

Developer: Well Grounded Real Estate

1925 Victoria Park Ave: Public Art Plan

Address: 1925 Victoria Park Ave, Toronto, Ontario, M1R 1T8

Public Art Consultant: Art+Public UnLtd

February 5, 2025



View of 1925 Victoria Park Avenue site. Rendering courtesy of Well Grounded Real Estate.

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Thank you

Project Team

1. Introduction



View of 1925 Victoria Park Ave, Westside face. Rendering courtesy of Well Grounded Real Estate.

ART+PUBLIC UnLtd was engaged by Well Grounded Real Estate in March 2024 to develop a Public Art Plan for their 1925 Victoria Park Ave site in Scarborough, ON.

This Public Art Plan outlines site context, our research and engagement process, identification of the most impactful public art opportunity, as well as the administrative processes proposed for implementation.

2. Site Context

Land Acknowledgement

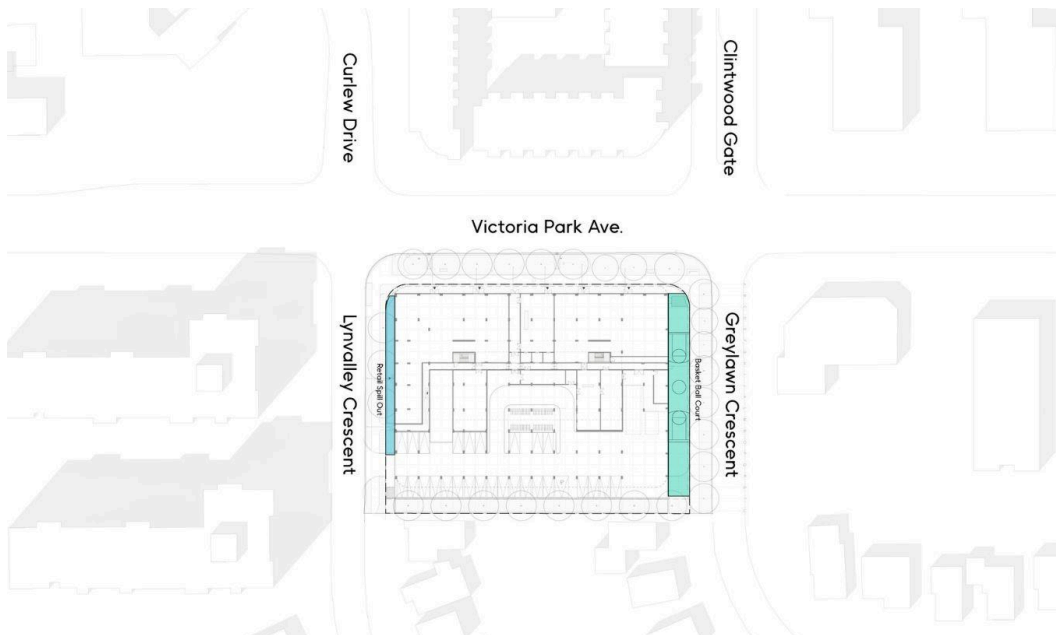
The land in which 1925 Victoria Park Avenue is located is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

For over 10,000 years, Indigenous peoples lived in what is now Scarborough, with First Nations solely occupying the land for most of that time. Archaeological evidence, oral histories, and European settler accounts show that the Mississaugas, Seneca, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat used the region's fertile land, dense forests, rivers, and access to Lake Ontario for trade, hunting, and settlement. The Huron-Wendat were among the first to establish agricultural communities, and Scarborough was a key part of Indigenous trade networks linking it to present-day Toronto and the Great Lakes.

The Scarborough Bluffs served as a major landmark, providing high ground for observation and navigation. The Rouge River and Highland Creek areas hosted both seasonal camps and permanent settlements. Though Scarborough was not included in the original Toronto Purchase (1787) or its 1805 revision, it was ultimately ceded to the British Crown through the Williams Treaties of 1923, following the disputed Gunshot Treaty of 1788.

Today, Indigenous history in Scarborough is recognized through archaeological sites, oral traditions, and community efforts. The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation maintain a connection to the land, and Indigenous communities in Toronto continue to preserve their cultural heritage.¹

¹ [Heritage Toronto](#)



Aerial view of 1925 Victoria Park Ave site. Rendering courtesy of Well Grounded Real Estate.

