Art in the City
Building Community at Jane and Finch

by
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A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfillment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Architecture

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2009

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. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

In rapidly growing North American cities, large-scale urban developments struggle to create a distinctive sense of community. Responding to increasing trends of isolation, decentralization, cultural and artistic expressions, capitalizing on local knowledge and people, have emerged as driving forces in the creation of authentic community development. Working within the existing model of large-scale development, interrogating process and program in relation to community building, this thesis asserts that architecture and urban design must calibrate themselves in response to the emerging trends by taking a multidisciplinary and comprehensive approach to design. This thesis asks the following questions: What is architecture's contribution to a creative community? How can our existing instant communities continue to evolve in response to changing needs? Where can we find public space in our contemporary communities? Can public art be used as a tool for community building?

The case study site, surrounding the Jane-Finch intersection, was rapidly developed from 1960 to 1970. The imposing Palisades apartment complex, standing on the north-east corner of the intersection, has become an icon in the neighbourhood. Three distinctly modern buildings rise out of a grassy lawn to be seen throughout the larger neighbourhood. The development represents both challenges and opportunities; 4,400 people know it as home while others associate it with media reports of poverty, crime and an aging legacy of modern architecture (San Romanoway Revitalization Association 2009). Issues of identity, public space, scale and implementation are examined through case studies of highly designed architectural precedents and informal grassroots organizations to inform the design proposal. Through the re-conception of the ambiguous ground plane at the base of the Palisades apartment complex as an educational and cultural campus for the emerging arts community, this thesis demonstrates the potential role of architecture in supporting creative community building and an expanded understanding of the contradictory role of an architect as mediator, dreamer and realist.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Rick Andrighetti for his patience, support and guidance throughout the process. As well I am grateful for my committee members Jeff Lederer and Lola Sheppard for their insight and advice and Dean Goodman for acting as the external reader.

The unwavering encouragement from my family and friends who helped me find my way. Kris for your constant understanding and patience and Walnut Street girls, I could not have done this without you.

Finally, to the organizations that graciously welcomed me and showed me what made in their community unique.

Dedication

For my family.

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Chapter 01
Introduction

Fig 1. Palisades Apartment Complex Winter 2008.

In North America, we are experiencing a change in the tradition of community. The dispersed metropolis, rapidly constructed, with a diverse population and composed of large-scale developments is affecting how we live our daily lives. Our sense of community is no longer tied to a particular physical place and our daily life takes us far from home. According to architect and urban theorist Lars Lerup, "Neighbourhood and Community …are losing their presence and becoming increasingly vague, both in concept and extent" (Lerup 2003, 201). Lerup describes this phenomenon as, "community without propinquity, a self-created community, facilitated by easy lines of new communication and transportation, which is not dominated by space" (Lerup 2003, 201). In response, Lars Lerup, observes what he describes as replacement therapy whereby the traditional role of the public is being replaced by private enterprises, such as regional malls that are becoming the centre of community life. Lerup also proposes a theory of community on demand where he observe groups coming together in the face of particular needs, for however long or short they are needed, such as, virtual, ethnic and grass roots organizations (Lerup 2003, 201). Increasing trends of isolation, decentralization and dramatic change are driving creative, cultural and artistic expressions, capitalizing on local knowledge and people, have emerged as a driving force of authentic community development. Richard Florida's generalized economic analysis provides the basis for a dynamic programmatic structure that can be applied to a range of project scales. Charles Landry on the other hand favors a localized approach to community which he sees as at the core of community building strategies. Comparing and contrasting large-scale approaches to development and smaller-scale locally driven strategies for community building this thesis asserts that architectural and urban design proposals must calibrate themselves in response to the emerging trends by taking a multidisciplinary and inclusive approach to design.

Current theory is studied to create an understanding of varied definitions of what constitutes community and how it develops. Once the theoretical background is established this thesis is broken down into three key sections. *Encounter. Emergence. Exploration.*

Encounter explores the case study site and its surrounding neighbourhood at the intersection of Jane and Finch, the area was rapidly developed from 1960 to 1970. The imposing Palisades Apartment Complex, standing on the northeast corner of the intersection, has

become an icon in the neighbourhood. Three distinctly modern buildings rise out of a grassy lawn to be seen throughout the larger neighbourhood. The development represents both challenges and opportunities; 4,400 people know it as home while others associate it with media reports of poverty, crime and an outdated legacy of modern architecture (San Romanoway Revitalization Association 2009). Mapping, visits to local community organizations and documentary photography reveal a complex network of social, cultural, and environmental issues, many of which reach beyond the scope of architecture and urban design. In particular we find a struggling youth population, deteriorating building stock, undefined public space, vast landscape, poor public transportation, high attrition rates and a negative community image. However, amongst the commotion, there are a few strong voices finding ways to draw the community together, often with education or art.

Emergence explores and contrasts the spaces of both highly designed architectural precedents and informal grassroots organizations as they relate to the current theory on community. Issues of identity, public space, scale and implementation are studied to inform the design proposal.

Exploration applies both the theoretical concepts and strategic principles developed in the case study analysis in a design. Through the re-conception of ambiguous ground plane at the base of the Palisades Apartment Complex, this thesis will investigate the potential roles of architecture in supporting creative community building and an expanded understanding of the contradictory role of an architect as mediator, dreamer and realist. Introducing new program, a school, theatre and live work residences allow for cross-pollination, making services more accessible to the local residents while opening up the community to the larger city. Identity is explored through direct relationships to the street, respectful facade alternations to the existing apartment buildings and spaces for both production and display of artwork. The relationship of the development to the human scale is examined through the range in size and extent of possible interventions, including built form, landscaping, art, and reprogramming. The potential for community engagement is explored through opening up the ground plane for public use. Public courtyards mediate between existing and new buildings. Finally, issues of implementation are considered in the design of the circulation, built form and life cycle. The design proposal describes a vision of an emerging community that builds upon the strengths of the existing community while discovering new potentials.

Chapter 02
Community
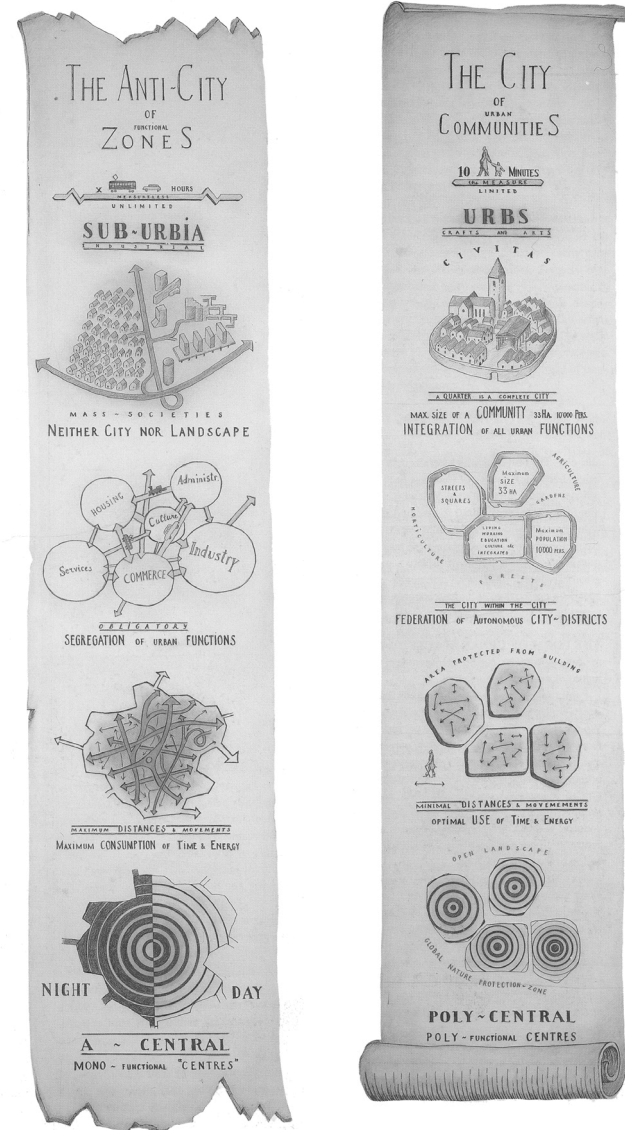
Fig 2. Leon Krier The Anti-City of Zones
versus the The City of Communities.

Meanings of Community

Recent large-scale urban developments accommodate thousands of people. Nuances, integral to a sense of community, are often lost in the massive size, efficient production and commercial nature of the projects.

The term community originates from communis, the Latin word for "common, public, general, shared by all or many" (Harper 2001). From an urban point of view, community typically refers to a neighbourhood where people might live, shop and work together on a daily basis. Traditionally, community is influenced by the physical characteristics and spatial limitations of the urban realm. For instance, Jane Jacobs' New Obsidian was founded on the trade of the local resources (Jacobs, Economy of Cities 1969, 49). Historically, public space was political in nature. It was often used an opportunity for people to communicate and rally together, celebrating or challenging common interests (Lerup 2003, 202). The agora in Ancient Athens exemplifies traditional qualities of public space. It was at the centre of daily life, both spatially and functionally.

Architect Leon Krier diagrams the effects of a-central development including suburbanization and functional separation suggesting that they aggregate a sense of displacement compared to traditional smaller scale and poly-central methods of development. The dispersed nature of our urban realms means that our daily routines can take us far from home during our daily lives. Lars Lerup describes this lack of specific spatial relationships as community without proqunity (Lerup 2003, 202).

Traditional typologies are often altered and combined in an attempt to create a sense of community culture. Lerup describes this phenomenon 'Replacement Therapy' where he sees less public and often semiprivate domain attempt to create a sense of community by co-opting traditional forms of public space (Lerup 2003, 202). Central City development in Surrey, British Columbia by Bing Thom Architects embodies Lerup's concept of 'Replacement Therapy', marrying the traditional public square and using it as a main public entrance to the mall with a university campus and office above. The physically accessible space, the open air between the mall and street, is not used as a place of exchange; instead the transaction of ideas and goods occurs within the controlled space of the malls hallways and atriums,

subject to the whims and restrictions of the property owner. Despite the often successful programmatic functionally, the merger of public and private space means that the space is biased (Lerup 2003, 202).

John Lornic's work follows a similar sentiment, declaring that schools are emerging as the new public spaces of community. According to Lornic, "Beside their core educational function, the public school system remains the only institution in our society where children, teens and adults from vastly different cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds can come together in a non-commercial environment for extended periods, during which they'll learn at least as much from one another as they will from their teachers" (Lorinc 2006, 82). Furthermore, playgrounds built for an elementary school are often used as local parks during off hours. Community organizations and continuing education programs often run during the evenings (Lorinc 2006, 82). In the contemporary city a sense of community is manifesting major gathering space for exchange including, malls and schools; however the degree to which they can be considered public or physically central is contestable.

The substitution of public space with semi public space monitored by private parties means that we depend on local interest to establish our communities, referred to as community on demand by Lars Lerup (Lerup 2003, 202). A varying scope and a fleeting nature makes them difficult to classify. Examples listed include local grass roots organizations banding together against unwanted development, birding watching clubs or ultimate Frisbee games in the park. Community groups can form for a moment or last a lifetime. As a result, the physical manifestation of community space has become much more temporary and ad-hoc (Lerup 2003, 202). Ultimately, Lerup suggests 'Community on Demand' or localized interest is seen as an important component in the continued emergence of a sense of community.

Current urban design theory reflects emerging theories on community. Over the last two decades there has been a notable shift in the focus of urban design theory from formal conceptions and compete visions of community development to informal models embracing the process and lived experience. *New Urbanism*, representative of traditional prescribed theory, describes a specific urban form that is walkable and mixed-use with a traditional neighbourhood structure. Despite some valuable lessons described in *New Urbanism* theory, the discourse is often marketed and associated with a nostalgic appearance (Kaliski 2008,
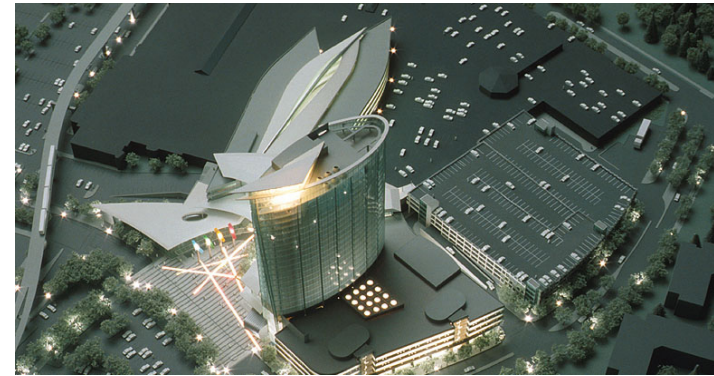
Fig 3. Central City Centre, Bing Thom Architect

"If healthy neighbourhoods are the building blocks of cites, strong public schools are the glue that holds diverse urban communities together"
- The New City by John Lorinc, 82

100). In contrast Koolhaas's *Generic City* embraces both the social and economic drivers of urbanization. Chaotic market-driven development is allowed on the metaphorical island within a rigid grid interrupted by feature buildings at significant confluences (Koolhaas, et al. 1995, 1252, Kaliski 2008, 101). Most recently *Everyday Urbanism* has surfaced emphasizing the live experience and rich complexities already present in our cities proposing that beauty and opportunity for the future of our cities can be found in the moment (Kaliski 2008, 109). From this cross-section of theorists, we can surmise that urbanism and a sense of community are emergent and dynamic conditions driven by programmatic and experiential frictions.

The varied notion of what constitutes community and how it develops is a reflection of its desirable and elusive nature. Designers must embrace the dynamic nature of community in both urban and architectural design proposals.
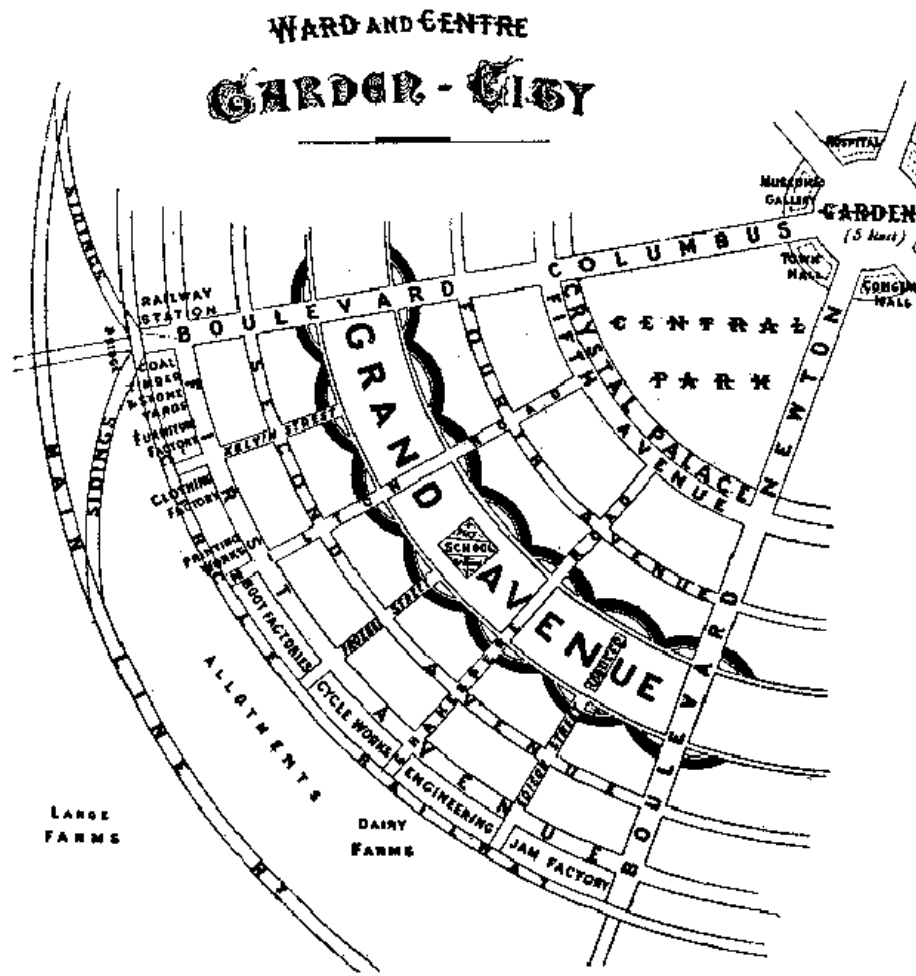
Fig 4. Conceptual Garden City layout

Fig 5. Letchworth Cottages

Fig 6. Post-war new town of Don Mills c.1959

Large-scale Urban Development

Large-scale urban development first gained momentum as a result of growth of industrialized cities. When combined with postwar population growth, the trend of large-scale development continued to gather momentum. This approach to development embraces society's desire for accessible housing and the efficiencies of the building industries. Complete communities offering immediate access to disparate residential, commercial, recreation and employment areas were envisioned, existing in opposition to the ephemeral nature and multiplicity of the meanings of community. The developments provided the functional elements of a neighbourhood but struggled to find a unique and desirable community culture. The idealized visions of Howard's Garden City and Le Corbusier's Radiant City were quickly accepted as popular development strategies and are now two of the most influential theories behind large-scale development found throughout North America (Wright 2008, 16 & 63, Sewell 1993, 22 & 32).

The *Garden City* movement was led by Ebenezer Howard, first coming into fruition with the publication of his book *Garden Cities of To-morrow* in 1902. The publication describes in great detail a self-contained and complete utopian community surrounded by green space, with a careful balance of agricultural, industrial and residential uses. The ideal *Garden City* is built on a green field housing 32,000 people on a site of 6,000 acres (Miller 1989, 12). The plan is roughly organized in concentric layers of uses extending along generous radial streets from the centre of the community. Based on a dispersed pattern of nodes, each *Garden City* would be linked to larger urban areas with populations of 50,000 or more by rail and road. Once the first neighbourhood development was completed the next was to begin close by, creating a dispersed urban network. Construction of the first prototype, Letchworth *Garden City*, began in 1903 (Miller 1989, 12-16). Despite the innovative proposal for a safe and healthy place to raise a family during a period of industrialization, Letchworth's carefully detailed appearance of a traditional town was a superficial attempt construct to sense of community identity.

During the postwar housing boom, new towns inspired by the *Garden City* became the preferred method of development to house a rapidly growing population. New towns are planned communities, often situated as a satellite development on the edge of an existing city (Sewell 1993, 22). Built between 1952 and 1965, Don Mills, located on the northeast edge of
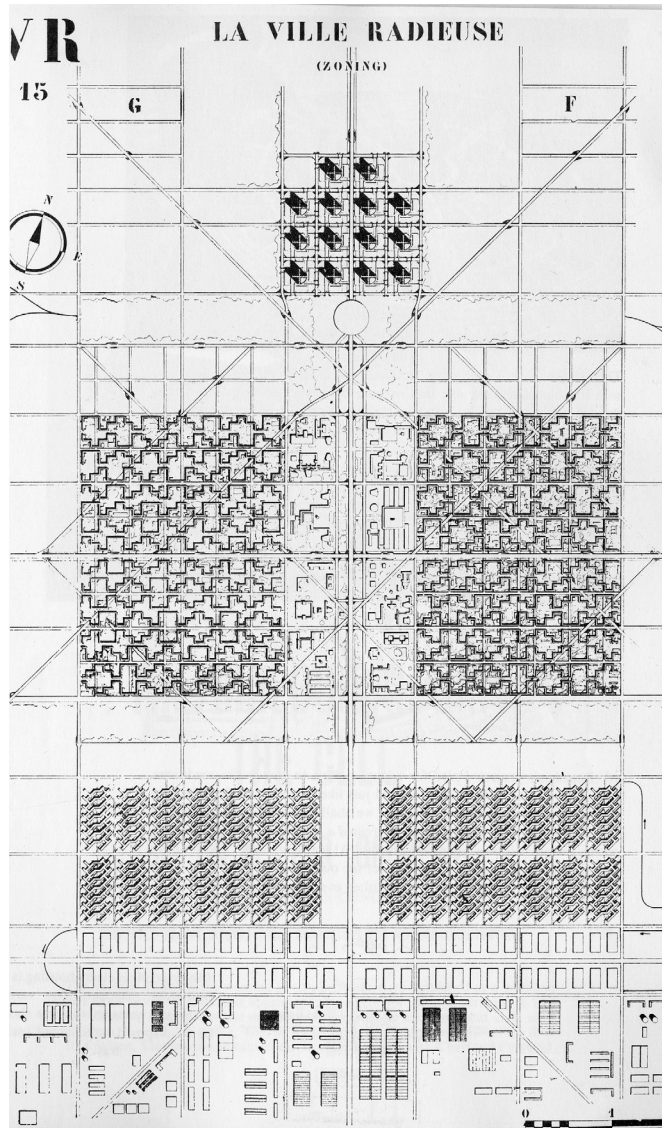
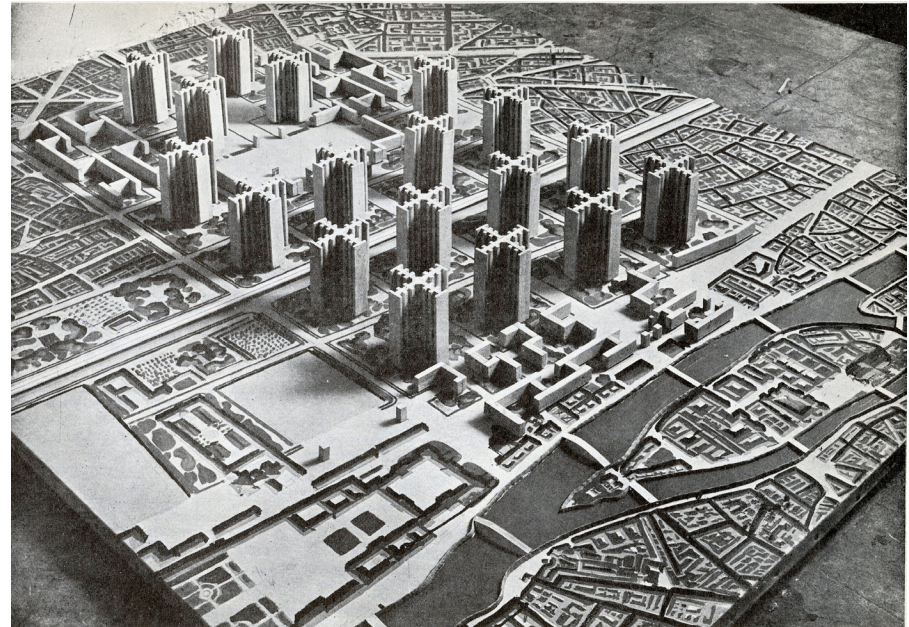Fig 7. Conceptual Plan of Radiant City

Fig 8. Plan Vision for Paris

Toronto, is the first example of postwar new town development in North America (Sewell 1993, 81). Don Mills consists of four neighbourhood quadrants surrounding a shopping centre. Housing types range from single-family detached houses to low-rise apartments. It offers a variety of uses by integrating retail and industrial uses into the neighbourhood; however, it is designed to separate car and pedestrian movement. Distinctly modern in character, Don Mills establishes itself as a showcase example of new neighbourhood development that has been copied throughout North America (Sewell 1993, 81).

Le Corbusier's 1922 *Radiant City* developed alongside new towns, focuses specifically to the need for high-density solutions in industrializing and growing European countries. Declaring the historic fabric of a city obsolete, Le Corbusier proposes that it is necessary to start over. He conceives of a completely new city to house 3 million people, by constructing massive apartment towers connected to independent systems of elevated roads and an open ground for pedestrian movement. Super density residential (3,2000 inhabitants per hectare), employment and industrial and civic uses are functionally separated radiating outwards connected by a series of efficient road ways. The extreme density and scale are intended to make the city more efficient and ultimately more valuable (Gris and Edouard 1933, 141). Due to the similarities of program but vast difference in densities the *Radiant City* is commonly referred to as "the French kind of Garden City" (Sewell 1993, 32) or vertical Garden City. *Radiant City* efficiently provides housing for a large population but fails to adequately address the need for a sense of community in city culture.

One of Le Corbusier's most ambitious applications of the *Radiant City* concepts was the 1925 Vision Plan of Paris that erased the city along the right bank of Paris (Gris and Edouard 1933, 202). The massive scale and utopian perspective of Le Corbusier's work means that it has never implemented precisely as he envisioned. However, lessons of density, land value, functional separation and open space were quickly accepted by the public and permeated throughout new developments (Wright 2009, 63, Swell 1993, 33).

In Europe new development was typically undertaken by large government agencies. CIAM (Congress for Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) formed in 1928, developing a unified understanding of the social role of modern architecture. The organization disintegrated in 1955 as European countries sought to explore new ideas more independently. In contrast, North

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America the post-war housing development guided by modern planning regulations, heavily influenced by European experience, was implemented by private development corporations (Stewart 2008, 27).

The proliferation of the *Garden City* and *Radiant City* movements has established large quantities of generously proportioned housing stock. Built within the last 60 years the vast majority of this housing uses contemporary construction methods and is often located on the edges of cities (Stewart 2008, 23, Druot, Lacaton and Vassal 2007, 15). However, the homogeneity of large scale development projects demonstrate a struggle to find a balance between managing the efficiencies of providing affordable housing for large populations while creating a unique and desirable community culture.

Garden City and *Radiant City* proposals might be considered *instant cities*; clever solutions for large housing developments are embedded with preconceived vision of urban life. Community and cultural relationships that can take decades to mature are conceived and constructed in only a few short years. *Instant Urbanism* has emerged as a term that encapsulates the diverse phenomena of city growth in relation to a dramatic period of development. The increasing trend of global urbanization with more than half of the world's population living in cities has exasperated the phenomenon (Wright 2008, 8, Dunham-Jones and Williamson 2009, 7). Archigram originally introduced the tern *instant urbanism* in the 1960's as part of a theoretical project. Embracing popular culture and advertising techniques, they proposed a mobile and technological event traveling from city to city. Herbert Wright describes the proposal in his anthology *Instant Cities*, "… a temporary megastructure consisting of modular mobile parts drifting into the air. …transformed [the town below] into an active metropolitan city, offering the inhabitants the cultural delights of urban life" (Wright 2008, 86). Mass production, prescriptive values and economy inherent to *instant urbanism* conflict with the ephemeral meanings of community. However, the large scale and commercial nature of urban development is a reality of how the majority of growth occurs today.
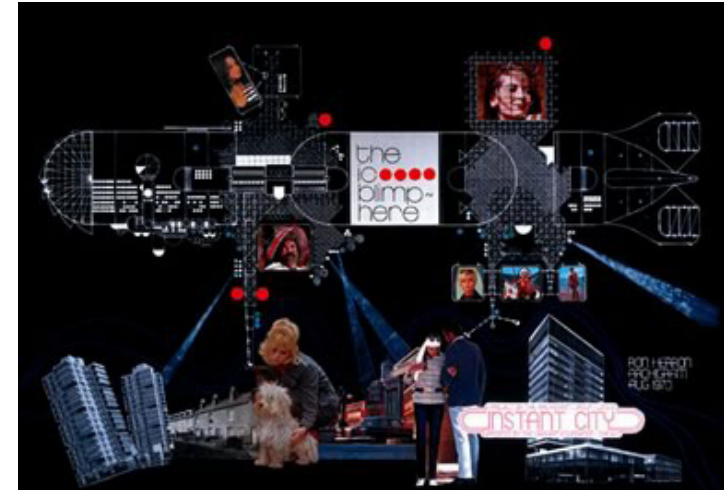

Fig 9. Rendering of the Ico blimp, part of Archighram's Instant City exhibition.

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Cultural Regeneration

In Part Three of Jane Jacobs book titled, *Death and Life of Great American Cities,* she describes a pattern of decline and regeneration. Neighbourhoods, communities and cities are constantly involved in a pattern of deterioration and emergence (Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities 1992, 14). The large-scale and fast pace of development over the last century has exasperated the cycle. Entire neighbourhoods can reach a critical point of decline. *Cultural regeneration* is the latest buzz-word being associated by planners, government agencies alike, with the rejuvenation of an urban area (Miles 2007, 47).

Cultural regeneration exists in opposition to earlier trends of renewal. For instance, *urban renewal*, popularized during the mid 20th century in America, tends to be prescriptive and formulaic, applying the same blanket solution to a diverse range of problems in a variety of contexts. Community renewal projects attempted to resolve complex social and built environment issues with large-scale demolition and replacement of entire neighbourhoods (Sewell 1993, 66). For instance, Regent Park in Toronto was an attempt to house low-income city residents in a healthier and safer environment. The existing fabric of decrepit Victorian row-houses was demolished and replaced by floating apartments in a park. The resulting displacement and social devastation of urban renewal has popularized the development of more community sensitive revitalization schemes. Only successful in the short term, Regent Park quickly became known for its deeply rooted social issues and crime often associated with low-income housing. The isolation of dead-end streets and poor transit integration made the neighbourhood difficult to safely access, while the homogeneity of the large-scale development lacked character and was difficult to personalize. Ironically, Regent Park is once again undergoing a massive government-initiated redevelopment tackling many of the same issues the first attempt failed to adequately address (Mays 2005).

