Participatory Design in the 21st Century: Stories from Regent Park

By

Ila D'Cruz

School of Architecture

McGill University, Montreal

October 2015

A research project submitted to Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at McGill University

In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

M.Arch (Post-Professional) in Urban Design and Housing

McGill University, Montreal

October 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

The on-going revitalization of Toronto's Regent Park social housing into "a stable, mixed-use, mixed-income neighbourhood" through a participatory design process has received mixed responses. Why did the city of Toronto select participatory design over a conventional design process for the redevelopment? What were the parameters and limitations of the formalized process of participatory design in this case that have contributed to its mixed reception? What was the role of the architect in this process of participatory design?

Participatory design is especially pertinent for social housing where the building users are vulnerable due to factors such as low-income, disabilities or advanced age. Tenants in social housing tend to be multi-ethnic and of varied population groups with needs non-compliant with normative design standards that architects use, and would benefit from participatory design that identifies their needs and local expertise.

Regent Park was originally built in 1948 as social housing by the city of Toronto and has been undergoing revitalization since 2005, following fifteen years of conversations between the residents and the city housing authority. The project has been touted for its mixed use and mixed income design as well as for the inclusion of the residents in the design process. But, it has been criticized for the displacement of some of the original residents, and since occupying newly constructed units, some of the re-housed tenants have petitioned that the design does not meet their requirements.

The data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews with key informants in the participatory design process including architects and community engagement consultants, community members and building users in the Regent Park case. Analyses of interview recordings reveal real world challenges that architects face while guiding participatory design for social housing together with an ambivalent administration and a cynical public; and in reconciling their knowledge of design with a user oriented process. The research report seeks to identify strategies for engaging the community in the revitalization process towards community building, learning and empowerment.

Regent Park has been publicized as a pilot project, and the city plans to implement several other revitalization schemes using the same model of participatory design. A critical examination of the model at this stage could help architects to better negotiate challenges that arise in future revitalization projects for social housing.

Résumé

La revitalisation actuelle du logement social de Regent Park au Toronto en le transformant à « quartier stable pour des groupes à revenu mixte et d'usages mixtes » à travers du design participatif a reçu des réactions mitigées. La question qui se pose est pourquoi la ville de Toronto a choisi le design participatif plutôt qu'un processus de conception classique pour le réaménagement ? Quels étaient les paramètres et les limites du processus formalisé du design participatif dans ce cas qui ont mené vers cette réception mixte ? Quel était le rôle de l'architecte dans ce processus du design participatif ?

Le design participatif est particulièrement pertinente pour le logement social où les utilisateurs des bâtiments sont vulnérables a cause des facteurs comme un revenu faible, des handicapes ou la vieillesse. Les locataires des logements sociaux sont plus souvent d'origine multi- ethnique et des partis de la population ayant des besoins variés, non-conformés aux normes des conceptions normatives utilisées par des architectes ; ils pourraient bénéficier d'une conception participative qui identifie leurs besoins particuliers et aussi, de l'expertise locale.

Regent Park a été conçu et construit à l'origine en 1948 comme un logement social par la ville de Toronto et après quinze ans de la conversation entre les résidents et l'autorité de logement de la ville, connaît actuellement un processus de revitalisation depuis 2005. Le projet a été vanté pour son usage mixte et sa conception de revenu mixte ainsi que pour l'inclusion des résidents dans le processus du design. Pourtant, il a été critiqué pour ayant déplacés certains anciens habitants, et après avoir occupé les logements constitués à nouveau, certains habitants relogées ont porté plainte que la conception ne répond pas à leurs exigences.

La collection des données comprenait des entrevues semi-structurées avec des personnalités clés dans le processus du design participatif, y compris les architectes et les consultants d'engagement communautaire, des membres de la communauté et des utilisateurs des bâtiments dans le cas de Regent Park. L'analyse de ces enregistrements révèlent les défis

concrets du monde réel conteste qui se posent aux architectes, tout en gérant le design participatif pour le logement social, surtout avec une administration ambivalente et un public cynique ; et à concilier leurs connaissances du design axé sur l'utilisateur. Le rapport de recherche vise à identifier des stratégies pour engager la communauté dans le processus de revitalisation en vue du renforcement de la communauté, de l'apprentissage et de l'autonomisation.

Regent Park a été médiatisé comme un projet pilote, et la ville prévoit de mettre en œuvre plusieurs autres régimes de revitalisation utilisant le même modèle du design participatif. Un examen critique du modèle à ce stade pourrait aider les architectes à venir à mieux relever les défis qui peuvent se poser dans les projets futurs de revitalisation pour le logement social.

Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude toward my graduate supervisor and mentor, Dr. Ipek Türeli for her patient guidance and enthusiastic support, that extended well beyond this project report. I would especially like to thank her for stimulating critiques that have challenged me not only to improve my research and writing skills, but also to reevaluate our roles and responsibilities as architects.

Special thanks to Dr. Annmarie Adams and Dr. Nik Luka for introducing us to different academic traditions in architectural research, and Dr. Lisa Bornstein for helping us imagine architecture and planning in a broader global context. My grateful thanks to the staff and faculty at the McGill School of Architecture for this opportunity to pursue post-professional research and not least to our graduate secretary, Ms. Marcia King for her patience and kindness in helping us navigate this program.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the architects, community workers and residents of Regent Park who participated in this study, for generously sharing their time, experiences and valuable suggestions for the participatory design process. Their readiness to contribute their time to this research has only strengthened my belief in the potential of participatory design, and optimism for its future.

Lastly, thank you to all of my friends in both Montreal and Mumbai for providing feedback and encouragement in equal measure. And, finally, my deepest gratitude to my family for their motivation and unwavering support, but also for inspiring me to strive towards larger goals, whilst giving me the strength to reach the smaller ones.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

1.1 Problematic

Participation in architectural design can have a significant role in citizen empowerment – its implementation can vary from "pseudo-participation" techniques of manipulation and placation to having the requisite effect of citizen control and delegation of power.[1] Contemporary architectural discourse has revived the ideas connected with participatory design, however the merits of different methods of implementation are still unexplored especially with regard to user empowerment.[2]

One of the foremost applications of participatory design has been in the architecture of social housing, necessitated by the dual motivations of empowering low-income or vulnerable groups as well as providing architects the benefit of local expertise in an unfamiliar setting.[3] Architects are seldom acquainted with the needs and aspirations of social housing tenants and user input from tenants can facilitate a more informed design response from the architects. Additionally, tenants have very limited alternatives with respect to housing, and not including them in the design process risks constraining them to an inadequate living environment.

---

[1] Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35 (1969): 216-224.

[2] Lee Stickells, "The Right to the City: Rethinking Architecture's Social Significance," *Architectural Theory Review* 16.3 (2011): 213–27 referenced in Ipek Türeli. "'Small' Architectures, Walking and Camping in Middle Eastern Cities," *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 2.1(2013): 5–38, doi: 10.1386/ijia.2.1.5_1.

[3] N.J. Habraken, *Supports: An Alternative to Mass Housing* (London: Architectural Press, 1972); "Community Technical Aid Centres," Spatial Agency website, accessed August 14, 2015, http://www.spatialagency.net/database/community.technical.aid.centres; "Participation- Movement 70s" Spatial Agency website, accessed August 14, 2015, http://www.spatialagency.net/database/participation.1970s; Giancarlo De Carlo, "Architecture's Public," *Architecture and Participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell Jones et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 3-22.

Although participatory design and public consultations have become standardised practices in Canada, the parameters and limitations of this model with regard to participation in architecture, especially that of social housing, have not been evaluated in regard to their impact on user empowerment.[4]

1.2 Explanation of terms

"Participation" in its most literal sense means taking part in something. In the context of democratic decision-making, participation implies the inclusion of stakeholders in the decision making process. "Participatory design" or "participation in architecture" is defined as the involvement of the user during the building design process.[5] Other definitions specify the inclusion of the client and the users of the building, who are often different entities, in the design process, as well as the general public who might be impacted by the building.[6] Participatory design can also refer to participation in other design disciplines, but for the purpose of this study, the term refers exclusively to participation in architecture and planning.

The basis for a participatory design basis is usually linked to two rationales – the first is user empowerment and the second promotes participatory design as a tool to improve the design process as well as the material outcome of the process. "User empowerment" can be elaborated as a means of ensuring that the user has a voice in the building design process, which is usually governed by the client that finances the project. This rationale recognizes participation as an extension of democratic rights and as a fundamental right for citizens who are affected by any process, including processes like architectural design.[7]

---

[4] With the establishment of the Environment Assessment and Review Process (EARP) in 1973. Julia Abelson et al., "Deliberations about deliberative methods: issues in the design and evaluation of public participation processes," *Social Science & Medicine* 57 (2003): 239–251.

[5] Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till, "Introduction," in *Architecture and Participation,* ed. Peter Blundell Jones et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), xiii-xvii.

[6] Paul Jenkins, "Concepts of participation in architecture," in *Architecture, Participation and Society,* ed. Paul Jenkins and Leslie Forsyth (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 9-22.

[7] Ibid.

"Community engagement" is best defined as a planned process of building relationships with community organizations and individuals with the purpose of involving them in joint decision-making, planned service delivery and evaluation.[8] Community engagement is a process that includes, but is not limited to, public consultations. "Public consultations" are a finite part of this process and are defined as "a process of dialogue with citizens and stakeholders, which has a defined start and end date, and informs a decision about a new proposal, policy, or service change."[9] While public consultations have definite timelines, community engagement involves more sustained investment of time and resources by the decision-making authorities who seek public input in the decision making process. Aspects of community engagement aside from public consultations include community outreach and capacity building to encourage greater participation across different sections of the community.

"Social housing" or "public housing" refers to rental housing operated by government agencies in order to house seniors, disabled people, and low-income families or individuals at subsidized rents. "Rent-Geared-to-Income housing" refers to social housing where the rent is subsidized to a percentage of the tenant's income, usually between 25-30 percent of their gross monthly income.[10] "Market housing" refers to housing produced by the private sector and rented or sold at a price that is considered affordable to a broad segment of the local population.[11]

---

[8] Department of Sustainability and Environment, *Effective Engagement: building relationships with community and other stakeholders. Book 1: An introduction to engagement.* (East Melbourne: Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2005); "Community Engagement," Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement website, accessed September 13, 2015, http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g3s1.html.

[9] Barbara Chappell, "To Engage or Consult?: That is the question!," *Incite,* (2008). 29(3), 8.

[10] "Rent Geared to Income Housing," *Housing Connections* website, accessed September 13, 2015, https://www.housingconnections.ca/HousingInfo/Rent_geared_to_income.asp.

[11] "Housing Definitions - Some Commonly Used Terms," *Comox Valley* website, accessed September 13, 2015, http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/assets/Governance/Documents/Housing%20Definitions.pdf.

1.3 Participatory design in theory

Early motivations for participatory design in social housing

Advocacy for user participation in architectural design and planning of the built environment dates back to the 1960s in Europe and North America, but participation in policy dates back even further to the 1870s in the United States and Europe, and arguably people's involvement in shaping their own homes has been a timeless practice.[12,13]

Notable architects such as John Habraken and Ralph Erskine, in the 1960s and 1970s, turned their attention towards housing, seeking to provide design solutions that involved users in the design of their homes. Their attempts were motivated by the critiques of public housing being generated in post-war Europe. Built according to government defined building standards, public housing neither catered to people's needs and aspirations, nor provided a justifiably lower cost alternative to standard building procedure. Dutch architect John Habraken surmised that architects could work with the construction industry to design prefabricated elements that would fit into "supports" – buildings that contained dwellings that could be altered independently of each other. He placed an emphasis on the potential of the construction industry to provide solutions and recommended this system that allowed the user to put together a dwelling of his own choice by selecting his preferred elements.[14] While Habraken focussed more on the benefits that user input would have on the design of the built environment, in Britain, architects like Ralph Erskine with the British Community Technical Aid movement worked to empower poor communities through enabling them to influence their built environments. The major goal of this movement was to encourage user participation and thereby foster communities to be more engaged in their neighbourhood planning.[15] Synchronously, other politically motivated architects such as Lucien Kroll, in

---

[12] F. Wulz, "The Concept of Participation," *Design Studies* 7.3 (1986): 153-162.

[13] Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture without Architects* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1964).

[14] N.J. Habraken, *Supports: An Alternative to Mass Housing* (London, Architectural Press, 1972).

[15] "Community Technical Aid Centres," Spatial Agency website, accessed August 14, 2015, http://www.spatialagency.net/database/community.technical.aid.centres.

Belgium, and Yona Friedman, in Hungary, and later France, were also working towards including users in the design and construction of their homes with the goal of user empowerment.[16]

Giancarlo De Carlo's seminal text titled "Architecture's Public" in 1969 furthered architecture's political motivations for participatory design with the statement that "architecture is too important to be left to architects" and that architecture should not plan "for" the users, but plan "with" them.[17] He also stressed the importance of the "process" of building with a reduced emphasis on the "product." His design for social housing in Terni, Italy that was built for workers in 1970, not only consulted the workers and their families on their desires for housing, but also conducted the consultations during their work hours.[18] The implication was that their feedback was essential for the process and the outcome would benefit both the company and the workers.

The SAAL process was an architectural and political experiment in Portugal, launched in 1974, that addressed the country's housing shortage by involving local communities in the provision of housing. The movement also aimed to empower low income communities by giving them a voice in the production of their living environment. Technical services were made available to communities in the form of "Brigades" - technical teams led by architects. Architect Alvaro Siza was an important contributor to this movement, designing the São Victor neighbourhood using an approach that expressed an dichotomous attitude to participatory design.[19] In a description of the project that he wrote for the Italian magazine *Lotus International* in 1976, Siza expressed the need for architects to maintain autonomy in participatory design by applying their own translation of the users' demands, even while seeking to empower the building users through acknowledging their needs and building

---

[16] "Participation- Movement 70s," Spatial Agency website, accessed August 14, 2015, http://www.spatialagency.net/database/participation.1970s.
[17] De Carlo. "Architecture's Public," 3-22.
[18] "Giancarlo De Carlo," Spatial Agency website, accessed August 14, 2015, http://www.spatialagency.net/database/giancarlo.de.carlo.
[19] Nelson Mota, "Engagement and Estrangement: Participation and Disciplinary Autonomy in Álvaro Siza's S. Victor Neighbourhood," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 101 (2013): 588-595.

consensus. This implies that though empowerment of the user through participatory design is critical, the architect risks "limiting quality" by letting what users want dictate the design of the project; instead, by maintaining an autonomous stance the architect can filter the users' needs into the design, thereby ensuring the "poetry" of design.[20]

Dutch architect Herman Hertzberger applied a contrasting approach to participatory design; his the design for Diagoon Housing in 1976, in Delft, Netherlands, used the idea of the "incomplete building" that granted the users autonomy over the interior layout of the houses.[21] By providing users with a structural skeleton that could be completed by them based on their own needs, Hertzberger risked compromising the "quality" of the architecture. Yet, critiques of this housing project commend the balance it achieves between maintaining architectural order and allowing freedom of the user.[22] A similar argument to partially relinquish architectural control and promote autonomy of the user was made by architect Christopher Alexander through his attempts to design a "pattern language." By describing a series of architectural problems and solutions in the form of patterns that could be read by users universally, without restrictions of language and training, Alexander promoted that users combine patterns to develop their own architectural design for their homes.[23]

A participatory design movement to empower users and promote democratic participation in the design of cities was simultaneously growing in the United States. Post-war urban reconstruction in 1950s North America was characterised by major development projects as part of the "urban renewal" that Lewis Mumford famously referred to as "the absolute folly of creating a physical structure at the price of destroying the intimate social structure of a community's life."[24] This phase of reconstruction led to a loss of public faith in the professions of planning and architecture, and the subsequent rise of several grassroots

---

[20] Ibid.

[21] Jeremy Till, Tatiana Schneider, "Flexible Housing: the means to an end," *Architecture Research Quarterly* 9.3 (2005): 287-296.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Andy Dearden, Janet Finlay, Elizabeth Allgar, and Barbara McManus, "Using pattern languages in participatory design," *Proceedings of the Participatory Design Conference* (2002): 104-113.

[24] "Urban Design," *Progressive Architecture* 108 (1956).

protests and community-driven practices.[25] In this climate of professional self-evaluation, American planner Paul Davidoff launched the debate on participatory design practice in 1965 by stating that plural planning is the only sensible way to have an informed debate in an effective urban democracy and that there is "no right solution" to any design problem. He urged planners to proceed not only as government representatives but also as advocates to the public and other interest groups.[26]

The early phase of the movement in the 1960s was characterised by protests against large development projects that destroyed neighbourhoods, by small groups of volunteer professionals, architects and planners, working with communities. The movement progressed in the 1970s with the design of several community-driven, grassroots projects such as neighbourhood plans, parks and community centres. Mary C. Comerio classifies these two phases as the "idealistic phase" and the "entrepreneurial phase" respectively.[27] Although early efforts were challenged by a lack of homogeneity and lack of representation of the weaker segments, the later phase was well funded, with universities playing a vital role in research as well as providing technical assistance. As the funding to community design dried up towards the end of the 1970s, the practices that continued to function in the sphere, had to take on a more practical outlook serving as Community Design Centres with community-based organisations as paying clients. The discipline of architecture, however, turned its attention to the formal and aesthetic value of architecture with the postmodern and Deconstructivist movements.[28]

A retrospective examination of participatory design and management in social housing links related discourse to one of three distinct agendas. The first agenda, located in the community design movements of the 1960s and 1970s, sees the idea of community participation as an

---

[25] Mary C. Comerio, "Community Design: Idealism and Entrepreneurship," *Journal of Architectural Planning and Research* 1.4 (1984): 227–43 referenced in Ipek Türeli. "'Small' Architectures, Walking and Camping in Middle Eastern Cities," *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 2.1(2013): 5–38, doi: 10.1386/ ijia.2.1.5_1.

[26] Davidoff, "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning," 331-338.

[27] Comerio, "Community Design: Idealism and Entrepreneurship," 227–43.

[28] Anthony W. Schumann, "The Pedagogy of Engagement," in *From the Studio to the Streets: Service-Learning in Planning and Architecture* (Sterling: Stylus, 2006), 1-15.

alternative to top down provision of services by directly involving the users of those services and addressing particular needs of different populations. The second agenda relates to the movement of workforce from the community sector to the government sector, with their beliefs that community-based practices favour tenants and reduce bureaucracy, and the consequent integration of these practices into state provision of services. The third, and most cynical, agenda sees support of community-driven social housing as a covert attempt by the state to establish inefficiency of social housing as an alternative to market housing, with the goal of completely eliminating social housing in the future.[29]

Resurgence of participatory design

A recent resurgence in discourse related to participatory design can be linked to broader currents signalling an upsurge in dialogue related to the theory and practice of public participation; a trend that has been analysed by several theorists. Sociologist Francesca Poletta traces the new leap in discourse and implementation of participatory practices to the diffusion of participatory models across for-profit, non-profit and governmental organisations.[30] She ties this development to several factors: the natural evolution of the civil rights movement from the 1970s, Habermasian theories of deliberative democracy, the antagonism with bureaucracy at all levels and finally the consistent shrinking of welfare spending. However, she posits that participation today is accepted by people to be a pragmatic rather than an ideological practice with more focus on the right to be heard than any right to actually impact the decision making process.

Other social scientists confirms this convergence of participation across different sectors as well as across academic discourse.[31] They trace the current emphasis to the rise of the creative class and the prevailing view that traditional top-down methods would not be

---

[29] Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 201-216 referenced in Michael Darcy, "The Discourse of `Community' and the Reinvention of Social Housing Policy in Australia," *Urban Studies* 36.1 (1999): 13-26.

[30] Francesca Poletta, "Participatory Democracy in the New Millennium," in *Contemporary Sociology* 42.1 (2013): 40-50.

[31] Abelson et al, "Deliberations about deliberative methods," 239–251.

appropriate for a "more educated, sophisticated and less deferential public."[32] This implies that participatory practices might foster or substitute social capital and greater visibility for improved governance. A major influence they cite on this trend is the neo-liberal consumerist and customer centred management that has seeped from the private sector into the public sector over the past few decades.

These arguments acknowledge the relationship between the rise in the rhetoric of participation and "customer-centric" policies. They suggest that the use of public sector equivalents of market research and surveys to understand users' needs and aspirations does not translate into a sharing of power, but rather preserves existing power relations by seeking to placate a population that is increasingly exposed to customised solutions concomitant with the information age.[33]

Similar shifts from political motivation to more pragmatic incentives for user-centric design have been observed in participatory design for architecture. Jan A. Granath, an architect and researcher, reviews three noticeable but intertwined stages in the development of participatory design in architecture from its beginnings in democratic discourse that saw the need for distribution of power to the outcome based discourse that associated user participation with better quality design. These are customer-oriented practices involving learning for both user and designer. He discerns a global movement from "producer oriented" architecture to "customer-oriented" architecture.[34]

However, politically and socially motivated arguments or participatory design have also resurfaced in the last decade. The global financial crisis of 2007 sparked a wider revision and recasting of social and political concerns to reshape the relevance of architecture. David Harvey's essay titled "The Right to the City" in the *New Left Review* in 2008 argued to

---

[32] Ibid.

[33] Poletta, "Participatory Democracy in the New Millennium," 40-50; Abelson et al, "Deliberations about deliberative methods," 239–251.

