

**Isolation in Practice: The Infilling of Common Space in Toronto's
Vertical Suburbia**

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Abstract

The City of Toronto has recently amended their zoning by-law to allow developers to infill the common space in and around suburban postwar towers. Infill densities ranging from townhomes to high-rises are becoming commonplace, while the city is explicitly asking developers to consider Toronto's amenity-packed design guidelines for these new builds. They have also amended the bylaw to allow for the conversion of postwar towers' "unused" common space into new rental units. Using a Lefebvrian, mixed-methods approach to understanding the production of infill development upon postwar towers, this research explores a case located at 1340-1360 Danforth Road. By triangulating data from interviews, site visits, policy, archival documents, and media, it uncovers the ways in which the modernist design goals of the towers have gone unrealized through practices of financialization and tenant exploitation. It argues that in practice, infill development functions as a novel form of housing financialization – resulting in less affordable housing, fewer common areas, and increasingly isolated living experiences for residents.

Key Words: Verticality, Financialization, Tower Renewal, Infill Development

Foreword

This major paper reflects the knowledge and skills I have learned during my time in the MES program, demonstrating the competencies required by the Canadian Institute of Planners and Ontario Professional Planners Institute to become a Candidate Member.

Through the production of this paper, I have gained extensive experience in the field of urban research, with a focus on the role of urban policies, regulations, plans, and processes in land use planning (Objective 1.2: To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the policies, regulations, plans, and processes which comprise the land use planning framework in Ontario). Conducting interviews and site visits has allowed me to advance my understanding of the urban justice implications of high-rise land use planning (Objective 1.1: To gain research experience studying the urban justice implications of high-rise land use planning in Toronto's inner suburbs), while also acquiring practical skills in conducting research through a lens of equity and sustainability (Objective 2.2: To gain knowledge and skills in equity planning to address, rectify, and avoid exacerbating social and environmental injustices within urban environments). In addition, I have expanded my knowledge and understanding of Toronto's developmental history through archival research; revealing the imbricating influence of earlier political, social, and economic variables upon both today and tomorrow's growth patterns (Objective 3.2: To study the Greater Toronto Area's historical and future development trajectories, to understand the ways in which the environmental, social, and economic realms impact, and are impacted by, these growth patterns).

The following literature review, case study, and discussion sections represent only a fraction of the rich and variable lessons that I have been taught by my professors, peers, and mentors in the EUC faculty – to whom I owe much gratitude for the continued support and many learning opportunities they have offered me.

To Jasper, Juno, Akiko, Akira, Akita, and Osaka

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I would like to thank the EUC Faculty for making me aware of not only the pressing issues of our time, but also of a network of academics who care about social and environmental injustices, affording me a place of belonging and community unlike any other.

I would like to thank my mom for providing the most support. Without her, I'd not be standing where I am today. She has kept me going when the going has gotten tough.

And my cats, who never fail to slow me down and remind me that it's okay to just be. It's often the point.

I'd also like to shout out the band Algernon Cadwallader's 2025 album "*trying not to have a thought*", for helping me organize mine. Their music has helped my research process in a significant way, with tracks like Shameless Faces and Million Dollars adding a layer of cathartic human expression to my spatial analysis. Their lyrics regarding negative space and hostile architecture were released at a time when I was contemplating exactly that – an uncanny instance of synchronicity so reassuring and guiding during the depths of my analysis, that it beckons me to share them below.

***“What an abstract way to express your disdain
A million in rocks to eliminate negative space
They sure are keeping Portland weird these days”
Million Dollars, Algernon Cadwallader***

Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Dedication</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>v</i>
I. Introduction	1
Methodology	2
II. Toronto’s Towers: Capitalizing on Modernist Architecture	4
Politicizing soil, gathering seeds, and lots of rain: 1910s-1930s	5
Under the post-war sunshine, modernist towers sprout up: 1940s-50s	7
Mass-propagation of the towers: 1960s-1980s	10
Transplanting the towers, a neoliberal uprooting: 1990s-2020s	13
Summary and Research Gaps	18
III. White Blocks: A High-rise Complex(ity)	19
Changes in Advertisements & Everyday Life	21
Ambivalent Attitudes Toward Apartments in Scarborough	28
Scarborough’s Vertical Communities	33
Tenant Struggles and Advocacy: “Evict the roaches, not the tenants”	36
Hot Potato Towers: The Speculative High-Rise Market	41
Infill and Renewal for Whom?	45
The Post-Pandemic Towers: Infill in Bloom	47
Securing Safety in Shared Spaces	48
Maintenance and Repairs	51
Amenities	52
IV. The Higgleddy-Piggleddy Infill: A Modernist Nightmare	61
Understanding their Unrealized Potential: The Roles that Actors Play	63
Landlords	63
Tenants	64
Municipality	66
V. Conclusion	67
<i>List of Interviewees</i>	69
<i>References</i>	70

List of Figures

- Figure 1: The (High)Rise of the Metropolitan Government: An Unrealized Vision of the Post-War Metropolitan Region, From the 1943 “Master Plan for the City of Toronto and Environs”. Source: Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Journal, June 1944.
- Figure 2: 1948 By-law 3861 is applied to the site.
- Figure 3: Application A144281, Submitted to the Office of Land Titles in Toronto on August 7th, 1964, by Danforth Apartment Park Limited and the Corporation of the Township of Scarborough. Contains an agreement and an affidavit registering legal ownership and development conditions for the company.
- Figure 4: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from February 15, 1969.
- Figure 5: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from April 26, 1969.
- Figure 6: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from May 27, 1972.
- Figure 7: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from December 19, 1972.
- Figure 8: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from July 23, 1973.
- Figure 9: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from November 12, 1974.
- Figure 10: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from January 10, 1980.
- Figure 11: In 1989, an underground parking garage is proposed, which will encroach upon Knob Hill Park.
- Figure 12: An article from July 8, 1958, discussing “victims” of Scarborough’s latest high-rise development.
- Figure 13: A 1962 article regarding the European influence of high-rise architecture in Scarborough.
- Figure 14: A 1964 article discusses a woman’s threats to the city due to high-rise proposal.
- Figure 15: A 1971 newspaper article regarding a Scarborough woman whose door had been removed by her landlord.
- Figure 16: A 1975 article discusses proposal to convert high-rise rental units into condominium units.
- Figure 17: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from August 11, 2006.
- Figure 18: A newspaper clipping of the Toronto Star on November 9, 2005
- Figure 19: A news article from 2000 regarding tenants who were trapped for a month in the upper floors of a high-rise in Scarborough.
- Figure 20: An ad from 2002 for the ‘Scarborough Tenants Forum’.
- Figure 21: A transfer of easement between the Rogers Cable Inc. and Danforth Estates Management Inc. allowing the cable company to service the units in the building.
- Figure 22: On December 12, 2018, White Blocks was sold for \$155,445,000, from 6965083 Canada Inc. to IMH 1340-1360 Danforth Limited.
- Figure 23: Google Maps image of 1340 Danforth on May 2012 (left) and June 2025 (right).
- Figure 24: Photographs taken on June 13, 2024 of the common space in the basement in 1360 Danforth Road. By Madison Stirling.
- Figure 25: A photograph taken June 8, 2024 in the basement of 1350 Danforth Road. By Madison Stirling.
- Figure 26: A photograph of benches behind the management office at 1350 Danforth Road. By Madison Stirling.
- Figure 27: A timeline of ownership, management, and significant events at 1340-1360 Danforth Road.
- Figure 28: An excerpt from A Changing City, page 21, outlining “higgledy-piggledy” block buildings.

Introduction

Toronto's "towers in the park" have transformed over the past half-century from Utopian, egalitarian dreams into financialized instruments of capital. More recently, they have become targets for ad-hoc, infill development, which contrasts sharply with their modernist design. Through contemporary zoning amendments in Toronto, municipal planners have incentivized the infilling of common space by reframing them as "unused" so as to justify their selection as appropriate sites for intensification. The dynamic, ongoing history of these towers and their common spaces reveals the tensions between conceived and lived space in Toronto, underscoring the role of social relations in shaping the lived outcomes of architectural design for residents.

This research examines the social production of an aging tower cluster that has recently been infilled as part of a "sustainable" development. Located on the lands legally referred to as 1340, 1346, 1350, and 1360 Danforth Road lie three post-war, high-rise rental buildings and one contemporary high-rise condominium. The three rental buildings have stood in place since their construction in the 1960s, and the condominium is the result of a 2018 infill project that severed the back half of the parking lot. Beginning in 1948, the site was initially conceived as a high-density, high-rise neighbourhood through a by-law designating the site as an Urban Development Area; today, the towers continue to undergo significant changes in their conception.

The investigation illustrates several juxtapositions, establishing a strong basis for comparison. The rental towers and condo are respectively aging and novel, low and high income, rented and owned. They share little in common with one another aside from size, typology, location, and common space. The social production of this 'infill' cluster is the focus of this study, analysed through the lens of Lefebvre's spatial triad.

Through this lens, the paper traces the towers' physical and conceptual evolutions over time: revealing key hegemonic conceptions of the space, as well as formal and informal spatial practices and lived realities of current-day residents. Together, these elements add depth and nuance to the discussion on Toronto's vertical history.

The findings underscore the ways in which representations of vertical space are increasingly at odds with the everyday spatial practices of Toronto's low-income, racialized tower communities. As novel plans and bylaws are being produced to infill many of these postwar sites, it is essential to investigate the disruption this causes to pre-existing relations.

Hegemonic plans and financialized ownership models increasingly conflict with the lived realities of residents in high-rise neighbourhoods, resulting in a need for more collective levels of tenant organization. Common spaces are ripened areas for such activity to occur; and yet their provision is being significantly reduced at the level of planning, ownership, and management. The provision and use of common spaces in these towers reveal an unmistakable gap between planning intentions and their current levels of enforcement. These findings illuminate how the suburban, post-war ‘tower-in-the-park’ distinctly manifests across Toronto’s landscape. Often privileging owners over residents, the paper underscores the ways in which the internal contradictions of the social, economic, and ecological production of postwar towers ought to be addressed and reconfigured through radically collaborative processes involving tenants, municipalities, and landlords.

Methodology

This research uses a mixed-methods approach to study a cluster of Scarborough towers, incorporating literature review, policy analysis, media analysis, site visits, and qualitative interviews. The literature review explores spatial production and verticality in Scarborough, with attention to the local history of high-rise housing. The policy analysis examines planning documents and regulations which have governed the site over time, drawing on archival zoning by-laws and municipal plans. The media analysis reviews online marketing materials and archived newspaper documents related to high-rise buildings in Scarborough. Qualitative interviews and site visits provide insight into the lived experience and local knowledge of these spaces from the perspective of the residents, managers, owners, and city officials.

Case study methodology is prevalent within urban studies, as they offer in-depth analyses of real-world urban phenomena (MacCallum et al., 2019, p. 43). In this research, a high-rise cluster has been selected to explore the ways in which verticality, as a phenomenon, “manifests within this setting” (Ibid., p. 44). Many other studies on verticality have similarly used case studies to explore high-rise living (MachLachlan & Gong, 2023; Roast, 2024).

The cluster at 1340-1360 Danforth Road was chosen due to its ‘tower in the park’ design, characterised by its substantial lot size, concrete architectural form, and suburban setting. These apartment neighbourhoods are socially interconnected, forming a broader network of verticality that can be examined through the lens of common space. This case study seeks to shed light on

the nuanced social relations within and between high-rise neighbourhoods and their urban context, with implications for similarly configured postwar tower developments.

The theoretical framework informing the design of this case study is multifaceted. Conceptualizations of verticality, alongside Lefebvrian methodology are mobilized. Literature on verticality explores the high-rise spaces “where vertical life takes place”, underscoring its variability and novel manifestations in relation to urbanization (March & Lehrer, 2022, p. 352). Lefebvre’s spatial triad stabilizes the research framework for exploring such spaces, insofar as they allow one to explore the lived space, perceived space, and conceived space; the temporal dynamism of common spaces via the “arriv[al] at the concrete through experience” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 21); the contribution of common spaces to the everyday livelihoods of residents; and the role of common spaces as civic infrastructure, respectively (Lefebvre, 1991).

Interviews were conducted with seven regular occupants of the site, including three rental tenants, one rental building manager, two condominium owners, and one condominium manager. The interviews explored how lived realities of residents are both shaped by, and shape, the cluster’s spatial production. Semi-structured interviews, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes, allowed discussion for the participant’s experiences and insights regarding shared space to emerge organically. The focus of conversation was guided toward the building/neighbourhood and their experience of common areas, everyday life, and insight into the relationships and practices which occur in and around the space.

All interviews were recorded, transcribed using Sonix, and uploaded to ATLAS.ti as part of the SSHRC-funded project *High Rise Living and Public Space*. All participants provided informed consent, and all data was anonymized.

Example questions from the interviews:

1. Which common areas do you use? To what degree?
2. What purpose do these areas serve to you?
3. To what degree do you feel able to take up space in these areas?
4. What types of use do you perceive as acceptable in these spaces? What types are not?
5. Where are you most likely to connect with your neighbours?

Key tensions, contradictions, and themes have been triangulated to tell the story of these buildings. In underscoring trends, challenges, and potential interventions, this methodological framework allows the analysis of the following findings section to directly address the production of space at White Blocks.

Tending Toronto's Towers: Capitalizing on Modernist Architecture

Scholars have largely acknowledged that the post-war boom of rental towers across Metropolitan Toronto was no accident (Boudreau et al., 2009; Caulfield, 1994; Fraser et al., 2021; Frisken, 2007; Hall, 2002; Harris, 2004; McClelland et al., 2011; Stewart, 2008). Their abundant construction was the result of a concerted effort on behalf of modernist, industrial thinkers in tandem with a growing partisan will to regulate the development of housing within Canada. Together, progressive ideals alongside a political appeal toward urban planning regulations and policies in Canadian cities capitulated the Toronto region toward an onslaught of concrete high-rise developments surrounded by grand boulevards of open lawn space (E.R.A. Architects, planningAlliance, & Cities Centre at the University of Toronto, 2010).

A variety of actors in both political and economic roles have distinguished the spatial production of this high-rise typology over time. Their story begins in the first half of the 20th century, when the modernist expertise of European architects and planners began transforming Canada's land use regime (Dennis, 1989). Ideological seeds germinated during the Great Depression in the 1930s and later began sprouting toward the end of the Second World War. By 1946, when Ontario passed the first Planning Act, the early results of these efforts began to see the light of day. They manifested as plans, civic discourse, and were abundantly developed on a local and provincial scale.

During the 1950s, early prototypes of modernist high-rise developments were constructed under the new planning regime of Metropolitan Toronto. In the decades that followed, over 2,000 towers were produced in their image (E.R.A. Architects, planningAlliance, & Cities Centre at the University of Toronto, 2010). The production of these sites was distinctly negotiated within the region through a technocratic process.

The political discourse and ideology surrounding apartment housing at the time caused particular versions of the modernist tower to emerge – outlined and coloured in by local and regional government in partnership with the private development industry. The general public

was warily involved in the conception and construction of these towers; however, a significant portion of Toronto's residents have inhabited and/or neighbored them ever since. The following section recounts the key actors and influences which pre-empted the ideologies and processes that initially stimulated Toronto's post-war tower boom.

Politicizing soil, gathering seeds, and lots of rain: 1910s-1930s

In order to understand the tower boom in the post-war years, it is central to understand the early political, legislative, and ideological climate which laid the foundations for its inception. Municipal concerns of the early 1900s in Canada comprised an array of contextual challenges which the post-war planning regime was later attempting to navigate. Prior to the 1910s, Toronto's housing was developing through an 'organic', market-led process, regulated largely by private and often discriminatory deeds and covenants in tandem with rudimentary bylaws (Dennis, 2000). The controversiality of multi-unit forms of housing has been well documented since the early 20th century (Dennis, 1989; 2000; Harris, 2004). With only eight apartment buildings listed in 1907, the fear of such housing typologies infringing upon local residents' privacy, morals, and property values was apparent (Dennis, 1989, p. 17).

As early as the year of 1912, a professor from the University of Toronto was noted to have "sold out his house on Huron Street and came up to Forest Hill Road with the express purpose of escaping apartment houses being near him" (Ibid., p. 30). News reports from this time also record apartments being labeled as "human packing cases", "ugly structures", and "moneymaking devices" (Ibid., p. 39). Since as early as this era, Dennis argues that while,

"the defenders of single-family dwellings see high-rise apartments as destructive of local community and family life; the advocates of apartments stress their potent symbolism of Toronto's rise to the status of "world city." (1989, p. 1).

These early imaginaries are important to note, as they underscore a systematic and historically oppressive cultural valuation of high-rise buildings, which are thus exploited for economic value at (seemingly) no sociocultural cost to the region.

As important as enduring negative valuations of apartment buildings are to the story of the aging high-rise, their opposing political boosters' utopian imaginaries, cultural influences, and distinctive architectural trends are forces of arguably greater significance to their manifestation. Originally coined as cosmopolitan "French flats", apartments in North America

were firstly designed for the affluent, which over time extended into “efficiency apartments for the middle-class” (Hancock, 1980, p. 88). A shift from communal services to self-contained units during this time was also recorded (Wright, 1981). The literature suggests that apartments in Toronto (and more broadly, North America) have historically been developed under tense sociopolitical climates, where dystopian and utopian imaginaries converge on local and regional scales - producing buildings which live on as controversial compromises across the city.

