

## Planning Northern District Library, 1966-75. Pentland & Baker Architects

10 THE GLOBE AND MAIL, TUESDAY, FEB. 13, 1968

### Library board plans 24-story office block

A spokesman for the Toronto Public Library Board yesterday outlined plans for a 24-story office building that would include a new headquarters for the city library system.

Chief Librarian Henry Campbell said the library board intends to proceed with the project within five years, and favors a site at the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Orchardview Boulevard, a block north of Eglinton Avenue.

Only the first two or three floors of the building, which could cost \$12-million, would be used for library purposes initially. The rest would be rented out as commercial offices.

The library would require progressively more space as apartment development in the district continues, he said, and if the board owned the building, this demand could be met

simply by not renewing office leases.

Mr. Campbell told the city's Buildings and Development Committee that the board has no intention of using its expropriation powers to acquire land.

The chief librarian said the project could go ahead within two or three years if Metro decides to retain control of the central library, which it took over from the city in 1967.

He described the proposed library as a middle-level service between the local branches and the central collection.

If Metro kept the central library, Mr. Campbell said, the new building would be the headquarters for the city system.

Apartment development in the district around Yonge and Eglinton will continue to swell the population, he said. Already the area for about a mile around has the heaviest concentration of library users in the city.

Toronto Public Library, TPL



Pentland & Baker Architects. Northern District Library The Toronto Public Library. 1976/7

**Model of Northern District Library, about 1972. Pentland & Baker Architects**  
The building was to be constructed in two phases. Phase I included the basement, a two-floor "podium" and a podium roof. They would house a district library, offices for library administration and leasing, a parking garage and retail space. An 11-floor tower block was to be added in Phase II, but the Library Board withdrew this proposal on May 11, 1972, in response to community opposition. Construction started on March 15, 1974.



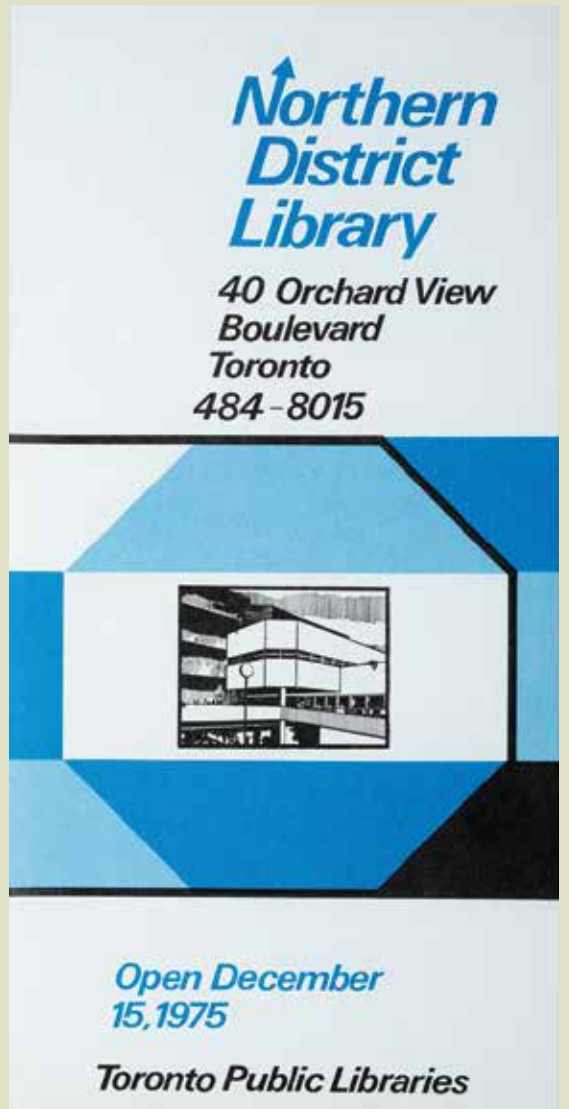
Toronto Public Library Archives

**Aerial view of the site, about 1975**

With the prohibitive cost of land fronting on Yonge Street, the Toronto Public Library Board started in 1971 to purchase properties in the central portion of the Yonge, Duplex, Orchard View and Helendale block. By 1973, a site of 5,931 square metres (63,900 square feet) had been assembled, with a frontage of 68.5 metres (225 feet) on Orchard View Boulevard and 69.4 metres (228 feet) on Helendale Avenue. Several houses on the site were demolished for the new building. A park for community use also was planned but was not completed.