[34] Jan A. Granath, "Architecture: participation of users in design activities," *International Encyclopedia of Ergonomics and Human Factors* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2001).

democratize the shaping of cities.[35] In the same year, an exhibition titled *Actions: What You Can Do With the City* renewed connections between urban design and citizen involvement from the 1970s.[36] Jeremy Till's book *Architecture Depends* as well as *Architecture, Participation and Society* by Jenkins, Forsyth et al. established a case for the contingency of architecture in the 21st century and the need for architects to factor in users while designing.[37] An exhibition titled *Right to the City* in 2011 organized by the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Sydney brought together artists, architects and urban planners to seek ways in which ordinary citizens could remake the city. In the same year, *Architectural Theory Review* published a special edition addressing the resurgence in the exploration of the social in contemporary architectural culture.[38]

Sources suggest that there is a renewed focus on participatory design, but its motivations vary from the focus on user empowerment to a recent reliance on consumer feedback, that has been made possible by the rise of the Internet and communication technology, and has spread across all design disciplines.[39] Given these dual motivations, participatory design is governed by parameters that fail to adequately prioritise user empowerment as a desired outcome of the process.

Limitations and challenges of the current model

The crucial challenge with participatory design relates to a lack of clear definition of the type of participation mandated by authorities or clients. "Meaningful engagement" and

---

[35] David Harvey, 'The Right to the City', in *Rebel Cities: From the City to the Urban Revolution* (London and New York: Verso, 2012), 23.

[36] Jochen Becker et. Al. *Actions: What You Can Do With the City* (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2009).

[37] Jeremy Till. *Architecture Depends* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009); Paul Jenkins et al. *Architecture, Participation and Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

[38] Lee Stickells, 'The Right to the City: Rethinking Architecture's Social Significance', *Architectural Theory Review* 16.3 (2011): 213–27.

[39] Francesca Poletta. "Participatory Democracy in the New Millennium" in *Contemporary Sociology* 42(1): 2013. 40-50.

"meaningful participation" are leitmotifs that show up in the majority of the literature on participation, yet the terms have no quantifiable merit.[40] For example, though the state guidelines within the regulatory framework for tenant input in low income housing in the United States mandate the need for "meaningful participation," "meaningful" is not clearly defined, as the courts have not gone to the extent of setting parameters for "meaningful participation."[41] Consequently, this leaves the execution of the process completely up to the interpretations of local authorities, as the government has failed to set the necessary guidelines for it. Researchers suggest certain regulations to help define the term - namely, the requirement for tenant input in goal setting stages of the design rather than implementation stages, the obligation of written satisfaction of participation from the tenants, and finally a limit to how much plans and designs can be changed post-consensus.[42]

Public participation at the pre-construction stage for public projects has become standardized procedure in North America, yet the debate regarding the value of such participation and its contribution to citizen empowerment is ongoing.[43] The quality of participation is intrinsically tied with scarce resources such as time, personnel, finances and political will and as a result participation is encouraged among certain groups, while the segment that is in dire need of empowerment may remain unrepresented.[44] An additional challenge in globalizing cities is the diverse and multi-ethnic nature of communities with no real community level ties resulting in greater complications in participatory planning. Often, community design

---

[40] Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" 1969; Judith Innes and David Booher. "Reframing Public Participation: Strategies for the 21st Century" in *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5.4 (2004): 419–436; Lisa T.Alexander. "Stakeholder Participation In New Governance: Lessons From Chicago's Public Housing Reform Experiment" in *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy* 16.1 (2009).

[41] Georgette C. Poindexter. "Who Gets the Final No - Tenant Participation in Public Housing Redevelopment", *Cornell Journal of Law and Public Policy*. 9.659 (1999): 659-684.

[42] Larry Keating. "Redeveloping Public Housing: Relearning Urban Renewal's Immutable Lessons" in *Journal of the American Planning Association* 66.4 (2000): 384-397.

[43] Abelson et al., "Deliberations about deliberative methods," 239–251.

[44] Hillier, J, "Beyond confused noise: Ideas toward communicative procedural justice," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 18 (1998):14-24 referenced in Jeffrey Hou and Isami Kinoshita, "Bridging Community Differences through Informal Processes: Re-examining Participatory Planning in Seattle and Matsudo," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26 (2007): 301-303.

exercises in these circumstances have to be preceded by community-building exercises that test the already stretched resources of time and political will.[45]

The deficiencies in the contemporary practice of participatory methods have also been traced to ambivalence towards participation in the literature, with established links to the ambivalence towards participation in public administration. [46] While the majority of planning literature advocates for the ideology of participation but expresses dissatisfaction with its methods of practice, several political science theorists argue that democracy is established by indirect participation and to expect direct participation is impractical. [47] Recent debates, addressing the new "customer-oriented" practices that have seeped into the public sector, are conflicted as to whether the role of the citizen should be that of customer or owner of the government. Both are shown to have shortcomings, where the former relates to citizens being passive recipients of services from the government; and the latter involves citizens setting agendas but not necessarily in a sustained way.[48]

The criticism of current government-mandated participatory methods alleges that it is a formal, two-way process implemented through public hearings, review and comment procedures, and limited only to citizens and public administration directly involved with the project. It fails to involve other local stakeholders or even engage a broader spectrum of public, and does not allow for a mutual learning process for either people or administration. The process tends to pit citizens against each other by polarizing their interests, with the end result of a dissatisfied, antagonized and cynical public and an ambivalent and close-minded government.[49] Other criticisms point out that implementation of state-mandated policies is often left to local authorities whose interests may not lie with "meaningful participation."[50]

---

[45] Hou and Kinoshita, "Bridging Community Differences through Informal Processes," 301-303.

[46] Dianne Day, "Citizen participation in the planning process: an essentially contested concept," *Journal of Planning Literature* 11.3 (1997): 421–434; King et al., "The question of participation: toward authentic participation in public administration," *Public Administration Review*, 58.4 (1998): 317–326.

[47] Innes and Booher, "Reframing Public Participation," 419–436.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Abelson et al., "Deliberations about deliberative methods," 239–251.

[50] Keating, "Redeveloping Public Housing," 384-397.

These local bodies may discourage participation that steps out of the limited legal framework by sharing vague and imprecise information and occasionally manipulating consensus by choosing to include or exclude certain populations. The citizens affected by these situations often take up the stance of a complete veto that can hold up important projects to the detriment of all concerned.[51]

This predicament is highlighted by Bo Bengstsson, a political scientist, who presents the question of active participation by social housing tenants as the exception and not the norm.[52] He cites it as a dilemma of "collective merit good," a situation in which participation of tenants is deemed good and found socially and economically meritorious by society at large, including planners and architects, but not by tenants themselves. Therefore, encouraging tenant participation is an important part of the participatory design process.

Research into factors that influence tenant participation in improving their built environment identifies the impact of neighbourhood ties, grievances, resources and constraints and efficacy. Neighbourhood ties in the form of number of social ties and duration of residency are found to positively affect tenants' participation. A longer duration of stay indicates more social ties and more social ties imply greater likelihood of being connected to a person involved in participation. With grievances, although logically a larger number of grievances should encourage participation, this factor was again strongly dependent on social ties, as social connections increased awareness of common grievances. Resources such as time, finances and education all work in favour of participation, with finances if people felt obliged to contribute money to the community, they were less likely to participate. Constraints such as physical mobility usually worked against level of participation. Though children may limit physical mobility, people with children tend to have more social ties and hence an increased likelihood of participation.[53]

---

[51] Poindexter, "Who Gets the Final No," 659-684.

[52] Bo Bengtsson, "Tenants' Dilemma- On Collective Action in Housing," *Housing Studies* 13.1 (1998): 9.

[53] Brian Conway and David Hachen Jr, "Attachments, Grievances, Resources, and Efficacy: The Determinants of Tenant Association Participation Among Public Housing Tenants," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 27.1 (2005): 25–52.

Several scholars argue that levels of participation from social housing tenants can be increased by increasing their awareness of issues and empowerment through adult education programmes and also recruitment of people with lower socioeconomic status into leadership positions in the participatory process.[54]

The role of the architect

Common misconceptions are that the role of the architect is reduced to that of a layman in participatory design, but specific studies suggest that the role of the architect is crucial in this process.[55] Drawing from his own research into architect-user participation, architect and social scientist Roderick J. Lawrence posits that participatory design requires high levels of creativity from the architect as he is required to suggest alternative design solutions for the same factors of design influence. He asserts that architects have an important role in participatory design of providing optimized design responses that are liberated from the conformist design standards that architects usually rely on.[56]

Lawrence's argument stresses the importance of the architect's role in participatory design with respect to improved design but this idea of architects taking on a pivotal role in this process has also been echoed in the context of user empowerment. Practicing architects Lynne Westphal and Roberta Feldman highlight the need for architects and planners to go beyond just reporting to citizens towards creating opportunities for citizens to take control of these programs. They assert that professionals must take the lead in championing

---

[54] Innes and Booher, "Reframing Public Participation," 419–436; Poindexter, "Who Gets the Final No," 659-684; King et al., "The question of participation," 317–326.

[55] Geoffrey Broadbent, "Design methods —13 years after — a review," in *Design: science: method* ed. Jacques, R and Powall (Guildford, UK: IPC Science and Technology Press, 1981) 3-6 referenced in Roderick J. Lawrence, "Trends In Architectural Design Methods-The 'Liability' Of Public Participation," *Design Studies* 3.2 (1982): 97-103.

[56] Roderick J. Lawrence, "Trends In Architectural Design Methods-The 'Liability' Of Public Participation," *Design Studies* 3.2 (1982): 97-103.

communities and designing strategies that the communities can benefit from, and that architects have a significant role to play in empowerment and social justice.[57]

However, landscape architect Mark Francis implies that participation is only included in the design process to satisfy government mandates and the designer's role is limited to making the client's vision more palatable to users and minimizing conflict.[58] This critique of the contemporary practice of participatory design has also been expressed by scholars Jeffrey Hou and Michael Rios through their study of community-design for a waterfront park in California.[59] Although contemporary designers have access to more sophisticated techniques for design communication, participatory design has become institutionalized and is often used by exclusionary groups to their advantage, to the detriment of the disempowered. It is being used to satisfy mandated requirements and focuses on creating a "neutral" framework of consensus; the role of designers is to restrict the scope and boundaries of the way projects are presented to the public with the aim of minimizing conflict, and seek to establish consensus with minimum cost to the client.[60] There is a call for an alternative model of practice that moves away from the narrow functioning of participatory design today towards practices that are more community driven and that define problems in ways that incorporate the community's needs and demands. This approach should address and involve all stakeholders and tackle broader social and political processes.[61]

This alternative model of practice is best summarized by the term "proactive practice" coined by Francis to define a model that emphasizes the designer's role in user empowerment. "Proactive practices" can be defined as individuals or firms who approach participatory design with a vision for citizen empowerment and who take on the role of advocating for the users

---

[57] Roberta Feldman and Lynne Westphal, "Participation for Empowerment: The Greening of a Public Housing Development [Participation with a View]," *Places* 12.2 (1999): 34-37.

[58] Mark Francis, "Proactive Practice: Visionary Thought and Participatory Action in Environmental Design," *Places* 12.2 (1999): 61-68.

[59] Jeffrey Hou and Michael Rios, "Community-Driven Place Making: The Social Practice of Participatory Design in the Making of Union Point Park," *Journal of Architectural Education* 57.1 (2003): 19–27.

[60] Francis, "Proactive Practice," 61.

[61] Hou and Rios, "Community-Driven Place Making," 19–27.

and the community as well as the client. Whether they are employed in private firms, public sector, not-for-profit agencies or universities, these professionals advocate for the community's vision and facilitate communities to "enlarge" or "modify" this vision.[62]

Need for research

The review of literature on participatory design reveals deficiencies in research into methods and best practices of participatory design. This finding is also echoed by other researchers such as architect and social scientist Roderick J. Lawrence and design researcher Yanki Lee. Lawrence cites the need for more research into methods of design communication, addressing the way design problems are presented to laymen and how people read and evaluate presentations of building proposals.[63] Lee furthers these observations by pointing out specifically the need for researching ways by which participatory design can address aesthetic aspects of a building, since conversations are usually limited to user and technical parameters.[64] The paradox is that practicing architects focus on research into the products of design, but research into participatory design would need to focus on design methods. The Regent Park case study furnishes an opportunity to study a contemporary model of participatory design, that has been mandated and regulated by the government, and aims to include social housing tenants in the design process. As an ongoing project it allows for research into the process of participatory design and design methods. The next section explores the use of the participatory design model for the Regent Park revitalization.

1.4 Participatory Design at Regent Park

Regent Park has the distinction of being Canada's first purpose-built social housing project and was constructed in 1949 at the height of the urban renewal phase of post-war urban reconstruction. Six blocks of existing low-income "slum" housing were demolished and low-rise buildings and three high-rise towers were constructed surrounded by empty green spaces

---

[62] Francis, "Proactive Practice," 61-68.
[63] Lawrence, "Trends In Architectural Design Methods," 97-103.
[64] Yanki Lee, "Design participation tactics: the challenges and new roles for designers in the co-design process," *CoDesign: International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts* 4.1 (2008): 31-50.

to house 10,000 people. The design of the project was based on the garden-city concepts prevalent at the time. Although initially cited as a success and hailed by the media, by the 1960s the movement against urban renewal had grown strong and Regent Park was already subjected to wide criticism for being over-populated, badly planned and having high crime statistics.[65]

Similar urban renewal schemes of the 1950s and the austere nature of social housing fostered negative perceptions of social housing in the public mind. This sentiment was backed by private developers and the real estate lobby, leading to the 1973 amendment to the National Housing Act that led to the emergence of the "third sector" in delivery of public housing through municipalities, non-profit organisations and co-operatives. This phase saw a rise in community participation as well as the rhetoric of mixed tenure and mixed income housing.[66]

The last decade has seen the dual effect of federal surplus and increasing social gaps and visible homelessness as the effects of the previous decade. The Affordable Housing Initiative, which was rolled out in 2001, marked the re-engagement of the federal government with social housing. This programme opened the doors to public-private partnerships with cost-matching stipulations that allowed any level of government or private sector to partner with the federal government to produce social housing. With private developers involved, there is an increased interest in redeveloping urban cores with high property land values as can be seen in several revitalization projects such as that of Regent Park, especially in Toronto. These projects are reminiscent of the "third sector" projects in the 1970s, with an emphasis on mixed income, mixed tenure projects that encourage resident participation.

---

[65] Robert Sean Purdy, *From Place of Hope To Outcast Space: Territorial Regulation And Tenant Resistance In Regent Park Housing Project, 1949-2001* (Kingston, Ontario: Queen's University, 2003), 49-112.
[66] John Bacher, *Keeping to the Marketplace: The Evolution of Canadian Housing Policy*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 3-36.

Regent Park, Toronto, Ontario, Google Maps, accessed October 3, 2015.

Figure 1. Location of the Regent Park neighbourhood in eastern downtown Toronto.
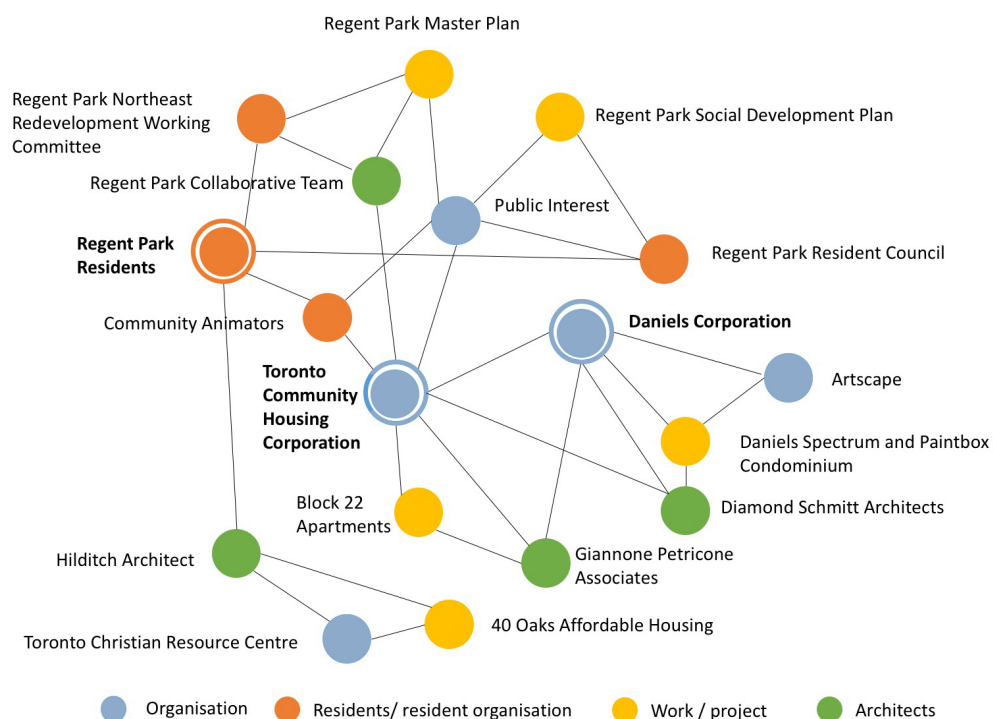

Figure 2. Diagram mapping various actors and agencies involved with the Regent Park Revitalization as documented in this report.

Within this framework of redeveloping the downtown core and leveraging high land value, a public-private partnership between the Toronto Community Housing Corporation and developer Daniels Corporation has been carrying out the revitalization of Regent Park.

The Toronto Community Housing Corporation's avowed motivations for the revitalization have been listed as the aging building stock and poor design of the neighborhood that led to social exclusion of the tenants, a lack of available government capital available for new building which required leveraging land values for new construction, pressure from the Regent Park community and its corporate commitment to environmental sustainability.[67] These factors stipulated that the TCHC needed to redevelop the Regent Park neighborhood but with private investment, leading it to look for a successful model of revitalization that worked within that framework and could be emulated.

A team of researchers was appointed to identify and study a successful model of a "stable, mixed income community" for replication; early research pointed to a need to find a model in a similar geographical, cultural and political context.[68] Thus the team looked for an example within the city and arrived on Toronto's St. Lawrence neighbourhood. St. Lawrence was redeveloped in the 1970s through private investment and has since become a mixed-use, mixed-income neighbourhood and that is well-integrated with the rest of the city. The researchers conducted a focus group study with members of the St. Lawrence community to understand factors for the neighbourhood's success and stability. The discussion revealed that a key factor was the "democratic nature of the planning process" and suggested that the planning of the neighbourhood including its urban design and location of public facilities had been arrived at through a participatory design process. Other factors were the seamless integration of Rent Geared to Income (RGI) and market units, sometimes even within the

---

[67] Remo Agostino, "Regent Park Revitalization: Building a great neighbourhood," (Toronto: Toronto Community Housing, 2013), accessed September 12, 2015. http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/graduate/programs/ensciman/forms/RemoAgostino_RegentParkRevitalization_EnSciMan2013.pdf.

[68] GHK International (Canada), Greenberg Consultants Inc., Markson Borooah Hodgson Architects, David Millar Associates, & Connelly Consulting Services, *Lessons from St. Lawrence for the Regent Park redevelopment process* (Toronto: Toronto Community Housing Corporation, 2003).

same building. The study established a link between neighbourhood stability and community engagement not only through the design process but through a sustained involvement that continued after the redevelopment.[69]

Studies of the on-going revitalization convey varied evaluations of its success. A recent study conducted by the planning department at the University of Toronto evaluated the social cohesion between residents with different income levels in the new Regent Park. The study found that in spite of mixed-income redevelopment, social mixing in Regent Park was not likely to occur without intervention; residents from different income groups would continue to "exist in parallel rather than mix" unless steps were taken by the city to promote social cohesion. The study recommended the promotion of community organizations, inclusive activity programming and shared facility use, and finally equitable governance systems in place to reinforce these measures.[70]

A planning report prepared in anticipation of the phases 3, 4 and 5 of the redevelopment in 2013 summarizes the revitalization so far as a success; it states that the "Regent Park redevelopment is working." While it enlists the numerous studies that have guided the revitalization including a master plan, urban design guidelines, a sustainability plan, a social development plan, a community services and facilities study, a functional servicing and storm water management plan, a financial plan, a secondary plan, a zoning bylaw study and a plan of subdivision, the report does not address the displacement of existing residents or plans for their relocation. The report's measure of the success of the project takes into account the construction of new public facilities, the addition of streets into the area, increased densification of the area and the rising value of real estate in the neighbourhood.[71]

---

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[70] Tamara Augsten et al., "Social Cohesion in Contested Space: A Neighbourhood Integration Framework for Regent Park. Final Report - December 2014," (University of Toronto, 2014) *Toronto Community Housing Corporation* website. accessed September 12, 2015. http://www.torontohousing.ca/webfm_sen d/11574.

[71] Gladki Planning Associates. "Regent Park Planning Report: Phases 3, 4 and 5. October 2013" on *City of Toronto* website. Accessed September 12, 2015. http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Planning/Community%20Planning/Files/pdf/R/Rege nt_planning_rationale.pdf.

1.5 Research questions

Initial probing into the Regent Park revitalization revealed an inconsistence in the TCHC's motives for implementing a participatory design process for the design of the redevelopment. Sources cited the St. Lawrence model as an inspiration, but participatory design had already been initiated in the development of the master plan before studies into St. Lawrence were conducted[72]. Central to the investigation of the success of the participatory design model would be an understanding of the desired outcomes of the process. Therefore, the first research question this study addresses is: Why was participatory design selected over a conventional design process for the redevelopment? What is the model of participatory design being used in this case?

