

The Legacy of 48 Abell

Tales From A Gentrifying Neighbourhood

by
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A u t h o r ' s D e c l a r a t i o n

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A b s t r a c t

Constructed in 1886 by Mr. John Abell, the former engine and machine works factory at 48 Abell Street is located near Queen and Dufferin Streets in Toronto, Ontario. This 100,000 square foot heavy timber and red brick building has housed approximately 80 live/work studios since the 1980's. Recently, rapid gentrification and intensive development proposals in the West Queen West neighbourhood have threatened its existence as an authentic artistic incubator.

In a series of chronicles, this thesis documents the history of John Abell and the neighbourhood surrounding his former factory from the late 19th century to present day. Woven into this narrative are the author's own stories of living in a loft at 48 Abell Street, observing the transformation of the neighbourhood and responding to potential eviction from her home. When the community rallies to the building's defense, 48 Abell becomes the central figure in a battle over land development with the City and real estate developers in which the key issue is the cultural value of heritage buildings and protection of live/work spaces.

Research in the form of mapping and data collection shows the concentration of the arts in the area known as the Queen West Triangle has been a catalyst for gentrification. The resulting displacement of arts production space and low-income residents due to escalating land values is an unintended and sobering reality challenging the current orthodoxy of 'creative city' movements in North America.

A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s

Committee

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January 2005

There's a dance floor?

After leaving little time to seek accommodation for my last 4-month work term, I asked my childhood friend who resided in Toronto if she knew of any places where I could possibly live. She immediately tried to sell me on moving into her place. According to her, the guys she was living with hadn't been proactive enough in finding a roommate to replace the girl who was moving out. They really needed a roommate and I was in need of housing in Toronto, and was too far away to actually carry out some proper house hunting.

I grilled her on the viability of this scenario. "What is this place like?" I asked.

"It's like a really big loft in this cool old building,"

"How much is the rent?"

"It's \$588.50 per month – but it's all-inclusive: heat, water, electricity and everything." Hmm, not bad. But what's the catch?

“Well, what about transit, is it close to anything?”

“There’s the Queen streetcar stop literally outside the front door.”

Wow, okay. I was imagining a particular loft party I had once been to years prior whereby this space as a dwelling was retrofitted to be so stark and white, that the vacuum created was more akin to an empty museum gallery than a domesticated living environment in spite of its industrial appeal. I speculated on loft living compared to a house or apartment and how any sound or noise would permeate the whole place. In addition to the aforementioned austerity, there was also an obvious lack of privacy that I wouldn’t want for myself. Also recalling a ‘room’ I had in Spanish Harlem one year prior, which was really just a nook off a railroad style apartment hallway separated by nothing but a curtain -and not looking to do that again- I continued to press my friend for information.

“Is there privacy?”

“Oh yeah, everyone has their own bedroom.”

“With a door?”

“Yes, with a door,” she laughed. I suppose it was a silly question, but I wasn’t about to take any chances. What else was I missing in this interrogation?

“Nobody gets a window to outside though,” my friend volunteered to me.

“What? Isn’t that kind of dark?” I asked. She tepidly explained. “Well no, there are windows that face into the main space and all of the rooms get indirect light from them. Your room is overlooking the dance floor which gets plenty of light.” Dance floor? There’s a dance floor? But she persisted, “Just trust me, you should totally live here. It’s really really really cool.”

By the end of the conversation, I was reluctantly persuaded to take the room. In spite of her interesting description, I couldn’t help but to be apprehensive over moving into a place I’d never seen before with roommates I hadn’t had the opportunity to meet in an unfamiliar neighbourhood that sounded really out of the way. The urgency of

filling this wonderful and desirable room made me wonder why no one else had yet snatched it up? A few days later, armed with but a couple of suitcases containing my belongings and no furniture, I took a cab from the bus terminal and braced myself for whatever living situation I had gotten myself into.

My friend jumped into the cab once I reached Abell St. at Queen Street West. “Just go around the back on the lane way,” she instructed the driver. “It’ll just be easier,” she said to me. We drove around to the back following along the inside U-shaped footprint of this old industrial building flanked by wild greenery and young trees on the left, and stopped in front of a garage door. Tanya got out and disappeared through a door. Then she reappeared after pulling up the garage door from the inside.

“Okay, this is it.”



Fig. A.1 *Left*, Studio 130 dance floor.

Fig. A.2 *Right*, Studio 130 from living room.



February 2005

Moved in.

When I first moved into studio 130 at 48 Abell Street in the winter of 2005, I immediately fell in love with this building's quiet grandeur from the outside and the raw, aged charm found within. Heavy timber beams and columns with robust iron connections and old peeling paint, signs of time gone by, this industrial space boasted many previous incarnations of use. I was attracted to the positive energy of the place as well, an atmosphere attributable to many like-minded creative dwellers within.

This former industrial building turned into a tapestry of loft studios was tucked away just off of Queen Street West in a less popular and forgotten stretch of this well-known thoroughfare all the way out near Dufferin Street in Toronto. At the time, I thought it was one of the best-kept secrets I had been fortunate enough to stumble upon.

Fig. A.3 *Left*, 48 Abell Street north laneway.

Fig. A.4 *Right*, 48 Abell Street south side of west wing.





Fig. A.5 48 Abell main entrance.

Generously sized and well-lit, these beautiful lofts all had exposed brick walls, high ceilings and enormous Douglas fir columns vertically interrupting the spaces. No two units were the same, however. Some having been dwelled in over the course of the previous 20 or so years against their commercial leases, developed an anarchic architecture crafted through subsequent constructed additions creating truly unique and beautiful authentic loft spaces. At the time, posted on the outside of the building, near the Aristocrat Lamps & Lighting Showroom was an application notice stipulating the intent to legalize the 80-live/work units within. Apparently as long as this was in contention, our status as residents there was quasi-legal.



Fig. A.6 *Left*, View toward car wash on Queen Street from 48 Abell Street roof.



Fig. A.7 *Middle*, 48 Abell's secondary entrance beyond the car wash.



Fig. A.8 *Right*, Queen's Car Wash sign.

It wasn't a week after moving in when I realized that I had actually been to 48 Abell once several years before in 2002 to meet up with a colleague who was renting there at the time. I also remembered my impression of the neighbourhood at that time. It had felt like a forgotten place, far from the downtown core, remote, desolate, abandoned. I remembered making fun of the 'Country Site' Cafe as it was an obvious rip-off of the Country Style Donuts there before it. Walking through the Queen's Car Wash property was the quickest shortcut for reaching the secondary laneway entrance from Queen Street. At that time, this pedestrian route felt more like an intrusion onto ambiguously private property. When I was living there, due to the increased pedestrian traffic through that same car wash to 48 Abell, it felt more like a boisterous and informal cross-pollination of uses assuming a sense of safety when coming home on a late night while passing by the taxi drivers washing their cars before starting their shift.



Studio number 130 was an enormous place. We figured there was roughly 2400 square feet of space which would place our rent at around \$1 per square foot. The left wall was painted a pale orange and was covered with large mirrors facing the dance floor, some of them broken. Beyond that was a modest living room set up with a couch and a television. The washroom was but a boxed out cube at the far left corner of the loft and beside it was an unrefined and upper-less kitchen with old and tired appliances, tiled with cheap linoleum on the floor and vintage bar stools pulled up to the high side of the counter. Jutting out into the space from above and to the right was Cam's bedroom and a beautifully minimal wooden staircase leading up to it and the other two upper bedrooms. The staircase had no handrails to speak of which took some getting used to. Below two of the upper rooms was both a dj booth and farther beyond that a dank storage area with a bare concrete floor that served as the band practice space once weekly. My room was stacked above Matt's which was directly on the right when walking in the main door. The large and colourful paintings that hung from most of the walls facing the main space belonged to Matt who had painted them.

Fig. A.9 Studio 130 upon entering.



Fig. A.10 *Left top*, Studio 130 paintings and entrance.

Fig. A.11 *Left bottom*, Studio 130 kitchen.

Fig. A.12 *Right*, Studio 130 dance floor.

Apart from the partially covered picture window facing the dance floor that afforded me little visual privacy and my glass bedroom door, my bedroom was great. It was huge, way more space than I needed, and shaped kind of like a pentagon. The floors were of cheap painted plywood and the walls were basically uninsulated drywall. Two thick dowels braced between one wall and a vertical 2x4 served as my improvised closet from which an old mirror was hinged.

I will always remember the first night I slept in my sparsely furnished room. My roommates were out, and all I could hear was what sounded like a wrench being banged as hard as possible on the pipes running along the ceiling of our loft which continued through to my bedroom. It frightened me at first as I lay in that fold-out couch I had appropriated as my bed. I thought that our neighbours in the next unit must have been doing something crazy, but no one else was home to consult over this loud irregular and annoying clamor. As it turned out, the pipes were always this noisy, because of the air pressure running through some of them. My roommates were so used to the sounds the pipes made that over time it barely even registered in their consciousness. I hated them -at first- until I realized that I could save on laundry money by hanging my wet clothes to dry on the hot water pipes running through my bedroom. They were so hot that my yoga mat suffered from some melting in a couple spots after being stored on them. Matt had also tipped me off that the coin-operated washing machine on the right side in the laundry room only needed the loonie and one quarter in order to work instead of the dollar fifty it asked for.

There was an enormous industrial heater in the loft that hovered high above the dance floor. The thing was so loud that one couldn't carry on a conversation, talk on the phone, or hear the television until it stopped. Sometimes we would flick the switch to shut it off, but most of the time we needed the heat since a pretty consistent draft came in through the poorly sealed edges of the garage door.

Our loft's garage door opened out to the back of the building where a wild field of young trees, grass and weeds grew. Most residents would let their dogs run around off-leash here. We also had a spectacular view of the CN Tower from this grade level loft, but only when the garage door was open.

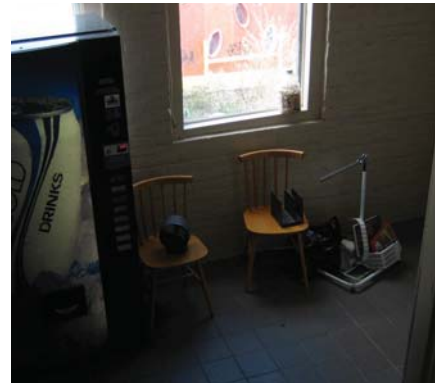


Fig. A.13 *Clockwise from top*, Free lumber outside Unit #305.

Fig. A.14 Balloons hung in west ground floor stairwell.

Fig. A.15 Mannequin in third floor corridor.

Fig. A.16 Chairs and knick knacks in second floor east stairwell.

Fig. A.17 Magazines left for perusal.

Fig. A.18 Picture frames below ground floor stairwell.

According to Cam and Matt who had lived there for some time already, one a musician, the other a painter, both with secondary jobs, the dance floor at our place was actually a sprung dance floor left behind from a previous incarnation of use as a dance studio. This really was the most striking feature of our loft, it was finished with marine-grade plywood and then lacquered after being stained a deep caramel colour. It was the first thing you saw upon entering the space, which was 16 feet from floor to ceiling. I know this because I measured it once with Tanya. Incidentally, the roommate they had previous to me was a ballet dancer and previous to her and Tanya were two set designers for music videos and television and had also built the additional two rooms so that four people could live here. Oftentimes I could hear our neighbours shouting and yelling at each other through the wall which made more sense when I found out that neighbouring unit was rented to a theatre company for rehearsals.

After a while I realized there was an unspoken system of exchanging unwanted belongings in the building. I noticed that people would leave them in the stairwell landings, the most traversed places in the building, seeing as the freight elevators were reserved for moving days. Tanya liked to call them “hallway presents.” One could find some interesting things in decent shape such as clothing, picture frames, knick knacks, chairs, bags, etc.

Apparently the building was notorious for having a party reputation that was accompanied by much lore about the legendary ones. “Remember the one upstairs where the floors were so slanted that the guy had affixed his table and furniture from the ceiling and then everything that was placed on the floor just rolled around?” Another one made mention of an inflatable pool and a bachelor party that got out of hand. Other parties often ended up with police shutting them down or the fire alarm being set off in the building, a nuisance we would encounter at the parties I was involved in planning at our place.

Our parties too contributed to 48 Abell Street’s infamous legacy. The first of which happened two weeks after I moved in, over Valentine’s Day weekend. The theme for it was Porn Party, where guests had to dress up like a porn star. This



Fig. A.19 Aristocrat Lamps & Lighting still operating out of 48 Abell’s east wing.

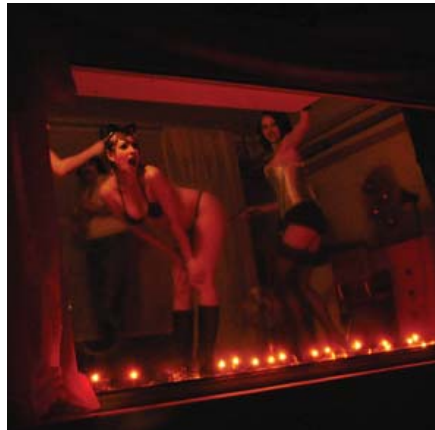


Fig. A.20 *Clockwise from top,*
The crowd on the dance floor at PP3.

Fig. A.21 The disco ball.

Fig. A.22 Exotic dancing in picture
window.

Fig. A.23 View toward the stairs from
the crowd on the dance floor.



Photos courtesy of Jason Raposo

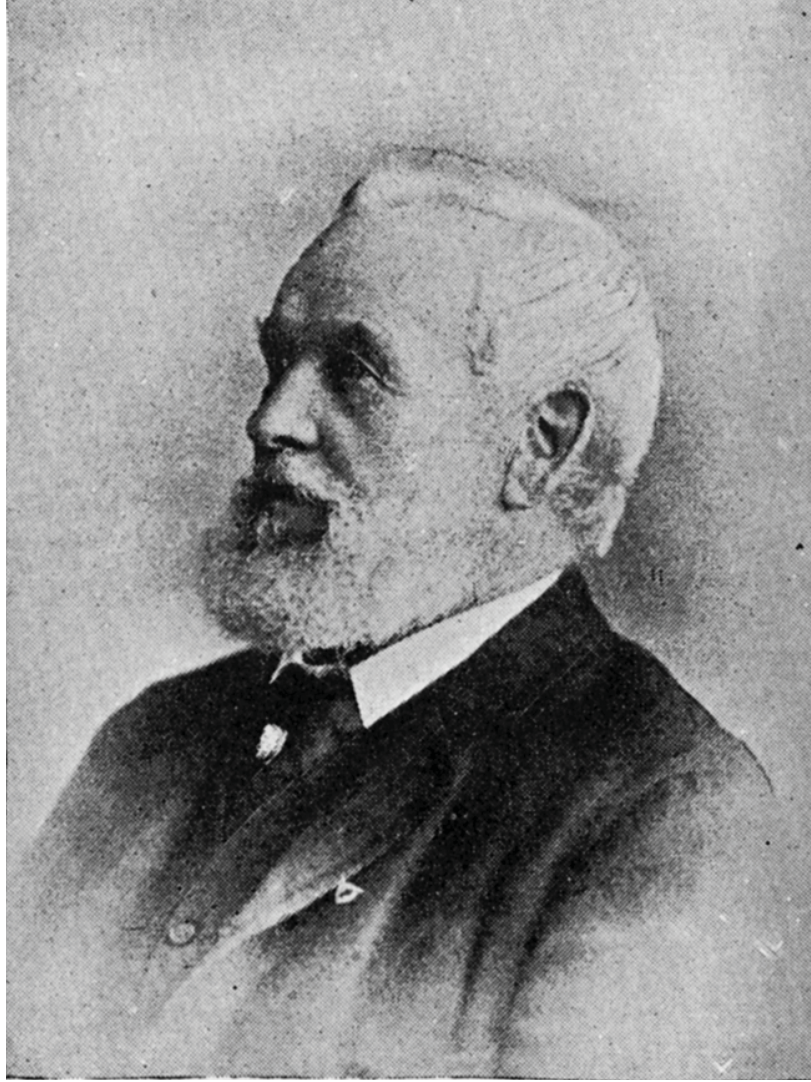
proved to be such a popular theme that we held the same party for three consecutive years, making each year more extravagant than the last. The first year had Matt's funk band playing throughout the party, the second year we filled a large outdoor pool with blue gelatin for wrestling on the dance floor (which is a whole other story unto itself) and the third year we actually hired exotic dancers to perform in the picture window of my bedroom to the 200+ party guests filling the dance floor.

I enjoyed living in this loft and at this building. The people were nice. The neighbourhood was passably pleasant and the perceived distance to downtown was shortened by the fact that more retail stores and street life had crept farther west down Queen Street from the Spadina area. Conveniently, the streetcar stop was a 30 second walk to the corner of Abell street. This particular stretch was sprinkled with a number of tiny art galleries nestled between appliance stores and homegrown shops. Tanya and I often went to get Vietnamese from Rong Vang in the Country Site plaza -mostly for the spring rolls. Across from the plaza was the Gladstone, which even before its renovation was a popular local destination for karaoke on the weekend. The Price Chopper, our low-end grocery store was conveniently a block away to the North. Tanya frequented Woolfitt's Art Supply directly in front of Abell for her school projects at OCAD, Matt for his commission work. We would also go to Friendly's Grill, or the Queen Star cafe for cheap weekend brunch or to the Beaconsfield if we felt like splurging. I often saw indie band Broken Social Scene members at the Beaconsfield too. The small corner grocery stores were convenient places to get streetcar tickets, unless they were closed, in which case the 24 hour one in the plaza was a sure bet. Lot 16 was a small bar beside the Drake Hotel owned by long time Abell resident Penny Rose who also coordinated the event programming at the Gladstone. It was cheaper to drink there since we couldn't afford to make a habit of the \$14 martinis served at the Drake.

That summer I left Toronto to finish my bachelor degree. With the intent of returning to my loft in September, I sublet my room during the summer months. Little did I know that particular summer in West Queen West would signal several significant turning points for this unassuming neighbourhood.



Fig. A.24 Above, Hissing pipes in the west wing corridor.



The Legacy of John Abell

The Man

John Abell was an industrious man. He lived to the ripe old age of eighty-one, scarcely a year after selling his wildly profitable enterprise, The Abell Engine and Machine Works Company. Born in 1822 in Charlton Kings and trained as a machinist in Cheltenham, England, Abell immigrated to Canada around 1845¹.

He was initially employed at the Wood and Ethridge Company working on the production of wagon and stagecoaches located in Woodbridge in the County of Vaughan². Little time would pass before his passion for machining, inventing and an entrepreneurial drive eventually led him to establish the Woodbridge Agricultural Works merely four years later.

By the mid-1860's Abell had not only established a thriving enterprise manufacturing farming equipment, the name 'John Abell' became synonymous with the manufacture of a high quality product in Canada. He was particularly well known for his award-winning Horse Powered Threshing Machine, which earned accolades at annual Provincial Fairs in Ontario. One company ad in *The Daily Globe* boasted that his "patent gearing proved itself, beyond a doubt, the best ever offered."³

Fig. 1.1 *Opposite*, John Abell.

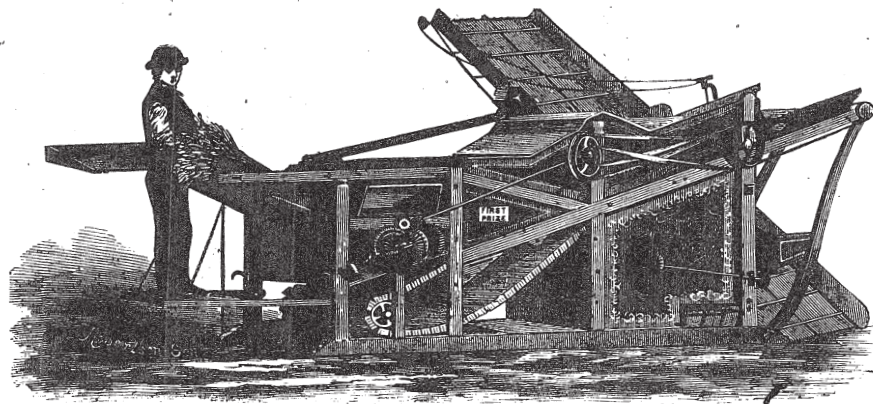
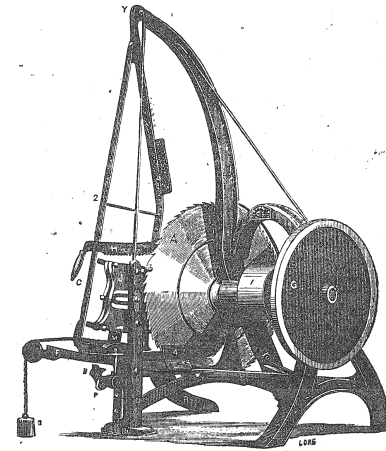
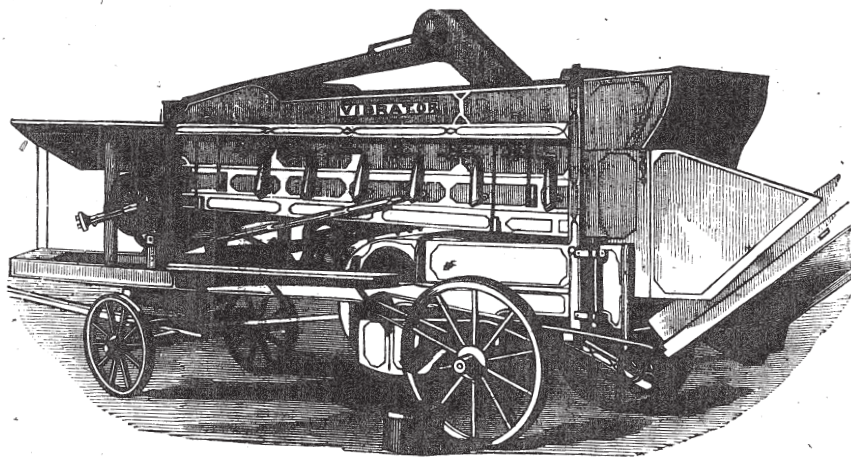


Fig. 1.2 *Above left*, Vibrator Threshing Machine.

Fig. 1.3 *Above right*, Law's Patent Combined Shingle and Heading Machine.

Fig. 1.4 *Lower left*, Horse-Power Threshing Machine.

This well-known patent gearing however was the subject of contention for some time in the late 1860's. In several newspaper notices entitled "The 'Berwick or Abell' Threshing Gear," Abell warns the public of patent infringements with respect to claims made by his competitor Mr. F. W. Glen against the validity of his gear patents in 1868.⁴ However, this wouldn't be his last time in court defending the matter of his patent gear, which he fought adamantly to protect.

The patent was later contested in chancery by Mr. Alexander Macpherson of Macpherson, Glasgow & Co. During these proceedings, Abell's improved threshing gear is described in detail as incorporating "spur and bevel gearing -so arranged on one side of the threshing machine as to combine the greatest force within the smallest compass. Originally such machines were driven by a bolting passing around a band-wheel attached to the rod of the cylinder."⁵ While these threshing gear improvements were acknowledged by the judge to be superior to typical gears at the time, they were also already known to be in use and manufactured by several other companies. John Abell however was the only one who had applied for and obtained the patent in 1859. This situation in turn was cause for much frustration among his competitors. Abell's patent monopoly gave him the right to prosecute others over these infringement rights for close to a decade. After three days of deliberation in chancery in 1870, it was decided that his patent gear would no longer be protected under Patent Law and that changes would be made toward free trade in the farming community.⁶

Unscathed by this controversy, the Woodbridge Agricultural Works continued to produce award-winning agricultural implements under John Abell's ownership. In 1871, he introduced a thresher adapted for steam worked by a steam engine, which would be the only one on the floor at the Provincial Exhibition in Kingston, Ontario that year, where he was awarded the prize for superior excellence among a plethora of other accolades.⁷ Another patented innovation on exhibit was a separator that had been adapted to cleanse the grain ready for market use.⁸ A Globe article noted the following in recounting the highlights of the West Riding

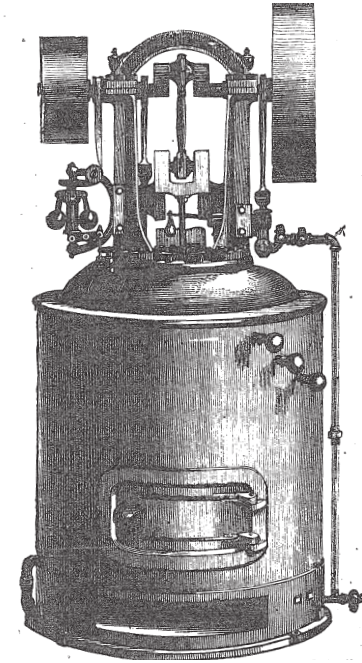

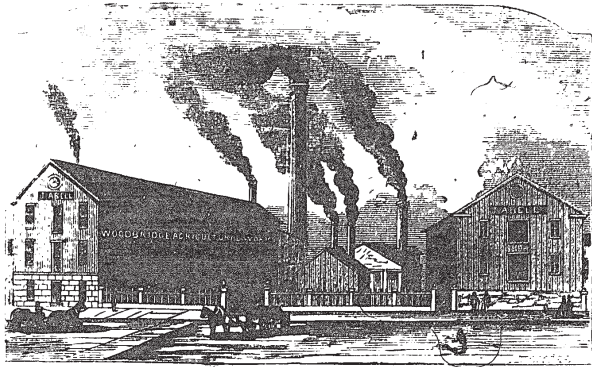


Fig. 1.5 Above, Engine and Boiler Combined.

ALL FORMER CATALOGUES ARE HEREBY CANCELLED.

1872.  1872.

ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE
OF
AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS & MACHINES
MANUFACTURED BY
JOHN ABELL.



WOODBIDGE AGRICULTURAL WORKS,
COUNTY YORK, ONTARIO, CANADA.

Established in 1849.

TORONTO:
GLOBE PRINTING COMPANY, 26 & 28 KING ST. EAST.
1872.

AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS AND MACHINES.

RESULTS OF LAST YEAR'S EXHIBITION.

I have much pleasure in drawing attention to the
UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS
—OF MY—
MACHINES AND IMPLEMENTS!

At the Provincial Exhibition at Kingston, against Most of
the Leading Makers of Canada.

My Threshing Machines have by their success there (under actual trial
on the ground,) fully confirmed the awards made THREE YEARS IN
succession at the previous Exhibitions of the Provincial Agricultural
Association, and have established beyond question their claim to be
considered the **MOST PERFECT MACHINES** of the day.

- Best Portable Steam Engine,—First Prize and Diploma, Kingston
Provincial Exhibition, 1871.
 - Best Steam Threshing Machine,—Extra Prize, Kingston Provincial
Exhibition, 1871.
 - Best Horse Power Threshing Machine,—First Prize and Diploma (15
machines entered for competition) Kingston Provincial Exhibition,
1871.
 - Best Mowing Machine,—First Prize and Diploma, (21 machines entered
for competition) Kingston Provincial Exhibition, 1871.
 - Best Clover Threshing Machine,—First Prize, Kingston Provincial
Exhibition, 1871.
 - Best Totman Sawing Machine (2 or 4 horses),—First Prize, Kingston
Provincial Exhibition, 1871.
 - Best Land Roller and Clod Crusher Combined,—First Prize, Kingston
Provincial Exhibition, 1871.
 - Best Ditching Machine,—First Prize, Kingston Provincial Exhibition,
1871.
- BEING A MUCH LARGER NUMBER OF FIRST PRIZES THAN
WAS AWARDED ANY OTHER MANUFACTURER.

of York and Vaughan Agricultural Exhibition's implements section:

In this department John Abell, the proprietor of the Woodbridge Agricultural Works, was, of course, in every respect the chief exhibitor. In fact, his excellent implements almost made up this part of the exhibition. As specimens of Woodbridge workmanship and enterprize were to be seen from the portable steam-engine shown at Kingston driving his improved threshing machine. Their steam engine is about eight horsepower, and appears admirably adapted for general use on the farm. Then there were two threshers and separators, one adapted from steam, the other for horse-power. These threshers are provided with a revolving grate behind the cylinder, and with the newly patented side elevator, which subjects the grain to a thorough cleaning.⁹

While the grain threshers and separators were his most noteworthy implements at the time, Abell manufactured an array of other farming equipment such as ploughs, grain crushers, boilers, saws, and mowers all shown in his 1872 catalogue. His production line was highly popular across Canada, addressing the needs unique to each region. By the late 1890's he had designed straw burning boilers specifically for engines in Western Canada and wood burning boilers meant for Ontario and Eastern provinces.¹⁰

In March of 1874, Abell's enterprise was met with catastrophe. A notorious group of American thieves committed an act of breaking and entering at the Woodbridge Agricultural Works premises. A man claiming to be selling pictures had entered many upscale Woodbridge homes earlier in the day. He also stopped by John Abell's business, seeming at the time more interested in scrutinizing the office rather than pushing the sale of his pictures. That night, an explosion was heard at two o'clock in the morning. It was the sound of the safe on the premises being blown open by the burglars who proceeded to set fire to the building before fleeing the scene. Hundreds of thousands of dollars in machinery at the Woodbridge Agricultural Works were entirely destroyed by the fire, which also meant that 150 men were out of work.¹¹ In spite of this great setback, John Abell published an ad scarcely two days later thanking the community for their support and his workers for helping him save his valuable patterns. He also expressed his intentions to complete orders for select machinery since a portion of the works would soon be up and running.¹²

Fig. 1.6 *Opposite left*, Cover of John Abell's 1872 Woodbridge Agricultural Works catalogue.

Fig. 1.7 *Opposite right*, John Abell's published accolades included in his 1972 catalogue on page 5.

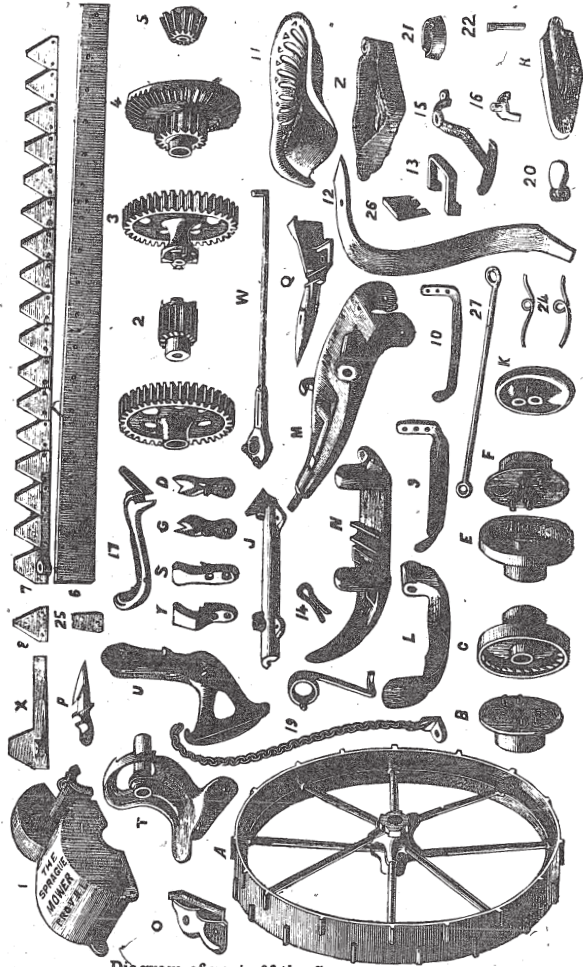


Diagram of parts of the Sprague Mower.

PRICE LIST OF EXTRAS.

WE ALWAYS HAVE THE FOLLOWING EXTRAS ON HAND AND IN THE HANDS OF OUR AGENTS:

A Driving Wheels	\$8 00	15 Shipper Lever	\$0 60
B Ratchet Box Cover, left	1 10	16 Shipper Saddle	20
C Ratchet Box, left	1 10	17 Bar Holder	1 75
D Pawl	12	18 Lifting Chain	50
E Ratchet Box Cover, right	1 10	19 Lifting Lever Spring	30
F Ratchet Box, right	1 10	20 Oil Cup Cover	05
G Pawl	12	21 Axle Washer	05
Ratchet Box complete	2 60	22 Linch Pin	05
Ratchet Box Key	05	23 Pawl Spring, right	05
H Frame	15 00	24 Pawl Spring, left	05
I Frame Cover	2 25	25 Guard Plate	10
J Crank Shaft Cap	1 50	26 Wedge for Seat Spring	20
K Balance Wheel	1 25	27 Draught Rod	40
Balance Wheel, with pin	2 00	Cutter Bar complete	20 00
L Crank Fender	1 00	Crank Shaft	2 25
M Hinge Joint	3 25	Crank Shaft complete	5 00
N Inside Shoe	3 25	with gear	
Inside Shoe complete	5 00	Back Shaft	2 25
O Scythe Head Holder	30	Hinge Joint Brace comp.	1 00
P Guard Finger	50	Rivets, per lb.	40
Q Outside Shoe	2 00	Rod to hold Cover	20
Outside Shoe complete	2 75	Washer on Pole	05
R Track Clearer Iron	70	Washer on Crank Pin	10
S Outside Scythe Button	12	Set Screws for false Shoe	10
T Ratchet Stand	1 25	Inside Shoe Bolts	15
U Lever Ratchet	1 00	Outside Shoe Bolts	10
V Brace Socket	40	Guard Bolts	08
W Pitman	3 00	Bolts for Crank Shaft Cap	12
X Scythe Head	80	Ratchet Stand Bolts	25
Y Inside Scythe Button	12	Pole Bolts	20
Z Tool Box	1 50	Pole Irons	25
1 Spur Gear	1 75	Main Gear Pin	12
2 Spur Pinion	1 25	Pole	3 00
3 Spur Gear	1 75	Neck Yoke	1 50
4 Bevel Gear	2 25	Evener	1 25
5 Bevel Pinion	70	Whiffletree	75
6 Finger Bar, 4 feet	6 50	Track Clearer	1 50
7 Scythe complete, 4 feet	6 00	Lifting Lever	30
8 Section	20	Monkey Wrench	1 00
9 Inside Shoe Spring	1 00	Cold Chisel	15
10 Outside Shoe Spring	60	Punch	15
11 Seat	1 75	Oil Cup	25
12 Seat Spring	1 75	Draught Rod Bolt thro' Pole	12
13 Seat Spring Holder	30	Scythe Heads complete	50
14 Spring Key	50	Bushing	

When ordering Extra Parts send the Number of the Machine.

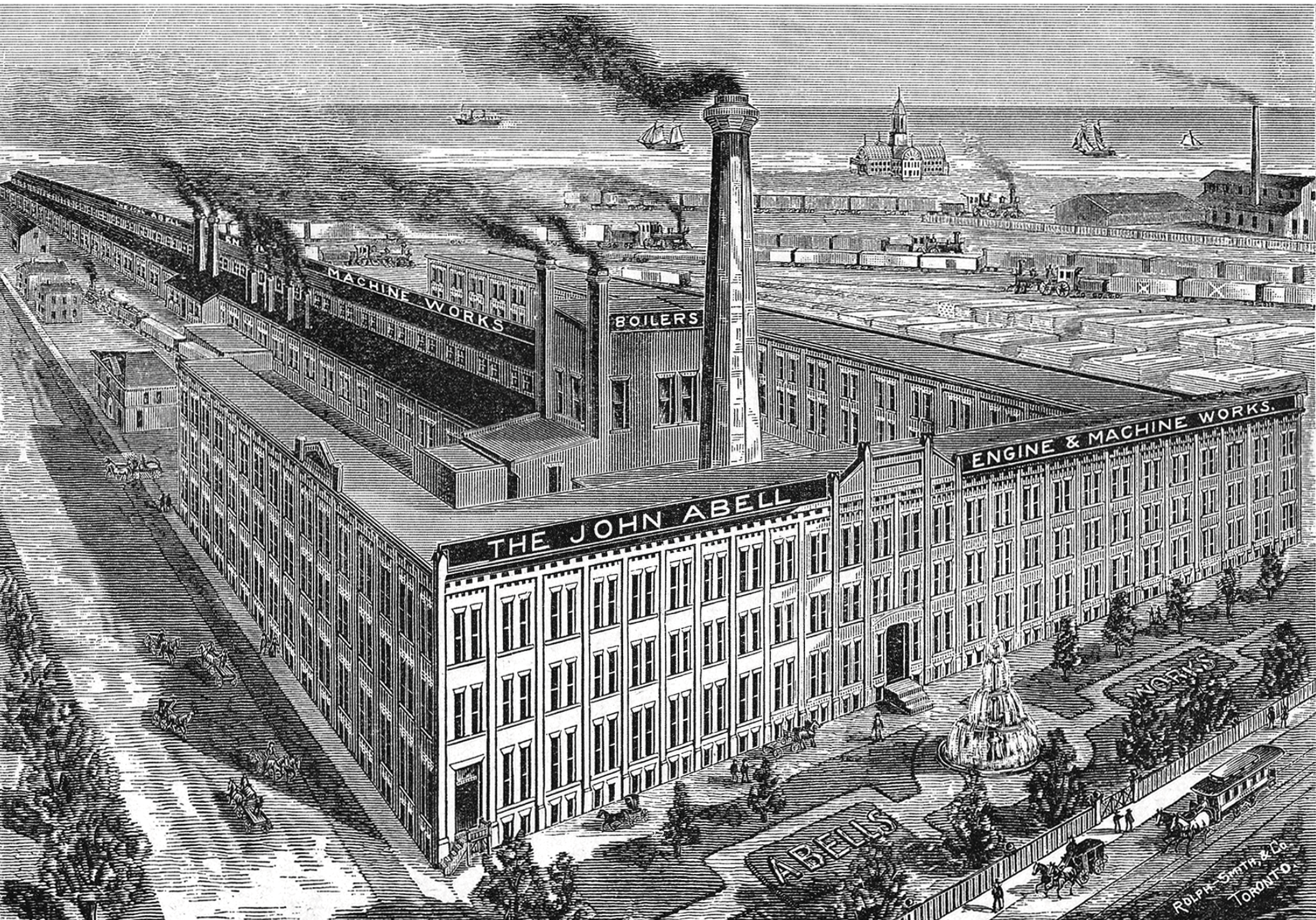
Abell continued to be honoured for the design and performance of his agricultural machinery at shows such as Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition in 1876¹³ and Toronto's Industrial Exhibition in 1880 while steadily making improvements to his patented machinery and production line.¹⁴ Winning the gold medal for his portable engine design at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 was Abell's most notable industry accomplishment.¹⁵

While John Abell's business portfolio had earned him wide recognition in the manufacturing industry, he was also deeply involved in his community and well respected beyond Woodbridge. He was a long-standing member and then president of the West York Agricultural Society from 1874 to 1886 after serving as president of the Vaughan Agricultural Society for the previous thirteen years. Mr. Abell was also a Justice of the Peace since 1870 and was elected as Reeve of Woodbridge in 1883,¹⁶ a responsibility similar to being the mayor of a town. Such were his achievements that a medal was awarded to John Abell by Her Royal Highness Princess Louise, wife of Canada's Governor General at the time, presented at the Senate Chamber in Ottawa in 1879.¹⁷

The town of Woodbridge would soon feel the loss of such a prominent community leader and key economic driver for the area. This loss would be Toronto's gain as John Abell made plans to relocate his operations to the Western boundary of the city after purchasing seven acres of land near the Canadian Industrial Exhibition grounds where his machinery was showcased each year.

Fig. 1.8 *Opposite left*, Diagram parts of the Sprague Mower from the 1972 catalogue.

Fig. 1.9 *Opposite right*, Price List of Extras from the 1972 catalogue.



THE JOHN ABELL

MACHINE WORKS

BOILERS

ENGINE & MACHINE WORKS

ABELLS

ROBERT SMITH & Co
TORONTO

The Building

The book *Industries of Canada*, describing Toronto's "prominent places and people [and] representative merchants and manufacturers,"¹⁹ was published in 1886, making mention of John Abell and his new works. Enormous pride was taken in the built environment of Canadian cities at this time. The above quote is evidence of the value placed on quality construction embedded in the public's collective unconscious. Businessmen proudly placed their name on the architecture representing their business. Every kind of construction, no matter how utilitarian, was not only executed to a high level of quality, it was also built to last.

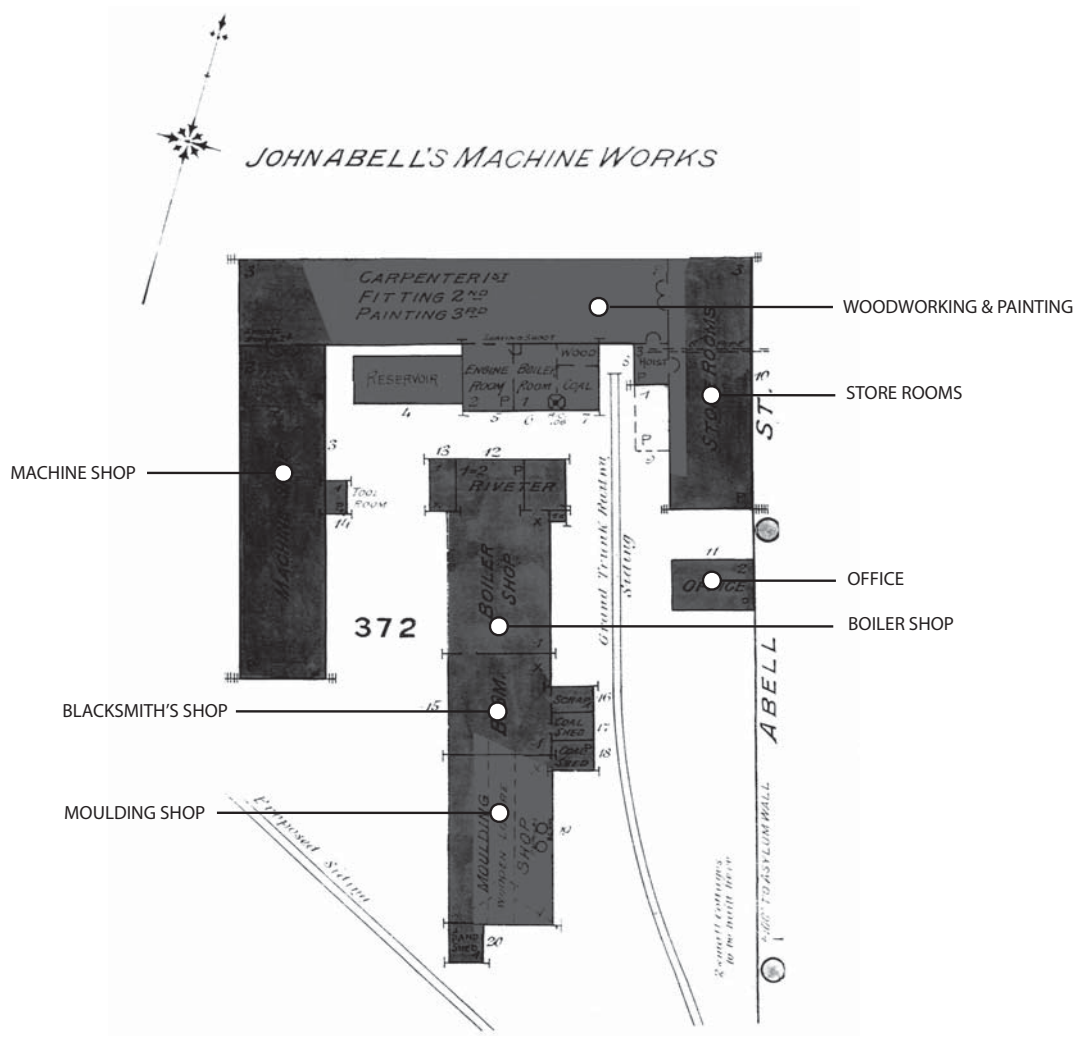
Over the course of three to four years, John Abell, now in his early sixties, would oversee the construction of his new manufacturing headquarters west of the Provincial Lunatic Asylum (now the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health) and east of the railway tracks on the south side of Queen Street West near Dufferin Street. The proximity of the railways was no doubt strategic for John Abell who capitalized on the ability to ship his goods directly from his private switches out to various clients across the country. The new location would also be adorned with a brand new company name: The John Abell Engine & Machine Works Company. At this time, the company was making the transition to production of a larger proportion of engines and boilers but was still enhancing the agricultural equipment owing to Abell's earlier success. *Industries of Canada* glowingly describes John Abell as "possessed of remarkable energy and perseverance, and combines with a keen insight into the requirements of the times a readiness of adaptation."²⁰

Fig. 1.10 *Opposite*, The John Abell Engine and Machine Works.

*"Recognizing the need of some work which would give a comprehensive and intelligent knowledge of the Toronto of to-day and the place she justly occupies, the publishers have no hesitancy in placing it in the hands of the public, believing that no volume heretofore issued contains so great an amount of useful information. The design of the work is not only to acquaint the people of Toronto with what properly belongs to their city and its material growth, but to place with them a convenient work of reference of such character that its distribution abroad will be a matter of interest to all."*¹⁷

Industries of Canada, 1886

Plan of John Abell's Engine and Machine Works





The formal opening of the works June 10th, 1886 was a lavish occasion with many prominent figures in attendance as well as all of John Abell's employees. In particular, the Lieutenant Governor Lorne, the Attorney General, members of Toronto's City Council as well as Toronto's mayor, at that time Mayor Howland, and members of the press.²¹ In the *Globe and Mail*, one journalist noted:

The buildings which Mr. Abell has erected are of a most substantial kind, and are built of red brick. They are somewhat in the shape of a hollow square, each building being about 300 feet long. One portion is devoted to woodworking; another to machinery, where planers, drills, punches, etc. are manufactured, another for painting purposes. Power for the works is furnished by a new compound 300 horse-power engine with an automatic cut-off, the only one of its kind in Ontario. The great dry-wheel of this great piece of machinery weighs ten tons. In a corner of the same compartment stands a little rusty seven horse-power engine, the first which Mr. Abell built for his own use about 40 years ago.²²

Fig. 1.12 1884 drawing of Toronto showing Abell's works (left) relative to the rail corridor and local institutions in a sparsely populated area.

Fig. 1.11 *Opposite*, The John Abell Engine and Machine Works plan showing main programmatic components of its initial construction.

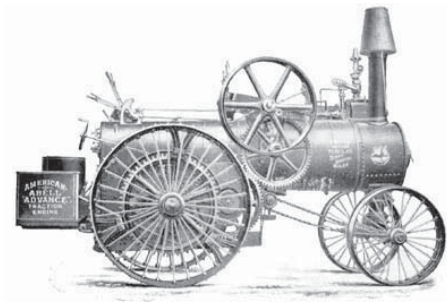


Fig. 1.13 *Top left*, Side view of the 'Advance' steam engine.

