

Ethnoburb
The Story of Malton

by

Nadine Peat

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Canada

ethnoburb

the story of malton

Written and Illustrated by: Nadine Peat

Advisor: Roger Connah

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Abstract

Canada is a country built on immigration. Toronto, at 2.5 million people, is a city of cultural collisions. The immigrant population has played a significant role in the formation of spaces within the urban and social city. The demographic shift of immigrants and ethnic concentrations from the inner city to the suburbs is now re-spatialising the city's banal suburbs. Malton is one such suburb, now known in planning parlance as an 'ethnoburb'. This thesis enquiry sets out to study the balance between the social and spatial nature of the ethnoburb; it is as much a challenge of the politics of change as with the role and *agency* of the architect in suburban developments. This is naturally as much a project of social understanding as it is of design and poses an urgent question: in the ethnoburb how can architecture carve out spaces and aid social navigation between these cultural collisions?

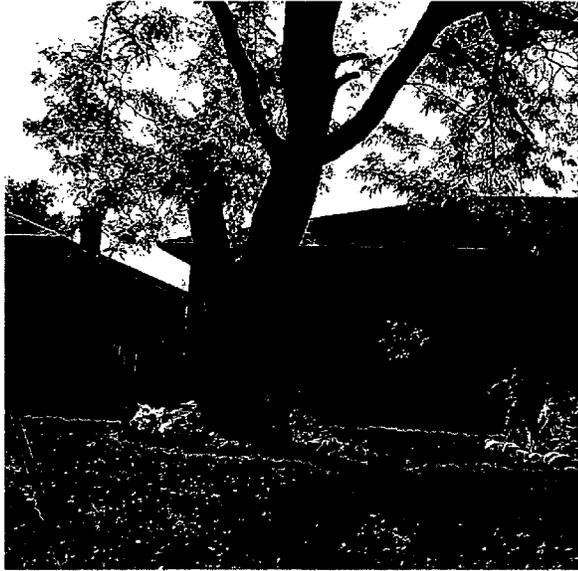
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Thank you to the staff at Malton Neighbourhood Services and members of the Malton community for taking the time to talk with me and show me around your piece of this world. It is a great community of many inspiring people. I am grateful for the opportunity. I would like to thank Roger Connah for his guidance and encouragement that gave me the confidence to complete this project.

To my friends who helped me out to the very last minute, and those who just listened. To my parents, thank you for your continued love, support and encouragement throughout all my endeavours. To Sid, thank you for your love, for staying by my side and encouraging me, for sharing with me the journey of immigration and absolute faith. To Him, who helped me feel I could soar on wings like eagles.

And home is that place, wherever, which encourages varied and ever-changing perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality. They describe a new consciousness, a consciousness of the borderlands, shaped by cultural collision, forged out of emotional states of perplexity and confusion, open to 'foreign' ways of seeing and thinking. They show us that it is possible to live with uncertainty, and essential to acknowledge our multiple identities as active subjects. They encourage us to reach out, to take risks, to explore the borderlands - to embrace difference.

Leonie Sandercock *Towards Cosmopolis* 120



While there is no ready-made point of home where all the selves can simultaneously merge, these addresses are in the making of every part of the global village, in all the places where we reside, in the mixtures and confusions, in the accidental crossings and unions, and in the intentional collaborations and making of communities.

Amita Handa Of Silk Saris and Mini Skirts 172

I want a city where people can cartwheel across pedestrian crossings without being arrested for playfulness; where everyone can paint the sidewalks, and address passers-by without fear of being shot; where there are places of stimulus and places of meditation; where there is music in public squares...

Leonie Sandercock *Mongrel Cities* 208



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Framing The Argument

cosmopolis a city inhabited by people from many different countries "Cosmopolis is my imagined Utopia, a construction site of the mind, a city/region in which there is genuine connection with, and respect and space for, destiny, a recognition of intertwined fates."¹

cultural collisions "They describe a new consciousness, a consciousness of the borderlands, shaped by cultural collision, forged out of emotional states of perplexity and confusion, open to 'foreign' ways of seeing and thinking."²

ethnoburb the suburban ethnic concentration of both residential and commercial districts.³

difference a point or way in which people or things are not the same. "Taking difference seriously does not simply mean joyously indulging in urban diversity. Nor does it automatically cast one into a form of depoliticized relativism"⁴ "Difference thus emerges not as a description of the (essential) attributes of a group but as a function of the relations between groups and the interaction of groups with institutions"⁵

lo-fi architecture an architecture that is acutely aware of the situation and environment it is to be built in. An architecture which is designed to the highest levels of design but able to be clearly understood by the context it is a part of and the users of it.⁶

micro-publics the sites in which *prosaic negotiations* and conversation are compulsory (workplace, schools, youth centres, community centres etc). "the micro-publics of 'banal transgression', in which people of different cultural backgrounds are thrown together in new settings which disrupt familiar patterns and create the possibility of initiating new attachments"⁷

multiculturalism "The multicultural approach argues that minority groups can participate fully in Canadian society while also maintaining distinctively different social values, practices, and institutions provided they protect human rights and freedoms."⁸

notes

1 Sandercock, Leonie. *Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities*. (Chichester, England: J. Wiley, 1998) 125.

2 *ibid.* 120.

3 Li, Wei. "Anatomy of a New Ethnic Settlement: The Chinese Ethnorburb in Los Angeles." *Urban Studies* 35.3 (1998) 479.

4 Fincher, Ruth, and Jane M. Jacobs. *Cities of Difference*. (New York: Guilford Press, 1998) 2.

5 Sandercock, *Towards Cosmopolis* 124.

6 Till, Jeremy. *Architecture Depends*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009) 137.

7 Sandercock, Leonie. *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities in the 21st Century*. (London: Continuum, 2003) 120.

8 Bunting, T., P. Filion, and R.C. Walker. *Canadian Cities in Transition: New Directions in the Twenty-First Century*. 4th ed. (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2010) 157.

A Note on Methodology

Currently, the process of architectural research is continually being re-articulated and explored. In the advent of an architectural project which seeks to discuss politics of change and social aspects of a community we must first rethink the process through which such an investigation takes place. Deeply bound in the following research is a sociological project¹ which reached out to the members of the community of Malton, Mississauga, 23 kilometers from Toronto City Centre. The local knowledge of the community was captured in order to attempt some translations into spatial sense.

The preliminary research was undertaken through the framework of Community Action Research (CAR), a sociological research model designed to empower marginalized communities of a specific geography, in this case, a neighbourhood. The intent of the architectural investigation uses similar threads of empowerment to work together with this form of research. CAR is focused on issues of social inclusion and seeks to develop an understanding of exclusion. It is committed to identifying the social condition and continues working towards positive change through taking action.² The action taken in this case is to reformulate the process of the architects' role in the early stages of design and effect a change in the architecture produced.

The focus on relationships and the community established in this form of methodology is essential to the framing of the thesis. Continuing under the pedagogy of social research, connections were made with non-profit organizations that are in place to provide settlement and community services to the area. Knowledge is continually redeveloped through the participation within the community's network of local knowledge, the people. Similarly, through participant observation, the experience and observations drawn from spending time within the community, spatial and social knowledge is also received. The value of experiencing the spaces of the everyday at a personal and unobstructed level is a technique that is inherently suggestive to the architectural goals.

Rather than the methodology of advocacy and the architect speaking for the community, this process seeks *agency** in the voices of the community. This enables an architect to seek to develop a *lo-fi architecture*, one that is conscious of the conditions it will encounter once built.³ This is not to design to a lower level of architectural conditions or reach but instead to understand the means by which the architecture will be translated to the community and, therefore, its presence and impact on the community. Along with the social research, this is about creating architecture of the everyday through an understanding of the reality of the site and people it serves. Perhaps best shared through the words of Jeremy Till in his recent publication *Architecture Depends*:

*The agency of an architect, the potential for agency, is the ability to act on behalf of others. To accept the responsibility of architectural production and use it towards the empowerment of those involved.⁴

*The action of the architect is here not about the implementation of generic solutions to particular problems. It is not about the architect as the detached polisher of form and technique, but as the person who gathers the conflicting voices of a given situation and makes the best possible social and spatial sense of them.*⁵

notes

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- 1 Peat, Nadine. "Malton: Learning from an Ethnoburb." Unpublished Essay. (Carleton U, 2011) see appendix.
 - 2 Kirby, Sandra L., Lorraine Greaves, and Colleen Reid. *Experience Research Social Change: Methods Beyond the Mainstream*. 2nd ed (Peterborough, Ont.: Garamond Press, 2006) 163.
 - 3 Till 136-7.
 - 4 Kossak, Florian et al. *Agency: Working with Uncertain Architectures*. 5 Vol. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010). 3-6.
 - 5 Till 193.

An interview with Costello was being repeated. 'After recording a song, I get the engineers to play it back through a cheap radio. I need to hear how it sounds in real life. How it sounds over the noise of a breakfast table.'

That interview has always stayed with me. There he would be, in a recording studio cut off from light and life, engulfed in black speakers, polishing the nuances of the twenty-four tracks on a mixing desk with the technical complexity of an aircraft cockpit. Perfected sound. But what really counted for Costello was the sound coming out of the cheap little transistor radio on the kitchen table to accompany the crunch of cornflakes. Lo-fi sound.

The analogy is direct. The architect in the studio, cut off from the world. Creating hi-fi architecture on high-end equipment, fiddling with keystrokes and mice, dreaming of that perfected delivery in the polished aura of blue skies and happy people. When in fact they should be dealing with the cheap radio end of things, imagining the moments of occupation, of cornflakes showering crumbs onto the shining floor, or maybe sad people. Lo-fi architecture.

Jeremy Till *Architecture Depends* 138

Introduction

Downtown vs. Suburbs: Yes, It's An Ethnic Thing!

The title is borrowed from a blog called *The Ethnic Aisle*¹ in which contributors were discussing the great urban-suburban divide that exists between the residents of Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area. The title is captivating and suggestive of the process in which our cities, and their suburbs, are evolving. The blog itself is a testament to the changing demographics of the GTA and the search for a new formula for the way the city operates. These suburbs were once touted for being the epitome of the *American dream*, a picture of 'mainstream culture,' but are now widely regarded as a less desirable location to live.² The blog post suggests that the suburbs have a high visible minority population that is altering the landscape. We will investigate this suggestion in the suburb of Malton, Mississauga, a neighbourhood known for its rich diversity but also its own struggles with crime and intolerance.



However, it is important to state on the onset, the presence of immigrants does not mean the suburbs are now lacking the qualities of the 'dream' but to identify that the dynamics are changing. The impact of new frames of thought and ways of inhabiting causes spatial qualities to evolve. At this point most impacts are at a small, not always noticeable, scale. In the case of Malton the high concentration of South Asian immigrants, including a large Sikh population, has produced spaces of worship and education that are unlike the typical postwar North American suburb. The concentration of like values and morals allows for these spaces to exist; the suburb is now an ethnoburb.³



In the smaller detailed fabric of the community, small organizations have begun to provide specialized services to address different cultural needs and the spatial occupation of the neighbourhood, they to offer glimpses of the changing dynamics. Front porches have expanded and are casually occupied by friends and family; the absence of privacy appears profound at first. Gatherings are not in the house or in the backyard, but right at the street or in the mall. It is impossible to deny that these are not the same suburbs they were 50 years ago, except for the rows of little bungalows. However, if the role of the spaces within the suburbs is changing, how do these social and cultural changes affect the future of architecture in the suburbs?



When considering the physical changes that an ethnoburb begins to reveal in contrast to a traditional suburb it is important to consider the social changes that exist. In the case of immigrants, and in particular second-generation immigrants, the visible contrasts in the cultural landscape exist also in their own identity. Balancing between their 'traditional' cultures and the 'dominant' culture and spatial inclination of their neighbourhood, immigrants often find themselves within their own 'cultural collision.' In many cases balancing both cultures at once; a state of dual consciousness.

Although the struggle of identity for many immigrants is indeed a social and cultural issue, it is also an architectural one. Often the physical environment is a cultivator of identity. This surely brings us to question the potential of architectural interventions in a landscape of 'cultural collisions' and to question the role of architecture as a mediator, negotiator and perpetuator of cultural and public spaces. Our task becomes more obvious: how can architecture be active in the evolving ethnoburb, the formation of identities and help develop a stronger sense of community?

notes

1 Balkissoon, Denise. "Downtown vs. Suburbs: Yes, It's an Ethnic Thing." *The Ethnic Aisle*. N.p. (20 Sept. 2011).

2 Wright, Gwendolyn. *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America*. (New York: Random House Inc., 1981). xix, 240-261.

3 Li 479-501.

Malton, the Place I call Home

If I were a lyricist I'd write a psalm
Of the harmony of Malton, its peace and calm.

If I were a poet I'd write a poem
All about Malton, the place I call home.

If I were a composer I'd compose a song
For my Malton and sing it all day long.

If I were a writer I'd write a book
Warm and glowing no matter how long it took.

If I were an artist I'd paint a scene
Of the prettiest village I have ever seen.

Those wishes cover the Malton I knew
From Nineteen eleven to Thirty two.
Sadly all that charm is now long gone
And Malton is lost in a mega-town.

Now I'm a nobody passing through
With nothing to offer, so what can one do...
When my home was Malton, somebody was I.
Oh why did Malton have to die?

Elfie Galbraith Howard

September 17, 1997

Hicks Malton: Farms to Flying 281

tell me a story **1** malton, mississauga

Some call it Mississauga's wasteland. Conversely, there are those who view it as a diamond in the rough. Others aren't sure exactly where it's located, or even if it's part of this bustling city.

Lousia Rosella 'A World of Hurt' May 28th, 2008

Malton was first settled as farmland, well known for its wheat production and, with the construction of the Grand Trunk railways, grew to be a major grain handling and export centre in the 19th century. With the onset of the war in 1914, Malton became a police village with a board of trustees to govern the area. Malton later experienced a major shift from its agricultural roots when an international airport was constructed at its doorstep in 1937. What had started as a small town located on the 'Four Corners'* became an industrial town that flourished during the wartime period. Malton was developed in the typical postwar process of veteran housing and later to suburban development.² In the same way that the establishment of the airport reflected a major shift onto the landscape of Malton, in recent decades, the airport has again provided a major shift on the small community, this created by the arrival of immigrants to Canada that the international airport brought to Malton.

In 2008 a series of articles entitled "A World of Hurt"³ were published by Mississauga News on the area of Malton. The first of the series quickly established the neighbourhood as a crime ridden, richly multicultural and secluded area. The latter cannot be denied. Malton is located in the north-eastern corner of the city of Mississauga, a part of the Greater Toronto Area. Adjacent to Toronto's Pearson International Airport, to the south-west, the neighbourhood of over 35,000 people is isolated by the airport's large footprint and the industrial development surrounding it. The northern and eastern sides are banded by major highways, the 401 and the 427 respectfully.

The article goes on to compare Malton's isolation to that of Alaska from the United States and follows through a three part series, first introducing

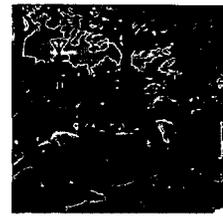
*Four Corners was the area in which Malton first developed. It began at the intersection of what is now Derry Road and Airport Road which flourished into a small downtown with local grocery and tradesman. There was a gas main explosion in 1969 that destroyed many of the original shops.



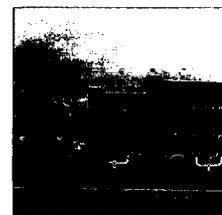
the reader to some demographic and social aspects of the community, then to the high crime rates and recent homicides, to conclude with a part entitled "Rallying Together to Re-Invent Malton". The first article in the series spiked a discourse across residents of Malton on May 28th. While the article captured many true facts about Malton and its rich multicultural landscape, it framed it in such a way which appeared to place blame on the immigrant population for the rising crime rates. A member of the community created a local newspaper in response to the article, written by members of the community. The newspaper entitled "The Malton Mirror" encompasses ideas of reflection and identity for the neighbourhood. It was designed to help strengthen the writing skills of the community and the local high school students while offering up a positive image for the entire neighbourhood and issuing information regarding community events and cultural news.⁴ This is the kind of social action which has taken place in the small neighbourhood of Malton, one that suggests a great strength in the community wishing to take down the barriers between cultures and enjoy a fully integrated lifestyle.

Malton is undeniably a richly diverse community in which 63% of the population is made up of immigrants. The immigrant makeup is a considerable contributor to the nature and the needs of this small suburb. Malton is home to one of the largest Sikh populations in the GTA and has since established community resources for their needs, including a large Gurdwara, Khasla Community School (which focuses on Sikh principles) and The Great Punjab Business Centre. The latter is a large retail development that caters to Punjabi businesses, products and cultural needs. People of South Asian origins account for the largest immigrant population in Malton, at 54% of the population. A further 15% of the population are Caribbean immigrants who have also established a group in Malton, many from Guyana and Jamaica. While another 15% of the population is still made up from the earlier European immigrants.⁵

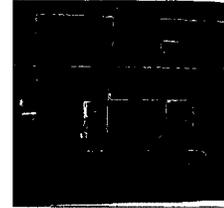
In the early 1980s Malton's population was infused by many Italian immigrants. The top five places of birth for immigrants arriving between 1996



Families and friends gathered at the picnic tables for the annual Malton Community Festival in 2011



and 2001 to Malton were India, Pakistan, Guyana, Jamaica and Sri Lanka. Malton's population has moved through periods of different cultural majorities but has not stopped being a popular neighbourhood for immigrants to arrive in. The neighbouring airport is an obvious reason as to the ease for immigrants to move to Malton, along with a large number of rental homes and basements at comparably low rates. The community has also adapted to become a welcoming place for immigrants, with services to help them settle and a variety of spiritual establishments. Malton needs to be an adaptable community in order to care for its various cultural groups. Its population of majority fluctuates, as one community member put it, "there are different flavours of the year."⁶ The statistics show a continually rising trend for immigrants arriving in Malton, this diverse background of people offers Malton many interesting aspects while also providing unique challenges to the atypical suburb.



As a working class community, the average household income is nearly \$40,000 less than the average household income in Mississauga, and 20% of the population is considered to be low income. Malton has a vibrant circle of community services, most notable being Malton Neighbourhood Services (MNS) which was first established in 1975 as a means to provide services to the suburb that was isolated from the rest of Mississauga. In 1987 MNS adapted to the needs of its changing demographics and began the Settlement Department to aid newcomers in adjusting to life in Canada. Their immigrant focused programs flourished, and in early 2000 they also initiated youth and early childhood programs. Since its humble beginnings in the basement of Westwood Mall MNS has provided services in a large variety of languages, now including, Somali, Twi, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Tamil, Arabic, Tagalog, Spanish, and Italian, a representation of the vastness of the cultures in Malton. Now located in the Malton Community Center MNS continues to serve the neighbourhood with its slogan "people helping people."⁷



The presence and continued growth of non-profit groups like Malton Neighbourhood Services, gives insight into the energy and care for each other that exists in the community. A culturally diverse community frequently

faces issues of misunderstanding and distrust across cultures, a fear of strangers. Many earlier Italian residents moved away from the neighbourhood as its demographics began to change for this very reason. A resident of the community reflected on the complexity of a diverse neighbourhood; "People are more reluctant, this is a bedroom community so people work and they come home, they are reluctant to, you know, meet at each other's houses and stuff like that. And there is also, I think, cultural barriers that prevent people from opening up their house."⁸ She continued to emphasize the quality of community and being able to count on neighbours for help she felt growing up and raising her own children in Malton.



The organization and initiative taken by groups like Malton Neighbourhood Services shows that there is a need for community services, however, the spaces of the community are rather poor due to rising crime rates and low income nature of the community. The suburb, while lacking any formal planning from the start, is not structured to support the social and spatial needs of its current diverse immigrant population. Its unique and isolated geographic location, while considered negative in the 'A World of Hurt' series, allows the study to be specific to the bounded nature of the area, in a land of vast suburban sprawl this kind of self contained community and boundaries can often be difficult to locate. The diverse nature of Malton is an example to the way in which our cities and outlying areas are establishing themselves. Canada is a country built on immigration and the newer, more diverse immigrants, ask us to rethink the means by which we structure our communities. The future asks more neighbourhoods and cities to begin developing like Malton has, so we will continue in this one isolated area, to investigate the strengths and challenges of the ethnoburb and the multicultural future. Some of the challenges of the spatial nature of the ethnoburb lie in the history of sprawl. Welcome to suburbia.

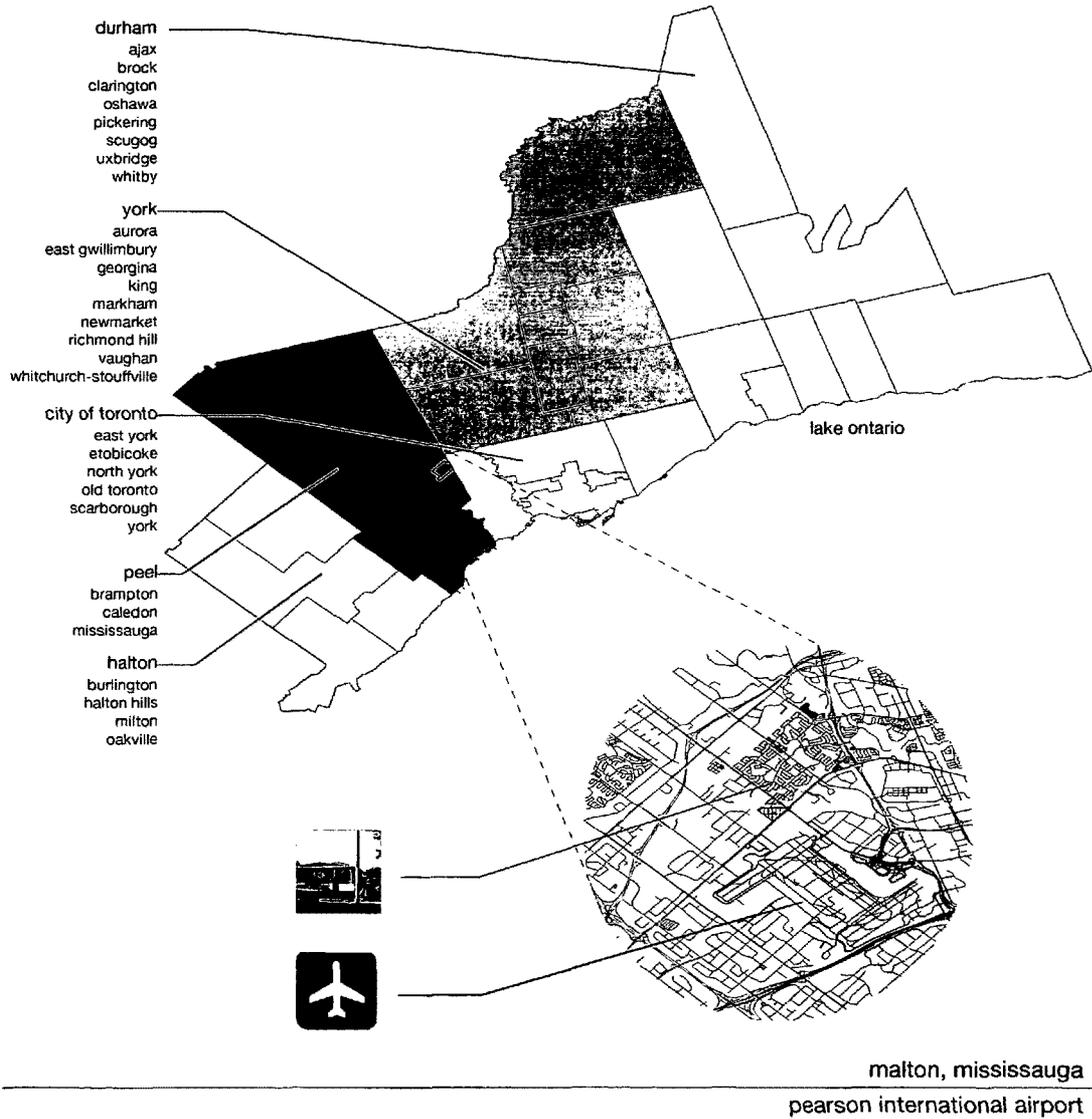
notes

- 1 Rosella, Lousia. "A World of Hurt: Graced by Diversity, Tormented by Violence". *Mississauga News* (28 May 2008) n. pag.
- 2 Hicks, Kathleen A. *Malton: Farms to Flying*. (Mississauga: Mississauga Library System, 2006) 70.
- 3 Rosella, "A World of Hurt: Three Part Series". *Mississauga News* (28-30 May 2008) n. pag.
- 4 Gurcharn, Ryan. "Malton's Newest Paper!" *Malton Mirror*. (N.p., 19 Nov. 2009). n. pag.
- 5 Peel Data Centre. *2006 Regional Atlas*. (Brampton: CSDS, 2006.) n. pag.
- 6 Peat 6.
- 7 "About MNS." *Malton Neighbourhood Services*. (N.p., 2009) n.pag.
- 8 Peat 9.

greater toronto area (gta)

The Greater Toronto area is a 7,100 km² expanse with a population of 5.5 million. The GTA attracts 100,000 new residents every year. Four in ten Canadian immigrants settle in the GTA. In a short few decades the GTA became the world's most ethnically diverse urban region. (as measured by the proportion of foreign-born)

Data via John Lornic - *The Walrus*



welcome to suburbia **2**

Most people tend to take built form for granted: the assumption seems to be, 'this is the way things are.' When it comes to the shape and form of places where we live, it is often difficult to recognize that, before the place had the shape it has, decisions were consciously made about what the shape was going to be. This is particularly true of the new suburban neighbourhoods built since the 1960s; residents can't conceive of anyone thinking good communities should be planned differently.

John Sewell The Shape of The City xi

Suburbia is both a settlement form and a lifestyle. It is a place aspired to by some and rejected by others. Amongst the suburbs within Canada there is a variety of different formations, ranging from the 'original' suburbs of the post-war era to the super-sized suburbs built in the last decade. The suburb is frequently an area avoided by the 'creative' types. Its implication of banal and sterile houses and retail power centres tend to scare away those seeking to engage in a vibrant lifestyle with culturally rich spaces; attributes commonly associated with an urban lifestyle. The current state of our suburban lifestyles should not be taken for granted and accepted as it stands. While reinventing the suburbs is a task for many professions to tackle, architecture has the potential to take the lead. To discuss and critique the decisions that have been consciously made about the shape of Toronto, it is important to consider some of the policies and the political motivations that have shaped the suburbs into the places they exist as today. The irony here lies in the avoidance of the creative design and planning people who would be taking on the suburbs, as a challenge to reinvigorate such areas.

John Sewell, former mayor of Toronto, guides us through Toronto's unique borderland development and the political influences of the post war era in his book *The Shape of the Suburbs*. At the end of World War II the City of Toronto emerged with a new form and plans for future growth patterns, it was a time of much ambition and change. The underlying currents developed in the

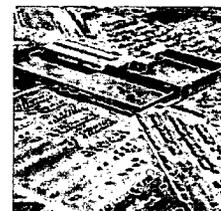


period following the war would end up shaping the future growth of Toronto and the physical spaces that still exist today. By the end of the war, Toronto had already planned a system of roads that would begin the expansion of their great city. Established at this time as a strong and growing financial center of Canada, there was reason for the lofty expectations of growth, while at the same time immigrants from Europe streamed into the city bringing with them their own goals, cultures, skills and needs for settlement. By the early 1960s nearly three million immigrants had landed in Canada, one quarter of them settled in the city of Toronto.¹



The early visions of the postwar suburbs developed under well defined social values. It reduced the occupants of the suburbs to white nuclear families with children. Domestic architecture is frequently endowed with individual character² traits and an expected social profile.

