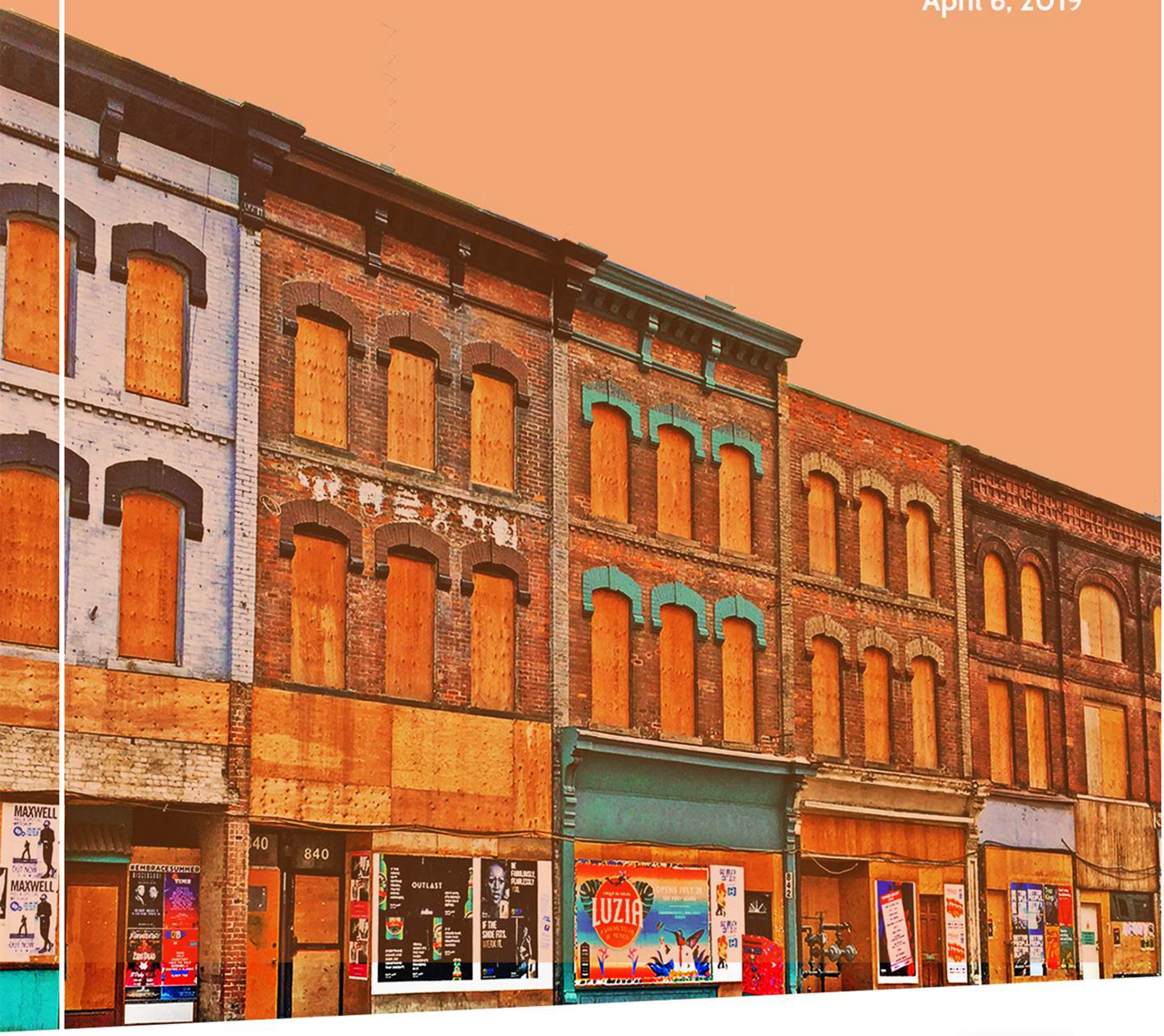
ACO Toronto 2019 Symposium

DISAPPEARING MAIN STREETS: BUILDINGS AND BUSINESSES

Toronto Central Grosvenor YMCA
April 6, 2019



www.acotoronto.ca

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVANCY ONTARIO
TORONTO

Toronto's Disappearing Main Streets: Buildings and Businesses

What is it that is vanishing when we talk about disappearing main streets? In Toronto, where the character of our streets is defined by continual transformation — both physical and cultural - how might we articulate the shifting values that motivate these processes? What of the residual effects? Today's symposium examines the causes, challenges, and opportunities of these changes. Through presentations, discussions and visual documentation, we will explore some of the background, current context, and urban interventions available to us as we seek to articulate multiple perspectives of streets themselves. We do not expect to answer all of our questions today — indeed, many more are likely to emerge — however we do hope that this day of inquiry will motivate future actions and collaborations on this subject.

