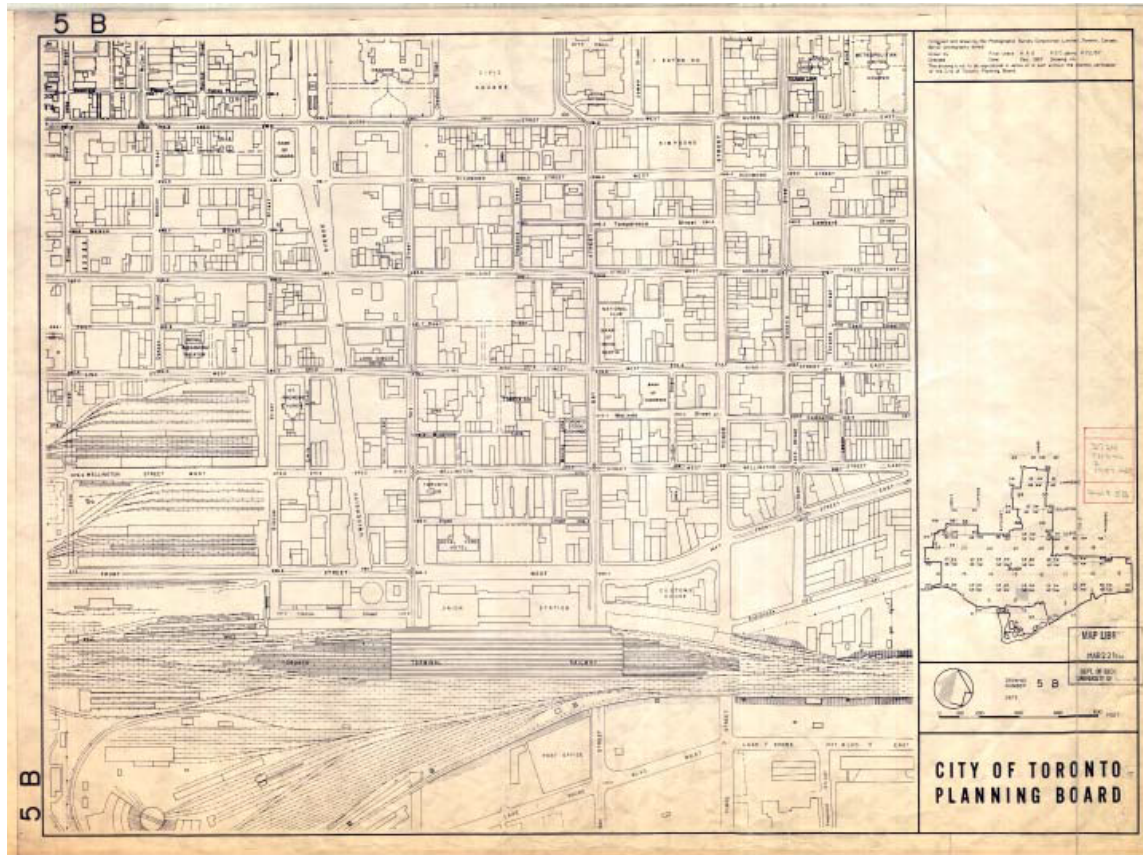
## MORPHOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL MAPS

The second sub-section of mapping to be analyzed is the Morphological and Historical Maps. These maps were developed as study to examine the changing city fabric over the course of the last 50 years. Historic Building Footprint Data maps were obtained and scanned from the University of Toronto's Mapping and Data library, dating from 1976, 1981, 1990 and 2000, and Building Footprint Data from 2013 was obtained from the OpenData Toronto website. Two data sites and one thesis site were chosen to be analyzed. The areas of Dundas St West, between University Ave and Yonge St, and King St West, between Bathurst St and Spadina Ave, were examined as preliminary data sites – used to enrich the overall examination of Toronto city fabric. These preliminary data sites were chosen as examples of city fabric that had experienced a wide variety of change over the last 50 years in hopes of examining the catalysts of change and helping to determine the vulnerability of city fabric. The third site of the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood, focusing on Dundas St West between Bathurst St and Ossington St, was chosen based on its relatively unchanging fabric with high potential for gentrification, high desire of people wanting to live there, and potential risk of densification; this will be the site of the final design portion of the thesis.

After each site was scanned and traced, it was then analyzed based on how much of the building footprint fabric had changed; new building fabric that replaced other buildings, areas in which a building was demolished and but remained vacant, and parking lot sites were noted for each year. A graph denoting the total percentage of new building, measured in terms of square meters of building footprint in comparison to the total potential buildable area, measured in square meters of site, was created to visually represent the percentage of new change that area had experienced at a ground or building footprint level. From there, basic catalysts of change were examined in the preliminary data sites in order to try and explain the reason behind the large amount of changing fabric. These catalysts were looked at through a sociological lens, with larger building projects, and cultural projects and attractions, being the core types of catalysts.

Maps M-4 to M-13 illustrate that both King St West and Dundas St West have changed dramatically over the last 50 years within the areas looked at. Catalysts in the King St area were mostly due to the deindustrialization of the fabric in that area during the 1970s, causing for the emergence of larger building types on these larger sites. These large sites, unlike most of the existing vernacular building sites which are much smaller in size, allowed for larger buildings to be built on the site without the need for a developer to purchase more than one parcel of land. This has made the area vulnerable to the buying and selling of large parcels and ultimately causing for a large changeover of buildings on these sites, corroborated by the mapped findings. However, this area has managed to retain a fair amount of its smaller-grain vernacular fabric in between the buildings that have been newly built over 2 or 3 different times. The percentage of new building has been increasing and has reached a high point in the most recent 2013 map, showing that the area is steadily under demand and that there is value to properties in that area. Dundas St West, on the other hand, was primarily influenced by the growth of Ryerson and the erection of the Eaton in the earlier years of the maps. Smaller sites were amalgamated into larger ones and therefore had bigger buildings put on them in the later years analyzed; the percentage of new building was quite large after the Eaton Centre had been built, but after that the percentage drastically reduced. the erection of the Eaton in the earlier years of the maps. Smaller sites were amalgamated into larger ones and therefore had bigger

buildings put on them in the later years analyzed; the percentage of new building was quite large after the Eaton Centre had been built, but after that the percentage drastically reduced.



*Fig. 2.1.5: Scanned Map of King Street from 1967, from University of Toronto Mapping and Data Library (above)*

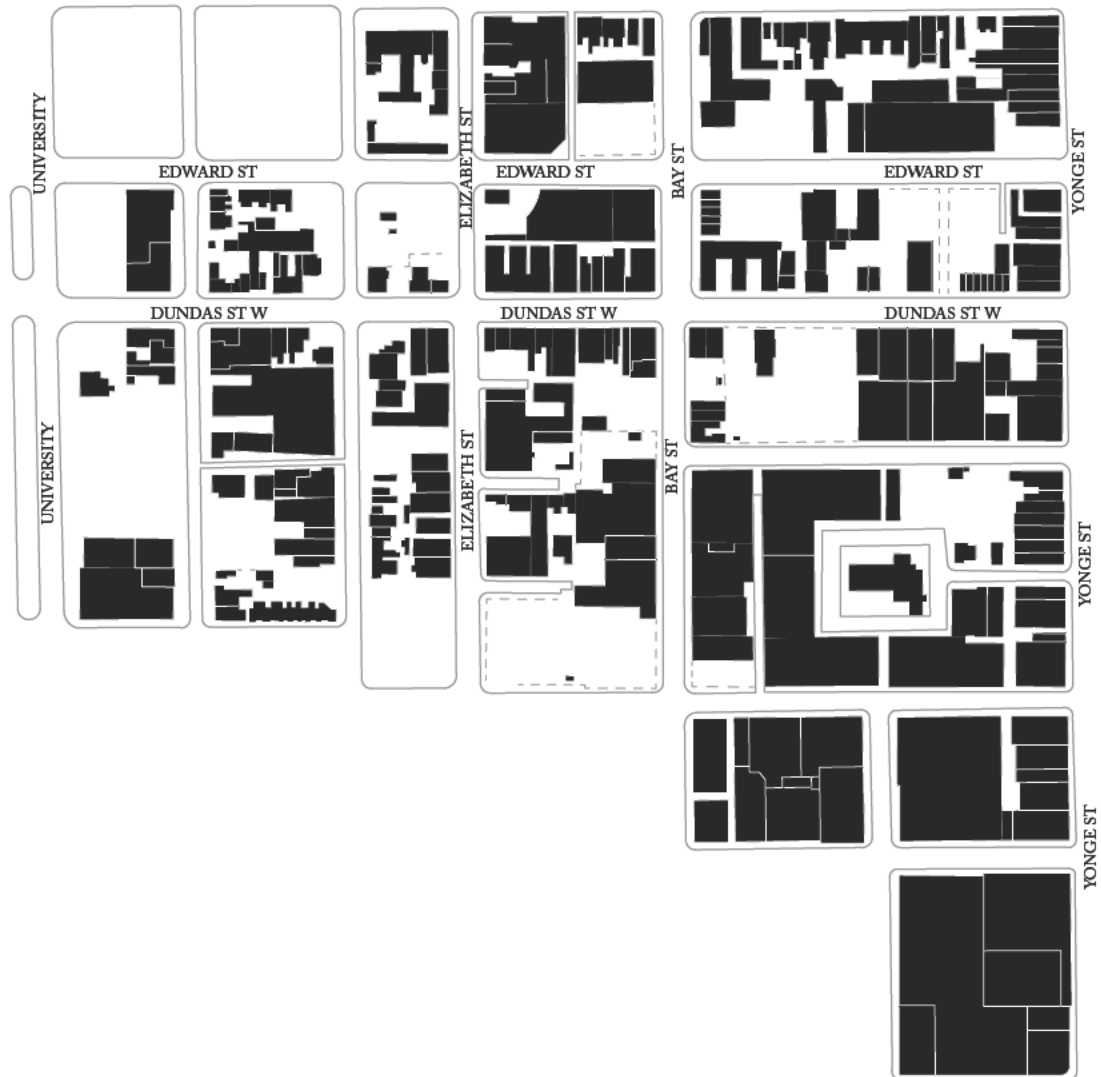
Historical maps obtained from the, University of Toronto, were instrumental in being able to properly understand the morphology of city fabric. These maps illustrated not only the building footprints, but also streets, laneways, and, on later maps, the building parcels.



# M-4

## DUNDAS ST W - 1967

This map begins the set of Morphological study maps. Here we look at a figure ground of Dundas St W in 1967. While some of the fabric shows larger parcels of building, the majority of the fabric is still small-scale.



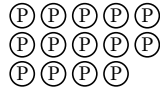
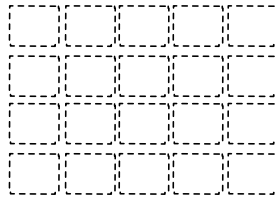
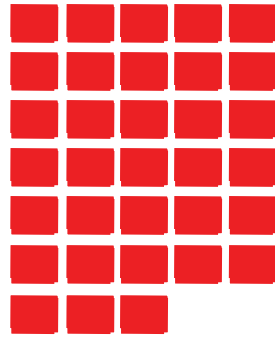
- LEGEND**
- KING ST W Street Name
  - PARCELLE Feature
  - Ⓟ Parking
  - Building
  - New Building
  - Demolished Building
  - Laneway/Path/Fence

# M-5

## DUNDAS ST W - 1981

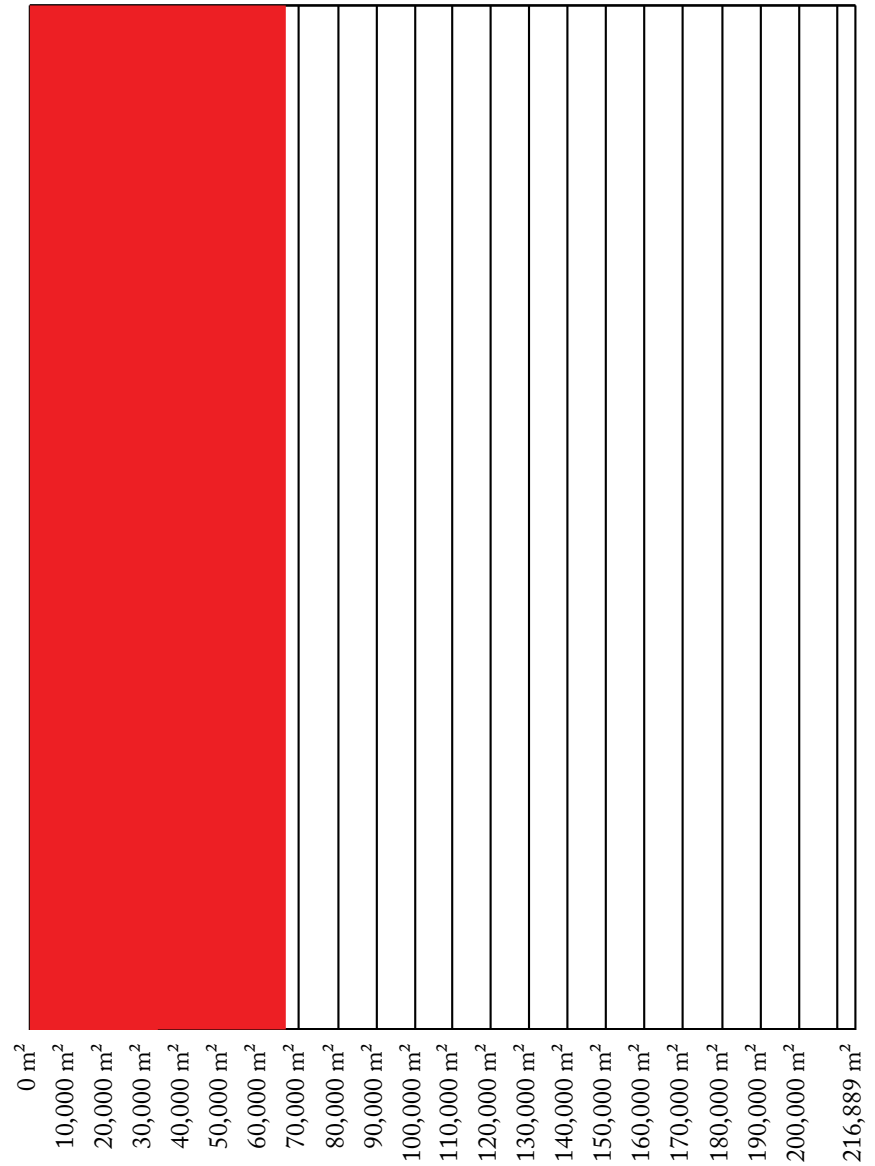
Here is the same section of Dundas St W but this time in 1981. It is interesting to note that 33 new buildings have been constructed, 20 sites have had buildings demolished but are left unused, and nearly a third of the site area contains new buildings. A huge catalyst to this change was the construction of the Eaton Centre.





The above diagram depicts change in the number of new building sites (33), number of demolished buildings sitting on a vacant sites (20), and number of parking lots (14) from the previous mapping date.

The graph to the right shows the amount of new buildings, in terms of foot print area, in relation to total buildable area within the site for the 1981 map.

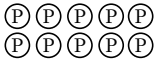


# M-6

## DUNDAS ST W - 1990

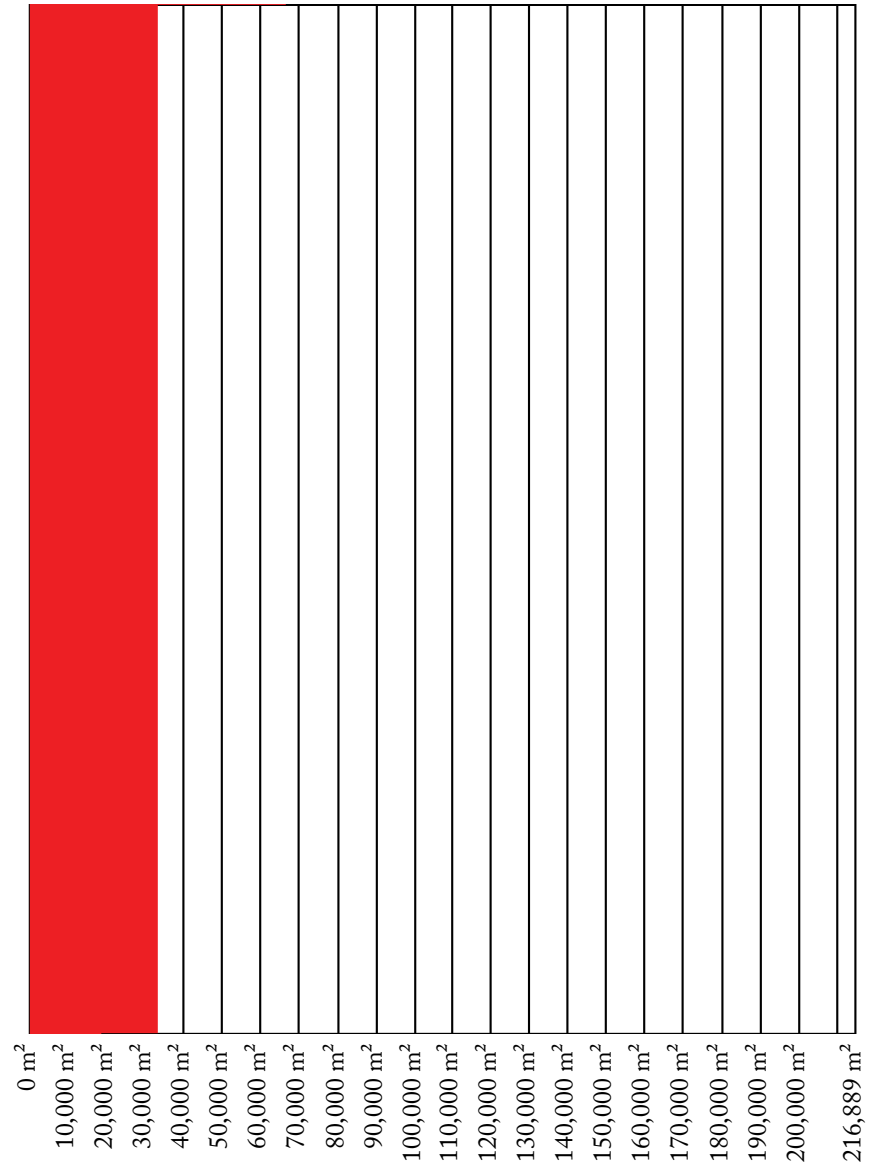
Here is the same section of Dundas St W but this time in 1990. It is easy to see that this map doesn't contain as much change to the building fabric as the previous map. Here only 13 new buildings have been constructed and only about 2% of site area fabric is new.





The above diagram depicts change in the number of new building sites (13), and number of parking lots (10) from the previous mapping date.

The graph to the right shows the amount of new buildings, in terms of foot print area, in relation to total buildable area within the site for the 1990 map.

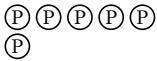


# M-7

## DUNDAS ST W - 2000

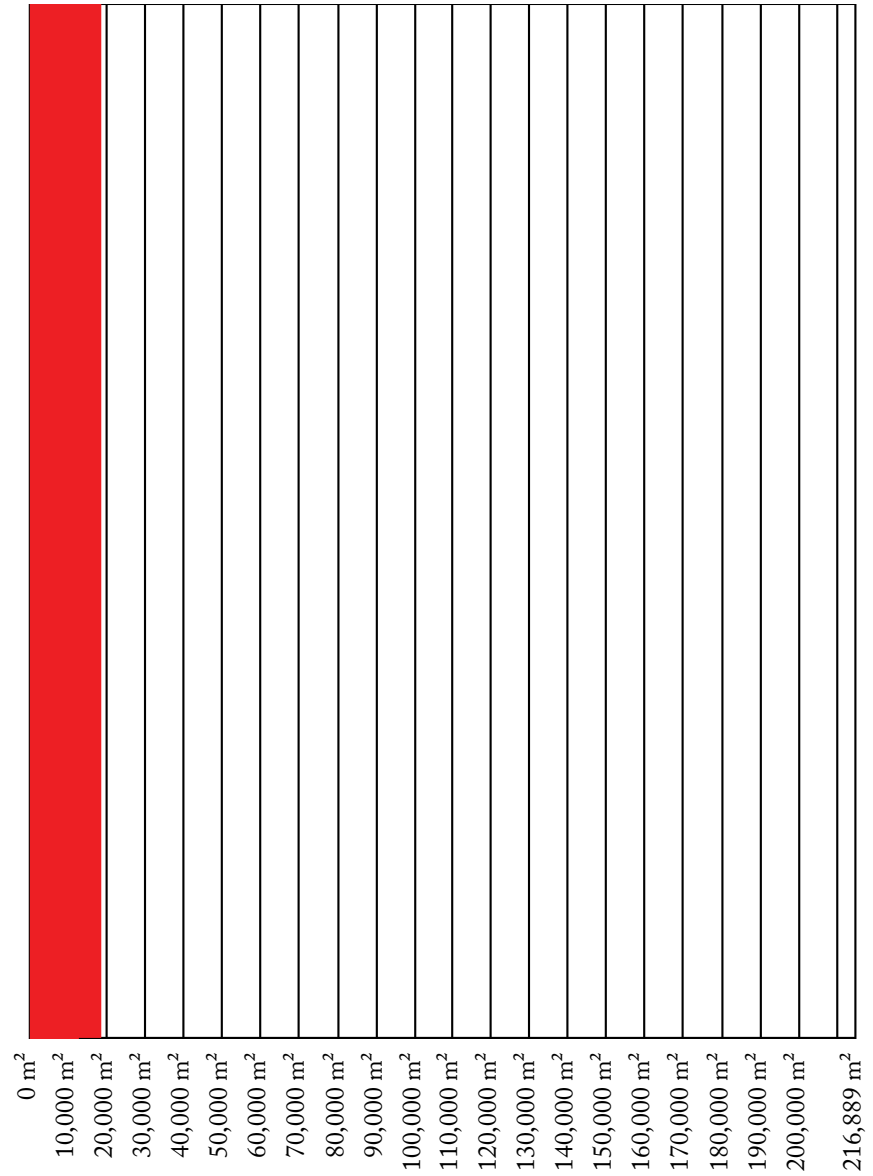
Here is the same section of Dundas St W but this time in 2000. It is easy to see that this map doesn't contain even less change to the building fabric with only 4 new buildings and under 1% of total fabric change. The boom of building from the Eaton Centre has worn off by this point.





The above diagram depicts change in the number of new building sites (4), and number of parking lots (6) from the previous mapping date.

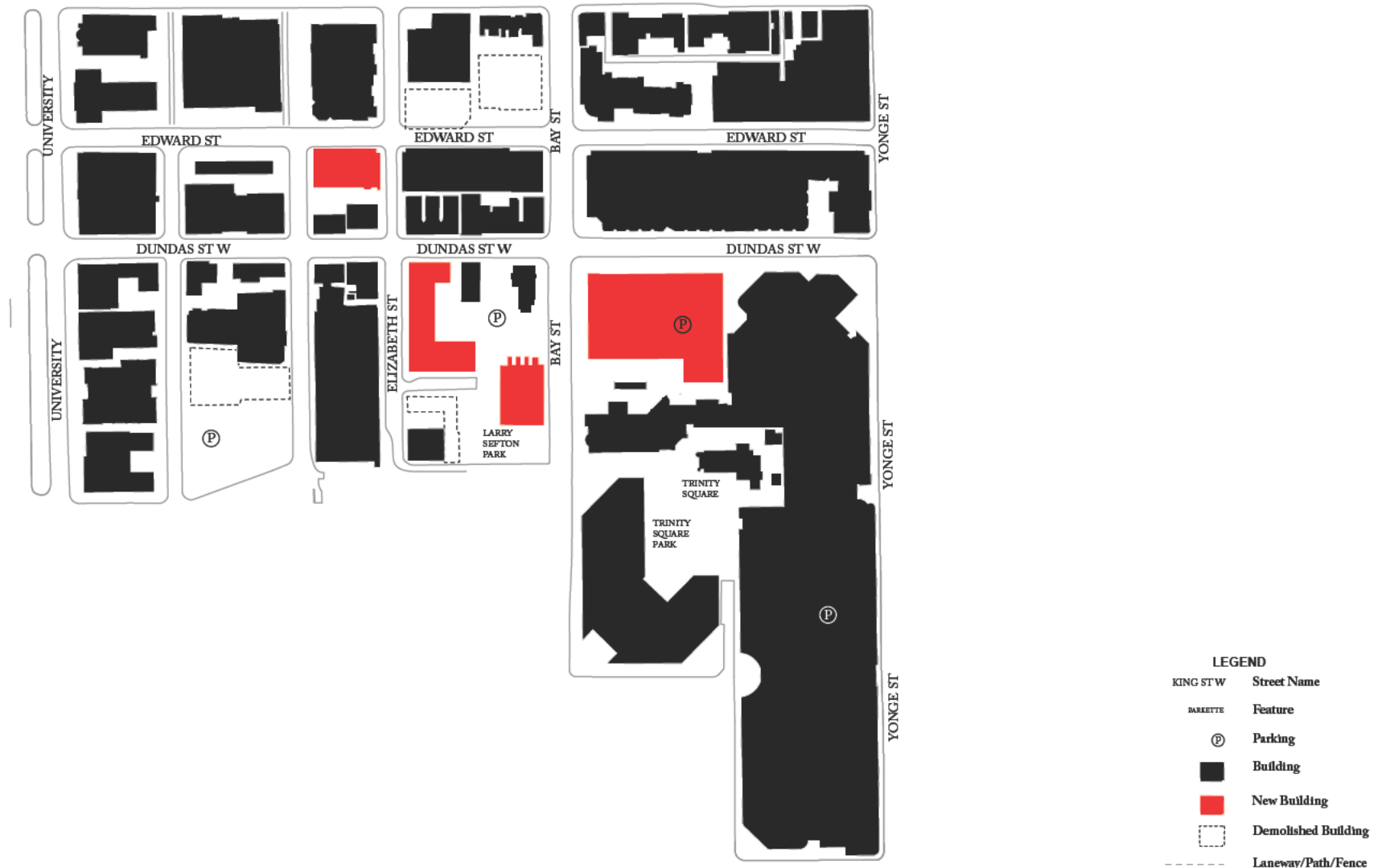
The graph to the right shows the amount of new buildings, in terms of foot print area, in relation to total buildable area within the site for the 2000 map.



# M-8

## DUNDAS ST W - 2013

Here is the same section of Dundas St W but this time in 2013. Again, this map contains very little change from the previous. It is interesting to now note how much the fabric has changed since 1967. The small-grain parcels that once dominated the area have almost completely been replaced by large-scale buildings on large parcels.

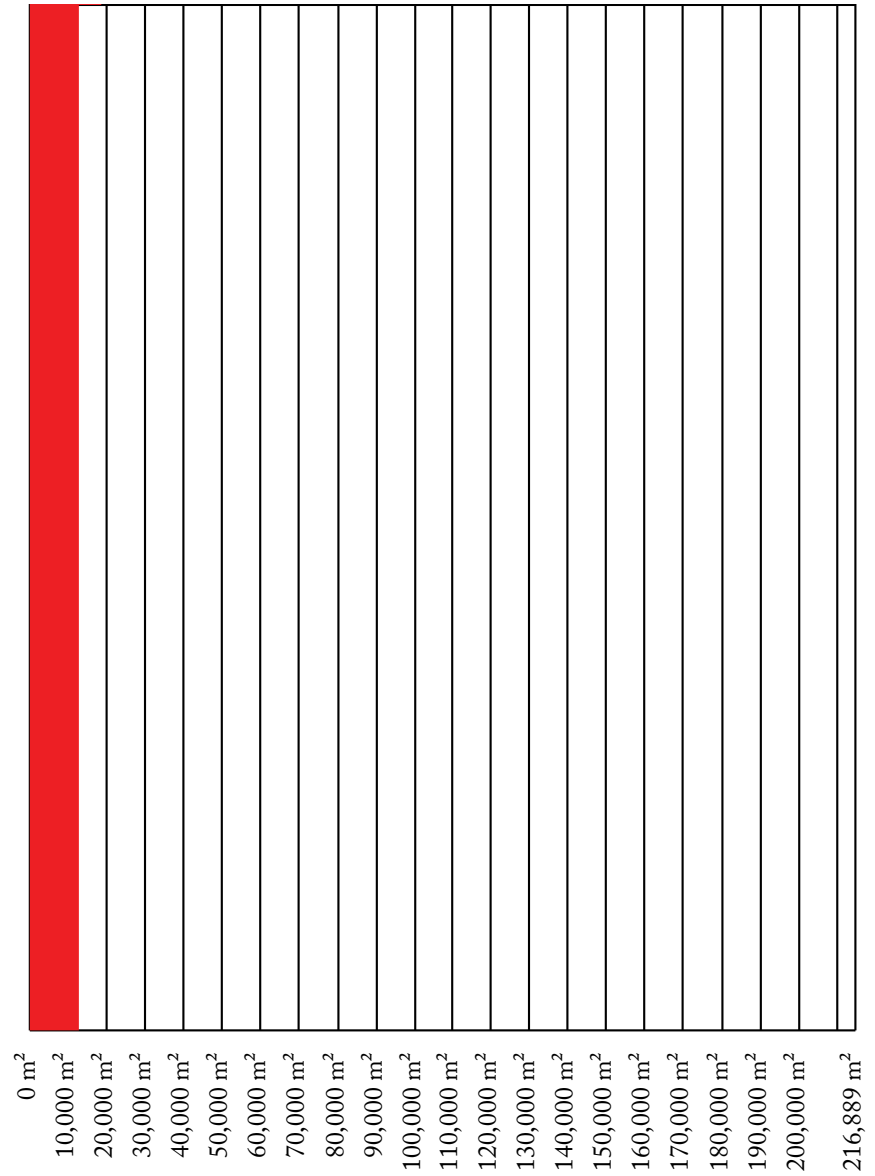






The above diagram depicts change in the number of new building sites (5), and number of parking lots (3) from the previous mapping date.

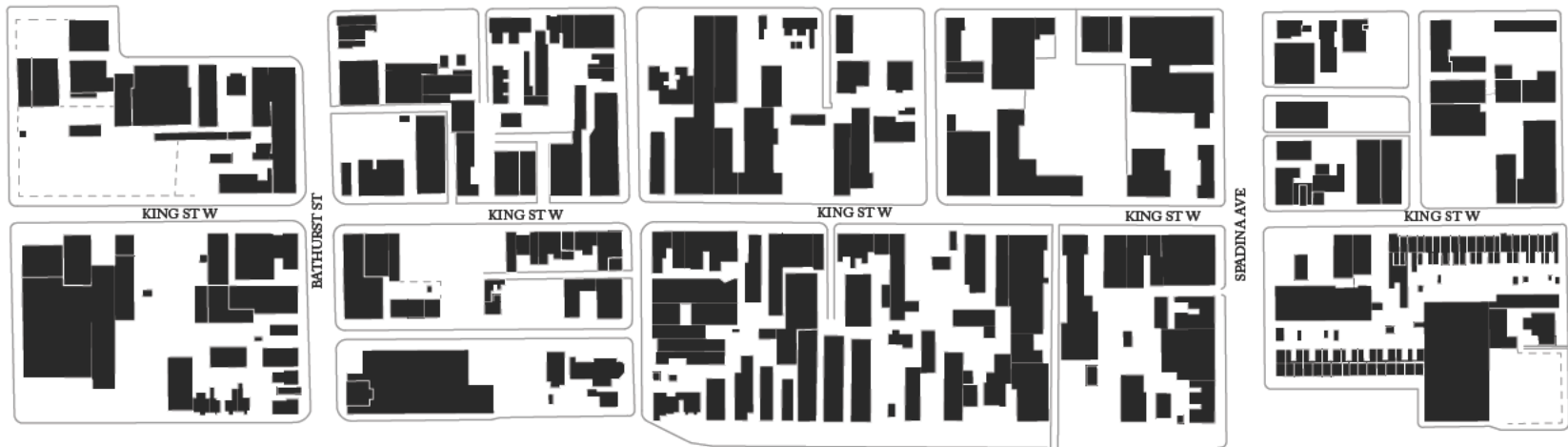
The graph to the right shows the amount of new buildings, in terms of foot print area, in relation to total buildable area within the site for the 2013 map.



# M-9

## KING ST W - 1967

This map begins the set second of Morphological study maps. Here we look at a figure ground of King St W in 1967. While some of the fabric shows larger parcels of building, the majority of the fabric is still small-scale.



- LEGEND**
- KING ST W Street Name
  - BARRETTTE Feature
  - Ⓟ Parking
  - Building
  - New Building
  - ⋯ Demolished Building
  - Laneway/Path/Fence



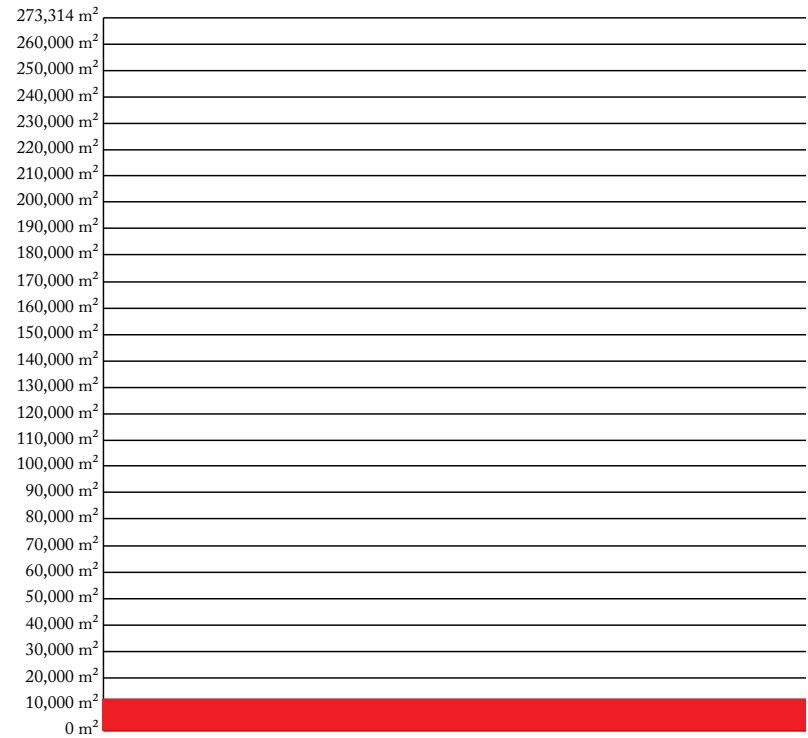
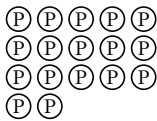
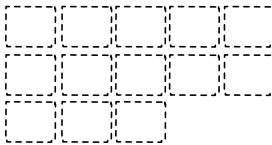
# M-10

## KING ST W - 1981

Here is the same section of King St W but this time in 1981. Unlike the Dundas St map from this time, here we see only a few small changes such as 8 new buildings, 13 vacant sites, and under 1% total site area change.



- LEGEND**
- KING ST W Street Name
  - BARRETTTE Feature
  - (P) Parking
  - Building
  - New Building
  - Demolished Building
  - Laneway/Path/Fence



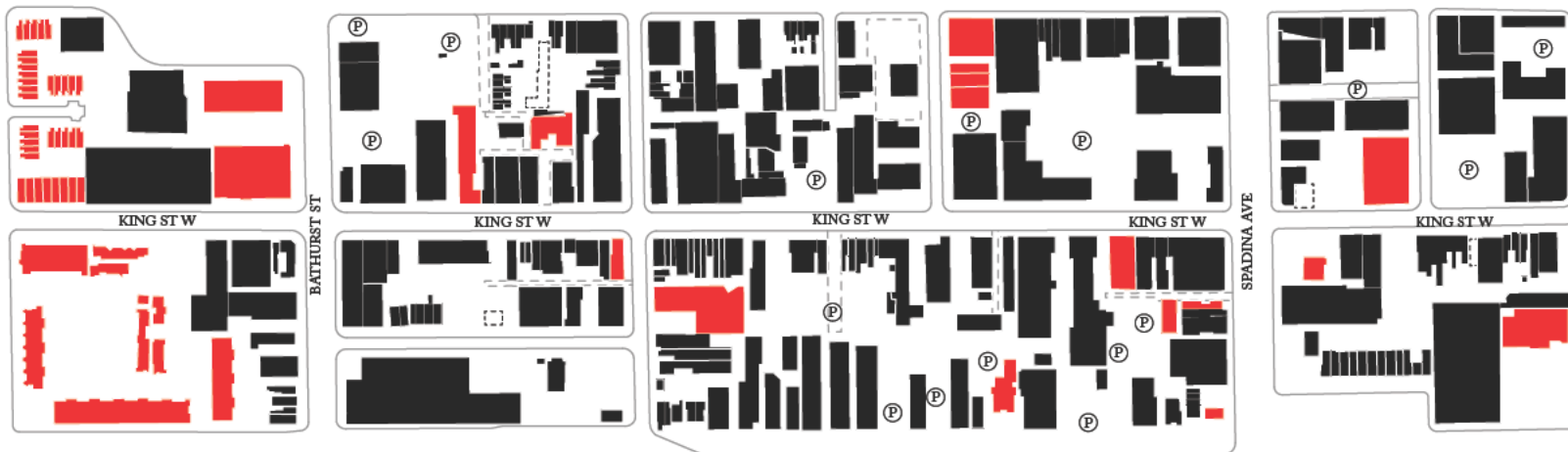
The above diagram depicts change in the number of new building sites (8), number of demolished buildings siting on a vacant sites (13), and number of parking lots (17) from the previous mapping date.

The graph to the right shows the amount of new buildings, in terms of foot print area, in relation to total buildable area within the site for the 1981 map.

# M-11

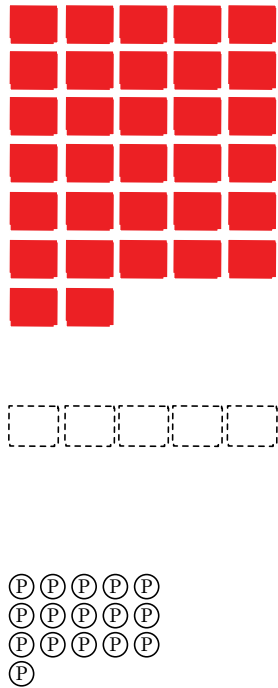
## KING ST W - 1990

Here is the same section of King St W but this time in 1990. Now, it is evident that there has been slightly more change from the previous map to this one. There are 32 new buildings but many are still smaller-scale in footprint.



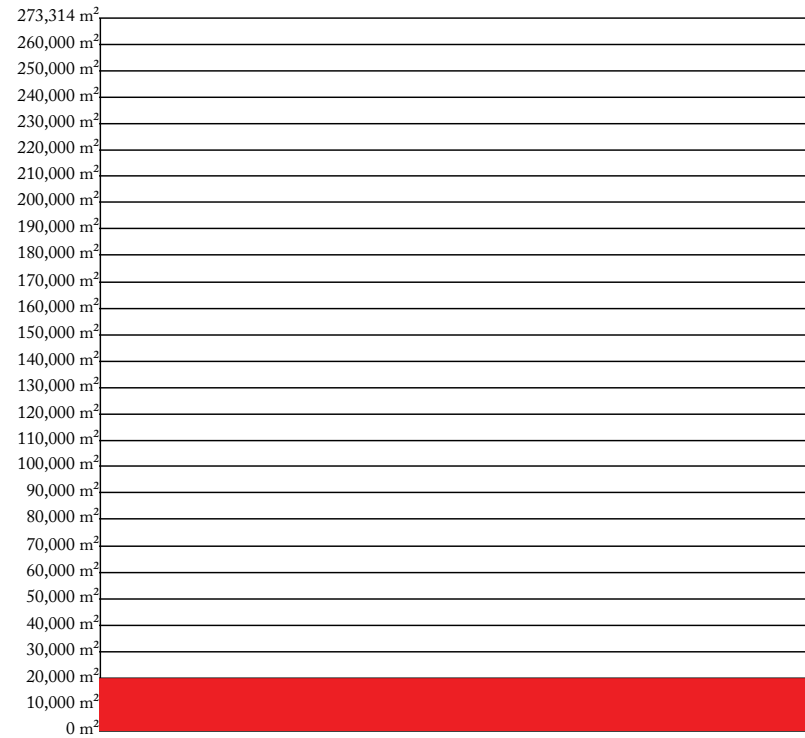
**LEGEND**

KING ST W	Street Name
BARRETTTE	Feature
(P)	Parking
■	Building
■	New Building
---	Demolished Building
---	Laneway/Path/Fence



The above diagram depicts change in the number of new building sites (32), number of demolished buildings sitting on a vacant sites (5), and number of parking lots (16) from the previous mapping date.

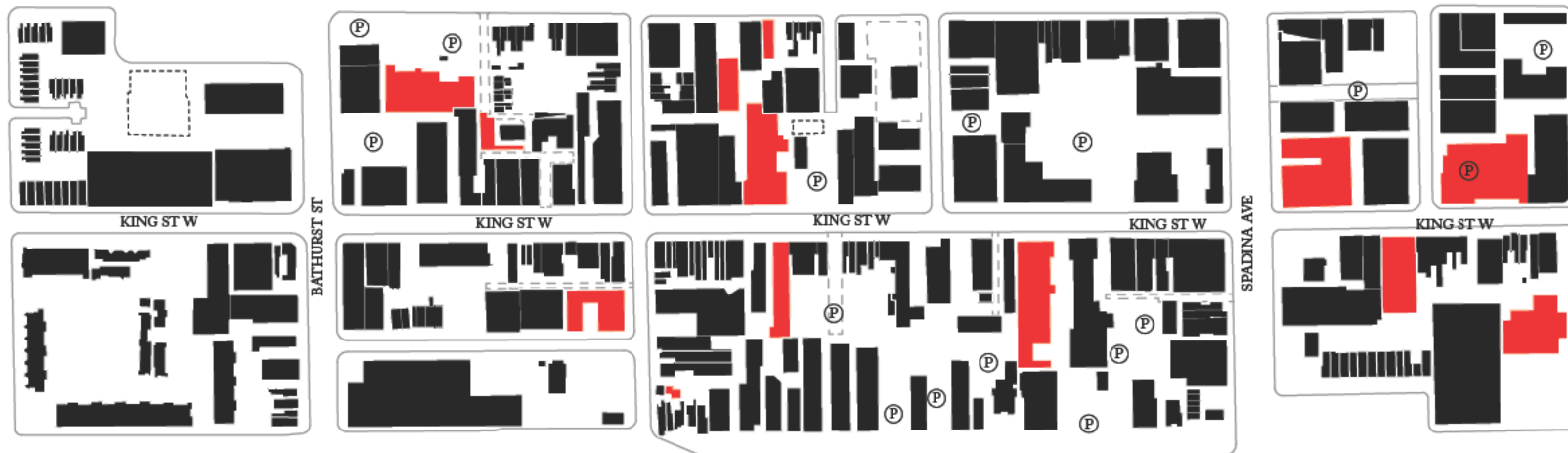
The graph to the right shows the amount of new buildings, in terms of foot print area, in relation to total buildable area within the site for the 1990 map.



# M-12

## KING ST W - 2000

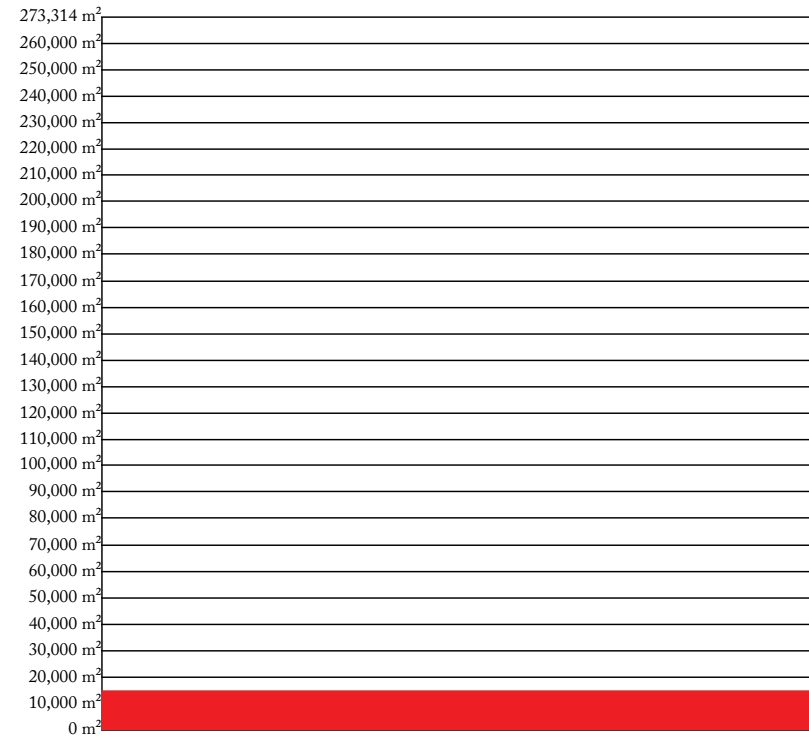
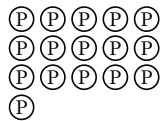
Here is the same section of King St W but this time in 2000. The level of change from the previous map to this one is about the same as from 1981 to 1990. However, the buildings in this case are larger in footprint size than previous denoting the amalgamation of parcels.



**LEGEND**

KING ST W	Street Name
BARRETTTE	Feature
(P)	Parking
■	Building
■	New Building
---	Demolished Building
-.-.-	Laneway/Path/Fence





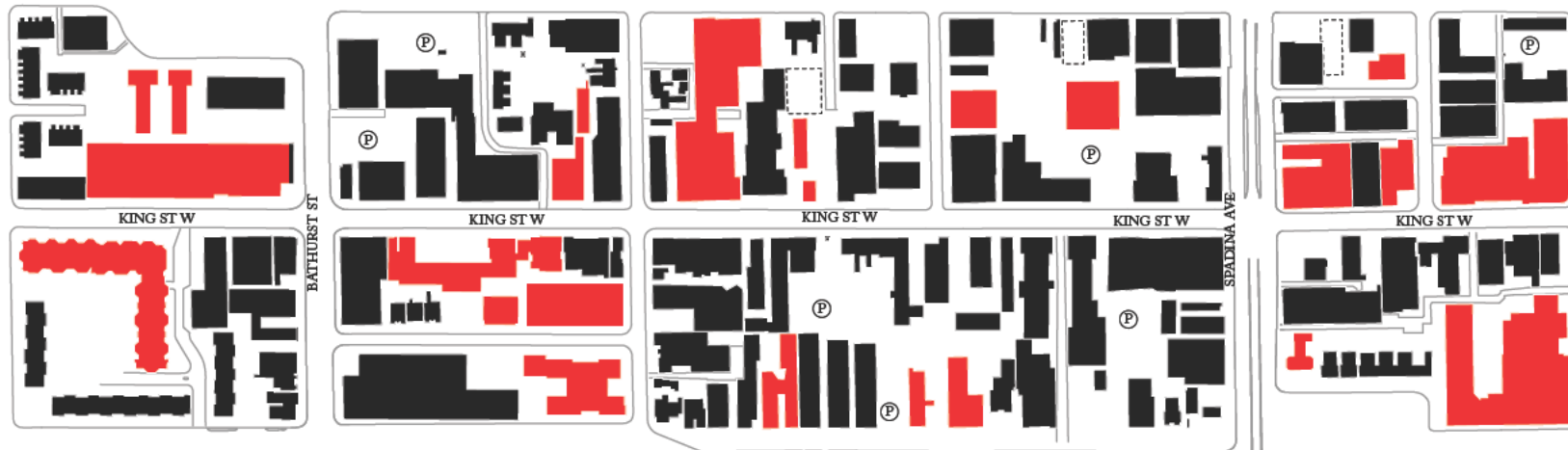
The above diagram depicts change in the number of new building sites (13), number of demolished buildings sitting on a vacant sites (2), and number of parking lots (16) from the previous mapping date.

The graph to the right shows the amount of new buildings, in terms of foot print area, in relation to total buildable area within the site for the 2000 map.

# M-13

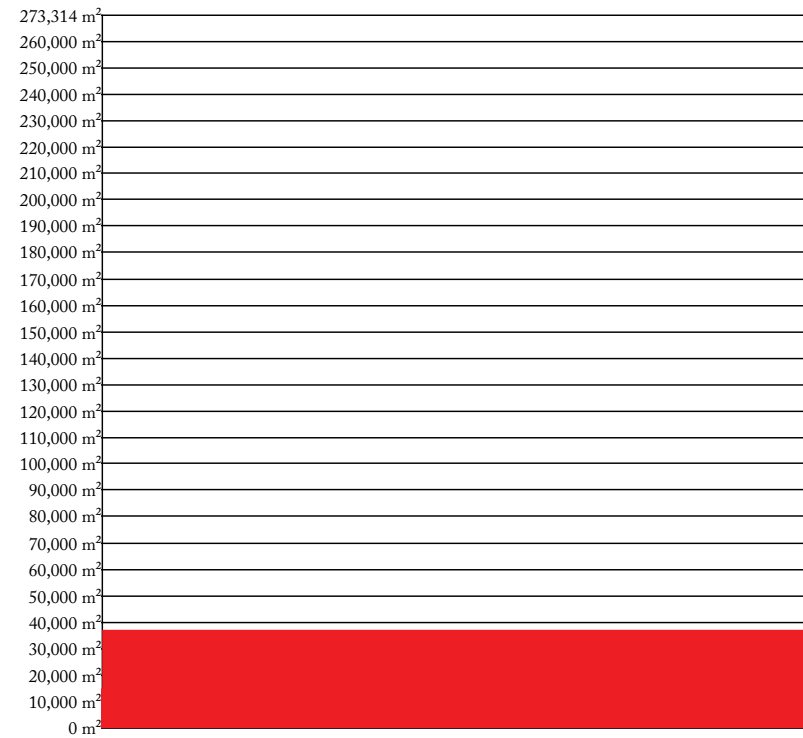
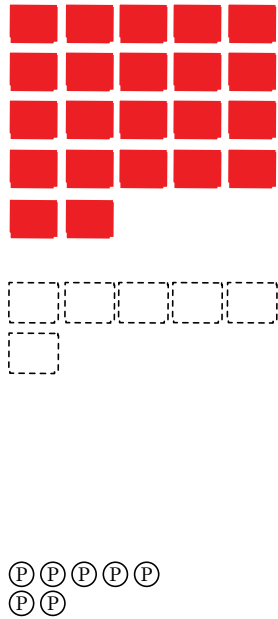
## KING ST W - 2013

Here is the same section of King St W but this time in 2013. This final map shows the highest amount of new fabric, with the majority being large-scale footprint sized buildings. In this case, most of these new buildings are high-rise condominium buildings, showing that this area has been gentrified and is a popular neighbourhood for people to want to live in.



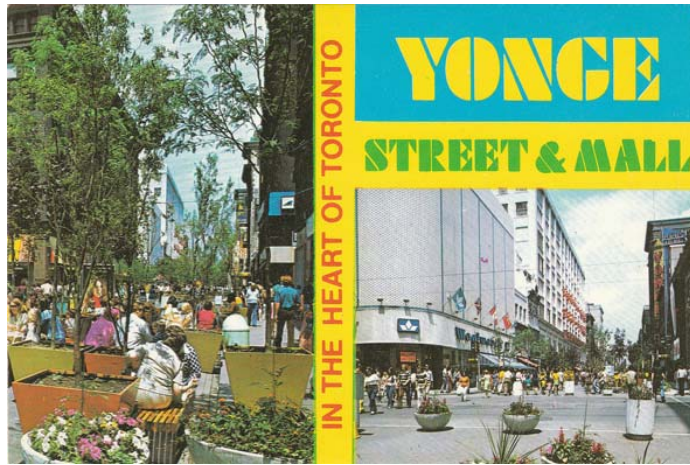
**LEGEND**

KING ST W	Street Name
BARLETTTE	Feature
(P)	Parking
■	Building
■	New Building
□	Demolished Building
---	Laneway/Path/Fence



The above diagram depicts change in the number of new building sites (22), number of demolished buildings sitting on a vacant sites (6), and number of parking lots (7) from the previous mapping date.

The graph to the right shows the amount of new buildings, in terms of foot print area, in relation to total buildable area within the site for the 2013 map.

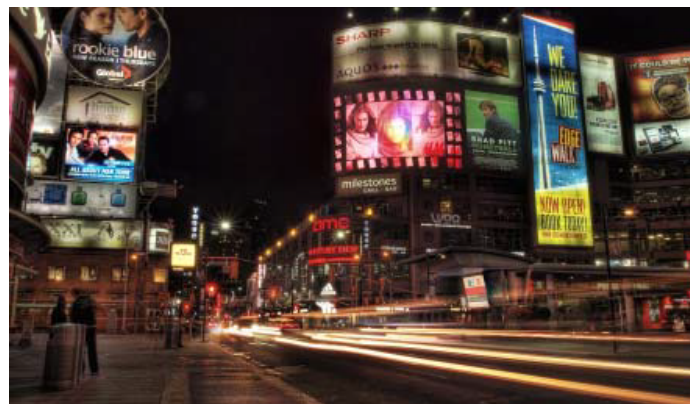


This series of photographs illustrate the change in the Yonge & Dundas intersection over the last 50 years to correlate the information being presented in the morphological maps within this section. In the photographs we can see that the area goes from a pedestrian-friendly, lower-scale neighbourhood to a more intensified intersection directly following the construction of the Eaton Centre and finally the high-scale, popular commercial intersection that it is today. Most of the intensification within this area can be directly attributed to the building of the Eaton Centre, in conjunction with the rise of Ryerson University in much later years.

*Fig. 2.1.6: Yonge & Dundas before development of the Eaton Centre (left)*



*Fig. 2.1.7: Yonge & Dundas during the 1970s, after the initial building of the Eaton Centre (left)*



*Fig. 2.1.8: Yonge & Dundas Square, at present day (left)*

## 2.2 TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

This section looks at five different residential building typologies which make up the majority of residential types of dwelling present within the City of Toronto. The first type, the High-Rise Apartment Building, represents the majority of new residential buildings within Toronto's new housing stock. This is the only type that is not present within the final thesis design site. The four remaining typologies represent what is present within the final thesis design site of the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood. It is important to note that these types are not solely found in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood, but rather can be found as popular existing dwelling types around Toronto.

These analytical typology studies will illustrate how these types operate, their various configurations, the pros and cons of each, and any other useful pieces of information needed to best understand these building types.

## 2.2.1 HIGH-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING

While the High-Rise Condominium Apartment Development type isn't a type that is seen within the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood, it is important to explore the past and present conditions of this type to better understand what they do well, and where they fall short. The City of Toronto, as well as this thesis, gives the high-rise designation to buildings over 10-storeys in height.

High-Rise Apartment Buildings are seen as providing a means for the largest amount of intensification possible on a site, and is the number one new residential building type within the City of Toronto.

### FEATURES:

Aims to insert the highest amount of density possible within a site.

Typically contains only a few unit configurations.

Can combine a few types of uses within one building or development. Many developments contain retail at grade, some have included office or work uses within the first few storeys, and living on the upper storeys.

Requires a large site or parcel of land that isn't typical to small-grain Toronto fabric.

Not seen as a suitable type to accommodate families.



The photograph on the left depicts a traditional High-Rise Condominium style of building in the City of Vancouver. This type of development is characterized by its podium base of retail uses and point towers of residential uses that emerge from the top of the podium. This type of high-rise development has gained popularity in the City of Toronto as a prominent type of High-Rise condominium development.

