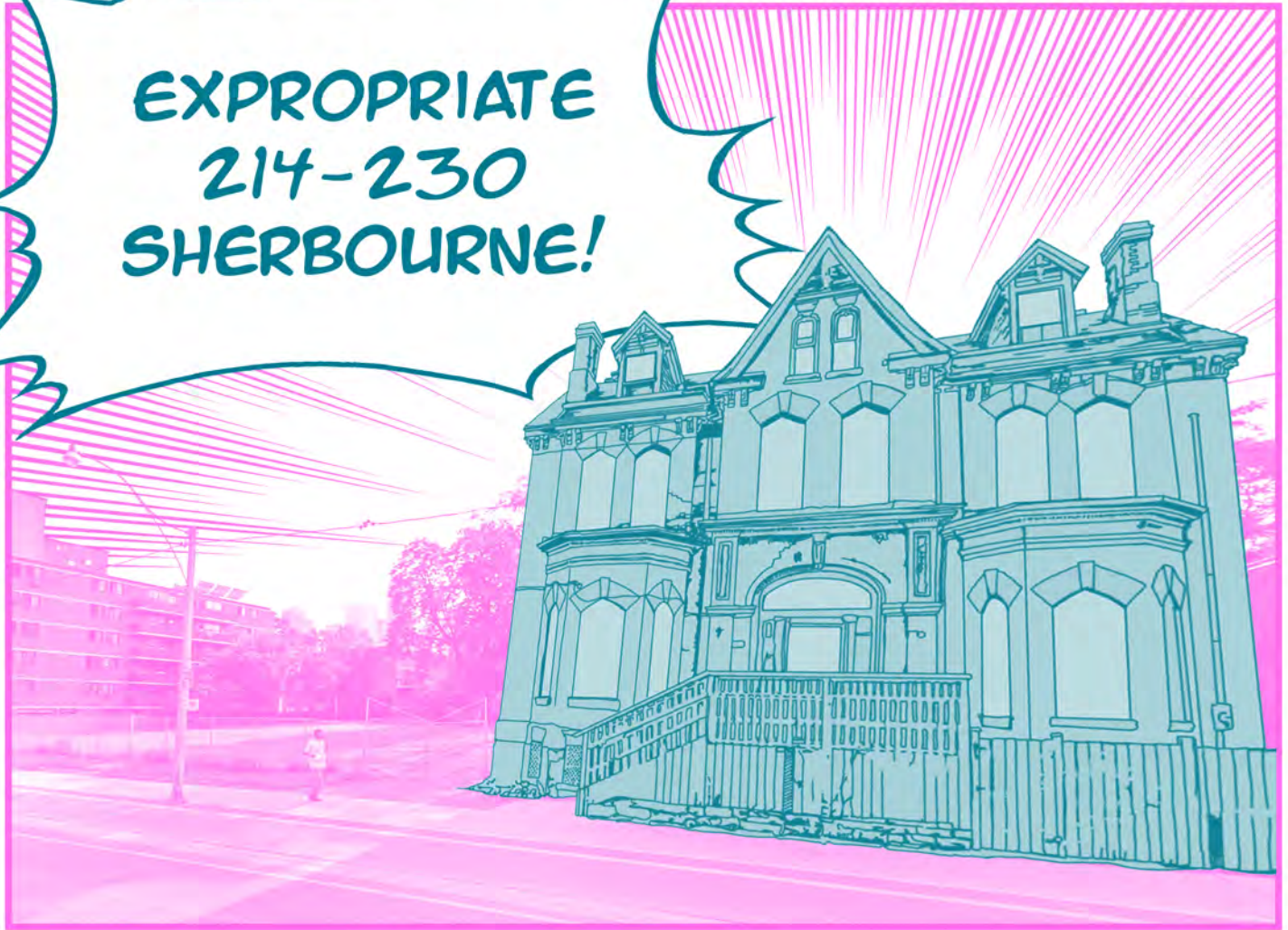


**EXPROPRIATE
214-230
SHERBOURNE!**



**A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

**FOR PUBLIC HOUSING AT
214-230 SHERBOURNE STREET**



This report is a product of a collaboration between the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), the Open Architecture Collaborative Toronto (OACTo), and allied architects, academics and activists. The list of report authors and project contributors appears below.

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FOREWORD

Toronto is a city beset by a deadly housing crisis. Nearly 9,000 people are homeless¹, and the count rises every year. The City's under-resourced emergency shelter system, as well as the back-up system of respite centres and 24-hour drop-ins, are over capacity. Unable to find shelter, hundreds of people are forced to sleep outside. Under stressful conditions, an average of two homeless people die each week according to City records, to say nothing of the deaths that go unrecorded. Toronto's homeless population has a median life expectancy of just 54 years².

Toronto is also a city that is breaking records for the number of homes under construction. The overwhelming majority are condos, with a median price tag of well over \$550,000³. The rental vacancy rate is one of the lowest in the country at just 1.1 percent⁴, and average market rents are very high. The supply of public housing is plagued by a repair backlog in the billions, causing homes to be boarded up. With little to no public housing construction since the mid-1990s, the wait-list for getting into public housing is unimaginably long, with people waiting for over a decade.

Toronto's often discussed housing market is not only saddling people with stifling debts and obscene rents, it is also critically gutting the few housing options available

to Toronto's poor. Arguably the area where the consequences of this dangerous situation are most visible is the Dundas and Sherbourne corridor, one of the city's poorest neighbourhoods. Hundreds of homeless and poor people struggle to survive here and are increasingly being displaced. As relentless condo development encroaches from all directions, property owners and business associations are escalating demands for increased policing and closure of services used by the homeless.

The proposals in this report provide a plan for building hundreds of publicly-owned rent-geared-to-income housing units that can transform the Dundas and Sherbourne neighbourhood into a vibrant community by including its most vulnerable residents, instead of pushing them out. As authors of this report, we bring together years of experience as architects, planners and activists dedicated to building an inclusive city that respects all its residents.

We urge Mayor John Tory, his council colleagues, and the provincial and the federal government to take these proposals seriously. We encourage others reading this report to join us in the fight to build a city for all Torontonians.

¹ City of Toronto, *Street Needs Assessment* (Toronto, 2018), 6.

² "Deaths of People Experiencing Homelessness", City of Toronto, accessed June 27, 2019, toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-inspections-monitoring/monitoring-deaths-of-homeless-people/.

³ Kaitlin Last, "Toronto Condo Prices Reach All-Time High, Sales Drop to 6-Year Low", *Better Dwelling*, March 28, 2019, betterdwelling.com/city/toronto/toronto-condo-prices-reach-all-time-high-sales-drop-to-6-year-low/.

⁴ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Rental Market Report - Canada and Provincial Highlights* (Canada, 2018), 4.

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INTRODUCTION



Image 1: The 7 lots that make up 214-230 Sherbourne (Image from OCAP photo archives)

The Vacant Properties that Taunt the Homeless and Tempt Property Speculators

214-230 Sherbourne Street is a series of seven adjacent properties located steps from the southwest intersection of Dundas and Sherbourne. For 50 years, houses on this lot provided homes for the area’s poor and working class residents. About 10 years ago, two of those houses were demolished, leaving just one 30-room house standing with the tenants pushed out. A decade later the lot remains empty and the house mostly abandoned.

The owners, Bhushan and Rekha Taneja, who also own quite a few other rental properties in the city, want to sell. They publicly advertised the properties for sale in March 2018, but took



Image 2: 214-230 Sherbourne for sale (Image from OCAP photo archives)

them off the market after city council considered purchasing them in response to a community mobilization⁵, making it evident that they

⁵ “The Fight For Dundas and Sherbourne”, OCAP, March 24, 2018, accessed June 27, 2019, ocap.ca/expropriate-230-sherbourne/.



Image 3: A development sign installed at 230 Sherbourne demands its expropriation (Image from OCAP photo archives)

prefer to sell to condo developers. An amendment to the city’s Official Plan forces developers to set aside 10 percent of any new housing built in the area as affordable (something the Tanejas are actively fighting against the Ontario Municipal Board⁶), but this offers little cause for comfort on two accounts. First, it allows the developer to get away with building up to 90 percent market-rate housing; and second, the city’s definition of affordability does not factor in the income of Toronto’s poor and working-class people.

The city’s official plan defines affordable housing as “at or below average City of Toronto rent.”⁷ Average market rent in Toronto is nearly \$800 for a room in a shared unit⁸, \$1,100 for a bachelor, \$1,300 for a one-bedroom, and \$1,500 for a two-bedroom apartment.⁹ Single people on social assistance receive a

maximum of \$390 (Ontario Works) or \$489 (Ontario Disability Support Program) per month for housing costs, making it impossible to even afford a room, let alone anything else. Even people earning the \$14 minimum wage and working full-time must spend well over 60% of their income on rent to secure a one-bedroom apartment. This means that even if a developer sets aside 10 percent of new housing as affordable, there will not be homes that poor and low-income people can afford.

