AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE NATURE OF THE
TORONTO ARTS COMMUNITY'S CONTRIBUTION
TO THE CULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL GROWTH
OF THE QUEEN ST. WEST AREA: THE QUEEN
WEST "PHENOMENON"

For: The National Association of
Non-Profit Artist-Run Centres
(ANNPAC)

June 1, 1980 By: Betty Ann Jordan
I would like to express my special thanks to Terry McGlade, a local video artist and Queen St. resident for eight years. By setting up numerous interviews for me with his friends, who happened to be Queen West area artists and residents of long standing, he facilitated this investigation remarkably. Terry also provided me with books, articles, a contact at City Hall, editorial advice, and moral support. His genuine affection and informed concern for his "neighbourhood" and the artistic community which has helped to shape it, exemplifies the attitude of all who live there.
1. A.C.T. - exhibition space
2. A Space - exhibition, performance, service, parallel gallery
3. About Books - used books, modern lst editions
4. Around Again - used records and books
5. Art Gallery of Ontario - exhibition, music, film, performance, etc.
6. Art Metropole - art books, magazines, catalogues, records, video
7. Arts' Sake Inc.,- Lectures, art school
8. Baldwin Street Gallery of Photography
9. Beverley Tavern - new wave music
10. The Cabana Room - music, video, performance, theatre (art bar)
11. Cafe Soho - theatre, jazz
12. Cine Forum - film screenings
13. Jane Corkin Gallery - photographs and related exhibitions
14. Courage My Love - clothing and collectibles
15. Cultural Initiatives - Discussion, films
16. Del Bello Gallery - art exhibition, dealer
17. Edwards Books and Art
18. Gallery 76 - exhibition, performance, film, video
19. Gwartzman's Canvas and Art Supplies
20. Horseshoe Tavern - new wave and contemporary music, performance
21. Klondaridis Inc. - exhibition, painting, dealer
22. Kontatke -
23. Loomis and Toles Co. Ltd. - art supplies
24. Socialist Bookstore
25. MacBeck Studios - rehearsal space, performing arts workshops
26. Mercer Union - exhibition space, performance, parallel gallery
27. The Music Gallery - music, performances, recording facilities, parallel gallery
28. Ontario Crafts Council - exhibition space
29. Open Studio - Printmakers' Co-op
30. Pages Bookstore - exhibition space
31. The Parrot Restaurant - restaurant, exhibition space
32. Peter Pan - restaurant
33. Resolution: A centre for Photography and Communication
34. The Second Story - collectibles, art cards, pins, etc.
35. Theatre in the Dell - live theatre
36. Theatre Passe Muraille - live theatre, workshops
37. 31 Mercer - readings, performances, publishing, printing, graphic design, affiliated with ANNPAC
38. Trinity Square Video - video production, studio
39. Van Slotens Cabaret -
40. Village By the Grange - dance, music, etc.
41. YYYZ - exhibition space, parallel gallery
42. Bau-xi - commercial art gallery
43. Madison Gallery - commercial art gallery
44. Gallery Pascal - commercial art gallery
45. Ontario College of Art
46. Artists' Postcards
47. Hart House - art gallery for University of Toronto
MAP LEGEND - QUEEN WEST AREA cont'd

48. New Massey Hall - entertainment complex
49. Niagara Loft/Studio building
50. Music Rehearsal studio
51. Artons Publishing - publishers of Fuse, Voicespionage, tapes by artists
52. ANNPAC Secretariat - headquarters, editorial office for Parallelogramme
53. Mixed Media - art supplies
54. File magazine - editorial and publishing headquarters
55. Mars co. Sound - recording studio
56. Splinter Design
57. Ms Emma Designs - textile, clothing design, custom design, retail
58. Artists' Alliance - Writers' Centre, Writers' Union, Canadian Authors' Association, Playwrights' Guild, Periodical Writers' Association, art studios, headquarters of Pungent Productions real-estate
59. Type A - typesetting, printing
60. Richmond and Bathurst loft / studio building

OFF-THE-MAP ART-RELATED PLACES: (ACCESSIBLE TO QUEEN WEST, IN DOWNTOWN AREA)

60. The Dream Factory - exhibition, performance, parties
61. The Edge - new wave and other contemporary music
62. Factory 77 - exhibition
63. Factory Theatre Lab
64. 15 Dance Lab (now video production studio only, dance and performance space until April 1988, ANNPAC gallery)
65. Canadian Centre of Photography and Film - exhibition, workshops, etc.
66. The Funnel - film screenings, exhibition space, parallel gallery
67. Harbourfront - exhibition space, performance, film, video
68. The Market Gallery - exhibition space, archival collection
69. A Moment in Time - exhibition space
70. New Music Concerts (Edward Johnson Building, Uof T)
71. NDT - live theatre, workshops
72. Palais Royale Ballroom - special events, music
73. Ryerson Photo Arts Gallery - Ryerson Polytechnical Institute
74. Television Production Studio
75. This Ain't The Rosedale Library - small press books, magazines
76. Three Schools - films, theatre, art courses
77. Theatre du P'tit Bonheur - live theatre
78. Toronto Dance Theatre - dance, school
79. Toronto Free Theatre - live theatre
80. Visual Arts Ontario - exhibition, service, publishers art magazine
81. Young Peoples' Theatre - live theatre, dance.
82. Canadian Film Distribution Centre
83. CARO offices - CANADIAN ARTISTS REPRESENTATION
84. Slate/ Avid Publications
85. Idee Gallery - exhibition space, commercial gallery
86. O'Keefe Centre - performing arts
87. St. Lawrence Centre - performing arts
88. Royal Alexandra Theatre - performing arts
89. 2 Berkley St. lofts / studio building
"Community', 'collaboration', and 'communication' are the three words which are going to stand for the art of the eighties". Willoughby Sharp, Centre for New Art Activities

The above statement with its emphasis on community, collaboration and communication as priorities for the 80's, parallels in a rather exciting way, the prevailing attitude towards art activity in the Queen St. West area of downtown Toronto.

This report will discuss the Toronto arts community's contribution to the cultural and commercial development of the Queen West area. With reference to this, it proposes to establish that the growth of the Queen West area as a cultural service-centre, bazaar, and favoured downtown strip, significantly reflects, and in some ways derives from certain developments within the young art community which has gravitated there.

The fact that six member galleries of the national artist-run centres network (ANNPAC) are situated on or near Queen St. West, with two more centres located in the downtown district provides solid evidence of the 'new' art presence in the area.

Queen St. West's potential for being a centre of contemporary cultural activity is further enhanced by the presence, within walking distance, of the following:
29 other exhibition spaces, 8 other associations representing various cells of the creative community, 13 other art cooperatives, 12 major cultural institutions, 15 art publications headquarters, 19 additional music and performance spaces, and myriad art services and suppliers.

The National Association of Non-Profit Artist-Run Centres has commissioned this paper and the Ontario Arts Council has funded it. Indirectly it may prove to be of interest to those
individuals in the private and public sector who wish to know just where state the Toronto avant-garde is in these days.

To quickly dispel the mystery, the arts and the myriad forms of entertainment and activity which they invariably generate, are flourishing in the Queen St. West area. The signs are all there and I suspect that many observers consider the current popularity and accessibility of contemporary culture on Queen St. to be inevitable.

Such is not the case. Things don't just happen, they are made to happen. And they don't last forever. By following the progression of events, personalities, projects, and successes of Queen St. West residents, habitues, and commercial enterprises, this study aims to:

a) establish what really happened on Queen St. West, also when, why, and who was involved.

b) discuss the significance of these events, given the fact that the Queen St. West arts community is a microcosm of a larger creative community which concerns itself with the processes of social and cultural change.

c) suggest several possible futures for the area and its artist residents.
TERMINOLOGY

QUEEN ST.: This major east-west artery extends through the downtown area of Toronto, running roughly parallel to the waterfront. 'Queen St. West' signifies that portion of the street west of Yonge St.

QUEEN ST. WEST AREA: The area bounded by Dundas St. on the north, Yonge St. on the east, the waterfront on the south, and Niagara St. on the west.

QUEEN ST. WEST 'STRIP': The approximately four block long, commercially intensive section of Queen St. West between University and Spadina Avenue.

'ART-RELATED' ESTABLISHMENTS: Those businesses and organizations which are actively engaged in the promotion, distribution, sale, or production of creative work by artists.

