

Vertical Urbanity

Urban Dwelling in an Age of Programmatic Promiscuity

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

Welcome to CityPlace.

Thirty-five hectares of formerly unoccupied rail-lands in downtown Toronto are currently undergoing a transformation into an instant neighbourhood. Eventually, CityPlace will be the home to over 15,000 people within 23 buildings, sequestered by the Gardiner Expressway on its southern border and by the still functioning rail-lines on its northern border, it is truly an island of suburban stacked living which is at once surrounded and yet at a distance from downtown Toronto. In CityPlace we are witnessing what the Belgian philosopher Lieven De Caeter describes as the rise of the capsular civilization.

Impossible to ignore, condominiums have become the dominant form of new housing in the city of Toronto; a process that has been driven by demographics, political imperative and most of all by the pursuit of profits in the high-stakes game of real-estate development. But lost in this torrent of development is a genuine dialogue about the city we are building.

This thesis explores the current state of condo development in downtown Toronto; from the myriad of political, economic and physical factors that have led to Toronto's vernacular condo typology to the marketing onslaught that targets the base consumerist hyper-individual within all of us and aims to hide the fact that these buildings are more similar than distinct. From the optimistic aims of a city council which seeks to achieve civic benefits from increased density, to the cynical de-urbanizing and social polarization that the type typically brings into the downtown.

The thesis explores the promise of downtown condominium living and the hybridisation of programme that accompanies the rising real estate values of the downtown core. Programmatic promiscuity and complexity are exploited to bring different user-types from the outside city into the tower. With its unique vertical properties and inherent density, the residential high-rise tower presents new opportunities for urban collective spaces. From introvert to extrovert, the new condo becomes a catalyst for urbanity in the instant neighbourhood of CityPlace.

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DEDICATION

To Solid Ground.

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VERTICAL URBANITY



A Portrait of Condo Culture in Toronto

“THIS IS YOUR FANTASY”

The audacious eye-catching message above flashes across my computer screen in large white lettering as the rendered image of the future One Bloor condominium project floats across a sky-blue background when I enter the projects website. Audacious, not just because one’s fantasy is the most personal of inklings and how could they possibly claim to know mine, but also audacious in relation to the project’s recent history.

In the summer of 2009, plans for the original proposed 1 Bloor, a condominium and luxury hotel, fell through. That original proposal for 1 Bloor was to be the pinnacle of Toronto condo design at the height of the city’s condo craze in the past decade. At eighty stories and at the corner of Yonge St and Bloor St, the tower was to be the tallest residential tower in Canada at the “most important corner in the country”. Eighty percent of the 612 proposed suites had been sold, roughly \$70 million in deposits having been collected on suites that ranged from \$500,000 to over \$8 million, and when the units first went on sale the anticipation and hype was so immense people lined up on the streets for weeks as real estate agents paid people to stand and sleep in

line for them. This was November 2007. Less than two years later, those 490 homebuyers were told they would be given their deposits back, the project would not be going ahead.

“Anna Cass had the distinction of being one of the first people in line to buy a unit at 1 Bloor in what she figured was a special property.

“We rented a room at the Marriot and took shifts,” says the Royal LePage realtor. “I didn’t invest in a property to flip. I wanted to live there.”

Cass eventually chose a nearly 1,300-square-foot unit for herself. She remembers the name. It was called the Dream 1290.”¹

What was sold as a “dream” to Anna and 489 other condo buyers, turned out to be just that, a dream. In 2009, 1 Bloor became a victim of the global financial crisis as its Kazakh based developers Bazis International were forced to downsize their original intended height from 80 storeys to 67 to alleviate elevating construction costs that were put into serious doubt when their main financiers, Lehmann Brothers and Societe Generale, were limited by the sub-prime mortgage crisis. The building was squashed altogether when the BTA bank, Bazis’ fall back option, were put under criminal investigation. The project was officially dead and deposits returned.

» fig. 02 One Bloor website [facing page]

Today the cycle is underway again. Great Gulf Group of Companies became the new developers having acquired the land from Bazis International in the midst of their economic misfortune, re-branding the new tower “One Bloor” as opposed to “1 Bloor” and introducing new architects and new design. The new tower will no longer be the tallest residential building in the city, a more modest 65 storeys rather than the 80 Bazis had originally planned; also gone are the plans for a hotel in the building, this one being purely residential and commercial retail space. However, despite its more modest objectives the building still doesn’t lack for confidence. “THIS IS YOUR FANTASY” is the marketing rallying cry pasted across the front page of the future tower’s website.

Anna’s story reminds us of the fragile and deceptive nature of Toronto’s current condo market. Developers are selling something that does not yet exist, in the case of 1 Bloor to disastrous results. Every downtown parking lot sitting empty is filled with endless possibility and potential, a ‘dream’ before it is built, but more and more the built end-result seems to mirror every other condo on the market. The story of 1 (One) Bloor demonstrates the inevitability of the high-rise condo typology in downtown Toronto. Even while crumbling in the midst of the world’s largest financial crisis in decades it was reborn, re-branded and sold anew. This is your fantasy, but what then is our reality?

The Reality

Today condos account for 30% of Toronto’s housing stock and that number is growing as 2008 saw 86% of all built new-homes in Toronto being condominiums. Very large, and increasing, proportions of Toronto’s inhabitants are now condo dwellers and as such are adjusting to new challenges of shared high-rise living.

Essentially an apartment building, a condominium is “at law really a form of ownership rather than a type of building”². The word ‘condominium’, translated from its Latin roots, means “together ownership” and defines a type of multi-unit housing where each unit is individually owned by the tenant and the common spaces of the building are joint owned with the other tenants in the building and maintained through the implementation of a board of condominium owners. It is a partnership of proximity. These common shared spaces refer to essential building components exterior to the unit such as corridors, elevators, stairwells, mechanical and electrical supplies, roof, cladding and structure, but also take the form of more specialized and ancillary spaces, such as amenity spaces.

These shared amenity spaces have gotten more elaborate and luxurious in a heated Toronto housing market where each condominium must ratchet up its offerings to



» fig. 03 rendering of 1 Bloor [above left]

» fig. 04 rendering of the revised One Bloor [above right]



» fig. 05 marketing renders of common elements from 300 Front by Tridel [above]

lure buyers. Designer security-staffed lobbies, 24-hour gyms, pools, tanning decks, screening theatres, yoga classes, billiard and screening rooms are all essentially standard now. Usually grouped together on one or two floors, these amenity spaces also take over the tops of podiums to offer rooftop infinity swimming pools and outdoor amenity space. As these jointly owned spaces increase in complexity and use, they also begin to form a new interior urban realm and with it, new challenges to our societal structure. If Jane Jacobs' view of urbanity centred on the street and neighbourhood block in the 60's, it is becoming abundantly clear that to the current generation, urbanity must now surely include the condo corridor, elevator, its amenity spaces and the lobby.

Overview and Objectives

Prompted by a mid-90's shift in provincial and municipal planning policy that promoted urban "smart-growth", high-density living across the Greater Toronto Area has become the objective for new residential construction. These relatively new planning policies, in concert with low-interest rates, escalating downtown real-estate values and a large home-buying demographic supplemented by real-estate speculation, have provided fertile ground for high-rise residential real-estate development in Toronto. In this process, abundant condominium towers in Toronto's downtown core, evolved in response to a

variety of economic, political and physical realities, have become a virtual vernacular typology, the physical consistencies of the tower's form replicating across Toronto over the past decade.

As more and more of these condos are built, the city of Toronto has increasingly come to rely on these real-estate developments to aid in financing public projects and sustaining the city's civic and infrastructural growth. Through development charges and public gains, the condo typology has become a major development engine, not just for residential, but for the city's public realm as well. The condo phenomenon is now intrinsically linked to Toronto's economic fibre. An entire industry has been built around condominium development, to the degree that any residential slow-down would be economically detrimental to the city as a whole.

As Toronto's reliance on the condo form increases, lurking dangers become amplified as any failure in their physical structure could very easily lead to a city crippling crisis. Vancouver, the city that Toronto's smart-growth initiative was modelled after, is still recovering from the leaky condo crisis that began over a decade ago. A condominium is an unpredictable real-estate investment, as it requires not only the purchase of the individual unit, but into a share of the building as a whole. But it is this unique collective and shared relationship that also

presents opportunity for a new form of urbanity and public gathering spaces.

In its current form, the condominium structure actively stifles its collective elements. The condominium unit owes much of its popularity with homeowners not on the collective aspect of its ownership but the appeal of the individual unit. Marketing, often wholly detached from the condo itself, uses fantasy, illusion and themes to construct an image of an attractive lifestyle one can obtain by buying into the condominium development. Lieven de Cauter's writings on the rise of the capsular civilization serve as a framework for exploring the 'hyperindividualization' that the current condo structure perpetuates. As part of a larger societal shift towards consumerism and individualism, the condo has become the proto-typical capsular home, the ihome.

While the capsular unit's appeal stems from it being a highly independent home where the inhabitant can more fully develop their individuality, the capsular civilization accomplishes this at the expense of the collective notion of society. This thesis investigates how the condo creates thresholds of isolation and separation while promoting its form of individualism. But it is also a building that wholly relies on the collective, and in its current form, seems to actively suppress the expression of that collective. Architects, writers and philosophers Leiven

de Cauter, Michael Sorkin, Rem Koolhaas, Margaret Crawford, among others are sourced in this thesis to add a broader context to the discourse surrounding the new urban realm.

Common Elements

This thesis, recognizing the abundant new opportunities of large-scale collective dwelling, aims to capitalize on the collective opportunities present in the high-density tower in an effort to quell the isolating effects of the current condo structure. In *Delirious New York*, Rem Koolhaas observed the opportunity present in Manhattan's vertical towers, where a stacking and replication of the city grid skywards meant a multiplication of the city's urban realities, where any floor could contain any function. Today, the condo structure does not encourage a multiplication of the urban grid, but instead divides the individual into their singular capsules. By re-positioning the common elements of the condo, this thesis aims to create new interior urban realms that open themselves to the city of Toronto, bring in new publics and create collective spaces negating the separation the condo form encourages.

Central to the design proposition are two ideas already inherent in the condominium phenomenon. By recalibrating these elements the design seeks to advance

the collective agenda of the condo tower. These central ideas are:

1) Common Elements: As defined by condo law, common elements are the collective spaces of the condo that are owned by every unit owner but controlled and maintained by the condo board. In their current form, they are a veritable no-man's land, owned by everyone and yet belonging to no one, kept in a perpetual state of new to preserve individual real-estate values. Amenity spaces, corridors and lobbies become luxury sales features, but are also enforced by strict condo edicts and heavily regulated. Here, real-estate value becomes difficult to monetize as these spaces are collectively owned, they aren't sold on square footage basis. But there would appear to be intrinsic value in these spaces that is being neglected and the second element is used as a means of maximizing the inherent opportunity and value of these common elements.

2) Programmatic Promiscuity: Like the Manhattan depicted in Koolhaas' Delirious New York, Toronto's high-rise towers are becoming increasingly hybrid in nature. As Toronto becomes a higher density city, increasingly more diverse programmes are being urged into cooperation. Already, Toronto has seen condos link with such disparate programmes as libraries, cinemas, art galleries and public schools. This thesis seeks to

re-calibrate these already present combinations in a way that maximizes this programmatic mixing and furthers the public realm into the interior of the tower. Creating collective common elements within the tower that offer new and exciting collective experiences. The counterpoint to the individuality of the unit, the common element could become the social spaces of the new urban realm.

Acknowledging that the condo unit, the capsule, is the place of the individual and one that is an efficient response to the Ontario building code, construction economics, the physical realities of high-rise design and market-conditions, this thesis takes the position that an intervention on the typical unit is not necessary. It is the private home where the individuals can express themselves, and this is critical. However, to avoid the isolation and separation that this individual capsule can create, there needs to be a new outlook towards the collective spaces that serve these individual units. The condominiums common elements have the opportunity to become the collective counter-point to the individuality of the capsular unit.

The aim of this tower is to embrace the new conditions created by this new age of programmatic promiscuity, to create an interior urbanity that draws on the juxtaposition of seemingly opposite and random functional uses. To

finally achieve the promise of the high-rise tower noted by Koolhaas, a culture of congestion, a vertical urbanity. Dwelling, office, swimming pool, roller-rink, night-club, Laundromat, sushi, book store... On the city street the combinations of these disparate programs create a vitality and energy, their users creating nodes of social interference. The conventional stacked tower contains all these elements and yet has done everything to suppress their mixing. This tower actively pursues the engagement and confrontation of these diverse functions and creates a “new public” from the elements already present.

The master-planned condo community of CityPlace is chosen as the design proposal site. CityPlace is the quintessential condo neighbourhood, ripe for intervention and the perfect testing ground for interior spatial explorations in the condominium structure.

New Opportunities

Toronto is now the North American market with the most new condominiums and as such has a tremendous opportunity to test new territories in collective urban dwelling. Rather than promoting and encouraging the individual capsule through marketing there is an opportunity to discuss and think about the new collective spaces and forms of collective ownership that we are creating. Be it through programmatic promiscuity

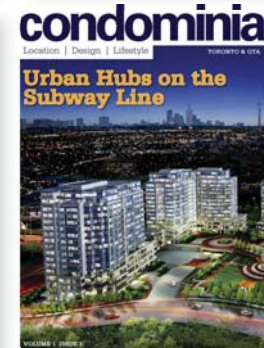
and hybridisation, or vertical urbanity with the common elements of the condo opened up to new publics, it is incumbent upon architects to explore a diversity of condo typologies, or risk replicating isolating effects across the city.

» *fig. 06 Toronto [facing page]*

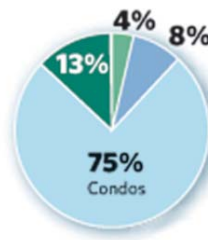
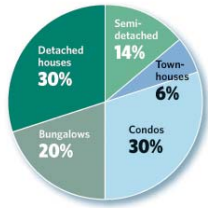


part one:

SITUATION



» fig. 07 The pace of Toronto's residential development registered on the newsstand.



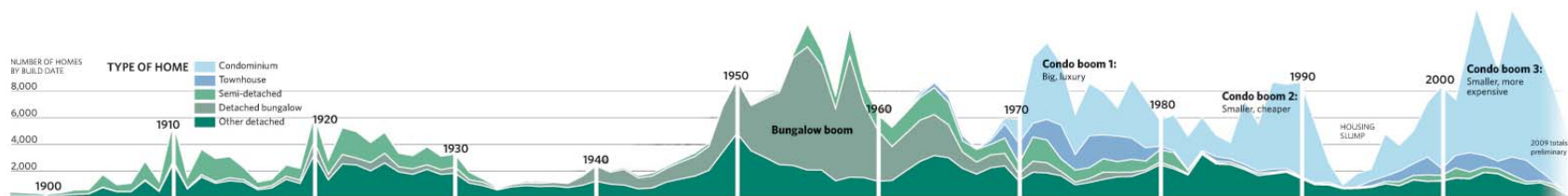
» fig. 08 [top] The total mix of homes in Toronto today.
 [above] The mix of newly built homes in the past ten years.

1.1 High-Density City

Toronto, Boom Town

Of the 573,948 homes in Toronto, 172,004 are condominium units, meaning a full 30% of this city’s housing stock is now condo based with 72,023 of those having been constructed in the past ten years. In 2008, condo units made up 86% of Toronto’s new homes.¹ As of August 2010, there were 272 condo towers on the market with a further 20 expected to come on to the market in the upcoming third quarter.² By every indication a vast and growing number of Toronto’s residents now make their home in these densely packed residential structures.

Even the critics now admit that condominiums are integral components of both Toronto’s residential and economic viability. Councillor Adam Vaughn, who originally ran for City council in 2006 “on a pledge to curb ‘unbridled’ condominium development”³, had changed his tune by early 2009. Interviewed in the National Post in January of that year, Councillor Vaughn suggested that the city’s building industry could use a bail-out. “Condo development is our General Motors,”⁴ he would say, evoking the Detroit based car company that was famously bailed out during the financial crisis of 2008. More than just the housing responsibility of these buildings, the condo industry creates work for planners, architects, designers, marketers, engineers and construction workers. At the time of the interview there were 89 projects underway in Vaughn’s Trinity-Spadina ward, an area of roughly 8 square kilometres. Toronto’s rampant condo industry is providing for more than just a housing need, it is now a catalyst for economy.



» fig. 09 Timeline of Toronto’s residential development showing three historical condo booms and the domination of condos in the housing market over the past ten years.

Furthermore, as the City of Toronto continues to benefit from the development fees, property taxes and civic gains provided by developers in exchange for increased density, the condominium has become a major generative force for the city's infrastructure, streetscapes and public spaces.

Towards a More Compact City

To understand Toronto's current condo boom it is important to first understand the forces behind it. How is it that this housing type became such a dominant form within Toronto? Condominiums first started appearing in Toronto sometime in the 1970s, however it has been in the last ten years that this housing type has really proliferated, becoming the predominant form of housing in the downtown core. This shift correlates with a change in philosophy at the city-planning level spurred on by financial and environmental warnings.

By the late 90s sprawling suburbs in Southern Ontario were causing strains on the Greater Toronto Area and the Province of Ontario. In 1996, A Greater Toronto Area task force would issue a report to the provincial government warning of the financial stress sprawl produced with its sizable infrastructure needs while supported by a limited tax base with a lower density

of property owners.⁵ Further studies by planners and urbanists throughout North America would echo the same sentiments, suburban sprawl was damaging to the economy, environment and future health of our urban and surrounding areas.

An answer to sprawl came in the planning philosophy of smart-growth. In the 90's North American cities such as Portland and Vancouver would prove that the densification of urban centres with their existing infrastructure in place made for a more vibrant, liveable and healthy downtown community, while negating the need for developing sprawl on the fringes. Essentially, the idea is to build up rather than out.

By 2000, Toronto would begin following suit, formulating its own strategy for intensification of existing urban areas. With forecasts suggesting the Greater Toronto Area would grow by 2.7 million inhabitants by 2031, with 537,000 of those being located in the core of Toronto,⁶ a sustainable forward-looking approach was necessary. Toronto would take its cues from Vancouver and re-focus its development and planning strategies towards smart-growth.

» fig. 10 Mapping high-rise condominium projects under-development within the Trinity-Spadina ward of downtown Toronto. [facing page]

“Condo development is our General Motors.”

In January 2009, interviewed in the National Post, Councilor Adam Vaughn suggested that the city’s building industry could use a bail-out. The condo industry creates work for planners, architects, designers, marketers, engineers and construction workers. At that time there were 89 projects underway in his Trinity-Spadina ward, an area of roughly 8 square kilometres, with the majority concentrated south of Queen St.



What is Smart-Growth?

Essentially, any of the four terms: smart-growth, intensification, densification and reurbanization, refer to a city planning strategy that focuses future development and growth in existing urban centres. By adding density to and refurbishing urban areas, with their transit lines, and supporting infrastructure firmly in place, development can be limited in the outskirts of the city and in the process an ‘intensifying’ of the urban realm with a refreshed vibrancy of street life may occur. The Toronto Official Plan 2007 offers its definition and reasons for reurbanization:

“By improving and making better use of existing urban infrastructure and services before introducing new ones on the urban fringe, reurbanization helps to reduce our demands on nature and improve the livability of the urban region by: reducing the pace at which the countryside

is urbanized; preserving high quality agricultural lands to protect Toronto’s food security; reducing our reliance on the private automobile; reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and reducing our consumption of non-renewable resources.

By shaping the urban fabric of the GTA into a system of mixed use centres and corridors linked by good transit service we will build better communities, strengthen economic conditions and improve air and water quality.”

In November of 2002 the Official Plan had been adopted by City Council, and the vision had been laid-out. Toronto would become a denser city. This of course participated in the promotion of downtown residential development, which due to escalating land values would take the form of the high-rise condominium development.



» fig. 11 Toronto Skyline



» fig. 12 Leaky condo tower under repair in Vancouver. [above]

Challenges of Density

However, high-density is not without its challenges. If improperly managed or planned, a dense congestion of people can have devastating effects on a city. There are the strains of over-loading of infrastructures, social stresses, and conflicts and mental anguish under the weight of over-congestion.

Shared ownership of dense condominium towers creates a whole host of challenges. In Vancouver, the leaky condo crisis of the 90's illustrated the precarious position homeowners can find themselves in when a key component of their shared building fails. The cost of renovating the faulty cladding systems throughout the city was estimated to be in the billions of dollars and created a series of lawsuits and conflicts between condo boards, home-owners and developers over who should pay when the building fails.⁸ In Miami, the condo market is still reeling from the real-estate crash. Foreclosures have left nearly entire buildings sitting dormant, as homeowners have walked away from their units.⁹ Building-wide issues that develop can cost condominium associations exorbitant fees to fix at the scale of a high-rise, leading to lawsuits and in certain cases people would rather foreclose and walk away from their units which aren't valuable enough to justify these expensive costs.

Of course, all of these concerns coupled with the inflated price of downtown land-values means that the cost of living in the dense city can be quite daunting. Certainly, the price per square foot is much higher in the city; this leads to smaller and sometimes cramped living spaces. However, studies have been done showing that the financial difference between living in a city versus living in the suburbs can actually even out over time once other suburban costs are factored in. Suburban energy and utility bills tend to be higher due to the larger space and car dependency carries its own expenses such as maintenance, insurance and the ever-escalating price of gasoline.¹⁰

There are also questions of high-density living's long-term viability as suggested by Brenda Vale and Robert Vale in their essay, "Is the High-Density City the Only Option?" Vale and Vale point to the unsustainability of too-high-a-density in a post-oil scenario. They point to the fact that while high-density solves the problems of today quite well, those being efficient land-use and transportation, that the dangers are high-density cities still rely on importing food, water and fuel and that this becomes significantly more difficult without the use of fossil-fuels. The high-density city they describe is a city of consumption without the ability to produce. They posit that sometime in the future sprawling neighbourhoods may actually be able to cope better to this transition,

having the land to generate renewable energies, grow food and even re-use sewage as fertilizer (theorizing that due to diminishing phosphorous ore levels, our current use of artificial fertilizers will be too expensive and unreliable) like they used to do before artificial fertilizers.¹¹ While it may be true that any region or urban typology will only ever be partially self-sufficient, it serves as a reminder of the intense infrastructure systems needed to maintain our urban densities and their fragility to energy concerns.

And while it is only diligent to consider the dangers of high-density perhaps the appropriate attitude lies in the conclusion to Susan Roaf's essay "The Sustainability of High-Density". Rather than focus on 'high-density' she surmises the answer is "optimal density":

"The question is not 'are high-density settlements sustainable'; rather, for any place and people on this earth, 'what is the optimal density for this city'. The answer depends upon the capacity of, and the constraints in, the supporting social, economic and ecosystems of that city. Welcome to the new age of the capacity calculators.

For each city we need careful calculations of the population level that it is capable of supporting in relation to available water, energy and food; sewage and waste disposal systems; transport and social infrastructure; and work opportunities for current and future conditions."¹²

The challenge lies at the planning level, where densities must be carefully managed and calculated alongside infrastructural, economic, social and civic capacities. Only then can the benefits of density be achieved while avoiding most of the dangers.

Perfect Storm

For Toronto's condo boom to happen at the scale it has, however, would require more than just a change in planning philosophy. As David Foot remarks in his book "Boom, Bust and Echo", "Demographics explain about two-thirds of everything"¹³ and indeed, a major ingredient of the condominium market has been a migrating population enthusiastic about downtown living, aided by low mortgage rates and access to credit.

Four specific demographics have fuelled this downtown migration, each drawn to the city and condominium living for different reasons. Foreign-born immigrants, young professionals, empty nesters and now young families have all been substantial factors in the growth of the condo market.

Net immigration is a substantial factor in Toronto's forecasted growth. Historically, Toronto has been an



» fig. 13 Condos along Lakeshore [above]



» fig. 14 The under-construction condo corridor along the southern edge of the Gardiner Expressway. [top]

» fig. 15 Illustration in *Toronto Life Magazine* [above]

attractor for foreign immigrants and a major centre of diversity. So much so that Toronto has the world's highest proportion of foreign-born residents with 43.7% of its population being born in another country.¹⁴ For many of these new residents, condominiums offer a familiar density and attractive housing option. "CityPlace's eventual density-and the cramped spaces of many units-are anathema to someone raised in an Annex Victorian, but for someone who has grown up in Mumbai or Kowloon, CityPlace can feel just like home."¹⁵

The largest demographic of new condo buyers are first-time homeowners, unable yet to afford a house in the city and not looking to move to the suburbs. "CityPlace's residents are predominantly first-time buyers or renters, between the ages of 25 and 35, who have lived here for two or three years and can't imagine staying more than five-especially if they plan to have kids."¹⁶

They are increasingly being joined in the condo market by an aging baby-boomer set. "In recent years, waves of empty-nesters and seniors-the parents of the boomer generation-have begun selling their single-family homes and moving into condominiums that are closer to the urban core. These housing choices reflect practical concerns-the reduced need for space, a desire to spend less time in cars-but they also underscore a trend that has driven the downtown renaissance visible in many

large cities right across North America."¹⁷

The combination of young first time buyers and empty-nesters make-up a significant portion of condominium owners. Derek Raymaker in the *Globe and Mail*: "More than half of all condominium buyers are still purchasing for the first time, but now a full quarter are considered to be empty-nesters or people downsizing."¹⁸ And as condominiums increase in popularity, they become attractive to unforeseen demographics, as "... government conservation efforts have sharply curtailed the development of new low-rise housing, which has led to higher new-home prices for such dwellings, especially in Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Mississauga and Oakville. That has added another segment to the condo market -- young families who have been priced out of the low-rise market."¹⁹

Furthermore, the downtown migration has coincided with a cultural renaissance in the core, the hoped for urban intensification, which only furthers the status of the downtown as a desirable destination. The past decade has seen new landmark buildings for the Art Gallery of Ontario, ROM, Film Festival, OCAD, Gardiner Museum, National Ballet School and Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts as part of the Province of Ontario's Superbuild Fund. These centres combined with the ongoing investment and revitalization of the

waterfront, major renovations to Union Station and a Bloor Street beautification initiative have coalesced to create a vibrant downtown that is now even more desirable to new residents.

Questioning the Form of Density

Factors of planning decisions, demographics and economic realities have converged to ensure that high-density in the city of Toronto predominately takes on a single form, that of the high-rise condominium tower. Condominiums have been able to address the specific needs of its target demographic groups and coupled with the appeal of downtown living, and supported by municipal planning decisions have combined to drive escalating downtown land values, thus making the density of the downtown condo tower the most viable and profitable housing type for real estate developers. As a result condo towers proliferate throughout the downtown core.

However, the rigidity and uniformity of these buildings across the city, while perfectly catered and targeted to certain demographics, have also ignored and alienated other potential downtown dwellers. For instance, the lack of many family-sized units on offer has kept many condos mostly family-free, not to mention the

lack of affordable housing stock which forces entire demographics out of the city-centre. The monetization of square footage by developers has also limited certain usages and programmes within condo-zones; all space has a monetary value associated to it and thus must have every dollar squeezed from it. This drastically limits any public, semi-public, social or collective space that is not retail-driven.

While, generally speaking, growth policies aimed at higher and more sustainable densities should be encouraged and the City of Toronto's growth plan commended, the goal should not be to merely create density but to do it in a way where the urban realm of the city's streets and public areas are enhanced and engaged in a way that promotes inclusion over segregation. For the most part, high-rise residential has gotten a free pass in Toronto, due to its ability to address the city's mandated growth policies, but questions must be asked of its long-term viability in creating and sustaining a healthy urban framework. As architects, we have a social responsibility to question the high-rise condominium logic that creates social polarization within the city. Density alone does not equate to "smart growth", but rather an approach that takes into consideration the parts of the city where monetary value is not easily calculated. A concern for the urban condition at large is necessary, rather than just limiting the outlook to creating valuable real estate within the walls of the tower.

Parlaying Public Gain

Section 37 and Community Benefits

Section 37: "Section 37 of the Planning Act permits the City to authorize increases in permitted height and/or density through the zoning bylaw in return for community benefits."⁴

The importance of the condo tower to Toronto is more profound than just providing housing and stimulating the economy. More and more, Toronto parlays condo developments into garnering public gains. The City piggy-backs these large urban developments to facilitate the construction of roads, bridges, parks and even schools and libraries. Development charges are administered by the city for every new construction project and these charges are used to fund the construction and maintenance of public infrastructure and services. More directly, the planning act Section 37 is used to negotiate gains for the city in exchange for amending zoning laws to allow an increase in density, which the developer and city desire.

These trade-offs can be relatively small; road work, street plantings and beautification, public art, or payment to a municipal agency, but they can also be quite large, as in the case of the CityPlace Development where the city received an 8 acre park and a pedestrian bridge over the rail lines in exchange for density².

And it isn't just the City of Toronto that uses condominiums for its own gains. Private organizations have also used the money generated by condos to help finance their own projects, such as Toronto International Film Festival's headquarters, which was only feasible when subsidized by the condo tower that it anchors. At a smaller scale, commercial and retail spaces are afforded prime downtown street level real estate by leasing out ground-floor space zoned for retail in condo towers.

Of course, this only furthers the commodification of our civic realm as the logic that dictates the residential private sector now begins to seep into the city's public spaces, institutions and cultural domain. Unfortunately, this places these public institutions at the mercy of a developer's profits, as the 'bottom-line' ends up taking precedence. Suddenly, efficiency of space takes precedence over quality of space. A public space, by definition, must be free and accessible to everyone, but when private interests are used to finance these spaces, it creates a potentially uneasy collaboration.



» fig. 16 Photo-op! "Representatives from the city, Concord Adex and artist/author Douglas Coupland, second from right, at the sod-turning for Concord CityPlace park."



» fig. 17 Library District Condominiums will share a site with a Toronto Public Library.