With a sizable plot of land up for sale just steps from Dundas and Sherbourne, the threat of homes for the wealthy being built in a neighbourhood overwhelmingly populated by the poor is very real. The City has the opportunity to step in and purchase or expropriate these properties, as it has done in numerous other instances, and build a vibrant inclusive community with hundreds of new rent-geared-to-income units at Dundas and Sherbourne. This report lays out proposals for how it can do so.

⁶ *Taneja v. Toronto*, (PL 150374) (2017 CanLII 16521), Ontario Municipal Board 2017.

⁷ City of Toronto, “Official Plan”, Chapter 3, 25.

⁸ City of Toronto, *Final Recommendations Report: Official Plan Amendment-Policies to Address the Loss of Dwelling Rooms*, May 21, 2019, 4.

⁹ City of Toronto, *Current City of Toronto Average Market Rents & Utility Allowances*, accessed June 27, 2019, toronto.ca/community-people/community-partners/social-housing-providers/affordable-housing-operators/current-city-of-toronto-average-market-rents-and-utility-allowances/.



Image 4: Toronto's poor and allies march to city hall in December 2016 to demand action on homelessness (Image from OCAP photo archives)

Gentrification and Resistance in the DTE

The Downtown East (DTE) is one of Toronto's oldest neighbourhoods. Working class people, including those facing unemployment, have lived in this neighbourhood since the mid 1850s but are being displaced by developers and property speculators who are buying up and flipping properties in the neighbourhood. This gentrification began in the mid 1960s and has intensified significantly over the last sixteen years. Thousands of rooming houses that served as affordable housing for the poor have disappeared, replaced by homes for the wealthy.

The corner of Dundas and Shebourne remains an important part of this neighbourhood. All Saints Anglican Church, which has served as a community centre since 1970, sits at the southeast corner. It houses a

day-time drop-in and a respite centre used by hundreds of homeless people. Across from the church, lie 214-230 Sherbourne Street, the seven properties this report focuses on. A large abandoned 30-room Victorian House - 230 Sherbourne - is the sole structure left standing on that lot. The house operated as a rooming house since 1914 until 10 years ago, when its tenants were evicted and the house abandoned. Two other houses adjacent to 230 Sherbourne, 224 and 226 Sherbourne, also operated as rooming houses for decades but were demolished.

The poor have a long history of fighting for housing in the DTE. In the 1970s, the City of Toronto was facing a crisis: rooming houses were disappearing. The city eventually brought more than a dozen rooming houses on Sherbourne St., just north of Dundas St., which continue to operate today. More than forty other rooming houses were also saved



Image 5: OCAP unfurls a banner from the rooftop of 230 Sherbourne, September 2013 (Image from OCAP photo archives)

and bought by the city in the late 1970s, after poor people fought back against speculators buying up rooming houses during the St. Jamestown redevelopment. In the mid 1980s, after a homeless woman, Drina Joubert, was found frozen to death at the back of a rooming house across the street from All Saints Anglican Church, a large coalition was formed calling on the Ontario government to build social housing for single adults. This battle resulted in the subsequent building of 3,000 units of social housing for single adults, including 61 units at Dundas and Sherbourne, behind All Saints Church.

Bhushan and Rekha Taneja may be the owners of 214-230 Sherbourne St. on paper, but it is Toronto's poor who have lived and died at these addresses. It is their money that kept those properties running for as long as they did. But it is the Tanejas who now stand to make millions from the sale of these lands, based solely on their speculative "value." These lands are home to Toronto's poor, and it is them who these properties must house.



Image 6: A march against gentrification and lack of affordable housing from Allan Gardens to 214-230 Sherbourne, September 2013 (Image from OCAP photo archives)

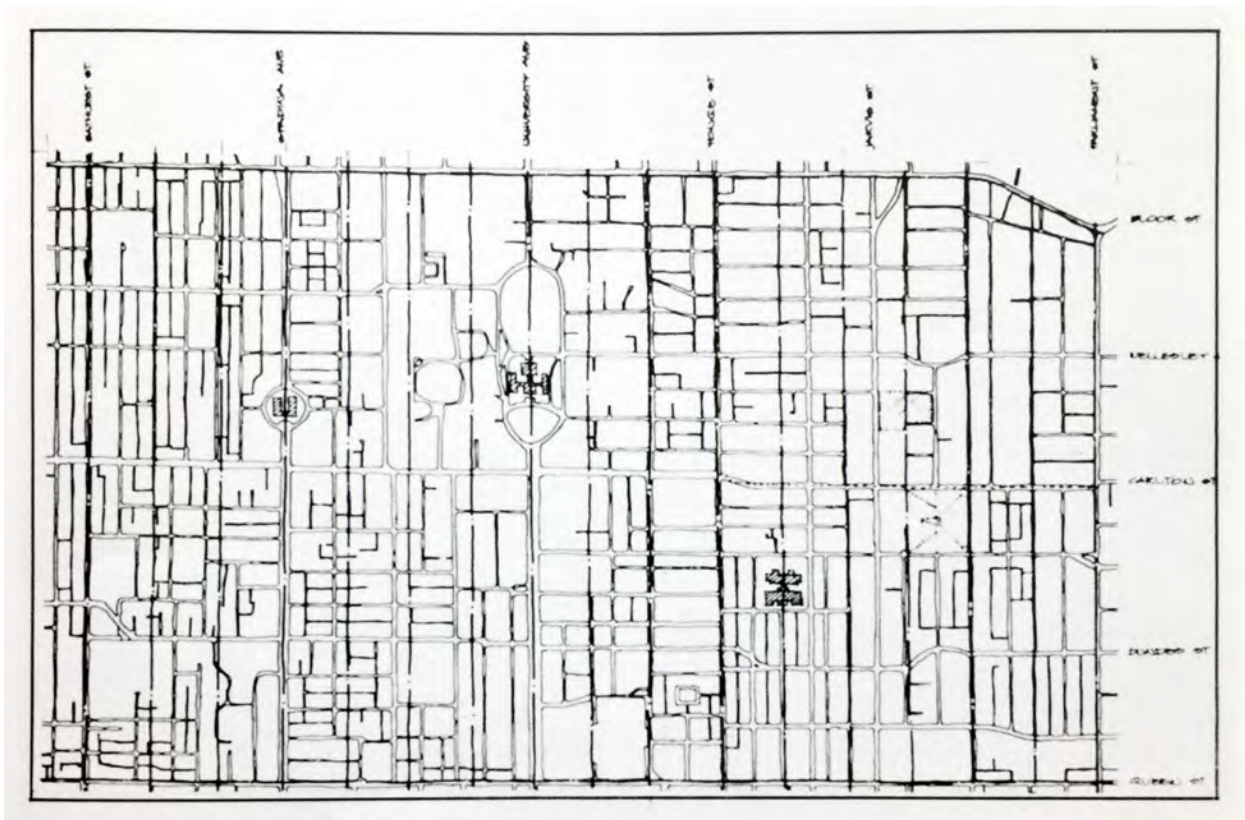


Image 7: Drawing of the Park Lots of Toronto superimposed on the Toronto Street Grid, from George Baird, "Theory: Vacant Lots in Toronto, 1978" in *Writings on Architecture and the City* (London: Artifice Books, 2015), 113

Architectural and Planning Context of 214-230 Sherbourne

The east side of central Toronto, surrounding 214-230 Sherbourne Street is just 600 metres directly north of the original ten blocks of the city. In the so-called "Toronto Purchase" of 1787-1805, the Mississauga Nation were pressured into granting the use of a parcel of land 14 miles wide and 28 miles inland from Lake Ontario to the British Crown. As the city began to be constructed, even before this treaty was formally concluded, the lands north of Queen Street (originally named Lot Street) were laid out as a sequence of park lots, suburban properties granted to the colonial aristocracy, 10 surveyor's chains wide (0.125 miles) along Lot Street, and 100 chains (1.25 miles) north to what is now Bloor Street. 214-230 Sherbourne lie in lands originally granted to Justice William Osgoode in 1793. When Osgoode left for Quebec in 1798, they

were transferred to the Deputy Surveyor General of Ontario, David William Smith, who sold it to William Allan in 1819.¹⁰

The Park Lots began to be subdivided in the early decades of the 19th Century, starting first near Yonge Street and then gradually extending to the east and west, as Toronto's population increased. By 1842, the land from Yonge to George Street had been cut into house lots. Allan's park lot was one of the slowest to be subdivided. He began the process in 1842 but preserved generous space around his own estate, Moss Park, from Queen to Dundas Street, including the properties at 214-230 Sherbourne, and designated an area for a horticultural garden between Gerrard and Carlton Streets, which is still named Allan Gardens today. By 1858, building and lot

¹⁰ For information about these Park Lots see Wendy Smith, "The Toronto Park Lot Project" 2012-2018 (parklotproject.com).



