

Urban Regeneration in Toronto: Rebuilding the Social in Regent Park

By

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Abstract

This thesis presents a critical exploration of the ‘revitalization’ of Toronto’s *Regent Park*. Regent Park is Canada’s oldest and largest government subsidized housing development. Originally designed in 1947, Toronto City Council approved the revitalization of the neighbourhood in 2003. Within this thesis, Regent Park serves as a means to examine some of the ways in which urban planning and design, public policy, architecture and landscape architecture interact with people’s daily practices in their socioeconomic and cultural contexts, to ‘rebuild the social’. In order to do this, the thesis begins by presenting an account of the original development, providing a sociohistorical context for understanding the more recent revitalization. Secondly, the thesis provides a review of relevant theoretical literature pertaining to the idea that design shapes society, discussing key aspects of modernist and postmodernist accounts of the city, arguing for the salience of a broadly ‘relational’ model inspired by the work of Julier (2008) and others. Thirdly, the thesis conducts an empirical analysis of the recent revitalization process, using a mixed methodology of documentary analysis and in-depth interviews with a key developer and the residents of Regent’s park. This analysis explores the ideological commitments at play within the planning process, as well as the practice of planning itself, investigating how theories of design and planning relate to the actual process of planning, including the political and financial obligations. The analysis then compares the intentions

of the design with the inhabitant's lived experience within the space, focusing on the inhabitants' active role in negotiating the space in ways that were 'unplanned'. This thesis provides a sociological exploration of Regent Park as a complex site of interaction between the design of the space (influenced by theories of design, as well as economic, political and social motivations), the materials that make up that space, and the actual use of the space by residents, the outcomes of which challenge deterministic accounts of urban development.

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List of Abbreviations

CMHC: Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation

LEED: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

MNP: Municipal Non-profit housing Providers

NHA: National Housing Act

RFP: Request for Proposal

RFQ: Request for Qualification

RGI- Rent Geared to Income

SHRA: Social Housing Reform Act

TCHC: Toronto Community Housing Corporation

Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis seeks to develop a critical understanding of the current 'revitalization' of Toronto's *Regent Park* in terms of the relationships between design, planning and society. Regent Park is a government subsidized housing project in downtown Toronto originally designed in the 1940s and 1950s by architects J.E Hoare and Peter Dickenson, as well as city planner Eugene Faludi, with the aid of social activist Albert Rose. The original design for Regent Park is characteristic of modernist public housing developments in North America at that time (Milgrom 1999: 10). The design consists of rows of townhouses, as well as a number of low-rise and high-rise apartment buildings situated in a 'park-like setting' (Milgrom 1999: 10). Regent Park is commonly understood as being broken down into two sections: Regent Park North, and Regent Park South. Regent Park North, designed by Hoare, was constructed before the South section. It is made up of rows of townhouses, as well as three and six storey red brick apartment buildings in a modified Georgian style. The South addition, designed in the 1950s by Dickinson consisted of 'five fourteen story towers mixed with townhouses' (Milgrom 1999: 10). Dickinson's apartments are known for their unique design in which all of the units are two-stories, allowing for the units to take up the entirety of every other floor (Mays 2005).

The original design of Regent Park was aimed at creating an idyllic, park-like neighbourhood, in which children could play on the streets without fear of

cars. A place with a 'strong community', where residents enjoyed all the benefits of the luscious open green spaces; a place where people focused on familial life rather than becoming distracted by the temptations of conspicuous consumption (Connor, developer; Mays 2005a). The Housing Authority of Toronto (the organization which headed the project) attempted to use planning to create such a community – to 'rebuild the social'. In 2003, the Toronto City Council approved the 'revitalization' of Regent Park, the reasons for which speaks to perceived notions of the role of design in social life¹. Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) heads the revitalization project, in conjunction with developer partner Daniels Corporation. With a proposed end date of 2025, the revitalization process is already within its second phase of construction. The new design boasts a mixed-income housing design, meaning that the revitalized Regent Park consists of government-subsidized apartments and townhouses as well as market condominiums and townhouses. The revitalization also marks a significant shift from the original design with its inclusion of commercial spaces and cultural centres throughout the development. Mixed-income, mixed-use design is a contemporary approach to urban design that is growing in popularity in North America (James 2010; Mays 2005).

This thesis explores how these developments might be understood from a variety of angles, from the utopian promises of regeneration and revitalization, the changing socioeconomic landscape of cityscapes, to the more mundane processes of designing, planning and living in urban environments.

¹ This concept will be examined throughout the thesis.

Thesis Outline

The thesis pulls together historical, theoretical and empirical material in an exploratory narrative about Regent Park as a social space. In chapter two, I begin by presenting an in-depth historical analysis of the original design of Regent Park, some of its complexities and the ways in which the development is situated within the socio-economic and political conditions present within the 1940s and 1950s. This chapter focuses on the attempts to design an idyllic social space, as well as what that ideal social space looks like within an era of modernist design.

Chapter three examines the theme of design paradigms in a more theoretical sense, presenting a review of relevant theories of urban design in terms of how the relationships between design and society are conceptualized. Beginning with an investigation of the continuities and discontinuities between modernist and postmodernist design paradigms, this chapter examines aspects of design that are characteristic of both eras. Drawing upon this, the chapter seeks to situate both the original design as well as the revitalization within these two design paradigms, focusing on what aspects of the two specific designs relate to broader ideological commitments. The chapter moves on to develop a critique of cultural design paradigms, turning toward accounts of urban design that focus upon changes in capitalism. Understandings of cities that take into account capitalist and neoliberal motivations and influences prove to be important in coming to an understanding of Regent Park, particularly the

revitalization project. I conclude by examining perspectives on urban spaces that take into account a multiplicity of different social, economic, political and material forces, influenced in part by actor-network theory. The writings of Amin and Thrift (2002), Soja (2000) and Julier (2005; 2008) present perspectives for an understanding of Regent Park that are resolutely undeterministic. Specifically influenced by Julier's (2005; 2008) model for design culture, I proceed to investigate the revitalization of Regent Park.

Chapter four presents an empirical analysis of the revitalization of Regent Park, in light of the historical and theoretical contexts discussed above. Drawing upon detailed documentary and interview sources, the chapter shows how the revitalization involves both continuities and discontinuities from the original project, in the specificities of the design as well as more abstract ideologies and social, economic and political motivations. The thesis concludes with reflections on the notion of 'rebuilding the social' in light of the empirical analysis in the context of changing rhetorics of participation, community and diversity.

A Note on Method

This study employs several research strategies in order to understand Regent Park as a site of sociological interest from multiple angles. My research begins with a content analysis of literature surrounding urban design, urban planning, architectural design and landscape architecture in order to come to a critical understanding of theories of design and planning. I discuss changes in

urban design paradigms, as well as some of the ideologies that inform the theories at hand. Analytically, I focus on the ways in which design and planning attempt to, quite literally, ‘build the social’ by shaping how inhabitants are able to ‘behave’ within a given space, as well as what is implicitly conceived of as a ‘virtuous community’ or appropriate ‘way of life’ within the literature. I supplement my understanding of urban planning and design more generally with a content analysis of literature, newspaper articles and official documents surrounding Regent Park specifically. My research focuses on how theories of planning are used and/or neglected (‘translated’) within the material design of Regent Park.

For the second phase of my research I conducted semi-structured interviews with three residents from Regent Park, as well as a developer at Daniels Corporation. I selected in-depth interviewing as a means to gain a richer understanding of the revitalization ‘on the ground’, in terms of perceptions, motivations and experiences that may not be available through any other means. The interviews with Regent Park residents focused on their experiences living within the space, how they feel the space influences their lives and the ways in which they actively attempt (not necessarily successfully) to change the space. I focused on the ways that these residents navigated through Regent Park in ways that were intended by the design, and ways that were unintended. I asked open-ended questions regarding how the inhabitants interact with Regent Park: everyday practices within the space, ways that they alter the original built space, how they interact with fellow residents and how they feel about living in Regent Park. I also investigated the residents’ roles within the planning process of

Regent Park. I interviewed a long-term Regent Park resident, Aisha², who lived in the original development and now resides in one of the newly built townhouses. Aisha works at the Regent Park Centre of Learning. Next I interviewed a tenant in one of the subsidized apartment buildings, Frank. Frank also serves as the tenant representative for his building. Lastly, I interviewed Steven, a condominium owner at One Cole. These three residents are all involved in Regent Park in differing ways, which are to some extent ideal-typical. Although the experiences of three residents cannot provide an exhaustive understanding of all Regent Park residents, these three people can provide an illustrative set of cases that speak to an intersection of some of the different ways that residents operate within the space.³

I also conducted a semi-structured, in-depth interview with an influential figure at Daniels Corporation - Connor. My interview with Connor aimed at uncovering the motives and reasoning behind the design as well as gaining insight into the design process itself. The interview focused on gaining a more in-depth understanding of the design and the planning processes, including the ways in which design may be compromised for financial or political reasons. I have supplemented the interviews with an analysis of official statements, as well as texts on architectural and urban planning. Originally, the project was to include interviews with several other figures. Though I attempted to interview someone from Toronto Community Housing (TCHC), most likely due to their recent

² The names of the residents have been changed to keep their anonymity.

³ I was only able to interview four people in total (one of which works with Daniel's Corporation) due to the time and resource constraints of a Master's thesis project.

scandal⁴, and the following drastic change in staff, I was unsuccessful. It is for this reason that I have used TCHC's 2007 *Regent Park Social Development Plan: Executive Summary* as a basis for information regarding the organization's views on Regent Park revitalization. It is with the information gathered from these interviews, as well as secondary sources regarding the design, and urban design more general, that I will present an understanding of the Regent Park.

Concluding Remarks

Studying Regent Park has provided me with a unique opportunity to investigate urban regeneration in Toronto at two different moments in time. It is through comparing the revitalization to the original design that I am able to adequately comprehend what practices or aspects of the revitalization are 'new' or different. This comparison provides insight into some of the ways that urban regeneration in Toronto has changed. I am specifically concerned with theorizing and empirically understanding the planning process; in particular, how theories of design become reshaped 'on the ground' in relation to a range of material, social, economic and political factors. In other words, *how do theories of design translate into actual developments?* My second focus is on how this materialization of a space is then experienced by inhabitants in daily life.

⁴ Due to the discovery of unaccounted for and lavish spending within TCHC, there was recently a complete overhaul of the Board of Directors as well as many staff members.

Chapter Two

‘Slum Clearance’ and Utopian Design:

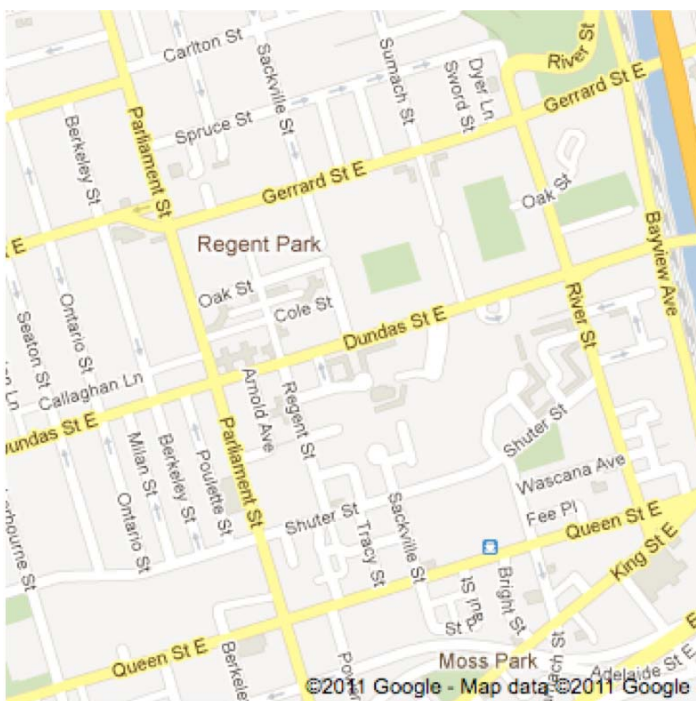
The Original Design of Regent Park

Regent Park provides a unique opportunity in which one can examine urban regeneration in Toronto in different temporal periods. It is through examining both designs that I am able to pinpoint the continuities and discontinuities within the design practices used in both projects. A brief overview will be presented regarding some of the thinking and debate surrounding the design and construction of the original Regent Park, as well as the process of tenant selection and rental agreements. I will concentrate here on the design of the space (not having access to information regarding tenants’ reaction to and interaction with the space due to the time line of the project), exploring the social, political and economic factors that influenced the decision to build Regent Park. I pursue this investigation further to illustrate how the design of the space can be understood in terms of modernist theories of urban design, with the associated criticisms of the design. As will become evident through this chapter, the design of Regent Park was not only shaped by planning professionals, but also by a number of social, political and economic factors, as well as different stakeholders

in the project. Further, this account will raise the theoretical problem of understanding urban developments solely through planning processes.

Regent Park: An Introduction to the Original and Albert Rose

Efforts towards the creation of Regent Park began in 1946, though it was not until 1948 that the physical construction of the space began. Between 1946 and 1957, when the project was completed, a lot of thought and debate went into designing a space that would not only benefit its residents, but also the overall perception of Toronto as a city. Regent Park spans from Gerrard Street to just



north of Queen Street, and from Parliament Street to River Street. The development covers a total of 42.5 acres. In 1947, before construction of Regent Park began, the area (then referred to as Cabbagetown) housed a population of 3,676 people. This figure almost doubled with

Figure 1, Map of Regent Park (Google Maps)

the completion of Regent Park (Rose 1958: 182). As of May 1st, 1957, Regent Park housed 5,091 people consisting of 1,889 children less than 12 years old, 550 teenagers, and 2,300 people over 20 years old and 350 people over 65

years of age (Rose 1958: 186). In 1958, there was an average of 3.95 people living in each unit (Rose 1958: 185-6).

As social planner Dr. Albert Rose (1958: 73) describes, Regent Park ‘was the first project on this scale, perhaps the first “modern” public housing program in Canada, and a unique phenomenon for the city of Toronto’. Rose, a professor and dean of The Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto played a central role in creating public housing projects in Toronto. Frustrated by the Federal government’s lack of public housing initiatives, Rose turned to Toronto’s municipal government for support in creating government subsidized, low-income housing for those in the lower socio-economic bracket. At the forefront of these efforts was Regent Park. Rose joined the Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association and became an active member in the creation of Regent Park. Rose was present throughout many of the negotiations, meetings and presentations regarding the project. It is with this first-hand knowledge, and the social connections that he made throughout the planning and building process, that Rose acquired the knowledge to write *Regent Park: A Study in Slum Clearance* in 1958. Rose’s insider knowledge of the theories, debates and changes that took place during the planning and building process of Regent Park makes his book the ideal source of information for outlining a historical account here, as it is not just the end product of the development that is of interest. This chapter will focus on the process of designing a public housing development: who are the stakeholders involved? What is the nature of their interactions? What theories of design underpin and legitimate the creation of the space?

A Brief Examination of the Post-War Housing Situation

In the 1940s, throughout Canadian urban spaces there was a great demand for housing, particularly rental properties for those in the lower income bracket (Rose 1958). It is due, in part, to this housing demand that the construction of Regent Park was supported by the Canadian government. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the original Regent Park, and the processes involved in its creation, it is important to understand the broader housing climate at the time of its design.

The demand for housing in the postwar period is often attributed to the rapidly increasing population of the country at that time (Miron 1988; Rose 1956 & 1980). As John R. Miron (1988: 3) explains in his book *Housing in Postwar Canada: Demographic Change, Household Formation, and Housing Demand*, due to the baby boom, as well as increased life expectancy and shifting marital patterns (among other things) the Canadian population doubled between the years of 1946 and 1981. Rose (1958: 17) partially attributes the population growth to the increased immigration, due to the increase in employment opportunities available in the postwar period. Though population growth did significantly affect the increased demand for housing, the demand was not solely a reflection of a larger population. The housing demand was also notably affected by a considerable shift in population *distribution* (Miron 1988; Rose 1956; Sandercock 1998).

The early 1900s marked the beginning of a move towards urbanization in Canada; what Rose (1958: 17) describes as 'the reversal of the rural-urban population distribution'. This urbanization heightened in the years following the Second World War (Miron 1988; Rose 1958; Sandercock 1998). In 1941, 51 % of the Canadian population (5, 852, 000 people) resided in urban spaces⁵ (Miron 1988). By 1958, 60% of the Canadian population was living in urban areas (Rose 1958: 17).⁶ The change in distribution has been attributed to a number of causes including continued industrialization after the Second World War, and the consequent increase in job opportunities in urban spaces (Rose 1958: 17). Sandercock (1998: 14) provides a nuanced description of the shift in population distribution:

growing inequalities in wealth between north and south impel people to move in search of opportunities for work; political, ecological and demographic pressures force some people to seek refuge beyond their homeland; ethnic and religious struggles... lead to mass exodus; and the creation of new free trade areas causes movements of labour.

To reiterate, this rapid population growth and the shift in population distribution towards urban spaces are thought to be two major factors that contributed to the postwar demand for housing. However, there are a number of other factors that should be taken into consideration when examining the housing demand. For instance, following the Second World War, the average number of residents

⁵ These figures, taken from the 1941 Census of Canada, exclude data from Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

⁶ This movement towards urban spaces continued to grow rapidly, with 80% of the Canadian population living in urban spaces by 1981 (Miron 1988: 3).

within a single dwelling began to decline steadily⁷ (Miron 1988: 67). Miron (1988: 93) explains that this decline in residents per household began in the 1880s, or even before, but became particularly significant during the postwar period. This cultural change served to exaggerate the pressure being put on the housing stock by the rapid population growth and shifts in the population distribution.

Rose (1958) goes into considerable detail in *Regent Park: A Study of Slum Clearance* regarding the factors behind the postwar housing demand. It is worthwhile to examine Rose's understanding of the situation in detail, as due to his involvement in the project it can be assumed that his position is influenced by those involved in the planning of Regent Park (and visa versa). Rose (1958: 18) understands the housing demand as stemming from the combination of two simple factors: a lack of production of new housing, combined with a growing need for housing. Rose expands on his understanding, outlining four major reasons for the housing demand. 'The most obvious component' according to Rose (1958: 18) is the increased 'net family formation'. The 'net family formation' consists of the total number of newly formed or immigrated families, less 'broken' families and those who emigrate. Rose (1958: 19) also cites 'accumulated shortage [,]... the need to replace the so-called substandard dwellings [and] the variety of accommodation required for families as they move through the typical life cycle'. Despite the growing need for housing, there had been 'a perpetual deficit in Canadian housing' (Rose 1958: 20). Rose (1958: 20) cites the nature of

⁷ Miron (1998: 93-94) attributes this decline to a rise in assisted housing, changes in familial and life patterns, the invention and popularization of commodities that aid in household chores, as well as the maturation and resulting decrease in rental costs of housing.

construction for this deficit - due to the seasonal nature of housing construction, outdated distribution methods and the rapidly rising costs of building materials, the construction process is increasingly expensive. Further, there was a 'relative shortage of serviced land', which was exaggerated by a reluctance to 'proceed with the servicing of raw land for housing' for financial reasons (Rose 1958: 20). Moreover, there has been a financial shortage in regards to mortgages, so much so that in 1956 Canadian charter banks were permitted to 'enter the mortgage loan field for the first time'⁸ (Rose 1958: 21). Finally, Rose (1958: 21) draws attention to the Canadian government's lack of efforts put towards *public* housing. It was not until 1953 that the Toronto municipal government formed an organization to focus on housing. Rose (1958: 21) states that

the end product of these influences is overcrowded cities spilling their population into suburban areas as fast as accommodation can be constructed... Canadian cities have preferred to leave the solution of their housing problems to the enterprise of individuals who would migrate to the suburbs, and the suburbs have barely managed to keep up with current demand.

As outlined above, Rose (1958) views the housing demand as stemming from an imbalance of supply and demand, originating from a combination of the economics and practice of building, changing cultural practices concerning dwellings and the structure of families, and a lack of sufficient government intervention in the provision of public housing. However, as Rose (1958) concludes, Canadian citizens' inability to afford market-price rental units stems from a plethora of different phenomena, including but not entirely reducible to these larger issues surrounding the housing stock.

⁸ Miron provides an opposing understanding of the involvement of chartered banks in mortgage loans that will be discussed later.

Though the Canadian housing stock was in great demand during the first half of the 20th Century, government-enforced restrictions placed on building construction and renovations during the Second World War⁹ hindered a resolution (Miron 1988: 168). Consequently, following the war there was an insurgence of new housing and renovations (Miron 1988: 168). According to Miron (1988: 192) the postwar period was also marked by a decrease in housing costs, as well as an increase in income rates. Further, as Rose (1980: 19) explains, the National Housing Act (NHA) of 1944 stated that the Canadian government would grant citizens '25 per cent of the capital amount of an approved NHA mortgage loan at relatively low interest, namely, 3 per cent'. Rose (1980: 19) notes that this was the lowest first-mortgage rate in Canadian history at that time. It should be noted that the NHA only approved mortgages on newly constructed homes¹⁰. Rose (1980:20) argues that the governmental involvement in mortgage loans during this time created a situation in which 'housing policy in effect took over the responsibility of urban planning (in this case suburban planning) which had been the source of so much distress to social, economic and planning analysts'.¹¹ As Rose (1980) notes, during the postwar period, public policy and the socio-economic climate had a deep impact on what was built, and how it was designed. However, one can assume that this is not a rare

⁹ During the war, rent controls were also put into place, restricting landlords from increasing rental rates at that time (Miron 1988:168)

¹⁰ The NHA's mortgage stipulation is reflective of a larger movement within architecture and urban design to start fresh on projects, rather than alter existing buildings or spaces. As a result, from 1945 to 1958, Canada's annual rate of housing production tripled (Rose 1958: 21). This trend of rebuilding is evident within Regent Park itself, and will be discussed in more detail shortly.