) Toronto was bursting at its seams with a booming population and strong industrial sector and the settlement pattern quickly began to push the boundaries of what was then the city's limits. To adapt to the rapidly changing patterns of growth in the city the government began to re-establish rules of growth, transit and governance. Many North American cities faced similar experiences of growth, and consequent sprawl, though they differed in degree, timing and details. As the automobile became the popular mode of transportation, the common theme of automobile suburbs attached to retail shopping centres began appearing. The first unique aspect of Toronto's suburbia is that it appears at twice the density of development found in comparable American cities. The understanding of this growth and how it came about is essential in guiding the direction of the potential of future development to strengthen the quality of life in the suburbs. All hope is not lost in the sprawl of the suburbs, but new development must begin with an understanding of how this situation arose. Any new process of revitalization starts here.³



At the end of World War II Toronto consisted of a dense and compact urban area including the municipalities of the City of Toronto, the Borough of East York and the Township of York, which combined covered 50 square miles. Surrounding the city at this time were farmlands and small farm settlements. The growth pressures on the city which forced the development to the periphery, also put pressure on the need for infrastructure developments where the farmland was not able to support itself. To accommodate the need of a regional

plan and support in the growing communities, the municipalities amalgamated into one body; in the early 1950s the Metro was established.⁴ The financial stability and specialists available to the Metro provided the structure for growth in the periphery, often accompanied with massive subsidies.

The amalgamation of the Metro proved to be a rapid success and by 1971 the larger city area had doubled in population (since the 1950s). Municipalities like Etobicoke grew substantially, from a lakeside settlement of 30,000 after the war, to a population of 202,000. The developers had reached the edge of the new city limits and had begun to look beyond, into the fringes to support further growth. The fringes struggled in planning as they lacked the structural support of the Metro that had helped the process of earlier developments. A two-tiered governance structure was introduced to the Metro during its establishment which proved successful to negotiate the wholesale functions; and the local government was left responsible for the retail functions of their community. The two-tiered government was then copied to the fringes in various areas but did not prove to have similar results, leaving behind neither local happiness nor good local government.⁵ This resulted in the mismatched suburban neighbourhoods that we now encounter, developed without a vision of an overall goal and, in many cases, lack the cohesiveness of a community.



Metropolitan Toronto in 1953

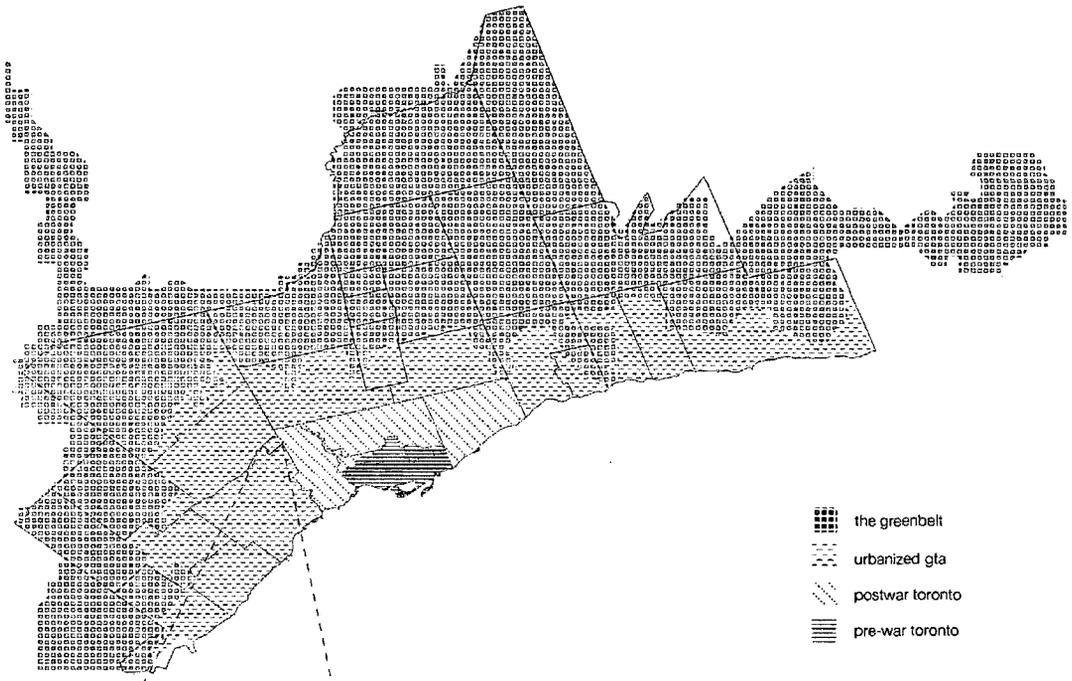
the growth of malton

Malton fits into the fringe development of the suburbs, today it is on the edge of the city of Toronto, the area was once called the Toronto Township. The Toronto Township, to the west of the City of Toronto, was one such fringe development which, whilst growing at rapid rates, did not have strong planning programs in place. In 1966 alone 50 subdivision applications for Toronto Township were submitted to the Toronto Planning Board for review. It would not be wrong to assume part of Malton was submitted at that time. In 1963 Toronto Township had asked for city status but was rejected. Fearful of being consumed by the Metro but aware of its poor land-use planning, the township suggested an extension of the Metro's planning powers, but was

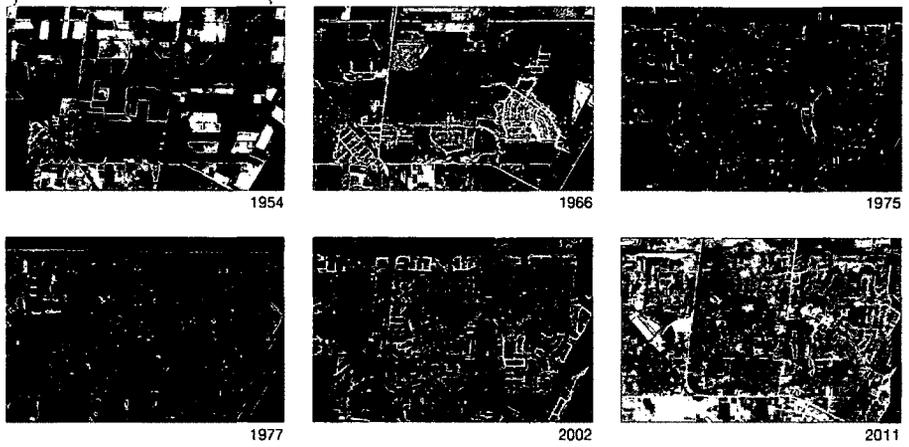


The greenbelt surrounding Toronto contains the spread of the urbanized Greater Toronto Area, causing the suburban sprawl to be slightly more dense than similar cities developed at the same time. What was once known as Metropolitan Toronto established in 1953 encompassed the area that is now known as the City of Toronto.

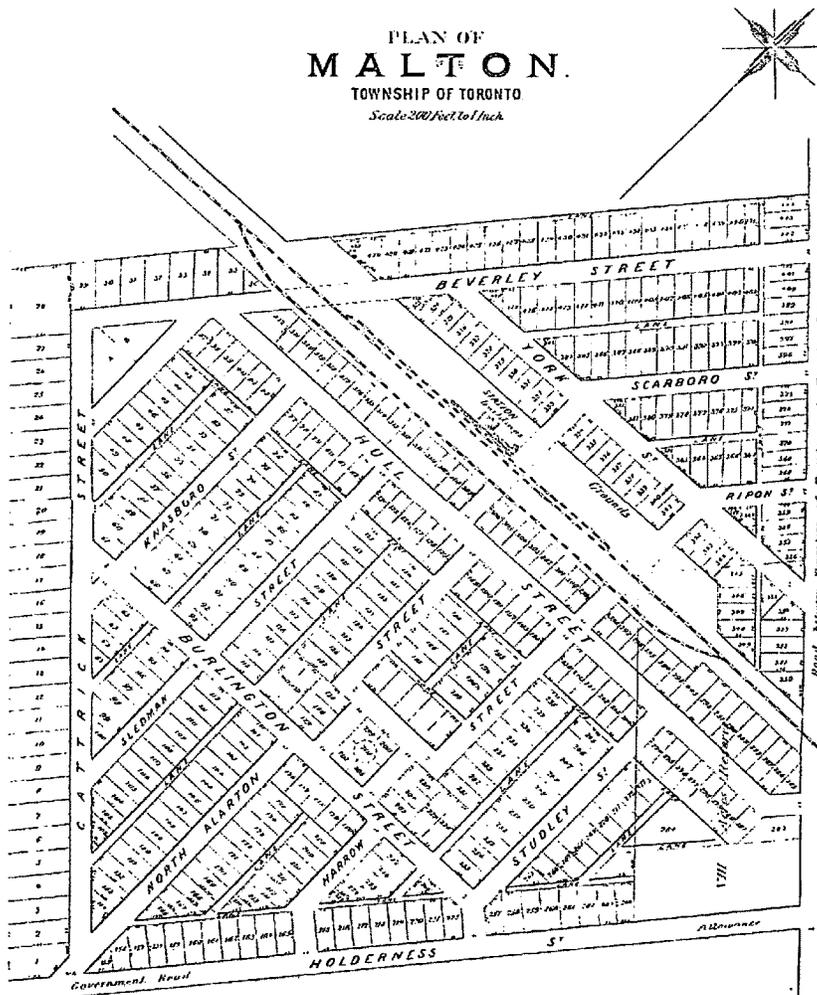
historical greater toronto area



malton , mississauga: suburban sprawl



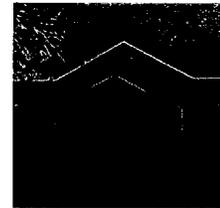
again rejected. Toronto Township was finally granted town status by the Ontario Municipal Board and in early 1968, the town of Mississauga was created. The regional government that is in place today, known as the Peel Region, a part of the Greater Toronto Area, was introduced in 1973 to include Mississauga as well as Streetsville, Brampton, Bramalea and Caledon.⁶



Demonstrated in Mississauga, now a city, the development in the fringes were mainly low-density with little regional planning and vision for their future. In the 1980s the problems resulting from this uncontrolled suburban sprawl became evident to planners. The various initiatives introduced to address the problems in the decades following, did not manage to slow

the turbulent development. The fringe population flourished from a delicate 100,000 people in 1953 to over 3 million by the millennium. This population growth occurred almost consistently at a density of 6 to 10 residential units an acre. The consequences of this sprawl have created a network of local boundaries that are increasingly growing less significant.⁷

Malton's sprawl was ignited by the rising demand for veteran housing during the 1940s and the neighbourhood expanded closer toward Etobicoke. Victory Village was established in 1942 out of temporary wartime housing that was constructed during World War II. Victory Hall, the original community centre of the settlement, was constructed immediately following the occupation of the houses. The sense of community at this point was strong and the neighbourhood was close knit and effervescent. At the end of the war Malton's population grew in support of the industrial influence of the nearby Malton Airport. In 1968 Malton became a part of Mississauga.



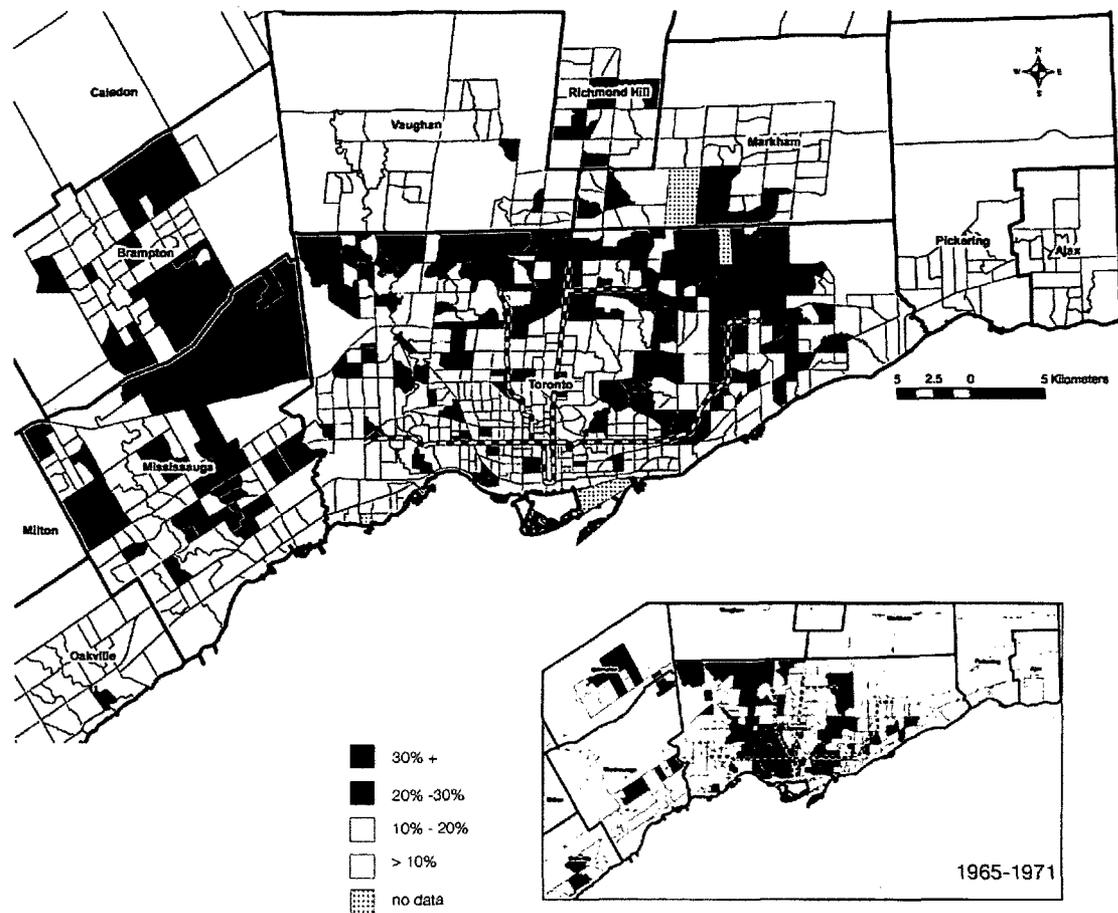
welcome to canada: the immigrant

Bit by bit, beneath the static image of uniform tract houses, many suburbs are undergoing significant physical, social, and cultural change. For the first time in history, suburban municipalities now house more people living in poverty than central cities do. The trend is attributed in part to the increased immigrant populations in 'first-ring suburbs' built shortly after World War II.⁸

The physical evolution of the suburbs and the first spatial goals of the city describe only one portion of the rapid changes that occurred in Toronto following the war. The current urban condition of the GTA is encountering an increase and diversification of immigration. The majority of the 20th Century immigration into Canada was driven by economic needs and political forces of a growing country. The early immigrants to Canada came primarily from European countries. There was a period of time in which immigrants from other source countries were welcome but policies restricted the reuniting of families in order to maintain the immigrants status as strictly labourers. In 1967 the Immigration Act opened the doors for immigrants to come from

immigrant arrivals in the toronto cma: 2001-2006

The decentralization of immigration arrivals in Toronto is made more evident through the visual mapping of arrivals from 2001-2006 and the period of 1965-1971. The shift is seen clearly in the movement to both Toronto's inner suburbs and the Region of Peel. Lower-income immigrants moved to the suburbs following the decentralization of lower-waged employment opportunities and the gentrification of Toronto's inner suburbs.



"These immigrants revitalized the commercial structure of the areas in which they settled by establishing ethnic businesses. They also developed their own cultural and religious organizations. Subsequently, many of these immigrants capitalized on the increased equity in their inner-city houses to buy more modern and spacious houses in the suburbs. There, they often formed spatially concentrated residential enclaves and developed new or relocated ethnic businesses and institutions."
 Robert Murdie *Diversity and Concentration in Canadian Immigration* 8

source countries outside of Europe. As the struggles with racism have settled, Immigration Canada is now seeing immigrants from largely outside the original European source countries. Since the start of the 21st Century almost 80% of recent immigrants have arrived from 'non-traditional' source countries.⁹

The change in source country has pushed the idea of *multiculturalism** further as very distinct cultures are now mixing in Canadian cities. This has challenged the vision of the *cosmopolis*. Canada proclaimed its status as a multicultural country in 1971 through the multiculturalism policy put into place by Pierre Elliott Trudeau. This policy had a profound impact on the social profile of the Toronto region. In the experiences of one generation, the GTA has evolved to become the world's most ethnically diverse urban region. (This is measured by the proportion of foreign-born residents to the Canadian-born population). Yet, the urban condition of everyday life has evolved little in means of embracing the diversity that has reached our cities.¹¹ At the same time as the faces of Toronto and the GTA have changed, the destination to which many immigrants locate has also changed. Contrary to the patterns of the first settlers into the city core, many of the immigrants are either relocating from the core to the suburbs or landing directly into the suburbs.

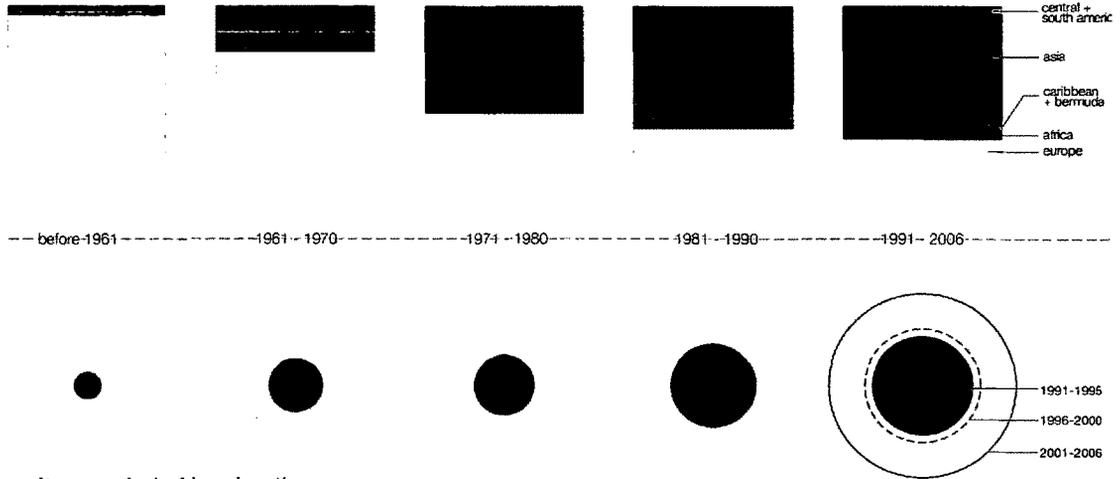
In the past thirty years Toronto has managed to remake itself in demographics and values at a rapid rate with the changing immigrant networks. The question remains however, with this drastic move within the social realm of the city, why has so little changed in the process and physical manifestation of the spatial goals and processes of our cities? The answer does not lie in the demolition and complete restructuring of the suburbs but rather in understanding the structures of everyday life and community that exist. As immigrants learn to adapt to their new environments, perhaps the physical landscape should also respond symbiotically. Only then can one begin to respond to the changes needed within the community, and only once prepared is the community able to grow and alter its own landscape while the population and urban lifestyles continue to evolve. The process of building a city, a neighbourhood or a home is never complete but should continually reconsider itself.

*Canadian Multiculturalism Act:
 (a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage;
 (b) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future;...
 (g) promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins.¹⁰



The Melton Public School was built in 1952 on Airport Road and later closed in 1981 as newer schools in the community monopolized the student population. The School was purchased in 1987 by the Sikh community to be used as its Gurdwara. Today it holds a large Sikh fellowship and the Khalsa Community School.¹²

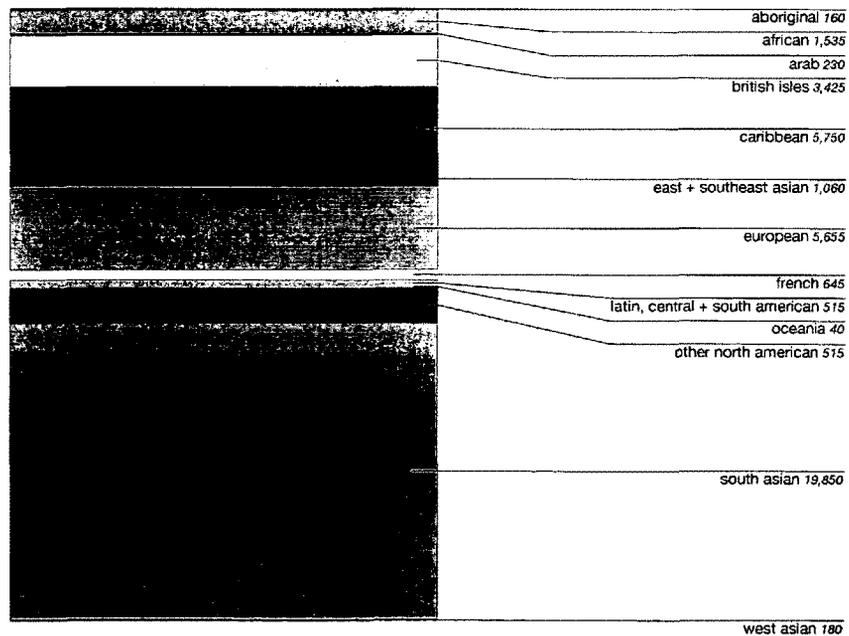
toronto cma: origins of the immigrant population: 2006 by period of arrival



malton: period of immigration

non-immigrants: **13,585**
immigrants: **23,620 63%**
non-permanent residents: **295**

malton: ethnic origin

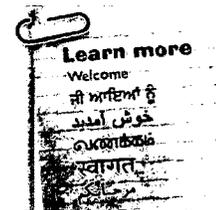


data from Murdie, Diversity and Concentration in Canadian Immigration and Peel Data Centre. 2006 Regional Atlas.

welcome home: the ethnoburb

The spatial formations created by the influx of immigrants are frequently described as ethnic concentrations. In the literature of the mid to late 20th Century, ethnic concentrations are typically defined as ethnic enclaves. Recent studies have offered new terminology to describe the current ethnic concentrations developing in suburban districts. Coined by Wei Li in 1998, the term 'ethnoburb' is used to discuss the suburban ethnic concentrations of both residential and business districts on the edges of a city. Li's research outlines the ethnoburb as having a combination of features of the traditional inner-city enclave, as well as the common suburb, a hybrid of values. A key point that Li expresses is that an ethnoburb can contain multiple ethnicities. Only a significant concentration of one ethnicity, not even a majority, is necessary to define an ethnoburb.¹³ This makes the community of Malton an ethnoburb by Li's definitions.

Contrary to common preconceptions, research shows that ethnoburbs do not evolve out of spatial constraints but instead are formed by the market systems and ultimately by choice.¹⁴ The evolution of the ethnoburb is in direct contradiction to previously held spatial beliefs on ethnic segregation. It was assumed that as immigrants moved outside of the city, they would begin to assimilate both spatially and culturally.¹⁵ Ethnoburbs have instead carried the values of ethnic concentrations and challenges to spatial integration. Spatial integration is defined as when the geographic distribution of each ethnic group is similar to that of every other group, with the expectation they are further distributed evenly across the country.¹⁶ Robert Murdie and Sutarna Ghosh go on to describe integration as a process and an outcome, the former as a 'series of negotiated interactions' and the latter as a range of categories. Murdie and Ghosh's research divides spatial and social integration into objective factors and subjective factors. Objective factors include housing, language and education, while the subjective factors comprise of issues of identity and the absorption of norms and values.¹⁷ These definitions propose a framework of both spatial and social investigation into the functions and processes of an ethnoburb, helping

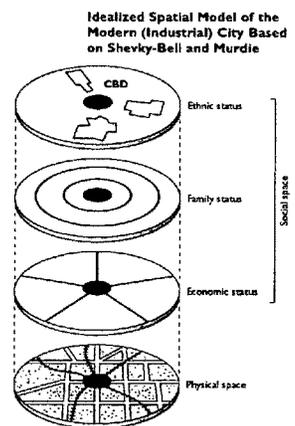


The home page of the Lincoln M. Alexander Secondary School in Malton demonstrates the diversity of languages within Malton. As listed above: English, Punjabi, Urdu, Tamil, Hindi, and Arabic.

us understand the nature of the everyday and how to participate in the 'series of negotiated interactions'. Research on ethnoburbs in most cases reflects economic, commercial, social and ethnic features of the communities. What it does not discuss, and what the following seeks to discover, is the changing visual imagery; the spatial, architectural and built environment characteristics. In the growth of Toronto, and other diverse cities in Canada, these elements not only help to express the identity of the ethnoburb to the visitor, but simultaneously build the identity for the inhabitants.¹⁸

Through the combination of the physical and social spaces of the city we can now consider the social landscapes that form within the city. As noted in *Urban Social Space* by Murdie and Carlos Teixeira, "much of our understanding of the Canadian urban mosaic is based on delimiting the spatial distribution of social groups and the segregation between groups."¹⁹ Their study re-organizes the traditional models of the social mosaic of a city, including Burgess's concentric zone theory, Hoyt's sectoral theory and, Harris and Ullman's multiple nuclei theory to represent the multicultural city organization of Toronto. The uppermost layer of ethnic status is organized in the nucleated form of Harris and Ullman's theory and begins to imagine the growth of the ethnoburb on the fringes of the city. There is a tendency for ethnic groups to form clusters as a means to preserve culture and receive mutual support. In some cases the concentration of ethnic groups are results of external forces of discrimination and racism.²⁰ The desire to gather together for mutual support is the foundation of a community; within the ethnoburb it is important to consider this gathering and support as one of the moments in which the suburb can begin to be revitalized. It could be considered that the united nature of minority groups could provide insight to all communities.

The development of ethnic enclaves and ethnoburbs has become increasingly important to the urban landscape of Toronto.²¹ The development of ethnic and religious institutions, as well as malls and shopping districts geared towards specific immigrant groups, are often part of the identity of the area. While each area and immigrant have their own experiences, it is expected



that immigrant groups will continue to move into the suburbs and continue to fragment spatial patterns. While some immigrants who gain language skills and improve their economic positions, will move from ethnic concentrations. The positive benefits of living together and retaining a sense of identity will continue to be significant factors in the re-articulation of the ethnoburb in different areas. While the benefits of living in ethnic concentrations can outweigh the challenges the ethnoburb still requires daily negotiations between the multiple cultural differences. There is an increased need for focus on these negotiated interactions and find a way in which difference can be understood equally.

notes

1 Sewell, John. *The Shape of the Suburbs: Understanding Toronto's Sprawl*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) 4-6.

2 Wright xvi.

3 Sewell, *The Shape of the Suburbs* 84.

4 *ibid* 22-26.

5 *ibid* 130.

6 *ibid* 135-143.

7 Lornic, John. "How Toronto Lost Its Groove." *The Walrus* Nov. (2011)

8 Dunham-Jones, Ellen, and June Williamson. *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs*. (Hoboken, N.J.: J. Wiley, 2009) 9.

9 Sandercock, Leonie, and Giovanni Attili. *Where Strangers Become Neighbours: Integrating Immigrants in Vancouver, Canada*. (London : Springer, 2009) 7.

10 Canadian Dept. of Justice. *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. (Ottawa: DJ. 2011) 3-4. See appendix for complete act.

11 Lornic n.pag.

12 "Live Kirtan From Malton Gurdwara Sahib." *Live Kirtan*. (N.p., n.d.)

13 Li 479-480.

14 Murdie, Robert, and Sutarna Ghosh. "Does Spatial Concentration always Mean a Lack of Integration? Exploring Ethnic Concentration and Integration in Toronto." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36.2 (2010) 293-311.

15 Abrahamson, Mark. *Urban Enclaves: Identity and Place in the World*. 2nd ed. (New York: Worth Publishers) 2006. 8-9., Murdie and Ghosh 295.

16 Balakrishnan, T. R., and Stephen Gyimah. "Spatial Residential Patterns of Selected Ethnic Groups: Significance and Policy Implications." *Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal* 35 (2003) 115.

