Housing Public-Private Partnerships in Toronto's Regent Park

by
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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This thesis explores the evolution of public-private partnership (PPP) in Toronto's housing development. PPP is defined as a legal and economic framework in which public and private sectors share resources, risks, and responsibilities in delivering projects or services traditionally managed by the government. The study first traces the model's emergence in 1980s Toronto, where it arose as a response to fiscal constraints and administrative inefficiencies, particularly in infrastructure and affordable housing initiatives. After the late 1990s, the model was widely employed in Toronto to address housing challenges—leveraging public land and private capital to develop mixed-use, mixed-income, and mixed-tenure communities. These developments sought to combine private-sector efficiency with public-sector goals of affordability, spatial equity, and sustainability.

Focusing on the redevelopment of Regent Park as a case study, this thesis critically analyzes the effects and limits of PPP-operated housing in contemporary Toronto. Originally constructed in the 1940s as Canada's first public housing project, Regent Park faced decades of physical decay, social isolation, and stigmatization. In 2005, the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) launched a major redevelopment to transform the area into a vibrant, mixed-income neighborhood. Drawing on archival research and fieldwork, the study investigates the collaboration among the City of Toronto, TCHC, and the Daniels Corporation at both political-economic and spatial levels. It assesses the model's spatial manifestations, advantages, and shortcomings—particularly issues of gentrification, displacement, and placelessness—while situating the case within a broader international context of PPP-operated housing projects. Finally, through a design-based inquiry into the Phases 4 and 5 of Regent Park, the thesis proposes a new public-residential typology that seeks to dissolve the spatial segregation between market-rate and affordable units, mitigate placelessness, and foster community integration and historical continuity. In doing so, it offers a transferable design strategy for the global implementation of PPP models in affordable housing. This design proposal responds directly to the spatial and social limitations of the PPP model, offering a pragmatic intervention rather than a utopian vision. At the same time, it embeds a critical stance toward the neoliberal housing paradigm by reimagining the relationship between public and private, affordability and profit, architecture and equity.

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I would first like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Rick Andrighetti. His guidance, generosity, and unfailing encouragement have shaped my academic journey in ways I will always treasure. Rick has consistently supported my ideas, encouraged me to pursue my own approach, and provided thoughtful feedback that sharpened both my design work and my thinking. His openness and genuine care for students have made him an inspiring mentor and an example of the best qualities in architectural education.

I am equally indebted to my committee member, Shiyu Wei, the first professor I met at this university. From the very beginning, her patience, encouragement, and constructive advice gave me the confidence to adapt to a new environment and academic culture. She has been a steady source of guidance, generously sharing her knowledge while respecting my own perspective. Her clarity of thought and ability to translate complex ideas into practical insights have been invaluable to my research and personal growth.

My appreciation also goes to my roommates, Xiaoyu Wang and Yiqing Liu, whose companionship made life in this quiet and contemplative town far richer than I could have imagined. I thank Han Guo for generously sharing experience and bringing joy into our routines, and Drashti Mehta, Angeline Reyes, and my other classmates for the camaraderie that carried us through both the most demanding courses and the school's thoughtfully complex graduation procedures.

Most of all, my heartfelt thanks go to my partner, Zengxin Wen. Your presence has given me the courage to start anew, time and again, in a world that often feels bewildering.

Lastly, I would like to thank the University of Waterloo for delivering an ‘atypical’ academic training that challenged my assumptions at every turn, which allowed me to witness the remarkable diversity within academic education. In particular, the remarkable adaptability between principles and practice has taught me how to remain active in the pursuit of academic trends while maintaining an appearance of public concern that resonates with the world, and it has also prompted me to ask: when architectural education so gracefully suspends itself above the realities of the world, how should students anchor their own professional ethics? Furthermore, the minimalist provision of infrastructure, in turn, created the conditions for an unusually focused period of academic work; a one-term thesis became a cross-year program, letting me present the same research in multiple courses in an sustained cycle of remarkable persistence. Although this distinctive training model increased both time and financial costs, it unexpectedly fostered a multi-dimensional engagement with my research topic.

Ultimately, this experience strengthened my resolve: even at the risk of marginalization, I refuse to let architectural designh serve as a footnote to educational ideology. Architecture should confront reality, not be bound by empty theory. The world should not be a projection of a single value system—and my learning here, as a critical case, has become a source of motivation to resist such a trend.

Table of Contents

Author's Declaration iii
Abstract v
Acknowledgements vi
List of Figures x

01 | Introduction 1

1.1 Defining the Public-Private Partnerships 6
1.2 Rise of PPP in Toronto's Housing Development 10
1.3 Research Questions and Methods 14

02 | Regent Park: From Public Housing to Revitalization 17

2.1 Regent Park: History and Overview 18
2.2 Emerging Calls for Redevelopment 24
2.3 Planning the Revitalization 26

03 | Tri-Partite PPP Model in Regent Park Revitalization 31

3.1 Operational Structure of the PPP Model 32
3.2 Development Process under the PPP Model 34
3.3 Space Features under PPP Model 42
3.4 A Critical Assessment of Regent Park 50

04 | Global PPP Housing Cases: Insights for Regent Park 59

4.1 Ensuring Financial Stability - Clichy-Batignolles Development 60
4.2 Zero Displacement: The Alexandra Park Revitalization 62
4.3 Promoting Social Integration: Via Verde New York 64
4.4 Preserving Historical Continuity: Hafencity 66

05 | Designing Regent Park Phase 4 and 5 69

5.1 Phase 4 and 5 Introductions 70
5.2 Site Selection and Analysis 72
5.3 Design Principles 74
5.4 Architectural Design 80
5.5 Summary 170

06 | Conclusion 173

Bibliography 176

List of Figures

Fig 1.1 By 2035, a large number of condos are expected to be built in Toronto to address the housing shortage.
https://www.stephenvelasco.com/downtown-core

Fig 1.2 Real home prices in Canada and the U.S. have surged far beyond income and population growth, highlighting a growing affordability crisis.
https://www.google.com/search?vsrid=COSEpbne59f4LhACGAEiJDBiYmM3YjRhLWIzMDEtNDFjMy1iZmQxLTM4MzZmMjY0YmE1NTIGIgJiaSgIOMz-3rPpsI4D&vsint=CAIqDAoCCAcSAggKGAEgATojChYNAAAAPxUAAAA_HQAAgD8IAACAPzABEOgHGLIEJQAAgD8&udm=26&lns_mode=un&source=lns.web.gsbubb&vsdim=1000,562&gsessionid=-PeNmuWHezaX8Smx30SbLGzkrjW2IyQhE8EC1t2xQV5F2VVCWnvnvQ&lsessionid=A3peYG-qAStpeS4VhjE47SChw8FP9AHtkXpUTM3eLy4skWrLpURB9w&lns_surface=26&authuser=0&lns_vfs=e&qsubts=1752100073324&biw=1707&bih=898&hl=zh-CN#vhid=dTJKqmVe2dKCFM&vssid=mosaic

Fig 1.3 The Evolution of the PPP Model
Produced by author.

Fig 1.4 The PPP model has common advantages and disadvantages as observed in established cases.
Produced by author.

Fig 1.5 As one of Toronto's earliest residential developments, St. Lawrence Community initially reflected the characteristics of the PPP model.
https://www.canadianarchitect.com/st-lawrence-district-toronto/

Fig 1.6 PPP-based developments are widely distributed in downtown Toronto and continue to expand
Produced by author.

Fig 1.7 Research Methods
Produced by author.

Fig 2.1 In a later map from 1912, Regent Park has filled in to take on the urban form it would have until after the Second World War.
https://www.torontotoday.ca/local/history/map-regent-park-redevelopment-part-of-a-long-story-of-change-9996752change-9996752

Fig 2.2 Slum housing in Williamson Place, 1937, before the construction of Regent Park.
https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=395763850493605&set=a.630049480398373

Fig 2.3 John Edward Hoare's 1948 plan for Regent Park North shows cross-shaped low-rise blocks arranged in superblocks, surrounded by generous green space—illustrating the influence of Garden City and Modernist planning ideas.
https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=395763850493605&set=a.630049480398373

Fig 2.4 A 1950s planning map reveals the dramatic contrast between Regent Park's superblocks and the surrounding dense urban fabric. The cleared site produced wide open spaces and severed the traditional street grid, reinforcing the neighborhood's spatial isolation.
https://www.researchgate.net/figure/John-Edward-Hoares-1948-plan-for-Regent-Park-North-showing-the-crucible-shaped-housing_fig2_370640620

Fig 2.5 Regent Park in 1968
Kelly, Sharon Ann. Reconstructing Social Housing: The Socio-spatial Effects of Welfare State Transformation in Toronto's Regent Park. University of Toronto (Canada),

Fig 2.6 Regent Park in the mid-1980s, during a period of visible physical decline and spatial isolation.
https://torontoguardian.com/2022/07/old-photographs-regent-park-neighbourhood/

Fig 2.7 Under the "Common Sense Revolution," Ontario cut social housing funding and downloaded responsibility to municipalities.
https://opencouncil.ca/1995-common-sense-revolution/

Fig 2.8 Row of Victorian houses for sale in gentrifying Cabbagetown in the 1990s.
https://www.blogto.com/city/2020/12/cabbagetown-toronto-history/

Fig 2.9 Early concept diagrams for the revitalization of Regent Park, showing an axonometric view of proposed mixed-use redevelopment (left) and block structure transformation from superblocks to a traditional grid (right).
https://www.kengreenberg.ca/projects/Regent%20Park,%20Toronto
https://preservedstories.com/2013/01/27/history-of-regent-park/

Fig 2.10 Regent Park Target Phasing Plan, October, 2013
https://id.map-of-toronto.com/kabupaten-peta/rencana-revitalisasi-regent-park-toronto-peta

Fig 2.11 Regent Park Planning Evolution: From Low-Density Blocks to High-Density Towers
https://www.kengreenberg.ca/projects/Regent%20Park,%20Toronto
https://www.tridel.com/blog/regent-park-city-of-toronto-approves-rezoning-phase-4-and-5/、

Fig 3.1 Stakeholder Structure of the Regent Park Revitalization
Produced by author.

Fig 3.2 Financial and Organizational Structure
Produced by author.

Fig 3.3 Community gathers for revitalization update.
https://torontohousing.ca/news-and-updates/regent-parks-exciting-future-community-gathers-revitalization-update

Fig 3.5 Daniels Spectrum organizes a diverse array of cultural programs annually.
https://www.eventsource.ca/daniels-spectrum
https://www.danielsspectrum.ca/june-events-at-daniels-spectrum

Fig 3.6 Collaborative Roles Behind Daniels Spectrum
Produced by author.

Fig 3.7 Red lines show new streets added in the redevelopment plan.
Produced by author.

Fig 3.8 Distribution of Public Spaces and Community Facilities in Regent Park
Produced by author.

Fig 3.9 Diagram of Residential Typologies in Regent Park Showing Diversity and Mixed-Tenure Characteristic
Produced by author.

Fig 3.10 Aerial view comparing Regent Park before and after redevelopment, illustrating the complete removal of original buildings and urban form.
Produced by author.

Fig 3.11 Comparison of Conventional PPP Models and the Regent Park Revitalization
Produced by author.

Fig 3.12 Visual Disparities Between Affordable and Market-Rate Housing in Regent Park
Produced by author.

Fig 3.13 From a Planned 1:1 Ratio to Nearly 1:2: The Shift in Affordable and Market Unit Distribution
Produced by author.

Fig 3.14 Regent Park Then and Now: A Morphological Comparison and the Emergence of Placelessness
Produced by author.

Fig 4.1 The Overview of Clichy-Batignolles Development
https://www.leparisien.fr/paris-75/paris-le-chantier-du-quartier-des-batignolles-bientot-termine-05-04-2018-7647783.php

Fig 4.2 Funding Structure for Social and Affordable Housing on Plot N1 of the Clichy-Batignolles ZAC, Paris
Ville de Paris, 2014 DLH 1284, p2

Fig 4.3 TCHC Guiding Principles: Zero Displacement as the First Priority in Alexandra Park Revitalization
TCHC (2024), Alexandra Park Phase 1 Closeout Report, Item 15A.

Fig 4.4 Left: Stepped facade blurs distinctions between unit types.Right: Rooftop serves as an everyday social space.
https://www.dattner.com/projects/view/via-verde-the-green-way/

Fig 4.5 A range of unit types serving various income levels is integrated through a consistent architectural language. space.
https://grimshaw.global/sustainability/via-verde-the-green-way-case-study/

Fig 4.6 Historic buildings preserved as a whole (left: the Speicherstadt warehouse district)
https://archello.com/project/hafencity-2

Fig 4.7 Unity in Diversity: Façade Control and Architectural Expression in HafenCity
Produced by author.

Fig 5.1 Location and Boundaries of Phases 4 and 5
City of Toronto, Phase 4 & 5 Decision Report, 2024.

Fig 5.2 Regulatory Framework and the Two Pedestrian Axes
City of Toronto, Phase 4 & 5 Decision Report, 2024.

Fig 5.3 A Rendering of the Proposed Design by GNW
https://www.tridel.com/blog/regent-park-city-of-toronto-approves-rezoning-phase-4-and-5/

Fig 5.4 Three Key Design Challenges Identified Earlier: Spatial Segregation, Insufficient Affordability, and Placelessness
Produced by author.

Fig 5.5 Three Design Visions: Collective Ground, Expanded Affordability, and Historical Presence
Produced by author.

Fig 5.6 Diagram of the Three Main Strategies
Produced by author.

Fig 5.7 Contextual Refinement of the Zoning Bylaw
Produced by author.

Fig 5.8 Overall Axonometric Diagram
Produced by author.

Fig 5.9 Aerial View: Complying with Zoning By-law in Tower Count and Height
Produced by author.

Fig 5.10 Central Park Perspective: Extend the public character of the Central Park
Produced by author.

Fig 5.11 Street-level perspective of the south elevation： Dynamic Urban Interface
Produced by author.

Fig 5.12 Pedestrian Realm Design
Produced by author.

Fig 5.13 Functional Distribution of Basement Level 1
Produced by author.

Fig 5.14 Exploded Axonometric of the Podium – A Vessel for Everyday, Diverse Public Life
Produced by author.

Fig 5.15 First Floor Plan
Produced by author.

Fig 5.16 First Floor Plan Functional Diagram
Produced by author.

Fig 5.17 Circulation Analysis
Produced by author.

Fig 5.18 Waste Collection and Circulation Flow Analysis
Produced by author.

Fig 5.19 Sinking Courtyard along the Pedestrian Street
Produced by author.

Fig 5.20 Tree Courtyard along the street
Produced by author.

Fig 5.21 Adaptive Reuse and Extension Strategy for the Boiler Room
Produced by author.

Fig 5.22 Boiler Room Bar in a Reimagined, Accessible Heritage Venue
Produced by author.

Fig 5.23 Civic Center Atrium
Produced by author.

Fig 5.24 Library Atrium
Produced by author.

Fig 5.25 Second Floor Plan
Produced by author.

Fig 5.26 Terraced Commons provides an informal setting for everyday interactions, interwoven with surrounding spaces.
Produced by author.

Fig 5.27 The open desk area in the co-working space adds flexibility to the workspace.
Produced by author.

Fig 5.28 Third Floor Plan
Produced by author.

Fig 5.29 The Gym
Produced by author.

Fig 5.30 Fourth Floor Plan
Produced by author.

Fig 5.31 The towers are positioned toward the edges of the site, freeing up the central area to create a cluster of multi-level public spaces.
Produced by author.

Fig 5.32 Greenhouse on the Third Floor Roof
Produced by author.

Fig 5.33 Improved Efficiency and 1:1 Balance via Loft Adaptation
Produced by author.

Fig 5.34 Distribution of the Five Unit Floor Types and Their Typological Composition
Produced by author.

Fig 5.35 Floor Type 1 Plan and Location
Produced by author.

Fig 5.36 Floor Type 1: Unit Type Distribution
Produced by author.

Fig 5.37 Typical Floor Section
Produced by author.

Fig 5.38 Floor Type 2 Plan and Location
Produced by author.

Fig 5.39 Floor Type 2: Unit Type Distribution
Produced by author.

Fig 5.40 Floor Type 3: Plan, Location and Units Distribution
Produced by author.

Fig 5.41 Floor Type 4: Plan, Location and Units Distribution
Produced by author.

Fig 5.42 Floor Type 5: Plan , Location and Units Distribution
Produced by author.

Fig 5.43 Rendering1 of Lofted Affordable Unit
Produced by author.

Fig 5.44 Rendering2 of Lofted Affordable Unit
Produced by author.

Fig 5.45 Facade of Residential Tower
Produced by author.

Fig 5.46 Section
Produced by author.

Fig 5.47 Direct Sunlight Hours Analysis
Produced by author.

01 | Introduction

Toronto is at a crossroad with a serious housing problem at the moment. It is complex and multidimensional, resulting from the intricate interaction of urban spatial, cultural, political, and economic elements.[1] At its core, the crisis is characterized by three interrelated dimensions: a severe housing shortage, soaring housing prices, and the erosion of urban public space due to the dominance of private capital in housing development.[2] What's worse, these challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has further exposed the limitations of current government policies.

A shortage of housing is one of the main issues facing today's housing market. High rates of immigration have fueled rapid population growth in Toronto, significantly increasing the demand for housing.[3] However, the supply of new housing is unable to meet the growing demand. According to recent estimates,[4] Toronto needs to add more than 250,000 residential units by 2035 to alleviate or solve this shortage; and plans to add another 430,000 residential units to meet potential future growth. The scale of residential construction makes us think about an important question: how can a city complete such large-scale construction projects in a relatively short period of time, while ensuring that new housing is affordable, sustainable, and provides high-quality community spaces?

[1] John David Hulchanski, The Three Cities within Toronto: Income Polarization among Toronto's Neighbourhoods, 1970–2000 (Toronto: Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 2007).

[2] David Madden and Peter Marcuse, In Defense of Housing: The Politics of Crisis (London: Verso, 2016).

[3] Steve Lafleur, Barriers to Housing Supply in Ontario and the Greater Toronto Area (Vancouver: Fraser Institute, 2024)

[4] Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Housing Market Outlook: Toronto CMA (Ottawa: CMHC, 2022).

The affordability of housing has been exacerbated by soaring housing prices, making it increasingly difficult for low- and middle-income households to own a home. Over the past decade, Toronto's housing market has become one of the most expensive in North America, with home prices rising much faster than wages.[5] The increasing commodification and financialization of housing have significantly contributed to the affordability crisis. As critics such as Douglas Spencer have pointed out, the prioritization of market demand over social need has led to housing being increasingly seen as a vehicle for wealth accumulation rather than as a basic space for living.[6] To make matters worse, during COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain disruptions have led to increased construction costs, while historically low interest rates have driven a surge in demand for home purchases.[7] The combined effect of these factors has caused housing prices to soar to unprecedented levels, forcing many Toronto residents to move away from the city center.

In the face of these challenges, municipal and provincial governments have introduced various policies aimed at addressing the housing crisis, such as inclusive zoning, rent control measures and affordable housing subsidies, but the results have been minimal.[8] The government's lack of measures to effectively counter the dominance of the private market has resulted in an unbalanced housing market, where the interests of developers and investors are often placed above the needs of residents.[9] This has led to the gentrification of urban spaces, with low-income communities disappearing to make way for high-end developments. As a result, urban spaces have been increasingly privatized. Public facilities are now often replaced by private residential developments such as condominiums. Amenities that were once shared by the entire community—like municipal swimming pools or community halls—are now built into condo buildings and reserved exclusively for residents. The erosion of public spaces not only undermines the social cohesion of communities, but also exacerbates existing inequalities . [10]

[5] Alan Walks, "Canada's Housing Bubble Story: Mortgage Securitization, the State, and the Global Financial Crisis," International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 38, no. 1 (2014): 256–284.

[6] Douglas Spencer, The Architecture of Neoliberalism: How Contemporary Architecture Became an Instrument of Control and Compliance (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016).

[7] Markus Moos and Andrejs Skaburskis, "The Globalization of Urban Housing Markets: Immigration and Changing Housing Demand in Vancouver," Urban Geography 31, no. 6 (2010): 724–749.

[8] Jason Hackworth, "The Limits to Market-Based Strategies for Addressing Land Abandonment in Shrinking American Cities," Progress in Planning 90 (2014): 1–37.

[9] Jason Hackworth and Josephine Rekers, "Ethnic Packaging and Gentrification: The Case of Four Neighborhoods in Toronto," Urban Affairs Review 41, no. 2 (2005): 211–236.

[10] Don Mitchell, The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space (New York: Guilford Press, 2003).

It is against this backdrop that the public-private partnership (PPP) model emerged as a potential solution to Toronto's housing crisis, the definition and characteristics of which we will explain in detail in the next section. By combining the respective strengths of the public and private sectors, PPPs provide a collaborative approach to housing development in Toronto, aiming to balance the efficiency of private investment with the broader public interest.[11] In recent years, PPPs have played an increasingly important role in housing development in Toronto, particularly in the development of large mixed-income neighborhoods such as Regent Park, Alexander Park and the Port Lands.[12] These large-scale developments aim to address the twin challenges of housing affordability and urban space regeneration, while promoting sustainable and inclusive community development. However, while the PPP model has advantages over other development models, it is not without controversy. Critics argue that it often prioritizes profit over social equity and does not adequately address the root causes of the housing crisis.

This thesis will focus on the application of the PPP model in the redevelopment of Regent Park, one of Toronto's most iconic and controversial residential development projects.[13] As Canada's first public housing community, Regent Park has a long and complex history, which will be briefly reviewed in a later section of this thesis. Over time, the community became synonymous with aging infrastructure, high crime rates and social isolation, and a comprehensive redevelopment plan was launched in 2003. The Regent Park revitalization project, a collaboration between Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) and private developers, has become an innovative attempt at urban transformation under the PPP model. By examining the strengths and weaknesses of this model, this thesis aims to explore the potential role of PPP in addressing Toronto's housing crisis, while exploring innovative design solutions to combat gentrification and spatial inequalities.

[11] Graeme A. Hodge and Carsten Greve, "Public–Private Partnerships: An International Performance Review," Public Administration Review 67, no. 3 (2007): 545–558.

[12] Martine August, "The Financialization of Canadian Multi-Family Rental Housing: From Trailer to Tower," Journal of Urban Affairs 42, no. 7 (2020): 975–997.

[13] John David Hulchanski, The Three Cities within Toronto: Income Polarization among Toronto's Neighbourhoods, 1970–2000 (Toronto: Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 2007).

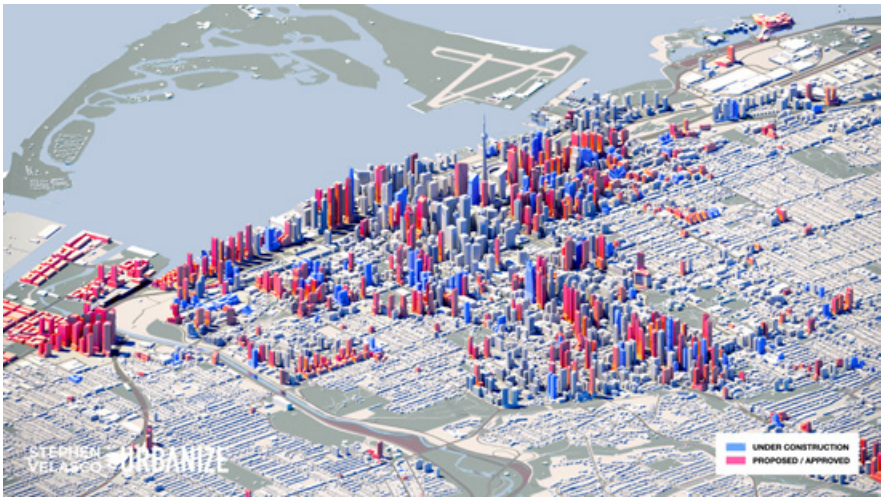


Fig 1.1 *By 2035, a large number of condos are expected to be built in Toronto to address the housing shortage.*

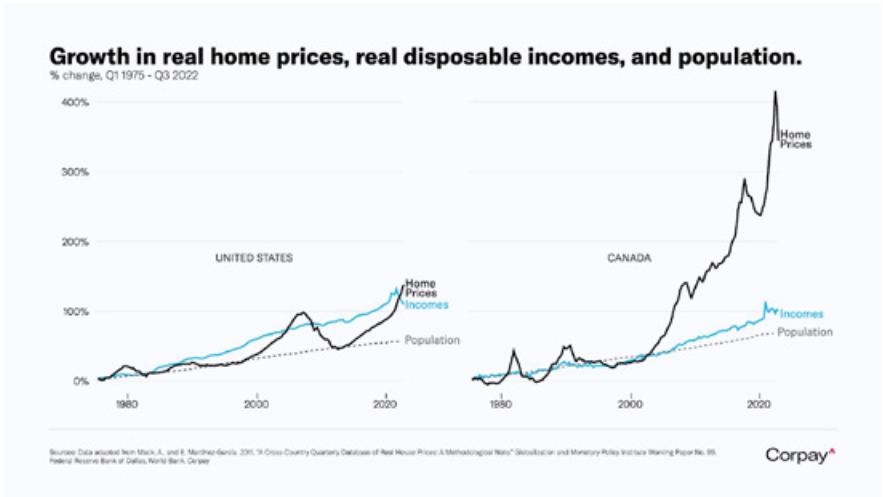


Fig 1.2 *Real home prices in Canada and the U.S. have surged far beyond income and population growth, highlighting a growing affordability crisis.*

1.1 Defining the Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships originated in various geo-economic contexts.[14] The earliest PPP model can be traced back to a water supply project in mid-19th century France led by the Compagnie Générale des Eaux (now Veolia Environnement), as it shared financial and administrative characteristics with later PPP models.[15] Similarly, in the 20th-century United States, toll road projects such as the Pennsylvania Turnpike in 1940 demonstrated early forms of public-private partnerships.[16] In developing countries, from the 1960s to the 1980s, international organizations like the World Bank promoted public-private partnerships for infrastructure projects, such as the 1977 Manila Waterworks project in the Philippines. These initiatives lacked formal frameworks, standardized contracts, and clear policies, and were often informal arrangements specifically designed to address local needs.[17]

The oil crisis of the 1970s, the fall of the Soviet Union, and the rise of neo-liberal ideology made countries begin to move away from the post-war Keynesian model of strong government intervention. By the end of the 20th century, there was a global shift towards privatization as economic stagnation, rising public debt, and inefficiencies in state-dominated systems emerged. Many countries have begun to seek reforms such as deregulation and the sale of state-owned enterprises to provide public services efficiently while addressing financial constraints.[18] Against this background, the first widely recognized PPP with a structured policy framework in the UK emerged in 1992. The Conservative government under John Major introduced the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) to achieve the goal of modernizing the UK's infrastructure.[19] This initiative advocates a shift from direct public funding to the private sector designing, building, financing and operating public assets. From the late 1990s, PPPs gradually spread across Europe, Latin America and South-East Asia.[20] In Latin America, Chile and Argentina have been active in PPP projects in the power, water, and gas sectors. In Asia, the Philippines enacted its first PPP law in 1990, paving the way for private participation in the power, water and telecoms sectors.[21]

[14] Stephen H. Linder, "Coming to Terms with the Public-Private Partnership: A Grammar of Multiple Meanings," American Behavioral Scientist 43, no. 1 (1999): 35–51.

[15] Dominique Lorrain, "Urban Capitalisms: European Models in Competition," International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 29, no. 2 (2005): 231–267.

[16] Daniel B. Klein and John Majewski, "Economy, Community, and Law: The Turnpike Movement in New York, 1797–1845," Law & Society Review 26, no. 3 (1992): 469–512.

[17] Caiyun Cui, Yong Liu, Alex Hope, and Jianping Wang, "Review of Studies on the Public–Private Partnerships (PPP) for Infrastructure Projects," International Journal of Project Management 36, no. 5 (2018): 773–794.

[18] David Harvey, A Brief History of Neoliberalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[19] Dimas de Castro e Silva Neto, Carlos Oliveira Cruz, Fernanda Rodrigues, and Paulo Silva, "Bibliometric Analysis of PPP and PFI Literature: Overview of 25 Years of Research," Journal of Construction Engineering and Management 142, no. 10 (2016): 06016002.

[20] Julie Froud, "The Private Finance Initiative: Risk, Uncertainty and the State," Accounting, Organizations and Society 28, no. 6 (2003): 567–589.

[21] Antonio Estache and Tomás Serebrisky, "Where Do We Stand on Transport Infrastructure Deregulation and Public-Private Partnership?," SSRN Electronic Journal (2004).



Fig 1.3 *The Evolution of the PPP Model*

There is no globally recognized definition of PPP. However, projects adopting the PPP model basically have the following common features: [22]

1) Co-operation between public and private parties, typically involving shared responsibilities in financing, risk management, and service delivery;

2) The signing of long-term co-operation contracts, often spanning 10 to 30 years depending on the project's scale and complexity;

3) The purpose is or includes the provision of public services, such as housing, transportation, healthcare, or infrastructure, which are traditionally under government responsibility;

4) Includes the whole process of services, such as planning, engineering, procurement, fund raising, construction, operation and maintenance;

5) The financial risk is shared by both parties.[23]

Based on the above core features, a public-private partnership (PPP) in this thesis can be defined as an entrepreneurial co-operation between the public sector and the private sector, legalized through a long-term contract, aimed at delivering public projects and services. Such partnerships typically cover all life-cycle aspects such as planning, engineering, procurement, financing, construction, operation, and maintenance, and the financial responsibilities and risks are shared by both parties.

The PPP model theoretically combines the strengths of the public sector and private investors to balance market efficiency with public interest. Compared to traditional development models, PPPs offer several advantages: public involvement helps ensure equity, transparency, and sustainability; private participation enhances efficiency and innovation; diversified funding reduces financial risk; and long-term contracts bring stability and predictability. However, in practice, PPP developments often struggle to maintain this balance, with private interests frequently dominating. Common issues include gentrification due to weak public oversight, complex negotiations that delay progress, rigid contracts that limit adaptability, and the exclusion of community voices, which undermines inclusivity. These challenges highlight the need for more balanced, flexible, and participatory approaches in PPP-operated urban regeneration.[24]

[22] Emanuel S. Savas, Privatization and Public-Private Partnerships (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 2000).

[23] Susumu Ito, Infrastructure Development and Public–Private Partnership (Singapore: Springer, 2022).

[24] Erik-Hans Klijn and Geert R. Teisman, "Institutional and Strategic Barriers to Public–Private Partnership: An Analysis of Dutch Cases," Public Money and Management 23, no. 3 (2003): 137–146.

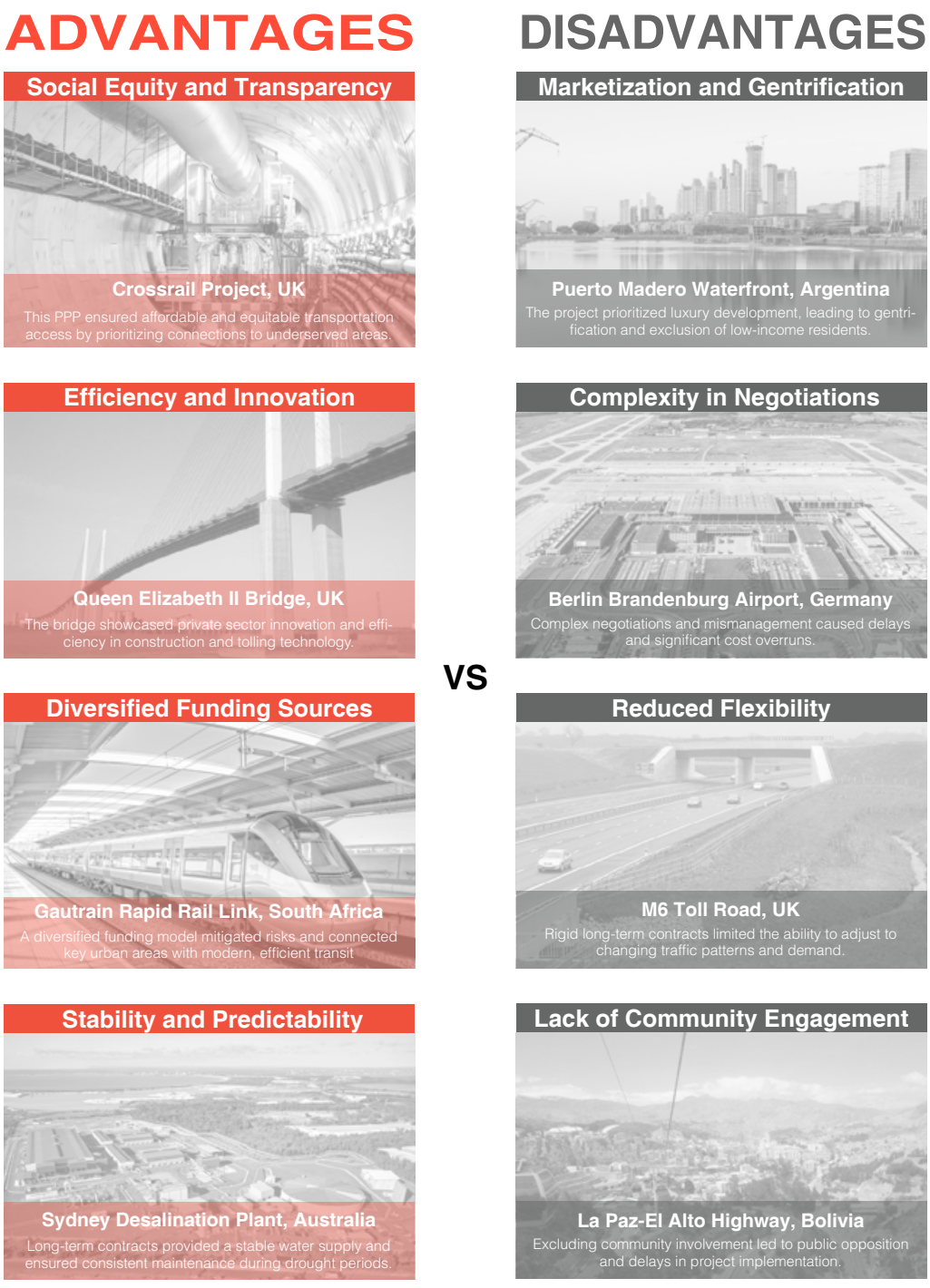


Fig 1.4 *The PPP model has common advantages and disadvantages as observed in established cases.*

1.2 Rise of PPP in Toronto's Housing Development

Before discussing the specific case of Regent Park, this section briefly outlines the three-stage evolution of PPP housing development in Toronto, reflecting changes in urban governance models. This evolution—from informal cooperation to the establishment of a structured framework—vividly demonstrates how the public and private sectors can work together to address challenges such as housing shortages, affordability, and urban renewal.

In the early experimental stage (1980s–1990s), Toronto's public-private partnership model was characterized by informality and opportunism.[25] Against a backdrop of economic stagnation, industrial decline, and a growing demand for affordable housing, the government turned to private investment to address capital shortages. Although the concept of PPP did not yet exist, early projects such as The St. Lawrence Community (1970s–1980s) already featured shared financial responsibility and collaborative development.[26] It shows that the rudiments of the PPP model had already emerged at the time, although the structured long-term contracts had not yet been formed.

[25] Gene Desfor and Roger Keil, Nature and the City: Making Environmental Policy in Toronto and Los Angeles (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004).

