**APPROPRIATE ACTS:
CATALYZING THE RECLAMATION OF THE NO-MAN'S-LANDS OF CRESCENT TOWN**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis proposes an approach of appropriate actions to address the problem of under-use in the vast spaces found within Toronto's aging apartment-tower neighbourhoods. Rather than tearing down neighbourhoods, this project hypothesizes that urban renewal can be achieved through small-scale, incremental, resident actions.

Jane Jacobs and Henri Lefebvre provide a theoretical framework that advocates the rich social and cultural life that can grow from a public engaged both with and in the shared spaces of their urban environment. The goal of reclaiming the no-man's-lands of tower neighbourhoods includes engaging residents within their shared outdoor spaces; enabling new ways of imagining, using, and adapting these spaces; and instigating a shift in the management and maintenance of these spaces from the current top-down model, to one where responsibility is shared informally between residents and property management. Notions of spatial agency and DIY-urbanism explore the potential for resident contributions to this urban richness.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis addresses the problem of the underused outdoor spaces surrounding the high-rise apartment towers of Toronto's Crescent Town neighbourhood, and explores the potential of these spaces to be the sites for social and cultural renewal within this particular type of tower-in-a-park neighbourhood typology. My research in Crescent Town studied the neighbourhood's built and social assets, its patterns of everyday life, and its residents' perceptions and uses of the outdoor spaces in order to inform a design project of small actions and interventions to take place within the neighbourhood's underused outdoor spaces. These spaces are the no-man's-lands referred to in the thesis title, and the ability of the actions to appropriate existing built infrastructure and patterns of everyday life in order to respond to residents' needs and desires defines the *appropriateness* of the proposed actions.

While originally motivated by the *Toronto Tower Renewal* project and its goals for social renewal within similar apartment-tower neighbourhoods throughout the city, this project takes its theoretical point of departure from Jane Jacobs and Henri Lefebvre -- both of whom advocate bottom-up, resident-led approaches to developing socially stable, lively, complex urban environments. As such, the scope of my design project focuses on small-scale, low-cost, unsanctioned actions and interventions, conceived of by and executed with the residents of Crescent Town. Rather than design proposals for high-investment, professional infill projects to develop the empty no-man's-lands, my project explores the possibilities and appropriateness of projects curated by think/do-tanks operating in a guerilla and do-it-yourself urbanist manner in order to instigate the development of resident-created social infrastructure throughout the neighbourhood. The design component of my thesis advocates an approach to place-making which directly contrasts the ideology and concepts

of the Modernist architecture movement from which Crescent Town's present form was designed. The focus is on process rather than representation, and the project's cues are taken from what currently exists in the everyday rather than projected ideals for societies of tomorrow. In direct contrast to the Modernist ideology under which Crescent Town was designed in the 1960s, rather than seeking ideal forms and master-planning my project seeks to inject ideals of messiness, accessibility, adaptability, engagement, and shared responsibility to the evolution of how the neighbourhood's shared outdoor spaces are used and managed.

With the goal of bringing social and cultural renewal to a tower neighbourhood in mind, this thesis asks: ***how can acts of appropriation be used to allow for the questioning of spaces, and the creation of places for socially-oriented activities in order to reclaim the no-man's-lands surrounding Crescent Town's high rise apartment towers?***

In order to answer this question, this thesis has been developed in four sections; three of which are entitled with the *Toronto Tower Renewal* project's social and cultural goals for Tenant Engagement, Neighbourhood Action, and Community Use Space. Before addressing these goals, however, I had to begin this study as Jane Jacobs suggested: "we must get out and walk" ("Downtown is for People" 1958). The first chapter of this thesis – *01: Stepping into No-Man's-Land* – introduces the tower-in-a-park apartment typology in relation to its roots in Modernist architecture ideology, and its present-day realities as Toronto's most dominant form of high-rise housing. The chapter also chronicles the walks I took in four apartment-tower neighbourhoods throughout Toronto in order to find the most appropriate testing ground for a bottom-up, small-action approach to enlivening the vast residual spaces in these neighbourhoods. The following chapter – *02: Tenant Engagement* – examines the works of Jacobs and Lefebvre to set up a theoretical framework for a place-based,

tenant-driven methodology for both researching and developing urban environments. The methods section of the chapter outlines the ways in which I engaged with Crescent Town's tenants. Through walks and observations on the podium, people counting, and surveys, I aimed to discover the built assets, daily patterns, and residents' desires of and for the neighbourhood. The data gathered in this section formed the basis for the designed-action proposals found in chapter 03: *Neighbourhood Action*. This third chapter begins by defining the role of *spatial agents* and the process of designing *acts of appropriation* to explore the appropriateness of small-scale, low-cost, unsanctioned approaches to urban development. In this chapter, four proposals are given for actions to appropriate different spaces and moments throughout the podium. This chapter's methods section outlines the conception, execution, and outcomes of these designed actions. Chapter 04: *Community Use Space* begins to imagine the evolution of these actions as instigators for larger built and social change within Crescent Town. The chapter discusses the ways in which the bottom-up, everyday urbanist approach can develop upwards in terms of the scale, longevity, and scope of projects that evolve from the initial acts of appropriation. The chapter concludes with proposals for architectural interventions throughout the neighbourhood which allow for the messiness, accessibility, and adaptability advocated throughout the thesis.

The Toronto Tower Renewal project defines its goals for social and cultural renewal as achieving the following: "to enable apartment neighbourhoods to grow into fully vibrant, sustainable places that meet the social and cultural needs, expectations, and wishes of residents" (ERA architects 2008, 15). It is my hypothesis that an approach of Appropriate Actions can achieve these goals and catalyze the process of reclaiming the no-man's-lands of Crescent Town.

APPROPRIATE ACTS:

Catalyzing the Reclamation of the No-Man's-Lands of Crescent Town

1.0 STEPPING INTO NO-MAN'S-LAND

Of the more than 1,000 postwar apartment towers in Toronto's current building stock, the most dominant typology is the Modernist tower-in-a-park. This housing typology is characterized by mid- to high-rise concrete towers, surrounded by open space that leaves nearly 90% of the building lot vacant. Modernist planning envisioned that this vast open space would be both filled with vegetation and people, providing each apartment unit with fresh air, sun light, views in otherwise very densely populated tower neighbourhoods. As Le Corbusier imagined, "the set-backs permit of vast architectural perspectives. There are gardens, games, and spot ground. And sky everywhere, as far as the eye can see" (Le Corbusier 1971, 177). However, on the ground level – the plane on which residents physically experience and move through the open space – the land stands vacant, unused, and, on many properties, poorly maintained. There is a disconnect between the ideal of the open space set aside as an amenity, and the reality of empty, neglected spaces surrounding apartment towers, where residents' experience of the space is that of avoidance, rather than enjoyment. Often fenced off or otherwise bordered to discourage or prohibit access, the lawns and paved plazas that make up these Modernist park and open spaces have become the no-man's-lands of Toronto's apartment tower neighbourhoods.

figure 1: apartment tower typologies
(ERA 2008, 17)

The ways in which the space can better serve neighbourhood residents must be reconsidered. What were the historical contexts that inspired the tower-in-a-park typology, both in Modernist architectural thought and as a prevalent building type in post-war Toronto? Is there something of the Modernist idealism that is worth attempting to recover, and how would today's conditions negate or accommodate these attempts? This thesis asks: what are the ways I can understand, and then address the problem of the vast under-used spaces in Toronto's apartment tower neighbourhoods? I hypothesized that a project of small scale interventions, acts of appropriation, and tenant involvement could reintroduce the human scale to these vast empty spaces, and instigate the process for reclaiming the neighbourhood's no-man's-lands.

figure 2: sketch for the radiant city by le corbusier
(<http://themodernist.co.uk>)

1.1 MODERNIST VISION

Exhaust gases and tar dust have the most appalling effects on our organisms... I assert that the city of today is a deadly peril to its inhabitants. But where is the remedy? The municipalities can do nothing; the essential need is the creation of green spaces covering from 20-50% of the superficial area of the city. It seems useless to dream of such things. The situation is appalling.

Department of Woods and Forests landscape gardener/ architect M. Forestier's exchange with Le Corbusier (excerpt from Le Corbusier 1971, 198)

Greatly influenced by Le Corbusier, the architects of the Modernist movement did not find it useless to dream of M. Forestier's remedy. It was what M. Forestier identified as the essential need to create significant amounts of green space that Le Corbusier based his plans for the *Contemporary City for 3 Million People*. Conceived in 1922, these plans were to provide a theoretical scheme from which Le Corbusier could represent his four rigorous principles of urban planning. Le Corbusier stated that his fourth principle: "We must increase parks and open spaces," was the only way to create healthy, calm environments to offset the stresses of a fast-paced, modern existence (Le Corbusier 1971, 170). In the parks and open spaces, trees would play a role of the utmost importance in putting the mind at ease within this new landscape of gigantic constructions; their presence would be the psychological bridge between the human scale and the lofty heights of the towers necessitated by the Contemporary City (Guiton 1981, 98). In the Modernist vision, the park spaces were conceived as lush, healthy, lively places that provided a solution to the pressing problems of overly-dense, highly polluted post-industrial cities while sensitively mediating the new spatial relationships between humans and the new high-rise apartment typology.

figure 3: sketch by le corbusier of the recreation spaces in his scheme for the radiant city (<http://materialinnovations.wordpress.com/2011/09/12/thoroughbred-in-a-concrete-jungle/>)

The inclusion of parks and open spaces in plans for the Contemporary City also allowed Le Corbusier to address the contemporary discourse surrounding French Labour reform and the newly-won right to eight-hour work days (Cross 1984, 195). As popular slogans demanded, the 24 hour-day was called to be divided equally into eight hours' work, eight hours' leisure and recreation, and eight hours' rest (Le Corbusier 1971, 202). Le Corbusier noted this new temporal pattern as a pertinent issue to be addressed by urban planners. The question he had in mind was *where?* Where should the workers spend their hours and energy for leisure and recreation? The open park spaces surrounding the tall apartment towers of the Contemporary City were the solution. Le Corbusier envisioned that these spaces would be easily accessible to all residents for play and exercise. Upon reaching home from busy, crowded city centers, the open park spaces were to be the place where residents could "fill their lungs, relax, and build their muscles" (Le Corbusier 1971, 202). Ease of access, and therefore close proximity to residents' homes were extremely important, as Le Corbusier concluded that it would be impossible for residents' minds and bodies to truly benefit from their eight hours' recreation if they had to sacrifice play time for travel time carrying their sports equipment on crowded trams and buses (Le Corbusier 1971, 202). Along with providing an alternative to the overly dense polluted post-industrial city, the spaces designed at the base of Le Corbusier's apartment towers were conceived to accommodate a program of sports and leisure, for the mental and physical benefit of tower residents.

The manifestation of Le Corbusier's ideals in three dimensional built form occurred in a period of rapid population growth, speculation, city rebuilding and expansion. He called his plan "The Radiant City: a city worthy of our times" (Fishman 1982, 10). He believed the solution to Paris's urban problem called for a total, radical, wide-sweeping plan in order to escape both from the limitations of the era's short-term, piecemeal city planning processes; and from what he felt was an outdated, inefficient practice of slowly evolving the city by means

of many individual decisions (Fishman 1982, 190). Robert Fishman writes that Le Corbusier's plans were effective because they addressed widely shared hopes and fears:

In particular [the plans] reflected (1) the pervasive fear and revulsion from the nineteenth-century metropolis; (2) the sense that modern technology had made possible exciting new urban forms; and (3) the great expectation that a revolutionary age of brotherhood and freedom was at hand. (1982, 10).

Beyond Le Corbusier's vision, the conceptual foundations of mass housing in the Post-World War II decades around the world were explorations of standardization, both as a means to advance building techniques and introduce new materials into residential construction, as well as to fulfil social agendas for egalitarian living conditions. Indeed, in the history of mass housing in Toronto, the invention of the flying-form – a system of concrete form work that could be raised and re-used on multiple storeys as the towers grew in height – was instrumental in the prevalence of concrete towers as the main form of mass housing and new construction in Toronto between 1945 - 1970 (ERA 2008, 14). Standardization allowed for a clear, logical, rigorous approach to design and construction. In the spaces surrounding the buildings, 'rigour' manifested in the layout and arrangement of elements such as furnishing, gardens, and pathways on the ground plane according to geometric order. As Henri Lefebvre notes, however, "rigour is uninhabitable" (1996, 94). In Toronto's tower-in-a-park neighbourhoods, the rigour of standardization has not left much room for play. Particularly in the mechanical sense of the word, where play refers to "freedom of, or scope, or space for movement" ("Play | Define Play at Dictionary.com"), perhaps it is because the open park spaces have been designed with such precise, geometric order that residents do not feel they have the opportunity or right to operate, or play, freely in the space. While publicly accessible, these spaces do not feel like they belong to residents. There is no sense of

what Jane Jacobs observed as informal, mutual networks of security, nor is there a diversity of adjacent commercial or service functions that would draw residents to linger and enjoy these spaces (Jacobs 1961, 96). According to Jacobs, places that are safe, delightful, and socially and economically stable are the product of regular use, activity, and casual interaction between neighbours in public spaces.

For some property managers of Toronto apartment towers, it appears that the preservation of neat, tidy aesthetic order in the outdoor open spaces— which is best appreciated from detached viewpoints far above the ground plane – has taken precedence over the Modernist visions of space allocated for leisure and recreation. Today the open spaces are often kept separate or fenced off from the everyday movement and lives of towers residents. In some neighbourhoods stern signs posted throughout the property list strict rules and limits on how residents can use the open spaces. Conversely in other neighbourhoods, the open spaces are met with neglect rather than the desire to preserve, and amenities designed within the open spaces for leisure, such as ball courts, swimming pools, and even benches have fallen into great disrepair. In Toronto's apartment-tower neighbourhoods, concerns for security and property management budgets have derailed the great Modernist vision and the promise of the open outdoor space.

figure 4: same scale aerial views of (l-r) st.jamestown, flemingdon park, thorncliffe park, and crescent town (bing maps, edited by author)

1.2 FOUR WALKS

Most of us identify with a place in the city because we use it, and get to know it reasonably intimately. We take our two feet and move around in it and come to count on it. The only reason anyone does this much is that useful or interesting or convenient differences fairly nearby exert an attraction.

Jane Jacobs, *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961, 129)

Jane Jacobs advocated the acts of walking and observation as methods to gain a full, intimate understanding of a place; taking our two feet and moving around is how both researchers and residents can come to know urban places. To better know the form and circumstances of these neighbourhoods, I set out on walks through four different neighbourhoods containing tower-in-a-park apartments: I explored St. Jamestown, Flemingdon Park, Thorncliffe Park and finally, Crescent Town. My hypothesis was that areas of intense but small scale actions could act as points of urban acupuncture to shift and disrupt the current conception and use of these spaces, while inspiring the residents to inhabit the podium on a broader scale. I aimed to address the issue of the vast, unused spaces of Toronto's apartment tower neighbourhoods by using a 21st century approach of bottom-up methods and acts of appropriation, thus bringing human scale interventions and inhabitation to places that were designed according to top-down planning methods and Modernist ideals. With

these methods I aimed to disrupt the current impersonal nature of these neighbourhood's empty open spaces with intimate interventions that would have the potential to slowly reintroduce the human scale to the vast open spaces beneath the looming concrete towers.

A bottom-up approach to design would require me to both (1) observe the relationships and interactions that residents have with each other and with the shared outdoor spaces of their neighbourhood, as well as (2) build my own relationships with residents eager to participate in the process of reclaiming their neighbourhood's no-man's-lands. The methods used would include people counting, surveys, mapping exercises, round table discussions, and photo walks to build a solid understanding of the temporal patterns of the site, the intensity of use of specific areas, and residents' perceptions on and desires regarding the limits and opportunities inherent to the site.

In these four walks I was searching for a neighbourhood where the combination of physical and social structures might best support and benefit from the hypothesis of small scale interventions as urban acupuncture to introduce broader human scale use of the modernist no man's lands. Although the tower-in-a-park is a specific housing typology, the ways in which the towers and their open park spaces have been arranged in relation to each other, other housing typologies, public parks, transit, and city infrastructure have resulted in a distinct sense of place in each of the neighbourhoods my feet moved around in.

St. Jamestown

figure 5: aerial views of st.jamestown,
(bing maps, edited by author)

The first neighbourhood I visited was St. Jamestown, located at the northern edge of downtown Toronto. The neighbourhood was first conceived in 1959, and its first towers – which were of the tower-in-a-park typology – were completed in the early 1960s (McClelland & Stewart 2007, 45). The 32.1 acre neighbourhood continued to be developed by different property owners, culminating in 18 high-rise apartment towers by 1973 (“About St. Jamestown,” par. 5). This intense development resulted in an incredibly dense neighbourhood of assorted tower typologies, contained within an already existing, well established city fabric. St. Jamestown is well served and accessible by local transit and borders the lively mixed-use neighbourhood of Cabbage Town, putting it in close proximity to an array of shops, restaurants, and businesses. I observed that St. Jamestown was teeming with street life; so much so that resident entrepreneurs had taken advantage of the opportunity presented by the heavy, concentrated foot traffic and established an informal outdoor flea market along the neighbourhood’s busiest pedestrian corridor. I learned from a vendor that the market runs seven days a week for as long as the weather conditions are favourable. I was able to move fluidly throughout the open spaces of the apartment towers along Wellesley Street, but found more boundaries and fences as different property management groups divided the lots north of St. James Avenue and west of Bleecker Street. Due to the compact footprint of the neighbourhood, the open spaces felt contained and the scale of the neighbourhood felt walkable. Though not all of the open space was occupied or even well maintained, I did observe an urban vitality in St. Jamestown. The open spaces between the buildings were also punctuated by playgrounds, parkettes, and even a butterfly garden initiated by Evergreen national charity, and now maintained by tower resident volunteers. I learned of a number of community groups and not-for-profit organizations at work within the neighbourhood, including Art in the City, the Wellesley Institute, and the Yonge Street Mission.