17 Murdie and Ghosh 296.

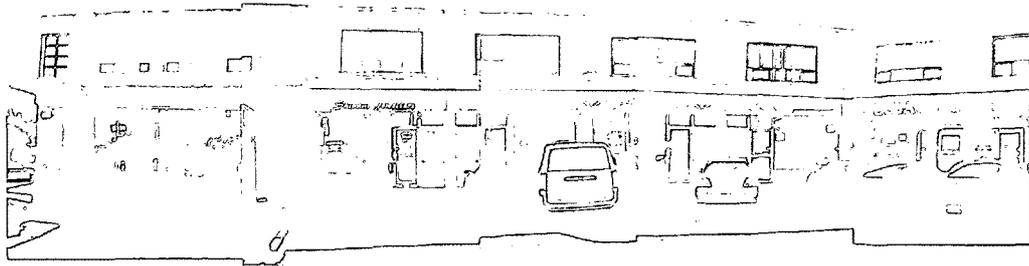
18 King, Anthony D. *Spaces of Global Cultures: Architecture, Urbanism, Identity*. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 105.

19 Bunting, Trudi E., and Pierre Fillon. *Canadian Cities in Transition: Local through Global Perspectives*. 3rd ed. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2006) 154.

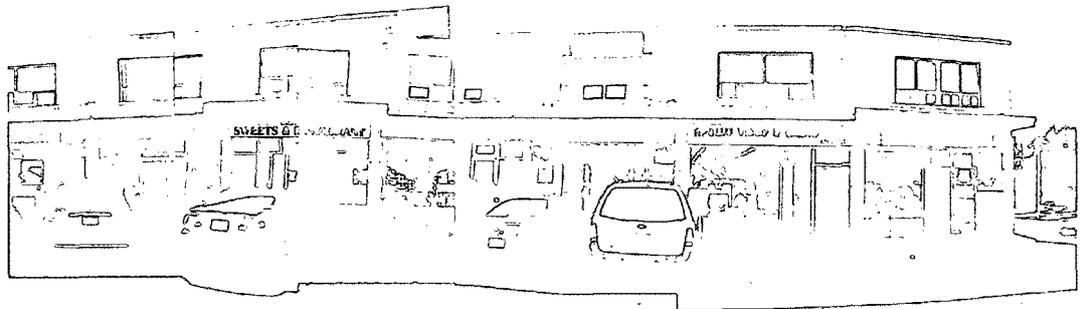
20 *ibid*. 157.

21 *ibid*. 163.

The commercial strip on Airport Road.



Bollywood movies and Indian sweets.



understanding difference **3**

Some notion of identity is, arguably, indispensable to life itself, and some sense of culturally based identity would seem to be inescapable, in that all human beings are culturally embedded. But while the politics of pure identity seeks to eliminate the Other, the politics of difference seeks recognition and inclusion.

Leonie Sandercock *Mongrel Cities* 98.

The changes we have seen in Canadian cities, in Toronto especially, over the past three decades call for a new way of understanding and restructuring of our urban landscape. The writings of Leonie Sandercock explore the question of the new *cosmopolis*, or multicultural city we are entering into and how the rules of planning for these cities will change. Part of this new formation is what Sandercock describes as 'the voices from the borderlands', "the voices of the multicultural city, of those who have been marginalized, displaced, oppressed or dominated."¹ These voices challenge the ways in which we structure and live in our neighbourhoods. These voices are strong within the emerging experiences of the ethnoburb and require both a means of negotiation and present new ways of thinking about spaces of cultural collisions and inclusion. People who "dwell in cultures of displacement and transplantation," the immigrants, are one type which Sandercock suggests, are challenging us to acknowledge and respect difference and diversity in our professional practice.²

Grounded in the discussion of the borderlands is the need for both place and identity. The role of physical space and the experiences of place are important in the development of social conditions, in this case, the social differences explored by Sandercock. Jane Jacobs and Ruth Fincher describe the importance of space as "far more than 'neutral backdrops or uncomplicated stages for people's lives,' more than 'containers within which social relations develop.'³ It is important to resist the tendency to define cultures as locally bounded in space, yet at the same time Jacobs and Fincher warn of the dangers of reaching the point to which cultures and identity are de-territorialized. The very act of immigration speaks to a movement of cultures but there is still a

THE ETHNIC AISLE

What is the Ethnic Aisle?

ETHNIC AISLE is a blog that collects and links to the thoughts of mouthy bloggers, journalists and everyday peeps who actually hail from those mysterious diverse communities you hear so much about. It's focus is race and ethnicity.³

"Welcome to the ethnic aisle. We know you've been craving something different. You're tired of hearing that the Greater Toronto Area is the most diverse spot in the world, only to be bombarded with the same voices, the same ideas, the same flavour of news and commentary on every website, newspaper, tv channel and radio station. It's boring, right? It's so limited, which is such a shame when there's so much more to taste.

This blog collects and links to the thoughts of mouthy bloggers, journalists and everyday peeps who actually hail from those mysterious diverse communities you hear so much about. It's focus is race and ethnicity.³

link between physical spaces and the social boundaries which contain the production of *difference*. There is the challenge of continually moving between and across boundaries and cultures. We have to understand that there are different ways in which cultural identities find their place in space.

The debates surrounding politics of difference are vast and varied, there is not time to discuss them all in the scope of this thesis. To utilize the politics of difference in relation to the ethnoburb is to understand its role in the imagining of a multicultural community. Difference in this case is not viewed as a deviation from a socially constructed norm, or *culture of domination**. Sandercock writes, "difference thus emerges not as a description of the (essential) attributes of a group but as a function of the relations between groups and the interaction of groups with institutions."⁵ The ethnoburb provides a varied landscape to explore the relationships amongst people, groups and institutions. It provides the opportunity to explore the levels of difference that are negotiated through interactions within the physical spaces of the community. Sandercock continues, "difference then is not just different interests,... but a different way of being in the world. This involves the need, and the right, to give expression to difference in the public sphere."⁶ Discussing the term 'difference' in a discussion about suburbs seems far from appropriate according to the traditional thought of the sterile suburban image. Social difference however, is found at varying scales and levels of intensity within a city. The use of the term difference here is not to work from the ideals of a diverse community, but to be able to critically discuss the structure of the ethnoburb. Fincher and Jacobs expanded on this writing, "To accept the term 'difference' into our vocabulary is to accept the assumption that there are indeed distinctions between groups of people that are defined by certain characteristics."⁷ Now, instead of designing with the idea of homogeny, we attempt to design in the image of difference.

* the culture of domination is the majority culture in which the policies and framework of the city are built off of. In North America Western cultural influence has shaped the majority of the social norms.



We must challenge the approaches to community planning and architectural production through the sociological imaginations that focus on thinking about how we might all live together amongst our differences. It is significant to consider in terms of identity and the everyday that 'difference' is not just a solution achieved through policies of multiculturalism. Sandercock

challenges the multicultural ideal of the 20th Century through a renaming of it to *interculturalism*. She frames it in this way; culture is indeed inescapable, it is embedded in the everyday. One must allow culture to be always evolving, dynamic and to form hybrids. Cultural diversity is a positive change in our communities and it should be looked upon as an opportunity not a barrier. However, it is understood that there will be political contestation. Sandercock believes that every citizen has the right to 'difference' and the right to the city, to understand both and work within them simultaneously demands active citizenship and daily negotiations. Finally, a sense of belonging cannot be based on ethnicity, race, or religion, and inequalities that are currently prevalent in society must be addressed.⁹

A strong community needs the invention and evolution of a 'common culture' that has no ethnic grounds and is established through the socialization of the members of the community. How then are we to create spaces in which the community has the opportunity to develop richly into a place which engages in interculturalism, and embraces 'difference'?⁹ In our changing cities it is important to consider this as a society of cultural enclaves, one in which people do not know how to talk to each other. Sandercock attempts to engage in the benefits of a diverse community through the discussion of intercultural interaction. "Intercultural contact and interaction are a necessary condition for addressing inevitable conflicts."¹⁰ Sandercock concludes that because each culture has its own systems of meaning and versions of the good life that as each culture realizes its own range of these capacities they essentially pertain to only a portion of the totality of human existence. Through a sharing of ideas and cultures we can widen our views and ways of proceeding in life. ¹¹ In a time when our way of living is no longer sustainable in the West it should be even higher on our priorities to learn from each other ways in which to create a richer and more efficient lifestyle.

Sandercock discusses the work of James Donald to frame the questions about strangers and community: "Problem with community is that usually its advocates are referring to some phantom of the past, projected onto

some future utopia at the cost of disavowing the unhomey reality of living in the present.”¹² Donald suggests that we need to start with the present day situation of living with strangers and then seek out the commonality that might currently exist. It is through broad social participation that we endeavour into the open process of making meanings and creating values. These developments are continually emerging, changing and negotiated within common culture. Perhaps even stronger, the need for negotiation exists in community of greater diversity. Sandercock writes, “This is community redefined neither as identity nor as place but as a productive process of social interaction, apparently resolving the long-standing problem of the dark side of community, the drawing of boundaries between those who belong and those who don’t.”¹³ Donald however, frames the argument suggesting we do not need to share cultural traditions, but must be able rather to talk to our neighbours. It is difficult in the age of migration to share all cultural traditions with your neighbour immediately, but as Sandercock says, through the development of community, a shared culture and traditions do emerge.

To probe deeper into the daily negotiations of culture and difference within the ethnoburb we need to explore individual cultural identity. Amita Handa, a sociologist, studied the trials and challenges of second generation immigrant youth in Toronto in her novel *Of Silk Saris and Mini-Skirts*.¹⁴ She discovers the fragmentation of identity that occurs in immigrant youth as they struggle to balance the pressures of cultural identity within their home and school. She claims that culture is associated with notions of identity and belonging, as outlined earlier, although it is very often interchanged with terms such as race and ethnicity. Handa states, “The overlap of the terms culture, race, and ethnicity can be understood if we examine the shifting notions of difference in the twentieth century.”¹⁵ This overlap is why Handa proposes that the notions of cultural difference have been avoided on many counts as an avoidance of the racist subtexts. However, she continues to argue that the avoidance draws attention away from the important notions of how cultural difference is closely related to cultural identity. The study covers the maintenance of ‘authentic’ cultural practices and the cultural aspects of the communities in which they live.



Multiculturalism is best expressed in the action of individuals. This requires people to be physically present in spaces together, but also to take risks and approach a stranger. Sandercock suggests the places where multiculturalism moves from policy to action are those where people are comfortable to take the leap. In the schoolyard, in line at the store, in parks and even in parking lots.¹⁶ These spaces of seemingly 'banal transgressions' open up the opportunity for people to engage with one another. The silent solitude of a suburban home or the daily commute alone in the car to work does nothing to encourage this atmosphere. At the same time, events held to celebrate our multicultural heritage place expectations and labels upon individuals, not allowing for the freedom of casual, and daily, association that will in time help to strengthen neighbourhoods, communities and, eventually, cities.

notes

1 Sandercock, *Towards Cosmopolis* 110.

2 *ibid.*

3 "What is the Ethnic Aisle?" *The Ethnic Aisle*. N.p. (20 Sept. 2011).

4 Fincher and Jacobs 19.

5 Sandercock, *Towards Cosmopolis* 124.

6 *ibid.* 125.

7 Fincher and Jacobs 1.

8 Sandercock and Attili 219-225.

9 *ibid.* 197.

10 *ibid.* 198.

11 *ibid.*

12 *ibid.* 200.

13 *ibid.*

14 Handa, Amita. *Of Silk Saris and Mini-Skirts: South-Asian Girls Walk the Tight-Rope of Culture*. (Toronto: Women's Press, 2003).

15 Handa 19.

16 Sandercock and Attili 30.

Two houses, side by side, in the front lawn of one a six foot inflated turkey to celebrate Thanksgiving. Next door a house covered in twinkle lights and a Sikh family in the front yard preparing to celebrate Diwali. These are the spaces of cultural collisions.



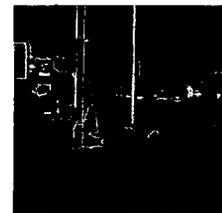
socio-spatial negotiations **4**

Further, the most important of the purposes or functions served by informal public gathering places cannot be supplied by any other agencies in the society. All great cultures have had a vital informal public life and, necessarily, they evolved their own popular versions of those places that played host to it.

Ray Oldenburg *The Great Good Place* ix

The ethnoburb, while unique in its demographic makeup, still struggles with the challenges of living in rapidly designed suburban sprawl. The suburbs are referred to by many authors and critics as sterile, boring and dull, in contrast to the excitement and liveliness that is envisioned to exist within a busy and thriving urban downtown community. The term community is important to consider as it is also a part of developing a bridge across multicultural differences. Ash Amin writes; "The distinctive feature of mixed neighbourhoods is that they are communities without community, each marked by multiple and hybrid affiliations of varying social and geographical reach, and each intersecting momentarily (or not) with another one for common local resources and amenities."¹ Cultural collisions, as discussed earlier, certainly add to the challenge of forming a network or community within the neighbourhood, it is also fair to confess that many post-war suburbs in general lack a lively public realm.

It is not that suburbia has no social life but that it tends to be organized around the home, workplace or school. These forms of social life exist within hierarchal settings and specific roles tend to be enforced causing socialization to be more exclusive. The communal spaces that do exist tend to be programmed to very specific forms of recreation, thus instilling segregation of age, interest or culture. ² We will take on the challenge of what type of spaces respond to the need for an inclusive social realm. In this case we are discussing both social and spatial negotiations within the ethnoburb. Sandercock shared a similar theme. While questioning this very challenge of the planning of a multicultural city she suggests;



"Let's pose this question to ourselves; If ethnic mixture through housing cannot be engineered, and public space is not the site of meaningful multicultural encounter, how can fear and intolerance be challenged, how might residents begin to negotiate and come to terms with difference in the city?"³

I will approach the challenge of public gathering places in two ways in this section, to develop a series of negotiations in the spaces of cultural collisions. The first is the form in which Sandercock suggests, *micro-publics* and their role specifically in engaging the diversity within the suburbs. The second is by way of sociologist Ray Oldenburg, who discusses these gathering spaces in terms of the *third place*. While Sandercock approaches the typological form and function in which micro-publics can be incorporated into the larger urban planning of the neighbourhood, Oldenburg approaches third places as a mode to strengthen the life of the community.

micro-publics

Sandercock states that 'public space is not the site of meaningful multicultural encounter.' If it is not within public space that we find the answer to negotiating our differences, where can we locate these negotiations in a suburban environment? The post-war suburb has limited informal public life, there are no quick places to walk to or to gather with friends outside the private home. In the ethnoburb it has been shared that gathering within a private home is even more a rare occurrence as there are cultural boundaries and differences which result in a unsure reading of neighbours.⁴ Suburbia lacks the congenial spaces in which to spend quality time with one another. While popular literature on urban studies suggests that within open public spaces people, through simply visibility and the chance encounter, will meet with each other and begin these processes of negotiations, we know this does not always happen in reality. In many cases the public spaces are territorialized by a particular group, such as the youth at the skate park. Other chances are those spaces of transit, where people generally do not slow down to listen and share with strangers. Sandercock suggests resolution to this through the theory developed by Ash Amin in his report *Ethnicity and the Multicultural City, Living with Diversity* (2002), created for the British government following the riots in Oldham, Burnley



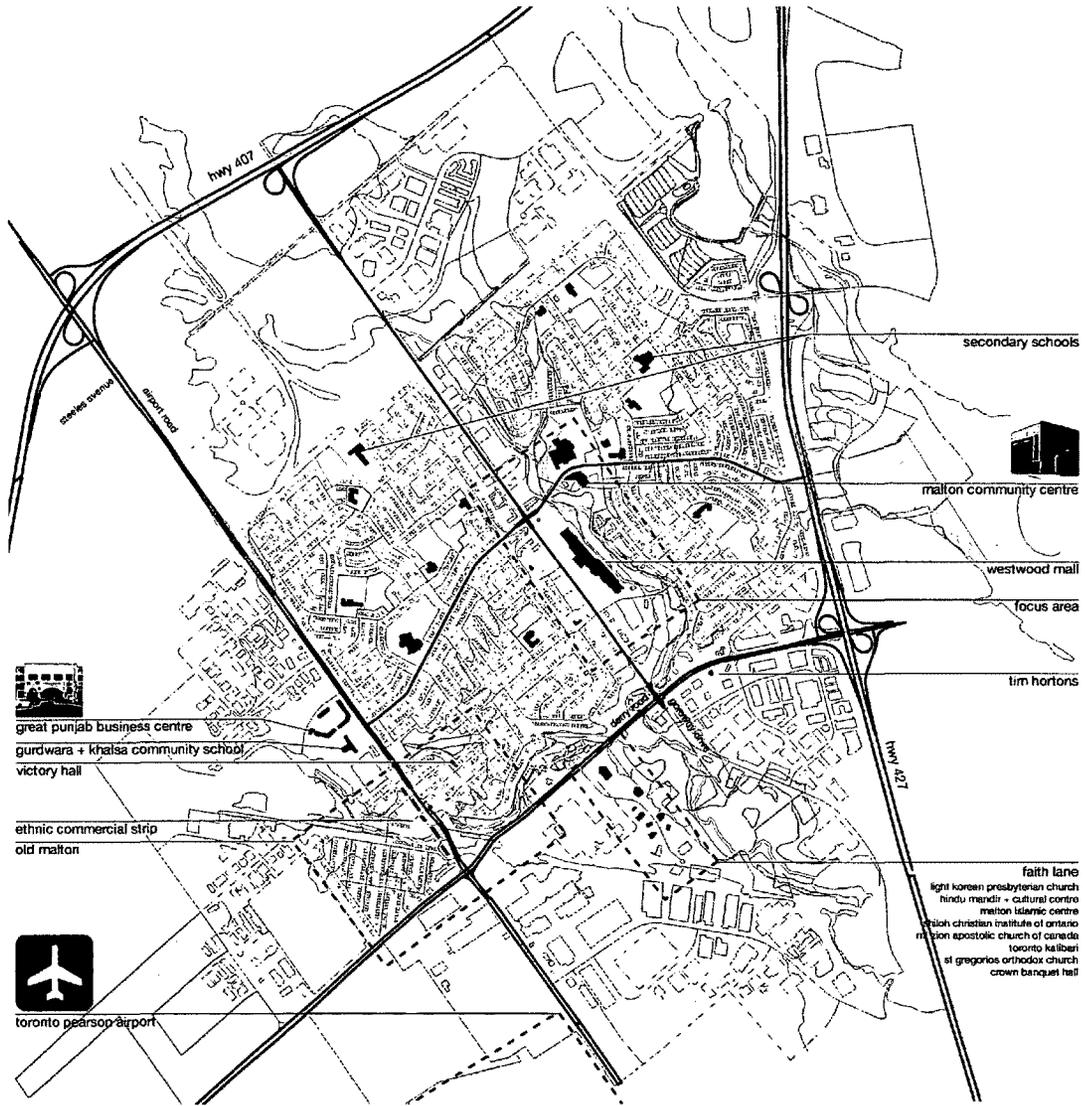
and Bradford in 2001 involving Asian youth. This event made international news regarding the scale of ethnic deprivation and segregation.⁵

Amin uses the term micro-publics to suggest the spaces in which diversity can be engaged and negotiated. He identifies the failures of the common public space because it does not instigate interdependence and habitual engagement. It is important these spaces of negotiation fall into the patterns of everyday life. The sites Amin suggests as micro-publics are those in which dialogue and prosaic negotiations are compulsory, spaces such as a school, youth centre, community centre or in some cases the workplace. He also uses the term 'banal transgression' as a further description of the activity within the micro-publics in which multicultural differences are negotiated. Banal transgressions, Amin suggests, are sites in which people step outside of their comfort zones, disrupting the usual patterns of their daily lives in these areas, they are more likely able to be encouraged to work towards cultural changes. An example of this kind of experience is post-secondary education. There, young people leave their locale and familiar places and, in the process of seeking similar goals, are able to break down pre-existing differences for the sake of a common goal. This disruption in daily life works to enhance interaction of a prosaic nature. Amin expresses this, "Their effectiveness lies in placing people from different backgrounds in new settings where engagement with strangers in a common activity disrupts easy labeling of the stranger as enemy and initiates new attachments. They are moments of cultural destabilization, offering individuals the chance to break out of fixed relations and fixed notions, and through this, to learn to become different through new patterns of social interaction."⁶

Micro-publics will not instantly become spaces of social inclusion, they still require the organization and strategies of a group to help build a voice within the community. They are however, a step towards challenging the sterile suburbs with an infusion of activity, surprise and spirit of community. The globalized localities of today have no shared sense of place. To establish this will help build the foundation for understanding and co-existence within the

malton, mississauga

Highlighted are the places of gathering within the community that exist today. There are a number of schools in Malton whose gymnasiums and hallways become places of interaction for the children and community. Other spaces highlighted include; religious institutions, community centres and Westwood Mall.



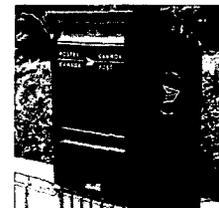
micro-publics and gathering spots

" My interest in those happy gathering places that a community may contain, those 'homes away from home' where unrelated people relate, is almost as old as I am. Children, I suspect, are instinctively attuned to the climate of human relations around them and experience an inner joy and serenity, a feeling that all is well when the adults in their lives relax and laugh in one another's company." *Oldenburg The Great Good Place ix*

ethnoburb.⁷ Micro-publics suggest a site that does more than the common public space, one that has an inherent program or level of unsettling to require interaction.

third place

Oldenburg's *third place* may not fulfill all the roles of the micro-public site but offers insight into the social nature of humans and our need for spaces of engagement. It can be taken as a reinforcing of the focus of the social engagement in which Amin seeks in resolving the tensions that often lie in the ethnoburb. Oldenburg opens his book *The Great Good Place* with a critique of the suburbs. Oldenburg writes, "The typical suburban home is easy to leave behind as its occupants move to another. What people cherish most in them can be taken along in the move... There is little sense of place and even less opportunity to put down roots."⁸ The urban growth and development in North America, in the suburban sprawl, is hostile to informal public life. Oldenburg is discouraged by the continued success of suburbs, shown through their proliferation across our landscape, when suburbia appears to have so obviously failed to create a vibrant community life. He challenges the role of planners and developers whom he believes, "have shown a great disdain for those earlier arrangements in which there was life beyond home and work," they "continue to add to the rows of regimented loneliness in neighbourhoods so sterile as to cry out for something as modest as a central mail drop or a little coffee counter at which those in the area might discover one another."⁹ Oldenburg's passion for the importance of social spaces and their role in communities, as well as his adamant disdain for the suburbs, is clearly visible through his language choices.



The third place is a setting radically different from that of the home and is a place in which people can find remedies for stress, loneliness and alienation through simple socialization. The third place is established through eight key character descriptions, although its primary activity is conversation. The characteristics are as follows; on neutral ground, the third place is a leveler,

conversation is the main activity; accessible, maintains regulars, maintains a low profile, the mood is playful, and finally, it is a home away from home. Oldenburg outlined these characteristics as the makings of a third place, a public gathering place. Oldenburg overviewed six locations which he felt embodied the qualities of a third place, ranging from the English pub to the classic coffeehouse to the American tavern. While each place has its own level of sociability and character of attendees they all evolve around the gathering of friends to enjoy casual time together.¹⁰

Oldenburg laments the loss of the local tavern. In the suburbs it may have never once arrived, but 'taverns' once held a variety of roles in the organization of the neighbourhood. The tavern served as both a 'mixer' and a 'port of entry' where newcomers were introduced to the regulars. The increased mobility of society in North America, with rapid residence changes now common place, it is mystifying why this function of the local tavern was not greater utilized. This argument is even more relevant now, as integration in the ethnoburb is a common struggle, and the need for a port of entry to welcome newcomers is frequently non-existent. The spaces of casual and informal affiliation are missing in the modern neighbourhoods and therefore are losing the easier version of friendship and congeniality that make a community.¹¹ The increasing scale of homes in newer suburbs are an internalization of the public gathering spaces which make a community. Many people in so called 'bedroom suburbs' take part in their third place socialization outside the neighbourhood, resulting in a socially blighted area they call 'home'.

Perhaps the most significant point that Oldenburg makes in regard to the third place, in relationship to architecture, is in finding the space itself. He writes, "most of the informal public life we managed in the past represented the triumph of the space user over the space planner - we simply took over establishments and spaces created for other purposes."¹² This statement embodies two architectural concepts, that of adaptation and flexibility. Oldenburg argues that the new environment which is so structured and divided by function is revolutionary in "its unprecedented resistance to user

modification."¹³ This poses to architects that the spaces of a modern and lively community should maintain qualities which allow for modification by the user. Further, in the evolution of the ethnoburb, and the changing of the culture of domination in the community, the specificity of the spaces may need to evolve to suit different lifestyles of the groups. Oldenburg predicted in 1999 that "America's upcoming generations will learn more than we about adaptation of the human organism to its habitat and about adaptation of the environment to the needs of the organism. It is an education that will be forced upon them."¹⁴ This prediction has proved true in ways possibly not even envisioned by Oldenburg, where the needs of adaptation have been stretched beyond individual cultures to involve a multicultural suburban experience. He thought the basic flaw of the American suburb was "its lack of diversity, and that flaw may prove fatal to it."¹⁵ The ethnoburb with its new vitality offers the diversity and refreshed ways of living that could be just the revitalization that is needed to root the sterile suburb within a community.

notes

1 Amin, Ash. "Ethnicity and the multicultural city: living with diversity." *Environment and Planning A* 34.6 (2002) 972.

2 Dunham-Jones and Williamson 60.

3 Sandercock, *Mongrel Cities* 94.

4 Peat 9.

5 Amin 1.

6 *ibid.* 14.

7 Sandercock, *Mongrel Cities* 94.

8 Oldenburg, Ray. *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community*. (New York: Marlowe, 1999) 4.

9 *ibid.* 18.

10 *ibid.* 20-41.

11 *ibid.* 65.

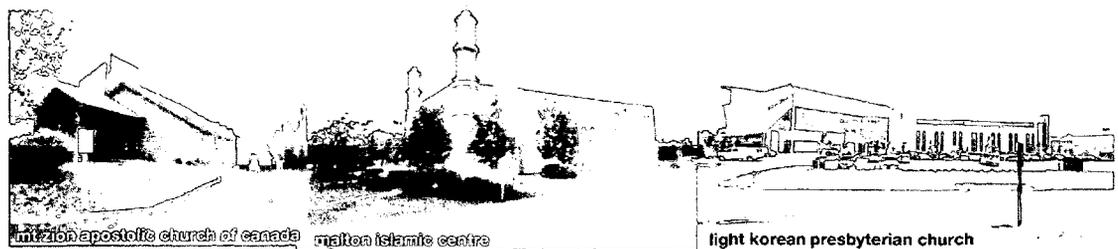
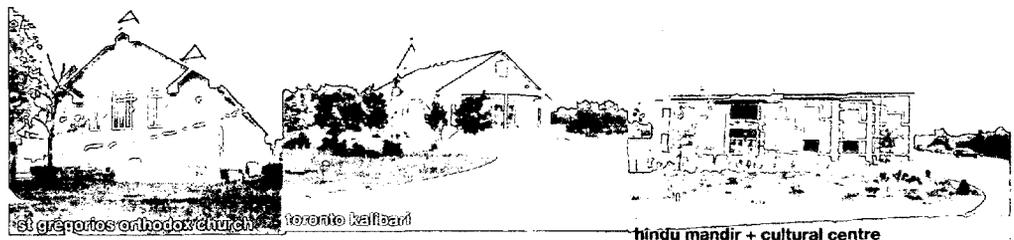
12 *ibid.* 286.

13 *ibid.*

14 *ibid.*

15 *ibid.* 290.

