Beyond Shelters:
An Urban Based Model to Alleviate Homelessness

by

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Author's Declaration

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

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

ABSTRACT

The historic connection between homelessness and severe economic depression has disappeared as a shortage of affordable decent housing prevails even during periods of strong economic growth. New factors such as the reduction of low skill careers in manufacturing in favour of higher paid higher skilled positions are causing an increasing gap between the highest and lowest earning populations in Canada. Furthermore, shifting taxation rates have reduced the federal government's ability to provide funding for affordable housing. As a result, current market based solutions are failing to meet the diverse housing needs of our communities, leaving some homeless and many others at imminent risk. Policy plays a large role in finding a solution to this crisis; however the means of applying any solution is intrinsically an architectural issue.

This thesis examines the state of homelessness in the city of Toronto and proposes a new and inclusive urban housing typology to better meet the city's housing needs. The thesis is structured by three forms of inquiry: Firstly, an analysis of homelessness in Canada is used to identify the historic causes of homelessness. As well, the principle obstacles faced by key demographics are highlighted. Secondly, the thesis investigates existing responses to homelessness to identify the difference between reactionary responses and a more effective integrated city making approach. Finally, the lessons learned from earlier research are applied through the design of an inclusive housing typology, which, through a city making strategy, blends together residential, cultural, and commercial programming. The goal of this design proposal is to foster a richer urban community, which better serves the needs of the entire city.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Andrew Levitt, Janna Levitt, and Jeff Lederer for guiding me through the research and design process, and for enriching my graduate experience. Thanks also to John McMinn and Adrian Blackwell for their comments and questions, that helped to deepen my investigation and to provide new insights into the topic of Homelessness.

I must also acknowledge the endless support from my family, friends, and colleagues, without whose support I would not have completed this thesis.

To my Family

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

[It is a] necessity for everybody to have a decent dwelling; not to make all homes mansions, but to insure that none of them will be hovels.

Lester Pearson, 1965 Speech to the OAHA

BEYOND SHELTERS

Part I: Crisis of Housing Affordability
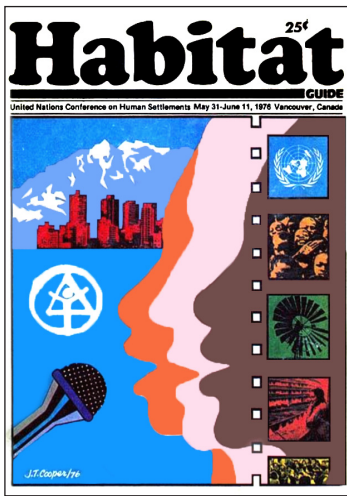
1.1 (Above) Cover of the 1976 Habitat I Guide Book

> Adequate shelter and services are a basic human right which places an obligation on governments to ensure their attainment by all people, beginning with direct assistance to the least advantaged through guided programmes of self-help and community action... [Of] special importance is the elimination of social and racial segregation, inter alia, through the creation of better balanced communities which blend different social groups, occupation, housing and amenities.

The above excerpt from the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements was created as part of the 1976 United Nations conference - the first of its kind on the state of housing and human settlements. This document clearly stated the universal aspirations towards achieving adequate shelter as a basic human right.[1] The conference known as Habitat I, was convened primarily in response to concerns over the quality of housing in developing countries. However, our experience over the following decades has shown that those concerns can extend even to modern industrialized nations such as Canada.[2]

1.2 (Below) Income Distribution

The low earners of the population surpass the high and middle income group combined

In the city of Toronto - not only considered Canada's economic capital but as well one of the world's most economically powerful as ranked Forbes magazine in 2008 - homelessness is steadily on the rise while housing affordability issues affect more than 30 % of the city's population.[3] The apparent disparity between the city's overall economic status and the growing affordability issues denotes a large and increasing rift forming between the highest and lowest earnings demographics of the population. In fact, in 1970, 66% of Torontonians were considered to be middle income (producing an income that falls 20% above or below the regional average), but that number has fallen dramatically to 29% percent by 2005. Meanwhile, the number of low income individuals has increased from 19% to 53% during the same span [Fig. 1.2].[4] These numbers would seem to suggest a need for more affordable housing, but contrary to this notion, large cuts to social housing programs by the federal government of Canada lead to a reduction in social housing starts from nearly 16,000 in 1980 to about 1,000 by 2008 [Fig. 1.3].[5]

1.3 (Right) Social Housing Decline

The number of social housing starts in Canada plotted against time in years

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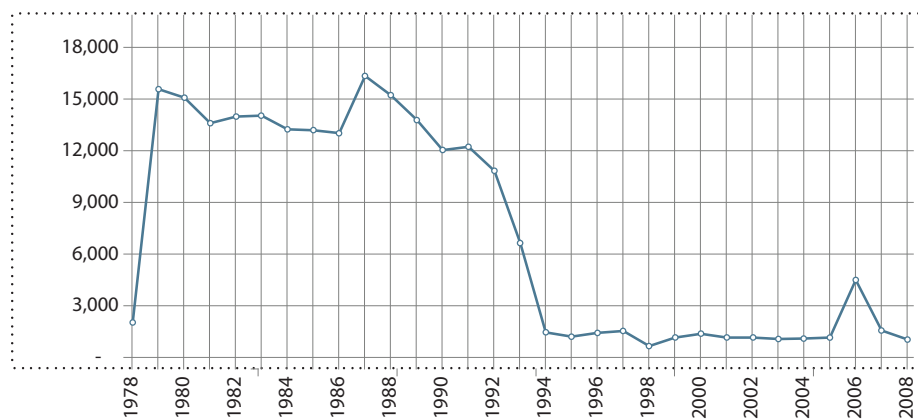
1   (United Nations Conference on Human Settlement 1976) Section 3 point 8
2   In 1982 Canada came under criticism from the united nations for its lack of attention to housing
3   (Wellesley Institute 2010) p. 39-43
4   (Hulchanski 2007) p. 5
5   (Wellesley Institute 2010) p. 37

The major decline in social housing has left the private market as the major force to deal with the housing issues as a service for those individuals who can afford it. However, due to the large range in income, the market is failing to provide adequate housing for everyone [Fig. 1.4][6]. As a result, a large portion of Toronto residents find themselves paying too much for housing; some households are one or two pay checks away from losing their homes, while others are unable to find any housing at all. Consequently, homelessness and precarious housing are on the rise.
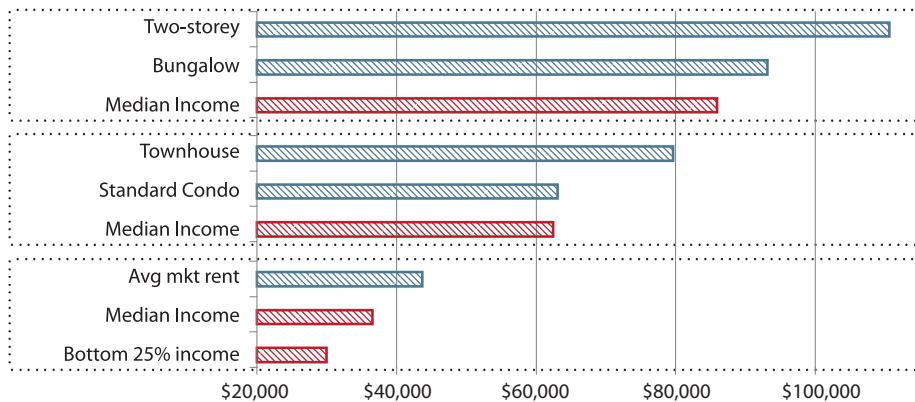
1.4   *The Gap in Market Housing*

Blue bars marking the income required to affordably own each type of market housing outweighs the average earnings of the current occupants

Part II: Stigma of Shelters and Social Housing

Further complicating the challenge, are reactionary responses to the growing rates of precarious housing and homelessness. Until recently, a two stream approach has been taken that, in general terms, accommodates the problem rather than dealing with the structural causes. Firstly, short-term responses such as emergency and transitional shelters have been used to deal with the most visible symptoms of homelessness by providing an alternative to the streets. Additionally, shelters act as a gateway to social assistance and counseling, to expedite a return to normality.[7] Secondly, long term measures such as social housing projects attempt to supplement shelters by placing housing within the means of low income individuals. The typological isolation of these projects from the city fabric, as well as the lack of diversity in the communities that they create, have the effects of generating negative public perceptions, and causing the projects and their residents to become highly stigmatized.[8]

1.5   *(Bottom) Poverty Hurts Us All*

A screen clipping from the film "Home Safe: Toronto", which peers into the lives of families and working individuals experiencing homelessness

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6   (Wellesley Institute 2010) p. 41
7   (Hutubise, Babin and Grimard 2009) Section 1.2 p. 8
8   (Lee, Farrell and Link 2004) p. 42-43

Although shelters and social housing projects are well intentioned and provide a much better alternative to inaction, they fail to go far enough fully address homelessness. Users are often defined by the act of accessing the shelter, or residing in the social housing project.[9] The residents are socially isolated and have a harder time escaping from poverty due to the limitations of their environment. The experimental nature of social housing projects often highlights the socio-economic differences of the occupants and amounts to experimentation on the poor as opposed to allowing their occupants to blend in.

When Regent Park was completed in 1949 as one of Canada's first and largest social housing projects, it was greeted with optimism and encouragement. The project replaced the dangerous and unhealthy slum conditions of Cabbage Town in Toronto with newly designed modern homes. After its inauguration, the project was deemed as 'housing heaven', creating closed pedestrian neighbourhoods for individuals earning an income equal to or below the regional average.[10] But as the project aged, tenant selection practices were updated to favour the lowest income individuals. Experimental aspects of the project such as the closed nature of the mega blocks, that were meant in theory to provide a safer environment for families, proved instead to create spaces conducive to crime and drug use. The original praise that the project was met with shifted towards relentless criticism and reflected the growth the public's negative attitude towards social housing.

1.6   Regent Park Sketch

This sketch of the original Regent Park project illustrates identical residential towers laid out in mega blocks

The old regent park took an approach typical of most social housing projects. The narrow scope of the design was very reactionary and overly simple. By limiting the project to replacing and upgrading the existing poor quality housing, the opportunities to provide a range of employment prospects, create a rich mix of amenities, as well as a more diverse community were overlooked. Furthermore, Regent Park ignored the existing city fabric and therefore formed an isolated community that was forced turned its back to Toronto. Like many other projects of the time, regent park failed to create the rich, mixed, and integrated community that the members of the United Nations would later aspire to in the 1972 Habitat I conference in Vancouver.

9   (Lee, Farrell and Link 2004) p. 42-43
10   (Zapparoli 1999) p 9

Part III: Housing as City Making

    A new leaf is turning in the way we approach the needs of our cities as marked by the revitalization and redevelopment of Regent Park. As each phase of the redevelopment replaces the old project, we can observe a glaring change in the juxtaposition of the old and the new. The specific and ubiquitous approach to housing, which caused segregation and alienation, is being replaced by an integrated city making effort.

The revitalization of the park has broadened its scope from simply replacing an outdated form of housing; it serves instead to reconnect Regent Park to the city both physically and socially, to create a better balanced community through a mix of market and social housing, employment and economic development, as well as community and cultural facilities. By approaching our growing housing needs as a city making exercise, new developments can respond to the full extent of the diverse demographics of the city. This new effort identifies the benefits of using architecture as a tool to generate strong, healthy and diverse communities. Rather than becoming isolated in environments that propagate poverty, the lowest earners and those with the least access to services are placed in an environment of opportunity.
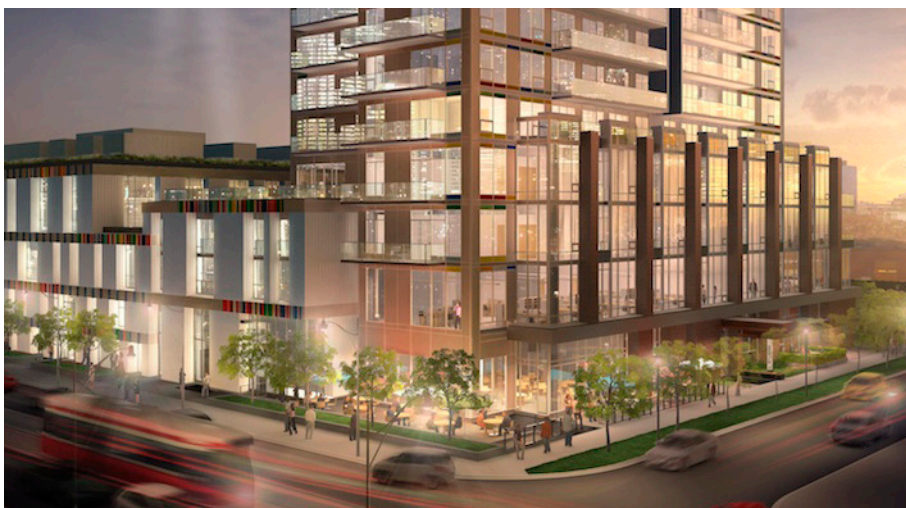
1.7   (Above) 'Regent Park Arts and Cultural Centre'

1.8   (Below) 'Regent Park Arts and Cultural Centre'

The cultural centre is one of the diverse building types that makes up the new Regent Park.

Thesis Intent

In his 1965 speech to the Ontario Association of Housing Authorities, Prime Minister Lester Pearson stated "the necessity for everybody to have a decent dwelling." He continued to emphasize that "this objective of decent housing simply has to be achieved in our democratic society." His speech marked a need to provide housing as a right to all citizens rather than a service for those individuals who can afford it.

Following the lessons learned from an analysis of homelessness in Toronto, and a review of both reactionary and integrated responses to the challenge, this thesis recognizes the benefits of integrating housing through a city making strategy.

This thesis proposes the design of an 'inclusive urban housing typology' in downtown Toronto that can bring the city closer to the goal of decent housing for everyone. The design addresses the growing rates of homelessness and precarious housing in the city and attempts to remove the deepening social barriers forming between various socio-economic demographics. This objective is achieved through the development of one of downtown Toronto's quickly disappearing parking lots into a mixed use and mixed income tower. The project blends together residential units with cultural and commercial elements that can provide opportunities for employment, job readiness, self-improvement, as well as social interaction and cohesion. The design combines rich mixture of a strong and diverse neighbourhood into a single site by applying a city making strategy. By setting a good precedent, private market builders and non-profit agencies who are interested in affordable housing can take a leading role in propagating this hybrid typology.

Methodology and Scope of Work

The following structure will be used to develop the case for designing the 'inclusive housing community'.

Chapter 2 - Challenge of Homelessness - provides an historic overview of the challenge of homelessness in Canada. Key political events relating to the recognition and evolution of homelessness are highlighted. The chapter continues to describe and define homelessness as it exists today, as well as the prominent demographics that are most affected. The structural and Individual causes of homelessness are described, and the chapter concludes with an analysis of the major obstacles and opportunities with regards to homelessness.

Chapter 3 - Homelessness Responses - investigates the role that shelters and affordable housing projects have played as a response to homelessness, and reviews the benefits and shortfalls of each typology. The section will contrast projects with a limited architectural language, to projects using a rich mix of program that broaden their scope in order to integrate and intensify the city fabric. This section concludes with a list of lessons and characteristics to be carried through to the design of the inclusive housing community.

Chapter 4 - Synthesis and Design - assembles lessons from previous chapters to develop an 'inclusive urban housing typology'. The development applies an urban based city making strategy to respond to Toronto's housing needs while alleviating homelessness. The chapter will describe a selection process for the site and programme based on obstacles faced by current housing responses, and continues to discuss primary design principles.

1.9   Rendering of 265 Richmond, the inclusive housing typology

CHAPTER 2

CHALLENGE OF HOMELESSNESS

The one thing all homeless people have in common is a lack of housing. Whatever other problems they face, adequate, stable, affordable housing is a prerequisite to solving them. Homelessness may not only be a housing problem, but it is always a housing problem; Housing is necessary, although sometimes not sufficient, to solve the problem of homelessness.

Cushing Dolbeare, (leading federal housing policy expert)

1981

1991

2001
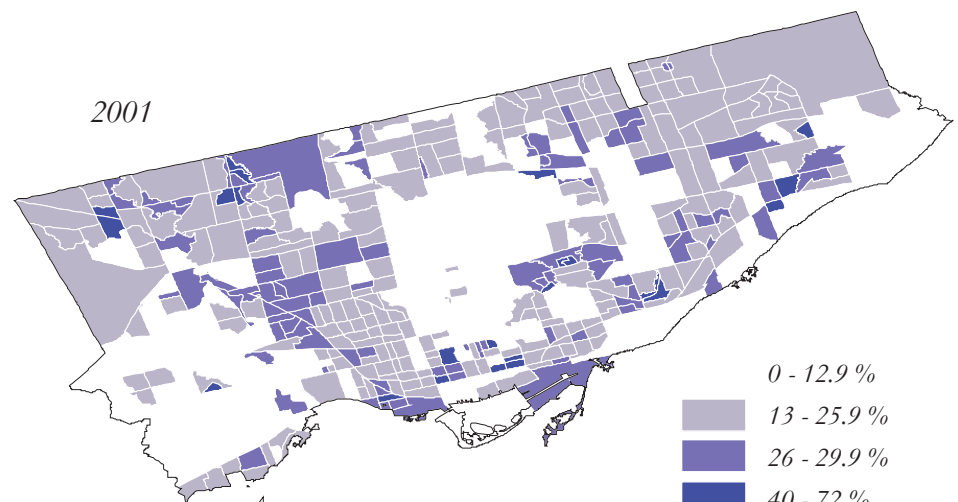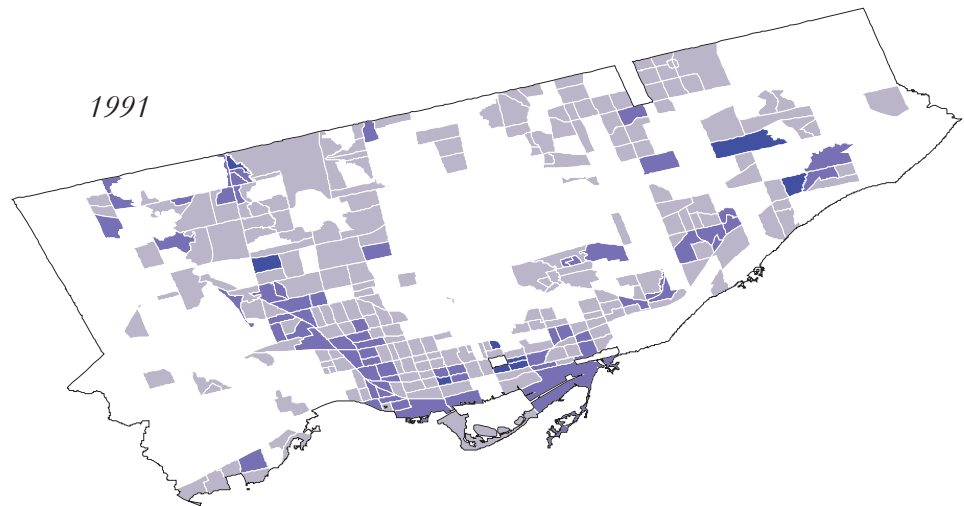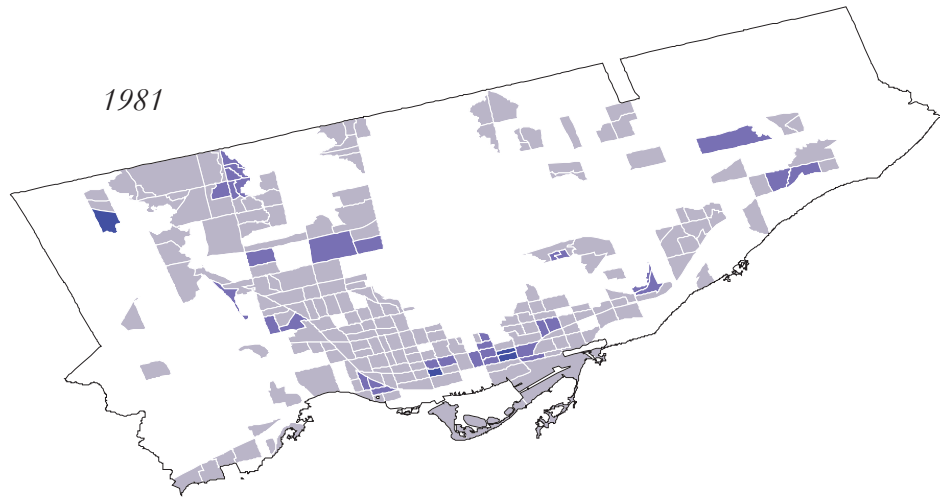
2.1   Family Poverty Rates

(Modified from "Poverty by Postal Code")

This map illustrates the rising levels and concentration of poverty in Toronto neighborhoods.
13 - 25.9 % represents average level of poverty.