St. Jamestown is a unique tower neighbourhood because it was developed within an existing city fabric. The ease of access to neighbouring infrastructure, city transit, businesses, and charitable organizations sets it apart from other tower neighbourhoods throughout Toronto. I hypothesize that for it is for these reasons that St. Jamestown is not included as one of Toronto's 13 Priority Neighbourhoods. By definition, a Priority Neighbourhood is identified as having a greater risk of negative social and economic outcomes than other city neighbourhoods, and so have been given priority for social and physical infrastructure development ("Strong Neighbourhoods: Call to Action"). Although I found the vitality of St. Jamestown exciting and I could easily imagine projects to further instigate the use of the open spaces surrounding the neighbourhood's towers, I felt my project would be more appropriate and relevant in a neighbourhood that hadn't so successfully begun to claim their open spaces. The City of Toronto's list of 13 Priority Neighbourhoods provided me with 13 neighbourhoods which all contained the tower-in-a-park typology. Due to my limited time in Toronto I narrowed my list of neighbourhoods to those in the city's south east end. I then set out to explore Flemingdon Park, Thorncliffe Park, and Crescent Town.

figure 6: aerial views of flemingdon park
(bing maps, edited by author)

Flemingdon Park

I found Flemingdon Park to be the complete antithesis of St. Jamestown. Designed by architect Irving Knapp in 1959, Flemingdon Park was envisioned as Canada's first apartment city ("History of Flemingdon Park"). It was to be a self-sufficient, modern town for 14,000 people, and the design of the high-rise apartment towers introduced a new way of thinking about housing and development in what were then the city's suburbs (McLelland & Stewart 2007, 45). Like St. Jamestown, the tower-in-park apartments were designed and constructed according to one master plan, and then a series of various high- and low-rise

housing typologies continued to be developed in the neighbourhood until the 1970s. When the neighbourhood began to be developed, its location was at an outer edge of the city, and so, unlike St. Jamestown, the development in Flemingdon Park was neither contained nor limited by an existing city fabric. Thus, the no-man's-lands of Flemingdon Park truly felt as though they were empty, unclaimed, and sprawling. Each of the separately owned properties in the neighbourhood were fenced off, severing any relationship that neighbourhood residents (i.e., not just the tenants of individual buildings) could have with the open spaces. Most of the pedestrian traffic, and what could be the potential for the neighbourhood's street life, took place on the paved pathways of public park land which has recently been refurbished with new benches. As I observed families using the pathways to travel between their towers and the neighbourhood shopping plaza, church, and elementary school I thought that the development of the pathway was an important part of Flemingdon Park's social infrastructure because it created moments of density and relatively high concentrations of pedestrian traffic in the otherwise sparsely populated ground level of the neighbourhood. The pathway and its nodes of benches offered the opportunity for neighbours to casually meet while fulfilling everyday tasks. Flemingdon Park was successful in this regard, but when it came to considering the potential to reclaim the open spaces directly surrounding the neighbourhoods apartment towers, I was overwhelmed first by the fences and property divisions, and then by the vast areas created by the open spaces arranged in relation to each other. I observed that residents experienced these spaces only at their perimeters, from the sidewalks on the other side of the fences which defined each separate property. In the following chapter I will explain why my project pursues small-scale resident actions and interventions as methods for reclaiming tower neighbourhoods. In Flemingdon Park however, I felt overwhelmed by the vastness and inaccessibility of the no-man's-lands and my initial reaction was that this neighbourhood called for much larger interventions than the

scope I had established for my project; in Flemington Park I wanted to remove all the fences and develop infill projects that would introduce mixed-use planning within the residential zone of the neighbourhood. The vastness of Crescent Town led me to conclude that it would not be an appropriate site for small interventions and acts of appropriation. With this realization in mind, I walked on the empty sidewalk to the nearest bus shelter and waited for the 25- Don Mills bus to Thorncliffe Park.

figure 7: aerial view of thorncliffe park
(bing maps, edited by author)

Thorncliffe Park

Thorncliffe Park was planned on the site of a U-shaped horse-racing track, giving the neighbourhood its distinctive U-shape, and its nickname, "U-Block." The neighbourhood developed as a mix of low-, mid-, and high-rise apartment buildings from the 1950s into the 1990s (McClelland & Stewart 2007, 44). The neighbourhood's tower-in-a-park high-rise apartments can be found in the south eastern corner of neighbourhood, rising from above a system of ravines that connects the neighbourhood to the Don Valley. These distinctive three-winged park-towers were designed by architect Alexander Benedek in 1960 (McClelland & Stewart 2007, 44). As these towers are all operated by the same property management company, their surrounding parks are not fenced off from each other. The towers' location at the top of a ravine creates a definite border to contain the neighbourhood's development and the sprawl of the towers' open spaces, and thus unlike Flemington Park I did not feel an overwhelming sense of vastness in this neighbourhood. In Thorncliffe Park I observed open park spaces which were neatly contained between the wings of their towers, creating spaces in which the scale felt easily habitable. The entrance approaches to the towers were designed with circular furnished islands for neighbours to gather- an activity which I observed in the mild fall weather. The grass lawns surrounding the towers served as play ar-

eas for children, as well as thresholds to the greater Don Valley park-ravine system. Though these are issues to be addressed about the street life and walkability of the neighbourhood, as noted from *Jane's Walk Walkability Reports* (Hess & Farrow 2009), the scope of my project focuses on the no-man's-lands surrounding the high-rise towers, and in Thorncliffe Park's case, my observations led me to conclude that these spaces actually work: their area is contained between the wings of the towers and does not feel overwhelming, and the spaces are used not only for neighbours to socialize, but also to connect to a greater city asset. Perhaps what makes Thorncliffe Park's tower-parks work is that residents are not scolded to 'keep off the grass' by stern signs, chain link fences, or zealous building security. At the base of Thorncliffe's tower-in-a-park buildings, I observed the park spaces being used as envisioned by the Modernists.

figure 8: aerial view of crescent town
(bing maps, edited by author)

Crescent Town

The final neighbourhood on my walk was Crescent Town, and I found it to be an incredible example of Modernist master planning with the Modernist intentions lost in translation. The neighbourhood was conceived in 1969 by architect Marlin Dietrich as an entire community contained within one mega-structure (McClelland & Stewart 2007, 47). Today, dental and medical offices, a convenience store, two restaurants, and a community centre with daycare make up the neighbourhood's central Marketplace Square. Behind the convenience store, a small pedestrian bridge links the neighbourhood to an elementary school also designed as part of the original master plan. The Marketplace Square appears to have been designed as a social hub of the neighbourhood, as it contains a grid of large concrete planters which contain small trees, and are surrounded with concrete benches. The square has been designed to a very human scale with its one-story buildings, benches, trees and a

low arcade along its perimeter. In contrast, the neighbourhood's towers and open spaces dwarf the human scale. The shortest tower of the neighbourhood's six towers is 10 stories tall, and the remaining five loom 29 stories above ground level. Lining the western perimeter of the neighbourhood are townhouses which rise two stories above ground level, with yards opening onto large grass lawns landscaped with the occasional sprawling evergreen hedge. All of Crescent Town's buildings are linked by a completely pedestrian podium raised 1.5 stories above street level. In addition to the podium's vast lawns, it has wide red brick pathways lined with the occasional bench and concrete planter. Those arriving from the pedestrian bridge linking the neighbourhood to Victoria Park subway station enter into a large paved entrance plaza, which looked as though it was designed to be a place of gathering and celebration. Large planters of trees and shrubs line the perimeter of the plaza, and benches are tucked into small nooks between the planters.

In contrast to the Modernist vision of park spaces for sports and leisure, what I observed on this first afternoon walk through the neighbourhood was a series of unoccupied lawns and empty squares. Even on the sunny, mild fall Sunday afternoon, there were no children playing on the podium, and no one lingered on the benches throughout the neighbourhood. Numerous stern signs posted throughout the neighbourhood listed several prohibited activities: loitering, game playing, bicycle riding, rollerblading, smoking, or drinking were not allowed on the podium. I saw that the rules prohibiting recreation and healthy activity on the podium were indeed being observed -- on my first walk through the neighbourhood I observed that the podium functioned merely as pedestrian circulation.

Site Selection

figure 9: crescent town seen from the south-east]
(nokia maps)

Crescent Town appeared to be an ideal site for a project of small actions and interventions. The towers loomed high above the vast empty spaces and I felt that neighbourhood called to be broken down to a more human scale. I imagined places such as the Marketplace Square and the entrance plaza to have active rush hours, when the energy and mass of the passersby could be tapped into to encourage more engaged moments of activity and interaction on the podium. These daily rhythms could also be used to activate all of the empty spaces adjacent to, and accessible from the podium's wide pathways. In the pathways' function as pedestrian circulation space, I saw the opportunity for this project's small actions and interventions to be highly visible, and more importantly, accessible to anyone curious enough to wander over to take a look.

In addition to the neighbourhood's form as an accessible podium, the on-site community centre was home to the Crescent Town Youth Council, which meant that there was already an established community group that I could build a relationship with. Working with the Youth Council would give me the opportunity to work with an age group whose needs for exercise, play, and social interaction should be directly served by the podium. Also, beginning this project, I felt that children and youth could be ideal instigators of social change, as their ideals and actions could easily be spread amongst family members, friends, adult role models and community leaders, and eventually the community at large. The presence of the Youth Council as an existing community group whose mandate was to organize activities for the neighbourhood youth convinced me that Crescent Town would be the ideal site to pursue my project. Collaborating with the Youth Council would provide the opportunity to connect to a network of neighbourhood residents to in order to inform research on local perspectives, needs, desires, and points of pride regarding the podium. I set my feet and curiosity

firmly in Crescent Town. What I observed, and the questions I asked of the neighbourhood is covered in the following chapter: *Tenant Engagement*.

figure 10: looking west towards crescent town's
no-man's-lands
(photo by author)

figure 11: a map of crescent town
the odd -numbered buildings are apartment towers,
and the even numbers townhouses
(by author)

02 TENANT ENGAGEMENT

For Jane Jacobs, the mother's milk of urban life comes from people passionately and publicly engaged in ideas derived from their observation, experience, and the willingness to act on them.

(Crombie 2010, 134)

Tenant engagement in this study is both a methodology for gathering data about Crescent Town, and about the project's aim to learn about how tenants could successfully engage with each other in the outdoor spaces of the podium through a small scale intervention. It is about finding ways to tap into existing moments of opportunity in order to encourage behaviour that actively engages the reclamation of the no-man's-lands through shared experiences and a sense of shared ownership of the podium. In the Toronto Tower Renewal Implementation Book, tenant engagement is identified as the first element towards the goal of cultural and social renewal. The idea that engaged residents have the ability to take ownership and bring about cultural and social change in places where they live their everyday lives is explored by both Jane Jacobs and Henri Lefebvre. The two authors had similar methods for learning about the ways cities worked: their conclusions about the intricate networks of interdependence and citizen participation required to make cities work were drawn from lived experience and observations made while out on city streets. The subjects of their conclusions address different possible manifestations of cultural and social renewal that can be brought about by an engaged public -- Lefebvre focused on the former, and Jacobs on the latter. Lefebvre's argument focused on the cultural richness that can come about when residents acknowledge and exercise their right to the city; to actively engage in it, and inhabit places beyond the walls of their homes. Jacobs focused more on the social stability that comes along with streets that allow for casual, yet regular contact with neighbours; she

observed the types of spatial and temporal patterns that allow this kind of contact to occur. It is important to present the literature of both Lefebvre -- specifically *Writings on Cities* -- and Jacobs' *Death and Life of Great American Cities* because both texts make compelling arguments for messiness, change, and adaptability in cities. Their ideas regarding how cities should be planned and inhabited directly contrasts the Modernist architectural vision of neat zoning, master plans, and static forms. Through their observations of everyday urban life, Jacobs and Lefebvre created arguments about how engaged tenants can bring about cultural and social renewal in their urban environments.

The first two sections of this chapter will explore the writings of Jacobs and Lefebvre to establish a theoretical framework for my own method and engagements with Crescent Town and its residents. The final section in this chapter will outline the methodology used to gather data in order to understand how tenants engage in the neighbourhood, and finally, to my engagement with the tenants. I began as I did in Chapter 1 -- by walking and observing. This time however, I was looking at Crescent Town through the lens of Jane Jacobs.

2.1 Walking with Jane Jacobs:

Looking for assets, needs, and opportunities on the podium

Cities are thoroughly physical places. In seeking understanding of their behaviour, we get useful information by observing what occurs tangibly and physically, instead of sailing off on metaphysical fancies.

(Jacobs 1961, 95-96)

Before looking at the neighbourhood through Jane Jacobs' lens, it is important to understand the world that she was seeing, what changes she was observing (and consequently, fighting), and what was going on in the streets and neighbourhoods that she was walking through. At the time that Jacobs wrote her seminal *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, cities around the world had been undergoing intense, rapid transitions towards urbanization (Lerner 2010, 184). New York City – where Jacobs called home – was undergoing transformative attempts to shed the skins of old, crowded, poorer neighbourhoods and small, congested streets to make way for modernization in the form of high-rise apartment blocks, bridges, parkways, and highways. Jane Jacobs saw that this transformation was deadly to the urban life that had grown in the neighbourhoods set for demolition. In her view, these large scale urban renewal projects destroyed not only the physical buildings that were bulldozed to make way for them, but also the small businesses, local economies, and social networks that had established their own order and security within the neighbourhoods set for demolition. Jacobs understood that urban environments were just as intricate and complex as natural ecosystems; both are results of numerous interdependent relationships between inhabitants and the habitat. An awareness of this complexity and the essential role of citizens in shaping their environments is Jacobs' most important lesson.

On the opposite end of the spectrum in approaches to city planning was Jacobs'

foremost intellectual and political rival, Robert Moses. Moses began a career of transforming New York City on a grand scale in the 1930s by directing federal funds from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal to both revitalize and build city parks. In his first official title of State and City Parks Commissioner, Moses mobilized a workforce of 80,000 labourers and granted positions to top engineers and planners left unemployed by the stock market crash, thus him earning acclaim, enthusiasm, and trust amongst New Yorkers (Berman 1988, 300). Moses' beginnings marked a time of excitement and progress for the city, and the success of his first park projects provided momentum for more public works on a grander, more transformative scale. Plans were made for the elevated West Side Highway, the Henry Hudson Bridge, the Belt Parkway, the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, and the Triborough project- a complex network of bridges and parkways to link Manhattan, the Bronx, and Westchester with Queens and Long Island (Berman 1988, 301). All of these works supported Moses' vision to "weave together the loose strands and frayed edges of the New York metropolitan arterial tapestry" (quoted in Berman 1988, 301). While these projects made it possible to physically connect New York's boroughs for motor vehicles, Moses did not comprehend or value the fact that in ordering the demolition of entire neighbourhoods, his projects would destroy the intricate, pedestrian fabric that allowed people to connect to each other on a more intimate level. When considering the differences between building in Manhattan and building in New York's suburbs, he boasted that in the city there were merely "more houses in the way... more people in the way – that's all" (quoted in Berman 1988, 293). The scale at which Moses considered the city completely countered Jacobs' views. In *Working for the People*, Moses explained that his projects made it possible to have "a civilization which more and more runs on rubber" (1956, 4). The car-oriented non-human scaled city of Moses' vision would function through restraints brought about through zoning, comprehensive city maps, government programs and budgets, definite frameworks, and 50-year plans (1956, 52-

54). In contrast, Jacobs championed walkable streets, incremental and independent small-scale growth, local initiative, and the piecemeal evolution of the city.

Robert Moses' plans for modernizing New York first directly challenged Jane Jacobs' ideals in 1952 when plans were announced for a four-lane extension of Fifth Avenue to cut through the center of Washington Square Park in Jacobs' Greenwich Village neighbourhood (Glaeser, "What a City Needs"). The resulting struggle between the people of Greenwich Village and prominent district leaders over the fate of Washington Square Park was Jacobs' first experience of the importance of "sidewalk public characters" (Jacobs 1961, 70). These characters are self-appointed and frequently in contact with a wide circle of people; their public presence in their neighbourhoods allows them to learn of news of public interest and spread the news amongst neighbours (Jacobs 1961, 72). By helping to draft, distribute, and deliver petitions against the city-wide program to widen roads particularly at the expense of

figure 12: washington square park , new york city.
highlighted is the proposed extension of 5th avenue
that would have cut through the park and existing
neighbourhood
(bingmaps, edited by author)

her neighbourhood park, Jane Jacobs established herself as a sidewalk public character. In the future neighbours would seek her help in pursuing other improvements they noticed and desired in the areas where they lived and worked (Jacobs 1961, 70). In the case of Washington Square Park, Jacobs credited two neighbourhood women for presenting a radical alternative in response to the threat to their valued local asset:

At first most of the local citizens opposed the proposed depressed highway, anticipating nothing beyond stalemate. However, two daring women, Mrs. Shirley Hayes and Mrs. Edith Lyons were less conventional in their thinking. They took the remarkable intellectual step of envisioning improvement for certain city uses, such as children's play, strolling, and horsing around, at the expense of vehicular traffic. They advocated eliminating the existing road, that is closing the park to all automobile traffic -- but at the same time *not* widening the perimeter roads either. In short, they proposed closing off a roadbed without compensating for it.
(1961, 361)

The City Planning Commission and traffic commissioner predicted that closing the park to vehicular traffic would dramatically and adversely increase traffic in the streets surrounding the park, saying that the streets would be brought "to a state of frantic and frenetic congestion" (Jacobs 1961, 361). Robert Moses himself predicted that the citizens of Greenwich Village would soon be back to "beg" the commission to not only reopen the road, but to also build the highway (Jacobs 1961, 361). The citizens, however, knew that the surrounding streets were already incredibly inconvenient routes for automobiles because they were narrow, filled with traffic lights, parking cars, difficult corners, and casual jaywalkers. The community was able to put firm pressure on the Planning Commission in order to close off the park road, first as a temporary trial, and then permanently.

Jacobs wrote, “[Mrs. Hayes’ and Mrs. Lyons’] idea was popular; the advantages were evident to anyone who used the park” (1961, 361). Closing Washington Square Park off to vehicular traffic is an example of the kind of alternatives that can be brought forward when engaged tenants with vested interests and intimate knowledge of their neighbourhood are able to come together to pressure policy makers to institute change. This kind of tenant engagement is essential for the creation of places. What kind of neighbourhood fosters this kind of engagement? What kind of neighbourhood encourages citizens to take on the roles of sidewalk public characters? Jacobs wrote of the intricate complexities that are required to foster a neighbourhood’s social capital. What intricate complexities did Jacobs observe in Greenwich Village and other American city neighbourhoods that contributed to making places that worked?

According to Jacobs, places that work have a rich street life. This means they function socially and economically because of networks established through everyday interactions in neighbourhood streets, shops, parks, and sidewalks. Neighbourhoods rich in street life are those that see continuous use, have a sense of liveliness, and most importantly to Jacobs, have established an order that makes them socially and economically useful to their larger contexts (1961, 112). How a neighbourhood accommodates or responds to different patterns of everyday life is an important factor in establishing this order. It should be clarified though, that while there is order in these neighbourhoods, it is not of the formal, top-down variety. The order here may appear random and messy, but that is what makes it work -- it is adaptable and evolves with the neighbourhood because it is based on the relationships between neighbours. At the time *Death and Life of Great American Cities* was written, the ideas Jacobs presented directly opposed the accepted Modernist discourse and approach to city rebuilding; in contrast to master planning and grand projects, Jacobs’ work reintroduced the human scale to urbanism. That human scale is what I believe Crescent

Town is lacking, and by looking at the neighbourhood through Jane Jacobs' lens I discovered opportunities in the infrastructure and in the patterns of the residents' everyday lives which called for the human scale to take root.

To know where I should begin looking at Crescent Town, it was important to know where Jacobs discovered her neighbourhood's moments of lively, messy, order. In building up her argument for how city neighbourhoods can become socially and economically useful to the greater city at large, Jacobs outlined how sidewalks and parks are essential places for establishing social and economic stability within neighbourhoods. In Crescent Town pathways and open spaces (i.e., grass lawns and paved plazas) physically exist but they are not places for establishing social and economic stability within neighbourhood. According to Jacobs' observations, establishing social and economic stability in urban neighbourhoods is a matter of addressing questions of what makes these places safe, what attracts people to these places, and what make people want to stay. How are these features accomplished?

The task of making places safe is the sidewalk's fundamental role (Jacobs 1961, 29). According to Jacobs, safe city sidewalks have the following three interrelated qualities (1961, 35):

1. clear demarcation between public space and private space
2. "eyes on the street" belonging to the natural users of the sidewalks
3. fairly continuous use by a variety of users throughout the day

The first quality is derived from the fact that, unlike suburbs and planned communities, city streets must be well equipped to handle strangers (Jacobs 1961,35). Easily identifiable public spaces negate ambiguity about responsibility for, and authority over the space. Anyone using the sidewalk is welcomed to linger, and everyone is encouraged to take responsibility

Age Groups*	Children under 10: 16.4% Adults in their 30s: 19.7% Older adults (45-64): 21.2% Seniors 65+: 8.3%
Household Composition*	Single parent: 16% Single adult: 20.1%, including 30% of the neighbourhood's senior population
Language and Culture*	Bengali, Urdu, and Chinese the most common languages spoken at home
Surrounding neighbourhood characteristics	Directly south of the neighbourhood: single and semi-detached family homes, bordered by low-rise commercial buildings on Danforth Avenue
Number of highrises	6 towers: 11 stories to 29 stories high
Number of lowrise townhouses	6 townhouses
Land tenure*	40% owned, 60% rented-including units rented by Pinedale Property Group, and private condominium owners
Units with podium level access	Towers: 22 Lowrise: 24

Neighbourhood Snapshot

*2001 Statistics Canada data taken from the Crescent Town Study (Boston & Meagher 2007: 19-26)

and act with authority in protecting the space and its users. Jacobs writes:

The first thing to understand is that the public peace -- the sidewalk and street peace -- of cities is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as they are. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves. (1961, 31).