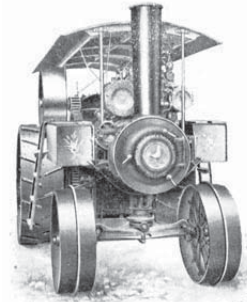


Fig. 1.14 *Top middle*, Front view of the 'Advance' steam engine.

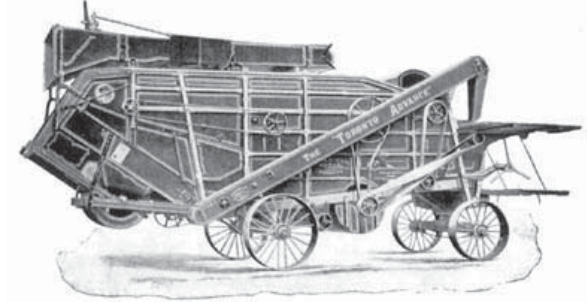


Fig. 1.15 *Top right*, 'Toronto Advance' grain separator.

At the time of the opening, Abell was completing an order of steel casters for repeat clients, Canadian distillers, Gooderham and Worts for their expansive grounds in the East end of Toronto,²³ an area now known as The Distillery District. John Abell also produced the boilers at the Ontario Legislature in Queen's Park Toronto several years later. At this time, the works were producing a much more sophisticated line of machinery than when he first started the company. The "Triumph" was a popular portable engine make, while the "Toronto Advance" thresher was designed particularly for the Manitoba trade and as such, sold extremely well in that market. The "New Toronto" was the latest in grain separators attracting much attention at the Chicago World's Fair, however it was the "Victor" clover huller design that was deemed to be "easily the best in the world"²⁴ by those judging the agricultural implements that year. Similarly, his work is mentioned glowingly in the 1886 edition of *Industries of Canada*, a publication highlighting Ontario's achievements in architecture and the most noteworthy commercial figures of the day, elucidating

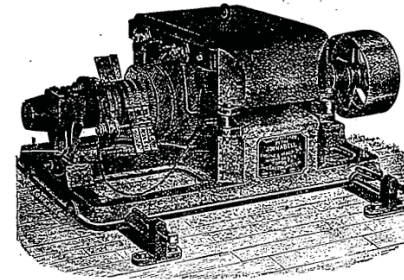
The portable engines of Mr. Abell occupy the highest position in Canada. The superiority of his engines is derived not only from excellence of workmanship and skill in construction, but also from the use and control of various patents which he holds exclusively, that enable him to manufacture and offer for sale a portable engine which is, beyond a doubt unequalled in Canada.²⁵

After investing his entire life in his company, Abell's ailing health had left him little choice but to sell his enterprise in 1902. At this time, the types of machinery being shipped out along the company's own rail sidings had expanded to include locomotives, passenger cars, rail appliances and complete rigs of saw mill engines and machinery.²⁶ In an impressive prospectus published in *The Daily Globe* that February, The Abell Engine and Machine Works Company was making annual net profits of nearly \$40,000 in each of its previous three years in operation and had an asking price of \$1 million dollars which, in today's market, would be equivalent to over \$23 million dollars in value. In the sale, the buyer would also acquire the rights to all of the original Canadian patents and rights owned by John Abell including the famous 'Cock 'O the North' thresher that had become a best seller in Canada after being introduced in 1898.²⁷ The works employed over 150 workers, including John's younger brother (16 years his junior) Henry Abell who was now managing the company.

Since 1876, John Abell's steam and traction engines had placed first in every single contested trial at exhibitions in Canada and in so doing received 29 first prizes and 13 gold medals. His machinery also earned first prizes in all foreign competition ever entered. Interestingly, additional to the array of accolades received from these various exhibitions and shows, his machines were also selected exclusively by the Canadian and Ontario governments for use on their experimental farms.²⁸

At this point, four and a half acres of land remained from the original seven bought by Abell when he first moved his works to Toronto. The street running south into the property was named Abell Street after him and has remained so beyond the next century to this day. An interesting argument made by one article written about the sale of the works in 1902 indicated that "the property of the new company is unusually well-located in a section of Toronto where property is rapidly rising in value,"²⁹ an assertion that would not be made again for over a hundred years.

**WE MANUFACTURE THE
EASTON SYSTEM of ELECTRICAL MACHINERY**



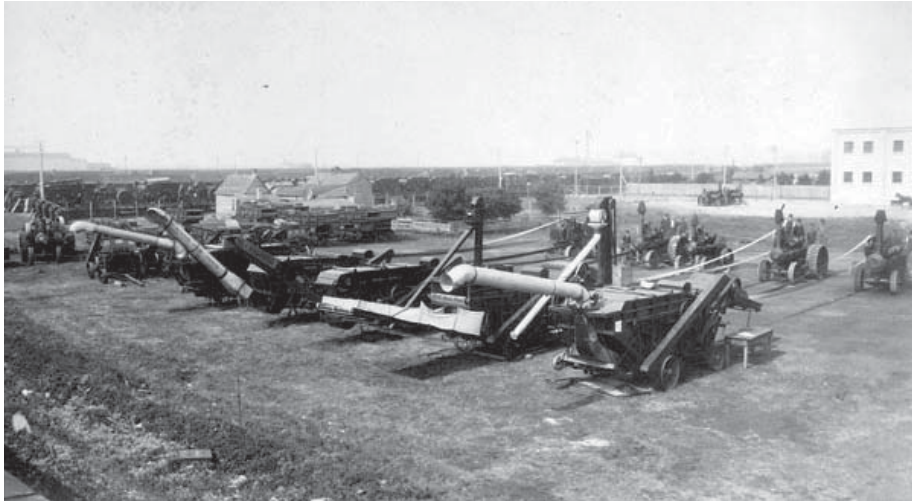
EASTON CONSTANT POTENTIAL DYNAMO.

The ABELL AUTOMATIC ENGINE was awarded
a Medal and Diploma Wor.d's Fair, Chicago, 1893.
The John Abell Engine & Machine Works Co., L'rd.
TORONTO - ONTARIO - CANADA.

Fig. 1.16 Above, The Easton Constant Potential Dynamo, 1893 Chicago World's Fair gold medal winner.

THE LATE MR. ABELL.

John Abell, whose lamented death took place on Friday night, was a man of singularly engaging personality. He had a strong scientific bent and exceptional mechanical aptitude. He was by nature an inventor and by temperament a student, but he was, unlike many others of like endowments, comparatively unconcerned about the pecuniary aspect of his enterprises. His main interest in his work was not the amount of money he could make out of it but the amount of good he could accomplish by relieving the toilers through the improvement of the implements with which they have to work. It would be a mistake to describe him as unbusinesslike in his methods, for he was a successful industrial operator; but to those who knew him well he was much more than that. He was, in spite of his modesty, a charming conversationist, because of his keen sagacity, intellectual originality, and generous sympathies. He was a conspicuous example of the enterprising capitalist who successfully resists the narrowing and hardening tendency of intense application to mechanical or commercial pursuits.



John Abell's health deteriorated into the next year and he passed away on August 7th, 1903 in his eighty-first year. He was survived only by his wife Ellen, two nephews and his brother Henry, who continued to assist in managing the company after its sale in the previous year. The funeral was held at his residence at 5 Madison Avenue followed by a procession to Woodbridge's Christ Church Cemetery where he is buried.³⁰ His legacy was that of a man with determination, innovation and a large roster of great honours and success to his name. Abell not only contributed to but also effectively led the development of agricultural equipment and machinery in Canada for well over half a century. It was because of Abell that this country was distinguished above others at international exhibitions in this industry. Forty-Eight Abell Street was a relic of this legacy and this era, one that has endured for much longer than John Abell's memory. Interestingly, an entrepreneurial spirit at his former factory continues to persist to this day.

Fig. 1.17 *Opposite*, John Abell's obituary published in *The Globe* on August 10th, 1903.



Fig. 1.18 *Above left*, Line-up of John Abell agricultural machinery.

Fig. 1.19 *Above right*, Shipment of threshers leaving 48 Abell Street on the private railway switch.



Fig. 1.20 *Above left*, American-Abell steam engine



Fig. 1.21 *Above right*, Detail of American-Abell steam engine's embossed trademark.

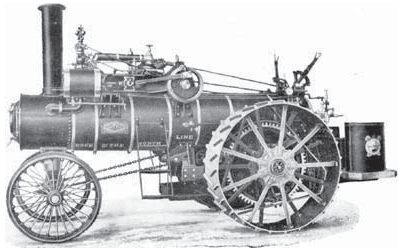


Fig. 1.22 American-Abell 26 hp 'Cock O' the North' Western type straw burning traction engine.

The Company

The company, the building, its property and the Abell Engine and Machine Works' holdings were sold to an American company after being on the market for only two months in 1902.³¹ The Advance Thresher Works, an agricultural company based in Battle Creek, Michigan, purchased and re-branded the Toronto enterprise to become the American-Abell Engine and Thresher Company Ltd, and kept the works running in order to gain access to the Canadian market. This meant doing away with paying duty over the American border for Canadian shipments, a great competitive advantage for a company based in the United States.³²

Despite this major shift in ownership, the Abell works continued to produce many of its original patented gear and machinery. The Toronto plant continued producing the 'Cock O' the North' threshers until the next merger acquisition took place in 1912 when the Advance Thresher Works and American-Abell were both bought out by The M. Rumely Company based in Laporte, Indiana along with the Gaar-Scott Company plant in Richmond, Indiana, US. The Abell location in Toronto was one of three companies bought out in a \$23 million dollar

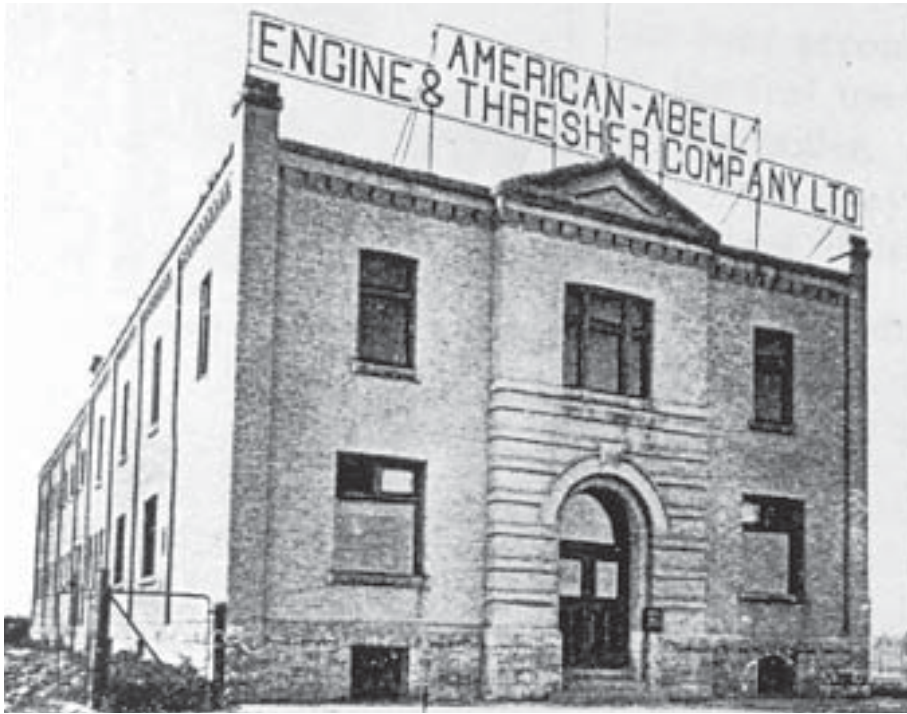


Fig. 1.23 *Above*, Poster for the popular Cock O' the North threshers.

Fig. 1.24 *Left*, American-Abell Engine and Thresher Company Ltd.

merger by the M. Rumely Company; its output capacity doubled as well as its workforce, growing to 450 men.³³ Seeing as the Canadian agricultural market was so lucrative, running a Canadian manufacturing plant like the Abell works meant the opportunity for an American company to make a worthy profit, especially from the Prairie farmers.³⁴ Additions to suit this expansion can be noted in the Goad's plans of Toronto as the grounds became more substantial and the city continued to grow around it, shown in figures 2.21 and 2.23.



Fig. 1.25 Above, 1926 photo inside 48 Abell Street while under ownership of the Rumely Company.

Market conditions were not favourable after the Rumely acquisitions, and the company struggled financially. After some restructuring the company was renamed Advance-Rumely Thresher Co. in 1914. The works at 38, 48, 50 and 58 Abell Street continued to manufacture under the new Rumely umbrella as the Canadian Rumely Company, Ltd. However instead of agricultural machinery produced steel channels, angles, sheets, and plates, as well as bolts, rivets and fittings since all thresher production was moved to Battle Creek, Michigan.³⁵

In 1920, operations were consolidated to Rumely's original location in Laporte, Indiana³⁶ and the Toronto plant was put up for sale, at this time simply known as the 'Rumely Buildings'. Subsequently, new ads appeared in Toronto's *Globe* newspaper in the early 1920's wishing to rent 30,000 square feet of space to other like manufacturers. A.B. Orsmy produced metal shingles and siding as well as prefabricated garages and cottages at 58 Abell Street and 48 Abell Street in the 1910's and 1920's³⁷, while Eaton Flooring milled hardwood floors out of 50 Abell Street during the 1920's and into the 1930's.³⁸ Meanwhile, the Advance-Rumely Thresher Company was bought by Allis-Chalmers of Milwaukee, makers of tractors, in 1931 after the stock market crash.³⁹

A company called Structural Plate and Steel was located at 48 Abell Street for a few decades after the Second World War followed by large food packing companies in the 1970's. Over the next 20 years, a plethora of Toronto manufacturers concurrently rented space at 48 Abell Street including publishing houses, pattern makers and companies that made toys, dolls, ceramics, signs, wood products, steel and metal, as well as cleaning product suppliers.

In the 1970's and 1980's the manufacturing sector in North American cities began to decline as its industries followed the middle class to the suburban periphery. And as cultural ideologies began to shift, these vacancies created a vacuum for a housing typology that never before existed: the loft.

1. Graeme Mercer. *Toronto, Old and New: A Memorial Volume, Historical, Descriptive and Pictorial. Coles Canadiana Collection.* Toronto: Coles, 1974, 186.
2. Jack C. Norbeck "American-Abell Engine and Thresher Co. Ltd." *Steam Traction*, March/April, 1987. <http://www.steamtraction.com/archive/4156/> (accessed October 23, 2008).
3. "Agricultural Works," *The Daily Globe*, July 1, 1864, 3.
4. "Berwick or Abell' Threshing Gear," *The Daily Globe*, January 9, 1868, 3.
5. "Threshing Machines in Chancery," *The Daily Globe*, March 9, 1870, 4.
6. Ibid, 4.
7. "The Provincial Exhibition," *The Daily Globe*, September 29, 1871, 4.
8. "York and Vaughan Agricultural Exhibition," *The Daily Globe*, October 21, 1871, 4.
9. Ibid.
10. H. S. Turner, "Canadian Notes: The American Abell Machinery." *Steam Traction Magazine*, September/October, 1951. <http://www.steamtraction.com/archive/2/> (accessed October 22, 2008)
11. "The Woodbridge Fire," *The Daily Globe*, March 17, 1874, 1.
12. "Card of Thanks," *The Daily Globe*, March 19, 1874, 3.
13. "The Centennial Exhibition," *The Daily Globe*, May 25, 1876, 2.
14. "The Industrial Exhibition," *The Daily Globe*, September 8, 1880, 6.
15. "Easton System of Electrical Machinery," *The Globe*, August 31, 1895, 3.
16. "The Municipal Elections," *The Globe*, January 3, 1882, 9.
17. Graeme Mercer, *Toronto Old and New*, 186.
18. *Industries of Canada. Historical and Commercial Sketches, Toronto and Environs, its Prominent Places and People, Representative Merchants and Manufacturers.* Toronto: Bixby, 1886, 26.
19. Ibid, 24.
20. Ibid, 182.
21. "The John Abell Works: Formal Opening of a Flourishing Industry." *The Globe*, June 11, 1886, 8.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. "John Abell Engine & Machine Works Co.," *The Globe*, September 13, 1894, 7.
25. *Industries of Canada*, 182.
26. "Exhibitors at the Fair," *The Globe*, August 28, 1901, 7.
27. "John Abell Engine & Machine Co. Prospectus," *The Globe*, February 18, 1902, 8.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. "The Funeral of John Abell," *The Globe*, August 11, 1903, 12.
31. "Abell's Thresher Works Sold: An American Company Purchases the Local Plant." *The Globe*, May 2, 1902,
32. Ibid.
33. "Toronto Plant in New Merger: American Abell Co. Bought by Rumely Co." *The Globe*, January 4, 1912, 1.
34. "A Brief History of the Rumely Company: 1853-1931." *Rumely Collector's News & Steam Power.* <http://www.rumely.com/History.htm> (accessed February 2, 2009)
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. "Preston Portable Garages and Cottages." *The Globe*, May 5, 1921, 13.
38. "Hardware Flooring." *The Globe*, June 18, 1921.
39. H. S. Turner, "Canadian Notes: The American Abell Machinery." *Steam Traction Magazine*, September/October, 1951. <http://www.steamtraction.com/archive/2/> (accessed October 22, 2008)

Summer 2003

Where is Parkdale?

In the summer of 2003 I was working at an office in Toronto. It was the first time I ever lived in Toronto and had a great place in the central downtown area called the Annex. An e-mail went around the office one day from a colleague that sat behind me who had a few paintings on exhibit in a gallery inviting anyone to stop in and take a look. "Oh, where is that happening?" I asked him. He mentioned an area called Parkdale. "Oh, where is Parkdale?" I asked innocently before another co-worker interjected, "Where is Parkdale?" He sneered in a know it all voice. To the painter's sheepish amusement, he then proceeded to describe Parkdale's notorious reputation as a rough Toronto neighbourhood in the west end, describing it as seedy and dangerous and generally an undesirable place to find yourself in. After the impression I got from its description I resolved to forgo that particular invitation, it sounded kind of dangerous and I feared for my own safety. While I was curious about this gallery exhibit, it sounded to me like Parkdale wasn't a place that was worth going out of my way to see anyhow.



Urban Land Progression

Early Settlement

Around 1793 the framework that defined Toronto's major city street grid was laid in the division of land into 100-acre parcels running north from Lot Street (later Queen Street), the First Concession at that time. These lots were given to British Officials after York was declared the new capital of Upper Canada.¹ Three historically significant factors served to shape the development of the land in the area where John Abell relocated his business almost one century later. The first was the existence of Parkdale as an immediate adjacent municipality, the second factor influencing the area's urban progression was the Garrison Reserves, military land contained within the Town of York's (now Toronto) city limits, and the third was the arrival of the railways in the mid 1800's.

Fig. 2.1 *Opposite, Parkdale train 1914.*

S
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Map
of the
TOWNSHIP
OF
YORK

in the County of York
Upper Canada
1851

Compiled and Drawn by
J. A. Brown F.S.A. Civil Engineer & **D. P. Sawyer**
Toronto.

Approved & Printed by A. M. G. & Co. 1851

Parkdale

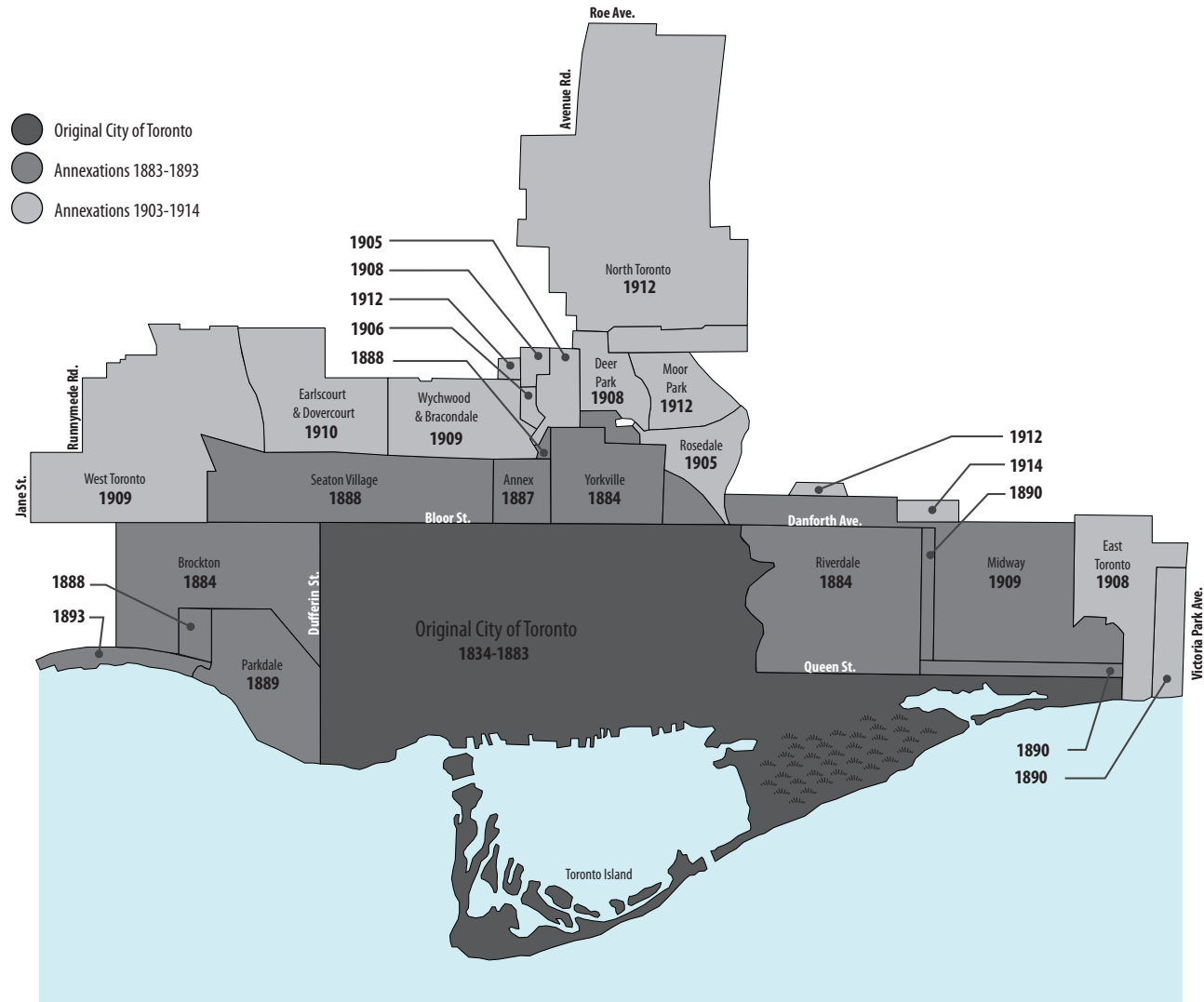
Throughout the 19th century, Parkdale, a village and then municipality in 1879, had a very separate identity from that of the rest of Toronto and East York townships. The boundaries enclosing Parkdale were Dufferin and Roncesvalles Streets on the east and west respectively, the Lake Shore to the south and the railway line to the north. The Village of Parkdale operated autonomously from Toronto, providing all of its own services to its residents, including sidewalks, the fire brigade, and the water supply and policing.² As well, a tollbooth existed for road users at Queen and Dufferin streets allowing passage into Toronto for commerce or out from Toronto for travel to nearby Hamilton and Niagara.³

In spite of its direct adjacency demarcated along the north-south axis of Dufferin Street, Parkdale's pretentious inhabitants considered their village, often referred to as the 'floral suburb', to be a rural haven from the city of Toronto. Several measures were taken to encourage beautification of the streets through extensive planting of trees and garden beds.⁴ The citizens of Parkdale were very concerned with their social stature relative to other villages and "had a reputation as being 'a village of very aristocratic pretensions ... austere, proud, and chaste' whose residents were escaping Toronto to establish a model community in the suburbs."⁵ Temperance was expected of Parkdale's citizens, which in fact prompted a bylaw restricting the sale of alcohol in the village for a time. Parkdale however, actually contained a largely working class population in spite of this elitist fanfare, many employed by the railway companies.

In 1879, the total assessed land value of Parkdale was second highest only to Yorkville among the eight villages at \$505,708 and over the next decade the number of homes multiplied along with its total assessed value rising to \$3,220,062 in 1888.⁶ As many other surrounding municipalities were annexed to Toronto, increasing pressure mounted for Parkdale's incorporation into the city, which was resisted vehemently by its local residents but encouraged by many landowners who did not live there. Interestingly, residents were against the probability of raised land values causing their property taxes to increase saying that annexation

Fig. 2.2 *Opposite*, 1851 Map of the Township of York showing concession division. The yellow outline is showing Toronto's city limits at that time.

Toronto Annexation



would only benefit ‘greedy land speculators’.⁷ At a population of 2000 and still averse to annexation, Parkdale would instead incorporate as a town in 1886, the same year John Abell unveiled his new engine and machine works building.⁸

Later that year the Queen streetcar line was extended from Ossington westward to Roncesvalles Avenue. This only strengthened Toronto’s pro-annexation position and officials continued to pursue negotiations on the annexation debate. One major obstacle to annexation however, was the mismanagement of Parkdale’s treasury, which had resulted in a significant amount of debt that Toronto refused to take on. In a controversial municipal vote, Parkdale was finally annexed to the City of Toronto in 1889. By this time Parkdale was already effectively surrounded by annexed municipalities and was soon found to have the lowest property values compared to the other wards in Toronto.⁹

Construction had slowed significantly until around the 1910’s when Parkdale became the recipient of a large proportion of Toronto’s mid-rise apartment houses. Toronto’s population reacted negatively to this type of housing construction likely comparing it to the squalid conditions found among the tenements of New York and London. Toronto City Council soon banned the construction of apartment houses in 1912 with unfounded allegations that they were ‘breeders of slums’.¹⁰ Parkdale was not in actuality a slum and many professionals had settled in the area in spite of this rhetoric. Even with the bylaw in place, many exceptions were made allowing for the building of apartment houses in Parkdale. Toronto’s perceived stigma associated with apartment houses negatively affected Parkdale’s neighbourhood reputation over many years. Meanwhile, because of the apartment ban, the emergence of the urban fabric throughout Toronto at large in the early 1900’s was devoid of density and comprised largely of single-family dwellings.

Fig. 2.3 *Opposite*, City of Toronto Annexation map.



Fig. 2.4 *Top*, Construction of streetcar tracks in 1890’s.

Fig. 2.5 *Bottom*, Parkdale apartment house on King Street West.



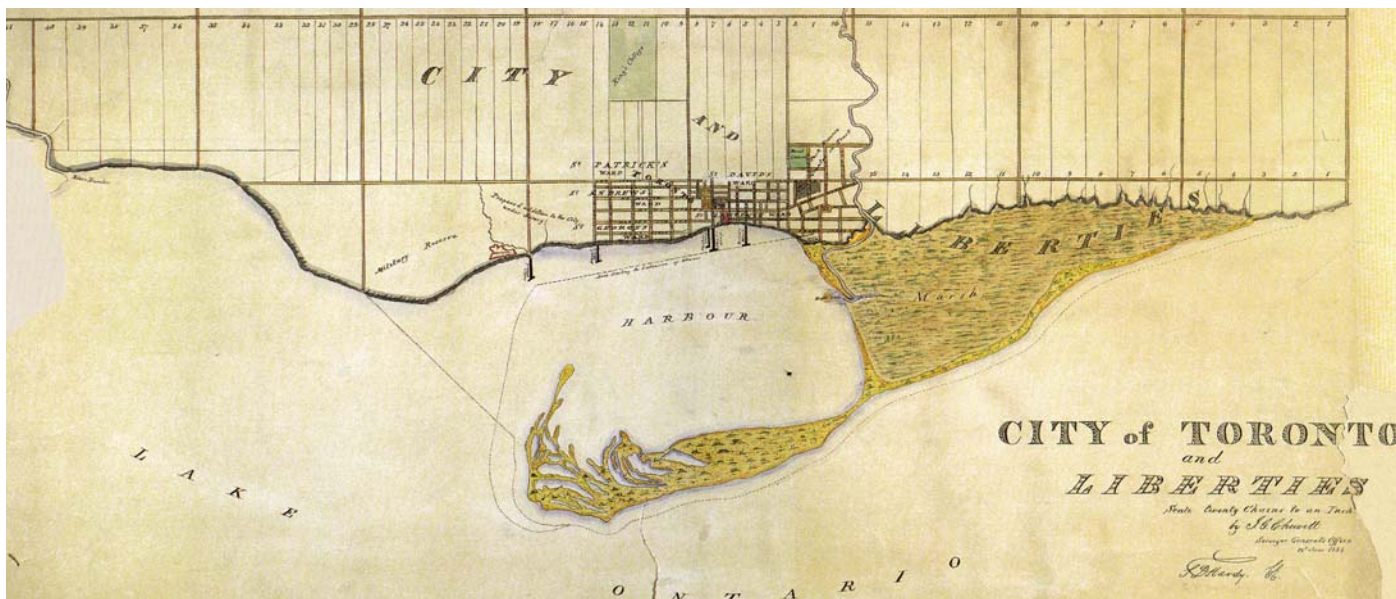
Over time, many of the estate owners' widows divided up their large estates into smaller units and throughout the 1930's their descendents; unable to maintain these large homes, converted many of them to rooming houses. Other long-time residents left the neighbourhood altogether,¹¹ but evidence suggests that Parkdale remained a fairly stable locality. The 1950's urban renewal projects saw the construction of a slew of high-rise apartment buildings;¹² in particular Jameson Avenue went from being a "quiet street of single-family homes' to a dense canyon of thirty apartment buildings."¹³ Also, construction of the Gardiner Expressway along the Lake Shore effectively severed Parkdale's access to the waterfront, which had begun with the digging of the railway along the lakeshore at the turn of the century. All of these endeavors resulted in the demolition of a large portion of Parkdale's Victorian homes.

Parkdale often absorbed many new residents from neighbouring institutions due to its stock of inexpensive rooming houses and apartments. These institutions included The Provincial Lunatic Asylum on Queen Street West, the Women's Reformatory on King Street West and the Central Prison near Strachan Avenue all east of Dufferin Street (see figure 1.12).¹⁴ Unfortunately Parkdale came to be labeled a slum because of this social diversity, especially when compared to the rest of Toronto, where nothing was being done to relieve the lack of affordable housing elsewhere in the city. In 1975, the 12 outpatient group homes and 11 nursing homes only accounted for around 10% of the area's total housing,¹⁵ therefore the ratio of affordable housing to market housing wasn't necessarily excessive. These factors all contributed to a perceived demise in the overall stability of Toronto's west end neighbourhoods which revitalization projects were meant to address at the end of the 20th century.

Fig. 2.6 *Top*, Typical Victorian housing in Parkdale.

Fig. 2.7 *Middle*, 1950's high-rise apartment buildings along Jameson Ave. in Parkdale.

Fig. 2.8 *Bottom*, Railway construction in South Parkdale.



The Garrison Reserve

The Garrison Reserve was a significant piece of land devoted entirely to military use in early to mid-1800.¹⁶ Initially it occupied all of the land south of the first concession stopping west of Toronto's downtown at Peter street. The map in figure 2.9, shows the military reserve to be bounded by Dufferin St. to the west and the Garrison Creek (now Niagara street) on the East, Queen Street West to the north and the Lake Shore to the south as more western property was added to the city. Unlike many of the properties surrounding the Crown Land, which had developed residentially, the Garrison Reserve remained intact as undeveloped land for much of the 19th century. The only exceptions were the military forts already built near the lakeshore and the Stanley Barracks built in 1841.¹⁷

Fig. 2.9 Above, City of Toronto and Liberties in 1834 showing the Garrison Reserves for military and defence uses. This was also the year that York incorporated as the city of Toronto.



Fig. 2.10 Above, The site of Toronto's first Crystal Palace exhibition hall was later bought by the Massey Harris Company in 1880.

Around 1845, fifty acres of this land was granted for use by the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, which was completed five years later. These grounds were reduced to a smaller area as the City of Toronto grew and other industries moved into the area. John Abell purchased seven acres of the contiguous land west of the institution, around 1880. In the same year, the Massey Harris Company, a manufacturer of tractors, and the Bridge Company, also bought several acres of land each adjacent to the Asylum grounds' southern boundary.¹⁸ Today the original grounds are still in use under the new name of Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, currently undergoing significant transformation to reintegrate itself into the surrounding city fabric.

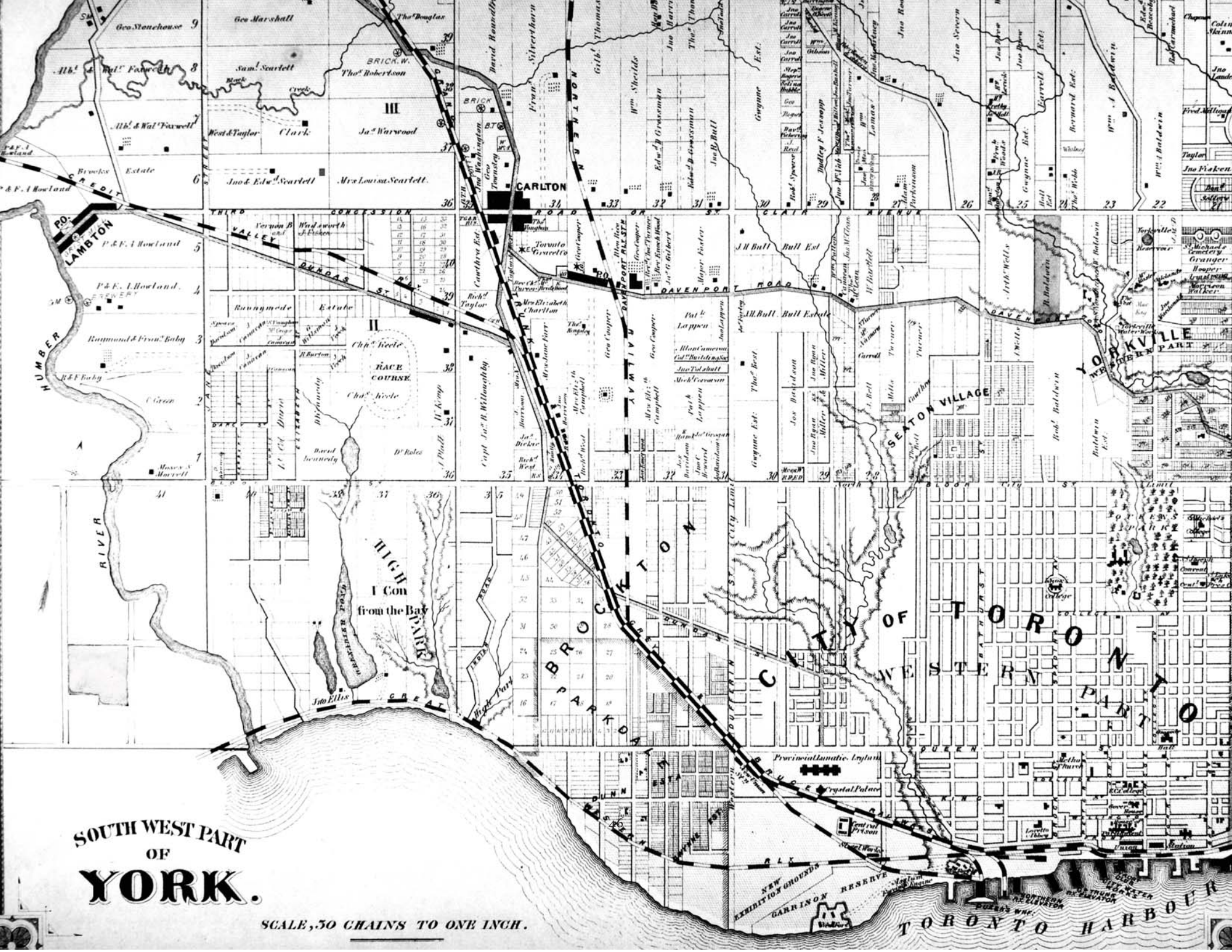
The land immediately south of the asylum was Toronto's first site for the annual Provincial Exhibition, a fair serving to promote and exhibit agriculture, horticulture, the arts and industries. The Provincial Agricultural Association and the Board for Agriculture for Canada West organized the exhibition to occur in a different city across the province each year.¹⁹ John Abell participated in this provincial event and was regularly awarded prizes for the design of his many agricultural implements.

Toronto's exhibition building was the Crystal Palace, built in 1858 and designed after Joseph Paxton's lauded Crystal Palace building in Hyde Park, London. However, "by the time Toronto was awarded the 1878 provincial fair, the city had deemed the site inadequate to handle increasing crowds."²⁰ With much protest from other Ontario cities, what is now known as the Canadian National Exhibition Grounds in Toronto became the permanent home for this annual fair after the city arranged a lease with the federal government for the Garrison land between the lakeshore and the railway corridor running parallel to it. The first annual Toronto Industrial Exhibition occurred in 1879 in a larger Crystal Palace built with much of the old building's ironwork incorporated into the newer exhibition hall.²¹



Aside from being home to the Women's Reformatory and the Central Prison, the land between the CNE grounds north to Queen Street was relegated largely to industrial uses as the CNE sold off its land to fund the expansion of its growing complex of buildings.²² The heavily industrial uses brought into being a vernacular of large brick factory buildings in this area, in sharp contrast to neighbouring Parkdale's fine-grained residential urban fabric to the west. The extensive railway infrastructure further perpetuated the industrial character in this part of the city at the turn of the century.

Fig. 2.11 In this 1947 aerial view of Toronto the difference in vernacular is evident on the former Garrison Reserves.



SOUTH WEST PART
OF
YORK.

SCALE, 50 CHAINS TO ONE INCH.

TORONTO HARBOUR

The Railway Corridor

Apart from the boundary created by Parkdale's independent municipal development and the emergence of industrial and institutional uses north of the CNE grounds, the railways divided the land at Queen and Dufferin streets even further. An identity also emerged within the area as a major railway transportation hub.

The Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Union Railroad Company was established in Toronto in 1853. Later changing its name to the Northern and Northwestern Railway (NoR)²³ it was one of four railway companies that passed through this juncture on the map. Credit Valley Railway (CVR) built the area's first passenger and freight stations in 1879 called North Parkdale which was actually just inside Toronto's city limits. This company also erected a roundhouse on the triangular piece of land south of the tracks north of King Street and east of Dufferin Street. In 1882 the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) also built a small station north of the tracks²⁴ adjacent to John Abell's property. Several company amalgamations and buyouts in the 1880's resulted in a surplus of stations at the Parkdale North stop. The Grand Trunk Railway retained the 1878 train station it acquired from NoR called the 'new Union Station' moving it north of the tracks. The Canadian Pacific Railway moved the operations existing at the roundhouse to West Toronto Junction in 1889²⁵, which can be noted in the land progression shown in figures 2.15-2.23, when that parcel of land instead filled up completely by sidings.

Fig. 2.12 *Opposite*, 1878 South West Part of York County showing the railways cutting through the city. Also shown is the first location of the Crystal Palace south of the Provincial Lunatic Asylum.



Fig. 2.13 *Top*, 1898 photo of Canadian Pacific Railway's North Parkdale Station taken over from CVR in 1884.

Fig. 2.14 *Below*, 1957 photo of Grand Trunk Railway's North Parkdale Station acquired from NoR known as 'new Union Station'. Operation of this station was taken over by the Canadian National Railway Company in 1923.

Area Land Progression 1884

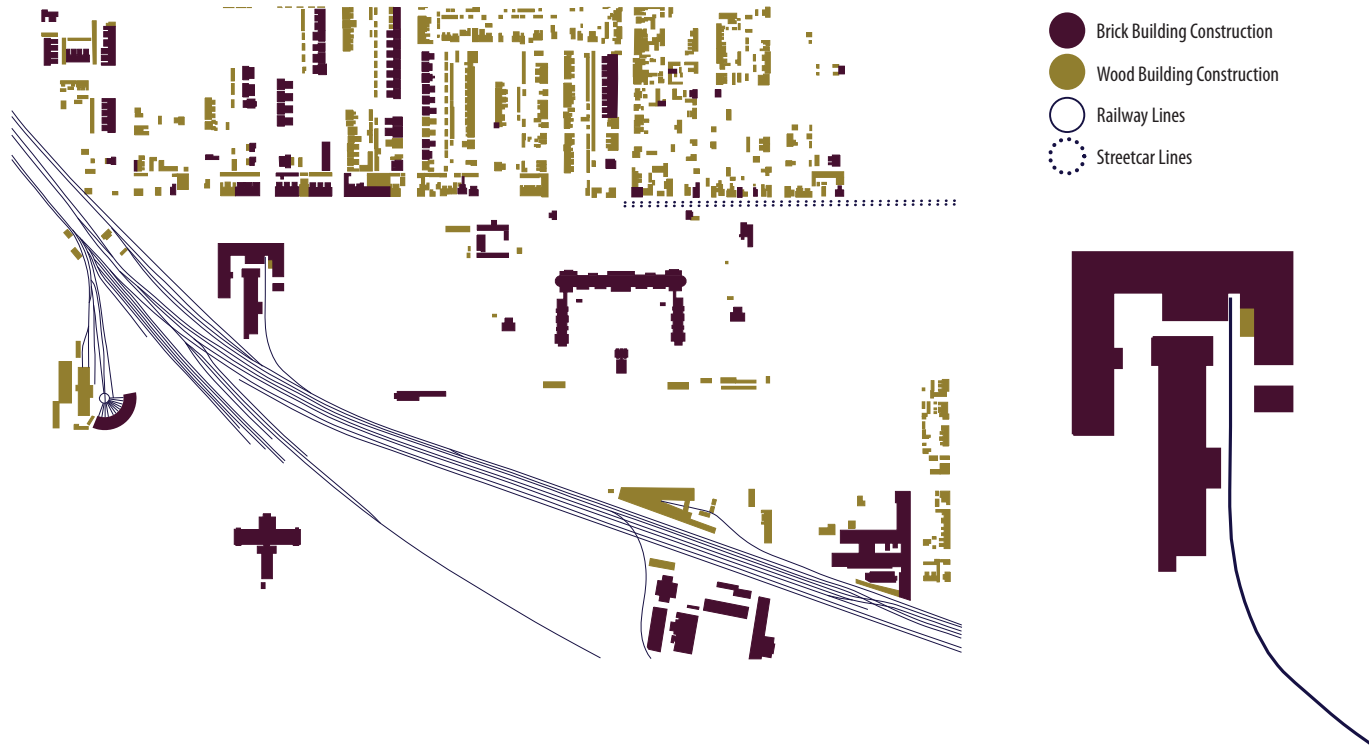


Fig. 2.15 *Above*, Area land progression in 1884.

Fig. 2.16 *Right*, John Abell Engine and Machine Works in 1884.

Area Land Progression 1893

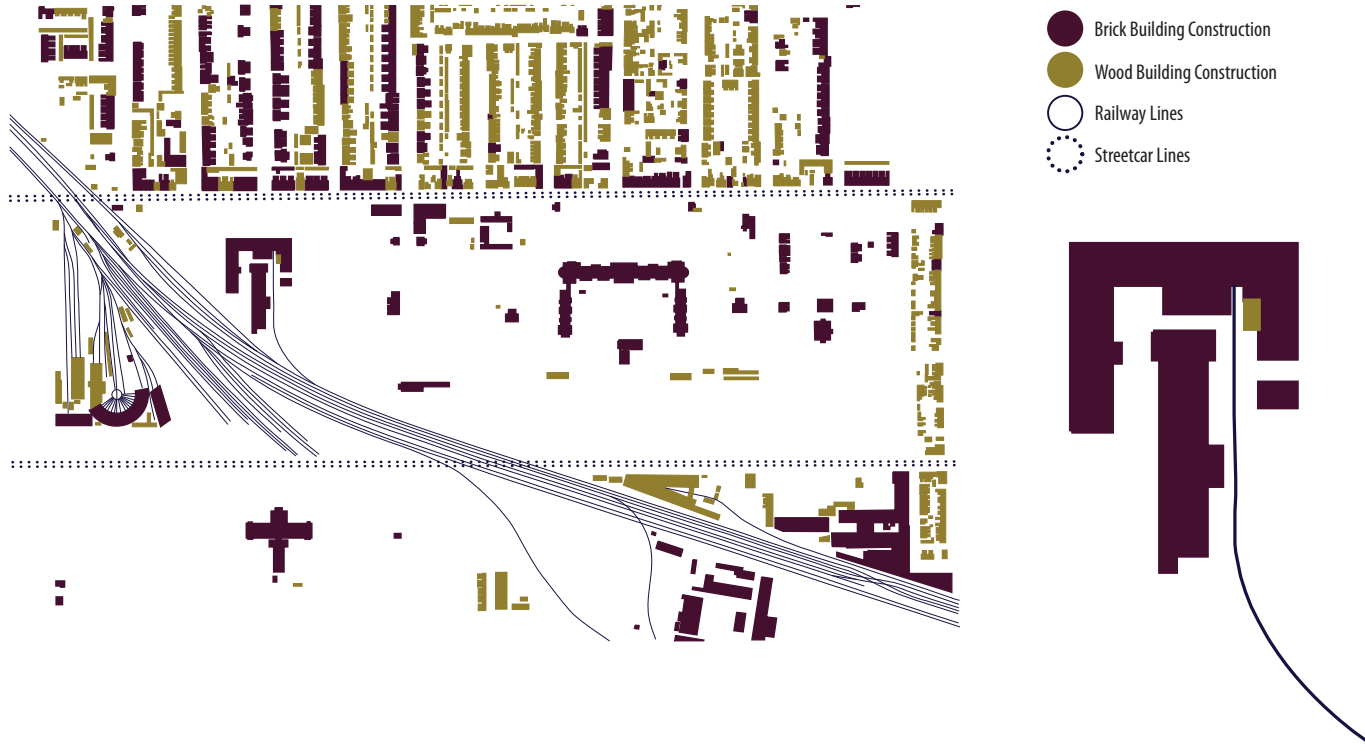


Fig. 2.17 *Above*, Area land progression in 1893.

Fig. 2.18 *Right*, John Abell Engine and Machine Works in 1893.