For the purposes of this paper, the following are considered to be 'overtly' art-related:
- commercial, non-profit and public art galleries, museums, and performance spaces;
- book stores; art supply stores;
- music and record stores; craft stores and galleries;
- organizations devoted to cultural causes; antique and collectibles shops;
- production facilities for video and audio recording; photography studios and supply stores;
- certain restaurants*, taverns**, and original, eclectic, or

** Certain restaurants and taverns are significantly art-related even though they exist ostensibly for the purpose of serving food and drink. These establishments fulfill one or more of the following prerequisites:

1) employ primarily artists, or enough artists to make a visible difference.
2) cultivate an art clientele
3) are artist-owned or operated.
4) support on occasion the activities of the local arts community by presenting entertainment drawn from area or accommodating advertisements, art work etc. which promotes the same.
ARTIST: Individual engaged in or skilled in creative work distinguished by its form, beauty, unusual perception, etc. Includes the following fields of endeavour:

music, dance, painting, plastic arts, writing, crafts, acting, entertainment, audio, visual, video, textiles, decorative arts, spoken arts, performance, photography, graphic art, animation.
1. There have been several distinct phases in the transformation of the Queen West area into the popular commercial, residential, and culturally intensive centre that it is today. By mid-summer 1977, there were clear indications that the area was experiencing an influx of new businesses and organizations, many of them art-related; in response to these relatively recent changes in the commercial and cultural status quo, Queen West has become a prime target for redevelopment.

2. As late as 1971, the Queen West area was considered to be economically depressed relative to other areas of the City and Metropolitan Toronto. The low income average for the area was partially accounted for by the make-up of the population, traditionally comprised of immigrant families, many of whom were recent newcomers to Canada, and students. The latter, derived largely from the Ontario College of Art and the University of Toronto, have been joined in recent years by a high concentration of young, single adults.

3. Commencing in 1950 and continuing through until the early '70's, the number of manufacturing and warehouse components in the light industrial district adjacent to Queen St. West was drastically reduced. The departure of these components, located in the area since the late 1890's, served to alter the local economic base and ultimately the nature of the local population.

4. A considerable amount of industrial space in the garment district adjacent to Queen West became available particularly in the late '60's. Since that time an ever-increasing number of artists have established studios, loft spaces, and galleries in these industrial spaces and over commercial components on Queen St. West.

5. In 1975 Queen St. West, particularly in the section between University Avenue and Spadina Ave., experienced an influx of new businesses with a predominantly art focus. It was evident by the end of 1976 that the range of goods and services available on the street was attracting an eclectic, culturally-aware clientele drawn from a milieu other than the local, working-class population.
6. The focus of commercial and other activity in the Queen West area over the course of the last four years, has been predominantly art-related. 44.5% of the businesses on the portion of the street running from University to Spadina alone, are engaged in the sale, distribution or production of creative work, or the provision of facilities, services, or the environment for such work to continue.

7. As a result of the Queen West area's emphasis on art-related enterprise, a significant number of artists have found employment there. At present approximately 14.7% of the work force on the 'strip' i.e. 4 block section of Queen St. West between University and Spadina, alone is comprised of artists.

8. Queen St. West has not risen in isolation from the cultural mainstream; it constitutes, at least geographically, an annex of the City's major cultural institutions which are heavily concentrated in the vicinity. Within a six to eight block radius of the Queen West commercial strip, there are 45 art-related components, including the Ontario College of Art, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and the University of Toronto.

9. To measure the economic and social impact on Queen St. West of art programming in neighbouring institutions like the Art Gallery of Ontario, is beyond the scope of this study. It would seem however, that major exhibits like last year's King Tut show at the A.G.O. and the planned Turner and Van Gogh exhibits at the same institution, will ensure a continued influx of visitors and culture consumers to the vicinity.

10. The opening of the Peter Pan restaurant in September of 1976 marked the beginning of Queen St. West's 'public' phase. Although there had been artists in the area for a number of years, the Peter Pan was the first commercial establishment which publicly acknowledged that it existed as an extension of the Queen West art neighbourhood. Residents of that neighbourhood gathered there in numbers sufficiently large to inspire a flurry of media coverage.

11. As early as 1977, representatives of the local media began to point out the similarities between Queen St. West and
other celebrated art 'villages', particularly New York's Soho. Indeed the rise of Queen St. West and Soho as centres of avant-garde activity stemmed from analogous historical circumstances. The "new Soho" label which has since been applied to Queen West has proven to be highly unpopular with local artists who consider it to be unnecessary and offensively derivative.

11. 'Queen Streeters' talk about their area, the changes that have taken place over the last ten years, and what they think the future will bring.

12. One concludes that the lifestyles, personalities, and activities of the Queen West arts community have generated sufficient interest and excitement to literally 'put it on the map'. The area has become a show-place where visitors and Torontonians alike go for good food, entertainment, and just "to look".

The promotion of the local artistic milieu on a commercial level, has become something of a cottage industry in the Queen West area: the commercial and cultural vitality of the district today is directly related to the highly visible presence of the artists who live and work there.

Whether area artists have specifically generated commercial income or spent enough money to make a difference to the local economy is beside the point. The essentially unquantifiable nature of their contribution in no way lessens its significance.

13. Possible futures for the area are discussed, particularly in view of the zoning by-laws which presently govern property use.

In the final analysis it is likely that artists will move out of Queen West, and indeed the process has already begun. If the trend towards stylish restaurants and increasingly homogenous boutiques continues, rents will become prohibitively high and only the most established artists and arts organizations will remain. It would appear that this wonderfully 'convenient' neighbourhood, close to the City's cultural institutions and resources will cease to be the locus of avant-garde activity. The implications of this loss remain to be seen.
1. By mid-summer 1977 there were clear indications that the Queen St. West area was experiencing an influx of new businesses and organizations, many of them art-related.

There were a number of reasons for the influx of new businesses into the Queen West area in the latter part of the '70's:

i) Queen St. West is located downtown, in attractive proximity to the major centre of employment, culture, education, recreation and services for all of Metropolitan Toronto.

ii) Relatively inexpensive properties were available in this traditionally low-income district.

iii) Prevailing social and economic trends were such that a "return" to the inner city with its conveniences and diversions, seemed imminent.7

iv) The population of the downtown core had been steadily increasing since 1961, partially due to the coming-of-age of the 'baby boom' group. An enlarged population necessitated an expansion of services and housing facilities.

v) The Queen West area is one of the earliest residential districts in Toronto. With its older structures and tree-lined streets, it was a prime target for private residential development. Cabbagetown and the Beaches had already undergone extensive renovation and new areas

1. In an attempt to prepare the way for the 'return to the inner City, the Village-By-The-Grange was being built on McCaul, north of Queen West. The Village-By-The-Grange contains no less than 616 apartments, 12 townhouses, and 100 stores.
were needed to meet the demand.

vi) By mid-1977 Queen St.'s reputation as a centre for avant-garde art, New Wave music, and vibrant street-culture, was firmly established. This, in combination with the wide variety of art-related shops which had been moving on to the street since 1973, led the local press to announce the birth of Toronto's new 'Village'.

vii) More recently, the street has attracted a number of investors and developers, some of whom derive from the arts community.

viii) By this time, the plans for the new Massey Hall entertainment complex, located on the waterfront below Queen St. West, were underway. It is anticipated that the property between Queen West and the waterfront will be developed more intensively once Massey Hall is completed, causing property in the vicinity to become more valuable.

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1 A full-page article with photos, entitled "A New Village Lures The Creative Crowd" appeared in the Toronto Star, June 25, 1977. The article by Bruce Kirkland, stated that "Toronto's newest trendy village is emerging"..."Queen St. is rapidly becoming a concentration of creative, artistic people".

2 Charlie Pachter, local artist and real-estate 'counter-developer' (his phrase), bought the Artists' Alliance building, his first commercial property, in 1973. Located just north of Queen West on Ryerson, it is the headquarters for his Pungent Productions company. The latter deals in the purchase, renovation, sale, or commercial development of properties largely in the Queen West area. The company has recently purchased a five-story office building on Queen West, past Spadina, and is involved with a consortium of investors which is soon to open a 500 seat restaurant in the Queen and Bathurst area.
In the latter part of 1975 the Queen West area experienced an influx of new businesses with a predominantly art focus.

The barbershops, shoe-repair stores, dry-cleaning and laundry businesses which, along with lunch counters and snack bars, had dominated the street through out the peak years of light industry, disappeared gradually in early part of the '70's. They were eventually replaced by shops with names like Late Bloomers, Zephyr, Wallnuts, and the Silver Snail, which offered nostalgia clothing, handmade toys, shells, gemstones, wall hangings, collectors' and new comics, antique coins and photographic equipment, etc.

By the end of 1976 there were 21 art-related shops with a compliment of enduring neighbourhood businesses like Barney's and the Stem Open Kitchen and exotic newcomers like the Cafe Michi Japanese Restaurant and the Bloomsbury Plant Shop.

Then in September of 1976, the now famous Peter Pan opened for business. The stage was set for the next phase of Queen St.'s commercial and cultural evolution.
The focus of commercial activity in the past four years on Queen St. West has been art-related.