Secondly, media and academic assessments of the redevelopment since its initiation have revealed mixed reports of the project's success. Though reviews of the architecture and urban design have been positive, residents have expressed discordant views from an opposition to the revitalization to a dissatisfaction with the design of the new units.[73] This evaluation also resonates with critiques of the contemporary model of participatory design, that highlight its function of promoting consensus and an efficient design process and its indifference towards user empowerment. Within this framework, the other research questions for this study are: What are the parameters and limitations of the formalized process of participatory design in Regent Park that have contributed to its mixed success? And, what is the role of the architect in this type of model of participatory design?

---

[72] GHK International (Canada) et al, *Lessons from St. Lawrence for the Regent Park redevelopment process.*

[73] Alex Bozikovic. "Park and Re-creation," *Canadian Architect* website*, July 1, 2012, accessed August 12, 2015. https://www.canadianarchitect.com/features/park-and-re-creation/; Joe Friesen. "Regent Park residents feel happier and safer with new homes, study says," *The Globe and Mail,* February 19, 2014, accessed July 5, 2015. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/regent-park-residents-satisfied-with-new-homes-study-says/article16986854/; Sue-Ann Levy. "TCHC residents feel like the were 'duped' in Regent Park redevelopment," *Toronto Sun,* March 28, 2012, accessed March 21, 2015. http://www.torontosun.com/2012/03/28/tchc-residents-feel-like-the-were-duped-in-regent-park-redevelopment; Jessica Smith Cross. "Regent Park residents not happy with TCHC," *Metro News,* February 25, 2014, accessed March 28, 2015.

1.6 Methodology

This research will attempt to piece together a realistic depiction of the participatory design process as it was conducted at Regent Park through first person accounts given by the different actors involved in the process. It will use semi-structured interviews as a framework to examine use of space with regard to original user feedback and architectural intentions. Qualitative research interviews are defined as interviews that are "flexible and open-ended in style, focusing on people's actual experiences rather than their general beliefs and opinions."[74] The research will address questions focussing on participants' experiences of the participatory design process – how do architects view the participatory design process for social housing projects? How do residents experience the same process? By opting for a qualitative method, this research seeks to offer a holistic, contextualised view of the design process and its outcomes. Qualitative research through interviews seeks to reveal how people feel about a situation and gain an understanding of their experiences and by extension, their comprehension of those experiences. In keeping with the philosophical underpinnings of participatory design, qualitative research through interviews acknowledges that there are multiple versions of reality and ways of being, with "no right solution" and seeks to understand different rationales behind actions.

Secondly, through interviews and conversation with active subjects, this research is not just conveying existing knowledge but creating knowledge through dialogue and exchange that encourages participants to make sense of their experiences.[75] The first step involved interviewing architects specifically regarding the integration of residents desires uncovered in public consultations. Architect participants were recruited on the basis of their involvement in the design of the new Regent Park and their responsiveness to the study. Further investigations involved interviews with the community engagement consultants, and finally the residents. Resident participants were recruited through "snowball sampling," given that the resident population will be difficult to access, this technique found new participants by requesting existing participants to recommend future ones from among their acquaintances.

---

[74] Nigel King and Christine Horrocks, *Interviews in Qualitative Research* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2010), 1-6.
[75] Ibid.

Advocacy for participatory design links the practice with the dual benefits of user specific design response as well as empowerment of the user. This study investigates the potential of the participatory design model employed at Regent Park to fulfil both these aspects through qualitative research that will record and analyse experiences of the architects as well as the users in the process. Analysis of the architects' experiences seeks to explore the potential of the process vis-à-vis providing the designers with a better understanding of the users' needs and desires. This aspect of the process is especially pertinent in the case of designing for social housing tenants as few architects have prior experience of living in or designing social housing. User experiences will shed light on the extent to which they were consulted on design and also the social impact of the community engagement processes that accompanies participatory design.

Although qualitative research does not seek to establish causal relationships between processes and outcomes, the analysis will have an inductive focus and seek to ameliorate contemporary processes of participatory design by exploring their shortcomings, and potential space for improvement.

1.7 Significance and implications

The literature has critiqued the contemporary practice of participatory design and established links between the more pragmatic incentives that guide the practice today and its limitations with respect to promoting democratic rights and empowerment of citizens. Additionally, the literature has also revealed the scarcity of specific research into methods of implementation of participatory design from within the architectural discipline. Through probing the prevalent methods and their benefits and challenges as observed by practicing architects engaged in participatory design, this research attempts to provide information on best and less effective practices for the discipline.

The case study of the Regent Park revitalization also offers an opportunity to study a "pilot" project in the Canadian context that is engaging residents in redevelopment of a large-scale project. The evaluation of this case study is significant for two reasons – the first as it has been described as a "pilot" project, the model of redevelopment, inclusive of the participatory design aspect will be replicated for future projects. The project has largely been hailed as a success by architectural and mainstream media, and this furthers expectations that this model will be used on future projects. [76] This case study provides the dual advantage of reflecting on contemporary practices of participatory design and evaluating the Regent Park model with the potential of timely intervention.

Secondly, despite generally positive reviews, a few media sources have exposed resident dissatisfaction with the new units as well as with the overall process that imply the residents were not consulted in the design.[77] Participatory design needs to emphasise the user's voice, and it is crucial to the process that residents feel heard, as well as having their inputs incorporated into the design. This research will also examine the residents' point of view, serving to highlight their experiences through first hand accounts that are instrumental to any evaluation of the participatory design process.

---

[76] Bozikovic, "Park and Re-creation;" Friesen, "Regent Park residents feel happier and safer with new homes, study says."

[77] Levy, "TCHC residents feel like the were 'duped' in Regent Park redevelopment;" Smith Cross. "Regent Park residents not happy with TCHC."

1.8 Chapter Summaries

The first chapter of this report provides a theoretical framework for participatory design in relation to social housing. Through this chapter, I attempted to piece together the varying arguments from the introduction of participatory design, to its implementation and current-day challenges associated with its practice in relation to social housing and the architect's contribution to the literature. The chapter provides necessary context for the case study by tracing the history, emergence, development and implementation of participatory design at Regent Park and sets the stage for the research questions and analysis of the case study provided in chapters two and three.

The next two chapters analyse data collected through field research and interviews as described in the methodology. Chapter two examines the architects' descriptions of the participatory design model at Regent Park and argues that participatory design's potential to improve design response is contingent on the architect's approach to the process. Through interviews with architects and urban designers involved in the redesign of Regent Park, the research seeks to piece together the process of design consultation used in the project. The analysis examines the impact of resident feedback on the design process and final design, and through the architects' own accounts of the process and their learnings, this chapter seeks to define, describe and assess the model of participatory design used in Regent Park.

Chapter three asks how participatory design has impacted the community and seeks to unpack the linkages between participatory design and community empowerment, which has been touted as one of the prime arguments for participatory design since the 1960s, based on interviews with the residents and community animators and residents involved in the process. This chapter argues that the level of interaction between residents and architects is critical to the outcome of a participatory design process. It will also seek to discern the result of community engagement and capacity building as part of the process on the residents as well as their experience of the final product, the new Regent Park.

The conclusion will set out to analyse findings of the research with a view to responding to the research questions — first, to understand why the participatory design model was used in

Regent Park, then to describe the model through its parameters and limitations with respect to design outcomes and community empowerment and lastly to examine the role of the architect within this model. Through a juxtaposition of the architects and residents points of view, this chapter will identify gaps in architectural practice and research that could have an impact on the success of future projects that implement the same formalized model of participatory design as Regent Park.

CHAPTER 2

Participatory Design for Better Design Response

User participation in the architectural design of social housing can lead to greater user satisfaction with the built environment as well as empowerment of the user. However, the benefits of participatory design are contingent on the method of implementation, and this chapter argues that suitability of the built environment to the user's needs and consequently, user satisfaction is contingent on the manner in which user feedback is used to inform design response. Further, the degree to which user feedback is solicited and incorporated into the design is dependent on the architect's approach to the participatory design process. This chapter seeks to investigate architects' approaches to participatory design through conversations with the architects involved in the Regent Park revitalization – motivations, challenges and benefits, and finally how they perceive the role of the architect in the process. The investigation will contribute to a broader analysis of the process of participatory design conducted at Regent Park.

Field research consisted of semi-structured interviews conducted over two months with the architects who were associated with the Regent Park revitalization. Also significant was an interview with the community engagement consultant on the project. Architects were invited to participate in the research and the interviews were conducted in person at the architects' offices or over the phone. Interviews focused on the architects' involvement in the project, their design process, their participation in the public consultations and their learnings from the process. Out of approximately six architects who designed the social housing or public component for the neighbourhood, four participated in this research.

The following analysis consists of themes that surfaced through the conversations, organized so as to introduce each of the participants as well as piece together the story of the Regent Park participatory design process. The first section of the chapter seeks to understand the architects' individual motivations for employing participatory design and their understanding of its benefits. The second section investigates their accounts of the process and design methods they employed. The third section discusses their point of view of the limitations and

challenges they experienced and the last section analyses their perceptions of the role of the
architect in this process.

2.1. The Rationale for Participatory Design

Central to the discussion about participatory design and public consultations was the way in
which each architect perceived the rationale for engaging users in a conversation about
design. As different theoretical arguments outlined in the previous chapter established,
rationales for engaging in participatory design can vary and uncovering these motivations can
provide a useful gauge against which the success of the project can be measured.

"Overcoming the Risk Factor": gaining community support

> Well the first step was actually to go to the community before drawing any plans at
> all, because we realized that this would never be successful unless the community
> was alright with the idea.
>
> Ken Greenberg (interview)[78]
> Director of Urban Design and Architecture, City of Toronto

The redevelopment of Regent Park social housing was preceded by fifteen years of
conversation between residents and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC),
finally culminating in the fall of 2002 with the organization of the Regent Park Collaborative
Team, a group of experts appointed by TCHC to explore a potential model for the
revitalization of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood of Toronto. The St. Lawrence
neighbourhood had gone through a similar redevelopment in the 1970s and was considered a
successful model of assimilation with the rest of the city, as "you can no longer tell where the
original boundaries of the St. Lawrence neighbourhood as a project were."[79] Drawing from
the St. Lawrence project's success, concepts of mixed-use and mixed-income development
were considered to be viable objectives for Regent Park and notably, St. Lawrence relied on
community participation to guide its planning processes, a factor that was considered a "key

---

[78] Ken Greenberg. Interview with author. Telephone interview. Toronto, May 28 2015.
[79] Ibid.

to its success."[80] A working committee had been created consisting of stakeholders who represented the community, planners and City officials who advised on the urban design of the neighbourhood as well as location of key amenities.

Ken Greenberg, a member of the Regent Park Collaborative Team and an architect and urban designer, describes the combination of concerns that led up to the decision to revitalize Regent Park — petitions from the Regent Park community and the condition of the existing buildings, which were proving not only expensive to maintain; but also providing substandard living environments to the residents. There were also other incentives — the "realization that this was right down town, and was well served by transit that could support more significant density and mixed use for the city."[81] The project was seen as "a pilot, as a test to see what they might do also with other sites," Canada's first public private partnership in the provision of social housing and a trial project that if successful, would be succeeded by implementation of 52,000 units that were part of the TCHC's portfolio.[82]

Community engagement was initiated through a series of public meetings as well as workshops and design charrettes, enlisting the services of a firm called Public Interest, a Toronto-based community engagement consultant. Sean Meagher, a partner at Public Interest, elaborates further on the need for this community engagement: "The first step was to gain the trust of the residents who could not believe that they were getting newer, better houses for free."[83] Early meetings revealed serious concerns among the residents that they would not be allowed to return to Regent Park, or that their new homes would not have the same amenities as their current ones. Meagher refers to this as "the Risk Factor," an important hurdle to be overcome in order to gain the residents' support. Public Interest recommended that this could be achieved through a signed contract, a "Right of Return," giving the residents the right to come back to Regent Park once ready homes were available.

---

[80]GHK International (Canada), Greenberg Consultants Inc., Markson Borooah Hodgson Architects, David Millar Associates, & Connelly Consulting Services, *Lessons from St. Lawrence for the Regent Park redevelopment process* (Toronto: Toronto Community Housing Corporation, 2003).

[81] Ken Greenberg. Interview with author. Toronto, May 28, 2015.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Sean Meagher. Interview with author. Telephone interview. Toronto, April 2, 2015.

It also stipulated that they would have the same manner of house as they had currently. Greenberg's account seconds this scepticism among residents and cites one of the reasons as "a lot of false starts" prior to the actual revitalization. The interviews suggest that the issue of establishing trust is especially relevant for social housing projects, as residents can be mistrustful of authorities and cynical about any projects that claim to improve their quality of life.

"Really, really listening": relying on local expertise

> Most of the architects had no experience with social housing and [had] never lived there, so they depended on the inputs from local experts to make better decisions.
>
> Sean Meagher (interview)[84]
> Partner, Public Interest

Meagher cites architects' lack of experience with social housing as the other compelling motivation for architects to invest their time in public consultations. Viewing public participation in design as a way of influencing the design requires architects to take a step back from their traditional role as experts and rely on the "local experts" who are "proficient with their particular living area and requirements." Designers of social housing are usually presented with the challenge of hypothesizing a lifestyle they are not familiar with as is illustrated by Pina Petricone, Principal at Giannone Petricone Associates, the firm responsible for Block 22 Apartments, rental and mixed-income housing at Regent Park. Petricone recounts her experience of being faced with the task of designing five-bedroom apartments:

> We had never done a five-bedroom rental unit before, for example; that was very new. And it was great, it was very exciting to start thinking about the extended family and what does it mean, what is a family unit, relative to another rental unit? … In a five-bedroom unit, how big does that kitchen or eating area need to be for so many people? It's not just that you Xerox and enlarge everything because there is a certain compactness that we need to abide by, but it is very interesting and exciting to allow one kind of space to share square footage with another kind of space. Then we started to imagine the family unit as a series of activities. Where did those activities take

---

[84] Sean Meagher. Interview with author. Toronto, April 2, 2015.

place? So we developed a kind of scenario based design process and that scenario included: how do they relate to their neighbours? What is the porch experience like?[85]

In the case of Block 22 Apartments, the architects were selected through a competition process in 2011, several years after the initial public consultations had taken place. Consequently, the TCHC and, later, the developer Daniels Corporation acted as "guardians of those [public] sentiments," by providing the architects with a highly detailed brief that contained "distilled information that they collected through public consultations."[86] In this case, the brief played the role of familiarizing the architects with the spatial and logistical requirements of the residents.

An interesting case that I uncovered during this research was that of 40 Oaks Affordable Housing by Hilditch Architects, a project that shares part of the Regent Park site but is independent of the TCHC and Daniels Corporation. This project was developed by the Toronto Christian Resource Center that owned property within the Regent Park neighbourhood and chose to develop it concurrently with the rest of the revitalization. They engaged Hilditch Architects for the project, a firm that has a reputation for working with affordable housing. Charles Rosenberg, an associate and one of the project architects for the building, expressed an atypical design philosophy regarding the need for public consultation and user-input:

> There's no point building something if it's going to replicate the cycle of poverty and homelessness… my suggestion of how to go about it - you've just got to get right in there and don't spend so much time on the Internet.[87]

Rosenberg's account describes his firm's role in the project as helping their clients "realize their projects, in other words, making it happen," taking on responsibilities that traditionally architects don't, such as project management, functional planning and even helping clients acquire funding from various levels of government and charitable organizations. In the case of 40 Oaks Affordable Housing, the client was unsure of how to develop the property and the

---

[85] Pina Petricone. Interview with author. Personal interview. Toronto, July 2, 2015.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Charles Rosenberg. Interview with author. Telephone interview. Toronto, June 19, 2015.

fundamental program for the building was developed in collaboration with the architects. This method of practice is reminiscent of the "proactive practice" advocated for by Mark Francis, which was dealt with in the first chapter. Francis argues for designers to take on pivotal roles in their projects by helping clients realize their vision through a participatory approach.

Rosenberg suggests that conversations with building users can uncover underlying social problems and then architects can try to find architectural solutions to these problems. He states that many of the problems with social housing arise because "no one has really taken the time to look at the problem or the issue." According to him, listening is the key to this process; "really, really, listening." Another aspect is knowing who the users of the space are going to be — in the case of 40 Oaks Affordable Housing, the architects met with potential candidates for the units including street people and existing public housing tenants and asked them about their needs and preferences such as "what worked, what didn't work, what kind of units they would want, what was important to them." Rosenberg recounts conducting at least 25 meetings with stakeholders and potential users.

Another approach that architects may take is at the intersection of these two varied approaches, as was illustrated during my conversation with Jennifer Mallard, an associate at Diamond Schmitt Architects and project architect for the Daniels Spectrum Arts Centre as well as the adjacent Paintbox Condominium Tower at Regent Park. This firm was also selected through a competitive process, and having had a role in the design of the master plan for the site, they had an advantage over other competing firms. Speaking about public meetings that were organized for the Daniels Spectrum project, Mallard says:

> Everybody in the neighbourhood, in the community, had an interest in what this building was going to be. So there were public meetings, just as information sessions, and Daniels Corporation organizes those because you know it is part of their PR routine, part of their commitment to keeping people informed. So there were public information sessions.[88]

---

[88]Jennifer Mallard. Interview with author. Telephone interview. Toronto, May 27, 2015.

This is indicative of the credibility approach, where public consultations are seen as a device to keep people informed of developments in the project, and thus ensure their continued support throughout the duration of the project. However, Mallard went on to speak about an instance where the public meeting helped inform their design of the Daniels Spectrum; in relation to a public parking exit that opened onto a glass courtyard, the firm became more aware of a public concern for civilian safety and were able to modify their design accordingly. In a more general discussion about public consultations, Mallard expressed the following sentiment regarding their significance for architects:

> [I]t just adds a layer of your design being in the world, of your design being part of an urban context or part of a social context. It's another layer of understanding what you do.[89]

The interviews revealed interesting and varied premises as the architects and consultants shared views that ranged from the pragmatic to the idealistic, often a balance of both. As in the case of Greenberg and Rosenberg, the architects themselves initiated public consultation and engagement; though at later stages of the project, the practice had become an entrenched part of the revitalization process, and as architects themselves admitted, was carried out based on a format delineated by the client, Toronto Community Housing Corporation and the developer, Daniels Corporation. The next section explores how these varied approaches to participatory design contributed to its implementation for the design of the master plan as well as individual buildings in the Regent Park neighbourhood.

---

[89] Jennifer Mallard. Interview with author. Telephone interview. Toronto, May 27, 2015.

2.2. The Process

Toronto Community Housing Corporation, http://www.torontohousing.ca/regentpark.
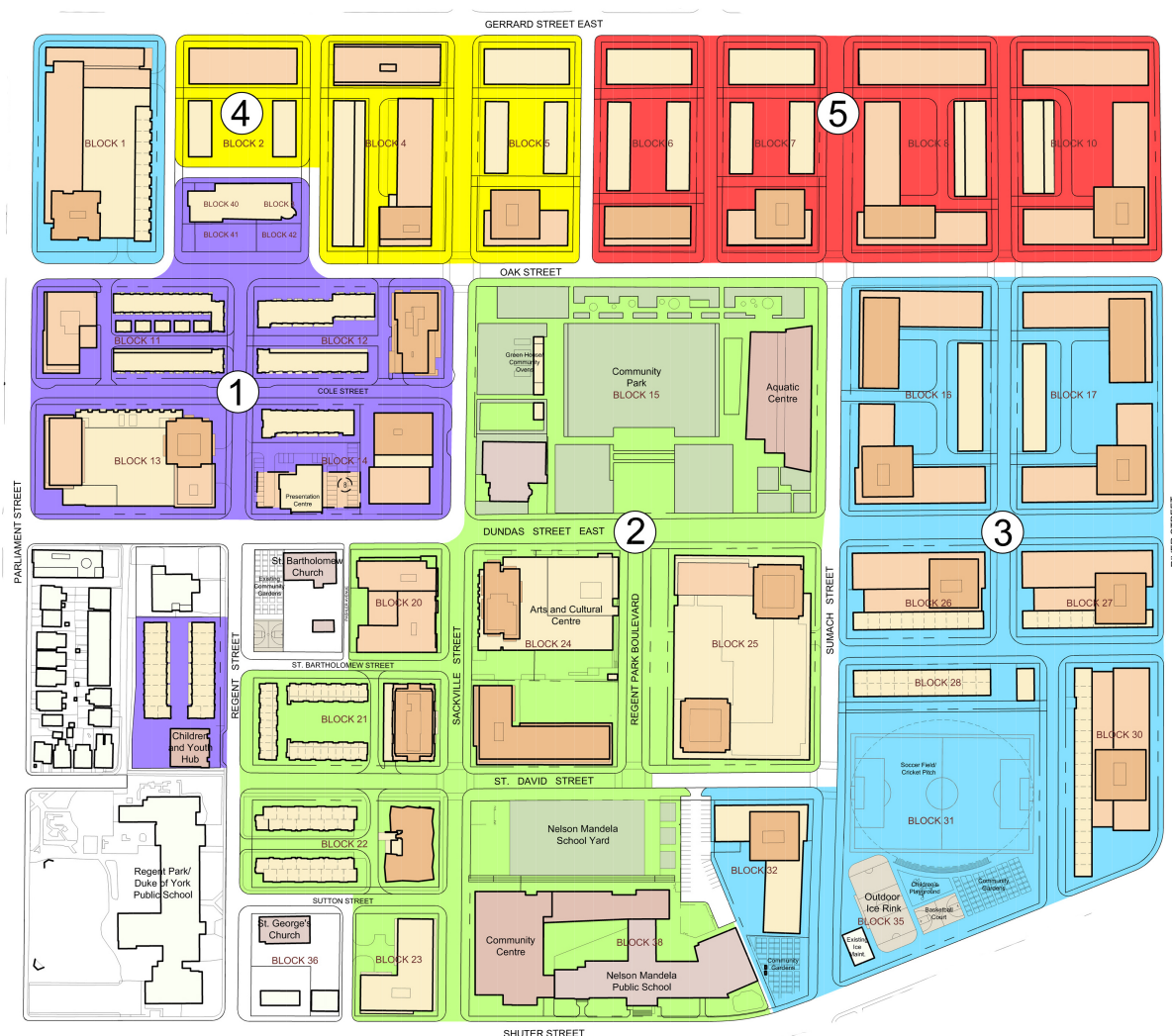
Figure 3. Master plan of Regent Park showing phasing of revitalization.