The site of interest to this Public Art Plan sits just inside the boundary of Scarborough, bordering Danforth Village, a neighbourhood in Toronto's East End. The site is bordered by Victoria Park Avenue which was originally built as a pioneer road for the settlement of Scarborough and served as the boundary for the former township. Victoria Park Avenue remains one of the busiest north-south streets in Scarborough.²

Well Grounded Real Estate has owned the property at 1925 Victoria Park since the 1960s and has been a part of the community ever since. The 1925 Victoria Park site was previously a Rexall Pharmacy and before that hosted a small retail plaza until 2010. The site is currently home to the discount retailer Krazy Binz until Well Grounded Real Estate decided it was best suited for a family-oriented, rental apartment building. The site is located adjacent to an existing residential neighbourhood with new residential developments being built in the area.³

1925 Victoria Park is a proposed mixed-use rental building designed by PARTISANS for Well Grounded Real Estate on the southeast corner of Victoria Park Avenue and Greylawn Crescent.

² Spacing - Canadian Urbanism Uncovered: Street Stories: Victoria Park Avenue, Eric Mutrie, 2010.

³ Well Grounded Real Estate, 1925 Victoria Park: About the Property.

i. 1925 Victoria Park: Redevelopment

The 1925 Victoria Park Ave project re-imagines apartment living through the design of the first 12-floor near-net-zero, mixed use rental development in Ontario. The site is in a mid-market location in Toronto at the intersection of single-family homes, apartment buildings and retail. The ground floor will host service-based retail that will serve the community and will foster an improved pedestrian experience. The project has a focus on delivering long term value while simultaneously building a precedent for sustainable and affordable buildings in our communities.⁴

1925 Victoria is an innovative model for sustainable, rapid, and low-cost housing production at scale. The team has categorised these innovations into two areas: *product-based design* and *construction and component-oriented delivery and planning*.

The result is a precedent-setting purpose-built rental apartment seeking to achieve a departure from tall, dense, small units with a limited lifespan, long construction durations, concrete heaviness, and a lack of natural elements. 1925 Victoria re-imagines humane apartment living with a focus on designing for lifecycle performance. Future tenants will thrive in a healthy environment that provides a foundation for social interaction.⁵

⁴ 1925 Victoria Park Avenue website.

⁵ 1925 Victoria Park Avenue, Innovation Overview, 2023.



Interior view of 1925 Victoria Park Ave. Rendering courtesy of Well Grounded Real Estate.

ii. 1925 Victoria Park: Impact

The 1925 Victoria Park Ave project team is working to create a vibrant community with curated service based retail and community public space. The proposed site has a range of features and amenities that contribute to its innovative design and sustainable framework. The site's design represents the highest standard of sustainability recognized by the City of Toronto. The site's energy efficiency is estimated to be 46% lower than the baseline for residential mixed use buildings in Toronto based on the National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings 2017.



View of 1925 Victoria Park Ave, from the Eastside face. Rendering courtesy of Well Grounded Real Estate.

The built form is reimagined with a central courtyard bound by large open-air corridors that double as social spaces throughout all seasons. The frontage along Victoria Park is transformed with biodiversity that frames the sidewalk, supplying shade and greenery for pedestrians, providing protection from wind, rain and snow. The design affords natural ventilation and natural daylight for every unit in the development.

The building's design will significantly impact affordability, comfort, health, and community development over time. The use of prefabricated hybrid-timber systems will reduce on-site disruption and long-term maintenance costs. A diverse selection of plant life on site will create comfortable microclimates, mitigating wind and sun exposure while passively managing on-site stormwater.

1925 Victoria Park Avenue received the Holcim Award 2023: Gold winner for Sustainable Excellence. Holcim Award acknowledged the project's extensive research and holistic approach, which considers the entire building lifecycle and optimises operational efficiency through passive systems.⁶

⁶ Holcim Foundation Sustainable Construction, 1925 Victoria Park Ave in Canada: High-tech and low-cost modular housing solution for urban living, 2023.