Today 44.5% of the businesses on Queen St. West are art-related and 15% are owned or operated by artists individually or in partnership.
The bulk of the art-related businesses and organizations were established between 1973 and 1979, while 1977 represented a peak year with 10 establishments.
The individual work force of 3.3% of all businesses and organizations on the strip is comprised solely of artists. 10.9% of the businesses on the strip employ between 50 and 100% artists.
Because these statistics are confined to the section of Queen West between University and Spadina only, they fall far short of documenting the number of artists employed in the area. The count does not include for example the staff of the five parallel galleries in the neighbourhood, the ANNPAC headquarters, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Ontario Art College, and other art-related components in the area.
To expand upon artists employed in the area, the manager of the Blue Angel restaurant indicated that out of a staff of 30, between 20 and 25 of his employees at any given time are involved with theatre, dance, and other branches of the arts.
The manager of Mad Caps restaurant said that he employed 10 artists out of a possible 12 staff members; he indicated that he wanted "genuine" people with real outside interests and the ability to communicate, and that it just happened that a large proportion of suitable candidates were artists.
The manager of The Queen Mother restaurant told me that the restaurant was started by a clown and a singer for the Nylons,
although the number of employees is prone to sudden change if somebody's career breaks; at present they employ 7 artists out of a possible 16 employees.

One of La Folie's former managers was a cartoonist. There are 5 artists out of a possible 12 there now; once there were 6 actor/entertainers working there at the same time.

All three permanent members of the Clichettes, an all-girl, lip-synch 'singing' group, work at the Parrot restaurant. The latter is owned by a former O.C.A. graduate and his partner, and 8 of it's staff of 10 are artists.

Peter Pan which popularized the 'artists-in-restaurants' craze, presently employs 9 artists out of a possible 25.

Steve's Music hires 17 people. They are all musicians although not all perform professionally.
Queen St. West, at least geographically, exists in close proximity to the City's major cultural institutions.

Within an eight-block radius of Queen St. West's commercial strip, there are 45 art-related components, including the University of Toronto, the Ontario College of Art, and the Art Gallery of Ontario. In addition, there are commercial galleries, particularly on Dundas St., arts publications headquarters and six parallel art galleries.

As far as it's accessibility is concerned, Queen St. West is in an enviable position. The most exciting aspect of this concentration of cultural components in the downtown area is the potential for collaborative programming and joint sponsorship, which it facilitates. Audiences, visiting artists, and facilities can be readily shared.

To measure the economic and social impact of art programming at neighbouring institutions like the A.G.O., on the Queen West area, is beyond the scope of this study. Major exhibits such as last year's King Tut show\textsuperscript{1} at the A.G.O. and the projected Turner and Van Gogh exhibits at the same institution, would seem to ensure a continued influx of visitors and culture consumers to the immediate area.

1. 734,501 people visited the King Tut exhibit at the Art Gallery of Ontario in November and December of 1979. The A.G.O.'s average attendance is 350,000 people a year.
In 1979, 1,960,856 people visited the same institution.

Source: Rep., Education Department, Art Gallery Of Ontario.
Commencing in 1950 and continuing through to the mid-'70's a number of manufacturing and warehouse components moved out of the light industrial area to the south of Queen St. West.

The departure of light industrial components from the district south of Queen St. was largely attributable to the decentralization trend, which lead to the growth of suburban industrial parks.

1 To convey the extent of the exodus, from 1950 to 1971 the City lost an average of 94 manufacturing firms a year, employing 3,700 people. During the same period, the Metropolitan Toronto area gained annually about 90 firms, employing more than 7,000 people.

Industry Work Group, City of Toronto Planning Board. A Place for Industry, 1974 p. 12
4. The availability of large, well-lit industrial spaces in the downtown area, prompted artists to establish studios, loft spaces, and galleries in vacant factories and warehouses, and over commercial components in the Queen West area.

With this move towards locating on Queen St. or in large central buildings utilized by other artists, those artists who had been living in the area for years, often as students, became more concentrated and hence more visible.

At present in the industrial area below Queen West the two best-known loft buildings are the Niagara building which is located between 89 and 101 Niagara St., and the Richmond loft building at Bathurst. Although official information is not available for the latter, the Niagara building now accommodates 42 private studio and workshop units, and 5 art-related businesses.

Not surprisingly, the chronology of the movement of artists into the Niagara building, reflects that of the consolidation of the arts community on the Queen West area. In 1972 the building was partially owned by Dominion Manufacturing; in 1975 and 1976 there were 3 art-related businesses only; in 1978 the number of studios had jumped to 39, and there were 7 art-related businesses.


There is another well-known studio and gallery space at 567 Queen West. This space has been in the uninterrupted possession of the arts community for about fifteen years.
and is still operated by artists under it's present incarnation as the YYZ Gallery, with studios in the back.

At 24 Ryerson, slightly north of Queen and past Spadina, there is the Artists' Alliance building, formerly a drapery factory. This building houses the Writers' Centre, the Writers' Union, the Canadian Authors Association, a type-setting business, private studios, and Pungent Productions, the aforementioned artist-run real-estate business.

The Music Gallery on St. Patrick St. just north of Queen now a centre for experimental music, performance, music and sound recording, is located in a building which was formerly a warehouse and a factory which produced rubber mats.

A Space, one of the areas more well-known parallel galleries, is located on Queen West in a building which accommodated the Ryerson Press and the United Church of Canada publishing companies until the early '70's.
As early as 1977, representatives of the local media were quick to point out the similarities between Queen St. West and other art 'villages', particularly Soho.

In the latter part of 1979 the Queen St. West merchants formed the Soho Merchants association; "Welcome to Soho" signs subsequently appeared in a number of store windows, incurring the wrath of Queen St. residents, many of whom were derived from the arts community. The residents largely felt that the presence of a block-long street called Soho in the Queen area did not constitute sufficient cause to assume the Soho label. The latter was considered to be exploitative, an invitation to increased rents and traffic, and from the artists' point of view, embarrassingly derivative.

In defense of the merchants, as early as 1977, the local media had pointed out the similarities between Queen West and Soho, N.Y.C. There is much to support the analogy in that both areas are possessed of a number of light industrial factories and warehouses, interspersed with tenement and semi-detached housing. Similarly, by the time that artists began to converge on both areas they were economically depressed with a high ethnic concentration. In New York, Soho and Little Italy are one and the same district.

In both communities, a number of industrial buildings had become vacant freeing up studio and loft space. In Toronto, as in New York until recently, loft-living is illegal except

1 Mayor John Lindsay's administration enacted a clause in the zoning laws making industrial lofts available to 'artists in residence' in the Soho area. In the first year 3000 artists registered with the City to be eligible for 'resident' status.
over commercial components. Partly due to the loft spaces, Queen St. and Soho have been subject to similar commercial and residential redevelopment and dramatically escalated property evaluation.¹ To counteract this trend, Soho artists have incorporated with friends to buy entire buildings to protect their spaces. With the exception of Pungent Productions' real-estate activities, similar action to purchase buildings for permanent artists' use has yet to take place in the Queen area. Until the zoning laws which govern the use of industrial buildings in the area are modified there is little that can be done legally with most of the available structures.

In other respects there are marked differences between the two 'villages', differences which dictate that Queen St. west's future is likely to be in variance to that of Soho, New York's. Unlike the latter, Queen West is immediately adjacent to the business and service centre of the city. As such it is very valuable development property transversed by a busy east-west artery which serves the downtown core. Also there are many active light industrial components in the district still

¹ To suggest the nature of property cost increases in the vicinity of Queen West, a survey of house prices undertaken by the Royal Trust in the past year indicated that the cost of a house in Central Toronto rose by 9.7% between January and July. This represented about three times the increase of houses in more outlying districts.

which generate a significant amount of tax revenue. In order to retain that revenue and sustain the use of existing shipping, railway, and warehouse facilities along the waterfront the City Planning Board has come out strongly in favour of keeping industry in the Queen West environs. If industry stays residential and commercial development adjacent to Queen St. West will be severely curtailed.
6. The opening of the Peter Pan restaurant marked the beginning of Queen St. West's 'public' phase in the sense that it drew attention to the fact that the Queen West district was the new home of the artistic avant-garde in Toronto.

"The opening of the Peter Pan was the first public evidence that this was the new art neighbourhood. It was clear that first year that they (owners and staff) were conscious of their role. They took an indigenous building"..." and hired artists for waiters. They were the stars".

Peggy Gale,
Director, A Space Gallery
and Queen West resident.

By hiring artists from the area and encouraging them to 'be themselves' as far as their dress and demeanour were concerned, the Peter Pan owners promoted not only the Queen St. aesthetic but also the people who had shaped it.

Peter Pan provided a place for the local arts community to meet, a social context for the area's burgeoning activity in the areas of video, performance art, punk and New Wave music, photography and dance. Peter Pan also started an employment trend which flourishes to this day on Queen St. By hiring artists, they consciously 'cashed in', for want of a better expression on the flamboyant sexual cachet which has been traditionally associated with artistic milieus. Members of the arts community came to see their friends, but ultimately curious members of the general public came to see them. This phenomenon touches on the very heart of the matter as far as this study is concerned. Whether artists in the area have directly generated commercial income or spent enough money to make a difference to the local economy is
essentially beside the point. Their lifestyles, their personalities, and their art activities generated sufficient excitement and stimulated enough outside interest in the area to literally 'put it on the map'.

The promotion of the local artistic milieu has become a cottage industry on Queen West. There are now 19 restaurants on the strip, and it has become a prerequisite to have at least some artists on staff.