*Fig. 2.2.1.1: High-Rise Apartment Building, Vancouver (left)*

Two precedents of the High-Rise Apartment typology will be examined in this section:

## ST JAMES TOWN CONDOMINIUMS

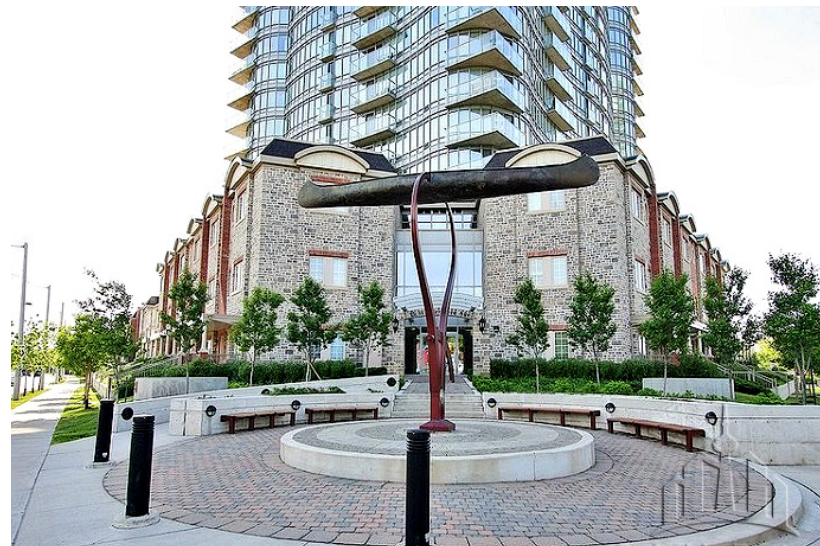
The St James Town Condominiums were chosen because they were a part of one of Toronto's very first high-rise condominium developments. This example looks at the original way the City dealt with intensification and was often classified as the "tower in the park" types of high-rise development.



*Fig. 2.2.1.2: St James Town Condominiums, Aerial View of Neighbourhood (right)*

## WINDERMERE BY THE LAKE

The Windermere by the Lake development was chosen as an updated example of the "tower in the park" model. This example is different, however, in the way the towers meet the ground. There is a podium or base level of stacked row homes at the bottom of the tower in an effort to soften the meeting between the grade level and the high-rise towers.



*Fig. 2.2.1.3: Windermere by the Lake, Phase 1 Development Entrance (right)*

## ST JAMES TOWN APARTMENTS, Toronto (primarily George Jarosz & James Howard)



Fig. 2.2.1.4: St James Town Neighbourhood, Toronto (left)

**Site Area:** 32 acres  
**Built Area/Building Footprint:** 31,375m<sup>2</sup>  
**Total # of Units:** +7,000  
**Density:** 218 units per acre  
**Price Per Unit:** Rent typically based on income  
**Unit Types:** Studio, 1BR and 2BR apartments  
**Unit Size:** varies  
**# of Storeys (above exterior grade):** 14 - 32  
**Year Built:** 1959 - 1977



Fig. 2.2.1.5: St James Town Map c.1950s, Before Tower Developments (above)

The St James Town neighbourhood is a prime example of development that occurred within the City of Toronto from the 1950s until the late 1970s: the eradication and levelling of existing fabric, rezoning efforts, and replacement of fabric with the “tower in the park”, high-density residential buildings.

The neighbourhood is bounded by Sherbourne St to the West, Bloor St E to the North, Parliament St to the East, and Wellesley St E to the South and is the largest high-rise communities in Canada; there are 18 high-rise buildings ranging in height from 14 to 32 storeys tall. Officially, there are 17,000 residents but it is estimated that this number is actually closer to 25,000 due to overcrowding. Presently, the neighbourhood is known to house low to median income households with a large percentage of immigrants. The apartment buildings are in need of major repairs and lack recreational spaces or resources to serve the community.

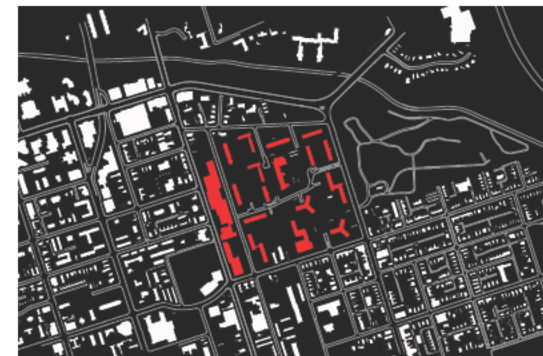


Fig. 2.2.1.6: St James Town Apartments, Context Plan, NTS (above)

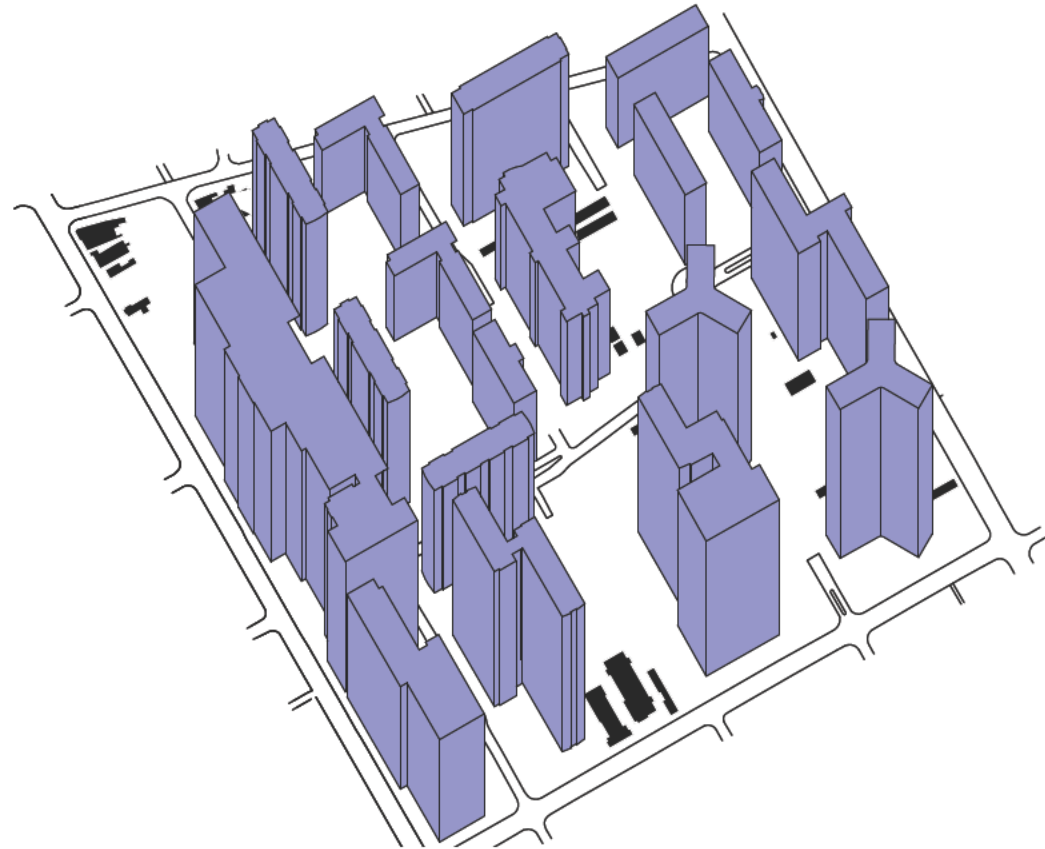


In the late 1800s, St James Town was a flourishing neighbourhood of upper-middle class residents; a highly desirable place to live and was a semi-suburban area of the city at that time. However, in the late 1950s, new forms of development were looked at to help the neighbourhood accommodate more density and encourage single-professionals to live within the area. What occurred was the eradication and levelling of existing single-family, semi-detached, and row houses, due to new zoning amendments. The original fabric was replaced by high-rise apartment buildings that were modelled after le Courbusier's "Tower in the Park" model and it became the city's first high-rise condominium development. Each tower was surrounded by open green space but lacked amenities because they were designed to appeal to single, childless professionals; in reality, this development attracted low-income families. 4 of the towers are owned by the Metro Toronto Housing Authority, and many of the units are priced to rent based on the family's individual income. While the neighbourhood is highly populated, many people felt, and still feel, that this level of development was inappropriate for what the site could handle. Issues that still plague the neighbourhood today are: extreme population density, lack of public space and community amenities, poor building quality and neighbourhood maintenance, and an uncertain future.

The Garden Court Apartments were constructed at a time when large parcels of land were not completely uncommon. This allowed for the use of extensive gardens throughout the property as means of getting around the development. Today, large parcels of land are uncommon and many developments use as much of the site as they can. The diagram below illustrates the 18 high-rise towers that make up the St James Town neighbourhood.

#### LEGEND

■ Residential



*Fig. 2.2.1.7: St James Town Neighbourhood, Axonometric Diagram (right)*

## WINDERMERE BY THE LAKE, Toronto (Pellow Architects)



Fig. 2.2.1.8: Windermere by the Lake, 15 Windermere Ave, Toronto (left)

**Site Area:** 4 acres  
**Built Area/Building Footprint:** 3,825m<sup>2</sup>  
**Total # of Units:** 306 (108 stacked townhouse units, 249 apartment units)  
**Density:** 82.9 units per acre  
**Price Per Unit:** Condos from \$274,900 - \$557,000 and towns from \$170,000 - \$538,000 (\$461/sf)  
**Unit Types:** Stacked townhomes (1-2 BR and 3storey-3BR) and apartments (2-3BR)  
**Unit Size:** 505 – 2,152 sqft  
**# of Storeys (above exterior grade):** 28 (tower), 3-4 (townhouses)  
**Year Built:** 2007

The Windermere by the Lake Tower and Townhouses were tackled as a master plan development, with rezoning amendments applied to the area. The site is bounded by historic single-family homes to the North and the Gardener Expressway to the South. Along with the High-Rise condominium tower and townhouses surrounding the base of the tower, the site also includes a water feature, berms, and nearly 5,000m<sup>2</sup> of landscaped surface; a modern application of the “tower in the park” model.



Fig. 2.2.1.9: Windermere by the Lake, Rendered Site Plan (above)

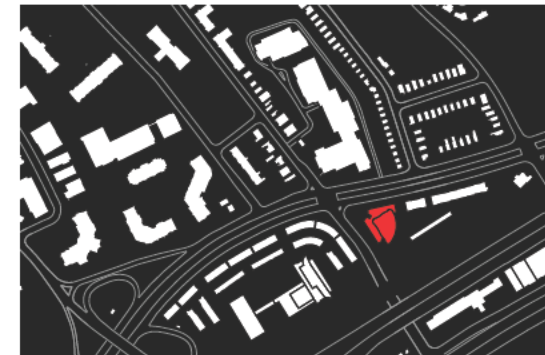
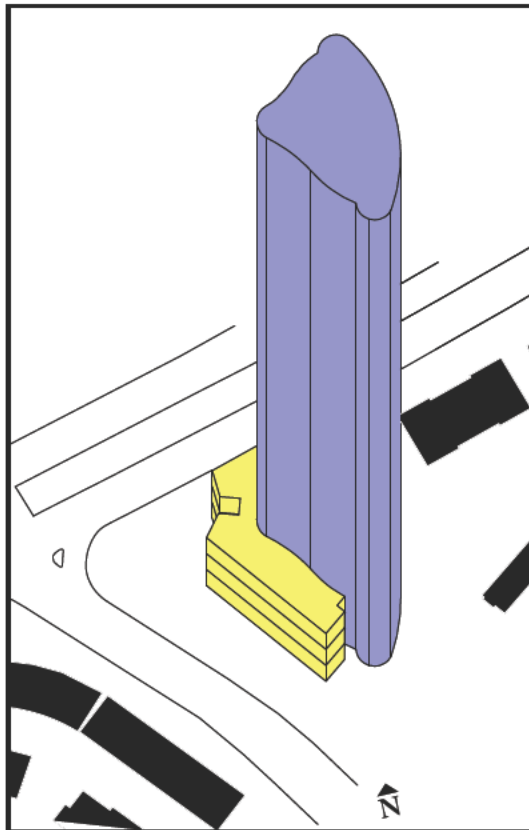


Fig. 2.2.1.10: Windermere by the Lake, Context Plan, NTS (above)

**LEGEND**

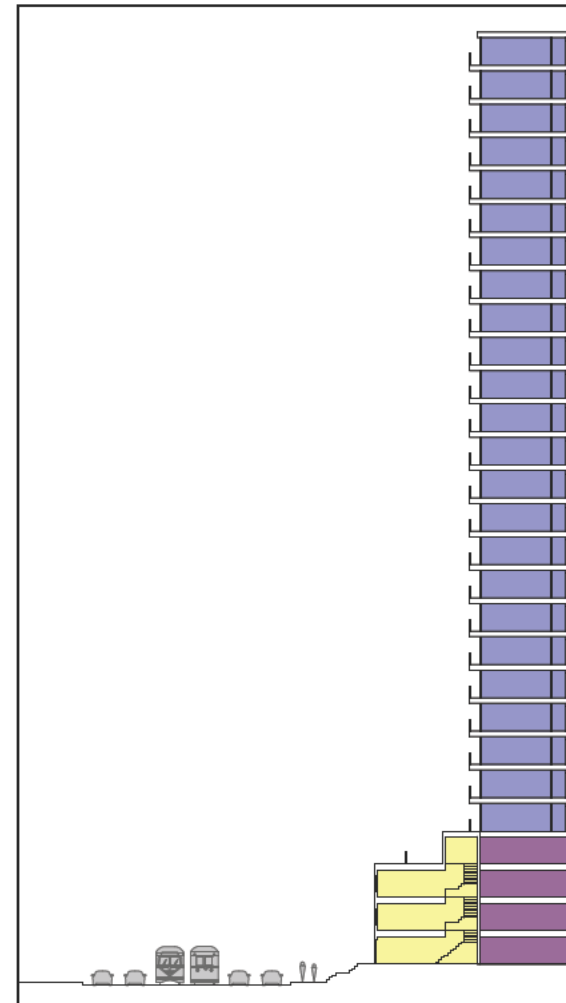
- Residential
- Row House
- Amenities

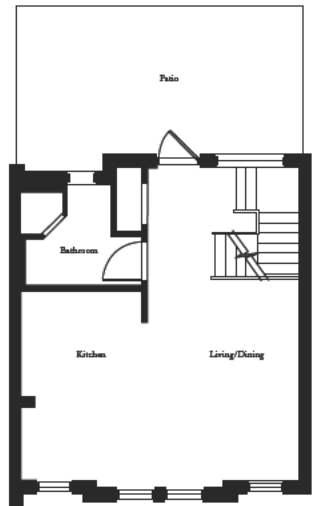
The high-rise tower is quite conventional for present day standards, where it differs is the way in which the architects have designed the street condition; the tower is grounded by traditionally-styled brick and stone townhomes. The strategy of putting these townhomes at the base of the tower was to create a streetscape that reflects the neighbourhood of historic homes to the north of the site. This development also boasts the wide selection of home types available to new homeowners, as there a selection of apartment options, as well as townhouse options. It is important to note that the development is marketed towards buying over renting; the prices of the various units are much more affordable than those traditionally available in the city center, especially for townhomes.



*Fig. 2.2.1.11: Windermere by the Lake, Axonometric Diagram (above)*

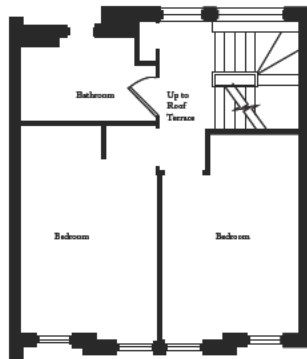
*Fig. 2.2.1.12: Windermere by the Lake, Organizational Section Diagram, NTS (right)*



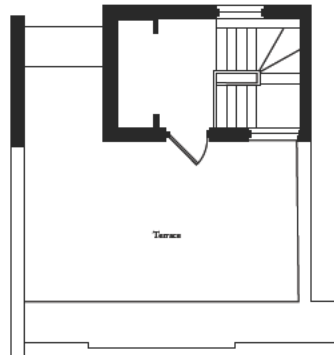


North Elevation - South Block

*Fig. 2.2.1.13: Windermere by the Lake, Stacked Town Elevation, NTS (above)*

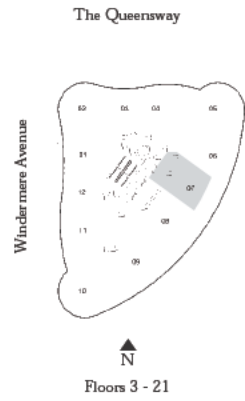


*Fig. 2.2.1.14: Windermere by the Lake, Stacked Town First Floor Plan, NTS (left)*

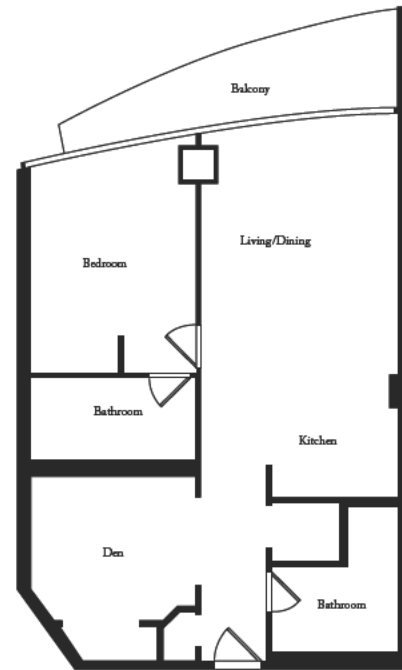


*Fig. 2.2.1.15: Windermere by the Lake, Stacked Town Second Floor Plan, NTS (left)*

*Fig. 4.1.16: Windermere by the Lake, Stacked Town Third Floor Plan, NTS (left)*



*Fig. 2.2.1.17: Windermere by the Lake, Tower Plan, NTS (above)*



*Fig. 2.2.1.18: Windermere by the Lake, Tower Apartment Plan, NTS (right)*

## 2.2.2 LOW-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING

The Low-Rise Apartment building type is the most popular dwelling type in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood. The Low-Rise Apartment building type is a building containing 5 or more residential units. The City of Toronto Census information distinguishes between apartment buildings under 5 storeys and those over 5 storeys but the traditional definition of a low-rise building is one that is under 10 storeys.

Low-Rise Apartments provide a means for the most amount of intensification possible on a site due to the configuration of units which are generally more compact and smaller in size than the traditional single-family homes.

### FEATURES:

Low-rise but with a higher density of dwelling units.

Can accommodate a variety of unit types.

Typically a single-use building type but can sometimes contain a retail storey at grade.

Outdoor space is usually communal in nature and is shared between the residents within the building.

Usually requires a larger lot or the consolidation of smaller, narrow parcels into one site.



On the corner of Dundas St W and Euclid Ave stands a small, low-rise apartment building with a retail storey at grade. Unlike most of the other fabric along Dundas St in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood, this building is fairly new. It does conform to the rest of the fabric however, by including the retail units at street level. The upper storeys also maintain the same height as the residential fabric behind it, maintaining continuity with the existing neighbourhood fabric.

*Fig. 2.2.2.1: Apartment Under 5-Storey, Dundas St West (left)*

Two precedents of the Low-Rise Apartment typology will be examined in this section:

## GARDEN COURT APARTMENTS

The Garden Court Apartments were chosen due to its ability to remain as a desirable place to live from the time it was constructed until present day, while maintaining the low-rise status as nothing exceeds 3-stories in height. Unlike many modern day condominium apartment developments, Garden Court was built on a large piece of land which lent itself to allow for large open gardens spread between the buildings.

*Fig. 2.2.2.2: Garden Court Apartments, Complex Entrance (right)*



## IDEAL LOFTS

The Ideal Lofts are a good example of what a typical present-day low-rise apartment development looks like. The bottom storey provides retail at grade for both residents and the neighbourhood, which is common practice in the design of most apartment buildings today. The building also employs setbacks as per Building Code guidelines, and ample underground parking for tenants; this was chosen not for its ingenuity but for its typicality.

*Fig. 2.2.2.3: Ideal Lofts, Exterior View (right)*



## GARDEN COURT APARTMENTS, Toronto (Forsey, Page & Steele)



**Site Area:** 5.5 acres  
**Built Area/Building Footprint:** 3,824m<sup>2</sup>  
**Total # of Units:** 104  
**Density:** 19 units per acre  
**Price Per Unit:** varies  
**Unit Types:** Townhouses & 1BR, 2BR, and 3BR apartments  
**Unit Size:** 500 – 1500 sqft (46.4 – 139.4 m<sup>2</sup>)  
**# of Storeys (above grade):** 2 – 3 storeys  
**Year Built:** 1939 - 1941

The Garden Court Apartments is a historical Art Deco style apartment rental complex in the Leaside neighbourhood of Toronto geared for quiet family living. The complex was constructed between 1939 and 1941 on a 5.5 acre lot that has since been designated as historically significant. The complex is made up of 10 two to three storey buildings with 104 units in total. While most of the development is made up of low-rise apartment units, there are a few townhouses mixed in among the apartments. The units range in size from 500 to 1500 square feet and contain units with 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms.

Currently, property taxes are quite high for this development so there was a proposal brought forth to turn some of the low-rise buildings on the site into high-rise developments to help battle the rising property taxes. Meetings are presently taking place and no solution has agreed to as of yet.

Fig. 2.2.2.4: Garden Court Apartments, 1477 Bayview Ave., Toronto (left)



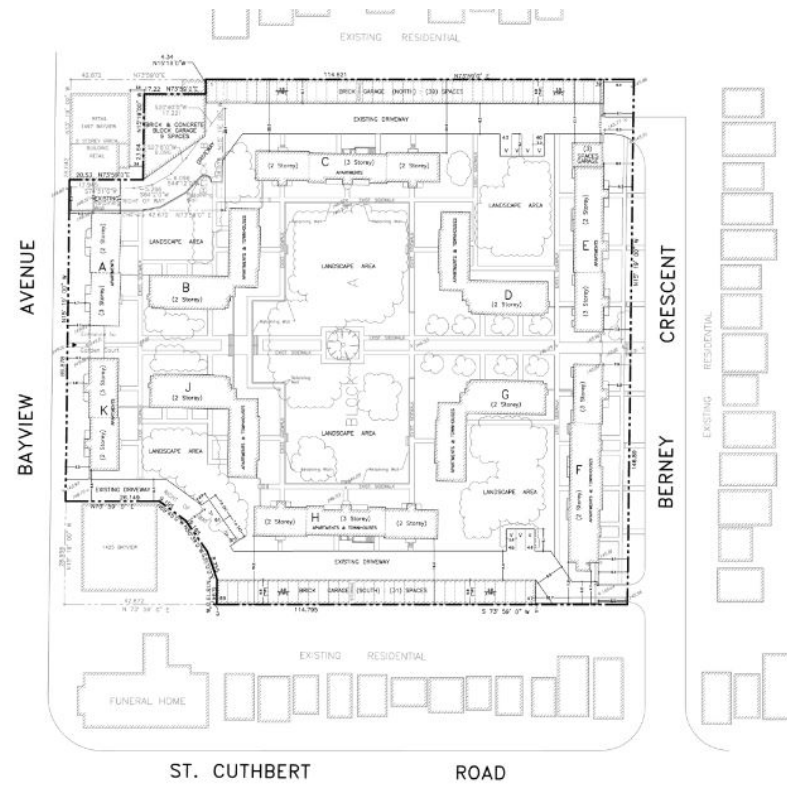
Fig. 2.2.2.5: Garden Court Apartments, Development Proposal (above)



Fig. 2.2.2.6: Garden Court Apartments, Context Plan, NTS (above)



Fig. 4.2.7: New Proposed Apartment Development, Garden Court Apartments (right)



**LEGEND**

Residential

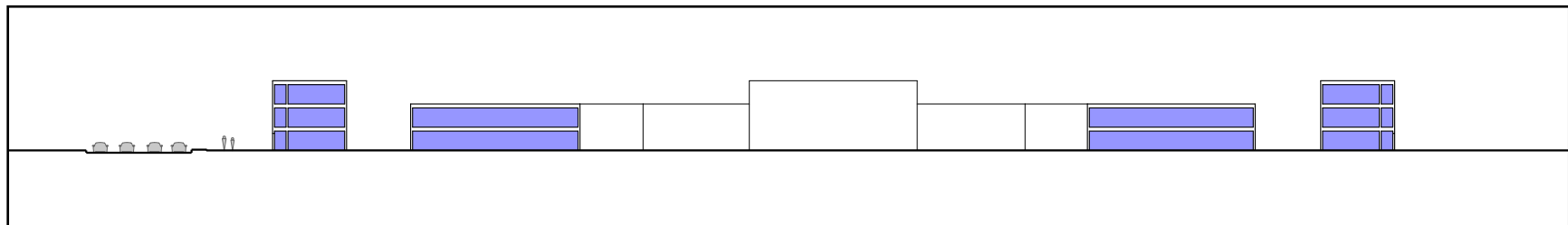
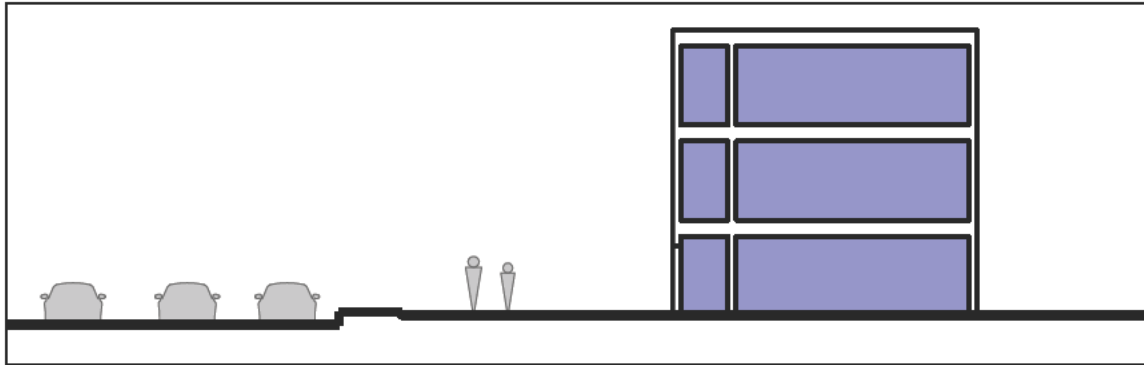


Fig. 2.2.2.8: Garden Court Apartments, Site Section Diagram, NTS (above).



*Fig. 2.2.2.9: Garden Court Apartments, Enlarged Building Section Diagram, NTS (left).*

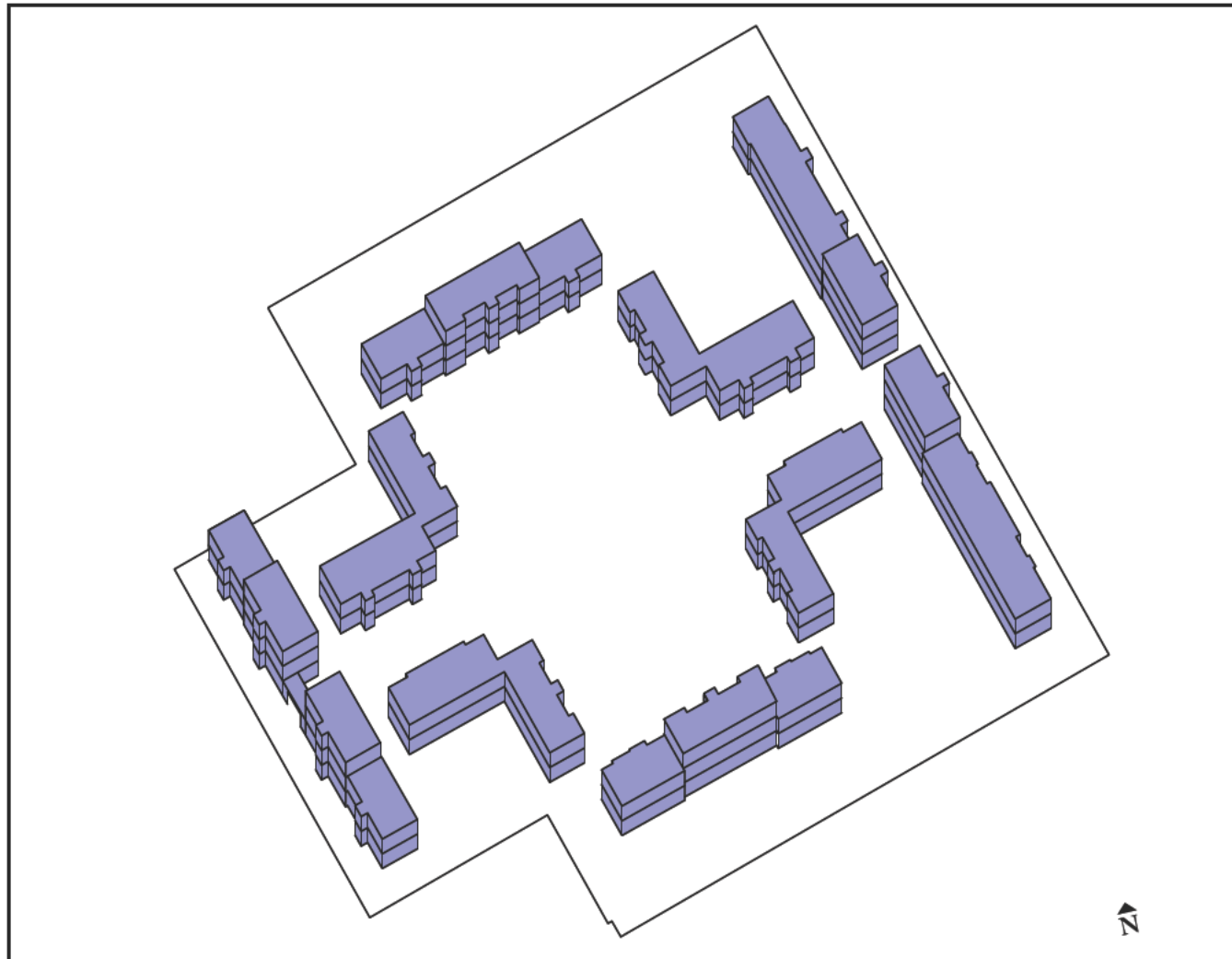
The Garden Court Apartments were constructed at a time when large parcels of land were not completely uncommon. This allowed for the use of extensive gardens throughout the property as means of getting around the development. Today, large parcels of land are uncommon and many developments use as much of the site as they can.



*Fig. 2.2.2.10: Access Gardens within the Apartment Complex (left)*

**LEGEND**

■ Residential



*Fig. 2.2.2.11: Garden Court Apartments, Axonometric Diagram, NTS (below).*

## IDEAL LOFTS, Toronto (architects Alliance)



Fig. 2.2.2.12: Ideal Lofts, 301 Markham St, Toronto (left)

**Site Area:** 0.31 acres (1,261 m<sup>2</sup>)  
**Built Area/Building Footprint:** 1,209 m<sup>2</sup>  
**Total # of Units:** 68  
**Density:** 219 units per acre  
**Price Per Unit:** varies (average is \$615/sqft)  
**Unit Types:** 1-2 storey lofts  
**Unit Size:** 515 – 2,232 sqft (47.8 – 207.4 m<sup>2</sup>)  
**# of Storeys (above grade):** 8  
**Year Built:** 2002

Ideal Lofts is a low-rise residential development, completed in 2002, in the Little Italy neighbourhood of Toronto. The development consists of 68 units within an 8 storey building at the corner of Markham Street and College Street. The units within the development are a mix of 1 and 2-storey lofts and range in size. At grade, there are double-height retail spaces, and the building has amenities for residents such as a multipurpose room, BBQs that can be rented out for use, and exercise facilities. The location of this development has helped to make it successful and well-liked due to its proximity to public transit routes, as well as being located in a thriving, highly walkable neighbourhood. The units are available to both rent and buy.



Fig. 2.2.2.13: Ideal Lofts, 1-Storey Loft (above)



Fig. 2.2.2.14: Ideal Lofts, Context Plan, NTS (above)



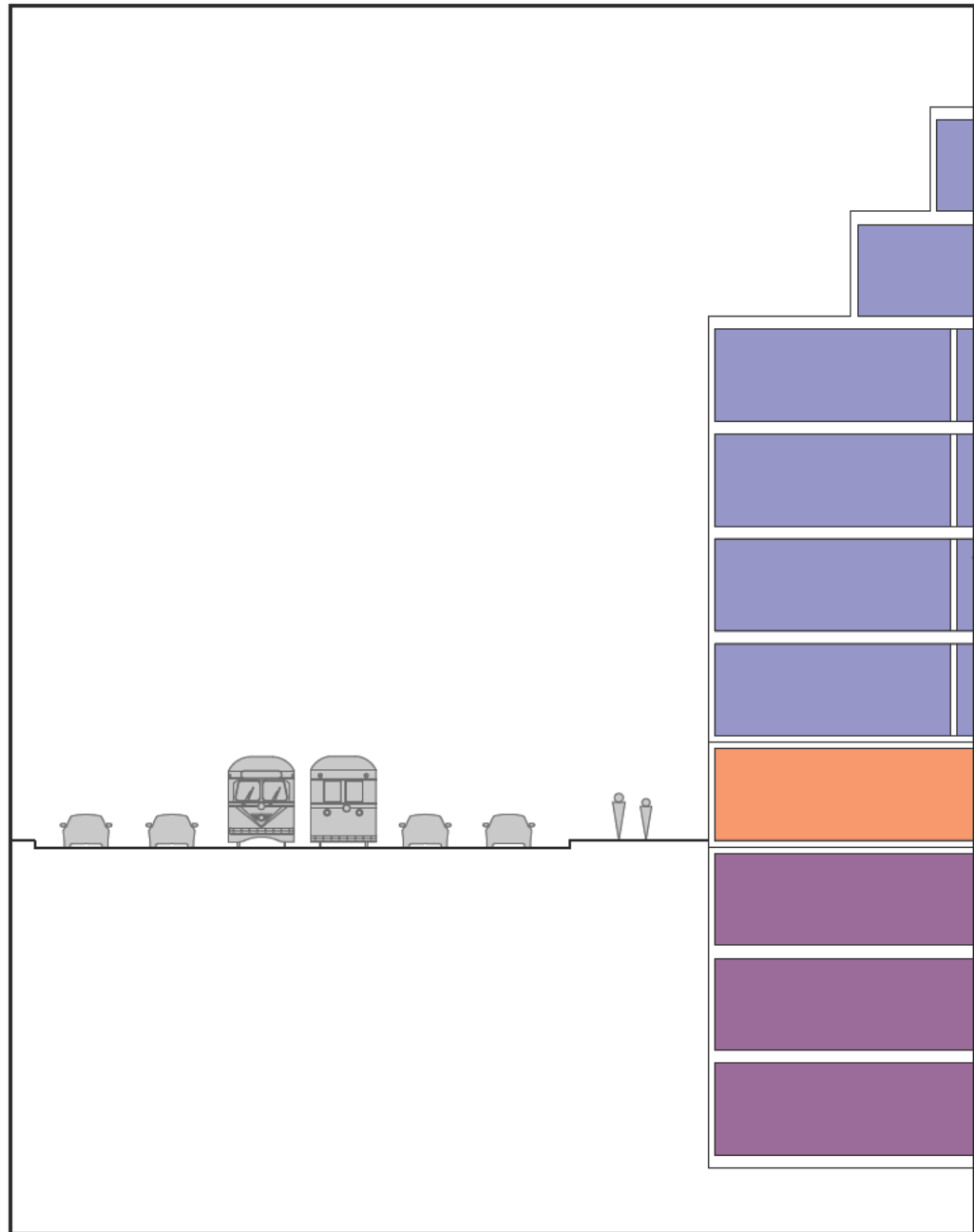
Fig. 4.2.15 & 4.2.16: *Ideal Lofts, 2-Storey Loft (above).*

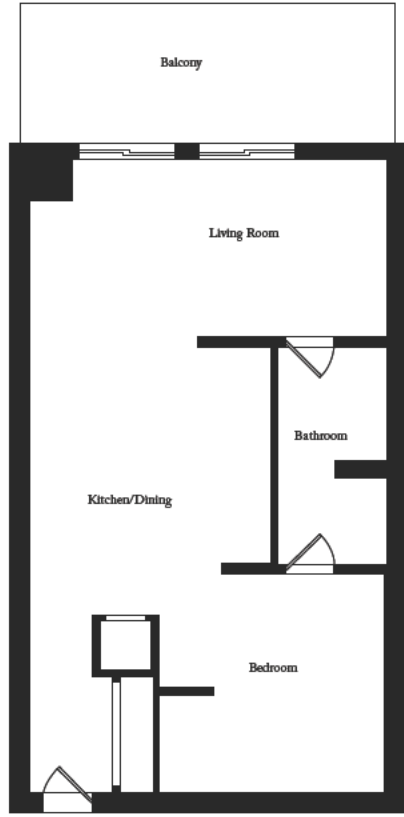
While this building is quite typical, when compared to others of this type built today, the 2-storey loft units offer unit variation; they could be tailored to suit the needs of a family better than a traditional unit.

**LEGEND**

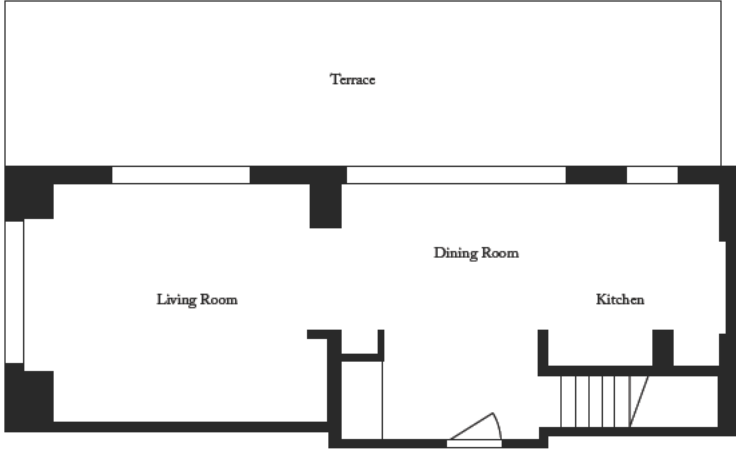
- Residential
- Retail
- Amenities/Parking

Fig. 2.2.2.17: *Ideal Lofts, Organizational Section Diagram, NTS (right).*

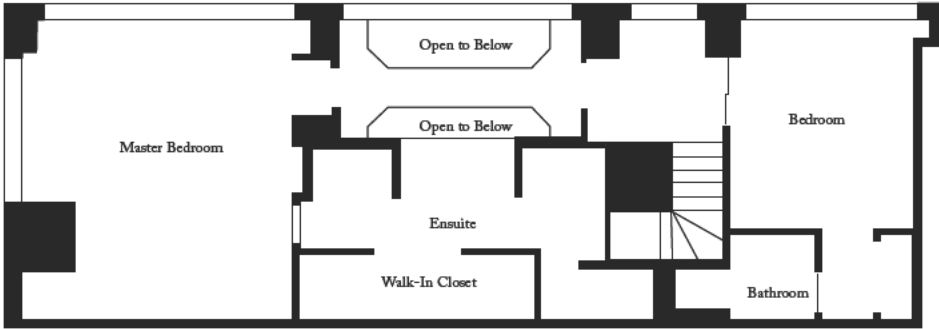




*Fig. 2.2.2.18: Ideal Lofts, 1BR Plan, NTS (left)*



*Fig. 2.2.2.19: Ideal Lofts, 2BR Loft Plan, Second Floor, NTS (above)*



*Fig. 2.2.2.20: Ideal Lofts, 2BR Loft Plan, Main Floor, NTS (above)*

### 2.2.3 ROW HOUSES

The Row House building type is the second most popular dwelling type in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood. The Row House is defined as a row of houses joined by common sidewalls; characterized as row houses when there are 3 or more houses joined together one after another. Typically, Row Houses are between 2 and 3 storeys in height.

This type of dwelling is perfect in accommodating the typical narrow parcels of Toronto city fabric, in fact, this type was one that was a result of the morphology of Toronto's streets and lots, as mentioned in Chapter 1.

#### FEATURES:

Accommodates a narrow parcel or lot.

Suitable for families.

Single-use building type; usually not mixed with retail or any other building uses.

Outdoor space is dictated by the size of the parcel or lot but each unit usually has its own private space.

Dwelling and living are separated by floors and don't usually happen on the same level.



Manning Ave, running north from Dundas St W, is a long, residential block that is typical of Toronto and the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood. Here, we can see that a new block of Row Houses blend into the block of existing Row Houses just to their north.

*Fig. 2.2.3.1: Row Houses, Manning Ave north of Dundas Street West (left)*



Two precedents of the Row House typology will be examined in this section:

### LANEHOUSE ON BARTLETT

The Lanehouses on Bartlett are currently under construction but were chosen as an excellent example of adaptive reuse of an existing building; in this case it was a former yarn factory. While opportunities for the adaptive reuse of industrial fabric has come to an end in Toronto due to the fact that the existing industrial buildings have already been reused, it is a great example of infill architecture and laneway architecture - two types of building that will help to add densification in residential areas that wouldn't otherwise be able to accommodate intensification.



*Fig. 2.2.3.2: Lanehouse on Bartlett, Artist Rendering (right)*

### TRINITY-BELLWOODS TOWNS

The Trinity-Bellwoods Towns were chosen due to their ability to blend in with existing residential neighbourhood fabric. The designers were influenced by the forms of dwelling around the area and translated it into a modern design. Unlike many of the developments that are aimed at adding density to an area, this project functions as an extension of the neighbourhood fabric, not something foreign within it.



*Fig. 2.2.3.3: Trinity-Bellwoods Towns, Exterior View (right)*

## LANEHOUSE ON BARTLETT, Toronto (Audax Architecture)



Fig. 2.2.3.4: Lanehouse on Bartlett, 50 Bartlett Ave., Toronto (left)

**Site Area:** 0.25 acres (1,006 m<sup>2</sup>)  
**Built Area/Building Footprint:** 1,026 m<sup>2</sup>  
**Total # of Units:** 16  
**Density:** 64 units per acre  
**Price Per Unit:** \$649,000 (flat) \$1,150,000 (row house)  
**Unit Types:** 1-storey flats, 1BR and 2BR row houses  
**Unit Size:** 955 - 1,975 sqft (88.7 – 183.5 m<sup>2</sup>)  
**# of Storeys (above grade):** 3  
**Year Built:** 2015 (to be completed November)

The Lanehouses on Bartlett are an example of an adaptive reuse project within an up-and-coming, gentrifying neighbourhood. They are currently under construction and will be complete in Fall of 2015. The development consists of 13 loft-house/townhomes and 3 flats tucked into a laneway off of Bloor/Dufferin Street. The Bloordale neighbourhood is an extremely walkable neighbourhood with many amenities, restaurants, shops, and transit opportunities. The Lanehouses have utilized a former yarn factory and the design of the development is made to reflect the craft and spirit of its former industry. As an adaptive reuse project, the development has a strong emphasis on small-scale, high-quality projects that will reflect the neighbourhood for today and into the future.



Fig. 2.2.3.5: Existing bones of the former Yarn Factory (above)



Fig. 2.2.3.6: Lanehouse on Bartlett, Context Plan, NTS (above)



Fig. 2.2.3.7: Lanehouse on Bartlett, Exterior view of lofts and terraces (right)

**LEGEND**

- Row House
- Outdoor Space
- Circulation

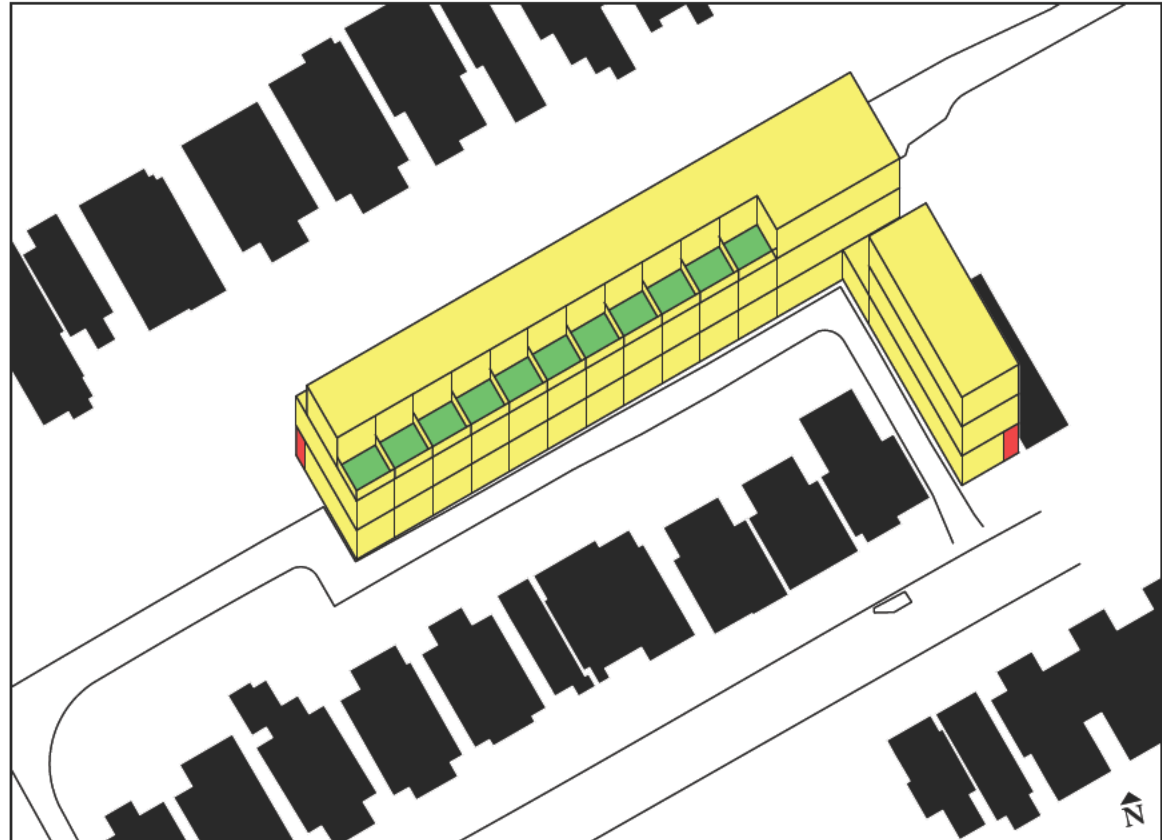
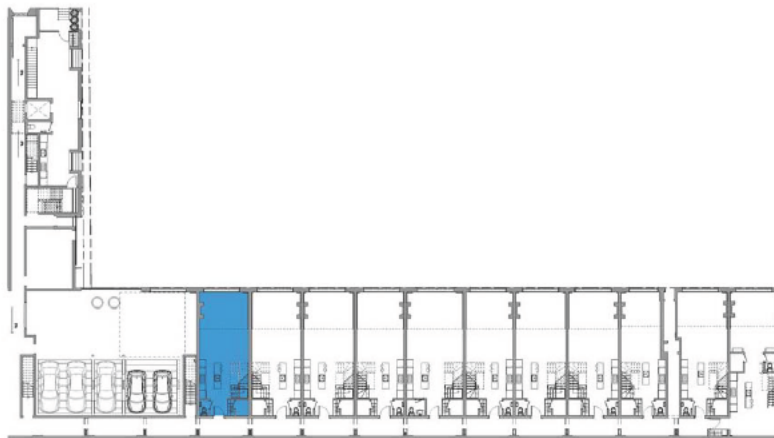
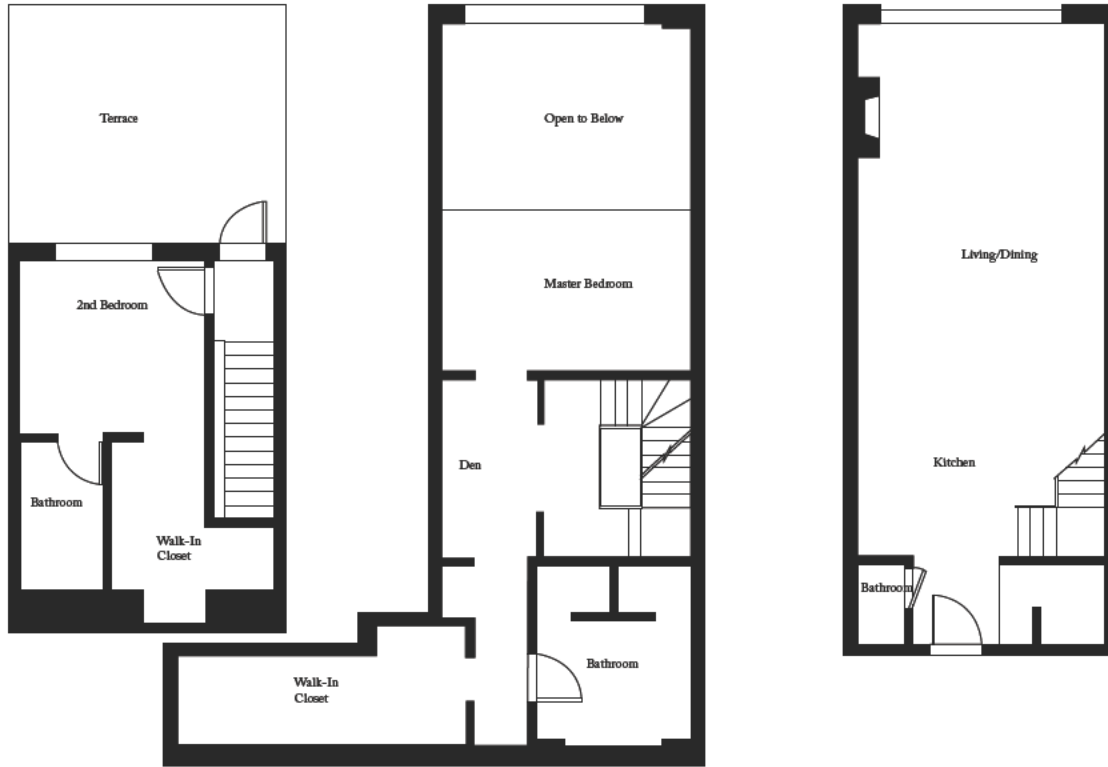


Fig. 2.2.3.8: Lanehouses on Bartlett, Axonometric Diagram, NTS (right)

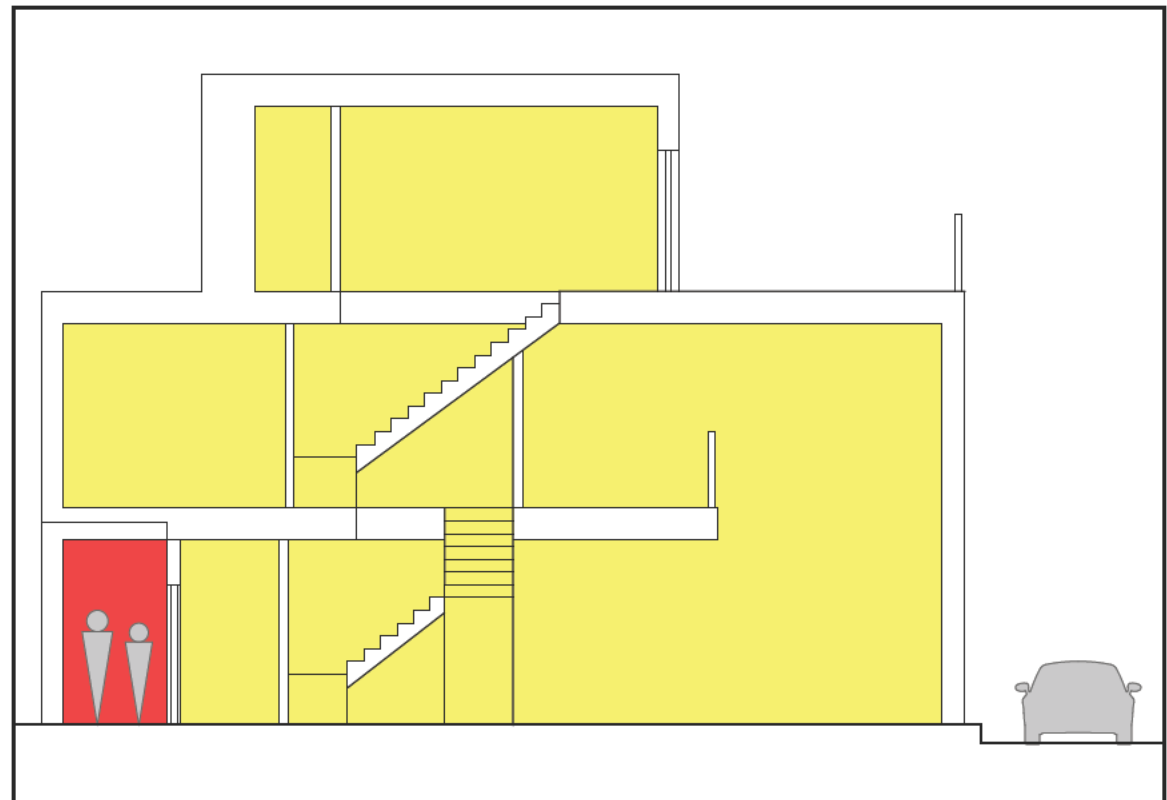
Existing industrial elements, such as exposed brick walls, were layered with new, raw materials to tie together the heritage elements with modern design. These units mix together the airiness of lofts (skylights) with the compactness of laneway/row houses.



*Fig. 2.2.3.9: Lanehouse on Bartlett, 3rd Floor, 2nd Floor, Main Floor Unit Plans, and Site Plan, NTS (above)*

**LEGEND**

- Row House
- Outdoor Space
- Circulation



*Fig. 2.2.3.10: Lanehouse on Bartlett, Organizational Section Diagram, NTS (right)*

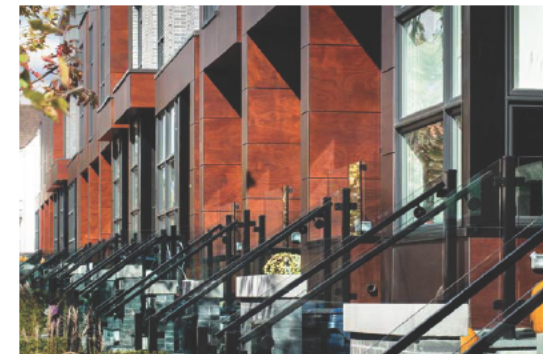
## TRINITY-BELLWOODS TOWNS, Toronto (Richard Wengle Architects)



**Site Area:** 1.07 acres (4,340 m<sup>2</sup>)  
**Built Area/Building Footprint:** 2,795 m<sup>2</sup>  
**Total # of Units:** 45  
**Density:** 42 units per acre  
**Price Per Unit:** \$1,100,000 (average)  
**Unit Types:** Townhomes with 3BR and 4BR options  
**Unit Size:** 1,900 – 3,100 sqft (176.5 – 288.0 m<sup>2</sup>)  
**# of Storeys (above grade):** 3  
**Year Built:** 2012

The Trinity-Bellwoods Towns + Homes are a development of 45 freehold townhomes built in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood of Toronto in 2012, just off Dundas Street. The project is the first foray into the stand-alone townhome developments for the developer Urban Capital. This development takes the idea of the traditional townhouse, which can be seen throughout the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood, and puts a contemporary spin on the design to help update the residential neighbourhood. The site was previously home to a public school flanked by residential homes to the north and a parking lot to the south; both the homes and parking lot have remained, with the townhomes replacing the school on the site.

