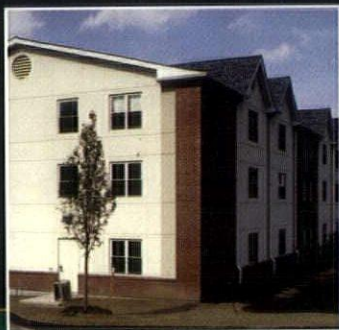


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Spring 2001

Shelter

Without apparent irony, the publishing industry has dubbed the legions of home decorating and design periodicals "shelter magazines." Breathlessly advising on pressing matters such as the relative merits of celadon and sage color schemes, these publications rarely address — or even acknowledge — the crises that are most obvious in the housing industry: affordability, sprawl, public housing. Basic shelter is still an elusive goal for many people, for whom the choice between nickel or brass bathroom fixtures is as irrelevant as the choice between a Mercedes and a BMW.

With this "shelter" issue, *ArchitectureBoston* looks at housing production. Over one million new homes are built each year by an industry that is marked by paradox and contradictions. The single-family house may be the great American dream, but it can also be the great American nightmare. Changing demographics, zoning and land-use regulations, and growing public concerns about sprawl are new challenges that influence one of the most enduring icons in our culture: the family home.

Nothing gets Americans more riled up than threats to the sanctity of the home; governmental intrusion in the form of quartering soldiers in private houses was one of the chief grievances cited in the Declaration of Independence. Our homes — whether house, apartment, or condo — are indeed our castles — a curiously European feudal image that underlies archetypal American notions about individual freedoms. Moreover, the housing industry itself is perhaps the last major industry in this country that is dominated by thousands of relatively small producers, essentially handcrafting each custom product for sale to individuals. Modern commercial and production ideas such as national chains, franchises, and buying cooperatives have made few inroads in an industry that has changed little since the postwar era.

It may seem obvious, then, that an industry of individuals for individuals has resisted government policies that would subvert our right to the modern version of 40 acres and a mule: two acres and an SUV. But there is plenty of evidence — as you'll see in the pages that follow — that the despoiling of rural landscapes and the escalating cost of housing are driven less by individual builders and consumers and more by the collective will of municipalities where residents striving to preserve community identity promote land-use regulations that tragically destroy the very character they are designed to protect.

The lack of affordable housing has reached critical levels in this region and threatens the sustained job growth and vigorous economy that paradoxically have fueled the current problem. But even a softening of economic conditions, as now appears likely, will ease housing pressures only temporarily. And a slow economy will have no effect on policies that encourage land consumption. More than ever, it is clear that cities and suburbs will solve their housing problems only by working together on a cooperative regional basis. A collective emphasis on "smart growth" planning will allow individuals to make smart choices.

Elizabeth S. Padjen FAIA
Editor

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Letters

"Why Bad Things Happen to Good Buildings"

by Tom Schwartz (Winter 2000)
charges architects to "meet the challenge
that innovation presents." As a registered
architect and professional specification writer,
I am terrified that inexperienced architects
will take this advice. The "bad things" that
happened to the glass at the John Hancock
Tower, the piles at 303 Congress Street,
and the cantilevers at Fallingwater have very
little to do with meeting challenges. These
buildings were designed and constructed by
the most skilled design and engineering teams
— and failures still occurred. How can a less
experienced architect expect to do better?

I believe "bad things happen" because the
technical expertise necessary to keep up with
an overheated construction market isn't there.
Not only are design offices overburdened
with fast-paced projects and staffing shortages,
but the availability of materials and the
new Massachusetts energy code also demand
attention. Mr. Schwartz states that "with
innovation comes reduced predictability and
increased risk." I believe that statement applies
to every project in every office in Boston
today.

As a spec writer, I see projects from a reverse
perspective. The specs are the neck of the
funnel between the designer and the contrac-
tor, and too much fuzzy stuff is coming
through. Designers need (and should have)
constant technical support as their documents
are produced. Mr. Schwartz states that "to
meet the challenge that innovation presents,
we must use the lessons of our history,
coupled with sound technical fundamentals
and a healthy dose of common sense."