While the city began to grow vertically via the development of apartment houses, its borders were growing horizontally through the annexation of nearby districts (Friskin, 2007, p. 56). However, by 1912, the cost of servicing new districts lost feasibility, which halted further annexation. A two-tier government was thus proposed to gain regulatory control over the growth and development of the region but was promptly rejected. However, the seeds of discourse during this time later bloomed into the Toronto Metropolitan Government (Ibid.). These initially fragmented governance structures thus indirectly led to the two-tiered Metropolitan regime, which went on to significantly shape the trajectory of the region’s vertical development over the latter half of the century.

It was in the early years of the 20th century that urban planning became a pre-eminent discussion within Canada. In 1909, Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier established a Commission of Conservation, whose public health advisor, Dr. Charles Hodgetts, first advocated for the urban planning profession in Canada (Harris, 2004, p. 107). In 1914, Hodgetts hired renowned Scottish planner, Thomas Adams, as an advisor for the commission. As an international expert on garden cities bringing insight to the nation’s capital, Adams went on to help popularize the planning profession, publishing often in the journal *Town Planning and Conservation of Life*, and helping to form the Town Planning Institute of Canada in 1919. However, legislation during this time was largely ineffective in regulating land use, and after the commission was dissolved in 1921, Adams left Canada to work as a planning director for New York (Ibid.). Adams’ influence, however, continued to gain momentum in the decades that followed as the planning profession further developed across Canada.

It is important, however, to note the ways in which Canada’s development industry initially lacked significant regulation and policy direction due to a lack of comprehensive planning; as well as the early discussions regarding potential regional governance structures for the coordination of services and political processes among municipalities; and the European

influence of planners upon the profession's earliest Canadian manifestations. Together these factors comprised a growing political desire for urban planning practices to redirect financial and infrastructural imbalances. Ideas for a two-tier regional governance structure across the Toronto area then began to germinate under Canada's political soil. The desperate times of the Great Depression and the difficulties brought upon by the Second World War worked to widen the policy window through which policies and planning legislature would later emerge.

Of particular note, social goals underpinned much of the early efforts to promote modernist design, and by 1937, the League for Social Reconstruction (an early think tank for what would later become the New Democratic Party) were strongly advocating against a "fetishization" of homeownership, fighting adamantly against the stigmatization of multi-unit housing and toward a "veritable renaissance of urban life" (Fraser et al., 2021). While modernism in the 20th century had many manifestations, some early discourse in the Toronto region strongly positioned modern, socialist forms of housing (Stewart, 2008). Although the towers that ultimately came to be appeared similar from a design standpoint, they were carried out under the commodifying aegis of postwar capitalism (Caulfield, 1994) – pre-empting contemporary practices of financialization, such as renoviction (Walks & Mah, 2025).

Discussed in greater detail below, the immediate post-war Planning Act of 1946 marked the foundational emergence of the planning regime as it largely continues to be practiced in Ontario today. The legislation empowered municipalities to enforce modernist design principles – governed by order and a self-asserted rationality – all the while setting the stage for the formation of the Metropolitan Toronto Government in 1953. The next section unpacks the plethora of politics and modern influences surrounding Canada's high-rise development industry during the post-war years.

Under the post-war sunshine, modernist towers sprout up from a politically fertilized landscape: 1940s-50s

Just prior to the Second World War, political discourse regarding municipal and provincial restructuring were addressed by a number of studies. In his provincially commissioned study from 1935, academic consultant A.W. F Plumptre argued that a metropolitan layer of government was needed to address "financial and social injustice" across Ontario's municipalities (p. 52-60). Shortly after, Carl Goldenberg (1939), a Montreal lawyer,

reported that regional levels of coordination were required to overcome such prevalent “obstacles to provincial uniformity” (p. 31). The influence of these studies was temporarily delayed by the war, yet they provided a critical foundation for the development of the local and regional planning framework in the following decade.

During the second world war, the Toronto region dealt with unprecedented challenges related to industrial growth, housing pressures, and regional growth (Frisken, 2007, p. 63). Tensions between federal, provincial, and municipal agendas began to thus commiserate through a novel planning framework. It was in 1942 when the Toronto Planning Department was formalized, in 1943 when the first metropolitan Master Plan was created, and in 1946 when Ontario’s Planning Act was first passed. These shifts in governance all sought to address unevenness across municipalities through a system that was based on specific planning principles (Ibid.). The Master Plan of 1943, as seen in Figure 1, outlines a postwar vision for the Metropolitan region, incorporating parkways, apartments, recreation, suburbs, and an agricultural belt. The 1946 Planning Act then legislatively empowered such plans in Ontario, requiring land use conformity at the municipal level.



Figure 1: The (High)Rise of the Metropolitan Government: An Unrealized Vision of the Post-War Metropolitan Region, From the 1943 “Master Plan for the City of Toronto and Environs”.

Reproduced from: Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Journal, June 1944.

The Metropolitan Government was formed shortly after in 1953. Frisken (2007) credits three men for its inception: Lorne Cummings, who requested that the provincial government “enable the planning of housing on a metropolitan basis in the Toronto area” (p. 69); Premier Leslie Frost, who had served on the York County Council and was close with Cummings; and Frederick Gardiner, an advisor of Frost who claimed “nothing short of a unified municipality could measure up to the problems facing the metropolis” (p. 67-70).

The Metropolitan Toronto Government, after officially established, led to the postwar Toronto region being touted as “something like a model city in North America as far as metropolitan government was concerned” (Boudreau et al., 2009, p. 50). Frisken (2007) notes that Metropolitan planners advocated “a set of principles that would be restated in planning documents for the rest of Metro’s history” (p. 89).

These principles included “commercial activities situated away from the central core [that] would be concentrated in sub-centres developed around shopping centres or major transportation nodes, with high-density housing nearby”, and the entire area to contain “a wide range of housing types suitable for families of different sizes and of different income levels” (Ibid.). Stewart (2008) argues that Metropolitanization was “the most significant feature” shaping the region after the war (p. 24). However, Frisken (2007) underscores that their power over land use decisions were not absolute - in high-income neighbourhoods they faced challenges enabling such high-density developments due to the power of local opposition (p. 89). It is thus central to note the nuanced ways in which the tower boom exemplified both the resonances and rejections of the Metropolitan planning principles, exposing the perpetuating unevenness across Toronto’s geography and political economy.

As exemplified above, accommodating rapid population growth and addressing the housing question were central on the Metropolitan agenda. A number of novel modernist planning principles were conglomerated into their plans and recommendations as idealized solutions (McClelland et al., 2011). High-rise, high-density housing represented a highly efficient, ‘rational’ answer provided by way of modern architectural advancements (Ibid.). Early prototypes developed locally and abroad became models of a modern tower typology which would later be mass-replicated across the entire region (Ibid.). Stewart (2008) notes that these prototypes were located in Toronto’s inner core, whilst their expansion occurred most prevalently throughout the region’s inner and outer suburbs (p. 24).

Furthermore, the work of German communist, Hans Blumenfeld and Englishman Gordon Stevens have been credited as key influences on the development of these towers through their “advocat[ing] for comprehensive planning which would enable fully functional communities in the periphery” and “accommodate all classes of workers” (Stewart, 2008, p. 25). Stewart (2008) further underscores the embedded influence of European modernism upon the region, noting that “a significant number of local planners and designers received modern training internationally, while at the University of Toronto, faculty successfully pushed for a modern curriculum within the design schools” (p. 24). Architectural advancements were transforming the construction industry: the towers were built using a novel high-rise development technique called the ‘flying form’ which emerged via the pouring of concrete (McClelland et al., p. 9).

Overall, the post-war tower boom was initially preconceived on a regulatory scale at the start of the 20th century, with its boosters and contenders respectively valuing and devaluing the high-rise in the decades prior. The Metropolitan government’s post-war rise to power garnered their land use control over the region, which was used to enact planning principles rationalized by enduring problems and inspired by utopian ideals. It is worth noting how the initial design provisions of these towers were a reaction on behalf of the metropolitan government to the sociopolitical housing challenges of the time, energized by their somewhat climactic rise to power.

The case below investigates the issues that these designs sought to solve, revealing their underlying purpose. It then explores how these initial conceptual layers influence the towers today, illuminating what can be learned about the early processes of their production and design. These omnipresent, suburban towers have become distinctive in their affordances and contradictions, which, as this paper attempts to elucidate, are the result of a layered multitude of conceptions, practices, and lived realities of those within and in relation to the towers since their early preconception.

Mass-propagation of the towers: 1960s-1980s

“Although the master-planning approach to these early experiments didn’t take hold, building suburban towers did. Subsequently, the suburban high-rise became the most popular housing type for a period of nearly 20 years, representing some 60 percent of the

development market. Thirty thousand high-rise units were built in 1968 alone. Highways, arterials, ravine sites and the edges of bungalow communities were flagged by planners as preferred zones for apartment development” (Stewart, 2007, p. 214).

It was in the 1960s that the Metropolitan Toronto saw its first and largest tower boom, with a whopping 30,000 units erected in 1968 alone (Ibid.). These towers varied by way of their developer, architect, geography, construction, and adherence to variegated sets of modernist and capitalist principles; yet they remained chained to the powerful legal mechanisms policing and regulating their development, local zoning bylaws and official plans. Caulfield (1994) defends that this era was “a distorted version of modernist city-building that occurred under the aegis of capital and the bureaucratic state” (p. 220), which had “declared an end to urban spatial history, spatial culture, and spatial politics” (Ibid.). Through co-ordinated planning practices, municipalities and developers negotiated their many productions, compromising the manifestation of a modernist lifestyle through commodification.

Together, E.R.A Architects, planningAlliance, and the Cities Centre at the University of Toronto (2010) conducted a study *Tower Neighbourhood Renewal in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: An Analysis of High-Rise Apartment Tower Neighbourhoods Developed in the Post-War Boom (1945-1984)*, which catalogued key historical and current data on these towers. The towers were largely constructed between 1945 and 1984, with the years 1960 to 1980 being the peak of the tower boom (p. i). They share several design similarities with post-war developments in Asia, Europe, and the Soviet Union – whose revitalization have often been prioritized “as a key strategy for achieving contemporary urban planning goals of low-carbon, prosperous, and equitable communities” (p. i).

Today, nearly 2,000 of these towers still stand across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, with 62% of them located within Toronto (Ibid.). According to McClelland, Stewart, and Ord (2011), these towers represent “some of the city’s most influential architecture and planning” (p. 9). They were often built in clusters of two or more, with 89% of today’s apartment towers being part of a cluster (E.R.A. Architects, planningAlliance, & Cities Centre at the University of Toronto, 2010, p. ii). Some of these clusters are relatively large, containing over 10,000 units (Ibid., p. ii). They were generally developed on large parcels of land, with 80-90% of the parcel

required to remain open space, together which comprise approximately 2,198 hectares of land across the region (p. ii).

As Caulfield (1994) notes, such modern processes of tower-building faced strong opposition and critique:

“Rather, it was the specific vision of a closed and universalist Utopia devised by an ahistorical and assertedly apolitical technique – the erasure of locality and place for the production of functionalized space – that anti-modernism condemned. In contrast, postmodernist urbanism's vision stresses the play of history, difference, combination, and locality that unfolds toward a future whose features are not theoretically apprehensible - a vision in which human life is understood as a polyphonic cluster of possibilities” (p. 221).

Thus in 1969, when Toronto's Official Plan carved out many spaces across the city for creative destruction, it led to a vertically hostile reformist movement in the 1970s which called for incrementalist, low-rise development instead of high-rise intensification (Boudreau et al., 2009, p. 104). Jacobs' historically significant obstruction of the Spadina Expressway in 1971 revved up the gas that was pushing the reformist movement forward, while political leaders Crombie and Sewell appeased their demands through middle-class regimes, investing in transit, housing, immigrant needs, education, and police (Ibid., p. 40). Toronto's citizen reformists of the 1970s quickly and strongly advocated for public involvement in the development process, becoming key negotiators within local development processes – and loudly anti-modern (Ibid.). This was in the wake of the tower boom of the previous decade, which had significantly transformed the regional landscape (E.R.A. Architects, planningAlliance, & Cities Centre at the University of Toronto, 2010).

Relph (1981) similarly provides an early critique on modernist processes, noting an apolitical nature that is “painstakingly engineered to fulfil bland technocratic perceptions of human needs and desires” (p. 108). Relph underscores the contradictions of the era's (de)humanising authoritarian practices of rationalist efficiency (Ibid.). Brolin (1976) suggests that the utilitarian functionalism of modernism's principles lent themselves compatibly to capital's surreptitious commodification (p. 15). Meanwhile, Caulfield (1994) argues that

“capital's commodification of urban modernist ideas has yielded a landscape that no more resembles the urban Utopias of writers like Le Corbusier or Giedion than current-day subdivisions resemble the suburban ideal of the eighteenth-century middle class” (p. 59).

Such ongoing intensification of commodification through practices of financialization, revitalization, and infill continues the towers toward a spatial production which is increasingly furthered from their modernist preconceptions.

Transplanting the Towers, A Neoliberal Uprooting: 1990s-2020s

In the 1990s, Ontario was hit with a late wave of neoliberal reform through the Harris government, who “became, in effect, perhaps the most interventionist government this province and city has ever seen” (Boudreau et al., 2009, p. 59). In 1998, they dissolved the Metropolitan Toronto layer of government and amalgamated the entire region into the single tier city of Toronto. This led to the conglomerating and streamlining of vast, distinct municipal bodies into a central, authoritative planning structure, producing a “new megacity regime” which graciously ushered in “a dramatic new wave of megalomaniacal urban growth” (Ibid., p. 58).

Such growth led to the towers, which Ghosh (2014) argues were designed for “middle-class, young singles and couples of Western European origin”, to begin to house large numbers of “young, highly educated yet low-income, ethnic-minority families” since the mid-1990s (p. 2021). Research has found that these towers provide homes to many new immigrants in the short and increasingly long-term, due to heightening difficulties for first-time home buyers to enter the market (Ghosh, 2014; August & Walks 2018; Hackworth, 2009a; 2009b; Hiebert, 2010; Preston et al., 2010). Since the mid-1990s, ethnic clusters have emerged within these inner suburban towers as they have attracted a high volume of immigrant families due to their low cost, generous unit sizes, and cultural amenities (Murdie & Ghosh, 2010; Ghosh, 2014).

Harvey (2005) has written extensively on the early global transition toward neoliberal ideology, particularly under the Thatcher and Reagan administrations between the years 1978 and 1980. These political shifts, theoretically grounded in the Chicago School’s promotion of economic liberalization alongside reductions to welfare programs, spread across the world over the following decades, significantly restructuring the Toronto region’s mode of governance in the mid to late 1990s (Boudreau et al., 2009). Political processes described by Peck and Tickell (2002) as “roll-back neoliberalism” have facilitated the emergence of what Smith (1996) calls the “revanchist city”, characterized by local displacement driven by policies designed to attract private development and global recognition. In this context, the production of the entrepreneurial city has become a defining feature of neoliberal North American municipalities (Harvey, 1989).

In the early 2000s, entrepreneurial policy and regulatory shifts favoured the market production of high-rise condominium buildings. Toronto's skyline was seemingly not up to par with its own deceptive semblance of global city pageantry, with architecture critic, Christopher Hume, clawing that "urban drama has been conspicuous in its absence from the Toronto skyline" (Boudreau et al., 2009). The entrepreneurial spirit of the high-rise development industry has since taken over – as a condo boom has been a prevalent component of the region's development since the turn of the millennium.

While lavish, private condominiums have been increasingly produced and marketed across the region, Toronto's 1,925 aging rental towers have been credited for housing one million residents, comprising 48% of the City of Toronto's rental stock (E.R.A. Architects, planningAlliance, & Cities Centre at the University of Toronto, 2010). In her follow-up study on the geography of poverty across the GTA, MacDonnell (2011) hones in on the vertical dimension of poverty, underscoring the rapid nature by which poverty has become concentrated in many of these towers since the 1980s. These aging suburban towers have seen ethnic clusters grow in tandem with levels of poverty (Ibid). Despite the significant role that these towers play in providing low-income, rental housing with abundant greenspace, these spaces have silently endured significant levels of social devaluation, neglect, and exploitation over time. This has led to efforts across the city to renew these towers, with the official Tower Renewal Program launching in Toronto in 2008 (McClelland, 2014).

The Mayor's Tower Renewal Opportunities Book declared the project as "a multi-faceted building upgrade, community revitalization and greening program of unprecedented scale" (E.R.A. Architects, & University of Toronto, 2008, p. 4). Four key provincial objectives are sought via this program: firstly, to identify and incorporate the densities of these areas into the Metrolinx Transportation Plan; secondly, to enhance Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy by investing in "apartment neighbourhoods identified as areas of high or very high social need" (p. 13); thirdly, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which are disproportionately emitted by older buildings relative to newer high-rises, or single-family homes; and fourthly, to identify ways to infill these sites to meet growth targets, which reportedly contain over 2,000 hectares of open space (McClelland et al., 2011).