¹¹ The NHA of 1953 discontinued the government's involvement in mortgage loans (Rose 1980: 20).

occurrence; theories of urban design necessarily become influenced by a number of different political, economic and social factors when put into practice.

In the first half of the 20th Century, home ownership was less common in urban spaces in comparison to rural areas (Miron 1988: 4). However, as a result of these affordable mortgages, more people were in a financial situation to become homeowners. By the postwar period, over one-half of Canadian's owned the dwellings in which they resided (Miron 1988: 238). During this time, the housing stock in Canada was predominantly privately owned by individuals or corporations (Miron 1988: 238). As Rose (1980: 16) explains, during this time Canada lacked a sufficient system regarding which level of government was responsible for public housing. According to Rose (1980: 16), this indecision proved to be detrimental for Canadian public housing, steps towards sufficient public housing is only possible once it is clear which body is responsible. Conversely, Rose (1980:16) goes on to describe that Section 92 of the British North American Act, written in 1867, dictates that the provincial government is responsible for housing individuals and families. Regardless, Rose (1980: 16) describes that it was not until the later part of the 20th Century that the provincial government put a significant effort towards low income housing initiatives.

During the postwar period, Rose (1980: 21) specifies that in Toronto elected and appointed officials put little effort towards public housing. Rather, it was the initiatives and pressure of 'voluntary community organization such as: the Citizens Housing and Planning Association, from 1944 to 1949; the Metropolitan Toronto Branch of the Community Planning Association of Canada,

from 1948 to the present [1980]; [and] the Association of Women Electors' that lead to the creation of public housing stock.

Rose (1980: 24) also notes the integral role that public housing administrators play in the success of government subsidized housing. As Rose (1980:24) explains,

the administration of public housing requires far more than the knowledge and experience of a rent collector or a property manager. Those who are charged with the responsibility of administering dwellings provide for certain persons or families who qualify by virtue of low income, grossly inadequate current housing accommodation, some physical or emotional disability, large families, or any combination of these several attributes, must be persons who have a clear understanding of both the objective of the housing programs and of the culture of the families and individuals most likely to inhabit them.

Rose (1980: 24) notes that few people were sufficiently trained to fulfill the difficult role of an administrator for public housing. In order to maintain the somewhat idealistic theories and policies concerning public housing, a significant amount of day-to-day, mundane work is required. It is through such instances that it becomes evident that there is more to Regent Park than its top down design. Although governmental policy does deeply impact the housing situation, as Rose (1980: 20) notes, policy is irrelevant unless it is acted upon. Further, the Canadian government and its affiliated agencies are not solely responsible for low-income housing; non-governmental organization, scholars and citizens (among others) are also involved. Rose provides another example in which figures other than professional planners exert influence over the creation of Regent Park.

As Miron (1988: 239) describes ‘the first modern instance of direct federal involvement in Canadian housing [as] a \$25-million loan to the provinces initiated in December 1918’. The loan was intended to aid the health and well being of Canadian citizens, particularly returning soldiers and their families (Miron 1988: 239). In 1935, the federal government created the Dominion Housing Act, and in 1937, the Home Improvements Loan Guarantee Act in order to stimulate postwar employment (Miron 1988: 240). However, the National Housing Act (NHA) of 1938 marked the first time in which the federal government put forth efforts to support low income housing (Miron 1988: 240). In 1944, the federal government amended the NHA to provide aid concerning “slum clearance and urban renewal” (Miron 1988: 240). This amendment marked the first instance in which the federal government attempted to use housing policy to aid those in the lower income brackets, rather than to stimulate the economy through creating job opportunities (Miron 1988: 240).

As Carver (in Rose 1980: 2) describes, it was previously thought to be unnecessary to put effort towards housing those earning lower incomes, as these citizens would be able to afford the dwellings previously owned by those of higher socio-economic status. In 1949, Robert H. Winters, the minister of Resources and Development, proposed an amendment to the NHA stating the public housing initiatives needed to be implemented by local governments (Rose 1980: 21). Miron (1988: 240) notes ‘there was an increased emphasis over time on this use of housing as a tool of social policy’.

The Development of Regent Park

Robert H. Saunders (in Rose 1958: 64), the Mayor of Toronto from 1945 to 1948, stated that ‘the true greatness of a city is measured not by its artistic and commercial attainments alone but also by the homes of its citizens and the conditions under which the least affluent of them live’. As Saunders specifies, a city is judged not only by the great works of architecture that it houses, but also by the *least desirable* housing. In accordance with this sentiment, it is fitting that Saunders was in strong support of the construction of Regent Park (Rose 1958: 63). Regent Park’s construction would aid the public perception of Toronto housing in two ways: by providing adequate housing for those in the lower socioeconomic bracket, as well as by clearing one of Toronto’s slums referred to at the time as Cabbagetown.¹²¹³

Much of the theoretical literature concerning housing written during the postwar period focused on replacing buildings that had been demolished in Europe during the war. For example, Lewis Mumford (1945: 157), one of the key thinkers on cities, wrote,

there is a sense in which the demolition that is taking place through the war has not yet gone far enough. Though many of the past structures are still serviceable, and some of them truly venerable, the bulk of our building no

¹² Drawing from a likely semi-biographical novel written by Hugh Garner about Cabbagetown in the Depression Era, James (2010: 71) explains that in all likelihood, the neighbourhood was “a lively, complex and politically engaged community; one that fits Jane Jacobs’s description of the type of ‘slum’ that possessed its own wisdoms and potential for regeneration.” James (2010) continues on to write that regardless of the neighbourhood’s vitality, Cabbagetown “was condemned by ‘paternalistic’ planners who did not understand [its value].”

¹³ Cabbagetown currently refers to a neighbourhood directly North of Regent Park consisting of predominantly Victorian style houses.

longer corresponds to the needs and possibilities of human life. We must therefore continue to do, in a more deliberate and rational fashion, what the bombs have done by brutal hit-or-miss, if we are to have space enough to live in and produce the proper means of life.

Mumford (1945) viewed the destruction of buildings during the war as a positive step towards a superior urban design, as the designs were 'outdated', and no longer able to sufficiently meet the 'needs of human life' at the time. This notion of starting fresh with a new spatial and housing design is mirrored in decisions to completely demolish the pre-existing slum in order to have a blank slate to create Regent Park.¹⁴ From an economic perspective, it is likely that it would have been logistically impractical to revitalize the existing Cabbagetown housing. Regardless, the spatial design of Regent Park necessitated complete demolition of the area in order to create the segregated community design.

Saunders himself, as well as 'officers, members and constituent organizations of the Citizen's Housing and Planning Association exerted great pressure to secure a favourable vote' regarding the construction of Regent Park (Rose 1958: 67). In 1946, anyone running for civic office received a mimeographed statement concerning the social and economic benefits of slum clearance followed by a request to support the project in upcoming votes. Information about Regent Park was also presented in all Toronto newspapers throughout December of 1946. According to Rose (1958: 68),

although there was a good deal of serious opposition in Toronto to the idea of publicly erected housing, and especially to the participation of the City of Toronto in such a scheme, there was little overt resistance during the weeks preceding the vote.

¹⁴ This concept of starting fresh with a completely new design was also repeated over 50 years later with the Revitalization of Regent Park.

Rose (1958: 68) attributed the lack of resistance to a number of possibilities: the Christmas season, a lack of organization on behalf of protesters or a belief that the project had no chance of being approved as 'the principal opponent could not conceive of the electors voting to increase their own property taxes for social purposes'. In spite of these factors, Regent Park (North) won a majority vote of 62%, though only 47 percent of eligible voters voted.

The Housing Authority of Toronto was created in the spring of 1947 to manage Regent Park, and any subsequent government subsidized housing projects in Toronto. The Housing Authority was entrusted with,

the construction, maintenance, control, operation and management of any housing project as defined by the Planning Act, 1946, any emergency housing projects, any low rental housing project which the Corporation has undertaken or may undertake under its powers.

(Rose 1958:71)

There was a great deal of debate regarding whether the Corporation should be independent from civic administration, or made up partially of elected representatives. In the end, the former was chosen in order for the Corporation to be 'relatively free from political pressures' (Rose 1958: 69). The Commissioners of Property, City Planning, and Buildings remained as 'paid advertisers and consultants [for Regent Park], but not in their official capacity as heads of the department' (Rose 1958: 74). This decision was in line with Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent's stance concerning the government's role in subsidized housing. As St. Laurent stated,

it is the deliberate policy of the government to encourage house building by private and local enterprise so that as much of our housing need as possible

can be provided without making the national government the landlord of too many voters...That does not mean that we do not recognize the need for housing units at low rents. With to-day's costs, it must be obvious that low-rental housing cannot be provided without some kind of financial assistance. Our legislation provides for slum clearance grants, and also for loans to limited dividend companies for construction of low-rental housing. It may be that experiences will show that other forms of federal assistance will be desirable.

(in Rose 1958: 85-86)

St. Laurent seems to have put forward the concept that it would be almost 'immoral' for an elected government to be 'the landlords' of its citizens, due to the power that the government would then hold over the inhabitants, and their living situation. Though the Housing Authority presumably exercised more independence in their decision making by not employing elected officials in the committee, the elected Chairman and issues such as obtaining funding for projects ensured that the organization remained inescapably connected to governmental agendas.

On May 19th, 1947, the Housing Authority met for the first time to work through fundamental questions regarding,

the type of construction, the kinds of buildings, the methods whereby construction could be commenced, organized and administered, the scale of rentals, the way in which tenants would be chosen to occupy the units as they became available and the relationship of the authority to the civic, provincial and federal governments.

(Rose 1958: 73)

At this time Mayor Saunders was elected chairman of the Housing Authority, Alderman Shannon was the vice-Chairman and Mr. G. A. Gillespie was the secretary. However, in April of 1948 Saunders left the Authority to become the Chairman of the Ontario Hydro Electric Commission, appointing Hiram E. McCallum to take his place. For the first decade of the Housing Authority, the

Chairmen were always chosen from the elected representatives involved in the organization. Consequently, despite the initiatives to separate the Housing Authority's from governmental agendas, during the years in which integral planning and construction decisions were made, elected officials were granted the power over the final decisions concerning Regent Park. However, due to his or her civic responsibilities, the Chairmen of the Housing Authority rarely had the time to attend meetings regarding the organization, placing much of the workload and decision-making onto the citizen members (Rose 1958). It was not until 1956 that a citizen was chosen as the Chairman of the Housing Authority (Rose 1958: 81).

The Residents of Regent Park: Tenant Selection

The process of selecting 'worthy candidates' to reside in Regent Park is closely affiliated with the cultural definition of an *adequate home* in the 1940s and 1950s. Rose (1958: 3-4) notes that during the postwar period there was a lack of 'adequate housing' for those in the lowest two-thirds of the income scale, specifying that an adequate home must uphold both social and physical standards. Quoting M. Mackintosh (1952 in Rose 1958: 4), Rose defines 'a "home" in the proper sense of the word [as] a family living in a separate dwelling as an organic unit of society and permeated with human feelings'. According to Rose (1958: 4), this 'home'

must be provided with adequate heat in winter and ventilation in summer, suitable natural and artificial light, and a modern, sanitary plumbing system.

Kitchen facilities must include a sink with hot and cold running water, a stove suitable to the needs of the family, and proper storage space and refrigeration for food.

Rose (1958) is clear regarding what kind of housing is 'adequate' for those within the lower socio-economic bracket. This definition of the 'adequate home' was not only utilized in the design of Regent Park, but also in deciding who was eligible to live there.

Regent Park houses were reserved for those living in inadequate housing conditions in or nearby to the area delineated for demolition in July of 1947 (Rose 1958: 77). Prospective tenants filled out applications describing their current living conditions. The families who were in 'the greatest need' (Rose 1958: 5) of housing were visited by an official from the Housing Authority's Sub-Committee on Management and Tenant Selection, who would then give a recommendation regarding their need of new housing: families residing in what was deemed by the Housing Authority as the 'worst' living conditions were given first priority, as well as families with small children (Rose 1958: 83). Any housing still available was reserved for families living in buildings that were scheduled to be demolished to make room for the new ones.

Rose (1958: 9) divides the people applying for government-subsidized housing into two economic but clearly normative categories. The first is families who mismanage their income; as Rose (1958: 9) describes it, their situation is 'their own fault'. The second category that Rose (1958: 9) believes makes up that majority of the applicants is families who have an insufficient income to afford adequate housing. Rose's (1958: 10) explanation for the latter issue is primarily

concerned with the economic strain that numerous children have on a family's finances, as well as the current urban housing prices.

According to the 1951 Census of Canada (in Rose 1958: 12), in Ontario 23 percent of the employed 'heads of families' brought in an annual income of less than \$2,000, and 43 percent earned between \$2,000 and \$3,000 annually. As Rose (1958:12) states, 'most families with such incomes literally cannot save sufficiently to provide a down payment towards the purchase of a home'. Consequently, those in the lower socio-economic bracket were left with renting as their only housing option. According to Rose (1958: 13), in order to maintain a satisfactory standard of living, the 66 percent of the population earning less than \$3,000 annually could only afford to put between 20 and 25 percent of income towards rent (that works out to \$25-\$50 per month). However, only 41 percent of the housing fits into that price range (Rose 1958: 15). Rose (1958: 11) concludes that the lack of proper housing is 'the fault of everyone'. Rose (1958: 11) goes on to state 'for the most part, it is the community which has failed'. Due to the large percentage of the population that could not afford adequate housing, individual laziness or mismanagement of finances does not sufficiently account for the problem. Larger issues concerning the housing stock and income rates can account for the lack of adequate housing.

Although Regent Park was intended to aid those in the greatest need for new housing, the Housing Authority was not solely concerned with helping Toronto residents in need; the organization also had a vested interest in the success of Regent Park as a *social space*. The Housing Authority denied the Toronto City

Council's requests to manage all of Toronto's emergency housing situations on the grounds that the organization would lose focus on Regent Park, and that Regent Park may 'become a half-way station for many families with more or less chronic personal, social and economic problems' (Rose 1958: 80). Consequently, 'the authority was accused of trying deliberately to seek "high-grade" tenants' (Rose 1958: 80). This criticism directly opposes the Housing Authorities policy to prioritize those with the most need.

It should be noted that throughout Rose's (1958) examination of prospective public housing inhabitants, he only describes those in need as 'families', never referring to 'individuals in need'. J. E. Hoare, the Head Architect for Regent Park, proposed 24 'single family' homes, for 'presumably widows or widowers' as Rose (1958: 75) suggests. However, the Housing Authority rejected this idea (although later, some exceptions were made to this ruling). It is through such decisions that prevailing 'modern' notions of the ideal 'family' come into play. Though the Authority did not allow for single-person dwellings, they did approve 70 one-bedroom units suitable for two people in what Rose (1958:83) refers to as a 'natural family group', people related through blood or marriage, 'most of whom were thought to be elderly couples' (Rose 1958: 75). There was debate concerning whether these two-person dwellings should be integrated into buildings with larger units, or segregated. However, the former option was decided upon so that the elderly could be in contact with families with children (Rose 1958: 75-76). It is through such instances that the *social planning* behind Regent Park becomes evident. The units were organized in such a way as to

promote the socialization of elderly people as well as those with smaller familial units. Another way in which the Housing Authority instilled their social beliefs into the design is through the bylaw that siblings over six years of age were only permitted to share a bedroom if they were the same gender (Rose 1958: 94).

Daily Management of Regent Park

Though The Housing Authority was responsible for the creation of the policies concerning Regent Park 'and for general approval of the execution of its policies' (Rose 1958: 82), the organization was not responsible for the day-to-day management of the space. The Housing Authority was not intended to put energy and resources towards the 'general administration or routine conduct of business' (Rose 1958: 82-83). Rather, the Housing Manager for Regent Park appointed Frank E Dearlove to head the maintenance of Regent Park. Dearlove was responsible to 'select, appoint and define the duties of his own staff' (Rose 1958: 83), pending approval from the Housing Authority. Dearlove hired a staff of seven administrators, as well as approximately fifty 'heating engineers, janitors and maintenance men' (Rose 1958: 182) to aid in the maintenance and of the space. One can assume that the administrators and staff involved in the day-to-day management and maintenance played a significant role in shaping the space. Though the Housing Authority was left in charge of making policy decisions, the manager and his or her associates had more control over the ways in which Regent Park operated on a mundane day-to-day level (Rose 1958). Rose (1980)

also notes the importance of a good manager in order to ensure the success of public housing projects.

The Cost of Rent

As Rose (1958) explains, coming to a decision regarding rental costs was a long and complicated process. Originally, Regent Park tenants' rental costs were calculated in accordance with the cost of production. The projected cost for Regent Park North (1947) consists of \$1,500,000 for both the land as well as its clearing, and \$4,400,000 for the construction of the new housing. The tenants' rent was originally intended to only consist of the cost of construction (not the price of the land), which worked out to \$39.46 per month for the first thirty years, followed by \$39.36 per month for the next twenty years (Rose 1958: 65-6). However, in 1946 the Toronto City Welfare Department for the Regent Park area interviewed 659 families concerning how much they could comfortably spend on rent. The Department concluded that the tenants could put 'one-quarter of their income [towards] shelter, including the cost of heat and light' (Rose 1958: 66), which worked out to \$25 per month (Rose 1958: 66). Charging tenants one quarter of their income marked a shift to what is now referred to as Rent Geared to Income (RGI), a model still used in the city of Toronto. Consequently the City of Toronto would then need to put a projected \$ 295,501 towards rent subsidies for the area over a fifty-year period, which translates to approximately \$5, 910

per year (Rose 1958: 66). Major Saunders (in Rose 1958: 66) justified this expenditure stating that the development would stabilize the

rapidly declining property values in this particular area and provide an inducement for private owners to re-build in adjoining areas and thus provide moderate-priced homes within the City for families now compelled to seek accommodation in the suburban municipalities, but undoubtedly will result in many other benefits to the City at large. These are largely intangible but some of them will unquestionably result in decreased department expenditure.

A 1943 study conducted in Toronto found that 'substandard districts' present higher rates of fire, infant and general mortality, tuberculosis mortality and arrests in comparison to 'sound districts'. Mr. Saunder's foresaw potential savings in fire protection, social services, street cleaning services, health services, building services as well as an increase in taxes received (Rose 1958: 67). Consequently, Mr. Saunders was able to justify putting a significant amount of money towards subsidizing the rental rates of the project.

Though early discussion concerning rental rates concluded that \$25 per month was the ideal rent for low-income families, in 1947 Humphrey Carver and Alison Hopwood worked towards a more exact figure, published in *Rents for Regent Park; a Rent-Scale System for a Public Housing Project, a Study of the Toronto Metropolitan Housing Research Project*. Carver and Hopwood (1947) concluded on a base rent of \$35 dollars per month, which consisted of 20% of an income of \$175 per month. This figure was intended for families comprised of two adults and three children. It was from this base figure that all other rental costs would be calculated. An increase or decrease of monthly income of \$5 would result in the appropriate addition or deduction of \$1 per month of rent. Rent

would also increase or decrease by \$1 per month according to the number of children in the family. Heating, water and other services would cost the tenants between \$9 and \$13 per month, dependent on their income and rental costs (and not the size of the unit) (Rose 1958: 79). When the first units were rented on March 30th, 1949, the rent (including services) for four and five-bedroom units ranged from \$30 to \$67 per month, with an average rent of \$53.71 per month. This figure was arrived at by taking into consideration the income of the 'head of the household' with an addition of \$10 per week for every additional wage earner in the family. This model for calculating RGI speaks to the traditional 'modern' family, in which there was ideally one head of household earning the majority of the family's income. According to Rose (1958), government provided family allowances were not included when calculating the household income, as the money was reserved for the children. However, if a senior citizen was residing with the family, 20% of his or her Old Age pension was to be added to the monthly rent (Rose 1958: 84). The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation disagreed with the Housing Authority's policies concerning rent. The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation maintained that all family members incomes, as well as family allowance should be included in the calculation of income (Rose 1958: 97). By the early 1950s, average rental costs rose to between \$53 to \$57 per month. It is through examining what forms of income are taken into account when calculating tenants' rent, as well as what percentage of their income 'should' go towards rent that social ideals become apparent.

The Design of Regent Park

The Housing Authority appointed Mr. J. E. Hoare the head architect for Regent Park North due to his attention to inexpensive construction, as well as his plan to produce the maximum number of housing units possible (Rose 1958). Peter Dickinson was later appointed to head the building design for Regent Park South.

