

## H.O.P.E. Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere

After the Second World War, North American governments produced plans to revitalize decaying urban areas through urban renewal. As part of this initiative, cities built public housing for people living in sub-standard housing. As a result of this policy, thousands of units for low-income residents were built in large cities across the continent. This initiative improved living conditions for many people, but at the same time destroyed the social support networks that proliferated in downtown neighbourhoods. Over the fifty years following their construction, these developments fell into disrepair as governments stopped maintaining them.

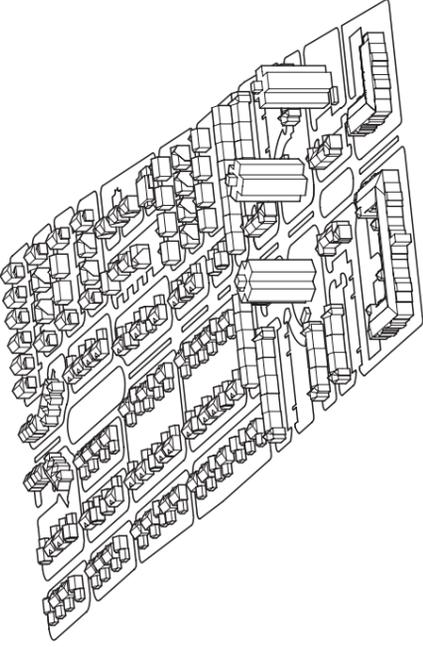
In 1992, the US federal government initiated a program called HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) to fund the demolition and rebuilding of the worst examples of public housing. The legislation mandated that modernist housing was to be demolished and replaced with low-rise, mixed-income communities designed in a neo-traditional style according to New Urbanist architectural principles. As a result of these design guidelines, it was impossible to replace the number of previously subsidized units, so federal grants were allocated to fund a substantial reduction in the actual number of housing units. In the case of Jeffries Homes in Detroit there was a reduction from 1428 to 621 subsidized units, or approximately 40% of the units.

Canada followed these US policies approximately a decade later. In 2002, the city of Toronto and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation began planning the redevelopment of Regent Park Canada's oldest and largest public housing project. This project learned both from HOPE VI and from St. Lawrence, an earlier mixed-income housing project in Toronto. The plan is to rebuild approximately 90% of the units on site, but in order to accommodate the desired mix the proposal calls for the construction of 3210 new market units, so that there is a 40:60 ratio of subsidized to market units. This change primes the downtown east side of Toronto for gentrification and will lead to the loss of existing affordable housing stock in the area.

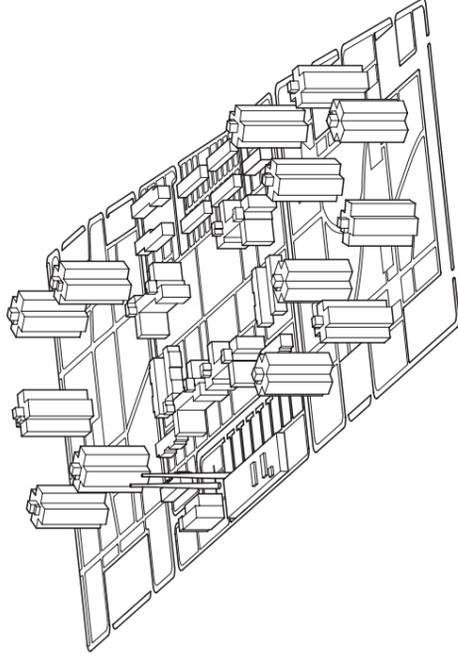
These two examples of the physical demolition of modernist public housing neighbourhoods follow the ideological repudiation of public housing that began in the 1970s and reached full force in the early 1990s. The push towards home ownership as the only solution to the housing challenges of low income people is the most recent point of this trajectory. Its repercussions can be felt in the sub-prime mortgage crisis of 2007, and in its derivative effects in 2008's financial crisis. The people most affected by the devastation of urban renewal, the neglect of public housing, the displacement of contemporary redevelopment plans, and the foreclosures of the sub-prime crisis, have been the lowest income urban residents.

Adrian Blackwell is an artist, and architectural and urban designer, who teaches at the University of Toronto.

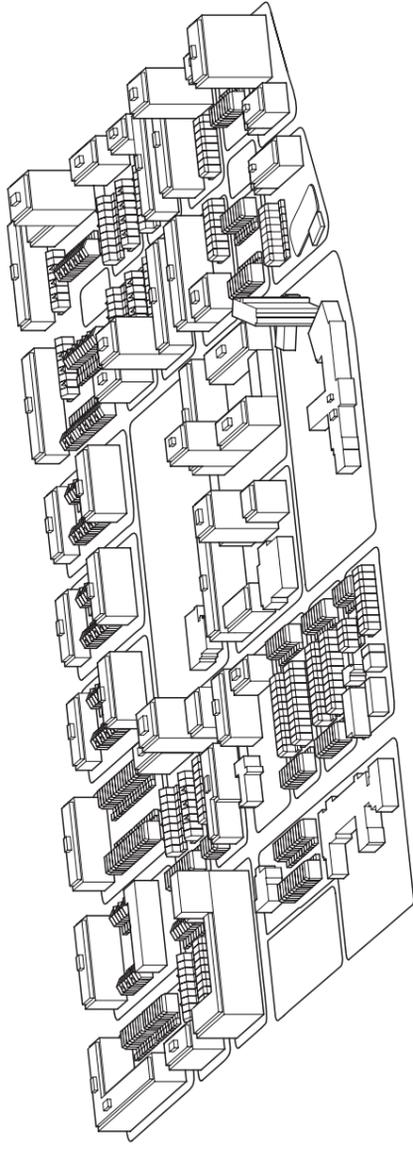
Jane Hutton is a landscape architect, who teaches at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design.



