

PLACES



EDRA / *Places* Awards
2001, 2002



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*Articles about the 2002 EDRA/Places
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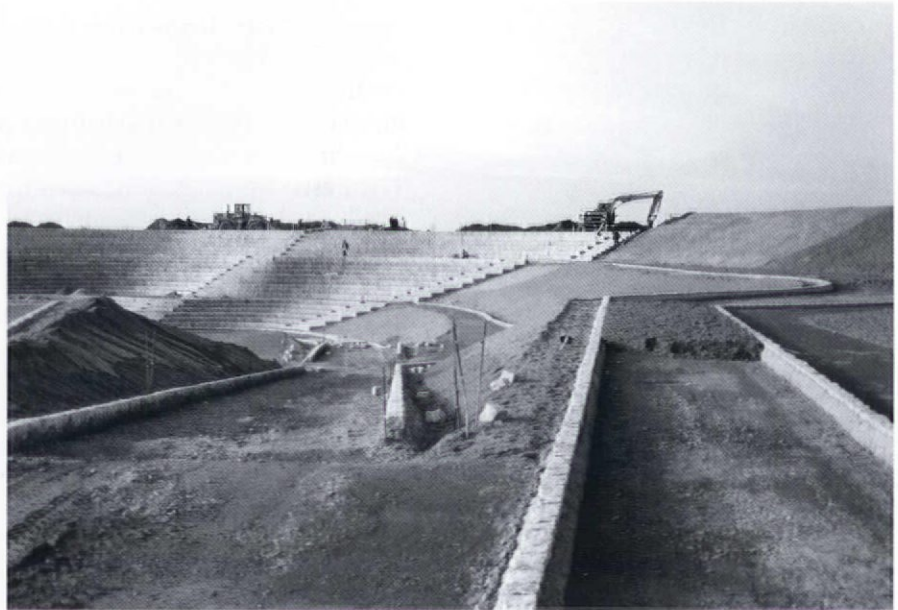
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About the Cover: The AGORA, an amphitheater that was one of the first projects constructed in Cultural Landscape Goitzsche, is both a singular art project and a new civic space. The project was a collaboration of Sigfried Knoll (landscape planner), Werner Sobek (architect) and Andreas Bosshard (composer and sound designer). Photo courtesy Knoll EcoPlan.

Caring for Places: Knowledge that Informs

With this issue of *Places* we initiate Volume 15. Over the years, we have explored many forms of interaction between person and place—searching for models of thought, analysis and representation that can inform the creation of places.

We present here twelve examples that can be instructive, the winning entries in our Place Design, Place Planning and Place Research Awards programs for 2001 and 2002. *Places* sponsors this program jointly with the Environmental Design Research Association as a means of uncovering good examples of how to learn about and how to make places that will yield enduring satisfactions.

The awards juries sought to indicate exemplary approaches to the use and development of knowledge about places. They sought to understand how research and design interact. Planners and designers, people doing research and people who sponsor projects can benefit from knowing more about what processes are most effective and what information really helps.

Of course, the conduct of verifiable research is different from the practice of planning or creating real, tangible places. These processes have overlapped and often blended into each other, yet they require differing forms of attention and have developed institutional support structures that value and reward differing characteristics. Publication and peer review verification are central to research. Regulatory review and political acceptance are essential for planning. Investment by private and—or public clients (as well as engagement with some components of the buildings industry) are preconditions for the design and creation of real places that can be assessed in terms of user satisfaction and cultural import. Accordingly, judgments of merit vary, sometimes in ways that may seem contradictory. The point is that the projects in this issue have been conducted with enough spirit, invention and care to be noticed, and with enough rigor and attention to human consequence to reward our careful examination.

Together, the projects that have been commended convey a marvelous range of concerns, an agenda for environmental design and research that has public scope. They show that the collective energies and skills of the professions can rise to pressing challenges of our time: to accommodate a diversifying set of social and cultural patterns, to find an order of making that embodies intelligent use of resources and has a close symbiotic connection with the natural world, and to invest new interest and care in places whose purposes are changing.

These premiated projects demonstrate the benefits of planning and designing in ways that engage the full complexities of place. These projects are all socially engaged; they involve the people as well as the places in which they are set. These projects and research studies are all generative, in the sense that they show how to draw energies through a place or they identify processes and possibilities that can inform the development of many places. They all have consequence beyond their immediate task.

We are pleased to be able to present these projects and to be a part of an awards program in which research, planning and design share center stage. We hope this will be generative, helping to foster mutual respect and interest among professionals and agencies whose working cultures vary. We hope to bring to wide attention the good places that can result from interweaving our disparate and our common ways of thinking into an expansive, patient and creative search.

—Donlyn Lyndon

EDRA / *Places* Awards

2001, 2002

This issue presents design, planning and research projects that were selected as winners of EDRA/*Places* Awards in 2001 and 2002. The projects are presented here by category, with winners from both years grouped together.

The selections made by each jury reflect common issues. Several of the 2002 winners, for example, are notable for their focus on processes of implementation.

A Place Design award was given to Pittsburgh's Allegheny Riverfront Park, a remarkable promenade that skirts two levels of highways and several bridge abutments. Place Planning awards were given to City of Learning and its vision for school development as the spark for economic revitalization in Paterson, N.J.; New•Land•Marks, which teams artists with communities on collaborative art projects in Philadelphia; and the Collier County Community Character Plan, which melds New Urbanist principles with regional ecological planning. Place Research awards were given to Growing up In Cities, which proposes strategies for involving children in shaping their neighborhood environments, and Technology and Place, a book that examines the failure of a farm established to demonstrate sustainable agricultural and architectural practices.

Several selections made by the 2001 jury explore the dynamics of industrial areas, particularly waterfronts, that are undergoing transitions to other uses.

Place Design awards were given to the Rosie the Riveter Memorial in Richmond, Calif., which commemorates the history of women workers in World War II, and Gantry Plaza State Park, the anchors of emerging residential district along the East River in New York. A Place Planning award was given to "Above the Falls," a long-term plan for a similar area along the Mississippi, just upriver from downtown Minneapolis. A Place Planning and Design award was given to "Cultural Landscape Goitzsche," an ecologically devastated coal-mining district in Germany that is crafting a new future through environmental reclamation and public art projects.

Place Research awards were given to Mississippi Floods: Designing a Shifting Landscape, a study of the interplay between cultural and engineering constructs used to define the river, and the New York City Privately Owned Public Space Project, a comprehensive evaluation of public spaces created by zoning incentives over the last forty years.

These projects represent the fourth and fifth rounds of winners of EDRA/*Places* Awards. The program is distinguished by its interdisciplinary focus, a concern for human factors in the design of the built environment, and a commitment to promoting links between design practice and design research. A call for entries for the next year's awards can be found in this issue and at www.places-journal.org.

Jury, 2002 EDRA/*Places* Awards

Barbara Brown, *Professor, Family and Consumer Studies, University of Utah*

Peter Calthorpe, *Principal, Calthorpe Associates, Berkeley*
Harrison Fraker, *FAIA, Dean, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley*

Louise Mozingo, *Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture, University of California, Berkeley*

John Rahaim, *Executive Director, City Design Center, Seattle*

Rob Wellington Quigley, *FAIA, architect, San Diego*

Jury, 2001 EDRA/*Places* Awards

Allan B. Jacobs, *Urban Designer; Professor Emeritus of City and Regional Planning, University of California, Berkeley*

Mary Griffin, *Architect; Principal, Turnbull, Griffin, Haesloop, San Francisco*

Thomas Hanrahan, *Dean, Pratt Institute School of Architecture*

Judy Corbett, *Executive Director, Local Government Commission, Sacramento*

Robert Sommer, *Environmental Psychologist; Professor, University of California, Davis*

Walter Hood, *Professor of Landscape Architecture, University of California, Berkeley*

/ Design / Planning / Research /

Gantry Plaza State Park

*Thomas Balsley, with Lee Weintraub, Richard Sullivan,
Laura Auerback, William Harris and Sam Lawrence*

Constructing Memory:

Commemorating Rosie the Riveter

The Office of Cheryl Barton, Susan Schwartzberg

Allegheny Riverfront Park

*Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc.,
with Ann Hamilton and Michael Mercil*

/ Design / Planning / Research /

Cultural Landscape Goitzsche

*Commission Cultural Landscape Goitzsche,
Knoll Ecoplan*

/ Design / Planning / Research /

**Above The Falls: A Master Plan
for the Upper River in Minneapolis**

URS/BRW, Inc.

City of Learning

Roy Strickland, Edwin Duroy/Paterson Public Schools

New•Land•Marks

Fairmount Park Art Association

Collier County Community Character Plan

Dover, Kobl and Partners

/ Design / Planning / Research /

Mississippi Floods:

Designing a Shifting Landscape

Anuradha Mathur, Dilip da Cunha

**The New York City Privately Owned Public
Space Project**

*Jerold S. Kayden, New York City Department of
City Planning, Municipal Art Society of New York*

Growing up in Cities

Louise Chawla (international coordinator)

Technology and Place

Steven A. Moore

Gantry Plaza State Park Queens, New York

Gantry Plaza State Park is a new riverfront space in Long Island City, Queens, across the East River from the United Nations, and one of the first elements of a Battery Park City-style development project called Queens West. It was praised by the jury for its design qualities and for its success in becoming a community and civic open space.

The \$12 million, six-acre park is the public edge of a scheme to transform a declining industrial waterfront into seventy-four acres of high-rise housing, office towers and public facilities. It began design in 1993, opened in phases and was completed in 2001.

The focal point of the park is a pair of gantries that once lifted trains onto barges that carried them between Long Island and New Jersey; the gantries are preserved in a state of arrested decay as dramatic icons visible from Manhattan and up and down the waterfront.

The park consists of diverse settings—lawn and plaza, garden and cove, shoreline and piers—that engage visitors in a range of activities, such as contemplation, sunbathing, fishing, strolling and public gatherings, and provide access to the water in different ways. Four reconstructed piers are outfitted for special activities—ferry terminal; cafe; sunbathing and stargazing; fishing—while allowing general public access.

Materials and finishes range from rough and rugged to polished and refined, reflecting the area's transition from work zone to public amenity, from natural environment to urban public space; the colors, shapes and sounds one experiences highlight this as well.

The project included extensive consultations with residents of nearby working-class communities, many of whom were skeptical of and antagonistic to Queens West, fearing displacement of their homes and workplaces. Outreach through questionnaires, meetings and interviews provided insight into programming, planning and design criteria. Later, neighborhood leaders, public sponsors, local politicians, historians, ecologists and exhibit designers assisted the design team in considering how the park could make strong links to the community and enhance the experiences of those who visit. The park has become widely popular—some 30,000 people have gathered there to watch Independence Day fireworks, and many residents have joined to create a “Friends of Gantry Plaza State Park” to watch over its management and maintenance.

Gantry Plaza State Park has set a standard for New York City's waterfront revival and redefined its neighborhood's image and sense of place. Visitors from all walks of life, of all ages and backgrounds come to appreciate Gantry Plaza—and, more importantly, they are returning. “People are coming to hang out,” designer Thomas Balsley says. “That's what it's all about.”

—Todd W. Bressi, Katy Chey

Top: Reconstructed piers face the Midtown Manhattan skyline.

Bottom: The Interpretive Gardens are one of several elements that provide access to the water. The texture of the materials recalls the site's industrial history; new plantings are native to the shoreline ecosystem.

Photos courtesy Thomas Balsley Associates





A Transition Zone

Standing in Gantry Plaza State Park on a cold winter afternoon, one has a view of Manhattan that is both unexpected and breathtaking. The East River shore, much of its length obstructed by abandoned industrial lots and gated by chain-link fences, is open and accessible here. Manhattan's skyline spreads out in front of you, crisp and bright in the chilly breeze. The water captures metallic hues reflected from the United Nations Secretariat, so close across the channel, its perfect geometry facing you from a distant future. All around you, the park unravels its tales along the Long Island City waterfront.

Gantry Plaza State Park is a sophisticated waterfront design that has transformed this largely deserted, but once-bustling, shoreline. The complex interplay of public spaces, plantings and industrial elements, new and old, offer an interpretation of the neighborhood's past while looking ahead ambitiously to its controversial future.

The park's central space is a large, semicircular plaza surfaced in smooth stone; it provides a stage for large gatherings and a terrace for sitting quietly and contemplating. Serving as a backdrop, and framing the view of the river and the skyline beyond, are two gigantic, black industrial structures—gantries that once lifted rail cars on and off barges and now stand as a bold testament to the activities that once took place here. The toil of their past work disappeared, their surfaces restored and their surroundings purified, the structures have been reclaimed as sophisticated icons of urban archeology.

Water—accessible, tangible, engaging—is the most crucial element, the very essence of the place. The complex articulation of the shoreline, with its interplay of natural and artificial elements, is part of a larger design strategy intended to guide the visitor to the edge, which no longer seeks to exclude prospective users.

At river's edge, the park negotiates its identity with the water's ceaseless movement, its ever-changing color and

texture. Culture and nature seem to exchange meaning and memory in an osmotic movement along the shore. Split-faced, pink granite blocks step down to the river, allowing visitors to make contact with the water; native grasses grow among the rocks, suggesting that the upland ecological system is re-establishing itself.

Infrastructure, new and old, plays a mediating force. Abandoned tracks, once the lifeline of the economy, are now partly covered by gravel in a contemplative garden where wild grasses and granite blocks alternate in a loose association of historic allusions. A new stainless steel walk arcs gracefully over the river and gaps in the riverbank, a precise, elegant line that contrasts with the roughness and constant change of the water's edge. Four piers project silently over the river, adding a new layer of history by meandering over some of the old piles while leaving others in exposed decay; they stretch toward Manhattan in a visual and temporal longing for the city, affirming the new neighborhood's integral connection to Midtown.

Every amenity in the park is conceived with precision and patiently crafted, adding a thick layer of cultural interpretation to the site—the beautifully designed, stainless steel upland light fixtures; the blue lights along the piers that mark the original barge bays; the metal bar counter that looms toward the river's stunning views.

As finely executed as the park is, though, these elements belie the transition the Queens waterfront (as well as industrial production in New York City) is undergoing. They seem closer in spirit to a SoHo industrial warehouse than to the blue-collar community whose residents make up a large constituency for the park. The historic interpretation of the site seems apprehensive; the formal aspects of the site's design seem to be more a meditation on the artifacts of industry than a rediscovery of past human labor and challenges.

The piers provide opportunities for numerous activities, such as sunbathing, stargazing, fishing and quiet contemplation of the Midtown Manhattan skyline.

Photographs of the site before the park was built show the gantries as grand relics on a crumbling shore—unpolished and dirty, painted with layers of graffiti, products of the cyclical processes of growth and decay in urban places. The gantries are reminiscent, in their humble yet powerful appearance, of the industrial towers of Richard Haag's Gas Works Park on Lake Union in Seattle. Those simple towers, unedited, speak eloquently about human production and its environmental consequences. The graffiti that remains on their surfaces testifies to the dialogue that surrounds our urban industrial legacy.

At Gas Works Park, the projects of reclaiming an industrial landscape and creating a new park evolved harmoniously. Some structures have been turned into functional facilities, allowing them to be inhabited creatively. The children's play area consists of an old compressor machine, still in its original barn; an old exhaustor building was converted into a covered picnic area.

In these places, the relationship between site and user is understated and open. The spaces and elements of Gas Works Park do not feel as tightly organized as those at Gantry Plaza do: their associations are suggested but not asserted; they extend a friendly invitation to explore and play. The materials feel creatively transformed, not imported or overly crafted.

Gantry Plaza State Park is conceived, designed and built to a level of quality not often seen in New York City public spaces: the restoration of the gantries is refined, the gardens, piers and plaza are distinctive and memorable. The park is a remarkable statement about one of the neighborhood's possible futures—as an unexpected, sophisticated gem on the roughness of the Long Island shore.

—Ilaria Salvadori

Jury Comments

Griffin: The design gives you all kinds of choices and opportunities. The Rosie the Riveter Memorial and Goitzsche projects seem to be more scripted for a specific experience, and Rosie has a very narrative experience. Gantry doesn't do that; you could go there and be in the place and never know what the gantry was for, and that's alright.

Hood: The designers have done a great job of creating the spaces that surround the gantries; the gantries are substantial objects, and they don't quite disappear, but they just become a part of the place.

Sommer: I was impressed by the outreach program, with questionnaires, interviews. They connected the community to the river, which hadn't been done before. I also liked the way that they designed for night experience.

Hanrahan: It's not only successful, but it says that it is truly possible to build places where you can get to the river and look at Manhattan. It was the first new riverfront park with a pier, and now everyone wants to do a pier.

Corbett: Is it well done?

Hanrahan: It's fantastic. There are a lot of unusual little parts to it. You get out on those piers, that's the best part.

Corbett: And those big gantries ...

Hanrahan: Walk under those structures, and it's superb.

Gantry Plaza State Park, Queens, N.Y.

Clients: Empire State Development Corporation (Frances Huppert, Senior Vice President, Design and Construction), Queens West Development Corporation (George Aridas, President), New York City Economic Development Corporation (Charles Millard, President), Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (Gregory Matviak), New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (James Moogan)

Design: Thomas Balsley, Lee Weintraub, Richard Sullivan, Laura Auerback, William Harris, Sam Lawrence

Allegheny Riverfront Park Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The narrow concrete embankment between an expressway and a river that floods every year might seem as tough and unforgiving a place for an enjoyable public space as one could imagine. But this is exactly the setting that the city of Pittsburgh and the non-profit Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, working with landscape architects Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, set out to reclaim.

Since the late 1970s, the trust has been working to revitalize what was once Pittsburgh's red-light district. Its vision for this fourteen-block area at the edge of downtown has been of a cultural district that would include not only new and renovated cultural venues and restaurants, but also residential and office space in new buildings and renovated warehouse space.

The trust has long envisioned pedestrian connections between the new district and the Allegheny River. However, according to Kevin McMahan, the trust's current president, this ran against the grain of Pittsburgh's industrial past. For more than a century, city residents had turned their backs to the river, considering it a utilitarian space at best, certainly not an environmental amenity.

The city also was interested in facilitating a re-engagement between downtown and the river. In fact, a river-edge linkage between downtown parks had first been proposed in 1911 by the landscape firm of Frederick Law Olmsted.

From a physical point of view, the major difficulty to re-establishing a pedestrian connection was that the river's edge had long ago been turned into a split-level transportation corridor, with an arterial boulevard at street level and a four-lane expressway below. Moreover, much of the space that remained between the expressway and the river was used for parking. Together, roadways and parking areas had effectively cut the city off from the river, leaving the water's edge paved over and forgotten.

Jurors were nearly unanimous in their praise for Allegheny Riverfront Park. They cited its aesthetic distinction as well as its success at solving a host of environmental and engineering problems in pursuit of a shared civic vision. Furthermore, they noted, the project not only navigated a maze of state, federal and local regulations, but also integrated the delicate contributions of artists into what is, in essence, a massive work of civil engineering.

Environmental and Infrastructure Challenge

From the beginning, the designers recognized that the problem Pittsburgh faced was similar to that of other U.S. cities. "Across America, as industry recedes from once active water edges ... , a lifeless divide has developed between cities and their waterfronts. The river's edge has

become an alienated, even hostile environment," they wrote in their award submission.

But while Portland, New York and San Francisco tore down waterfront highways, Pittsburgh followed a different strategy. Matthew Urbanski, of Van Valkenburgh Associates, explained that a key early decision was to accept the site for what it was. This meant resisting the desire to turn back the clock and bury the highway. Instead, the lower level of the park consists of new riparian plantings and a fourteen-foot-wide pedestrian and bicycle path that threads its way dramatically between the highway and the river. At street level, above, the park consists of a broad, semiformal, promenade overlooking the river.

Much of the design is predicated on the need for bold solutions to neutralize the hostile character of the expressway. One problem was finding a way to bring pedestrians across the expressway and down to the riverfront. The answer came in the form of twin 350-foot-long ramps that descend from each side of the Seventh Street Bridge, one of three suspension structures that lead downtown.

According to Urbanski, noise from the expressway once made it impossible to hold a conversation by the river's edge. Now, the ramps not only provide a fully ADA-compliant means of getting people down to the river, but also act effectively as sound walls. Pedestrians are further enticed to descend the ramps by undulating bronze handrails. And artist-designed screens with Virginia Creeper vines provide further shielding from the traffic.

Another difficulty that had to be surmounted was finding a way for the riverfront walk to bypass an existing bridge abutment while avoiding conflicts with the Army Corps of Engineers. The method devised was to cantilever sections of reinforced concrete beyond the existing seawall, satisfying the Corps' prohibition against filling the river. The new path actually sweeps pedestrians and bicyclists out over the water, while leaving room for a narrow strip of earth along the bank in which plantings can be established.

Yet another issue was that the lower level of the park is subject to floods that raise the Allegheny between five and ten feet each spring. Such extreme conditions, which sometimes include rapidly moving ice cakes, presented serious problems when it came to selecting plant materials.

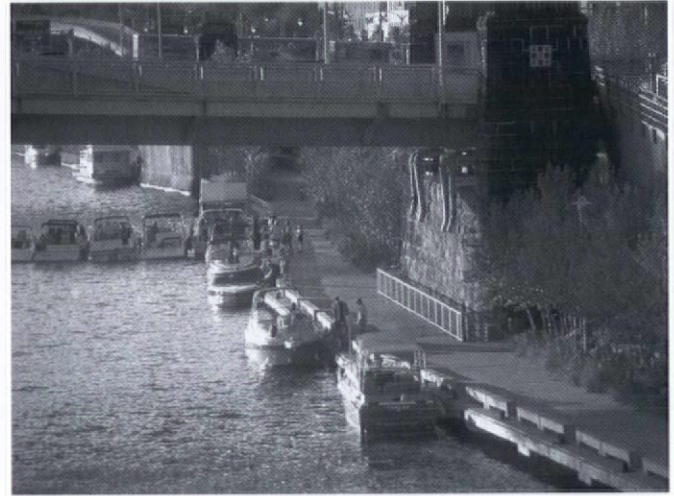
According to Urbanski, the design research involved boat trips up and down the river to determine what survived in similar "inundation zones." Eventually, plants like river birch and silver and red maple, which have the ability

Left: Construction of walkway cantilevered over river.

Photos © Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc., unless otherwise indicated.

Right: Park site, after construction. Photo © Ed Massery





to sprout back after being broken or crushed, were chosen. To secure such plantings and limit soil erosion, boulders were installed along the walkway. The artists marked the natural cycle of flooding was established by casting a pattern of reeds into the walkway concrete.

Unlike the lower level, which was intended to be “willfully wild,” the upper level provides an elegant built edge to the city. A major challenge here was reconfiguring an existing street, Fort Duquesne Boulevard (which runs above the Tenth Street Bypass), to consolidate space for a broad, semiformal promenade overlooking the river.

The promenade now offers views both out over the river and back toward the city. It is shaded with London plane trees and paved with rough-cut native bluestone—elements that are familiar from their use in public spaces elsewhere in Pittsburgh—and separated from traffic by a curving seat wall.

Assembling Resources, Extending the Vision

Jurors recognized that this project benefited from a public-private partnership of the highest order. Although the park is owned by the city, the client for the reconstruction work, the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, is a private nonprofit that has been able to pool additional financial contributions from individuals and foundations.

Creating place out of no-place also involved a complex

engagement at a number of other levels. For example, Urbanski says, while the city owned the roadways and the park, the county owned the bridges, the state owned the highway, and the Army Corps had veto power in issues of river navigation and flooding. Such a tangle of jurisdictions undoubtedly contributed to this important city edge being lost in the first place. Reclaiming it involved a complex negotiation, including not only design review on aesthetic and social issues, but also complex technical consultations with engineers from a variety of agencies.

Altogether, the process of seeing the park through to completion spanned ten years, says McMahon. Throughout, the one constant was the insistence by the trust and its former president, Carol Brown, that the highest level of design be employed.

Above left: Aerial view of Allegheny Riverfront in downtown Pittsburgh.

Photo by Marge Beaver.

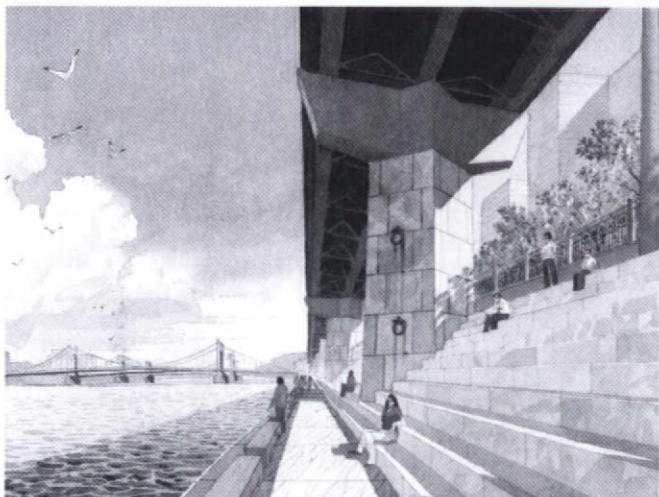
Above right: Workers creating one of the art elements in the park.

Below left: Seatwall in upper level of park. Photo by Annie O'Neill.

Below right: Boats docking along lower level of park. Photo by Annie O'Neill.

Opposite: Existing conditions (above) and proposed amphitheatre (below) for the planned westward extension of the park.

Rendering by Michael McCann



The long-range vision for the park is that it will extend roughly 1,200 feet east and west, to Point State Park at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers, and to the city's new Convention and Trade Center. At the time of the jurying, the central 1,800-ft. section of the park had been completed.

—David Moffat

Allegheny Riverfront Park, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Client: The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust

Owner: The City of Pittsburgh

Designers: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc., Landscape Architects (Michael Van Valkenburgh, Laura Solano, Matthew Urbanski, Martin Roura, A. Paul Seck)

Artists: Ann Hamilton and Michael Mercil

Associated consultants: Ove Arup and Partners (structural engineering), Frederic R. Harris, Inc. (civil engineering), GAI Consultants (geotechnical engineering), Phillip Craul (soils), Accessibility Development Associates (ADA), Inter•Fluve (hydrology), Urban Design Associates (planning).

Funders: Vira I. Heinz Endowment, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust/Campaign For a Dynamic Downtown, Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority.

Jury Comments

Mozingo: Talk about making a silk purse out of a sow's ear. There are two tiers of roadway with 250 feet to the edge of the water, an enormous grade change, all concrete; no remnant habitat that you can work from. And then to have restructured the roadway, dealt with this grade change, gotten people down. And you talk about handicapped access—this is completely accessible. This is significant place-making in an incredibly difficult urban condition.

Quigley: It is really sublime.

Mozingo: It is also fresh in that most urban restoration projects are much too delicate for the conditions. By structuring both the walkway and the boulders here it actually presents a really tough urban version of restoration.

Fraker: And the art has been integral to a whole improvisational collaboration, not stuck on at the end. Even the pre-cast assembly of the walkway means you can use a crane from the road to create a work place from which you can come back and build a garden.

Mozingo: And it's flooding every year. There are huge ice floes that keep knocking into these things. They have created a tree-lined promenade in extreme environmental conditions using native plants.

Calthorpe: What's interesting is where research had to have been done for this to win public approval. It is both poetic and something that overcomes great obstacles and probably has a great research base as well as a high level of social purpose.

Mozingo: I can't imagine how hard it must have been to collaborate. Everyone from the Army Corps of Engineers to local community groups had to have a role in the project. And the designers had to have done research on the ecology to get things to grow. You can't pull this off better on technical issues.

Brown: This is one of the projects for which I really wanted to hear more about the research, but I was dragged along by the other jurors, appreciating what must have gone on.

Fraker: There was a lot of effort made in understanding how you make a garden in this difficult place. The creative use of the materials to bring in imagery and textures and shading and so on, the weaving of these grasses into the concrete formation, is just extraordinary.

Rabaim: Just for the record, I didn't vote on this because I was involved. But it had the most integration I've ever seen between a designer and an artist.

Fraker: You can see that. There is a trace in here of the thought, the construction, the materials being made, and so on.

Constructing Memory

Rosie The Riveter Memorial

Richmond, California

By nature, monuments and memorials are fragmentary constructions of the past. Yet, under the right conditions, they can serve as catalysts for complex, robust connections between contemporary citizens, the history of the places where they live and their own place in history. The *Rosie the Riveter Memorial: Honoring American Women's Labor During World War II*, illustrates the fertile intersections between public art, landscape design, public history and community development.

The city of Richmond, Calif., initiated the memorial project in 1996 as a means of reclaiming an important aspect of its history. Few American communities offer a home front story as dramatic; a city of 23,000 when the war began, it quickly became a twenty-four-hour boomtown with more than 100,000 residents. Kaiser Shipyards, the nation's largest and most productive wartime shipbuilding facility, played a central role in this transformation by bringing people from all backgrounds and across the nation to work alongside each other on San Francisco Bay. The memorial focuses particularly on the experiences of women, who made up more than one quarter of the shipyard workers and whose labor was celebrated, along with that of their counterparts across the country, in the popular song, "Rosie the Riveter."

Richmond has suffered in recent decades from a reputation for crime, poverty and heavy industry, and its diverse citizenry found scant public connection to this story. While much of the city retains its wartime built environment, most reminders of those years had been erased from the waterfront. Beginning in the 1970s, Richmond's Redevelopment Agency transformed much of the former shipyard into a collection of industrial facilities, gated communities and public open spaces.

Civic recognition of Richmond's wartime contributions, especially those of local women, became a crusade for Richmond Councilwoman Donna Powers. She began talking about the importance of commemorating Richmond's "Rosies" (as she called them) and by 1996 others in the city's power structure came along.

A memorial committee, chaired by Powers and including city staff and community representatives, considered various strategies for recognizing women's wartime roles, from a "Walk of Fame" with names inscribed on a water-

front sidewalk to renaming a city park. Meanwhile, the city's Arts and Culture Commission was working on a public art ordinance, and the memorial committee settled on an interpretive artwork as the most desirable option. The city council directed the redevelopment agency, which controlled development in the area and administered a large budget, to fund and oversee a commemorative art project. A waterfront park at the former location of Kaiser Shipyard Number 2 was selected as the site.

When the agency hired me to direct the project in 1997, I searched for other commemorations of women's wartime efforts, but found none. This was not surprising, considering the scarcity of overt reminders of women's history anywhere in American urban places. The committee agreed to broaden its commemorative scope to develop the first national tribute to women on the home front.

We organized a design competition, asking respondents to interpret both Richmond's local history and the contributions of eighteen million women to the wartime labor force, and drew more than 75 responses from individuals and interdisciplinary teams. Cheryl Barton and Susan Schwartzberg were selected for their skill in answering the competition's complex interpretive charge in a form accessible to a broad audience.

