



Foundation News

The Voice of NTCI Alumni



All in favour ...

“This is our one kick at the can. It’s the best chance we’re going to get to give students a top-rate facility.”

Danny Russell, NTCI teacher (1971 – present)

All opposed ...

“The school board says they envision the new building to be an architectural gem, but tonight, we may already be sitting in an architectural gem.”

Andy Georgiades (1992)



Heated debate over new NTCI

If there is one truth about the NTCI school community to be gleaned from the two public meetings held on November 27, 2003, and February 19, 2004, it’s this — people care passionately about their school.

At the November 27, 2003 meeting, over 300 students, teachers, parents, alumni, community residents, and public officials gathered at the NTCI auditorium to discuss the Toronto District School Board’s (TDSB) proposed land use concept plan for the new school.

The meeting began quietly enough. Sheila Penny, Executive Superintendent for Facility Services at the TDSB, described the background behind the project and where it has come to date. Architect Steven Teeple then gave a presentation outlining the land use sketches for the site (see page 3).

After the presentations, audience members were taken on tours of the building by NTCI students, showing the now infamous shortcomings in the current school structure. But it was back in the auditorium after the tour that the strong feelings held by those in attendance became apparent, as people voiced their support—and their concerns—about the proposal to tear down the existing NTCI building and sell some of the school land to a developer.

If there was one consensus that emerged from the question and answer session at the end of the meeting, it was that there was no consensus. And while the second public meeting on February 19, 2004 (see page 2) satisfied many of the skeptics that the proposal to replace the school was the best option available, it’s clear that some alumni are still uneasy about the loss of a 92-year-old building and the sale of some public land to help finance the building of a new school.

While plans for the new school are moving forward, there may still be some twists and turns in the future NTCI. So stay tuned. We’ll keep you informed of the latest developments through this annual newsletter, and on an ongoing basis through the NTCI website at www.ntci.on.ca.

The proposed site plan for the new NTCI is unveiled. See [page 3](#)

An architect’s view of the NTCI development. An open letter from Paul Raff on [page 4](#)

The war years at NTCI remembered. An interview with Stan Heather (1943) on [page 6](#)

Where does the project go from here?

The redevelopment process is a complex one, with a number of steps needed before a plan is finalized and construction begins. Here's what lies ahead:

- The TDSB will develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the community as to the extent of development on the site.
- The TDSB will put out a request for proposals to the development community, and choose a private development partner.
- A project architect will be selected, with the formation of a new design team.

The rise of the "Friends of NTCI"

With many NTCI alumni expressing concern about the demolition of the existing school, and the selling of some school land to private developers, three alumni from the 1990s — Cornell Wright (1992), Andy Georgiades (1992), and Breese Davies (1991) — took action and formed the Friends of NTCI.

Within a few weeks, they had the written support of over 600 alumni and former teachers, asking the Toronto District School Board for "a full, public discussion of all possible alternatives." The group stressed that "the issue has enormous implications for the local community and for public schools all across Ontario... and deserves a full and open debate."

This grassroots movement also raised the public profile of the issues concerning the new school, generating extensive coverage by local and national newspapers serving the Toronto area.

While the Friends of NTCI has not stopped the development of a new school from going forward, they were instrumental in forcing the Toronto District School Board to account for their plans and discuss why possible alternatives were rejected (see article at right).

"Are we happy with the process? No," says movement co-founder Andy Georgiades. "While the school board went through the motions of holding a couple of public meetings, at no point did it show any real willingness to consider alternatives to the single proposal they originally put forward. This is unfortunate because lots of people with significant expertise and resources had volunteered to help come up with a plan for completely renewing the school in a way that would have addressed the community's concerns and set an example for the adaptive and creative reuse of a public school which could have been used across Toronto."



What are the alternatives to a new school building?

On February 19, 2004, a second public meeting was held at NTCI regarding the new school plan. The meeting was an opportunity for the TDSB to share information with the community regarding the various options considered in coming to the decision to build a new NTCI.

Here's a summary of the three alternatives considered (but ultimately rejected) by the TDSB.

Alternative #1 — Status Quo

Richard Kalmin, manager of design and construction at the TDSB, described how more than \$6 million would be needed in maintenance funds over the next five years just to ensure that essential services are maintained, and that the school doesn't deteriorate further.