*Fig. 2.2.3.11: Trinity-Bellwoods Towns + Homes, Manning Ave. & Claremont St., Toronto (left)*



*Fig. 2.2.3.12: Row configuration of Trinity-Bellwoods Towns on Claremont St (above)*

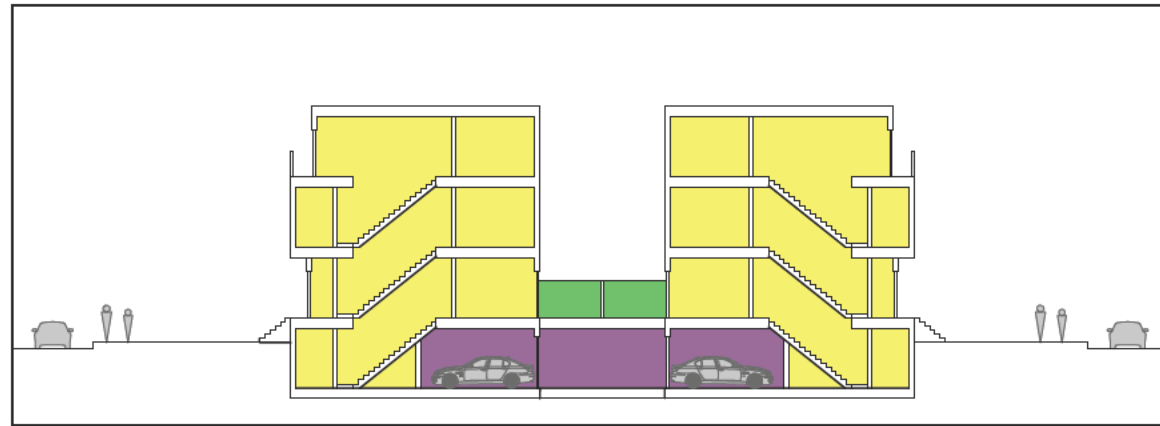


*Fig. 2.2.3.13: Trinity-Bellwoods Towns, Context Plan, NTS (above)*

## LEGEND

- Row House
- Outdoor Space
- Parking

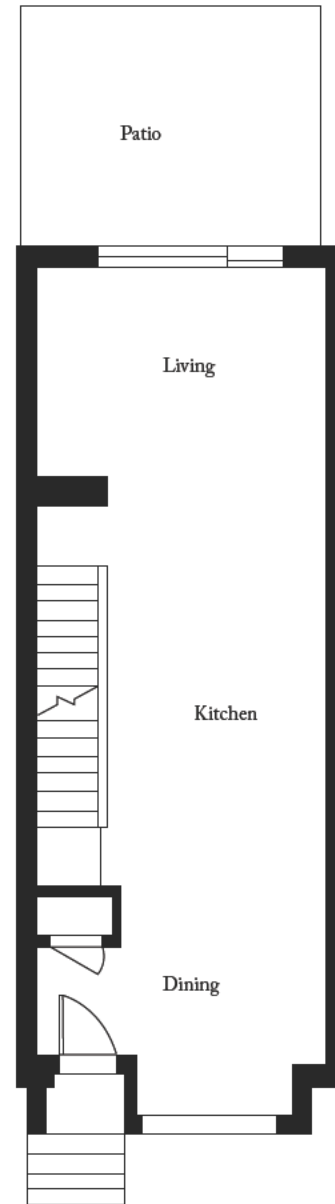
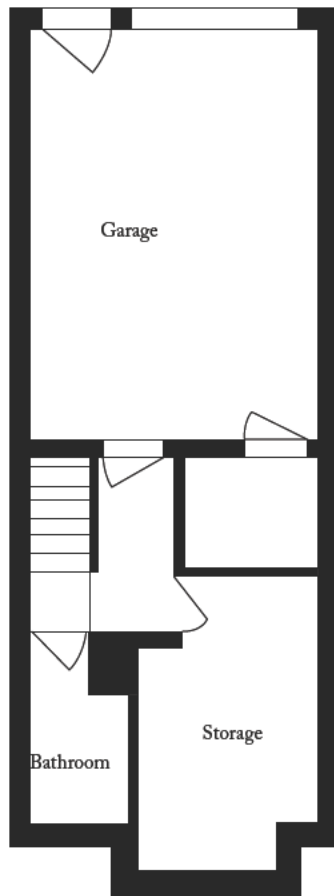
*Fig. 2.2.3.15: Trinity-Bellwoods Towns + Homes, Organizational Section Diagram (above)*



*Fig. 2.2.3.14: Trinity-Bellwoods Towns + Homes, Living and kitchen interior (above)*

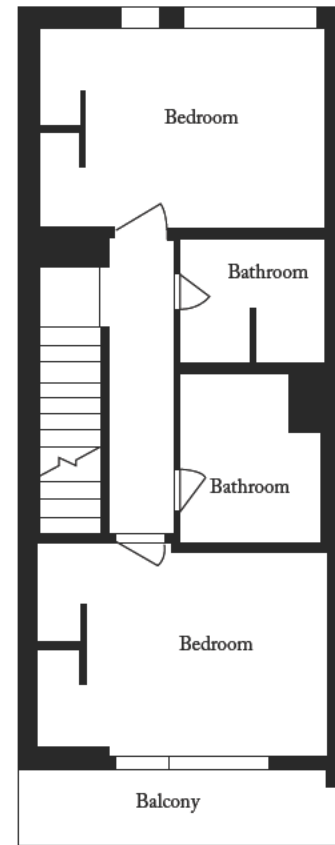
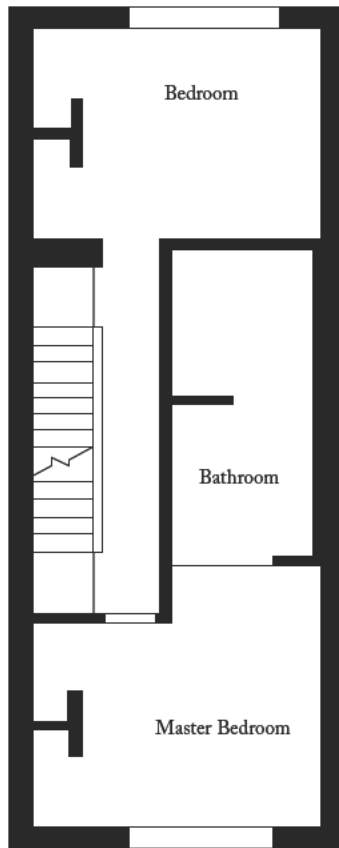
Designers chose to put a series of townhomes on the site instead of a high-rise development so that the new development would fit within the surrounding fabric – designers felt that a high-rise development would inject too much intensification within the neighbourhood and cause for an unmanageable and unsustainable development.

Each unit contains a private back porch, single or double parking spots, and access to a public park included in the development for the residents. The interior of the units boasts open floor plans with spacious kitchens, plenty of storage, high end features and finishes, and are aimed at accommodating urban couples and larger families as they contain either 3 or 4 bedrooms on upper floors.



*Fig. 2.2.3.16: Trinity-Bellwoods Towns, Basement and First Floor Plans, NTS (above)*





*Fig. 2.2.3.17: Trinity-Bellwoods Towns, Second and Third Floor Plans, NTS (above)*

## 2.2.4 STACKED ROW HOUSE

The Stacked Row House combines the ideals of two other housing types: the row house and the low-rise apartment building. This type has been used in communities where a low-rise residential building typology is desired but a higher density of dwelling units are required. Often, the lower unit will be sunk into the ground in order to prevent the building from being too tall; typically they are 3 - 4 storeys in height.

This is a type that is just beginning to gain popularity in the City of Toronto. Presently, there are a number of new projects around the City that are turning to this type of dwelling over other types, such as the low-rise apartment.

### FEATURES:

Accommodates a narrow parcel or lot.

Suitable for families.

Single-use building type; usually not mixed with retail or any other building uses.

Outdoor space is dictated by the size of the parcel or lot but each unit usually has its own private space.

Dwelling and living are separated by floors and don't usually happen on the same level.

Doubles the density of a traditional Row House



These Row Houses on Dundas St W in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood have been internally sub-divided into a form of Stacked Row Houses. Each Row House now contains two separate dwelling units.

*Fig. 2.2.4.1: Existing Row Houses Converted into Stacked Row Houses, Dundas St W (left)*

One precedent of the Stacked Row House typology will be examined in this section:

## WOODLAND TOWNS

While this example isn't in the Toronto area, it still remains an excellent example of the ability to increase density within a neighbourhood without going overboard, which has been the tendency for many high-rise residential building projects.



*Fig. 2.2.4.2: Woodland Towns, Exterior View (right)*

## WOODLAND TOWNS, London, Ontario (Domus Developments)



Fig. 2.2.4.3: Woodland Towns, 112 North Centre Rd., London, Ontario (left)

**Site Area:** 2.47 acres (10,000 m<sup>2</sup>)

**Built Area/Building Footprint:** 1,500m<sup>2</sup>

**Total # of Units:** 24

**Density:** 9.7 units per acre

**Price Per Unit:** \$1,195 - \$1,700 /month (rent)

**Unit Types:** 2BR and 3BR options

**Unit Size:** 1,025 – 1,550 sqft (95.2 – 144.0 m<sup>2</sup>)

**# of Storeys (above grade):** 4

**Year Built:** 2011

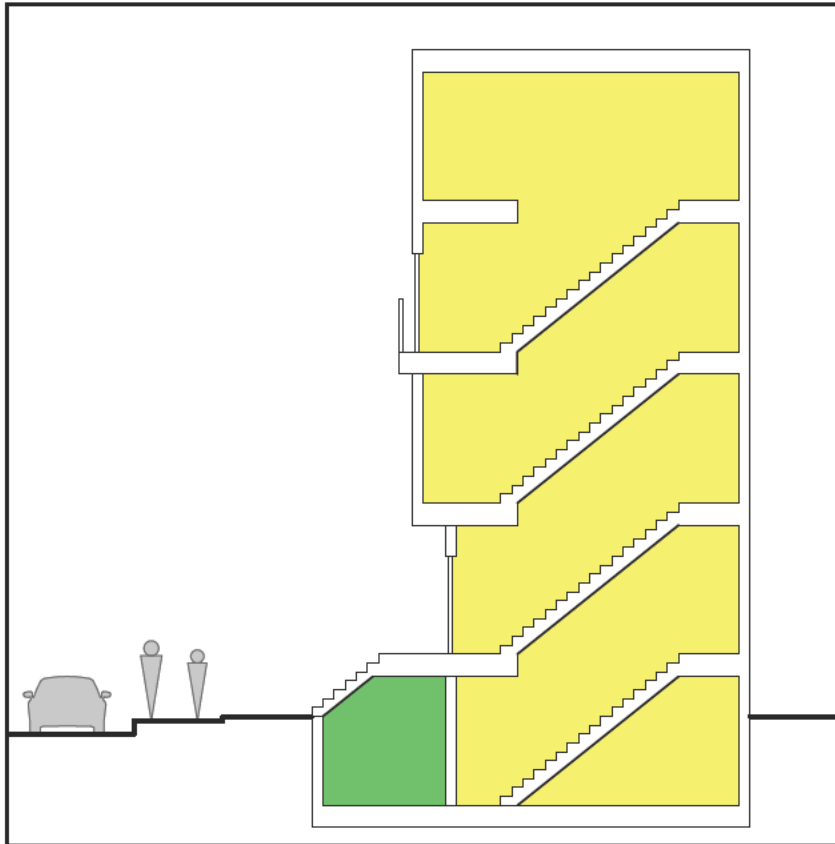
The Woodland Towns development in London, Ontario is a stacked townhome development geared for both buyers and renters. The units are 2 – 3 storeys in height and range in size from 1,025 square feet to 1,550 square feet with two and three bedroom options. Units are more traditionally laid out but contain modern appliances, central air conditioning, and master bedrooms with ensuite baths. Each unit also has access to an outdoor space in the form of a patio, terrace, or Juliet balcony. The neighbourhood is walkable and has many amenities nearby for residents such as grocery stores, parks, fitness centres, universities, hospitals, and public transit.



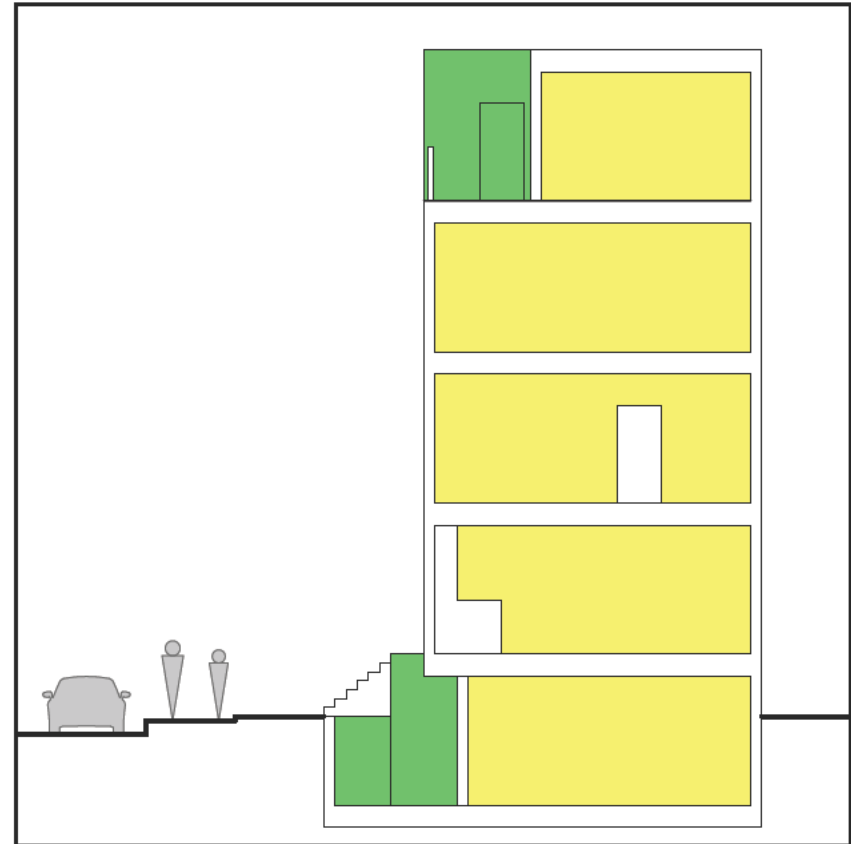
Fig. 2.2.4.4: Woodland Towns, Site Plan, NTS (above)

**LEGEND**

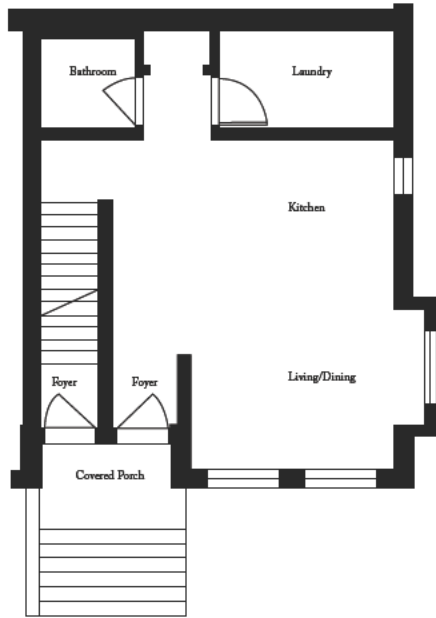
- Row House
- Outdoor Space



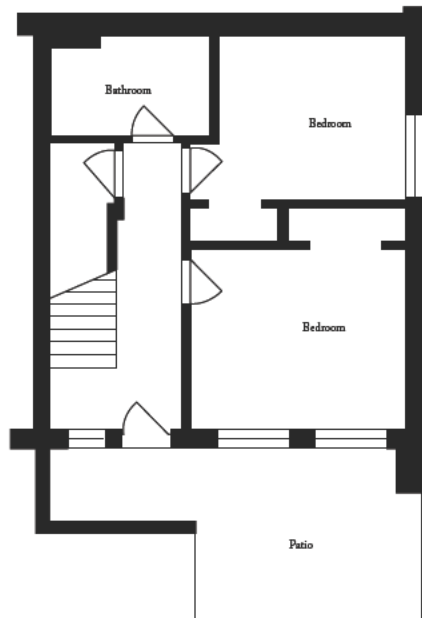
*Fig. 2.2.4.5: Woodland Towns, Organizational Section Diagram, NTS (above, left)*



*Fig. 2.2.4.6: Woodlane Towns, Organizational Section Diagram, NTS (above, right)*



*Fig. 2.2.4.7: Woodland Towns, 2BR Unit, Main Floor Plan, NTS, (left)*



*Fig. 2.2.4.8: Woodland Towns, 2BR Unit, Bottom Floor Plan, NTS (left)*

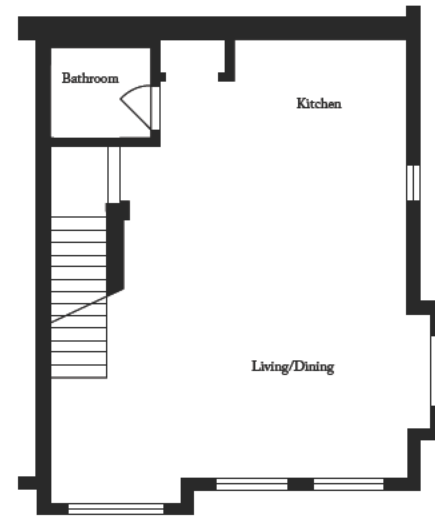


Fig. 2.2.4.9: Woodland Towns, 3BR Unit, Main Floor Plan, NTS (right)

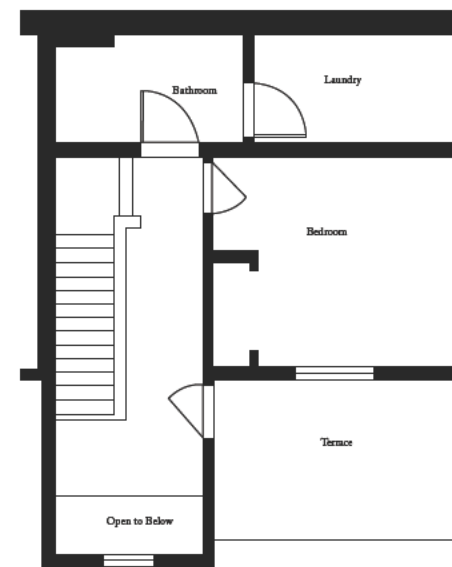
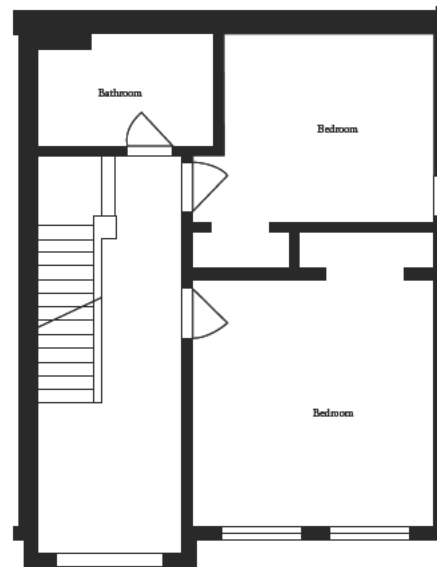


Fig. 2.2.4.10: Woodland Towns, 3BR Unit, Second and Third Floor Plan, NTS (above)

## 2.2.5 LIVE-WORK UNITS/MIXED-USE STOREFRONT

The Live-Work Unit building type is not a dwelling type that is a part of Toronto's Census, but is a vernacular type that dominates the Dundas Street West streetscape in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood, as well as along many other main streets in the city. The Live-Work Unit building type is a mixed-use building type that contains residential living area and commercial/office/work-related area in the same unit. These are often owned by the same person to allow for them to live and work within the same unit.

This typology is one that is typical of the main streets of Toronto due to their status as arteries through neighbourhoods.

### FEATURES:

Accommodates a narrow parcel or lot.

Suitable for creative types or entrepreneurs.

Outdoor space is typically communal in nature, similar to apartment buildings.

Retail and living are separated by floors and don't usually happen on the same level due to the mixed-uses.

Typically 2 - 3 storeys in height; can accommodate for one or two living units stacked on top of the retail unit with separate entrances.



Dundas St W is characterized by this type of building throughout the entire neighbourhood of Trinity-Bellwoods. Almost all of the retail at grade are owned locally and there are little to none which are chain-type stores. These units suit the needs of the residents of this area and help the neighbourhood to be extremely walkable.

*Fig. 2.2.5.1: Live-Work/Mixed-Use Units on Dundas St West (left)*



Two precedents of the Live-Work/Mixed-Use Storefront typology will be examined in this section:

## PUBLIC STUDIO

The Public Studio office is an excellent example of the raw potential that vernacular main street fabric has. The architects here adapted the narrow, main street parcel into an office for their business, their living quarters, and added a storey to the building in order to facilitate an extra dwelling unit which they rent out. Here they managed to keep the essence of the existing building while adding density and enriching the streetscape.



*Fig. 2.2.5.2: Public Studio, Exterior View (right)*

While this example comes from a building that is not solely of the Mixed-Use/Live-Work Unit typology, it provides a great alternative to the typical “retail at grade” requirement that plagues most podium towers, condominium developments, and low-rise apartment buildings. This type of unit both adds density and neighbourhood enrichment opportunity.

## DUKE CONDOS



*Fig. 2.2.5.3: DUKE Condos, Exterior View (right)*

## PUBLIC STUDIO, Toronto (Public Studio)



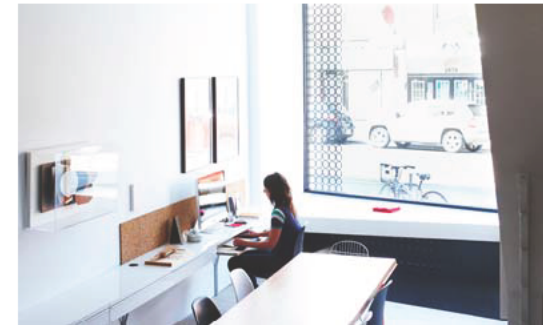
**Site Area:** 0.01 acres (53.5 m<sup>2</sup>)  
**Built Area/Building Footprint:** 44.3 m<sup>2</sup>  
**Total # of Units:** 2 living + 1 office/retail  
**Density:** 100 units per acre  
**Price Per Unit:** \$1,550,000 (entire parcel)  
**Unit Types:** Live-Work unit with separate rental unit on third storey  
**Unit Size:** 1,500 sqft (139.35 m<sup>2</sup>)  
**# of Storeys (above grade):** 3  
**Year Built:** 2012

Public Studio is a project designed by architect Tamira Sawatzky, as her and her partner's office and home. What drew her to the existing storefront space on Dundas St West was the high ceilings and large addition at the back of the unit, making the traditional Victorian space easier to work with. This addition proved to be important in the organizational scheme of the building as it helped to add some privacy to the main level as they intended on using the storefront as their studio/office and have the living room in the back of the house. Using the kitchen as a buffer element, the main level of the project has three zones of privacy.

*Fig. 2.2.5.4: Public Studio, 1575 Dundas St W, Toronto (left)*



*Fig. 2.2.5.5: Existing storefront and building pre-renovation (above)*



*Fig. 2.2.5.6: Studio/Dining space and storefront window after renovation (above)*



*Fig. 2.2.5.7: Public Studio, Context Plan, NTS (above)*

By leaving certain elements of the building intact and as-is, the architect was able to achieve a dialogue between the building's past life and its new one. In the photograph to the right, the exposed, unfinished, untouched original wall acts as a backdrop for the modern elements of the stairs and kitchen and existing structural elements were left exposed, to reinforce the building's past.



*Fig. 2.2.5.8: Public Studio, Stairs and Kitchen (right)*

Key original materials were recycled and repurposed; all of the lath that had originally been used in the partition walls were repurposed to clad the new partition walls, further connecting the past and present of the building. In the photograph, the lath can be seen in its new purpose as a wall cladding for the “core“ of the upper level.



*Fig. 2.2.5.9: Public Studio, Second floor den with repurposed lath (right)*

In terms of the building's historical character, she evaluated the elements and chose to work with the ones that she thought were most important: the brick façade from the street, the exposed structure (ceiling joists and partial sections of wall that had the character of the building in it), the refurbished original sign, and old lath that was removed during demolition. By keeping these important elements intact, she was able to create a dialogue between the building's history and its present day use. This project is a great example of a type of Toronto Small-Grain vernacular and that can be adapted to suit many sites around the city, and especially in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood.

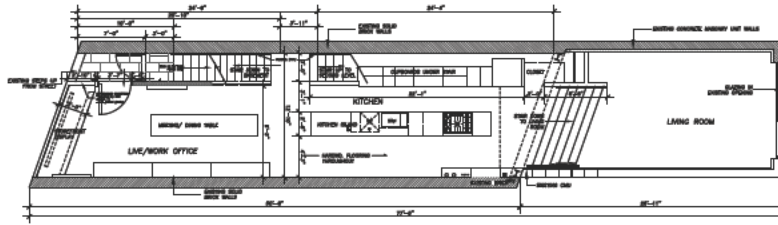


Fig. 2.2.5.10: Public Studio, Ground Floor Plan, NTS (left)

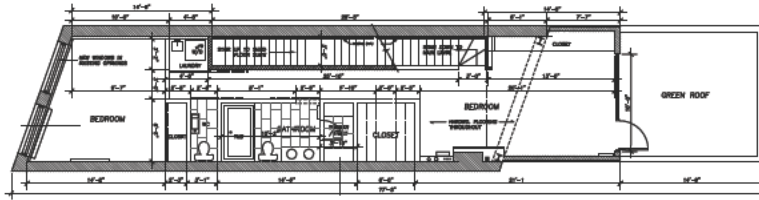


Fig. 2.2.5.11: Public Studio, Second Floor Plan, NTS (left)

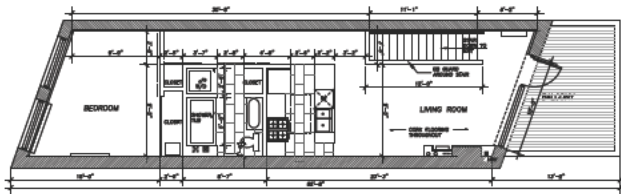


Fig. 2.2.5.12: Public Studio, Third Floor Plan, Separate Rental Unit, NTS (left)

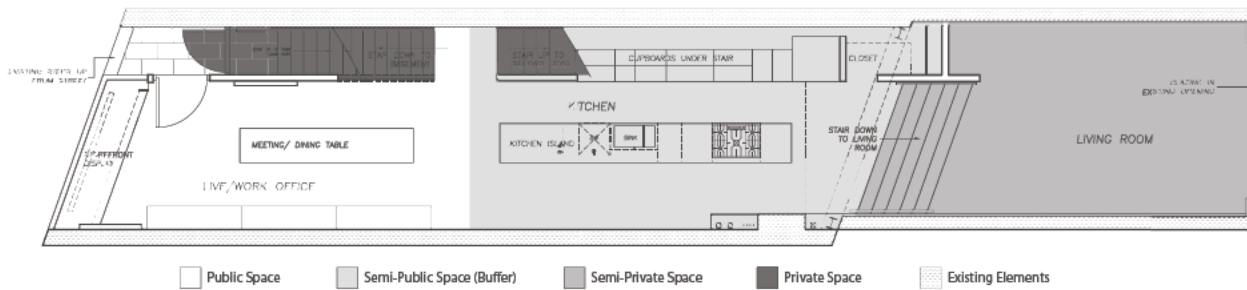


Fig. 2.2.5.13: Public Studio, Ground Floor Space Plan, NTS (above)

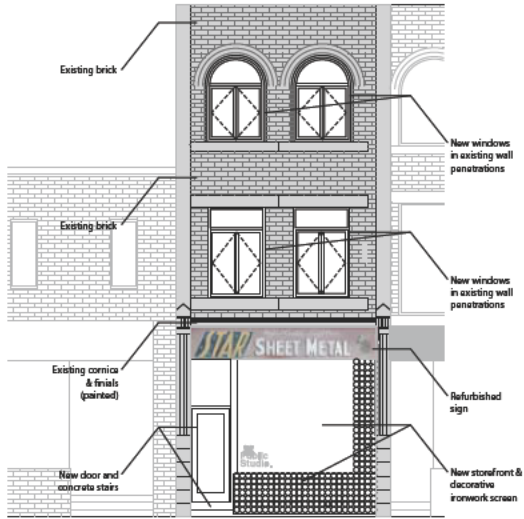
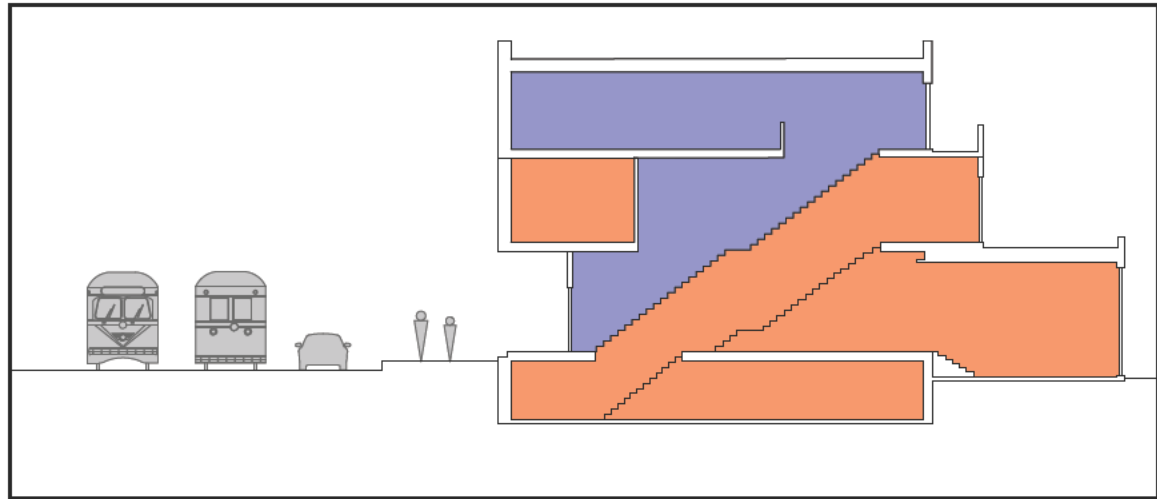


Fig. 2.2.5.14: Public Studio, Exterior Elevation, NTS (above)

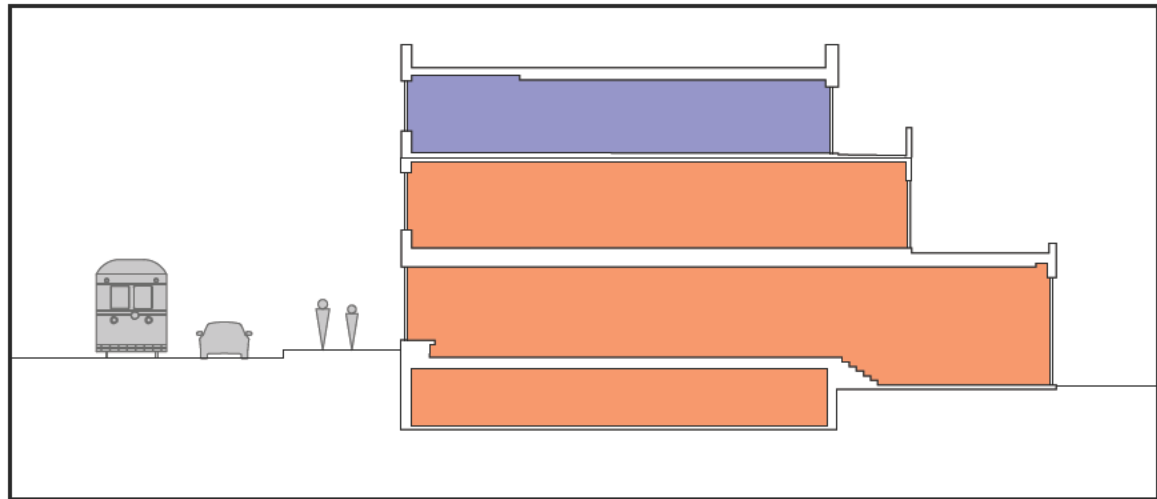
Fig. 2.2.5.15: Public Studio, Building Section looking East, NTS (right)



**LEGEND**

- Live/Work Apartment
- Apartment

Fig. 2.2.5.16: Public Studio, Building Section looking East, NTS (right)



## DUKE CONDOS, Toronto (Quadrangle)



Fig. 2.2.5.17: DUKE Condos, 2800 Dundas St. W., Toronto (left)

**Site Area:** 0.16 acres (628 m<sup>2</sup>)  
**Built Area/Building Footprint:** 580 m<sup>2</sup>  
**Total # of Units:** 85 (total), 5 (Live-Work)  
**Density:** 531 units per acre  
**Price Per Unit:** \$599,900 (LW)  
**Unit Types:** Development has a variety of condo units, townhomes and live-work units  
**Unit Size:** 1,150 - 1,548 sqft (106.8 – 143.8 m<sup>2</sup>)  
**# of Storeys (above grade):** 7 (total), 2 (Live-Work)  
**Year Built:** 2015 (completion in November)



Fig. 2.2.5.18: DUKE Condos, Entire Development (above)

DUKE is a Mid-Rise residential development in the Junction neighbourhood that is comprised of a 7-storey structure with over 85 units within the mid-rise development, plus 2 townhomes and 5 laneway live-work units at grade. The development is designed to suit a variety of residents from singles, to families, and even entrepreneurs. It is looking to balance the current state of the Junction neighbourhood while providing a future for the shifting demographics of the growing community. DUKE is working towards the City of Toronto's goal of adding densification and intensity along the avenues while serving as a prototype for the potential of infill development. The project is currently under construction and is set to be completed by November 2015.



Fig. 2.2.5.19: DUKE Condos, Context Plan, NTS (above)

The main portion of this development is a typical mid-rise apartment block configuration, with double-height space at grade along the main street (Dundas) for retail opportunities. However, along the quieter laneway to the East, there are 5 double-height Live-Work units aimed at the neighbourhood's creative entrepreneurs.

The Live-Work units have direct access from the street, to serve as an office or showroom for entrepreneurs, with storage and an accessible washroom at the back of the unit. The living quarters are located on the second storey of the unit and are completely separated from the publicly accessible at-grade storefront working quarters. Each Live-Work unit has a small patio at the front entrance to provide a buffer zone between the pedestrian sidewalk and the unit itself.



*Fig. 2.2.5.20: DUKE Live-Work Unit with Patio (right)*

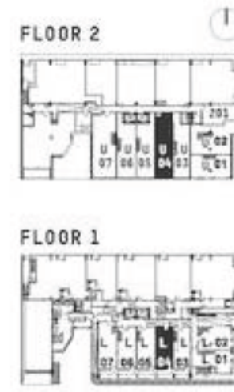
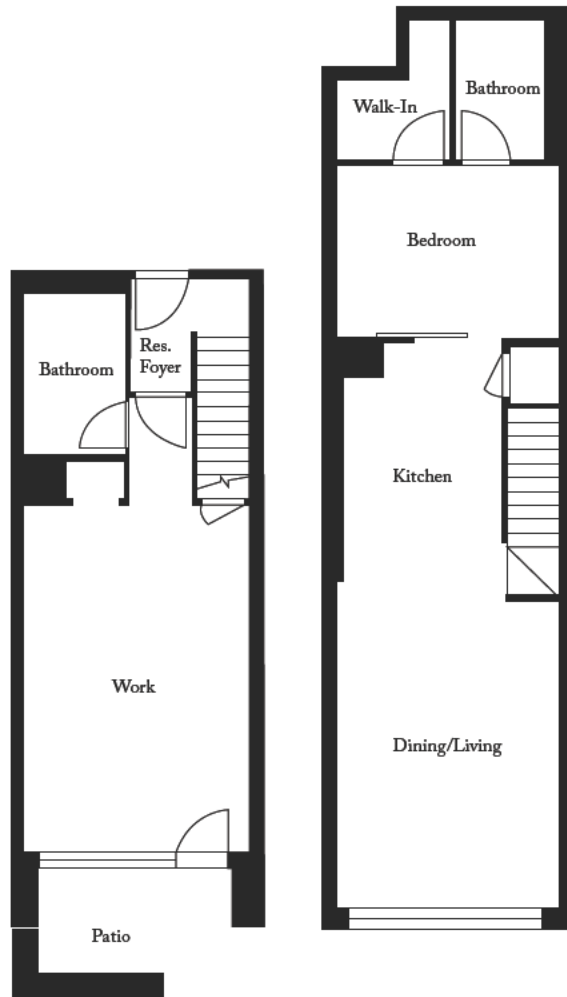


Fig. 2.2.5.21: DUKE Live-Work, Partial Building Plan, NTS (above)

Fig. 2.2.5.22: DUKE Live-Work, First and Second Floor Plan, NTS (left)





Fig. 2.2.5.23: DUKE Live-Work, Sectional Perspective (above)

**LEGEND**

- Residential
- Live/Work
- Circulation
- Outdoor Green Space
- Amenities

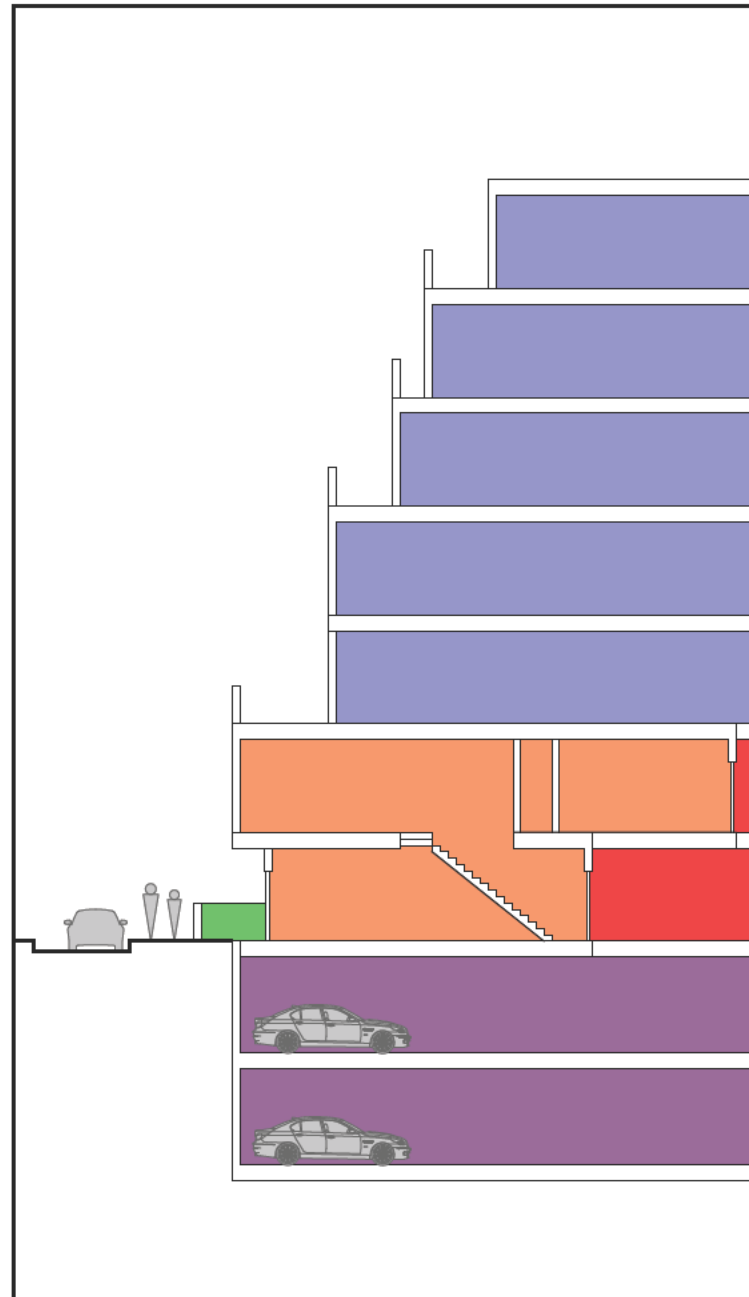


Fig. 2.2.5.24: DUKE Live-Work, Organizational Section Diagram, NTS (right)

## 2.2.6

### **SUMMARY OF BUILDING TYPES IN RELATION TO *CITY-NESS* HIGH-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING**

From looking at the presented typology examples, a few things can be concluded. First, this type presents the most opportunity for density increase but often overwhelms the neighbourhoods they are put in, such as the St James Town examples. Second, these types don't provide services or amenities available to the entire community; there is no community enrichment. Third, while the Windermere by the Lake example has made an effort to better communicate with the streetscape, the High-Rise type creates isolated buildings with little-to-no connection to the area around it. Last, large sites needed for these types of development are all but gone; eradication is the only way to achieve this type of development, similar to the St James Town example.

#### **PROS:**

Provides the highest amount of density possible.

More affordable than the single-family home or other type options.

#### **CONS:**

Needs a large site or the consolidation of many small parcels; parking requirements exacerbate the need for a larger site.

Not ideal for families.

Pressure to build higher than intended to provide maximum return on investment for developers.

Overwhelms infrastructure and existing neighbourhoods.

Creates isolated communities with no street-relation.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

While this type evolved to made efforts to better the relationship to the street, isolated vertical communities are still the result of this type; more efforts need to be made in having the type learn from the existing fabric around it.

## **LOW-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING**

From looking at the presented typology examples, a few things can be concluded. First, while this type presents the most opportunity for density increase, it does little to communicate with the street and ends up becoming a shorter version of the high-rise condominiums. Second, this type does best on a large lot. While the Garden Court apartments are a continued successful example, we simply cannot build like this anymore due to the finite lots available for building presently. Lastly, this type does extremely well as a multiple-use type building; hybridizing this type with other types will help make it more versatile.

### **PROS:**

Provides the highest amount of density possible for a low-rise scale.

Adaptable to allow for more typologies to fit within the scheme (ie. Mixed-Use/Retail).

Affordable price for both renting and owning.

### **CONS:**

Needs a large site or the consolidation of many small parcels; parking requirements exacerbate the need for a larger site.

Little private outdoor space for residents; communal in nature.

Not ideal for families.

Pressure to build higher than intended to provide maximum return on investment for developers.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

In order to make this a successful type for future development, the low-rise apartment building must communicate better with the street, mix-uses, and conform better to smaller sites.

## **ROW HOUSE**

From looking at the presented typology examples, a few things can be concluded. First, this type is a great alternative to the single-family home but doesn't add much in the form of extra density to the neighbourhood. It can, however be easily added to an already established neighbourhood by becoming infill architecture and utilizing empty laneways. Second, the price tag for this type of home is typically quite high and unattainable for many families. Lastly, the Row House does well on residential type streets but is not suitable for main street intensification.

### **PROS:**

Accommodates narrow parcels.

Suitable for families.

All units typically have private outdoor space.

Suitable infill architecture; works in tight areas.

Good alternative to the single-family home.

### **CONS:**

Lowest amount of density for the amount of land used.

Single-use; isn't typically mixed with other uses (ie retail).

Seen as "luxury" and therefore has a high price tag.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

In order to make this a more versatile type for future development, the Row House should be used in conjunction with other types of dwelling to keep the price lower and while providing a suitable alternative for families.

## **STACKED ROW HOUSE**

From looking at the presented typology example, a few things can be concluded. First, the Stacked Row House is a great form of the traditional Row House as it enables double the density while still remaining at a low-scale. Second, this type is just starting to gain popularity as is evidenced by the lack of precedents; many of the examples are currently in the early stages of construction. This shows that the type is already an accepted alternative to the single-family home. Lastly, this form of the Row House is more affordable than the traditional type making it more attainable for the average family who wishes to remain in the city but cannot afford the price of the single-family home.

### **PROS:**

Doubles the density of the traditional Row House.

Remains a suitable alternative to the single-family house; ideal for families.

Accommodates narrow parcels.

### **CONS:**

Single-use; isn't typically mixed with other uses (ie retail).

Doesn't address the street; suitable on residential streets not main streets.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Similar to the recommendation for the Row House, this type would benefit from being used in conjunction with other types to boost the density around main street areas. It could also be used as an alternative for sites with already existing Row Houses as a density booster without changing too much of the original fabric.

## **LIVE-WORK UNIT/MIXED-USE STOREFRONT**

From looking at the presented typology examples, a few things can be concluded. First, this type already exists within the main street fabric of Toronto as vernacular fabric. The examples have illustrated modern adjustments that can be made to the type, in order to make it better suited for modern life. Second, this is the only type that addresses the street; storefronts allow for the interaction at street level and help to increase foot traffic along the main streets, adding vitality and vibrancy to neighbourhoods. Lastly, this type can be easily fit into a scheme with other dwelling types; it provides an excellent base for hybridization.

### **PROS:**

Accommodates narrow parcels.

Mixed-Use in nature and provides a means for increasing density while enhancing the streetscape and neighbourhood.

Contains both public and private features.

Provides opportunity for small and local businesses; generates money for the neighbourhood.

### **CONS:**

On the lower side of the density scale.

High cost associated in buying and adjusting an existing vernacular piece of Mixed-Use fabric.

Living units are typically apartments and not suitable for families.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

While this type is proven to work along the main streets of Toronto, it needs help from other types to help boost density on main streets; the hybridization of this type in conjunction with other types would be best for this.

# 3.0

## SPECULATION

The focus of this chapter is to create a speculation-based dialogue about the issues regarding density and development in the City of Toronto.

## 3.1 DENSITY AND DEVELOPMENT

*The next step in working towards an alternative to the condo building typology is to examine the current state of affairs when it comes to how the City of Toronto is dealing with intensification and density, and answer a few important questions regarding the issues of condos.*

*Where does this pressure to eliminate Toronto's "city-ness" come from? Why condos and why now? What is the role that density is playing into the initiation of this type of condo development? Why is this kind of development an issue? Why even is the loss of Toronto's "city-ness", due to the current trajectory of intensification, an issue? This section looks to answer all of the above questions by speculating about the issue of density and development, and analyzing the condo typology.*

### THE ROLE OF URBAN DENSITY AND LIFESTYLE CHANGE IN THE INITIATION OF HIGH-RISE CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPMENT

Density and intensification in the City of Toronto over the past decade hasn't happened evenly over the entire city. Due to the need for development land, the GTA continually grew outward until, with a crisis of unsustainable sewage and transportation funding, and the gridlock on its expressways and arterial roads, it could no longer grow anymore. Arguments have been made regarding the influence of the creation of the Greenbelt surrounding the GTA in the early 2000s and how it has affected the GTA's ability to grow. The Greenbelt pushes back on the GTA, limiting its ability to continue sprawling outward. This containment, in conjunction with the lack of available vacant land within the city, has caused the development of the single-family home to slow the suburbanization of the previous decades. Furthermore, to combat suburbanization and sprawl, and draw more residents back into the City, there has been a push for the reurbanization of the City of Toronto's urban areas, especially its arterial avenues.

Reurbanization is an intelligent way to assist intensification efforts within a city and is helpful in accommodating growth while limiting sprawl. It takes advantage of the already existing system of infrastructure within a city, requiring efforts to be made towards the improvement of existing infrastructure rather than the expansion of a new system. The process saves money and time. Improvement of existing infrastructure also helps to the push for a more pedestrian-centred and transit-based centre, reducing the dependency on automobile travel.

A catalyst for the push towards reurbanization was the zoning changes made during the 1970s which encouraged mixed-use development opportunities. With density bonuses and transfers being added to the development pot, mixed-use intensification projects were made more feasible. The City was and has been trying to provide a means for the greatest amount of intensification and reurbanization possible. Apartment condominium developments flourished in this regulatory environment. All expected development in the city, and even in the GTA recently is now assumed to be accomplished through the intensification of land use within existing built-up areas<sup>76</sup> and the apartment based condo building typology is seen as the best solution so far.



As noted in the previous section, shifts in demographics, lifestyle, and economics, are cause for the condo market to remain buoyant today. Changes in family size and household dynamics have caused shifts in what the “ideal” dwelling type is for urban life. The average family size has decreased; the single, young-professionals and newly divorced 50-somethings, are the newly surfacing household types which are helping to propel the condo market. These demographics are helping to drive the desire for the condominium residential typology and seem to be responsible for the continuing construction of this type.

The growing demographic is also choosing to live in areas of the city that allow for freedom from the car. Condominiums in areas typically zoned for mixed-use, allow residents to be within walking distance of their employers or other day-to-day destinations, such as grocery stores and coffee shops. A closer look at these condominium developments needs to be taken in order to establish whether they are helping to push towards these intensification goals or compromising the quality of life in the city by the transformation they engender.

*Fig. 3.1.1: Before, King St W industrial fabric (right)*



*Fig. 3.1.2: After, conversion of King St W industrial fabric into condominium developments (right)*



## ECONOMIC ISSUES WITH THIS TYPE OF HIGH-RISE DEVELOPMENT

While the high-rise condominium is a satisfactory economic phenomenon for developers, this type of development is problematic for the healthy growth and intensification of the physical built fabric of Toronto. Limitations on new single-family housing stock within the city is causing prices of this dwelling type to skyrocket. As economist and investment guru, Garth Turner puts it: *“Higher prices on reduced volumes is unsustainable; we can’t accommodate growth this way.”* (Bull Talk June 3, 2015 greaterfool.ca). Condominiums aren’t gaining value like single-family houses which means there is a growing surplus of this type of dwelling in a market searching for a new ideal lifestyle of new families.

Turner depicts this struggle for an urban home by going so far as to say: *“Renters who invest in financial assets do better than dudes with condos.”*<sup>77</sup>. A market report conducted by RealNet Canada Inc., published on June 18, 2015, examines GTA High Rise Projects, as a part of their GTA New Homes Overview publication. The figures within this report show that the sales for the High Rise developments have dropped 7.3% from 2014 to 2015 while the sales for Low Rise developments have increased 21.7% over the same time period.

While the prices for high-rise developments increased only 0.6% over the year, low-rise single homes increased 16.1%. These two sets of numbers corroborate the idea that there shift in desire from high to low-rise developments. Turner’s point stating condominiums aren’t gaining equity like other forms of dwelling are is also compelling. When comparing the percentage of new projects being sold, the high-rise units are sitting at 35% of total new units sold whereas the low-rise units are 71% sold. This data further corroborates a shift in dwelling desirability ideals from high-rise to low-rise.

Despite the detailed tendencies in the above issues, in general there simply are no more large empty sites within Toronto on which to build low-rise homes or condominium developments. No “clean” sites are available within the city anymore, meaning that new developments can be made only on already built-on sites after a period of land assembly. The demolition and takeover of already built-on Toronto fabric is slowly starting to occur in order to accommodate for new large, condominium developments. If this trend of building continues, Toronto’s downtown will be engulfed with high-rise condominiums, especially on the main streets. Most of the single-family residences on the local streets will remain intact due to their high prices, and the only areas that will be feasible to build on will be the remaining main streets that connect these low-scale but very expensive to assemble residential neighbourhoods. The amount of high-level growth and intensification attributed to condominium developments cannot be accommodated by the already struggling arterial infrastructure within the city. Roads already are too congested to allow for more private vehicle traffic and the subway system has not been developed enough to sufficiently deal with the mass transit of residents within the city.



*Fig. 3.1.3: State of high-rise construction in Toronto, 2014 (above)*



*Fig. 3.1.4: Restaurant Alley on King St W is under threat to be torn down and redeveloped as high-rise condominium buildings (above)*

## **“MORE TORONTO”: SPECULATION PRESSURE AND LOSING TORONTO’S “CITY-NESS”**

As mentioned above, there are very few “clean”, developable sites remaining within the city large enough to support high-scale intensification efforts such as condominiums. The limited stock and climbing prices of single-family homes, especially within the City of Toronto, will help to maintain their survivable position within the intensifying fabric of the city, meaning that many of the remaining small-grained fabric of Toronto’s city core, particularly on the main streets, is vulnerable to assembly, eradication, and larger-scale rebuilding. A large scale comprehensive takeover of the main street fabric would mean the loss of that distinctly Torontonionian small-grain vernacular fabric; a loss of its *city-ness*. Businesses at the podium or ground level of today’s new condominium developments are typically large and corporate chain retail in nature. The eradication of the small business opportunities and neighbourhood-centric shops, businesses, and residences, mean that the main streets of Toronto, those that help give Toronto its unique flavour, would vanish. The small shops and locally-owned businesses that fill Toronto’s main streets today simply don’t generate enough revenue to be able to afford space within these expensive new mixed-use high-rise condo developments. This situation means that local business would suffer, and the city itself would undergo a massive shift in economic opportunities for its residents. No longer would designers or merchant entrepreneurs be able to afford small shops to sell their goods. Places of meeting such as cafes and small bars would be replaced by larger chain restaurant conglomerates. Those places that made neighbourhoods distinct would no longer exist. The locational buffer between high-density, large-scale developments and small-grain vernacular fabric would cease and the contrast between high and low density, big and small developments, and local and generic building would become extremely evident. The breakdown of neighbourhood character would follow as the low-scale residential pockets would become isolated between large-scale buildings. The condominium developments themselves would become secluded entities that breakup the unity of the streetscape and the pedestrian based diversity at the sidewalk; Fig. 2.1.5 demonstrates that above the fifth storey, an association with the street below is no longer evident, weakening the connection between building and street. Condominium developments are typically large and corporate chain retail in nature.

The City of Toronto itself sees this transformation as an issue, and discusses it in their Avenue and Mid-Rise Building Study, which was published in May 2010. Here, the City looks at creating an incentive to grow the mid-rise scale of buildings, as an attempt to “*shift from the high-rise type back to something more manageable and more Toronto*”. Redevelopment and intensification in Toronto should happen within the context of the existing fabric – largely detached and semi-detached low-rise homes on residential streets that are bordered by low-rise main street buildings. Too much intensification, especially at a high-scale, removes all traces of Toronto’s unique *city-ness* and neighbourhood qualities that are alive within the main streets today. Toronto will become another generic city of high-rise condominium developments and isolated streetscapes reduced to “character” areas much like many US cities.

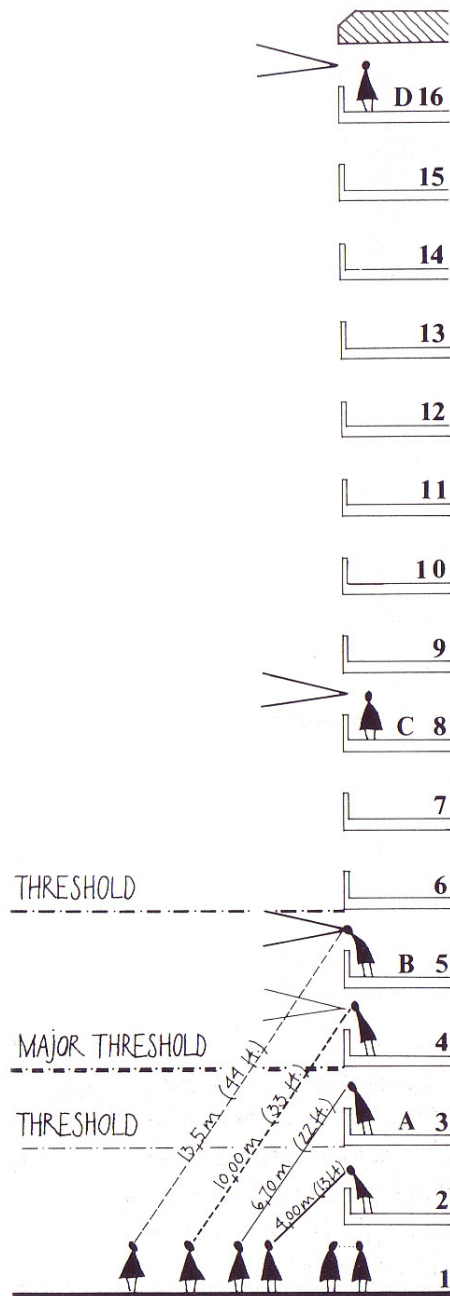


Fig. 3.1.5: Height in relation to street connectedness, Diagram (left)

## THE THESIS DESIGN PROBLEM: WHY CONDOS, WHY NOW, WHAT TO DO?

The previous four queries have all lead up to the final question of why condos and why now? To answer that question, we must look at three things: the rise of urban housing, the changing of demographics, and the issues surrounding the single-family housing stock.