Socio-Spatial Design

Regent Park consists of three sections, delineated through the design of the space (Rose 1958: 181). The eastern section was the first to be completed in 1952. It consists of four blocks of row housing, one at each corner of the space, as well as five 48-unit apartment buildings and one 54-unit apartment building. The central section was completed in 1955. This section consists of three blocks of row-housing, four 48-unit apartment buildings, two 54-unit apartment buildings, as well as the central heating plant, and the Administration and Community Centre Building which contained an addition of 15 apartments on the top floor. The last section to be completed was the western division in 1957, consisting of six 72-unit, six-storey buildings and four 48-unit apartment buildings.

Different types of housing are accompanied by a number of theoretical notions and ideals, regarding which circumstances they are appropriate for, as well as their potential benefits and issues. The row house (or town house)

originated in Northern Europe and was later brought to North America (Lozano 1990). This types of housing design is often credited with allowing for individual privacy within the home (and at times the accompanying outdoor space), while still promoting a fairly dense population that, as Lozano (1990: 184) puts it, 'encourages community interaction'. In the case of Regent Park, this community interaction is further promoted through the lack of fences separating different houses' yards. Further, apartment buildings are also commonly understood as promoting community (also due to their increased population density) (Lozano 1990: 184). The promotion of community is a common thread throughout the design of Regent Park. This idealization of 'community' is evident through the architectural design as well as urban design of the space, and will be discussed in greater detail shortly.

Regent Park's housing design is characteristic of the predominant public housing model in North America at that time. As Lozano (1990: 137) describes, public housing commonly consisted of 'a large number of low-rise and mid-rise apartment buildings assembled in huge tracts, without any reference to the surrounding urban pattern, street network, or scale of development'. The problematic nature of this model for public housing has become widely recognized (Lozano 1990: 138).¹⁵

The types of building constructed in Regent Park also fit with a larger movement in Canadian housing away from detached dwellings and towards apartment buildings. In the early 1940s, over 70% of Canadian housing consisted

¹⁵ However, this trend of separating spaces from their surroundings through street design is currently popular for outdoor shopping centers within North America (Lozano 1990: 138).

of 'single detached dwellings' (Miron 1988: 5). The housing boom that occurred immediately after the war consisted of predominantly small one or one and a half storey houses. However, in the 1950s larger housing units became more popular¹⁶ (Miron 1988: 5). The 1960s marked an increase of apartment buildings, both within cities and suburbs. By the 1981, single detached dwellings made up less than 60% of housing in Canada, where as apartments rose to over 30% (Miron 1988: 5).

Regent Park was criticized by the Community Planning Association of Canada, who found the number of units created within the space problematic. The organization argued that the surrounding schools were not large enough to accommodate the population and that the space-population ratios would create 'negative social implications' (Rose 1958: 99). Within urban design and planning paradigms, population density is often considered to be an integral factor in shaping the ways in which a space operates. As Lozano (1990: 184) describes, 'a successful pattern should offer a proper gradation between the privacy of the house and the various levels of community'. Under consideration is the ratio between private places, such as fenced in private yards, balconies and building entrances, and public spaces such as streets, plazas and parks.

Throughout the space, cement walkways connected all the housing and community buildings. Regent Park contained a large amount of open green spaces (Rose 1958). After the construction of the space was complete, attention

¹⁶ This shift in housing sizes is often attributed to the need for larger family dwellings following the baby boom (Miron 1988: 7).

was put towards the 'beautification' of these green spaces



Figure 2, 'Green space' in the original Regent Park (Personal Collection)

through landscaping (planting trees, shrubbery and flowers) and maintenance of the grounds. The area also contained four baseball diamonds and two 'Tiny Tots' Playgrounds, which were supervised by 'playground centre' staff or Toronto Parks and Recreation staff (Rose 1958: 182-3). The importance placed on green spaces within Regent Park is characteristic of the prevailing design ideologies of the time, promoted notably by Le Corbusier's conceptions of the benefits of 'fresh air' and sunlight (Colquhoun 2002).

This discourse surrounding the value of green space can be traced back to the Garden City movement. Ebenezer Howard is commonly credited with heading this movement (Broadbend 1990: 123). In his book *Garden Cities of*

Tomorrow (1898)¹⁷, Howard describes a spatial plan that he believed would result in a utopian way of life. Howard writes about the different innate problems and benefits that result from urban as well as rural spaces. Summarized succinctly by Broadband (1990: 124),

[Howard] characterizes the town, for instance, as closing out nature and catalogues many disadvantages such as the isolation of crowds, distances from work, high rents and prices, excessive hours of work, the army of unemployed, fogs and droughts, costly drainage, foul air, murky sky, slums and gin places. But he balances these with concomitant advantages: social opportunity, places of amusement, high wages, chances of employment, well-lit streets and palatial edifices. The country certainly has its advantages: the beauty of nature, wood, forest and meadow, fresh air, low rents, abundance of water, bright sunshine, but these too have their concomitant disadvantages: lack of society, lack of work, land lying idle, long hours, low wages, lack of drainage, lack of amusement, no public spirit, the need for reform, crowded dwellings and deserted villages.

Howard wanted to create a space that would combine all of the benefits of living in an urban space with the benefits of living in a rural one. Through this combination, Howard believed that one could diminish many of the problems that arose from living in either setting. In order to obtain this balance, Howard proposed that previously undeveloped, raw spaces needed to be transformed into small town-like spaces. Howard's promotion of starting with a blank canvas is mirrored in Mumford's (1945) belief that the ideal postwar housing needed to be started from scratch. Both the original design and the revitalized plan of Regent Park have followed this recommendation.

Howard's (1899) Garden City consisted of a concentric design that would serve as the basis for which to design an ideal social space. Though Howard

¹⁷ Originally published as *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*

(1989) believed that the physical site would need to be taken into account while designing the individual spaces, his design promoted a park as the centre of the space, around which everything else would surround. Howard planned for public buildings (such as government buildings, the library, the hospital, and so on) to be arranged in a ring around the central green space. The following ring was to contain more green space surrounded by what he referred to as a Crystal Palace (a well-lit glass atrium). The Crystal Palace was intended to encourage residents to make use of the park, as they would feel secure knowing that a bright shelter is nearby. The next concentric circle was delineated for housing and gardens in which resident could express their personal stylistic preferences. However, Howard (in Broadbent 1990: 125) believed that the municipality should exercise 'the strictest possible control over "proper sanitary arrangements" '. This attention to sanitation was also a priority during the design of Regent Park, which is evident through a design that prevents access to the compartment under the kitchen sink in order to 'ensure cleanliness' (Rose 1958: 184).

Howard (1898), and followers of the Garden City movement, saw green spaces as integral for successful urban planning (Broadbent 1990). Regent Park's design adheres to this importance of green space. Of the 42.5 acres that make up Regent Park, 34 acres were left as open space 'for the use of the children, adults and old people who make up the tenant families' (Rose 1958: 182). Rose (1958: 182) describes the space as 'a veritable oasis... in the midst of an extremely crowded downtown location at the core of [a] metropolitan area'. Jane Jacobs (1961) critiques the abundance of green space that is promoted by

what she refers to as orthodox city planners.¹⁸ In *The Death and Life of the Great American City*, Jacobs (1961: 90) describes what she believes to be a common circumstance in which an orthodox city planner suggests creating more open green space in order to rectify a problematic neighbourhood. Her response is,

more open space for what? For muggings? For bleak vacuums between buildings? Or for ordinary people to use and enjoy? But people do not use city open space just because it is there and because city planners and designers wish they would.

(Jacobs 1961: 90)

Most significantly, Jacobs argues here that people do not necessarily navigate through a space in the ways that were intended by the designers of that space. Discussions surrounding the problematic nature of Regent Park often focus on the *design flaws* in the space (Appleby & Davis 2011; Mays 2005a; Milgrom 1999). These arguments frequently imply that the designers were ‘misguided’ in their plans, and that a more well-thought out, better-executed plan could lead to the success of the area.

As Jacobs (1961) explains, a successful neighbourhood is predominantly understood as being ‘safe’. This feeling of safety stems from a feeling of trust amongst members of that neighbourhood and this trust is developed through a neighbourhood’s community. As Jacobs (1961) describes, neighbours get to know one another through non-committal, mundane, day-to-day interactions. According to Jacobs (1961), it is uncommon for strangers (or near strangers) to interact in locations that require a significant social commitment. Consequently,

¹⁸ Jacobs critique of Modernist urban planning is described by David Harvey (1990: 71) as the “most influential of the anti-modernist tracts.” It is for this reason, as well as the strong influence that she has on the contemporary Revitalization (Conor, developer) that I will use Jacobs’ critiques heavily throughout this paper.

social interactions typically occur in commonly used public spaces such as on sidewalks or small local commercial establishments such as butcher shops, hardware stores, cafes and pubs. It is these sorts of places that promote community. According to Jacobs, open green spaces are not ideal for these non-committal casual interactions.

Spatial Segregation in Regent Park

The importance of green spaces is not the only Garden City design principle that influences Regent Park; the neighbourhood also reflects the promotion of single-use, segregated spaces. Just as Howard's concentric circles delineated different single-use spaces, Regent Park was designed to be segregated as an almost purely residential space. This homogeneity of space is characteristic of postwar urban design (Lozano 1990: 131). Regent Park was an almost purely residential space except for two churches, which were erected independently of the Housing Authority within Regent Park North. A Macedonian Bulgarian Orthodox Cathedral is located on the southwest corner of the central division; the Housing Authority arranged for the style to mirror that of the surrounding public housing (Rose 1958: 182). The other church in the area is the Regent Park United Church, located in the western part of the western division. The space was previously inhabited by the Oak Street United Church, which was built in the late 1800s. However, the Housing Authority pushed for the construction of a new church that was more modern in design (Rose 1958: 182). The fact that the only

exception to the purely residential original design was churches, speaks to the designer's conception of what was important at that time.

Regent Park was designed without any commercial spaces, and (other than a few tents selling produce) the space remained that way until its recent 'revitalization'. The lack of commercial spaces within Regent Park is commonly viewed as highly problematic (Connor developer, Mays 2005a). As Jacobs (1961: 37) describes,

storekeepers and other small businessmen are typically strong proponents of peace and order themselves; they hate broken windows and holdups; they hate having customers made nervous about safety. They are great street watchers and sidewalk guardians if present in sufficient numbers.

Storekeepers have a vested interest in the safety, and the success of their neighbourhoods, as their financial success is deeply impacted by it. Consequently, according to Jacobs (1961), many storekeepers become actively involved with what goes on around their store. Further, storekeepers serve as the 'eyes on the street' for the majority of the day. Whereas other neighbours commonly go to work during the day, storekeepers are physically present in the space during the daytime (and perhaps nighttime depending on the type of establishment). Finally, as previously discussed, Jacobs (1961) views small local stores as ideal sites for non-committal interactions between neighbours, which also serves to build a sense of community.

Jacobs is not the only thinker that finds spatial segregation in this sense problematic. As Lewis Mumford (in Lozano 1990: 141) famously stated, 20th Century urban planning 'confused a machine-using society with a vision of a society as a machine itself'. As Lozano (1990: 131) explains, a certain degree of

spatial homogeneity is necessary for successful urban design, however too much homogeneity and segregation threatens 'the essence of communities [and] their urbanity'. By homogeneity, Lozano (1990) is referring to spatial use, socioeconomic status as well as ethnicity. The former two phenomena are evident within Regent Park, the spatial use is almost solely residential, and all of the tenants are necessarily in the lower income bracket. However, Regent Park developed into a notably ethnically diverse space (James 2010).¹⁹ According to Lozano (1990: 143), 'diversity is the key factor in maintaining flexibility and adaptability in a system'. Regent Park's ethnically diverse population marks a difference from the historically common ethnic segregation in Toronto as well as around the world (Lozano 1990).²⁰ Further, most of the suburban spaces that were designed around the same time were notably ethnically homogeneous (Sandercock 1998).

Another critique of Regent Park has been that the streets did not connect to those in the surrounding areas. This design feature is believed to have created a disconnect between Regent Park and the surrounding neighbourhoods: a phenomenon that was furthered through the erection of 'strong fencing on the street corners where the project buildings front the main streets' (Rose 1958: 183). This design seems to be reflective of a number of modernist design ideals including the promotion of community and the social acceptance of segregation

¹⁹ It should be noted that Regent Park was originally predominantly Irish, due to the fact that The Authority first housed all the people whose houses were destroyed to build Regent Park, an area made up predominantly of Irish immigrants (Rose 1958).

²⁰ Lozano (1990: 132) uses the example of the Jewish, Christian, Armenian and Arab 'quarters' within Jerusalem.



Figure 3, Modified Georgian style red brick low-rise apartment in Regent Park (Personal Collection)

(Colquhoun 2002). As Lozano (1990: 6) explains, 'traditional cities built external walls against outsiders, cities in industrialized countries have become the first to build internal walls against themselves: The wealthy fear the poor, while the poor just fear'. It is commonly believed that the lack of through-streets resulted in the neighbourhood becoming isolated from the surrounding areas, as people had no reason to pass through the space (Connor developer; Mays 2005a). As Jacobs (1961: 36) explains, 'you can't make people use streets they have no reason to use'. Jacobs (1961: 34) continues to state: 'a well-used city street is apt to be a safe street. A deserted city street is apt to be unsafe'. This lack of people coupled with the fact that police cars could not easily access the neighbourhood is believed to have contributed greatly to the 'dangerous nature' of the neighbourhood (Aisha, tenant; Connor, developer; Mays 2005a; Milgrom 1999).

The Buildings of Regent Park

Due to the rapidly increasing projected costs figures, members of the Housing Authority put a great deal of thought into finding 'newer or less traditional forms of construction' that would reduce the over-all cost of construction, for instance the 'Armstrong System of cement blocks' (Rose 1958: 81). However, in the end the Authority settled on a modified Georgian style, comprised of a 'traditional brick veneer' (Rose 1958: 81). Though the decision was criticized due to the 'undistinguished' style, according to Rose (1958: 81) there had 'rarely been any

question concerning the soundness and stability of the construction' at the time when he wrote *Regent Park: A Study in Slum Clearance*.²¹ Members of the Housing Authority believed that 'while [the buildings] should be substantial and meet all the needs of a home, ... they should not be substantially more attractive and elaborate than homes outside the area, the owners of which would be required to contribute to the cost of the project' (Rose 1958: 74). Regent Park houses were not only widely known as *public housing* due to delineation of the area through a lack of through streets, but also in the design of the buildings themselves.

As Rose (1958: 184) describes,

all apartments in Regent Park contain a living room of generous proportions, a kitchen which is large enough to provide reasonable adequate dining space, and a bathroom. These facilities for living, eating and bathing are considered the basic two rooms, the kitchen and bathroom being counted as one room.

Every kitchen came equipped with a four-burner stove and a refrigerator. Larger families frequently found that the refrigerator was not an adequate size, and either replaced or supplemented it (Rose 1958: 184). Cupboard space was purposely not provided underneath the sink in order to 'assist cleanliness and ensure the absence of vermin' (Rose 1958: 184). As Rose describes, 'the bathroom includes a recessed bath of modern design, a flush toilet and a porcelain basin. Bathrooms are not tiled but are painted in enamel, and the floors are of linoleum cemented to concrete' (Rose 1958: 184). One can assume that linoleum was chosen over tile for financial reasons, and perhaps also to avoid the

²¹ Since that time there has been a great deal of criticism concerning the condition of the buildings (Mays 2005a).

mold that often festers in between tiles. It is in these such details that the paternalistic role of the planner as well as the focus on sanitation becomes evident.

Concluding Remarks

Regent Park as described above was eventually deemed so 'dysfunctional' that in 2003 the Toronto City Council approved a complete overhaul of the space. Regent Park became dilapidated, isolated and dangerous (Mays 2005; Milgrom 1999). Popular discourses frequently attribute the 'failure' of the space to poor planning (Connor, developer; Mays 2005a; Milgrom 1999). After examining the problematic nature of Regent Park, one is left with an important question: can the failure of the space be attributed to the failure of urban and architectural design and planning? Lozano (1990: 6) expresses that there is not a clear yes or no answer to this question. As he explains,

there are limits to what community design can do. Powerful technological and socioeconomic forces have been critical in determining the evolving organization of human settlements- suburbanization of jobs and housing ostensibly resulting from new industrial production and information technologies, new transportation modes and facilities, and conscious public policies. This has resulted in permanent inner-city poverty stemming from declining numbers of entry-level jobs, lower educational quality, and segregation.

As Lozano explains, there are numerous social phenomena that influence poverty in the city; community design cannot solve all of these problems. However, Lozano (1990: 7) believes that if designers fail to take into account the social forces at play when planning a community, this neglect will '[add] to the

disintegration of cities and [increase] the sterility of human life'. Lozano (1990:7) explains, 'a community design that builds upon the lessons of the past and is cognizant of the complexities of current realities not only can improve human environments and alleviate social and economic ills, but can also help to reshape cultural goals'. Though community and urban design influence the cityscape, it has become evident that there is more to Regent Park than solely the design of the space. Rose (1958) explains how during the opening ceremony of Regent Park, members of the Housing Authority and the Toronto City Council were praised for the project, where volunteers, management, construction workers and the residents were almost ignored, despite their considerable impact on the project. As Rose (1958) expresses, design was not the only influence on the space. Throughout this chapter, I examine some of the different factors involved in the creation and maintenance of Regent Park. For instance, Rose (1958) notes the invaluable role that building managers and administrators have on Regent Park. Further, the need for the development was situated within the socio-economic and political climate of the time.

Though planning is not the sole influential factor, it is an important one to consider. It is through investigating the design that the social ideals characteristic of the 1940s and 1950s become apparent. The types of buildings chosen for the space, the designs and placement of specific units, the ways in which the development was situated in relation to surrounding neighbourhoods, the prevalence of green space, the incomes taken into account when calculating the rental costs; all of these phenomena are deeply embedded within broad

ideological commitments. The design and planning of the space is situated within moral judgments about familial life and social life more generally. The design attempts to shape inhabitants into living in a certain way that is in line with creating what was viewed as the ideal social world at that time. It is in this way that urban design becomes both a reflection of, as well as a means to achieve the 'ideal society.' For this reason it is important to investigate different theories regarding urban design, as they provide both an understanding of the cityscape, as well as ideological commitments regarding social life more generally.

Chapter Three

The Power of Design?

Conceptualizing the Cityscape

In the previous chapter some of the key aspects of the original Regent Park development were outlined, focusing upon its basic conception and socioeconomic rationale in the post-war period. I illustrated how many of the decisions about housing stock and tenants were ideologically and normatively motivated as well as addressed well-known post-war issues of housing, employment, immigration and so on. What is apparent in all of this is the notion that *design can shape society*: the social order can be 'rebuilt' according to the dominant values of the time. This idea forms the focus of this chapter - the ways in which the theoretical notion that design can be used as a policy tool to shape and reshape social life has provided the basis for both Regent Park developments. As discussed in the previous chapter, such an idea is prevalent within both the original design of Regent Park and within its recent 'revitalization'. In this chapter I will examine how the relationships between design and society are conceptualized within key theories of the cityscape, in order to highlight some of the similarities and differences between the two Regent Park developments in terms of a transition from modern to postmodern conceptions of design and society.

To simplify initially, the original design of Regent Park can be clearly situated within *modernist* conceptions of design dominant during the 1940s. Conversely, the more recent revitalization can be understood as exemplifying aspects of *postmodernist* conceptions of design. Both of these design paradigms will be examined in order to ask what difference this makes in terms of the 'social' aspects of the design.

I will go on to argue that, despite their differences, both cultural paradigms privilege the affects of design on social spaces in a broad sense. As a partial corrective, some of the more socio-economically orientated theories of urban development will be discussed, highlighting the significance of commercial interests in shaping cultures of design and planning. Following this, I draw upon the work of Ash Amin, Nigel Thrift, Guy Julier and others, who stress the complexity of interactions between design and use in the rebuilding of urban spaces. In conclusion I suggest that many aspects of modern and postmodern theories of design are reproduced within the contemporary urban planning environment, and have some kind of agency in shaping key ideas. But, both of these underestimate the role of commercial imperatives and the complexity of interactions between design practices and uses of urban spaces, and the materials that enable the physical construction of urban space.

Modernist Urban Design

I will begin by examining some of the major trends in urban design and planning, as well as urban theory. Beginning with a brief discussion of modernist planning ideals, I will go on to discuss a proposed shift towards a postmodernist approach to and understanding of planning in greater detail. Though the modernist and postmodernist approaches to planning differ in many ways, both understandings rely on a belief that design deeply impacts the social outcomes within a space. In the previous chapter, I introduced some of the ways in which the original design of Regent Park is situated within modernist design ideologies that prevailed from the beginning of the 1900s. In what follows, I will outline these principles in more detail to provide a context for postmodernist approaches.

Modernity

There are many ideas about what marked the commencement of modernity, and how the scope, scale and detail of the era may be conceptualized. Within the sociological tradition, modernity is usually positioned as becoming fully formed at the end of the 19th Century, with the development of industrial societies well underway. Most notions of modernity suggest that it is contingent on its differentiation from the past. For example, Featherstone (1991: 3) argues that the concept of modernity relies on a notable cultural and

ideological shift from 'the traditional order'. As Weber (in Swingewood 1998: 25) describes,

modernity begins precisely with the progressive rationalization of institutions and culture, with the breakup of unified, dominant worldview and value systems and the emergence of a pluralist structure of differentiated 'value spheres', including the political and economic, the intellectual and the scientific, and the aesthetic and the 'erotic' (personal sphere).