The 1925 Victoria Park project design and delivery team includes Partisans (Architectural), Seritony (DFMA Strategist), CREE Buildings (System Engineer), Aspect (Structural Engineers), Integral (MEP – Engineer), Modern Niagara (MEP – Contractor), and Janet Rosenberg & Studio (Landscape Designer).

3. Public Art Direction

i. Research Overview

In March of 2024, ART+PUBLIC UnLtd engaged in initiatives to support the development and direction for this public art plan. This work included desk research into public art precedents, and a series of project team interviews with representatives from Well Grounded Real Estate, Janet Rosenberg & Studio, and Serotiny Group.

Our project team interviews allowed us to gather specific project information on the local context and the public realm plans for this site, as well as determine direction for key aspects of project implementation, including artist selection process, mentorship opportunities, and outreach and engagement strategies.

Our research into public art precedents aimed to provide the client with insights into the comparable landscape, enabling strategic decision-making within this opportunity, particularly concerning the relationship of works to site and budgetary considerations.

Combining these efforts allowed us to identify priorities, establish goals, and outline the future direction of public art at the 1925 Victoria Park site.

ii. Public Art Priorities for 1925 Victoria Park

Throughout our conversations with project team members, there was a strong emphasis on the importance of integration and interaction with public art at this site. These insights have guided us in identifying the following key priorities for public art at the 1925 Victoria Park site:

Interaction

- A desire for on-site animation driven by public engagement and interaction with and around the artwork, especially given the focus on community building and future occupancy of a daycare or future retail tenant facility.
- Creating opportunities for sustained engagement with public artwork, offering moments of discovery over sustained timeframes, and potentially tactility
- Envisioning change, growth, or evolving elements over time, aligning with the building's long-term strategy to actively involve the community in the narrative of the site.

Integration

- Give dynamic expression to the stories of community and sustainability that are the building blocks of this development project, both in content/concept and form/materiality.
- Enhance the site and seamlessly integrate into the building's fabric.

4. 1925 Victoria Park Ave Public Art Opportunity

i. Vision for Public Art at 1925 Victoria Park

Expanding on the key learnings and priorities identified above, the following vision statement has been developed for public art at this site:

Public art will give expression to the twin principles of sustainability and community at this site. Seamlessly integrated into the site in a way that provides meaningful moments for interaction and engagement, the public art program at 1925 Victoria Park will result in a permanent public artwork integrated into the building infrastructure that will anchor the space and become a local landmark.

ii. Site Selection



View of 1925 Victoria Park Ave, Northeast wall at Victoria Park and Greylawn Cres. Proposed area for public artwork highlighted in yellow. Rendering courtesy of Well Grounded Real Estate.

In our research and discussions with project team members, the activation of the lower exterior wall (highlighted in the image above) with public art was consistently envisioned from the outset of this project. This particular exterior facade stood out as the prime location for public art as it is a blank facade of the building, presenting a large “blank-canvas” opportunity.

Additionally, the following qualities further support the selection of this site for public art:

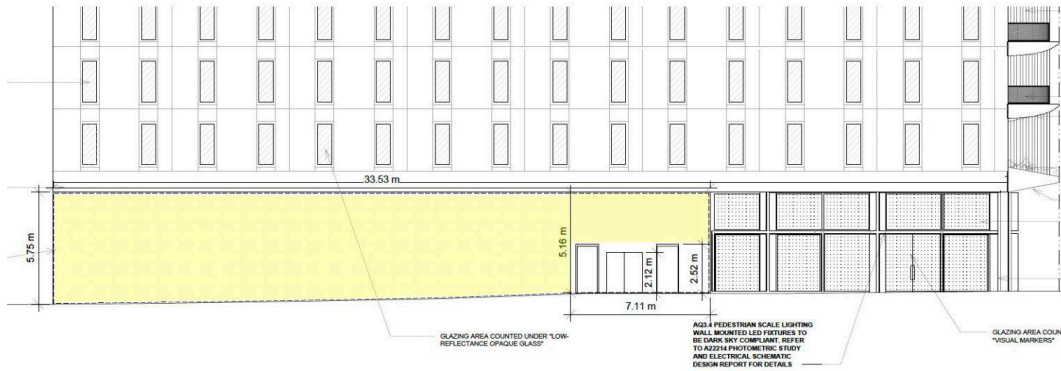
High visibility

- This site is highly visible to pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and is easily viewed by car and transit.
- This site offers close engagement with pedestrians, particularly residents of the building and daycare attendees or future retail tenant patrons.

