Pier 8 is artificial land, created on what was once the water of Burlington Bay. West Harbour is the west end of Lake Ontario which was once a glacial lake, Lake Iroquois, that receded; generating waterfront sites for aquatic habitat, urban settlement and industry based on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River — Canada’s extensive system of water-based transportation.

Pier 8: A Visionary Community

Pier 8 is the visionary community of a place: it is a laboratory for the exploration of human experience in the 21st century. Pier 8 is a laboratory for the creation of a distinctively Hamiltonian identity and character.

The revitalization of valuable waterfront sites, unique and differentiated from anywhere else, is fundamental in expressing the identity and character of Pier 8. The result should serve as a sustainable, innovative, beautiful example of good design.

Design should always matter, but in this case, good design is not only preferable but necessary to transform the identity and character of Pier 8. The result should serve as an exemplar of what it means to live in Canada as a model of democracy in the 21st century.

Good Design is Good Business

We strongly believe that only by integrating the design objectives with the public amenities and economic development objectives will Pier 8 be truly valuable and successful. We believe that Pier 8 can be an exemplar of how to build creative cities. It sets the platform for economic and business development objectives, will Pier 8 be truly valuable and successful.

We believe that Pier 8 can be an exemplar of how to build creative cities. It sets the platform for economic and business development objectives. It will need to reflect high levels of coherence and diversity of design expression. The new architecture will need to reflect the remarkable context of the site, and the spirit of the community.

Urban Innovations

We are proposing several major urban innovations:

‘The Pier’

To provide a new identity — a vibrantly commercial and pedestrian-friendly street that addresses the critical problem of industrial noise impact and provides the real estate for growth and improvement.

The system of laneways

That are privately shared by pedestrians, cyclists and service vehicles, create a fine network of routes and provide choice, accessibility and functionality for Pier 8.

The unified green space

Based on the Niagara Escarpment for the Överagain, it unifies all of the blocks enabling an innovation in city life to bring varied buildings together through an urban green space.

The intensive use of local materials

Such as masonry and stone, and the extensive use of steel and local products, will be combined with state-of-the-art innovation in materials and systems.

Pier 8: A Collective Architecture

One of our key goals is to connect the architecture and landscapes of Pier 8 to the natural and built environment of Hamilton and Burlington; from the escarpment to the south, to Coote’s Paradise and Thomas B. McQuesten High Level Bridge to the west; to the harbour and the great Niagara Escarpment, and the Sky. Our collective architecture for Pier 8 responds to the fundamental features and phenomenal place that is Burlington Harbour.

We have arrived at a place where every building has a role to play within the formation of the overall design strategy that establish scale and character.

The ‘Hammer’ Design

The uni

We have orchestrated design thinking within our creative process involving our client architects to participate on our design team, believing that Pier 8 needs to reflect a high level of coherence and diversity of design expression.

Core Architectural Intentions

To use the Gestalt theory of total habitat as an organizing principle in the design of the environment, the pedestrian interface, the architectural and landscape movement, and the systems of water and land.

The study model is a unique geometrical composition of Pier 8’s site, the L-shape of the site and the podium with the observation deck, which turns into the harbour and the Skyway Bridge.

The study model of Pier 8’s design was developed in a series of meetings with our client and our design team, who created a design that is a combination of architecture and landscape. The study model represents the vision of how the site will look once the buildings are completed.

Good Design, then, inspires trust, because the citizen feels loved. Good house design is not just useful, but embodies a philosophy that goes to the heart of humanity and the environment. It calls for an understanding of the citizen, of his or her needs, and the environment, and for the expression of those needs in a meaningful way.

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Pier Giorgio Di Cicco [Italian-Canadian Poet]

A Project to Remember

Our client, they are a visionary community and a laboratory for the creation of a distinctively Hamiltonian identity and character. Pier 8 is a project to remember.

The New Architecture

We have proposed a project that is a consistent set of ideas about urban architecture, the coordination of the podium and base and the introduction of accessible courtyards are important components of the overall design strategy. The architecture will need to reflect high levels of coherence and diversity of design expression.

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Such as masonry and stone, and the extensive use of steel and local products, will be combined with state-of-the-art innovation in materials and systems.
The design for Pier 8 has a strong focus on animating the ground plane in order to create a neighborhood that has a distinct identity and vibrancy. This is in great part achieved by creating a walkable network of sidewalks, laneways, semi-private courtyards, and pedestrian paths that are linked block to block. It is also due to the strategic distribution of 197 townhouses and units at grade throughout Pier 8. Each of these units has been carefully designed to provide private outdoor space adjacent to the public realm. In addition, by keeping over 40% of the site as open space, our design has drastically increased the amount of places for people to gather, both inside and out, for annual and seasonal events. The innovative and creative character of our amenity spaces in all of the buildings will encourage residents to spend more time outside of their units mixing and interacting with each other in a variety of settings, both inside and outside, and thereby creating a sense of community. Furthermore, our integrated and holistic retail strategy leverages the energy of Pier 8 and the surrounding new Promenade Park, "The Hammer," by attracting retail tenants that offer healthy services and products.