[26] John Sewell, The Shape of the City: Toronto Struggles with Modern Planning (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

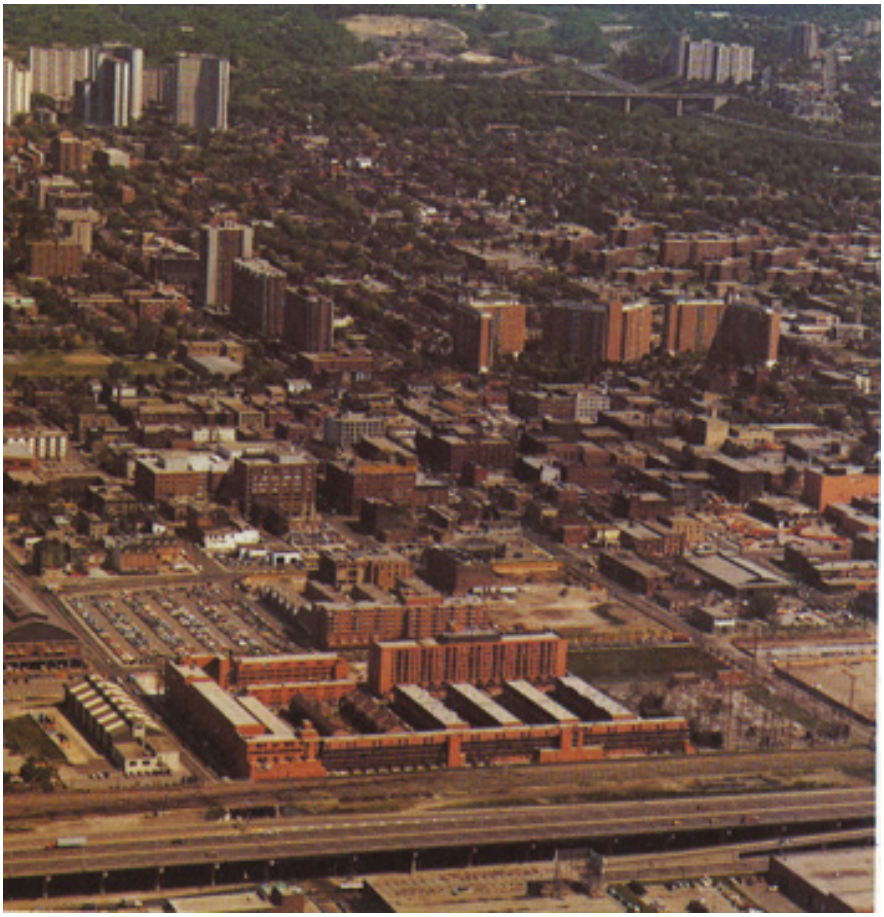


Fig 1.5 *As one of Toronto's earliest residential developments, St. Lawrence Community initially reflected the characteristics of the PPP model.*

During the regularization and expansion phase (2000s to 2010s), public-private partnerships became an important strategy in Toronto's urban planning framework.[27] A key event was the 2002 establishment of Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), now Canada's largest social housing provider.[28] The Regent Park revitalization (2003–present)—the focus of this thesis—is a prime example of TCHC's operation.[29]

During the diversification and large-scale development phase (2010–present), Toronto's PPP housing development has been marked by two key features: more diverse stakeholders and increasingly large, complex projects.[30] Since the 2010s, non-profits and community groups have played a growing role, with housing increasingly integrated with social and cultural functions. For example, the TIFF Bell Lightbox (2010) combined housing with cultural space.[31] The second feature is the large-scale development of housing projects. The West Don Lands, East Bayfront, Port Lands project, developed by Waterfront Toronto in partnership with private developers, exemplifies this trend. These projects are among the largest and most complex urban renewal projects in Toronto's history.

As can be seen from the evolution of housing development in Toronto under PPP, its characteristics of large-scale construction and balancing public and private interests have made it play an increasingly important role in housing construction and urban renewal, and it should be regarded as a potentially effective solution to the housing crisis.[32] Despite the controversies surrounding it, it is still worth studying and analyzing the next chapter, we will explore the regeneration of Regent's Park in detail to examine the advantages and challenges of public-private partnership models.

[27] John David Hulchanski, The Three Cities within Toronto: Income Polarization among Toronto's Neighbourhoods, 1970–2000 (Toronto: Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 2007).

[28] Martine August, "Challenging the Rhetoric of Stigmatization: The Benefits of Concentrated Poverty in Toronto's Regent Park," Environment and Planning A 46, no. 6 (2014): 1317–1333.

[29] R. Alan Walks and Richard Maaranen, "Gentrification, Social Mix, and Social Polarization: Testing the Linkages in Large Canadian Cities," Urban Geography 29, no. 4 (2008): 293–326.

[30] Ute Lehrer and Jennefer Laidley, "Old Mega- Projects Newly Packaged? Waterfront Redevelopment in Toronto," International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 32, no. 4 (2008): 786–803.

[31] Stefan Kipfer and Roger Keil, "Toronto Inc.? Planning the Competitive City in the New Toronto," Antipode 34, no. 2 (2002): 227–264.

[32] Jamie Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 29, no. 4 (2005): 740–770.



Scale	No	Name	Address	Status	Government Agencies	Private Developers	NGO / Others
Single Building	1	Artscape Triangle Lofts	38 Abell St	2010	City of Toronto	Urbancorp	Artscape
	2	Meridian Hall/L Tower	1 Front St East	2014	City of Toronto	Castlepoint Numa, Fernbrook Homes, Cityzen Development	
	3	TIFF Bell Lightbox	350 King St W	2010	City of Toronto	The Daniels Corporation	Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)
	4	Toronto Public Library/ Library District Condos	126 Fort York Blvd	2013	Toronto Public Library, City of Toronto	Context Development	
	5	Daniels Spectrum/ Paintbox Condominium	585 Dundas Street E	2012	TCHC, City of Toronto	The Daniels Corporation	Artscape
	6	OCAD Onsite Gallery/ Studio Condominiums	199 Richmond Street W	2017	City of Toronto, OCAD	Aspen Ridge Homes	
	7	Artscape Daniels Launchpad	132 Queens Quay E	2018	City of Toronto	The Daniels Corporation	Artscape
	8	Eva's Phoenix, YMCA/Waterworks	60 Brant St	2021	City of Toronto	MOD Developments, Woodcliffe Landmark Properties	YMCA, Eva's Initiatives
	9	Red Door Shelter/875 Queen Lofts	875 Queen St E	2021	City of Toronto	Harhar Developments	Red Door Shelter
	10	Canoe Landing Centre	45 Fort York Blvd	2020	City of Toronto, TDSB, TCDSB	Concord Adex	
	11	Sugar Wharf	100 Queens Quay E	Ongoing	Waterfront Toronto	Menkes Developments	
	12	Streetcar Crowsnest Theatre/ The Carlaw Condominium	345 Carlaw Ave	2017	City of Toronto	Streetcar Developments	Crows Theatre
	13	Artscape Sandbox/ Cinema Tower Condominium	301 Adelaide St W	2017	City of Toronto	The Daniels Corporation	Artscape
	14	Coach Terminal Redevelopment	610 Bay Street	Ongoing	City of Toronto	Uncertain	
Community Development	15	Regent Park Revitalization	Downtown East	2005-Ongoing	TCHC, City of Toronto	The Daniels Corporation	
	16	Alexandra Park Revitalization	Downtown West	2013-Ongoing	TCHC, City of Toronto	Tridel	
	17	Don Summerville Revitalization	1555 & 1575 Queen Street East	2019-Ongoing	TCHC, City of Toronto	Context Development, RioCan	
	18	West Don Lands Development	Downtown East	2012-Ongoing	Waterfront Toronto	Dream Unlimited, Kilmer Group	
	19	Railway Lands Development	CityPlace	2013	City of Toronto	Concord Adex	
	20	Port Lands	Waterfront	2018-Ongoing	Waterfront Toronto, Various Government Levels	Not fully developed yet	
	21	East Bayfront	Waterfront	2010-Ongoing	Waterfront Toronto	Great Gulf, Hines	

Fig 1.6 *PPP-based developments are widely distributed in downtown Toronto and continue to expand.*

1.3 Research Questions and Methods

This thesis offers both historical and contemporary inquiries into the PPP model in the context of Toronto's affordable housing, with a particular focus on the case of Regent Park, to answer the following research questions:

1) How did the government, the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), and the developer collaborate in the redevelopment process? And how is this development mechanism reflected in the spatial and architectural outcomes?

2) In what ways does Regent Park diverge from conventional PPP models in terms of both development mechanisms and spatial design?

3) What design strategies, from a global perspective, can harness the strengths of the PPP framework while addressing its limitations? How can these strategies be applied to Phase 4 and 5 of Regent Park?

The case study of Regent Park builds on archival and site investigation. Most documents on the project's decisions and processes are publicly accessible, with major files released by TCHC and City of Toronto. The documents issued by TCHC are more comprehensive and cover all stages of the project process. The main documents released by TCHC include Requests for Proposals, Reports to TCHC's Board of Directors, Financial Statements, Redevelopment Progress Reports, and Community Engagement and Consultation Documents, among others. The City of Toronto publishes documents that focus more on spatial planning, such as Re-zoning Applications and Approvals, Secondary Plan Documents, and Social Development Plans. The two have also jointly issued Community Benefits Agreements, which provide detailed plans for community engagement and rights protection.

While the archival analyses aim to figure out the mechanism of regent park development, the site investigations are designed to examine how this mechanism is reflected spatially. I conducted three field visits to Regent Park—in October 2024, March 2025, and May 2025—to observe and document its spatial configuration, public realm, and built environment transformations related to the PPP development model.

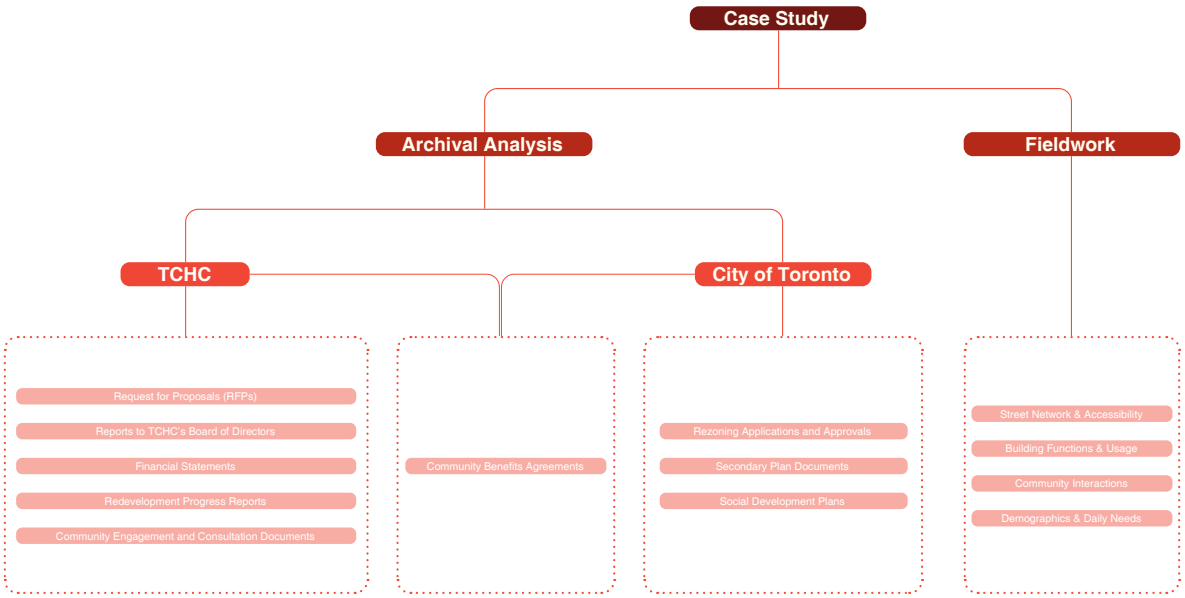


Fig 1.7 *Research Methods*

02 | Regent Park: From Public Housing to Revitalization

2.1 Regent Park: History and Overview

Regent Park, on the east side of downtown Toronto between Parliament and River Streets, was one of the city's oldest working-class neighborhoods. In the 1930s–40s, it was labeled a "slum" due to overcrowding, unemployment, poor health, and rising crime.[33] In the late 1940s, the city of Toronto launched a slum clearance program, demolishing the existing community and planning and constructing Regent Park as a public housing community.

Initiated in 1947, Regent Park was Canada's first large-scale public housing project. The project aimed to address the severe housing shortage after the war and achieve the municipal goal of eliminating slums. Developed by the Toronto Housing Authority with financial support from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, it was seen as a modern solution to replace traditional cramped and crowded rental houses.[34]

[33] Sean Purdy, "Framing Regent Park: The National Film Board of Canada and the Construction of 'Outcast Spaces' in the Inner City, 1953 and 1994," Media, Culture & Society 27, no. 4 (2005): 523–549.

[34] Sharon Ann Kelly, Reconstructing Social Housing: The Socio-Spatial Effects of Welfare State Transformation in Toronto's Regent Park (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2015).

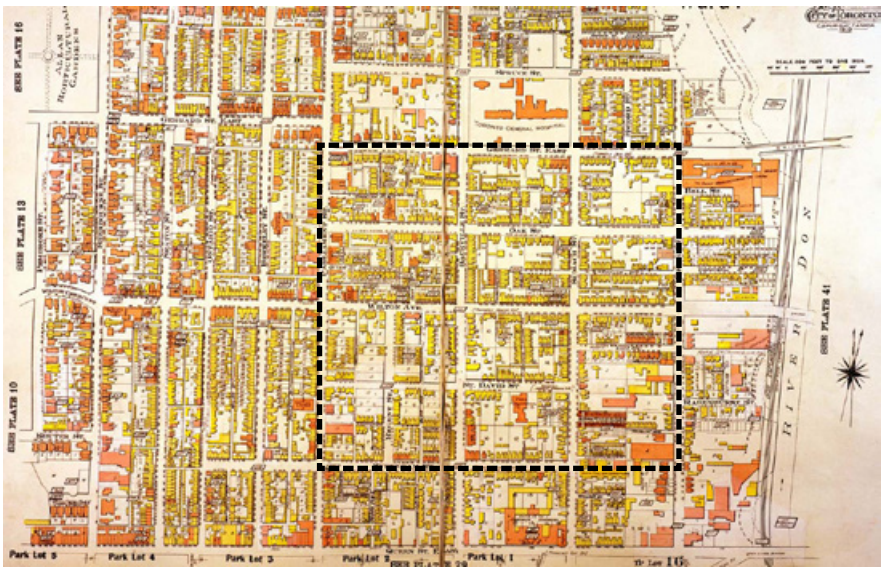


Fig 3.1 *In a later map from 1912, Regent Park has filled in to take on the urban form it would have until after the Second World War.*



City of Toronto Archives, Series 372 $0372_ss0033_jt0157

Fig 3.2 *Slum housing in Williamson Place, 1937, before the construction of Regent Park.*

Regent Park North was designed by J. E. Hoare Jr., and the South by Peter Dickinson. Incorporating the Garden City movement—such as cul-de-sacs and generous green spaces—it more accurately reflects a hybrid of planning ideologies. The design drew from Ebenezer Howard's rural-urban integration model while also channeling modernist visions advanced by Le Corbusier, whose Radiant City concept proposed housing as "machines for living."[35] At the neighborhood level, superblocks broke away from the traditional grid layout, separating pedestrians from vehicles and emphasizing internal green spaces—but it also isolated the community from the surrounding urban fabric.[36] Buildings were mainly low-rise apartments and townhouses with brick facades and green access.

[35] Le Corbusier, Towards a New Architecture (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2013).

[36] Martine August, "Social Mix and Canadian Public Housing Redevelopment: Experiences in Toronto," Canadian Journal of Urban Research 17, no. 1 (2008): 82–100.

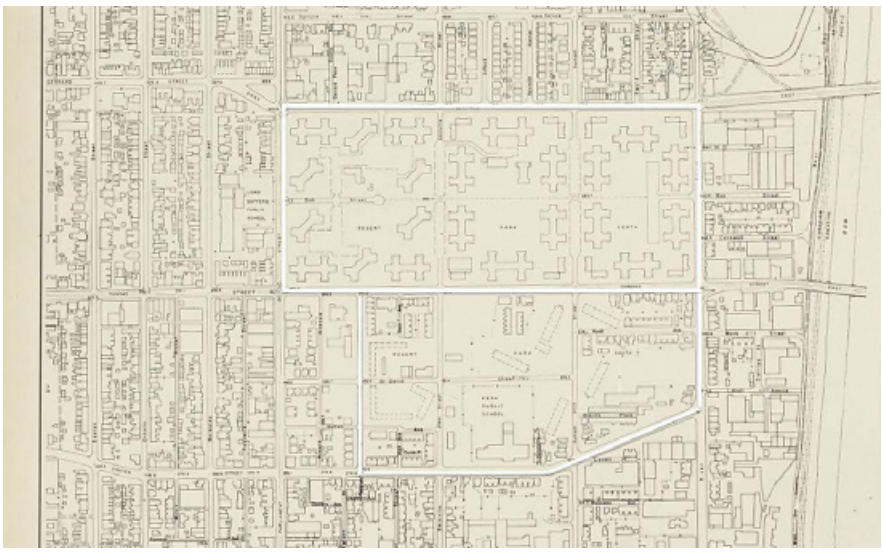


Fig 3.3 *John Edward Hoare's 1948 plan for Regent Park North shows cross-shaped low-rise blocks arranged in superblocks, surrounded by generous green space—illustrating the influence of Garden City and Modernist planning ideas.*



City of Toronto Archives.

Fig 3.4 *A 1950s planning map reveals the dramatic contrast between Regent Park's superblocks and the surrounding dense urban fabric. The cleared site produced wide open spaces and severed the traditional street grid, reinforcing the neighborhood's spatial isolation.*

Despite initial promises of gradual improvement, Regent Park began facing severe physical and social challenges in the 1970s. Building conditions deteriorated: heating failures, water leaks, cracked foundations, and rotting windows became prevalent. Shared spaces suffered from poor maintenance: lawns turned to dirt, lighting was inadequate, and garbage piled up—signs of systemic decline.[38] Worse still, the lack of commercial services and community engagement led to a shortage of safe, organized public spaces. The inward-looking neighborhood became disconnected from the street grid, reinforcing physical and social isolation.[39]

As a result, Regent Park gradually became a symbol of urban failure in public policy and media narratives. Newspapers, planning documents, and official reports reinforced the perception of the community as suffering from crime, welfare dependency, and decline. It reflects broader shifts in governance: as Canada moved away from welfare state principles toward neoliberal urban policies in the 1980s and 1990s, public housing was redefined as inefficient and unsustainable. In this context, stigmatization became an institutional tool—used to justify cuts in investment, undermine tenants' legitimacy, and secure support for future redevelopment plans.

[37] John David Hulchanski, The Three Cities within Toronto: Income Polarization among Toronto's Neighbourhoods, 1970–2000 (Toronto: Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 2007).

[38] Martine August, "Social Mix and Canadian Public Housing," in Canadian Journal of Urban Research 17, no. 1 (2008).

[39] Bailey Classen-Schneider, Artwashing Toronto's Planning Landscape: A Critical Analysis of Creative Placemaking & Public Art (PhD diss., Toronto Metropolitan University).



Fig 3.5 *Regent Park in 1968*



City of Toronto Archives. Series 1465. File 48. Item 5

Fig 3.6 *Regent Park in the mid-1980s, during a period of visible physical decline and spatial isolation.*

2.2 Emerging Calls for Redevelopment

By the 1990s, Regent Park had come to be widely regarded as a "problem community".[40] Economic restructuring and neoliberal policies led to disappearing manufacturing jobs, declining minimum wages, and major cuts to social welfare programs.[41] As unemployment rates rose, the community increasingly became a symbol of poverty and marginalization. Within the community, deteriorating conditions and inadequate government response sparked calls for change. In response to worsening security, gang violence, and excessive policing, grassroots organizations emerged. By the late 1990s, tenant-led advocacy groups called for more profound change.[42] These efforts began to shift the focus of public discourse from maintaining the status to structural renewal.

In 1996, the Ontario provincial government launched the "Common Sense Revolution" and canceled all new social housing construction plans.[43] Funding for thousands of planned non-profit housing units was halted.[44] From then on, the provincial government began to delegate housing responsibilities to local governments, forcing local authorities to manage existing public housing with increasingly scarce funds. At the same time, land market changes redefined Regent Park as an undervalued development opportunity. Surrounding areas like Don Vale and Cabbagetown were rapidly gentrifying, with rising land values. Regent Park's open spaces and aging, low-density housing made it appear underused. For governments, it offered revitalization without added funding; for developers, a profitable investment opportunity.

[40] John David Hulchanski, The Three Cities within Toronto: Income Polarization among Toronto's Neighbourhoods, 1970–2000 (Toronto: Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 2007).

[41] R. Alan Walks, "Suburbanization, the Vote, and Changes in Federal and Provincial Political Representation and Influence Between Inner Cities and Suburbs in Large Canadian Urban Regions, 1945–1999," Urban Affairs Review 39, no. 4 (2004): 411–440.

[42] Tom Slater, "The Myth of 'Broken Britain': Welfare Reform and the Production of Ignorance," Antipode 46, no. 4 (2014): 948–969.

[43] Roger Keil, "'Common–Sense' Neoliberalism: Progressive Conservative Urbanism in Toronto, Canada," Antipode 34, no. 3 (2002): 578–601.

[44] Jason Hackworth, "The Durability of Roll-Out Neoliberalism under Centre-Left Governance: The Case of Ontario's Social Housing Sector," Studies in Political Economy 81, no. 1 (2008): 7–26.



Fig 3.7 *Under the "Common Sense Revolution," Ontario cut social housing funding and downloaded responsibility to municipalities,*



Fig 3.8 *A row of Victorian houses for sale in gentrifying Cabbagetown in the 1990s.*

2.3 Planning the Revitalization

In 2002, the City of Toronto established the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) by consolidating its major public housing agencies.[45] As Canada's largest provider of social housing, TCHC is responsible for managing over 58,000 public housing units across the city. TCHC's first major initiative was the Regent Park revitalization plan. In 2003, the company approved a comprehensive redevelopment plan aimed at transforming this isolated, aging community into a mixed-income, mixed-use, and mixed-ownership neighborhood.[46] The plan included:

1) Replacement of all 2,083 rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units on a one-to-one basis;[47]

2) Addition of approximately 5,400 market-rate units, including condominiums, rental apartments, seniors' housing, and townhouses;

3) Construction of new commercial spaces, schools, community centers, and parks to enhance livability and service access;

4) Reintroduction of a traditional street grid, reconnecting Regent Park to the surrounding urban fabric;

5) Implementation of a Right of Return policy, ensuring original RGI tenants could return to subsidized units after redevelopment.

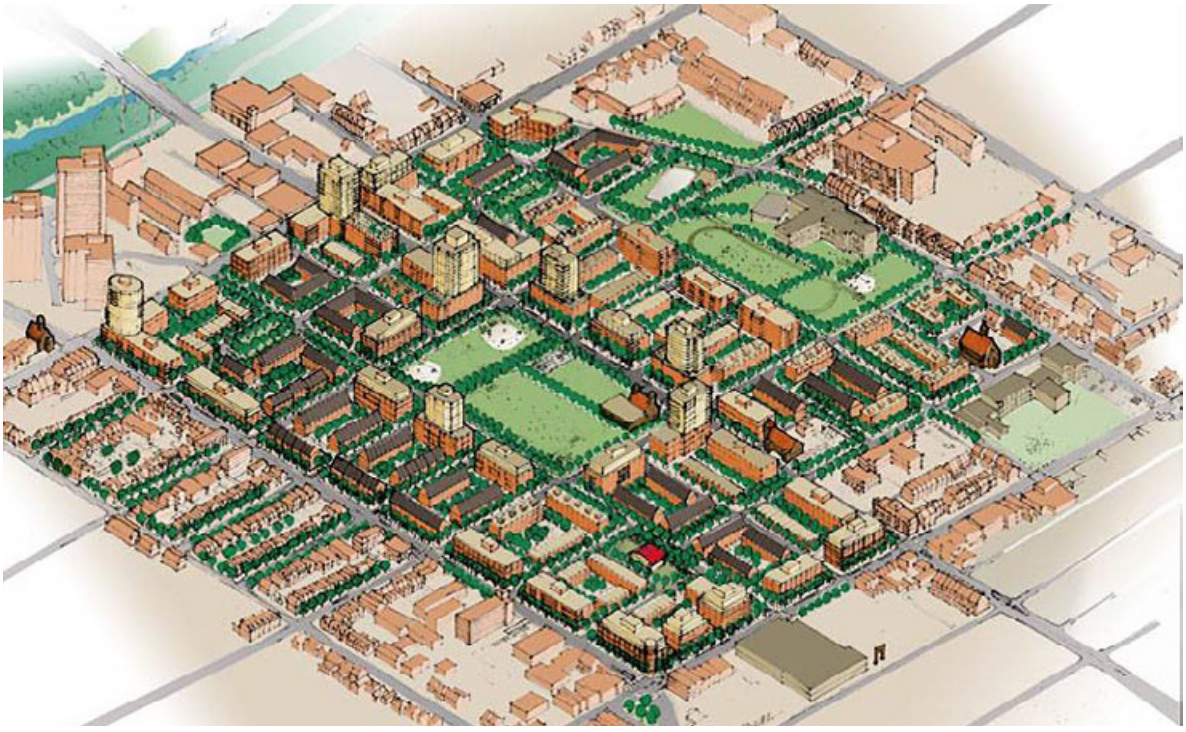
In 2004, the initiative was officially launched through the "Doors Open Regent Park" event, which invited residents from across the city to visit and learn about the community's revitalization vision.[48] To enable implementation, the City of Toronto passed official plan amendments and rezoning approvals in 2005. TCHC has established a public-private partnership with Daniels Corporation, under which the developer will construct market-rate housing and retail space to help fund the construction of social housing.

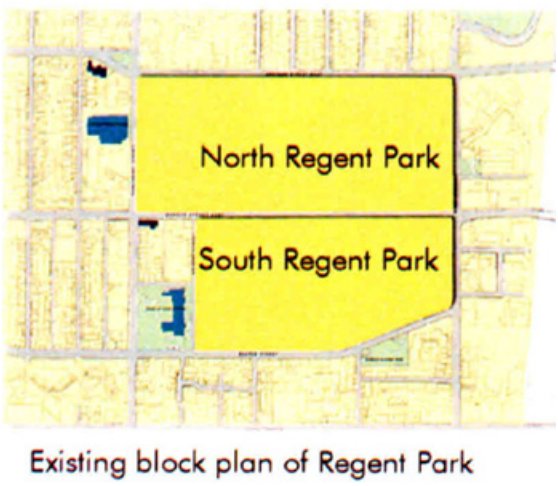
[45] Lara Griffin, Creating Affordable Housing in Toronto Using Public-Private Partnerships (Master's thesis, York University, 2003).

[46] Toronto Community Housing Corporation. Final Report – Application to Amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law – Regent Park Revitalization. Toronto and East York Community Council Report 1, Clause 4. February 1–3, 2005.

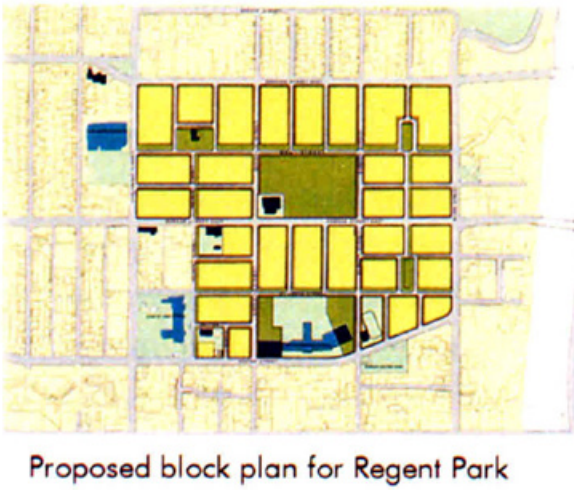
[47] Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), 2015 Annual Report: Building Communities (Toronto: TCHC, 2016), 12.

[48] Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), "Regent Park Revitalization Launches with Doors Open Event," News Release, May 15, 2004.





Existing block plan of Regent Park



Proposed block plan for Regent Park

Fig 3.9 *Early concept diagrams for the revitalization of Regent Park, showing an axonometric view of proposed mixed-use redevelopment (left) and block structure transformation from superblocks to a traditional grid (right).*

The Regent Park Revitalization Plan is divided into five phases. The first three phases were developed by Daniels Corporation, while the fourth and fifth phases were taken over by Tridel Corporation. The core vision of the project is to create a mixed-use, mixed-income community. Currently, Phases 1 to 3 have been completed, including 1,800 housing units in 14 TCHC buildings (including 1,400 income-based rental housing units and 400 affordable rental units); 4,700 market-rate housing units; a six-acre central park; a playground; a dog park; and 20,000 square feet of new retail space. These phases also delivered key community amenities, including the Daniels Spectrum arts and cultural center, the MLSE Athletic Grounds, and the Regent Park Aquatic Centre.

Phases Four and Five have received zoning bylaw approval, and demolition of existing public housing structures is underway. These phases are expected to provide an additional 633 RGI units, up to 637 affordable housing units, and 2,100 market-price housing units. The plan also includes the construction of a new Toronto Public Library branch and a civic center.[49]

It is worth noting that the latest Phase 4–5 plan differs significantly from Regent Parkk's initial master plan in terms of spatial form. The early plan adopted a medium- to low-density neighborhood structure with uniform building heights, consisting mainly of townhouses and low-rise towers, creating a sense of enclosure around the central park. In contrast, the updated Phase 4–5 plan shows a significant increase in density, with high-rise buildings forming a striking skyline. Within the neighborhoods, space is reorganized into a network of small, open squares and green spaces. The layout of public spaces shifts from a centralized structure to a more dispersed and interconnected one, reflecting a more complex and diverse urban strategy.

[49] Toronto Community Housing Corporation, "Regent Park Development," Regent Park Revitalization webpage, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, accessed July 10, 2025, https://toronto-housing.ca/building-construction-and-revitalization/revitalization/regent-park/regent-park-development.



Fig 3.10 *Regent Park Target Phasing Plan, October, 2013*

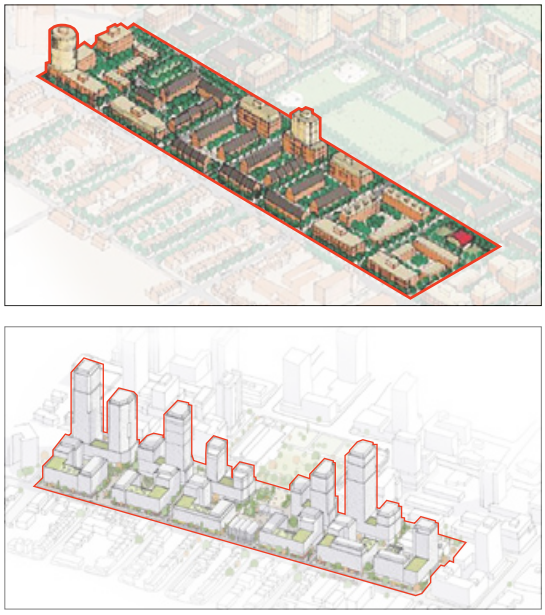


Fig 3.11 *Regent Park Planning Evolution: From Low-Density Blocks to High-Density Towers*

03 | Tri-Partite PPP Model in Regent Park Revitalization

3.1 Operational Structure of the PPP Model

Traditional housing projects often have a linear structure: the government approves the plan, a private developer builds it, and each party acts independently. In contrast, the Regent Park revitalization project employs a governance model in which multiple stakeholders work together over time. This cross-sector collaboration is a distinguishing feature of public-private partnerships (PPPs).

As shown in Figure 2.11, the project included a wide range of participants-community groups, architectural firms, media, consultants, and others. However, this thesis will focus on the three core partners that determined the direction of the project: the City of Toronto, TCHC, and Daniels Corporation. Overall, the City of Toronto provides policy support and regulatory approvals. TCHC, as a corporation wholly owned by the City of Toronto, owns the land ownership of Regent Park and is responsible for the delivery of affordable housing. Daniels builds and sells the market-rate housing and uses the funds from sales to partially fund the affordable units. Their collaboration is structured through joint ventures, legal agreements, and shared responsibilities.[50]

[50] Lynne B. Sagalyn, "Public/Private Development: Lessons from History, Research, and Practice," Journal of the American Planning Association 73, no. 1 (2007): 7–22.

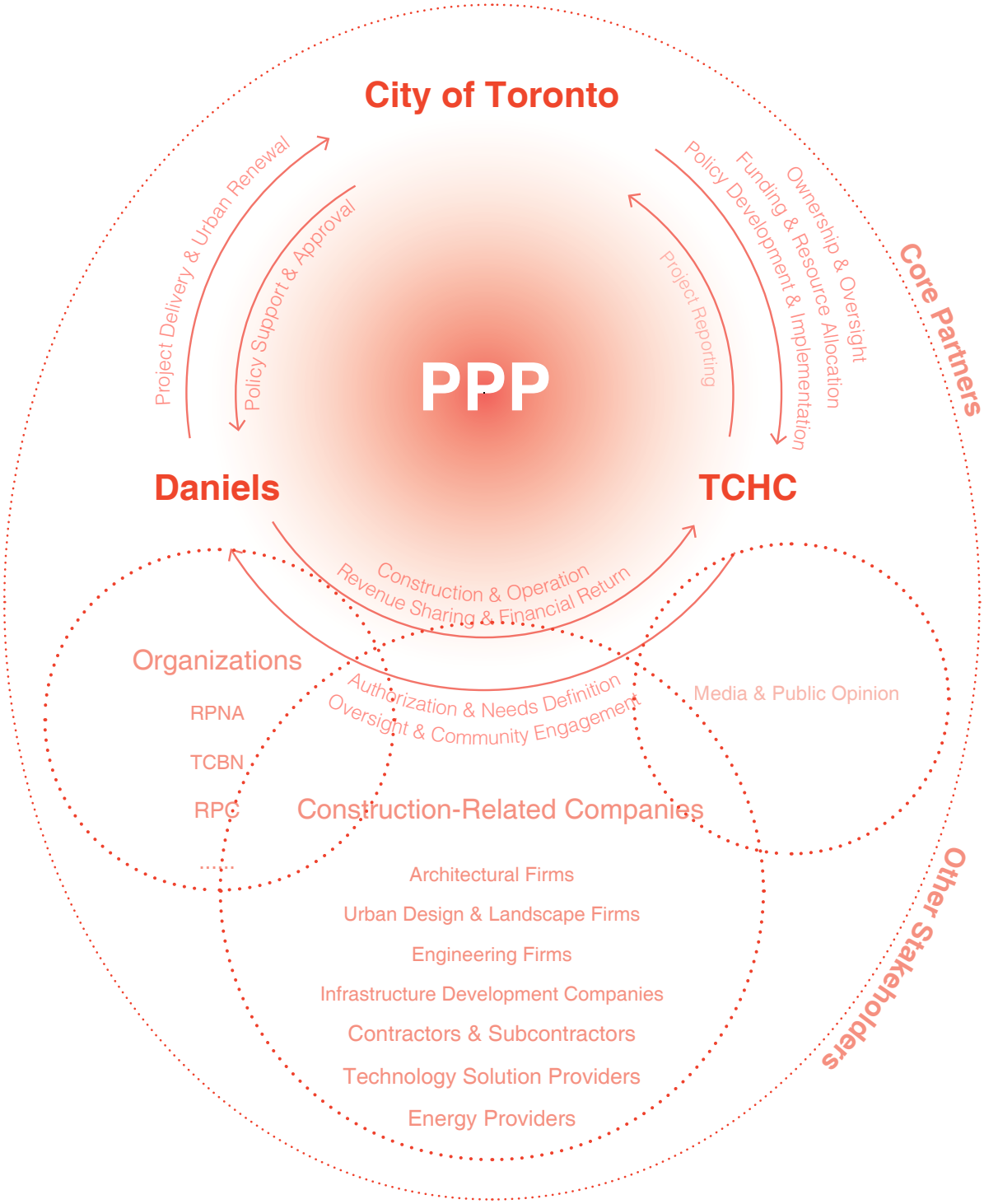


Fig 4.1 *Stakeholder Structure of the Regent Park Revitalization*

3.2 Development Process under the PPP Model

1) Phase A: Policy and Planning

This initial phase is mainly focused on laying the policy foundation for revitalization efforts, which are primarily the responsibility of the public sector.

· City of Toronto

Set the legal planning foundation: The City of Toronto established the overall policy and regulatory framework by issuing planning documents such as the Official Plan, approving site-specific amendments (e.g., Official Plan Amendment No. 140), and passing zoning by-law changes to permit higher-density, mixed-use redevelopment.[51]

· Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC)

Led community consultation: TCHC organized public vision workshops and planning meetings with residents and local stakeholders to gather a wide range of opinions and determine redevelopment priorities.

Technical Research: TCHC completed feasibility assessments, zoning studies, and affordability analyses to guide project progress and design decisions.

· Daniels Corporation

Not involved: The developer procurement process will only begin once the policy and planning framework has been established.

[51] City of Toronto, Final Report: Rezoning Application 05 126972 STE 28 OZ and Residential Demolition Application pursuant to Section 33 of the Planning Act (Regent Park Redevelopment – Phase 1), prepared by the Director of Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, September 2, 2005.

2) Phase B: Financing and Investment

This phase established the core financial structure of the PPP model. Unlike traditional development, City of Toronto, TCHC, and Daniels shared the financial risk and investment returns.

· City of Toronto

Partial Funding and Public Support: The city does not fully fund affordable housing construction like traditional social housing projects, but instead provides partial capital support to ensure financial stability. For example, the city allocated $50.7 million in its 2024–2033 budget for Phase IV-A to fund infrastructure and affordable housing. Additionally, the city collaborated with TCHC to co-fund streets, parks, and community facilities, demonstrating flexibility in public investment under the PPP model.

· Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) and Daniels Corporation

[51] A. Moore and Jordana Wright, "Toronto's Market-Oriented Subsidised Housing PPPs: A Risk Worth the Reward," Cities 69 (2017): 64–72.

Joint Venture Delivery Model: To fund affordable housing without relying solely on public subsidies, TCHC adopted an income-sharing partnership model, investing the proceeds from the sale of market-rate housing into the construction of non-market housing. This approach differs from traditional social housing development by leveraging market profits as a key funding source for affordable housing.