A study, known as the Daniels Study, was conducted which found that building envelopes and aging mechanical systems are causing the building's poor energy performance (Kesik &

Saleff, 2009; McClelland et al., p. 10). Three retrofitting solutions have been suggested: (1) interior upgrades, (2) exterior upgrades, or (3) interior and exterior upgrades. In selecting the third option, providing a 'full' retrofit, scholars argue that 50% in energy reductions are possible (McClelland et al., p. 10). Interior upgrades are often more effective on their own than exterior upgrades but are also more disruptive to tenants. Exterior upgrades are thus what is normally recommended and include renovations to the building's over-cladding. McClelland, Stewart, and Ord warn that these exterior upgrades have the potential to significantly alter the appearance of the buildings, impacting the cultural aesthetic value of the tower to the neighbourhood (p. 10).

The Daniels Study argues that preservation, conservation, and cultural resource management should be guiding principles for renewal efforts (Ibid., p. 10). Despite this recommendation, renewal projects have not always considered local residential needs in their planning, design, and management, and it's been made clear that any attempt at tower renewal must put residents first if it is to have a positive social impact upon the pre-existing community (Ghosh, 2014; Lehrer and Laidley, 2008; Milgrom, 2008; Walks and Maaranen, 2008).

In a comparative analysis of two case studies of tower renewal in the GTA both undertaken by a single developer (the Kipling tower in Etobicoke and the Ken Soble tower in Hamilton) extremely different outcomes emerged, likely due to the differing approaches taken to redevelopment in each (March & Lehrer, 2019). In the case of the Kipling tower, extensive and meaningful resident engagement occurred at an unprecedented scale, allowing for the incorporation of public participatory methods to plan for and address the social needs of the local population; meanwhile during the Ken Soble tower project, none of the residents were engaged by developers, and a purely top-down approach was undertaken. The latter project became a gentrifying, waterfront redevelopment dedicated to senior living, gearing the design toward its anticipated demographic, rather than the building's pre-existing residents (March & Lehrer, 2019). Indeed, a key concern of such renewal programs is the potential for gentrification, whereby renewal is gained while affordability is lost, and locals are inevitably displaced (Lehrer & Wieditz, 2009). The line between gentrification and revitalization must be drawn, and the questions of *by whom* and *for whom* these developments occur must be answered.

With tenants' everyday lives in mind, Okamoto (2013, p. 44) notes that there is over 90% of open space on the majority of tower parcels, "which are largely lawns and parking lots separated by chain link fences". Charging residential zoning for the 'lack' of mixed uses on these

sites, Okamoto argues for the potential rezoning of sites to include neighbourhood amenities, such as childcare and social services. Intent on maximising the use value of open spaces within and around these towers, her research underscores the potential for the Tower Renewal Program to transform open space into more enriching and valuable spaces for residents (p. 45). She argues that tower renewal projects present opportunities to address the many issues of environmental justice in these apartment neighbourhoods related to health, mobility, zoning, and public participation.

Likewise, the threat of the reduction of greenspace via infill development on the 2,000 ‘vacant’ hectares of land surrounding these buildings may be working to reduce levels of environmental justice in these neighbourhoods. As locally valued open spaces are parceled and developed, thereby increasing density yet reducing greenspace (Valzania, 2022). Valzania suggests that,

“we not return to the pseudo-scientific principles of postwar urbanism, but enhance a new, collective welfarism valuing low-cost ecological performances (from microclimate control to biodiversity, from urban agriculture to water and waste management) and the use value of buildings and open spaces in symbiosis” (2022, p. 242).

These open spaces may thus be better re-imagined as “sites of agency” for locals, acting as a “common resource worth improvement” (2022, p. 242).

It is essential to further note the financialization of a number of these towers through sales to financial groups, which has worked to transform much of the rental stock into “products for investors by financial firms, including private equity funds.. but also publicly-listed real estate companies, Real Estate Investment Trusts [REITs], institutions, and asset managers” (August & Mah, 2025, p. 2). The eviction rates of financialized landlords have been recently documented, outlining their disproportionately high rates of evictions comparative to other landlord types (Ibid.). August and Mah (2025) argue that,

“the structure of financial firms, which treat housing as an investment product and prioritize profit maximization for investors, compels firms to more aggressively manage their properties, and to more aggressively file eviction notices to drive revenues through rent increases on vacated units” (p. 17).

The case below demonstrates this on a micro-scale, outlining the inherently imbalanced processes of the capitalist housing system through an exploitative, top-down system that the

REIT Starlight Investment has imposed upon its residents through renovicting and infill practices.

August and St-Hilaire (2025) have identified Starlight Investments as Canada's biggest landlord, who own more than 60,000 units across the country. They note that as a private asset manager, Starlight Investments has published notable insights into their management practices, which they have boasted about being "uniquely able to extract maximum growth from apartments using a 'value-add strategy'" (p. 521). Of importance, these practices emphasize the use of renovations and increasing rents up to 31% (Ibid.), despite the fact that researchers have underscored the importance of these towers as the "last bastions of affordability amidst landscapes of gentrified retail and low-rise housing" (August & Walks, 2018, p. 124). August and Walks (2018) have noted practices of gentrification alongside "squeeze[ing] revenues from lower-income tenants in aging concrete tower blocks" among particular types of financialized landlords (p. 124). They further note the state's complicity in enabling these trends via the enactment of legislation which supports the financialization of housing and delegitimizes the rights of tenants to protected, affordable rents, arguing that "[t]hese policies have resulted in a landscape of crisis for tenants and of new opportunities for diverse investors" (p. 125).

Such profiteering practices have resulted in an increasing number of evictions of tenants from these towers (Ibid.). Evictions have been found to produce outstanding negative impacts upon the health and wellbeing of those affected by them (Ross & McCartney, 2025). In a recent publication, Ross and McCartney (2025) cited associations between evictions rates and a number of negative health outcomes, ranging from increased levels of "suicide, drug-related death and increased mortality" (p. 1). It is worth noting that the threat of eviction alone has a strong influence upon rates of mortality, whilst actual evictions have a higher effect (Ibid.). The threat of eviction has been found to affect unborn children, leading to "higher risk of premature birth, low birth weight and infant mortality with the strongest effects evident during the last two trimesters" (p. 1). Evictions have also been found to negatively affect childhood development and raise levels of food insecurity and child neglect (Ibid.).

Summary and Research Gaps

It is clear that the literature supports the continued provision of affordable rental units within these towers whilst underlining the evolving practices which have begun to work

increasingly against such provision. The financialization of aging rental housing has become a key neoliberal process which has been transforming these spaces for the betterment of the financiers at the expense of their tenants. The Tower Renewal Project began with great aims to revitalize these sites for residents; yet, in practice, has been argued to have produced “a case study of ever-evolving modes of neoliberal urban governance” (Young, 2019, p. 112).

To conclude, these bodies of literature underscore the ongoing history of verticality across the GTA. Between the years 1944 and 1985, thousands of apartment buildings were privately developed and managed - and have aged relatively poorly. The design of these buildings focused on the ‘tower in the park’ modernist ideal, resulting in 2,000 ‘vacant’ hectares of open space surrounding these towers that is gradually being infilled with new housing.

These aging rental towers, however, neither look nor function similarly to their condominium counterparts. Their design, financing, ownership models, and management structures diverge entirely from one another. The reasons for these contrasts are due to the evolution of politics, planning, architecture, finance, and everyday life in Toronto. This process is perpetually evolving, as regulatory reforms in the City increasingly see these towers as sites for infill development: an exploitative, inverted devolution of the tower in the park ideal, grounded in disillusioned, neoliberal, centrally authorized spatial negotiations which further financialize the rental market and displace low-income residents.

Altogether, the literature focusses on the historical macro-processes across the GTA which have worked to initially produce and increasingly exploit these towers in order to benefit financiers. However, far less attention has been paid to the micro-scale through which these processes occur in practice. As a result, a gap remains in understanding the ways in which structural processes materialize and reshape the lived realities of tower residents through renewal and infill projects.

This study outlines such processes on a micro scale, underscoring the complicity of actors in enacting exploitative, dehumanising mechanisms which have extracted financial gain from residents in the towers at 1340-1360 Danforth Road. The evolution of the site has culminated in a high-rise condominium infill project on the back portion of the site, which took place in 2018. This research thus reveals site-specific details regarding an exemplary case of tower financialization, infill, renewal, and renoviction.

White Blocks: A High-rise Complex(ity)

White Blocks is the longstanding local name for the three postwar towers at 1340-1360 Danforth Road. Located in Toronto's east-end suburb of Scarborough, they were developed in the mid-1960s, following the site's designation as an Urban Development Area One under By-law 3861 in 1948 (Figure 2). This designation aimed to facilitate post-war urban expansion and was part of the broader Metropolitan strategy to accommodate anticipated residential growth, marking the first legally binding spatial representation of the site (aside from political mappings) which envisioned the site's future development as a high-density residential zone. (In order to give a better overview of the multiple changes of specific regulations and ownership structures as well as some headline news about these specific towers, I have put these events all into a table listed as Figure 27, which can be found at the end of this chapter on pages 59-61).

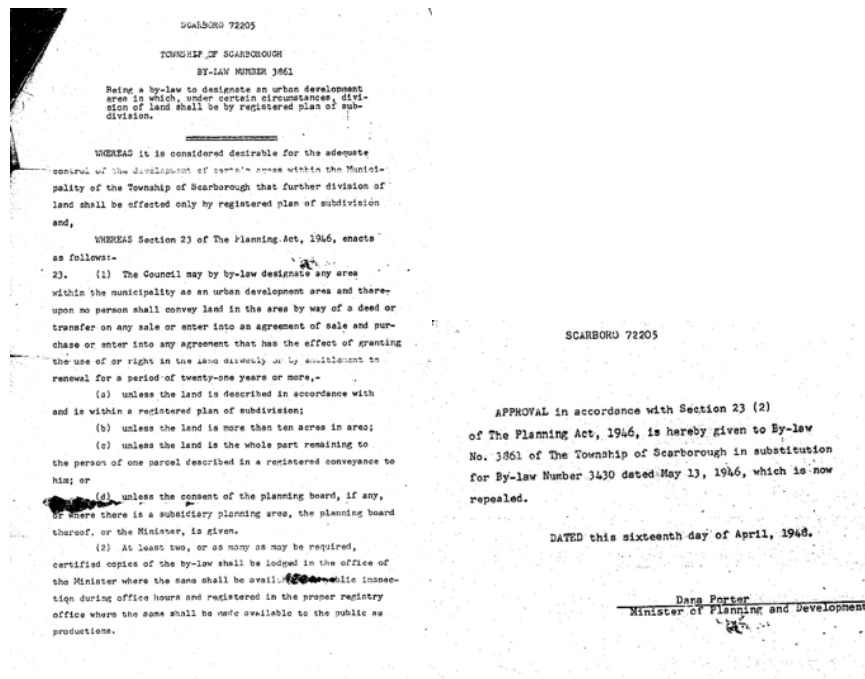


Figure 2: 1948 By-law 3861 is applied to the site.

The towers were further preconceived on the 29th day of May 1964, when a corporation titled Danforth Park Apartments Limited signed an agreement with the Corporation of the Township of Scarborough regarding the site. This agreement was registered on August 7th, 1964, legally binding the owners of the land to a number of conditions for high-rise development on the site (Figure 3). These conditions included the provision of a site plan outlining the location, height, entrances, footprint, dwelling unit dimensions and locations, elevations, exterior colours and materials of the proposed building(s). The agreement outlined a six-month time frame for

development to commence post-approval. Thus, it can be inferred that the development upon the site was initially formulated by planners at the Township, Metropolitan, and Provincial levels; and merely coloured in and brought to life by the developer. Such developmental control exerted through the planning process exemplified a new level of ‘provincial uniformity’ sought by the state during the postwar era (Goldenberg, 1939).

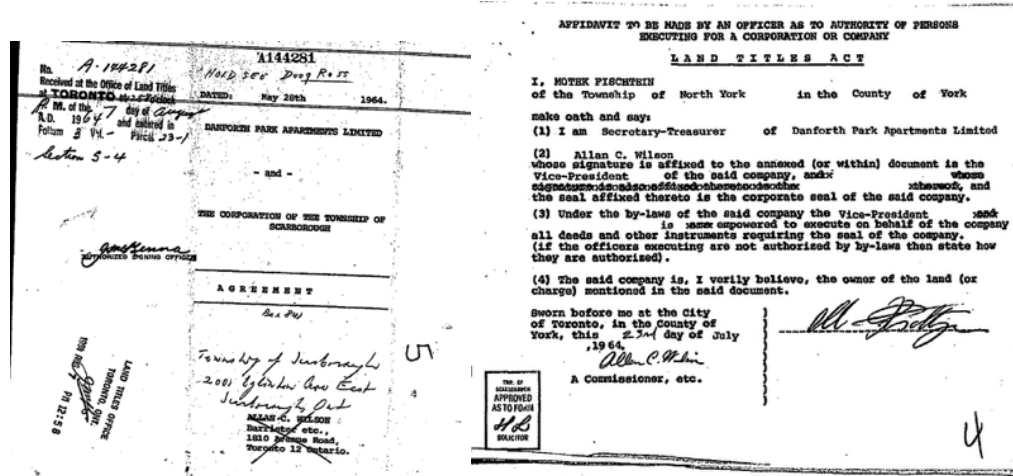


Figure 3: Application A144281, Submitted to the Office of Land Titles in Toronto on August 7th, 1964 by Danforth Apartment Park Limited and the Corporation of the Township of Scarborough. Contains an agreement and an affidavit registering legal ownership and development conditions for the company.

The first owners of the land on title were a corporation called Danforth Park Apartments Limited, who signed an affidavit under oath on July 23rd, 1964, swearing the land was verily owned by the corporation, and empowering their Secretary Treasurer, Motek Fischtein, and Vice President, Allan C. Wilson, to execute deeds and other legal instruments on the corporation’s behalf. This corporation had an office in North York, and these two individuals also ran at least one other business titled International Airport Industrial Park Ltd., which purchased 173 acres of vacant land in Oakville in the year of 1965 (R. v. Stillman, 1997). It is uncertain how many other properties were developed by Fischtein and Wilson, nor how long they retained the property post-development. However, it is important to note that they likely developed numerous industrial and residential properties throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe during this decade.

The site plan was subsequently produced and approved; development began upon the site in 1965. Three 15-storey towers were developed adjacent to the West Highland Creek. The buildings were conceived to have a grand boulevard of open space, spacious suites, an indoor

pool, multiple recreation rooms, balconies, and a sense of centrality within the middle building. The pool was located inside of the middle building and shared by the residents of all three towers. The targeted demographic was middle-income families, and suites were marketed as “affordable luxury suites”. These features embody the modernist orientation and European influence upon the design of the towers, which emphasized the uniformed provision of efficient, inexpensive rental housing for families.

Changes in Advertisements & Everyday Life

The evolution of rental advertisements for these towers reveals a number of spatial conceptions and perceptions from the late-1960s to the early-1980s. Beginning in 1969, ads were produced for the site highlighting the location, cost, suite features, amenities, property management companies, and various names or ‘brands’ for the estate. On February 15, 1969, a small ad was released in the Toronto Star highlighting what the advertisers called the “Danforth Towers”, representing one of the first branding attempts for the complex. The ad gave readers information regarding the site’s close proximity to Eglinton Avenue East, suite size (1-3 bedrooms), and that drapes were included. The cost was first advertised as \$149 and up (Figure 4).

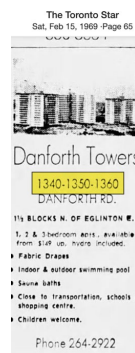


Figure 4: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from February 15, 1969.

A few months later, on April 26, 1969, the largest, most detailed advertisement was produced, with a cost lowered to \$145 per month. In large fonts, the ad read “GET MORE FOR LESS”, “HUGE SUITES”, “YOU DON’T HAVE TO SPEND A LOT OF MONEY TO ACQUIRE FOR YOURSELF AND FAMILY THE FOLLOWING AMENITIES”, and “A CHILDREN’S PARADISE” (Figure 5). Amenities were romantically described, citing “Hollywood style cosmetic cupboards in sumptuous bathroom”, a party room, chandeliered

dining room, indoor and outdoor pools, and “luxurious size living rooms overlooking beautiful green space plus dramatic view of the city”, among others. Such details underscore the owners’ attempt to differentiate the buildings from the crowded tenements of the pre-modern era (Dennis, 2000) by highlighting the novel, family-friendliness of their modern-day towers.

26 Apartments to Let Unfurnished

Inexpensive Luxury Apartments



GET MORE FOR LESS

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEND A LOT OF MONEY TO ACQUIRE FOR YOURSELF AND FAMILY THE FOLLOWING AMENITIES. AVAILABLE AT DANFORTH TOWERS.