However, the TDSB receives only \$40 million annually from the Ministry of Education to address all its renewal needs, and there is already a \$747 million backlog in requests. Because of inadequate provincial funds, this option was not feasible.

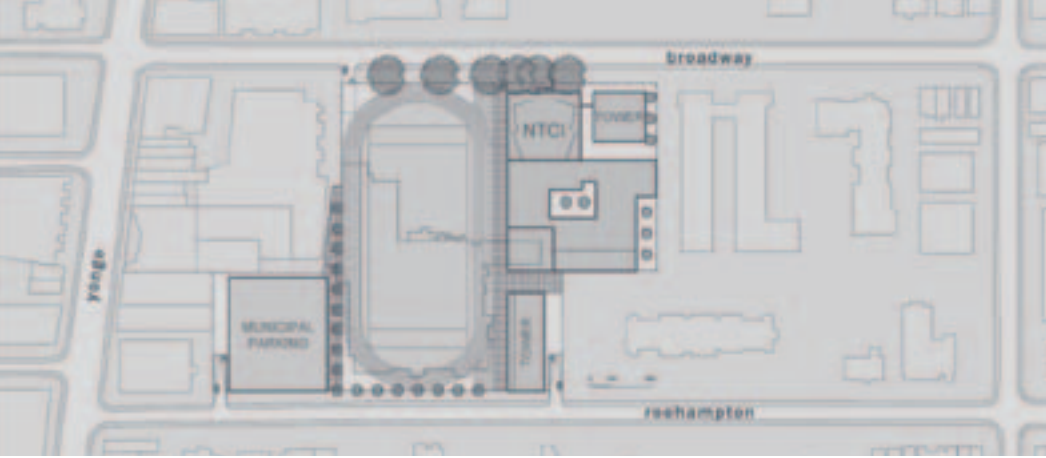
Alternative #2 — Renovation

With a projected price tag of more than \$20 million, a renovation of the current NTCI building would cost over 70% of what it would cost to replace the building, said Engineer Peter Halsall, who was hired by the TDSB to provide an expert outside opinion. The conclusion? The TDSB would be better off in terms of operational efficiency and educational performance to build a new school.

In addition, a renovation wouldn't change the present program offerings at the school (same gym, library, undersized field) and students would have to relocate during the renovation, a situation that the TDSB wanted to avoid. There are also no funding mechanisms available for this option, as there is no room for residential towers on the existing site.

Alternative #3 — Renovation Plus Addition

Architect Cheryl Atkinson presented two "renovation plus addition" options considered by the design team. Both options proved more expensive than new construction and would require at least two residential towers to finance. However, there is inadequate space on the site to fit the towers. One of the options required the school to be six stories high, and the residential tower would have to go on top of the school. The TDSB did not feel this was a feasible arrangement.



Principal Ashley Waltman reviews one of the many historical photo displays at NTCI.

Land use study shows what new NTCI might look like

At the community meeting on November 27, 2003, architect Steven Teeple presented the results of a land use “test fit” process to replace NTCI.

Teeple stressed that he was presenting simply a study. The TDSB still has to select a development partner and architect, submit a rezoning application, and undertake full public consultations before a design is finalized.

Bright lights of Broadway

The proposed new NTCI would be a four-story building fronting on Broadway Avenue in the north-east corner of the site. It would be partially wrapped around, but separate from, a 26-storey residential condominium tower. The school would house 1,200 students in its new building, and students could stay in the existing school while the new one is being built. A second condominium would rise 30 stories on the present site of the school parking lot at the southeast corner of the property.

A new state-of-the-art auditorium, which Teeple called the “principal icon of the school,” would be a centre of excellence in music and drama and also a space that the public will be able to access. Students and community members would walk into school under the swooping archway of the auditorium, up a large ramp that overlooks a courtyard.

