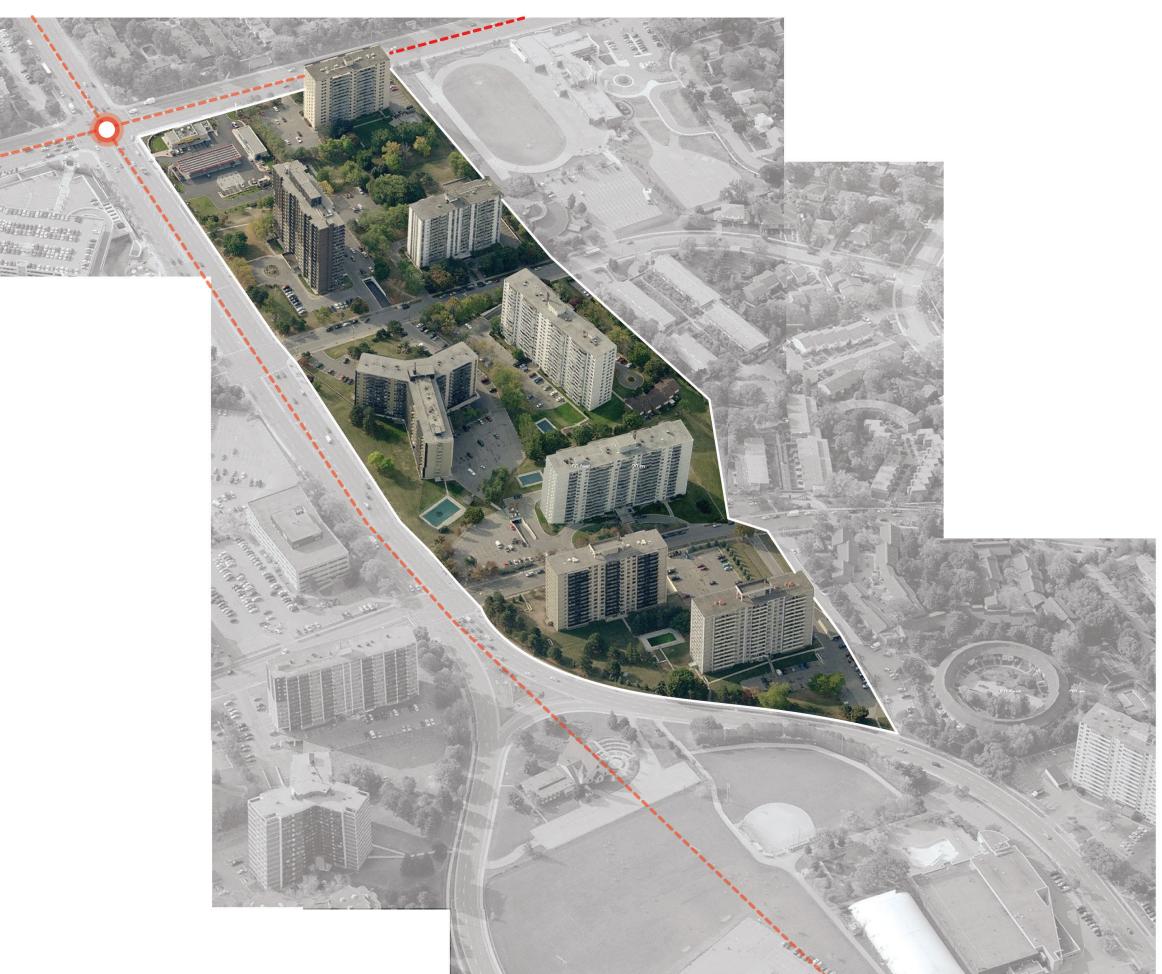
Designing the Future For a Historic Toronto **Modernist Vision**