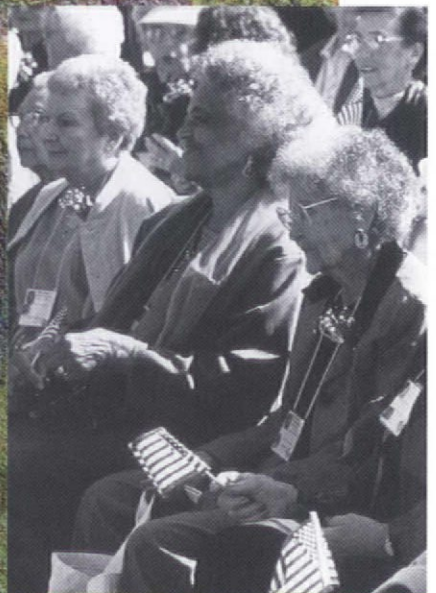
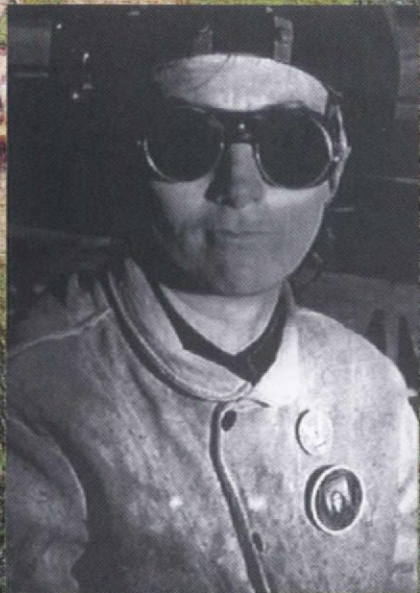
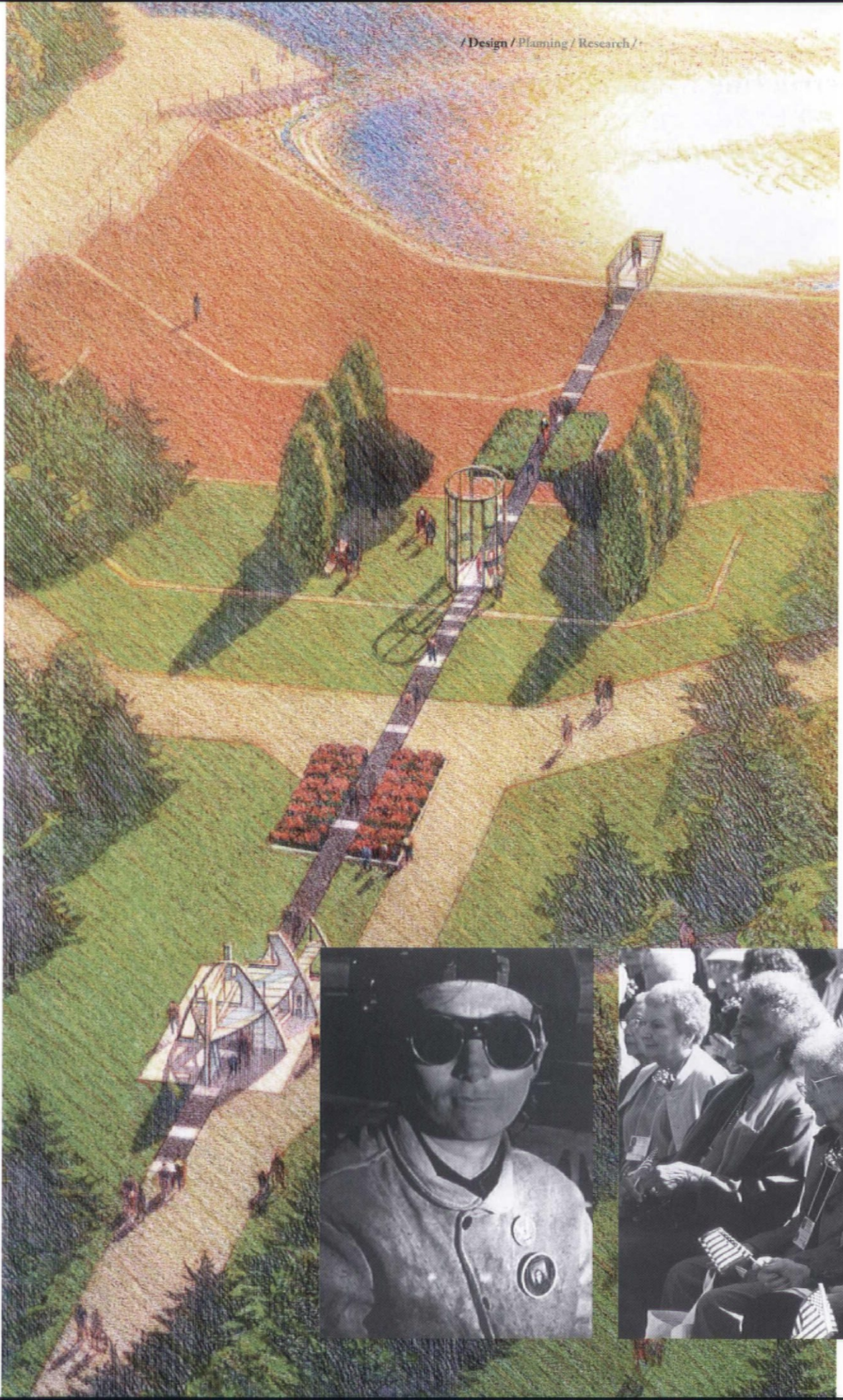
Their proposal for sculptures suggestive of a ship under construction recalled the work performed at the site and evoked the constructed nature of social memory. It is organized as a series of outdoor rooms created by sculptures that evoke the image of a ship hull under construction. The rooms—named the "Forepeak," "Fore Hatch," "Stack," "Aft Hatch" and "Fantail"—act as gathering places rather than detached objects in space. The design is a metaphor for the reconstruction of memory, the process of collecting fragments and bonding them together into a whole.

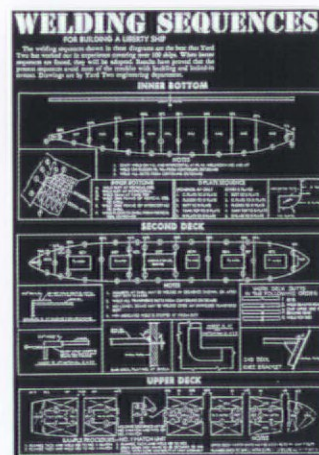
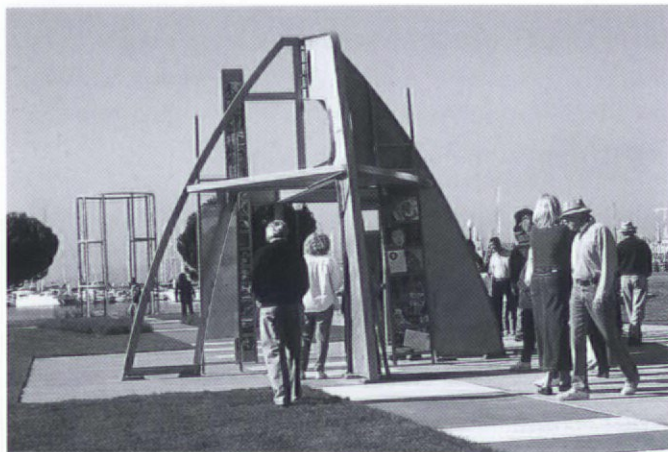
The rooms are arranged along a 441-foot-long path, "Keel Walk," that slopes down to and projects over the harbor's edge; along it are recollections of the women workers and a timeline of events that occurred during the war. Images of the shipyard, engineering drawings, artifacts and workers are arranged between the rungs of "memory ladders" that recall construction scaffolds.

The design process began with research into local and national archives and included efforts to locate and engage the many women around the country, now in their seventies and eighties, who had worked in the yards. We organized a "memory gathering workshop" that collected stories of everyday life and reflected on the larger social themes that shaped women's experiences. Women shipyard workers shared their stories, letters, photos and even trade tools—which were incorporated into the memory

Opposite: Plan of the Rosie the Riveter Memorial. Rendering by Christopher Grubb.

Inset: The research phase involved locating and interviewing women who worked at the shipyards sixty years ago. The women were invited to the dedication, and their mementos were incorporated into "memory ladders." Left photo by Hansel Mieth, right photo © Felix Rigan.





ladders and served as an inspiration for the designers.

The memorial's dense weave of labor, social and women's history reflects decades of work by historians that recasts the American past as a shifting collection of multiple narratives. This view of history has increasingly shaped the field of public art as cities and community organizations work to reclaim forgotten histories through monuments and memorials. Within this context, the memorial initiative is notable because it casts its attention broadly, situating the breadth of women's wartime experiences within the many factors that shaped the home front, and because it has been an agent for reconnecting a group that had dispersed and, therefore, had not focused on commemorating its history.

In addition to the design team's site-specific artwork, the memorial initiative included numerous components intended to create richer connections between the site's history, the local community and a wider public. We published a newsletter and developed a website; distributed a questionnaire that resulted in a list of more than two hundred women who had worked in the shipyards and shared a trove of memories; conducted an oral history program; produced a short video documentary; developed a high school education project; and worked with labor organizations to develop a campaign, "Tradeswomen: Pioneers Then & Now," geared to young women interested in employment in the trades today.

The most dramatic outcome of the project has been the creation of a new national historical park in Richmond. From the project's earliest days, it was clear that an even larger story was embedded in Richmond's streets, structures, civic organizations and personal memories. At the encouragement of Congressman George Miller, National Park Service staff visited in 1998, and we laid out the city's

complex story of migration, housing, childcare, health care, labor unions and racially integrated workforces on the home front. The memorial was dedicated in October, 2000, and ten days later, President Bill Clinton signed the official designation of Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park, incorporating the site into the National Park Service.

The resulting Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park will interpret a range of sites throughout the city—such as war-era daycare centers that still serve local families, the original Kaiser Field Hospital and housing for war workers. All are woven into a changing, and often quite challenging, urban fabric. With newfound recognition of its historic resources, and in response to encouragement from the park service, the city passed a historic preservation ordinance that can protect these places and additional historic sites that are identified as research continues.

The historical park, now in its planning and research phase, presents dramatic challenges to the park service, the city and the collaborative partners upon which it will depend. The quality of the architecture generated by frantic wartime mobilization raises especially difficult preservation issues in a city eager to grasp every development opportunity. The historic sites are owned both publicly and privately, raising questions about ensuring adequate protection and about whether the level of interpretation at each site will form a coherent whole. And the social history the park will interpret is itself complex and, in instances,

The Rosie the Riveter Memorial takes the form of a ship under construction, recalling the work performed at the site and evoking the constructed nature of social memory. Left photo © Felix Rigan. Center and right photos courtesy Richmond Museum of History.

contentious: While many prefer to highlight efforts to dismantle gender and racial barriers on the home front, subtle and overt discrimination affected day-to-day life for women and people of color; public policy and informal social practices shaped a segregated landscape in much of Richmond, including its war housing and daycare centers.

The Rosie the Riveter National Historical Park will face tensions between historical interpretation, aesthetics, politics and the requirements of commerce and tourism. Yet it is also a remarkable opportunity to develop innovative strategies for reviving neglected aspects of American social and urban history, and using them to reanimate the community at large.

—Donna Graves

Jury Comments

Hood: It's easier to do a project like Gantry Plaza, where there is something to respond to. With Rosie, nothing was there, just a ubiquitous suburban landscape, and now there is a place people can come to and identify with.

Griffin: There's difference between having a gantry as an artifact and making a place around it, and having the built experience of the waterfront gone and trying to explain it by putting artifacts into a kind of neutral landscape. You wish there had been fragment of something like a gantry here, or more content related to the waterfront. It would be interesting to think about what a good extension of this effort would be, other than more housing.

Hood: As a monument or as a memorial, this project is more like a large object rather than a place per se. It doesn't operate by taking over that entire green space, it's more like an abstract object. How do we talk about place within that framework?

Corbett: They did really use research, it's historical research.

Hanraban: This project brings forward a story that may not have even been considered a legitimate memory twenty years ago. The notion that the U.S. can assume a stronger interest in the cultural aspects of its history is very powerful, and very well put here. The pictures of the women coming back for the dedication are impressive.

Sommer: The memory to me is the sad part, though. As a monument to industrial America, things were made in that whole tidal basin, not only in one part of it.

Hood: It's important for people to recognize the history of Richmond that is slowly being wiped away. I do think people will come to this site and remember the way it used to be, based upon the project, based upon the narrative.

Griffin: And it may be a catalyst, now that there's something there, implemented, to use. It's bringing back institutional support, and the prospects in a way are almost as exciting.

Constructing Memory: Commemorating Rosie the Riveter, Richmond, Calif.

Client: City of Richmond, Redevelopment Agency (Donna Graves, project director)

Design: The Office of Cheryl Barton (Cheryl Barton, design principal/sculptor; Zoë Astrachan, landscape architect; Burt Tanoue, landscape architect/technical advisor) and Susan Schwartzberg, visual artist.

Cultural Landscape Goitzsche Bitterfeld, Germany



“We need more rusted metal!” exclaimed French artists Marc Babarit and Gilles Bruni.

On this day in the middle of the Goitzsche, a sixty-two-square-kilometer region in former East Germany that was once one of the largest brown coal mines in Europe, an unusual group has come together. There are artists. There are workers, most of them miners from the region who have been unemployed since the mine closed in 1991. There are local residents, who offer their help.

The artists, gathered around an artificial hill of gravel, sand, dirt and scraps of rusted metal, have decided they need more material to realize their vision of a landscape memorial to the region’s industrial history. The crowd disperses to search for contributions and returns with heaps of personal belongings that they are willing to donate to the project. The hill is now covered with soon-to-be-rusted old metal objects. This is the creation of a very special place.

For the Goitzsche and Bitterfeld, the area’s main town, the last century has been a time of immense upheaval and transformation. Once one of the most industrialized regions in Europe, the tensions and transformations of Germany’s recent history have been deeply imprinted onto the area’s physical and psychological landscapes.

Today the Goitzsche, once called the “the dirtiest corner in Europe” by the magazine *Der Spiegel*, is a model for comprehensive, dialogue-based regional planning and development that focuses upon strengthening the distinct character of local places, fostering intercity cooperation and sensitivity to ecology, and promoting interdisciplinary and international communication. The former mine has been flooded to create a new landscape of lakes, recultivated vegetation and art projects intended to regenerate the identity of the area in the minds of potential residents and visitors.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Goitzsche was developed as a major resource of brown coal for rapidly industrializing Prussia and, eventually, the German empire. By the turn of the century, an open-pit mine had been started and chemical plants soon located next to the energy source. After World War II, the ravaged landscape received no respite: the area was part of the communist German Democratic Republic, whose policy of promoting intense industrial production stood far before environmental concerns. The mining and chemical industries expanded, forcing the displacement of four villages and the relocation of more than four miles of the Mülde River. The impacts on people’s lives were enormous: In windy



weather, neighboring cities would become coated with polluted soil blown from the open pit.

After German reunification in 1991, the mine was closed, the industrial infrastructure was demolished, and the region was declared an ecological disaster site by the federal government. Much of the population was left unemployed while the devastated landscape and environmental hazards remained. Bitterfeld and its neighbors were left to confront the ecological restoration of the former mine and develop a new economy for the region.

The former mining organization, the LMBV, a regionally organized federal entity, hired the landscape architecture firm Knoll Ecoplan to lead the replanning. Ecoplan saw the opportunity to redevelop and redefine a former industrial landscape through a process that would involve a constant dialogue with the local communities and emphasize the distinct historical character of the landscape and region. Ecoplan aimed to provide the local communities with usable, accessible public space, while confronting the area's socioeconomic problems by creating opportunities for growth and employment in tourism and by improving the quality of life in the region to help attract new employers.

The connection with local communities was achieved

through the mediating role of the Zweckverband (roughly translated as “purpose association”), an organization that brought together the mayors and other public representatives of the eight surrounding communities. This group connected the consultants with the concerns of local citizens, thus assuring that the planners’, designers’ and artists’ visions would reflect the concerns of the communities themselves.

The Zweckverband’s most important accomplishment was the creation of the so-called “Shoreline Contract,” which outlines the cooperative goals of the various communities. The first point of the contract binds each community to respect the new shoreline as a public space, accessible to all for relaxation and recreation, not to be developed for commercial purposes (except for a selected intensive-use region near Bitterfeld). In an area with an intense history of political turmoil and oppression, the provision of public space was regarded as essential to democratic, community-based, socially-conscious development. Other elements of the Shoreline Contract included an

Left: *Eight Hills and Forty-Nine Cones* (Marc Babarit, Gilles Bruni).

Right: Goitzsche mining landscape.

Photos courtesy Commission Cultural Landscape Goitzsche.

emphasis on recreation activities and ecological and aesthetic strategies that would attract people to the area; creating landscape art projects, in a manner consonant with landscape recreation and protection; and using traces of the former industrial activity as design elements.

The comprehensive master plan for development in the region was completed in 1995. It cultivated a mixture of uses in different areas, setting aside places exclusively for environmental protection, for light recreation (hiking trails and bike paths) and for more intensive use (camping and limited commerce). Lastly, sites were designated for the integration of art projects, most of them on the half-island of Pouch, a perfect place for creating a web of interconnected landscape art projects.

The technical aspects of redeveloping the mine according to sensitive environmental standards and flooding the open pits was carried out by the LMBV, and the work was paid for by the LMBV and special funds from the European Union. These projects were one of the central means of creating jobs: Along with the construction of the art projects themselves, from 1995 until 2000 the redevelopment of the Goitzsche provided on average one hundred jobs for otherwise unemployed members of the region each year. The total investment in the project will total about 550DM, with funds coming from both the German federal government and the state of Saxony-Anhalt.

The implementation and selection of the art projects was led by the state-financed, but privately-incorporated group, EXPO 2000 Saxony-Anhalt, which was organized to carry out regionally significant projects to be showcased at the World EXPO in Hannover in 2000. The state of Saxony-Anhalt, its image within Germany and abroad heavily tainted by its extensive environmental, social and economic problems, saw the World EXPO as an opportunity to create and showcase innovative methods for redeveloping the state's most troubled regions. EXPO 2000 was essential to realizing plans for the Goitzsche, providing much of the funding and vision for the art projects and forcing the project to be completed by a specific deadline.

EXPO 2000 selected the art projects through the Kuratorium for the Cultural Landscape Goitzsche, a forum that realized the interdisciplinary and international objectives of the region's politicians and the project's planners. In 1997, the Kuratorium invited artists, scientists, politicians, architects and engineers from throughout Germany and Europe to discuss the integration of art into the new lake landscape. The art projects were understood in practical terms as a means of communication between the professionals and the local communities, and more broadly as the means of strengthening the region's identity and assuring a

tangible connection between the landscape's history and its emerging future.

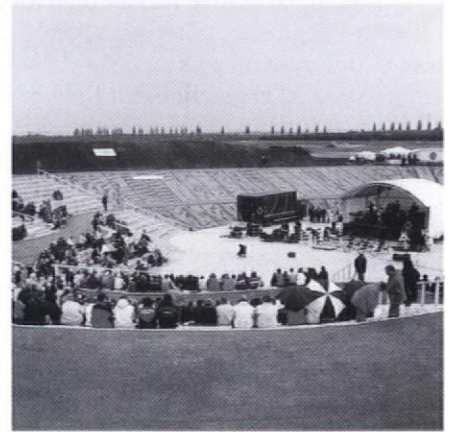
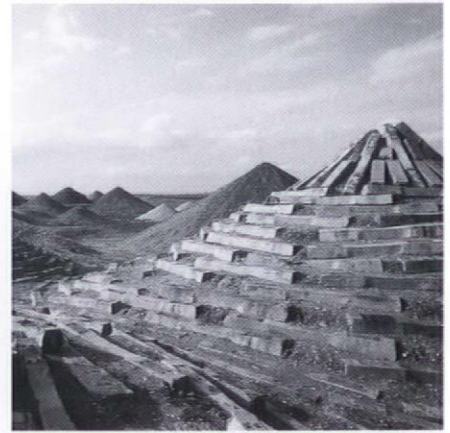
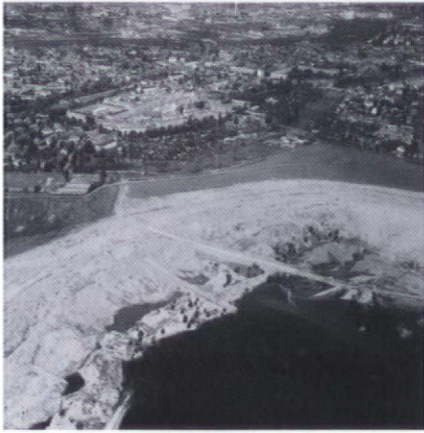
At first there was resentment and confusion among the local community about the idea of using art to drive the redevelopment of the region. Most of the population had little experience with public art and considered the projects a waste of money. These feelings were not ignored, but confronted through constant public meetings between the planners, artists and local residents. An atmosphere of dialogue was regarded as the only means of connecting the communities with the outside professionals and assuring that local citizens took part in shaping the new form of their region.

The interaction went beyond public meetings. All artists were required to be present during the building of their works, and the construction was carried out by unemployed former miners and managed by the former mining company. This approach created jobs and forced the artists to shape their work in dialogue with the local population. At the same time, the community could learn through firsthand experience the significance and purpose of the art projects.

Today, many of the plans for the Goitzsche have been realized. The flooding of the mine was begun in 1999. A number of art projects have been completed—including functional and symbolic structures such as a swimming bridge and water level tower, which visitors can climb to observe the progress of the filling of the lake, as well as conceptual projects that explore the ecological and psychological conditions of the site. In all, nearly 600 hectares will be reforested and some 34 miles of trails are being built.

Today the Goitzsche is no longer remarkable for its degree of heavy industry and ecological destruction, but instead is one of the most interesting landscape redevelopment projects in the world. Indeed, Cultural Landscape Goitzsche will always be changing. When the flooding of the lake is complete, a new process will start for developing recreation facilities and planning events. The restored landscapes will continue to evolve. In a region traditionally at the forefront of technology and ideas, it is fitting that today the whole area can be seen as an inspiring model for planners, artists, developers and politicians.

—*Jesse Shapins*



Jury Comments

Sommer: I love the integration of art with industrial history and biological restoration—they brought artists in and had them create site-specific projects. What I take away from this is the idea of continuing change.

Hood: I really admire the artists' interpretation, since this had been working area, they have to be open to broad interpretations, which lead to different landscapes. I didn't see anything that reminded me of a traditional park, it's an in-between place where landscape is undergoing the process of change, whether through remediation or bringing back things. All the projects seemed very thought-provoking.

Hanraban: It's really a project that evolved from experimentation and research in the world of art and sculpture, particularly Robert Smithson. This is case of an art mentality combining with a certain knowledge, with the specific history of a place, to produces an artificial landscape at a

Smithson scale. They used the industrial character to generate projects that are literally Pirenisian in scope and character. Whereas Smithson used certain materials to cut, to transform, to move landscape in ways that we associate with the universe of conceptual art in this country, they use these practices to make design at a scale that's really interesting.

Hood: How many years does it take implement a project like this? That's the biggest challenge. When you see a project like this, which is actually being completed, that's really impressive.

Hanraban: It would be interesting to think about how one could accomplish a project that covers such a vast area. In the U.S., where we are attempting to tangle with so many different interests, how would this fare?

Clockwise from top left:

View of open pit mine and nearby town.

Stairway in the *Water Level Tower* (Wolfgang Christ), which provides a reference point for the rising level of the lake.

Eight Hills and Forty-Nine Cones (Gilles Bruni, Marc Babarit)

AGORA (Siegfried Knoll, Werner Sobek, Andreas Bosshard).

The opening of the channel used to fill the new lake.

Study sketch for *The Vanished River* (Herman Prigann), which traces the former bed of the Mülde River.

Photos courtesy Commission Cultural Landscape Goitzsche, Knoll Ecoplan

Cultural Landscape Goitzsche, Bitterfeld, Germany

Sponsors: Commission Cultural Landscape Goitzsche, Expo 2000 Sachsen-Anhalt Company

Landscape planning: Knoll Ecoplan (Martin Stein, Executive Director)

Artists and artist teams: Marc Babarit and Gilles Bruni; Claus Bury; Wolfgang Christ; Anatol Herzfeld; Siegfried Knoll, Werner Sobek and Andreas Bosshard; Jacques Leenhardt and Heike Brückner; Domenico Luciani; Till Neu; Zenon Polus; Hermann Prigann; Hartmut Renner; Nadia Schmidt; Gilles Vexlard.

The Community Character Plan for Collier County, Florida

County government is often dismissed as a weak link in the management of the nation's land resources. Poorly funded, understaffed and politically vulnerable, counties have been regarded as easy marks for the one-size-fits-all projects of well-heeled developers and the ill-considered schemes of local cronies.

Then, as if to counter such cynicism, along comes an effort such as the Community Character Plan for Collier County, Florida, which demonstrates the potential for integrated planning at the front lines of battles over sprawl, traffic, ecology and social equity.

Most significantly, the Collier plan interprets the public realm as including not only streets and urban open spaces but also systems of habitat and waterflow, as well as traditional patterns of rural life. Within this context, it tackles a range of contemporary physical planning issues, such as creating a better-balanced transportation system, retrofitting introverted subdivisions, transforming arterials into great streets and helping inner-ring suburbs age gracefully.

Upmarket Gridlock

Situated at the southwestern tip of Florida, Collier County is hemmed in by the Everglades to the east, the Gulf of Mexico to the west and stands of coastal mangrove to the south. Its older built-up areas, Naples and Marco Island, mark the affluent southern tip of a string of waterfront communities that extend north some 150 miles to Tampa-St. Petersburg.

For the last twenty years Collier County has seen an explosion of gated residential compounds that have threatened to rob it of its charm. Inland, problems have surfaced with the continued development of large, subdivided areas of forest and swamp, originally sold off as unserviced five-acre lots during the Florida land scams of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Development pressure has also mounted in eastern portion of the county, which contains valuable agricultural land as well as some of the last viable habitat for the endangered Florida Panther.

According to Victor Dover, whose South Miami firm, Dover, Kohl and Partners, was lead consultant for the plan, many of Collier County's difficulties arose because it "had built itself into gridlock through very upmarket renditions of conventional sprawl." This eventually led the state to challenge the sufficiency of the county master plan, and caused citizens to publicly question the county's "business-as-usual" development practices.

As part of a settlement with the state, the Collier Board of Commissioners agreed to both redo its official plan and undertake a broader community planning effort. Emerging from the second of these tracks, the Character Plan was

directed by a citizens advisory panel and adopted in 2001. Its purpose was to increase citizen interest, generate new ideas and set a new direction for county policy.

Because a key element of the effort was consciousness-raising and consensus-building, the plan included an intensive period of public input: Ten large public meetings were held, including four hands-on planning sessions. The final plan was illustrated with photorealistic before-and-after simulations, diagrams and change-over-time scenarios whose purpose was to help county residents visualize the implications of community-design decisions.

The bulk of the plan is contained in manuals devoted to community design, mobility and green space. These are followed by an implementation section that translates general recommendations into precise suggestions for change to official county planning documents. The intent of this implementation work was to make it as easy as possible for county planners to follow the thread of public interest through to the correct formulations of technical language.

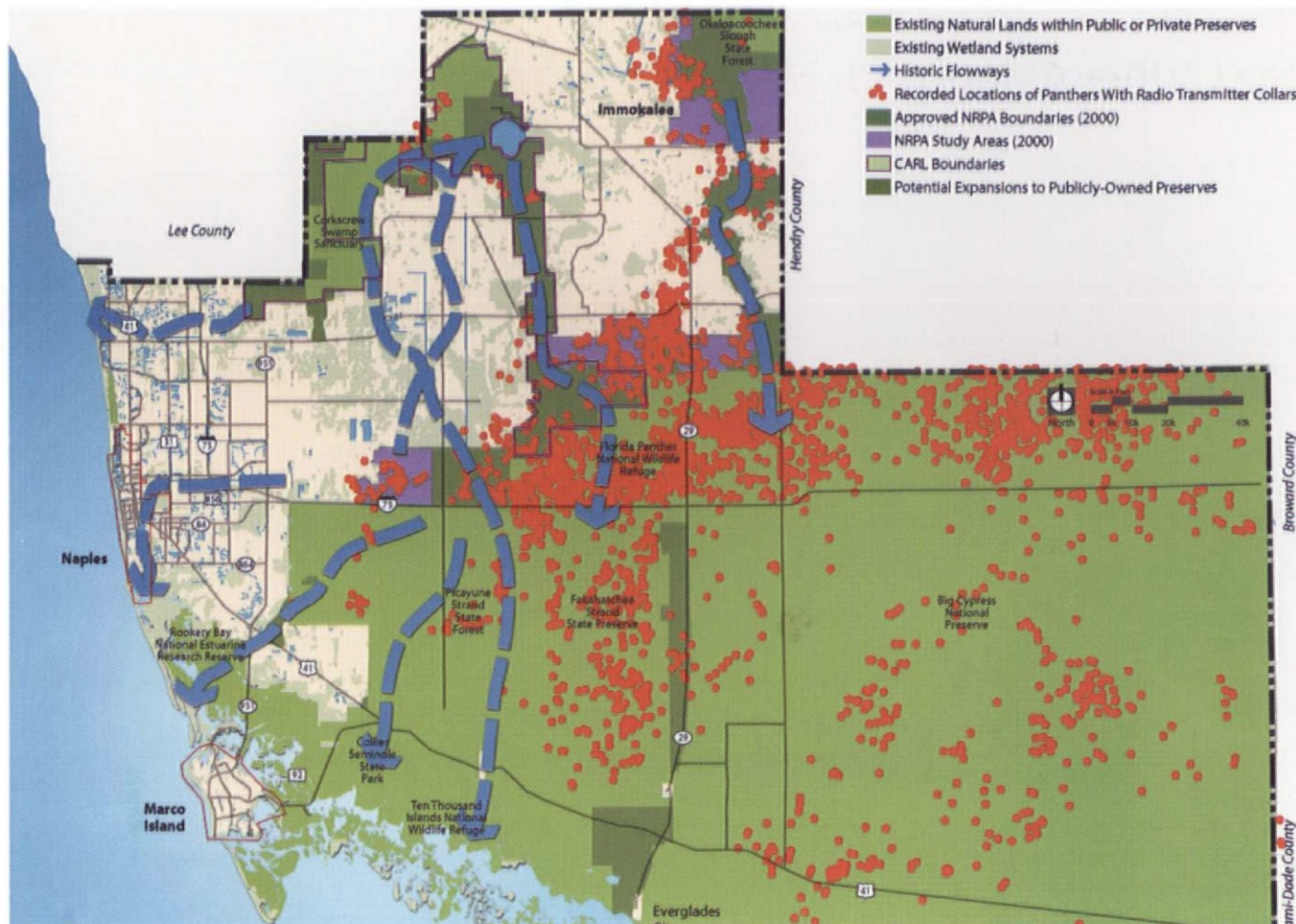
New Urbanist Influences

Much of the material in the Community Design Manual will be familiar to proponents of Traditional Neighborhood Development. To re-establish a viable public realm, the plan advocates that existing communities build toward greater levels of density, interconnectedness and walkability. At the same time, it criticizes the existing planned unit development (PUD) process by which large parcels of land are developed without adequate connection to one other.