In the first and second phases, TCHC and The Daniels Corporation each held a 50% stake in the joint venture subsidiary Regent Park Development Corporation (RPDC), responsible for developing and selling market-price apartments, with profits redistributed to fund the construction of social housing. Notably, TCHC also acted as the primary financier for both market and rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units, securing loans at interest rates at least 1% lower than those typically available to private developers. This allowed for more favorable financing terms, reducing the overall cost of development.

Although this structure placed greater financial risk on TCHC—since it would be responsible for repaying the loans if the market units failed to sell—it also provided an opportunity for higher returns. Rather than merely selling land to private developers, TCHC was able to capture a share of the market profits, reinvesting them into the redevelopment. For example, in the third phase, the total redevelopment cost was approximately $260 million, with $94 million (approximately 36%) coming from market-rate housing revenue and land transactions. This model enabled TCHC to maintain affordability goals while minimizing reliance on direct government funding.

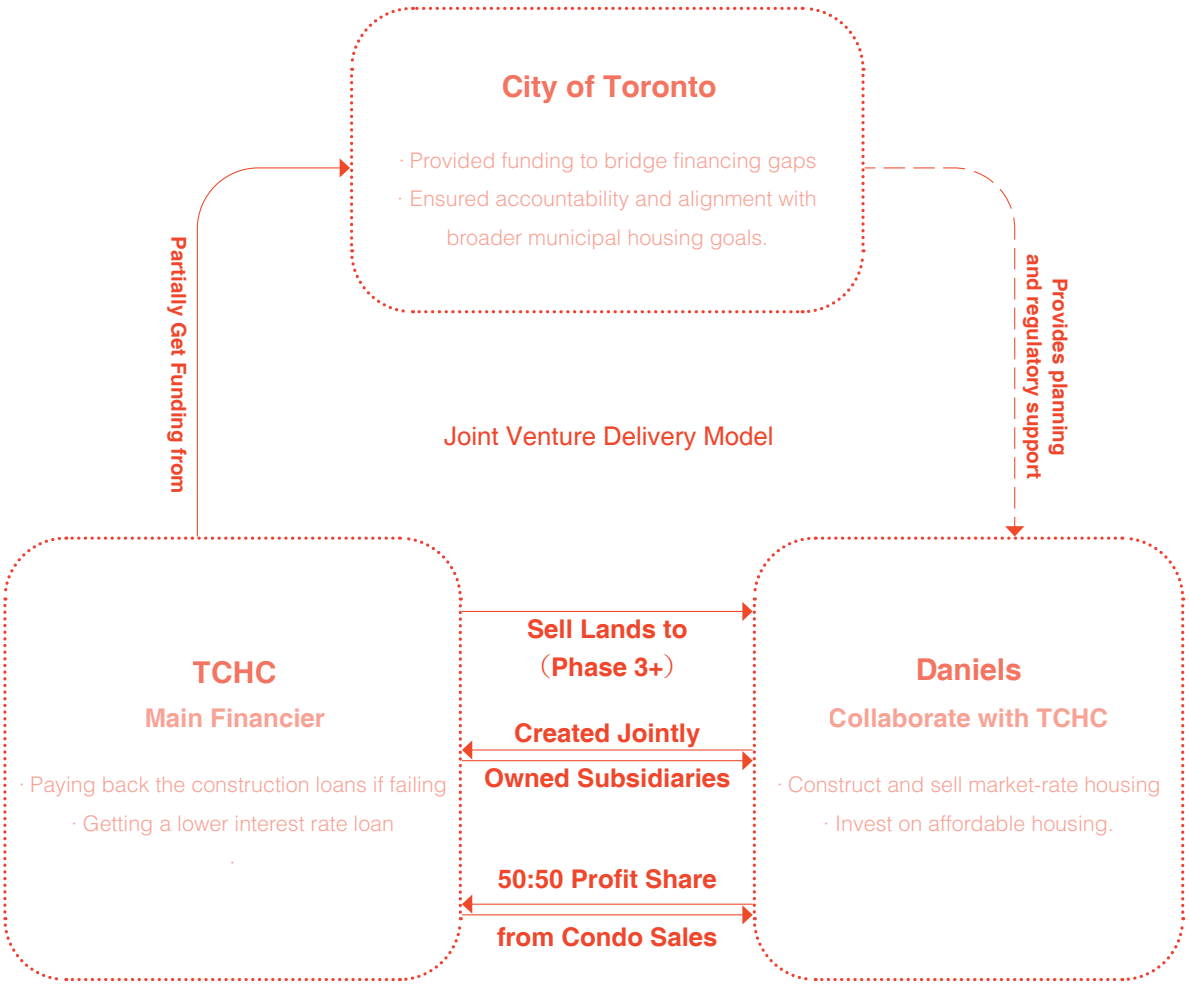


Fig 4.2 *Financial and Organizational Structure*

3) Phase C: Community Integration & Operations

The focus of this phase is on ensuring long-term liveability through inclusive governance, social infrastructure, and community activities. The impact of the city government, TCHC, and Daniels Corporation goes beyond mere construction and plays an important role in shaping everyday life.

· City of Toronto

Policy Support and Social Development Planning: The city and residents jointly spearheaded the Regent Park Social Development Plan, which is committed to addressing issues such as safety, employment, inclusiveness, and health. The plan sets out specific goals and measures in five priority areas—safety, employment, community building, health, and education—with the aim of improving social conditions and community well-being.[52]

· Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC)

Social Management and Resident Engagement: TCHC co-led the Regent Park Social Development Plan with the City of Toronto to address community priorities. TCHC regularly organizes public consultation meetings, establishes resident advisory groups, and distributes relevant materials to ensure that tenants understand the project schedule, relocation plans, and their rights to return. TCHC also collects feedback from the community on long-term issues such as safety, maintenance, and supporting facilities, and uses this feedback to adjust the priorities for future development.[53]

[52] City of Toronto, Regent Park Social Development Plan – Draft, February 1, 2019, https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/9444-SDP-DRAFT-2019-FEB-1-003.pdf.

[53] The Daniels Corporation and Toronto Community Housing, Regent Park CCM Notice #2 – Multilingual, April 2023, https://rp4and5.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Regent-Park-CCM-Notice-2-MULTILINGUAL.pdf.



Fig 4.3 *Community gathers for revitalization update.*



Fig 4.4 *Covers of the original (2007) and refreshed (2019) Regent Park Social Development Plan*

· Daniels Corporation

Building Cultural and Social Infrastructure: Unlike traditional private developers who focus solely on construction and profit, Daniels Corporation also plays an important role in community integration and cultural infrastructure development. The company actively participates in creating inclusive public spaces that are deeply integrated into society and operates cultural events.

A prime example is the Daniels Spectrum, a 60,000-square-foot cultural hub developed in collaboration with TCHC, Artscape, and the City of Toronto. Daniels Corporation made the primary donation through its charitable foundation. The facility has become a base for multiple arts and community organizations, hosting over 100 events annually and helping to strengthen the cultural life of Regent Park.[54] Daniels Corporation no longer operates independently, but is deeply integrated into the project as a long-term partner. Such financial and governance entanglement is a defining feature of the PPP model.

[54] Daniels Spectrum, "About Us," accessed July 10, 2025, https://www.danielsspectrum.ca/about-us.





Fig 4.5 *Daniels Spectrum organizes a diverse array of cultural programs annually.*

Roles / Stakeholder	RPAD	Board of Directors	Equity Partners	Daily Operations	Legal Operator	Initial Funders	Co-Development Partners	Operations Manager
RPAD					■			
TCHC	■	■	■				■	
Daniels	■	■	■			■	■	
Artscape		■	■				■	
ArtHubs Toronto Inc.	■	■	■	■				■
Regent Park Community		■					■	
Note	RPAD (Regent Park Arts Development) is a non-profit corporation legally responsible for the facility.	Provides governance, oversight, and strategic direction.	Contributed capital and shares in long-term ownership.	Day-to-day programming, staffing, and facility use management.	Holds legal responsibility for regulatory and contractual matters.	Initial funding provided by Daniels Corporation and its foundation.	Co-led planning, design, and development process.	Oversees ongoing operations, maintenance, and tenant coordination.

Fig 4.6 *Collaborative Roles Behind Daniels Spectrum*

3.3 Space Features under PPP Model

1) Street Grid and Block Structure

At Regent Park, the original superblocks have been replaced by a denser grid of blocks, reconnecting the area to the city and creating a livable, walkable community. This grid increases land value and attracts investment by adding street-facing commercial and recreational spaces, thereby supporting PPP objectives. Second, the open neighborhood grid enhances safety by eliminating blind spots. Frequent intersections, clear sightlines, and active building facades achieve "street visibility," promoting surveillance and daily interactions—key factors in attracting the middle class and increasing land value.[55] Third, the neighborhood grid supports phased development. Under the PPP model, land is held by TCHC, Daniels, and other parties. A clear neighborhood structure facilitates lot allocation and coordination of construction across different property types.

[55] Laura Johnson and Robert Johnson, Regent Park Redux: Reinventing Public Housing in Canada (New York: Routledge, 2017).

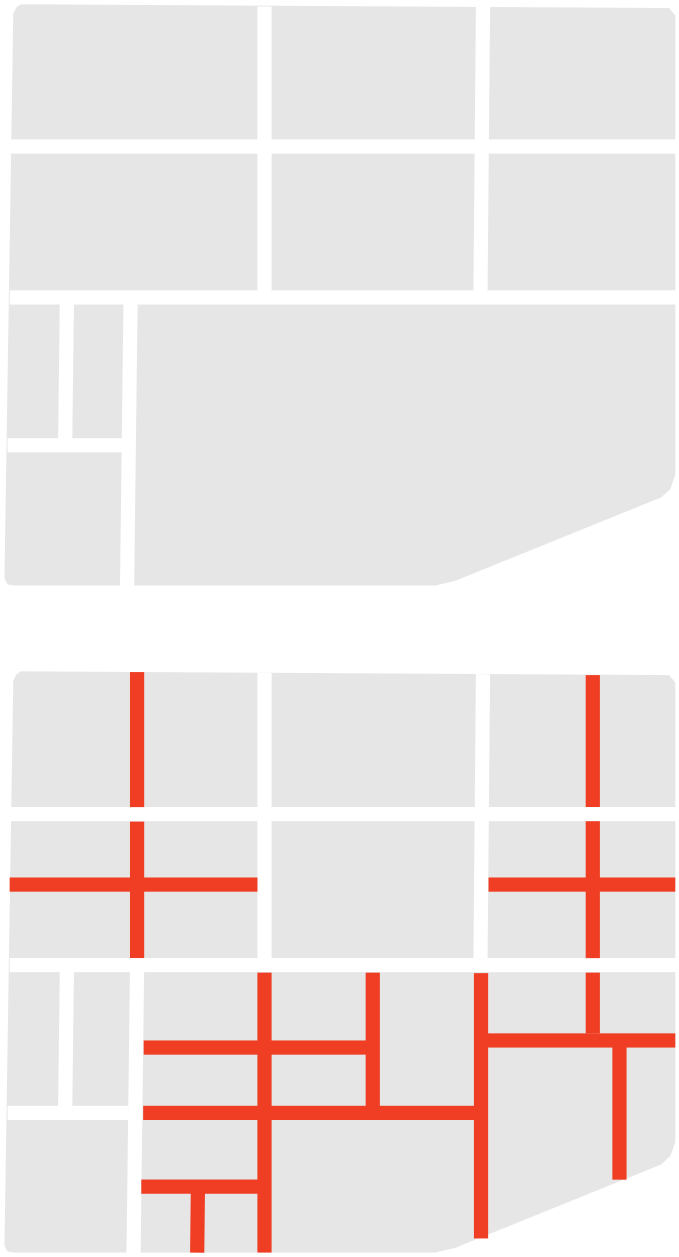


Fig 4.7 *Red lines show new streets added in the redevelopment plan.*

2) Public Space Configuration

A notable feature of the Regent Park redevelopment under the PPP model is the significant increase in large public spaces. Unlike traditional projects that prioritize density over shared areas, Regent Park includes a central park, sports fields, and community gardens, operated by nonprofits and community groups—reflecting multi-stakeholder governance.

These spaces also allow private developers to fulfill social responsibilities. For instance, The Athletic Grounds were built through a partnership between TCHC, Daniels Corporation, and the MLSE Foundation, which contributed $2.5 million.[56] Public spaces are highly accessible. Instead of being placed at the site's edges, they are integrated into the neighborhood's core through open corners and walkable streets, promoting collective living and everyday use often lacking in conventional developments.

3) Housing Typologies and Tenure Diversity

In traditional developer-led projects, affordable units are often severely insufficient in quantity, confined to marginal sites, and delayed until later stages of development. In contrast, the Regent Park Revitalization exhibits diversity and a mix of ownership structures. The comprehensive plan includes approximately 2,033 RGI units, 1,037 affordable rental housing units, and 6,868 market-rate housing units,[57] realized through various building types such as high-rise and mid-rise buildings, townhouses, and more—with the proportion of non-market housing significantly higher than in market-driven projects such as CityPlace.

This diversity is also reflected in spatial distribution. While more condos are concentrated around Central Park to attract buyers, non-market housing managed by TCHC remains relatively evenly distributed across the entire site, without showing obvious spatial segregation or clustering. All building types—whether market-driven or non-market—have nearly identical accessibility to public facilities.

Finally, the phasing of construction further ensures spatial diversity. Unlike the practice of prioritizing the construction of market-rate units in early phases to recoup investments, each phase of Regent Park includes a mixed configuration of RGI, affordable housing, and market-rate housing. This phased approach also avoids the temporal marginalization of affordable housing.

[56] MLSE Foundation, "Who We Are," accessed July 10, 2025, https://www.mlsefoundation.org/about-us/who-we-are.

[57] The Daniels Corporation and Toronto Community Housing, Updated Housing Issues Report – Regent Park Phases 4 & 5, April 2023, https://rp4and5.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/5.-Updated-Housing-Issues-Report_Regent-Park-Phases-4-5.pdf.

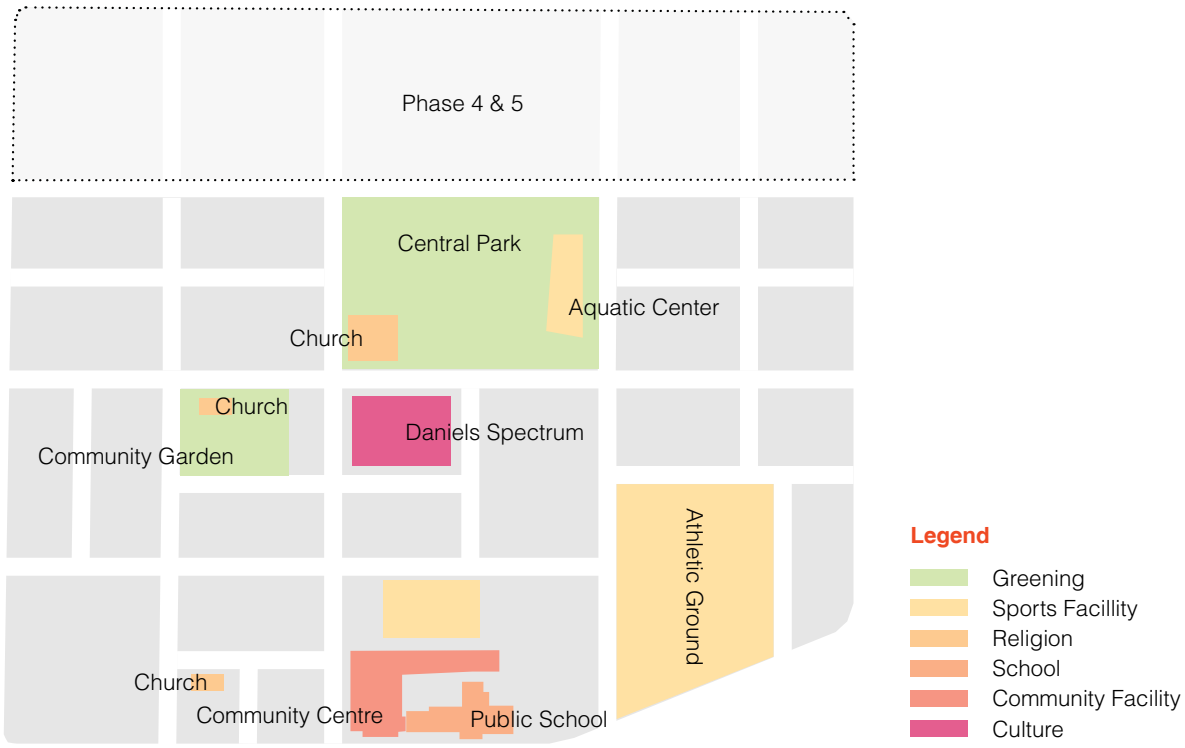
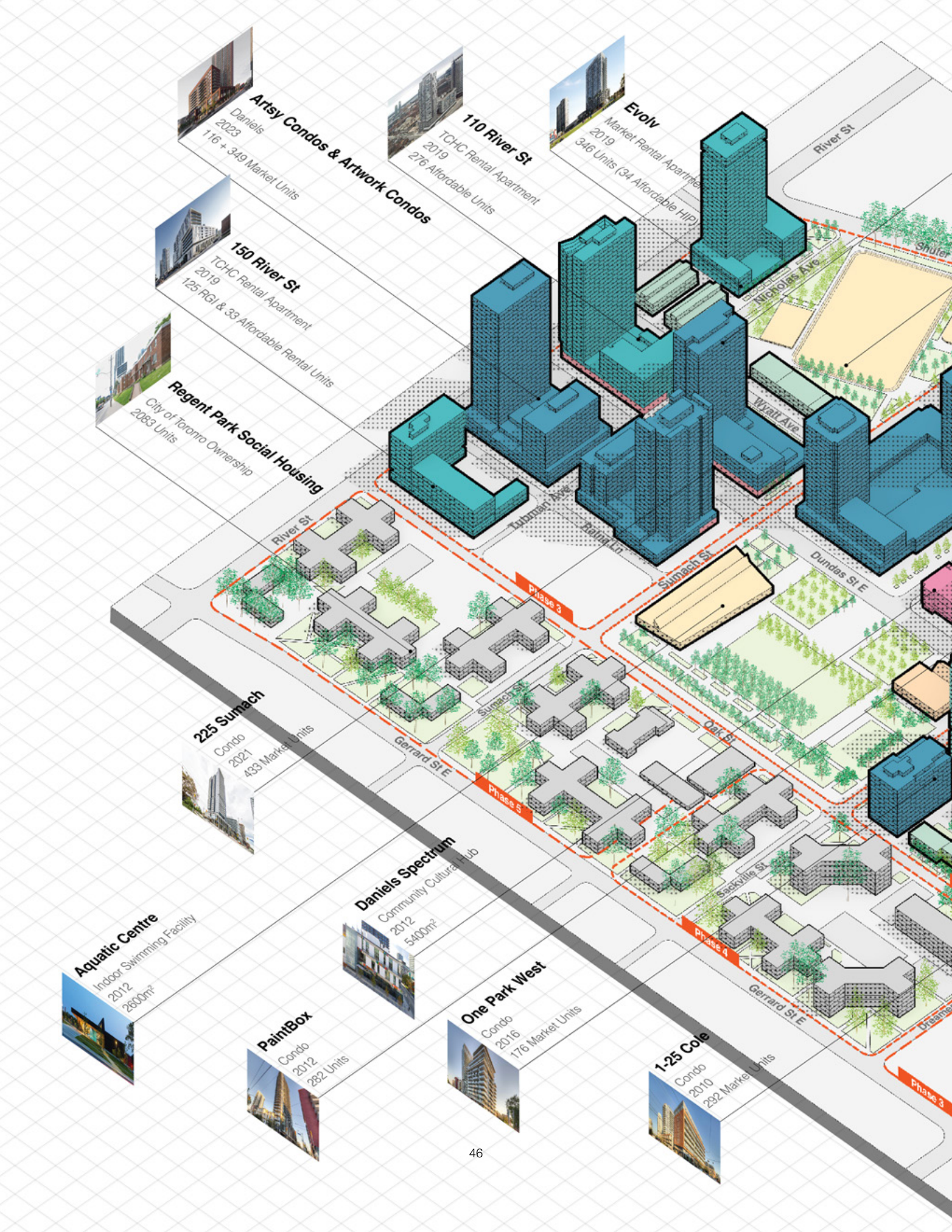


Fig 4.8 *Distribution of Public Spaces and Community Facilities in Regent Park*


Artsy Condos & Artwork Condos
Daniels
2023
116 + 349 Market Units
110 River St
TCHC Rental Apartment
2019
276 Affordable Units
Evolv
Market Rental Apartments
2019
346 Units (34 Affordable HIP)
150 River St
TCHC Rental Apartment
2019
125 RGI & 33 Affordable Rental Units
Regent Park Social Housing
City of Toronto Ownership
2083 Units
225 Sumach
Condo
2021
433 Market Units
Daniels Spectrum
Community Cultural Hub
2012
5400m²
Aquatic Centre
Indoor Swimming Facility
2012
2600m²
PaintBox
Condo
2012
282 Units
One Park West
Condo
2016
176 Market Units
1-25 Cole
Condo
2010
292 Market Units
River St
Shuter
Nicholas Ave
Wyatt Ave
Tubman Ave
Power Ln
Sumach St
Dundas St E
Oak St
Sackville St
Gerrard St E
Phase 3
Phase 5
Phase 4
Phase 3

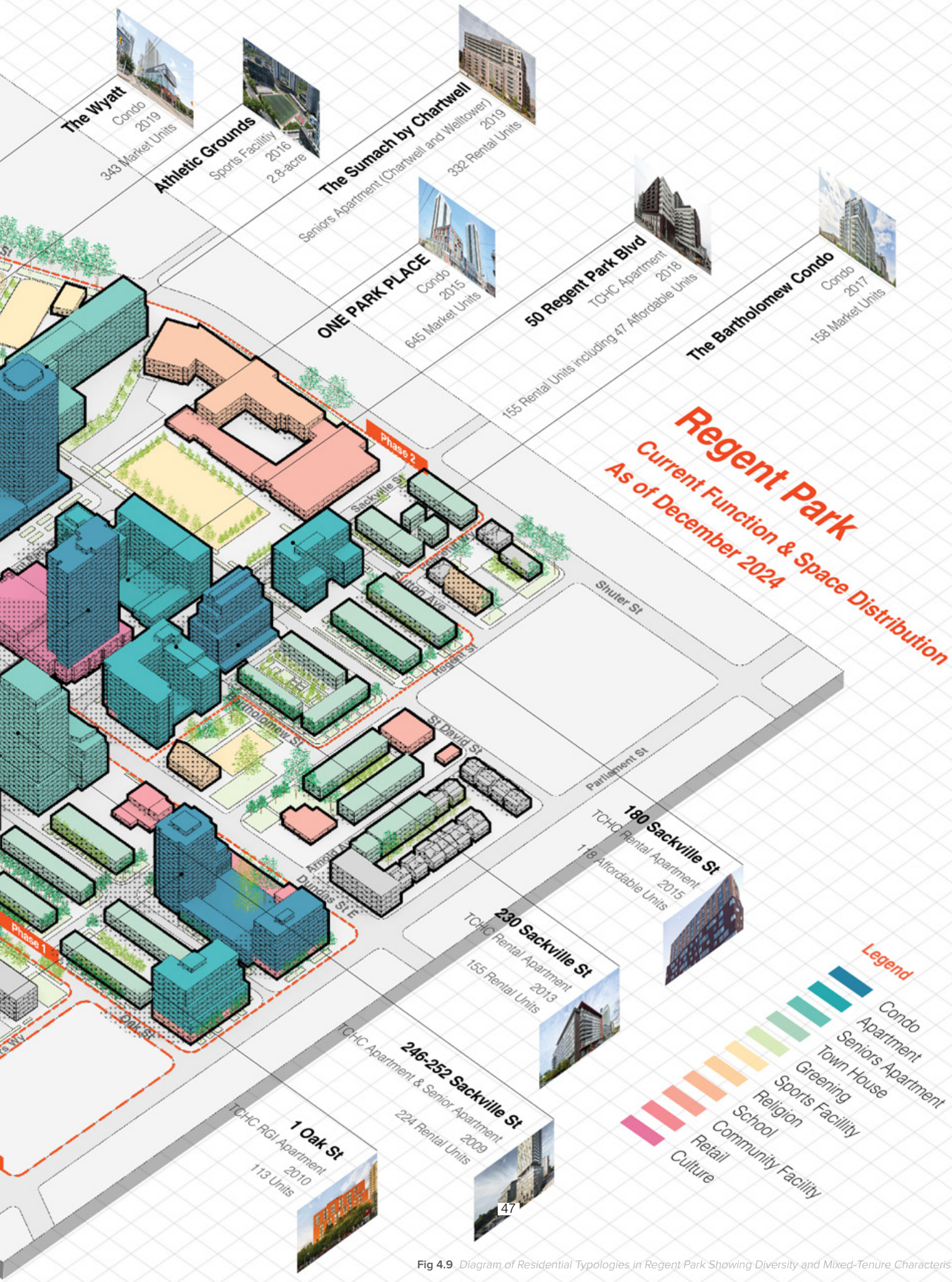


Fig 4.9 *Diagram of Residential Typologies in Regent Park Showing Diversity and Mixed-Tenure Characteristic*

4) Cultural Memory and Heritage Presence

Although Regent Park holds significant historical importance as Canada's oldest public housing project, its redevelopment has resulted in the near-complete demolition of the original buildings. As a result, the physical traces of the community's early public housing history have been almost entirely erased, with no substantial architectural elements preserved.

This decision has drawn criticism from scholars and social activists. While the revitalization plan emphasizes social diversity and physical renewal, it pays limited attention to the spatial carriers of local identity and cultural heritage. In the absence of tangible remnants of the past, efforts to maintain cultural continuity rely primarily on symbolic initiatives by event organizers rather than architectural or spatial memory. This reflects a common tendency in PPP-driven redevelopment projects, which prioritize economic value and visual transformation over the preservation of historical heritage.



Fig 4.10 *Aerial view comparing Regent Park before and after redevelopment, illustrating the complete removal of original buildings and urban form.*

3.4 A Critical Assessment of Regent Park

Regent Park shares the core characteristics of traditional PPP models. Building on its common advantages and disadvantages, it innovatively proposes its own solutions. Over the past two decades, the Regent Park Revitalization Plan has delivered diverse urban functions and housing through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, largely fulfilling its vision of a mixed-income, mixed-use community. These outcomes show how the model retains traditional PPP strengths—such as rapid delivery—while incorporating some equity. Still, Regent Park introduced key innovations. The Social Development Plan (SDP) set measurable goals in employment, education, and culture—rare in typical models. Crucially, the integration of TCHC and developer land, both spatially and temporally, promoted spatial equity and challenged the fragmentation of space and ownership common in many PPP-led projects.

However, the plan also reveals common PPP drawbacks. It relied heavily on market-rate housing to subsidize costs, shifting the non-market to market ratio from 6:4 to 7:3,[58] raising concerns over privatization and reduced social equity. Gentrification remains a concern, reflecting broader global PPP challenges. Although the project has made considerable efforts to optimize the PPP model, the following issues remain serious and difficult to resolve.

First, gentrification and displacement remain severe. TCHC claims to guarantee a 1:1 relocation ratio and "Right to Return",[59] ensuring that all original residents can return to their original RGI housing units. While this approach appears to address the common issues of displacement of original residents and community transformation in traditional PPP models, its implementation still faces numerous challenges. Tenants have reported that the relocation process had cumbersome bureaucratic paperwork and insufficient guidance, making it difficult for them to make informed decisions. Although RGI housing is provided, the new units typically do not include utility costs that were previously bundled with rent, leading many tenants to face rising living costs. According to data from TCHC officials, by summer 2021, only 1,166 households (56% of the original Regent Park residents) had returned to alternative housing in phases one through three, while 375 households had either relinquished their right to return, moved out of Toronto community housing, or passed away.[60]

[58] Toronto Centre for Community Learning & Development, Regent Park Community Revitalization Needs Assessment 2009–2010, November 2012, https://www.tccld.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/RegentPark_2009-10_CRNA.pdf.

[59] World Economic Forum, Urban Transformation Case Study: Regent Park (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2024), https://www.weforum.org/publications/urban-transformation-case-study-regent-park/.

[60] Metcalf Foundation, Regent Park: A Love Story About Community (Toronto: Metcalf Foundation, 2022), https://metcalffoundation.com/publication/regent-park-a-love-story-about-community/.

Dimension	Traditional PPP Characteristics	Regent Park's Approach	Notes / Comments
Advantages Typically Offered by PPPs	Private investment reduces public financial burden	Daniels Corporation co-invested in construction and management of facilities	Multiple facilities such as Daniels Spectrum were built with private funding
	Improved efficiency and faster delivery	Phased development with controlled progress	Each phase delivered mixed housing and facilities according to schedule
	Resource integration and multi-party collaboration	Close cooperation between TCHC, Daniels, the City, and community organizations	Long-term strategic partnerships formed
Challenges Commonly Faced by PPPs	Emphasis on market returns can overlook social goals	The ratio of market housing to non-market housing has been increased from the previously set 6:4 to 7:3.	Risk of privatization and social equity concerns
	Limited community participation	Early-stage resident input was relatively constrained	Participation mechanisms exist but power asymmetry remains
	Risk of marginalization of vulnerable groups	Gentrification concerns persist	Limited RGI supply; new RGI units incur extra utility costs not previously paid by tenants
Regent Park's innovation to the traditional PPP model	Absence of social outcome metrics	Implementation of Social Development Plan (SDP) with dedicated oversight	SDP includes employment, education, and cultural goals with measurable targets
	Public facilities often controlled by single entity	Multi-party co-management of cultural and athletic amenities	Daniels Spectrum and Athletic Grounds are key examples
	Single-function development and land ownership	Planning interweaves TCHC and developer land parcels to avoid spatial segregation	Mixed land ownership supports diverse uses, phasing, and tenure integration

Fig 4.11 *Comparison of Conventional PPP Models and the Regent Park Revitalization*

The second key criticism lies in its failure to achieve genuine spatial integration among different income groups. Despite claims of building mixed-income housing, affordable housing and market-rate housing are completely segregated into separate buildings, with no overlap in entrances, elevators, or residential facilities. This physical segregation not only hinders daily social interaction but also reinforces symbolic boundaries between different socioeconomic classes. Architectural differences further exacerbate this segregation—condos typically feature lightweight, transparent materials like glass and light-coloured metals, with continuous balconies, while affordable housing is relatively simple, using dark-coloured bricks and stones, with cramped and narrow balcony spaces. This stands in stark contrast to the project's claims of complete spatial integration and visual indistinguishability.[61] (see Figure 2.22) Additionally, many former public housing residents report feeling alienated, noting minimal or uncomfortable interactions with new neighbours, and criticizing the design of new buildings for failing to evoke the sense of community belonging they once had. This disconnect between physical distance and social cohesion highlights the limitations of the current spatial model.

[61] Chris Brawley, "Inside Regent Park: Toronto's Test Case for Public Private Gentrification," The Guardian, December 8, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/dec/08/inside-regent-park-torontos-test-case-for-public-private-gentrification.

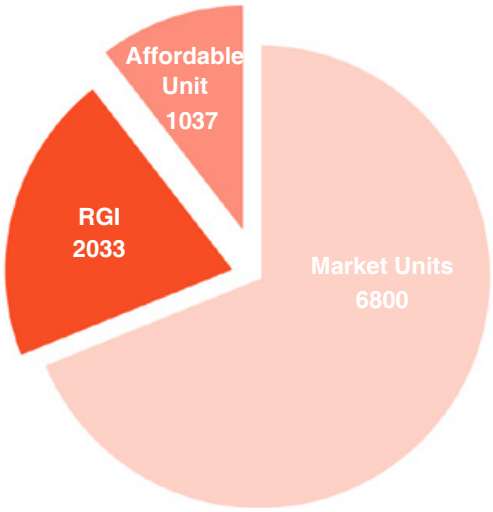


Fig 4.12 *Visual Disparities Between Affordable and Market-Rate Housing in Regent Park*

Third, overreliance on the market has exposed the structural vulnerabilities of financialized PPP models in achieving long-term public benefits. In the early stages of the project, it relied on profit-sharing from condos sales rather than land sales, enabling TCHC to reinvest proceeds into public housing and infrastructure. However, faced with rising construction costs, declining market returns, and mounting long-term debt pressures, TCHC shifted to directly selling lands to developers to achieve rapid capital recovery. However, this also led to a reduction in land reserves and the deepening of privatization. This shift not only reflects the growing influence of private developers but also exposes the market-oriented PPP model's high dependence on real estate market conditions and its insufficient financing resilience. Therefore, the assumption that social housing can be sustainably funded through real estate profits based solely on land value has proven to be unsustainable. Continued public intervention and diversified financing remain crucial.

Market Housing 1

Affordable Housing 2



Phases 1-3 (with Daniels)

· 14 TCHC buildings

· 1,800 TCHC units

including 1,400 RGI and 400 affordable rental housing units

· 4,700 market units

Phases 4-5 (with Tridel)

· 12 buildings

· 633 RGI units

· up to **637 affordable housing rental units**,

· **2,000 additional market units**

Fig 4.13 *From a Planned 1:1 Ratio to Nearly 1:2: The Shift in Affordable and Market Unit Distribution*

Placelessness and loss of historical identity is a major issue at the spatial level. The complete demolition of all original buildings, without preserving any architectural elements or spatial memories, has resulted in severe damage to the community's physical and symbolic heritage. While the new urban fabric is modern and functional, it lacks any reference to the area's historical identity. Market-driven middle-class aesthetics have completely replaced the former public housing memories, weakening residents' long-term sense of belonging. Additionally, the original spontaneous social spaces—such as stairwells, shared lawns, and central courtyards—have been replaced by a standardized street grid and modern architectural layout, resulting in an environment that feels colder and more detached.

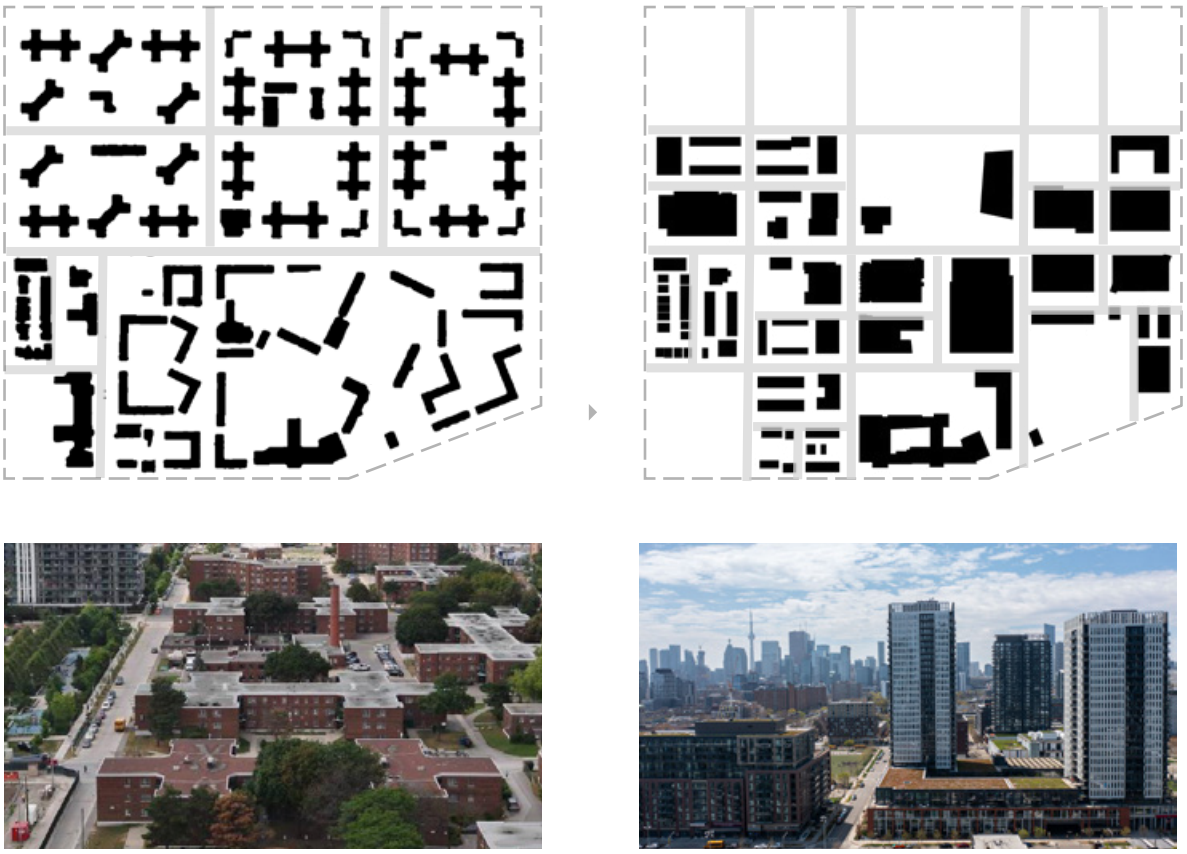


Fig 4.14 *Regent Park Then and Now: A Morphological Comparison and the Emergence of Placelessness*

04 | Global PPP Housing Cases: Insights for Regent Park

In light of the main criticisms and controversies surrounding the Regent Park revitalization, it is worthwhile to draw on lessons from global PPP development projects to optimize the existing model and provide feasible recommendations for future phases.