"For Your Comfort & Convenience"

HUGE SUITES WITH: -

- SOME 3 BEDROOMS HAVE EXTRA 3-PIECE BATHROOMS PLUS WALK-IN OR 2 CLOSETS.
- ALL 3 BEDROOMS HAVE 2nd BATH WITH SHOWER PLUS WALK-INS OR TWO CLOSETS.
- TOP MODEL FRIDGE & STOVE.
- CHANDELIERED DINING ROOM.
- LUXURIOUS SIZE LIVING ROOMS OVERLOOKING BEAUTIFUL GREEN SPACE PLUS DRAMATIC VIEW OF THE CITY.
- INDOOR AND OUTDOOR POOLS PLUS OLYMPIC COMMUNITY POOL NEARBY.
- HOLLYWOOD STYLE COSMETIC CUPBOARDS IN SUMPTUOUS BATHROOM.
- BROOM CLOSET, LINEN CLOSET, LIGHTED STORAGE CLOSET IN SOME!
- PIPED-IN MUSIC.
- CONVENIENT MAIL-TO-DOOR.
- PARTY ROOM.
- BEAUTIFUL SAUNAS WITH SHOWERS, LOCKERS AND CHANGE ROOMS FREE TO TENANTS.
- DRAPED WINDOWS.

All schools close by. Bus stop in front of building. Direct connection to subway. Just a short walk to GO station. Surface and underground parking. Shopping plaza just across road. Three major shopping centres within short walking distance: Knob Hill, Eastown and Elmcroft, plus Sayville Store.

"A CHILDREN'S PARADISE." Park adjacent to property. Each building has a well-equipped playground. Tree'd ravine.

CHOICE SUITES PRESENTLY AVAILABLE WITH 1, 2 & 3 BEDROOMS!

MAKE SURE YOU SEE THEM NOW!

\$145 And Up, \$155 And Up, \$195 And Up

Danforth Towers
Apartments
264-2922

1340, 1350 & 1360
DANFORTH ROAD
SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO



TORONTO DAILY STAR
Sat., April 26, 1969 **63**

26 Apartments to Let Unfurnished

DON MILLS-SHEPPARD



Sunrise Tower

APT.

2 Bedroom
From \$165

3 Bedroom
From \$195

ADULT BUILDING—15 YRS. & UP
IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY

- TTC FACILITIES AT DOOR
- CLOSE TO HOSPITAL, CHURCHES AND SHOPPING CENTRE
- LARGE HEATED SWIMMING POOL
- LUXURIOUS SAUNA ROOM
- FABRIC DRAPES
- ALL 2 AND 3 BEDROOMS HAVE TWO BATHS
- HYDRO INCLUDED

Open For Your Inspection

WEEKDAYS 10:4 P.M.
WEEKENDS 11:4 P.M.

447-7775

1650 SHEPPARD AVE. E.

Figure 5: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from April 26, 1969.

In May of 1972, the towers continued to be advertised under the name “Danforth Towers” (Figure 6), however, on December 19, 1972, a small ad was released in the Toronto Star advertising them as the “Brookview Towers”, along with a new property management company named DelZotto (Figure 7). DelZotto was likely owned by Jack DelZotto, an Italian immigrant, who began managing properties around Toronto in 1968. His legacy management company is

now referred to as Del and is parented by the Tridel Group of Companies – Toronto’s largest condominium developer (Del Property Management, n.d.).

The Toronto Star
Sat, May 27, 1972 · Page 46

Danforth Towers

1350 DANFORTH RD., SCARBORO
NORTH OF EGLINTON
1 & 2 BEDROOM SUITES
AT VERY REASONABLE RENTS
Few Apts. Available On Upper Floors —
Magnificent View

● DAY NURSERY

- THREE ATTRACTIVE APARTMENT BUILDINGS ON THE EDGE OF A BEAUTIFUL PARK
- CLOSE TO EVERYTHING (SCHOOLS, SHOPPING CENTRES, HOSPITALS, AND MEDICAL CENTRE)
- BUS AT DOOR TO SUBWAY
- SPOTLESSLY CLEAN BLDG.
- SPACIOUS APTS. WITH SLIDING GLASS DOORS TO BALCONY. EXTRA LARGE CLOSETS AND HI-FI FM MUSIC PIPED INTO EACH SUITE
- INDOOR, OUTDOOR POOLS AND SAUNA
- BEST OF ALL NURSERY WITHIN COMPLEX

RENTAL OFFICE HOURS:
MON.-FRI. 10 A.M. - 9 P.M., WEEKENDS 1-4 P.M.



264-3411  

Figure 6: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from May 27, 1972.

Under DelZotto’s influence, the new “Brookview Towers” were more simply marketed, highlighting only their “UNUSUALLY LARGE 2 Bedrooms” and a day nursery, starting at a raised \$168 per month. In 1973, ads continued to be produced for the building under the name “Brookview Towers”, which was still managed by Delzotto. The cost per month jumped to \$176 per month for a two bedroom, and “SPECIAL ON 1 AND 3 BEDROOMS” were advertised without a specific price. The “gorgeous view” available to upper floor suites was highlighted, as was the “tastefully decorated building next to park” (Figure 8).


Brookview Towers

1350 DANFORTH ROAD
NORTH OF EGLINTON
SCARBORO

● DAY NURSERY
UNUSUALLY LARGE
2 Bedrooms from
\$168

- Beside beautiful park
- Indoor, outdoor pools and saunas
- Spotless, clean bldg.
- Lovely big suites, with sliding doors to balcony, roomy closets and piped-in FM music.
- Close to schools, shopping centres, hospital and medical centre
- Bus at door to subway.

Open Mon.-Fri. 1-9 Wkends 12-6

264-3411 

MANAGED BY
delzotto

Figure 7: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from December 19, 1972.

furnished 26 Apartments Unfurnished 26 Apartments Unfurnished

COURT

Brookview Towers

1350 DANFORTH RD., SCARBORO
NORTH OF EGLINTON

2 Bedroom from \$176

SPECIALS ON 1 AND 3 BEDROOMS

● DAY NURSERY

- FEW ARTS ON UPPER FLOORS WITH GORGEOUS VIEW
- CLOSE TO SCHOOLS, SHOPPING CENTRES, HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTRE
- INDOOR, OUTDOOR POOLS AND SAUNAS
- TASTEFULLY DECORATED BUILDING NEXT TO PARK
- LOVELY BIG SUITES, WITH SLIDING DOORS TO BALCONY, ROOMY CLOSETS AND PIPED-IN FM MUSIC
- BUS AT DOOR TO SUBWAY AND CLOSE TO SCARBORO TOWN CENTRE

MON.-FRI. 9 A.M.-9 P.M., WEEKENDS 12-4 P.M.

264-3411  **delzotto**

10-6; SUN. 12-4

Figure 8: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from July 23, 1973.

It is noteworthy that these ads do not contain photos as the ones in 1969 did, and only list 1350 Danforth Road as the address. The shift in advertisement strategy during this time was subtle but reveals a distinctive shift away from the family-lifestyle focus of the previous ads and toward a more commodified, branded, value-for-money sales approach.

However, DelZotto left shortly after. On November 12, 1974, an ad was released in the Toronto Star once again under the original management company, Pinetree Property Management, signalling that they had returned to manage the site. The ad focussed on the park, schools, shopping, subway, and allocated parking spots offered to tenants, as well as a line which reads “sorry no pets” (which was absent in the earlier ads) (Figure 9). The focus on public amenities was novel, underscoring a growing confidence in the neighboured features of the site to attract tenants.

255 Apartments Unfurn. 255 Apartments Unfurn.

Brookview Towers

1340, 1350, 1360 Danforth Rd.
(at Eglinton)
Extra Spacious
1, 2 & 3-bedroom suites

- OVERLOOKING PARK
- NEAR SCHOOLS—SHOPPING
- LARGE BALCONIES WITH SLIDING DOORS
- SOME 7-BDRM. SUITES WITH 2 BATHROOMS
- ALLOCATED PARKING SPOTS
- INDOOR & OUTDOOR POOL WITH SAUNA
- HYDRO INCLUDED

Sorry no pets
Bus at door
Minutes to subway

264-3411

Pinetree Property Mgmt.
Office 1350 Danforth Rd.

265 Shared Accom'dation

BROADVIEW-Danforth working girl to share house with same, call 461-2881 after 5 p.m.

BURNHAMTHORPE Rd. large luxury 3 bdrm. to share. 671-8542

CARLTON-Sherbourne young couple has modern house to share. \$159 to young girl. 967-8997

DANFORTH-Broadview furn. bdrm. \$14 w/ w/c. Payment for small chores. 461-4871

DAVISVILLE Ave. business girl 25 to 35 to share 3 bdrm. cosy house. Laundry & rec. room. Evgs. 485-4128

DAVISVILLE-Mt Pleasant 3 mature students need apt to share 4 bdrm house. \$90 mo. 687-4347

DAVISVILLE subway, guys or girls. 25-35 to share house. Furniture welcome. 684-4000

DAWES Danforth, adult to share 1 bdrm. furn. apt. separate bath. 355 w/ky. 751-1997 after 3

DIXON Kingston, wanted 1 guy to share 2 bdrm. apt. with 2 others. 2 bdrm. color TV. 742-2617

DIXON Midland, business girl has 2 bdrm. apt. to share with same, reasonable. 249-3551, evgs.

DIXON Midland, gentleman has 2 bdrm. to share, own room. \$125 mo. 16-4890, 9M-2575

DIXON W. Yonge, straight male has furnished house to share. \$135. 248-3324 or 248-0276

DIXON Martin Grove, mother has 1 bdrm. apt. to share, own large room. \$105. 248-6145, 741-7119

DON Midland-Sheppard, businessman to share 2 bdrm. furn. apt. near parking, pool, sauna, gym. 293-3454 before 8:30 a.m. or after 11 p.m.

DON Midland-Sheppard, neat, tidy male, furniture girl 35 & over to share townhouse. 343-7997, 493-7798

DOWNTOWN trendy girl in cosy apt. own room. \$87. 975-1189 Shared Accommodation Service

DOWNTOWN own room, fully furn. apt. for young business man or mature student. evgs. & wkends. 921-7787

DUFFERIN Eglinton, quiet decent young woman with own bdrm. furniture to share 2 bdrm. apt. 787-0483 evgs. & wkends.

EGLINTON Keele, 28 yr. old seeks other to share near 7 bdrm. furnished apt. 742-2974

EGLINTON Marlborough, girl to share luxury air cond. mixed house, own room, all conveniences, no kids allowed. Ideal for winter seasonal rent.

280 Flats Furn.

DANFORTH Jones, 2 kitchen private. 643-1841

DANFORTH Logan, 1 br 1 1/2 w/c, owner works in apt. 7158 Call after 3:30

DANFORTH Park, 1 1/2 cable respectable adults. 46

DUFFERIN Dupont area & kitchen. After 6. 524-8453

DUFFERIN Eglinton, 2 br kitchen. call 787-6488

DUFFERIN Home, 2 room & bath. furnished. 217-2912

DUNDAS Dufferin, 2 bdrm room & kitchen, separate suit couple with 1 child or person. 311-1131 or 311-7150

EGLINTON Dufferin, 1 room & kitchen, quiet, call 974

EGLINTON Spadina, apt. suit student or business pe 586

FINCH Yonge, room, w/c own entry. 1st floor. 221-647

GERARD Woodbine, 1 bdrm & bath. \$125. 438-4372

HIGH Park area, one bdrm color stereo. 322-1289

HIGH Park, near bdrm, wash room, quiet home. 536

HIGH Park, 3 rooms & share bath. couple. 333-7932

HIGH Park, Bloor, 3 room apt entry. 248-8818, 337-8172

HIGH Park, 2 rooms & kitchen 744-8973

HIGH Park, 2 rooms & kitchen. 58-4536 after 5

HIGH Park, 1-3 bdrm, su kitchen, bath. Adults. 746-30

LANSDOWNE Queen, 2 kitchen, sunroom, veranda. 10 children. 537-1427

LAWRENCE K. middle R girls. All facilities 782-2145

LOGAN Danforth, 2 br weekly, in apt. 1st floor. 40 2637 after 3:30 p.m.

PARKDALE 2 attractive kitchen. 95-146

PARKDALE 2 attractive kitchen, full kitchen. 743-1484

PINEWOOD St. Clair, kitchen & bath. adult. 537-13

RONCESVALLES & Que decorated, new fridge & st adult. 84 Harward Ave. after

ROSEDALE large, bath, parking, hot water. 757-853

WILSON call 746-8111

Figure 9: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from November 12, 1974.

On the other hand, the pet prohibition reveals a lack of desperation on behalf of the owners to fill vacant units, alongside a lack of desire to accommodate pet-owners. The intimately described, detailed ads of 1969 focalised the spacious and glamorous interior design of the building; whereby the 1974 ad focussed upon the convenient location of the building – possibly to differentiate the towers from others located in less desirable places. In this way, the shift in

advertisement strategy can be viewed in relation to the variety of buildings that the towers were in competition with.

On January 10, 1980, the owners began advertising that the buildings were “5 minutes to [the] 401”, with immediate occupancy available for one- and three-bedroom units. The ad continued to remark “sorry no pets” to prospective tenants, whilst advertising a number of different amenities than previous renditions did (e.g., nothing about parkland or views, yet underscoring large suites, convenient location, and the availability of cable TV) (Figure 10). Such a shift marks the gradual restructuring of the towers around automobility and a privatized domestic life, revealing at least a partial divergence away from their open-space, modernist design toward preferences for exclusivity and consumption-based living.



Figure 10: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from January 10, 1980.

In general, these shifts in marketing strategies signal a number of novelties in the spatial production of the towers at the time: that advertising proximity to the highway had become more desirable than the proximity to the subway, and that advertising cable TV was more effective in drawing in new tenants in lieu of the greenspace/park setting. The tower management and owners were advertising car ownership and indoor living, whilst prohibiting pets, revealing a

shift in desire toward more exclusive lifestyles and away from the open-space, park-centric, communal features of the towers' conceptual utopian ideals.

The 2,000 acres of open space surrounding these towers (E.R.A. Architects, planningAlliance, & Cities Centre at the University of Toronto, 2010) have largely become parking lots since this era; and in June of 1989, permission was granted for the owners, listed at the time as “1340 Danforth Limited, 1350 Danforth Limited, and 1360 Danforth Limited”, to construct an underground parking garage on the site. The renovation encroached into the adjacent lands known as Knob Hill Park by 8.87 by 195 feet (Figure 11), which were owned at the time by the Corporation of the City of Scarborough. The city council accepted such encroachment with conditions related to cost and performance, outlining that the city may retain the space at any time if required. This further exemplifies a shift toward car ownership in the representations of the space, with the owners and the city following suit of the car-reliant spatial practices of tenants in the towers.

THIS AGREEMENT made this 30th day of October, A.D.1989.

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF SCARBOROUGH
hereinafter called "the City";

OF THE FIRST PART,

- and -

1340 DANFORTH LTD., 1350 DANFORTH LTD. and
1360 DANFORTH LTD.
hereinafter called "the Owners";

OF THE SECOND PART.

WHEREAS 1340 Danforth Ltd., 1350 Danforth Ltd. and 1360 Danforth Ltd. are the registered owners of certain lands and premises municipally known in the year 1989 as 1340, 1350 and 1360 Danforth Road, in the City of Scarborough, in the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, which lands are more particularly described in Schedule "A";

AND WHEREAS the Owners have sought the permission of the City to maintain and use an existing encroachment over a public park, the encroachment consisting of part of an underground garage which encroaches over Knob Hill Park to a maximum of 8.87 feet north into Knob Hill Park over a distance in length of approximately 195 feet all as shown on a building location survey prepared by Schaeffer & Reinthaler LIMITED, Ontario Land Surveyors dated April 8th, 1983 and attached hereto as Schedule "B".

AND WHEREAS the said underground parking garage shall hereinafter be referred to as "the Encroachment";

AND WHEREAS the Council of the City through the adoption of Item 5 of Report 24 of the Board of Control adopted by Council adopted by Council on June 15, 1987 did authorize the execution of an encroachment agreement on certain terms;

NOW THEREFORE THIS AGREEMENT WITNESSETH that in consideration of the premises and of the covenants and agreements hereinafter set forth on the part of the Owners to be observed and performed, and of other good and valuable consideration, the City hereby grants to the Owners (insofar as the City can legally do so) permission to maintain and use the Encroachment until such time as the removal of Encroachment from the public park is required by the City as hereinafter provided;

Figure 11: In 1989, an underground parking garage is proposed, which will encroach upon Knob Hill Park.

Overall, the shifts in advertisements alongside the 1989 parking garage renovation, mark a restructuring of the cluster's preconceived, modernist logic toward a lifestyle-based, market-oriented logic. Access to highways, parking space, and in-unit media consumption replaced

greenspace and collective, family-friendly living as the principal selling points. This reveals details regarding the market competition faced by the tower owners over time, leading them to produce representations which centred value-for-money, exclusivity (“sorry no pets”), and the marketing of consumer-based lifestyles (e.g., automobility and media).

Ambivalent Attitudes Toward Apartments in Scarborough

While the change in advertisements represented a sway from the utopian modernity of the towers, media representations of the towers represented longstanding attempts to console local skeptics with perceived benefits of such design, followed by market pressures and profit logic superseding the aforementioned planning and design goals. Five key newspaper clippings were found regarding the public tensions of Scarborough’s high-rise industry during the post-war era between the years 1958 to 1975, illustrating a local, historical vertical discourse.