The term *modernism* refers to the broadly cultural and intellectual movements (in art, literature, thought and so on) that embody the ideologies, which are broadly characteristic of modernity (the social, economic, political, technological order). According to Harvey (1990: 23), modernism surfaced before World War I and was 'a reaction to the new conditions of production (the machine, the factory, urbanization), circulation (the new systems of transport and communications), and consumptions (the rise of mass markets, advertising, mass fashion)'. Modernist *thought* is generally preoccupied with notions of linear progress, rationality, science, institutionalization and the scientific method (Eisenstadt 1996; Swingewood 1998). These themes of breaking with tradition, and of rational development and linear progress are evident throughout the majority of modernist urban planning and design initiatives.

Designing Utopias

Modernist urban (and architectural) designs are typically preoccupied with creating *utopian spaces* (Colquhoun 2002; Sandercock 2003). A significant amount of modernist literature concerning urban design, as well as modernist

urban and architectural designs themselves, attempt to create the ideal social space through the design process.²² Modernist thought understands human beings as ‘autonomous entities regulated by some internal laws which could be fully explained and grasped by human reason and inquiry’ (Eisenstadt 1996: 27). The belief in rational beings that can be understood through scientific inquiry allows for the legitimization of the idea that ‘experts’ can understand the actions of individuals, and potentially shape or even control future actions. As Sandercock (2003: 29) explains, ‘an Enlightenment belief in the perfectibility of Man became, by degrees, a belief in the perfectibility of the social order’. As modernist planning literature suggests, this social control can be achieved through well thought out urban and architectural design (Colquhoun 2002; Sandercock 2003). The possibility of an ideal social space, as well as the concept that such a space can be achieved through modern design relates to modernist beliefs of rationality and scientific management. In this context, Sandercock (2003: 29) refers to Le Corbusier as ‘the high priest of such thinking in the twentieth century’, though other designers and thinkers such as Ebenezer Howard and Bruno Taut are also well known for their explicitly utopian designs (Colquhoun 2002).

Within modernist urban design, the individual designer was viewed as an authority on how to create successful social spaces (Colquhoun 2002; Jacobs 1961; Sandercock 2003). As Jacobs (1961: 17) explains, ‘in all [modernist] Utopias, the right to have plans of any significance belonged only to the planners in charge’. Sandercock (1998: 4) expands on this, ‘modernist architects,

²² For instance, Le Corbusier’s *The Radiant City* (1935) and Bruno Taut’s *Alpine Architektur* and *Hufeisensiedlung*.

planners, engineers - Faustian heroes, all - saw themselves as experts who could utilize the laws of development to provide societal guidance'. Through rationality and reason, it was thought that these designers could reach an *objective* understanding of what the public 'needs' from a social space, as well as what corresponding design would fulfill these needs. As Colquhoun (2002: 1) describes, within modernity 'the architect is a kind of seer, uniquely gifted [individual] with the power of discerning the spirit of the age and its symbolic forms'. Jacobs (1961) criticizes this model of the expert planner for being 'paternalistic', not taking into account the experience and knowledge of actual community members. The all-knowing designer that prevailed during most of the 19th and 20th centuries mirrors more general modernist ideologies concerning the role of the expert in contrast to the 'lay person', as well as the clear divide between producer and consumer (Forty 1986; Lash and Lury 2007). More specifically Sandercock (1998: 4) argues that,

the hubris of the city-building professionals was their faith in the liberating potential of their technical knowledges and their corresponding belief in their ability to transcend the interest of capital, labour, and the states, and to arrive at an objective assessment of 'the public interest.'

As Sandercock (1998) describes, modernist urban and architectural designers rely on their expert knowledge and a belief in their comprehensive understanding of design to create what they saw as 'neutral' social spaces, embodying the highly problematic assumption that such efforts remain unaffected by external social, political, and economic factors (Sandercock 1998). Indeed, according to Jencks (1973: 30) architectural and urban projects within modernity are particularly 'dependant on collective patronage, whether this is by the state, local

governments, or a committee of businessmen', with governments playing a particularly important role in shaping and governing social life (Dean 1999).

Spatial Segregation in Urban Design

As I have previously discussed, another prominent characteristic of modernist planning is spatial segregation. Promoted most notably by Howard and followers of the Garden City Movement, it was common for the layout of a space to be organized into single use areas that were segregated from one another. As Jacobs (1961: 18) explains, Howard 'conceived that the way to deal with the city's functions was to sort and sift out of the whole certain simple uses, and to arrange each of these in relative self-containment'. This trend of spatial segregation became prevalent amongst urban planning in the Global North. According to Jacobs (1961: 18), 'city planners and designers with no interest in the Garden City, as such, are still thoroughly governed intellectually by its underlying principles'. This spatial segregation is reflected within the original design of Regent Park and is a particularly important aspect to note in relation to the revitalization process.

Postmodernist Urban Design

Postmodernism is a complex phenomenon *and* theoretical perspective that has been explored and articulated across many academic disciplines. The

term itself was first introduced 'as early as 1938 by the English historian Arnold Toynbee, and applied to architecture by Josph Hudnut in 1949' (Jencks 1982: 111). Postmodernism is the concept used to understand and categorize art, architecture, design, as well as social and political theories that accompany or respond to postmodernity. Postmodernity refers to the set of social, economic and political conditions characteristic of the time period 'after Modernity' (Best and Kellner 1991). While there may be somewhat of a consensus that key aspects of modernity and modernist thought have become less dominant (Best & Kellner 1991; Harvey 1990) the extent of this shift toward postmodernity and postmodernism is heavily debated throughout social theory (Harvey 1990: 39). One of the central problems has been that, whereas the characteristics of modernism can be expressed in a fairly clear manner the conditions of postmodernism are more ambiguous by nature (Harvey 1990: 42). This ambiguity is viewed, at times, as a major flaw in the very notion that there is a coherent temporal or spatial paradigm of postmodernity/postmodernism; however ambiguity is also one of the key characteristics of postmodernity (Harvey 1990: 42-43).

There is a great amount of debate between disciplines, as well as within them, surrounding when postmodernism emerged, or the exact cultural conditions that the term refers to. For this thesis, it is most relevant to use Jencks understanding of the commencement of postmodernity, which highlights the architectural dimensions and their relationship to broader notions of design and society. As Harvey (1990: 39) describes,

with respects to architecture... Charles Jencks dates the symbolic end of modernism and the passage to the postmodern as 3:32p.m. on 15 July 1972, when the Pruitt-Igoe housing development in St. Louis (a prize-winning version of Le Corbusier's machine for modern living) was dynamited as an uninhabitable environment for the low-income people it housed.

Jencks describes the shift to postmodernism as the materialization of the failure of the pinnacle of modernist architectural and urban design. As Jencks (1977: 86) and Tietz (1999: 86) explain, the shift from modernism towards postmodernism within architectural and urban design began as early as the 1960s. However, this shift was met with a considerate amount of resistance from the general population who had grown accustomed to modernist design, as well as a modernist paradigm shaping dominant ideas about how the built environment should be developed (Jencks 1977: 86).

For the purposes of this thesis, I will discuss how postmodernist tendencies in design differ from previously dominant modernist ones, while acknowledging that these two design paradigms are not completely antithetical. The differences between the two may often be subtle, but can usefully speak to the ways in which different ideals of social space have shaped the two Regent Park developments.

Heterotopias

As discussed, modernist urban design was typically preoccupied with creating *social utopias* through design, whereas there are only a few notable postmodernist utopian urban design projects (Harvey 1990: 40). As previously

explained, the concept that one can build 'a utopia' relies on the modern notion that the social world (and even nature) can be understood and controlled in a rational manner. Put simply, postmodernist thought marks a shift from such modernist beliefs in the rationality and potential order of the social, it signals the end of the meta-narratives that dominated modernity, the 'illusion of a "universal" human history' (Harvey 1990: 9). In this sense, postmodernist thought negates the possibility of achieving a singular overarching condition suitable for all societal members, as the diversity and difference of the human population and their experiences and priorities is recognized from the outset (Harvey 1990: 9). The end of universal narratives – of progress, of scientific rationality - was accompanied by a move 'towards the particularity of knowledge' (Featherstone 1991: 33). As Harvey (1990: 52) points out, within postmodernism, 'action can be conceived of and decided only within the confines of some local determinism, some interpretive community, and its purported meanings and its isolated domains'.

In the more specific context of urban design, these shifts in largely abstract theoretical ideas were materialized through the replacement of grand utopian design by 'place-specific' designs that take into account the local vernacular as well as the locals themselves (Harvey 1990). As Harvey (1990: 40) explains, designers following the postmodernist paradigm attempted 'to build for people rather than for Man'. Postmodern design thus mirrors the assumed conditions of postmodernity in that it '[pays] attention to the needs of the "heterogeneity of urban villagers and taste cultures" [and as a result does not

promote]... some unified meta-language [breaking] it down into highly differentiated discourses' (Harvey 1990: 82). The recognition of a *multiplicity* of narratives resulted in the utopian models of the past becoming almost obsolete.

Where the expert planner dominated modernist urban design, postmodernist theories of urban design promote *participatory* design (Harvey 1990: 76). As Sandercock (1998: 190) explains, postmodernist planning 'reveals a realm of the possible that is rooted in the heterogeneity of lived experience rather than in Utopian futures'. Postmodernist theories of architecture and design articulated by Jencks (1977) and Venturi (in Harvey 1990), promoted the notion that, as Harvey (1990: 40) puts it, 'architects had more to learn from the study of popular and vernacular landscapes (such as those of suburbs and commercial strips) than from the pursuit of some abstract, theoretical, and doctrinaire ideals'. This acceptance of popular or 'common' tastes is something that is not prevalent within the modernist design paradigm, in which such tastes 'tended [to be dismissed] as common and banal' (Harvey 1990: 76). The concept of a utopia relies on creating a *single* space, uninfluenced by local power dynamics, political or economic agendas, that is beneficial for everyone in the space.

Conversely, Jencks (1977) describes postmodernist urban design and architecture as 'radically schizophrenic by necessity' a term which can also be used to describe postmodernity itself. By taking into account the tastes and needs of so many different perspectives; postmodernist designers become more like *interpreters* than visionaries, at least in theory (see Bauman 1987). Of course, in practice, design professionals may speak the language of participatory

design but assume the role of experts in ways that maintain their influence and expertise. Influenced by Foucault's recognition of the power dynamics involved in the production of 'knowledges' (or discourses), postmodernist planning is credited with being more aware of the political agendas and power dynamics involved in planning. As Sandercock (1998: 217) explains, postmodernist planning also critiques the modernist belief that 'planning is, or could ever be, a-political and value-neutral'.

Mixed-Use Spaces

Whereas modernist urban spaces were characteristically segregated, postmodernist urban design treats the 'urban fabric as necessarily fragmented', as Harvey (1990: 66) describes it. The terms *collage* and *pastiche* are frequently used when describing the aesthetics of postmodernist urban and architectural design (Harvey 1990; Jencks 1977; Tietz 1999). As Harvey (1990: 40) states within postmodernity,

the norm is to seek out 'pluralistic' and 'organic' strategies for approaching urban development as a 'collage' of highly differentiated spaces and mixtures, rather than pursuing grandiose plans based on functional zoning and different activities.

This move towards 'mixed-use' spaces is evident in Toronto through both the St. Lawrence neighbourhood (designed in the 1970s) as well as the revitalization of Regent Park in contrast to the original segregated design.

Though modernist urban design was frequently funded by the state, postmodernist design is mostly privately funded (Harvey 1990). Jencks explains

that postmodern architecture and urban design is unsurprisingly market-driven as this is the dominant economic paradigm of the late 20th century. In this sense, post-Marxist scholars such as Jameson (1991) and of course Harvey (1990) have argued that postmodernism is the 'cultural logic' or 'cultural condition' that accompanies late capitalism. As Crimp (in Harvey 1990: 62) has noted, this trend towards corporate building is part of a larger 'virtual takeover of art by big corporate interests... Corporations have become the major patrons of art in every respect'. Whereas governmental and institutional buildings dominated the grand architectural projects in modernity, corporations hold this place within postmodernity (Tietz 1999). One of the most important aspects of this, especially in the case of public and private housing, is the ways in which market-oriented architecture relates to inequalities, catering mainly to the private consumer, while potentially ignoring marginalized populations and more general public needs.

Modernist versus Postmodernist Design?

In contrasting modernist and postmodernist design paradigms I have sought to highlight some key differences, particularly as they relate to the idea that design can be used as a social policy. This has been most explicit in modernist design. As Sandercock (1998: 16) explains,

the planners' historical role has been above all to control the production and use of space. In their state-designed role, they have acted as spatial police, regulators of bodies of space, deciding who can do what and be where, and even, when.

Although postmodernist theories of urban design take into account 'the local', and the potential diversity and difference of social subjects, they also place great significance on the design itself. Both perspectives have a somewhat deterministic stance concerning the role that design has on the ways in which a space operates. For example, the 'failure' of Regent Park is often understood by planning professionals, and through news articles, as resulting from the failure to create an effective spatial design (Connor, developer; May 2005; Milgrom 1999) rather than as a critical problem of design itself. As Edward W. Soja (2000: 9) explains, urban space

has tended to be viewed primarily as an architecturally built environment, a physical container for human activities, shaped and reshaped over time by professional or vernacular citybuilders and a host of non-spatial but distinctly social and historical processes of urban development.

As Soja (2000) describes, understandings of the urban environment that focus on physical space often reduce the cityscape to merely an outcome of urban design. Though urban design notably impacts cities, and it is important to understand the ideologies, interests and concepts that inform that urban design, it is problematic to assume that this is all there is to cityscapes (Amin and Thrift 2002; Soja 2000). Soja (2000: 9) draws attention to this lack of attention to city *life* stating that, 'this has concentrated attention on the distilled material forms of urban spatiality, too often leaving aside its more dynamic, generative, developmental, and explanatory qualities'. Accordingly, I will turn toward alternative perspectives on the development of cityscapes that stress how the cultures of design and planning discussed above are themselves shaped by other factors within the context of capitalist development.

Critiques of Design Culture

In opposition to the previously discussed perspectives, which focus on the impacts of urban and architectural design and planning, many theories concerning cityscapes view changes in the capitalist economy as the most influential factor for a city. As Amin and Thrift (2002: 54) describe, influenced by Marxist and Weberian thought, 'the varied and uneven geography of the capitalist economy' replaced spatial design as the dominant influence on cityscapes within literature on the subject. For instance, rather than looking to modernist planning ideologies for an understanding of urban spaces within modernity, this economic-based model examines the effects of industrial capitalism. As Soja (2000: 77) observes, the population shift from rural to urban spaces in the 19th Century²³ can be understood as a consequence of the means of production required to reproduce an industrial capitalist economy, as well as the

development of new ways to keep this emerging industrialized space economy of urbanism together, to administer and reproduce the social and spatial relations of capitalism at its now tightly nested global, national, regional, and local state scales

This focus on the economics of the city translated into a number of different understandings of the cityscape. I will provide a brief overview of some of the more influential economic-centered understandings of urban spaces.

Despite the view that industrial capitalism increased the population of urban spaces, key urban sociologists such as Manual Castells (in Soja 2000:

²³ Soja (2000: 77) refers to this shift in population as part of the third Urban Revolution.

101) argue that industrial capitalism resulted in the ‘virtual disappearance [of the city] as an institutional and relatively autonomous social system’. Castells argues that although cities were housing a larger percentage of the population, the global scale of capitalism lead to the *insignificance* of the city as an entity within itself. As Soja (2000: 102) describes, Marxist historical materialism negated the potential influence of non-economic, spatial-centric²⁴ factors on urban spaces. However, Castells (in Soja 2000: 103) focuses on ‘the structuring and re-structuring effects of the social relations of production, consumption, exchange, and administration’. Castells (in Amin and Thrift 2002: 55) views cities as hubs in ‘a new global ‘space of flows’ of information, people and commodities’ (Amin and Thrift 2002: 55). Castells critique of urban theories concerned with spatial design refers in a large part to the work of Lefebvre, who, as Soja (2000: 104) describes, worked towards an ‘urbanistic theorization’ of Marxist thought as apposed to a Marxist analysis of the urban. Soja (2000: 104-105) goes on to praise Lefebvre’s “spatialization of Marxism”; as it takes into account both socioeconomic factors as well as spatial design. Theories of urban design are not the only forces behind the cityscape. Often economic motivations inform what kind of social world planners attempt to create. Further, as Castells (in Amin and Thrift 2002) articulates, cities are embedded with ‘flows’ of people, commodities and information. It is important to supplement understandings of the nature of urban design with the ways in which differing modes of production and economic

²⁴ Though Castells recognizes that social and economic processes materialize into spatial phenomena, he does not believe that the spatial serves as a cause that results in social effects (Soja 2000: 104).

motivations come into play throughout both the planning process as well as the cityscape in and of itself.

Some city leaders and urban thinkers displayed concern that 'localized linkage would lose out to international linkage through the activities of transnational corporations or the rise of global sourcing and subcontracting patterns' (Amin and Thrift 2002:55). This type of theory commonly proposes that within a global economy, the local will become obsolete. As Amin and Thrift (2002: 37) explain, these theories state 'the development of the full money economy results... in a progressive detachment from space, helped by communication techniques that enable space to be overcome by time'. However, Amin and Thrift (2002: 55-56) note a trend in urban thought towards a renewed importance of the local, which promotes 'the power of spatial proximity (intensity of face-to-face transactions, local knowledge transfers, agglomeration economies)'. Though the advancement of non-space specific information and communication technologies as well as globalization has lead some thinkers to deem physical local environments as inconsequential (Amin and Thrift 2002), through examining Regent Park it is apparent that this is not the case. Regent Park presents evidence of a dynamic specific physical locality, which, though influenced by global economic forces, is distinctly local in other ways.

The Socio-Spatial Complexities of the Cityscape

The majority of the ideas discussed above are efforts to uncover the social, cultural or economic factors that shape the built environment or cityscape. As Soja (2000: 7) explains, until the 1990s, writing concerning urban spaces and planning focused on the social and cultural processes and ideologies that influenced the design of urban spaces –the modern to postmodern narrative. According to Soja (2000: 7) it was not until fairly recently that the *physical* spatiality of urban spaces has become important, as a *causal* entity within itself. As Soja (2000: 8) explains, it is commonly understood that the ‘spatial is simultaneously, even problematically, social, it is much more difficult to comprehend the reverse relation, that what is described as social is always at the same time intrinsically spatial’. Further, this ‘socio-spatial’ dialectic, as Soja (2000: 8) puts it, can present challenging problems for analysis as the two phenomena are always interrelated. Soja (2000: 9-10) draws upon Lefebvre, who argued that cities are made up of the ‘interaction between macro and micro geographical configurations’. As Lefebvre (in Soja 2000: 10) describes, one type of phenomenon cannot be privileged over the other, cityscapes result from the complex relationships between large-scale social, political and economic phenomena *and* localized, everyday life.

Some contemporary social theory concerning urban spaces attempts to take into account the multiplicity of different material and non-material factors that makes up city life (Amin and Thrift 2002; Sandercock 2003; Soja 2000). As Amin

and Thrift (2002: 3) argue 'cities are places of work, consumption, circulation, play, creativity, excitement, boredom'. They cannot be understood solely in terms of the impact of cultures and practices of design, neo-liberal urban policies or technological developments. Contrasting with Mumford's view of a city as an entity with an underlying coherent system, Amin and Thrift (2002: 8) believe that contemporary cities are too complex to be understood this way:

the city's boundaries have become far too permeable and stretched, both geographically and socially, for it to be theorized as a whole. The city has no completeness, no centre, no fixed parts. Instead, it is an amalgam of often-disjointed processes and social heterogeneity, a place of near and far connections, a concatenation of rhythms always edging in new directions. This is the aspect of cities that needs to be captured and explained, without any corresponding desire to reduce the varied phenomena to any essence or systematic integrity.

Though Amin and Thrift (2002) believe that it is necessary to theorize cities, they caution against systematizing thought and generalization. It is important to examine cities and the ways in which they operate, but it is problematic to attempt to reduce specific urban spaces to the outcome of a single phenomenon or process: 'too often, writings about the city have taken hold of one process and presumed that it will become general, thus blotting out other forms of life' (Amin and Thrift 2002: 40). Some aspects of such approaches to urban life, particularly the idea that the social and the spatial are mutually reinforcing and that both are materially shaped, have been influenced by actor-network theory (Latour 2005).