4.1 Ensuring Financial Stability - Clichy-Batignolles Development

The Clichy-Batignolles development, located in Paris's 17th arrondissement, transformed a 54-hectare former railway and industrial wasteland into a mixed-use community. Led by the public development agency Paris & Métropole Aménagement (P&Ma), the project adopted a PPP model. The master plan allocated land use as follows: 50% social housing (HLM), 20% intermediate rent-controlled housing (logement intermédiaire), and 30% private market housing, totaling approximately 3,400 units.[62]

To ensure long-term control and financial stability, the City of Paris retained full land ownership, leasing plots to private developers via long-term administrative emphyteutic leases (baux emphytéotiques administratifs, BEA) (typically 50-99 years). This prevented speculative land sales while generating rental income. Public financing covered core costs: €223M for land acquisition, €740M for infrastructure, and €598M for rail relocation/soil remediation, sourced from municipal budgets, regional funds, and state-backed loans (e.g., Caisse des Dépôts). What's more, private developers were restricted to constructing market housing under strict planning obligations, such as Phased development timelines set by P&Ma to synchronize social housing, public amenities, and market units. For instance, a 2014 municipal document outlines the budget and funding plan for a social housing development on Plot N1 of the Clichy-Batignolles ZAC in Paris.[63] It relies on a structured, multi-layered public financing framework, including long-term loans from Caisse des Dépôts, direct subsidies from the City of Paris, and equity from public developers like RIVP. The project achieved financial sustainability. Its success underscores the viability of public land stewardship through BEA leases and stable, diversified public fundinh—a model when prioritizing equitable urban regeneration over short-term market returns.

[62] D. C. G. T. Correia, La Territorialisation des Politiques Urbaines et les Nouveaux Enjeux: L'apport de L'opération Clichy-Batignolles à Paris (Master's thesis, Universidade do Porto, 2017).

[63] Direction du Logement et de l'Habitat, Projet de Financement: ZAC Clichy-Batignolles–Lot N1 (Paris: Mairie de Paris, 2014).



Fig 5.1 *The Overview of Clichy-Batignolles Development*

2°) Plan de financement

RECETTES (en euros)	PLA-I	PLUS	PLS	Logements étudiants	CHRS	TOTAL Logements	Locaux d'activités	TOTAL Opération
Prêt CDC (40 ans)	862 812	2 603 770		7 149 693	1 433 835	**12 050 110**		12 050 110
Prêt foncier CDC (50 ans)	390 800	1 186 500		2 789 600	605 300	**4 972 200**		4 972 200
Prêt PLS (40 ans)			1 100 297			**1 100 297**		1 100 297
Prêt PLS foncier (50 ans)			525 000			**525 000**		525 000
Prêt Employeurs	-	-	60 000			**60 000**		60 000
Subvention Employeurs sur le programme	140 000	210 000	60 000			**410 000**		410 000
Subvention Ville de Paris	685 777	2 009 967	112 270	6 040 000	2 550 000	**11 398 014**		11 398 014
Fonds propres	-	-	-	1 510 000	115 000	**1 625 000**	-	1 625 000
Prêt bancaire						-	1 262 357	1 262 357
TOTAL	**2 079 389**	**6 010 237**	**1 857 567**	**17 489 293**	**4 704 135**	**32 140 621**	**1 262 357**	**33 402 978**

Fig 5.2 *Funding Structure for Social and Affordable Housing on Plot N1 of the Clichy-Batignolles ZAC, Paris*

4.2 Zero Displacement: The Alexandra Park Revitalization

Gentrification and displacement are persistent challenges in public-private partnership (PPP) housing projects, with few global successes in addressing them. However, Toronto's Alexandra Park revitalization, also led by Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), offers an alternative. Unlike Regent Park, it adopts a resident-centered governance model and incorporates cooperative housing.

At its core is the Atkinson Housing Co-operative, Canada's first conversion of public housing into a non-profit co-op. Since 2003, it has co-held leasehold and management rights to 410 units with TCHC. As a formal governing body, the co-op participates in decisions on operations, redevelopment, and relocation, shifting residents from passive recipients to empowered stakeholders.

A key feature is the "zero displacement" principle: residents stay in the community during construction, temporarily relocating within the site and returning post-reconstruction. This is embedded in both consultation documents and the city's planning report, which commits to phasing strategies aligned with the principle.[64]

Planning policies also require one-to-one replacement of all social housing units at the same rent, along with tenant assistance—relocation subsidies, return priority, and income-based rent guarantees. In contrast to slower, costlier, and more market-driven PPP projects like Regent Park, Alexandra Park shows how community governance can ease displacement pressures. It also highlights the potential of hybrid PPP models that integrate co-ops or community land trusts (CLTs), balancing public investment, private capacity, and resident control.

[64] Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Alexandra Park Phase 1 Closeout Report, Item 15A – 2025-10, February 2025, https://torontohousing.ca/sites/default/files/2025-02/item_15a_-_2025-10_-_alexandra_park_phase_1_closeout_report_r_w_attach.pdf.

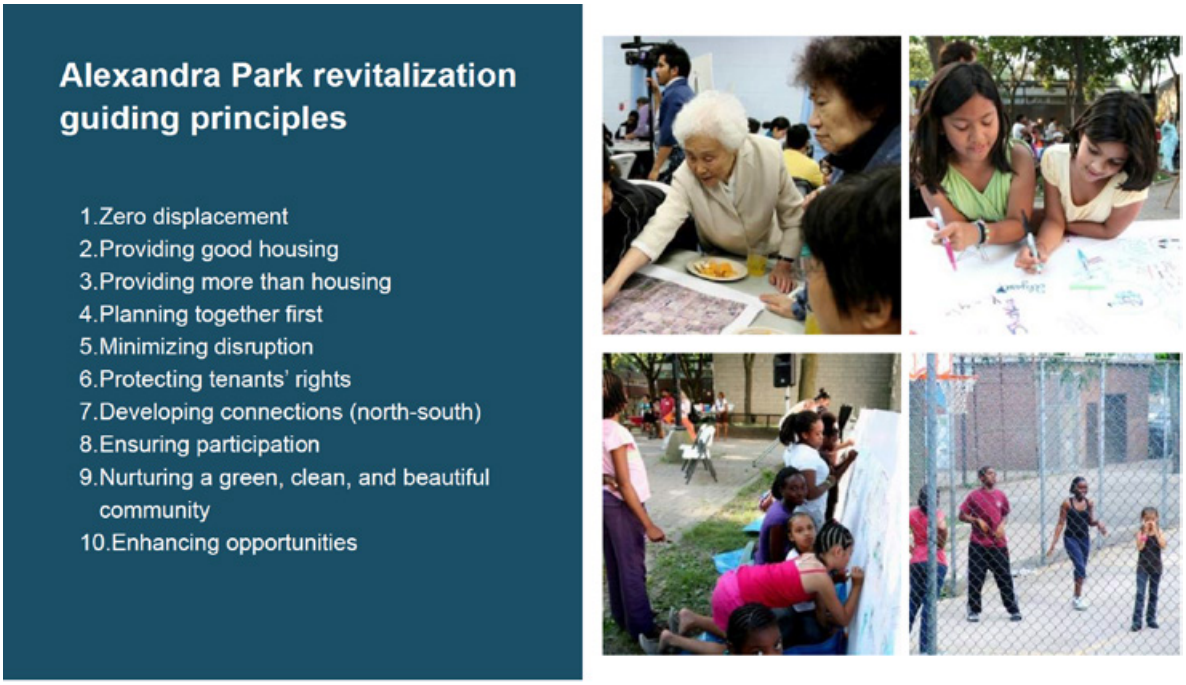


Fig 5.3 *TCHC Guiding Principles: Zero Displacement as the First Priority in Alexandra Park Revitalization*

4.3 Promoting Social Integration: Via Verde New York

Via Verde, or the "Green Way", is a mixed-income housing project in the South Bronx, New York City. Completed in 2012, it includes 222 units—151 rentals for low-income families and 71 co-ops for middle-income families—plus community and retail spaces.[65] Residents of different income levels live in the same building, sharing entrances, circulation, and amenities, avoiding the "poor door" phenomenon common in mixed-income housing. This contrasts with Toronto's Regent Park, where social and market housing are in separate buildings.

[65] Urban Land Institute, Via Verde, ULI Case Studies, January 2014, https://cases-tudies.uli.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Via-Verde.pdf.

Despite income differences, Via Verde's facade achieves visual equality. A consistent material palette—precast concrete, wood panels, metal facades—and stepped volumes create visual unity. Though the project includes town-houses, lofts, mid- and high-rise units, the exterior makes it hard to distinguish unit types or income categories, challenging typical visual cues of class difference.

Via Verde promotes integration through small and medium-sized public spac-es: terraced rooftops, planting boxes, gardens, courtyards, fitness loops, and outdoor classrooms. Unlike centralized parks in other renewal projects, these informal gathering spaces are spread throughout, encouraging spontaneous interaction. This helps reduce isolation and fosters real integration. Unlike Regent Park, which risks reinforcing spatial inequality, Via Verde shows how design can support integration through income-mixed housing, unified archi-tecture, and a network of intimate public spaces.



Fig 5.4 *Left: Stepped facade blurs distinctions between unit types.Right: Rooftop serves as an everyday social*



Fig 5.5 *Top: Stepped facade blurs distinctions between unit types. Bottom: Rooftop serves as an everyday social space.*

4.4 Preserving Historical Continuity: Hafencity

Placelessness is a common challenge in PPP-driven development, but the HafenCity project effectively addressed it. By preserving and adaptively reusing historic buildings and enforcing façade design guidelines, the project retained the area's port-related historical memory. Located on the Elbe River in Hamburg's former dockyard, HafenCity is one of Europe's largest urban redevelopments. Unlike market-oriented development, it preserved heritage sites—warehouses, bridges, docks—transforming them into museums and cultural centers, thus maintaining historical continuity.

For new buildings, HafenCity preserves historical continuity by strictly controlling facade colors. Unlike many German cities that use subdued grays, Hamburg developed a distinctive red brick identity. HafenCity continues this through design guidelines requiring unified facades—mostly in red or reddish-brown, with neutral tones like gray, beige, and brown—creating a warm, cohesive look. Rather than replicating historic warehouses, new buildings use tonal variation and rich materials for modern expression. Compared to Regent Park, where all historic buildings were demolished, this approach is worth emulating.



Fig 5.6 *Historic buildings preserved as a whole (left: the Speicherstadt warehouse district)*

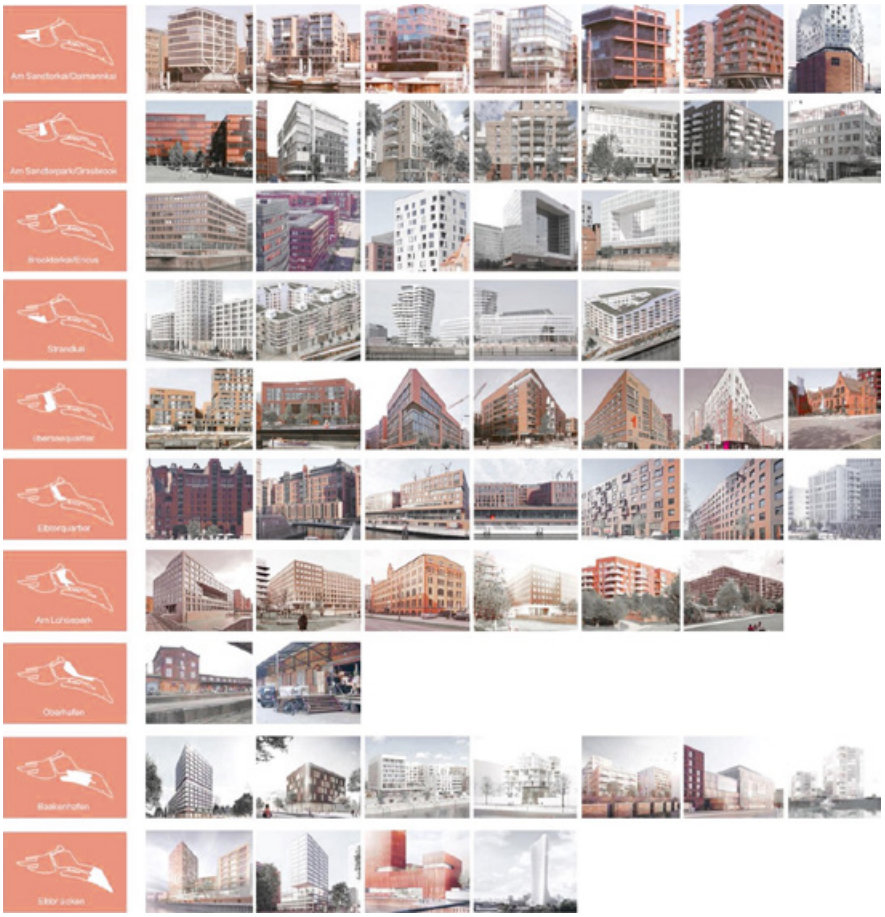


Fig 5.7 *Unity in Diversity: Façade Control and Architectural Expression in HafenCity*

05 | Designing Regent Park Phase 4 and 5

Building on the analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the PPP model in the Regent Park revitalization project presented in the previous chapter, this chapter will focus on the design of a specific plot of land within the fourth and fifth phases of the project. This design aims to address the functional shortcomings of the PPP model from an architectural perspective and use this to drive more comprehensive and in-depth institutional reforms.

5.1 Phase 4 and 5 Introductions

The fourth and fifth phases of the Regis Park Revitalization Plan, located at 325 East Gerrard Street, mark the final stages of the project. The approved plan includes 12 buildings ranging in height from 6 to 39 stories, providing a total of 3,246 residential units. Of these, 633 are income-related rent (IRR) social housing units, 637 are new affordable rental units, and the remainder are market units. This phase also includes over 10,000 square meters of retail and office space, 3,700 square meters of community facilities, and a new branch of the Toronto Public Library.[66] As of the end of 2024, the project has entered the detailed design and implementation phase, with demolition of the existing public housing structures already underway.

[66] City of Toronto, Planning and Housing Committee: Background File 252024, March 2025, https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2025/ph/bgrd/backgroundfile-252024.pdf.

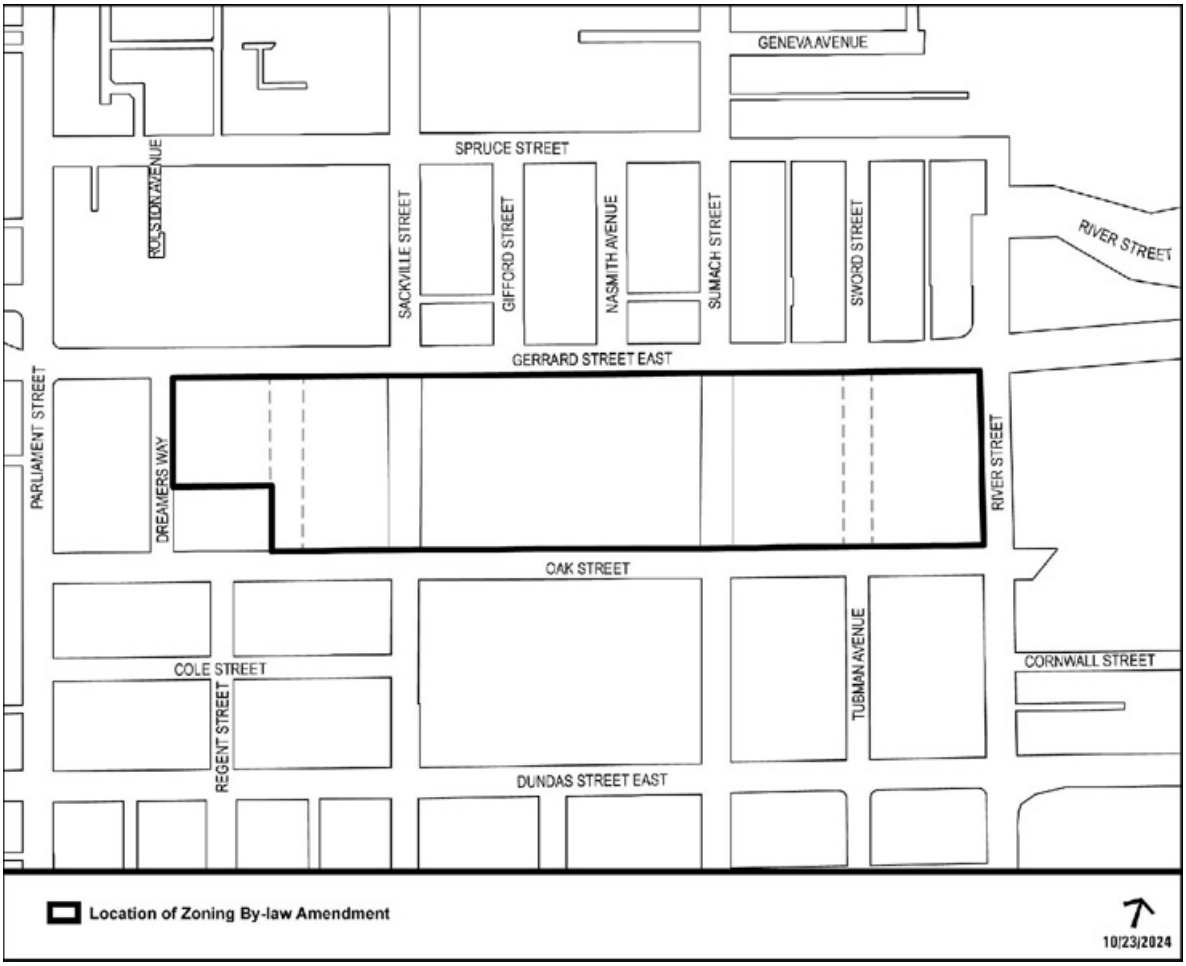


Fig 6.1 *Location and Boundaries of Phases 4 and 5*

5.2 Site Selection and Analysis

The selected design site is located in the central plot of Phases IV and V, directly north of Central Park. This central location serves both to provide a large number of residential units and to extend the main public axis, creating another core public space within the project.

According to the planning documents, the revitalization efforts adhere to three core design principles: establishing two perpendicular, car-free pedestrian axes to control the number, height, and scale of new residential towers; and developing detailed functional planning, including preserving the historic boiler house and integrating community centers, public libraries, and other civic infrastructure. These regulations not only impose spatial constraints on architectural interventions but also create opportunities to enhance public quality of life and equity within a mixed-income, mixed-use environment.[67]

[67] City of Toronto, Toronto and East York Community Council: Background File 250702, 2024, https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2024/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-250702.pdf.

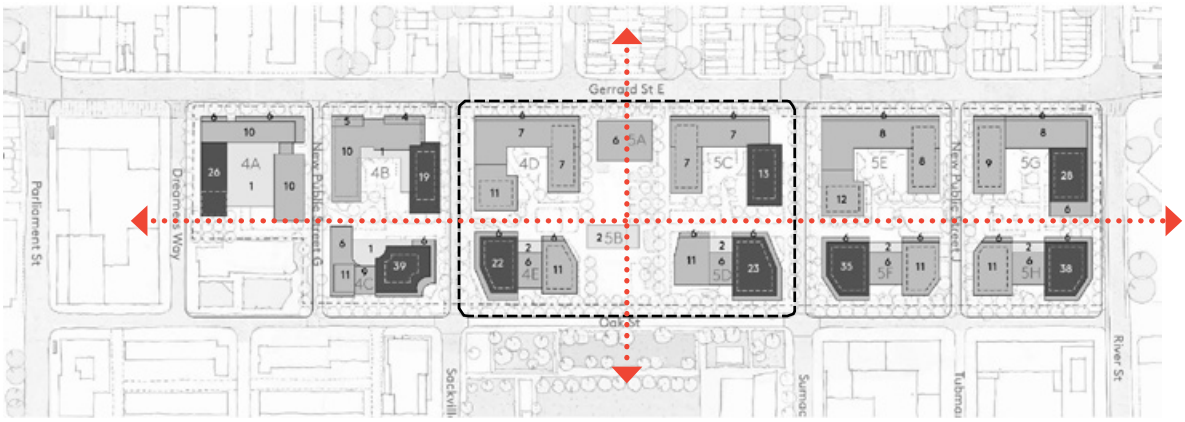


Fig 6.2 *Regulatory Framework and the Two Pedestrian Axes*

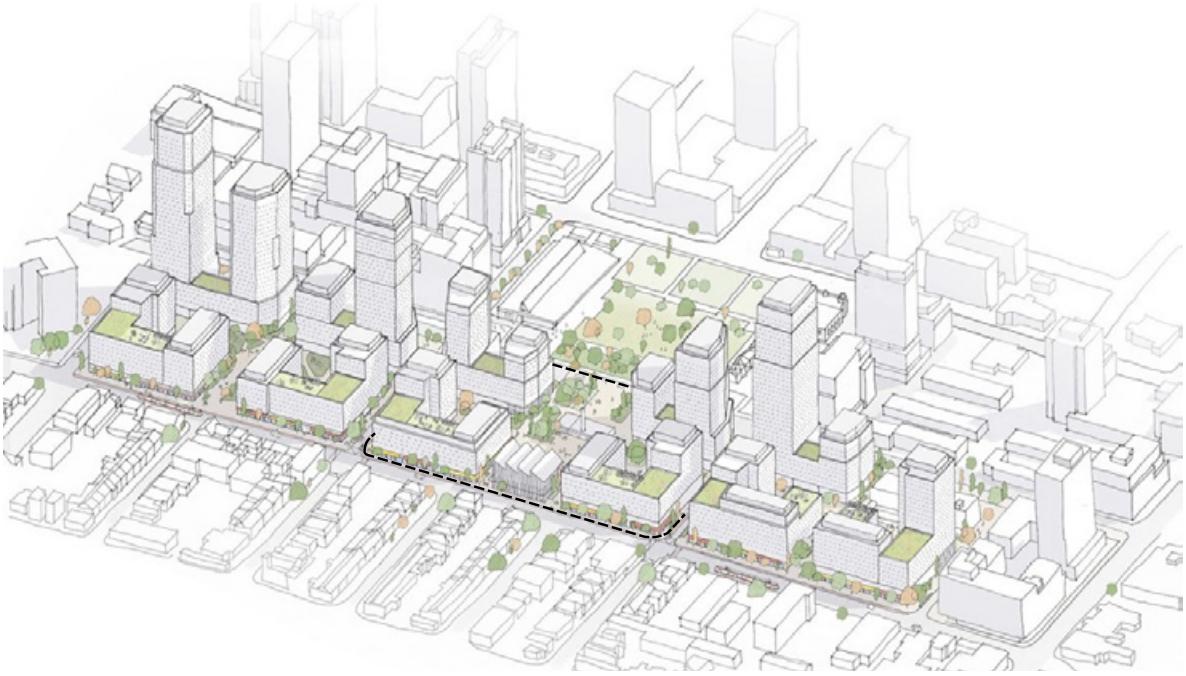


Fig 6.3 *A Rendering of the Proposed Design by GNW*

5.3 Design Principles

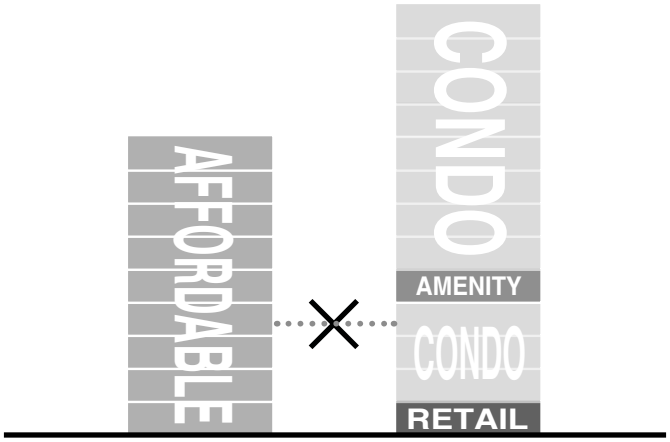
Building on the critical analysis of global precedents and PPP models, this chapter turns to the spatial dimensions of the Regent Park redevelopment. While policies and financing reforms are addressed elsewhere, this section argues that spatial design can act as a meaningful intermediary—complementing rather than replacing systemic change—by prefiguring more equitable development through built form.

From this perspective, the design directly addresses the three major spatial challenges identified during the current implementation process:

First, spatial segregation—affordable housing and market-rate housing are located in separate buildings, with no shared facilities and visually distinguished through design, leading to implicit yet widespread spatial inequality.

Second, insufficient affordability—unstable financing mechanisms and market-driven constraints have reduced the supply of affordable housing, while rising rents further undermine its accessibility.

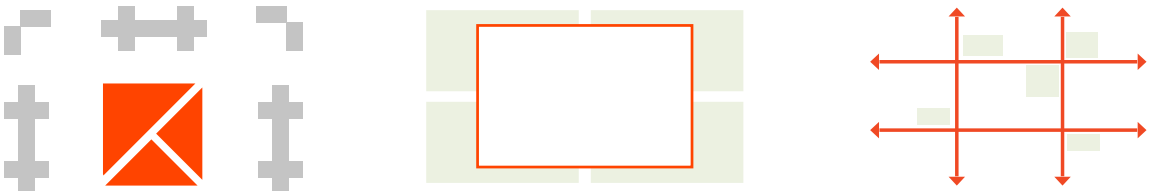
Third, Placelessness—beyond the complete demolition of existing buildings, the more subtle loss is the erasure of everyday spatial typologies that once fostered a sense of belonging for original residents. Neighborhood green spaces, semi-public courtyards, and pedestrian networks have been replaced by globally standardized middle-class tower typologies.



1 Spatial Segregation



2 Insufficient Affordability



Semi-Public Green Space

Neighborhood Plaza

Internal Pedestrian Street

3 Fading Spatial Memories

Fig 6.4 *Three Key Design Challenges Identified Earlier: Spatial Segregation, Insufficient Affordability, and Placelessness*

In response to the three spatial challenges outlined above, this design adopts three core principles:

1) Weaving Space

The base serves as a collective ground, consolidating public functions and connecting the previously isolated towers. By incorporating shared facilities into the base and mixing market-rate and affordable housing units on each floor of each tower, the design breaks down spatial isolation and promotes daily interaction between different residents.

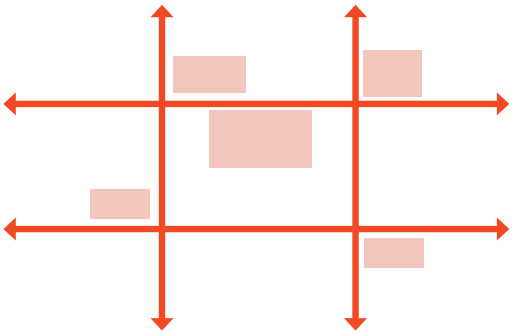
2) Reinterpreted History

Drawing from the original horizontally extended cross-shaped housing typology, the podium reintroduces spatial continuity through vertically layered platforms, rooftops, and semi-open terraces. This creates a three-dimensional network of informal social spaces—reminiscent of former neighborhood greens, doorfront plazas, and inner-block paths—that once supported a sense of belonging.

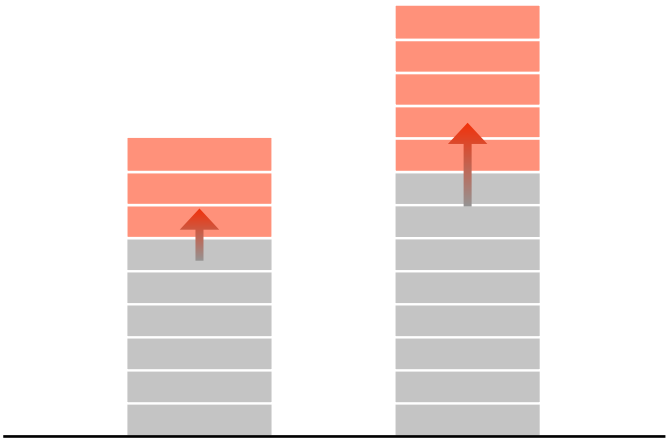
3) Improved Efficiency

The design replaces conventional 3-metre floor-to-floor flats with 4.7-metre-high loft units through vertical reorganization. This strategy not only introduces spatial variety but also increases the unit count by one-third within the same volume, alleviating financial pressures while enhancing redistributive spatial equity—allowing more residents to access quality housing, rather than concentrating spatial privilege in the hands of a few.

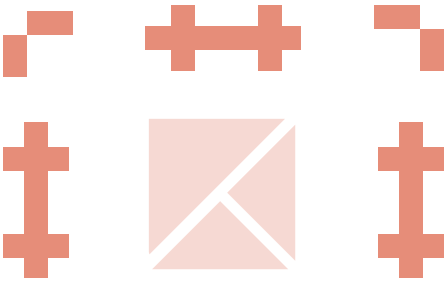
These three strategies collectively articulate the project's spatial ambitions: to construct a Collective Ground, ensure Expanded Affordability, and restore a sense of Historical Presence.



Collective Ground



Expanded Affordability



Historical Presence

Fig 6.5 *Three Design Visions: Collective Ground, Expanded Affordability, and Historical Presence*

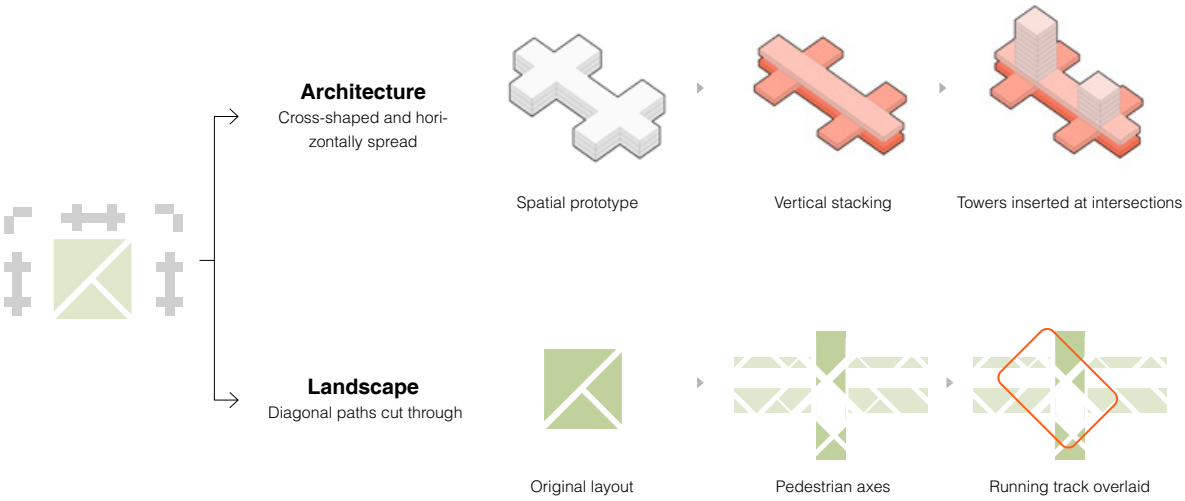
1) Weaving Space



· From Segregation to Spatial Inclusion

This design seeks to integrate residents across both podium and tower levels. Facilities previously exclusive to condominium units are redistributed within the podium, activating shared spaces across social groups. At the tower level, affordable and market units are mixed floor-by-floor, promoting interaction and a more equitable living environment.

2) Reinterpreted History



· Bridging Histories, Building Contexts

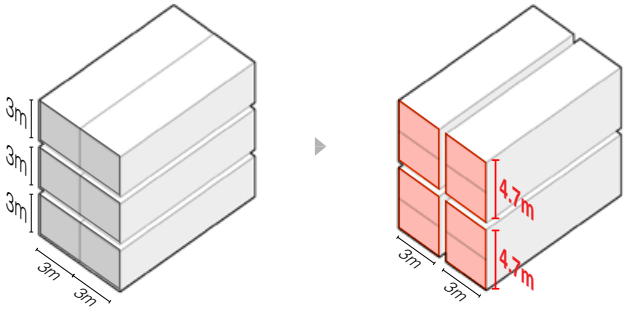
By critically extracting and reinterpreting the historical spatial prototype, the design integrates it with contemporary planning conditions and urban context—generating a spatial language that bridges the past while responding to the complexities of the present.

Fig 6.6 *Diagram of the*

3) Improved Efficiency

Within the approximate

9m × 6m × [length] volume

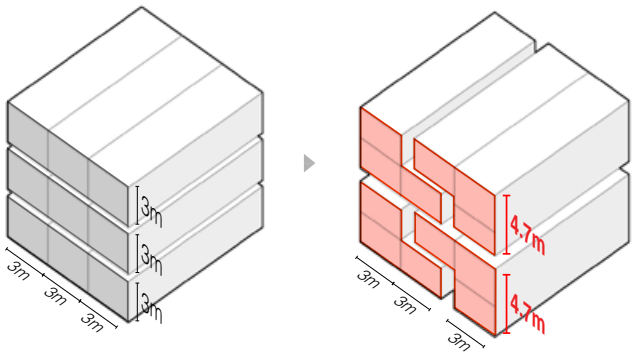


3 × 1B1B

4 × Lofted 1B1B

Within the approximate

9m × 9m × [length] volume

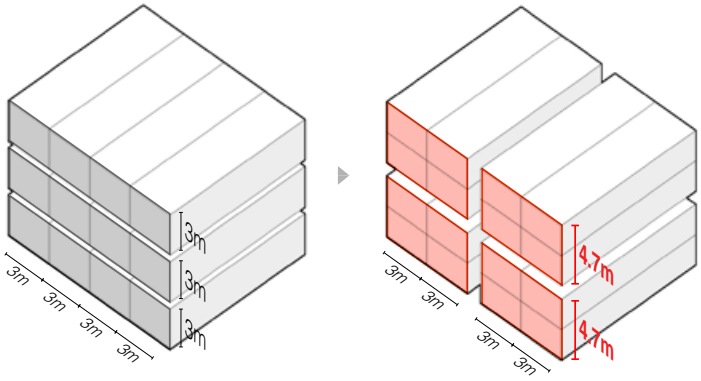


3 × 2B2B

4 × Lofted 2B2B

Within the approximate

12m × 9m × [length] volume



3 × 3B2B

4 × Lofted 3B2B

· Introduce Loft Units

By converting traditional single-floor units into loft-style layouts, the number of units within the same spatial volume increases by one-third. This strategy significantly boosts the supply of affordable units under comparable construction costs, enabling more residents to access housing. By enhancing spatial efficiency, the design promotes greater housing equity.

5.4 Architectural Design

1) Optimization of Zoning Bylaws

Although the City of Toronto has issued the zoning bylaw for Phases 4 and 5, the current plan continues to reveal several characteristic issues of PPP-led development, including the neglect of existing spatial typologies, fragmented urban form, and a formulaic, homogenized approach to public space.

At the design level, I begin with a principled optimization of the spatial massing defined by the zoning bylaw, aiming to better respond to the site's context and community fabric.

The first strategy is interface optimizationn. The existing plan sets all podium-tower buildings on nearly the same vertical plane, with only minimal setbacks. This results in rigid, monotonous frontages along Central Park and Gerrard Street, producing a generic urban edge that contradicts the intended walkability. To counter this, the design introduces setbacks, volumetric shifts, transitional spaces, and activated podium rooftops, fostering more spatial variation and opportunities for community interaction.

The second strategy emphasizes historical continuity. While most original buildings in the area ranged from 3 to 5 storeys, the zoning bylaw mandates street-facing heights of 7 storeys or more, breaking scale continuity. In response, I introduce a three-storey podium that echoes the historical fabric, with slender towers above to balance functionality with contextual respect.

The third strategy focuses on reorganizing the tower-public space relationship. In the current scheme, four northern towers are pushed toward the site center to meet daylighting standards, resulting in oversized podium roofs and fragmented ground-level spaces: two large plazas, a broad central street, and several fragmented smaller plazas. My design repositions the towers slightly northward to consolidate a central public space cluster. Stepped podiums create a more nuanced hierarchy of public realms, ensuring spatial cohesion while avoiding excessive, functionless openness.