Beginning in 2002, the revitalization of Regent Park has been divided into five phases, with Phases 1 & 2 partially completed and occupied; and Phase 3 demolition and construction commencing in 2014.[90] Through conversations with architects and consultants, different

---

[90] With the development still under way, it is interesting to note that the plan that was developed during initial consultations is still "amended from time to time in big parts and small," with a design review panel making decisions on whether these amendments require further public consultation or not. Purportedly, zoning changes require the full process of public consultation while smaller, less significant changes are approved by the panel. Source: Ken Greenberg. Interview with author. May 28, 2015.

approaches and practices of participatory design come to light including descriptions of means of engagement, design communication and means of gathering feedback.

"Even before the designers put pen to paper": initiating the discussion

Sean Meagher, one of the community engagement consultants for the Regent Park revitalization, describes the early steps in the process to engage the residents in a conversation. The team sought to relate to the residents in ways that would be comfortable and convenient for all communities. Going beyond not only linguistic barriers but cultural ones as well; Meagher recounts having women talk to women and men talk to men for the Bangla community, having large "raucous" meetings for the Somali community, meetings over food for the Spanish community and private meetings at home for the Vietnamese community. Younger people from within the community were trained as community animators, as the residents would be able identify with them in terms of language and culture, as well as associate with them through social contacts within the neighbourhood.

The community engagement consultants acted as facilitators, taking information from the residents to the architects in the form of briefs, "even before the designers put pen to paper." The process included both one-on-one engagement, through private conversations in people's homes and kitchens, as well as large public meetings with all stakeholders and architects present. The large meetings consisted of presentations by the architects to confirm that their designs were compatible with the community's requirements; the architects' constantly referred to how resident feedback had informed their design, arguably to reinforce that residents were being heard and to consolidate their support. The initial development stage consisted of five to seven of these meetings, and, interestingly, architects were only present at these large meetings, where according to Meagher "no meaningful discussion could take place," and not at the smaller one-on-one consultations in people's homes.

Public Interest, http://www.publicinterest.ca/community-engagement/regent-park.

Figure 4. Visuals created by Public Interest to engage residents in design discussion.

According to Greenberg, people were involved right from the goal-setting stage of the project, before architects began designing the new master plan. He recounts how "before drawing any plans at all," the team worked towards getting residents to outline the basic principles for the revitalization, which became the blueprint for any future development. He describes "surprising" concerns that came up during the discussions – the desire to have a green community galvanized a lot of support from the residents. There was a lot of apprehension about the idea of relocating; however, according to Greenberg, there was a strong desire to become a mixed-use mixed-income neighbourhood:

> At the end of the day, after a lot of discussion there was a desire in the principles to become a normal neighbourhood - with shops, with jobs, with commerce - all those things that exist in other neighbourhoods in the city, and at the end of the day, that the boundaries would be erased; that there wouldn't be a hard line around something that would forever be identifiable as Regent Park.

Meagher confirms this initial involvement of residents and mentions that trying to communicate with residents through plans and "maps" failed, so instead of technical

questions about building density or land use, they asked people about their lives - what kind of neighbourhood they lived in, how they would like it to be, what kind of buildings they would like, what kind of parks they'd like etc. They did not try to get residents to comment on architecture or urban design but tried to craft a brief for the designers from the residents' needs and desires.

Highlighting gaps between what architects visualize and what residents want, Meagher mentions that the original plan drawn up by the architects depicted "a tower in a park" scenario, with tall buildings and lots of free ground space, emphasising connectivity at the ground level. Apparently, this plan was not acceptable to the residents who maintained that they would prefer the existing density, with smaller parks and roads. Their input brought about considerable change in the development plan – smaller parks for mothers with young children and narrower roads for child safety. The architects designing the master plan had proposed a large park along Dundas Street North, a street that "divided the community along lines of violence"; crossing the street would have meant inciting violence between resident gangs. The public input was instrumental in avoiding errors of such large scale in the design of the neighbourhood.

Greenberg amends this account; according to him this version of events took place prior to the 2003 revitalization plan. The master plan developed in 2003 had always aimed at "normalizing the neighbourhood" through breaking down the two superblocks of the existing Regent Park into 24 new blocks by introducing streets, sidewalks, and a range of densities from low-rise buildings to towers and townhouses.

At a smaller scale, Rosenberg recounts, 40 Oaks Affordable Housing also began with conversations; before the architects began producing designs they initiated "visioning sessions" with the Toronto Christian Resource Centre to scope out the nature of the building. The clients wanted to continue providing the services which they had been previously doing out of different centres — providing a shelter for "vulnerable street people" to have meals, do laundry and gather as well as receive some professional services; additionally, they wanted to have a worship space within the new building. The architects recommended the possibility of

housing some of the homeless within the shelter, which was when the building began to be considered as affordable housing.
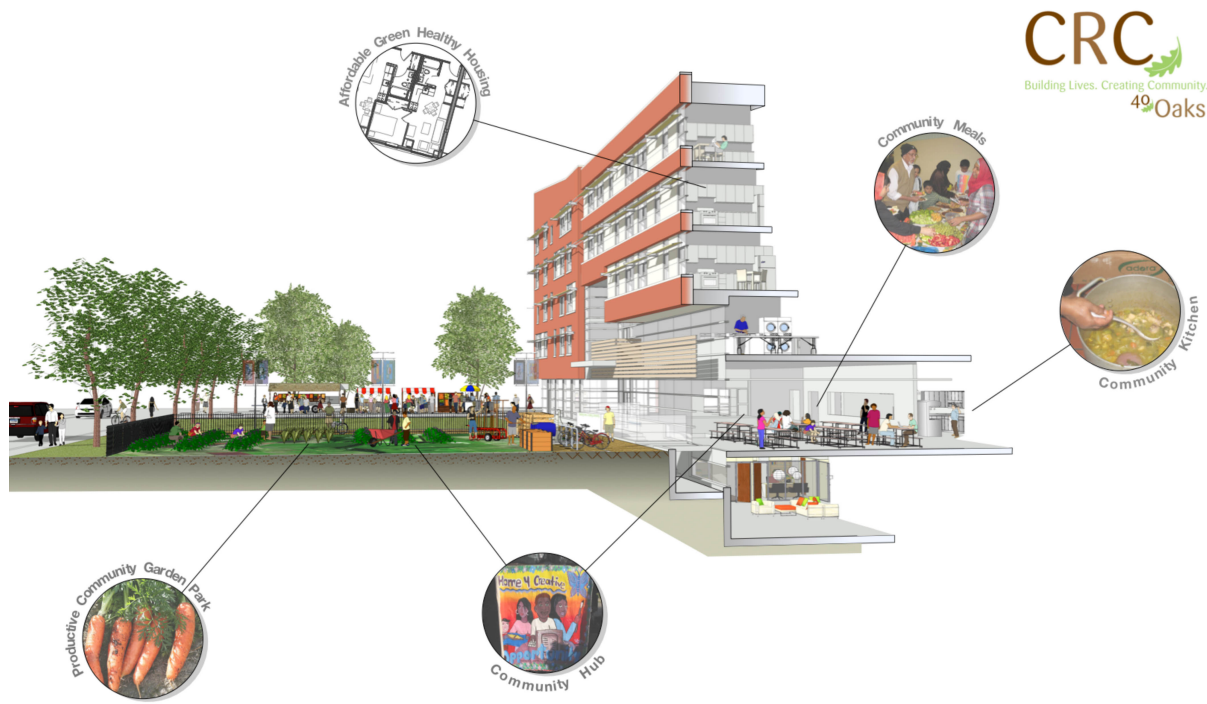

Hilditch Architects.

Figure 5. Rendering of 40 Oaks Affordable Housing used during consultations.

Rosenberg, one of the project architects, describes the collaborative design process that was conducted primarily through meetings at which the architects would present simple schematic sketches along with precedents, which would always be followed up by a functional plan that provided a "reality check." Through this methodology, they would consistently point out pros and cons of any suggested scheme so that the non-experts would be able to make educated choices about any design.

Many, many, many meetings: interacting with many stakeholders

Individual commissions for buildings within the TCHC - Daniels scheme followed a different procedure - architects were selected through a competition process by the TCHC. In the case of the Daniels Spectrum Arts Centre and Paintbox Condominium Tower projects, which

were developed by Diamond Schmitt Architects, the firm competed by sending in their resumes and fee statements after being invited to compete by TCHC. For the Daniels Spectrum, the clients were the private developer Daniels Corporation in partnership with Artscape, a not-for-profit operator of arts and cultural spaces. Speaking about the project, Jennifer Mallard recollects that the first step in the process was sitting down with the clients and understanding the brief. Design was initiated through a few schematic plans after which meetings with the seven not-for-profit organisations that would occupy the space commenced.
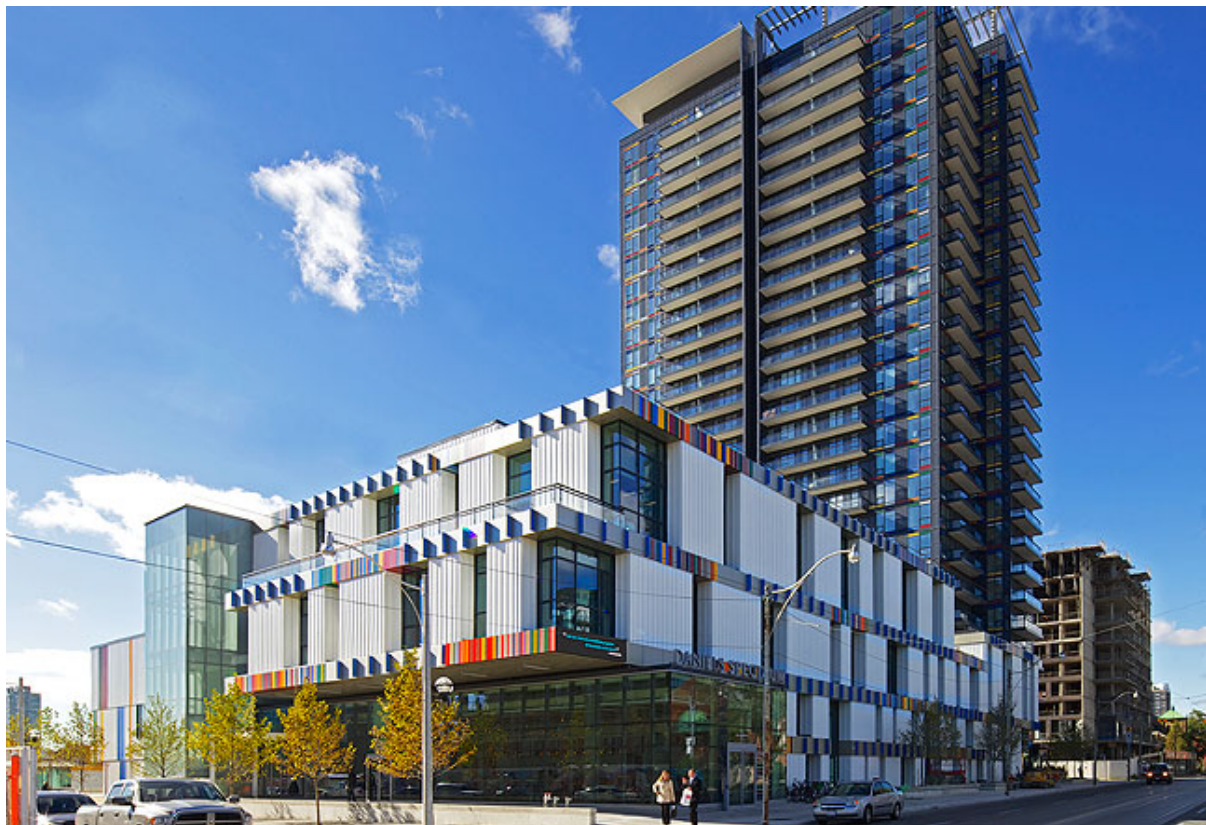
Diamond Schmitt Architects, http://www.dsai.ca/projects/daniels-spectrum-and-paintbox-condominiums.

Figure 6. Daniels Spectrum and Paintbox Condominiums by Diamond Schmitt Architects.

Being an arts building that included activities like music and dance, technical requirements needed to be incorporated early in the design, as they would affect fundamental aspects of the

building structure, such as lowering the concrete slab to install a dance floor, for example. Mallard posits:

> It was pretty great for these grassroots organisations to be involved at this very early stage of the design of their space. It's an opportunity that doesn't come along very often, but the stars aligning, that they're in early enough to have an impact on where they're going to be.

This statement suggests that it is atypical for users to be involved in the design process early on. It also implies that the participation of the building users in the design planning is more beneficial to the user rather than the architect. But, Mallard continues: "it was a pretty extraordinary experience for them and also for us, I mean it's pretty rewarding." For an architect, she speculates, a project that involves design participation requires a greater investment of time than a client-oriented project, and also requires the designer to adopt a "different attitude"; she elaborates this attitude as a more open-minded approach that allows user input to shape the design.

Although design meetings were largely held with stakeholders such as TCHC, Daniels Corporation and the seven non-profit organizations, public meetings were also staged to keep the larger public informed about the progress of the project "because of Regent Park, because of the kind of project that it is." While the public meetings were described as "information sessions," Mallard suggests that through listening carefully at these meetings issues and concerns surfaced that the architects had not taken into account in their designs.

For Pina Petricone, project architect for the Block 22 Apartments, design was initiated by an invitation to compete for the project; they had to present schematic design ideas, in response to a competition brief composed by the TCHC, for the mid-rise building that was accompanied by town houses. On winning the competition and being engaged as the architects for the project, they sat down to meetings with a couple of people from the TCHC who "were really interested more in the overall compatibility with our design and our intervention with the rest of the development."[91] Subsequent meetings involved more

---

[91] Pina Petricone. Interview with author. Toronto, July 2, 2015.

stakeholders such as TCHC representatives that managed the operations and maintenance systems for the housing authority. At each stage, more people would be involved in the design process including representatives of the developer, Daniels Corporation, leading to "many, many, many meetings," more than a market condominium project would entail. Yet, Petricone suggests that the architects welcomed the feedback:

> In this case, it was multivalent, which was great actually, because it meant that we were given a lot of information that we needed to respond to which helped us to develop the architecture, and helped define it really.

Additional to the regular team meetings, monthly or bimonthly meetings were conducted at which the architects presented the design to a design review panel that included the director of the TCHC, and these meetings were also open to the public. However, only a few residents or members of the public would attend these meetings, and their participation was limited. As Petricone remembers:

> We didn't get a lot of questions, like formal questions, from the public at those meetings but maybe just the nature of those meetings is that, the panel with many people on it, each have an opportunity to give feedback, to give recommendations. So, in a way, it kind of takes up the entire meeting. But following those meetings, we would have a lot of informal discussions with residents or with members from the public that would be interested and ask up about things.

Consequently, for this project, the architects were reliant on the TCHC, acting as representatives of the tenants, to provide feedback. According to Petricone, the design also benefitted from the additional expertise that TCHC and Daniels Corporation had developed from previous buildings. Still, Petricone remembers being surprised by some of the informal comments they received after these meetings: for example, residents were excited by the brick façade of the buildings, which was unexpected for the architects, as the old Regent Park buildings also had brick facades and they had expected that the aesthetic would have negative connotations for the residents.

Giannone Petricone Associates, http://gpaia.com/.

Figure 7. Rendering of Block 22 Apartments by Giannone Petricone Associates.

"It's a very private conversation": interacting with residents

On how public meetings for social housing differ from public consultations on other projects, Mallard discerns that the level of engagement is higher among tenants than other types of public. Tenants are more concerned about how the design might affect their lives and what opportunities it might create for them; consequently, they're that much more aware of the discussion and are listening more attentively. Conversely, public consultations for other types of projects attract people from neighbouring properties who are concerned about the effects of the construction on them personally.[92]

Rosenberg has a less charitable view about people from neighbouring properties attending meetings for projects that address the needs of economically weaker sections; according to

---

[92] Mallard. Interview with author. Toronto, May 27, 2015.

him "the people that show up at the meeting are the people that don't want the building." In the case of social housing or affordable housing projects, he strongly advocates for private conversations with the building users who are often coming from vulnerable situations involving abuse or neglect and whose privacy needs to be protected. In his experience, public meetings often expose these vulnerable people to further abuse by citizens who attempt to resist their presence in the neighbourhood, for reasons such as maintaining property values and other concerns that are characteristic of "Not In My Backyard" (NIMBY) attitudes. Though not completely discounting the role of public meetings that contribute to integrating the building within its neighbourhood or within the city, Rosenberg promotes private consultations with future building users for "meaningful participation."

This approach however does not easily translate into projects involving designing homes for larger numbers and for which the resident group has not been identified. In the case of the original Regent Park redevelopment in 1949, a single architect was responsible for designing over 1800 units, which he achieved through replicating the same building block several times. Although the situation has changed subsequently, architects designing the new Regent Park buildings are still forced to contend with designing for unknown residents, with minimal face-to-face engagement with residents and public consultations only serving to crease out more noticeable discrepancies in the planning. Reacting to the prospect of designing a thousand homes, Rosenberg exclaims:

> I would say there's too many. That'd be the first thing. That's crazy! Like that's nuts, isn't it? It's just nuts. You break it into manageable numbers. I mean, again everyone tries to turn it into a science. I'm going to design the perfect building, the perfect unit and just repeat it a thousand times. It's wrong. So you have maybe five different architectural firms, you have three or four different service providers offering their opinions, and then you get a sense of it feeling like a real neighbourhood.

Descriptions of the process reveal that public consultations function as a means of conveying information to the residents, and receiving broad feedback in the form of questions or comments. They do not serve to facilitate deeper interactions between the architects and residents or allow architects to further their understanding of what the residents'

requirements and aspirations for housing are. Developing on this and other issues, the next section lays out challenges to the participatory design process identified by the architects.

2.3. Limitations/challenges of the process

An important issue that this research aims to address are the challenges and limitations perceived by architects in the practice of participatory design as well as their suggestions for potential improvement. The architects' critiques are not limited to the institutionalized process of public consultation but expose complex challenges even in informal interactions between different actors in the process. As experienced professionals and key participants in the participatory design process on the Regent Park project as well as others, the architects are in a position to provide strategic feedback and critiques of the way the process is conducted.

A challenge that architects are universally confronted with is that of communicating design in a comprehensible way, but which is exacerbated in the case of public consultations with larger numbers in attendance, especially in cases of social housing with a multi-lingual population and varying levels of education. With the development of the digital medium and 3D representation, architects are better able to show photo realistic representations of their designs, but while this may lead to clearer visualisation of the end product, it gives the illusion of a finished building with little to no room for change. The other drawback to these images is that though they can be produced fairly early in the design process, the client or public begins to expect that the design will not change, despite changes in budget or programme or changes wrought by technical requirements. In the case of Regent Park, Meagher and Greenberg both attest to the residents being involved by the TCHC early on in the design process, even before the architects and planners. In spite of this, Meagher speaks to a similar concern as a community engagement consultant, of trying "not to let the residents be wooed by seductive and pretty drawings of the architects," by emphasizing the experiential angle of any scheme so that residents could relate to it.

Jennifer Mallard admits that "there is a danger in pretty pictures" and stresses the importance of communicating to the public that "this is a design process, this is a line in the sand, this is

where we are now, and some things will change as the design process continues."[93] She postulates that the only plausible solution to this issue is to explain the design process to the client or user, so that they understand what decisions they need to make in order to fit in with the schedule of the design or building process. This necessitates an investment in time spent on communication on the part of both architect and client/user, one that is central to the concept of participatory design.