Image 8: Downtown East Shown in a Survey of Toronto by William Sommerville Boulton and Henry Carew Boulton, 1858

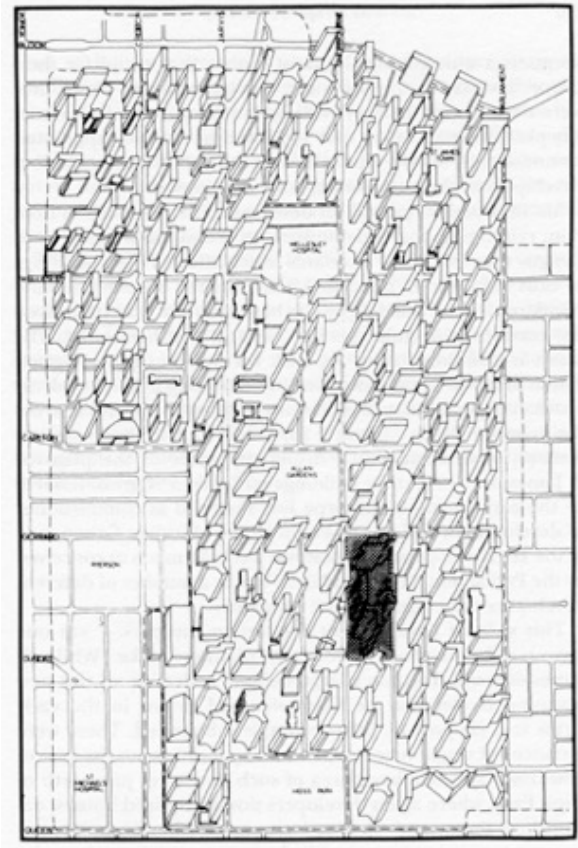
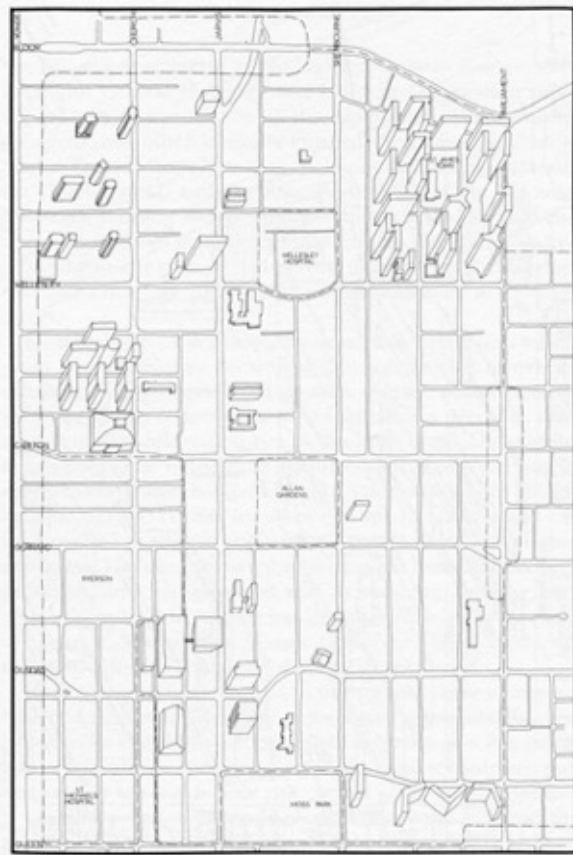


Image 9: Toronto's Downtown East, drawn by Diamond and Myers Architects, showing existing high-rise buildings and what they called the "Doomsday Scenario" mid 1970s

division had extended east of Sherbourne and there was a single building built at or near 230 Sherbourne, in an otherwise unbuilt northern annex of Moss Park. By 1884, the east side of the city was fully built out to Bloor, including the lots at 214-230 Sherbourne.¹¹

As Architect George Baird has pointed out in his analysis of North Jarvis Street, by the turn of the 20th Century, the subdivision of park lots into house lots was complete. Jarvis had larger lots, Sherbourne had large to medium ones, and smaller streets like Pembroke were divided into even smaller house lots for working class homes. In 1960, during the postwar period of urban renewal,

a reverse process began where lots were consolidated to make larger developments.¹² The largest consolidation on the east side of downtown happened in the high-rise neighbourhood of St. Jamestown which was built in the northern sections of two historical park lots directly east of Allan's. But the threat of consolidation to build towers was spreading through the DTE - southward from St. Jamestown, and eastward from Yonge. Examples of this include the Sherbourne Estates tower and slab buildings across the street from 214-230 Sherbourne Street.

In the early 1970s, Jack Diamond and Barton Myers made a powerful drawing called the Doomsday Plan, to illustrate their

¹¹ References to the dates of the subdivision of lots around 214-230 Sherbourne are drawn from historical maps. See Derek Hayes, *Historical Atlas of Toronto* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2008), 19, 41, 66-67.

¹² See George Baird, "Theory: Vacant Lots in Toronto, 1978" in *Writings on Architecture and the City* (London: Artifice Books, 2015), 106-123.

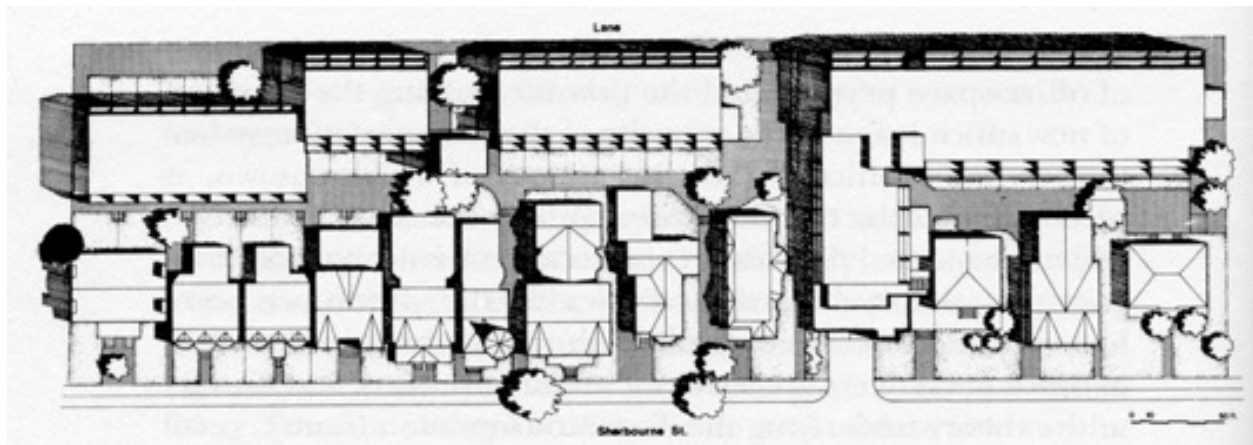


Image 10: Plan Drawing of Sherbourne Lanes Housing, Diamond and Myers Architects, 1975

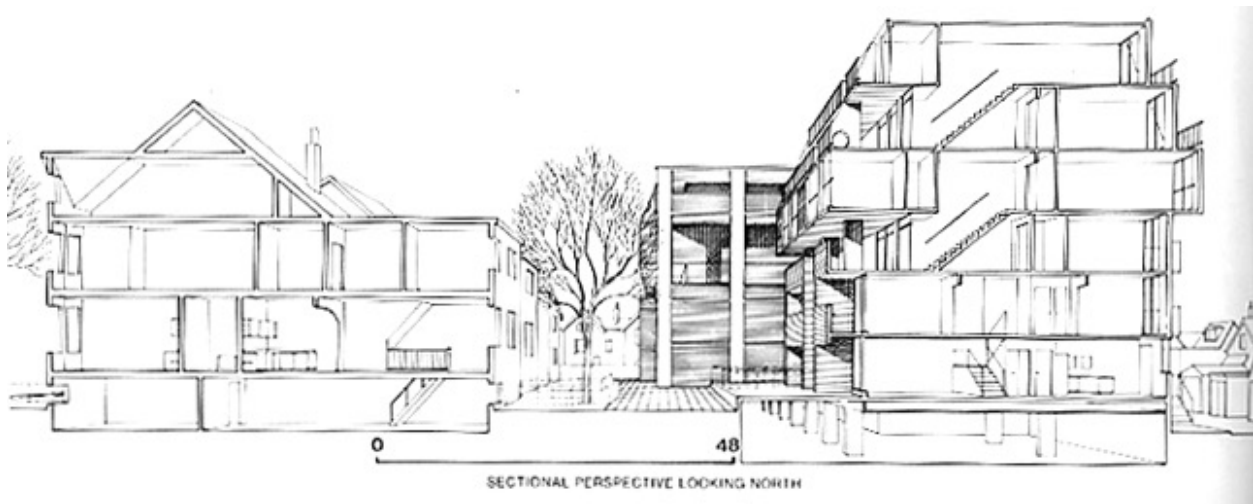


Image 11: Section Drawing of Sherbourne Lanes Housing, Diamond and Myers Architects, 1975