In 1966, the Toronto Public Library Board decided to build three district libraries, starting in North Toronto. Several options were considered including this proposal to construct a 24-story office block at the northwest corner of Yonge and Orchard View.

## Northern District Library opens December 15, 1975



Toronto Public Library, Northern District Branch

**Northern District Library brochure, 1975**



Pentland & Baker Architects. Northern District Library The Toronto Public Library. 1976/7

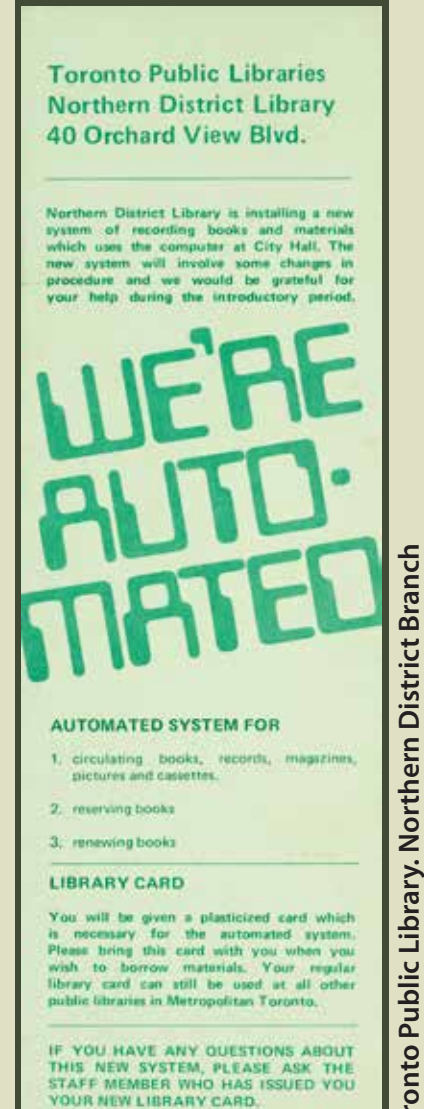
**Northern District Library, Orchard View Boulevard façade, 1976**  
The brick building was given a diagonal orientation to the southeast, the architects explained, "towards the pedestrian and vehicular traffic generated from the Yonge/Eglinton junction."



Pentland & Baker Architects. Northern District Library The Toronto Public Library. 1976/7

**Northern District Library, main floor entrance, 1976**

On the left is the library's single control centre, from which radiated the various subject sections including the children's area. Northern District was the first library in Metropolitan Toronto to have an automated circulation system. It was discontinued on May 1, 1980, but automation was reintroduced at the branch in the late 1980s with the rest of the Toronto Public Library system.