> I think the public recognizes that either the project has already gone too far, or, they're intimidated because the drawings seem to be too set. There doesn't seem to be a possibility for movement, in the design or the program…Is that really a public consultation or is it really an information session?
>
> Charles Rosenberg (interview)[94]
> Associate, Hilditch Architects

Speaking about the way public consultations are predominantly conducted in Toronto, Rosenberg posits that most public consultations are merely "information sessions" disguised as public participation, soliciting people's approval rather than their opinions and design input. He suggests that these consultations are conducted principally to appease residents from neighbouring properties or else "they're going to yell and scream and take you to the Ontario Municipal Board or try and stop your project." This reasoning resonates with hypotheses by Francesca Poletta and other social scientists introduced in the first chapter about the influence of "customer-centric policies" that have seeped into the public sector from the private sector, and the public demand to the right to have input on a decision rather than actually having the right to impact the decision. Similarly, people demand the right to approve or veto a project but do not seek to contribute to its design. Rosenberg further elaborates that public consultations largely attract people from surrounding properties that are in attendance to protect their financial interests; especially in the case of affordable housing, the "neighbours" may have a stronger voice in the decisions concerning the project than the actual users. Tenants or residents of the housing, in these cases, are nonplussed by the advanced stage of the project and find it difficult to venture an opinion or imagine a different scenario from the one being presented.

---

[93]Jennifer Mallard, interview with author. Toronto, May 27, 2015.
[94] Charles Rosenberg, interview with author. Toronto, June 19, 2015.

"It's just a conversation": improving the process

Developing on the importance of communicating the stages in the design process to the public, Mallard recounts that "sometimes for the general public they don't know where the line is for what an architect can or can't change." Elaborating on this statement, she explains that the list of demands is greater than the things that can be realised on any project. However, in the case of a social housing project like Regent Park, "the clients [residents] are unaware of the implications" of some of the decisions and it is up to the architect to bring their "knowledge" to the decision making process. She suggests that if she were to do things differently, she would create a matrix of budget decisions and priorities before meeting with the public, in an effort to expedite the decision-making and enable the public to make more informed decisions.

Though this suggestion has merit with respect to facilitating a more efficient process, it risks excluding users from the priority setting stage of the project; even as architects attempt to channel their users' interests, they are often unable to visualize all of their client's priorities, as is evinced by the planning team's surprise at the community's desire for a "green" neighbourhood in the case of Regent Park.[95]

Perhaps another way to tackle the issue of mixed signals and educating residents about the design process is for architects to have direct engagement with the residents and the need for more one-on-one conversations. Rosenberg, as an experienced practitioner of participatory design and affordable housing, laments the loss of this personal engagement: [96]

> I'm going through that with a big project right now, and I feel I've been distanced from the people I want to talk to. Even when it comes times to talking with staff, who I value what they have to say, it's very carefully managed - the hours; there's too many people in a room… you know you can't talk one – on – one.

---

[95]Ken Greenberg, interview with author. Toronto, May 28, 2015.
[96]Charles Rosenberg, interview with author. Toronto, June 19, 2015.

Remonstrating the use of professional facilitators in what he describes as essentially "just a conversation," his critique of the way in which public consultations are conducted today is that, "They're not overly complicated and yet we seem to be making them very complicated."

Yet, this philosophy is extremely difficult to reconcile with a project the size of the Regent Park revitalization, involving approximately 7,500 residents. Ken Greenberg, also a highly experienced practitioner in consensus-building and revitalization projects, stands his ground with respect to the way public engagement was conducted at the initial stages of Regent Park.

> It was a very, very extensive outreach and we started, before drawing any plans at all, with getting people to agree on what the basic principles for revitalization would be; and that was really important because we constantly referred back to those principles.

Asked how he would have improved the public consultation process, he posits that since the outreach predated the widespread use of social media, it could not be applied at Regent Park; that they would rely much more on social media in current and future endeavours. But he affirms that "the fundamentals of developing open lines of communication would be the same" on any future public engagement project.

Interviews consistently point out the need for an investment of time towards "educating" the public – whether that happens through one-on-one conversations or through larger public meetings. Another common concern that comes through is that though the use of sophisticated three dimensional images for the promotion of any architectural project is a prevalent practice, they need to be used discreetly in participatory design as the purpose is not to sell a finished product but to gather feedback on the design. This reverts to the question of who the architects represent and to whom they are accountable in a participatory design process, and the role they play within this framework.

2.4. Role of the architect

Public participation on design, particularly for a social housing project, is a complicated
process involving several actors and agencies, including, but not limited to, city and
provincial governments, developers, consultants, residents, architects and a larger public of
citizens. Each actor has varying degrees of authority and influence in the way that public
engagement is conducted, and unquestionably, the power of the architect to influence change
is limited. Yet, this report is primarily concerned with the role that architects play in this
process, through their attitudes and inclinations, and this last section of the chapter will
attempt to tease out how architects view their own agency within this complex network.

> Would it be any different if I was designing a cottage for you, wouldn't I go and talk to
> you and say, "Well, what kind of cottage are you thinking of?" Don't architects ask
> those questions? Why don't we ask those questions to the people that are going to use
> the building? It seem[s] simple to me. What's the role? You do what you always do, but
> you're more inclusive.
>
> Charles Rosenberg (interview)[97]
> Associate, Hilditch Architect

Rosenberg posits that engaging users in design development is fundamental to the role of an
architect, regardless of the type of project. His attitude reveals an acceptance of the challenge
that this position might entail in the context of social housing, where clients and users are
clearly separate entities, and users may number in the hundreds, or even thousands. This also
translates to a departure from the traditional role of an architect of serving the client's
requirements; being "more inclusive" implies treating the user's needs on par with those of
the client. Realistically, this approach, though compelling has restrictions for the career of an
architect, especially with regard to the type of clients they can work with. As Rosenberg
expressed to me during the interview, their firm prefers not to take on commercial projects,
choosing instead to work with not-for-profit groups and consequently, working on projects

---

[97] Charles Rosenberg, interview with author. Toronto, June 19, 2015.

where identifying and serving the client's needs often coincides with meeting those of the user.

A comparable approach, without the social subtext, is articulated by Pina Petricone of Giannone Petricone Associates. She articulates the role of an architect as one of a "custom tailor" as opposed to a designer of "haute couture," implying that for an architect responding to the constraints imposed by a particular project in terms of site, budget, program etc. is more important than purely "aspiring to the best and highest standards of design." This attitude suggests that providing for the user while designing is of utmost importance to any notion of design success, even if it means "one arm is longer than the other, oh well" compared to the alternative approach where "It's all about the gown." Yet, this also suggests that the users' needs are quantifiable measurements like those a custom tailor might consult, limiting the role of the architect to the designer of a physical product as opposed to an individual capable of effecting social change.

"Managing your client(s)' wishes": representing the client and user

> Well I think it's a combination of being a really good listener and interpreter, on the one hand. But it's not just listening and playing back to people what they know; as urban designers, as architects, landscape architects, we bring to them knowledge of what things could be, and some of our own experiences of what has been successful in the city. So it's a tier-to-tier conversation, where both parties are bringing something significant to the table.
>
> Ken Greenberg (interview)[98]
> Director of Urban Design and Architecture, City of Toronto.

Greenberg implies that the relationship between architects and the public is a partnership, "where both parties are bringing something significant to the table." Though he posits that the architect needs to be a "really good listener and interpreter on the one hand," his statement re-establishes the role of the architect as the expert within the context of participatory design. In this view, the architect is not a representative of the community, rather, an individual with the advantage of "knowledge," who can benefit the community

---

[98] Ken Greenberg, interview with author. Toronto, May 28, 2015.

through the sharing of this knowledge. While he is required to listen and interpret, he is an expert on a panel that makes the final decisions with regard to the built environment. In response to a question regarding how the team of experts dealt with situations where they weren't able to deliver what the community wanted, Greenberg replied:

> Well you just had to be honest. We were very honest, as was the housing corporation, about the economic parameters that most people were dealing with, and not everything was possible, and it was important not to over promise.

This challenges the possibility of an equal partnership between experts and residents; rather it implies that the experts represented the housing corporation in the case of Regent Park through the public consultation process. Another perception of the architect's role sees him/her as being positioned between the clients and the users, effectively representing them both:

> Our role is to make that process rewarding for the user groups. They have to feel that they're contributing meaningfully to the process. We have to be good listeners, and we have to communicate between those user groups what their needs are. Because sometimes one user group is not even aware of what another user groups' needs or wants or their priorities are. So then it becomes a process of managing your clients' wishes, right? So that they understand each other well.
>
>   Jennifer Mallard (interview)[99]
>   Associate, Diamond Schmitt Architects

This description of the role of an architect positions her as a sort of mediator or facilitator within the participatory design process. She is charged with the task of representing different clients, here seen as the developer as well as the tenants for the Daniels Spectrum, and of making them aware of each other's interests. This also seems to suggest that if different parties are made aware of their distinct needs and priorities some level of reconciliation can be achieved; that there is merit in communication between different user groups, and also the potential for an architectural solution that fulfils these different needs through an implied compromise. The other significant task is to make the different users "feel" that their contribution to the process is valuable. This approach requires the architect to have a

---

[99] Jennifer Mallard, interview with author. Toronto, May 27, 2015.

specifically social capacity, not exclusively a technical or entrepreneurial one. With regard to the importance of public participation for the success of a project, Mallard suggests:

> It's how you see the role of an architect. There are some who just want to put their mark on the world and they don't listen to those social, contextual cues. But there are some that think context is more important.

Mallard's remark resonates with the thesis of this research, that the benefits of a participatory design process are contingent on how the architects perceive their own role. Meagher expresses a similar view of architects through his experience on the Regent Park project – while some considered user feedback as a "boon" that enriched their design, others felt that it interfered with their design process and considered it a hindrance. Most of the architects interviewed expressed the view that user input did help the design process, whether it allowed the architects to imagine a lifestyle that they were unfamiliar with or whether it brought to light problems that they were generally unaware of.

The next chapter investigates the other prescribed benefit of participatory design: user empowerment. This part of the study aims to explore the outcomes of the participatory design process at Regent Park through conversations with residents who have been part of the consultations or have occupied new buildings and can provide feedback and relate their experiences.

CHAPTER 3

Participatory Design for Community Empowerment

Introduction

Participatory design serves to empower users by including them in the shaping of their built environment.[100] This chapter seeks to examine this assumption in the context of the Regent Park case study, investigating the processes and impact of community engagement and participation in the architectural design of the new redevelopment. The revitalization of Regent Park, as described in the previous chapter, relied extensively on community consultation, involving grassroots agencies and community leaders and also on community capacity building through training residents and community animators. Given this focus on community building and engagement, I was interested to understand how the residents were involved in the process and about their perceptions of the process itself, and lastly, how they perceived the revitalization to be affecting their community.

I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with residents, social workers and community animators. Participants were recruited through "snowball sampling"[101]; the first participant was recruited through referral by one of the architects interviewed in the previous chapter, and through subsequent chain referrals a total of seven participants were interviewed. Four of the interviewees were residents, and three were social workers in Regent Park; while all the residents had attended community meetings, two had participated actively from the initial stages and a third had been employed as a community animator.

The first section of the chapter explores how individual participants came to be involved in the process and their level of engagement, also probing their experience of the public

---

[100] Giancarlo De Carlo. "Architecture's Public," in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till (Abingdon: Spon Press, 2007), 3-22.

[101] A technique that finds new participants for research by requesting existing participants to recommend future ones from among their acquaintances, referenced in Chaim Nov, "Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research," *International Journal of social research methodology* 11. 4 (2008): 327-344.

consultations and participatory design process. The next section tackles the displacement and method of relocation, uncovered through first hand accounts. The third section details the residents' comments on the new spaces and buildings of Regent Park. The final section addresses the less tangible effects of the process on the community and lays out residents' suggestions for improving it.

The revitalization of Regent Park commenced in 2005, and is halfway complete with two out of five phases redeveloped and reoccupied, while relocation of residents from Phase 3 is currently underway. Originally slated for a 2020 completion, the current status of redevelopment suggests the likelihood that it will only be completed by 2025.[102] Within this timeline, an estimated figure of 10,000 people will be relocated, an outcome of redeveloping Canada's largest social housing project. Findings echo previously cited media reports, with residents expressing mixed feelings about the redevelopment and the new buildings. These feelings were, however, inextricably tied to the trauma of displacement. Residents also posit on the overall impact of the engagement process on the community, and the interviews suggest that while the participatory design has eased the transition from old to new Regent Park, it has not compensated for the breakdown of social networks accompanying the displacement.

3.1.   Engagement

Resident advocacy for the redevelopment of Regent Park can be traced back to the 1980s, later coalescing into a more sustained engagement in 1995 with the formation of resident groups such as the Regent Park Northeast Redevelopment Working Committee and the Regent Park Resident Council. [103] The city of Toronto states that the revitalization was initiated in response to over fifteen years of petitions from residents of Regent Park,

---

[102] The original revitalization plan was estimated to take between 15 – 20 years and since Phase 3 is estimated for completion in 2019, it seems unlikely that Phase 4 and 5 will be completed before 2025. Reference — Toronto Community Housing Corporation, "Regent Park," *Toronto Community Housing Corporation* website, accessed September 15, 2015. http://www.torontohousing.ca/regentpark.

[103] Bay Weyman et al., *Return to Regent Park.* (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 2008); Diane Maclean, interview with author. Personal interview. Toronto, July 2, 2015.

beginning in 1995.[104] In the previous chapter, architect Ken Greenberg and consultant Sean Meagher described the first step in the revitalization process as working to gain community trust and support for the project. This highlights contradictions in the Toronto Community Housing Corporation's purported motivation for the project, as well as a contrast within the resident community — between those who had petitioned the city for the redevelopment and those whose support had yet to be gained. Resident interviews both support and disprove the city's claim as they reveal varying experiences and motivations for taking part in the community consultations. This aspect of the study may be of special interest to agencies seeking to engage residents in the design of their neighbourhoods.

"Not just about new buildings": becoming involved

> In 1995, I was asked to sit at the table and start talking about these buildings… I was already an advocate in the community for community redevelopment, so they said, "Diane, we got a thing, come sit at a few meetings."
>
> Diane Maclean (Interview)[105]
> Administrative Coordinator, Parents for Better Beginnings and resident at Regent Park

As a resident and community worker who was socially active in the neighbourhood, Maclean was invited to sit at a table with architects, planners and city authorities in 1995, which eventually led to the setting up of the North East Redevelopment Committee. Maclean describes the factors that led her to become an advocate for community driven redevelopment – a combination of deteriorating built infrastructure and top-down spatial interventions that failed to improve the quality of life. She was also personally driven by her own sub-standard living conditions; according to her, the buildings in Regent Park, built in 1948, were "falling apart" by the 1980s and this state of disrepair was exacerbated by poor maintenance and slow response rate to tenant complaints: "You called and you may never, ever have anyone come." Against this scenario of poor physical infrastructure, quality of life at Regent Park was also impacted by the city's attempts to tackle drug trafficking in the neighbourhood. Acting on tip offs from a few residents, the city began dismantling any

---

[104] Toronto Community Housing Corporation. "Regent Park," *Toronto Community Housing Corporation* website, accessed September 15, 2015. http://www.torontohousing.ca/regentpark.
[105] Diane Maclean, interview with author, Toronto, July 2, 2015.

amenities that were being used by drug dealers within the neighbourhood, including playgrounds, park benches, phone booths, mailboxes as well as any fences that could be used for sitting etc. These factors led Maclean to believe that successful changes in Regent Park could only be achieved through a bottom-up, community-led development.

Early on in the proceedings of the committee, the members who were Regent Park residents requested to be "mentored" by city officials in an effort to strengthen their voice within the committee and ensure their role as equal stakeholders. Maclean describes spending Saturdays sitting at restaurants with city officials and poring over architectural drawings and budgets, in an effort to understand the scope and nature of these documents. Subsequently, Maclean went on to chair the committee until 2013, at which point she had moved out of Regent Park and had to leave the committee.

Shelly Manuel (name changed), also a community worker and resident, revealed a similar motivation for being involved with the revitalization and expressed that one of her greatest desires was that "redevelopment happened with the people of the community, not to them."[106] As a community development worker and community leader in Regent Park for over 20 years, Manuel was asked to be a member of the Regent Park Resident Council, a group of residents and volunteers that worked to ensure that the community had a voice in the redevelopment. She was also engaged with the group of residents and community engagement consultants that penned the Regent Park Revitalization: Social Development Plan, a document that laid out seventy-five principles that the redevelopment would follow. Created between 2005 and 2009, the plan was a guideline for the revitalization process, the "first of its kind" to be commissioned by the city of Toronto and passed by the City Council.[107] The resident recounts working with Sean Meagher, partner at Public Interest, the community engagement consultancy for the project, on the Social Development Plan. According to her, Meagher authored the plan, but collaboratively, and it was a product of joint deliberations between community leaders and different agency representatives. The plan

---

[106] Shelly Manuel (name changed). Interview with author. Telephone interview. Toronto, August 10, 2015.
[107] Toronto Community Housing Corporation, "Regent Park", http://www.torontohousing.ca/regentpark.

addressed the social aspects of the redevelopment, attempting to ensure that the process was "not just about building new buildings... [but] about improving the quality of life experience in Regent Park for all people." Manuel has a continuing involvement with the revitalization in her role as community development worker.

While these two residents' accounts suggest that they were actively involved in initiating the redevelopment, further interviews reveal contradictory experiences. Ashrafi Ahmed and Rajakumary K., also residents of Regent Park, recount finding out about the redevelopment after Phase One had been initiated, at which point their homes were already slated for demolition as part of that phase. Rajakumary first became aware of the redevelopment at a public meeting in 2005, at which residents living in the area demarcated as Phase One were informed that they would be relocated:

> Before we didn't know about that… they had a meeting and they told us – "First we are going to do this [relocation and demolition], we can't help it. All things will be moved and again we will build a new building, then you can come back and we can help with the moving." [108]

Unlike Maclean, Rajakumary didn't express a desire for change in Regent Park. On the contrary, she spoke about the advantages of living in Regent Park prior to the revitalization that included services for low-income residents like community centres and medical facilities, as well as the everyday support offered by the community. Rajakumary doesn't remember being consulted on the design of the new buildings, though she does explain that she had a small baby at the time and may have missed the meeting. While unsure of whether residents were consulted on architectural design during the early phases of construction, she reveals,

> Now they are asking. After they start up, they know the first building there were some troubles, in Phase One. They are getting people's opinion now, I know. I mean, I am going to the meetings too. [109]

---

[108] Rajakumary K. Interview with author. Personal interview. Toronto, August 19, 2015.
[109] Ibid.

Rajkumary was not the only interviewee who became aware of the revitalization only at the time that it affected her personally. Ahmed found out about the impending demolition of her building through word of mouth as she was still a newcomer to the community at the time and had not yet established any social networks that could induct her into the engagement process.[110] This news, obtained through secondary sources, led to much anxiety at the time of relocation, aggravated by a lack of clear information and the fear of not being allowed to return to the community. Motivated by her own stressful experience, Ahmed subsequently went on to become a Community Animator — a resident recruited by the community engagement consultants to inform other members of the community about the process and engage them with it. Responding to a question about whether she has attended the public consultations, Ahmed responds:

> Yes. Always I am attending, and that is why I tell the residents – "Just attend. If you can't attend the meeting, you are always behind."

Ahmed uses her role as Community Animator to allay residents' fears and encourage them to participate in the consultations and ask questions:

> Just read the paper, and if you need something, you have a right to ask the question. Sometimes people have no idea, what is their right. We have a language barrier. English is our second language, not our first language. But I say, this is your right, to ask! Even if you can't understand, just tell them, "Let me know the meaning!"

These residents' experiences point to the influence of certain factors such as length of stay, social networks and language on the level of engagement and participation in the community. The barrier of language, despite efforts by TCHC and Daniels Corporation to use interpreters, seems to have excluded certain communities during community engagement and also prevented them from receiving clear information. As revealed by Ahmed's experience, unclear information proved particularly debilitating during the relocation and demolition stages of the revitalization. This section revealed certain failures in the communication between the TCHC and the residents; what were the factors responsible for the problems in communication in the revitalization process?

---

[110] Ashrafi Ahmed. Interview with author. Personal interview. Toronto, August 19, 2015.

"From the CEO to the grassroots": challenges to communication

> [There were] some disputes because of rumours they heard, "You're not going to get back in, you're not going to do this, and you're not going to do that." Without going to meetings and asking questions for themselves, some of them, I must say, lack comprehension because they do not understand the English lingo properly, how this part of the world speaks and how they say their thing. Those who know it, decide to twist it around.
>
> <div align="right">Gideon Buntyng (Interview) [111]
Vice Chair, Board of Directors, TD Centre of Learning</div>

Buntyng, a community worker in Regent Park since the last three years, has observed the damage that rumours can inflict on the community, according to him, perpetuated by residents who were against the revitalization. Language barriers as well as a general mistrust of the authorities among residents compound the fear of not being allowed to come back to Regent Park. Ahmed also highlights this issue, adding that some residents presumed that the city authorities and the developer were colluding "to take the place from [them]" in order to put up market rate condominiums.

According to Manuel, this mistrust was rooted in lapses in communication that occurred during the early stages of the redevelopment. She gives the example of three buildings with Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) units that were built off the footprint of Regent Park but which the TCHC considered as fulfilling the requirement of replacing RGI units for Regent Park. Residents who agreed to relocate to these buildings, unwittingly waived their right of return to Regent Park, not realising this was a permanent relocation and not a temporary one. This incident sparked a lot of anger among the residents and community groups with the consequence that the TCHC agreed to provide all future replacement units within Regent Park. At the time, Manuel remembers trying to understand what caused the misunderstanding, and attributing it to "a break in communication because people didn't have translators; they didn't understand that they were signing a lease that was for a permanent move."[112] Though communication between the TCHC and the residents was problematic in this case, this example also shows that the community had a strong voice and

---

[111] Gideon Buntyng. Interview with author. Personal interview. Toronto, August 20, 2015.