As a result of the pressure to reurbanize Toronto and attract more residents to live in the city, Toronto has been allowing the building of development that are eradicating the *city-ness* that make the streets and neighbourhoods unique. It has realized this problem but has no real solution. The state of modern architecture has a sense of global appeal; a building in Los Angeles could easily be replicated and built in Tokyo with little changes. This globalization pressure is causing for Torontonians architecture to try and appeal to such larger, global trends and markets. Architecture that is universally appealing creates bland and flavourless buildings that exist but don't live or emerge within a city. There is little consideration for site-specific architecture and this is causing the fabric of the city to suffer. Instead of trying to compete with other large successful cities, such as Vancouver, by using the same building types they are, Toronto should be focusing on what makes it unique, and expand from there. In the end, understanding its own *city-ness* will help Toronto intensify at a proper rate, maintain its unique qualities, and maintain its success long-term.



*Fig. 3.1.6: Vancouver-style podium and point tower development in Toronto(right)*

Years of suburban growth around the periphery of the city is slowing down and developers have now shifted their attention back to the city centre. The successful push towards the reurbanization of Toronto means that urban housing has grown in popularity. There is a growing desire to live within the city and up until this point, the condominium development type of dwelling has supplanted the intensification efforts by providing a means for the greatest amount of intensification possible. Due to the quick success of this type, developers began building more and more condominiums; the stock of high-rise apartment housing is now at an all-time high. The City of Toronto modified rules and regulations geared towards the high-rise condominium making it easy to continue building this type of development and difficult to build other types. Unfortunately, the demand for high-rise dwelling units is being surpassed by the continuously growing stock and new buildings. The current “renters market” is making renting condominiums an ideal but is causing for very few of the owners of these units to be living in them. The stock of people willing to purchase a second residential property will dwindle. The idea of the high-rise condominium as an investment property isn’t working the same as it is with the single-family home; the return on investment is slim and high-rise property doesn’t gain revenue like the single-family house does.

Demographic and lifestyle changes have also helped to propel the high-rise condominium development forward in the City of Toronto. The condominiums being built today reflect the single and/or childless demographic – the single young professional women, the newly divorced 50-something’s, and young professional couples without children. High-rise condominium developments have little ability to accommodate any other familial structures, especially those that are greater than 2 people, and those with children. Previously, this wasn’t an issue due to the fact that these types of residential structures were generating great demand for the building of more high-rise developments. Now, however, the demographics propelling the condominium market are experiencing another shift as their families mature. The young professionals have begun coupling, getting married and having children, all while wishing to remain residents of the City of Toronto. While many of the single professionals had financial help in purchasing their condos, typically from parents helping to bankroll the investment, single-family homes are much more expensive and, even with help from parents, remain far too costly. Other options for these new and growing families need to be made so that they can remain to live within the city and not get pushed out to the suburbs, acting counterproductive to the intensification and rerurbanization efforts put forth by the City of Toronto.

Another reason behind the popularity of the high-rise condominium developments is simply the fact that, due to the finite stock of single-family housing within the city, single-family homes are far too expensive for most residents to afford, causing them to turn to renting or buying more affordable high-rise apartments or condominiums. Economist Garth Turner speaks to this issue on his Blog, in an entry from June 3, 2015 entitled Bull Talk. He argues that the higher prices on a reduced volume of stock, in this case the single-family home, is unsustainable and cannot accommodate growth. The price of these houses has gained over 18% in a single year making them extremely unaffordable for the average family; the price is more than double the income of the typical Torontonian household. He illustrates the unattainability of these homes by describing the actual costs behind purchasing one:



*Fig. 3.1.7: Looming High-Rise Residential and Office towers over Small-Grain vernacular fabric, Dundas St W (above)*

*“Third, as prices move higher, the universe of potential buyers shrinks – even with the lowest mortgage rates ever in place. If the average 416 detached is \$1.15 million, a new buyer not bringing big equity to the table would need 20% down and enough for closing costs (land transfer tax along is \$38,500). That’s cash of \$270,000. The mortgage would be \$920,000, cost \$5,100 a month (at just 2.8%) with property tax and require an income of at least \$185,000.”*

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It is clear that the small stock in single-family houses is generating a demand for this type of dwelling, but the astronomical prices associated with purchasing a house of this kind are preventing most families from being able to live in them. With the case being made that high-rise apartments or condominiums are unsuitable and undesirable types of dwellings for a family to reside in, this brings forth the question: what other options do families have?

To continue developing and building in a business-as-usual manner will only set up Toronto for poor, unsustainable development. Just because intensification is being approached in a certain manner at this point in doesn’t mean that these types of developments are the only option available. The types of development that the city chooses to use will directly influence the future of Toronto. Should the city keep going the way it does, too much intensification will be put in place for the infrastructure to handle and the neighbourhoods will lose their unique *city-ness*. What is needed is a sensible and manageable densification effort that will help the city grow efficiently, that is able to translate and build on Toronto’s unique elements of *city-ness*, creating a more urbanized, intensifying and distinct city for the future. This is the design problem of this thesis; to generate a new approach that does not rely on extensive land assembly for large-scale high-rise intensification. Rather it will be an approach that inserts density, often substantially with a series of small to mid-scale typologically diverse solutions.

## 3.2 PLANNING & CODES

A thorough read of the City of Toronto's Official Plan (2002) was conducted, noting all important and pertinent policies, information and plans. The following is a review of these policies, information and plans, organized by the chapter headings and sub-sections that appear in the Official Plan. It is important to note that the Plan takes into account not only the metropolitan Toronto (downtown) area, but the whole of the GTA.

By examining the Official Plan, it will be evident which plans, procedures, and policies are already in place to help the efforts of this thesis, and which may pose a problem. The goal of reviewing this document will be to take away a better understand of the planning policies and direction of the City, how these will help or hinder the ultimate goal of the thesis, and, finally, create a list of recommendations in order to help tailor the Plan in order to better accommodate the Design Development and Guidelines proposed at the end of the thesis.

A comprehensive review of the *Official Plan*, written by this author, is located in the **Back Matter** section in **Appendix A**.

## CONCLUSIONS

Upon investigating the Official Plan a few key things can be concluded. Firstly, the Official Plan is pushing for similar goals with this thesis; it shows an importance in the planning of vibrant neighbourhoods and communities, a desire for more of a mix in housing types, the importance of reurbanizing the core, establishes the importance of cultural context and vibrancy of neighbourhoods, and desires to intensify at a lower scale than what is happening currently. There is also a push to remove the reliance of private vehicles and push towards a more transit-oriented city. It establishes the importance and versatility of main roads as potential sites of intensification, as is evident through the Building the Avenues Study, and is also pushing for city planning to be approached in a more holistic manner, rather than the project-by-project approach happening presently. The downfall to the Official Plan, however is that there are many good plans and regulations are not being followed; amendments and appeals that are being overruled by the Ontario Municipal Board are playing a large role in this. The Plan has also acknowledged that proper sites for Tall Buildings have vanished and that there needs to be a new solution to help support density and inject intensification but it does not provide the answer. Similarly, the Plan states that a balance in the housing stock needed and new types of dwelling must emerge but again, gives no possible solutions to this issue. Overall, the Official Plan has good intentions but is too vague to get anything done successfully or properly enforced. There needs to be a better framework for development and guidelines for building intensification that can be adhered to easily and consistently enforced.



### 3.3

## THESIS DESIGN FRAMEWORK: THE CITY OF TORONTO CONDOMINIUM CONSULTATION RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

*Condominium Consultation Recommendations Report* was published on behalf of the City of Toronto in order to ensure the health of Toronto's condominium communities as a key for the future health of the city as a whole. A two-phase public consultation process was launched, a year prior, to engage people in an arrangement of issues related to city planning and condominium living. Phase One of the consultation ran from February to March of 2013; over 1,500 people provided feedback through 5 public meetings, working sessions, online surveys, and voluntary communication with the project team. Phase Two ran from April to July of 2013; over 500 people provided feedback through the same methods used in Phase One. The two phases of the consultation were designed to gather feedback on draft ideas on how to improve condo living; ideas were part of the presentation for the public meetings and the survey. Existing processes currently underway at the City were examined, as well as new ideas not yet in place, and feedback regarding alternate, or new, ideas from the community were sought after on how to improve condominium living. The Project Team consisted of Swerhun Inc, retained to conduct stakeholder and public engagement processes, and R. E. Millward and Associates, Planning Alliance and Halsall Associates, retained to provide technical advice and inform recommendations.

In total, 36 recommendations were put together for the final report which was published in January of 2014. The recommendations were organized into 13 different sections: Planning Process, Height and Density, Congestion, Green Space and Public Realm, Pets and Dogs, Parking, Condo Board Governance, Flexible Space, Family-Sized Units and Affordable Housing, Community Engagement, Construction Quality and Building Permits, Amenities, and Voting Stations. Of these 36 recommendations, a few have been selected for further review in the current section as vital pieces of community-based information regarding this thesis, and will be taken into account during the final Design Development in Chapter 5.

A comprehensive review of the *Condominium Consultation Recommendations Report*, written by this author, is located in the **Back Matter** section in **Appendix B**.

## TORONTO'S DESIGN GOALS

From the examination of the Condo Report, we have learned a few key things regarding what current condo residents see as issues regarding this type of residential development.

First and foremost, the Ontario Municipal Board's jurisdiction over the Toronto City Council on matters of Zoning By-Law amendments, Official Plan amendments, Site Plans, Urban Design Guidelines, Subdivision and Condominium Plan approvals, Community Improvement Plan approvals, and appeals under the Heritage Act should be abolished.

The Toronto City Council should have primary jurisdiction over all matters listed above and should not be able to be overruled by the Ontario Municipal Board. This will help ensure that the design and vision for the future of the city matches what actually is being built and that developers no longer have a loophole in changing the regulations set forth by the City of Toronto.

Second, there is a strong desire for developments to take into account the importance of a connection with the street and community. Many of the residents thought that while it was convenient to have amenities conveniently located within their own condominium development, it actually hindered the cohesiveness of the streetscape and isolated the condominium from the rest of the community outside it.

Third, it was made clear that residents are ready to ditch the car and have a desire for more transit-oriented design. Developments that are built along the already established transit corridors, such as main streets, would be most ideal in taking advantage of already existing infrastructure. Clear attention has to be paid to the amount of density placed along these arteries however, to ensure that the infrastructure can handle the level of development; slow, incremental change is best.

Fourth, residents showed a need for more family-sized units and a greater variety in dwelling types overall. It was established that condominiums do not easily absorb families and that there must be other options made for these types of residents; a type that could infuse the ideals of the single-family home with the affordability of the condominium unit would be most suitable in being able to accommodate more types of familial structures.

Fifth, and finally, there was a strong desire for better retail, designed to meet the needs of the residents and allow for more community enrichment. The current retail podium at grade that is the trademark of most high-rise condominium towers are usually filled with generic and chain-retail options. The residents made it clear that, although they appreciate having retail opportunities so close to where they live, they would like smaller retail businesses that are better suited to the needs of the neighbourhood. Locally-owned shops would be an example of a type of retail that these residents would benefit from.

In conclusion, the design of future density-carrying developments should take the above recommendations into account in order to better facilitate successful, community-oriented intensification that will serve the neighbourhood and residents.

## CHAPTER 3.0 ENDNOTES

<sup>76</sup> Lawhon, Larry L. 2003. "Planners' perceptions of their role in socially responsive neighborhood design". Vol. 20.

<sup>77</sup> Garth Turner. "Scum". June 23, 2015. <http://www.greaterfool.ca> (accessed May 2015).

<sup>78</sup> Garth Turner.



# 4.0

## TRINITY- BELLWOODS

This Chapter focuses on the final thesis design site of the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood. It illustrates how this neighbourhood is both unique and typical, making it an ideal demonstrative design site. It also contains a set of morphological maps that provide context for the urban morphology of the area. Finally, it looks at the current conditions present within the main street portion of the design site.

## 4.1 TRINITY-BELLWOODS: UNIQUE & TYPICAL

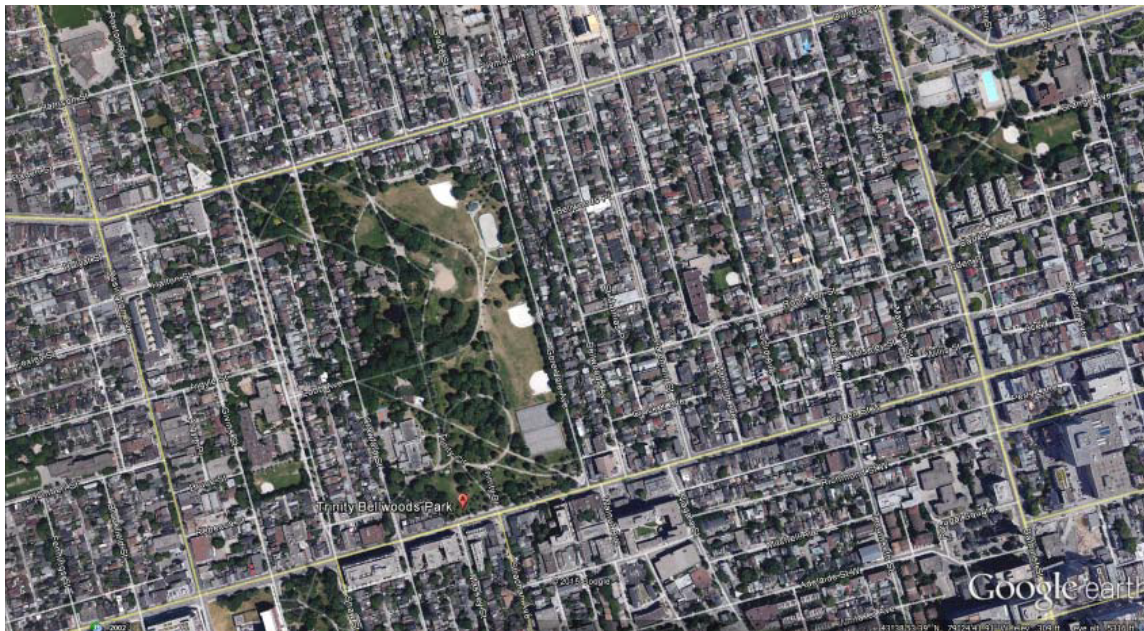
*The neighbourhood of Trinity-Bellwoods has been chosen as the site for thesis design development. While this neighbourhood, like all neighbourhoods in Toronto, has its unique qualities, it can also be seen as 'typical'. Some elements that help to make Trinity-Bellwoods unique are also elements that occur in other neighbourhoods around the city such as: parks, a Torontonians main street, streetcar transit, long residential block neighbourhoods with small parcels, schools, and the beginnings of gentrification.*

### PARKS: TRINITY-BELLWOODS PARK

Trinity-Bellwoods Park is a unique feature of the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood. The park is a popular spot for local residents to walk their dogs, for people to meet, a site for art installations, and as communal outdoor space for the area's residents. The City of Toronto purchased the land, which at the time was the site for the Trinity College Campus, in the 1950s and swiftly demolished the campus, with the exception of the stone and iron entrance gates and the St Hilda's College building which now serves as a senior's residence. There are residential streets along the East and West perimeters of the park which flank the property. The North and South perimeters of the park are bounded by main streets which pull pedestrians through the park.



*Fig. 4.1.1: Trinity-Bellwoods Park (above)*



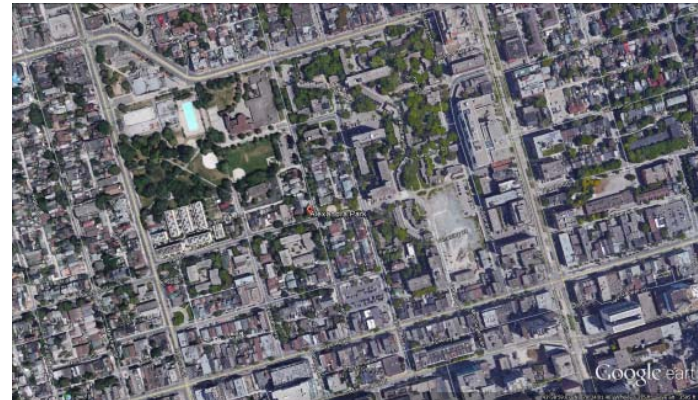
*Fig. 4.1.2: Trinity-Bellwoods Park - GoogleEarth View (left)*

Trinity-Bellwoods Park is a destination point for many people within the city; even people who don't live within the neighbourhood travel to the park for various community events, art shows, and picnics.

While the history and current uses of the park are unique to the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood, there are many other parks which share the same form and function as this one.

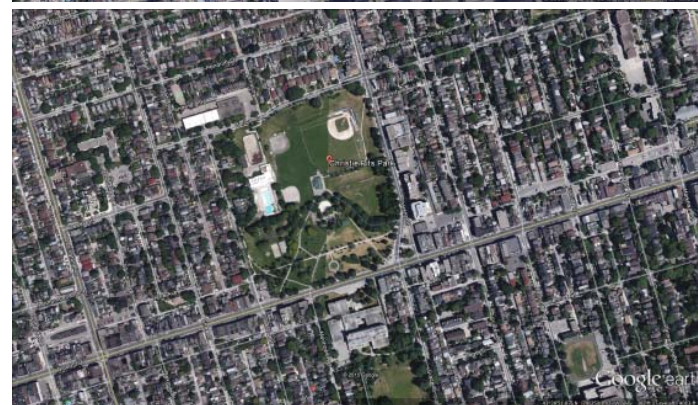
*Fig. 4.1.3: Alexandra Park - GoogleEarth View (right)*

Alexandra Park is another example of a neighbourhood being named after a park within its jurisdiction. Park amenities include a baseball diamond, picnic area, community garden, volleyball court, skateboard area, wading pool, and children's playground, as well as an ice rink, outdoor pool and community centre. Most activities within the park are centred on facilitating the needs of the residents of the area, a large majority of whom live within the neighbourhood's community housing.



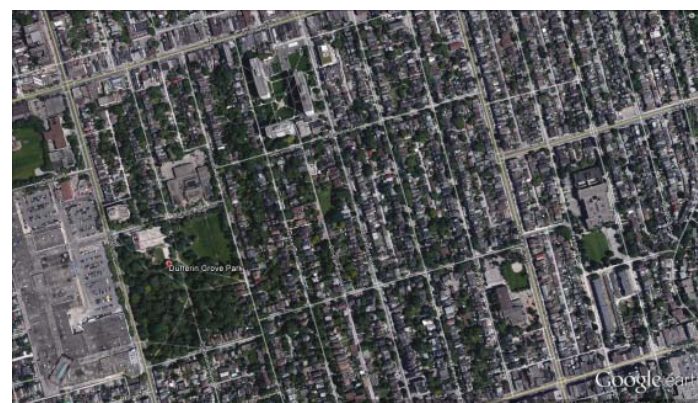
*Fig. 4.1.4: Christie Pits Park - GoogleEarth View (right)*

Christie Pits Park was formerly the location of the Christie Sand Pits, which were on that site until the early 1900s. Because of this, the perimeter edges of the park are highly sloped causing for the majority of the park to sit below street level. In the winter it is common to see children taking advantage of this by using the slopes to toboggan down. A number of sports and recreational amenities exist on the site as well as picnic sites. The Garrison Creek runs under the park, which is a common element to many Toronto parks.



*Fig. 4.1.5: Dufferin Grove Park - GoogleEarth View*

Dufferin Grove Park is filled primarily with mixed open green space and treed areas. Some sport amenities can be found on the site but what is unique to the park is the Organic Farmer's Market that sets up in the park on Thursdays. It is also home to the Clay and Paper Theatre which stages outdoor plays in the summer and is responsible for organizing other special events throughout the year. Like the Christie Pits Park, the Garrison Creek ran through a quadrant of the park.



## STREETCAR TRANSIT: 505 DUNDAS

A large contributing factor to the nature of Dundas St Was a main street is the 505 Dundas streetcars. This streetcar easily connects the neighbourhood with other neighbourhoods around it and also contributes to the walkability of the neighbourhood; the dependency on the private vehicle is lessened due to the ease of mobility made possible by the streetcar.



Fig. 4.1.6: 505 Dundas Streetcar (above)



Fig. 4.1.7: Toronto Streetcar Network Map (left)

This diagram shows the extent of the TTC Streetcar Network, overlaying the route on top of the Subway lines to show where each intersects. These intersections facilitate easier travel from one form of transit to another.



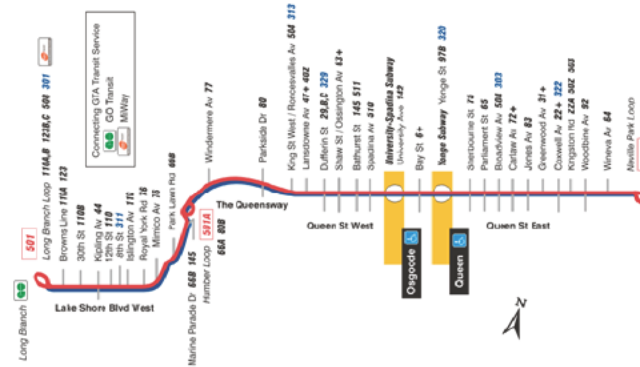
**LEGEND**

<span style="color: red;">—</span>	Main Route
<span style="color: blue;">—</span>	Blue Night Route
<span style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;"> </span>	Terminal Point
<span style="color: red;">44</span>	Connecting TTC Route

Other notable streetcar lines that improve the neighbourhoods they serve are: 501 Queen that goes along Queen St, 506 Carleton that goes along College St, and 512 St Clair that goes along St Clair Ave.

*Fig. 4.1.8: 501 Queen Route Map (right)*

The 501 Queen Streetcar is the longest streetcar route of the TTC at nearly 25km long. This route is one of the busiest in the city with service running 24-hours a day and a daily ridership of 43,500 people.



*Fig. 4.1.9: 506 Carlton Route Map (right)*

The 506 Carlton Streetcar is a popular route because it links so many different destinations together on one route. It runs 24-hours a day and has a daily ridership of 40,900 people.



*Fig. 4.1.10: 512 St Clair Route Map (right)*

The St Clair Streetcar line is one of the oldest in the city; it began in the early 1900s in a successful attempt to promote development in a newly annexed part of the city. Today, the relatively short line services a ridership of 32,400 people per day.



## TORONTONIAN MAIN STREET: DUNDAS ST W

As discussed in previous chapters, the main street typology is a recurring element throughout the City of Toronto. Main Streets link together various elements of the city, such as neighbourhoods and destinations, while serving as a destination themselves. Dundas St W runs through the centre of the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood. It is characteristic of a typical Torontonion Main Street; low-rise residential buildings with small, locally-owned shops at grade line the street and contribute to the walkability of the neighbourhood. Dundas St W helps give life and vitality to the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood and connects the fabric of residential streets to the north and south of the main street.

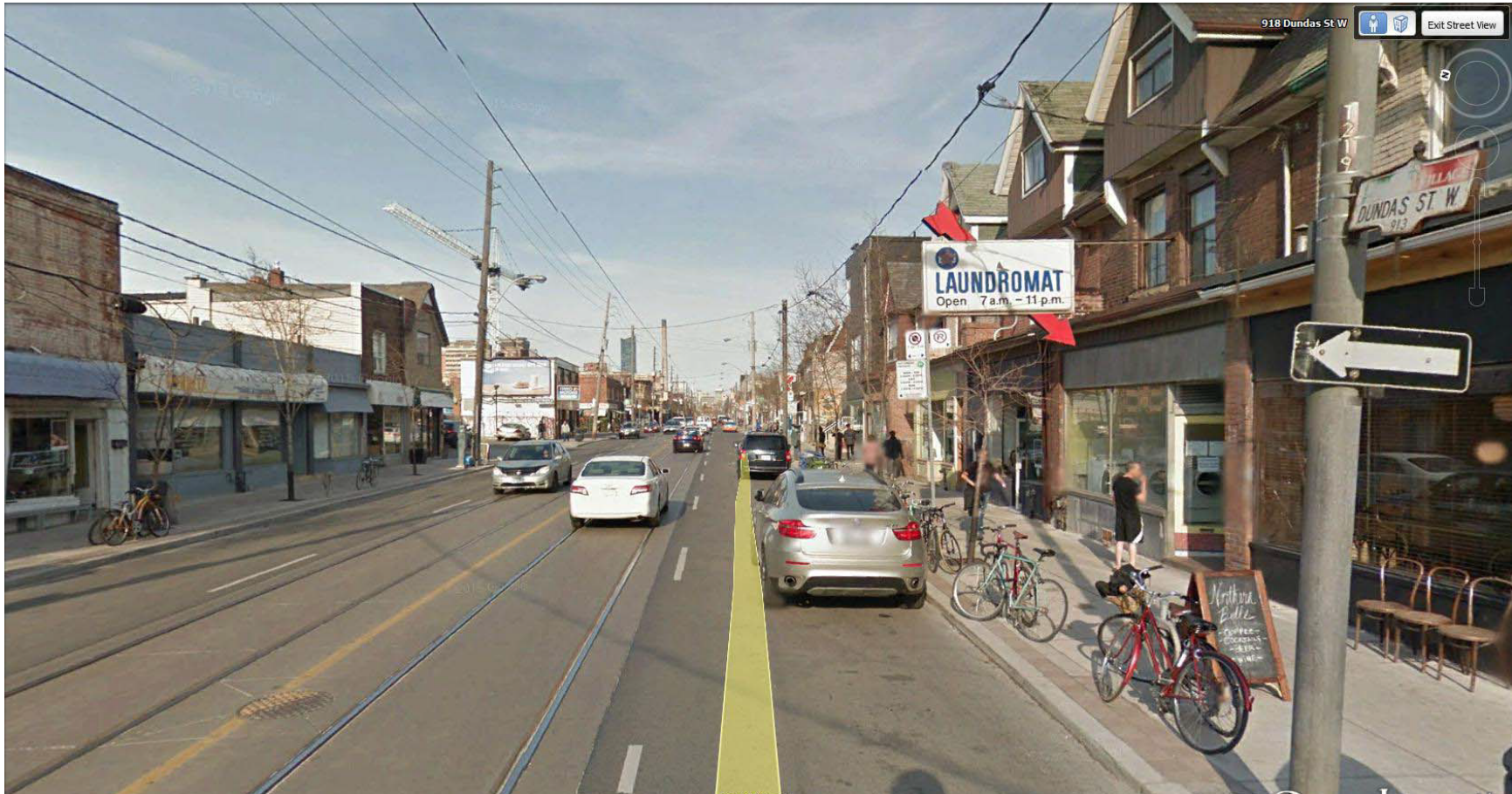


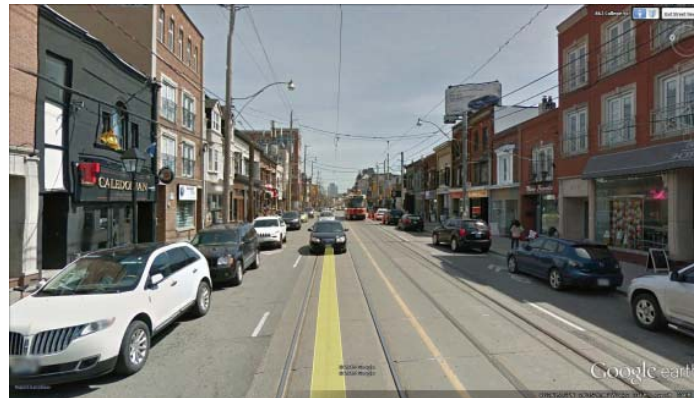
Fig. 4.1.11: Dundas St W - GoogleEarth View (above)

Other main streets that have a similar effect on the neighbourhood they are in are:

*Fig. 5.2.12: Bloor St - GoogleEarth StreetView (right)*



*Fig. 4.1.13: College St W - GoogleEarth StreetView (right)*

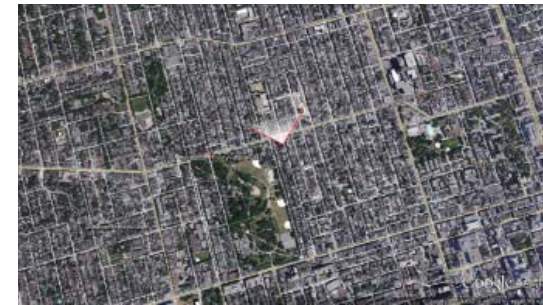


*Fig. 4.1.14: St Clair St W - GoogleEarth StreetView (right)*



## LONG RESIDENTIAL BLOCK NEIGHBOURHOODS/SMALL PARCELS: MANNING ST

Toronto is a city of neighbourhoods dominated by stretches of long, residential blocks lined with single-family homes in between a network of main streets. The Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood is an excellent example of this type of fabric; the stretches of residential fabric that run north and south of Dundas St W and meet the other main streets of Queen St W to the south and College St to the north, are typical of the residential fabric that runs throughout the city. The parcels of land within these residential blocks also conform with the small, long and narrow parcels typical of Toronto city fabric and contain upon them a highly-desirable, finite stock of single-family homes.

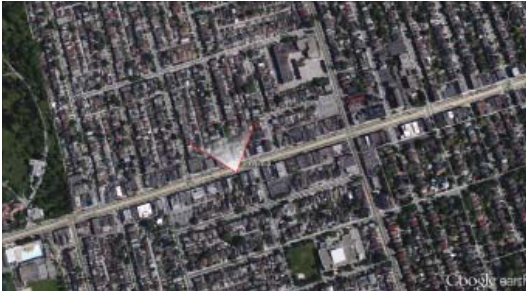


*Fig. 4.1.15: Trinity-Bellwoods - GoogleEarth View Context (above)*



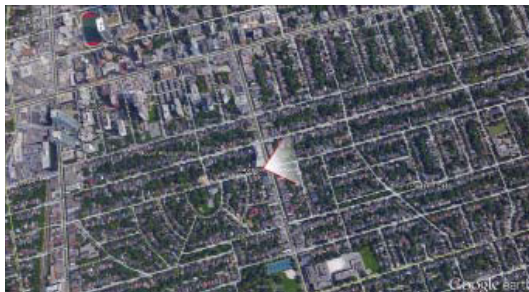
*Fig. 4.1.16: Trinity-Bellwoods - Aerial GoogleEarth (left)*

Other neighbourhoods that follow a similar pattern of long blocks with narrow residential parcels and single-family homes are:



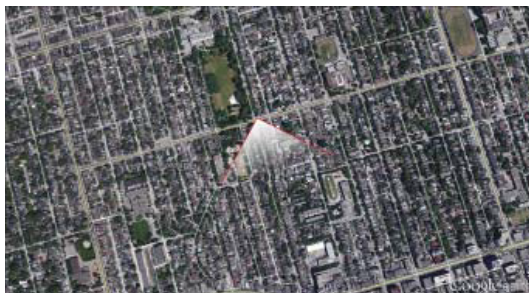
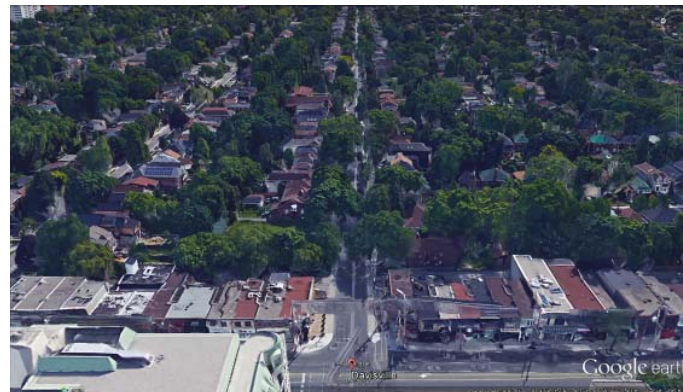
*Fig. 4.1.17: Corso Italia - GoogleEarth View (above)*

*Fig. 4.1.18: Corso Italia - Aerial GoogleEarth (right)*



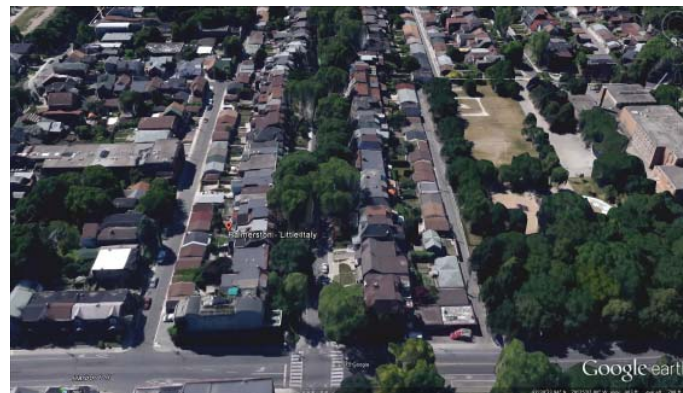
*Fig. 4.1.19: Davisville - GoogleEarth View Context (above)*

*Fig. 4.1.20: Davisville - Aerial GoogleEarth (right)*



*Fig. 4.1.21: Little Italy - GoogleEarth View Context (above)*

*Fig. 4.1.22: Little Italy - Aerial GoogleEarth (right)*



## SCHOOLS

The Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood is home to several Junior Public Schools such as Charles G Fraser Jr PS and Gavin S Shaw Jr PS. This shows that there is a need within the neighbourhood to accommodate children and their families. This has to do with the high percentage of single-family type homes and residential fabric that provides dwellings suitable for families, unlike the areas with high percentages of condominium dwellings that are less suitable for the lodgings of families. Many of the neighbourhoods mentioned previously in this section are composed of similar residential fabric, and also contain schools to accommodate the families and children.

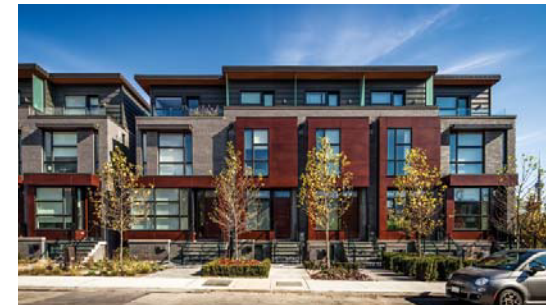
## GENTRIFICATION

The neighbourhood of Trinity-Bellwoods has all of the typical elements of a Torontonian neighbourhood, such as parks, main streets that carry public transit and border single-family residential fabric, and schools. It is these elements and their success in working together to form a vibrant, cohesive neighbourhood that are causing for Trinity-Bellwoods to become vulnerable to gentrification efforts.

In 2012 an empty site, that once was a Public School and parking lot, was developed into two rows of 45 townhomes. The new development, which was looked at in-depth in the precedents of Section 4.2 Row Houses, blended right into the existing rows of townhomes already within the neighbourhood and sold out quickly. The success of the Trinity-Bellwoods Towns development has spurred a new low-rise apartment building, by the name of Nero Condominiums, on the corner of Dundas St W and Manning Ave that is currently under construction. While this is the only new intensification development happening within the neighbourhood, it shows that there will be need to accommodate more residents within these types of neighbourhoods in the near future.



*Fig. 4.1.23: Charles G Fraser Jr Public School - GoogleStreet View (above)*



*Fig. 4.1.24: Trinity-Bellwoods Towns (above)*

*Fig. 4.1.25: Nero Condominiums (left)*

Nero Condominiums are currently under construction in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood. Unlike many new developments around the city, this one is at a much lower scale in terms of height and density. This is the first type of such developments within the neighbourhood and is sure to cause for more developments to occur.

The desirability of living in a neighbourhood such as Trinity-Bellwoods is growing. Many other similar neighbourhoods around the city have, are, or will be experiencing this push for intensification, as evidenced below.

*Fig. 4.1.26: Davisville Intensification (right)*

The intersection of Yonge and Eglinton in the Davisville neighbourhood is synonymous with high-scale intensification condominium developments. The area has been gentrifying for the better part of the last 20 years and shows a huge difference in scale from the pre-existing vernacular fabric and the newer condominium buildings.



*Fig. 4.1.27: Yonge/Dundas Intensification (right)*

Since the construction of the Eaton Centre in the late 60s and 70s, the Yonge/Dundas neighbourhood of Toronto has been undergoing rapid transformation. Gentrification in this area typically occurred on a large scale, in which many of the smaller parcels of land were bought up and combined in order to facilitate the building of larger condominium towers. There is, however, evidence of low-scale vernacular fabric on the fringes of the neighbourhood, as seen in the photo.



*Fig. 4.1.28: Yorkville Proposed Development (right)*

The Yorkville area of Toronto has changed a lot over the course of the last 50 years. Seen as a trendy and desirable neighbourhood, many high-rise condominium buildings have been constructed in order to capitalize on the desirability of the area.



## 4.2 DESIGN SITE MAPS

In contrast to these two changing sites examined in **Chapter 2.1** the M-14 to M-18 maps look at the thesis design site of Dundas St West in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood which show very little change to the building fabric. The small-grain parcelization of the site has also stayed the same over the 50 years' time, retaining the narrow and long configuration that it had historically always been. This raises questions as to what conditions have caused for this area to refrain from changing so drastically and why it is under threat of change now. The small-grain parcels, which are characteristic of many Torontonians neighbourhoods, have prevented the large-scale development of the city fabric in this area. Also, aside from the main streets, the majority of the fabric in this area is strictly low-rise residential fabric which is home to single-family homes, duplexes, and row houses. These types of dwelling are a part of the finite but highly desirable stock which means the fabric on these residential streets is not susceptible to development due to their high price tags and high desirability. The need for dwelling types that accommodate the family type are in high demand but finite supply making fabric in these areas not as vulnerable as those along the main streets. The issue of vulnerability in this neighbourhood is along the main arteries as they typically contain mixed-use storefronts and small-scale retail opportunities, in conjunction with already established transit infrastructure, making these main streets excellent sites for development.

Below are two photographs taken from the same point on Dundas St W in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood. The larger photo was taken in 1936 and the smaller on in 2010. While the store no longer serves the same purpose, we can see that the make-up of Dundas St W in this area has changed little throughout the years.



*Fig. 4.2.1 Dundas St W Storefront, 2010 (above)*

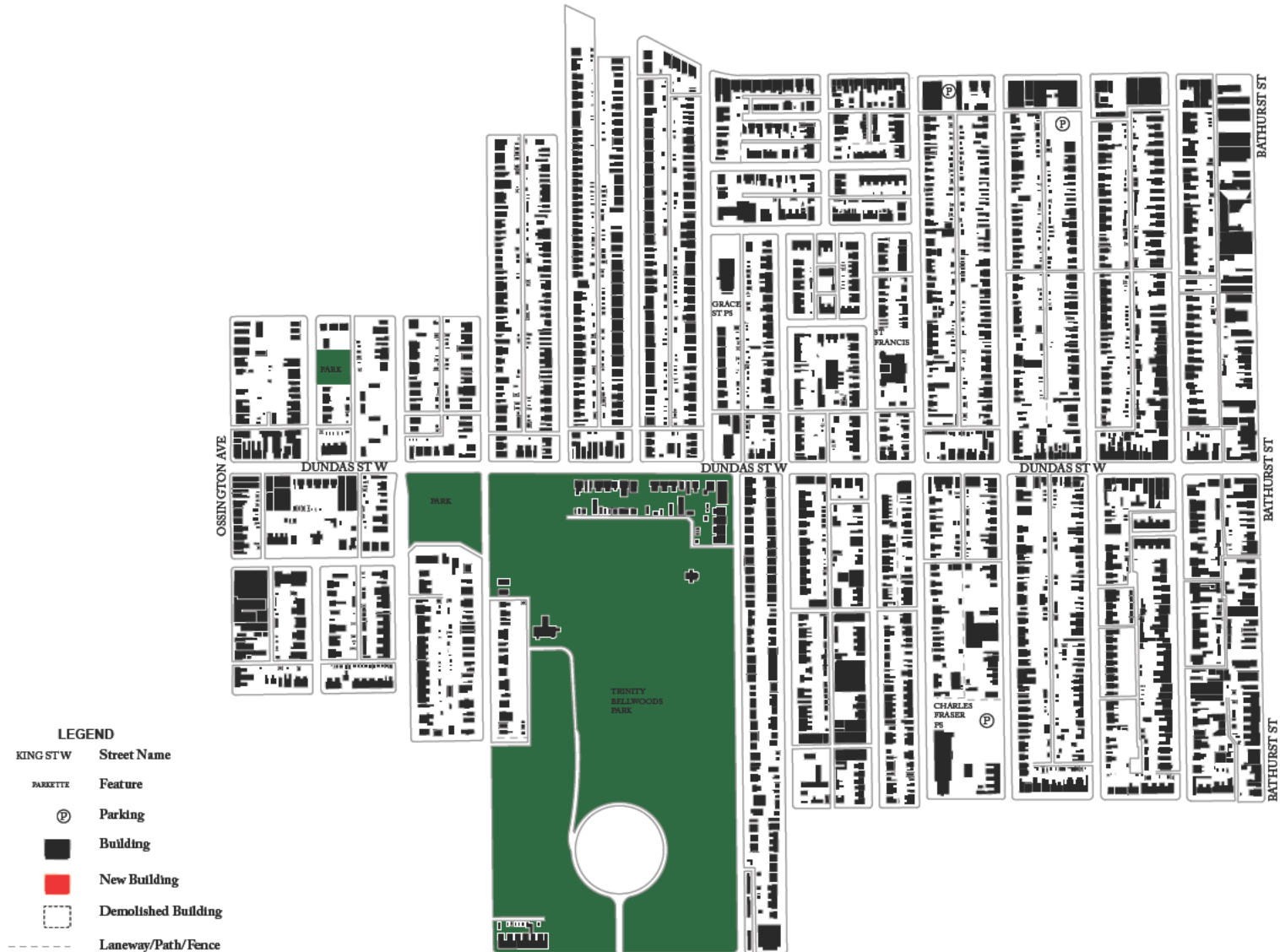
*Fig. 4.2.2: Dundas St W Storefront, 1936 (left)*



# M-14

## TRINITY-BELLWOODS - 1967

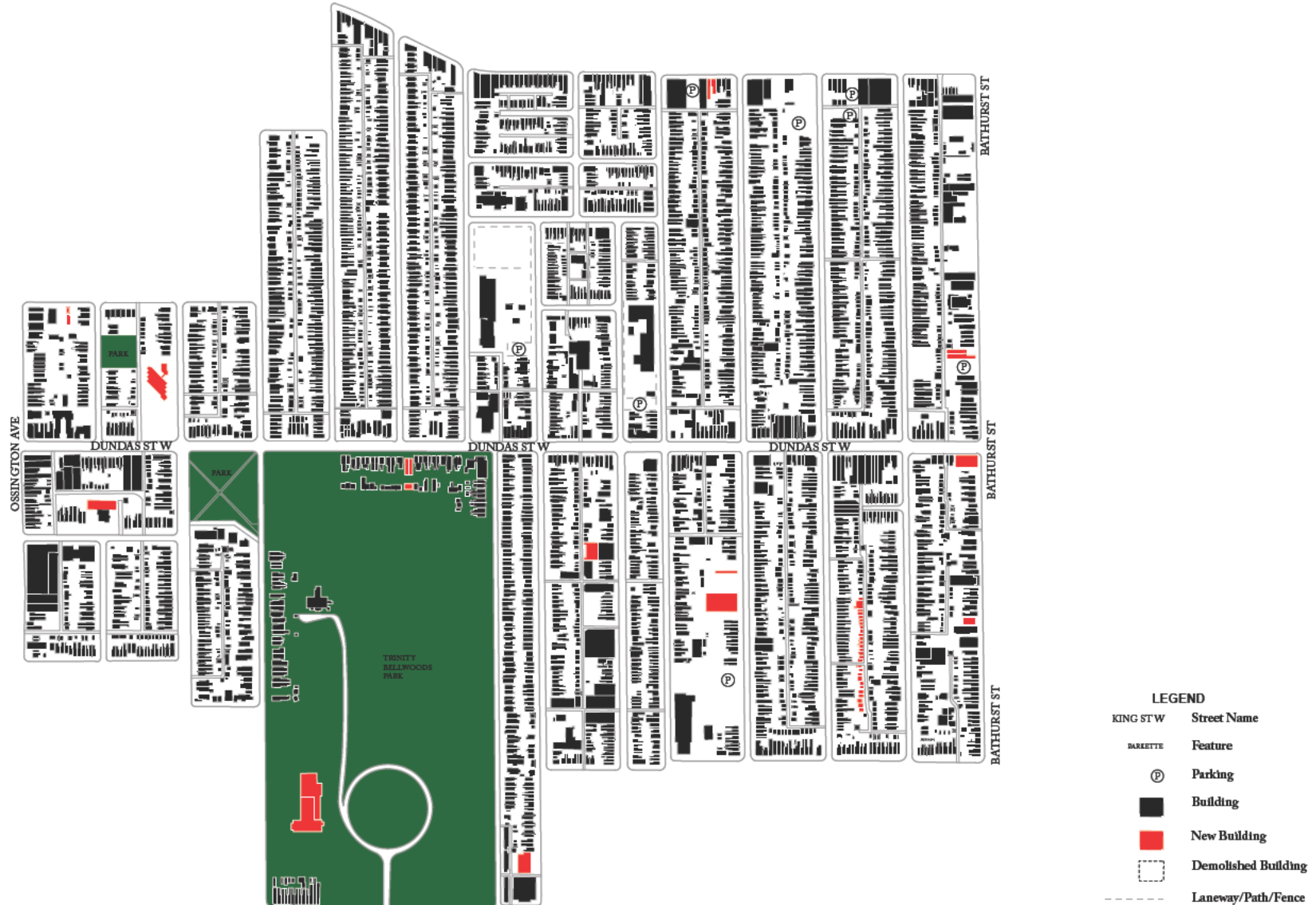
This map begins the final set of Morphological study maps. Here we look at a figure ground of Dundas St W, our final target design area, in 1967. This fabric denotes much of what Toronto's fabric looks like. It contains an arterial main street that is flanked by long, narrow blocks of low-rise residential fabric.

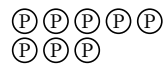
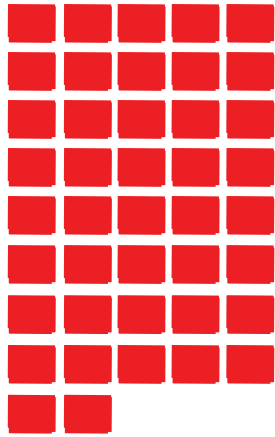


# M-15

## TRINITY-BELLWOODS - 1981

Here is the same section of Dundas St W but this time in 1981. Even though there are 42 new instances of buildings, we can note very minimal changes to the fabric of this area. Many of these new buildings include garages along laneways and renovations of older homes.



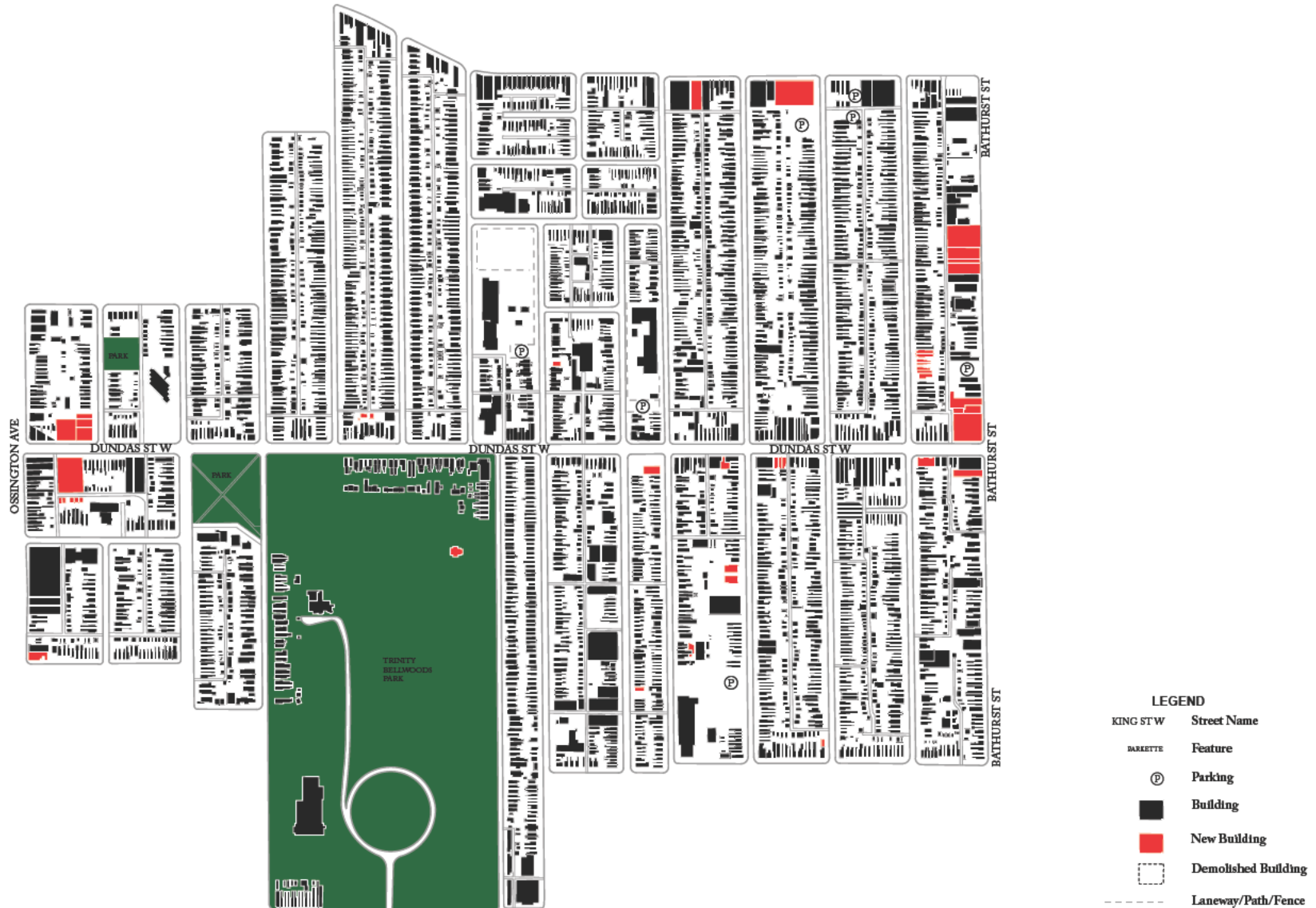


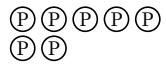
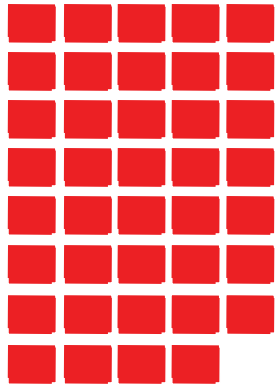
The above diagram depicts change in the number of new building sites (42), and number of parking lots (8) from the previous mapping date.

# M-16

## TRINITY-BELLWOODS - 1990

Here is the same section of Dundas St W but this time in 1990. The same amount of change as the previous map is present in this map. In this case, however, there are more new buildings along the main streets of Dundas St and Bathurst St indicating the updating of older fabric into retail shops or offices.



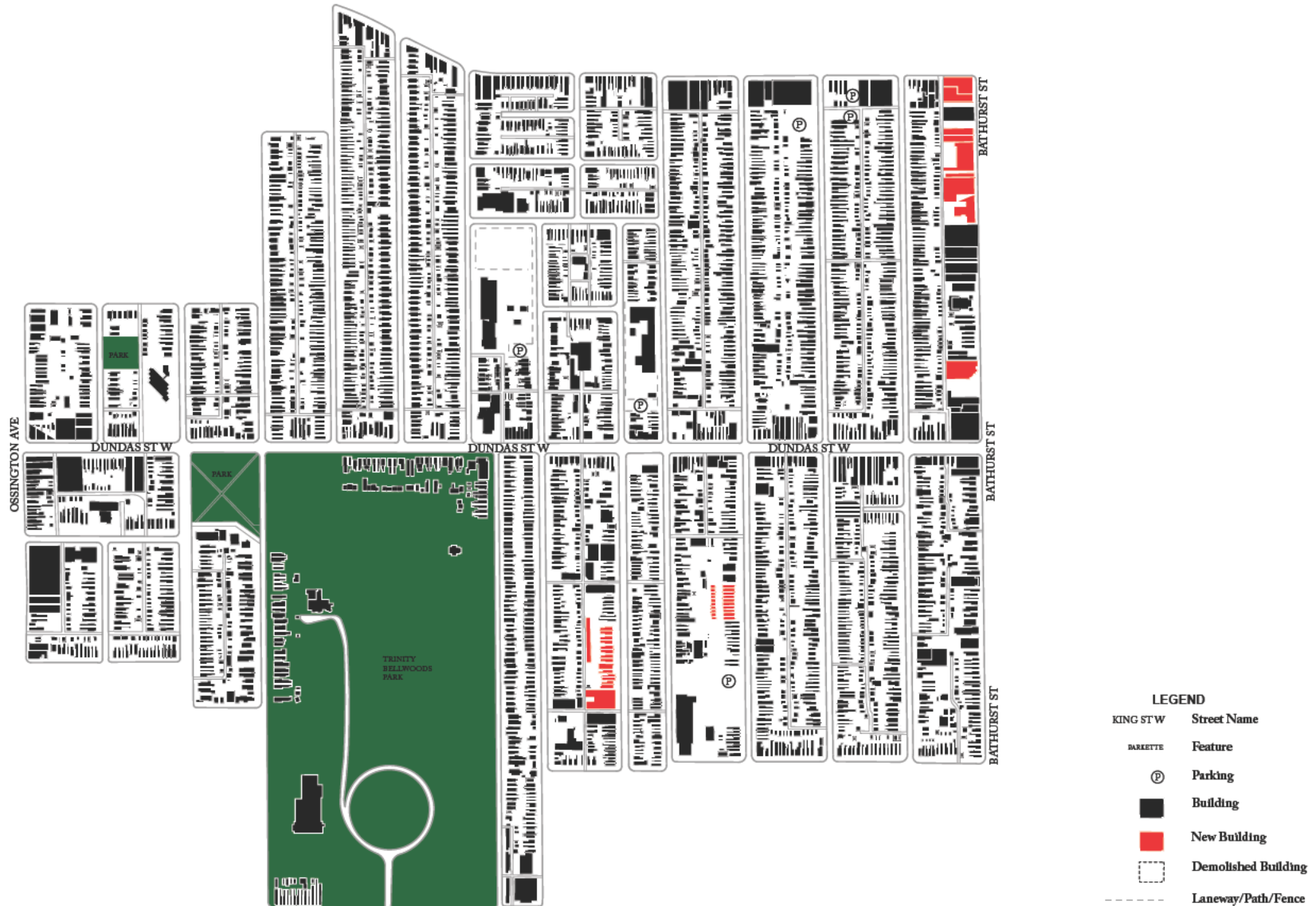


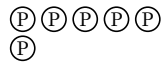
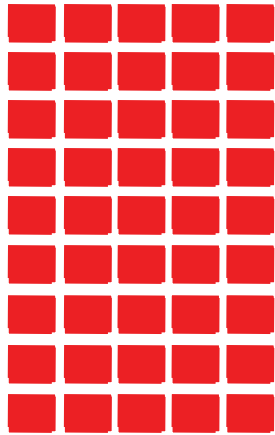
The above diagram depicts change in the number of new building sites (39), and number of parking lots (7) from the previous mapping date.

# M-17

## TRINITY-BELLWOODS - 2000

Here is the same section of Dundas St W but this time in 2000. Similar to the previous map, small amounts of change has occurred in this map. The majority of new buildings are along Bathurst St this time.