In architecture, "lessons of our history"
describe form and function, not rust and
leaks. Creative people come into this
profession for the chance to design. When
clients ask for innovation, they still expect a
building that works. Clients must be able
to rely on the architect's knowledge of
materials and the building code. Yet what
would clients say if they knew that fewer
than 5 percent of the registered architects in
the state have taken the free seminars on
the new energy code now in effect, and fewer
than 10 percent of the offices have purchased
a copy?

"Sound technical fundamentals" are a thing of
the past. When the recession 12 years ago
robbed the profession of a whole generation, it
forced today's 50-person firm to rely on only
one or two "technical gurus" to keep the firm's
projects on track. The results are predictable:
already, for example, we are seeing buildings
less than 10 years old that must be taken
down due to improper use of housewraps. As
the new energy code requires an air barrier in

the wall and vapor barrier in the roof, poor
detailing and improper placement of
insulation will cause gallons of water to
condense in exterior walls each Boston winter.
(Make sure you do a dewpoint calculation on
every exterior wall type.) Small wonder that
firms offering technical review of documents
are booming.

The "healthy dose of common sense" seen
to have left town also. Why are we using lead-
coated copper on canopies on elementary
schools? Why do building-product manu-
facturers introduce products that aren't tested
our climate — only to withdraw them after
multiple failures? When was the last time
owners tested their sprinkler heads or the
"first-glass" lead content in their water supply?

For most architects, the cutting edge of
technology is a knife at their own wrist. My
advice is to be as innovative as possible
by designing from within your knowledge of
form, function, and materials. Grow from
constant learning that takes place as your
projects are constructed. The process works
when we get involved and work together.

Mark Kalin FAIA FCSI
Newton, Massachusetts

Thanks for bringing us a serious conversa-
tion by an extraordinary group ("Forensic
Examination: The Pathology of Boston's
Seaport District," Fall 2000). One only
wishes, in vain apparently, that this were the
level of discourse in City Hall and the
State House.

City Councilor Chuck Turner has described
many of our current project debates as land
wars. He's right. This is a land war — and
class war, too. The city is again the new
economic frontier of real estate investment
and the casualties will be, as in the urban-
renewal land war, everyday family and
neighborhood life, and the natural
environment.

Like any good discussion, this one brought
out all the important questions.

The panel described well the double-edged
sword of community: Is it about Balkaniza-
tion and provincialism or about identity and
stability? Can you really make a community
out of a mobile stream of pre-procreative
yuppies and an aged elite of empty-nesters
alighting temporarily between the Cape house
and the Florida house — the only groups

are economically able and willing to
plate the new Boston?

It addressed the dilemma of governance:
What is the meaning of public process in
defining how our land is used? Will our
government officials serve the ordinary mortals
or vote for them or the corporations that
employ them?

Currently, the dominant mode of "progressive"
governing is to throw everything to the markets
and let private corporations primarily to run
the government. Reference for private corporations shackled
by sticky, stultifying regulations. Will an
unleashed market lift all the boats in the
harbor? Will private "public" space be public if
there are enough covenants? Does anyone care,
besides us, as it's clean, green, and safe?

What role will designers play, as professionals
and as citizens? Is there a moral framework for
design and process? What will rule: the
market or the society?

How will we get to the answers?

Ray Kessel, Landscape Architect
Boston

In his response to "Letter from Cincinnati:
A Field Guide to Meta-Narratives" (Winter
2000), the delightful piece by Brenda Case
for AIA. Ms. Scheer issued a call for
stories and, as one who never met a narrative
I don't like (well almost), I thought I'd add
to the pile.

Aronoff Center, or actually, the Aronoff
Center, is an early example of buildings
designed under the rule of law, with trial
attorneys being the concept consultants. The
center represents a snap shot of the systemic
failure of litigative design at that time. In the
Aronoff Center case, the plaintiffs, a.k.a. gravity,
moment, and orthogonality, lost by a narrow
4 jury vote. Two of the total of 12 ballots
were too chad-ridden to be counted, but
the intent of their votes will be memorialized in
the center's structure, speculated to be designed by
Frank Gehry sometime in the next four years.
Ideas never die, they just become context.