This intricate, informal, voluntary network of mutual security and casual surveillance refers to the second quality of "eyes on the street," which belong primarily to those who regularly use or can easily view the activity going on in the street. The third quality of having fairly continuous use of the sidewalks ensures a continuous presence of eyes on the street, as well as encourages people inside adjacent buildings to watch the ever-changing activity occurring on the sidewalks. Having fulfilled all three qualities and therefore providing safe places for the neighbours and sidewalk users to gather, the activity generated by safe, well-used streets and sidewalks becomes an attraction in its own right - along with the various shops and businesses that give a place practical draws. As Jacobs observed, "the sight of people attracts even more people". Safe streets not only provide security for their users, they also bring delight to the neighbourhood. They become places for neighbours to make casual contact, for children to play, and for adolescents and teens to hang out; they become focal points to what Jacobs called "street life." A lively street life provides the opportunity and security for tenants to actively engage, or at least be drawn to, the public life of the neighbourhood.

In *Time, Scale, and Control: How New Urbanism (Mis)Uses Jane Jacobs* Jill L. Grant wrote that the intense street life Jacobs observed in her 1950's Greenwich Village neighbourhood was accommodated by the physical environment, but it was not a product of it (2011, 93). Grant was making the argument that Jacobs' observations cannot and must not

be simplified into formulaic design moves for planning ideal neighbourhoods. She goes on to write: "[Jacobs'] Hudson Street reflected the social, economic, and cultural conditions of that particular era. History unfolded within the form as products of time and human history as well as artifacts of spatial configurations." As I walked through the podium to observe it through the lens of Jane Jacobs, I was curious to see how much the three qualities of safe streets listed above could be used to explain the current state of the life of the Crescent Town neighbourhood. On the podium, the "streets" existed as pedestrian pathways. What kind of street life did these pathways currently accommodate? Were public and private spaces clearly demarcated? Was there a presence of informal eyes on the street? What were the patterns of use on the pathways? To address these questions, I spent one day each taking notes in areas I saw from previous walks to be the neighbourhood's two busiest spaces: its central Marketplace square, and the entrance plaza connecting the neighbourhood to Victoria Park Subway Station.

figure 13: the marketplace square (top) and the entrance plaza, high-lighted (bingmaps, edited by author)

figures 14 & 15: stern rules and restrictions posted throughout the podium
(photos by author)

As an isolated, self-contained, property-managed neighbourhood, Crescent Town is entirely under private control. The relationships between public and private here differ from the neighbourhoods observed by Jane Jacobs because the podium is co-managed, maintained, and secured by Pinedale Property Management and the Crescent Town Condominium Board. Therefore, despite the vast lawns and open spaces to be found on the podium, there is no truly “public” space on site. American planning scholar Tridib Banerjee describes the effect of privately managed private space as one where access is a privilege granted to those using the shops and services, but not a right for everyone who happens to be passing through (Banerjee 2001, 12). In Crescent Town residents can use the podium, but they must adhere to strict guidelines and restrictions regarding its use. Throughout the site, signs remind those using the podium that it is private property and that several activities that would normally take place on lively city streets are prohibited here.

Because the podium prohibits many activities that could be enjoyed by Crescent Town’s many children, teens, and families, I observed that rather than a place where people lingered, the podium took on a life more like a pedestrian thoroughfare: the benches sprinkled throughout the site remained unoccupied, and those moving through the podium did not stop and chat with each other as they used the space to access the adjacent parks and amenities. The spaces I observed were bustling only for brief periods of time, during morning and evening rush hours, when people were hurriedly walking between two points. As such, I observed no natural eyes on the street. To fulfill the neighbourhood’s need for safety, the property managers and condo board have hired security guards to patrol the podium and enforce the posted rules. I wondered what effect the lack of informal, mutual surveillance had on residents’ feelings of safety, ownership, responsibility, and authority over the podium. Surely a percentage of their rent and condominium fees must go into maintaining and securing the podium, but did any of the residents include the big open spaces they

moved through daily in their ideas of “home”? Crescent Town’s nature as a private property appeared to be a factor that perpetuated the sense of no-man’s-land in the neighbourhood. Though the successful city streets observed by Jacobs were clearly municipal property, they were public in the sense of the civic responsibility and ownership that the public felt towards them. I hypothesized that that same sensibility would not be upheld in Crescent Town. Perhaps there were eyes on the street from the tower units high above the podium, but the scale of the towers is so large and so removed from what is happening at ground level that any informal surveillance occurring from apartment units would be ineffectual at forming the cohesive, intricate networks Jacobs observed in safe, working places.

In relation to the rest of the podium, I found that the Marketplace square had the most potential for supporting a sidewalk life. Located centrally in the neighbourhood, it is defined by a covered walkway which provides shelter and introduces the human scale to the neighbourhood. The one-story shops, daycare, dental, and doctors’ offices that form the perimeter of the square provide functional diversity to draw residents into the space. This is in keeping with Jacobs’ observation that working places must function economically as well as socially (1961, 118). The square itself consists of large concrete planters with trees that form a canopy over concrete benches. Adjacent to the arrangement of benches and planters is a small pad of grass that could form a front lawn or play area for the daycare. The Marketplace shops create a continuous street front along two edges of the square, and the daycare and community centre form an enclosure perpendicular to them. The result is an active pedestrian corridor. Beyond the foot traffic attracted to the Marketplace shops and services, I observed a high volume of activity between 8:00 and 9:00 AM, and 3:00 and 4:00 PM as a steady flow of residents and their children took this path to and from the neighbourhood elementary school and daycare. Later on in the evening, the Marketplace square continued to see continuous foot traffic as people returned from work, and came and went

figure 16: the human-scale of the marketplace square
(photo by author)

figure 17: looking west into the marketplace square
from beneath the covered walkway
(photo by author)

from recreational night leagues and programs in the community centre. The Marketplace sees all of this activity because it is the central axis of the podium. It is flanked by two lesser-used areas of big open no-man's-lands: west of Building 5 there are three large grass lawns with minimal, generic landscaping and far-too-generously spaced benches; to the south of the square, is a large, paved entrance plaza enclosed by benches and tree planters. Because these places appeared to want to be designed to function as parks of public squares, I began to consider Jacobs' observations on how neighbourhood parks function.

Jacobs' chapter on the *Uses Of Neighbourhood Parks* begins by challenging conventional thinking that parks and park-like spaces should be provided for the benefit of deprived populations. Quite the contrary, she suggested, is more in tune with what truly makes parks work: parks and park-like spaces will definitely suffer from underuse and deprivation unless they are given the benefit of the population's existing presence (Jacobs 1961, 89). These spaces, Jacobs wrote, "are directly and drastically affected by the way the neighbourhood acts upon them" (1961, 95). Without people around to use parks and park-like spaces, their potential to become delightful, welcoming features or even economic assets within neighbourhoods goes unfulfilled. Jacobs was highly critical of the open spaces designed as a result of Modernist ideology and as a part of the new housing projects in her time. She critiqued architects' desires to impose visual order by creating open spaces as elements of an over-arching design composition rather than considering the spaces in relation to users' everyday lives (Jacobs 1961, 378). Like the sidewalks that see fairly continuous use, parks need a diversity of functions surrounding it to attract diverse sets of people with varying schedules to use and populate the parks continuously throughout the day. Only then, Jacobs concluded, could the parks succeed in being safe, attractive features in the neighbourhood (1961, 95). In walking around Crescent Town's no-man's-lands, it became clear that Jacobs' criticisms of Modernist designed open spaces ring true: despite the open spaces being well-

maintained, landscaped, and lined with benches, my observations the neighbourhood did not reveal that these spaces were integral parts of the everyday social life of the neighbourhood. Even on the mild, sunny autumn days of my walks through Crescent Town I did not observe people lingering on the benches or children playing on the grass lawns or the open paved area of the plaza. The no-man's-lands lacked a street life of casual, chance encounters between neighbours, of children playing while parents socialized, of residents out strolling, of neighbours people watching...of any sort of liveliness that resulted from people coming into the spaces as part of their everyday lives.

The activity found in the no-man's-lands consisted of people quickly passing through, either to access the large towers or to leave the neighbourhood. Neither the lawns on the west of the site or the entrance plaza are home to secondary public functions which act as destinations in and of themselves. Jacobs' observation that well-used parks "must possess an intricate sequence of uses and users " (1961, 97) is a fitting explanation for the lack of life in the no-man's-lands. This intricate sequence refers to a diversity of functions that draws different people to the space at different times, resulting in what Jacobs observed as the "sidewalk ballet:"

It is a complex order. Its essence is intricacy of sidewalk use, bringing with it a constant succession of eyes. This order is all composed of movement and change, and although it is life, not art, we may fancifully call it the art form of the city and liken it to the dance — not to a simple-minded precision dance with everyone kicking up at the same time, twirling in unison and bowing off en masse, but to an intricate ballet in which the individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce each other and compose an orderly whole. The ballet of the good city sidewalk never repeats itself from place to place, and in any one place is

always replete with improvisations. (1961, 50)

Even if today's current Torontonians culture is more inclined to spending leisure time indoors in front of televisions and computers compared the Jacobs' 1950s neighbours, I predict that injecting these no-man's-lands with some sort of function related to the everyday needs and desires of the residents would encourage an increased use of the no-man's-lands as more than just a thoroughfare; it could be a place where people lingered and perhaps, if tenants felt engaged enough, there would be small acts of improvisation to begin reclaiming the spaces. Successful parks, like sidewalks, need the intricacy that is built up partly from the overlapping patterns of residents' everyday lives.

figure 18: geometric rigour in the marketplace
(<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vipez/3620552345/>)

Jacobs discussed the role of adjacent functions in successful parks, explaining that there must be specialized uses, rather than general ideas, that give people specific reasons to visit parks (1961, 107). One of the general ideas Jacobs was criticizing referred to the Modernist ideology from which Crescent Town was designed, where design elements were rationalized based on grand, general ideas of social justice and equality, universal rules, efficient forms and visual order (Fishman 1982, preface). Jacobs particularly criticized the Modernist desire for literal visual control, writing: "Art is seldom ploddingly literal, and if it is, it is poor stuff. Literal visual control in cities is usually a bore to everybody but the designers in charge, and sometimes after it is done, it bores them too. It leaves no discovery or organization or interest for anybody else" (1961, 378). Aesthetically, the no-man's-lands of the podium were laid out with geometric rigour that can be best appreciated from highly detached points of view: in aerial view of Google maps, from the windows and balconies of units looking in on the space from the towers above, or from the drafting board and scale models from which the designs originated. In Crescent Town the architect's literal visual control of the ground plane resulted in the tidy, geometric configuration and spacing of

benches perpendicular to each other, or spaced metres apart at regular intervals. The visual order here indeed feels like boring stuff, and from what I observed of the unoccupied benches and empty open spaces, I predict that the residents feel the same.

What types of problems does Crescent Town have in relation to what Jane Jacobs observed? How can the emptiness of the lawns, plazas, and pathways be explained? To begin, the podium lacks sense of civic ownership or “public-ness” due to the prohibitiveness of the rules posted throughout the site; private ownership and management negates the creation of networks of mutual security that is essential to fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility of the podium. The residents’ schedules appear, for the most part, to adhere to the same patterns of coming and going, resulting in great rushes, followed by periods of emptiness -- neither of which supports casual contact between neighbours. Opportunities for casual contact are also hindered by the lack of functions to attract residents to linger just outside of their towers, particularly in the western lawns and the southern entrance plaza. The order here -- visually and in terms of management regulations -- feels too rigid, too fixed to invite the sidewalk life Jacobs observed in Greenwich Village. David Crombie reflected on Jane Jacobs’ contribution to his experience of life in downtown Toronto, writing: “ She understood that liveable cities evolve spontaneously, and her distaste for prescriptive planning played to our desire to imagine, innovate and create” (2010, 126). The solutions to the problems of Crescent Town lie in engaging the tenants’ desires to imagine, innovate, and create within their neighbourhood. The complexity and intricacy required for liveliness on the podium cannot be dictated as the Modernists attempted; it must be guided to evolve from the energies of the tenants’ everyday relationships with the site and with each other. Ontario tenants have a legal right to reasonable enjoyment both within their residential units and in common areas in their apartment complexes (Residential Tenancies Act 2006, ss22). Encouraging tenants to truly exercise this right -- to truly enjoy the po-

dium -- is the first step towards reclaiming Crescent Town's no-man's-lands. The notion of a citizen's right to the city is central to Henri Lefebvre's understanding of the urban dilemma caused by Modernist master planning.

figure 19: the empty entrance plaza... how can it be reclaimed?
(photo by author)

2.2 INHABITATIONS WITH HENRI LEFEBVRE

I merit the value of spontaneity; life shouldn't fall from above and rest heavily

Henri Lefebvre, quoted in Merrifield 2006, xxv

Like Jane Jacobs, Henri Lefebvre began meditating on the city in the two decades leading up to the 1960s. The two authors approached the city in similar fashions: they learned from observing and experiencing the streets, paying close attention to the rhythms of time and actions, what they felt, and what they heard. Secondly, both believed in messiness, and in nurturing a life for the city that was open to growth, change, and adaptability. Lefebvre wrote *Writings on Cities* during the French student protests in 1968, as an analysis on the society that he observed was emerging from the unrest. He was interested in how citizens live in, and consequently create the city. He likened the city to a seashell -- a structure which is secreted "as a product of a living creature" (Lefebvre 1996, 116). For Lefebvre, neither the animal nor the shell -- in other words, neither the inhabitant nor the habitat -- could be fully understood without understanding the relationship between the two. This echoes Jane Jacobs' findings on the interdependencies between citizens and socially and economically successful cities. Like Jacobs, Lefebvre saw the great potential in engaging citizens in the processes of place-making. Finally, both observed the social and economic benefits of citizen engagement. Lefebvre adds to the discussion with his fascination with the cultural merits, and a method of exercising one's right to, and engaging with the city.

In the chapter *Right to the City* Lefebvre presented the colossal, shapeless forms of Modernist design which was transforming French inner cities and suburbs as the antithesis to the city (Merrifield 2006, 71). While visiting the high-rise new town of Moulon -- which, like Crescent Town, was the product of Modernist master-planning -- Lefebvre felt that he had found an "ordered, enclosed, and finished world, a world in which there's nothing left to

figure 20: 1957 model of the new town of mourenx
(http://mourenx9.online.fr/images/Grands1/mx_a1.jpg)

21: post card photograph of mourenx
by Mr. C. Roux en Lyoncolor
(<http://archipostcard.blogspot.ca/2008/12/mourenx-sans-bulle.html>)

do" (Merrifield 2006, 63). The need for these new towns rose from a housing crisis related to industrial and demographic growth, specifically due to an influx of people moving from the provinces to Paris (Lefebvre 1996, 78). In Paris, housing became understood as a right, rather than a public service. Faced with the responsibility of housing every single citizen, the State focused on providing as many units as quickly and as cheaply as possible, at the expense of carefully considering the intricacies of urban planning. Lefebvre wrote:

The new housing estates will be characterized by an abstract and functional character: the concept of *habitat* brought to its purest form by a state bureaucracy...Large housing estates achieve the concept of *habitat*, by excluding the notion of *inhabit*, that is, the plasticity of space, its modelling and the appropriation by groups and individuals of the conditions of their existence (1996, 79).

As a result of these efficient, utilitarian, fixed habitats, Lefebvre felt that dwellers of this new type of urban environment were denied the right to 'inhabit.' The citizens' sense of creative and collective purpose was not encouraged or accommodated by their surroundings, and thus the city suffered politically, socially, and aesthetically (Lefebvre 1996, 76).

The notion of "inhabitation" is central to Lefebvre's understanding of what is urban. To Lefebvre the city was the shell, or "oeuvre," and urban space was the valuable work of art "created and recreated everyday by the quotidian practices of urban inhabitants" (Purcell 2003, 578). In contrast to the Modernist approach of dominating space through practices of zoning and master planning, life in the city-oeuvre was structured by urban spatial practices which were shaped by, and presented new way of living by means of a "dialectical interaction" (Merrifield 2006, 63). This dialectical interaction is the relationship between the routines of citizens' daily lives and the way the oeuvre is shaped, and gives shape to those patterns. In Jane Jacobs' Greenwich Village, for example, inhabitation could be considered

in one's role in the intricate pattern of the sidewalk ballet. "To inhabit," wrote Lefebvre, "meant to take part in a social life, a community, village or city. Urban life has, among other qualities, this attribute. It gave the right to inhabit" (1996, 76). In other words, one's right to the city includes the right to fully inhabit it by participating in how it is shaped. Mark Purcell explains further:

The right to the city imagines inhabitant to have two main rights: (1) the right to *appropriate* urban space; and (2) the right to *participate* centrally in the production of urban space. In advocating the right to *appropriate* urban space, Lefebvre is not referring to private ownership so much as he is referring to the right of inhabitants to 'full and complete usage' of the urban space in the course of their everyday lives (Lefebvre 1968; 1996, 179).

(Purcell 2003, 578)

The solution to the problem of how to engage tenants with Crescent Town's no-man's-lands can be found within the two main rights mentioned above: encouraging tenants to exercise their right to appropriate, make use of, or modify urban space will thus enable tenants to exercise their right to participate in the creation and shaping of spaces that more intimately respond to their needs. Particularly, the notion of appropriation is crucial in gradually reclaiming the open spaces from a strictly top-down system of private management. At present, the majority apartment towers of Toronto's 13 priority neighbourhoods are nearing their 50 year anniversary (ERA 2008, 32), and as such any funding should be channelled into the maintenance and retrofitting of aging infrastructure within the buildings and apartment units. However, the problem of the unused, neglected, alienating spaces make up the majority of land-use in these neighbourhoods remains. Like Lefebvre, I hypothesize that encouraging tenants to appropriate these spaces will instill a sense of responsibil-

ity and ownership within the reclaimed spaces; perhaps to the point where informal, casual networks made up of those who are out enjoying and shaping the spaces may be able to provide their own systems of security and maintenance. Perhaps this is too idealistic; a more likely outcome would be a joint partnership between tenants and property managers to ensure that the space is being used and managed in a way that all residents are encouraged to practice their right to inhabit the open spaces. In this way, funding can be concentrated towards much needed upkeep of the towers and apartment units while encouraging a self-sufficient system of managing and maintaining the neighbourhood's shared spaces.

The goal of self-sufficiency could be the ultimate signifier for successfully reclaiming Crescent Town's no-man's-lands. For this to occur, I think it's pertinent that property managers' and residents' understanding of ownership and responsibility within the podium is that of the casual, informal order that Jane Jacobs observed in Greenwich Village. Crescent Town functions as a gateway neighbourhood: tenants are attracted to the neighbourhoods because of low rents and condominium prices, but the majority of residents who can establish the financial stability choose to move elsewhere (Boston & Meagher 2007, 19). Because of the neighbourhood's transient nature, the notions of ownership and shared responsibility of the podium's spaces must require an understanding of fluidity and co-operation. All residents must be welcomed to participate in and add to the acts of inhabiting and appropriating the no-man's-lands, regardless of the length of their residency. An ideal outcome of accommodating the right to inhabit the shared spaces Crescent Town would be that residents become more likely to set down more permanent roots in the neighbourhood, resulting in decreasing tenant turnover rates; this would in turn make a better business model for the property manager and a more socially stable environment for tenants. Besides the current fluidity in the neighbourhood dynamic, a formalized system of costs, time commitments, and liabilities of shared ownership and responsibility could not realistically be afforded by

the neighbourhood's demographic of new immigrants, retirees, students, and young families (Boston & Meagher 2007, 19). The network of contributions to the cultural and social life of the podium has to result from the efforts of individuals and small groups. These contributions must be encouraged and accepted -- but not formally managed -- by the property management in order for the oeuvre to successfully begin to find its own form. Considered through Lefebvre's theoretical framework, the goal to reclaim Crescent Town's no-man's-lands becomes one of not only accommodating the enjoyment and creativity of the neighbourhood, but also of fulfilling democratic ideals.