The manual contains illustrations showing how these goals may be achieved—ways to establish walkable neighborhood centers, promote denser housing and integrate big-box retailers into patterns of smaller-scale streets and subsidiary buildings. It also shows how existing PUDs could be retrofitted, although the real lesson of such studies is that the county should require more flexible, integrated development patterns to begin with, Dover says.

In addition to generic statements of principle, the manual also grapples with specifically local situations, such as North Golden Gate Estates, a semi-rural area that dates to the era of Florida land scams. Many lots there are swampy or otherwise exceedingly difficult to build on, resulting in a spotty pattern of development. And the area is largely devoid of infrastructure or services, and prone to wildfire and flooding. Nevertheless, the area provides some of the only affordable housing in the county.

Among the recommendations are that Golden Gate undergo a process of selective densification, leading to a pattern of new hamlets and village centers. It proposes new connector roads with distinctly rural characteristics



and calls for limited commercial development based on historic Florida “crossroad” stores.

Connections to the Larger Scale

The two other manuals attempt to tie these recommendations for fine-grained community development to a countywide framework of social and ecological concern.

The Mobility Manual notes that while county population has risen dramatically in recent years, the miles driven per vehicle has increased even more. A key recommendation is to allow local traffic to remain local by establishing a network of secondary routes. It also proposes well-located new major thoroughfares, neighborhood traffic-calming and a hierarchical palette of tree-lined “great streets.”

The third component of the plan, the Green Space Manual, works from a fairly standard community-needs survey. While it finds the county to be generally well served by parks, many of these are so poorly integrated into neighborhoods there is little choice but to drive to them.

At the regional scale, the plan used GIS maps to evaluate research from a host of sources (including panther telemetry), making it possible to accurately correlate linkages between ecosystems, threatened species, natural patterns of water flow and development. The overlays make a convincing argument for a policy of county growth boundaries linked to broad ecological concerns.

To date, the Community Character Plan has spawned at least two new planning efforts. One aims to redo the North

Golden Gate Estates master plan. The other will lead to a specific plan for Naples Park, an older suburb that may greatly benefit from recommendations in the Community Design Manual.

Dover says that since county voters rejected a half-cent sales tax for road-building in November, county planners have also begun to look at some of the corridor-management recommendations in the Mobility Manual. And interest is rising in a ten-year “green tax” to acquire new open space to link up existing parklands in built-up areas.

According to juror Peter Calthorpe, the plan “does something I haven’t seen done before, which is an adopted county-wide plan that truly integrates ecology, circulation and urbanism.” Its eventual impact, however, will depend on its ability to convince county residents of the importance of a bigger picture, one that gives new meaning to the pursuit of shared public values.

Collier County Community Character Plan, Collier County, Fla.

Client: Board of County Commissioners, Collier County, Fla. (Amy Taylor, project manager) and directed by a Select Committee on Community Character.

Planning: Dover, Kohl and Partners

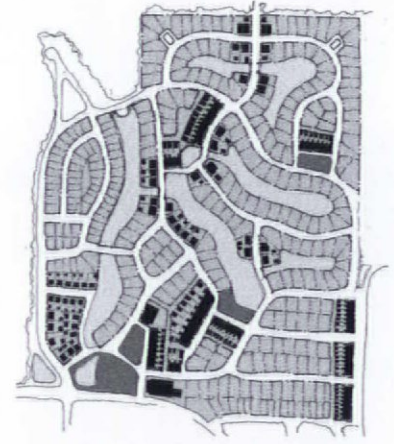
Associated consultants: Open space, transportation planning: Glatting Jackson (open space, transportation planning), Spikowski Planning Associates (implementation), Communities by Design (community image survey), UrbanAdvantage (visual simulations).



Existing subdivision pattern in a typical neighborhood.



Areas with opportunities for transformation.



Proposed reconfiguration of lots and streets.

Jury Comments

Calthorpe: Collier changes the nature of the field. It says, okay, we are going to take the regional environmental framework, the regional circulation framework and we're going to integrate them with an urban design framework that addresses a whole range of issues from greenfield to suburban infill to town repair. That seems to me a qualitative shift in what planning is doing in America today.

Rahaim: My problem is the approach. It sets up expectations that to create this New Urbanist paradigm, to create these wonderful environments, this is the image of the place you have to have.

Calthorpe: Everybody gets caught up in the architecture. I think it's a bogus issue. This goes beyond the typical TND stuff. It operates on a larger scale: It tries to integrate an urban sensibility about development—not downtown development, but suburban development—to a larger-scale sensibility about green space and overall circulation. When the thinking moves to this scale, that's healthy.

Fraker: I admire the effort to do something at a regional scale, to address the issues of sprawl and circulation. But the prescriptive imagery of the kind of development that should take place is offered as an alternative to nothing. There are ways of presenting a plan where you are not giving such a prescriptive solution. What I see is a lot of the CNU tried-and-true "principles" applied at a larger scale and I don't know that they are appropriate.

Rahaim: We've seen these, but I don't think people in Collier County have. The folks that will be most affected by this are exactly the folks who need to be.

Brown: When you get citizens involved who often times have never had any kind of passion about planning or place,

such images can be very powerful. I agree the images can be trite and wrong for that kind of place, but I think in terms of getting involvement from the community, they can have an impact.

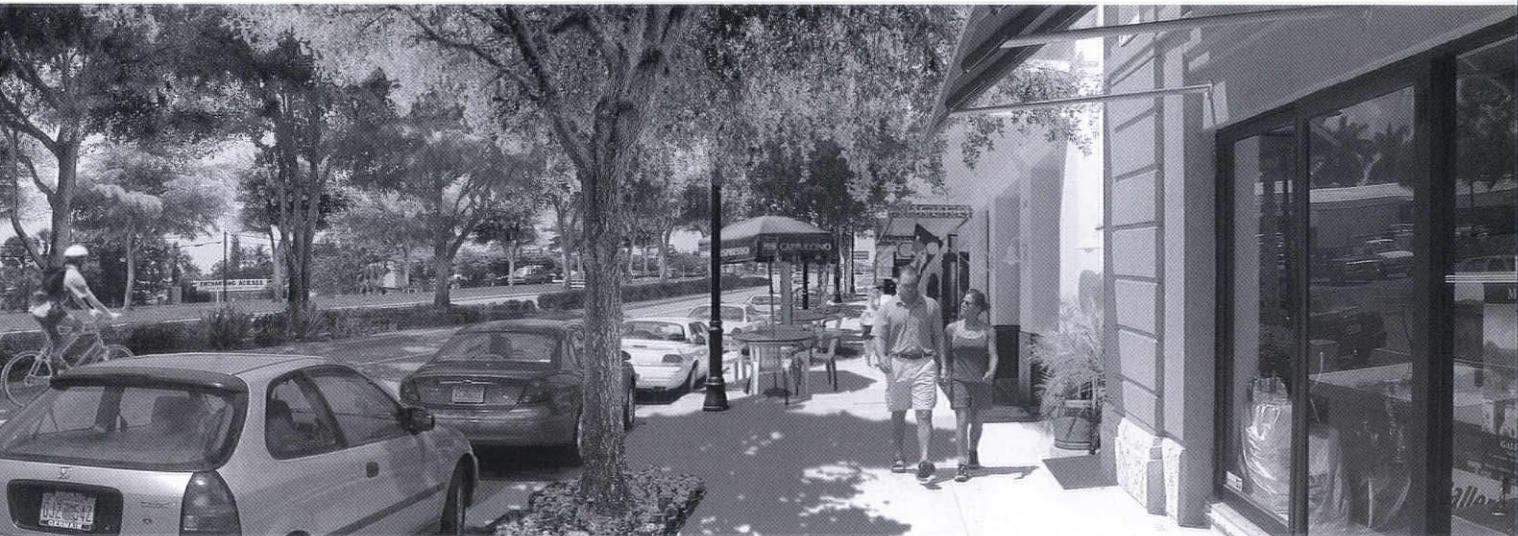
Mozingo: Isn't there something else we can play off here other than the plantation house? People are responding to the loveliness of the arches, but they are also responding to the socioeconomic aspirations it represents. There's a whole theory about class operation and how people yearn for the class just above them.

Fraker: We should emphasize that while we worried about some of the prescriptive images of buildings, it was the site-to-system effort that is really good. That is the real strength of the matter.

Previous: The plan proposes that wetland, habitat and waterflow patterns should shape open space and urban form of Collier County. Graphics courtesy Dover Kohl and Partners

Above: How an existing gated community might be retrofit, over time, to improve internal circulation, create neighborhood-scale public space and diversify housing choices.

Opposite: Existing conditions along U.S. 41 in Collier County, and simulated images of suggestions for improving the streetscape with new landscaping and development standards. Photo and simulations by Urban Advantage



Above the Falls Minneapolis, Minnesota



Minneapolis owes the fact of its settlement to the terrain—more precisely, to the Mississippi River and the Falls of St. Anthony. The falls were important to Minneapolis because they generated power that could be captured to mill the lumber, then the flour, that the city gathered from across the Great Plains then shipped east.

The terrain has also been instrumental in shaping development along the reach of river just upstream from the falls, an area whose long-term future is the subject of the *Above the Falls* master plan. Here, the west bank lies low, just a few feet above the wide, strong river, giving way to a plain that rises gradually up to an escarpment created by glacial outwash. The area developed with river-related industries, such as sawmills, foundries, brick works and breweries.

Just a generation ago, the industrial future of the Upper River seemed secure. Minneapolis officials, convinced that the area could supplant St. Paul as the head of navigation on the Mississippi and be an economic engine for the city, enlisted the help of former Senator Hubert Humphrey and secured federal funding for locks that allow barges to be lifted around the falls.

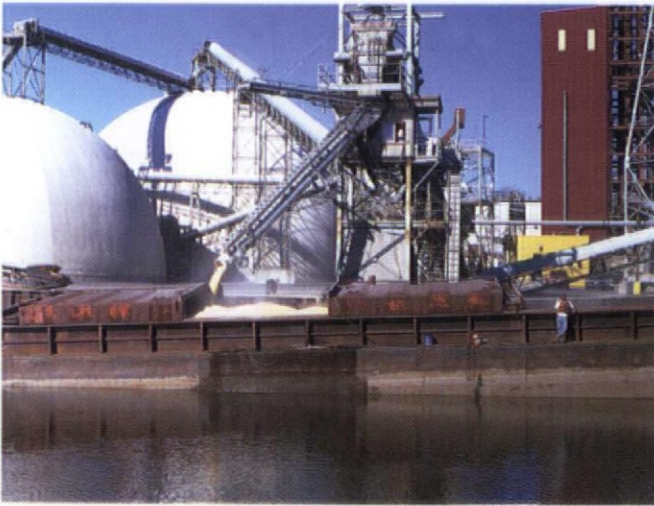
Today, the Mississippi still figures into the city's future, but in a vastly different way. The river, the lakes and the habitat surrounding them are regarded as interconnected resources—visual, recreational and environmental—that are critical to making the region healthy, distinctive, desirable and successful. Throughout Minneapolis and St. Paul new connections to the water are being made, new residential, commercial and cultural developments are emerging along the riverfront.

Thus, the plan—crafted under the guidance of city, county and state agencies and approved by the city's council and mayor two years ago—seeks to direct the public and private transformation of the Upper River district into mixed-use communities and waterfront amenities. Jurors praised its approach to building on Minneapolis' parkway traditions and using environmental factors to shape urban form in a strongly articulated manner.

Above: Henry Lewis, *St. Anthony's Falls in 1848*. Courtesy Minneapolis Institute of the Arts. Gift of Mr. E. C. Gale.

Opposite left: Numerous upper river industries are dependent on barge traffic.

Opposite right: Proposed urban neighborhood along the river's west bank.



The plan rests on the premise, still controversial to some people, that barge-related heavy industries are economically obsolete and that housing, workplaces and public spaces are the natural successors. It proposes shifting barge activities downriver and replacing heavy industry with housing, shops and offices, riverfront parks and promenades, while retaining space for light industry, particularly operations that support downtown businesses.

The plan draws much of its power by building on Minneapolis's open space traditions, particularly its Chain of Lakes system of parks, boulevards and riverfront parkways, which was conceived by Horace Cleveland 125 years ago and still forms the backbone of the city's park system. Most recently, the Minneapolis Park Board has completed a parkway section along the downtown riverfront that connects from the dramatic gorge below the falls, skirts an emerging downtown warehouse-residential district and leads to the Upper River area.

The parkway and open spaces proposed in the plan would connect that network upstream to an existing regional park and wetlands area, reinforcing the connection between the city and its lakes, the river and regional landscape and habitat patterns. The plan also proposes a more localized, urbanized set of connections, via trails along seldom used railroad corridors (including two bridges across the river) and other new pedestrian infrastructure, to upland neighborhoods, whose residents are largely working poor or new immigrants.

The urban pattern would be structured by no-build zones that provide for stormwater drainage and establish corridors for river and downtown views; and by a parkway and street grid that connect to adjacent city districts. A state-of-the-art environmental restoration plan integrates water filtration parks with wetland plantings, proposes riverbank stabilization through soil bioengineering techniques, and calls for a recreated oak savanna ecotype in this place where the western prairie meets the northwoods and the Mississippi.

Finally, the plan suggests how Minneapolis can take advantage of the unusual condition of flat, buildable land along the west bank of the river, which elsewhere is separated from the city by bluffs. It proposes dense residential

and retail development with a pedestrian promenade right along the water's edge—a pattern of development and open space that would break with Cleveland's standard pattern of river, trail and open space, and parkway—and which aroused controversy when the plan was debated before its adoption.

Moving Forward

Above the Falls' main accomplishments have been to win public acceptance for the notion that barge-related industry's time has passed, to propose new and somewhat provocative strategies for integrating this last reach of Minneapolis riverfront into larger ideas about the city's open space system, and to offer solid advice about how infrastructure, stormwater management and environmental restoration can be handled to wrap private development in a particular sense of place.

Indeed, one outcome of the plan may have been to staunch the expansion of heavy industry. The plan was initially triggered when a scrap metal company announced plans for a new metal shredder in the area and a cement company proposed a new silo. The city imposed a moratorium on industrial expansion while the plan was being prepared, and it initiated legal action to stop the shredder. Even though the city lost its case, and even though the moratorium has been lifted for two years, neither proposal has moved forward. "It will be interesting to see if heavy industries really do invest in the Upper River, or if their own business decisions continue the gradual decline that our economic panel suggested would happen," said Barry Gore, author and lead land-use planner on the project for URS/BRW.

Building new urban neighborhoods is a tougher proposition. The history of large-scale master plans of this sort has been fraught with false starts and slow execution—especially when the costs involved in acquiring industrial land, reclaiming it and creating new public infrastructure are to be borne by the redevelopment program, as they likely would be here. As a result, such plans often resort to large-scale development schemes that take years for the market to absorb, and are built through processes that make it difficult to incorporate qualities of landscape,

urban space, architecture and community activity that feel rooted in the place.

The path to implementation of *Above the Falls* has allowed for quick, opportunistic actions, mostly initiated by the private sector, while longer-term, public arrangements for infrastructure and regulatory frameworks are still falling into place. The Grain Belt Brewery, an architectural landmark on the east bank that had fallen into city ownership, was converted into architect's offices. Adjacent to the brewery and across the street, more than 250 town homes are planned, and another 169-unit housing development is underway nearby. A manufacturer with a plant in the area has moved its headquarters there as well, and a sign company is opening a fabrication shop in the light industrial district, diversifying the employment base.

On the public side, there have been early victories as well. The Metropolitan Open Space Commission has won designation of the entire riverfront (except for the barge terminals) as part of the regional open space system, which means that the city can tap regional funds for acquiring land and making it usable. The Minneapolis Park Board has already purchased two-thirds of the land in the proposed Skyline Park, where an amphitheatre would have the downtown skyline as a backdrop, and the agency is moving its headquarters into a vacant building along the Upper River riverfront.

While the Minneapolis Community Development Agency is, for now, opposing the key recommendation for creating an Upper River Development Corporation to oversee the project, it has set up a citizens advisory committee that will weigh in on development and planning strategies. MCDA is also hiring an ombudsman to help public agencies and local businesses keep in touch about their plans for the area.

Important hurdles remain—among them changing the zoning and assembling the \$160 million needed to acquire the land and put in public infrastructure. But the key is that the long-term vision is in place, and the private and public sectors are taking steps in that direction, Gore said. "The plan promotes the inherent urban design potential of the riverfront, and communicated that vision to the city council in a manner that gave it the courage to accept the plan and undertake a very ambitious redevelopment concept."

Jury Comments

Hood: I was turned away from this at first because the imagery didn't look that specific, but I don't think that's the strength of this plan. The fact is, it's very well done, bringing us up to date with what we know about good planning, whether it's high-density development, getting access to the river, reusing stormwater, establishing wetlands gardens. There is a section on riverbank restoration, one on soil bioengineering; there is proposal for a water filtration park, citing a project that won an EDRA/Places Award two years ago as an example of wetlands gardens. It's all here.

Jacobs: The plan is really aggressive. It's a long site, some of it is historic, the uses vary. You have industrial problems, railroad problems, circulation problems, access and boating problems, natural vectors problems, water problems, and they all get worked out. That's impressive. In so many of the plans we've looked at, there is no necessity to deal with the really difficult stuff like this.

Hanrahan: There is a principle here, from the outset, that there are two sides of the river. Gantry Plaza State Park is similar in that regard, in trying to engage both sides of a river, but this plan takes all sorts of steps.

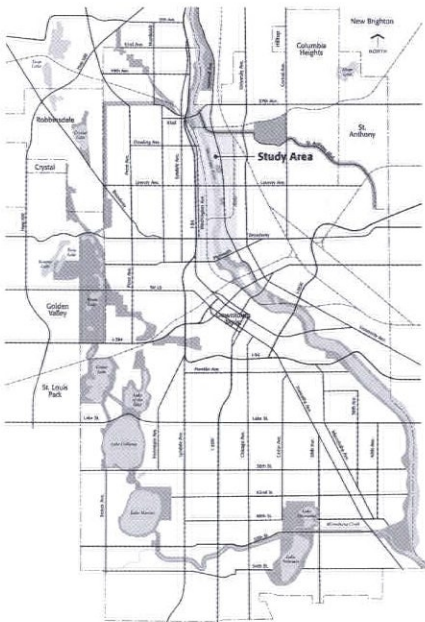
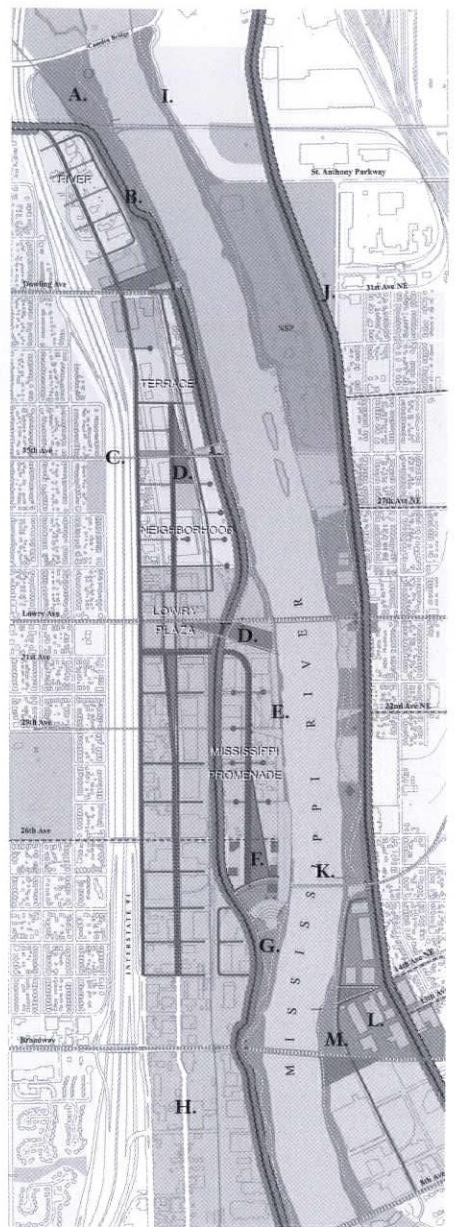
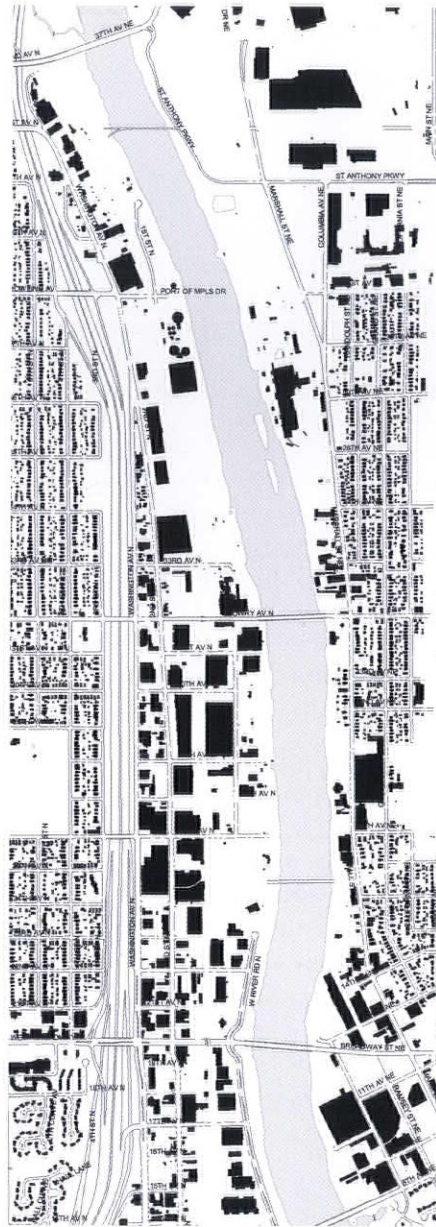
Jacobs: I'm also excited about the plan because it leads to other things, making a place that starts to create part of the city rather than to sit here alone in its setting.

Griffin: There are very legible diagrams. The actual traces of the analysis read through the diagrams, or the diagrams read them, and I think that's a very good, difficult contribution.

Above The Falls: A Master Plan for the Upper River in Minneapolis, Minn.

Clients: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (Judd Rietkerk, Rachel Ramadhayni), Hennepin County (Larry Blackstad), City of Minneapolis Planning Department (Fred Neet), Minneapolis Community Development Agency
Planning, urban design, landscape architecture: URS/BRW, Inc. (Steve Durrant, Dave Showalter, Barry Gore)

Associated consultants: Wallace Roberts & Todd (Ignacio Bunster-Osso, Ferdinando Micale, Paul Tookwood; planning, urban design, landscape architecture), James Miller Investment Realty Company (commercial navigation analysis), Robbin B. Sotir & Associates, Inc. (soil bioengineering), Anton & Associates, Inc. (economic development analysis).



Above left: Aerial view of planning area.

Above middle: Figure ground of planning area.

Above right: Summary of planning proposals.

Below left: Open spaces proposed in the plan would connect to a historic, citywide network that connects numerous lakes and the river.

Photos and graphics courtesy URS/BRW, Wallace Roberts & Todd.

- | | |
|--|---|
| A. Recreated oak savanna landscape | H. Light-industrial district |
| B. West River Parkway extension | I. Restored riverbank and trail extension |
| C. Pedestrian deck and grand staircase | J. Marshall Street boulevard |
| D. Stormwater retention and filtration | K. Pedestrian/bike boardwalk along Burlington Northern bridge |
| E. Riverfront promenade | L. Grain Belt Brewery area |
| F. "Living Machine" wetland garden/water filtration park | M. Arts Park |
| G. Skyline park and amphitheater | |

Designing a City of Learning Paterson, New Jersey

Few aspects of American life bring people together in common purpose as clearly as their hopes for their children. Ask families why they live where they do, and many will answer, "because of the schools." The City of Learning strategy for Paterson, New Jersey, attempts to harness this interest in education to the rebuilding of a bypassed rust-belt city.

Paterson, sixteen miles northwest of New York City, is home to some 170,000 residents. It was founded in 1791 near a seventy-foot waterfall on the Passaic River that could power textile mills. For more than a century the city typified the promise of the American experience, even lending its name to a celebrated collection of poems by William Carlos Williams.

After World War II, Paterson entered a long period of decline. The middle class departed for the suburbs, leaving behind an aging infrastructure, dilapidated housing and deteriorating public schools. Eventually, a mask of poverty descended over Paterson, shrouding its former heritage, its importance as a county seat and its significance to a new generation of immigrants.

In 1998, however, Paterson's fortunes brightened when twenty-eight of the state's urban school districts successfully argued that years of suburban school expansion had denied them a fair share of facilities-construction money. Largely as the result of that New Jersey Supreme Court ruling, Paterson expects to receive more than \$700 million in state school-construction funds over the next decade.

City of Learning/Paterson proposes that most of this money be used to weave new learning spaces for the district's 26,000 students into the city's fabric of historic buildings, industrial architecture and dense neighborhoods. Capital projects are to be balanced between building small new schools and recycling empty or underutilized structures, such as former industrial, commercial and institutional buildings. The eventual goal is to leverage the social and economic capital of students, teachers and parents towards the greater project of urban revitalization.

Jurors noted the project has wide-ranging implications: in the next decade, an estimated \$200 billion will be spent on school construction across the nation. Indeed, the City of Learning strategy has already become a model for New Jersey's "Renaissance School Zone" program, and plans are being pursued to expand it to Union City and Trenton.

The Integrative Approach

City of Learning/Paterson emerges from more than twenty years of research, planning and design by Roy Strickland, currently Director of the urban design program at the University of Michigan.¹

As Strickland notes, for the last fifty years the prevalent model of a public school has involved either locking students onto urban campuses or isolating them in self-contained boxes at the edge of town. First at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and now at Michigan, his New American School Design Project has explored a variety of ways to break out of this mold.²

Strickland's views have been deeply influenced by educational theorists such as John Dewey, James Comer and TheodoreSizer. He believes the activity of learning should be incorporated into the community—both physically and in terms of a "lesson plan" drawn from local resources.

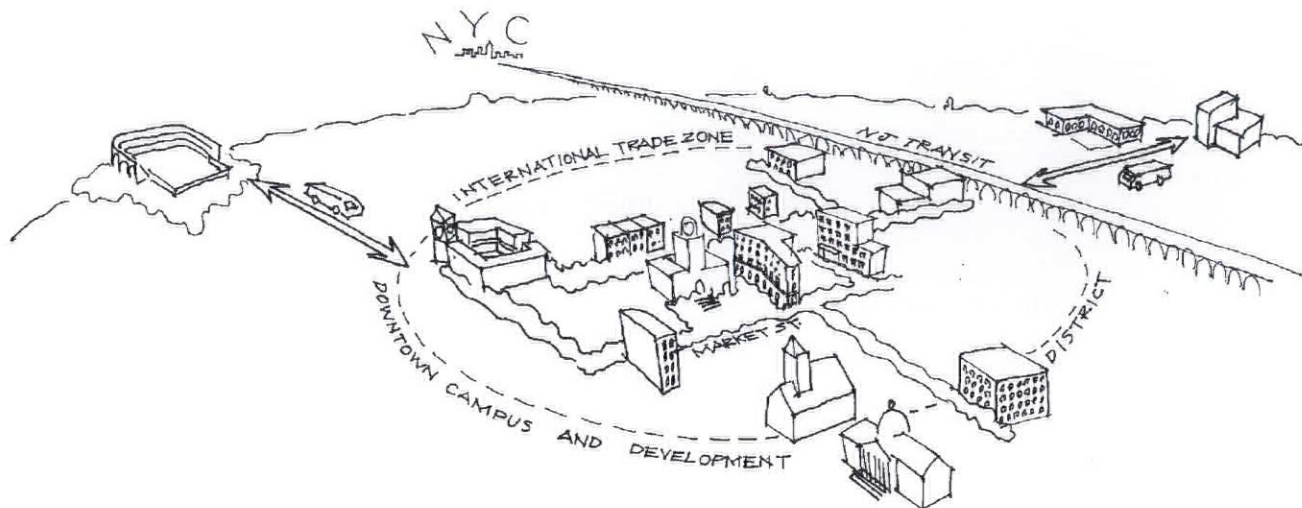
One of Paterson's great resources in this regard is its architecture. When Strickland was first hired to advise the district in 1998, he says he found a city filled with "aspiring architecture from another time." Much of this heritage consisted of handsome buildings built downtown as part of an earlier renewal effort, which followed a devastating turn-of-the-century fire.

Strickland pointed out that restoring such structures would be less disruptive and more valuable to the community in the long run than building new school facilities from the ground up. In the process, the district could foreground the history of place in the lives of a new generation of Americans.

Part of the success of this integrative philosophy in Paterson comes from its combination with a small-academy approach to raising achievement levels. That philosophy was brought to the district by Dr. Edwin Duroy, the state-appointed Superintendent (the state disbanded Paterson's school board and took over its failing schools in 1991), who successfully initiated a similar program in Hoboken. Duroy believes the small-academy approach will never entirely replace existing programs and facilities, such as Paterson's two traditional high schools, but that it offers an engaging alternative for motivated students who may benefit from concentrated programs in specific fields.

So far the partnership between Duroy and Strickland has resulted in the establishment of some ten small academies, many of which have involved architectural restorations aimed at raising the profile of learning in the community. The projects include a performing arts academy in a former Lutheran church; a health and related professions (HARP) academy in a nearly vacant three-story downtown mall; an international studies and languages academy in an old synagogue; and a transportation academy in an abandoned locomotive factory.

City of Learning/Paterson's most ambitious proposal has been to envision the entire downtown as a campus serving some 1,500 to 2,000 high-school and middle-school



students. Although this will take many years to achieve, Strickland believes it represents the district's best chance to create new learning opportunities for students and facilitating links with other institutions. Eventually, a downtown campus might even lead to new and renovated mixed-use structures and improved transit connections within the city and between the city and the region.

Learning by Doing

One of the most successful new academies has been the Metro Paterson Academy for Communications and Technology (MPACT). Beginning in 1999 with twenty-five students in the same disused Main Street mall that housed the HARP program, its popularity has continued to grow and plans are now being drawn up to expand it into a rehabilitated building of its own.

MPACT was originally based on the belief of its director, Stephen Cohen, that immersion in technology and communications was the best way to prepare a new generation of city leaders. But when architecture and planning were added to its curriculum, it became the first test of City of Learning's philosophy that the city itself should be part of each student's lesson plan. MPACT students now split their day between a traditional curriculum and sessions more typical of a graduate architecture studio.

One of the first projects the students took on involved an elementary and a middle school across the Passaic River in the low-income Northside neighborhood. The two schools are located a block apart in the shadow of a row of high-rise public housing blocks. The challenge was to redesign the barren asphalt between them (much of which was being used for teacher parking) as an educational park.