[112] Shelly Manuel. Interview with author. Toronto, August 10, 2015.

was able to ensure that no RGI further units were constructed outside of the Regent Park neighbourhood.

Another example that Manuel cites is of confusion caused by unclear terminology used by the TCHC. According to her, the TCHC uses the term social housing to refer to two kinds of units - Rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units, but also affordable housing units available at 20% below the market rate. She recounts:

> So you're constantly asking them, "How many RGI units are you talking about?" They'll say there are so many units of social housing, then you have to get it broken down, "Well how much of that is affordable housing, and how much of that is RGI?" So that's another area of clarity.

Maclean's account, however, suggests that these areas of confusion were unintentional on the part of TCHC. During almost two decades of involvement with the redevelopment as chair of the Regent Park Resident Council, Maclean had direct contact with three consecutive CEOs of the TCHC, as well as several architects involved with the project including Ken Greenberg of the Regent Park Collaborative Team. According to her, Derek Ballantyne, the first CEO of TCHC to be involved with the project, began to attend the Resident Council meetings — she posits that "instead of creating his own public consultation process he just joined ours." Maclean suggests that one of his main agendas for attending these bimonthly meetings was rumour control; Ballantyne depended on the residents to report damaging rumours they heard and in turn his staff attempted to dissipate them. Maclean narrates an anecdote:

> Someone was told by Housing [TCHC] that they had to paint their home before they were relocated. So Derek asked why, and I said, "Your staff is telling people to paint a building that's going to be destroyed in a 140 days," and he said, "What! Let me get on the phone." That is how we got right from the CEO to grassroots and back up and out again.[113]

Challenges to communication appear not to have been restricted to indirect verbal and written interaction but also extended to the medium of direct interaction between residents and organizers at the community consultations. The next section details residents'

---

[113] Shelly Manuel. Interview with author. Toronto, August 10, 2015.

descriptions of community consultations, including those meetings that addressed architectural design.

"More on the line of an update": community consultations

> Sometimes they call the meeting, and they don't provide the actual information that people want. They just say, "This is the update, this is what is happening, come and do this thing" - and people feel angry. They came for their information, and sometimes if they ask questions, they're ignored. Then, that is also stressful.
>
> Ashrafi Ahmed (interview)[114]
> Community Animator and resident of Regent Park

Ahmed calls attention to the frustration that residents associate with attending public meetings at which the issues that are of particular concern to them are not addressed. Christine Swearing, Housing Initiatives Manager at the Toronto Christian Resource Center (TCRC), and a community worker in the area confirms Ahmed's account of the public meetings. Speaking about a community consultation that took place in March this year, Swearing describes it as "more on the lines of an update" that discussed the next phase of the redevelopment.[115]

Interestingly, meetings that addressed design were described as being more interactive; Manuel reports that residents were actively engaged in the design of public spaces such as the park, the athletics grounds and the community centre. She recalls architects being present at these meetings and asking residents "what they would like to see"; for example, residents wanted a greenhouse and an outdoor oven for the park, both of which have been incorporated into the final design. According to her, the concept for the Daniels Spectrum Cultural Centre also came directly from women residents that said they wanted a place where they could "celebrate their cultures together with learning, arts and cultural space."[116]

---

[114] Ashrafi Ahmed. Interview with author. Toronto, August 19, 2015.
[115] Christine Swearing. Interview with author. Personal interview. Toronto, August 20, 2015.
[116] Shelly Manuel. Interview with author. Toronto, August 10, 2015.

However, she also points to important aspects of the design of the redevelopment where resident feedback was not sought or addressed – first on the type of commercial development as part of the new mixed-use community, and second regarding the community's desire for "integrated buildings." Though appreciative of the new amenities in the neighbourhood connected with mixed-use development such as a bank, a grocery store and a fast food restaurant, she feels that the residents were not adequately engaged in the integration of the commercial sector. A collaboratively developed commercial sector in Regent Park could have held much more social potential in terms of employment of residents, she posits. Additionally, the type of commercial spaces provided are closed in the evenings, meaning that streets that earlier had townhouses or apartment buildings that were lit and occupied at night, are now dark and unpeopled.

On the second point, she asserts that the community wanted not only mixed-income development, as has been reported by the planning team in the previous chapter, but specifically demanded that social housing and private market housing be combined within the same buildings. According to her, the residents were very keen to have these "integrated buildings"; however, what has been provided is so-called "uniform design" that ensures though private market housing and social housing are provided in separate buildings, they look similar.

Despite pointing out challenges and problems within the community engagement and consultation process, several of the interviewees also expressed opinions that the revitalization process was evolving and being improved based on changes that the TCHC was incorporating using resident feedback. Interviews provided examples of ways in which the revitalization process has been modified since its commencement in 2005 to better cater to residents.

"Day by day they improve": an evolving process

> TCHC has been quite good at adapting to people's needs and it has been holding
> community consultations quite frequently and working with social workers and such. I

would say the process has improved, it has been a learning process for everyone, and they're certainly responding to the residents needs.

Tim Svirklys (interview) [117]
Studio Manager at the ArtHeart Community Art Centre

Svirklys, a community worker in Regent Park for the last 20 years, cites the example of residents' complaints that they were being relocated in the middle of the school year, which was proving disruptive to families with children. The TCHC responded by changing the schedule such that residents would be relocated during the summer months. Additionally, buses were organized to transport children who had been relocated within a certain distance of Regent Park, so that they could continue to attend the same schools.

Ahmed also refers to an evolving process, that "day by day, they [TCHC] improve a lot." Comparing her own stressful experience at the time of being relocated in 2010, to the experiences of residents she deals with in her capacity as Community Animator today, Ahmed is optimistic about the future of the revitalization process. According to her, the TCHC has strong feedback mechanisms in place through their Community Animators who provide grassroots support to the residents.[118]

Returning also to Rajakumary's remark about recent processes in the revitalization that consult residents about the architecture of the new residential buildings to come.

> Now they are asking. After they start up, they know the first building there were some troubles, in Phase One. They are getting people's opinion now, I know. I mean, I am going to the meetings too.[119]

The inference here is that the TCHC is responding to resident dissatisfaction with the social housing buildings put up in earlier phases and pre-empting discontent with any future buildings by including residents in their design. It points to the existence of feedback mechanisms for post-occupancy evaluations that inform the TCHC and architects about residents' experiences with the occupied buildings. But more significantly it points to the

---

[117] Tim Svirklys. Interview with author. Telephone interview. Toronto, August 12, 2015.
[118] Ashrafi Ahmed. Interview with author. Toronto, August 19, 2015.
[119] Rajakumary K. Interview with author. Toronto, August 19, 2015.

acknowledgement by the TCHC and the developer that user participation in design has a direct correlation with user satisfaction, especially in the case of social housing.

3.2.   Displacement

One of the major challenges with a redevelopment project at the scale of Regent Park is the displacement of thousands of people and, as expected, a strong leitmotif through all the interviews was the trauma and anxiety associated with the displacement caused by the revitalization. Attitudes to this displacement varied between anger and acceptance; while some residents questioned the method of relocation, others accepted it as inevitable. The displacement of residents was not addressed by any of the architects discussed in the earlier chapter, yet this is an area of study that has strong implications on the planning and design of revitalization projects. Alongside the design of new buildings, measures to preserve, accommodate and acknowledge existing buildings and their residents have immense scope in the discipline of architecture. This section describes the system of relocation and return that has been implemented for Regent Park as reported by the residents.

"The lottery system": relocating residents

> There's different ways to do it, and I know it's a huge undertaking; I can't imagine what the database looks like for this. But I think that's something about the people part that didn't happen. Treating people like a number, or treating people like they're in a lottery, especially when people have issues about gambling and feeling like a number and relying on chance, not very nice.
>
> Diane Maclean (Interview)
> Administrative Coordinator, *Parents For Better Beginnings* and resident at Regent Park

Maclean is referring to the lottery system, a system that relied on a number draw to determine the choice that residents were given at two stages during the displacement – while relocating out of old Regent Park buildings slated for demolition, as well as while returning to new buildings within the neighbourhood. While she acknowledges that there were no easy alternatives to the lottery system given the large number of people that are relocated at one time, Maclean expresses anger at the idea that residents end up feeling powerless as a

consequence, compounding their already vulnerable position with respect to citizenship and their mistrust of authorities.

However, the experience of having to relocate, before the lottery system was in place, has also been described as being "very hard."[120] Rajkumary recounts being relocated as part of Phase 1 in 2005, and having to wait in line outside the TCHC redevelopment office from 4 a.m., so that she could have access to more choices of the vacant TCHC units available. Her main priority at the time was to remain in Regent Park, where her support systems and family were located. She considers herself fortunate to be moved to an apartment within Regent Park, but points out the injustice of the system that was especially problematic for senior citizens and people with disabilities.
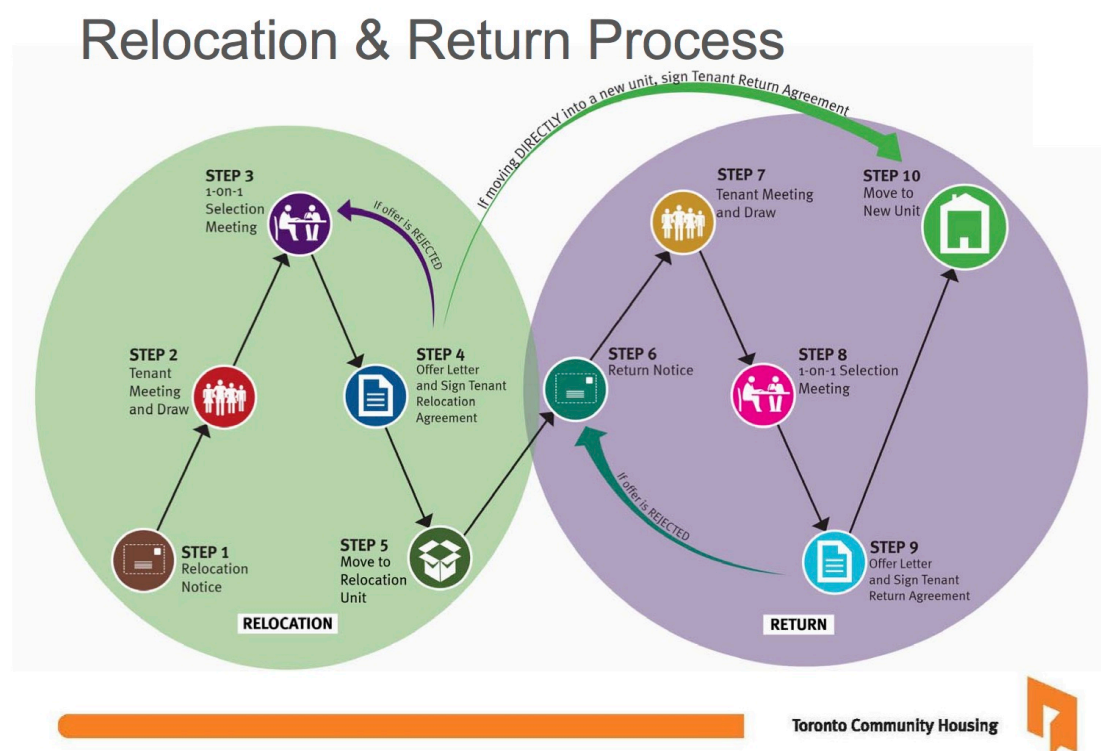
Toronto Community Housing Corporation, slide from latest tenant update meeting held on January 20, 2015. http://www.torontohousing.ca/webfm_send/11256.

Figure 8. Slide illustrating relocation and return process.

---

[120] Rajakumary K. Interview with author. Toronto, August 19, 2015.

Ahmed, who relocated in 2010, after the lottery system was instated, describes this system of random selection as "another headache":

> Because, when you move, that time you have a selection and again when you move in, there is selection. And people are always like, "Maybe my number is top one." If your number is lower, then you have more opportunities to choose the right thing. But if your number is behind, you are the last person.[121]

She remembers, at the time of being relocated, being told "there is no place," and being offered a new apartment outside of Regent Park. But she rejected the offer, opting instead to stay temporarily at 274 Sackville Street, an old TCHC building in Regent Park. She too felt the need to stay within Regent Park with the rest of her family and friends, which she expressed was also important for her children.[122]

Christine Swearing speaks about her previous experience as a community worker in Scarborough, Toronto, where a number of Regent Park residents were, and continue to be, relocated.

> There was no support for them. They were trying to figure out where to go, what to do – it's a new area, transit is different, and things are different. It's the same city but things are different and some things they are not used to, so it takes time... It's stressful if you are moving to a place that's completely under served, when you're used to having everything at your fingertips.[123]

Swearing emphasises the stress accompanying this kind of relocation, particularly given Regent Park's central location in the city, close to public transit, and the relatively easy access it offers to residents in terms of grassroots support like community kitchens or health facilities. She continues to elaborate also on the stress of returning to a revitalized Regent Park:

> So, moving back here, just the stress of a changed community, it's not what you remember. It doesn't feel… it's going to take a while for it to become home, if it ever feels like home. So even though the old condos were built and designed like dog bones

---

[121] Ashrafi Ahmed. Interview with author. Toronto, August 19, 2015.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Christine Swearing. Interview with author. Toronto, August 20, 2015.

> \- that was your home. These new, fancy, smaller units may not be best for the individual.

The community organisation that Swearing works with, the Toronto Christian Resource Centre provides programming to engage residents moving back into the community, aiming to reduce their stress levels through music, arts and craft activities.[124]

Ahmed expresses another aspect of the anxiety of returning to Regent Park – choosing a new apartment. While returning to new apartments, once again residents draw numbers that will decide the order in which they will move in, as well as, the range of apartments they have to choose from.

> The bad thing is that they don't give us the opportunity to visit before we enter. Just one day before, they give me the key. So you don't have anything, you just have an idea that "Okay, it looks like this." Because I am not an architect like you, I am a regular person and so I don't have any idea what these square feet will look like, how this bedroom will be. So that is a big challenge.

Ahmed reveals that TCHC officials encourage residents to list more than one choice, in case their first choice is not available. However, they are asked to choose apartments by looking at blueprints and not allowed any access to the apartment before they move in. Ahmed was satisfied with her apartment as she was granted her first choice, which was an apartment on the southeast corner of the building, a location that is considered auspicious by her culture.[125]

Rajakumary also felt fortunate as she drew the number 42 while moving in which allowed her to list a large number of preferred apartment choices. She accepts this method of selection as being fair, as she says "the building is very big; they have to do the draw, otherwise how can they select the people who go first? That's why they do a random draw."[126]

---

[124] Christine Swearing. Interview with author. Toronto, August 20, 2015.

[125] Ashrafi Ahmed. Interview with author. Toronto, August 19, 2015.

[126] Rajakumary K. Interview with author. Toronto, August 19, 2015.

According to the community engagement consultants, the number draw relocation strategy was developed collaboratively with the residents as a means to "complete the move in a timely, supported way."[127] The chief limitation vis-à-vis the relocation strategy is the scale of the Regent Park revitalization, with approximately a fifth of 7,000 residents being relocated in every phase. While the method of random selection to allocate the order in which residents choose to be relocated may appear undemocratic, the "first-come, first served" alternative as described by Rajkumary critically disadvantages vulnerable populations like seniors and the disabled, while also promoting residents to compete against each other for resources. Residents who are aged or disabled are disadvantaged when having to compete for resources in physically demanding ways such as queuing up for hours in order to be able to have more choices for relocation; subsequently the random draw selection is a non-discriminatory alternative.

3.3   New Regent Park

In relation with the redevelopment of Regent Park, the most commonly expressed feeling was appreciation for the removal of stigma associated with the revitalized neighbourhood. Other common themes were happiness expressed about the new public spaces and outdoor facilities like the park, aquatic centre and athletics grounds. Opinions with regard to the new housing buildings were vastly different, despite recurring complaints about the size of the new apartments and the quality of construction.

"It's been modernised": new buildings

> I felt so excited when I saw the new building, because we are poor people, we can't ever go to a new building, yeah? And that's why I thought, "Oh we are going to live in a new building." That's comfortable.
>
> Rajakumary K. (interview)[128]
> Resident of Regent Park

---

127 Public Interest. "Regent Park" on Public Interest website. Accessed September 19, 2015. http://www.publicinterest.ca/community-engagement/regent-park
128 Rajakumary K. Interview with author. Toronto, August 19, 2015.

Rajakumary's excitement was short-lived however. She goes on to recount the difficulties her family began to face within a few years of moving into 246 Sackville Street, the first new TCHC building in Regent Park. Her complaints include suspicions about the quality of materials used in the construction such as the use of plasterboard instead of brick for walls – "if we do something, hardly, our hand will go inside," or the paint – "the children touch something, it comes off on their hands," as well as the elevator which breaks down regularly. She reports that a glass pane fell from one of the balconies, after which all the balconies were closed off for 3 months while repairs were conducted. She jokes that, whilst new buildings are coming up in Regent Park, her building continues to break down, and that when the revitalization is finished, she will have to move again.

However, on being questioned about whether the TCHC has been responsive in dealing with these building issues, she replies positively, stating that they usually repair the problem within three or four days. Yet she interposes, "the old buildings were not so easily damaged, they were strong, I think." Her account makes it difficult to determine whether these complaints with regard to the new building are rooted in feelings of attachment to the old buildings, or arise from deeper dissatisfaction with the new units.

For Rajakumary, an appreciation of the revitalization stems from the perceived detachment of stigma from Regent Park:

> Revitalization, look, this is beautiful yeah? Before, when we had the old buildings, people would say "Oh, Regent Park? You are living in Regent Park? Why are you living there?" But now people are happy, "Oh, you've got a new building, a nice big apartment, everything is fine." It's been modernised.

She concludes with the opinion that she likes Regent Park better now, as the mixed-income development allows social housing tenants and market rate condo owners to mix, giving residents an opportunity to "meet the rich people too;" residents no longer feel that they are living in social housing.

Figure 9. Street view of 246 Sackville Street apartments by architectsAlliance.

According to Manuel, other residents have also echoed mixed feelings about the revitalization. She cites certain residents who "can't wait to return; they're very excited, they love the new units and they think the appliances are beautiful." She expresses a particular fondness for 230 Sackville Street, a TCHC rental building completed in 2013 and designed by Wallman Architects. She appreciates its common spaces such as a play space on the second floor, a common area on the ninth floor and the large building lobby, and also its sustainable design features such as a green roof and water recycling. At the same time, she also reports residents' complaints that the apartments are smaller than their previous units and certain communities being unhappy about the open-plan kitchens that are "against their culture" and are the cause of some communal tensions.

An example of a building that suffered due to inadequate user input in the building design was 252 Sackville Street; a 22 storey building that was created specially to house seniors. According to Manuel, the seniors are uncomfortable with the height of the building and the floor to ceiling external glass cladding. There have been recurring issues with the elevators in the building, resulting in debilitating mobility issues for the senior citizens.

Toronto Community Housing Corporation. http://www.torontohousing.ca/webfm_send/9840.

Figure 10. An outside view of 230 Sackville St. apartments by Wallman Architects and the common area on the 9ᵗʰ floor.

Toronto Community Housing Corporation.http://www.torontohousing.ca/webfm_send/5138.

Figure 11. Rendering of 252 Sackville Street apartments by architectsAlliance.

Additionally, upkeep and maintenance issues with the glass cladding have resulted in balconies being closed off for several months, and residents having no access to fresh air in their homes. She also mentions that the seniors were keen to have a building with social services integrated within it. Manuel highlights an important critique of the phasing of the building that was built as part of Phase One - she asserts that a building for a vulnerable population like seniors should have been built at a later stage once the TCHC had worked out challenges faced in other buildings, also taking the time to include the users in the design.

Ahmed considers the revitalization "really fortunate for the community" and appreciates the well-organised use of space, even if the apartments are smaller. Her favourite parts of the revitalization however are, the public spaces such as the park and the community garden, spaces that promote mingling between social housing tenants and condo owners. Interestingly, spaces at the intersection of social housing and private market also serve as potential sites of conflict over ownership, accessibility and privileging certain users over others. The next section highlights portions of the interviews that raised these concerns over shared public amenities.

Contested Spaces

> What happens when this is a mixed income community? You know your funding changes, are you going to open your doors to everybody that lives here, or just those with the most need? Everybody in this area was poor so those were your clients, but if it's mixed income, are you going to start doing mean testing? Are you going to assess and see who deserves the programs more, based on need? Does the funder say, "I want this to go to underprivileged kids only?"
>
> Diane Maclean (Interview)[129]
> Administrative Coordinator, Parents for Better Beginnings and resident at Regent Park

Maclean points out one of the challenges that a newly mixed-income community like Regent Park can face, especially with respect to sharing cultural resources that could cater to both social housing tenants and private condo owners alike. This concern is elucidated by an

---

[129] Diane Maclean, interview with author, Toronto, July 2, 2015.

example of the Daniels Spectrum Cultural Centre that Manuel shares. According to her, the Daniels Spectrum was built in response to residents' requests for a shared cultural space where they could "celebrate their cultures" through art. She elaborates that public facilities like the Daniels Spectrum were built in the early phases of the redevelopment, and prioritised over housing, to promote the coming together of social housing tenants and condo owners.