2.3 METHODS: RECORDING THE CRESCENT TOWN BALLET

Illustrations: The scenes that illustrate this book are all about us. For illustrations, please look closely at real cities. While you are looking you might as well also listen, linger and think about what you see.

(Jacobs 1961)

Everyday life is a primal arena for meaningful social change -- the only arena -- "an inevitable starting point for the realization of the possible."

(Lefebvre quoted in Merrifield 2006, 10)

When Lefebvre imagined the inhabited oeuvre, and when Jacobs observed Greenwich Village's sidewalk ballet, they both emphasized the role that the patterns of citizens' daily lives must have in shaping the social, economic, and cultural landscapes of the city. For this reason it was essential to learn about the ways in which Crescent Town tenants currently engage with the neighbourhood. Walking with Jane Jacobs and thinking about inhabitation through the frame work of Henri LeFebvre raised many questions about how tenants use and perceive the shared outdoor space of the podium, and also what they desire of it. To develop my case study on the Crescent Town ballet, a mixed methods approach, of quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. These mixed methods included people counting, surveys, and both hierarchical and experiential mapping and photography allowed me to gather data, visualize, quantify and understand patterns of use, as well as learn about tenants' attitudes towards the podium. The data gathered provides the essential starting point to imagining programs and processes for small acts of appropriation that will playfully engage the residents' everyday lives.

figure 22: crescent town and its surrounding urban context. shown are the two most commonly used connections, to a shopping plaza to the south and victoria park subway station to the east (maps.google.com, edited by author)

METHOD 1: People counting to discover temporal patterns of use

The goal was to record patterns of activity throughout the busiest part of the site. Thus the that focussed I chose to observe the site on a Sunday because my hypothesis assumed that residents would be most likely to have “recreation and leisure time” to linger and not merely rush across the podium as Sunday is a day typically set aside for leisure and household activities. This exercise was conducted in the winter and thus the results are seasonally biased to show a lower quantity of people outdoors compared to results gathered in warmer weather. My ability to stand outdoors in one spot while gathering this quantitative data was also heavily influenced by the seasonal temperatures, which hovered around -10°C . To this end, I counted people only for the first half hour of every hour and allowing myself the next half hour to move around the neighbourhood. This enabled me to gather data on general patterns of movement through the entrance plaza from 10:00 AM- 5:00 PM, rather than more precise recordings over a shorter period of time, had I committed to staying in place for the full hour.

On previous visits to the neighbourhood, I observed moments of heavy foot traffic through the entrance plaza of the podium as residents came and went from the pedestrian bridge linking the neighbourhood to Victoria Park subway station. I chose to observe from a spot beside the threshold to the pedestrian bridge because it allowed me to view not only people coming and going from the subway station via the bridge, but also observe movement through another point of access in corner of the entrance plaza directly across from where I sat. From my observations of families with young children, and people pulling shopping trolleys I concluded that people were using this corner access point to reach Dentonia Park and the larger shopping centre on Danforth Avenue, which is a 5-10 minute walk south of the podium. I noted this extra layer of movement and recorded each person’s path of

travel by adding a tick mark in the respective category for their paths of travel. The following categories for arrival and departure were established:

Leaving the site:

Through the plaza, towards the pedestrian bridge

Through the plaza, towards the park

Through the park, towards the pedestrian bridge

Arriving to the site:

From the pedestrian bridge, through the plaza

From the park through the plaza

From the pedestrian bridge, through the park

figures 23 & 24 departure and arrival paths to and from the podium.
(bingmaps, edited by author)

figure 26: graphing arrival paths from the podium.
one block=one person
(by author)

Results & Discussion

Mapping this data graphically displays the various flows of energy in this portion of the site throughout the day. The graphs reveal which directions the flows of energy and movement were concentrated throughout the day. Consistently throughout the day, the majority of people leaving the podium were heading to the subway, and the majority of people were arriving through the pathways of Dentonia Park, just south of the neighbourhood.

During my breaks from people counting, I walked throughout the podium to see if there were other areas of activity concentrated throughout. I did not find anyone walking in the marketplace, or in the western lawns. On the most basic level, it was easy to attribute the lack of activity on the podium to the cold temperatures. Looking at the podium through the lens of Jane Jacobs however emphasized the role of a diversity of functions in drawing people into public spaces, as I watched people funnel out of Crescent Town to access the park, the shopping plaza, and the subway. For the majority of the day, the numbers leaving the podium were greater than those arriving and I did not observe anyone pausing from this pattern of constant movement to linger and use the podium as something beyond a thoroughfare. I hypothesized that the lack of activity in places like the marketplace square was due to residents' Sunday schedules and activities, which would negate the need to use the daycare, and allow time for residents to travel to shops off site rather than taking advantage of the convenience of the shops in the square. The community centre was the only place where I observed people coming and going throughout the day, but usually just one or two people at a time. The most common path of departure from the podium was towards the pedestrian bridge and subway. Crescent Town's connection to the subway line presents a great opportunity not only to connect residents to the rest of the city, but possibly to draw people

to the podium to contribute the neighbourhood's economic and cultural development. The plaza could have great potential as a weekend market, or a venue for small performances.

Although it is self-contained, Crescent Town is well connected to its surroundings, and residents greatly benefit from the ease of access to services. In return, the surrounding shop and businesses benefit from the residents' patronage, as was evident from the majority of people arriving to the podium with full shopping trolleys from the park pathways. Similarly, Crescent Town's connection to the subway line presents a great opportunity not only to connect residents to the rest of the city, but possibly to draw people to the podium to contribute the neighbourhood's economic and cultural development. The plaza could have great potential as a weekend market, or a venue for small performances. What are the ways in which residents can contribute culturally and socially to the greater community through their inhabitation of the podium?

METHOD 2: Observing the Marketplace

I returned to the site two days later to gather more quantitative data about how typical weekday school and work schedules affect the neighbourhood's flows of energy. Given the location of the neighbourhood elementary school north of the podium, I planned to use the same method as above in the Marketplace square. Based on its central location, I hypothesized that I would be able to observe great flows of energy and movement, as parents and children from all of the neighbourhood's towers arrived at the daycare in the square, or passed through the square to arrive at the elementary school.

I arrived in the square at 8:00 AM and stood beside Building 5, which allowed me to

observe people headed towards the school from the east and west towers, as well as people coming to use the services located at the Marketplace. I was quickly overwhelmed by the volume of people coming and going from all directions and was unable to keep up with recording individual bodies. I thus used this opportunity to look for the ways people engaged with each other and the site. After the rush of dropping off their children, I observed a group of mothers lingering on the bridge to socialize with each other on the bridge behind the Hasty Mart. I counted 5 people lingering in the marketplace square, but they stood underneath the arcade rather than sitting on the benches. Lastly, I observed an unexpected demographic moving through the square in significant numbers: middle school-aged children were using the ramp adjacent to Building 5 to access street-level bus stops on Victoria Park Avenue.

A similar rush took place in the evening hours, starting at 3 pm when school let out. At around 5 pm a steady flow of people began passing through the marketplace square from the south of the podium, most likely arriving from the pedestrian subway bridge. In between these rushes, the marketplace square was mostly empty. Due to the neighbourhood's large demographic of young families, the patterns of use were fairly homogenous. The problem to be solved here was not to attempt to diversify those patterns -- as that would require completely changing the residents' everyday schedules -- but finding the moments of opportunity within the active times that would allow for residents to pause and use the podium a little longer.

METHOD 3: Surveying and Mapping - Quick thoughts on the site
(Appendix 02: Quick Survey)

I followed up the first exercise on temporal patterns by addressing the questions I had regarding residents' perceptions of the podium. By this point I had not yet established a partnership with a community group and thus I did not have connections to the community, despite the knowledge of the existence of the youth council in the community. The data was therefore gathered by means of a convenience sample. I formulated a 6-open ended question survey, which I felt could be answered in less than five minutes by participants I approached through the podium.

Questions:

1. I spend my time outside in nice weather
2. I enjoy spending my time outside on the podium level
3. I feel safe spending time and moving through the podium level
4. The podium level is a good place to socialize with neighbours outside of my apartment
5. More activity on the podium level would enhance the neighbourhood
6. What kinds of hobbies, activities, sports, celebrations, events can you imagine taking place on the podium level?

The first question was asked to determine whether participants had a desire to spend their leisure time outside. A trend strongly agreeing with the statement would indicate that it would be appropriate to pursue a project that supports activities that take place outdoors. The next three questions asked specifically about participants' experiences and uses of the podium to gauge the type of relationship they have with the space. The final two questions aimed to discover participants' interests, hobbies, and desires for the podium to enable me to create a vision list to begin designing future programming and actions.

In addition to the survey, I believed it was important to spatially map the elements that were discussed by the participants. The mapping exercise asked participants to draw the paths they typically take throughout the neighbourhood. By asking participants to do this, I expected to uncover concentrations of energy and movement, which I may not have observed (Figure: path maps). This short survey was the first instance of my active engagement with the tenants of Crescent Town.

I arrived in the neighbourhood at 5:00 PM on a Monday and stood at the threshold of the Victoria Park Station pedestrian bridge closest to the entrance plaza. I asked each person heading in the direction of the podium to participate in my survey; doing so increased the likelihood that I was gathering data from a diverse sample of residents who I inferred were arriving from the subway to their homes in the neighbourhood. I completed 9 surveys with a sample of residents including a father and his school aged daughter, high school and university students, retirees, and middle-aged adults. This sample gave a fair representation of the diverse age demographics found in Crescent Town.

Results & Discussion (Appendix 02a: Quick survey results)

The brief nature of this survey meant that the questions were very broad. Also, carrying out a survey outdoors, in the winter time, during the evening rush limited the amount of time participants were willing or able to reflect and/or elaborate on their responses. After carrying out this survey I felt I had a good base to create a more robust survey, as the responses prompted me to think of further questions that would create a clearer picture of residents' relationship to the podium. In addition, while a variety of age groups was represented in the sample, the sample size of 9 participants was extremely small in relation to the population of the neighbourhood. While I could not extrapolate the participants' answers to reflect broader attitudes in the neighbourhood, I was encouraged by the results and was en-

thusiastic about forming a real working relationship with the residents to better explore the potential of the podium; as the discussion below shows, through this survey I discovered an indication amongst participants that there was indeed interest in reclaiming Crescent Town's no-man's-lands.

The first five questions of the survey were closed answer ranking questions that asked participants to indicate the degree to which they agreed with a statement on a scale of 1-10

Questions:

1. I spend my time outside in nice weather
2. I enjoy spending my time outside on the podium level
3. I feel safe spending time and moving through the podium level
4. The podium level is a good place to socialize with neighbours outside of my apartment
5. More activity on the podium level would enhance the neighbourhood
6. What kinds of hobbies, activities, sports, celebrations, events can you imagine taking place on the podium level?

Overall, the ratings of each question averaged between 7/10 and 8/10, which indicated fairly positive attitudes towards the podium. Question #2: *I enjoy spending time outside on the podium level* gathered the greatest range in ratings; three out of the nine participants responded with 5/10 or below, and four out of the nine participants responding with 10/10. This would indicate that while the majority of this small random sample completely agreed that they enjoyed spending time outside on the podium level, almost the same amount of participants completely disagreed with the statement. The range of responses was encouraging for my project, as I interpreted the negative ratings as indications that there were elements of the podium that needed to be addressed and changed, and positive ratings elements that participants appreciated and could be tapped into, enhanced, or pos-

sibly applied to different places throughout the podium. Generally participants responded that they felt safe on the podium- the responses to this question averaged to 8.9/10, with the lowest response being 5/10. One participant in particular responded to the question with 9/10, but specified that presence of other people on the podium greatly improved her sense of security. I interpreted this response as an indication that there were times when the podium was perceived as unsafe due to the lack of natural eyes on the pathways. The responses to the last question of whether more activity would enhance the neighbourhood indicated that the participants strongly agreed with my hypothesis that activating the social life of the podium would be a valid means of bringing about social renewal in the neighbourhood as a whole, as per the goals of the Toronto Tower Renewal Project, and this thesis.

The final question of the survey asked participants about the types of hobbies, activities, sports, celebrations, and events they wanted to take place on the podium level. Answers included cultural or religious celebrations or events, activities to cater to children and seniors, dance, barbecues, fundraising events, volunteer opportunities, and ball sports (dodge ball, badminton, pick up soccer). I had anticipated that this question would be a way for me to gather ideas for specific types of activities that my interventions should be designed to accommodate but found that, with the exception of the particular examples of ball sports, the responses tended towards broader ideas for community interaction. In addition to the suggestions for activities, some of the participants responded by telling me about events such as the annual one-day flea market which have already been established on the podium; thus this question gave me further insight into the existing life of the neighbourhood. According to the results, the participants were clear that they would welcome change in the form of more activity on the podium. Within this small sample, I discovered an indication that there was a desire within the Crescent Town community to reclaim the neighbourhood's no-man's-lands.

METHOD 4: At Your Leisure - An in-depth mixed methods survey
(Appendix 03: Robust Survey)

The first survey prompted only more questions for me, so I felt a more robust survey that was distributed to residents to complete at their leisure would give a clearer picture of residents' uses, perceptions, and desires of the podium. I was also hopeful that this approach to the survey could also initiate dialogue among residents about the podium's possibilities. At this point in the project I had begun to work with a group of grade 10 students who made up the Crescent Town Youth Council, and thus had a means to connect with a larger, snowball sample of the neighbourhood recruited through the Council. After some initial discussions about my project, I gave each of the members of the Council 10 surveys to distribute amongst friends, family members, and familiar neighbours who lived in Crescent Town. In consideration for the Council members' safety, I was clear that they should not go door-to-door or approach strangers to complete the survey. I observed that the Council members formed a tightly knit group, and I predicted that by distributing the surveys through the members, my sample would have a bias limited to close social circles representing the same age demographics of young and middle aged adults, with similar experiences and points of view regarding the podium. If the participants' shared experiences of the podium was not enough to create a bias to similar results from this sample, I expected some bias to appear in the results due to the method in which the surveys were distributed by the Council, which made it impossible for answers to be non-anonymous. In order to widen the sample and better represent the diversity of neighbourhood, surveys were also at the recreation office of the community centre. In the end, 12 surveys were returned from Council members, and 5 were filled out in the community centre possibly by members of the neighbourhood's retiree population, judging by the ages indicated on the survey forms. While the total sample size is small given Crescent Town's population, the participants represented

a wide cross section of the neighbourhood's varied age demographic, with the youngest participant being 13 years old or younger, and the oldest 76 or older. A range in the length of time spent living in the neighbourhood was also represented; this spanned from one year to 40 years as a Crescent Town resident. While the sample size increased to nearly double the number of participants in the first survey, I concede that this sample was still small in relation to the population of the neighbourhood, and biased towards the views of two particular groups with shared experiences of the podium. Thus, while the responses cannot be interpreted to reflect the views of the entire neighbourhood, they were encouraging for my project because my approach calls for incremental change to the inhabitation of the podium through small scale individual initiatives and engagement. As in the first survey, participants were asked to indicate the degrees to which they agreed with statements about how they engaged with the podium and also the areas surrounding Crescent Town. I broke this survey down into three sections to address the three different issues of how participants use the podium, how they feel about the podium, and how the podium could be re-imagined. For clarity, I provided the follow definition of the term 'podium' as: "the outdoor spaces where people walk at the ground level of Crescent Town's apartment and condo buildings; including bridges, ramps, pathways, and lawns."

The first section: *Using the Podium* clarifies uses of, and therefore attitudes towards the podium as a place for socializing and leisure. These attitudes were gauged by asking participants if they enjoyed spending time on the podium in nice weather, if they embraced it as a place to spend time with family and friends who also live in the neighbourhood, and if they felt it was a good place to get to know their neighbours. In addition to the questions about the social life of the podium, participants were also asked to identify places beyond the podium - such as nearby parks, the community centre, or individual apartment or condo units - which made up their social and leisure spaces. The questions of whether participants

walked through the podium regularly and when, were asked to discover if there were patterns of use, or a life, to the podium outside of regular rush hours.

The second section: *Getting a Sense of the Space* was aimed at discovering participants' views on the environment created by the existing designed elements, rules, and life of the podium. I was curious about participants' views on their personal safety and comfort, and the freedom to use the podium as they wished. In asking these questions I expected to get an idea of what participants liked about the built environment and management of the podium, and what kind of changes they might desire.

The final set of questions attempts to engage the residents' imagination by asking about possibilities for new ways of enjoying and using the podium as a focal point for their social lives. The questions tap into residents' desires and needs for the podium, while trying to initiate the discussion on what the podium could become.

Results & Discussion (Appendix 03a: Robust survey results)

Section 1: Using the Podium

The answers from this section revealed that the podium is not the primary choice of location for spending outdoor leisure time, meeting new neighbours, and spending time with friends. The majority participants noted that they spend their outdoor leisure time within walking distance of the neighbourhood (71%), that they have met neighbours in the common areas, hallways, and elevators of their buildings (88%), and that they spend time with friends and family who live in the neighbourhood inside their own apartments (71%). In comparison, 59% of participants indicated that they spend their outdoor leisure time on the podium, 76% have met and gotten to know neighbours while on the podium, and only 29% chose the podium to spend time with family and friends who live in the neighbourhood. The trend indicating that the podium did not play a large role in people's leisure time

was also apparent in the question about what times people walked through the podium. As expected, the responses showed that the podium sees the most foot traffic during the hours of 5:00 AM-9:00 AM, and 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM. Given the participants' age demographics and my previous observations of the site, it was fair to infer that during these times the podium is used as a thoroughfare to access connection points to school and work, rather than a place to enjoy leisurely.

Section 2: Getting a Sense of the Space

The goal of this section was to get a sense of the participants' feelings of personal safety, level of enjoyment, and also their thoughts on the rules of the podium. The responses to all of the questions in this section averaged out to 6/10, which indicates a prevalent perspective that there is much room for the relationship between residents and the podium to be improved.

The participants rated safety levels 8/10 during the day time, and 3/10 at night, which indicated that the podium is quite safe during the day (59% of participants rated safety as 10/10) but perhaps some interventions are needed to increase the sense of security during the night. In regards to how participants felt about the number of people on the podium, an average rating of 7/10 was given. From my observations of the podium, and informal interviews with residents, I hypothesized that this rating reflected a desire for the spaces to be more heavily populated rather than the spaces being too crowded.

An average rating of 6/10 on the level of enjoyment of the benches placed throughout the podium prompted me to start imagining some intervention in how and where the benches are placed, and how they are designed. From my reactions to the site, original raw concrete benches placed throughout the podiums can be re-imagined and re-arranged for a more comfortable experience on the podium. Responses also indicated that the trees and

flower beds planted throughout the podium should be re-imagined (7/10)- in the third section about the podium's potential, "more garden" was the most common response for what residents would add to enhance the podium.

The majority of participants strongly agreed (53% gave a rating of 8/10 or higher) that there are too many rules and prohibitions on what should not be done on the podium. From this I inferred that the rules posted throughout the site must be questioned and addressed. The question of rules related to questions regarding whether or not children should play on the podium. Average ratings of 5.5/10 regarding whether the podium is in fact a safe place for children to play, and 7.5/10 regarding whether children should be allowed to play on the podium level at all indicated that the relationships between the neighbourhood's youngest residents and their spaces needs to be re-thought.

In analyzing the results of this section of the survey I was able to begin formulating specific questions about the relationships of participants to the podium, and imagining responses to those questions in the form of neighbourhood actions. I began to wonder:

- How can feelings of security and safety be increased at night?
- What kind of landscape would encourage residents to come together on the podium?
- Which rules serve the neighbourhood, and which ones must be rethought?
- If measures were taken to increase safety for children, ground floor units, and passersby, would more residents agree that the podium is a suitable place for children to play?