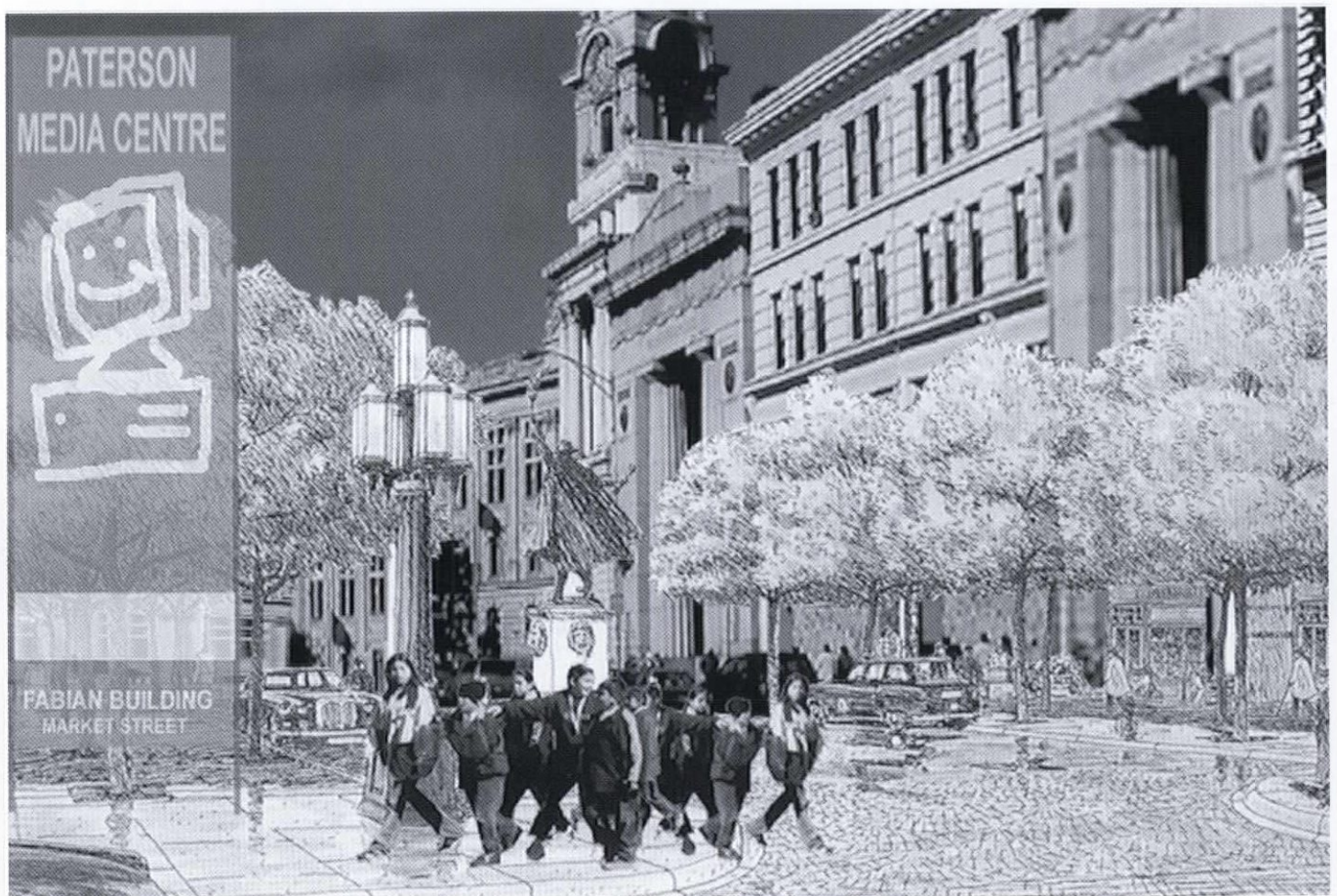
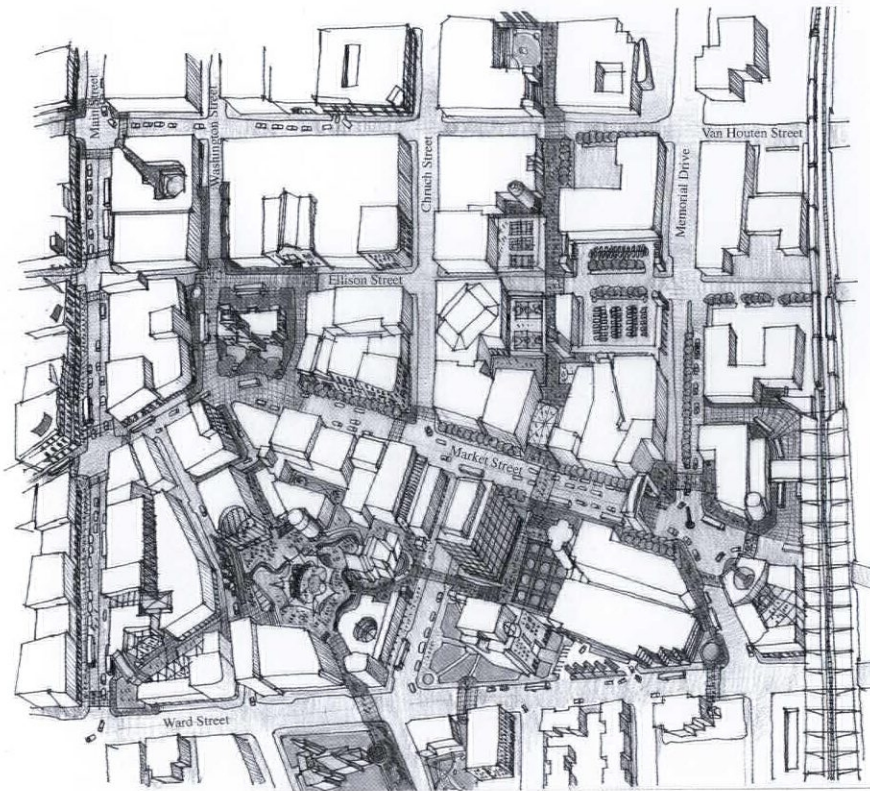
Working in cooperation with students, teachers and parents, City of Learning/Paterson envisions that the two schools might eventually anchor "a neighborhood for living and learning" that would combine streetscape improvements with a mix of community facilities for both children and adults.

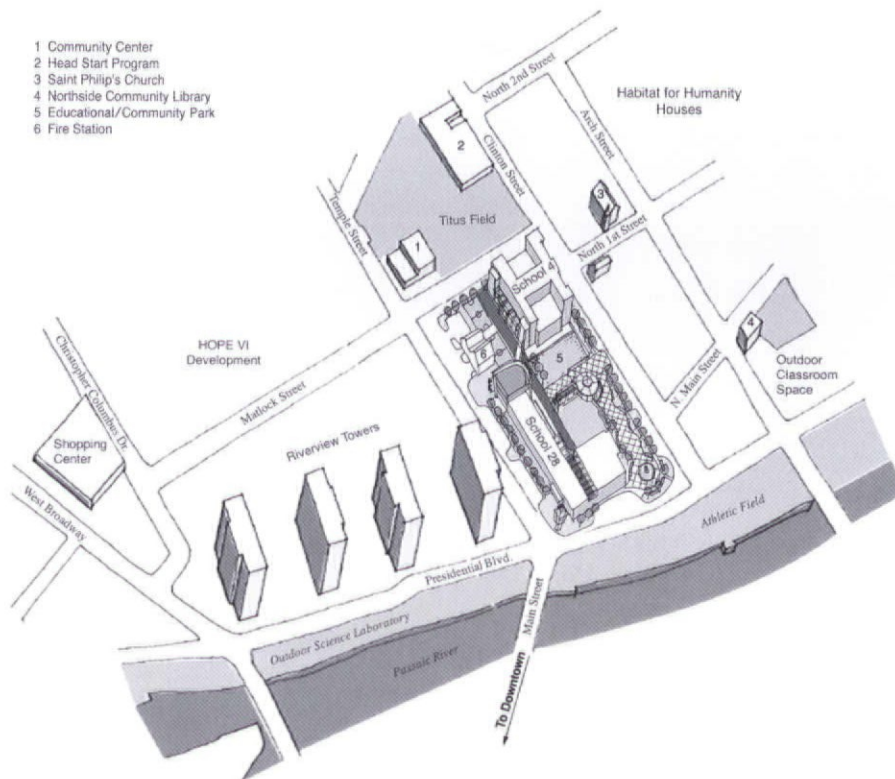
Critics of City of Learning question whether school-based redevelopment can have the same long-term impact as programs based on investment in businesses and housing. The ultimate success of the initiative will certainly depend on additional efforts, such as attracting a diverse set of employers, who could offer jobs commensurate with the skills of the city's new graduates. Until this happens, though, City of Learning offers a strategy for putting Paterson's best foot forward — both by highlighting the importance of education in the lives of its residents, and by revaluing and rediscovering its environmental heritage.

— David Moffat

Notes

1. See Roy Strickland, "Neighborhoods for Learning," *Places* 13.1 (Winter 2000). His research was cited by a previous EDRA/*Places* award winner, the Rosa Parks School in Berkeley, Calif.
2. The Paterson work began when Strickland was teaching at MIT. Many of its proposals were developed with help from students in the graduate architecture and planning program there.





Jury Comments

Brown: I know, based on research on human resistance to revitalization, that in cities crime and schools are the qualities that are the two biggest stumbling blocks. This project takes on the school issue. It's not just, "Let's put some money in and hope it works." They built an entire framework of curriculum, research and seeing schools as community centers. Cities have resources for students you can't find anywhere else. We can draw from this wealth to make city schools something suburban schools can't be.

Rabaim: This fits the awards program better than any other entry we've seen. What I think is very interesting is its applicability to a whole host of situations where one can conceive of using investment in civic uses in the way that this revitalization strategy suggests.

Fraker: And yet it's the schools that are seen as community builders, because every parent is emotionally, physically, daily tied to an institution they want desperately to succeed for their child. It has the emotional attention of the citizenry. To use that as leverage for fixing cities is the right way to go. If you could spend all your money fixing the school system in each city, I think practically all the

other things would take care of themselves, because people would make sure they did.

Mozingo: It's a very strategic way of thinking about capital planning in cities, where you accomplish a social goal and an urban-fabric goal at the same time. We don't usually think of schools as vehicles for knitting the urban fabric together. We tend to think of them as being added on, or that they should be in the suburbs. It is strategic and smart.

Quigley: Giving an award to this project would have special value in that it might encourage other school districts to put something like this in place. You can't say that about the architectural design projects. They are limited to the talent of one person at one point in time.

Fraker: I would rather put it in planning than design. If there were just one case study showing how these principles ended up producing a different kind of design than the ones you normally get, I'd be really excited.

Opposite: Proposal for a downtown campus of living and learning.

Above: Proposal for a "neighborhood for living and learning," turning a parking lot between two schools into an educational park.

City of Learning, Paterson, N.J.

Roy Strickland (University of Michigan)

Edwin Duroy (State District Superintendent, Paterson Public Schools)

New • Land • Marks Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

"To understand the community, not merely to decorate it." This motto elegantly sums up "New • Land • Marks," a program of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park Art Association.

For the past five years New • Land • Marks has been combining the talents of nationally recognized artists with the insight and energy of Philadelphia community groups. The aim has been to integrate public art into ongoing community development, urban greening and revitalization initiatives. The association hopes to use the creativity and care for place that public art can generate to leverage a greater level of community engagement and empowerment.

In selecting New • Land • Marks for a place planning award, jurors noted that while many cities now have "percent-for-art" programs, the directors of those programs rarely seek, in such a systematic way, to ensure that public art is more than private art in public places. Instead, New • Land • Marks encourages community groups and artists, under the guidance of a civic organization, to initiate their own projects.

New • Land • Marks is further distinguished because it re-examines the social purpose of public art. Several projects are concerned not only with embellishing public places, creating civic space or even provoking public thinking, but also with expressing community identity, providing a means of community organization and serving as catalysts for further community improvement.

The Fairmount Park Art Association is one of the nation's oldest civic design organizations, with a charter that dates to 1872. According to its director, Penny Balkin Bach, a successful public art program today demands reconciliation between diverse and often conflicting political and managerial interests, and nonprofit groups are ideally situated to play an coordinating role in this process.

Analyzing typical programs for art in public places, the group identified several shortcomings. One is that such efforts are usually associated with new construction, generally benefiting only the wealthiest communities. Another is that when public art is added to a building or revitalization project after its planning and design is complete, it may amount to little more than window dressing.

Citing the "broken windows" research of criminologist James Wilson, the association is taking a more proactive social stance with New • Land • Marks. According to Wilson, urban despair festers in disorderly environments where no one appears to care how things look.¹ As a suitable countermeasure, the association has tried to model its effort after the interactive and participatory art practice identified by Suzi Gablik in *The Re-enchantment of Art*, which deliberately focuses attention on neglected spaces.²

The Process

Jurors based much of their praise for New • Land • Marks on its approach to the difficult process of eliciting community involvement in urban placemaking.

As the early stages of the program unfolded with funding from the William Penn Foundation, artists and communities were invited to respond to a novel "request to participate." Afterwards, they were matched with each other and given a year and the full backing of the association to create proposals.

The process involved a tripartite contract between communities, artists and the association. Artists were obliged to engage in a serious dialogue with the communities they agreed to work with. In return, communities needed to commit to speaking through three official representatives who would advocate the artists' ideas to other community members and city boards. For its part, the association promised to facilitate the entire process by providing resources, arranging professional consultations and eventually working to fund all projects which emerged from the development process.

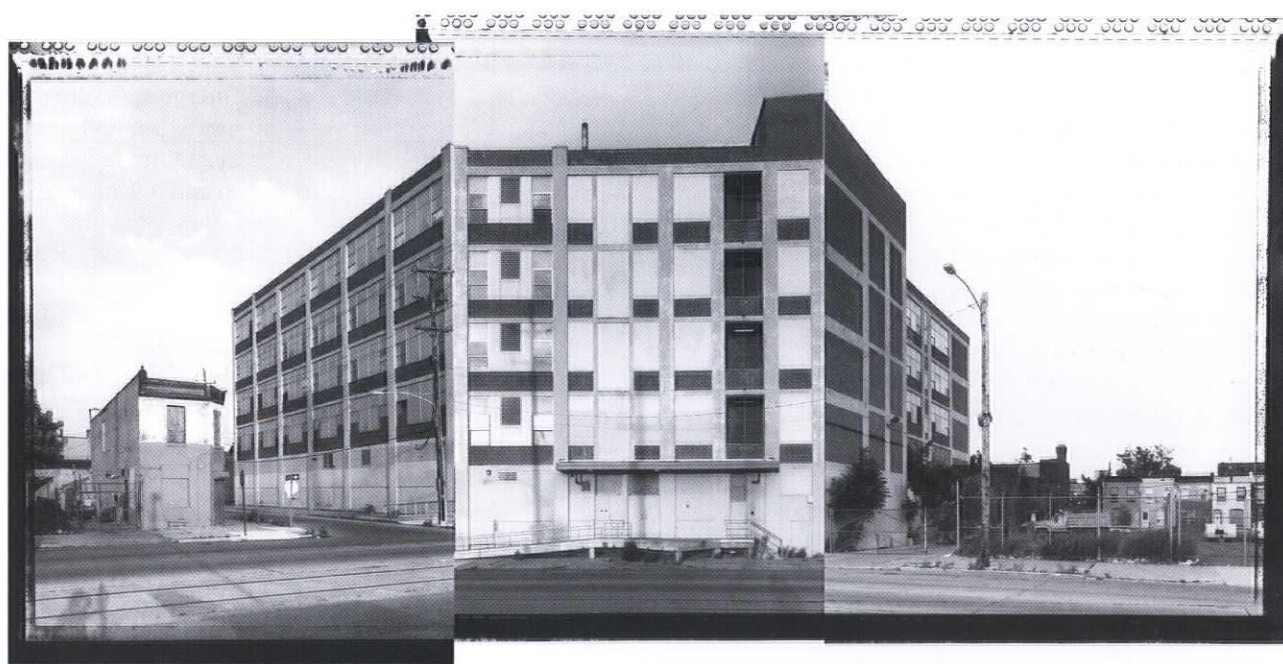
Not all collaborations were successful, according to project manager Charles Moleski. Several artists withdrew after they found their ideas did not mesh with what the communities wanted, and several community groups withdrew when they found they could not sustain an adequate level of commitment. The association also maintained a "safety valve," according to which no project would be allowed to proceed to the funding stage without the complete endorsement of the community.

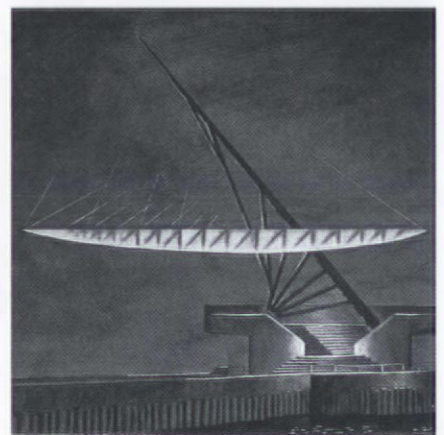
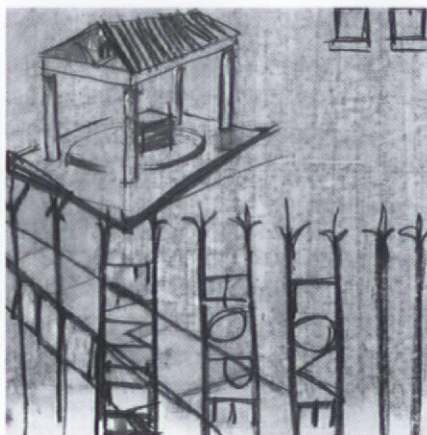
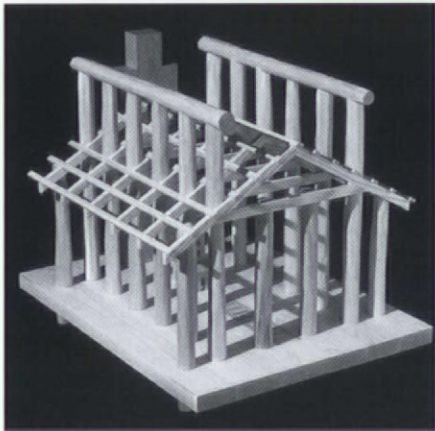
Eventually, sixteen projects did emerge and were chronicled in a book and an exhibition that was put up in community buildings throughout the city.³ Of these projects, two are currently under construction and five more are in various stages of development. Although some projects may eventually drop out of the program for political, financial or community reasons, Moleski says the art association is working hard on coordination and fundraising to see the rest through to completion.

The Projects

The ideas that have emerged have been as varied as the communities that sponsored them. A deliberate ambiguity was embodied in the program's title. According to the

Opposite: Pepón Osorio, *I have a story to tell you ...* (1999). The casita illuminated at night, elevation of community building where photographs will be mounted in window. Photos by Will Brown (above) and James B. Abbott (below), courtesy Fairmount Park Art Association.





New•Land•Marks book: “Those desiring *new* land marks sought creation, innovation and change; those in pursuit of new *land* marks looked for meaning in hearth, sanctuary and path; and those seeking new land *marks* emphasized playmaking through an evocation of the historic past.”

One project currently under construction is Pepòn Osorio’s *I Have a Story to Tell You...*, which takes on issues of ethnic identity by means of an effort to transform a new social services center for the Congreso de Latinos Unidos into a community photograph album. After collaborating with the Congreso, Osorio agreed on a process for collecting photographs from the local Hispanic community. These are now being incorporated into the panels of a glass meeting pavilion and the windows and doors of a larger renovated building. “Near or far, the photographs are intended to speak to you and follow you as you walk around the building,” Osorio says.

Another project moving forward is *Church Lot*, planned for the site of a North Central Philadelphia church destroyed by fire in 1995. For several years, the grassy area

where the church once stood has served as a meeting place for local groups. Working with Project H.O.M.E., author Lorene Cary, photographer Lonnie Graham and sculptor John Stone have proposed new ways of affirming its

Clockwise from upper left:

Ed Levine, *Tboreau’s Hut* (2000), from the proposal *Embodying Tboreau* (1999). Photo by Will Brown.

Artist Rick Lowe (right) and West Philadelphia resident discuss ideas for *May Street: A Place of Remembrance and Honor* (1999). Photo by Will Brown.

John Kindness, *Work Button Table Top* from *Labor in the Park* (1999), memorializes organized labor. Photo by Will Brown.

Darlene Nguyen-Ely, *The Vietnamese Monument to Immigration* (1999), proposed for Penn’s Landing. Photo by Will Brown.

Lorene Cary, Lonnie Graham, John Stone, *Church Lot* (1999). Sketch of perimeter fence for community gathering place. Photo by Lonnie Graham.

Todd Noe, *Hat Bandstand*, from the proposal *Persistence* (1999) for a neighborhood where Stetson hats were once made. Photo by Todd Noe.

Illustrations courtesy Fairmount Park Art Association.

significance as a community space, including carved quotations from community members, a sanctuary in the form of an altar-fountain and a nearby oral history room.

Several projects, though neighborhood based, take on broader themes of labor history. *Perseverance* involves street furniture designed by Todd Noe that celebrates activities that were once integral to the city's industrial Kensington and Fishtown neighborhoods (he worked with the Kensington South Neighborhood Advisory Committee and the New Kensington Community Development Corporation). Among the activities were shipbuilding, hatmaking and the manufacture of baseballs. For *Labor in the Park*, John Kindness designed seating areas in South Philadelphia's Elmwood Park that memorialize the role of organized labor. The design, developed with Friends of Elmwood Park, includes tables in the form of work buttons, enameled historic images and symbolic paving.

While many projects are based on the creation of specific objects, others represent a more open-ended engagement with place. One such project combines the efforts of Houston-based artists Deborah Grotfeldt and Rick Lowe and the Mill Creek Artists' Collaborative. Their goal is to reassert what was once a popular pedestrian short cut, a quarter-mile-long section of May Street in West Philadelphia, as "a place of remembrance and honor."

Depending on one's point of view, this effort might be described as an ongoing multiphase environmental public art project or a work of community performance art. Among the activities proposed are restoring empty buildings for artist spaces; clearing out weeds, trash and abandoned vehicles and replacing them with community gardens, benches and places for play, contemplation and socialization; and installing murals and other "artistic touches" to bring color and meaning.

In such a situation, Grotfeldt says, "The art is the process—it's the experience, it's working with the community." According to Lowe, "[it's] the opportunity for the community to say it cares about this particular area. That's the challenge. That's where the art is."

Notes

1. James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety," *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 1982, pp. 29-38.
2. Suzi Gablik, *The Re-enchantment of Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991).
3. Penny Balkin Bach, ed., *New•Land•Marks: Public Art, Community and the Meaning of Place* (Washington, D.C.: Editions Ariel, 2001).

Jury Comments

Brown: They get artists to work with communities, with people, and they put art in places where you don't find art. It's not art as a band aid.

Rabaim: It is a program that makes public art happen that is meaningful to communities.

Quigley: There is a level of skill here that is far and away beyond what we saw in some of the other projects.

Brown: Usually you think of art as something that happens in the airport or is imposed on a community, and here they had a much more grassroots, collaborative process. I think that is a much more vital definition of art than what you typically get. And I think we all also wish we had more time to read the book, which is a compliment.

Fraker: This is actually an implementation process that tries to make sure that the intervention is positive and that there is community support and care as it goes on. It makes the idea of art as place-making more enduring, rather than a kind of one-off moment in time.

Rabaim: That's what I liked about it. And it's interesting that it's a not-for-profit, not a city agency. It's pointed out somewhere that this is what nonprofits are actually supposed to do—that is, support the relationship between planning and public art.

Calthorpe: I'm glad we included this. The other public art projects are personal, singular events. This is something that can be generalized.

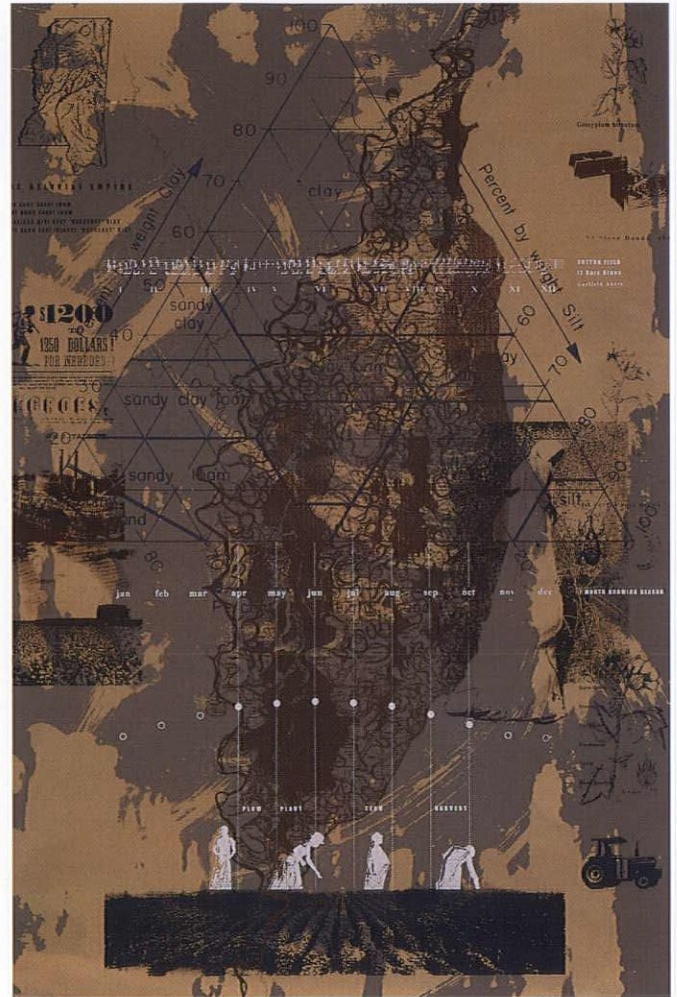
Fraker: There's a planning process here that can be exported to other cities. It's just not an organization that is obviously well funded.

New•Land•Marks, Philadelphia, Pa.

Sponsor: Fairmount Park Art Association (Penny Balkin Bach, director)

Funding: William Penn Foundation, Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative (Pew Charitable Trusts, University of the Arts), The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, Samuel S. Fels Fund, Independence Foundation, Heritage Preservation, The Leeway Foundation

Mississippi Floods: Designing a Shifting Landscape



“Mississippi Floods” investigates how representations of the Mississippi River—maps, surveys, photographs, engineering reports—have been used to construct a meaning for the landscape, and, ultimately, to frame design and management policies. Jurors praised the project for its beauty and its ability to convey the complexity of the life of the river and to suggest that both landscapes and the way we construct them in our minds are constantly evolving.

Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha, landscape architects and instructors at the University of Pennsylvania, began studying the Lower Mississippi after the floods of 1993, contrasting its physical elusiveness to human efforts to capture it as a river and as a cultural idea. They assembled a range of material and experiences—reviewing maps, publications and working documents held by public agencies; travelling the landscape by canoe, towboat, car and airplane; visiting flood control structures and river-related enterprises such as catfish farms; even interviewing blues

musicians and lawyers whose art and practice are rooted in the river—to understand how representations have been used as ideological instruments. Their work was presented in an exhibition and a book, *Mississippi Floods: Designing a Shifting Landscape*, published by Yale University Press.

It is when the Mississippi floods, Mathur and da Cunha argue, that these constructions are most provocative. They describe two opposing ways of representing floods: as a natural disaster that ought to be controlled by engineering interventions, or a cultural disaster that necessitates the withdrawal of human settlement. They suggest that rather than searching for solutions to flooding, we might question the frameworks that shape our thinking about floods in the first place. What is at stake, they say, “is not just money, life, economy or ecosystem, but the openness of imagination necessary to inhabiting an enigmatic landscape.”

—Todd W. Bressi



River Logic

Understanding how environments inhabit people, rather than the other way around, remains a difficult subject for designers and design researchers. The difficulty lies not in empirically describing subjective experience, but in recognizing how one's experience contributes, consciously or not, to what one knows.

Rivers in particular enter deeply into our minds and lives, making our depictions of them impossible to fully rationalize. Artists sometimes compare their imaginations to a river's shifting velocity and volume, its periods of wildness and calm. Toni Morrison has described the Mississippi River as a model of the creative mind, especially its periods of idleness and intensity. She uses the river's unpredictable force as a metaphor for explaining how subjectivity serves in mysterious and circuitous ways in intellectual problems, particularly those we claim to be "functionally objective":

Because, no matter how "functional" the account of these writers, or how much it was a product of intention, the act of imagination is bound up with memory. You know they straightened out the Mississippi River in places, to make room for houses and livable acreage. Occasionally the river floods these places. "Floods" is the word they use, but in fact [the river] is not flooding; it is remembering. Remembering where it used to be. All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get to where

*it was. Writers are like that: remembering where we were, what valley we ran through, what the banks were like, the light that was there and the route back to our original place. It's emotional memory—what the nerves and the skin remember as well as how it appeared. And a rush of imagination is our "flooding."*¹

The record of human inhabitation of the Mississippi basin, and the river's inhabitation of human enterprise, is compellingly probed in *Mississippi Floods: Designing a Shifting Landscape*—a book based on a reconnaissance and exhibition by landscape architecture professors Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha. *Mississippi Floods* presents a historical and cultural context that reveals how the Mississippi inhabits the people whose livelihoods, and lives, are bound up with the river. By blending archival research, field explorations, interviews and mappings with studio printmaking, they look and think beyond the "levees and locks [and] gates to the representations employed in their design—the maps hydrographs, photographs" which project their ideologies through a visual rhetoric and descriptive text.

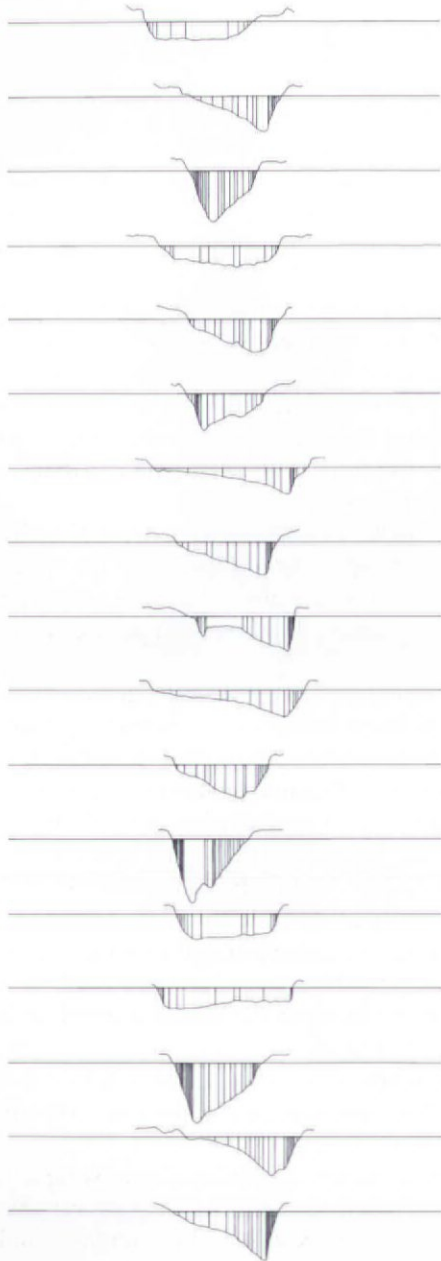
Opposite left: Map of the ancient courses of the Mississippi River meanders.