In addition, the school would have:

- A new CFL-regulation-size playing field and track running north to south between Broadway and Roehampton. Teeple described the playing field as “part of the community, a large green area, like a Common.” NTCI would finally be able to have home sports games, not possible for decades because of the existing field’s small size and poor drainage.
- A triple gym and improved change and weight room facilities
- A library on two floors, expanding from the present 1,400 square feet (smallest library in the TDSB) to 4,000 square feet, and able to house almost double the number of books
- An upper floor devoted to science with new labs and classrooms
- A pool in one of the residential towers, to be shared with NTCI
- Fully wired classrooms and new computer rooms
- New music practice and storage rooms
- Roof-top gardens
- Underground parking for the school and condominiums.

Plans announced previously for a French Catholic School on the lands currently occupied by the municipal parking lot are uncertain, and no decision has been made on whether the parking lot grounds will be incorporated into the overall plan. Either way, the NTCI redevelopment is not dependent on the development of these lands.

Principal position — We need this new school

Ashley Waltman has been principal of NTCI since September, 1999, and fully supports the plans for a new NTCI as the best option going forward.

“There’s a reason that most current students, parents, and staff support the new school development,” says Waltman. “They’re the ones who see the need up close, and have to live with the inadequacies of the building on a daily basis.”

While Waltman is clearly excited by the possibilities that new facilities represent for today’s students, it’s not without regret.

“In a perfect world, this building would have been renovated to state-of-the-art status 10 years ago, but it didn’t happen,” says Waltman. “If a new school is built, we have to do everything we can to preserve our 92 years of history—from a heritage room, to facades from the existing school, to honour boards and award displays.”

However the history of NTCI is ultimately preserved, one point is clear—it won’t come cheaply, and there’s little if any money available in the school board’s budget for such extras. That’s why the North Toronto Foundation is exploring ways that it can raise money earmarked for the preservation of our history and related artifacts.

“We’ll need a lot of help to make it happen,” says Waltman, “but with the support that alumni have shown the school in the past, I know we’ll be able to preserve our past in a meaningful way.”



How the North Toronto Collegiate controversy underscores the need for change

An architect's call to action

Paul Raff is an architect and a current member of the North Toronto Collegiate Foundation Advisory Board, and has been one of the two NTCI alumni advisors to the Toronto District School Board on the redevelopment of the school.

Paul graduated from North Toronto Collegiate in 1986 and obtained university degrees in architecture and environmental studies, graduating from the University of Waterloo in 1992. Following internships in New York, Barcelona, and Hong Kong, Paul established his own practice in Toronto and has designed buildings locally and

abroad, including houses and offices, public buildings and parks.

In 2001, he became the youngest ever recipient of the Allied Arts Award of Excellence, which is given by the Ontario Association of Architects for overall contribution to the field of architecture. Paul is also an adjunct professor of architecture at the University of Waterloo and University of Toronto.

Based on his work on the NTCI redevelopment project over the past two years, Paul wrote the following open letter to all citizens and elected representatives of Toronto and Ontario.

You have no doubt heard about the controversy surrounding the redevelopment of North Toronto Collegiate. The plan is to demolish the historic building, sell some of the school's land to private developers, and construct a new school building funded largely by the land sale. This is the only option for the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), ironically, because our laws and government processes make it impossible to pursue better alternatives.

A flawed system

While North Toronto Collegiate's redevelopment may appear to be a "local" issue, I have discovered just the opposite. Indeed, the North Toronto controversy is a symptom of flaws in provincial laws and municipal processes that threaten the quality of our society.

I have followed the site development process closely, as a citizen, as a member of the school's alumni Advisory Board, as a representative to the Toronto District School Board's design meetings, and as an architect with international

experience. I am shocked by what I have discovered and wish to bring two issues into focus for all concerned.

The first issue relates to the coordination of different public bodies. In the case of the North Toronto redevelopment, I am referring to the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Parking Authority. If the Parking Authority, which owns a surface parking lot next door to North Toronto Collegiate, agreed to swap its land for a new and larger parking structure beneath the schoolyard, it would go a long way toward saving the school—which was recently added to the city's Inventory of Heritage Properties—and preventing the sale of school land. However, the publicly-owned Parking Authority has no mandate to serve public education and would not normally consider the land swap because "on paper" it would be losing money.

Unfortunately, we are guarding the short-term interests of parking cars over the long-term interests of education. This is an obvious affront to our common values. I hope our elected representatives will take the opportunity to fix this problem; indeed, they are the only ones who can.