On the weekends, Queen St. is glutted with restaurant goers, shoppers, and sight-seers. The street has clearly become a place where visitors and Torontonians alike go to look; it is a place where young would-be artists with aspirations to rock-stardom, a career in dance, or a cover photo on File Magazine, go to be seen; it is a place where practicing artists actually live.

Queen St. as it exists today is still a place which art has made. It is not likely that this will continue to be obvious because in another two years it may no longer be true. The following remarks indicate the nature of the transition which Peter Pan and ultimately the entire area has undergone:

"Peter Pan was the first local outlet for the artists to make money and support their art. I gave a lot of people part-time jobs. (Subsequently) that's what brought (the rest of) them... their friends were working here. It became a drop-in centre. People knew that they could come here and find out what was going on in the city, or at least in this part of the city".

Mary Jackman, Part-owner of Peter Pan.

Mary Jackman, in Bruce Powe's "Transformations: Across Queen St.", The Downtowner, Vol. 1, # 10, p.3
"We knew that the Peter Pan would be a great place, and we knew that everyone wanted it so much.
There were always artists in the area, I guess because of the art school. Artists lived there individually, they didn't have places to go particularly...
What we didn't realize was that all the other people who worked in that neighbourhood would come there for lunch, and start bringing their wives (sic) back down in the evenings for dinner".

"Mary and I got another partner Larry and we did it all ourselves. It cost us $10,000 to start the Peter Pan."

"We took the values that we had then and made them into money-making propositions".

Sandy Stagg,
Former Owner of Peter Pan

"Peter Pan has enlarged the entire street. Because it is linked with the media it appears to be even more powerful than it really is. The Peter Pan has provided a focus for a lot of activity and it is cutting off other avenues".

Nancy Johnson,
Artist, Queen St. resident
Curator, Gallery 76 (O.C.A.)

"Peter Pan was the end and the beginning. The end of the underground and the beginning of a high profile in the area".

Elizabeth Chitty,
Video artist, dancer, ...
Queen St. resident, worked at Peter Pan
If recent commercial development on Queen St. West is any indication of the future, the area will cease to reflect its avant-garde art origins in the very near future.

In the first quarter of 1980, two new restaurants opened and a third doubled in size bringing the present total of restaurants up to 19.

A former dress factory located on Queen below Spadina is being converted into a french restaurant; Charlie Pachter and a group of associates are opening a five hundred seat restaurant named "Gracie's" further west on Queen; the Horseshoe Tavern, home of country and western music for many years, and punk/new wave music since 1977 (less 6 months) was sold in the latter part of May this year to a party who reportedly intends to convert it into a bar and disco.

Four new stores of the rectangular box, glass-front variety are opening in the section between 429 and 439 Queen West.

The City has discussed widening Queen St. between Soho and Spadina and converting the former site of the St. Patrick's market, now a poultry business, into something like it's original state.

One thing is certain. Change is going to continue to alter the face of Queen St. If it's development continues to favour the proliferation of modish restaurants and boutiques there will soon be little trace of the young arts community which lent it it's present colourful, idiosyncratic definition.

Actually two things are certain with respect to the future. Whether artists are living in the area or not, the 'Soho' label will continue to be capitalized upon. "Already" as local real-estate watcher pointed out, "there are 'loft' loving spaces in the area which artists will never have lived in. Property in the Queen St. West area has
increased in value to such a degree that it is moving out of the range of the people who pioneered it".

The pattern is as familiar as it is inevitable with similar action having taken place in Toronto's Cabbagetown and the Beaches where "coach-house" developers have drastically altered the look of those neighbourhoods. Why, one is compelled to ask, should Queen St. be spared?
DAVID BUCHAN:

DAVID IS A VISUAL ARTIST, VIDEO PERFORMER, AND HEAD OF WHOLESALE / RETAIL DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER PRINTED ART MATERIALS AT ART METROPOLE. HE IS ALSO A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO FILE MAGAZINE.

"Queen St. is a community of people with similar attitudes and tastes, people who share their participation and interest in cultural activity and the support structures related to the production and distribution of these (cultural) products.

The Queen St. West area represents the strongest grouping of interests in the cultural scene in Toronto. This is the only collection of people who are involved with making art, looking at art, - I mean all types, dance, film, etc.

When one considers the commercial art scene elsewhere there is no discernible sense of community there; it seems that they deal with each other basically as competition. I don't think that they collaborate..."

(When asked about the manner in which Queen St. is changing and the possible future of the arts community centred there if the area becomes too pricey to stay...)

"Now Queen St. doesn't have that vibrancy which it originally did, the excitement which comes from people coming together to set something up communally. 'Good things' will not be lost if the arts community is forced to disperse. Good things
DAVID BUCHAN:

will stay good things - they will be merely forced to relocate. Really interesting art activity will make the adjustment, grow, and expand. Artists' enclaves don't disappear, they become different, more stable.

There will always be a high rate of turnover when you are dealing with people involved in experimental art activity. It's not an entirely bad thing if they are moved along by developers".
ANDREW JAMES PATTISON:

SONG WRITER / SINGER, CURRENTLY IN TORONTO BAND "THE GOVERNMENT", PERFORMER IN VIDEO-CABARET, AND CONTRIBUTOR TO ART PERIODICALS. LIVES IN THE AREA.

"Down here everybody's a minor somebody. Everyone knows everyone else. One's fame or notoriety is no big deal. It's the difference between character actors (down here) and models (uptown).

If you are known to be working on something, people will ask you how it's going. And maybe the conversation will extend and you will wind up going to the Queen Mother for business conversations.

Restaurants are drawing less and less on the notoriety of the arts community to survive. Word has gone out that there are a lot of 'good' restaurants down here. It's no longer like 'Let's go see what weird haircolours the Diodes have now...' or 'Let's see if we can catch General Idea making pie in a phone booth somewhere on Queen St.', any more.

This area is a convenience. (It is a) ...ghetto that grew up in a specific area for a specific reason i.e. 'I've got an appointment and I've only got this long to get to it'. When A Space needed a new location it seemed that it would have to be down here. It would be too much bother to go anywhere else.

I don't think that this is an artist-dominated community, aside from the fact that a lot of artists live down here and their business defines certain buildings.
"There started to be a street-life down here in the middle to latter part of 1976. There seemed to be more and more minor events like the Crash and Burn Club ... so on Thursday and Friday night the Queen St. 'superstars' would be seen at the Beverley... then there was the old Crash and Burn — that was a great pose scene.

Most of the rock bands in the Queen St. West area had their roots in the Ontario College of Art. Most of the bands that are interesting in terms of their posture and content have about half of their members from an Art College peer group. The suburbs have set up an alter-ego down by O.C.A. on Queen St. Some of those people that you see on the street don't even live there, they live out in Scarborough.

I'm reluctant to go north of College St. now unless I get paid. I just feel that (uptown) is a different neighbourhood. I'd look funny or else they would associate me with something else and ask questions about what I did a long time ago.

Things happen privately down here — not publicly, except for the odd art event or party. And openings."
JOHN SCOTT AND NANCY JOHNSON:

JOHN AND NANCY RUN THE GALLERY 76 ON MCCAUL ST. FOR THE ONTARIO COLLEGE OF ART. THEY ARE BOTH ARTISTS THEMSELVES, AND HAD A SHOW RECENTLY AT THE CARMEN LAMANNA GALLERY.

At the moment they live above a store on Queen St. West

It's really interesting. The guy who was our landlord (on Queen St.) specifically wanted to get art students in. There had been winos up to that point. Art students were easier on the property. Unfortunately, a lot of the people who were defined as winos were just poor people, that were moved out.

T.M: Nancy was saying that a whole group of the older people have moved out in the last two months. Does that mean that before that nobody ever moved out?

J.S: It was always a specific kind of art student who moved down to Queen St. A couple who were sort of finishing. It was your last year and you moved into a cheap, large space. All those people have stayed if they possibly could get in here. I've really felt moving because... well the rent has been going up slowly...

(Nancy interjects..."And you have to walk down through restaurant-land with your laundry ")

Yeah, and there are a lot of first-class jerk-offs on the street. We get the people coming out of the Blue Angel. (Nancy adds "Yeah, and they're drunk...". Real sophisticated, Manhattan-style types on the street! )

Yeah. All of those gales of laughter coming out of those model-like figures... (laughter)... that wild, impetuous
laugh...

T.M.: Do you really feel that you have become a déclassé person in your neighbourhood?

J.S.: Oh, yeah. (Nancy interjects "There is still no place to buy food. It's weird to have all that money move into the neighbourhood and have nothing happen for the neighbourhood... You have to go to Yonge St. or the I.G.A. for food...")

J.S.: I'm waiting for a fast-food quiche place to open...

T.M.: This is interesting. You two are the first people to have a real gut reaction to all of it. Like"It's really horrible..."

N.J.: Who have you been talking to? People who are making money off it?

B.A.: Most people have been very stoic about it, saying that it was inevitable...

J.S.: I'm right in the middle of it. With the Blue Angel and the Village by the Grange... There are so many fur coats at lunch hour. I guess what is really bothering me is the constant subversion of specific neighbourhoods. It was a neighbourhood in a sense. You can't just keep moving the dispossessed out. People were down on Queen St. for specific reasons... they didn't have a lot of money, and they needed a place to go.