Actor-network theory provides an analysis of social phenomena that takes into account the interactions of human and non-human actors. In fact, within this understanding it is these interactions *themselves* that make up networks (Sismondo 2004: 66). According to Latour (2005), one cannot validly discern a

single social factor that dominates the social world. As Latour (2005: 30) states, 'ANT doesn't claim that we will ever know if society is "really" made of small individual calculative agents or of huge macroactors'. It is through the relative connections between actors that one can grasp the most 'objective judgment' (Latour 2005: 30) concerning a network. It is for this reason that the social world is best understood locally, that is through examining specific networks and the ways in which they operate (Latour 2005; Sismondo 2004). As Amin and Thrift (2002: 30) explain, places 'are best thought of not so much as enduring sites but as *moments of encounters*, not so much as "presents", fixed in space and time, but as variable events; twists and fluxes of interrelation'. It is through the interactions of these different actors, such as building policy, theories of design, everyday interactions, communication technologies, and the material space itself that one can come to an understanding of the cityscape. Though there is some discourse concerning actor-network theory's lack of recognition of power relations, recognizing power dynamics is key to understanding social spaces. Through an understanding of power relations influenced by Foucault, one can examine the power relations involved in the actors' interactions. As described by Geoff Danaher et al. (2000: 71),

power now functions in terms of the relations between different fields, institutions, bureaucracies, and other groups (such as the private media and other businesses) within the state. What characterizes these relations of power is not set in stone. Power can flow very quickly from one point or another, depending on changing alliances and circumstances. In other words, power is mobile and contingent.

In the instance of Regent Park, it is important to examine the ways in which power plays into the interactions between the actors involved, notably Toronto

Community Housing, Daniel's Corporation, the renters and condominium owners. However, these actors are only significant in the ways in which they interact with each other within the network; 'objects are defined by their places in networks, and their properties appear in [contexts], not in isolation' (Sismondo 2004: 69). In other words, the different organizations, residents, and social phenomena involved in Regent Park are shaped by one another.

Influenced by actor-network theory, Guy Julier (2008) explains that one can come to an understanding of an object, space or an image through viewing it as the intersection of its *designer*, its *production* and its *consumption*. Julier (2008) explains that none of these phenomena are solely deterministic, rather it is the interaction of all three phenomena, and all of the different social factors involved in each, that make up that object, space or image. Julier (2008) provides a well thought-out means to understand an urban space, which takes into account both macro and micro forces, as well as the physical space itself. Julier (2008) recognizes the different types of forces at play in creating social spaces. As he expresses, the design of a space or object is not deterministic of the ways that it will be used; the use of a space or object will alter the intended purpose or meaning (Julier 2008). Further, Julier (2008) notes that the physical production of the commodity or space, influenced by technological developments amongst other things, cannot be taken for granted. Whereas often theories of design tend to neglect the physical and spatial aspects of the city (Soja 2000), Julier (2008) articulates the necessity of the physical space or object.

Julier (2005: 874) proposed the term *urban designscape* 'to convey the pervasive and multilevel use of the symbolic capital of design in identifying and differentiating urban agglomerations'. Julier (2005: 874) explains that an urban designscape 'exists through a variety of aesthetic platforms, ranging through brand design, architecture, urban planning, events, exhibitions. But it also extends to the productive process of design policy-making and implementation'. Julier (2005: 874) notes that the combination of these forces work in conjunction with the consumption and social practices of people within that neighbourhood to create a symbolic understanding of the space. Though Julier (2005) notes the influence of design, he articulates that an urban designscape is not simply designed to be a certain way and consequently symbolically understood to be that way. Rather, a designscape arises through complex interactions between finance and capital interests, building stock, commercial organizations, cultural ideas about that space, and peoples' social and consumption practices within that space, among other things. Though an urban designscape can change, it is more complex than simply redesigning and rebuilding the space, this sort of shift involves changes in all of the above-mentioned overlapping phenomena, which work to reproduce each other. In the instance of Regent Park, the 'revitalization' requires much more than a reconstruction in order to be 'successful', the whole designscape needs to be 'revitalized' in order for the space to change.

Julier (2008) provides an understanding of cityscapes as complex networks that are made up of the interaction of their design, production and consumption. It is for this reason that I use Julier's (2008) model as a starting

point for my analysis of Regent Park revitalization. However, due to the specific nature of the project I use the categories of *design*, *use* and *materials*. Design is used instead of Julier's (2008) 'designer', as there are multiple 'designers' and policy makers, as well as residents involved in the design process. Throughout this section I note some of the different organizations, ideologies and political and economic factors involved in the design process. I examine the development of governmental policy regarding public housing, and how Regent Park is situated within these policies and documents. Through interview material with TCHCs developer partner, I provide insight into the design process and some of the motivations behind the design features. The next category is *use*, rather than Julier's (2008) proposed 'consumption' due to the fact that I am examining a neighbourhood development that for the past 60 years contained no commercial establishments, and I want to propose that consumption can be misunderstood as being primarily about the acquisition and purchase of commodities rather than the ways in which objects and spaces are used. In this sense, though the term consumption can be used loosely, the daily practices that I examine in this section are better fitted to the term 'use'. Throughout this section I discuss the ways in which three residents of Regent Park experience the space, including their thoughts on the space, the ways that they navigate throughout the space, and their experiences living in Regent Park generally. In this section I focus on the ways that the residents utilize the space in ways that were both intended and unintended by the design. Lastly I have chosen to use the category of materials instead of 'production', as the materials themselves have a powerful influence on

Regent Park. However, due to the focus and scope of the project, the materials will be discussed in conjunction with the designing of and use of the space.

Concluding Remarks

Throughout this chapter I have charted the historical development of theories of design and planning to work in tandem with the focus on Regent Park over the same period. Through an inquiry into modernist and postmodernist conceptions of design, I situated both the original design and the revitalization within more abstract conceptions of ideal social life and the role that a designer should play to achieve it. It is through examining these different paradigms that the motivations and methods behind the designs become apparent. Further, through examining modernity and postmodernity, one gains insight into the general nature of the social worlds that the designers are attempting to shape. It is with this insight in conjunction with an investigation into the political motivations behind the developments that one can begin to examine Regent Park. However, as made apparent through the presence of a private developer in the revitalization of Regent Park, urban design is inextricably connected to economic motivations, dominating modes of production, as well as 'flows' of commodities and consumption patterns (Amin and Thrift 2002; Julier 2005; Soja 2000). I have chosen to utilize Julier's (2008) model for understanding urban spaces, as the approach accommodates theories of design with economic interests and influences, while taking into account the ways in which materials and the physical

space are implicated in both, as well as the impacts of the actual use of the space.

Chapter Four

Regent Park Revitalization:

Mixed-Income, Mixed-Use Heterotopias

This chapter examines the processes of Regent Park revitalization in detail, drawing upon the historical and theoretical material discussed so far and employing in-depth interviews as a means of generating dialogue between macro and micro accounts of the space. Inspired in part by Julier's (2008: 13) model for understanding 'design culture', I examine Regent Park through the relational categories of 'design' and 'use', the interaction of which is conceptualized as 'building the social' of Regent Park. Both categories are inseparable from the physical infrastructure of Regent Park, from the conception of the appropriate construction materials to the ways in which residents interact with the physical space. For example, throughout my interviews, the topic of building materials was frequently discussed, where TCHC requested that Daniels Corporation uphold a level of 'environmentally responsible materials'. Daniels Corporation also had to uphold certain standards and conventions concerning what types of materials are used in contemporary condominiums in Toronto (such as glass, granite, and hardwood). Additionally, the TCHC tenants that I interviewed both discuss interactions they had with the materials used in their units. In contrast to

an actor-network account, my research does not allow for an analysis of the materials outside what is said about them. As such, within this chapter I examine the ways that materials make up Regent Park through how both the developers, as well as the residents understand, articulate and interact with them. The chapter is organized as follows.

Firstly, within the section on design, I examine how the Regent Park revitalization developed through political and economic contexts that have shaped ‘who gets to do design’ in this case, and what kind of relative role each organization has been allotted. I focus on the proposed goals of both TCHC and Daniels Corporation, highlighting what I argue to be the key ideologies and theories that are present throughout these organizations manifestos. Through in-depth interview material with an influential figure at Daniels Corporation, I examine the design process itself, what the new design features and why, who was involved in the process, how the organization attempts to bring about social change as well as how theories of design mesh with economic motivations to create a design-in-practice.

Secondly, within the section on use, I draw upon in-depth interview material with Regent Park residents to analyze specific examples of how these people interact with the built environment. Although the small sample size does not allow for generalizations to be made regarding Regent Park as a whole, the interviews used in this section are in some ways ideal-typical in that they represent different categories of resident (a new Regent Park tenant who volunteers as the tenant representative for his building, a tenant who has lived in

both the original design and the newer design, and a condominium owner) and in this way provide significant examples of how people live in and react to the design.

As Julier (2008) explains, these phenomena (design and use, and the materials entangled with them) are in reality necessarily intertwined; they are all affected by, as well as affect one another. Though I have separated them to examine the development, there are many cases when the line between design and use becomes particularly blurred. For example, there are occasions when the design of the space elicits both intended and unintended behaviors within the neighbourhood in general, as well as the buildings more specifically. Similarly, the actual use of the space also shapes the neighbourhood, as well as future designs of the space. The chapter concludes by articulating the specific ways in which the interactions between the design, the everyday use as well as the materials make up Regent Park as a social network.

Rebuilding the Social: Designing and Planning the Revitalization

Public Housing in Socioeconomic Context

The original plan for Regent Park developed in the 1940s was financed by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), formed by the federal government in 1946 (James 2010: 71). As James (2010: 76) observes, in 1993, Paul Martin (the Finance Minister for the Liberal Federal Government at the time)

shifted exclusive responsibility for subsidized housing to the Provincial Government. However James (2010: 76) explains that within the next nine years, inline with his 'Common Sense Revolution', Mike Harris (the Premier of Ontario at that time),

cancelled any pending commitments [the Provincial Government had] to public housing construction, eliminated regulatory barriers on private builders, cut support for 17,000 public housing units and handed off responsibility for public housing to municipal governments which lack the taxing capabilities to adequately fund it.

The Social Housing Reform Act (SHRA), passed in December of 2000, downloaded responsibility for social housing to 47 'service managers' who would be responsible for regulating the portfolios in their region (Hackworth 2008: 13). In Toronto, the city is the 'service manager'. As stated by the SHRA,

A service manager may,

- (a) purchase or otherwise acquire a housing project in its service area for the purpose of operating it as a housing project;
- (b) purchase or otherwise acquire land in its service area for the purpose of operating a housing project on it;
- (c) construct a housing project on land that it has acquired in its service area;
- (d) make alterations or additions to a housing project that it has acquired or constructed in its service area;
- (e) operate and maintain a housing project that it has acquired or constructed in its service area;
- (f) sell or otherwise dispose of land and housing projects that it has acquired or constructed in its service area;

(The Social Reform Housing Act 2000, Section 5.1)

The ostensible reasoning behind this downloading of responsibility was to shift the nature of social housing from a 'top down' model, to a locally based, autonomous, 'more entrepreneurial' project (Hackworth 2008: 17). However, as Hackworth (2008: 17) found through his interviews with Municipal Non-profit Housing providers (MNPs), these organizations lack the power to make significant changes to the nature of public housing, and yet hold the majority of the financial responsibilities, as well as find themselves responsible for the 'more vulnerable populations', as Hackworth puts it. As the SHRA states,

upon the incorporation of a local housing corporation, the Minister may do anything the board of directors is permitted to do by subsection 117 (1) of the *Business Corporations Act* (first directors meeting) and a by-law or a decision authorized by this subsection.

(The Social Reform Housing Act 2000, Section 6)

It is through this subsection that the government retains control over subsidized housing projects, should they wish to alter the developments. As an official at a MNP notes, 'a municipal politician has more ability to put a "cap" on or prevent the development of new social housing [than someone working at a MNP]' (Hackworth 2008: 18). In short, MNPs are liable for the success or failure of subsidized housing projects, without being granted a significant amount of power over the projects.

As Hackworth (2008: 13) explains, housing providers were both implicitly, as well as explicitly pressured to 'become more entrepreneurial, to ally more closely with the private building market, and to get used to working with their local service managers rather than a central authority'. Writers such as

Hackworth (2008) and James (2010) note the lack of involvement from the Federal and Provincial Government in public housing, as well as the trend towards private interventions, as characteristic of the neoliberal framework in which the Canadian and other western governments operate. These neoliberal agendas are evident throughout the Regent Park Revitalization, most obviously through TCHCs partnering with a private corporation, Daniels Corporation, as well as the accompanying focus on financial gain.²⁵

In 2003, Dalton McGuinty replaced Harris (and his successor Ernie Eves) as the Premier of Ontario. Hackworth (2008: 13) believes that the voters' support of the Liberal Party, and McGuinty, was a backlash against Harris and Eves' Conservative ideologies, including their stance on public housing. However, Hackworth (2008: 14) explains that despite McGuinty's election promises, social housing has 'taken a back seat to health care, economic development, and the federal-provincial funding relationship'. Drawing upon the work of Harvey, Hackworth (2008: 15) examines the way in which neoliberal ideologies have been 'built into' the social world in such a way that neoliberal beliefs have become a 'foundational assumption even among those who are mildly critical of the project'. Hackworth (2008: 16) uses the state of Canadian public housing to examine how Harvey's account of neoliberal capitalism plays out in Canadian society. After interviewing 37 managers from Ontario MNPs, Hackworth (2008: 16) found that,

the prevailing finding among nearly all respondents was that while social housing has indeed been placed more prominently and sympathetically in

²⁵ A more detailed examination into these motivations will be presented shortly.

the public realm, virtually nothing has been done to roll back even the most punitive 'reforms' of the Harris-Eves period.

Hackworth (2008) argues that the current Liberal stance regarding public housing actually proves to be more harmful to the future of public housing than a government that explicitly does not support it, as the discursive support of public housing does not warrant active protests, yet little is being done to improve social housing.

Hackworth (2008: 16) also notes that the SHRA encourages non-profit housing agencies to act more like for-profit corporations. A manager at an Ontario MNP states that,

social housing providers are having to become more market-oriented. Under the old program there was less pressure for providers to increase market rents ... New benchmarks will mean that providers need to be more attentive to the marketplace so that they don't place the corporation at financial risk/difficultly. It will be necessary that nonprofit providers take the same market rent increases as (other for-profits providers) in the marketplace.

(in Hackworth 2008: 16)

The promotion of the private sector that is characteristic of neoliberal ideologies is evident within the public-private partnerships regarding public housing developments. As Hackworth (2008: 13) draws attention to, the SHRA serves to insure the reproduction of these neoliberal agendas even after the (then) current government is no longer in power. The SHRA becomes an actor itself, shaping subsidized housing in ways that were both intended and unintended by the past government. The SHRA remains a key player in shaping subsidized housing despite the shift from a Conservative to a Liberal Provincial government, as well as the efforts of Municipal Governments, 'service agencies' and MNPs. In this

way, the SHRA provides an example of how the shifting socioeconomic and political landscape of contemporary capitalism shapes the possibilities of design and planning with respect to Regent Park.

Indeed, Connor (developer) described this downloading of responsibility from the provincial government to the municipal government as ‘something kind of catastrophic, but important to the revitalization of Regent Park. It was due to this shift in responsibility (influenced by the agendas described above, the SHRA and both the Federal and Provincial Government’s delegation of their prior responsibilities for subsidized housing), that in 2002 Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) took over responsibility for Regent Park, as well as all other government subsidized housing developments in Toronto (James 2010: 76). TCHC is headed by a 13-member Board of Directors consisting of the Mayor (or a representative for the Mayor), three Toronto City Councilors, and nine citizens, two of which must be TCHC tenants (TCHC website). As explained on the TCHC website, the Board is responsible for ‘managing the housing portfolio, employing a staff, making policy and operational decisions, leading shareholder direction, [and] following related legislation and regulations’. It is evident that the existence of TCHC, as well as the Corporation’s intentions, are deeply impacted by the Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments, as well as a number of different documents written by governmental organizations, such as the SHRA.

Urban Design in Theory and in Practice

The push toward 'entrepreneurialism' and 'localism' described above involves a complex mixture of market and commercial imperatives associated with developments in late capitalism, alongside elements of the postmodern critique of large-scale state funded modernist projects, to be replaced by 'participatory design' and mixed-use spaces. Such a mixture is evident within the more specific processes involved in the design and planning of Regent Park revitalization. As examined in chapter three, it is common within modernist planning ideologies to view design as a separate entity, uninfluenced by social, economic and political factors (Sandercock 1998). Despite the critique of the original design, popular discourse surrounding Regent Park seems to adhere to this notion that planners or designers hold almost absolute control over social spaces. This sentiment is evident through the common belief that the 'failure' of the original Regent Park was a result of a *poor design* (James 2010). For instance, Connor (developer) credits the lack of through-streets and the resulting segregation as the reason that Regent Park is understood as a dangerous neighbourhood. As Connor (developer) explains, the segregation

was deliberately done in the 40s and 50s to create this idyllic, park-like setting that was going to be this wonderful place to live in the urban. You know, that was the theory of planning at that point in time- that it's going to be a quiet place, while the city bustles all around. It's going to be safe for kids because there's not going to be roads that go through it. But the planning itself led to consequences in the health and vitality world, which were really unintended. But looking back it's kind of obvious.

Connor is speaking not only to the modernist popularization of 'park-like' spaces, but also to what was understood as an *ideal community* at that time. This 'idyllic community' was also 'designed in' through the lack of commercial establishments within the neighbourhood. As Connor (developer) explains,

unbelievably, there was no bank and no grocery store in Regent Park for the past 50 years. And again it seems so simple, but it's so important, it's like so critical to the life of the community. And again, it's about planning, it's about how you layout a community realize - okay we need to create the zone where there will be commercial, but that will be successful.

Again, this concept of design determining the social is evident through the notion that the lack of commercial spaces had a negative effect on the neighbourhood. Though Connor (developer) recognizes changes in design paradigms since the 1940s, when the original project was designed, he does not seem to find the concept that design shapes social life problematic, or that it may be the broader context of socioeconomic problems that shapes how the built environment gets used in practice. Rather, he finds the design itself problematic. As Connor (developer) explains, due to the design of the space,

police couldn't patrol like they do up and down every other street, because you can't get there. So the planning itself is a problem and, this, you know, created issues in the community... people became afraid of Regent Park, people didn't want to walk or drive through-and couldn't. So it became this island of danger and poverty.

Connor articulates that problems originated from the lack of police access to the area, due to the neighbourhood's segregation from the surrounding city, as well as the great number of streets throughout the neighbourhood that cannot accommodate automobiles, making it difficult for police cars to navigate the area. Connor goes on to recognize how the 'dangerous' nature of the neighbourhood

became recognized by the community (as well as surrounding communities), and as a result people began to avoid being out in Regent Park. As he explains,

by taking out public streets you take out the opportunity for people to, sort of, have the feeling of neighborhood- but where neighbors look out for each other, because you are walking up and down the same public streets. You have what Jane Jacobs calls the eyes on the street. Eyes on the street, which is just people on front porches and on front stoops and the mailman goes by and the pizza delivery man comes and delivers to your front door

(Connor, developer)

Connor makes reference to Jacobs' (1961) concept of 'eyes on the street', which refers to the idea that the presence of people around a neighbourhood subsequently creates a safer community.²⁶ Connor sees planning as integral to ensuring the presence of 'eyes on the street'. TCHC (2007: 11) also speaks to this notion of safety, stating that it is important to 'create a community that is both safe and perceived as safe'. According to Jacobs (1961) it is only when a neighbourhood is perceived as safe, that people will become more present on the streets, and as a result the neighbourhood becomes more safe. Regent Park was not, and still to this day is not perceived as a safe neighbourhood. As Frank, a resident of Regent Park that I interviewed states,

I don't want to go out at night, I'm worried because I know... I have to pass Gerrard Street, and I don't know if you know about or remember the streetcar comes along on Carlton and then down but I get nervous just when I make the turn, because of what I heard

Frank expresses that while on the streetcar he becomes nervous at merely passing along an outer edge of Regent Park. Jacobs' concepts concerning urban spaces seem to be quite influential in the planning of Regent Park revitalization;

²⁶ See chapter two for a more detailed explanation of Jacobs' eyes on the street.

Jacobs (1961) conceptions of eyes, participatory design and 'reconnecting' the community are evident throughout the revitalization.

The segregation of the poor through the design of Regent Park is addressed by TCHC in *Regent Park Social Development Plan: Executive Summary* released in September 2007. Within this document TCHC (2007: 1) writes,

despite persistent, innovative work by residents and local service providers, the economic and social marginalization of the community disadvantaged the people who live there. These local barriers, or 'neighbourhood effects,' have undermined access to employment, success in education, and opportunity for advancement in Regent Park, as they have in other low-income communities across North America.

Within this statement TCHC discusses the socioeconomic effects of 'poor' planning on the residents. TCHC states that 'research shows outcomes for individuals are affected by the neighbourhood they live in. People in disadvantaged neighbourhoods face lower outcomes in health, employment, income and education' (TCHC 2007: 5). TCHC is not explicit in their views concerning the root causes of these 'neighbourhood effects' within the *Regent Park Social Development Plan*. However, they appear to reduce many of these problems to issues of proper planning.