Section 3: The Podium's Potential

The purpose of this section was mainly to engage the participants' imaginations about the types of opportunities they would like to see on the podium. It was my intent that these questions would spark reflection on the type of relationship one has to the podium and what can be done to make it better.

The question of whether the residents consider the podium as part of their home reflects the way the participants relate to the space. An average rating of 6.2/10 indicates that the notion of no-man's-land may exist in the residents' minds, and that the hypothesis that the spaces of the podium must be reclaimed is not unfounded. Participants gave average ratings of 8/10 to the answers from this section, indicating a general desire for more opportunities to meet neighbours, enjoy hobbies, and celebrate cultural festivities on the podium. 65% of participants strongly agreed that more activity on the podium would enhance the neighbourhood.

Of the responses to what residents would add to the podium if given the chance, gardens was the most common answer, though residents did not specify if they wanted their gardens to be ornamental, or if they desired more hands-on community gardens. The responses indicate that the spaces of the podium could use some revitalization and animation, by means of more colour, beautiful things to look at (sculptures, ornamental fountains, structures), and music.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Yet before imagination can seize power, some imagination is needed: imagination to free our minds and our bodies, to liberate our ideas, and to reclaim our society as a lived project

(Merrifield 2006, 120)

Through my initial engagements with the residents of Crescent Town, and in particular the Youth Council, I discovered a community that was critical of the current management, regulations, and uses of their neighbourhood's shared outdoor spaces. I discovered an interest amongst the Youth Council and survey participants to be able to use the podium as a space that could better serve the needs of a neighbourhood made up of young families, youths, and retirees. The participants of my survey and the Youth Council expressed desires for the podium to be more than it currently was: more colourful, more active, more clean, and most importantly, more welcoming. The discussion about what the podium could become had started, and imaginations had been fired up.

This chapter theorized on questions of two questions of why: why did no-man's-lands exist in Crescent Town? And why must these spaces be reclaimed? Observing the neighbourhood through the lens of Jane Jacobs was instrumental in answering the first why; by walking through Crescent Town with Jane Jacobs I discovered the neighbourhood's patterns of everyday use, its spaces and times of intensity, and reasons for its periods of emptiness. During the week I observed that residents kept to similar, typical work and school day schedules, resulting in routine morning and evening rushes with very little activity in between. The moments of intense foot traffic were concentrated on the podium's pathways, particularly throughout the Marketplace square, and through the entrance plaza, and the nature of these rush periods was such that there was no time for pause or friendly interac-

tion. Though designed as a self-contained neighbourhood with a small variety of functions, the concentration of Crescent Town's functional diversity in the Marketplace square meant that the other areas of the neighbourhood, such as the west lawns and pathways, and the entrance plaza, functioned mainly as pedestrian expressways used primarily, and rarely for anything other than, coming and going from one's apartment tower. Using Jane Jacob's theoretical framework, I hypothesized that it was because of the lack of functional diversity spread throughout the neighbourhood, combined with strict restrictions regarding prohibited activities on the podium, and the massive, impersonal scale of the Modernist-designed neighbourhood that Crescent Town's big open spaces existed as no-man's-lands.

Considering the neighbourhood through the lens of Jane Jacobs also guided answers to the second question of why the residents must reclaim their no-man's-lands. These spaces must be reclaimed so that the pathways and open spaces can serve the functions which are asked of sidewalks and parks in other urban neighbourhoods -- that is, first and foremost according to Jacobs, to keep the neighbourhood safe. From her observations of socially stable neighbourhoods Jacobs concluded that establishing networks of mutual security and casual surveillance at ground level contributes to not only to the economic and social stability of the neighbourhood, but also to its sense of delight and enjoyment, as the sight of people enjoying these shared spaces will only attract more people. To this, the theoretical framework of Henri Lefebvre adds ideas that a podium where the residents feel welcomed to inhabit has inherent potential to become the locus for the neighbourhood's rich cultural development. This desire for a locus of cultural development was indicated in the responses gathered from my surveys and through discussions with the Youth Council. The participants revealed that the podium which lies in their imaginations is one that accommodates broad ideas of interaction amongst neighbours, and also the desire to make spaces in which to celebrate the cultural diversity of the neighbourhood. Critique of man-

agement rules also indicated a desire for a shift in management policies, especially regarding the strict restrictions in using the podium for leisure activities. Jacobs and Lefebvre both concluded that a population engaged in their public spaces not only takes advantage of the opportunity to imagine, innovate, and shape their environments; the residents' involvement and public presence also have great potential to shift notions of responsibility and ownership -- from the top-down order imposed by the property managers to a more fluid, casual order shared amongst residents and management which more closely responds to the everyday needs and desires of those who have the right (according to the Ontario Residential Tenancies act) to enjoy the space.

Jacobs' and Lefebvre's critiques of the Modernist solutions to the post-war housing crises reveal the shortcomings of a city planning approach that attempted to create something completely new, completely prescribed, completely ordered, and completely finished. Observing Crescent Town and engaging with its tenants highlighted these shortcomings and revealed the appropriateness of the individual, incremental approaches to evolving the social and cultural life this neighbourhood. This chapter provided answers to the whys of Crescent Town's no-man's-lands; the following chapter: *Neighbourhood Action*, will introduce the hows. How exactly can we reclaim the no-man's-lands of Crescent Town?

03: NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION

As a strategy, reclaiming residual spaces provides a venue for testing innovative, unconventional urban ideas through rethinking the overlooked potential of undervalued sites. Creativity and improvisation are inherent to this process. Only through taking responsibility for the creation and evolution of the environments in which we live can we truly point ourselves in the direction of a better future.

(Hou 2010, 95)

Sparkling neighbourhood action to reclaim the underused spaces of Crescent Town's podium involves an incremental process. The previous chapter discussed the first steps in the process: through surveys and observations, I formed my own hypotheses about the neighbourhood's limitations and opportunities. This understanding of the social and physical structures of the neighbourhood was further deepened through my interactions with the residents, specifically the Crescent Town Club's Youth Council. At the same time, these interactions opened up discussions about what the residents needed, wanted, and valued about the podium. The next steps towards reclaiming Crescent Town are covered in this chapter. First, by adopting the notion of "spatial agency" from Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider, and Jeremy Till (2007, 31) I defined the Youth Council's role in reclaiming their podium. Our mode of operation -- as I was acting as a spatial agent along with the Youth Council -- was to instigate residents' imaginations about new ways of using of the podium by proposing and executing acts of appropriation. These two terms: *spatial agency* and *acts of appropriation* are explored in the first section of this chapter. Defining these two terms also provides the definition for the scale and scope of my design project as a series of temporary, small-scale, low-cost, unsanctioned interventions on the Crescent Town podium. The proposals for these interventions are presented in the second section of this chapter, and finally

the outcome of one attempted action is discussed. The previous chapter ended by asking, "How can we reclaim the no-man's-lands of Crescent Town?" This chapter proposes a small-scale, bottom-up approach to making it happen.

figure 27: examples of DIY-urbanism and acts of appropriation

- a: architect John Locke's phone booth library (<http://www.treehugger.com/urban-design/john-locke-nyc-communal-phone-booth-libraries.html>)
- b: impromptu busstop chair by Walk Raleigh group (<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2012/02/guerilla-wayfinding-raleigh/1139/>)
- c: PARK(ing) day space by Rebar studio (<http://parkingday.org/>)
- d: 366 Chairs by Maider López (<http://www.maiderlopez.com/portfolio/366-sillas-2/?lang=en>)

3.1 Enabling Actions

In *Reclaiming Residual Spaces in the Heterogenous City* Erick Villagomez writes:

...the traditional planning processes that outsource important local decisions to "specialists" who have minimal contact with the neighbourhoods they transform have left deeply embedded cultural myths and values that have led us to neglect the creativity and improvisation inherent to typical urban processes. In short we, the public, have lost our critical sense of that which constitutes good urbanism, and how and why to go about transforming the cities in which we live. This is detrimental to the evolution of robust cities and is largely due to our detachment from how people interact directly with the everyday built environment. (2010, 82)

In projects of do-it-yourself/ adaptive/ tactical/ guerilla urbanism, spatial agents are those residents who reclaim the responsibility of local development from the detached specialists (i.e., architects, planners, the State, property managers, etc.) critiqued by Villagomez, Jacobs, and Lefebvre. Spatial agents challenge organized space by acting alternatively to the norm. As Frank Nobert describes it, spatial agents divert expectations by acting on their observations, thoughts, needs, and desires within the public realm (2008, 1); they use space differently, and in doing so present new possibilities to those around them. Compared to the professional standards and expectations upon which specialists operate, spatial

agents act and continually refine their actions based on intimate knowledge the spaces they are acting in, and on exchanges with those using the spaces along with them. Negotiating fluidly is one of the key ways spatial agents operate: they negotiate with the limits and opportunities found within the existing physical and social structures and to achieve partial reform (Awan et al, 2011, 31). The concept of achieving only partial reform is also contrary to the specialists' approach to urbanism, which is driven by the necessity to deliver a finished product, or a finished space. Jacobs writes that "the tactics needed [to evolve a city] are suggestions that help people make, for themselves, order and sense, instead of chaos from what they see" (1961, 378). Seeking to achieve only partial reform is a tactic for making suggestions: it acknowledges and anticipates future transformations and contributions to the urban environment by a multiplicity of users; partial change saves room for future agents.

Understanding one's role as a spatial agent means understanding one's contribution to evolving an urban environment within a social and temporal continuum. Agents' actions can effect change through their ability to empower others (Awan et al. 2011, 71). In Crescent Town I took on the role of a spatial agent with the goal of enabling residents to reclaim their neighbourhood. In turn, I wanted the members of the youth council to understand that as agents, they would also be taking the role of protagonists, or central characters in the evolving story of their neighbourhood (Nicolas-Le Strat 2008, 5). In literature, the protagonist is the character through whom one begins to understand the world being presented; hearing the youth council's stories and experiences of the podium helped to develop a richer understanding of the life of the podium. Through our discussions, the youth council and I gained a clearer understanding of which rules of the podium needed to be challenged, which needs of the community the podium was failing to meet, and in which places and moments the potential for reclaiming the podium lay. Also along with being the medium for understanding a story, protagonists are the characters around whom a story unfolds; it was my intent that

the acts of appropriation designed by the youth council and I would serve as catalysts for a new direction in the neighbourhood's story. Adaptiveactions.net's founder Jean-François Prost writes about the relational shift created by the urban intervention projects his website curates saying: "It is no longer a question of infiltrating public space, but of penetrating the collective imagination" (2008, 142). By collaborating with the youth and attempting actions within Crescent Town's shared spaces, it was my goal to capture, or seize the imagination of the neighbourhood for at least long enough to make residents pause and consider staying on the podium just a little longer.

The actions of spatial agents are stimulated by the interactions of daily life, and a need to better adapt the conditions of those interactions (Nicolas-Le Strat 2008, 6). In Crescent Town, I believed the most fitting response to these stimuli would be to design and carry out acts of appropriation.

Karen Franck writes that spaces which are most conducive to appropriation have an element of "looseness" to them (2007, 14). Loose spaces operate in the way Jacobs eluded to, as a counter to Modernist order and finality: the way the loose spaces are structured, and the way people interact within them invites change and adaptation (1961, 375). Within loose spaces, people (i.e., spatial agents) feel enabled to act with "creativity and determination" in order to modify their surroundings to better satisfy their needs and desires for leisure, entertainment, self-expression, or social interaction (Franck 2007, 3-10). Franck specifies that "what is loosened is the user's understanding of how the physical environment can be combined with body, image, thought, and action to produce new spatial experiences" (2007, 14). Looseness then, is not something entirely inherent in a space's design, but is an attitude generated by liveliness, activities, and opportunities to engage those using and passing through the space. The social and physical conditions for looseness are often met in active

urban centres because there is free access to open spaces, a diversity of characters, anonymity, and tolerance or acceptance for acting in ways different from the norm (Franck 2007, 4). While these conditions exist in Crescent Town, the moments of liveliness and activity are concentrated in very small pockets of time and space throughout the podium. Also, the authority of the neighbourhood's property management groups too strongly enforces values of "homogeneity, certainty and order" (Franck 2007, 17), which stifles possibilities for "diversity, uncertainty, and disorder" (Franck 2007, 17). Working with the youth council would be the first step in injecting attitudes of looseness throughout the podium and in the residents' imaginations. Through acts of appropriation carried out by the youth council, I intended to begin the process of loosening up residents' perceptions of what could be possible in the big, open, empty spaces of Crescent Town's no-man's-lands.

Projects of appropriation focus on the deliberate reworking of ordinary spaces. These projects have common beginnings in agents' questioning of shared spaces, and in solutions that call for modifications in the ways one uses and relates to the space, rather than drastic physical change (Awan et al. 2011, 74). Acts of appropriation take on the spirit of bricolage, which is about tinkering with, and bringing new meanings to found objects; as spatial agents in Crescent Town, the youth council and I would also be tinkering with found spaces, and found moments. When collecting projects of acts of appropriation for her tumblr site, Emily Hooge of urbanbricolage.tumblr.com looks for "work by 'professionals', 'amateurs' as well as ordinary people: guerrilla gardening, small fixes or major hackings of public space, repurposing street furniture, creative uses of the streets, etc." ("about| Urbanbricolage"). The success of an act of appropriation lies in the sensitivity in which spatial agents respond to the constraints and opportunities found within the existing social, temporal, and physical structures of the neighbourhood. When, for example, Jane Jacobs heard about a group of youth sneaking in overnight to wash their bikes in an mall's ornamental pool, she

concluded that one only has to look for what people try to do if they can get away with it, in order to uncover both a place's hidden opportunities, and the desires of its users. These acts reintroduce the intimate human scale by slightly, yet cleverly modifying public settings and shared spaces to satisfy individual needs and desires (Franck 2007, 10). Making one's desires, habits, and rituals visible in the public realm serves not only to create a sense of intimacy for the spatial agent initiating the action, but also for passersby who observe, and subsequently might be encouraged or inspired to participate in, use, and adapt the new possibilities presented. Rather than a space which is used just to pass through -- the "expressway architecture" criticised by Lefebvre (Merrifield 2006, 61) -- acts of appropriation create moments where people are anchored within a place; in those moments those who would normally just be passing through could begin to imagine, or act upon their own wishes, thus creating spaces which are more intimate, and that residents could more easily relate to as part of their home.

Encouraging more intimate relationships with the podium through acts of appropriation is a process which Margaret Crawford refers to as "refamiliarization" (2005, 19). Crawford describes the process as one that "domesticates urban space to make it feel more home-like, familiar, intimate, and inhabitable by putting something of one's self into the space, usually in the form of one's belongings" (2005, 19). Crawford gives the example of the garage sale and Los Angeles' informal flea markets as ways that familiar, used objects inject intimacy into the public realm, as passersby and potential buyers are invited to view, touch, and purchase the objects from the seller's private home and private life (2005, 25). The notion of refamiliarizing Crescent Town's podium would be important in addressing the 44% of survey participants who strongly disagreed with the statement that the podium was part of their home, as well as the majority of participants who indicated that their leisure time was spent in places beyond than the podium, or isolated from the life of neighbourhood in

their individual condo or apartment units. It would likely be too much to ask of residents to bring and leave their own personal belongings into the neighbourhood's shared spaces. Refamiliarizing the podium then, would be about accommodating the activities valued by the residents -- activities which call for more room, and more interaction, than what could be possible within the confines in individual tower units. Along with finding new, clever ways to engage with the podium's existing structures and movement patterns, appropriation is a way to remix the unique interests, talents, celebrations, and hobbies of Crescent Town's residents with the opportunities inherent to the site in order for residents to more fully claim ownership and responsibility for the neighbourhood's shared spaces.

Acting as spatial agents and carrying out acts of appropriation are methods of "unsettling the status quo" (Awan et al. 2011, 74). I found the status quo of the podium to be impersonal and uninhabited; the spaces and the residents' interactions were too tightly ruled by the restrictions set out by property management, as well as everyday routines of too-quickly coming and going. I believed that unsettling this current state would require small-scale, low-cost, unsanctioned, short-term interventions designed in collaboration with residents who knew the neighbourhood intimately. This bottom-up approach focuses not on the design of spaces, but in questioning how these have been used and proposing ways to use them differently in order to develop the networks of shared responsibility, mutual security, and ownership advocated by Jane Jacobs. This part of the study is just one phase of what the Tactical Urbanists call a "deliberate, phased approach to instigating change" (Lydon 2012, 1).

3.2 Meeting the Neighbours

Interest in user needs or user participation is not rooted in romanticism about human involvement but rather in the recognition that users have a particular expertise different than, but equally important to, that of the designer.

Henry Sanoff, *Designing with Community Participation*

A key factor in my selection of Crescent Town as the site for my project included the potential to work with establishing community groups through the neighbourhood community centre. As outlined in the previous section -- *Enabling Actions* -- I aimed to impart the role of spatial agents onto participants from community groups through this phase of my project. Enabling participants as spatial agents meant creating a forum to discuss residents' experiences, criticisms, needs, desires, and praises for their neighbourhood's shared spaces. As spatial agents the participants and I would then respond to the findings of these discussions by designing of small-scale acts of appropriation throughout the neighbourhood. In a project that aspires to stimulate the active and committed participation within a neighbourhood's shared spaces, local input was an essential element in ensuring that the planned acts of appropriation and spatial interventions could directly address and enhance the residents' everyday realities.

After concluding the mapping and observation portions of my study to discover patterns in the temporal uses of the site, and conducting surveys from small samplings of the large neighbourhood population, it was time to work directly with residents -- or local experts, as Sanoff attributes them -- in order to address the questions generated from these methods. My initial attempts to contact neighbourhood stakeholders did not appear to generate interest from representatives of the property management office, the condominium board, or the tenants' association, as no questions were asked in response to my emails, but

I was put in touch with Kristal Arseneau -- co-ordinator of Youth Programming at the Crescent Town Youth Club, and my link to the Crescent Town Youth Council.

The Youth Council consisted of eight grade 10 students who are all residents of Crescent Town. The group's mandate is to organize events for children and youth in the community. Through past events, the council has learned that their target audience is children age 12 and under, but through our discussions the group made it clear that they were interested in ways of engaging larger portions of the community, with activities beyond conventional movie and pizza nights. Thus, the Council's involvement in my project would not only enrich my study with their local expertise, but also contribute to their own mandate and their desire to bring more creative programming to the children and youth of Crescent Town. Working with the Youth Council also meant I would be working directly with a neighbourhood demographic whose needs for places to play, exercise, and socialize could be better served by the podium. The group understood and were enthusiastic about participating in a project that promoted productive, playful uses of their neighbourhood's shared outdoor spaces.

Method 1: The Focus Group

My first two meetings with the Youth Council were conducted using the focus group method. Each meeting began with a presentation of DIY-urbanism precedents and concepts, in order to stimulate discussions about what kind of projects could be possible and appropriate responses to the limits and opportunities inherent in the Crescent Town podium. By presenting precedents from websites such as spatialagency.net and urbanbricolage.tumblr.com, I aimed to spark the Council members' imaginations and convey the idea that enhancing the podium was not merely about designing superficial additions such as gardens or fountains, but about re-thinking the ways that the podium could be used. As my project also advocated applying a bottom-up urbanism approach to a place that was created and

managed from the top-down, the focus group also allowed for discussions about which of the management's restrictions on the podium's use should be questioned, and the ways in which we could challenge those rules intelligently. Through the focus groups I aimed to convey the notions of spatial agency and acts of appropriation discussed in the previous section of this chapter in order to arrive at ideas for actions that could respond to and enhance the conditions of everyday life which I observed, and which the Youth Council experienced daily.