**coined faith lane by residents
this street of religious institutions**



**represents different cultures
existing peacefully beside one
another but not negotiating
differences through interaction.**

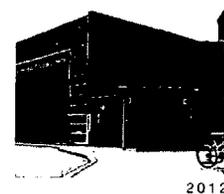
counter-study 1 malton community centre

In the sustained absence of a healthy and vigorous informal public life, the citizenry may quite literally forget how to create one...Urban sophistication is deteriorating into such matters as knowing who is safe on whose "turf," learning to minimize expression and bodily contact when in public, and other survival skills required in a world devoid of the amenities.

Ray Oldenburg *The Great Good Place*,13

Malton Community Centre first opened its doors in December 1976, the community of Malton was booming and in need of a central location to gather. Its creation was a combined effort of the Citizen's Task Force, the City of Mississauga, the Region of Peel and the local library and school boards. The previous gathering place of Malton, the old Malton Police Village Hall was condemned by the city and the vision for the new community centre was set to replace it. A survey of the community was taken by the commissioner of Parks and Recreation, Ed Halliday, as a means of research to discover the needs of the community. The study found that there was a need for leisure activities, organized programming and a day care centre, all of these were combined with the vision of the community centre which was built to include the previously existing Centennial Library. The library was first built in 1967 but temporarily moved into the basement of Westwood Mall in 1975 during the construction of the new community centre.¹

The original Malton Community Centre was designed by Raymond Moriyama, the design received the Award of Merit in the Ontario Masonry Architecture Rural Design Awards in 1978. The official opening of the centre in 1977 was much anticipated as the largest and best event ever to be held in Malton. Accounts from the day show that the excitement was palpable. The opening brought together 56 community groups, clubs and organizations to share with the members of Malton. Dance groups, choirs and a stage band performed in the new 200 seat theatre. There were three days of events



2012



1978

celebrating this great feat in the community. The Peel Regional Chairman at the time, Lou Parsons shared that it was “a fabulous facility and a jewel for Mississauga.”² Aside from the theatre, the community centre’s 5300 m² featured 2500m² of recreation centre, including a fitness club, squash courts, racquet ball, saunas and a gymnasium. There was also 1700 m² dedicated to the new library which housed 40,000 books and a crafts room, large and small auditoriums and an informal meeting lounge for seniors. Malton’s community centre later saw renovations in 2003 and a recent pool addition in 2011 increasing its service areas to over 7,500m².³



While the latter part of the 20th Century saw great experiences for the Malton Community Centre, the responses are not as positive today. As Malton's population increased, it began to struggle with incidents of crime and violence, the security on the community centre changed, essentially altering its potential as a third place and space of local gathering. While it is still a great recreational service centre for the community featuring, a 25 m lane pool, a therapeutic pool, fitness centres, a gymnasium and rooms to hold programmed classes, it lacks the freedoms associated with being a community. The city of Mississauga conducted a youth response report regarding the community services. One student had this to say about the Malton Community Centre;

“The age limit and for instance in the gym where I live I have to go with an adult but if they wanted to invite more youth they could have put supervisors there and the police in my community center in Malton thinks all the kids which are 12 and higher are mischief makers and so the other day I went and was roaming around in the center with my friend and the policeman comes and says angrily, 'what are you doing?' and we are saying nothing but his face was telling us 'hey kids I hate you get out' and we went out.”⁴

This experience is partially the result of an incident which took place in the community centre. On July 3rd, 2010 a 17 year boy was shot and killed on the basketball courts within the community centre. The shooter was a Scarborough gang member searching for someone else.⁵ When he was unable to find the person he was looking for, he shot the innocent youth. While this incident was a situation of bad timing and anger, the experience of the community centre has since changed and a blemish has been placed on all youth in the neighbourhood. There was an increase in levels of security and a



strict no loitering policy was put into place. As one mother of the community discussed, it has made it difficult for her children to be able to find a place to hang out with friends outside their own homes. She shares her thoughts;

"Now, even my daughter goes to a Leaders in Training program there and when it's done they are like, 'Okay make sure you guys go home.' Like you know what about talking and fellowship and engaging each other getting to know each other better? [Saying,] 'Oh by the way there's a sewing class next week, maybe we'll take it.' You know how are people supposed to know what's going on and make use of the community centre if their space is limited in being there?"⁶

engaging the community

In Malton Community Centre while the building represents triumphs in the architectural 'hi-fi' world it has failed to understand its 'lo-fi' effects. When offered the opportunity to retrofit in 2003 the architects and planners did not consult the community on their needs. Many who mourned the loss of the theatre space after the renovations were complete felt the new fittings were not much use to their lifestyle.⁷ This provides insight into the demands required by the architect in the processes of design, to engage in the community. Sandercock shares the example of Collingwood Neighbourhood House in Vancouver as a project which was able to bind together neighbour through the learning and sharing of cultures and challenges.⁸ As quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Oldenburg warns of what could happen, and is happening, in communities which are lacking third place informal socializing. While the shooting at the Malton Community Centre could have happened anywhere the dissolve of the nature of the community centre as a gathering place, especially for youth, has resulted in a higher need for social space in the community.

notes

1 Hicks 248-251.

2 *ibid.* 251.

3 *ibid.* 249.

4 City of Mississauga. *Mississauga Youth Plan: Youth Engagement Report.* (Mississauga: C of M, 2008) 30.

5 White, Madeleine. "Teen shot dead on Malton basketball court." *The Toronto Star.* (4 July 2010) n. pag.

6 Peat 7.

7 *ibid.* 8.

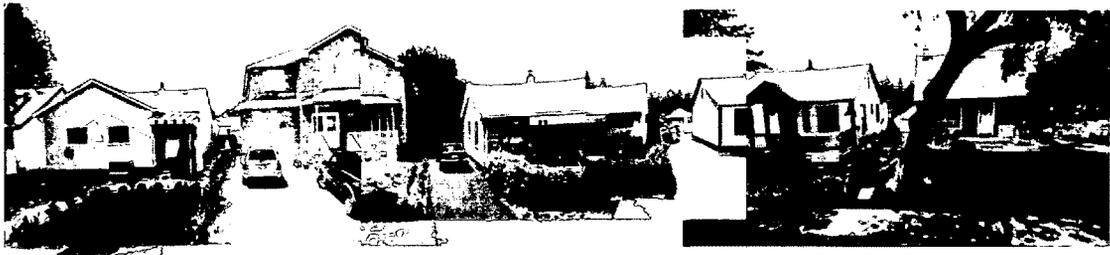
8 Sandercock and Attili 118.

9 *ibid.* 125-132.

Collingwood Neighbourhood House's (CNH) main goal is to build community, building relationships being the first step. The neighbourhood of Collingwood has a large immigrant population and prior to the development of CNH there was a fear of strangers which resulted in locked doors and drawn curtains. CNH has broken down many barriers of fear and brought out a vibrant and growing community in which difference is embraced and discussed at many levels. Among other things the neighbourhood house has become a 'neighbourhood reception centre for immigrants'. This building provides newcomers with a neutral place to meet.

The key to the mission of a neighbourhood house is to embrace change, the goal is not to fit newcomers into pre-existing rules. The CNH operates as a first contact for immigrants and provides the first line of resources the members need when establishing themselves in the community.⁹

**people don't want
to leave the neighbourhood**



**so slowly the wartime
bungalows are being torn
down and replaced with
images of new suburbs.**

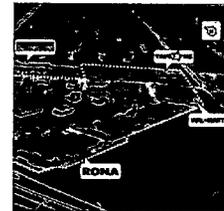
McNaughton Avenue, Malton

localizing the project **6**

With widespread suburbanization, 'people would live in detached houses and would detach themselves from common experiences.' This detachment...would diminish our interest in public and cultural affairs.' Our minds become as canned as the products we buy.'

*Victor Gruen in *Mall Maker* 140.*

Ray Oldenburg is not the only critic of suburbia's poor public infrastructure. In recent years the potential for suburban retrofitting has become a popular challenge to the design profession. The decline in sociable behaviour in suburban landscape is enhanced by the increased segregation of uses, requiring greater use of a car, and the substitution of volunteer time with commute time. Another factor, unrelated to the use of the automobile, could be the loss of identification, through the loss of locally specific service retail within the individual neighbourhoods. This challenges the consideration of the local and the current popularity of power centres filled with typical chain stores. These factors are very closely related to the built environment and the structure of the suburban lifestyle.¹



The experience of the everyday, reflects back to Jeremy Till's argument for creating a lo-fi architecture which is uniquely connected to the local situation and the everyday experiences of its environment. Till engages in the gap which is created between the image in which architecture reflects itself within the architectural community and how it is experienced in the reality of the everyday. He writes, "To put it simply, an architecture that ignores the everyday will be ignored every day. But this does not mean a collapse for architectural design into the everyday as a mere repetition of the architectural dress that is already there."² The suburbs are a typical built environment to enter into with the challenge of quality architecture. Within seemingly banal architectural spaces the challenge is to design an architecture that is acknowledged everyday within the neighbourhood and responds to the needs of the community.

Localizing the project is especially significant within the unique diversity of the ethnoburb. The excitement and cultural diversity that the urban downtown often promotes exists in an ethnoburb but lacks the public spaces that put such cultural interest and variety on display. Through time spent in Malton and discussions with community members the most vibrant space of neighbourhood interaction occurs in their everyday suburban mall, Westwood Mall. The suburban mall in many post-war developments are the only programmed spaces that represented anything close to a main street or town centre which often held much of the public spaces of an area. The formal movement towards embracing commercial spaces as public and social spaces began with the chain stores, such as Barnes and Noble who integrated coffee shops and lounge furniture into their store layouts in 1996. The Starbucks revolution has since followed suit. In 2006 the CEO of Starbucks made the idea of the third place a part of their brand and it was even infused into employee training methods.³



While these coffee shops serve as a home away from home for a certain social group, they do not reach the full quality of experience which earlier urban public spaces did. Public spaces then made up for a general lack of space in the private realm. Suburban experience has inverted the equation in which larger private homes are compensating for the little public space.⁴ In Malton many homes remain the original veteran housing bungalows, however, in recent years some of these small homes are being torn down and replaced with larger brick houses. To add to the small private dwellings the case of many immigrant stories results in a higher density and more families living within one dwelling. As family members move to the community they often live with relatives until they are able to afford their own home. A story shared by a mother of four children;



I live in a semi with my husband and four kids. We live upstairs and downstairs even though the apartment can be separated into two apartments we rent everything. Next door there is a family in the upstairs; there is a wife, husband, daughter and baby on the way. The uncle lives with them and his wife is coming over with his baby and they all [will] live there. In the basement is another family. Even that, that is a good example of the difference. As a Caribbean family we feel we need all this space, maybe two Indian families feel they can share that space.⁵



Unusual for a suburban community Malton has a strong rental market that helps to establish immigrant families quickly. In February 2012 meetings were held in the community to help support the organization of basement apartment rentals as it is a source of much needed income for some and an affordable option for others.⁶ This kind of density in the ethnoburb further takes away from the private realm, where in many cases the basement is the recreational room for youths to hang out is no longer there they are left with no where to go, except to the mall. To invigorate the neighbourhood of Malton, to embrace differences and learn new ways of interacting within the barren suburbs the study will investigate further into the experience and opportunities that lie dormant in the expanse of the mall.

the suburban mall

Victor Gruen is the architect known for designing the first enclosed mall, the typology proliferated North America in the late twentieth century. It is a staple sight in the suburban environment. Reflecting on Gruen's original intentions for the mall provides insight into the potential that can be found in today's suburban malls. Many of these malls are losing tenants and having to close down, becoming what is now known as a 'dead mall'. Understanding the reasons behind the typology and some of its former goals will help provide insight into its current situation and the potential directions of architectural interventions.

Our understanding of malls today has little in relationship to how Gruen first envisioned the shopping centre, as the heart of a community. Gruen believed that, "people would come together at the shopping center which would 'fill the vacuum created by the absence of social, cultural, and civic crystallization points in our vast suburban areas.'⁷ His initial visions included more than retailing, they attempted to create an environment of social spaces, play areas, auditoriums and places to host events. In a proposal for an *Architectural Forum* article about envisioning the postwar city in 1943, Gruen designed his first futuristic shopping centre with two main functions.

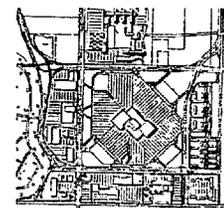
The first was retailing, as store design was his speciality, the second were the communal functions. The latter functions included a game room, a theatre, a clubhouse, an exhibition hall, announcement boards and a stable for ponies, to name a few. He emphasized the importance of the communal functions in the shopping centre's role in the postwar city, Gruen hoped to achieve a centre of cultural activities and recreation within one building.⁸ Gruen's design was directly contradictory to the aim of the *Architectural Forum* article, entitled *194X**, which envisioned the new city reduced to functional zones within a large master plan. At the time it seemed that Gruen's proposal was the most far reaching of the proposals set forward. However, it was also the most realistic prediction of the entire issue.⁹ Gruen went on to begin implementing designs for shopping centers in the following decade.

In 1954, after receiving national successes for his shopping centre developments, Gruen produced his very first enclosed mall, which would later be known as his, "single greatest contribution to American retailing."¹⁰ The Southdale Shopping Center was built in Edina, Minnesota by Dayton's department store. Interestingly, what is now commonly known as the anchor store in a mall began as a means for Gruen to fund projects, through convincing department stores to build shopping centres around them as a way to enter the suburban market. The Southdale Shopping Centre was built across 84 acres and was designed to serve over 200,000 people. Southdale was a component of a master plan that was to be built to enhance the surrounding suburbs, however, only the shopping centre was implemented. Southdale had 72 stores, 2 levels, 810,000 square feet of retailing space, 5,200 parking spaces, 2 department stores and one magnificent garden court. Southdale was a tremendous success and crowds gathered to experience the art, entertainment, excitement and shop. The result was an incredibly lively atmosphere focused on the centre garden court.

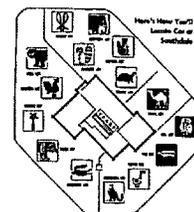
As soon as Southdale's success was widespread, suggestions and alterations to the format of the enclosed mall began to stray from Gruen's vision. Architects argued to have narrow and long malls so that both sides of retail windows were exposed to shoppers as they moved through. The garden court



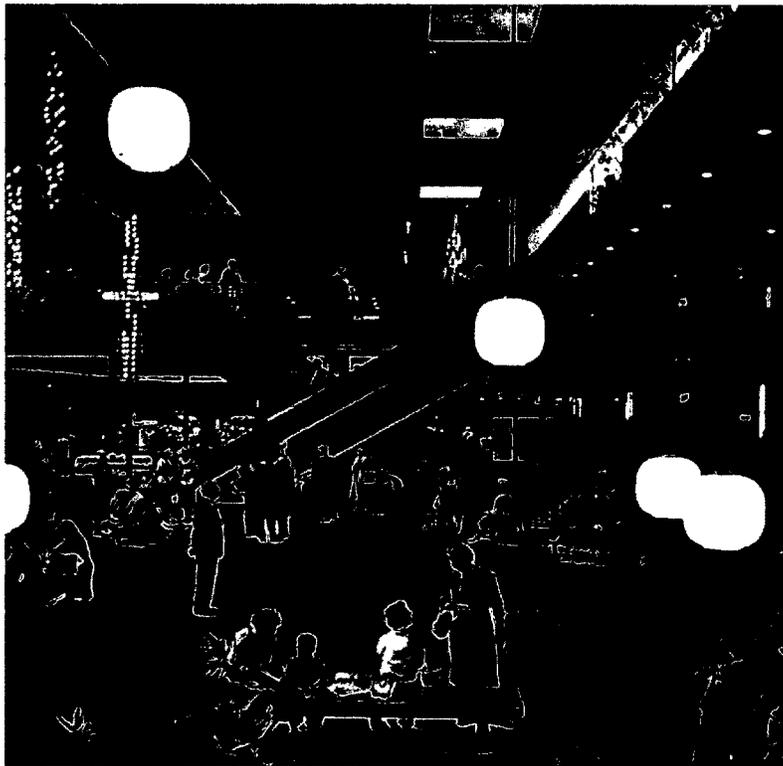
*The article was named 194X because it was unknown when the war would end and the vision was for the changes that would come following the war.



Southdale Master Plan



that had struck awe into the visitors of Southdale subsequently diminished in size, due to its lack of profit making features, until it was no longer a part of the typology of many shopping centres. Motivated by similar profit margins the land surrounding Southdale that was to be kept uncommercialized, was rapidly sold off with the rising land values to developers. The prospect of great profits that Gruen sold the idea of the shopping centre on, quickly outweighed the benefits to the general public, which he claimed would beautify the environment and enrich their lives.¹² Gruen's heavy handed confidence in the economic benefits of the mall contradicted the importance of design in the shopping centre.



"In addition, it was hardly a secret that the suburban experience, and especially the shopping center, was premised on creating a separate, private space for whites. Southdale's court provided a secure, predictable space from which white suburban men and women could feel a part of a larger civic world."¹¹

While it may appear that somewhere in the midst of his revolutionary shopping centre designs Gruen lost the focus of design and leaned more to economic benefits, perhaps under the weight of the developers, he was not shy in writing and speaking of his visions of the shopping centre. "But design, Gruen pointed out, must go beyond pretty buildings. 'It is concerned with people, their needs, their wants, their happiness.'¹³ Gruen revealed his desire

towards the social side of the architectural design process. While he included the ideas of communal functions in his early design he would go on to establish the importance of the mall hosting special events to attract people and develop the location as a real community centre. His designs often included gathering areas or theatres in which such events could take place. He focused on the spaces between the stores to establish the open gathering spaces, modeled off, and named after, the old European city designs. You would frequently find courts, terraces and lanes in the plans of Gruen's malls. The food court is a name which still remains in almost every mall built today. As M. Jeffrey Hardwick describes of Gruen's intentions in his book *Mall Maker*, "consumerism would become a way to express social connections and to reconstitute a social community."¹⁴

Amidst its great success the shopping centre typology was not without its critics. At the end of his career Gruen too had his own opinions regarding the failures of the shopping centre. Gruen observed that shopping centers were destroying city centres and a rich social life. He however did not want to take the blame for the failures of his design. In a speech titled *The Sad Story of Shopping Centers* he blamed the American pursuit for profit to have corrupted his vision.¹⁵ He concluded there were two major flaws in the execution of the shopping centre; "The ugliness and discomfort of the land-wasting seas of parking... scarred the landscape. And shopping centers focused too much on retailing and left out other community functions."¹⁶ Regardless of these failures, as an architect during the time of rapid growth in America, Gruen has "redefined how Americans thought of themselves, their relationship to others, and their lives within the public sphere."¹⁷

notes

- 1 Dunham-Jones and Williamson 60.
- 2 Till 139.
- 3 Dunham-Jones and Williamson 60.
- 4 *ibid.*
- 5 Peat 9.
- 6 Clay, Chris. "Basement apartment meeting a success: Councillor" *The Mississauga News*. (27 Feb. 2012) n. pag.
- 7 Hardwick, M. Jeffrey. *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) 134.
- 8 *ibid.* 80.
- 9 *ibid.* 78-86.
- 10 *ibid.* 142.
- 11 *ibid.* 152.
- 12 *ibid.* 122.
- 13 *ibid.* 121.
- 14 *ibid.* 134.
- 15 *ibid.* 216.
- 16 *ibid.*
- 17 *ibid.* 224.

**The Architectural Project:
Reconfiguring Westwood**



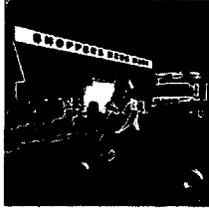
Welcome to Westwood Mall

Westwood Mall is located in what has developed to be the heart of Malton. The area is identified by the City of Mississauga as one of ten community nodes.¹ This is a great place to start when seeking to establish a stronger sense of community and locations for the best gathering places of the neighbourhood. The idea of a node returns to Gruen's idea of the mall as a new social, cultural and civic crystallization point within the suburbs.² Today, Westwood Mall is a place of gathering, on any given day there are groups of senior men sitting at the few tables and chairs chatting about the day's events and life 'back home'. Although Oldenburg clearly proclaims his disgust towards malls and their role in the social realm of a neighbourhood, in Westwood Mall many of the characteristics of the third place are realized.³ It is a regular meeting place for many members of the community, people shout hello to neighbours and are delighted to see friends that have been absent for a while. The mall also attracts a variety of age groups, from the youth to the seniors, into one environment. The mall as a retail environment has been on a downward slide, as many malls are in the past decade. With the major anchor stores leaving and an increased number of vacancies Westwood Mall is heading towards a dead mall, but a dead mall full of people?



The demands of the neighbourhood are evident in the manner in which the mall has evolved. Compared to the common mall there are very few retail chain stores and there are more culturally based services and independent companies. There is also an increased number of professional services within the mall including, four dentists, two lawyers, one medical doctor, an optometrist, a chiropractor and a global immigration service. The community based Malton Neighbourhood Services has a small booth located in the mall corridors and the Peel Regional Police have their office in the mall. By spending time in the mall one would be able to discover many of the ethnicities which are a part of the Malton community. Westwood Supermarket sells a large variety of South Asian goods and spices while Today's Trendz features lavish embroidered saris and lehengas. The mall's two main anchor stores are both grocery, Food Basics and Fresh Co. What was once a Zeller's department store in the large center block, which left in 1998, now stands half vacant partly filled with a furniture clearance store. The corridors of the mall are spotted with similar vacancies but it still holds its major service retail stores like grocery, drugstore and hardware, which portray a surviving main street.

For the lack of an encouraging retail environment, Westwood Mall is certainly not under used by the people of the community. The corridors are often busy with families running daily errands and meeting with neighbours. There are community boards on the walls to advertise non-profit events and updates on the neighbourhood. The pizza place in the corner is flooded with youth at lunch time. The mall also supports its seniors with the opportunity for a mall walk every day between 8 am and 10 am, prior to the stores opening; on Wednesday and Fridays there are group mall walks at that time. The mall management also runs a kid's club in the corner of the food court with free crafts for children on Saturdays, and every Thursday an early years program is run in the same room. The kid's club also puts on free shows in the mall's 'centre court', a section of slightly wider corridor, every couple of months.⁴ These are the kinds of events which Gruen would have wanted to happen in his ideal mall. However, over the decades we have lost the physical features of the mall which supported these kinds of activities.



The mall was Malton's very first plaza which opened in 1971 on the corner of Goreway Drive and Etude Drive. The first construction was 19,414m² and featured 59 stores. It was built by Dalewood Investments, owned by three brothers Norm, Sam and Joe Black who purchased the farmland from the Shaw family. Joe's son Tevy was the first manager of the mall. It was then anchored by a Miracle Food Mart on the south end and a Tower's department store on the north end, which is now the vacant centre block. The greatest feature of the new mall was the Fireside Theatre which proudly showed movies on a 16 mm projector. The mall was quickly expanded in 1975 with an additional 41 more stores, 7,000 m² additional footprint and spaces for 3,000 more cars. The expansion was completed in 1977. The Miracle Food Mart was relocated to the north end of the mall and a new Gourmet Fair Restaurant and a hardware store opened for business, a Food City replaced Miracle Food Mart's old home. The Fireside Theatre was able to upgrade to a 35 mm projector and began to feature newer movies. It was touted for now providing a quieter and more relaxing atmosphere. At that time a night at the movies cost \$3 for adults and \$1 for seniors and Saturday matinees offered a feature price of only 50 cents. The Fireside Theatre was replaced in 1987 by a new food court, which today features a few ethnic restaurants and many boarded up service counters. The mall reached its final expansion size in 1977 of 34,400m² and has changed little since, aside from a facade update in 2010. The current owner is Josephine Kwan Tan who does not live in Canada.⁵

notes

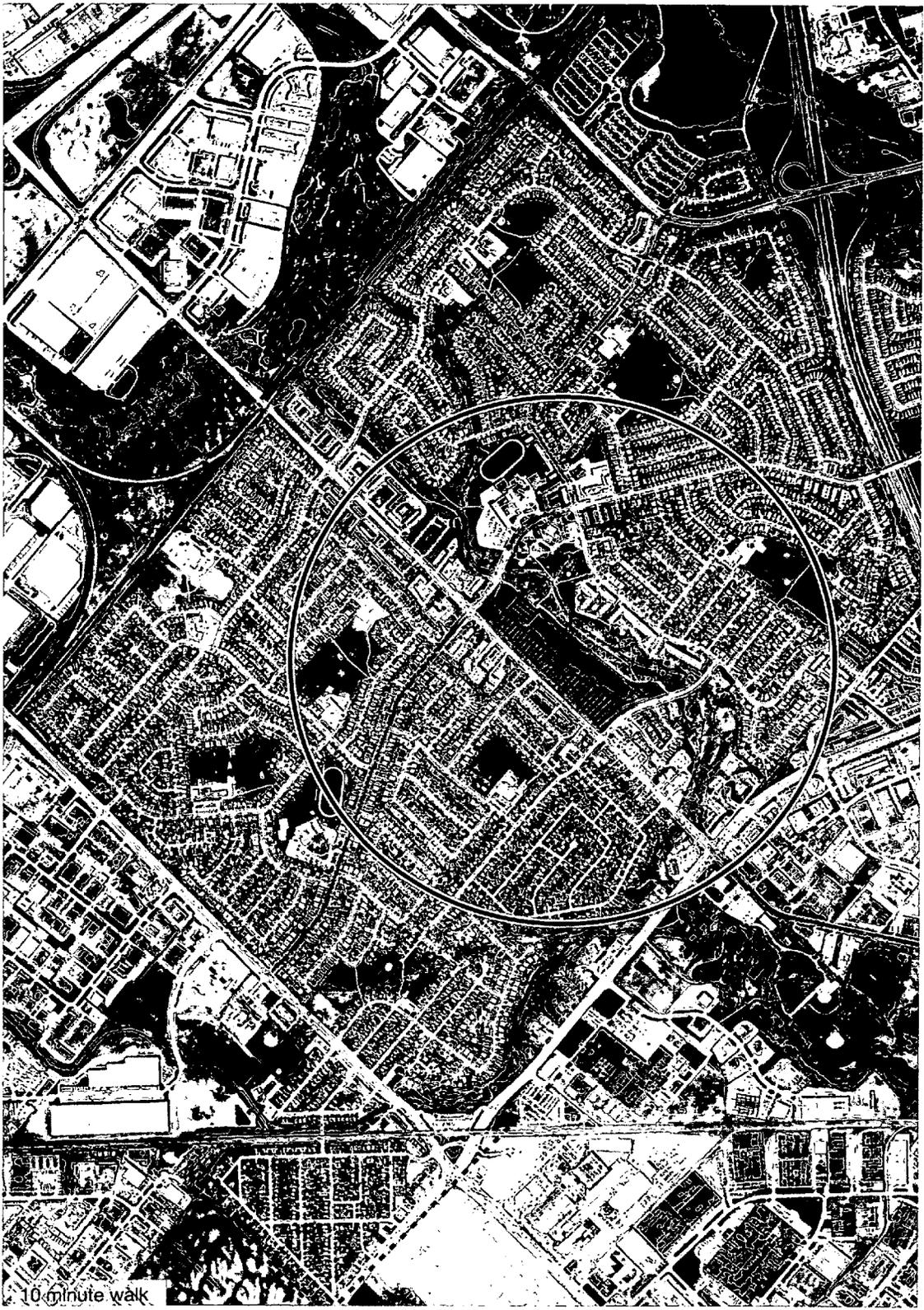
1 City of Mississauga. "Community Nodes." *Mississauga Official Plan: Part 3*. (Mississauga: C of M, 2011) 14-10.