Ten years after the completion of the space, even Rose (1968 in James 2010: 74) himself conceded that

we have constructed huge villages of the poor, disabled, and handicapped, vast collections of dependent and quasi-dependent families ... who cannot provide or foster the indigenous leadership or, at least, the quantity and continuity of leadership required to build a strong neighborhood

In Toronto, Regent Park is infamous for being a design failure (James 2010; May 2005; Milgrom 1999). As James (2010: 76) describes, 'it was seen as a neighbourhood that hopelessly leads to violence, substance abuse and community fragmentation due to its built environment'. The concept that poor planning *caused* many of the problems in the neighbourhood is held not only by those involved in planning, but also by the residents, as well as many Toronto reporters (May 2005: Milgrom 1999). For instance, Aisha (tenant) describes 'the design was bad, very bad like you don't who is coming if there is the problem'.

Reproducing the notion that these problems stem from the original design, the revitalization provides a complete design overhaul of the space. After being granted responsibly over Toronto subsidized housing in 2002, TCHC decided to revitalize Regent Park, with the agenda of having Regent Park serve as a model for other social housing projects, both in Canada and in the United States of America (Connor, developer). Taking influence from St. Lawrence, a successful mixed-income, mixed-use neighbourhood built in the 1970s in downtown Toronto (James 2010: 77), TCHC set out to find a developing partner. According to Connor (developer) TCHC chose Regent Park as their first project due to a grassroots call for change initiated by the residents themselves. Connor explains that Regent Park tenants started having meetings regarding the problematic state of their neighbourhood. As Connor describes, the tenants

started talking about 'okay we got to do something. what can we do, what should be done?' You know, what are the solutions to this problem and they came to that conclusion, which was wonderful that came from the tenant, and it came from the community, that basically the entire community would need to be demolished and [rebuilt] doubling the density more than doubling the density to have a mix of ownership housing and rental housing

As Conor explains, through their lived experience, residents developed ideas concerning what was problematic in their neighbourhood, and how it should be altered. It is through circumstances such as this – which appear to speak to the notion of ‘participatory design’ - that the complex relationship between ‘design’ and ‘use’ can be illuminated.

TCHCs original plan was to sell land to a developer interested in building condominiums in the neighbourhood. TCHC would then reinvest the money from those sales into building new subsidized housing units. TCHC put out a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), which Connor (developer) describes as a document explaining ‘just who are we and do we have the capability [to execute the project]’. From these RFQs, TCHC created a short list of five developers who were of interest. TCHC then gave the five developers a Request For Proposal (RFP). An RFP is a very detailed plan for the project, as Connor (developer) describes it. Daniels Corporation provided a different approach than what TCHC originally had in mind. As Connor (developer) explains,

my approach to it was- your land is worth nothing. I'm not going to buy your land because it isn't worth anything today. We have to go through a process with you to create value in these lands. We have to do it together as partners.

Daniels Corporation proposed that they would work in conjunction with TCHC to develop the *entire neighbourhood*, an initiative that is fitting with Hackworths’ (2008) findings regarding the frequent collaboration between MNPs and private corporations in the redesigning of cityscapes. Initially, TCHC rejected Daniels Corporation’s RFP. However, after a few months of working with their original

developer, TCHC realized that the ‘whole proposal the other builder had given them was full of smoke and mirrors’, as Connor (developers) put it. Consequently, TCHC put out another RFP to the other four developers on the short-list, and Daniels Corporation was chosen.

Designing Community

Like the original Regent Park (and the accompanying ‘slum clearance’), Regent Park revitalization necessitates the tearing down of all original structures, except for one apartment building in Regent Park South, designed by Peter Dickinson.²⁷ The demolition and construction is done in phases, in order to minimize disruption to the residents’ lives as much as possible. The design of the new space is frequently referred to as ‘mixed-income, mixed-use.’ In this sense, the problems of segregation often attributed to the original design are being counter-acted by a design with through streets that integrates condominiums with public housing, as well as commercial and ‘cultural’ spaces. Jacobs (1961) proposal seems to be quite influential in the revitalization. For example, Jacobs (1961: 393) writes,

the underlying principles for bringing life to a project site itself and to the borders where it must be rejoined with the district are the same as the principles for helping any city area where vitality is low. The planners have to diagnose which conditions for generating diversity are missing here- whether there is a lack of mixed primary uses, whether the blocks are too large, whether there is insufficient mixture in ages and types of buildings, whether the concentration of people is great enough. Then, whatever among those

²⁷ This building will be preserved as it is viewed as an important architectural work. The design won the Massey Medal of Architecture in 1961. There have been discussions of renovating the building, turning it into a condominium.

conditions is missing has to be supplied- usually gradually and opportunistically- as best it can be.

The new design of Regent Park is intended to 're-connect' the neighbourhood with the surrounding areas, as well as 'draw in new residents with a wider range of incomes, professions, skills, relationships and backgrounds to Regent Park' (TCHC 2007: 1) through providing condominiums for sale. This design is fitting with Jacobs' (1961: 395) notion that a successful public housing development must 'tie in with streets beyond the project borders, because the prime objective is to knit this site with what lies around it'. TCHC (2007: 1) explains

these changes will add more economic resources, social networks and contact with decision makers to the current community, providing Regent Park residents with tools to improve both the neighbourhood and the opportunities for the people who live there.

Again, it becomes evident how planners view design as a powerful means for building the social, including the nature of community bonds, social networks, public and private modes of provision and consumption, and so on; THCH and Daniels Corporation expect real social changes to be a tangible outcome of the design of the built environment. As TCHC (2007: 10) state,

mixed-income communities are more successful when social inclusion is supported by physical design features that encourage social mixing. Pedestrian-friendly design with well-designed pathways and carefully placed entrances increase social mixing among different groups. Building designs that minimize any visible distinction between rental housing and privately owned housing help all residents feel that they are part of the same community.

Another way the TCHC and Daniels Corporation is attempting to integrate those in a higher socio-economic bracket into the space is through the presence of particular kinds of commercial establishments. Regent Park now houses a bank,

a grocery store, a *Rogers* store and a *Tim Horton's* - all of which are at the corner of Dundas St. and Parliament St. Connor (2011) discusses how important the placement of these establishments is,

Parliament and Dundas- this is the main corner and so the planning said, let's make this a commercial node, let's make this be a hub. And again that's how your planning, you know, if you put it here- it won't work. There is not enough traffic, there is not enough people. So, like, how do you make it so that it draws the broader community, but it's easy access. So it's a matter of how you layout things, this is working phenomenally.

Within these statements, the importance placed on planning is paramount, and to some extent this would obviously be the case among those concerned with planning. The specific ways in which this is thought to be the case – notions of 'hubs' around which people interact, providing people with the 'tools' to access community life, and so on – reflect the general tendency to conceive social action as the outcome of planned environments, and that residents' needs can be easily defined and met. Connor explains these commercial spaces are not only designed into the space for the convenience of the residents, but also to draw people from surrounding communities into the neighbourhood. It should be noted that these establishments are on the corner of Regent Park, and people could shop at them without ever actually entering Regent Park. However, as Connor discusses, the businesses first and foremost need to run from a location that people are willing to frequent. Regardless, there are plans for a café, run by students at George Brown College, a dog park, and an Athletic and Cultural Centre, which will be more explicitly embedded within Regent Park. Connor (2011) also discusses the importance of the type of establishments in Regent Park. As he explains,

this is such an important part of the community development, of having that opportunity- again its something you might not think about- but a place to like, get groceries, get fresh produce, buy stuff that's healthy as opposed to junk food. So fresh is really important in this whole grocery store thing. The idea is fresh produce, fresh stuff for people to eat. So, commercial, a very important part of it- a part that was never contemplated, but a thing that helps to make a community a healthy place.

Connor explains that the *Freshco* grocery store recently built in the



neighbourhood could have a positive impact on the residents due to the healthy food options it provides, an unintended consequence. Regardless of the validity of this claim, and the normative

Figure 4, *Freshco* grocery store at the corner of Dundas St. and Parliament St., in Regent Park (Personal Collection)

position it takes upon social planning, this recognition of the possibility of an aspect of urban design taking on a role not intended is central to this paper. Designers and planners cannot maintain a coherent grip on the consequences of their designs once they are made, and experienced by actual communities of people. Further, sometimes these unintended consequences will in turn affect future planning efforts.

Jacobs (1961: 27) notes that,

conventional planning approaches to slums and slum dwellers are thoroughly paternalistic. The trouble with paternalists is that they want to make impossibly profound changes, and they choose impossibly superficial means for doing so.

With some affinity to Jacobs' criticism of conventional planning, TCHC (2007) notes that when using these mixed-income, mixed-use designs, social 'interventions' are necessary to ensure the success of the project. TCHC notes that social inclusion cannot solely be created through urban planning; the planning must be supplemented with social initiatives to create a healthy community. As TCHC (2007: 2) notes,

research...shows that without interventions, there are often divisions between groups of residents in new mixed-income communities based on income, ethnicity, age, ability and length of stay in the community.

Consequently, TCHC lays out a number of initiatives put in place in order to ensure a cohesive, inclusive community. As TCHC (2007: 6) explain,

research on other communities and interviews with residents in the East Downtown show that informal activities, such as community events and casual gatherings that attract residents from all socio-economic backgrounds, are among the most effective tools in knitting a diverse community together and building bridges to neighbouring communities.

This notion of creating social inclusion through casual interactions is discussed by both Jacobs²⁸ (1961) as well as Amin's²⁹ (2002) work. TCHC reproduces this notion that a healthy, safe and vibrant community is created through the everyday, casual interaction of community members.

The revitalization is heavily focused on creating an ideal community. As Connor (developer) explains,

if we are going to make this investment of demolishing all of the buildings and building new buildings, how do we make that planning, and construction exercise be much more than that... How do we convert that from a bricks and mortar exercise into a process that in turn, empowers people?

²⁸ See chapter two.

²⁹ Amin's (2002) theories on social cohesion focus on multiculturalism.

Connor is referring not only to the initiatives for social inclusion, but also an initiative the TCHC proposed to Daniels Corporation. Daniels Corporation was to ensure that residents of Regent Park were to gain employment opportunities throughout the Revitalization process, as well as in the commercial establishments in the neighbourhood. Connor (developer) explains that as of the spring of 2011, '350 jobs have been created, for residence of Regent Park, directly as a result of the revitalization.' Empowering residents through employment opportunities is not the only social initiative put in place by TCHC and Daniels Corporation. Connor (developer) describes the process of creating social inclusion:

what brings people together? I mean these are, this is the question that we asked, and it is a question that [a] social worker or a person thinking about planning and social impact [considers]... What are the things that bring people together? You know, how does planning and social impact and social work and healthy, you know, connectivity- where do people come together, how do we bring connections?

Daniels Corporation and TCHC sets out to create this social cohesion through a number of initiatives including, community gardens, which are placed on the rooftops and balconies of the condominiums and subsidized housing, and are designed into the (yet to be constructed) parks. As Connor explains, 'food is certainly one of [the things that bring people closer together]'. TCHC (2007: 6) describe that community gardens create interaction between people from a range of different socio-economic statuses and cultures, and as a result aid in social cohesion in mixed neighbourhoods. As TCHC (2007: 6) explains,

community gardens are attractive to different income groups and the shared experience of preparing soil, tending plants and harvesting. [They] create a setting where differences in background are less visible.

Regent Park housed a number of community gardens, before the revitalization even began. Due to the success of the previously existing community gardens, TCHC and Daniels Corporation incorporated them into the revitalization design. These community gardens provide an example of the ways in which the use of the space influences the future design of it.



Figure 5, Community garden in the original Regent Park North development (Personal Collection)

The Arts and Culture Centre is also intended to be a space for those from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds to mingle with one another. As Connor (developer) describes,

if it's going to be successful as to create a place where people from all different cultures are going to be able to come and put on shows, put on demonstrations, to do dance theater, music, spoken word and so, you know,

out of all of that community consensus at the very grass-root level came a desire to have an arts and culture center- that's easy to say but it's not so easy to build.

The question is, to what extent are these people really involved in the revitalization? What is the nature of participatory design in practice? It is certainly the case that decisions concerning the Arts and Culture Centre were *influenced* by Regent Park's (and surrounding neighbourhood's) community members. Community meetings were held to discuss what the public wanted of the Arts and Culture Centre. Daniels Corporation projected a 27.5 million dollar budget for the project. As Connor (developer) describes,

our timing was kind of a miracle in that the federal provincial governments established the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund, about two years ago, after the economy had collapsed in 2008. The Harper government with the provinces set up as Infrastructure Stimulus Fund, we apply it for and received \$24 million to build an Arts and Culture Centre. We need 27 and a half, so we are fundraising right now and we're actively going out it looking for funding partners but 24 million was the kick-start of this unbelievable place.

The Arts and Culture Centre presents another instance in which the economy, as well as governmental initiatives influence urban design.

Another establishment created in Regent Park to aid in creating a 'healthy community' is *The Regent Park Centre for Learning* opened in April 2010. According to the official website, the centre offers classes free-of-charge for residents of the neighbourhood, as well as provides

a gathering place for existing and new members of this diverse and vibrant community. The Centre of Learning will promote active citizenry, and link into opportunities for actual participation and engagement; ensuring that learning is relevant, purposeful and accessible to people as part of their everyday lives. It will also link into wider networks, and encourage participants to contextualize their individual experiences in relation to those of people across Toronto.

(The Regent Park Centre for Learning Website: About)

The Regent Park Centre for Learning serves as a social hub for many Regent Park tenants, and other TCHC tenants living nearby. Aisha (tenant), an interviewee, works at the centre and notes that the majority of her interaction with other Regent Park residents happens within the Centre. It should be noted that there are also a number of NGOs within Regent Park, such as *Pathways to Education*, *Salvation Army* and *Yonge St. Mission* that operate within Regent Park.

The TCHC (2007: 8) also describes how the revitalization should support 'small, ethno-specific grassroots groups in Regent Park', as well as 'faith groups.' TCHC (2007: 8-9) explains that these organizations are integral to the success of Regent Park as a *community*. One of the ways in which TCHC will set out to support these groups is by providing accessible venues for the organizations to use. As TCHC (2007: 9) states, 'the informal, casual interactions that are critical to the development of social cohesion are facilitated by the availability of affordable, accessible venues where those interactions can occur'. Here is another instance in which TCHC (2007) mentions the importance of 'informal, casual interactions,' referring to Jacobs (1961) theories on what creates a safe community³⁰. Despite TCHC and Daniels Corporation's social initiatives and the rhetorics of participatory design and inclusion that accompany them, James (2010: 76) still views the revitalization as another instance in which 'the drastic modification of [the] environment is being posited as a monolithic solution to [its] problems'. In this sense, James (2010) questions whether deeply rooted social

³⁰ See chapter one.

and economic problems can be solved in such a deterministic manner through urban design.

It is also worth noting that not everyone is in agreement with TCHCs focus on social initiatives. Case Ootes, who served as managing director³¹ of TCHC from March 14, 2011 to June 17, 2011, is quoted stating that

TCHC should be a landlord. That's it. The social services should be provided by the province. Our staff started becoming involved in social services. You have to keep your focus on the mission, which is to provide housing to as many people as possible at a reasonable cost... In fact, I have a problem with the name Toronto Community Housing Corporation. It should just be Toronto Housing. Creating communities is an organic process – it can't be mandated by government.

(White 2011)

In the above sense, Ootes' perspective supports minimal governmental involvement in social life.

Participation, Collaboration and Consultation

Regent Park revitalization was designed through a method referred to as 'participatory design', meaning that the design was created by collaboration between the developers, different stakeholders, and the residents. As TCHC (2007: 2-3) explains,

a Core Committee of community agency leaders, City staff and the Toronto Community Housing staff has provided ongoing direction to the creation of the plan. Participants in the Core Committee have carried out consultations with community members, boards of directors of local agencies, community agency staff, parent's councils, faith groups, local businesses, grassroots

³¹ As Managing Director, Ootes took over the responsibilities of all 13 members of the Board of Directors, until TCHC hired replacements. The previous Board members were all dismissed due to the uncovering of the organization's lavish spending.

groups, disabled residents and service providers, harm-reduction workers, people with addictions, homeless people, neighbouring communities, youth, city staff, and institutions such as schools and child welfare.

Connor (developer) used the example of the process of designing the neighbourhood park to explain how these community consultations work. As he explains,

what we did with the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Toronto was a really really cool process of consultation where everyone in the community was invited to a series of meetings. And we on the Daniels side invited all of our potential condo owners, people who had joined the list of interested condo owners and people, some people who'd already bought, and said 'come and participate and give us your feedback on what should happen in the big park in Regent Park.' So we held a number of these consultations and the way it was done was, so in the community center, a big community room, tables of 12 people, big tables right. And a presentation up here, landscape architects gave many options on what could happen in a big park- there could be active play, there could be passive play, there can be movies that can be shown on outdoor screens, there can be children's playground equipment, there it can be all kinds of things and they sort of created a whole menu of opportunity. And then sitting around these tables were people who were tenants from Regent Park, owners who had already bought our first condo building, um people from Cabbagetown who came, some of the social service agencies ... they are all there and are all sharing the table and the animators of this thing created these cut outs which sort of represented, you know, soccer fields, basketball, a greenhouse, community gardens, playground equipment. So all these different things, so people got those and a huge thing of the park, it was the size of the tables almost. So people got to sort of play. So, there were three of these meetings and over a period of time a plan of the park emerged. It was a great process of owners and tenants coming together, people from Cabbagetown saying 'this is going to be our Park, and we had a say in determining what it should be.' That was like a fantastic process. So out of that came a series of decisions.

Connor goes on to discuss disagreements amongst tenants regarding what should be designed into the park. For example, there was a disagreement amongst residents concerning whether or not there should be a basketball court in the park. Many residents thought that there needed to be a place for young

people to get together and play basketball. However, others thought it would be intimidating to young families to have a basketball court in the park. Connor (developer) explains that the two parties reached a compromise by deciding to put the basketball court in another area of the neighbourhood. Connor describes that the input from residents is important, as it sheds light on insights that the designers may not consider.

Participatory design fits within Jacobs' (1961: 271) explanation that in order to develop a 'healthy community', planners must take into account the insights that "slum dwellers" develop through their lived experiences. Jacobs (1961: 271) explains that too often the opinions of residents of 'slums' are disregarded, when in reality 'slum dwellers [are] people capable of understanding and acting upon their own self-interests'. As Jacobs (1961: 271) describes, planners must 'discern, respect and build upon the forces for regeneration that exist in slums themselves and that demonstrably work in real cities'. Jacobs (1961: 271) specifies that this approach differs from the paternalistic methods of modernist planners; planners should not erase the existing community, attempting to enforce what they believe to be the design of a utopian society, rather they should work in conjunction with the community. Participatory design can also be understood as deriving from the postmodernist sensibility that marks the 'minimizing [of] the authority of the cultural producer [and in turn] creates the opportunity for popular participation and democratic determinations of cultural values', as Harvey (1990: 51) explains.

Though the revitalization is participatory due to the community consultations that were held, there is a power dynamic at play throughout these consultations. As Connor explains during the consultations regarding the parks, landscape architects provided the participants with a number of different options regarding what the park could house. Though participants had a say in what went into the park, they were confined by the options provided to them. Further, those involved in the planning are viewed as the authority on that matter, and consequently have the last word regarding the design. In a way, it is up to planners to 'interpret' resident's concepts regarding the space³². For instance, a number of residents expressed a desire to have a mosque within Regent Park throughout the consultation process. Connor (developer) explains,

there are groups that wanted to have a mosque and Toronto Community Housing, they consulted with us and felt like- if we do a mosque then why shouldn't we also be doing another church or synagogue or whatever? And they sort of felt, you know, that it's not, that it doesn't makes sense to take a piece of land and build a mosque. Tough decision. There is a lot of Muslims who live in Regent Park.

It is through such circumstances that the power dynamics within participatory design becomes more evident. Another example Connor (developer) provides is that a number of agencies and NGOs in Regent Park requested free office and program space. However, as Connor (developer) explains,

the answer to that is 'no.' This is not about simply giving away free office or program space for you to run your programs. This has to be a market-driven thing. It has to be people paying rent. There has to be people who

³² It is interesting to note the different ways that one can interpret participatory design. When Frank, a tenant liaison and resident I interviewed was asked how he would accommodate differing views concerning what the design should be, he replied "you go with what is more likely to please everyone, or the majority you can't please everybody." Frank's democratic understanding of what participatory design should be like differs from TCHC and Daniels Corporations model.

are buying condominiums, we can't give stuff away. It has to be a business model that makes sense.

It is through these types of statements that the profound effect that capitalist economic motives have on the design of the space become apparent. TCHC partnered with a private company, Daniels Corporation, whose goal is, above all else, to create a development that is financially viable. Though it is important to recognize the effects of economic motivations on the very idea of the revitalization, the multiplicity of factors involved in the actual rebuilding of Regent Park that I have examined speak to a more complex understanding of the ways in which urban spaces are realized. As Connor (developer) describes to complexities of working on a project with both private and public interests,

for sure, the planning is very challenging because there are so many people. So we listen we try to, you know, incorporate people's different ideas. But ultimately we have a pretty good sense of, number one from a condo-marketing point of view, what's going to sell. You know, what does the building look and feel like, so we have to think about that because we have to sell condos in order for the whole financial model to work. So fortunately our partner, Community Housing defers to us because we are the experts in designing and building and selling condominiums we've been really good.