Publicly accessible

- The relocation of the TTC bus stop to the site enhances accessibility.
- Offers wayfinding opportunity for daycare/future retail tenant.

- Standard construction allows for not only 2-dimensional work, but the potential for attachments on the wall, sculptural elements embedded in the infrastructure.



We arrived at the following:

The envisioned location for public art is the exterior wall adjacent to Greylawn Cres (the Northside facade).



1. Yellow highlight indicates the proposed location for an integrated permanent public artwork.
 - a. Prefabricated elements of the building design start at the second story up, with standard construction on the bottom floor.
 - b. The wall can accommodate attachments, offering potential for sculptural elements or embedding within the infrastructure and construction.
 - c. Dimensions 5.16m x 40.64m (height x width)

During implementation of the Public Art Plan, ART+PUBLIC UnLtd will work with the project team to finalize the detailed site plan, with updated information, images/renderings and dimensions for the permanent public artwork. This work will include ongoing coordination with the project team to ensure that adjacent and implicated site elements are developed in such a way as to be synergistic with the artwork: exterior lighting of this facade will be coordinated in terms of placement and effect with respect to the artwork; the design of any fencing or site requirements for the public realm will be finalised with consideration as much as possible for optimum viewing and experience of the artwork; the placement of any trees along the street edge, if applicable, will not obscure the artwork.

iii. Mentorship

This Public Art Plan aims to build capacity among aspiring Scarborough-based public art practitioners. ART+PUBLIC UnLtd will collaborate with Scarborough Arts network contacts to identify potential mentees from the Scarborough area. Together with the lead artist, they will select one mentee to participate in various phases of the project. The chosen mentee will be compensated for their work.

The public art consultant will be engaged throughout this process, facilitating communication, providing support and guidance to both the primary artist and mentee as needed.

5. Implementation

i. Timeline

Implementation of the Public Art Plan will commence in coordination with the completion of this redevelopment slated for fall of 2026. At the time of writing, the anticipated timeline is approximately as follows:

Public Art Plan approval	
TPAC through to City Council	January to March 2025
Public Art Plan Implementation: Permanent Public Artwork	
Public Art Selection Process (develop documents and facilitate selection)	April to July 2025

process to select artwork concept)	
Public Art Implementation (design development and fabrication)	August 2025 to September 2026
Installation of Public Artwork	Fall 2027
Acceptance of Completed Permanent Artwork	Fall 2027

ii. Budget

The proposed public art contribution will include upfront capital investment in one permanent public artwork along the north facade of the building.

The total public art budget contribution of \$422,400 ex HST has been divided as follows:

Total Permanent Artwork Budget (CBC contribution)⁷

Total amount ex HST: \$422,400	
Public Art Budget (min 80%) ⁸	\$337,920 ex HST
Administration (up to 10%) ⁹	\$42,240 ex HST
Maintenance (up to 10%)	\$42,240 ex HST

iii. Art Selection Process

The implementation will be managed by a public art consultant, working closely with the project team, and will follow best practices of peer input and review. The selection process for the permanent public artwork will be through a two-stage invitational process.

⁷ The public art budget is for the custom finishes required to apply the art concept to the wall. This budget is additional to the base infrastructure budget for the wall itself. The final art budget will be confirmed once the land value has been determined.

⁸ Includes all hard and soft production costs, selection process disbursements, Engagement and Communications, Construction Management and Contingency, Mentorship.

⁹ Including: preparation of Public Art Plan, presentation to TPAC, planning and administration of artwork selection process for artist, assistance in preparation of artist agreement(s).

As part of the Public Art Plan development, the public art consultant researched and compiled the work of 21 artists whose qualifications and artistic practice align with the public art opportunity. The longlist of 9 artists included in this plan has been developed in consultation with and approval from the client. The public art consultant has confirmed eligibility with the artists included in the list below.