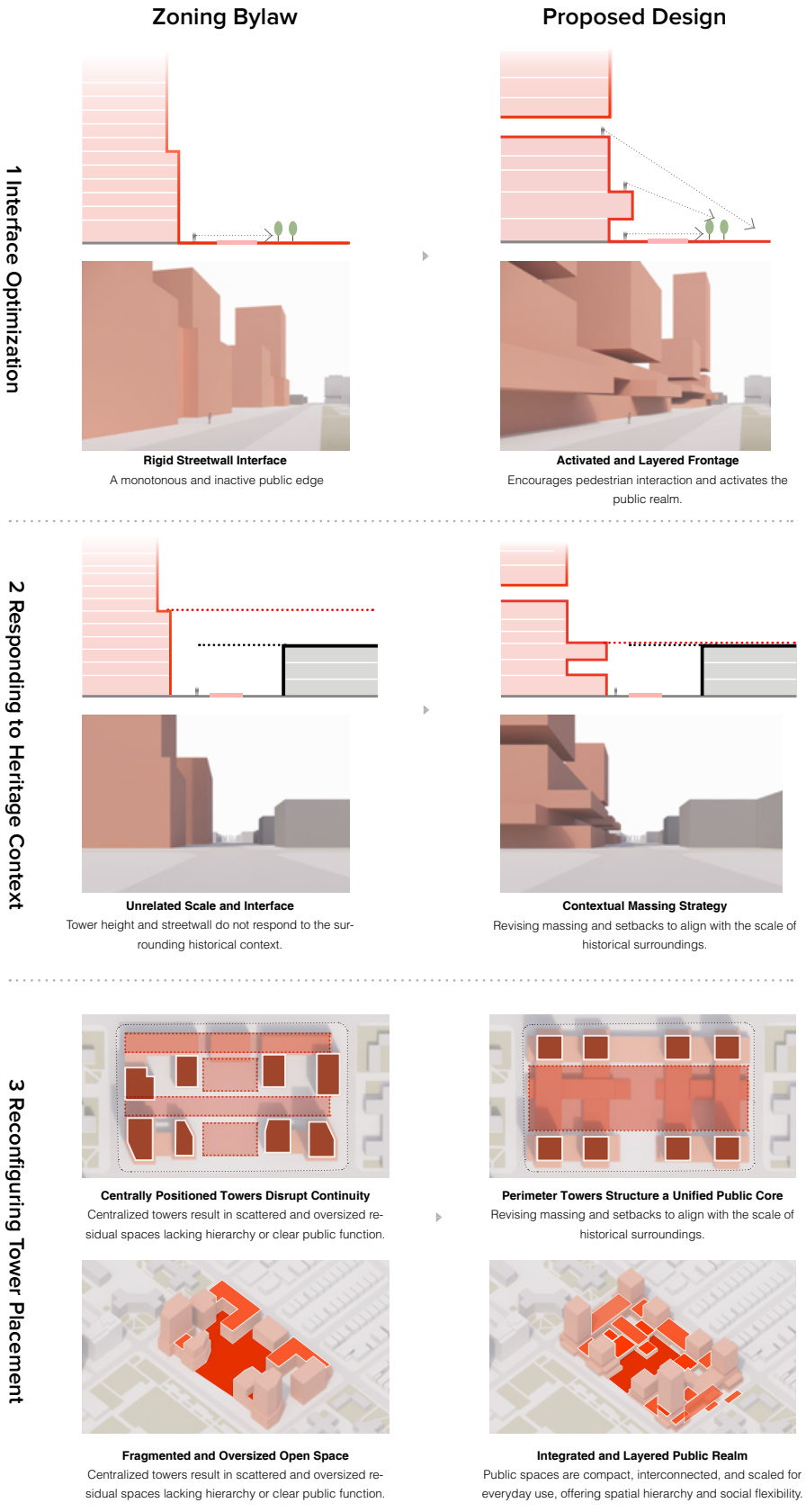


Fig 6.7 *Contextual Refinement of the Zoning Bylaw*

2) Overall Design

Overall, the design aligns with the zoning regulations' intended role for the site—striking a balance between spatial efficiency and a public-oriented mission. It aims to increase the number of residential units while leveraging the site's central location to activate its potential for public living spaces. Unlike large open spaces such as Central Park and Athletic Ground, this proposal emphasizes the creation of a more decentralized and complementary urban public resource system through a network of small and medium-sized public spaces and community-oriented services. Therefore, the design operates through two intertwined spatial logics: the collective ground- at the podium level, which promotes social interaction and public access; and the efficient vertical layout of the towers, which achieves housing density and equity within a limited land area.

Regarding the sidewalks adjacent to urban streets, Toronto's Tall Building Design Guidelines divide the space from the street edge inward into four hierarchical zones: Edge Zone, Furniture and Planting Zone, Pedestrian Clearway, and Frontage and Marketing Zone, creating a layered and pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Depending on the internal building functions, residential lofts are typically accompanied by a dedicated forecourt serving as an entry plaza, while retail spaces often feature an outdoor patio designed to accommodate seating and other leisure activities.

According to calculations, two underground levels are required to accommodate parking. Basement Level 2 is relatively straightforward and will serve entirely as parking and limited service areas; thus, it is not elaborated upon in this thesis. Basement Level 1, however, involves more complex spatial conditions and is illustrated through a functional diagram. Several areas within this level cannot be used for parking or mechanical rooms: first, the area beneath the existing heritage boiler room must remain unexcavated due to structural and conservation constraints; second, a portion of the library and civic center occupies part of this level, including their associated sunken courtyards; and third, driveways providing access to the underground parking are located on both the east and west sides of the site. In addition, the cores of the eight residential towers and their surrounding zones are allocated for electrical rooms, mechanical shafts, storage, garbage collection, and other building service functions. The remaining space is designed as a fully connected parking layout with circulation driveways.

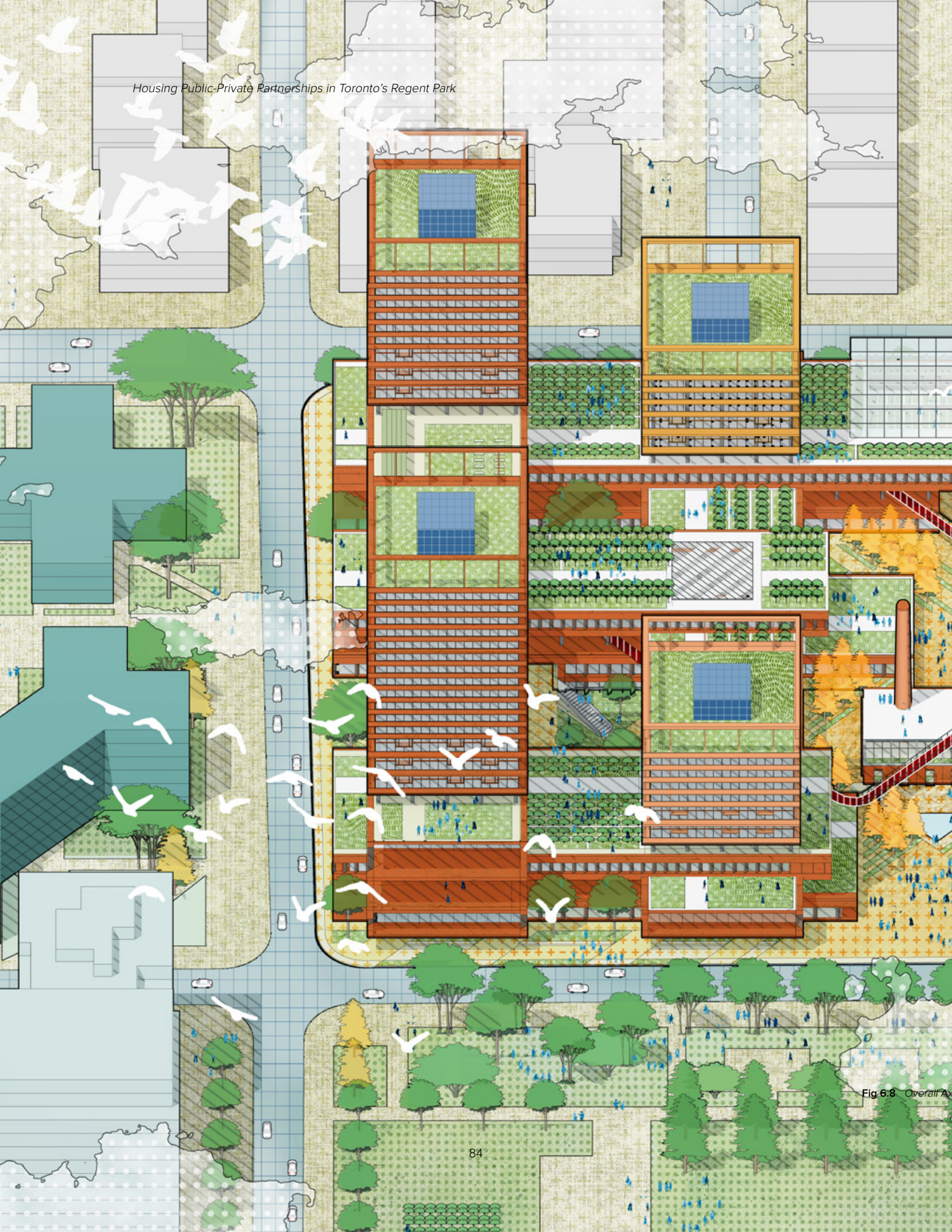
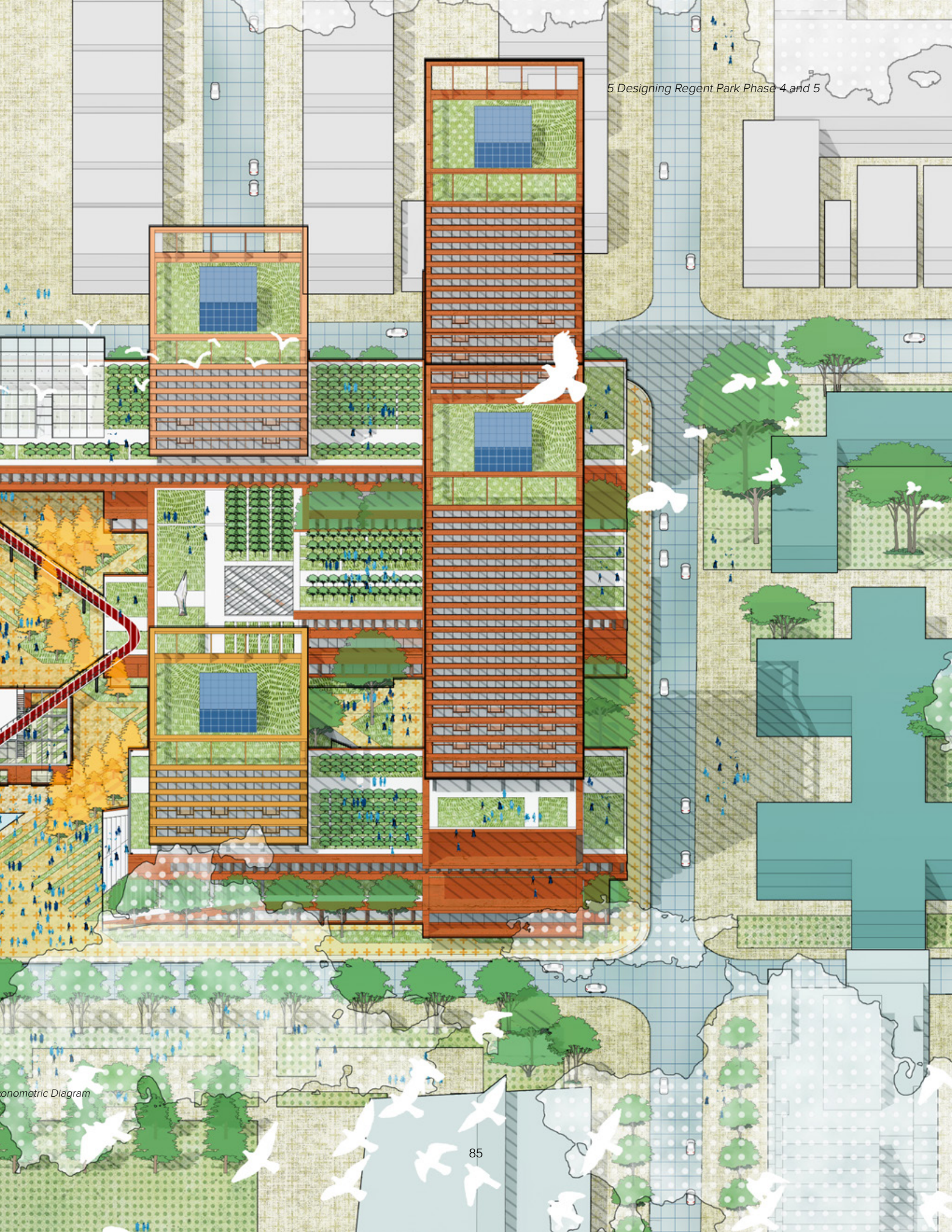


Fig 6.8 *Overall A*



onometric Diagram



Fig 6.9 *Aerial View: Complying with Zo*



oning By-law in Tower Count and Height



Fig 6.10 *Central Park Perspective: Exten*



d the public character of the Central Park



Fig 6.11 *Street-level perspective of the s*



outh elevation： Dynamic Urban Interface

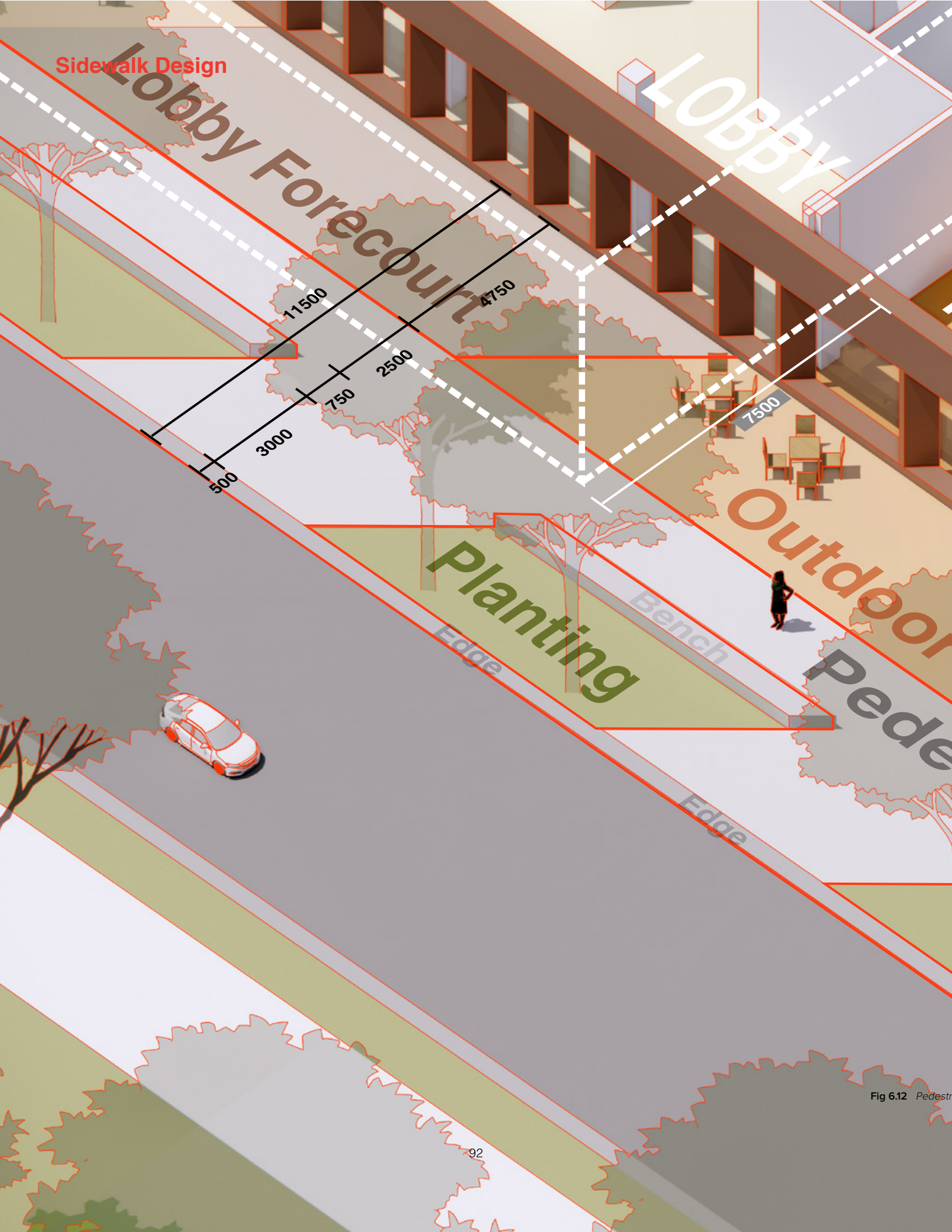
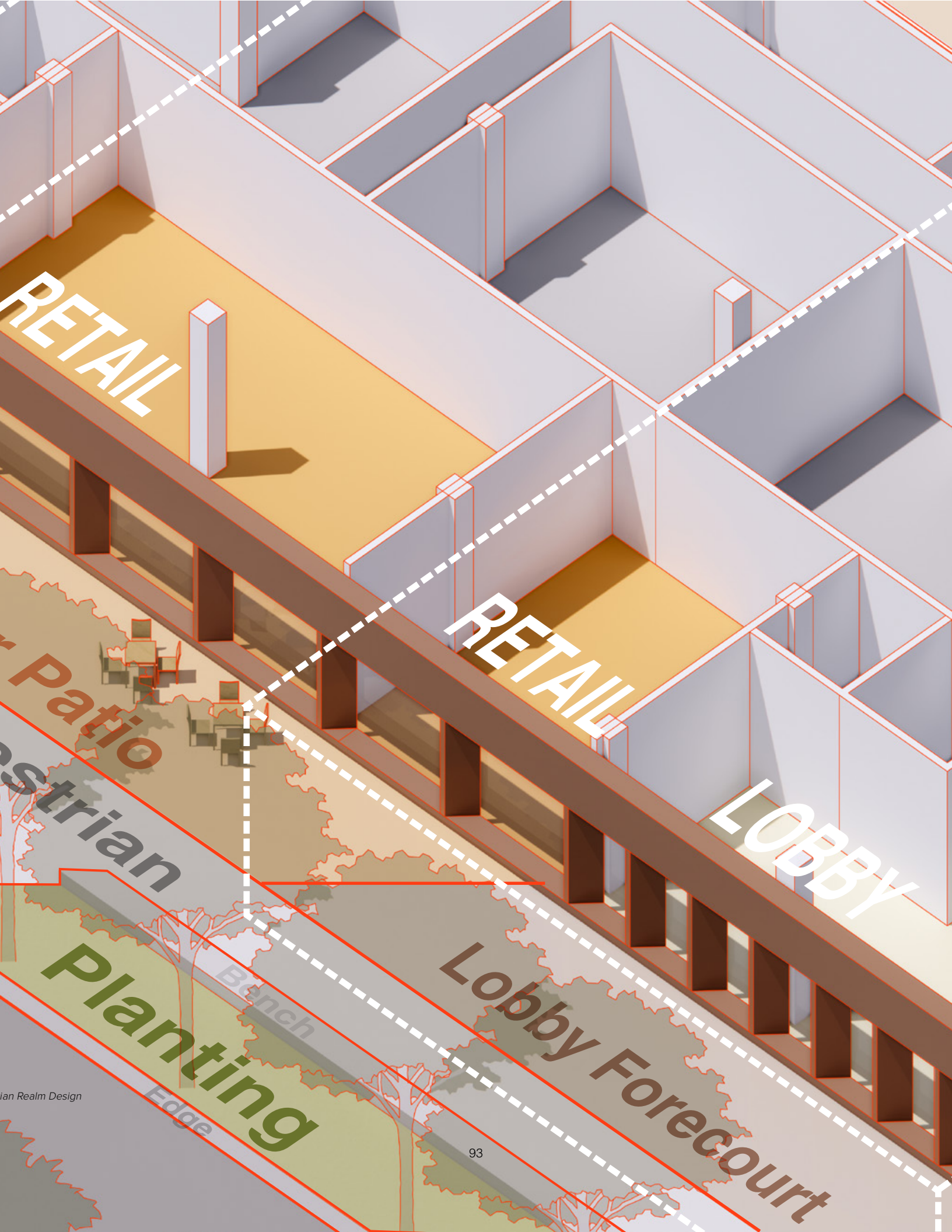


Fig 6.12 *Pedestr*



ian Realm Design

Underground Floor Plan Diagram

Housing Public-Private Partnerships in Toronto's Regent Park

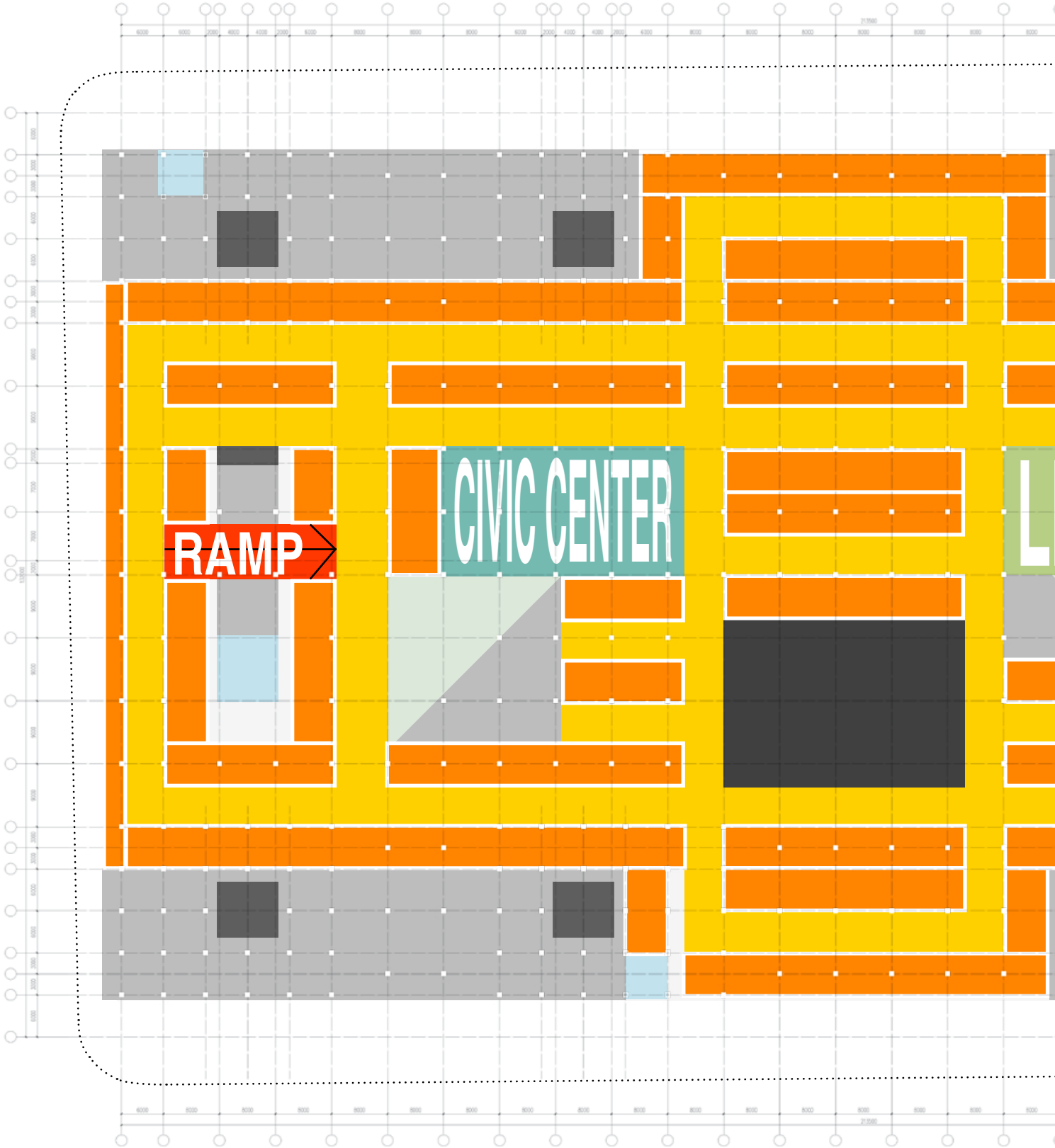
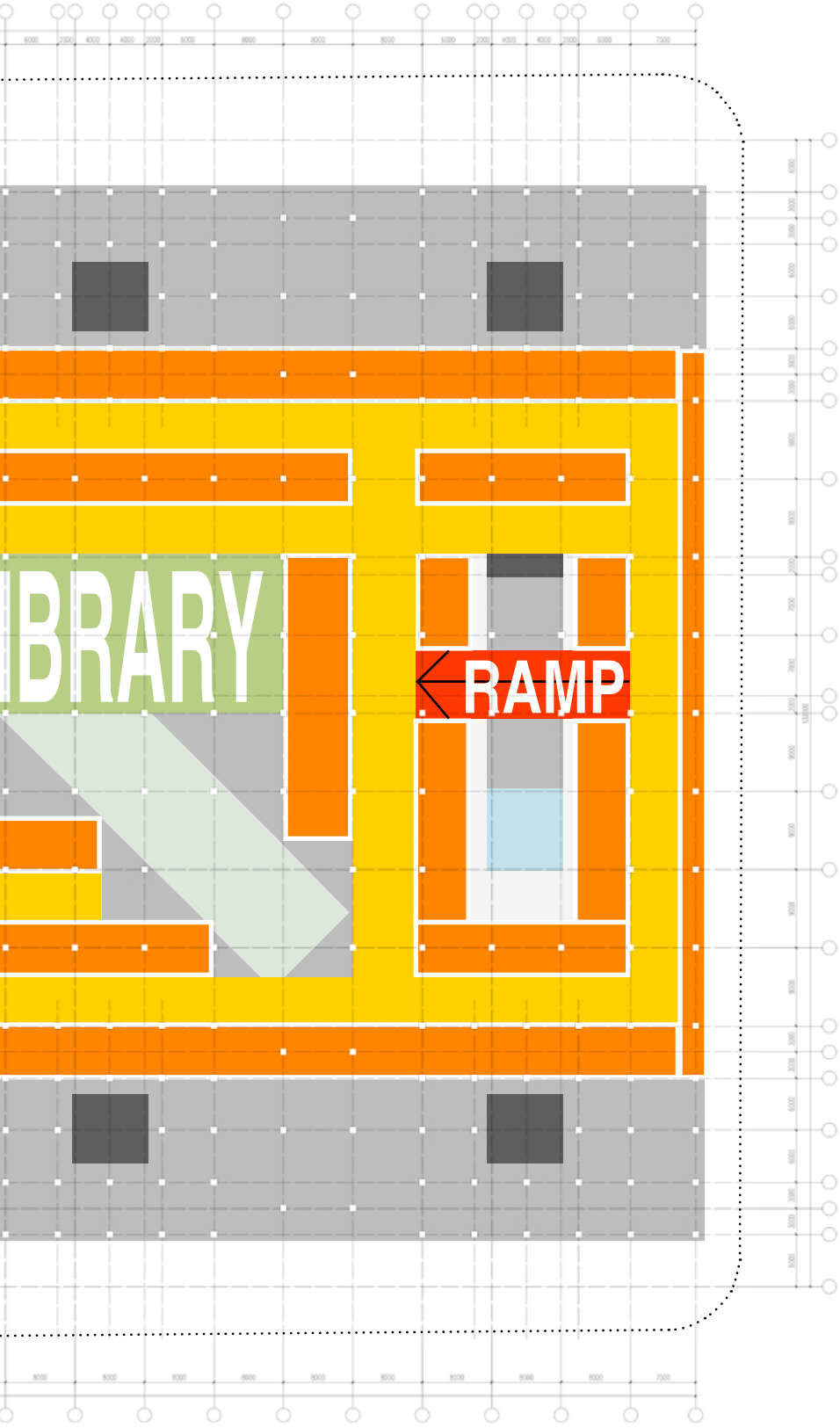


Fig 6.13 *Functional Distril*



bution of Basement Level 1

Legend

- Driveway
- Parking Area
- Vehicular Ramp
- Mechanical and Electrical Room
- Residence Service Core
- No-Excavation Zone
- Office Lobby
- Library
- Civic Center
- Sinking Courtyard

3) Podium Level Design

The podium space is named "Common Ground", conceived as both a container and a base for diverse types of public space that support the residential towers above. It is diverse, vibrant, and fluid, embodying the spirit of public life rooted in the site's history. At the same time, it serves as a critical and imaginative response to the nature of public space in contemporary housing developments under the PPP model.

The podium level consists of three floors. As mentioned earlier, its overall spatial logic follows a cross-shaped layout formed through vertical layering—a reinterpretation of the historical building. The base section features a residential lobby and its amenities, along with a series of public functional spaces. The first and second floors are fully open to the public except for the residential areas, while the third floor is exclusively reserved for residents' amenities. This vertically layered layout structure achieves a balance between public accessibility and residential privacy.

The first floor consists of a linear internal space and a public walkway. At the north and south ends are residential lobbies, freight and waste disposal rooms, outward-facing retail spaces, inward-facing sports facilities, cafes, restaurants, and community exhibition areas. The central strip space includes underground garage entrances, bicycle storage areas, and the core Civic Activity Center and library. As a result, all vehicular circulation is confined to the east and west edges of the site, preventing cars from entering the interior. This separation of pedestrians and vehicles ensures a safe and pleasant walking experience. What's more, this layout aligns with the east-west and north-south pedestrian axes specified in the zoning bylaw, ensuring active streetfronts on both sides and enhancing pedestrian comfort.

The boiler room, which previously obstructed the intersection of the axes, was partially demolished and reinforced with new steel structures to connect the two axes, creating a public corridor that is both passable and inviting. Its iconic red brick facade and chimney have been preserved, while the interior has been transformed into a public bar, offering a close-up view of the industrial-era ambiance. On the south side, the linear volume is intentionally interrupted to form a medium-scale plaza, extending the public axis of Central Park while providing flexible civic space.

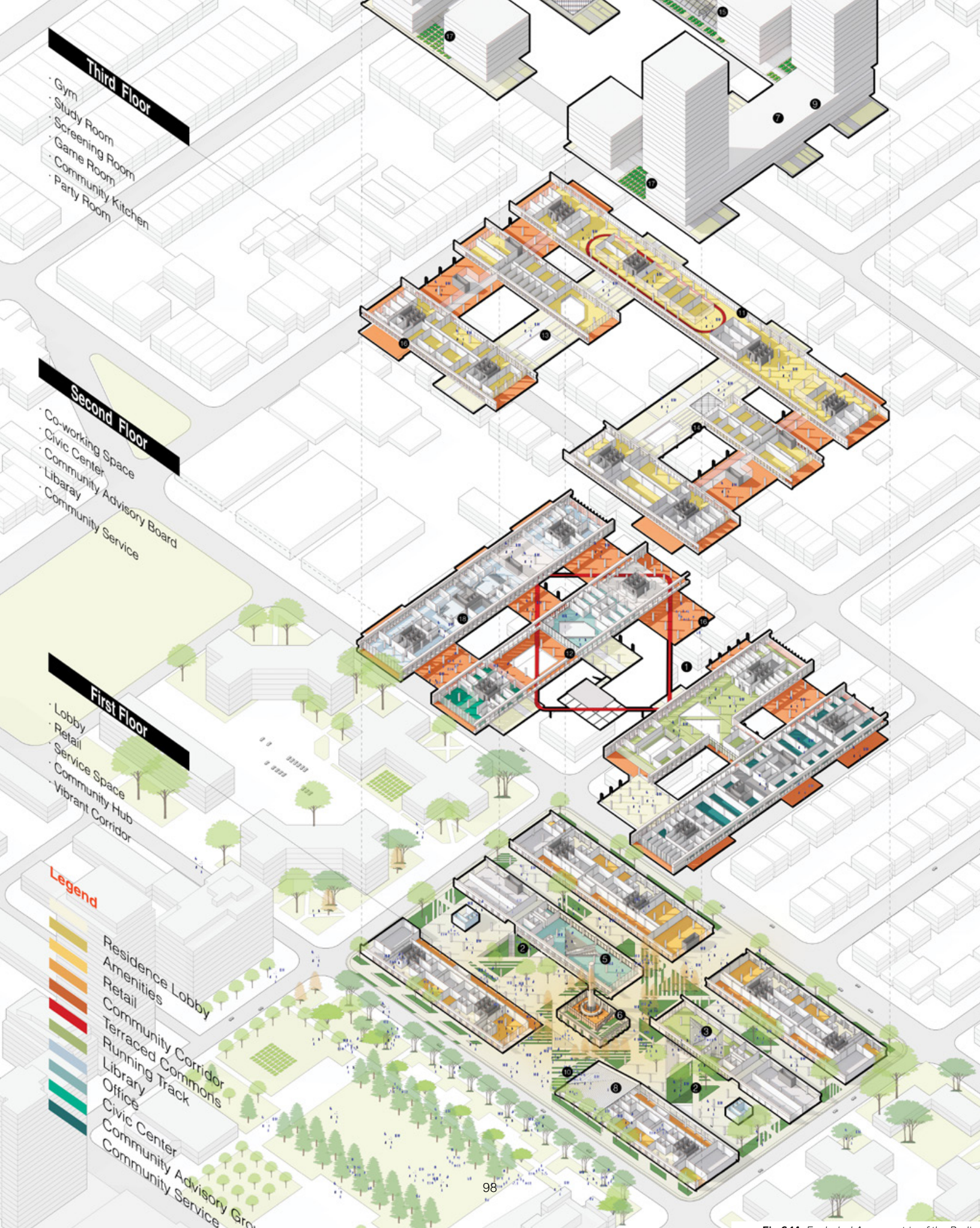
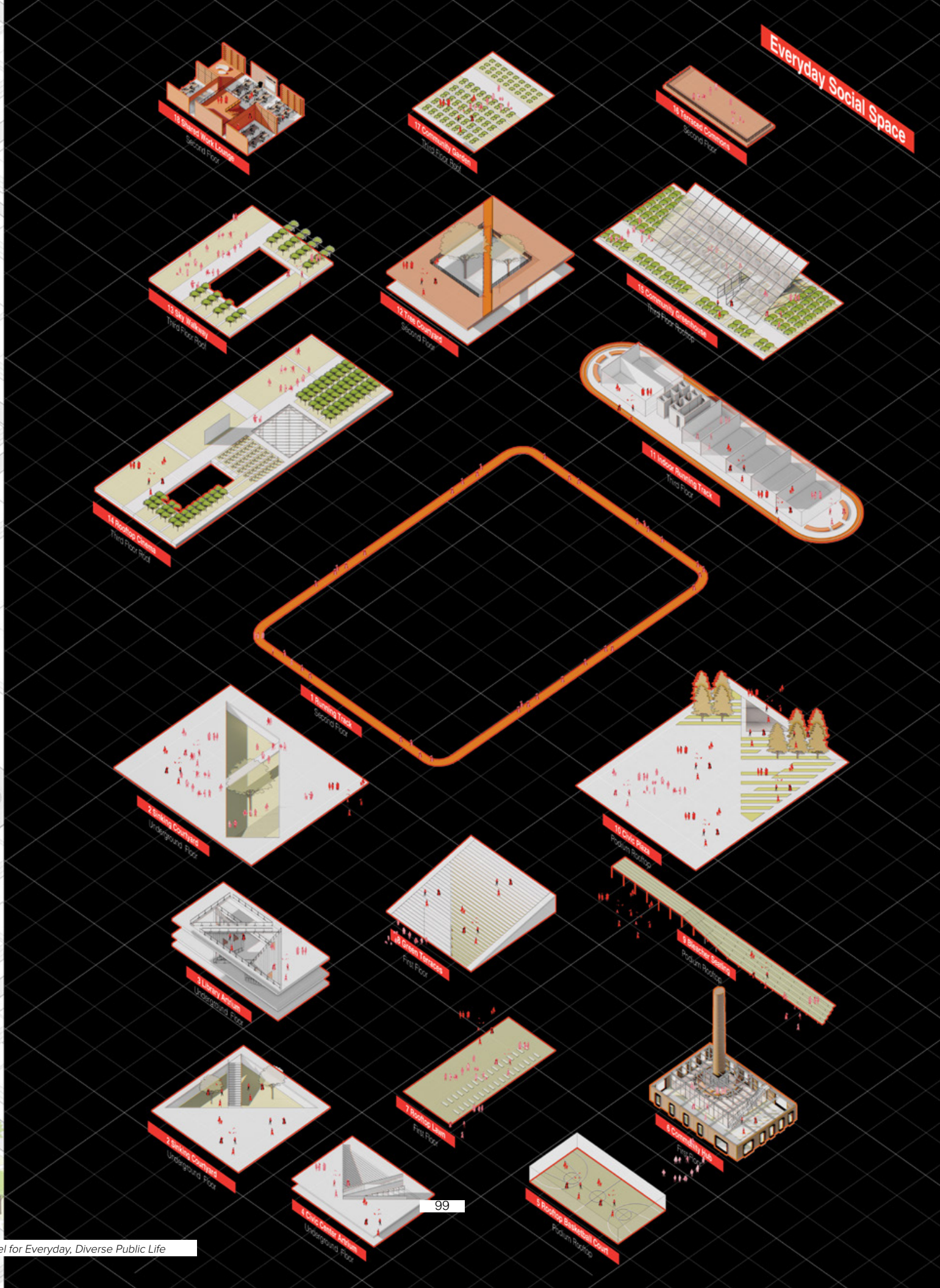