(We talk about Sandy Stagg. A heated discussion ensues, for and against...)
J.S.: The thing about the Peter Pan and it's connection with General Idea... has crystallized a specific kind of style and way of approaching things which is I suppose anti-political and in a sense unconcerned. It appears to be very self-oriented - a strong manifestation of this "me" generation... that's an incredibly pervasive style - not just for people down here. It really has transformed this area.

N.J.: That is linked with the media. It appears to be even more powerful than it really is because of the media coverage. Peter Pan has provided a focus for a lot of activity and it is cutting off other avenues.

J.S.: As far as Sandy is concerned, I don't think it was so much her, as the kind of symbiotic relationship started developing between her and the community that bounced off her. It enlarged the entire street.

N.J.: And then you have a real strata forming. Previously the community was much more homogenous. We were all young and poor - to varying degrees. People's lives have gone in various directions tremendously.

There was a whole mythology which supported that (i.e. the old ways). It was the 'homogenous poverty' mythology -- the 'decay development' mythology. It supported people who were poor and basic.

(Terry tells the story of a house full of poor people who were evicted in 1973. The house was just off of Queen ST., and a number of Queen St. people rallied round this cause. Terry made a film about the situation and took it to City hall...) Everyone agreed that that would not happen now.

N.J.: It's a very different situation off of Queen St. ... neighbourhood communities... that there have never been on Queen St. Second floor walk-ups just don't generate the same kind of neighbourhood.
J.S.: Formerly, there was a crusty kind of individualism on Queen St. It was a community of individuals, which it is not now. You are supposed to have a public persona now on Queen St.... You are supposed to go to the corner now and chit-chat with everybody...(now).
(B.A. asks "Who expects that?") The media and probably all the other people who want to move down to Queen St.

(John talks about the competition now for places on the street. Tells an anecdote about having left the door up to his place open recently, and having somebody come in off the street, wanting to rent the place up above.)

You make a slip and your apartment is gone.

J.S: When I first moved into the place (Q.S.W.)
- I had as much space as I have now, for $58.00. Now I'm paying $200.00. It has gone up the maximum amount that it can every year since the Q.S. thing started...

It is almost impossible now to afford a space to produce art objects in (down here...) yet it was the culture that first attracted people down here. Now the artist are being weeded out except for those who are really established. For the generation of new ideas and new situations it becomes out of their range.

N.J: It's very different than New York. There there is an infinite amount of space which can be changed and revamped. It is not true with manufacturing, commercial and residential space in Toronto. Only a small per centage of it was ever downtown in the first place. QSW is only three blocks long....
GARY MARZINSKY AND KATHERINE PARKER

GARY MARZINSKY IS A REAL ESTATE AGENT WITH TERRY MARTEL REAL-
ESTATE. HE WORKED AT THE PETER PAN RESTAURANT, AS DID
KATHERINE PARKER.
KATHERINE PARKER IS AN ARTIST AND A WAITRESS.

K.P.: What is interesting about this area is that it
seems to be 'skipping' a number of steps in terms of normal
development(of an area) It has been accelerated incredibly.
I see that happening in terms of loft-space. Traditionally
(like in New York) you have loft space which people moved
into because it was empty, abandoned space, cheap space.

You have the same sort of situation down here
except the rents are going up higher than that can be
developed. I think that loft space is going to be developed
around here but artists will never have lived in them...

People in Toronto are hungry for space. New
York set the precedent. Architectural Digest has done
enough articles on renovated loft spaces for people to think
"Well yes, this is what I want...".

G.M.: The situation in Toronto is that loft-living
is illegal. his means that most of the loft-living that is
done around here is done on the Q.T. (?). People don't
advertise it.

Above store-fronts, where the zoning allows
both a residential and commercial component, you can have
'loft'-like spaces. The problem is that most artists can
not afford to rent a thousand square feet above a store
on Queen St., because the rent is outrageous. Two years
ago that was still possible...but it isn't now.

What happens now is that the artist, who
(traditionally) the person who lives in lofts is being
moved along - he's being moved farther out of the core.
The problem starts when you live in an old warehouse that is not properly fire-proofed. In order to make that space safe, it costs a lot of money. The professional, the entrepreneur, who usually buys up core property - that is the person who is buying the warehouse spaces and converting them into day-studios.

K.P.: re: 'day-studios' That's a quasi-legal term...

G.M.: What they are saying is that "It's a day-studio. There are kitchen and washroom facilities, but you can't live there as far as we are concerned...".

Illegal loft-living has been going on for ten years in this area. There are numerous warehouses around that have pooled apartments in them. People have spent years and money putting them together. They never have a lease. (Generally) Any improvement they make is at their own risk. When it becomes too expensive to be renting the place, they get bounced.

K.P.: I think that it is part of the activity (around here). Artists will go into a space and not worry about protecting themselves. "We don't do business - we do art".

G.M.: Artists are very non-committal. There's no way that they would ever tie themselves down to a lengthy lease or a mortgage...

K.P.: When there was an opportunity here for people to get together and buy houses, almost nobody did.

B.A.: Money must have been a problem...

G.M.: No. Money was not a problem... up to two years ago, it wasn't. The money was there -- it was the commitment that wasn't there.

K.P.: I don't think that it was just the commitment... I think that they were reluctant to own a house... Also I think that people just didn't think that it was going to
happen this fast. They thought that this would be their area, and that things would stay this way... except that maybe we would get a new restaurant. I think that everybody — well look around — I mean Spadina... who wants to live on Spadina?

K.P.: (In response to my question "Have you lived around here a long time?) Yes. I am a graduate of the Art College. I lived at Spadina and College, and for a few months, I lived on the other side of town — and ran back. I've lived about five years in the area. We own a house at Richmond and Peter now (laughs).

G.M.: We were among the few people that bought at the time. The turning point for this area was the opening of the Peter Pan, not necessarily for the better, especially for the artists. It started out as a nice neighbourhood with a café/restaurant that the artists could wine and dine and sit around rap...

K.P.: ... and very quickly they were moved along because they didn't spend enough...

G.M.: Oh yeah... business is business. Then that restaurant started getting their write-ups. We started getting large paper exposure... the Star did that whole page... It was all within six months of the Peter Pan opening up... that's also when real-estate started going up.

The loft building on Richmond - two and a half years ago- that nice little three-story brown stone 12,000 sq. feet... super building. Ideal New York-type loft building... We couldn't give it away. It finally ended up going at a ridiculous price of a hundred and forty-seven thousand dollars. That building right now has got to be worth $600,000 to $700,000... That's in the matter of two and a half years. Some business people own it. Artists galore were shown the place... But what it required was a little bit of management on somebody'd part because
obviously it has to be paid for...

As soon as the exposure started, that's when the business people started to look into it. They said "Well look, we've got the art college, the art gallery, city hall, Bay St. - everything is within a five minute walk from Queen St. West ..." It's prime core property.

B.A. (I ask Gary to talk about the possible future of the area in terms of developments proposed in the South-East Spadina city plan...?)

G.M.: I think it's a case of what the city wants (vs) what the city can afford. Two totally different things. The city wants a lot. When the city down-zoned this whole area - under the zoning, they want to see a good residential mix, 40% under the Spadina south-east plan. What they are saying is - okay - we have all this factory space, and all this warehouse space, scattered houses, ... and we would like to see it developed as combined residential/commercial...

That's where it gets tricky because the new zoning under the Downtown plan says "Yes, you can do it..." but the by-law says that "No you can't..." It's a safety precaution so that all of a sudden everybody go in there and immediately turn the area inside out...There have to be restrictions.

The by-law restricts the existing use. This means that you can go ahead and convert it into a living space, but you are going to have to do it this way.

You can't just go in and open it up and say "OK. you can have this much space, you can have that much space...."

K.P: OK. Maybe that has something to do with this whole thing. Maybe because of those controls, then somehow they have kept artists out of those spaces. Perhaps the controls were such that people couldn't just go in there and start putting things together... and by putting a lid
you have kept the place undeveloped but the prices have
gone up. It didn't keep the prices down. So now the only
person who can do anything now is the developer...

K.P.: What I would like to see happen... whether
it's the art school or the city - I would like to see them
get interested in housing. To get the most of an educational
institution you have got to live close. OCA. doesn't have
a campus... if you paint large canvases, etc, you have to work
at the art school. You have to be able to stay there -
the school is open until really late at night - you have
to live close by.

G.M.: The art students are living a lot farther
away this year than they were last year. They are having to
move farther and farther out. That core area around the
school is developing at such a phenomenal rate...

If you take from the waterfront where the C.N.
Tower is, and you take a look at the Massey Hall development
.... the amount of development that that particular project
has started in this area is crazy...

K.P.: The street on which we live is zoned
commercial/residential. ... We could have a wonderful two-
floor apartment upstairs, and a commercial component down-
stairs. ... And it will happen. As soon as the Massey Hall is finished it will attract more professional people down here. In which case we will sell and will go somewhere else...