Area Land Progression 1903

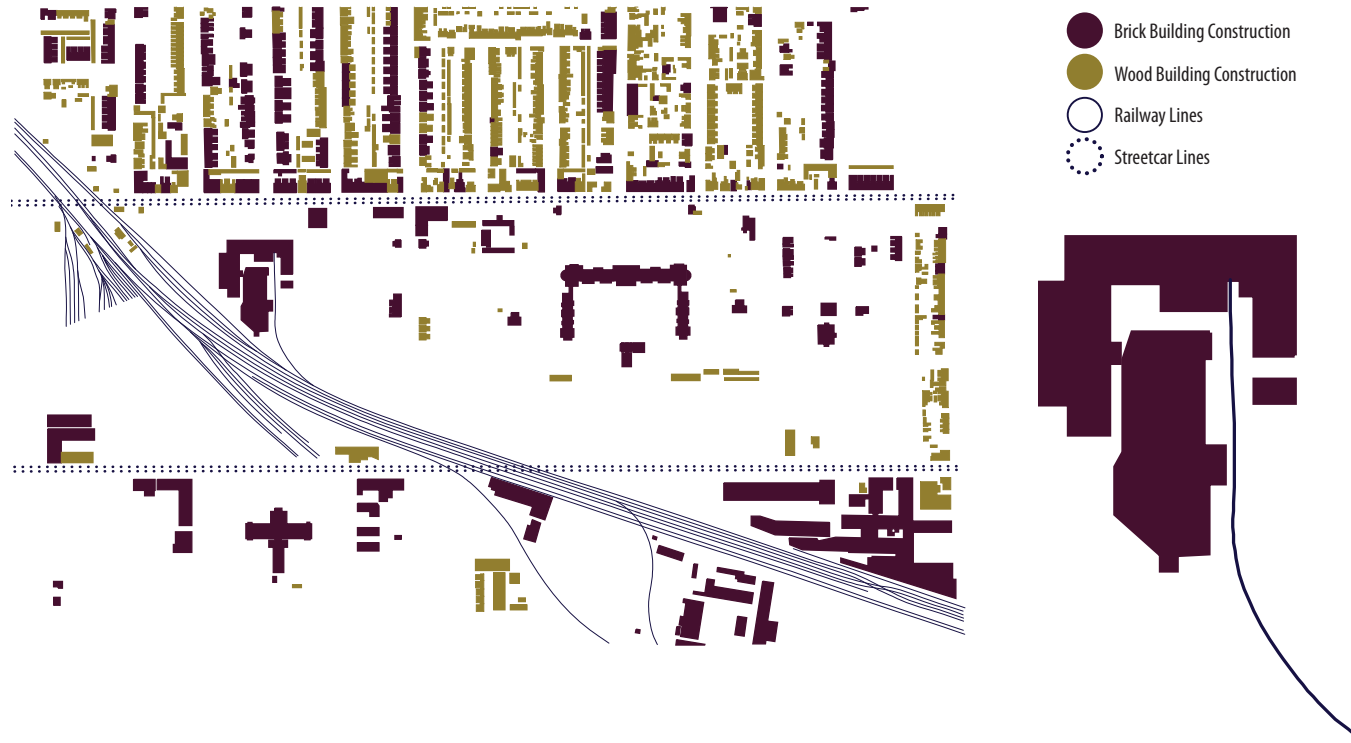


Fig. 2.19 *Above*, Area land progression in 1903.

Fig. 2.20 *Right*, American-Abell Engine and Thresher Co. in 1903.

Area Land Progression 1910

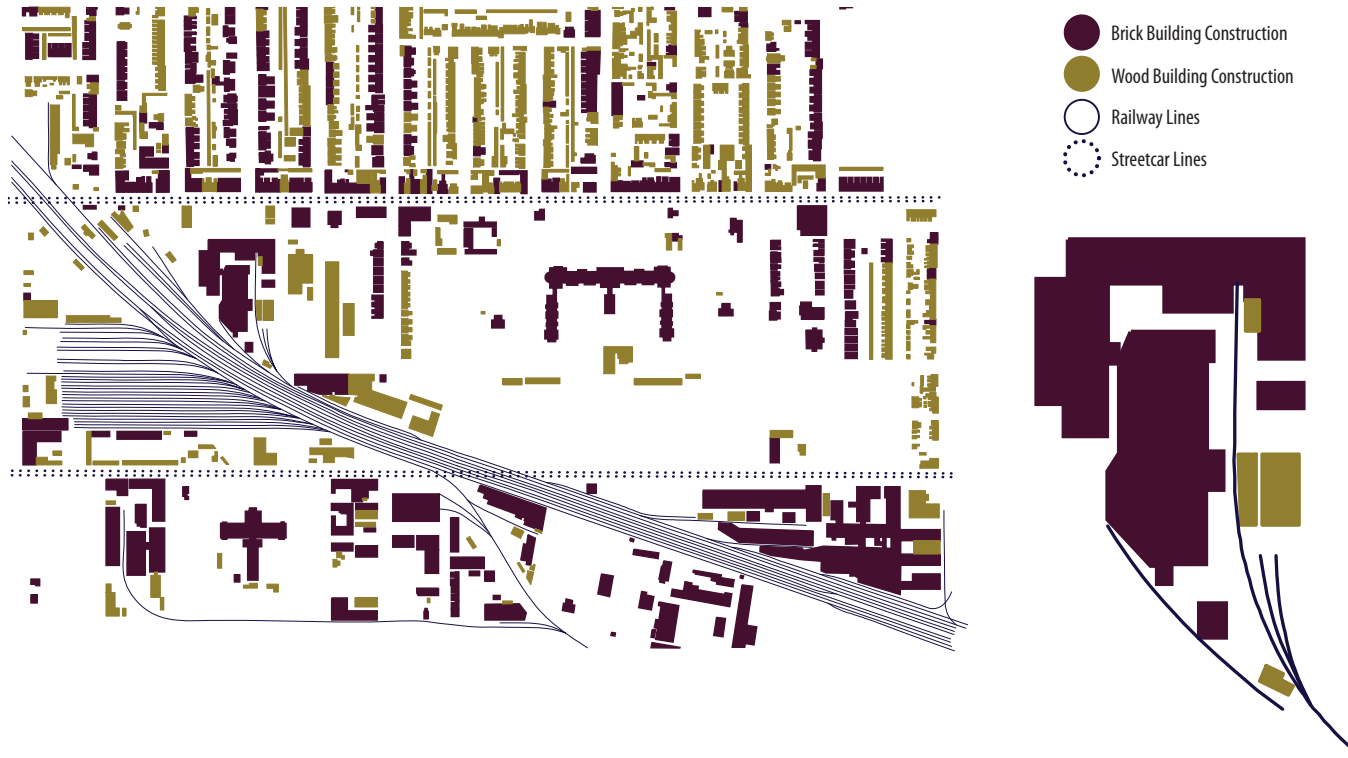


Fig. 2.21 *Above*, Area land progression in 1910.

Fig. 2.22 *Right*, M. Rumely Co. in 1910.

Area Land Progression 1923

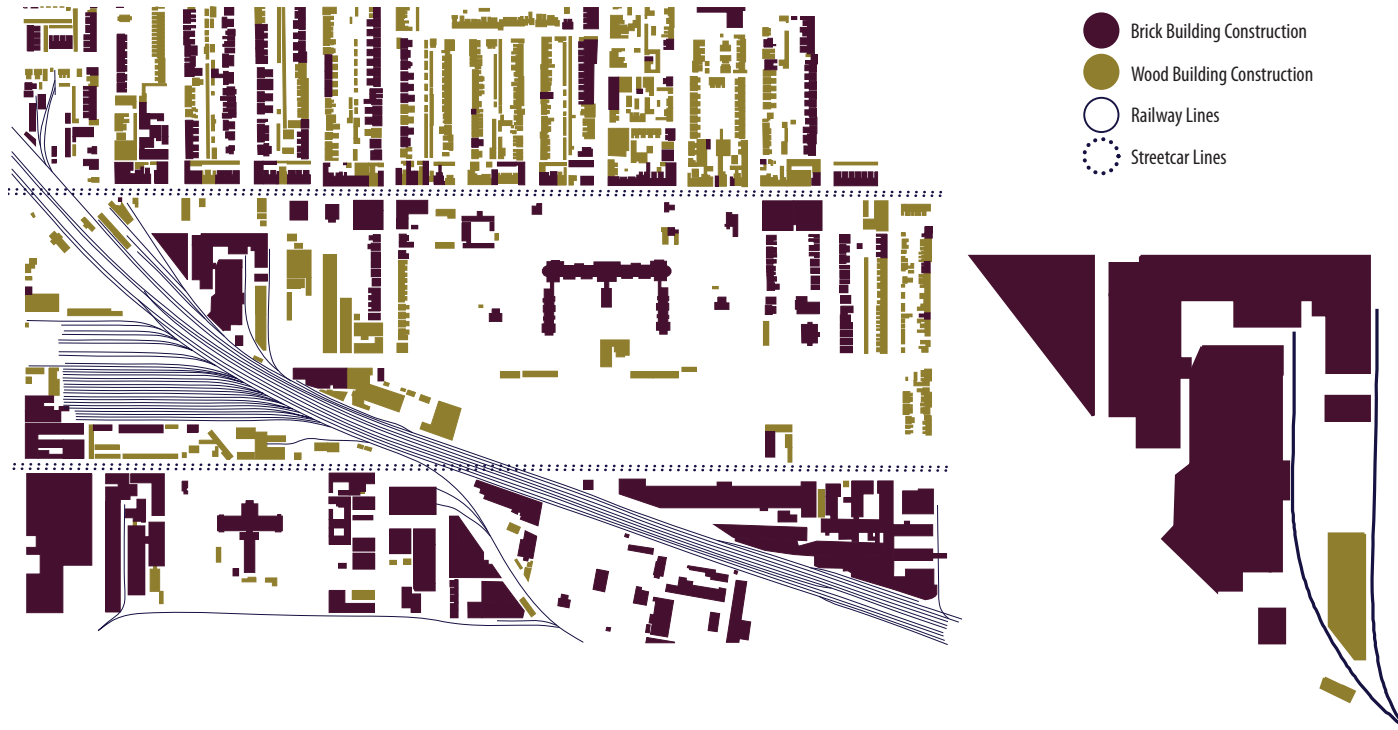


Fig. 2.23 *Above*, Area land progression in 1923.

Fig. 2.24 *Right*, Advance-Rumely Co. in 1923.



The at-grade railway crossing at busy Queen and Dufferin streets prompted many complaints about its interference with daily traffic.²⁶ In 1884 work was begun to change the railway crossing at Queen to a street underpass. In the previous year, to the disappointment of Parkdale residents, Toronto City Council had withdrawn their financial support for the project. This undoubtedly aggravated the ongoing debate for annexation at the time. In the end, the underpass known then as the ‘subway’ was funded entirely by Parkdale along with the five major railway companies and contributed greatly to Parkdale’s aforementioned debt.

The new underpass opened in 1885 leading to the closure of the section of Dufferin street from Queen street northward to Peel street much to the protest of Toronto’s Council.²⁷ Local residents hated the new underpass, as it was often dangerous in winter or else muddy, foul smelling and dripping with oil and water from the trains above in the summer time. Some referred to it as a “dreadful hole,”²⁸ and many locals opted to climb over it and cross the railway tracks instead of using the sidewalk below until the rail companies built a fence to prevent this. The imposition of this large infrastructure not only contributed greatly to the alienation of pedestrians but also presented a psychological barrier between the City of Toronto and neighbouring Parkdale. In 2009, construction began to reinstate the lost portion of Dufferin by way of a tunnel from Peel to Queen streets in order to eliminate the ‘Dufferin jog’ and reconnect the street grid.

Fig. 2.25 *Top left*, Subway underpass looking east on Queen Street West.

Fig. 2.26 *Top center*, View looking north on Dufferin toward rail and subway.

Fig. 2.27 *Top right*, Wall inscription still in existence.



Fig. 2.28 *Left*, 1899 Aerial of the rail overpass showing CPR's North Parkdale station on the left.



Fig. 2.29 *Middle*, Grade construction showing the Union Hotel on the right and the Gladstone in the distance.



Fig. 2.30 *Right*, The Gladstone House

While the railway industry and industrial companies employed a large quantity of local residents from Toronto and Parkdale, the hotelier industry flourished in proximity to the North Parkdale stop. These railway hotels were also conveniently located for visitors to the Canadian National Exhibition. The Union Hotel, probably named after the Northern and Northwestern Railway station, was built in 1879 at the southwest corner of Queen and Dufferin, and then rebuilt in 1881 after it was destroyed by fire.²⁹ One particular hotel, the Brady Hotel and bowling alley was located at the northeast corner of Queen and Gladstone streets. After a change in ownership, the hotel, redesigned by architect G.M Miller in 1889 was renamed the Gladstone House.³⁰ Two blocks east of the Gladstone House on Queen Street West was D.A. Small's Hotel built in 1890³¹, sited directly across from John Abell's Engine and Machine Works. After some name changes, it was called the Drake Hotel in 1949. In due time, these two hotels would play a significant role in transforming the neighbourhood around them as would John Abell's manufacturing grounds.

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1. Margaret Laycock and Barbara Myrvold. *Parkdale in Pictures : Its Development to 1889*. Toronto Public Library Board Local History Handbooks ; Toronto: Toronto Public Library Board, 1991, 7.
 2. Ibid, 22.
 3. Ibid, 9.
 4. Ibid, 25.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid, 27.
 7. Ibid, 33.
 8. Ibid, 14.
 9. Ibid, 27.
 10. Carolyn Whitzman and Tom Slater. "Village Ghetto Land: Myth, Social Conditions, and Housing Policy in Parkdale, Toronto, 1879–2000." *Urban Affairs Review* 41, no. 5 (May, 2006): 673-696, 679.
 11. Laycock; Myrvold, *Parkdale in Pictures*, 1991, 36.
 12. Whitzman; Slater. "Village Ghetto Land," *Urban Affairs Review* 41, no. 5 (May, 2006), 682.
 13. Jon Caulfield. *City Form and Everyday Life: Toronto's Gentrification and Critical Social Practice*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994, 33.
 14. Whitzman; Slater. "Village Ghetto Land," *Urban Affairs Review* 41, no. 5 (May, 2006), 678.
 15. Ibid, 685.
 16. Laycock; Myrvold. *Parkdale in Pictures*, 1991, 7.
 17. Ibid, 9.
 18. "Industrial's Funds: The Exhibition, Heavily in Debt, Seeks Relief." *The Globe*, June 6, 1896, 23.
 19. CNE History. "Early Beginnings of the Fair." <http://www.theex.com/downloads/Early%20Beginnings%20of%20the%20Fair.pdf> (accessed July 6, 2009)
 20. Jamie Bradburn,"An Exhibition in Crystal" *Historicist, Culture*, August 23, 2008
http://torontoist.com/2008/08/historicist_an_exhibition_in_crysta.php (accessed July 27, 2009)
 21. Ibid.
 22. "Industrial's Funds," *The Globe*, June 6, 1896, 23.
 23. Laycock; Myrvold. *Parkdale in Pictures*, 1991, 9.
 24. Ibid, 23.
 25. Ibid.
 26. Ibid, 20.
 27. Ibid, 21.
 28. Ibid.
 29. Ibid, 51.
 30. Ibid, 52.
 31. The Drake Hotel. <http://www.thedrakehotel.ca/info/about> (accessed July, 2009).

December 2005

Torso found in a lane way.

I was very disturbed when I heard about the police finding a human torso left in a shopping cart in the little Parkdale laneway called the Milky Way. They later discovered that it was a man who had killed his wife and severed all her limbs including her head. Even though you always think of horrible things like this happening in 'other' places, the truth is that that laneway South of Queen Street was only a block away from where I was living, just on the 'other side' (the Parkdale side) of the railway tracks off of Dufferin.

This occurrence called into question the safety of my own neighbourhood. I knew that it was fairly rough around the edges in past but felt like it was safe enough that I could go anywhere at night without being afraid to walk alone -at least on my side of the tracks. In a way I felt like I was braving a frontier. If nothing else, the mounting popularity of west end establishments was a positive change because the greater number of people on the streets meant that the area was becoming safer ... right?



Ideology of the After

Post-Industrial Society

The industrial sector of the Western World has been in slow and steady decline since the 1960's. What followed is the post-industrial condition where most manufacturing has either moved to the periphery of cities, or in the global context has been consolidated and farmed out to other countries. As well, factory machines, outperforming workers, have largely replaced the labour force.¹ According to sociologist Daniel Bell, post-industrial society is characterized by the shift from an industry-based economy toward a knowledge-based economy² in de-industrialized cities of the developed world. This shift also includes a rise in service sector employment (see table 3.1).

Evidence of this paradigm is vacancies in factories, relics of the industrial era, and a reinterpretation of their use to residential loft conversions. In her 1981 book *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*, Sharon Zukin wrote, "the residential conversion of manufacturing lofts confirms and symbolizes the death of an urban manufacturing center,"³ resulting in use of its infrastructure for other means than its intended construction. Also, the desire to dwell within

Fig. 3.1 *Opposite*, Aerial view of industrial district now known as Liberty Village, in 1920.



Fig. 3.2 48 Abell Street north lane way.

Daniel Bell's Post-Industrial Thesis
1973

Daniel Bell argued that there are four key features of a 'post-industrial society' in emergence:

- a shift from a manufacturing to a service based economy
 - the centrality of new science-based industries with 'specialized knowledge' as a key resource, where universities replace factories as dominant institutions
 - the rapid rise of managerial, professional, and technical occupations
 - artistic avant-gardes lead consumer culture, rather than media, corporations, or government
-

Table. 3.1 *Above*, Daniel Bell's Post-Industrial Thesis 1973

these spaces is characteristic of an ideological shift that has accompanied the onset of post-industrial society.⁴ Zukin explains, "the changing appreciation of old loft buildings also reflects a deeper preoccupation with space and time. A sense that the great industrial age has ended creates melancholy over the machines and the factories of the past."⁵ Therefore, an attraction to loft living stems from a romanticized nostalgia for the passing of the industrial age.

Decline in urban centers has not been limited to industry. After the Second World War, American cities experienced a decline in residential population climaxing in the 1970s.⁶ Middle class families were leaving the city for the suburbs -the capitalist's dream- where land was inexpensive, plentiful and a car-centric lifestyle awaited. During the 1950's Toronto residents flocked to popular suburbs like Don Mills and others that subsequently followed its success.⁷ While Toronto's downtown middle class "never wholly abandoned Toronto's old inner-city neighbourhoods"⁸ compared to its American counterparts, this established ideal of domesticity, perpetuated by the suburban lifestyle, is what the residential loft conversion challenged in the years to come.

Borrowed Infrastructure

While an industrial vernacular permeated the area near Queen Street West east of Dufferin throughout the 20th century, its deindustrialization eventually gave way to loft conversion in buildings such as 48 Abell Street. In the 1970's the retail strip along Queen St. was dominated by blue-collar businesses such as appliance stores, service and equipment repair shops as well as auto related industries and trades. This neighbourhood had previously been home to a Polish community, for instance, known today as The Great Hall, the historic building at the corner of Queen Street and Dovercourt Road, was then called the Polish National Hall across the street from which a Slavic Pentecostal church was located.* Portuguese food wholesalers were also located here, indicative of the predominant cultural underpinnings following the Poles' westward migration. Shops and retail catering to the Portuguese community still existing today is concentrated along the stretch of Dundas Street west of Ossington Street.

Throughout the 1970's, manufacturing buildings south of Queen West near the railway tracks contained a plethora of manufacturing industries, wholesalers and suppliers such as those located along Lisgar, Sudbury and Dovercourt streets. These buildings housed lithographers, food packers, textile, wood, steel, metal and glass fabricators. During this time, 48 Abell Street contained businesses such as Goodtime Toys, Baylen Signs, Plate & Structural Steel, Lafrance Fire Engine Foamite, Maple Lane Produce Ltd, Star Doll Mfg, Reliable Food Supplies, and Hollbrand Ceramics to name a few. Aristocrat Lamps & Lighting moved in sometime in the mid-eighties and has never left. Next door at 45 Lisgar Street were lithographers Ashton-Potter Ltd who held the stamp production contract for Canada Post until 1993.⁹ The Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian National Railway were still operating freight services out of this area too.

As these industries left, arts industries began to infiltrate the area's factory buildings, with a sharp increase around 1990 of commercial photographers, video production and communications companies locating in the Sudbury and

* Roncesvalles Street (at the west end of Parkdale) is now identified as a predominantly Polish area.



Fig. 3.4 1087 Queen Street, Great Hall



Fig. 3.5 48 Abell Street, Aristocrat Lamps & Lighting.



Fig. 3.3 Aristocrat window.



Fig. 3.6 1153 Queen Street West, Woolfitt's Art Supply.



Fig. 3.7 6 Lisgar Street, United Foods Wholesale still in operation in 2005.



Fig. 3.8 45 Lisgar Street, home of print shops and commercial artists.



Fig. 3.9 99 Sudbury Street, commercial arts building in the 1970's



Fig. 3.10 55 Sudbury Street, commercial arts building since the 1970's.



Fig. 3.11 41 Dovercourt Road, Dufflet Pastries since the 1970's.



Fig. 3.12 40/44 Dovercourt Road. Site of Auto repair shops in 1970's.



Fig. 3.13 90 Lisgar Street, Vacant industrial property.



Fig. 3.14 110 Sudbury St., adjoins to 45 Lisgar, is also home to commercial artists.

Neighbourhood Context Site Plan

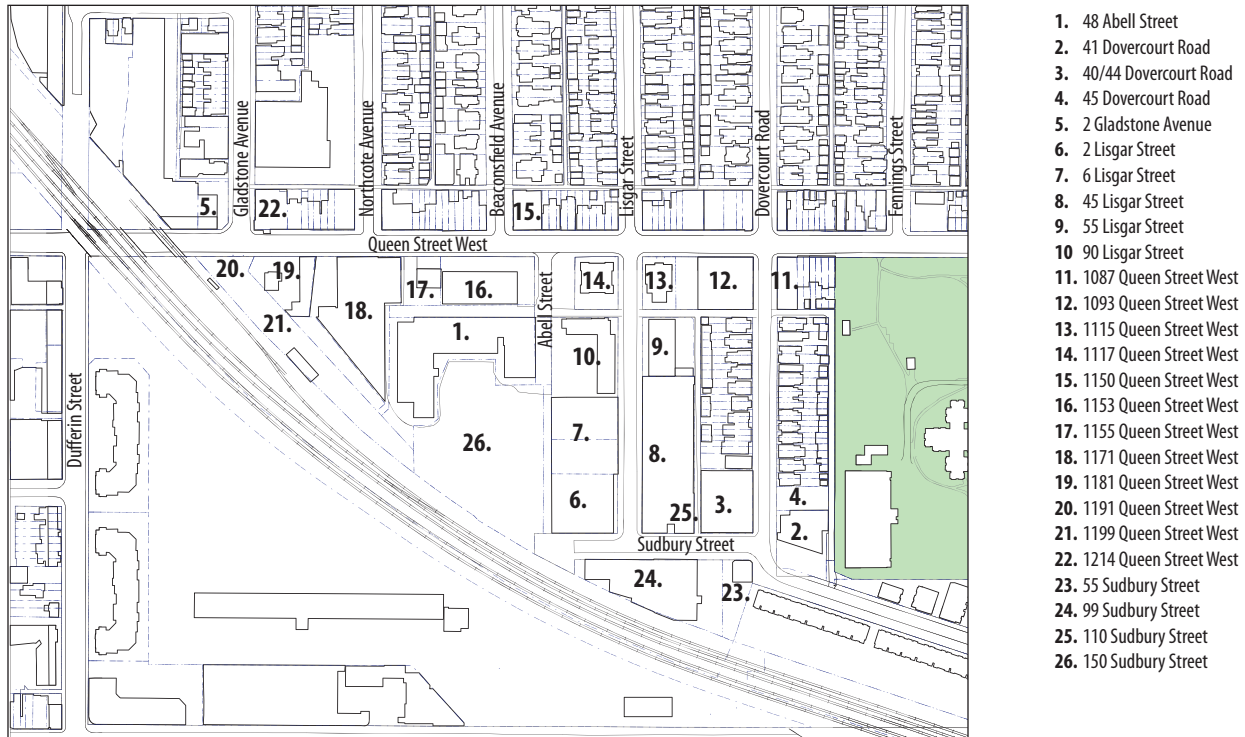


Fig. 3.15 Neighbourhood Context Site Plan

	1970	1975	1980	1985-6	1990	1995	2000	2005	2009	
INDUSTRIAL										
Manufacturing	20	14	13	8	6	5	4	3	1	
Wholesaler/ Distributor (also jobbers, food packing)	13	12	7	8	6	8	6	3	1	
Trades (auto related, construction)	6	5	7	6	6	12	8	7	2	
	39	31	27	22	18	25	18	13	4	Total
ARTISTIC										
Art Production (fine arts, media and communications)	2	7	7	3	14	26	33	21	12	
Professional (architects, interior design)	0	0	1	1	0	4	4	4	5	
Cultural (theatres, galleries)	0	1	1	3	3	3	2	14	13	
	2	8	9	7	17	33	39	39	30	Total

Table. 3.2 Arts to Industrial business count in the Queen West Triangle from 1970 to 2009.



Fig. 3.16 1196 Queen St. West, location of 3 architect offices in the 1970's.

Lisgar Street factories. As well, the former Polish National Hall at 1087 Queen Street West was instead packed with arts related enterprises such as Music Works (magazine publisher), Music Gallery, YYZ Artist's Outlet (art gallery), AED Media Corp (audio/visual products), Danceworks, Ceilidh Arts Centre and the Toronto School of Art. The Toronto Business Directory from the year 1990 shows the first recorded household listings in 48 Abell Street's lofts. There were also a number of vacancies in the building at this time. Five years later, 48 Abell's directory entry in 1995 is telling of the neighbourhood's industrial pulse, reading "Households 50, Businesses 3". The linear building in the middle of John Abell's old works was demolished sometime in the late 1980's.

While a range of arts production was quietly aggregating in the early 1990's, more conspicuous evidence of the arts community began to appear on the main drag among the appliance stores and collision shops. Three architects were located at 1196 Queen Street West, Woolfitt's Art Supplies owned by artist Ben Woolfitt enjoyed Queen Street frontage directly in front of 48 Abell in a concrete block building formerly a fur supplier and sample shop at 1153 Queen Street West. A handful of loft conversions including Ben Woolfitt's own studio occupied the second floor of this building, above the art store. Meanwhile, design icon Bruce

Mau's office was located off the beaten path at 41 Dovercourt Road for a time during the 1990's, in the same building as Dufflet Pastries. Several print shops also located in the vicinity, services which included the design and fabrication of signs and logos.

In the early 2000's a handful of art galleries clustered along the Queen Street West strip likely migrating from the Queen-Spadina corridor where a vibrant bohemian arts scene existed in the 1970's after being priced out of Yorkville (Young and Bloor Streets).¹⁰ By 2005, at least 10 art galleries including the Burston Gallery, Katherine Mulherin Gallery, the DeLeon White Gallery, Spin Gallery, The Engine Gallery, Sis Boom Bah, Omy Gallery, Greener Pastures Contemporary Art, Bracket and Loop galleries were all located along the short stretch of Queen Street between Dufferin and Fennings, east of Dovercourt. More galleries east and west of the area added to the Queen Street arts scene as well as the 2005 relocation of the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MOCCA) to 952 Queen Street West near Shaw Street.

While the arts in this locale had been accruing for some time, the area's projected image in the city was pretty rough around the edges. The following quotes are from current and former 48 Abell residents reflecting on their impression of the neighbourhood when they first moved to the area. Based on the image projected by the main retail strip and de-industrialized land south of Queen St., these descriptions also help to elucidate where this locality existed in the collective unconscious of the city at large:

I would say that there wasn't alot going on when I first moved in. It still felt like an 'in between' area. Not quite parkdale and definitely not queen west. A bit seedy. (48 Abell resident in early 2000's)

whore house with drugs and appliance stores (48 Abell resident in early 1990's)

Undeveloped. Great potential for local growth, reasonable rent for interesting space to enhance personal development. Quality of living was affordable. (48 Abell resident in early 1990's)



Fig. 3.17 1100 Queen St. West, The Spin Gallery's sign.



Fig. 3.18 Loop and Fly Galleries on Queen St. West.



Fig. 3.19 The MOCCA at 952 Queen Street West.

Arts to Industrial Uses in the Queen West Triangle 1970 to 2009

- Manufacturing
- Wholesaler/ Distributing
- Industry Trades
- Art Production
- Professional
- Cultural



Fig. 3.20 Arts to Industrial 1970



Fig. 3.21 Arts to Industrial 1980

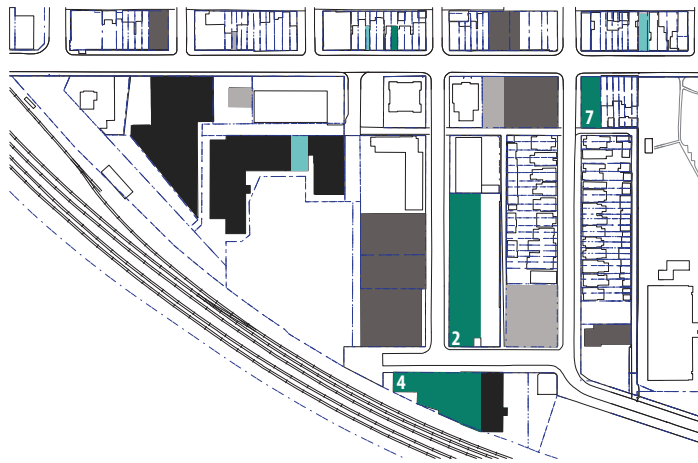


Fig. 3.22 Arts to Industrial 1990

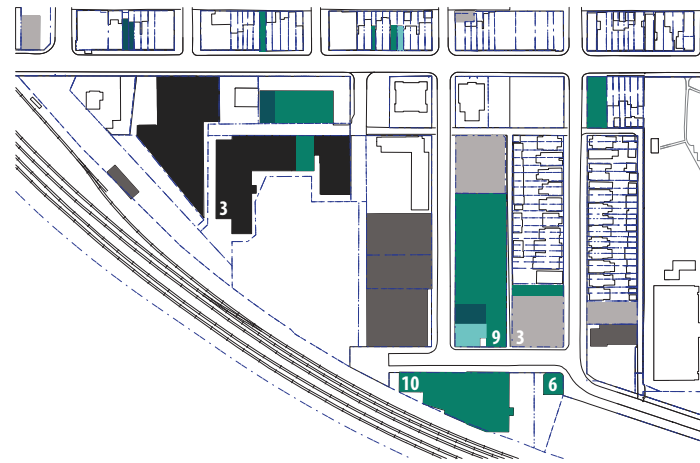


Fig. 3.23 Arts to Industrial 2000

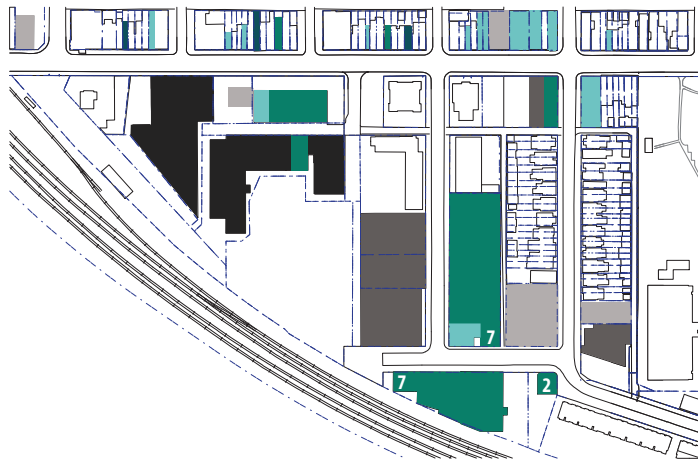


Fig. 3.24 Arts to Industrial 2005

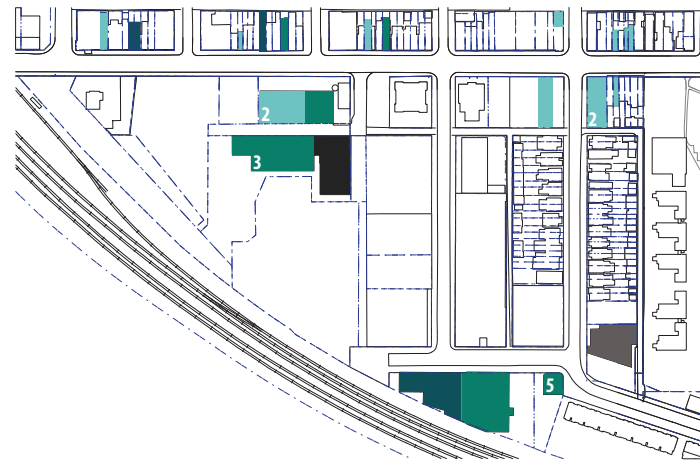


Fig. 3.25 Arts to Industrial 2009

*West Queen West
was fairly low end
and run down when
I first moved in.
There was a soup
kitchen next door
and the Gladstone
chased welfare
checks.*

Abell resident

It was dirtier. There had been a stabbing at the StarLite, currently the Drake Hotel, in the while before I moved there. To be fair, I had not fully availed myself to the kindness of the neighbourhood before moving in in 2002. (48 Abell resident in early 2002)

nice honest slum cheaper everything (48 Abell resident in early 2000's)

gritty, lots of character both in the stores, buildings, and people, up-and-coming - on the verge of being discovered / transformed / gentrified (48 Abell resident in early 2000's)

West Queen West was fairly low end and run down when I first moved in. There was a soup kitchen next door and the Gladstone chased welfare checks. (48 Abell resident in early 2000's)

In 1993 the city was in a deep economic downturn the conditions of which were very evident on Queen west with many empty shops and marginal businesses and a general feel of unkempt decline without the gallery art, bar restaurant scene, radically different than today. (48 Abell resident in 1993)

I moved to Queen and Ossington in 2001 and at the time I'd say the area West of Shaw street was not very approachable to the average citizen. The Drake, The Gladstone, the former DeLeon White gallery had yet to be purchased and renovated. CAMH still presented a Significant psychological barrier to westbound pedestrian traffic. Between Shaw and Dufferin, Queen West felt as though it was on life support. (48 Abell resident in 2001)

Much different, the drake was the stardust. We would see hookers in parked cars behind Abell near the garbage bins all the time. None of the same bars or coffee shops that you see now. Lots of crack heads. Lots of drunks. Once the Drake moved in many things changed rapidly. (48 Abell resident early 2000's)

Although this area is not currently located within Parkdale proper, it was in the 1970's when Parkdale's east boundary was along Dovercourt Road. Whether or not this area, sometimes referred to as 'Beaconsfield Village', was suffering the spillover effects of Parkdale's proximate notoriety as a slum or simply experiencing the transition away from an industrial economy, 48 Abell resident testimonies paint a sordid picture of disinvestment and decline throughout the 1990's and into the early 2000's. The description given by a Parkdale native who lived at Abell in the early 2000's offers a different perspective explaining,

I feel like the area was more convenient. There were a few more places to eat that were not expensive "lounges", the stores were less high priced. The place was a bit grungier- but for the better. It never felt unsafe. It had a lack of polish. I grew up in Parkdale and that's what I always loved about the area...

Nonetheless, change was creeping slowly westward from the city core. Redevelopment of abandoned industrial land, that had started on the former rail yards near Union Station and near the de-industrialized waterfront in the 1980's was making its way to the concentrated industrial grounds of the former Garrison Commons south of the railway tracks from 48 Abell.

Area Land Progression from 1995 to 2005



Fig. 3.26 1995 Aerial



Fig. 3.27 1997 Aerial



Fig. 3.28 1999 Aerial



Fig. 3.29 2002 Aerial



Fig. 3.30 2003 Aerial



Fig. 3.31 2005 Aerial



Fig. 3.32 The Carpet Factory within view of Abell's roof.

Liberty Village

Similar to conditions around 48 Abell, artists had gradually appropriated lofts in former factory buildings such as 53 Fraser Street, 9 Hannah Street and the Carpet Factory near King and Dufferin, beginning in the 1970's.¹¹ It wasn't until the 1990's that "the area started to attract more affluent in-movers," when artist collectives began inviting the public into their studios for exhibitions and festivals. Artscape, a not-for-profit organization had also "created 45 live/work spaces for artists at 60 Atlantic [Street] and further stimulated investment in the area."¹² This artistic and economic activity laid the groundwork for imminent gentrification. After being branded as 'Liberty Village' (named after Liberty Street), the area became a new enclave for small businesses in new media. Bigger names like Sony BMG and Adobe set up shop in the factory buildings in the late 1990's acting as a magnet for further development but at the same time raising land values and displacing many artists and small businesses alike.¹³ Even though Artscape was successful in providing live/work studios to artists at 60 Atlantic, "they are deliberately silent on the fact that many affordable artists' studios were lost in the conversion of inexpensive industrial space to high-rent offices"¹⁴ in the area as a result of the catalyzing effects of the arts in gentrifying Liberty Village.

In the late 1990's, a portion of the former Massey-Harris lands were eventually developed as "ready-made whitepainted [middle class] neighbourhoods"¹⁵ of imitation Victorian townhouses, while high-density buildings were placed along the King Street frontage of these lands. As well, the undeveloped area near the former Central Prison (now mostly demolished) has since been developed extensively with condominium high-rises, townhouses and factory building retrofits in recent years shown in the lower right of the aerial maps in figures 3.26 to 3.31.

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1. Daniel Cohen and William McCuaig. *Three Lectures on Post-Industrial Society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009, 34.
 2. Ibid., 5.
 3. Sharon Zukin. *Loft Living : Culture and Capital in Urban Change*. Johns Hopkins Studies in Urban Affair. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982, 3.
 4. Ibid., 58.
 5. Ibid., 59
 6. Jordan Rappaport. "U.S. Urban Decline and Growth, 1950 to 2000." *Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City Economic Review* 88, no. 3 (3rd Quarter 2003, 2003): 15.
 7. John Sewell. *The Shape of the City: Toronto Struggles with Modern Planning*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993, 80.
 8. Jon Caulfield. *City Form and Everyday Life*, 1994, 67.
 9. Glenn H. Morgan. "Stamp Printers by Country: Canada: Ashton Potter Limited, Mississauga."
http://www.stampprinters.info/SPI_Country_Canada.htm
(accessed November 20, 2009).
 10. Jon Caulfield. *City Form and Everyday Life*, 1994, 90-91.
 11. Thorben Wieditz, "Liberty Village: The Makeover of Toronto's King Dufferin Area." *Centre for Urban and Community Studies Research Bulletin* no. 32 (January, 2007) www.urbancentre.utoronto.ca (accessed May 12, 2009), 3.
 12. Ibid., 4.
 13. Ibid., 5.
 14. Jon Caulfield. *City Form and Everyday Life*, 1994, 83.

Summer 2005

When the boarding went up.

While I was away during the summer, friends in Toronto were raving about this new bar that had become the most talked about summer destination in the city. “It’s called the Drake Hotel” they said “and it’s actually really close to your loft.” I was surprised and curious. How had I been oblivious to this place before? When did it open? What was it all about?

Before I returned to my loft in September, there was another surprise that had arrived toward the end of that summer. This was when the boarding went up behind 48 Abell. Where previous vehicular access went all the way around the periphery of the building, the boarding placed along the southern property line essentially terminated the laneway at the garage door of our studio. The residents were confused and frustrated from this infringement of access, but were also becoming familiar with the first signs that gentrification in these parts had begun to take hold.



Fig. D.1 View from our garage door of the large water-filled hole at 150 Sudbury behind 48 Abell.



Fig. D.2 *Top*, Flowers growing in former laneway.

Fig. D.3 *Bottom*, Studio 130 lounge space outside the garage door.

Not only was the hoarding enclosing the vacant property of 150 Sudbury Street, but the little oasis of greenery that South-facing Abell dwellers previously overlooked on that same piece of land had been razed and essentially reduced to a blank wasteland of dirt and rubble. The property was then dug up leaving a big gaping hole in the ground that proceeded to fill up with water over the following months and then left to freeze over the winter.

I noticed an interesting reaction from residents in the appropriation of these newly created residual spaces following the hoarding's arrival. A sense of ownership emerged in the enclosed laneway between the building and the hoarding.

In one place a small flower garden was started and potted vegetables accompanied it. Outside our garage door we built a small deck for lounging the following summer. Everywhere else, the pedestrian traffic around and through the building was rendered visible where the plywood was ripped down to make openings for passage through the hoarding walls. Meanwhile, the big hole in the ground became a real eyesore in the spring once the snow melted. Management at Abell had said to me that the pit was somehow leeching out chemicals from the ground and the water was there for this reason. I didn't really buy that explanation. Residents looked upon it with disgust; seagulls and ducks were now swimming in this repulsive pool of polluted water. Fellow residents I spoke to were nicknaming it the 'West Side Nile,' or the 'West Nile Pond' or my favourite 'The Queen West Nile'.

The rodent population in the building and in our studio increased ten-fold. It was a problem for us since we had lower cabinets only in the kitchen, half of which were open shelving where our food was kept. We had actually been very fortunate never to have pests prior to the hoarding's arrival, but the honeymoon was definitely over, and in so many ways.

At one Community Council meeting at City Hall, the summer after the boarding went up, Matt brought a photograph of the gross pond behind Abell. Given its location behind our building, on top of being surrounded by an 8 foot wall, it is fair to say that many people probably weren't privy to its existence. He printed the image on acetate and, in between other local neighbourhood residents voicing their concerns, made his deputation by projecting this image on the wall and asking what would be done about it. The entire room fell silent.

That week, a water pump appeared at the pond slowly removing the stagnant water over the course of a few days and once it was emptied workers and trucks arrived, filled in the hole with dirt and leveled out the ground.



Fig. D.4 *Top left*, Frozen water hole in winter 2006.

Fig. D.5 *Above*, View toward back of Abell's east wing.

Fig. D.6 *Bottom left*, Pond emptied and filled in Summer 2006.

Gentrification typically occurs when a higher class of people moves into a neighborhood, makes improvements to property that cause market prices and tax assessments to rise, and so drives out the previous lower-class residents.¹

*Sharon Zukin,
Loft Living: Culture and
Capital in Urban Change*



A Changing Landscape

The Drake Hotel

In the summer of 2005, the stretch of Queen Street West between Dovercourt and Dufferin received much more attention than from its usual local patron base. A relatively new bar and boutique hotel across the street from 48 Abell had become a citywide hotspot overnight. The Drake Hotel, a redesigned and retrofitted former flophouse (previously housing daily and weekly renters) was soon attracting the weekend nightlife crowd to this unassuming neighbourhood. It was an instant success, and seemed to create the beginning of a trendy and hip scene in Toronto.

Purchased in 2001 by multi-millionaire and dot-com executive, Jeff Stober,² the Drake Hotel bar is said to have previously been a strip joint, better known as the Stardust. Armed with a bold and ambitious artistic vision, Stober hired Toronto firm 3rd Uncle Design to bring this tired hotel and bar back to life. It was re-opened in December 2004 loaded with an artsy and edgy agenda that

Fig. 4.1 *Opposite*, Drake Hotel sign.



Fig. 4.2 *Above*, The Drake Hotel in 2007.



Fig. 4.3 *Left*, In the year 2000 the Drake was better known as the Stardust.



Fig. 4.4 *Right*, The renovated Drake Hotel shown in 2008.

“emphasized the quirky and outré.”³ With a self-proclaiming identity promising a ‘Hotbed for Culture,’ the Drake Hotel’s facelift was a drastic remodeling of the interiors and front façade. On top of the luxury hotel suites above, the Drake quickly established itself as a consistent venue for arts events and nightlife. The basement bar stage often played host to indie bands and performances, the main lounge and bar held DJ nights within view of the upscale dining room divided by a staircase leading to the second floor patio called the ‘sky bar’.

When first opening, the local arts culture underbelly that had been accruing over time was frequenting the Drake’s new edgy scene. Like the natural progression of anything avant-garde, the mainstream nightlife crowd from the rest of the city, as well as their suburban counterparts, were visiting the Drake Hotel on a regular basis after the summer of 2005. This neighbourhood, formerly infamous as a downtrodden dive, had actually become a weekend nightlife destination.

The Gladstone Hotel

Down the drag, at the corner of Queen West and Gladstone Ave, another hotel and bar had been undergoing its own transformation since the year 2000. Known to many locals as the place to go for Karaoke on a Thursday, Friday or Saturday, the Gladstone Hotel, similar to the Drake, was also a rundown historic building renovated into a boutique hotel. Margie Zeidler and Michael Tippin, both entrepreneurs in the business of purchasing and renovating historic buildings, originally purchased the low-end hotel together. Daughter of Toronto architect Eb Zeidler famed for his design of Toronto's Eaton Center, Margie is most well known for her work on 401 Richmond Street, a former tin factory she bought, developed, and brought back to life as a rental haven for commercial arts. In 2003, she was awarded Toronto's Jane Jacobs prize for this project.⁴ Similar to the Drake, the Gladstone was an S.R.O. (single room occupancy) rented to weekly and daily low-income tenants, some who had lived there for decades. However, when it became apparent that the owners' respective visions for the Gladstone's renovation weren't necessarily aligned, Zeidler acquired sole ownership a few years into the project.⁵

Not unlike the Drake's approach, an artistic theme was pervasive in not only the programming of events here, but throughout the actual renovation as well. During the gradual renovation, the owner of a nearby gallery, lent the Gladstone

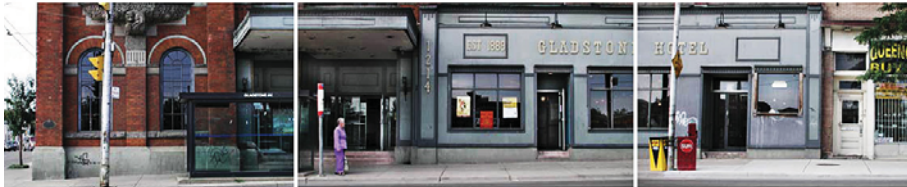


Fig. 4.5 Gladstone Hotel in 2003.



Fig. 4.6 Gladstone Hotel after renovation in 2006.



Fig. 4.7 The Gladstone Hotel at the corner of Gladstone Avenue and Queen Street West.



Fig. 4.8 The Starbucks at the corner of Dovercourt Road and Queen Street West.

paintings for exhibit in its hotel lobby.⁶ As well, thirty-seven private artists, designers and architects were chosen for the design and execution of the hotel rooms making each one uniquely themed according to the conceptual idea of the designer.⁷ For example, one room was created using felt as the main material for the furniture and finishes, another room was made in an Art-Nouveau theme, and the room created by artist-in-residence at the time, Bruno Billio, was decorated with piled up books and suitcases in his signature style.

The official launch of the hotel on December 2, 2005 invited the public to venture inside each hotel room to view the final result of the hotel's transformation and the preserved historic features within it, such as the hundred-year-old elevator and refinished wood stair that wrapped itself around it. In contrast to the Drake's drastic transformation, the Gladstone's owner was intent on bringing the building back to its 'former glory' as a railway hotel. The hardwood floors were refinished, the crown molding repaired and walls repainted. Karaoke nights continued in the melody bar throughout the renovation while a new at-grade café and ballroom livened up the Gladstone's street presence as a corner building. As well, an artist-in-residence program provided studio spaces to selected artists in the city. In effect, the building's low-income tenants were eventually displaced.