From Harold N. Fisk, *Geological Investigation of the Alluvial Valley of the Lower Mississippi River*, 1944.

Opposite right: *Raising Hollers*.

Above: *Delta Crossings*.

Illustrations courtesy Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha.



Mississippi Floods traces the confrontation between governmental logic and “river logic” into what might be called the natural history of river design. Before there was any engineering of the muddy Mississippi, the U-shaped bends in the river were so long around that Mark Twain once wrote, “if you were to get ashore at one extremity of the horseshoe and walk across the neck, half or three-quarters of a mile, you could sit down and rest a couple of hours while your steamer was coming around the long elbow at

a speed of ten miles an hour to take you on board again.”³ In order to improve the transport system for big boats and the people and goods they carry, concrete paving was used to deepen the channel, contain the banks, and cut off the U-shaped bends—halving the distance from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico.

As early as 1850 a structural approach to river management was accepted as a means of furthering economic development by enhancing river traffic, mitigating floods and farming in the fertile flood plains, and Congress passed the first of many river and overflow land acts to help pay for construction. This legislation enabled the federal government to deed millions of acres of river marsh and swampland to the states along the river, which in turn sold the acreage to pay for river management. The new owners would drain the wetlands in order to farm—thereby eliminating the only naturally occurring form of flood control (like sponges, swamps and marshes have the capacity to absorb floodwaters, retain the overflow and gradually release it as the flow subsides) and spurring demands for greater protection from ever-larger levees. This was the dilemma one hundred and fifty years ago, and many billions of dollars later it characterizes the dilemmas we face today.

Mark Twain began writing *Life on the Mississippi* in 1879, the same year that Congress consolidated these various efforts into the Lower Mississippi River Basin Commission and granted the Army Corps of Engineers full authority over flood control strategy and construction. Twain commented:

*Ten thousand River Commissions, with the mines of the world at their back cannot tame that lawless stream, cannot curb it or confine it, cannot say to it, ‘Go here,’ or ‘Go there,’ and make it obey; but a discreet man will not put these things into spoken words; for the West Point engineers have not their superiors anywhere; they know all that can be known of their abstruse science; and so since they conceive that they can fetter and handcuff that river and boss him, it is but wisdom for the unscientific man to keep still, lie low, and wait till they do it.*⁴

In their research, Mathur and da Cunha reject the oppositional logic behind calls for more river control and counter-demands that settlement be withdrawn from the flood plains. Instead, they turn their attention, and the public’s eye, toward the Lower Mississippi’s boundless working landscape. They propose that the river’s extraordinary hydrology, the magnificent feats of infrastructure that attempt to contain it, and the daily negotiations—surveying, draining, building, cultivating, dredging, towing, crossing—that the river demands can offer grounds for fertile “new imaginings,” in much the way that Morrison

suggests. They elongate the process of understanding the river, encouraging the reader to draw different maps in their minds and on the landscape.

Mathur and da Cunha seek to open an “imagination that tends to be underplayed by professionals” with visually stunning environmental design research that is more like a seedpod than a manifesto. Their work enables Twain’s “unscientific man,” as well as the designers and engineers, the pilots and farmers who still manipulate the Mississippi, to reflect on the Mississippi as a working landscape and encourages them to draw different maps in their minds and on the terrain. The project resonates with Donlyn Lyndon’s editorial introducing the publication of the year 2000 EDRA/*Places* awards winners: “The most pressing challenge for designers is to learn to see and think with appropriate complexity.”⁵

Mississippi Floods succeeds because it brings us closer to the river. Like new waterfront development or public art projects that enable citizens to engage their rivers anew, this book is an inviting visual and physical product (some images are gorgeous, all are interesting)—beautiful enough to detain even those who are not aesthetically oriented, to keep them hovering, looking and learning anew.

Yet *Mississippi Floods* is not only about the visual environment. Mathur and da Cunha have generated research about design decisions that depicts a river far more complex than a single landscape design project. They have woven a picture of the ecology, culture, environment and history that usually is evoked only in great literature. This project, and this EDRA/*Places* award, acknowledge that we must draw on the cultures of both art and science if we are to reconcile landscape ecology and human communities.

—Jamie Horwitz

Notes

1. Toni Morrison, “The Site of Memory,” in Russell Ferguson, et. al., *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 305.
2. John McPhee explains and explores this logic in the essay “Atchafalya” in his collection, *The Control of Nature* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1989).
3. Mark Twain, quoted in Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha, *Mississippi Floods* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 33.
4. Twain, 1951, 156; Andrew Bookes, *Channelized Rivers: Perspectives for Environmental Management* (New York: Wiley, 1988), 18. As cited in Mathur/da Cunha. [what page?]
5. Donlyn Lyndon, *Caring about Places*, *Places* 14.1

Jury Comments

Hanrahan: The drawings are beautiful, they are derivative of James Corner’s *Measuring the American Landscape*.

Jacobs: My problem with this is, what do you do with it?

Hood: They don’t say, “You should do this,” or “You should do that.” It’s more about looking at the life of the river, looking at the river of from the point of view of landscape, and re-mapping it.

Hanrahan: We live in a moment at which things like flooding rivers have been looked at as natural problems for solving, and we’ve internalized the ways we deal with those problems. It is very positive and powerful to look at landscapes and local disasters—to look at nature, at the processes, at the issues and interpretations that resulted in the form of the river.

Sommer: I like the way they look at maps. They have a theory about maps as projective documents, ideological documents. But I would like to have seen this coupled with viewer research, to understand what people are learning from the exhibition.

Griffin: The diagrams of the river sections are fascinating. There is a problem with looking at a river as a flat surface: we don’t know what’s happening underneath, yet the potential for using that information is really powerful.

Hood: Knowing the scientists who are working on these kinds of issues, I wonder if this project makes the research findings less pointed for them? Is it communicating that information to them directly?

Sommer: There is a marriage of art and science that looks, for example, to the beauty of astronomy and the world of the microscope, scientists are very interested in that, so are policy-makers.

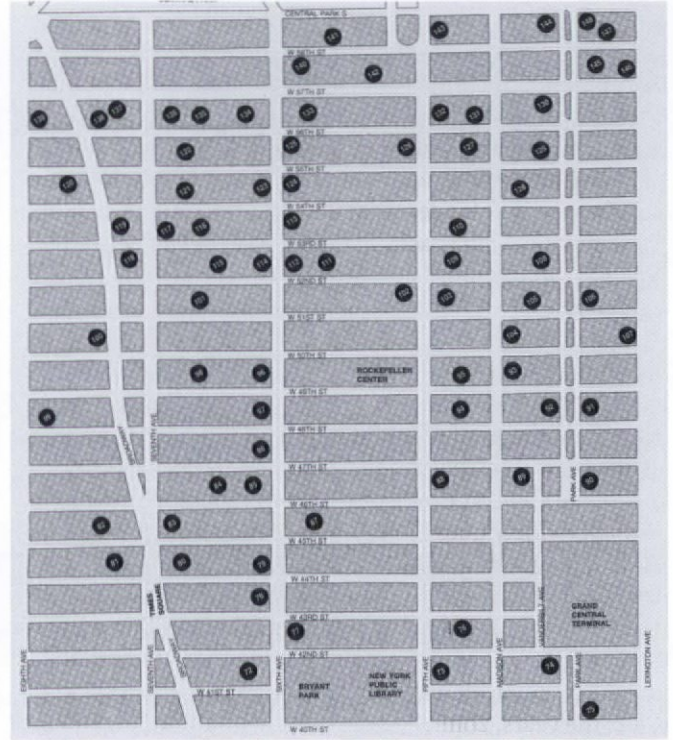
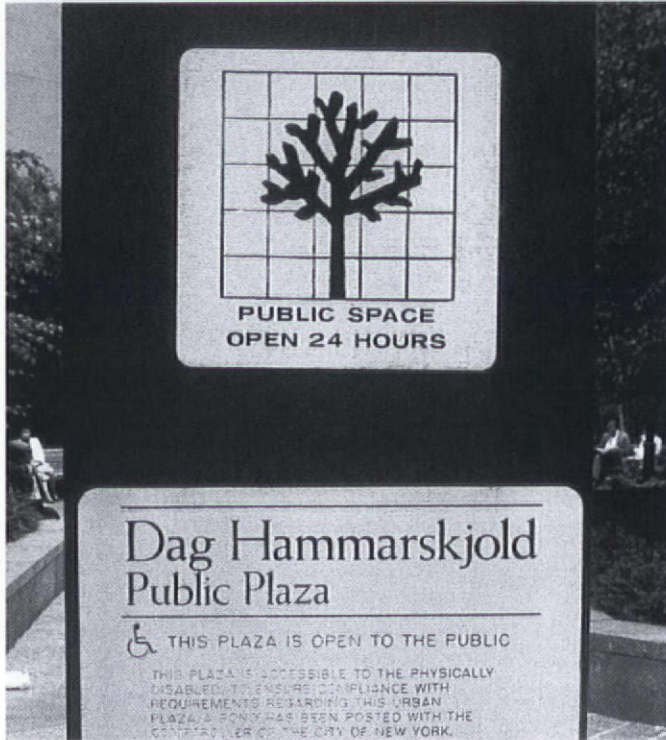
Hood: I would like to think so, but as designers doing this kind of work, I wonder if we do ourselves a disservice when we couch the work so as art.

Hanrahan: Of course the pitfall is also looking at very complex diagrams of work, ordinances and natural phenomena and saying, “It looks cool, but I don’t understand it.”

Opposite: Cross sections of the river, drawn from data taken from soundings, reveal a hidden profile.

The New York City Privately Owned Public Space Project

New York, New York



For more than forty years, New York City developers have been building plazas, gallerias, arcades and other public spaces in exchange for lucrative density bonuses under provisions of the city's zoning code. From the outset, critics questioned the value of the public amenities that were provided, and despite numerous revisions to the zoning, the public spaces have remained controversial.

The primary purpose of this research, co-directed by Jerold Kayden, an associate professor of urban planning at Harvard, New York's Department of City Planning and the Municipal Art Society, a civic organization, was to find, legally define and evaluate all of the public spaces that had been built under various zoning provisions since 1961, and to reach conclusions about the overall operation of the public space program. The researchers identified 503 spaces at 320 buildings, unearthed the legal agreements under which they had been approved and made field visits to evaluate whether the spaces complied with those agreements. The researchers also evaluated how each space was used. The findings are detailed in *Privately Owned Public Space: The New York City Experience*, published by John Wiley and Sons in October, 2000, and in a database soon to be accessible to the public over the Internet.

The jury commended the rigorous approach to analyzing the outcome of a legal, design and policy issue whose impacts reach to any community that is seeking to tie

public space benefits to private development, and for suggesting that New York's privately owned public spaces might be reconsidered as an integrated urban landscape.

The research has resulted in stepped-up enforcement efforts and is helping to coalesce a constituency for doing something more with these spaces—a constituency that was tested shortly after the project was completed when a brokerage house proposed building a trading floor over a public space near Wall Street. More generally, the project underscores the need for ongoing, aggressive, institutional oversight of public space by government and civic groups.

—Todd W. Bressi

The New York City Privately Owned Public Space Project, New York City
Co-directors: Jerold S. Kayden (Harvard University), New York City Department of City Planning (Richard Barth, Philip Schneider, Edith Hsu-Chen, Patrick Too), Municipal Art Society of New York (Ellen P. Ryan).

Bold Hopes for a Neglected Public Asset

A century after New York City built Central Park, adding a new dimension to American urban open space, New York city planners launched an equally bold experiment. The city's sweeping 1961 zoning revision not only codified the construction of slender towers set in open spaces, bringing light, air and open space to the densest parts of the city, but also awarded "bonus" development rights to owners who agreed to create public space around their buildings.

Since then, some 503 privately owned public spaces have been established under a host of zoning provisions derived from that initial idea, mostly in Manhattan—eighty-two acres of what has been called world's most expensive public space.

Unlike Central Park, though, the impact of these public spaces is widely questioned. To many people, their design and management has failed to live up to the spirit or the letter of the law, and few of the spaces have made a mark, individually or collectively, on the city's civic identity.

The problem has persisted despite civic fulmination, scholarly and professional critique, even political tussles. Over the years, zoning requirements have been tightened, demanding that plaza owners meet specific criteria for amenities such as trees, seating and specific hours of accessibility. (The first of these changes was based on research done by William H. Whyte and his Street Life Project).

The latest research attempt is the New York City Privately Owned Public Space Project—undertaken by Jerold Kayden, a Harvard city planning professor with a long-standing interest in incentive zoning; New York's city planning department; and the Municipal Art Society, a civic design advocacy group. This unusual academic-civic-government collaboration came about in 1996 after a MAS-sponsored symposium on the topic. "The three of us agreed, 'This is a project we know needs to be done,'" Kayden said.

The first research question, critical for determining the scope of the problem, was daunting: What spaces and what amenities were developers and property owners legally obligated to provide? Kayden and three planning department staff painstakingly gathered and analyzed the thousands of legal instruments (which had been shaped by more than a dozen different zoning provisions) and organized their findings into a database, which will be accessible to the public on-line.

The second question was how management policies impacted the use of these spaces. "We conducted field surveys to see whether the space was in apparent compliance with applicable legal requirements," Kayden explained.

The site visits confirmed what many people had sensed: a substantial number of public spaces were blocked from public access, taken over by private activities such as cafes, or operating without the required amenities.

Finally, the project made a qualitative assessment of the usefulness of the spaces based on a variety of post-occupancy evaluation strategies, including documentation through photos and sketches, and user interviews. The findings were sobering: only sixteen percent of the spaces had become significant neighborhood amenities or regional destinations, while more than forty percent were of marginal or little value.

Kayden says the research led to several conclusions about elements necessary for making urban public space successful. "One is the importance of well-conceived, well-drafted law that takes realistic account of the inherent tension in privately owned public space." Another is the significance of enforcement. A third is having publicly determined boundaries for rules of conduct for these spaces, "so owners are not simply imposing rules by their will." And reconceptualizing the spaces as an integrated network, rather than unrelated dots on a map, is key.

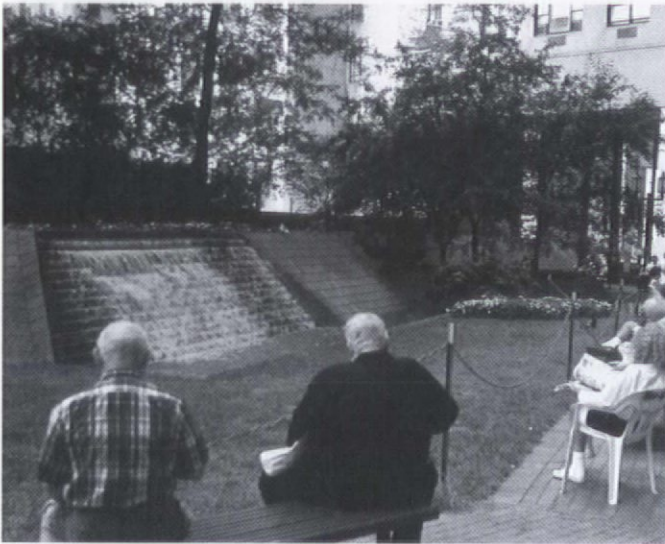
The research was published in the book, *Privately Owned Public Space: The New York City Experience*, which attracted substantial attention from the general media (the *New York Times* Sunday real estate section devoted nearly three pages to an article, maps and a list of every space). It also received favorable reviews in an unusually wide array of academic and professional journals representing disciplines such as urban planning, law, architecture, landscape architecture and geography.

The research will soon be available in an on-line database, which will help the public find out more about these little-known public resources. "The best scenario would be, somebody could put in an address and find out where all the spaces are within a certain radius," along with information about the amenities there and hours of operation, said Ellen Ryan, director of issues at MAS. The database will also enable community volunteers to help monitor the spaces and report violations, she added.

The book and publicity it generated have helped build momentum for the project, and each sponsor has launched follow-up projects. The city planning department initiated lawsuits against three property owners, seeking compliance of their spaces with the zoning and the approvals under which the spaces were built (the suits are being settled and

Opposite left: Signage announcing location of privately owned public space, the amenities that are to be provided, and rules of conduct.

Opposite right: Location of privately owned public spaces, Midtown.



Above left: A circulation space. CitySpire, Midtown.

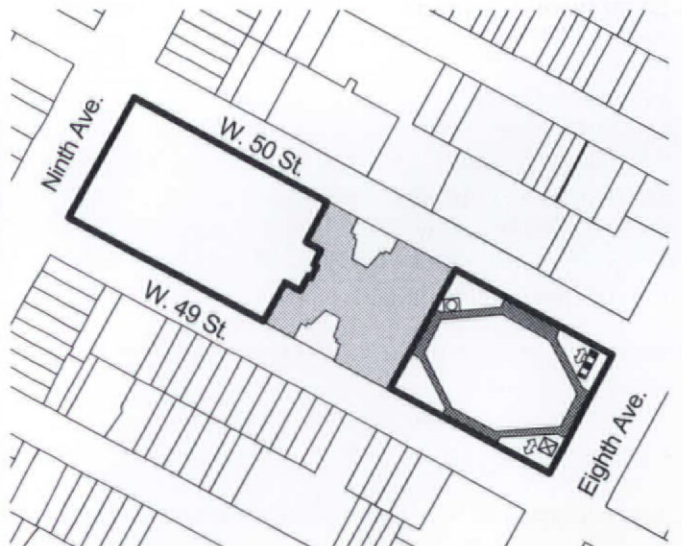
Above right: A destination space. 590 Madison Avenue (formerly IBM Building), Midtown.

Center left: A neighborhood space. 30 Lincoln Plaza, Upper West Side.

Center right: A hiatus space. PaineWebber Building, Midtown.

Below: A destination space: Worldwide Plaza, Clinton, before recent renovations (left), and site analysis (right).

Photos and graphics courtesy Jerold Kayden.



Places 15.1

the violations are being corrected, reported Richard Barth, director of Manhattan planning). Kayden is writing scholarly articles on the relationship between the value of zoning bonuses and the private costs of the public space, and on the importance of institutional structures for enforcement.

MAS has continued with its civic watchdogging. In fall, 2000, the group enlisted volunteers in "The Holly Watch," an effort to re-survey the spaces and generate public involvement in the issue. Last year, volunteers contacted the owners and managers of ten especially problematic spaces, urging improvements. One space, for which new designs had been prepared but never implemented, has been refurbished and includes a memorial to firefighters from a local firehouse who were killed in the World Trade Center attacks. MAS is also co-sponsoring a design competition for an elevated plaza whose owner last year proposed taking it out of the public inventory and building a trading floor on the space.

Beyond its ongoing enforcement actions, the city is taking longer-term action. The planning department assigned a senior staff member full-time to oversee its efforts in regard to these spaces—including updating the database, coordinating enforcement with the city's Department of Buildings, and working with property owners and architects to bring spaces into compliance. The buildings department established an on-line complaint form the public can use to report non-compliant public spaces. And the planning and buildings departments have worked out a protocol for reporting and investigating complaints.

Indeed, as Kayden, the city and MAS continue to monitor the spaces, they have noted that 9/11 security concerns are placing additional pressure on accessibility. At one indoor space "you practically get MRI'd by the time you reach the lobby," Ryan observed. The city is meeting with property owners to determine how to respond to these concerns "while ensuring continued public access in the full spirit of the regulations," Barth said.

The most ambitious idea is still in the works: Kayden and MAS are organizing a new civic group that would monitor these spaces, work on compliance issues and design improvements with owners and public officials, and perhaps even develop the capacity to provide management, security and programming services to the spaces. Such an organization would re-focus the public's attention on the spaces "as a collection, rather than individual places," Kayden said—a network of urban places that one day has as dramatic an impact on the city as Central Park.

Jury Comments

Hanraban: These spaces are really byproducts of the effort to reduce a building to its purest solutions, and to increase the size of the building at the same time. They have not even been afforded the level of design that open spaces within low-rise dwelling complexes, for example, have been. Literally they are byproducts, just tossed into the heap, yet New Yorkers have seen them as some kind of good thing. So to open our eyes and say, "Here's what you've got," that's important.

Sommer: The magazine and newspaper articles are impressive. They have gotten their message out, a real example of the mythical translation of research into action.

Hanraban: The real value is probably as a guide for new development, but what do you do with the existing spaces is the tough question.

Sommer: What is the research that goes into that determination, that these are unsuccessful spaces?

Jacobs: What basis does this give us for future action, in other places? About what to do or not to do? I would have liked to have seen more, for the research to have gone a couple of steps of further.

Hood: This suggests that there is a new, powerful landscape that we haven't really considered, a landscape that shows up in San Francisco, shows up in New York. By saying there are 500 of these spaces, people can start looking at them as a group.

Hanraban: The most important thing, with respect to public policy issues, is that the vast majority of these spaces are unsuccessful, so there are certain questions you have to ask about continuing to award these bonuses.

Sommer: On the other hand, I think that this will have a great impact on policy, pointing out the quantity of these privately developed public spaces, without regard to typology or public acceptance, and afterwards they can put in place realistic policies for improving these spaces. It makes people ask, "Do you have any idea how many of these spaces there are? Where they are? Maybe you could dust them off ..."

Jacobs: The other policy you want to consider is, maybe we shouldn't do this again, or maybe we ought to fine tune this a lot before we do it again.

Griffin: I'll sign the petition.

Growing Up in Cities

Growing Up in Cities is a broad-based international research initiative that revisits and extends a project, conceived in 1970, that examined the ways in which children use and perceive the environments that shape their lives.

The original project, directed by urban designer Kevin Lynch and funded by UNESCO, involved research in four countries and resulted in *Growing Up in Cities*, a classic in child-environment literature for both its methods and findings. Lynch found remarkable agreement among children, across cultures and urban contexts, as to what constituted a superior environment. Children were most satisfied when their worlds were defined by strong and inclusive cultural frameworks, and when they were free to explore the physical environment without fear of physical harm.

In 1994 environmental psychologist Louise Chawla, a professor at Kentucky State University, proposed revisiting Lynch's work in order to address two of its unfulfilled goals: improving urban design through participatory projects with children and informing local and national policy with regard to the needs of children in cities. By May 2002, again with primary sponsorship from UNESCO, the revived Growing Up in Cities project had studied urban quality and children's priorities for change in more than a dozen countries.

In most respects, it found that Lynch's conclusions remained remarkably valid. However, a key feature of the effort this time around has been to try to use the very activity of research to build participatory social networks and political coalitions to bring the needs of children to more popular attention. In presenting a research award to Growing up in Cities, jurors were particularly excited by its ability to move beyond the accomplishments of the earlier effort.

An International Commitment

The revived initiative has produced a considerable volume of material drawn from fourteen research sites around the world. Much of this now appears in two books. *Growing Up in an Urbanising World*, edited by Chawla, the project coordinator, provides an overview of goals and philosophy and presents research findings from eight of the sites.¹ *Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth*, by planner David Driskell, serves more as a "how-to" manual, outlining procedures and practices to seek out and integrate the views of children into participatory planning projects.² Jill Swart-Kruger, an anthropologist based in South Africa, has produced a video, *The Children of Thula Mntwana*, that illustrates the project's approach. There is also an extensive Web site, www.unesco.org/most/growing.htm.

In general terms, Growing up in Cities owes its name to worldwide economic and demographic trends which today see ever more children being raised in urban areas. As Chawla writes:

[T]he realities of most urban areas are that traffic dominates the streets; waste places and public open spaces are often barren or dangerous; children's hunger for trees does not appear to be shared by most developers and city officials; communities still have to fight to maintain their heritage and identity in the face of development pressures; most children have narrowly limited ranges of movement; and research with children and attention to their needs are emphatically not part of most urban policy planning and design and management practices.³

Despite this gloomy picture, project researchers believe several promising events have occurred since Lynch's time. Primary among these was the United Nations' adoption in 1989 of the International Convention of the Rights of the Child. That agreement contained provisions that call on member states to recognize the right of children to participate in design decisions affecting their lives.

Recognition of the value of input from children has also been incorporated into several international sustainable-development and environmental-protection compacts. The thinking is that environments will improve for everyone when they become more supportive of the needs of young people.

A Common Methodology

In their comments on the project, jurors praised the rigorous research methodology. Armed with a common set of guidelines, Growing Up in Cities researchers work separately while sharing their findings broadly. Most of their projects have required little or no capital investment.

As with many such studies, much of the work is based on observation, mapping and interviews. After a period of initial informal observation, researchers move to more formal techniques, including objective strategies as behavioral mapping, documentary photography and background data-gathering. But more important are efforts to have children relate their own points of view. Techniques included participatory design projects or having children produce their own neighborhood maps, take photographs or lead explanatory walks. Formal interviews, community workshops and focus groups were also employed.

In general, researchers found there were strikingly similar characteristics of place that cause children to feel either sustained or marginalized, and that these seemed directly related to the quality of culture surrounding them (see accompanying chart).

A key finding, though, is that beyond a generally



acceptable level of health and welfare, increased material prosperity does not seem to affect children's sense of satisfaction with their environments. Out of the eight case studies Chawla's book presents, children's sense of satisfaction was greatest in Sathanagar, a self-built settlement on the periphery of Bangalore, India; and in Boca-Barracas, a working-class district of Buenos Aires. In both places, children were accepted participants in a vibrant cultural framework. They were also relatively free to move around within a protected space.

By contrast, a sense of alienation was prevalent among children in research sites in the U.S., Britain and Australia. Children in those places complained of boredom, lack of safe unstructured play space and general marginalization within the arena of public life.

Photo by Karen Malone

Such findings led Chawla to conclude that the current development model of increased industrialization and integration into a free market may not be adequate to children's needs. Equal concern should go to preserving "social capital," she argues. By this she means such things as maintaining a valued role for children, increasing the importance of rituals of cultural identity and supporting community self-help efforts.

From Research to Political Action

One of the most important aspects of *Growing up in Cities* is that it is not another expert study of child-friendly practices for city planning. Accordingly, it manages to steer clear of the pitfalls, however well-intentioned, of design-based environmental determinism.

Instead, the backbone of the research is a belief that research itself may create opportunities for political

engagement. The very act of seeking input from children can make an entire community more aware of and responsive to the needs of a minority population in its midst.

Such was the case in the South African project, where the mayor of Johannesburg met with a group of children in an effort to understand their point of view. In India, although many desired practical outcomes were subverted by local politicians, several new organizations were founded and important public health issues were given prominence.

Even more importantly, the experience of participation is extremely positive for children. At the age of ten to fifteen years old, many are beginning to develop a sense of their own identity. This is precisely when increased interaction with the world may be reinforcing feelings that their particular awareness of place will always be disregarded. By contrast, participation in environmental decision-making fosters self-esteem and self-efficacy, and may lead to a greater appreciation of democratic values.

There are many pitfalls to such a participatory approach to child welfare. For instance, Chawla writes, "much that passes for participation in government, non-governmental organizations, and planning practice . . . falls under tokenism, decoration and manipulation."⁴

Not only did researchers have to deal with those who claimed to already know what children wanted, but, Chawla notes, "they also had to contend with well-intended but misguided officials who believed that they had achieved participation if children sang a song at a ceremony. Other politicians were quick to co-opt the GUIC process by having publicity pictures taken with children, although they never followed up on anything that the children proposed."⁵

Still, an appeal for basic public services will always be stronger if it is backed by the voices of children. According to Chawla, "Few mayors or other officials will overtly oppose the reasonable requests of a group of children who want to cooperate to improve their environment."⁶

—David Moffat

Notes

1. Louise Chawla, ed., *Growing Up in an Urbanising World* (London: UNESCO and Earthscan, Ltd., 2002).
2. David Driskell, *Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth* (London: UNESCO and Earthscan, Ltd., 2002).
3. Chawla, 25.
4. Chawla
5. Chawla
6. Chawla

Jury Comments

Brown: I love this project. To me it's incredibly socially relevant. It is a terrific and rare example of social scientists learning from their mistakes. The earlier research had gone out and looked at conditions of how children grow up around the world and described them, and hoped that would motivate people to design better cities for children. But it didn't. So this round is going back and making the difficult collaborative relationships between researchers and policymakers that have the potential for making real change. It's wonderful action research. There are not a whole lot of social scientists who collect data the way these people do.

Rahaim: What was the methodology?

Brown: They do a range of things. They have kids draw pictures of where they live. They have them draw ideal houses. They interview the kids to find out what kids are fearful of, what would change the qualities of their lives, how far they have to walk to the water spigot. So it's an in-depth description of the conditions of their lives. But this time they are getting the mayors, people who can make a change, involved at the beginning.

Quigley: What you are saying is that there is a real sophistication about the implementation, about getting things actually achieved. That's what is rarely seen with research like this. It's always isolated in an academic situation and doesn't get used correctly.

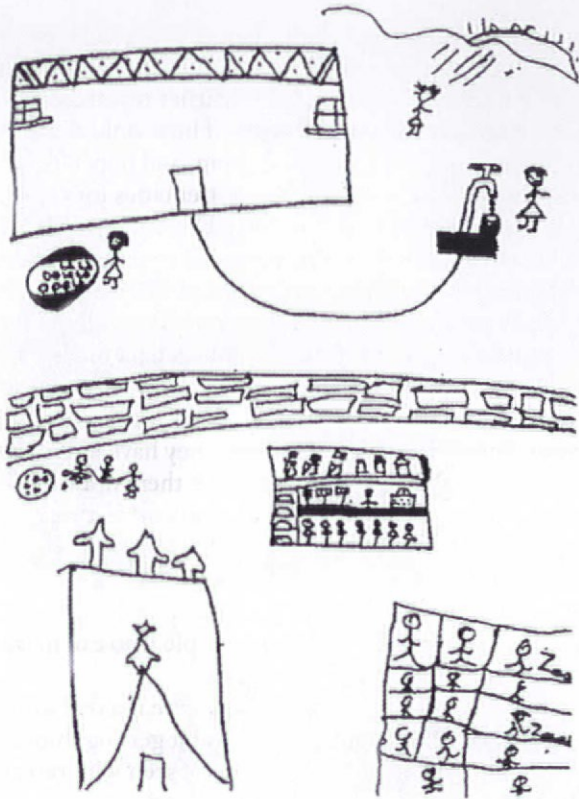
Mozingo: I thought it was especially good because it gave examples from places that are much more difficult and that you don't always hear about, like a south Indian slum. Most of these types of books about children are Northern European or North American.

Brown: But even then I thought they made some interesting points. Such as kids in the Australian suburbs are more bored than those in South Africa.

Mozingo: The conclusion chapter contained some new ideas. Such as security of tenure. And boredom. They talk more about boredom than I've heard in a long time.

Calborpe: I would lend my vote to this because I worry about the other projects being too anecdotal. This clearly has a broad base of research and then maybe even a broader applicability, so its importance would be higher.