In 1958, an article was produced which centred on the initial tensions at the beginning of the postwar apartment boom. Opening with residential and schoolboard concerns, the article frames a local family as “victims of Scarboro’s newest development – the apartment building boom” (Figure 12). The family claimed to reporters that they are being forced to move, stating that “we don’t want to go, but we are not going to continue living here with big apartment buildings looking down on us from every side”. The article continues on by describing the various plans for apartment buildings, which were planned to be “concentrated on Eglinton Avenue and close by on North-south traffic arteries” (1340-1360 Danforth Avenue is just north of Eglinton Avenue, fitting this description).

At the time, the CMHC was reportedly restricting the development of apartments east of Kennedy Road (which 1340-1360 Danforth Avenue is). However, Scarborough’s chief planner Don Easton stated that they had “hope[d] to meet with the CMHC soon to arrange a change in this restriction”. The article went on to state that planners sought 25% of new developments to be in the form of apartments.

Promoted by top-consultant Oliver Crockford, it was argued that an apartment at Brimley and Eglinton (one block away from 1340-1360 Danforth Avenue) was “really terrific, it provides people with low-cost accommodation, and it’s done by private enterprise”. The article goes on to note that,

“land prices indeed sky-rocketed in residential areas now slated for apartments... even at this rate, Mr. Crockford claims apartment builders can get good land cheaper in Scarborough than other suburbs”.

This clipping illustrates the tensions regarding the tower boom between locals, the state, and industry. The top-down negotiation of the modernist ideal under a capitalist regime, within a moderately sparse suburb resulted in a compromised introduction of verticality. Utopian aspirations were thus interceded by both economic logic and local antagonism from their earliest arrivals to Scarborough.



Figure 12: An article from July 8, 1958, discussing “victims” of Scarborough’s latest high-rise development.

A few years later, in 1962, an article was published regarding a zoning amendment for a proposed high-rise development in Scarborough. The article touts a proposal for “very high, European style apartment blocks”, which an industry professional felt “would be ideal for the introduction of high-rise apartments patterned after projects he recently saw in England and

Sweden during a month-long visit to those countries” (Figure 13). This article underscores the origination of many of the modern tower designs, situating Scarborough’s postwar planning within a global modernist discourse. It insinuates that aspirational elements of the tower boom were imported from abroad, while revealing the strong influence that professional expertise and advocacy had in shaping local zoning.



Figure 13: A 1962 article regarding the European influence of high-rise architecture in Scarborough.

Two years later, in 1964, a sensational article was released which publicized a threat made by a local woman: to send rats every day to the Scarborough civic centre if a proposed apartment development resulted in an influx of rats to her home. She was “one of several homeowners” to object to the proposal, but the only one to personally threaten the city (Figure

14). This article suggests a level of anxiety and resistance on behalf of the locals with regard to high rise development in Scarborough. It dramatized local fears of apartments with theatrical protest, stressing tensions between the established low-rise communities and the tower boom; revealing how anecdotal fears were amplified within public discourse.

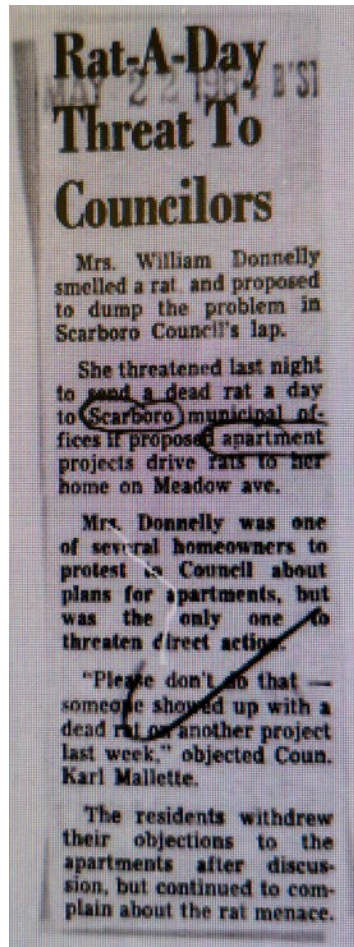


Figure 14: A 1964 article discusses a woman's threats to the city due to high-rise proposal.

On top of the stigmas and fears tower tenants have endured from local community members, their exploitation by tower owners has been documented since as early as 1971; when it was reported that a woman who was behind on her rent had her front door removed by her building (Figure 15). Meanwhile, in 1975, another building on Trudelle Street was attempted to be half-converted into condominium units from rental units (Figure 16). These instances mark the aggressive, profit-driven motives of tower owners during their early inception, highlighting the practical prioritisation of the exchange value, rather than the use value, of certain tower sites by their owners.



Figure 15: A 1971 newspaper article regarding a Scarborough woman whose door had been removed by her landlord.

Overall, these news reports assert the conflicting values, priorities, and agendas on behalf of the three bodies of actors at play during the time: the locals, the state, and the industry. Notably absent from these early conversations are tenants, who continue to be silenced in discussions about their homes. The next section unpacks the sociodemographic composition of Scarborough's tower communities, accentuating their reliance upon and exploitation within these apartments.



Figure 16: A 1975 article discusses proposal to convert high-rise rental units into condominium units.

Scarborough's Vertical Communities

Over time, Scarborough has become a complex, multicultural hub within the GTA, with over half a million inhabitants, more than half of which are immigrants (City of Toronto, 2018). Scarborough is touted as being one of the most multicultural places within North America, with 73.5% of Scarborough residents having self-identified as belonging to a visible minority group, compared to Toronto's 51.5% (City of Toronto, 2018).

MacDonnell presents numerous statistics regarding Scarborough's socioeconomic landscape in contrast to Toronto's other boroughs (MacDonnell et al., 2011). She has underscored a number of things which differentiate Scarborough from other areas: (1) in the 1980s, Scarborough had one of the highest median incomes of the boroughs - yet, by 2006, this number had declined by more than \$10,000 (p. 32); (2) Scarborough has since gained the most

widespread levels of poverty across the region (insofar as it has rapidly manifested horizontally *as well as* vertically), whilst also containing the highest concentration of vertical poverty in the GTA – 48% of Scarborough’s high-rise residents were found to be low-income in 2006 (p. 38); (3) Scarborough had a nearly doubled rate of mice and rats compared to the majority of other areas (p. 67); (4) people in Scarborough also felt less safe in their common parking areas, and reported more break-ins on average than the rest of the region (p. 88-89); (5) despite these challenges, Scarborough scored the highest with regard to having neighbours who would regularly lend them items and watch their children (p. 119). What MacDonnell’s study tells us, is that whilst Scarborough faces much greater levels of poverty on average than the GTA, in both horizontal and vertical residences, their levels of interdependence and connectedness between neighbours have been heightened comparative to other boroughs.

Thus poverty, immigration, and multiculturalism have converged within Scarborough’s postwar towers, which have long acted as hubs of refuge by providing affordable and spacious accommodations for low-income families. Despite their affordances, the power dynamics and spatial practices of the owners and management of these towers have been effectively exploitative, dehumanising, and commodifying. As the sociodemographic composition within these towers have shifted from middle to low-income, with an influx of various cultures and ethnicities which often cluster in and around them, the strategies put forth by tower owners and management companies to attract and retain residents has reduced dramatically since their modernist hey-day.

In comparing the pride and effort put into their planning, design, and ‘golden years’, to the ways in which the towers have been maintained since the 1990s a striking juxtaposition emerges. With a growing population and shifted targeted demographic, tower owners and management companies have exemplified profit-based priorities of the capitalist housing market through practices of neglect, financialization, and tenant mistreatment.

The ads for 1340-1360 Danforth Avenue during the early 2000s were basic, simply listing units below market rent. On August 11, 2006, MetCap advertised their units for \$799 per month for a one bedroom, \$899 for a two bedroom, and \$1139 for a three bedroom (Figure 17). Toronto’s average rent during that year were \$896, \$1,067, and \$1,271, respectively (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, n.d). The rental housing market had evidently shifted - offering below-market rent had become enough to attract new residents to the site.



Figure 17: A newspaper ad in the Toronto Star from August 11, 2006.

Their previously touted amenities, location, and greenspace became notably absent during this time of market devaluation, which strikingly coincided with a shift in sociodemographic away from middle-income, European families toward low-income, ethnic minorities. It is not a far stretch to assume correlation between the two, particularly when noting the lack of power and capital needed to push back in the latter comparative to the former. In a market with high demand for low-cost units, it is clear that little more than suite availability and competitive pricing was required to attract low-income tenants during this time.

In sum, the shift in demographics seems to have reinforced the devaluation of the towers, with owners taking advantage of their lower-income, marginalized tenants' minimized capacity to effectively contest their practices. Nevertheless, far cries have still been heard of the tenants disputing the management and ownership practices in these towers. Yet, their voices have proven to have little power in producing change. The following section recounts the ongoing struggles of tenants in Scarborough's tower neighbourhoods since the mid-2000s.

Tenant Struggles and Advocacy: “Evict the roaches, not the tenants”

In July of 2005, a roach rally was held by tenants of White Blocks to demand that management address the prevalence of bugs in the buildings. Approximately 50 residents participated, touting signs that read “evict the roaches, not the tenants”. This was the result of help from ACORN Canada, who aided tenants in opening a tenant union chapter to begin organizing ways to advocate for themselves within the building. A resident in the building at 1340 Danforth remarked that “before ACORN came along, we didn’t think we could get anything accomplished.”. The reporter further remarked that “it would be an exaggeration to say 1340 Danforth is a desirable place to live. But it is relatively clean, and the bugs are gone” (Figure 18).

The Toronto Star
Wed, Nov 09, 2005 - Page 24

🔍 Cli

It all began with the roach rally

They laugh about the roach rally now, but it didn't seem funny at the time.

Every morning, the residents of a neglected apartment complex in Scarborough would wake up to find cockroaches darting across the floor. They'd scuzz, spray, complain to the landlord and curse.

Marva Burnett, one of the feistier tenants, would catch as many as she could, put them in zip-lock bags and plunk them on the property manager's desk, demanding that something be done. Nothing ever was.

Then, last summer, ACORN got involved. It is a community self-help network that organizes low-income Canadians apartment by apartment, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, city by city. It now has seven chapters with 700 members in Toronto.

The Scarborough-Danforth chapter decided to hold a rally to get rid of the roaches. It urged as many of its members as possible to gather outside the infested building on July 7. Together, they'd march in and confront the landlord.

Fifty people showed up with homemade placards ("Evict the roaches, not the tenants").

The property manager told them he couldn't let them all in because they'd scare the tenants. They ignored him. They entered en masse and presented their demands.

Two days later, the exterminators arrived.

It would be an exaggeration to say 1340 Danforth Rd. is a desirable place to live. But it is relatively clean and the bugs are gone.

"Before ACORN came along, we didn't think we could get anything accomplished. Now landlords know we're all going to be in their faces until they fix things," Burnett said.

That is the way ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) works. Organizers show people how to mobilize, but they don't set the priorities or pick the battles. That is up to the members.

The concept was developed in the United States 35 years ago. There are now branches in 75 American cities.

ACORN arrived in Canada a year and a half ago, in the person of Judy Duncan, a dynamic young Winnipegger who had seen it in operation in Seattle as a student. She decided to start a chapter in Toronto.

It was lonely work at first. She'd go in to rundown apartment buildings and knock on doors, asking tenants if they had problems and offering to help. Sharon Shrieve, who lives in Weston, remembers when Duncan turned up at her door. "At first I thought she was a crazy lady who thought she could change the world. But every time there was a major issue in our building, Judy was there. People started listening. Before you knew it, we had a group of 80."

With ACORN's help, the tenants took their landlord to the Ontario Rent Tribunal over the decrepit state of their apartments and won. They set up teams of floor monitors so people wouldn't be afraid to venture outside their doors. They started talking about programs for their kids and regular, rigorous building inspections.

"People who'd never said a word and didn't know their neighbours were suddenly opening up, pouring their hearts out," Shrieve said.

Duncan no longer works on her own. She has two full-time colleagues, an office in the city's east end and a small army of volunteer door-knockers.

It costs \$10 a month to belong to ACORN. But if people can't afford to pay, they can still join as non-voting members and get all the benefits.

Although landlord-tenant issues are ACORN's biggest concern, they are not its only focus. It has launched a campaign to get Ottawa and Queen's Park to crack down on payday loan shops that charge exorbitant interest rates. It has organized community cleanups. It has taken a delegation to Mayor David Miller's office to ensure that the concerns of underserved neighbourhoods are reflected in the new City of Toronto Act.


Burnett's dream is that, through ACORN, she and her neighbours can show Torontonians that Scarborough is a place where good people are doing good things. "If you focus on what's positive, you can show that there's an alternative to crime and violence," she said.

Shrieve has a city-wide vision. She'd like to see red, yellow or green inspection notices (like restaurants have) posted in every apartment building. She'd like the option of paying her rent into a special account, run by the city, if her landlord doesn't keep the building in decent shape. She'd like community programs for kids in high-rises.

Something is stirring in Toronto's troubled inner suburbs.

It sounds like hope.

Carol Goar's column appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday.



Carol Goar

Figure 18: A newspaper clipping of the Toronto Star on November 9, 2005

In a later 2014 news article, Mike Adler reports that tenant relations with building management at White Blocks were strained since as early as 2006 (Toronto.com, 2014). At this time, the Scarborough Property Standards Committee identified 102 substandard living

conditions within the towers, including 52 issues in the interior of the buildings, 18 in the parking garage, and 32 exterior issues (City of Toronto, 2014). The city had given the owners an Order to Comply, to which John Tsangaris, MetCap’s then Vice President of Operations, rebutted that the majority of the items are ‘nuisance items’ and that with “any 40-year-old building, they are going to have their challenges”.

Despite significant renovations in the years prior (which are discussed in greater detail below), residents argued that aesthetic concerns outweighed more pressing issues. A 1350 Danforth resident claimed that all they had done was “paint my door and change the carpet in the hall... they don’t maintain the buildings they have”. City Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker urged tenants to advocate for themselves and help the city identify issues in buildings, noting “we [the city] don’t have x-ray vision”.

Such issues are not confined to the buildings at 1340-1360 Danforth Avenue but are a widespread commonality across these aging towers. The struggles of tenants in Scarborough’s towers have become a well-documented pattern over the years, with particular management companies and owners acting as repeat offenders. Discussed in greater detail below, owners Starlight Investments and MetCap Living have both become notorious ‘slumlords’ in the city.

The White Blocks towers exemplify only one of their many victimized high-rise communities. In a recent instance of tenant struggles, a building also owned by Starlight Investments and managed by MetCap Living in Toronto’s Parkdale neighbourhood have similarly employed practices of exploitation and neglect within their buildings (Mannie, 2025).

In the tower located at 55 Triller Avenue, “significant capital investments” were made in 2022 by Starlight, who then retroactively attempted to raise the rents to cover the renovation costs. Starlight’s current senior vice-president, Penny Colomvakos, shared that the renovations were “essential to maintaining the safety, comfort, and energy efficiency of the building for all residents”. However, tenants have claimed that maintenance issues within the building have been long-ignored, and that they continue to deal with issues regarding pests, paint, black mold, and water shut-offs – which have led to some tenants experience serious health concerns, including “nausea, dizziness and nosebleeds”.

A tenant took their concerns to the LTB over the lack of maintenance, who ultimately ruled against Starlight investments, citing that they “took an unreasonable amount of time” in providing serious repairs, which led to a mice infestation among other complications for the

tenant. The tenant was exempted from paying a large portion of their rent during the years that the repairs went unaddressed through the granting of several rent abatements.

Starlight and MetCap Living are notorious, repeat offenders in the business of tower exploitation in the GTA; however, they are just two examples among many others. Such financialized landlords and their management companies have repeatedly and blatantly inflicted patterns of systemic oppression upon their tenants. Other key offenders in Scarborough towers include the Realstar Group and Golden Equity Properties. Both of these companies have practiced hostile and neglectful tactics in their ownership and management of the postwar towers.

To elaborate, two 2017 news articles cited Realstar's mismanagement practices of a postwar tower in Scarborough. Since taking over the building's managerial roles, maintenance and repair responses to issues with elevators, water, security matters, and pest control deteriorated (Lavoie, 2017; Mullin, 2017). On top of the poor management practices, tenants began to face threats of eviction, leading a resident to claim that the building is enduring "systemic abuse" (Lavoie, 2017). The tenant further stated that "I feel whenever there are problems they're not listening. We're not being heard". Meanwhile another tenant noted that Realstar is "pretty arrogant, very argumentative, and rude", which they noted "doesn't make for a comfortable situation. This is my home". The latter tenant expressed fears of repercussions for voicing their concerns – which an interviewee similarly expressed during an interview at 1360 Danforth Avenue (this is discussed more in the following sections).

These articles underscore the role of ACORN in empowering tenants to organize and fight back against their housing conditions. ACORN is the actor which postwar tower tenants have continually turned to after being ignored as individuals. A tenant remarked that they were not "up to fight alone", and that "they [Realstar] wanted us to move to another apartment and pay market rent. They didn't want to fix it at all until ACORN stepped in" (Ibid.).