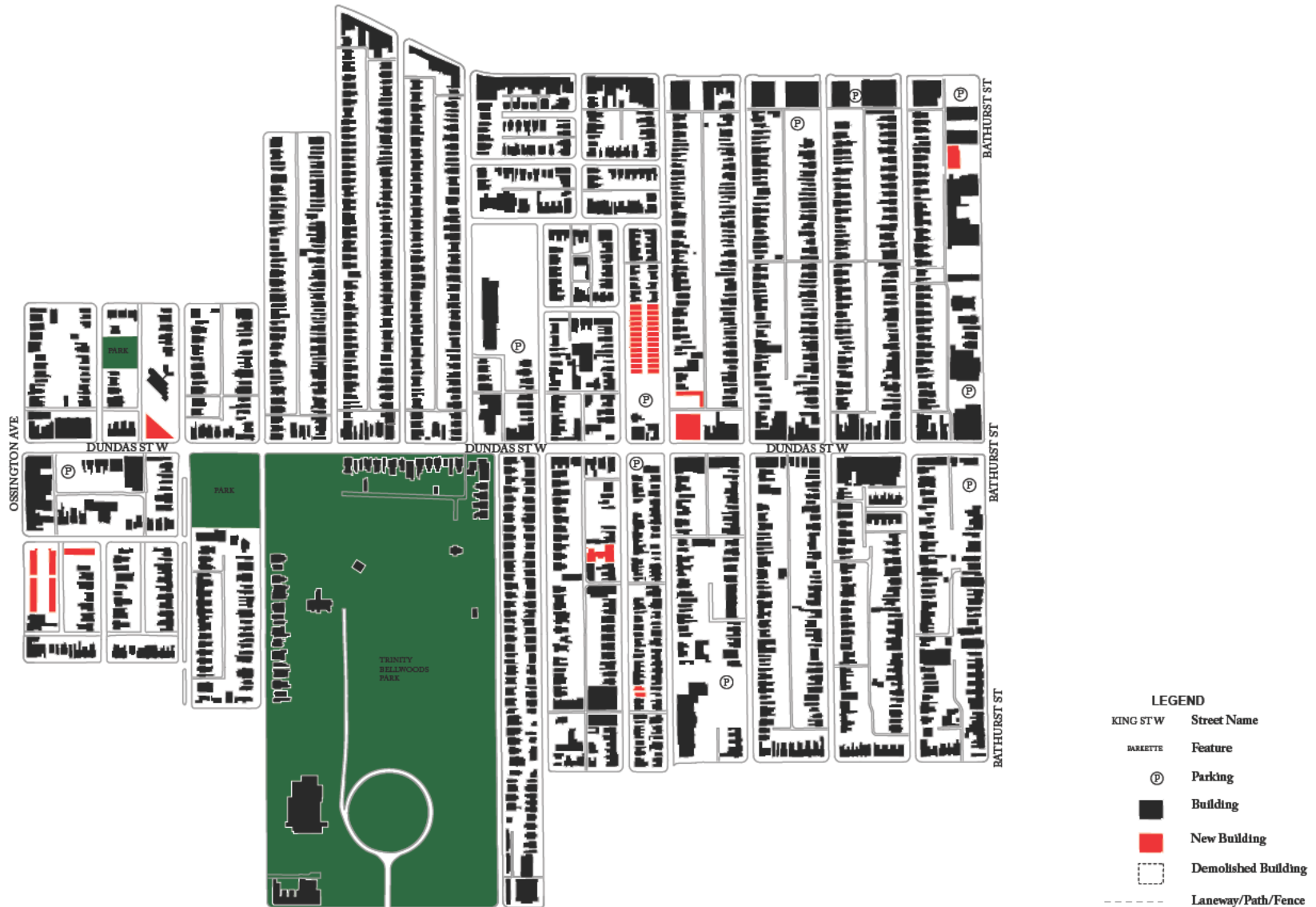


The above diagram depicts change in the number of new building sites (45), and number of parking lots (6) from the previous mapping date.

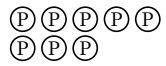
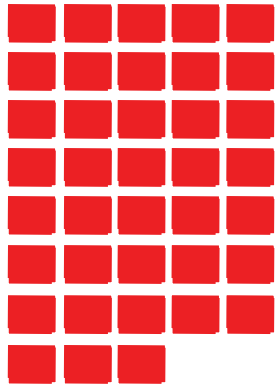
# M-18

## TRINITY-BELLWOODS - 2013

Here is the same section of Dundas St W but this time in 2013. This is the first time that we see two instances of smaller parcels of fabric being amalgamated into larger sites on Dundas St W, in the form of two mid-rise apartment buildings. The rest of the fabric remains fairly constant due to the fact that it is primarily made up of single-family homes.





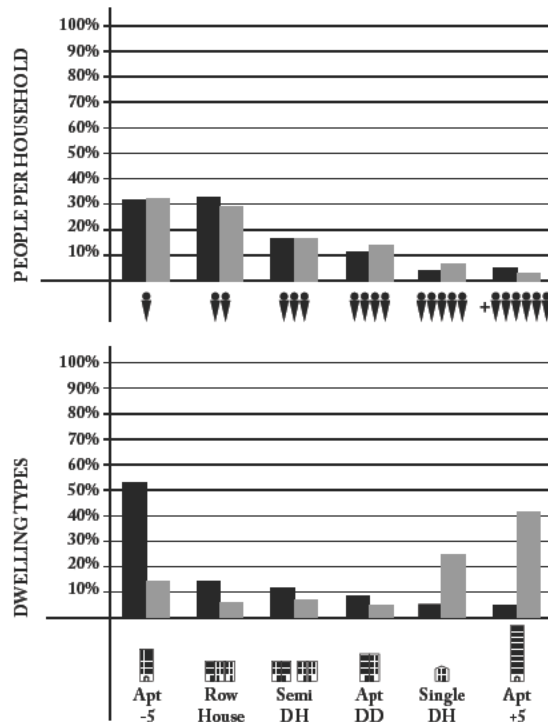


The above diagram depicts change in the number of new building sites (38), and number of parking lots (8) from the previous mapping date.

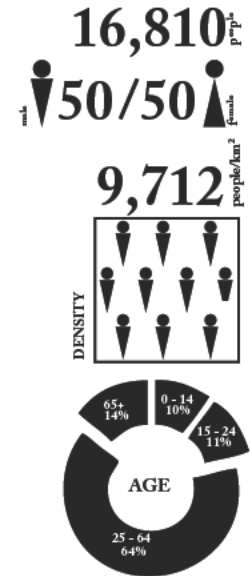
## DESIGN SITE MAPS

In addition to the mapping and analyzing of historic fabric described above, the area was also looked at and analyzed further in its present state using data the City of Toronto's Open Data Catalogue, as well as Census Data from the City of Toronto. It is important for to understand the demographic makeup of the area that was chosen as the final design site, so Census information for the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood was examined. Diagrams and infographics were created to better understand the sociological dynamics at play in the site, and were contrasted with data from the Toronto generalized census data.

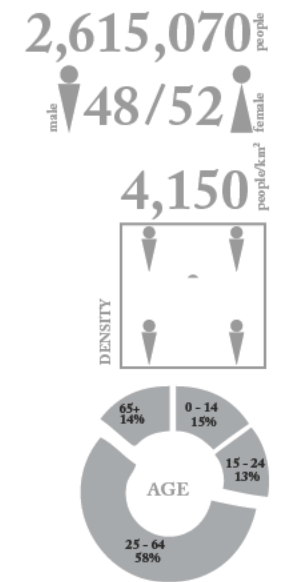
The infographic diagrams to the left depict statistics that compares the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood with the entire City of Toronto. First, population, split of male and female population, density, and ages of residents were diagramed. The first graph below shows the average number of people per household was created to illustrate the familial structures within the city. The second graph below shows the percentage what percentage of households live within which dwelling types. The diagrams in black depict information regarding the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood and those in grey depict information regarding the City of Toronto.



## TRINITY-BELLWOODS



## TORONTO



Map M-19 was created to explore and inform of the various existing residential building typologies throughout the site, specifically mapping the top three occurring using the Census Data. This typology study map will help influence the design intervention described in the final chapter of this thesis. Using GoogleStreetview and the AddressPoint data from the Open Data Catalogue, three typologies were mapped: the low-rise apartment building under 5-storeys, the row house, and the retail/living mixed-use type. Photographs of the three types, taken within the site area, accompany the map to give viewers an example of what this typology looks like already existing within the site. Data taken from the 2011 Census of the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood showed that the residential building typologies most evident in this neighbourhood are not similar to the average of Toronto, where the high-rise apartment building dominates the dwelling types followed by the single detached home. In the Trinity-Bellwoods site the most dominant type of dwelling is the under 5-storey low-rise apartment building, followed by the row house and then the semi-detached home, showing that the area is characterized by lower-rise, but not necessarily less dense, buildings. However, even though this site has a lower scale of building fabric, the site density is more than double that of the overall density of the city of Toronto which tells us that the site has many small-scale parcels with buildings that have been adapted to accommodate more than one dwelling unit within the parcel; there is no room for the densification potential of the site to grow horizontally so the only way residential intensification will occur is if it grows upward or allows for more residents to occupy a parcel. The typology of the retail/living unit dominates the Dundas Street West corridor of this site. Although this isn't a type recognized by the City of Toronto's Census, this thesis believes that it is an important vernacular type in this neighbourhood. There is potential in the type to both accommodate residential intensification, as well as positively enrich the streetscape of Dundas. Overall, the typological study of the site has better informed the end design product and was a source of precedence for the hybrid typologies created.

# M-19

## TRINITY-BELLWOODS: TYPOLOGIES

This final map shows, by color, the three most popular dwelling type within the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood: Low-Rise apartment, Row House, and Retail/Living units. Along the main street of Dundas, the majority of fabric is small-scale retail at grade with living units above. The majority of the residential fabric is split between Row-Houses and the conversion of duplex or single-family houses into apartments.

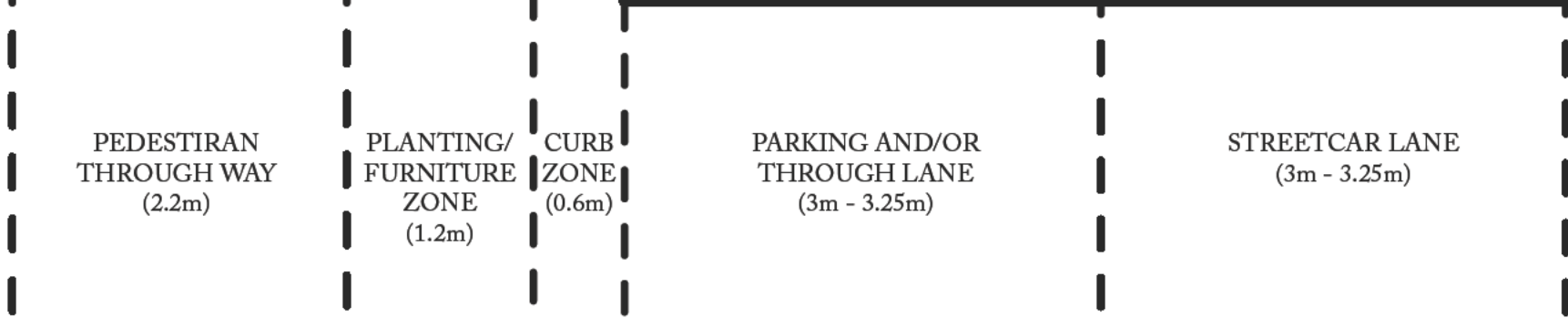


### 4.3 DUNDAS ST W: CURRENT CONDITIONS

*This section will use the guidelines and principles outlined in section 5.1 to demonstrate the potential outcome of intensification along main streets, when adhering to the above proposed guidelines and principles. The study area will look at Dundas St W in the Trinity–Bellwoods neighbourhood, stretching from Bathurst St to Ossington Ave. To better understand this area, a short study of existing conditions will be undertaken. This will focus on the streetscape, sidewalk conditions, and character of this portion of Dundas St W. Following this, the type/strategies outlined in 5.1 will be demonstrated through a short design study. Finally, the future potential of Dundas St W will be revealed in the form of rendered streetscape images which will show what intensification, tackled through the guidelines and principles, could yield.*



*Fig. 4.3.2: Photo taken along Dundas St W in the Trinity-Bellwoods Neighbourhood (right)*



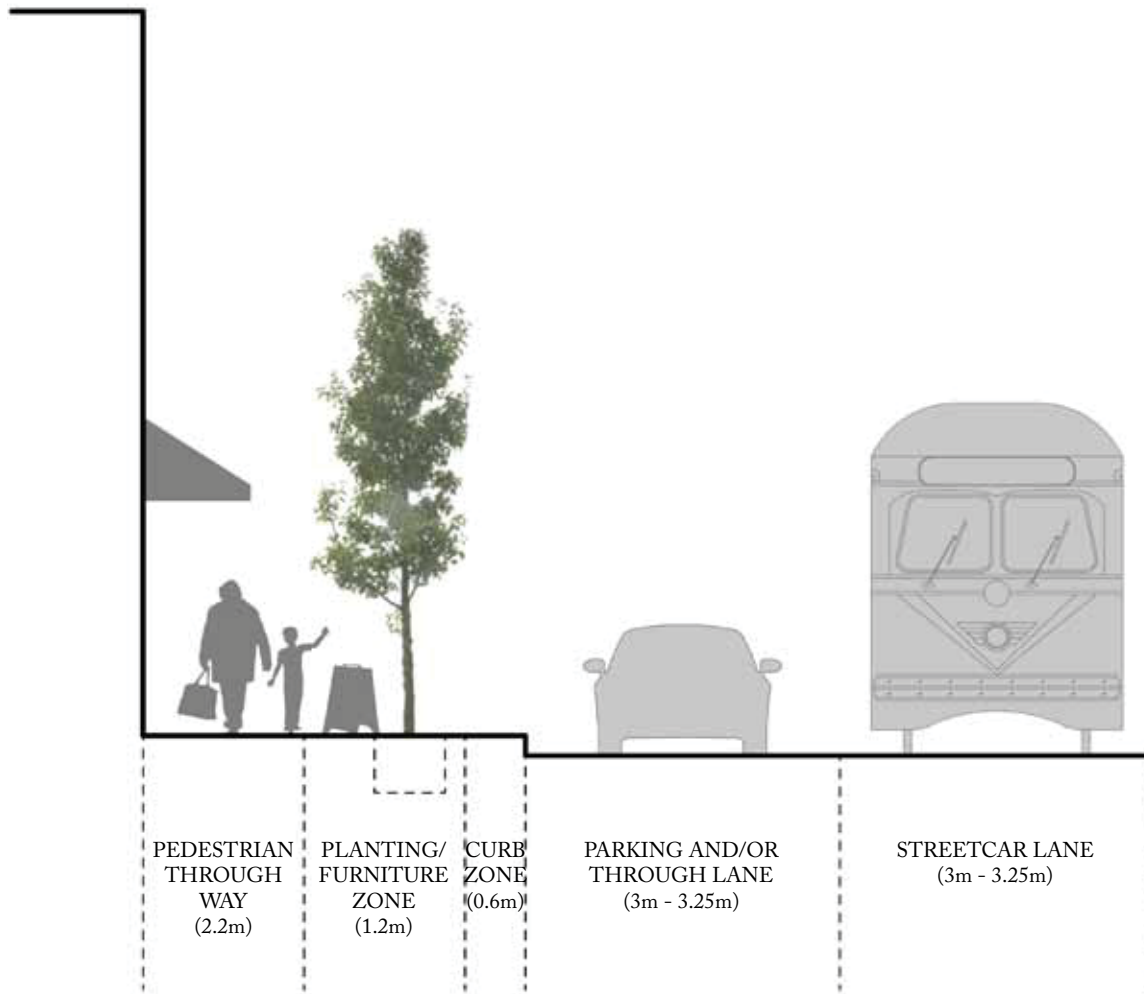
*Fig. 4.3.1: Typical Street Section Diagram, Dundas St W looking East, NTS (above)*

The point of this thesis is to provide the tools, guidelines, and principles necessary to intensify main street fabric without overwhelming the existing conditions while maintaining, or bettering, the character of the main street. To successfully do this, the existing conditions of the intended intensification areas must be examined and understood. This thesis will employ the use of street sections to establish the existing conditions present along the Dundas St W target area.

One thing to note regarding the street sections is that the street and lanes throughout the target area remain consistent along the entire stretch, creating a stable street dynamic. What do change, however, are the sidewalk and building conditions. While the changing of these conditions are not drastically different, things such as the building setbacks and uses do vary. The following sections are meant to explore the at-grade conditions present along the main street, and illustrate the varying ways the buildings connect to the streetscape.

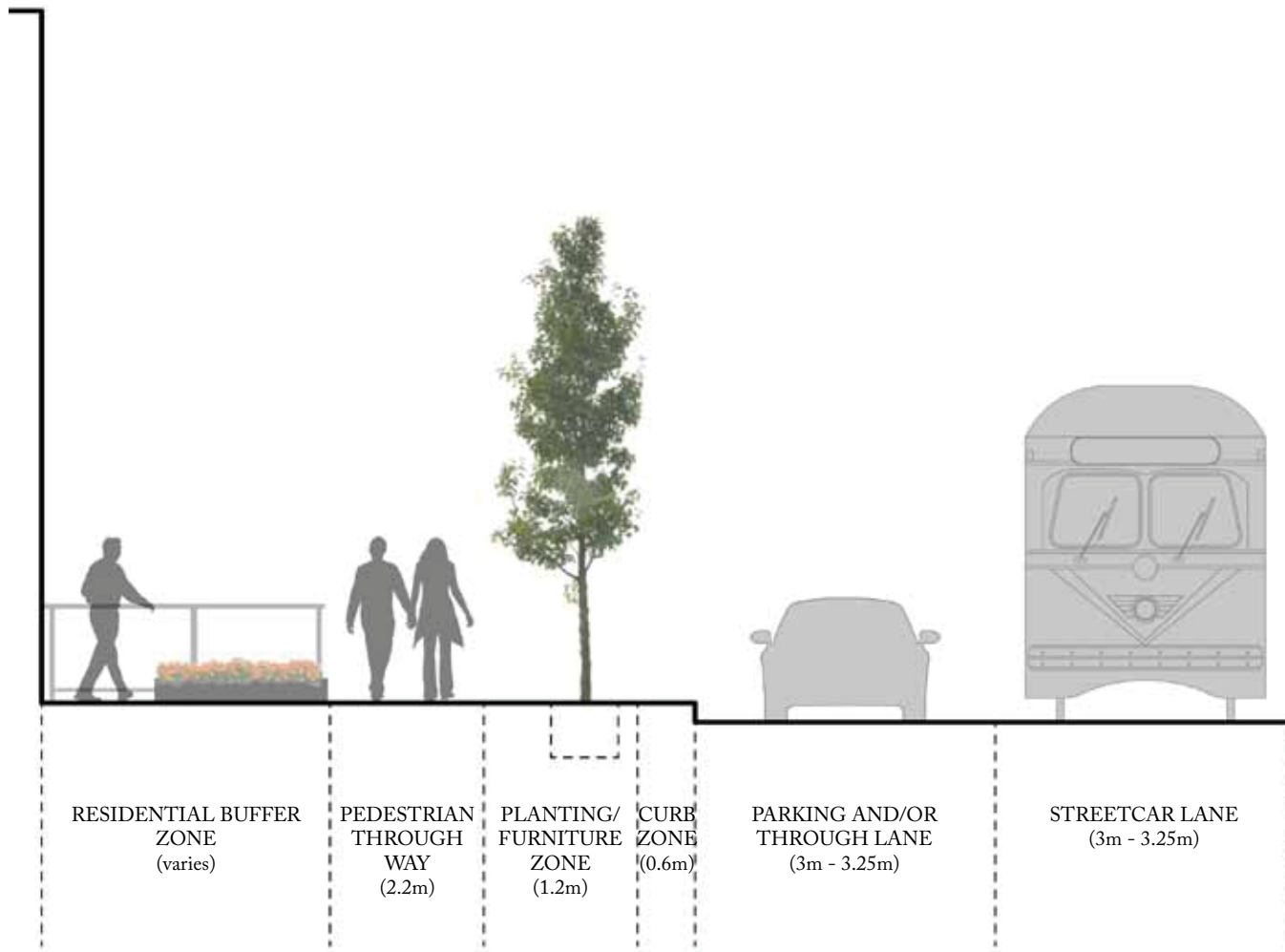
First, two typical sidewalk sections are presented to establish the two characteristic sidewalk conditions that are present along this area of Dundas St W. The first looks at the sidewalk condition where the building is built up to the lot line against the sidewalk, usually where there is a retail use at grade. The second looks at the sidewalk condition when the building is setback from the lot line and sidewalk, usually where there is a residential use at grade.

Then, larger whole street sections depicting the varying conditions on either side of Dundas St W will be observed. These aim to examine how the two sides of the street connect with the sidewalk, the street, and each other.



*Fig. 4.3.3: Typical Sidewalk Section, Building to lot line, Scale 1:75 (above)*





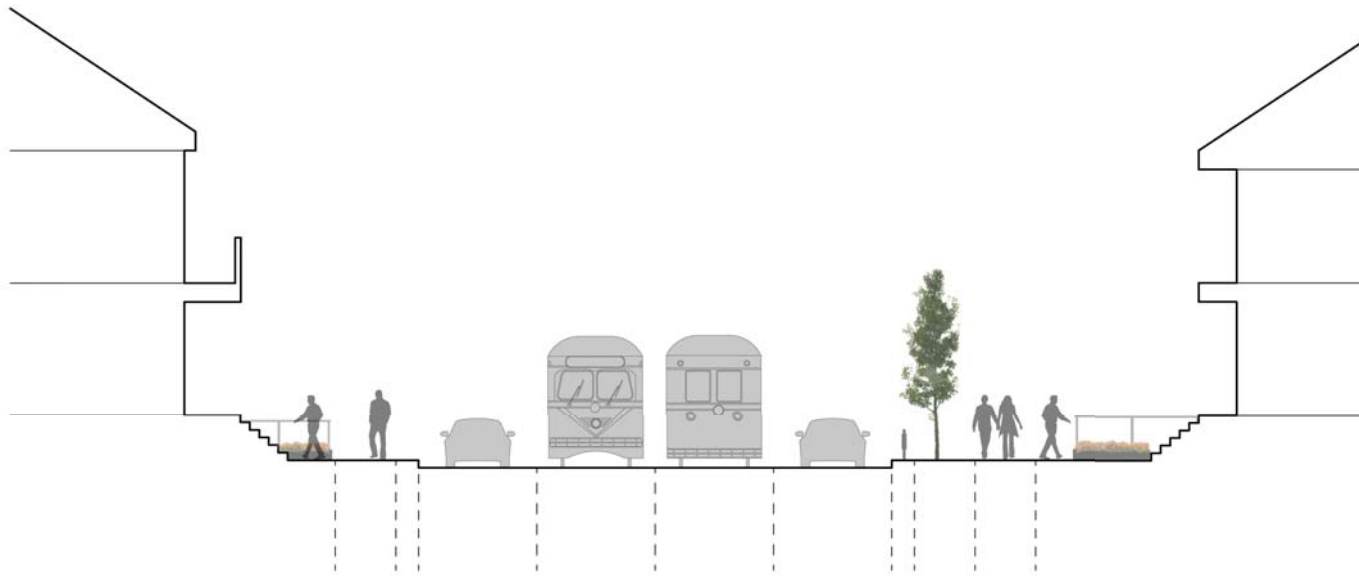
*Fig. 4.3.4: Typical Sidewalk Section, Building setback from lot line, Scale 1:75 (above)*



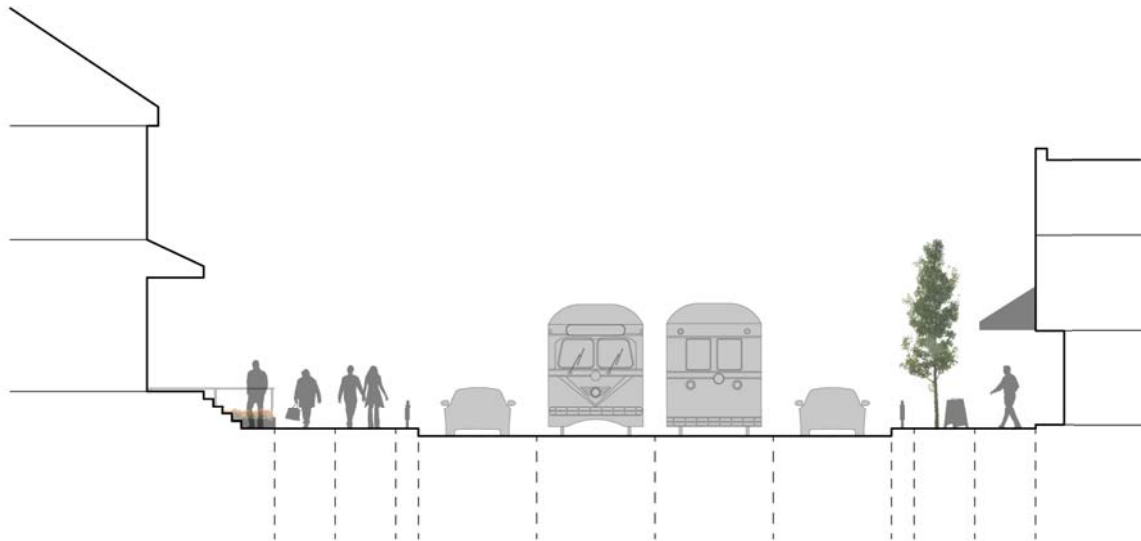
*Fig. 4.3.5: Park-Street-Residential, Typical Street Section, Scale 1:200 (above)*



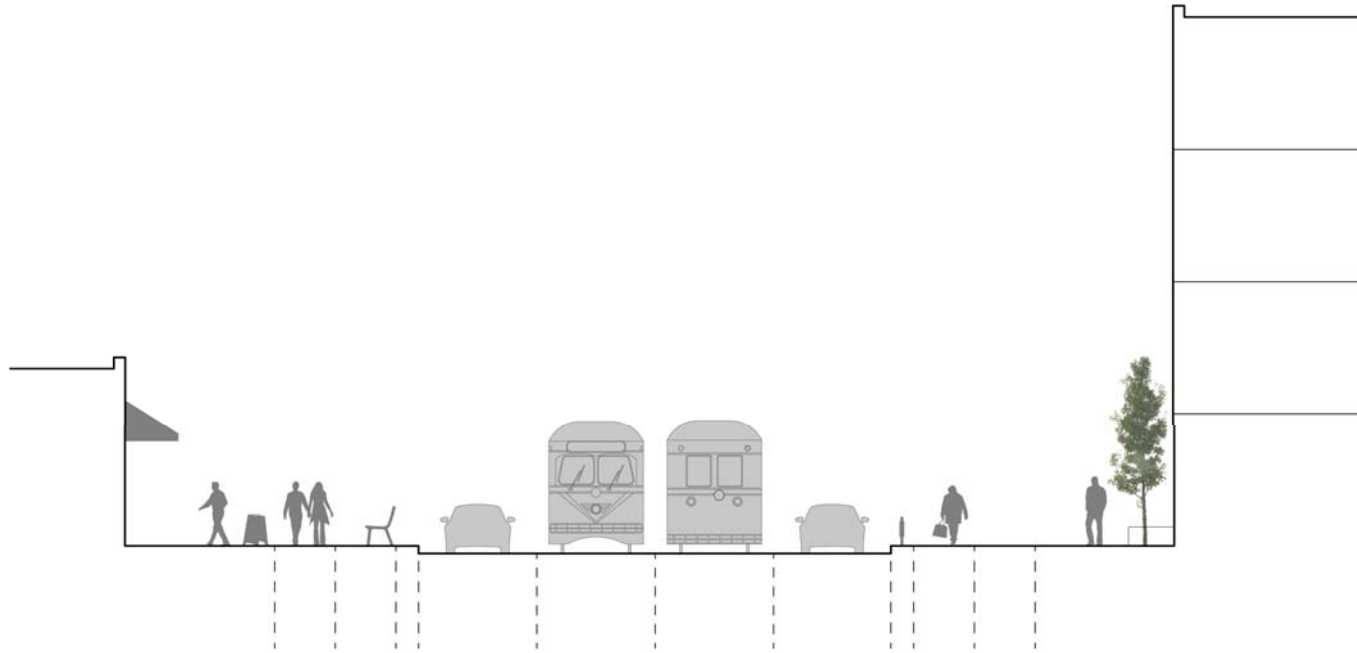
*Fig. 4.3.6: Park-Street-Retail, Typical Street Section, Scale 1:200 (above)*



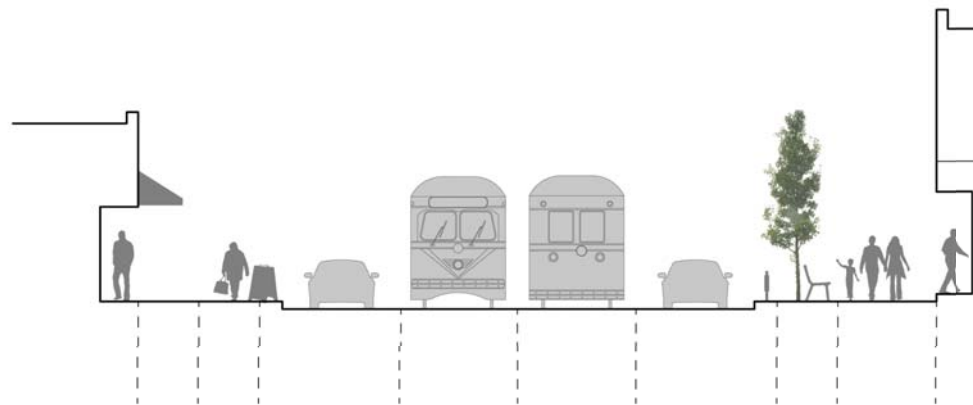
*Fig. 4.3.7: Residential-Street-Residential, Typical Street Section, Scale 1:200 (above)*



*Fig. 4.3.8: Residential-Street-Retail, Typical Street Section, Scale 1:200 (above)*



*Fig. 4.3.9: Retail-Street-LowRise, Typical Street Section, Scale 1:200 (above)*



*Fig. 4.3.10: Retail-Street-Retail, Typical Street Section, Scale 1:200 (above)*

## CHARACTER

The character of Dundas St W is that of a typical Toronto main street. Much of the main street fabric is home to at-grade, small-scale retail uses with upper storeys of residential units. There are, however, many instances where residential fabric is present at grade but this is most present within the vicinity of Trinity-Bellwoods Park. This stretch of Dundas is quite beautiful, and usually has small trees along the edge of the sidewalk which buffers pedestrians from the automobile traffic next to them on the busy street. There is little modern architecture along this portion of Dundas St, as much of the buildings seem to be of older construction causing for them to appear worn out yet charming.



*Fig. 4.3.11: Dundas St W, Sidewalk character (right)*



*Fig. 4.3.12: Dundas St W Streetscape, Mingling of Retail and Residential uses along the main street (left)*

Part of what gives this portion of Dundas St W its character are the things that occur on the sidewalk as “extras” in the traditional zones of this area of the streetscape. Within both the Furniture/Planting Zone and Pedestrian Through way, small shop owners allow for their stores to spill out onto the sidewalk. There are many instances of sandwich board type signage along the sidewalks of Dundas St W that interact with pedestrians, enticing them to wander into the shops and cafes along the way. Shop entrances are almost always located directly off the sidewalk, sometimes with a small step up, which allows for a more seamless transition from sidewalk to shop. Entrances to the above residential units are also located just off the main sidewalk but are typically hidden behind a closed door. Benches and canopies are also quite common along this area, giving patrons and passers-by a place to sit or stand that is sheltered from the elements. This set-up also fosters interaction between patrons and pedestrians. While there are not very many bus shelters along this stretch of Dundas St W, there are however, many bike racks located along the edge of the sidewalk in the Curb Zone. People who work in the small shops and restaurants often use these as a place to lock up their bikes while they are working. Each one of these elements plays a role in giving the streetscape, particularly the sidewalk area, of Dundas St W in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood its unique quality and character.

# 5.0

## DESIGN OUTCOME

This chapter is the culmination of all the preceding chapters; it focuses on the final thesis design proposal which is influenced by the existing residential building typologies of the site.

## 5.1 VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*This chapter sets out to provide guiding design principles that will illustrate a viable solution to shift the way intensification is approached in the City of Toronto. A concrete building design will not be the final result, rather, a set of design solutions will be illustrated to provide a basis for intensification that can be universally applied anywhere along the main streets of the City. First, a clear Vision with Design Objectives will be laid out. Then, Guidelines and Standards will be established. These will then influence the overruling Guiding Principles and finally be illustrated through a Demonstrative Study along the main street of Dundas St W in the Trinity-Bellwoods neighbourhood. Intensification efforts will focus on providing low-to-mid scale development to neighbourhoods along the main streets as a means of injecting incremental density without overwhelming the existing city fabric and infrastructure.*



With the disappearance of suitable sites for high-rise developments, we are now faced with the question: where can we put more density and in what form?

*Fig. 5.1.1: Current state of Condominium Developments being built in Toronto (left)*



The images below illustrate the vulnerability of existing vernacular fabric on Toronto streets. The historic and famous strip of King St W in the entertainment district is set to be demolished and taken over by high-density, high-rise condominiums which will surpass the existing building context.



*Fig. 5.1.2: Existing Buildings on King St W (above left) and Proposed Mirvish Condos on King St W (above right), Entertainment District*

## DESIGN OBJECTIVES/VISION

The main design objective of this thesis is to allow for the City of Toronto to be able to incrementally intensify its main street fabric in order to accommodate the future needs of the growing city. It will also ensure that densification and intensification efforts happen in a sustainable manner that won't overwhelm the existing infrastructure or neighbourhood fabric. While maintaining the *city-ness* of Toronto is important, the preservation of buildings simply for reasons of nostalgia is not the aim. Existing building forms will be used to influence design while aiding in the preservation of the character of the Toronto neighbourhood main streets they exist within. In order for these objectives to be realized, the current intensification efforts must change. Options other than large-scale, high-rise condominium developments must be explored and utilized. Intensification continuing at the present rate and scale is not sustainable because the existing infrastructure cannot handle it. Furthermore, the large parcels of land needed for these types of developments have been used up. This type of development requires larger parcels of land which are not available anymore, requiring smaller parcels to be amalgamated and assembled resulting in the eradication of the existing small-grain fabric.

This thesis looks to reinvigorate the main streets of the City of Toronto and allow these arteries to become destinations and not only a means of flow through the City. It also looks to aid in the successful reurbanization of Toronto by outlining methods of suitable and reasonable intensification which will create unique and neighbourhood-centric streetscapes that will ultimately strengthen the network of neighbourhoods. In realizing this vision Toronto will be have a strong future that will allow the City to grow, neighbourhoods to be revitalized, and ensure happy residents.

## DESIGN ASSUMPTION:

If the site containing small parcels could get bought out and sold to develop the low-rise apartments on Dundas and Manning, then all other sites like this are vulnerable to whole site redevelopment, especially when there are failing or contain vacant retail units at grade.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CITY-NESS

The following Guiding Principles were developed to direct the Design Objectives and influence the overall Demonstrative Intensification Study.

Queen St W in Toronto has become a popular destination for shopping in the City.



*Fig. 5.1.3: Storefronts on Queen St W, Toronto (right)*

### **1. Make Toronto's main streets a place or destination for residents or commuters.**

Main streets primarily serve as an artery of movement within a city as they link neighbourhoods and points of interest together. Beyond this primary function, main streets contain some of the richest and varied fabric within the City of Toronto. Main streets can and should become main attraction points along the way of a journey or even as the destination for a journey. Retail, small-business, and community-based opportunities at grade at a fine-grain scale to echo the existing fabric will ensure that there is a place for everyone along the main streets whether they are residents of the neighbourhood or just passersby.

By using incremental intensification strategies, the fabric of Toronto's main streets could become vibrant and bustling areas, especially in those neighbourhoods that have fallen into neglect. It will also ensure that suitable development happens along these main arteries that won't overwhelm the existing elements or disturb the sense of urbanity along the streetscape.



The image to the left is an architect's render for the potential future of the City of Geelong near Victoria, BC. The key to success, according to the architect, is to intensify incrementally and reasonably. This render vision for the City of Geelong captures the quality that the new renderings, created in this thesis, will aim to achieve.

*Fig. 5.1.4: Vision for Geelong, Victoria (left)*

## **2. Double the density along Toronto's main street corridors.**

This study determines to only double the density along the main street corridors. While the main street arteries are set up to be able to absorb more density intensification due to their existing infrastructure and neighbourhoods, too much of a density increase can overwhelm the fabric. The goal is to be reasonable with intensification efforts and intensify incrementally so that the existing neighbourhoods, infrastructure, and character of the City remain but are also able to grow at a sensible pace.

The City of Toronto has already begun intensifying along transit routes, as is evidenced by the photograph to the left.



*Fig. 5.1.5: Streetcar lines along Queens Quay in Toronto (right)*

### **3. Reurbanize Toronto's city core by integrating intensification efforts with the already existing transit and infrastructure.**

Working within the already established goals of the City of Toronto, this study looks to help reurbanize the City by creating opportunity for reasonable intensification along the main streets of Toronto. The facilitation of living in the City can occur by providing a wide variety of housing types to suit different familial structures along the main street corridors. The location of this intensification is essential in enticing families to rediscover the ease of living in the City. Main streets already have existing transit options which will help residents move between work and home without depending on the private-vehicle. Enriching the retail and community-based opportunities with the incremental intensification strategy will ensure that residents have everything they need within their neighbourhood. Alternatively, stretches of the main streets will vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood based on residents which will encourage the mixing of residents and passersby, making the main streets more vibrant destinations.



*Fig. 5.1.6: Unique neighbourhood qualities of Bloor West Village, Toronto (left)*

**4. Maintain or better the neighbourhood qualities along the main streets while augmenting the unique culture of the area.**

Toronto is a city of unique neighbourhoods that are linked together by a system of main arterial streets. With proper incremental intensification, this main street fabric can be strengthened.



*Fig. 5.1.7: Shop Small Campaign (right)*

**5. Encourage small businesses, local-owned retail, and community-based opportunities at grade on the main streets.**

Part of the vitality of existing main street fabric comes from the variety of small business that line the fine-grained streetscape. These small businesses, locally-owned retail shops, and community-based programs help give the main streets a unique character within the neighbourhoods they exist within. They connect with the street and encourage foot traffic along these main roads that create vibrant, bustling streets and animated neighbourhoods. Encouraging these types of businesses and opportunities also help work towards the reurbanization goal of the City by providing for places for people who live within these communities to work and attracting new residents by providing job opportunities that are closer to their place of residence in the City.



*Fig. 5.1.8: Results of Land Assembly and the amalgamation of parcels (left)*

**6. Small-grain, parcelized nature of the main street fabric is to be maintained; assembly of parcels along a solid block for one purpose/retail/etc is not part of the vision for future intensification.**

Many of the current intensification efforts being made along main street fabric within the City of Toronto, such as the high-rise condominium buildings, require large parcels of land to be built on. This is resulting in the assembly of entire blocks of small parcels into one larger one in order to accommodate these types of developments. These large-parcel developments often provide for retail opportunities at grade but, instead of allowing for varied small retail opportunities, place one large unit at grade. Due to the large nature of the units, local businesses or small retail cannot be supported within these types of development. These large, block-encompassing units do little to interact with the streetscape, hindering the possibility for a vibrant and bustling street. Intensification that allows for more of these fine-grain opportunities will strengthen the streetscape, add vibrancy to neighbourhoods that are in need of sprucing up, and allow for intensification at a reasonable and viable scale. It is for this reason that in this incremental intensification strategy, the assemblage of multiple parcels along an entire block to create one large unit is not permitted. Assemblage of parcels at a certain level will be allowed, however, the retail or business opportunities at grade that will take place in new developments must follow the same level of parcelization as the fabric around it.



## DESIGN GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS FOR *CITY-NESS*

Guidelines and Standards are established to ensure a clear and easily followed intensification strategy that can be applied to the City of Toronto. They are broken up into three target areas: Building, Form and Massing, and Parcelization and Land Assembly. In conjunction with these target areas, the Guidelines and Standards will also seek to remedy issues at three levels. The first are Toronto-based Issues, which are the most general. These encompass the issues of density and intensification that pertain to the entire City of Toronto. The second are General Building issues which cover things such as materiality, setbacks and building heights. These are issues which are specific to the neighbourhood and existing fabric around the desired intensification areas. The third, and final, issues are Project Packages which deal with various types of intensification sites along main streets at a fine-grain, parcelized level. These look at various intensification types and strategies that are present along the main streets at the most specific level of design.



*Fig. 5.1.9: The mingling of old and new buildings within Trinity-Bellwoods (right)*

# 1. BUILDING

## Materials

Draw from existing conditions along the main street and into the surrounding residential fabric. The goal is to create a synergy of existing and new buildings that work together along a main street and into the surrounding residential fabric of a neighbourhood.

## Architecture:

Architecture styles should draw from the existing conditions of the main street and surrounding fabric. New interventions need not be direct copies of existing fabric but use similar proportions and elements to convey a feeling of continuity along the blocks of the main street. The idea is not to keep the architecture of the main street stuck in a particular time period but create a cohesive fabric of buildings that help bring vibrancy and vitality to a main street by mingling old and new buildings together.

## Height:

Incremental intensification, which is the nature of this study, should occur at a low-to-mid-rise scale and communicate with the existing fabric around it. This means that new buildings should not exceed the existing by more than two storeys. As a general rule, 10-storeys is the absolute maximum height a new building should reach as to maintain low-to-mid-rise fabric along main streets. Density goals are also a factor of building heights and will be discussed further below.

## Density:

The goal of this incremental intensification strategy is to only double the density along the main streets of the City. Any more than that would be to overwhelm the existing neighbourhoods and infrastructure and would no longer be reasonable intensification. Building heights should reflect a doubling of density and not exceed this goal.

## Vertical Zoning:

While traditional zoning is established through the City of Toronto, vertical zoning for uses will be established to prevent main street fabric from become dead at the streetscape. This includes provisions such as no residential uses at grade on a main street, as well as moving all residential access off of the main streets and on to the laneways or residential side streets.



*Fig. 5.1.10: Typical main street fabric that is built directly to the lot line and sidewalk (right)*

**Setbacks:**

New building setbacks are to follow the existing fabric's line of setbacks from the property line. Generally, the main street fabric is built to the lot line or directly up to the sidewalk. Residential side streets are to abide by the setbacks set in place by the City and should be maintained to achieve continuity along the streets.

**Stepbacks:**

Building Stepbacks are to be used to visually articulate the diversity of various uses within a building. This will give the facades visual interest and create a sense of life within the building. Ground floor or at grade uses are to follow the existing setbacks within the fabric but upper storeys are to use the stepbacks to achieve visual interest and differentiation between facades. These can also be used to create private outdoor spaces for upper-storey residential units.

## 2. FORM AND MASSING

### **Type/Uses:**

Building types or uses should reflect the existing main street fabric. The street level uses on main streets are to house retail or community-based service uses. Entrances to all residential units must not occur directly off of the main street but be accessed from a residential side street or laneway. Live-Work units with offices at grade are an acceptable use of the bottom storey of main street fabric. At-grade units must address the street and be designed to promote a connection with pedestrians and passersby. Direct access from the main street for units at grade is mandatory. Half-storey grade changes up or down are not to be permitted as these types of conditions stunt the activity at street level and disconnect the streetscape from the uses within these storeys. Offices on a second storey above ground-level retail with direct access off the main street are permitted, however.

Residential uses are not permitted at grade on a main street and may only occur on second storeys or above. In addition, there must be an assortment of appropriately sized living units that can accommodate a variety of family types and/or residents.

### **Access:**

The issue of access was touched on a few other sections within the target areas but is important to note. All residential access will be moved from the main streets to the laneways or side streets to maintain fluidity and continuity on the main streetscape. This gives residential units more private entrances and prevents the main street from accumulating semi-private dead zones of residential access. All at-grade program, which will primarily be retail or live-work space, must be accessed directly from grade and not include and step ups or down. This will create a dialogue between the street and the inside program of these buildings. Offices on second storeys of buildings are permitted if they have direct and clear access from the main street.

### 3. PARCELIZATION AND LAND ASSEMBLY

#### Main Streets:

Primary intensification efforts will take place along the main streets as to take advantage of existing infrastructure which can accommodate incremental growth of population. Intensification that wraps up the corners of the main streets on to adjoining residential side streets is permitted but must conform to the standards and guiding principles set forth by this study.

The main street fabric should have small-scale retail or community-enriching program at grade. Large-scale or big-box type program is not allowed. This means that the fine-grain nature of many of Toronto's main streets should be respected and kept as fine-grained as possible.



*Fig. 5.1.11: Fine-grain parcelization of the existing main street fabric on Dundas St W (right)*

### **Parcels/Assemblage:**

Vitality and diversity along main streets must be kept alive. The small, parcelized nature of the existing main streets are to be maintained and not consolidated into one large use, preventing the “Drug Store” dilemma that typically occurs at grade within new developments. Intensification that assembles many parcels into one new larger parcel is not acceptable unless developers and owners reach an understanding of development that respects and maintains the parcelized rhythm of existing main street fabric.

### **Types/Strateiges:**

There are 7 incremental intensification types or strategies being explored which will be looked at further in **Chapter 5.3 Demonstrative Study**. The types are:

Single parcel.

Adjoining parcels (2 side-by-side).

Parcels within a block (semi-block intensification).

“L” shaped corner wrap (main and side streets).

Upper block, side street fabric update.

Half block, higher density, with corner wrap.

Whole block, higher density, with corner wrap.



*Fig. 5.1.12: The “Drug Store” dilemma; entire half-block of streetscape is taken up by a drug store in Vancouver (above)*

## 5.2

### DESIGN CASE STUDY FOR DUNDAS ST. W: INTENSIFICATION TYPES AND STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING *CITY-NESS*

As mentioned previously in Section 5.1, there are 7 incremental intensification types or strategies being explored:

Single parcel.

Adjoining parcels (2 side-by-side).

Parcels within a block (semi-block intensification).

“L” shaped corner wrap (main and side streets).

Upper block, side street fabric update.

Half block, higher density, with corner wrap.

Whole block, higher density, with corner wrap.

These 7 types are not only present within the Dundas St W target area fabric but are general enough to be found along most of Toronto’s main streets. Their purpose is to visually categorize the possible means of attacking reasonable intensification along the City’s main streets by using parcel types and land assembly as a base. Primarily, these types will serve as examples of massing strategies which will deal with a variety of site-specific issues present along these arteries. The designs are not to serve as a one-size-fits-all solution to incremental main street intensification but rather as a visual guide to how the previously presented guidelines and principles should be applied to recurring scenarios.

What should be noted is that not every scenario is the same but this thesis presents an outline that is the suitable approach to figuring out what is and what is not appropriate for any site along a City of Toronto main street. First, the area of intended intensification needs to be examined. This is important in creating a seamless streetscape. Existing conditions such as the streetscape, sidewalks, culture, and architecture, should be studied in order to fully understand the nature of the neighbourhood. Then, a suitable scale of intensification should be selected. This will have to do with existing infrastructure running along the main street, as well as the level of density in the surrounding fabric. Finally, suitable sites for incremental intensification should be chosen. These sites should reflect the types and strategies which are explored later in this section, and also conform to the guidelines and principles presented earlier in this thesis.

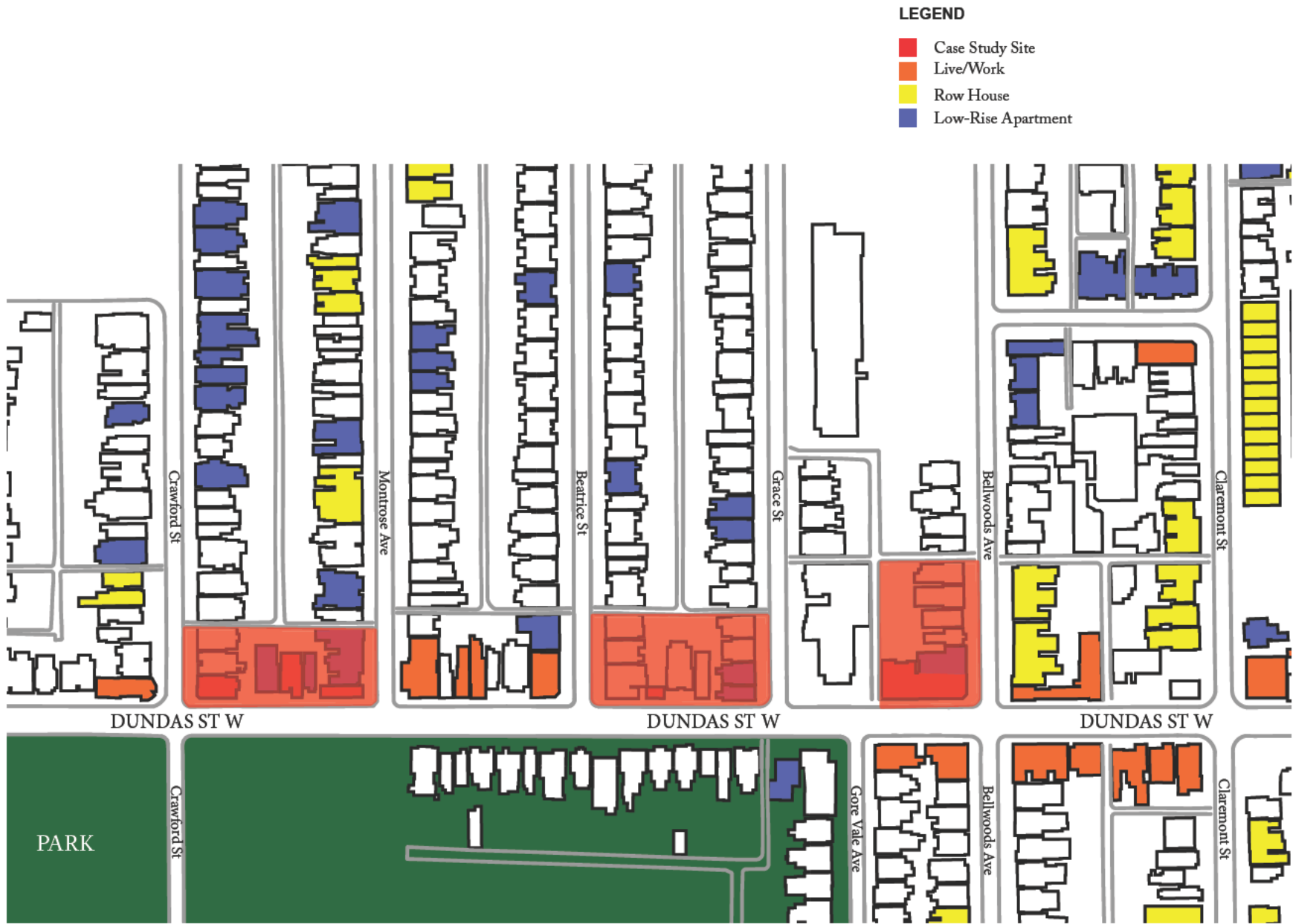


Fig. 5.2.1: Design Case Study Sites, Highlighted (above)



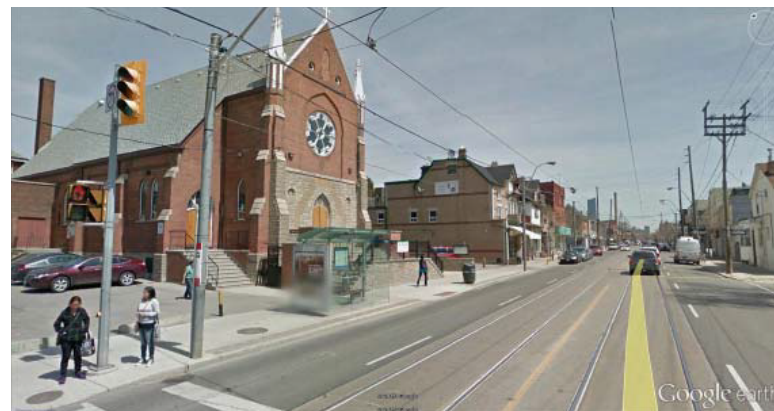
*Fig. 5.2.2: Google Street View, Design Case Study Site 01 (right)*



*Fig. 5.2.3: Google Street View, Design Case Study Site 02 (right)*

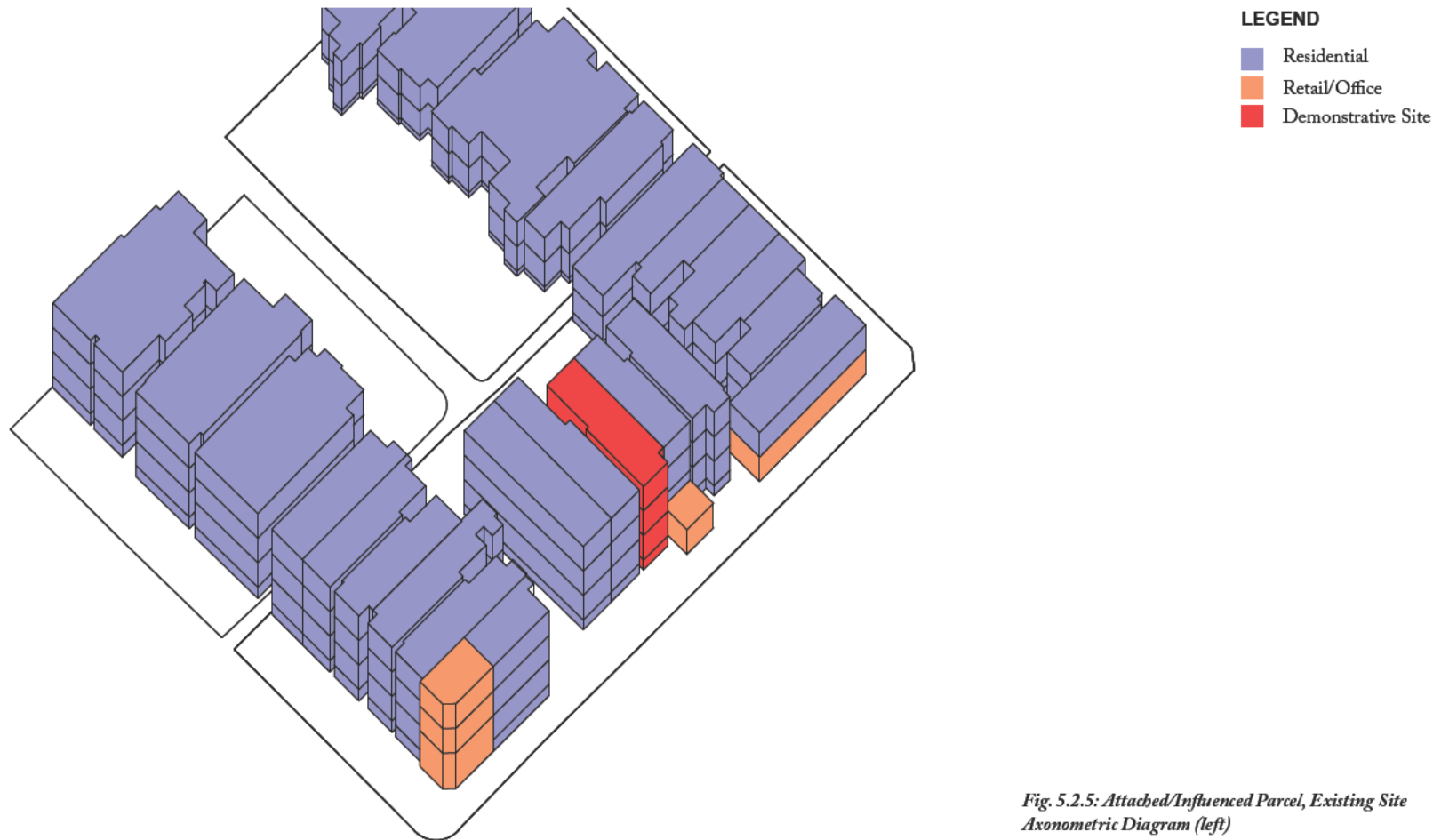


*Fig. 5.2.4: Google Street View, Design Case Study Site 03 (right)*



# 1. SINGLE PARCEL

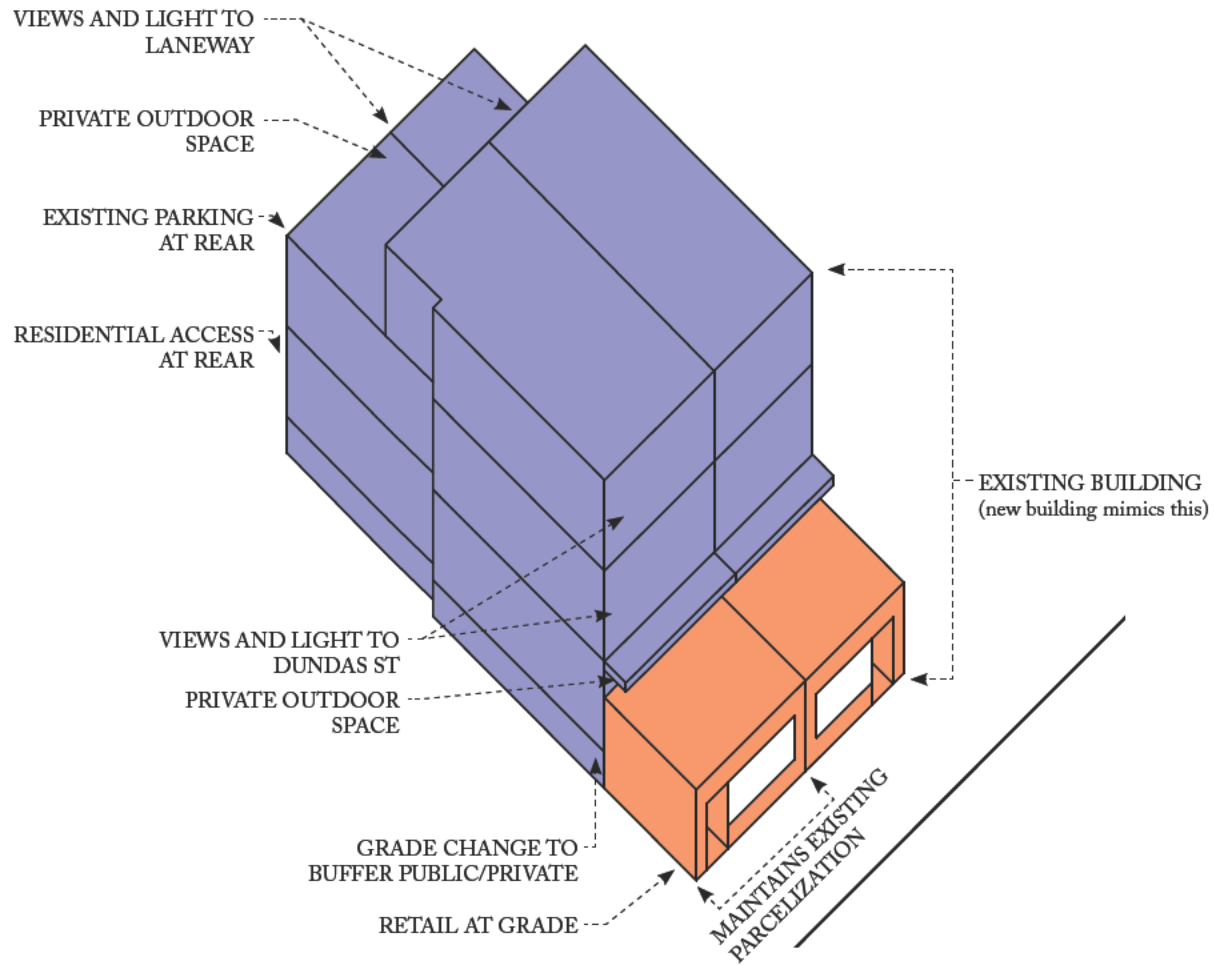
The first, and most basic of the types is the Single Parcel incremental strategy. It occurs at the most general and smallest level of intensification and is a type that is already happening along many of the main streets within the City. Due to the nature of this strategy, this type lends itself greatly to retaining the original structure of the building and adaptively tailoring the inside design to suit new uses. The precedent explored in Section 4.5 for Public Studio can serve as an excellent example of incremental intensification of this nature (see Fig. 2.2.5.4) This type will be looked at in two forms: the attached/influenced single parcel and the strict single autonomous parcel.