Along with discussing the limits and opportunities of the podium, the youth contributed to my understanding of the neighbourhood by telling me about barbecues, flea markets, and celebrations that were organized as one day events in the neighbourhood. By thinking about how acts of appropriation could be applied to these events, we were contributing to the group's mandate, as well as gaining a deeper understanding of where the energies of the site lay. We identified the energies of the site through the discussion of these events by considering relationships between their location, timing, and success. We also considered how these events could contribute to generating liveliness throughout other areas of the podium. For example, the annual one-day flea market took place logically along the pathways on the Marketplace square. What if -- we discussed -- it took place on the big empty lawns west of Building 5, to better accommodate more people, and also to create opportunities for spillover events like picnics to take place at the same time. Getting the Council to begin their own series of "what if" questions was an important part of enabling them as spatial agents.

When identifying possible locations to carry out our acts of appropriation, it became clear that the rules and presence of property security made the youth wary of trying anything in the open spaces and empty lawns west of Building 5. This posed a large concern, as the majority of the no-man's-lands this project seeks to reclaim are concentrated in the

open areas west of Building 5. Surveillance is kept from balconies as well as by security guards patrolling on the podium as people are scolded publicly for playing on the grass. An important question called into consideration the appropriate form of action to take within the restrictions imposed by the building management. Which rules could be abided by, and which rules should be bent, or completely broken? In true teenage fashion, the group lamented that it was the “old people” who were keeping the no-man’s-lands particularly west of Building 5 empty. Questioning how we could engage the retired, aged demographic of the neighbourhood’s population became a key component of the approach to inhabit the podium’s biggest, most open spaces. What actions could we take to inspire new, productive, non-disruptive ways of using the space?

The data from the survey in conjunction with brainstorming interest from the youth council of what the neighbourhood would like to happen on the podium, it was decided that the action should celebrate dance and the neighbourhood’s predominantly Bengalese culture. We decided that a Flashmob would be an appropriate first action for the group, as it would allow the Youth to use the entrance plaza as a stage to tap into the energy of residents flowing into the podium from Victoria Park subway station during the evening after-work rush hour. For this project, I believed the Flashmob was an appropriate intervention because it not only had the potential to enliven the podium, but more importantly because it engaged the group (and their friends) in re-imagining the spaces of the podium. The group’s imaginations as spatial agents took off as the appropriated physical elements throughout the site to rehearse and perform their dance; in particular, a large window wall in the neighbourhood elementary school became a mirror for the group to watch their dance moves, and a wooden fence became the back drop of their stage. These small acts of appropriation were important in allowing the group to experience, rather than just discuss, the possibilities inherent to the podium.

Method 2: Asking the Space

During our third meeting I applied the method of a photo-walk to the design charrette activity of Asking the Space. The aims of this activity were to experience the podium with the Council as my tour guides and thus gain further insight into the spaces; and to stimulate the group's thinking about specific physical elements on the podium that called for modification or appropriation. With my camera in their hands, members were instructed to record either an opportunity for a new use or action, or an idea about how a space could be modified to better accommodate lingering, hanging out, or play. This activity was successful in stimulating the group's ideas about what could be done to enhance the podium, but one of the difficulties I encountered was that the group tended to focus on superficial enhancements, rather than types of activities that could be accommodated by the spaces. When I ventured on to the lawns and asked what kind of games could be played in the space, I was met with responses that property security or neighbours watching from above would be quick to discourage any kind of activity on the grass. From this activity I discovered that Crescent Town's social limits have just as large a presence as the physical.

While the group mostly understood the photo-walk as an opportunity to suggest superficial enhancements such as gardens, fountains, sculptures, and murals, they also took it as an opportunity to point out clever ways in which residents had already thought to inhabit the podium. For example, the pad of grass in front of the daycare that I envisioned as a small play area was already used as a place for smaller, younger children to play soccer. Soccer is also played in the entrance plaza, using the nooks created by the concrete planters as the goals, but play is often interrupted by people moving through the space. One of the youth also pointed out faint scratch marks along the side of the benches in the paved entrance plaza which marked elements of a cricket pitch. When I asked about places for

worship and prayer for the large Muslim population in the neighbourhood (Boston & Meagher 2007, 19), one group member revealed that two apartment units in two separate towers were being rented out and used solely as places of prayer. By walking with the youth council I was led to discover small traces of inhabitation and appropriation that were easily missed, or inaccessible to my outsider eyes. The spirit of agency and appropriation did exist in Crescent Town. Now the question was how could the Youth Council and I engage and encourage this spirit to give it -- and therefore Crescent Town's residents -- a stronger presence and sense of belonging on the podium.

figure 28: mapping the youth council's energies throughout the site (from focus group)

Results and Discussion

Working with the Youth Council presented the unique opportunity to collaborate with a demographic whose needs for play, exercise, and socialize could be directly served by the podium. The members of the Council had the makings of spatial agents as they spoke readily of their criticisms of the podium, and the ways it could serve them better. Our discussions focused on the limits of the podium and the ways in which it was managed, and so I aimed to steer their curiosity and enthusiasm towards ways we could negotiate with those limits to bring about small changes to the neighbourhood's shared spaces (Awan et al. 2011, 31). While the Council seemed receptive to the precedents of DIY-urbanism I presented to them, it became evident on our photowalk that they were still in the mindframe that top-down, superficial enhancements to the podium, such as ornamental gardens or sculptures were necessary to attract residents into the empty spaces of Crescent Town. In order for the Council to understand the small-scale bottom up approach I was advocating, it became clear that we needed to execute our own acts of appropriation.

3.3 Designs for Appropriate Actions

"This is the space which imagination seeks to change and appropriate."

(Lefebvre 1991)

At the end of my four walks through Toronto apartment tower neighbourhoods, I selected Crescent Town due to the contained structure of the podium, its accessible open spaces and wide pathways, and the opportunity present to work with an existing community group. The spaces in Crescent Town which my imagination sought to appropriate existed as no-man's-lands, but the energies of the neighbourhood, and the desires expressed by the residents I engaged with led me to imagine a by enabled spatial agents and their acts of appropriation.

The following acts of appropriation were arrived at through a synthesis of my observations of the neighbourhood, the responses to the survey, and input given by the Youth Council through our focus group meetings, and our walk throughout the neighbourhood. The actions adhere to the guidelines I adopted from *Tactical Urbanism*: they were designed to instigate change, offer local ideas to local opportunities and challenges, and, most importantly, to develop social capital between residents (Lydon 2012, 1). Additionally, the actions were designed to be small-scale, low-cost, unsanctioned, temporary interventions on the neighbourhood. These actions were imagined to be the catalysts for evolving the social and physical structures of the podium. As such, they are intended to shake up status quo by introducing and enabling new ways residents can use and enjoy the podium. Inherent in shaking up status quo is a questioning and challenging the existing rules posted throughout the podium by property management. Principles of cleanliness and respect would be adhered to within the physical aspects of these planned actions, but one cannot be a catalyst for change by simply adhering to the rules. The actions are the means to question established uses and

relationships to the podium, and to present alternatives to those questions. These actions represent the just first phase in which the Youth council and I planned to begin reclaiming Crescent Town. The desired outcomes and ways these actions could grow to spread energy throughout the neighbourhood will be discussed in the next chapter, *Community Use Space*.

figure 29: appropriate actions
(by author)

figure 30: site for the bike lane intervention
(by author)

figure 31 (next page): bike lane intervention
(by author)

ACTIONS

1. *Please Bike and Rollerblade Here*

One of the rules on the many signs posted around the neighbourhood prohibits bike riding and rollerblading on the podium. With the exception of the Market Place, however, I found that the pathways are wide enough to accommodate pedestrians, bikes, skateboards, and rollerblades. By introducing bike lanes throughout the wide pathways of the podium, we can introduce a new order and create a situation where the pathways can be shared safely.

Elements required:

- White Duct Tape or chalk paint used to mark lines of the bike lane, and to make large bicycle symbol stickers
- Signs: stop, please walk bike

Location:

- On the pathways west of Building 5

Actions:

- Designate one side of the pathway to a bike lane
- Place large bicycle symbol stickers at each corner of the designated areas
- Place stop signs and lines of duct tape to indicate where to stop at all corners
- Place "please walk bike" signs at the entry points to the marketplace square

figure 32: site for the mom chairs intervention
(by author)

figure 33 (next page): mom chairs intervention
(by author)

2. Mom Chairs

On weekday mornings parents (mostly mothers) walk their young ones to Crescent Town elementary school, and then linger on the bridge behind the Hasty Mart. The question for this action is how can we enhance this experience of gathering for the parents? Once the parents are comfortable lingering here, what kind of opportunities are created to cater to this group?

Elements required:

- Patio chairs and table, preferably bar-height
- Paint

Location:

- The benches of the marketplace square
- The nook behind the Hasty Mart

Actions:

- In the early morning before the school-time rush, place furniture in the areas where the moms have been observed to linger

figure 34: site for the sowing seeds intervention
(by author)

figure 35 (next page): the transformation of the
square after the sowing seeds intervention
(by author)

3. Sowing Seeds

Crescent Town's podium holds large, but mostly barren planters throughout the site. These can easily be re-imagined as community-maintained gardens. Though the climate in February is not ideal for sowing seeds, the idea can be sown metaphorically by 'plantin' stakes of seed packets throughout the planters with clear invitations for residents to take the packets to cultivate indoors for the time being, so that the seedlings will be ready to be transplanted to the planters in early spring. This act of appropriation begins with reclaiming the planters by means of cleaning them cigarette butts and other garbage.

Elements required:

- Planter cleaning team: rubber gloves, garbage bags
- Seed packets designed with instructions for indoor cultivation, on stakes
- Designated dispensers for cigarette butts, installed near existing garbage cans
- Signs notifying residents of a garden project underway, bringing attention to the new dispensers, requesting co-operation for this project

Location:

- Concrete planters in the marketplace square and to the south of Building 9

Actions:

- Clean the planters of cigarette butts and other debris
- Winter: Place signs and stakes holding seed packets throughout the planters
- Spring: Re-clean the planters as needed and plant seedlings. Change signs to invite residents to plant their own seedlings in the garden

figure 36: site for the flashmob intervention
(by author)

4. Flashmob

Of my initial ideas for appropriating elements found in the podium, the Youth Council was most receptive to the idea of using the wooden fence in the entrance plaza as the backdrop for a stage. The Flashmob was used as a means of getting the Council to think differently about the spaces of the podium, specifically by asking them to look for spatial elements throughout the site that would support the acts of performing and rehearsing.

When walking throughout the podium with the Council, we agreed that the entrance plaza would be an ideal place for the performance to take place, based on the amount of foot traffic, and therefore potential audience members, that regularly moves through the space. From survey findings and people-counting exercises, the group and I reasoned that the optimum amount of foot traffic would be moving through the space on a weekday evening would be around 5:30. By looking and thinking differently about the architecture of the site, the group found more than one set of large, glass windows that they appropriate to help them rehearse and choreograph their performance.

Elements required:

- Wireless speakers or amplification system
- Sizeable mob
- Chalk paint to mark the stage
- Evening rush of residents moving through the entrance plaza from the subway

Location:

- Entrance plaza, stage set in front of the wooden fence

Actions:

- Flashmob to be choreographed by the Crescent Town Youth Council

Results & Discussion: The Flashmob

figures 37 & 38: an appropriated wooden fence becomes a stage
(by author)

The Flashmob was attempted on a Friday evening in early spring. By then the weather had warmed and children had taken over the entrance plaza with cricket matches and pick-up soccer. According to previous observations of the site, meeting at 5:00 PM would have allocated enough time for the youth council and their friends to prepare for their performance before the 5:30 rush of commuters filled the entrance plaza. In the weeks leading up to the Flashmob, I was in touch with a group member who was particularly fond of dance, and he has assured me that progress on music selection and choreography were going well.

On the day of the performance I was met by nearly all members of the youth council, along with some of their friends recruited for the mob. The only member who was unable to attend was, unfortunately, the choreographer and leader. Such is the nature of community based participation projects, I learned, where things often do not go according to plan. However, being able to quickly improvise is a key quality of spatial agents, and true to the role I had assigned the group, in lieu of a Flashmob, two members appropriated the wooden fence in the entrance plaza as the backdrop for some free style break dancing. With music blasting from small portable speakers, the group members attracted the attention of the boys who were playing on the podium, and the occasional adult passersby. Besides the missing choreographer and leader, this attempt at a Flashmob was also missing the presence of the regular evening rush of passersby. On this particular Friday people did not stream through the entrance plaza from the subway station-- perhaps they were out enjoying the nice weather in other outdoor places throughout the city?

The action did not at all go according to plan with an absent leader and an absent crowd. The group that had showed up to participate had not been shown any of the chore-

ography, and while they showed up, it did not seem as though everyone would have been willing to participate in a performance. From this experience I learned that the suggestions needed for the community to come together had to take on more tangible forms -- it was not enough to verbally suggest an activity that I predicted would bring many people to the podium. However, for the purpose of the overall project, the goal not to instigate a successful Flashmob, but rather to enable thinking about new ways of using the podium. The group members who showed up to dance gladly took the stage in front of the fence and attracted passersby to stop, watch, and linger. For the duration of the dancing, the pedestrian expressway architecture of the podium was freed from its primary use as a circulation corridor to a place of performance, infused with the sounds of young Bengali-Canadian culture. The fence was no longer just a fence, and the contrasting colours of the paving stones of the entrance plaza served to delineate spaces for the performers and for the audience. That small area of podium had been successfully appropriated by the dancing spatial agents.

figure 39: a new possibility for the podium
(by author)

3.4 CONCLUSION

Claiming residual spaces lies in opposition to current city planning practices and engages the city at the intimate scale of the person, focusing on the potential of ordinary spaces within our built environment. ... Exploiting and transforming neglected spaces that exist throughout our cities is one of the most direct ways to create a more equitable and dynamic urban environment. Moreover, the transformation of these everyday spaces can have large social, economic, and ecological impacts on the liveability and quality of our cities.

(Hou 2010, 95)

Engaging the city at the intimate scale of the person is the main task of a spatial agent. By imparting the role of spatial agents to the Youth Council, I wanted us to arrive at ideas for actions that were motivated by their experiences and interactions on the podium. Inherent to the notion of agency is the idea that one is able to act otherwise, or challenge the norm (Awan et al. 2011, 31). In Crescent Town the Youth Council expressed a desire to challenge the norm set by the strict restrictions placed on how residents could enjoy the podium. To challenge this norm intelligently, we arrived at the acts of appropriation discussed in the previous section which provide productive, playful alternatives -- or acts of appropriation -- to better accommodate different uses of the podium. These acts are not only alternatives in and of themselves, but are also intended as catalysts for the rest of the neighbourhood community to begin re-thinking and re-imagining the ways their own interests and needs could take root and enhance the life of the podium. Through acts of appropriation and tinkering with the found infrastructure, furniture, tools, and active moments of a place, spatial agents can act as catalysts for new physical and social relationships within their urban environments. This design project, then, is not a project of 3-dimensional urban objects

but, to use a term coined by Bjarke Ingels, one of creating “3D urban conditions “ (“Hedonistic Sustainability” 2012) which present new uses and give suggestions about new ways of using the podium without large top-down investments.

The acts of appropriation outlined in the previous chapter were designed to question conventional practices, rules, and everyday realities, and to address those questions in to form of new ways of using the podium. The *Bike Lanes* challenge the restrictions posted throughout the site and provide a thoughtful alternative that can allow the wide pathways to be shared safely by pedestrians and cyclists. The *Mom Chairs* seek to adapt the podium to more comfortably accommodate a specific group who had already begun to inhabit the podium in order to further encourage their presence in the neighbourhood’s shared spaces. The *Community Planter* project imagined to literally take root in the large concrete planters throughout the site responds to survey participants’ and the Youth Council’s desires to inject more colour and greenery on to the podium while calling for resident involvement in order to ensure the new gardens survive. The *Flashmob* seeks to appropriate existing physical infrastructure and enliven the podium by tapping into the energies of the podium’s daily evening rush of residents returning home through the entrance plaza. The *Bike Lanes* and *Community Planter* projects in particular are also means of negotiating how the podium is managed and maintained; beyond providing more productive uses of the space, they give cause for the management to reconsider what could be permissible and what roles residents could play in sharing responsibility for the podium. To refer back to Jacobs and Lefebvre, anchoring residents in their public spaces is a means to not only generate security and delight, but also to fulfil democratic ideals.

Jean-Francois Prost writes that there is a need for personal appropriation in spaces which are either too generic, or too specific , in order to foster a sense of belonging, and to

bring character and singularity to these too-big spaces (2008, 145). The new ways of using shared spaces should foster a sense of belonging and character by “stimulating active, committed participation” (Prost 2008, 143) that is able to anchor observers, thinkers, and players within these shared spaces, even if it just calls one to pause and linger for a moment rather than rushing through. The acts of appropriation outlined in this project are imagined to gradually evolve into projects where the community is more physically anchored into the spaces of the podium that are as Prost writes: spaces with character, a sense of belonging, and singularity. The following chapter: *Community Use Space* will outline this evolution in the form of three phases towards the gradual reclaiming of Crescent Town’s no-man’s-lands.

04 COMMUNITY USE SPACE

4.1 ACUPUNCTURE URBANISM: MOVING UP FROM JUST THE BOTTOM

So far this thesis has advocated small-scale, do-it-yourself, bottom-up, celebration-of-the-everyday approach to urbanism. As the *Michigan Debates on Everyday Urbanism* reveal, however, the criticism to an approach so embedded in the small scale and the everyday is that the scale of the interventions is too small to contribute to greater change. Michael Speaks explains:

In reality Everyday Urbanism is not really bottom-up because it is mostly, or almost entirely, bottom. It never develops any kind of comprehensive proposals that might be activated by the small-scale interventions. It does not even seek to understand the implications of the small-scale interventions that it launches, but is instead content to fetishize and tinker with the everyday things it finds ready-made. It is anti-design and begs the question: How do you design with the banal and to what end? (quoted in Crawford 2005, 36)

As defined in the previous chapter, one of the modes of operation for spatial agents is to achieve only partial change. In rebuttal to Speaks' argument, the scope of this 'partial change' should be clarified. The actions carried out by spatial agents are partial and can be considered incomplete because they invite, or depend on, participation and future adaptations by those who share the spaces with the agents. The agents act as enablers, and the acts of appropriation are carried out in order to address and explore the effects of small-scale interventions on an urban spaces' social and physical structures. The idea of a comprehensive proposal is indeed negated, as these projects function by being left open to possibility and adaptation. The spatial agent operates in the manner Jane Jacobs advocated: by

making suggestions to enable those around them to contribute to the act of place-making (1961, 375).

In *Reviving Cities* Jaime Lerner writes: "Once the scenario and priorities are set, we have to make it happen, and to make it happen quickly. ... Strategic, timely interventions can release new energy and help consolidate it toward the desired goals. This is what I call 'urban acupuncture': it revitalizes an ailing or worn out area and its surroundings through a simple touch in a key point" (2010, 190). Jacobs referred to these timely interventions, or points of urban acupuncture as spillovers of positive chain reactions to heal and enhance the whole system (1961, 139). I understand an urban environment's "whole system" to include not only residents and buildings, but also official policy and systems of management that can and should also be influenced by the suggestions and new possibilities presented by acts of appropriation. The *UN-HABITAT World Cities Report* for 2008-2009 notes that the contribution of "inter-actor collaboration, greater citizen participation, and the emergence of services that harness the power of grassroots imagination" is essential to processes of creating harmonious cities (Camponeshi 2010, 11). The diversity that can be introduced to spaces like the podium creates opportunities for this inter-actor collaboration which includes not only residents, but the property managers who will inevitably question, resist, and then hopefully understand and make room for the shared sense of responsibility that is generated by the acts of, and inspired by, spatial agents.