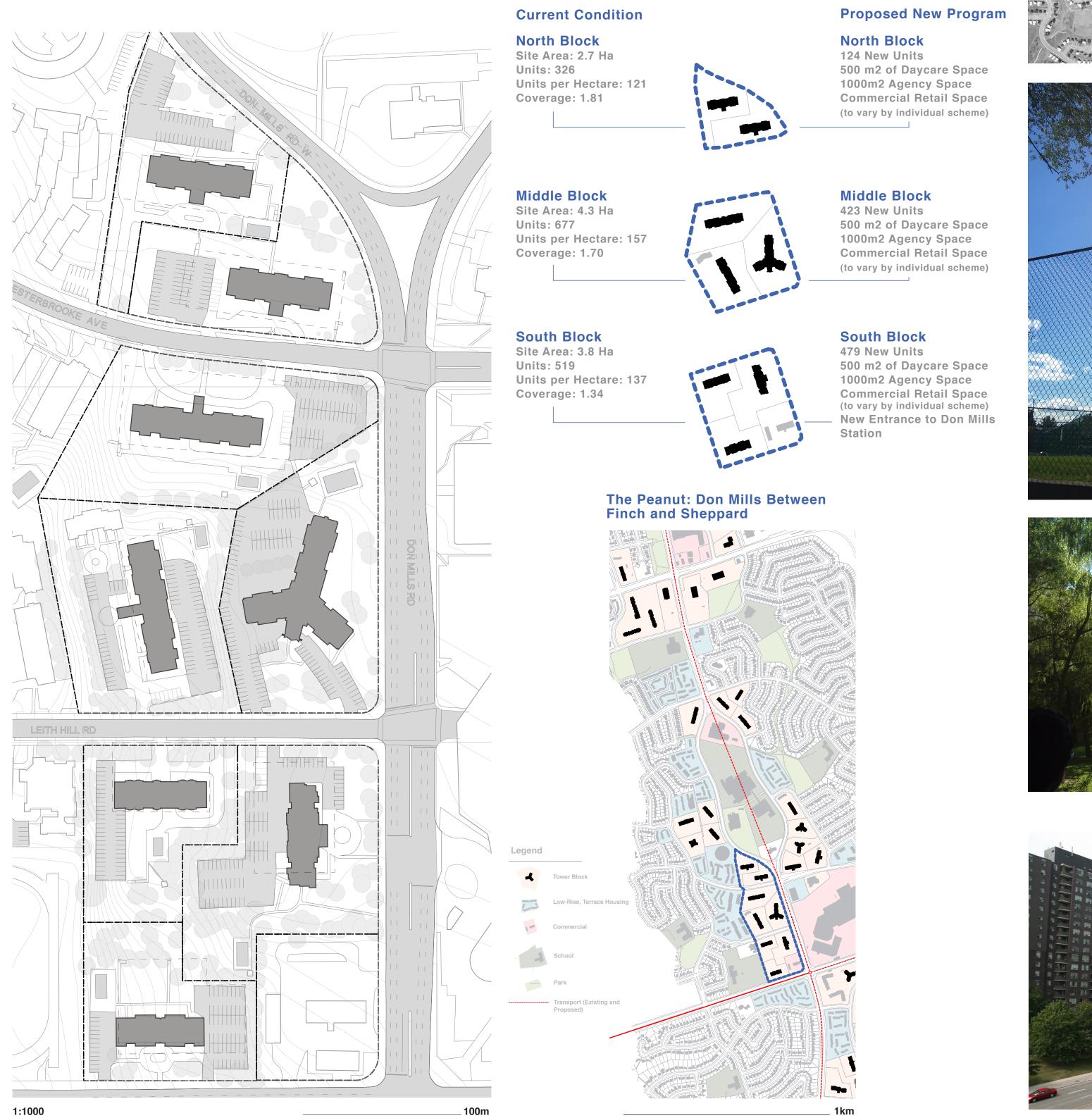
Masters of Architecture Design Studio at the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design, University of Toronto



INSTRUCTORS: George Baird, Graeme Stewart

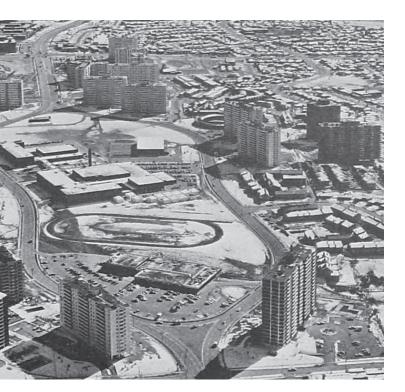
STUDENTS:

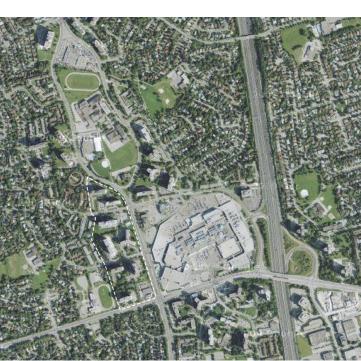
Steven Avis, Max Berg, Jon Cummings, Darius Gumushdjian, Nicholas Hoban, Mahsa Majidian, Nariman Mousavi, Stephen Ng, Jared Pumber, Steven Socha, Brendan Whitsitt, Mendi Zhen







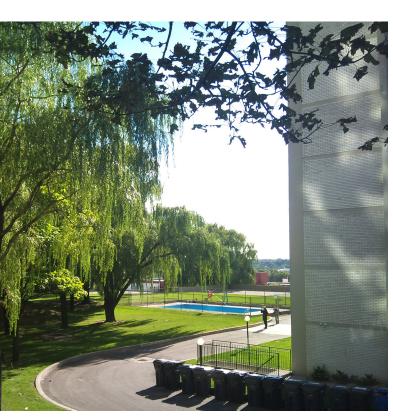


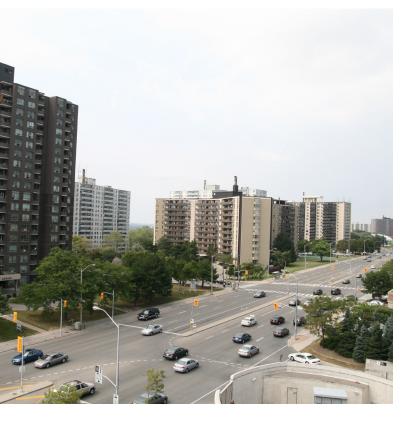












Explorations into Tower Neighbourhood Renewal:

focused on a typical site in Toronto's inner suburbs. c ch distinctive clusters of high-rise residential buildings were erected in period of the 1950's through the 1970's. These clusters of buildings have become the subject of considerable recent interest in planning and architectural circles in Toronto – as well as around the world - on account of a number of significant factors.

