

Emery Yard

## Julian Jacobs Architects

**Client/Owner:**

City of North York, Parks &  
Recreation Dept.

**Location:**

26 Toryork Road, North York, Ont.

**Completion Date:**

1992

**Construction Budget:**

\$2,000,000

**Architectural Team:**

Julian Jacobs, Semy Gerantab,  
Gail Weininger, Daniel Karpinski

**Structural Engineers:**

Anrep Associates

**Mechanical/Electrical Engineers:**

Mancini Saldan

**Builder:**

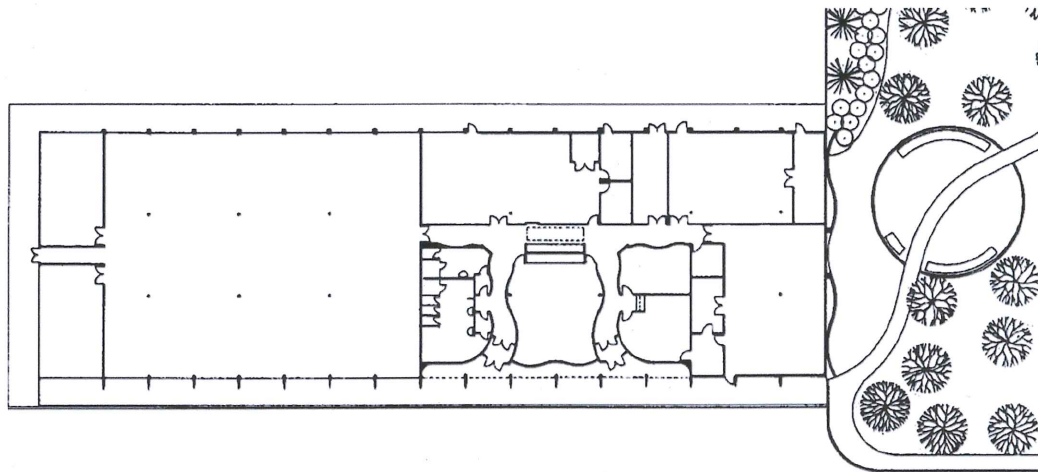
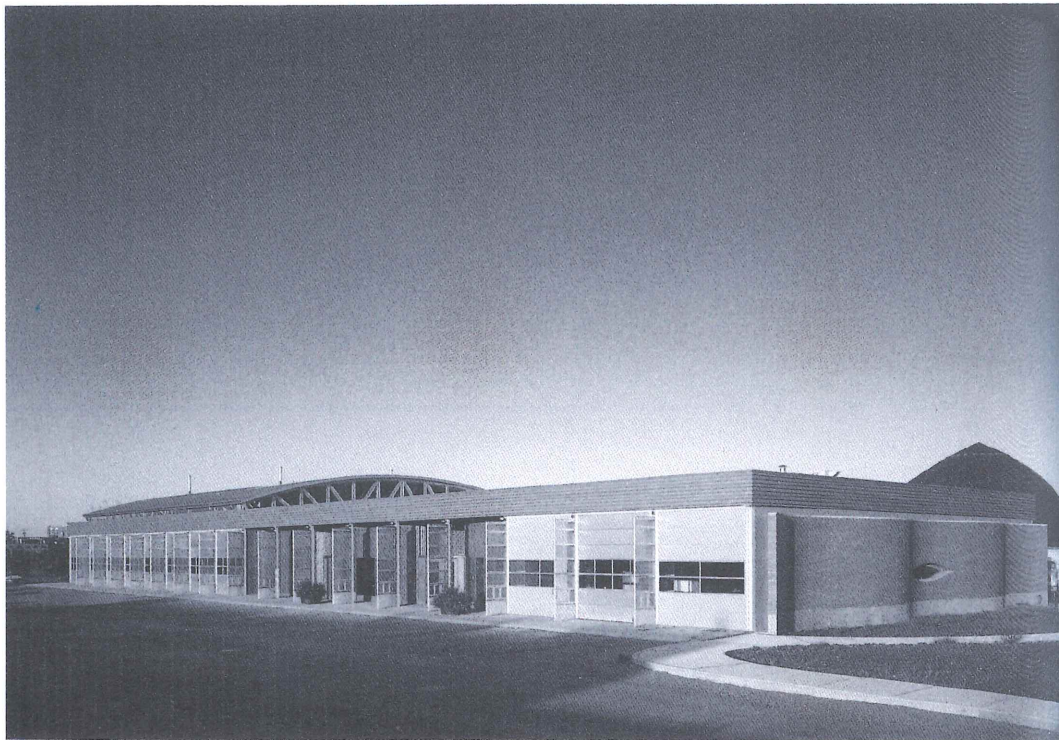
Harbridge & Cross