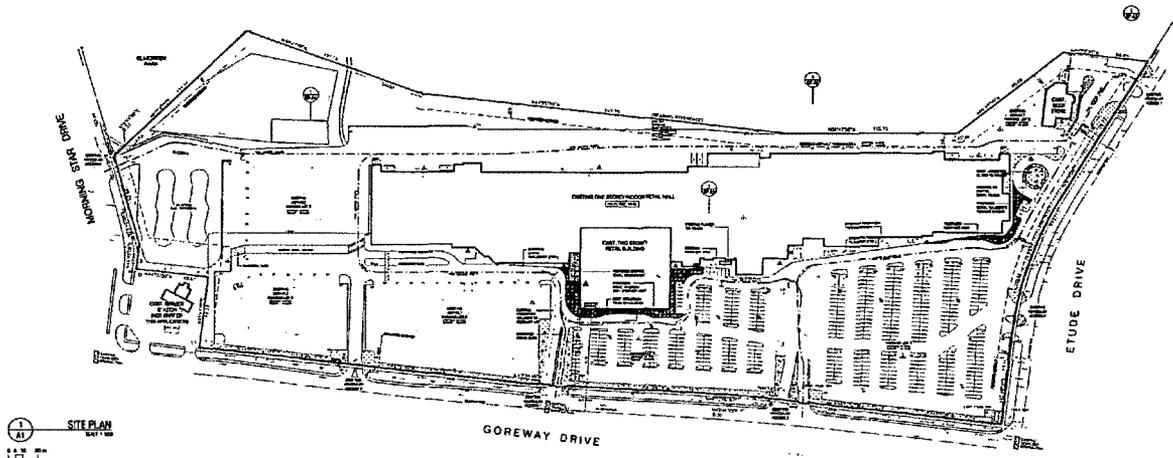
2 *ibid* 90.

3 Oldenburg 119.

4 "Services," "Clubs." *Westwood Mall*. (Fieldgate Commercial Properties Limited. n.d.)

5 Hicks 218-219.





SITE PLAN
1:1000

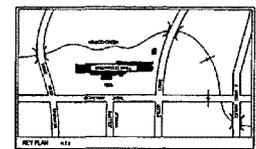
LEGEND

- ▲ OPEN TO MAIL
- ◆ EXISTING FIRE HYDRANT
- Y EXISTING BRANCH CONNECTION
- EXISTING LIGHT POLE
- EXISTING CATCH BASIN
- FIRE ACCESS ROUTE
- ▭ PROPOSED PARKING SPACE & NUMBER
- ▭ EXISTING PARKING SPACE & NUMBER
- ◊ UNDEVELOPED PARKING INDICATOR
- ▭ EXISTING LOADING SPACE
- FUTURE CURB
- NEW CURB (BY EDC, OR)
- ▭ EXISTING CONC. DRIVE
- ▭ PROPOSED CONCRETE DRIVE
- ▭ WHEELCHAIR RAMP
- ▭ NEW PAINTED TRAFFIC ISLAND
- ▭ EXISTING PAINTED TRAFFIC ISLAND
- ▭ NEW PAINTED LINES
- ▭ EXISTING METALLOID PAVING
- ▭ CONCRETE PAVING
- ▭ ASPHALT
- ▭ EXISTING PAVEMENT
- STOP SIGN
- ▭ REPLACE EXISTING CONC. PAVEMENT WITH NEW CONC.
- ▭ NEW ASPHALT

SITE INFORMATION

INFORMATION OF SITE PLAN TAKEN FROM TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF PART OF LOT 12, CONCESSION 4, EAST OF ABERNETHY STREET & NEAR PART OF 17001 REGINA, REDUCED PLAN FOR THE CITY OF MISSISSAUGA, REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL, BY ACCONWELL, WILKINSON LIMITED, DATED LAND SURVEYORS, DATED OCTOBER 10, 1988.

BOUNDARIES SHOWN HEREON ARE ASTROPHOTIC AND ARE REFERRED TO THE NORTHWESTLY CORNER OF PART 1, LOT 1405, NAMED A RESERVE OF PARCELS AS SHOWN ON LAD PLAN, COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT (FILE NO.), '91-2049.



SITE STATISTICS & DATA

▲ ORIGINAL APPROVED SITE PLAN FILE NUMBER SPR 84 145 18

ALL DIMENSIONS ARE MEASURED IN METERS UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

AREA INFORMATION	DISTRICT COMMENSURE (BY PLAN #2000)	LET AREA
BLDG AREA	EXISTING	PROPOSED
GROSS LEASABLE AREA	24,312 SQ M	24,312 SQ M
BUILDING COVERAGE	26,250 SQ M (74.1%)	26,250 SQ M (74.1%)
TOTAL GROSS LEASABLE AREA	27,369 SQ M	27,369 SQ M
NET GROSS LEASABLE AREA	25,841 SQ M	25,841 SQ M
DRIVE GROSS LEASABLE AREA	2,278 SQ M	2,278 SQ M
LANDSCAPE AREA	17,521 SQ M	17,521 SQ M
PAVED AREA	74,271 SQ M	74,271 SQ M

PARKING	REG.	EXISTING	PROPOSED
NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES	154	154	154
NUMBER OF UNDEVELOPED PARKING SPACES	18	18	18
NUMBER OF LOADING SPACES REQUIRED	6	6	6

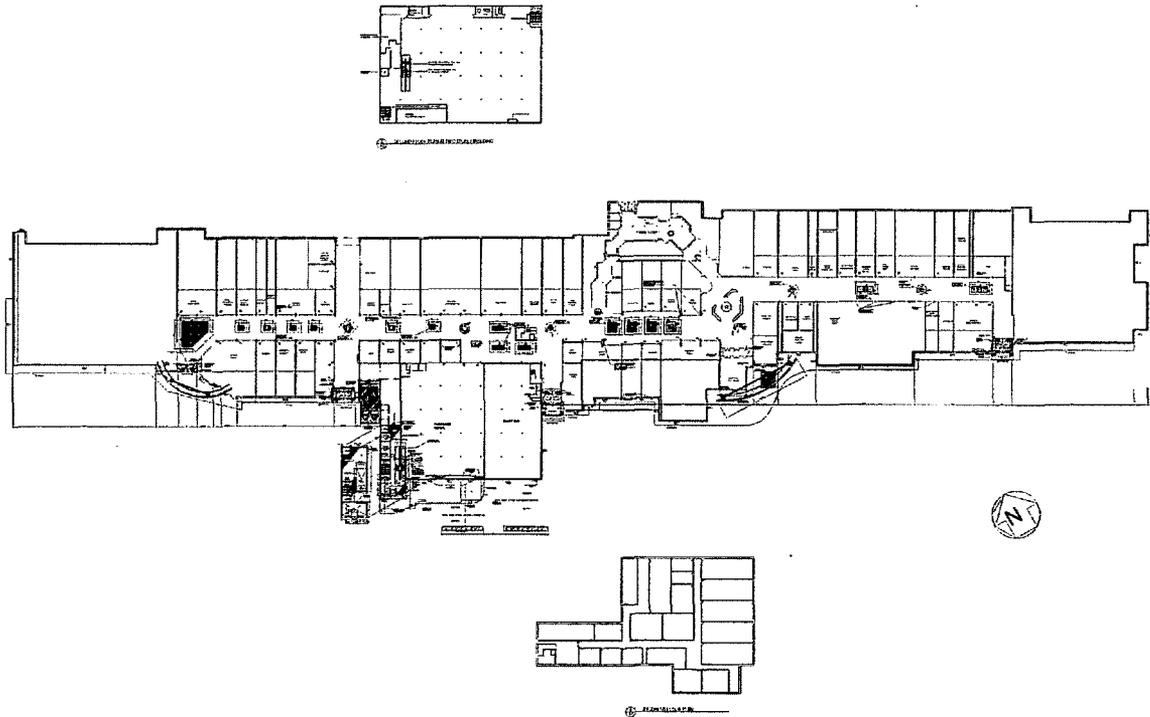
UNDEVELOPED REQUIREMENT	REG.	EXISTING	PROPOSED
SCULPTURE PARKING SPACE	2.0m x 3.0m	0	0
UNDEVELOPED PARKING SPACE	4.0m x 11.0m	0	0
LOADING SPACE SPACES	3.0m x 10.0m	0	0
CONCRETE WALKWAY WIDTH	7.0m MIN.	7.0m	7.0m
FIRE ACCESS ROAD WIDTH	8.0m MIN.	8.0m	8.0m
FRONT SETBACK WIDTH	1.0m MIN.	1.0m	1.0m

PARKING SPACE STATISTICS

AREA	EXISTING	PROPOSED
A	425	425
B	231	231
C	265	265
D	218	218
E	220	220
F	141	141
G	80	80
TOTAL	1,880	1,880

BUILDING CODE ANALYSIS

O.B.C. COMPLIANCE	STREETS	CLASSIFICATION	PARKING SPACES	SPRINKLERED	CONSTRUCTION	FLOOR ASSEMBLY	ALLOWABLE FLOOR AREA
3.3.3.17	ANY HEIGHT	3	YES	NON-COMMERCIAL	2 OR 3 S.	1 OR 2 FLOOR	ANY AREA



In an effort to find balance in the social nature of the ethnoburb and the spatial surroundings of the postwar suburb the intervention into the realm of public spaces and social interaction has to be negotiated. The role of the architect is reinstated in the developer formatted suburbs as an aid to assist in the beginning stages of adapting the existing landscape into one that will perpetuate social change and move with the changing demographics of the ethnoburb and Canada's growing diversity. Westwood Mall provides the controlled playground to explore the concepts of difference and identity through notions of third place and micro-publics.



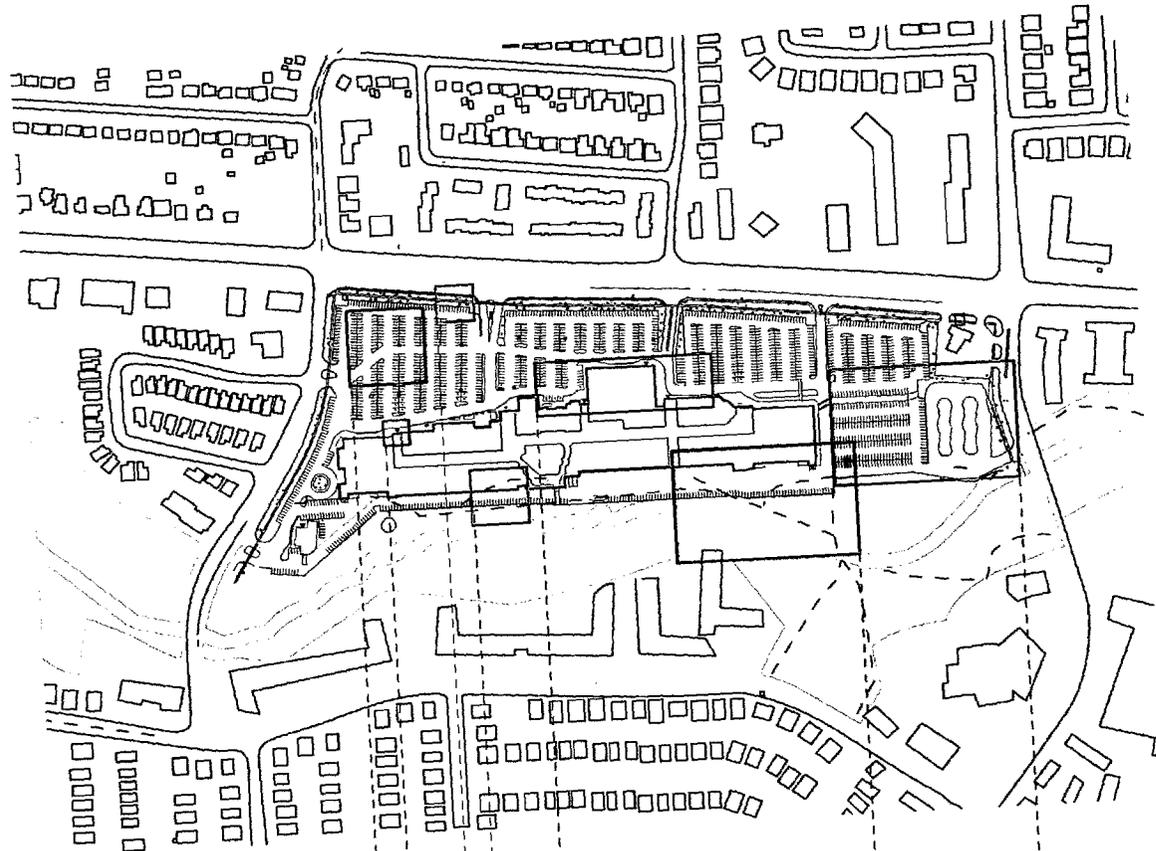
destination vs. landscape

The mall exists as a destination. Surrounded by a sea of parking and disconnected from the major transit stop located on the edge of its own parking lot. It turns it's back on the community centre, green park space and paths that link it to half of the community. The design is focused on automobile transportation even though a large majority of community members walk to the mall or arrive by transit. A line of trees disconnect the parking edge from the sidewalk and windows are hard to find on the blank facade. To most passing by it is nearly impossible to know what is happening inside.

A landscape relates to its own community, and becomes part of its neighbourhood. The reconfiguration of Westwood is an opportunity to begin to adapt the suburban environment, starting with a typical mall, to create points of gathering and interaction for the local community members, to encourage negotiations within the micro-publics. The conversion from destination to landscape is a process of re-knitting Westwood Mall into the neighbourhood.

westwood mall - destination

The shopping centre was never designed to be integrated into the community but as a destination. Today, it is increasingly important to overcome the characteristics which make a shopping centre a destination and re-knit the area into the surrounding community. An active and locally based shopping centre has the potential to offer more back to the neighbourhood.



sea of parking



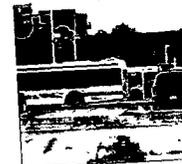
blocked from neighbourhood



blank facades



turns back on community



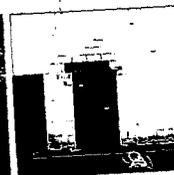
poor connection to transit



no free speech



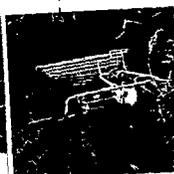
not permeable



not permeable



not permeable



not permeable



not permeable

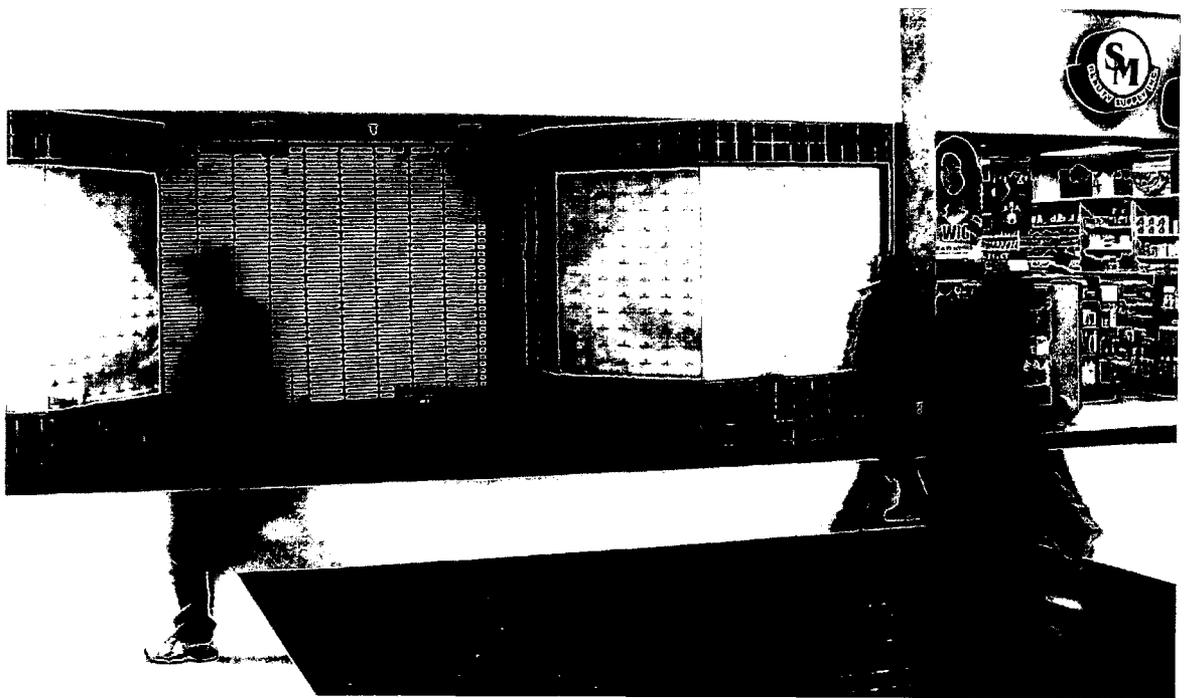
dead mall

While the challenge of Westwood as a destination focuses on the exterior qualities of the building the concept of a *dead mall* focuses on its internal activity. The term 'dead mall' was introduced in the past decade to describe the prevalent decline and closure of shopping centres across North America. While malls reached their peak production at the end of the 20th Century they are now dying faster than they are being constructed.¹ Westwood Mall has not closed due to vacancies but does have a number of vacant stores and is seeing many mainstream stores leaving the mall. The latter however, holds its own benefits as it is beginning to open the mall up into become a more locally influenced retail environment.

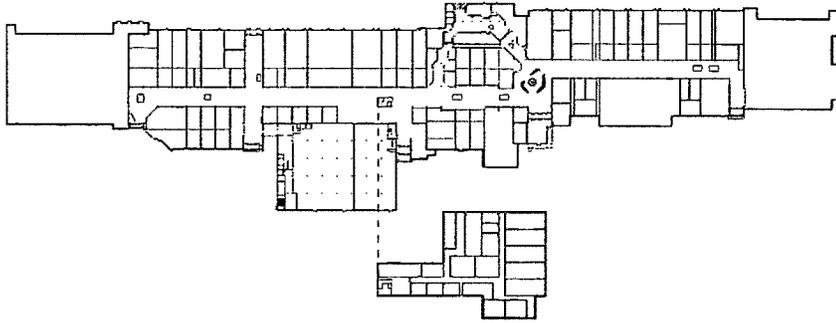
The reconfiguration of Westwood Mall will include an inversion of the current programmatic breakdown of the mall. The programmatic inversion will increase the spaces which serve community needs, as well as, encourage the continued development of entrepreneurial local stores. The reality of a shopping mall already offers a great potential for rapid change and adaptability in terms of the ease of arrival and departure of different kinds of stores depending on current demographics. Within a community that undergoes rapid change, and at times substantial in terms of cultural demands, the flexibility of a mall offers the opportunity to adapt. What requires focus currently in the mall is its capability to encourage social encounters. The adaptation of the space will shift some areas into the potential of third places, to gather and converse.

notes

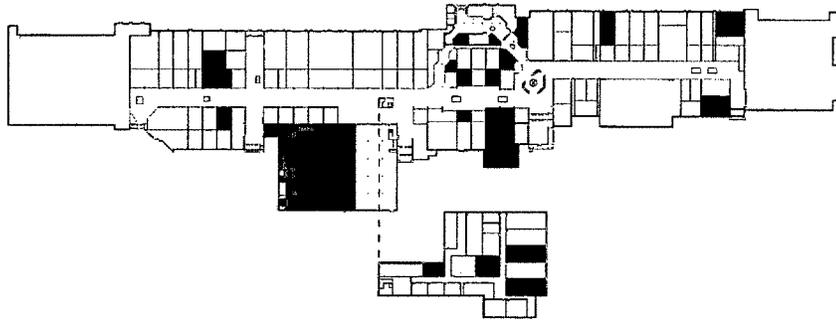
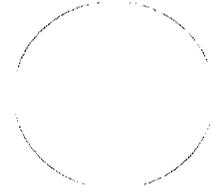
¹ Dunham-Jones and Williamson 108.



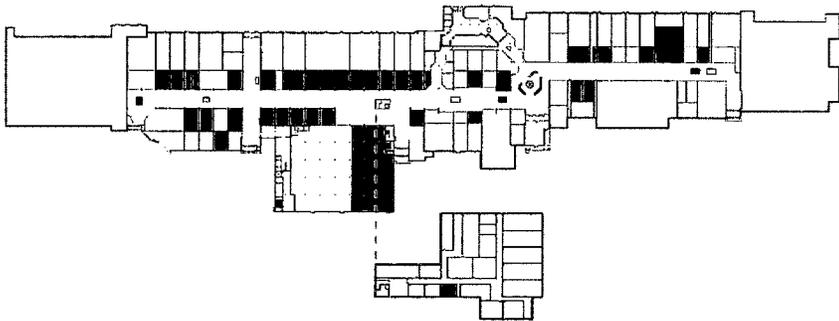
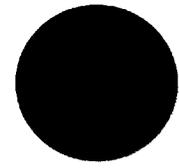
existing programming



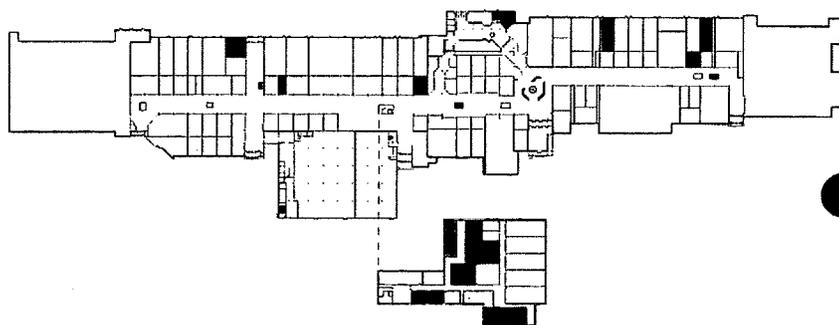
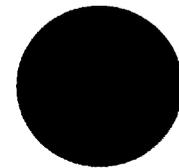
basic needs:
(drug store)
(grocery)
(bank)



vacant spaces



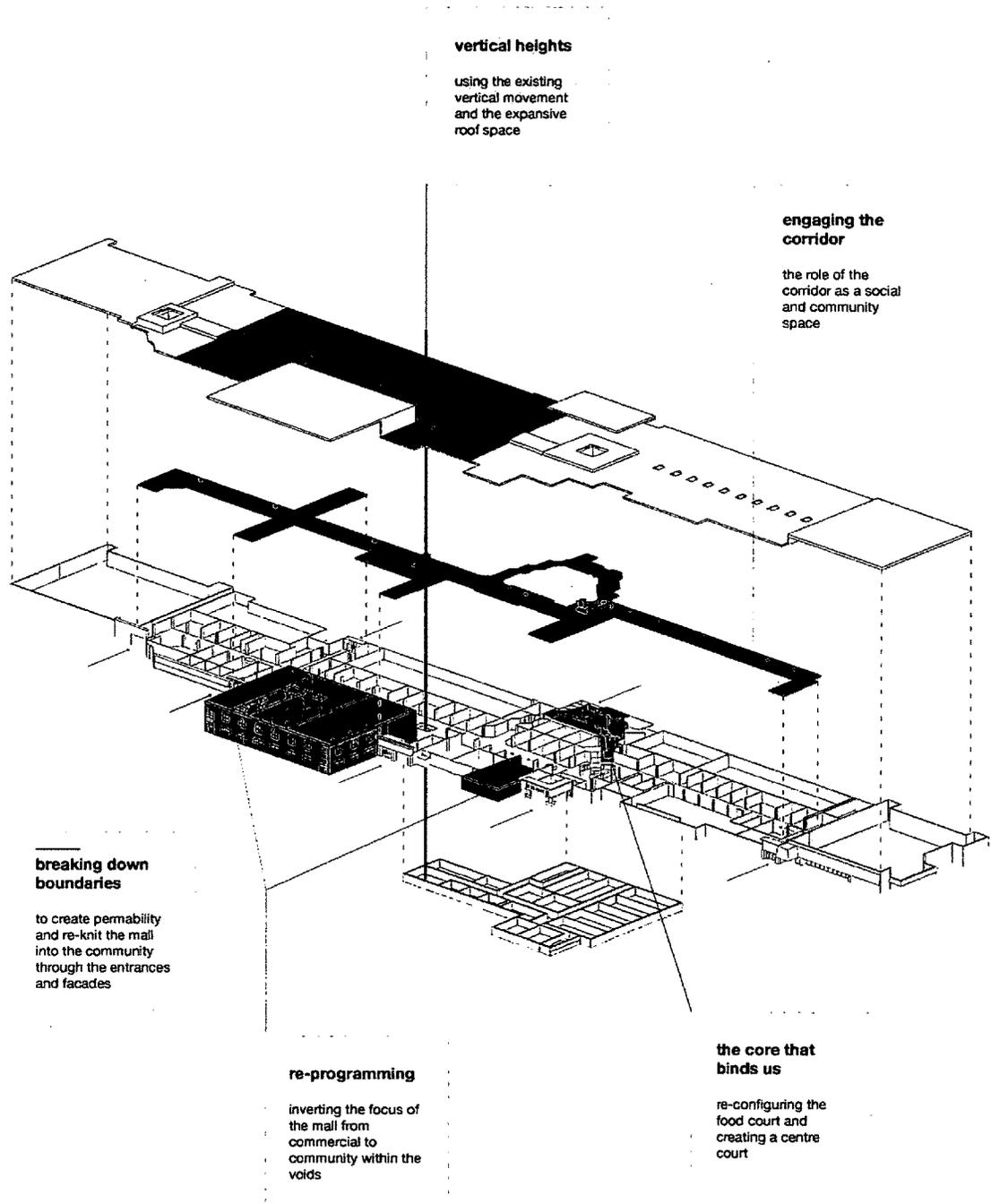
retail stores
locally geared retail stores