Today, *cultural regeneration* has become a widely accepted planning method of engaging both social and built environment concerns in an effort to slowly improve the quality of life in our urban realms. *Cultural regeneration* focus is to build upon the strengths of the existing community. Since the 1980's, the broad definition of culture and the arts allows this strategy to engage with complex urban problems including social exclusion and the rehabilitation of post-industrial sites (Miles 2007, 47). The scale and potential impact of *cultural regeneration*

is large and varied. It can involve the redesign of an entire neighbourhood, a cultural quarter, a single building or small neighbourhood. Cultural venues often encourage proliferation of small, cultural-based business such as graphic design firms and high-end bars. Projects are often centered on a new flagship cultural institution, such as the Tate Modern in London's Bankside neighbourhood or the Guggenheim in the industrial city of Bilbao. These venues tend to attract visitors from outside the neighbourhood or city to the area; gentrification often ensues as the neighbourhood becomes more desirable and competitive (Miles 2007, 48). Gentrification is neither a positive nor desirable outcome of *cultural regeneration*. It could result in the displacement of local population by elevating housing prices and limiting the availability of affordable housing units (Miles 2007, 49). The focus is on improving the quality of life for people in the community. *Cultural regeneration* attempts to create diverse urban neighbourhoods that capitalize upon the synergetic potential of a city.

As previously established, one of the fundamental premises behind *cultural regeneration* is the potential for larger and generative effects of a smaller physical insertion in a community. The same idea of generative effect also applies to the economic viability of cultural regeneration schemes. A well known and analyzed example of cultural regeneration is the Guggenheim Museum designed by Frank Ghery in a small industrial town called Bilbao. According to reports by the Financial Times in 2001 the Bilbao Museum has created 500 million Euros of economic activity in the region during the first three years of operation, in addition to 100 million Euros in taxes (Anderson 2009). Furthermore, approximately 80% of visitors said that they came specifically to see the Guggenheim (Anderson 2009). As a result, the reverberation of economic impact of *cultural regeneration* is commonly referred to as the 'Bilbao effect.' Although the Bilbao is a large-scale city wide project, a neighbourhood project could have a similar experience on a smaller scale.

Despite the many positive benefits of cultural regeneration, John Thackara warns designers of the potential downfalls in his essay, *The post-spectacular city – and how to design it*, in which he states, "I would not aspire to be a design metropolis" (Thackara 2005, 191). By default, *cultural regeneration* projects tend to focus on the design and creative population of cities as the driving force of regeneration. The singularity of this approach can create a monoculture that only contains designers, architects, artists and public relations consultants. Thackara describes Venice as a design city, packed with beautiful buildings and ornate artwork drawing

millions of people to the city every year. However, the problem is that, "people come to look and consume but not participate" (Thackara 2005, 191). The creative nature of professions, such as artists, designers and architects means that they inherently tend to participate in the current cultural dialogues. The role of creative industry must be understood broadly to ensure the success of *cultural regeneration* projects.

"City building is a cultural process and architecture must paradoxically be both transformative and enduring to ensure the sustainability of societies and cities."
- Architecture and Urbanism Building April/May 2008

Economist Richard Florida is careful to establish the broad definition of what might be considered a creative profession. Creative professions Florida lists might include, but are not limited to, science and technology, engineering, info-tech, bio-tech, arts, music, culture, design, architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, law, health care and finance (Florida 2005, 25). According to Florida, the creative class is changing the way communities work, "…we substitute a truly human input – intellectual, creative, knowledge-based labour – for a physical input (Florida 2005, 25). As a result of the value-added process of design creativity is seen as an economic driver. The broad nature of the creative class as described universally by Florida, can be leveraged in smaller scale community development projects to create unique, strong and vibrant neighbourhoods.

Charles Landry has also emerged as a leading authority on the potential of creativity through the publication of *The Art of City Making* (2006) and *The Creative City* (2000). His work looks at smaller scale and culturally driven projects. According to Landry,

> *"The creative city idea is an ongoing process, not an end result. It is dynamic, not static, and it is concerned with the mindset predominant in a city. It suggest that a culture of creativity should be embedded into the texture of how the city operates, that is into it's community members, its organizations and its power structures."*
> (Landry, The Art of City Making 2006, 407)

Landry's definition of creativity is broad and closely related to issues of culture, contrasting Florida's meticulously developed economic argument. However, both concepts of creative communities offer comprehensive approaches to city building that rely upon the strengths of the existing community. The principles of localization, culture and cross-pollination found in creative city building and cultural regeneration can be applied to the rejuvenation of large-scale urban development projects to help foster a stronger sense of community.

Art in the City

Cultural regeneration, community development and emerging urbanism stress the importance of culture, creativity and pluralism in everyday life. One of the many possible common outlets of the varied forces is the role of art. However, it is important to maintain a cautious optimism when describing both the potential and limitations of art in the city and understand that artwork is an expression of the creator's point of view.

According to Suzanne Crowhurst Lennard, a contemporary urban theorist, a new form of public art is emerging, "intended to delight and inform people of all ages and all walks of life, to enrich the experience of everyday life and an understanding of common heritage" (Crowhurst-Lennard 2004, 172). Bringing art into the everyday experience allows it to humanize and engage with the city. There are traditional high-culture forms of art such as oil painting and opera that are out of reach for many people on daily basis. However, we also find it in many more less traditional and formal forms of artistic expression such as popular music, documentary photography and graffiti on a daily basis.   The diverse range of what constitutes artistic expression leads many people believe that art encourages interaction, debate of cultural values, inspires and reflects the vibrancy of a community (Crowhurst-Lennard 2004, 179).

The *Creative City Network of Canada* has published a list describing the key arguments for building community identity and pride through art.
> *The arts help to facilitate social cohesion.*
> *Arts and culture can be used to brand a community and set it apart from other.*
> *The arts can help foster a sense of ownership, belonging and pride within a community*
> *The arts help to preserve a collective memory and foster a continuing dialogue about the*
>> *past.*

Public art is expected to take on functions similar to a building as it engages in social and political issues. If the artist is not given free range, this approach can be deterministic and, in turn, raises the concern of what art forms are at liberty to explore contemporary issues (Rendell 2006, 3).

"The historical and conventional assumption that the role of the architect is to create form and that the role of the artist is to decorate form has in many recent public art projects been critically challenged."

Michael Stanley - Responding to Architecture:
Alison Turnbull at Milton Keynes Theatre

In *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* Jane Rendell presents a more skeptical analysis of public art and its relationship to architecture and community, ultimately proposing an alternative approach. There is an emerging trend for art to engage with the world outside of the traditional gallery. In attempting to define what constitutes public art and understand how it is created, Jane Rendell found that it was difficult to find work that was able to be freely representative of the public as public and private realms often blur (Rendell 2006, 6). For instance, a public square can feature a piece sponsored by a corporation or a public gallery can exhibit a privately owned collection. As an alternative, Rendell proposed a concept she describes as critical spatial practice that she believes, "allows us to describe work that transgresses the limits of art and architecture and engages with social and aesthetic, public and private" (Rendell 2006, 6). This mode of exploration encourages us to explore the interdisciplinary relationships that exist between art and architecture, while being both critical and spatial, without assuming responsibility of public representation.

Fig 10. Gastown Drive-in, 2008.

In 2008 the Urban Republic Arts Society created the Gastown drive-in, converting the top level of parking garage into an open-air theatre showcasing movies set locally in British Columbia. The architect's professional knowledge of building code and safety issues helped them to negotiate with the private owner, work with the city and secure insurance for the event. A large screen was secured to the concrete structure, and the front rows were filled with old car seats for seating while the back rows were filled with people watching from their cars. The organizers believe, "The provocative venue for the film series drew in new and broader audiences for BC film, and sparked us to re-imagine the city's functional infrastructure as a social and cultural resource" (Urban Republic Arts Society 2008). The Gastown Drive-in project demonstrates Rendell's concept of *critical spatial practice* by highlighting the under used roof parking during the off business hours. They suggest new uses of everyday spaces, encouraging people to encounter and explore the space through their own experience of the event and image new potentials.

Bringing art outside of the gallery and into the landscape and city expands its capacity to relate to real world situations while new potentials can be realized through an interdisciplinary approach. Both art and architecture have the ability to create unique and provocative

responses to specific contexts that can engage with the public enriching our everyday experiences, however, in being critical it will not always be representative of the entire public's point of view. Exploring the current theory on the emerging modes and experiences in the production of community and public space reveals its fragile and elusive nature. Artists and architects can use their work as mediums to explore and communicate relevant issues to a specific community. Specific examples of public art will be more closely studied in *Chapter 4 - Encounter* through a series of local case studies.

Chapter 03
Encounter

1998

NORTH YORK

SCARBOROUGH

YORK

ETOBICOKE

EAST YORK

OLD TORONTO

1953

1834

1793

Post-1970
1945-1955
1919-1929
Pre-1901
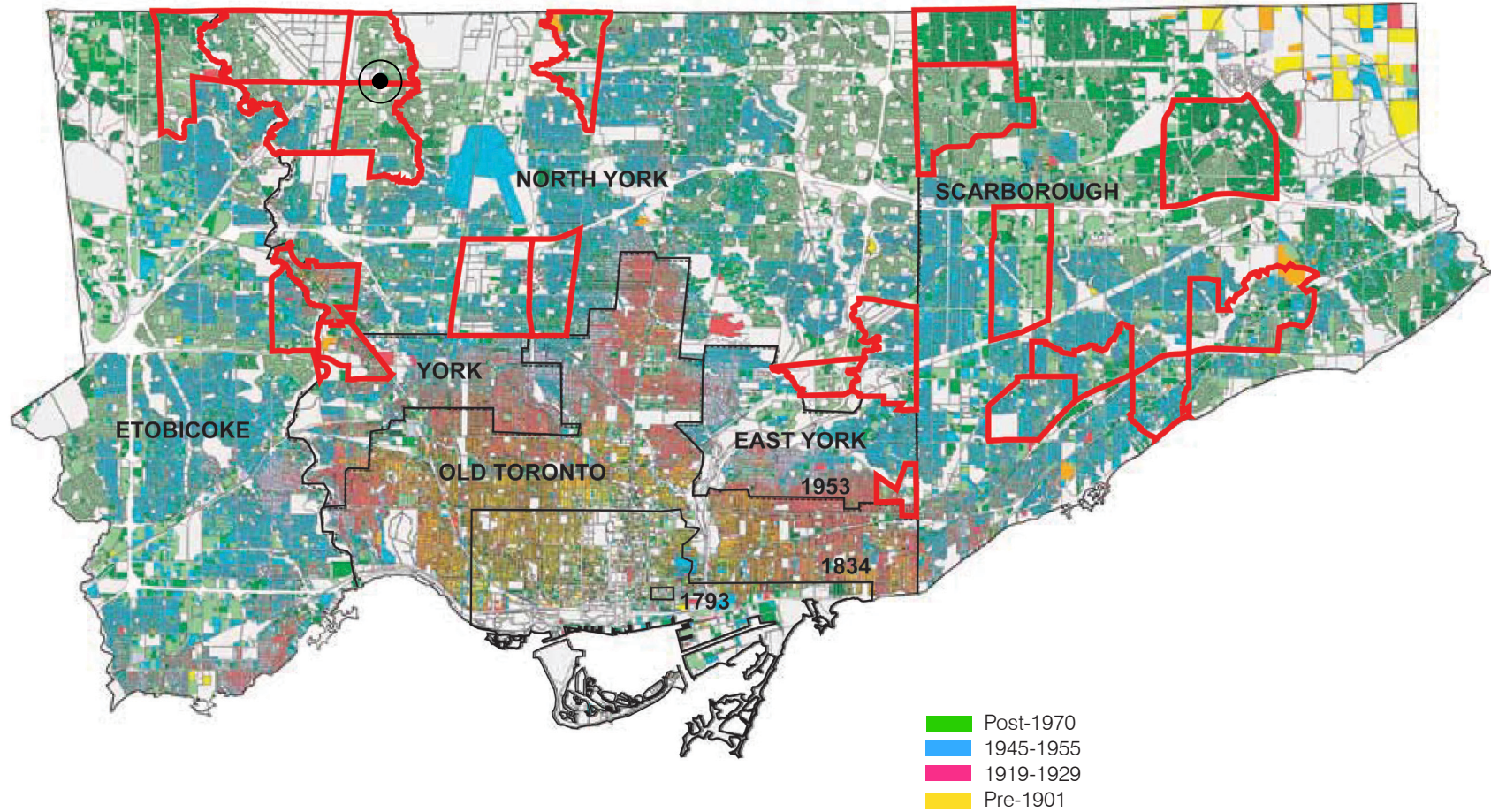
Fig 11. Map of Toronto's built fabric by age of construction, overlaid with expanding city boundaries and priority neighbourhoods.

Toronto's Instant Urbanism

Toronto began as a small military settlement in the late 18th century; over the years, the city grew slowly along the lake and northwards following gridded lot divisions. On the adjacent map, yellow represents the iconic Victorian fabric of the city with long rectangular blocks often filled with row housing while the pink is the first layer of car suburbs. The most prolific is blue and green representing the two most recent stages of development since the Second World War. In the most mixed area of the city, seen as a mix of all the colours where you find a range of buildings from the original stately buildings to modern skyscrapers. Urban development continues today stretching the fabric of the city well beyond the current boundary (Benn 2006).
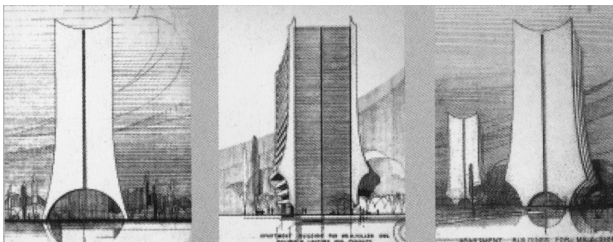
After the Second World War the city experienced massive population growth in combination with changing urban ideals that dramatically changed the pattern of urban development. Affordable access to cars allowed the city to spread out while demand for safe and healthy family housing away from the dangers of city life pushed the edges out even further. This is apparent in the shift between the smaller grain of older development relative to the larger plots surrounding the core of the city. The booming population and large scale development have meant that the majority of Toronto's built fabric has been constructed during the last 60 years (Benn 2006). Wide streets, standardized plans, modern aesthetic and large scale are common characteristics found in most postwar urban fabric. Uno Prii was one of Toronto's most successful architects during this period, he is best known for sculptural concrete apartment buildings. The heavy concrete structure, rigorous geometric plan and full height glazing at Twenty Prince Arthur are representative of his work (Stewart and McClelland 2008).

A study completed by the University of Toronto's Centre for Urban and Community Studies reveals a parallel trend to the aging built fabric and city infrastructure. Over the last 30 years a pattern of neighbourhoods isolated by decreasing income levels have emerged (Centre for Urban and Community Studies 2007). The most affected areas roughly correspond to the built fabric constructed during the last 60 years and are likely in need of significant repair or updating. The City of Toronto is becoming socially and economically divided.

Between 2005 and 2009, the City of Toronto, in partnership with the United Way identified
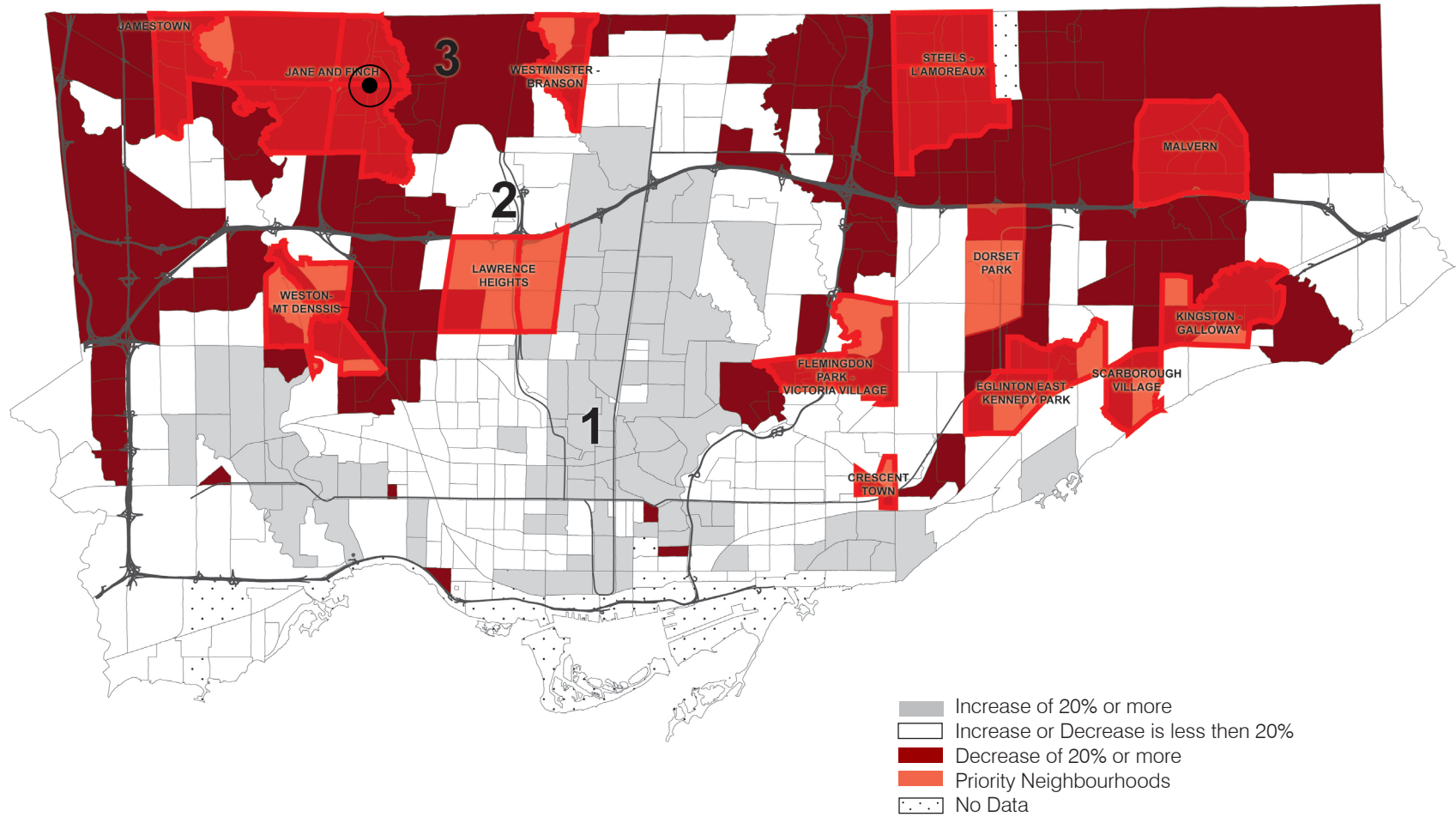

Fig 12. Aerial photograph of postwar urban fabric
Fig 13. Renderings of apartment buildings by Uno Prii

JAMESTOWN

JANE AND FINCH

3

WESTMINSTER -
BRANSON

STEELS -
L'AMOREAUX

MALVERN

2

LAWRENCE
HEIGHTS

DORSET
PARK

WESTON-
MT DENSSIS

KINGSTON -
GALLOWAY

FLEMINGDON
PARK -
VICTORIA VILLAGE

EGLINTON EAST -
KENNEDY PARK

SCARBOROUGH
VILLAGE

1

CRESCENT
TOWN

Increase of 20% or more
Increase or Decrease is less then 20%
Decrease of 20% or more
Priority Neighbourhoods
No Data

Fig 14. Map of Toronto demonstrating the emerging pattern of economic segregation, overlaid with public transportation and major highways.
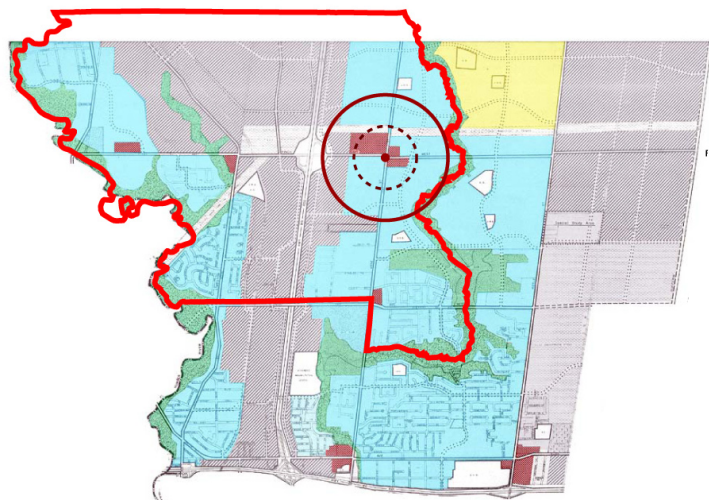
Fig 15. Map of District 10 Master Plan overlaid with priority neighbourhood boundaries and walkable radius.

Priority Neighbourhood Statistics according to City of

Toronto Census mapping

4,400   residents

2,800   youth

75%   new immigrants

13 priority neighbourhoods. The neighbourhoods were identified as facing the greatest need of social infrastructure (United Way Toronto 2009). Many studies and reports have been completed on these neighbourhoods as a result of the increased attention. For instance, *United We Stand – Jane and Finch* identified key issues such as service gaps, history of youth alienation and safety (Green 2006). The challenges identified in the reports are complex and deeply rooted, covering a broad range of disciplines including social, environmental and economic. It will take many years, people and programs to begin to understand and undertake some the challenges faced in these neighbourhoods. Architecture and art will just be one of many necessary components in a neighbourhood revitalization strategy.

One of the largest neighbourhoods identified is Jane-Finch, on the north edge of the city. Jane-Finch began as a quiet farming community far away from the noise and bustle of the city; however, it was rapidly developed between 1950 and the late 1970's in response to a booming population in need of housing (Downsview Weston Action Community 1986, 27). Developed during a period when modernist ideals prevailed, the focus was on providing safe and healthy homes away from the dangers of the city. Tall towers were constructed in field-like conditions, housing thousands amongst the grassy green fields. A lag in planning policy, high demand and the city's desire to attract development meant that there were flexible height restrictions in York (Stewart 2008, 25, Downsview Weston Action Community 1986, 25). Massive roads had to be constructed to move people from one distant place to another. Sprawling retail malls serviced a wide spread community. Shortly after the development began, the isolated community gained a reputation for violence and poverty through negative newspaper reports (DiManno 1986, Richardson 2008, 4).

The District 10 plan, laid out in 1962 by the City of North York, established the land use in the community now commonly referred to as Jane-Finch. Deep ravines, a busy highway and street grid determine the edges of the plan, separating what might otherwise be a well-connected community. The boundaries of what is today referred to as Jane and Finch reflect this isolation as defined by the ravines and major roads.

A 30 minute walkable radius, centred on the commercial hub, demonstrates the large scale of the neighbourhood. Light industrial uses line the highway corridors while a commercial
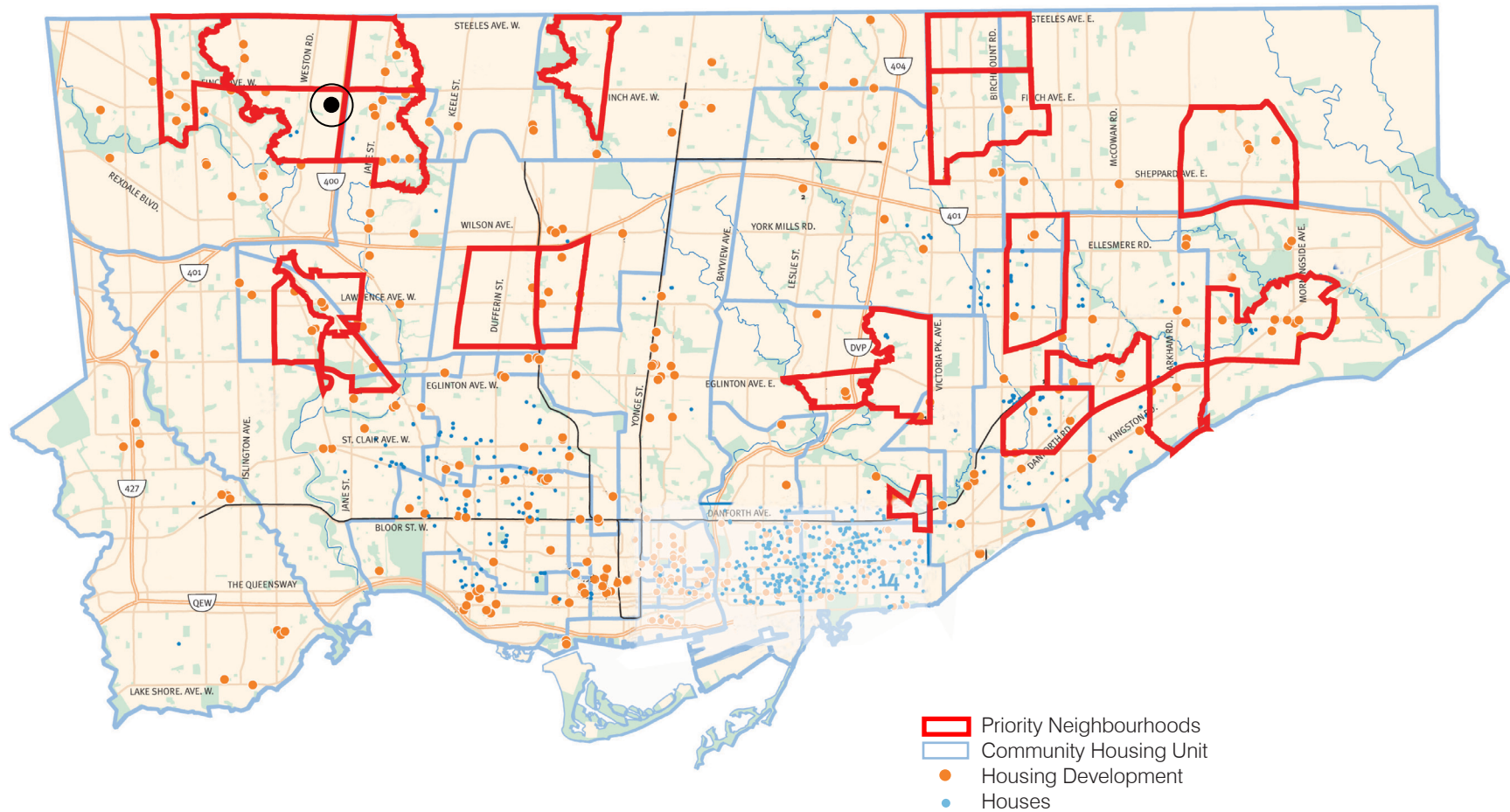
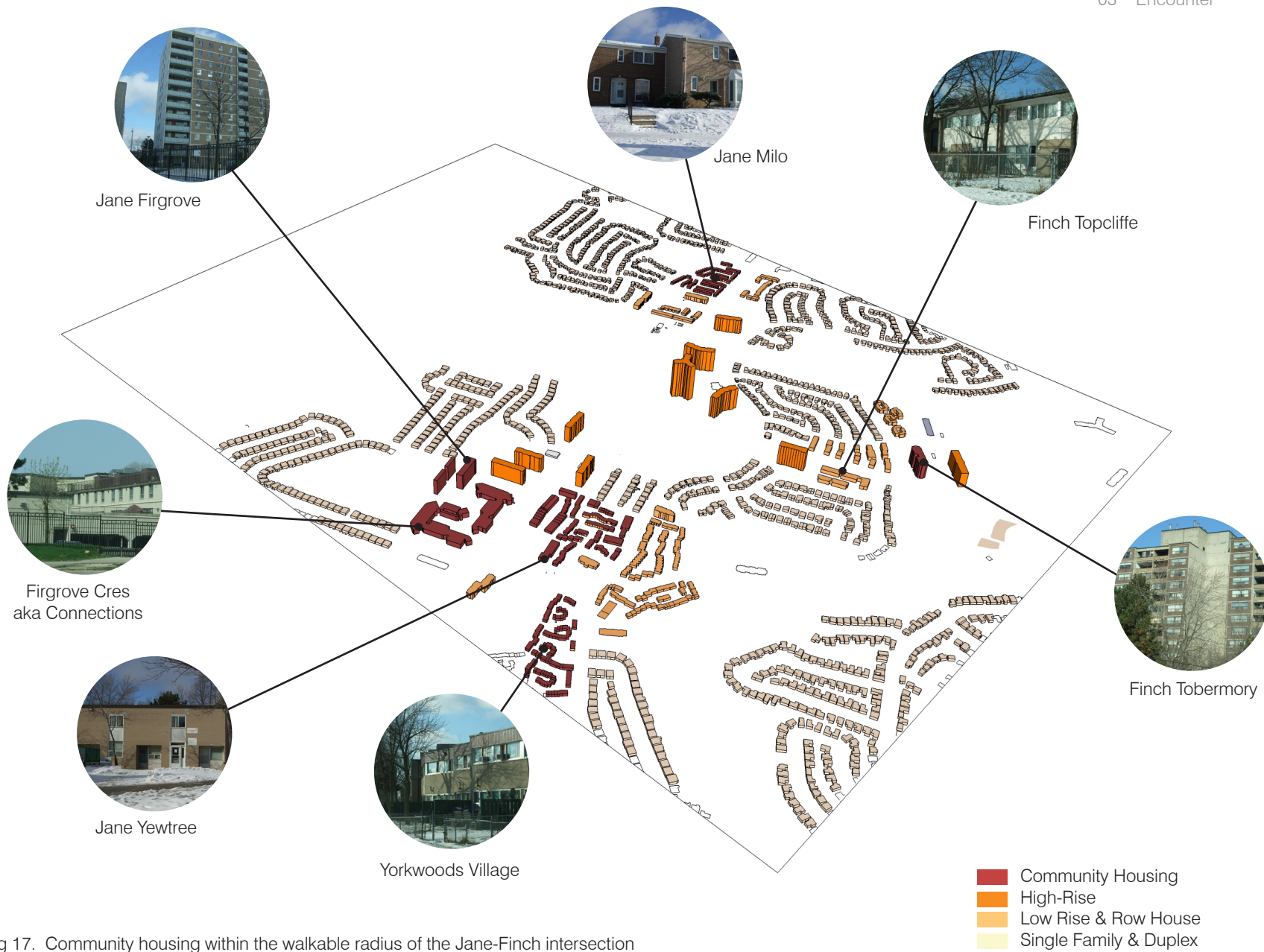Fig 16. Community housing in the City of Toronto with Priority neighbourhoods overlay