Funding formula must be amended

The second issue has to do with the Province of Ontario's "funding formula" for education, which mathematically defines the process of maintaining and developing schools. Based on the NTCI example, the funding formula provides insufficient funding for the TDSB either to rehabilitate any existing school building or to replace even the most dilapidated school with an equivalent new building.

This is because the funding formula does not recognize when a building is being used, and when a building is closed. Furthermore, the funding formula does not recognize where facilities are located with respect to the needs of children and young adults. For example, a surplus of unused warehouse space in western Etobicoke, because it is counted in the TDSB's inventory of functioning space, means that kids 40 kilometres away in Scarborough might have their school closed because of the "surplus" of space. This is ludicrous! Surely the provincial government could make modest but significant improvements to the funding formula simply by saying that unused buildings should not be counted as functioning space.

In the case of North Toronto, the funding formula encourages the demolition of historic buildings. As is natural with old buildings, North Toronto Collegiate is well beyond the point of mere maintenance—it needs a full rehabilitation including structural remediation and the replacement of life safety systems. The funding formula, unfortunately, provides zero funding for any such work. Further, the funding formula recognizes neither architectural quality nor historic value—so the building will be demolished and gone forever.

Focus on real needs of students

The formula is an abstraction, but the needs of students are real and immediate. Responding to these real and immediate needs, the TDSB has found a way to fund the replacement of the dilapidated building with a good, modern, though smaller facility. Unfortunately, their solution requires the

sale of public land. If North Toronto Collegiate is to survive, there is no real choice for the TDSB and the community but to sell this land, and the TDSB has worked hard to build an understanding and a consensus within the school community.

Sadly, the sale of public school land is not simply a means to balance the budget; it is a depletion of assets for public education. We will never get the land back, and the government has no strategy for what to do when there is no land left to sell. This is an unsustainable approach to education.

A call to action

I encourage you to use this opportunity to take action, to help to stop this degenerative *status quo* approach. Let's ensure that our city and province reflect who we really are and what we really believe in.

If you would sacrifice a few moments of your time, please forward this letter to people you know are concerned about these issues, and send even the briefest message of support to either my postal address or email address below. Please include your own name and address in your response so that I may take our collective message to municipal and provincial governments.

Things can and should work better.

Sincerely,
Paul Raff, *Architect*

email address: paul@paulraffstudio.com

Postal address: Paul Raff Studio
204 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5T 2C2

If you would like to forward a copy of this letter to others who might be interested, an electronic version is available on the NTCI web site at www.ntci.on.ca. Look under the "A New NTCI" link in the left navigation bar.

Special thank you to key alumni

We'd like to say a special thank you to four alumni for their tremendous contribution to NTCI over the past several years.

Ian Macdonald (class of 1948) and Hugh Alexander (class of 1949) served on the Advisory Board since its inception 17 years ago, and left the Board in June 2003. Including their earlier work on the planning committee for the 75th anniversary celebrations in 1987, they provided 19 years of unflinching and enthusiastic leadership. Their contribution to our school is virtually unmatched, and they will truly be missed.

We'd also like to thank two other alumni members of the Advisory Board who are leaving the Board this year — Ian Waldron and Cornell Wright.

Ian Waldron, a teacher and vice-principal at NTCI from 1979 to 2001, was our exemplary Advisory Board secretary for the past five years, and was also the sweat and inspiration behind "The Show" at the recent NTCI 90th anniversary reunion. Cornell Wright (class of 1992) was instrumental in the formation of the "Friends of NTCI", a group of alumni and community members that voiced concerns about the school board's proposal for the school.

NTCI sports stars revisited

We're still getting feedback on the 2002 issue of *Foundation News*, in which we featured many NTCI athletes. It's clear that we missed the gymnasts in our overview!

Robin Fowler (1986) was a member of Canada's National Rhythmic Gymnastics Team from 1982 to 1986 (Ontario Champion in 1984 and 1985), winning a number of Canadian competitions and competing internationally for Canada. Nicole Steiner (1986) and Debbie Phelps (1987) were also members of Canada's National Rhythmic Gymnastics Team, competing internationally between 1983 and 1985.