fears about this phenomenon. The drawing shows the whole east side of downtown from Bloor to the lake and from Yonge to the Don Valley covered in high-rise towers. In response to this fear, middle-class activists afraid of the destruction of the historic city campaigned to curb the development of high-rise buildings in the DTE. Architects worked creatively to design “infill” housing that would fit into the existing fabric rather than knocking it down. Examples of this type of project include Sherbourne Lanes, a housing project nestled behind the preserved

rooming houses on Sherbourne, kitty corner to the northeast of 214-230 Sherbourne, and Sherbourne-Pembroke housing directly south by Jerome Markson, one of Baird’s early mentors. Sherbourne lanes was the more celebrated design in the early 1970s, and yet today it is criticized by local residents as being dangerous, with its open spaces at ground level hidden from view in the backyards of historic houses. Sherbourne Pembroke seems to have fared better, providing solid accommodation for low-income residents.

In the 1970s, David Crombie’s “red” Tory



Image 12: Protestors tear down the construction hoarding to stop the demolition of Enoch Turner House on Sherbourne north of Dundas, on the site of Sherbourne Lanes. Early 1970s

leadership of the City responded to these middle-class activists by restraining high-rise development and encouraging more contextual housing with projects like Sherbourne Lanes, and to the south of the city's first ten blocks, the St. Lawrence housing development. This moratorium on high-rises had repercussions into the 1990s. In the mid-1990s, Mayor Barbara Hall and Chief Planner Paul Bedford rezoned industrial areas on the east and west of the downtown along King Street into mixed-use, including residential, in a project named the "Two Kings". This began a wave of new condominium development in the city's core directly south of 214-230. These first projects were renovations of existing warehouses and stepped towers of moderate height, responding to the street contexts in their podiums. By the turn of the millennium, higher-rise tower podium models were imported from Vancouver by developers like Concord Adex, and high-rise towers became the preferred model for development in the central city. Today, Toronto has more towers under construction than any other North American city and is only surpassed by the construction of towers in Chinese and Middle

Eastern cities.¹³

In addition to the "Two Kings", the redevelopment of Regent Park has been the second most important stimulus for the DTE property market. By demolishing Canada's largest public housing project, the City removed a significant concentration of low-income residents from a large area of east downtown, opening the way for new market developments in and around its site. So now the Sherbourne site sits between the high-density condominiums of the city's core and Regent Park's new condos. It is easy to see this avalanche of high-rise housing marching toward Sherbourne. In the context of all this high-rise density, residents who participated in the consultation meeting we held to discuss the future of 214-230 Sherbourne argued that any building built here should maximize affordable rent-geared to income units in the face of the onslaught of unaffordable housing being built all around it.

¹³ From 2016-2018, Toronto has had the most cranes in use in high rise construction in Canada or the United States. "Toronto has more cranes than NYC and Los Angeles combined" Equipment Journal, September 13, 2018.

DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY INFORMED DESIGN PROPOSAL



Image 13: Community Meeting to discuss a housing proposal for the site of 214-230 Sherbourne at 40 Oak Street CRC, Toronto, May, 16, 2019

The Design Charette

As architects interested in making the city a better place for all to live in, we are deeply concerned by the growing inequality and displacement occurring in our city. The dominance of market-driven condominium development over all other modes of housing provision, has caused architects to take on work that increasingly serves only the wealthy. However, the profession of architecture mandates us to serve the public interest¹⁴. In order to do so, we have to engage with and listen to the needs, opinions, and thoughts of the public, which is inclusive of all Torontonians. As a group of volunteers, we are excited to be able to use our professional training to advocate for housing for the

city’s poorest residents in the city center, by collaborating with OCAP in facilitating a design charrette for this expropriation project, and by creating a community-driven design proposal for social housing based on the insights gathered from this charrette.

Through two community feedback sessions, the first in Regent Park, and the second at All Saints Church at the corner of Dundas and Sherbourne, we outlined the intention of the overall project and the role that design can have in creating a strong case for expropriation by envisioning a future use for the site. To engage the community in an inclusive preliminary design process, we created activities to gather input on four aspects of the proposal outlined below.

¹⁴ “Vision, Mission & Mandate”, Ontario Association of Architects, last modified May 2016, accessed June 27, 2019, <https://www.oaa.on.ca/the%20oaa/about%20the%20oaa/mandate%20mission%20&%20vision>

Overall Building Form

One of the first exercises in a design process in architecture, the building form looks at how it is situated on the street and amongst the neighbouring context. Participants were provided three options to discuss the appearance of the building's form, its density (number of floors and floor area), the use of the building (mixed-use, residential), and its public and private spaces.

Ground Floor Programs

As a mixed use residential building, the ground floor(s) will be open to the public, opening the ground plane of the building to the street and community. This component looked to gain feedback on which support services were most needed for the public, in order to work these into the design.

Public Space Qualities

A key component connecting the building to the surrounding neighbourhood is the site's public space. With the building form and ground floor programs setting up the context of a mixed use building that seeks to engage with the community, participants were asked to provide feedback on the implications of public space in the three building forms, and envision the qualities of the site's public space and its relationship to the residential spaces.

Domestic Space Qualities

For this component, participants were asked to discuss the qualities that create a sense of home, and what aspects of residential spaces are most important, such as light, accessibility, open or closed layouts, etc.

In both community consultation sessions, participants expressed enthusiasm around an approach that began with an inclusive, bottom-up initiative. The first session was held in the evening with a free community meal and childcare provided. Extensive outreach was done in the neighbourhood, at street level, through supportive service agencies in the neighbourhood, and word-of-mouth.

Approximately 70 people attended, most of whom were residents of the DTE, with most being currently housed to under-housed, and some currently living in Toronto Community Housing buildings. There was a mix of households with children, couples and single people. However, few people who identified as homeless attended this session. To ensure their feedback was adequately captured and reflected in the final design, day-time focus groups were organized at All Saints Church, located at Dundas and Sherbourne, and directly across from 214-230 Sherbourne Street. Additional rounds of outreach to the area's respite sites and drop-in sites resulted in the daytime focus groups being attended predominantly by people who are currently homeless and living at or near Dundas and Sherbourne. 24 people completed the feedback activities during these focus groups.

One challenge identified at both sessions was that there were some instructions associated with the charrette activities that were slightly difficult for some participants to understand, but a majority of participants in both meetings responded to all of the design activities. All in all, from the perspective of the design team, the feedback gathered from this process was integral to inform the design, and gave us the tools to move forward with a greater understanding of how we can serve the community. With the expropriation of the site, we will continue to involve vulnerable stakeholders of DTE in developing a vision for the design of rent-geared-to-income housing.

Community Feedback Analysis

Overall Building Form

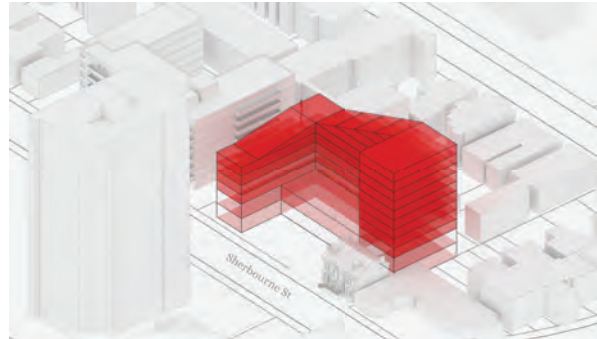
Responses from the community show diversity in their preferences for density and overall building form of 214-230. Between the 3 options given, OPT3, the high-rise option, was the most desirable massing option (with **43%** ranking it first). The vast majority of respondents emphasized the importance of building the greatest number of units as their top priority and their main reason for choosing OPT3.

36% of the participants preferred OPT1 over the two other options, emphasizing the importance of having a public space directly connected to the street. Some respondents also expressed concerns about high-density buildings and favoured a design that respects the buildings around it. Concerned with the urgent need for more housing, **18%** of the participants who marked OPT1 as their preferred option expressed their desire for the architectural characteristics of OPT1 with a much higher density (similar to OPT3).