There is a drastic increase in the number of higher poverty neighborhoods following the 1980s.

0 - 12.9 %

13 - 25.9 %

26 - 29.9 %

40 - 72 %

1 NORTH

(2001 City of Toronto Boundaries)
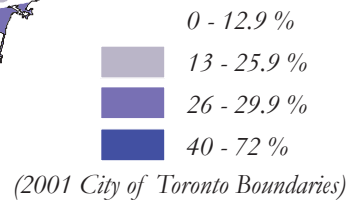
Chapter Overview / Introduction

In the 1980s Canada was praised by the united nations on its progressive housing policies. Yet, during the two prosperous decades that followed, the policies which were the subject of praise were gradually dismantled.[1] Now, as an affordable housing crisis is reaching a tipping point, homelessness has become an increasingly visible phenomenon and is threatening to become a characterizing feature of our cities.

It is becoming apparent when looking at the economic success in Canada and more specifically Toronto, that some groups are being left behind. Increasing inner city real estate values are contrasted with rising levels of poverty[2]. In the 20 years between 1981 and 2001 Toronto experienced a considerable increase in high poverty neighborhoods - from a total of 30 neighborhoods experiencing higher than average poverty in 1981, to 120 by 2001 [Fig. 2.1].[3]

This chapter will describe how homelessness, in Canada, progressed from an undefined issue during mid-twentieth century, to a national crisis by the end of the century. It will highlight the effects of federal policies on the intensification of homelessness. A clear and current definition of homelessness will be developed, including an overview of the demographics involved. Later, structural and individual causes of homelessness are discussed to identify opportunities for improvement. These discussions are critical to understanding the issues and providing the context for an architectural intervention. The chapter will then conclude with a list of suggestions and approaches toward a creative solutions based on the research gathered.

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1   (D. Hulchanski 2009) p. 3-4
2   (Wellesley Institute 2010) p. 1-7
3   (United Way of Greater Toronto 2004) p. 21

HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA

Development of Homelessness

A walk through any of the urban centres in Canada will undoubtedly reveal homeless individuals finding shelter in either the streets or welfare institutions. Yet, this group defines only a small fraction of the total number of people facing homelessness. The term working homeless is becoming more common. Rising costs of housing in Toronto have resulted in one third of the population spending more than 30% of their income on shelter.[1] In contrast to the image of the panhandler, the fastest growing demographics of the homeless population are youths and single parent families.[2]

2.2 The downtown experience is commonly juxtaposed with scenes of homelessness

Homelessness has not always been an issue in Canada. Although the word homeless has been in the Canadian vocabulary since the turn of the century, homelessness, a description of the social phenomenon relating to the loss of housing, entered the common vocabulary only within the last three decades.[3] Historically, it has taken cooperation and leadership from higher levels of government to assist the poor in maintaining adequate housing. The development of homelessness in Canada can be attributed to many factors, but a significant catalyst has been withdrawal of the federal and provincial government's interest in providing support for social housing.[4]

In the early 19th century, housing was not a public-sector responsibility. In Toronto, shelter for the poor consisted of charitable institutions, poorhouses, or skid row apartments. The municipality's role in dealing with housing problems of the day was secondary to private charities. Homeless men were at this point considered transient men lacking the social connections of a family home who had access to shelter, albeit low standard.[5]

Following the First World War, increasing urbanization and population growth led to a greater role by the municipality in response to workers' need for housing. The Toronto Housing Commission was established in 1920 and produced 236 homes prior to its dismantlement less than a decade later. The aftermath of the Great Depression led to deplorable housing conditions in many of Toronto's neighbourhoods. In 1935, as a reaction to a report published a year earlier, detailing the dismal conditions of Toronto's slums and their negative effects, the federal government of Canada accepted its role in financing housing. Following the recovery of the post war era in the 1940s, the government role became better defined and social housing projects were a key point of the federal agenda, as exemplified by the 1944 National Housing Act.

1   (TD Economics 2003) p. 6
2   (Golden 1999) p. 19
3   (Hulchanski, et al. 2009) p. 1-2
4   (Golden 1999) p. 20-21
5   (Hulchanski, et al. 2009) p. 2

Lester Pearson called for all Canadians to be housed in decent dwellings in a 1965 speech that later echoed in amendments to the National Housing Act. The amendments eventually led to the development 20,000 social housing projects per year between 1974 and 1977. The consistent production of affordable housing meant that Canadians with even the most meager resources had access adequate and affordable shelter. Had Canada's proactive role in housing continued through the following decades, homelessness would not constitute the problem it does today.[6]

In 1981, the United Nations sought to bring attention to the millions of unhoused individuals in the less developed countries of the world. In its 1981 resolution, the United Nations announced 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH). The resolution was intended to focus on developing countries and made no mention of industrialized nations such as Canada. By 1987, however, the interest of the IYSH had shifted to recognize the growing number of individuals losing their housing in wealthy countries as well. The conferences held in Canada focused on the local growth of homelessness, rather than those ones in the developing regions.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF SHELTER
FOR THE HOMELESS

2.3   1986 Stamp Commemorating the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless

By this point, the definition of the homeless had shifted from those lacking a support network to the literally homeless - those sleeping in the rough, places inadequate for habitation and in welfare institutions - and those at imminent risk of losing their housing with no alternative available.[7] The new definition arose in response to a newly developing phenomenon that was occurring in Canada. Prior to the 1980s, the focus of the government was to rehouse those individuals and families living in substandard conditions and rough neighborhoods of low standard workers housing known as Skid Row. But policy changes in the 1980s which drastically reduced federal funding for social housing projects led to the new trend of de-housing. This point was made clear by the Canadian Association of Housing and Renewal officials in the in the 1988 report on the proceedings of the IYSH:

> A significant component of the homeless problem is that housing has not been a high priority of government at any level... In all regions of the country, the demand for housing that is adequate and affordable to low-income persons and the willingness of local organizations ready to build greatly exceed the availability of government funds to carry out effective social housing programs.[8]

Regrettably, the federal government's attitude of the late 1980s and 1990s led to an approach contradictory to the findings. Canada's booming economy resulted in greater trust in the private market. The dismal housing conditions of the 1930s and 40s which

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6   (D. Hulchanski 2009) p. 3-4
7   ibid p. 2
8   (Canadian Association of Housing Renewal 1988)

made housing a priority for voters and therefore the government at all levels, were a distant and fading memory. Early social housing and revitalization projects like that of Regent Park had succeeded in providing affordable housing, but the projects lacked social diversity and led to the formation of isolated low income ghettos. The social housing projects had left the public disheartened, and the active economy caused voters to value tax cuts above housing. The findings from the 1987 agenda were ignored and the role of the federal government in social policy was gradually cut further.

Following the common economic aphorism that "a rising tide will lift all boats" led policy makers to introduce new tax cuts that reduced resources available for social spending. Matters of social policy were left to be resolved by the mechanisms of the private market.[9] Only six years after the international year of homelessness in Canada all federal spending on social housing was eliminated, cutting new developments from their peak of 20,000 per year between 1974-77 to slightly over 1,000 in the mid 1990s. By 1996, the federal government transferred all responsibility for existing social housing projects to provincial governments which lack the resources and tools available to the federal government. The responsibilities were further downloaded to municipalities, effectively reverting to the unsatisfactory conditions fifty years earlier.

* * * *

When it comes to policy, there is a need for a greater role from all levels of government, especially the federal government in providing funding to relieve poverty and homelessness. The incongruity between the need for adequate affordable housing and cities' ability meet that need can be seen as a failure in city making.

As the federal government's role in providing housing is re-evaluated, and funding partnerships with provinces and territories, municipalities, and non-profit organizations have a chance of revival, there is an urgent need to identify an effective approach to alleviate homelessness. In the past, projects such as old Regent Park and other concentrated affordable housing projects have produced undesirable results, tightening the purse strings of parliament. Shelters have been the topic of debate, representing band-aid solutions which use excessive tax revenue to deal with the impact of growing homelessness without presenting a long term solution. To count on the continued support of the general population, the effects of government spending must be shown to be positive and measurable, and must assist a larger percentage of the voting population.[10] Therefore, new approaches to housing must go beyond a reactionary response to efforts that provide adequate affordable housing while improving the health and efficiency of the our cities as a whole.

The role of the architect is complex. One aspect of the architect's role concerns balancing issues of site conditions, cultural context, policy restrictions, technologies, and economic constraints. Another aspect concerns the architects abilities in place making. Architects can contribute their city making expertise, and work within the existing policy framework to meet the diverse needs of the city, while providing an effective integrated response to homelessness.

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9   (Layton, 2008) p. 54
10   (Hulchansky 2011)

Following fifty years of service, the regent park development is demolished, making room for a new approach to Toronto's housing needs. Although the development undoubtedly assisted less advantaged Torontonians and provided them an affordable alternative to homelessness, the social and physical segregation of the site resulted in an undesirable and stigmatized neighbourhood that betrayed the purpose for which it was originally built - to provide the less advantaged with the stability and opportunity.

Policy and Homelessness Timeline

1910-1930

Skid row communities form in large sections of metropolitan areas to accommodate in coming labourers and low income demographics

1920-1930

The Great Depression leads to increased governments role in quality of life and social programs

1946

Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) formed to deal with general housing shortage and the influx of housing required for veterans returning from war

Canadian Housing Act introduced in 1944, unifying all housing legislation and giving the federal government a leading role in housing programs

1950

Plans to replace skid row developments with adequate housing come to fruition. CMHC approves urban renewal projects for federal funding.

1960

City of Toronto Report on Homeless and Transient Men defines homeless as transient workers who lack the support network of family implied by a traditional home.

1960s-1970s

Studies show a majority of mentally ill patients can be healthy, productive members of society when provided with care.
A significant portion of the mentally ill fail to be integrated into communities due to lack of support.

1965

Lester Pearson makes speech calling for decent housing for all Canadian citizens. "Insure that [no homes] will be hovels"

Legislation allowing the construction of condominium apartments

1973

Following an amendment to the national housing act, 20,000 social housing units are built per following year for 3 years

1977

Toronto's "Report on Skid Row" outlines the decline of the availability of rooming houses and flop houses for the low income demographic

Gradual increase in the federal government's role in social matters and housing

Minister of Urban Affairs outlines the governments obligation to assure the basic needs of shelter are met.

1981

United Nations focuses attention on homelessness in developing countries. 1987 announced as international year of homelessness.

1987

International year of homelessness prompts conferences that focus on poverty and homelessness in Canada

The term homelessness enters the common vocabulary

Canada receives recognition from United Nations for progressive housing policy

1980s-2000

Placing more trust on the market economy, the government gradually cuts spending in social sector, reducing the role of federal government in quality of life and social programming

1993

Federal government cuts all funding for new social housing projects

1996

Federal government transfers responsibility for existing social housing to provinces which lack the resources and tools of the federal government

Mayors from metropolitan areas meet to discuss housing and poverty - housing concerns declared a national disaster

1998

Toronto disaster relief committee declares homelessness a national disaster, calling for relief funds to be used for combating the immediate problem of homelessness.

The United Nations refers to Canada's record on housing and social issues a national emergency and provides a list of recommendations

2009

Bill C-304 is introduced into the House of Commons to involve the federal government in housing and begin the process of rebuilding policies to provide adequate, affordable housing to Canadians

Present

2.5   Housing Cost and Federal Investment in Housing Versus Time

Federal Housing Investments as % of GDP

1.20 %
1.10 %
1.00 %
0.90 %
0.80 %
0.70 %
0.60 %
0.50 %

Canadian Average House Price

$ 400,000
$ 350,000
$ 300,000
$ 250,000
$ 200,000
$ 150,000
$ 100,000
$ 50,000

1988 1990 1992 1994 1996 1998 2000 2002 2004 2006 2008 2010

A Practical Definition

The definition of the word 'homeless' has shifted and evolved significantly throughout the past century. In the 1960s, as part of Toronto's first report on transient and homeless men, a homeless individual was described as "one with little or no tie with a family group and who [is] thus without the economic or social support a family home normally provides."[11] At that time, the base of the word referenced home as a psychological space, and therefore, homeless men were generally transient workers or beggars who had access to low quality shelter but were lacking a support network. Far from the context of the 1960s, the influx in the loss of housing due to affordability issues as well as increasing rates of precarious housing has changed the meaning of the word.[12]

Definitions can play a significant role in public perception as well as government policies.[13] Following the discussions of the international year of homelessness, a report was commissioned by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to assess the extent of the challenge at hand. The resulting 1987 Fallis report addressed the significance of defining the homeless population by bringing attention to the common and unreasonably narrow definition of a homeless person as an individual "lacking a roof over one's head". The report continued to identify the pitfall of describing the homeless as "stereotypical street person[s]" living on the street by choice.[14] Such oversimplified and uninformed perspectives can have large effects on policy. It was no doubt partly due to the pervasiveness of this narrow, yet common, point view that in the year following the report, the government of Canada dismantled housing policies that it had accumulated over years.[15]

In acknowledgement of the significance of a practical description of who can be described as homeless, the following section attempts to capture what degree of unstable and inadequate housing denotes a state of homelessness. This information can then be applied to identifying who is at risk, as well as what measures can be taken in response.[16]

Common Pitfalls

There are two major issues outlined in the description provided in the 1990 Fallis report. The first issue relates to the allusion towards a solely individualistic cause for homelessness based on personal choice. This type of definition wrongfully shifts the social obligation solely onto the people experiencing homelessness. The second relates to identifying an appropriate scope for the magnitude of the issue. For example, a definition which limits those enumerated in research to the roofless (those that are living in the rough) will present numbers that can be dwarfed if those individuals living in inadequate shelters, welfare institutions, and the precariously housed are included.[17] Simplistic definitions increase stigmatization, or risk ignoring the issue, whereas overly broad definitions

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11   (Spencer 1960) p. 1
12   (Hulchanski, et al. 2009) p. 2
13   (Gaetz 2004) p. 9
14   (Fallis and Murray 1987) p. 12
15   (Layton 2008) p. 20
16   (Gaetz 2004) p. 9
17   (Burt 1996) p. 16

combine groups facing a different set of challenges obscuring the problem and making the development of solutions a more difficult task.[18] A sensible approach must therefore be taken in order to define an appropriate scope.

Components of Homelessness

A rational approach to defining homelessness was developed in 1987 through the United Nations report, *Homelessness: A Proposal for a Global Definition and Classification*. In this proposal, two subcategories of homelessness are introduced that form the basis of the most recent and generally accepted definitions. The overarching category of homelessness is divided into two categories: the Literally Homeless, and Those at Imminent Risk [Fig. 2.6].[19] [20]
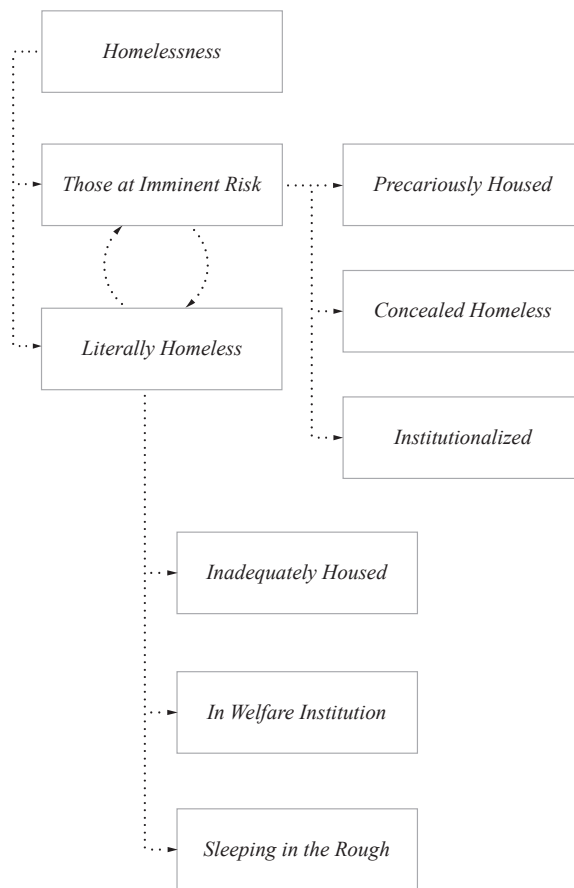
This definition of homelessness covers the extreme end of a continuum of housing, at the base of which, is the total absence of shelter. The literally homeless constitute the core group who are included in most research documents. They consist of those residing in inadequate or unsafe households, places not meant for human habitation, in welfare institutions, or sleeping in the rough. There is a constant mobility between those at imminent risk and the literally homeless.[21]

2.6   The United Nations Components of Homelessness

18   (Layton 2008) p. 28
19   (Burt 1996) p. 17-19
20   (Burt, Aaron, and Lee 2001) 23-25

Those people at imminent risk are a group that is difficult to enumerate.[22] Large portions of this group are often excluded from surveys due to the impracticality of finding accurate figures relating to their situation. This group includes the precariously housed, families or individuals affording an unsustainable amount of their income on housing, the concealed homeless who have found temporary accommodation with friends, family or others, and institutionalized individuals without accommodations available upon their release.

The City of Toronto follows a similar categorized strategy to define homelessness, modified into three categories [Fig. 2.7]:

Homefulness

An alternative and more humane method to categorization is a definition that identifies what the homeless are lacking, therefore identifying the qualities that must be restored to people who are homeless. An adequate home is the base for human relationships and is vital for an individual to play a productive role in the social and cultural life of a community.[23] A helpful concept to determine the definition of homelessness and to ide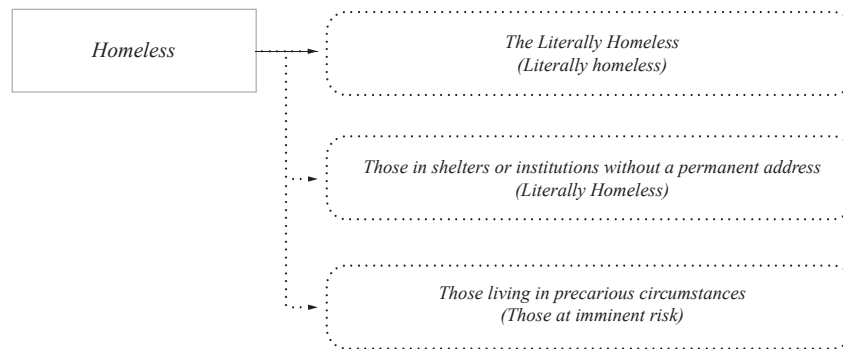ntify the qualities that a homeless individual is deprived of is the notion of 'homefulness'.[24] This concept was developed by psychologist Jerome Tognoli, who describes the six aspects of home. These aspects represent the intangible qualities that a house provides, many of which must be provided by any form of architectural or other response to homelessness, in order to return the affected individuals to normality, and an active role in the community.

> *Certainty, rootedness, place attachments* - Home is seen as rootedness and the central place for human existence. It is a pivotal place around which human activity revolves, yet it is a place from which to reach out and to which to return. Home is seen as a place wherein one can achieve a balance among privacy, territoriality, and personal space, elements that are essential in achieving some sense of belonging and identification and some degree of personalization.

> *Continuity, unity, order* - Home can represent the continuity of life from one generation to the next. It gives a person context through which to comprehend a more complete and complex sense of self. Home can have an almost sacred quality that symbolizes the unity of the family even in the face of non-ordered domestic lives.