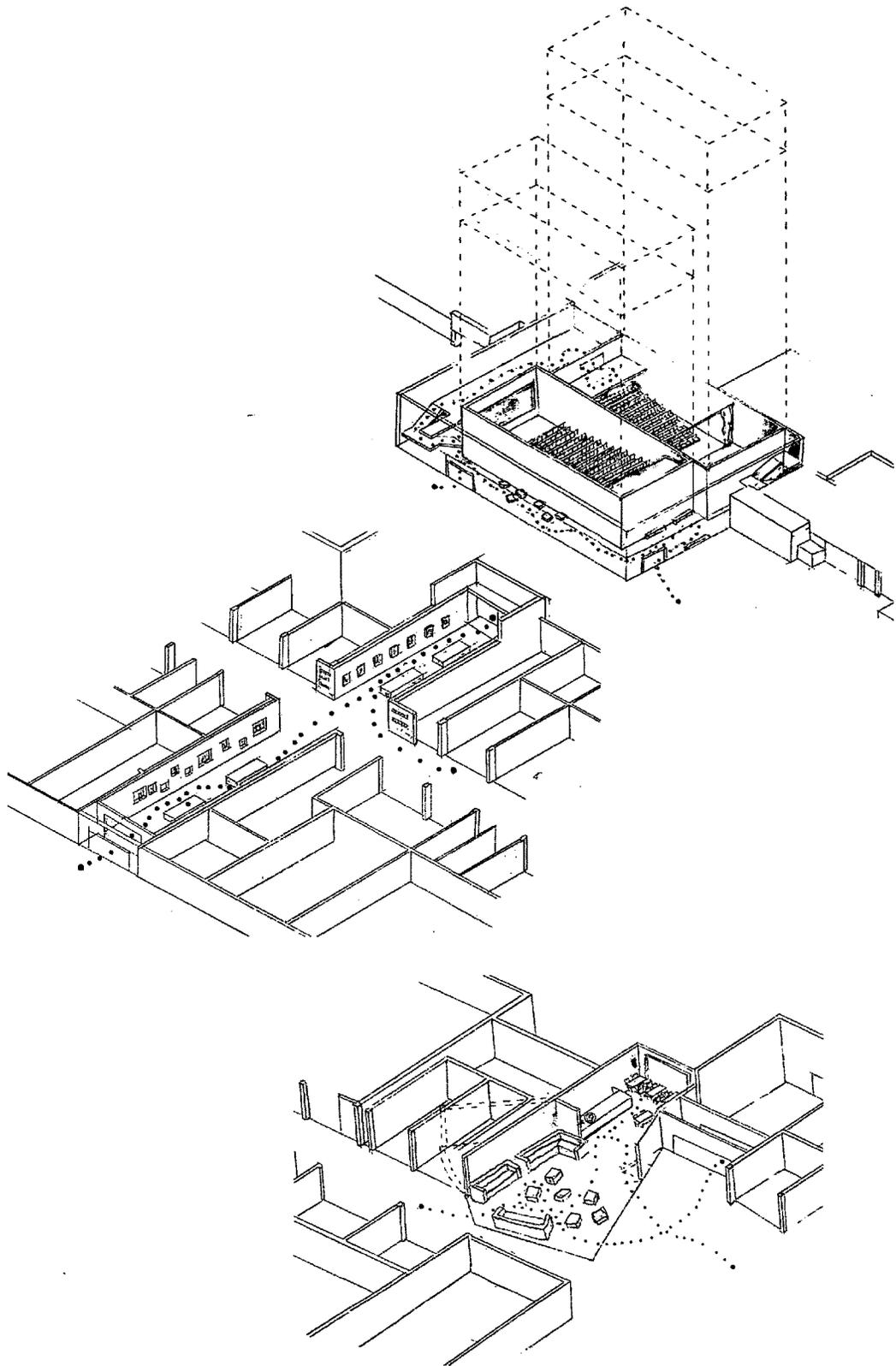


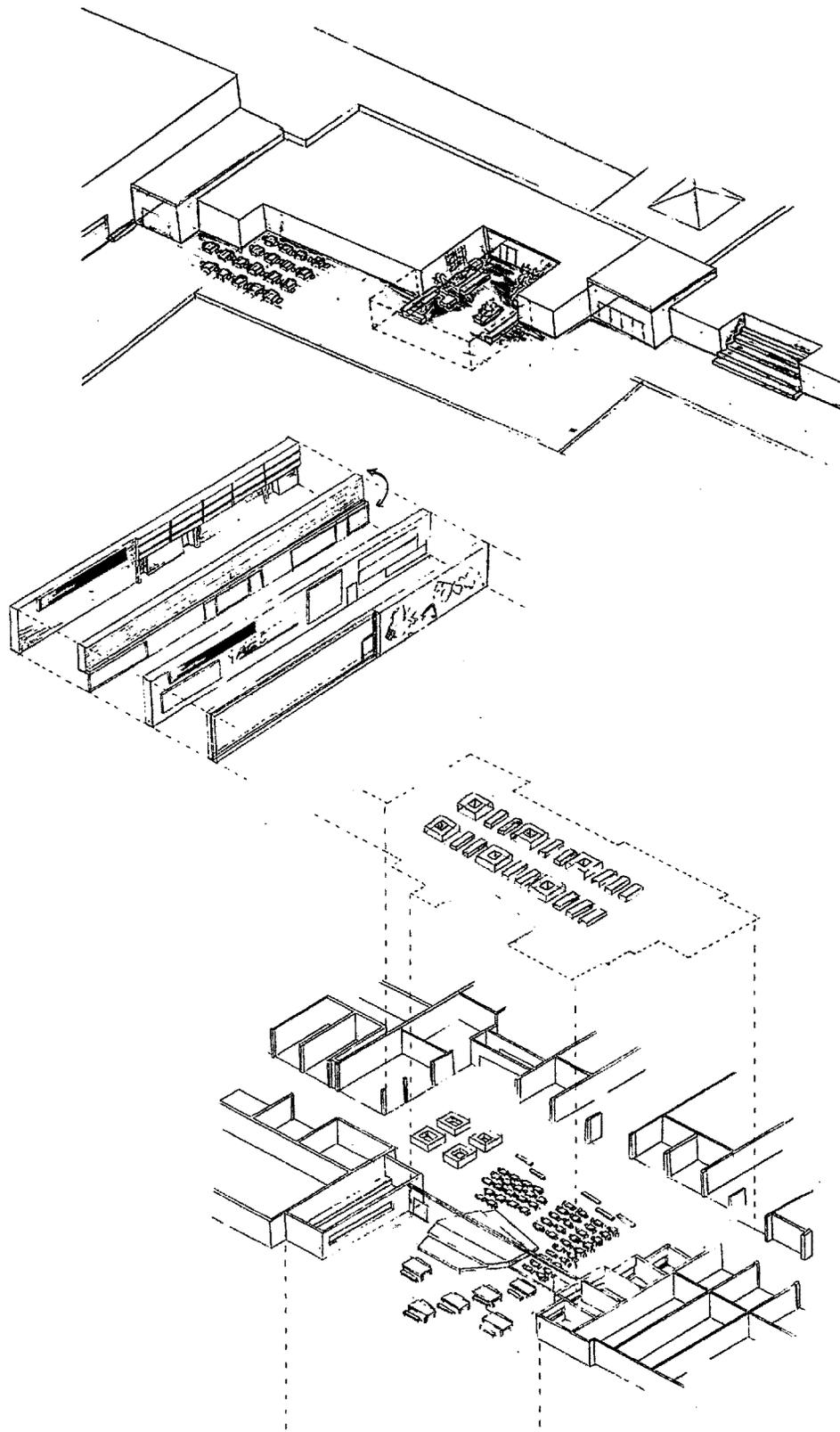
professional services
retail services
community services



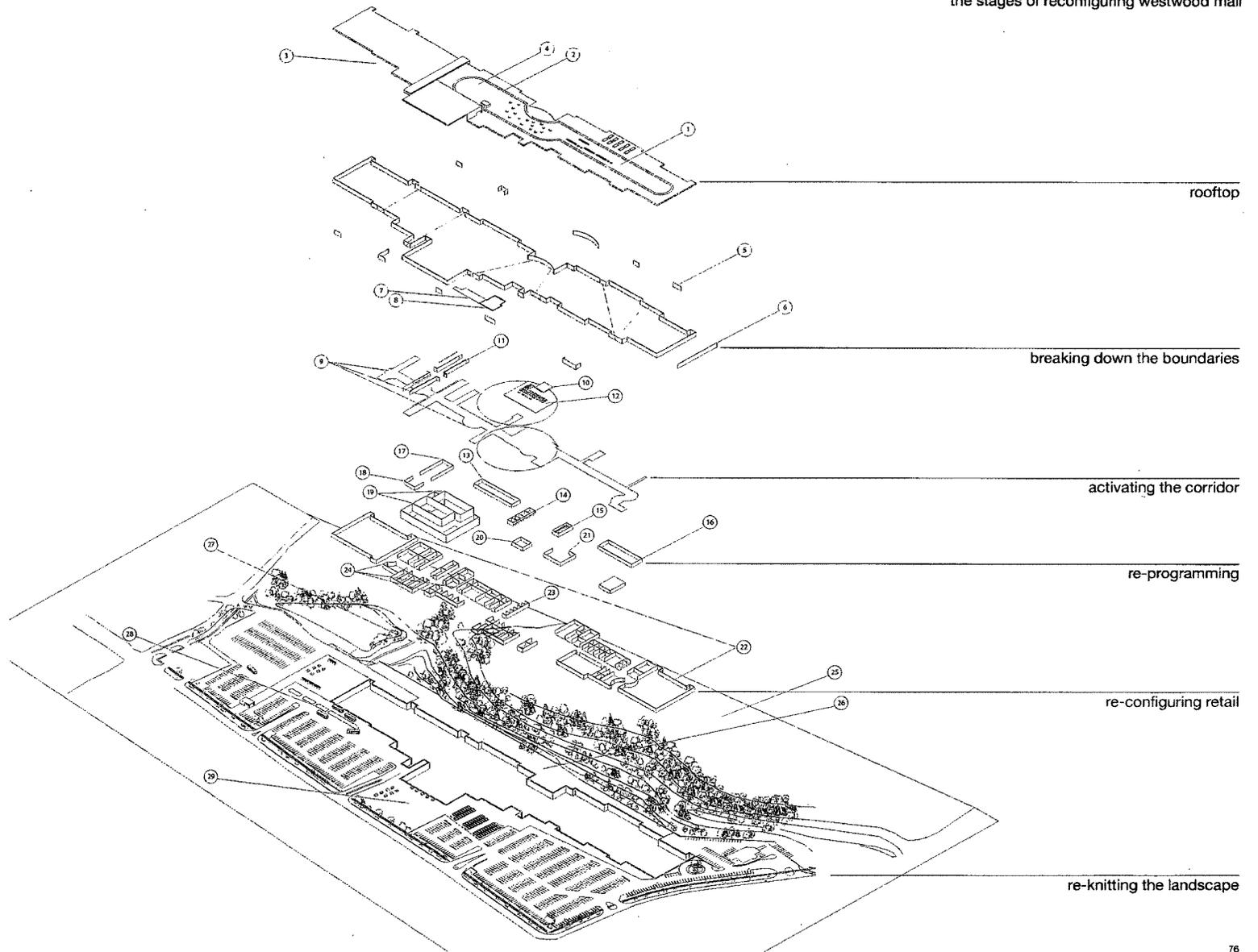
existing mall: architectural interventions







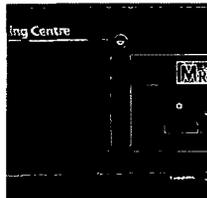
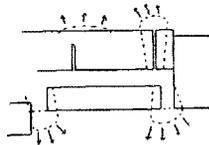
- ① community gardens
- ② walking path
- ③ transit station awning
- ④ extended picnic area
- ⑤ entrance(s)
- ⑥ graffiti wall
- ⑦ patio area
- ⑧ sandbox
- ⑨ gathering swells
- ⑩ indoor/outdoor stage
- ⑪ art corridor
- ⑫ centre court/ food court
- ⑬ free space
- ⑭ food court vendors
- ⑮ community kitchen
- ⑯ classrooms
- ⑰ pub
- ⑱ mns welcome desk
- ⑲ theatre/cinema
- ⑳ kid's club
- ㉑ youth rec room
- ㉒ existing grocery stores
- ㉓ reconfigured small stores
- ㉔ existing retail store blocks
- ㉕ elm creek park/ malton greenway
- ㉖ extended park space
- ㉗ existing pathways
- ㉘ reconfigured transit station
- ㉙ public square

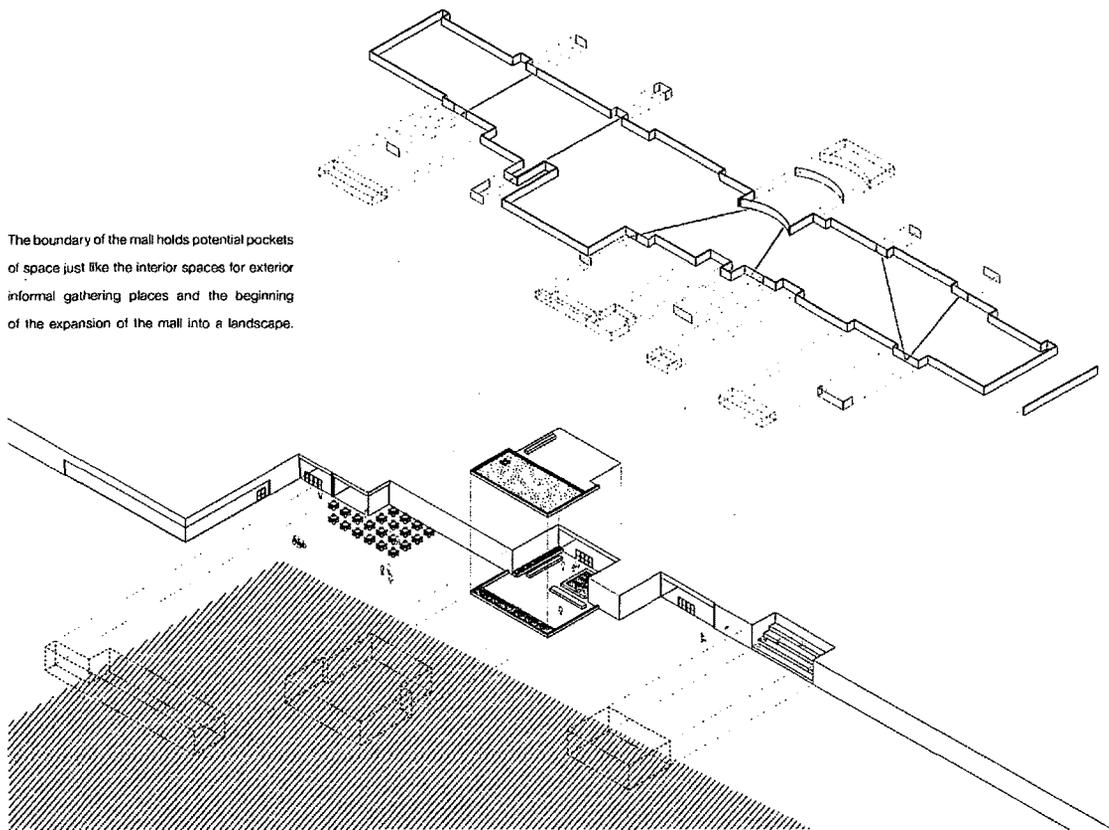


1 breaking down the boundaries

The struggle of the impermeability of the mall's facade and entrances does not encourage the mall to become a welcoming place to draw in newcomers. The long blank facades present a barrier between the community and the activity within. While the mall has various entries that are somewhat denoted by a stylized archway they do not communicate the experience of the mall. This intervention focuses on the opening of entrances, creating permeability through the mall and rethinking the facades.

Westwood currently has seven main entrances, five on the facade facing the parking lot and two facing the park. The focus of a mall is typically on the signage of stores and an 'architectural detail' to signify an entrance, mostly the top portion of the facade. The challenge of Westwood Mall is to remove the focus on the facade to a focus on the energy within, by opening up the boundaries to respond to the neighbourhood and welcome newcomers.

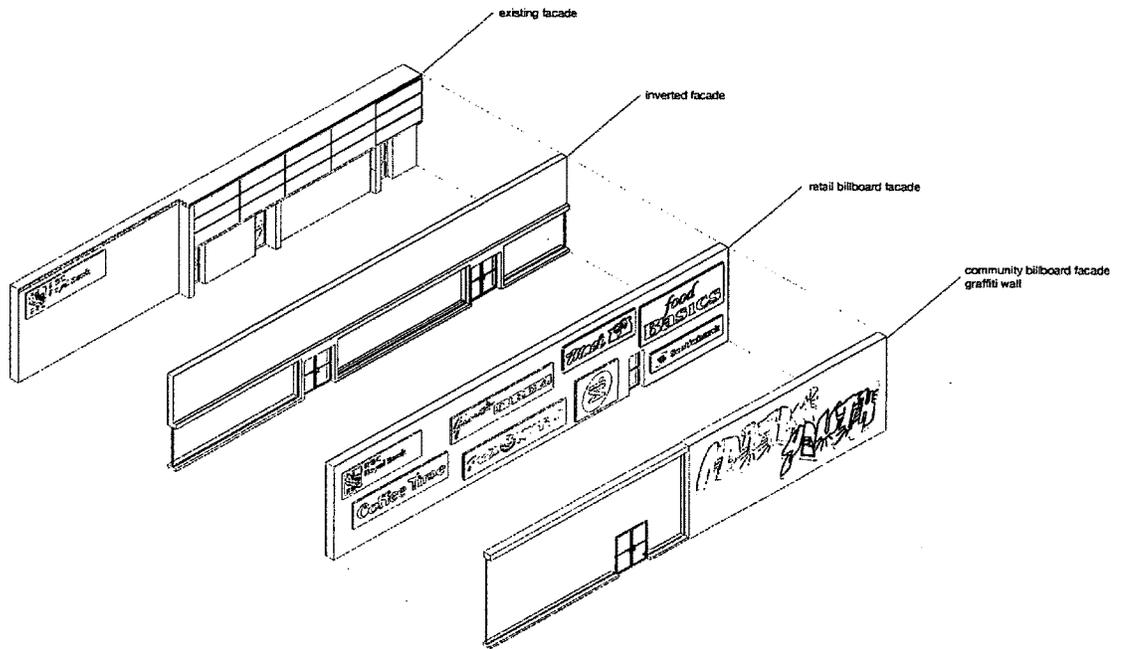




The boundary of the mall holds potential pockets of space just like the interior spaces for exterior informal gathering places and the beginning of the expansion of the mall into a landscape.

boundaries 1: pocket spaces

With a south facing main facade the property offers appealing spaces to take over as public social spaces. This is made possible through utilizing the varied depths of the facade to introduce pockets of lounging spaces. Illustrated here are four different options, two for the same space. The first is a patio space located outside of an existing cafe. The second and third are located outside the new kids' club space and are built into the foundation of a now vacant section of the mall. One is a sand box and patio space, the other is a bordered garden space for safe play. The final pocket is filled with stepped seating to the rooftop for lounging on and just hanging out, outside the popular pizza place.



boundaries 2: activate the facade

The current facade is impersonal and focused on the retailing aspects of the mall. The new studies invert the focus of the facade. The first is a literal inversion, bringing the focus to the lower half of the wall at the height of the user, utilizing the activity within the mall to activate the facade. The next pushes the signage to its limits covering the facade as if it was a bulletin board. The last uses two opposing blank facades, one of pure glass eliminating the boundary completely. The solid blank wall becomes a canvas for the neighbourhood to promote themselves and instill a pride of ownership over the spaces of the mall.

2 re-programming

The ratio of retail to community services is inverted, like the inversion of private space in the suburbs we are now inverting retail space to public space within the mall. To address the loss of the theatre space during the Malton Community Centre renovation, a new theatre will fill the empty centre block. The needs of the youth are addressed through an expanded lounge area located by their feeding spot (the pizza place). Various other programs throughout the voids encourage the lively attitude which is found in social third places.

- ① the neighbourhood pub
- ② mns welcome desk
- ③ theatre/cinema
- ④ kids' club
- ⑤ rec room/ gino's pizza
- ⑥ classrooms
- ⑦ community kitchen
- ⑧ kiosk gallery

The old 'port of entry' of the neighbourhood, the pub, is across the corridor from the new welcome desk for Malton Neighbourhood Services. These spaces begin the introductions and interactions

This 'free space' introduces the potential of highly flexible spaces throughout the mall. It is shown here as a kiosk gallery. The small kiosks provide the first step into entrepreneurship.

A community kitchen edges the new centre court and has service windows which open to the interior court and the exterior picnic area. A kitchen is the hub of any home and provides the neighbourhood with a space to take part in the common enjoyment of cooking.

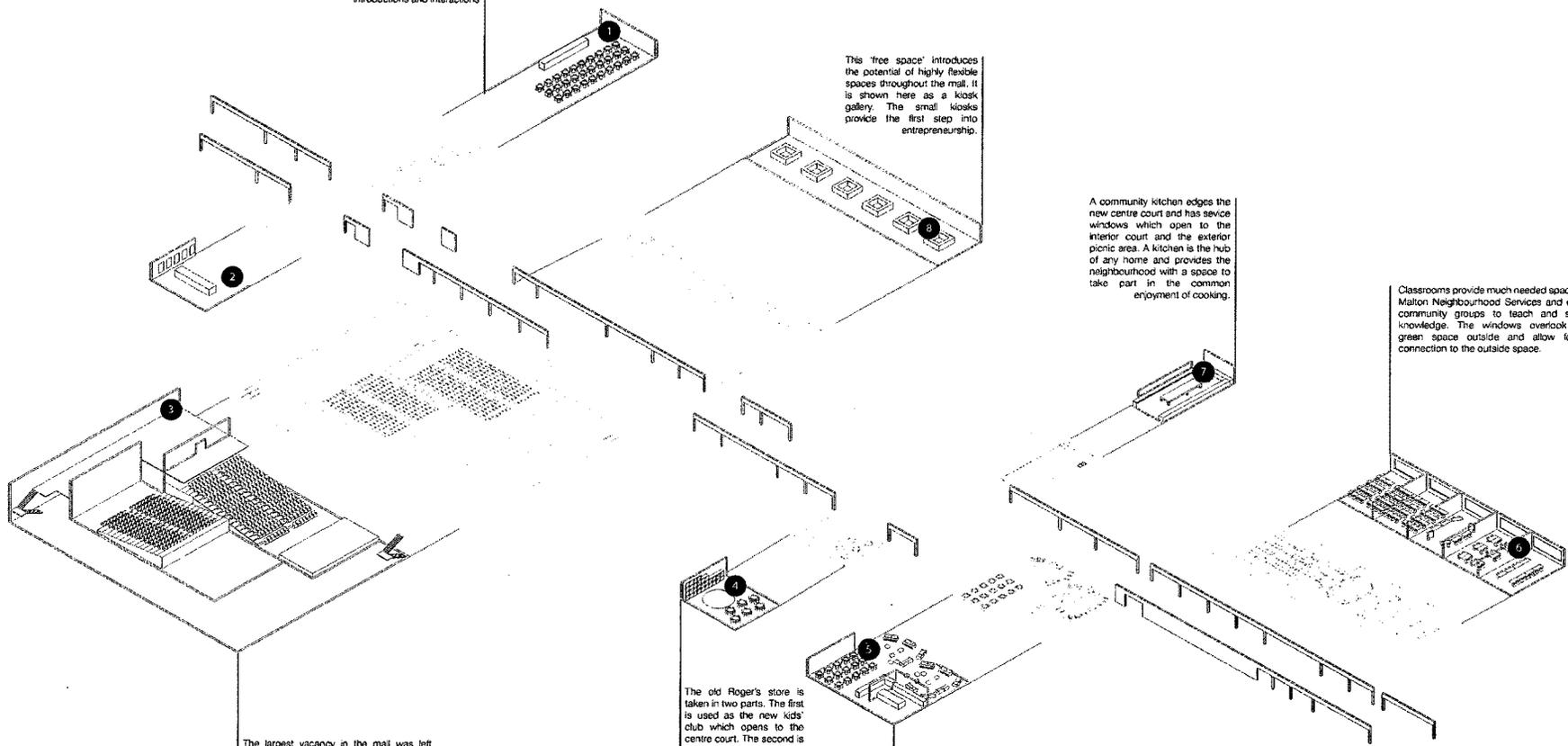
Classrooms provide much needed space for Malton Neighbourhood Services and other community groups to teach and share knowledge. The windows overlook the green space outside and allow for a connection to the outside space.

The largest vacancy in the mall was left behind from a Zellers department store. The loss of the theatre space in the community centre was felt by the community and is replaced in this void. There is also a cinema screen theatre for added entertainment within the neighbourhood. It offers the possibility of playing films that cater to the current demographics.

The new theatres are boxes within the space allowing for movement around the outer edges and spaces for gathering while activating the facades.

The old Roger's store is taken in two parts. The first is used as the new kids' club which opens to the centre court. The second is removed to create an attached outdoor space.

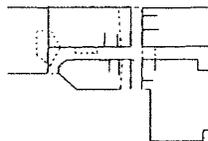
Gino's Pizza already serves as a magnet for youth and provides them with a small third place. The space now expands into an adjacent store and becomes a 'rec room' with couches and movable seating. This space replaces the loss of a basement rec room for many kids in the neighbourhood.

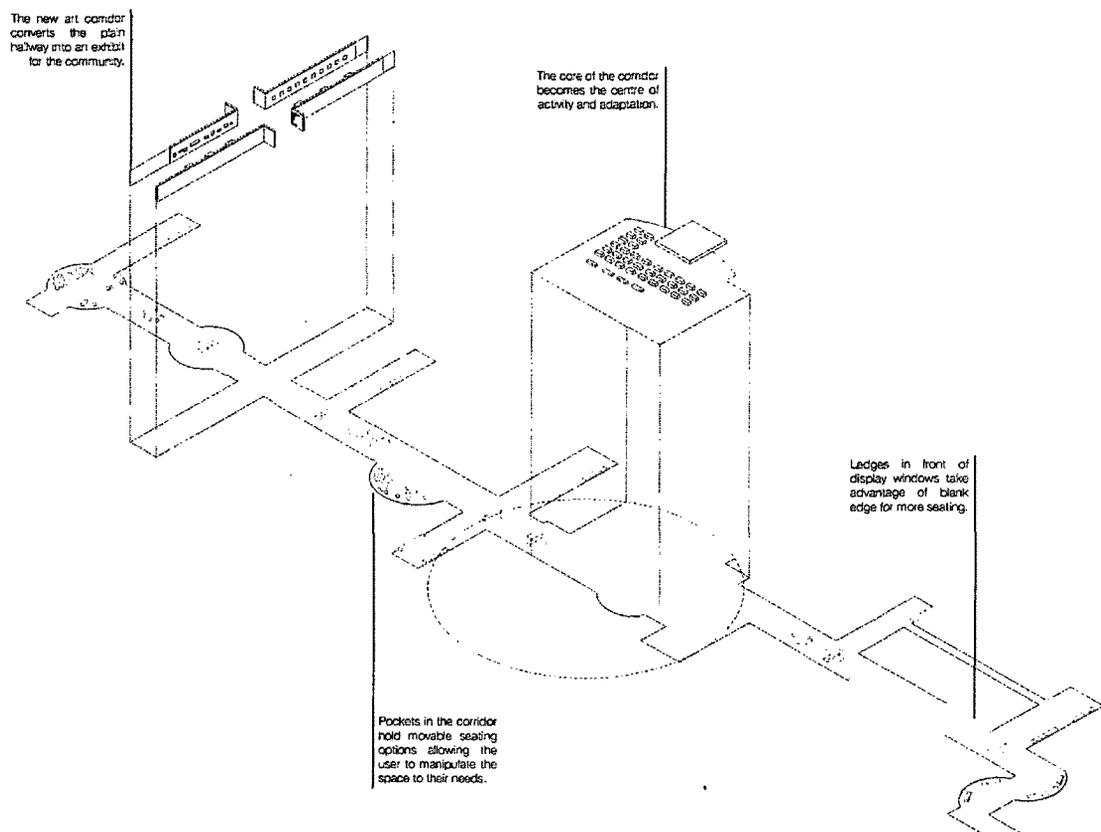


3 activating the corridor

The corridor serves a functional purpose as a space of transit but is adapted by users as a social space to stop and talk and also to sit wherever possible. The corridor will be exploited as a social space with an increase, from the seven existing benches, with a variety of seating options.

The introduction of an art gallery space into one of the corridors will serve the community groups as a display centre. To take over one of the corridors of the mall as a space for the display of art and community events. The art corridor will take over the previous "community boards" that were posted at various places in the mall for non-profit groups. It will also provide a location to showcase different cultures and provide a rapidly changing environment within the mall.