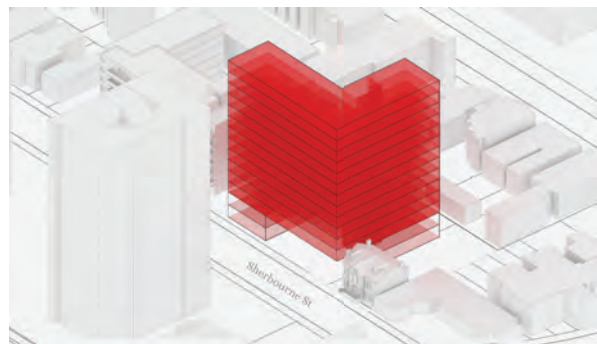
Looking for a good compromise between very high and very low density, **18%** of respondents chose OPT2.

Design ideas drawn from this feedback:

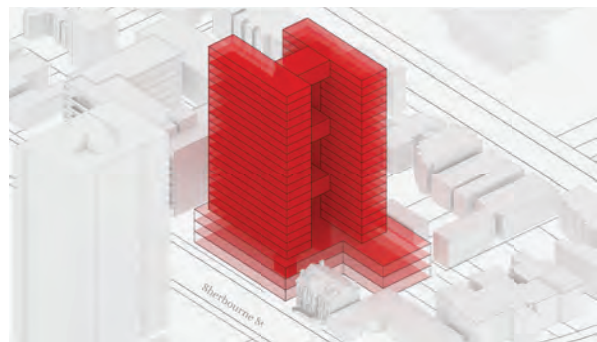
- Maximize area dedicated to housing
- Maintain connection to street
- Have communal open spaces on different levels of the building
- Provide a range of mid-rise to high-rise building form
- The height and massing of the building should respect the surrounding environment



OPT 1: Mid-Rise Forecourt
Height: 8 residential (avg.) 2 public | No. of Units: 45-90
Single/Double-loaded corridor | Lowest density | Most public open space



OPT 2: Mid-Rise Courtyard
Height: 12 residential, 2 public | Number of Units: 70-140 |
Double-loaded corridor | Medium density | More private open space



OPT 3: Tall Podium
Height: 20 residential, 3 public | Number of Units: 100-200 |
Single-loaded corridor | Highest density | Enclosed public podium

Ground Floor Programs

Five specific options were presented for the ground floor program survey, and each option has a range from 1 to 5 to indicate the importance of the program, where 1 represents the less important value.

The ground floor program desire at 214-230 Sherbourne is diverse and over **42%** of participants identified all options as “most important”, which denotes a sense of urgency for the services. **61%**, the majority of the respondents, considered the community health clinic the most important program to have on the ground floor. **58%** selected the free or low-cost meal programs, and **54%** selected a community centre offering social and employment programs. These three programs options were also emphasized in the open question space of the survey.

There is also a desire for public open spaces for socializing, meetings and developing any program or event based on residents needs. Gym equipment, workspaces, and childcare facilities are also mentioned frequently among the responses.

Design ideas drawn from this feedback:

- Include community health clinic, free or low-cost meal programs and a community centre offering social and employment programs in the ground floor programming
- Include workspaces like a library, and open studios
- Include gym facilities and flexible spaces for residents to use as they need



Image 14: Free or low cost meal programs (Photo from Toronto Regent Park Food Centre)



Image 15: Social and employment programs



Image 16: Community Health Clinics

Public Space Qualities

41% of participants noted a need for the public spaces at 214-230 Sherbourne to be inclusive, inviting and welcoming. Within these responses, there were calls for a space that people of all physical abilities, ages, and genders feel comfortable occupying, and interacting within. **17%** of participants suggested including a large, prominent entrance or sheltering elements like canopies, **12%** suggested warm, day-lit spaces, **9%** suggested human-scaled massing of the overall building and detailing, and **12%** suggested furniture throughout.

15% of participants desired other related spatial qualities that included a focus on building community, making spaces for games, art, music, and food-related activities, as well as creating a peaceful or a relaxing atmosphere. **55%** of participants indicated a need for green spaces and shared outdoor and green spaces (such as community gardens).

27% of participants prioritized the need to create a sense of safety and security without the presence of police. Suggested strategies for achieving this include enabling casual surveillance of entrances, well-defined boundaries between public and private spaces, and well-illuminated spaces.

Design ideas drawn from this feedback:

- Inclusive and accessible spaces
- Flexible and informal open areas
- Human scaled architectural aesthetic
- Shared green spaces
- Security created by having well used public programs overlooking outdoor spaces



Images 17-19: Example participant responses on Public Space Qualities

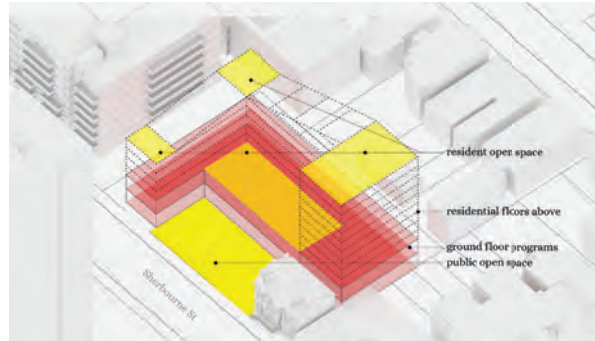
Public/Resident Space Relationships

Many respondents to this question, **42%** liked the openness of having public spaces at 214-230 Sherbourne connect directly with the street, as shown in the mid-rise forecourt in OPT1. **25%** of participants chose OPT2, preferring a more enclosed public space layout, with some explaining that a sense of separation, control and privacy for residents of the building is desired.

The remaining **33%** of respondents picked OPT3, a scheme with no outdoor public spaces. Explanations provided by those who chose this response were varied. Some indicated a concern over security and loitering in public spaces, while others liked the large amount of interior space and street frontage dedicated to public programs.

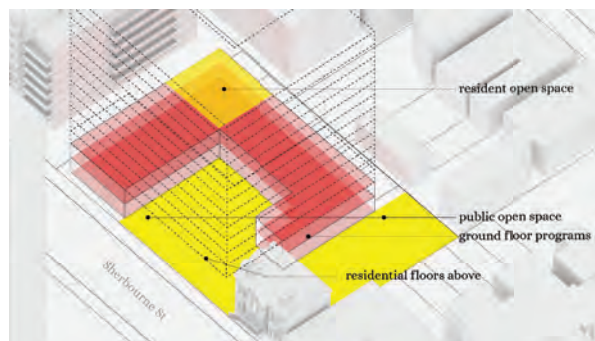
Design ideas drawn from this feedback:

- A strong connection between public spaces and Sherbourne Street
- Clear separations between public and resident programs



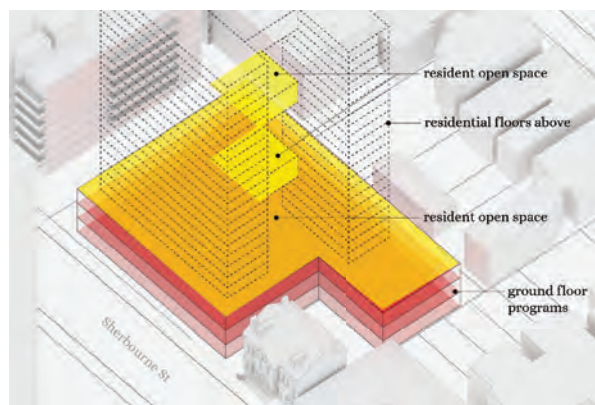
OPT 1: Mid-Rise Forecourt

Open space is most public, connecting directly to Sherbourne



OPT 2: Mid-Rise Courtyard

Public open space accessed by passing under residential floors. The residential floors provide more privacy to the public open space, and resident open space at the rear of the site.



OPT 3: Tall Podium

The entire site is filled with indoor public programs in an enclosed podium. The top of the podium, and the spaces in between the residential blocks, can be used as resident common space.

Domestic Space Qualities

34% of participants expressed that the domestic space should be able to house people with disabilities, providing barrier free elements within the units and communal areas such as hand bars in washrooms, ramps where needed, easy to transit hallways and open spaces. **22%** expressed a mix of private and communal areas where individuals can gather to eat, cook, lounge, watch TV, or work.

Many participants listed “bright and airy” as the most desired qualities for residential units. **22%** of the participants also noted that units should have an open concept floor plan and be colourful. Privacy was also a prevalent concern - **39%** of the participants mentioned insulated walls to prevent noise transfer between units. As well, some participants preferred units without balconies.