Fig 6.14 *Exploded Axonometric of the Podiu*


Everyday Social Space
13 Shared Work Lounge
Second Floor
17 Community Garden
Third Floor Roof
16 Terraced Commons
Second Floor
13 Sky Walkway
Third Floor Roof
12 Yoga Courtyard
Second Floor
15 Community Greenhouse
Third Floor Rooftop
14 Rooftop Cinema
Third Floor Roof
11 Indoor Running Track
Third Floor
1 Running Track
Second Floor
2 Skating Courtyard
Underground Floor
10 Civic Plaza
Podium Rooftop
3 Library Atrium
Underground Floor
18 Green Terraces
First Floor
9 Bleacher Seating
Podium Rooftop
2 Skating Courtyard
Underground Floor
7 Rooftop Lawn
First Floor
8 Community Hub
First Floor
4 Civic Center Atrium
Underground Floor
5 Rooftop Basketball Court
Podium Rooftop

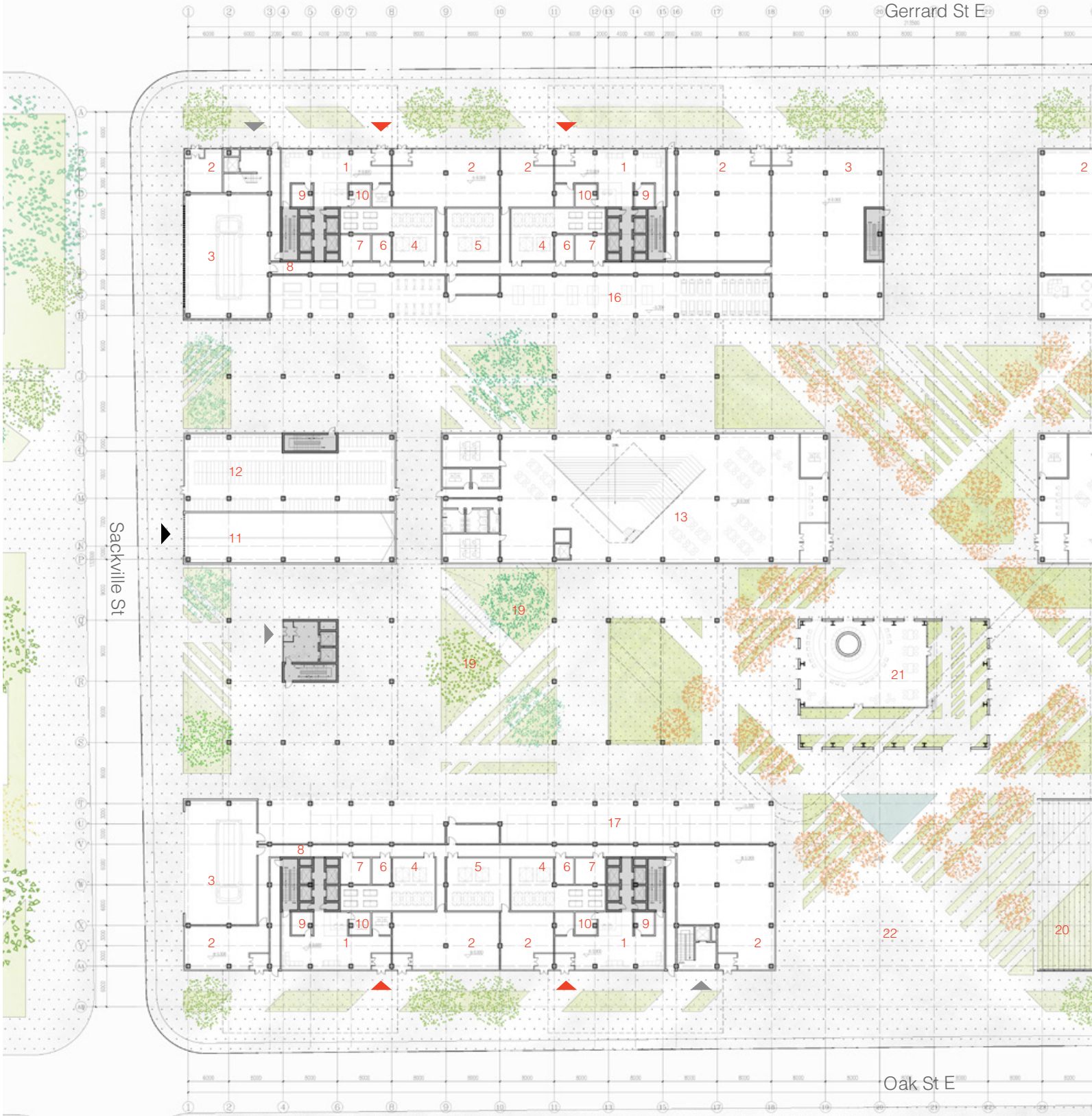


Fig 6.15 *First Floor Plan*



First Floor Plan

Legend

1 Residence Lobby
2 Retail
3 Type G Loading
4 Garbage Room
5 Retail Garbage
6 Storage
7 Moving Room
8 Service Corridor
9 Mail Room
10 Residence Office
11 Garage Ramp
12 Bycicle Parking
13 Civic Center
14 Library
15 Restaurant
16 Sports Facility
17 Community Market
18 Cafe
19 Sinking Courtyard
20 Landscape Stairs
21 Bar (Former Boiler Room)
22 Civic Plaza
▲ Residence Entrance
▲ Underground Parking Entrance
▲ Office Entrance

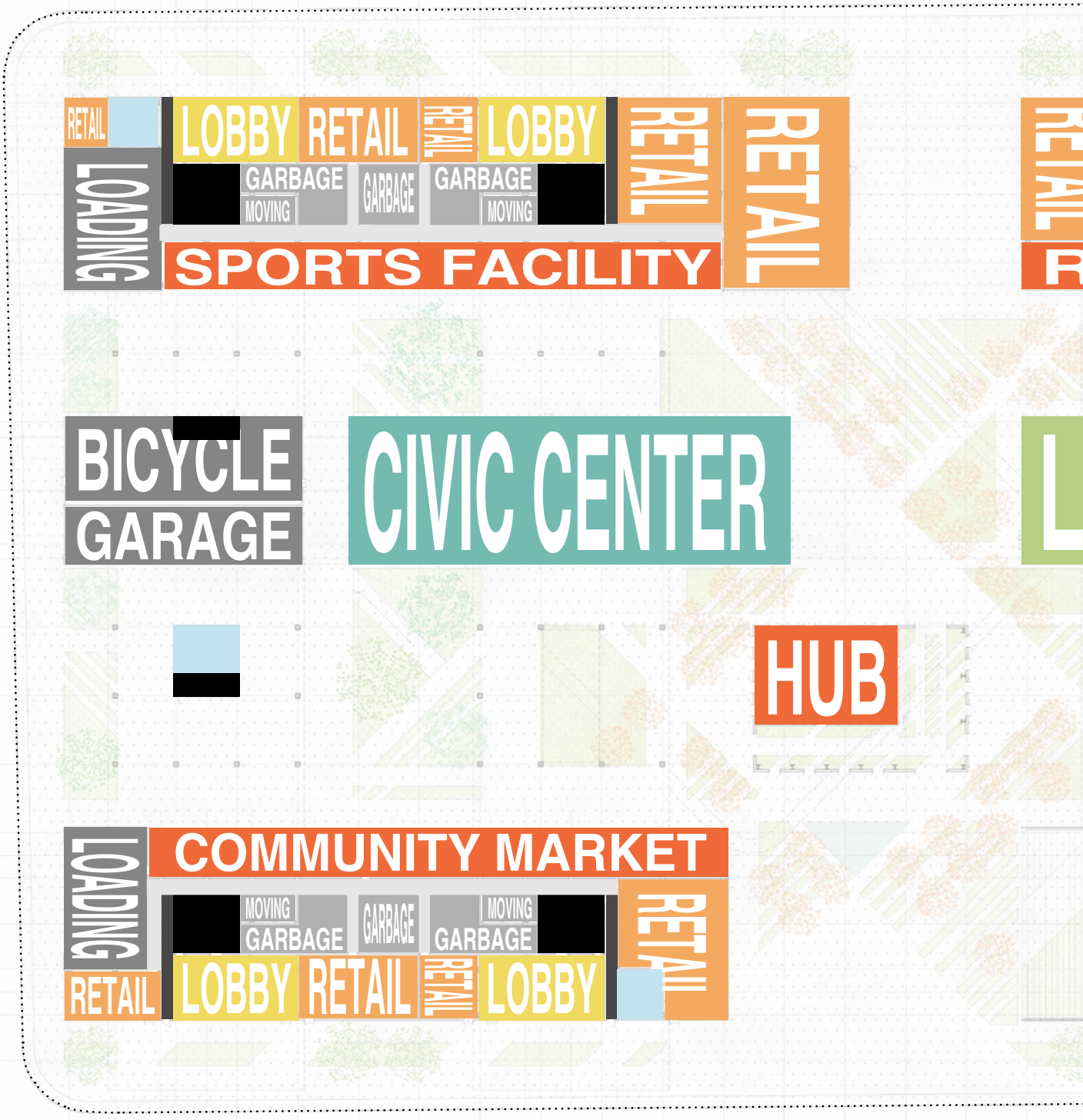
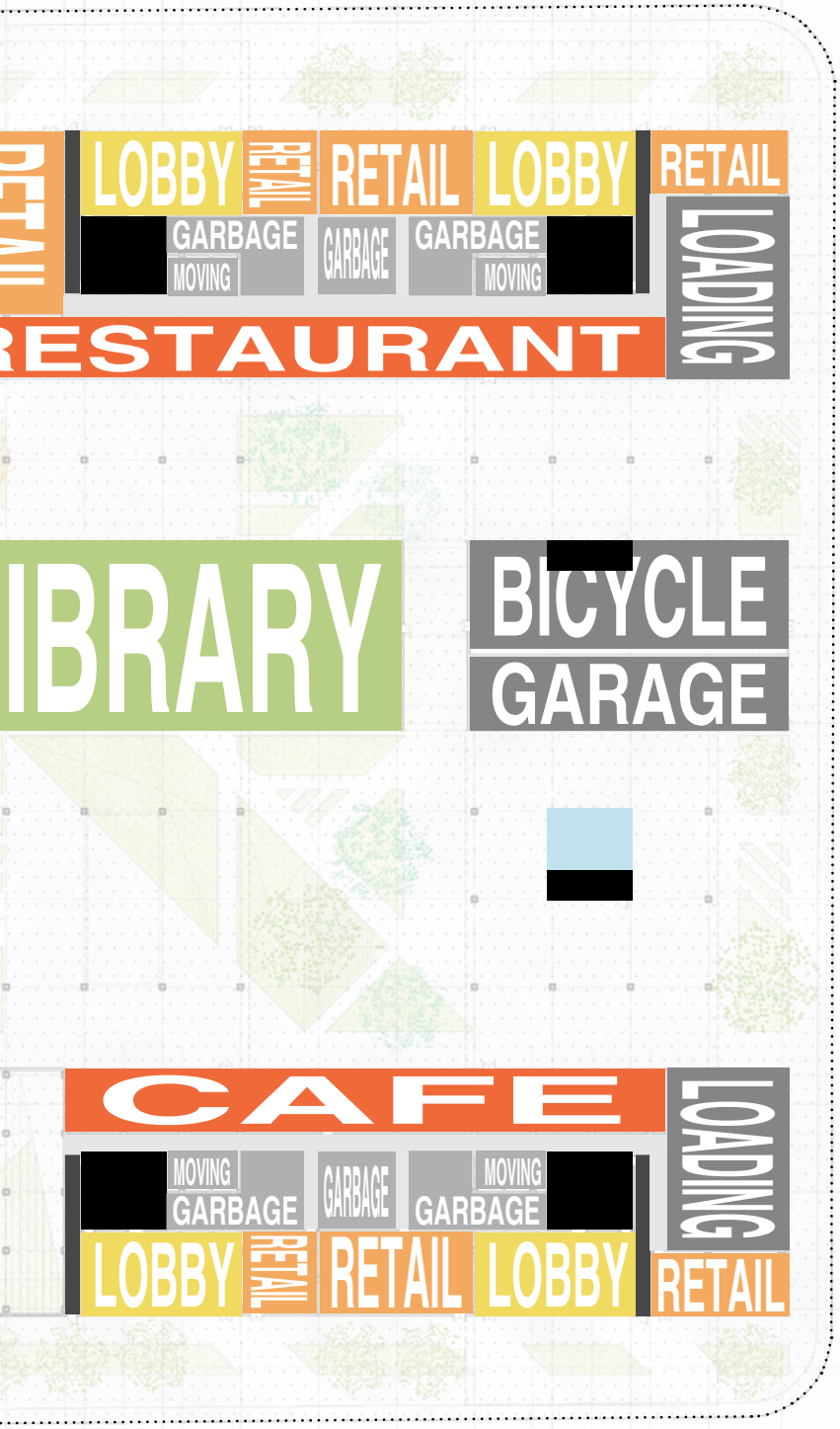


Fig 6.16 *First Floor Plan Functional Diagram*



Legend

- Community Corridors
- Retail
- Lobby
- Library
- Civic Center
- Office Entrance
- Service Corridor
- Service Spaces
- Access and Service Spaces
- Exit Corridor
- Core

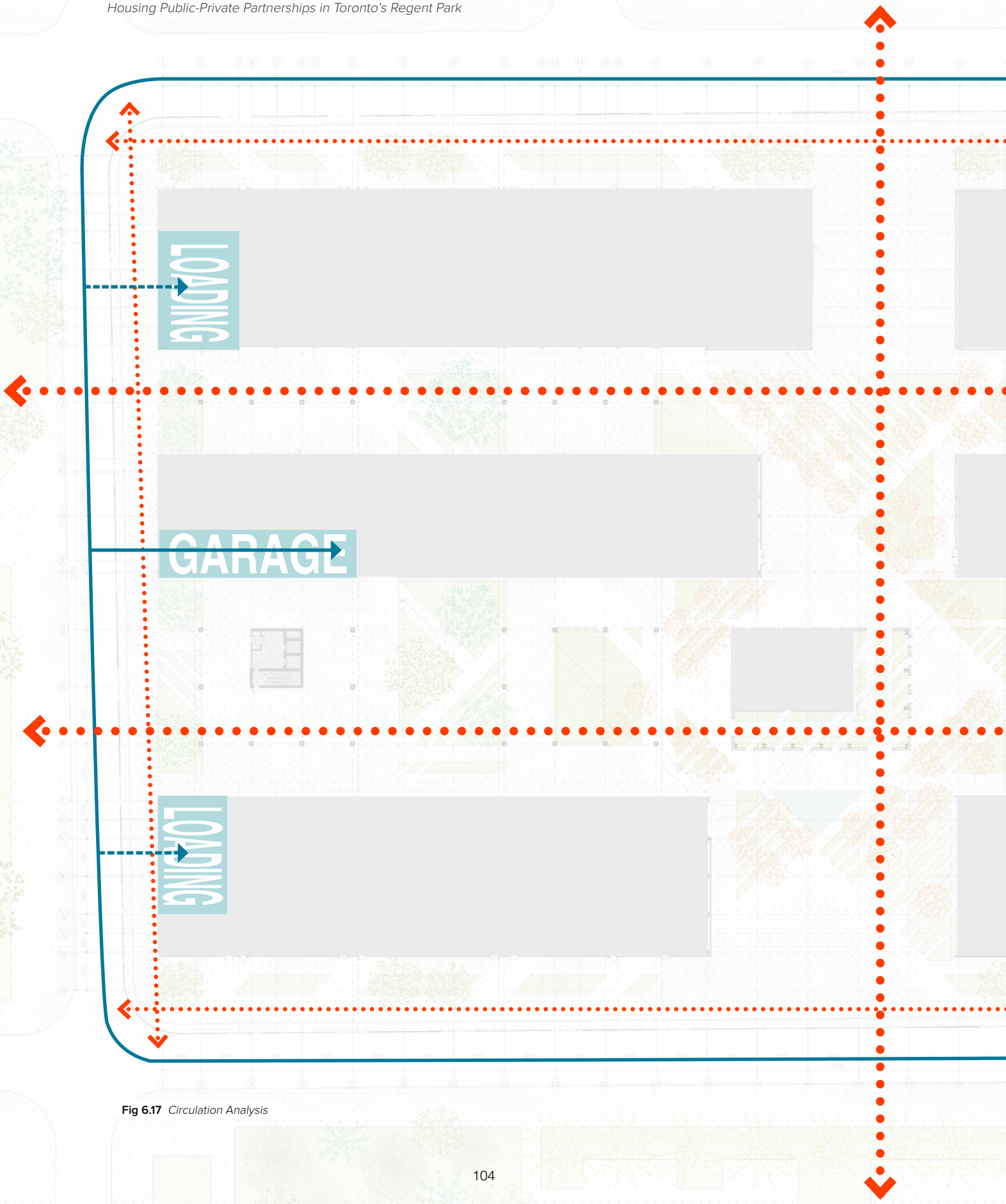
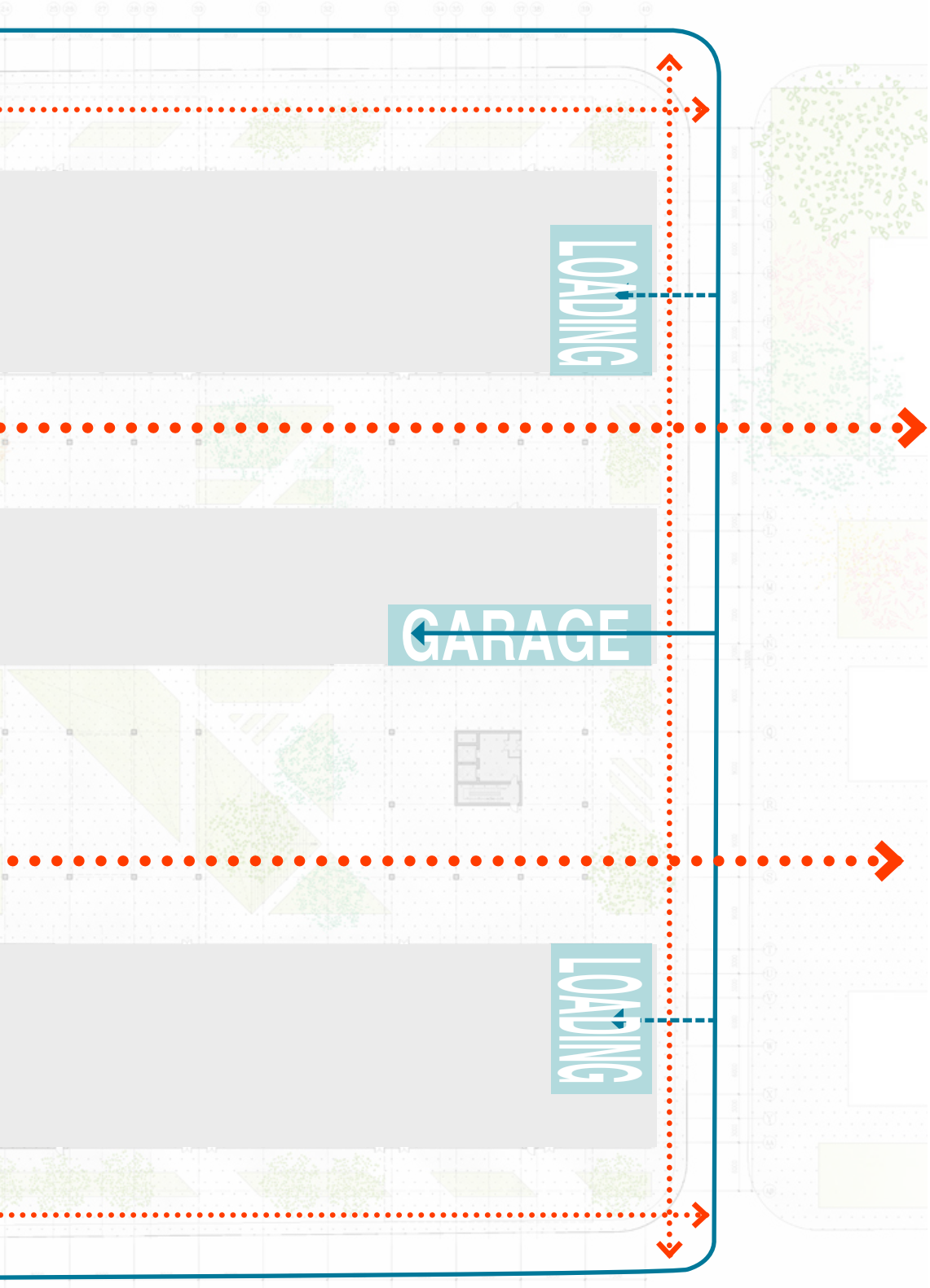


Fig 6.17 *Circulation Analysis*

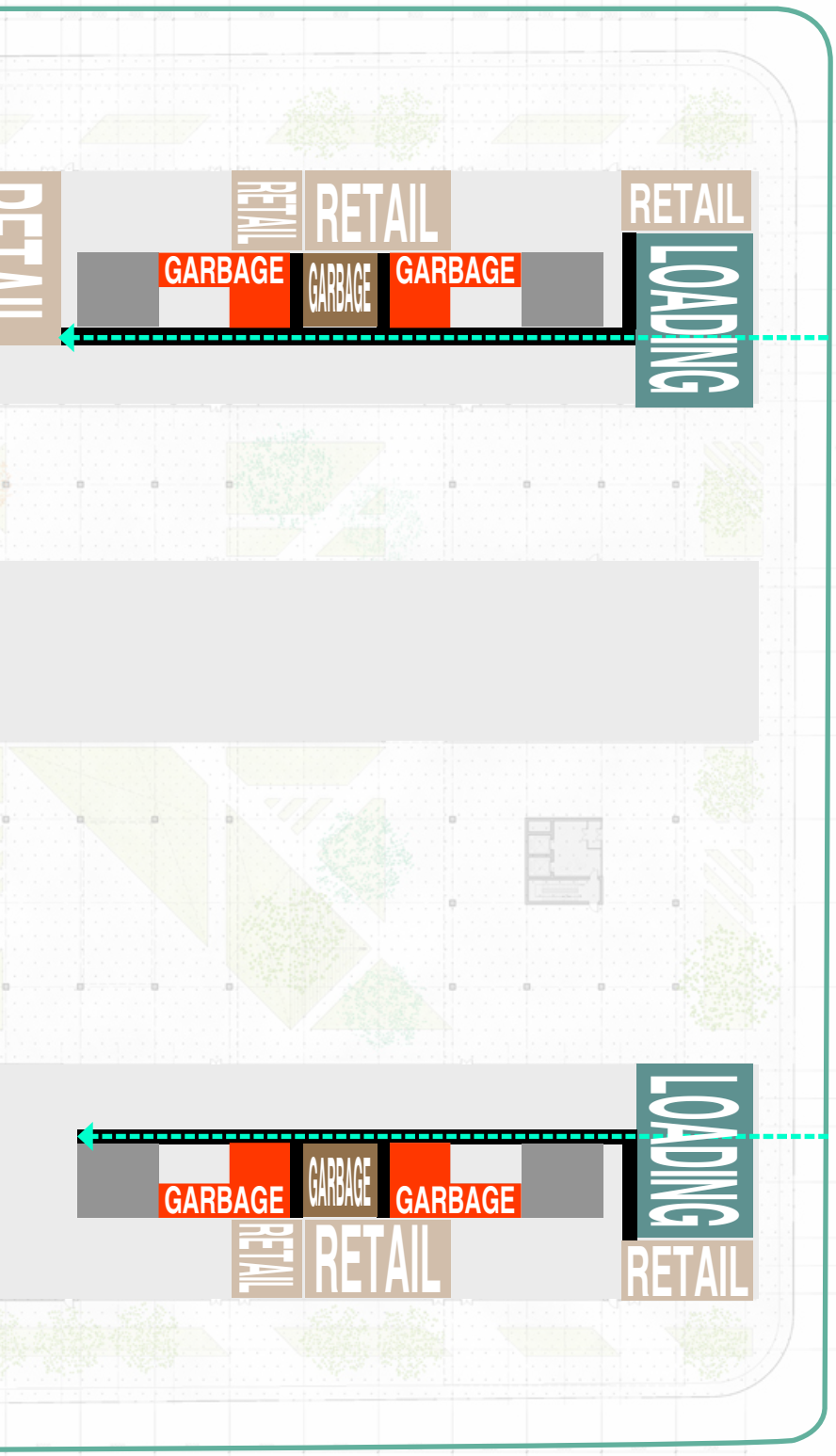


Legend

- Pedestrian
- Vehicle
- Loading



Fig 6.18 *Waste Collection and Circulation Flow Analysis*



Legend

- Type G Loading
- Service Corridor
- Garbage Room
- Retail Garbage
- Retail
- Core



Fig 6.19 *Sinking Courtyard*



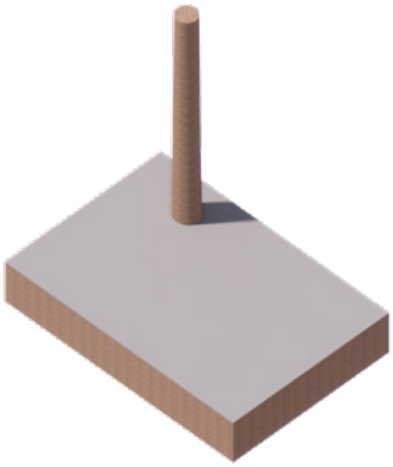
along the Pedestrian Street



Fig 6.20 *Tree Cour*



yard along the street



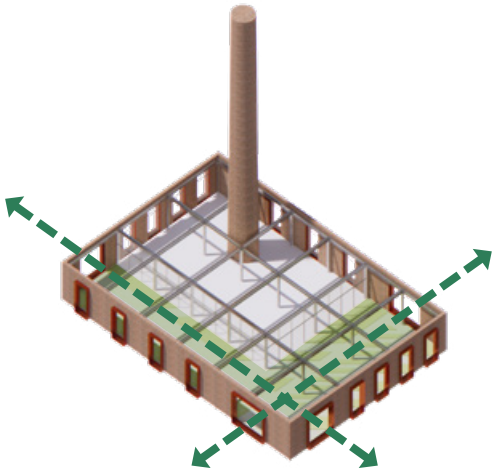
1 Industrial Origin

The original boiler room features a prominent chimney and red brick façade, serving as a recognizable industrial landmark.



2 Selective

The existing roof and interior s
brick façade and chimn



4 Opening & Connectivity

The previously enclosed façades are opened up, introducing two pedestrian pathways that extend the site's landscape axis.



5 Communit

The remaining interior space i
hub, with a circular bar organi

Fig 6.21 *Adaptive Reuse and Exte*



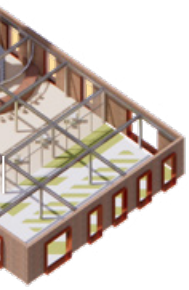
Demolition

structures are removed, while the
ey are carefully preserved.



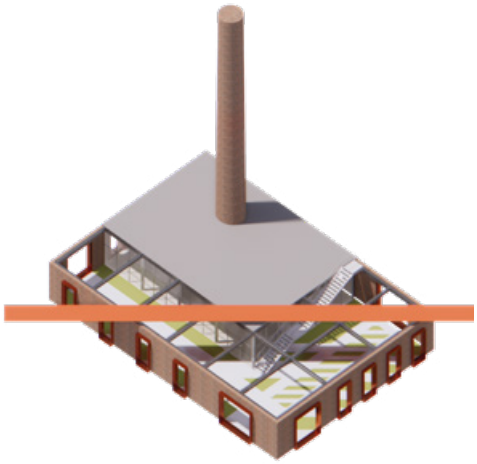
3 **Steel Reinforcement**

A new steel structure is inserted to stabilize and support the preserved masonry shell.



ty Activation

is transformed into a community
zed around the central chimney.



6 **New Roof & Elevated Circulation**

A new roof is constructed, incorporating stair access and a second-floor running track.



Fig 6.22 *Boiler Room Bar in a Rein*



nagined, Accessible Heritage Venue



Fig 6.23 *Civic*



c Center Atrium



Fig 6.24 *Li*



brary Atrium

The second floor plan forms a more pronounced cross-shaped layout in relation to the roof space of the first floor. This layout creates numerous spontaneous interaction spaces for daily use, such as semi-outdoor platforms, courtyards, landscape stairs, sky bridges, and boiler room roofs. Notably, a approximately 200-meter-long sky runway is integrated into this floor, echoing the historical 45-degree landscape texture while enhancing spatial interest.

As for the indoor space, there are four linear spaces from west to east: office and co-working space, civic center and community organization office space, library, and community service layer. The co-working space offers various types of spaces, including larger-scale Scale-up Offices, small, medium, and large co-working rental offices, and more flexible open-desk offices. This diversity enhances the success rate of space leasing and can help alleviate financial pressure by recovering construction costs through rental income.

The second linear space is the second floor of the Civic Center, serving as a community activity room. The southern section provides unified office space for various community-related organizations, offering meeting venues for potential community self-governance models. The third strip is the second floor of the library, primarily comprising a reading hall, audiovisual room, study rooms, and computer rooms. The easternmost strip provides essential public service facilities for the community, such as daycare, clinics, employment and legal counseling, senior and youth activity rooms, and learning centers. Compared to the first-floor space, the second-floor space is more community-oriented and has a relatively lower public nature.

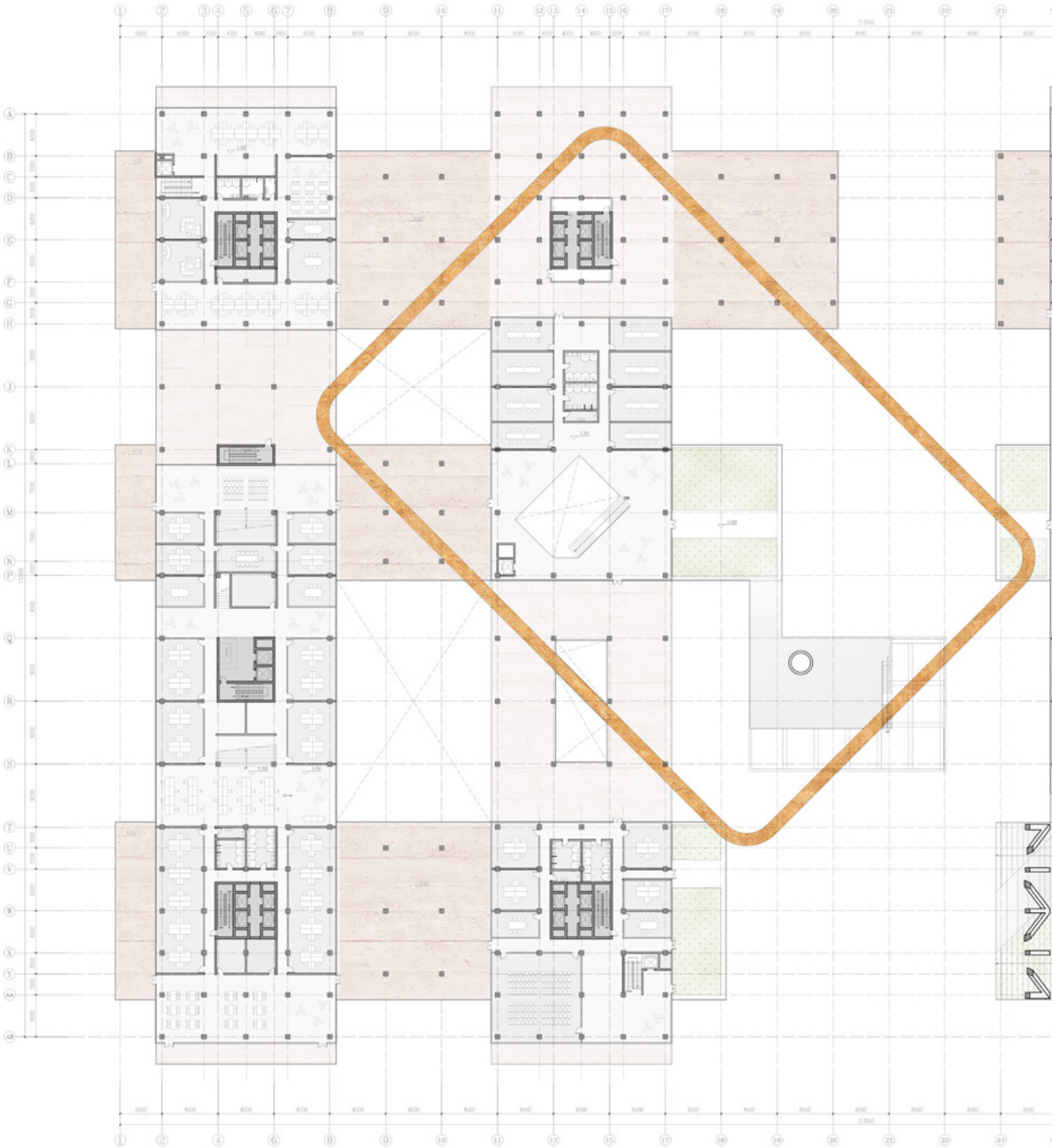


Fig 6.25 *Second Floor Plan*



Second Floor Plan

0 5 10 20 123 50

Legend

1 Scale-up Office
2 Event Space
3 Small Office
4 Meeting Room
5 Medium Office
6 Reception
7 Service Space
8 Co-working Space
9 Large Office
10 Relaxation Area
11 Game Room
12 Tree Courtyard
13 Community Advisory Board
14 Study Room
15 Reading Hall
16 Computer Room
17 Resource Center
18 Employment Assistance
19 Counselling Service
20 Youth Activity Room
21 Management
22 Senior Social Room
23 Foyer
24 Private Meeting Rooms
25 Daycare Center
26 Clinic
27 Health Education Room
28 Screening Room
Terraced Commons
Roof Garden



Fig 6.26 *Terraced Commons provides an informal setting fo*



r everyday interactions, interwoven with surrounding spaces.



Fig 6.27 *The open desk area in the co-wor*



king space adds flexibility to the workspace.

The third floor primarily consists of residential amenities and part of the second-floor roof. The residential amenities are largely symmetrical on the east and west sides, including a community kitchen, party room, study room, and screening room. This layout enhances accessibility, with each side serving residents on the east and west sides. For example, residents on the east side do not need to walk a long distance to the west tower. The elongated section on the north side houses the gym, which is a highlight of this floor. Its continuous horizontal lines also enhance the spatial recognizability on the facade. The gym features an indoor running track, complementing the semi-outdoor running track on the second floor. Additionally, it includes standard gym facilities such as a running zone, strength training area, yoga, Pilates, and spin bikes. All these public spaces are accompanied by outdoor platforms, offering more possibilities for space utilization.

The rooftop garden on this floor is exclusively for residents. It primarily consists of quiet walking and resting areas, all featuring low-lying plants. There is also an open-air movie area that corresponds with the screening room on the floor below.

The fourth floor features small- and medium-scale rooftop public spaces, including community gardens, a greenhouse, walking paths, and podium-level residences. The north-south orientation of the gardens ensures optimal sunlight, while the sloped glass façade of the centrally located greenhouse—aligned with the main pedestrian axis—creates a lightweight visual landmark and provides indoor activity space during winter.