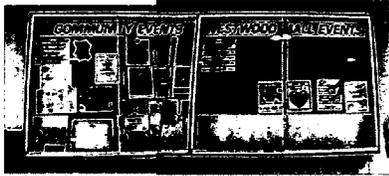




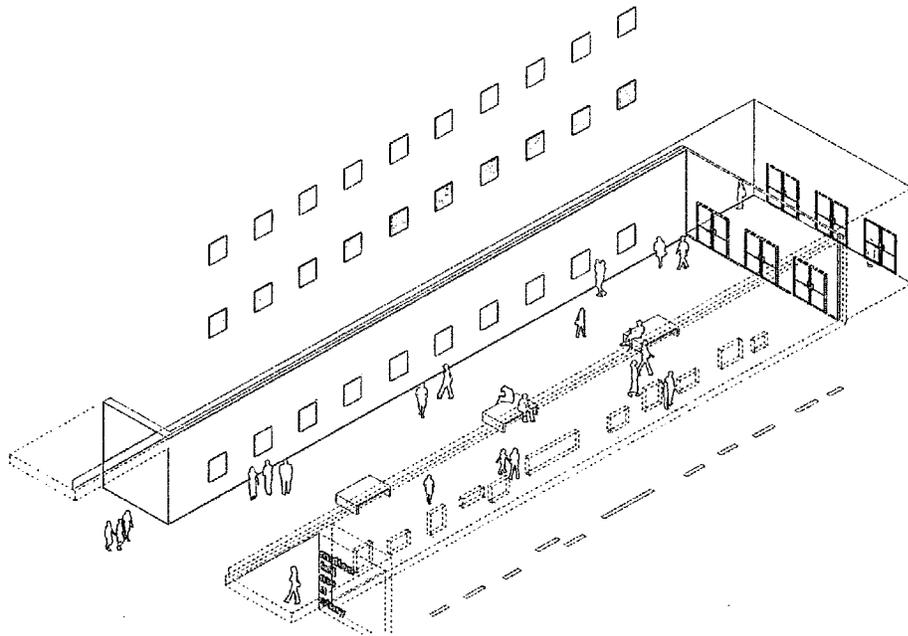
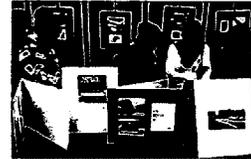
take a seat

The simple addition of seating potentials will increase the functionality of the mall significantly for the members of Malton who previously perched on any available piece of ledge they could find. Central seating arrangements encourage the gathering of people in groups while other ledges open the centre of the corridor. The movable furniture pieces encourage the residents to claim a part in shaping their mall.

community art:
groups in malton have organized different art
exhibitions to help build cultural interactions.
this space sets aside a permanent location
to display and share

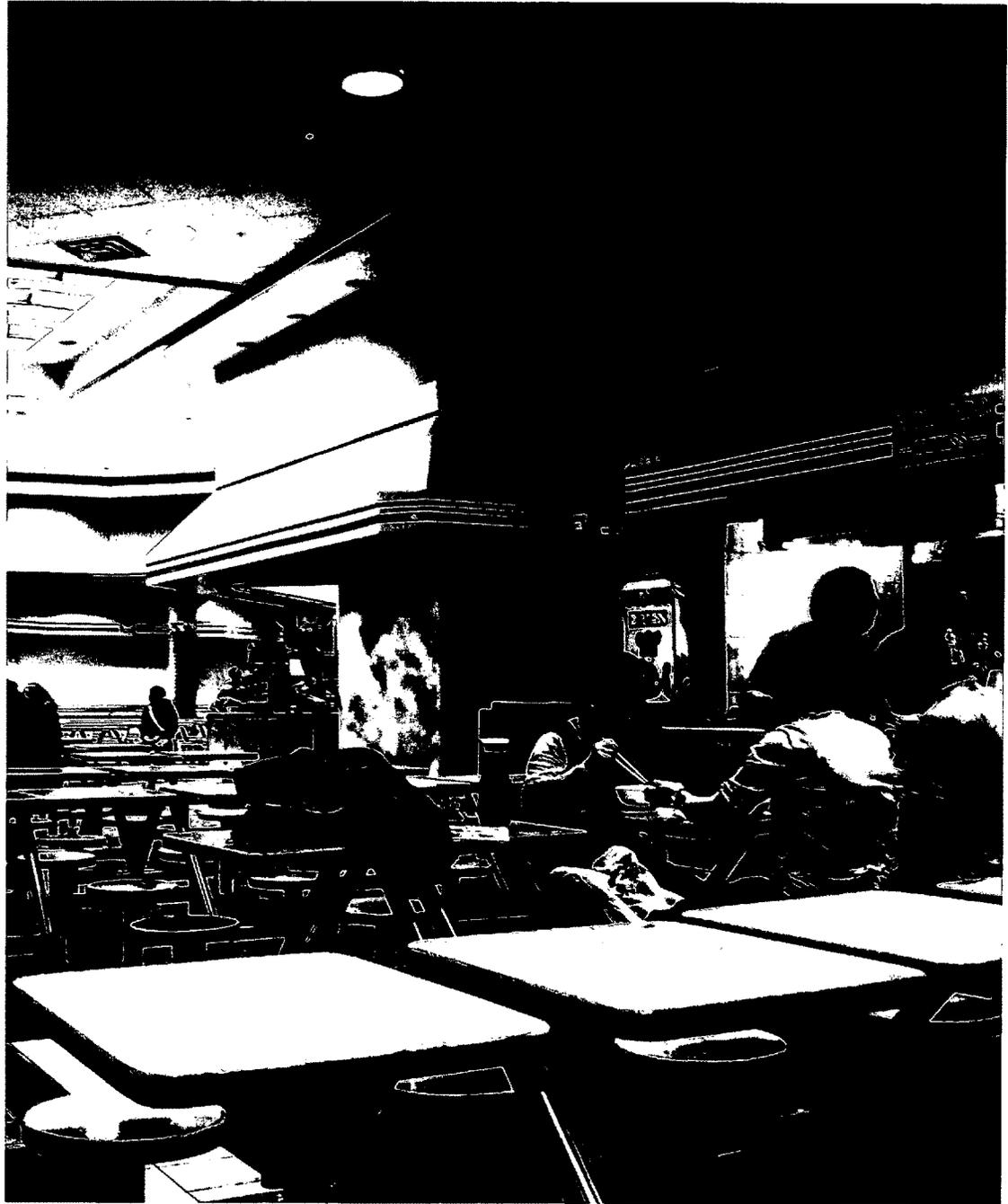


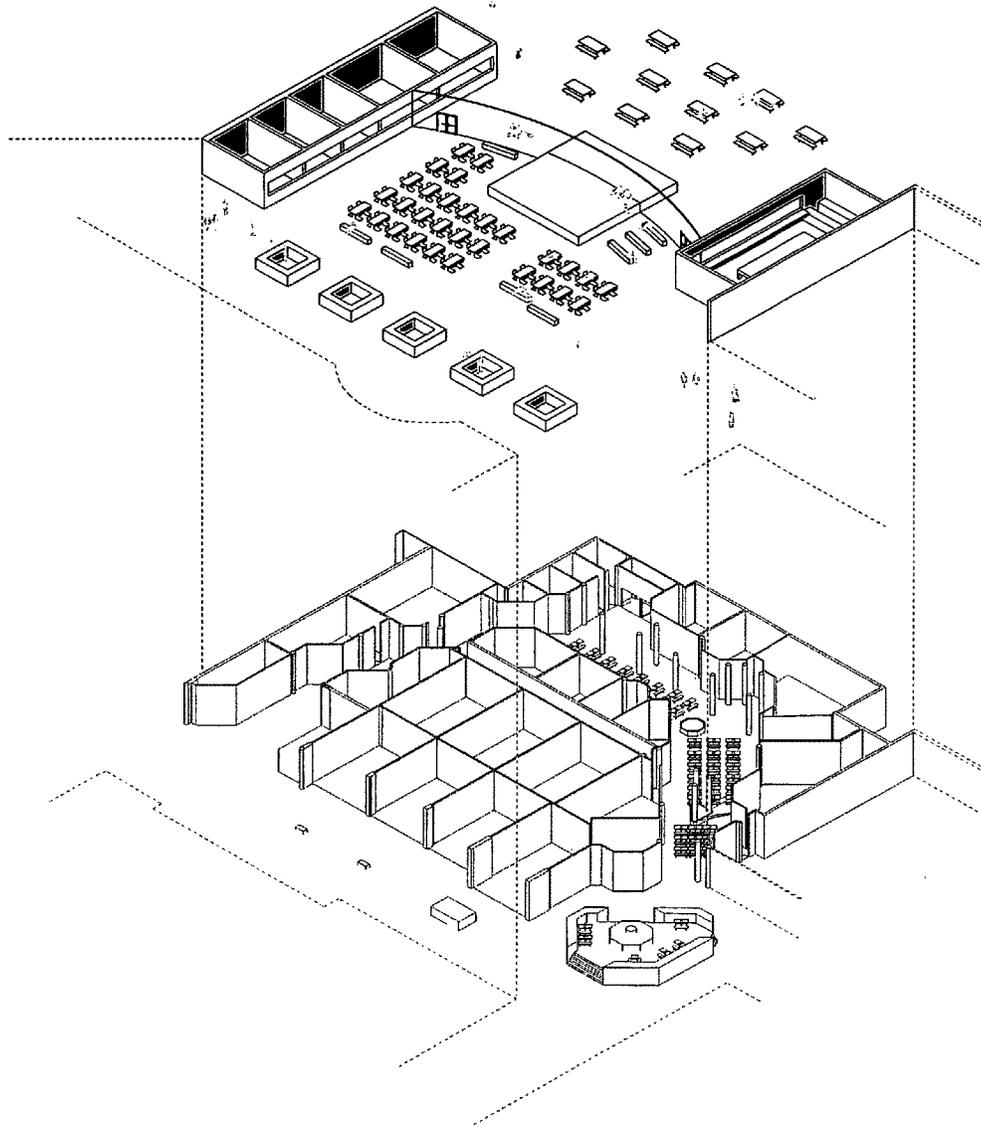
photovoice:
An exhibition of photographs from
around malton and short paragraphs
to accompany them. The project was
meant to promote social change and
identify both the strengths and
weaknesses of the neighbourhood.
More permanent or longer exhibitions
would allow the message to
spread further.



art corridor

The new corridor will provide a change of pace from the other corridors of the mall. It will cause regular users to stop and consider things other than the consumption of goods. It will also bring in a different user who might not commonly visit the mall, altering the daily patterns of the regular and presenting opportunity of negotiations between differences.

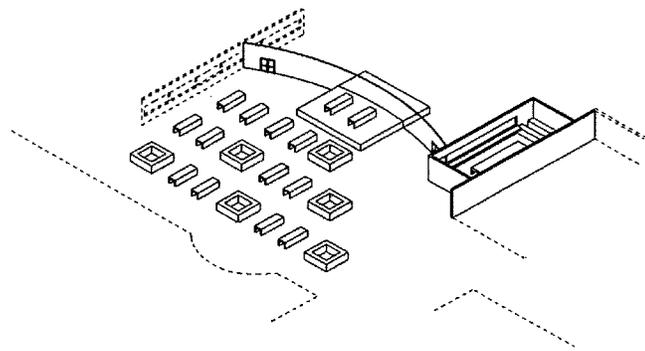




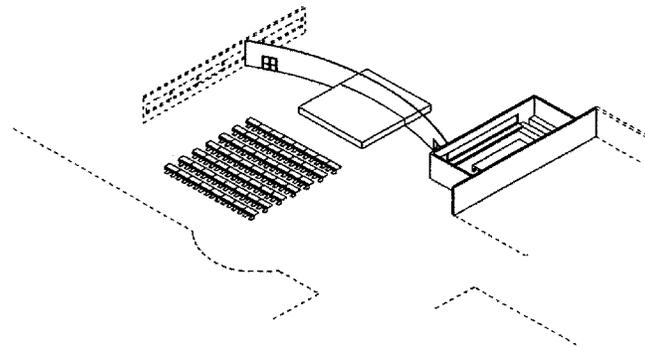
the core: food court - centre court -picnic area

The extra versatile space will allow for the adaptation of the areas for the use of various events, such as kids' shows and seasonal displays.

The current entrance to the food court backs onto the dumpster ridden back parking lot which then opens to the ravine. The new centre court will seek to engage both the inner corridor of the mall and the parkland behind through a picnic area.



market day



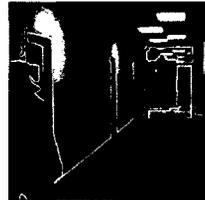
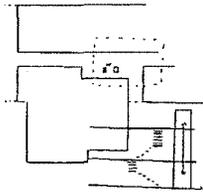
dinner and a show

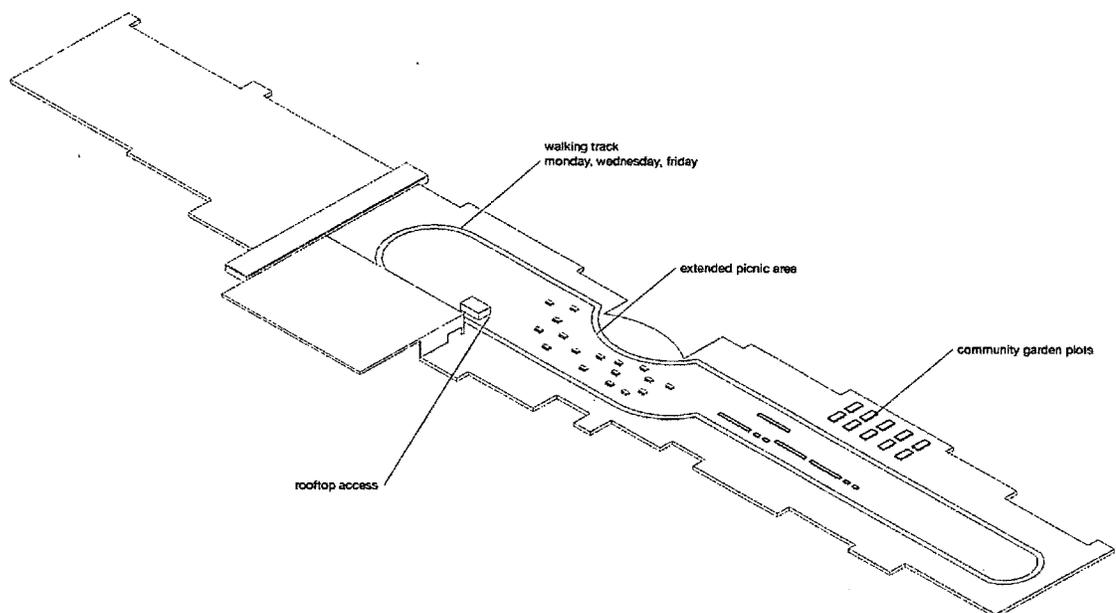
the core: food court - centre court -picnic area

The In the vision of Gruen's center court, a hive of activity in the mall, the existing components will be removed to reconfigure the space into a social hub. A place for events to be held by the mall management. While people do gather in the food court, though not frequently, they tend to sit to the outer edges from where they can see and be seen by the highest amount of pedestrian traffic. This desire to be within the 'action' will be encouraged by opening the food court area along the main corridor.

4 rooftop

Westwood Mall is in need of a sense of excitement and surprise within the experience of a long mall. The current building has a unique occupied basement which suggests the beginning of a vertical movement through the spaces. The unique basement offices and the expanse of flat roof will be reconnected through the existing vertical core. The roof space can be gained as a seasonal experience and the potential for community projects and enhancing the theatre experience.



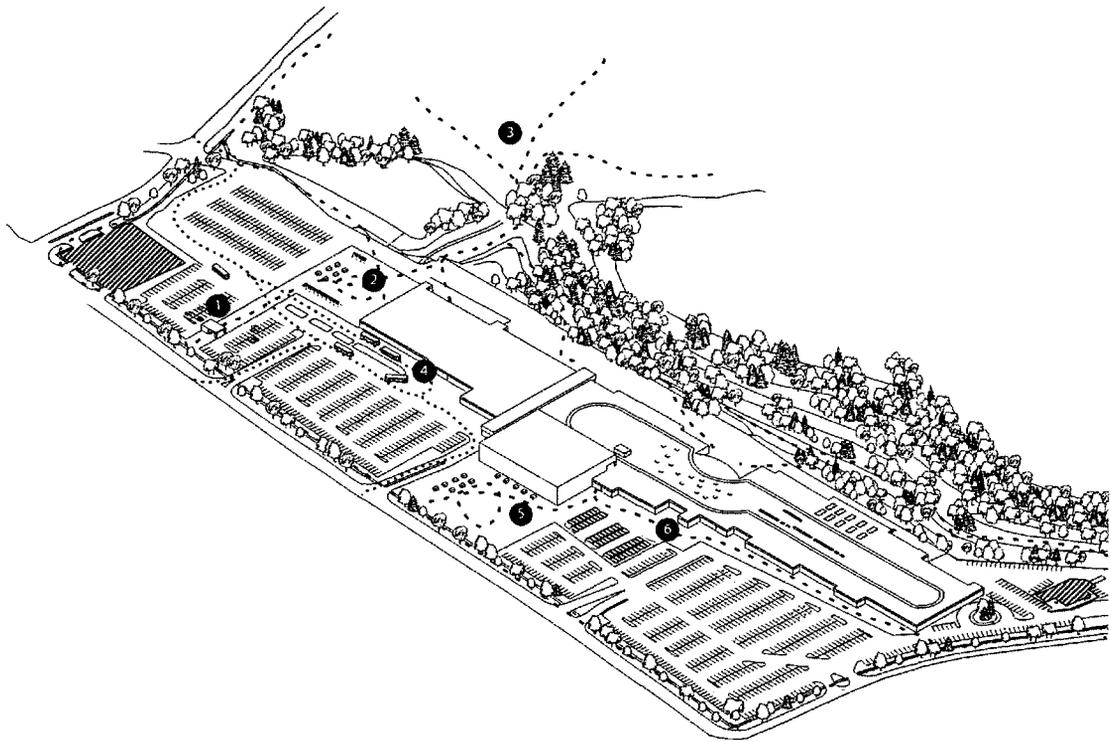


roof top

The flat roof of the mall is taken advantage of with a green roof and a direct link to the second storey of the theatre as well as a central connection directly to the corridor. There is a walking track so the morning walking group can take advantage of nice weather and a flat surface. The picnic area and gardens offer the opportunity for the community to take on different projects to enhance the secluded roof space.

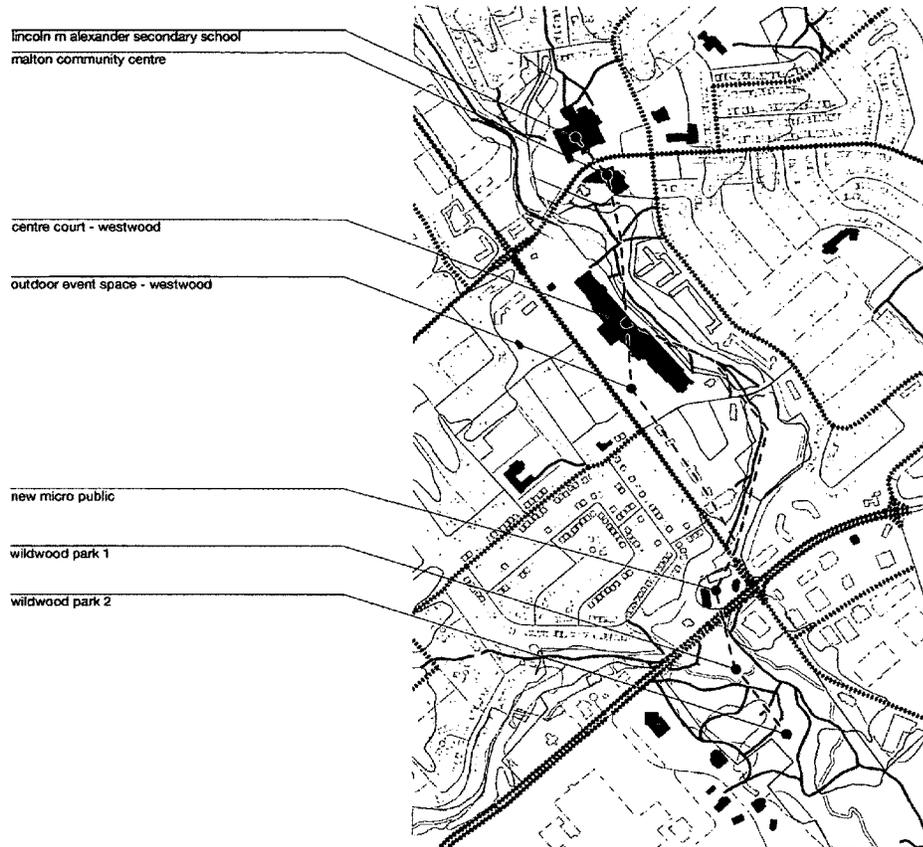
5 re-knitting into the community

The changes to the mall thus far have been relatively internal to the existing plot of land which belongs to the mall. It is important to consider the spaces beyond the mall and into the community which it is re-knitting itself into. This section takes on the question of re-knitting at three different scales. First, within the boundaries of the land of the mall in addressing the barren parking lot as a potential for community space. Second, through the imagining of a larger network of community nodes that could expand the spirit of gathering into different corners of the ethnoburb. Third, the network of the annual Malton Community Festival is considered utilizing the reconfigured Westwood Mall as a pivotal link to the physical event locations. The festival is an event which works towards the re-knitting of the community through a series of activities and gatherings.



parking lot to landscape

- 1 Taxi drivers hang out in the corner of the parking lot so a small pavilion creates a central point for them to get out and stretch their legs.
- 2 A plaza for large gatherings and swing sets to spend time well waiting for the bus.
- 3 Links to the Malton Community Centre and adjacent subdivisions through the park.
- 4 New transit stop integrated into the facade.
- 5 Front plaza which serves as a major gathering place outside the theatre and play space.
- 6 Community gardens overtake the corner of the parking lot filling the rows of parking and suggest a potential for expansion.



"The Malton Community Festival is an event that brings together all cultures under on roof. It provides you an opportunity to know the people you live with while you interact with them. If we can imbibe the spirit of this festival then we can make this country an excellent fusion of all the cultures."

Ranjit Sohal | O/A fingerprints Plus (maltonfestival.ca)

festival network

The annual Malton Community Festival is a symbol of the strength of Malton and the desire to exist as one close knit community and not broken by difference or the challenges of diversity. The negotiations that happen between different people on that day exemplify what the future of the neighbourhood could be. This map suggests the different nodes in which events currently happen during the festival and introduce two into the mall which serve as the link between the two main locations of the Malton Community Centre and Wildwood Park.

① **reconfigured westwood**
serves as the hub of social activity in the community and extends links to other spaces and parks

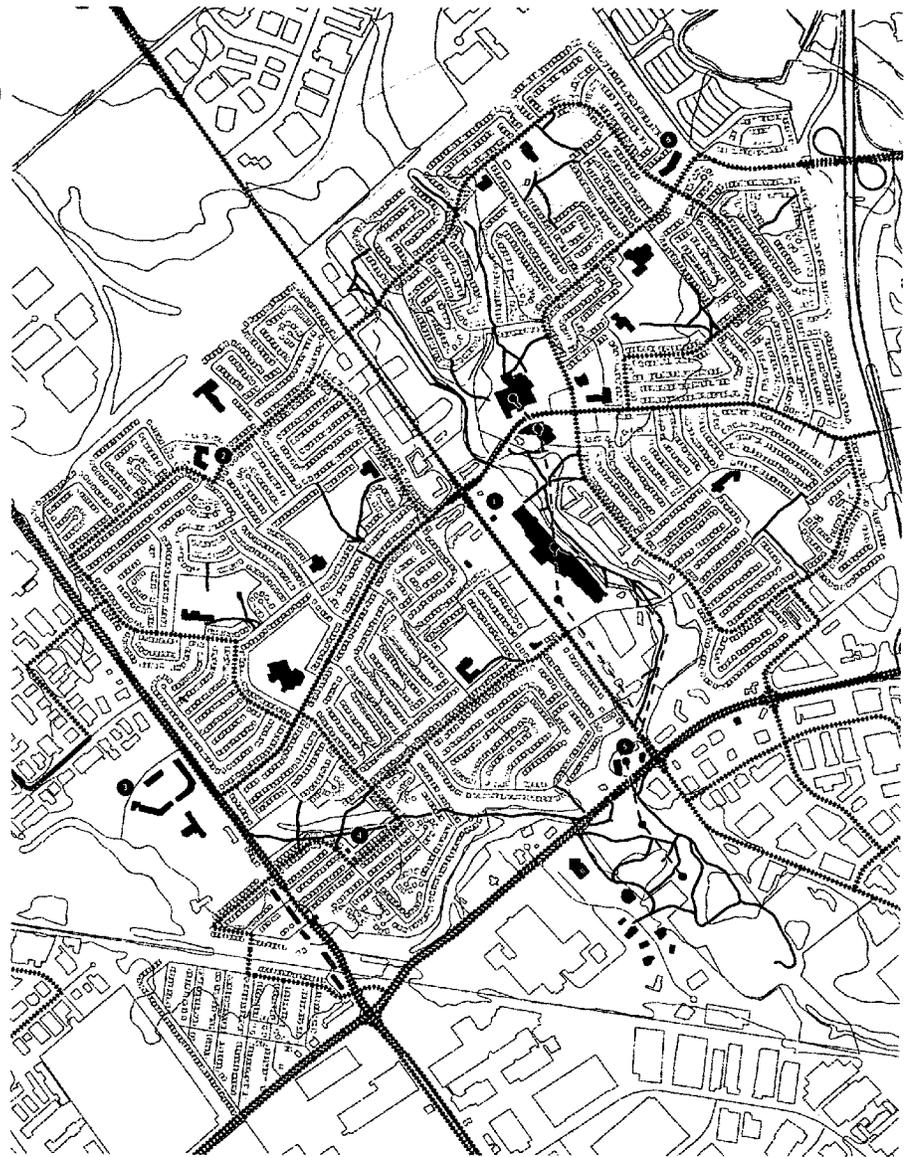
② **strip mall 1**
partially vacant strip mall is adjacent to a public school could become a new youth hangout, just the right amount of distance from parents

③ **great punjab business centre**
if the Sikh population moves from the community one would imagine this space to take on a new life and utilized the courtyard lie formation

④ **victory hall**
the old heart of the community could be revitalized and expanded to serve the community further

⑤ **strip mall 2**
located on the edge of a busy road this location would serve the industrial area as well as the homes

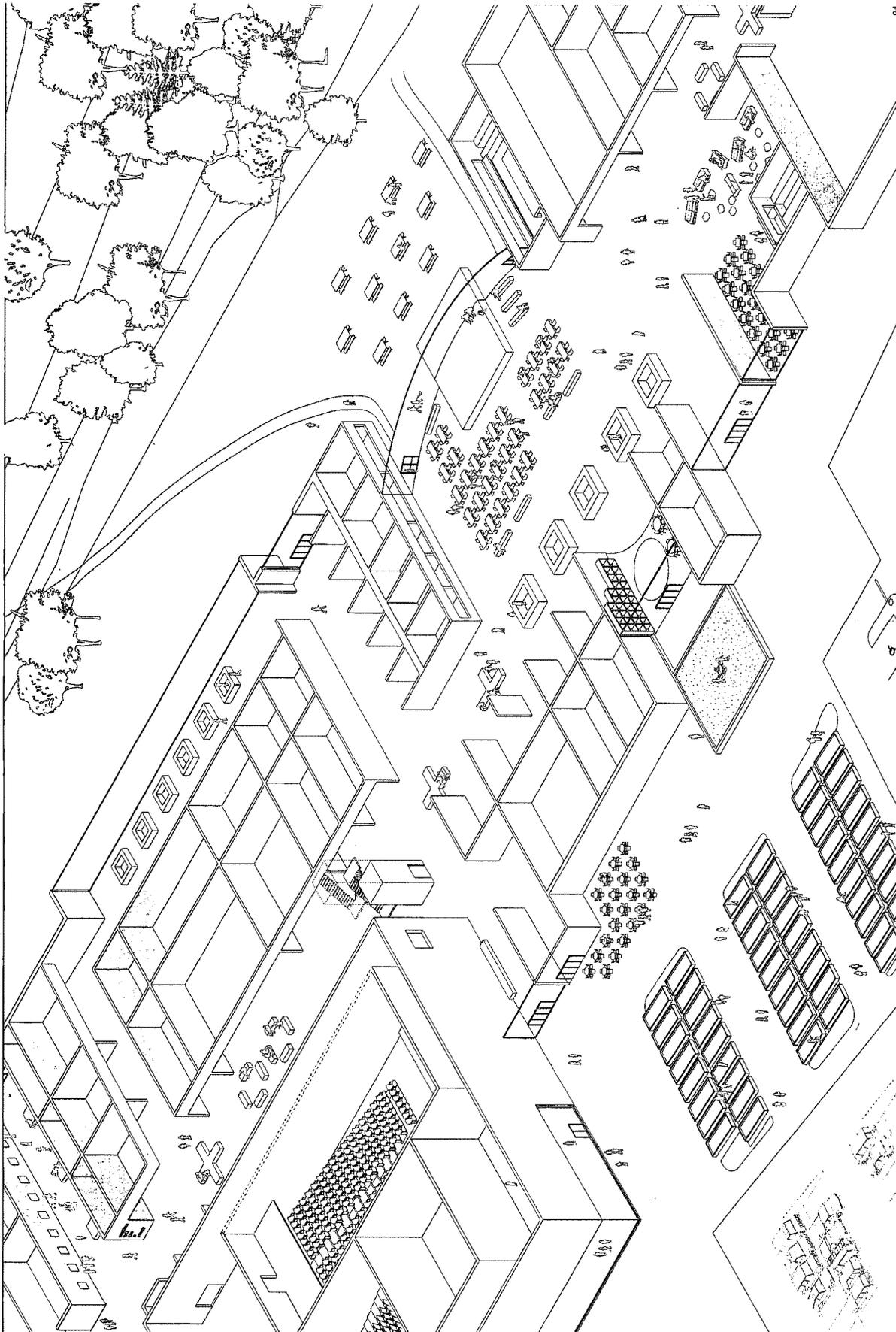
⑥ **strip mall 3**
at the edge of the lower income portion of malton this location could provide a variety of classes and services amongst the retail stores



- proposed new or revitalized micro-publics
- existing gathering places (schools, places of worship)
- transit routes
- existing pedestrian paths
- - - community festival route
- festival event nodes

expanding micro-publics

As the reconfiguring of Westwood works towards the re-knitting of the community its network can reach beyond the limits of the site into the rest of the community. The map indicated further micro-publics and third places which could be implemented to encourage the social nature of the ethnoburb. With each specific location the micro-publics could further target the needs of their subdivision while keeping close to the reconfigured mall through easy pathways and the current transit network.