G.M.: The area will be filled with the service industry... restaurants...

K.P.: I think that you are going to see a lot more professional people. I have a dentist in the Toronto Dominion Tower... that's not very far from here... it's only about a block and a half... I think that a lot of people are going to seek alternatives to those towers. These people certainly have an opportunity to check out the area when they are down here at lunch time...

G.M.: Getting back to the issue of residential development... Residential is starting to build up now... you can pay $725.00 - $750.00 for an apartment in a house on Queen St.... there are certain areas, like the one around the Grange, which was heavy-duty Chinatown... all you are going to see in the next couple of years is the Dundas strip... it will be the shops and the restaurants. That entire residential area, both north and south of Dundas - it's happening now... houses are being renovated and restored. Duplex, tri-plex, whatever they lend themselves to. It is not a student market, a student can not afford a $145,000 house...

It's a natural progression for a prime residential area in a core location... Once the commercial money moves in the residential money is not far behind. It's one and the same - it comes out of the same pocket.

K.P.: (Back to the student housing crisis) Beverley turns into St. George. The artists and students are having to leave the area which they pioneered.
G.M.: Have you seen the building which has gone up across from the Horseshoe? Just east of Spadina.? It still has the hoarding up in front of it. It is an idea of what is happening. The look of Queen St. has already changed.

K.P.: That site was a parking lot. All of the parking lots are going to be bought up and filled in. There has been no attempt by those developers to make it a village.

G.M.: .... no creativity. You have 12,000 sq. ft. of land. The density allows six times the coverage...

K.P.: I think that in the future you are not going to have a centre anymore - you are going to have three or four areas..

Later.....

K.P.: Any new building which goes up in this area has to have a 40% residential...

G.M.: That building that I told you to go look at beside the Horseshoe represents that (40% mix)

K.P.: Another building which you should look at is over top of the donut shop. There's a horror story.

Three years ago you could pick up a house in this area for $50,000 dollars. Now, you are looking at double that - and the structure is worse than it was three years ago.
ELIZABETH CHITTY:
VIDEO AND PERFORMANCE ARTIST, FORMER DANCER AND CHOREOGRAPHER.
EDITOR OF SPILL MAGAZINE, FORMERLY RAN A REHEARSAL STUDIO FOR
DANCERS ON QUEEN ST. WEST.

My decision to start a Studio came partially in response to
the fact that there was no support for independant people.
These people needed a place to rehearse, so I decided that
I would make the upstairs fill that need. ("**. The
'upstairs' which Elizabeth refers to, is directly above her
apartment, also at 410 Queen St. West)

B.A.: There wasn't room at 15 Dance Lab for all these people?

E.C.: '15' is not a rehearsal space, but rather a performance
place. They were booked solid with shows. I also wanted to
make it as cheap as possibly I could, and I overshot myself
for awhile there. At the beginning I was quite obsessive
about it. I even paid people back one day when I found that
I had enough to pay the rent. I gave people rebates, and it
went down to 40¢/hr. at one point. I was obsessed with this
thing about cheap rent. I felt that it was really wrong to

... think of it as a business. I would feel quite differently
now. Until March of '79, the studio ran - it was almost four
years. I administered it inasmuch as that involved constant
bookings, phonecalls, drawing up schedules, and keeping the
books - it was basic stuff really, not too high-powered.
Oh yeah, and people used my bathroom... so it was four years
of people dancing over my head, and coming down into my house.
There was no privacy, and yet it didn't bother me because I
was really into it.
T.M.: Talk about the party circuit...

E.C.: We had parties upstairs where there were hundreds of people. There was a party circuit. Nowadays it's not like that any more. It's "invited only". But in those days there were huge loft parties and people were really into throwing bashes and dancing. There used to be lots of parties at 2 Berkeley St., and 815 Queen St. West.

T.M.: There was an evolution in the parties. They started off small...we weren't clued in at the beginning of the party circuit, that would be around '75 (fall and the following spring). Hundreds of people came because we were on the circuit -- not because we knew them.

E.C.: I don't know how much of this is just me, but during the earlier parties we never had anything stolen. A glass ashtray once from the bathroom... Now I would worry about having things ripped off. The feeling of camaraderie at that time was such that I never worried about fights, etc. It seemed to go sour somewhere and maybe that fits in with how the community has changed and gone high-profile. Uptowners deciding to slum it...

B.A.: What about the other Queen St. West people? What are they doing now, if they don't have big lofts anymore? Can we assume that they don't have lofts...?

E.C.: I don't know that there are fewer lofts it's just that people are more careful now when it comes to parties and such, 815 Queen still has parties, and they do it for money with a cash bar and so does Mercer St. But (the latter) ... are very much organized affairs, around a gallery opening, or a publication.
T.M.: So Elizabeth, are you happy to live on Q.S.W.? Would you want to live anywhere else?

E.C.: Yes. No. It's really changed a lot. I do have reservations about what is happening in the area. Its restaurant-crazy down here now. I remember a couple of years ago, and (one day) ... noticing really well-dressed matrons coming downtown shopping -- no, it wasn't Christmas --. On Sundays its nothing but families from god-knows-where, come down, walking along Queen St. for sight-seeing or something, - like taking the kids to the park. The area has become so public, and has a high profile as an area, much in the same way that people used to go to Yorkville to see Yorkville. Its a bit odd when it's your neighbourhood.

When Crash and Burn was punk it was fabulous. It was a very small community, musicians who were art students, and it was in the basement of an art centre. Then the Horseshoe went punk. The Stranglers came to the Horseshoe - that was their very first thing - and I thought "Well, this is handy... I can just walk across the street".

T.M.: What would you consider to be an 'actual' Queen streeter? Do you consider somebody like Larry (part-owner of Peter Pan) a Queen streeter?

E.C.: He's closer to it than lots of other people. My definition would be people who have actually lived here. The area which I would define as Queen St. West proper would be no farther east than University; it goes as far east as Niagara, as far south as the waterfront and as far north as Dundas or maybe Darcy. Once you go beyond Dundas it isn't Queen St. (area) but it's still downtown. I refer to people who came here because they wanted to live downtown because that's their milieu, they got off on a downtown
versus a more uptown, residential type of neighbourhood - somebody who is a downtowner. It's a different sensibility. It irritates me that people who live in nice residential areas uptown and want to cash in on the trendiness of Queen St. village. They figure that they can open a restaurant and make their fortunes and well, it's just a little gripe, I'm not saying that they don't have the right to do this, I mean they do.

(When asked about her predictions for the future of Queen St. west ..)

... I have figured over the last year that rents will continue to escalate in this area, more and more places will be bought and renovated. You always run into these articles about loft living, even in magazines like Home-Makers' Digest. (We've got the lofts here) and executives, etc., have the money to buy and renovate them. That's what is going to happen and all of us locals will be forced out.

There's nowhere else that I want to live. If I was ever forced out I don't know what I would do. I don't ever expect to have enough money to own a house.

T.M. : Do you feel that we exist as an artistic community? a) in the sense that we do our art and we are part of a larger group of people who are doing their art and b) that we also then are part of a community which exists beyond our being artists, that in fact we are part of a community?

E.C. : Sure. Of course I do. There's a community of people here who aren't artists (however). There's a community
of people here around a nucleus of art and artists. New Wavers, the whole music thing, then there are the hangers-on of New Wave - those who are into the new wave style and visuals - very fashion-oriented. That's all part of the community. There is also an artist community
a) because of the fact that so many artists live here in studios and apartments and
b) because of the Music Gallery and A Space, Trinity, Mercer Union, etc. ... They are all here.

We Queen Streeters like Queen Street.
We like to feel how we want, and dress how we want, and look how we want, and feel at home - because we are at home!"
CHARLIE PACTER:

ARTIST, BUSINESSMAN (DEALS IN REAL ESTATE i.e. SALES, DEVELOPMENT AND RENOVATION). ALSO BEGAN THE ARTISTS' ALLIANCE, A COOPERATIVE STUDIO, LIVING AND OFFICE FACILITY. PRESENTLY OWNS AND/OR RENTS A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF PROPERTY IN THE QUEEN ST. WEST AREA. HE AND A GROUP OF PARTNERS, ARE ABOUT TO OPEN A LARGE RESTAURANT ON QUEEN ST. WEST (i.e. 'GRACIE'S')

Nobody called me a speculator when I first came down here and bought this wreck (the A.A. building). It was a practically abandoned drapery factory. I moved in here because I was miserable not knowing where I was going with my life, and I wanted to be in a building with other artists. I lived in the basement of this building, and I'm still here seven years later... Bled the furnace, I was the bloody janitor of the place, and I lived here when all the other artists lived here.

Slowly I worked my way up to the top floor for myself, and what did I get? - the wrath of every other artist who said "Who the hell does he think he is, having the top floor and taking my money?" (Blandly). I was charging rent to my own fellow artists...

I couldn't stand it any more. After three years I left (i.e. stopped residing in A.A. building) and the whole building went commercial. We have got art-related activities here. The Writers Centre is here. We've got a jeweller, the typesetters are here, N.C. Press is here. I stopped banging my head against a brick wall. I don't want to rent to my fellow artists... they are driving me crazy!