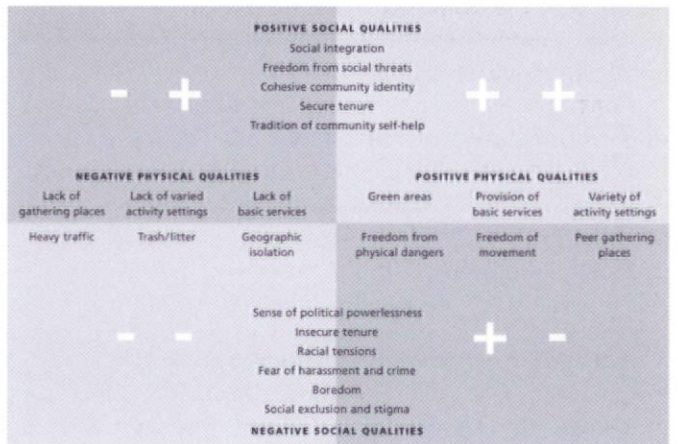
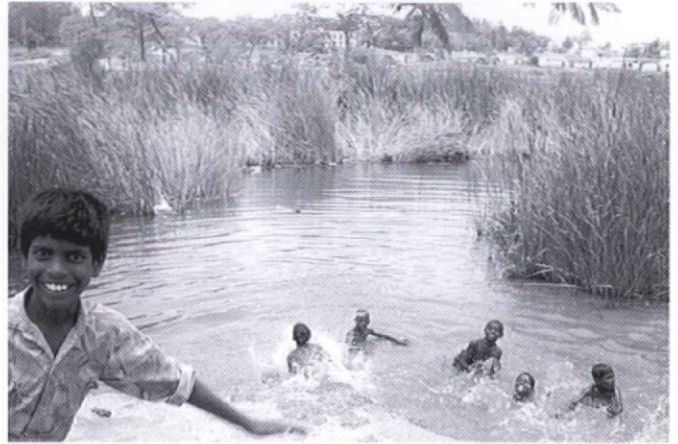
Fraker: The whole topic of youth and cities is an area of research that is extremely important. Something like half the world's children are in or at the edge of poverty. Any research that can understand how to strategically intervene is extremely important.



Left: A child's drawing of the places she encounters on a daily basis. Photo courtesy HSRC/UNESCO.

Above right: A rich diversity of natural settings in the settlement of Sathanagar, on the periphery of Bangalore, India, provided young people with a refuge and supported highly valued play experiences. Photo by S. R. Prakash.

Below right: Indicators of environmental quality from the perspective of children in study sites. Graphic by Dean Driskell.



Growing up in Cities

Project team (1995-present): Louise Chawla (international coordinator); Nilda Cosco, Robin Moore (Argentina); Karen Malone, Lindsay Hasluck, Beau Beza (Australia); Barry Percy Smith (England); Kanchan Bannerjee, David Driskell (India); Ed Salem, Nilda Cosco, Robin Moore (Jordan); Irene Arbadji, Ahmad Jradi (Lebanon); Hanne Wilhjelm (Norway); Karen Malone, Lindsay Hasluck, Haraka Gaudi (Papua New Guinea); Piotr Olaf Zylicz, Krystyna Skarzynska (Poland); Jill Swart, Peter Rich, Dev Griesel, Shaun Cameron (South Africa); Lisa Sundell, Maj-Britt Olsbo, Ing-Marie Larsson (Sweden); Ilaria Salvadori (United States); Maria Angelica Sepulveda, G. Lopez, Y. Guairnaro (Venezuela); Yung Le, Ms. Huong, Sarika Seki Husey (Vietnam).

UNESCO support team: Nadia Auriat, Brigitte Colin, Gillian Whitcomb

Book designer: Dean Driskell.

Technology and Place: Sustainable Architecture and the Blueprint Farm

In April 1988, the first crops poked hopefully from the ground at the Blueprint Farm in Laredo, Texas. An outgrowth of the radical populism of Jim Hightower, the Texas Agriculture Commissioner, the farm was established to challenge the dominance of corporate agriculture in the state and to demonstrate the viability of alternative modes of production based on small growers, high-margin crops and sustainable technologies. In *la frontera chica*, the semi-arid south Texas border region where the farm was located, the farm was also welcomed by activists as a bold attempt to empower low-income Mexican Americans.

The story of the inception and collapse of Blueprint Farm has never been widely reported outside Texas. But, as Steven Moore explains in his book *Technology and Place: Sustainable Architecture and the Blueprint Farm*, the farm did achieve a certain cult status within the emerging sustainable technology movement in the mid-1990s.

For largely political reasons, Hightower had conceived of the farm as a way to transfer the intensive drip-irrigation methods of Israeli kibbutzes to farms that could employ displaced West Texas farmworkers. But for funding reasons, his Texas-Israel Exchange was soon married to the visionary ecologism of Pliny Fisk III, Gail Vittori and their Austin-based Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems.

The flawed nature of this attempt at political alchemy became evident almost immediately. As Moore writes, personal rancor and institutional conflict eventually revealed sharp disagreements over the purpose of the project. Finally, after a series of institutional reshufflings, all hope for the farm was abandoned in 1991. Hightower was voted out of office, the Texas Department of Agriculture withdrew its support, the scientists went home, the ecological community became embittered and the gates to the site were locked by its sponsor, Laredo Junior College.

For Moore, an architecture professor at the University of Texas and director of its Design with Climate program, the demise of Blueprint Farm is “a small story with large implications.” Above all, it reveals the inconsistent foundations of the now-ubiquitous ideology of sustainability.

Specifically, Moore argues, the story indicates how sustainable places can only emerge from democratic engagement with technological change. For planners and designers, the lesson is clear: even the best sustainable endeavors will fail without engaging the social practices needed to support them. Moore’s ethnographic and theoretical case study thus provides fascinating insight as to why sustainability as a practice has yet to live up to its potential as an idea.

Conflicting Visions

Jurors praised the Moore’s ability to foreground hidden attitudes toward technology in the construction of place. Indeed, his intent was to move beyond a “fetishization of objects” to produce a deeper understanding of the relationship between places and their users than normally present in design critiques.

Moore’s research ultimately involved a full investigation of archival sources, extensive interviews and a broad range of theoretical readings. Using methods of content analysis drawn from sociology and anthropology, he identified five competing networks of interest and ideology behind the conception, design and management of the farm.

The Israeli agronomists, the farm’s putative managers, originally developed their computerized drip-irrigation methods within the disciplined confines of kibbutz socialism. But they had no real investment in notions of ecological sustainability, tending instead toward a belief that all the methods of science should be employed to “make the desert bloom.” They were further motivated by a financial interest in promoting their system to U.S. buyers.

By contrast, the ecologist network saw the farm as the ideal location to work out a complete system of organic production. As such, they were less interested in constructing a profitable farm than in promoting a new set of values. And, Moore writes, this orientation soon led them to challenge the boundaries between their work and that of other groups.

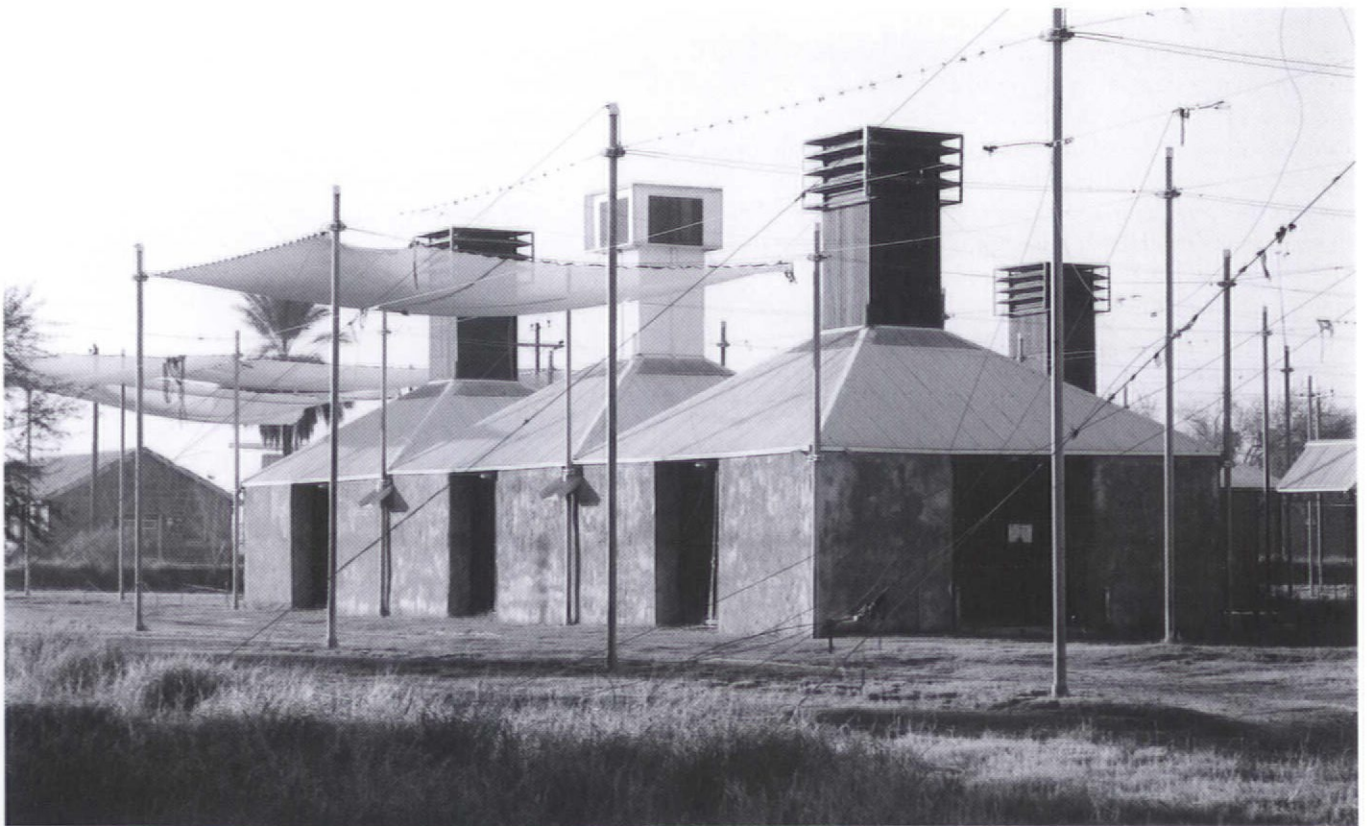
A third local network consisted of social activists in and around Laredo. For them, the farm’s technologies were merely “black boxes,” the workings of which were less important than their promise as agents of social change, writes Moore. However, such ignorance caused the group to misunderstand the ideological divide between the Israelis and the ecologists. Furthermore, as Moore points out, all hope for change would have been frustrated if farmworkers had been unwilling to embrace the composters, straw-bale walls and solar food dryers being developed on the farm.

Indeed, the determinist assumptions of all three groups on site—the Israelis, ecologists and activists—were nowhere more evident than in the fact that none had consulted the people whose interests they claimed to champion.

Above: U.S. Representative Albert Bustamonte, an Israeli agronomist and Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower, May, 1989.

Photo by Karen Dickey, courtesy Texas Department of Agriculture.

Below: Blueprint Farm as it appeared in 1995. Photo by Steven A. Moore



Such a divergence of views on site was only compounded by interested networks off site, Moore adds. The Texas Department of Agriculture was ultimately responsible for the farm, but many of its employees did not share Hightower's political views. And even if career bureaucrats did not personally subscribe to the corporate farming paradigm, they at least needed Blueprint Farm to conform to pre-established funding and administrative categories.

Finally, as Moore points out, for the Hightower network the farm was never simply about growing sun-dried tomatoes. The symbolic value of the rhetoric of sustainability was equally important in terms of promoting a larger personal and political agenda.

"As the project took shape ... there was no common vision of sustainable architecture, agriculture or technology that bound these competing networks together," Moore writes. "In the battle for the imaginary supremacy to define reality and the politically useful concept of sustainability, there were no victors."

Connections to Architectural Theory

Previous reviewers have faulted Moore's book for being difficult to read. However, its lack of a simple story line stems from a desire to provide "thick description" in the sense advocated by Clifford Geertz. In addition, Moore's concerns extend far beyond the specifics of the case at hand. In this regard, jurors praised Moore's ability to connect the facts on the ground with a breadth of theoretical writings.

Moore's archaeology of ideas draws heavily on the writings of cultural geographer Henri Lefebvre. For Lefebvre, space is never neutral, but always structured by the workings of the society that occupies it. From sociologist Bruno Latour, Moore also adapts, among other positions, the view that scientific "fact" is "not 'about nature,' ... [but] a fierce fight to *construct* reality."

Furthermore, as Kenneth Frampton points out in his foreword, Moore is influenced by Andrew Feenberg's holistic critique of contemporary technoscience. According to this view, the inability of market-driven societies to invent new technologies that are both efficient and life-enhancing represents a fundamental failure of imagination.

But it is Frampton's idea of critical regionalism that most interests Moore. For the last twenty years, critical regionalism has provided a basis for place-based critiques of Modern architecture. But as Fredric Jameson has noted, these efforts have been weakened by their largely aesthetic bias. By drawing on the ideas of landscape architect John Tillman Lyle, Moore attempts to extend Frampton's principles to describe a "regenerative" architecture.

In his last chapter Moore argues that the two poles of current architectural theory, Modernism and Postmodernism, are both inadequate to such a task. Modernism's homogenizing tendencies are well known. What is less well appreciated is how the Postmodern alternative often merely reverses Modernism's conceptual bias without reengaging with the place-bound moral codes that once sustained traditional environments. As a result, Postmodernist projects often seem emotionally sterile.

At one end of an alternative philosophical axis is what Moore calls "radical nihilism"—evident, for example, in the writings and work of Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas. What is important to this way of thinking is less what technology amounts to, so much as the deliberate secularization of experience it allows.

At the other end of Moore's alternative axis is a matrix of emergent "non-modern" positions that embody a conscious reengagement with issues of technology and place. Among these are the "eco-tech" projects of architects such as Norman Foster and Richard Rogers, the notions of ecological sustainability that played such an important role at Blueprint Farm, and Frampton's critical regionalism.

However, Moore cautions that the consolidation of such an alternative path will require full recognition of architecture as an "ecological, technological and political practice." In this sense, buildings and communities represent social agreements first. More important than any particular ideological agenda will be the ongoing contest over what architecture embodies as a normative practice. In other words, without unity of conception and execution, no new orientation toward architecture, technology or place will ever stand the chance of being socially sustained.

Technology and Place

Steven A. Moore, *Technology and Place: Sustainable Architecture and the Blueprint Farm*, foreword by Kenneth Frampton (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001).

THE LAREDO BLUE PRINT FARM

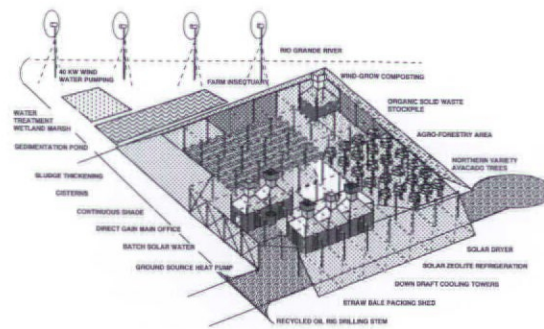
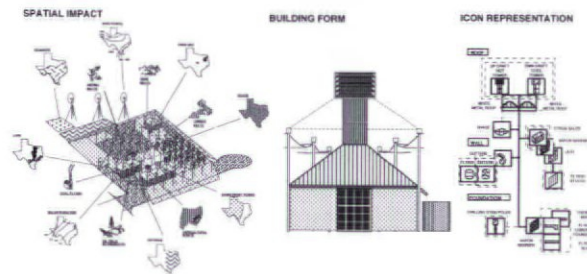


Fig. 2.5



Jury Comments

Quigley: I wish I had time to read the whole book. It's one of these wonderful "green" projects where everybody was on board. And the level of design looks quite high. Then everybody pulled out and there were all kinds of problems. The book documents the whole process.

Brown: It serves a useful purpose, specifically because it provides an anthropological analysis of the conflicting idea of sustainability. Because the competing parties couldn't come to an agreement, the whole project failed. That is pretty sad for a concept that is supposed to be so healing and over-arching.

Quigley: This seems enormously relevant to architectural practice now, because we are seeing, just in the last twelve months, city councils say "you will do a green building," having no idea what that means or entails.

Brown: And you could see practicing architects reading this and learning from it?

Quigley: Yes, I could.

Rabaim: From that standpoint, it really seems to show the pitfalls of jumping on the bandwagon with little knowledge of what's going on.

Quigley: It is a bandwagon, and on a certain political level, it's dangerous. But in another way, I couldn't be more pleased, because although we've been advocating this direction for twenty-five years, it's been happening in such an uninformed and naive way. I'm hoping books like this could help sort out these issues.

Mozingo: I liked the methodology, which sought to look at complexity. That led to a set of eight propositions, which were concise and enlightening. They were very insightful and they would only be convincing after this careful immersion in the situation.

Fraker: Attitudes about technology in our society are under-discussed and under-researched. To show the relationship between technology and social objectives—and, in fact, the dysfunction of a set of ideas—is really interesting. We don't arrive at consensus about technology at the start of projects. It's that "other." Somebody else does it: "It's not my responsibility—oh, it's *them*." And to bring these issues into the design process and show how critical they are to users—how much they have to understand it, be able to buy into it and take care of it—this is a great case study of that challenge.

Mozingo: Something else I really liked is the consistent intervening of theory. There is a discussion about a specific place and time, but it's connected to a broader discussion about how we make decisions as humans, how we operate in the world. Every place that I've opened the book, there is something interesting.

Above: Dialogic qualities of place and technology. Diagram by Steven A. Moore

Negotiating Implicit Theoretical Agendas

Harrison S. Fraker, Jr.

Every awards jury goes through a process of trying to understand and interpret the criteria for selecting winners. While this is generally an open discussion and debate about how specific projects fulfill published criteria; invariably, the theoretical interests and conceptual biases of each jury member also play a role, implicitly or explicitly. The 2002 EDRA/*Places* awards jury negotiated a particularly interesting set of theoretical issues, both explicit and implicit, that are worth discussing.

Not surprisingly some of the awards were relatively straightforward to select, especially in the Place Research category. The jury was able to arrive at an agreement on questions about whether the research method was clear and rigorous and about whether the findings were significant and—or transformative, based on empirical evidence in the submissions. For example, "Growing Up in Cities" was chosen as an exemplary extension of Kevin Lynch's early work on how people construct a sense of place, an image of their world, particularly studies he led in the 1970s of children's environments throughout the world. Through participatory projects with children, it identifies critical urban design criteria for urban spaces that successfully serve children's needs. There is evidence that the work is having an important impact on local and national planning policy.

Steven Moore's ethnographic and theoretical case study, *Technology and Place: Sustainable Architecture and the Blueprint Farm*, seemed to avoid any ideological differences among jury members as well. Through his close analysis of the facts of the case as seen by five competing networks of interest at work on the farm, he reveals fundamental disagreements about the role of technology and its objects. To the jury, Moore's message—that sustainable things are only as successful as the social constructs and practices by which they are implemented and maintained—seemed both eloquently argued and of profound significance to both architectural practice and theory.

Two of the winners in the Place Planning category also transcended any implicit or explicit theoretical differences among the jury, but more by the sheer strength of their initial hypotheses than by careful analysis. "Designing a City of Learning: Patterson New Jersey" harnesses people's interest in the education of their children as a strategy for rebuilding communities. By re-conceiving urban schools as something other than self-contained boxes or isolated campuses, the planning hypothesis is to weave them into the urban fabric, to use them to revitalize urban neighborhoods, to draw lesson plans from local resources. The publication then presents convincing diagrams for how this can be accomplished in specific locations. The implications of this idea were perceived by the jury to be profound, not

only enriching education with an expanded curriculum that is place based, but also creating the means for restoring historic urban fabric and reconstructing the public realm.

"New•Land•Marks," was chosen for having an equally compelling first proposition: public art should not just be privately conceived art in public spaces; it should "understand the community, not merely decorate it." The work of the association lays out an innovative and effective program for engaging community involvement. A key mechanism is a tripartite contract between communities, artists and the association in which nothing can be built that is not completely endorsed by the community. While not breaking new ground in the methods of participatory design, its innovation is applying participatory processes to private artistic practice, creating a more meaningful and engaging public realm.

All four of these winners, which were the least theoretically problematic for the jury, share a common theoretical interest in discovering and foregrounding activities and social processes of the everyday. The first two used careful analysis and proven methods to uncover important insights. The latter two used hypotheses about everyday activities that re-position them with new meaning and potential for design. The theoretical nuances of these practices have been explored in the writings of Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord and Frederic Jameson. But all four projects seemed to avoid any ideological controversy, not because of their theoretical underpinnings, but because they did not appear to be promoting any prescriptive aesthetic or design agenda.

On the other hand, the selection of the final two winners (one in design and one in planning) revealed problematic theoretical differences. Different interpretations of the theoretical design agenda represented in the projects caused serious debate, which was further complicated by the fact that for many of the design and planning submissions, the grounding in research was ambiguous.

What is a meaningful relationship between design and research was a vexing question that recurred throughout the jury. One of the design projects in the final cut, "Cardada: Revisiting a Mountain," elicited the most explicit and implicit theoretical debate. The project presents a series of exquisitely designed places, constructed episodes, that highlight particular environmental processes or phenomena. The architectural elements are highly abstract and minimalist in expression, yet executed in beautiful materials and with careful attention to detail.

All the jury members agreed that this was the most hauntingly poetic submission. The problem for the jury was that the project presented no research basis for its

design proposition, although it included user testimonies to the powerful experience it elicited. Some jury members argued that the design begged interesting questions about understatement, silence, mystery and wonder that were worthy of research. Other jurors said that without evidence, we were just indulging in personal speculation; that to give the project an award would contradict one of the EDRA/*Places* advertised criteria that "submissions should address the relationship between design research and design outcomes." Ultimately, advocates for the project could not overcome this challenge. In letting it go, some observed, however, that the project symbolized the difference between the cultures of research and design, and that with a slightly different attitude and presentation the embedded research issues could have been made more operative and relevant.

The jury wrestled with the same question about the relationship between research and design in selecting "Allegheny Riverfront Park" as the only design winner. The design concept not only solved a number of environmental and engineering challenges but also managed to run a gauntlet of federal, state and local codes and regulations, and integrated local interest and participation as well, creating a public place of stunning aesthetic appeal. The jury recognized that the designers conducted local field research in selecting plant materials that would survive the flooding and ice flows in an inundation zone. Jurors praised the elegant construction and detailing of the continuous fourteen-foot-wide pathway that in some sections is cantilevered out over the river not only to avoid bridge abutments but also to free up space for plantings in more protected soil conditions. The beauty of the project is carried out in every detail, even integrating the delicate vision of several artists in the paving. The result is a work of tectonic richness where research into the making of things transforms one of the toughest environments imaginable into a place for the human spirit.

This year's awards program received the largest number of planning submissions that could be described as typical comprehensive planning proposals for cities and municipalities. Several excellent examples of this kind of work made it into the final group of projects the jury considered. The most theoretically charged debate occurred over one group of projects which could be described as orthodox New Urbanist or neo-traditional infill versus a group of projects whose design guidelines give explicit requirements for bulk, height and set-backs for blocks and buildings and specific guidelines for streets, giving prescribed shape to the public realm, yet purposely not prescribing building types or regional styles.

For some jury members this latter planning strategy was just a remake of failed zoning practices, leading to placeless neighborhoods with no character. To others, the New Urbanist strategies did not allow for building innovations or new building types and represent a nostalgic representation of a past that no longer exists or is meaningful. Several exemplary projects on both sides fell by the wayside as this debate remained unresolved. In the end "Toward Better Places: The Community Character Plan for Collier County, Florida" was chosen. Despite the project's obvious New Urbanist sympathies, presentation style and analytical technique, the jury felt that the emphasis on developing a carefully articulated system and hierarchy of county roads, integrated with a vision for restoring and maintaining the ecological infrastructure, as a way of further distinguishing the special place characteristics of rural towns and neighborhoods was innovative and groundbreaking. In other words, the more comprehensive system thinking of the New Urbanist agenda overwhelmed any disagreements among the jury may have had about stylistic theming or class-based prejudices.

In the end, the jury was pleased with the projects selected as significant and deserving winners. However, the jury discussion and debate itself raised fundamental questions. To what extent should the relationship between the design process and research investigation be explicit? When a design is based on established assumptions about people's experience of the environment, and there is documentation of a powerful user response, is the design research based? In fact, does user participation in the design process ground the work in research? Obviously, the answer is that it depends, and it depends in part on the theoretically laden differences in aesthetic preferences and different attitudes about what constitutes legitimate evidence. Without such differences juries might be more predictable but much less interesting.

Cardada—Reconsidering a Mountain

When the cable car from Orselina to Cardada had to be renovated after years of service, the question arose as to what people actually expected when they visited this mountain.

So begins the story of a poetic and personal engagement with place documented in the EDRA/*Places* competition submission by landscape architect Paolo Burgi of Camorino, Switzerland. More than any other project, Burgi's typified the issues jurors wrestled with this year. Specifically, it brought into focus the EDRA/*Places* Awards requirement that entries document the research background that was useful in designing or planning a project, or pose the research questions the project raises.

Burgi's project involves a number of interventions in the mountain landscape around the Cardada tram near Locarno. According to Burgi, their purpose was to "examine the question of whether fascination can lead to a greater and more profound respect for the environment."

Now, instead of riding the tram up to the 1340-meter station to look passively over the hills and Lake Maggiore, visitors encounter various constructions that afford them the chance for a more meaningful engagement with the Swiss mountain landscape.

Burgi describes his project as a series of personal responses. Among these are a walkway of steel and titanium suspended in the trees, leading to a viewing platform. Along the way, visitors discover symbols and brief explanatory texts highlighting the fragility of the environment and its changes over the centuries.

There is a "meeting place" at the entrance to the upper tram station, which incorporates a "severe" geometrical paving design, a fountain and a bench. New paths lead from the tram station and incorporate strategically placed benches and other sculptural elements that force hikers into visual encounters with the area's trees. There is also a "play path" containing unusual game equipment designed to heighten appreciation of natural processes.

Another design intervention is a "musical wood," where speakers in the trees mysteriously animate a small meadow. A "laminated" waterfall, in which water will cascade down a metal staircase, has been proposed for the base of the tram.

Above: "The Geological Observatory." This platform, at the top of the cableway, explores a profound geological convergence. A red line marks the line along which the European and African tectonic plates meet, and stones brought in from the mountains on the horizon are set into the platform.

Below: "The Landscape Promontory." This suspended passage, made of steel and titanium, rises up through the trees to a lookout platform that provides an unexpected view of Lago Maggiore.

Photos courtesy Paolo Burgi.

Finally, visitors can ride a chairlift (used for skiing in the winter) from the Cardada station to an observatory atop the nearby 1670-meter Cimetta Peak. The observatory, which has the form of a disk slicing through the mountain rocks, aims to reveal and interpret the geological forces that created the place over millions of years.

When Burgi first visited the mountain, he recalled it had the character of an urban periphery, where "small but disturbing interventions" detracted from the ability of visitors to perceive its natural qualities. His goal was to reconstruct the place so visitors could once again "marvel instead of limit(ing) ourselves to a reductionist and aesthetic contemplation . . . that makes nature a mere panorama."

—David Moffat

Jury Comments

The following discussion, about the design project "Cardada—Reconsidering a Mountain," took place on the second day of the 2002 jury. The project, which was not chosen for an award, is documented on the preceding pages.

Fraker: One thing I hope we can stress in what is published about these awards is that an aesthetic experience can be a powerful, emotional, social experience. There is a stereotype that high, poetic design is not research based. That upsets me, because that has not been my experience. Yet, unfortunately, you have in the contest for the limelight, some people who like to criticize high-end design as irresponsible. And, vice versa, designers like to criticize projects that are heavily behaviorally based or research based. This awards program ought to get right in the middle of that stereotype and try to address the complexity and difficulty of the issue.

Rabaim: There are certainly many designers and academic researchers who are concerned about high design not being responsible. On the other hand, the question is whether this awards program should be where that issue is tackled. As beautiful as I think the Cardada project is, I am concerned about giving an award from this program to a project that is a complete and singular vision of an individual.

Calthorpe: Hold on a second. I thought we had already cleared this up. I thought we were going to give awards that were not research based but were good placemaking—that those were parallel criteria.

Bressi: The point of the research requirement is to demonstrate that one is searching for knowledge, that one is



aware of where knowledge is coming from, and that one is trying to incorporate knowledge into design. We are not trying to suggest that people should unquestioningly follow research. But design entries should demonstrate some sort of knowledge basis, whether it's a scientific study or something else.

Quigley: On the other hand, you could argue that some wonderful innovations in all fields have come not because of knowledge but because of ignorance. So they weren't hampered by this channeled thought that the history of that particular view had. That would suggest that research is irrelevant.

Fraker: Or there may be cases in which the design outcome is based more on an intuitive hypothesis. What we are arguing about is different definitions of research.

Quigley: No, it's two separate activities. It's placemaking and research. In the Cardada project research may exist, but the author has given us no reason to understand this integration.

Calthorpe: I actually think the research is there. We all know from professional experience that when you go through an arduous approval process, you are getting community input. This project has been shaped by that phenomenon.

Quigley: I'd argue that during that stage, community input is not research. It's just consensus building.

Calthorpe: Then we will have the same problem with all the planning documents. Not all the planning documents are research based.

Bressi: Research base does not necessarily have to mean original research. It could draw from already-done research in an intelligent way.

Mozingo: That just makes things more confusing. Let's take the planning category. The people who submitted the better project must have done research at some point in their careers to really understand how you build cities in a way that makes sense.

Quigley: But was it research, or self education?

Mozingo: I don't know. I just don't think you can do good work without having read a lot, understood a lot, done some of your own research, and culled it through. Do we need entrants to say explicitly that they've done this?

Fraker: It is a requirement.

Brown: And that is why with some of the research projects, the outcomes that are claimed are so wonderful that I would dance on the table and argue for them to get an award except that they didn't demonstrate it in the documents. They didn't prove it to me. This would never pass muster with any social science group that is looking for how did you address the criteria.

Rabaim: Another way of looking at the Cardada project

is, does it rise to such a high level of placemaking that we want to ignore the requirement for some kind of more serious research?

Quigley: Yes, I would like to give this an award. But I'd like us to be honest about it, and say it is not research based, but it is of such high quality placemaking that the research requirement is less relevant. We were victims of poetry.

Rabaim: There are projects throughout history that are great personal visions of people who have extraordinary talent, and I just think we should acknowledge that this may be in that category, and stop trying to create the argument, which is totally unsubstantiated, that they did some kind of research.

Mozingo: If were to do that, would you be saying that there is a trump card? The trump card is beauty?

Rabaim: No, I think this is beautiful, but it is also placemaking.

Mozingo: I can't support saying, "Oh, by the way we completely changed the rules." If you are acknowledging that this does not involve research, I don't think we should give it an award.

Fraker: I am still going to argue that there are degrees of research in all of these projects. Although it's not well documented and not well written up, I think there is a hypothesis and the implication of research behind the hypothesis. You can argue with me, but I don't think we can say categorically as a jury that there was no research there.

Brown: I think we were more enthused about research being the unique edge of this competition until everyone saw this project, and now we are trying to back away from that.