Podium Plan

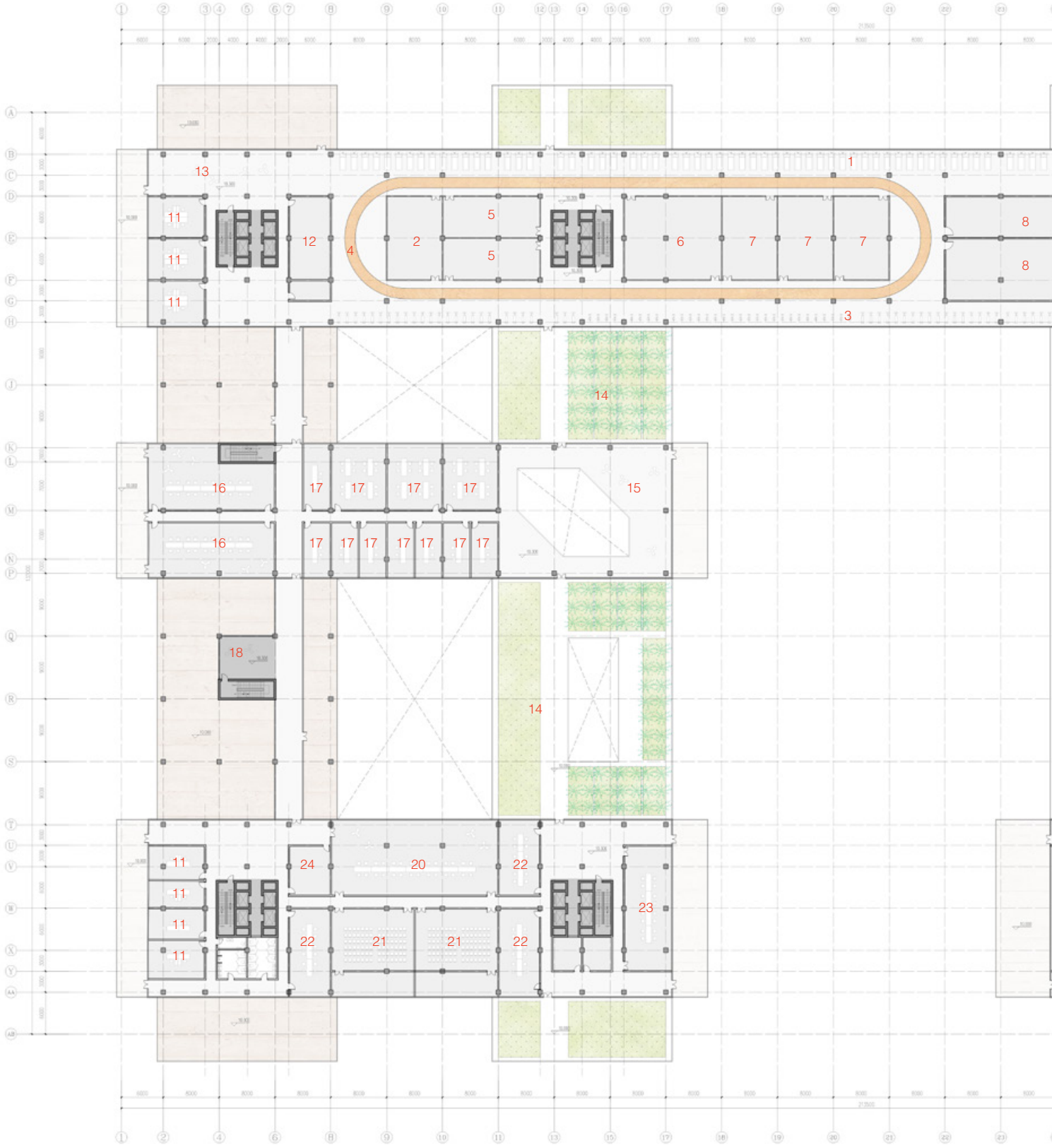
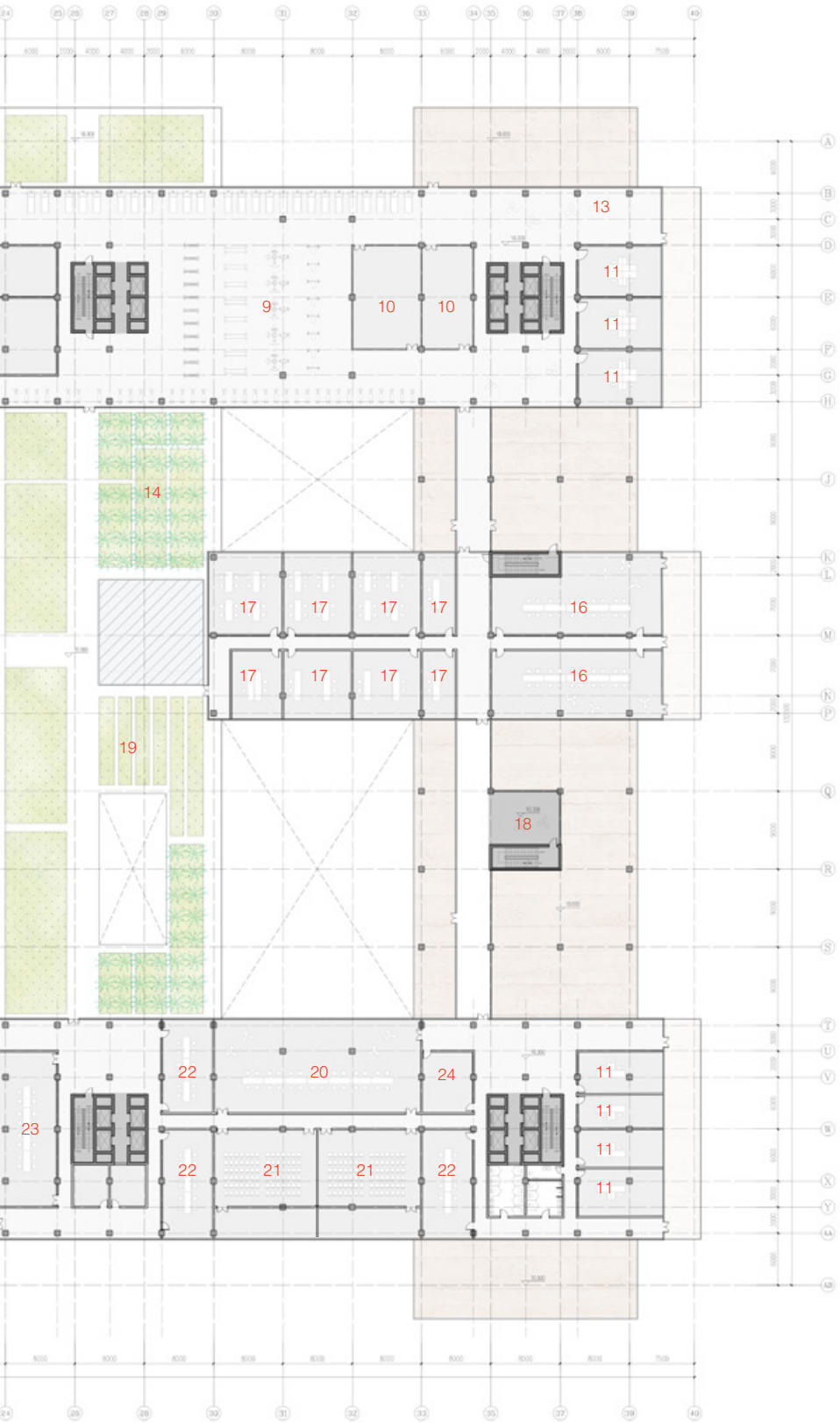


Fig 6.28 *Third Floor Plan*



Legend

1 Treadmill Zone
2 Zumba
3 Functional Training Zone
4 Running Track
5 Body Combat Room
6 Spinning Room
7 Yoga Room
8 Changing Room
9 Strength Training Area
10 Pilates Room
11 Office
12 Storage
13 Relaxation Area
14 Garden Walkway
15 Rest Lounge
16 Game Room
17 Study Room
18 Foyer
19 Rooftop Cinema
20 Party Room
21 Screening Room
22 Craft Studio
23 Community Kitchen
Terraced Commons
Roof Garden

Third Floor Plan

0 5 10 20 131 50

Gym



Fig 6.29



The Gym

Podium Plan

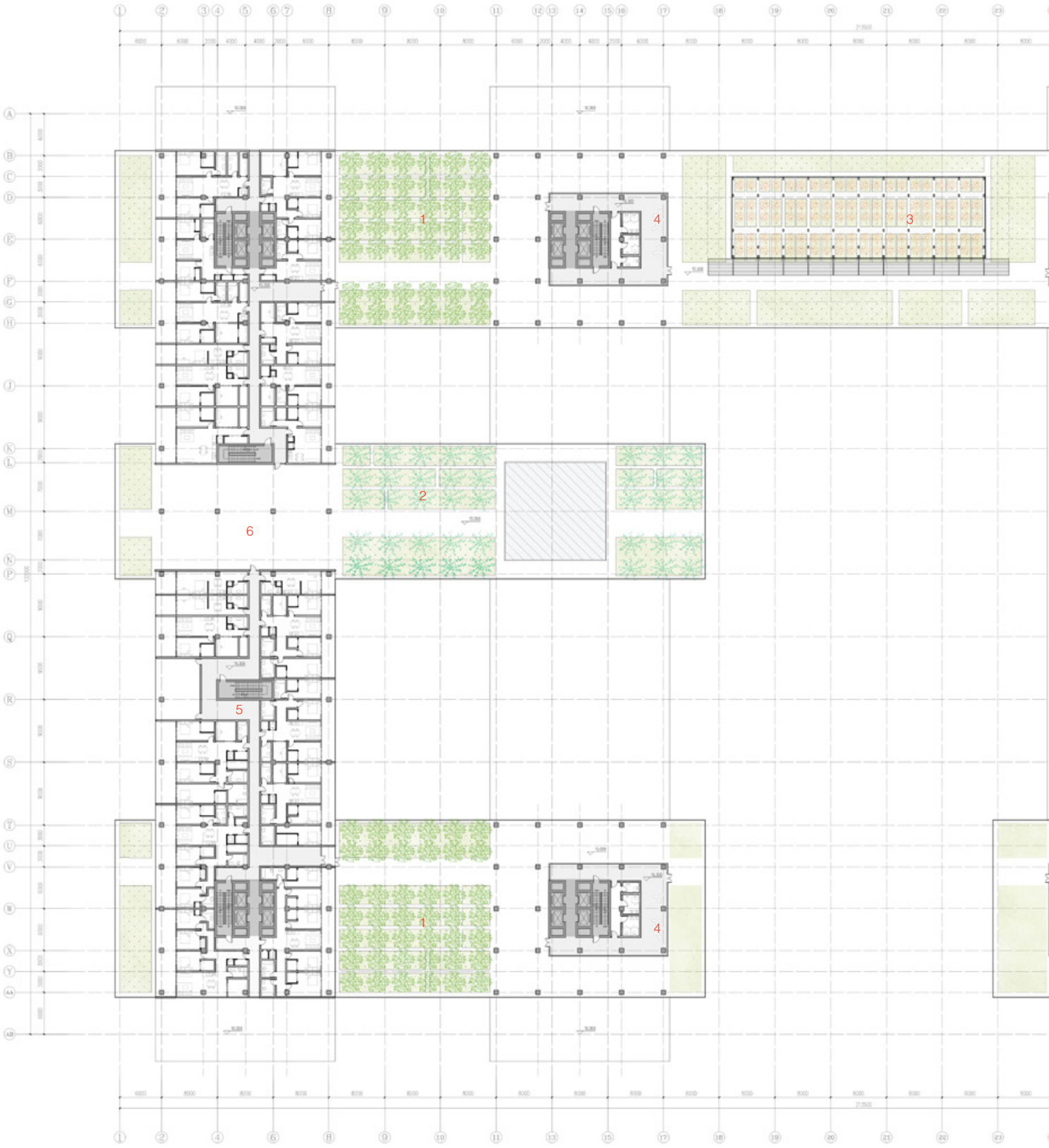


Fig 6.30 *Fourth Floor Plan*



Legend

1 Community Garden
2 Garden Walkway
3 Community Greenhouse
4 Rest Lounge
5 Podium Level Unlofted Units
6 Shared Terrace
Terraced Commons
Roof Garden

Fourth Floor Plan

0 5 10 20 135 50

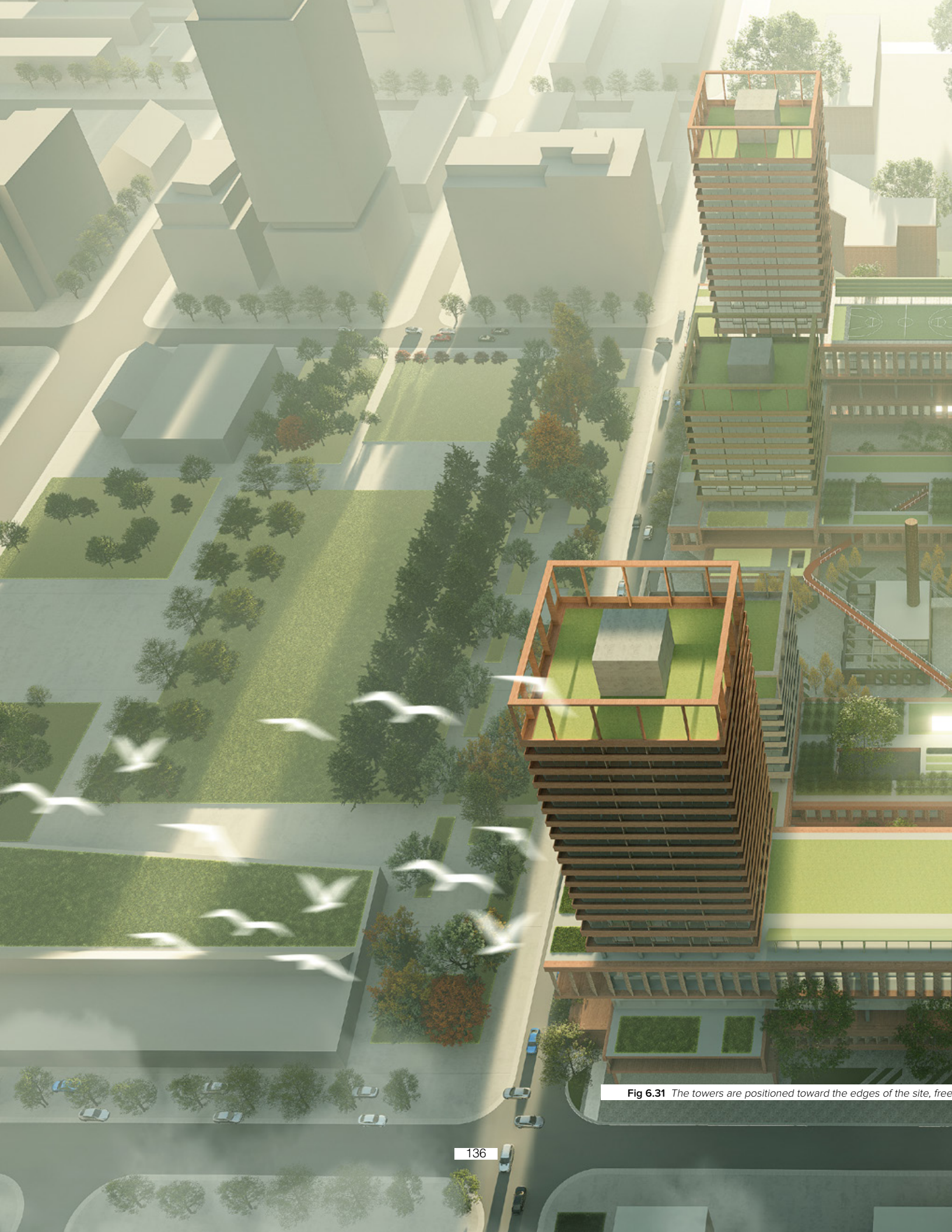
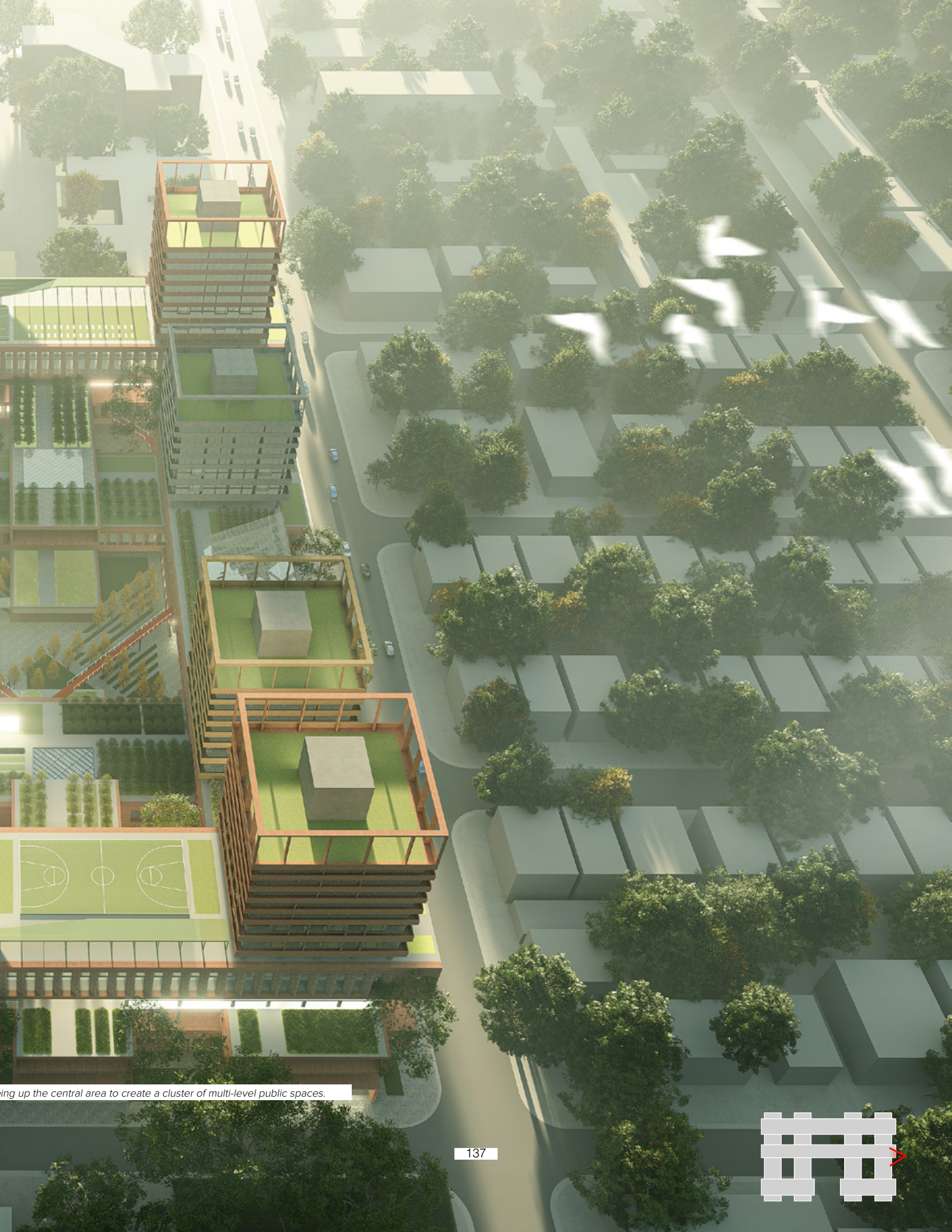


Fig 6.31 *The towers are positioned toward the edges of the site, free*



ing up the central area to create a cluster of multi-level public spaces.



Fig 6.32 *Greenhouse*



on the Third Floor Roof

4) Residential Space Design

The design of residential spaces requires balancing multiple seemingly conflicting demands. The layout must break down spatial isolation while maximizing spatial efficiency. It must offer a variety of unit types to meet the needs of a large number of residents, while maintaining sufficient modularity to simplify construction and reduce costs. To this end, the project employs five floor types—two lofted units to enhance vertical efficiency, and three unlofted units for standard layouts.

Each floor type combines market-rate and affordable housing configurations to promote spatial integration. Residential units are distributed across the podium and tower volumes, ensuring diversity in both type and space.

Unit configurations also vary by tenure type to accommodate different household needs. Market-rate units include studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom layouts, with a ratio of approximately 2:14:4:1, aligning with current market demand. Affordable housing units primarily feature larger unit sizes, ranging from one-bedroom to five-bedroom layouts, with a ratio of 4:7:10:1:1, referencing other TCHC buildings.

To improve spatial efficiency and promote broader housing equity, a portion of the standard floor types was converted into loft units. This strategy allows more residents to access affordable housing within the same building footprint. Under the original all-standard layout, the space could accommodate 508 market units and 443 affordable units. After the partial conversion to lofts, the same space now provides 550 market units—an increase of 42 units (approx. +8%)—and 542 affordable units—an increase of 99 units (approx. +22%). This adjustment not only maximizes spatial effiency but also achieves the originally proposed 1:1 ratio between market and affordable units, reinforcing the project's commitment to inclusive housing.

Within the same space,

Unit Distribution After Loft Conversion

Location	Unit	Market Units	Proportion	Affordable Units	Proportion
Tower	Studio	12	3%	0	0
	1B	283	72%	60	17%
	2B	86	22%	123	36%
	3B	12	3%	139	40%
	4B	0	0%	12	3%
	5B	0	0%	12	3%
	Total	393	100%	346	100%
Podium	Studio	30	23%	0	0
	1B	81	61%	32	18%
	2B	14	11%	60	33%
	3B	8	6%	77	43%
	4B			9	5%
	5B			3	2%
	Total	133	100%	181	100%
Total	Studio	42	8%	0	0
	1B	364	69%	92	17%
	2B	100	19%	183	35%
	3B	20	4%	216	41%
	4B	0		21	4%
	5B	0		15	3%
	Total	526		527	
		50.0%		**50.0%**	

Unit Distribution Before Loft Conversion

Location	Unit	Market Units	Proportion	Affordable Units	Proportion
Tower	Studio	0	0%	0	0
	1B	275	74%	48	17%
	2B	86	23%	103	36%
	3B	12	3%	115	40%
	4B	0	0%	12	4%
	5B	0	0%	12	4%
	Total	373	100%	290	100%
Podium	Studio	30	26%	0	0
	1B	68	58%	24	17%
	2B	12	10%	45	32%
	3B	7.5	6%	58.5	42%
	4B			9	6%
	5B			3	2%
	Total	117.5	100%	139.5	100%
Total	Studio	30	6%	0	0
	1B	343	70%	72	17%
	2B	98	20%	148	34%
	3B	19.5	4%	173.5	40%
	4B	0		21	5%
	5B	0		15	3%
	Total	490.5		429.5	
		53.3%		**46.7%**	

Within the same space, after the conversion,

35 additional market units were added representing a **7%** increase;

98 additional affordable units were added, representing a **23%** increase,

achieving a **1:1** ratio between market and affordable units.

Fig 6.33 *Improved Efficiency and 1:1 Balance via Loft Adaptation*

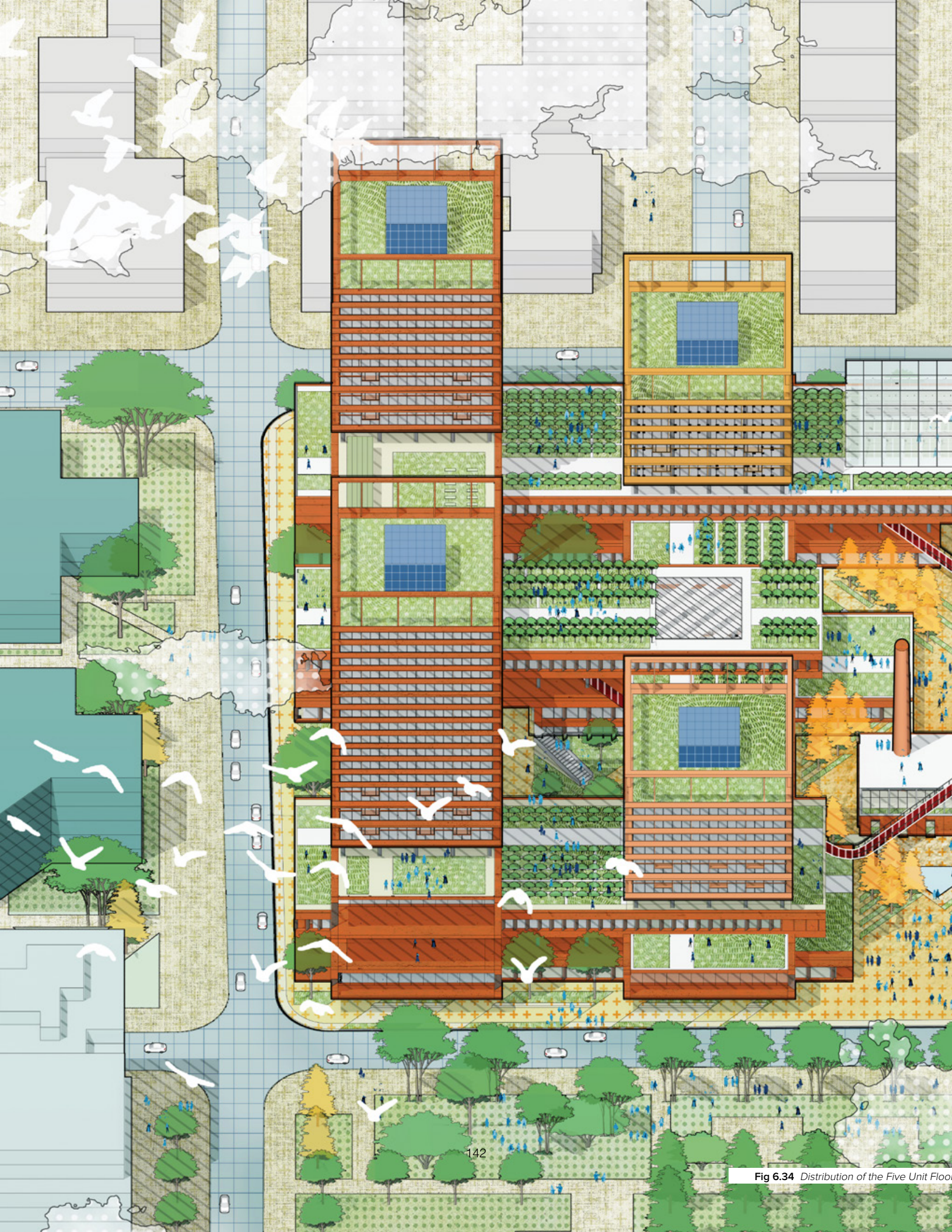
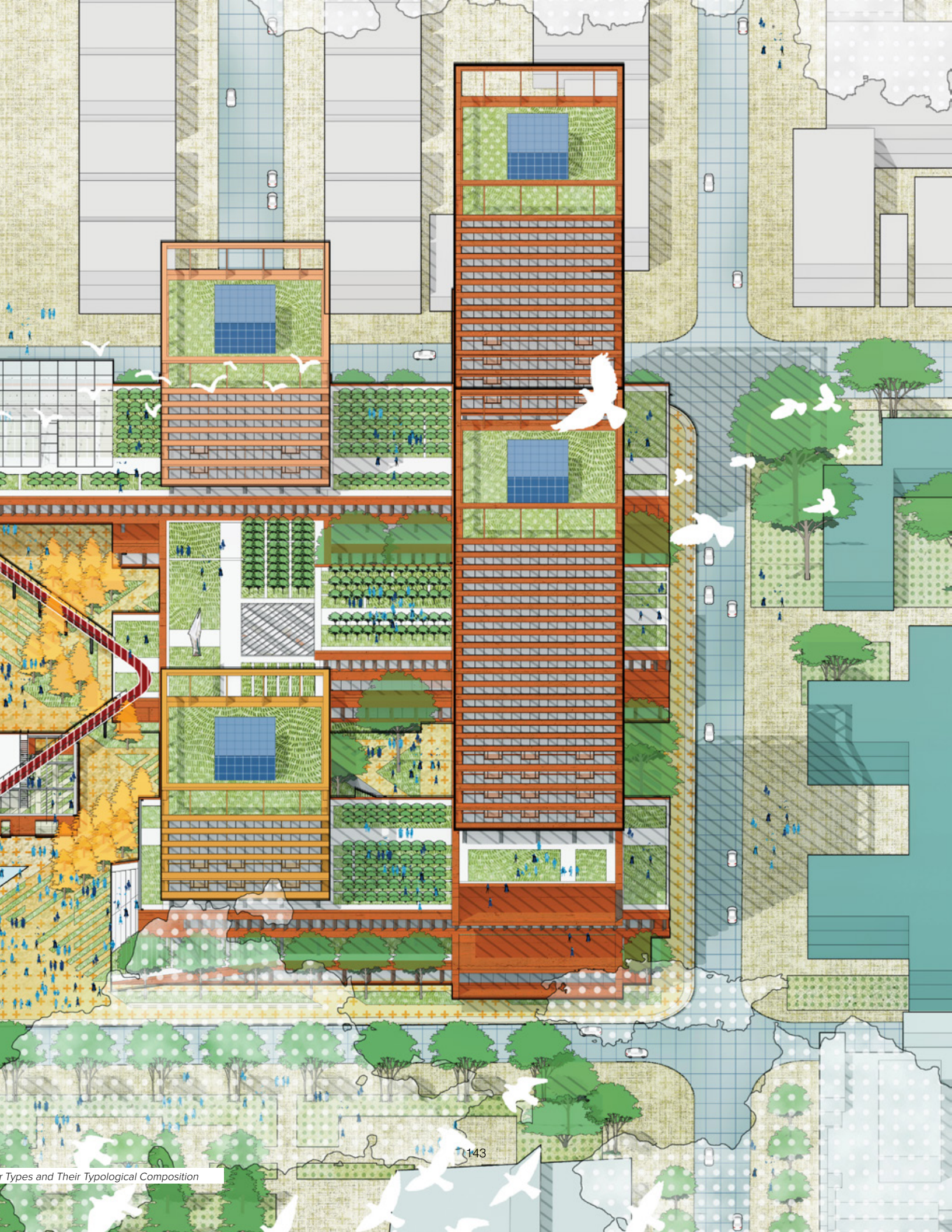


Fig 6.34 *Distribution of the Five Unit Floo*



Floor Type 1:

Located on the 5th floor of the West Podium and the 5th–6th floors of the East Podium, this unlofted floor type includes a semi-outdoor terrace and a shared activity room. Larger units are positioned at the corners to ensure higher spatial quality, with direct access to a four-level rooftop garden.



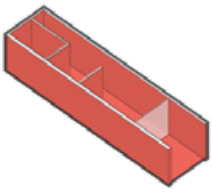


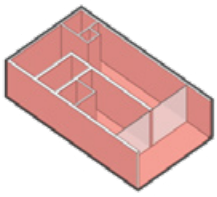
West Podium 5F / East Podium 5–6F

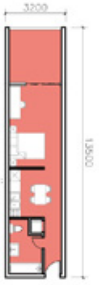
Fig 6.35 *Floor Type 1 Plan and Location*

0 5 10 20 50

Market Units









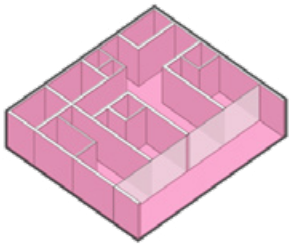
Unlofted Studio

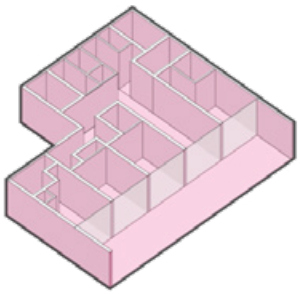
32m²

Unlofted 1B1B

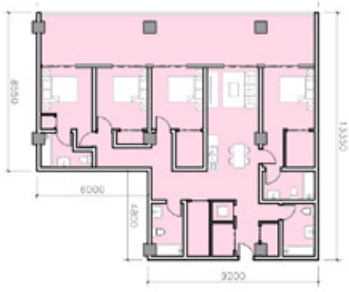
64m²

Affordable Units









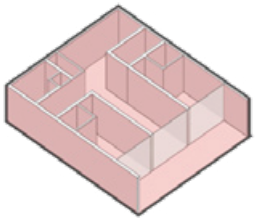
Unlofted 3B3B+1DEN

103m²

Unlofted 4B4B

125m²

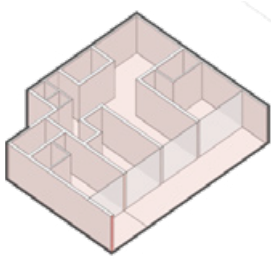
Fig 6.36 *Floor Type 1*





Unlofted 2B2B+1Den

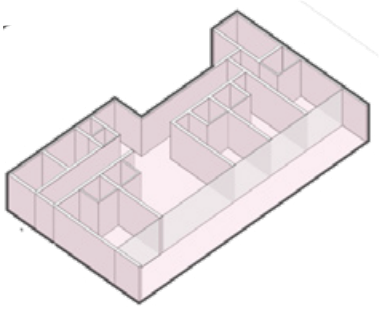
95m²

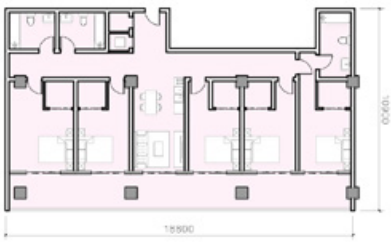




Unlofted 3B2B+1Den

101m²





Unlofted 5B4B

144m²

: Unit Type Distribution



West Podium 5F / East Podium 5–6F

0 5 10 20 50

Floor Type 2:

Located on the 6th–7th floors of the West Podium and the 7th–8th floors of the East Podium, this floor type consists entirely of loft units and includes a shared activity room. Due to the spatial constraints of the loft typology, only one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom units are offered. The two-bedroom units feature alternating L-shaped and inverted L-shaped vertical layouts that intersect with one another, enhancing typological diversity. All units have a floor-to-floor height of 4.7 meters.

The interior organization is standardized: the lower level has a clear height of 2.3 meters and includes the entrance foyer, powder room, and kitchen; the double-height zone accommodates the living room, with additional rooms in two- and three-bedroom layouts. The upper level has a 2.1-meter ceiling height and contains the bedrooms and bathroom. Generous built-in storage is integrated into the design to meet everyday living needs. Each unit features a 2-meter-wide wraparound balcony, providing continuous exterior access and outdoor living space.