While the Drake and Gladstone are often viewed as the instigators of change in the neighbourhood, a cacophony of factors were influencing the transformative dynamics of the area apart from the conversion of these boutiques hotels. The nearby Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), had plans to make their grounds less isolated and more integrated with the city. Their new master plan included extending the street network into the site, creating new city blocks and the construction of many new buildings. As well, two more characters arrived on the scene in the year 2005. The Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MOCCA) opened its doors in January⁸ moving its facilities several blocks east of Dovercourt Road near Shaw Street, a short distance to a plethora of art galleries in either direction. Even one of America's largest coffee chains, Starbucks, took notice of this locality, moving to a prominent location at the corner of Queen West and Dovercourt Road. In Lance Freeman's words, Starbucks is "the ubiquitous symbol of gentrification."⁹ Indeed, the area had now been deemed safe for capital investment.

The Big Three

The re-launch of the Gladstone and the opening of Starbucks came on the heels of a heated community consultation given by the City of Toronto in November of 2005 at the McCormick Community Centre, moderated by Elise Hug, the City's planner for Ward 18. It was at this well-attended community meeting that many neighbourhood locals learned about the impending developments that were coming to the area. Two other consultations in the summer had already earned the attention of vigilant community members who had begun meeting on their own to discuss the impending developments.

The area planner's presentation began with explaining the boundary of a study area the City was calling the Queen West Triangle. Its boundaries were Queen Street West to the north, Dovercourt Road to the east and the rail lands to the southwest. Three major applications had been made in 2005 for rezoning and Official Plan amendments.¹⁰ These applications were looking to build higher densities and differing land use from the outdated zoning restrictions of these industrial lands. In the middle of the Triangle stood 48 Abell and its beautiful lofts. In fact, nearly all of the properties in the Triangle comprised of land formerly belonging to John Abell. It soon became evident that his old manufacturing building was in the direct path of development. While the meeting's purpose was to notify the community of the impending developments, they were a major jump in scale and scope compared to the relatively modest proposed developments and transformations in the previous five years.

In 1999, a planning application was made by the owner of 48 Abell Street to add a fourth storey to the building and legalize the 80 lofts for residential live/work use. To date, the inhabitants were technically living illegally in their commercial units. It seemed that as long as this status was in contention, these residents seemed to be safe from litigation. The following year, the owner of 150 Sudbury Street (formerly 38 Abell St.) made a rezoning application to build 4 storey townhouses that were approved for construction by the City of Toronto's Planning Department. No new streets were needed at this time, parking was to be at grade, and Abell Street would be extended in the form of a bicycle path.

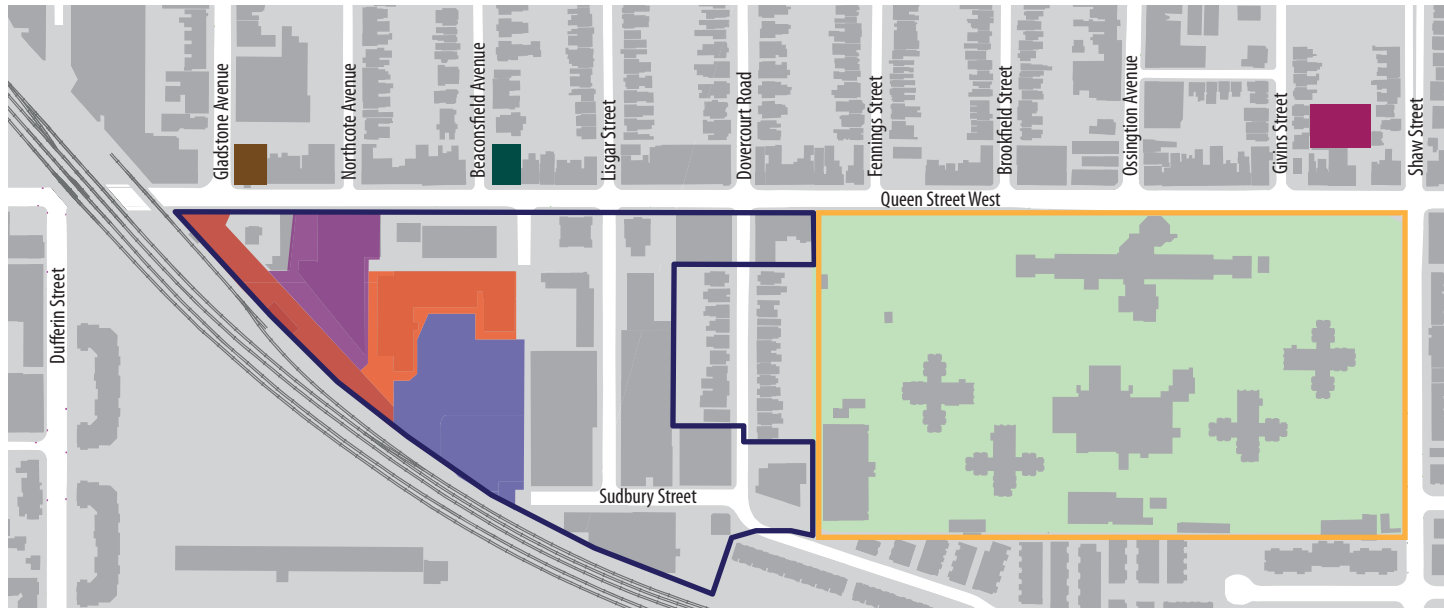


Fig. 4.9 In-place height restrictions.



Fig. 4.10 In-place zoning.

Queen West Triangle surrounding context



- 48 Abell Street
- 1191 Queen Street West
- 1171 Queen Street West
- 150 Sudbury Street (formerly 38 Abell)

- Drake Hotel -1150 Queen Street West
- Gladstone Hotel -1204 Queen Street West
- MOCCA -Museum of Canadian Contemporary Art

- Queen West Triangle boundary
- CAMH redevelopment site

In 2002, the Triangle was identified in the City of Toronto's New Official Plan as a regeneration area that would include residential and commercial uses in addition to the industrial uses already permitted.¹¹ However, the details of the planning were not initially stipulated in detail, so when each property application was revised to include more drastic developments, the City needed more time to perform comprehensive planning studies on the Triangle. Meanwhile, the neighbourhood had become better known as a cultural enclave for the arts due to the number of galleries that had established along Queen Street West. In 2003, with the Gladstone and Drake Hotel renovations already underway, the area was officially designated by the city as the 'Arts and Design District.'

While in 2005, the building application at 150 Sudbury Street was brought to the Committee of Adjustment for a minor variance to include below grade parking and a slightly higher density, a new development application came in that summer for rezoning and amendments to the Official Plan at 1171 Queen Street West, directly beside 48 Abell Street. This application was for a 10-storey building along Queen Street with a 26-storey high tower behind it, both condominiums.¹² This plan would entail the demolition of the already vacant Gibson Textile Dyers building, constructed in the 1920's by the Rumely Company, however another application in August that year would also propose drastic changes the Triangle.

The owner of 48 Abell had not only withdrawn his application to regularize the land use for the building, he had partnered with a developer and proposed a two tower building in its place, to include 25 stories for market condominiums and 19 stories for affordable housing on an 8-storey podium. It was also acknowledged that the property at 1199 Queen Street West -home to an outdoor garden centre at the time, and also serving as right-of-way access for Abell's industrial tenant IMAR Steel- was owned by Merv Hollander, 48 Abell's landowner. Incidentally, this land was crucial for the success of the street access system the City had envisioned for the Triangle.¹³

Fig. 4.11 *Opposite*, Queen West Triangle surrounding context.

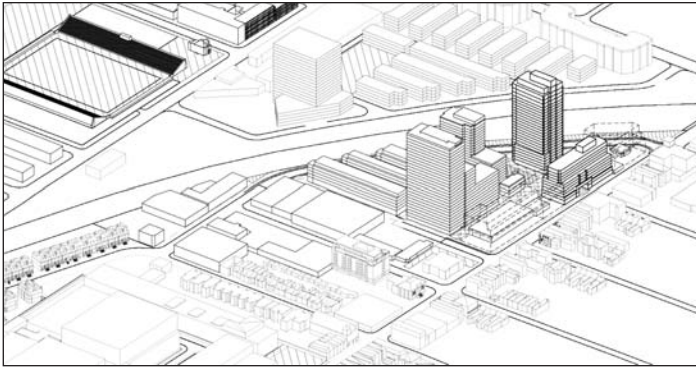


Fig. 4.12 City proposed massing, view from north-east.

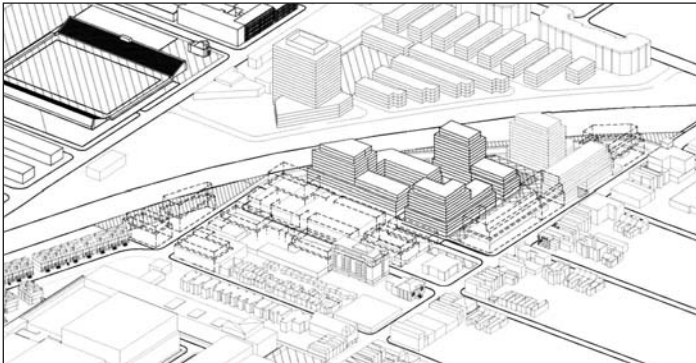


Fig. 4.13 Massing of developers' proposals in 2006, view from north-east.

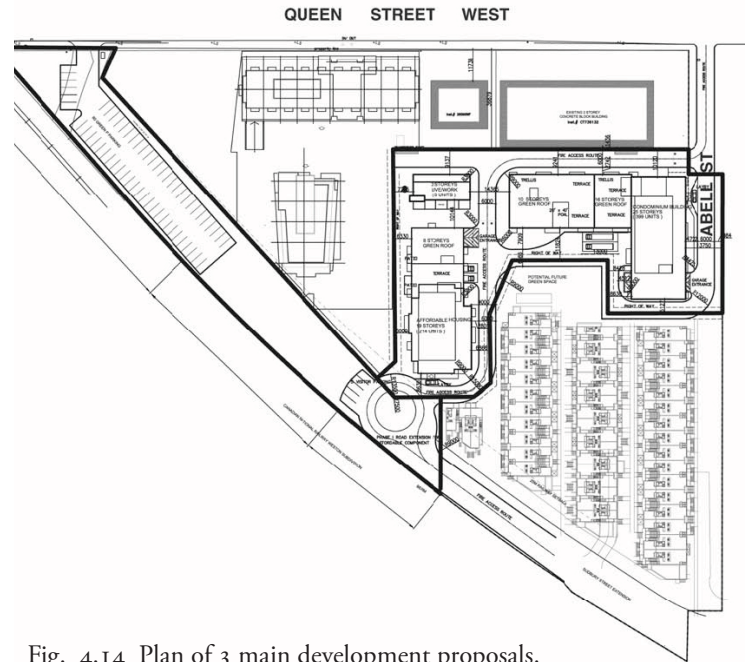
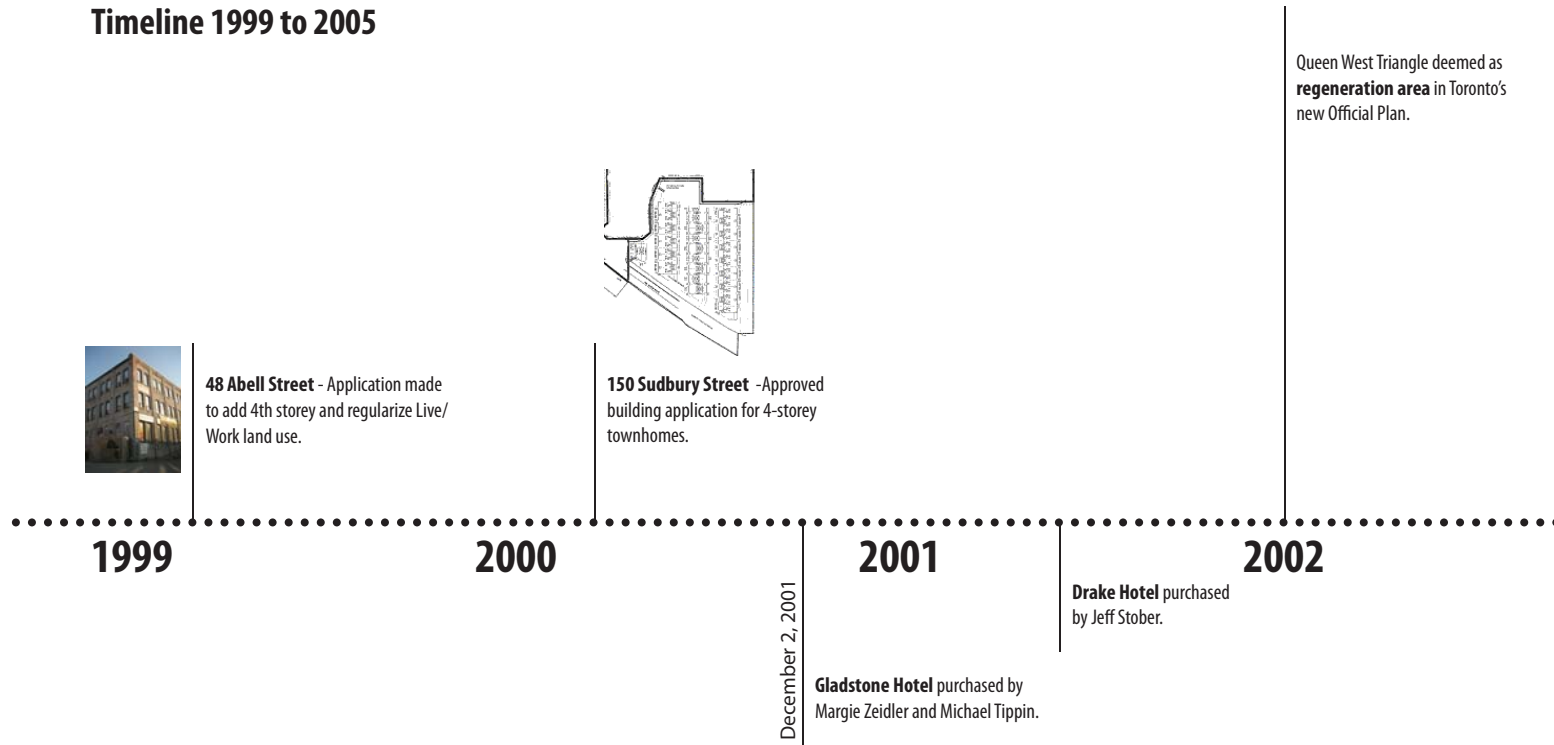


Fig. 4.14 Plan of 3 main development proposals.

What the City of Toronto's planning department did not reveal the evening of the community consultation was that they had received yet another Official Plan Amendment to the existing application at 150 Sudbury earlier that month. The new proposal was for another condominium that consisted of two linear buildings of 9 and 14-storeys tall stepping down to 8 stories. The showroom building for marketing these condos to the public was already underway beside Woolfitt's Art Supply store at 1145 Queen Street West and situated directly in front of Abell's main entrance. Angry residents were already aware of an infraction for commencing construction of this temporary building without a permit.

Prior to the community meeting, pressure had been mounting from the community about the future of the neighbourhood, while developers alike pressed the City of Toronto to take a position on the outcome of their applications. Comparatively, three-dimensional images were shown illustrating the developer applications' contextual siting and heights compared with the neighbourhood (see figures 4.11 and 4.13), and the City's planning department's version showing the height allowances they were willing to permit on these and several other properties identified in the Triangle (figure 4.12). The development applications were a drastic change in scale from the City's as well as the existing neighbourhood. Because the three properties were collectively a substantial amount of land being redeveloped, the City insisted that additional planning studies had to be carried out before any approvals could be made. These outstanding studies included the review of infrastructure, (such as new streets and sewers), public transit, parks and recreation, local heritage buildings and a notion of preserving this area as a 'Cultural Corridor'.¹⁴ They were asking for feedback from the community that evening about the city's 'vision' for the Triangle.

Timeline 1999 to 2005



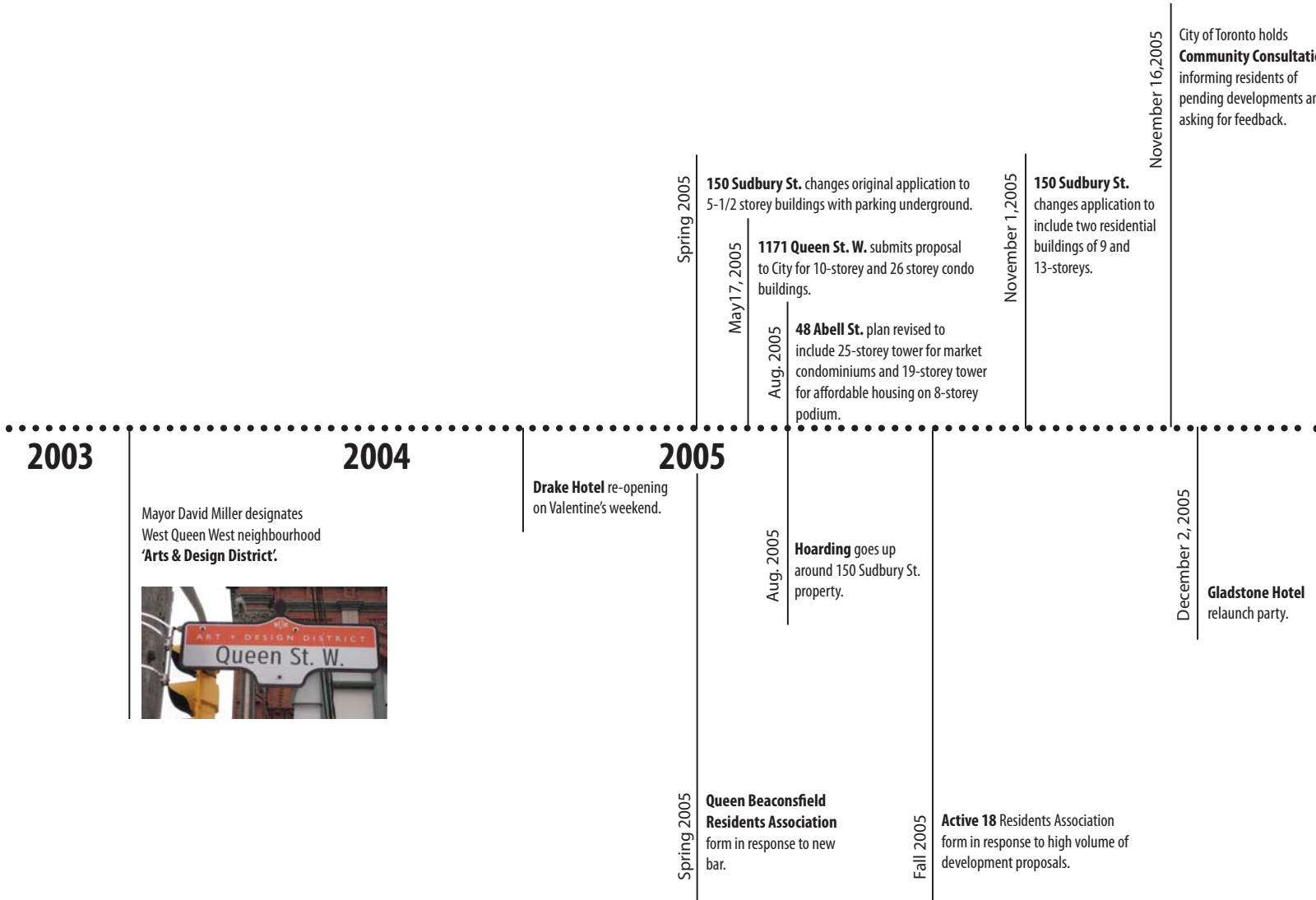


Fig. 4.15 *Previous Spread, Timeline*
1999 to 2005.

If nothing else, a few things were evident. The planner's so-called vision was less of a projection or strategy than it was a reaction to the proposed developments. They had simply taken the proposed buildings, kept the massing but reduced the heights. Additionally, the developers' plans to build these towers were not going to be readily approved by City Council. Next, it became regrettably apparent that there were no plans to preserve 48 Abell as an historical landmark, rendered clear by the fact that the revised zoning in the City reports were showing new height and land-use allowances on this site. While notionally the City's position seemed to include retention of the arts and culture in the area and to protect historic buildings, it was implicit that they did not support the historic preservation of 48 Abell and the artists and cultural workers contained therein. Additionally, the land speculation was already causing rent increases for many residents in the surrounding area making it difficult for cultural workers and current local residents to remain in the WQW Triangle at all.

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1. Sharon Zuking, *Loft Living*, 1981, 5.
 2. Jody Rosen. "The Inn Crowd: Two Indie Hotels have Turned Toronto into a Capital of Cool". *The New York Times*, Spring 2009, sec. Travel, <http://67.199.9.155./press/newyorkstylespring09.pdf> (accessed July 2, 2009).
 3. Ibid.
 4. "Awards." *Canadian Architect*, July, 2004., <http://www.canadianarchitect.com/issues/ISarticle.asp?aid=1000157255> (accessed January 24, 2010).
 5. Derrek Roemer. *Last Call at the Gladstone Hotel*, Edited by Derrek Roemer. Toronto: Last Call Productions, 2007.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Ibid.
 8. MOCCA, <http://www.mocca.ca/about%2Dus/about%2DMOCCA/>
 9. Lance Freeman, Ph.D. *There Goes the Hood: Views of Gentrification from the Ground Up*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2006, 62.
 10. *Request for Direction Report: West Queen West Triangle Area Study*. Toronto: City of Toronto, 2006, http://www.toronto.ca/planning/pdf/wqw_final_full_05nov16.pdf (accessed Oct 23, 2008), 3.
 11. Ibid, 9.
 12. Ibid, 14.
 13. Ibid, 15.
 14. *Request for Direction Report: Official Plan and Zoning Review in the West Queen West Triangle Area*. Toronto: City of Toronto, May 30, 2006, <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/committees/te/te060613/it005.pdf> (accessed June 27, 2007).

Winter 2006

Something wasn't right.

There was something in the pit of my stomach that didn't sit well with these buildings planned for the Triangle. I just couldn't bring myself to support any of them. As a resident I felt like these people were coming from outside and acting like they knew what would be good for my neighborhood. All they wanted was to capitalize on the trendy scene that had been emerging, kick us out and demolish our beautiful old building. How could this remain a cultural corridor if none of the cultural workers could afford to live in the area anymore? What sense did it make to destroy Abell when it was such a significant contributor as an artistic hub? Adversely, wasn't this the usual cycle? The arts scene renders an area valuable, then gets pushed out of it as its popularity rises and the middle class moves in? Some annoyed bloggers were pointing out that the artists shouldn't complain of displacement when they too must have displaced others in order to move to the area in the first place.

As a pupil of architecture, I felt like I a trader. After all, architects are always touting that cities should be dense and that high density urban living is good while suburban sprawl is bad. We have learned and know better from the days of urban renewal and neighbourhood clearance, but wasn't this almost like the same thing? The neighbourhood was going to change drastically with this influx of buildings and the higher income demographic that would follow. I tried to think of the Triangle from an architect's perspective. Was my attachment to Abell clouding my judgment? Perhaps, but I also couldn't ignore the gut feeling in my stomach.

Spring 2006

Practice versus Advocacy.

One day there was an office meeting about a master planning project in the office presented by colleagues who had been consulting residents on future growth on their main streets in a Toronto neighbourhood. The designers were expressing their frustration after getting the residents on board with building up the street with a few towers mixed and mid-rise buildings, only to have the residents change their mind at later discussions and turn against these building heights.

I looked around the room. Every single person in that room who owned property had actually purchased and renovated an old single family Victorian townhouse somewhere in Toronto. It was a bit hypocritical. Was there not a dichotomy between where we -architects, advocates for density- expected city dwellers to live relative to where we ourselves choose to locate?*

* It is fair to note that Victorian townhouses make up much of Toronto's downtown housing stock because of the apartment ban in the early 1900's and accordingly a great amount of the population lives in these homes. In fact, the avid protection of these historic low-density neighbourhoods downtown puts incredible pressure on regeneration areas like West Queen West.



*“Finally it almost seemed authentic
As we headed further west
Into the worst, out of the best
Magazine neighborhood”*

Metric

Grow Up and Blow Away 2001

Cashing in on Culture

150 Sudbury Street, West Side Lofts

The 150 Sudbury Street condo showroom was built at the corner of Queen West and Abell Street on a small parcel of land beside Woolfitt's Art Supply and opened in March of 2006. This showroom playfully designed by UK architect Will Alsop, had jellybean shaped windows punctuating the boxy façade made of stained plywood, not unlike the kind that covered the dance floor at Abell's Studio 130. A black and white painted concrete blob sat beside this funky building which internally acted as the office space and subsequent to completion suffered several rounds of graffiti on the outside from defiant locals.

The condo to be built was called the 'West Side Gallery Lofts'. In spite of their slogan 'Be an original, own an original' the West Side Loft units stood very little chance of delivering the kind of experience or character inherent to 120 year-old 48 Abell's authentic lofts. The irony of an invitation to potential condo owners



Fig. 5.2 The West Side Lofts condo show room building.

Fig. 5.1 *Opposite*, Abell and Queen street signs.



Fig. 5.3 View into West Side Lofts showroom at night.

buying into the idea of owning a unique and ‘original loft,’ was the fact that these so-called lofts would be newly built exposed concrete construction. Not only was selling fake lofts a clever gimmick, the developer got to spend less money finishing the walls and floors. As well, the units in any developer condo high-rise are the epitome of replication, efficiency and mass production, not the unique, personalized lofts being pushed in these ads. As a sardonic twist, the model suite’s second floor south-facing window actually had a direct view to 48 Abell’s authentic studio lofts, that weren’t expected to survive this wave of development much further into the century. Promotional material used the neighbourhood’s mainstream trendiness accelerated by the Drake and Gladstone’s popularity as a beacon:

Take a walk down the street and you can feel the creative energy radiating from the galleries and artist’s studios established in this area. The West Queen West Arts & Design district is a different kind of place, unlike any other in the city. As one of Toronto’s most eclectic neighbourhoods, it is a trove of neighbourhood treasure.”²¹

1171 Queen Street West, Bohemian Embassy Flats & Lofts

Meanwhile, the red brick building at 1171 Queen Street West, formerly Gibson Textile, was given a full-out stucco facelift for their condo showroom. From the outside, it looked more like some slick bar than a condo showroom with its big red-tinted glass windows and a security guard at the front door with a club bouncer-like stance. Opening in the fall of 2006, the name given to this condo, 'Bohemian Embassy Flats & Lofts,' was accompanied by an extensive marketing campaign obviously hoping to capitalize on value that the avant-garde culture, precluding West Queen West's popularity, afforded the area. Several aspects to this marketing were outright ridiculous, starting with the idea that the bohemian life of the starving artist was remotely glamorous and that this trashy lifestyle was being used to lure potential buyers of luxury condominiums. If this weren't enough, two story billboards on the building featuring someone's idea of a 'bohemian' showed a dramatic black and white photo of a model done up in a mesh shirt, holding a single rose, wearing long braided hair and a loose fitting artist beret and a big red sash, appearing as the 'ambassador' of the 'embassy'. One of these billboards faced the car wash in front of Abell's secondary entrance featuring "the smoky-eyed Bohemian Embassy billboard waif that daily insults artistic sensibilities."²

The Bohemian Embassy website continued the barrage of shameless marketing calling out to "freethinking, art-loving, unconventional urbanites to take up digs in its chic, unique and oh so Bohemian residential suites."³ Unit layouts were named after famous artists like the 'De Kooning' and the 'Mondrian'. An enormous 24"x18" oversized promotional booklet given to interested buyers contained suite information, more images of the bohemian model and conjured-

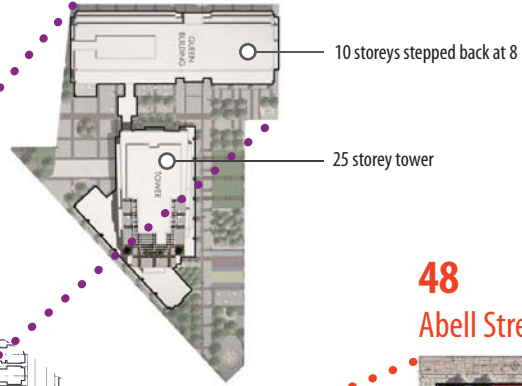


Fig. 5.4 *Top*, Bohemian Embassy model on billboard facing the car wash.

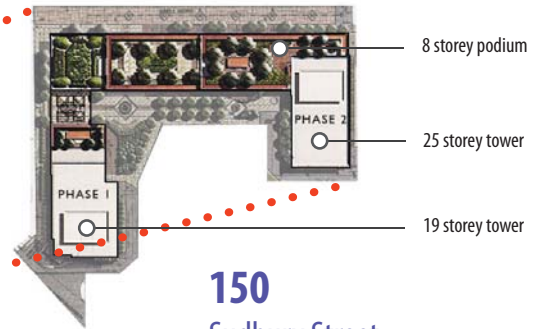
Fig. 5.5 *Bottom*, Bohemian Embassy condo showroom.

3 Development Proposal Sites

1171 Queen Street West



48 Abell Street



150 Sudbury Street



3 Development Proposals' Marketing Imagery

1171
Queen St.



Bohemian Embassy Flats & Lofts



48
Abell St.



Forty Eight Abell Street



150
Sudbury St.



West Side Lofts



Fig. 5.6 *Previous pages, 3 Development Proposal Sites.*

Fig. 5.7 *3 Development Proposals' Imagery.*

up 'edgy' behaviour to their target demographic described in poems like this one:

How to BE
Wear a beret.
Be the only employee of your own company.
Play the bongos.
Write poetry. And don't be afraid to read it out loud.
Don't wear a beret.
Start an art gallery.
Wear vintage clothing.
Own a cool car. But take the subway.
Know the names of all the street musicians on Queen West.
Live at the Bohemian Embassy.⁴

Evident in their marketing campaigns, these developers were eager to cash in on the very culture that has made the area trendy. A form of simulacrum was at play here which was both subversive and manipulative. These condos were attracting potential buyers to a phony experience made convincing only by virtue of their location in the Arts and Design District. As well, advertising of this artsy neighbourhood was only in terms of what it could offer to a high end demographic and the local attractions associated with this target market. Due to their widespread success, the Drake and Gladstone hotels were prominently featured in promoting the area's desirability by both marketing campaigns. In further promotional material, the Bohemian Embassy was also staking a claim in causing the hip factor to rise upon its arrival on the scene:

Anchoring the west end of Toronto's hippest strip comes a condominium so stylish and cool, it promises to redefine the way this city's hipsters live. Join the ambassadors of hip on Queen Street West of Gladstone, renowned for the famous Drake Hotel and home of the soon-to be equally eminent Bohemian Embassy.⁵

The Social and the Beaver were two new bars that further contributed to the nightlife of the Queen Street strip. The new Starbucks also appeared as a consistent attractor to condo shoppers. An interesting choice in the West Side Lofts booklet made the interesting choice of highlighting the Organic Boutique several blocks East as well as the Dominion grocery store quite a distance south of the railway tracks in Liberty Village reveals a selective marketing intention when the lower end Price Chopper grocery store is located in the block literally to the North of the Queen West Triangle.

Representation of the buildings and their scale is a whole other issue. Not only does each 3-D image attempt to downplay the scale of the buildings, in each case the building context is completely absent in rendered illustrations. One might ask if this really is a problem? It may be up to the scrutiny of condo buyers to discern between what they are shown in promotional material and model suites versus what they will buy. These suites are often meant to be deceitful, for instance by showing only the highest upgrades available (appliances, finishes, fixtures) or ceiling heights greater than planned, making the condominium appear to be more desirable than it is. However, when promotional images enter into public discourse of legal proceedings with the City of Toronto or the Ontario Municipal Board, there is perhaps a need for regulations to differentiate between marketing imagery and that of real proposed scale. Accurate representation of a proposal's built form could be ensured by mandating that 3-dimensional images brought forth as evidence for hearings be generated from measured perspectives and include adjacent context.* More honest marketing campaigns would not hurt either.

* This point was brought up in an informal conversation between the author and the partner of a 3-d rendering company in Toronto hoping to introduce the concept of accurate 3-dimensional representation into legal proceedings instead of allowing marketing images to be used as evidence in cases at the Ontario Municipal Board. As well, this individual also encourages his clients go about marketing their projects more honestly.



Fig. 5.8 The commodification of art depicted in an informal hallway exhibit on the second floor 48 Abell's east wing.

The Problem with Condos

A condominium as a housing type can be very problematic. First of all, in an effort to derive the greatest profits possible, the developer will generally build as cheaply and efficiently as possible. The more units, which can be squeezed into a given footprint, the higher the return. Construction of small units ill-suited for families and a homogeneous demographic of middle to high-income couples or singles is often the result. In high contrast to buildings constructed during the turn of last century, a developer has little incentive to insist on quality construction when the building is immediately turned over to a collective of condo owners, after making a quick and handsome profit. We have therefore gone from an age of specific to generic, a form of forced anonymity coupled with conformity. Similar to condo townhouses or suburbs, singular expression in the form of paint colour or window treatments is vehemently resisted and quashed in favour of uniform identity of the collective which dictates permitted or acceptable 'standards' for the condo. Additionally, these buildings are not meant to last and will age uniformly, eventually needing a great amount of maintenance and repair, due to their sheer size, all at once. Additionally, the contribution towers make to the streetscape often only benefit the condo owners as private amenity space for the building. This at-grade treatment further disrespects the public realm in addition to the large shadows cast by obtrusive towers denying sunlight from pedestrians, fellow residents and businesses alike.

The profit calculation for a developer goes something like this: once below grade parking is required, there is little difference in cost between a 12-storey tower and a 24-storey tower, for example. The profits only increase with the addition of floors -and quickly too. However, when townhomes are built beside towers, as is the case in the east part of Liberty Village, the question must be asked whether it would have been possible to make the whole area into mid-rise buildings? Most importantly, should a developer feel any social responsibility toward shaping the city to be more humane and livable? Why does the city not force their hand when it comes to making such enormous impacts on the public realm?

Incidentally, management kept silent on the 48 Abell development and continued to worry the residents in the building over impending eviction. These plans for development threatened the existence of the local artistic culture being used to attract potential condo owners. Amidst the fanfare, the Spin Gallery nearby also highlighted in the West Side Loft promotional material had to close its doors. By 2005, several galleries between Dufferin and Dovercourt streets including Sis Boom Bah, Lift, Burston and Brackett closed due to the climbing cost of rent and their inability to afford to remain open.⁶ And what nobody knew at this time, was that the artistic activity in the area, was already peaking.

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1. West Side Lofts promotional booklet
 2. Lisa Foad "Selling Off Queen West." *Now Magazine*, August 23-29, 2007, 18.
 3. Bohemian Embassy promotional booklet
 4. Bohemian Embassy promotional booklet
 5. Bohemian Embassy promotional booklet
 6. *UTOpia: Towards a New Toronto*, edited by Jason McBride. Toronto: Coach House Books, 2005, 159.

May 2006

St. Clare's focus group.

A colleague and fellow Abell dweller had told me in the hallway about some meetings with the management that were going on with the building residents at the Aristocrat office. "It's a focus group that's getting the residents' input on the affordable housing part of the proposed building," he said. I was interested in finding out more so he let me know when the meeting was going on that week.

It turned out to be the third and final meeting to this effect. A woman from St. Clare's Multi-faith Housing, with whom the Aristocrat management was applying for affordable housing in the new development, had organized the meetings. Their idea was to provide current residents at 48 Abell with an option to rent 'artist loft' space in the new development's 19-storey west wing. It was planned as a phased project and construction was meant to begin at the west wing - where I was living.

After dinner, I went over to the Aristocrat office at the north-east corner of

the building. I had never been beyond the front office, a long space flanked with northfacing windows and a few workstations with paper piled high on the desks, where I dropped off my rent cheques. There was a large conference table around which 10 or so people were sitting. Everywhere else in this room were light fixtures and lamp parts lying around from the adjacent show room and workshops, also owned by Aristocrat. One might say the appearance of the place was pretty laid back. Nancy Estrela from the front office was there -the person who collected our cheques each month- she also had the unfortunate honour of busting the parties in the building and answering to emergencies. Aside from Nancy and Liz from St. Clares, everyone else present was a resident, mostly artists.

I was given a set of drawings of the west wing of the new building in question, where some affordable housing was meant to be located. After the previous two meetings some feedback from the residents had been incorporated into the drawings. Apparently it was originally proposed that tenants share one big studio in the new building, but everyone had agreed they would prefer to have their own space to work in. Joe said that sometimes he wakes up in the middle of the night with an idea and has to paint it when that idea is fresh. Others were concerned for their art supplies and preferred the freedom of using the space according to their wishes.

The meeting was tense, likely because the elephant in the room was that no one wanted to see the current building go. Sadly, keeping Abell wasn't an option in the eyes of the management. In a way it was rather cruel to force the issue of a new building when 48 Abell already housed ideal loft studios well-suited for artists. Everybody knew that the units in the new building could not surpass what we already had in terms of space, light, cost and character.

We were pressed and questioned about the 'minimum' amount of square footage we could 'live with'? What are the absolute 'lowest' ceiling heights we could 'live with'? The St. Clare's rep explained that if these units were to qualify for affordable housing that it would be considered a luxury to apply for funding with such large

units, even if the bedrooms were not enclosed. "I need my 12 foot ceilings," said one person. "That's the lowest height I could live if I'm going to work in my studio, I'm sorry." It was brought up that not everyone in the building is an artist. One person reasoned that people living before or after non-artists at Abell may still use those units as studios. The discussion went back and forth with St. Clares pressing for less and Abell residents pressing for an equivalency to their current studios. The frustration in the room was mounting. The real problem wasn't space or height, but that these two programmatic pieces were simply incompatible. One couldn't be bent enough to accommodate the other.

The issue of legality also came up. The status quo in the building was illegal seeing as everyone held commercial leases and were living in their lofts in spite of this. Management was well aware of its illegal occupants but now wanted that to change. In fact, many folks at Abell will vouch for the landlord if asked about his generosity or lenience toward residents and artists and their troubles with making rent payments in the early days.

One middle aged resident recalled with another how the building inspector used to come, in the 90's, to make sure no one was living at Abell. At that time, a residential space was defined to contain a bed, so when residents knew an inspection was imminent, they shoved all their mattresses in the elevators to hide them away. Even though signs of residential use may have been present in the lofts from kitchen dishes or clothing, an infraction wasn't possible without that bed in the unit.

I met some interesting people that evening. One girl, Jessica who looked to be in her mid to late 20's said that she had been living at Abell since she was 14. Given the discussion, she clearly wasn't the only long time resident. Because of the divisive nature of that evening's dialogue, she asked everyone if they would be interested in meeting up another time with just residents to talk more about these changes. We agreed and exchanged email addresses so we could reach each other and figure out a good time for that gathering.

*We are not a collective
singular voice but a forum
for collective voices.¹*

Active 18 Association

Community Activism

Active 18 Association: Citizens for Good Design

When residents caught wind of the pending applications in the Queen West Triangle, some were confused about the development plans, while others were frustrated about the esoteric nature of the City of Toronto, saying it was not accessible to the average citizen.² It was difficult to view or attain information on the development applications, seeing as this type of information is only accessible for viewing at City Hall during business hours and is not released to the public or permitted to be copied. When compared to Toronto, Vancouver's planning department is relatively transparent, where development activity can be sought out on the City's website 10 days after an application has been made,³ signifying the importance of public discourse to development. Community members of West Queen West were frustrated from being shut out of the planning process and wished to have more opportunity to participate in a dialogue for shaping what would happen in their own neighbourhood.

After two community consultation meetings held by the City in the summer of 2005, residents began meeting on their own and before long had formed a new community group in response to the development activity, mobilizing quickly to oppose it. The new group, spearheaded by Margie Zeidler held open meetings at the Gladstone Hotel in an attempt to piece together the details of the building applications and disseminate this information to neighbourhood residents. The group officially called itself 'Active 18 Association: Citizens for Good Design', stemming from the ward's namesake. A pivotal goal of Active 18 was to create a forum ensuring the community's voice was heard and residents could stay informed. A website was started to facilitate this where city reports, regular updates and meetings were posted. However, the unifying position of the group was to advocate for 48 Abell's preservation and protect it from demolition. Naturally, many Abell St. dwellers has become members of Active 18 and in some ways the battle over Abell turned into a crusade.

After several meetings and ongoing recruitment during the fall of 2005, Active 18 consulted with the Annex Residents Association to seek direction on how best to represent the community's varied concerns as a unified front. Interested local professionals including planners and architects also joined the cause lending the group even more credibility and clout. The point was to have a liason between the community and elected officials as well as developers, architects and landowners with respect to development in the ward. A steering committee was soon formed and a constitution was drafted and adopted in January of 2006. At this time Active 18 also incorporated as an organization.⁴

Community groups and individuals often are accused of NIMBY-ism (Not In My Backyard) when development is encroaching on their turf and residents are not open to change. Active 18 strove to break this stereotype. In fact, an annual YIMBY Festival (Yes In My Backyard) was started at the Gladstone just to prove the opposite, welcoming and celebrating local groups, clubs and organizations while providing opportunity to increase their visibility within the community. While the developments were a surprise to the community, the goal was not to make them simply disappear, nor was that a realistic expectation. While Active

18 published pointed criticism of developer proposals, but was also critical of the City's planning department as well. In Christopher Hume's words, "The point isn't to stop growth but to control it; in this regard the city has a record of abject failure."⁵ At one meeting it was pointed out to ward councilor Adam Giambrone (who regularly provided updates on the City at Active 18 meetings) that although residents were frustrated with the lack of communication from the City, the developers had equal right to be frustrated by the City's turning down their proposals when a clear framework to build from in the Triangle was never outlined in the first place.

Many were optimistic that if they could be a part of the discussion, positive change could be effected on these developments. While some community groups resist development altogether in their neighbourhoods, Active 18 set itself apart by being a proponent for development -as long as it was responsible socially, environmentally and aesthetically. A set of principles was established by the organization in April of 2006 to this effect,

- Preserve and revive valuable heritage buildings and spaces, such as 48 Abell and its courtyard and other heritage sites.
- Respect the scale and nature of Queen Street by maintaining its distinctive character: emphasize fine-grain retail and retain the existing height limit along Queen St. proper.
- Promote mixed-use zoning, i.e. establish a mix of commercial, residential and light industrial space to ensure accessibility and affordability for a variety of businesses, residents and artists.
- Introduce public streets and laneways that integrate the pattern of surrounding streets and link to King Street and Liberty Village through, for example, a pedestrian/ cycle bridge.
- Incorporate green space and sustainability by adding a neighbourhood park, developing "greenways" along the railway corridor, and employing strategies for environmental sustainability throughout the site.
- Make it beautiful by preserving the area's arts focus and heritage character in combination with high-quality contemporary design.⁶



Fig. 6.1 Active 18 logo.

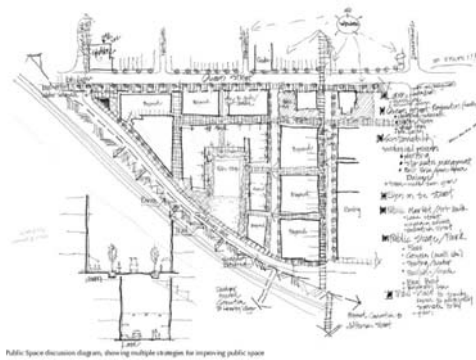


Fig. 6.2 Active 18 Public Space Diagram showing multiple strategies for improving public space from design Charette in March 2006.



Fig. 6.3 *Opposite*, 3-dimensional image of Active 18 design charette scheme for the Queen West Triangle showing retention of 48 Abell.

While some of these principles aligned with goals outlined in city reports, few were inherent to the proposed developments. In fact, when considered together, the design of each property was rather compartmentalized making for an incoherent whole. Taking matters into their own hands, Active 18 held a Community Design Charrette in March 2006 wishing to come up with design alternatives to the in-place proposals. While the Charette was open to residents, several prominent Toronto architects, planners and artists also joined the cause throwing their support behind the efforts of Active 18 including internationally respected professionals Jana Levitt and Dean Goodman of Levitt Goodman Architects, Ken Greenberg, former chief of planning in Boston and Don Schmitt of Diamond & Schmitt Architects Inc.⁷ Several priorities guided the principles applied in this exercise, including the retention of 48 Abell, securing of public parkland, retaining Queen West's fine grain retail frontage and an emphasis on mid-rise buildings instead of towers. The Charrette results were formatted into a report which was then published on the Active 18 website.

Renegade Resistance

In the mean time, renegade citizens had made visible their own distaste for the change coming to the neighbourhood. Before the Starbucks had even opened, a message in black spray paint was graffitied onto its stuccoed exterior wall saying: “Drake, you ho, this is all your fault” (see figure 6.4). Once this graffiti was painted over, it was promptly replaced with another message: ‘Drake, you slut, its all your fault.’ And even if the Drake Hotel was not to blame for starting the process of gentrification now being resisted, this \$6 million renovation could certainly be considered a catalyst accelerating immanent change and contributing to heightening land values.

Another bold statement appeared in the window of the Fly gallery located across the street from the Bohemian Embassy’s showroom. On exhibit was a television displaying a looped video of a drunk Bohemian Embassy model look-a-like in front of a red backdrop (see figure 6.5). Instead of the rose, in her hand was a bottle of wine from which she was taking large swigs and wiping her face with her sleeve in between stumbles. Coupled with the television was a poster identical to the one across the street (figure 6.6) advertising ‘one-bedroom units from \$159,900’, except for some choice substitutions in the text. Instead



Fig. 6.4 Gentrification of West Queen West is often blamed on the Drake Hotel.



Fig. 6.5 *Left*, Bohemian Embarrassment installation by 48 Abell resident Michael Toke.

Fig. 6.6 *Right top*, Bohemian Embassy's graffitied condo billboard.

Fig. 6.7 *Right bottom*, Defaced Bohemian Embassy model.

of Bohemian Embassy, Condos & Lofts, the imitation poster read: 'Bohemian Embarrassment, Cons & Lies' and cited a website that led to the looping video online. At the bottom of the poster where it said 'Exclusive Brokers of Millborne Real Estate Inc', the substitution instead wrote: 'Exclusive Broken Stillborn Real Mistake, Inc'. Also in the poster, the developer Baywood was referred to as 'Fauxwood.' The artist, Michael Toke, incidentally lived in 48 Abell's west wing. Following his exhibit, the developers of 1171 Queen St. W threatened litigation for defamation against Toke, however when he pointed out to them that the headlines would read something along the lines of 'big real estate developers sue starving artist', they thought better of it, and backed off. Adding insult to injury, billboards picturing the Bohemian model were subsequently vandalised with paintballs and graffiti (see figure 6.7).

