

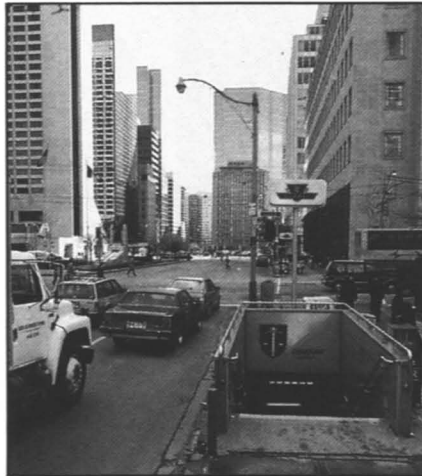


THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Morguard's Midland Avenue Development in Scarborough

By Pamela Snow

He sees the presence of parkland in an urban landscape as, in his words, "enlightened green" (a balance of green, transportation, housing, and people), and notes that in its purest form it becomes the "urban lung" of the city. "One of the greatest failings of the city's core is the lack of a major landscape element," he claims.



University Avenue: Access to the lake?

Integral to his concept and dreams for the betterment of Toronto, is the redevelopment of University Avenue, as he puts it, "On a grand scale." Currently a stately, divided avenue that runs north/south from the Ontario Legislature Building at Queen's Park to Front Street, Jacobs envisions it proceeding right down to the waterfront, with much more landscaping than it currently has. His aim is to cease construction in the immediate area of the waterfront, and develop strong north/south connections in part by attempting to lessen the impact of the railway lands and the Gardiner Expressway (they now serve as a monumental block to viewing the lake from the downtown vicinity) on the waterfront region. Of a recently revealed notion to bury the Gardiner under the water at the rim of the lake shore, Jacobs feels that it is too costly, and removes the one benefit the Expressway now holds: a panoramic view of the city for inbound traffic.

On the housing front, a type of remedy needs to be designed in order to bring people into these areas to live - and live in a quality environment. Part of the process would require that all new development face stringent requirements, and an in-depth analysis of viability and long-term ramifications. It is anticipated that this

method help quell public opinion that development is little more than wheeling and dealing between big business and government, with no real human interest at heart.

The last official plan for the City of Toronto was comparatively weak, and is not being followed closely in any case. The systems are abused; the notions archaic for a city that is fast becoming a world contender. City Plan '91 is in the works to

ensure that this city not only maintains its global appeal in terms of business and tourism, but also that it strikes a balance by being a great place to live, and to really call home.

If the new plan succeeds, the ad hoc style of planning that has occurred in the past will be replaced by a guided, visionary system, returning the human element to the city, and providing it with that much-needed soul. □

When the concept of small units clumped in industrial plaza formats was conceived and executed about 25 to 30 years ago, their purpose was singular: to serve light industrial tenants with a small office, warehouse or factory space, and reasonable rent. While their function is essentially the same today, these types of commercial properties are undergoing the same evolution that all other business concerns are experiencing. Suddenly image is important.

A small manufacturer no longer wants to be located in a grimy, run-down industrial mall, even if the product or image is very down-to-earth. The impression given to prospective clients has become paramount to all forms of business, and although the guts of these operations remains virtually the same as it has for a quarter century, the desire for positive professional image has taken over the facade of the locations.

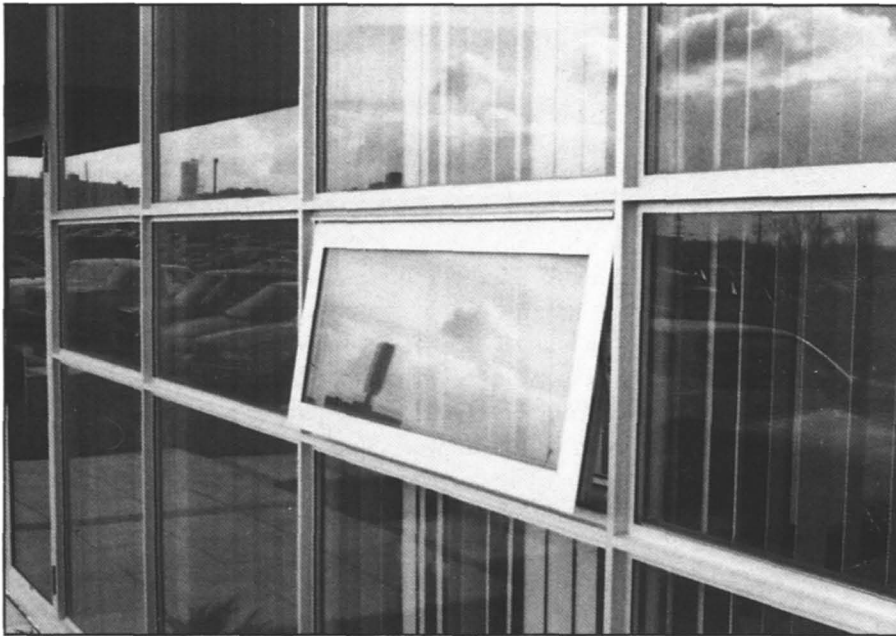
There is still, and likely always will be, an ongoing need for light industrial, economically-priced space, but this aesthetic evolution has initiated a

prise about 20 units each, and are a profile of what has just been described.