- First of all, these clusters of buildings in the older suburbs are so utterly, distinctively Torontonian. No other city in North America has them.
- Second, as a local vernacular, they embody a series of site planning principles derived from high European architectural modernism from the 1920's and
- Third, they have reached an age at which it is apparent that they would
- now benefit from careful re-examination, and from the retrofitting of their existing building fabrics.
- ourth, despite the substantial existing high-rise buildings that sit or e often underutilized, and many of the populations living in the buildings under serviced, offering up the possibility of adding new uses and programmes to them. These new programmes can provide opportunity for considered site improvements, as well as the design of new buildings. Such new buildings can provide additional residential accommodation as well as needed services, amenities and community facilities. What is more, the income generated from these buildings will have the capacity to contribute to the costs of retrofitting the adjacent existing buildings.

e was selected for study in the studio. Each student asked to consider a strategy for the addition of over one thousand ne housing units, community services, shops and family amenities within the existing property boundaries of the chosen cluster of eight modernist slab apartments near the transit interchange at Sheppard and Don Mills, in the former borough of North York. Students then selected one of the three blocks within this clusters to develop a detailed proposal

While it is anticipated that the full scope of site regeneration would include the retrofitting of the existing buildings on such sites, the retrofitting process itself did not form part of the work of the studio. Instead, the studio focused specifically on the re-conceptualization of the site planning of the cluster of buildings in question, and on the design of new buildings to be erected there. Furthermore, while organization of community programming, management models and development pro-forma's were considered at a high level, the research of this studio was primarily concerned with built form.

Project Brief:

General Program: The general program of each scheme was to conform with the outline provided in the left portion of this board.

Housing Type Requirements:

Of the housing accommodation provided in each scheme, 70% were asked to be of family sized units of two bedrooms or larger. Furthermore, of all housing provided, 25% was to be affordable units.

Sustainability

Proposed new construction was to be of a high green standard, with emphasis placed on building orientation and facade design, passive systems, the application of renewables, and stormwater management.

Exiting Requirements

Schemes were asked to conform to exiting requirements of the Ontario Building Code.

Parking Requirements

A ratio of 0.75 residents' parking spaces per unit were to be provided in each scheme together with 0.25 guest parking spaces per unit. These were to be accommodated as both surface and underground parking.

Demolition

If a convincing argument could be made for the partial or complete demolition of one of the existing residential buildings on the site, this was permitted, so long as the units it accommodates were replaced in the new total unit count.

Properties

The ownership pattern of the eight towers within the study area is generally fragmented and represented by a series of private rental companies. Each scheme was given the option of working within existing property lines or working with the cluster as a whole; anticipating consolidation either through agreements between owners of the sale of properties to one owner.

General Finding:

This architectural design studio resulted in the development of twelve very unique schemes, suggesting a high level of flexibility within the target urban form. While each of the twelve schemes presented a unique approach, several themes have emerged. The following are among the highlights:

- no schemes required the demolition of existing buildings to reach the objectives; several schemes met the objectives while accommodating new housing in exclusively low-rise, street oriented developments;
- several schemes met the objectives with minimal impact to existing trees and maintaining a high open space ratio;
- while most schemes tackled the cluster as a whole, several schemes demonstrated the ability to reach project objectives while staying within current property boundaries;
- both strategies of directly engaging existing tower blocks through significant interventions, and maintaining them in their current configuration met objectives;
- while in many cases large open spaces were maintained, nearly all schemes provided private outdoor space as a component of the amenity for family housing;
- nearly all schemes included significant commercial retail programs; all schemes addressed the current fragmentation of the site through the provision of integrated open space plans including various combinations of pedestrian, cycle and road networks.

Further Research

The goal of this studio was to investigate the potential of apartment tower sites to emerge as more livable and sustainable communities, with a specific emphasis on built form. The results of the studio correspond with the wide range of findings from various investigations into the potential of post-war tower blocks. As such the studio further confirms that these sites are indeed assets with great potential to help shape the Toronto region in the decades to come.

The results of this studio are not intended as proposals, but rather as part of the process of better understanding the opportunities of these sites. That their suitability for growth and land-use diversification has been established through the course of these investigations is encouraging. It is our hope that a wider conversation can emerge about how these sites might best evolve to meet the increasing challenges of growth, equity and sustainability facing the greater region.

There are several challenges in reaching this potential, chief among which are fragmented property divisions within clusters, and regulatory barriers that render growth and land use-diversification in these areas difficult.

Overcoming these challenges will require thoughtful investigation and innovation. Key areas for future research identified during the course of the studio include: the development of tools for planning at the level of a cluster rather than property by property; working with a broad range of stakeholders to determine appropriate levels of growth and diversification within tower block sites; and establishing a regulatory framework in which high quality projects can be realized.

Selection of Studio Results