Stan Heather as a teenaged recruit



Stan Heather in 2004

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times

Remembrance Day continues to gain importance as a commemorative date at NTCI, with the annual Remembrance Day assembly a powerful and emotional tribute by current NTCI students and staff to Canadian war veterans.

In November last year, eight World War II veterans came to speak to NTCI students during the Remembrance Day assembly. One of the vets was NTCI alumnus Stan Heather. We spoke him to about his experiences before, during, and after the war.

Q: What was it like being a student at NTCI when the war broke out?

In the 1930s, we lived in quite different times from now. It was a very militaristic society, and most of the politicians were ex-military. The games we played as little kids were war games. Principals at all three schools I attended were ex-military officers.

I went to NTCI in 1939, just when the war was starting. There was a tremendous patriotic feeling in the

school, so much so that I think I and some of the others felt that we were all just putting in time until we were old enough to be in the service.

At NTCI under principal Colonel Wood, the whole school was taken up with patriotism. There were war bond drives and classes where the girls learned how to wrap bandages and knit socks for the troops. We participated in cadets, which was compulsory during the war years in second and third year of high school. In cadets, we marched on the field and shot .22 rifles in a shooting range in the basement of the school (if I remember correctly).

Coming from a military family, the idea of marching was great. I had already been to cubs and the boy scouts so I knew how to do these things, but it was a good way to get out of class and do something in the fresh air.

Q. What was the North Toronto community like in those times?

I grew up on Heddington Ave. We moved there in 1929 when the houses were just

being built. It was a great neighbourhood because there were all sorts of vacant lots so you didn't have to go to the park to play baseball. Eglinton Avenue had a few stores, but you had to go to Avenue Road to shop because it was fields all around. We'd go skating on a big pond that used to be where the Eglinton theatre currently is.

My father paid \$9,000 for our house on Heddington. Can you believe now that same house is worth more than \$900,000?

Q. What did you do in the service?

At 17, I left NTCI and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) as ground crew.

Once in the air force, I was able to upgrade my math and science education and join the flying crew. After training, I went to England and did a tour of operations on Halifax aircraft, with 78 Squadron, Royal Air Force (RAF). We flew over Germany in large Halifax bombers. I was a gunner and sat in the turret up in the top. It was terrifying. We had 16 air craft take off from our



Stan Heather NTCI class photo. Stan is the one with the white vest second row from the top, a little right of centre.

squadron every night and we'd lose a crew every second night. You'd come back and there'd be an empty set of bunks and they'd quickly move all the stuff out and bring in another crew from training command. So you never got too close to anyone else other than your own crew.

It's funny, you're 18 and you don't think about getting shot down. You know you're going to win the war and don't think about your own mortality. At the rate the Germans were going, they could have taken over North America. This is probably why we flew. Somebody had to do it.

We were also afraid of letting the others down. If you didn't fly, you were branded LMF (Lack of Moral Fibre) and were sent away to a place that was almost like a prison camp. You weren't sent home. You'd just lose your wings and stripes

and end up working in a kitchen somewhere. So that was a bit of a deterrent. I knew of two guys who just couldn't fly anymore and they were deemed LMF. And the air force didn't recognize it as a medical problem. It was terrible.

Q. Were you changed at all by the war?

Ever since the war, I've never really settled down. I've had all sorts of jobs but have never taken to authority figures very much. Like I've had enough of them. Four years is the longest I've stayed working for someone else. I've done better on my own. I'm 81 and still in business with my wife today.

As a war survivor, I've often thought the worst thing that could ever possibly happen to me has already happened. I've tried to live every day to the fullest. I love to travel, to ski, and if work ever interfered with that, I'd quit my job. My brother Fred was just the opposite. He

worked for one company from the day he got out of the war until he retired. And he's still around at 94.

Q. What does Remembrance Day mean to you?

The names listed on the NTCI front hall are more than just names to me. Al Kipping and I dug Indian artifacts on the Heddington Avenue hill as kids. Al was killed while parachuting into Arnheim in WWII. Other close friends are inscribed on the wall. My brother Bob died in the North Atlantic, his ship sunk by a German U-boat. My father died in the army while I was overseas. My younger brother Ken, not old enough for WWII, joined up during the Cold War and was killed in the crash of a CF100 aircraft.