Jane Firgrove

Jane Milo

Finch Topcliffe

Firgrove Cres
aka Connections

Jane Yewtree

Yorkwoods Village

Finch Tobermory

Community Housing
High-Rise
Low Rise & Row House
Single Family & Duplex

Fig 17. Community housing within the walkable radius of the Jane-Finch intersection

Priority Neighbourhoods

Highest (3368-4174) to lowest (143-949) student yield

Areas where students from new development have been redirected

Areas where students are being considered for redirection
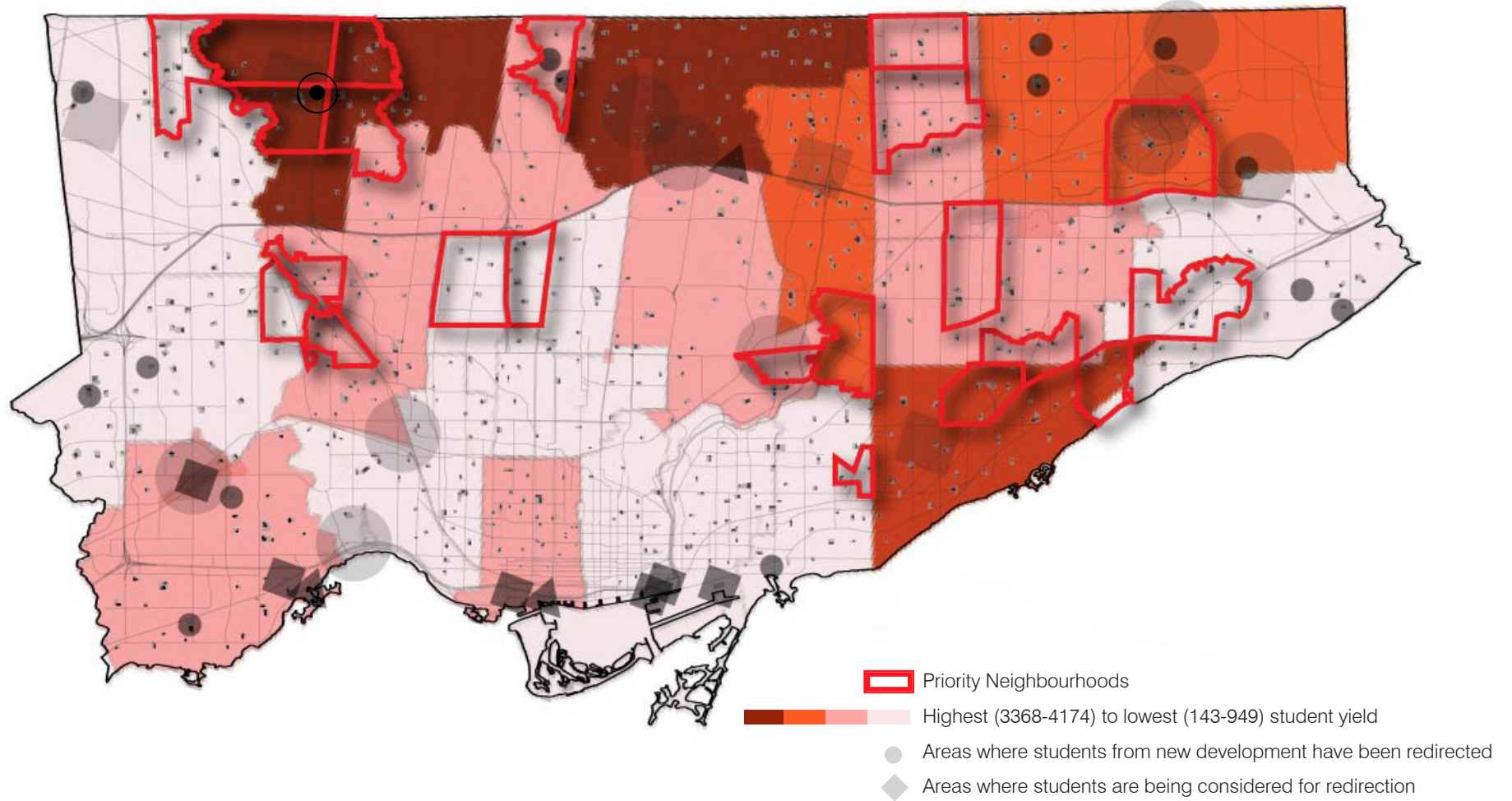
Fig 18. Projected school demand based on new housing applications, overlaid with existing TDSB property and priority neighbourhoods.
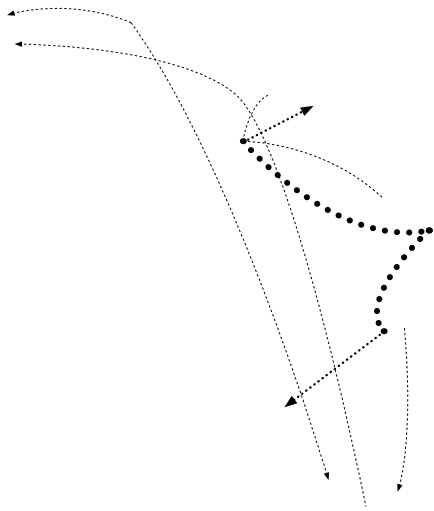
Fig 19. Existing flow of students
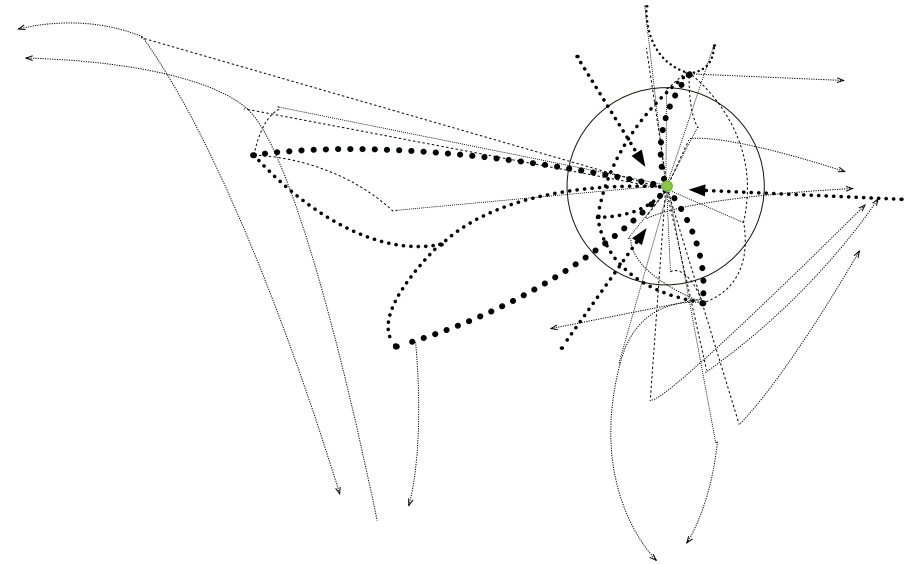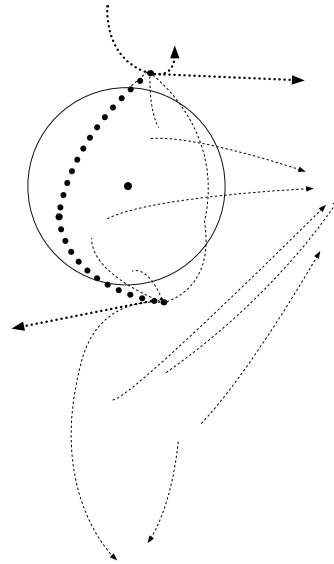
Fig 20. Proposed flow of students
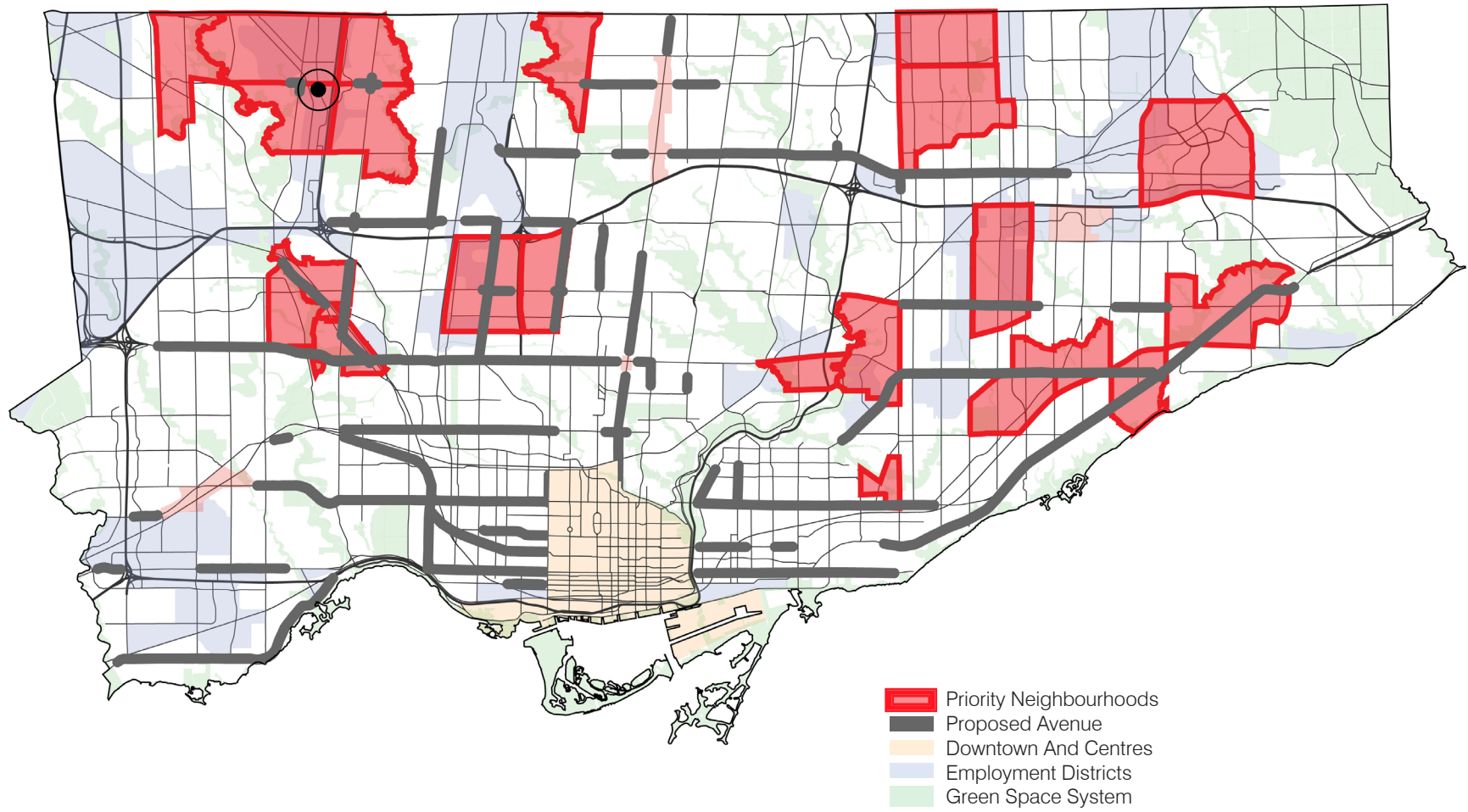
Fig 22. Avenues proposal from the City of Toronto's Official Plan

Priority Neighbourhoods
Proposed Avenue
Downtown And Centres
Employment Districts
Green Space System
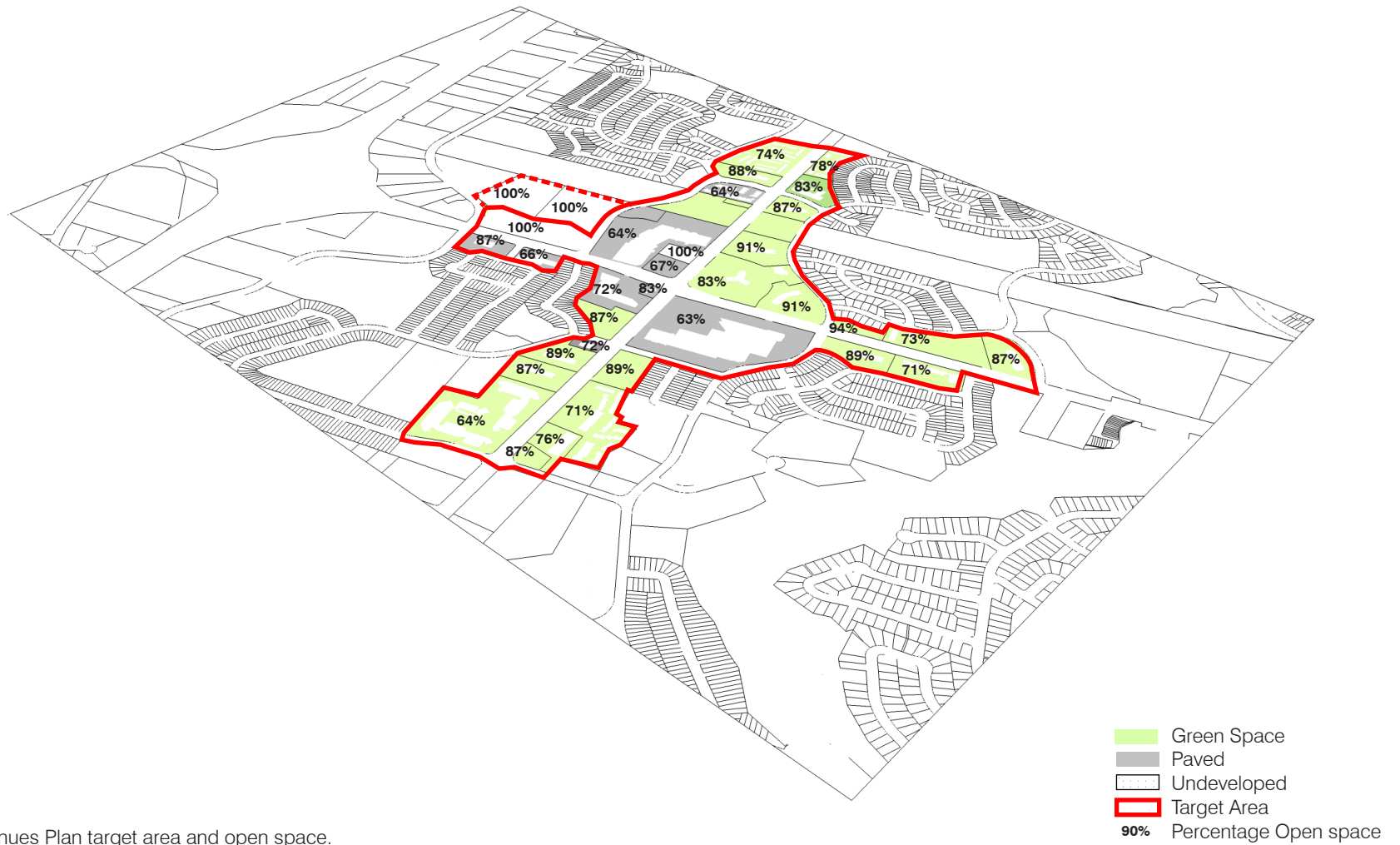
Fig 23. Avenues Plan target area and open space.

Green Space
Paved
Undeveloped
Target Area
90% Percentage Open space

c. 1891

Black Creek in it's natural state.

1948

"...Jane/Finch was once a small farming district north of the City of Toronto. For nearly 150 years farms and orchards dotted the landscape ..."

1949
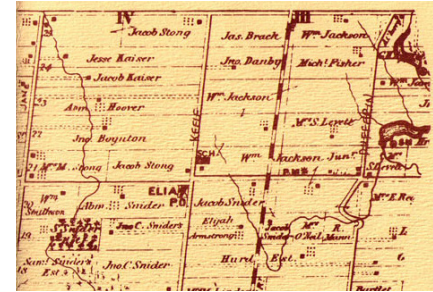
A federal and provincial land assembly put together 900-acres of land in the area

1962
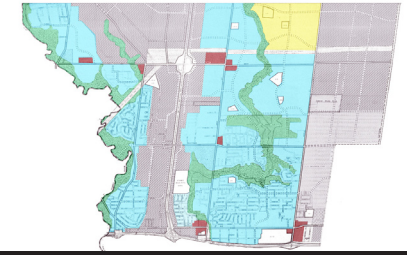
1961 - 1,300 people

District 10 Master Plan.

1976

1971 - 33,000 people

This newspaper ad features the Palisades apartment project in the Toronto Star.

1986

The Toronto Star "...stereotype as a concrete jungle of social breakdown."

2006

Lost in the Struggle Documentary airs on CBC, documenting drugs and gangs

2006
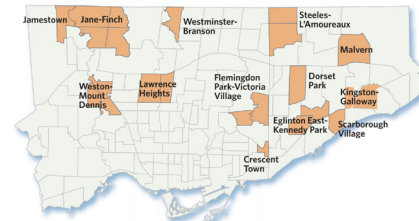
2006 - 80,150 people

One of 13 priority investment neighbourhoods identified by Toronto

2006

The Official Plan identifies the Jane and Finch intersection under the Avenues Plan.

1967

Edgeley Village (Irving Grossman) was featured in Canadian Architect's Annual Design Review.

2004

"...a united virtual community centre of expression, concern and inspiration."

2008

A local city councillor is leading the campaign to re brand the neighbourhood as University Heights

Fig 24. Opposite, development timeline

hub at the intersection of Jane and Finch anchors a residential community scattered between the disparate uses. Community institutions such as schools, community centres, park space and churches were located inside of the residential fabric while York University is an island cornered off by ravine, hydro corridor and industrial uses. The plan led by the City of North York was developed with the best intentions. Much of the development was undertaken by the Community Housing Corporation, accounting for the high rate of social housing in the neighbourhood. As a result, 60% of the residential units are rentals and 45% of rental units are in the form of a high-rise (Stewart, Jane and Finch: Progressive intent 2008). By 1969, 90% of the development projected for 1990 was already completed. (Downsview Weston Action Community 1986, 27)

A mapping study reveals the predominate trends in relation to the larger city. The Jane-Finch neighbourhood has one of the highest concentrations of Community Housing developments in the city, they are large-scale, high density and located along the main arterials. Despite high attrition rates, a study by the Toronto District School board anticipates significant growth in demand (TDSB 2005). Currently public schools are dispersed far away from the physical and commercial centre of the neighbourhood, older students are forced to travel longer distances often outside of the neighbourhood. The Avenues Plan is the primary planning policy in place that identifies the Jane-Finch corridor, encouraging stronger street relationships and reurbanization (City of Toronto 2006, 2-15).

Recently the neighbourhood is undergoing another transformation as the local city councillor has announced plans to rebrand the 'Jane-Finch' as 'University Heights'. The councillor's proposition has come up against stiff criticism from local residents proud of the diversity and large stock of community housing that makes their neighbourhood unique. Many people see rebranding as a superficial solution to the challenges people face in the neighbourhood (Aveling 2009, Gopaul 2008). The master plan currently being implemented for York University is a reflection of the changing attitude towards architecture and development in the city, calling for infill housing connecting the campus to the residential tissue of the neighbourhood (York University Development Corporation 2006). Despite the progressive description and intentions in the plan the recently constructed townhouses are a hybrid of Georgian and Victorian styles, appearing inappropriately traditional in comparison to the existing neighbourhood.

Art in the City

Agape Ministries

Toronto Police 31 Division

Immaculate Conception
Community College

Humber River Regional Hospital

Kerala Christian Assembly

Westview Centennial Technical
Secondary School

Medical Centre
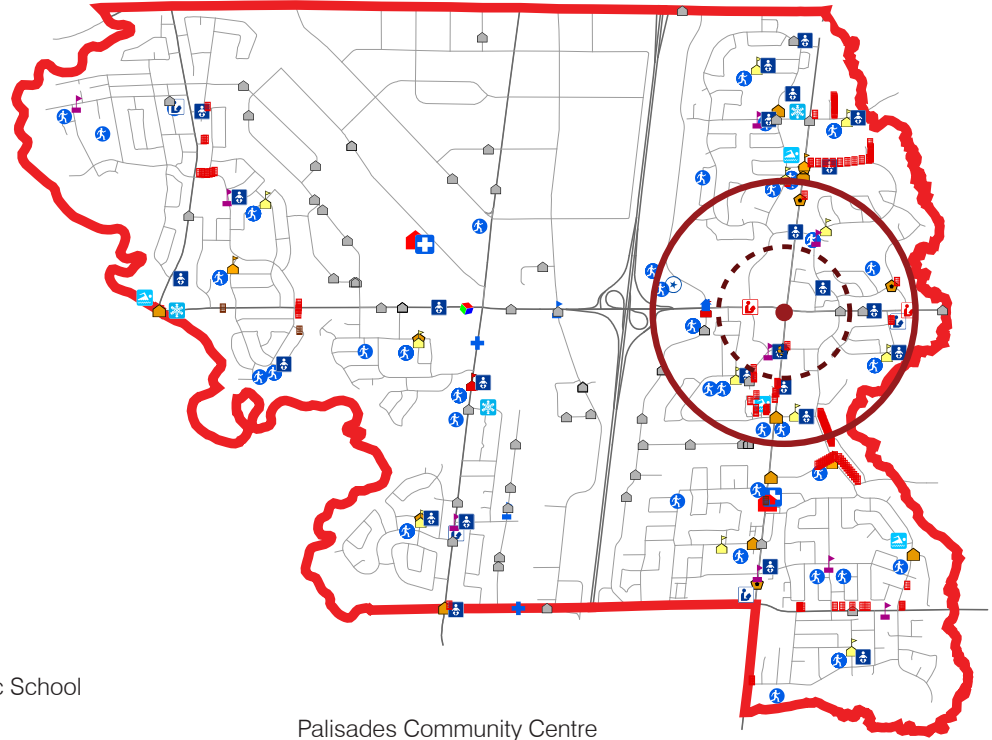
Seniors Residence

Gosford Public School

Firgrove Public School

Youth Drop-in & Sherdon
Outreach

Belka Enrichment Centre

St Francis de Sales
Catholic School

St. Charles
Catholic School

Palisades Community Centre

Driftwood Elementary School

Youth Inc Employment Centre

University Presbyterian Church

Yorkwood Community Centre

Salvation Army

Yorkwoods Public Library & Theatre

Topcliff Elementary School

34
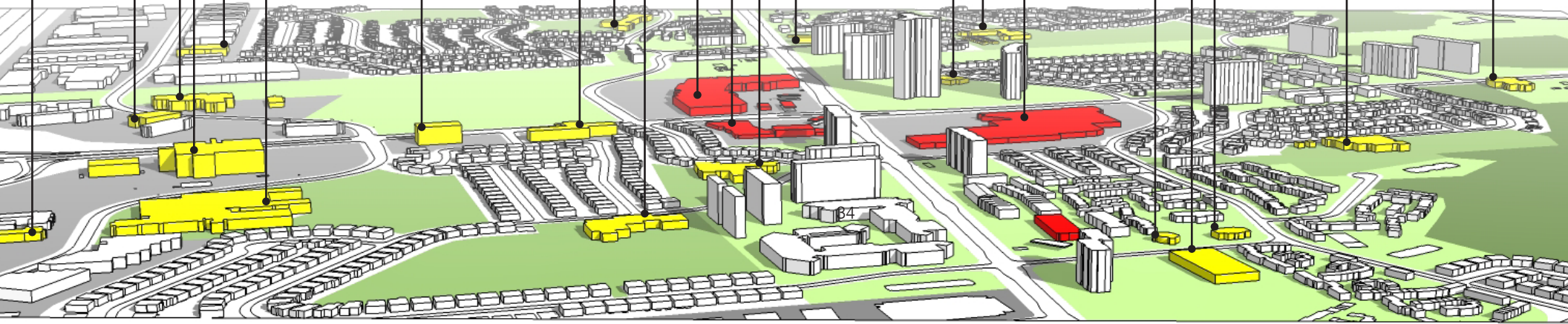
Fig 25. Map of Jane-Finch community services.
Fig 26. Perspective view of community services surrounding the Jane-Finch intersection.

Neighbourhood Services and Institutions

Social services in the Jane-Finch neighbourhood are buried deep in the residential fabric, making them difficult to see and access for many local residents. A 30-minute walking radius centred on the Jane-Finch intersection demonstrates the large scale of the neighbourhood. A mapping exercise reveals that they are unevenly dispersed throughout the neighbourhood and many services are difficult to reach by foot or public transit. Religious spaces appear to have infiltrated the light industrial areas lining the highways. Schools are buried deep in the lower density residential fabric on curving streets. The central intersection of the community is dominated by large scale commercial malls. A few of the newer and innovative services, Youth In Employment Centre, Youth Drop-in, Sherdon Outreach and Belka Enrichment Centre have setup inside the malls in an attempt to attract an untapped population. Following the lead of the more recently developed social services, creating more visible institutions in accessible locations could help bring members of the neighbourhood together and foster a stronger sense of community (United Way Toronto 2009).
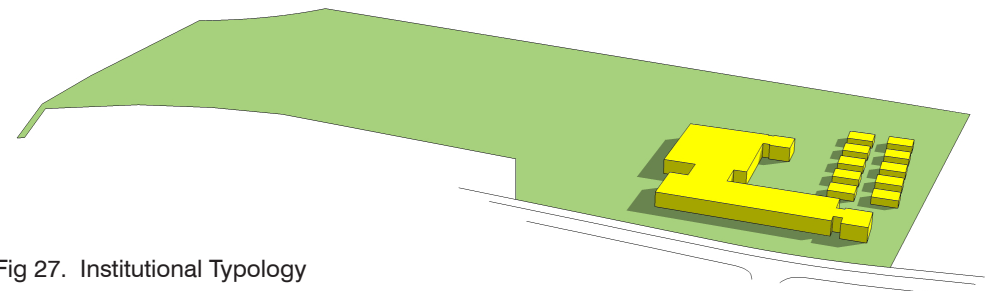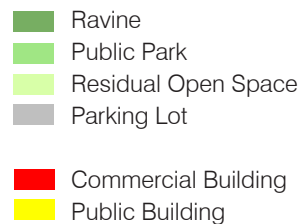
Fig 27. Institutional Typology

     St. Charles Catholic School

     - Attached to grassy park space

     - Located on a quite street with limited frontage

     - Accessed by quite residential streets

     - 1-3 storeys

Ravine
Public Park
Residual Open Space
Parking Lot

Commercial Building
Public Building

Fig 28. Circle of Words, Garden of Thought by Linda Covit located behind the Driftwood Community Centre.