Postscript

Remember who you were before you were branded an architect. Remember you too inhabit this world. Remember that you too use buildings, occupy space. And remember that users, you included, are more than abstractions or ideals; they are imperfect, multiple, political, and all the better for it.

Jeremy Till Architecture Depends 126.

At the end of a thesis one usually expects to read the conclusion. The reality is, the project is only the beginning. Human behaviour will continually alter the spaces which are designed and the environment surrounding them, and as Jeremy Till shares; 'all the better for it'. The best an architect can do is to prepare the spaces to reach the potential of appropriation, to ignite a sense of pride and ownership between the users and the spaces in which they desire to spend time within. Till discusses "building the unfinished" to allow for the appropriation of users.¹ In the community of Malton the goal of this project was not to 'fix' the problems in the neighbourhood but to begin to carefully address the present needs through the reconfiguration of spaces, starting with Westwood Mall but further providing a platform for the community to grow. Till writes;

"Instead, building the unfinished compels the architect to project multiple actions onto the building... The architect of the unfinished mentally inhabits the spaces of their future building in a myriad ways in order to test them for their openness to appropriation, and then makes adjustments when the whole feels too constricted."²

The ethnoburb provides both a precedent for adaptation in the ways that newcomers to Canada both adapt their own lifestyles and their spaces to cater to their cultural needs, and a site for the investigation of an architecture that responds to its community. While the possibilities are endless to the ways in which both the ethnoburb could evolve culturally, and the directions that could be taken in the mall, the steps taken thus far are to challenge the agency of the architect in creating change for the community. Through spending time in the neighbourhood and focusing on the local needs and lifestyles the architect is able to respond appropriately. In a further exploration like this, it would be a great experience to have been able to spend time living in the community and gain understanding on a greater, everyday level through personal experience of the needs of the community. While in the reach of this thesis it was not possible.

We are seeing today a step towards agency and towards a more locally based architecture by many architects however the level of interaction with the community is continually being redefined. The process of designing for appropriation perhaps suggests that one architect can not learn all the answers a community needs, and in the case of the ethnoburb, the community could be changing rapidly. To design within reach of the community's understanding presents a new form of empowerment to the users, the control over the creation of their spaces. The ability to belong.

notes

1 Till 107.

2 *ibid* 108.

Appendices

A. Excerpt from the Canadian Multiculturalism Act

B. Malton: Learning from an Ethnoburb

A. Excerpt from the Canadian Multiculturalism Act

3. (1) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to
- (a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage;
 - (b) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future;
 - (c) promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation;
 - (d) recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society, and enhance their development;
 - (e) ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity;
 - (f) encourage and assist the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character;
 - (g) promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins;
 - (h) foster the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures of Canadian society and promote the reflection and the evolving expressions of those cultures;
 - (i) preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada; and
 - (j) advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada.

SOCI 4830

MALTON: LEARNING FROM AN ETHNOBURB
RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared for: Pum Van Veldhoven

Prepared by: Nadine Peat | 100708587 [Principal Investigator]

Date: December 8, 2011

Toronto is the destination for many immigrants and as such is one of the most culturally diverse cities in Canada. Although Canada has policies in place to navigate the basics of a multicultural society there is still evidence of spatial concentrations of ethnic groups. The research project surveys an 'ethnoburb' on the edge of Toronto. Social and spatial needs of the community are analyzed through the everyday lives of the residents. Malton is a small suburb that is at the edge of its city Mississauga that has been neglected by the city but has a strong and vibrant community inside. The research responds to the enthusiasm of the community and seeks to develop theories in which to guide the process of an architectural project in the neighbourhood.

Malton: Learning from an Ethnoburb

Principal Investigator: Nadine Peat

Introduction

This social research study was developed as an aspect of a larger Masters of Architecture thesis. The overall thesis project will be an analysis of a diverse, immigrant suburb on the edge of Toronto. The thesis seeks to understand the changing need of the suburb since it was first designed and built over 40 years ago. The thesis contextualizes the various complexities of the changing multicultural spaces of Canada. Canada is proud to define itself as a multicultural country, and has done so in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, projecting that all cultures live in harmony with one another. However, there are intricacies to the articulation of diversity and the cohabitation of diverse people, values and norms. Canada is quickly needing to learn how to adapt and provide for the new social landscape that is emerging.

The following report seeks to understand these intricacies at the level of everyday experience. As architecture is inherently social in nature the social research is necessary to develop a complete understanding of the broader thesis project. To play into the architectural thesis the research is focused on the spatial needs of the community while using social research methods as a means to strengthen and guide the process of architectural design. The study is a step into the exploration of interdisciplinary studies through the incorporation of social findings in a spatial investigation.

The suburb of choice is the community of Malton, Mississauga, a part of the Greater Toronto Area, which is both a case study and the proposed site for the architectural project. The community was selected due to its high immigrant population and geographical location and scale (*Appendix C Maps*). Toronto as a background to the suburb is significant as it is estimated that 70% of immigrants to Canada settled in Toronto between 2001 and 2006. Consequently, it is suggested that the spatial formation of the city began to shift at the same time (Murdie and Ghosh 2010). Malton has produced spaces of worship and education that are unlike those in the original North American suburb because of its diverse citizens. The concentration of like values and norms allow for the creation of these new cultural spaces, the suburb is now the 'ethnoburb.' The term 'ethnoburb'

has been adapted from Li to be used in this project as a description of the suburban ethnic concentration of both residential and commercial districts (Li 1998). The research designed to learn about Malton in order to empower and enhance its future. Through these concepts of identity, belonging and pride also evolve and seek to be understood in their place in an ethnoburb.

Literature Review

For the purposes of this study I focused on Canadian literature sources to establish an image of the current situation of immigrants in suburban areas of Canada. The literature projects Canada as a model of multiculturalism to the rest of the world (Dib et al. 2008). The foundations of this multiculturalism stem from the fact that the country is a classical immigration country (Murdie and Ghosh 2010, Quadeer 1997). The complexity that resides in the spatial and sociocultural aspects of the country's cities is often a result of the immigration and multicultural landscape. Multiculturalism is defined as the achievement of the integration of minorities into Canada while still maintaining their own heritage (Balakrishnan and Gyimah 2003, Quadeer 1997). Multiculturalism is mainly represented through empirical data sets and is measured by ethnic origin, status as an immigrant and language(s) spoken at home (Quadeer 1997). The quantitative methods of the research limits the scope of understanding of immigrant lifestyle to only the three categories of census data and does not expose the everyday lived experiences of immigrants.

In the late twentieth century as immigration and multiculturalism increased in Canada the spatial formations of the country began to change, most frequently established as ethnic concentrations (Murdie and Ghosh 2010). The term 'ethnoburb' has since been employed by many researchers (Li 1998, Qadeer and Kumar 2006, Dib et al. 2008). Li's literature outlines the ethnoburb as having a combination of features of the traditional inner-city enclave, as well as the common suburb (Li 1998). Abrahamson suggests that the most successful way of studying an enclave and its boundaries is not through empirical data but by experiencing the community at street level and engaging with the residents (Abrahamson, 2006). This literature suggests that the research is both relevant to modern day experience as well as the importance of getting close to the community and becoming familiar with its members.

As interesting as the purely social aspects of the newly formed ethnoburbs are it is important not to forget that the research is also discovering the spatial needs of the community. The literature

on ethnic enclaves and ethnoburbs has an inherent spatial quality to its descriptive language and therefore reinforced the rationale for selecting this mode of study. Contrary to common conceptions the literature shows that ethnoburbs do not evolve out of spatial constraints but instead are formed by the market systems and ultimately choice (Murdie and Ghosh 2010). It was assumed that as immigrants moved outside of the city they would begin to assimilate both spatially and culturally (Murdie and Ghosh 2010, Abrahamson 2006). Ethnoburbs have instead carried the values of ethnic concentrations and challenges of spatial integration. Spatial integration is determined through quantitative measurements of population and geography (Balakrishnan and Gyimah 2003, 115). Murdie and Ghosh's research divides spatial and social integration into objective factors and subjective factors. Objective factors include housing, language and education, while the subjective factors comprise of issues of identity and the absorption of norms and values (Murdie and Ghosh 2010).

The literature has hinted at the issue of identity in both the development of ethnic concentrations and their subsequent integration (Abrahamson 2006, Buchignani et al. 1985, Murdie and Ghosh 2010, Qadeer and Kumar 2006). Abrahamson confirms the relationship when he states: "like roles, a built environment can attain very high salience in people's identities because physical settings become associated with the bonding of people ... the basis of people's attachments to a place, such as an enclave" (Abrahamson 2006, 10). Desai and Subramanian addressed the issue of identity, specifically, in South Asian immigrant youth. The study concluded the existence of a dual consciousness of identity in many of the subjects. The youth were able to balance both their individual cultures and western culture, this resulted for many in developing an active role in a new hybrid culture (Desai and Subramanian 2000). The focus on youth in the literature perhaps proposes for further research to be executed on the changing identity of the generational status of immigrants. Although the literature revealed interesting discussion in the realm of identity the research is more interested in the interactions between groups and the needs of an ethnoburb in terms of common cultural values and norms.

It is evident from the literature found that research into the changing demographics of Canada is very relevant and important at this time. The research question was established to investigate the social and spatial needs of Malton. However, as revealed in the literature review an

interesting social aspect of immigrant populations is the challenge with identity and culture. Although this was not the main focus of the research it was important to allow for social perceptions like identity to emerge along side the spatial data.

Methodology

The literature revealed that outcome of the research project would only be valuable to this project if it was able to address the experiences of immigrants in Malton at the level of the everyday. Therefore, I chose to use qualitative research methods to achieve engagement with the community and not the quantitative and restrictive measures which were often documented in the literature (Balakrishnan and Gyimah 2003, Qadeer and Kumar 2006). A combination of both interviews and participant observation were selected to gather the data. The interview process worked as a way to gather both personal immigration narratives and perceptions of the community. Participant observation in contrast utilized my observation skills as both a social researcher and an architecture student. This process proved to be very progressive in understanding the characteristics of Malton.

The framework used to develop the data gathering procedures and research methods was Community Action Research (CAR). The CAR model was a strong theoretical background for establishing the research because it maintained an overall goal of empowering marginalized communities of geography. This intent encapsulates the architectural and social research goals of the project. I chose to recognize this method of social research because it is committed to identifying the social condition and taking action to make positive changes (Kirby et al. 2006). The focus on the relationships and community was a vital starting point for framing the following procedures.

The data gathering was conducted on two trips to the community of Malton. The first trip was an informal interview with a member of Malton Neighbourhood Services who served as the initial gatekeeper to the community. The same day a participant observation session was conducted at the local mall. The data from these two sessions was then considered while formulating the framework for the next visit. Contact was continued with the first interviewee to attempt to arrange for the next set of interviews. The second visit included one interview with a member of the community and another participant observation conducted outside of the mall. This participant observation focuses on the flow of people from transit to the mall, and youth to the school and mall. To maintain ethical

procedures consent forms were signed for the recording of interviews and interviewees' identity were held in confidence.

I found the data gathering plan to be very successful in reaching the appropriate data I hoped to receive. I learned quickly that results were much faster by telephone than by email when seeking out interviews and that it is difficult to arrange interviews through a third party which requires more time. I found the proper selection of words to be difficult at times and depending on who you were talking to was interpreted differently. The use of probes and expanding questions proved to be very successful in learning the suitable information from the interviewee. The limited data set and number of interviews however, mean that the results cannot be generalized beyond a certain extent and only apply to the community of Malton.

The data management consisted of transcribing the interview which was recorded and managing the participant observation notes digitally. The hard copies were kept in a specified folder. The digital files made the analysis of the data easier to survey and reference multiple times.

Data Analysis

To begin analysis of the data I chose to use grounded theory and use coding to begin to develop the emerging themes in the data. The properties to code initially were broad and were refined to eight separate properties. (see *Appendix C Analytic Schema*) With this clarity I investigated each data property to refine individual themes and the account for the overlapping of properties and their relationships. While some properties maintained individual status, for example pride and immigration. The other properties were regrouped into two categories; sense of community and the architectural project. The factual data properties fell into the latter, these were space, need and youth. Youth and need were very closely linked as the youth were proposed as an age group which was in most need of space in the community. The category of the architectural project could then be said to describe the potential program¹ and spatial needs of the community.

¹ The term *program* is describing the function the building would provide to the community. A building can have multiple programs occur at once. The program also describes to some extent who the users of the spaces would be, in this case: youth.

The second category was the sense of community that I discovered within Malton. This was projected through a combination of properties; identity, belonging and ethnicity and culture. These three categories guided the overall impression of the community. In particular, I found identity to be subdivided into an identity for the community as a whole and the identity of the individual within the community and their own cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Identity was also a property that I expected to develop because of its prevalence in the literature (Desai and Subramanian 2000).

The property of immigration was its own category of personal histories narratives. Although these histories did not add to the initial development of an overall theory they created a mindset for the interpretation of data. These stories confirmed speculations developed from participant observation on the family structures of the community. Similarly, pride maintained its own category. It was a property that I did not expect to discover in my data but as I began dividing the bits and applying properties to them it became evident. This sense of pride became an important social characteristic and theory builder.

Final Research Results

1. Immigration Stories

The interviewees in this study shared their personal history and relationship with Malton, both are second generation immigrants. The first, Abe^{*}, who works with Malton Neighbourhood Services, was born in Malton. Abe's parents immigrated from Guyana, he grew up in the community and has only moved a few streets from his childhood home. Abe has watched the evolution of the community and briefly discussed the changing populations, beginning with Italians and Polish then seeing an influx of Caribbean and most recently South Asian. Abe expressed that projects in the community could not cater to just one ethnic group as he described "the flavour of the year" suggesting that the ethnic group of majority has continually fluctuated.

The second interviewee, Brittany^{*}, first lived in Toronto with her parents, they had immigrated from Grenada before she was born. They made the move from urban to suburban Malton when she was five years old. After living in Toronto during her early twenties for school and work she returned with her three children 15 years later to establish her own household in Malton. Brittany expressed

^{*} Names have been changed to protect the participants' identities.

that over that time period of being away from Malton it appeared the community had not grown or developed as a healthy community would have. Both the interviewees have experienced a long time watching and living in Malton. As second generation immigrants they have framed the development of the community and its needs very well.

2. Locating the Architectural Project

The interviews and participant observation sessions both greatly influenced the conclusions drawn from the research for the architectural project. The site of the architectural project has been narrowed to two locations, an intervention within the existing mall and an empty lot across from the mall, the latter was suggested as a potential site by Brittany for a youth centre. Abe first communicated the need for the youth of the community, sharing that they often leave the area to take part in extra curricular activities. He suggested that this was an undesirable situation for the youth. Brittany continued in emphasizing a need for the middle years, ages 7 to 12 and the youth ages 13-19. During participant observation I noted negative reactions by adults towards the youth when they were on their lunch from school and making their way to the mall yelling and cheering. Brittany also shared that within their new community centre the youth are ushered out quickly after activities.² She said,

Now, even my daughter goes to a Leaders in Training program there and when it's done they are like, 'Okay make sure you guys go home.' Like you know what about talking and fellowship and engaging each other getting to know each other better? [Saying.] 'Oh by the way there's a sewing class next week, maybe we'll take it.' You know how are people supposed to know what's going on and make use of the community centre if their space is limited in being there?

From this statement I also interpreted frustrations with the community centre as a mother who wants the best for her children. Brittany agreed that Malton was in need of social and community spaces and has discussed this with a group of mothers that she regularly gathers with. When I suggested the mall as a place where I saw many people meet she agreed;

"Exactly and it's suburban and you will find that if you go into like Bramalea they do have community spaces a lot more. But people now a days, I find very interesting, that the mall is where people meet and in this neighbourhood; seniors, teens... They meet at the mall and they still hate it, they still don't love it. It's not a great place but it's the place that they have."

² There was an incident in 2008 in which a gang member from Scarborough came to the community centre and shot a young boy. Since that incident the security has heightened in the community centre and large security guards are there at all times keeping the groups moving.

This also raises an interesting question regarding the feeling of neglect from the surrounding areas in particular the city of Mississauga in helping to provide for their community. Brittany also brought up in the discussion of the community centre, which had a new addition built on in 2005, that in the process of the designing of the community centre the people of Malton were not consulted on their needs. This has caused what I have interpreted in both interviews a sense of disappointment in the new building they have received. Brittany expressed feelings of deception and neglect in the process of the building. She said "There were community consultants, but basically they railroaded people."

This narrative holds important interpretations for the needs of the community and the spaces that are desired, something that could be discussed at great length. However, it also provides insight into the direction of my own architectural project and the process in which I am taking through this social research. It would suggest that this form of research, as I had predicted, would be a better method to create an architecture which would then help to strengthen the community as a whole.

3. The Community of Malton

As stated, I have discovered the needs spatially of the community but also the importance in understand the community as a whole. Although I only have a small data set to draw conclusions from, therefore they can not be generalized to represent the whole community, the interviewees due to their roles in the work have significant insight into the community. With this assumption I have drawn some interpretations and initial conclusions of the sense of community in Malton. From my first drive through the area, after reading negative news reports on the community, I felt that the neighbourhood seemed to have a lot to offer and was very active.

Both Abe and Brittany expressed that Malton had a strong sense of community and that people felt they belonged. However, they also felt that the community needed work at various levels to become a neighbourhood that was desirable for everyone to stay in. This is what Brittany had to share about the community;

I think it's a very, like, a nice blend of community. There is like everybody here and people get to know each other and once they, like especially in my capacity, doing advocacy, working counseling. Once people get to know you, trust you, they think of you as part of their neighbourhood so they come to you and ask you for support and stuff like that. It's good because once we can do that for each other we can rely on helping on each other. Because sometimes resources aren't easy to find.

Not only does Brittany suggest that the diversity of the community is part of what leads to its uniqueness, she also implies there is a network of people that care for each other. This was even more evident in the number of small organizations she listed as playing a role in the care for Malton. MNS provides services to help enhance the community and it can be said that their goal is to create a welcoming community for newcomers to Canada, however, they are not the only group doing so.

Although it was clear through participant observation and the interviews that the various cultures that exist in Malton do maintain a certain degree of separation from each other. Many groups in the mall, and even in the youth, were only with people from the same visible minority. Brittany did express that there are certain unwritten rules of each culture that at times create difficulties in networking and casual fellowship. Such as the rules about who you welcome into your home, and who lives with you. This is what she shared;

People are more reluctant, this is a bedroom community so people work and they come home, they are reluctant to, you know, meet at each other's houses and stuff like that. And there is also, I think, cultural barriers that prevent people from opening up their house. You know what I mean? It might not be. Like in Caribbean culture you don't just invite everybody over to your home right? You have to know people, and there is risk in that as well.

This is interesting in that it shows that there is a division between the characteristics of cultures and how the community then operates. The hesitancy with inviting people into their home plays into the need of neutral spaces in Malton for people to meet, gather and socialize. In both interviews it was also brought up that there is a high volume of renters in the community, and people who rent out their basements of their homes. There is also a pattern of increased people within the home within some cultures, such as Brittany's South Asian neighbours as she told me about the number of people in their home;

I live in a semi with my husband and four kids. We live upstairs and downstairs even though the apartment can be separated into two apartments we rent everything. Next door there is a family in the upstairs; there is a wife, husband, daughter and baby on the way. The uncle lives with them and his wife is coming over with his baby and they all [will] live there. In the basement is another family. Even that, that is a good example of the difference. As a Caribbean family we feel we need all this space maybe two Indian families feel they can share that space.

Consequently, even the gathering spaces within the home are less that originally designed for the residents when the suburbs were first built and designed for nuclear families. Although the challenges and barriers between cultures were evident at times, both interviewees found the diversity of Malton to be part of what makes it an interesting and strong community.

The final point addressed which is important to discuss is the role that identity has in the community. Identity I discovered was read in two ways; as an individual and as a community. In the interview Brittany suggested that it was not productive to invite members to a multicultural themed event designed to have different cultures interact but instead to use common identifiers, for example parenting to connect people. This continues to establish the theory of building a design based on a common identifier outside of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, such as youth and community space.

4. Being Proud

Pride of ownership. Pride of neighbourhood. I'm a big community person because I want a good neighbourhood for my kids, a good place to walk, you know, flowers in the neighbourhood. Raking our leaves, that means my kids live in a nice place, my kids are proud of where they come from and it, you know, it's a circular thing. Some people don't make that connection as easily and I don't know if they don't care or it's just too much effort. But once you begin to do things it's just like anything in your life, exercise is too much effort until you start walking once a day..

The final result of this study that proved to be very interesting and insightful was what evolved as the property of pride. Pride was an unexpected potential of the research at the beginning but has proved to be very insightful to all of the afore mentioned result categories. The example discussed in the architectural project of the community centre explains the benefits of involving the community in the design process to result in a building which they are then proud of. This pride of place carries forward into the treatment of the spaces and the social affect it has on the community. Brittany discussed her experiences in a rental condo in Malton which was very poorly maintained by the owners and consequently became difficult to be proud of a maintain herself. She discusses the impact this had on her experience there;

And then people leave garbage out and people do gross things. They deface the walls or what have you, and that stuff doesn't leave like, i mean, its not like I stopped caring, but I'm not invested. I mean for example if my neighbour throws out garbage all the time [in the corridor] I'm not going to pick up the mail for her. You know what i mean?

Brittany's disgust in her neighbour's behaviour did not allow her to create a network and behave like a community within the building. This kind of pride of ownership concerning home can easily translate into public spaces and the community as a whole. While Brittany did at times express her pride in Malton she also brought up the opposite in which people neglected care of their homes and did not choose to contribute to the community as a whole, but treated it as merely a place to sleep and then move on. Abe through his body language and choice of sites to show me in Malton exemplified his pride for his community, when asked about the sense of community in Malton he

described many of the residents as “Malton proud” and continued to share famous people who had once lived in Malton. It is important that the architectural thesis continues to develop a ‘Malton proud’ community.

Plan for Action

The analysis thus far has proved to be very insightful into the spatial and social needs of Malton and has provided a beginning structure to continue the architectural thesis on. I believe the initial intentions of the project have been achieved. The data collected could still be further analyzed, especially in the property of space, which will be broken down to guide initial design phases. A deeper reading of the data, one that would not find a place in this report, will need to be conducted to enhance further research directions. This further research will be conducted as a workshop on the defined architectural project. The second interviewee has become more of a gatekeeper to the community than the initial contact with MNS and will prove to be a valuable resource in conducting this form of workshop process and has indicated this to me. Although this project is not designed to bring about physical social change in the community, it is hoped that the further contact and design development with the community will prove to be an inspiring and constructive period of time for the community.

Conclusion

The architectural thesis will prove as a platform to disseminate the ideas and conclusions of the research project into an architectural representation. As a social research project the study has provided great insight into the community and was truly a rewarding experience. I have learned the benefits of using a telephone as well as the strength of the data you can gather directly from members of a community. The process of social research is challenging and time is incredibly important and limited but working through the challenges also offers many opportunities to learn more. The social and spatial needs of the community are indeed complex stories to write but through a strict analysis bring issues like pride to the forefront. This will help to clarify the architectural project and emphasizes the importance of careful work and design within an ethnoburb.

APPENDICES

- A. Consent Forms
- B. Data Gathering Instruments
 - i. Interview Schedule
 - ii. Participant Observation Chart
- C. Analytic Schema
- D. Maps of Malton Area

Interview Schedule

MNS Members

1. How do you feel about the sense of community in Malton? Is it strong?
2. What aspects of the community add to its vibrancy and social life?
 - a. Are these culturally related?
3. Why do you think immigrants tend to gravitate to Malton?
 - a. What are the benefits of living with people of the same ethnicity or culture?
 - b. What are the disadvantages?
 - c. How does this effect immigrants ability to adapt to a "Canadian lifestyle"?
4. What are some things you feel are lacking in the community?
5. What kinds of social spaces are most needed by the community?
6. Because there is a high immigrant population in this community how does this affect its needs?
7. Other needs you perceive the community needs now? In the future?
8. Would you like to continue living in Malton, or an area with similar characteristics?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add to our conversation today/Is there anything I should know about Malton?

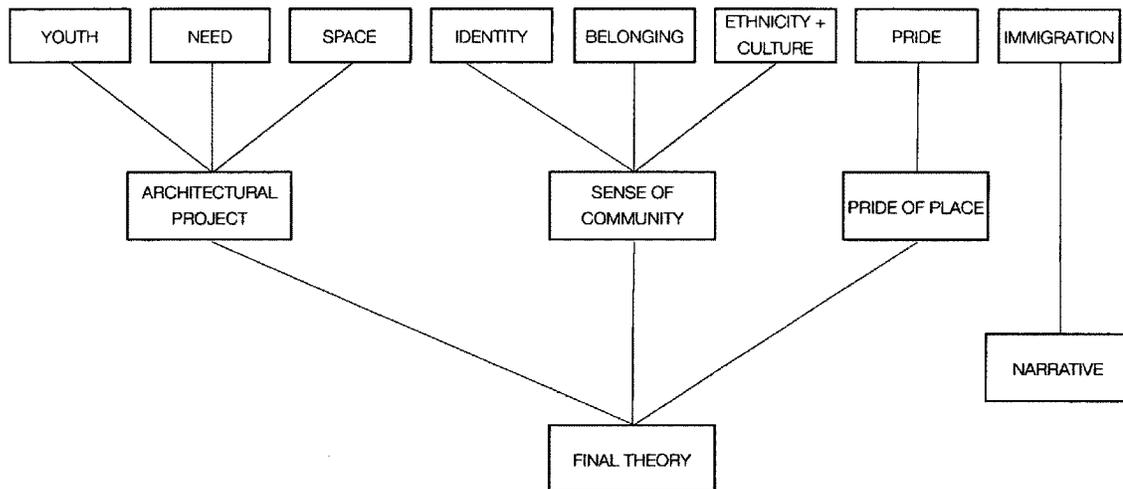
Thank you for your time and sharing your knowledge with me.

Participant Observation Chart

note: appearance
verbal behaviour and interactions
physical behaviour and gestures
personal space
pedestrian traffic
people/groups who stand out

Location:	Time:	Date:
		expansion notes:

Analytic Schema



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