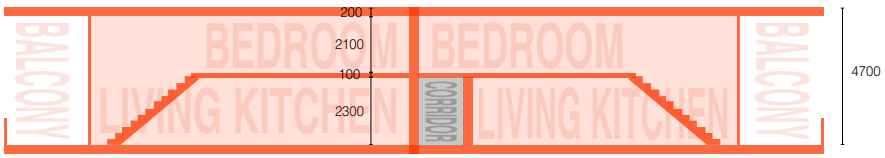


Fig 6.37 *Typical Floor Section*

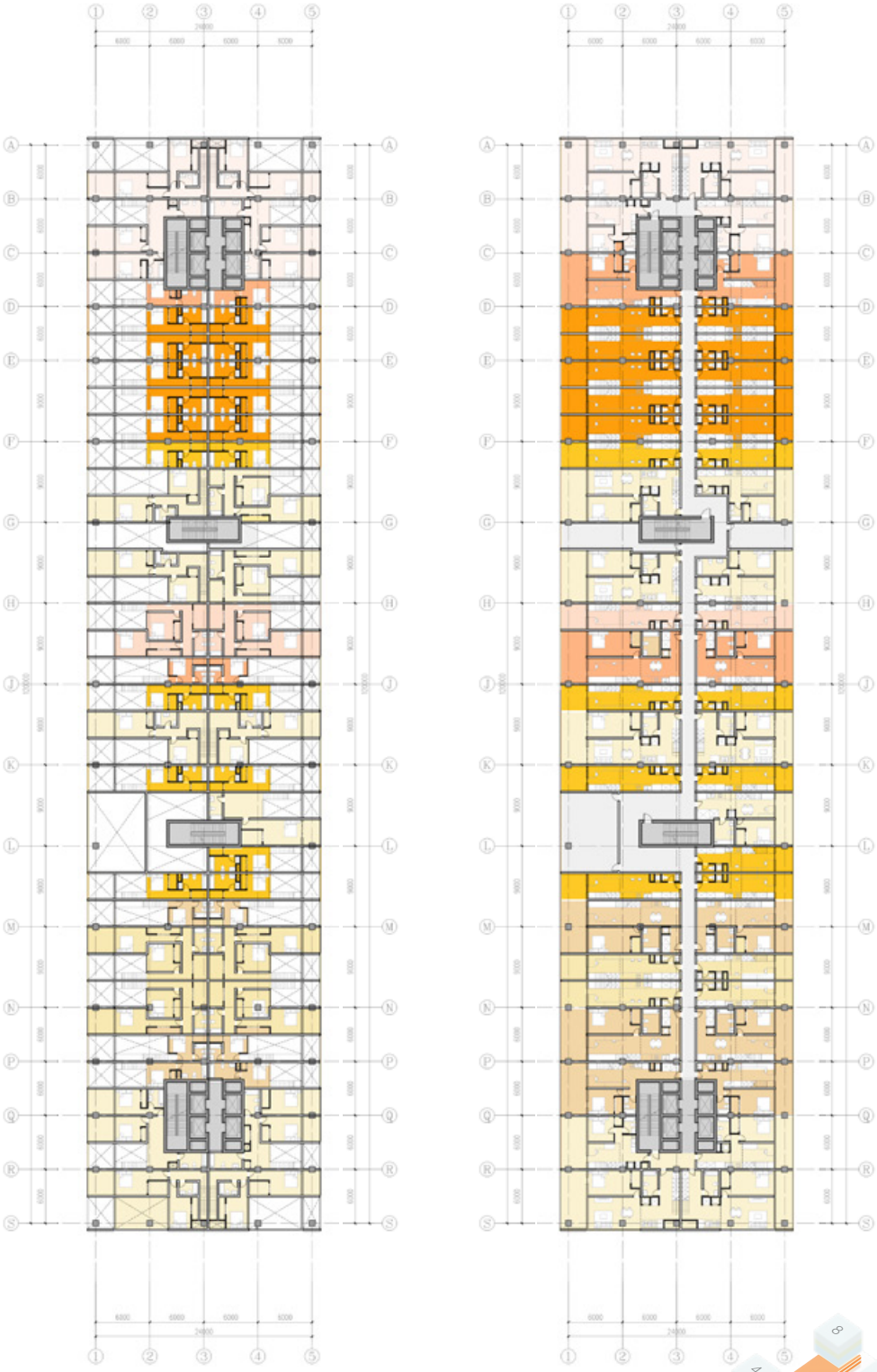
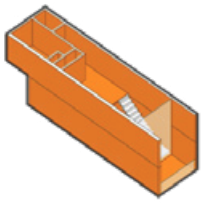


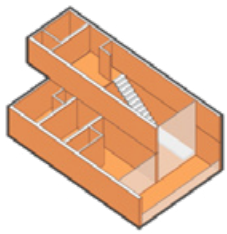
Fig 6.38 *Floor Type 2 Plan and Location*

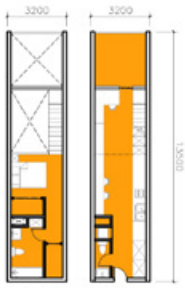
0 5 10 20 50

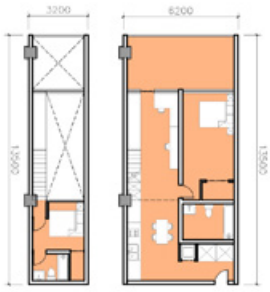
West Podium 6-7F / East Podium 7-8F

Market Units









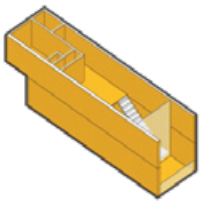
Lofetd 1B1B

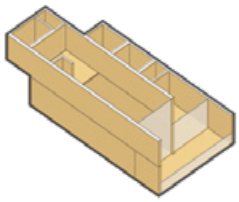
52m²

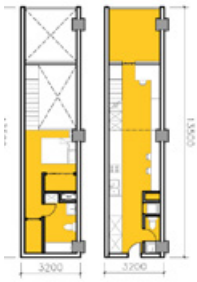
Lofted 2B1.5B

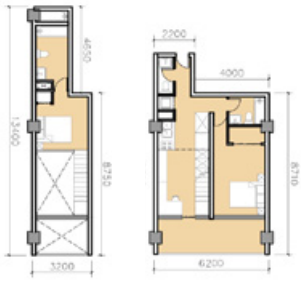
76m²

Affordable Units









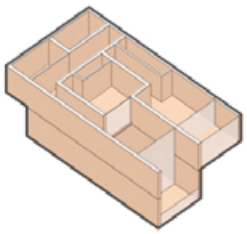
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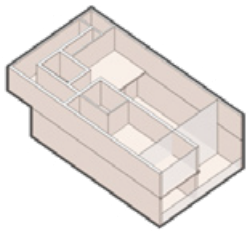
52m²

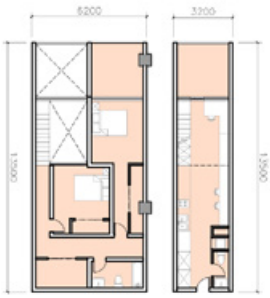
Lofted 2B1.5B

70m²

Fig 6.39 *Floor Type 2*







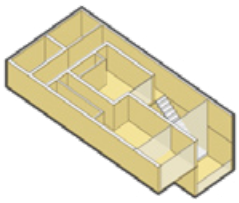


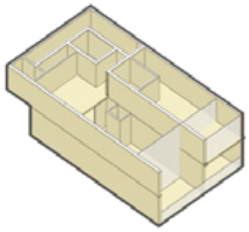
Lofted 2B1.5B

83m²

Lofted 3B2B

107m²







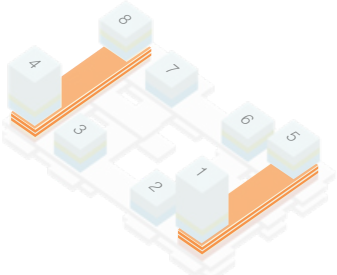


Lofted 2B1.5B

78.5m²

Lofted 3B2B

107m²



West Podium 6-7F / East Podium 7-8F

: Unit Type Distribution

0 5 10 20 50

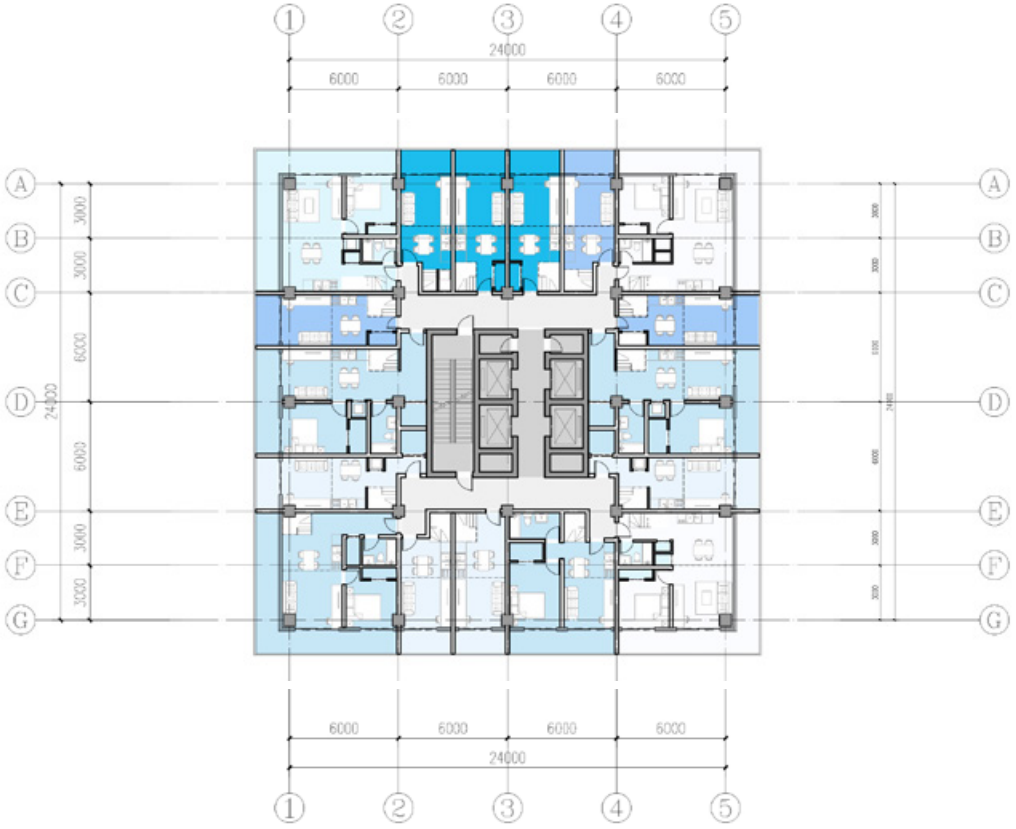
Floor Type 3:

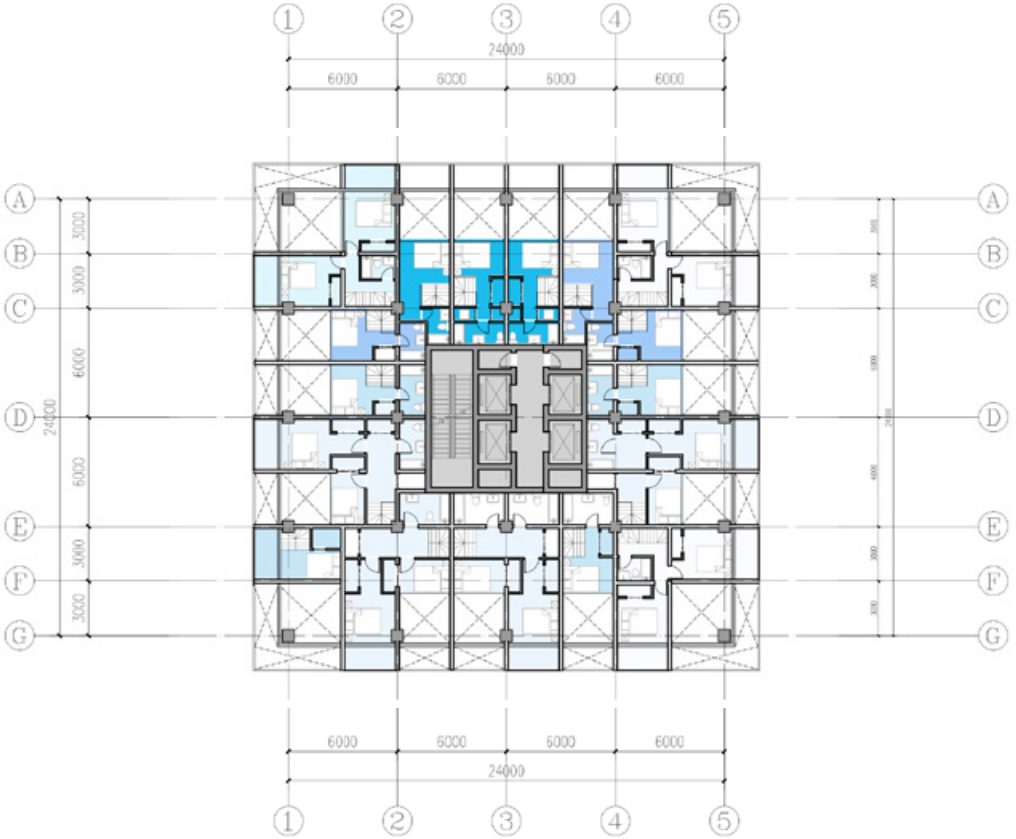
The eight residential towers incorporate the remaining three floor types, with loft units located on the lower levels and flat units placed on higher floors. Floor type 3 occupies Towers 1 (9–11F), Towers 2, 3, 6, and 7 (5–6F), Tower 4 (8–10F), Tower 5 (9–10F), and Tower 8 (8–9F). This floor type primarily consists of affordable units, with a smaller proportion of market-rate units. The loft units follow the same sectional configuration and ceiling heights as those in floor type 2. All tower units include a continuous wraparound balcony to maintain visual consistency across the façades.

Floor Type 4:

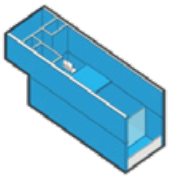
This floor type consists of standard unlofted units and is located in Tower 1 (12–15F), Towers 3 & 6 (7–8F), Tower 4 (11–14F), Tower 5 (11–12F), and Tower 8 (10–11F). It includes a higher proportion of large units, featuring rare three-bedroom, four-bedroom, and five-bedroom layouts. The majority of units are affordable, with a smaller number designated as market-rate units.

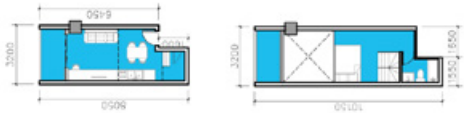
Floor Type 3


1
2
3
4
5
24000
6000
6000
6000
6000
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
3000
3000
6000
6000
3000
3000
24000


1
2
3
4
5
24000
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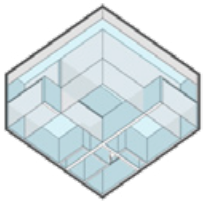
Market Units





Lofted 1B1B

34m²

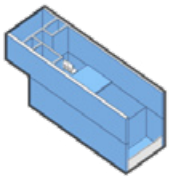


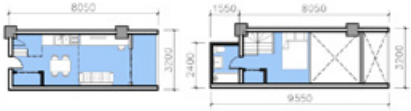


Lofted 3B2B

84m²

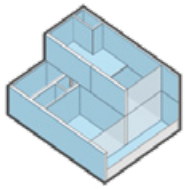
Affordable Units





Lofted 1B1B

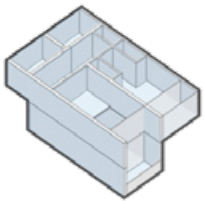
34m²

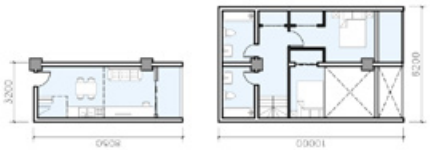




Lofted 2B1B

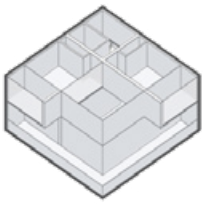
57m²





Lofted 2B1B

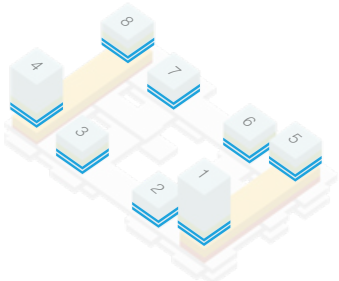
69m²





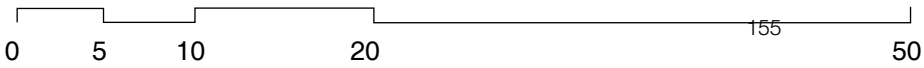
Lofted 3B2B

84m²

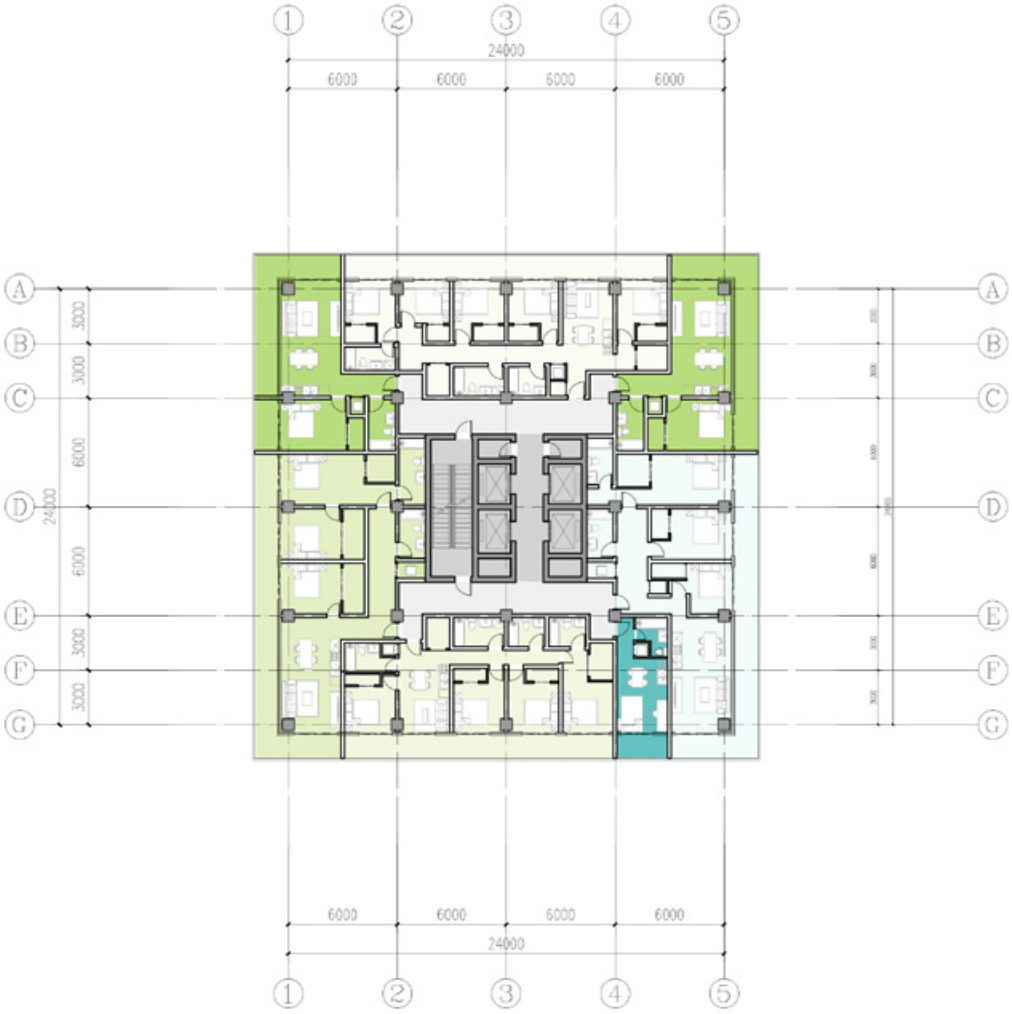


Towers 1 (9–10F), Towers 2, 3, 6, 7 (5–6F),
Towers 4 (8–9F), Tower 5 (9-10F) , Tower 8 (8-9F)

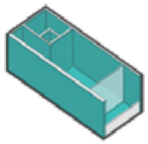
Fig 6.40 *Floor Type 3: Plan , Location and Units Distribution*



Floor Type 4


1
2
3
4
5
24000
6000
6000
6000
6000
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
3000
3000
6000
6000
3000
3000
24000

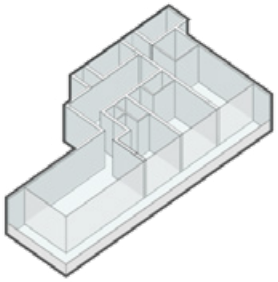
Market Units





Unlofted Studio

22m²

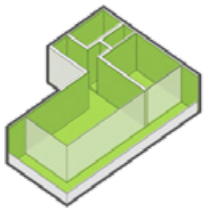




Unloftetd 3B2B

97m²

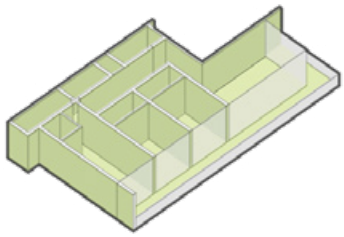
Affordable Units

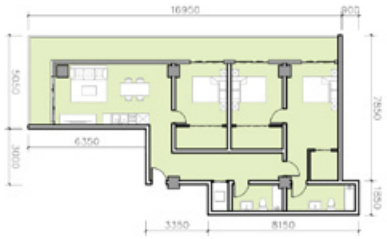




Unlofted 1B1B

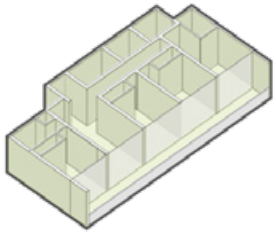
50m²

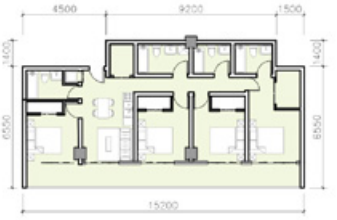




Unlofted 3B2B

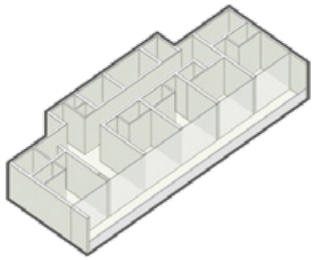
97m²

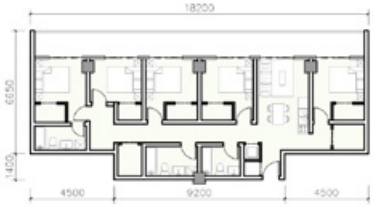




Unlofted 4B4B

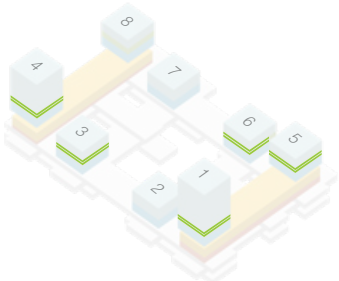
104m²





Unlofted 5B3B

120m²



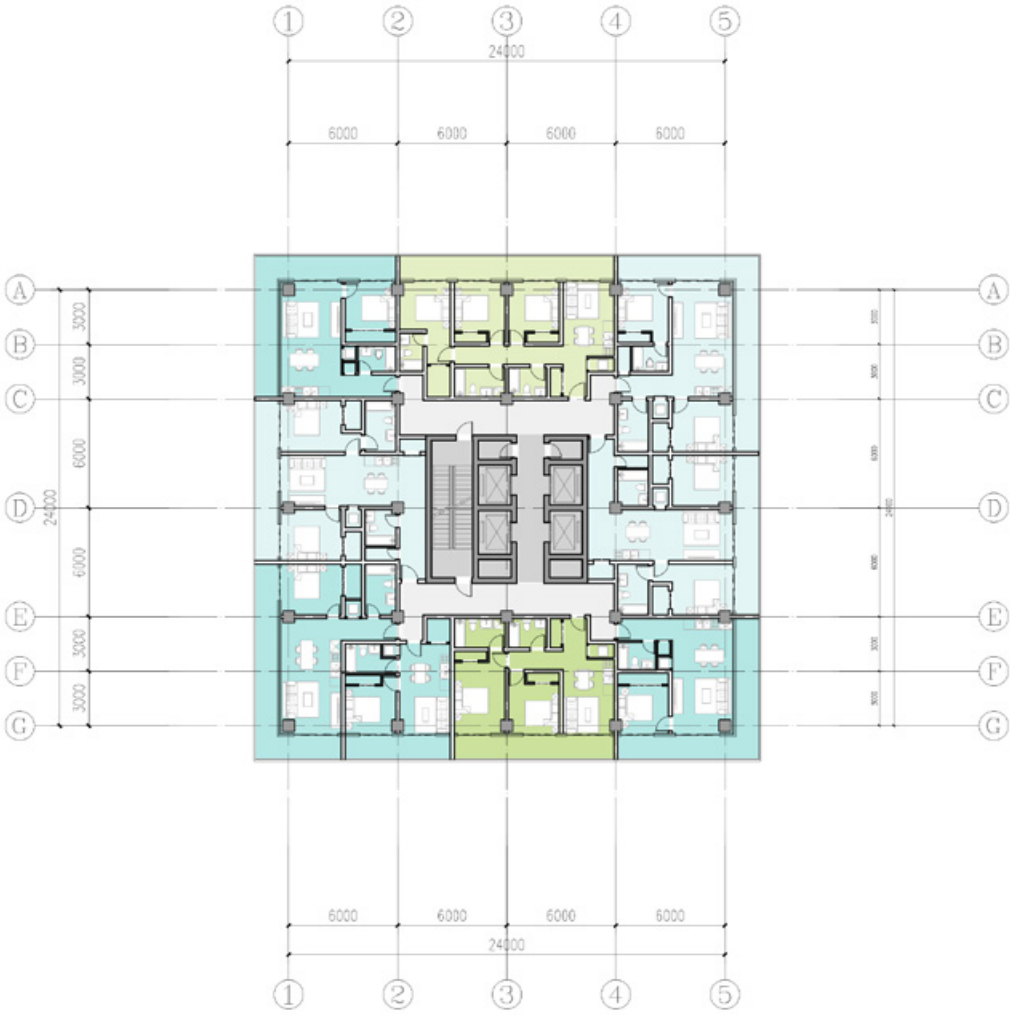
Tower 1 (11–12F), Tower 3 & 6 (7–8F),
Tower 4 (10–11F), Tower 5 (11–12F), Tower 8 (10–11F)

Fig 6.41 *Floor Type 4: Plan , Location and Units Distribution*

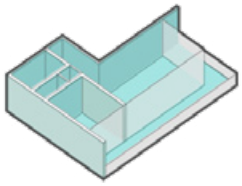
0 5 10 20 50

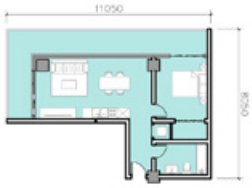
Floor Type 5:

Like floor type 4, this floor type consists of standard unlofted units. It is located in Tower 1 (16–27F), Towers 2 & 7 (7–10F), Towers 3 & 6 (9–12F), Tower 4 (15–22F), Tower 5 (13–18F), and Tower 8 (12–16F). Unlike floor type 4, it primarily features smaller unit types, ranging from one-bedroom to three-bedroom layouts. The majority of units in this floor type are market-rate.



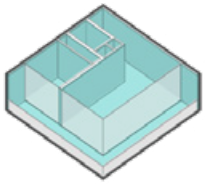
Market Units

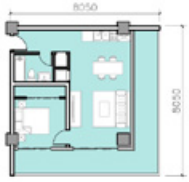




Unlofted 1B1B

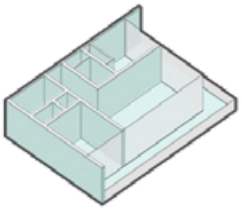
50m²





Unlofted 1B1B

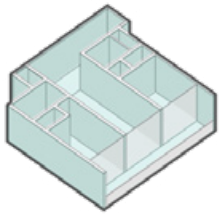
45m²





Unloted 2B2B

65m²

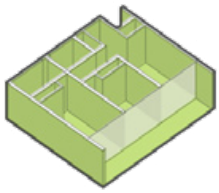




Unlofted 2B2B

75m²

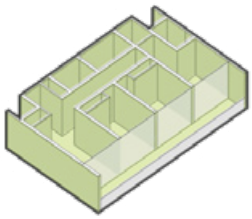
Affordable Units

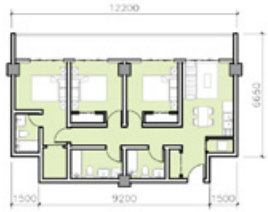




Unlofted 2B2B

60m²





Unlofted 3B2B

78m²

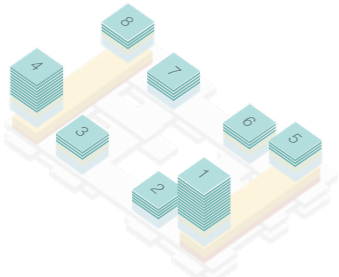


Fig 6.42 *Floor Type 5: Plan , Location and Units Distribution*

0 5 10 20 50

Tower 1 (13–25F), Towers 2 & 7 (7–10F), Towers 3 & 6 (9–12F), Tower 4 (12–21F), Tower 5 (13–15F), Tower 8 (12–14F)



Fig 6.43 *Rendering1 o*



f Lofted Affordable Unit



Fig 6.44 *Rendering2 o*



f Lofted Affordable Unit



Fig 6.45 *Facade d*



of Residential Tower

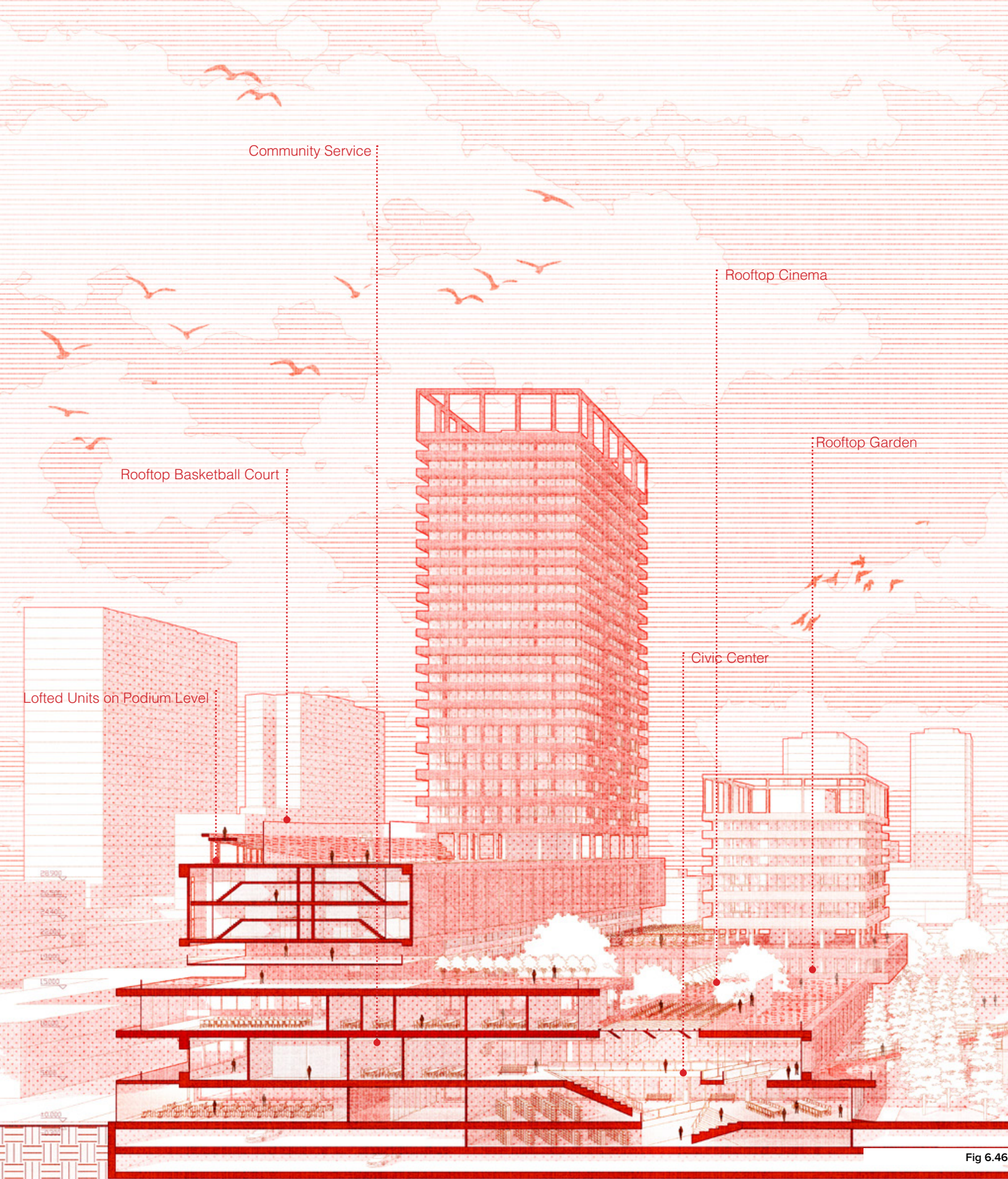

Community Service
Rooftop Cinema
Rooftop Garden
Rooftop Basketball Court
Civic Center
Lofted Units on Podium Level

Fig 6.46



Section

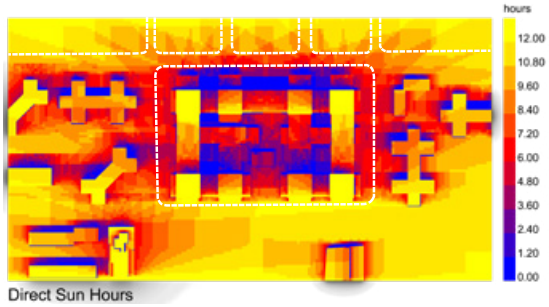
Section

0 5 10 20 167 50

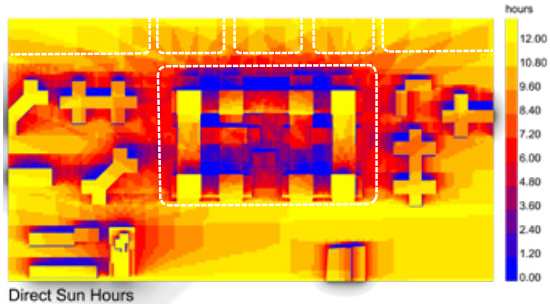
Direct Sunlight Analysis:

The southern side faces a park, which does not heavily rely on direct sunlight, while the low-rise residential area to the north is largely unaffected except around the winter solstice. As shown in the diagram, even on the winter solstice, areas receiving less than one hour of direct sunlight are mostly located at the site's periphery rather than its center, with only Gerrard St E experiencing a more significant shadow impact.

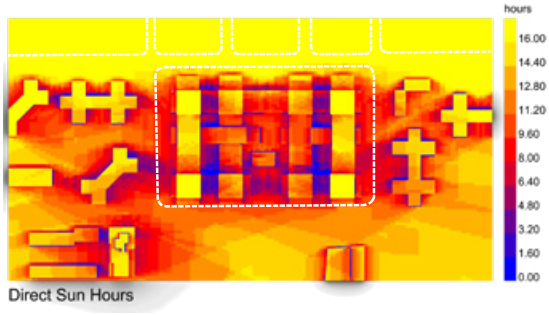
As for the design itself, only the ground-level courtyard may face some sunlight deficiency. In contrast, all rooftop spaces receive more than four hours of direct sunlight, with community gardens and greenhouses in particular receiving over five hours of direct sunlight even on the winter solstice.



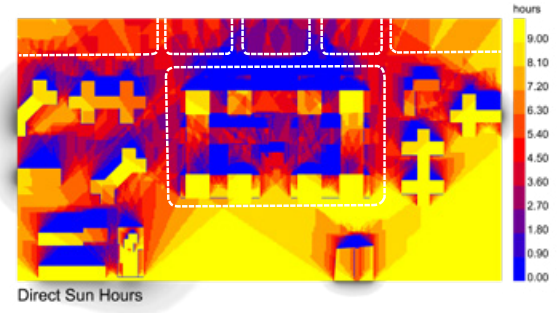
Mar 20



Sep 22



Jun 21



Dec 21

Fig 6.47 *Direct Sunlight Hours Analysis*

5.5 Summary

This design offers a direct spatial response to three interrelated challenges in Canada's current housing landscape: the shortage of supply driven by rapid population growth, the erosion of affordability due to rising real estate prices, and the increasing inequity resulting from the privatization of land. Rather than treating these as isolated issues, the proposal addresses them as intertwined conditions, calling for a systemic yet spatially grounded approach.

Working within the public-private partnership (PPP) framework, the project explores how the model might be internally optimized—reorienting its priorities through design. By introducing bottom-up strategies such as modular flexibility, tenure integration, and layered collective spaces, the proposal embeds long-term adaptability and inclusivity into a top-down delivery system. In doing so, it departs from the dominant logic of neoliberal urbanism, not through explicit opposition, but through quiet resistance: shifting focus from commodified efficiency to lived equity, from static plans to spaces that evolve.

While grounded in existing regulatory frameworks such as zoning bylaws and aiming for practical feasibility, the project positions itself as a design-based intervention within the current system—offering not a utopian escape, but a realistic and adaptable solution to housing challenges. This is not simply a housing scheme—it is a speculative reimagining of how residential space can perform socially, economically, and politically within and against the systems that produce it.

06 | Conclusion

This thesis concludes with a critical reflection on the redevelopment of Regent Park, positioning it within the evolving history of urban housing delivery and public-private collaboration in Toronto.

1. Historical Positioning

Regent Park represents a key shift in Toronto's housing policy—from state-led welfare provision to market-mediated redevelopment. It reflects the broader neoliberal turn in North American cities, where public responsibilities are restructured through private capital and partnership. In doing so, it marks a transitional moment in the history of housing—from centralized public housing estates to mixed-income, design-oriented urban enclaves.

2. Recognized Achievements

The project's core achievement lies in its ability to balance efficiency and equity. Within a relatively short period, it delivered large-scale housing construction and public realm improvement, while maintaining a basic level of social fairness. Compared to purely developer-led models—which often disregard affordability—and state-led initiatives—which struggle with cost, time, and quality—the PPP model offers a pragmatic compromise. Alternative models such as co-ops or CLTs, while more equitable in intent, remain difficult to scale, especially in housing markets under severe supply pressure like Toronto.

3. Controversies and Criticisms

Despite its positive outcomes, Regent Park has received ongoing criticism. Concerns include gentrification, a declining share of affordable housing, the loss of historical and spatial character, and the increasing influence of private developers over time. At a deeper level, the PPP model reflects the government's gradual withdrawal from the direct provision of public services, placing excessive reliance on market-based solutions to address structural inequalities. This dependence on private investment, in the absence of strong public oversight, limits the model's ability to effectively tackle the very challenges it is intended to resolve. Only through such measures can

4. Constructive Suggestions

Future PPP-based housing developments must move beyond traditional two-party arrangements between governments and private developers. A tripartite model—incorporating community-led organizations such as housing cooperatives or community land trusts (CLTs)—can help introduce a more balanced structure and promote long-term accountability. These actors should be granted formal authority, enabling a more inclusive and transparent negotiation of the public interest. To maintain long-term goals, binding mechanisms such as mandated affordability targets and protections for tenants are essential.

At the spatial level, comprehensive design guidelines are equally important. These should preserve local identity, safeguard historical assets, and actively promote social integration across income groups. Only through such measures can mixed-income neighborhoods avoid becoming physically fragmented or symbolically exclusive. A truly inclusive urban environment must be designed not only for shared occupancy, but also for fostering a sense of collective belonging.

Final Remarks

This thesis is not merely a site-specific design proposal, but a speculative framework for rethinking the possibilities of PPP housing models. It proposes a spatial prototype that reconciles development efficiency with long-term social equity. At the same time, it offers a quiet critique—against the normalization of the state's withdrawal from public responsibility, and against a neoliberal planning logic that reduces housing to an asset class. Through this, it argues for a more inclusive, memory-conscious, and socially embedded approach to urban redevelopment—one that reclaims space for collective life in the city.

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