Fig 29. Entry Mural for the Jane and Finch Community and Family Centre

Public Art

The large scale and fast pace of development has meant that few individuals who live the in the area had the opportunity to influence the evolution of the neighbourhood. Since the beginning of development in the area, numerous grass roots organizations have formed as people have spoken up trying to voice their concerns. One of the most visible indications of struggles facing the community has appeared through art scattered throughout the neighbourhood. Exploring the neighbourhood there is a wide range in of work that might be considered public art.

In some instances, formal invitations to professional artists have been used to create unique spaces that speak to specific issues. For instance, 'Circle of Words, Garden of Thought' was commissioned by the City of Toronto as an informal gathering space behind the Driftwood Community Centre. It is a series of simple arcs, paving, seating and lighting. Ideas of gathering, communication and respect are subtle but present, embedded in the details of the design, as the stone bench cradles people who enter along the stone path and small boulders with engravings with the words heritage, trust, friendship and gathering are loosely scattered throughout (Bishop 2002). This project is both a success and a failure for the same reason the subtle acknowledgement of difference and conflict persistent in the community encourages tolerance -- the discrete location means that it is difficult to find.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is the brightly coloured but simply composed mural depicting moments of celebration, recreation and gathering. It attracts attention to the side basement door where you can entire the Jane and Finch Community and Family Centre in the basement of a tall tower. The mural plays an important role in identifying the community centre but does aspire to be a refined work of art.

The urban art organization known as 'Style in Progress' was granted funding from the city of Toronto's beautification fund to decorate intrusive utility boxes along public streets in the Jane-Finch neighbourhood (Style in Progress 2007). A box located just north of the major intersection on Jane Street, has an image depicting the Toronto skyline with the words, dream, peace, love and hope floating as clouds in the sky above. The spray paint makes the telephone box more attractive but the message on the box, so closely associated to the

Fig 30. Graffit by Style in Progress on Jane Street utility box.

Fig 31. Just like Kingston, Versatile impromptu outdoor performance at the Palisades apartments.

city, feels more like advertising than a critical piece of artwork.

The local music scene is the most authentic, original and prolific art form in the neighbourhood. Hip hop, rap, freestyle and reggae are the most popular. Music allows youth in the neighbourhood an opportunity to share their experiences while learning valuable skills. Computers and Internet allow music videos filmed in the area and songs written by local youth to be easily shared with each other as well as the larger music scene. Music videos often incorporate local neighbourhood scenes as backgrounds for their work (Lornic 2008). For instance in Versatile's performance of 'Just Like Kingston' in collaboration with Beenie Man, outside of the Palisades apartments and surrounding developments, stark architecture is background for everyday events at Jane-Finch in Toronto and Kingston, Jamaica. Large groups gather to dance, drug deals go down, people give money to the homeless and couples fight. The music video's preoccupation with the neighbourhood is critical of the line between reality and myth of life in the Jane-Finch community.

Each work presented represents a unique point of view in the community by creating a dialogue between local residents, identifying points of significance in the neighbourhood as well as creating a sense of pride through beautification. Work by both local residents and professional artists should be encouraged; with each piece a stronger sense of identity is created and higher quality is expected.

Fig 32. Aerial view looking north at the intersection of Jane and Finch.
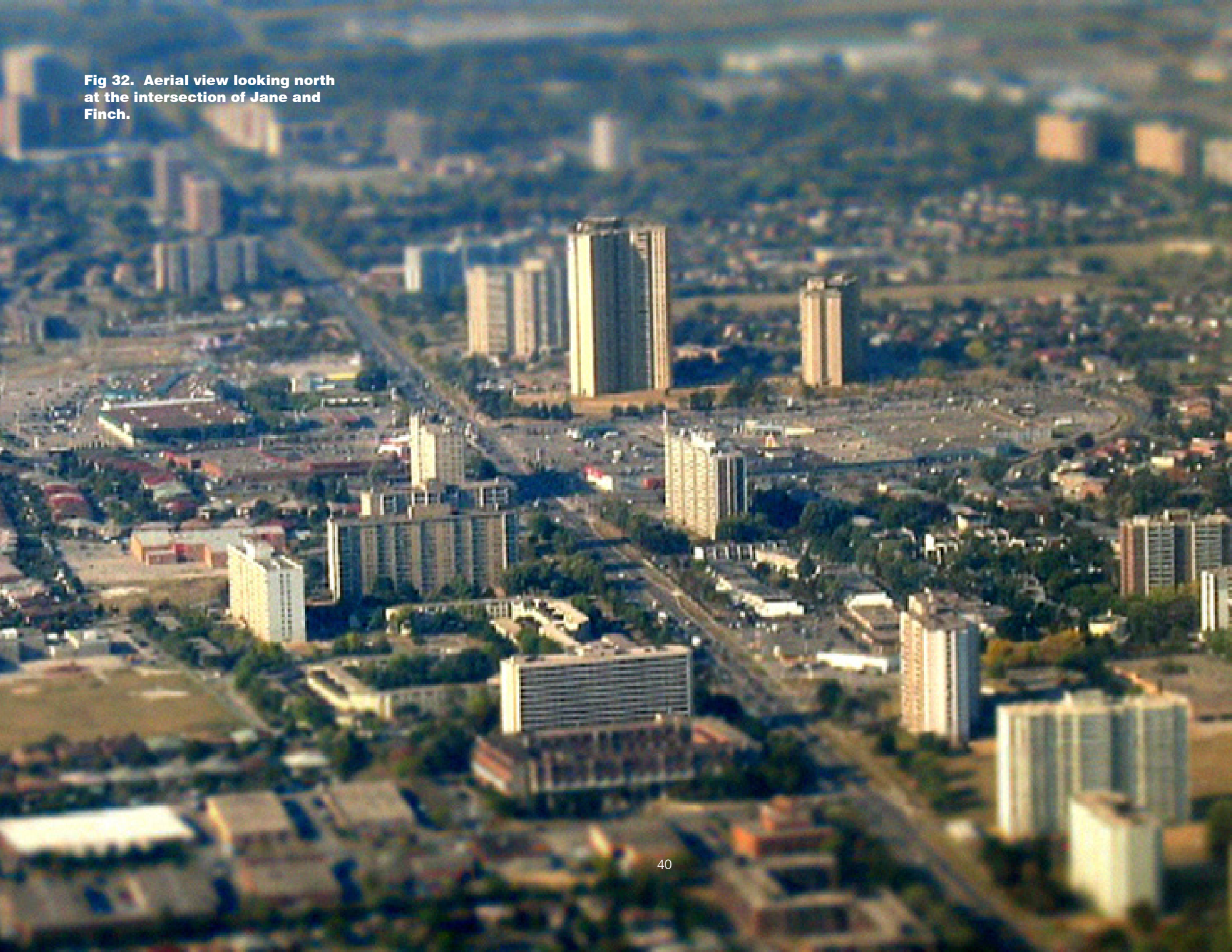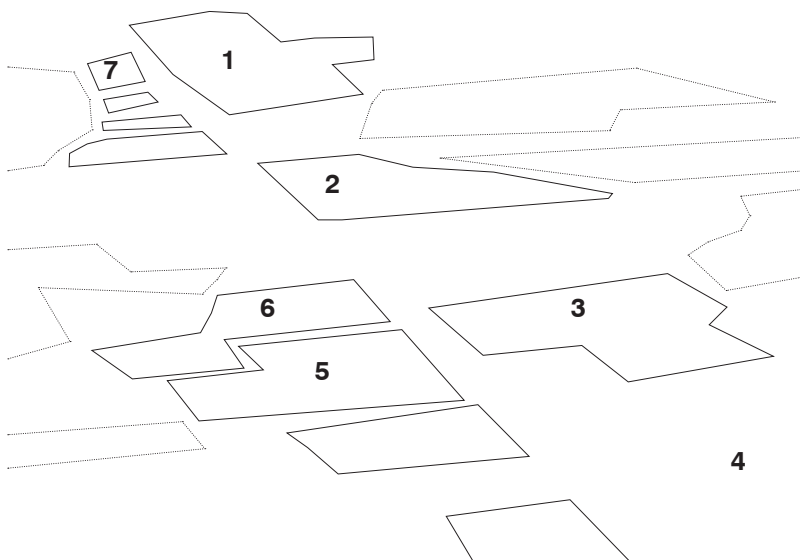
Fig 33. Large scale development

1 Edgeley Village

2 Palisades Apartment Complex

3 Jane Yewtree

4 Oakdale Community Centre

5 Connections

6 Jane Firgrove

7 Jane Milo

Neighbourhood Character

The accelerated timeline and commercialized nature of the development process has caused the Jane-Finch neighbourhood to evolve as a series of disparate residential developments. An aerial view of the intersection demonstrates the sporadic nature of the density along the main arterial roads. Vast areas of parking and ambiguous green space separate the built form from the street. Cars appear as small dots in the landscape, emphasizing the massive scale. Minimal decoration, strong lines and simple forms of the buildings are distinctly modern.

Both award winning and everyday projects have become iconic spaces in the Jane-Finch neighbourhood. Featured in Canadian Architect's 1965 annual design review, Edgeley Village by Irving Grossman, demonstrates the functional planning ideologies that drove development. Accommodating 6,500 people in a modern village like setting, a central pedestrian only street runs north south, lined with schools, retail and community buildings (Edgeley in the Village 1971). Oakdale Community Centre built 1997-1999 by Patkau Architects, offers a more current perspective on architecture and community in the evolving neighbourhood. The long and low building frames the bottom edge of a park along a busy street, as a large canopy opens up the front facade of the building that allows people to slip into the central circulation spine along the entire length. Walls built of concrete block and yellow steel beams presents a more refined use of the typically standard materials common in the area. The different points of view each project's relationship with the street, materiality and scale reflects the emerging character of the neighbourhood.

Palisades apartment complex constructed during the 1970's on the northeast corner of the intersection is one of the most visually dominating structures in the neighbourhood. Analyzed in greater detail, the apartment complex will become the eventual site for the thesis design.

Art in the City

Families defy forest fire

What makes Palisades Toronto's most interesting apartment project in years?

Fig 34. 1976 advertisement in the Toronto Star

42

Palisades Apartment Complex

architect unknown

1970's

The Palisades apartment complex was developed by a private corporation as a joint venture between Greenwin/Glen-Ash, with financing from CMHC (Greenwin/Glen-Ash 1976). It consists of three inward facing high-rise apartment buildings with the central triad-shaped building at 33-storeys and the two flanking couplet shaped buildings at 18 storeys. The buildings are a striking vertical amongst the surrounding low rise bungalow and mall developments.   Once marketed as "Toronto's most interesting apartment project", the Palisades apartment complex was designed for families hoping to enjoy a balance between conveniences of city life and the peacefulness of a rural lifestyle (Greenwin/Glen-Ash 1976). The realities of current demographics of the community are very different with a population of approximately 75% new immigrants and high unemployment (San Romanoway Revitalization Association 2009).

The basic plans of buildings accommodate a wide range of unit types including single bedroom, two bedrooms and three bedrooms. Double loaded corridors allow maximum efficiency and light penetration. Roomy modern dimensions allow for generously sized furniture. Sunken living rooms, finished with durable wood parquet, offer spectacular views of the neighbourhood. Identical in materials and basic form, heavy concrete shear walls move straight up from the base of the buildings to the top and are infilled by off-white bricks. Garages are hidden beneath a thin layer of grass; access ramps and emergency exits reveal their presence. Small lobbies and low dark entrances maximize efficiency while limiting the possibility for social interaction. The durable concrete construction, standardized layout provides a high standard of living for the many residents. After 40-years the buildings need to be repaired and upgraded and the public space lacks character and opportunity for interaction with other residents.

A small pavilion like community centre with a ground floor daycare, pool, basement change rooms and storage is the only on site amenity for the 4,400 residents. Two tennis courts are on high ground adjacent to the community centre. Since construction was completed in the

4,400	*residents*
2,800	*youth*
75%	*new immigrants*
900	*units*

Source: San Romanoway Revitalization Association

Keywords:

high density

tower

modern

aging

appropriation

thin landscape

1970's, the ground floor of each apartment building has been appropriated by community organizations, additional playground space has been developed on the grounds and the pool has been covered to function as a large room for gatherings. Residents and local organizations are guiding the future evolution of the neighbourhood by establishing strong community relationships.

Despite the strong presence of community organizations and what appears to be a free flowing landscape, the complex is divided up into three separate lots as each apartment is now owned and operated by a separate private owner. The main road, San Romanoway, is privately owned and maintained. Artificial breams separate the grassy lawn and the buildings as they turn their backs towards the busy arterials. The fragmented and ambiguous landscape severs all connections with the surrounding community.

Fig 35. Building approaches from San Romanoway Boulevard

Fig 36. View of the Jane-Finch intersection looking northeast at the Palisades Apartment complex

FOR RENT
416
663
3402

45

Fig 40. Opposite, existing site plan

1 5 San Romanoway

2 10 San Romanoway

3 Community Centre

4 25 San Romanoway

Fig 37. Sidewalk along Finch Avenue approaching Jane Street

Fig 38. Street relationship

Fig 39. Open grass field between existing apartment building and corner of the major Jane and Finch intersection.

Fig 41. Existing Site Plan

Art in the City
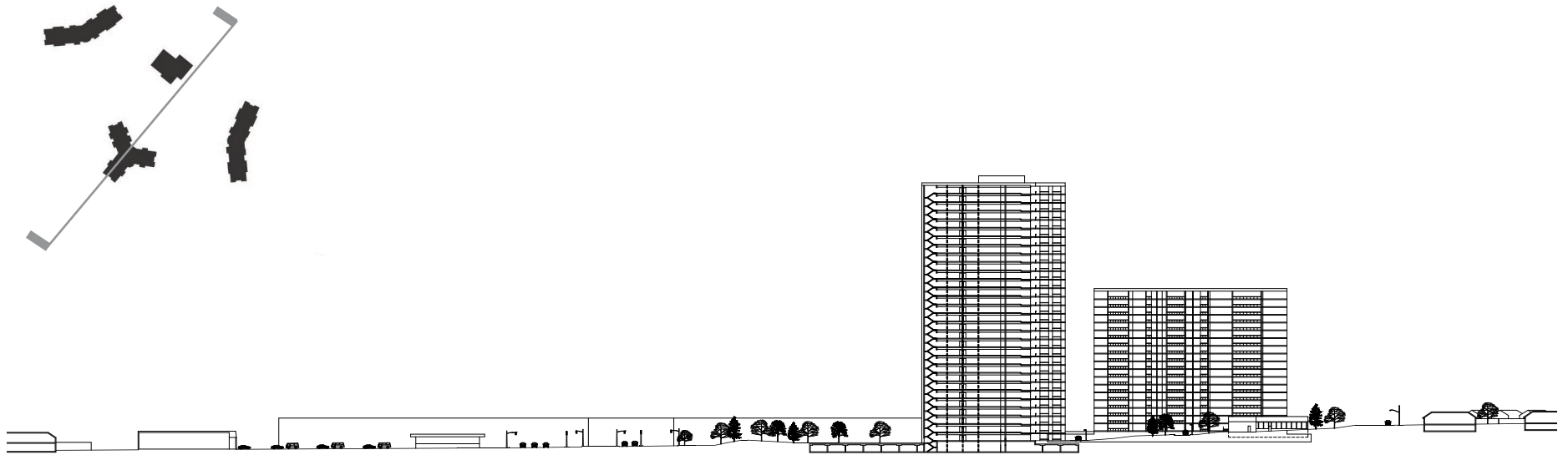
Fig 42. Site Section
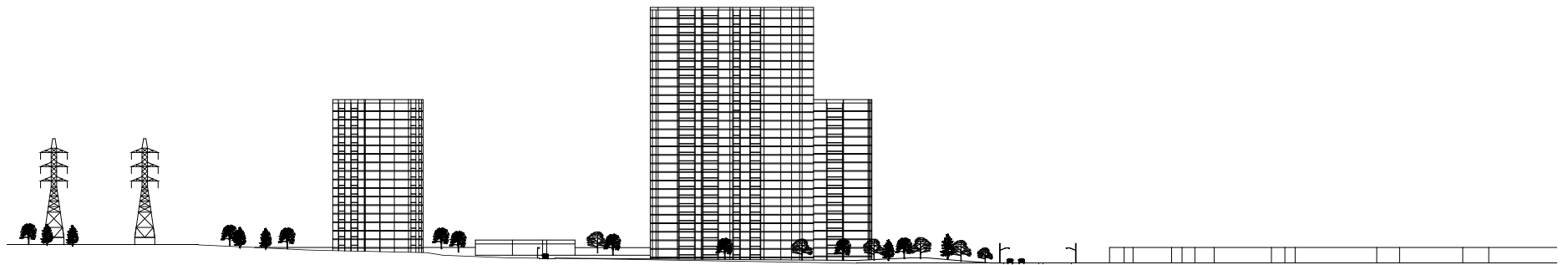
Fig 43. Jane Street elevation
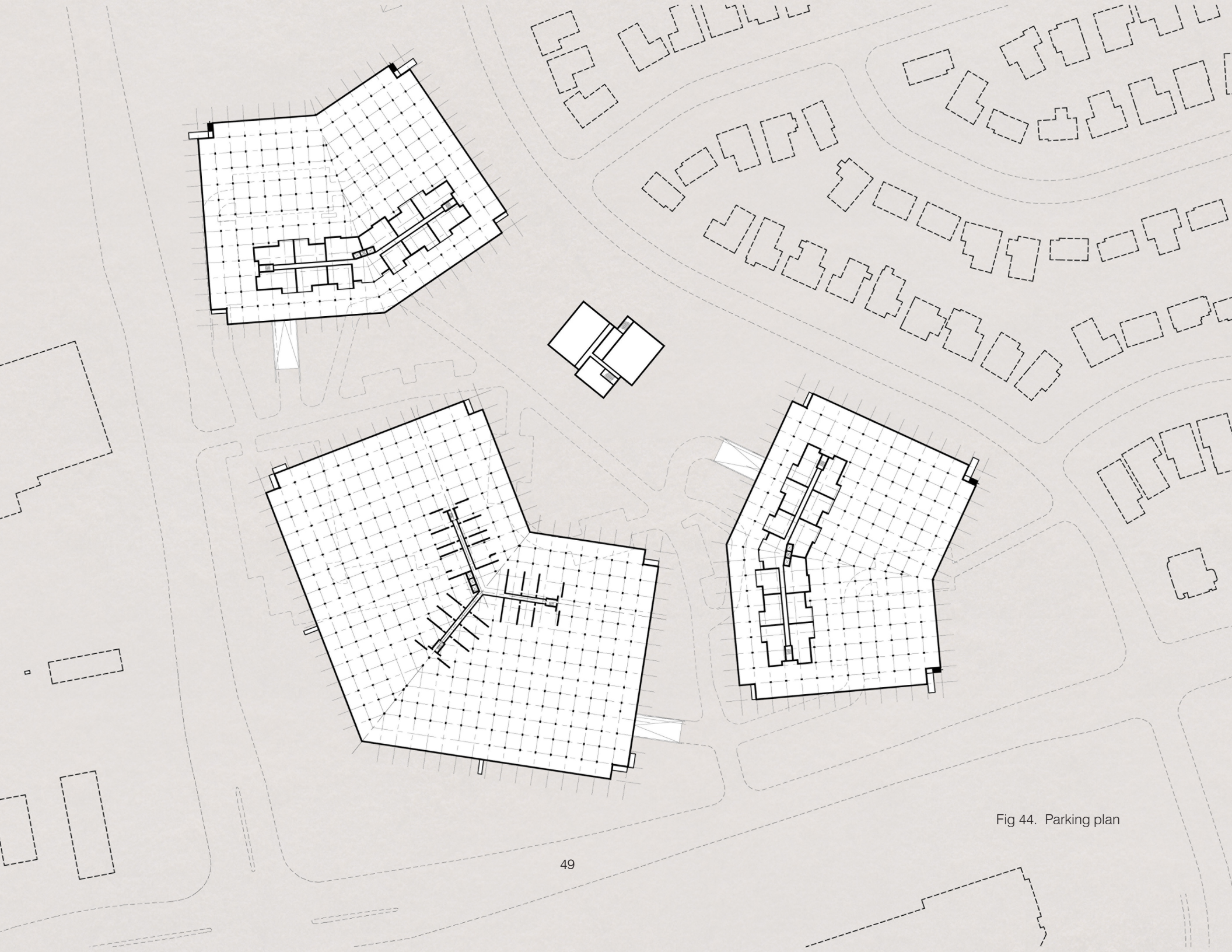
Fig 44. Parking plan

49
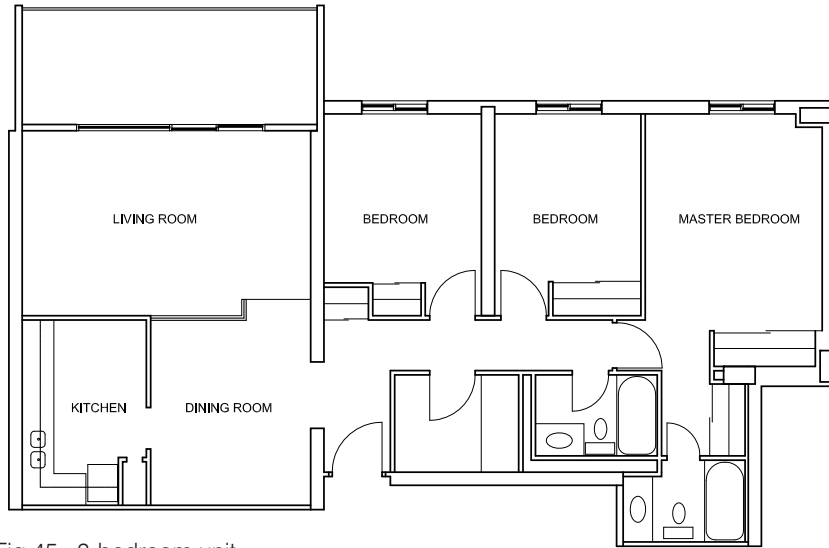
Fig 45. 3-bedroom unit
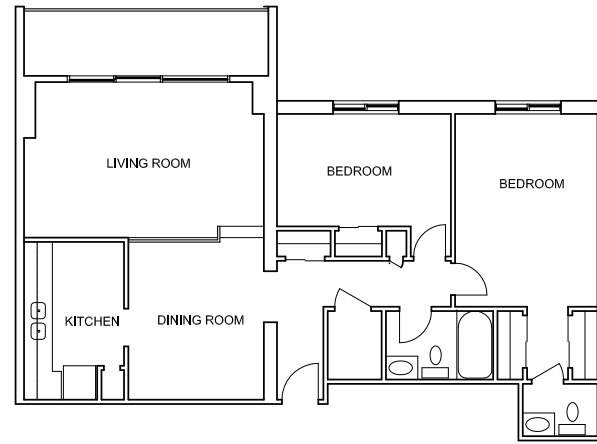
Fig 46. 2-bedroom unit
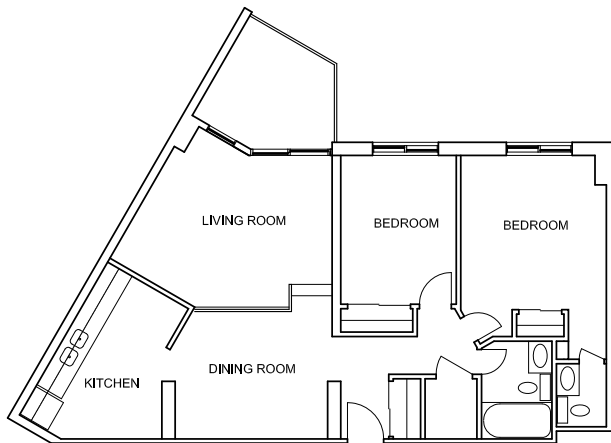
Fig 47. 2-bedroom corner unit
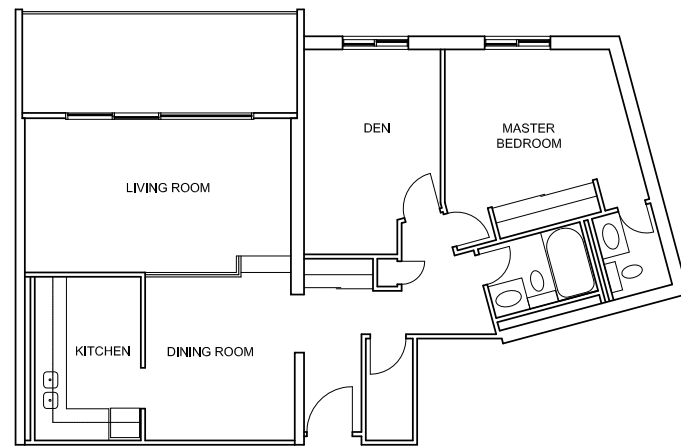
Fig 48. 1-bedroom plus den
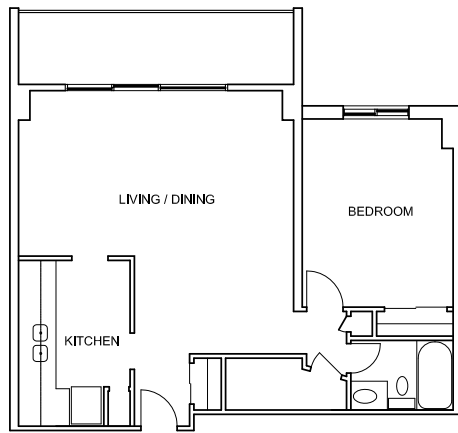
Fig 49. 1-bedroom unit
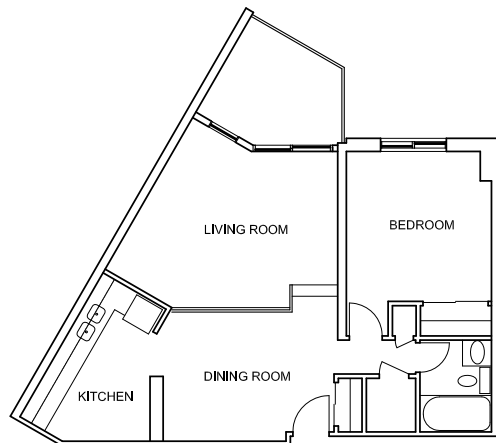
Fig 50. 1-bedroom corner unit

Typical Units

Each apartment has large windows and a balcony with full height sliding glass doors off of the sunken living room. Generous in unit storage space is also provided. The buildings accommodate a wide range of unit types from three-bedroom to one-bedroom units. Three-bedroom units tend to be located at the end of hallways away from the noise of the elevator. One-bedroom units occur where the wings of the buildings join. As a result the smaller units often have pie shaped common spaces. The durable concrete structure provides a high degree of sound control between units. The wood parquet flooring is easy to clean and a neutral background that runs throughout each unit.