Toronto Public Library, Northern District Branch

**Automation notice, 1975**

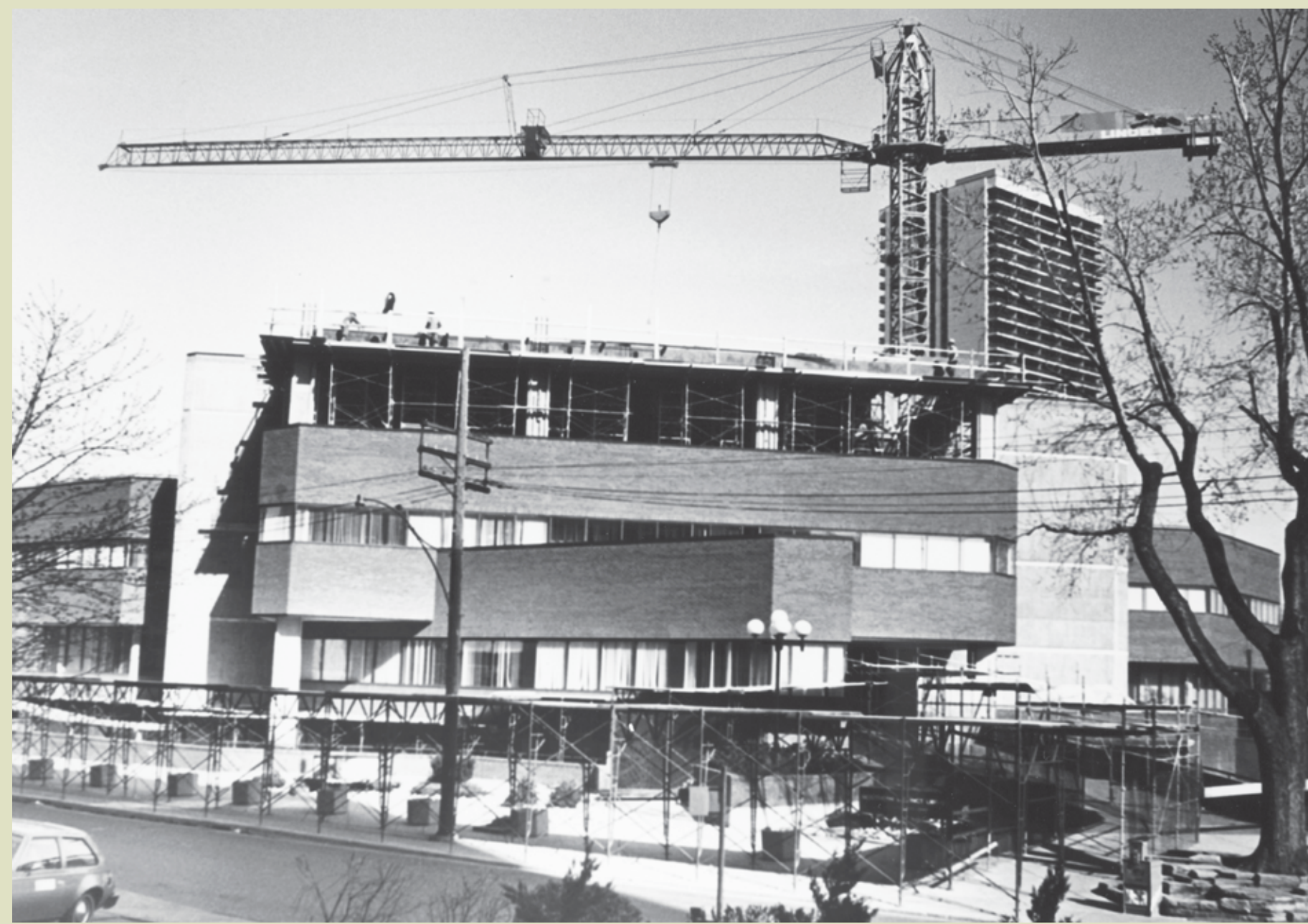
## Stanley Knowles Housing Co-operative built, 1983-84. Tsow/Pollard Architects



Toronto Public Library Archives

**Northern District Library with tower addition. Yvonne Leung, architectural rendering for Tsow/Pollard, Architects, about 1981**

After more than a year of discussion, the Toronto Public Library Board agreed on September 3, 1980 to support, in principle, the construction of non profit housing primarily for seniors above the Northern District Library by the Stanley Knowles Housing Cooperative Inc. (through its agent, the Canadian Labour Development Foundation), the sale of air rights being contingent on community support for the proposed development.



Toronto Public Library Archives

**Construction of the Stanley Knowles Housing Co-operative, spring 1983**

Construction of the 12½-storey tower started in March 1983, shortly after the Toronto Public Library Board approved the lease between it and the Stanley Knowles Housing Cooperative Inc., for the lease of the air rights above, and certain areas within, the library buildings at 40 Orchard View Boulevard, for a period of 50 years. In return for a net rent of \$772,500, paid in advance, the Board agreed to allow the Cooperative to erect a non-profit 103-unit apartment building in the leased air rights, in accordance with the Site By-Law, which provided for predominately senior citizen housing.



Globe and Mail, July 18, 1983, 5

**Stanley Knowles at the dedication ceremony, 16 July 1983**

The apartment tower was named for Stanley Knowles (1908-1997), a long-time Canadian parliamentarian, in honour of his commitment to social and economic rights for senior citizens. Mr. Knowles also attended the official opening of the building on May 26, 1984.

## Renovation of Northern District Branch, 2010-11. Ken Fukushima Architecture



Toronto Public Library

**Northern District Library ISF Renovation Project, May 2010. Ken Fukushima Architecture**  
With funding from the federal government's Infrastructure Stimulus Fund (ISF), Toronto Public Library undertook a \$950,000 retrofit and reorganization of Northern District Branch. The project started once the branch was closed on July 4, 2010 and was completed with its reopening on Thursday, February 3, 2011.



Toronto Public Library

**Northern District Branch, staircase and skylight, January 25, 2011**



Toronto Public Library

**Northern District Branch, main floor entrance, January 25, 2011**

Prepared by Toronto Public Library staff for the reopening of Northern District Branch on February 3, 2011 after a major renovation.