Again, Michael Speaks asks, "How do you design with the banal and to what end?" This thesis advocates the method of appropriation as a deliberate reworking of an under-used urban space's existing social and physical structures, and patterns of use. Designing with the banal -- or in other words appropriating what is available -- is the first step towards enabling Crescent Town residents to rethink their relationships with the podium and inviting

modes of inhabitation that will contribute to further modification, adaptation, and design of the shared spaces. These small acts are intended to communicate that it is not just large, superficial changes such as ornamental gardens and fountains, as desired by the residents, that will make the Crescent Town's podium more pleasant to be in, but rather the sustained, visible presence and activity of members of the neighbourhood. Though the finished form, or end product of these actions is deliberately left open to the needs and desires of future users, the end goal of these appropriate actions is as Lefebvre notes: enabling the inhabitation of the city is as much about accommodating enjoyment and creativity as it is about fulfilling democratic ideals through projects that reinforce notions of ownership and responsibility within a neighbourhood's shared spaces (Purcell 2003, 578).

What can happen when the appropriate actions begin to effect more than their isolated locations on the podium? This chapter is where architectural imagination truly takes flight. It is about the exploration of future spatial and social scenarios on the podium that could result from spillovers of energy generated from the initial acts of appropriation. These are the visions for how the no-man's-lands of Crescent Town might be reclaimed eventually, incrementally.

4.2 Spreading the Site's Energies

In pursuit of equitable progress, citizens are typically invited to engage in a process that is fundamentally broken: rather than being asked to contribute to incremental change at the neighbourhood or block level, residents are asked to react to proposals they often don't understand, and at a scale for which they have little control

(Lydon 2012, 1)

As defined in the previous chapter *Neighbourhood Action*, spatial agents act to achieve partial change defined by an individual, human scale. This scale allows agents to engage residents in 3-dimensional space and real time about shifts in the ways their shared spaces could be used. Acts of appropriation are suggestions and catalysts for further action. These actions are deliberately unfinished in order to invite further appropriation, adaptation, modification, and most importantly, participation from a multitude of users. This section imagines the possibilities inherent in the initial actions outlined in the previous chapter. Here I imagine how these possibilities could manifest over three future phases in the life of the podium: the first phase being at the time of the initial actions, the second phase taking place within months after the actions, and finally the third phase presenting a vision of a reclaimed Crescent Town after a decade of enabled actions and inhabitation.

This chapter imagines the actions as points of urban acupuncture. If this metaphor of urban acupuncture is applied, then the initial acts of appropriation were just the small pin pricks in the body of the podium. Their presence would help release the flows of the podium's isolated moments of energy from confined channels to wider circles throughout the neighbourhood ("What is Acupuncture?"). The result would be a spreading of the areas of engagement and activity throughout the podium, causing more moments of overlap and more opportunities for interaction to strengthen the neighbourhood's emerging network

of ownership, responsibility, and mutual security. On my walks throughout the podium, I observed that its energies were concentrated in morning and evening rushes through the Marketplace square and the entrance plaza. Three of the actions: *Mom Chairs*, *Community Planters*, and the *Flashmob* take aim to take advantage of these energies by presenting uses that invite residents to pause or break away from their daily rushes to enjoy new activities on the podium. The *Bike Lanes* project also makes space for a new activity, and in doing so attempts to inject entirely new energy into the vast, unused spaces of the no-man's-lands west of Building 5.

Eventually the energy generated by these acts of appropriation could begin to provide a physical infrastructure that could be inhabited by the community for various uses. I imagine this infrastructure to manifest as steel frames, and their various uses are imagined to be implemented in the third phases in the evolution of the appropriate actions. These frames are elements that first mediate between the human scale and that of the towers, with the potential to be arranged to create a more human "street front" to enclose the vast open spaces of the podium, particularly west of Building 5. The construction and materiality of the steel frames allows them to be durable, easily constructed, and easily modified, thus manifesting the idea that acts of appropriation must invite and accommodate future adaptation through simple modifications. The frame's generic, open design allows the structures to accommodate a wide range of functions that might result from the increased amount of time and efforts the residents spend on the podium. Interested resident groups could be able to afford the frames through kick-starter-like group fundraising campaigns, or economic activity generated through preceding acts of appropriation. More idealistically, there could also be the possibility that future property management groups see is as a priority to set aside funds for these frames, as the structures and the activities they house and support are understood as economic assets and amenities that help, rather add nuisance to, manag-

ing the podium.

The role of a spatial agent is to instigate change and provide suggestions towards specific goals and desired outcomes. In Crescent Town these goals were to reclaim and enliven the spaces of the podium by accommodating residents more comfortably in places where they were already observed to be gathering, providing alternatives to existing restrictions, and engaging them in productive uses of the space. The following vignettes imagine the gradual reclaiming of Crescent Town's no-man's-lands.

figure 40: actions and a set of portable speakers enlivened the podium temporarily, but design can make bolder statements about reclaiming the podium
(by author)

figure 41: map of initial actions
(by author)

1. Please Bike and Rollerblade Here

Phase 1

In response to the stern rules posted throughout the podium that prohibit bicycling, bike lanes are introduced to the pathways of the western lawns using duct tape and large home-made stickers of bicycle symbols, presenting the idea that the pathways can be comfortably and reasonably shared. The duct tape and stickers remain for only a matter of days before property management requests that grounds maintenance remove the tape. During the time the tape remained, however, residents took notice and cyclists and pedestrians begin to share the podium in an orderly manner.

Phase 2

Not long after the tape is removed, a rogue group of residents take it on themselves to spray paint the bicycle logo on to the podium pavement as more permanent suggestions for bike lanes.

figure 44: bicycle repair workshop
appropriates Building 5 in phase 3
(by author)

Phase 3

The willingness of residents to respect the guerilla bike lanes prompts management to remove cycling from the list of stern list of restrictions posted throughout the podium. After much negotiation, residents have convinced management to reorganize the existing benches in the western lawns to create physical barriers between bikes and pedestrians . DIY bike repair stations pop up in the form of essential bicycle tools chained to posts throughout the podium. Eventually, an initiative is started up in a section of the neighbourhood's town hall to teach bicycle repair to interested youth. Through the repair, refurbishing, and sales of recovered bicycles, this initiative leads to a bicycle co-op, housed within two shed-frames on the empty lawn east of Building 1.

figure 45: bicycle repair and refurbishing sheds add to the economy of Crescent Town and the surrounding neighbourhoods
(by author)

2. Mom Chairs

Phase 1

Early one weekday morning before the daily school rush, patio chairs are placed in the space where a group of mothers have been observed to congregate, in order to more comfortably accommodate this group of the podium's regular inhabitants. Despite some confusion, the mothers accept the chairs and are able to sit comfortably and enjoy each others' company a little longer than usual before heading off to appointments, errands, jobs, and other responsibilities.

Phase 2

Every morning that the chairs remain on the podium is a pleasant surprise. Eventually, however the mothers grow so fond of the chairs and their daily meetings that they invest in locks and chains to ensure their piece of the podium is not removed. Someone finds a discarded table beside on the neighbourhood garbage dumpsters and adds it to the set. The mothers begin bringing breakfast treats to share on their DIY patio. After school another set of parents use the patio set to catch up while allowing their children to blow off energy on the small pad of grass in the marketplace square before heading home. By the time the parents and young children leave, middle schoolers take claim to the patio, and then after them highschool students. Eventually more misfit pieces of patio furniture begin surfacing around the original set.

figure 46:: a shed frame cafe emerges in Phase 3
(by author)

Phase 3

The number patio sets quickly grows to take up the small nook behind the Hasty Mark. The owner of the neighbourhood convenient store takes note of the constant flow of people just outside his store and began selling coffees and teas. Eventually he and the patio users are able to raise funds for a shed-frame cafe just beside the Hasty Mart. The walls and ground in these areas are painted with bright inviting colours, and flower pots are brought in to add more colour to the area.

The small pad of grass in front of the daycare is also affected by the emergence of Crescent Town's patio cafe. The parents who use the chairs after picking their children up from school raised funds and negotiated with management to put up a small shed-frame play structure in this area. Wooden palettes are painted brightly and finished to provide a new ground surface that children can crawl on. This is the podium's first designated play area. Eventually it becomes so overcrowded that the patio users raise funds to build another shed-frame playground in the neighbourhood's western lawns, adjacent to Building 3.

figures 47 & 48:: a shed frame play structures
(by author)

3. Sowing Seeds

Phase 1

Beginning in the wintertime, spatial agents plant ideas for community-maintained gardens in the imaginations of their neighbours. They take advantage of the sparse snowfall that season and clean cigarette butts and other debris out from the planters. To try to keep the planters clean in the following months, the agents plant stakes holding up signs and seed packets to explain their intentions for the site. The packets disappear, and by spring time they are replaced by small seedlings planted anonymously and by agents alike. Spatial agents pay varying degrees of attention to the planter experiment- some plants flourish, while others wither.

figure 49: (a) seed packets "planted" in the planters for residents to take home and cultivate before planting in the (b) podium planters

Phase 2

A resident with a green thumb observes the agents taking care of the planters decides to get in on the fun. Neglected plants are uprooted and replaced by healthy seedlings, and the resident begins overlooking the health of all the plants. Small bonds of community are formed between the resident green thumb and the young agents-turned-gardeners as they tend to their plants over the summer months.

Phase 3

A system of rainwater collection has been installed along the arcade which encircles the marketplace square. Demand for garden space has grown so much that the management conceded to renting out plots on the lawn in front of Building 7 in exchange for a portion of one's harvest. Vegetables are plentiful and respect for the planter-gardens has grown so much that residents no longer worry about, or experience theft or damage in their garden.

figure 50: (a) the vast unused lawn outside building 7, and (b) the thriving garden and community that reclaimed it
(by author)

In time the concrete planters are patched up and repainted to add some much desired colour to the podium. A marketplace storefront which sat empty has been converted to a garden co-op shop, where members can borrow tools, buy seeds, and get gardening advice from the volunteers. Every spring children from the daycare get to plant something they grew from seed in the planters just outside the daycare.

figure 51: the daycare garden also appropriates found wooden slats to create seating a vertical garden space (by author)

4. Crescent Town Stage

Phase 1

On the night of a failed Flashmob, a group of agents use a space in the neighbourhood's entrance plaza as a stage. A wooden fence provides just enough height and width to be the makeshift stage's backdrop, and a change in pavement patterns delineates the limits of the stage on the ground. Portable speakers are set up, and a small performance goes underway. The dancing and the music attracts the attention of a group of boys playing on the plaza, as well as some curious passersby.

Phase 2

When planning an event on behalf of the Crescent Town Youth Council, one of the agent-dancers remembers the potential of the plaza to be a stage. The agent suggests a talent show to take place on the stage and after weeks of work, the group inaugurates the first Crescent Town outdoor festival.

Phase 3

The space in front of the wooden fence in the entrance plaza has been adopted as the focal point for the neighbourhood's cultural celebrations. Instead of installing the annual Christmas Tree in the middle of the large muddy lawn in front of Building 7 (as was the case in the years prior to the initial stage performance), the tree is now set up in the entrance plaza, and its lighting ceremony is a very well attended event in the community. The stage is also used for performances to celebrate the various New Year's festivals of the different cultures who call Crescent Town home. Although the transformation brought about by this action is less tangible than others, it has made great contributions to the cultural development of the community.

figure 52 (next page): portable speakers, appropriated shipping palletes, chipboard panels, and a coat of paint make up the elements of a raised stage that turns the entrance plaza into a cultural venue in the neighbourhood
(by author)

4.3 CONCLUSION

...Citizenship is no longer just a reference to one's political standing within a country, but an indication of involvement in the community -- a descriptor of responsibilities that doubles as a value orientation. ...When we look at citizenship as more than just a matter of duties and taxes, we uncover a multifaceted world of daily experiences that gives more legitimacy and visibility to the resourcefulness of the traditionally excluded.

(Camponeschi 2010, 66)

Community Use Space is about embedding residents within the shared spaces of the podium in order to ultimately enliven this sense of citizenship to the community of Crescent Town. By stimulating interests, addressing desires, loosening spaces, and questioning rules residents are given the opportunity to inject new uses, and therefore new life into the empty spaces of the podium. In the scenarios presented each action is a catalyst for greater physical, cultural, and social growth. Each action also leads to opportunities for negotiating and shifting ideas of ownership and responsibility from the property management groups towards the residents. Camponeschi's quote brings to mind Jane Jacobs' observations of the "publicness" of spaces that were proudly used and watched over by an active citizen community. This project has the potential to make residing in Crescent Town about more than just paying rent or fees for the space of one's apartment or condo unit. The acts of appropriation present opportunities to take advantage of the possibilities of the podium in order for residents to extend their notion and claims to "home" to include all of the spaces of the neighbourhood.

Perhaps the imagined outcomes for each scenario can be criticized for being too idealistic -- surely chairs would go missing from the patio, or plants would be vandalised, or

residents with units facing the entrance plaza would make a fuss about the noise from the stage celebrations -- but these actions were planned taking into consideration the responses from surveys which placed neighbourhood safety in high regard, along with the desires for more greenery and cultural celebrations on the podium. Also, the low-cost, easily modifiable materials required for the initial interventions -- a coat of paint, chairs, seed packets, portable speakers -- allow residents to make small interventions that can be easily responded to, reconsidered, and further adapted and built upon. The different phases gradually reclaim the podium based on a series of actions that both respond to, and stimulate different needs and interactions. The series of interventions grown from the bike lanes, for example, extrapolate the inevitable need to repair bikes into new community institutions where residents learn how to repair their bikes in the workshop inside Building 5, and then add to the local economy through sale of bikes built and refurbished in the bike sheds.

My optimism about the long-term success of these actions is based on Jane Jacobs' theory of eyes of the street, where active parks and sidewalks become central nodes for networks of casual, mutual security and support. The more engaged residents become in Crescent Town's shared spaces, the more involved they become in the neighbourhood's shared public life, which includes sharing a sense of responsibility, authority, and ownership of the spaces. In the long term, the scenarios that evolve from the initial actions would become treasured assets to the neighbourhood that are respected and watched over.

Each actions generates even more diversity for the podium. More diversity increases the interactions amongst a place's variety of social, cultural, temporal, and physical structures , thus generating urban vitality (Talen 2006, 237). This variety and vitality can be revealed and slowly rooted onto the podium to establish places for the Crescent Town community to experience a shared sense of security, pride, enjoyment, and delight.

05 FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

5.1 WHERE WE'VE WALKED

This study began by taking inventory of Toronto's apartment tower neighbourhoods, to find a site where issues of underuse and neglect might be receptive to changes brought about by a series of small actions and interventions. I was particularly looking for neighbourhoods made up of the tower-in-a-park building typology, as the issues mentioned above have become prevalent within the large, open spaces inherent in this building type. My walks led me to Crescent Town: a tower neighbourhood master-planned in the 1960s, and designed as a self-contained island surrounded by a lush ravine to the north, and a large city park to the south. The neighbourhood's most unique feature was its elevated pedestrian podium, which linked the neighbourhood's tall towers and contained many of the vast, underused spaces my project sought to address.

To begin to form my understanding of Crescent Town, I looked back to the neighbourhood's conceptual beginnings as a work of Modernist architecture. Faced with large housing crises brought on by rapid urbanization post-World War II, and presented with the new technology of concrete high rise construction, Modernist architects and state housing officials alike embraced the concrete tower-in-a-park building typology as the most efficient, cost- and time-effective form to respond to and house an increasingly large urban population. The tower-in-a-park was also infused with Modernist ideals for healthy living: above ground, the open park spaces were to provide fresh air, a view, and sunlight to all apartment units; and at ground level these spaces were to be lush with trees and vegetation, and active with tenants participating in all sorts of leisure activities after a hard day's work. Somewhere along the line, these ideals were lost in translation, and while the open spaces remained and were allocated up to 90% of a tower-in-a-park's building lot (ERA 2008, 14) often a lack of

property funds or uninterested property management strategies failed to provide the financial support or maintenance to keep these spaces from devolving into underused, neglected no-man's-lands.

While the Modernists can be credited for imagining the ideals and benefits of the tower-in-a-park typology, they have been heavily criticized -- particularly by Jane Jacobs and Henri Lefebvre -- for a design methodology that focused more on finding complete, ideal forms for the architects' utopian visions rather than responding to the everyday experiences and realities of the individual. In Jane Jacobs' experience of post-war New York City, large master-planned projects such as the new housing estates being rapidly built were the cause of the destruction and demolition of many of the city's old, pedestrian neighbourhoods where the interaction amongst neighbours had long established networks of social and economic security. City planning officials like Jacobs' rival Robert Moses saw only that these neighbourhoods were aging, overcrowded, and home to large poor populations, and this had no remorse in demolishing them to make room for new projects that would usher in an age that would cater more to the automobile (Moses 1956, 4). Large housing estates or expressways were rapidly built in place of the old neighbourhoods, and the rich social networks of support and security were never able to be re-established within the new, impersonal environments. Jacobs' critique of the scale of the projects of modernisation is a critique of a planning approach that fails to take account, or give credit to, the essential contributions and the intricate complexities of urban places which are allowed to grow incrementally, as the result of individual human efforts from people who have vested interests and intimate knowledge in the places they are evolving. Through her observations of socially and economically stable urban neighbourhoods, Jacobs formed principles about the importance of functional diversity, an active street life, and regular casual contact between neighbours in forming networks of mutual security and casual surveillance (or "eyes on the street" as she

called them [1961, 35]), as well as a shared sense of civic authority and ownership of the neighbourhood's shared, public spaces. This sense of ownership, authority, and belonging was also central to Lefebvre's understanding of the city.

Henri Lefebvre celebrated the idea of urban environments as *oeuvres*, or shells secreted as the result of creative actions taken by the creatures (or inhabitants) living inside them. Like Jacobs, Lefebvre saw great value in the residents' participation in the life of their urban environments. While Lefebvre acknowledged the social and economic values of having a public engaged in their public spaces, he placed a greater emphasis on the cultural and political richness to be had when residents exercised their right to inhabit the city (Merrifield 2006, 69). For Lefebvre, the act of inhabitation was about actively participating in the creative process of shaping one's city; inhabitation was, as Andy Merrifield wrote in his *Critical Introduction to Henri Lefebvre*, about taking part in spatial practices that "secrete, propound, propose [the *oeuvre*] in a dialectical manner," as an active negotiation between individuals and the physical and social structures of their urban environments (2006, 110).

Exploring the works of Jacobs and Lefebvre formed the theoretical framework to guide the design of both research methods for understanding Crescent Town, as well as the scale of my design project as a series of *small acts of appropriation designed to activate different points throughout the podium*. Jacobs and Lefebvre learned about their respective cities through experience and observation of what could be seen and felt on city streets. My study followed suit, as I walked and waited on the pathways of Crescent Town, using people counting and active observation methods to get an understanding of the podium's temporal patterns, its moments of energy, and any hints at processes of inhabitation already taken on by the residents. Using these methods I found that the residents appeared to adhere to

a schedule that matched the rigorous order of their Modernist environment. During the week, the podium's Marketplace square and entrance plaza saw periods of intense pedestrian activity at typical morning and evening rush hours, as residents moved through these spaces to come and go from the neighbourhood elementary school, and the pedestrian bridge to Victoria Park subway station. For the most part during these rushes, I did not observe residents pausing to linger and speak casually with neighbours; this is understandable during the morning rush, but in the evening residents appeared to be just as determined to get home to their towers without any pause. The exception to my observations was a group of mothers who, after dropping their children off at the neighbourhood elementary school, stayed for a while to socialize on the pedestrian bridge linking the school to the neighbourhood. This group's daily chat was the first instance of inhabitation I noticed in Crescent Town.