Design ideas drawn from this feedback:

- Focus on universal accessibility throughout
- Communal areas for cooking, eating and working
- Bright and well aired units with properly insulated noise barrier walls

4. DOMESTIC SPACE QUALITIES

Home on Sherbourne St should be...



Expropriate 214-230 Sherbourne

4. DOMESTIC SPACE QUALITIES

Responses

1. Complete the sentence below on a sticky note for each of these. Stick them to choose a word or draw an image.

2. Show your response(s) with your table neighbours - choose one above for everyone to see their response to on the other side of this page. Are there similar ideas? Cluster them together.

KEY:
 trees needs to be a COMMITMENT to investment to keep people off the way to make they are HEALTHY + ADEQUATE

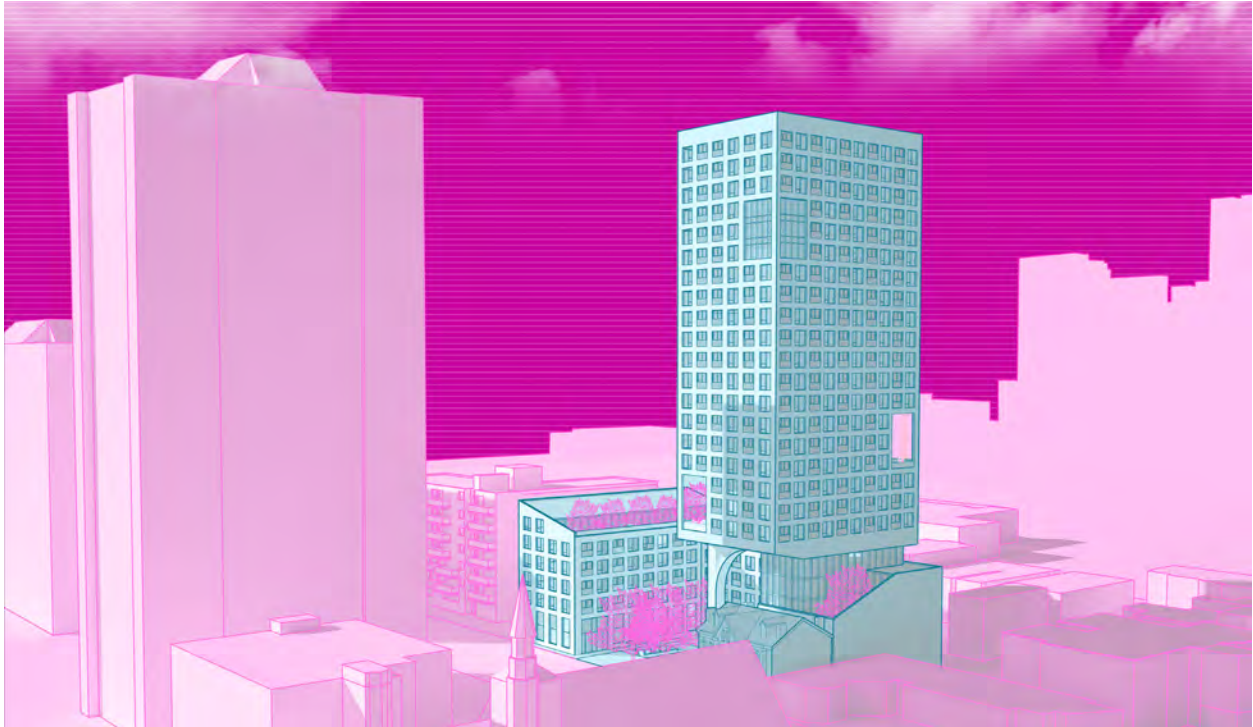
Expropriate 214-230 Sherbourne

FAMILY-friendly units + communal spaces
 (MULTIGENERATIONAL)

HOUSTIC
 JUDGE
 IN SPACE

Images 20-21: Example participant responses on Domestic Space Qualities

THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL



Perspective view showing the whole proposal from the northeast

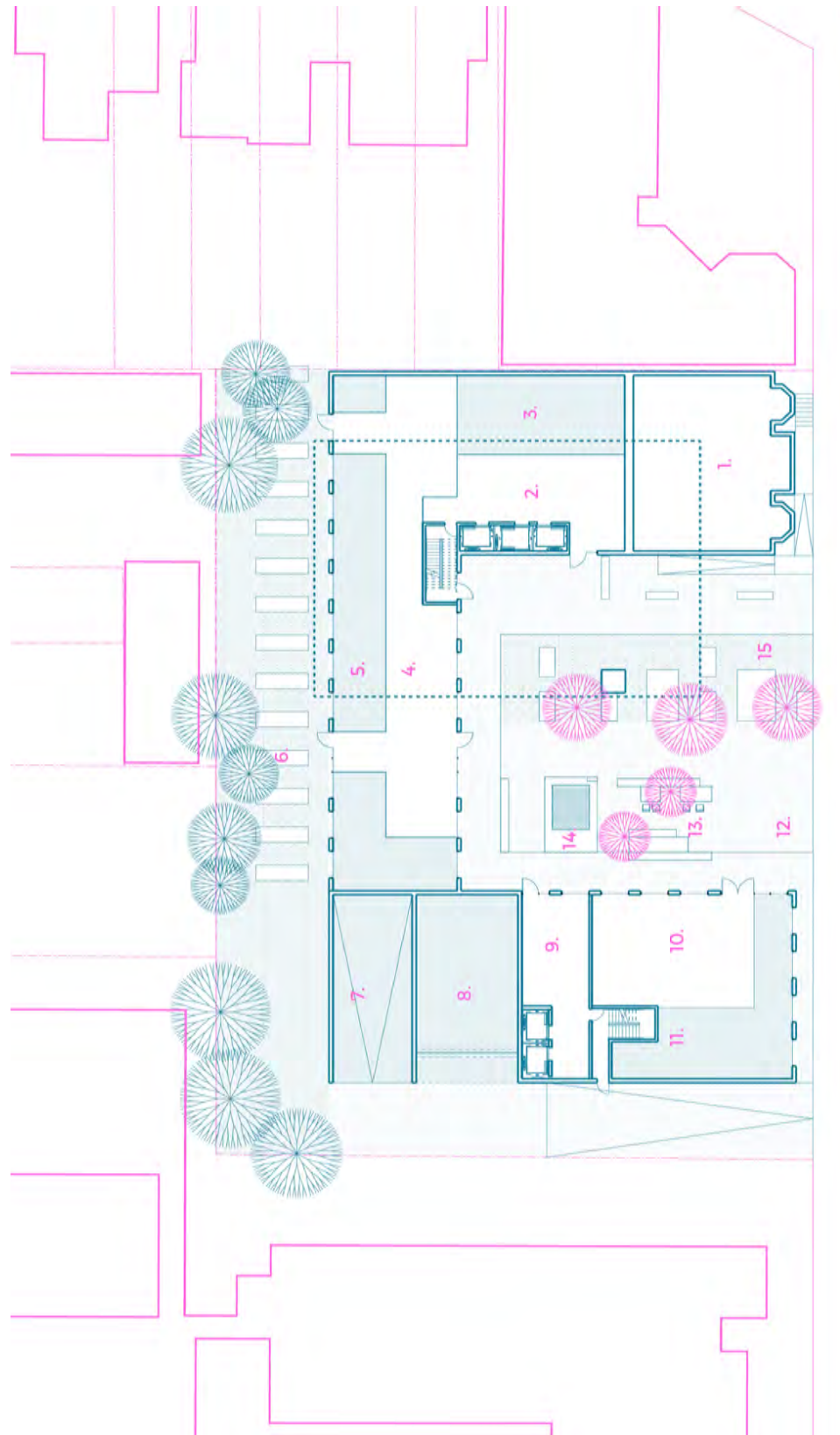
Design Description

For 214-230 Sherbourne we propose a large rent-g geared-to-income housing project that is welcoming, open and connected with the DTE community in every way. To accomplish this the building is designed in two parts: 1) a sloped podium that forms a courtyard open to Sherbourne Street, and 2) an eighteen storey tower that accommodates most of the units.

The podium rises six storeys in the south, matching the Sherbourne Pembroke affordable housing in height. It steps down to four towards the northside of the site to allow more sunlight into the courtyard, and finally to three storeys to meet the historic house. The u-shaped podium is inspired by the contextual “infill” housing of local architects

like Diamond Myers and Jerome Markson in the 1970s, forming a harmonious connection with its surrounding buildings and framing open public space. The double-height first floor and mezzanine level, surrounding the courtyard, houses a variety of public programs, including a meal drop-in program, a health center, and a community center with employment services, as well as the entrance lobbies for the midrise and high-rise housing. Above the public levels are four levels of housing in the southern arm and three levels in the western arm, with common rooms for residents opening to roof gardens on two different levels.