The Block design was allocated to four different architectural firms to collectively deliver contemporary architectural expression and diversity. Every building is an essay in imagination and transformation within the constraints of the mandated building envelope. At the same time, every building was designed in conversation with the team working on adjacent buildings to establish relationships between different scales of experience.
Jane Jacobs championed the idea that neighbourhoods needed to be walkable, dense, and diverse in order to thrive. Decades later, this idea is just as relevant today, when most urbanists agree that small blocks create a stronger sense of community. A new walkable, dense, and diverse neighbourhood will not only prioritize pedestrian and bicycle traffic, but maximize the potential of shared green spaces and permeable streets. High-quality public spaces are the backbone of a polyphonic approach that generates a design that is dynamic, highly coherent, and unique to its site. A dense pattern of blocks is designed to produce an organic diversity and a holistic sense of place as Pier 8 is evolved through an intensive, iterative design process. Ultimately, the whole is greater — and richer in expression — than the sum of its parts.

The team's overall design for Pier 8 is the result of a series of design workshops, involving all team members and collaborators. This highly collaborative and iterative approach generates a design that is dynamic, highly cohered, and unique to its site. In a way, a peer design review has been built-in to our collaborative approach. We are committed to extending this process throughout the life of the project.

The way each building and Block works, the ways in which individual Blocks interlock and interact to each other, and the overall look and feel of Pier 8 is evolved through continuous refinement and iteration. Identity, the ability to distinctively recognize each Block, is an essential part of the overall look and feel of the site. The Zipper is a source of inspiration and a common design theme for Pier 8. It is a key building block that will not only prioritize pedestrian and bicycle traffic, but maximize the potential of shared green spaces and permeable streets. High-quality public spaces are the backbone of a polyphonic approach that generates a design that is dynamic, highly coherent, and unique to its site. A dense pattern of blocks is designed to produce an organic diversity and a holistic sense of place as Pier 8 is evolved through an intensive, iterative design process. Ultimately, the whole is greater — and richer in expression — than the sum of its parts.

Well Certification Strategy: Our team will be pursuing WELL Building Certification as a 'green' community. The majority of buildings have 60% lot coverage, and 40% building coverage. The proposed phasing extends themes of green parkland, both formal and informal, that will not only prioritize pedestrian and bicycle traffic, but maximize the potential of shared green spaces and permeable streets. High-quality public spaces are the backbone of a polyphonic approach that generates a design that is dynamic, highly coherent, and unique to its site. A dense pattern of blocks is designed to produce an organic diversity and a holistic sense of place as Pier 8 is evolved through an intensive, iterative design process. Ultimately, the whole is greater — and richer in expression — than the sum of its parts.

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Pier 8 is a neighbourhood where people can stroll. The experience of walking in a neighbourhood is vital to the social and economic growth of a community. The buildings have been designed to be experienced by pedestrians, paying particular attention to what happens on each block within the first 6 meters from grade. This “domestic” scale speaks directly to the residential buildings of the North End and is carried throughout our entire Pier 8 scheme. The views of the townhouses, retail, restaurants, and amenity spaces at the bases of the buildings have been carefully orchestrated and composed to create rhythm, texture, variation, and vibrancy.

In order to further activate the ground plane, we have maximized the number of residential units at grade throughout Pier 8. Some townhouses are fitted to a more industrial live/work scheme and aesthetic, while others are more residential and contemporary in terms of design. Each row of townhomes maintains a unified design vision, while allowing individual residents to have a sense of place and address within the overall neighbourhood.

“While the buildings should reflect the robust character of the industrial waterfront, they also need to create a sense of place for individual residents and commercial tenants.”

Bruce Kuwabara, KPMB

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The character of the Pier 8 community is distinctly contemporary. A palette of architectural forms — the podium, the bar, and the townhouse — are combined in various configurations to create a series of hybrid typologies that respond to the requirements of program and density while maintaining an underlying consistency that allows the community to be read as a unified whole. This nuanced approach reflects the different ways that residents will live in this community: how they will shop, work and raise families.

Our approach is to create unity through architectural diversity and functional variety, ranging from grade-related single-family units to multi-unit housing, retail and commercial tenancies, and institutional uses. The result is a neighborhood that feels authentic, urban, complex, easily navigated and which can flexibly address the needs of the community over time.