**Photography:**

Steven Evans







### Project Description

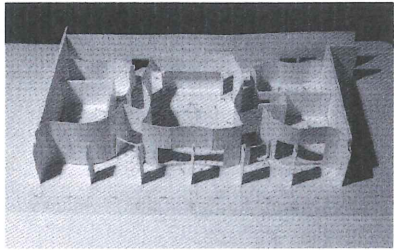
The project provides a 20,000-square-foot single-storey municipal facility maintenance building for the Parks and Recreation Department, comprising workshops, garages, offices and amenities. The site, shared by a quonset hut and a brick structure, is a city dump (with soil venting requirements) at the edge of a suburban industrial district, bordering on a metropolitan thoroughfare.

The traditional maintenance building is a brown brick box, single-storey where it contains offices, amenities and workshops, with a higher rear portion for garages. A longitudinal corridor runs through the middle of the low section from the front entry to the garages. At Emery Yard, locating the entry on the side of the building creates a new, centralized organization within the traditional rectangular format. Retaining this economical format frees up the budget for architectural sculpture and detailing. The front wall, released of its conventional façade and entry roles, can become abstract sculpture: the hourglass shape, the brick "skin" effect, and the eye/aperture suggest a reclining nude. Future landscaping will contain, on five sinewy steel supports, individually coloured and styled letters spelling "EMERY": the nude's five suitors.

A primary dialectic, involving the rectangular building metaform of silver metallic components and the natural wood and brick curvilinear walls, is set up between a tectonic armature relating to a tough industrial site, and warm, organic elements relating to human users. A parallel counterpoint is created between the structural lattice and other building components, with the structure as "basso continuo." The structure's special role is conveyed through its pure yellow colour while other finishes are as close as possible to the "natural" states of materials.

The middle of the principal longitudinal elevation contains loggia, visitor and staff entries and windows. Inside, the wooden, anthropomorphic middle section of the building acts as a kind of belly, containing all the more human and amenity functions: office, meeting room, lockers/washrooms. This area is symmetrical about the building's heart, the multipurpose lunchroom, which itself takes a torso-like shape. The halls are skylit at their confluence, over an alcove containing water fountain, message centre and punch clock. The garage is vaulted by a curved silver plane, supported by bowstring trusses, floating at its edge on continuous, frameless glass.







### Firm Description

Julian Jacobs Architects was formed in 1979 to provide a full service architecture/interior design facility. Since we view the built environment holistically, professionals trained in urban design, architecture, interior design and other related disciplines work together in the firm.

The working methods that lead to an architecture of quality demand pragmatism and thoroughness, leaving no gap in the seamless process of designing and building. Our intentions in design are balanced by serious attention to technology, management and construction. The continual exploration of all these aspects fosters an emergence of fresh ideas in the firm's projects; it avoids stereotype and stylistic tendencies. It is a *tabula rasa*, or clean slate, approach.

Foremost, we believe that a building must be *superbly functional*. Each aspect must be designed with the utmost care; every user function must be optimized. In a great building the functional approaches a level of art: its planning resolves the programmatic spaces and their relationships in a *transcendent* way; not only are its materials perfectly suited for their purpose, durable and low-maintenance, but the construction details are a considerable source of delight in themselves.

We believe that each programme and site contain the seeds, or "DNA molecule," of a language of architecture precisely appropriate to that programme and site, and that every project has the potential to advance its *Type*, to make a new prototype.

The ideal of beauty, rendered passé by the avant-garde earlier this century, is restored by the new spirit of *living architecture* we propose. The making of beautiful buildings is a tacit cultural obligation of the architect, an obligation from which one is not excused by the limitations of programme, budget, zoning or building codes. At one level, the aesthetic, a building must be judged on its merits as a work of art.

We prefer to work closely with the client or user, and to be carefully attentive to both stated needs and perhaps unstated aspirations. Excellent buildings are contingent upon the client's active role as an informed participant. For each user group, a building must possess a sense of authenticity and excitement; it must make a *vital* place which will resonate with meaning and purpose for its specific community over the years.