Picturing the Route to Newark Airport

Photographs by Random Ashlar

Randy Ashlar is a retired Navy man, trained first in navigation and then in photography, who lives in the New York City area and often flies out of Newark Airport on visits to his grandchildren in the Midwest. With time he has come especially to enjoy the Lincoln Tunnel-to-Newark leg of his trips. Last year he thought he would photograph it.

The essence of his pleasure in the drive, he decided, could be found in several structures and a hill, all of which were easily recognizable from the highway even though most lay some distance from it. They had become landmarks for him, though not, he thought, in the sense of older structures that should be preserved because of their historical role or architectural quality, but in the nautical sense, as recognizable forms, glimpses of which reassured him that he was on course.

But when Randy undertook to photograph his landmarks and in some instances approached them, he realized that some of them were indeed landmarks in the newer historical-architectural sense. The Hackensack Water Tower and the Monastery Church, he learned, were designed by the well-known architects Frederick Clarke Withers and Patrick Charles Keely. Part of their effectiveness was their quality as architecture.

And then he realized that another contribution to his experience was the landscape in which his landmarks were set. Condescended to by New Yorkers, who see Weehawken, Hackensack and Union City on the highlands as of no interest and the Meadowlands beyond as little better than wet versions of Jay Gatsby's Valley of Ashes, these, he decided, were very much pre-twentieth-century landscapes that appropriately complemented his landmarks. He also realized he was looking across this landscape from a roadway that, as it cut through highlands and hill and was elsewhere elevated above the land, reminded him of nothing so much as the Futurama exhibit at the 1939 New York World's Fair that he had seen just before he went into the Navy. The ultimate secret of his pleasure was a topography of the past seen from a roadway of the future.

—*Cervin Robinson*



Manhattan from Weehawken



Mile o: False front, Croatian Catholic Church
at Lincoln Tunnel entrance, Manhattan



2.4 miles: Water Tower, Hackensack Water Co.,
Weehawken seen across Lincoln Tunnel approach



4.4 miles: Monastery Church of Saint Michael
the Archangel, Union City, seen across
New Jersey Turnpike



6.5 miles: New Jersey Turnpike and Snake Hill
(Laurel Hill), Secaucus (taken before September 11)





7.7 miles: New Jersey Turnpike and WMCA transmitter building, Kearny, with Snake Hill in the distance



9.5 miles: Pulaski Skyway and New Jersey Turnpike,
Newark and Kearny

13.8 miles: first sight of Newark Airport



Exorcising the Ghost of Emily Latella

Emily Talen

New Urbanists can be their own worst enemies. I get particularly annoyed with my New Urbanist friends when, in their conversations, public interviews and speeches, they loosely throw around the term "community." At first I chided them. At a conference in Seaside, Florida, held in January, 1999, on the topic "Is Design a Catalyst for Community?" I denounced the way that they seemed to be promoting a thoroughly unsubstantiated and politically dangerous proposition about the ability of design to promote a sense of community. I chastised them for failing to understand and appreciate the complexities and paradoxes of community life.

But, in learning more about what New Urbanists are really trying to achieve, I have come to feel a little like Emily Latella, the Saturday Night Live character portrayed by Gilda Radner who would rant about an issue that turned out to be non-existent. For example, she once scolded public schools for trying to discourage "sax and violins" before someone tapped her on the shoulder to tell her that the issue was actually about discouraging "sex and violence." "Oh..., never mind," she would say.

What I have come to realize is that most New Urbanists do not, in fact, adhere to some sort of Skinnerian view about the ability of design to create community. What happens is that the occasional New Urbanist will overstep the bounds and misspeak about what design can be expected to do, but it usually doesn't take much for the New Urbanist to eventually admit that all he or she is really trying to do is strengthen the public realm. Strengthening the public realm, in turn, is about providing opportunities for social interaction. In some cases, interaction leads to stronger bonds; in other cases, it has no effect. In either case, it simply is not possible to design

for "community," and New Urbanists, despite an occasional blurt of feel-good rhetoric, are not really proposing to do so.

In fact, New Urbanists state repeatedly (ad nauseum, even) that their goal is to create a variety of venues where social interaction can occur. Whether or not that interaction leads to higher order social bonds is, contrary to misconception, not an explicit part of their agenda. What is explicit is that they seek an urban form that does not actively thwart the ability for citizens to come together. Whether this interaction involves friends and neighbors or actors and spectators is not a distinction most New Urbanists make.

This is not just wishful thinking on my part. I recently analyzed the Charter of the New Urbanism to determine what it explicitly says about social goals in general, looking for clues about how notions like community, social equity and the common good are treated.¹ I found that the social goals of New Urbanism are most concerned with the common good, followed by social equity second and community last. In fact, I found no principles in the charter that were directly based on the social goal of "community." Instead, there are instances in which notions of community are used as descriptive material to support a given principle. True, there are various statements about the promotion of "social life," "civic bonds," "social identity" and the like, but community is not an explicit goal under any of the charter's twenty-seven principles. Most often, the idea of community is limited to short descriptive phrases that signify, perhaps, an underlying perception among New Urbanists that social bonds have somehow been damaged by sprawl. It is not inconsistent to question this assumption (as I do) and still

be a New Urbanist.

What critics most object to is the idea that New Urbanists may be trying to promote community to the exclusion of a more open public life. This interpretation is based on statements that seem to emphasize one form of public space over another. For example, statements made by Peter Calthorpe in his book, *The Next American Metropolis* refer to the need for places where "workers meet during lunch time," or that plazas should be able to act as "neighborhood meeting places."² But it is important to remember that although such places serve as meeting grounds for neighbors and co-workers, there is no exclusion of other types of activities. Statements about what people might typically do in a public place are merely descriptive. What is at issue is the design of public *place*, not public *life*, and it is not necessary to view quality design as an attempt to exclude particular behaviors.

Part of the confusion stems from the erroneous idea that New Urbanism is about implementing a prototype for the medieval village. If this were true, it might make sense to explore the distinction between *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* forms of association and postulate that New Urbanism is attempting to instill *gemeinschaft* fellowship and common identity as an alternative to the alienating angst created by the *gesellschaft* urbanism of detachment and impersonal relations. It would mean that New Urbanists are exclusively focused on the world of kinship while remaining essentially indifferent to the world of strangers. But there is no reason to suspect this, and there are no statements that I am aware of that indicate that this is the case.

The criticism is also made that New Urbanists are seeking a kind of conformity and consensus in

neighborhood social life. The problem with this assertion, however, is that it directly contradicts many of the New Urbanists' other explicitly stated goals. A careful reading of the charter suggests that the importance of social diversity is far more explicit and pervasive than anything said about "community." In particular, one of the main goals of New Urbanism is to reverse the segregationist trend found in U.S. cities by integrating multiple dwelling unit types and multiple types of uses in one locale. Unlike the goal of "community," these goals *do* have an explicit link to physical design. If it is true that New Urbanism seeks conformity and consensus among similar people (the *gemeinschaft* convergence of people with similar backgrounds and attitudes), then critics should be pointing out that New Urbanist contradict themselves by attempting to mix housing types.

If New Urbanists advocate community association to the exclusion of other types of public associations and behaviors, as some contend, then they must be actively discouraging more diverse, non-parochial forms of social relationship found in public life. They must be asserting that parochial realms are morally superior to free expressions of social non-conformism.

But this conclusion could be reached by any attempt to design, and therefore order, the public realm. For example, public spaces that are well integrated, dispersed, accessible and well-designed (adhering for example to the principle of space enclosure rather than space unbounded) could be interpreted as a quest for conformity and consensus, promoting rigid enforcement of certain codes of moral conduct. The reverse of this would be an ad-hoc, non-designed public realm—public spaces that are dispersed, unbounded, inaccessible except by the automobile and found

in strip malls and parking lots. These alternative types of spaces could be interpreted as good venues for a public life where people are able to engage in all kinds of self-satisfying behaviors that are free from social control.

Either attempt falls into the trap of physical determinism. In fact, both community life and public life, if such a distinction can be made, elude a territorial basis. For this reason, the distinction between public life and community life does not make a great deal of sense in the context of city design. Thus, even if New Urbanists did have the goal of creating community through design (and simultaneously excluding public life), they would not be able to accomplish it. A review of the sociological literature quickly reveals that "community" is much too complex to be designed.³ It involves multiple meanings and perceptions and the creation of it has to account for interaction effects (e.g., socio-economic status) as well as indirect effects (e.g., feelings of safety). Franck's 1984 article "Exorcising the Ghost of Physical Determinism" explains these points particularly well.⁴

The best that can be done is, first, to make sure that design doesn't actively get in the way of social interaction and, second, to provide venues that allow for a variety of types of civic engagement. It doesn't matter if one then meets strangers or neighbors in these places. Both types of interaction can happen, both are important, and it is neither necessary, desirable nor possible to focus on venues that exclude one or the other. It is possible to meet a friend under the Eiffel Tower just as it is possible to see a stranger in a neighborhood playground. The issue of community life versus public life is thus a straw man.

Rather than drawing distinctions between different desired social

behaviors, New Urbanists posit that social behavior—individual conduct that happens in a social place, as well as social interaction—is affected by design. Naturally, this interaction can take on many different flavors and lead to a variety of outcomes, but New Urbanists are primarily focused on making sure that a variety of well-designed and well-located spaces exist. These spaces range from tot lots and alleys to grand plazas and boulevards, and nowhere is there a denial that a variety of public places set the stage for a variety of social behaviors. The social interaction that occurs can be limited to mere observation (of individual theatrics, either non-threatening or threatening), it can lead to striking up a conversation with a stranger, or it can be a deliberate meeting between friends or colleagues. That it may lead to the shaping of public concepts of governance or to deriving pleasure from creating a public spectacle is entirely possible.

How can something so basic and simple—the need for accessible, well-designed and well-situated public spaces—have become so complex? It is true that public life in the classical open spaces of street, square or park has given way to a thriving public life in shopping malls and parking lots. But public life that emerges in a parking garage is public life desperately looking for a place to land, evidence that the public is willing to work with, however awkwardly, whatever place happens to be there. This is a testament to the tenacity of public life: it springs up here and there in spite of planning policies that for years have actively degraded a meaningful physical context. This hardly justifies a call for planning and building more of these *de facto* venues.

New Urbanists seem to be getting into trouble by asserting that there can be guidelines for designing a

better public realm. Often their designs for town centers, village greens and commons are seen as being in the same tradition as the anti-urban bias that pervades American culture. This amounts to a downgrading of the urban qualities of places like town centers. This is ironic, since office tower atria and parking lots—among the venues apparently preferred for a genuine public life—are the types of places associated with an ideal that is truly agrarian: suburbia.

That skyscraper atria and shopping mall hallways are not particularly noteworthy public spaces should be of concern, but some New Urbanist critics do not seem troubled. Instead, they seem to want to capitalize on some sort of missed opportunity for the public life potential of semi-public spaces such as these. New Urbanists, on the other hand, are proactively hoping to replace these de facto venues with something based, more concretely, on an explicit normative theory about public space. That is, promoting spaces that are not only publicly owned (and therefore more genuinely public than a shopping mall), but are also easier to reach by being integrated into neighborhood spatial design and adhering to principles of good urban form. That these goals have become a basis of criticism is a clear sign that the Emily Latella school of criticism is alive and well.

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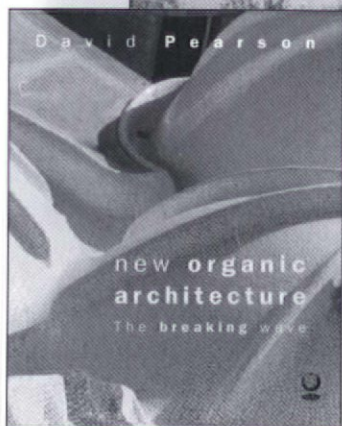
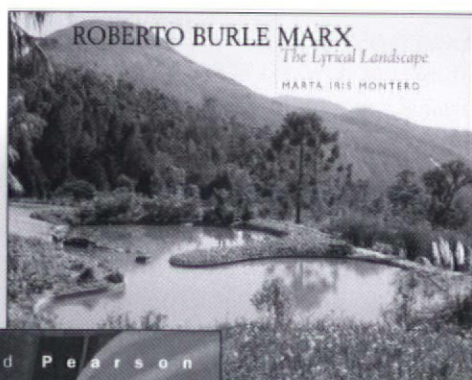
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Jamie Horwitz is associate professor of architecture at Iowa State University. She worked on a design assistance team that helped move a small town devastated by the floods of 1993 upland and into a national model of sustainable design, and continues to visit and write about the afterlife of the ghost town. Her current book, about architecture and food, was published by Princeton Architectural Press.

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Call for Submissions: Sixth Annual EDRA/*Places* Awards

Places and the Environmental Design Research Association announce the sixth annual EDRA/*Places* Awards for Place Design, Planning and Research. We seek nominations for exemplary design, planning and research projects from practitioners and researchers from any design or related discipline.

Awards will be presented in May, 2003, at EDRA's annual meeting in Minneapolis. Winning projects and commentary will be published in the Fall, 2003, issue of *Places*. The postmark deadline for submissions is February, 15, 2003.

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Each year *Places* and EDRA assemble a jury with diverse backgrounds in design, research, teaching and practice. The jury evaluates how each project, no matter what the discipline, addresses the human experience of well-designed places—and especially considers the transferability of research about human experience of place into design and planning practice—then selects six winners from three categories: place design, place planning and place research.

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Place Design. Any design project completed within the last five years (and long enough to assess how well it functions for its users) can be nominated. Nominations can consist of individual structures, spaces or elements, or groups that work together as a unit. They can involve the design of something new or the reuse of existing resources. The scale could be large or small, ranging from a local street to a civic boulevard, a community park to a regional greenway, a single room to a cluster of buildings and spaces.

Jury

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Marian Weiss, *Weiss Manfredi Architects*; *Univ. of Pennsylvania*

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Postmark deadline: February, 15, 2003

Mark Hoistad, AIA

The American
Institute of Architects
Committee on Design

A Global Context for Local Architecture

Historically, "context" has been understood as a local cultural and physical condition. Today, with the collapse of time and space facilitated by the media and the Internet, the very notion of "local" has become ambiguous. The strongest sense of distance contemporary society might feel is from the traditional notion of the local and the particular. Design is not immune to this circumstance in its affair with occupying the foreground at the expense or ignorance of the background.

In 2001, the American Institute of Architects Committee on Design (COD) focused on the relationship of design to context. At its fall conference, "Nebraska: Architecture in the Heartland," participants considered the notion that in architecture, the global foreground is supplanting the local background as the context for design. Paradoxically, Nebraska's location in the heartland of America has long filtered out many of the influences arriving on our shores.

This change in the notion of context was particularly evident at the meeting because it took place shortly after September 11. The Oklahoma City tragedy in 1997 certainly shook the foundations of our sense of social connection, but last year's attacks left many at the conference wondering about not only the future of the civic realm but also the vulnerability that the changing circumstance of context has created.

The conference began with a visual survey of Omaha by Marty Schukart, AICP, a former planner for the city. The slide show featured significant churches (Westminster Presbyterian, Our Lady of Lords), the Horace Cleveland-designed park system (Hanscom Park) and local neighborhoods (Happy Hollow, Dundee, Martin Meadows); considered the influence of topography and the trace

of an old Indian trail (Vinton Street); and identified various ethnic restaurants along the way to connect the group to the culture and rituals of the local ethnic communities.

The first site visit was to the new addition to the Joselyn Art Museum (Sir Norman Foster), an excellent example of the back-and-forth influence of the global and the local. The addition—a simple block that matches the scale and height of the original building and is clad in stone from the original quarry—is highly restrained and not at all the imported firecracker it could be. Foster chose to defer to the original building at the large scale, leaving the precision of its execution and detail to be the imported lessons for the local professional community. Foster's restraint provided an interesting point of departure for examining the notion of how context is influencing the architecture of the heartland and vice versa.

The next day the group visited St. Cecilia's Cathedral, a recently restored landmark (Bahr Vermeer Haecker), and the new Hruska Federal Courthouse (James Ingo Freed, DLR), one of the first projects of the U.S. General Services Administration's Design Excellence program. Both projects represent investment in the local community and aspire to be monuments in the urban landscape. The cathedral, with its imported Spanish revival design, will continue to serve in that capacity given the level of care and energy being spent on its restoration and its longstanding presence in the urban fabric. On the other hand, only time will tell if the bold-larded distance between the courthouse and the city will be spanned, and whether the stripped-down version of the original courthouse design (the aftermath of a forty percent budget cut) will spark a connection with the local community.



These forum pages are produced under an agreement between *Places/Design History Foundation* and the American Institute of Architects. This article reports on the AIA Committee on Design's visit to Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska, October 11-14, 2001. The conference chairs were Lowell Berg, AIA, and Patrick Leahy, AIA, and this year's committee chair was Wendy Evans Joseph, AIA. For information about AIA membership and upcoming programs, call 800-242-3837 or visit www.aia.org/pia/gateways



Later that day the group visited the Boys Town campus, as well as a new office building and a recently completed private residence. At Boys Town, standing out from the otherwise ordinary campus was the newly completed chapel (Dennis Raynor), built employing the stone-on-stone technology of Gothic architecture. This project seemed intent on resisting newly imported styles in favor of connecting to the traditional values taught at Boys Town.

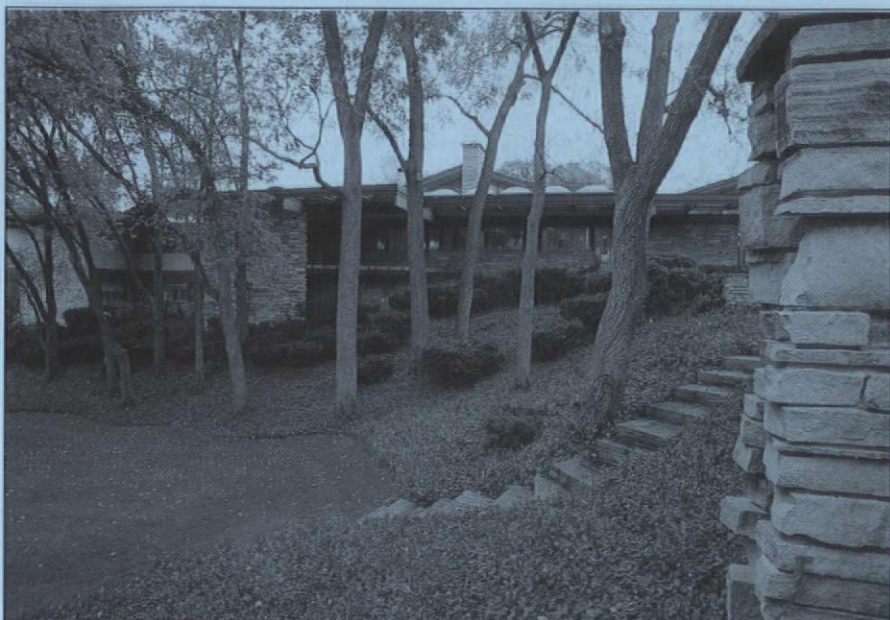
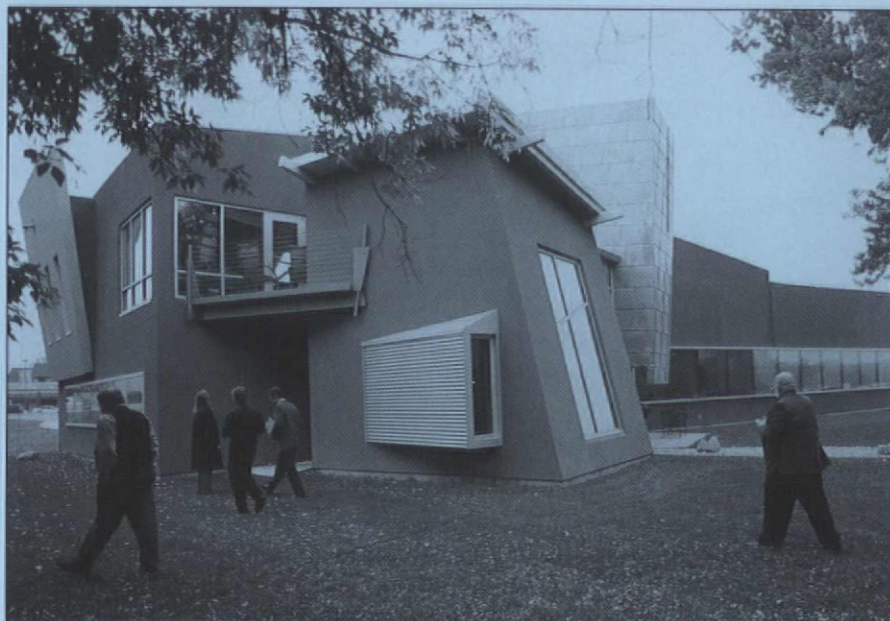
The 120 Blondo building (Randy Brown, AIA) is the prairie's response

to Santa Monica, a collection of composed fragments located at a busy intersection of two arterial streets. The project exudes youthful energy and, according to the architect, presents perhaps a more critical understanding of context that reflects a less romanticized view of the Plains in the contemporary world. The Schragger Residence (Don Polsky, AIA), with its rambling contemporary prairie style, is a minimalist frame for an extraordinary collection of imported contemporary art within. These two projects, in contrast to the traditional Boys

Town chapel, presented the struggle, merits and shortcomings in both local and imported design.

The real architectural highlight was the Bertram Goodhue-designed Nebraska State Capitol building in Lincoln. This project, which originated in a national design competition and was constructed in phases during the Great Depression, is a study in collaboration and the heights that can be reached when local and imported

Nebraska State Capitol (Bertram Goodhue).
Courtesy Nebraska Capitol Collections.



influence work together. The Capitol architect, Bob Ripley, AIA, related how Goodhue's practicality and bold departure from mimicking the national Capitol caught the eye of the competition jury.

Goodhue chose the imported notion of an Art Deco high-rise for the office space of the building rather than the traditional neoclassical domed monument. But he also consulted with Hartley Burr Alexander, the philosophy chair at the University

of Nebraska, on the local thematic and cultural condition. As a result, he incorporated Native American and settlers' themes in the materials, ornamentation, doors, light fixtures, and other components of the building. The resulting blend of imported Art Deco and local themes is a piece of architecture rich in detail at every turn.

The exoticism of faraway places has long sparked the imagination of architects and the public. Today, though, it is the emergence of a more fluid contextual condition, not so much a fascination with the exotic, that shapes the popular imagination.

We can sometimes observe, when our gaze broadens, that the local

foreground fails to have the presence it once did. This results in a disconnection with the particularities of place in favor of a distant vision. Incorporating influences beyond the local condition can and does enrich our environments, yet the tangible nature of that which is close at hand and familiar can be reassuring.

Does the quest to participate in the emerging global, imported context have to be at the expense of local knowledge? Might our fascination with the global context cause us to lose sight of the little things, so important in the discipline of architecture? For example, in a place like Nebraska, with its significant climate shifts over the course of the year, can one design a building the same way that would in southern California, with its benign climate?

The definition of context has changed. Connections are fluid in the collapsed space of our world today; distance can no longer buffer ideas or people from each other. At the same time, to ignore the presence of the local environment would disrupt any sense of continuity, casting one adrift in a world with no points of reference. It is not necessary to choose one vision over another in architectural design; if place is to survive in our time, we must strike a balance between the local and the global.

The conservative nature of the heartland and its penchant for pragmatic approaches provided the visiting architects with an opportunity to explore the emerging definition of context in a place that is still largely oriented toward the traditional. Nebraskans still appreciate the beauty of pragmatism, and favor a things with a tangible, lasting presence. In the Midwest psyche, innovation comes through hard work, not by casual inspiration or assistance from elsewhere, though this does not mean

Above: 120 Blondo Building (Randy Brown, AIA).

Below: Schragger Residence (Don Polsky, AIA).

Photos courtesy Ian Mackinlay, FAIA.



the region is blind to outside influences, as can be seen with the Art Deco Capitol.

Perhaps, though, a healthier civic realm can emerge from a local context that is rediscovered, and reinvigorated, by contact with a diversity of outside voices. Perhaps we can find a middle ground where immediate presence of the local conditions is

enriched by the global currents of our time. I, like many in the Plains, am optimistic about the future.

Mark Hoistad, AIA, is chair of the architecture department at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and a practicing architect with Davis Design in Lincoln.

Top: Hruska Federal Courthouse (James Ingo Freed, DLR). Photo courtesy Ian Mackinley, FAIA.

Bottom: Joselyn Art Museum (Sir Norman Foster). Photo by Tom Kessler.

John Rahaim, Ray Gastil,
Karen Hundt

City Design Centers

American Planning
Association Urban Design/
Preservation Division

Introduction

Cities have typically organized their urban design activities within their planning departments, but in recent years there seems to have been a growing desire for establishing urban design centers that have their own identity.

There are any number of reasons why urban design is once again receiving public attention. One is that the development boom of the 80s and 90s generated increasing public concern about the pace of change in cities and the quality of development, concern that often manifested itself in opposition to projects. So there has been a growing pressure on the public sector to be concerned about the quality of what is being built.

Another reason is that there is a growing interest in urban quality of life in general, and an increasingly sophisticated understanding about the role urban design plays in that issue.

But why create a new organization, an urban design center? For one thing, the opportunity is there. Many large cities eliminated their urban design functions because of downsizing, and small and medium cities never had an urban design function in any form.

For another, there is a desire for urban designers to be more entrepreneurial. That means creating organizations that have one foot in and one foot out of city government, which can operate in a way that is perceived as not really being part of city government (even if they really are).

There are three basic models for design centers, and each of the following presentations represents one of them. One model is the design center that is totally housed within city government, such as my office, CityDesign, in Seattle. At the opposite end of the spectrum is the independent non-

profit that is focused on urban design issues. Ray Gastil represents one of those, The Van Alen Institute in New York City. The third model is a hybrid, funded by some combination of city government, universities or other sources. The Chattanooga Planning and Design Studio is one, and Karen Hundt will speak about it.

In spite of the generic title "urban design center," our organizations have fairly different missions, but there are similarities that often include work program items such as design review of development projects as well as education and outreach. And, inevitably, our work involves a collaboration between a number of public sector and private sector entities. Urban design by its very nature is collaborative, intergovernmental and inter-jurisdictional. What ties us all together, and what gives us our commonality, is that what we are all about is making the public sector a better client. That, perhaps, is the most important role that an urban design center, and an urban designer, can play.

—John Rahaim



These forum pages are produced under an agreement between *Places/Design History Foundation* and the American Planning Association, Urban Design and Preservation Division. This article reports on a session at the last national APA Conference, held April 14-17 in Chicago. The chair of APA's Urban Design and Preservation Division is Karen Hundt. For more information about APA membership, upcoming programs and resources, visit www.planning.org.

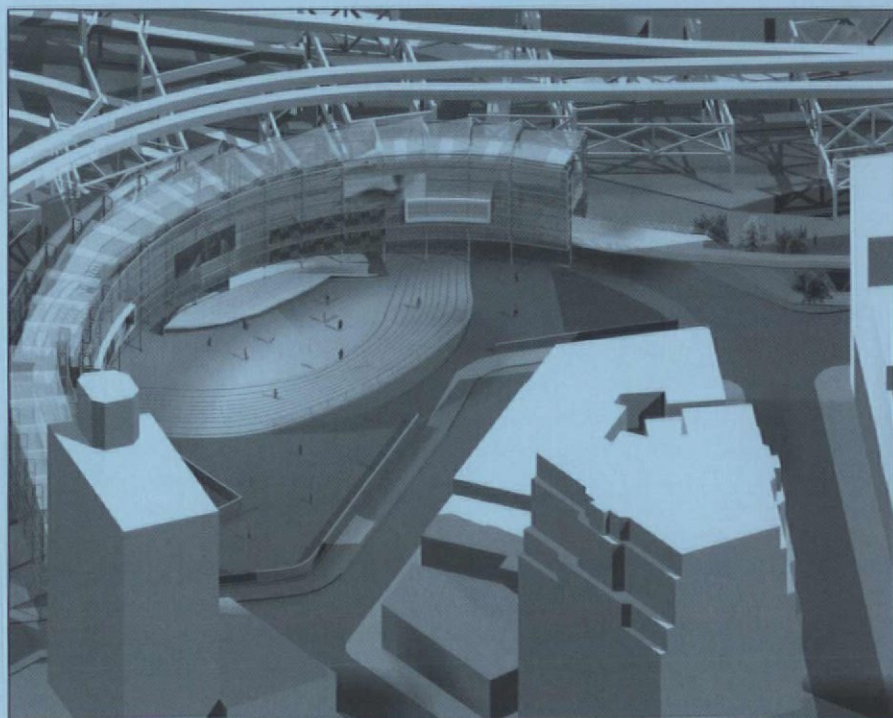
Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture, New York

The Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture is a private not for profit in New York City. We sponsor exhibitions, competitions, public forums and publications that try to raise the bar about what design can be for a city. We don't consider New York, even, to be a hothouse of excellence in the built environment, and that's something we want to change.

We were endowed by William Van Alen, architect of the Chrysler Building. One thing that our name asserts, and which those of you in urban design know, is that private projects often have enormous public impact. The Chrysler Building is good example; it shaped the public's impression of de-sign in New York, yet it was entirely an effort of private enterprise.

We collaborate with communities, civic groups, city agencies, schools and others. One of our most important roles is making the public sector a better client for design, or what I call "investing in the client realm." We:

- Help public agencies recognize the consequences of their actions, in physical and environmental terms.
- Help agencies and community groups realize that urban design means more than putting flower baskets on street lamps.
- Help private interests realize that there will be a political and financial return on urban design investments.
- Help the architectural community look at urban design not as a bunch of guidelines that get in the way of doing creative work but as an opportunity for doing better work.
- Help the urban design and planning community realize that big plans and bold designs by architects are not simply egomaniacal wrongs, but sometimes may be right for the city.
- Help the public and its leadership



recognize that public architecture that incorporates urban design is at its base is about ideas as much as anything else, and that ideas are not a bad thing.

- Help academics who study space and place realize that without a physical environment, none of their ideas about public life count for much.

We try to focus on places that have consequences for more than just the immediate neighborhood. In Queens, the borough president asked us to organize a design competition for Queens Plaza, where a major bridge, elevated and underground subway lines, and some arterial streets all converge in a large public space. There was new zoning to turn the area into an office district, and upcoming air quality and transportation study, and increased interest from arts groups and design-related businesses. Without visualization and the involvement of the larger public, she thought, we would never get interesting ideas about how the district could change.

After 9/11, we joined with twenty-

one other design and planning organizations in an effort called New York New Visions—a scale of collaboration that has never occurred in New York before. One of my colleagues noted that New York is like Santamino, the city with so many different towers, a metaphor for the idea that there should be different organizations doing the same thing. NYNV has been worthwhile, but there is also a reason to have competing efforts. Providing an outlet for competing voices is one way that a design center can help a city achieve quality design.

—Raymond Gastil
Raymond Gastil is executive director of the Van Alen Institute.

Proposal for a "media wall" at Queens Plaza in New York City, winner of a recent design competition. Graphics by Surachai Akekapobyotin and Juthathip Techachumreon. Courtesy Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture.