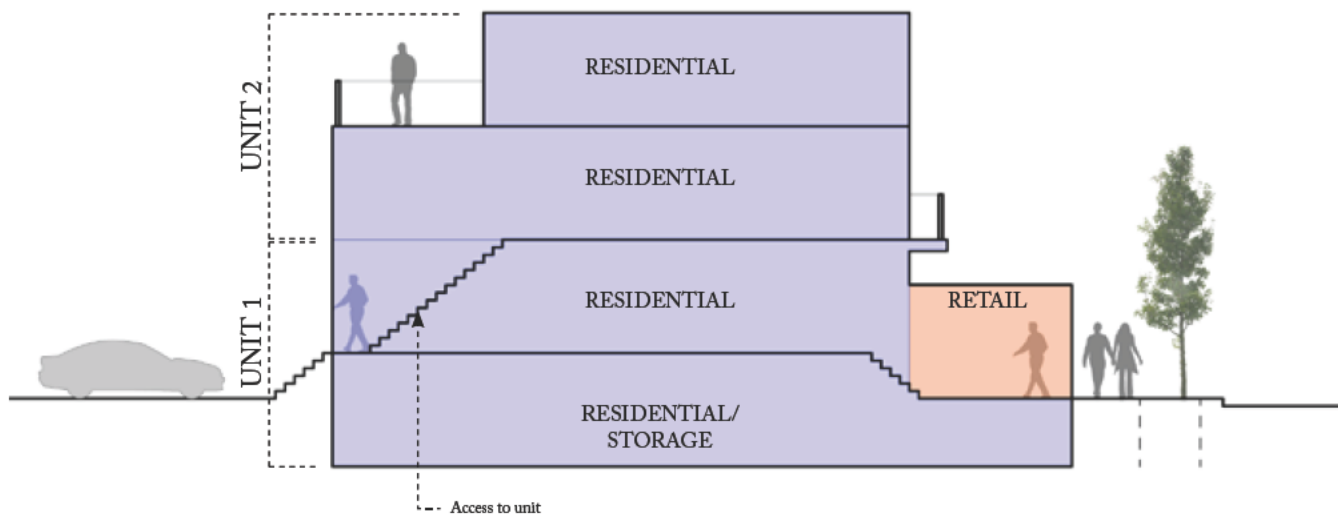
*Fig. 5.2.5: Attached/Influenced Parcel, Existing Site  
Axonometric Diagram (left)*

**LEGEND**

- Residential
- Retail/Office



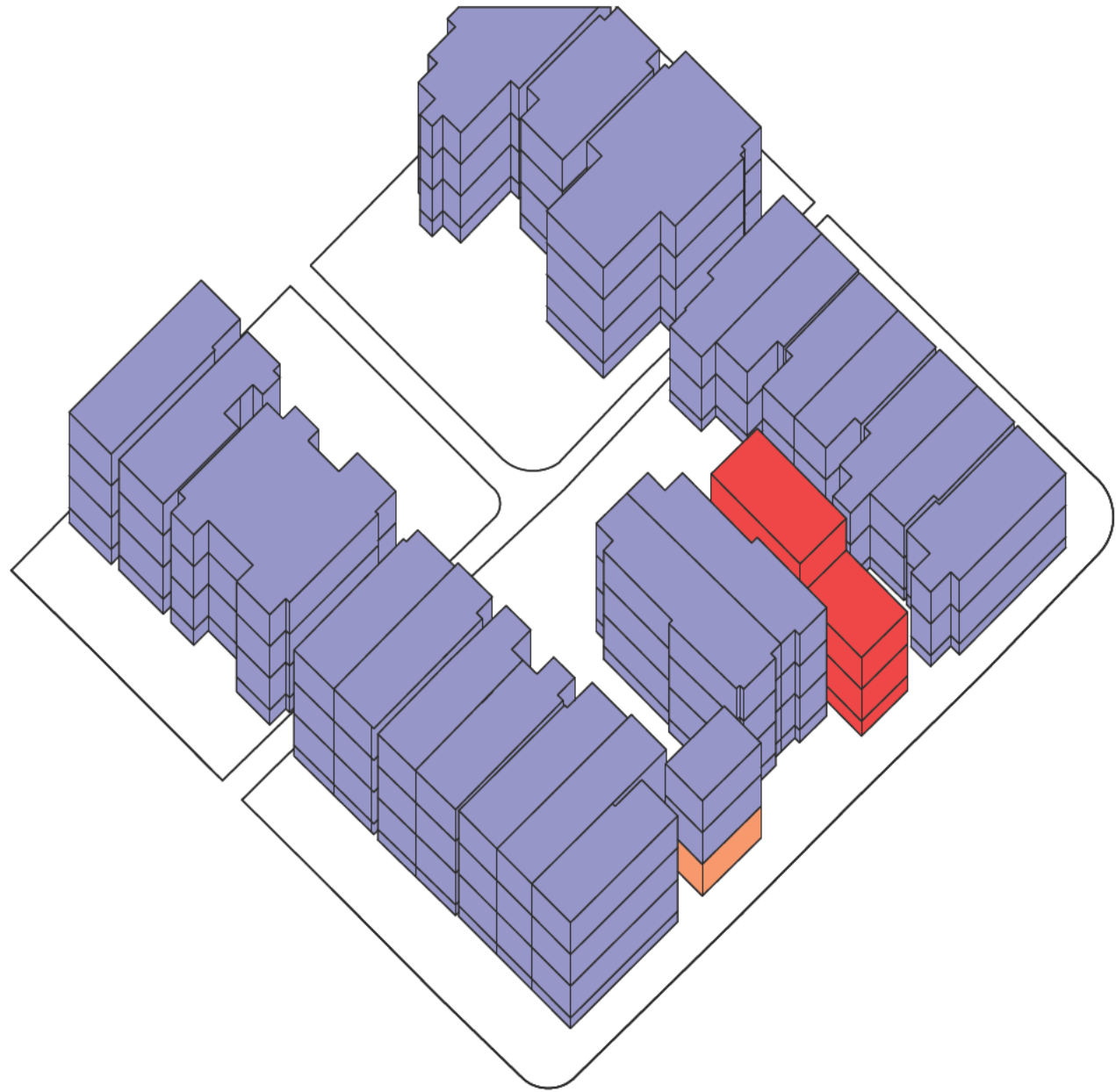
*Fig. 5.2.6: Attached/Influenced Parcel, Massing Axonometric (above)*



*Fig. 5.2.7: Attached/Influenced Parcel, Organizational Section, 1:200 (above)*

**LEGEND**

- Residential
- Retail/Office
- Demonstrative Site



*Fig. 5.2.8: Single Autonomous Parcel, Demonstrative Site  
Axonometric Diagram (above)*

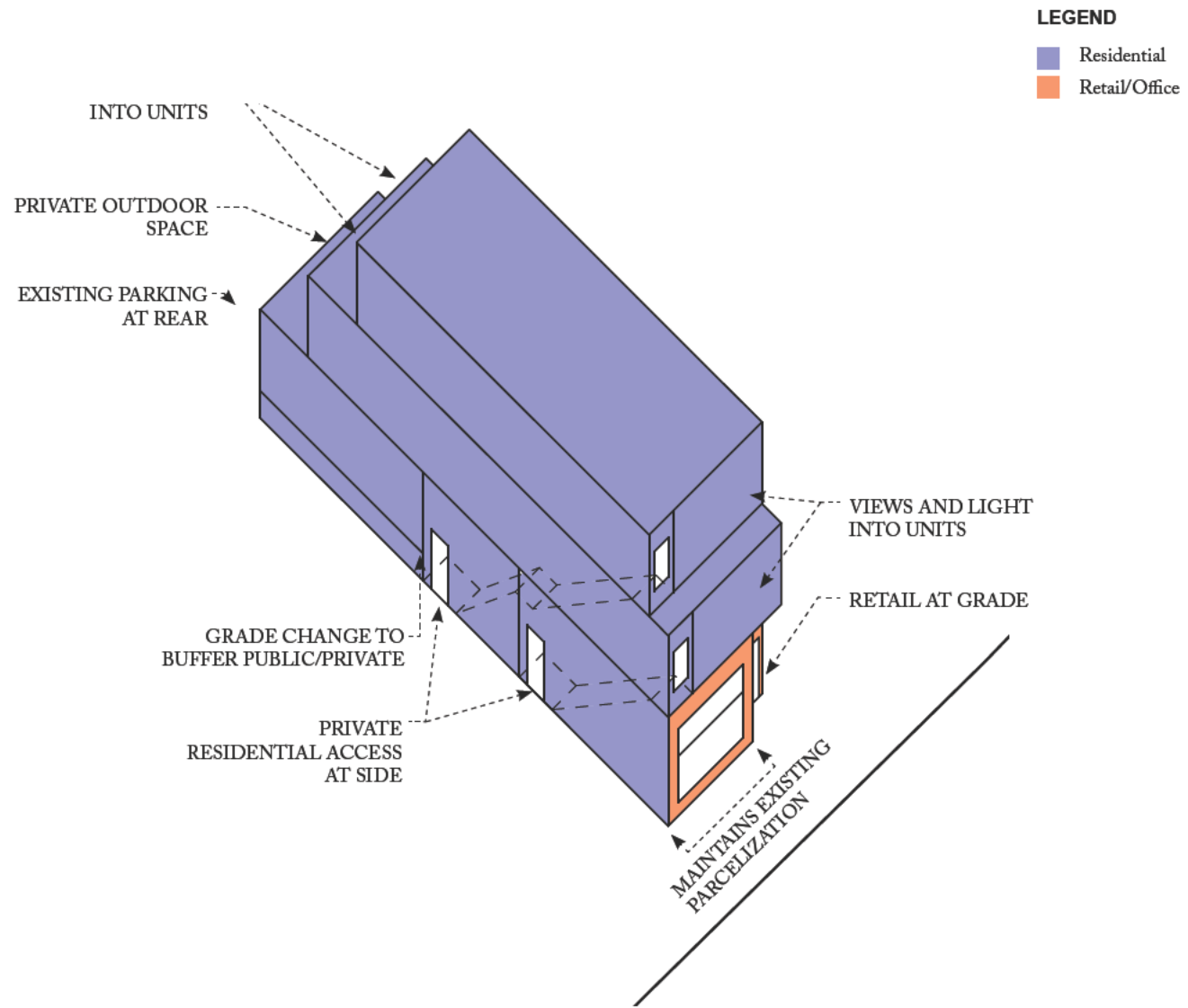
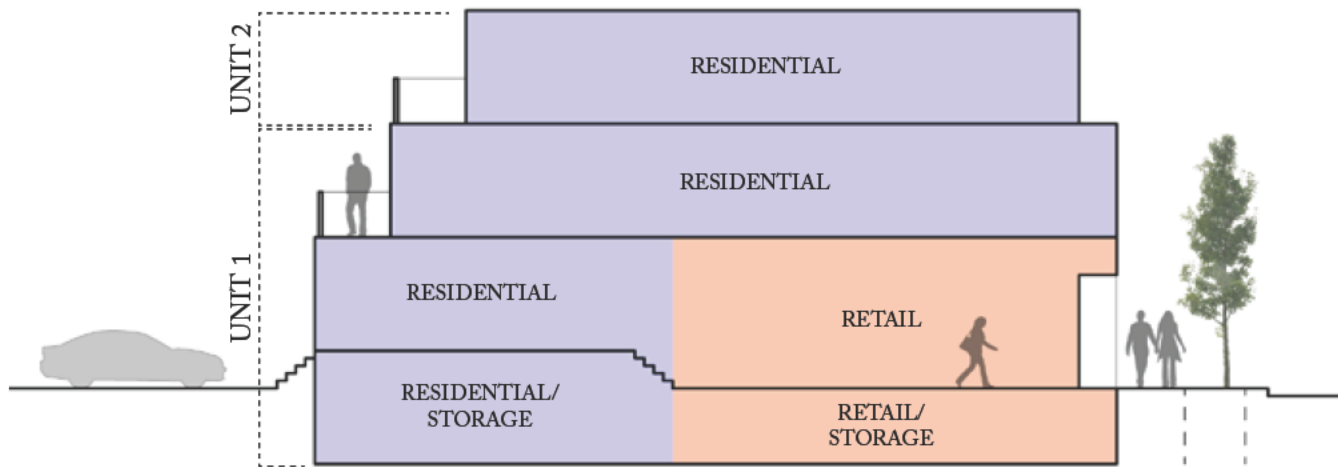


Fig. 5.2.9: Single Autonomous Parcel, Massing Axonometric (above)



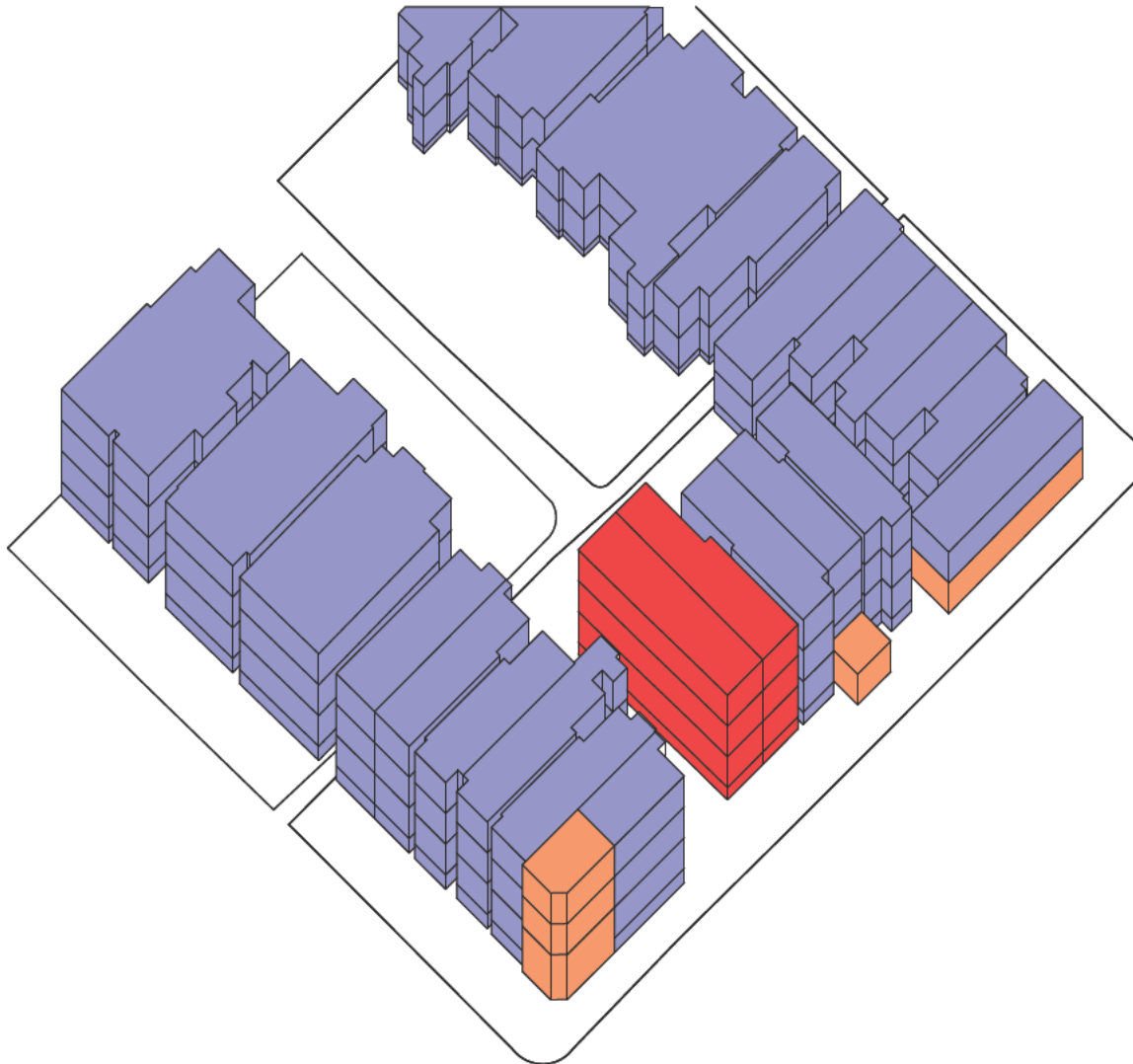
*Fig. 5.2.10: Single Autonomous Parcel, Organizational Section, 1:200 (above)*

## 2. ADJOINING PARCELS

The second type is the Adjoining Parcels incremental strategy. This strategy is similar to the Single Parcel type but includes two side-by-side parcels being intensified at the same time. Again, the typology precedent explored in Section 4.5 for Public Studio can serve as an excellent example of incremental intensification of this nature. Like the Single Parcel type, this strategy lends itself greatly to the retention or reuse of existing building structure.

### LEGEND

- Residential
- Retail/Office
- Demonstrative Site

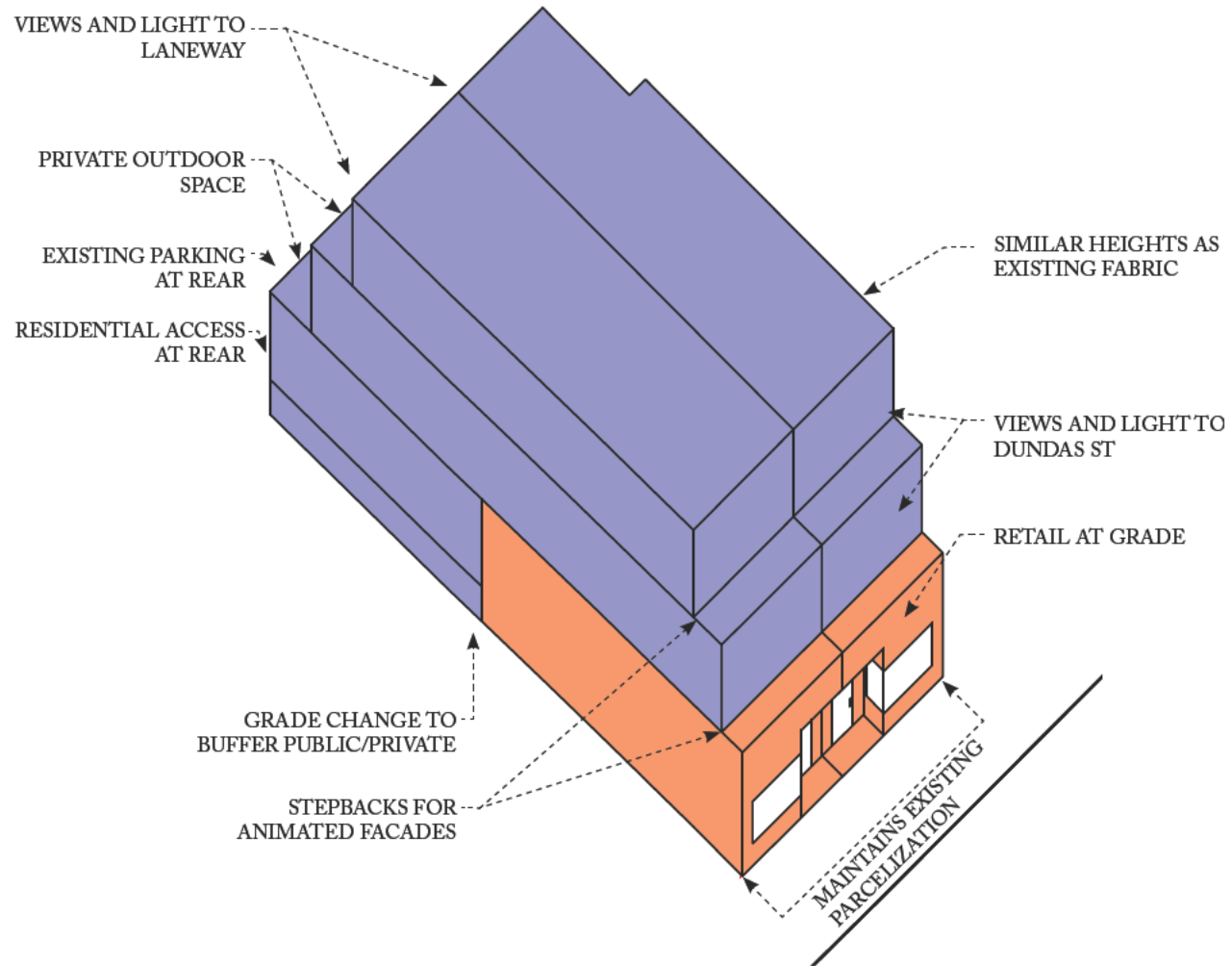


*Fig. 5.2.11: Adjoining Parcels, Existing Site Axonometric Diagram (above)*

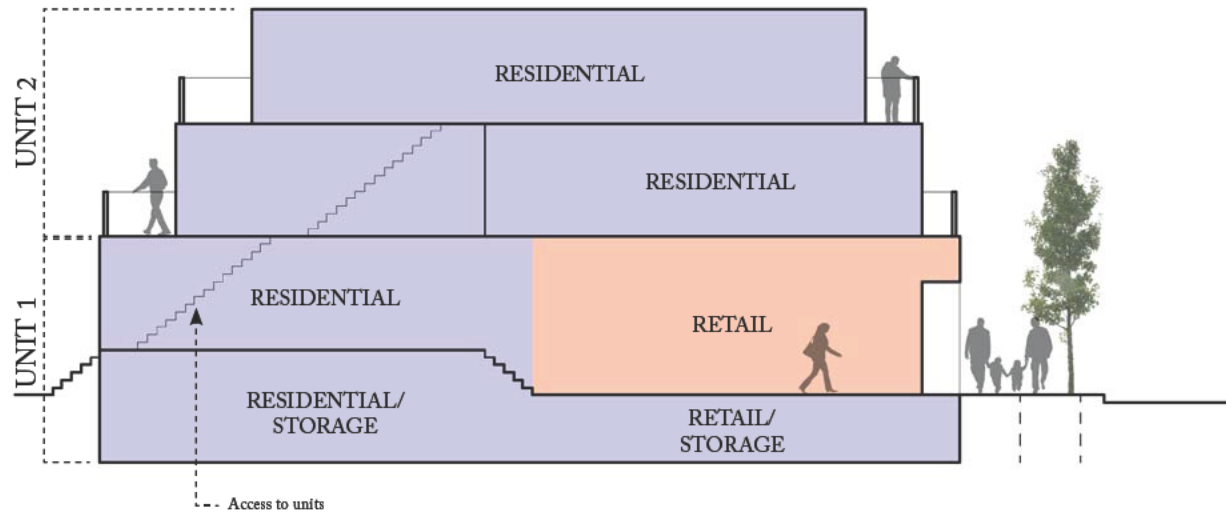


**LEGEND**

- Residential
- Retail/Office



*Fig. 5.2.12: Adjoining Parcels, Massing Axonometric (above)*



*Fig. 5.2.13: Adjoining Parcels, Organizational Section, 1:200 (above)*

### 3. PARCELS WITHIN A BLOCK

#### LEGEND

- Residential
- Retail/Office
- Demonstrative Site

The third type is the Semi-Main-Street-Block strategy. This strategy comes as an alternative to the current situation of land assembly and parcel conglomeration that often results in high-rise residential buildings to be constructed. In the case of Toronto's main streets, the parcels of land are still too small to be amalgamated into a plot big enough to support a high-rise development, so instead a mid-rise residential apartment development is injected there. A case of this has already occurred within the target area of Dundas St W and is currently under construction.

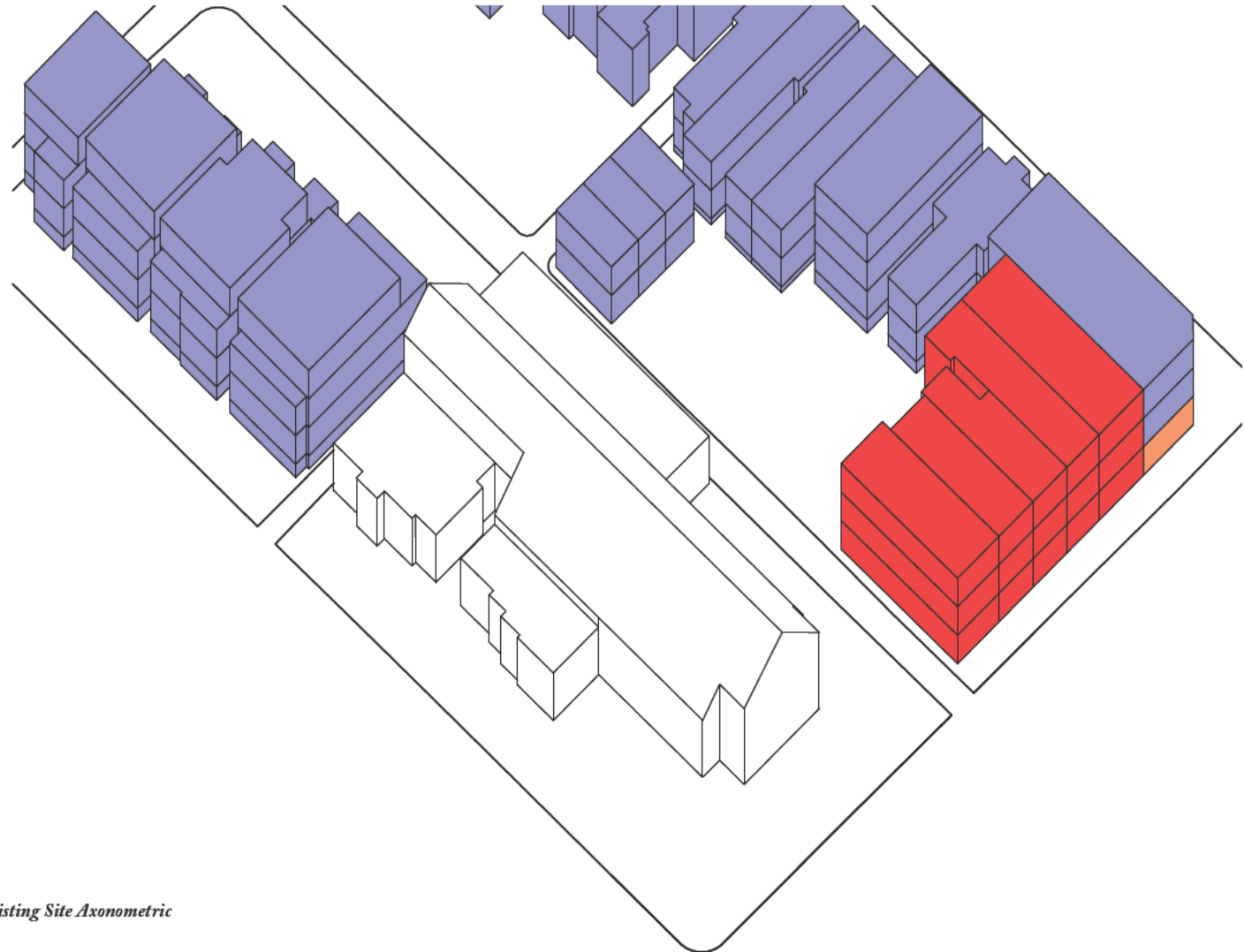


Fig. 5.2.14: *Parcels within a Block, Existing Site Axonometric Diagram (above)*

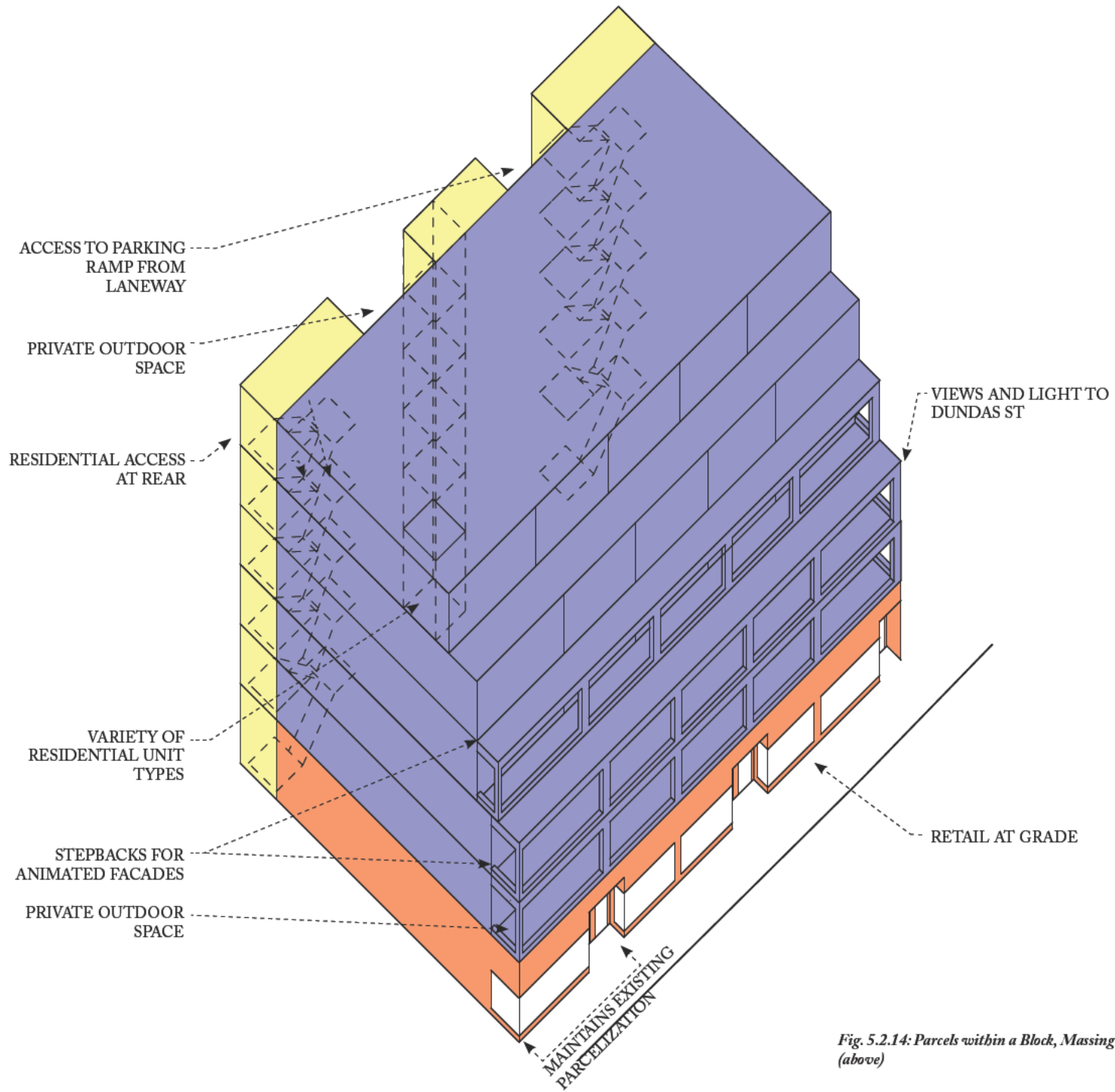


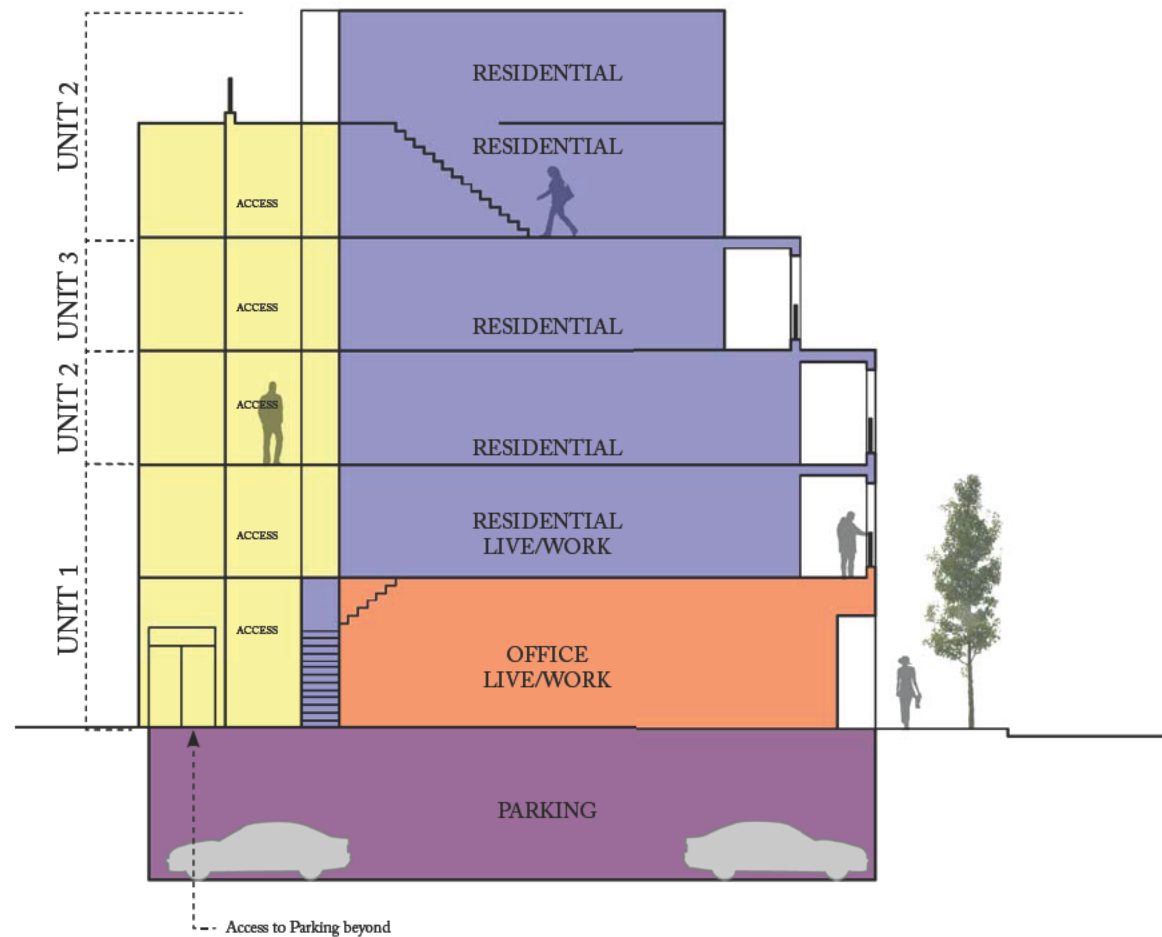
Fig. 5.2.14: *Parcels within a Block, Massing Axonometric (above)*

**LEGEND**

- Residential
- Retail/Office
- Circulation
- Parking
- Demonstrative Site

In order to maintain the small-grain parcelized nature of the main street fabric, precautions must be made when dealing with this intensification strategy.

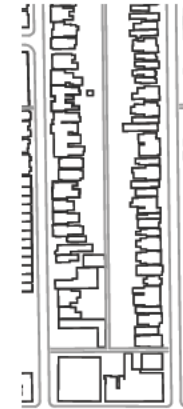
First, this type of strategy cannot encompass a whole main street block. In order to maintain a varying and vibrant streetscape, whole block amalgamation is not ideal. Generally, no more than 5 parcels should be intensified at once. Second, when the buildings are rebuilt and are not reused, adequate underground parking for the units must be made. Third, each parcel must maintain its small-grain status at grade. This prevents the “Drug Store Block” that is commonly a result of land assembly at the base of residential mid or high-rise residential developments. Fourth, and finally, all residential units should have main street facing windows or, where possible, balconies. This maintains the Jane Jacobs philosophy of maintaining “eyes on the street” which are cause for safer and more animated neighbourhood streets.



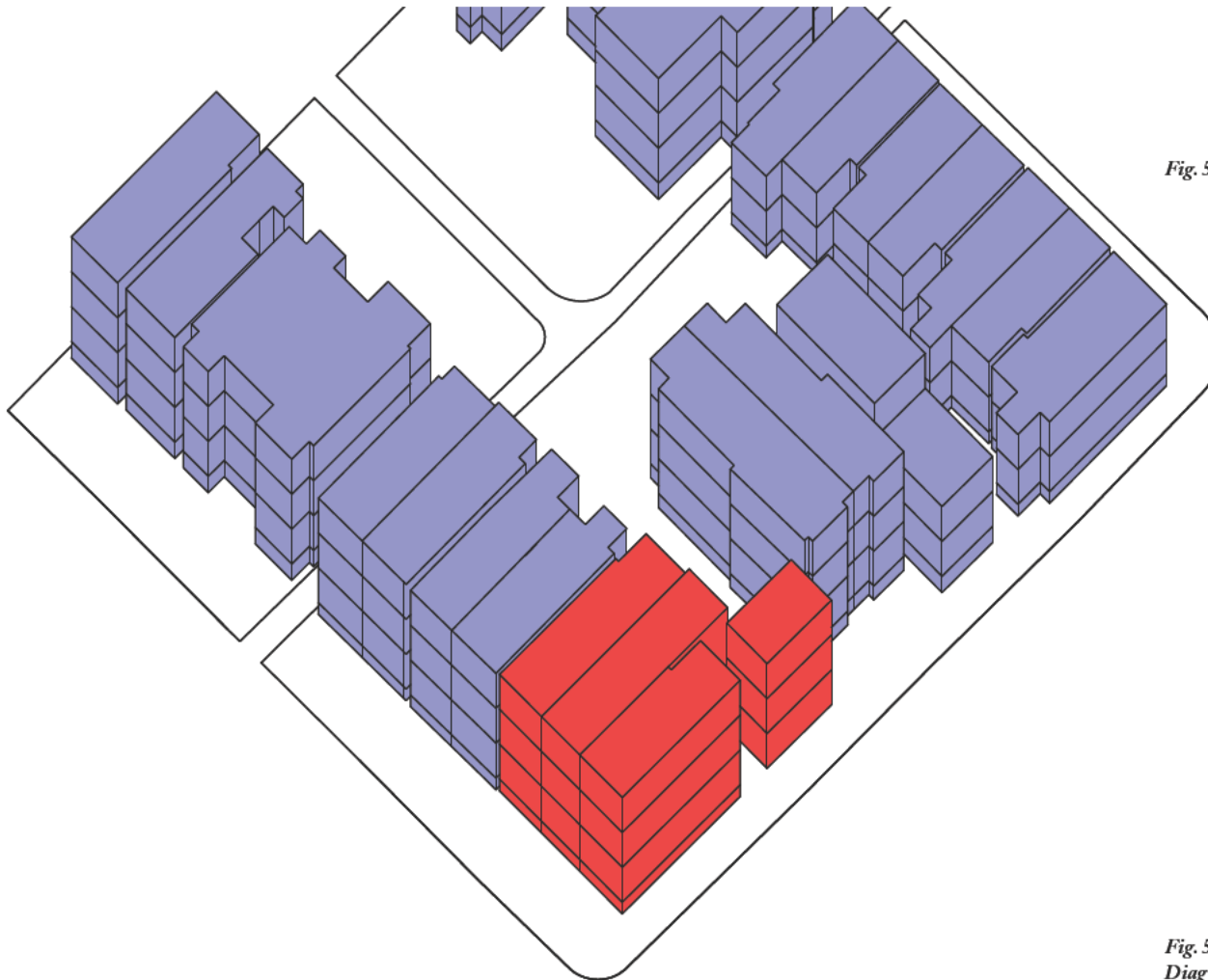
*Fig. 5.2.16: Parcels within a Block, Organizational Section, 1:200 (right)*

## 4. “L”/CORNER BLOCK

The fourth type is the “L” or Corner Block strategy. This strategy encompasses the intensification of parcels on both main street and side street fabric, at the same time. While the intensification of main street fabric is the cause of this thesis, the side street fabric within the first hundred meters or so of the main street is also important as it serves as the link or buffer between the main street and residential side streets. This is especially important when the block has an intersecting laneway running parallel to the main street forming one of Toronto’s typical residential “T” shaped blocks (see Fig. 5.2.17). This type will be looked at in two forms: the Small Corner block and the Large-L block.



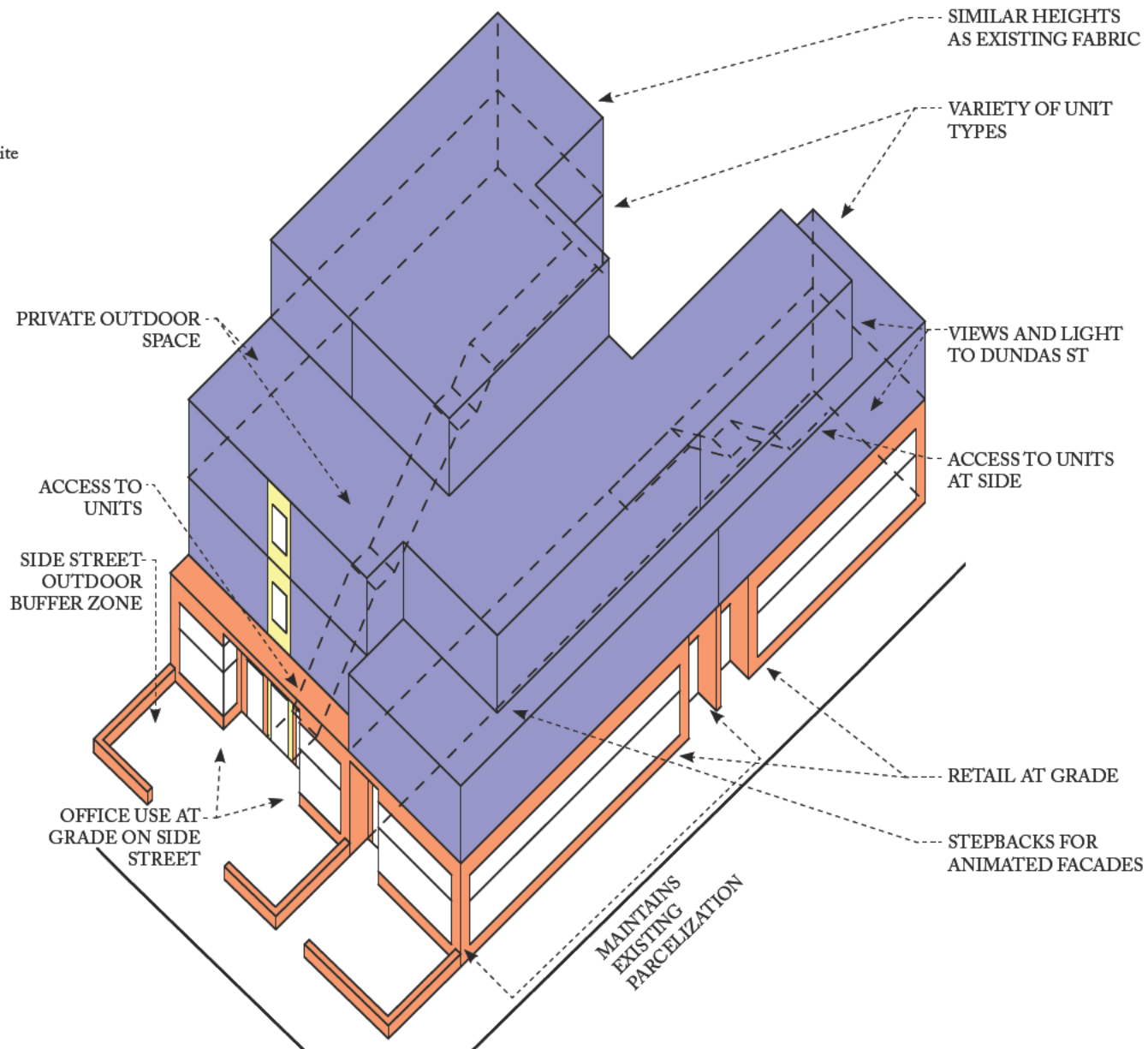
*Fig. 5.2.17: Typical Residential “T” Block (above)*



*Fig. 5.2.18: Small Corner Block, Existing Site Axonometric Diagram (above)*

**LEGEND**

- Residential
- Retail/Office
- Circulation
- Parking
- Demonstrative Site



*Fig. 5.2.19: Small Corner Block, Massing Axonometric (above)*

The Small Corner block typically contains one main street parcel and one side street parcel forming a corner of intensification that acts as a buffer between both types of fabric. The challenge for this type of strategy is being able to communicate with both public main street fabric and private residential fabric. While retail uses at grade may not be suitable for residential side street fabric, having residential uses directly on street-level is also not advised. The purpose for this type of intensification is to double density while acting as a proper buffer between main street and side street fabric that will facilitate lively and vibrant streets.

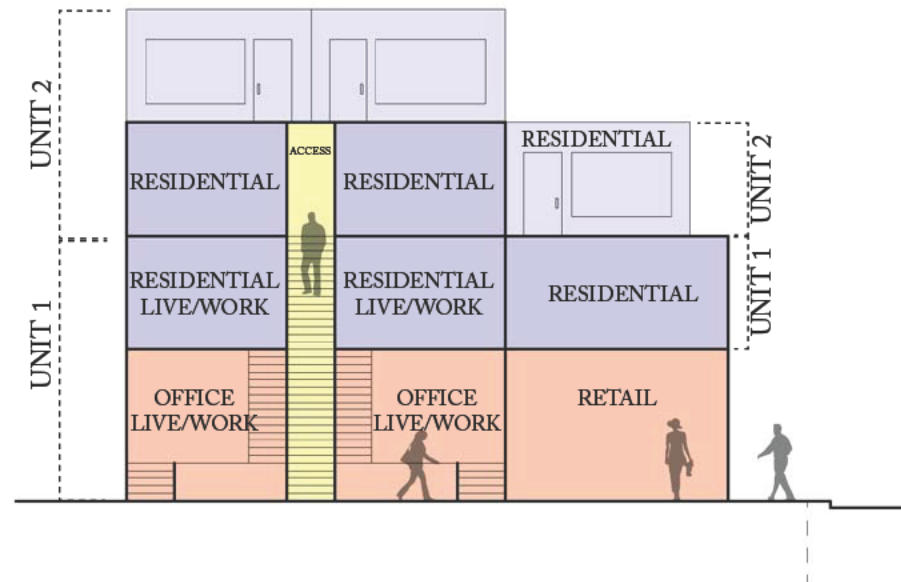


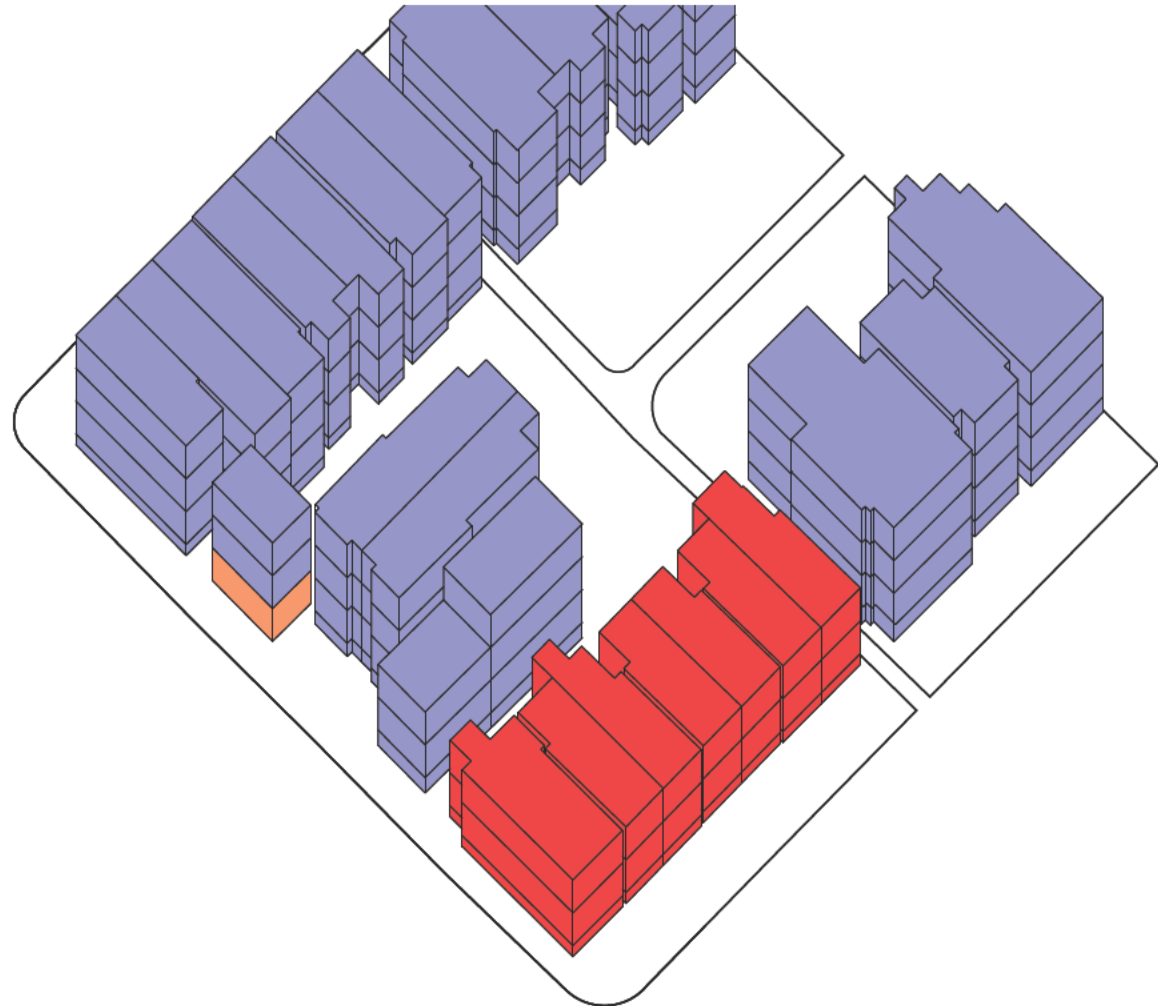
Fig. 5.2.20: Small Corner Block, Organizational Section, 1:200 (above)



**LEGEND**

- Residential
- Retail/Office
- Circulation
- Parking
- Demonstrative Site

The Large-L block contains one parcel of main street fabric and an entire short block of residential fabric combined into one intensification strategy. Similar to the previous Small Corner block strategy, it is advised that the intensification strategy employ some sort of semi-public use at grade to ensure a smooth transition or buffer from main street fabric to residential street fabric. The residential fabric being improved or replaced in this strategy should be analyzed and found to be “past its best before date” or, to put it simply, in need of improvement. Fabric that has already been updated or intensified is not ideal for this type of strategy. It is also important to note that the small-scale parcelization of the fabric, like on the main streets, should remain as is.