The media was one of the most powerful tools this community had for gaining exposure, and the more media coverage the land development battle received in the newspapers and blogs the more public support was garnered for the community's cause. For instance, Toronto Star columnist on urban issues, Christopher Hume, wrote regularly on new developments. The story of the Queen West Triangle inspired pent-up discontent across the city, over the many downfalls of Toronto's planning process, which were voiced in various public forums.

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1. Active 18 Association. *Queen West Triangle Charrette Report*. Toronto, March 6, 2006, http://active18.org/charrette/active18-charrette_report_full.pdf/view?searchterm=charrette (accessed December 13, 2009), 6.
 2. Active 18 Association. "Mini Town Hall Open Meeting #1", [Minutes] October 20, 2005, 1.
 3. *Toronto Planning Studio Report*. Toronto: Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, May 2006, www.active18.org (accessed November 7, 2009), 7.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Christopher Hume. "Queen West Failure shows City's Faults." *Toronto Star*, November 11, 2006, A2.
 6. Active 18 Association. "Principles for Design" [Meeting Hand-Out], April 2006, 1.
 7. Active 18 Association. *Queen West Triangle Charrette Report*. Toronto, March 6, 2006, 7.

June 2006

How Model48 was formed.

A small group of Abell tenants had their first meeting one month after the last St. Clare's focus group consult. We met at Jessica's place, fueled with an ambitious agenda and hoping to get organized in order to make our presence known to the public. Her studio was on the third floor where she lived with her dog Lucy. In the previous months, some of us were getting the feeling that, between the various interested parties active in the West Queen West development dialogue (Active 18, the City, Aristocrat, etc.), Abell residents needed their own voice.

After some formalities, discussion centred around how popular the neighbourhood had become and how the arts scene had rendered it valuable. One person said that as soon as they heard about the 'Arts & Design' designation that the neighbourhood's secret was out and that everything would change. Then she remarked the same thing happened in Yorkville reminiscing with another tenant about the vibrant arts scene there in the 1970's and how everyone else in the city wanted a piece of it and started walking down the streets



Fig. G.1 Model48 logo.

trying to dress like the artists of the day. “Look at Yorkville now,” she said, “the same thing is going to happen here.” It was true, Yorkville had gentrified to the point of becoming an area where few could afford to live except for Toronto’s upper echelons, and several large office towers like the Manulife Center had usurped the fine-grained charm of the area’s vibrant center along Bloor and Yonge streets in the 1970’s, replace with large block towers. Now, during the latest up-market developments Yorkville was a breeding ground for million dollar condominium construction and a destination for visiting Hollywood celebrities flocking to the Park Hyatt and The Four Seasons hotels.

Now that the WQW area, as an arts enclave, was made attractive for development, these developments were already raising property values and pricing out businesses and residents alike. Ironically, the culture people were buying into wasn’t going to last once the condos became occupied. Some felt that Abell, as the arts cultivator it had become, should be preserved for this very reason apart from being an amazing historic building.

One person, actuated to get involved in the QWT development dialogue, spoke enthusiastically of how exciting it was that reinvestment was going on and with our feedback the neighbourhood could get even better. He was convinced that all the community input could effect positive change on WQW serving as a model for the city and beyond. I was inspired by the energy in the room, from all these folks wanting to work together to make a difference. We also talked about creating an identity for a resident group that could represent common interests in the building. By the time we met next, a name had been thought up for our group. We called ourselves Model48.

One guy came up with a logo and we put our heads together to write a mandate for the group, which Jess later published online. I started an email account for the model48 communications to the building tenants. Our first line of business was to be heard at the upcoming Community Council. This was when Matt showed the councillors the photo of the West Nile pond behind the building everyone was complaining about.

One resident cautioned us about artist elitism since not everyone in the building was actually an artist. The group was meant to be accessible to as a residents group first regardless of people’s occupations. She also made clear that we were ‘residents’ and not just ‘tenants’, an important distinction to make where eviction rights are concerned.

We wished to get more informed about the whole process of the OMB. Coming up was the pre-hearing in June of 2006 where hearing process details would be worked out for all three developments. I set up a meeting with a work colleague in planning who had experience assisting one of the partners-in-charge who often spoke at OMB hearings as an expert witness. He postulated that we could probably get first right of refusal for units in the new building. He also tried to explain to my roommate and I the different levels of involvement that were possible as a residents group. It was confusing, but it didn't seem like we would get the chance to speak unless Model48 was either a party or participant in the hearing. Additionally, partys typically have lawyers which cost money, two things we didn't have. We found out that participants had to express their interest to the Board at the pre-hearing which had already passed, and provide a participant statement of our vested interest in the developments as well as the position of our group. Now we were worried we wouldn't get to participate at all.

Luckily, Jess found out through some Active 18 connections that they were willing to accept our late 'request for participant status' submission, so a small team of us scrambled to put something credible together. At the heart of the matter was to see our beautiful building remain standing, but our argument for the preservation of live/work space was also of paramount importance.

Knowing that our small group was not representative of the building's population, it was agreed that conducting a survey would be an effective way to find out more about the people living at Abell. In particular we wanted to prove that live/work use of Abell's studios was alive and well, hoping that concrete numbers would give this argument more clout in front of a judge. So, ideas for survey questions were brainstormed, compiled and edited down to a two page, 10-question survey. What we were really searching for was an inkling that residents other than us ten or so Model48 members cared enough about saving the building from demolition to do something about it. In this spirit, we titled the survey 'Do You Give a Shit?' and set about cold calling Abell's various incredible lofts over the Fall of 2006.



Fig. G.3 Building logo created by author.

Fig. G.2 Following spread, Model48 mandate.

OUR STORY

A GROUP OF RESIDENTS

formed **model48** to address current issues central to the fate of 48 Abell, and the creative community of residents within. As residents of 48 Abell currently living and working in the 'West Queen West Triangle', **model48** represents the vibrant cultural community of architects, artists, curators, cultural workers, designers, dancers, filmmakers, journalists, musicians and writers directly affected by the decision to tear down our building. We are not against (condo) development in the 'Triangle,' rather we support responsible growth that considers the public's interest to preserve - and enhance - the unique flavour of this community from an cultural and architectural perspective.

THE HEART

of the 'West Queen West Art & Design District,' 48 Abell is a live/work studio building consisting of 80 studios for artists, cultural workers and creative people. After a 25-year legacy of providing live/work studio spaces for the cultural community, 48 Abell is a hub for artist activity and production in Toronto, a model live/work building. The essential elements for the production of culture in the 'creative city' exist here. For over 25 years, these unique conditions consisting of a combination of an industrial conversion to live/work units, the community that occupies these units, the affordability of the units, and the physical characteristics of the building such as its industrial features like high ceilings and large windows allowed the vibrant cultural community to live, work and thrive. This network of talent evolved organically over the past 25 years contributing significantly to the artistic and cultural fabric and success of the 'West Queen West Art & Design District'.

OUR MANDATE

is to generate interest, provide information and promote awareness about the redevelopment of 48 Abell and the direct impact on its residents, neighbourhood and city, specifically the cultural community and the Arts in Toronto. We strive to represent as accurately as possible the concerns, interests and rights of the residents, and act as a liaison with outside parties. As a reflection of a community of talented residents, **model48** uses its cultural savvy to implement community building - a positive and exciting model for change for Toronto and beyond.

OUR CITY

is experiencing a 'Cultural Renaissance'. Toronto is learning that a vibrant cultural community is synonymous with a world class city. We are well on our way towards a thriving cultural ecosystem, as evidenced by the investment in and reception of our city's creative spaces and places. TO is live with culture, buzzing from its newly built or renovated cultural institutions such as galleries, museums, performing art centres and educational facilities to the recent success of its civic all night contemporary art event.

This highly profiled campaign of 'culture in the city' assumes that an institution such a museum is the centre of culture in Toronto. model48 recognizes and celebrates live/work studios as a central creative space and place in Toronto. Whether it be a studio for an artist to paint or for a dancer to rehearse, without the spaces critical to the production of culture our institutions will be lifeless, our galleries will be barren and our stages will be empty. Live/work space such as 48 Abell Street is an incubator for talent and creativity essential to the vibrancy of our city without which our cultural ecosystem is dangerously out of balance.

model48 identifies creative people - not creative buildings - as the core of a city's cultural ecosystem. Imagine creative mortar collaborating with creative glass and synthesizing with creative steele et voila - a creative city! An investment in culture is an investment in people (that make culture). The proposed redevelopment(s) of the West Queen West Triangle threatens the extinction not only of our amazing buildings such as the 48 Abell Street studios, but the creative community, the people, that created the West Queen West Art and Design District. The survival of Toronto's creative community - TO live and TO work and TO thrive - is linked to the survival of the creative spaces such as 48 Abell Street and the creative places such as West Queen West neighbourhood and community.

OUR FATE

is in your hands. model48 poses the question back to the creative city:
TO be or not TO be?

*That which can be written into law does not represent real space.
In effect, text represents space badly, and the law poorly accommodates the
complexity and multiple meaning of places. Thus the judicial evacuates the spatial.¹*

Christian Devillers, The Urban Project

The Political Landscape

The Ontario Municipal Board

The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) is like court for buildings. Essentially, the developers were taking the City to court and the Province had the power to overturn planning decisions previously made by City Hall. According to their website, the OMB “is an independent adjudicative tribunal that hears appeals and applications and resolves land use disputes under a variety of legislation”²² in the province of Ontario. Because the appointed chairs have no constituents, the OMB is meant to be free from bias and therefore make their decisions for the good of the community. These decisions are based on the city’s in-place policies and zoning by-laws as well as the evidence brought forth by developers, city staff, residents, or private shareholders. Many who are familiar with this tribunal would beg to differ with these assertions on fairness and community benefits. In fact, because of the press this particular case was receiving, the Queen West Triangle became the poster child for everything wrong with Toronto’s planning department and shone an unflattering light on the Ontario Municipal Board

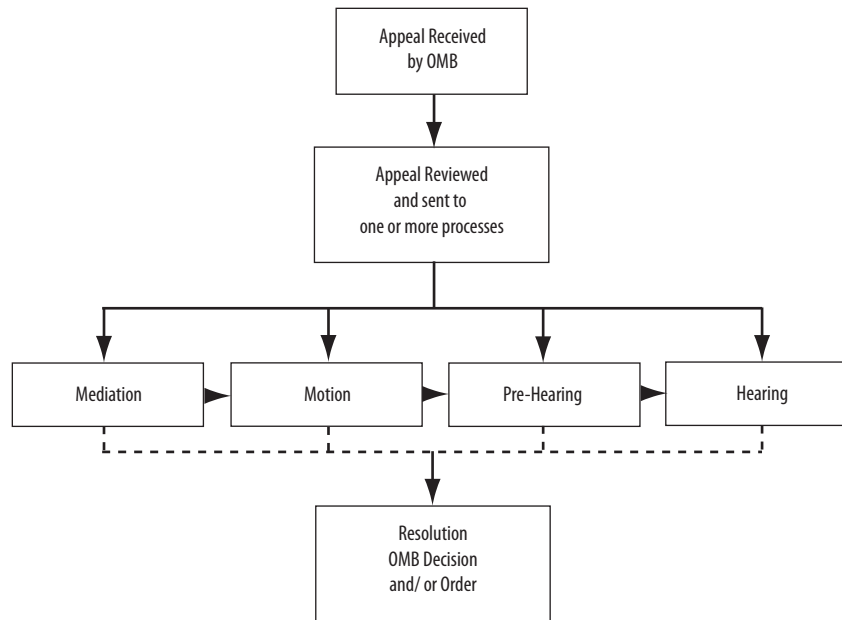


Fig. 7.1 The OMB Process.

appeals process prompting harsh criticism from media outlets in Toronto. The Toronto Life referred to the OMB as “the much loathed, Queen’s Park-appointed tribunal”²³ and with equal contempt, in an article titled ‘Queen West failure shows City’s faults,’ Toronto Star’s urban issues columnist Christopher Hume referred to the OMB as “that unaccountable, quasi-judicial body that has final say over all development in this province.”²⁴ The City’s inability to keep up with processing building applications was part of the problem. As well, Active 18 was there to address the tendency for communities to be shut out of the planning and appeals processes relating to their own neighbourhoods.

All three major applications in the Queen West Triangle were reviewed in the same Ontario Municipal Board hearing. Because of their physical adjacency and large scales, it made sense to assess the impact they would have collectively on the neighbourhood. A pre-hearing held on the 28th of June 2006 served to identify the major common issues existing among these proposed developments according to the City of Toronto's neighbourhood reports. The purpose of the hearing was to review the issues common to the three applications made to the City of Toronto at the macro level followed by more specific evidence for each in turn. A ruling would be delivered on zoning allowances and any required modifications to the original design proposals after the final closing arguments.

The hearing began on September 5th, 2006 in a large and austere over air-conditioned room on the 16th floor of a Bay Street tower. Present were the appellants, the developers (for 150 Sudbury Street, 1171 Queen Street West, 48 Abell Street) and each of their respective lawyers. The City of Toronto was also registered as a party, represented by their lawyer, as was the CN Railway Company. Refusing to be left out of the discussion the underdog, Active18 represented the interests of the local community. Pro bono legal representation from local resident activist, Charles Campbell guided by former Toronto mayor John Sewell, allowed Active18 to have party status at this hearing. Beside Mr. Campbell was Margie Zeidler who, as a passionate heritage advocate was determined to defend 48 Abell and communicate the community's support for its preservation. Ken Greenberg, interim chief planner in Boston, was also supporting the efforts of Active18 throughout the hearing. The presiding chair identified the participants to the hearing who had issued statements. Among them were Model48, St. Clare's Multi-faith housing, and Artscape. Unlike those with party status, participants to a hearing have no legal representation and are unable to cross-examine. However because of an interest in a case, they wish to have their views on certain issues heard by the Board.⁵

Due to the peaking economy, the year 2006 was a particularly boisterous time for building applications. City Hall was swamped with proposals coming in steadily. Legally, the City of Toronto has 180 days to respond to a building application in order to allow the time necessary to conduct the planning studies associated with it. However, as described in the *Toronto Life*:

The city's planning department is perfectly upfront about the fact that, for complex applications that require the attention of community planners for zoning changes, approval takes at least nine months. The result is a policy perversion: on any major application, the city guarantees that it will fail to respond on time.⁶

This backlog in the system prompts two significant reactions in the building applications process. First of all, the City fundamentally relinquishes its authority over planning matters to the province on many of the largest and most complex building applications in Toronto, proposals where the City's full attention is needed. Secondly if zoning amendments are required, developers engage in projects expecting to circumvent municipal authority and have their developments fought at the OMB level. As a matter of course, architects are often asked by the developer to design a building greater than their desired height so that any height reduction resulting from an OMB ruling appears as a compromise, in spite of being a violation of in-place zoning restrictions. This situation is perpetuated by the fact that advance planning to revise outdated zoning for neighbourhoods located in regeneration areas in the city such as the Queen West Triangle, are given no attention when the planning department and its funds are constantly tied up in OMB hearings. It is a vicious cycle that allows building after building to fall through the cracks of the system without adequate scrutiny.

Not only was the appeals process for the Triangle's proposals already underway before the City could conduct its area studies, these studies were not even yet complete before the OMB hearing had begun. On the first day of the hearing the City's expert witness, a land-use and policy planner was being pressed to comment on the applications and their adherence to city policy. When he responded that

it would be 'premature' to speculate because the necessary area studies were not yet complete, this led to some heated reprisals from the developers' lawyers. This issue had already been brought up at the pre-hearing. In spite of this significant lack of evidence, the OMB knowingly allowed the hearing to proceed although the area studies were incomplete. It was then agreed among the parties at that moment that they would refrain from bringing up the 'P' word (premature) again throughout the duration of the hearing.

The City of Toronto held the position that it not only acknowledged the existence of a vibrant arts community in the neighbourhood, it requested that the Triangle be able to retain the same number of current live/work units existing within the contested development area. They called this proviso their 'no net-loss' policy, encouraging 80 live/work units to exist in possible affiliation with a non-profit artist organization such as Artscape to be included among the three proposals. Ironically, the easiest way to achieve this goal would have been to preserve the 80-live/work units already existing at 48 Abell. However, it was implicit in the city reports that there was no intention to protect the building itself. The City's position appeared rather conflicted over 48 Abell since on the one hand it was a heritage listed building and on the other the planning reports were showing new height allowances indicating the possibility for development on the property.

Active18, the community group that had formed in response to the rush of development applications in the Triangle served as a critical response to many of the City's requests for direction made in their reports and of the planning process itself. They found the height allowances asked for by the developers and concessions made by the city both to be exorbitant compared to the in-place zoning and the neighbourhood context. As excellent evidence, they presented a viable charrette design, which compiled the input of community members, many of whom were relevant professionals to the built form of cities and the public realm. And if there were any community benefits arising from this hearing, Active 18 was the authority for direction in this respect.

Heritage Properties in West Queen West



Fig. 7.2 Heritage properties in West Queen West.

The Heritage Question

Cities need old buildings so badly it is probably impossible for vigorous streets and districts to grow without them. By old buildings I mean not museum-piece old buildings, not old buildings in an excellent and expensive state of rehabilitation-although these make fine ingredients- but also a good lot of plain, ordinary, low-value old buildings, including some rundown old buildings.⁷ Jane Jacobs

As the guardian angel of 48 Abell, notwithstanding the overwhelming community support for its retention, a heritage designation was the only thing that could, on no uncertain terms, save John Abell's factory from wholesale demolition. This majestic giant was a heritage listed building, meaning that the City had deemed it necessary to conduct a heritage study before a final decision could be made about its fate.

In her OMB witness statement, Margie Zeidler made several compelling arguments for Abell's preservation. She shared her success as the developer for 401 Richmond Street West, a turn-of-the-century factory in Toronto's downtown core, not unlike 48 Abell. Zeidler bought this 200,000 square foot building in the mid-1990's. Despite a floundering market, the spaces in this high ceilinged brick and timber building were fully leased with a waiting list within 18 months of purchase after renovating.⁸ Her tenants include artists, galleries, and businesses related to film, graphics and information technology among a plethora of other creative enterprises. Her success with 401 Richmond, proof of a pent-up demand for this type of space in Toronto, is further proven by her latest project 215 Spadina, which has followed a similar path.⁹ Arguing that historic buildings like 48 Abell are economically viable, Zeidler deliberately had turned down grants and subsidy for 401 Richmond just to prove that they are not necessary for this type of venture to be successful. She derives a 12 percent return when she could be getting 30 percent or higher in this particular neighbourhood, resulting in affordable spaces for the 130 creative businesses that rent at 401 Richmond.¹⁰



Fig. 7.3 *Top*, 401 Richmond Street, owned by Margie Zeidler.

Fig. 7.4 *Middle*, 401 Richmond stairwell.

Fig. 7.5 *Bottom*, 401 Richmond lobby.



In addition to cultural and economic potential, the retention of historic buildings contributes to the argument for sustainability, especially when construction waste makes up one third of what goes into landfills and the demolition of buildings is a waste of their embodied energy.¹¹ The lamentable trend in Toronto of demolishing historic buildings in spite of their economic and environmental benefits is only encouraged when the prevalent ideology values the land they are on to be worth more than the buildings themselves. In her OMB statement, Zeidler also revealed her strong belief that “retaining existing structures helps to ground any area going through a redevelopment phase. It provides a touchstone for what happens around it - some might say lending soul and spirit to the area being redeveloped.”¹² In the Queen West Triangle, 48 Abell was identified by the community as this touchstone.

In a staff report dated May 30th, 2006 city planners requested the owner of 48 Abell St. have a structural report conducted in order to assess the building’s structural integrity to be reviewed by Heritage Preservation Services.¹³ This assessment was less focused on the building’s own structural merits, and instead on two scenarios exploring the building’s potential integration with the proposed development of a 19 story tower on the west side of the property and a 25 story tower on the east, with below-grade parking on the entire site.

The first option considered the retention and incorporation of the existing structure with the proposed new construction. The second option assessed the potential for Abell’s façade only, to be incorporated into the proposed building elevations. In both cases the conclusions were the same, only cost-prohibitive measures would render these schemes viable. Yet at face value, these conclusions still implied viability. The construction could not be carried out without posing significant risk to the building’s exterior walls and foundations.¹⁴ The difficulty of a building to withstand this kind of stress is not surprising; especially considering its foundations would be literally uprooted if construction were to proceed.

Fig. 7.6 Bricks at the base of Abell’s front entrance.

The building façade's integrity was also scrutinized in this report based on compressive strength tests and water absorption tests performed on some of the bricks. Likely applied in the 1960's, the exterior North, East and South walls of Abell had been covered in stucco as protection from prevailing winds. The report stated "the removal of stucco rendering to reinstate the original exterior walls would risk the integrity of the brick units and would adversely affect the freeze-thaw durability for these units."¹⁵ While compressive strength tests found the tested bricks to be within the average range for a building of this age, the water absorption tests in the report revealed that the application of stucco had actually been drawing in moisture to the bricks over time and weakening the mortar in some places.¹⁶ These conclusions were based on the testing of bricks in only three locations around the building's perimeter.

The report also disclosed that the floors' structural capacity was satisfactory given that its past industrial uses denote a greater load capacity than required for residential use. Yet, it being a visual assessment, the report could not properly ascertain all structural components of Abell such as the footings, connections and roof, due to restricted access into the loft units. Because of so much unavailable information, this report was by no means comprehensive and could not convincingly express a fair and accurate account of the building's fitness on its own merits.

The Vote on 48 Abell

On June 22, 2006 the Toronto Preservation Board reviewed the case of 48 Abell Street. Based on the new information brought forth in the feasibility study, the Board agreed to withdraw their recommendation for designation. While 48 Abell met the criteria for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, the Board stated, "the cultural heritage value of the property did not justify the costs that would be involved in incorporating the structure in the development scheme."¹⁷ Therefore, its basis for assessing heritage value was now biased toward a scenario involving the proposed developments instead of on 48 Abell as it existed. As well the Board was sympathetic toward the cost the developer might incur should that development proceed. A heritage designation would exempt the building from costly upgrades for building code adherence anyway.



Fig. 7.7 Above, Stucco applied to some exterior walls of 48 Abell caused possible moisture damage to the brick according to report.

97.2% of 48 Abell residents believe that historic buildings are important to the cultural identity of a neighbourhood.

They're important as carriers of history and a connection to the continuity of the human condition of the urban environment. Culture is usually derived from one's history. Take away the history and the basis for the culture goes with it.

48 Abell resident

Due to overwhelming community support for its preservation, the case for heritage designation was brought up again to Community Council by the Ward's councilor Adam Giambrone. The Toronto Star reported that:

The vote could undo a move by the city's Heritage Preservations Services staff, which withdrew a recommendation for heritage designation in June due to the high costs of restoration.

"This building is one of the few industrial buildings left in the area. It's a link to the past," [Giambrone] said. The cost of restoration is not the city's problem, he said. "Our problem is, once you bulldoze a heritage building, it never comes back."¹⁸

Giambrone had rallied a number of councilors and identified at least 23 votes out of 45; enough for a majority. The vote on the motion to designate 48 Abell took place on September 28, 2006, four weeks into the OMB hearing. Meanwhile, the developer was apparently lobbying the councilors for two weeks -ever since the motion was first made. In spite of Giambrone's plea to preserve Abell, one councilor was calling it a crumbling piece of junk, while other arguments asked why this vote was happening so late in the game? After all, the application was in the queue for over a year and the OMB hearing was already underway. One problem was that none of the decision makers were familiar with the beautiful spaces within; their judgments were based on presentation of the exterior façade only. Further discussion among councilors devolved into accusations of NIMBY-ism and that the community members were all against affordable housing. Unfortunately, nothing could have been further from the truth.

The vote was a contentious issue among city councilors and not only because 48 Abell's story had received expansive media coverage in Toronto. Councilors were averse to taking a position on this loaded topic of heritage, affordable housing, community activism and condominiums because they had to remain accountable to their constituents and likely feared that siding one way or another might jeopardize their popularity. It being an election year at City Hall in Toronto, with the municipal vote less than a month away, the politics at play were not pretty. Prior to the vote on Abell, some councilors 'excused' themselves, while others

went for well timed ‘breaks’, even mayor David Miller, who had Deputy Mayor Joe Pantalone chair this session, was absent during the vote only to resurface shortly thereafter. Abell’s last chance for salvation was defeated that autumn day at Toronto City Hall. The community who had surrounded it with so much love, was left in helpless outrage as the final decision rested with the OMB.

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November 2006

The Funeral.

As a publicity stunt, Jessica organized a funeral for 48 Abell as a means to garner as much publicity as possible. We planned to make a human chain around the building as a symbol of our solidarity. Members of the press were emailing us and asking for interviews which, as the face of our group, Jessica usually handled. The real breakthrough for model48 was making the cover page of the Toronto Star on November 11th, 2006. We weren't the cover story, but our photo up at the top pictured a few residents and supporters poised in front of Abell for an article about the upcoming funeral.

The funeral was on a Saturday held subsequent to a panel discussion called 'Is Queen Street Dead?' curated by Jessica Rose as part of the Toronto Alternative Art Fair International a.k.a. TAAFI. Three panel members had been selected to speak at the Gladstone's Melody Bar, in direct reference to the Queen West Triangle mess.

THE FIGHT FOR 48 ABELL

Queen Street artists display their defiance

Luxury condo may replace industrial building
'The community saw it as a slap in face'

MURRAY WHYTE
ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

At 3:15 this afternoon, the mourners will gather at the Gladstone Hotel. As with any funeral, there will be eulogies and reminiscences — statements of love and loss, spoken from the heart.

But as darkness crowds in this evening, the memorial departs from the norm. The mourners, as many as 600 strong, will march in procession down

"It's not just an artists' issue," he said. "It affects everyone."

West Queen West is not an isolated case. "In a world where the creative capacity of a city is linked to its economic success and vitality, it makes no sense for creative communities to be pushed out of downtown centres," Jones said.

Verdiroc, the developer of the Abell site, has offered some encouragement, with a small portion set aside for low-



RON BULL/TORONTO STAR

Residents and supporters of an industrial building at 48 Abell St. plan to link arms to form a human chain this afternoon and encircle the building to protest plans to convert it into a condo.

Fig. H.1 Toronto Star Article covering the funeral planned for Abell.

Artist and Abell resident Michael Toke presented a selection of projects including his infamous 'Bohemian Embarrassment'. Gladstone owner Margie Zeidler, also on the panel, spoke about her work on 401 Richmond Street in Toronto, a factory-turned haven for commercial artists and small businesses located in the downtown core. Roberta Brandes Gratz author of 'The Living City' a book about the small neighbourhood victories in cities across the United States and urban successes resulting from them, was the third panel member. She advocated strongly for the retention of historic building stock encouraging zealously community activism toward that end. When asked what artists can do about being displaced her response was simply to buy property, because otherwise displacement was difficult to avoid. When asked to provide her thoughts on the potential demolition of 48 Abell, Gratz pointed out the hubris of the City in designating an area the 'Arts & Design District' and then allowing a building full of artists in that district to disappear.

At dusk, following the panel discussion and fueled with a renewed sense of purpose, Abell friends and lovers marched in a funeral procession down Queen Street West from the Gladstone Hotel to Abell Street in front of our beloved building. On a loudspeaker I befittingly sang the Beatles song 'In My Life' as Jess and I led the crowd down the sidewalk. When we stopped at the laneway in front of 48 Abell the crowd gathered to listen to Abell's residents and supporters eulogize about the building on the loudspeaker. It was a chilly evening. I think it was experimental artist Istvan Kantor, known for his flagrant artwork and performances, who poured lighter fluid onto the ground lighting it up in a trail of fire and waving a big red flag in the air. The passion that night was touching as mourners spoke of Abell affectionately and solemnly, sometimes as though the building was already gone. There was a lot of love in the air. A CBC reporter hovered trying to capture the evening's events.

In My Life by The Beatles

There are places I remember
 All my life, though some have changed
 Some forever not for better
 Some have gone and some remain
 All these places had their moments
 With lovers and friends
 I still can recall
 Some are dead and some are living
 In my life I've loved them all

But of all these friends and lovers
 there is no one compares with you
 And these memories lose their meaning
 When I think of love as something new
 Though I know I'll never lose affection
 For people and things that went before
 I know I'll often stop and think about them
 In my life I love you more

Though I know I'll never lose affection
 For people and things that went before
 I know I'll often stop and think about them
 In my life I love you more
 In my life I love you more

Fig. H.2 Song performed at Abell's funeral.



Fig. H.3 *Right*, Procession down Queen Street West.

Fig. H.4 *Left*, Mourners eulogizing Abell.

Then, forming a chain as far around the building as we could go, everyone held hands for several minutes in quiet contemplation as Cam strummed a tune on his guitar for Abell. And just when I started to wonder how much longer we would stand there, with the feeling of warmth from Tanya's hand on one my left and Eb Zeidler's on the my right, I was overcome with emotion. So moved from that moment, tears welled up in my eyes as I thought of a reality without Abell in it and how that would really feel. At that moment on that chilly evening, in the company of many other mourners, it suddenly struck me with great sadness just how much this building meant to me.



Fig. H.5 Above, Reporter covering the funeral.

97.2% of current
and former
48 Abell residents
agree that
affordable
live/ work spaces
are an important
form of housing
within the
City of Toronto
and are worthy of
preservation.

“Especially since most of them are vanishing. With the economy the way it is right now a lot of people are opting to freelance. Having enough affordable spaces that are modular and can be used for different things is very important. Getting rid of these buildings are making people look to other cities to move to. One of the things I loved about Toronto growing up here was the amount of warehouse spaces available and the untapped potential of living in one of these spaces.”

48 Abell resident

The Importance of Live/Work

Arts in the Triangle

In the planning report submitted by the City in May of 2006, it was recognized that the WQW neighbourhood had a vibrant arts community, one they wished to see remain instead of priced out of the area. It was also acknowledged that displacement was a real threat to the survival of this identified artistic enclave known as the Arts & Design District. The report conveyed compelling evidence supporting the local art sector's relevance within the city noting "West Queen West is within the top 1 percentile of census tracts with a concentration of artistic residents, when compared against the 800 plus census tracts in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area,"²¹ from the City of Toronto Employment Survey in 2005. Furthermore, the area's national status as an artistic hub was even more impressive. According to a study performed in 2005 by Hill Strategies Research Inc titled 'Artists by Neighbourhood in Canada', "the M6J postal code, or West Queen West neighbourhood, is home to the 5th highest concentration of artists in all of Canada."²²



**"WHERE ARE WE GOING TO GO?
THE TENANTS OF 48 ABELL STREET
FORM A COMMUNITY THAT HAS A
15-YEAR LEGACY"**
— ARTIST JESSICA ROSE DISPLAYS
HER EMOTIONS ABOUT HER HOME
AT 48 ABELL, BOTH ABOVE AND ON
THE OPPOSITE PAGE.

The City credited three factors in fueling the area's art sector. The first was the concentration of creative workers, followed by the availability of suitable spaces supporting artistic activities, as well as private and public sector establishments providing opportunities to artists for creative collaboration, networking and the sale of their work, such as the galleries along Queen West. The facts, in addition to the mapping of the area's arts and industrial activity shown in Chapter Three, irrefutably prove that not only were creative workers fueling the area's social and cultural dynamic, Toronto's hottest art scene was also an important source of employment to the city.

Forty-eight Abell played a significant role in the establishment of the area's artistic identity exemplified in a July issue of *Eye Weekly* magazine written by (current *Spacing Magazine* editor) Dale Duncan. In this article called 'Pave Paradise, Put up a Condo Tower' 48 Abell is described as a model for housing geared toward artists which "has slowly evolved into the type of building that houses the type of community ArtScape spends months, even years building partnerships and finding funding to create and sustain."³ Abell also possessed within its walls, the three essential factors for supporting artistic activity according to the City; space, artists and collaborative opportunities. Yet, what was most important to a great majority of tenants at 48 Abell was not just the provision of amazing working space, but the ability to inhabit the spaces they worked in.

Fig. 8.1 *Opposite*, Photograph of Jessica Rose posing on 48 Abell's roof featured in Toronto's *Eye Weekly* magazine.

The Importance of Live/Work

The City of Toronto defines the creative sector as including:

artists, performers, dancers and musicians along with architects, graphic designers, photographers, book and periodical publishers, filmmakers and broadcasters, sound recording professionals as well as craftspersons who work with ideas⁴

further noting that in 2005, 31% of jobs in the Queen West Triangle alone comprised of employment in creative enterprises. Researcher and author Richard Florida's book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, has popularized the idea that artists are not only key economic drivers in North American cities, but their measured presence in a city can also serve as a barometer for a city's livability. And if that barometer reading is low, he promises, once artistic activity can be lured and fostered in a given place, the creative sector will stimulate economic growth.⁵ His definition of those employed in the 'Super-Creative Core' is very similar to the Toronto's aforementioned creative sector while his definition of the Creative Class at large is slightly broader:

I define the core of the Creative Class to include people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment, whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology and/or new creative content. Around the core, the Creative Class also includes a broader group of creative professionals in business and finance, law, health care and related fields.⁶

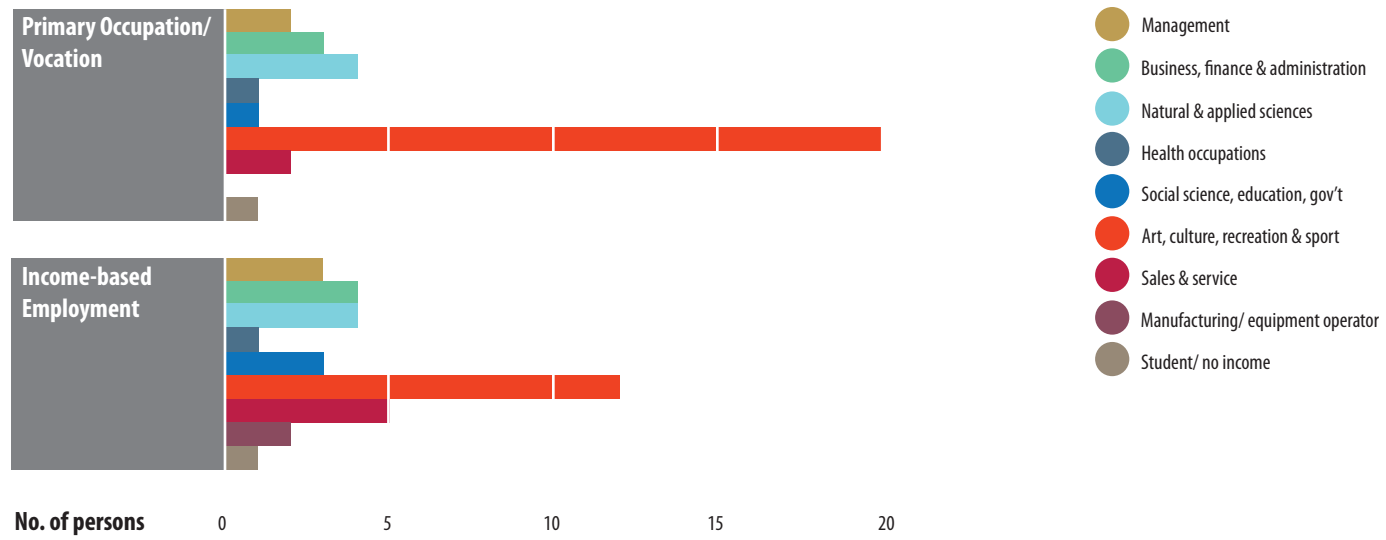
Florida goes on to assert that "roughly 15 million Americans, more than 12 percent of the workforce, compose the Super-Creative Core of this new class,"⁷ compared to the more broadly defined Creative Class to which 30% of all those employed in the United States belong. While Florida's figures are derived from US cities, they should suffice as a basis of comparison to Toronto for the following points.

The survey conducted by Model48 in the Fall of 2005 not only supported evidence of artistic activity, but also surpassed the city's recorded numbers by a great margin in terms of proportion. Borrowing the City's definition of the creative sector, 71.6% of known Abell residents were cultural workers in 2005. Using Florida's definition of the creative class' core, which includes science, business, and software-related employment in addition to typical artistic industries, 83.6% of Abell's residents were part of this 'Super-Creative Core'. As well, 70.8% of survey respondents used their lofts for live/work purposes and at the time 67.3% of these entrepreneurs considered their loft to be vital to this work.

However, what was lacking in Model48's survey assessment was an adequate method of distinction between the blurred lines of occupation with respect to vocation and income-based employment of residents. Many artists find work outside of their primary occupation or vocation in order to be able to support their living expenses, by taking on jobs unrelated to their education or training such as bartending, waiting tables, retail sales, etc. It being difficult to live off one's art work until it bears financial success, the classic definition of the starving artist is one who must make ends meet by supplementing their labour of love with jobs on the side in order to survive the resulting economic instability.

In a survey conducted for this thesis in 2009, past and present 48 Abell dwellers were asked to categorize their primary occupation or vocation (related to education and training), followed by their income-based employment-type from a list based on Statistic Canada's employment matrix (see figure 8.2). Interestingly, the numbers clearly show a high margin of respondents whose primary occupation falls under the arts category. However, lower numbers of people were deriving their income as artists, the tendency being for those employed in the arts to take up service sector jobs or unskilled labour in order to supplement their income.

48 Abell Street Resident Occupation Breakdown



The following statement made by an Abell resident of the early 2000's embodies the pivotal role of live/work spaces with respect to the self-employed creative worker:

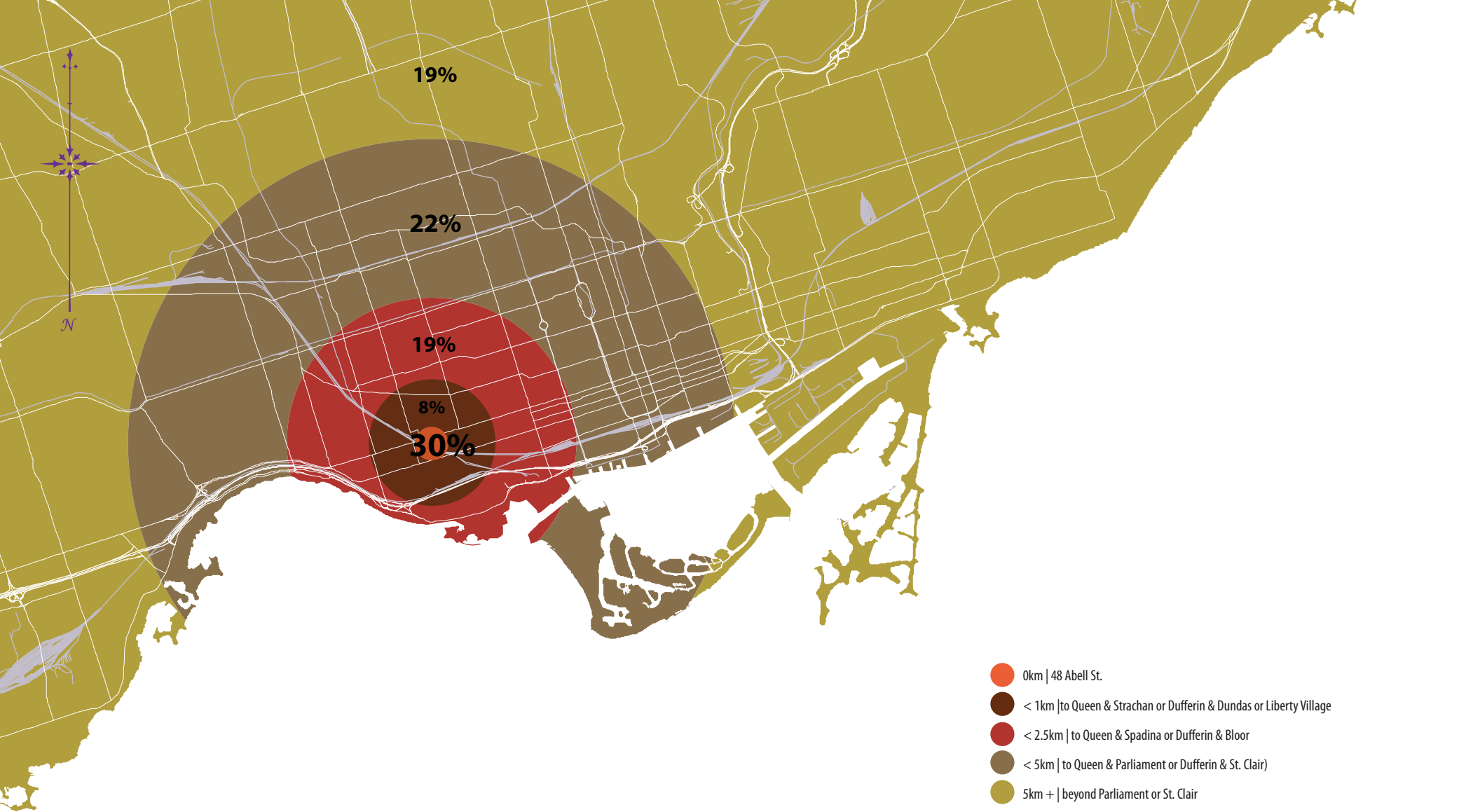
I worked as an Art Director. The loft stored my kit and art supplies as well as gave me enough room to make small sets and build props. I now have to rent a workspace separate from where I live to do the same. I have had success in my career and am able to afford the workspace but when I was living at Abell I would not have been able to afford the separate rental. Abell helped when my career was young.

The studios at 48 Abell have over the years provided enormous financial relief to emerging artists and entrepreneurs, thanks to the landlord turning a blind eye to renting Abell's commercial spaces used instead for live/work purposes. If the rental situation were strictly residential or strictly commercial, then renting extra space for a vocation that doesn't generate a financial return simply wouldn't be feasible or intelligent. The consistent use of 48 Abell as a live/work building is shown in the comparative mapping of travel distance from Abell to primary occupation vs. income-based employment in Toronto, created from the responses provided in the 2009 resident survey. In these mappings, it is shown that 30% of Abell dwellers use their lofts for their primary occupation or vocation while 22%, use their lofts for income-based employment, the difference, a drop of 8%, is dispersed elsewhere in the city. Two observations emerge from this exercise that are interesting to note, the first being the overwhelming tendency for Abell residents to work in the downtown core within a 5km radius of 48 Abell, over 80%. The other noteworthy observation is a discrepancy in respondent answers between travel distance to work yielding the aforementioned 30% of residents traveling 0km (to get to their primary occupation), and another survey question posed about living arrangements where 70% of residents responded that their loft was used for live/work purposes. This is an enormous discrepancy of 40%, which can be postulated to exist for a few reasons. Take for instance, an architect who rents at 48 Abell and works in the Queen-Spadina area, this person would

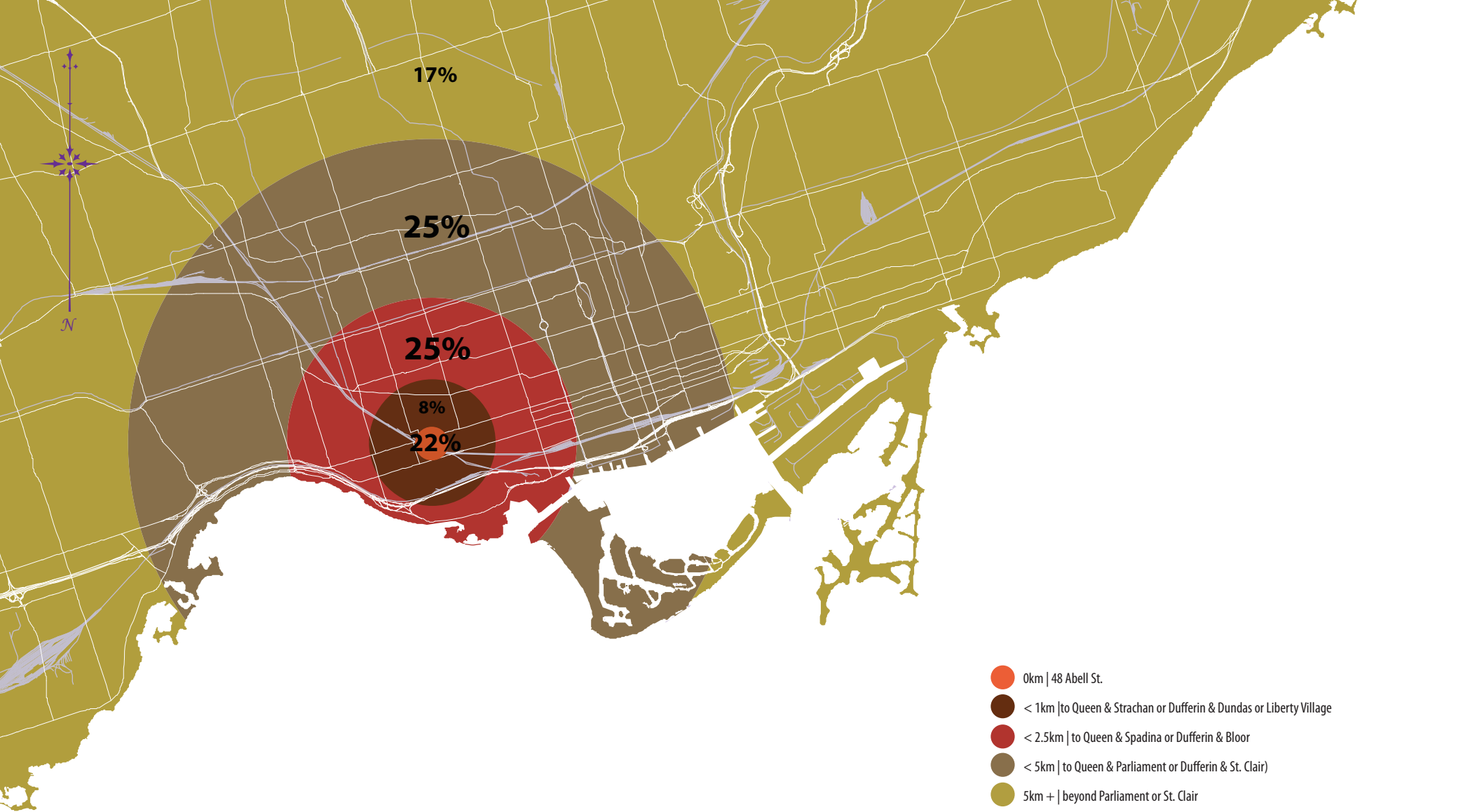
“I have had success in my career and am able to afford the workspace but when I was living at Abell I would not have been able to afford the separate rental. Abell helped when my career was young.”

Abell resident

Fig. 8.2 *Opposite*, Occupation breakdown of current and former 48 Abell residents.



Distance from 48 Abell to Primary Occupation or Vocation



Distance from 48 Abell to Income-base Employment

Fig. 8.3 *Previous spread*, Distance to Primary Occupation or Vocation.

Fig. 8.4 Distance to Income-based Employment.

say that they must travel 2.5km or less in order to get to both their primary occupation as well as their income-based occupation. However, if this same individual undertakes freelance work and meets with clients in the evening or weekend hours at their loft, then they would also consider their loft to be used for live/work. Another reason for the discrepancy may be that someone using their loft to produce work might still need to travel in order to sell their products or visit with clients. So even though their living situation is live/work, their job still involves a certain amount of traveling.

The following testimonies from current and former residents illuminate the nature of live/work activities undertaken at 48 Abell:

We used it for painting and photography. (Abell resident after 2005)

My wife and I during our last year at Abell used the space to help run our own clothing line. In addition as a DJ (hobbyist) the space was great for my collection and impromptu soirees. (Abell resident in early 2000's)

I had my salon set up in my loft. The lighting and space was fantastic. (Abell resident after 2005)

Provided an amazing space to think, be creative, assemble projects, exhibitions, do photography etc. (Abell resident in early 2000's)

It was hosting my workshop where I would produce prototypes for my work. (Abell resident after 2005)

Base of the business. (Abell resident in early 1990's)

48 Abell afforded me a low-cost space for hosting client meetings and collaborating with others on research projects (some of which required open physical space) that were instrumental in building a technology consulting practice in its early years. (Abell resident in early 2000's)

I screen-printed my line in my apt. (Abell resident in early 2000's)

When I do freelance work the large space really helped out. Being able to set up a green screen and have the space to build mini "sound stages" really helped me. Also the tall ceilings have come in handy. (Abell resident in early 2000's)

Provided unfettered access to create, whether music for myself or fashion and set design for my former roommates. Outsized space at 2400sq', and as a drummer and singer it offered me quite an opportunity to learn more about my own hands and voice. Learning to use our instruments in the most dynamic and engaging ways are some of what I strive for a creator of sorts. My former home holds a singular place in my heart for what it allowed me to do. (Abell resident in early 2000's)

Abell's importance as a provider of live/work space to emerging artists, practitioners and entrepreneurs is an integral piece of the cultural hierarchy that feeds creative workers at the grassroots level. Without the availability of spaces like this, and the fostering of creative enclaves like West Queen West, it is increasingly difficult for Toronto as a city to produce successful homegrown artists. In addition to the building's historical significance, these points were central to Model48's arguments for 48 Abell's preservation at the OMB. And while some may argue there are plenty of old factories to go around in Toronto, this valuable building stock only continues to diminish with each passing year.

*“My former home
holds a singular
place in my heart
for what it allowed
me to do.”*

Abell resident

The ‘No-Net-Loss’ Policy

Toronto’s new Official Plan was adopted by City Council in 2002 stipulating a strategy for growth and development encouraging urban intensification in order to facilitate the arrival of newcomers to the city in the following decades and meeting the long term needs associated with this growth.⁸ The projected city target of receiving at least 3 million new inhabitants by 2031 meant that regeneration sites within the city became prime real estate for intense development. One such example of increased density through private development is the cluster of City Place condos under construction at the foot of Spadina and Bathurst Streets in Toronto downtown. City Hall’s ‘Culture Plan for the Creative City’ adopted in 2003, possibly influenced by Richard Florida’s writing on the topic, identified two key goals: “to position Toronto as an international cultural capital and to have arts, culture and heritage at the centre of the economic and social development of the city.”⁹

In light of the focus on the West Queen West area as an arts destination and 48 Abell being a contributing factor to the creative culture, the City of Toronto built into their arguments at the Ontario Municipal Board, a plea to encourage the provision of this type of space into area developments. In an effort to mitigate this potential outcome, the City report on the Triangle outlined a strategy of retaining an equal amount of non-residential space existing in the Triangle at the time, of roughly 40,000 square feet, while encouraging a mix of residential and commercial uses on the site.¹⁰ They hoped to achieve this end through a proviso called the ‘no-net-loss’ policy. Additionally, Lori Martin brought forward Florida’s book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, as evidence to be read by all of the hearing’s parties in order to substantiate this culture department initiative.

The ‘no-net-loss’ policy aimed to retain or replicate studio and light industrial

space, create gallery and performance space and retain or create affordable live/work units and sought public/private partnerships with the application proponents to render viability to this goal. Part of the goal to encourage art sector growth in the area involved a proposal to retrofit the historic former Carnegie Library at Queen and Lisgar streets, built in 1908, into a performing arts hub where the Theatre Centre (at the time located in the Grand Hall basement) could establish a new location. Another target was to require that 80 new units “suitable for live/work activities should be given or leased to a non-profit agency for a long term at a rate that will allow the not-for-profit to provide affordable and secure tenure for artists and creative enterprises.”¹¹ This number of units was not arbitrarily derived either, it was meant to replace all of 48 Abell’s studios that would be lost once the tower application for the property was approved for construction.



Fig. 8.5 Carnegie Library currently occupied by Toronto Public Health.

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1. *Request for Direction Report: Official Plan and Zoning Review in the West Queen West Triangle Area*. Toronto: City of Toronto, May 30, 2006, 9.
 2. *Ibid.*, 8.
 3. Dale Duncan. “Pave Paradise, Put Up a Parking Lot.” *Eye Weekly*, July 13, 2006. 1-2, 1.
 4. *Request for Direction Report: Official Plan and Zoning Review in the West Queen West Triangle Area*. Toronto: City of Toronto, May 30, 2006, 8.
 5. Richard L Florida. *Rise of the Creative Class : And how it's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002, 5.
 6. *Ibid.*, 8.
 7. *Ibid.*, 9.
 8. *Request for Direction Report: Official Plan and Zoning Review in the West Queen West Triangle Area*. Toronto: City of Toronto, May 30, 2006, 7.
 9. *Ibid.*, 7.
 10. *Ibid.*, 10.
 11. *Ibid.*, 11.

December 2006

Conflict of Interest.

In preparation for the OMB case, I compiled the Model48 survey results with my roommate into a spreadsheet. The results revealed a remarkable array of occupations from artists to architects, software and IT consultants to graphic designers and filmmakers. Several people worked in the media while others were not artsy at all, such as the real estate agent, truck driver and mail man. Speaking to residents was also very interesting. Most residents supported our endeavor, and were eager to hear details of the legal battle and the building's threatened status. Some were jaded by the immanent eviction saying the lofts at Abell were too good to be true and it was only a matter of time before they were 'discovered.' To my surprise, one person expressed his excitement about the new building saying he was looking forward to seeing the affordable housing portion come to fruition which he thought was a good thing for the city.

We were scheduled to speak sometime in November, but that date got pushed a couple of times. We had asked to speak toward the end of the hearing anyway to give us more time to prepare and hoping our words would be fresher in everyone's minds

before the decision was delivered. We needed that extra time too, my office was so busy I had little time to devote to my Model48 obligations, -everyone was busy, the market was crazy. The lawyers were lucky, they got to prepare for the case as part of their full time job, but we weren't receiving any compensation for our efforts, with limited time and resources to work with. I sent an e-mail to my boss asking for the morning off so it would be possible to speak as a participant at the OMB hearing. Matt and Jess had done the same. My work colleagues knew peripherally about my activist endeavors for my building since I would often talk about it in the office. But when I received the response to my e-mail from my boss, I was startled by its stern tone making clear I was not to make mention or represent the firm in any capacity, as well my boss had copied the other partners onto the e-mail.

I confided in a friend and colleague, worried about the implications of my involvement. She mentioned a rumored phone call one of the partners received from a client -a developer- who was upset that one of our firm's employees was against one of their projects. My heart dropped to the floor. Was it me? I couldn't figure out where any mention of my office affiliation was made, or how this may have come about. I was also bewildered as to why, of all people, our community would register as a real threat to a developer, especially considering the OMB's notoriety for siding with high-rise condominium developers. Did this mean we really did stand a chance of making a difference?

A couple days later I recalled in horror as the memory from the previous August returned to me. In the scramble to submit our participant statement we had argued about how to sign our names at the bottom. I said we should write our university degrees after our names. But Jess and Matt disagreed saying mine was the only relevant one and their B.F.A's weren't impressive enough. I wondered what qualifications could be more fitting than educated artists defending this cause? We were arguing about other things in our participant statement document too and in the shuffle of our rushed submission, what landed beside our names was instead our respective workplaces.

I felt awful. For a while I thought for sure that I would lose my job, or in the least get reamed out. And why shouldn't I? I was tampering with the very hierarchy keeping a person like me employed. My bosses paid me, and they were most often hired to do work by developers, one of which was apparently furious with me. In spite of myself I had to admit that Abell's development proposal was the most noble of them all. They planned to incorporate affordable housing with condos, something that never happens in Toronto, and they had made a real effort to include the residents in a plan to provide for them new live/work spaces. My problem was what had to disappear in order for that project to be realized, my home.

Rather sheepishly, I finally spoke to one of the partners about the whole thing one evening after-hours at the office, expressing my deep regret for the trouble I had caused. He was more than understanding explaining there were no real liability issues as long as I understood my place in the hearing as a resident and not an architect. When I tried to apologize again, he stopped me saying there was nothing wrong with standing up for what I believed in. For the moment I was terribly relieved, but the worst was still yet to come.

On the morning of December 6th, 2006 I met up with the other core Model48 members in the stale and cold 11th floor Ontario Municipal Board hearing room. I had foolishly stayed up almost all night in preparation but was surprisingly awake. The City's lawyer was away, but having already met with Active 18's lawyer Charles, a few weeks prior, we found out that part of speaking as a participant meant we could be cross-examined by each of the party's.

Jessica spoke first, about the importance of fostering live/work spaces for artists to Toronto's culture. In a time when a significant amount of capital was being invested in our major cultural institutions like the Art Gallery of Ontario, The Royal Ontario Museum and the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, and following successful events like Nuit Blanche, equal importance should be placed on funding the feeders to the arts at the grass roots level. She also projected several studio photos that had been posted on our blog by fellow residents and quoted survey respondents describing their need and use of Abell's live/work spaces.

I was up next. I was nervous and my hands were clammy in anticipation. I walked to the front, sat in the raised seat beside the presiding chair and swore to tell the truth. After making clear to the Board I was not speaking in any expert or professional capacity, I explained my unique situation as an intern architect living at 48 Abell. On one hand my livelihood was built upon my passion for architecture and the built form of cities, while on the other hand as a resident who's home was threatened by development, architecture had also fostered in me an appreciation for the historic character of Abell only cultivated over time and impossible to replicate in new construction -new construction that would destroy the ecology that had evolved over the years attracting like-minded people and acting as a grounds for cultural networks and friendships to form.

Furthermore, the preservation of historic buildings coincides with the argument for a sustainable future in light of climate change. How much of 48 abell would be slated for the landfill? How much more energy would it take to demolish and build anew than to preserve what is an already functioning and thriving model?

The idea behind Model48 came out of a recognition of the change going on in the neighbourhood. Cognizant of its potential -if harnessed and designed responsibly, with livable healthy spaces in mind- this new and exciting result could serve as a model for the city of Toronto and beyond, enhancing the features intrinsic to the Arts & Design District.

In my experience working in Toronto, I had happened to work at several offices situated in former factory lofts. I rationalized that if the leaders of my profession, the builders of cities, were locating their own offices in buildings like 48 abell, this must allude to the value and flexibility recognized by architects, that these old manufacturing buildings are able to provide.

With the consideration of our input we felt that the overall developments could be more successful. We were not anti-development, adversely we wanted to promote responsible growth that took the public's needs into consideration while preserving the unique flavour of this community both from a cultural and architectural perspective.

An important component of the mixed use future of the Triangle, we felt, was the current land-use and unit configuration of Live/Work space. When considering changes in zoning we were asking the Board to legalize this land-use and to respect the form of accommodation this building already provides to support it.

I cannot recall exactly how things happened next, because I have since tried to block it out of my mind. Charles Campbell proceeded with his 'friendly cross-examination' on behalf of Active 18 and one of the other lawyers had some choice questions for me before Verdiroc's lawyer really let me have it. It may very well have been one of the most dreadfully intimidating experiences I had yet been faced with. He fired question after question at me, saying as an architect didn't I know that the building 48 Abell Street wasn't protected under the Ontario Heritage Act? I asserted that I wasn't speaking as an architect, but I had to agree, I was aware of that. And wasn't I aware as a professional that if the building were renovated and brought up to code that the costs to do this would be exorbitant? Again, I clarified I wasn't speaking in any professional capacity but conceded that it may come at a high cost. And wouldn't this cost, he pressed, raise the rents in the building rendering it too expensive for current tenants to continue living in the building?

I had thought of that in fact. This last question was fundamentally the Achilles Heel in our proverbial battle. As renters, even renters with rights, we were inevitably at the mercy of our landlord. Our own displacement was a viable possibility, I couldn't disagree.

When I was allowed to leave the stand, Margie who had been watching, came over and whispered to me. The building would be exempt from costly upgrading to bring it up to code, she said, if it got its heritage designation, then residents wouldn't have to leave. I felt like an idiot.

The hearing was concluded in the next couple of weeks followed by a period of silence. Since I was a participant to the hearing, I received the verdict in the mail in a plain 8.5x11 envelope.

“Destruction of sites which have become part of the communal consciousness, in an agreed and widespread sense, must inevitably create gaping wounds in the communal body.

But modern society often ignores the psychological importance of these sites. They are bulldozed, developed, changed, for political and economic reasons, without regard for these simple but fundamental emotional matters; or they are simply ignored.”¹

Christopher Alexander, A Pattern Language

The Verdict

It is so Ordered.

The OMB decision was delivered on January 10, 2007. The hearing lasted a total of 35 days over the course of 4 months, much longer than expected. After deliberation during the holidays, the decision was to permit construction of all applications as they were proposed. Very minor modifications to certain building heights were included in the decision involving no compromise on the applicants' part. All this to say 48 Abell's lofts would be allowed to disappear after everything the community did to defend them.

As well, the OMB was unsympathetic toward the City's proposed no-net-loss policy saying the provision of residential space already implied permitted work-at-home opportunity (given the 1996 legislation to allow home offices) and unless secured by a not-for-profit ownership any live/work unit is still considered residential use.² The City's position of providing employment within the mixed-use zoning of the Triangle spread out among the applications could not be required. In this regard "the Board finds no basis for quantifying a specific amount for each site based on a general poorly defined no net loss policy basis."³ The Board also noted the 13% employment growth within one kilometer of the subject lands in the previous 15 years already lent the area economic stability. These were reasonable assertions given the OMB's role of enforcing existing

city policies and by-laws under the Official Plan, policies from which the City was deviating in its area-specific no-net-loss proposal. However one point made over the issue of securing specific amounts of employment land reasoned the City “must be able to rely on objective criteria and data achieved through some comprehensive analysis of the planning area and City wide employment objectives to be achieved.”⁴ This may have been a realistic expectation had the City been allowed the time to conduct all necessary comprehensive planning studies related to the three applications prior to the hearing, which it did not.

Conversely, the Board did see fit to

Require all ground floor spaces related to Queen Street, the proposed parallel running “Mews and frontage along Abell Street opposite existing non-residential land uses to be secured for non residential uses including affordable live/work artists studios where subsidy is available. This will insure an appropriate amount of non-residential land use in excess of what exists today on the three subject sites.⁵

Instead of privatized amenity space for condos, this requirement of non-residential space likely resulting in commercial activity would be beneficial to the public pedestrian realm. Another benefit to the community was the agreement over parkland acquisition by the city under Section 37 of the Planning Act (money paid by developers in exchange for building height violations), especially considering the neighbourhood was deemed as a parks-deficient area. Although this new park would have manifested through Section 37 monies regardless of the resulting OMB decision. The city was already pursuing this end in order to meet the 6-month parkland acquisition time frame given by the OMB.

Forty-eight Abell’s building application was looked upon favourably by the Board and the City alike due to the inclusion of affordable housing, provision of affordable live/work artist units and the creation of a gallery and workshop space at grade. Ironically, nearly identical concluding remarks in each separate application decision the Board deemed the proposals to be “appropriate, represent good planning and be in the overall public interest of the community.”⁶ The imminent loss of 48 Abell overshadowed any benefit the community could derive from these developments. And for the record, the destruction of 48 Abell and its longstanding legacy was certainly never supported by or in the ‘best interests’ of the current community.

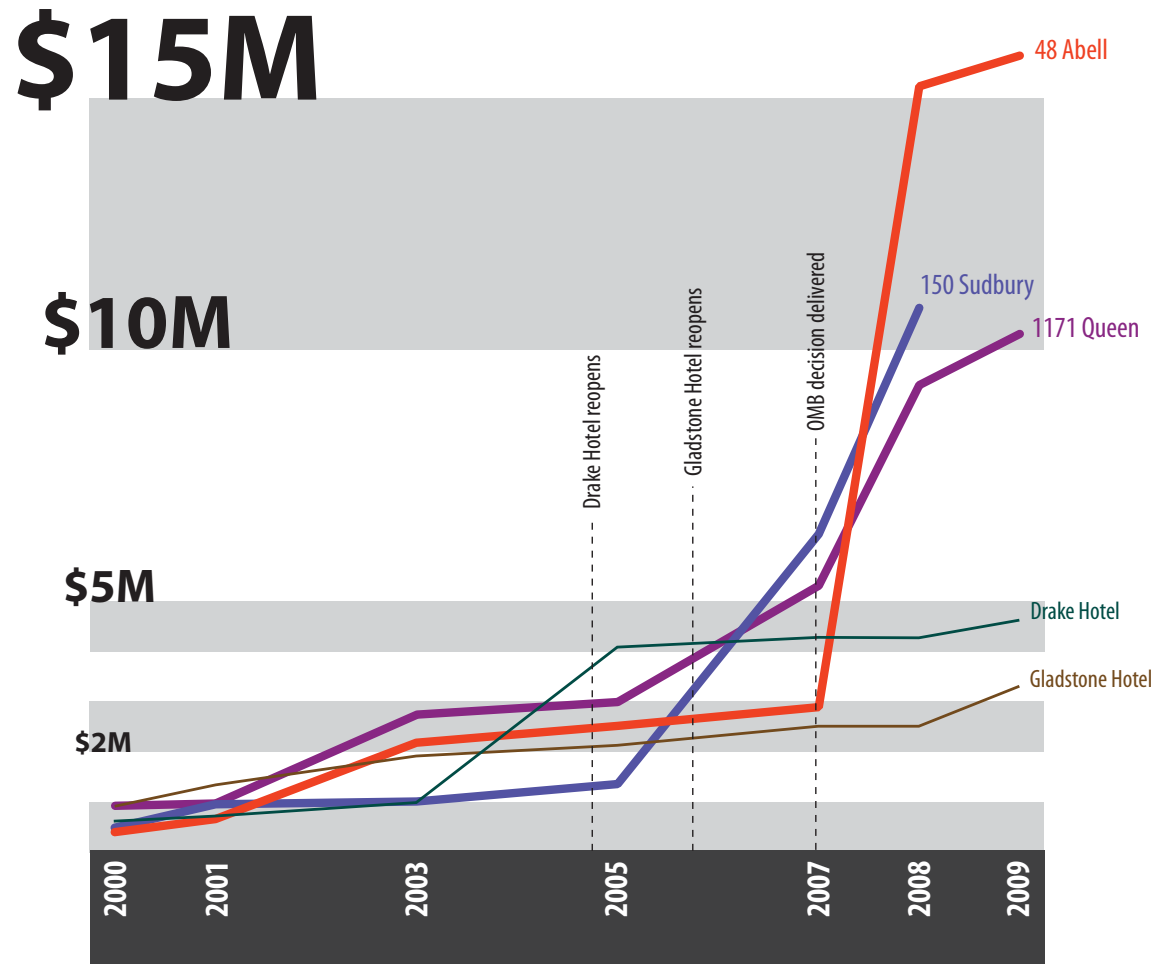
The Appeal

When news of the decision reached City Hall it should have come as no surprise, after all, the planning department had done precious little with respect to Abell's cause. This in spite of the great many hours spent by Active 18 and Model48 making their voice heard in the City's public forums making known the plight of the Queen West neighbourhood to preserve their beloved hundred-year-old building. And even though Active 18's charrette design was met with apparent enthusiasm by city planners.⁷ In February of 2007 Mayor David Miller publicly condemned the OMB decision, seeking council's support to overturn the ruling.⁸ To the community's relief, both Active 18 and the City appealed the decision, further prolonging the judicial process for the anxious developers wishing to begin construction of their condos.

An appeal pre-hearing was eventually scheduled to begin in June of 2007 in order to determine whether another hearing was warranted, this time with a brand new roster of Board members in an abbreviated version of the original hearing. If it were possible to review the transcript of the original hearing, this likely would have sufficed, however the hearing's dialogue was not recorded in any way that could be officially referred to, making it necessary for all parties involved to spend more of their time arguing, defending and reciting policies all over again to a new panel. During one of the day's proceedings while revisiting the issue of prematurity and jurisdiction, one lawyer expressed his frustration over the drawn out process, wailing "we're going to miss the market here, your honour!" And it was true, there was certainly a lot of money to be made in the sale of condos in the Queen West Triangle, money the existing residents were bent on making as difficult as possible for the proponents to make.

The final ruling of the Queen West Triangle's reheard case was released on July 10th, 2007. The Board unanimously upheld the original decision. The community looked back at Mayor Miller in disappointment; he had done too little, too late. Yet, had he acted sooner, this likely would have revealed to the public something even more embarrassing: the lack of power Toronto's mayor has over the development processes in his own city to begin with.

Land Assessment Value Increase 2000 to 2009



Between the City and Active 18, the only recourse to the OMB's final decision was divisional court, which seemed to be a matter of course until the City did something that surprised everyone. The City settled with 2 of the 3 developers in a move to avoid divisional court, resulting from a negotiation that took place at Council one week following the release of the OMB's final decision, without the knowledge of fellow appellant Active 18. Subsequent to learning about the City's secret deal, Active 18 conveyed their sentiments in a scathing statement issued on their website:

As has been the case over the past two years, however, the Planning Department has shut the community out of the discussion and seems to make unilateral decisions about how the community should develop without regard for neither the existing zoning by-laws and/or Secondary Plans, nor the wishes of the community.⁹

Active 18 further expressed their deep disappointment in councilor Adam Giambrone for his failure to include them in the negotiations that had been carried out between the City and developers saying "the plan for the Triangle falls well short of community sustainability and livability."¹⁰ It was a bitter end to a controversial battle.

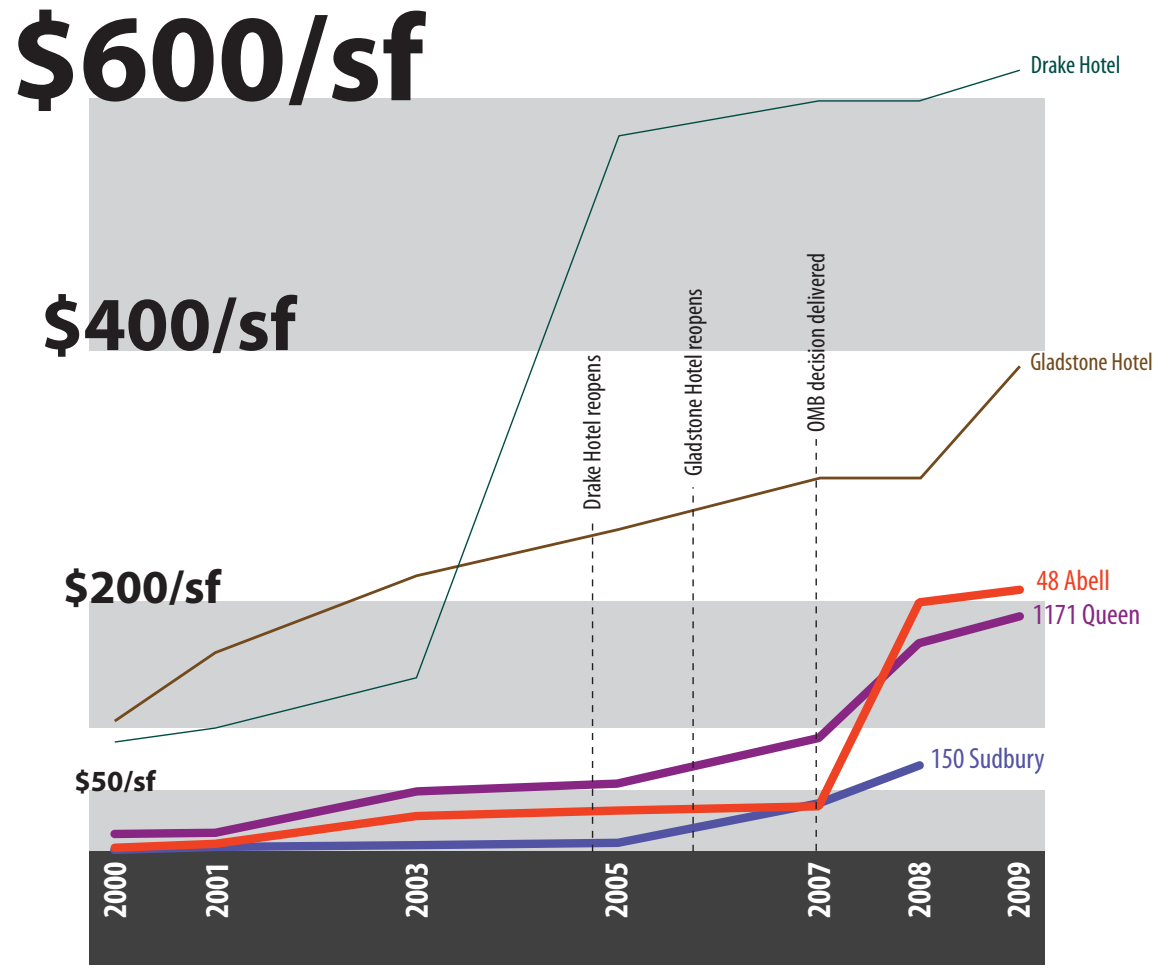
Money

After the development battle was settled, land values in the Triangle skyrocketed. Of course with so much more development potential compared to before, this made perfect sense, but the extent to which land values increased must have been a surprise even to developers.

Several significant turning points for the area in turn affected overall land values. The first was being designated as the 'Arts & Design District in 2003 which effectively doubled and tripled land values in the Queen West Triangle. In 1999, 48 Abell was valued at \$384,000 rising to \$617,000 by 2002 and in 2003 was worth \$2,288,000. When the Drake Hotel re-opened the following year after Jeff Stober's big ticket renovation, the hotel's value quadrupled in value to just over \$4 million dollars. In 2009 the Drake's projected worth was roughly \$5 million. The land value of the Gladstone Hotel has increased moderately each

Fig. 9.1 *Opposite*, Land Assessment Value Increase 2000 to 2009.

Per square foot Land Value Increase 2000 to 2009



year, consistent with its gradual renovation carried out by owner Margie Zeidler. In 2003, it was already valued at \$1,883,000, rising to just over \$2 million in 2004 and to \$3,286,000 in the 2009 fiscal year. The Gladstone's projected worth in 2009 however surpassed the Drake's at over \$5.5 million dollars.

The most significant spike in assessed values occurred in 2008, the year following the City's the settlement (subsequent to the OMB's appeal hearing), allowing construction of the proposed developments at 48 Abell, 1171 Queen and 150 Sudbury. Collective overall land assessment of these three properties went from \$14,514,000 in 2007 up to an incredible \$35,362,000 in 2008. Increasing the most by \$13,000,000 dollars, was the property of 48 Abell Street to \$15,845,000 in 2008. Additionally, City records show Abell's current projected assessment for 2009 to be worth a whopping \$17,653,000. This dramatic increase in tax revenue from the area and resulting economic boost to the City's coffers clarifies what the City and developers had to gain financially by allowing for the demolition of this 123 year old factory building.

Fig. 9.2 *Opposite*, Per square foot Land Value Increase 2000 to 2009.

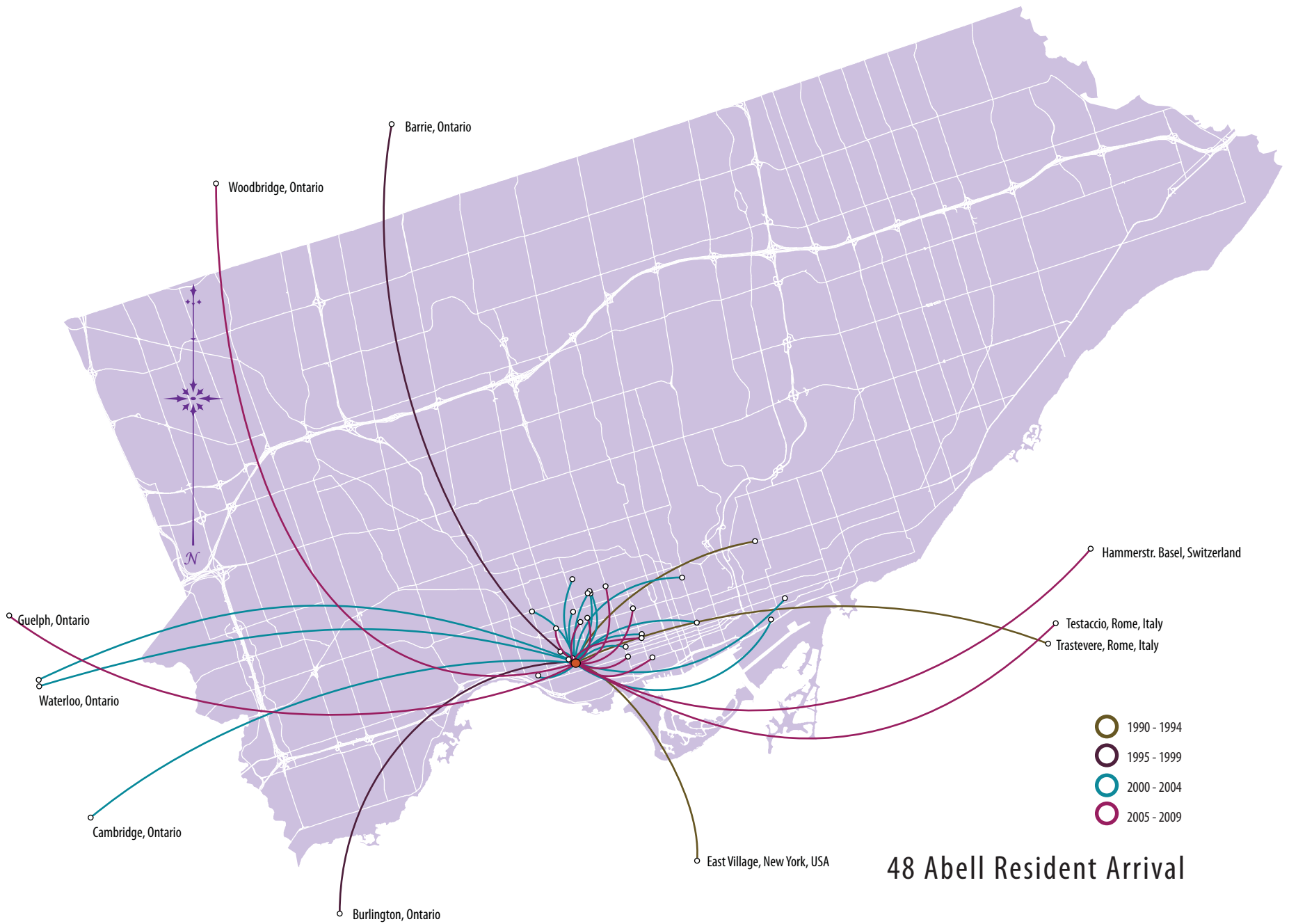
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1. Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa, and Murra Silverstein. *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, 132.
 2. Granger, D. R. Cases PL051203, PL060087, PL060443. Decision 053. Toronto: Ontario Municipal Board, 2007, 5.
 3. Ibid, 7.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid., 13
 7. Hume, Christopher. "Queen West Failure shows City's Faults." *Toronto Star*, November 11, 2006
 8. Torstar News Service. "Miller Will Fight Condo Development: OMB Sides with Developer in Arty Neighbourhood." *Metro News*, February 5, 2007, 6.
 9. Active 18 Association. "City Settles with 2 of 3 Developers" <http://active18.org/news-folder/city-settles-with-two-of-three-developers-in-the-triangle> (accessed August 19, 2007).
 10. Ibid.

August 2007

Eviction Letters.

Swiftly following the City's settlement, 48 Abell's West Wing residents received eviction letters -hand delivered in early August by Verdiroc's lawyer. It was as though the lawyer had them print-ready for the moment the notices could be distributed.

Earlier that year, to address the circulating rumours, management had placed flyers under everyone's door promising tenants 6 months notice if residents had to relocate due to eviction. Adversely, West Wing tenants were asked to clear out by October 31st, and bribed with 3-months worth of rent money to leave by September 30th which was less than two months away. Most everyone took the money and moved out, with exception of three people, one of which was my former roommate, Cam. Few Abell Street renters were likely aware that that the 3-month rent severence was actually their legal right regardless of which date they chose to leave.



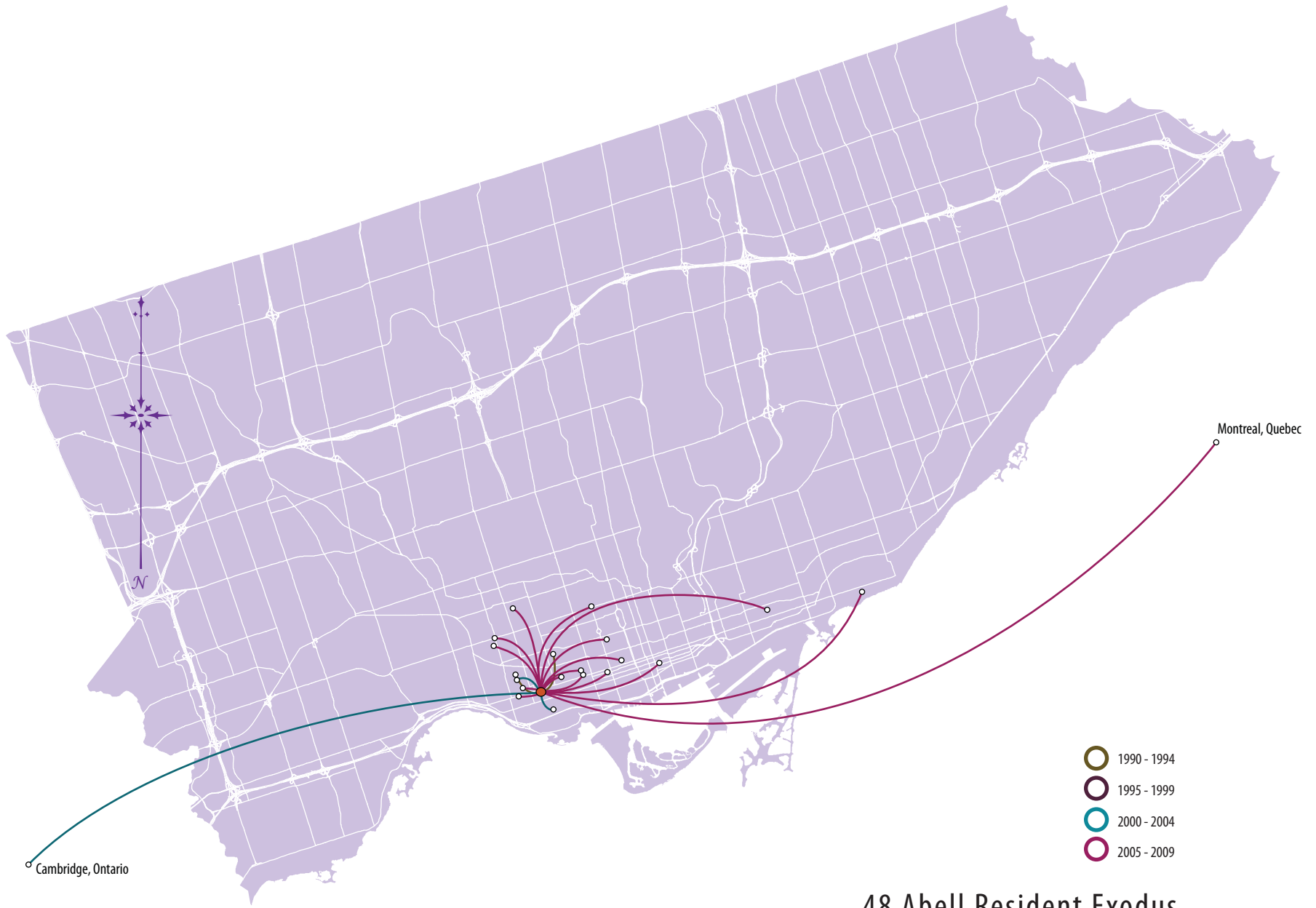
48 Abell Resident Arrival

I knew of at least 7 people who, instead of leaving, relocated from the West Wing to a new studio within Abell. Some folks moved to other buildings managed by Aristocrat. I had moved out 4 months prior to pursue my studies and Matt had done the same. Tanya subletted her room out for the summer only to return to an eviction notice. So our replacement tenants in effect had lived at the studio for 4 months and in the end only had to pay one month's rent before moving out themselves.

Based on information retrieved from the resident survey conducted in 2009 (see appendix), the trajectories of known 48 Abell residents through time has been mapped out in two directions. The first shows the convergence of Abell dwellers from their previous place of residence throughout time, and the second includes west wing tenants in the exodus from Abell. By and large, the dispersal of residents from Abell over time is relatively concentrated within close range of the building, roughly 2.5km, with exception to some headed to the east end of the city and others leaving Toronto altogether. While the majority of Abell's residents used their loft for live/work purposes, 70%, those who left were less often moving to another live/work rental, 14.3% and most often moving to a rental that was strictly residential, 28.6%. Interestingly, almost a quarter of all former Abell residents transitioned to residential ownership after moving out from the building alluding to Abell as a stepping stone getting first time home buyers and the upward mobility of the residents who left willingly over the years.

I had started out my studies with the intent of somehow creating a record of 48 Abell's legacy. Now that the looming demolition had become a reality, the need to record the beautiful lofts within Abell proved to be even more pressing. In a flyer I slipped under residents doors, I asked permission to photograph their studios. In Sharon Zukin's words, I wished to document these studios not just as 'spaces,' but as the 'places' they had become anarchically over time.

Fig. J.1 *Opposite*, 48 Abell Resident Arrival.



48 Abell Resident Exodus

I provided each person who agreed with a large piece of Bristol board on which I asked each resident to write what their studio at Abell, or the building itself, meant to them. Many were eager to help me, and so it began. However, because I wasn't aware of the earlier eviction date for the West Wing tenants, I was already too late to capture their inhabited beauty. Instead I was actually knocking on the doors of empty, desolate and abandoned studios who's locks had already been changed in preparation for demolition. IMAR Steel, Abell's small manufacturing business at unit 120 that took up half the west wing, was given until the end of November to leave before the demolition company arrived to tear down the building in December. In the mean time a small crew were working day and night, gutting and looting the already surrendered units.

Fig. J.2 *Opposite, 48 Abell Resident Exodus.*



Fig. J.3 IMAR Steel was evicted from Abell's west wing in November 2007.

Following Pages:

Fig. J.4 48 Abell Street plans.

Fig. J.5 Studio B102 basement.

Fig. J.6 Studio 107, This is a real loft!

Fig. J.7 Studio 109,
Shauneen will miss 48 Abell.

Fig. J.8 Studio 201. Band-Aid.

Fig. J.9 Studio 203

Fig. J.10 Studio 205.

Fig. J.11 Studio 233.

Fig. J.12 Studio 235,
Some places have a time.

Fig. J.13 Studio 236.

Fig. J.14 Studio 303, Smile.

Fig. J.15 Studio 306b, Place.

Fig. J.16 Studio 308a, Community.

Fig. J.17 Studio 113, Evicted.

Fig. J.18 Studio 120.

Fig. J.19 Studio 123.

Fig. J.20 Studio 124/125.

Fig. J.21 Studio 126.

Fig. J.22 Studio 127.

Fig. J.23 Studio 128.

Fig. J.24 Studio 129.

Fig. J.25 Studio 130. give > take.

Fig. J.26 Studio 241.

Fig. J.27 Studio 242.

Fig. J.28 Studio 243.

Fig. J.29 Studio 244.

Fig. J.30 Studio 245.

Studio B102



3



2



1





Studio 107



3



2



1

This is a real loft!



Studio 109



3



2



1

48 Abell
Unit #250 1st 4 years
Great friends and sushi parties
Unit #109 the 'Final Years'
Shauneen will miss 48 Abell
xoxo



Studio 201



3



2



1

Band-Aid



Studio 203



3



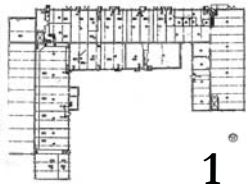
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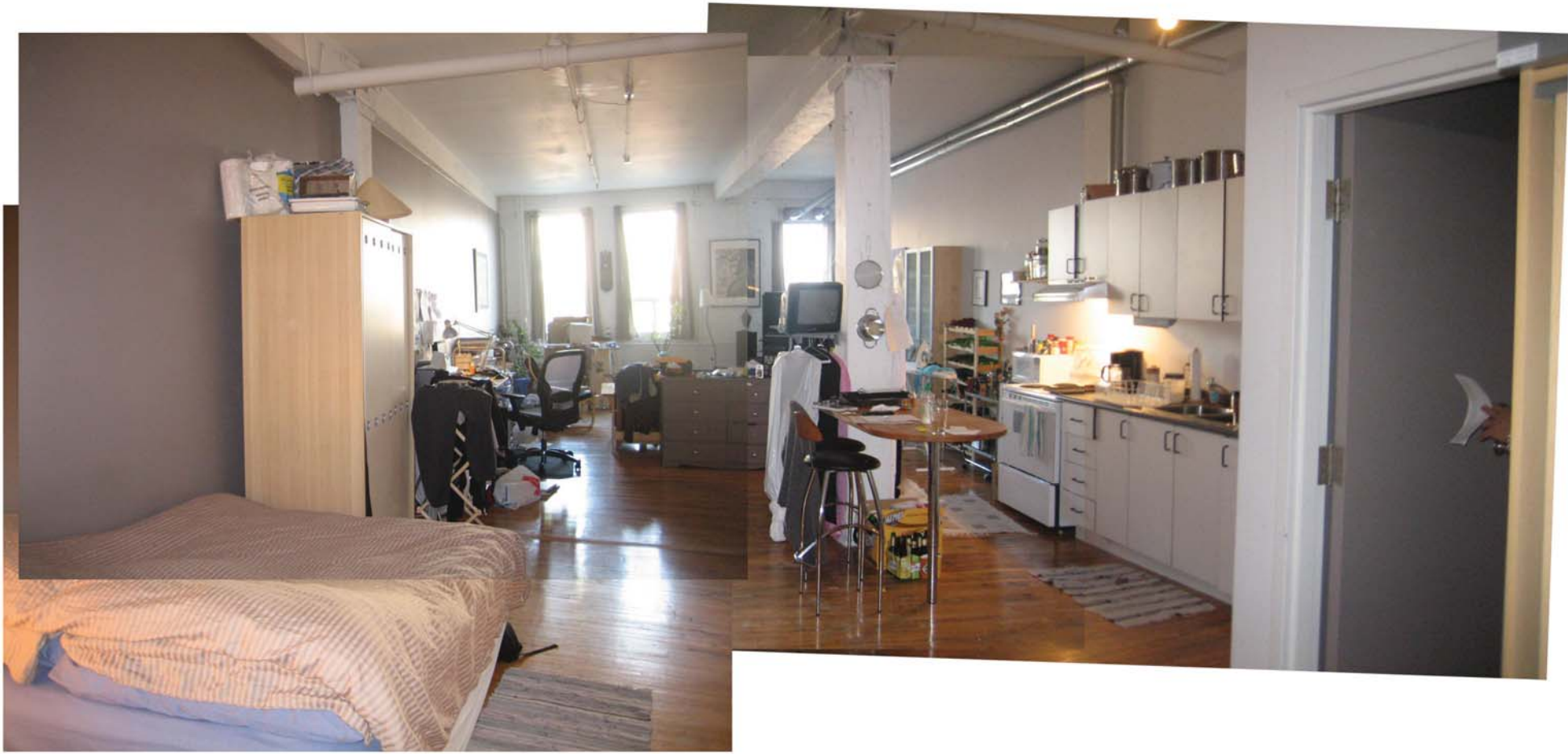


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Studio 205





Studio 233



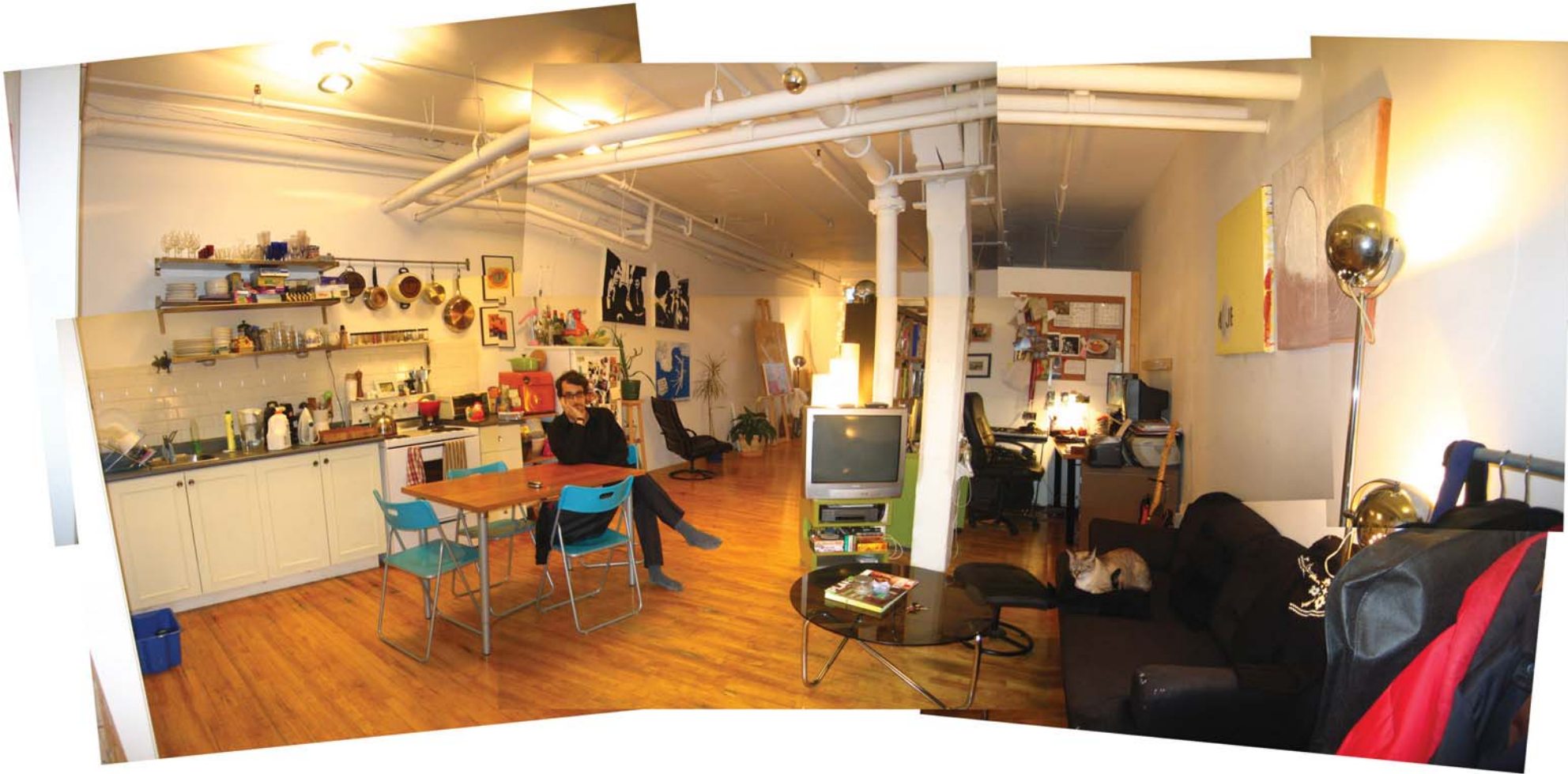
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Studio 235



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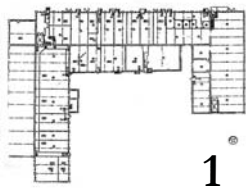
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Some Places Have A Time...

*Haight-Asbury Prague Yorkville Ibiza
Queen West Picadilly Circus Greenwich Village Nigra*



Studio 236





Studio 303



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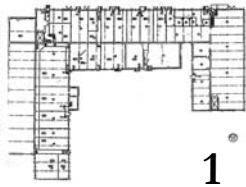


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Smile.



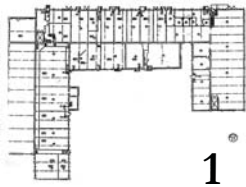
Studio 306b



Place



Studio 308a



Community



Studio 113



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Evicted



Studio 120





Studio 123



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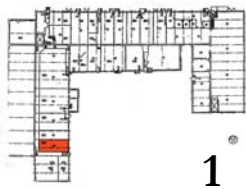


Studio 124/125





Studio 126





Studio 127



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Studio 128



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Studio 129



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Studio 130



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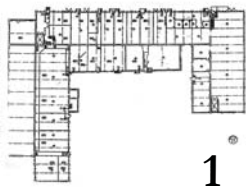


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give > take

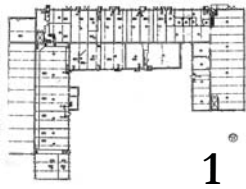


Studio 241



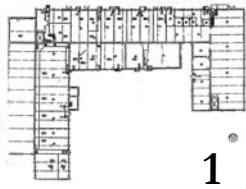


Studio 242





Studio 243





Studio 244



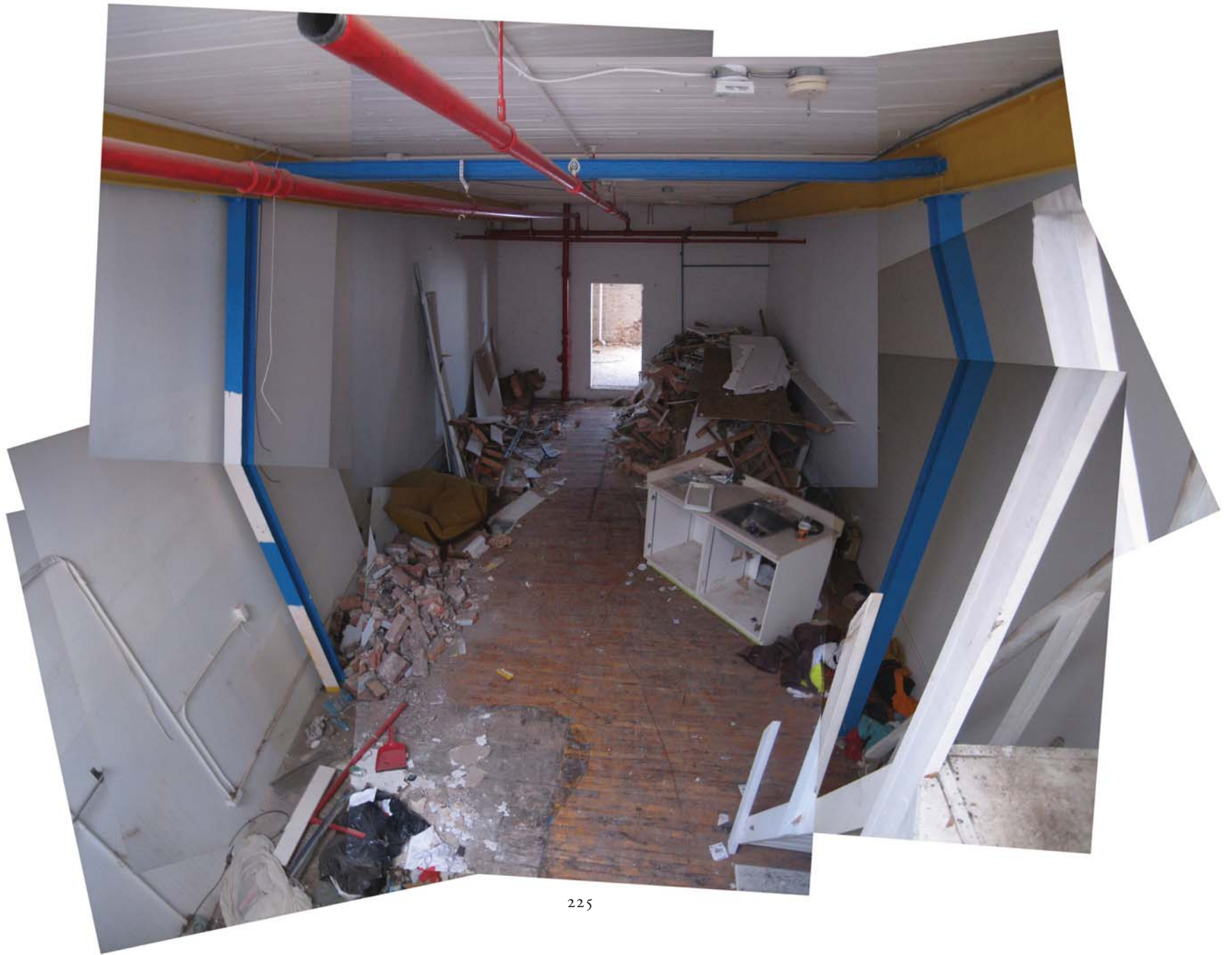
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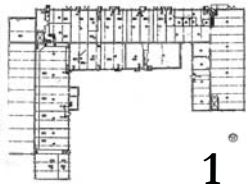
2



1



Studio 245





October 2007

The Last Hurrah

Our last party was epic. It was held on October 27th, 2007 and the old crew from Studio 130 reunited to host a farewell bash celebrating Halloween called 'Get Gone!' That night we had two bars going in the loft, the same usual funk DJ as well as a line-up of indie bands that Cam had arranged. He had removed the wall and window facing the dance floor from my former bedroom and turned it into a stage. It was fantastic. And if there was any damage done to the place that night it was certain no one was going to be complaining about it. The kitchen was naturally turned into a bar, and Matt's room was where the second bar was after his window and a portion of the wall were removed to make a transaction counter (made from an old kitchen counter we found outside). Tanya and I mixed up corn starch and water with red food colouring and poured the goopy batter down all the walls making it look like they were bleeding. While it was a fitting decor for the occasion, it was also symbolic



Fig. K.1 Get Gone Invite.



Fig. K.9 Get Gone, 8:45pm



Fig. K.2 Get Gone, 11:41pm



Fig. K.3 Get Gone, 12:08am



Fig. K.4 Get Gone, 12:48am



Fig. K.5 Get Gone, 1:44am



Fig. K.6 Get Gone, 5:29am



Fig. K.7 Get Gone, 6:00am



Fig. K.8 Get Gone, 6:15am



Fig. K.10 Get Gone, the day after.



of the pending amputation of the West Wing. Certainly the building's beautiful soul was in so much pain. In our minds, it really was the end of an era, so that's how we partied. Our loyal patrons dressed up in outlandish costumes, people always arrived in great costumes at our parties.

Over at 113 in the west wing, Michael Toke threw his own Halloween bash on the day itself. He fittingly called it 'The End of Days'. By this time, the car wash in front of our secondary entrance suddenly disappeared and information surfaced that Baywood had planned to expand the Bohemian Residences onto this adjacent property now surrounded by hoarding. The words painted along the hoarding wall, "Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall," were perhaps synonymous with the restless and frustrated sentiment of the community toward the powers that be.



Fig. K.12 *Top right, Bloody walls on the bathroom.*



Fig. K.13 *Bottom right, Bloody bedroom windows.*

Fig. K.11 *Left, Graffitied hoarding around carwash property.*

Epilogue

Displacement

Since the arrival of the renovated Drake and Gladstone Hotels, the displacement of many small businesses and residents has become a reality for Queen West locals, further perpetuated by the approval of intense development proposals in 2007. In their conceptual stages, both the Drake and the Gladstone were previously SRO's (single room occupancy) that housed low-income daily and weekly renters, some people for instance had been living at the Gladstone for years. The growing pains particular to the Gladstone Hotel are followed in a documentary called *Last Call at the Gladstone Hotel* which shows how the intentions of the Zeidler family to gradually renovate the historic hotel without evicting renters are compromised by insurance problems and extensive building repair resulting from the previous landlord's neglect to maintain the building. In the end, the low-income renters are displaced and management helps them to relocate.



Fig. 10.1 Appliance stores with for lease signs in the windows.



Fig. 10.2 Toronto Fashion Incubator in 2007 at 1093 Queen Street West.



Fig. 10.3 Bohemian Embassy showroom in 2008 at 1093 Queen Street West.

Previously mentioned in this text are the closures of several art galleries along Queen Street once property values in the area began to climb around 2005. Several more galleries have since closed or left the area including the DeLeon White gallery at 1096 Queen West where a bar called Nyood now operates. Other galleries that left the Arts and Design District since 2005 include LBT Art Studio at 1118 Queen St., Loop Gallery at 1174 Queen St. which has relocated to Dundas West near Dovercourt, and Greener Pastures Contemporary Art Project at 1188 Queen St., where a salon and spa operates in its place. The Engine Gallery moved to Mill Street in the Distillery District. Omy Gallery moved to Dundas West and another gallery called the Beverly Owens Project took over their old space at 1140 Queen St. Adversely, several new galleries have opened in recent years on the strip between Dufferin and Fennings. Additions include Alexandre Studio, Board of Directors (an affiliate gallery to Katherine Mulherin Contemporary Art still on Queen), and David Kaye gallery, which moved into the rear retail space of the Starbucks. De Luca Fine Arts moved in above Woolfitt's Art Supply while re:Pro, Fly and Median Contemporary Art galleries have also arrived on the Queen West scene. Thrush Holmes Empire a high-end art gallery shares the building at 1093 Queen St. with the Bohemian Embassy Showroom and two boutique furniture stores. The Toronto Fashion Incubator, a reputable not-for-profit organization that nurtures young talent, had previously occupied the Bohemian condo showroom space since 1999. When Baywood Homes, the Bohemian Embassy's developer, refused to renew TFI's lease in August of 2007,¹ this small designers outfit had to relocate and moved to Exhibition Place with the help of local councilor Adam Giambrone. The United Way has also moved out from this building leaving behind vacant space.

Further to galleries, other businesses have also left the locale, for instance Mercer Union an artist run contemporary art organization previously located at 45 Lisgar, has now moved to Bloor Street West. Boutique retail stores Kingly and Studio Brillantine have picked up and traveled west down Queen into Parkdale. As well, Imar Steel the steel company that occupied Abell's west wing moved to Atomic Ave in Etobicoke after eviction. The departure of all of these businesses,

in addition to the out-migration of Abell residents from the west wing (soon to be followed by the rest of the building), is rapidly and dramatically turning over both the business and resident populations of this area. A scarcity of studio spaces now exists in the area as the affordable light-industrial buildings disappear and the retail storefronts along Queen Street that served as exhibition space have become too expensive for many homegrown businesses to afford. As will be shown below, it is plain to see what was once a conglomerate of properties providing thriving production space within the Triangle is now being eaten up one at a time by developers. It is clear from the arts progression mappings shown earlier in this book, that the Triangle area's artistic activity actually peaked in 2005 (see figure 3.24).

Additionally, the number of bars in the area continue to multiply, much to the distain of Queen Beaconsfield Resident Association which formed in 2005 upon arrival of the Beaconsfield bar at a time when the only other bars on Queen Street in this stretch were the Drake and Gladstone. The Beaver, and Unit two bars beside the Gladstone as well as Lot 16 next to the Drake and the Social are drinking establishments that arrived on scene soon after the Drake and Gladstone were re-launched, when the area was at its zenith. Now at least 13 bars are located within only three blocks creating an area that is not only a nightlife destination in the city, but also an international tourist destination. This change has meant enormous grief for local residents concerning their quality of life, not to mention their quality of sleep. Three Abell residents describe their diminished enjoyment of the neighbourhood in recent years:

We moved away because the influx of night-clubbers was extremely unpleasant on Thursday through Saturday. Drunk, aggressive people behaved as if they had license for rudeness...A few nightclubs don't define the surrounding neighbourhood. These partygoers behaved with such entitlement and belligerence, as if they owned they area and the people in the neighbourhood were visitors. Transportation in and out of the area became difficult, and we couldn't afford to drink with our friends in the area. We resented these changes and moved out of the area.



Fig. 10.4 Sign indicating Imar Steel's move.



Fig. 10.5 Another business leaves the area due to eviction.



Fig. 10.6 Belly up to the bar, poster in West Queen West.



Fig. 10.7 Too many liquor licences are driving out local residents.

It quickly became pseudo-gentrified, i.e. clubs opened & suburbanites started coming here on weekends to go to the clubs. It's become a bit like a summer vacation town, in the way that locals frequent the establishments during the week, and outsiders push the locals out on the weekend. They illegally park in our lot and literally vomit & urinate in the area while they're drunk.

It's getting trendier and trendier. More loud drunk people in the parking lot on weekends. [Before] There seemed to be a better mix of old neighbourhood shops and trendy boutiques/galleries than there is now. Once the appliance stores go there won't be much of anything left that's more than four years old.

In their blog, the Queen Beaconsfield Residents Association have an interesting response about the proliferation of bars in the neighbourhood to those suggesting moving out is the only answer. They find this position to be anti-urban saying that while a vibrant city lifestyle may be louder than the suburbs, it doesn't mean urban dwellers forfeit their right to sleep. Since the fight to limit the number of liquor licenses by the AGCO (Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario) has resulted in little headway, the residents group has taken to speaking with bar owners to reduce noise disturbances, and managed to put a stop to the opening of a proposed night club with an outdoor patio planned above the Social where the Spin Gallery once was.² This instance is further proof that a community must speak up in order to effect any influence over matters of concern important to their residents.

Compromises and Victories

Although highly criticized, the surreptitious deal negotiated by the City with developers in July of 2007 secured several benefits to the community. In the interest of achieving a greater mix of uses on the subject lands, more commercial space was secured as well as public green space. Five percent of 48 Abell and 1171 Queen's land value will go toward creating the new public park at 90 Lisgar, land also incidentally owned by Baywood Homes, the Bohemian Embassy's developer. An increase in building setbacks granted to the City would also allow for more light along Queen Street³.

Baywood agreed to give the City \$500,000 toward the purchase of artist workshops in the Queen West Triangle. On 48 Abell's north lane, planned to be a pedestrian mews, 6 out of 9 proposed artist workshops will be offered to the City or an arts organization by developer Verdiroc.

In October 2007, as the last of Abell's west wingers vacated the premises, the City struck another deal, this time with Landmark Developments. In an agreement that also included Artscape CEO, Tim Jones, and Landmark Developments, the developer for West Side Lofts at 150 Sudbury promised to sell 70 condo units from the building, an equivalent of 56,000 square feet of space valued at \$19 million, to not-for-profit organization Artscape for a discounted cost of \$8.4 million dollars.⁴ In turn, Artscape plans to rent or sell these units to artists at a discounted rate, funded by selling off some of these condos. According to Jones "to make the deal work, Artscape pioneered a new self-financing model for affordable housing development that achieves affordability for renters without requiring government assistance."⁵

The City's proposed theatre at historic Carnegie Library located at 1115 Queen West also gained financial backing from this deal. Landmark agreed to provide \$1 million dollars to help renovate the building into a performing arts hub and \$250,000 for the relocation of the Toronto Public Health offices currently located there. The City will then receive free leasing of 10,000 square feet of at-grade rental space for the Health Offices in developer Medallion Corporation's 7- and 14-story rental building at 45 Lisgar Street, yet another approved development in



Fig. 10.8 The DeLeon White gallery at 1096 Queen Street West.



Fig. 10.9 Once a gallery, now a bar called Nyood at 1096 Queen Street West.

Triangle.⁶ Despite the long community struggle against developers, certainly some good has come out of the City's agreements, results that would not have come to light without the arduous effort and involvement of Active 18's dedicated group of residents. On a related note, Active 18, tired of waiting on the City, has carried out a heritage study along Queen Street West to prevent other neighbourhood treasures from falling to the same fate as Abell. They also have another charette in the works for what they are calling the 'Northwest Triangle' north of Queen along the rail line, this time hoping to create a vision that preempts development plans.

Additionally, after all was said and done with Active 18's legal involvement in the hearings, something wonderful happened. Instead of quietly placing their proposed applications at the City's door, property owners have begun speaking directly to Active 18 about their proposed buildings in early design stages, before applying for building permits. As a result of Active 18's activism, a dialogue had now been established between the community and developers. These developers have started caring about what they bring to the table, or at least they have started caring about what the community thinks about their proposals. Residents were finally given the opportunity to provide their feedback to developers and to take ownership over the planning decisions made in the West Queen West neighbourhood *before* receiving City notices for community consultations.

Further to these breakthroughs, the community will benefit from new parkland in the Triangle located on the property east of 48 Abell, behind the existing Post Office. As well, the ground plane of the main 3 Triangle developments will be publicly accessible private land. A Queen West Triangle Public Space Charette was held by Active 18 on March 2, 2008 to field ideas from the community of how to program the interconnected series of public spaces resulting from the developments at 48 Abell, 1171 Queen, and 150 Sudbury streets. The presence of the Triangle developers at this charette, alongside residents, artists, city officials, and concerned professionals⁷ is a positive sign of progressive planning for Toronto.

Fig. 10.10 *Opposite*, Active 18 Public Space Charette poster created by Levitt Goodman Architects.

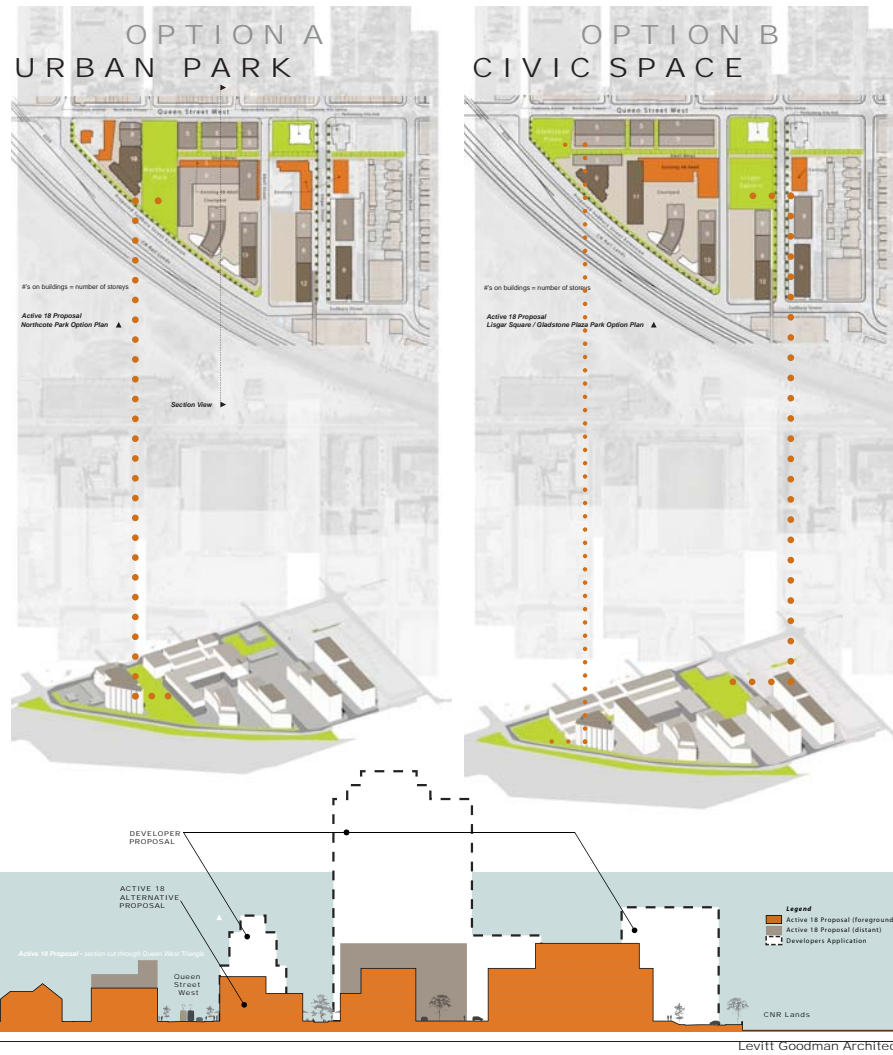




Fig. 10.11 West Side Lofts building dwarfing 48 Abell.



Fig. 10.12 Construction of the first of two West Side Lofts buildings is well underway.

An array of ideas and uses for this network of spaces were suggested during the course of the public space charette. Some common threads served to identify priorities such as the blurring of boundaries between property lines and the importance of a prevalent cohesive design style reinforcing the connectivity of spaces. Multi-generational access was important so that all citizens will feel welcome to the park and the spaces connected to it. As well, day and night use must be considered and safety ensured with ample lighting incorporated into the design. Programmatic park elements were also considered including potential use as a farmer's market, a stage or amphitheatre, an exhibit space, provision of a bread oven/kiln, etc. Participants to the charette also expressed the importance of including artists and arts programming throughout the realization of the park.

Application Aftermath

So many people want to live in the locality that it becomes profitable to build, in excessive and devastating quantity, for those who can pay the most.⁸

Throughout the OMB and well afterward, the City continued to be flooded with building applications around or in the Queen West Triangle. Half of the applications in queue belong to Baywood Homes, the developer building the Bohemian Embassy. They have an 8-storey building planned for 1155 Queen Street West where Queen's Car Wash used to be, and another 8-storey building planned across the street from the Gladstone at 1181 Queen Street West, where the Country Site plaza is located. Another Baywood condo project, this one 9 storeys tall, is planned for the southwest corner of Queen and Dovercourt facing the Great Hall where their new condo showroom relocated. This will entail the displacement of more businesses once that building is demolished. One more Baywood application of 15 storeys with a grocery store at grade, proposed at 2-90 Lisgar will be facing the new park. Now under construction, the Bohemian and former car wash sites were sold to developers Pemberton Group after an

8-month delay in the construction. Currently the three latter developments (1181 Queen, 1093 Queen, and 2-90 Lisgar) are on hold or for sale as of October 2009.⁹ Baywood has also been granted leave from the related OMB hearings.

The construction of the West Side Lofts building at 150 Sudbury is well underway, however this property also changed hands, from Urbancorp Developments to Landmark Developments. The exterior facades have undergone an entire redesign and additional floors were squeezed into the overall permitted height allowance. A 7-storey building by Streetcar Developments is approved by the City for construction at 2 Gladstone Avenue, just west of the Gladstone Hotel. Another development at 40 Dovercourt Road called 'Art Condo' is approved for construction of an 11-storey building by Streetcar Developments. Developers Medallion Corporation have a 14-storey rental building on a 7-storey base planned for 45 Lisgar Street as a continuation their mid-rise rental building 'Marquee' at 55 Lisgar built in the early 2000's.¹⁰ Although no application has been made to the City, Ben Woolfitt owner of Woolfitt's Art Supplies at 1153 Queen West, has plans for a private art museum, yet to be announced.

With Abell's west wing a distant memory, foundations were laid for the affordable housing tower at 48 Abell in the fall of 2009. Eviction of remaining residents is only a matter of time. Once the developers are through with the Queen West neighbourhood, it will be difficult to recognize from its former self as the affordable local arts enclave it once was.



Fig. 10.13 Art Condos at 40/44 Dovercourt Road.



Fig. 10.14 Ads for lofts at 2 Gladstone.



Fig. 10.15 New foundations poured at 48 Abell's former west wing. View from a hole in the window of building stairwell.

New Developments in West Queen West since 2005

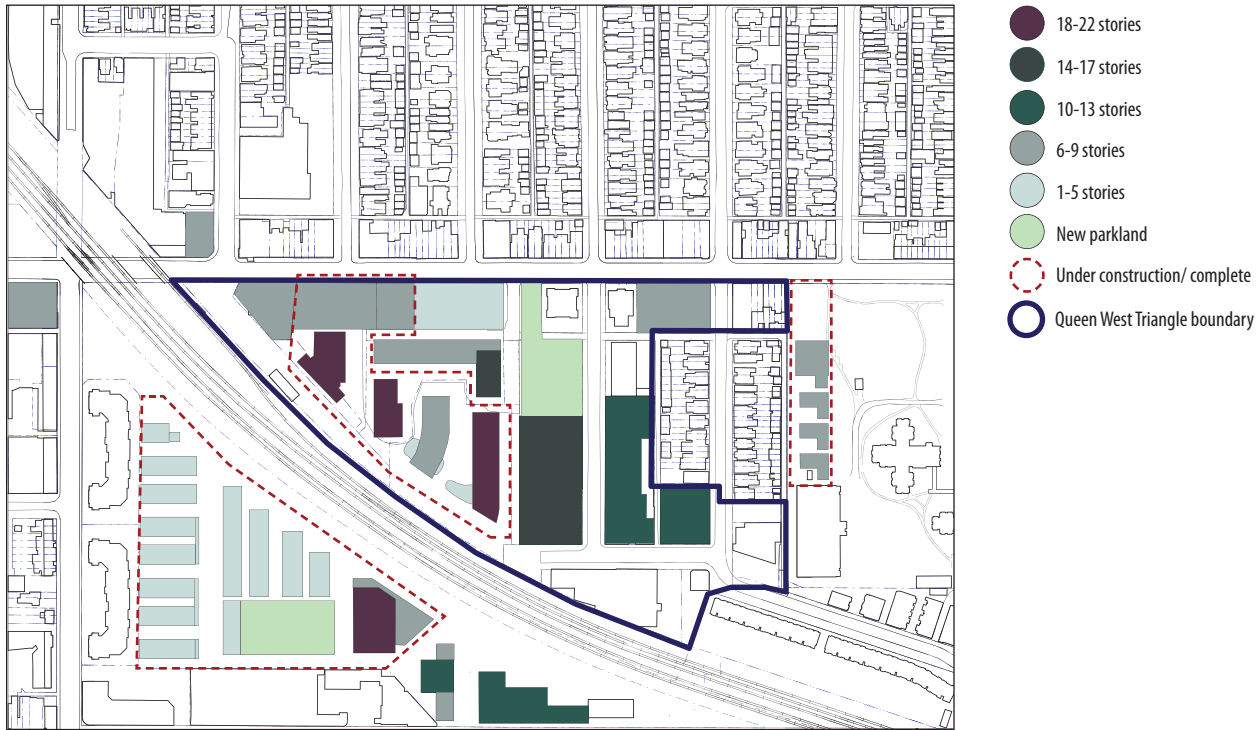


Fig. 10.16 New Developments in West Queen West since 2005.

Status of Applications in West Queen West 2010

ADDRESS	DEVELOPER	STORIES	UNITS	TYPE	STATUS
48 Abell Street	Verdiroc Development Corp.	18 & 14 on 8 storey base	300 180	condominium affordable housing	under construction
1171 Queen Street West	Pemberton Group	8 & 20 storeys on 8 storey base	325	condominium	under construction
150 Sudbury Street	Landmark Developments	18 & 8	573 70	condominium affordable artist	under construction
1155 Queen Street West	Baywood Homes	8 storeys	40	condominium	under construction
45 Lisgar Street	Medallion Corporation	14 storeys on 7 storey base	325	rental units	approved for construction
2-90 Lisgar Street	Baywood Homes	15 storeys	334	condominium proposed	on hold/ for sale
2 Gladstone Avenue	Streetcar Developments	7 storeys	60	condominium	approved for construction
40 Dovercourt Road	Silverburg Line Canada Inc.	11 storeys	118	condominium	approved for construction
1181 Queen Street West	Baywood Homes	8 storeys	65	condominium	on hold/ for sale
1093 Queen Street West	Baywood Homes	9 storeys	107	condominium	on hold/ for sale

Table. 10.1 Status of Applications in West Queen West 2010.



Fig. 10.17 Application influx montage.

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1. Michele Henry. "Fashion Incubator Loses Queen St. W. Home to Developer." *Toronto Star*, June 8, 2007, sec. Home, <http://www.thestar.com/article/222939> (accessed January 5, 2010).
 2. Queen Beaconsfield Residents Association. "Bar Concentration Around Queen FAQ." <http://queenbeac.wordpress.com/bar-concentration-around-queenbeaconsfield-faq/> (accessed January 5, 2010)
 3. Lisa Foad. "Selling Off Queen West." *Now Magazine*, August 23-29, 2007, 18.
 4. Barry Hertz, "Details Trickle Out on Queen West Triangle Deal." *National Post*, <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/toronto/archive/2007/10/30/city-reaches-deal-with-developers-for-queen-west-triangle.aspx> (October 30, 2007).
 5. Gord Hume, Nancy Duxbury, Tim Jones, and Greg Baeker. *Cultural Planning for Creative Communities*. Municipal Knowledge Series. Union, Ont.: Municipal World, 2009, 66.
 6. Barry Hertz, "Details Trickle out on Queen West Triangle Deal" *National Post*, October 30th, 2007, 1.
 7. Active 18 Association. *Queen West Triangle Public Space Charette*. Toronto, 2008, 1. http://active18.org/park-charrette/active18-public_space_charrette_report.pdf (accessed December 13, 2009)
 8. Jacobs, Jane. *Death and Life of Great American Cities*. [New York]: Random House, 1961, 249.
 9. Active 18 Association. *Planning Update on the Triangle*. Toronto, 2009, http://active18.org/Active18_PlanningUpdate_Oct2009_v02.pdf (accessed January 12, 2010), 1.
 10. See <http://www.liveatmarquee.com/flash.htm>

December 2007

Worst Christmas ever.

In the previous two years it had felt like this building, our building at 48 Abell was slowly being pried from our hands. These were the same hands that had held together around it in a gesture of love. But then, Abell's death sentence was delivered.

Seeing Abell's west wing come down was like watching a pack of lions attack an elephant, a great beautiful majestic elephant. First the beast was bullied before it became worn out trying to avoid its fate, and then when its life was taken away, the heart stopped beating. Weeks went by while one by one, Abell's west wing studios were ravaged for any goods left behind. The windows were removed and then the demolition claw finally had its way with the gutted building carcass as though it had been kept waiting, tearing and scraping away. The enormous steel and timber columns and beams that made up its spine were picked apart and set aside. The claw continued to chomp at the building, each time reducing more of it to piles of rubble. Pieces of its life lay around in carnage. Clothes strewn around. A deformed arm chair. A pendant light. A skate. Some painted pieces of wood. A mirror. Shoes.

It was heartwrenching and I cried. It really was the worst Christmas ever.



Fig. L.1 Random installation beside Abell's boarded up west wing.





Fig. L.5 View of Gladstone beyond pile of bricks.

Fig. L.2 *Opposite*, Home.

Fig. L.3 Bye Bye.

Fig. L.4 My home, my home... Why have you forsaken yourself?



Fig. L.6 Rubble in the place of IMAR steel's old unit.





Fig. L.8 Studio 241 opened up from the top.

Fig. L.7 *Opposite*, Severed portion of Abell's west wing.



Fig. L.9 *Opposite*, Mangled steel studs with building beyond.



Fig. L.10 *Opposite*, Studio 127 door.

Fig. L.11 *Right*, CN Tower beyond 48 Abell construction waste.





Fig. L.12 Studio 130, December 15, 2007.



Fig. L.13 Studio 130, December 22, 2007.



Fig. L.14 Ghost of Studio 130, January 11, 2008.

“There has been no place like that home.”

48 Abell resident

Afterword

Self-Destruction

The West Queen West neighbourhood is a victim of its own success. Jane Jacobs calls this phenomenon the self-destruction of diversity. In an outstandingly successful street or district, competition for real estate space is high,

It is taken up in what amounts to the economic equivalent of a fad.

The winners in the competition for space will represent only a narrow segment of the many uses that together created success. Whichever one or few uses have emerged as the most profitable in the locality will be repeated and repeated, crowding out and overwhelming less profitable forms of use... Since so many want to get in, those who get in or stay in will be self-sorted by the expense.

... But the triumph is hollow. A most intricate and successful organism of economic mutual support and social mutual support has been destroyed by the process.¹

“A nostalgic desire for maintaining a given condition in a city as a static status quo is not realistic - cities are places of flux and movement, yet the intense and under-regulated development and gentrification are negative in that the positive characteristics of a neighborhood like Queen west need not be co-opted by the narrow financial interests of a very small and primarily non-resident group of developers and financiers whose motives are distinct from the qualities and values of the healthy and vibrant diversity of the people who inhabit the area”

48 Abell resident

Currently it is not clear who is winning the duplication competition between the condominiums, bars and art galleries of Queen West, but Jacobs’ forewarned destruction of a highly successful district is nigh, if it hasn’t already happened. When move-in dates for the condominiums are within view, buyers may no longer remember the neighbourhood’s charms that first attracted their condo purchase. The question is who is at fault and what could have been done to prevent this outcome?

Debunking Blight

I am not easily convinced when city officials deem an area to be in decline or labeled a slum. As we can see in the case of Parkdale, it was generally a stable locality throughout the 20th century in spite of slum rhetoric, even with a high proportion of low-income residents. Additionally, Toronto’s modernist architects of the 1950’s and 1960’s mistakenly viewed places like Yonge Street and Kensington market to be in need of slum clearance because they appeared disorderly to the eye.² These two thriving mixed-use areas of Toronto would have been a great loss to Toronto if demolition plans were successful. Therefore our ability to understand apparent slums is skewed to a time in history where investigative methods were limited to subjective visual observation and typically measured according to class and income.

While many factors contributed to downtowns being perceived as undesirable places to live, including competition with the suburbs, it is also important to consider that much of the so-called blight in cities in the 1960’s and 1970’s was merely a passing symptom of the transition period out of the industrial economy. At the time this economy was concentrated in our North American downtowns. Seeing as property values are so high in Toronto at the moment, shown for instance in Abell’s latest land assessment, this is proof of an enormous housing demand. Yet, the vacant industrial buildings of decades ago only carried a stigma in cities until artists and creative workers demonstrated their creative potential for adaptive reuse.

Better Planning

The positive outcome of Active 18 establishing a dialogue with Queen West Triangle developers did not come without exorbitant costs to all parties involved including taxpayer dollars going toward the City's legal fees. In effect, much of the strife central to this land battle could have been avoided with advance planning.

City Council's identification of former industrial sites as regenerative zones in 2002, such as the lands around 48 Abell, was irresponsible without first investigating the development impact on existing social and economic dynamics and providing a framework to mitigate development. In this respect, the City's reactive planning for limiting heights after rejecting developers' proposals was unfair to these stakeholders. The volume of Ontario Municipal Board appeals are evidence that advance planning by the City for streets, building massing and heights, as well as public space and heritage preservation, is necessary to areas that anticipate development. These frequent developer appeals are a symptom of the current neoliberal dysfunction stemming from the unsanctioned private development practices prevailing in Toronto.

Over-development could be avoided if the City only had an effective method of diverting this development capital elsewhere in the city. Generally, developers understand the language of policy and money, so whether enacting policy regulations limiting heights or requiring affordable live/work spaces on a given property (whatever be the case), mitigating development through policy ensures a more fair and well-informed process for all. The problem with condos is the same as for suburbs; a large injection of housing is created without considering how it might function as a community. As Lees, Slater and Wyly state: "local communities must be consulted about the regeneration of their local area, and this must be more than a form of participatory tokenism."³ Therefore, when policies include community feedback, then neighbourhoods are enhanced instead of destroyed by development pressure. However, the most effective means for a community to resist gentrification is the formation of a strong grass roots organization, like Active 18, that can identify area priorities and communicate them to the City before land speculation even occurs.

*“local communities
must be consulted
about the
regeneration of
their local area,
and this must be
more than a form
of participatory
tokenism.”*

*Lees, Slater
& Wyly,
Gentrification*

If social mix is good, argue local activists, then why not make it possible for the poor to live in rich neighbourhoods?

*Nick Blomley,
Gentrification*

Social Mixing and Creative City Fallacies

In the context of West Queen West, this thesis has proven that cultural workers had much to do with creating value in an area otherwise deemed to be derelict. However, a critical look at the creative city movement, led by Richard Florida, reveals flaws in a strategy of exploiting the arts as a means to stimulate economic development of so-called downtrodden areas.

First of all, implicit in any attempted top-down revitalization strategy is a sanctioned effort to gentrify. While low-income neighbourhoods may have their own complex problems, positioning cultural workers in this locale will not and cannot be solely responsible for solving or addressing them. City officials often encourage development in these places citing social mixing and the apparent trickle down benefits from the middle class, as a means to upgrade the area. However, social mixing is the kind of fallacy where the theory does not reflect the reality. The book *Gentrification*, on which these views are heavily based, criticizes this theory using a quote by researcher Nick Blomley in his observations of Vancouver's Eastside:

The problem with 'social mix' however is that it promises equality in the face of hierarchy. First, as often noted, it is socially one-sided. If social mix is good, argue local activists, then why not make it possible for the poor to live in rich neighbourhoods? ... Second, the empirical evidence suggests that it often fails to improve the social and economic conditions for renters. Interaction between owner-occupiers and renters in 'mixed' neighbourhoods seems to be limited. More importantly, it can lead to social segregation and isolation.

Another problem with creative city movements is the idea that a low income neighbourhood's existence is negative or in need of economic stimulation. Especially since low-income residents have few housing options in an increasingly expensive and polarized city. Yonge Street and Kensington market are great examples of low-income districts perceived as slums that have successfully 'unslummed' over time. Furthermore, whether market-led or top-down, gentrification inevitably leads to displacement due to climbing costs of rent as seen with Queen West residents and businesses. The resulting displacement of low-income residents and the social services that address their needs only exacerbates

the challenges experienced by these residents.⁴ For example, gentrification has led to the departure of not-for-profit organization, United Way from the Queen West strip and threatens the existence of the methadone treatment center currently located on the development site south of the Gladstone. Several inexpensive restaurants have also moved or closed down. It is certain that the affordable housing portion of Abell's new building will contribute to some well-needed balance in an otherwise homogeneous middle to high class demographic of new in-movers however income polarization will only increase and local inexpensive amenities become more scarce.

Also implicit to the creative city idea, as well as all top-down revitalization strategies is an uncomfortable assertion that neighbourhoods should always be tending toward a higher income. Today, people view their homes as an investment with the expectation of eventually gaining a return on its sale. When Parkdale residents were confronted with annexation at the turn of last century, their resistance was based on keeping their property taxes low. Unfortunately, striving for maximum profit is a function of our capitalist society and it seems many are oblivious to the lessons of 2008's stock market crash showing us that the greed for money that capitalism fuels is an unsustainable economic model. It remains to be seen what post-capitalism looks like if it actually materializes in this lifetime.

Finally, the great irony of injecting creative capital into area districts is that the end result is always the same. When the creation of value spurs economic prosperity in a given district, the displacement experienced by low-income residents is also as a matter of course guaranteed to the artists, "those very people whose aesthetic disposition helped to initiate the influx of middle-class professionals."⁵ Creative city advocates are quick to tout the positive impacts of fostering the arts, but don't consider a mechanism for protecting arts production spaces when the area prospers. In the case of WQW, live/work spaces were secured in the end, however in the Canadian municipal planning guide called *Cultural Planning for Creative Communities*, the summary of this achievement written by Tim Jones neglects any mention of the residents' plight to preserve the 80 authentic live/work spaces lost with 48 Abell's demolition.⁶ Sadly, the creative class often seems to be given all of the credit and none of the power.

65.7% of 48 Abell residents view the effects of gentrification to be both positive and negative.

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A p p e n d i x A

Model48 resident survey 2006.

This 48 Abell survey was conducted door to door over the Fall of 2006 by members of Model48 prior to initiation of this thesis.

Name: [Responses withheld]						
Studio Number:	Approx. Sq Ft	Height				
			231		10'	"Business Development"
			233	875	10.5'	"Video Producer"
101	950	13'	236	2600	12'	"Sales/Multimedia"
102	1000	14'	236	2600	15'	"Retail"
103	1000	22'	241	1000	15'	"Graphic Design/Musician"
103	1000	22'	241	1000	15'	"Artist/Marketing"
104	1000	12'	243	900	12'	"Musician"
105	800	17'	246	1000	14'	"Student (Advertising)"
105	1000	12'	247	900	13'	"Intern Architect"
107	1400	17'	249	660	18'	"Musician"
108	1300	12'	250	800	12'	"Insurance Adjuster"
108	1300	12'	251	780	12'	"Sign Maker"
123	1100	16'	302B	650	20'	"Aesthethician"
123	1100	16'	303	1500	15'	"Communications"
124/125	1200	16'	303	1500	15'	"Real Estate"
126	1000	16'	303	1500	15'	"Student"
127	1400	high	304	1200	12'	"Self Employed"
128	1700	16'	304	1200	12'	"Film Technician"
128	1700	16'	306A	600	10'	"intern Architect"
128			308A	500		"Engineer"
129	1700	20'	308B	900	15'	"Independent Film Maker/ Pro Video Sales/Support at Carbon"
129	1700	20'	308B	900	15'	"Computing"
130	2400	16'	309	1250	14'	"Accessories Designer/ Freelance Writer"
130	2400	16'	310	1500	14'	"Magazine Art Director/ Photographer"
130	2400	16'	310	1500	14'	"Designer/ Teacher"
130	2400	16'				"Designer"
134	1000	20'				"Music Copyright Administrator"
201	800	11'				"Freelance Production Manager"
202	1000	12'				"Artist"
202	1000	12'				"Artist"
204	1000	15'				"Carpenter/ Film"
205	800	12'				"Interior Designer"
205	800	12'				"Info Services Consultant"
207	750	12'				"Graphic/ Supply Chain Mgt"
207	750	12'				"Computer Development"
222	950	11'				"Manager Food Beverage"
224	800	11'				"Hair Stylist"
225	750	12'				"Truck Driver"
226	780	12'				"Not Disclosed"
227	900	14'				"Mailman"
230	730	11'				"Artist/ Designer/Magazine Managing Editor"
230	730	11'				"Clothing Designer"
			Age: [Responses withheld]			
			Occupation:			
			"Music/Photography"			
			"Glazier"			
			"Business Development"			
			"Video Artist"			
			"Writer"			
			"Programmer"			
			"Business Owner"			
			"Entertainment Company Owner"			
			"Media"			
			"TV Producer"			
			"Architect"			
			"Property Management"			
			"Artist"			
			"Sales Manager"			

"Gaffer (Film Technician)"
 "Artist"
 "Graphic Designer"
 "Journalist/ Producer/ Writer"
 "Costume Designer"
 "Costume Designer"
 "Artist"
 "Actor"
 "Director/ Writer/ Editor"

Email address: [Responses withheld]
Phone number: [Responses withheld]

1. 1. How many years have you been residing at 48 Abell St?

a) 0-1 yrs	35.3%	23
b) 1-5 yrs	43.0%	28
c) 5-10 yrs	10.8%	7
d) 10 + yrs	10.8%	7
answered question		65

2. i) Although 48 Abell is a Commercially zoned building, it is an open secret that there are residents in this building. As such, Aristocrat acknowledges residents have rights as tenants. Please circle which best describes your situation:

a) Residential	29.2%	19
b) Live/Work	70.8%	46
c) Work Only	0.0%	0
answered question		65

If you answered "a", please skip to question 3

ii) Is live-work space vital to your work?

a) Yes	67.3%	32
b) No	38.5%	20
answered question		52

If you answered "a", why is it vital?

"require studio space" – music director, writer and editor

"I have my workshop and tools set up in my studio" – video game designer and teacher / sculptor

"need rehearsal space" – actor

"creating music is sometimes more smoothly done at home. Our studio houses my home recording studio, dj equipment, drums, and guitars. I could not afford rent and a separate rehearsal space nor does it interest me. I live here for the ease and comfort it provides me in creating my most relevant work." – musician

"need a large open and accommodating space as I work in many mediums. . . that is also affordable!" – visual artist, graphic designer, magazine editor

"I am a visual artist and having affordable space to foster a good studio practice is essential – especially in a building of like minded people" – visual artist

"I edit films/dance pieces/commercial works and also maintain a "day job". If I was not able to work in the comfort of my own home, I would have to pay to rent an editing space which is completely ridiculous (as I could never afford it)". – Independent Filmmaker

"Large open space, industrial setting, high ceilings, conditions of light, friends/associates in the building" – intern architect / installation artist

"character, location and space" – painter

"open spaces which are easy to work in and are affordable" – artist

"being an indie designer isn't the highest paying job. Living and working in the same space let's me afford to do what I do" – accessories designer/freelance writer

"availability of photography studio space in the unit saves time and resources, afford a comfortable environments for clients and models" – magazine art director/photographer

– "not having live work space would have been economically unfeasible for many stages of the growth of my consulting company" – IT services consultant

– "need a space for interviews, shooting, meetings, working, writing" – journalist/producer/writer

– "my creative activities are very much co-dependant on my living space" – television

– "no other light industrial space is available in Toronto" – painter -building is a lifeline to the greater cultural community. I curate my neighbours into art exhibitions, I work with my neighbours to build

– "when you work in the cultural sector, you need to live in it. When you live in a building that has 75 percent of the cultural sector, you cant just transplant them into a place like the Bohemian Embassy or St Claire's proposal where likeminded people wont be as plenty. In this sense our building in an anomaly." – journalist, writer, producer

– "Artists work goes largely unpaid. Some years I can make 70K in my day job which if I am lucky might sustain a year of being 'a full time artist' in my studio. During these years grants as source of income – my studio is the consistent, stable centre of my practice both as an artist and in my day job as a curator. Without this space, I am f-ed" – artist curator

iii) Please circle the type(s) of work you do in your studio from the list below. Select all that apply.

a) Music	28.3%	13
b) Visual Art	41.3%	19
c) Performance Art	0.0%	0
d) Writing	30.4%	14
e) Film	19.6%	9
f) Photography	19.6%	9
g) Web/graphic designer	23.9%	11
answered question		46

h) Other:

"screen printing"
"technologies IT and telcom"
"architecture"
"make stickers and designs"
"real estate"
"architecture"
"software"
"architecture/ design"
"engineering"
"electronics resin body works"
"software development, Information services consulting"
"software development"
"hairstyling"
"fashion design"
"costume and props"
"costume and props"

iv) How would you describe this work?

a) Part-time	40%	18
b) Full-time	60%	27
answered question		45

3. When did you last employ or collaborate with another resident of 48 Abell or someone from the local community; Parkdale, Queen West / Dovercourt area, etc...?

a) In the last month	46.9%	30
b) In the last 6-12 months	18.8%	12
c) More than a year ago	3.1%	2
d) Never	31.3%	20
answered question		64

4. Aristocrat has announced that our building will be demolished and replaced with a condominium development. What best describes your attitude concerning the possible demolition of this building?

a) Against it	72.3%	47
b) Indifferent	24.6%	16
c) For it	3.1%	2
answered question		65

5. What best describes your opinion of the current state of 48 Abell? (Includes maintenance, security, cleanliness, etc.)

a) Excellent	11.7%	7
b) Good	36.7%	22
c) Fair	41.7%	25
d) Poor	10%	6
answered question		60

6. Aristocrat verbally agreed that current residents at 48 Abell have priority in the new development for affordable rental units [whether or not funding is provided by the City, Model48 would like to hold them to this, provided there is demand].

The "move-in" date may be 3yrs away. What best describes your attitude about Aristocrat's potential offer:

a) I am interested, but only if the size (square footage + ceiling height) of the new space is the same as my current unit and if the new rent is comparable to what I pay now.	51.6%	32
b) I am interested, even if the new units are smaller, but only if the new rent is comparable to what I pay now.	11.3%	7
c) I am not interested	22.6%	14
d) Undecided	14.5%	9
answered question		62

7. Do you think it's fair to expect further compensation for being displaced?

a) Yes	44.6%	29
b) No	30.8%	20
c) Undecided	24.6%	16
answered question		65

8. Regardless of the Heritage designation of 48 Abell, do you believe that this building has architectural and historical value for the city of Toronto?

a) Yes	75.4%	49
b) No	12.3%	8
c) Unsure	12.3%	8
answered question		65

9. Do you feel that the character and cultural value of the neighborhood can be retained once 48 Abell is demolished?

a) Yes	18.5%	12
b) No	69.2%	45
c) Undecided	12.3%	8
answered question		65

10. As a resident of this building, please indicate your interest in Model 48 residents group:

a) Not interested	14.8%	9
b) I support to Model48 representing my interests	57.3%	35
c) Want to be a member, sign me up! *	21.3%	13
d) Want to be on the steering committee. *	6.6%	4
answered question		61

11. Would you be interested in attending a resident-wide meeting in August or September 2006?

a) Yes or	80.3%	49
b) No	19.7%	12
answered question		61

Signature: Date: Email:

Thank you very much, your time is greatly appreciated. We look forward to meeting you! email: model48@gmail.com

Current Model48 Members:
Jessica Rose, Studio 306b
Malcolm Brown, Studio 306b
Michelle Van Eyk, Studio 130
Matt Wyatt, Studio 130
Steve Wood, Takman Chow,
Sabrina Saccoccio,
Penny Rose, Jaan Poldaa
Mark + Chantal Laliberte
Joseph Flasko and more!

Appendix B

48 Abell resident survey 2009.

This survey of current and former 48 Abell Street residents was conducted between the months of May through July of 2009. Data was collected over the internet using the paid services of www.surveymonkey.com. This study received ethics clearance from University of Waterloo's Office of Research and Ethics.

1. Have you ever rented a studio at 48 Abell street, Toronto?

Yes	93.8%	45
No	6.3%	3
answered question		48

2. When did you first move into 48 Abell street?

Prior to 1984	0.0%	0
1985-1989	0.0%	0
1990-1994	8.1%	3
1995-1999	5.4%	2
2000-2004	51.4%	19
2005-2009	35.1%	13
answered question		37

3. When you first moved into 48 Abell street, where did you relocate from? Please indicate address or nearest intersection and city. (Responses withheld)

Address
City/ Town
Province/ State
Country

4. Please indicate which unit you first rented at 48 Abell street: (Responses withheld)

100B	127	222
101	128	223
102	129	224
103	130	225
104	131	226
105	134	227
106	201	228
107	202	229
108	203	230
109	204	231
113	205	232
120	206	233
123	207	234
124/125	208	235
126	219	236

240	301	310
241	302A	311
242	302B	312
243	303	314
244	304	315
245	305	316
246	306A	317
247	306B	318
248	307	319
249	308A	Other (please specify)
250	308B	
251	309	

5. Can you recall any previous types of use of your loft unit(s) - commercial or not - going backward in time? (eg. Dance Studio, Concert venue, etc.)

"no"

"no"

"lived in 2 loft spaces previous to abell"

"commercial artist studio"

"No. Unit belonged to a couple before us. He was a storyboard artist, she had coincidentally lived above me at Crawford Street."

"live/work for a musician/audio engineer"

"Residential/ Textile designer"

"no"

"Dance studio, event space"

"We used the large space to build sets on. We were art directors for music videos and commercials and some stage design. It was used as a dance studio previous to us as well as an after hours club. We threw some large parties, including Wabi parties and the launch of the magazine Trucker. Also had roommates that used it for band practice."

"130 - dance studio, booze can/rave venue. 316 - it was Arif's house."

"no."

"Always a residential space"

"I believe the tenants before me were residential + operating a small interior design consultancy from the space."

"no"

"Art show"

"Music studio, office, parties, home"

"living"

"n/a"

"No"

"No. Though its current use is a visual effects / motion design studio complete with green screen and lighting set up."

"No idea."

"no"

"I sublet the space from two dancers from the National Ballet, one of whom Karen Fournier, later became the national Ballet's principal dancer. Her boyfriend, a dancer and choreographer was also a painter and used the space as a painting studio"

"Our second unit # 242 was definitely used previously as an after hours booze can. It had 3 story addition off the back which allowed entrance from the rear of the building. I have met many people over the years who have partied in that particular unit."

"No, this was a newly partitioned space. I assume you're not looking for ancient history (i.e. munitions storage, dollmaking, etc.)"

"Dance studio and previous to that a venue for raves."

"ours was apparently a dance studio or two before my time there. i moved in august 2002. it was a larger space and had apparently had an accordingly larger number of parties and gatherings held there. i had not been to any that i could recall, though had been to other events in the building going back to 1997."

"art studio"

6. Please describe your most and least favourite things about your loft space?

"favorite - space, light, attitude of neighbours
least - drafts, leaks, no heat, thin walls, no laundry"

"Most - culturally rich, hip happening, right on the Queen Street strip.
Least - sometimes loud parties, sometimes no hot water"

"favourite thing is the empty space and ability to rearrange living space... least is the typical residents and the noise at all hours due to lack of quality construction in the walls/ceilings"

"most favorite - the amazing butcher block wood ceilings, iron columns and beams, view of the city scape, green field outside my window before it was plowed over for a condo development, the freight elevator out in the hall, the 15 foot ceilings, the iron and wood stair that had been installed by a previous tenant. the skylight i could climb through to get up on the roof.
least favorite - the sound transfer throughout the building. the weekly fire alarms, the low ceiling in my loft and the iron beam i'd hit my head on. the super high kitchen counters that a former tenant had built. the institutional looking bathroom."

"Least: Noise from west neighbours -- after recording engineer moved out, series of short-term tenants were selfish. Also random drunk loud people in hallways at all hours, sometimes they would try to enter unit.
Most: Open space, felt full of opportunity and potential."

"favourite:
-age
-raw, unpolished interior
-wood
-high ceilings
-community
-noises
-big windows
-gritty outdoor environment
-artifacts from previous industrial uses (hooks, rails)
least favourite: -none"

"High Ceilings Good light to much noise both from within the bldg and surrounding neighbourhood"

"most favourite: unique, location, view, size, style
least favourite: heating unreliable"

"loved the corner unit
disliked the noise from the plumbing system"

"Loved: Incredible value for the enormous space
Hated: Lack of stewardship/security on the part of the owner(s)"

"most favourite - the space and the atmosphere of the area
least favourite - the dirt that was always present (had a large garage door which dust would blow into)"

"130 - The space was the most amazing thing. It felt like a place that only existed in movies. It could be used like no residential space ever could, for infrequent plaster projects, or whatever else.
Least favorite thing was the mice when they started clearing the back area out.
316 - Best things are the space and all the light for plants to grow.
Worst thing's the lack of heat in the winter."

"the heat in the summer - how it becomes a hot box"

"Favourite: Freedom, Least favourite: heating"

"Most favourite: flexible space for creative activities, direct connection to a creative community.
Least favourite: pollution in the form of paint fumes from Imar Steel, and dust during site remediation and grading of the adjacent 150 Sudbury property that lasted two summers."

"most favourite: large open space
least favourite: badly maintained windows"

"Wooden floor, high windows, surface, studio-workshop space."
"most favorite is the freedom.
least favorite is the building up keep."

"Space, open minded
Dirty,"

"incredible space, thin walls, great community...gross entrance"

"most favorite, flexible space, adapts to photo & sculpting projects. owners are groovy
least favorite, lack of windows (lighting) & expensive"

"MOST FAV
High ceilings.
Large windows, lots of light.
Open-concept.
Rawness... can do messy work here.
Community feeling.
Neighbourhood - live near friends, close to downtown.
LEAST FAV
Paper thin walls (hear neighbours' conversations).
Slanted floors.
Occasional ceiling leak.
In the past, mice & ants (exterminator controlled).
Irate/unprofessional property manager.
Difficult to get even small things fixed.
Since condo developments, laundry rooms have been reduced to just one washer, 3 dryers for entire building.
Weekend club goers."

"I love the aesthetic. The exposed walls- the shanty town styled second floor and the industrial double doors. Theres not to much I dont like about it. Gets a bit cold in the winter due to the huge window and concrete floor. Also the alley way gets almost completely submerged when the snow melts or it rains a lot."

"Pros: Wide, great wood beams, access to Queen St + Parkdale,
Cons: A shared garden or shady area on the roof would have given some respite from the heat in the summer."

"I didn't have any complaints. I loved living there until they started demolishing the west wing to which point I moved."

"Favourite - the quality of light, open space, freedom to build, modify space to suit needs;
least favourite - no deck, thin walls, fire alarms"
"fav- space! ceiling height, industrial feel, location, ""hidden lair"" atmosphere, cool neighbours, loved that it was a building in re-use."

least fav- lack of natural light, air"

"cold in winter"

"North light and gritty open space character best qualities worst were the very frequent sounds of sex from the adjoining unit"

"Best - cheap, open bare loft space

Worst - my unit was right by the side alley door and the Abell lofts didn't exactly have insulation or sound attenuation blankets in the walls! .. There was a lot of in and out traffic at night."

"Open space, the esthetic of a vintage space, the communal bond with your neighbours.

The old heating pipes, the mice, and sometimes the noise at 4 o'clock in the AM from the neighbours."

"Most favourite: quality of light, expansiveness of the space.

Least favourite: noise transmission through walls, clanging of hot water rads alarming enough to cause widespread panic."

"Mice...lots of mice."

"Flexible and Open concept"

"Favs -Enormous stained wood dance floor, amazing for entertaining, garage door, Douglas Fir beams and columns and robust steel connections.

Least - loud pipes, deafening industrial heater, lack of privacy/ insulation between bedrooms."

"favourite = outrageous size of space, and corresponding capacity to fill it with all types of happenings. the p.a. system for easy vinyl aurification, as well as the band set up and it's all the time capabilities, continue to have been second to none. there has not ever been a time of greater creativity and ease in my life, certainly in my career as a musician."

least = mopping the dance floor after Porn Party 2, and the jello pool that sounded good at the time..."

"freedom and view
thin walls"

7. Are you currently renting at 48 Abell street?

Yes	40.5%	15
No	59.5%	22
answered question		37

8. If you are no longer renting at 48 Abell, when did you move out?

Prior to 1984	0.0%	0
1985-1989	0.0%	0
1990-1994	4.5%	1
1995-1999	0.0%	0
2000-2004	13.6%	3
2005-2009	81.8%	18
answered question		22

9. When you moved out from 48 Abell, where did you relocate to? Please indicate address or nearest intersection and city. (Responses withheld)

Address
City/ Town
Province/ State
Country

10. Were you evicted in Fall 2007 as a tenant of the West Wing?

Yes	29.7%	11
No	70.3%	26
answered question		37

11. When you were evicted from the West Wing, did you relocate to another studio at 48 Abell?

Yes	36.4%	4
No	63.6%	7
answered question		11

12. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Some High School	2.7%	1
High School Diploma	0.0%	0
Some College or University	10.8%	4
College or University Degree	64.9%	24
Master's or PhD	21.6%	8
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0
answered question		37

13. Were you enrolled at an educational institution while renting at Abell?

Yes	18.9%	7
No	81.1%	30
answered question		37

14. Sometimes people find work outside of their primary occupation or vocation in order to be able to support their living expenses. From the table below, please choose one category from each column as it pertains to your primary occupation (relating to your education and training) and one category pertaining to your employment income while renting/living at 48 Abell street. It is possible that the same category applies to both column. Students select primary occupation as it applies to your studies.

	Primary occupation/ Vocation		Income-based Employment	
Management	5.9%	2	8.6%	3
Business, finance & administration	8.8%	3	11.4%	4
Natural & applied sciences	11.8%	4	11.4%	4
Health occupations	2.9%	1	2.9%	1
Social science, education, gov't	2.9%	1	8.6%	3
Art, culture, recreation & sport	58.8%	20	34.3%	12
Sales & service	5.9%	2	13.3%	5
Manufacturing /equipment operator	0%	0	5.7%	2
Student/ no income	2.9%	1	2.9%	1
answered question		34		35

15. From the following list, which vocation best describes your primary occupation while renting at 48 Abell street. If a student, select applicable category as it relates to your studies. Select all that apply.

Music	8.1%	3
Visual Art	16.2%	6
Performing Art	0.0%	0
Photography	5.4%	2
Film & Television	18.9%	7
Web Designer	5.4%	2
Software Development	5.4%	2
Designer (graphic, architect, interior, fashion)	40.5%	15
Writer	8.1%	3
Other (please specify)	27.0%	10
answered question		37

Other:

"Food & Beverage Manager"

"researcher"

"Insurance adjuster"

"telecommunications"

"IT Systems Integrator"

"Hairstylist"

"sales"

"Teaching"

"Health Care/IT Consultant"

"house painter, marketing administration."

16. What best describes your situation while renting at 48 Abell street?

Live/ Work rental	70.3%	26
Residential rental	29.7%	11
Commercial rental	0.0%	0
answered question		37

17. What best describes your situation after leaving 48 Abell street?

Live/ Work rental	14.3%	5
Residential rental	28.6%	10
Residential ownership	22.9%	8
Commercial rental	0.0%	0
Not applicable (still renting)	34.3%	12
answered question		35

18. Would you agree that your loft space at 48 Abell is/ was vital to your primary occupation?

Yes	43.2%	16
No	56.8%	21
answered question		37

If yes, how was your loft space vital to your occupation? If no, what other use did you make of your space?

"We used it for painting and photography."

"large enough for office equipment"

"work space,shop space"

"I used the space for art and music production/rehearsal and events"

"I worked as an Art Director. The loft stored my kit and art supplies as well as gave me enough room to make small sets and build props. I now have to rent a workspace separate from where I live to do the same. I have had success in my career and am able to afford the workspace but when I was living at Abell I would not

have been able to afford the separate rental. Abell helped when my career was young.”

“to live in a space i loved and could dictate my personal living spaces and work spaces”

“At school there were things like photo shoots I had to set up that worked much easier because of the space. Or for random art projects.”

“48 Abell afforded me a low-cost space for hosting client meetings and collaborating with others on research projects (some of which required open physical space) that were instrumental in building a technology consulting practice in its early years.”

“high ceilings and large open-concept space allow for artmaking It was hosting my workshop where I would produce prototypes for my work.”

“Base of the business”

“Space and location was asset”

“i screen printed my line in my apt.”

“storage, entertaining, presentations/shows”

“Except that it keeps me close to my contacts.”

“When I do freelance work the large space really helped out. Being able to set up a green screen and have the space to build mini “sound stages” really helped me. Also the tall ceilings have come in handy.”

“I had my salon set up in my loft. The lighting and space was fantastic.”

“Provided an amazing space to think, be creative, assemble projects, exhibitions, do photography etc.”

“residential and studio space, though the nature of the space, other than being a great place for live work, was not vital to work

in that it could have ben done elsewhere”

“My wife and I during our last year at Abell used the space to help run our own clothing line. In addition as a DJ (hobbyist) the space was great for my collection and impromptu soirees.”

“Threw huge parties, did cartwheels.”

“provided unfettered access to create, whether music for myself or fashion and set design for my former roommates. outsized space at 2400sq; and as a drummer and singer it offered me quite an opportunity to learn more about my own hands and voice. learning to use our instruments in the most dynamic and engaging ways are some of what i strive for a creator of sorts. my former home holds a singular place in my heart for what it allowed me to do.”

“space to work, film, paint”

19. How far did you have to travel in order to get to your PRIMARY OCCUPATION or VOCATION while renting at 48 Abell?

0 km (48 Abell)	30%	11
1 km OR LESS (eg. to Queen & Strachan or Dufferin & Dundas or Liberty Village area)	8%	3
2.5 km OR LESS (eg. to Queen & Spadina or Dufferin & Bloor)	19%	7
5 km OR LESS(eg. Queen & Parliament or Dufferin & St. Clair)	22%	8
5km +	19%	7
I was traveling to 48 Abell from (indicate location or distance)	3%	1
answered question	“all of the above”	37

20. How far did you have to travel in order to get to your place of INCOME-BASED EMPLOYMENT while renting at 48 Abell?

0 km (48 Abell)	22%	8
1 km OR LESS (eg. to Queen & Strachan or Dufferin & Dundas or Liberty Village area)	8%	3
2.5 km OR LESS (eg. to Queen & Spadina or Dufferin & Bloor)	25%	9
5 km OR LESS(eg. Queen & Parliament or Dufferin & St. Clair)	25%	9
5km +	17%	6
I was traveling to 48 Abell from (indicate location or distance)	3%	1
answered question	“all of the above”	36

21. How would you describe West Queen West when you first moved to the neighbourhood compared to the way it is now in 2009? (character, safety, retail stores, people, cleanliness, etc.)

"This neighbourhood was already in transition when I moved in."

"Pretty much the same. Some building of new developments had occurred."

"better, less 905ish"

"i would say that there wasn't alot going on when i first moved in. it still felt like an 'in between' area. not quite parkdale and definitely not queen west. a bit seedy."

"It was quieter, though run-down. Great access to art supplies, galleries, a quick drink with friends, and transportation. We moved away because the influx of night-clubbers was extremely unpleasant on thursday through saturday. Drunk, aggressive people behaved as if they had license for rudeness...A few nightclubs don't define the surrounding neighbourhood. These party-goers behaved with such entitlement and belligerence, as if they owned they area and the people in the neighbourhood were visitors. Transportation in and out of the area became difficult, and we couldn't afford to drink with our friends in the area. We resented these changes and moved out of the area."

"average people (middle lower income) arts-related demographic and services a few ""trendy"" young urban professional shops, bars, and services"

"nice honest slum cheaper everything"

"can't really say, only moved here in 2008"

"Same"

"WQW was not nearly as gentrified, expensive or pretentious as it has become"

"Much different, the drake was the stardust. We would see hookers in parked cars behind Abell near the garbage bins all the time. None of the same bars or coffee shops that you see now. Lots of crack heads. Lots of drunks. Once the Drake moved in many things changed rapidly."

"its turned into a 905 club street"

"It's getting trendier and trendier. More loud drunk people in the parking lot on weekends. There seemed to be a better mix of old neighbourhood shops and trendy boutiques/galleries than there is now. Once the appliance stores go there won't be much of anything left that's more than four years old."

"West Queen West was fairly low end and run down when I first moved in. There was a soup kitchen nextdoor and the Gladstone chased welfare checks."

"I moved to Queen and Ossington in 2001 and at the time I'd say the area West of Shaw street was not very approachable to the average citizen. The Drake, The Gladstone, the former DeLeon White gallery had yet to be purchased and renovated. CAMH still presented a significant psychological barrier to westbound pedestrian traffic. Between Shaw and Dufferin, Queen West felt as though it was on life support."

"less noisy with more galleries"

"low average"

"Undeveloped. Great potential for local growth, reasonable rent for interesting space to enhance personal development. Quality of living was affordable."

"similar but less bars, turning into club gino central now"

"save current construction dust, 10 years past the hood was not safe to walk at night. currently potential business traffic is very good. the community feels more like a community."

"Much different. In the first six months living here, the neighbourhood was an artist district. Artists & people working in creative jobs lived here. It quickly became pseudo-gentrified, i.e. clubs opened & suburbanites started coming here on weekends to go to the clubs. It's become a bit like a summer vacation town, in the way that locals frequent the establishments during the week, and outsiders push the locals out on the weekend. They illegally park in our lot and literally vomit & urinate in the area while they're drunk."

(When I say pseudo-gentrified, I mean, there is new business activity, but catering mostly to the club scene. We are still lacking markets or decent stores or restaurants to buy food.)"

"I feel like the area was more convenient. There were a few more places to eat that were not expensive "lounges", the stores were less high priced. The place was a bit grungier- but for the better. It never felt unsafe. It had a lack of polish. I grew up in parkdale and thats what I always loved about the area. I feel less safe now on the weekends due to the fact that this area has become a new club land. Idiots from wood bridge are really judgmental and ive seen more drunken stupidity and ignorance in the recent years than I ever have. At least with the sketchy people that were there before- they would leave you alone because they were not drunk or high off the crowd."

"Then: Prostitution, drug dealing, prior to the Drake. Now: Gentrified, condos sprouting."

"I haven't been down there since I left, but it was great when I was there. A lot of changes and cleaner than it was prior to that."

"gritty, lots of character both in the stores, buildings, and people, up-and-coming - on the verge of being discovered / transformed / gentrified"

"significantly "poorer", less developed, but no difference in safety. possibly less clean."

"dumpy and dirty"

"In 1993 the city was in a deep economic downturn the conditions of which were very evident on Queen west with many empty

shops and marginal businesses and a general feel of unkempt decline without the gallery art, bar restaurant scene, radically different than today”

“I moved in early 2005 so it was much the same as it is now, not as many retail stores & people, but pretty close.”

“The gentrification was already on the rise when we moved out there in late ’04. The change was noticeable during our stay, based on retail, and the people who it attracted and had settled the surrounding area. I wouldn’t say the neighbourhood got cleaner, but rather shineier (sp?).”

“I was there before, during, and after the re-opening of the Drake Hotel. Thus all of these things changed radically during my time there. Virtually all commercial tenancies on the street have flipped. Daytime vs. nighttime populations turn over completely (i.e. local crowd during the day, 905 crowd at night / weekends). One thing that hasn’t changed: the strip has always had an issue with being a “real” neighbourhood – there are eleven places to get a beer, but no fishmonger. Three pawn shops, but no butcher. Sixteen art galleries, and nowhere to get some cheese. You get the idea ... So, in spite of the concentration of creative energy, WQW has always had some issues as an authentic “locality”.”

“got busier, cleaner, more gentrified, harder to get on a streetcar in the am.”

“The area became popular very quickly while I was there. The crowd at the Gladstone changed from being pretty rough around the edges to a more shiny and yuppy clientele. It seemed like a place that was really far from the city core. There were pawn shops and small independently owned restaurants and corner groceries which began to change while I was there.”

“it was dirtier.”
there had been a stabbing at the StarLite, currently the Drake Hotel, in the while before i moved there.
to be fair, i had not fully availed myself to the kindness of the neighbourhood before moving in in 2002.”

“whore house with drugs and appliance stores”

22. The following is a list of reasons for moving to the neighbourhood, please rate each according to how important they were to you.

Answer Options	Not important	Slightly Important	Average	Important	Very Important	Rating Average	Response Count
Location, transit	2	1	2	16	14	4.11	35
Social opportunities	5	3	6	14	8	3.47	36
Tolerance & community	3	2	7	14	10	3.72	36
Proximity to bare necessities	2	3	9	13	9	3.67	36
48 Abell St.	5	0	5	13	13	3.81	36
answered question							36

23. What influenced your decision to rent a studio at 48 Abell street over other places? Please rate each according to how important they were to you.

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Average	Important	Very Important	Rating Average	Response Count
Historic authenticity	5	5	8	9	7	3.24	34
Generous space and natural light	0	0	1	11	24	4.64	36
Cost/ affordability	0	2	4	13	17	4.25	36
Like-minded community	1	1	7	9	17	4.14	35
Collaborative opportunities	12	5	6	8	5	2.69	36
Working studio space	4	8	3	3	18	3.64	36
answered question							36

24. Do you feel that historic buildings are important to the cultural identity of a neighbourhood?

Strongly Agree	72.2%	26
Agree	25.0%	9
Neutral	2.8%	1
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0
answered question		36

(Optional) Please elaborate why you feel this way?

“Historical buildings are what gives a neighbourhood its character and authenticity. They should be maintained.”

“One’s past, or history, defines who we are and how we came to be the person we are. The same applies to neighbourhoods.”

“it gives the city real bones to build off of”

“There’s a certain romanticism or connection to an identity or past that can only happen when there is a physical representation of that past. That’s what makes cities like Rome or Paris so great.”

“Toronto doesn’t seem to value old buildings and I think suffers culturally as a result of it.”

“It helps people getting involved to understand why and people used to live there before them”

“I am one of those people that like the look of warehouses. When I see them- i dont think they are scars on the landscape. I see a space that is open to use. These buildings were what made that neighborhood what it is. Seeing them vanish (all across toronto) has made me emphasize less with city and care less about how much longer I stay in Toronto.”

“They’re important as carriers of history and a connection to the continuity of the human condition of the urban environment Culture is usually derived from one’s history. Take away the history and the basis for the culture goes with it. The identity of the

neighbourhood (Abell) has changed dramatically in the recent years because a lot of the history has been torn down or white washed over. (Yes, I realize this is pretty generalized, but it ain't my thesis:)"

"I feel authentic buildings are important, but I don't care whether or not they are "historic".

"the future is the way, but inspiration is equally important."

the buildings of the village of parkdale in particular, mark a time in the history of the gathering of this new City of Toronto. all world architecture, alongside the most necessary in functionality, make our section of the landscape a unique lens into the time it has taken us."

"history, variety"

25. Would you agree that the high concentration of artistic individuals in the West Queen West area has contributed to the cultural vitality of the neighbourhood?

Strongly agree	74.3%	26
Agree	22.9%	8
Neutral	2.9%	1
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
answered question		35

(Optional) Please elaborate why you feel this way.

"Not sure if this neighbourhood has "cultural vitality" or its just happens to be where a lot of people who dress the same ended up - and businesses moved in to accommodate."

"Historically, I believe, most areas of gentrification are preceded by artists living there because rents are cheap. Once the wider city catches on and moves in for financial opportunities, artists are choked out and move somewhere else. They're not needed anymore -- they created a sense of desirability in an area that was perceived as unsafe/run down -- but the perception remains in the civic consciousness."

"Not only did artistic individuals tangibly contribute to WQW within the art community outlets and hubs, but they also flavoured the attitude, social dynamics and character of local non-art-related businesses and public spaces."

"I guess I don't really know, since I wasn't here, but before the arts community came, this area wasn't one that anyone outside of living here went out of their way to visit."

"they promote social interaction and awareness"

"Its also what is bringing its downfall. Its a trendy area- and al-ways has been. The more galleries- the more people get attracted to the area. Unfortunately the southern edge of queen and around abell is pretty sparse in terms of living areas. The amount of artists / cool people (not everyone in abell is an artist) have given the area a nice laid back feeling."

"Hard to say as I feel a good majority have resettled in the Junction due to the changes on Queen West. From a historic perspective I'd say strongly agree."

"creativity like rabbits."

26. Do you feel that affordable live/ work spaces are an important form of housing within the City of Toronto and worthy of preservation?

Strongly agree	88.9%	32
Agree	8.3%	3
Neutral	2.8%	1
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
answered question		36

(Optional) What are your thoughts on this matter?

"Not everyone works in an office. The further you drive people "outside the box" out of the downtown core, the closer you get to a repeat of the mistakes that drove people to the suburbs before."

"Yes, but there is a definite problem of "coolness" with having loft spaces or larger, versatile spaces. People that don't need them want them, which drives up the prices and makes them unaffordable for artists. I make a living in TV now, but had been pursuing installation art and painting -- i needed cheaper space. What's the solution, though - showing your BFA? Elitism isn't any prettier of a solution."

"Every city directly or indirectly relies on the outgoing nature of artistic individuals who help to develop and/or revitalize neighbourhoods that might otherwise be abandoned, unwelcoming or boring."

"Affordable housing in general and live/work spaces included are vital to the vitality of the city in general. Especially now when sustainability issues are becoming more and more important, it's good for more people to be concentrated in cities. When everything gets too expensive in cities, people are forced to leave them."

"Let people construct their habitat the way they need in order to function during their lives"

"YES.

Especially since most of them are vanishing. With the economy the way it is right now a lot of people are opting to freelance. Having enough affordable spaces that are modular and can be used for different things is very important. Getting rid of these buildings are making people look to other cities to move to. One of the things I loved about Toronto growing up here was the amount of warehouse spaces available and the untapped potential of living in one of these spaces."

"These spaces are of vital importance to the incubation and practice of the ongoing cultural life of a city"

"Your question is tainted. Affordable live/work spaces are absolutely crucial. However, they are worthy of preservation only if it is reasonable to preserve them (structurally, urbanistically, etc.) For example, the amount of structural work necessary to repair 48 Abell might well make its preservation untenable."

“some arts require more elbow room than others. no one eVer wants something given to them, but affordable live work spaces are absolutely vital to a process that is hard to bottle at best. in my estimation, the city of toronto failed the residents of 48 abell and the greater community when they failed to stop developers from demolishing at least the west wing of the building. it is my understanding that when the crucial vote was taken, to decide whether or not halt two developers in their efforts to build twin towers over the cite, both the mayor David Miller and councillor Adam Giambrone (who had personally campaigned at our door to stress he would fight for our building, and whom i had spoken to at length that one day) were ABSENT from the vote altogether. in stead they were at a news conference announcing the future of rapid transit in the city’s north end. i felt i had been diversionarily tacticked. at the time of this writing, july 3 2009, the bohemian embassy (the building geographically responsible for abell’s west wing demolition), has had their building ceased for almost two months now, citing lack of funds in their decision to stop building immediately. as a footnote, my current credit card balance has increased over seven thousand dollars since leaving abell street. a succession of too-expensive apartments and couch surfings have found me foundering in new ways, and at great rates of speed.

there has been no place like that home.”

27. Gentrification can be described as the upgrading of urban property in a deteriorated area, usually resulting in the dispersal of the current residents and their replacement by a more affluent population. How do you perceive the effects of gentrification on the West Queen West neighbourhood?

Very positive	5.7%	2
Positive	8.6%	3
Both negative and positive	65.7%	23
Negative	8.6%	3
Very negative	8.6%	3
Neutral/ Undecided	2.9%	1
answered question		35

Please share your thoughts on this matter.

“This area needed a cleaning up. However, it was not done with any consideration of character or “cultural vitality” of the existing neighbourhood. What we will be left with is a Hot Topic version of a WQW that may not have ever existed beyond a marketing plan to begin with. A squandered opportunity to rejuvenate a unique area will now result in an outdoor mall akin to Spadina/Queen.”

“All of the plans to demolish several blocks and replace them with condos so that people can flip them for profit nauseates me. Flippers aren’t building a community. Change should happen organically, not in a few years. The character changes when the people who established/participated in the community leave. Building plans best on the trendiness of drinking establishments is dangerous... once it’s not cool anymore, the area will decay and be perceived as even more dangerous. I do remember the neighbourhood back in 2000, and it was pretty dreary and felt dangerous. So civic pride and small-G gentrification is good, but the area around Abell is on gentrification steroids.”

“soon the area will lose the character (and the buildings) that attracted me to it when i moved here, so eventually i will have to move.”

“Commercialism at the expense of the historical buildings sucks.

“Of course neighbourhood property owners and some businesses have and will prosper(ed). But others have been forced out because they are unable to keep up with opportunistic rent-raising, new corporate businesses taking neighbourhood business and long standing customers moving out of the neighbourhood. Relatedly, it is unfortunate that many former residents, like myself, felt pushed out of 48 Abell and a new unfamiliarity with the nouveau affluence and corporate feel spreading through the neighbourhood.”

“It’s always nice to see interesting things come to communities, and to see them become more vibrant. But, people with lower incomes or social issues need places to be as well. It also sucks when the super yuppie people move in then everyone ends up leaving.”

“Money comes in --> plus Ignorants move in --> negative”
There is a need for control and cultural consciousness to preserve and allow new initiatives to enrich the area”

“The increase of population can benefit the local merchants. However, this population increase will make the area lose its uniqueness. Commercialism will capitalize and originality will suffer.

“Boarder line positive. I like that there is some new life blood coming into the area. I dont like whats its bringing. Every day a new “bar/lounge” seems to be opening up. Things are getting more expensive. There are no cheap places to eat- and store front is getting gobbled up to cater to the weekend club crowd that is attracted to this area. I feel its making this area less liveable and more of a going out destination. If they city was smart- they would have augmented the triangle and not tried to tear it down and replace it with higher income people.”

“Gentrification is a mixed blessing - it generally improves the area - makes it safer, brings interesting architecture, galleries, restaurants that would have resisted opening in that area. However, it obviously destroys much of the inherent drive which made that area so dynamic / edgy and desirable to many who thrive in those types of environments.”

“I actually think that (forms of) gentrification are both necessary and inevitable when developing a neighbourhood. I just despise whitewashing and corporatization- it doesn’t have to always be that way, and find it sad that it so often is.”

“A nostalgic desire for maintaining a given condition in a city as a static status quo is not realistic - cities are places of flux and movement, yet the intense and under-regulated development and gentrification are negative in that the positive characteristics of a neighborhood like Queen west need not be co-opted by the narrow financial interests of a very small and primarily non-resident group of developers and financiers whose motives are distinct from the qualities and values of the healthy and vibrant diversity of the peopl who inhabit the area”

"It's the natural cycle of urban re-use and building repurposing: industry moves out of the inner city to the burbs, artists move into vacant derelict buildings, slowly fixing them up, creating a market for local business and making the area cool. Then people with more money move in to get in on the cool, further providing a market for local business and development and the area eventually becomes gentrified and too expensive for the original artist community. I see it as a positive cycle of building reuse. If gentrification did not occur the buildings would slide into disrepair and would eventually fall apart."

"In this area, I like the idea because the density will increase so dramatically that the city will be forced to re-imagine its transit strategy. Furthermore, the nature of live/work is going to shift as well -- many professions simply require less space than in previous decades (I'm thinking of design and graphic art). I know of two architects who are attempting paperless practices, and apparently it's going well ... This means that even conventional houses can serve as live/work (i.e. without "lofty" space). Therefore, there can still be an active live/work community in an area with tight rental units next to conventional houses, which is still the situation at Abell / Lisgar / Beaconsfield / Gladstone etc..."

"Gentrification brought the area up to be more artistic minded and moved in a new breed of people. Because of this we were torn from our building so they could build another nasty new building where our space was."

"natural cycle of growth and atrophy"

28. Based on your perception of the rapid gentrification that has occurred in the West Queen West neighbourhood please order each factor with respect to triggering this process? Choose 1 as the most responsible and 6 as the least.

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating Average	Response Count
Location	12	9	4	6	1	1	2.33	33
Affordability	6	7	8	3	8	3	3.26	35
Concentration of arts community	6	6	6	9	2	4	3.21	33
Refurbishing of Drake Hotel	8	3	8	7	4	3	3.15	33
Refurbishing of Gladstone Hotel	0	7	6	6	13	3	3.97	35
Starbucks	1	2	3	4	5	20	5.00	35
answered question								35

(Optional) Why would this be your number 1 choice?

"Drake you ho, this is all your fault."

"Refurbishment happened because the arts community was there as a factor already, and they wouldn't be there if it hadn't been affordable..."

"The catch-22 of living in a cool, under-the-radar artsy neighbourhood is that eventually the word gets out. The concentration of the arts community made WQW a trendy, therefore attractive location that was still relatively affordable. This unfortunate trend led to a series of events bringing about an exponential gentrification of the 'hood."

"I saw the change happen and I believe it was all due to the drake. The drake was the catalyst."

"its so close to downtown - it was next to be hit"

"The affordability/perceived authenticity of the neighbourhood, I think brought the arts community, who then promoted it..."

"that choice matrix you provide above doesn't allow all choices."

"location: Its close to the downtown core."

"Affordability: its cheap. but not that cheap. The W lofts are cheap. Bohemiam Embassy not cheap. Very very few cheap places to eat. Drinking out at places is expensive and there are lot of places to drink."

Concentration of Arts Community: I think that is alluring to the people already there- or moving in and out of the spaces already

provided such as Abell. The new people coming in are there because its perceived as trendy. I doubt these people will be purchasers of art either.

Drake: rip stardust. This spurred the whole lounge boom. Its also part of the reason i no longer feel safe on the weekends with wood birdge assholes trying to fuck with me or my gay roomates. Gladstone: It got nicer- but from going there the crowd has not changed at all. I feel the gladstone never tried to be anything it wasnt already either.

Starbucks: I feel this had mostly nothing to do with the gentrification. Sanctuary closed because it was losing money. Starbucks moved in. Its just a coffee shop. And i find it to be rather socially responsible too."

"There was only a sense of impending change when I lived there, I was not living in the area when perceptible change began to set in, so I don't feel that I can answer this with any authority."

"An area so close to the downtown core naturally attracted a lot of young professionals"

"This is usually why any area gentrifies. Cheap buildings, close to the core."

"the drake has had the chic thing going for it since it started. better or worse, it makes people come. my personal favourite Gladstone Hotel is all time, and has the drake looking foolish in my humble estimation. authentic is a dangerous word, but the gladstone's downhome goodness is not replicatable."

"the reason why people came"

29. What is your gender?

Female	27.8%	10
Male	72.2%	26
answered question		36

30. In what year were you born?

Prior to 1964	16.7%	6
1965-1969	2.8%	1
1970-1974	33.3%	12
1975-1979	27.8%	10
1980-1984	16.7%	6
1985-1989	2.8%	1
After 1990	0.0%	0
answered question		36

31. Which annual income bracket best applied to you when first renting at 48 Abell street?

under \$10,000	8.6%	3
\$10,000 – \$19,000	8.6%	3
\$20,000- \$29,000	17.1%	6
\$30,000 - \$39,000	14.3%	5
\$40,000 - \$49,000	22.9%	8
\$50,000 - \$59,000	5.7%	2
\$60,000 - \$69,000	17.1%	6
\$70,000 - \$79,000	5.7%	2
Over \$80,000	0.0%	0
answered question		35

32. What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual	91.7%	33
Homosexual	0.0%	0
Bisexual	5.6%	2
Transgender	0.0%	0
Would rather not say	2.8%	1
answered question		36

33. Thank you kindly for your time and for participating in this questionnaire. For more information or for survey findings, please enter your email address below, or email Michelle Van Eyk at michelle.van.eyk@gmail.com. You may also write any additional comments you have in the space below:

Appendix C

Land assessment values in the Queen West Triangle.

The land values in this table were collected from the Toronto Archives at 255 Spadina Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Two resources facilitated this data collection: the computer-based land assessment search engine, and bound hard copies of land assessment rolls requested for viewing by the author.

ADDRESS	LOCATION	AREA	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Current
INITIAL 3 APPLICATIONS													
48 Abell	48 Abell	75707 sf	384,000	617,000	617,000	2,288,000	2,578,000	2,578,000	2,864,000	2,864,000	15,243,000	15,845,500	17,653,000
1171 Queen	Bohemian Embassy	53321.60 sf	726,000	769,000	769,000	2,360,000	2,483,000	2,483,000	5,300,000	5,300,000	9,304,000	10,300,750	13,291,000
1171R Queen	Sudbury St. extension	1672.2 sf	181,000	200,000	200,000	416,000	520,000	520,000	572,000				
150 Sudbury	West Side Lofts	3.67 AC/ 2.47 AC		497,000	922,000	922,000	1,093,000	1,367,000	1,367,000	6,350,000	6,350,000	10,815,000	
PROXIMATE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY													
1150 Queen	Drake Hotel	7170 sf	632,000	717,000	717,000	1,003,000	4,077,000	4,077,000	4,292,000	4,292,000	4,292,000	4,468,000	4,996,000
1204 Queen	Gladstone	8475 sf	895,000	1,345,000	1,345,000	1,883,000	2,187,000	2,187,000	2,536,000	2,536,000	2,536,000	3,286,000	5,537,000
QUEEN WEST TRIANGLE													
48 Abell	48 Abell	75707 sf	384,000	617,000	617,000	2,288,000	2,578,000	2,578,000	2,864,000	2,864,000	15,243,000	15,845,500	17,653,000
40/ 44 Dovercourt	Art Condo	20410 sf	518,000	531,000	531,000	1,309,000	1,471,000	1,471,000	1,530,000	1,530,000	1,530,000	1,644,750	1,989,000
41 Dovercourt	Dufflet Pastries	19242 sf	302,000	366,000	366,000	1,191,000	1,256,000	1,256,000	1,381,000	1,381,000	1,381,000	1,484,500	1,795,000
45 Dovercourt	U-Haul	7523 sf	162,000	270,000	180,000	289,000	362,000	362,000	398,000	398,000	398,000	411,250	451,000
2 Lisgar	United Foods	32195 sf	540,000	565,000	565,000	1,835,000	1,910,000	1,910,000	2,295,000	2,295,000	2,295,000	2,888,250	4668000
6 Lisgar	United Foods	31610 sf	1,753,000	1,575,000	1,575,000	2,789,000	2,553,000	2,553,000	3,155,000	3,155,000	3,155,000	3,512,000	4,583,000
45 Lisgar	Mercer Union, etc.	69810 sf/ 1.16 AC	1,058,000	1,157,000	1,157,000	2,245,000	2,471,000	2,193,000	2,391,000	2,391,000	2,391,000	4,653,000	11,439,000
90 Lisgar	New Park	32273 sf/ 31870 sf	356,000	429,000	429,000	851,000	1,036,000	1,036,000	1,036,000	1,036,000	1,036,000	2,314,250	6,149,000
1075 Queen	Residential	2080 sf	220,000	257,000	257,000	305,000	358,000	358,000	418,000	418,000	418,000	451,750	553,000
1077 Queen	Residential	1950 sf	179,000	246,000	246,000	288,000	331,000	331,000	394,000	394,000	394,000	428,000	533,000
1079 Queen	Residential	1977 sf	191,000	224,000	224,000	263,000	313,000	313,000	363,000	363,000	363,000	396,000	495,000
1081 Queen	Residential	1982 sf	141,000	200,000	200,000	240,000	285,000	285,000	333,000	333,000	333,000	364,000	457,000
1083 Queen	Residential	1967 sf	232,000	281,000	281,000	329,000	377,000	377,000	442,000	442,000	442,000	477,250	583,000
1085 Queen	Residential	2063 sf	165,000	266,000	266,000	289,000	336,000	336,000	387,000	387,000	387,000	421,250	524,000
1087/1089 Queen	The Great Hall	6534 sf	578,000	368,000	368,000	368,000	453,000	453,000	767,280	1,570,000	1,570,000	1,732,501	2,220,000
1095/1093 Queen	Bohemian Showroom	24390 sf	360,000	414,000	414,000	888,000	1,050,000	1,050,000	1,999,000	1,999,000	1,999,000	3,252,500	7,013,000
1115 Queen	Carnegie Library	.26 AC	940,000	940,000	940,000	1,203,000	1,276,000	1,276,000	1,364,000	1,364,000	1,364,000	1,485,000	1,848,000
1117 Queen	Canada Post	13975 sf	442,000	339,000	339,000	339,000	409,000						2,794,000
1153 Queen	Woolfitt's	27600 sf	1,114,000	1,111,700	1,111,000	1,284,000	1,595,000	1,595,000	3,105,000	3,105,000	3,105,000	3,238,751	3,640,000
1155 Queen	Car Wash	11520 sf	287,000	378,000	378,000	529,000	581,000	581,000	719,000	719,000	719,000	1,840,000	2,299,000
1171 Queen	Bohemian Embassy	53321.60 sf	726,000	769,000	769,000	2,360,000	2,483,000	2,483,000	5,300,000	5,300,000	9,304,000	10,300,750	13,291,000
1171R Queen	Sudbury St. extension	1672.2 sf	181,000	200,000	200,000	416,000	520,000	520,000	572,000				
1181 Queen	Country Site, etc.	0.44 AC	974,000	960,000	960,000	1,028,000	1,043,000	1,043,000	1,396,000	1,396,000	1,396,000	1,584,500	2150000
1199 Queen	Garden Center	1.2 AC				859,000	1,073,000	1,073,000	1,181,000	1,181,000	1,181,000	1,285,000	1,597,000
20 Sudbury	Vacant	1484 sf	46,500	86,000	86,000	86,000	98,000	98,000	108,000	108,000	108,000	118,500	150,000
55 Sudbury	Commercial Arts bldg	11326 sf	507,000	412,000	412,000	694,000	854,000	854,000	938,000	938,000	938,000	1,092,250	1,555,000
99 Sudbury	99 Sudbury	1.02 AC	1,363,000	1,115,000	1,115,000	1,616,000	1,399,000	1,399,000	1,657,000	1,657,000	1,657,000	2,444,000	4,805,000
150 Sudbury	West Side Lofts	3.67 AC/ 2.47AC	497,000	922,000	922,000	1,093,000	1,367,000	1,367,000	6,350,000	6,350,000	10,815,000		