Through Jacobs' and Lefebvre's critique of the top-down, large-scale design and management of housing projects from the latter half of the 20th century, I formed ideas about an approach that was to be bottom up, small-scale, and engaging to residents. My next step was to conduct surveys with Crescent Town's residents to deepen my understanding of the podium's limits and potential. These surveys addressed questions of how residents use the podium, especially where they spend their leisure time and where they make casual contact with their neighbours; how residents perceive the podium, specifically in terms of safety, enjoyment, and how it is managed; and finally what the residents desire of the podium, in order to generate ideas for the types of activities that the project's small-scale interventions should strive to accommodate. Overall, the trend from the small sample of participants indicated that though the podium was not the participants' first choice to spend their leisure time or make casual contact with neighbours, it was perceived as a safe place which could be enhanced and likely made more enjoyable by making it a place for activities which

promote interaction amongst neighbours and celebrated the diverse cultural backgrounds of the community. Participants had ideas about what they wanted the podium to become, both in the broad sense by expressing desires to make it a space that fostered a sense of community, and also on a superficial level as many suggested additions to make the podium more visually appealing. The steps to achieving those goals would be left for neighbourhood spatial agents to imagine.

In addition to acquiring residents' feedback through the survey, I felt that working closely with a community group would greatly enhance my understanding of the everyday life of the neighbourhood, as well as give me an opportunity to directly engage residents in activities that would promote new ways of using the podium. One of the factors in selecting Crescent Town as the site of my study was the presence of existing community groups with whom I could test this bottom-up approach to urban place-making. I was put in touch with the Crescent Town Youth Council -- a group whose mandate included programming activities for neighbourhood children and youth, and whose particular demographic's needs for exercise, play, and socializing could be better served by reclaiming the neighbourhood's no-man's-lands. Thus, working together presented a mutually beneficial opportunity as I used the methods of focus groups and photowalks to gain a deeper understanding of their insights and experiences of the podium. In order to communicate the role I aimed to take with the Council in their neighbourhood, I adopted the term of spatial agents from Awan, Till, and Schneider. I defined a spatial agent as one who challenges norms and presents alternative ways of using public spaces based on their own intimate understanding and experiences of those spaces; in presenting these new uses, agents could effect change by inspiring others to participate in further adapting, or perhaps even creating new spatial interventions (Awan et al. 2011, 71-76). Enabling the Youth Council as spatial agents by sparking their imaginations and giving them a forum to question and rediscover the unique conditions of

their neighbourhood was the first step in reclaiming Crescent Town.

When working with the Youth Council I aimed to impart the idea that we could begin the process of reclaiming Crescent Town's no-man's-lands through small acts of appropriation. By focusing on the potential of the podium's everyday routines and spaces, I aimed to arrive at actions that would intimately respond to the realities of Crescent Town. I hypothesized that re-imagining the podium through acts of appropriation would present easily relatable and accessible new uses to the podium that could inspire resident participation, further adaptation, or even entirely new interventions. The nature of acts of appropriation is that they play with what is available in order to better adapt the relationships between built structures and the everyday needs and desires of the residents. I wanted to counter the Youth Council's and survey participants' thoughts that enlivening the podium would require superficial additions or organized events to attract residents to the podium. Reclaiming the no-man's-lands of Crescent Town was not only about enlivening the vast unused spaces of the podium, but doing so in a manner that directly responded to the desires, interests, and every day routines of the neighbourhood's residents in order to encourage more personal relationships between residents and their neighbourhood's shared spaces.

When working with the Youth Council, it was my goal to enable them to not only imagine how the podium could be transformed through small actions, but to take on an action themselves, thereby becoming active spatial agents. Through a synthesis of our discussions, the results from the surveys, and explorations of DIY-urbanism precedents, we decided that a Flashmob would be an appropriate first action for the group to take on. The obvious goal of a Flashmob is to temporarily enliven a space; this played to desires from the surveys participants and the Council to animate the podium through dance and cultural celebrations. As an act of appropriation, the Flashmob served as a tool to teach the Youth

Council to appropriate and re-imagine existing physical structures of the podium in order to find structures that would serve their needs for spaces to rehearse and perform. While the Flashmob as a performance did not work out according to plan, it was successful as a method for the Council to act as spatial agents by bringing new meanings and new possibilities to the existing infrastructure of the podium. To refer back to Lefebvre, the Flashmob was a method to enable the Council to begin inhabiting the podium by bringing creative new uses to its existing spaces.

Along with the Flashmob, three other acts of appropriation were synthesized from my observations of and engagements with residents. These acts were imagined as pin points of urban acupuncture, each responding to a specific opportunity or limit found on the podium. Because spatial agents operate in ways that invite participation and future adaptation, I imagined that over time these initial actions would slowly spread the energies of the areas they initially strove to tap into, thereby encouraging broader and more diverse inhabitation of the podium. Also, by slightly modifying or adding to existing built structures on the podium to present new, productive ways of engaging the space, these acts could bring into consciousness different questions or challenges to the status quo of how the podium is used, managed, secured, and maintained. Beyond enlivening the empty spaces to bring delight and mutual security to the podium, the eventual reclaiming of Crescent Town's no-man's-lands must also involve the rethinking and gradual shift in how the podium's property management groups approach the issues of use, management, security, and maintenance. I hypothesized that by engaging the residents within the spaces of the podium, an informal order could be established between all who have vested interest in the neighbourhood's shared spaces, so that a sense of shared responsibility and authority over the spaces can develop amongst residents and property management.

This shift in order and responsibility from the top-down management of the podium, to an approach that is shared and leaves room for adaptability and participation is the ultimate goal in reclaiming Crescent Town's no-man's-lands. The initial actions were designed to introduce the intimate, human scale to the podium, thereby creating spaces where residents could begin to feel more comfortable, welcomed, and inclined to linger. By introducing new activities to the podium the acts of appropriation first engage tenants in the outdoor spaces, and then eventually engender a sense of commitment to the podium. If this sense of commitment is shared by a critical mass of engaged tenants, I hypothesize that the networks of mutual, casual security and the creative spirit of inhabitation observed by Jacobs and contemplated by Lefebvre will emerge to bring about the social and cultural renewal of the neighbourhood, as sought by the City of Toronto's Tower Renewal Project and the residents I engaged with.

5.2 RECONSIDERING THE “WE”

I began this project by asking: how can acts of appropriation be used to allow for the questioning of spaces, and the creation of places for socially-oriented activities in order to reclaim the no-man’s-lands surrounding Crescent Town’s high rise apartment towers?

This study has unpacked the notion of what it means to reclaim no-man’s-land: it is no longer just about creating places for socially-oriented activities, but understanding that engaging residents in the shared spaces of their neighbourhoods has great potential to empower. Reclaiming spaces by placing a chair, planting a garden, or marking down bike lanes is not only about using the spaces in new ways, but also about reclaiming one’s civic right and responsibility towards these spaces. Though very rooted in the everyday realities of the neighbourhood at the time of the study, and designed as responses to these realities, the acts of appropriation were just pin points intended to direct the current energies of the podium towards a future of citizen engagement, mutual security, and shared responsibility, as well as enjoyment and delight. Originally the working title for this project was Appropriate Actions: How We Will Reclaim the No-Man’s-Lands of Crescent Town. Coming to the end of this project meant re-evaluating its goals, achievements, and challenges.

Earlier on in this text, I used a quote by Jane Jacobs that guided my research methodology within Crescent Town:

Cities are thoroughly physical places. In seeking understanding of their behaviour, we get useful information by observing what occurs tangibly and physically, instead of sailing off on metaphysical fancies. (Jacobs 1961, 95-96)

While I abided by the principle of observing physical occurrences and patterns within the

neighbourhood to learn about Crescent Town, a criticism I have for my project of appropriate actions is that I have spent more time theorizing and imagining possible outcomes rather than testing what could have occurred tangibly and physically with the actions proposed in Chapter 3. The importance of action and citizen participation has been thoroughly discussed in this text, but in concluding I have found that what I have come up with is mostly a theory for actions rather than a test for them.

As outlined in Chapter 4, my goal for the interventions was to build on my observations and research of the behaviour and desires of neighbourhood residents. Though my project does seek to change the behaviour of residents in the long term by encouraging the inhabitation of the podium, the actions proposed do not strive for radical changes initially. Methodically observing and researching the neighbourhood was essential in discovering the moments and attitudes which could be tapped into to catalyze long term changes in how residents interact with each other and with the shared spaces of the podium. In the long term, the scenarios imagined to evolve from the initial actions proposed in Chapter 3 would become treasured, and continuously evolving, built and social assets to the neighbourhood.

This project proposed a new, participatory approach to place-making in a privately-owned apartment tower neighbourhood. The ethics of approach proved to be the project's greatest challenge. As I worked with the Youth Council I became very aware of various systems of control who I was accountable to in Crescent Town. In particular I was working with a youth group who were very wary of breaking the rules and being noticed by property security. I was not only accountable to the youth but also to the authority figures who co-ordinated the Council and other community centre programs. The Councils' concerns reminded me that I was a non-resident on private property, and although the property managers were aware of my presence as an architecture student researching their neighbourhood,

I was also wary of over stepping the boundaries of my welcome or creating negative tension between the youth group and the community. The approach I took of trying to involve the youth group early on in the process was valuable in learning about the community, but I felt tangled within the systems of control when trying to implement actions.

As an alternative to this approach, it is important to reconsider the “we” involved in reclaiming Crescent Town. Resident participation is still imperative to the approach of appropriate actions, but the relationships that spatial agents have with neighbourhood stakeholders and authority figures when taking on this approach must be reconsidered. As Lefebvre and Jacobs noted, one of the benefits of a public actively involved in the shaping of their shared space is a shared sense of authority and responsibility for the space. Perhaps an alternative approach would have been to engage the Youth Council in small actions at the outset of the project, and then invite stake holders such as property management groups, the condominium board, community centre program co-ordinators, and a more diverse cross section of residents to reflect on, discuss, and steer the future of the interventions. In this sense, the project keeps the element of growing from unsanctioned, spontaneous, do-it-yourself actions, but the “we” in question strives for more holistic involvement from different representatives of the community. Eventually this table of “we” could grow to involve funders, and members from the larger neighbourhood surrounding Crescent Town. This environment of open discussion and understanding between residents and stakeholders about the goals for appropriate actions is the kind in which the spirit of DIY urbanism could really flourish and propel the movement from just bottom-level whimsical interventions to a truly bottom-up approach of reclaiming underused spaces throughout the neighbourhood.

Within this “we” the role of the architect as spatial agent would be to suggest, to use one’s access to the design world to inspire, to synthesize and highlight the community’s

concerns, and to give what may be a necessary initial push for the actions. This necessary push could come in the form of providing an initial supply of materials, or of taking on the role of even organizer to help residents work out the logistics of an intervention. Being a spatial agent requires more than attempting to inspire residents, but taking action and providing tactile tools that will enable the residents to implement their ideas and appropriate the neighbourhood to better respond to their needs. It is through active participation as a spatial agent that we designers, architects, and urbanists can truly catalyze the reclaiming of the no-man's-lands of Crescent Town and Toronto's other apartment tower neighbourhoods.

figure 53: a map of the podium
being reclaimed
(by author)

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Ethics Clearance Form

This is to certify that the Carleton University Research Ethics Board has examined the application for ethical clearance. The REB found the research project to meet appropriate ethical standards as outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, 2nd edition and, the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research*.

X New clearance

☐ **Renewal of original clearance**

Original date of clearance:

Date of clearance	25 June 2012
Researcher	Kristina Corre
Status	M.Arch. student, School of Architecture
Supervisor	Professor Shelagh McCartney, School of Architecture
Funding status	Non-funded
Project number	13-0246
Title of project	Appropriate action: Reclaiming the non-man's lands of Crescent Town (Working title)

Clearance expires: **31 May 2013**

All researchers are governed by the following conditions:

Annual Status Report: You are required to submit an Annual Status Report to either renew clearance or close the file. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the immediate suspension of the project. Funded projects will have accounts suspended until the report is submitted and approved.

Changes to the project: Any changes to the project must be submitted to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board for approval. All changes must be approved prior to the continuance of the research.

Adverse events: Should any participant suffer adversely from their participation in the project you are required to report the matter to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. You must submit a written record of the event and indicate what steps you have taken to resolve the situation.

Suspension or termination of clearance: Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, 2nd edition and the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research* may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.

Antonio R Gualtieri

Antonio R. Gualtieri, Chair
Carleton University Research Ethics Board

APPENDIX 02 QUICK SURVEY

OCCUPATION:

YEARS LIVED IN
CRESCENT TOWN:

I SPEND MY TIME OUTSIDE IN NICE WEATHER

disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ agree

I ENJOY SPENDING TIME OUTSIDE ON THE PODIUM LEVEL

disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ agree

I FEEL SAFE SPENDING TIME AND MOVING THROUGH THE PODIUM LEVEL

disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ agree

THE PODIUM LEVEL IS A GOOD PLACE TO SOCIALIZE WITH OTHER NEIGHBOURS OUTSIDE OF
MY APARTMENT

disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ agree

MORE ACTIVITY ON THE PODIUM LEVEL WOULD ENHANCE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ agree

WHAT KINDS OF HOBBIES, ACTIVITIES, SPORTS, CELEBRATIONS, EVENTS CAN YOU IMAGINE
TAKING PLACE ON THE PODIUM LEVEL?

This neighbourhood was designed in 1969 by an architect named Marklin Dietrich.

During this time period, many architects were designing neighbourhoods like Crescent Town with large areas of grass at the base of the towers so that residents could have access to light and fresh air from their apartment units, and also to be able to play sports and be active right outside their homes.

I'm interested in how these spaces on the podium level are used by you, your neighbours, and your family today. How do you feel about the spaces? How do you want to use them?

Kristina Corre- Master of Architecture candidate- Carleton University

APPENDIX 02a QUICK SURVEY - TABULATED RESULTS

question	ratings									average
1	10	6	8	10	6	10	9	10	10	8.778
2	1	9	3	10	7	10	5	10	10	7.222
3	10	9	8	10	5	10	9	10	9	8.889
4	10	6	8	8	3	10	9	10	10	8.222
5	7	7	8	10	n/a	10	9	10	10	8.875

Draw the paths you typically take throughout the neighbourhood.

Where are your favourite places on the podium level? Indicate the activities you enjoy or would like to enjoy in these places.

Where are your favourite places on the podium level? Indicate the activities you enjoy or would like to enjoy in these places.

APPENDIX 02b QUICK SURVEY - MAPPING ACITIVTY RESULTS

REDISCOVERING CRESCENT TOWN:
relationships between users, uses, and place

My name is Kristina Corre, and I am a Masters student at the Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism at Carleton University in Ottawa. As part of my research on bringing cultural and social renewal to Crescent Town, I am investigating how the spaces at the base of the neighbourhood are used and perceived by neighbourhood residents. The research is being conducted in collaboration with the Crescent Town Youth Council and is aimed at informing the design of small architectural actions throughout the podium level of neighbourhood.

The questionnaire asks about the ways you interact with the outdoor spaces on Crescent town's podium level- for example, the Market Place, the pathways, ramps, and bridges, the plaza, and the lawns at the base of the apartment towers. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete, and completion is voluntary. The questions ask about your experiences and opinions- there are no right or wrong answers. All answers will be treated anonymously- individuals will not be identifiable in the reporting of the research.

It would be appreciated if you could complete the questionnaire at your earliest convenience and no later than February X. Once you have completed it, please return it to your Youth Council member or to the dropbox at the front desk of the Crescent Town Club. Return of the questionnaire will be considered as your consent to participate in the survey.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. Your opinions are important in helping to understand how the spaces of the podium are used, and their potential to truly become places that serve and build the community.

Questions about this research can be directed to me at the e-mail address provided, or attached to this questionnaire to be addressed at a Town Hall presentation of the project.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,
Kristina Corre

Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism
Carleton University, Ottawa

Project e-mail: rediscoverctown@gmail.com
Project website: <http://rediscoverctown.tumblr.com>

REDISCOVERING CRESCENT TOWN

*For the purposes of this questionnaire, the podium refers to the spaces directly at the base of Crescent Town's condo and apartment buildings, including bridges, ramps, pathways and lawns

Age range (circle one):

13 or under 14-18 19-24 25-40 41-64 65+

Years living in Crescent Town:

Building number where you currently reside:

USING THE PODIUM*

I enjoy spending time outdoors in nice weather

disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ agree

My outdoor leisure time is spent

- ___ on the podium level
- ___ in Dentonia Park
- ___ in Taylor Creek Park
- ___ within walking distance from the neighbourhood
- ___ a TTC or car commute away from the neighbourhood
- ___ I do not spend my leisure time outdoors

I walk through the podium daily

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I regularly walk through the podium during the following hours:

- ___ 5 am-9 am
- ___ 9 am- 12 pm
- ___ 12 pm- 4 pm
- ___ 4 pm- 8 pm
- ___ 8 pm- 12 am
- ___ 12 am- 5 am

The podium level is a good place to meet and get to know my neighbours

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I have met neighbours in the following places (check all that apply):

- ___ in common areas, hallways, and elevators of my building
- ___ in the Community Centre
- ___ in the Town Hall
- ___ on the podium level
- ___ I have not gotten to know my neighbours

The podium level is a good place to spend time with friends and family who live in the neighbourhood

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

My friends and I usually get together:

- ___ in the Community Centre
- ___ in the Town Hall
- ___ in my apartment or condo
- ___ in their apartments or condos
- ___ within walking distance of the neighbourhood
- ___ a car or TTC commute away from the neighbourhood
- ___ on the podium level

GETTING A SENSE OF THE SPACE

I feel safe walking through the podium level during the day

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I feel safe walking through the podium level after dark

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

There is usually a good number of people moving through or spending time on the podium

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I like to sit on the benches throughout the podium

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I like the trees and flower beds planted throughout the podium

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

There are too many rules about what should not be done on the podium

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

THE PODIUM'S POTENTIAL

More activity on the podium would enhance the neighbourhood

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I would appreciate the opportunity to get to know my neighbours in informal settings

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

The podium level is a part of my home

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I would spend more time on the podium if there was an opportunity for me to enjoy my hobbies and/or celebrate cultural festivities in this space

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

What kinds of hobbies, activities, sports, cultural celebrations or events would you take part in if they occurred on the podium level?

What would you add to the podium if given the chance?

MAPPING ACTIVITY

Draw the paths you typically take throughout the neighbourhood,

Where are you favourite places on the podium level? Indicate the activities that you currently, or would like to, enjoy in these places.

APPENDIX 03a ROBUST SURVEY TABULATED RESULTS

#	Ratings																averages
1	10	10	10	3	10	4	1	10	9	10	6	10	10	10	10	10	8.313
2	10	10	8	10	9	6	10	n/a	10	10	5	2	10	10	n/a	5	8.214
3	10	8	5	10	7	4	1	10	6	8	6	2	10	10	n/a	n/a	6.929
4	10	10	2	2	9	4	1	10	9	10	4	1	10	n/a	1	n/a	5.929
5	10	10	10	4	10	4	10	10	9	10	5	10	5.5	10	1	10	8.031
6	1	5	6	9	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	8	10	3.375
7	10	8	4	9	5	4	4	10	7	9	4	10	10	10	5	10	7.438
8	10	10	3	9	8	3	1	10	6	10	5	10	1	5	1	6	6.125
9	10	10	4	2	10	3	1	10	4	10	8	10	10	10	1	6	6.813
10	10	10	8	2	8	3	8	10	10	1	2	10	4	1	10	4	6.313
11	10	6	6	4	4	2	3	10	6	10	2	10	1	8	1	5	5.5
12	10	10	9	9	5	5	10	10	10	8	2	10	10	6	1	5	7.5
13	10	10	9	9	9	6	9	10	10	10	6	10	6	4	1	10	8.063
14	10	9	9	9	8	4	4	10	8	10	7	10	n/a	5	1	10	7.6
15	10	8	5	2	3	4	1	10	2	10	7	10	n/a	10	1	10	6.2
16	10	10	9	9	10	5	5	10	7	10	8	10	n/a	1	1	10	7.667

APPENDIX 03b ROBUST SURVEY MAPPING ACTIVITY RESULTS