*Fig. 5.2.21: Large-L Block, Existing Site Axonometric Diagram (above)*

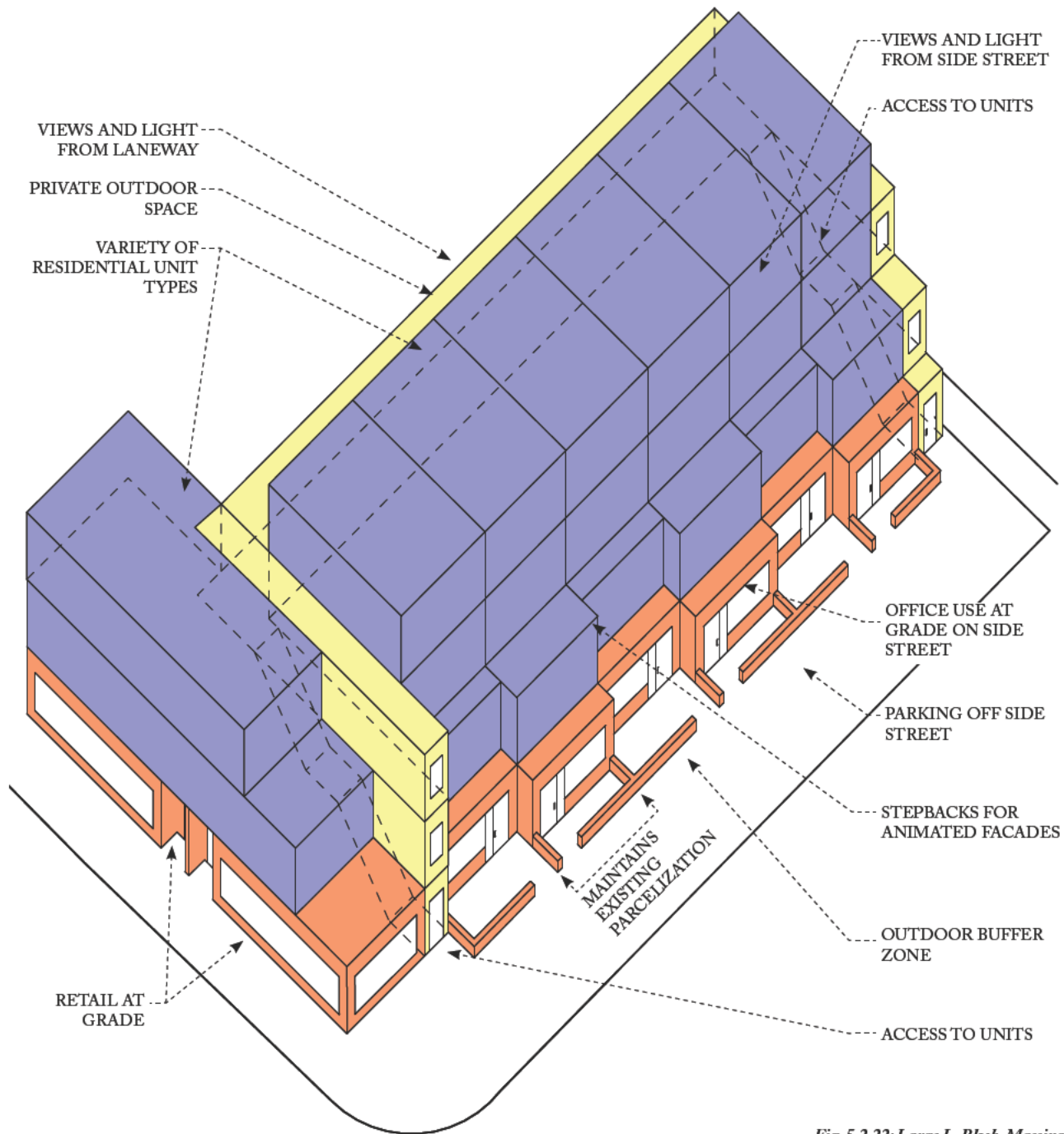


Fig. 5.2.22: Large L-Block, Massing Axonometric (above)

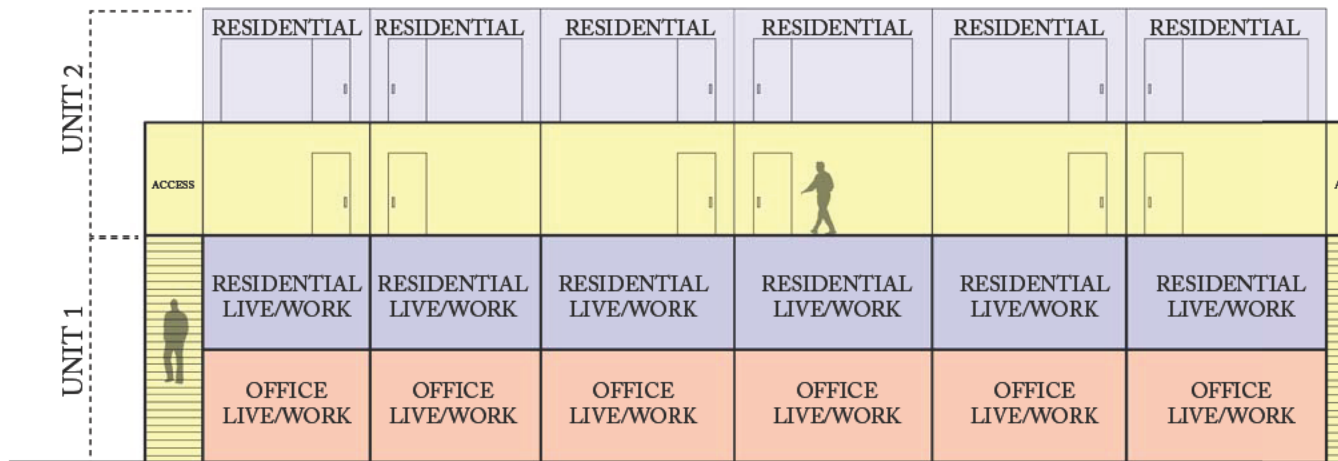


Fig. 5.2.23: Large-L Block, Organizational Section, 1:200 (above)

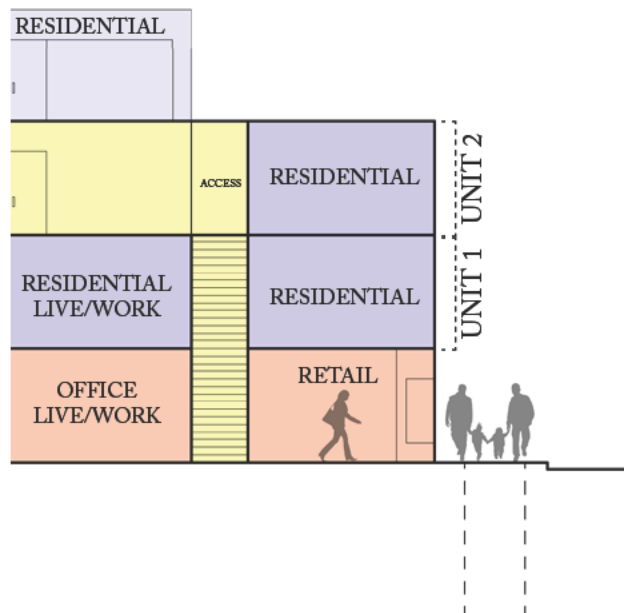


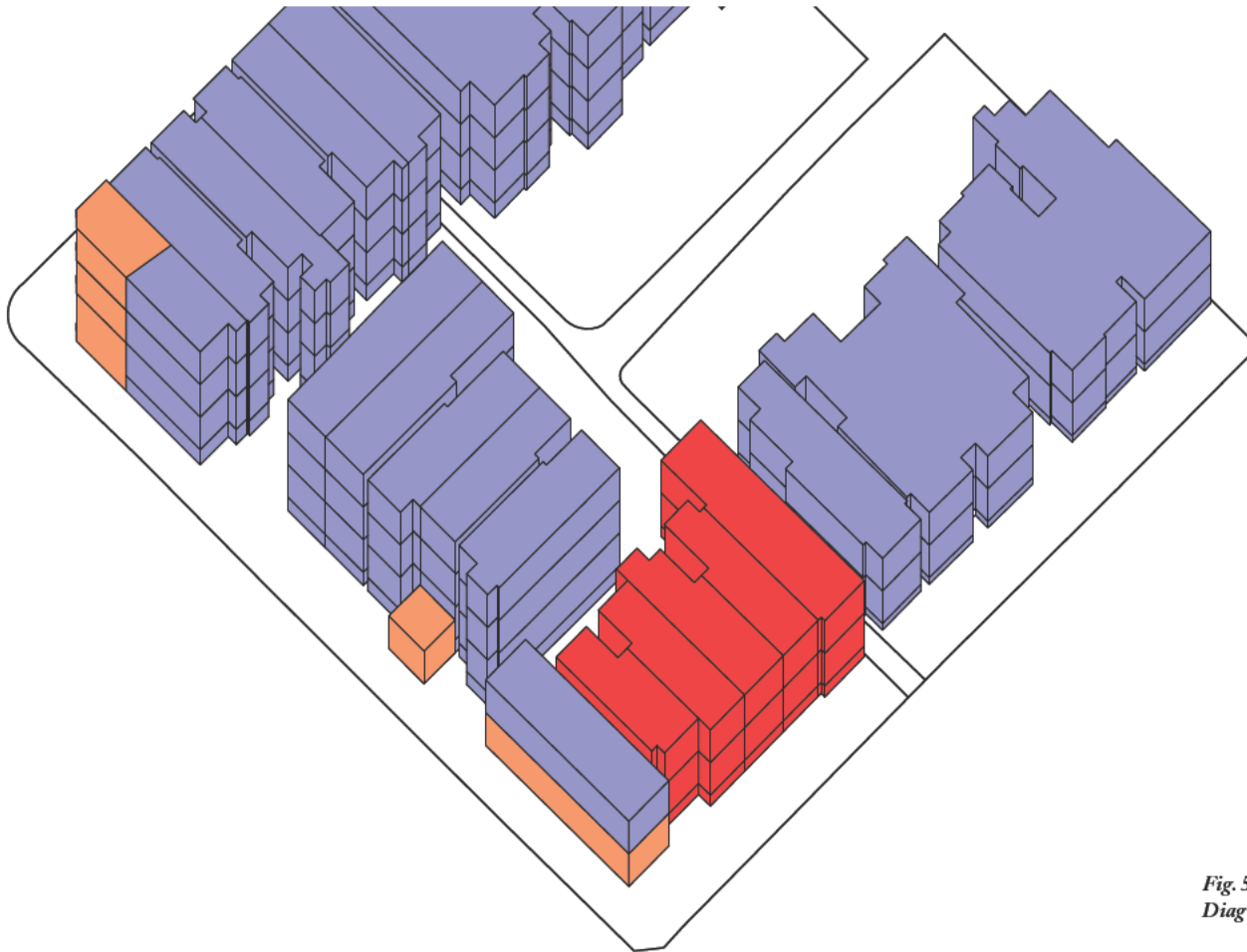
Fig. 5.2.24: Large-L Block, Organizational Section, 1:200 (above)

## 5. SIDE STREET BLOCK

The fifth type is the Side Street Block strategy. This is a distilled version of the previous Large-L Block strategy in that it only looks at the intensification of the residential or side street fabric. While all of the other strategies deal with main street fabric, as is the focus of this thesis, the side street fabric that runs within the first hundred meters or so of the main street is also important in ensuring a smooth transition from public main street to private residential side street. Typically, this type of intensification will happen on Residential I-shaped blocks, where there is a laneway that bifurcates the residential side street a short distance from the main street, but this may not always be the case. Whatever the structure of the entire block, it is important to ensure proper incremental intensification on these parcels due to the fact that many of the residential fabric on them have fallen into disrepair. Since these parcels are clearly visible from the main street, it is important that they have a connection with both the main street and residential fabric.

### LEGEND

- Residential
- Retail/Office
- Circulation
- Parking
- Demonstrative Site



*Fig. 5.2.25: Side Street Block, Existing Site Axonometric Diagram (above)*

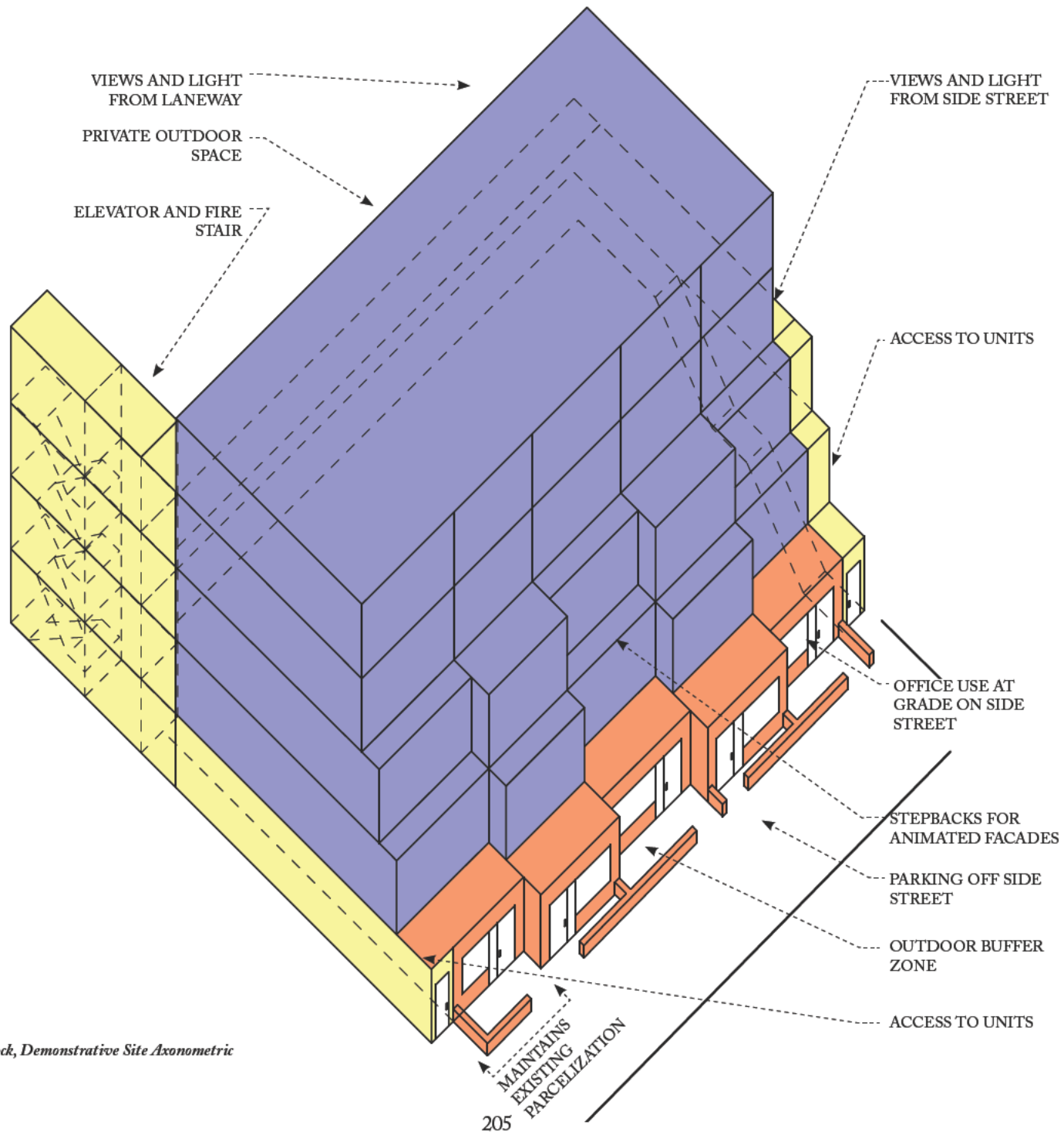
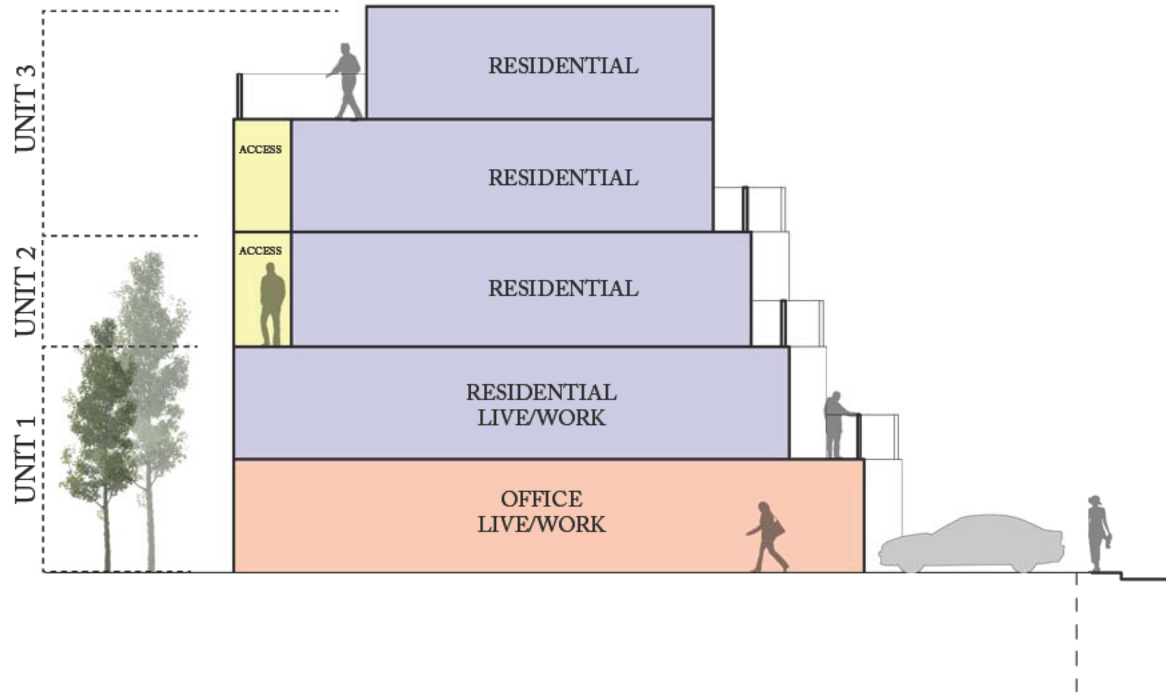


Fig. 5.2.26 Side Street Block, Demonstrative Site Axonometric Diagram (above)



*Fig. 5.2.27: Side Street Block, Organizational Section, 1:200 (above)*

## 6. HALF BLOCK, HIGHER DENSITY

### LEGEND

- Residential
- Retail/Office
- Circulation
- Parking
- Demonstrative Site

The sixth type is the Half Block, Higher Density strategy. This example illustrates the potential of density at a higher level than the previous strategy types. It utilizes a half block site which is large enough to fit an underground parking lot beneath the new type. While this strategy is higher density, it fits within the design guidelines of staying within 2 or 3 storeys of existing fabric as the type is 6 storeys tall. Underground parking access is from the side street and the existing parking in the rear has been utilized for community outdoor space, such as small parkette for the neighbourhood. The retail at-grade along the main street will remain, as well as the small grain and parcelized nature of these retail spaces. All units on top of the retail spaces are accessed from a circulation hallway which contains two fire stairs, a larger service elevator, and a standard passenger elevator. Typically, this type of intensification will happen on sites which are large enough to accommodate such intensification.

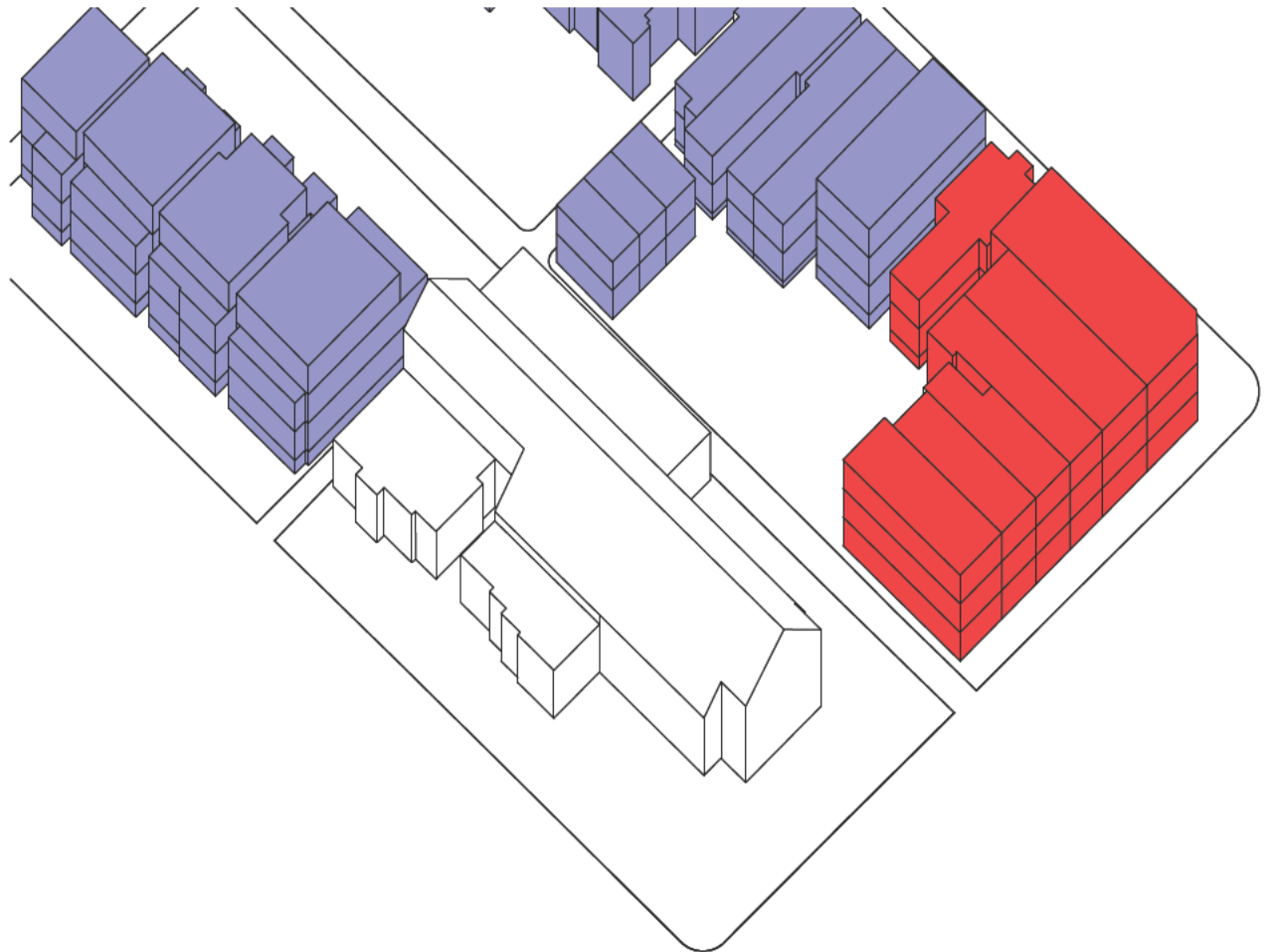


Fig. 5.2.28: Half Block Higher Density Strategy, Existing Site  
Axonometric Diagram (above)

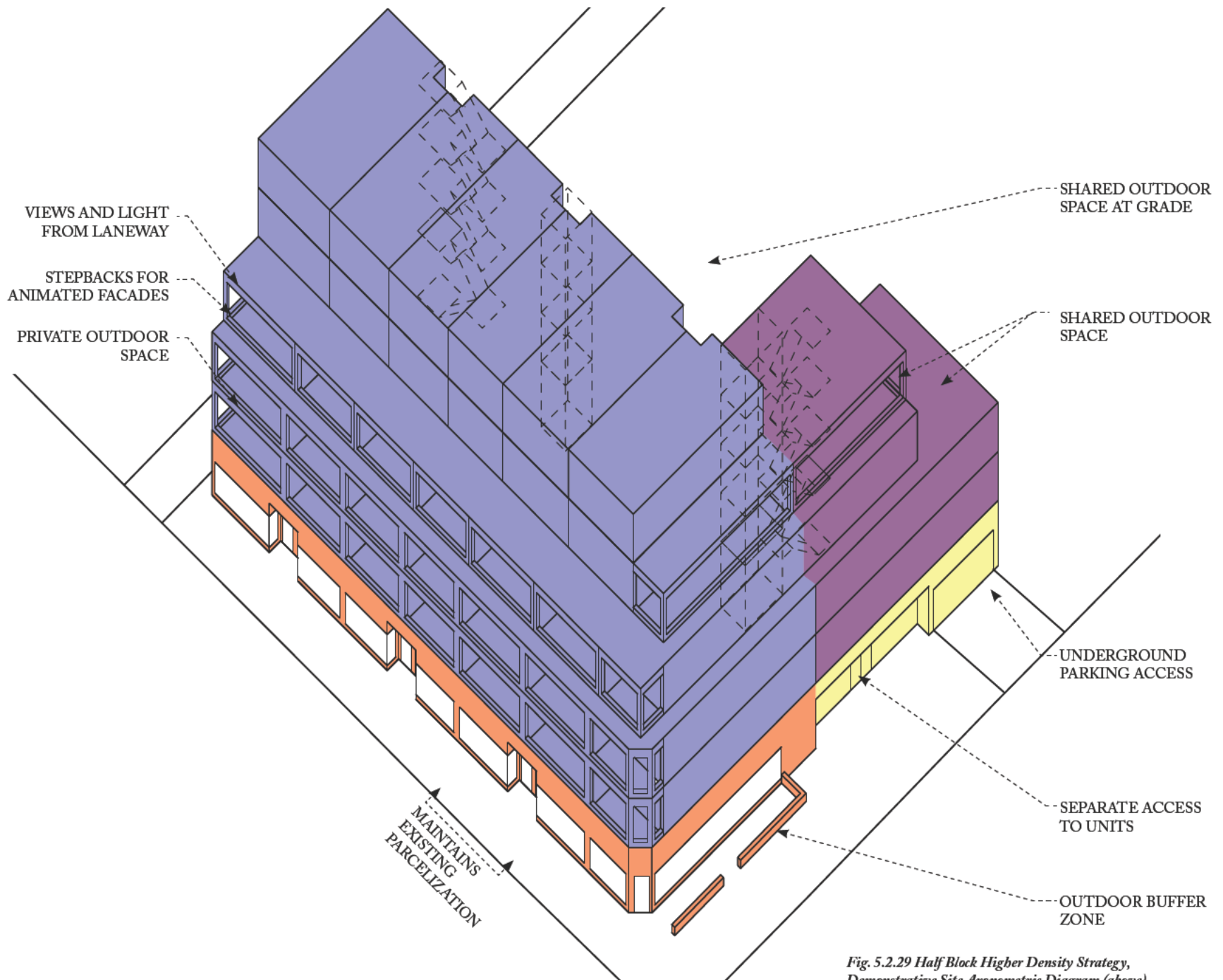


Fig. 5.2.29 Half Block Higher Density Strategy,  
 Demonstrative Site Axonometric Diagram (above)



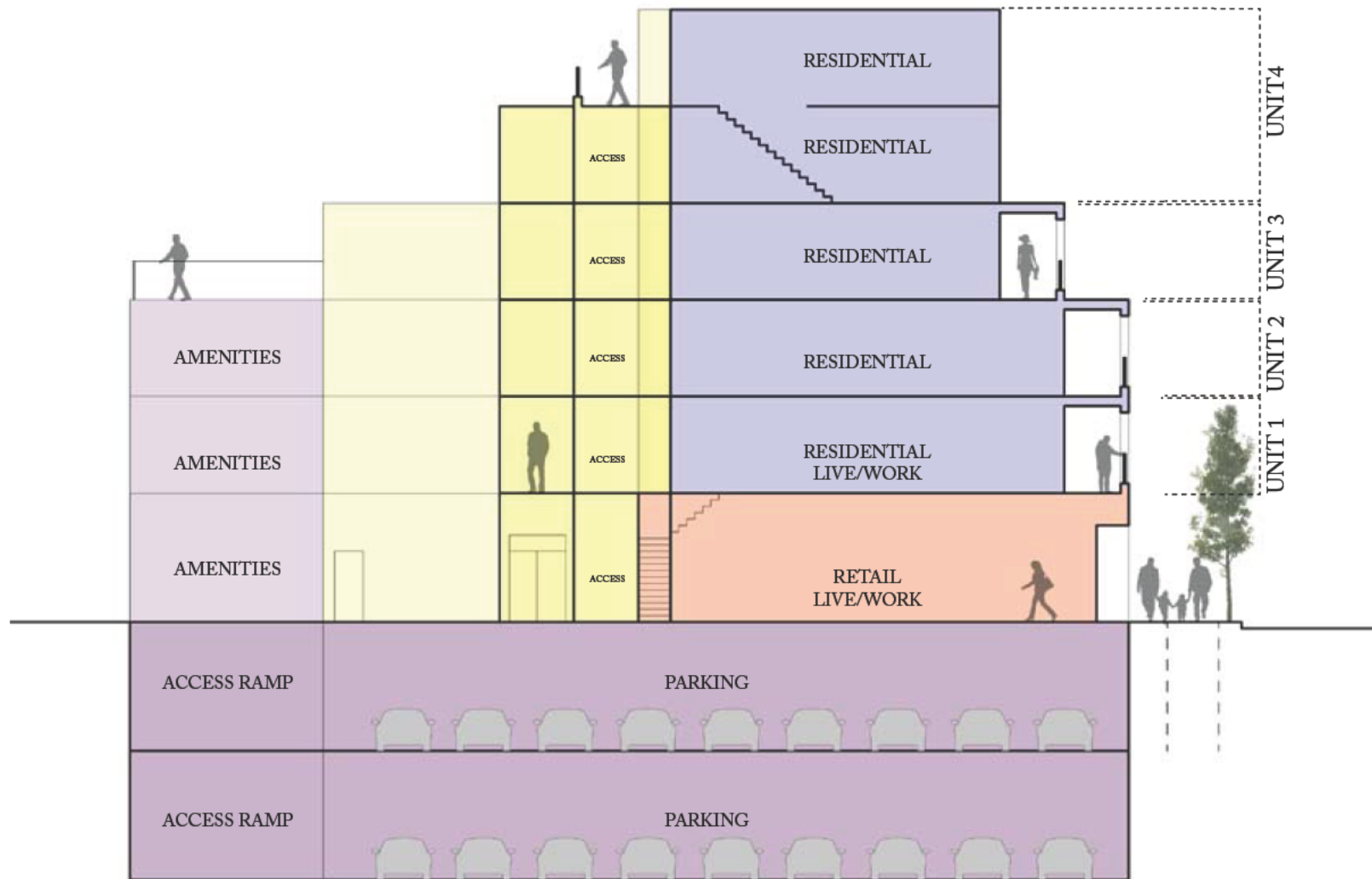


Fig. 5.2.30: Half Block Higher Density Strategy, Organizational Section, 1:200 (above)

## 7. WHOLE BLOCK, HIGHER DENSITY

The seventh and final type is the Whole Block, Higher Density strategy. This example illustrates the potential of density which utilizes the entire block of main street fabric, as well as a portion of the side street fabric that extend up from the main street. Like the previous strategy, it is large enough to fit an underground parking lot beneath the new type. Again, while this strategy is higher density, it fits within the design guidelines of staying within 2 or 3 storeys of existing fabric as the type is 6 storeys tall. Underground parking access is from the side street and the existing parking in the rear has been utilized for community outdoor space, such as small parkette for the neighbourhood. The retail at-grade along the main street will remain, as well as the small grain and parcelized nature of these retail spaces. All units on top of the retail spaces are accessed from a circulation hallway which contains two fire stairs, a larger service elevator, and a standard passenger elevator. Typically, this type of intensification will happen on main street sites which are large enough to accommodate such intensification, and side street fabric which is in new of renewal.

### LEGEND

- Residential
- Retail/Office
- Circulation
- Parking
- Demonstrative Site

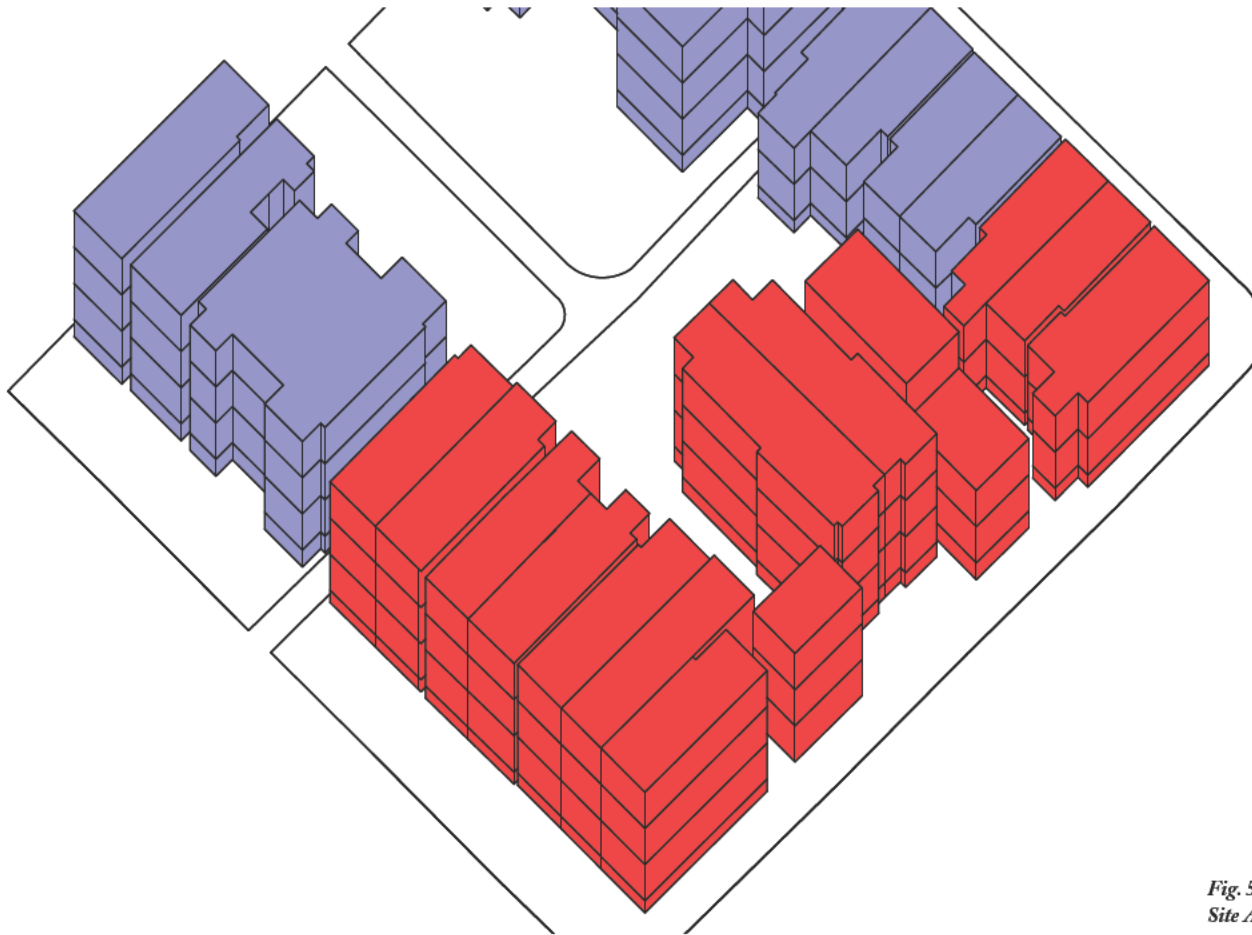


Fig. 5.2.30: Whole Block Higher Density Strategy, Existing Site Axonometric Diagram (above)

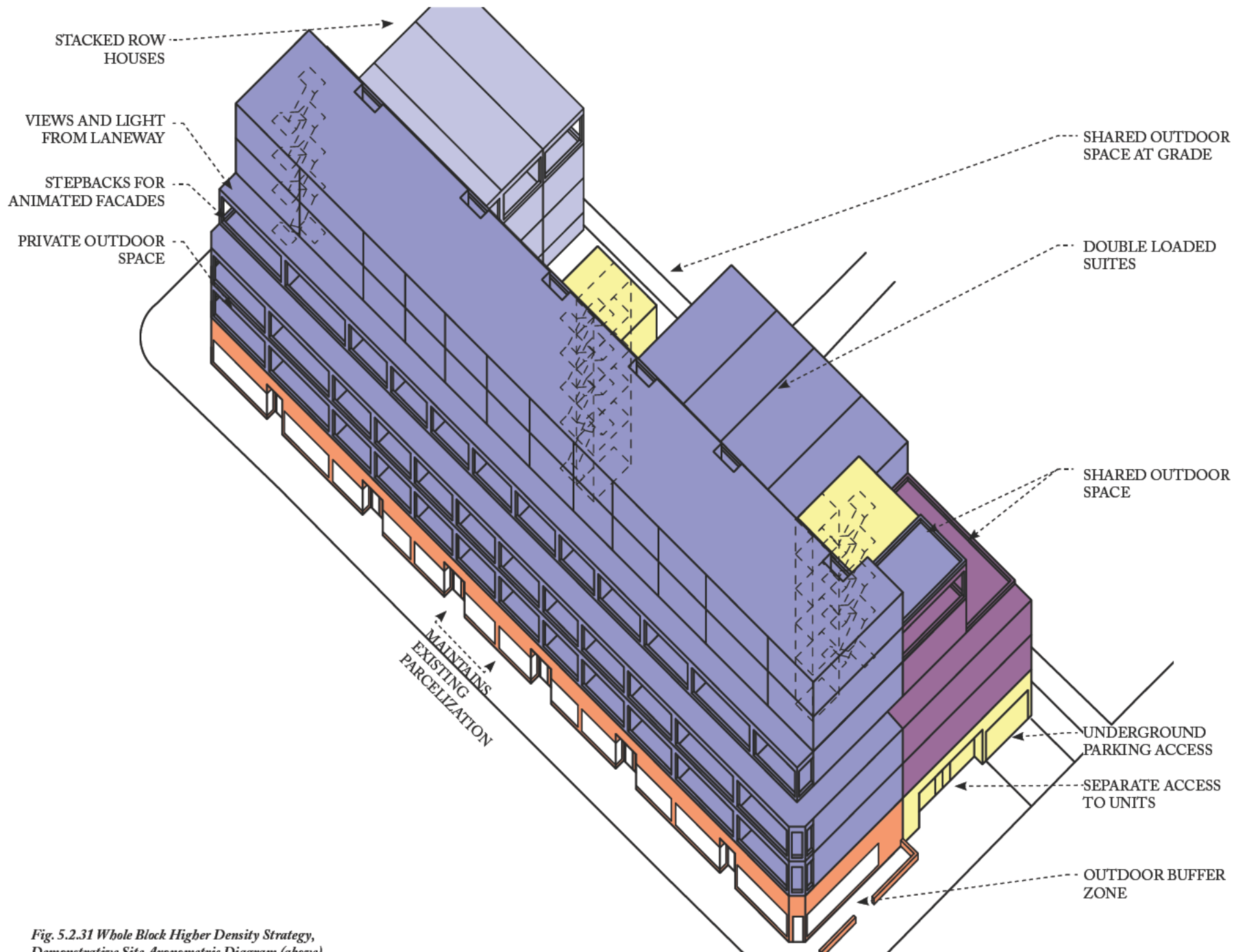


Fig. 5.2.31 Whole Block Higher Density Strategy, Demonstrative Site Axonometric Diagram (above)

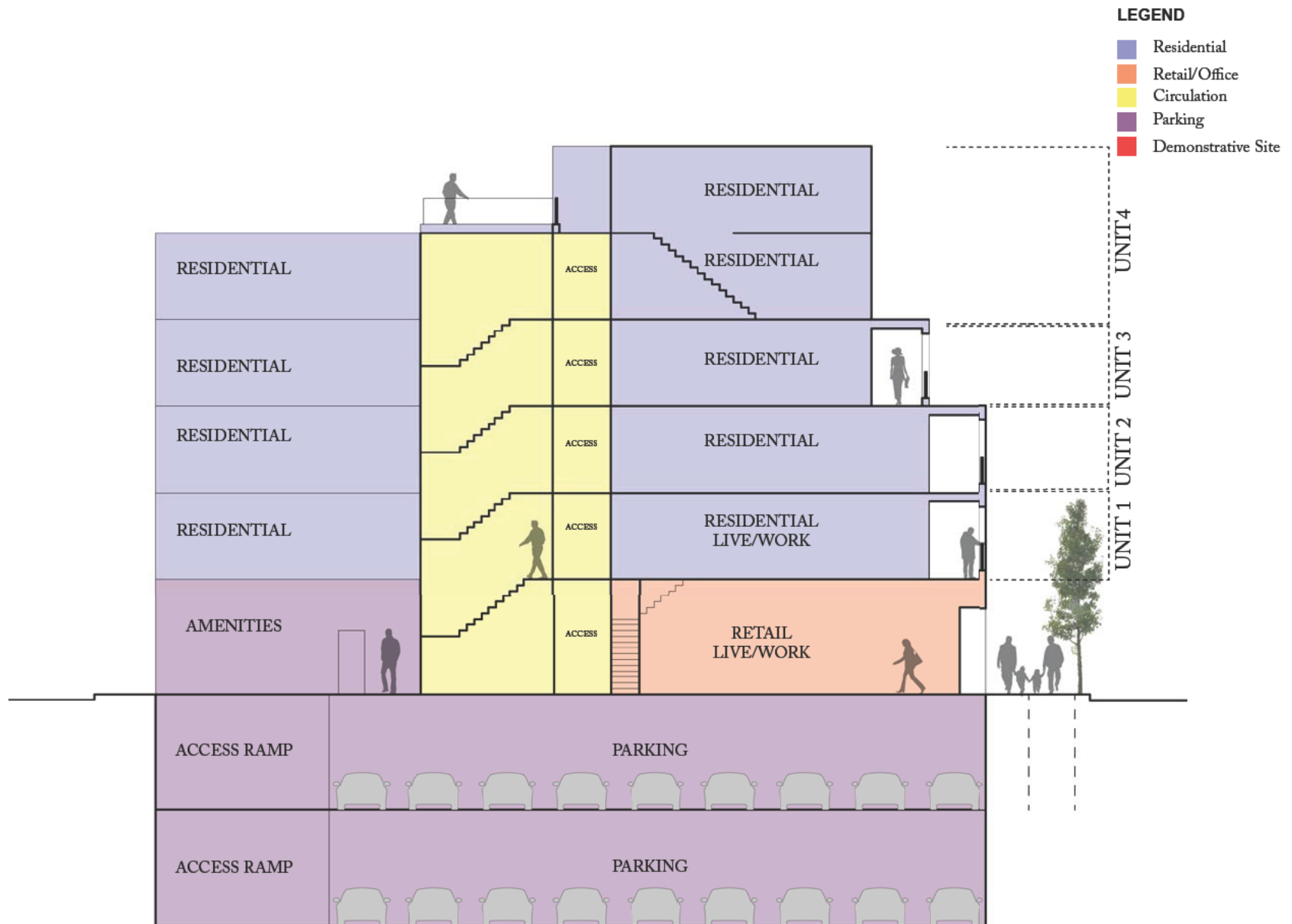


Fig. 5.2.32: Whole Block Higher Density Strategy, Organizational Section, 1:200 (above)

This strategy utilizes the stacked row house type to fill in existing side street fabric which was in need of rejuvenation. Parking for these units are also located underground, along with the rest of the strategy. This helps to bridge the density gap between the new strategy and existing single family homes.

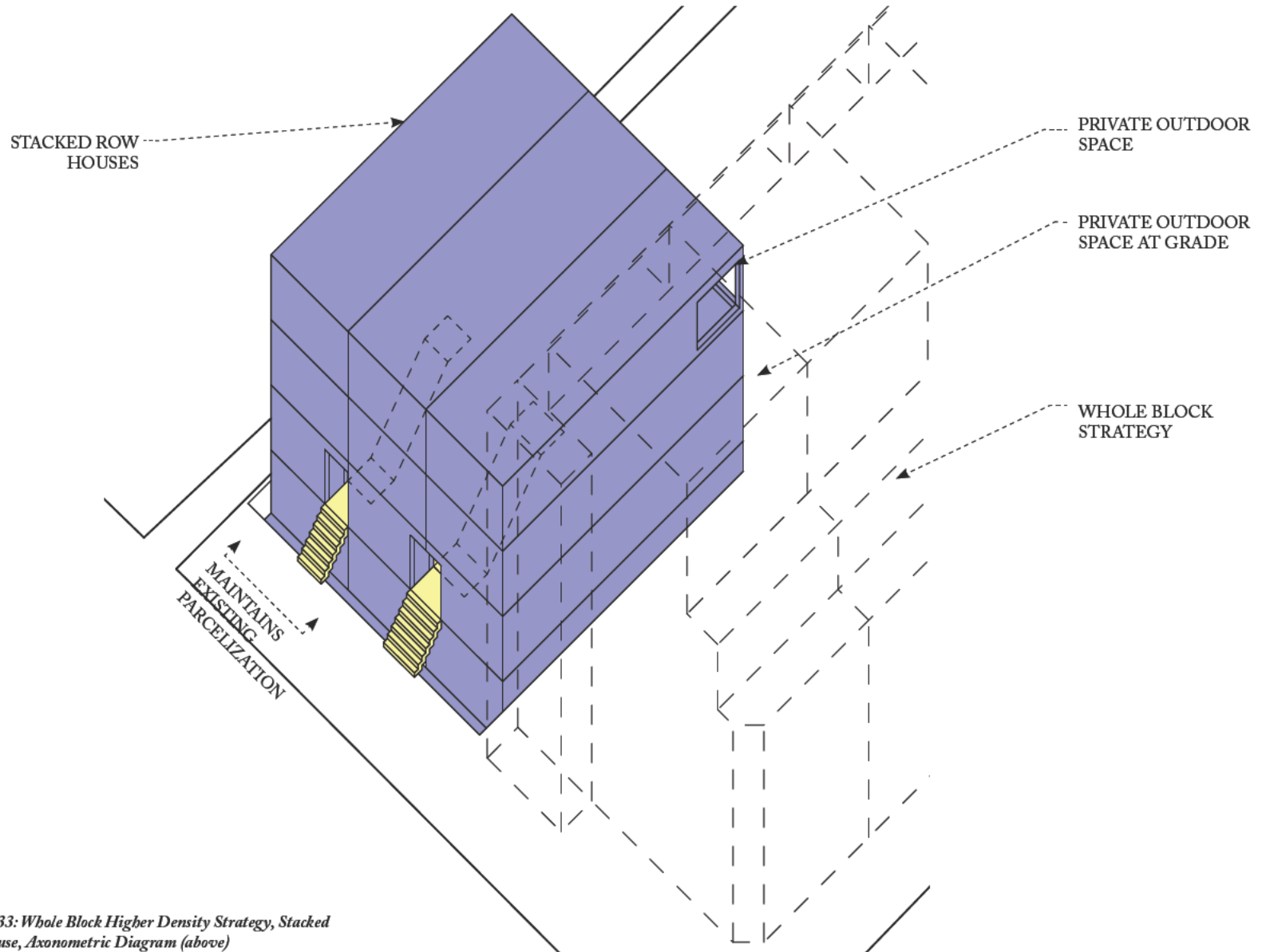


Fig. 5.2.33: Whole Block Higher Density Strategy, Stacked Row House, Axonometric Diagram (above)

### 5.3 CONCLUSIONS



*Fig. 5.3.1: Demonstrative Intensification Render, Future Potential of Dundas St W (above)*

While the population of Toronto continues to grow, efforts must be made to successfully accommodate the rising number of residents especially in the central city areas. With the City's push to continue the re-urbanization of the downtown core and the immediately surrounding areas, a suitable intensification strategy for new building density must be employed to ensure the city grows reasonably and sustainably without overwhelming the existing small and mid-scale urban fabric and infrastructure. The present, and growing, condominium-based high rise apartment building typology in Toronto has been the primary means of such intensification thus far but its jump in scale is causing a great deal of strain to the diversity and vitality of the main streets of Toronto. In addition to adding an overwhelming amount of new high rise building at a single point, the manner in which those high-rise condominium developments interact with the existing streetscapes is causing for the loss of what is in this thesis called Toronto's *city-ness*, or its historically evolved qualities of public spaces like main streets. These high-rise developments are being constructed towering over the already existing two to four storey vernacular main street fabric, a process which in turn is eradicating the long embedded main street culture within the City. This issue has gotten the attention of Urban Affairs and Architecture Critic for the Toronto Star, Christopher Hume. He acknowledges it by saying:

*"Looming over their older neighbours, they (condos) are a painful reminder of how the city-building function was taken over by the development industry, which not surprisingly, has its own priorities... The streets of Toronto have become a reconfiguration of the expected brands, logos, colours and signs. Subway, Starbucks, Tims, McDonald's, Shoppers and, at every corner, another bank branch have washed across the city like some tsunami of sameness, and condos are their enablers."*<sup>79</sup>

This thesis seeks to lay out a set of more sophisticated and directed guiding principles and urban design guidelines to augment Toronto's current municipal planning regulations already in place, by exploring alternatives to the high-rise condominium development building typology. The work of the preceding chapters work focuses its attention on the main streets as they already exist; as vital vibrant arterial connectors of the overall City that link Toronto's unique neighbourhoods to each other, and are home to the building fabric that contributes to the *city-ness* that makes Toronto distinct. Christopher Hume enforces the importance of these streets:

*"The most vital streets in Toronto are those lined with small and often unremarkable two- or three-storey buildings... Jane Jacobs was right when she proclaimed that "new ideas need old buildings." This city is a perfect example of what that means."*<sup>80</sup>

By learning from the existing built fabric and conditions within Toronto's neighbourhoods, and attacking the present intensification with both architectural and urban design lenses, better options for intensification can present themselves. Not only does this approach facilitate the re-urbanization and intensification of the City but it also allows for the main streets to maintain or better their street culture, spatial qualities, and vitality.

Through the examination of a case study site on Dundas Street West in the Trinity-Bellwoods park neighbourhood, this thesis has been able to distill seven different site types or strategies to an alternative urban intensification. The case studies, in increasing size, are: the single main street parcel, adding the adjoining parcels, the parcels within a block, the “L”/Corner wrap parcels, the side street block, the half block with higher built density, and the whole block higher built density. These strategies are not only specific to the study site but are also general enough to be applicable on most other main street fabric within Toronto. As well, these strategies aim to at least double the existing density along the main street fabric to ensure intensification at an incremental and sustainable level, providing a suitable buffer between the intensifying main street fabric and highly valuable residential fabric that surrounds the main streets. The last two case studies seek to offer an alternative at the densities of the new tower building types that are today’s preferred developer option. This alternative design approach will ensure that the City is able to grow at a reasonable pace, spreading the project opportunities to more development actors, and all the while guaranteeing that the vitality of the main streets is not compromised.

During the writing of this thesis, there have been a few main design struggles at both building and urban design levels. Four over-arching images in this thesis conclusion encapsulate in streetscape pictures those main issues on which this thesis has focused in its Demonstration Studies, and they frame the range of alternative solutions as part of an ongoing process of shaping Toronto’s main streets with more, and more diverse, sets of actors:

## The Oblique Streetscape

The first struggle of this thesis was in understanding this alternative urban design process as an experiment in the author’s attempt at maintaining or bettering Toronto’s *city-ness*. The types created within the Design Guidelines were new inventions and were produced from a bottom-up design process, meaning that the small or mid-sized site or parcel was first taken into account and then a strategy of intensification was built from there. This design approach worked best, and achieved the thesis ideals, when it was applied to small, incremental types of intensification; one or two parcels which were to be intensified land assemblies of entire blocks that are today’s preferred option. When larger blocks with many assembled parcels were developed with the thesis’ alternative design approach, what ultimately happened was similar to the already occurring building type of mid-rise condominium apartment building typology that can be exemplified in the Nero Condominium Development (see Fig. 5.3.2).

The second design struggle was an issue with existing rules or legislation put in place by the City of Toronto. Things such as mandatory parking provisions, mid-rise building codes, and access and fire issues, are preventing this type of smaller, more appropriate, incremental intensification from being utilized on Toronto’s main streets. In order for these types of new typologies to work and be utilized as a means of incremental intensification, the City of Toronto, with safety issues at the forefront, needs to relax or make more flexible its regulations, and work in conjunction with this newly proposed method of design approach in order to better facilitate main street intensification within the City’s main streets. For example, the issue of ensuring that all new developments, whatever the scale, present ample parking makes it extremely

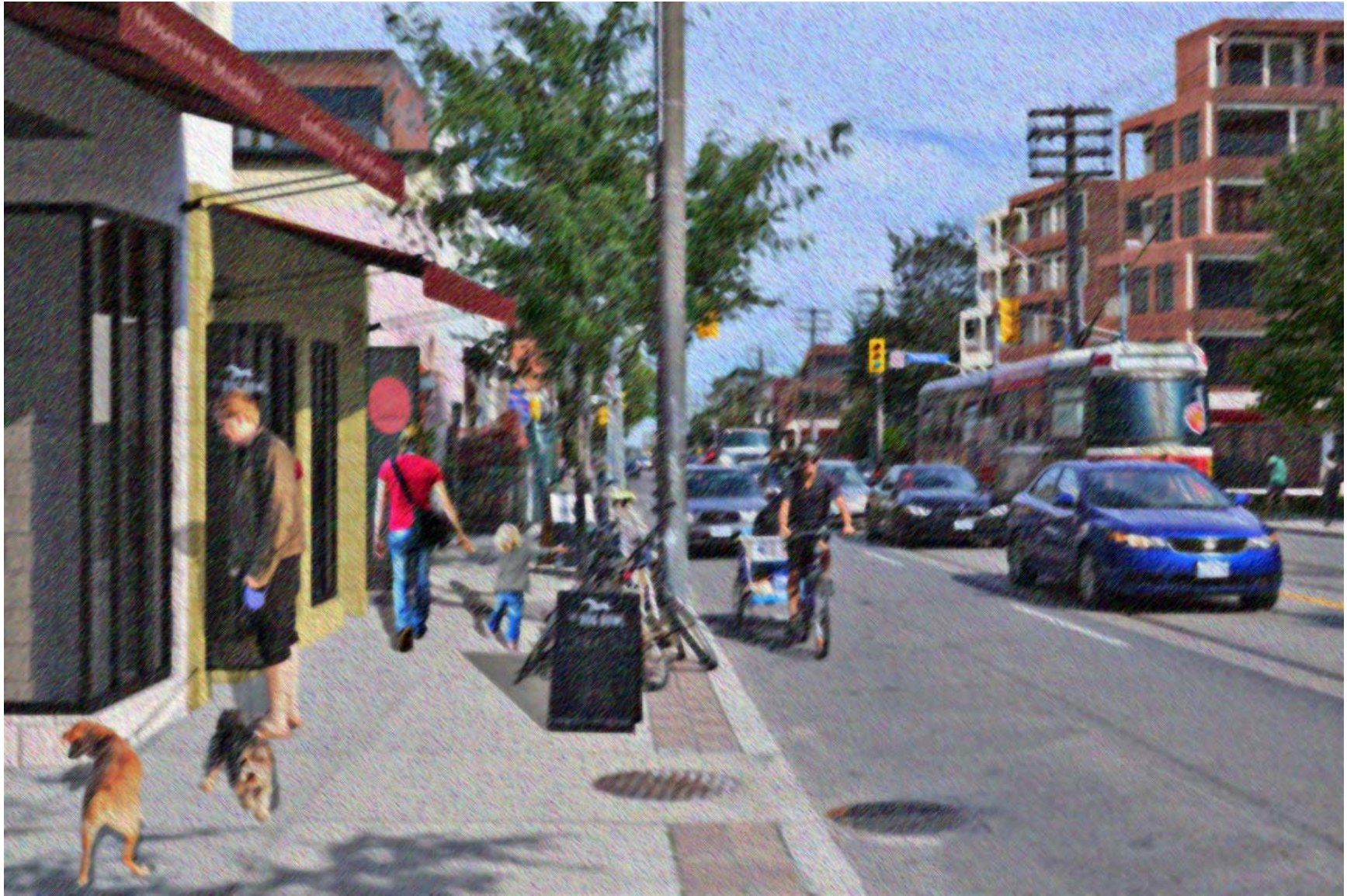


Fig. 5.3.2: Nero Condominium Development (above)



difficult to execute the small-grain incremental intensification strategy set forth by this thesis. In many of the thesis' demonstration case study project types, the sites simply do not provide enough land area to meet required municipal parking expectations, especially in the area of the ramp spaces necessary for structured parking spaces. The challenges and limitations set in place by many of the City's policies or regulations make it difficult to implement this type of new incremental small to mid-scale growth strategy. The City of Toronto needs to work better in conjunction with architects, developers, and planners in order to find more flexible approaches to find alternatives to the rules and regulations so that the development strategies presented in this thesis can actually get built.