Who needs to endure all that misunderstood wrath about what it is to be a landlord...

... I found out in 1970 after I bought my first house. Aha! If you own property and you're creative, then you've got leverage. It's as simple as that. And the same
people who used to torment me about it are asking me how to do it now.

When you came down to Queen and Bathurst—well it was the 'shop on Main Street'; it was warmth, it was old people, it was young people, it was draft dodgers, it was all the real world.

I spent a year in France. When I came back that was it for me. I would never again go home. This was home—that was all that there was to it. It never bothered me that there was subsidized housing or whatever the hell it was... It was just putting to use stuff that nobody else could see any future in. Queen St. seemed so obvious to me. I just came here and it seemed like home that's all.

Look. Queen St. is sixty miles long. I was out in the Beaches last week. I've been in areas around Logan and everywhere else. This little stretch of Queen St. is three blocks for gods sakes, and it's right next to the downtown core. Why shouldn't it have trendy little shops? It will never become Hazelton or Yorkville because it's a main thoroughfare—and it's full of old industrial loft buildings and stuff. One of my greatest challenges would be to take one of those buildings and make a bunch of really reasonable loft-living apartments in them. People in Soho don't feel...

C.P.: You know where trendies go? They go where there is dignified architecture, in the Annex and on Walmer Road, and they are moving a little bit more over towards Euclid and Palmerston. (Softly, confidentially) They won't come down here, I'm telling you. In seven years
I know it.

Unconventional people will come down here. It's more like the East Village in New York, where you get your odd well-known writer, but you are not going to get your status quo - the schools aren't here. You won't get your nuclear family trendies. They are in Cabbagetown because the schools are there. They have ratepayers associations and all the rest of it. For better or worse, you get people who aren't into a normal lifestyle, down here. Ones who want all the amenities of downtown, the closeness to shopping, etc. ... people who have kids are not that into being on Queer St. - not as the status quo. The adventurous ones, maybe... but not really.
TOM SHERMAN:

VIDEO ARTIST, WRITER, FORMERLY INVOLVED WITH A SPACE. CONTRIBUTOR TO FUSE MAGAZINE, THE HEADQUARTERS OF WHICH ARE LOCATED IN THE QUEEN WEST AREA. ALTHOUGH TOM WAS AWAY TEACHING AT THE NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOL OF ART WHEN THE INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED, THE FOLLOWING FRAGMENT OF A PIECE THAT HE WROTE FOR CENTREFOLD (NOW FUSE) POIGNANTLY SUGGESTS THE AMBIENCE OF QUEEN ST. WEST., MORE SUCCINTLY THAN A DESCRIPTION OF THE PEOPLE, BUILDINGS, AND TREES. COULD EVER DO.

" But we do listen in. Not to the radio or television. We get the word off our friends. We have our personal contacts who keep us informed. I take appointments with my friends who tell me everything they know. We exchange important information. We help each other grow. We help each other survive. We compromise our individuality in order to find out how the others see. We acknowledge our differences so we can share the common thought.

The stories are moving this morning. First with the people who sleep together. Then on the street. And later in their work. And after or before and then in between. People touch and deliver their words. With a few. Or with many. Words for a shifting few. For nobody. Then we are on to someone else. Through a new interest. A refocus of attention. There. There will be someone of a similar makeup. In the city. Maybe there will be more than a few."

CONCLUSION

To summarize 'what really happened on Queen St. West...' when? and 'who was involved?':

A group of young artists, many of whom had been residing in the Queen West area as students, accumulated in numbers significant enough to become noticeable by late 1975. Some had opened shops, others were working in the vicinity, and an additional group was beginning to establish studio and loft spaces in the industrial district to the south of Queen St. By late 1976 the milieu had coalesced to such an extent that its members could be seen at the Centre for Experimental Art and Communication, the Crash and Burn Club, and the Peter Pan restaurant and perhaps most significantly, on the street.

The Horseshoe Tavern, a bastion of country and western music for many years, turned 'punk' in 1977 and Queen St. West became a centre for punk and new wave music performances and enthusiasts.

The Music Gallery, Studio 410, Gallery 567, and the Centre for Experimental Art and Communication, all located in area, were providing a physical space and a context for intense video, performance, visual, and experimental art activity. The latter escalated to such an extent that new arts organizations and arts publications headquarters sprang up or were relocated in the area.

The Peter Pan, one of Queen West's first commercial enterprises with a clearly avant-garde profile, had been operating with great success since the fall of 1976. The precedent having been set, other restaurants and art-related businesses were launched in rapid succession with 10 new establishments in 1977 alone. Additional employment opportunities
opened up for local artists, particularly in the restaurants. The 'artists-in-restaurants' phenomenon played a major role in the transformation of the area. The presence of flamboyantly creative people, combined with the innate charm of the neighbourhood, and the lure of fine food, made for good business and good press.

By 1977 Queen St. was the "new 'Village'", home of the artistic avant-garde, those innovative iconoclasts whom we look to for the modes and meanings of contemporary culture.

That the arts community has contributed to the vitality of the area is undeniable. The difficulty arises when one attempts to estimate the nature and extent of their contribution. How does one measure the by-products of social interaction? How, for that matter does one present facts which truly reflect the altered texture of an environment?

The answer lies beyond statistics and quotes. A photographic essay or an exhibition of the art work, performance pieces, tapes, music, dance, music, etc. which have been produced by artists in the area would come much closer to the reality of Queen St. West. Ultimately one encounters the same problem here as when one attempts to discuss a piece of art which is not in front of you; the verbal description will fall far short of conveying the essence of the real thing.

The statistics presented in this study can only suggest the extent to which art-related activity defines the Queen West area. The remarks excerpted from interviews with local artists can only suggest the strong sense of community which informs their work. They feel no need to validate or qualify their actions.

The abstract nature of the role that the arts community has played in the transformation of Queen St. West from a 'sleepy
outpost to a living cultural centre, in no way diminishes its significance.

What Next?

It is as impossible to project when commercial development in the Queen West area will reach the saturation point as it is to predict who will be walking down its streets in ten years time.

One can, however, state with certainty that if the present influx of stylish restaurants and increasingly homogenous boutiques continues unabated, visitors to Queen St. West in ten years time will be hard pressed to find even a trace of the artists' enclave for which it is presently famous.

A number of futures are possible:

There is a strong possibility that the recent, highly touted proliferation of new businesses in the area will inspire further commercial development; there is also a likelihood that the amenities of downtown living afforded by the area will continue to attract would-be residents, renovators, and real-estate entrepreneurs. If these trends prevail, students will definitely become a minority. As Gary Marzinsky noted, such a change has already begun to take place:

"It (Q.S.W. area) is not a student market - a student can not afford a $145,000.00 house. Once the commercial money moves in, the residential money is not far behind. It comes out of the same pocket." (p. 34)

There is always the possibility that Queen West artists will unite and lobby City Hall, demanding zoning or other considerations which would permit them to remain in the area. If they were to do so, they could make a strong case for the viability and desirability of their continued presence if only by citing the success of such historical precedents as Greenwich Village, Gastown, both Sohos, etc.; if they were truly desperate, artists could appeal to the City's cultural chauvinism or its interest in enlarging its tourist
trade.

To further develop this hypothesis, if the zoning laws were altered to permit residential components in the light industrial district, artists presently utilizing warehouse spaces as 'day' studios, could live in them legally, consolidate their interests, and establish roots in the community.

Even more significantly, if the City was inspired to take a stand on behalf of its artists, by instating an 'artists-in-residence' protection clause in the zoning laws, the creative status quo of the area would be ensured. Not only would artists presently located in the Queen West district remain, but they would be joined by others from across the country.

Such a turn of events would have to take place almost immediately, however, to forestall the departure which has already begun, of artists from the area.

It is also faintly possible that artists will decide to play the real-estate game, as their counterparts have done in New York's Soho, by forming cooperatives expressly to purchase property in this optimum district. Once more the spirit of enterprise would be severely curtailed by present land-use stipulations.

In conclusion, we are left with these facts:

There are a number of light industrial components still operative in the area, primarily south of Queen St. West. These businesses generate a significant amount of tax revenue which the City feels that it needs to maintain the level of services required in the high-traffic, Core area. Furthermore, along the waterfront there are extensive railway, shipping, and warehouse facilities the continued use of which the City is also anxious to ensure. It would appear to be imperative that light industry remain there, in some-

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1 As indicated earlier, such a clause was instated in N.Y.C., in Soho, where industrial lofts were made available exclusively to 'artists-in-residence'.
thing like its present state; to facilitate this the City has indicated its intention to protect this industrial environs from residential/commercial developers and speculators. It is understood that manufacturing and warehousing interests in the area ought not be forced to compete with development conglomerates for the same properties.

One can only conclude, for the reasons stated above, that the zoning laws which so directly affect artists, are not likely to be changed in any way which would prove detrimental to light industry. It is necessary for someone to come up with a better idea.