A tower, housing the majority of the residential units on the site, cantilevers

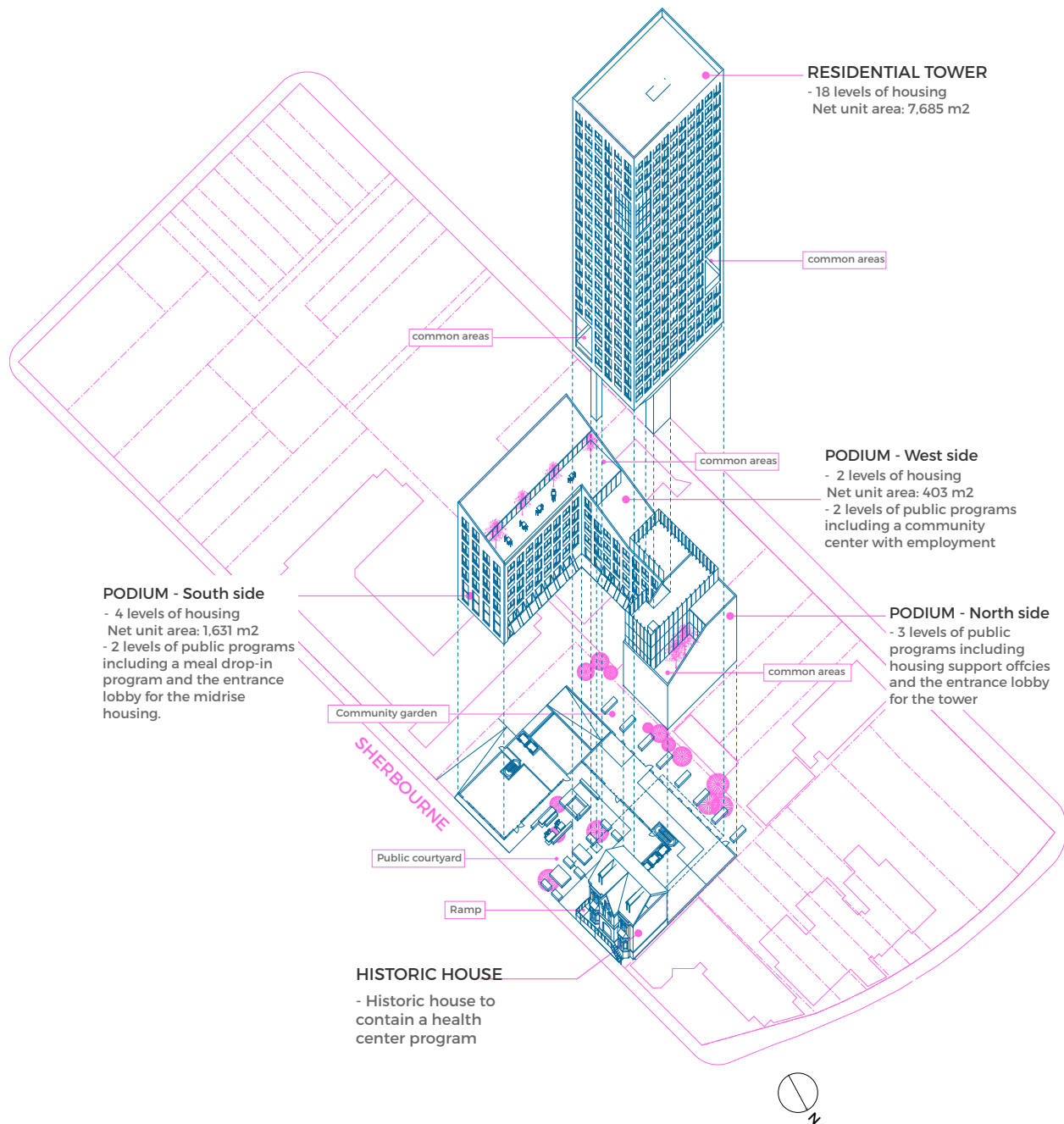


SHERBOURNE STREET

LEGEND

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. CLINIC | 12. ENTRY PLAZA | □ BACK-OF-HOUSE/OFFICE SPACE |
| 2. TOWER LOBBY | 13. OUTDOOR EATING AREA | □ SOFTSCAPE |
| 3. HOUSING SUPPORT OFFICES/BACK-OF-HOUSE | 14. DRINKING AND WATER FOUNTAIN | □ HARDSCAPE WITH PERMEABLE PAVERS |
| 4. COMMUNITY CENTRE WITH SOCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES | 15. GARDEN | |
| 5. OFFICES | | |
| 6. COMMUNITY GARDEN | | |
| 7. RAMP TO PARKING BELOW | | |
| 8. SHARED LOADING | | |
| 9. PODIUM LOBBY | | |
| 10. DROP IN CENTRE AND FOOD HUB | | |
| 11. KITCHENS/OFFICES | | |

Ground Floor Plan



Axonometric diagram showing programs



Image 22: The team assembling the physical model of the design proposal

above the podium. The tower responds to the existing developer driven architecture of the city, matching its high-density, in order to create an equivalent area of RGI units as a developer condo. The tower footprint is 555m², slightly under the development standard of 750m² per floor. It rises 18 stories on top of a six storey podium and is similar in height to the 22 storey Sherbourne Estates across the street and a tower under construction a block away at Pembroke and Dundas. However, in contrast with a typical market-rate condominium that would maximize floor area dedicated to private residential space, our proposal provides generous space for common areas accessible from each floor and at the podium roof overlooking the courtyard, allowing residents to informally connect and socialize in day to day life.

As well, where a typical condominium development would enclose the ground floor

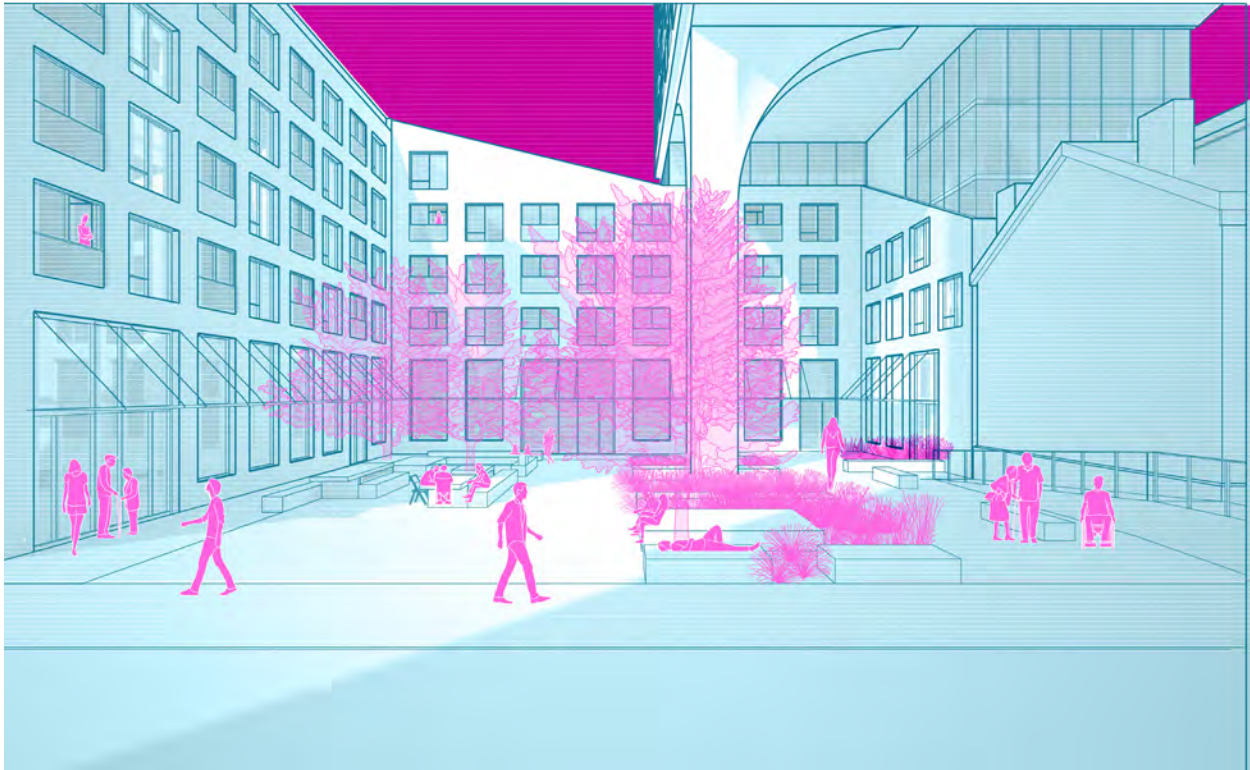
space in retail or private amenity space, our proposal centres around an animated public courtyard, opening up onto the sidewalk on Sherbourne Street. The ground plane is fully accessible, with a new ramp providing access to the existing heritage house. Vegetation, placed near areas of rest, creates a tranquil and welcoming atmosphere, and delineates boundaries between public and private while maintaining a feeling of openness.