The next struggle, the other missing piece of this thesis design approach, are that more provisions need to be made in the case for family-based design and ensuring that these new types of incremental intensification appeal to the evolving family dynamic of young people who wish to remain in the City and live affordably. With the rising cost of the central city single family home and the lack of amenities (lack of schools, park play areas, recreational services, libraries, and more) within the new high-rise condominium buildings geared towards larger family units, improvements must be made to the building and development types to present a viable option for those who are looking for an alternative. Such things like the mandatory inclusion of outdoor space for new intensification efforts need to be made. A safe, tenant-accessible outdoor parkette will give families a place for their children to safely play while mingling with other tenants and creating an urban social space. Types 6 and 7 in the Demonstration Studies both include at-grade outdoor space meant to be used for such purposes. The inclusion of a gate surrounding the parkette would add extra safety and ensure that the space remains for use by the tenants of the building. This will result in the transformation of the laneways in behind the main streets from rundown and dark to places that are light, safe, and full of activity. It is important to note that attention must be paid to the proper design of the laneways and side streets of these intensification efforts in order to maintain city-ness not only along the main streets of the development, but all around. Doing this will strengthen the neighbourhoods and *city-ness* even further.



*Fig. 5.3.3: Demonstrative Intensification Render, Future Potential of Dundas St W, From Sidewalk (above)*

## Sidewalk Conditions

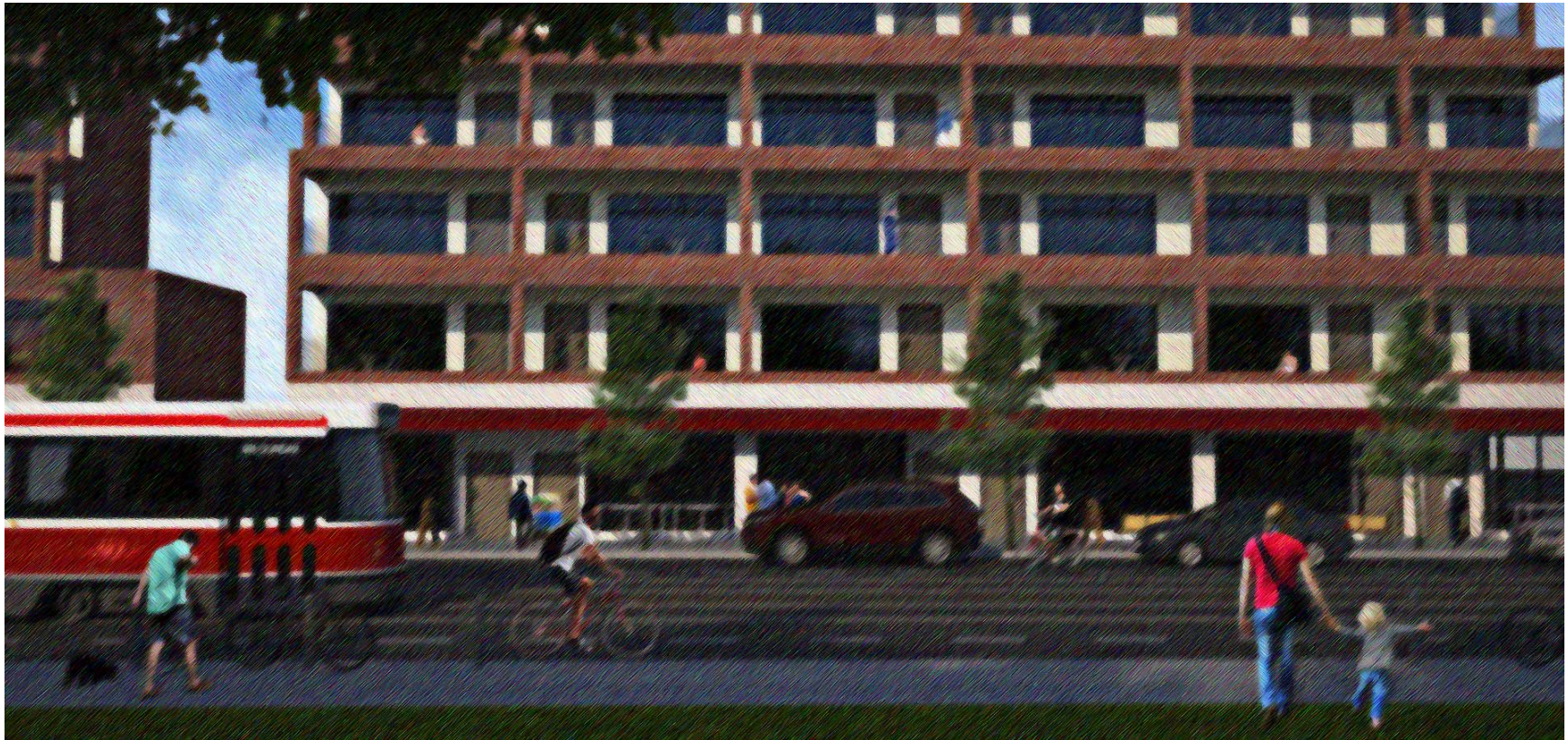
Architects largely have control of the design of buildings. They have control over things such as materials, massing, unit types, and internal circulation. What they don't have control over is the range of diverse scales that naturally makes up a broader urban streetscape. The multiple actors who live, own, and use the buildings all influence the vibrancy of the streetscape through their appropriation of the street frontages for their uses. Signage, sidewalk canopies, sandwich boards, flower planters, and benches, are all at the mercy of these multiple actors. As designers, architects must ensure that the space needed for these "extra" items are designed into the buildings. If this is done, the streetscapes can naturally evolve over a short time into the vibrant and diverse main street found in Toronto today. In the above image the "Future of Dundas Street West", the guidelines and guiding principles of this thesis were used to illustrate the result of intensification of the building fabric along the main street. The Demonstration Studies have provided an example of incremental intensification that not only doubles the density of these buildings, but also could begin the process that contributes to the vitality of the main street itself.



Fig. 5.3.4: Extra Wide Sidewalk, Queen St W (above)

The narrowness of the sidewalk along many portions of Dundas Street West in the Demonstration Site area poses an issue. In order to create a dynamic and variant streetscape, sidewalk widths need to be re-examined and an additional dynamic between developer and City needs to be established when it comes to new intensification efforts. While there are a few areas along Dundas Street West which provide ample sidewalk space, the typical width of the main street sidewalk is narrower than is the ideal along the majority of the street frontage of this area. With the above thoughts on too small sidewalks in mind, other City sidewalks which are too wide, such as the example of Queen Street West in Fig. 5.3.4 can also be causes for dead areas along the streetscape.

There is a suitable sidewalk width that allows for proper room to be made for the necessary elements to be put in place by the multiple actors using the sidewalk, those benches, flowers, signs, and canopies mentioned earlier, while still providing enough space for people to walk along the sidewalk comfortably. The streetscape sections looked at in Section 4.3 demonstrate typical dimensions that occur along the strip of Dundas Street West. Many of the main street lots in this area are more than deep enough to allow for a change in frontage depth. Instead of building directly to the lot line, as many of the existing buildings do, and new ones would also, extra room should be given to the sidewalk to allow for the increase of space between the realm of the building and the streetscape. This will ultimately provide more room for pedestrians and the extra items that are placed within this zone. A dynamic push and pull of varying sidewalk widths should be the goal in helping to preserve or better the *city-ness* of the streetscape along areas of incremental intensification.



*Fig. 5.3.5: Demonstrative Intensification Render, Future Potential of Dundas St W from Trinity Bellwoods Park, Higher Density (above)*

## The Large Block

As mentioned previously in this section, the mid-rise whole block condominium typology is the inevitable result of even this change in design approach. Developments such as the Nero Condominiums, which are under construction within the demonstrative design site, though better than the larger high rise types, may still be the bridge too far. When the alternative strategies have reached this far in their similarity to the existing Nero building in building type and density, they may need to be pulled back. They may have gone too far to today's norm of scale that they are no longer an ideal of incremental intensification. While this block type originated out of the same design approach as the other demonstrative study types, the consolidation of many parcels into a larger building has ended up pushing the development of this type far beyond the original intentions of incremental intensification.

Other issues that arise with this larger typology are related to the retail potentials at grade. While the building typologies are set out to maintain the existing small-grain parcelization at grade, current practices and policies work against this ideal. Things such as high rents combined with increased business taxes make it difficult for smaller businesses to be able to afford the new retail space in larger buildings. With policies, rents, and taxes like this in place, new intensification developments run the risk of having empty retail space at grade because the smaller businesses can't afford the taxes and larger businesses want more space. There are, however, a few solutions for this problem. First, taxes on businesses need to be re-assessed by the city. In order to prevent the "Rexall and/or Shoppers Drug Mart drugstore-blocks" often found in the new high-rise developments, the city must create some tax breaks on small businesses to ensure that the small-grain parcelization of main street fabric remains small-grain. It is only when the tax policies change that small business can flourish within new urban intensification developments.

Secondly, the way larger companies require such large retail spaces needs to be reconsidered. Large retail providers are sometimes necessary as they can provide some of the things to customers that cannot be provided by the small businesses. A municipal push, however, must be made as a general policy and during development negotiations, to encourage new corporate tenants to restructure their approach to retail in urban settings in order to suit the small-grain spaces desired within this study. This pull back from the large scale corporate nature of these big businesses would see them offer retailing alternatives to a suburban big box scale, at a smaller more focused scale, which would fit much better within the fabric of that this thesis desires for Toronto's main streets. If these changes cannot be made, the City runs the risk of the continuation of this larger scale type of development and the inevitable takeover of at-grade retail units for a large sole suburban style tenant, thus disturbing the flow of the streetscape, destroying opportunities for small scale urban retail and service businesses, and thereby damaging Toronto's present diverse *city-ness*.



*Fig. 5.3.6 Demonstrative Intensification Render, Future Potential of Dundas St W from Trinity Bellwoods Park, Incremental Density (above)*

## The Small Block

While the Demonstration Studies look at seven different types of intensification based on various forms of street parcelization and land assembly, the small-scale incremental building types are those which truly reflect the intentions of this thesis. Image 03 (fig#) depicts intensification done at this level, which is a good image for the ideal outcome of incremental intensification. This type of development strategy is dependent on the ability of the design to yield a small (2-3 parcels wide) and tall (4-5 storeys high) building type. Such buildings would facilitate the incremental intensification of the main street fabric while still allowing for buildings and land parcels of good quality existing urban fabric to remain intact and long lived. The implementation of this type of intensification allows for a slower and more methodical approach to growth along main street fabric and streetscape. It ensures that main street fabric that is still in good architectural and built condition remains, and only the fabric which is beyond its “best-before-date” gets replaced. Slow, incremental change that changes only a few parcels of land at a time also ensures that the qualities of *city-ness* present within the design neighbourhood are not instantly disturbed or destroyed. This type allows for the strengthening and bettering of main street fabric and overall *city-ness* and its complex evolution and transformation over time. It also ensures that due to the small nature of incremental development the new intensification efforts don't overwhelm the existing building fabric, local business economies, or public infrastructure.

When these new alternative building types are built alongside the existing two or three storey urban fabric, there will inevitably be some impacts to the existing areas such as more shadow cast into the front or backyard of existing buildings. While this may not be ideal for some local residents, they will have to reconsider their options in understanding that this type of change is far more suitable for main street intensification than both options of no intensification, or the more likely typical large scale mid-rise and high-rise development main street intensification that, despite their objections, will come. With this thesis' alternative design approaches, existing residents and businesses may lose some occasional daylight in either their back or front yards, but they will be facing a smaller built scale jump, and gaining a strengthened neighbourhood that can sustain the changes necessary to help the city grow for the future. Along with changes in mindset, changes to existing rules in regulations set in place by the City of Toronto also need to be reexamined in order to allow for these alternative types of developments to be built. While still utilizing the bottom-up design approach of this thesis, design for intensification of this nature should be thought of and initiated as the encouragement of new building types to ensure that such an urban intensification strategy will work, and be able to be applied to many different main street arterial sites within the city.

Changes in parking requirements for new developments especially need to be reevaluated as the small parcels of land make it nearly impossible to provide ample parking by the existing rules. Codes and regulations regarding fire exits and accessibility need to creatively evolve to allow for smaller and more innovative circulation methods to be employed for both access and safety. Community outdoor space for the tenants of these new buildings also needs to be including within the building design. If the chosen intensification site lacks enough room to provide this, then a suitable nearby site for grouping together the same or similar demand for other local nearby small-scale developments should be demanded by the City

and developed collectively in order to provide a safe, outdoor space for the families who live within the group of new developments. If these changes and additions can be fought for and made, then this ideal type of incremental intensification will have all the tools it needs in order to become a successful and widely-used type of re-urbanization along the main streets of the City of Toronto.

The enforcement of the alternative urban guidelines and guiding principles presented in this thesis, implemented along the main streets of Toronto will ensure incremental intensification that can be supported by the already existing systems in place. The streamlined and alternative process of design brought forth in this thesis brings in the multiple actors needed to maintain and better Toronto's unique *city-ness* along its main arterial streetscapes. While the City of Toronto's Official Plan works towards many of the same goals of this thesis, the vague nature of the text ensures that intensification efforts move without any more concrete guidance towards these objectives. In addition to this broad issue, the current practices and policies set in place by the City of Toronto are specifically hindering a wide range of smaller scale intensification strategies. By working towards reforming these practices and policies that are preventing the successful implementation of new small scale building types, and utilizing the examples within the thesis' Demonstrative Intensification Studies, the City, planners, architects, and developers can work towards intensifying Toronto's main street fabric in a more diverse and reasonable manner while providing the City ample room for its population to grow without sacrificing the vitality and distinctiveness of its main streets.



## CHAPTER 5.0 ENDNOTES

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# BACK MATTER

# GLOSSARY

## Adaptive Reuse

A method of dealing with old or obsolete building types by reassigning them another purpose other than what they were originally built or designed for. This is a way of adapting the outdated city fabric and changing it to better serve the area around it without demolishing and rebuilding from scratch. It helps to maintain the smaller-scale of many areas of the city while injecting a newer, vibrant type of program into the fabric.

## Anonymous Architecture

Architecture that isn't specifically designed by a particular person or architect but still maintains a staying power and importance within the fabric of a city; has no clear author but is still integral to the fabric and culture of a city.

## Apartment

A suite of rooms forming a residential unit, typically in a building containing a multiple units.

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## **Catalyst**

Something that precipitates an event, typically of change; a person, politician, law, event, development, demographic movement, etc.

## **City-ness**

The elements that work together to create the feeling of a particular city . Certain spatial qualities, in conjunction with the specific configuration of particular elements together create the unique feeling of *city-ness* which gives a City a distinctive sense of identity.

## **Condominium**

A residential building or complex of buildings, typically large-scale in nature, which contains a number of apartment units.

## **Condominium Dwelling (from STATSCAN)**

Refers to a private dwelling that is part of a condominium development. A condo development is a residential complex in which dwellings are owned individually while land and common elements are held in joint ownership with others.

## **Culture**

The customs, achievements, social norms, and people-driven factors, that creates discernible, unique qualities of a neighbourhood or area in a city.

## **Density**

The degree of compactness; the quantity of people in a given area, typically measured in the number of people per square meter or square kilometer.

## **Duplex Apartment**

Having two parts; a house that has been divided into two separate residential apartments, both with its own entrance; distinguished from a semi-detached home by being built as one home and then later being split into two units.

## **Gentrification**

The process of renewal and rebuilding of an area that is deteriorating, typically due to an influx of middle-class or affluent residents that displaces poorer residents.

## **High-Rise**

A building having multiple storeys; this thesis defines that as exceeding 10 storeys, above grade.

## **High-Scale Residential**

A residential building having a high number of multiple storeys; this thesis defines that as exceeding 10 storeys, above grade.

## **Historic Fabric**

The physical form of towns and/or cities, of which is composed of architectural and infrastructural elements. In this case, the fabric has been a part of the area for quite some time and plays a role in defining that part of the city's character.

## **Hybrid/Hybridization**

Of mixed character; composed of mixed parts; a building type that is made up of several other already existing types.

## **Infill**

To fill a space or hole; a newly constructed building that fills a space or hole between other existing buildings.

## **Informal Network**

A set of relationships between individuals, things or types, that join together to form a network.

## **Intensification**

The action of becoming more intense; intensifying a characteristic of an area such as population or housing type.

## **Live/Work Unit**

A mixed-use building type that contains residential living area and commercial/office/work-related area in the same unit; often owned by the same person to allow for them to live and work within the same unit.

## **Low-Rise**

A building having a low number of storeys, typically fewer than 10 above grade.

## **Low-Scale Residential**

A residential building that a low number of multiple storeys; this thesis defines that as having fewer than 10 storeys above grade.

## **Neighbourhood-Centric**

A term used to describe the unique elements within a specific neighbourhood that attribute a certain culture or feeling to an area.

## **Parcel/Parcelization**

The division of a piece of land; a plot, tract or lot, owned by the same owner(s).

## **Pattern Code**

The patterns within a city that both make up, and define the character and urban fabric of that area. It is a collection of spaces and smaller-grain buildings that, together, allow for the nature of a city to become evident; an abstracted network of parts that create a whole, living, vibrant city.

## **Preservation**

Seeking to preserve artifacts of historical significance, particularly in the area of architecture. The action of preservation does not solely consider a building's age in determining its importance, rather the impact of that building on the culture and fabric of the area it lives in. A building preserved for the sake of preservation does not do any favors to the city, rather preservation efforts should be made to buildings that can inject vibrancy and function into the surrounding fabric.

## **Row House**

A row of houses joined by common sidewalls; characterized as row houses when there are 3 or more houses joined together.



## **Small-Grain**

In relation to architecture and the city, buildings or elements at a smaller scale such as minimal storey storefronts, row houses and alleyways. These elements work together to create the fabric of a city at a smaller and more personal human scale. Often, these elements are what defines the vibrancy and culture in a city.

## **Semi-Detached Home**

Pairs of houses built side-by-side that share a partition wall between the two of them; distinguished from a duplex by being built as two homes instead of being split later on in the life of the home.

## **Single-Family Home**

A free-standing residential dwelling containing only one living unit; also called a “single-detached home”.

## **Toronto-ness**

The unique qualities that give Toronto its unique feeling, especially at a street level. (*See also: City-ness*)

## **Typology**

A classification based on types; in the case of this thesis, it looks at a form of building.

## **Urban Cultural Geography**

The study of cultural norms within an urban setting, relating to the definition of spaces and places in a city. Often, these norms within a city will vary from area to area depending on the small-grain fabric in that part of the city.

## **Urban Morphology**

The study of shape; understanding how a city's urban areas change structure and shape over time. The study of urban morphology takes into account political, social, economic, and societal factors when understanding the physical shifts in city's shape.

## **Urban Vibrancy**

An integral part of city fabric that creates life in the city. Architectural networks and fabric that work together to make an exciting, stimulating and lively area of the city that help define the culture of that area.

## **Vernacular**

Architecture types that make up the fabric of a city. They are not concerned with monumentality but rather the life within the area that they live, serving functional means. Most often they are building types that have been present in a city or town for an extensive period of time and have, or will need to, change their original designed programmatic function to suit the evolving city fabric.

## **Vulnerable/Vulnerability**

Susceptible of attack or harm; a building, area, or piece of land, that is susceptible of take-over, redevelopment, or destruction, typically during the process of gentrification or development.



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## APPENDIX “A”: PLANNING AND CODES

*The following is a summation, written by this author, of the City of Toronto Official Plan published in 2002.*

### CHAPTER 1: MAKING CHOICES

Chapter 1 introduces the basic fundamentals of the Plan and outlines the specific focus of each chapter. It states that the Official Plan is geared towards maintaining a clear vision in order to plan for a successful future for the City of Toronto, grounded in the principles of: Diversity and opportunity, beauty, connectivity, and leadership and stewardship. A strong push for the creation of “*an attractive and safe city that evokes pride, passion and a sense of belonging – a city where everybody cares about a quality of life*” (2) is also outlined in this introductory chapter, through the implementation of:

*Vibrant neighbourhoods that are part of complete communities;*

*Affordable housing choices that meet the needs of every one throughout their life;*

*Attractive, tree-lined streets with shops and housing that are made for walking;*

*A comprehensive and high quality transit system that lets people move around the city quickly and conveniently;*

*A strong and competitive economy with a vital downtown;  
Clean air, land and water;*

*Green spaces of all sizes and public squares that bring people together;*

*A wealth of recreational opportunities that promote health and wellness;*

*A spectacular waterfront that is healthy, diverse, public and beautiful;*

*Cultural facilities that celebrate the best of city living; and*

*Beautiful architecture and excellent urban design that astonishes and inspires*

The implementation of these elements shows a push for similar goals as the thesis.



## CHAPTER 2: SHAPING THE CITY

Chapter 2 sets out to define the urban structure of the City, develops strategies in dealing with directing the growth of this structure, and creates specific policies meant to manage change through the integration of land use and transportation (6).

Section 2.1 shows that the City understands the pressing need to intensify and reurbanize Toronto. It also shows a push towards reducing the reliance on private vehicles and the establishes that the City acknowledges a need for the utilization of existing infrastructure to support intensification efforts.

### 2.1 Building a More Livable Urban Region

In order to increase the livability of our future Urban Regions, the Plan looks to employ reurbanization methods in order to ensure better growth management (8). The Plan defines Reurbanization as: “a coordinated approach to the redevelopment of land within the existing urban fabric to accommodate regional growth” (8). The Plan argues that reurbanization improves the livability of the urban region and reduces our demand on nature by:

*Reducing the pace at which agricultural lands and the countryside are urbanized;*

*Reducing our reliance on the private automobile;*

*Reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and*

*Reducing our consumption of non-renewable resources*

Reurbanization is important to the future of the City in order to ensure it will support better communities, strengthen economic conditions and create a system of mixed-use centres that support the changing fabric of the GTA.

#### **Applicable Policies (8):**

*1f) Encourages rental housing construction to provide a wider choice of housing types.*

*1g) Increase the supply of housing in mixed use environments to create greater opportunities for people to live and work locally.*

The policies in this sub-section are aimed to create a reurbanized central region in the City in order to provide a means of intensification that grows within itself instead of spreading outward. These policies reflect a need for change in the way the City approaches housing, showing a need for a variety of housing types as well as a desire to create neighbourhoods that support the ability for people to live and work in the vicinity to one another.

## 2.2.1 Downtown: The Heart of Toronto

This sub-section focuses specifically on the Downtown area of the City, which is the main area of surveillance for this thesis. *The Future of Downtown Toronto* (2000) describes Toronto's Downtown as:

*“Toronto is fortunate in having a large and relatively mixed population resident in its core area and a diversity of old and new neighbourhoods and old and new populations... perhaps the single best methods of ensuring continued employment growth and renewal in the core to ensure that the area is healthy and attractive as a social space, as a place for both living and working.”*

### Applicable Policies (16):

4) *A full range of housing opportunities will be encouraged through:*

*4a) Residential intensification in the Mixed Use and Regeneration Areas of Downtown; and*

*4b) Sensitive infill within Downton Neighbourhoods and Downtown Apartment Neighbourhoods.*

*5) The architectural and cultural heritage of Downtown will be preserved by designating buildings, districts and open spaces with heritage significance and by working with owners to restore and maintain historic buildings.*

*6) Design guidelines specific to districts of historic or distinct character will be developed and applied to ensure new development respects the context of such districts in terms of the development's fit with existing streets, setbacks, heights and relationship to landmark buildings.*

The policies in this sub-section present a push for the use of more varying housing types in the effort to allow for the intensification of residential city fabric, with the opportunity of employing the infill method to development of Downtown neighbourhoods in conjunction with traditional methods of development. These policies also showcase an importance of historic fabric as well as the maintenance of culture in existing communities.

## 2.2.3 Avenues: Reurbanizing Arterial Corridors (20)

Toronto's grid-like road network is one of the legacies of the original settlement of Toronto. These main roads acted as principle arteries of movement and still contribute to the linking of the downtown with the larger region of the City. Main arteries, such as the Avenues, have provided the city with a suitable network for public transit buses and streetcar lines and, as the plan sees it, will help to contribute to reduce our reliance on the automobile and make the City a more walkable one. The overall idea of reurbanizing these main arteries and Avenues will allow the City to develop high quality and varying types of housing long these corridors. The reurbanization and further development of the Avenues is a key challenge for the Official Plan and is of great importance to the fulfillment of the overall Plan.

These policies enforce a need for change, a need for more housing types to accommodate families and to keep people living within the city, and the maintenance and bettering of neighbourhoods; all ideas are shared with the purpose of this thesis.

Policy 5 shows that the City acknowledges the importance of cultural significance within Toronto, in order to maintain and create a proper future for the City - this is a value that the thesis is pushing for.

Section 2.2.3 reflects the thesis' position on main roads; they are vital areas of potential intensification for the City due to their versatility and existing infrastructure.

## CHAPTER 3: BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL CITY

Chapter 3 focuses on the creation of policies used to guide decision making concerned with the Plan's goals for the human, built, economic and natural environments (6).

Jane Jacobs brought forth the issue of project-by-project planning and how it created a disjointed city. The Plan shows that it has the desire to approach planning through a more holistic basis, in order to create a more linked and responsive Toronto.

While Policy 1 is a great way to ensure new buildings fit within existing context, this rule is not being enforced. Many new buildings are exceeding height and density allotments and have little or no response to the fabric around them. This needs to be addressed.

In similar fashion, Policy 3 is also being ignored or worked-around. Very few new high-rise condominium buildings improve the local scale and character of the streets they are being built on. In order to ensure a viable future for Toronto through density and intensification, these policies need to be followed and enforced more closely.

### 3.1.2 Built Form (37)

The City's built form greatly influences how its residents enjoy the streets and open spaces around the built environment; it is a culmination of visual quality, activity, comfortable environment, and perception of safety in these spaces. (37) Since most of Toronto has already been built with at least one generation of buildings, new and future developments will have to focus on infill and redevelopment sites. With these types of sites, it is crucial for the new fabric to fit in, respect and improve the character of the already established area it is being built in. As the Plan states, it is necessary to ensure that: *"each new development in these areas adds up to more than the sum of parts"* (37). The Plan also speaks to the civic responsibility of developers and architects where it comes to creating buildings that suit the needs of the both the clients, tenants and customers, but also people who live and work in the area (37). Designers should be concerned with the building's site and program, but also how the development fits within the context of the neighbourhood and the City overall (38).

#### Applicable Policies (38-39):

*1) New development will be located and organized to fit with its neighbours or planned context. It will frame and support adjacent streets, parks and open spaces to improve the safety, pedestrian interest and casual views to these spaces from the development by:*

*1b) locating main building entrances so that they are clearly visible and directly accessible from the public sidewalk; and*

*1c) providing ground floor uses that have views into and, where possible, access to, adjacent streets, parks and open spaces.*

*3) New development will be massed to fit harmoniously into its surroundings and will respect and improve the local scale and character. It will minimize the impact on neighbouring buildings and open space by:*

*3a) Massing new buildings to frame adjacent streets and open spaces in a way that respects the existing and/or planned street proportion;*

*3b) creating a transition in scale to neighbouring buildings;*

*3d) minimizing shadows and uncomfortable wind conditions on neighbouring properties and open space*

### 3.1.3 Built Form – Tall Buildings (39)

The Plan both argues for and against tall buildings as they are “*desirable in the right places but don’t belong everywhere*” (39). It states that tall buildings allow for the development on a large site to be concentrated in one particular area, giving way to high quality publicly accessible open spaces and areas for community services. However, when these tall buildings are poorly located and designed, they can cause for the overwhelming of adjacent streets, parks and neighbourhoods, as “tall buildings are only one form of intensification” and often other forms of intensification are overlooked. The Plan proposes that the proposed intensification should be achieved through the use of neighbourhood appropriate developments that reflect the existing fabric. This means that intensification will have to take a mid-rise scale in order to fit in with existing neighbourhoods. The Plan states:

*“Most of the proposed intensification in this plan is anticipated to be achieved with street oriented, grade related or mid-rise building types that define and support, sunny, comfortable, and vita streets parks and open spaces. Tall buildings are limited to parts of the Downtown Centres and other areas where they currently are permitted.”* (40)

### 3.1.5 Heritage Resources

Historic and heritage buildings, districts and landscapes help create a unique sense of local identity for many Torontonians (41). The Plan responds to this important historic fabric by stating: “*The Plan focuses on conserving Toronto’s remaining irreplaceable heritage resources, including our heritage landscapes, historic cemeteries and buried archaeological sites.*” (42). This shows that the City feels strongly for the preservation and maintenance of precious heritage resources and that they want to ensure that these areas are conserved properly for the City’s future interest.

#### Applicable Policies (42-43):

*8) Additional gross floor area may be permitted in excess of what is permitted in the zoning by-law for lands designated Mixed Use Areas, Regeneration Areas, Employment Areas, Institutional Areas or Apartment Neighbourhoods for a lot containing a conserved heritage building and new development provided that:*

*8b) Additional floor area does not exceed the floor area of the designated heritage building or structure being retained.*

While, in some areas, tall buildings are a more than acceptable form of building, the large sites needed for them to be properly situated and built on are all but gone, making this type of building for residential purposes unsuitable. The need for types that accommodate the smaller types of parcels or infill areas are needed to add intensification in a reasonable manner.

The direct quote from the Plan shows that the City of Toronto is on board with this thesis’ desires’ to look at lower-scale intensification means to help densify the fabric of the city through culturally sensitive and neighbourhood-centric building.

Balance is required within the residential housing stock; new forms to accommodate a wider variety of people and family types are needed.

### 3.2.1 Housing

At present, there is a lack of diversity in Toronto's housing stock. The Plan seeks to put in place specific policies that deal with this lack of diversity, specifically dealing with type, tenure, and level of affordability; new supply of housing is needed and when this new supply is inadequate, existing housing stock must be maintained and adapted (44). The current state of the production and ownership of condominium housing is abundant but there is a lack of healthy balance between high rise condominium housing and other forms, including low-rise housing ideal for families and households with children. The Plan intends to create policies, incentives and assistance that help target these missing forms of housing needs, especially mid-scale and affordable rental housing as "more than half of Toronto households rent, yet no new rental housing is being built in quantity" (44). In order to provide for the housing needs of the City, policies created in the Plan will address four areas (44-45):

*Stimulate production of new private sector rental housing supply;  
Preserve what we have;*

*Make efficient and effective use of the City's own housing resources to achieve a range of housing objectives; and*

*Work in partnership to take advantage of emerging opportunities.*

#### Applicable Policies (45 - 47):

Pushing the purpose of this thesis which is to create a more culturally-sensitive, neighbourhood-centric, new type of residential building that accommodates more intensification but at a lower scale.

*2) The existing stock of housing will be maintained and replenished. New housing supply will be encouraged through intensification and infill that is consistent with this Plan (45)*

*3) Investment in new rental housing, particularly affordable rental housing, will be encouraged by a coordinated effort from all levels of government through implementation of a range of strategies, including effective taxation, regulatory, administrative policies and incentives. (45)*

Solidifies the position of pushing for a more low-rise and incremental increase to intensification efforts.

*8) The conversion to condominium of any building or related group of buildings containing seven or more rental housing units is premature and not in the public interest unless: (46)*

*8a) the rental apartment vacancy rate for the City of Toronto, as reported by the CMHC, has been at or above 2.5% for the preceding two-year reporting period; and (46)*

*8b) all of the rental housing units have rents that exceed mid-range rents at the time of the application.*

(47)

### 3.5.3 The Future of Retailing (60)

The Official Plan shows a desire for more locally-based and neighbourhood-centric retail developments in the Toronto, especially in the Downtown area. The injection of retail stores along main arterial roads and avenues will reduce the need for automobiles and better serve the community's needs. New retail development must, however, fit within the existing form of the neighbourhood and not disturb the flow of the area, potentially impacting the existing patterns of retail activity (61). The Plan looks to reestablish the role of traditional shopping on main streets as catalysts for community activity and life in the neighbourhoods they exist in. By using the existing, small-scale, vernacular examples of retail in many Downtown neighbourhoods, the infusion of community-based and neighbourhood-centric retail will provide neighbourhoods with more than just a place for business (61).

## Chapter 4: Land Use Designations

Chapter 4 contains the land use designations for the City which are focused on implementing the change-managing strategies set out in Chapters Two and Three (6). This chapter splits the land use designations in to two categories: designations that reinforce existing physical character and designations for growth. The first category deals with the designations of neighbourhoods, apartment neighbourhoods, parks and open space areas, and utility corridors (63). The Plan describes this category as follows:

*“Toronto’s hundreds of low scale residential neighbourhoods, with their distinctive character, together with local institution, retail and services that serve their populations, are prized by residents. These are composed largely of apartment buildings and differentiated because of the scale of buildings, share the objectives for contextual stability, better amenities and environmental sustainability.” (63)*

This direct quote from the Plan enforces the argument presented by the thesis; Toronto's unique city-ness is, in part, created by the low-scale residential neighbourhoods that connect the city together and are valued by residents. Contextual stability is key in providing a sustainable means for intensification for the future of Toronto.

The second category deals with the designations of mixed use areas, employment areas, regeneration areas, and institutional areas. These designations are anticipated by the Plan to distribute most of the increase in jobs and population throughout the city (63).

### 4.1 Neighbourhoods (64)

Toronto's neighbourhoods traditionally contain a full range of low scale residential use buildings in conjunction with schools, parks, local institutions, small-scale retail shops and other amenities that serve the needs of the area's residents. However, in the last 50 years, high-rise apartment buildings began to be scattered in throughout these lower-scale residential neighbourhoods. In order to combat the further construction of these high-scale buildings into lower-scale neighbourhoods, the Plan will not permit any new construction of high-rise apartment buildings in areas with the Neighbourhood designation (64).

Furthermore, Neighbourhoods should also accommodate for at home occupations, as recently more and more Torontonians have begun working from home; this will help generate more economic activity, reduce the strain on commuter routes, and enhance neighbourhood safety by providing “eyes on the street”, a phenomenon talked about by Jane Jacobs in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (64). In order to ensure that Neighbourhoods are able to develop in the right way, the Plan has outlined a few Neighbourhood development criteria: (65)

Slow, incremental changes to density is what this thesis is pushing for; this is supported by the ideas presented here.

*Physical changes to our established Neighbourhoods must be sensitive, gradual and generally “fit” the existing physical character. A key objective of this Plan is that new developments respect and reinforce the general physical patterns in a Neighbourhood. (65 - 66)  
In converting these sites to residential uses, there is a genuine opportunity to add to the quality of Neighbourhood life by filling in the “gaps” and extending streets and paths.*

#### **Applicable Policies (66):**

While these policies are on track for building a more sustainably intensifying Toronto, they need to be enforced properly in order to work, which is not happening at present.

*5) Development will respect and reinforce the general physical patterns and character of established Neighbourhoods, with particular regard to:*

*5a) patterns of streets, blocks and lanes, parks and public building sites;*

*5b) general size and configuration of lots;*

*5c) heights, massing, scale and type of dwelling unit compatible with that permitted by the zoning by-law for nearby residential properties;*

*6) Zoning by-laws will contain numerical site standards for matters such as building type and height, density, lot sizes, lot depths, lot frontages, parking, building setbacks from lot lines, landscaped open space and any other performance standards to ensure that new development will be compatible with the physical character of established residential Neighbourhoods.*

#### **4.5 Mixed Use Areas (71)**

The Mixed Use area designation allows for the culmination of many planning objectives within one zoning area, achieved by combining a broad range of residential, office, retail, service, institution, entertainment, recreation, cultural, and park uses. This land use designation will allow for Torontonians to live, work, and shop in one neighbourhood; residents will be able to depend less on their vehicles and thus creating areas or districts, particularly along transit routes, that are animated, safe and attractive. (71)

These types of Mixed-Use area developments are ideal along main streets.

### **Applicable Policies (71-72):**

*2) In Mixed Use Areas development will:*

*2a) create a balance of high quality commercial, residential, institutional and open space uses that reduces automobile dependency and meets the needs of the local community;*

*2b) provide new jobs and homes for Toronto's growing population on underutilized lands in Downtown, the Central Waterfront, Centres, Avenues and other lands designated Mixed Use Areas*

*2f) provide an attractive, comfortable and safe pedestrian environment;*

*2k) provide indoor and outdoor recreation space for building residents*

*3) Large scale, stand-alone retail stores and/or "power centres" are not permitted in Mixed Use Areas within the Central Waterfront, ad Downtown, and are permitted only through a zoning by-law amendment in other Mixed Use Areas.*

### **4.7 Regeneration Areas (75 – 76)**

The Plan pushes Regeneration Areas as key areas to the Plan's growth strategy. These areas are crucial in reintegrating areas of the city that are no longer in productive use, strengthening neighbourhoods and, ultimately, the city as a whole. Similar to Mixed Use Areas, Regeneration Areas mix various uses, such as commercial, residential, live/work and institutional, within the same block, building or area. The introduction of this type of land use designation area will reinvigorate unused parts of the City and help to create lively, bright neighbourhoods that have been previously underutilized (75). Because of the unique nature of each particular Regeneration Area, not all of the areas will have the same mix of uses or development polices, as per the Plan. Factors such as the existing built environment, character of adjacent areas and opportunities for revitalization, will affect what policies are put in place. The Plan refers to this as a "tailor-made strategy and framework for development" that will be enforced through a Secondary Plan that will help to unlock unused potential for growth within the city. (75)

The approach outlined in this section of the Plan illustrates that the City is capable of conceiving a strategy that is both typical and unique, that will be used as a framework for guidelines that will govern whole-city planning. The final Design Development of this thesis will operate in a similar manner by using a design site to illustrate unique and typical design possibilities that can be easily translated to other areas of the city by using guidelines created within the chapter.

### **Applicable Policies (75-76):**

*1) Regeneration Areas will provide a broad mix... in an urban area form to:*

*1a) revitalize areas of the City that are largely vacant or underused;*



Proper implementation of the Plan boils down to the OMB relinquishing jurisdiction back to the Toronto City Council in order to ensure that implementation is wholly followed.

*1c) Restore, re-use and retain existing buildings that are economically adaptable for re-use, particularly heritage buildings and structures, through the use of incentives;*

*3) Large-scale, stand-alone retail stores and “power centres” are not permitted 3) Large-scale, stand-alone retail stores and “power centres” are not permitted*

## **Chapter 5: Implementation**

Chapter 5 outlines the general approach of Plan implementation, which includes policies meant to guide local City planning (6).

### **5.1.1 Height and/or Density Incentives (81 – 84)**

According to the Plan: *“Section 37 of the Planning Act provides one means by which the City can achieve responsible, balanced growth.” (81)* In reality, Section 37 provides a means for the City and developers to bend the height and/or density zoning by-laws in exchange for community benefits such as: the provisions for additional parkland, non-profit arts, cultural, community or child care facilities, public art, conservation of heritage buildings, transit improvements and purpose built rental housing. The City, through Section 37, can pass a zoning by-law which grants a height or density increase for a particular project that is greater than the already established zoning by-law created by the Plan, under the condition that there will be sufficient community benefits provided for the neighbourhood. Section 37 will be discussed in further detail at the end of this chapter, however, the Plan describes the process for obtaining height and/or density increases as follows:

*“Any application for extra height and density will be evaluated on the basis of all of the policies of the Official Plan, including the development criteria for the respective designation area, the strategic Official Plan objectives in Chapter Two and the built, human and natural environment policies in Chapter Three.”*

#### **Applicable Policies (82-84):**

*1) Zoning by-laws, pursuant to Section 37 of the Planning Act, may be enacted to permit more height and/or density than would otherwise be permitted by the zoning by-law in return for the provisions of community benefits in the form of facilities, services or matters that are set out in the zoning by-law. Development involving increases in height and/or density must constitute good planning and be consistent with the objectives and development policies of this Plan.*

4) Section 37 may be applied to development excepting non-profit developments, with more than 10,000 square meters of gross floor area where the zoning by-law amendment increases the density by at least 1,500 square meters and/or significantly increases the permitted height. Where the zoning by-law measures residential density in units per hectare (UPH), the units are converted to gross floor area at the rate of 100m<sup>2</sup> per unit in order to determine whether these thresholds are exceeded.

### 5.1.5 Temporary Use By-Laws (86)

Temporary use by-laws are put in place for the public interest, according to the Plan. At times, certain pieces of land may be used for a particular use even though it may not comply with the Official Plan of zoning by-laws. The temporary use could be requested for a number of reasons such as a trial for a new or unfamiliar type of use, or vacant land to be used temporarily for facilities such as farmers markets or other non-permanent uses. The Official Plan and the Planning Act authorize any municipality to pass these temporary use by-laws that individually define the specific area, duration of use and terms of use. The Plan sets out a few guidelines regarding this (86):

1) *Temporary use by-laws may be enacted to permit the temporary use of lands, buildings or structures for a purpose that is prohibited by the zoning by-law and/or this Plan. Temporary Use By-laws may allow a use on a trial basis or the temporary use of a building or property.*

2) *The temporary use will:*

*2a) maintain the long term viability of the lands for the uses permitted in the Official Plan and zoning by-law;*

*2b) be compatible with adjacent land uses, or be made compatible through site mitigation;*

*2c) not have an adverse impact on traffic, transportation or parking facilities in the*

*area 2d) be suitable for the site in terms of site layout, building design, accessibility, provision of landscaping, screening and buffering and available services*

### 5.2.3 Development Permits: A Specialized Development Approval Process (91)

The Plan seeks to utilize a development permit system as a proactive planning mechanism that is able to be applied in a wide variety of applications around the entire City. The system would facilitate development and effectively manage the city-wide and Plan-friendly building objectives in designated development permit areas. Applications for the development permits would be made to a council or a designated authority in charge of such decisions, meaning a body of officials would need to be chosen to look after such matters. The designated body of officials would then evaluate applications in terms of applicable Plan policies. Approved development permits would then replace specific existing zoning by-laws (91). The Official Plan describes the Development Permit system as follows:

*“A main advantage of a development permit system is a streamlined development approval process that would consolidate the current zoning, site plan control and minor variance processes into one approval system. But it is much more than just a streamlined approval process. The system offers a flexible alternative to zoning by allowing certain pre-defined discretionary uses and a range of variation in development standards, as long as certain conditions can be satisfied. Traditional zoning provisions cannot provide for this range of variation in standards nor do they allow for setting conditions for discretionary land uses. In such scenarios, a minor variance or rezoning application would be required along with separate site plan approval.”*

## APPENDIX “B”: CONDO REPORT

*The following is a summation, written by this author, of a City of Toronto Condominium Consultation Recommendations Report published in January of 2014 by SWERHUN, in association with: R.E. Millward & Associates Ltd., regionalArchitects, and Halsall Associates.*

### PLANNING PROCESS

#### **Recommendation 2:**

*Monitor and follow-up on Toronto City Council’s request that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing amend the Planning Act, the Heritage Act and the City of Toronto Act to abolish the Ontario Municipal Board’s jurisdiction over Zoning By-law Amendments, Official Plan Amendments, Site Plans, Urban Design Guidelines, Subdivision and Condominium Plan Approvals, and Community Improvement Plans and appeals under the Heritage Act. (Short-Term; City of Toronto Responsibility)*

There is a desire for the city to have sole responsibility for rules and guidelines and not to be overruled by the province. Currently, the OMB is overruling the City when it comes to dealing with issues of approving increased height and density in the City’s neighbourhoods.

*“Condo residents find the Ontario Municipal Board’s (OMB) adjudication process particularly problematic when it results in the approval of increased height and density in existing condo neighbourhoods, especially when these approvals override the City’s planning approach to support well-designed, context-sensitive intensification.” (6)*

Many of these overruling approvals are working in direct opposition to the City’s planning and policies when it comes to the intensification of City fabric.

*“Strong desire for changes that would strengthen and support the City’s planning positions and policies and enable the municipal role to have greater authority in determining the direction of height and density in the City.”*

This issue is one of the greatest issues facing the Downtown core and the rest of the City of Toronto and should be dealt with in order to assure the City grows at a reasonable pace and doesn’t harm the future development of the City’s neighbourhoods.

*“OMB tends to rely more on the letter of planning policy than on local context and neighbourhood concerns when make its decision.”*

#### **Why is this important?**

R2 follows an issue that is huge in the problem of intensification of the city. While Toronto tries to maintain certain height and density rules, their efforts continued to be thwarted by the OMB. This is ultimately causing for the type of out-of-control, large-scale intensification that this thesis is opposing. In order for a sustainable intensification of the city to occur, the OMB needs to relinquish control back to the Toronto City Council so that efforts can be controlled and density can be managed more sustainably.

### Why is this important?

R3 runs in conjunction with R2; the developers need to be governed by city policies and not be fighting around them. This ability to search out and use loopholes again, thwarts the City's efforts towards proper means of intensification and whole-picture planning.

### Recommendation 3:

*Create mechanisms and/or process changes for the management of Section 37 funds to increase transparency and more effectively engage the community. Use the process review currently under-way to help inform the best methods to achieve transparency and accountability within Section 37 fund management. (Short-Term; City of Toronto Responsibility)*

There is a desire for the guidelines and rules to be followed; developers have found the loopholes and are building against the set out rules because of this. Section 37 (discussed in the previous section) is found to be confusing to the public. There is a strong desire for these guidelines and rules set out by Section 37 to be more direct and transparent so that they can be understood by everyone. Also, there is a feel that Developers are using certain parts of Section 37 as loopholes to greater development, harming the intensification plans that the City has put in place.

*“Section 37 is problematic in two key areas: transparency and accountability. Some of the consultation participants want the community to be given an increased role in the determination of Section 37 benefits with decreased participation from the local Counselor while others felt that this process should not be community-driven.”*

## HEIGHT AND DENSITY

### Why is this important?

More controls need to be set in place to maintain guidelines and rules, and to also put more emphasis on maintaining reasonable building heights. When these things are ignored, sight-lines, sunlight to the street, and pedestrian-friendly space are compromised, as well as the overall lack of regard for the bigger planning picture.

### Recommendation 4:

*Expand the qualitative wording of the Built Form and Tall Building section of the Official Plan to reflect the latest guidelines. Consider adding more prescriptive standards to the zoning by-law, such as:*

- i. 12.5 metre tower setback from side lot lines*
- ii. 25 metre separation distance between towers*
- iii. 3 metre tower setback from base building*

There is a desire for more room between buildings and better setbacks, to ensure more usable outdoor space for residents as well as maintain sky sight lines. An overall desire for the enforcement of these rules is also desired among residents.

*“Height and density issues were frequently raised during the consultation. This recommendation provides the City with an explicit and quantitative tool to apply to new condo developments... Strong support from consultation participants to find ways for the City of Toronto to have “more teeth” to enforce its planning vision... Concern that bodies such as the OMB override the City's intention as it has the legal authority to do so. This recommendation presents a tool to use for more local authority.”*

It is important to note that this recommendation was not supported by Developers.

## GREEN SPACE AND PUBLIC REALM

### Recommendation 9:

*Study the potential provision of privately owned public spaces (POPS) that are readily accessible from the street. Additionally, prioritize the provision of such spaces during the review of new development applications to further bolster and maximize green space opportunities. (Medium-term; City of Toronto)*

There is a desire for the provision of Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) within the developments that are accessible from the street; maximize green space opportunities.

*“...they also requested the City improve walkable areas around buildings to enhance public use of space around condos.”*

Residents desire more provisions for green space, especially when there is no direct street access to their units. These could be in the form of general semi-private spaces intended for use by residents of the development, but arguments are made for POPS that would ensure each unit have its own private outdoor space.

*“There is an opportunity to innovate within new developments to add green spaces.”*

### Recommendation 10:

*Include opportunities to provide public space benefits (e.g. sidewalks, benches, other elements of the public realm, social gathering spaces, etc.) in the process for the development of Guidelines for Complete Streets. (Medium-Term; City of Toronto)*

There is a desire to provide public space benefits (sidewalks, benches, elements of social gathering in the public realm) – Guidelines for Complete Streets. The current state of condo development leaves little to desire when it comes to the provision of public space.

*“The City should be continuously innovating in the ways it can provide open space in areas of increasing density and constrained parks space.”*

Many towers are cut off from the street below them and do little to interact with the streetscape.

*“In addition to providing basics, like places to rest and stop and talk, public realm improvements also contribute to safety, walkability and a generally improved neighbourhood feel.”*

### Why is this important?

R9 shows the importance of public green space to residents. Parks and green space already existing should remain intact as they are precious fabric of the city. This recommendation translates into the need for more innovative design for the integration of public and private outdoor space for residents who live in dwelling types that do not normally support outdoor space.

### Why is this important?

Residents are showing that the current way design is approaching the integration of streets with building designs is not meeting their standards. A connection with the street and sidewalk to form a cohesive community and neighbourhood feel for residents is important in establishing a strong city.

This needs to be remedied in order to create more desirable neighbourhoods and maintain the Toronto quality streetscapes already in place in many neighbourhoods; intensification doesn't mean the City has to lose out on a beautiful and neighbourhood-centric streetscape.

## **PARKING**

### **Why is this important?**

R17 show that residents of the city are quite ready to relieve themselves of car-dependency and take advantage of public transit, resulting in less space wasted for parking provisions and more walkable neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods along existing transit infrastructure, such as main streets with subway and streetcar lines, can already stand to accommodate more reasonable density at smaller, incremental scales.

### **Recommendation 17:**

*Build the transit required to support the planning direction to reduce available parking, especially Downtown and in North York. (Immediate; City of Toronto)*

There is a desire for transit and infrastructure to be able to keep up with the development; many residents are quite fearful that they currently do not and will not support the growth.

*“While the Official Plan “Feeling Congested” consultation and various Metrolinx projects and consultations are focusing on the “how” this could be done, it is important to tie this feedback directly to the condo consultation as many residents who live in condos, especially in North York and Downtown, find the congestion around their condo to be one of the most negative aspects of their condo experience. While this issue is not necessarily particular only to condos per se, it is increasingly a factor in areas of high-growth and high-density.”*

The growth of the City can't exceed its capacity for transit. Most intensification efforts tend to naturally happen along transit corridors and should remain in these areas until further intensification of infrastructure is made. In conjunction with this, neighbourhood developments should be made walkable in an effort to reduce the need for car-based traffic and relive some congestion on the public transit lines.

## **FLEXIBLE SPACE, FAMILY-SIZED UNITS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

There is an overall desire for condominiums to provide more units that are suitable for families or residences with a larger household. This shows that the current state of condo development is not designed with families in mind. With the continuing rise desirability of the single-family housing in the city due to the lack of new ones being built, something has to be done in order to better accommodate families. Dwelling types that both accommodate families and more density need to be employed. The following recommendations share the same sentiments:

**Recommendation 19:**

*Continue to support Official Plan policies that promote a mix of unit types, housing forms, tenure and affordability. Where appropriate, examine how these policies can be expanded or modified to apply to condos, specifically in terms of unit layout and affordability.*

**Recommendation 20:**

*Continue to develop and support new Official Plan policy regarding Units Suitable for Households with Children, which considers numbers of bedrooms and unit flexibility.*

**Recommendation 21:**

*Continue to undertake studies and analysis to identify necessary revisions to the definition of affordable ownership housing so that it may more closely reflect the cost of developing “affordable” or below market ownership (e.g. condos), while continuing to address the City’s broader housing needs.*

**Recommendation 22:**

*Continue to advocate at the Provincial level for additional mechanisms, such as inclusionary housing legislation or conditional zoning regulations, which would enable the City to require the provision of affordable housing units. (Medium-Term; City of Toronto)*

There is a desire for the changing of zoning to accommodate various types of dwelling. As mentioned previously, the Provincial level of government legislation affects the City’s plans in a negative way. Both need to work together to better address the issue of zoning so that more intensification efforts can be made without the need to use loopholes in legislation that derail planning efforts.

*“City should implement policies to support the development of affordable, family-sized/flexible units in new condo buildings, though several urged caution and warned that larger units are less affordable and more difficult to sell. The development industry also shared its concern regarding large units, the lack of demand for them and cautioned against creating policy requirements to force larger and/or more affordable units.”*

The desire for varied types of units is high; zoning can help to ensure that there is a structured way of planning for these various types instead of having a single type dominate the area like is happening today.

**Why is this important?**

Some existing residential types can be adapted to double density, such as the Stacked Row House. If dilapidated types can be replaced by more density-carrying types, then that would both allow for density to be added to existing neighbourhoods while maintaining the same character of the area; regulations to facilitate this would be necessary.



*“There is an increasing need to ensure that these buildings are designed to both facilitate such transformation over time, and to provide a wider range of units at the outset... In summary, future condominium design should seek to introduce the same sorts of flexibility and adaptability that other forms of housing – single detached, semi-detached, duplexes, triplexes and quadrplexes – have demonstrated over time.”*

## CONSTRUCTION QUALITY AND BUILDING PERMITS

### **Recommendation 28:**

*Proscribe a minimum level of review for builders that must be completed by the design professionals. This level of review must be higher than the current standard and include new checkpoints that ensure the design-intent has been achieved.*

There is a desire for better quality by design professionals and builders; desire for higher standards. Residents desire a better quality of building by design professionals and the builders who are building them. A design-professional team or board could be created to review all applications being made for design to ensure that they are sticking with the City’s development or intensification ideals, as well as guarantee that all designs being made fit into the existing neighbourhood fabric. Also, design issues such as a lack of storage space, which is a concern for many condo residence, can also be factored into the approval of new designs.

*“We recommend that the City proscribe a minimum level of review that must be completed by the design professional that is higher than the current standard.”*

## AMENITIES AND VOTING STATIONS

### **Recommendation 33:**

*Increase the amount of required storage space per unit based on a unit-size formula, ensuring an adequate amount of storage space for both small one-bedroom residences and larger ‘family-sized’ condos. (Long-Term; City of Toronto)*

There is a desire for more storage space (especially for families). This is important but specifically shows the need for better designed units and more flexible types to accommodate a variety of resident types, which is mentioned in the above section.

### **Why is this important?**

Residents currently living in condominium developments see a lack in the current retail opportunities being offered within these developments. Examples of better types of community-based retail exist in the low-scale residential neighbourhoods and main streets surrounding many of these condominium developments. These low-scale retail opportunities offer a selection of small, mostly local-owned shops that help inject vitality and business into the city, and connect the streetscape with the building fabric by allowing the mingling of people at grade.

**Recommendation 34:**

*Pursue a study to develop a strategy for improved retail space in condos. (Short-Term; City of Toronto)*

There is a desire for a strategy to be developed in order to improve retail space in developments.

*“Lack of successful retail on the ground floor of condos, how condos did not attract the types of businesses that residents wanted, that the design of ground floor retail was unappealing, that vacant retail had a negative impact on the building and the neighbourhood and that some types of retail, particularly restaurants, could have negative impacts on the residential experience due to noise and odor... there is still a strong desire to better understand how the entire situation could be improved, whether through better design, improved processes with potential tenants or otherwise.”*

At present, the retail opportunities in new condo developments are not meeting the needs of the residents. In working towards more walkable neighbourhoods, retail opportunities should match the existing scale of what is already present within these communities and try to fill gaps as to what is missing within these areas.

*“Concerned with the high square footage price and difficulty of finding appropriate tenants for the ground floor retail space in condos... Downtown condo residents and representatives of neighbourhood business associations emphasized the need to protect existing successful retail from condo developments.”*

**Recommendation 35:**

*Study the feasibility of short-term lease or use by non-profit/arts and culture groups in retail spaces while the condo developer seeks to lease space to a long-term tenant. Explore the feasibility of conditional tenancy documents that could include the need to be ready to move with short notice, and a best practices approach to furnishing the space to be flexible and responsive to the developer’s business needs. (Long-Term; City of Toronto)*

There is a desire for the study of feasibility of short-term lease or use by non-profit/arts and culture groups in retail spaces while the developers seek long-term tenants.

*“There is a desire to animate vacant storefronts while providing space for local groups at reduces rents... One opportunity is to incentivize this activity to developers is through continued taxation at ‘vacant’ rate.”*

There is a potential for laws, incentives or rules to be made to support conditional tendency; strong support from the residents for this idea. This could animate vacant storefronts with short-term local renters at a reduced rent, as well as bring new things to the neighbourhoods in terms of opportunity, culture, and community space.

**Why is this important?**

Residents see that the typical retail space available in condominium developments isn't working for the neighbourhood or the residents. The desire for a more neighbourhood-centric means of retail opportunities need to be available for the small business owners, local entrepreneurs, or local groups, who can't afford space within these high-scale condominium developments.