Likewise, two articles regarding Golden Equity Properties display similarly egregious practices of mismanagement while harbouring hostile relations with their tenants. In 2021, an article was released which charges the management company for removing money from tenants' bank accounts without their permission (McAllister & Bond, 2021). The article further notes that in a building owned by Golden Equity on Trudelle Street (a short walk from White Blocks), tenants were "strictly prohibited" from gathering in common areas (both interior and exterior),

citing the pandemic as the main cause. However, it is clear that this prohibition was an attempt to eradicate forms of tenant organizing, as a letter was issued which instructed tenants to “call building management or police if they see “strangers” circulating “unsolicited written materials” or talking to tenants”. The Trudelle Tenants Association member, Alicia Ludwig, noted their attempt to “paint those that are advocates as troublemakers”, who were simply “asking for proper rodent and pest management because we do have cockroaches, bed bugs and rodents in the buildings that are not being addressed”.

Meanwhile, in a post-pandemic article released in 2025, tenants complained of inhumane conditions in a different Golden Equity property in Scarborough on Markham Road. A tenant noted that “they haven’t repaired one thing in five years in my apartment,” despite the fact that, “there is mold, there’s mice. It’s so bad my kids can’t sleep. They’ve missed school. Two [of my kids] moved out because of all the mice at night. The balcony is not repaired. The ceiling in the bathroom is about to cave in. The vents are not working”.

Tenants further report being gaslit by the management staff, who claim to not have received their work orders.

Tenants in the building have recently joined ACORN and have been conducting surveys to help document and organize themselves in order to improve their living conditions. One tenant notably cited that she has been fighting for better repairs and maintenance standards since the 1990s. In 1998, they organized and advocated for the building at City Hall after gathering 120 signatures from residents in the tower (Burman, 2025).

Furthermore, two articles were found in the year of 2000 and 2002, insinuating further patterns of neglect and exploitation within these towers. In 2000, a month-long instance of trapped residents on upper floors of a Scarborough tower was reported, whereby the city had to step in to their aid in order to fix the elevators and provide mobility for those who were trapped (Figure 19).



Figure 19: A news article from 2000 regarding tenants who were trapped for a month in the upper floors of a high-rise in Scarborough.

Such an instance signals severe mismanagement and dehumanising treatment of residents during a time of crisis. Two years later, in 2002, an ad put forth by a legal company requested tenants to participate in a ‘Scarborough Tenants Forum’, to voice their “concerns about repair problems, rent increases and affordable housing” (Figure 20). Over a quarter century later, those same tenant concerns remain as relevant as ever, as does the lack of concern by owners and managers toward their tenants.

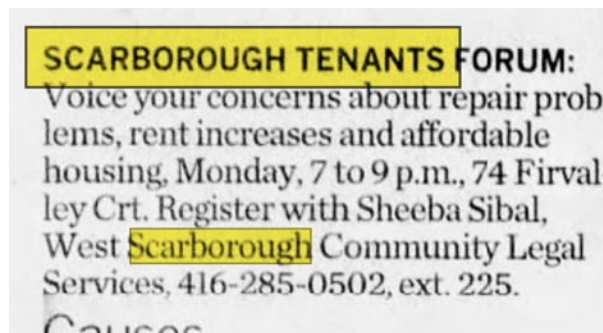


Figure 20: An ad from 2002 for the ‘Scarborough Tenants Forum’.

Such instances mark the longstanding prevalence of dehumanising practices of landlord profiteering across the region’s high-rise rental markets. These injustices and poor conditions

have gone largely unaddressed at the level of the state, who have (as this case discusses further below) become increasingly complicit in such matters through both neglect and incentivization of the financialization of market rental housing through policy reform.

The everyday lives of tower residents have become decreasingly valued comparative to their ability to be financially exploited due to their need to be housed. Not only are these towers failing to provide “provincial uniformity” through the provision of modern housing for all classes, which was sought during the pre-and post-war years; they are, at present, actively contributing to the redistribution of wealth from the hands of the poor to the wealthy.

Hot Potato Towers: The Speculative High-Rise Market

By investigating the ownership history of the towers, we can better understand the ways in which the treatment of tenants are not isolated instances of managerial neglect, but part of a broader regime of tower financialization through profit-maximization strategies. Since the early 2000s, the towers at 1340-1360 Danforth Avenue have been sold on three separate occasions to various types of financialized landlords. In 2002, 2007, and 2018, the site changed owners; each of whom have left enduring marks upon their investment (and those who inhabit it). This section dismantles the ownership typologies of the three most-recent owners, assessing in tandem their investments into the building, revealing the towers’ subjection to diverse forms of financialization over time. The history of ownership reveals how the towers have transformed from a speculative real estate property, into an institutional land re-valorization project, and ultimately into an REIT-based asset to be aggressively managed.

In the summer of 2002, the towers were purchased by the Northwest Realty Company under the legal name Danforth Estates Management Inc. The company is a subsidiary of Century 21 (a global real estate entity), and they paid \$40,850,000 for the property (Altus Group, n.d.). During their ownership, they invested \$9,000,000 in exterior retrofits and upgrades into the towers. They also, shortly after purchasing, signed a formal agreement with Rogers Cable Inc. (Figure 21), to allow for the company to access and service the towers. During the time shortly after the sale, the buildings were being managed by O’Neill Property Management Inc. Yet by 2006, they were being managed by MetCap Living (Altus Group, n.d.). Records indicate that MetCap had also taken ownership of the building by this time (Altus Group, n.d.). This may have

It is worth noting that the full history of the towers' ownership remains concealed behind boardroom doors, as a number of private acquisitions, mergers, and other strategic agreements between actors have absconded from appearing on the land title registry; yet, much can be inferred from the aforementioned timeline. Century 21, MetCap Living, Sun Life Financial, and Starlight Investments are powerful global actors in the realm of financialized housing, who each partake in the game using their particular specialties.

Century 21, a hands-on, professional actor predominantly involved with real estate sales, sought to invest in and flip the towers for a profit. However, the net profit of their purchase in 2002 (\$40,850,000), their investment (\$9,000,000) and their sale in 2007 (\$49,000,000) resulted in a loss of \$850,000 (Altus Group, n.d.).

When Sun Life purchased the towers in 2007, they were acting as a long-term investor. Their institutional power was harnessed (comparative to the professional expertise harnessed by Century 21), to significantly alter the valuation of the site through the planning and regulatory processes. Through agreements (and subsidies) with the city, alongside development corporation Heintzman Development Co-Operative, they managed to more than triple the exchange value of the site within 11 years (which had notably shrunk in size due to the infill development!). When they eventually sold the land to Starlight Investments for \$155,000,000, they had primed it to become an even more abstract financial asset with renewed potential for extraction and development.

Since then, the REIT Starlight Investments has restructured the towers' management and ownership strategy into one of intensified rent extraction and shareholder-led asset management. They altered the façade of the building to increase the perceived aesthetic value and have been explicitly undertaking a "value-add" strategy to reset rents through renovation and eviction practices. Their main purpose, as an REIT, is to yield maximum profits from their portfolio of buildings.

Overall, the ownership over the past two decades indicates a staged intensification of the towers' financialization. The three typologies of owners may be categorized as professional (Century 21), institutional (Sun Life), and REIT (Starlight Investments). Each actor has imprinted the towers in various ways through different mechanisms of profit extraction. This history reveals a transformation in valuation of these towers from housing to asset, whereby renovations, rezoning, and rent increases have operated together to maximize shareholder value

(rather than their occupational quality). During these years, as the towers have been subordinated to varying instruments of capital accumulation, these processes have had substantial effects upon their residents. The following sections explore the spatial dynamics that such financialized models have worked to produce, beginning with an investigation into the condominium infill process and following up with its socio-spatial aftermath.

Infill and Renewal for Whom?

One of the first publicized glimpses into the condominium infill at 1340-1360 Danforth Road was released on June 7, 2013, in a municipal staff report recommending the subsidization of the development of affordable housing units via various projects across Toronto (City of Toronto, 2013). In the report, staff recommended that \$2,565,000 of forgivable loans be allocated from the Development Charges Reserve Fund toward a new condominium infill development upon the site at 1340-1360 Danforth Road. The condominium was to produce 171 ‘affordable’ condominium units, to be developed by the Heintzman Development Co-Operative in partnership with Options for Homes. For reference, Options for Homes is a non-profit developer of condominium towers and townhomes, and their development model strategizes to expand homeownership opportunities to lower-income households (Options for Homes, n.d.).

In 2015, a zoning bylaw amendment was approved, allowing for the new condominium to be developed (City of Toronto, By-law No. 392-2015, August 28, 2015). The lands were parceled into Parcel A, which contains the pre-existing towers at 1340, 1350, and 1360 Danforth Road, and Parcel B, which contains the condominium at the novel address 1346 Danforth Road. The amendment included a number of provisions for the pre-existing towers and the new condominium tower, related to the built and social infrastructure of the site. The height of the proposed condominium infill was capped at 52 metres. A total of 277 units were approved to be developed within the condo; a significant increase from the proposed 171 affordable units in the staff report from 2013.

Notably, however, the amenity space requirements for the site were reduced from the standardized, citywide 2 square metres indoors and 2 square metres outdoors per dwelling unit to 1.2 square metres indoors and 1 square metre outdoors (S. 465, i, ii). This nearly 50% reduction in amenity space requirements from the standard represents a strong attempt to reduce the ongoing maintenance costs for the new condo owners. What stands out the most regarding the

zoning bylaw amendment, however, is the required changes in the built environment and its shared use within the pre-existing towers.

As per the City's conditions, prior to the development of the condominium, a number of improvements were to be completed to the interior and exterior common space of the pre-existing towers. Firstly, in the laundry rooms of each building, upgrades including washrooms, appropriate seating, and security features were to be added. In the exterior space of the site, a 150 square metre play area and a barbeque pit area with a minimum of, "two barbeque pits, two picnic tables, one chess/checkerboard table and a shade structure for the casual use and enjoyment of all the residents and occupants of the four buildings on the site" (9). In the clause 72. b) (2), the bylaw states that 134 square metres of multi-purpose, furnished amenity space must be provided at grade in the tower at 1340 Danforth Road "for the use and enjoyment of all residents of the rental buildings at 1340, 1350, and 1360 Danforth Road". In the tower at 1360 Danforth Road, a 90 square metre amenity space was to be provided to all (3), and in the main buildings at 1350 Danforth Road, a 224 square metre amenity space would be provided to all (4).

However, upon investigation into the site through visits and interviews, the only novel amenity provisions have been the play area and a chess table – this is discussed in greater detail below. Another interesting provision put forth by the amendment included a clause which ensured *shared access* to the interior multipurpose space within the new condominium for a period of 20 years by residents of the rental towers. The findings outlined in the next section reveal that while some rental tower residents have been able to access the condominium party room, hostile management practices within the rental towers have largely prevented tenants from its use and enjoyment.

In 2018, the condominium tower was built and touted as a sustainable design on behalf of the city (City of Toronto, 2019). Notably scored as a Tier 2 building as per the Toronto Green Standard, the development enforced measures to reduce construction waste and increase energy and water efficiency. The contractor for the project was Deltera; the architecture firm was Icke Brochu Architects; the sustainability consultant was EQ Building Performance Inc.; the mechanical engineer team was the Nova Trend Engineer Group; the electrical engineer team was Nemets (S/A) & Associates Ltd.; and the city planners assigned to the project were Lisa King and Shayna Scott.

Unfortunately, the focus of this ‘sustainable’ initiative was in regard to environmental sustainability, with little to no explicit regard for the socioeconomic impact of the development upon the pre-existing community. The plans underscored the benefits that the project would have in providing ‘affordable’ condominium units for purchase to low-income households, overlooking the potential adverse impacts of development upon the pre-existing community. The prescribed outcome of the condominium towers was thus a modest inclusion of novel, ‘affordable’ units for purchase in Scarborough, providing far fewer amenities than competitor buildings.

A gym, multipurpose space, locker rooms, a laundry room, a lobby, and an unfurnished, fenced in patio space were ultimately produced. In conversations with condominium residents, which is further outlined below, these modest building features were desirable and influential upon their decision to purchase their units. However, their assumed lowered maintenance cost due to fewer amenities has been somewhat contradicted since the pandemic through ongoing, unforeseen rises in maintenance costs.

Overall, investigating the plans for the infill development prior to its construction reveals an unrealistically optimistic conception of the infill process; with increased affordability and improvements to common spaces for all residents as key imaginaries driving the plans. As the next section outlines, the development has, in reality, largely reduced the quality and quantity of common space for the rental tower tenants. This leads into a final interrogation of the benefits of such infill developments upon rental tower communities.

As well-meaning plans go unrealized in practice, and tower residents are forced to sacrifice their open space with little to no benefit in return, the case reveals the deceptive nature of the tower infill utopia. It forces us to question for whom such development occurs, whose problems it truly seeks to solve, as well as the hidden costs which are externalized and involuntarily paid for by the rental tenants. In sum, it explores the typology of shared environments which have emerged under the circumstance of infill development, in both the condominium tower as well as the rental towers.

The Post-Pandemic Towers: Infill in Bloom

In the summer of 2024, a series of interviews were conducted with residents and managers of the condo and rental towers on the site, revealing consequences of the infill

development on the micro-scale via the participants' lived realities. Three interviews were conducted with tenants in the rental towers, two interviews were conducted with owners/residents within the condominium building, and two interviews were conducted with building managers (who shall be referred to as the Condo Manager and Rental Manager).

Together, their experiences reveal the ways in which the financialization of the rental towers and the condominium infill development has impacted, for better or for worse, the everyday lives of residents on the site. A number of tenant concerns were disclosed during the interview process, including matters regarding the level of safety and security within the building, unsatisfactory management and maintenance practices, decreasing levels of access to common space, and severe divergences between the quality of the relationships between tenants and the rental management staff versus the relationship between condominium owners and the condominium management staff.

To begin, this section will outline the severity of safety concerns put forth by residents, underscoring their concerns alongside a witnessed incident during a site visit whereby security protocol had been breached during a crisis, as well as news reports of murders which have occurred in the post-pandemic years within the towers. Next, it will outline the various concerns raised by rental tenants with regard to maintenance and repair issues. It will then disseminate the ongoing loss of access to common space within and around the rental towers, through hostile design and management practices. Finally, it will examine the relationships and attitudes between tenants and rental management staff, condominium owners and condominium staff, and tenants and condominium owners. To conclude, the section shall underscore the ways in which these matters relate to the infill development process as well as the staged financialization of the rental towers, outlining the discrepancy between the municipally conceived plans for the site and the private practices which interrupt the realization of such plans.

Securing Safety in Shared Space

Across the findings from the interviews, site visits, and media analysis, common practices of reactive safety measures on behalf of the rental building management company stood in stark contrast to more preventative safety practices put forth by the condominium tower management company. Most notably, a number of anecdotal reports indicate that the security cameras are not usually working in the rental buildings - to the severe detriment of the wellbeing

and sense of safety to tenants in the rental buildings. This section outlines the evidence gathered to support this finding, including a number of shootings – two fatal – occurring in the rental towers in recent years.

In 2019, police received reports of a shooting at 1360 Danforth Road at 4:42pm on November 23, 2019 (Tong, 2019). Zachary Antrobus was pronounced dead at the scene. Investigators reported that a “moving gun battle” of about 15-20 shots had occurred, which resulted in “numerous bullet ricochets off both walls, the ceilings; there was a trail of blood from the victim being hit”, underscoring that “anyone could have come out of their apartment at any time and walked into the middle of this gun battle.” Police linked the shootings to a previous gang-related shooting which occurred across the street at a bar on November 2, 2019. Residents at 1360 told CTV News that this shooting took away their sense of safety of being in the building (Ibid.). A resident interviewed in 1360 Danforth Road made similar remarks (Interview, 1360 Danforth Road Tenant, June 6, 2024).

Furthermore, on August 12, 2020, John Wheeler, 45, was murdered on his way out of his apartment in 1350 Danforth Road. He was shot by Christopher Mitchell, an 18-year-old who was attempting to rob the convenience store and believed that Wheeler was calling the police on him. The youngest of 12 children, Wheeler was described as a kind and generous man, and his loss has profoundly impacted the neighbourhood (Toronto man who deliberately shot an unarmed stranger, 2025).

On May 9, 2022, multiple shootings occurred around 4:00pm in front of the buildings. The Toronto police investigated the scene and found shell casings and damaged windows. Nobody hurt was found (Police Investigate Shots Fired, 2022), but these tragedies have had a severe impact upon the sense of safety for tenants in the rental towers.

Alarming, however, they have not strongly influenced building management’s security practices over time. During the interview process, tenants claimed that there was a short-term, reactive provision of on-site security guards, but this has since reportedly stopped (Interview, 1340 Danforth Road Tenant, June 6, 2024). What is clear across all reports, is that there has been a lack of security camera footage available to law enforcement and residents when it has been needed in recent years – despite the City ordering the installation of new security cameras when approving the zoning for the new infill in 2015.

During a site visit in June 2024, a frantic mother was found outside of the main building at 1350 Danforth Road. She said that her 13-year-old son had not been dropped off by the school bus. She had gone to the management office to see footage of the drop-off but was told by the building management that the cameras were not working, so there was no footage available that day. The school bus eventually looped back to the building and had simply not dropped him off with the other students. She was unsurprised that the cameras were not working.