It is impossible to conceive of this discussion on disappearing main streets without first recognizing that both the streets and the location of this conversation are built on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. This place remains the home of many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Essential to today's conversation, we humbly acknowledge this legacy and express our gratitude for use of this space.

Sponsors and Thanks

ACO Toronto is grateful for the generous support of several key sponsors without whom this event would not be possible. Thank you to: DTAH, ERA Architects, Blackwell, and Colliers International. Thanks also to Alison Creba, Catherine Nasmith, Penina Coopersmith, Stephanie Mah, Emily Gwiazda, Matthew Zambri, and Kat Akerfeldt for their tireless work and support in developing and promoting this event.

dtah

ERA

Blackwell

Colliers
INTERNATIONAL

Agenda

9:30-9:45AM	Registration & Coffee
9:45-10:00AM	**Opening Remarks** • Matthew Zambri
10:00-11:30AM	**Background, Moderated by Penina Coopersmith** • Catherine Nasmith: *Main Street as Old Growth Forest* • Julian Smith: *Main Streets as Cultural Landscapes* • John Lorinc: *Evolution of Retail: From Streetcar Suburbs to Strip Malls* • Tamara Anson-Cartwright: *Main Streets: City Planning's Approach and Tools for Identifying Heritage*
11:30-11:40AM	**Short Announcements** • Bay Wayman: Documenting the Evolution of Toronto's Main Streets
11:40AM-12:25PM	**Lunch** • Vik Pahwa: Main Streets Photography Slideshow
12:25-1:00PM	**Film Presentation** • *The World in Ten Blocks* with introduction by Derval Slatcher
1:00-2:30PM	**Current Context, Moderated by Michelle Senayah** • Claire Nelischer: *Taxed Out: Illustrating the Impact of Tax Policy on our Main Streets* • Robert Allsopp: *Urban Taxidermy* • John Kiru: *BIA Experience and Observation* • Alex Speigel: *The Changing Retail Landscape: A Case Study*
2:30-4:00PM	**Interventions / Responses, Moderated by Shawn Micallef** • Daniel Rotsztain & Brendan Stewart: *PlazaPOPs - Supporting Strip Mall Retail with Public Amenities* • Ellen Kowalchuk: I*ntangible Values, Interdiscplinary Approaches* • Kim Storey: *UnAvenues: Another Way to Create Density* • Kristyn Wong-Tam: *Municipal Responses*
4:00-4:30PM	**Closing Remarks** Guests are invited to join ACO Toronto for our Annual General Meeting after the Symposium

Speakers

Robert Allsopp
A partner of DTAH, Robert is an urban designer with a background in architecture, landscape architecture and city planning and over 50 years of experience. He is a member of ACO's President's Circle and currently serves on the City of Toronto, Heritage Preservation Board. He lives, works, and takes his pleasures in downtown Toronto.

Tamara Anson-Cartwright
Tamara is a Program Manager in Urban Design/Heritage Preservation Services at the City of Toronto Planning Division. Tamara manages the policy and research team focused on undertaking heritage evaluation of properties, Heritage Conservation Districts, and cultural heritage landscapes for inclusion on the City's Heritage Register, and delivery of heritage incentive programs. She is currently leading the City's feasibility study for a Citywide Heritage Survey.

Penina Coopersmith
Penina holds a BA (History) from New York University and an MA (History) from the University of Toronto, where she also studied architecture. She has worked variously as a consultant, journalist, author, and editor dealing with matters related to architecture, planning, municipal affairs, and the environment. She was the City of Calgary's first Heritage Planner.

John Kiru
John Kiru received his Urban & Regional Planning degree from the University Ryerson School of Planning in 1982 and has continued studies in urban renewal, economic development, and real estate. Over the years, John has delivered the BIA message of self-help and Private Public Partnership to many business communities across the country and the US, as well as at numerous conferences in Canada, the US, Germany, France, and Scotland.

Speakers

Ellen Kowalchuk
Ellen is a founding partner of Common Bond Collective, a Toronto-based heritage planning firm. She routinely collaborates with community members, architects, planners, landscape architects, urban designers, and engineers to identify and conserve places of local, provincial, and national significance. Ellen is a Faculty Associate at the Willowbank School for Restoration Arts, and a lecturer at the Turner Fleischer Academy.

John Lorinc
John is a Toronto freelance writer and editor who specializes in urban affairs, local history, business, and technology. He regularly contributes to the *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star, Walrus* and *Spacing*, where he is senior editor. John is also the co-editor of several Coach House anthologies, including the forthcoming *House Divided: How the Missing Middle Can Solve Toronto's Affordability Crisis*, (June, 2019).