2.7 City of Toronto Components of Homelessness

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22   (Burt 1996) p. 17-19
23   (Springer 2000) p. 475 or p. 1 of section
24   (Fallis and Murray 1987) p. 17

Privacy, refuge and ownership - Home is a place where one feels comfortable and at ease, which feels familiar and warm, and which one loves. it can serve as retreat from the more public world of work. It is a place for restoration, re-energizing, and regeneration.

Self-identity, gender difference - Home can be a source of personalization, individualism, identification as belonging, feeling in control, feeling habituated or adapted, and feeling that one has the freedom to do as one chooses. Home has also been viewed as a concept of self. For most (but not all) women, home is an especially powerful source of self identity.

Home as a context of social and family relationships - Home is the place where many of life's most intense, highly personal and intimate interactions occur. It is the locus of much social intercourse, particularly with relatives.

Home as a socio-cultural context - Home and the house itself are both an expression of the residents' culture and determinant of it. Thus, it reinforces inherited values at the same time that it serves as a medium for gradual adaptive change.[25]

Although each of the qualities can easily be understood as a vital necessity, homelessness is the total absence of all six. This is a significant point when attempting to address homelessness that brings institutional approaches, such as emergency shelters, into question. Homelessness is a phenomena that is an unavoidable part of our modern society, and must be addressed in a sympathetic manner. The understanding of homefulness brings considerations of architectural quality and place making into greater significance than common reactionary responses to the challenge. Although short term shelters, and dense and/or poor quality alternative housing projects can be perceived as a safer alternative to living in the rough, they fail to provide the rootedness and stability to assist their residents toward a return to normality. The most urgent task in preventing the becomes restoring the qualitative aspects of home.

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[25]   Quoting: (Fallis and Murray 1990) p 17-18 from (Tognoli 1987) p. 657-65

Who are the Homeless

The stereotypical depiction of the homeless as middle-aged alcoholic men is misleading and detrimental to any effort to reduce homelessness. A more accurate portrayal presents a widely diverse group including families, single parents, the elderly, the working poor, and newly arrived immigrants.[26] Single adult males represent a shrinking share of the total homeless population in Toronto as the youth and family demographics grow much faster in comparison.[27]

The growing income gap between the rich and the poor in Toronto, coupled with the rising costs of housing are major contributors to the diversification of the homeless population [Fig. 2.9]. Jobs in manufacturing no longer produce wages that allow a single income to support a family.[28] With a dwindling supply of rental units, and a minuscule and rapidly degrading stock of affordable housing (families on waiting lists can expect waits of 17 years for affordable housing), a large percentage of Toronto's population is dedicating unsustainable levels of income to maintaining housing [Fig. 2.10].[29] This portion of the population is one or two pay checks away from homelessness.

Low Income   Middle Income   Upper Income

Owners in 2000	*Renters in 2000*
29.1%	42.2%
30% or more spent on shelter	*30% or more spent on shelter*
12.3%	20.0%
50% or more spent on shelter	*50% or more spent on shelter*
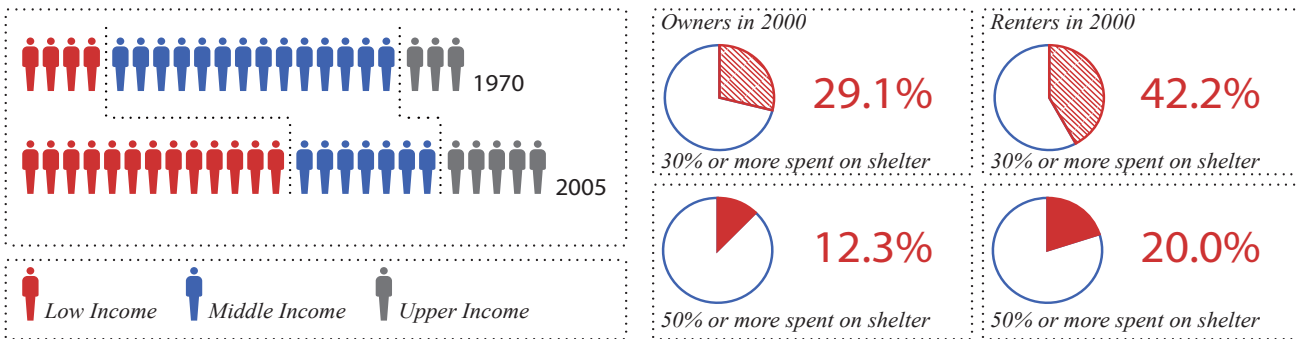
Demographics:

The homeless population is an increasingly diverse group that involves men, women, families and youths. The following section briefly describes some of the major demographics that are identified in reports regarding homelessness:

Single men have constituted the largest fraction of the homeless population in the past, but this trend is quickly changing as more families and youth find themselves homeless. Most shelter systems have tended to isolate demographics of the homeless population, but this approach leads to marginalization. The isolated method has led to the caricaturized version of homeless men, characterized by alcohol abuse and inability to work. Recently, research has shown that these generalizations are not consistent with reality. Even though alcohol and drug abuse are more prevalent in homeless men than the domiciled population, this increased statistic is often the result of homelessness rather than the cause.[30] The simple reality is that economic pressure plays the most significant role in the growth of the homeless population.

2.8 (Left) Shrinking Middle Class, and Increasing Income Gap

2.9 (Right) Percentage of Population in housing need

26   (Golden 1999) p. 19
27   (Fallis and Murray 1987) p. 36-40
28   (Crow 2009)
29   (Hulchanski 2007) p. 5
30   (Burt, Aaron, and Lee 2001)

The rising rates of homelessness for single women and youths are most often attributed to a diverse set of causes such as family breakdown, economic pressure, violence or behavioural problems. More single women are finding themselves homeless due to increased safety problems and difficulty finding employment. On the other hand, the greatest attributor to youth homelessness is the lack of access to information regarding assistance programs and services already in place, or a lack of basic life skills. The main issues faced by this group reflect the absence of a strong and healthy community to provide support or remove safety concerns.

Families represent the greatest increase in the demographics admitted to the Toronto shelter system in recent years, marking a 39 % increase between 2006 and 2009. The increase can be attributed to many factors such as an influx of immigrants, or changes to policy which make it easier for landlords to evict tenants. But the most obvious attributor is the lack of appropriate housing to meet families' needs.

Those with mental disabilities are often isolated in statistics regarding homelessness due to the over representation of those experiencing various degrees of mental problems. The over representation can be attributed to two major factors; firstly, temporary periods of depression are often caused by the stress and anxiety of homelessness, which accounts for the prevalence of mild mental disorders. Secondly, deinstitutionalization trends of the 1960s coupled with a lack of sufficient community support has also attributed to the issue. Although mental illness may be a contributor to homelessness it is not a determinant. In a 1998 study lead by a leading researcher on homelessness and mental illness, only 4% of the homeless population sampled cited mental health issues as a cause of homelessness, in contrast to 36 % who cited joblessness and an inadequate income.

Until recently, the shelter systems of large metropolitan areas like Toronto have chosen to deal with each demographic through transitional housing and emergency shelters that are targeted. But the tendency to systematize the care system promotes generalizations and cannot address the diversity within each group. This tendency can be identified as a failure in city making, and leads to marginalization and stigmatization. Factors such as safety, lack of support, employment, and access to information have a large effect on homelessness and are more easily addressed through integrated holistic measures such as community strengthening rather than reactionary efforts that isolate and marginalize.

Single Men 42%

Families 27.5%

Youth 12.5%

Single Women 18%
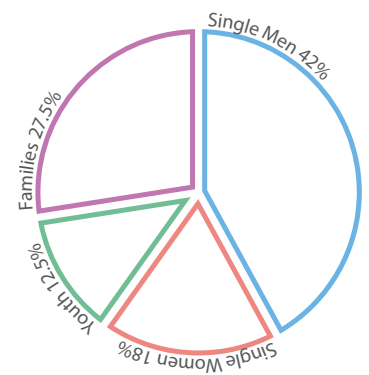
2.11   *Key Homeless Demographics*

2.10   *Changing Homelessness*

A Toronto family moves into a shelter in the outskirts of the city after job cuts in manufacturing caused the main provider to lose his source of income. The family's remaining income is not enough to secure permanent housing.

*A screen clipping from the documentary "Finding Home"*

Pathways Into Homelessness

Contributing Factors

Understanding the factors that lead to homelessness is difficult due to the heterogeneity of the involved population. Research regarding these factors generally focuses on interconnections between broad structural circumstances outside of any one person's control, and individual circumstances based on personal history and characteristics.[31]

This section describes the different ways that people become homeless. There are varying views of how one ends up in the condition of homelessness; when the focus of Canadians was first brought to the issue, it was very easy to blame the homeless population for their problems. Public exposure to troubled individuals among the homeless in the 1980s created a perception that personal limitations were the major reason, if not sole cause of homelessness. The availability of information and education on the topic has now made it apparent that the key contributors to homelessness are often structural causes outside of the control of the individual.

In most cases, some combination of structural causes and personal limitations act together, leading to homelessness.[32] Those with the least access to resources are the first to lose their ability to hold secure housing when structural issues push them over the edge. Eventually, as structural issues worsen, the competition for maintaining secure housing also worsen and those with more subtle disadvantages lose their homes. Structural causes refer to broader economic conditions, as well as the organization of society's resources [Fig. 2-12].
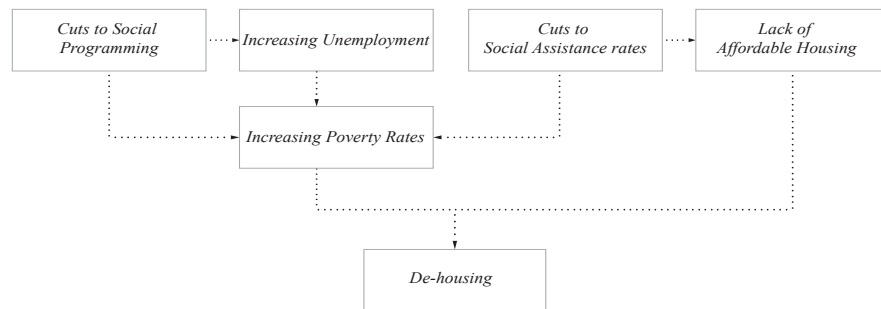
Structural Factors

The main structural issue that is leading to increased homelessness in North America in general is the widening gap between low cost housing and the income generating ability of the lower class. Other issues include a reduction in the availability of affordable rental housing and social housing projects coupled with a growing pool of vulnerable poor. Decreases in low income housing are not always a cause for concern and would be acceptable in situations where the number of people falling below the poverty level are shrinking. However, this is not the current context, and a significant portion of the population is spending more than 30% of their income on housing.[33]

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31   (Gaetz 2004) p. 11
32   (Burt, Aaron, and Lee 2001) 5-11
33   (Wellesley Institute 2010) p. 41

The increasing scarcity of affordable housing is a result of cuts to social spending by the federal government. Whereas social housing projects are common in European countries - constituting 35% of the total housing stock in the Netherlands- the Canadian government has not been able to firmly shoulder the responsibility for housing in our region.[34] Toronto's rental market also represents a dwindling resource [Fig. 2-13]. Private market builders can generate significantly more profit faster by building condominium rather than rental units. Without sufficient incentives for builders to produce rental units, new rental projects starts have fallen drastically from their levels in 1970. Similarly to a game of musical chairs, as the available stock of affordable housing falls in comparison to those in need, more and more people face homelessness.
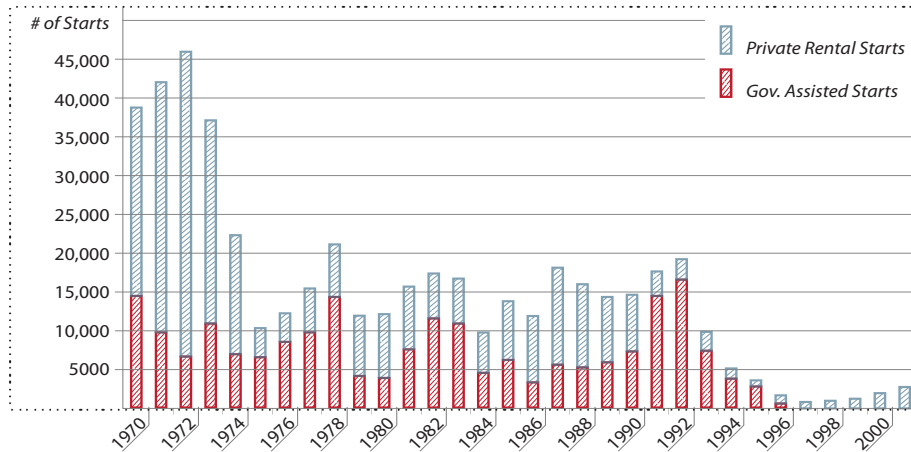
Individual Factors

Individual causes can also contribute to homelessness but they are not enough to cause homelessness without a structural context. The extent by which disabilities, lack of resources or disruptive habits help precipitate homelessness, or extend the duration of a person's homelessness by making it more difficult to secure replacement housing is case dependant. No overarching generalizations can be justly made.[35] Nonetheless drug abuse and mental disability are more prevalent in homeless than domiciled adults - although alcohol abuse and other disruptive habits are in many cases the result, rather than the cause of homelessness. Individual causes prevail more often in single adult homeless males rather than families or other demographics.

Most often, the causes of homelessness are a combination of personal shortcomings and structural causes, though either can trigger homelessness and they are often interrelated. American and Canadian studies after major rises in shelter applications have concluded that homelessness is the result of unemployment rather than the other way around, yet public perception that assumes individual responsibility is difficult to challenge.[36] Nevertheless, effective responses must address both areas of vulnerability. Rehabilitative and economic responses must be paired for any intervention to be successful. Homelessness must be viewed as a warning sign for broader challenges in the distribution of society's resources that can spread to wider groups of the population if not properly addressed.[37]

2.13   Private and Government Funded Rental Starts in Ontario

34   (Golden, 1999)
35   (Gaetz 2004) 31-33
36   (Hopper 1990) 13-29
37   (Koegel, Burnam and Baumohl 1996) p. 25-33

ANALYSIS: OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITY

Housing Continuum

Based on an analysis of the history and causes of homelessness, it is clear that one of the major and central obstacles attributing to the issue is a large gap in the housing continuum. The continuum ranges from a state of full home ownership to literal homelessness or sleeping in the rough. Current private market options are limited and fail to meet the needs of the lowest earning part of the population. The gaps in the market are being met with non-market options such as publicly funded social housing, and co-operatives, but this is not enough. Waiting lists for affordable housing in Toronto average at about five years and can stretch for as long as seven. The resulting overflow leads to many costly temporary and emergency measures which act to accommodate homelessness rather than

Homefulness						Homelessness
Owner Occupation	*Private Rental/ Mobile Home*	*Subletting a Room*	*Rooming House/ Residential Hotel*	*Temporary Doubling Up*	*Sleeping Rough*	
Housing Market Options					*Non-Market Options*	
Co-op Housing	*Social Housing*	*Supportive/ Group Housing*	*Transitional Housing*	*Emergency Shelter*		

2.14   The Housing Continuum

resolving the issue. Shelters are intended to provide temporary assistance and access to services in order to transition their residents into a state of normalcy, but without fostering more diverse communities that can support a growing stock of affordable housing, families are left to cycle between long stays in shelters and unsustainable housing options. (30% of families who become homeless stay in the shelter system for three months to one year, with an additional 35% of shelter users remaining homeless for longer).[38]

Stigmatization

Toronto Waiting List

Seniors:	*18,741*
Average wait:	*61.3 months*
Non-Senior Single:	*26,572*
Average wait:	*61.4 months*
Families:	*21,147*
Average wait:	*76.8 months*

2.15   Waiting List

The second major obstacle in resolving homelessness is the stigmatization of the affected population. Stereotypical misrepresentations and social generalizations are the result of limited exposure and education regarding the alienated group.[39] This obstacle is an unfortunate and unintended result of reactionary architectural and planning responses to homelessness. Social housing projects act similarly to shelters and transitional housing in the way that they separate and isolate the homeless and low income populations of the city into concentrated groups. Attributing to this obstacle is the fact that the lack of diversity - both social and programmatic - in isolated affordable housing projects often results in undesirable neighbourhoods. This phenomena leads to NIMBYism - the opposition of neighbourhood residents against affordable housing due to the fear that a negative physical and social change will reduce their socio-economic status - which intern fuels greater stigmatization. This is a phenomena that can only be addressed by switching from reactionary responses to an integrated city making approach to housing.

Overcoming the social stigma of homelessness provides a series of opportunities to increase positive public exposure to this ousted group and to create more desirable archi-

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38   (Toronto Shelter Support and Housing Administration 2009)
39   (Lee, Farrell, and Link 2004) p. 40-42

tectural responses. The new responses will in turn improve the general public's perception of affordable housing. Hybrid programming and the concept of the social condenser are architectural tools that can help achieve balanced neighbourhoods that integrate the low income population, rather than isolating them. The long term effects integration will not only increase the opportunities for low income families, but can increase sympathy and empathy from the public, leading to better informed policy decisions. Similarly, hybrid programming can be used to provide greater incentives for local communities to reduce NIMBYism by providing economic and social stimulus for the full spectrum of the local neighbourhood as well as the population in need of housing and social services.

Access to Fundamental Services

As the poorest portion of the urban population loses access to permanent housing they lose the level of stability required to maintain a normal and productive life. Sliding to the lower end of the housing continuum means a gradual reduction of access to essential services relating to health care and social assistance.[40] A permanent address and reliable contact information are essential to gaining employment opportunities. Although providing stable housing is central to effective long term solutions to homelessness, social services and resources can improve the success rate of individuals finding and maintaining permanent housing as well as reaching their productive potential. This notion exemplifies the need to distribute social services with our cities in a manner that promotes equal access. Similar to hybrid programming, accessing established public institutions as resources to reduce homelessness will also provide the positive effects of reducing social stigma by increasing contact between the homeless and general population.
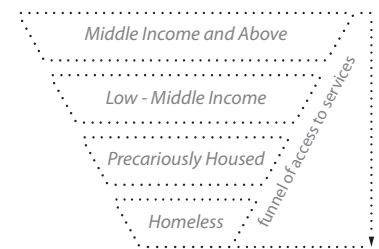
2.16   *Service funnel*

Libraries, community centres, municipal offices, colleges, and universities all provide accessible and socially neutral locations to provide social and drop-in services. Increasing access to fundamental services offers an opportunity to create healthier and more active communities by offering job training, career counselling and other services to the full spectrum of the community. This contrasts with welfare institutions that often promote a negative stigma due to their narrow focus.

Geography of Opportunity Through City Making

The quality of places matter. Homelessness can be viewed as an indicator of the health of our cities, our society, and the accessibility of resources. Research has shown that poverty is not an inherent trait to be passed on from generation to generation.[41] Low income and homeless individuals' self worth and ability to improve their situation is highly dependant on their location and access to opportunities.[42] By focusing attention on a city making approach, fostering a rich mixture in neighbourhoods and celebrating diversity, architects and planners can ensure that low income populations and those with the greatest need for assistance are placed in a positive geography of opportunity. Through this strategy, homelessness can be alleviated, and affected individuals can be assisted in a return to normalcy.

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40   (Raine and Administration 2010)
41   (Rosenbaum, Reynolds and Deluca 2002) 71-82
42   ibid

CHAPTER 3

RESPONSES AND PREVENTION

Shelters historically have been "hybrid institutions," plugging gaps in the formal institutional array of supports, while at the same time serving as dwellings of last resort for usually-working men who have exhausted informal resources of assistance. This double burden has made program design incoherent, barriers to access commonplace, and mystification of shelter functions the rule.

Kim Hopper, Public Shelter as a Hybrid Institution

Emergency Shelter

days weeks months years

- Access to on site social services

- Separate shelters or wards for demographics of the homeless population

- Subsidized through public funds and private donations

Occupants:

Those without the ability to pay for housing. Many occupants have mental or physical health problems.

Accommodations:

Generally organized in dormitory style wards including access to social services

Transitional Shelter

days weeks months years

- Access to on site social services

- Combination of living arrangements

- Subsidized through public funds, private donations, can include rent geared to income

Occupants:

Those without the ability to pay for housing. Many occupants have mental or physical health problems.

Accommodations:

Range from large dormitory style rooms, to units for small groups, and single room occupancies or family apartments

Supportive Housing

days weeks months years

- Access to social services and specific programs for residents, though not always on-site

- Considered permanent housing

- Subsidized through public funds and private donations, can include rent geared to income

Occupants:

Those with some ability to pay for housing, through work related income or subsidies. Many have mental or physical health problems.

Accommodations:

Range from single room occupancies to boarding houses or other shared residences as well as family apartments

Social / Alternative Housing

days weeks months years

- Either created specifically for those with insufficient income or privately developed units used to house those who qualify for rental subsidies

- Subsidized through public funds and private donations. Can be partially financed through tax credits.

Occupants:

Those without the ability to pay for housing. Many occupants have mental or physical health problems.

Accommodations:

Often organized within multi family apartment buildings. Can include other forms of accommodation based on context.

Responses To Homelessness

Introduction

The architectural responses to homelessness range widely from temporary and emergency measures like overnight shelters to long term stable housing projects. Each form of dwelling can be differentiated based on their set of goals and methodology, but all responses can be placed into two general categories: short-term responses dealing with the symptoms of homelessness, and long-term responses based on affordable housing alternatives. Emergency shelters, transitional shelters and other temporary substitutes for housing do little to deal with the structural causes of homelessness. Instead, these measures attempt to connect their residents with essential services to improve their situation and provide a temporary place from which they can move on to more stable homes provided by affordable housing. The limited perspective of this approach misses opportunities to deal with larger issues and produce a positive geography of opportunity, that can have lasting and robust results.

Although short-term projects such as emergency shelters can be argued to be helpful responses to homelessness, and are a better alternative to inaction, these projects are highly reactionary and have significant shortfalls. Similarly, affordable and alternative forms of housing have sever limitations in dealing the full scope of issues relating to homelessness. A lasting and robust approach requires architects to look beyond isolated shelters and to consider the city and organization of resources in the context of larger communities. In contrast to a reactionary responses, homelessness requires an integrated city making approach.

The following section will explore a range of responses to homelessness and precarious housing in order to highlight the benefits and shortfalls of each, starting from temporary responses to symptoms, to long term measures. The range of responses will also start with projects that use a limited architectural language such as an emergency shelter, and will continue to a large scope city making exercise that applies a rich vocabulary of building types and uses. The section will demonstrate that, while each method provides some benefits, the most effective means to resolve homelessness is to approach housing as a city making exercise.

*3.1   (Opposite) Key Typologies of
Existing Responses to Homelessness*
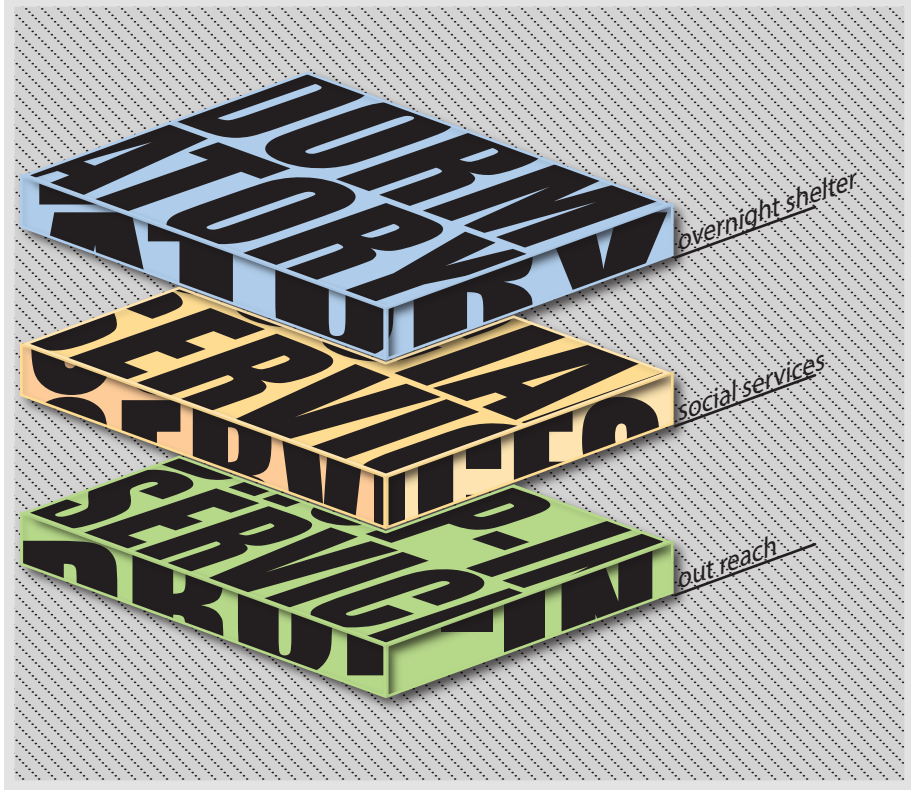
3.2   Standard Programmatic Components of Emergency Shelters
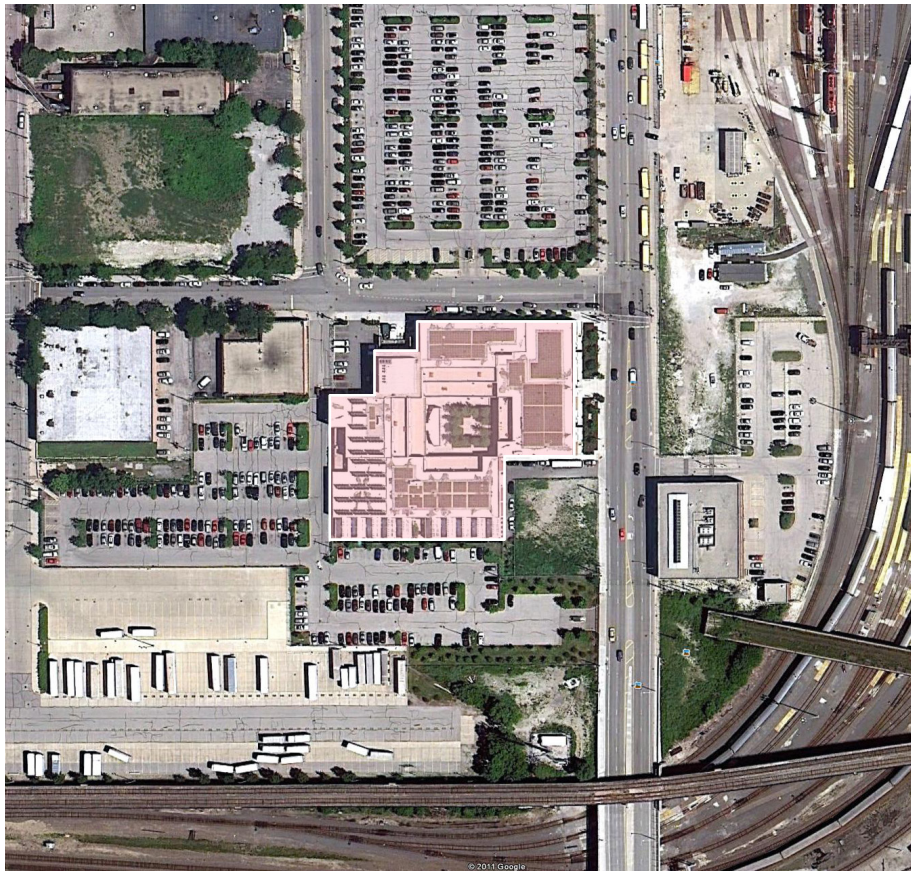
3.3   Aerial Photograph of the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago

Emergency Shelters

Until the end of the 19th century, sheltering the poor in North America was mainly the realm of charitable institutions and the police.[1] For early shelters, design was viewed as an unnecessary luxury even though the diversity of the homeless population suggested a nuanced and varying approach. Early facilities made no distinction between users, and only the bare minimum was provided to them. Basements, warehouses, and armouries were converted and fitted out with boards or beds, while privacy and sanitation were of little concern. Poor conditions in early shelters were more of a deterrent than a response. They offered a last resort and alternative to flophouses or slum housing. Shelters did not provide the stability which their tenants required, rather, they ignored any opportunity to ease a return to permanent housing.

Over a century later, the poor quality design decisions of some shelters still leaves their residents at a disadvantage [Fig. 3.4]. But overall, recent decades have led to a greater level of thought in the role of shelters, using them as a means of connecting a desperate population with resources and services to expedite a return to safe and secure housing. Various models and approaches have been developed. Shelters sub-typologies can be defined by many characteristics, either number of beds, demographic of the users, services provided, or the duration of stay. While charities and non profit organizations have been the leaders in innovation and exploration in shelter responses, research into the costs of homelessness has prompted governments and municipalities to take a greater interest in the design of shelters as well as the affects of the architectural quality.

3.4 The Contra Costa County Adult Shelter is a typical example of some of North America's improvised emergency shelters

Modern emergency shelters focus their attention on providing an alternative to life in the streets for individuals without housing, who are unable to rely on a support network of family or friends.[2] The shelters bring together overnight accommodations with drop-in services, counselling, as well as assistance in finding permanent accommodations [Fig. 3.2]. In this way, emergency shelters are a gateway to essential services like counselling, ID clinics, or financial support programs. The main critique of this typology as a response to what is essentially a housing issue, is that emergency shelters do not add to the existing housing stock. Rather, they act as a warehouse for the homeless, merely accommodating a growing problem. Further criticism arises from the implementation of this typology, which is generally isolated, increases stigmatization, and amplifies social barriers.

Chicago's Pacific Garden Mission (PGM) – is a contemporary example of an emergency shelter that highlights some of the negative aspects of this typology. The lack of architectural identity has produced an institutional building that looks and acts like a warehouse for the homeless. The project is isolated in an industrial landscape, and the density and scale of the project have an oppressive effect that hinders the progress of its residents.

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1   (Davis 2004) p. 24-26
2   (Hulchansky, et al. 2009) p.2-3
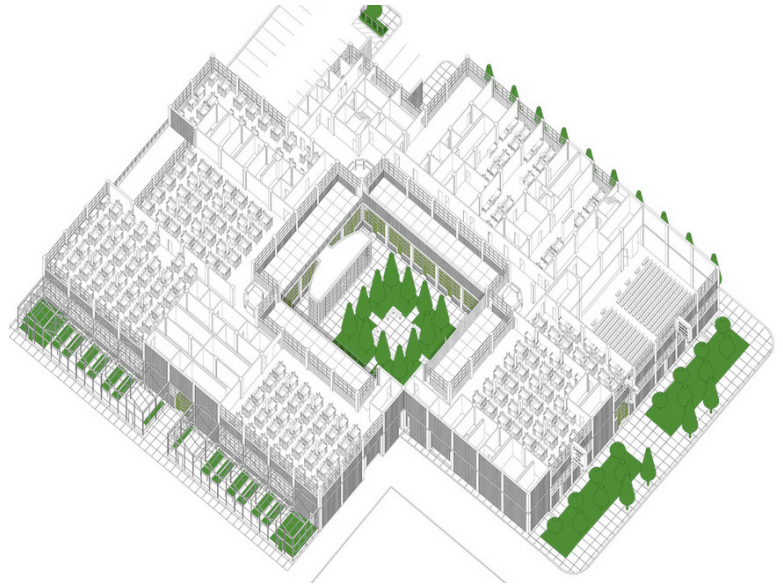
3.5   Exterior Facade of the PGM

3.6   The accommodations afford little privacy to residents

3.7   Photograph of dense and uniform bunk arrangement

The scale of chronic and episodic homeless-ness in Chicago is significant, with at least 21,000 individuals and families homeless or precariously housed during any given day in 2008.[3] The large faith based shelter that attempts to deal with this problem is located in the middle of a void in Chicago's urban fabric. The project is isolated by commuter rail tracks on the south and east corners, a highway on the west, and is stamped down in the middle of a sea of parking lots [Fig. 3.3]. Although the PGM is covered with green roofs and various green features, there is no real attempt to generate spaces for informal interac-tion except for a symmetric courtyard in the cen-tre. Aside from its location, the exterior of the building also projects an unwelcoming character that further isolates the shelter and its users from the city [Fig. 3.5].


The mission serves 1,000 to 1,400 residents in dense dormitories of bunks inspired by submarine style sleeping accommodations [Fig. 3.7, 3.8]. The architect of the project maintains that "[the shelter] is not a home. It's an Institution..." But by maintaining an uncomfortable environment, the project fails to provide the stability that users in order to move on to permanent housing options. Serving such a large population with little regard for the architectural quality of spaces also produces a counterproductive atmosphere. The shelter residents are not afforded any privacy or other qualities of homefulness [Fig. 3.6]. The unique atmosphere that emergency shelters produce is very different than the normality of a home, leaving residents at risk of 'shelterization' – becoming accustomed to using a shelter, and being defined by act.[4] This can also alter normative behavior, making reintegration into more stable forms of housing a greater challenge. The low quality spaces also neglect the guest's individuality, leading to a sense of domination and enclosure, hampering the ability for case workers to form meaningful relationships with their subjects.

3.8   Axonometric view of the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago.

Although the PGM brings together many programme elements such as exercise facili-ties, medical care, salons, and green houses meant to help their guests and allow them to improve their situation, the lack of attention to the quality of these spaces is detrimental. The programming of the shelter focuses only on the individual causes to homelessness rather than structural causes, thereby placing all of the blame for homelessness on those experiencing it. The PGM is therefore ineffective in helping to resolve homelessness due to its poor integration into the city, the low architectural quality of spaces, failure to deal with structural causes of homelessness, as well as its contribution to the marginalization and stigmatization of the homeless population.

3   (Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness 2008)
4   (Hurtubise, Babin and Grimard 2009) section 1.2 p. 14
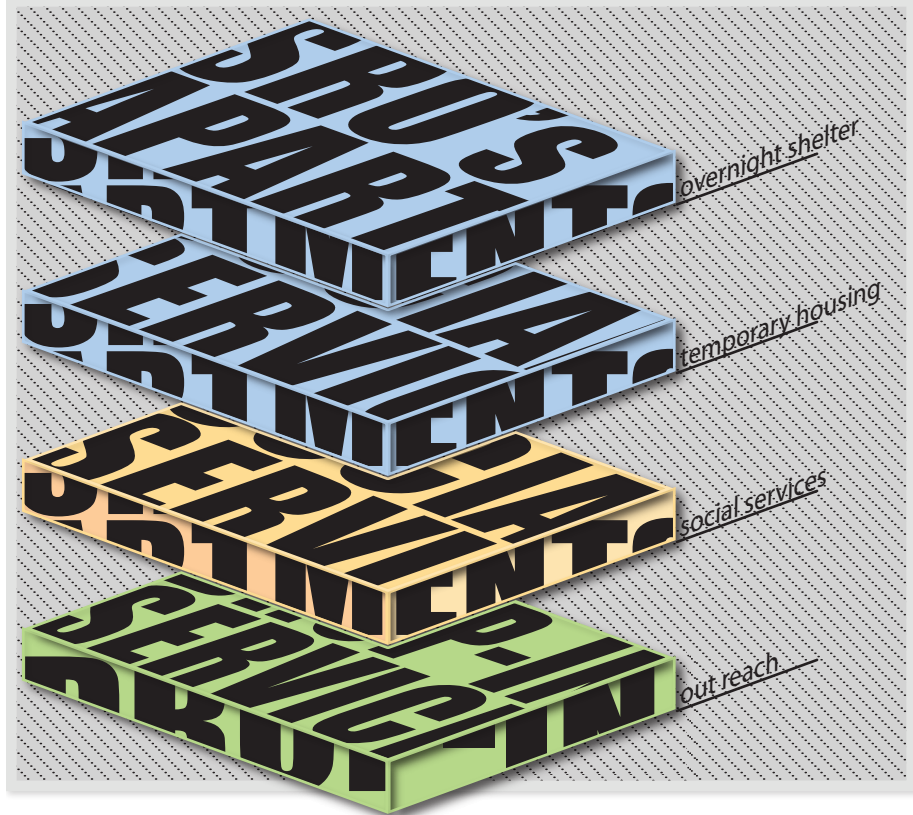
3.9   Standard Programmatic Components of Transitional Shelters

3.10   Aerial Photograph of the Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre. The centre is tightly inserted into the existing fabric.

Transitional / Graduated shelters

The growing realization that individuals and families who experience homelessness need support beyond what's provided by overnight shelters has led to greater reliance on transitional or graduated shelters.[5] This form intermediary housing includes long term residential components and offers greater privacy than emergency shelters. The transitional model is meant to help people exit homelessness, making the design and quality of spaces imperative to their function. The programme of transitional shelters is dependent on the residents, and provides services to help them become stabilized. The greater range of flexibility and the provision of longer term stable housing tend to respond to a mix of structural and individual factors leading to homelessness. Transitional shelters improve on the emergency shelter typology to ease a transition into self sufficiency. Short term stable housing becomes an essential element to help families and individuals avoid homelessness. A critique of this form of response argues that providing permanent housing is that perhaps permanent housing with transitional support is a more well-rounded response. Similarly to emergency shelters, this typology can also increase marginalization by isolating a narrow socio-economic demographic.

The Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre (CONC) – is a transitional shelter located in downtown Toronto that takes advantage of a thoughtful architectural language and process to overcome many of the negative qualities found in the PGM. The shelter is located in an area which allows easy access and offers more opportunities for interaction with the greater community. The project affords more privacy and places for informal interaction. And most importantly, the Neighbourhood Centre is well integrated into its context to reduce stigmatization. The negative aspects of this project are derived from a lack of permanent housing that limits the socio-economic diversity of the occupants.

The CONC is nestled tightly into a mixed use neighbourhood and makes use of a varied facade to create an unimposing aesthetic [Fig. 3.10, 3.11]. The project's inner courtyard

3.11   The varied and warm facade of the CONC

5   (Novac, Brown and Bourbonnais 2009)

3.12   Inner Courtyard of CONC

3.13   (Right) The courtyard is open
to the main facade and creates a link
between the Centre and the street.

3.14   (Left) CONC Courtyard

is also open to the street, which increases permeability, links with the street and creates a zone of interaction between the building and the neighbourhood [Fig. 3.13]. The material pallet of the facade makes use of an existing structure, and reclaimed wood cladding that fits in with the style of local converted lofts and is comparable to the newly built market condos in the area. In this respect, the project is well integrated into the neighbourhood, which reduces the stigmatization normally associated with transitional shelters. Although architecturally, the project has reduced stigmatization, the narrow socio-economic range of its occupants does not completely eliminate the potential marginalization and stigmatization.

The shelter combines 20 one bedroom transitional units with a dormitory style hostel, meeting rooms, and administrative offices for counselling services. The mix of units provides opportunities for a gradual process of moving through stages of housing. The single room occupancy apartments are small enough to place the units within the means of their occupants, while providing privacy and stability that are prerequisites of a return to normality. The small units are complimented with communal areas that create opportunities of socialization and interaction. Hallways leading to the units are sized generously to allow for informal interaction, eliminating the feelings of domination and isolation which tightly portioned emergency shelters produce. Similarly, the language and material pallet of the project read as a residential, rather than an institutional project.

Overall, the negative aspects of transitional shelters such as, isolation of the residents, shelterization and an often unsafe atmosphere are partially overcome through the quality of architecture. This project succeeds through the physical integration into a mixed income neighbourhood in close proximity to public transportation and employment opportunities. The permeability and variety of the facade allows the project to add to the streetscape and increase positive interaction. And finally, efficiently designed units provide stability and privacy while generous communal spaces increase interaction and provide opportunities for personal development. The project's only drawbacks are the lack of permanent housing, and the limited diversity of the occupants.

3.15 View of 60 Richmond, exemplifying common terraces and transparent facade. (The interior of the ground level is under construction at the time of this photograph)

3.16 (Right) The interesting and playful facade projects a positive image to the local community

3.17 (Left) View of Inner Terrace

Affordable Housing

Social and alternative housing projects help to provide a preventative response to home-lessness by placing permanent housing within the means of low income individuals and families. These projects deal with a primary issue of homelessness that is a lack of afford-able housing. Social housing and alternative models have had a long history in Canada dating back to the post war period, during which large developments were constructed. Lessons from the earlier developments of the 1950s and 1960s have led to the advance-ment of the model, overcoming negative qualities that caused some social housing proj-ects to isolate residents and result in ghettos.

Housing projects that effectively deal with homelessness not only provide a home, but focus on tenant's sense of community to foster a safe and productive environment. Incorporation of services such as daycares libraries or community services can provide residents with the resources to improve their situation through meaningful employment or personal development. New affordable housing projects also aim to create a balanced communities by either placing smaller affordable projects into mixed income neighbour-hoods, or by providing a range of units that cater towards a socially and economically diverse group of clients. This method requires looking beyond the individual project and focusing on integration into the greater community.

60 Richmond – is a project that reflects the city of Toronto's shifting attitude towards homelessness. The progressive live/work model replaces an existing homeless shelter that was demolished to make room for the new development. 60 Richmond is com-posed of 85 apartments ranging from one to three bedrooms, a restaurant and training kitchen, communal services, and a series of gardens and terraces - all for hospitality workers employed within walking distance of the building. The programme provides permanent housing, skills training, and community building elements to achieve a well-rounded response to the city's housing needs. The success of 60 Richmond is derived through site integration, activation of the street, the range of affordable units, and the emphasis on shared outdoor spaces to promote a sense of community. The focus paid by the architects to the issue of addressing the streets and improving the quality of place by integrating this building into the city fabric also begins to incorporate a vision for the quality of the city as a whole.

A highlight of this project is the attention paid to the street. The lower floor of buildings has a decisive influence on how it will be perceived by the neighbourhood, and creates an exchange zone between the city and the live/work community [Fig. 3.15, 3.18]. The ground floor makes use of a highly transparent facade, multiple doors, and overhangs to allow activities inside the building to relate to the outside. By including a training kitchen in the design, the project not only integrates skills training and employment opportunities, but also promotes an active realm adjacent to the building. The vibrancy of the project leads to casual surveillance which promotes a greater sense of safety for the community.

The socially sustainable aspect of the project, achieved through the combination com-munal spaces and the range of affordable units, is another focal point. The building

3.18 View of 60 Richmond's elevation. Overhangs, transparency, and multiple openings address the context and blur the line between city and building
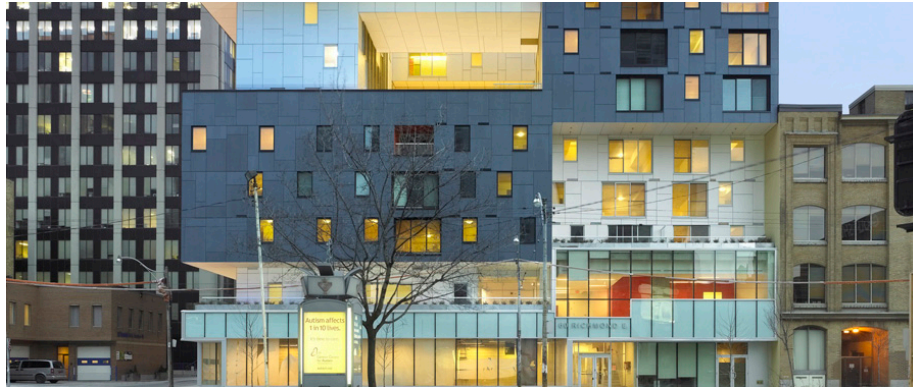
3.19 The existing, uniform, and physically isolated development of Regent Park

3.20 (Left) St. Lawrence Housing Development is blended into the city fabric in contrast to old Regent Park. Buildings are moreover placed to relate to the streetscape

3.21 (Right) St. Lawrence Market is one of the many integrated amenities which are blended into development

3.22 St. Lawrence Branch Library - Integrated into non-profit housing

makes use of projecting and receding volumes to define communal and semi private courtyards and a garden where families and individuals can gather. The garden is tended by residents and produces vegetables to be used by the training kitchen on the ground floor - contributing an income earning opportunity to the project. The various openings in the facade allow light to flood in to terraces, thereby creating a pleasant atmosphere to foster community activities. When combined the range of units, the communal areas can initiate exchange between the diverse group of residents, regardless of family composition or socio-economic standing.

60 Richmond sets a high standard of design and architectural quality regarding alternative housing models. The most significant difference between this project and less successful affordable housing projects is the emphasis on community building, and a focus on integration with the city. Although this project sets a great example to be followed, it can benefit from supportive elements of the earlier mentioned shelter projects as well as short term rentals that can be used to broaden the diversity of its residents.
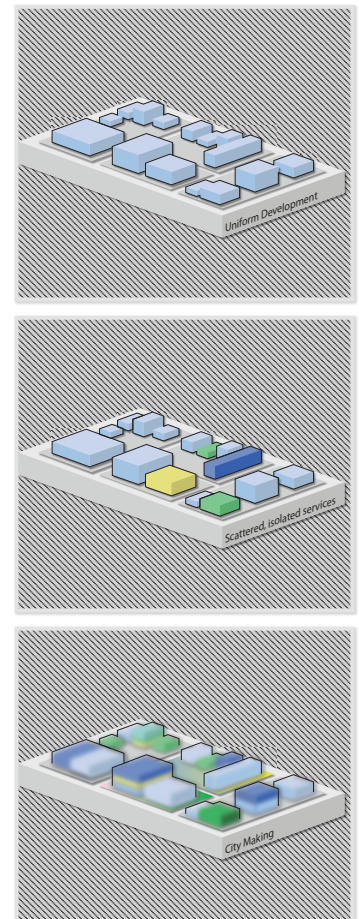
City Making

As mentioned in the concluding remarks of the second chapter of this thesis, homelessness can be considered an indicator of the health of our cities. Integrating our communities, housing and services into the city fabric is the most successful way through which homelessness can be addressed. As some disadvantaged individuals become marginalized, their opportunities become limited, resulting in a negative cycle that continues poverty.

A consistent element in the discussion of the case studies so far has been that of integration. Though the previous projects have addressed disparate aspects of the housing challenge, homelessness is a multidimensional issue and is beyond resolving through simply imposing a shelter or affordable housing project onto a site. By focusing a social group into one area, the group becomes isolated and stigmatized. Rather, by considering housing as a city making exercise – fostering balanced and diverse communities, mixing uses, and providing a continuum of experiences – cities can be made healthier, and social issues like homelessness will not pose the challenge they do today.

Currently, shelters, employment assistance, and alternative forms of housing are self contained, and focus on narrow demographics, creating a stratified system with very little integration. This is reflective of planning policies that isolate function [Fig 3.23a, 3.23b]. The city making approach requires widening our perspective beyond this approach, by integrating and blending services and uses with a focus on creating rich spacial experiences, and an even distribution of resources/opportunities to address challenges such as homelessness while promoting healthier and more diverse communities. This method relies on integration of programme, and a focus on spaces of interaction [Fig. 3.23c].

Mixing income and de-stigmatizing social support are important steps in the city making approach to resolve homelessness. Cities, through their institutions such as libraries, community centres, and public spaces, offer opportunities for inclusion and social support. Similarly, opportunities for continuing education and skills training can also be provided through such public amenities and socially conscious businesses.


3.23   City Making

a. (Top) Large developments with a focused function are isolated by planning practices

b. (Middle) Scattered mixed use blocks provide better alternative but with limited interaction between functions and communities

c. (Bottom) a rich mix of programme, amenities and spaces increases accessibility to diverse groups that interact on a regular basis

3.24   Regent park revitalization plan

The revitalization plan breaks down oversized mega blocks to promote access and better integrate into the existing fabric of the city.

Buildings are placed along side roads and attention is paid to the junction between the street and the facade.
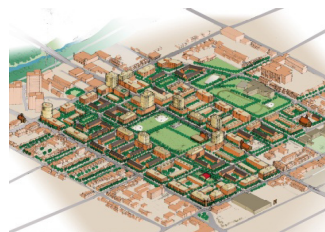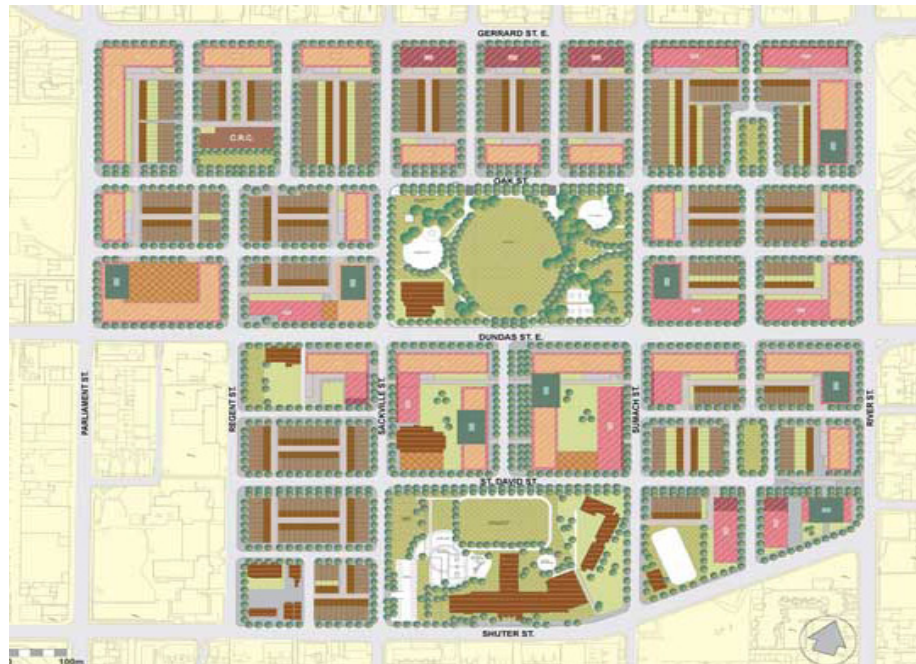
Phase 1 Plan - Diagram by Toronto Community Housing

■ *TCHC Owned Building*

■ *Christian Resource Centre*

■ *Market Building*

■ *Grocery Store*

■ *Parkette*
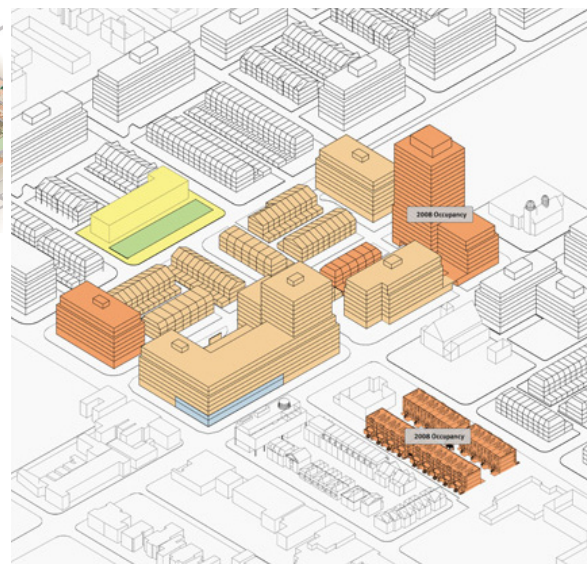
3.25   Phase 1 Plan

The new development blends a mix of units with amenities and services.

3.26   New Found Pride

"We have a bank, supermarket, more access to services and programs... After a month of settling I start inviting my friend over. In my old house I never used to do that because I was ashamed... Residents like me take more pride at living in Regent Park. Other people['s] perception of my neighbourhood change completely."

– Sureya, Regent Park resident

Regent Park Revitalization – is a large scale example of a city making effort that deals with Toronto's housing issues as a whole. The revitalization enriches the decaying site of the original social housing development by introducing a healthier mix of uses, focusing on community and cultural projects, and fostering a greater level of diversity in residents. In this way, the project aims to not only reduce homelessness, but to encourage a healthier city.

The original Regent Park had turned its back to the city, making one of the major challenges of the revitalization the reconciliation of the affordable housing development with the rest of Toronto [Fig. 3.19]. The original design, built in the 1950s, focused on creating large pedestrian zones to reduce car traffic and produce a safer environment for children. This was achieved by building large 'mega blocks' and populating them with housing projects; but contrary to the original intent, the large blocks created ambiguous zones that led to increased criminal activity and drug use.

The Revitalization of regent park reacts to the challenges of its predecessor, and follows a model which more closely resembles the St. Lawrence housing project of the 1970s. The most significant difference between old Regent Park and St. Lawrence is the integration of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood into the city fabric without any boundaries [Fig. 3.20]. The project also combines a mix of commercial and residential, with housing split between market and subsidized units. The focus of St. Lawrence is to add to the overall quality of the city while providing affordable housing alternatives. The St. Lawrence branch library is also one of the only ones in the Toronto Public Library system to be integrated into a non-profit housing project, and provides a means to integrate support services in a socially neutral manner.

Building on these lessons, the new Regent Park aims to improve the development by cutting the mega blocks to size, and focuses attention on creating a lively edge condition between the buildings and the street [Fig. 3.24, 3.25]. The new approach reintegrates the development with the city and creates a safer environment by intensifying public spaces with a mix of programme, parks and cultural spaces that promote 24 hour activity.

Another major change that gives direction to the revitalization is the revision of the tower in the park model. New condo and rental tower developments are now connected directly to the street and help enliven the edge condition between the city and the buildings. The success of the redevelopment with respect to resolving homelessness is rooted in integration of the project into the city, the increased diversity of residents, and the rich mix of building types and uses. These characteristics allow the project to increase accessibility to employment and development opportunities, as well as community amenities.

Cultural and community focused programming such as the Regent Park art centre allow a diverse group of people to interact, who would have otherwise been mutually isolated. This aspect coupled with the overall diversity of the project helps to eliminate stigmatization. The transformation of Regent Park exemplifies the need for affordable housing responses to extend their focus to fostering strong balanced communities.

Summary

The projects reviewed in this chapter exemplify various approaches that architects and designers have taken to reduce or prevent homelessness. The case studies range from a reactionary project that simply accommodates a growing homeless population, to a preventative city making exercise aiming to resolve homelessness while creating a healthier community. A comparison of the case studies reveals a set of criteria required to provide a long term and preventative response to homelessness and precarious housing through the design of an inclusive housing community.

Foster a balanced community

By reconciling the diverse communities of our cities, and increasing meaningful interaction, marginalized groups become exposed to more opportunities. The revitalization of Regent Park has focused on producing a setting that fosters economic and racial diversity, to respond to the negative aspects of the original project. To overcome stigmatization and create a geography of opportunity, any response to homelessness must aim to produce a balanced community. This ensures that less advantaged groups of the population find quality housing and maintain access to the essential resources and services provided by cities.

Provide a wide range of housing options

In order to achieve a balanced community, new projects must consider a wide range of housing options based with varying levels of affordability and length of tenure. While the range of units offered in 60 Richmond addresses a range of family compositions, short term rentals like those provided in transitional shelters can add to the mix. By integrating the various forms of housing, individuals and families facing brief periods of housing uncertainty can also be accommodated. Similarly to the new Regent Park, market rate units can offset the cost of less profitable units, and allow for a greater range of amenities.

Provide a mixture of programme

Providing a mixture of programme can increase safety and vibrancy of projects. This can also be used to provide development and skills training opportunities for residents such as the training kitchen in 60 Richmond, or the community centers of the Regent Park redevelopment. A mix of programme can be used to generate activity during various times of the day, providing eyes on the street and thereby resulting in a safer environment.

Integrate counselling and support services

Counselling and support services are an integral part of reactionary responses to homelessness, but must be integrated into communities along with permanent housing and employment opportunities to be effective. These services can be integrated into community centres, libraries or other public forums that provide services without isolating specific social or economic groups.

Promote vibrant streets

The Ossington Neighbourhood Centre, 60 Richmond, and Regent Park redevelopment all depend on an active relationship with the street to improve the quality of the development, increase safety and foster a healthy community. An active street presence can increase opportunities for interaction as well as improve public perception of affordable or alternative housing developments.

Emphasize community building spaces

Tenant satisfaction with housing is closely related to their sense of belonging to a larger community.[6] The successful case study examples in this section focus their design efforts in spaces where communities can gather and interact. By including a variety of spaces that encourage communities to come together, individuals from different social groups can expose each other to new experiences, and help replace prejudices based on ignorance with first hand knowledge.

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6   (Levitt Goodman Architects n.d.) p. 5-13

CHAPTER 4

SYNTHESIS

At its best, architecture not only reflects but also serves society; it has a duty to provide for those with the greatest need and the fewest options

Sam Davis, Architect and author of "Designing for the Homeless"

4.1   (Opposite) Nelson Street View

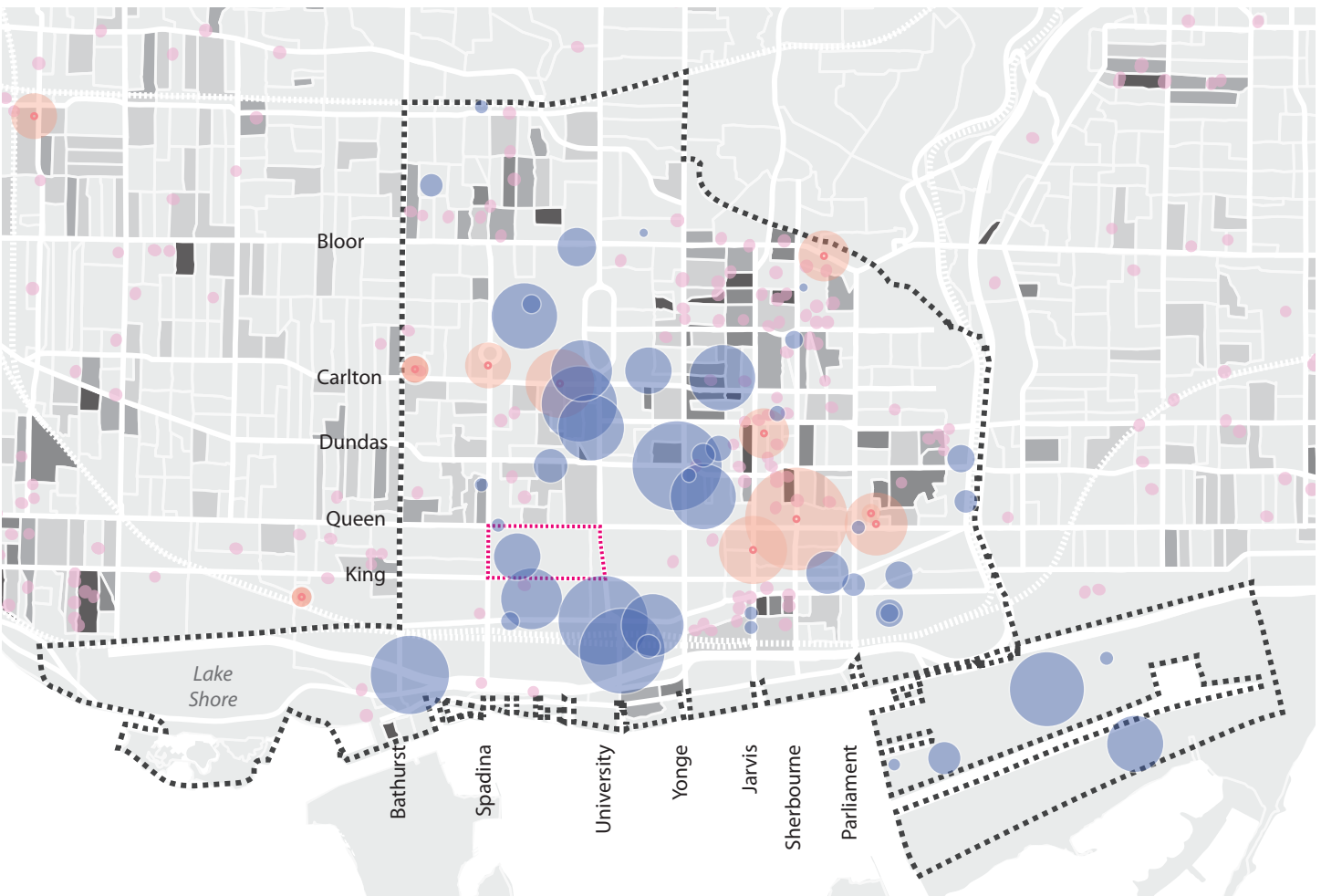*Public realm perspective of the inclusive urban housing typology*

THE INCLUSIVE MODEL

The 'inclusive urban housing typology' is conceived as an expansion and intensification of the city's fabric, bringing together housing, commercial space, and community programs in one vibrant block. The design re-imagines the conventional systematized and segregated approach toward housing by reconciling affordable developments, and supportive elements with the remainder of the housing market. Using the city making approach, the inclusive housing community combines a diverse set of cultural, public, commercial, and residential elements onto a single site. During a period of income polarization that tends to isolate communities in the city, this project seeks to restore a healthy diversity by taking an inclusive approach towards housing, to improve the city, and to alleviate homelessness.

4.2   (Opposite) 235 Richmond,

The inclusive urban housing typology

New Res. Development

10,000 Sq Meters

5,000 Sq Meters

1,000 Sq Meters

Homeless Shelter

250   Bed Capacity

100   Bed Capacity

50   Bed Capacity

Unemployment Density

2001-2500 Persons / Sq Km

1501-2000 Persons / Sq Km

1001-1500 Persons / Sq Km

501-1000   Persons / Sq Km

0-500   Persons / Sq Km

Bloor

Carlton

Dundas

Queen

King

Lake
Shore

Bathurst

Spadina

University

Yonge

Jarvis

Sherbourne

Parliament
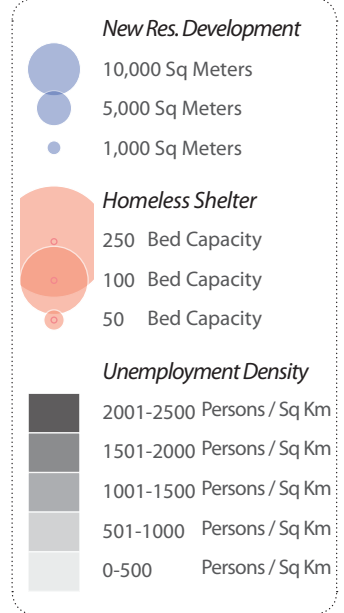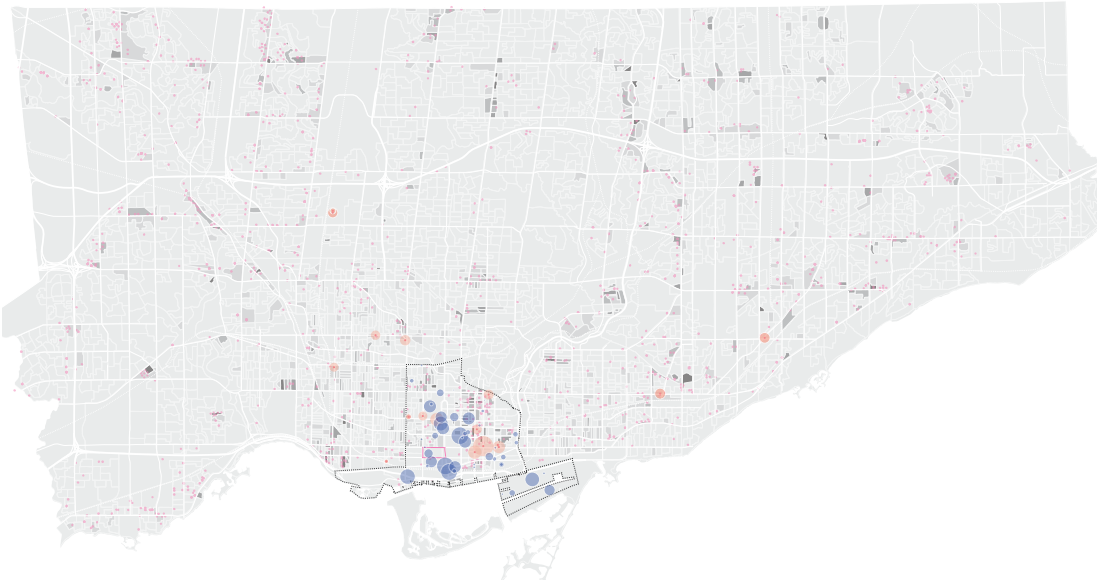
Site Selection

Finding an appropriate site for the proposed design is an important step in producing a vibrant community that responds to homelessness. The site is focused to the downtown centre of Toronto because this portion is slated for growth and provides a wide range of employment opportunities, amenities, and transportation. To further narrow down the potential site, Canadian census data is used to isolate areas with high employment rates and a low density of households applying for rent bank assistance[Fig. 4.2]. This set of data helped to identify areas that can support a blend of affordable housing while proving the residents plenty of opportunities and services. The location and capacity of Toronto's shelters are also overlaid as a reference, to show the prevalence of homelessness in the surrounding areas.

The block of land bordered by Queen and King street to the north and south, and Spadina and University avenue to the east and west, is a site that provides ample employment opportunity, as well as a vibrant mix of residential, cultural, retail, and office developments. The expansions of new residential condominiums directly to the south of the site, as well as the availability of countless under utilized plots make this an ideal location for new developments.

4.3   (Opposite) Site Analysis

4.4   General Context
a.   (Top) Queen Street Shop Fronts
b.   (Mid) King Street
c.   (Bottom) University and Queen

KENSINGTON MARKET

Dundas

Art Gallery of Ontario

ST. PATRICK

OCAD

CHINATOWN

City Hall

Ogden Public School

Queen

Campbell House

Four Seasons Centre

OSGOODE

Richmond

235

Nelson st.

Adelade

Peter st.

Widmer st.

John st.

Duncan st.

Simcoe st.

King

Princess of Wales Theatre

Royal Alexandra Theatre

Roy Thompson Hall

ST. ANDREW

Spadina Ave

University Ave
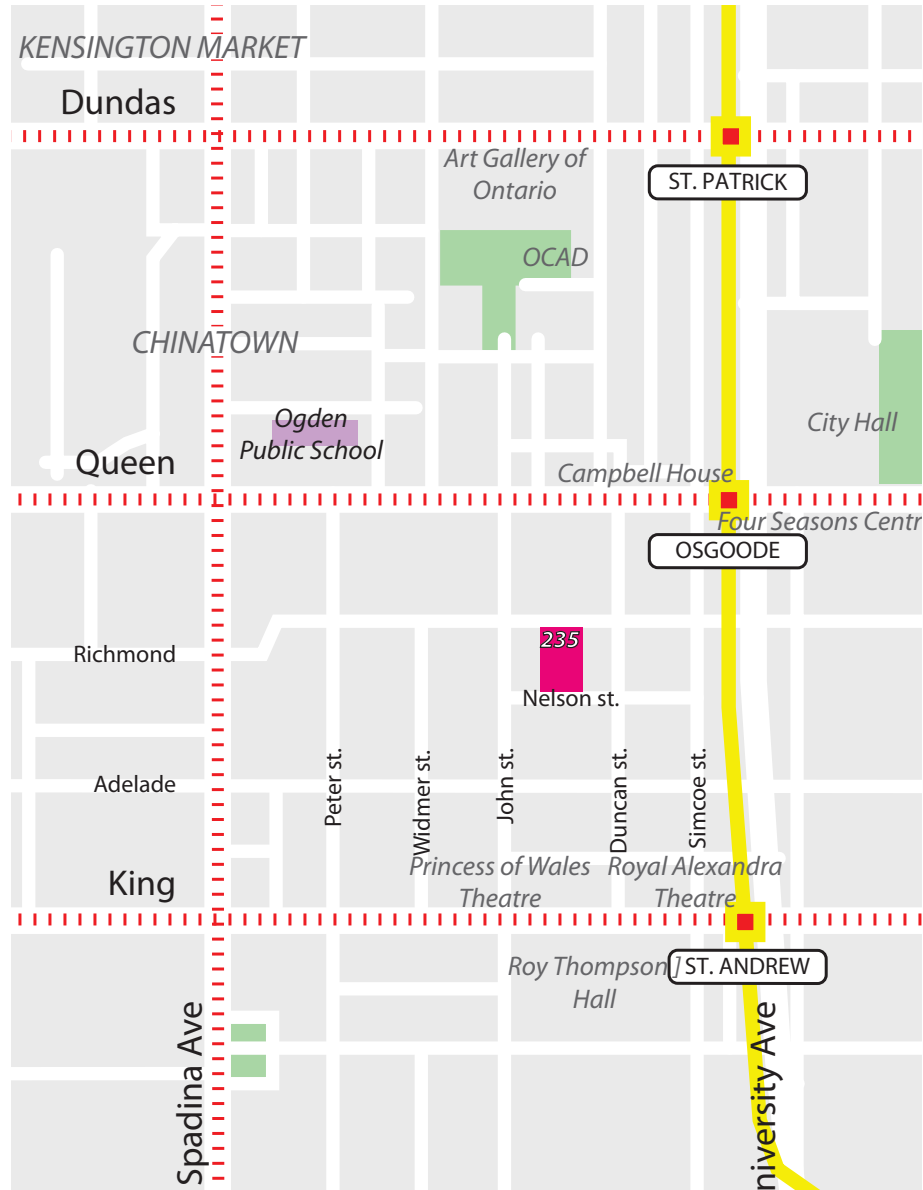
4.5 Context Map

Transportation, schools, parks and cultural amenities with relation to 235 Richmond

4.6 Richmond Street

Variety of experiences and scales The street provides a mix of residential and commercial elements at scales ranging from apartment and office buildings to low rise units

Unlike the densely developed street fronts of Queen and King, the land between the two major thoroughfares is littered with quickly disappearing parking lots. The majority of the empty sites are now being replaced by multi-storey developments such as the Boutique Condominiums to the south east and Tribute condominiums to the west making one of the local parking lots a plausible and appropriate location for the Inclusive Housing Community.

The plot of land nestled behind Toronto's CityTV broadcast centre just east of Richmond and John, enjoys a prime location for residential real-estate. 235 Richmond mediates the eclectic mix of retail, contemporary galleries, bistros and cultural elements of Queen Street to the north, and the grand condominiums, theatres, offices and lofts of King Street to the South.

235 Richmond is immediately located by three major transportation lanes; the King and Queen streetcar lines are two of the busiest and most frequent ones in Toronto, and the University avenue subway line links the major destinations of the city. Schools and parks can be found nearby, and the size of the site is large enough to provide ample opportunity for adding to the area's cultural and public spaces. The site is also walking distance to other vibrant communities such as Chinatown and Kensington, which offer affordable grocers and markets. The combination of these amenities makes this area appropriate for the Inclusive Housing Community - hereon referred to as 235 Richmond.

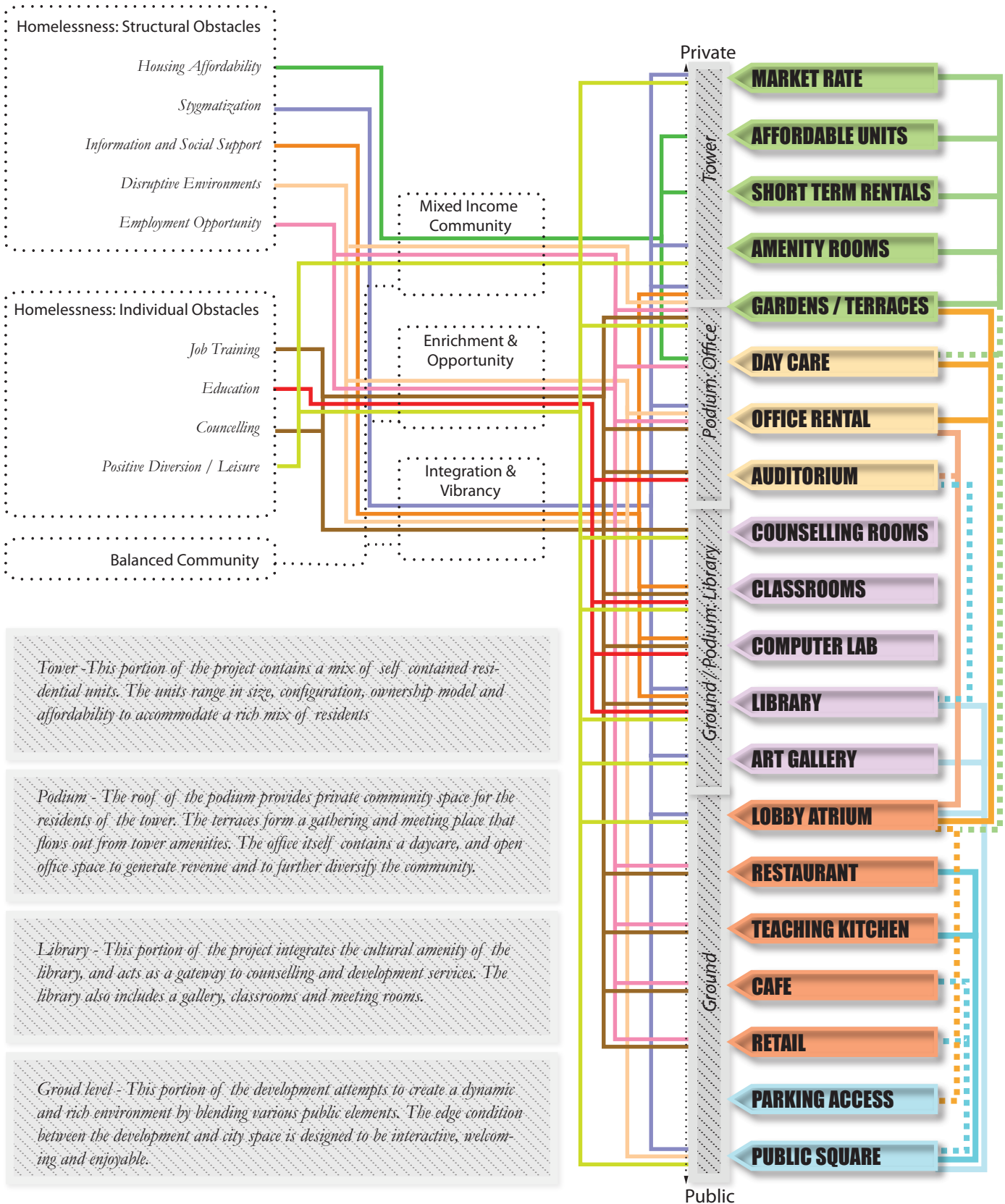*4.7   Aerial Image of 235 Richmond*

4.8   (Top left) New Condo Development Adjacent to Proposed Site

4.9   (Top left) Parking lot Currently occupying 235 Richmond

4.10   (Mid) View of 235 Richmond From Nelson Street

4.11   View of John Street Between Richmond and Nelson

Homelessness: Structural Obstacles

Housing Affordability

Stygmatization

Information and Social Support

Disruptive Environments

Employment Opportunity

Homelessness: Individual Obstacles

Job Training

Education

Councelling

Positive Diversion / Leisure

Balanced Community

Mixed Income Community

Enrichment & Opportunity

Integration & Vibrancy

Private

Public

Tower

Podium: Office

Ground / Podium: Library

Ground

MARKET RATE

AFFORDABLE UNITS

SHORT TERM RENTALS

AMENITY ROOMS

GARDENS / TERRACES

DAY CARE

OFFICE RENTAL

AUDITORIUM

COUNSELLING ROOMS

CLASSROOMS

COMPUTER LAB

LIBRARY

ART GALLERY

LOBBY ATRIUM

RESTAURANT

TEACHING KITCHEN

CAFE

RETAIL

PARKING ACCESS

PUBLIC SQUARE

Tower -This portion of the project contains a mix of self contained residential units. The units range in size, configuration, ownership model and affordability to accommodate a rich mix of residents

Podium - The roof of the podium provides private community space for the residents of the tower. The terraces form a gathering and meeting place that flows out from tower amenities. The office itself contains a daycare, and open office space to generate revenue and to further diversify the community.

Library - This portion of the project integrates the cultural amenity of the library, and acts as a gateway to counselling and development services. The library also includes a gallery, classrooms and meeting rooms.

Groud level - This portion of the development attempts to create a dynamic and rich environment by blending various public elements. The edge condition between the development and city space is designed to be interactive, welcoming and enjoyable.

Design Approach

The goal of the Inclusive Housing Community is to take a meaningful step towards alleviating homelessness. To do this, the project must balance decisions between building a healthy community and overcoming obstacles relating to homelessness. While providing affordable housing and counselling services is a must, these elements have to be integrated into the larger set of programming to ensure the socio-economic diversity of the project. Through the integration of the lessons from previous chapters, the design of 235 Richmond follows three primary principles:

Mixed Income Community

235 Richmond provides housing for a rich blend of Toronto's individuals and families. The mix of units is representative of the city's diversity, ranging from modest single room occupancy apartments to large four bedroom units. Variety is emphasized in the composition of units, the affordability of each individual type, as well as the length of tenure - a small number of short term, or transitional rentals are included to recognize the growing number of families and working individuals facing situational homelessness.

The goal of the mix is to avoid tendencies toward the systematization of housing responses, which isolate demographics. By fostering a rich blend, one of the major and central obstacles to dealing with homelessness is addressed – stigmatization. The diversity will also encourage contact between different strata of social and cultural groups, improving attitudes, and replacing prejudices caused by ignorance with firsthand knowledge that serves to invalidate stereotypes.

Enrichment and Opportunity

The causes of poverty leading to homelessness also stem from an uneven distribution of resources and opportunities. Mixed income dwellings are one step in removing social barriers and improving the environment for poverty stricken individuals; the complementary step is the provision of services and opportunities that empower families and individuals to reach their potential. 235 Richmond acts as a gateway to employment opportunities, skills development, and counselling services by using the building's podium space to provide a blend of community enriching elements. This is achieved through the introduction of a Toronto Public Library branch and office space to house the Centre for Social Innovation, as well as a daycare service.

The library acts as a social condenser, bringing together diverse individuals who make up Toronto. The branch can be a stage on which the local community can band together to find an identity, and forms a place of equal opportunity where career advice and family counselling can be delivered without marginalizing any specific group or demographic. Similarly, the commercial space of the podium can be used to house socially conscious businesses such as the Centre for Social Innovation to further diversify the 235 Richmond community, generate income, and promote entrepreneurship.