The most up to date Schedule of Development Charges is available by contacting the Toronto Building Division. The latest Schedule is also accessible on the City of Toronto's website at toronto.ca/finance/dev_charges.htm.

Residential (per unit)	
Single Detached and Semi-detached Dwelling	\$12,366.00
Multiple Dwelling Unit ⁽¹⁾	\$9,841.00
Apartment Unit – Two Bedroom and Larger	\$8,021.00
Apartment Unit – One Bedroom and Bachelor Unit	\$4,985.00
Dwelling Room	\$3,195.00
Non-residential (per s. m. of gross floor area) ⁽²⁾	
Industrial Uses	No charge
Other Non-residential Uses (Ground Floor only)	\$99.30

Notes:

- (1) The development charge rates are subject to change due to indexing, phase-in or amendment to the Bylaw.
- (2) Multiple Dwelling Units smaller than 55 sq. m. pay the Apartment Unit rate.
- (3) The non-residential development charge applies only to the Non-residential Gross Floor Area that is located on the Ground Floor (as defined in the Bylaw).

» fig. 18 Development Charges are used to fund: Childcare, civic improvements, development-related studies, emergency medical services, fire, health, library, parks and recreation, pedestrian infrastructure, police, roads, sanitary sewers, Spadina subway extension, storm water management, subsidized housing, transit and water.

Developers are keen to take advantage of the city's situation. There is value in association with these institutions, as the Library District Condominiums clearly demonstrate, using its co-operation with the public library as its namesake and a marketing feature. But the long-term advantages of these pairings are harder to find for the public-side. Once the construction is complete, the private real estate continues to benefit while the public-end gets the short-end of the stick.

Five Cases

To further understand the motivations of city institutions and the concepts and influence of community benefits stemming from condo development, five specific case studies are detailed here. The first, 300 Front, exhibits a typical trade-off with the city for public gain. The second, The L Tower, demonstrates how a City-funded cultural facility, through negotiation with the city, can benefit. The third, the Republic condominium in North Toronto, combines a high-school and two condominium towers. The fourth, Festival Tower, is an example of a private organization using condos to finance its own project. And lastly, the MoMA tower in New York illustrates the level of complexity that these symbiotic relationships can achieve.

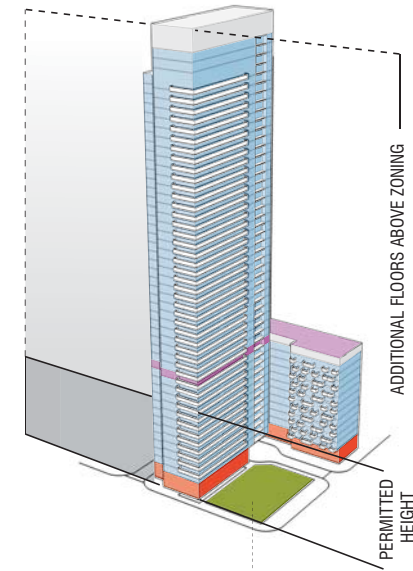
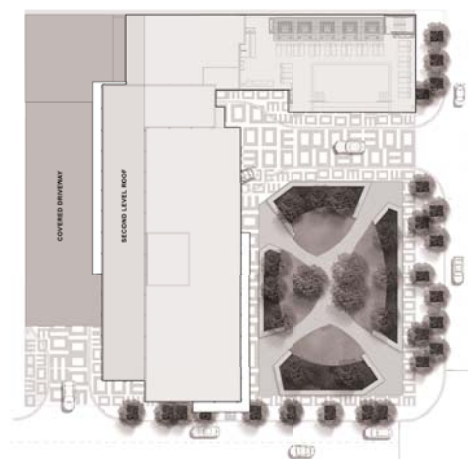


» fig. 19 Development Charges Pamphlet

300 Front

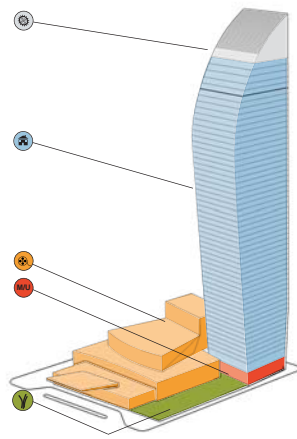
For the condo development of 300 Front, located right in the heart of downtown Toronto at the corner of Front St and John St, the developers, Tridel, entered into a Section 37 agreement with the City. On a property zoned RA (Reinvestment Area) for a building height of 30 m (10 storeys) the developers sought a height of 156 m (51 storeys), after community consultation and numerous discussions regarding the quality of built form and its effect on the area, the proposal was accepted. In exchange for these additional storeys and increased density the developers made the following concessions to the City: 825 sm of the lot are to be given over to public open space, in the form of a landscaped parkette, designed and paid for by the developer. In addition, there was a \$2 million payment to the city to be used for improvements to the streetscape and to surrounding parks in the area, and payment to the Toronto Community Housing Corporation to benefit developments in the Ward. Also, public art is to be provided per public programme's requirements (ie 1% of gross construction costs of all buildings built on the lot) along with the provision that 10% of all units be 3 bedroom or contain knock-out panels so they can be converted as such. This is all in addition to the development charges, which are estimated to be \$3,736,186 paid to the City upon issuance of the building certificate.³

The parkette, designed by a landscape architect chosen and hired by the developer, features paving patterns that spell out the address of the condo when viewed from above. The design of the entire park centred on the idea of being viewed from the condo units above. This example indicates one way in which a public gain is manipulated by the developer in order to increase condo values.



» fig. 20 Demonstrating the gained floors, a big part of the city's return is the landscaped public park at the corner of John and Front St. [above]

» fig. 21 Site plan showing the landscape the way it was meant to be viewed, from above. Paving spells 300, the projects address. [left]



» fig. 22 Programmatic breakdown with the Sony Centre in orange [top]

» fig. 23 Rendering of the 'L' tower as it was originally intended before the cultural centre was cut from the base. [above]

The L Tower

The L Tower, another downtown Toronto condo, this one well known for being designed by internationally renowned architect Daniel Libeskind, is an example of a cultural centre using condo financing to supplement renovations. The Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, adapting to the loss of the long-term tenants of The National Ballet and The Opera (both with their own new buildings), needed updating and renovating. The on-going \$20 million renovation to the city owned Centre is being almost entirely paid for by Castlepoint Development in exchange for the rights to 49 storeys of residential condos.

The seven storey extension of the podium was to house a cultural centre named the Arts and Heritage Awareness Center which hinged on the Sony Centre raising \$75 million - with \$44 million coming from provincial and federal money. The public agenda for the project encountered problems when the Sony Centre was unable to raise these funds. The back-up plan was implemented with the podium becoming 7 storeys of retail and commercial development, which Castlepoint would lease from the city with a one-time payment of \$3.5 million. However, this was amended so that the current plan has the podium removed and the remaining floors becoming condos with a large public plaza being given to the city. This amendment results in Castlepoint paying

\$1million for the construction of the public plaza and \$3million to the city for additional residential density. Castlepoint, it has been revealed, has also donated \$1 million to the Sony Centre in the form a condo unit (valued at over \$500,000) and cash. Total Concessions accumulated \$25million after Castlepoint paid \$20mil for renovations, \$1mil for public plaza, \$3mil for extra density and a \$1mil donation.

The 'L' tower's name stemmed from its profile, which contained a toe that was to be a new cultural centre. Instead, that has been lopped off, making the 'L' tower an 'I' and lessening the cultural floor area the developer was supposed to construct, replaced instead by more units.

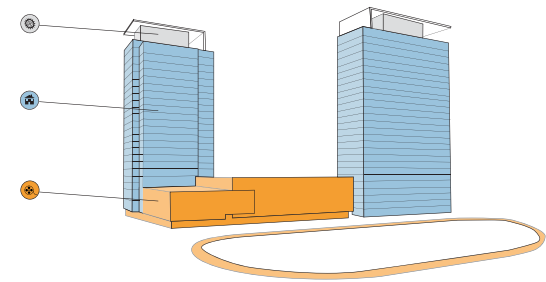
The Republic

The Republic condominium towers by Tridel exhibit a rare collaborative union between developer and school board. The Republic is comprised of two condominium towers, 24 and 27 storeys, in North Toronto, which share a podium with the North Toronto Collegiate Secondary School. The existing school, in dire need of renovations, was stuck with a predicament: “Too rundown to last but too costly to fix, North Toronto’s location near thriving Yonge and Eglinton meant it could sell off less than an acre for \$23 million in 2007, enough to kick-start a rebuild project, and with it a storm of debate on whether school boards should sell public land to private owners.”⁴

The result is the Republic: a hybrid building new to Toronto, the combination of private housing and public schools. Although the project may stir debate on whether or not school boards should be selling land to developers, the collaboration exemplifies the new realities that the densifying city of Toronto is faced with. However, the architectural opportunities presented by such an unusual and unique programmatic pairing are squandered. Despite their proximity and forced combination, the school and condominium seemingly ignore their new relationship.

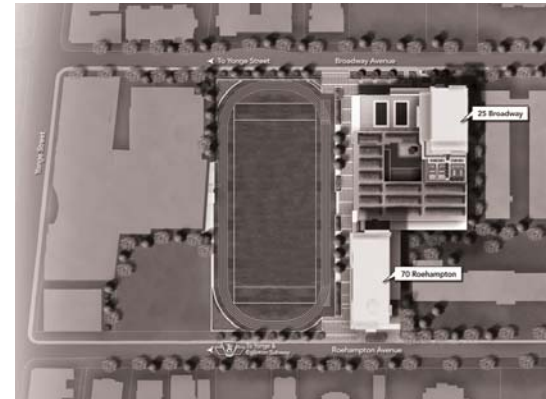
The Republic looks exactly like a high school sandwiched by two condo towers, instead of creating a new architectural condition cognizant of its unique union of two disparate programmes.

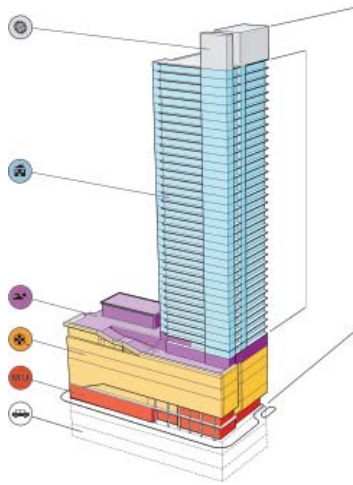
» fig. 24 Marketing render of the Republic with the collegiate’s track and field in the foreground [below]



» fig. 25 Programmatic breakdown with the collegiate shown in orange [above]

» fig. 26 Site plan [below]





» fig. 27 Programmatic breakdown with retail in red, cinemas and exhibition space in orange and residential amenity space in purple. [top]

» fig. 28 street view of Festival Towers Cinema podium [above]

Festival Tower

The Festival Tower represents a different form of symbiotic relationship. In the case of Festival Tower the city gains lie in the indirect results of cooperation between two private organizations. While the city of Toronto benefits, in the form of a new cultural centre and the infusion to the local economy that comes from the institution and the variety of festivals it supports, the city receives no direct payment as in the first two cases. Instead, this is an example of a private organization piggy-backing off the force of the condo market.

“Located in the heart of Toronto’s entertainment district, on the northwest corner of King and John streets, the five-storey facility will house TIFFG activities, including five theatres, a film reference library, a gallery and exhibition space, and an education centre for all ages.”⁵

When Canadian Film Director Ivan Reitman inherited the downtown plot at King and John, he donated it to the Toronto International Film Festival with the intention of building a permanent home in the city for the international Festival, something it did not previously have. In order to secure the financing necessary for erecting a 5-storey cinema and cultural centre, the real-estate developers, The Daniels Corporation, were brought in, both for financial support and for their

construction management knowledge.

In the end, the federal and provincial governments committed to donating \$25 million each to assist in the fundraising for the Bell Lightbox, indicating a rare reversal where the government actually contributed to the construction efforts of a condominium.

MoMA Tower

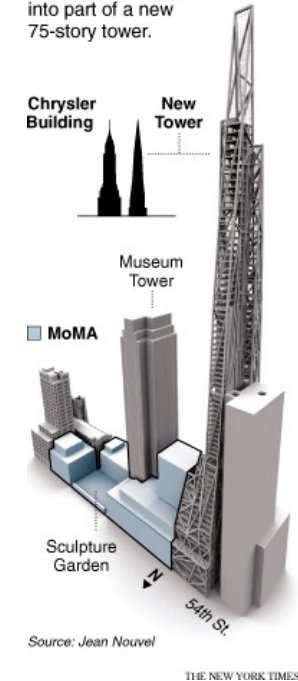
The MoMA tower illustrates that mutually beneficial combinations of condominium and organization are not phenomena present only in Toronto. In fact, the MoMA tower illustrates how complex, creative and intertwined these combinations can become. In this case, three external organizations, the Museum of Modern Art, the University Club and St. Thomas Church, all sought to benefit from the condo's development.

Along similar lines to the Toronto International Film Festival, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City would gain additional gallery space through an agreement with real-estate developers. The developer, Hines, purchased an empty lot from the Museum of Modern Art for \$125 million in early 2007 to go towards the MoMA's endowment. As part of the agreement MoMA would gain over 60,000 sf of gallery and back of house spaces and, in an interesting twist, MoMA held veto power over the architect (the two sides would agree on Jean Nouvel). Zoning laws required Hines to purchase the air rights from nearby historical sites (And deemed New York City Landmarks), the University Club (136,000sf) and St. Thomas Church (275,000sf). In exchange for the air rights to these two historic landmarks, Hines would pay for restoration of the buildings, and contribute to a maintenance endowment, ensuring the continuation

of these two buildings. Despite the benefits to three respected midtown institutions, local opposition is strong against the MoMA tower proposal, in no small part due to the buildings ambitious height. As New York architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable points to the principle that these deals with City, at the base level, are about breaking zoning by-laws. "What I see is an enormous real-estate deal with cultural window dressing, a case history of how the zoning rules can be used to do something they were never meant to encourage."⁶

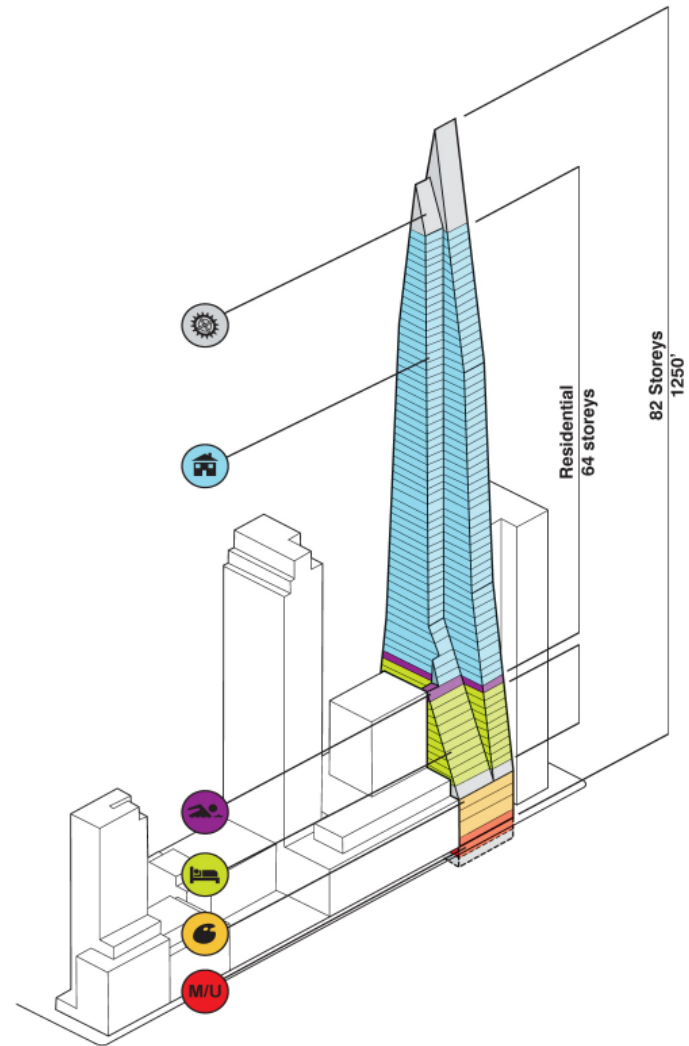
New Neighbor For the Modern

MoMA plans to extend its galleries into part of a new 75-story tower.



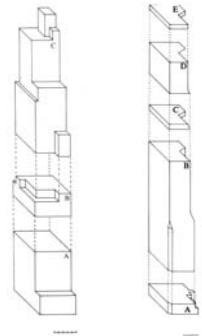
» fig. 29 Controversial for its attempted height, Jean Nouvel's tower has lopped off height in an attempt to appease city councillors. [top]

» fig. 30 Programmatic breakdown. Red is retail and restaurants, orange represents museum floors, green is hotel floors and purple is an amenity floor. [right]



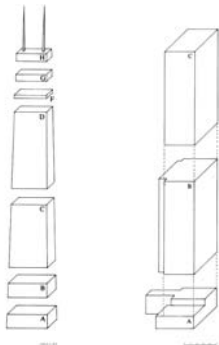
*» fig. 31 Comparing other forms of hybrid cataloguing.
[opposite page]*

HYBRID BUILDINGS
 Images taken from Joseph Fenton's "Hybrid Buildings"



- A. Athletic club
- B. Restaurant
- C. Hotel

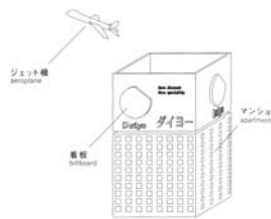
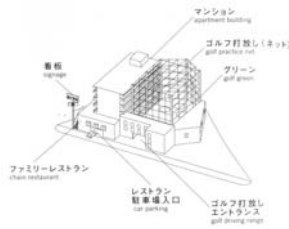
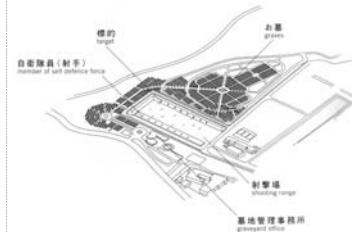
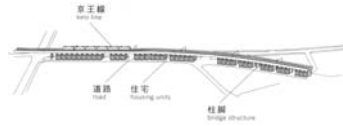
- A. Lobbies, Bank
- B. Offices
- C. Athletic club
- D. Hotel
- E. Tennis courts



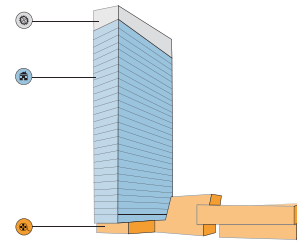
- A. Stores
- B. Parking
- C. Offices
- D. Apartments
- E. Health club
- F. Observatory
- G. Restaurant
- H. Television studios

- A. Stores
- B. Offices
- C. Apartments

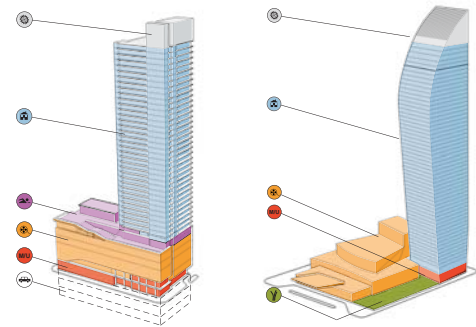
DA-ME ARCHITECTURE
 Images taken from Atelier Bow-wow's "Made in Tokyo"



PROGRAMMATIC PROMISCUITY
 Images by author

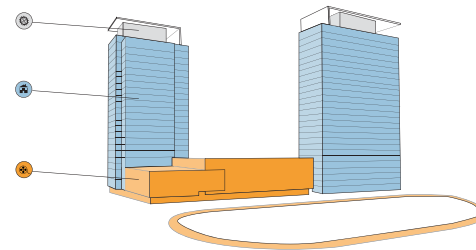


public library / condo



cinema / condo

performance theater / condo



public high-school / track / condo

1.3

The New Vernacular

“Competing lines of real estate agents waiting to buy new luxury condos turned ugly on Bloor St. this morning with jabbing, shouts, threats and accusations of queue-jumping”¹

This was the scene November 25th, 2009, outside of the opening for X2 condominiums, a 42-storey Miesian condominium tower on the southwest corner of Jarvis Street and Charles Street. Named X2 after the condo it replicates, X condo, on the northwest corner of Jarvis and Charles. So anticipated was the project that real-estate agents waited in line for days to gain the opportunity to be first to purchase units in the building, resulting in clashes outside. The scene mirrored the anticipation created by a sequel to a blockbuster movie.

City-wide, this phenomena of condo towers replicating and basing themselves off their predecessors, in this case a virtual copy and paste of units, aesthetics and features, has created a distinct Toronto typology. The marketing website for X2 condominiums not only admits to this copy and paste job, but also seems quite cognizant of the

condo’s role in influencing future developments. From the project’s website:

“Be inspired by X, the spectacularly successful condominium directly north on Charles Street. Create a residence that raises the bar for all others that follow.”²

Trends in the market are constantly under analysis and developers tweak projects to match the public’s buying patterns. In the case of X condominium and its cloned sequel, X2, we see definitive proof that what *has* sold becomes the benchmark for what *will* sell. This fact tightens the architect’s position as designer. The market forces that are acting on every project, in concert with local conditions, physical constraints and political factors, have made the condo tower a form of vernacular architecture, an evolved, efficient, and complex solution to an amalgam of factors and variables.

Vernaculars of Capital

In her book Form Follows Finance, Carol Willis coins the term “Vernaculars of Capitalism” as a means of explaining the form of early American high-rises. She argues that before the International Style in architecture, high-rises in New York and Chicago were vernacular buildings rather than recognized as a ‘Chicago-style’ or ‘New



» fig. 32 Render of X condominium [above left]



» fig. 33 The nearly identical X2 condominium [above right]

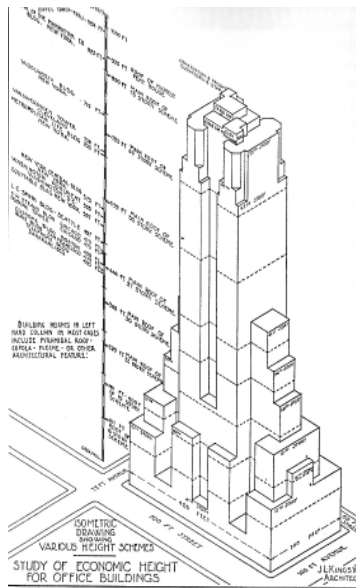


Fig. 92 Study of economic height for office buildings.

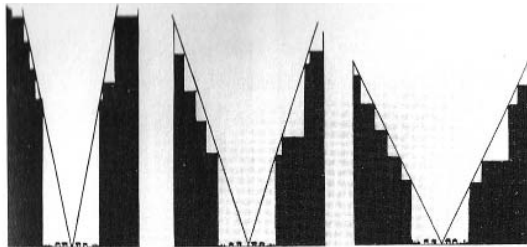


Fig. 75 Zoning diagrams, three height districts.

» fig. 34 Historical study of economic heights for NY office buildings [top]

» fig. 35 NYC zoning diagrams [above]

York-style'. The combination of economics, municipal regulations, zoning and each city's specific grid structure would guide the building into its form more so than any style designed by architects. These vernacular structures "are less *designed* than *evolved* in response to functional demands and to the particulars of place."³

She rightly connects the form of early high-rise building to market forces of the time: "A machine that makes the land pay' was the apt definition of a skyscraper offered by Cass Gilbert in 1900... This insistence on the linkage between profit and program is fundamental to commercial architecture, where the function of a building is to produce rents, and economic considerations govern design decisions."⁴

Because of this 'linkage between profit and program', office space was only constructed if it was of a desirable quality to prospective renters, un-rentable space would cut into profits and be unfeasible. Before the invention of air conditioning and fluorescent lighting, this required a close proximity to natural light and air dictating the depths and ceiling heights of offices as larger windows would allow more light deeper into the space. In this way, the ideal depth of 20'-28' with a ceiling height of 10'-12' became the parameters of leasable office space, and in many ways the tower was designed from the inside out. Economics would determine physical

qualities of the building, and location would drive up land costs which would result in more height, the extra cost being recouped by adding more leasable floors. The laws of diminishing returns cap the building's height; at a certain point the rent afforded by extra space can no longer cover the increasing construction expenses, as the building gets higher. However, as much as economics dictated the design of these buildings, the word vernacular also connotes a link with the specificities of a particular place.

Particulars of Place

As much as the economic forces of each city would influence a high-rises design, the particular parameters of each city would play an equal roll. Willis argues that historical factors such as each city's grid size contributed to a vernacular. Chicago's large lot-sizes made for large 'U' or 'O' shaped plans with lightwells in the middle, while Manhattan's small lot sizes led to the vertical tower. The individual zoning laws of each city also had a huge effect. Hugh Ferriss, in his classic "Metropolis of Tomorrow", illustrates clearly how the designer's hand was forced by Municipal zoning regulations in New York City. Taking a generic two hundred by six hundred foot Manhattan lot, Ferriss shows the linear step-by-step progression to a tower's 'design'.

*"It must be understood that the mass thus delineated is not an architect's design; it is simply a form which results from legal specifications. It is a shape which the Law puts into the architect's hands."*⁶⁵

Carol Willis' assertion is that the rise of modernism and the International Style supported by technological innovations brought about a standardization of office towers that ended these local 'vernacular' types. Given the ever-replicating forms of the Toronto condominiums, one wonders whether it is conscious design decision that forms the Toronto condo typology, or if yet again, a New Vernacular has emerged.

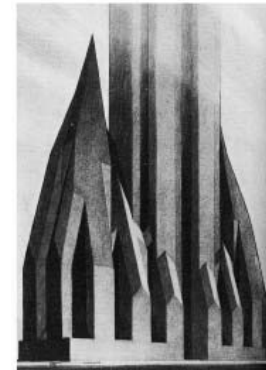
The New Vernacular

*"A skyscraper is not a metaphor. It's what happens when a team of cost analysts, insurers, engineers, architects, developers, investors, and lenders makes a collective determination that math, physics, and market forces, fused in one enormous hunk of a building, will probably yield a profit."*⁶⁶

In many ways, Toronto's condo towers are forming a vernacular type, a response to the particulars of the city's zoning laws and its market forces. The factors acting on Toronto condominiums are far-reaching and

numerous, but generally they can be split into three categories: physical, political and economic. Physical factors that limit design options stem from both the high-rise nature of building - structure, vertical circulation, egress, mechanical and electrical systems, etc - and requirements of residential types - natural lighting, ventilation and views, size and layout of unit, access and safety. Political factors include city-specific zoning and planning laws. Political factors are the most mutable and, given urban concessions can be bent or manipulated in the developer's favour. Economic factors range from land values, construction costs and fluctuations in real estate to the consumption habits of the market. As in early New York and Chicago high-rises, Toronto condominiums epitomise a 'linkage between profit and program.'

Developers are constantly registering what homebuyers find most attractive in a project finessing the aspects of their condo to mirror what has sold the best in the past. Urbanation Inc. is a Toronto based market research company that specializes in tracking Toronto's high-rise condominium market. They produce quarterly reports tracking the trends and performance of the condo market, which they then sell to "major financial institutions, condominium developers, government institutions, real estate professionals and land owners."⁶⁷ These reports include a section that provides "a statistical account



SECOND STAGE



FOURTH STAGE

» fig. 36 New York City zoning studies by Hugh Ferriss. [above]

New York Vernacular

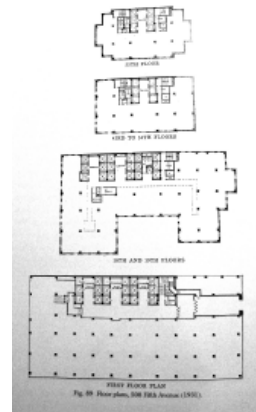


» fig. 37 Bank of Manhattan. 1930. NY. [above]

Chicago Vernacular



» fig. 39 Illinois Merchants Bank Building. 1924. Chicago. [above]



» fig. 38 500 fifth avenue. 1931 [above]



» fig. 40 u plan - McCormick Building. 1912. [above]

of every aspect of new condominium development in Toronto, including unit count, current overall sales, quarterly sales, suite sizes, price ranges, price indexes, as well as building and suite features, finishes and amenities.”⁸This analysis allows developers to recognize the trends and aspects of condo developments that are most appealing to recent home-buyers. This results in replication and a downsizing in options and diversity. Only the proven, most popular models are built. It’s a Darwinian selection process that narrows the options for future home-buyers.