Through fundraising the Centre was able to offset costs, allowing community groups use of its 425-seat theatre for free once a year and low-income residents are also given complementary tickets to some of the ticketed performances. Yet, permission issues limit the use of these cultural spaces for residents and community groups. She elaborates:

> It's beautiful that we have these new spaces but we still have a problem accessing them. There's not a process in place now, how do you book them, the community spaces? I'd like to see the city relax on its permitting so that it makes it easier for people to permit use of spaces. The processes are ridiculous. You want grassroots, you want volunteers to do these things, to animate these spaces and then they have to jump through hoops and you put up barriers and permits and restrictions.

She also cites cost related concerns through the example of a grassroots community organisation, the Regent Park Focus that works with youth through training in media and arts and is located at 38 Regent Street, a building owned by the city of Toronto to house child and youth facilities in Regent Park. Previously, Regent Park Focus was located in a TCHC building with an annual rent of $7,000, later being relocated to the new building for which rent was subsidised for the first few years. However, once the subsidy stopped the organisation was expected to pay $30,000 as its annual rent, despite having a total annual budget of $60,000. She points out the irony of a city-funded non-profit organisation that has to pay half of its yearly budget back to the city in the form of rent.

Another issue concerning spatial inequality that she highlights is that, since the redevelopment, community meetings have been conducted only within TCHC buildings and public spaces including the Daniels Spectrum, but none have taken place within public spaces in the private condominium towers in Regent Park. Though this may have been a consequence of unavailability of large spaces for congregation within the condominium

towers, the statement hints at Manuel's anxiety that tenants may not be assured the same rights as condo owners in the New Regent Park.

3.4.   Community empowerment

In the last section of this chapter, I explore the impact of the participatory design process on empowering users. First, I analyse the residents' and community workers' thoughts on how this process of community engagement could be improved to counter the challenges described in the earlier parts of this chapter and better suit user requirements. Then, I survey the residents' views on the net impact that the revitalization has had on their community, considering implications of both the community building efforts that have preceded the redevelopment and the negative repercussions of the displacement caused by it.

Improving the process

> They could have come with a clear plan to the residents and said upfront, "This is what's going to happen," instead of leaving them confused as to whether they're coming back or not. Spell it out clearly. Those who don't understand English properly for them, professional interpreters, not a neighbour, to interpret "This is what's going to happen, this is when you have to move so that we can tear down this part of the building and then this is the time you can come back."
>
> Gideon Buntyng (Interview)
> Vice Chair, Board of Directors, TD Centre of Learning

Many of the interviewees expressed a desire for clearer information early on in the process of revitalization as a means of avoiding the anxiety generated by misinformation and rumours through the community. It is difficult to identify the points of failure in communication between the TCHC and the residents, as outreach has been extensive, even as revealed by the interviewees. Outreach included establishing relationships with existing grassroots organisations and community leaders, training and establishing a network of community animators who could communicate with residents in their native language, as well as communicating directly with residents at several public meetings and consultations that were

advertised through posters, newsletters, emails and word-of-mouth communication. [130]
However, fault lines in outreach are also revealed through the interviews. Buntyng speaks
about language barriers despite the extensive use of interpreters and community animators –
he highlights the possibility of misinterpretation or biased interpretations by dissenting
residents, when communication is so highly dependent on a grassroots network as in the case
of Regent Park. Ahmed voices dissatisfaction with the way public meetings were conducted,
allotting too little time and importance to residents' questions. This complaint seems to have
also been registered by the TCHC; a recent meeting in January 2015 requested residents to
provide feedback on the way they would like the meetings to be conducted.
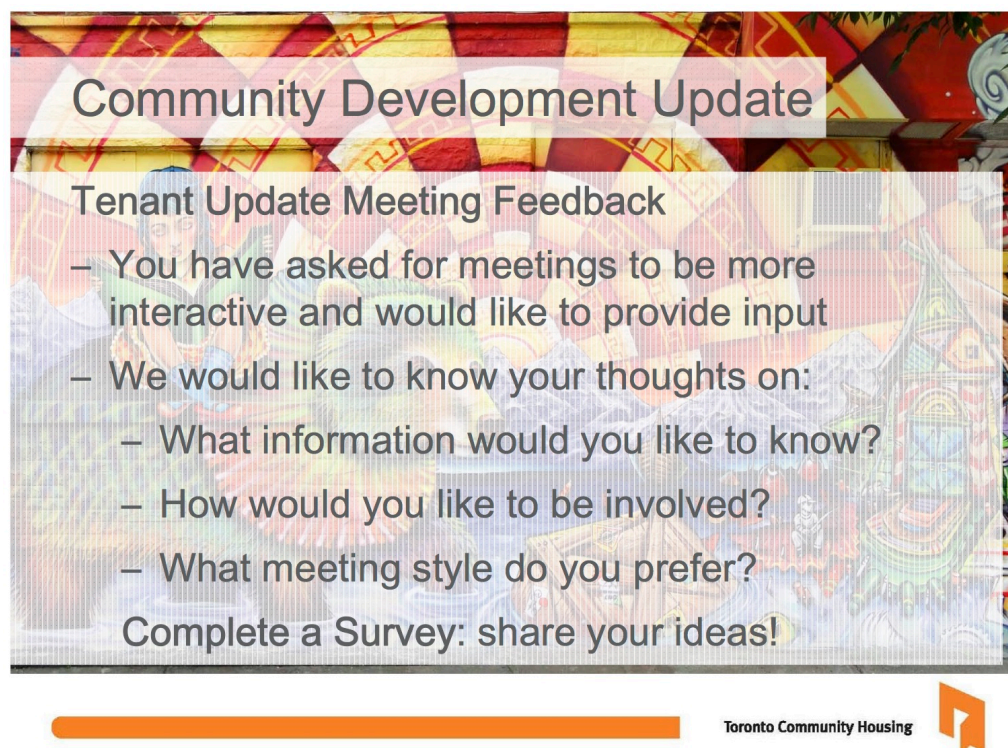
Toronto Community Housing Corporation, http://www.torontohousing.ca/webfm_send/11256.

Figure 12. Slide from latest tenant update meeting held on January 20, 2015.

---

[130] Diane Maclean. Interview with author. Toronto, July 2, 2015; Ashrafi Ahmed. Interview with author.
Toronto, August 19, 2015; Tim Svirklys. Interview with author. Toronto, August 12, 2015.

Many of the problems with the community engagement and consultations seem to arise from the challenge of working with a population of over 7,000 residents of Regent Park, some interviewees even suggested that the number was closer to 10,000. With such a large-scale operation, certain communities begin to fall through the cracks — such as the Vietnamese population, the homeless population or even persons with disabilities and senior citizens. [131] According to one resident, the youth of Regent Park did not feel adequately engaged and have subsequently started an independent campaign for a Youth Center in the neighbourhood. Within this scenario, Swearing, a community worker who works closely with the homeless and vulnerable populations of Regent Park recommends:

> There are some of the people who don't have the support; some people need more support than others. They may not be able to speak up for themselves or advocate for a particular service. So, I believe that could be something that could be worked on. Just identifying people who require support and ensuring they get the needed support while relocating.[132]

Other recommendations to improve communication include setting up a centralized system for obtaining information so that residents know where to go to find the information they need, when they need it. Another suggestion from Swearing was for post-occupancy evaluations for the new buildings that have been occupied; she is not aware if these surveys are being conducted.

Maclean, who is more familiar with neighbourhood planning and design through her association with the architects early in the process as well as her exposure to capacity building, has more material suggestions for the improvement of the revitalization process.

> You can't let ten years of further neglect happen to already neglected buildings and you can't just let other areas run derelict, and you can't let a playground not be used. There's a wading pool in North Regent that's been broken, they're not fixing it. Why? Because it's going anyway. Well it's hot! Yes, you have the aquatic center but it took two years between when the pool broke and the aquatic center was built. So you really have to find creative ways to make it liveable and enjoyable.

---

[131] Shelly Manuel. Interview with author. Toronto, August 10, 2015; Rajakumary. K. Interview with author. Toronto, August 19, 2015.

[132] Christine Swearing. Interview with author. Toronto, August 20, 2015.

The revitalization of Regent Park began in 2005; though originally slated for fifteen-year completion, only have three out of five phases will have been completed by 2019 and the redevelopment shows the likelihood of extending deadlines till 2025. [133] In the meantime, residents of Regent Park are faced with everyday challenges to their mobility, caused by construction sites and barricades, issues of air and noise pollution caused by construction, as well as the slow disintegration of any existing infrastructure that is scheduled for demolition in the next ten years.[134] Manuel vocalizes this sentiment:

> Those kinds of difficult changes, and how they impact your day to day life, the routes you take, in some cases it breaks my heart when I can see my house but I have to walk halfway around the block to get to it, because it has been fenced off for construction.

Maclean raises an important concern that is especially significant for architects, of finding ways to sustain, or improve the quality of the built environment within a neighbourhood that is going through the process of revitalization.

Impact of the process

The critical question that surfaced through conversations with residents was the impact of the participatory design process on their lives; did community participation in the design of their new neighbourhood ease the difficult transition between the old and new Regent Park?

> I think so, I would say definitely. I think if it was the opposite, and we had no say, then I would be telling you that everything is negative. You know how much I've been telling you is positive, right? But like I'm saying, there's good and bad.
>   Shelly Manuel (interview)
>   Resident and community worker in Regent Park

Additionally, this resident also expressed the sentiment that the Regent Park community was relatively fortunate to have been working with a developer (Daniels Corporation) that "has been engaged with community development, in the process of capacity building and

---

[133] Toronto Community Housing Corporation. "Regent Park," 2015.
[134] Shelly Manuel (interview). Interview with author. Toronto, August 10, 2015.

engaging with residents." She refers to reports she has heard from residents in other neighbourhoods that are undergoing similar transformations as "horror stories," situations where the residents were completely unaware of the developers and the plans for their neighbourhood.

Another way that the Regent Park community may have benefitted from the revitalization is the birth of new non-profit agencies or community empowering programmes since the revitalization started.[135] Buntyng characterises this change as externally driven:

> The people are looking for something to do and other people are mobilising them, pulling them together and inviting everybody, no matter where you're from…Get involved, see what's going on, take part; all that sort of thing.

He gives the example of the TD Centre of Learning, a non-profit organisation that was set up in 2010 as a centre for adult education programmes through a partnership between the University of Toronto, Ryerson University and George Brown College with financial support from the TD Bank Group and TCHC. Additionally, the centre started two programmes – the Immigrant Women Integration Programme that provides immigrant women with the skills necessary to enter the Canadian job market, and which has also enabled some residents with entrepreneurial training that has allowed them to start businesses locally. The second initiative is the Youth Empowering Parents programme, started in 2011 by two residents from Regent Park through which youth teach their parents computers skills in their first language. Other examples of recently created organisations include the privately funded Centre for Social Innovation set up in 2004 that provides co-working spaces in the Daniels Spectrum for social agencies.

Other community workers posit that the damage that the revitalization has inflicted on social networks is not easily remedied and the community will take several years to recover. Manuel comments on the effects of the revitalization:

---

[135] New organisations include Regent Park Film Festival (2003), TD Centre of Learning (2010), Youth Empowering Parents (2011).

This has caused an impact on our social networks. It means that the volunteer that everybody knew might have been relocated and we are still building relationships with the people who are new and coming in. There's a lot of work to be done around that and that's developing the grassroots again. We had sixteen grassroots groups before the redevelopment, now I'm lucky if I can count two.[136]

She goes on to elaborate on possible reasons for this breakdown of networks — changes caused by relocation of residents and community workers within and outside the neighbourhood have disrupted grassroots social networks that had been developed over decades prior to the revitalization process. According to Manuel, this "breakdown of networks" impacts residents' lives on a smaller scale as well – the loss of neighbours, family and friends from the neighbourhood is manifested as a "sense of grieving for our former community."[137] Additionally, she mentions that local grassroots agencies were struggling to meet the needs of the community even before the redevelopment, and post the redevelopment these existing agencies have not been granted the necessary resources to deal with the new challenges. In fact, she cites the requirement of participating in community consultation as "an additional obligation" for the community agencies, with no accompanying investment in the community service base; as a result, "people are stretched thin."[138]

Speaking to residents and community workers has revealed mixed feelings about the redevelopment; through the anxiety and loss caused by the relocation, many have expressed a sense of optimism for an "evolving process," through which their voices are heard and their feedback reaches the TCHC, resulting in a more sensitive future redevelopment process. Participation in the architectural design of their new community is only one aspect of a complex, multi-layered community engagement in Regent Park, and the interviews suggest that it was not of the highest priority for the residents, given their more pressing concerns with the relocation, return and loss of social networks.

Despite efforts from many actors including architects, community service agencies, TCHC and the Daniels Corporation, the interviews suggest that events unfolded contrary to the

---

[136] Shelly Manuel. Interview with author. Toronto, August 10, 2015.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.

original intention that "redevelopment happens with the people of the community, not to them."[139]

---

[139] Ibid.

CONCLUSION

The revitalization of Regent Park through the process of participatory design presents an interesting opportunity to examine the formalized model of participatory design being implemented in Canada today. The Regent Park model also offers researchers an overview of the challenges and opportunities afforded by the application of the participatory design model in the context of social housing. Regent Park itself is especially important as a case study for two reasons: first, it is a 20 year revitalization scheme impacting over 7,000 existing residents as well as several future residents and people from surrounding neighbourhoods. The scheme is only halfway into completion and in its tenth year, and accounts from residents and community workers suggest that it continues to evolve and improve based on user feedback. Therefore, the Regent Park model of participatory design could benefit from a more comprehensive evaluation at this stage. Secondly, as has been mentioned by the TCHC as well as the planning team, Regent Park is a pilot project, and the revitalization model will be replicated for several projects across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in order to meet the TCHC's requirement of providing 52,000 new units. A critical evaluation of the process at this stage offers a chance for timely intervention and an opportunity to redesign future processes to better meet user requirements.

The study sought to examine the participatory design process implemented in Regent Park, by first understanding its motivations and therefore its desired outcomes, then trying to establish a framework for the parameters and limitations of the process and finally exploring the role of the architect within this framework.

The first research question examined why participatory design was selected over a conventional design process for the redevelopment. The revitalization of Regent Park was motivated by the dual pressure of deteriorating condition of the existing buildings and the rising real estate values of the land; by leveraging land values, the TCHC would construct new RGI rental buildings through a public-private partnership. However, this meant that the neighbourhood would also contain private market housing owned by the private partner in the project, the developer, Daniels Corporation. Therefore, the primary goal for the

revitalization was the creation of a "stable, mixed income community;" study of precedents such as the St. Lawrence neighbourhood established a link between a successful mixed-income neighbourhood and a participatory design process.

Interviews with a member of the initial planning team and the community engagement consultants revealed that the first step in the revitalization process was setting up lines of communication with the residents of Regent Park in order to gain their support for the project. The interviewees expressed that the project could not have proceeded without the community's support; this statement was not surprising considering that Regent Park is home to at least 7000 residents, and several grassroots agencies and active resident groups. Regent Park also has history of resident engagement, with the residents advocating for redevelopment. Therefore, participatory design was a means of pre-empting resident opposition to the redevelopment, while also engaging stronger resident voices in the revitalization.

One of the community engagement consultants expressed the sentiment that architects have little prior experience with social housing and therefore including tenants in the design process was a method of improving the design. Resident interviews suggested that tenants were not included in design processes for some of the TCHC buildings constructed in the first phase, but that for subsequent phases their feedback was being sought. One resident even ventured an opinion that this soliciting of user input was a consequence of "problems" with the first TCHC building and residents expressing dissatisfaction with the design of the units. Through the evolution of the revitalization process, the TCHC appears to have intensified its efforts to incorporate user feedback into the design process, with the purpose of better suiting user requirements.

The parameters and limitations of participatory design in Regent Park

An analysis of interview recordings revealed mixed feelings among residents and community workers about the revitalization process and underlined the challenges that prevented the participatory design process from fulfilling its potential for empowering the residents and

communities of Regent Park. Simultaneously, the analysis of the interviews with architects uncovered the challenges the architects themselves faced through the process, as well as their recommendations for improvement.

The TCHC cites one of its prime motivations for the redevelopment as the tenants of Regent Park approaching the city for revitalization in 1995. This factor was confirmed by Ken Greenberg, a member of the *Regent Park Collaborative Team* that designed the master plan for the scheme, and described as fifteen years of conversations between the residents and the city authorities. However, according to the planning team, the first step in the revitalization process was to bring the Regent Park community on board with the idea of revitalization and overcome credibility issues that some residents had with the redevelopment. Secondly, interviews with residents revealed that despite what has been described as "a very, very extensive outreach,"[140] some residents were not aware of the revitalization right up till the time their homes were scheduled for demolition.

These contradictions to the city's claim provoke questions about the initial motivations such as - Who asked for the redevelopment? Who didn't want it? What system did the TCHC use to establish consensus? Were certain groups excluded from the initial consultations? And finally, did an acceptable majority of residents agree to the revitalization before it was initiated?

The revitalization has also been described as a pilot project whose success or failure would serve as an indicator of whether this model could be applied to future projects. Given this experimental aspect to the redevelopment, would it have been more justified for the TCHC to approach the project incrementally? Regent Park is totally 69 acres in size and home to approximately 7000 residents. The revitalization is being carried out in five successive phases over twenty years, leaving little time between phases for in-depth post-occupancy evaluation that can inform future developments. As an experiment, it risks large-scale

---

[140] Ken Greenberg. Interview with author. Toronto, May 28, 2015.

failures that are already beginning to manifest themselves in the form of "breakdown of social networks" as well as cases of resident dissatisfaction with the new buildings. [141]

The other aspect of the revitalization that is governed by its size is the large-scale displacement of its tenants outside of the Regent Park footprint and to distant neighbourhoods such as Scarborough. The large number of simultaneous relocations has forced a reliance on an impartial number draw system to determine how residents are relocated. Consequently, the entire process of relocation and return is devoid of resident participation, and tenants are left "feeling like a number and relying on chance," a sentiment that is antithetical to the purpose of participatory design.[142]

Impact on design

The issue of scale also translates into limited interaction between architects and residents in the case of Regent Park. In the early stages, architects like Ken Greenberg who were part of the initial planning team had intensive interaction with residents and community leaders. Subsequently, however, architects who designed buildings for the social housing tenants depended on the TCHC and the developer to provide "distilled information that they collected through public consultations."[143] The only direct interaction that the architects had with residents in these cases were through the medium of large public meetings at which, arguably "no meaningful discussion" can take place.[144]

Architect Charles Rosenberg who is an experienced practitioner of participatory design describes the drawbacks of this kind of interaction as feeling distanced from the people that he would like to speak to. Yet, this limitation is inevitable with a redevelopment of the scale of Regent Park. Rosenberg's alternative to this model is of breaking down the project into manageable units that allows for more specific engagement with residents and consequently more responsive design, and is worth serious examination.

---

[141] Shelly Manuel. Interview with author. Toronto, August 10, 2015.
[142] Diane Maclean. Interview with author. Toronto, July 2, 2015.
[143] Pina Petricone. Interview with author. Toronto, July 2, 2015.
[144] Sean Meagher. Interview with author. Toronto, April 2, 2015.

Consequently, the model of user participation implemented at Regent Park relied on feedback mechanisms through which architects received user input through secondary and tertiary sources. Networks of community animators were set up that relayed residents' needs and desires for the design to community engagement consultants who in turn passed the information to the architects. Furthermore, this solicitation of resident feedback was concentrated in the earlier concept design stages of the project — during design development stages, resident feedback was obtained only at large public consultations, at which, as reported by residents, there was little time allotted for residents' questions and comments. As a result, the Regent Park model of participatory design is more aligned to that of public consultations employed for larger public projects as mandated by the Environmental Assessment Act than the architect-user interaction model employed in housing design by architects like Ralph Erskine and Giancarlo De Carlo in the 1960s and 1970s.

The effects of the participatory design are still tangible, however, in several aspects of the design, including the master plan and design of individual buildings. The master plan for Regent Park designed in 1949 erased all buildings and streets existing on site, and began with a blank slate to create a superblock spanning 69 acres. The old Regent Park was therefore insulated from the city with few intersecting roads or public spaces. In order to contrast this as well as increase density, the new master plan proposed for the redevelopment sought to introduce the "tower-in-a-park" scheme with taller buildings that freed up ground space for public spaces and greater road connectivity. However, the final plan designed with resident feedback in 2003 incorporated residents' rejection of this scheme and their desire to maintain the existing density. It also introduced smaller streets and parks as desired by the residents that were deemed more suitable for use by young children.

Additionally, the redevelopment reflected residents' desires for Regent Park to be integrated with the rest of the city through mixed-density, mixed-use planning. Although residents' demands for buildings that integrated social housing and market-rate housing were not implemented, their desires for social housing buildings and market-rate condominiums to be aesthetically indistinguishable were respected. Residents' input regarding the need for a cultural centre and their ideas for the park were also implemented. Internally, however, the

social housing buildings allow for no flexibility in planning, thus failing to adapt to varying requirements of a multi-cultural population, leading to friction amongst certain minorities who protested against open kitchens, for example. Additionally, though the exterior of these buildings resemble the same quality of construction as the market-rate condominium towers, resident interviews suggest that the interiors are not designed to the standards of durable construction required for publicly managed low-income housing. In contrast, the design for 40 Oaks Affordable Housing by Hilditch Architect, which was preceded by one-on-one interactions between architects and users, allows for flexible planning of the affordable housing units through provision of column free spaces.