Architect Julian Jacobs was at the reins on this project. Jacobs took what he referred to as a "constructivist approach", utilizing the three primary colours, offset with a light grey neutral tone to balance and tie everything together. The net result is a softer appearance - less hard-line industrial - and as Jacobs phrases it, "A more gentle expression of the architectural elements in a graphic sense."

The redesign and development has taken a very standard industrial mall complex from its essentially dull existence into a modern, highly commercial place of business.

Weathered brick, which once comprised a low wall at the base of all front unit windows, was removed and replaced by glass to maximize light and create a long, unbroken line which gives the illusion of greater height. Inside the windows, which are divided horizontally by virtue of the frames into several segments, are sporadic panels of rigid yellow plexiglass. These are removable, should the tenant wish to change the random pattern, and clean the panels.



string of renovation projects on existing industrial plazas that were erected in the late 50's and early 60's. The result is functionally similar space, with greater efficiency in terms of resources and floor area utilization, on the interior, and better, more professional presentation on the exterior.

One such project that has recently been completed is owned and managed by Morguard Properties. Located in the heart of a commercial/industrial part of Scarborough, Ontario at the junction of Midland Avenue and Progress Avenue, the two buildings com-

In each unit, operable windows remained functionally intact until, or in addition to, the installation of air conditioning throughout the entire complex. In the name of consistency, vertical louvres replaced the eclectic array of tenant-supplied window coverings, giving a coordinated enhancement to the design.

More of the true red and blue tones were implemented around the entrances to each unit in conjunction with new lighting under the doorway

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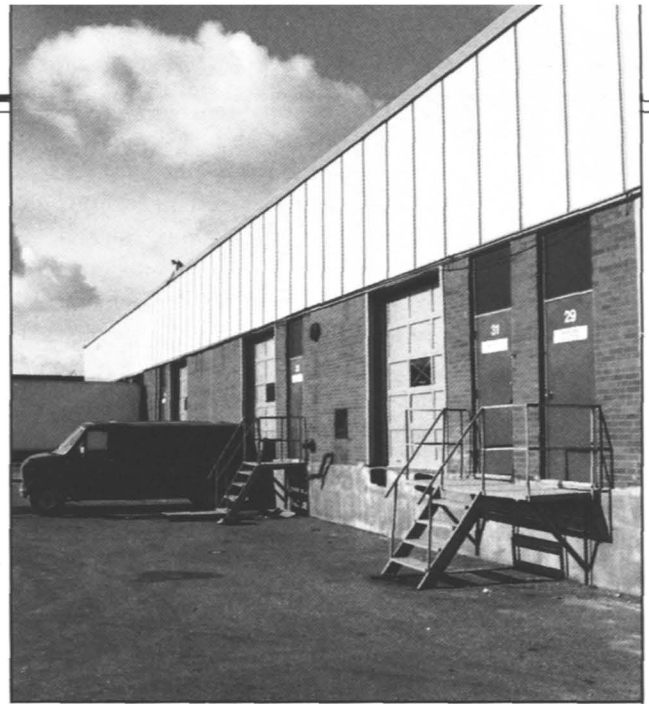
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overhang. The lines and colours are simple, clean and dynamic. Varied signs identifying tenants have been replaced with consistent signage that complements the total image. The final touches included removal and replacement of worn, broken concrete sidewalks, and the uprooting and disposal of unsavoury hedges and unwanted greenery.

The adaptive re-use of these two industrial plaza buildings will likely see a slight change-over in tenancy as leases come up for renewal, as the new image will tend to attract some new tenants.

In the process of spending the approximately \$300,000 per building exterior, Jacobs' team did not neglect the less-noticed, heavily-used rear area of the industrial malls. Entire window facades were replaced by a product called "Overglaze", which is translucent yet allows the penetration of light, and is virtually unbreakable. By installing Overglaze, which is put in place over the existing glass, several goals were achieved.

Light was still able to enter the warehouse portions of the industrial units by way of the lofty windows, yet privacy was ensured by the opacity of the Overglaze. The other significant benefit of the product is its practically unbreakable characteristics. The rear areas of industrial properties are often victims of van-



dalism as they are commonly unoccupied at night, and well concealed from the street, frequently resulting in smashed glass littering the parking area, and theft of goods. With Overglaze, breakage is virtually impossible, and the storage of goods, visible through conventional glass, is hidden, removing much of the enticement to thieves.

Rear doors for shipping and receiving, and access entryways were also colour-coordinated with the front entrances of the units, keeping the scheme of hues consistent. Due to carelessness, some of the bricks flanking the truck doors required repointing and/or replacement, and the addition of security lights in the loading areas completed the refurbishing of that area of the complex. The overall appearance is no longer that of a dishevelled industrial area, but a neat, professional business address.

Jacobs believes that this project was the fringe of a trend that will sweep similar developments across the nation. The motivation is two-fold: the tenant desire for better outward image, and the sheer age of the buildings in question. Like all other buildings in the commercial classification, they must update and evolve with the times in order to compete in the hot new market of the 90's - just around the corner. □



Developer: Morguard Properties

Architect: Julian Jacobs Architects, Anna Richter,
project architect

Construction: Kamrus Construction

Electrical Engineers: A.E.I. Electric

Windows: Prima Aluminum

Painting: Artex Painting

Overglazing: Commercial Plastics