1 BR Unit. 540sq.ft.
Bohemian Embassy.



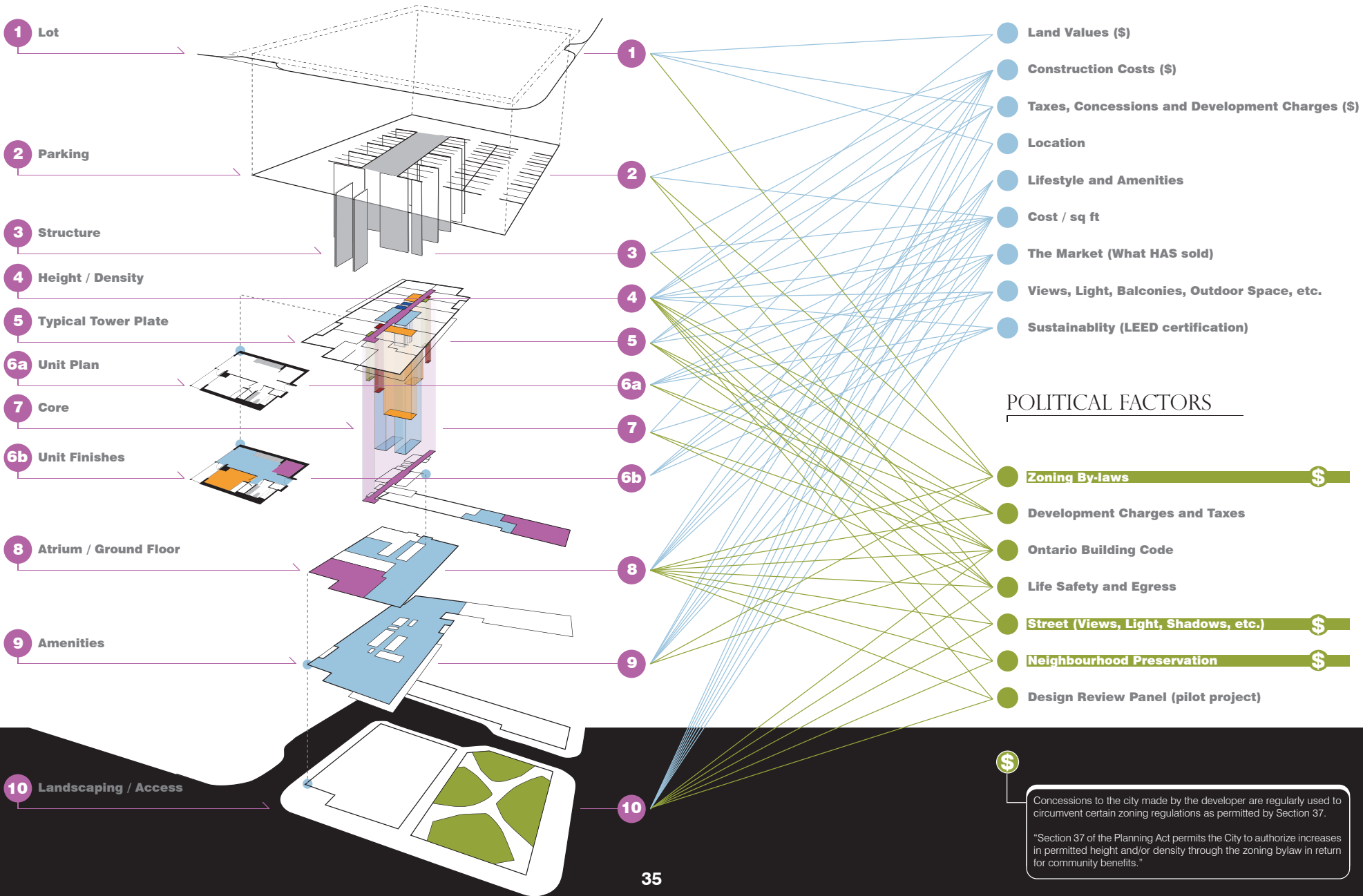
1 BR Unit. 500sq.ft.
Parade 2.

» *fig. 41 Typical Toronto unit comparison [above]*

» *fig. 42 Constructing the New Vernacular [facing page]*

CONDO COMPONENTS

ECONOMIC FACTORS



» fig. 43 Kurokawa Detail [facing page]



part two:

THE CAPSULE AND THE NETWORK

2.1

The Capsular Civilization

The thesis, thus far, has delved into the logic of condos and the impetus for their proliferation; yet faced with this rapid development, important questions emerge as to what are the societal challenges to Toronto inherent in this evolving form of shared living. In Toronto's condo boom, we are witnessing the culmination of societal trends that writers like Michael Sorkin, Margaret Crawford, Marc Auge and Lieven De Cauter have been warning of for nearly twenty years. The marketing onslaught of condominiums focused on the consumer individual combined with the on-going privatisation of our public realm hastens our collective descent into what the Belgian writer and philosopher Lieven De Cauter terms the Capsular Civilization.

In his seminal essay, "The Capsule and the Network", De Cauter expands on the ideas of capsule architecture first suggested by the Japanese Metabolist Kisho Kurokawa in his 1969 essay "Capsule Declaration". De Cauter's definition of Capsule is "a tool or an extension of the body which, having become an artificial environment, shuts out the outer, hostile environment. It is a medium that has become an envelope."¹ His fears about the rising

capsular civilization centre on the disintegration of society through barricading, segregation and isolation.

In today's condo culture this idea is promoted through the fostering of an insider/outsider mentality, and an active retreat from the public realm that encourages a growing separation and polarization of individuals. Beginning with the separation of image from reality and the fantasy created in the minds of the individual, this fantasy is then confronted by the reality of isolation that this typology fosters at the scale of the individual unit, the home and its network of collective spaces. This isolation, however, does not remain enclosed within the condominium walls, but is now proliferating into the city's urban realm and distinguishing entire neighbourhoods.

Rather than promoting and encouraging the individual capsule through marketing, Toronto's stimulated condo market has an opportunity to subvert current conditions by creating 'open' networks of interior urbanity within these new semi-private spaces. Hybridisation of programming, already becoming a necessity in the high-density city, can be utilised to encourage a diversity of user-types and open the collective spaces of the building up to new publics. By creating new forms of interior urbanity, perhaps the isolation and separation fostered through this capsulization can be negated.



» fig. 44 Kisho Kurokawa's Nakagin Capsule Tower. [above]

2.2

Constructing the Fantasy

Image > Reality

“Torontonians are spoiled for choice when it comes to boxes in the sky. In the second quarter of the year the city had 272 condominium projects on the market — the most of any metropolitan area on the continent. Another condo? Yawn.”¹

In Toronto’s saturated condominium market, real estate developers have had to search for any edge, any distinction that will set their condo development apart from the rest of the competition. The fact remains, however, that many of a condo’s built qualities vary little from one development to the next. Aesthetic appearance, square footage, unit cost, amenities offered, location, finishes, security, parking, storage; all of these are products of the market and as such, remain consistent within the market. The reality of condos is that, for the most part, they are more similar than not.

This situation is exacerbated by the financial realities for developer’s whereby most units in the building be sold before construction begins. Preconstruction sales are

used to secure financing for the construction; the longer this takes, the more money a developer loses in interest. In this pre-built environment, the image becomes more valuable than the eventual built reality. The marketing trumps the design. As Mason White explains in his essay “Condomanium”: “Current averages of development costs show a division of about five percent toward design and a whopping 15 percent toward marketing. The total cost of a condo is more influenced by its marketing methods than its design.”²

This has created a sharp division between image and reality. Illusion, fantasy and themes are all deployed in a marketing onslaught that sells consumers an image first and a home second. In the absence of any built product or design, marketers are free to target consumers in a variety of different ways.

Creating the Illusion of Choice

“Apparent diversity masks fundamental homogeneity.”³

So writes Margaret Crawford in discussing shopping malls, but she could just as well have been talking about marketing Toronto condominiums. The condos themselves are quite repetitive, but they are marketed as if each is highly individual.

Any new amenity or service offered is quickly replicated by newer condominium developments afraid to lose an edge, creating an upward spiralling of the market that suddenly becomes the norm. This copycat culture spawns downtown condos that are more similar than distinct; more copy than original. Any new distinction that a condo does possess immediately becomes a rallying point of its marketing strategy. The front page of the marketing website for Liberty Market Lofts in Toronto, proudly boasts of “17’ HIGH CEILING DOWNTOWN LOFTS”⁴, the loud monolithic descriptive phrase now superseding the actual condo name itself in size and importance. The price (“from \$199,900”) as well as financing options are shown next to assure any potential buyer that the condo is competitive and firmly entrenched in the rest of the market. However, the most original aspect is the one that is touted first and foremost as a way the buyer can “set your spirit free” in a “light-filled 2-storey loft that defies the boxy mentality of ordinary condominiums”; again, the marketing stressing how this one unique aspect of the condo separates it from “ordinary condominiums”. The marketing proclaims that the condo has everything the other condos have, but they *also* have this!

With every condo fighting for an edge, a new condominium may even be able to distinguish itself from the rest of the market by what it doesn’t offer. In September 2009, the community council of Toronto-

East York voted to approve the amendment of a zoning by-law for a future development that was previously rejected by the city council. The reason the contentious project was initially not approved revolved around its ambitious plan to provide 315 units in a 42-storey tower without providing a single permanent parking spot for tenants, as well as its lack of interior amenity space. What the city viewed as insufficient planning, the developer recognized as distinct and marketable.⁵

“If you look at the evidence of what sells downtown, the majority of units under 750 square feet in the downtown core sell without parking,” said Stephen Deveaux, a vice-president with the developer, Tribute Communities. Parking spots typically add \$20,000 or more to the cost of a downtown condo. Deveaux called the project, which still needs approval from full city council, an opportunity to design and market an “environmentally progressive building.” With so many jobs and handy transit nearby, the units will sell, Deveaux said.⁶

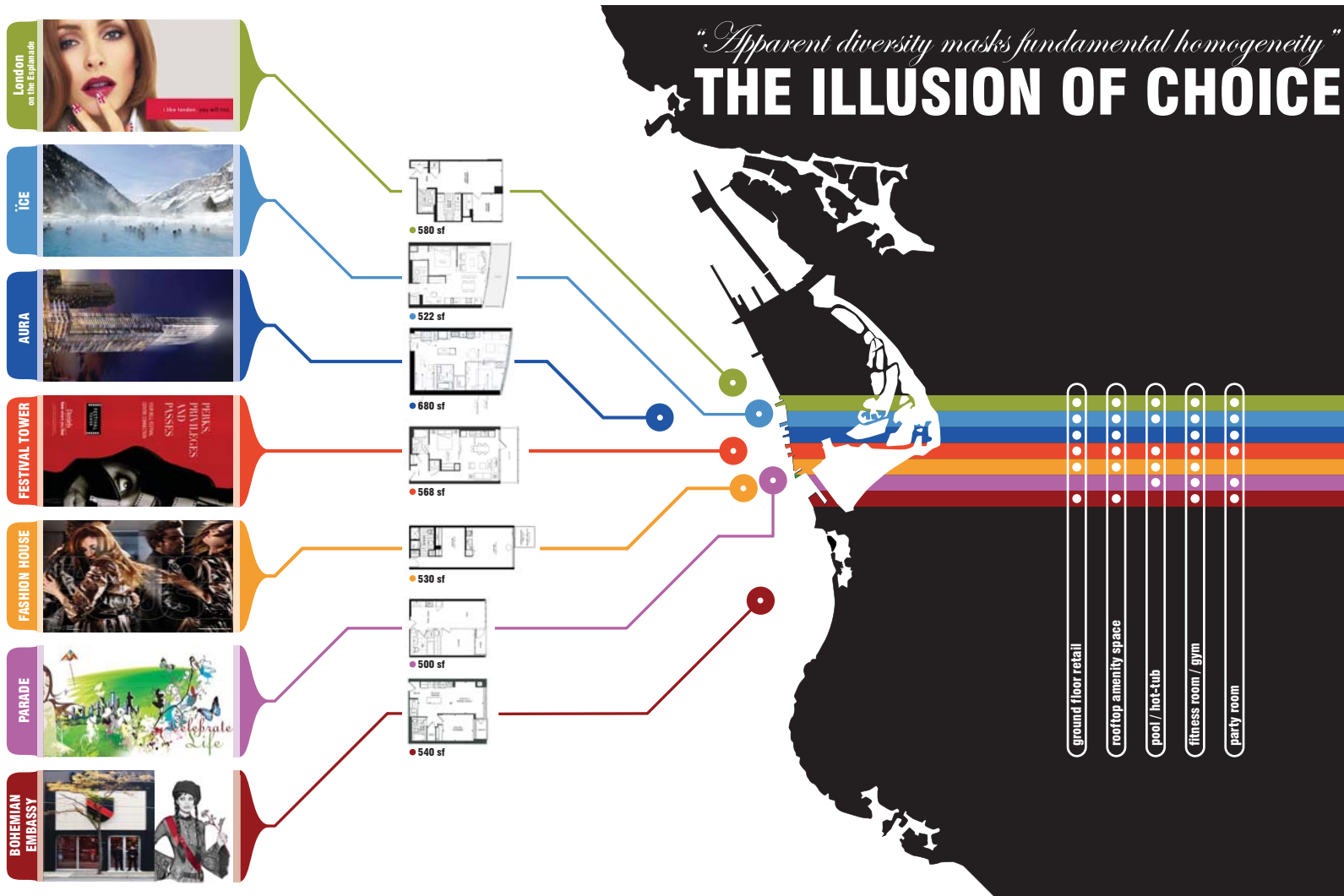
The Toronto Star ran an article about the council’s decision, the headline reading: ‘Car-free condo: 42 storey’s, no parking.’ Before site plan approval, or building permits, even before full city council approval, without anything more than a location, proposed height, and a lack of a typical amenity, the ‘car-free condo’ already had an image.



» fig. 45 Marketing poster for “Fashion House” condo. [top]

» fig. 46 Screenshot of marketing website for Liberty Market Lofts with the emphasis on ceiling heights. [above]

» fig. 47 The Illusion of Choice. [facing page]



These examples focus on tangible, physical features or services. Other condominiums, often devoid of any distinguishing feature, tend to focus on more abstract, intangible features in their aggressive marketing.

Is this the Real Life – Is this Just Fantasy

This idea of fantasy is inherent in much of the condo marketing in downtown Toronto. The CityPlace development in Toronto uses the under construction 8-acre public park that will be at the heart of the development as an attraction, a short video displayed upon entering the website asks us to act out the fantasy:

*“If my home has an 8-acre front yard...
I can discover myself again...
I can frolic like a child...
I can see my dog smile with glee...
I can fall in love with life all over again...
If my home has an 8-acre front yard...”*⁷

The short video, which is backed by music with laughter and a blurred and slightly de-saturated image of an attractive woman playing and strolling, sometimes with her dog, sometimes with a man, give off a dreamlike impression. The video is pure fantasy and viewers, through the use of the personal pronouns “I and my”,

are asked to imagine themselves in the scene and project the public park as their ‘front yard’. The marketing is not about the physical aspects of the condo, but instead about a fantasy life the consumer could buy him or herself in to.

Sales centres take this role-playing to the next level. More than the slogans, images and videos that websites and print media can provide, sales centres fully immerse the consumer in a fantasy environment. Authors Steve Maich and Lianne George describe the scene in their book “Ego Boom”:

*“These sales centres, staffed by attractive, stylish young people the market wants to identify with, are like sets designed to give prospective buyers the impression that they might step out of their former unsatisfying lives into a more fabulous one just by purchasing a unit in this building. ... “We want to make people feel like they are that [fantasy] person,” says Brad Lamb, “that they’re living a hip, cool downtown lifestyle by being in that space-even if they’re not. They can feel better about themselves. It’s intentional that we’ve delivered the buildings and the marketing materials to make you feel that way.”*⁶

Quite often these sales centres feature a mock-up unit plan, fully furnished, to let the homebuyer imagine what actually owning a unit in this condo might be like. This



» fig. 48 Stills from video commercial about CityPlace’s Parade condominium advertising the park fantasy. [2 top images]

» fig. 49 Park, as is today [above]



» fig. 50 Cover of marketing brochure obtained at Ice sales office [above]



» fig. 51 Exterior of the Ice Sales office. [top]



» fig. 52 Interior of the Ice sales office with front desk [above]

could be equated to the “cognitive acquisition” Margaret Crawford explains happens in malls in her essay in “Variations on a Theme Park”:

“...as shoppers mentally acquire commodities by familiarizing themselves with a commodity’s actual and imagined qualities. Mentally “trying on” products teaches shoppers not only what they want and what they can buy, but also, more importantly, what they don’t have, and what they therefore need. Armed with this knowledge, shoppers can not only realize what they are but also imagine what they might become. Identity is momentarily stabilized even while the image of a future identity begins to take shape, but the endless variation of objects means that satisfaction always remains out of reach.”

Location, cultural connection, neighbourhoods, environmental impact, historical connection and celebrity designers; all of these are used as built-in marketing features. But what about when a condo has nothing especially unique to distance itself from the market?

Enter the Theme

“Alongside the unsurprising frenzy found in any competitive market is the long touted mantra of ‘location,

location, location.’ Most condominium developments today find some angle, justified or fabricated, for pitching their location as an amenity. It is another form of branding, but this time at the scale of neighbourhood. Sometimes it is about the street name, or a nearby park, or an existing or emerging commercial district. Sometimes, though, there is little location amenity, and this is where the developer stakes are high.”¹⁰

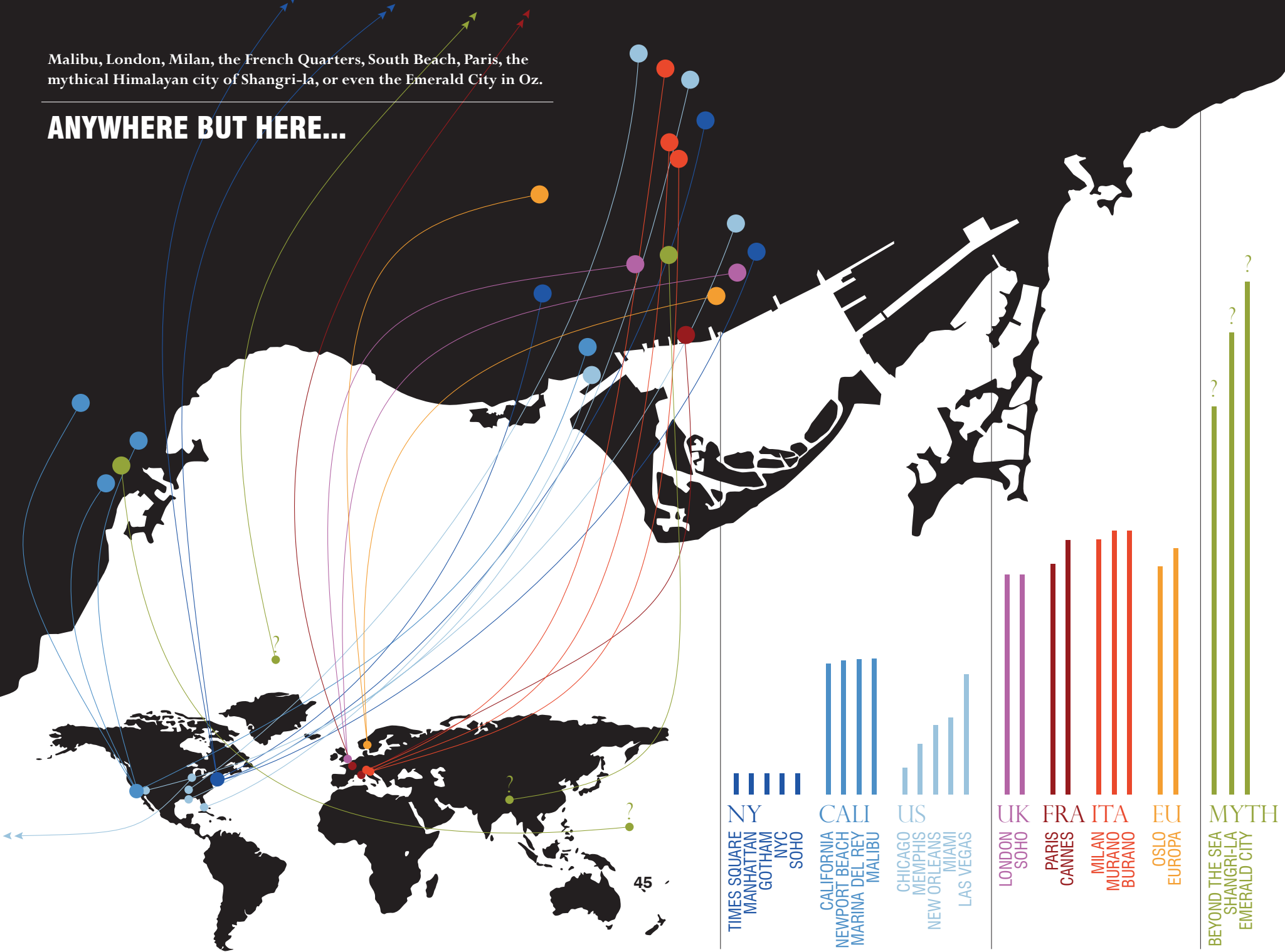
Margaret Crawford explains Richard Sennett’s theory of “indirect commodification,” as “a process by which nonsalable objects, activities, and images are purposely placed in the commodified world”.¹¹ In this case, condos (being the saleable commodity) use the image of the non-salable objects (sex and exotic locations) as a way to stimulate consumers. She explains further: “The basic marketing principle is “adjacent attraction”...a temporary suspension of the use value of the object, its decontextualized state making it unexpected and therefore stimulating.”¹²

Marketing campaigns for condominiums have exploited this technique of “indirect commodification”. Wholly disconnected from the project or the city, exotic locales are cynically bandied about with no reference to the actual location in Toronto. Condominiums located in North York, Mississauga and Etobicoke are named Malibu, French Quarters, Chicago, South Beach, even

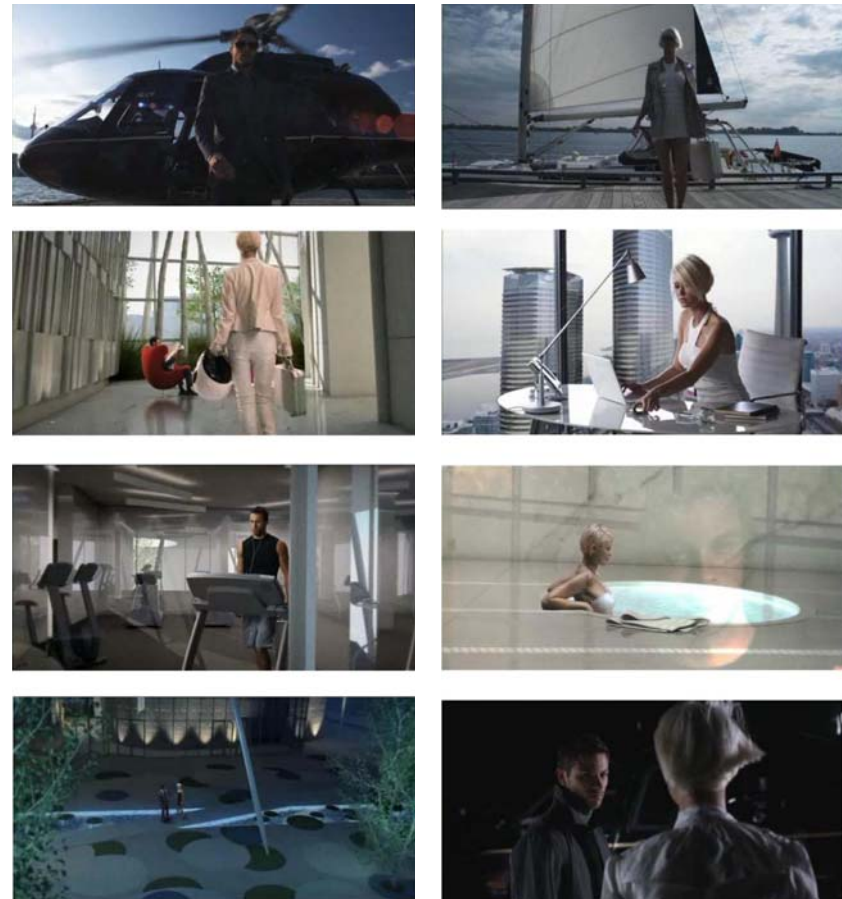
» fig. 53 Condos in Toronto and their corresponding world-wide locations. [facing page]

Malibu, London, Milan, the French Quarters, South Beach, Paris, the mythical Himalayan city of Shangri-la, or even the Emerald City in Oz.

ANYWHERE BUT HERE...



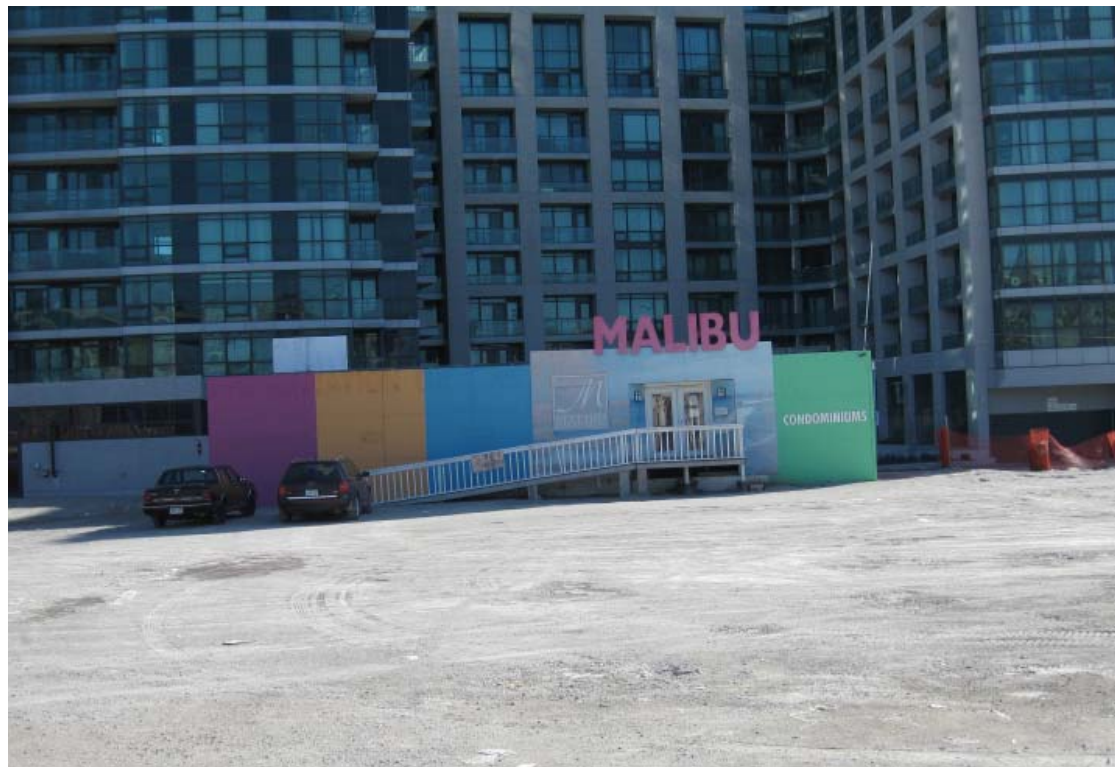
Emerald City, the fictional city of OZ, is manipulated for its exotic connotations. The glamour of a sexy lifestyle promised by the inhabitation of these over-marketed boxes and the dissolution of place, evaporated in a miasma of exotic and unreal locales.



» fig. 54 Stills from a marketing video shown in the Ice Sales office. The narrative follows two twenty-something characters, one male the other female. Both appear to be fabulously rich as the man arrives via a helicopter and the women on a yacht. They keep glimpsing each other in the collective spaces of the condo, the woman seeing the man as he works out in the gym and the man gazing at the women as she relaxes in her swimsuit in the hot-tub. They eventually meet in the courtyard and rendez-vous in her condo unit. [above]



» fig. 55 Magazine advertisement for California Condos in Etobicoke. [above]



» fig. 56 Malibu Condos, not located in Malibu [above]

2.3

Hyperindividualization

From the ipod to ihome

“The consumer is always an isolated, atomized individual: single, sometimes part of a couple or, at most, a member of a nuclear family... It describes how we are projected in advertising, how we live. We can call this the logic of hyperindividualism.”

De Cauter introduces the notion of hyperindividualization as the “massive disinterest in the concept of society in terms of sociability and solidarity.”² In essence, he describes a “free society centred on the individual, freedom and mobility”³ with the paradox being that such a society is rooted in “separation, enclosure and confinement.”⁴ The ‘capsule’ is the “mutually independent individual spaces, determined by the free will of individuals... Each space should be a highly independent shelter where the inhabitant can fully develop his individuality.”⁵

The rise of the individual is even more evidenced now, ten years after De Cauter wrote his essay, in the proliferation of laptops, smart phones and other mobile devices. More and more these personal devices are made not for a

family, group or company but for each individual. The ipod, imac, ipad, iphone... the 1 bedroom condominium unit is the housing equivalent of this phenomena, the ihome.

This focus on the individual is developed in a Capitalist society that encourages freedom and consumption. “Atomization serves an important economic imperative—the most obvious being that it creates markets.”⁶ These new markets are the young singles, couples and empty nesters that are fuelling condominium demographics. More households equals more microwaves, more cars, more televisions, more blenders and more coffee makers. The Isolation of the individual leads to more consumption.

Identity Through Consumption

In David Fincher’s 1999 film adaptation of the Chuck Palahniuk novel, *Fight Club*, the protagonist is the narrator, a man who is every bit an American consumer who defines himself through his collected purchases:

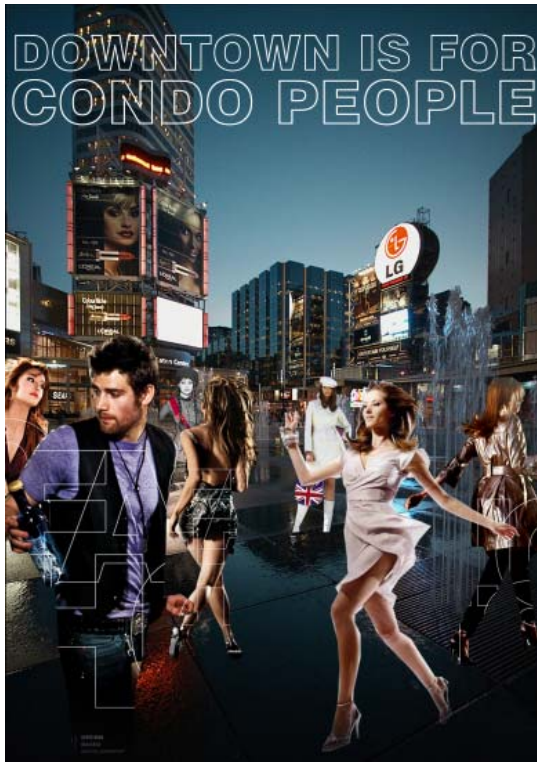
Narrator:

“Like so many others, I had become a slave to the Ikea nesting instinct.

If I saw something clever, like a coffee table in the shape of a yin-yang, I had to have it. The Klipsk



» fig. 57 Mock-units showing possible interior possibilities and furniture choices. [above]



» fig. 58 Collage of models used in condo marketing. [above]

personal office unit. The Hovetrekke home exercbike. Or the Ohamshab sofa with the Strinne green stripe pattern. Even the Ryslampa wire lamps of environmentally-friendly unbleached paper.

I'd flip through catalogues and wonder

What kind of dining set defines me as a person?»⁷

The movie centres on the narrator's personal struggle with his dissatisfaction towards his life and role in this consumerist culture. His escape comes in the form of a sub-consciously created alter ego named Tyler Durden, a nihilistic rebel who idealises all of the resentment the narrator has for his world and lifestyle. As the plot unfolds, the narrator gradually sheds his identity and more and more becomes his created ideal self-image. This of course leads him on a path of destruction as he rebels against society and his old self. But his first act of rebellion, the first step he takes in distancing himself from his old life and identity? He blows up his condominium, his "filing cabinet for widows and young professionals". His self-image and identity are so interwoven with his condo that the only way to start anew requires that he destroy it.

This idea of defining oneself through consumption is explained by Margaret Crawford in her criticism of mall culture in "Variations On a Theme Park":

"The ethos of consumption has penetrated every sphere of our lives. As culture, leisure, sex, politics, and even death turn into commodities, consumption increasingly constructs the way we see the world. . . . Moreover, for many, the very construction of the self involves the acquisition of commodities. If the world is understood through commodities, then personal identity depends on one's ability to compose a coherent self-image through the selection of a distinct personal set of commodities."⁸

In the condo world this is epitomized by lifestyle marketing, creating an image of the type of person that would live in the condo rather than focusing on the condo itself. From Maich and George's "Ego Boom": "...home as a symbol of your hip, young, unencumbered self. From the architecture to the interior design, the amenities, the designer-sanctioned choices of layouts and materials, tarted-up sales centres, websites, and model suites-every facet of urban condos is marketed to meet a set of precise emotional needs: to project a fantasy life onto concrete and glass."⁹

Beyond the marketing, the condo unit as the individual capsule, the ihome, has made itself more desirable through the use of apparent customisation within the purchased unit. The developer must cater to the 'individual'. Maich and George describe this situation in



Construction of Self

» fig. 59 The narrator decorating his condo, choosing the furniture that will define him as a person. [above]

Destruction of Self

» fig. 60 The narrator watches his identity being destroyed as his condo unit is a ball of flames. [above]

their book “Ego Boom”.

“Today, forward-thinking developers will recruit the biggest names in interior design to select a limited range of standard options for buyers to choose from: three or four different hardwood stains and a few choices in the colour of tiles, backsplashes, countertops and cabinetry, for example. Buyers can also invest in upgrades—a kitchen island, maybe, slate bathroom floors, or stainless-steel appliances. They cost more, but, the pitch goes, the more money you spend, the more “unique” your home will be. Essentially, the designers serve as lifestyle editors. They eliminate thousands of decisions and variables for you, and offer you options from a very narrow spectrum of designer-sanctioned stylish selections. Even though the choices are very limited, the important thing is creating the illusion that the final selections were yours.”¹⁰

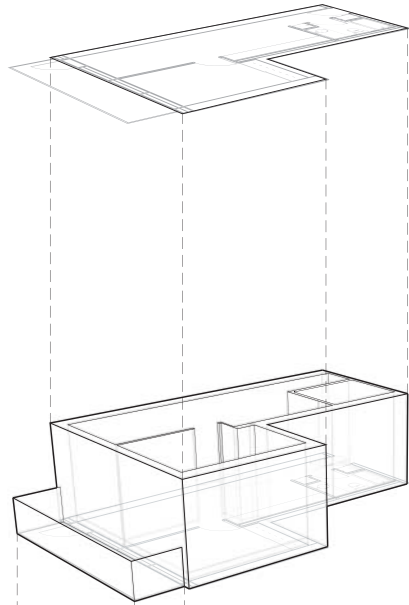
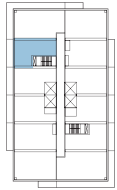
The ability to choose all the finishes, customize the kitchen and bathroom fixtures, makes the unit feel unique to our tastes and sensibilities. The unit becomes the personal extension of ourselves, our capsule. It is a created environment that acts as a membrane from the world outside and an incubator for the individual. And with that encapsulation comes a separation, a retreat from the exterior world. Even condo fees, paid to a board for them to deal with the problems of snow-removal, roof repairs, etc, keep the resident further removed and

impartial. This is the paradox of the apparent freedom of the capsular unit, as it promotes individuality and diversity, it also creates thresholds of separation. Again, Maich and George in “Ego Boom”:

“If anything, it seems that as we move physically closer together, psychologically we’re moving farther apart... the condominium model is a physical manifestation of our changing attitudes toward home, family, and community. It is the housing model of the individual - designed to be unique, self-contained, and fully customisable to your lifestyle needs.”¹¹

And in focusing on the individual, we risk ignoring the collective. It is this reality that causes De Cauter and Kurokawa to forecast the disintegration of society.

UNIT

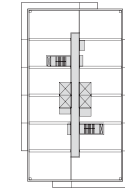


COMMON ELEMENTS

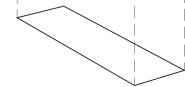
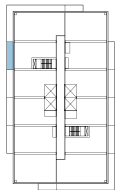
rooftop and mechanical

corridor and core

- corridor
- elevators
- fire stairs
- garbage room
- electrical room
- air shafts
- fire hose cabinets



EXCLUSIVE USE COMMON ELEMENTS



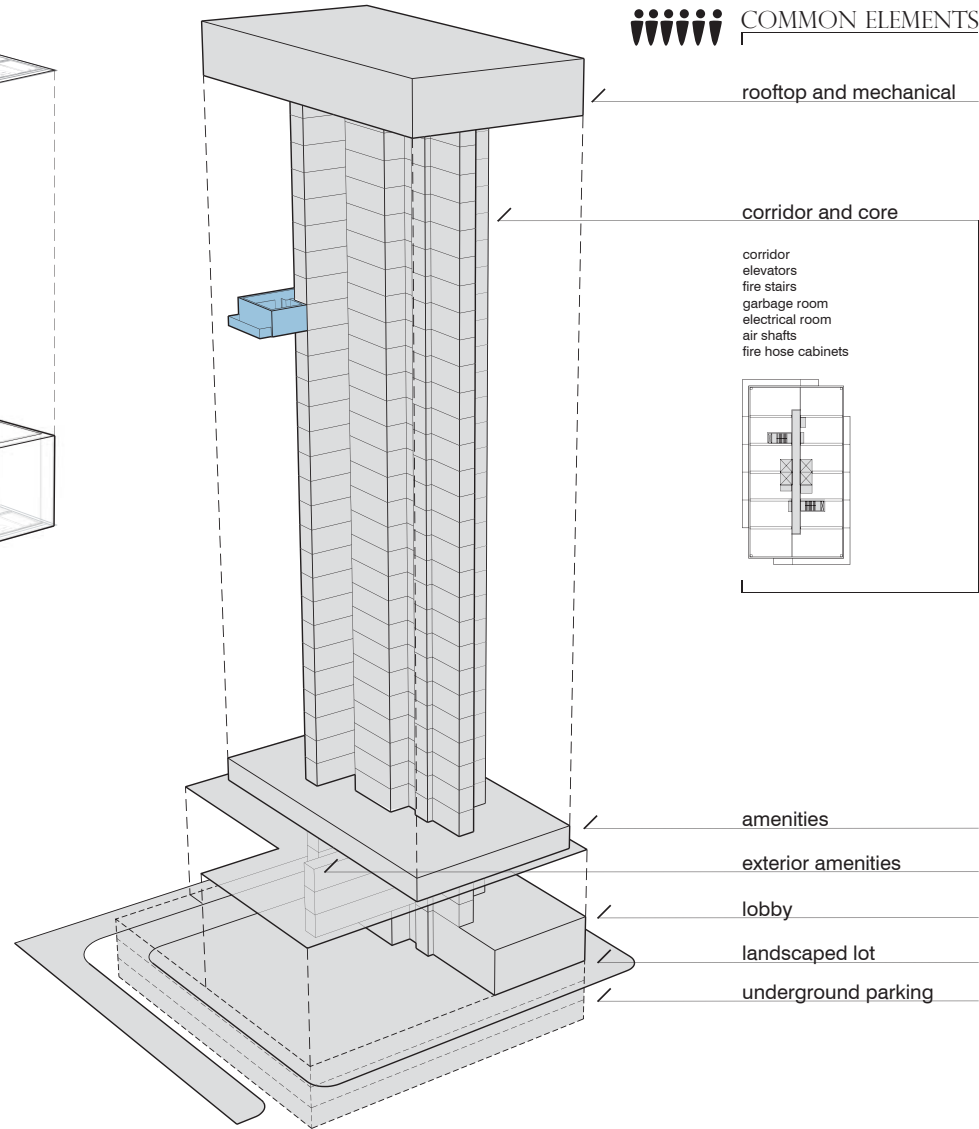
amenities

exterior amenities

lobby

landscaped lot

underground parking





» fig. 62 Security desk in the front lobby [top]



» fig. 63 Condo corridor [above]

» fig. 61 Diagram explaining individual ownership of a condominium [facing page]

2.4

The Capsule and the Network

The Network: Space of Flows

The capsule, in the case of the condo, the unit, makes necessary the network. The networks are the connections and circulation spaces that make the encapsulation within the unit possible. In the case of the condo unit, there are a variety of infrastructure which link into it, mechanical systems, communication links and of course circulation and collective spaces. This network forms the overall structure of the condo system, it includes the entry lobby, the elevator, the corridor, the shared amenity space, etc. However, De Caeter makes one caveat; “No network without control: the plug-ins, the passwords, the cards, the cameras, the voice-recognition systems and so forth.”¹ And certainly the controls can be seen in the collective spaces of condominiums.

No Network without Control

In the 1975 novel, *High-Rise*, author J.G. Ballard describes a brand-new 40-storey co-op apartment building as it achieves ‘critical mass’, or full occupancy.

The tower he describes has many similarities to high-rise condominiums of today; the tenants are all young professionals, all of the affluent set. The building has many interior amenities, a grocery store, bank, liquor store, hairdresser, gymnasium, swimming pool, restaurant and junior school are all located within two floors in the tower, rivalling the most extensive of today’s amenity floors. Within the tower, a social segregation materializes, spurred on by conflicts over malfunctioning services. The novel details the wholesale social disintegration between lower and upper floors and it is in the shared spaces, the stairwells, elevators, roof garden and swimming pool where the major conflicts play-out. These shared spaces become battlegrounds, barricaded and territorialized by tribes formed of neighbours placed together by their proximity. The insider/outsider mentality takes place within the building itself.

The reality of condominiums is that these shared spaces are in fact heavily controlled and protected spaces. Every condo has a Condominium Declaration, essentially a rulebook, since the condo is a shared ownership; certain regulations need to be in place to ensure the upkeep of the shared spaces in the condo. Even though everyone in the condo shares ownership in these spaces they are mired in regulations imposed by tenant-run condo boards; they are the most heavily regulated and controlled spaces in the building. Balconies are included

in this collective ownership, and regulations usually stipulate what can and cannot be done on these privately accessed and maintained yet collectively owned spaces. These collective spaces, so commonly used and yet never really inhabited become a no-man's land within the condo, owned by everyone and yet belonging to no one; transitory spaces based on efficiency and circulation under the omnipresence of network controls. In condominiums, these controls take the form of secured entrance lobbies, and sterile hallways and collective spaces, kept forever neutral so as not to diminish re-sale prices, everything kept in a perpetual state of "new". Author Evan McKenzie explains:

*"Preservation of property values is the highest social goal, to which other aspects of community life are subordinated. Rigid, intrusive, and often petty rule enforcement makes a caricature of Howard's benign managerial government, and the belief in rational planning is distorted into an emphasis on conformity for its own sake."*²

Fourth Level of Government

In *Privatopia*, author Evan McKenzie describes the power and control condo boards or homeowner associations have as a 'fourth level of government'. And indeed to buy

into a condominium brings with it mandatory inclusion in this board. Homeowner fees are the equivalent of taxes, security personnel the police, fines can be levied in the face of violations and there are decisions that must be voted on but there is another level of involvement that the board can take.

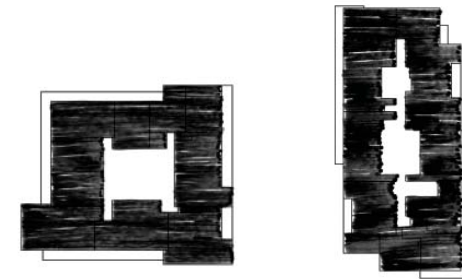
*"In addition, the association can impose certain standards of behaviour on residents and anyone who visits the property. Taken as a whole, these powers permit the regulation of a wider range of behaviour than any within the purview of a public local government. Among other things, the governing documents require the individual owner to maintain certain standards of repair and maintenance in his or her individual unit... Generally there are also restrictions on the uses to which the units can be put, such as the number of occupants permitted, age restrictions for residency, maximum lengths of stay for guests, and whether any sort of business can be conducted from home."*³

These common controls placed on homeowners coupled with the security and barriers to limit outsiders instil an insider/outsider mentality throughout the building. This is reinforced by a retreat from the "sidewalk-bound urbanity" as described by Mason White. The abundant choice in amenities and services offered to the condo dweller create an insider world with distinct exclusions of the masses.

"Central to the allure of condominium developments is their ability to internalise qualities of



» fig. 64 Lobby: A collective space kept in a perpetual state of "new" [top]



» fig. 65 By blacking out the units in typical condo floor plans, the void represents the collectively owned spaces. "no-man's land". [above]

seeming urbanity. However, condominium urbanity is very different from the less predictable sidewalk-bound version of the city. Condominiums produce petri-dish urbanity. It is contained, controlled, and always room temperature. Once urbanism is invited to the condo interior, it is tamed, and becomes more sterilized and homogenous.”⁵⁴

This separation from the city is also conveyed in condo marketing. Websites are quick to advertise “views” and the city is always shown from a picturesque birds-eye angle, sections of the website labelled “neighbourhood” are edited to include the fashionable and trendy options located within walking range; yet, in all aspects, a very large component of the city is being denied and “edited out” fostering a subconscious retreat from the urban realm.

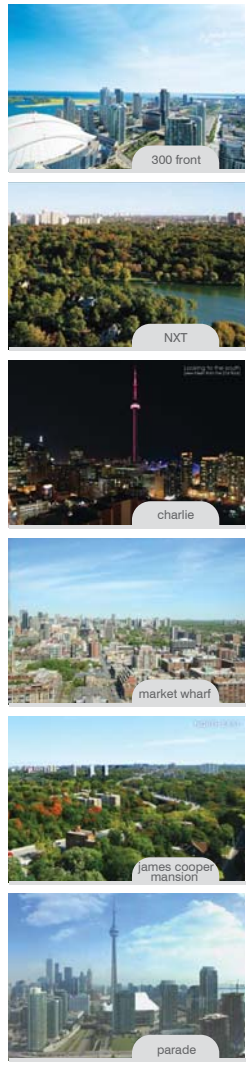
This duality has also started to materialize within the building itself. As a large percentage of condominium units are bought by investors and speculators, many of the inhabitants are not owners but rather renters of units. These renters have different rights, no vote in the condo board for example, and can be made to feel ostracized within their own residence. High turnover of tenants can breed a loss of respect for the building by renters as seen in CityPlace, where renters make-up a reported 75% of tenants in some buildings. “CityPlace condo owners are annoyed by renters who feel little

loyalty to their building”⁵⁵The brewing situation brings to mind the inter-tenant conflicts that develop in Ballard’s High-Rise.

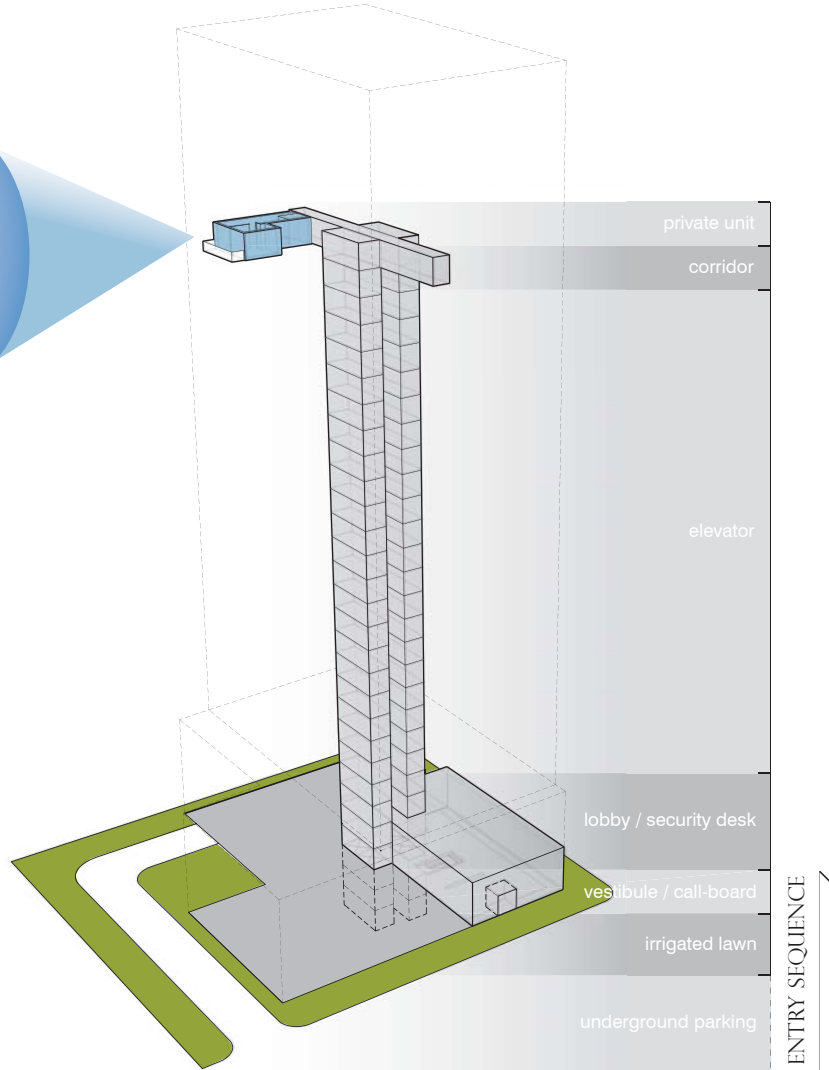
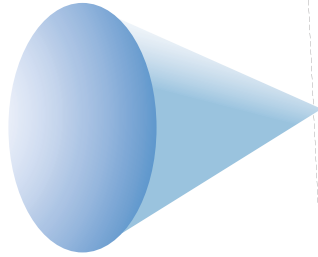
These ‘network’ spaces, which make living in a high-rise building possible, also carry with them a large amount of controls and exclusionary systems. In many ways similar to the heterotopias of gated communities, this barricading and enforcement of a fourth level of government have created a fortress against the urban realms they are immersed in, further emphasizing our society’s transformation into a capsular one. As De Cauter explains:

“The capsular society is the sum of the network space, the phantasmagoric space of consumption and the fortress: the armoured enclave against the hostile world outside in a global society increasingly characterized by duality of rich and poor, inside and outside. The capsule is the device that makes the rigid distinction between inside and outside possible.”⁵⁶

This is the paradox of the apparent freedom of the capsular unit, as it promotes individuality and diversity, it also creates thresholds of separation. But what happens when this capsular phenomena begins to permeate into the rest of the city? The next chapter will deal with this “duality” that is emerging not just in the buildings themselves, but also in the city at large.



AT HOME ABOVE THE CITY



RETREAT FROM THE CITY



» fig. 67 The City Place town square. [above]

» fig. 66 The entry sequence goes through a variety of collectively owned spaces. Websites market views, editing neighbourhoods to portray the image the desire. [facing page]

2.5

The Suburbanization of the City

“Continuity is the essence of Junkspace; it exploits any invention that enables expansion, deploys the infrastructure of seamlessness: escalator, air conditioning, sprinkler, fire shutter, hot-air curtain... It is always interior, so extensive that you rarely perceive limits... Air conditioning has launched the endless building. If architecture separates buildings, air conditioning unites them... Because it costs money, is no longer free, conditioned space inevitably becomes conditional space; sooner or later all conditional space turns into junk space...” — Rem Koolhaas

Rem Koolhaas suggests junk space is conquering the urban realm. He argues that conditioned space is expanding to a point where “Unwittingly, all architects may be working on the same building, so far separate, but with hidden receptors that will eventually make it cohere.”² He is suggesting that the monetized spaces of our shopping malls, lobbies and retail centres are spreading to encapsulate our entire public realm. Michael Sorkin offers similar sentiments, writing in his introduction to “Variations on a Theme Park”, “The new city likewise eradicates genuine particularity in favour of

a continuous urban field, a conceptual grid of boundless reach.”³ Similarly, De Cauter warns that the “Capsule abolishes the public sphere” and “induces a specific kind of numbness.”⁴

The physical form of their warnings can be evidenced in the new residential high-rise neighbourhoods of Toronto, where all space has monetized value to developers and land is always real estate. Already, the thesis has described the situation at 300 Front, where a public park for the city provided by developers was designed with the intention of being viewed from the units above, a sales feature. The exterior ‘public space’ becomes an amenity for the building. Even outside the walls of the condo, space is commodified in some way.

The neutrality spawned in the ‘conditioned’ spaces of the condo interior is beginning to proliferate into the urban realm of the downtown. The lobby is expanding into the street, pushing the public realm further away. In Toronto, entire neighbourhoods have been master-planned and constructed by single developers, such as CityPlace, The Distillery District or Water Park City, in each the monetization of the interior lobby space has begun to spread into the exterior urban realm.

In his profile of the condo neighbourhood of CityPlace in Toronto Life, Jason McBride describes how the

main social hub of the neighbourhood has become the Sobeys' grocery store in one towers podium. "Sobeys' is the new town-square"⁵ states McBride. However, it is a town square engulfed by the conditioned interior space of the condo, and is no longer a public domain, but one which as a place of retail now has a commodified value and entrance restrictions. It is now governed by the same logic that controls the network space of the condominium. Now, the insider/outsider logic encapsulates the "town square".

City as Theme Park

*"Here is urban renewal with a sinister twist, an architecture of deception which, in its happy-face familiarity, constantly distances itself from the most fundamental realities. The architecture of this city is almost purely semiotic, playing the game of grafted signification, theme-park building. Whether it represents generic historicity or generic modernity, such design is based in the same calculus as advertising, the idea of pure imageability, oblivious to the real needs and traditions of those who inhabit it."*⁶ – Michael Sorkin

The Distillery District is proto-typical theme-park urbanity. Forty-seven expertly restored Victorian industrial buildings in Toronto have been transformed

by developers into a gated pedestrian-only village of condo units, one-of-a-kind stores, shops, galleries, studios, restaurants, cafes, and theatres. As its website boasts, "To enter The Distillery is to step back into an era of horse-drawn carts, windmills and sailing ships"⁷ Wholly disconnected from the logic of the traditional public street, this is a privately-owned and operated neighbourhood with its own set of rules and controls designed to stimulate commerce.

In the Distillery District, the pedestrian cobble-stone streets are populated by buskers, artisans and farmer's market vendors, each having successfully gone through an application and permit phase, each accepted and having paid for the right to be there. The editing of lifestyle that takes place in condo marketing websites has taken its physical form here, as managers of the Distillery District have edited out what and who are allowed to perform, and do business on their streets, each conforming to the image they want to portray. The Distillery is a manipulated image edited to evoke a certain response from the consumers who enter its gates, separated in ideology from the public urban streets of Toronto and thus creating invisible barriers. Here, developers have used the nostalgia associated with turn of the century industrial to create a new themed place centred on the logic of shopping and condo-living.



» fig. 68 Distillery District condo. [above]



» fig. 69 Shopping in the Distillery District. [above]

Where the Distillery District is rooted in an historical image of Toronto's past, built themes, much like the marketing before them, can come from complete fantasy. The streets of Toronto have for years been used as a cheap stand-in for many North American cities, portraying Manhattan, Chicago, Baltimore and Boston among others, in major films. A recent urban design proposal for a new residential neighbourhood around the Pinewood film studios on the waterfront would urge this phenomenon even further. The proposal calls for residential streets and buildings to be built to mimic neighbourhoods of London, New York and Chicago and to act as living movie sets. Residents could buy a home in Toronto, designed to have the look of SoHo in New York or the Loop in Chicago.⁸

This chapter began by detailing the way in which marketing had begun to separate the built project from reality, rooting it in consumerist fantasy. But these fantasies have begun to play themselves out in the themed-building of spaces of simulation. While this may be the first occurrence of Toronto developers actively aping other cities architectural identities, it is the continuation of a trend that has been on-going in the marketing of Toronto's new condominiums. Perhaps it is the absence of a self-perceived identity that compels Toronto's developers to borrow one, because condominiums throughout the Greater Toronto Area

have long been projecting the imagery and themes of distant international cities as a means to market themselves.

Demographic Splintering

"Junkspace pretends to unite, but it actually splinters. It creates communities not of shared interest or free association, but of identical statistics and unavoidable demographics, an opportunistic weave of vested interests. Each man, woman and child is individually targeted, tracked, split off from the rest..."

The danger of this monetization of space is that it begins to target and narrow demographics, making areas only welcoming to those who can afford it, or narrower still, those who would choose to spend their money in this way. Accompanying this 'cocooning' by junk space is a very real demographic dispersion that threatens to polarize entire neighbourhoods of the City.

An on-going erasure of the middle-class has created a divide in the city as affluent, child-less and for the most part young, condo owners are distancing themselves from the growing less wealthy classes pushed to the inner suburbs and more and more made unwelcome in the downtown core. New neighbourhoods are emerging

as real estate values price various families and individuals out of the downtown. The diversity of Toronto's neighbourhoods, often regarded as one of its main strengths, is threatened as the new condo generation and their instant neighbourhoods bring the suburbs to the city.

In his essay "Sprawl is No Longer What it Used to be", Edward Soja describes the densification of Los Angeles' suburbs in a process he refers to as the 'urbanization of suburbia.' David Hulchanski's recent studies of Toronto would seem to indicate a similar process is occurring in Toronto. The numbers show that in the past forty years, the economic status of the city's inhabitants has inverted. The middle class that predominated the suburbs in the 1970's has today almost vanished, replaced by a growing low-income base. People living in the previously less wealthy neighbourhoods of the downtown core have moved out and found a new home in the inner suburbs as the downtown core along Yonge Street has been taken over by a concentrated higher-income bracket. Along with this infusion of money and shifting of demographics has come a new set of cultural values and standards within the downtown core, epitomized by the condo tower. As a more affluent demographic takes hold of downtown, the privatising inherent to gentrification is chasing out the very culture that made the downtown so attractive in the first place. We are seeing the reciprocal of Soja's

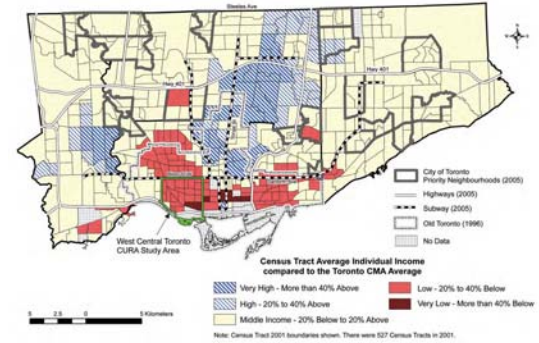
'urbanization of suburbia', this is the suburbanization of the downtown.

This marked change in demographics has not been lost on politicians who have targeted new condo owners in their hunt for votes. An article in the Toronto Star by Kate Allen, reports on how condo dwellers south of Queen St are being targeted by politicians in the latest Federal Election.

