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# ARCHITECTURAL RECORD



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## 197 Sorauren Ave.

Antje Bulthaup

Roncesvalles Village, Toronto, Canada

The original building at 197 Sorauren was constructed in 1926 as a bakery, on a residential street peppered with industrial buildings, retail properties, and even a Greek church and a Hindu temple. In the 1960s the storefront was unsympathetically converted into a hair salon. When the building was purchased in 2007 as a live/work property, it was in great disrepair. The owners saw their project as an opportunity to make a quiet but bold statement about the power of contemporary architecture to comfortably address Toronto's urban density and visually improve its streetscapes.



#### PEOPLE & PRODUCTS

- **Flat roof:** Roof Works
- **Lighting:** Sistemalux

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- [Twofold House](#)
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**Design concept and solution:** Extensive renovations inside and out have given the property new life as a ground floor and basement commercial space—a yoga studio—with a two-story, 800-square-foot residential apartment for a family of four above.

The building was stripped down to its essentials and complimented with natural materials that highlight the handsome form of the brick building. The windows were enlarged, including a large rear dormer window that is wrapped in copper, and the doors replaced in oak. The roof was tiled in cedar. Inside, the store and the apartment are have large rooms, with white walls and recycled Douglas-fir plank flooring. An oversized rear dormer window on the third floor frames a floor-to-ceiling view of the sunrise and the downtown high-rise towers. In turn, the transparency gives passersby animated views of people practicing yoga and the residents carrying out their activities.

In Toronto these corner stores are often converted into residences that usually withdraw the building from the neighborhood by masking the storefront with walls or window coverings. Reviving the commercial space, the project imbues the property with light and vitality and it also ignites and uplifts the neighborhood. Since the project was completed, a mini-village has formed between this property and the other Sorauren shops and cafes that are now emerging from similarly “dead” buildings.

**Total construction cost:**  
\$297,000

#### Architect:

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December 2010