I think you can see why Remembrance Day is a personal thing to me.

CALLING ALL VETERANS

The NTCI History department invites any NTCI alumni — men and women — who served during the world wars, Korea, or UN peacekeeping to join students in their November 11th, 2004 Remembrance Day assembly. We'd be honoured by your attendance. Please contact Kathy McConnachie at NTCI 416-393-8585 extension 20075 for more information.

The NTCI Foundation's commitment to you

...and why we need your donation to maintain alumni connections!

As an organization that supports both ongoing student activity at NTCI and alumni affairs, the NTCI Foundation has an important role to play during these times of change at the school. Our commitment to you is a simple one.

We will:

- Keep you informed about major school activities and the ongoing redevelopment process
- Work with the school and the school board to provide alumni views and suggestions as the new NTCI takes shape
- Continue to support ongoing student activities through the grants and scholarships we provide each year.

So why does the NTCI Foundation need your financial support? There are two reasons:

- **Support for student excellence.** In 2003, the NTCI Foundation distributed grants to several student groups: \$1,100 to Graffiti, the student newspaper; \$1,250 to the NTCI Robotics Club, which competes provincially each year; and \$1,500 for technology support to maintain and

enhance the school's computer capabilities. We also granted \$4,350 in scholarships this past commencement, funding awards for **two** graduating classes during the double cohort year. Your donations fund this much needed ongoing student support!

- **Maintain alumni connections:** Despite the hundreds of volunteer hours that our Foundation Advisory Board puts in—from writing this newsletter, to maintaining the alumni database, to planning reunions—there are hard dollar costs to our operations, such as postage, printing, and IT support to name a few.

If you value your continued connection to NTCI, please help us with a donation by completing the enclosed donation form and mailing it in the enclosed postage-paid self-addressed envelope. Or donate online at www.ntci.on.ca. On the "Alumni" section of the site, click on the "Donate Now" button to make a secure donation. Canada Revenue Agency approved tax receipts will be issued within minutes by email.

Thanks for your feedback on preserving our traditions of excellence

In our 2003 newsletter, we asked alumni for input on the following question: "How can we ensure that North Toronto's many traditions of excellence are transferred from the old building to the new?" Many thanks to the over 120 alumni who responded! Here's a brief summary of what you told us.

Many alumni suggested that NTCI's high standards in academics, music, and athletics be maintained by incorporating one or more of the following ideas into the new building.

- State of the art science and computer labs
- Computer/internet access provided in the library
- An auditorium
- Adequate music and fine arts rooms, with acoustically sound rooms for rehearsals
- Full-size track and football field
- Equal male/female athletic facilities
- As much green space as possible.

Many respondents also asked that as much of the original architecture as possible be preserved. It's clear that the gothic windows, front entrance, and the North and South facades hold a lot of memories and history to the many students and staff who have spent time at NTCI. And keeping the war memorials, honours walls, and photos of past school activities and achievements were also popular suggestions.

Your feedback was submitted to the TDSB design committee, and was taken into account during the development of the current proposed site plan.

Moving? Changing your email? Let us know!

To continue receiving this newsletter, as well as timely information on reunions and alumni events, you need to tell us how to reach you if you move or change your email address. You can keep us up-to-date by emailing us at ntcifoundation@ntci.on.ca, or writing us (the old-fashioned way) at NTCI Foundation, 70 Roehampton Ave., Toronto, ON M4P 1R2.

Advisory Board Members 2003-2004

Bill Clark (1952)
Lorraine Clarkson (1971)
Nelson Eng (1992)
Sarah Eshelby (1983)
Mike Filey (1961)
John Fowler (1951)
Andy Georgiades (1992)
Bill Hammond (Retired Staff)
Neal Irwin (1950)
Jane Kennedy (Retired Staff)
Beth Montgomery (1979)
Andrew Ogilvie (1990)
Paul Raff (1986)
Janet Russell (1981)
Paul Russell (1979)
John Selby (1948)
Nancy (Caldecott) Sutherland (1961)
Ian Waldron (Retired Staff)
Ashley Waltman (Current Principal)
Carole Whelan (Current Staff)
Mary Kay Winter (1961)
Cornell Wright (1992)
Vicky Zeltins (1985)