Fig 51. Marketing photographs from CAPREIT website living/dining room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom

Chapter 04
Emergence

*E*mergence catalogs both highly designed architectural precedents and grassroots organizations as they relate to the current theory on community. Issues of identity, public space, scale and implementation are studied to inform the design proposal. Large-scale architectural case studies include Tower Renewal by ERA Architects, The Cente Quarter by Lacaton and Vassel, Block 31 by MJM architects and Regent Park Redevelopment by Markson Borooah Hodgson Architects. The Idea Store by David Adjaye and Wychwood Barns by du Toit Allsoop Hillier / du Toit Architects Limited are two smaller scale architectural examples. A Jane's Walk lead by youth from the Jane-Finch neighbourhood spurs a larger investigation into local grassroots organizations including Yorkwoods Library Theatre, San Romanoway Revitalization Association and Belka Enrichment Centre. Finally, a review at the end of the chapter consolidates and distills the key design considerations.
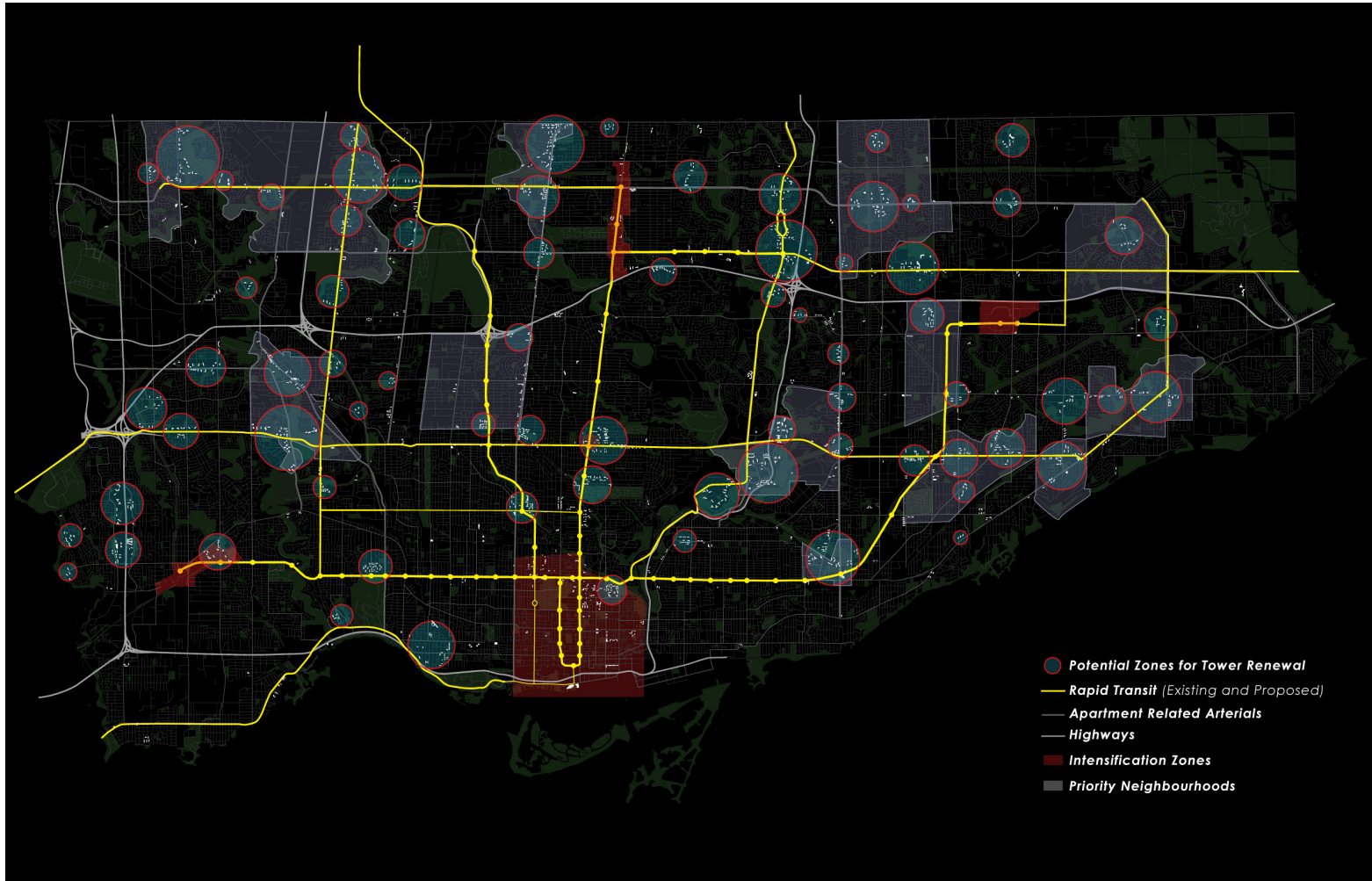
Fig 52. Map highlighting the interrelationships of transport, priority neighbourhoods, and natural systems in relation to areas of potential interest for tower renewal.

Fig 53. Multidisciplinary approach of Tower Renewal.

Tower Renewal
Toronto, Canada
ERA Architects

The Tower Renewal proposal is a city wide initiative aimed at improving the sustainability and quality of life in our aging stock of apartment towers. Taking a multidisciplinary approach, the scheme looks at social, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities. Typically built between 1950 and 1970, the modern towers represent an important legacy of architecture and urbanism dedicated to providing safe and comfortable housing for the masses. According to research completed as part of the initiative, the City of Toronto has the second highest concentration of concrete towers in North America (Stewart, Toronto's towers make city unique 2008).

After more than 50 years of operation, many of the buildings are in need of repair and the needs of the tenants are changing. Today, these towers are generally located in low-income neighbourhoods on the periphery of the city. They exist in a variety of conditions including arterial, commercial, master-planned, ravine-pastoral and infill intensification. Built during a period of cheap energy, the crux of the proposal is based on the re-cladding of the towers to improve the energy efficiency of the building envelope. Urban agriculture, mixed use infill, renewable energy source, transit city and affordable housing initiatives complement the re-cladding (Stewart, The Suburban Tower and Toronto's Legacy of Modern Housing 2008). The multidisciplinary approach to community regeneration works in parallel to Lerup's discussion of community.

The program was conceived as part of a master's thesis at the University of Toronto. It continues to gain momentum today as ERA architects and the City of Toronto have established a partnership examining the implications of the proposal at four pilot sites. Each site will be a unique response to the pre-existing conditions on the site and within the neighbourhood. The exterior retrofit and infill will allow the residents to live on-site as the project progresses. The initial cost of the retrofit and associated initiatives will be offset in the long term through energy savings, resulting in minimal or no rent increases for the tenants. The pilot sites are intended to develop a body of knowledge that can be use by both private and public building owners to improve their buildings and communities (Office

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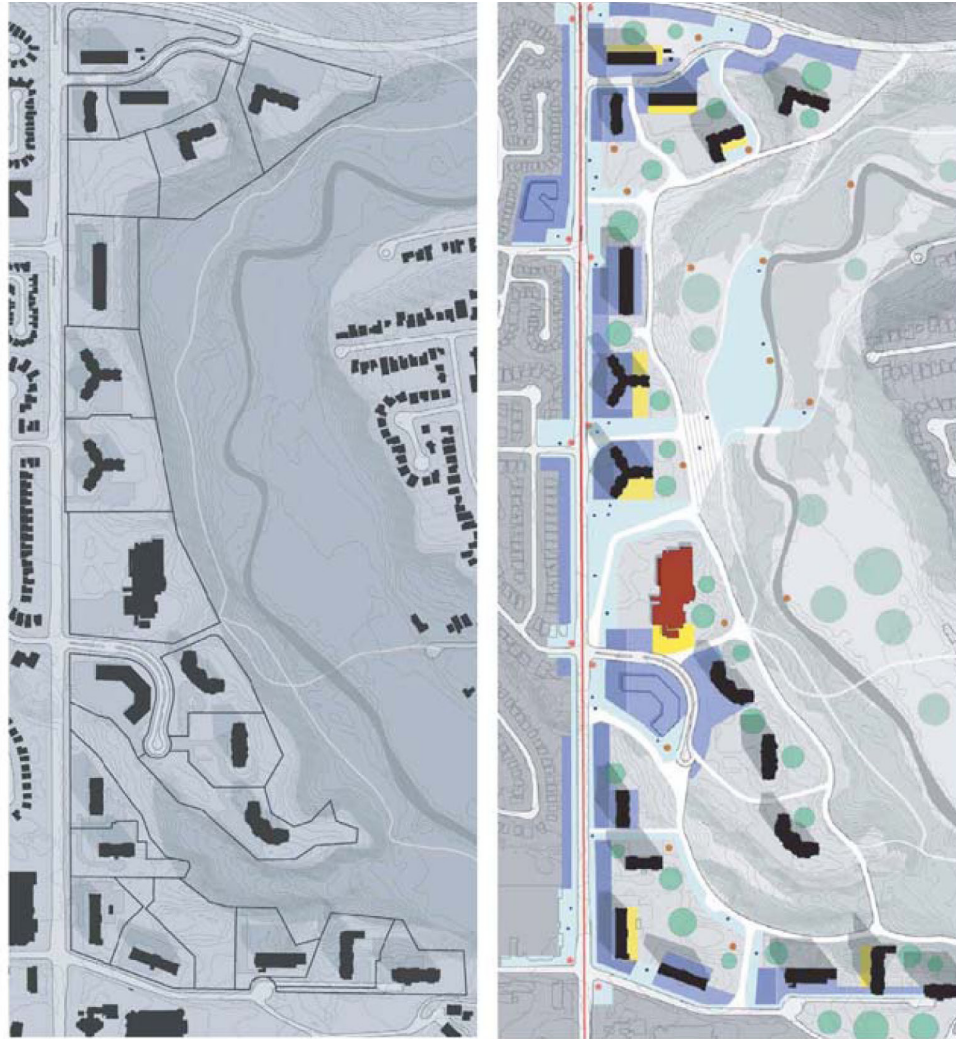
Complete Apartment Neighbourhood

Conceptual framework of gradual growth and evolution towards a 'complete community' within an existing Apartment Neighbourhood in Toronto.

DEVELOPABLE LAND

DEVELOPABLE LAND W/ INCREASED HEIGHT, DENSITY

PUBLIC/COMMUNITY AMENITY WITHIN PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY GARDENS

PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE LAND

PUBLIC PATH INFRASTRUCTURE

PUBLIC BUILDING

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING

COMMERCIAL BUILDING

PUBLIC AMENITY NODE

PRIVATE KIOSKS

Fig 54. Before and after of a schematic tower renewal development scheme at Kipling and Finch.

of Mayor David Miller 2009).

The strategic partnership with the City of Toronto and privately held pilot sites is an important lesson in establishing high quality benchmark projects that can be copied throughout the city. Although each site will be unique, further time needs to be spent exploring the relationship of the building to the surrounding urban fabric. Apartment towers are often serviced by large underground garages which add another potential conflict. Current zoning restrictions will inhibit the development. Equal consideration to the ground plane is needed to complete the well-rounded multidisciplinary approach.
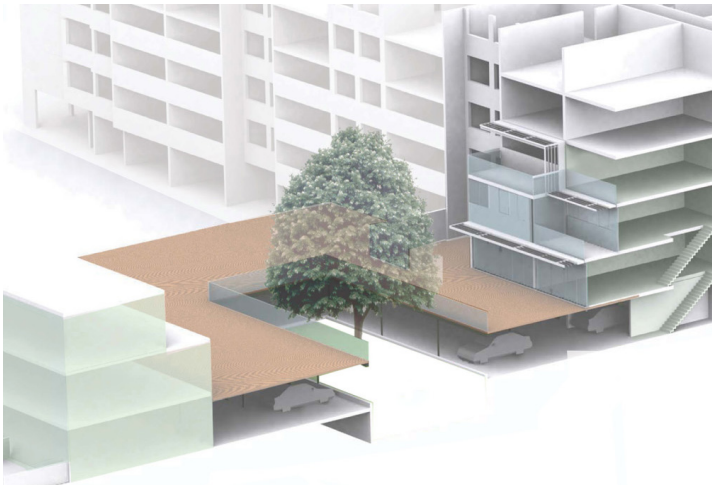
Fig 56. Base Infill
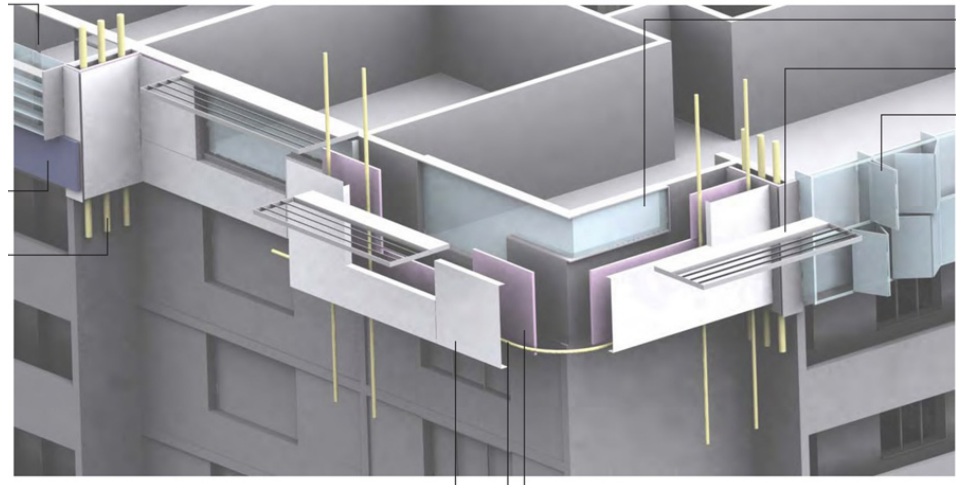
Fig 55. Exploded detail of over cladding technique.

Fig 57. Before

Fig 58. After

The Cente Quarter
Trignac, France
Lacaton and Vassel

Lacaton and Vassel's work on postwar housing estates began as a reaction to the government's intention to demolish what the general public conception believed to be decrypted housing stock in the form of large-scale housing developments with tower apartments. Constructed to house a rapidly growing population, the towers were often associated with social problems such as violence, racial segregation and poverty (Druot, Lacaton and Vassal 2007, 15). In the case of The Cente Quarter, the government's intention was to replace the towers with more traditional, but less efficient, typologies including row houses and courtyard housing (Druot, Lacaton and Vassal 2007, 179).

For Lacaton and Vassel, the towers represented an important opportunity. Despite the outward appearance of decay, the towers are a home to many people and are well-built with durable concrete construction. The proposal put forth for The Cente Quarter includes preserving the high-rises while radically changing their image and improving the function of the space and interior environment. Retention of the standard and flexible concrete structure allows the reorganization of the flats, increasing each unit in size while decreasing the number of units from 216 to 108 (Druot, Lacaton and Vassal 2007, 189). Living space is doubled by extending the concrete slabs to create wide and enclosed terraces along the entire front of the building, establishing a closer relationship to the landscape. Lacaton and Vassel refer to this as double space, a concept which means that extra space without a specific function is attached to the living space and used to engage the environment. In the competitive French real estate market, space is a luxury not often accessible in low-income housing (Lacaton 2009).

A further 108 units are developed at the base of the buildings and on adjacent lots in the form of courtyard and infill housing (Druot, Lacaton and Vassal 2007, 179). Renderings depict a highly articulated new and layered landscape with services on the ground levels and tower building above. Semi-public space inside the buildings is improved with the addition of unique paint colours, enlarged entrances and added glazing. The most notable change on the exterior is the re-skinning of the building with transparent and energy efficient

Keywords:
reskin
double space
space as luxury
economy
partnership
reurbanize

Plan ensemble avant transformation
✕ Démolitions prévues

Fig 59. Before

Plan ensemble après transformation

0 5   20   50

Fig 60. After

materials, completely altering the appearance of the building (Druot, Lacaton and Vassal 2007, 181). Lacaton and Vassel's clever use of the existing structure, minimal finishes and economy of space is an elegant reflection of the economic realities of community development.

The Cente Quarter project remains as a theoretical study completed as part of an initiative between Lacaton and Vassel Architects in partnership with the French Ministry of Culture. Lacaton and Vassel have recently published a book, + *PLUS: Large-scale housing developments. An exceptional case,* describing the intention*,* vision and possibilities revealed by the study. Lacaton and Vassel have begun prototyping and testing the installation of the new facades and are engaged in the redesign of numerous apartment complexes in partnership with local housing authorities (Lacaton 2009). The implementation strategies employed by Lacaton and Vassal are specific to the French systems. With the support of French Housing Authorities they have a broad government base of support for both application and financing allowing for in-depth studies (Lacaton 2009). In Canada, postwar apartment housing is largely privately held and has more difficulty attracting generous government subsidies for improvement (Stewart, The Suburban Tower and Toronto's Legacy of Modern Housing 2008, 23). Similar to the Tower Renewal studies, further development of the ground plane is necessary to create a better understanding of the implications of the proposal on the urban landscape and public space, currently only vaguely drawn in plan and rendered in perspective.
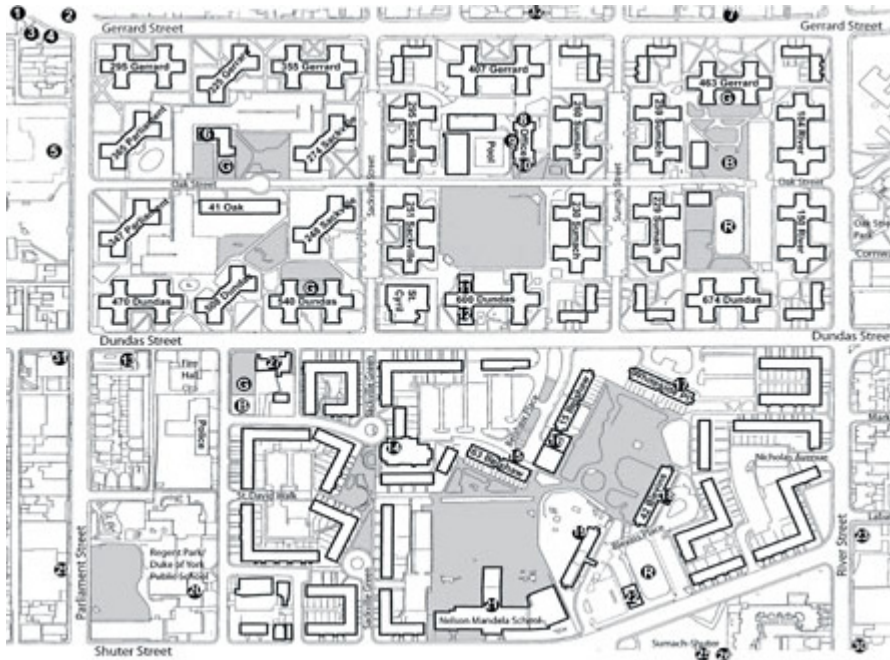
Fig 61. Regent Park 1950's
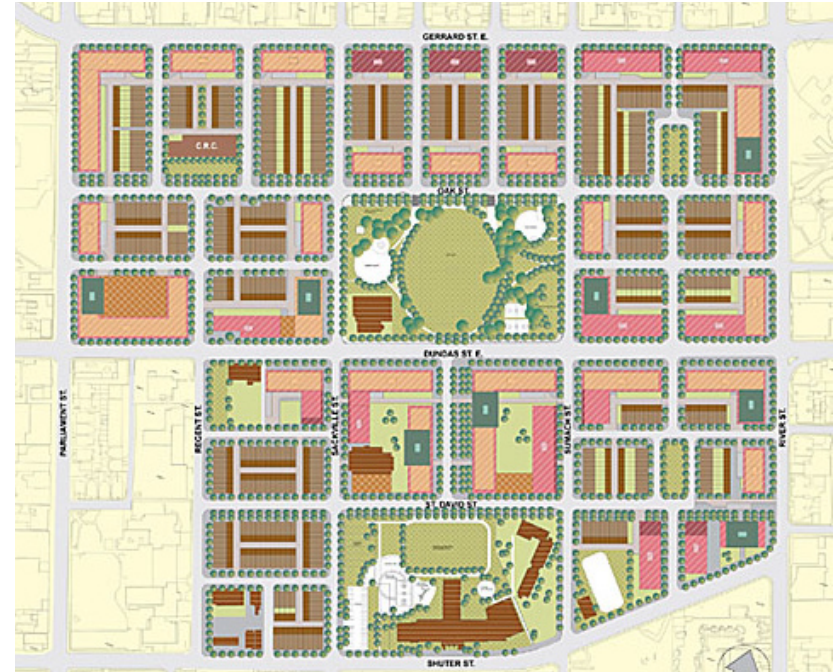
Fig 62. Proposed Regent Park redevelopment

Regent Park Redevelopment
Toronto
Markson Borooah Hodgson Architects and Greenberg Consultants Inc.

Regent Park was originally developed in the 1950's by razing an existing slum neighbourhood composed of fined grain housing. The street network was erased to consolidate 26 hectares of land in downtown Toronto. The blocks were amalgamated into large grassy green fields with floating residential towers, blocks and townhouses. The new development accommodated 2,100 households (Mays 2005).

Over the next 50 years the neighbourhood went into decline. The large scale and monofunctionality of the development isolated the residents from the surrounding city. Home to 7,500 people, Regent Park attracted the attention of Toronto Housing Corporation. In 2000, Markson Borooah Hodgson Architects and Greenberg Consultants Inc. began a revitalization study (Mays 2005). Through a multidisciplinary approach that included rigorous public consultation, they proposed a large-scale demolition of the existing housing blocks to allow the street grid to be re-instated. A central park will anchor the public space in the neighbourhood and taller buildings will frame the park and busier streets. Rigorous studies have been completed in addition to the master plan to ensure the successful integration of institutional and community services. The study describes a consistent and structured urban fabric but required that the project be divided into smaller housing projects designed by different architects, each one offering their own interpretation of and style to scheme (Mays 2005).

In John May's 2005 review of the proposal in *Canadian Architect*, he describes it as, "mixed everything: mixed use and mixed rise for people with mixed incomes and mixed social ambitions, from diverse races and diverse educational, social and cultural backgrounds" (Mays 2005). The intention of the project is to re-integrate the stigmatized and isolated 1950's Regent Park development to the city but May is critical of gentrification's capacity to respectfully and effectively resolve complex social issues.

Keywords:

phasing

comprehensive

mixed use

public private partnerships

The large scale and complexity of the Regent Park redevelopment plan meant that the Toronto Community Housing Corporation sought a partnership with private enterprise. As

Fig 63. Regent Park 1950's

Fig 64. Advertisement for Regent Park market rate condominium units developed by the Daniels Corporation.

incentive, the development scheme included approximately 2,400 new units of market housing, business and urban industry. In exchange for building the new community housing, the developers are allowed to develop the rest of the space within the guidelines established. Unfortunately, only four units of new housing are replacing every five units of housing demolished in the project (Mays 2005).

From a developer's perspective the Regent Park plan appears to be successful; private condos are selling quickly (Vincent 2009). Approaching the problem from a social housing advocate's perspective, there is still a long way for the project to go before it can be considered a success. Phased over 15 years, the project has just started to take the physical shape and much more work remains to ensure that the social support and infrastructures in the community develop (Mays 2005). With cautious optimism, it is important to embrace the smaller successes as each housing block is re-established and more families find affordable and accessible housing in an emerging neighbourhood.
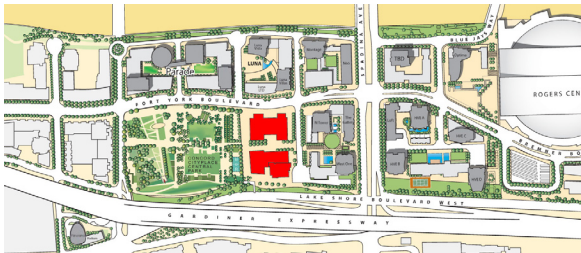
Fig 65. Master Plan of Railway lands with Bock 31 in red.
Fig 66. Nighttime aerial view of Block 31.
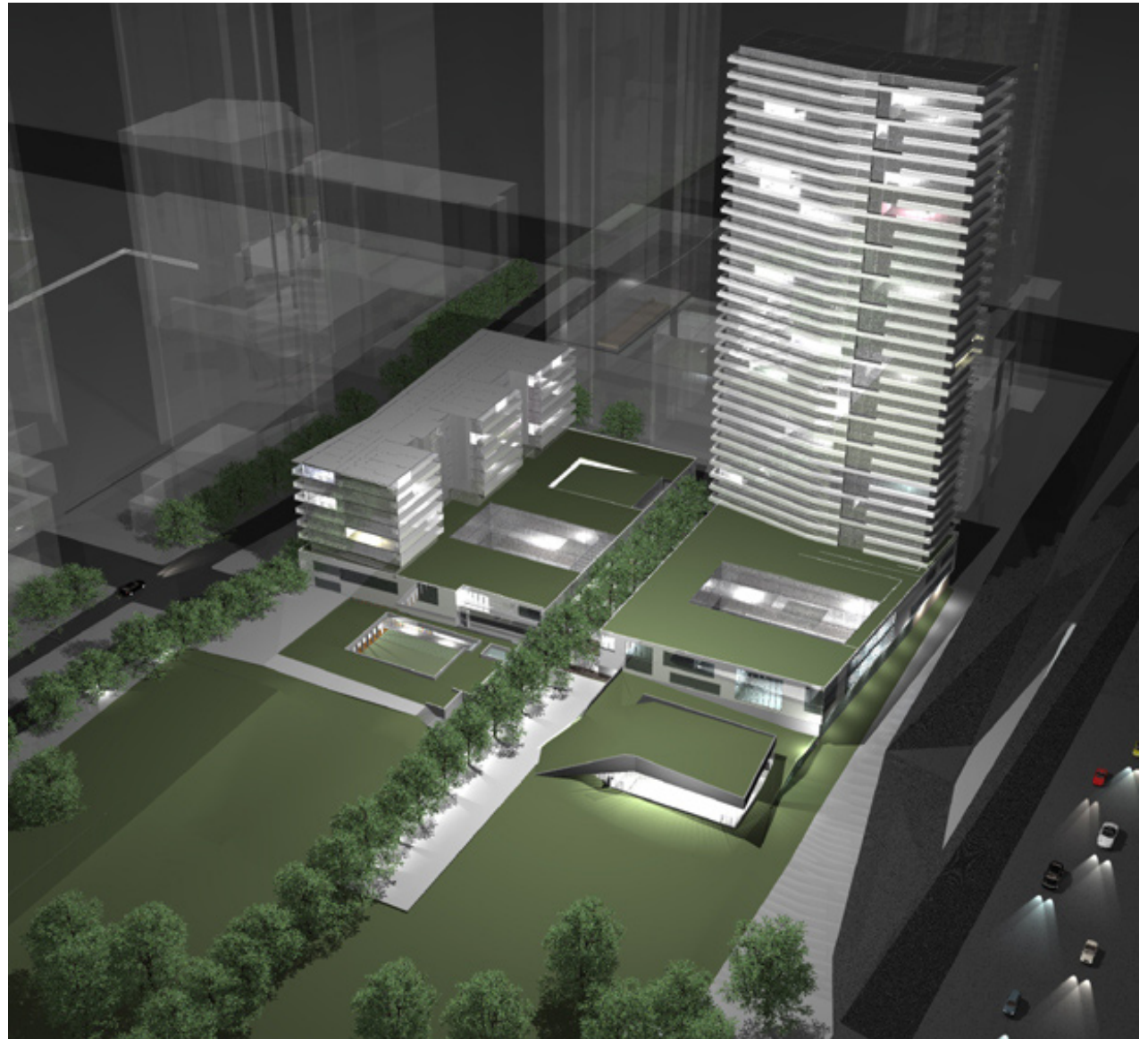
Fig 67. Corner condition of Block 31.
Fig 68. Structured public space used by the adjacent institutions.

Keywords:

structured public space

accessible courtyards

mixed use

maximize development potential

interconnect

Block 31
Toronto, Canada
MJM Architects

Block 31 is a civic and community centre being completed as part of the redevelopment of Toronto's railway lands. An integral part of Concords City Place development, the project is representative of current endeavors of large-scale and high-density community development. Block 31 includes approximately 350,000 square feet of family oriented housing in a neighbourhood dominated by smaller residential units (MJM Architects 2006). Block 31 is particularly interesting as it demonstrates the accumulation of current community development knowledge in a completely new build. It attempts to build both housing and social infrastructure at the same time. As completely new construction, it has the ability to more freely explore the relationships of the towers, base podium, public space and surrounding neighbourhood.

Occupying the edge of the park, the complex is the social heart of the community. Public institutions are organized along the street while accessible courtyards mediate between the different functions and create structured public space. Programming includes the Toronto District School Board Elementary School, a Toronto Catholic District School Board Elementary School, a City of Toronto Child Services Day care Centre, and a City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Public Recreation Centre (MJM Architects 2006).

As part of the large development, the developer is required to provide space for community amenities such as public schools and park space. The dense nature of the community created the necessity of exploring alternative development solutions (MJM Architects 2006). A public/private partnership maximizes the development potential of the site while contributing to a strong sense of community. This unusual partnership also allows the interconnection of public functions, offers the potential to streamline operation and, as a result, reduce operating costs of the individual institutions. The design of Block 31 reflects the realities of community life in a high-density metropolitan condition; the dominating tower is integrated into the neighbourhood with institutions and commercial entities below.

Fig 69. Signature look of London's Idea Store located on Chrisp Street in Tower Hamlets.

Idea Store
Chrisp Street, London
David Adjaye

The Idea Store is a unique concept developed in response to poorly serviced communities. Conceived of as a chain that could be scattered across the city, traditional community services such as library and social services are packaged with retail and cultural programming to create a welcoming and accessible institution. Someone who comes in for a book may also encounter the other services available in the same space such as a lifelong learning class (Tower Hamlets Borough Council 2009). The Chrisp Street location is in the middle of a 1950's post-war neighbourhood with tall residential towers and long block housing (Adjaye 2006, 160). Shops occupying a low podium are accessed by vehicular courts and the residential tower is accessed by separate concrete decks. The larger scale makes the facility stand out from the adjacent shops, while the alternating bright panels of curtain wall are playful and inviting. The small shops at the ground level remain, encased by the building, while a casual double height entrance combined with a small display and gallery space occupies the corner. High ceiling heights and cranked stairs encourage people to move upstairs where they will find playful curvilinear bookshelves in a large open library lined with meeting and classrooms on the north edge. The ceiling height drops and the width narrows as you move further into the space where there are intimate spaces for reading and children.