The gross area of residential floors in the development is 12,634 m², or 9,718 m² of apartment area.¹⁵ This could accommodate different number of units depending on the sizes and types of apartments. It could supply 152 units, following the City of Toronto's "Standards for Affordable Housing in Toronto" which specify 40% one-bedroom, 40% two-bedroom, 15% three-bedroom, 5% four bedroom units.¹⁶ If the building catered to singles, it could accommodate 262 37.2 m² bachelor units. The decision about mix and size of units is a decision that would need to be left to a later stage of study.

Instead of a tower of exclusive residential units for the wealthy and a podium of private retail spaces, this proposal illustrates, at a schematic level, a vision for how housing in the DTE could be more inviting, inclusive, and of service to the neighbourhood it stands on.

¹⁵ The calculation of unit area is based on a ratio of 1.3 of gross to net building area. See Roger K. Lewis, "Factoring in Floor Footage Plays Big Role in Building Design", The Washington Post, August 10, 2002

¹⁶ City of Toronto, Affordable Housing Office "Affordable Rental Housing Design Guidelines" January 2015, 3.



Perspective view of the proposal, showing the podium framing the central courtyard at ground level

Sustainable Development

Climate change and other damaging impacts to the environment have particularly adverse effects on low-income communities and the homeless.^{17 18} Given this, we propose that 214-230 Sherbourne be designed to support the resilience of the DTE community against the myriad impacts of a warming climate, and restore the health of vulnerable residents and their surrounding urban environment for generations to come. The project shall be designed to achieve at least a Tier 2 compliance under the Toronto Green Standards.

With the opportunity to further develop the design, we hope to build the DTE's resilience

¹⁷ Stephane Hallegatte et al., *Climate Change and Poverty—an Analytical Framework*The World Bank, 2014.

¹⁸ David Satterthwaite, "The Political Underpinnings of Cities' Accumulated Resilience to Climate Change," *Environment and Urbanization* 25, no. 2 (10/01; 2019/06, 2013), 381-391.

to climate change through design strategies that maximize energy efficiency, minimize carbon emissions, and reduce impacts on city infrastructure. Proper building massing and orientation, passive solar design, efficient envelope design and provision of on-site renewable power generation are all ways to counter global temperature increases by reducing energy consumption and our carbon footprint. More immediately, these strategies also constitute means of reducing energy expenses for low-income residents, mitigating other increased costs of living (ex. food, supplies, increased heating/cooling costs) that would likely result from climate change. For DTE, climate change also entails more frequent storms that would overwhelm the city's aging combined sewage system and cause floods especially catastrophic for poor people living in inadequate housing. We advocate for the design to incorporate features like green roofs, permeable paving,



Image 23: Physical model view from the southwest

grey-water treatment systems to reduce loads on municipal infrastructure, and thus flood damage to the surrounding neighbourhood. These strategies, and others listed above are just a few examples of concrete ways in which actions to increase climate-change resilience can benefit those most vulnerable to the impacts of a warming environment.

As well, understanding that people's health and the quality of the environment are inextricably linked¹⁹, we propose for the design to include spaces that restore the health of both residents and the environment. For example, roof gardens and community vegetable plots reduce the urban heat island effect, energy consumption, and provide a source of local and sustainably produced food, while also serving as places of relaxation and socialization for low-income communities.

¹⁹ Joanne Wheeler, Elinor Hugget and John Alker, Health and Wellbeing in HomesUK Green Building Council,[2016]).

Spaces designed to welcome urban wildlife (ex birds, bees, and butterflies), through tree plantings, pollinator-friendly plants, and drought-resistant greenery, can improve residents' mental and physical wellness, even more so in a highly urbanized environment.²⁰ Low Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) finishes in interior spaces reduce impacts on both the environment and resident health.

The proposed development aims to provide healthful housing for people who are homeless or of low income, while also addressing multiple aspects of sustainability. Any increased initial costs would be more than offset by future savings, and benefits to the city and region as a whole, resulting from residents' improved health and wellbeing, reduced energy costs, waste materials, and infrastructure loads, and increased resilience to climate change and other impacts on the environment.

²⁰ Marcy Cuttler, "Nature Offers Serious Benefits to our Physical and Mental Health, Research Suggests," CBC News, sec. Health, May 10, 2019, 2019.



Image 24: Physical model view from the east

BREAKING GROUND: MAKING IT HAPPEN



This development proposal presents an innovative yet pragmatic approach to building housing in a way that is responsive to the needs of the community. It has the potential to radically transform Dundas and Sherbourne for the benefit of its most vulnerable residents, rather than at their expense. Most importantly, the proposal would build hundreds of new rent-gear-to-income housing units in a neighbourhood that desperately needs them.

In putting together this plan, we are aware of the battle that lies ahead to make it a reality. Funding for its construction must be secured from all three levels of government, at a time when none are willing to invest in public housing. But we are equally aware that there couldn't be a more urgent time for governments to break out of their inertia.

While the housing market presents serious challenges for the majority of Torontonians, for Toronto's poor, it is fatal.

The City must lead the way by expropriating 214-230 Sherbourne St. and make sure the land does not fall into the hands of a private developer. These properties have been a historic part of Toronto's poor and working class people living and dying at Dundas and Sherbourne. We will fight to make sure these properties will also be part of their future

Join us.

APPENDIX:

An open letter to Mayor John Tory from 27 organizations demanding the City expropriate 214-230 Sherbourne Street, sent June 25, 2018.

June 25, 2018

Subject: Expropriation of 230 Sherbourne St., and adjacent vacant lot.

To Mayor John Tory and Members of the Affordable Housing Committee:

We are concerned agencies, advocates and community groups that provide individual services and supports to poor and homeless people in the downtown east. As you are well aware, the city is in the midst of a housing and shelter crisis. In the downtown east, this crisis is further exacerbated by an alarming intensification of gentrification, a process displacing community members from the neighbourhood through the loss of affordable housing in the area, the closure of rooming houses, an overall lack of subsidized and supportive housing and ever inadequate social assistance and ODSP rates.

We are aware that properties at the southwest corner of Dundas and Sherbourne, including 230 Sherbourne street, were put up for sale for potential condo development. The corner of Dundas and Sherbourne is an important part of the neighbourhood. Unfortunately, at present, more than 50 people sleep on mats in the All Saints Church at the corner as they cannot access shelter or housing on a nightly basis. Just blocks away, over 100 people sleep on mats at the George Street respite centre. Shelters are at nearly 100% capacity across most of the sectors each and every night, and wait times for rent geared to income housing exceed ten years with nearly 100,000 households presently on the waitlist.

Given the homelessness crisis across the city and the rapid pace of gentrification in the downtown east, we are asking the City to take action around the property at 230 Sherbourne Street. We are aware that a motion was passed in March that directs Citystaff to look into purchasing or expropriating this plot of land and that a report from staff is expected at the Affordable Housing Committee on June 25, 2018. In the face of the severity and depth of homelessness in this community, expropriation of this site is a necessary response to ensure the development of truly affordable, subsidized and supportive housing units in the community that will never be possible in private development.

Expropriation has been utilized by the City to secure properties on several occasions, including most recently to purchase properties on George Street, and to buy the building that houses the City-run Birkdale Residence for women. The current crisis of homelessness requires the consideration of measures such as expropriation in order to ensure that community members have access to safe housing.

We look forward to your timely response in this matter.

Sincerely,

The undersigned:

1. Street Health
2. Sanctuary Toronto
3. Regent Park Community Health Centre
4. Sistering
5. Fred Victor
6. Mainstay Housing
7. Inner City Family Health Team
8. Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services
9. LOFT Community Services
10. Sherbourne Health Centre
11. St. Jude Community Homes
12. 416 Community Support for Women
13. Health Providers Against Poverty
14. Neighbourhood Legal Services
15. Sound Times
16. The Neighbourhood Group
17. Peace Builders
18. Young Street Mission
19. The Interfaith Coalition to Fight Homelessness
20. Rev'd Maggie Helwig, Rector, Church of St. Stephen-in-the-Fields
21. Neighbourhood Information Post
22. Centre for Community Learning & Development
23. Faith in the City
24. S.E.A.S. Centre (Support Enhance Access Services Centre)
25. Toronto Kiwanis Boys & Girls Clubs
26. Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre
27. Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario