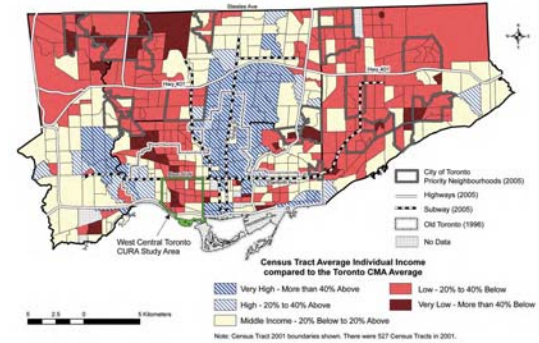
"A surge of condominium development below Queen St. has created thousands of housing units that are magnets for people who have little in common with the established voters living in homes to the north... According to a 2006 city planning survey of downtown residents, those living in housing constructed since 2001, mainly highrises, are likely to be childless adults under the age of 40 — like Somera. More than two-thirds make more than \$60,000 a year. Those living downtown in homes built before 2001 — as Hardie does — are a mix of older adults, children, and significantly more seniors. They are four times more likely to be retired. Only half make more than \$60,000 a year. Condo-dwellers have another demographic difference: "Everyone comes from the suburbs," says Brad Lamb, a condominium magnate and real estate broker."¹⁰

That last remark by Brad Lamb, that everyone living

MAP 2 Average Individual Income, City of Toronto, 1970
Average individual income from all sources, 15 years and over, census tracts

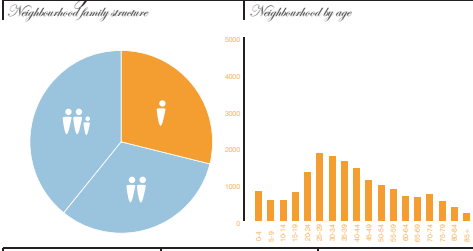


MAP 3 Average Individual Income, City of Toronto, 2000
Average individual income from all sources, 15 years and over, census tracts



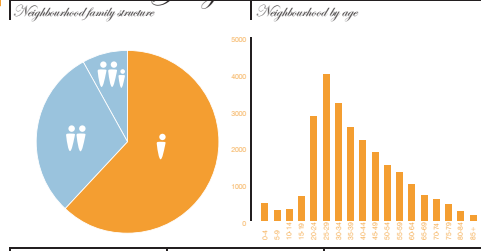
» fig. 70 David Hulchanski's "Three Cities Study" showing the gentrification of the downtown core. [above]

Trinity-Bellwoods



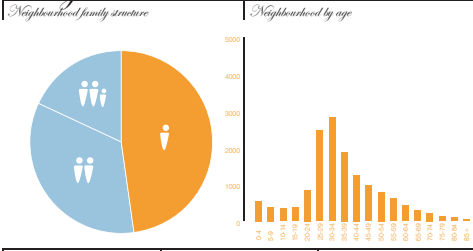
Population in apt. over 5 stories: **1%**
 Population that owns home: **57%**
 Dwellings built since 2001: **3%**

Church - Yonge Corridor



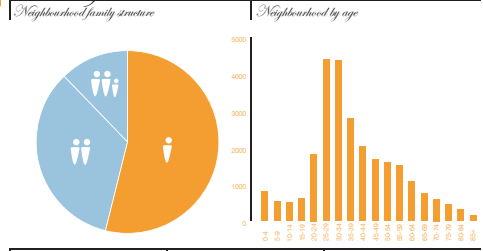
Population in apt. over 5 stories: **89%**
 Population that owns home: **29%**
 Dwellings built since 2001: **12%**

Niagara

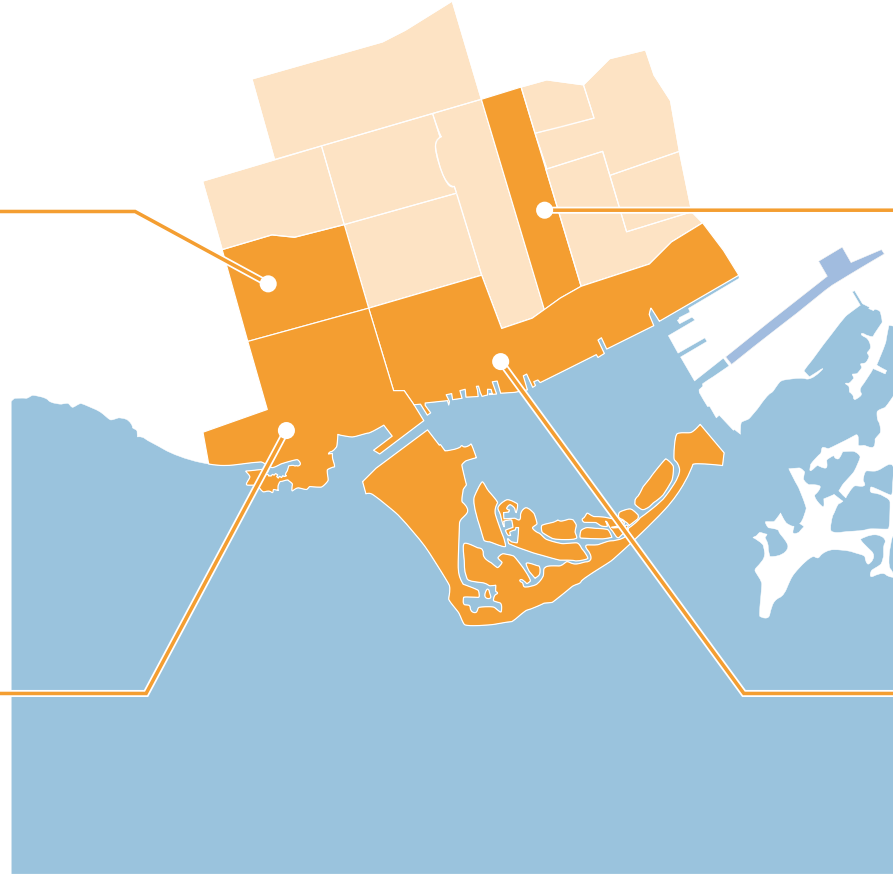


Population in apt. over 5 stories: **67%**
 Population that owns home: **49%**
 Dwellings built since 2001: **41%**

Waterfront and the Island



Population in apt. over 5 stories: **89%**
 Population that owns home: **48%**
 Dwellings built since 2001: **35%**



» fig. 71 Condo neighbourhoods vs a more traditional urban neighbourhood (Trinity-Bellwoods) [above]

in condos 'comes from the suburbs', is a telling one. It points to the inversion of classes going on in the downtown of Toronto at the moment and a new demographic taking hold of parts of the City, but also the polarization between this new demographic and the long established base.

publics gathering in its collective spaces. It promises an interior urbanity that takes advantage of its inherent vertical nature and begins to subvert the capsular walls through "physical proximity and urban movement and a sense that the city is our best expression of a desire for collectivity."

Conclusion

"By describing the alternative, this book pleads for a return to a more authentic urbanity, a city based on physical proximity and urban movement and a sense that the city is our best expression of a desire for collectivity. As spatiality ebbs, so does intimacy. The privatised city of bits is a lie, simulating its connections, obliterating the power of its citizens either to act alone or to act together."¹¹ – Michael Sorkin

Michael Sorkin eloquently pleads for new forms of urbanity as he concludes his introduction to "Variations on a Theme Park". Similarly, this thesis proposes a new form of interior urbanity, one rooted in programmatic hybridisation and an increase in user-types, which is open to the surrounding city's urban fabric. It strives for an interior urbanity that is more permeable to outsiders and the surrounding city, revelling in the new

» fig. 72 Annotated Study Model. [Facing Page]



library
computer labs

community gardens

yoga studio
cardio / weight room
pool deck
juice bar

studios / desk space
student lounge
gallery / exhibition

classrooms
jim / jim / meeting room

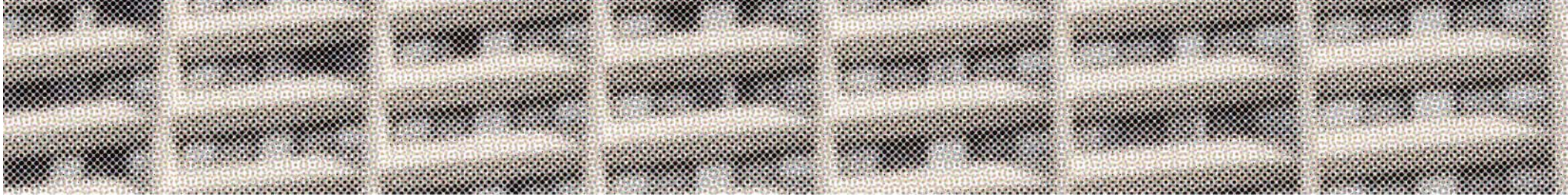
work-shop / fabrication
building entrance

community gardens
restaurant with patio

offices
cafe
retail
design / furniture store
loading
community gardens

Part Three:
design offices

Complexity as Urbanizing Instrument



programmatically promiscuity



3.2

Approaches to Interior Urbanity

On Hybrid Building and Programmatic Promiscuity

“Public space, previously understood as exterior space – a kind of civic stage set or place of appearance that stood in direct relation to buildings – has now become a spatial structure closely linked to commercial exchange and mobility, and intertwined and interiorised along with other spatial structures.”

The idea of urbanity as a spatial construction, as an interior element, is now fundamental in the city of high-rise living. The increasingly dense city, conjuring Koolhaas’ description of the “culture of congestion,” has produced a complexity of myriad programmes that increasingly must share built environments, the scarcity of downtown real estate necessitating functional promiscuity. Moving beyond the modernist notions of master planning a horizontal distribution and segregation of use-zones, urbanity now must also operate in section. Dwelling units stacked on top of hotels, stacked on top of offices, stacked on top of shops, stacked on top of parking lots, this vertical layering of programme creates a new opportunity for a vertical interior urbanity. As

Steven Holl notes in the foreword to Joseph Fenton’s Hybrid Buildings: “These buildings offer hope for the understanding of architecture in terms of its programmatic regale, reinstating a diversity of activities, concentrating, rather than scattering, the most essential ingredients of the city.”²²

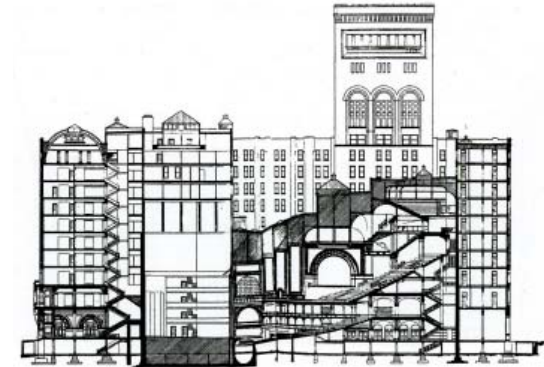
In his Pamphlet Architecture from 1985, titled Hybrid Buildings, Joseph Fenton identifies and catalogues a unique American building typology, what he names the ‘Hybrid Building’. Originating in the late 19th Century and amongst the earliest Skyscrapers, hybrids were mixed-use buildings that evolved as “a response to the metropolitan pressures of escalating land values and the constraint of the urban grid. With horizontal movement restricted, the city fabric moved skyward...Unable to occupy these vast new volumes with an individual usage, functions were combined.”²³The products of sheer economics and physical limitations, hybrids evolved out of necessity.

Fenton distinguishes hybrid buildings from traditional forms of mixed-use building, such as the ‘house over the store’ concept, as being of a different scale and form, one at the size of the city block. He identifies a number of hybrids built during the span between 1880 up until the great depression, such as the Auditorium Building in Chicago by Adler and Sullivan. Post-war construction

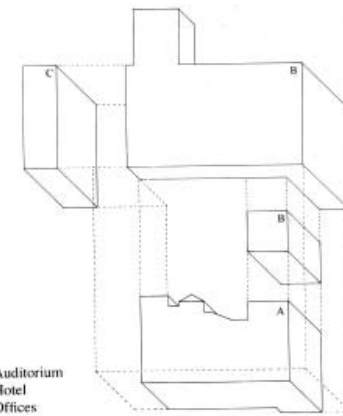
» fig. 73 Programmatic Promiscuity. [Facing Page]

in America was heavily influenced by CIAM IV and the Athens Charter which called for the systematic segregation of functions such as living, working, and recreation, creating a void of hybrid development. However, the 1960s would see a renaissance of hybrid building, with projects such as Marina City and John Hancock Center, which continues to this day.⁴

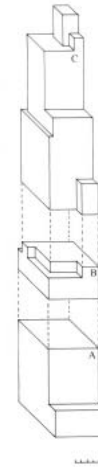
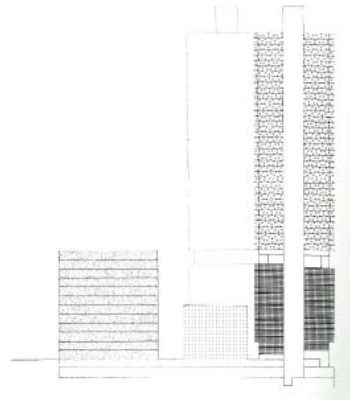
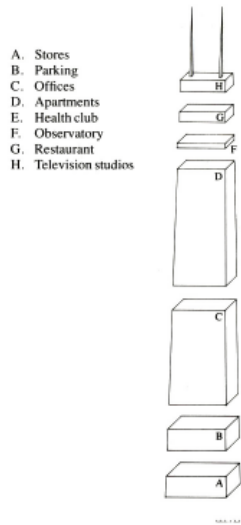
One landmark building identified by Fenton and similarly singled out by Koolhaas in *Delirious New York* is Manhattan's Downtown Athletic Club. A combination athletic club, restaurant and apartments, the Club provides an amazingly diverse set of functions, with billiards and cards rooms, squash and handball courts, golf greens, gymnasium, lockers and changing rooms, swimming pool, massage rooms, oyster bar and dining rooms all stacked vertically within the tower. For Koolhaas, the Downtown Athletic Club is the pinnacle of his "culture of congestion": "The Club represents the complete conquest – floor by floor – of the Skyscraper by social activity... In the Downtown Athletic Club the Skyscraper is used as a Constructivist Social Condenser: a machine to generate and intensify desirable forms of human intercourse."⁵



» fig. 74 Auditorium Building in Chicago, Ill. Built in 1887 by architects Adler and Sullivan.



» fig. 75 Programmatic promiscuity of the Auditorium Building



- A. Athletic club
- B. Restaurant
- C. Hotel

» fig. 76 John Hancock Center (Chicago, 1968) SOM



» fig. 77 Marina City (Chicago, 1960-67) Bertram Goldberg



» fig. 78 Downtown Athletic Club (Manhattan, 1931) Starrett & Van Vleck

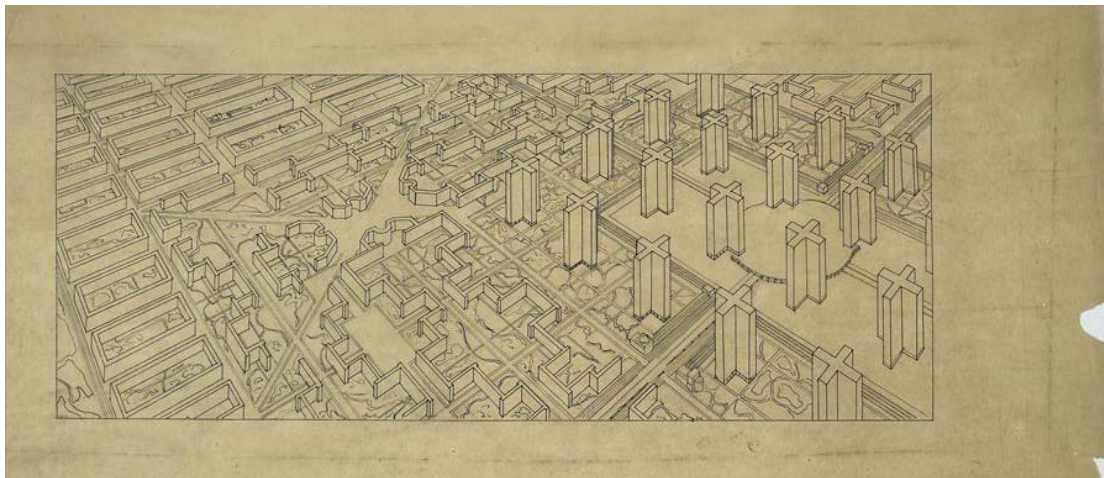


On Social Condensers and Interior Urbanity

Concurrent to the hybrid building type, experimental forms of collective housing were being developed by Soviet Constructivists. The aim of these buildings was to break down traditional social hierarchies, creating a new controlled social behaviour. Dwellings were scaled down to their most base dimensions and traditional areas of the private domestic realm became collective areas, such as common kitchens, laundrettes and nurseries

and circulation routes became areas of social interaction. Termed 'Social Condensers', these buildings were not the pragmatic result of economics and siting as was the case of Fenton's hybrid buildings. Instead, they were forged out of modernist ideologies, socialist thinking and a fundamental belief in the idea of collective living, and its subsequent spatial manifestation.

While Koolhaas refers to the Downtown Athletic Club as a social condenser, Fenton calls it a hybrid building, and while it certainly "generates and intensifies desirable forms of human intercourse," it is still the product of



» fig. 79 Le Corbusier's "Ville Contemporaine" for 3 million inhabitants



» fig. 80 Unite d'Habitation (above)



» fig. 81 Archigram's Walking City (below)

a Capitalist society and lacks the social agenda that condensers maintain. It is important to note that while the hybrid is open and encourages differing outside users; the social condenser is imagined as a closed system, self-sufficient and detached from the surrounding city. These buildings were early attempts at interior urbanity, albeit a disconnected one, with collective spaces being used to encourage and stimulate social connections within the building or group. Aurora Fernandez Per, writing in the A+T publication *Hybrids III*, further articulates the differences between hybrid and condenser thus:

*"The same functions that can be found in a hybrid can be found here, especially in Unités and those that followed, where businesses and even offices were inserted on the so-called inner street. Nevertheless, the difference rests in the fact that each function is thought out not to create intensity and vitality in the city, nor to attract flux of outside users or even to favour mixing and indetermination, but to achieve a self-sufficient and 'complete' building that can isolate itself from the conventional city."*⁶

This idea of the building as a "self-sufficient and 'complete' building," would have a significant influence on European architects during the modern movement, and Le Corbusier in particular used many of these principles in his Unite d'habitation. An interior shopping street on the 7th and 8th floors contained a grocery, dairy, bakery, restaurant and offices; built in the suburbs of

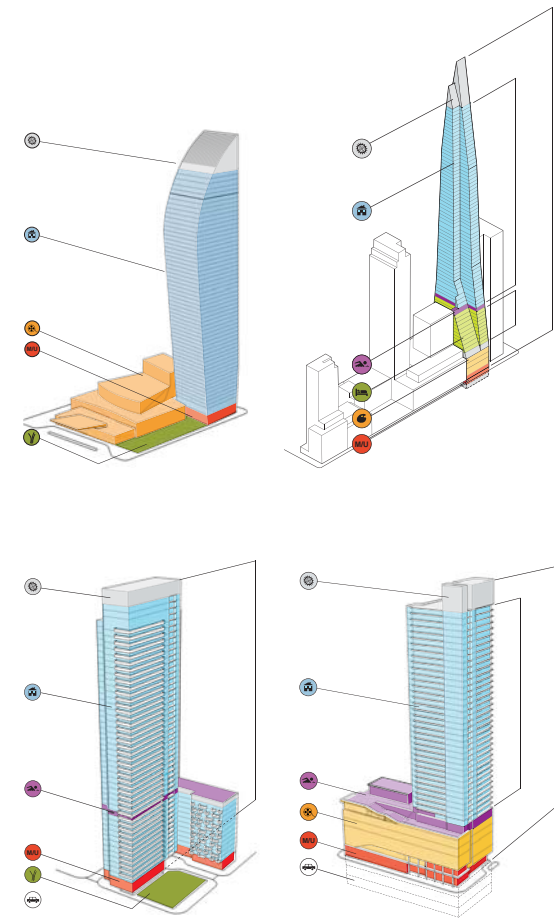
Marseille and surrounded by green space, Unite was designed to provide all the necessary functions of a city in one building, the ultimate machine for living.⁷ The building of course is very similar to J.G. Ballard's self-imploding fictional social condenser of *High-Rise* whose self-sufficiency led to a complete retreat from society outside the building which was based on the principles of the Unite.

The idea of the closed self-sufficient building was further extrapolated to thinking of the building as a city. Ron Herron and Archigram's "Walking City" explored the extremes of this concept. Not only imagining a city that was completely internalised and self-sufficient but one that could then transport itself anywhere; so disconnected from the traditional society that it no longer even required a site.

Typical Current Approach

While clearly hybrid in nature, with the occasional publicly programmed podium, today's condominiums risk veering further into the direction of the social condenser. The amenities are typically gathered on one floor, buffered by stacks of private dwellings and shielding themselves from the public life of the street, only open to residents of the building. To make the most of the latent possibilities of their hybrid nature, condominiums must open these social networks up to their surrounding city. Any public programme is now placed in proximity to the street, with the mixed-use retail spaces often being given over to the ground level of the podium. However, even within this location of potential public mixing, the condominium distances itself through the private and security controlled ground floor component of the lobby.

What follows are examinations of contemporary and historic experiments that deal with this idea of interior urbanity in order to more fully inform this thesis' proposed design. Grouped as either interior public street, mixing bowl, pocket urbanity or pixelation, the following projects have been categorized as a way of discussing their individual benefits and potential pitfalls in creating this new urban realm of the interior.



» fig. 82 Current hybrid condominiums. (clockwise from top left) L Tower, MoMA tower, Festival Tower, and 300 Front.



» fig. 83 Cover of Moses King's *Cosmopolis*. 1911.



» fig. 84 Hugh Ferriss's *City of the Future*. 1930



» fig. 85 Hilberseimer's *Vertical City*. 1924.

The Interior Public Street

Since the inception of the earliest Skyscrapers, there have been accompanying visions of a future metropolis of elevated connected networks of mobility. These proposals, while originally centred on a separation of vehicular traffic from pedestrian, hint at a future form of internal vertical urbanity. Moses King published a series of guidebooks illustrating New York's expanding skyline at the turn of the Century, some depicted a future New York where bridges, both rail and pedestrian, connect from building to building elevated many storeys off the ground. These images forecasted a vertical urbanity in the age of the high-rise. In 1930 Hugh Ferriss offered his speculation on a city where the ground plane was given over to the automobile and a partially internal pedestrian network was elevated over that level; "these exclusive pedestrian thoroughfares would at first be arcaded through existing buildings; eventually, they would be open boulevards."⁸

The German architect and urban planner Ludwig Hilberseimer, in response to Le Corbusier's "Contemporary City for Three Million Inhabitants", which segregated the city by functions in plan, would propose his Vertical City in 1924. Hilberseimer created a city plan, that still relying on modernisms tenets of functional separation, stacked functions sectionally

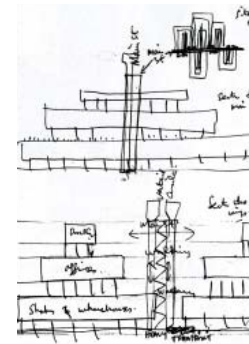
rather than Corbusier's master plan scheme. The result was a scheme that had the lower levels of the city dedicated to work and automobiles, with an upper level above that provided housing and pedestrian networks. Hilberseimer's scheme indicated a dense three-dimensional city that was more versatile, efficient and complex than Corbusier's horizontally segregated one.⁹

In the 1950's, Alison and Peter Smithson further challenged the horizontal functional segregation of modern urban planning and proposed city plans that hinged on vertical circulation points and mixed-use building 'clusters' that were stacked vertically. Their proposals for both Cluster City in 1952 and their Berlin Hauptstadt Competition entry in 1957, featured this sectional urbanity with connected pedestrian networks on levels above the street, using these circulation spaces as places of shopping, retail and leisure with an aim of stimulating social mixing among the public.

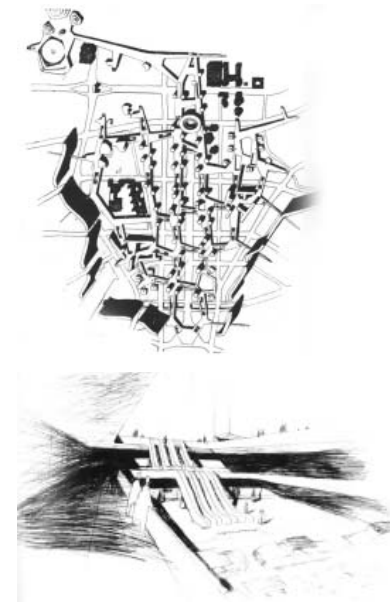
Here in Canada, cold winters have offered a logic to realize this idea of a secondary pedestrian network, in these cases, internalised to shelter from the elements. Both Toronto, with its PATH system, and Montreal, with its la ville souterraine, have extensive underground pedestrian networks that connect buildings to each other using a logic independent from the streets above. La Ville Souterraine in Montreal is the largest underground

network in the world with 32 km of tunnel that cover 42 city blocks, Toronto has 27 km of underground walkways, and in both cases these networks act as shopping concourses in addition to their circulation functionality. In Winnipeg, networks of ‘skywalks’ connect buildings internally at a level above ground. In all cases these networks are controlled spaces dedicated to fostering consumerism and movement, in and out.

Similarly, Steven Holl’s Linked Hybrid in Beijing and Herzog and De Meuron’s proposed Eleven Eleven project in Miami, bring this idea of hybrid connected shopping networks to the building. The Linked Hybrid project has so far failed to create the type of porous open network imagined by Holl, its public space offering no real attachment to street traffic, and the developer has even threatened to fence the property in an effort to keep outsiders at bay. While Eleven Eleven, essentially an above-ground parking structure infused with dwellings and shops, is interesting in its very real vertical continuation of the street; cars drive right up into the building. However, it is designed for and caters to the demands of the automobile and is thus hindered at a pedestrian scale.



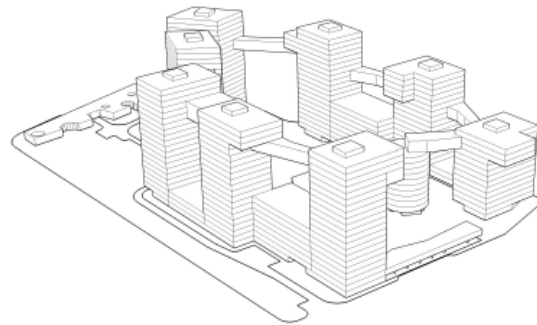
» fig. 86 Smithson’s Cluster City. 1952. (above)



» fig. 87 Smithson’s Berlin Hauptstadt Competition. 1957.



» fig. 88 Montreal's Ville Souterraine



» fig. 89 Linked Hybrid (Beijing). Steven Holl.

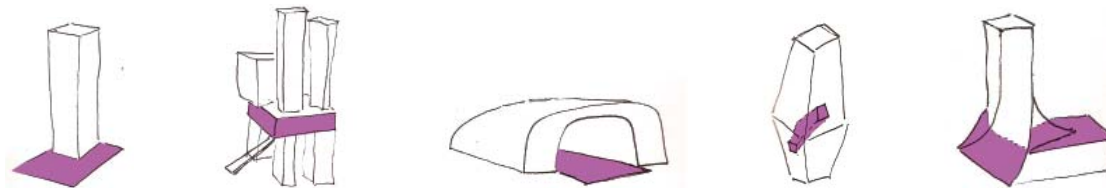


» fig. 90 Herzog and De Meuron's 1111 Lincoln Rd. Miami.

Mixing Bowl

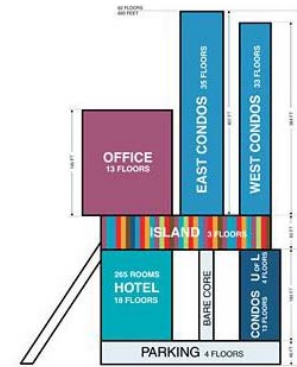
Buildings that have a ‘mixing bowl’ design strategy have their genetic roots in the modernist tower and plaza scheme. The plaza existed as an open grand public space activated by the density of the towers surrounding it and the life of the streets that encircled it. Contemporary hybrid buildings have updated this scheme, transforming the open plaza to become more fully integrated with the architecture, forming hybrid plazas and interior mixing bowls. The grand public space still operates as a reciprocal to the more private functions of the building, but now the ‘plaza’ is a spatial component of the building. In the case of Scala tower by Bjarke Ingels Group and Market Hall by MVRDV, the plaza remains an exterior element, though heavily informed by built spaces and integrated into the building.

In Museum Plaza by REX and Torre Bicentario by OMA,

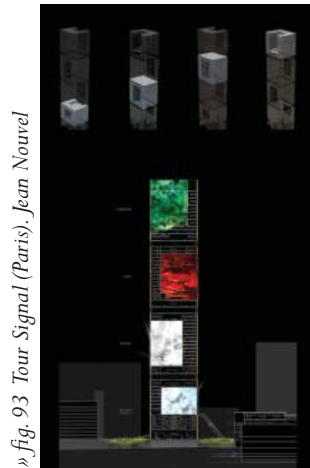


» fig. 91 Tower and plaza, the contemporary variations.

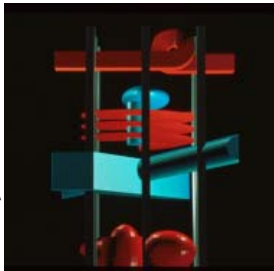
the public plaza is elevated from the ground plane and becomes fully interiorised, with connections that bring the public up to its level. These examples are especially intriguing in their vertical and interior approach to public space. However, this interior urbanity is contained; the Museum Plaza refers to its ‘mixing bowl’ as an island, separate from the functional parts of ‘dumb’ towers. They fail to mediate or connect to the functional aspects of the programme, these functions still remain segregated entities, just supplied by the same feeder system, the public mixing bowl. Each function remains isolated and segregated within its envelope without any real conversation happening or overall urbanity.



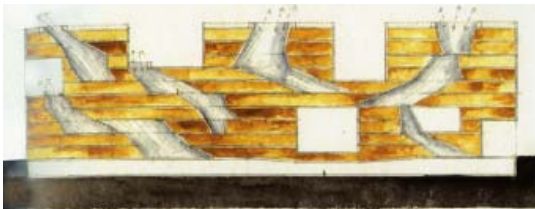
» fig. 92 [top] Museum Plaza (Louisville, KY). REX architects. [center left] Market Hall by MVRDV. [center right] Torre Bicentario by OMA. [bottom] Scala Tower by Bjarke Ingels.



» fig. 93 *Tour Signal (Paris)*, Jean Nouvel



» fig. 94 *Tres Grande Bibliotheque (Paris)* OMA.



» fig. 95 (left to right) *MIT Simmons Hall*, Steven Holl

Pocket Urbanity

At a smaller scale, some contemporary buildings use an isolated ‘pocket’ of urbanity approach, where multiple collective spaces are situated throughout the building often responding specifically to their surrounding programmatic influences. In the cases of the Tres Grande Bibliotheque proposal by OMA and MIT Simmons Hall by Steven Holl, public spaces become voids carved into the solid of the section dispersed randomly throughout like holes in a slice of Swiss cheese.

High-rise towers have used similar approaches as well; 111 First St by OMA and Tour Signal by Jean Nouvel both use forms of pocket urbanity. Tour Signal, in Paris, France, splits the building into four separate stacked use-zones, all demarcated by colour; Bleu is for public amenities, blanche for office space, rouge is a hotel and verte, the apartments on top. Each one of these four zones encapsulates a large public interior gallery, what Nouvel calls the ‘Loggias’, that serves as the collective space for each zone. Similarly, 111 First St by OMA splits its tower into three stacks, each serving its own functions and each containing its own collective space at the base of these stacks.

While at first blush appearing to provide a diversity of urbanity to the interior realm, these spaces fail to

replicate the diversity and complexity of the cities they are situated in, instead focusing and segregating their ‘public’ spaces by function. The segregation and isolation of differing programmatic uses neglects the latent potential of disparate programme; Instead, they remain isolated pockets without a network to fully engage them and open them to the general public.

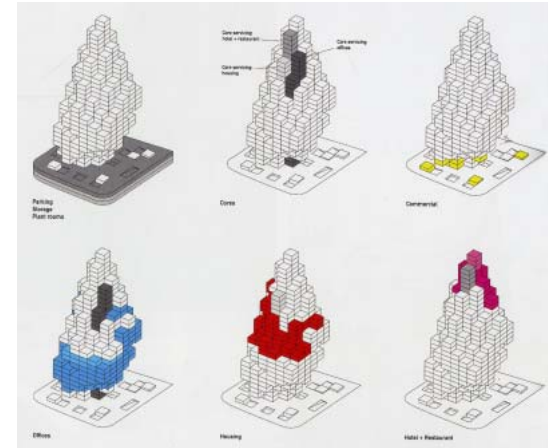
Pixelation

A recent trend in hybrid building form has been the pixelated approach. Harkening back to Moshe Safdie's Habitat in Montreal, this approach is an accretion of individual units. MVRDV's Sky Village hints at the promise of this approach in its ability to break down the traditional high-rise form of stacked program. No longer adhering to the floor-by-floor breakdown of program, the Sky Village is based on building through the individual unit and forms clusters of program, rather than stacks. Sectionally, dwellings share floors with offices, offices with hotels, hotels with amenities. Herzog and De Meuron's "Le Project Triangle" and OMA's MahaNakhon tower hint at similar possibilities in their pixelated forms.

In terms of a collective urbanity however, these projects fail to make use of the new adjacencies presented by this form. As an accumulation and aggregation of units, always inherently based on the individual unit, public space is also atomized creating a variety of configurations but always at the scale of the individual, its DNA being opposed to the notion of collective urbanity. The urbanity presented is either in the form of private individual terraces or relegated to the traditional ground plane plaza.



» fig. 96 *Habitat (Montreal)*, by Moshe Safdie.



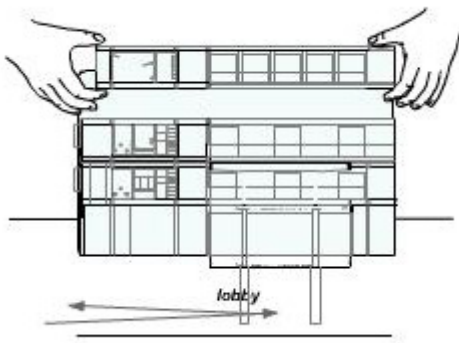
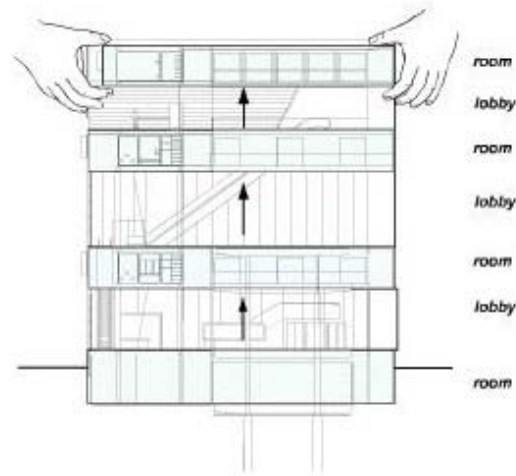
» fig. 97 *Clustering programme in Sky Village*. MVRDV.



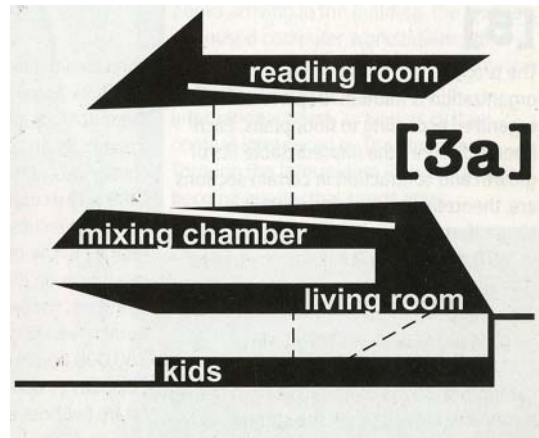
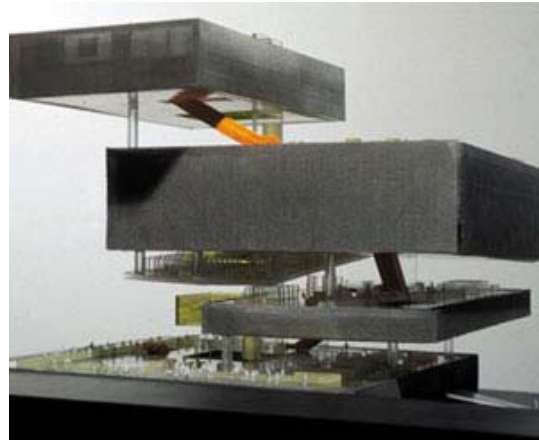
» fig. 98 (left) *MahaNakhon Tower (Bangkok)*, OMA.



» fig. 99 (right) *Le Project Triangle (Paris)*, H & DeM



» fig. 100 Hotel Pro Forma, nARCHITECTS. Continuous Lobby.



» fig. 101 Seattle Public Library, Collective spaces

Conclusions

Perhaps the most workable solution to the design proposal lies in the approaches of Seattle Public Library by OMA and Hotel Pro Forma by nARCHITECTS. In Seattle Public Library programme is stratified and rejigged with spaces in between the set core elements becoming ‘trading floors,’ stimulating public areas of work, play, interaction, rest and reading. These trading floors contain connections, visual and physical, to each other that create a network through the building. They are flexible spaces capable of dealing with a diverse set of functions and future changes. The building also responds to its urban surroundings and creates a genuine open public realm. Hotel Pro Forma by nARCHITECTS, stretches out the point of arrival, the lobby winds its way through the building providing flexible performance spaces and gathering areas that respond to their immediate adjacencies.

Both these projects, while successfully combining public and private functions have the advantage of being governed by a single entity, one a hotel through and through, the other a library. The goal should be in achieving equally effective collective spaces in a building that must share uses, users, owners and managers, must mediate between functions, and must work at a variety of scales while mixing-in new-user types.

3.2 Welcome to CityPlace





» fig. 102 Site Graffiti [facing page]

» fig. 103 CityPlace Site photos [This page]

CityPlace and the Railway Lands

Thirty-five hectares (85 acres) of formerly unoccupied rail-lands in downtown Toronto are currently undergoing a transformation into an instant neighbourhood. Eventually, CityPlace will be home to over 15,000 people in 35 buildings, sequestered by the Gardiner Expressway on the south border and by the still functioning CP and CN rail-lines on the north, it is truly an island of suburban stacked living which is at once surrounded and yet at a distance from downtown Toronto.

When fully constructed, these former rail lands will be almost entirely comprised of large-scale high-rise residential condo towers. CityPlace is the pinnacle (also the name of a CityPlace tower) of Toronto's stimulated condo development and the perfect test subject for De Cauter's capsular civilization.



» fig. 104 CityPlace 20 years ago [above]



» fig. 105 The waterfront rail-lands as they once were [above]

» fig. 106 Site Plan [opposite]



Fort York

Rail Lands

Site

Gardiner Exp.

Lake Ontario



CONTEXT PLAN

Site barriers

In his thesis entitled “The Infrastructural Space of Appearance”, Neeraj Bhatia describes CityPlace as an island within Toronto, separated at its northern and southern edges by heavy transportation infrastructure. “CityPlace lands largely remained “trapped” in the central core of the downtown Toronto.” (Bhatia, p.62)

Along the northern edge of the site rail-lines are sunk down creating a canyon which carves through the city and can only be traversed by bridge, making the only current over-passes Bathurst St and Spadina Ave within CityPlace, although a pedestiran bridge is also proposed. This creates a serious physical divide between the CityPlace neighbourhood and downtown of Toronto.

While, the combination of the elevated Gardiner Expressway and the busy Lakeshore Blvd on the Southern edge certainly create a daunting edge and barrier for pedestrians. Thus creating a divide between CityPlace and the waterfront.



» fig. 107 The rail canyon to the north [top] Image from Mute blog [above]

» fig. 108 The Gardiner ExpressWay and Lakeshore Blvd conspire to create a southern barrier to the site [above]

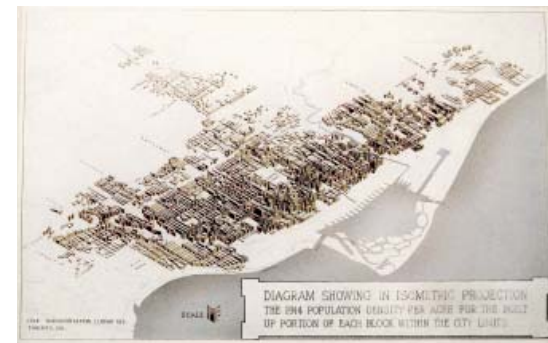


Tabula Rasa

Beginning in the late 1960s, CN rail began to shift many of its functions out of downtown Toronto creating an opportunity to re-develop this downtown land.



» fig. 110 Bing maps show much of the former rail-lands under construction [above]



» fig. 111 This isometric projection gives a graphic representation of rail-way and industrial occupation south of Front St. The residential population ends at the railway edge [above]

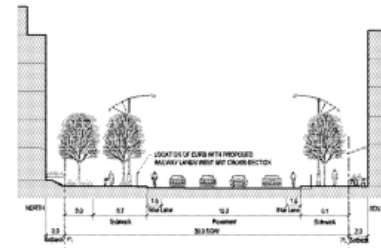


» fig. 113 The view from google earth with future condo proposals modelled. [above]

Development Visions and Masterplans

The 35 hectare neighbourhood is largely the product of five developers with input from the City. Concord Adex were the first to develop and are responsible for most of the condo towers and the park east of Bathurst St. The City of Toronto run TCHC (Toronto Community Housing Corp) is also responsible for three properties in this area (the result of negotiations with CN rail and Concord Adex during land transfers).

A 'Fort York Neighbourhood Public Realm Plan' put together by Toronto architects duToit Allsopp Hillier and adopted by the City also present design guidelines for each street in the neighbourhood and each site, specifying heights and street frontages as well as character for each street.

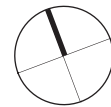


» fig. 114 The Concord Adex vision for CityPlace [above]

» fig. 115 Fort York Neighbourhood Public Realm Plan [above]



- City Place. by Concord Adex
- City of Toronto controlled properties
- The Yards. by Onni Group
- Malibu and LTD. by Malibu Ltd
- West Harbour City. by Plaza Corp
- Water Park City. by Lanterra/Lifetime



CITYPLACE DEVELOPERS

» fig. 116 Developers of the former rail-lands [above]

VERTICAL URBANITY

In *Delirious New York*, Rem Koolhaas explored the excitement surrounding the first high-rises in Manhattan, marvelling at the first city that became so congested it had nowhere to expand but straight up. In the high-rise, Koolhaas identified the multiplication of New York's grid, each plot reproducing itself over and over again with the ultimate urban Utopian vision, a single lot containing multiple realities; any floor could contain anything. He called this the "culture of congestion": "On each floor, the Culture of Congestion will arrange new and exhilarating human activities in unprecedented combinations. Through Fantastic Technology it will be possible to reproduce all "situations" – from the most natural to the most artificial – wherever and whenever desired." (Koolhaas, pg 125)

The Downtown Athletic Club, with its diversity of functions, became to Koolhaas the final realization of the skyscraper's potential promised by the 1909 theorem. "In spite of its physical solidity, the Skyscraper is the great metropolitan destabilizer: it promises perpetual programmatic instability." (Koolhaas, pg 87)

The nature of the contemporary condo tower means that the utopia of an independent personal plot in the sky imagined in the 1909 Theorem can never materialize. The reality of real estate demands concrete partitions dividing each plate into ever-smaller plots. The truth is that the plot has not been multiplied but divided. Of course, the marketing of these towers promises something greater than a rigid concrete volume, it promises a lifestyle.

The culture of congestion is not just a "Manhattan thing" anymore, "greedy utilitarianism" is no longer just Tokyo's domain, Toronto is now a three-dimensional city.

The aim of this tower is to embrace the new conditions created by this new age of programmatic promiscuity, to create an interior urbanity that draws on the juxtaposition of seemingly opposite and random functional uses. To finally achieve the promise of the high-rise tower noted by Koolhaas, a culture of congestion, a vertical urbanity. Dwelling, office, swimming pool, roller-rink, night-club, Laundromat, sushi, book store... On the city street the combinations of these disparate programs create a vitality and energy, their users creating nodes of social interference. The conventional stacked tower contains all these elements and yet has done everything to suppress their mixing. This tower actively pursues the engagement and confrontation of these diverse functions revelling in the unpredictability of the public realm and creates a "new public" from the diverse elements already present.

The marketing propaganda that promises lifestyle choices and a better you, replaced by new settings created through proximity and interference. Programme pitted against programme, in a perpetual unresolvable conflict. Where leisure can finally attempt to wrest control of the floorplate from the income-generating massing of housing and office while housing and office benefit from the struggle.

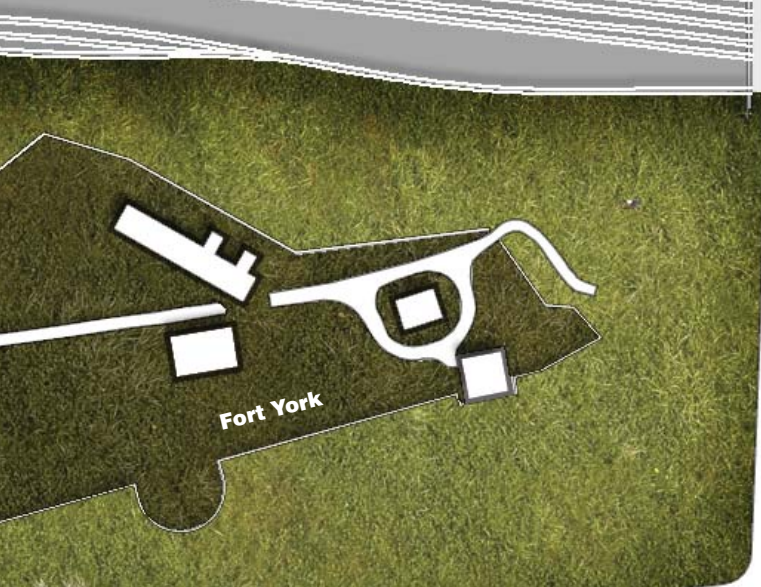
By re-positioning the public hybrid programmes, the

collective shared spaces become infused by them. The public programme coils up the standard condo tower, exploiting its vertical nature and bringing new publics into the body of the tower. Spiralling around the tower, the programme takes advantage of views and orientation (the pool gets south light, but the studios prefer north, the gym overlooks the Gardiner to raise heartbeats, while the café overlooks Fort York, etc.) As it spirals, the degree to which it infects the standard condo floorplate varies. It actively engages certain units, as private rooms puncture into studios, the library or the pool. While it doesn't actively engage every unit, it greatly affects the shared common elements of the tower. The collectively owned hallways, stairwells, and areas of circulation become new interior public spaces, where a walk down through the building might bring one by a workshop, lecture hall and daycare. These common elements that are kept so sterile in the condominium, become infused with new activity and user groups.

Programmatically, the condominium shares its form with a furniture/interior design school, daycare, brewery, restaurant, café, gallery, gym and pool. Synergy exists between the interior design school and the condo as the condo itself has the potential to become a testing ground for new ideas about urban high-rise inhabitation. The school's location in CityPlace strategically places it, as condo dwellers from the surrounding towers would be lured in to the school's showcase galleries and home depot style courses catered to urban living. New publics, from outside the Cityplace boundaries, would be entering and working in the building all day as well; professors, students and faculty stretch the hours

of activity of the condos interior. Not to mention the variety of interesting programmes within a design school that can be exploited in the interior public realm; gallery space, café, student lounge, studios, library, workshop, machine room, lecture halls, etc.

It is important to welcome demographics that are separate from the school to catch a larger swath of the city's demographics, hence, the daycare, as well as the new home of the Amsterdam brewery (currently on the site already) bring in completely different groups of people. More typical condo amenities, like pool and gym, remain; However, they've been re-calibrated to allow not just homeowners but people with memberships and students in to their upper zone.



Fort York

Bathurst Bridge



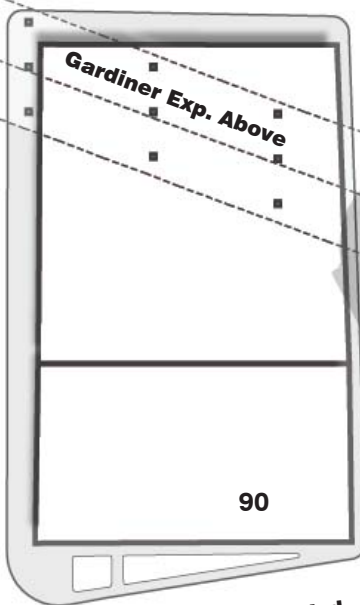
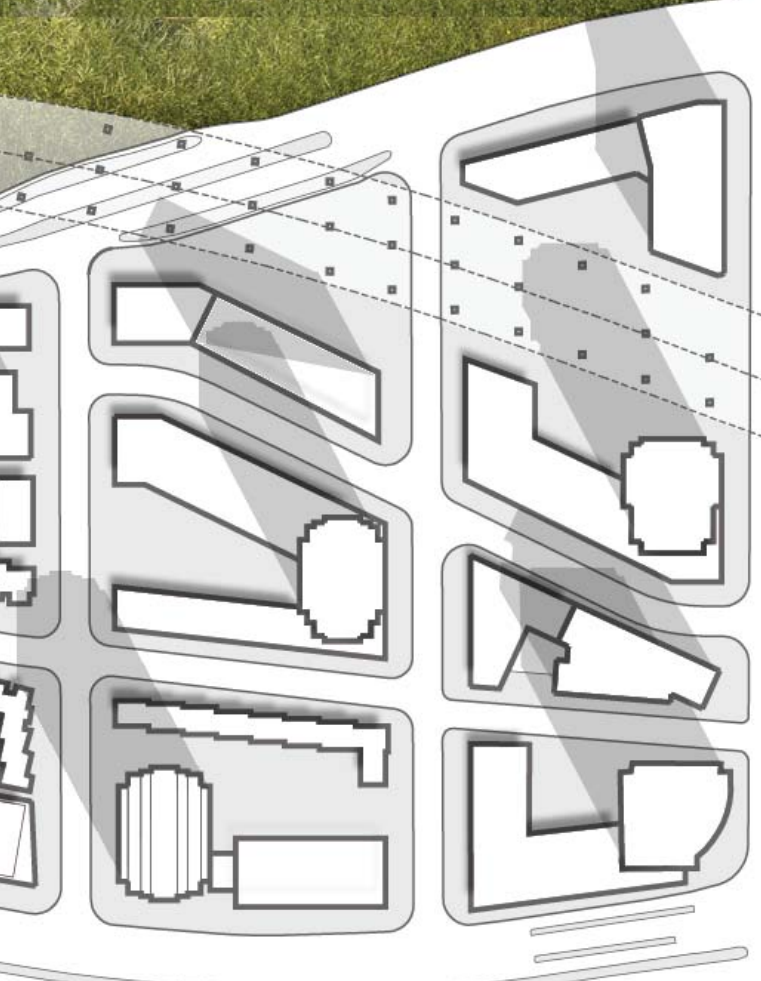
Library District Condos

Bremner Ave



BLOCK 37 / SITE

Bathurst St



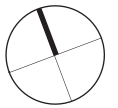
Gardiner Exp. Above

90

Lakeshore Blvd

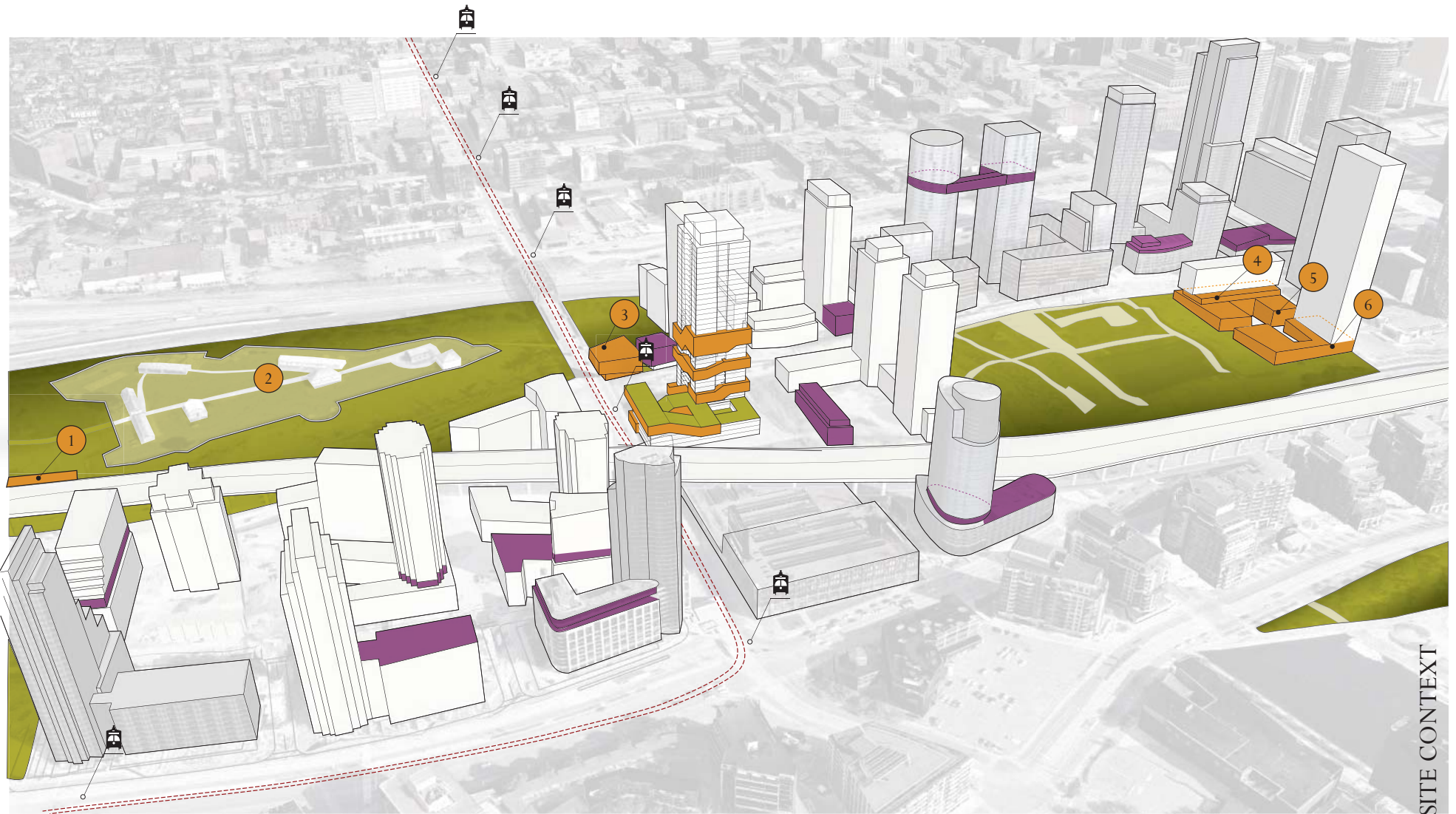


Public Park



» fig. 117

SITE PLAN



Public Amenities

Private Building Amenities

511 Bathurst Line Stops

» fig. 118

- 1/ Fort York Visitor Center
- 2/ Historic Fort York
- 3/ Public Library
- 4/ Community Center
- 5/ Public School
- 6/ Catholic School

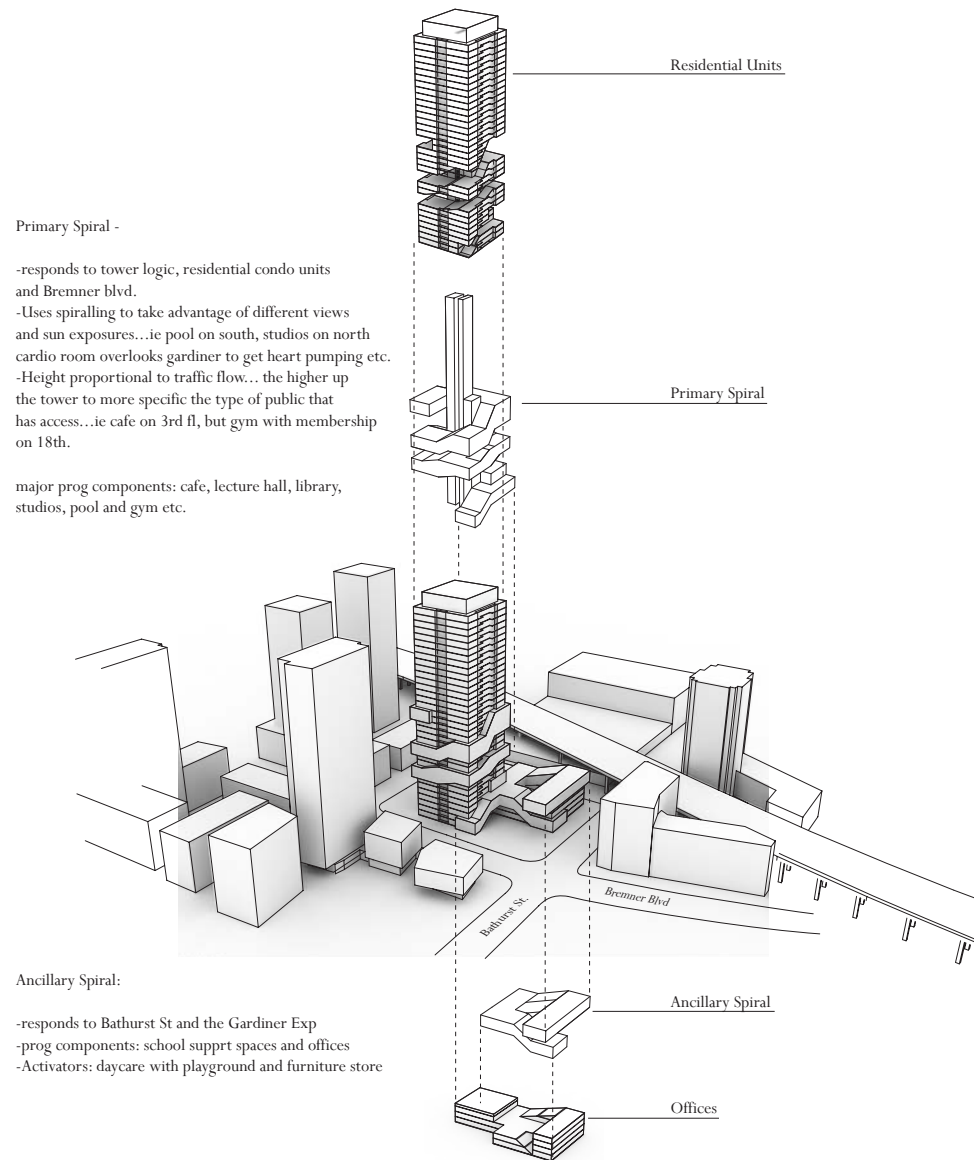
Organizing Logic

The building is comprised of two overlapping spirals which form the organizing logic for the public programme. The two spirals wrap themselves around the more standard programme of condo units and offices.

Public circulation follows vertical spirals and is expressed on the exterior by structural trusses on the exterior of the spiral. The express circulation with elevators and fire stairs forms the standard cores of the two spirals.

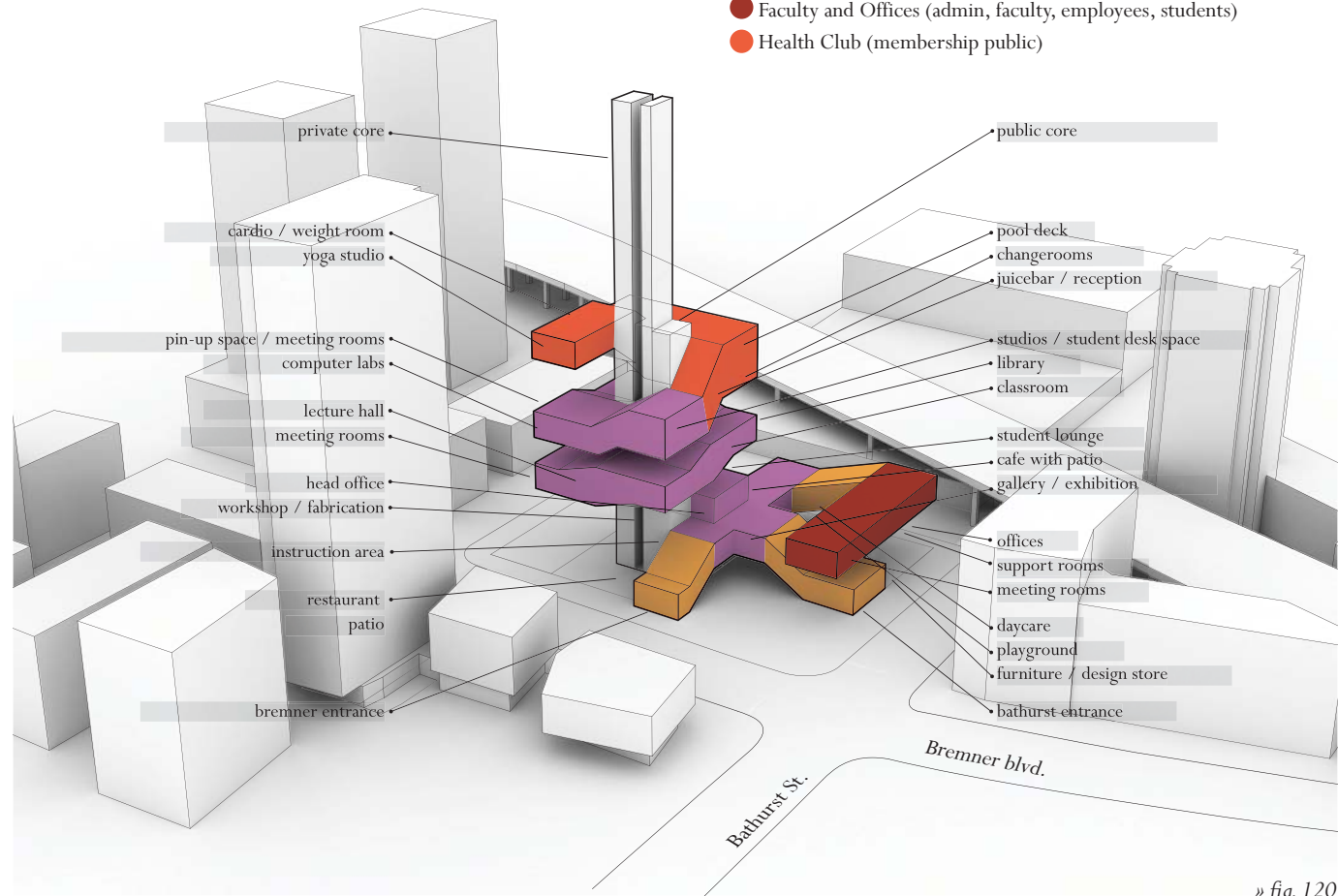
The knuckle where the two spirals meet forms a major node within the tower, here the public gallery, cafe, daycare, brewery, furniture store, workshops and head offices for the school are located.

» fig. 119



Annotated Programme Index of Collective Spaces

- Retail, Daycare, Access Points (general public)
- Design School (public, students, faculty, visitors, home courses)
- Faculty and Offices (admin, faculty, employees, students)
- Health Club (membership public)



» fig. 120

Site Challenges and Opportunities

The site has a complex set of issues that offer a series of challenges that can be harnessed as opportunities.

The orientation of the tower responds to historic Fort York to its north-west corner, as well as the public library directly to its north by having a public outdoor area at the corner of Bathurst and Bremner. The tower placement also responds to its neighbours by its siting on the north-west corner which attempts to minimize shadow impact, especially for Fort York.

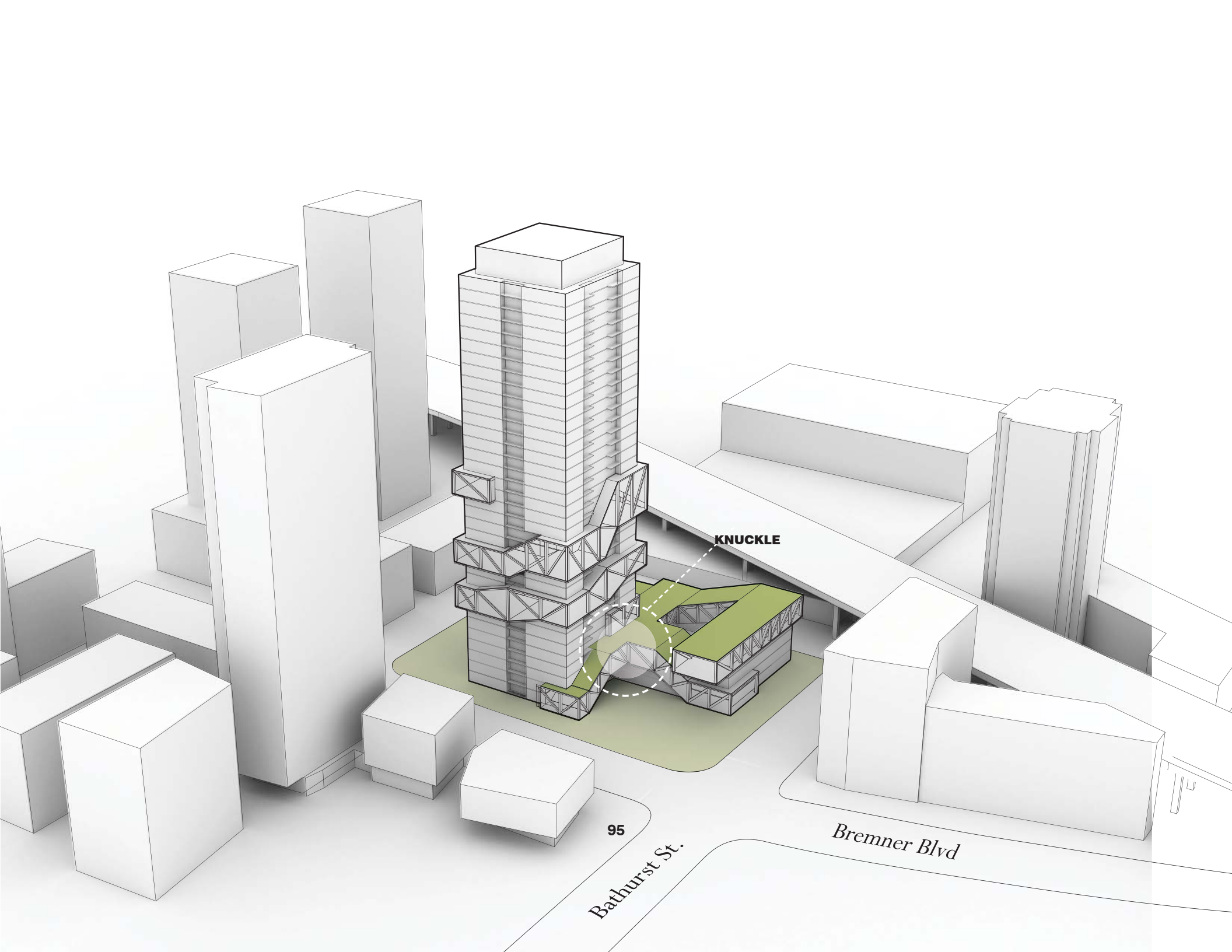
Both spirals respond to their main streets, one locates its main entrance along Bathurst and the other along Bremner, these are the main access points to the interior urbanity in the tower.

The building aims to shield itself from the Gardiner Expressway to its southern edge and the rear of abandoned Loblaws heritage site. The exterior public ground plaza is shielded from this, as well as the courtyard playground and gardens on the second floor.

Above the Bathurst arm of the spiral, an exterior elevated gardens circulate up to form a look-out point along Bathurst that gives interesting views of Fort York, Bathurst bridge and even the rare opportunity to look at the Gardiner from above.

Structure and Circulation

Typical condominium structure in Toronto is concrete shear wall construction and this tower uses the same structural logic for its “standard” condo areas. However, in places where the new vertical public programme wraps around it transfers to an exterior truss system. This serves several purposes: it allows for an opening of the floor plan in several areas to allow for larger volumes than the typical construction. It becomes a visual signal of the public areas and public circulation throughout the building making the tower’s interior urbanity legible to the larger urban realm.

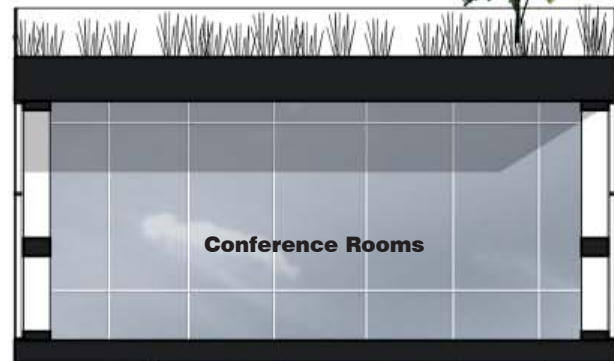


KNUCKLE

95
Bathurst St.

Bremner Blvd

**Bathurst Lookout /
Community gardens**



Conference Rooms



Offices

Offices

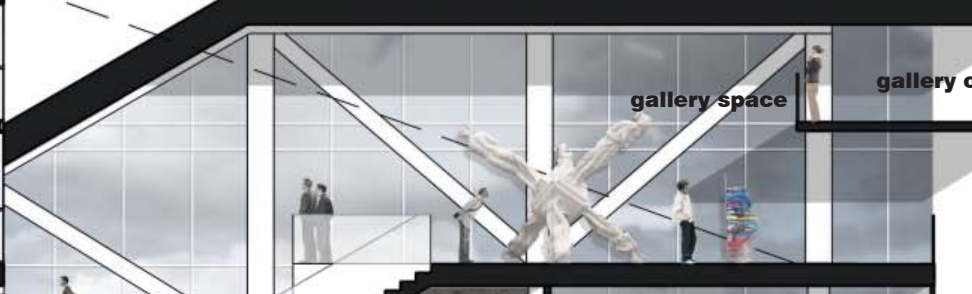


Furniture Store

Building Entrance

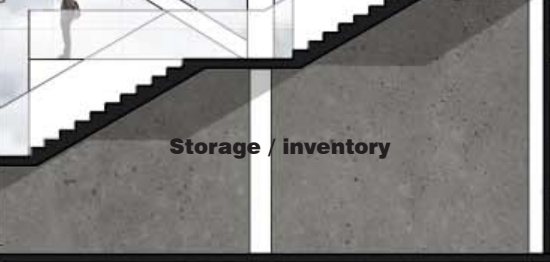


cafe patio



gallery space

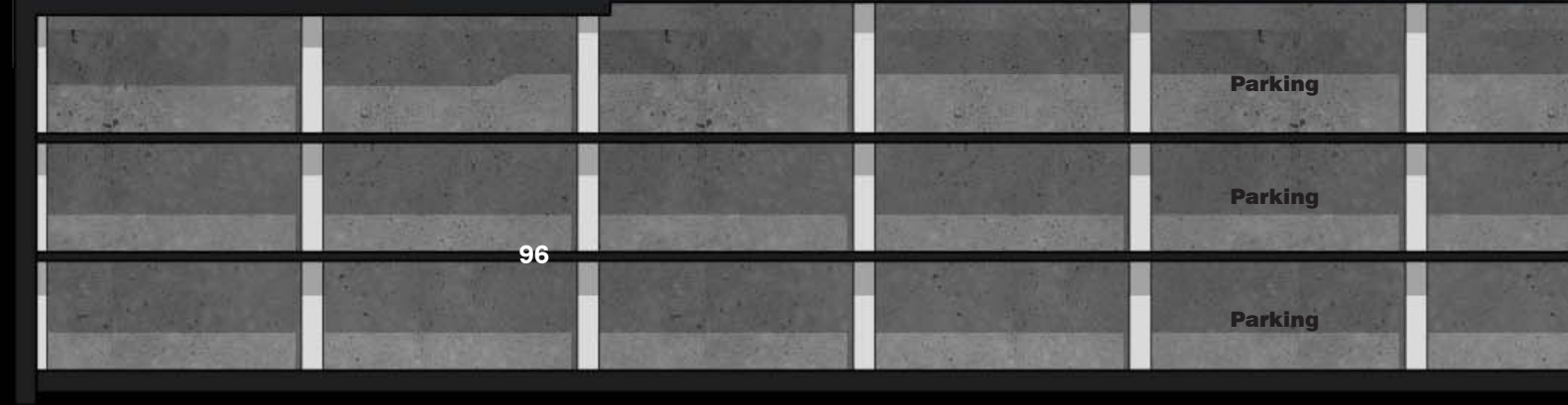
gallery over



Storage / inventory



instruction area



Parking

Parking

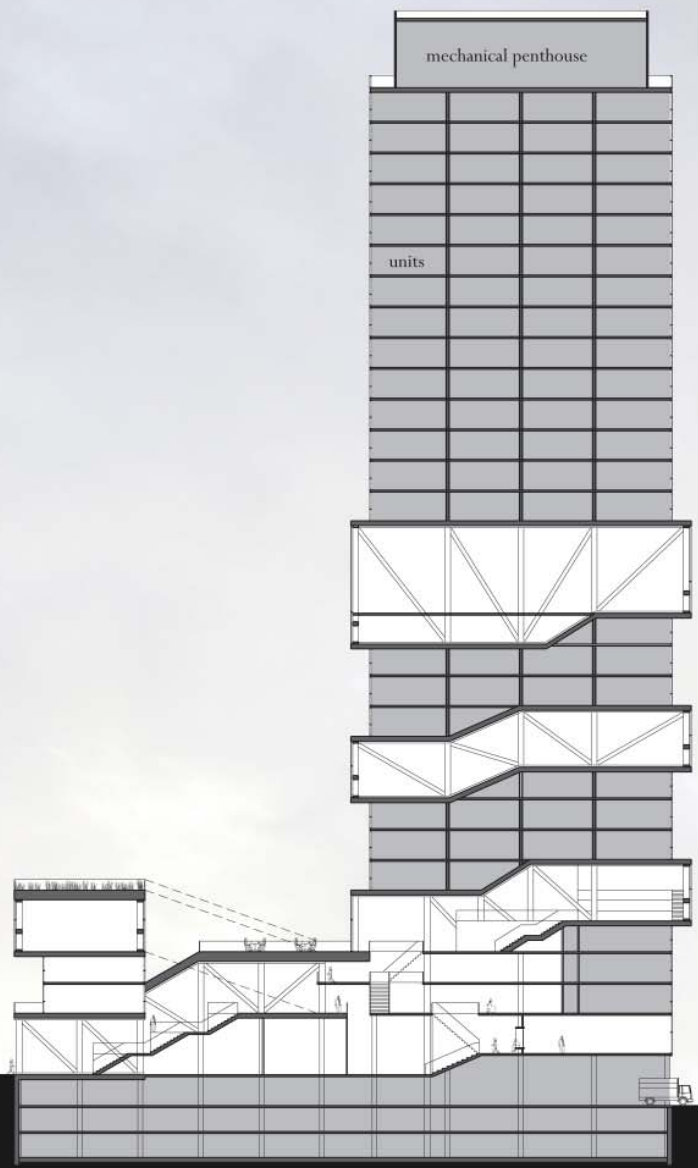
Parking



»fig. 122

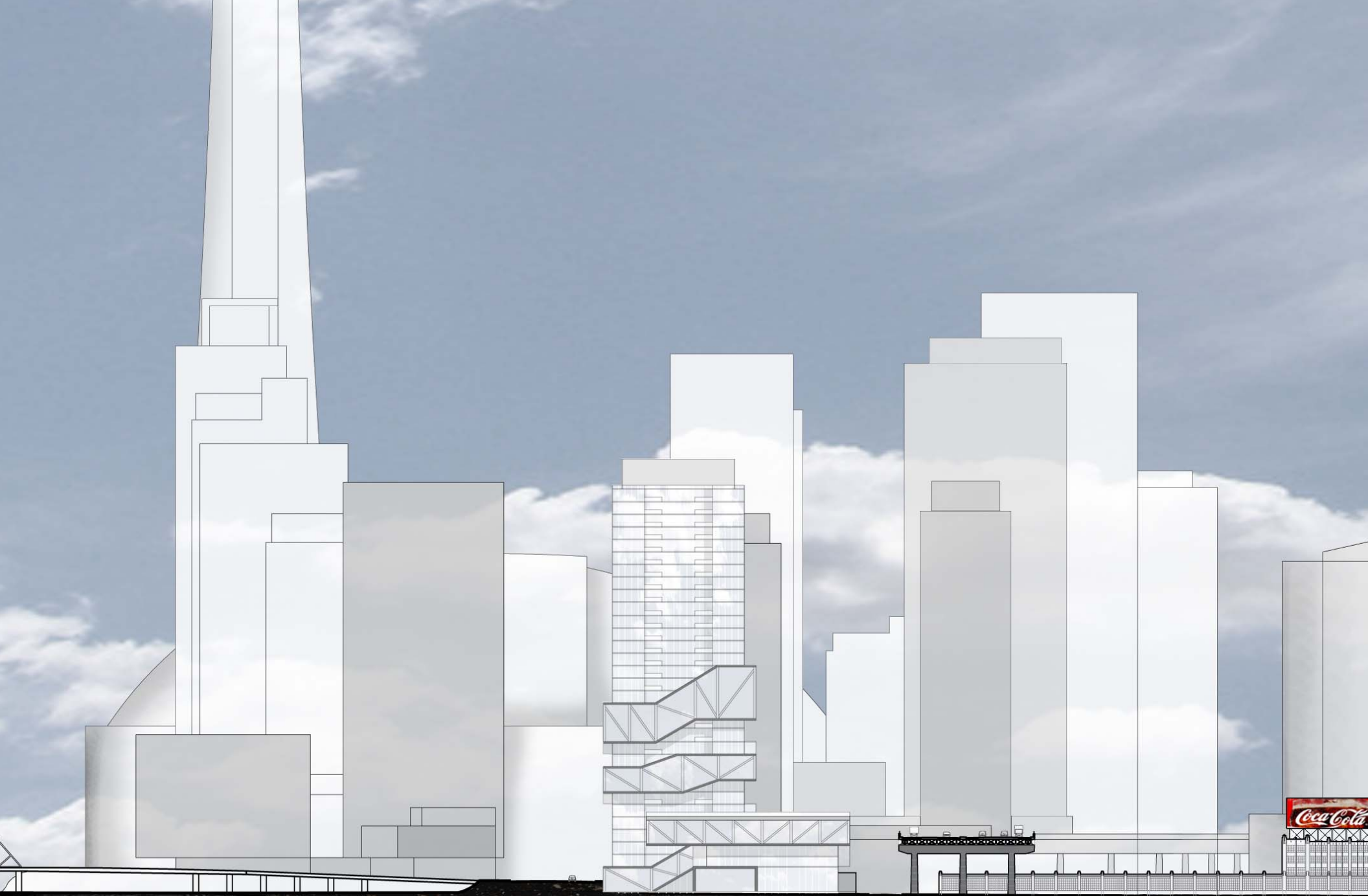
SECTION THROUGH KNUCKLE

OVERALL BUILDING SECTION



» fig. 123

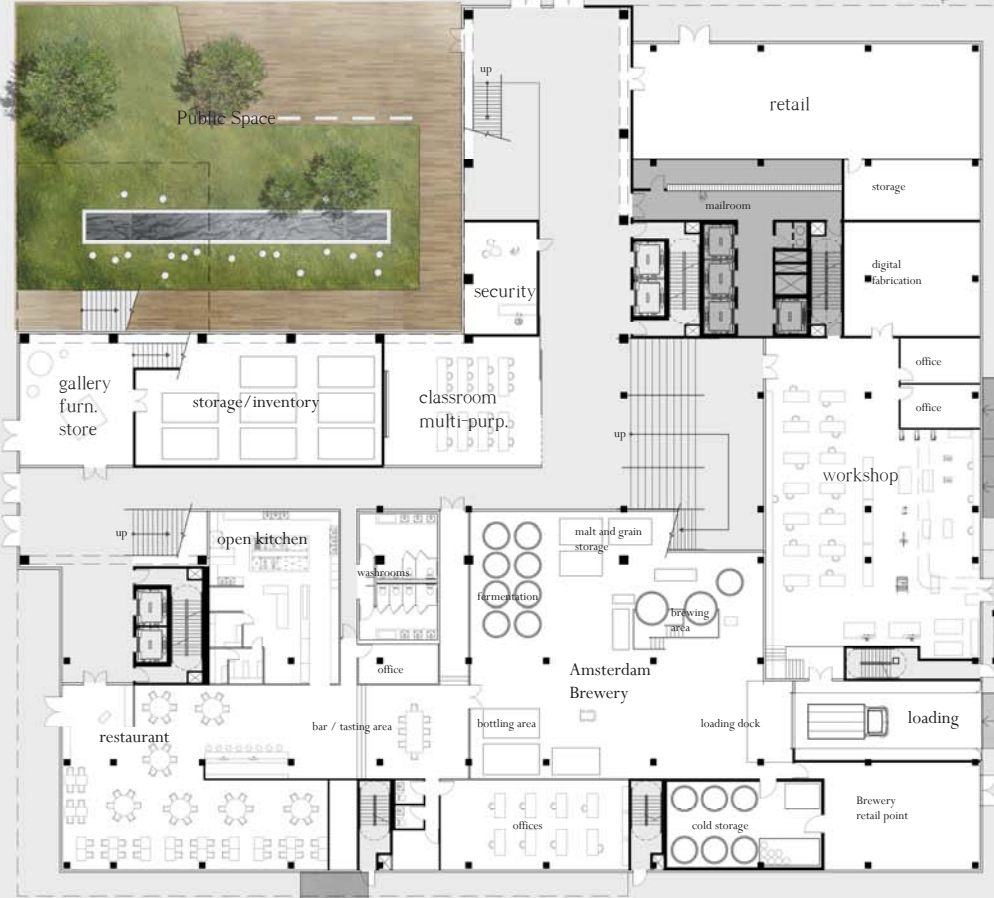
» fig. 124



Bremner Ave.

Bathurst St.

Bathurst Entrance



101

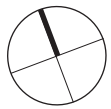


» fig. 125

Ground Floor Plan

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

TOWER FLOOR PLAN LV 10 (LECTURE HALL)



» fig. 126

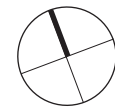


Adjacent units with studies that overlook library

private corridor with viewing platform

Open to book stacks below

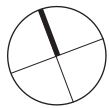
Adjacent units with studies that overlook library



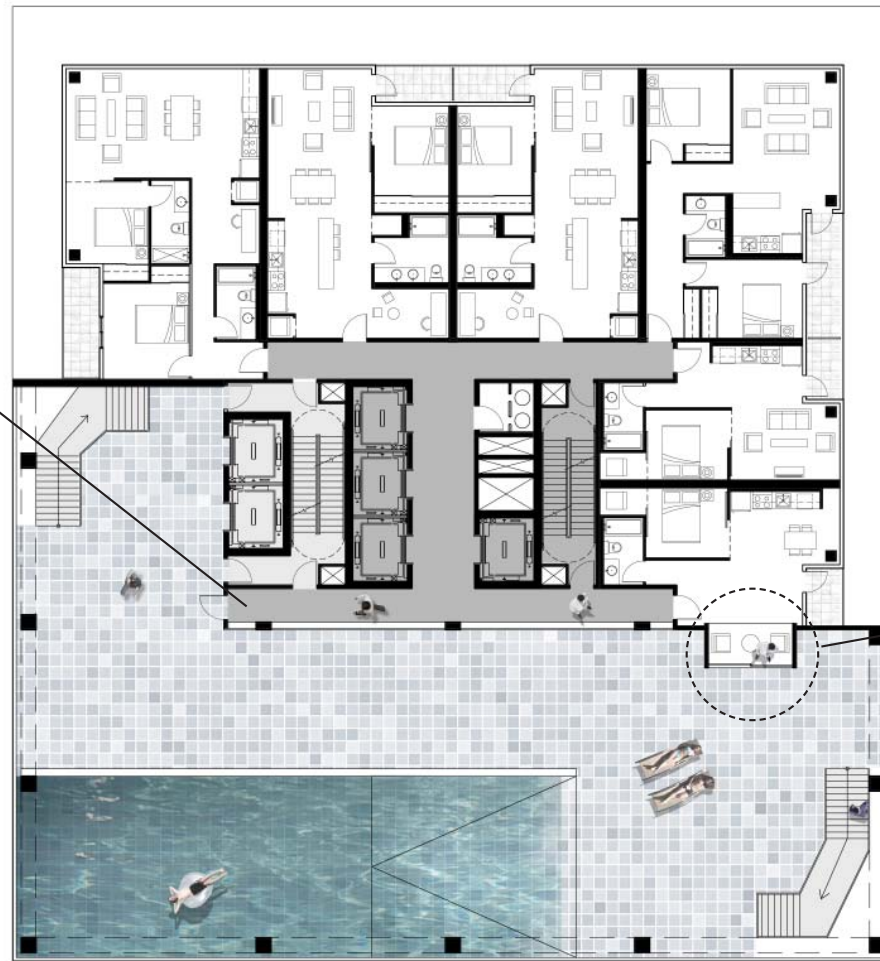
TOWER FLOOR PLAN LV 15 (LIBRARY)

» fig. 127

TOWER FLOOR PLAN LV 19 (POOL)



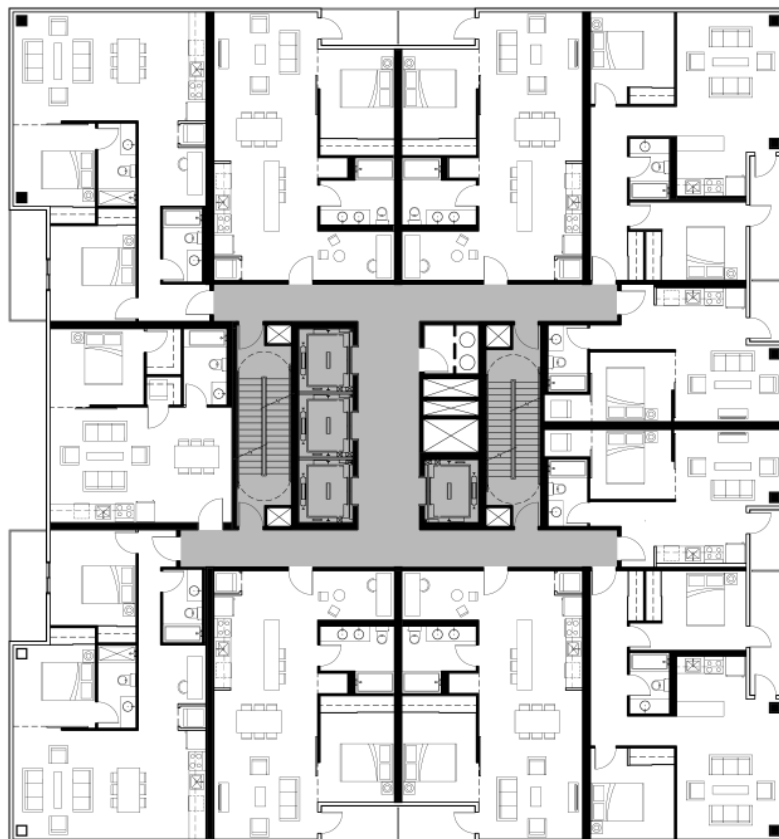
» fig. 128



Private corridor viewing terrace

Adjacent units with pool overlook

Pool deck with Southern Exposure



TOWER FLOOR PLAN TYPICAL

» fig. 129

section vignette 01

STUDENT DESIGN STUDIOS AND ADJACENT UNITS

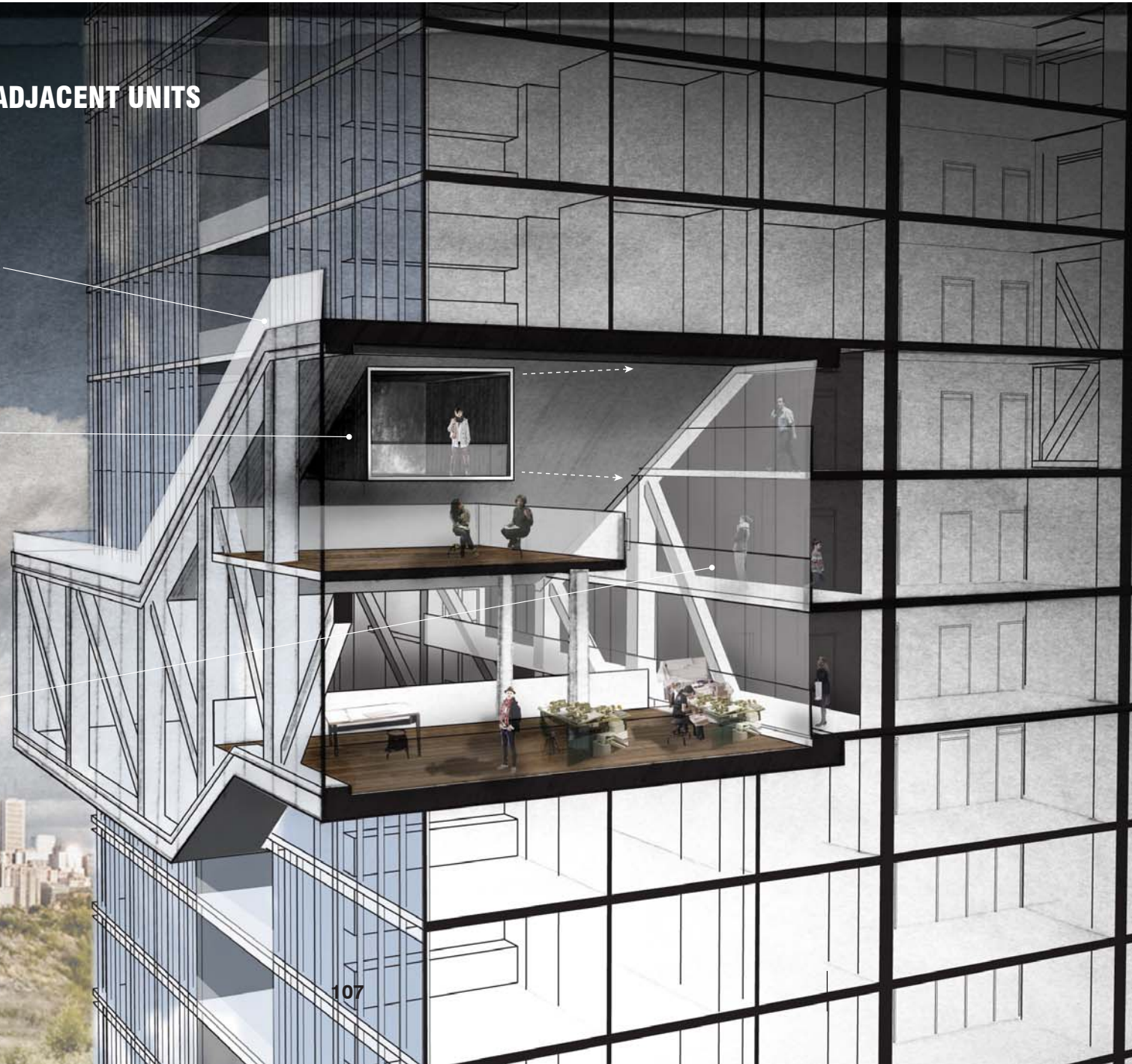
Spiralling terrace creates unique outdoor spaces

Adjacent units mutate to pick-up studio space
One-off unit with working studio.