In the first phase of Public Art Plan implementation, the art consultant will secure expressions of interest and support material from the artists on the compiled long list. The art consultant will convene a selection panel, which includes 2 project team representatives and 3 independent art experts. The selection panel will select a shortlist of 3 artists who will be invited to develop a proposal based on a project brief document which has been developed in consultation with the project team. It will include details regarding the site context, accompanied by images, renderings and dimensions. The brief will also provide extensive information on the sustainability impacts of this redevelopment, with a view towards ensuring artists address sustainability both in the conceptual and material/process development of their proposals. The jury will select a winning concept for the site and the art consultant will work with the artist and project team to implement the selected project.

Shortlisted artists will be paid an honorarium to develop a proposal. Budget for honorarium fees is accounted for in the budget above.

Confirmed Artist Long List

1. Ghazaleh Avarzamani	7. Maggie Groat
2. Nicolas Baier	8. Simon Hughes
3. Panya Clark Espinal	9. Aaron Jones
4. Julia Dault	10. Jimmy Limit
5. Alexandre Farto (Vhils)	11. Zin Taylor
6. Sara Graham	12. Shellie Zhang

Consideration has been given to artists capable of working within the budget, who possess a practice that is well suited for integration and has been compiled with an eye on diversity and inclusion.

The art consultant will provide support to the selected artist during all phases of artwork implementation (design development and fabrication).

Permanent Public Artwork Selection Panel Composition

In keeping with best practices of public art selection, voting members of the selection panel for Artwork Selection will include:

2 x Client representatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jonathan Diamond, Vice President, Well Grounded Real Estate 2. Gabriel Diamond, Vice President, Well Grounded Real Estate
3 x Professionals with relevant expertise (at least two of which will live or work in Scarborough)	<p>Recommended independent art professionals for consideration, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. James Carl (Artist, Previous Associate Professor University of Guelph, Public Art Expertise) 2. Lillian O’Brien Davis (Curator of Collections and Contemporary Art Engagement, AGYU, Nuit Blanche 2024) 3. Marla Hlady (Artist, Associate Professor, Program Director, Studio Art at UTSC) 4. Ashley MacKenzie Barnes (Independent Curator) 5. Emmanuel Osahor (Artist, Associate Professor at UTSC) 6. Rajni Perera (Artist)
1 x Technical Advisor (non-voting SME participant)	Ivan Vasyliv, Chief Design Officer, Seritony Group

Selection panel composition will strive to prioritise expertise, connection to the community, and diversity, and encompasses a variety of roles within the art world including artists, curators and educators.

iv. Engagement + Communications

Installation of the permanent artwork will be supported by interpretative assets including a plaque and online information about the project. As a community forms

within the development, the public art story will be an evolving part of the community narrative.

The permanent work will speak to the ethos of the project overall—the importance of community and sustainability—and will become a neighbourhood landmark, giving gravitas to opportunities for emerging artists to see their work prominently installed within the public realm.

v. Conservation + Maintenance

Well Grounded Real Estate will be staying on as the property manager for this site. As such, Well Grounded will own and maintain the artwork that results from this plan. As an artwork commissioned with a view to permanence, it is anticipated that the artwork will be a fixture onsite for at least 25 years, and hopefully more than 50.

Upon completion of the public artwork, the artist will be required to submit a comprehensive Maintenance Manual. This manual serves as a detailed guide, providing essential information for Well Grounded and partners of the project team. This document will outline the expected lifespan of the artwork and its component parts and necessary steps and procedures to ensure the longevity, preservation, and ongoing quality of the public artwork.

PROJECT TEAM

Well Grounded Real Estate

Well Grounded Real Estate is a private Toronto-based real estate company that owns and operates a portfolio of multi-residential and retail properties throughout Southern Ontario. With a hands-on approach and over 60 years of experience, the firm prides itself on offering exceptional service to its residential and commercial tenants.

ART+PUBLIC UnLtd

ART+PUBLIC UnLtd is a team of curators, artists, art administrators and planners who focus on developing and implementing exceptional opportunities at the intersection of art and public. ART+PUBLIC UnLtd brings together a combined 30+ years of experience in the public art realm.

THANK YOU

ART+PUBLIC UnLtd would like to sincerely thank the team at Well Grounded Real Estate. Special thanks to everyone who participated in our project team interviews including Ivan Vasylyv, Jonathan Diamond, Wayne Swanton, and Nicholas Gosselin.