4.12   (Opposite)ProgrammeDiagram

Tower

Office

Library

Retail
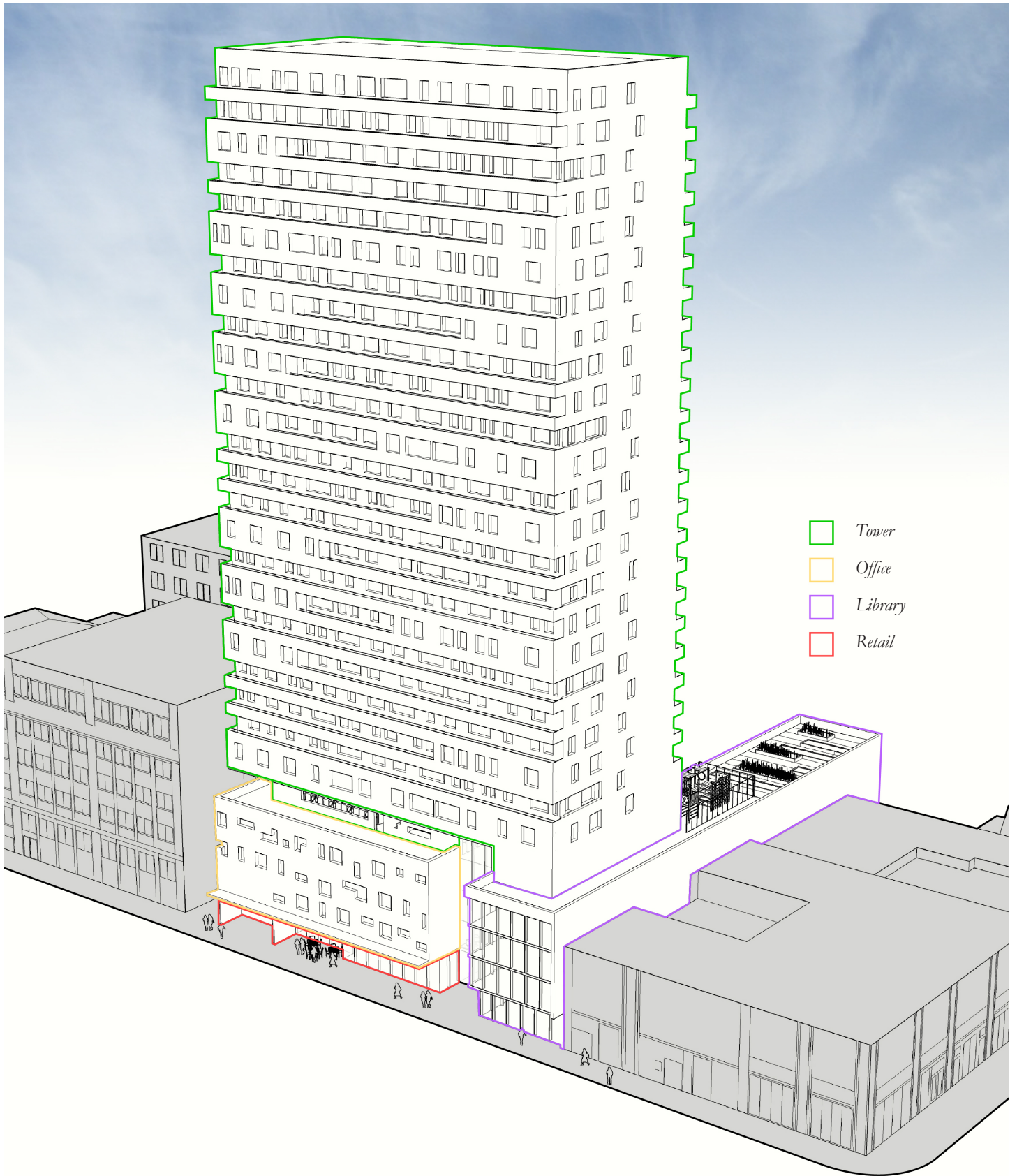
Integration and Vibrancy

This is a unifying quality that is required to ensure that 235 Richmond forms a successful community, is well accepted by the city and enriches the city fabric. The vibrancy of the project promotes safety, and ensures a high quality of life for residents and the surrounding community. This principal is highly dependent on the architectural expression and execution of the project. Overhanging elements that provide shade and shelter, a porous ground plane and playful facade send warm and welcoming signals with the assurance that this is a place of social interaction and cohesion. Giving back to the city by providing a public square and access to a rich mix of amenities ensures that this model is a socially viable and worthwhile endeavour.
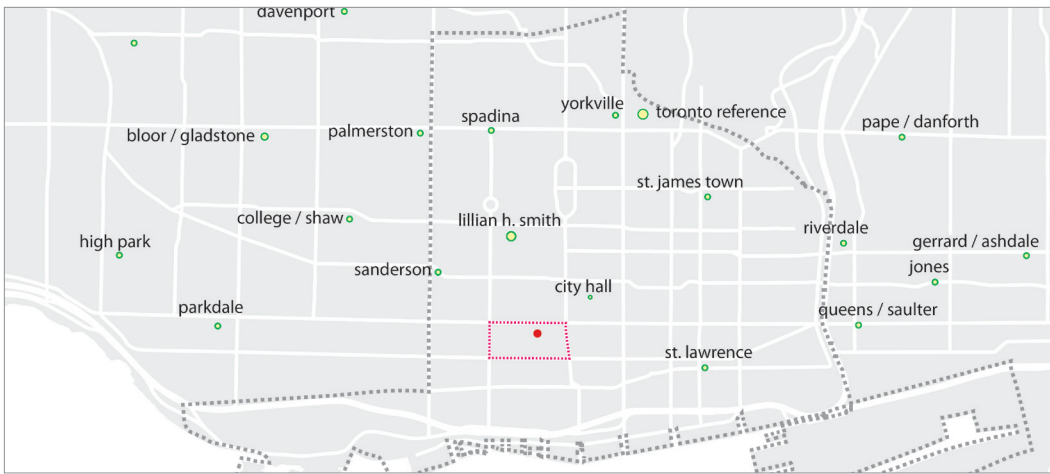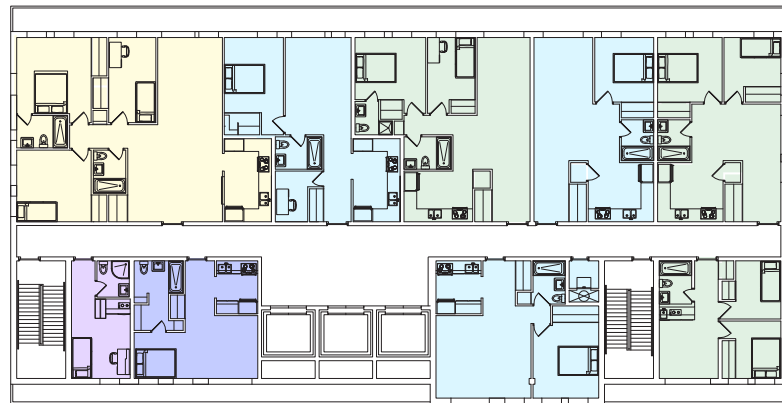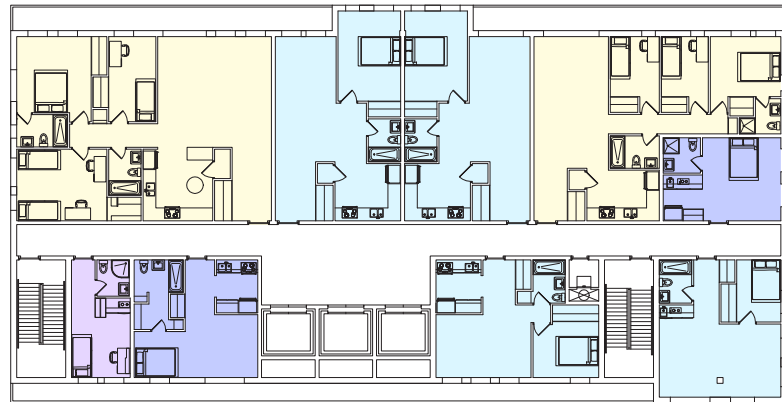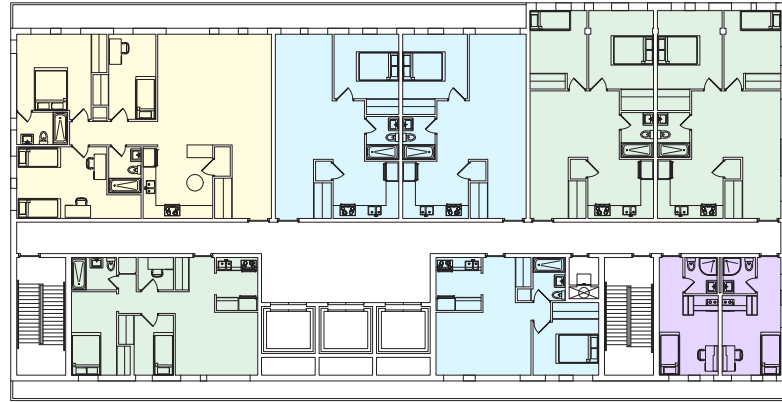

4.13   (Opposite) Massing Diagram

4.14   Libraries Map
The nearest Toronto Public Library to this location is the small, single room collection at City Hall.

The fast paced growth of residential developments in the area warrant the addition to the library network.

4.15   (Below) Front Elevation

61

4.16   Selected Tower Floor Plans

Bachelor Unit

Studio Unit

One Bedroom Unit

Two Bedroom Unit

Three Bedroom Unit

Four Bedroom Unit

Mix of Units

The design makes use of a wide range of units - single room occupancy, studio apartments, one, two, three, and four bedroom apartments- in order to foster a diverse community. Overall, the residential portion of the design provides 197 units distributed among 23 levels.

The units are varied along two categories: affordability and occupancy. Single person units can range from single room occupancy apartments of 17.7 m^2, studio units of 25-38 m^2, to small and medium one bedroom units. Similarly, two and three bedroom units also vary in size and affordability, while the four bedroom units of 110 m^2 are distributed sparingly to accommodate large or extended families.

The unit distribution aims to maintain diversity among each floor. Single room occupancy units are limited to an average of one unit per floor, with a maximum of two allowed on any floor plate. A potential ownership strategy for the project will be to sell a portion of the units as condominiums, but to retain a significant portion of each type of unit as rental. The proportion of condominium units will be dependant on the amount of funding required to realize the project and is related to policy decisions regarding assistance from the various levels of government or donations. A more detailed description of the units and intent is provided on the following pages.
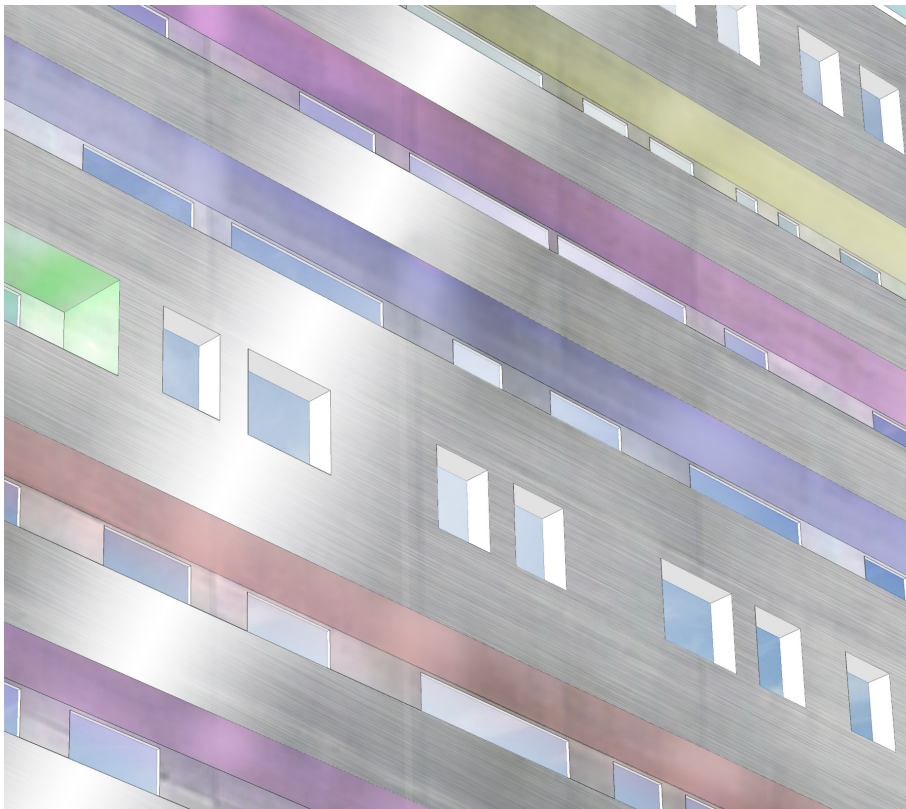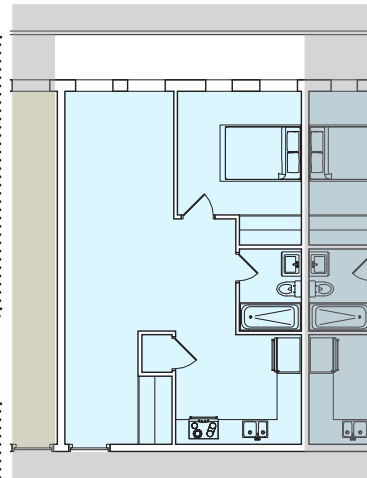

4.17   Tower Elevation
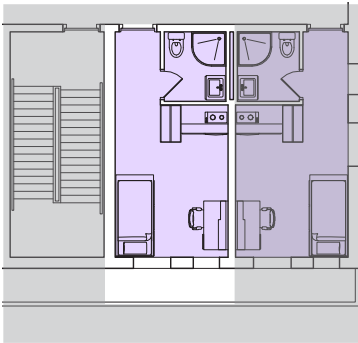
Unit Details

- Single Person Dwelling
- Short - Long Term
- 18 m2
- 18 Units total

Unit Details

- One Bedroom L.A
- Mid - Long Term / Owned
- 57 m2
- A+B = 32 Units Total

Unit Details

- One / Two Person Dwelling
- Short Term Rental
- 25 m2
- 6 Units total
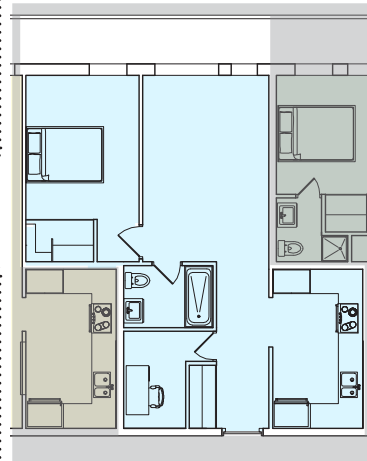
Unit Details

- One Bedroom L.B
- Mid - Long Term / Owned
- 60 m2
- L.A+L.B = 32 Units Total
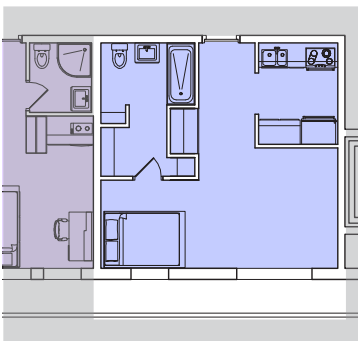
Unit Details

- Studio Apartment
- Mid - Long Term
- 39 m2
- 12 Units total
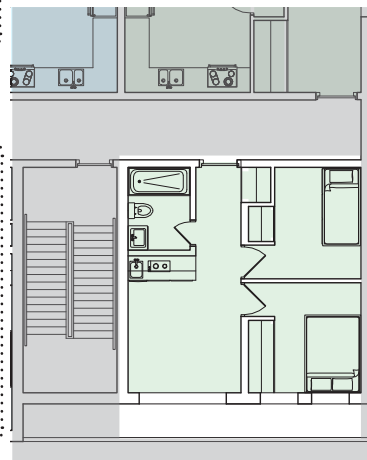
Unit Details

- One Bedroom XSM
- Short - Mid Term Rental
- 37 m2
- 6 Units Total

Unit Details

- One Bedroom SM.A or B
- Mid - Long Term / Owned
- *A=45 m2* B=40 m2
- SM.A+SM.B = 27 Units Total
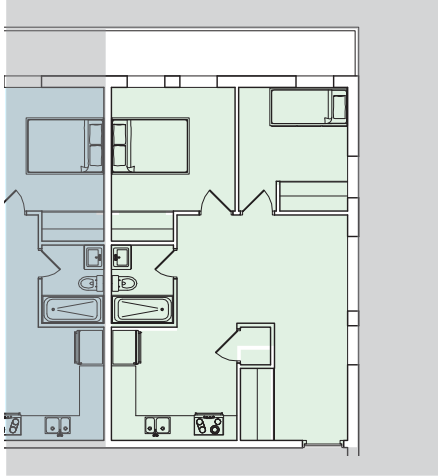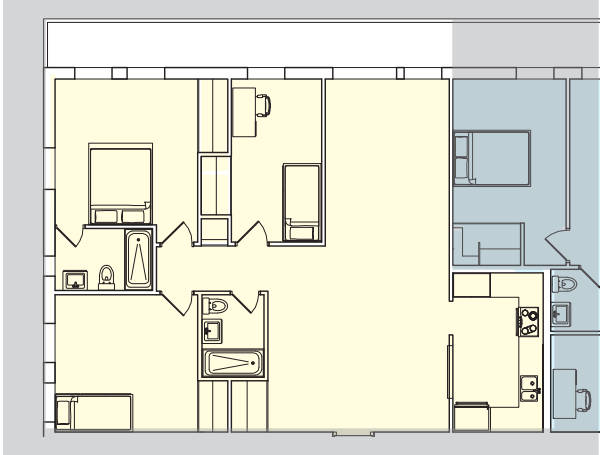
65
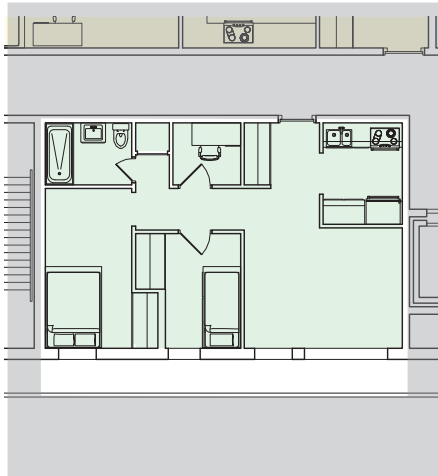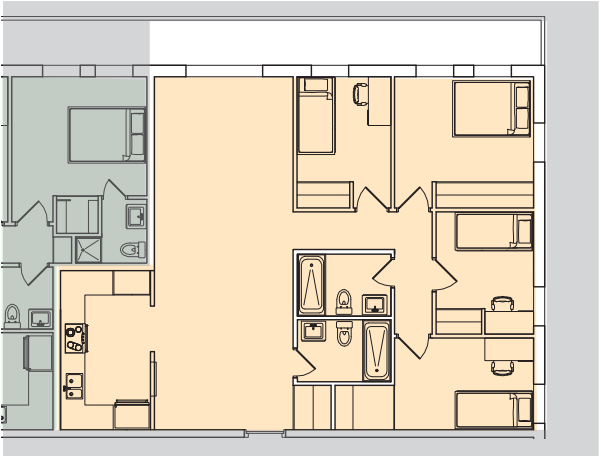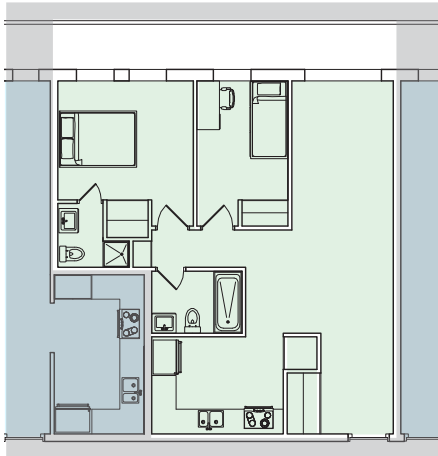
Public Gathering Space

Public Library

Retail

Community Gathering Space

Community Amenity Space

Community Spaces and Terraces

The terraces, roof top gardens, and the other communal amenities of 235 Richmond act as informal gathering spaces and areas of social interaction. The terrace formed in the transition between the office podium and the residential tower acts as the main exchange hub for residents. The terrace flows out from the gym and multipurpose room onto a series of seating areas, permanent barbecues, and plantings. The space offers various levels of privacy to foster interaction 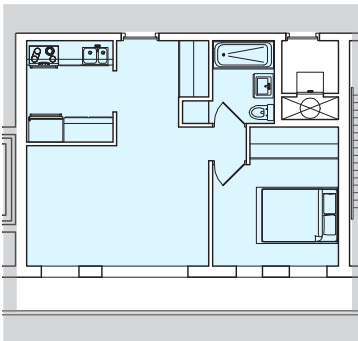and exchange while maintaining a sense of safety and privacy for smaller gatherings. The goal is to allow a space for regular community gatherings, where permanent barbecues can be used for community sponsored events that can involve sharing ethnic foods, or to host fundraising events, .

Similarly, the roof top of the library is used to provide an array of community gardens, and is used as a private playground for the daycare during certain times of the day. The gardens are another element that help foster community development, while providing an economic opportunity for selected tenants in financial need. The produce from the garden is used to supply the restaurant and training kitchen on the ground floor, while run-off from the roof is collected in a cistern for irrigation and a grey water system for the library.

4.19   (Opposite) Public and Community Space Massing

4.20   View of South Terrace

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

The open office space of 235 Richmond is intended to be occupied by the Centre for Social Innovation. The CSI is a social enterprise that provides flexible office space for socially conscious entrepreneurs. The goal of the centre is to bring these individuals together to exchange and generate ideas. The centre's aim is to promote a sense of community, and maintains that innovations occur best in diverse environments.