As Connor notes, contemporary condominiums must 'feel' and 'look' a certain way in order to make a profit. These building material preferences provide an instance in which the importance of materials (such as glass, granite, hardwood, top-end appliances and fixtures) becomes evident. Connor goes on to explain that TCHC has a more prominent role in the design of the subsidized housing.

For instance, Connor describes that Daniels Corporation must replace all of the



Figure 6, Regent Park Condominium advertisement (Personal Collection)

units from the original design. Consequently, Daniels Corporation will be building a number of four and five bedroom units, when they would not otherwise due to their lack of popularity in the Toronto real estate market.

It has become apparent throughout this investigation that the ‘designing’ of Regent Park is a complex process, involving a number of different stakeholders. Despite all of the money, time and thought that go into the design process, as Julier (2005; 2008) notes, design can only account for so much. Regent Park as a symbolic and social space, or ‘urban designscape’, also consists of the social and commercial practices that occur throughout its use (amongst other things).

Rebuilding the Social: Living with the Revitalization

As I have examined above, the design process of Regent Park revitalization is complex and involves interactions between a number of different actors including community stakeholders, policies, documents, designers, planners, governmental bodies and NGOs. However, as I have previously explained, urban spaces are not solely defined by their design; they exist in a broader context and involve multiple local dynamics. Despite all of the efforts of TCHC, Daniels Corporation and the architectural agencies involved, it is very difficult to deterministically shape social life through design. The residents of Regent Park are situated social subjects, with their own practices, motivations, relations and so on. Most obviously, as became evident through the ‘failure’ of the original design, residents do not always navigate or live in a space in the ways intended by the design.

In what follows I will draw upon material gathered through interviews with residents to examine some examples of ways in which the actual use of the space relates to the design and materials to reconfigure Regent Park revitalization. Clearly, given the small number of interviews, this section is intended to illustrate some of the ways in which design and use might be complimentary and how they might not. I will outline some examples of ways in which residents interact with the space, and their more general experience of living in Regent Park during the revitalization.

The New Regent Park Residents

Regent Park tenants at the time of the revitalization were given priority in terms of access to the newly constructed units. However, as Aisha explains, these tenants had to choose a unit without actually seeing the space in person. Rather, prospective tenants were able to view the floor plans for the unit that they could live in. As Aisha describes, many tenants that she knew had great difficulty making such an important decision based solely on looking at plans, especially because the majority of tenants were not able to sufficiently understand how the plans would translate into the actually built space. As she notes,

they should have been explained [by] somebody: what is floor planning? Not a lot of people read the floor planning... They didn't explain what is the floor plan. They just give you, choose and come back. That's it, you decide... They didn't have a choice. They didn't have somebody to sit with them and to explain what is this square feet? What is the living room? ... Not everyone visualizes to look and read that those planning. It caused a problem for some people. That's why... they didn't pick the units that have been given to them. So that creates a barrier for them to choose the units.

(Aisha, tenant)

Aisha explains that after seeing what the new units looked like in person, many residents regretted turning down the offer. These misunderstandings seem to be a common thread throughout subsidized housing. Documents such as the SHRA, as well as these floor plans have such a large effect on tenants' lives, and yet many of them cannot understand the way that the information is presented. Aisha herself made the decision to move into her townhouse because she was able to peer into the space through the floor-to-ceiling glass walls.

what happened was mine was on the Cole Street, that you could see through. Its ... [a] townhouse. At first there is no barrier... we used to see it while they're building. Sometimes we used to sneak up and with the glass, you would see through. Yeah, because of the way it built and I had a chance to sneak in what is inside.

However, most prospective tenants were not able to see the apartments in person, relying only on the floor plans to make their decisions. This method of presenting prospective tenants with the choice of staying in Regent Park seems to have shaped who accepted the Regent Park units, and who moved elsewhere.

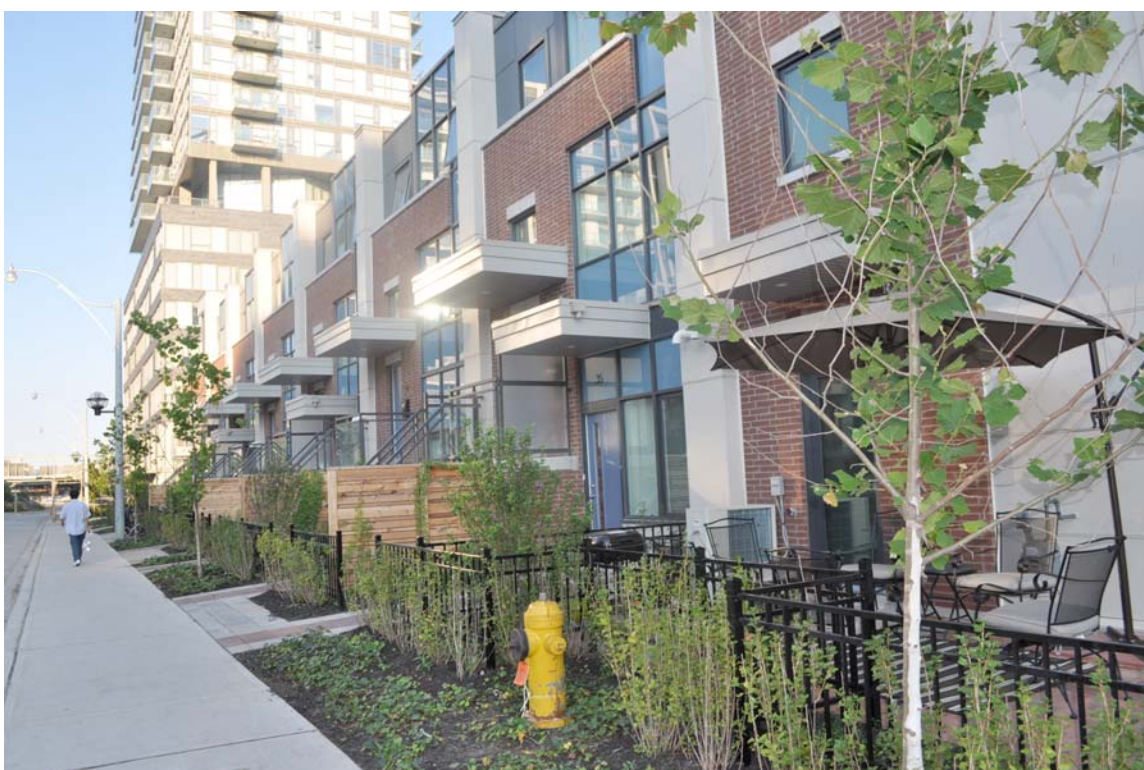


Figure 7, Subsidized townhouses in Regent Park (Personal Collection)

Another important aspect to consider regarding Regent Park residents is why people decide to purchase condominiums in Regent Park. The two most obvious reasons concern finances. The condominiums that have already been built boast relatively affordable prices for the Toronto real estate market, as well

as the chance for a large return should the project be successful (although the units also present a risk of declining in value due to the nature of the project). Secondly, Daniels Corporation has presented condominium buyers with an option to put \$1,000 a month towards their mortgage, until they reach a five-percent down payment. As Steven (condominium owner) explains, the 'five-percent down deposit plan... [makes] it affordable for people who normally wouldn't be able to afford to buy a condo'. When asked about why he purchased a condominium in Regent Park, Steven credited the two previously mentioned financial reasons as well as stating that he liked 'the idea of different types of housing and people living together' referring to the model as 'really... the way to go for urban planning'. Further, Steven also noted that 'I would rather live here than give Brad Lamb³³ more money, [that] was a big [reason] actually'. The marketing of Lamb Development Corporation and Daniels Corporation influences Steven's last reason. Regardless, Steven ended the interview by explaining that

I mean lets face it, in the end... its like people who buy into phase one, if the project continues successfully, will make a really good profit on their condos, right? In five to ten years from now if they want to resell them. So yeah, is there behind all the you know lovely hippy oh, we all live together and la-la-la, that is all great, But no one ... in snobby, money-induced Toronto would be buying into something that they didn't think they would make a big, or half decent profit on in the long run. It's what makes the city go round.

This observation conveys the potential differences between public and private housing, and the different motivations and rationales for living in Regent Park, both of which raise questions about the notion that 'community' can be built in to the cityscape in any idealistic sense.

³³ Brad J. Lamb is a well-know real estate broker and developer. His company, Lamb Development Corporation, owns many condominiums in Toronto.

The Revitalization Process

Many Regent Park residents are temporarily dislocated during the revitalization process, some more than once. Typically, tenants are briefly relocated to other original buildings in Regent Park or to other subsidized housing developments in downtown Toronto. One of the tenants I interviewed was a woman named Aisha, who was living in the original Regent Park when the Toronto City Council approved the renovation of Regent Park in 2003. Aisha was relocated twice within Regent Park before she moved into her new townhouse in the neighbourhood. Aisha liked living in her original low-rise apartment, stating that 'I really think [my apartment] was good. I didn't see what is the reason in the first place that they are going to demolish in that time'. Further, Aisha speaks highly of the sense of community in her original building. As she describes,

there was [no commercial establishments] in Regent Park, but you feel a sense of community in Regent Park... we like all I do know your neighbors and you help them any way you can need. To have relationship with your neighbors and if there is any problems, they will stand by you. And their socialized life, you know what I mean? If you come out from your house like you [take] time to come talk with them and greet them and you feel good about it... What I found in Canada, there is there is no connection, like everybody is running on their way and there is no relationship with your neighbor or yeah in your community there is no connection.

Aisha speaks fondly of living in one of the originally designed buildings. She explains that she hoped she would not be in the first phase of demolition, as she did not want to move. However, her apartment did end up being amongst the first to be demolished. Aisha states,

it was very hard I felt very sad moving on that time, that moment was very hard. I was close to the school for my kids...on the Parliament was Lord

Dufferin school and yeah it was it was hard. It kind of like somebody comes to your house and takes you out, you know? Like not like you voluntarily want it and also the unit that we had and the building it was perfect. It looks perfectly fine.

Aisha was originally among the residents who were against the revitalization, she did not want to move; she liked her home the way it was. Aisha's family was the last household to move out of her building. She describes that although a strong community once surrounded her, after her neighbours moved out of the building, she felt unsafe. Further, her apartment became infested with rats and cockroaches from other units. Her daughter developed allergies due to the cockroaches in her family's temporary units. Frank (tenant and tenant representative) also notes the problematic nature of the relocations necessitated by the revitalization,

I know people were moved to other areas while this was being rebuilt are having more problems than they ever did in their lives. People lived there all their lives. On Alexander Street, they moved them into those co-ops and it was drugs and police there all the time.

Salwa Moubachar, who was interviewed in 2010 for *The Globe and Mail* was also quoted say, 'before, it was okay...everybody knows everybody. It was a really strong community. But now, people are moving. Places are empty. You're walking around, you see strange faces' (Paperny 2010). Though Regent Park was viewed as a 'dangerous' neighbourhood, the revitalization appears to have exacerbated elements of this, for some, by removing some of the social bonds and networks that had become embedded in the urban space as it was.

Contested Accounts of the Design

Daniels Corporation contracts out the architectural aspects of Regent Park. Diamond and Schmitd has designed the majority of buildings to date. Daniels Corporations seems to prioritize urban design and community initiatives above the architecture. As Connor (developer) explains,

our background, where we come from, I mean it is really more about the social integration. That is really the important part of something like this. The buildings are the easy part seriously. Anyone can build a building and it can be red or black or blue or whatever and the sustainable LEED³⁴ gold or not. But it's what happens within those buildings that we really put a lot of emphasis on.

As the developer, Daniels Corporation is more concerned with the social impacts of the design, as apposed to the actual buildings.³⁵ However, the residents that I spoke with mainly expressed dissatisfaction with mundane material issues related to the interior design or construction of their specific units. As Frank (tenant, tenant representative) explains, 'there's no storage. You have to use your cupboards then, and under the bed. The balcony'. Though residents' lives are deeply affected by the urban design of the space, it is the mundane, day-to-day issues that these tenants focused on. Frank also notes problems with the heating and cooling systems of the building he lives in. As he explains,

³⁴ LEED is an acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. TCHC requested that Daniels Corporation ensure that everything built in the Revitalization be LEED gold, meaning that the building practices must uphold a certain level of environmentally sustainable design practices. The necessity of having LEED gold certification provides another example of the importance of which materials are used in the construction.

³⁵ That being said, As Connor (developer) explains, Daniels Corporation is also concerned about the financial success of their market condominiums, which requires producing marketable condominiums.

the heating is not properly done. It looks beautiful from the outside, but the inside is usually freezing. Laundry room is freezing.

Frank also notes that, though he enjoys the wall-to-wall glass in his unit, and the view it provides, it makes his unit too hot in the summer months, and he finds the air conditioning system inadequate. Aisha (tenant) also disliked the amount of



Figure 8, Government-subsidized apartment building, Regent Park (Personal Collection)

glass within her townhouse, as well in the Regent Park Centre for Learning, where she works. Aisha explains that the amount of glass on the outer walls of her townhouse results in a lack of privacy. As she describes,

people will see you. What are you going to do, hide in the closet and change your clothes? Like those glass is horrible anyway, I don't like them... You could get light, but you know there is no privacy. It's all like, it's all the glass from top to bottom... there is no concrete.

Aisha also finds it difficult to screen movies, digital stories and presentations in the Learning Centre due to the amount of light let in by the glass.



Figure 9, Regent Park Centre of Learning (Personal Collection)

Further, Aisha has experienced a number of problems in her unit including a cracked ceiling, broken door handles as well as a burst pipe which flooded her home. She explains that Daniels Corporation was under warranty for the pipe, and fixed the problem. However, TCHC is responsible for the crack in her ceiling, as well as other minor problems, which they have yet to address. Frank (tenant,

tenant representative) also notes a number of problems with material aspects of his building. However, he explains, 'we weren't allotted any money because it was a new building, for repairs for errors or anything that we wanted. Some things we did want but they say the new building you don't need anything' (Frank). For instance, Frank describes that the exercise equipment is too big for the tenants in his building, and therefore if not used.

Despite the problems that Aisha (tenant) notes, when asked if she felt like her suggestions were listened to regarding the design, she responded,

yes they did in a way yeah. The way right now it's planned, yeah it's very good. The street... like I mentioned all the streets that we didn't have it before. That's a new street that the car goes through and also the people could walk by and the bike. It's enough to walk like to accommodate that people could walk and also the biker also could ride. It was very good plan and design also.

Aisha spoke positively regarding the design, stating that she felt proud to live in her new townhouse, and enjoyed having people over. Steven (condominium owner) also noted that he enjoys the view that the glass facade provides, explaining that, 'what I personally like about [my unit], I was the eighth person to buy into the whole thing so I snatch myself a really great condo, facing South, overlooking the lake in downtown or whatever'. Steven also describes that he enjoys the finishes in his condominium, stating that 'the space itself, Daniels Corporation has done a great job of using, you know, upgraded elements... Like the stainless steel, the granite countertops... That's what I like about my own personal space'.

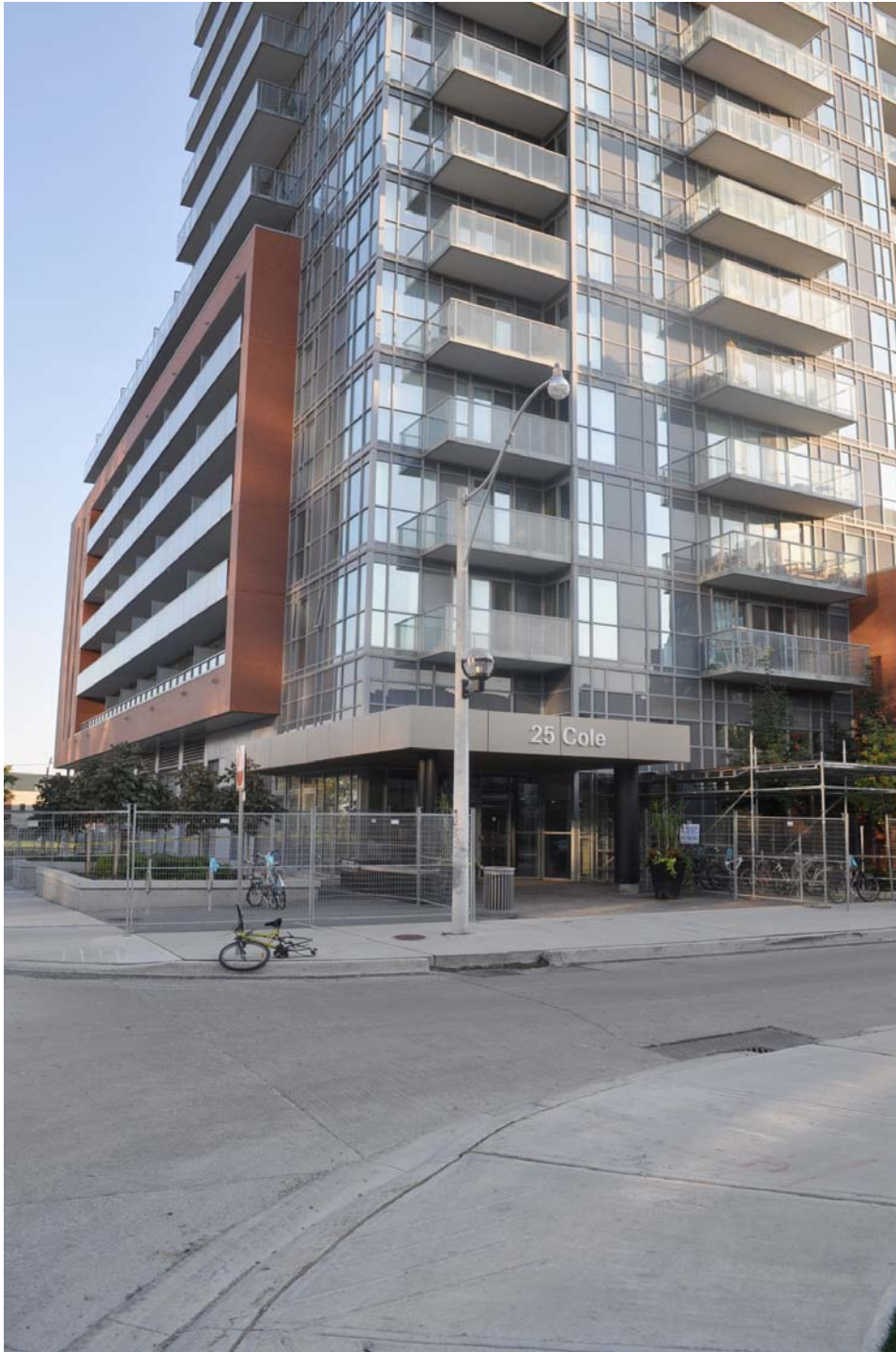


Figure 10, *One Cole* condominium, Regent Park (Personal Collection)

Connor (developer) explains that Daniels Corporation has a lot of experience in designing marketable condominiums, and it was for this reason that TCHC gave the company a lot of freedom when designing the market homes.

We can see here the significance of the materials used in the physical manifestation of the design, and how they shape perceptions of the urban space and are perceived rather differently by residents in relation to their specific conditions and arguably socioeconomic status and culture.

Design versus Use?

Despite the amount of thought that goes into the design of the space, it is impossible to know in any detail just how residents will interact with and within the space, partly because of the unanticipated reactions to physical architecture and the materials, and also in relation to the ways in which intentionally constructed spaces are used. For instance Frank (tenant, tenant representative) describes that there are two lounges with fireplaces in his building, meant to provide spaces for both casual and formal interactions between residents in the building. When asked if those spaces were used, he replied 'no, they sit downstairs, they like to see people coming and going, and talking about who's coming and going'. Frank explains that people are 'not supposed to' socialize in this downstairs lounge, referring to a space directly beside the main door outfitted with couches and chairs. However, Frank states that the placement of the room, within view of the entrance of the building, makes it a popular place for residents

to spend time as they can keep watch of who is coming into or leaving the building.

Despite the rhetorics of revitalization ‘making the neighbourhood cleaner’, and ‘safer-feeling’, from the residents I spoke with, there was little interaction between condominium owners and tenants, which goes against the intention of the design and more obviously the explicit social initiatives designed to shape such interaction. When asked if he interacted at all with the condominium owners, Frank (tenant, tenant representative) responded ‘No, it is separate’. Steven (condominium owner) did not interact with public housing tenants either, responding ‘no. But not because I don't want to, just because I don't know them’. Steven did attend a ‘packed’ social event held at the Regent Park Learning Centre aimed at creating connections between condominium owners and tenants, however he states ‘I didn't make any friends there. Where its like “oh hey John I’m going to come over to your house for coffee” or whatever’. Aisha does note that a few condominium owners take advantage of the services at the Regent Park Centre for Learning, but she has much more communication with public housing tenants, both in and outside of the Learning Centre.

Aisha also notes a difference in access to the subsidized housing buildings and the condominiums when conducting work for the Regent Park Centre for Learning. As she describes, in the subsidized

senior buildings, I have access to the key. I'm entitled to the senior building, I know most of them by just going to post my flyer. [In the condominium] you [have] to go to the Board of Directors, you know? I mean there is a lot of layers that you go through but like I say... if I need to post my flyer I have to go to super and super has to post it

Despite all of the design efforts and social initiatives, it is difficult to simply produce 'social cohesion' by establishing a 'mixed neighbourhood' through design. It seems that existing social networks or social groups, whether defined by class, ethnicity, age, and so on, remain intact to some degree, and perhaps have to develop over a much longer term and somewhat organically.