The concept for the Idea Store developed through a series of intensive community consultations that identified a need for more accessible and modern libraries in a community with low literacy rates. As the process evolved, Bisset Adams Architects was brought in to develop design guidelines (Tower Hamlets Borough Council 2009). Each Idea Store is funded by government support, local businesses and interested community groups. For instance, the Chrisp Street Idea Store was funded by a combination of public and private parties including Tower Hamlets Council, UK Online, Leaside Regeneration and Lloyds of London Charities Trust (Tower Hamlets Borough Council 2009). The Idea Store has since developed 9 locations, all with the brightly coloured blue and green curtain wall making them standout as a brand in the city. The Idea Store is a small scale and tactical community revitalization strategy that could potentially be integrated into a large community revitalization strategy.

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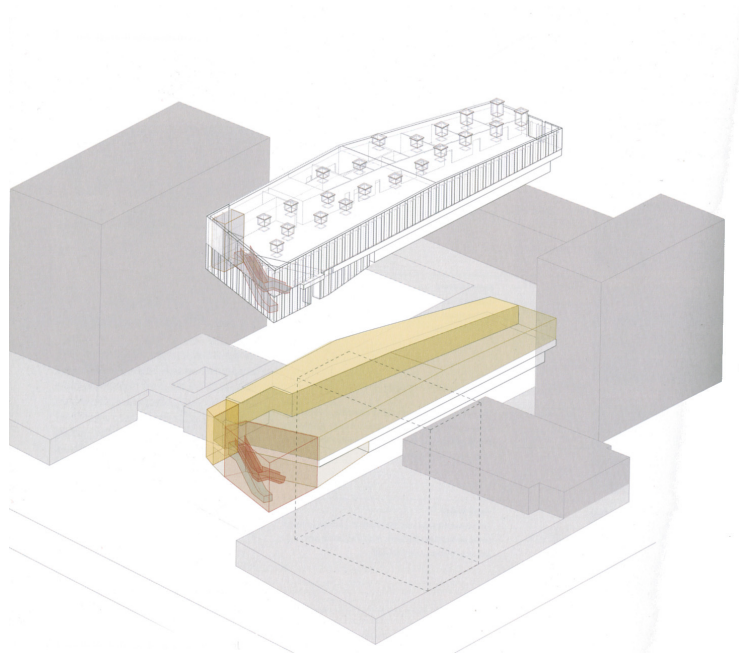
Fig 70. Exploded axonometric describing how the building is integrated with the existing structure.

Keywords:

podium infill

intimate space

public private partnerships

signature look

Fig 71. Glazed entrance to Barns 2 Covered Street and 3 Community Barn.

Fig 72. Landscape plan and basic layout of the Wychwood Barns.
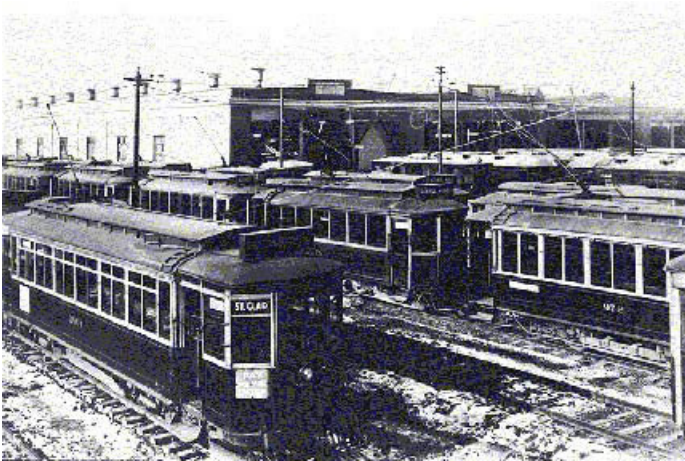
Fig 73. Historic photograph of TTC barns at Wychwood Barns.

Keywords:

adaptive reuse

extended threshold

anchor tenant

creative community

Wychwood Barns

Toronto

du Toit Allsopp Hillier / du Toit Architects Limited

Wychwood Barns is the transformation of 5 historic streetcar barnyards into a community arts hub. At 60,000 sq. ft., it is a multipurpose centre where "arts and culture, community centre where arts and culture, environmental leadership, heritage preservation, urban agriculture and affordable housing are brought together to foster a strong sense of community" (Artscape 2009). Program spaces open up to the street and surrounding park. The Wychwood Barns, opened in 2008, is a landmark project and exemplary example of creative and community space (Artscape 2009). Wychwood Barns is an interesting realization of community initiative.

Each barn is used for a different purpose. The north barn was developed as 15 work-only studios and 26 live/work apartments facing directly onto adjacent streets. The second barn is an open hall referred to as the 'covered street barn.' It is used for markets, large events and as generous circulation space. The third barn, known as the community barn, houses small offices for nonprofit organizations and administration as well as a gallery and meeting room. The 'Green barn' is a massive green house that supports a local food network. The last barn is left as an open air structure creating an extended threshold between the buildings and existing park. A detailed landscaping design has further enhanced the position of the space in the neighbourhood with a separate dog park, playground and gardens. Unfortunately the public park is over designed and fragmented into many small spaces; the struggle to please all participating parties is evident.

Artscape is a not-for-profit developer focused on access to creative spaces. The concept of creative spaces is based on a collaborative approach to city building. Over a period of seven years, the organization has worked with the City of Toronto and the Stop Community Food Centre to complete an intensive community consultation process. Stop Community Food Centre is the anchor tent of space, occupying an entire barn and drawing the largest crowds on a regular basis. Funding for the development was backed by the City and secured through a series of grants from the government and neighbourhood fundraisers (Artscape 2009). Fundraisers and the quest for currently trendy lifestyle choices appear to have been a driving force behind the project, which, is not necessarily possible or desirable.

Fig 74. Youth leaders

Fig 75. Group gathering around to listen, as the youth leaders stand on a rock to been seen

Fig 76. Hydo Corridor

Fig 77. Sunday Market inside the Jane Finch Mall

Fig 78. Walking route.

Jane Jacobs Walk

It was a warm spring day and a large group of approximately 50 curious people gathered in the parking lot of the Driftwood Community Centre to go on a Jane's Walk'. This year's 'Jane's Walks' focused on highlighting the walkability and strong communities forming in the inner suburbs of Toronto. Closely related to my thesis research, I decided to investigate further. The walks are held to honor Jane Jacob's legacy of community advocacy and walkable neighbourhoods. My previous experiences with the neighbourhood were limited to driving through on the busy arterials and the negative news reports documenting the high crime rate. The crowd was so large that youth leaders had to use a portable microphone to ensure that everyone could hear.

We spent about three hours walking around the neighbourhood visiting the leaders favourite spots. At each stop, the leaders took turns speaking about why the site was important to them. The local snack shop, across from the Driftwood Community Centre, is within safe walking distance for all the youth in the neighbourhood. An annual water fight between local youth is held on the hydro fields that separate adjoining developments. The Palisades recording studio is a safe haven where youth can escape to explore their ideas. A barbershop in the Jane-Finch Mall is more than just a business; it acts as a meeting space and information point. The Sunday market held in the wide corridors of the Jane-Finch Mall is a collection of local entrepreneurs. The Spot Drop-In Centre, on the second floor of the Yorkgate mall, is an outreach centre with computer stations and decorations that create the appeal of a hip retail store. Flemington Park is a massive open grassy lawn in the centre of a residential block that is both daunting and liberating at the same time. Cutting diagonally through the park and slipping in a side entrance, the tour ended with a warm homemade lunch of vegetarian samosas, jerk chicken and fried rice in the community room at the Connections housing development. The youth gathered at the front to conclude the tour and a loud round of applause was given to the youth who organized and led the walk. The walking tour provided a new, unique and positive perspective on the community.

The next day, the citywide event was featured in all of the major news publications. I was most surprised a couple days later, when one of my favorite social blogs, 'She does the City',

Fig 79. Walking through the neighbourhood

Fig 80. Approach to Connections from Flemington Park

Fig 81. Entering the community room.

Fig 82. Eating a homemade meal.

recounted the same' Jane's Walk' at Jane and Finch I had been on. The walk successfully demonstrated the hidden potential in the emerging neighbourhoods on the edge of the city. The walk's website features a quote from Jane Jacobs' writing in "Downtown is for People" from the Exploding Metropolis that sums up the intention of the walks, "No one can find what will work for our cities by looking at suburban garden cities, manipulating scale models or inventing dream cities. You've got to get out and walk" (Centre for City Ecology 2009). For myself, the 'Jane's Walk' highlighted the massive scale of the neighbourhood, the difficulty of traversing boundaries between public and private land, the generous parks, the affordable housing, the commitment of local residents to the neighbourhood and the need for an open dialogue between local residents, city planners and designers in response to the changing conditions. The Jane-Finch neighbourhood is emerging as a unique community within the city.

Keywords:
youth leadership
walking
engagement
dailouge

77

Fig 83. Street presence of Yorkwoods library theatre

Fig 84. Entrance doors from exterior and library

Fig 85. Theatre entrance from library service hallway

Fig 86. Theatre stage

Fig 87. Location map

SITE VISIT 12.30.2008

Yorkwoods Library Theatre

It is a cold and snowy winter day as I make my way up to the Yorkwoods Library Theatre. One of the youth leaders had mentioned enjoying spending time there but it was not included in the walk. Trying to get in to the see the theatre was a difficult task. Everyone I spoke with was very helpful and accommodating but the manager of the space, who is located at a central York library, can only be reached by phone. You are often directed to an answering machine. The library theatre is only accessible when an event is being held. After about half a dozen phone calls, I got permission to join a tour with a dance troop looking to rent a space for their holiday performance.

The Yorkwoods Library Theatre was built in the 1990's as an accretion on the front of the existing library building. It is managed and staffed by a separate department in the larger North York district library administration. The library has maintained the right to first choice for programming of the space but they must book it through central booking and follow all of the same regulations as any outside group. The management system is efficient but impersonal. For-profit ventures must pay $100/hr or $700/day while a non-profit organization can rent the space for $150/day. In addition, they are responsible for cleaning up and providing their own staffing for sound, security and ushers. The theatre space has its own exterior entrance that sits on the east side of the building, a few steps up from the street and around the corner from the street. From the street, the theatre and library is a massive sculptural object. Direct access from the library occurs through a back hall where you also find the washrooms and vending machines. A short vestibule reorients movement to align with the theatre's exterior entrance doors.   A large circular lobby space neutralizes the unusual and awkward angles while providing comfortable waiting space. A skylight provides the lobby with soft light and prepares you for the dark theatre. At 13,600 sq ft the theatre is a small performance space that seats 260 people in formal raised seating and a raised stage is 27'deep by 32'-8" wide with wings on each side. There are two dressing rooms, a green room, a small kitchen and a suspended control booth. The facilities are basic but well-used and maintained. Although this case study is not an independent grassroots organization, one of the main preoccupations of the space is servicing such organizations. The relationship of the theatre to the library's service corridor and management structure is representative of challenges facing an architectural solution for community organizations.

Fig 88. San Romanoway community centre.

Fig 90. Recording and editing studio in basement of the community centre.

Fig 89. Casual entrance for San Romanoway group space.

Fig 91. San Romanoway office entrance.

Fig 92. Location map

Keywords:

appropriation

youth leadership

public-private partnerships

outreach
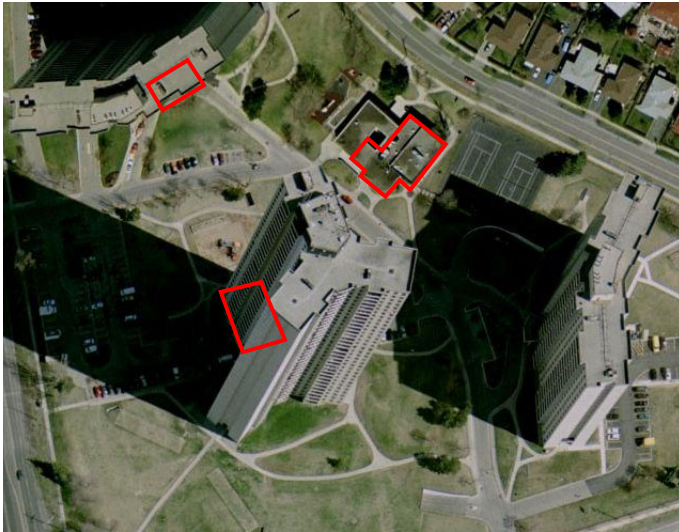
San Romanoway Revitalization Association

I had learned about the San Romanoway Revitalization Association during the 'Jane's Walk'. A proactive organization, its name also appears in most studies and publications on community initiatives published about the neighborhood. While contacting the organization to ask if I could visit, I discovered that the organization's founder was deeply involved in many different areas of the community. She is the founder of the San Romanoway organization as well as the local Toronto District School board trustee. Due to the busy Christmas season, she did not have time to meet with me personally but she directed me to a youth program leader with years of experience working on a daily basis with community members. They were very accommodating and welcomed my curiosity. Arriving at the centre by car, I was able to easily find a visitors' parking space in front of the main entrance to the triplex apartment building. The association is scattered amongst two of the three tall apartment buildings and a small outbuilding on the northeast corner of the Jane and Finch intersection. It has developed in response to the dramatic need for a stronger sense of belonging and safety in the community. According to the organization's website, in 1999 the neighbourhood was labeled, "Canada's worst neighbourhood" (San Romanoway Revitalization Association 2009). Law enforcement, local residents, local business, community organizations, school trustees and community leaders began to work together.

The main entrance to the organization is a crude modification of the existing steps adjacent to the original fire stair that exist in the north-facing wing of the central building. A shiny stainless steel sign with the organization's name and corporate sponsors attracts your attention. Occupying a series of converted apartments, an administrative office and reception area are the first rooms that you encounter. The receptionist immediately knew that I was not a regular visitor as most people use the less formal ground level balcony entrances. She greeted me warmly and causally directed me to walk straight ahead to where I would find Chris's office. Moving deeper into the space, there is a room with large dining tables and a step down to a clear open space, like a former living room. Tucked in behind a short wall is a large kitchen space that has been recently renovated to take up both the former kitchen and living room of the opposing apartment. A quiet reading room and washrooms are tucked into former bedrooms. Walking through a tight hallway, I found Chris's office and a 40 seat computer lab occupying former bedrooms. It is early in the afternoon and not much

Fig 93. Covered pool used as a flexible theatre space for 200 people.

Fig 96. Playground.

Fig 94. Computer lab in the living and dining room of a former apartment space.

Fig 95. Quite library and reading room in the bedroom of an old apartment.

is happening in the main space. After a brief discussion, Chris suggests we move on to the recording studio in the basement of the small pavilion building across the driveway. We walk over to the side entrance. The door is always locked so you have to knock on the basement window to get someone to come upstairs and let you in. As we sit on comfortable sofas discussing the programs offered by the organization, three youth drop in and start working diligently at the computers. The organization, which started in the basement, has slowly grown to takeover ground floor apartments, outdoor space, and even an unused pool. The unused pool has recently been covered and converted into a flexible theatre space for 200 people. A sophisticated speaker system, projector, popcorn machine, lighting and moveable seating have been added to create a relaxed theatre. The flexible seating allows the space to be used for large gatherings such as the association's holiday party. An additional space is found in the north building where outreach programs working in schools and other local organizations share ideas and office space. One reaches out to youth in the schools and helps with gang involvement. A group of facilitators is sitting around a table exchanging ideas; the homey atmosphere of the dining space is friendly and welcoming.   Another nested organization that has filled the rooms of an apartment with cubicles provides services to newcomers, teaching them the traditions and systems in Canadian culture. The basic layout of the ground level apartments provides comfortable spaces, appropriate for a variety of occupations. Bold signage advertising community partnerships, Highway 407 on the tennis/ basket ball courts, Home Depot on the playground and Cineplex Odeon on the theatre, reveal the compound financial and political support required for a grassroots organization. According to Chris, the organization is funded by a series of public grants, private donations and umbrella organizations. It is difficult to secure funds for new programs but experience in the community, private partnerships and knowledge of government funding structures has helped secure the finances of the organization over time.

Returning to the main building, the community room is now loud and full of students participating in an after school program. When asked about the future expansion of the organization, my tour guide for the day, Chris, feels that the most important part of what they do is the constant dialogue with the community. There is much more that can be done but a great deal is achieved in small steps every day. Little consideration has been given to the future facility requirements of the organization but he is confident that they will find a way when they too.

*name of individuals have been changed.

Fig 97. Classroom on wheels parked at the Jane and Finch Mall.

Fig 98. Photo from Jane-Finch.com of strip mall where the Central office located on the second floor.

Fig 99. Computer Stations and meeting space inside the bus.
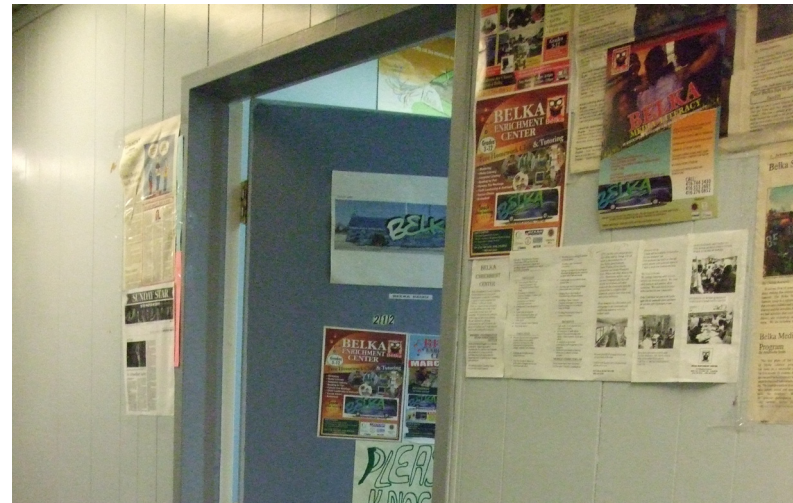
Fig 100. Postered front door at the central office.

Fig 101. Location map

Belka Enrichment Centre

It is the first warm day of spring and I am meeting Daniel at his weekly Saturday recreation program. It is just before 10:30am and a group of energetic youth are already bouncing on the front steps of St. Charles Ganier Catholic School. When Daniel arrives, the building manager opens the side-door and youth swarm the gym, pushing benches to side and pulling out sports equipment. Daniel is overwhelmed by requests to refill balls with air and to play outside. Just after the gym opens, an older group arrives and helps everyone settle into an activity. Daniel points out students who have won scholarships, speaks to a youth about a summer co-op placement and asks a youth to represent the organization at an awards banquet later that evening.

I had done some preliminary research on the organization before I visited. According to the organization's website, The Belka Enrichment Centre, started in 2000 by Daniel, "[it is] a nonprofit organization aimed at developing the academic and social potential of low income and at risk youth in the inner city Jane Finch community of Toronto , Ontario at large and other parts of Canada" (Belka Enrichment Centre 2008). The slogan seen written on the side of their bus and other promotional material is, "Thinking locally, acting globally." As I speak with Daniel I realize how appropriate the slogan is. Known as Belka Enrichment Centre, the issues it deals with and the activities it runs reach far beyond its main office space. We make a quick trip to the central office to pick up some juice packs and snacks. The office is located a small space on the second floor of a 1960's strip mall at the south-west corner of the Jane and Finch intersection. The discreet entrance is plastered with program flyers and articles featuring accomplishments of the organization. The main space is packed with computers, desks and comfortable seating. Daniel's office has been converted into a hub for the web-based radio station. The meeting room at the back is stacked with supplies. The office space is a home base offering transferable high school credits, homework club and much more.

Recreational programming such as soccer and basketball occur throughout the neighbourhood in local parks and schools. The summer camp program that started at two local schools has grown to five located across the north edge of city. A recent agreement

with the city allows community organizations to use the schools free of charge; however, there are still many expenses to account for such as staff and lunches. The larger spaces and recreational facilities in schools are an important resource for the community organization.

Daniel' background as a teacher gives him insight into the political nature of dealing with organizations such as the Toronto District School Board. When asked further about the organization's relationship to the local schools, he emphasizes the importance of autonomy from the school board. With discretionary detail, he gives an example of new immigrants settling into the neighbourhood. Experiencing a major change in culture, the new immigrants needed extra support. They found that the schools were not accommodating. Issues of social justice, discrimination and poverty are constant challenges in the neighbourhood. Belka was able to work with them as an advocate to find the support that they needed; they spoke with the school to find an amicable solution. Working in the Jane and Finch neighbourhood, a culturally diverse community, Belka deals with issues that are global in scale but finds ways to act at a local level.

We head off to see one of his most innovative programs started by the Centre in the parking lot of a local bus repair shop- a refurbished and retrofitted TTC bus that can be taken anywhere it is needed. Plug it in and computers and wireless Internet turn it into a digital classroom on wheels. Facing seats in the back create a meeting space or homework desk. The bus is wrapped in bright graphic promoting the message and activities of youth at Belka. I discovered the organization when the bus was parked in the Jane-Finch Mall parking lot. Often used for parent meetings to address community concerns, the bus is a literal example of an outreach program focusing on grassroots community development.

Fundraising is a constant challenge despite Belka's successful and popular programming. The high demand for programming is always exceeding the inconsistent flow of government grants and private donations. An article published by the Toronto Star featuring Belka, suggests that Daniel contributes up to one third of his own salary to the organization (Goar 2008). Out of both necessity and generosity, he often commits to running programs before funding is secured. Daniel is already planning to run summer camps this year but doesn't know exactly how he will be able to pay for all of the staff and food supplies.

Daniel' enthusiasm and energy for the cause is never ending. After speaking with me for more than two hours and showing me around his organization, he invites me to meet with master's students at York University and suggests a local professor interested in community and university partnerships.

Reflecting on how this fits into the different theories of city building and community development, I would suggest that the Belka Enrichment Centre is an example of Charles Landry's ideas of Creative City Building. The programs offered by the Centre focus on bring a diverse group of people together to capitalize on their individual strengths. For instance, teenagers from the neighbourhood who at one point might have participated as youth have the opportunity to pass on their experience and knowledge when they are employed as summer camp counselors or lead Saturday basketball. It is a positive opportunity for the both youth and young leaders.

Furthermore, the Belka Enrichment Centre is also an example of Lars Lerups concept of 'community on demand', where grassroots organizations form in response to specific needs in the community. The Centre was started in response to Daniel personal experience of violence in the neighbourhood- he was mugged in his apartment building.

Finally, the spaces used by Belka also ring true with Jane Jacobs's famous quote from Life and Death of Great American Cities, "Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings" (Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities 1992, 188). Belka is constantly coming up with new ideas to improve the sense of community in the neighbourhood. As a result, they must be creative with the spaces that they can access whether it is retrofitting a TTC bus, occupying an office space above a strip mall and using school facilities during off hours.

*name of individuals have been changed.

Keywords:
think globally act locally
dialogue
youth
leadership

Key Principles - *Designing for Community*

1   ***Foster a unique identity.***

Building upon the strengths of the existing communities, requiring high design standards, re-cladding existing structures, allowing for re-appropriation of space and incorporating art.

(Druot, Lacaton and Vassal 2007, E.R.A. Architects & University of Toronto 2009, Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities 1992, Kuwabara 2008, Landry, The Art of City Making 2006, Crowhurst-Lennard 2004, Stanley and Turnbull 2005)

2   ***Create structured public space.***

Infill, re-urbanization, amenity and institutional presence can help frame and stimulate an active public realm.

(MJM Architects 2006, Druot, Lacaton and Vassal 2007, E.R.A. Architects & University of Toronto 2009, Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities 1992)

3   ***Humanize by the built environment by considering the scale of an individual.***

Provide variation in scale, materials and program.

(Adjaye 2006, Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities 1992, E.R.A. Architects & University of Toronto 2009, Landry, The Art of City Making 2006, Druot, Lacaton and Vassal 2007)

4   ***Establish reciprocal relationships.***

By nature a community gives and takes, a mix of uses can create mutual benefits.

(Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities 1992, Rendell 2006, Mays 2005)

5   ***Carefully consider the implications of a design proposal on the existing community.***

Establish community partnerships, public/private partnerships and phase the development timeline to help consider the economics of construction and maximize development potential.

(Adjaye 2006, Landry, The Art of City Making 2006, Landry, The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators 2000, Kaliski 2008)

Resolution of Principles

Architects cannot design a community; conversely, architects can design for a community (Lerup 2003, 201). Key architectural design strategies for nurturing community, revealed in the analysis, include fostering a distinctive identity, structuring public space, humanizing scale, establishing reciprocal relationships and phasing implementation.

Active public space where ideas and experiences can be shared and exchanged is a vital component of every community. The potential role of a private enterprise and public government in the successful design of public space is a highly contested issue (Landry, The Art of City Making 2006, 303). How many of the successful qualities of public space are determined by the form of the space compared to the occupation of the space? Although as architects we may not ultimately be able to determine the success of public space, design plays an important role in defining areas of public space and the atmosphere it exudes. Traditional strategies of urbanization, infill and institutional presence, create structured public space along streets and in courtyards and help to frame and activate space. The Tower Hamlets Idea Store reinforces the edge between the apartment plinth and the public shopping concourse below, creating a bright and busy public space (Adjaye 2006,162). MJM's proposal for Block 31 uses courtyards, framed by public institutions, to navigate between buildings and eventually open up to a large and central park (MJM Architects 2006). Other strategies such as amenities and public art are more subtle interventions that define the atmosphere of a public space. For instance, the playground built by San Romanoway Revitalization Association between the existing apartment buildings, provides an amenity supporting the use of the grassy lawn as an area for play. Distinct, welcoming and flexible design creates a structured public realm that has the potential to host an active public community life.

The scale of many large-scale community development projects is comparable to small towns but little of the complexity, culture and amenity is present. Furthermore, many developments built during the postwar period are geared towards automobiles. Design must humanize the scale of the built environment. For instance, alcoves, porches or steps to an entrance will create a subtle transition between smaller interior and larger exterior environments (Druot, Lacaton and Vassal 2007, 121-122). The San Romanoway

Revitalization Association creates a similar sense of intimacy through reprogramming of the ground level apartments in a monofunctional enclave. The small scale community program makes services more accessible for pedestrians. Providing variation in the scale, materials and program humanizes spaces and will help to create welcoming and comfortable spaces.

A neighbourhood community is composed of a complex mix of people and spaces; large-scale development of communities often leads to a stylized and homogenous appearance. Design proposals must foster a unique identity by building upon the strengths of the existing communities. Re-cladding of existing buildings will update the appearance of a building while also improving the energy efficiency (E.R.A. Architects & University of Toronto 2009). Re-skining, involving the complete removal and replacement of the existing facade will more drastically alter the appearance but also give a larger range of possible interventions including adding balconies and increasing transparency (Druot, Lacaton and Vassal 2007, 21). Anne Lacaton's studies of French postwar housing reveal that spacious layouts are a luxury not found in contemporary low cost housing. Design strategies that amplify the spacious qualities will help improve a community's image within the larger city and make the neighbourhood more desirable (Druot, Lacaton and Vassal 2007, 25). Furthermore, Lacaton proposes a concept of double space whereby the living spaces are increased to allow for flexible programming and a more direct relationship to the landscape. Courtyards and terraces that residents can personalize over a period of time will create a varied and unique experience throughout (Lacaton 2009). Art helps us to engage with local context and community (Crowhurst-Lennard 2004, 172, Rendell 2006, 6).   For instance, the Circle of Words, Garden of Thought by Linda Covit is a subtle intervention in an ambiguous grassy lawn that speaks to issues of diversity and respect with trees that break cold winds, a collection of unique stones and an arced stone bench for sitting. We must be cautious when describing art as public. The broad definition of the public and representative nature of art can lead to generalizations and assumptions (Rendell 2006, 6).   Requiring a high standard of design, re-cladding existing structures, allowing for re-appropriation of space and incorporating art can help create a more varied and unique quality of space throughout a community.

By nature a community gives and takes; establishing reciprocal relationships such as a mix of uses can create mutual benefits. For example the Regent Park revitalization uses a mix of

incomes and a mix of uses to improve the reputation of the area. New market condos are built in conjunction with community housing revitalization efforts making the neighbourhood safer for current residents and more desirable for potential buyers. May's review of the proposal questions the long-term benefit of gentrification strategies as the process will make the neighbourhood less affordable for the existing residents (Mays 2005). The Wychwood Art Barns use a more subtle approach. Stop Community Food Centre, the anchor tenant occupies an entire barn.   A market, live/work studios and incubator offices compliment and support the business while simultaneously providing a framework that can support the smaller community initiatives (Artscape 2009). The fragmentation of the adjacent public park into a dog park, playground gardens and skating rink demonstrates how it can be difficult to balance everyone's demands. Establishing reciprocal relationships through programmatic juxtaposition will help to ensure a continuous community dialogue both positive and negative repercussions that must be weighed.