>Similar conditions occur with the library,
workshop, pool and crit spaces.

Condo corridors become viewing platforms
into public programme.

>Similar conditions occur with the library,
pool, lecture hall and crit spaces.



POOL DECK AND ADJACENT UNITS



Units above pool space can drop down to pick up additional rooms overlooking pool.

Adjacent units have views and balconies overlooking pool.

>Similar conditions occur with the library, workshop, pool and crit spaces.

Condo corridors become viewing platforms into public programme. Smell of chlorine omnipresent.

>Similar conditions occur with the library, pool, lecture hall and crit spaces.

Dark spaces around pool to be sauna, changerooms and pool mech rooms. with views into pool.

Units below dark spaces can pick up extra headroom creating mini-windows at the ceiling which let-in the ambient ripples of the pool.

109

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is to more fully embrace the opportunities inherent in the programmatic promiscuity of Toronto's new high-density urban reality. To re-position the already present common elements, which seem to actively suppress the outward display of their collective ownership, with a juxtaposition of disparate programmes where the tension between functions begins to encourage new interior publics and propagates into the surrounding urban realm.

Interconnected and continuous collective spaces pull the public urban notion of the street into the interior of the tower. Toronto's vertical and three-dimensional form is exploited to create a vertical urbanity that propagates throughout the tower and infects as much of the standard condominium logic as possible. The tower is opened up to the urban unpredictability that occurs in the city street by re-positioning disparate programmes that are already present in Toronto's condo typology.

But a complexity of programme also brings a complex list of challenges that require creative solutions, levels of coordination and cooperation and compromise between the various functions and their actors.

Every square foot of a condo has a monetary value, construction costs and the selling price calculated in price per square foot. In the individual unit, the value of

this square footage can be easily calculated and charged to the homebuyer, but a challenge in the feasibility of this design lies in convincing the developers of the value created in the building as a whole with the addition of these complex collective spaces. As architects, we need to argue for the value of collective spaces when they aren't easily monetized like units.

By working within the typical current condo structure and keeping the units the same as they are now, this thesis argued under the assumption that changes need to take place within the vernacular framework of market forces, political and physical factors. In reality, a project like this would take a careful cooperation between major institution and real-estate developer, a cooperation that would have to extend to the condo board and unit owners throughout the duration of the building's life. A project like this would require new thinking on security and maintenance. New forms of ownership would almost certainly need to be developed to accommodate these design ideas.

A vital challenge of this thesis was creating interaction points between the units and the public sphere. How do you maintain privacy and security, crucial for the space of the individual, while opening up the building to new programmatic elements? This thesis begins to probe these different levels of interaction and the hierarchy of thresholds between home and public, but it is a conversation must continue.

The spaces created in the design through the re-calibration of these diverse programmes needs to propagate out

from the building and into the surrounding condos as well. Exploring how this building would interact with its neighbouring condos to form a network of common elements and shared collective routes is key as more and more Toronto's civic realm is being developed along with the condominium.

This building is unique; a product of its site, context and neighbouring conditions, but the ideas and discussions it begins are genuinely important topics for architects in Toronto and throughout North America. The condominium typology has spread rapidly over the past decade. As architects we have a social responsibility to question this over-riding high-rise condominium logic. Density alone will not equate to "smart-growth" but rather an approach that takes into consideration the collective areas of our cities, the areas where monetary value is not easily ascertained. More and more these towers will become responsible for the production of Toronto's urban realm and this is an issue that affects every inhabitant of the city.

TOWER + PODIUM

PARADE 2



Developer: Concord
Cityplace
Architect: KPF

PANORAMA



Developer: Concord
Cityplace
Architect: Page & Steele /
quadrangle

HARBOUR VIEW



Developer: Concord
Cityplace
Architect: Page & Steele

PEARS ON THE AVE



Developer: Menkes
Architect: Page & Steele

FESTIVAL TOWER



Developer: Daniels Corp.
Architect: KPMB



Developer: cadillac fairview/
lanterra
Architect: Architects Alliance

DNA3



Developer: canderel
Stoneridge
Architect: Graziani &
Corazza

300 FRONT



Developer: Tridel
Architect: Wallman

Appendix A:

Vernacular Vocabulary

What follows is a cataloguing of the various elements that make up today's typical condominium in Toronto. Eight different and independent condominium projects have been chosen to demonstrate the condo components of Tower + Podium, Parking, Structure, Floorplate, Service cores, Unit design, Lobby spaces and amenities.

Three of these condos (Panorama, Parade 2 and Harbour View Estates) belong to Concord's CityPlace development. The rest are each done by different developers with a diverse mix of architects and interior designers, they exist in different stages of development, some built, some under construction and some still in pre-sales phase.

And though they have been designed and created by different combinations of people and under different conditions, they share a remarkable amount of similarities. The reasons for this will be explored in detail in the following pages.

» Tower and Podium Types [left]

Tower + Podium

The tower and podium scheme that dominates Toronto residential high-rise design evolved out of a response to the failings of modernist “tower in the park” schemes that prevailed through the 1960s and 70s. These buildings failed to fit into their neighbourhood context and were “disruptive to its scale and texture. The buildings did not support streets and open spaces with the porches, stoops and retail that the traditional forms of urban buildings had. Their large floor plates cast long shadows and created windy conditions at grade.”¹ (p7 Design Criteria)

As a response, the tower and podium scheme began to gain traction:

“In the late 1980’s a new approach to tall buildings began to take hold in Toronto. These tall buildings were more careful to fit within the existing urban fabric, defining the edges of streets and small open spaces in a traditional way with base buildings, townhouses, or lower scale buildings.”² (p7 design criteria)

Current planning policy within Toronto reinforces the podium and point tower scheme. Urban design strategies encourage the use of podiums and base buildings as a

means of infusing street life by framing the street, fitting into context, and offering retail and amenity at the ground level.

Different neighbourhoods maintain different zoning policies and base buildings are built to reflect the scale of these different streets and neighbourhoods. This dictates the height of base buildings and the setback on any towers or additional height above the base building to stay within the streets character.

The point tower (defined as having a Gross Floor Construction Area under 8,000 sf)³ is encouraged for the tower portion as a small floorplate minimizes shadow impact on the street and wind issues. Also, more slender towers permit better views within the city. The south and east side of a block are the preferred locations for point towers as that keeps the majority of the towers shadow within the site and minimizes shadows on the street and in the public realm⁴.

1 p7 design criteria

2 p7 design criteria

3 design criteria (check for pg #)

4 Same as above

Parking Provisions

In many regards, condominium design is shaped by the reality of parking spaces. The City of Toronto has parking provision requirements for multi-unit housing, where the amount of unit types are multiplied with a factor (0.3 for bachelor units, 0.5 for 1 bedrooms, 0.8 for 2 bedrooms and 1.0 for 3+ bedrooms), likewise there are requirements for bicycle parking spots at a rate of 1.0 per unit.¹

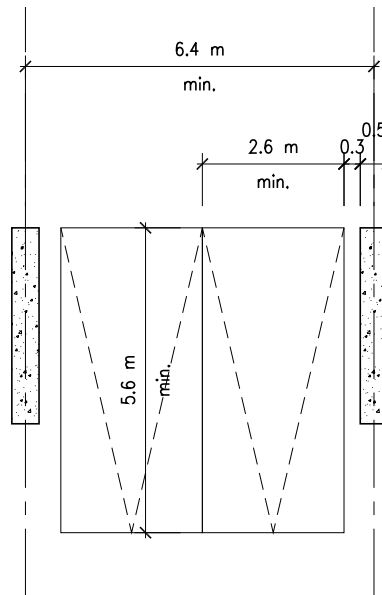
These parking provisions are commonly accommodated via multiple underground basement levels. Since the more underground levels there are on a project the more expensive it gets, (extra material, labour and of course time, to excavate and build up) parking efficiency is paramount.

To achieve maximum efficiency, spaces are packed as tightly as possible. Generally, this grid determines the structural layout for the entire condominium building. In this way, a persons living unit is determined by parking space, not by the unit.

Other factors affecting underground planning are property lines and neighbouring buildings, parking ramp

1 city of toronto website (chart in margin)

entrance and its turning radii, loading bays, garbage rooms, mechanical rooms, minimums for drive aisles (6m), bicycle parking requirements, storage locker placement and of course, tower location which will determine where the core placement is in the parking level.



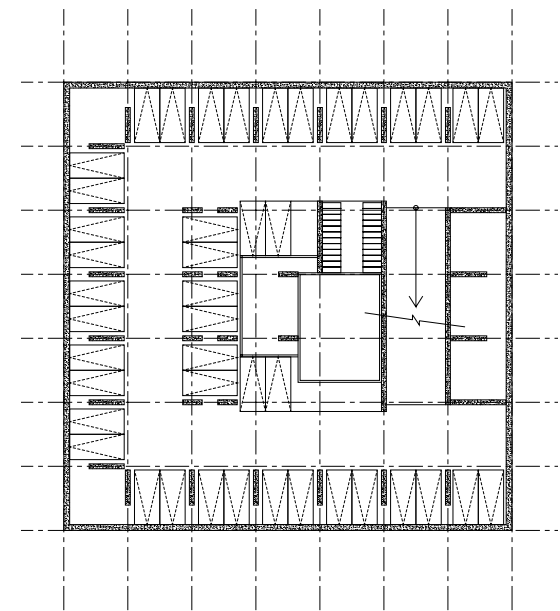
» A typical structural layout determined by minimum parking requirements [above]

Table 4.1 Recommended Minimum and Maximum Parking Standards – Condominium Apartments

Location	Resident Standard (to accommodate personal vehicles)								Visitor Parking (Minimum & maximum)
	Bachelor*		1 Bedroom		2 Bedrooms		3+ Bedrooms		
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	
Downtown Core	0.30	0.45	0.50	0.75	0.70	1.05	0.90	1.35	0.10
Downtown and Central Waterfront	0.30	0.45	0.50	0.75	0.80	1.20	1.00	1.50	0.10
Centres and Avenues on Subway	0.60	0.90	0.70	1.05	0.90	1.35	1.00	1.50	0.10
Other Avenues (well served by Surface Transit)	0.70	1.05	0.80	1.20	0.90	1.35	1.10	1.65	0.15
Rest of City	0.80	-	0.90	-	1.00	-	1.20	-	0.20

*40 sqm (~430 sqft) or less
 Notes:
 1. Maximum standards are 50% higher than the minimum standards except for the Rest of the City where there are no maximum standards.
 2. Due to under representation of bachelor units in the survey results the bachelor standards were developed based on consideration to the existing standards and in relation to the 1 bedroom standards.

» Minimum parking requirements for multi-unit housing [above]



» Typical basement level plan with parking and structural layout. [above]



» fly-forming in progress. The form is being craned from one floor to the next above. [above]



» concrete shear wall structure of condo [above]

Concrete Shear Walls

In Toronto, residential high-rises are predominantly concrete shear wall constructions and have been since the 1960s. This familiarity, with developers, architects, engineers, and labourers is a major reason for its continued use.

Concrete shear walls provide inherent strength and stability, fire-resistance and sound-proofing between units. A large pool of available tradesmen and concrete suppliers also feed into this, but perhaps the most important draw of concrete is its economic viability, reinforced by its speed of construction.

“The main advantage of this type of “concrete core /flat plate” cast-in-place concrete high rise residential tower is it can be constructed very quickly. Typical floor-to-floor cycle is one week, however three-day cycles are often achievable.”¹

These speedy construction times are achieved through the use of ‘fly-forming concrete construction’.

“The industry-standard construction method

1(WHE Report 79, p12) - <http://www.world-housing.net/>

is called flying-form concrete construction. It was born out of an ingenious response to increased labour costs and an ever-diminishing labour pool in Toronto’s construction industry of the 1960s.”²

Using a climbing tower crane, plywood forms are lifted from one poured floor to the next reusing the forms as the building is constructed. This method is less labour intensive and allows for much larger forms, speeding up the construction process significantly, thereby decreasing construction costs.

“Flying-form construction literally raised the roof in an apartment building market that had previously been comprised primarily of six- to eight-storey buildings, and introduced Toronto to the high-rise residential tower of 30 storeys and beyond.”³

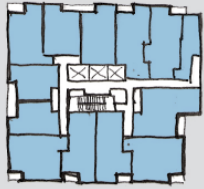
These benefits have insured that concrete shear wall structures are the dominant form of high-rise construction in Toronto, however, they come with one significant drawback, their inherent lack of future flexibility and difficulty in adapting to anything other than housing units.

2 (p220 Concrete Toronto)

3(p220 Concrete TO)

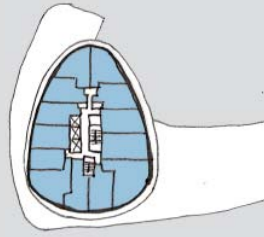
TOWER FLOORPLATES

PARADE 2



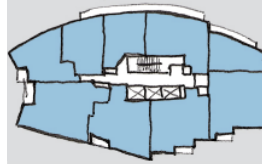
Type A

PANORAMA



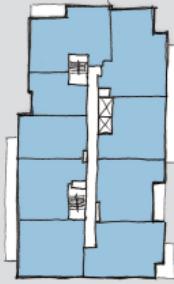
Type A

HARBOUR VIEW



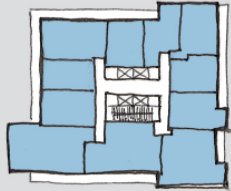
Type A

PEARS ON THE AVE



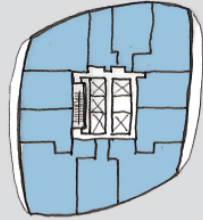
Type B

FESTIVAL TOWER



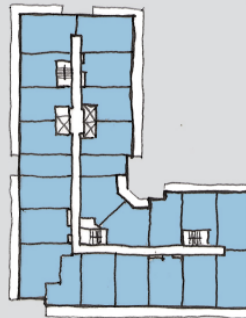
Type A

iCE



Type A

DNA3



Type B

300 FRONT



Type B

Tower Floorplate

The form of the tower's floorplate is designed to the optimum dimensions of a dwelling unit. This dictates the depth of the tower plate, as the need for natural lighting in a dwelling unit limits its depth to around 10m. This 10m shell of dwelling units has at its centre a compact core and corridor for the vertical distribution of services and people. The core, of course, has its own spatial needs and configuration issues which inform the tower plate. The core, corridor and units are finessed to ensure entry points to each unit and workable unit shapes. Mixes of unit types are generated that reflect the developers desire based on what the market information reflects. Specific square footages, unit types and desirable shapes are created based on this information.

Other factors affecting the design of tower plates are site restrictions implemented by zoning by-laws, structural issues pertaining to high-rise construction, environmental concerns affecting orientation, results of wind and shadow studies and of course iconic or style-drive aesthetic and formal concerns.

» Tower Floorplate Types [left]

Tower Layers

Tower plates typically take a variation of the following two types. **Type 'A'** being a central core with corridor encircling and then concentric rings of programme. **Type 'B'** being a double-loaded corridor with core elements spread along its length.

A. Core Elements

The next section looks at the core and corridor in further detail, but essentially, since they are not part of saleable unit square footage they are as compact as possible to minimize their area.

B. Corridor

C. Inner Residential Unit

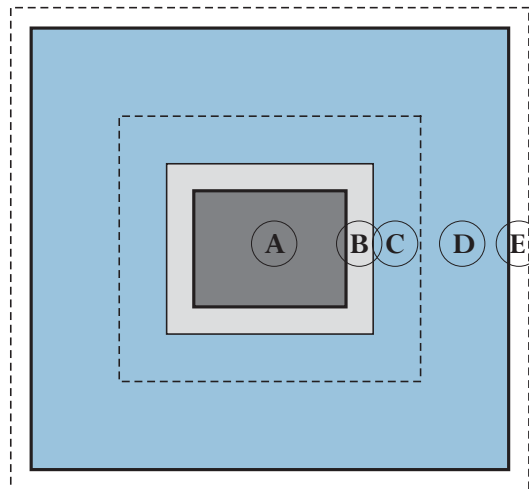
These are the elements of the dwelling unit that don't require access to natural light and thus use up the space closest to the corridor. This includes the entry point, closets, bathrooms, dens and kitchens.

D. Outer Residential Unit

These represent the parts of a dwelling unit located adjacent to natural light and windows, bedrooms and living/dining rooms.

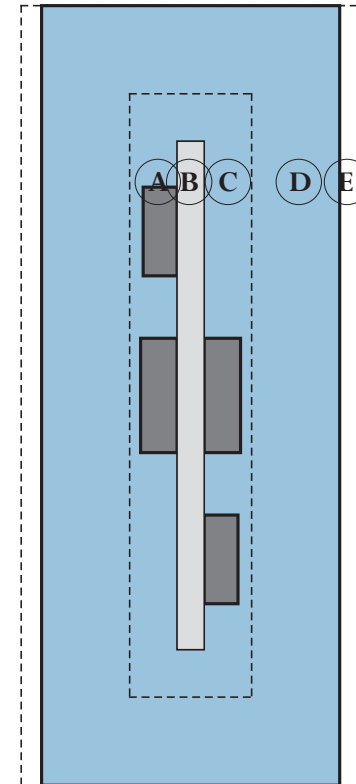
E. Exterior Balconies

Type A - central core



» Type 'A' - Central Core [above]

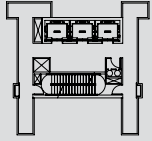
Type B - double loaded corridor



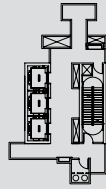
» Type 'B' - Double loaded corridor [above]

CORE CONFIGURATIONS

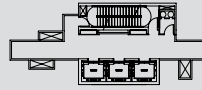
PARADE 2



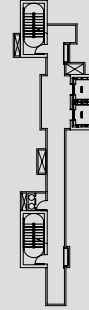
PANORAMA



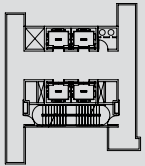
HARBOUR VIEW



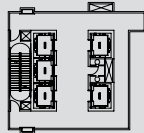
PEARS ON THE AVE



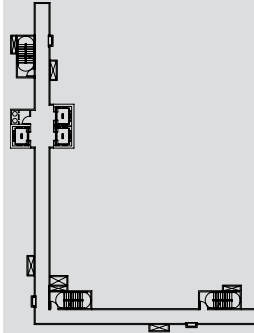
FESTIVAL TOWER



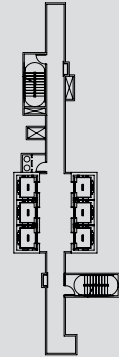
iCE



DNA3



300 FRONT



» Core types [left]

Core Elements

A. Elevators

B. Fire Stairs

Means of egress. Code specifies guard heights and lengths, riser and tread sizes, landing size and door swings for a fire escape route. Both types, scissor stairs and individual stairs, are prevalent.

C. Garbage and Recycling Room.

Vertical shoots.

D. Electrical Closet

Has double doors on it for access

E. Mechanical and Plumbing Risers

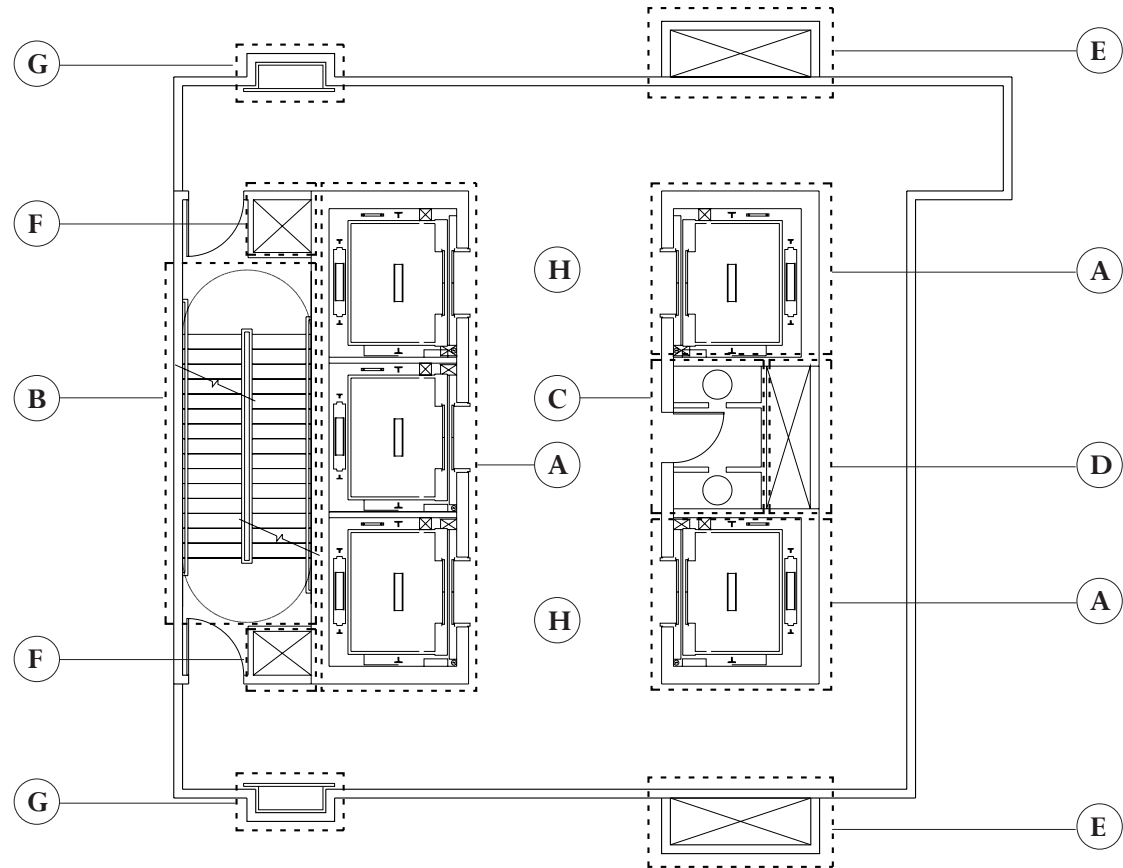
HVAC shafts for ventilation and heating and cooling, vertical piping to carry storm water, plumbing and sprinkler systems.

F. Stair Pressurisation Shaft

G. Fire Hose Cabinets

5m from stair door

H. Corridor and Circulation



» Core Elements diagram [above]

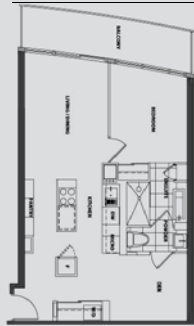
UNIT PLANS

PARADE 2



1 Bedroom
500 sq ft

PANORAMA



1 Bedroom + Den
638 sq ft

HARBOUR VIEW



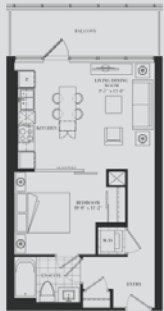
1 Bedroom
621 sq ft

PEARS ON THE AVE



1 Bedroom
605 sq ft

FESTIVAL TOWER



1 Bedroom
568 sq ft

iCE



1 Bedroom + Study
522 sq ft

DNA3



1 Bedroom + Den
609 sq ft

300 FRONT



1 Bedroom + Den
647 sq ft

Units

The form of each individual unit is predicated by a number of factors which ensure that there are only so many configurations it can take. A unit's enclosure is informed by structural concrete shear walls that decide its width, proximity to natural lighting and ventilation which determine its depth and placement of specific core elements which can add irregularities to the plan. Every dwelling unit requires corridor access and is subject to facade treatments.

Units are also at the mercy of the real estate market. Units are shaped to achieve optimum square footages determined by popular unit sales in the market. Desirable unit types (Studio, 1 Bedroom, 2 Bedroom + Den, etc) are also maximized in floorplates to achieve a mix of units that sell quickly. If a unit is a proven seller, developers will be quick to try and emulate any successes.

Each dwelling unit is the assemblage of the same components, each with its own logical position in the condo unit. Room placement is determined by windows. The Ontario Building Code requires windows in bedrooms and living rooms, but not bathrooms, kitchens or dens, relegating these rooms to area of the unit closest to the main corridor wall.

» Unit types [left]

Ontario Building Code Requirements

A. Entry and Corridor

Entrance has a min. corridor dimension of 1060mm for barrier-free accessibility, all other corridors can be 860mm

B. Bedroom

Min dimensions 8' by 8'. If there is a second bedroom in the unit it is allowed to be smaller.

9.7.1.3- Need to have an operable window (per code)

OR

9.5.1.4 (1) - Combination Room, if 40% opening, in condo units this is accomplished by having bedrooms with large openings and then having large barn-style sliding doors. As seen in the examples 300 Front, Ice and Festival Tower. Window needs to be unobstructed.

C. Living / Dining

9.5.4.1 (2)- 11sm min area

10% of area served must have unobstructed window area.

D. Bathroom

At least one bathroom in the unit must be designed to barrier-free standards, ensuring larger min. door sizes.

E. Kitchen

9.5.6.1 (1) - 4.2sm is the min allowed area and in condo units a general rule of thumb calls for a 12' kitchen counter to contain fridge, sink, stove and dishwasher.

F. Balcony

Balconies can be either inset (flush with the building facade, ie parade 2) or outset with balcony cantilevering off the facade. In some cases (ie Pears on the Ave) a Juliette Balcony can be employed, which is marketing speak for 'door with a railing to keep you from plummeting to your death'.

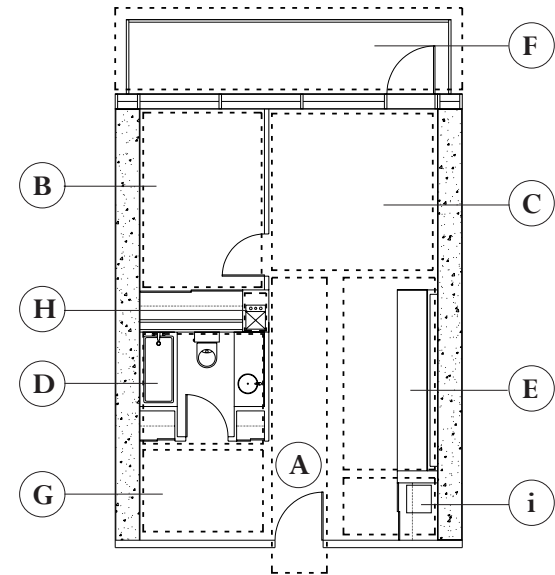
G. Den

Den's are spare rooms that can not legally be called bedrooms due to lack of windows or in many cases, too small in area.

H. Air Handling Unit

i. Washer/Dryer Closet

***Studio Apts.** 9.5.8.1 (1) allows for the combination of bedroom, living, dining and kitchen in one room provided the area be atleast 13.5sm and be for no more than 2 people.



» Unit Elements diagram [above]

UNIT INTERIORS AND FINISHES

PARADE 2



Interiors: Il by IV Design

PANORAMA

HARBOUR VIEW



Interiors: Concord

PEARS ON THE AVE



Interiors: Munge Leung

FESTIVAL TOWER

iCE



Interiors: Munge Leung

DNA3



Interiors: Cecconi Simone

300 FRONT



Interiors: Chapman Group

» Unit finishes [left]

LOBBIES

PARADE 2



PANORAMA



HARBOUR VIEW



FESTIVAL TOWER



iCE



DNA3



300 FRONT



» Lobby types [right]

AMENITY LEVEL PLANS

PARADE 2



PANORAMA



HARBOUR VIEW



PEARS ON THE AVE



FESTIVAL TOWER



iCE



DNA3



300 FRONT



Amenity Levels

Zoning by-laws dictate amenity square footage per dwelling unit in condos with requirements for both indoor and outdoor amenity spaces. Typically these are gathered on one shared floor, sometimes in the podium and sometimes on the floor directly above the podium so as to make use of the roof top of the podium as exterior amenity space. Marketers sometimes refer to these as skygardens.

Like unit interiors, lobbies and corridors, design of finishes and interiors for the amenity level is typically the responsibility of an interior design firm rather than the architect.

A condominium may make use of a “signature amenity”, something unique not offered by other condos in a way of separating themselves from the pack. Examples of this are a rock climbing wall in Panorama, SuperClub in Harbour View Estates. DNA3’s rain room and misting stations, Festival Towers film festival cinema or ICE condominiums Nordic inspired spa and bathing facilities with saunas, steam rooms, hot tub, and cold plunge.

» *Amenity floor types [left]*

Typical Amenity List:

- Pool (roof top or indoor)
- Change rooms
- Gym (fitness and weight rooms)
- Yoga room
- Sauna room
- Spa
- Massage room
- Hot tub
- Party room (with kitchen and bar)
- Lounge
- Games room (mahjong or poker room)
- Theatre
- Boardroom or meeting room
- Outdoor terraces
- Internet lounge
- Billiards and Table Tennis room
- Children's play area
- Outdoor pet area
- Squash Courts
- Guest Suites

» Amenity types [right]

AMENITIES

PARADE 2



internet lounge

PANORAMA



skygarden and sun deck

HARBOUR VIEW



roof terrace

PEARS ON THE AVE



gym



kitchen/bar



water feature



indoor pool

FESTIVAL TOWER



roof-top sun deck

iCE



fitness room

DNA3



roof terrace

300 FRONT



roof-top pool deck



cinema



party room



rain room



steam room

ENDNOTES

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