The Better Idea:

It is the contention of this report that the Queen St. West arts community could peacefully coexist with light industry. In fact artists have been doing so, if somewhat surreptitiously, for years. There would be little conflict of interest with regard to the real-estate: the artists in question are not backed by 'big money'¹ and unless our present social order changes dramatically, neither are they likely to be.

Unfortunately, in the final analysis, one perceives that although developers are eagerly lobbying City Hall to expand their interests, artists are not. There is every indication that as rents become prohibitive, or the neighbourhood unrecognizably commercial, all but the most established artists and arts organizations will move out. This wonderfully 'convenient' neighbourhood, so close to the City's cultural institutions and resources, is likely to be lost to artists permanently.

It made so much sense for them to be there - their passing may prove to be everyone's loss.

¹ At least, not visibly so. Exceptions to the rule could be dealt with accordingly.
APPENDIX # 1

INTERVIEWEES

Susan Britton (video artist, teaches at O.C.A., part-manager of Cabana Room, O.S.W. resident)
John Scott (painter, curator of O.C.A. art gallery - Gallery 76, resident)
Nancy Johnson (painter, curator of O.C.A. art gallery - Gallery 76, resident)
Anna Blewchamp (dancer, choreographer, resident)
Michael Wurtslin (graphic artist, resident)
John Faichney (dancer, former C.E.A.C. librarian, sociologist, res.)
Michael Hollingsworth (Video Cabaret, writer, producer, playwright)
Andrew Jas. Patterson (video and video-cabaret performer, musician, lead singer for the Government, contributor to art periodicals)
Elizabeth Chitty (dancer, video artist, choreographer, ran 410 Dance Studio, affiliated with 15 Dance Lab, editor Spill magazine, Dance in Canada magazine, resident)
Terry McGlade (video artist, dancer, community television, director for Real Story - T.V. Ontario, resident)
Sally Dundas (film production manager, resident)
David Buchan (video, artist, performer, writer, distributor of print materials, etc. at Art Metropole)
Tanya Rosenberg (editor - Parallelogramme, ANNPAC Secretariat coordinator, artist, typesetter, resident)
Peggy Gale (director - A Space, critical writing on video, video promotion, resident)
George Whiteside (photographer, artist, resident)
Al Mattes (director - Music Gallery, spokesman for ANNPAC, musician - member of the Canadian Creative Music Collective)
Charlie Pachter (artist, real-estate entrepreneur, resident)
Mary Jackman (part-owner of Peter Pan and the Metropolitan restaurants)
Sandy Stagg (part-owner Peter Pan, formerly, owner Fiesta restaurant, resident)
Andrew Milne (part-owner Parrot restaurant, O.C.A. graduate)
rep. Blue Angel, La Folie, Le Select, Queen Mother, Mad Caps, Ms. Emma Designs, Del Bello Gallery, Mood Indigo, Second Story, Zephyr, News Trading Co., Abelard Books, Bakka, About Books...
INTERVIEWEES...


Barney Devore (owner of Barney's Open Kitchen for 25 years, father figure and friend to the entire neighbourhood, resident Grange Park)

William Pullenzas (manager The Stem Open Kitchen, friend to the entire neighbourhood particularly the older and down-and-out ones, worked there for 27 years)

Jack Cooper (owner of Cooper's Office, Used and other Furniture, started business in the area 37 years ago, resident)

Cal Kelly (part-owner Zephyr, O.C.A. graduate)

John Paichinsky (artist, studio on the street, owner Second Story)

Allan Sparrow (Alderman - Ward 6)

Gary Marzinsky (real-estate agent, former Peter Pan employee, resident)

Katherine Parker (artist, waitress - part-time, resident)
APPENDIX # 2

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION PERTINENT TO THE QUEEN WEST AREA:

The Queen West area was traditionally a low-income district with a population comprised largely of immigrant families, students, and more recently young, single adults.

Census data gathered as late as 1971 indicated that the average income per family in the core area was $8,200 as opposed to $10,370 for the rest of the City and $11,841 for Metropolitan Toronto.

The Alexandra Park district to the north of Queen West, bounded by Bathurst, Dundas, and Spadina, has served as an immigrant reception area since the turn of the century. A high ethnic concentration remains to this day. In the 1920's Alexandra Park was the first home of many Polish immigrants, and in the '30's for Ukrainians; by the early '60's the population consisted mainly of Ukrainians, Polish, Portuguese, Italians, Greeks, Hungarians, and Germans.

North of Queen along Dundas and west on Spadina is a major residential/commercial area for Toronto's Asiatic community. This group, the second largest ethnic group in the central area, represented 10% of that district's population in the 1971 census.

With respect to the proportion of young adults, during the period between 1966 and 1971, the proportion of the population aged 25 - 34 years increased in the core area (which includes Queen St. West), in contrast with the rest of the City and the Metropolitan area where it declined.

All demographic information on this page from, The City of Toronto Planning Board. Core Area Task Force: Technical Appendix. 1974 pp. 154, 155, 167

The largest group was comprised of those of British origin. This group represented 51% of the total population in the core area of the City in 1971.
Similarly, the proportion of single persons increased in the central area to the extent that they represented more than half the population in 1971.
APPENDIX # 2

CENTRAL AREA

1951

BRITISH (58%)

OTHER European (10%)

RUSSIAN (10%)

JEWISH (2%)

ITALIAN (1%)

FRENCH (1%)

ASIAN (1%)

1971

BRITISH (51%)

RUSSIAN (10%)

JEWISH (10%)

ITALIAN (4%)

FRENCH (1%)

ASIAN (1%)

OTHER European (3%)

UKRAINIAN (1%)

POLISH (1%)

SCANDINAVIAN (1%)

CITY OF TORONTO

1951

BRITISH (68%)

OTHER European (4%)

RUSSIAN (10%)

JEWISH (10%)

ITALIAN (2%)

FRENCH (2%)

ASIAN (1%)

POLISH (1%)

SCANDINAVIAN (1%)

1971

BRITISH (45%)

RUSSIAN (10%)

JEWISH (7%)

ITALIAN (7%)

FRENCH (3%)

ASIAN (5%)

OTHER European (3%)

UKRAINIAN (3%)

POLISH (3%)

SCANDINAVIAN (1%)

METROPOLITAN TORONTO

1951

BRITISH (72%)

OTHER European (4%)

UKRAINIAN (3%)

SCANDINAVIAN (1%)

RUSSIAN (1%)

FRENCH (3%)

POLISH (2%)

Netherlands (1%)

JEWISH (5%)

ITALIAN (2%)

1971

BRITISH (34%)

OTHER (10%)

ASIAN (3%)

OTHER European (2%)

JEWISH (5%)

ITALIAN (4%)

SCANDINAVIAN (1%)

POLISH (2%)

Netherlands (1%)

CHANGES IN POPULATION STRUCTURE BY ETHNIC ORIGIN, 1951-1971.
Central Area, City of Toronto and Metropolitan Area

core area TASK FORC 46

TECHNICAL APPENDIX - CITY OF TORONTO PLANNING BOARD 1974
Dear Mr. Sewell;

Please find enclosed a copy of The Association of National Non-Profit Artist-Run Centres recently completed report entitled The Queen St. Phenomenon.

Of the 56 artist-run centres in Canada 35 are members of our association. The highest concentration of these centres is in downtown Toronto, specifically around the Queen St. West area.

This report documents and comments on the cultural and economic development of the Queen St. West area that has occurred due to the presence of Toronto's art community. As such it may be of interest to you as a record of cultural activity in the city, and as an aid in understanding the needs of the community that works and resides in that district.

The development of Queen St. West closely parallels the development of such neighbourhoods as: Greenwich Village in New York, Gas Town in Vancouver, and SOHO in London. As evidenced by the interviews in the report, and by the experience of the artists in other cities, the prime beneficiaries of this sort of development are not the artists, the the businesses.

As the area became popular, restaurants and small businesses moved in. The result of the renovations and 'capital' presence was that rents quickly and significantly increased, forcing artists out of their studios and often their residences (some of which were acknowledgedly occupied despite the non-residential zoning status).

Present legislation makes it difficult for art activity and presence to continue in the area and the areas that surround it. Ultimately, the result will be that the arts community become fragmented as it is dispersed throughout the city. Often artists are unable to find suitable inexpensive studios to carry on working in. As well, galleries and artist-run centres are having difficulty finding suitable housing as they approach expansion. Many feel that this difficulty is primarily due to policies on renovation and zoning in the area.

It is an inevitable conclusion that the recognized and valued contribution of the artist community to the city of Toronto requires support and attentive legislation to support it.

We would appreciate any comments from your office regarding this letter, as well as information on the future plans, with regards to zoning, renovation and building of the area that is bound by Wellington St., Dundas St., University Ave. and Bathurst St.
November 13, 1980

His Worship Mayor Arthur Eggleton  
Mayors Office  
City Hall  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5H 2N2

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Thanking you in advance for your anticipated concern and attention, I remain,

Yours Sincerely,

Kerri Kwinter
Research Coordinator

XX/kk
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