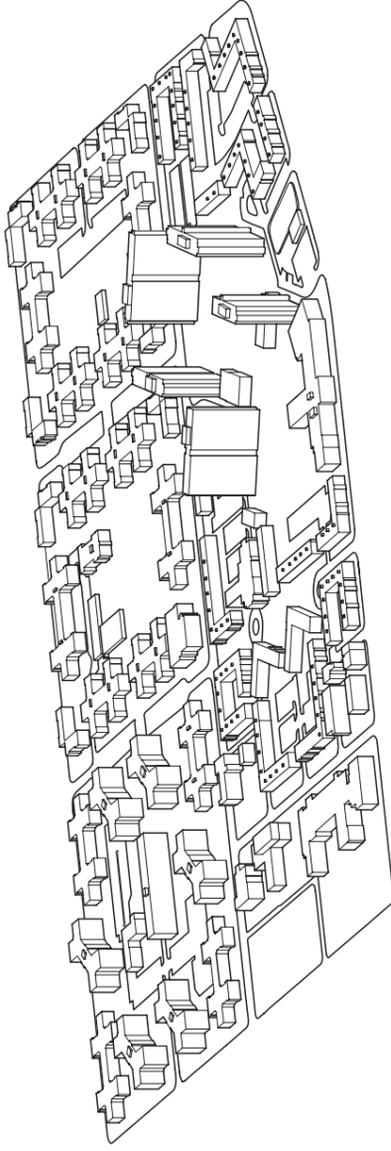
WOODBRIDGE ESTATES (2008)  
621 PUBLIC UNITS / 135 MARKET UNITS



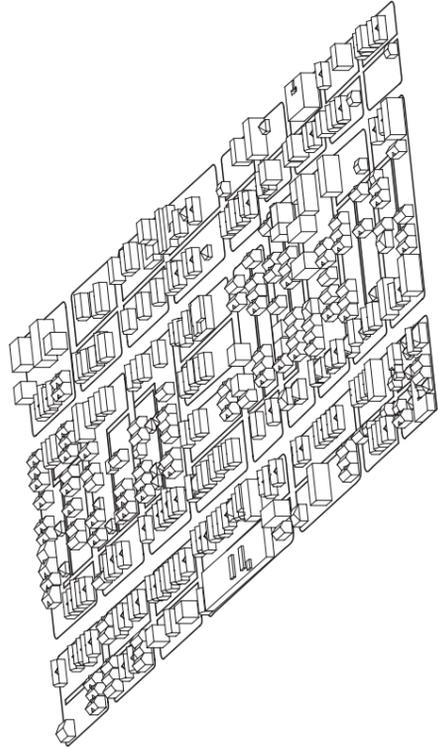
JEFFRIES HOMES (1952-2000)  
1428 PUBLIC UNITS



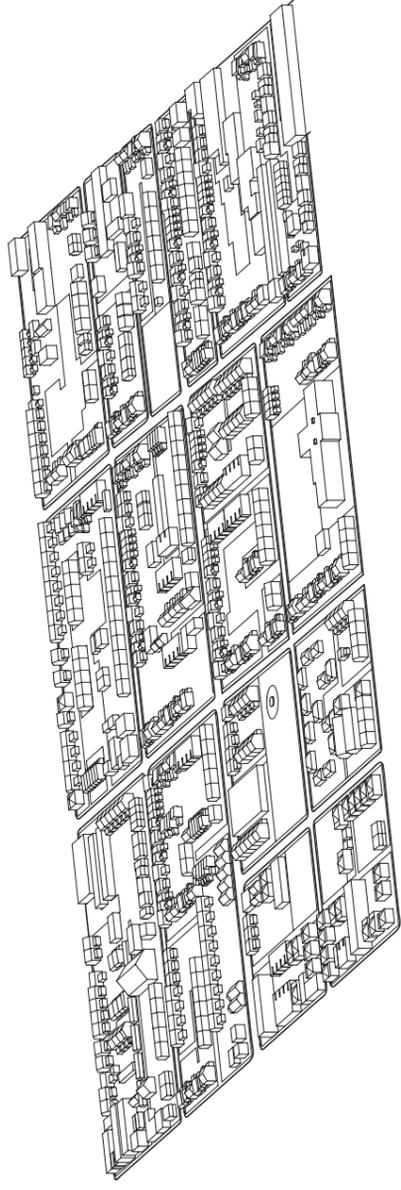
REGENT PARK (PLANNED 2020)  
1905 PUBLIC UNITS / 3210 MARKET UNITS



REGENT PARK (1959-2006)  
2083 PUBLIC UNITS



GIBSON ST. TO 6TH ST. - CANFIELD ST. TO STIMSON ST. (1949)  
415 MARKET UNITS



PARLIAMENT ST. TO RIVER ST. - GERRARD ST. TO DENHAM AVE. (1947)  
1160 MARKET UNITS