Finally, a sense of community is a highly desired but an intangible quality of a neighbourhood. The confluence of what makes a community desirable at any given point in time is difficult to identify and almost impossible to intentionally create.   Thus the largest challenge community development encounters is implementation. The case studies reveal that innovative strategies specific to each individual context must be employed. For instance, community partnerships, as seen with Wychwood Art Barns integration of live/work townhouses with other more community oriented programming, will help draw the support of local residents for a project and aid in overcoming hurdles of zoning and funding. Public/private partnerships are the reality of how many communities are able to fund the construction of public amenity. The Regent Park revitalization is partially financed by allowing the development of new condominiums in exchange for the construction of new social housing (Mays 2005). Lloyd's of London offered financial support to Tower Hamlets on the Idea Store; now their name is prominently featured on the sign for the building (Tower Hamlets Borough Council 2009). A plaque acknowledging private donations surrounds the entrance to the San Romanoway Revitalization Association. Furthermore, design must reflect economic realities and provide economic incentives for the participating parties. For example, re-cladding will reduce energy cost allowing the savings to be put towards the cost of construction (E.R.A. Architects & University of Toronto 2009, 72). Providing renovated and well-designed units with flexible terraces at prices lower then new construction will provide

incentive for both the developer and future tenants. Finally, phasing will support an evolution of community, helping the development to integrate with the existing neighbourhood and allowing the daily life of local residents to function relatively normally as the construction proceeds. For instance, the Regent Park revitalization is going to take 12-15 years to complete. Buildings are demolished and new units are constructed in small groups to minimize displacement of local residents (Mays 2005). San Romanoway Revitalization Association reoccupies spaces, such as converting the pool into a theatre, as they become undesirable and unused.

Community is dynamic and elusive occurring in many different forms. As a result, any attempt to support community cannot be prescriptive; it must be reactive. Demanding high design standards, creating structured public space, humanizing scale, establishing reciprocal relationships and considering implementation in an architectural proposal will support the evolution of a strong community.

Chapter 05
Exploration

The program, process and form of a community vision is seen as an instrument to test new ideas and start conversations towards the evolution of a sense of community in large-scale developments.

The design proposal investigates the potential of intermediary ground plane at the base of the Palisades apartment complex. Issues of typology, ownership and public space are examined and challenged through a vision for the emerging arts community. A school for the arts wraps around the base of the existing apartment complex. The width of the building expands and contracts locking into the grid of the parking garage and reaching out the busy streets. A generous overhang runs along the entire building, shifting up towards the corner and lowering towards the neighbourhood park. The ground level is entirely glazed and broken down into manageable segments with service cores clad in brick. Glazing and metal panels are mixed on the second and third levels providing the appropriate conditions for specific programs. The development is integrated into the neighbourhood with adjoining live-work residences. A separate theatre supports the school drawing in visitors from the larger city and exhibiting local talent.

The chapter is developed through six key strategies describing the proposal. **Reconsider**, identifies both physical and regulatory barriers to development and proposes a possible solution. **Wrapping** examines the potential for re-skining and podium infill around the base to confront both environmental and identity associated with the tower typology. **Parallel programming**, allowing spaces to run from the street to the inner courtyards connects the building to the community and allows for a gradient of experience and interaction all around the building. While **linked infrastructure** is used as a means of achieving efficiency and locating the large development in the community.   An **integrated landscape** respects the original intentions of the typology and is used as a strategy to create a series of structured public spaces that mediate between buildings. Finally, **phasing and partnership** is proposed as a means of developing a balance between the permanent nature of buildings and the ephemeral nature of community.

Fig 102. Corner entrance

Fig 103. Ground Floor Plan

1 Existing apartment building

2 Main lobby school

3 Main lobby

4 Theatre

5 Exhibit garden

6 Assembly yard

7 Recreation court

8 School entrance

9 Gymnasium

10 Library

11 Cafe

12 Gallery

13 Studios

14 Public park with soccer field

15 Public parking pedestrian entrance

16 Existing apartment building

17 Small office building

18 Recreation court

19 Townhouses

20 Live/work units

21 Recreation court

22 Existing apartment building

Fig 104. Parking Plan

1   Existing parking garage

2   Proposed public parking garage

3   Existing parking garage

4   School basement

5   Existing parking garage

6   Proposed private parking garage
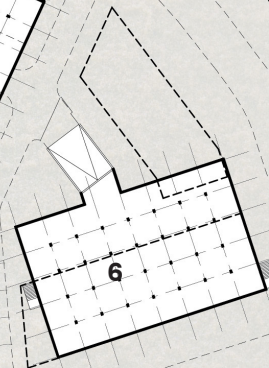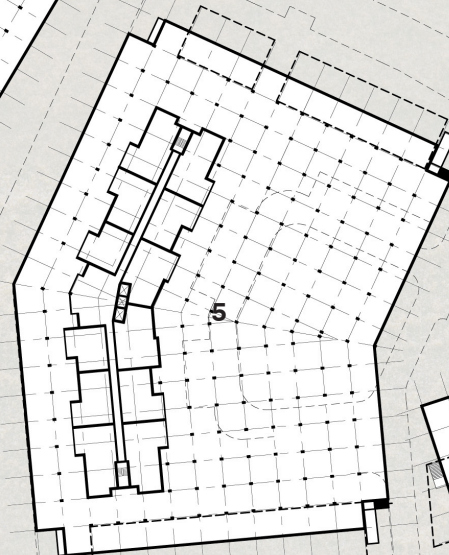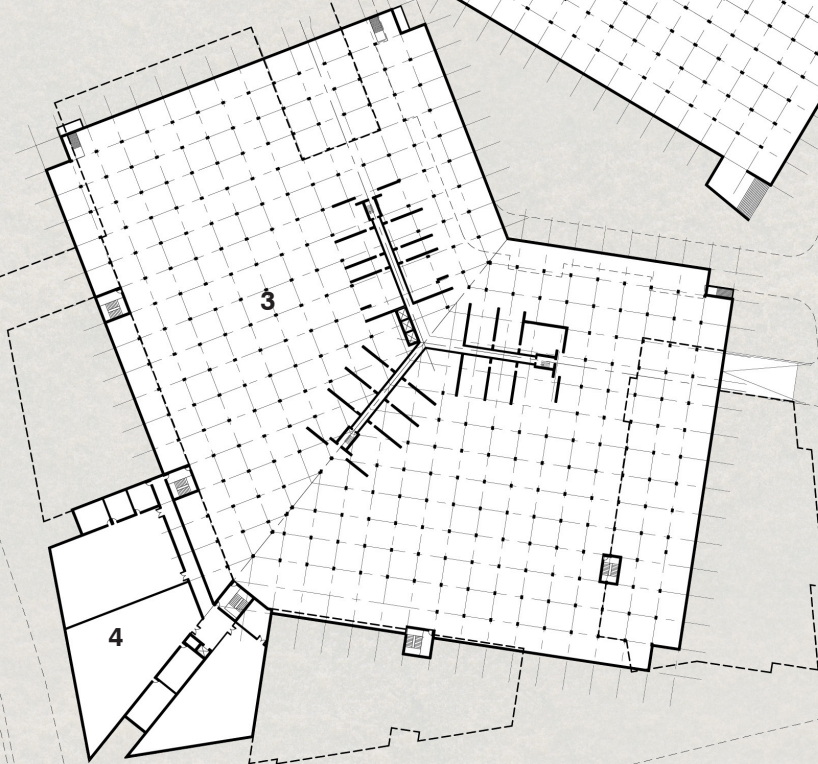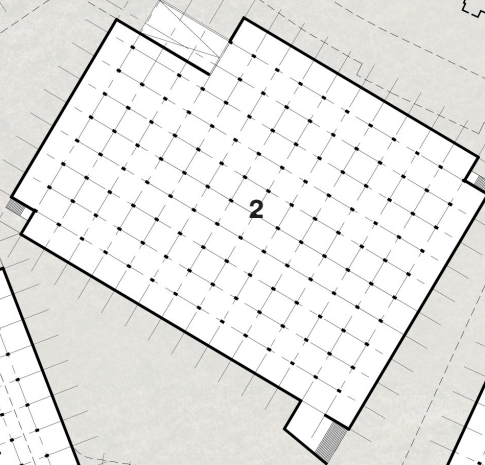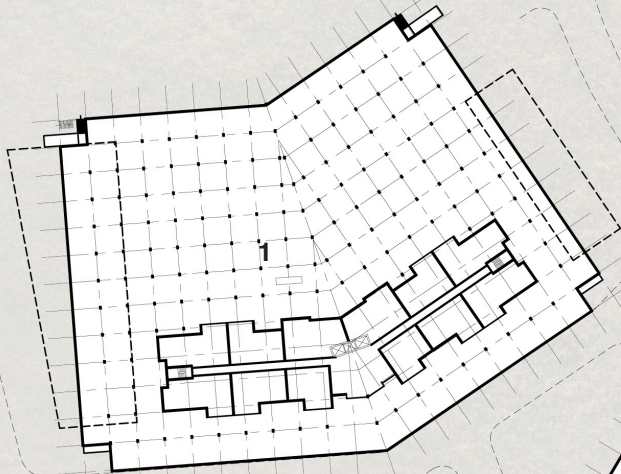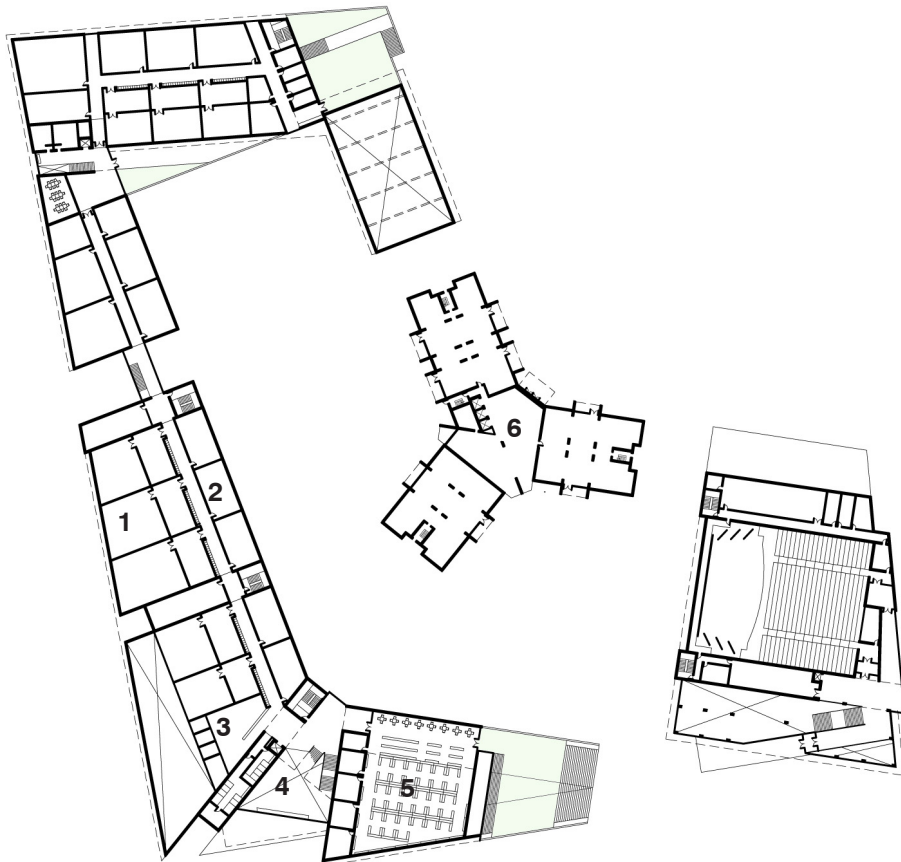
Fig 105. Second Floor Plan

1	Typical science classroom with anteroom
2	Typical classroom
3	Administration
4	Lobby
5	Small business start-up shared office space
6	Community organizations
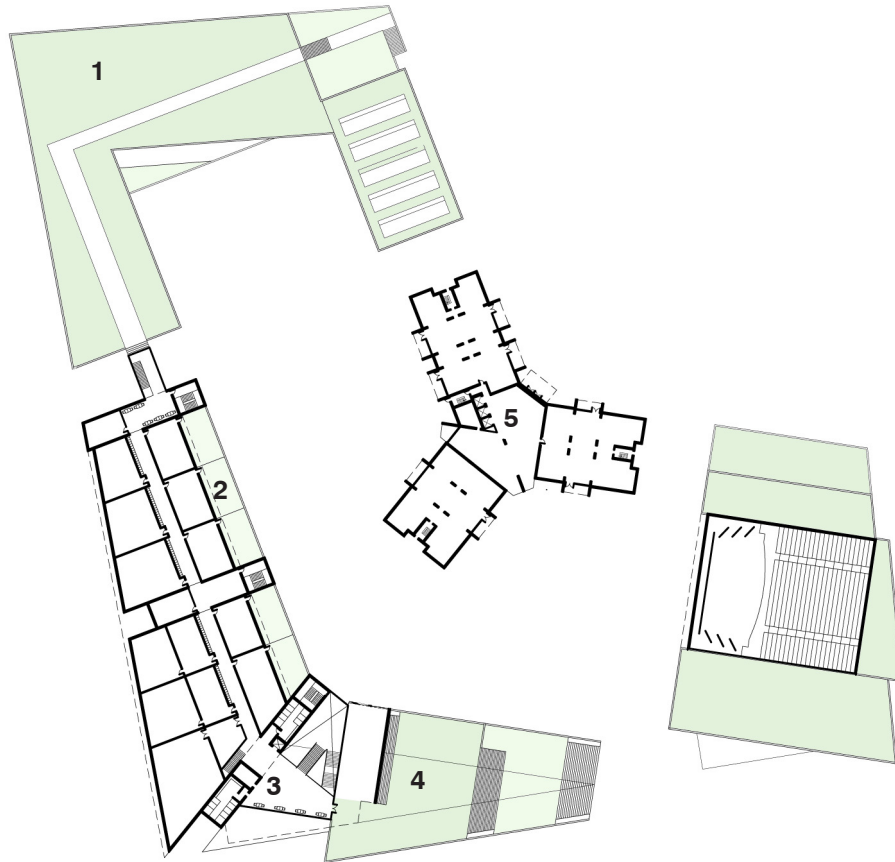
Fig 106. Third Floor Plan

1   Roof garden

2   Classroom with roof garden access

3   Lobby

4   Patio

5   Community organizations

Reconsider

Charles Landry's writing encourages people to redefine, recognize and rethink to encourage the development of a more creative city (Landry, The Art of City Making 2006, 4).

Buildings scattered in the landscape, a curvy street network, zoning and ownership are the key barriers to further development on the site. The design proposes infill to re-establish the relationship of the complex to the neighbourhood, the intention is to increase the intensity of the experience rather than the density. Road and sidewalk realignment is used to create clear and direct paths through the development. Sidewalks are widened and drawn closer to the building creating more opportunities for interaction. Originally a monofunctional residential development the design proposes a mix of uses. Institutional, commercial and residential developments are introduced as part of the plan.

The most challenging obstacle to overcome is the issue of ownership. Currently all of the buildings are owned by private property management companies. The realignment of roads and introduction of new buildings will require the reconsideration of the property boundaries. The proposed property lines flow the existing apartment buildings and parking structures. Rational and incentives for the redistribution of ownership will be explored in greater detail through a phasing and partnership analysis at the end of the design.

Fig 107. Existing and proposed built form

Fig 108. Existing and proposed underground parking

Fig 110. Existing and proposed street network

Fig 109. Existing and proposed pedestrian network
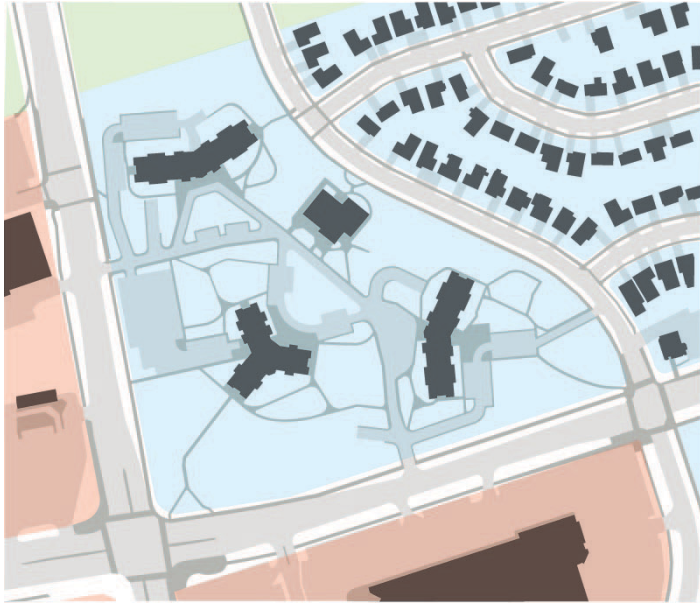
Fig 112. Existing and proposed zoning

Fig 111. Existing and proposed ownership

Wrapping

Two types of wrapping are proposed to foster a unique identity for the apartment complex. Re-cladding of the existing apartments, increasing the glazing at the end of the wings where the stairwells are located and creating fully glazed balconies updates the aging concrete structure. The second is the wrapping of a completely new public building around the base of the existing apartments, creating more direct relationships to the surrounding streets and formal front address. The school occupies the busy corner at the intersection of Jane Street and Finch Avenue, the apartments face onto through streets and the theatre stands on the corner of Finch Avenue and San Romanoway Road.

Fig 113. Wrapping

Parallel Programing

This unwrapped section demonstrates the proposed variation
in programming and scale surrounding the existing apartment
building. Each space acts as an aperture, producing a unique
point of view into the community. Services and support offices
are bundled into cores that break down the larger building into
individually accessible spaces and allowing larger program to run
from the street into the inner courtyards.

gymnasium

studios

lobby

cafe

gallery

theatre

107
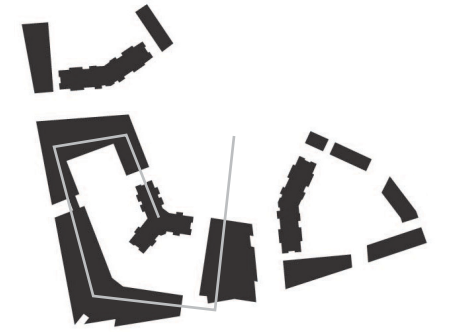
Fig 114. Main Entrance
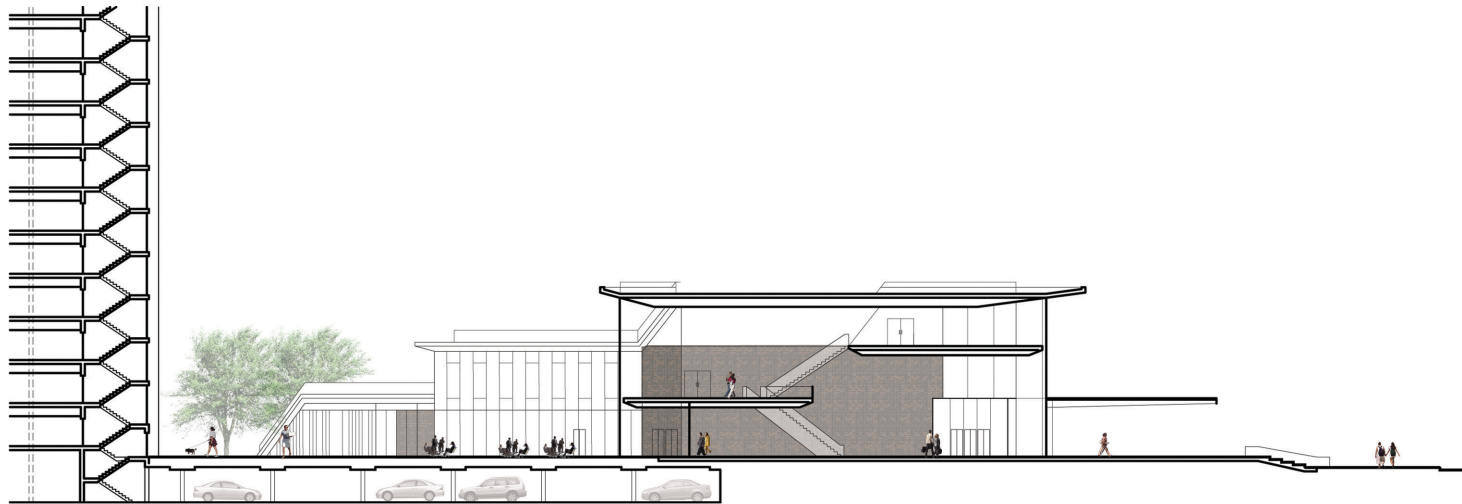
Fig 115. Studios
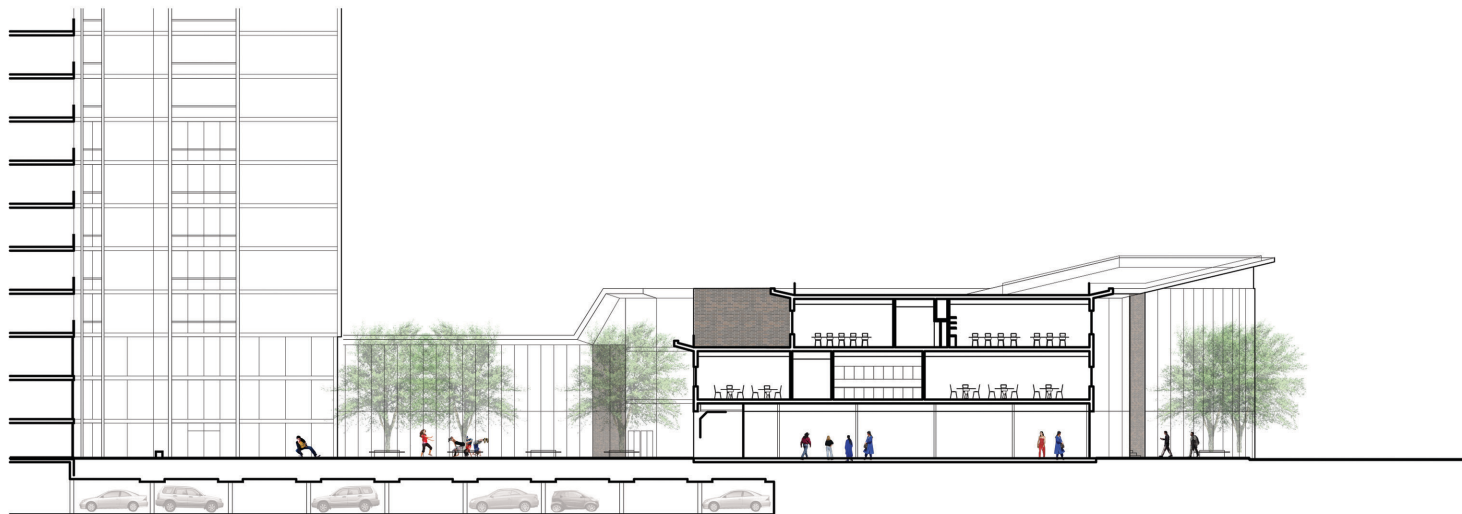
Fig 117. Theatre
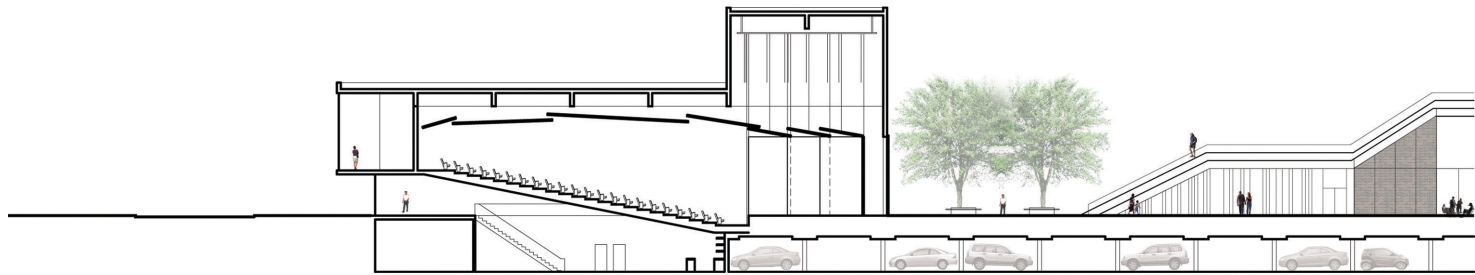
Fig 116. Cafe