Furthermore, a resident claimed that police were neither able to obtain footage within her building after a shooting occurred, nor when her son's car was stolen from the parking lot. Another resident claimed that "we have cameras, but they suck" (Interview, 1340 Danforth Road Tenant, June 6, 2024). Tenants from the rental buildings also reported that the lighting is brightest outside of the condominium buildings at night, meanwhile their lighting is often flickering or turned off entirely – particularly outside of the wheelchair entrance in the farthest building at 1360 Danforth Road.

There is a clear contrast in security provision and crime rate between the rental towers and the condominium building. A condo owner noted that in the condominium "CCTV is okay. But here the building is safer [than the rental towers]" (Interview, 1346 Danforth Road Condo Owner, June 19, 2024). Thus, the sense of safety, levels of security, and rates of violent crime between the rental towers and the private condominium provide a stark juxtaposition and uneven practices in security provision on behalf of the different management companies.

The rental buildings have had three reported shootings, including two fatalities, within three years. Yet, their security cameras remain out of operation, and their exterior lighting near accessible entrances remain faulty. There is a clear spatial inequality between the condominium towers and the rental towers with regard to the level of security provisions; producing space which does not share in the benefits of the infill development.

It is noteworthy that all of these incidents took place after the rental renovations and condominium infill development occurred in 2018. The Zoning Bylaw Amendment in 2015 sought to provide a heightened level of security inside and outside of the rental buildings, as additional security cameras were a key part of the agreement. These findings reveal the ways in which the infill development agreement has failed to increase levels of security for site inhabitants - there are still not working security cameras.

It has failed in a perceived sense; residents are left feeling wary of crime occurring within their buildings, with little faith in management's ability to secure their safety. It has failed on an institutional level; the agreed upon security provisions have not been met in good faith by Starlight and the city has done little to correct the issue. The city is idly standing by, touting the condominium's 'sustainable' features on their website, while refusing to address or enforce the compliance of legal agreements within the rental towers.

Maintenance and Repairs

Despite the extensive renovations undertaken by Starlight in 2018, a number of tenant concerns continue to be raised with regard to issues within the buildings and their practices of maintenance and repair. In contrast, the condominium owners and management have claimed satisfactory practices with few to no complaints. This section highlights the everyday struggle of tenants in the rental building, underscoring their perception of Starlight's level of investment into the towers.

A resident in the tower at 1360 Danforth Road provided extensive insight into the process of the 2018 renovations, alongside their ongoing, unaddressed concerns. On a building-wide scale, they noted issues with heating during the winter months, ongoing issues with the garbage shoots, perpetually broken washing machines and dryers in the laundry rooms and underscored the unreliability of the wheelchair entrance to the building. On a microscale, they noted that in the past six years, two of their fridges have broken and have been replaced with smaller, older units. They contrasted this to their witnessing of brand-new appliances being brought in to units when tenants eventually move out (Interview, 1360 Danforth Road Tenant, June 8, 2024).

Another tenant in the building at 1340 Danforth Road, also complained of broken washing machines and dryers, which have costed them extra money over time. When speaking with the Resident Manager about the laundry rooms, they noted "from my view, it's terrible, but I cannot say... [That is] for the guys that own the laundry room to answer" (Interview, Rental Building Manager, June 6, 2024). These ongoing concerns have left tenants disenchanted by their building managers, and many have surrendered their power to complain due to a sense of futility as well as fear of reprimand.

As one tenant stated,

“like there's a hole in the roof because they're like, doing some repairs or something. And like when they do that, you never know when they're going to fix it. The hole could be there for a day. It could be there for three weeks. So yeah, I don't know, I feel like a lot of people have been here like so long, they're just like, yeah, it is what it is. You know, like, I'm not going to send anyone service reports or whatever requests for every little thing. You know, they fix them eventually” (Interview, 1340 Danforth Road Tenant, June 6, 2024).

Meanwhile, a tenant in one of the buildings signaled extreme fear of retaliation and potential eviction, noting that they are too afraid to put in service requests for maintenance issues. They instead manage by cleaning up messes on their own or submitting to the state of their unit and building so as to stay off the radar of the building staff.

Such concerns are prevalent within Toronto's postwar towers, as extensively outlined in previous sections, and are part of a much larger pattern of mismanagement, neglect, and hostile attitudes toward tenants on behalf of the rental management staff. The emerging dynamics of maintenance and repair issues within these (and other) towers reveals the tensions between owners, managers, and tenants on levels which move beyond the cost of repairs and into the realm of the underlying social dynamics, which are embodied by bad faith managers harboring significant levels of hostility toward tenants. These relations are investigated further in the sections below, moving the discussion of financialization beyond the economic and into the less-discussed, inter-relational component through an analysis of spatial practices within and around shared space.

Amenities

Perhaps the starkest divergence between affordances of the complex between the rental tower tenants the condominium residents is in the provision of common space and amenities. Despite lengthy agreements outlined by the Zoning Bylaw Amendment (discussed in detail above), the provision of common space for tenants has not been realized in a significant way. Across all three rental towers, washrooms and seating within laundry rooms have not been afforded; nor have required amenity provision and access in or around the rental towers; and neither have tenants been afforded equitable access to the condominium party room as per the bylaw's 20-year agreement.

Two tenant accounts report the installation of washrooms shortly after the Zoning Bylaw Amendment was released, and their subsequent closure through locking the doors. One resident noted their confusion as to whether it was even meant for them,

“To tell you the truth, I think it might have always been there. It just wasn't open for, like, public use or, like, I don't even think it's open for public use anymore. I think they locked it. Yeah, they locked it. Honestly, I've come in here before and it hasn't been locked. And like, I'm like, ah, I wouldn't have made it upstairs. But like, I guess now it's just for like, security [guards]” (Interview, 1340 Danforth Road Tenant, June 8, 2024).

As discussed in previous sections, these washrooms and seating within the laundry rooms were explicitly required by the city to be provided to tenants, yet they remain locked.

The cost of maintaining the washrooms has evidently been cut by management from their budget in order to maximize shareholder value at the expense of the residents’ everyday lives. None of the bylaw’s required amenity spaces have been produced by the owners. They have rather left the spaces in various states of disrepair and inaccessibility.

In the tower at 1360 Danforth Road, a tenant claimed that their common areas have not been functioning in the past six years, except for when the construction workers were given access to the space as a break room during the 2018 renovations. These spaces were able to be explored, and photographs below indicate that left-behind construction material has not been cleaned up since that time; the spaces remain in severe states of neglect (Figure 24). Offered to temporary workers, but denied to tenants, these spaces represent hostile management and design strategies unjustly affecting the quality of life for rental tower inhabitants.

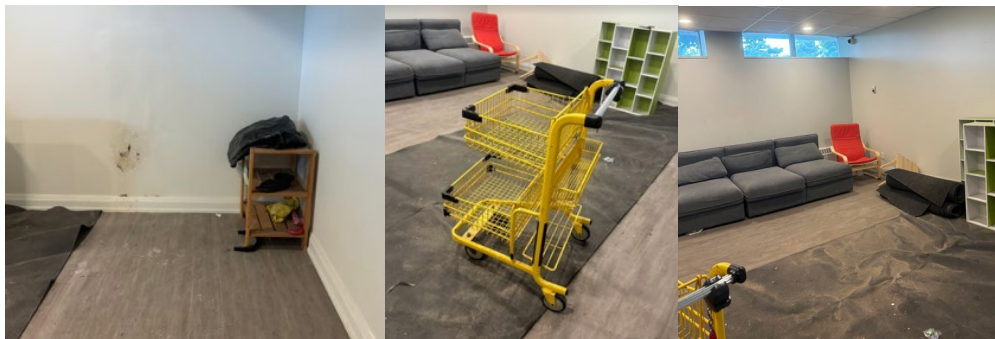


Figure 24: Photographs taken on June 13, 2024 of the common space in the basement in 1360 Danforth Road. By Madison Stirling.

The required amenity spaces were conceived by the city bylaw as being separately provided within each of the three towers, yet accessible by residents of all three towers.

However, tenants and building managers have confirmed that tenants only have access to the buildings in which their unit is located. One tenant noted the challenges this poses to communicating with the management staff,

“So your card only works for your building. Yeah. So even if you have a problem with, like, your laundry card or like anything like that, and you want to go to the middle of building, you can either buzz or like just hope... Because that's where the rental office is” (Interview, 1340 Danforth Road Tenant, June 6, 2024).

Thus, the only truly shared amenity across the towers is the privately rented convenient store, located in the main building at 1350 Danforth Road, as it has its own entrance to the public.

In blocking tower residents' access to all three towers, it becomes clear that the potential for shared common infrastructure is limited not only by the extreme lack of physically maintained common space, but also by an isolating regime of inter-building separation on behalf of the management company and owners.

The pool, located in the main building at 1350 Danforth Road, has been closed for over a decade. Tenants and building managers have reported varying histories, with some claiming that it may have been opened around the late 2000s, and others claiming that it was not open back then, either. None of the tenants that were interviewed have ever swam in it.

Upon touring the perimeter of the pool space, a strong smell of must and mold was apparent. See Figure 25 for a photograph of the hallway leading into the pool room. As this space has remained in an ongoing state of neglect and disrepair, some discussions have been had between owners and tenants over the years, with a tenant of claiming that,

“We when they closed it [in the late 2000s], they were going to redo it. And so, they had a thing where people could vote for, like, a weight room or a library. Nothing ever happened of it, though. So, I don't even know what's over there. I think to my knowledge it's just an empty pool” (Interview, 1340 Danforth Road Tenant, June 8, 2024).

As this timeline correlates with the shift in ownership from Century 21 to Sun Life Financial, it remains unclear which owner sought to renovate the space for tenants.



Figure 25: A photograph taken June 8, 2024, in the basement of 1350 Danforth Road. By Madison Stirling.

Notably, a major discrepancy was discovered between the agreed upon access provisions to the condo party room for tenants in the rental towers. This agreement was outlined in the bylaw and legally ensures access to the space for rental tenants for a period of 20 years. Despite this costing nothing to Starlight or MetCap to provide - as the condominium managers provide access, maintenance, repairs, and logistical support to tenants - there have been actively hostile practices put forth by MetCap to prevent tenants from booking the space.

Through interviews, this finding has been corroborated by two rental tenants and both the Resident Manager for the rental towers and the Condominium Manager. When asked about the agreement, the Resident Manager stated,

“There is a party room inside here [the condo]. It's a nice one. The residents, as part of deal or something with them, building a condo here, they were supposed to let some of our residents use that room sometimes, but that never happens”. (Interview, Rental Building Manager, June 6, 2024).

When probing into the reason that residents do not book the space, they replied “I wouldn't know about that” (Ibid.) and refused to answer further questions.

Meanwhile, an interviewed tenant described their experience in trying to book the space for their daughter's birthday,

“I talked to our super, and he said that it wasn't being rented out. Actually, did go over to [13]50, but that lady wasn't there, and they told us to go to the condo to rent the party room at the condo, but that it was like \$1,000 down payment because it's huge” (Interview, 1340 Danforth Road Tenant, June 8, 2024).

The tenant further expressed their disdain at the high cost, as they had looked forward to booking the space after a previous visit, reporting that, “I've been to the condo room once. Someone I know had a baby shower there. So, it is nice, but I don't think it's worth that much” (Ibid.).

However, the cost for the space is not \$1,000. The Condominium Manager confirmed that the space costs \$50 for condominium owners to book, and \$75 for the rental tenants to book. Thus, the tenant seeking to rent out the space was actively discouraged from doing so through misinformation provided by their building management staff.

This hostile attitude toward tenants from the rental tower management company was not shared by the Condominium Manager, who was happy to accommodate their requests to book the space. They reported that the space is constantly being booked by condominium owners, and

a condominium resident advised that one books the space months in advance as it is always in use on weekends. Despite its high popularity and, what the Condominium Manager argued was “pretty cheap” booking fee, they claimed that in the past six weeks, only two bookings were made by tenants within the rental towers (Interview, Condominium Manager, September 3, 2024). Thus, the space is only being accessed by a small portion of rental tenants comparative to condominium owners.

When discussing the shared access to the party room with another tenant, they stated, “I didn't know about that. I've been always like trying to run into somebody and make a friend so I can be like, yo, what amenities you got?” (Interview, 1340 Danforth Road Tenant, June 6, 2024). It would be easier for tenants and condo owners to build relationships if exterior spatial agreements were honoured, particularly the city-required exterior barbecue space. Yet, this space was blocked off and privatized by the condominium using high fences, locked gates, and through the hosting of exclusive events for condominium residents.

As discussed in the section above, the bylaw states that,

“the owner will provide a barbeque pit amenity area with a minimum of two barbeque pits, two picnic tables, one chess/checkerboard table and a shade structure for the casual use and enjoyment of all the residents and occupants of the four buildings on the site” (City of Toronto, By-law No. 392-2015, S. 72. B. (9)).

However, only a shade structure and chess table have been provided to residents of all four buildings, which are inconveniently located adjacent to the condo building; producing a space which is easily perceived as private and exclusive to the condominium.

The lack of functional, exterior space that is shared between all residents is detrimental to the perceived benefits that planners argue are provided through mixed-income developments and neighbourhoods. There appears to be a concerted effort on behalf of the tower rental managers to prevent the gathering of tenants, as well as to prevent their access to the amenity space in the condominium. One tenant noted that there used to be more exterior seating for them and their friends to gather, but that those seats have since been moved to the rear entrance of the middle building, behind the rental tower management office. These gathered seats, shown in Figure 26, were where the rental management staff was found lounging, and where their interviews were conducted.



Figure 26: A photograph of benches behind the management office at 1350 Danforth Road.

Overall, these findings reveal a deep contrast between the practices of the condominium management staff and the rental management staff; notably in whose interests they seek to serve, revealing contradictions in space which emerge from the divergence in power dynamics. One tenant described the issue with a particular staff member in the rental towers,

“I know a lot of people don't get along with the main people. So, there's some lady in the office. I've never had a problem with her, but I know a lot of people don't get along with this lady. She's not very nice. I've heard.” (Interview, 1340 Danforth Road Tenant, June 8, 2024).

Furthermore, in another interview with the managers, when asked what has changed since the pandemic, one of them candidly remarked that the “tenants are still a**holes, so it's the same sh*t. Nothing's changed” (Interview, Rental Building Manager, June 6, 2024).

Reports of such hostility are plentiful in the towers and are detrimental to tenants' empowerment to fully and rightfully use the common space. Another tenant expressed extreme fear of upsetting the management staff, to the point of refusing to put in work orders to avoid being on their radar. That tenant refused to be recorded due to a perceived fear of reprimand which may result in eviction. For vulnerable residents with rent-controlled units, the fear of post-eviction homelessness trumps their desire for spatial improvements and increased access to amenities.

Overall, the conducted site visits and interviews reveal gaps between the vision for the infill development conceived through the bylaw amendment, and the spatial design, practices and relationships which have emerged across the site. In many ways, the plans have gone unrealized; particularly through the lack of shared accommodations for tenants. This contrast reveals the deceptive nature of infill development as it has occurred in this case; whereby the costs and gains are inequitably distributed amongst pre-existing tenants and novel condominium residents. Tenants have given up a significant amount of their open space, their parking spots, and their views of the park, for very little in return. It may further be argued that the increased desirability of their site due to the infill development (which was involuntarily produced on the tenants' behalf), led to the purchase of the towers by an REIT, whose interests align with shareholders predominantly more so than tower residents.