Shawn Micallef
Shawn is the author of *Frontier City: Toronto on the Verge of Greatness, Stroll: Psychogeographic Walking Tours of Toronto,* and The T*rouble With Brunch: Work, Class and the Pursuit of Leisure*. He is a weekly columnist at the *Toronto Star,* and a senior editor and co-owner of the independent, Jane Jacobs Prize–winning magazine *Spacing*. Shawn teaches at the University of Toronto, and was a 2011-2012 Canadian Journalism Fellow at University of Toronto's Massey College.

Catherine Nasmith
Catherine Nasmith is a practising architect, President of the ACO Toronto Branch, Past-President of ACO, and a Jane Jacobs prize winner (2010). She has been observing Main Streets since the 1980s.

Speakers

Claire Nelischer
Claire is a Project Manager with the Ryerson City Building Institute, where her work focuses on planning and policy to support a vibrant public realm. She has authored reports on a range of topics including street design, parks policy, and planning for civic assets, and frequently presents and writes on urban issues. Before joining CBI, Claire was an Urban Fellow with the City of Toronto, where she contributed to the development of the City's first Complete Streets Guidelines.

Vik Pahwa
Vik is a professional Toronto-based architecture, infrastructure, and urban photographer featured in several print publications. His work combines an inquisitive and unique perspective with a strong emphasis on geometry. He has been running a daily photography blog for eight years documenting Toronto's rapidly changing built environment at vikpahwa.com and leads urban exploration walks around the city.

Daniel Rotsztain
Daniel is the Urban Geographer, an artist, writer, and cartographer whose work examines our relationship to the places we inhabit. A frequenter of libraries, malls, and strip malls, Daniel's projects seek to understand and support the diverse settings of the city's public life. The author of *All the Libraries Toronto*, and *A Colourful History Toronto*, Daniel's work has also been featured in the *Globe and Mail, Spacing*, *Toronto Life*, and *NOW Magazine*.

Michelle Senayah
Michelle is an urban designer and placemaker with over a decade of experience in Toronto's city-building sector. Since 2013, she has worked with The Laneway Project and Open Streets TO to bring Toronto's underused public spaces to life as vibrant, living places through precedent-setting demonstration projects, activations, research reports, and policy initiatives. Undertaken in collaboration with a wide range of public, private, and grassroots-level stakeholders, these projects have explored whether, why, and how to adapt our public realm to ensure a high quality of life for our city's growing population.

Speakers

Julian Smith
Julian is an architect and planner who has worked on culturally-significant buildings, landscapes, and neighbourhoods across Canada and internationally. He is a co-author of the 2011 UNESCO "Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape". He has been closely involved with the development of the Willowbank School and Centre.

Alex Speigel
Alex is a partner with the Windmill Development Group and a senior consultant with Urban Equation. An architect with 40 years of experience in design and development, Alex is strongly committed to a high standard of design and sustainability. Throughout his career, he has directed several innovative residential and mixed-use projects that involved the adaptive reuse.

Brendan Stewart
Brendan is an Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Guelph, having joined the faculty in 2017 after more than a decade of practice as a landscape architect and heritage planner in Toronto. He was an Associate with ERA Architects, and continues to consult and collaborate with the firm on a regular basis. He received his BLA from Guelph, attended Edinburgh College of Art, and received an MLA from the University of California, Berkeley.

Kim Storey
Kim is a Toronto architect, urban designer, and founding partner of Brown and Storey Architects, a multidisciplinary office focusing on civic and urban infrastructure of housing, landscape, and transportation. Their work ranges from urban design frameworks and guidelines to implementation of public spaces and streetscapes. Kim and her partner James Brown, are currently teaching at the Daniels Faculty in the Masters of Urban Design studio.

Speakers

Kristyn Wong-Tam
Kristyn was elected to Toronto City Council in 2010 and has an extensive career investing in the city through both the public and private sectors. She is Vice-chair of the Toronto Board of Health and Chair of the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee, which provides advice to City Council on the identification, prevention, and elimination of barriers faced by people with disabilities with the goal of achieving social, cultural, and economic well-being. Kristyn is also a founding board member of the Toronto Biennial of Art, and was voted Toronto's Best City Councillor by NOW magazine readers four years in a row (2015-2018).

***The World in Ten Blocks*. A film by Marc Serpa Francoeur and Robinder Uppal**
Small business owners from all over the world have made Bloorcourt one of Toronto's most vibrant neighbourhoods. Meet some of these immigrant entrepreneurs and hear about their dreams, struggles, victories, and the unexpected ways in which they've changed. An intimate journey into the kitchens and behind the counters of small businesses where cultures and traditions are preserved, shared, and evolve.

Join the Conversation
#MainStreetsToronto

@Arconserve

@Arconserve

@Arconserv