Fig 118. Gymnasium

Fig 119. Live/Work

continuous roof

organizing cores

infill programme
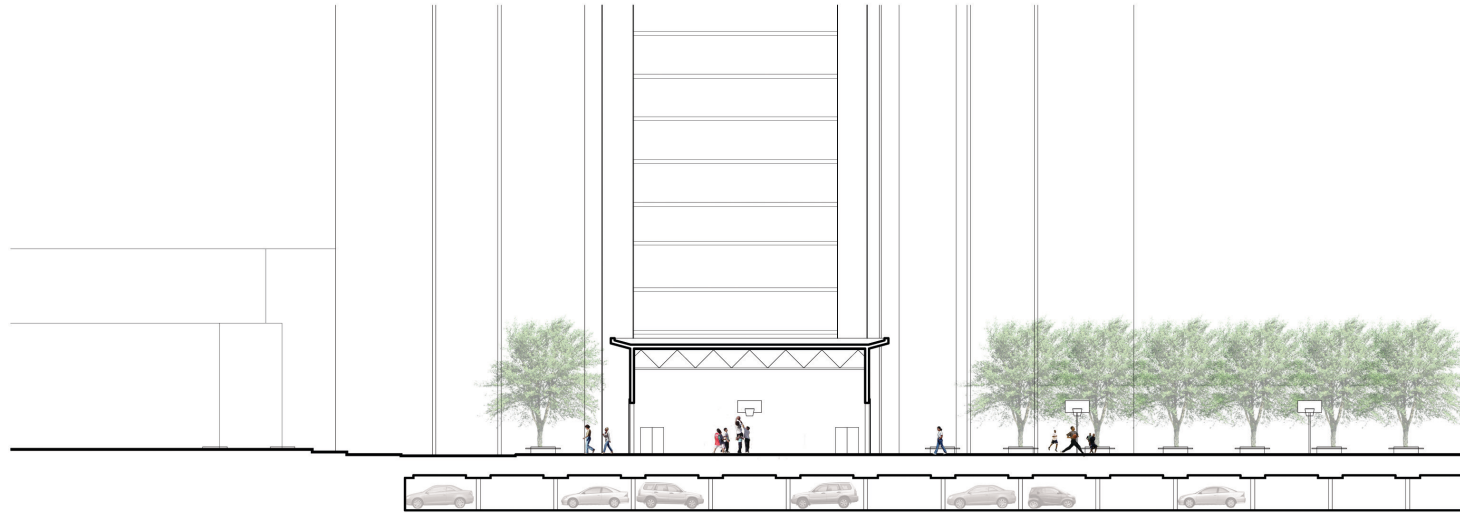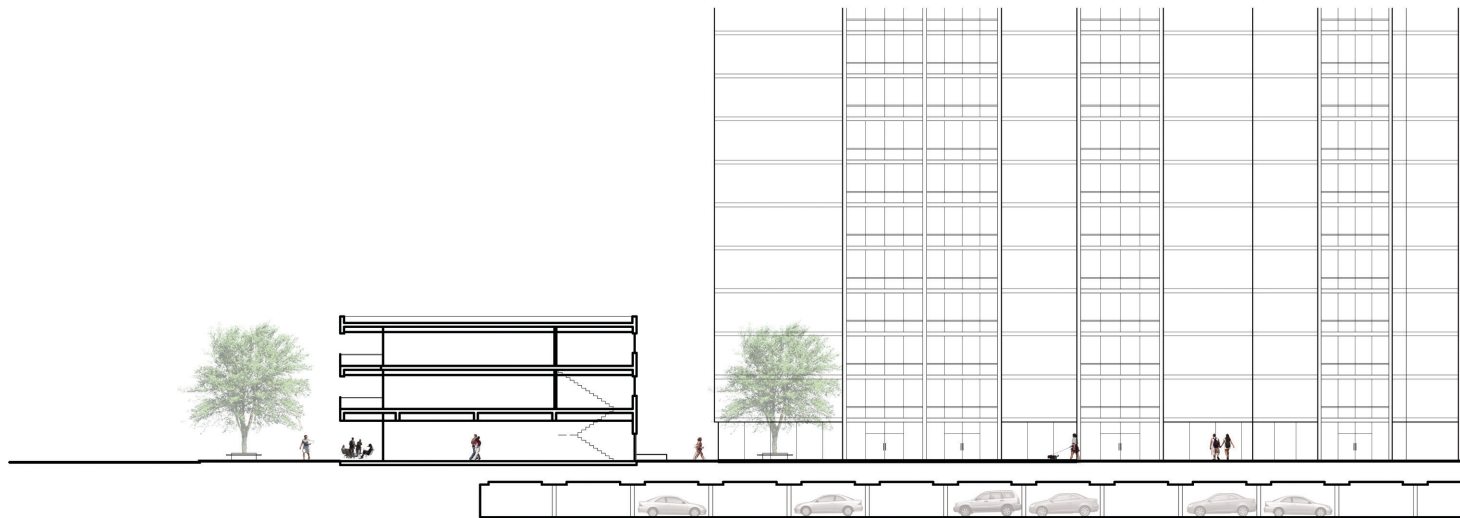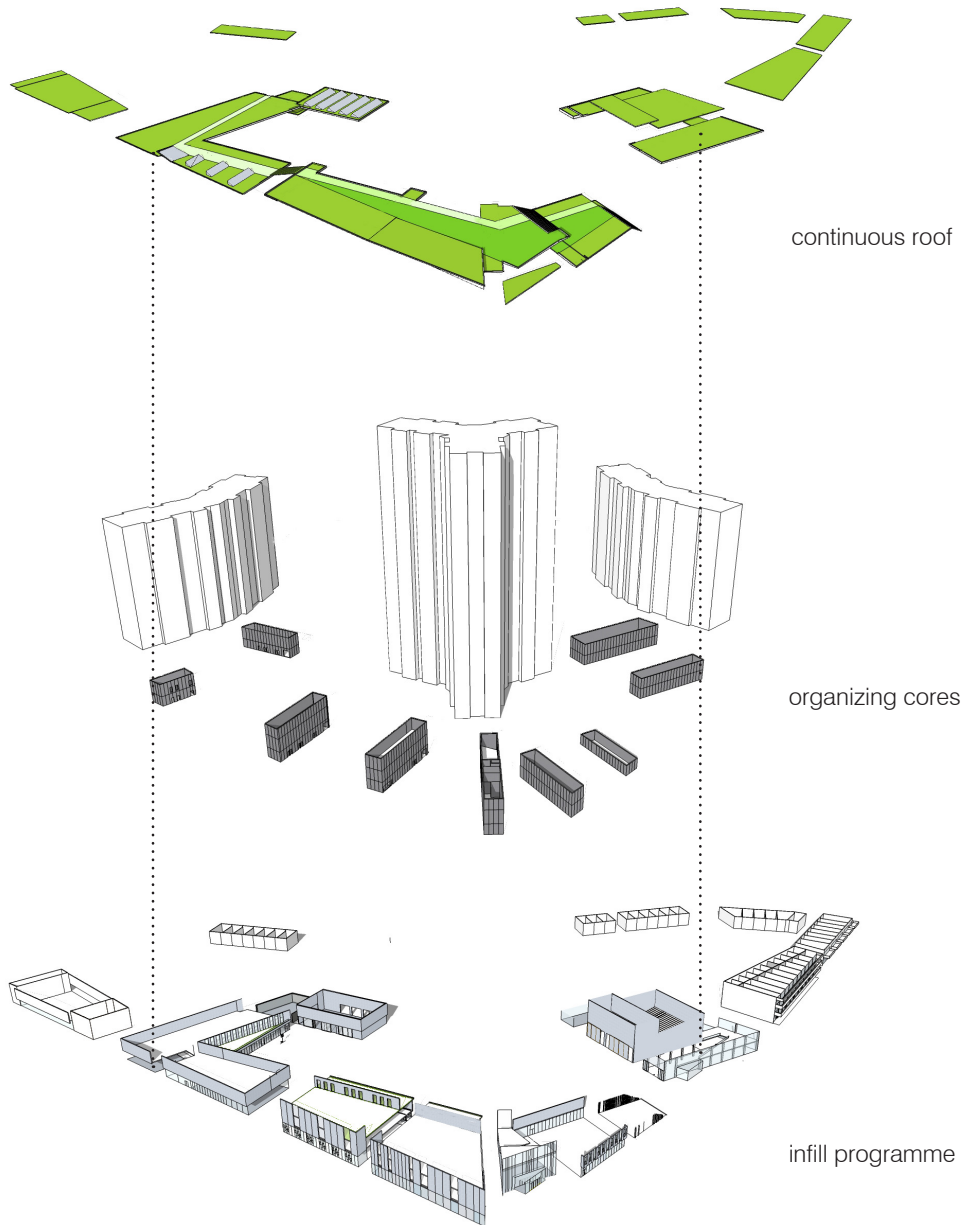
Linked infrastructure

Accommodating a mix of uses, institutions, small business, and community organizations can capitalize on synergy, sharing resources for mutual benefit. This diagram demonstrates how architectural design can accommodate a balance between autonomy and unity. Rising from the ground a continuous green roof covers the main building. Separated by service cores each area of the school can be accessed and operated independently, separating school departments. On the ground level loud recreation drama and music occupy the north most wing, graphic arts and library occupy the middle and the lobby separates commercially driven endeavours including, cafeteria, gallery and small start-up office space. Including a gallery and shop within a school provides easy access and opportunities for students while providing customers and artist for the shop and gallery.

Fig 120. Linked program

Integrated Landscape

A lush landscape was an integral part of the original tower in the park typology (Swell 1993, 32). The proposal calls for the ground plain of the existing apartment buildings to be given over for public occupation. The design embraces the park concept by creating a productive and highly articulated series of landscape interventions adding texture to the public space and connecting the building back to the larger neighbourhood. Open grassy areas are fitted for specific functions such as the soccer field. Tree lined streets and raised planters soften the

Fig 121. Overall aerial

113
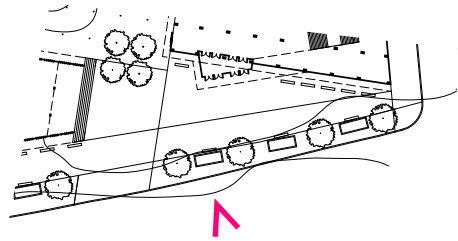
Fig 122. Theatre Entrance

hard urban surfaces. Accessible green roofs lift the original grass and gardens up above the new program creating a pleasing view for the apartment residents and increasing the usable outdoor space. Angled roofs provide raked seating for lectures, generous stairs double as seating and shifting walls and pathways create inmate gardens for reflection.

On the ground level a series of distinct spaces mediate between the existing and proposed buildings while allowing people to efficiently navigate through the site. The front entrance for the school and the theatre both pull back from the street edge using overhang, colour, and soft textures creating intimate spaces for waiting, meeting and display. Radial tree lined paths provide direct access through the site, framing the distinct courtyards. The Exhibit Garden has soft grassy mounds for lounging and playing but also can double as a stage or podium for display. The Assembly Yard is a blank canvas with a grid of outlets that organize the space, adjacent studios and community organizations open up directly into the space and are able to transform it using the outlets for poles, light fixtures and electricity. A Recreation Court defined by trees, gymnasium and health services is a continuation of the assembly yard where basketball can be safely played and watched by many. Just beyond the park is the major outdoor lawn for the school shared with the adjacent apartment buildings. A gentle hill between the higher street and the field is informal seating while a triangular lawn provides a generous front address for the existing apartment buildings. The open park space intended to integrate into the larger network of generous outdoor recreation space in the larger neighbourhood including the hydro corridor and ravines.

Fig 124. Exhibit Garden

Fig 123. Assembly Yard
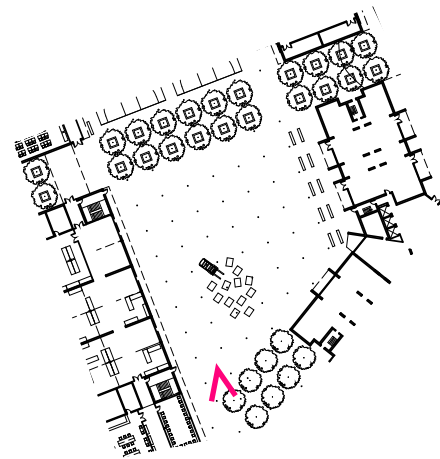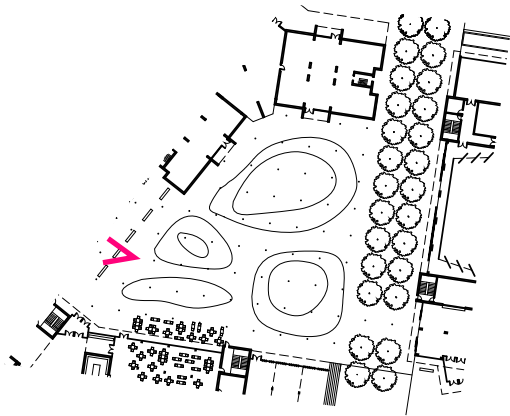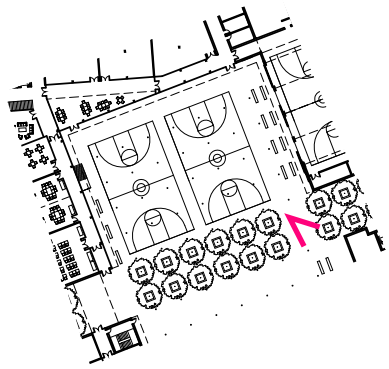
Fig 126. Recreation Court
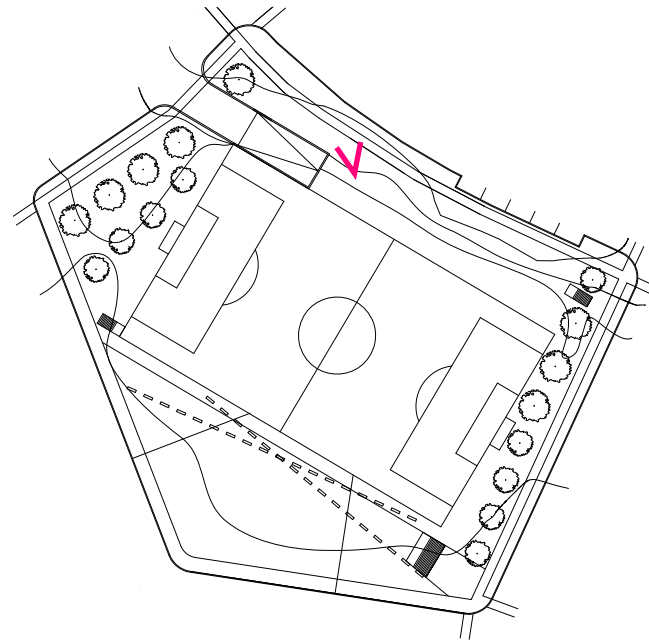
Fig 125. Park

Phasing and Partnership

Implementation is one of the largest challenges facing the
emergence of a strong community. This diagram demonstrates
how design can utilize a phased implantation strategy and public
private partnerships in the development of community spaces.
Working with both public and private groups the most efficient
layout of roads and development lots are established.   Working
with the existing radial layout of the apartment complex a radial
design allows for the development to occur in stages. Broken
down into seven phases the project will take many years to
develop from a concept phase to reality.
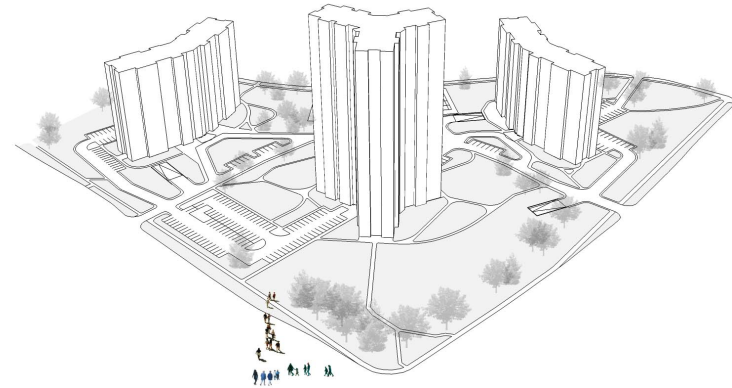
1 Formation of community organization

... Community initiative

... Community demand

... Identification of key issues

... Preliminary consultation with potential design team and feasibility
    study completed

1 - 5 years

2 Partnership

... Established with the City of Toronto and other relevant agencies
   (TDSB, Toronto Community Housing, Toronto Arts Council,
   Artscape)

... Design team is formally hired to establish

... Refinement of project objectives

... Community organization works with City to find funding through
   government grants and fundraising events

... City and community organization buy land from the private
   owners

3 Site Preparation

... Redistribution and alignment of ownership according to the
   proposed plan

... Road re-alignment

... Public park established

... Relocation of activities in existing community centre to renovated
   lower levels of apartment buildings

... Landscaping for market development sites

... Individual designers are hired independently for separate projects
   Live-Work, School-Theatre and townhouses

1 - 5 years

8 months

4 Phase A Construction

... Reinforcement of existing parking structure

... School building constructed

... Renovation of existing rental units on a credit basis

... Design team to complete construction administration and
   respond to issues as they arise

5 Phase B Construction

... Occupation of School

... Construction of live/work buildings

... Construction of two houses

... Construction of small office space

... Landscaping

... Design team to complete construction administration and
   respond to issues as they arise
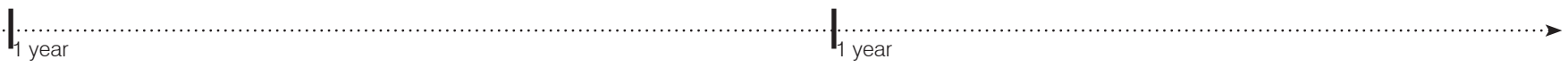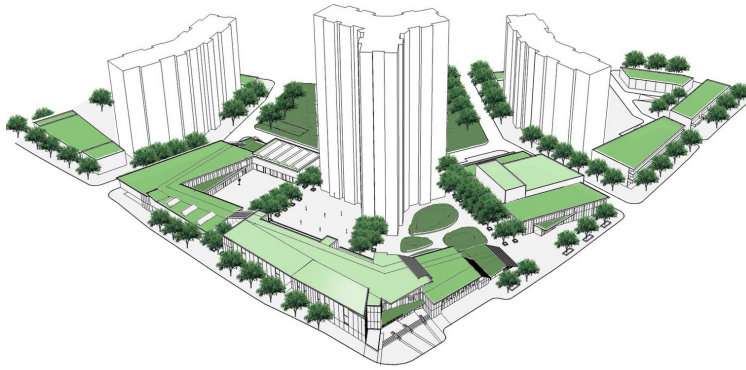
1 year

1 year

6 Phase C Construction

... Construction of theatre building

... Potential resale of renovated apartment buildings or condo
conversions

... Potential sale of townhouse and live/work units
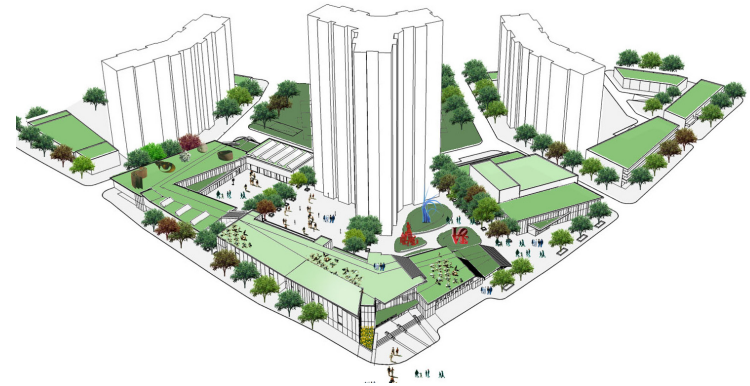
7 Ongoing

... Establishment of a community organization to monitor long term
interests

... Construction of public parking and public park above to be
maintained by city

... Potential resale of renovated apartment buildings or condo
conversions

... Potential sale of townhouse and live/work units

1 year

Ongoing

Chapter 06
Conclusion

"Urbanists and city builders a like must acknowledge that community on demand cannot be designed (although it may be possible to design for such community)."

On Community (From Zoon Politikon to Multitude) by Lars Lerup

This thesis sets out to investigate the role of architecture and architects in community building, proposing a comprehensive approach. Exploring current theory establishes a productive vocabulary through which case studies are examined. According to Lerup community is emerging as a multifaceted entity manifesting in many forms ranging from an established neighbourhood to momentary events (i.e. a parade). *Instant Urbanism* is an associated term that reflects development strategies, common in a large-scale and fast-paced metropolitan condition. From a comparison of current urbanism theory, Crawford's *Everyday Urbanism* and Koolhaas' *Generic City*, the approach to city building can be surmised as an emergent condition helping to incorporate the varied meanings of community. *Creativity* is also emerging as a buzzword associated with urban revitalization whereby some cities are trying to reinvent and market themselves as "creative cities." Subsequently, public art is considered a medium of community. Its quality, style and proliferation is seen as an indicator of the strength and descriptive of the community character. Introducing Jane Rendell's concept of *critical spatial practise* refocuses the emphasis of public art towards collaboration, engagement with local context and emphasis on offering a unique point of view.

Recognizing the Jane-Finch neighbourhood in Toronto as a contested community and application of this thesis, a careful examination exposes a collection of disparate large-scale housing developments in need of repair. After 50 years, there continues to be a number of factors that influence the growth and develop of its urban fabric such as increasing concentrations of economic segregation, an emerging popular music and art scene, a lack of institutional presence, vast and ignored public space, outspoken community organizations and a nostalgic rebranding campaign. These factors are seen as both challenges and opportunities towards the development of a vital and creative community.

Identifying, examining and contrasting architectural and grass roots cases reveals a reciprocal relationship between the built environment, art and community. The form and texture of the built environment affects the artwork and vice versa. The following specific architectural strategies all help to support community:

- Foster a unique identity that builds upon the strengths of the existing communities by re-cladding existing structures, allowing for re-appropriation of space, and incorporating art.

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- Create structured public space such as, infill, re-urbanization, amenity and institutional presence that help frame and ground public space.
- Humanize the built environment by considering the scale of an individual with respect to providing variation in scale, materiality, and program.
- Establish reciprocal relationships. By nature, a community gives and takes; a mix of uses can create mutual benefits.
- Consider the implications of a design proposal in the existing community by establishing community partnerships and public/private partnerships. Phase the development timeline to help consider the economics of construction and maximize development potential in an effort to discover new possibilities and integrate new projects.

The design proposal envisioned for this thesis integrates theoretical concepts and practical site knowledge enveloped with a 'creative community' concept. The ambiguous ground plane located at the base of an existing apartment complex is redesigned. Anchored by a school for the arts, the development is integrated into the neighbourhood with structured public space that is supported by live/work residences. Mixed-use and cross-pollination of programming are intended to be catalysts for a creative community. The proposal respects the original intentions of the tower in the park typology by creating an accessible undulating grass roof. Inherent in the design is an architect's contradictory role as a mediator, dreamer and realist, constantly testing accepted traditions and boundaries.

The role of public art as a tool for community building is one of the initial inspirations for the thesis work. As the work evolved, so did the role of public art. Initially, in the case studies, public art projects became the common interest and conversation starter. Through my investigations, I met many well-spoken and informed people working hard to improve the sense of community in the Jane-Finch neighbourhood. They often used public art projects to bring together local residents who shared common goals and interests. Ultimately, the focus of the thesis shifted to an architectural design solution. The vision is seen as an instrument to support the evolution of a community while simultaneously acknowledging the limitations of the architect's capacity to create community. A sense of community, is elusive, intangible and defined by it's members. However, a community can be supported by the program, processes and framework of the neighbourhood. In the design phase, spaces for

production and exhibition of art became a program to test and imagine the potential of new typologies, forms of public space and implementation strategies. In the future, projects can be used to communicate some of the key issues and engage the public in the process of understanding the latent potential of the site as well as continue to transform and reinvent the community once the construction of the proposed buildings is complete.

Issues of public and private space also emerged as a central component of the design proposal. Where do you draw a property line between the public space associated with the school and the apartment buildings? Why would the privately owned buildings participate in the public reclamation of the ground plane? In the design, public and private space is defined sectionally so that community organizations can easily expropriate the lower levels of the existing apartments. Increased densities and zoning allowances are used as development incentives for the adjoining buildings. Ultimately, incorporating the school and mediating courtyards at the base of the central tower would depend on a public/private partnership. Strong vision and leadership is required to challenge traditional development methods and typologies. Embedded in this work is the belief that instigating a debate and dialogue between public and private enterprises will contribute to the evolution of public space appropriate to a creative community.

Reflecting on the design proposal, this thesis presents a clear and specific vision of how a postwar apartment high-rise neighbourhood might continue to develop in response to its local community. A great deal of time was spent developing an understanding of the scale of open space, site constraints and opportunities unique to the Jane and Finch neighbourhood fabric. Through local residents' participation, the intention is to foster an authentic sense of community, supported by a staged implementation strategy. Renderings and design details suggest potential inhabitations. This work is just a first iteration of a community vision that requires further refinement through detailed planning studies and local participation. Design strategies developed (wrapping, parallel programming, linked infrastructure, integrated landscape, phasing and partnership) can be calibrated as the process moves ahead and applied to other similar situations.

Through a vision of an emerging creative community, this thesis demonstrates that careful consideration of the dynamic nature of community and unique characteristics of an existing

site can help create engaging and dynamic spaces. Private enterprises can find new development opportunities, new types of community can be examined and embraced, and most importantly, local residents can find opportunities to affect the growth of their neighbourhood.

Appendix

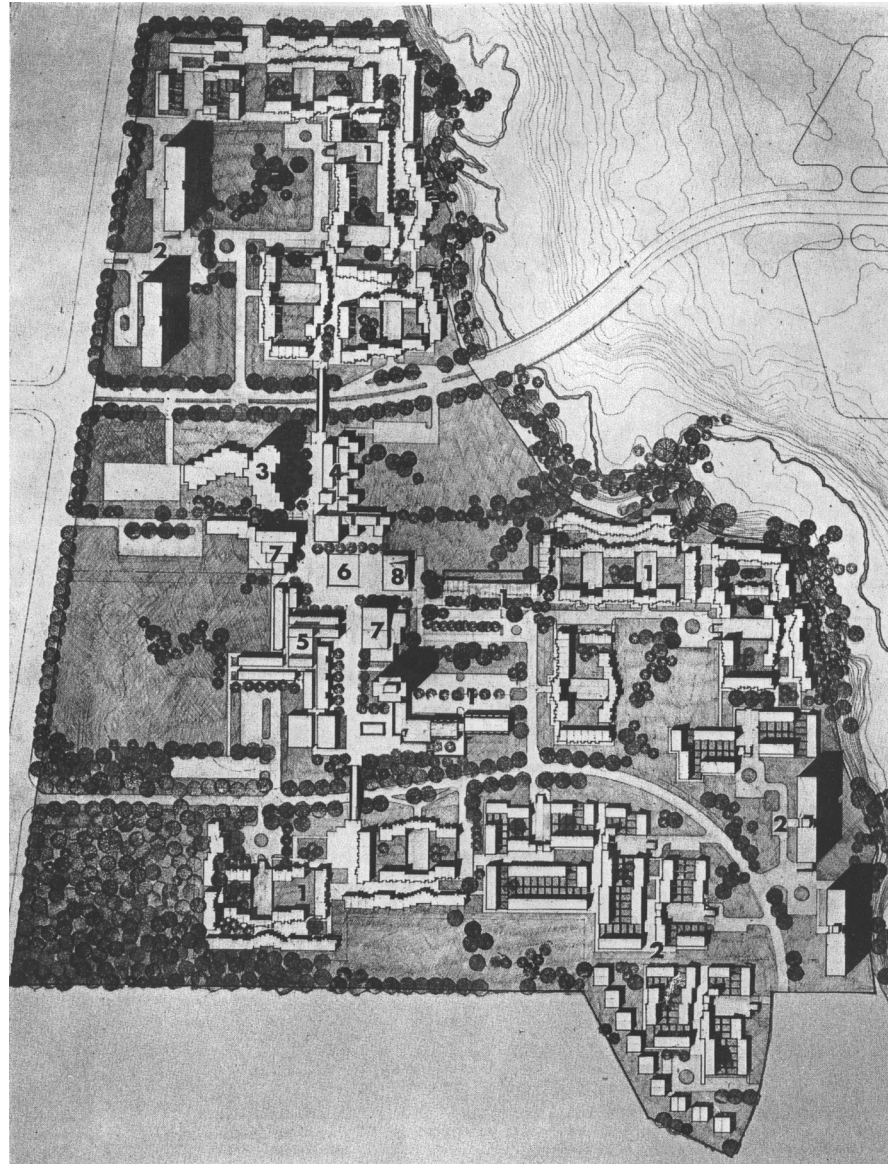# Neighbourhood Developments

Fig 127. Rendered plan of Edgeley Village

Fig 128. Edgeley Village today.

Edgeley Village

Irving Grossman, 1965

Edgeley village is a respected housing development 15 minute walk north of the Jane and Finch intersection. Developed by Irving Grossman's firm, Environment Planning Associates for the Ontario Housing Corporation it attempted to mixed both public and private housing. A total of 579 units were intended for public housing while another 736 units were intended as condominiums (Three Housing Projects 1967, 31). The units are housed in separate blocks forming small privately and community housing precincts. In addition the project induces public schools, churches, community centre, shops, day care, park space and social services. Completed the village accommodates 6,500 people in a modern village like setting (Three Housing Projects 1967, 31). Grossman creates a variation in the project through a variety of unit types and interesting exterior spaces. Three housing groups are connected by pedestrian walkways to a central spine of community programming with schools and a community centre. The busy roads are pushed the north and south edges of the site away from the community space. Pedestrian bridges and parking corrals are disguised by being located in the centre of the housing blocks and help to further separate the car and pedestrian and creating a child friendly environment. Everything needed for a completed community was provided, except fences when the project ran out of funding, allowing residents to put their town mark on the neighbourhood.

Shortly after it's construction it was featured in Canadian Architect's Annual Design Review. The article praises the valiant effort by the designer to attempt such an ambitious housing scheme but remains skeptical regarding it's ability to ultimately manifest as a mix income neighbourhood. Aspirations for the mixed income neighbourhood were hampered when funding became unavailable for the private sector houses. The first phase of housing was almost completely social housing (Three Housing Projects 1967, 36).

Keywords:

functional separation

village setting

mixed income

dead end

pedestrian walkways

The 1983 documentary *Home Feeling: Struggle for Community* describes the troubles of efficiently policing by car in Edgeley Village dominated by isolating dead ends and pedestrian paths. Set back from the busy arterial streets the life within Edgeley Village is hidden from public view.

Fig 129. Night street view.

Oakdale Community Centre
Patkau Architects with local Ralph Giannone Architect
1997-1999

The Oakdale Community centre located on Yorkwoods Gate, a 15 minute walk south of the Jane and Finch intersection represents an important shift towards community engagement. Patkau architects is a well respected and recognized firm. Completing a project in this neighbourhood signifies the importance of the community to the client, the City of North York Parks and Recreation Department as well as the opportunity for an architect to act as a facilitator. Derek Nicholson's knowledge as an architect but primary role a project manager for the City of North York Parks and Recreation department helped the public agency achieve a high standard of design while reflecting community needs (Patron of the Parks 1999, 25).

On the west side a tall apartment building looms over the site, to east exists dense town house development operated by Toronto Community Housing Corporation and the north is a vast and relatively unprogrammed park space. The community centre is a striking contrast to it surroundings as it stretches out horizontally across the bottom edge of the park and focuses it's attention to the street. A highly ordered circulation spin reaches parallel to the street, off which the larger multipurpose rooms and gymnasium fall revealing an organically shaped pool that spills out into the open park. A generous upwards facing canopy and full height glazing across the entire front of the building creates a extended threshold inviting people in from the street while creating controlled solar access. The building borrows material inspiration from it's surrounding suburban context to create durable and sophisticated pallet. Concrete block forms thick structural walls while fluted metal paneling is used for the light canopy. Finally bright yellow on the structural steel and interior finishes create a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere.

In an article published by Canadian Architect Magazine, architect and project manager Nicholson emphasizes the importance of a community's open mind in the design process, "...allowed the architects to develop an unconventional architectural language that challenges accepted formal, material and spatial norms for public projects in Toronto" (Patron of the Parks 1999, 25). The unique design, transparency and public preoccupation of the Oakdale Community Centre make it a welcoming space in the community.

Fig 130. Architectural plans and sections

Keywords:

engagement

context

open mind

public project

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