However, something unexpected came up repeatedly throughout my interviews concerning means for social integration. Dogs were repeatedly mentioned as a means to spark interaction between neighbours. Steven (condominium owner) explains that 'just because I have a dog, [I interact] with all the other dog people in the condo. So I do have a lot of interaction with a lot of other people in my condo just from those two things³⁶.' Steven states that a great deal of the social interactions he has with his fellow condominium owners can be attributed to his pet. Further, Steven explains that he foresees more interactions with public housing tenants who are dog owners once the off-leash park is built. Connor also described a situation in which dogs united a condominium owner and a tenant:

I was walking down the street to go to have coffee and I see a woman and her young child about six or seven maybe and their dog and they had just moved into the condo building. So they were condo-owners and then there was a woman who lives here in the rental building at 1 Oak, she had her dog, but no kid, just her and her dog and they were out walking. And here is a tenant, and an owner, and they're like patting each other's dogs and talking about the kids and this woman actually works in the Duke of York Regent Park school as a teacher, and this kid goes to... All of a sudden, over dogs, because 'oh they are cute', seriously! This instant connection happen, and I happened to be blessed to walk down the street at that moment and sort of witness this and that's what's happening and that's what we're trying to do. Is creating these opportunities for connectivity.

³⁶ Referring to his involvement in the community garden and having a dog.

Connor states 'dogs are great for that kind of sharing. There is nothing like it'.

Another social initiator in Regent Park is the community gardens. Regent Park was the home to community gardens before the revitalization process began. The gardens were so successful that Daniels Corporation designed community gardens into both the buildings, as well as outdoor spaces. The residents that I spoke with all had positive things to say about the community gardens, and the role that they play in creating a 'healthy community'. According to Frank (tenant, tenant representative), the gym in the building is being moved to accommodate more space for the community garden, as it is a popular activity amongst tenants. As Frank explains, the garden is

going to be great because it will get people out, especially seniors who have nothing to do. And the people who sit downstairs with nothing to do- it will get them involved with something to do with their lives instead of sitting and gossiping about me!

Steven (condominium owner) is also involved in his condominium's community garden, stating that

I personally think it is a great way to meet your neighbors and just people who have common interests with you and it helps provide a sense of community in a condo where we can all just live in our aquariums in the sky, you know, and not know anyone.

Steven also stated that 'the communal garden at 25 Cole was so successful that Daniels Corporation actually plans to expand the communal garden area to an even larger amount for every building coming forward'. Steven provides an example of another circumstance in which use in turn affects future designs.

Currently, phase two of the revitalization is underway. Two condominiums (One Cole and One Park West), 51 market townhouses, three subsidized

housing building (246 Sackville Street, 252 Sackville Street, 1 Oak Street), 47 subsidized town houses, 87 public housing units at 40 Oak Street, The Toronto Christian Resource Centre, The Regent Park Centre for Learning, The Regent Park Children and Youth Hub and a number of commercial establishments (including a bank, grocery store, *Rogers* store and *Tim Horton's*), have all been completed. Aside from the problems with relocation associated with the revitalization, everyone that I interviewed have largely positive things to say about the social effects of the revitalization so far. Steven (condominium owner) states that

since I've move, I've noticed a huge change in the past year. Just even with these town houses have gone up since then... So even that little park up there, up Gerrard, seems cleaned up a little bit, you know? ... In my opinion it just seems over the last year there are a few less sort of less crack addicts on the street or whatever. Maybe it's because of the winter. Who knows? We'll see when the summer comes right?

Steven states that 'I'm a 210 pound guy, I am not fearful to take the dog out at nine o'clock at night, but I do know that there are people who are'. Steven goes on the note that he thinks the presence of police officers on bicycles has been increased, which he believed makes people feel 'safer'. Frank (tenant, tenant rep) also expresses that 'I think [Regent Park] is a bit better, but I think it's going to take a while. It was just so bad you can't improve something that quickly'. Frank goes on to explain, 'even within the building there is, there are problem peoples... like drugs and prostitutes living in the building, coming to the building to visit'.

TCHC believes that the mere 'newness' or maintenance of the space can aid in its success. As TCHC (2007: 11) explains,

research also points out that people who perceive fewer 'incivilities' (for example graffiti, garbage or broken windows) in their neighbourhood have a lower fear of crime and a higher sense of their ability to have a positive effect on their surroundings. Studies in Chicago show that people from all income, tenure and cultural groups tend to be more attached to their neighbourhoods when incivilities are reduced and their sense of safety is increased.

Following this notion, regardless of the design of the revitalization, the new-looking buildings and streets themselves will, at least temporarily, aid in the success of the neighbourhood. Despite TCHCs optimism concerning the fresh, new, clean design, Julier (2008) notes that re-shaping a neighbourhood is a complex process that requires more than just a new design. It has become apparent throughout these interviews with Regent Park residents, that the use of a space is often unexpected, residents often interact with the space in unintended ways.

Closing Remarks

Through examining Regent Park revitalization from the perspectives of planning and policy as well as residents' lived experiences, the complexities of the project and the space are brought to light. It becomes evident that the design of the space, the materials used, and the actual uses of the space are all necessarily interconnected with one another. Conceptions of an almost utopian-like community, economic interests, governmental policy, political agendas, bureaucratic documents, building materials, input from residents, past and present daily practices, NGOs, community centres, and mundane activities such

as walking a dog (amongst other things) all merge together to make up Regent Park. Though it is almost impossible to gain an exhaustive understanding of all of the different forces involved in Regent Park, through examining some of the ways that design and policy merge with use and material, one can come to an understanding of some of the forces that are involved.

Postmodernist understandings of urban design, examined in the previous chapter, provide an understanding of the rhetoric that informed the revitalization of Regent Park. It became apparent that aspects of the Regent Park revitalization, such as the mixed-income, mixed-use model and the use of participatory design methods, are informed partially by postmodernist theories of urban design. It is through these design characteristics that the influence of ideological conceptions of design and of the ideal community becomes apparent. These abstract ideologies not only influence theories of design, but also government policy regarding the nature of public housing, which also influences Regent Park. Regent Park serves, in part, as a physical manifestation of abstract ideological concepts of community and social life. This physical manifestation, in turn, has the potential to partially shape inhabitants lives in accordance with these ideologies, at least in theory.

However, it has become apparent throughout this investigation into Regent Park that these ideological commitments are not always upheld in practice. For instance, TCHC (2007) discusses the importance of local, grassroots organization, vowing to support them through providing spaces for these organizations to create connections through casual interactions. However,

Connor (developer) explains that though these organizations asked for free program and office space, Daniels Corporation is a market-oriented business and it is not financially viable to give away building space for free. In this instance, it becomes evident that ideologies and theories concerning the ideal social space are not the sole force involved in design. Especially with the involvement of a corporate developer partner in the revitalization, financial motivations are significantly influential throughout the design of Regent Park. As Hackworth (2008) explains, MNPs common partnering with private corporations serves to ensure the production and reproduction of neoliberal ideologies throughout many public housing projects. The decision to not provide NGOs and local groups with free office space also articulates the power dynamics involved within the so-called participatory-design model utilized in the revitalization.

As I have illustrated, the revitalization of Regent Park is a multifaceted process, involving the influence of a vast amount of ideological, financial and political forces. However, the space is also shaped through its actual daily use. It became apparent through my interviews with Regent Park residents that these people relate to the symbolic and built environment in often-complicated ways. The residents I spoke with provide examples of instances in which future designs for the space are shaped by their use of it, such as the popularity of the garden in Steve's condominium, that lead to larger gardens in future building designs. They also presented situations in which they knowingly do not behave in the ways that the space was designed for, opting for alternative uses of spaces. For instance, Frank's building, in which tenants neglect the intended room for socialization,

choosing to spend time instead in what was intended to be merely a waiting room. Conversely, in some ways the residents that I spoke with act in accordance with the intentions of the design, for instance the use of community gardens or building gyms as spaces for 'casual social interactions' with neighbours.

The materials themselves often factored into the residents discussions, often in multifaceted ways. For instance, some residents value the taste of the materials used, other do not find them practical or appreciate the style, where as others both like and dislike a certain material simultaneously. For instance, both Aisha and Frank appreciate the glass walls in some sense, and not in others. Aisha dislikes the appearance and lack of privacy created by the glass façade of her townhouse, and also finds the glass walls of the Learning Centre to be problematic for showing films and presentation. However, she simultaneously enjoys the atmosphere that the glass creates in that space. Frank enjoys the view presented by the glass façade of his apartment, but finds the material to cause temperature control problems in his unit. It is apparent, through these examples and other described above, that design is not completely deterministic of Regent Park as a social space. The residents interact with the space, in way that are somewhat shaped by aspects of the design, but also serve to reshape the space themselves in other ways. These different interactions affect the general perception of the space, and consequently future designs and uses of that space. It is in these ways that Regent Park serves as an interaction of both design and use, macro and micro social forces.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

This study of Regent Park serves as a means to investigate urban regeneration in Toronto from two different periods of time, 50 years apart. I examined the two designs for the space, what they express about theories of urban design, and the ways in which these models of urban design are situated within more abstract ideologies. In terms of culture, as I explained in chapters two and three, the original design in many ways straightforwardly reflects key aspects of a *modernist* design paradigm – stressing rational planning, segregation, functionality. Conversely, the revitalization can be situated more clearly within aspects of a *postmodernist* design paradigm – stressing participatory design, integration, and multi-use spaces. While these cultural paradigms have a strong influence in the language that is used among the actors involved, and the underlying conceptions of how design and planning might determine or at least shape the social, I have also examined how these paradigms need to be understood in relation to a number of other factors.

Firstly, I have identified some of the more mundane aspects of the planning process – the selection of contractors, the shifting roles of different institutions, the allocation of tenants, and so on – all of which are shaped by the broader political and socioeconomic conditions of the time. Secondly, I have argued that design can only really be understood in relation to use, illustrated by

the ways in which Regent Park 'failed' as a planning process by neglecting the complexities of real communities. The participation and consultation processes utilized in the revitalization appear to present a more nuanced approach, reproducing a rhetoric of public involvement. The social practices of Regent Park residents were investigated, in reference to the ways in which they shape and reshape the neighbourhood. Thirdly, I (admittedly briefly) illustrated the potential importance of the physical infrastructure and particularly the construction materials used, as both symbolically and practically contested in the lives of residents. Often neglected in discussions of urban spaces (Soja 2000), the physical Regent Park significantly impacts the neighbourhood. Throughout this study, the physical materials used in the development, and the ways that they have changed over the period, have been recognized as profoundly important to understanding the perception and experience of living in or around Regent Park. In sum, I have argued that the cultural, socioeconomic and material dimensions of design and planning are equally significant and are best approached as mutually constituting the revitalization process.

Summary of the Research

This thesis began with a sociohistorical examination of the original design for Regent Park, informed by Rose's (1958) firsthand experience with the development. This chapter focused on what the project uncovers about ideologies concerning design, as well as social life more generally. The

segregated, single-use design of the space is influenced by modernist notions of the utopian potential of urban design. These modernist theories of urban design rely on more general modernist ideologies, such as the belief in scientific rationality and the subsequent ability to control social life, as well as the heightened ability of the designer to shape social practices. Also apparent throughout the design are modernist notions of proper familial life and the benefits of 'fresh air'. These ideologies are evident not only through the socio-spatial design of the space, but also through its policies (for instance, the calculation of the income used for RGI rates). Through examining the housing market in the postwar period, I was able to situate the original development within a larger socio-economic and political context, but also examine the ways in which these political and socio-economic factors partially lead to not only the need for, but also the nature of the development. For instance, the government-supported trend towards building from scratch is evident in Regent Park. Further, Rose (1958) sites the lack of support from government agencies as being the reason that the housing in Regent Park was necessary. This chapter also reflected upon the forces outside of design that work towards shaping the space, such as housing administrators. In reference to the discursively understood 'failure' of Regent Park, this chapter began to question the role of urban design, and the extent to which it affects cityscapes.

In chapter three, I presented different theoretical approaches to understanding the cityscape. I began with a common understanding throughout urban design and planning literature, which views design as deterministic of

social spaces. This perspective often focuses on the ways in which a certain design is informed by more general ideological commitments and cultural practices. It has been important to articulate aspects of this perspective, as it continues to frequently inform urban design, and uncovers a great deal concerning design practices and conceptions of what an 'ideal society' should look like. Though this understanding of design presents a means to uncover significant insight into the cityscape, it only accounts for the design of the space, which, as evident through Regent Park, does not always work out as planned.

As became apparent through examining the original Regent Park, one needs to take into account factors outside of design when attempting to understand urban spaces. Economic-based approaches for understanding urban spaces are relevant to the project at hand, as the housing market directly influences Regent Park. These economic-based models present some insight into Regent Park, for instance the ways in which industrial capitalism aided in shaping population distribution and the consequent increased housing demand in the beginning of the 20th Century. Further, neoliberal ideologies become apparent throughout the revitalization process. However, economic-based models, such as the work of Castells, are often criticized for not taking into account physical space, which is central to understanding Regent Park.

After examining Regent Park, it became evident that a perspective that allowed for all of the complexities of the space was in order. The work of Amin and Thrift (2002), Julier (2005; 2008) Sandercock (1998; 2003) and Soja (2000) are drawn upon to understand the cityscape as a complex entity, influenced by a

number of different factors. As Lefebvre (in Soja 2000) explains, the urban landscape is an intersection of different macro (large-scale political, social and economic) and micro (localized) phenomena. It is through these perspectives, some of which are influenced by actor-network theory, that I arrived at a perspective that articulates urban spaces as dynamic entities, consisting of the interaction of a number of physical, ideological, social, economic and political forces. Using Julier's (2008) model, I presented an understanding of Regent Park as a symbolic and 'real' 'urban designscape' consisting of the interaction between design, use and materials.

In the fourth chapter, I examined the revitalization of the space through investigating theories of design, official documents, and knowledge gained through interviews. Connor (developer) presents great insight into the design of the space itself, as well as the process of design, due to both the organization he is involved with and his position in that organization. I was able to use Connor's knowledge, supplemented with formal documents concerning the project, to present a significant understanding of the design and design process. It became apparent that the design process was embedded with conceptions of what the ideal social space should be like (influenced by postmodernist theories of urban design, as well as the work of Jacobs (1961)). However, the design was also influenced by financial, market-oriented motivations, evident through the condominium designs as well as the whole design process. In some ways the opinions of the residents were taken into account, through the participatory design model, but in other ways they were overshadowed for financial or

ideological reasons. Power dynamic and notions of experts were at play through the participatory design process. Governmental policy and documents also proved to be largely influential in the revitalization of space, predominantly concerning who was involved in the project, as well as the funding of the project. The mixed-use model serves as a means to gain capital to built subsidized housing.

Interviews with different residents also uncovered insights into how Regent Park operates on a local, physical level. These interviews brought to light some of the complex relationships that the residents have with their built environment. The residents that I spoke with expressed strong and at times simultaneously ambivalent relationships with their built environment, as well as their perceived safety in that environment. The interview revealed some successful attempts of designing 'the social' (for instance community gardens), and some not so successful attempts (for instance the connections between tenants and condominium owners). The interviews also illustrated some ways in which the use of the space, in turn, affected future designs of the space. The fourth chapter exemplifies how Regent Park is the interaction of all of these above-mentioned forces, some with more 'sway' than others.

Conclusion: What is 'The Social' in a Revitalized Regent Park?

In comparison to the original design, Regent Park revitalization marks a shift in concepts of design, more general ideological commitments, the social,

political and economic context of the project, as well as shifts in planning practices themselves. The two designs differed in the ways in which the space is meant to relate to surrounding neighbourhoods. The original design promotes segregation, whereas the revitalization attempts to re-integrate Regent Park with the rest of Toronto. This difference speaks to a shift in theories of urban design, as well as attitudes towards people in lower socio-economic brackets. The planning model itself shifted from a top-down approach in the original design, to a participatory approach in the revitalization. Although the participatory model retained some modernist views regarding the expertise of the professional; the planning professionals still interpreted the residents' requests, settling on what they believed to be the most promising design, informed by their professional training and experience on the subject. It is through such examples that the continuities between the projects become evident. Both designs are aimed at achieving an idyllic form of 'the social'. However, the conception of what the ideal social world looks like is not necessarily the same in both cases. The first design idealized a closed, tight-knit community for the tenants of low socio-economic status; it was socially acceptable to isolate that group of people at that time (Sandercock 1998). Conversely, the new design attempts to integrate the subsidized housing tenants with people of higher socioeconomic status, through the mixed-income housing in the neighbourhood, as well as the neighbourhood's 'reconnection' with surrounding areas.

As Jacob's (1961: 41) describes,

orthodox planning is much imbued with puritanical and Utopian conceptions of how people should spend their free time, and in planning,

these moralisms of people's private lives are deeply confused with concepts about the workings of cities.

Jacobs (1961) explains that planners attempt to create idyllic cities by attempting to shape residents social lives into what they believe to be *virtuous*. According to Jacobs (1961) efforts of orthodox planning are focused more on shaping residents social lives than on the city itself. It is in this way, that the two designs reflect more than just shifts in planning practices and ideologies, but also a shift in notions of social life.

Like the designs themselves and the ideologies that partially inform them, there are continuities and discontinuities between the social worlds that both designs are attempting to shape. The neighbourhood demolished in 1948, differs from that same area over 50 years later. Further, Toronto as a city has changed. The two designs are both attempting to shape different social worlds. There are differences (and similarities) between the residents and social lives that both designs are attempting to shape. The original Regent Park consisted of predominantly poor Irish Immigrants. Conversely the contemporary Regent Park is notably ethnically diverse, as well as economically diverse (James 2010). Steven (condominium owner) describes contemporary Regent Park residents as 'everyone... single, coupled from all backgrounds, from all placed in the world from, all different you know gay, straight bi...its Toronto'. Thinkers such as Amin (2002) and Sandercock (1998; 2003) examine the relationship between multiculturalism and urban spaces. The multicultural nature of the contemporary Regent Park appears to have a significant impact on the ways in which the space operates. Though this issue was not central to my research, which focused more

on design, the merging of multiple different cultures in one space is another important aspect to consider when attempting to understand Regent Park, and would prove to be worthwhile research.

The original design of Regent Park housed two churches, which remain there to this day. It can be assumed that these churches accommodated many of the original residents of Regent Park (and the previous Cabbagetown), which Rose (1958) described as predominantly Irish. However, the revitalization project shows no intention of creating new buildings to accommodate other religions. In fact, TCHC rejected inhabitants' request for the inclusion of a mosque in the new design due to the likelihood that it would result in requests for other religiously affiliated buildings (Connor, developer). This phenomena can be seen as reflective of TCHCs privileging of churches over other religious institutions, a decrease in the significance of religion or the hesitation for a government affiliated organization to become involved with religious endeavors. Sandercock (1998: 16) describes that urban planners,

invented no end of both blunt and subtle ways of keeping certain preferences (*marked* bodies, marked by colour, by race, by gender, by sexual preference, and by physical ability) out of the sight and out of the way and out of the neighbourhoods of certain other bodies. These discriminations and repressions are the *noir* history of planning.

Such practices are particularly evident through the original design's isolation of the poor. However, it seems that in some ways these practices are still alive in planning, and worth examining further in relation to Regent Park (Sandercock 2003).

As I have investigated throughout this thesis, design can only ever offer a partial account of the forces that make up social spaces. With the influence of social, political and economic factors, as well as materials, documents and the actual usage, what is the role of the designer? This research raises questions regarding popular understandings of the role of urban designers in contemporary Toronto. How can urban designers accommodate the plethora of different phenomena involved within urban spaces? Does the knowledge of these other influences necessitate a shift in the practices of urban design? Perhaps we need to recognize the significant influence that these different factors play, and move away from the notion that effective or progressive social change can be 'planned' or 'designed' in any definitive sense.

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Appendices

January 11, 2011

Ms. Astrid Greaves
Master's Student
Department of Sociology
Queen's University

Dear Ms. Greaves:

GREB Ref #: GSOC-080-10

Title: "Urban Regeneration in Toronto: Rebuilding the Social in Regent Park"

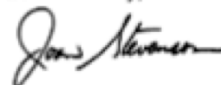
The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "**Urban Regeneration in Toronto: Rebuilding the Social in Regent Park**" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been cleared for one year. At the end of each year, the GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, if applicable, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (details available on webpage <http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchethics/GeneralREB/forms.html> – Adverse Event Report Form). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes in study procedures or implementations of new aspects into the study procedures on the Ethics Change Form that can be found at <http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchethics/GeneralREB/forms.html> - Research Ethics Change Form. These changes must be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services or irvingg@queensu.ca prior to implementation. Mrs. Irving will forward your request for protocol changes to the appropriate GREB reviewers and / or the GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,



Joan Stevenson, PhD
Professor and Chair
General Research Ethics Board

c.c.: Dr. Martin Hand, Faculty Supervisor
Dr. Steve Baron, Chair, Unit REB
Anne Henderson, Dept. Admin.

JS/gi



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