2 *   1 *   3 *

2 *   1 *   3 *

Office and Library

The office and library add diversity to the functions of 235 Richmond, leading to 24 hour programming in order to increase safety and vibrancy. In addition, these elements are used to integrate social assistance and counselling services without arousing any of the negative stigma caused by traditional employment or counselling centres. The Centre for Social Innovation is an ideal tenant for the office space and adds to the social enterprise aspect of the project. The varied functions also add life to the lobby of the building, promoting a lively and pleasant atmosphere conducive to positive interaction.

The library plays a key role in the development by providing free and easy access to the internet, educational resources, as well as seminars to provide training for effective resume writing and interview skills. The top floor of the library includes office space and meeting rooms that can be used by social workers and counsellors to follow up on residents with special needs or requirements. By including these services, the transitional and subsidized units in 235 Richmond can act as an integrated form of transitional housing without the common opposition and NIMBYism[1] that traditional models of transitional shelters or housing create.

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1   Described on p. 26

Legend

1. Atrium Space

2. Open Office Space
(Auditorium available for community meetings)

3. Library

4. Indoor Day Care Space (roof top access via lobby)

5. Library
(level dedicated to classrooms and counselling services

4.21   (Opposite top) Images of The Centre for Social Innovation

4.22   Podium Floor Plans

a. (Opposite left) Second Level Plan
b. (Opposite right) Third Level Plan
c. (Adjacent) Fourth Level Plan

8 *

7 *

6 *

1 *   2 *   3 *   4 *   5 *

Vibrant Streets

Earlier in the document, the city making approach was identified as one of the important aspects to involve in design process. Beyond providing a wide range of program in order to develop a rich neighbourhood, the city making approach also focuses on fostering meaningful exchange between the building and the city - enriching the environment not only for residents, but also the greater community.

The ground plane and edges of buildings are the zones that most clearly define the physical and visual space of our city. The Richmond street facade provides a range of stimuli to activate the street and ensure an interesting and pleasurable experience.

Overhanging elements and receding elements provide cover to allow indoor activities to flow out, provide shelter for passers-by and form an exchange zone where individuals can wait for friends, take a break, and/or initiate spontaneous social interaction. Allowing for program to flow onto the streets through the covered patio spaces, the frequent rhythm of doors, and the highly transparent facade, provides greater opportunity for people of different demographics to interact, as well as increasing the points of exchange between retailers and consumers, complimenting both the social and economic sustainability of the project. Care is also taken to widen the variety of experience by dividing the front

4.23   (Opposite) Ground Level Plan

Legend
1. Pedestrian Access
2. Pay Parking Entrance
3. Restaurant
4. Retail
5. Cafe
6. Lobby / Pedestrian Access
7. Library
8. Public Square

4.24   (Below) Richmond Street Entrance

facade into seven zones. The series of zones serve to create a more pleasant pedestrian experience, mimicking the active condition of vibrant streetscapes such as Young street or Queen West.

Beyond the inherent benefits of a vibrant and healthy pedestrian experience, this zone also provides ample employment and training opportunities. The restaurant element incorporates a generously sized training kitchen that can also contribute to activating the public square.

The square gives back to the surrounding area by providing a meeting place for families, teens, and all members of the community - a place where local businessmen, workers and residents can have their lunch, enjoy a fresh coffee while reading, or take a break and cool down near the reflecting pool. Like the library, the public space is a social condenser, allowing a place for citizens to assemble and exchange ideas. The square features scattered seating and indigenous plantings that produce range of spacial qualities from open to intimate. This public portion of the project acts as the critical social mixer, linking the multiple elements of the programme with the larger community, and is therefore a key element in the city making strategy. The boundaries of space and built form are designed to enrich the urban environment, providing an amenity to all citizens.

4.25   (Opposite) Public Square

4.26   Initial Design Diagram

DEMOGRAPHIC

Situational Homelessness

Families (mid income) emergency
Families (low income) affordability crisis
Families (refugee)
Single Adult (mid income) emergency
Single Adult (low income) affordability crisis
Youth with behavioral problems
Youth fleeing abuse

Episodic Homelessness

Families (low income)
Families (abuse or dysfunctional)
Families (single parent low income)
Families (refugee)
Individuals (low income)
Individuals (disabilities)
Individuals (dysfunctional)

Chronic Homelessness

Individuals (dysfunctional)
Individuals (dealing with addiction)
Individuals (mental disabilities)
Individuals (physical disabilities)
Youth

OBSTACLE

Lack of Affordable Housing
Income
Unemployment
Disabilities
Inability to Access Support Information

Drug / Alcholhol Abuse
Disability (physical)
Disability (mental)
Lack of Human Capital
Housing Affordability
Unemployment
Income Shortage
Housing Affordability
Behavioral Problems
Family Breakdown
Health and Care Issues

Dysfunctional Behavior
Stigmatization
Housing Affordability
Abusive Environment
Threat of Violence
Disabilities
Criminal Behavior
Inability to Access Support Information
Family Breakdown
Health and Care Issue

PROGRAMME

Family Units
Single Room Occupancy Units
Shared Kitchen
Shared Facilities
Social Services
Administration Offices
Counselling
Health Services
Day Care
Dormitory Style Units
Unprogrammed Activity Space
Semi Private Common Area (Guest Lounge)
Education / Employment Training
Food Bank
Soup Kitchen
Drop-In Services
Thrift Store / Donations
Community Activity Space / Market
Commerical Amenities
Neighbourhood Community Space

Dwelling Based Program
Dwelling Support
Administrative Program
Support
Dwelling Support
Drop-In
Return

NEED ADDRESSED

Rootedness
Order
Privacy
Self-identity

Context for social relationships

Structure
Socio-cultural context
Family Breakdown

health or hygene

Daily Assistance
Resolving dysfunctional
behaviour

Structure
Socio-cultural context
Context for social relationships

Employment opportunities
Resolving dysfunctional behaviour
Job training

Community Contact
Social Interaction
Revenue Generation

4.27   The Integrated Shelter

In the early stages of the thesis, the focus of the design was on providing a centre that uses a set of programme that relate directly to the needs of the homeless, and provides some amenities to the general public.

After some development and further research, this designed did not seem to provide the necessary diversity or integration that the thesis aspired towards.

4.28   (four images below) The design slowly evolved to better address its surroundings, produce vibrant street life, and foster greater diversity.
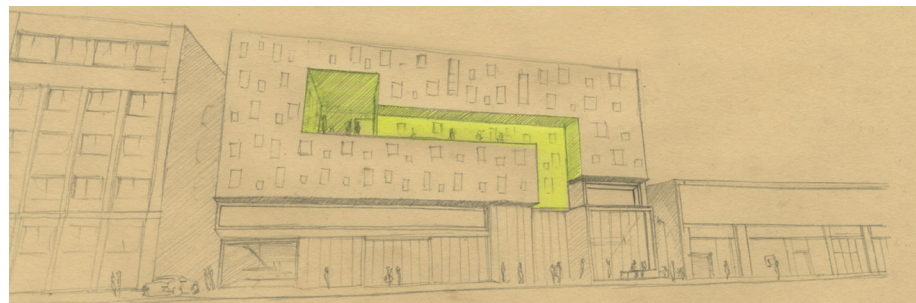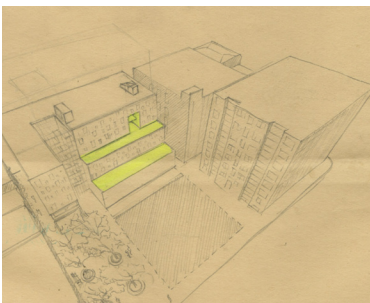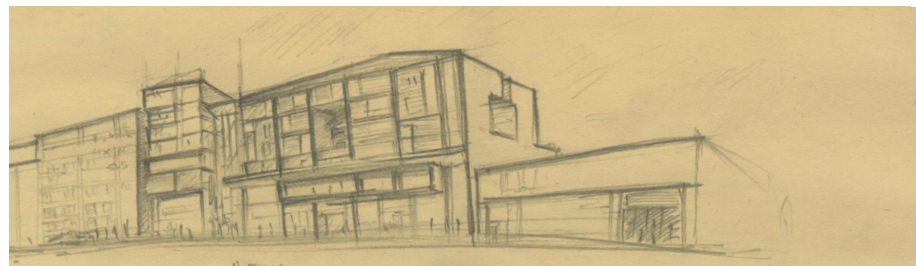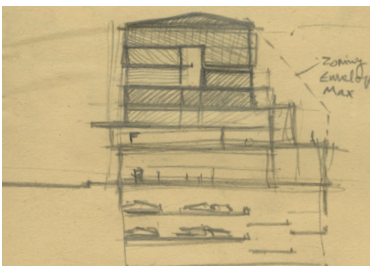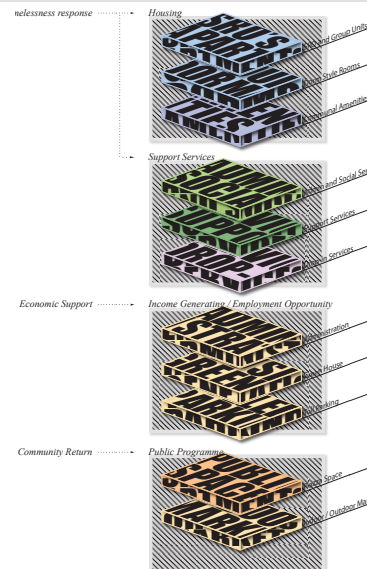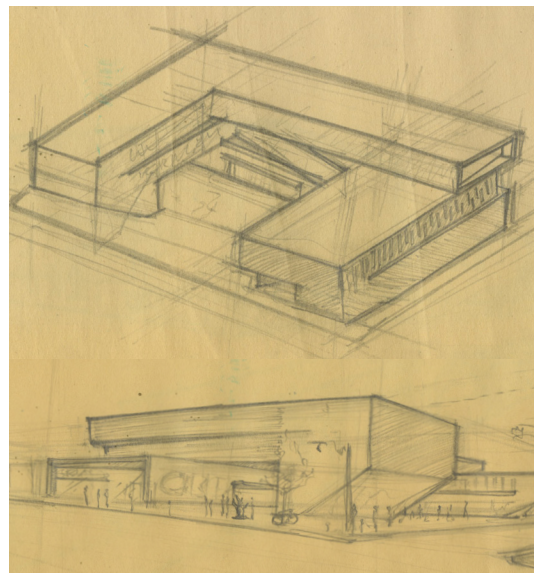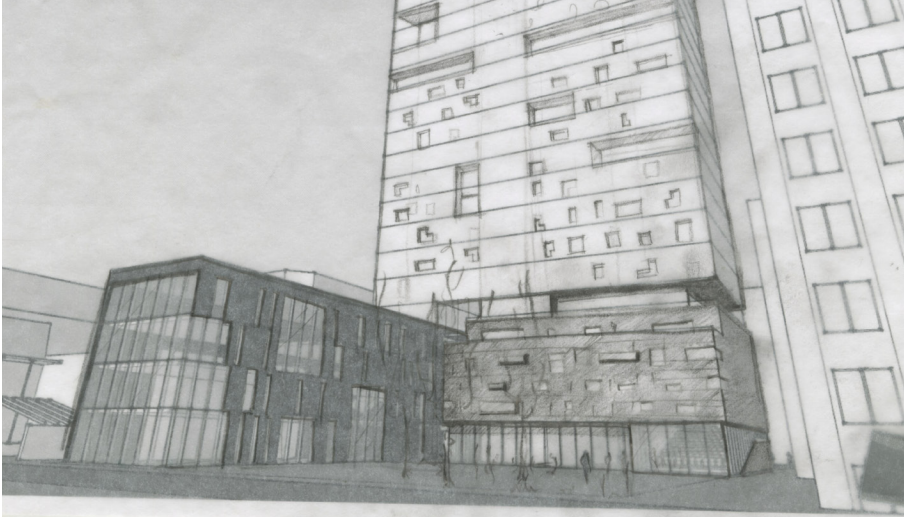
Design Evolution

The design goals, approach and process for developing the final inclusive housing community was subject to a significant series of transformations during the process of completing this thesis. Through the development of research, the project evolved into an integrated community that follows a city making strategy.

The initial and superficial research compiled in the early stages of this thesis had led me to believe that providing a structured set of programme elements based on the demographics of the homeless population would be sufficient to produce a successful design. As a result, my intention was to selectively combine a set of program related to specific demographics (i.e. Single adults) and to provide an example of how these elements could produce a new form of shelter. During that stage, I was taking a top down approach which valued programme over architectural execution. This approach exhibited some of the main obstacles that I would later identify as my research continued - stigmatization, lack of permanent housing, shelterization etc.. A review of emergency shelters such as the Pacific Garden Mission as compared with other case studies led me to identify the value of the architectural quality of spaces, and community integration.

Similarly, an investigation into the role of stigmatization in propagating poverty as well as requirement to expand permanent housing alternatives allowed me to shift my approach. My next iteration expanded the diversity of the shelter / housing by combining a 6 storey tower of SRO apartments, a block of mix of market rate units and retail on the ground. I would later decide that this design still overly concentrated very low income individuals, and would produce an undesirable development.

Following a series of meetings my faculty assistants, and an expansion of the scope of my case studies typologies, and further design experimentation, I settled on an approach which parallels a city making exercise. The final design attempts to produce a vibrant development by combining cultural, residential and commercial elements in a well balanced community.

4.30   Conceptual Poster

*Conceptual image used as a generator
for the final design of 235 Richmond.*

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Beyond Shelters: a Reflection

The decisions that led to the design of this thesis were fully dependant on developing a well-rounded research agenda that included an understanding of homelessness, the individuals involved, and the obstacles that are preventing our society from overcoming the challenge. Homelessness is not the result of a set of personal factors that cause either a family or individual to lose the stability of a home. It is rather an indicator of the health and quality of our cities, the architecture of our buildings, and the distribution of our resources. Homelessness is, therefore, an issue of profound importance in the discourse of architecture and planning.

My research led me to understand that homelessness did not always constitute the challenge that it does today. Following the post war era, the Canadian housing market was under great stress to meet the needs of returning soldiers, and a rapidly urbanizing population. These conditions led to a federal response that ushered in a peak of social housing development in accordance with the ideal that decent affordable housing should be universally available. But the modern tendency to systematize development produced architecture that isolated communities based on income, and neglected diversity - creating environments that would propagate poverty and form low income ghettos. The negative perception of social housing prompted a change in the federal government strategy. Housing investments were gradually cut back in the 1980s in favour of tax cuts so that the forces of the private market alone could meet Canada's housing needs. Subsequently, the market's failure to meet the needs of all citizens, combined with the income disparities that are stratifying our communities, resulted in the growing phenomena of homelessness.

The network of shelters and transitional housing projects that have been put in place to deal with homelessness operate at full capacity in an attempt to accommodate an increasing number of families and individuals. But these temporary responses ignore the structural issues that led to the growth of homelessness. Moreover, they intensify obstacles such as marginalization and stigmatization that had been the weakness of large scale social housing projects. My study of architectural responses ranging from a narrow focus on a specific demographic to a more universal city making approach, led me to believe that it is the quality of architecture and its ability to foster balanced communities that provides the most meaningful response to homelessness.

This thesis originated out of a drive to understand homelessness as occurring in a wealthy modern nation such as Canada. The initial intent of the investigation had been to command a quantitative understanding of the problem to provide a guideline for designing new shelters to assist the homeless population in their return to normality. The goal of the thesis, however, quickly changed as my research delved deeper into the development and make-up of the growing homeless population in Canada, and more specifically in Toronto. It helped reveal that a meaningful response must reach beyond the ability of individual shelters to accommodate the homeless population. An effective response has more to do with the strength, health, and diversity of our communities. This thesis, therefore, looks beyond shelters to develop an inclusive model of housing that integrates responses to homelessness into a diverse and vibrant community development.

Limitations and potential for future research

Homelessness is a large and multidimensional field of research. Although I have used this thesis to understand homelessness to a degree to provide a thoughtful architectural response, I must acknowledge its limitations, and opportunities to build upon it:

Firstly, homelessness is an issue which is highly related to policy, and planning. Although the vision for 265 Richmond is one can be shown to increase the social and economic potential of our cities in the long run, this form of development can only exist in a political environment that values the qualities of this approach. Further research into how architects can influence policy and long term analysis of the benefits of similar projects can help shed light on this aspect.

Secondly, the design of 265 Richmond aims to cast a wide net over the fastest growing demographics at risk or experiencing homelessness through a mixed income, community supported approach. The project also takes a preventative approach and may not provide the adequate amount of support for the chronically homeless. The ideology of 265 Richmond is to integrate supportive elements into the developing fabric of our cities to limit the intermediate step of dedicated shelters and to expedite the process of returning individuals to normality. But the author does acknowledge that portions of the chronically homeless population will require a transitional and highly supportive programme to become self sufficient. The design principles of this thesis can also be applied to a more supportive form of response, which must also aim to avoid stigmatization and provide a vibrant addition to its surrounding community. Alternative design explorations that aim to include a greater portion of chronically homeless individuals warrant further investigation, but have been placed outside the scope of this thesis.

Conclusion

Throughout the process of completing this thesis, the design goals and approaches changed dramatically as they became informed by research and case studies. The first elements of research I had collected for this thesis were purely statistical. The information was then organized by demographics, typologies of shelters, housing forms, and incidences of homelessness by location. As a result, my initial architectural responses were similarly organized to deal with each specific demographic. My design goal at that initial stage was to formulate a prescriptive list of programme options for each individual demographic. But as my understanding grew to include the causes of homelessness, the obstacles faced by the population, and the qualitative aspects of the home, the prescriptive approach proved to be inadequate. The design goals had to therefore be modified.

The final iteration of 235 Richmond is more than a shelter, or an affordable housing development. Rather, the design utilizes the elements of a vibrant and diverse city to offer, in a single development, a rich spectrum of architecture and social programming to alleviate homelessness. Mixed income community, enrichment and opportunity, and integration and vibrancy are qualitative principles of the design that are independent of a specific site and do not relate directly to a set program. Instead, these principles place value on architecture's ability to improve the resilience of our communities through the act of design. The integration of programmatic elements that are sensitive to the needs of the homelessness is a complimentary step in the design, and is reliant on the qualitative aspects of the project for success.

New developments require a mixed income approach to ensure that the needs of the full spectrum a city's residents are addressed. This allows for interaction between a diverse set of individuals and assures a rich new set of experiences that can improve attitudes, reduce prejudice, and invalidate stereotypes. In the case of 265 Richmond, a diverse set of units geared towards different family compositions and affordability were dispersed and complimented with generous public spaces to provide opportunities for interaction and exchange.

Planning policies can be used to encourage new developments to enrich neighbourhoods by introducing social amenities as part of their modus operandi. By including amenities and providing opportunities for employment, leisure, and social interaction, projects can improve safety through casual surveillance, and encourage more active and educated communities which will have significant social returns. The cultural and commercial elements of 265 Richmond provide a diverse set of opportunities by including skills training, educational resources, and career opportunities. Meanwhile, the integration of accessible public resources and amenities produce an enriching environment.

Great cities are celebrated for their vibrancy. Using the designer's ability to produce this effect through enjoyable and dynamic environments is of great importance. This is a principle that seems to have been treated as an unnecessary luxury when responding to the needs of the most deprived portions of our society. The design of 235 Richmond takes advantage of its ground level connection to create a varied and interactive street experience. Designers must make certain that developments are well-connected to the surroundings and provide a friendly and welcoming atmosphere for pedestrians and residents to ensure that a project is well accepted and will provide a lasting positive effect on its surroundings.

Homelessness is the result of years of neglect by many levels of government to the issue of affordable housing. 265 Richmond approaches homelessness and Canada's housing crisis not only by providing affordable units, but by providing the elements to build a diverse, vibrant, and enriching community. By demonstrating the architectural, social and economic benefits of well designed urban housing, projects like 265 Richmond can point the way towards healthier, more compassionate cities.

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