CityDesign, Seattle

CityDesign was established in 1999 in Seattle's Department of Design Construction and Land Use and Construction. It grew out of the desire of the Seattle Design Commission, an appointed body that reviews all of the city's public works, for the city to get out in front of private development, rather than just react to it. Mayor Paul Schell, who formerly was dean of the University of Washington architecture school, was strongly supportive at the time.

There are three parts to our work program, some of which we inherited, such as design review and project review, and some of which we invented as we went along. Those latter functions include strategic urban design work and education and outreach, which is probably the most difficult for a public sector office to do.

As part of our design review work, we staff the Design Commission, which reviews the city's capital public projects, from the new city hall designed by Peter Bohlin to the controversial but interesting new central library designed by Rem Koolhaas. The commission's work is interesting because, inevitably, these projects can't be talked about in isolation, so the commission has become more and more involved in discussions about the larger urban design issues that surround these projects.

We also staff a panel that reviews the design of the city's light rail system, which will start construction this summer—the transit agency actually funds one of our staff positions. And we advise a separate design review program that considers all private residential and commercial development in the city above certain thresholds.

Secondly, we take on strategic urban design work. Our focus has



largely been in the center city because that's where most of Seattle's growth is taking place. We are currently looking at how to create open spaces for and connections among the various parts of downtown.

Allan Jacobs says that if you add up all the acreage of the parks, plazas and other conventional open spaces in your city, it wouldn't come close to the amount of space devoted to streets. By our measurements, thirty percent of the land in downtown Seattle is in the public right-of-way. So it makes great sense for us to look at streets and to think about them as open space. We took on a program called "green streets," which was already on the books and allows certain streets that have low traffic volumes to become alternative kinds of open space. Developers are able to achieve bonuses if they contribute to building part of a green street.

Even though we are a small office, for us to be effective, we need to take on a full range of activities, from

large-scale urban design plans to coming as close as possible to implementation. That is not only our best hope for political survival, but it also helps us to learn from each end of the spectrum; the street design work greatly informs our larger urban design work and vice versa.

—John Rabaim

John Rabaim is Executive Director of the Seattle Design Commission and CityDesign, and the former Associate Director of the Department of City Planning in Pittsburgh.

Proposal for a "green street," part of a program of alternative street designs. Courtesy CityDesign.

Chattanooga Planning and Design Studio

Chattanooga's Planning and Design Studio is officially an office of the joint Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency, which provides us with funding and staff. But we really are a combination public-private organization. We also receive funding and staffing from The River City Company, a not-for-profit development corporation. The Lyndhurst Foundation, which has been instrumental in Chattanooga's turnaround, was one of the original partners in the studio and continues to provide funding. And the University of Tennessee School of Architecture, which is located in Knoxville, also provides funding and staffing for our office.

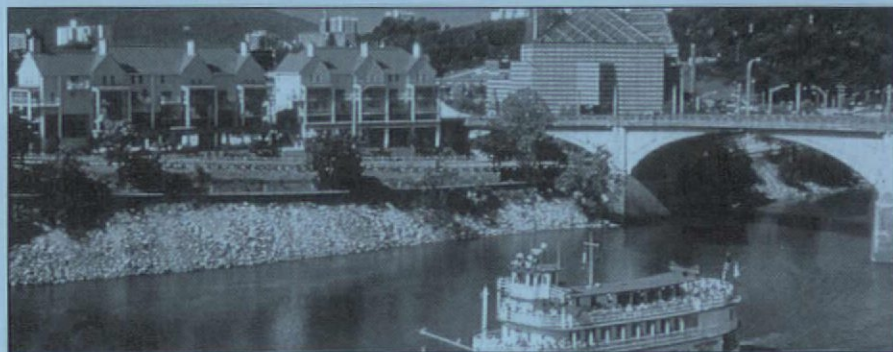
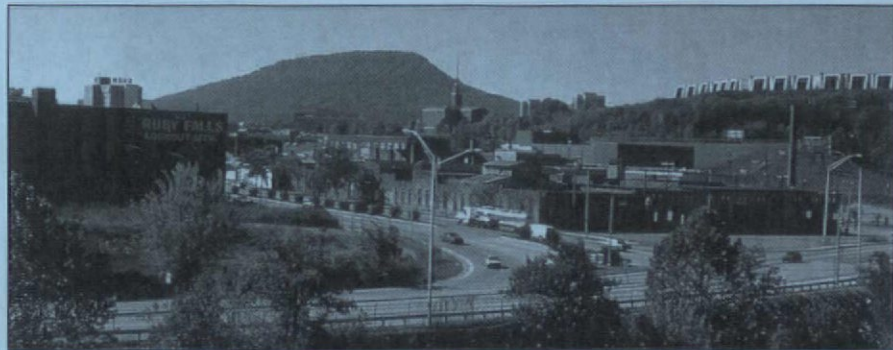
To be quite honest, we use this situation to our advantage: On some days we talk about how we are part of local government, and on other days we are able to stress our autonomy.

We basically concentrate on three kinds of work. We spend our time helping the community develop a collective vision, on doing good solid planning and on implementation.

The word "collective" is key. You cannot do any kind of major project in Chattanooga anymore without significant public participation. We've done such a good job of involving the community that they now expect it, in fact, they demand it. For example, we had a kickoff recently for a new downtown planning process. We had an event at 7:45 a.m., and more than three hundred people showed up, just to talk about downtown planning. That's the kind of response we get.

Next is good solid planning. One of the differences between the design

Ross's Landing, on the Chattanooga River, before and after redevelopment. Courtesy Chattanooga Planning and Design Studio.



studio and a conventional planning agency is that we spend a lot of time looking at the third dimension. Planning agencies often look at two dimensional maps, zoning maps, policies, subdivision regulations, those sorts of things. We try to look at how things are really going to look in the built environment.

Implementation is a large part of what we do. For example, we were concerned about a wonderful old building downtown that was vacant. We made some renderings showing what it could look like; then, working with River City Company, we found someone to take this project on. Our local United Way chapter needed to expand, so we convinced them to purchase this building, renovate it and move in. A lot of our time is spent in collaboration and coordination for these types of projects.

Another arena we work in is the public realm—public spaces, such as parks, plazas or streets. We spend a lot

of time on street projects, whether it's looking at the design of new pedestrian lights, picking tree species with the urban forester, making sure a new restaurant's cafe doesn't take over the sidewalk, or persuading the state transportation office to let us try two-way streets again downtown. These details are really very critical from an urban design standpoint.

Great projects require great planning, and I would add that they require great design. We can't have architects on one side, planners on another and engineers and public works in another corner. We have to work together, and I think that our design studio's role is to be a convener, to bring those people together.

—Karen Hundt

Karen Hundt is director of the Chattanooga Planning and Design Studio.

Tridib Banerjee,
Todd W. Bressi, Philip
Enquist, John Rahaim

American Planning
Association Urban Design/
Preservation Division

Is Urban Design on the Right Track?

Todd W. Bressi: In the last decade, there seems to have been a growing interest in urban design and physical planning. Cities themselves, and urban ways of living, have seen a remarkable resurgence as well.

University programs are proliferating (although some are struggling for enrollment) as are general courses in urbanism. Firms and practitioners are adding urban design to their portfolios; cities, developers, civic groups are generating dialogues of all sorts, charrettes, workshops, civic forums. Even the Congress for the New Urbanism is approaching its tenth anniversary as an organization.

It's an opportune moment, then, to ask, "Is Urban Design on the Right Track?"

I would like to preface this discussion with remarks related to the conference "Urban Design Now," which was held last April in New York and sponsored by Harvard, Columbia and the Van Alen Institute. The conference focused primarily on what urban design is, but also reflected on where urban design has come from, and that might give us a better context for this discussion.

The field of urban design is generally dated back to a seminal conference at Harvard in 1956, at which Harvard's dean at the time, Josep Lluís Sert, set forth the propositions that would underlie it. According to an article in the conference publication by Margaret Crawford and Andrea Kahn, two things set urban design apart from other types of environmental design practice at the time.

First, Sert thought that urban design would be an alternative arena for architects, planners and landscape designers to work together in a common concern for the physical form of the city—a vehicle for overcoming fragmentation among disciplines.

Second, he thought urban design

would be a mode of practice for people who were committed to the idea of the city and the culture of the city. So urban design was fundamentally linked to the idea of urbanism, as well.

Crawford and Kahn note that a number of changes have occurred in the profession over the past few decades, and that it faces new challenges. For example, they say, by the 1980s, the modernist inclination of most urban designers, which was laid out in the discussions at Harvard and subsequent conferences, yielded to what they call a "post-modern contextualism," which has evolved into ideas like New Urbanism and neo-traditionalism.

They note that the urban development process has been characterized by an increasing number of, and increasingly complex, public-private partnerships, challenging notions of civic responsibility and public access to urban space.

They note the increasing importance of aesthetics in city development, and question whether the focus on the visual character of cities is a "dangerous concealment of social realities."

And they note that the nation has become increasingly suburban, and wonder whether urban design, with a commitment to cities, is losing its relevance. Or, conversely, I might ask, are urban designers prepared to engage the scale, the systems and the kinds of lifestyles that characterize the suburban landscape?

I would suggest an additional set of concerns of my own. Is urban design, as practiced and studied, founded on a strong enough research or knowledge basis? Is it overly directed towards formal strategies without strong approaches for understanding local conditions? Has there been enough evaluation of recent



These forum pages are produced under an agreement between *Places/Design History Foundation* and the American Planning Association, Urban Design and Preservation Division. This article reports on a session at the last national APA Conference, held April 14-17 in Chicago. The chair of APA's Urban Design and Preservation Division is Karen Hundt. For more information about APA membership, upcoming programs and resources, visit www.planning.org.

urban design strategies—do we know enough about what we've been doing to be doing it well?

Let me start the discussion by revisiting one of Sert's propositions. From your different vantages, has urban design been successful at being an integrative force among the different design disciplines, architecture, planning and landscape architecture?

John Rahaim: I would argue that for the most part urban design has not been successful in this regard. And I think that is largely because we have not been able to define urban design in a way that the public, that elected officials can really understand. So we have not been the force in city building that we otherwise could be. That's something the New Urbanists have been successful at, packaging and marketing what they do.

Tridib Banerjee: From the academic perspective, I might begin by noting that this year something like seventeen different planning programs are recruiting for positions in urban design or related fields, which is probably the one concentration with the highest number of positions available this year.

The question is whether urban design has been sufficiently institutionalized in public sector planning. My sense is that it has been to some extent, it is part of most planning organizations, but I don't think it has come to have the central role that our predecessor had expected.

My sense is that the time of the grand visionary urban design plan is over, that we are talking about "make no big plans." Urban design, like planning generally, has become much more democratized, much more pluralistic, and in that sense it has served an integrative function across the class ranges and neighborhood differences. We are seeing more smaller-scale urban design efforts, a lot of urban

design initiatives that are coming from the private sector, sometimes neighborhood groups are pushing for urban design improvements in the context of community development. With infrastructure development, ISTEA money and so forth, there is a lot going on.

So we are seeing more of a "thousand points of light approach" to urban design than one single grand visionary approach and the central synthetic role that they thought of in those days.

Bressi: Phil, do you have experience, in the consulting you've done, with municipalities that have set themselves up to be good clients for urban design?

Enquist: I'm seeing some clients that are as sophisticated as we are in terms of interest and knowledge of urban design. In Chicago, Mayor Richard Daley is fascinated by urban design and the quality of the public realm, and has challenged his departments of the environment, planning and transportation to look at things from an urban design perspective. The goal is for Chicago to be America's greenest city, and that is influencing all sorts of improvements within the public realm. In Milwaukee, we're working with John Norquist, another mayor who has really understood the importance of urban design and the commitment to the public realm and is bringing interesting changes to the city.

I've also had experiences in a few suburban communities that have taken the initiative to get all their departments together around the table, the transportation department, the civil engineering groups, the planning groups, to talk about these issues together, and take the walls down between their different disciplines.

Bressi: Tridib, what is happening in planning programs that are expanding into urban design with coursework or

faculty? Are they finding ways to forge good alliances with architecture and landscape architecture programs, or is there suspicion?

Banerjee: Obviously, Harvard has a long tradition of having all the disciplines under one roof, and they seem to have worked things out, and the University of California, Berkeley, has similar relationships, but I haven't seen at the academic level in general any great sort of integrative effort in the curriculum.

I've noticed that many of the new positions are being advertised in schools that are not traditionally linked to architecture, like geography and public policy. The faculty there are not inherently sensitive or sympathetic to urban design, but they are advertising for these positions because they feel there is a demand, that students are interested. Whether the absence of a connection with architecture would hurt them, I don't know, though I would guess that they are probably better off in that they don't have to fight the territorial battles that often arise in places with a stronger connection to architecture.

Typically there are two or three models for planning schools. One is the traditional model where it shares the same roof with the school of architecture. That does not necessarily suggest a friendly relationship between architecture and planning. In recent years, planning schools have begun to look at urban design from a larger perspective, from the view of the city as a whole, and policies and implementation and institutional issues.

Bressi: Is academic fragmentation is harder to address than municipal or political fragmentation?

Enquist: That issue doesn't just apply to universities, it's all over, including in my own office, where I have architects who refuse to work with

the urban design and planning studios because they think it's beneath them somehow.

Banerjee: One of the reasons we have difficulty with interdisciplinary work in the university is the tenure and promotion process, which basically determines faculty members' lives and careers, and are based on their commitment and basis in a particular discipline. Very few urban design programs have faculty of their own; as an academic discipline, urban design doesn't have a real identity. So you have a foot in architecture, planning or landscape architecture or some combination. But universities are very much aware of this and are trying to create interdisciplinary initiatives.

Bressi: Let's talk about Sert's notion that urban design is a field whose practitioners have a fundamental commitment to cities and urbanism. Does urban design offer the right paradigms? Does it have the right knowledge base, the right research tools for dealing with the wide range of development patterns that one finds in metropolitan regions?

Enquist: Suburbs are a fascinating topic now; there are very interesting things happening. Suburbs in America in general didn't have the benefit of our predecessors' interest in infrastructure, so the road system is generally all they have and often that's not enough. There are too few roads, and they are too wide, generally, and many are not even connected effectively.

In Chicago, we are now seeing suburbs trying to get rail stations. Schuamberg wants an extension of the Blue Line so it can connect to O'Hare Airport by rail. Prairie Crossing at Greys Lake is trying to add two rail stations, on a Wisconsin Central and a Metro Line, so that they can connect to Chicago and O'Hare. They see this as valuable to their communities.

There's also an interest in mixed-

use development, housing over garages, having "granny flats" if you will in single-family neighborhoods. We've just been involved in a project in Highland Park here, just about twenty miles outside of Chicago, it's mixed use with rental housing, retail, office, being built within walking distance to a train station.

Rahaim: In Seattle, many suburban communities are becoming more vocal about creating places out of their communities, and they are doing this in an after-the-fact kind of way. The city of Bellevue, which is a pretty high-density suburb, consciously made a decision to turn what was a suburban office center into an urban, mixed-use environment, and is doing this over a twenty-five-year period.

Part of the reason for this is the state has sent a message to every community: density is not a question of whether you are going to have it, everyone is going to have to accept more density. Once you get beyond that argument, the question is how do you become more dense, and that has enabled this discussion about placemaking.

I think in terms of research, it would be useful to understand how one can go about doing this. It would be helpful to develop case studies of how cities can start creating places out of what were traditional suburban placeless communities.

Banerjee: I don't think the suburban arena is different from the arena of urban design. I have always considered Clarence Perry, who designed the neighborhood unit concept, which pretty much dictated the design of most early suburbs, very much an urban designer.

The real issue is sprawl versus the compact city. How to re-morph sprawl into more compact urban form is a real challenge for urban designers. It's not just a matter of design, there

are a lot of problems of politics and other kinds of institutional and structural difficulties.

For example, zoning plays a powerful role in preserving the landscape and built form. There is a good reason for that, because one thing zoning does is to protect the secondary mortgage market. When people are buying homes, they are not only choosing a place to live, they are also making an investment. They are not only financing a home, but also their children's college tuition and things like that. Yet it is the single-family home that continues to be the bane of urban designers and the real problem of sprawl and the compact city.

As urban designers we have not historically paid much attention to the larger political-economic problem of urban form. We can always make small-scale changes, what designers call placemaking, but fundamentally, the restructuring of the American metropolis from low-density sprawl to more dense urban form remains a daunting challenge.

Bressi: John, even though you come from Seattle, much of the city is built to single-family density, so you are capturing one end of the suburban scale. Seattle has had a lot of experience with trying to do infill and densification in neighborhood centers, but has faced a lot of resistance—

Rahaim: That's definitely true. Even though we are experiencing substantial increases in density, seventy percent of the city is zoned for single-family residential, and that is unlikely to change, so the vast majority of the growth in this city is actually happening on less than thirty percent of the land area in the city, which is an interesting discussion in and of itself.

In talking about tools, most cities have essentially done urban design through regulation, good or bad. I think some of the tools are in need of

serious updating. For example, generally the standard for commercial streets and downtown streets in Seattle is that buildings are built to the property line and retail is required for the majority of the frontage. That seems like a great idea: you put retail along the edges of the street, you activate the streets, and so on. The problem is that that creates an amount of retail that is beyond the capacity of the market to absorb. We really have to think more carefully, and in a more nuanced way, about how to create active streets.

Banerjee: In planning we can approach urban design from a larger public policy perspective, so we can think about other measures that affect people's choices and preferences. For example, a major problem for the American metropolis is that we have uneven standards for schools, and as long as there is a significant difference in the quality of school districts, you will see this fragmentation. Unless we can address those issues in urban design, just tinkering with the built form itself is not going to change the fundamental, structural reason why we have sprawl and not compact living.

Bressi: As I said earlier, the Congress for the New Urbanism will soon be celebrating its tenth year as a formal organization. What has New Urbanism accomplished? Is New Urbanism on the right track?

Rahaim: One thing New Urbanists have done is to create a cachet around their movement, and frankly they've done a much better job than those of us who have practiced urban design for many years. One reason for this is that most of their work is focussed on single developments built by single developers, so you can wrap a product with a single marketing package.

Enquist: The charter is a very impressive document, and I reference

it quite a bit. What the New Urbanists have done is to sound a wake-up call to the design profession, that it was neglecting the suburban environment. You have relegated the design of suburbs to traffic engineers and residential developers. Where is the designer in suburban development?

Rahaim: I also think CNU has helped advance the discussion about design and urbanism, particularly about pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development. They have raised some awareness about the need to think differently about development patterns, about some mixed-use. But one could argue about how successful New Urbanist projects have been in that regard.

Banerjee: I'm not sure their solutions are necessarily that versatile. I mean, once you have seen one, it seems like you have seen them all. There is a repetition. The concepts are somewhat limited, yet they are applied to all of the opportunities and possibilities. New Urbanist projects also seem to be oriented to upper-class, upper middle-class neighborhoods, rather than poorer areas. And is quite a little bit of physical determinism in their arguments, the belief that you can shape people's lives and behaviors by how you design the environment.

Enquist: I think traditional urban designers would simply like to see more depth in coverage, and not just focus on new communities, and I think New Urbanists are aggressively trying to do that. They are focusing more on second and third generations of land use, redevelopment issues, brownfields issues, and now you're starting to see larger, regional issues being addressed.

Banerjee: What the New Urbanists have done, if nothing else, is to inject an enormous amount of passion and mobilize a lot of support not only among professionals but also among

lay people. They have touched a hidden source of energy in the public at large.

Enquist: They should be commended for permeating their message down, basically, to a lay audience. They have had a great reach through their movement.

Banerjee: New Urbanism has made a lot of people angry, so we now have a lively discussion going on, and that's a very good contribution. The movement is something that was needed and they made a very timely contribution.

Todd W. Bressi is executive editor of Places and a lecturer in urban design and planning at the University of Pennsylvania.

John Rahaim is executive director of the Seattle Design Commission and CityDesign.

Philip Enquist is partner-in-charge of urban design and planning at Skidmore Owings & Merrill in Chicago.

Tridib Banerjee is a professor of urban and regional planning at the University of Southern California.

U.S. General Services
Administration, Center
for Urban Development

Before the Jersey Barrier: Public Access and Public Safety in Federal Buildings

The chilling events of September 11, 2001, and the bombing of the Murragh Federal Building and the World Trade Center in the years before, have forever changed the way people think about security in urban areas. Just as cities have developed ways to turn back spiraling crime rates, now they must find strategies for bracing public facilities and landmarks against the possibility of deliberate, terroristic attacks.

The U.S. General Service Administration's Public Buildings Service, responsible for maintaining the inventory of federal office buildings and courthouses across the nation, is squarely in the middle of this issue. Because of the activities that occur in them and because of their impact on the cityscape, federal buildings play an important role in shaping our civil society. The way they are designed and managed as civic assets is of utmost public significance: their importance can make them targets for people or organizations who wish to air their grievances.

Since last September, design professionals have had vigorous debates about designing safe cities, about how architecture and site planning can be configured to discourage the use of buildings as targets and to improve their chances of survival if attacked. One of the most common short-term outcomes has been to increase the distance between buildings and potential threats, by closing off public spaces, shutting down parking lanes on surrounding streets and creating perimeters around federal buildings with bollards, heavy-duty planters or so-called "Jersey barriers."

But GSA building managers and the Federal Protective Service, charged with providing security in federal buildings, are also learning that security does not stop at the Jersey barrier; in fact, it probably

doesn't even start there. Just as critical are the arrangements by which people—from federal employees to contractors, from visitors to deliverers—are given access to a building.

Some situations are extraordinarily complex. The Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C., for example, hosts not only conferences, a District of Columbia visitors' center and a food court for tourists, but also frequent visits from the President, foreign dignitaries and other high-level officials.

GSA has also more typical spaces, such as the plazas and atriums of federal office buildings and courthouses. In other places, GSA continues to accommodate large gatherings in both indoor and outdoor spaces. In Syracuse, evening concerts are staged on a plaza that surrounds and runs underneath an elevated federal building and courthouse. In Chicago, a farmers market, arts and crafts fairs and even a large ethnic festival take place regularly on the plaza at a federal building in the Loop. In Tacoma, weddings and other celebrations occur in the rotunda of an historic train station that has been converted for use as a courthouse.

In these cases, heightened levels of security are provided not so much by barriers, but by careful arrangements for monitoring public access. These policies are worked out, site by site, patiently and deliberately, not only to provide for security but also to allow the activities to function as they ordinarily would. GSA and its colleagues, from the managers of the Reagan Building/ITC to the non-profit group that runs events in Syracuse, are developing a new art and science of public-spirited public space management in this time of heightened caution.



These forum pages are produced under an agreement between the Design History Foundation and the U.S. General Services Administration, Center for Urban Development. For more information, contact: Center for Urban Development, Public Buildings Service, U.S. General Services Administration, 1800 F St., NW, Suite 6037, Washington, D.C. 20405, 202 501 1881
www.goodneighbor.gsa.gov

State of the Art Management

The Reagan Building/ITC is an extraordinary federal building in many respects, not the least of which is the sheer amount of public activity that occurs there. The building includes a food court, restaurant and the official District of Columbia visitors' center, all open to the public; offices for federal agencies and private businesses; and conference and meeting facilities where nearly 1,200 events—from a summit of ministers from NATO nations to trade forums to weddings—are held each year. Woodrow Wilson Plaza/Daniel Patrick Moynihan Place, just outside, hosts a daily lunchtime performance series in the summer as well as special events like Hollywood-style film premieres and cooking extravaganzas.

Ironically, this busy 3.1 million square foot building is located in the heart of the largest office federal compound in the country—the seven-square-block Federal Triangle. For the most part it is a quiet area, wedged between the bustle of Washington's downtown retail district and the tourist-thronged attractions on the Mall; except for the National Archives and Old Post Office Building a few blocks down Pennsylvania Avenue, there are no major public facilities nearby.

The diverse activities in the Reagan Building/ITC (the second largest federal office building, after the Pentagon) are not only an exemplar of GSA's Good Neighbor policies but also an important part of the building's finances. Unlike most federal buildings, its construction was funded via long-term debt, and the ITC (the public component) receives no annual operating appropriation. Rents from federal tenants and ITC revenues (rents from private sector tenants and fees for special events) help retire the debt and also contributes toward the



management and operating costs of operating the building.

Security concerns have always been paramount here, because of the building's location (on Pennsylvania Avenue between the White House and the Capitol), because the building was opened after the Murrah bombing and due to the high concentration of federal workers in the building (which houses the headquarters of the U.S. Customs Service, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, as well as a component of the Environmental Protection Agency). GSA's Federal Protective Service (FPS) and the manager of the Trade Center's public spaces and events, have evolved an in-depth, yet straightforward, protocol for maintaining necessary security while allowing all manner of public activities.

Security occurs in layers. Since the building is nestled in the Federal Triangle compound, only two sides are open to the street, and vehicles are made to keep their distance by on-street parking restrictions and bollards that prevent access to the plaza. GSA has a more attractive perimeter security concept plan that will provide the necessary security while making it more visually appealing and more accessible on a human scale.

The guards (who are also a GSA contractor force) at the building's seven entrances and security cameras that monitor the streets and entrances "are our security perimeter. They are like a fence, just an invisible fence," explained Douglas Avery, GSA's Deputy Security Manager for the building.

Anybody can stroll into the plaza or walk into Michael Jordan's restaurant, which is tucked into a pavillion on one



side of the Reagan Building/ITC, without passing through any special checking. To get into the building's public spaces, visitors must pass through an airport-style checkpoint. And to enter one of the towers that house federal and private offices, visitors must pass through a second airport-style checkpoint.

This system provides a base level of

security for the entire building while allowing the Federal agencies to tailor additional levels of inspection to their own needs, Avery said. "To a person not used to security, it can be disconcerting, but once inside you can walk anywhere," said Don Shapiro, who manages events and security for the trade center manager.

Deliveries are carefully choreographed by the FPS, the guard service contractor and the trade center manager, who also oversees the garage operations. Delivery trucks must be screened off-site, at the Southeast Federal Center, then sealed for the trip downtown. Then, when the trucks park at the loading dock, someone has to stay with them at all times. In addition, the trade center manager does all catering in-house and has developed a list of preferred vendors for other services; the manager collects background information about their employees and sends it to FPS for review and approval.

"It's not taking the easiest route, efficiency is not the first thing we look at here," Shapiro acknowledged. "But once you follow the procedure, it's easy, and there's no delay." While it may add a bit to the cost of doing

business at the ITC, many clients think the trade-off is fair for the level of security the building offers.

In practice, the key to making these arrangements work has been flexibility. The trade center manager and FPS have weekly planning meetings, and the building's security committee meets every two weeks, so there is plenty of opportunity to anticipate and address special situations. "We do try to balance security needs with the building's legislative mission to be open and accessible to the public," Avery said. Shapiro agreed: "There's lots of give and take."

For example, one client requested an reception that would take place both in the building's atrium and on the plaza, under a tent. To accomplish that, guests were screened at the building entrance and given a special wristband, which allowed them to move out to the plaza and back inside. The plaza area was configured with a secure perimeter, which was patrolled by guards paid for by the client.

Another event involved so many guests that they could not be screened efficiently at the building entrance. So the event sponsor asked guests to assemble at a different location, where they were screened and put on buses, which were escorted to the building.

Like many federal buildings, after Sept. 11 "this place was a fortress," Avery said. Everyone entering the building was screened, with the result that "people were lined up to Virginia just to get inside, and that was not acceptable." But because the building had such thorough procedures in place, it could get back to normal in short order. The parking garage was closed for only two days, and a wedding went on as scheduled the very next weekend.

Business dropped off briefly last fall, but over the twelve months business has been stronger than it was in

Opposite: Afternoon concert on Woodrow Wilson Plaza. Photo by Photographics.

Top: National security conference, Ronald Reagan Building/International Trade Center. Photo by Freed Photography.

Bottom: Public food court, Ronald Reagan Building/International Trade Center. Photo courtesy Trade Center Management Associates.

the previous year—compared to a general drop off in the hospitality business in Washington over the last year. This is a tribute both to the building and to the spirit of flexibility and partnership in which GSA's management and its contractors operate.

Syracuse: Party in the Plaza Parties On

The "Party in the Plaza" at the Hanley Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse is more than a nineteen-year tradition; it's a lynchpin of nightlife in Syracuse, New York.

Every Wednesday in the summer, starting about five p.m., the party fills up the plaza that surrounds the courthouse/office complex and even flows underneath an elevated section of the building. Up to 10,000 people turn out to listen to bands like ... , dance and munch on all manner of festival food.

"This makes or breaks businesses in downtown Syracuse, it's like another weekend night," explained William A. Cooper, president of the UpDowntowners, the volunteer group that organizes the events. On top of that, profits are distributed among other local groups to help them organize additional public events downtown—last year fifteen groups split \$48,000.

Security for the event was tightened after the Oklahoma City bombing, according to Cooper and Joan Grennon, GSA's property manager for the building. Since then, for example, city police and bomb-sniffing dogs have inspected every vehicle that comes on the plaza—including delivery trucks, trailers for food vendors, even the local radio station's promotional van.

"This year, though, we had some increased concerns," Grennan said. "The chief judge invited us in to see if this should be a 'go' or a 'no go.' He

was interested in hearing what additional security measures they were going to provide," Grennan recalled. Relocation wasn't an option; no other downtown public space had the right configuration or facilities. So the UpDowntowners, in conjunction with GSA, the FPS, the chief judge and the U.S. Marshalls (which oversee security for courts), mapped out additional security measures.

One step was to bolster the presence of security officers. More than a dozen uniformed city police are on the scene, as well as FPS officers and contract security, with the UpDowntowners picking up the extra cost. Security risks were reduced by moving portable toilets and Dumpsters farther from the building, and by banning parking on streets surrounding the plaza during the event.

Party-goers have had to get used to a new ban on backpacks at the event. Security staff observe everybody who enters the site, which has four access points, but there are no metal detectors or searches. "We don't stop everyone, we do visual checks. When we see people with a backpack, we go over and ask them to not bring it onto the premises," Cooper said.

Finally, the UpDowntowners increased the number of volunteers who mingle with the crowd and provided them all with special anti-terrorist training. Under the guidance of a retired army officer, "we review what to look for in terms of suspects, terrorists, suspicious characters," Cooper explained.

Complaints about the new arrangements have been minimal, according to Cooper. "The security is not obvious. Some people complain that they've come on the bus and have no place to put their backpacks. But most people drive and they can leave it in their cars."

A key reason these arrangements

could be worked out effectively is UpDowntowners' solid track record of working collaboratively with GSA and the building tenants. "As part of their planning every year, they put together a proposal about the organization, their licenses, their insurance, and they would talk to every judge in the building and a lot of politicians, and get their blessings, in letter form, for us," Grennan said.

Another reason is that the event was too important for Syracuse to cancel. "When it started, there was a beat up slum section a few blocks away," Grennan recalled. "Now that area has come back, with boutiques and bars, and those places advertise in the paper to come see them after the party. This has brought the area up."

No argument from Cooper: "This is a good thing for the federal government. It says, 'We're doing business as usual, we're not being held hostage due to threats. We are taking precautions, but we are doing business as usual.'"

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