Another aspect that betrays the limited interaction between residents and architects is the architects' surprise at resident appreciation for brick facades.[145] Architects Giannone and Petricone Associates selected the brick façade for its affordability and durability, making it the sensible option for a social housing building.[146] Buildings like 246 Sackville St.(RGI units) and 252 Sackville St. (housing for seniors) have largely glass facades that have already exhibited problems with maintenance and ventilation.[147] Architects' reluctance to use brick in the façade, due to their assumption that it would have a negative connotation for residents, because of its use on the old Regent Park buildings, belies a lack of communication between architects and residents.

Impact on the community

From its initiation, the Regent Park revitalization was slated to be a fifteen-year project, which has recently been amended to a twenty-year timeline. This timeline dictates that parts of the existing neighbourhood scheduled for the last phase of redevelopment will continue to be lived in for at least a decade into the revitalization process. In this scenario, the city needs to continue to invest in providing maintenance and infrastructure to the tenants residing in these buildings. However, interviews revealed that parts of Regent Park that are not

---

[145] Pina Petricone. Interview with author. Toronto, July 2, 2015.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Shelly Manuel. Interview with author. Toronto, August 10, 2015; Rajakumary K. Interview with author. Toronto, August 19, 2015.

undergoing revitalization are neglected and continue to deteriorate while they await demolition.

Resident interviews throw light on this aspect of continued neglect of existing infrastructure as well as dismantling of existing amenities such as playgrounds and swimming pools. If the purpose of the revitalization was to improve quality of life for the residents of Regent Park, shouldn't the revitalization have invested in sustaining existing infrastructure, even if in a temporary capacity?

A participatory design process of the scale of Regent Park relied extensively on existing social networks and grassroots organisations for the outreach and community engagement. Additionally, community workers and grassroots representatives were invited to participate in intensive consultations and be part of committees such as the Social Development Plan Core Steering Committee that collaborated to lay down principles that would guide the revitalization process. Despite this dependence on existing social infrastructure and the added pressures placed on these resources, interviewees suggest that there was no investment to support or build up these agencies.

One of the community workers had to withdraw from the consultations, as she could no longer afford to volunteer her time, while another highlighted how an obligation to participate in the revitalization placed additional stress on community service agencies' limited resources. Both instances point to a need for investment in social infrastructure prior to the initiation of any participatory design process.

The role of the architect

The architects involved with the design of Regent Park unanimously expressed their appreciation of the value of user input in enriching design. At the most basic level, even when interaction between residents and architects was minimal, architects felt responsible for incorporating residents' needs and desires into the design of the building, with the "custom-tailor" approach. Additionally, when exposed to lengthier interactions with the users of the building, as in the case of the Daniels Spectrum Arts and Cultural Centre, the architects felt the need to go beyond providing technical expertise and act as facilitators for the discussion between clients and users, trying to represent both in the design. Some architects even took on the role of initiating discussions and developing lines of communication with the residents, soliciting their input for the fundamental stages of design.

The limitations imposed by the TCHC mandated framework appear to have restricted the role of the architect to being a representative of the TCHC as the client, while incorporating user requirements as an added context into the design. Still, even within this limited framework architects who believed in the merit of participatory design stretched their role as technical professionals to include varying levels of advocacy for the user. However, interviews with the residents uncovered large gaps in information that don't appear to have reached the architects – regarding their preferences for room layouts, building materials and even fundamental desires for "integrated buildings." These cases could also point to decisions where the architects privileged the clients' needs over the users. Other major oversights relate to the relocation scheme and the upkeep of the existing amenities.

Factors that influence design such as finances and building regulations are determined by clients and building authorities — in this case the Toronto Community Housing Corporation. These factors are not within the architect's control and function as constraints to design, despite any intentions that the architect might have with regard to designing for the user. Therefore, this critique of the participatory design is not limited to architects but seeks to address the entire process of design and construction as mandated by the TCHC, and consequently, amendments to the process would need to incorporate holistic changes at all

levels of administration that govern financial and regulatory parameters. It is important for architects to be aware of these larger issues, even if it is not within their direct mandate or power to provide solutions for them. There is also a need for further examination of methods by which architects can use resident feedback to suggest improvements for the process of revitalization of social housing and not just the built outcomes.

Limitations of the study

This study was limited by restrictions of time as well as limited access to the resident population of Regent Park. While four out of approximately six architects for the social housing component of the project agreed to interviews, providing a good representation, a sample of seven residents and community workers is not representative of a population of 7000 residents. The small number of resident interviews conducted for this study provides only a glimpse into the experiences of the overall resident population of Regent Park. However, the basis of qualitative or interpretive research is to identify broader recognizable themes through in-depth interviews with participants, with attention paid to contextual detail. The analysis focuses on larger common themes that emerged from resident interviews and not on specific details that were shared by individual participants. Therefore, this study is seen as being inductive and its implications have been presented as responses to the research questions, as well as additional research questions for future investigation.

Research questions for future investigation:

How can architecture and planning address displacement due to revitalization in order to minimize relocation anxiety and damage to social networks?

The interviews reveal that for the revitalization process to achieve any significant level of success, it would need to address the issue of displacement. All of the interviews with residents and community workers referred to the anxiety and trauma associated with the relocation as well as the longer lasting impact that the displacement had on social networks. Other research has shown how integral these social networks and community resources are

for social housing tenants[148] and, as was revealed by a community worker, the process of rebuilding these networks post revitalization is arduous and time consuming.

There is an opportunity for architects and planners to integrate a plan for displacement within the overall planning of any revitalization scheme. It follows that any approach to displacement would need to engage the residents in a conversation about phasing and priorities to be integrated into the process. For example, one of the residents recommended that vulnerable groups like seniors should have been relocated at a later stage of the revitalization, by which time major challenges in the process would have been addressed and thus could be pre-empted. Additionally, residents expressed the desire to be relocated, even temporarily, within the neighbourhood. Further investigation into phased planning and temporary solutions with resident input could provide vital information for future revitalization schemes.

How can architects and designers engage residents in design towards preservation of identity?

According to several community workers, relocated residents experienced disorientation on returning to a new, revitalized Regent Park. In spite of the new public amenities and improved infrastructure, some tenants find it difficult to adjust to their new surroundings and "need a way to come back and remember familiar places from before they moved."[149] One of the interviewees spoke about the "stress" of returning to the community and of engaging people through art and music in order to help them overcome stress and disorientation.

Community groups attempted to address the issue of identity at Regent Park through art installations and the media of film and story telling, yet the master plan did not have a comprehensive approach to either preservation of identity or helping residents reorient themselves on return to the neighbourhood. Approaches to preserving identity through

---

[148] Brian Conway and David Hachen Jr., "Attachments, Grievances, Resources, and Efficacy: The Determinants of Tenant Association Participation Among Public Housing Tenants," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 27.1 (2005): 25–52.

[149] Christine Swearing. Interview with author. Toronto, August 20, 2015.

architecture and urban design, and finding ways to include residents in the process need to be researched in relation to future revitalization schemes.

How can architects and planners involve communities in sustaining and improving quality of life in neighbourhoods undergoing revitalization?

One of the factors that motivated residents to petition for community-led revitalization was the deterioration of built infrastructure as well as the dismantling of public amenities such as benches, parks and playgrounds. However, even after the revitalization process was initiated there was no investment in the existing infrastructure. Consequently, over the twenty-year timeline, residents who continue to live in the condemned buildings will have to contend with substandard living conditions, while waiting for construction on new public amenities to be completed. One resident cited the example of the wading pool in Regent Park being closed for two years before the Regent Park Aquatic Centre was opened, leaving residents with no access to public pool facilities in the interim period.

Though investment in buildings and infrastructure slated for demolition may not be profitable, the quality of the built environment that continues to be occupied must be sustained. In this context, architects working with residents can find targeted solutions within limited budgets that ensure that residents can continue to lead comfortable and fulfilling lives during the decades that the neighbourhood is under construction. Participatory design with the residents of a neighbourhood undergoing revitalization can "find creative ways to make it liveable and enjoyable."[150]

Conclusion

The TCHC's primary purpose in initiating a participatory design process was as a means to create "a stable mixed income community" through the revitalization of Regent Park. With this goal, empowerment of the existing community was not a priority for the process. Though interviews with architects revealed strong beliefs in the value of participatory design, their

---

[150] Diane Maclean. Interview with author. Toronto, July 2, 2015.

role was limited by the framework set by the TCHC, and consequently there are large gaps between what the residents' desired and what the redevelopment has achieved. However, even within that limited framework, the interviews have revealed positive effects of participatory design on the built environment as well as on the residents' acceptance and ability to adjust to changes wrought by the revitalization, suggesting that resident participation is indispensable in social housing projects.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35.4 (1969): 216-224.

Abelson, J., Forest, P., Eyles, J., Smith, P., Martin, E., Gauvin, F. "Deliberations about deliberative methods: issues in the design and evaluation of public participation processes." *Social Science & Medicine* 57(2003): 239–251.

Agostino, Remo. *Regent Park Revitalization: Building a great neighbourhood.* Toronto: Toronto Community Housing, 2013. Accessed September 12, 2015. http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/graduate/programs/ensciman/forms/RemoAgostino_RegentParkRevitalization_EnSciMan2013.pdf

Alexander, Lisa T. "Stakeholder Participation in New Governance: Lessons From Chicago's Public Housing Reform Experiment." *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy* 16.1 (2009): 117-185.

Alexander, Christopher; Silverstein, Murray and Ishikawa, Sara. *A Pattern Language*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Augsten, Tamara; Babin, Meghan; Bennington, Monica; Kelling, Matthew and Procopio Anna. "Social Cohesion in Contested Space: A Neighbourhood Integration Framework for Regent Park. Final Report - December 2014." *Toronto Community Housing Corporation* website. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2014. Accessed September 12, 2015. http://www.torontohousing.ca/webfm_sen d/11574

August, M. "Negotiating social mix in Canada's first public housing redevelopment: Power, space, and social control in Toronto's Don Mount Court." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38.4 no.11 (2014): 61-84.

Bacher, John. *Keeping to the Marketplace: The Evolution of Canadian Housing Policy*, 3-36. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993.

Becker, Jochen; Zardini, Mirko and Borasi, Giovanna eds. *Actions: What You Can Do With the City.* Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2009.

Bengtsson, Bo. "Tenants' Dilemma- On Collective Action in Housing." *Housing Studies* 13.1 (1998): 99-120.

Blanchet-Cohen, N. "Igniting citizen participation in creating healthy built environments: the role of community organizations." *Community Development Journal,* published May 23, 2014. Accessed 23 March, 2015. doi: 10.1093/cdj/bsu031.

Bozikovic, Alex. "Park and Re-creation." *Canadian Architect* website, published July 1, 2012, accessed August 12, 2015. https://www.canadianarchitect.com/features/park-and-re-creation/.

Broadbent, Geoffrey. "Design methods —13 years after — a review." In *Design: science: method* edited by Jacques, R and Powall, 3-6. Guildford, UK: IPC Science and Technology Press, 1981, referenced in Lawrence, Roderick J. "Trends In Architectural Design Methods- The 'Liability' Of Public Participation." *Design Studies* 3.2 (1982): 97-103.

Chabot, M. and Duhaime, G. "Land-use planning and participation: The case of Inuit public housing (Nunavik, Canada)." *Habitat* 4(1998): 429–447.

Chalk, Warren. "Housing as a Consumer Product." *Archigram* eds. Peter Cook et *al*, London: Studio Vista, 1972, 16-17.

Chappell, Barbara. "To Engage or Consult?: That is the question!." *Incite,* 29.3 (2008): 8.

Clarke,L. and Agyeman, J. "Is there more to environmental participation than meets the eye? Understanding agency, empowerment and disempowerment among black and minority ethnic communities." *Area* 43.1 (2011): 88–95.

Conway, Brian and Hachen Jr, David. "Attachments, Grievances, Resources, and Efficacy: The Determinants of Tenant Association Participation Among Public Housing Tenants." *Journal Of Urban Affairs* 27.1 (2005): 25–52.

Comerio, Mary C. "Community Design: Idealism and Entrepreneurship." *Journal of Architectural Planning and Research* 1.4 (1984): 227–43 quoted in Türeli, Ipek. "'Small' Architectures, Walking and Camping in Middle Eastern Cities." *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 2.1 (2013): 5–38, doi: 10.1386/ ijia.2.1.5_1.

Comox Valley. "Housing Definitions - Some Commonly Used Terms." *Comox Valley* website. Accessed September 13, 2015. http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/assets/Governance/Documents/Housing%20Definitions.pdf

Dahl, Robert A. *Democracy and Its Critics.* New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1991 quoted in Innes, Judith and Booher, David. "Reframing Public Participation: Strategies for the 21st Century." *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5.4 (2004): 419–436.

Darcy, M. "The Discourse of `Community' and the Reinvention of Social Housing Policy in Australia." *Urban Studies* 36.1 (1999): 13-26.

Davidoff, Paul. "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning." *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* (1965): 331-338.

Day, Dianne. "Citizen Participation In The Planning Process: An Essentially Contested Concept." *Journal of Planning Literature*, 11.3 (1997): 421–434.

Dearden, Andy, Finlay, Janet, Allgar, Elizabeth and McManus, Barbara. "Using pattern languages in participatory design." *Proceedings of the Participatory Design Conference* (2002): 104-113.

De Carlo, Giancarlo. "Architecture's Public." *Architecture and Participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell Jones et al. London and New York: Routledge, 2005, 3-22.

Department of Sustainability and Environment. *Effective Engagement: building relationships with community and other stakeholders. Book 1: An introduction to engagement*. East Melbourne: Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2005.

Fairclough, Norman. *Discourse and Social Change,* 201-216. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, referenced in Darcy, Michael. "The Discourse of `Community' and the Reinvention of Social Housing Policy in Australia." *Urban Studies* 36.1 (1999): 13-26.

Feldman, Roberta and Westphal, Lynne. "Participation for Empowerment: The Greening of a Public Housing Development [Participation with a View]." *Places* 12.2 (1999): 34-37.

Francis, Mark. "Proactive Practice: Visionary Thought and Participatory Action in Environmental Design." *Places* 12.2 (1999): 61-68.

Friesen, Joe. "Regent Park residents feel happier and safer with new homes, study says." *The Globe and Mail,* February 19, 2014, accessed July 5, 2015. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/regent-park-residents-satisfied-with-new-homes-study-says/article16986854/.

GHK International (Canada), Greenberg Consultants Inc., Markson Borooah Hodgson Architects, David Millar Associates, & Connelly Consulting Services. *Lessons from St. Lawrence for the Regent Park redevelopment process*. Toronto: Toronto Community Housing Corporation, 2003.

Gladki Planning Associates. "Regent Park Planning Report: Phases 3, 4 and 5. October 2013." *City of Toronto* website. Accessed September 12, 2015. http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Planning/Community%20Planning/ Files/pdf/R/Regent_planning_ration

Granath, J. A. "Architecture: participation of users in design activities." *International Encyclopedia of Ergonomics and Human Factors. London: Taylor and Francis, at http://granath. arch.chalmers.se/_private/encyklopedia.html,* 2001.
Gulati, Padi. "Consumer Participation in Administrative Decision Making." *Social Service Review* 56.1 (1982): 72-84.

Habraken, John. *Supports: An Alternative to Mass Housing.* London: Architectural Press, 1972.

Harloe, Michael. *The People's Home?: Social Rented Housing In Europe & America*. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1995.

Harvey, David. "The Right to the City." *Rebel Cities: From the City to the Urban Revolution.* London and New York: Verso, 2012, 23.

Hillier, Jean. "Beyond confused noise: Ideas toward communicative procedural justice." *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 18 (1998): 14-24.

Hou, Jeffrey and Kinoshita, Isami. "Bridging Community Differences through Informal Processes: Re-examining Participatory Planning in Seattle and Matsudo." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26 (2007): 301-3.

Hou, Jeffrey and Rios, Michael. "Community-Driven Place Making: The Social Practice of Participatory Design in the Making of Union Point Park." *Journal of Architectural Education* 57.1 (2003): 19–27.

Housing Connections. "Rent Geared to Income Housing." *Housing Connections* website. Accessed September 13, 2015. https://www.housingconnections.ca/HousingInfo/Rent_geared_to_income.asp

Innes, Judith and Booher, David. "Reframing Public Participation: Strategies for the 21st Century." *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5.4 (2004): 419–436

Jenkins, Paul. "Concepts of participation in architecture." *Architecture, Participation and Society* ed. Paul Jenkins and Leslie Forsyth. London and New York: Routledge, 2010, 9-22.

Jones, Peter Blundell; Petrescu, Doina and Till, Jeremy. "Introduction." *Architecture and Participation* ed. Peter Blundell Jones et al. London and New York: Routledge, 2005, xiii-xvii.

Keating, Larry. "Redeveloping Public Housing: Relearning Urban Renewal's Immutable Lessons." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 66.4 (2000): 384-397.

King, Nigel and Horrocks, Christine. *Interviews in Qualitative Research.* Los Angeles: Sage, 2010, 1-6.

King, C.S., Feltey, K.M. & Susel, B.O. "The question of participation: toward authentic participation in public administration," *Public Administration Review*, 58.4 (1998): 317–326 referenced in Innes, Judith and Booher, David. "Reframing Public Participation: Strategies for the 21st Century." *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5.4 (2004): 419–436.

Lawrence, Roderick J. "Trends In Architectural Design Methods-The 'Liability' Of Public Participation." *Design Studies* 3.2 (1982): 97-103.

Lee, Yanki. "Design participation tactics: the challenges and new roles for designers in the co-design process." *CoDesign: International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts* 4.1 (2008) 31-50.

Levy, Sue-Ann. "TCHC residents feel like the were 'duped' in Regent Park redevelopment." *Toronto Sun,* March 28, 2012, accessed March 21, 2015. http://www.torontosun.com/2012/03/28/tchc-residents-feel-like-the-were-duped-in-regent-park-redevelopment.

Lobko, Joe. "Toronto Brownfield Redux." DTAH website (Paris: ICOMOS Symposium, 2011) http://dtah.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Toronto-Brownfield Redux_ICOMOS_2011_Lobko.pdf.

Mota, Nelson. "Engagement and Estrangement: Participation and Disciplinary Autonomy in Álvaro Siza's S. Victor Neighbourhood." *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 101 (2013): 588-595.

Pearl, Daniel and Wentz, Daniel. *Community- Inspired Housing In Canada.* Zurich: Holcim Foundation, 2014.

Poindexter, Georgette C. "Who Gets the Final No - Tenant Participation in Public Housing Redevelopment." *Cornell Journal of Law and Public Policy*. 9.659 (1999): 659-684.

Poletta, Francesca. "Participatory Democracy in the New Millennium." *Contemporary Sociology* 42.1 (2013): 40-50.

Purdy, Robert Sean. *From Place of Hope To Outcast Space: Territorial Regulation And Tenant Resistance In Regent Park Housing Project, 1949-2001*, 49-112. Kingston, Ontario: Queen's University, 2003.

Reingold, David. "Public housing, home ownership, and community participation in Chicago's inner city." *Housing Studies* 10.4 (1995): 445-469.

Rudofsky, Bernard. *Architecture without Architects*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1964.

Schostak, John F. *Interviewing and Representation in Qualitative Research Projects*. Berkshire, GBR: McGraw-Hill Education, 2005. Accessed June 13, 2015. ProQuest ebrary.

Schumann, Anthony W. "The Pedagogy of Engagement," *From the Studio to the Streets: Service-Learning in Planning and Architecture.* Sterling, VA: American Association for Higher Education: 2005, 1-15.

Smith Cross, Jessica. "Regent Park residents not happy with TCHC." *Metro News,* February 25, 2014, accessed March 28, 2015. http://www.metronews.ca/news/toronto/2014/02/26/regent-park-residents-not-happy-with-tchc.html.

Spatial Agency. "Community Technical Aid Centres." *Spatial Agency website*. Accessed August 14, 2015. http://www.spatialagency.net/database/community.technical.aid.centres

Spatial Agency. "Participation- Movement 70s." *Spatial Agency website*. Accessed August 14, 2015. http://www.spatialagency.net/database/participation.1970s

Spatial Agency. "Giancarlo De Carlo." *Spatial Agency website*. Accessed August 14, 2015. http://www.spatialagency.net/database/giancarlo.de.carlo

Stickells, Lee. "The Right to the City: Rethinking Architecture's Social Significance." *Architectural Theory Review* 16.3 (2011): 213–27.

Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement. "Community Engagement." *Tamarack Institute* website. Accessed September 13, 2015. http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g3s1.html

Taube, G. and Levin, J. "Public Housing as Neighbourhood: The Effect of Local and non-Local Participation." *Social Science Quarterly* 52.3 (1971): 534-542.

Till, Jeremy, and Schneider, Tatiana. "Flexible Housing: the means to an end." *Architecture Research Quarterly* 9.3 (2005): 287-296.

Toronto Community Housing Corporation. "Regent Park." *Toronto Community Housing Corporation* website. Accessed September 15, 2015. http://www.torontohousing.ca/regentpark.

Türeli, Ipek. "'Small' Architectures, Walking and Camping in Middle Eastern Cities." *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 2.1 (2013): 5–38, doi: 10.1386/ ijia.2.1.5_1

Harvard Urban Design Conference. "Urban Design." *Progressive Architecture* 37 (1956): 108.

Wulz, Frederick. "The Concept of Participation." *Design Studies* 7.3 (1986): 153-162.