Date	Event	Details
1948	By-law No. 3861	The site is designated as an urban development area by the Township of Scarborough
May 29, 1964	Agreement for site development was signed	Conditions for high-rise development were produced between the Township of Scarborough and the owners, Danforth Park Apartments Limited
July 23, 1964	Danforth Park Apartments Limited signed affidavit swearing ownership under oath	Motek Fischtein and Allan C. Wilson were empowered to execute deeds and other legal instruments on behalf of corporation
1965	Development of the site began	Three 15-storey towers were constructed, including many amenities (pool, recreation rooms, balconies) and open space
1969	Advertisements for suites emerged in newspapers	They were branded as the "Danforth Towers", starting with \$149/month

		rents and Pinetree Property Management
1972	Advertisements with name and management company emerged in newspapers	The towers began to be referred to as the “Brookview Towers” under management company DelZotto
1974	Advertisements in newspapers displayed a switch in management company again	The towers were once again advertised under the original management company, Pinetree Property Management
1980	Advertisements emerged with new marketing strategy	The towers began to be advertised for having access to the 401 and cable TV
1989	New owners gained municipal approval to develop parking garage	Under the name “1340 Danforth Limited, 1350 Danforth Limited, and 1360 Danforth Limited” the owners were given an allowance to build a parking garage which encroached into the publicly owned land of Knob Hill Park
2002	The towers sell for \$40,850,000	NorthWest Realty Company (Century 21 subsidiary) purchases the towers and sign agreement with Rogers Cable Inc. to service them
2005	Tenants hold a roach rally	Protesting the living conditions in the building, ACORN helped tenants organize in front of their building to demand better management practices
2006	New advertisements emerged for the towers in newspaper ads showing MetCap as management company	Starting at \$799/month, MetCap Living advertised their units in the towers
2007	The towers sell for \$49,000,000	Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada purchases the towers from MetCap, signed off by Lee Warren and Wayne Walton on behalf of Sun Life, and Guy Alberga on behalf of MetCap
2013	Toronto Staff Report recommends subsidizing infill at the site	Toronto proposes subsidizing \$2,565,000 to Heintzman Development Co-Operative to develop new affordable condominium on the back portion of the site
2014	102 substandard conditions found within the buildings by the Scarborough Property Standards Committee	The city of Toronto gives an Order to Comply, the VP of MetCap blames it on the age of the towers

2015	By-law No. 392-2015 amends the city’s by-law to allow for infill to occur	The land is parceled into sections and conditional shared facility agreements are produced
2018	The towers sell for \$155,445,000; the condo is built	Starlight Investments purchases the towers under the name IMH 1340-1360 Danforth Limited, allowing MetCap to continue to manage the property; the condo receives a Tier 2 sustainability designation
2019	Zachary Antrobus murdered in 1360 Danforth Road	A gun battle of 15-20 shots occurred in the tower stairwell; residents express fear
2020	John Wheeler is murdered in 1350 Danforth Road	On his way to work, he was shot and killed by Christopher Mitchell who was attempting to rob the convenience store
2022	Shootings occurred in front of the buildings	Toronto Police investigated reports of multiple shootings, finding shell casings and damaged windows
2024	Interviews and site visits are conducted	Hostile management practices discovered, common spaces remain inaccessible, safety concerns have mounted, security cameras remain turned off

Figure 27: A timeline of ownership, management, and significant events at 1340-1360 Danforth Road

The Higgledy-Piggledy Infill: A Modernist Nightmare

Through investigating the postwar towers’ longstanding history, a stark juxtaposition of planning logics emerges between their modernist preconceptions and their contemporary infill rationale. Prior to the ‘tower in the park’ boom, planners were struggling to reconcile the negative effects of market-led infill development upon the downtown core. In a document released by the city of Toronto in 1959, titled “A Changing City”, large lot sizes and grand boulevards were strongly recommended for any new development of towers. Figure 28 shows a diagram provided by this document, which reveals historical instances of infill development during the first half of the 20th century, whereby lots that had been initially parceled for 2-3 storey buildings were increasingly being replaced with tall towers, resulting in a form of development that the city argued was “higgledy-piggledy: light and air is cut off, lanes are inadequate, parking is poor, pedestrian movement is cramped” (p. 21).

Such modernist planning logics have been all but abandoned in recent years due to increasing pressures to infill tower boulevards in an attempt to increase the housing supply. In the case of the White Blocks tower complex, four towers currently stand on a site that was originally designed and planned for three. In this sense, through the lens of the post-war planners, this ad-hoc, infill development may, too, be critiqued as ‘higgledy-piggledy’. It is in direct contradiction with the preconceived spatial logic of the site’s initial production and design.

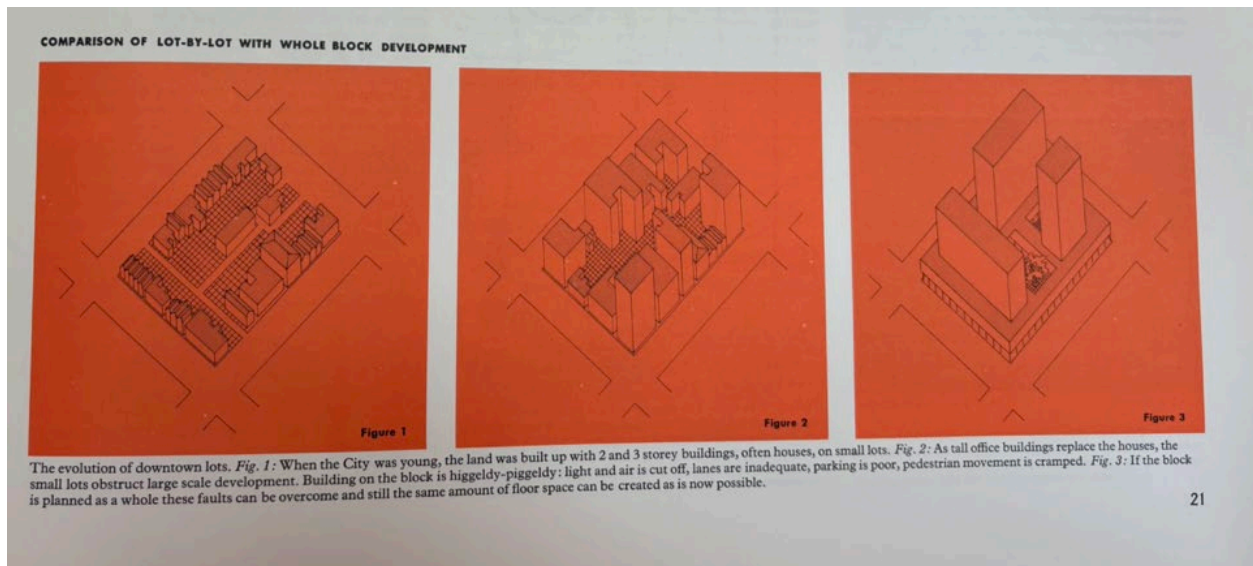


Figure 28: An excerpt from A Changing City, page 21, outlining “higgledy-piggledy” block buildings.

Yet, the city continues to promote and streamline opportunities for such development to occur, with recent studies such as the Apartment Infill Study 2025, and accompanying bylaw amendments (City of Toronto, By-law No. 647-2025, 2025), to allow for such development to occur as of right. Thus, the costly, timely, and lengthy process that Sun Life underwent to receive development approval for the condominium would be drastically reduced. In light of the outcomes from this case, this should pose a number of concerns to planners and tower residents: without such processes, what measures will be taken to legally ensure the continued provision of affordances to pre-existing tenants? And furthermore, are the imagined outcomes of infill developments predominating decision-making discourse, with no plans for accountability by measuring actual infill outcomes?

In analysing the case above, it appears so. The pre-existing residents have gained very little through the infill process and have had their spatial affordances significantly reduced. Meanwhile, the city has done little more than boast about the development’s sustainable features.

The final sections of this paper will seek to assimilate the various forms of data provided in earlier chapters - which have underscored, at length, the initial logic of postwar verticality and the benefits that such logic continues to afford tenants. The following section will point toward the complicity of the owners, managers, municipality, and even the tenants in the loss of affordances offered by the towers' modernist design. It is clear that the issues facing tenants lay not in the physicality of the aging towers, but rather the social, political, and economic factors evolving within and around them.

Understanding their Unrealized Potential: The Roles that Actors Play

Toronto's postwar towers were once conceived as a means to produce modern, affordable housing on a large scale; yet their exchange value takes increasing precedence over their inhabitable qualities. Around the world, concrete towers reflect the modernist high-rise model; they are a quintessential postwar housing typology. Yet, their manifestations differ geographically, economically, socially, and culturally.

In Toronto, the towers have been culturally devalued and stigmatized, which has lessened public resistance to their mounting levels of exploitation and financialization. This has resulted in a novel form of vertical urbanism that has recently emerged within Toronto: postwar tower infill. While our case represents but one of nearly 2,000 towers in the region (which are currently being deregulated to incentivize future infill), its lessons are plentiful with regard to both the tensions and possibilities of the site.

Each type of actor plays particular roles in producing these sites and thus must act upon their role in order to produce positive change. This section outlines the responsibility of the owners and landlords, the tenants, and the municipality in overcoming spatial tensions and capitalizing on the use value, rather than the exchange value, of the towers.

Landlords

The landlords, comprised of the owners (currently Starlight Investments) and management company (currently MetCap Living), hold the most power over the site. Thus, they play a pinnacle role in the production of White Blocks. However, as this case has explored, these landlords seek to increase value in the towers for their shareholders, rather than their tenants.

In practice, this has resulted in a refusal to invest in the hospitable value of the building beyond necessity, lest they garner a shareholder approved, financial return. In other words, they are extremely cheap and cut as many corners as they can to extract maximum gains from the towers and their residents. In these aging towers, where maintenance and repair demands are mounting, this has become highly problematic for those inhabiting the building.

In White Blocks, and many other postwar towers, many long-term tenants are living in rent-controlled units and cannot afford to leave and pay current market rent. To push these tenants out, landlords are ignoring or perpetually postponing maintenance requests, evicting tenants at extremely high rates comparative to other landlord typologies, and are renovating units and raising rents when vacancies arise. Furthermore, they are withholding city-required common spaces, arguably to prevent tenants from interacting and organizing themselves. Their game of renoviction is as psychological as it is financial; rent control is but a barrier that their hostility determines to cross.

In practice, the management company, MetCap Living, mediates the immediate relations between tenants and Starlight Investments; they help to produce everyday life in the towers on behalf of their financial client. MetCap Living's malpractices embody the ways in which tower financialization moves beyond the financial and into the interpersonal; but remains imbued with socioeconomically motivated malfeasance. Comparative to the condominium management company's prosocial relations with their residents, MetCap Living evidently lacks the provision of adequate security, communication, amenity space, and timely maintenance and repairs; displaying in action and words a deep lack of respect toward the tenants whose home they manage. It is worth noting that the key difference between the two management companies is in who they serve: the condo management serves the condominium board and the residents; the rental management serves the owner of the towers. One looks up to their residents, the other looks down upon them.

Tenants

The tenants become involuntarily responsible for bearing the costs that the landlord will not pay, be they financial, social, psychological, or biological costs. They lose from their homes the quality of safety, stability, openness, and belongingness – meanwhile, the landlord gains

money. However, they are not powerless actors; tenants and tenant unions such as ACORN have organized to produce positive change in these towers.

In order to protect their own interests during a time of intensifying tower financialization, tenant organizing is essential. Yet, this rarely occurs for a number of reasons. Many tenants have seemingly given up on attempting to reclaim their power and/or voice - they only join tenant unions when they have been pushed to the brink due to years of ignored repairs or severe issues in their building, such as infestations or mold. The decreasing levels of common space within the postwar towers, such as the open exterior space and the recreational facilities, are laughable concerns comparative to the more dire issues tenants are facing. However, these open, common areas are the Parthenons of the towers, where such tenant organizing may most organically occur.

In these spaces, which are currently being withheld from tenants in White Blocks, tenants can gather and recreate in ways which serve them. Youth can play board games, rather than join street gangs. Neighbours can gather and discuss their concerns with building management, rather than suffer in isolated silence. Parents can throw their children birthday parties. People can meet up and just be together, outside of their private units. These spaces are essential to the production of a tower urbanism that is healthy and functional; and yet, the White Blocks towers (which once hosted a plethora of open, common, recreational space) is full of mold, locked doors, and isolated, afraid residents.

Tenants have the right to use these spaces in ways which do not impede one another's use and enjoyment, as per the zoning bylaw. They act as sites for their collective rights yet are being withheld both literally and symbolically. In this sense, the tenants have the law on their side: it is within their power to reclaim the common spaces which the zoning bylaw legally requires they have access to. If tenants realized the affordances of the space, they could actualize them through revolting and striking against the landlords. The municipality has legally bound the landlords to an agreement which offers the spaces to the tenants and thus would likely be on their side.

However, practices of managerial hostility and neglect, coupled with cultural devaluation and marginalization of both the towers and their residents have produced a system of oppression which psychologically and socially binds the tenants to practices of obedience through a strategically manufactured culture of fear and surrender. ACORN stands out as an actor who is bridging the systemic gaps between tenants and the expression of their rights; it is worth investigating the ways in which this and other tenant unions may be scaled up and out in terms of

influence as the tenant, market, and state level. The role in which they play in the redistribution of power from landlord to tenant must not be overlooked in the improvement of Toronto's postwar urbanism.

Municipality

The municipality retains responsibility for the postwar towers' spatial production at the conceptual level, as they have planned, zoned, and conditioned both the initial development of White Blocks (beginning with their 1948 designation of the site as an Urban Development Area) as well as the more recent infill development. They are responsible for the formal production of these towers, yet they exert little control over their informal realities. As White Blocks was initially planned and zoned by the Town of Scarborough, which transformed into the City of Scarborough, and later amalgamated into the City of Toronto, the interests and municipal oversight of these towers have too, transformed over time.

It has been argued that Toronto has been increasingly entrepreneurial in its role as a municipality, which the findings from this case underscores. The city has thus played to the interests of both the owners, developers, and tenants to varying degrees; yet, they have largely taken a hands-off approach in the enforcement of their bylaws and building standards to protect the wellbeing of tenants. They attempted to get the owners of White Blocks to comply to their standards when 102 substandard conditions were found in 2014. However, they allowed the owners to convert some of their common space into units a year later and have not enforced their own conditional development provisions to increase tenant access to common space.

The City is thus complicit in the provision of housing with substandard conditions, through the allowance of new units in a building which they admit falls well below their own standard. It could be argued that if the owners have enough money to add new units, they should also have enough money to address the concerns of pre-existing tenants.

Also, the agreed upon spatial practices to share space amongst residents of all four buildings are not being enforced by the landlords. Tenants are not allowed to use the city-ordered washrooms; nor are they given appropriate access to the condo party room; nor have their interior and exterior common spaces been updated and made accessible to all. Toronto's bylaw amendment attempts to regulate use; yet its power largely lays in providing development permits. Once permits are granted, how are spatial uses regulated and enforced?

This conundrum underscores the sociality of the production of space. As municipalities attempt to regulate use through their zoning code, spatial practices and relationships supersede the zoning code, which becomes largely symbolic post-development. This leads us to ask: how can municipal planners better engage with the private and public industries who carry most often implement their plans? How can informal realities (namely, the struggles of tenants within these towers) be more adequately addressed by the state at large? How can standards for renters actually be enforced?

Conclusion

In sum, this paper reviews the history of a postwar tower in Toronto, adding nuance to the broader history of verticality in the region. It underscores the ways in which the metropolitan government enabled the regional planning framework in tandem with local municipalities and industry professionals. It examines the ways in which the utopian dreams of these towers have been compromised due to variables from both the capitalist market and local opposition. Emphasising the apolitical nature of their inception, the study of these towers has offered a unique historical perspective on housing over time. The key finding is in the failures of these towers beyond their ‘tower in the park’ design. Their design retains much potential use value for tenants – yet, due to several causes, this value goes unrealized.

Above sections pinpointed the micro scale of broader macro processes by linking tower financialization to instances of tenant exploitation while tracing postwar verticality in Toronto back to a combination of private capital, oppositional locals, and pro-developer state actors. The evidence links policy, architecture, global modernism, and neoliberalism, to the everyday lives of people in White Blocks and other suburban towers. It turns the ‘object’ of focus (the tower and their residents) into participants of their own history. Through filling in the micro details of the systemic patterns, a key finding regarding the sociality of the space emerges: the production of these towers unrealizes their potential through contested socioeconomic relations, not through their design.

This paper contains a review of the literature on Toronto’s postwar verticality, underscoring the tensions between modernist planning principles and neoliberal profiteering schemes. It examines a case of infill development upon a cluster of postwar towers in Scarborough (owned by one of the most powerful landlords in the country, Starlight Investments)

through a process that was touted as ‘sustainable’ and funded by the city. It does so by examining the history and current lived reality of tenants and residents of condo and rentals, as well as managers from both. In this context, it poses a number of queries into one of Toronto’s latest bylaw amendments which seeks to allow for the conversion of unused common space into units.

The case of White Blocks thus represents a story of failed modernism through continued and increasing levels of exploitation under the capitalist regime. On the broadest scale, the findings underscore the dangers of financializing reproductive mechanisms of society such as housing. By revealing the dehumanizing practices of profiteering investors, it defends that the municipality step in to provide and/or deeply regulate the provision of basic needs such as adequate, standardized housing (“provincial uniformity”). Realistically, there is an increasing pressure within municipal governance regimes to appease developers and landlords, due to political pressures from all sides to “cut red tape” as an approach to increasing the housing supply.

On a broader scale, infill development in postwar tower neighborhoods represents an ad-hoc, “higgledy-piggledy” approach to housing production. The White Blocks infill case displays a chaotic production of space due to the short-term, myopic lens that capitalism produces, which is at odds with the long-term vision of planning. Planning will continue to fail in its expressions so long as it is realized by private industry with declining regulatory mechanisms to protect the use value of our cities.

In sum, we need to protect these sites as affordable communities and reinstate their purpose to provide ‘affordable luxury’ housing for families. Their unit sizes and common space infrastructure are socially valuable assets, but their use value is compromised by profiteering landlords and bystanding municipalities. Infill development evidently represents new levels of isolation, whereby we take away our commons, our open space, to sell closed space in the form of private units. At its core, infill represents novel manifestations of spatial injustice that tower residents are involuntarily facing.

List of Interviewees

- Long-term Rental Tenant, Male, 1340 Danforth Road
- Long-term Rental Tenant, Female, 1340 Danforth Road
- Long-term Rental Tenant, Female, 1360 Danforth Road
- Rental Building Manager, MetCap Living, Male, 1340, 1350, 1360 Danforth Road
- Condominium Owner and Resident, Male, 1346 Danforth Road
- Condominium Owner and Resident, Female, 1346 Danforth Road
- Condominium Manager, Danforth Village Estates, Male, 1346 Danforth Road

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