Christopher D. Williams AIA
Middletown, Connecticut

In his interesting letter in the Winter 2000
issue, Robert Luchetti AIA says, "If architects
and interior designers keep providing less value
with each step we take, we will rightly
disappear." Interesting, because this is the third
time that I've heard that comment this week.
First, an officer of a major US construction
company suggested to me that, in his view, the
profession of architecture will be obsolete
within 10 years. The next day, the director of
business development of a multi-city
architecture firm, whom I invited to address the
faculty of architecture at my university said so,
too. And now Luchetti!

My business-development friend is trying to
counter such a disappearance by changing the
scope of what his architecture firm provides
to clients. He's enlarging that scope to include
organizational design, corporate planning,
financial planning, and management —
literally "managing change" as it pertains to
institutions and businesses and their real-
estate/space issues. His firm is also enlarging
the scope of liability it is willing to accept
(this goes hand-in-hand). His new hires are not
architects. This architect noted that his firm,
fully employing over 300 people in five cities at
the top of the economy, is barely able to
generate a profit-making architecture. They're
fully wired, quite efficient, and they actually
make good buildings that their clients like.
I like them, too. So what's the matter?

The late J.B. Jackson, a wonderful writer and
historian of American landscape, once implied
that America's influence on architecture was to
make it a *commodity* (not the Vitruvian mean-
ing). Land itself was valued in this country,
not for its history, nor for the sense of place it
imparted, and not because it had supported a
particular family for generations. One of
America's contributions to global culture has
been to treat land, space, as a *commodity that
could be traded*.

What that means to architecture is now
being felt. Our profession, based on antique
European attitudes toward land and building
and place (attitudes that are even more
deeply ensconced in our system of architectural
education), is in for big trouble in a culture
whose values are very much at odds with
those. A commodity! And we're not even
talking about how much business and educa-
tion is now conducted in crudely designed
virtual space.

Ready to edit an issue entitled, "After
Architecture"?

Jeffrey Stein AIA
Boston

There has been a lonely copy of *Architecture-
Boston* floating around our office for some time
now. Like *Architecture Minnesota* and many
other small regional publications, it was full of
interesting commentary, good photography,
and I must confess, the advertising was fun to
look at. But what does Boston have to do with
our lonely practice here in North Dakota? In
a year of lean budgets, the subscription cost
for *AB* is surely a luxury that we could do away
with. No offense, please. But who the heck
ordered it in the first place?

Today, the Winter 2000 issue arrived in the
mail, and I commented to one of the student
interns that it seemed silly to be getting such a
frivolous publication. Then I sat down for my
morning coffee and began to actually read.
Before I could begin to enjoy the coffee, I had
to extract my foot from my mouth. Between
the "Material World" article and the photo
essay on brick, it seems there is much to be
learned from a regional magazine based in a
region across the country.

It may be that political commentary and local
reference is lost on me — not having the
fortune to be in Boston. This is fine. But please
keep up the good work, continue your course,
and I'll keep reading, learning, and subscribing.

Randy Lieberg, Assoc. AIA
Johnson Laffen Architects
Grand Forks, North Dakota

Editor's response:

We send copies of *ArchitectureBoston* out into
the hinterlands because:

- ① Bostonians are really into that "Hub of the
Universe" thing.
- ② We're hoping David Kelley will notice,
because it isn't fair that lawyers and teachers
get all the good TV shows.
- ③ We really appreciate your paying for our
Big Dig and hey, it's the least we can do.

In fact, *ArchitectureBoston* now distributes
15,000 copies nationally, including
subscriptions and newsstand sales. Johnson
Laffen Architects receives a complimentary
copy because Lonnie Laffen AIA is the
president of AIA North Dakota. ■ ■ ■

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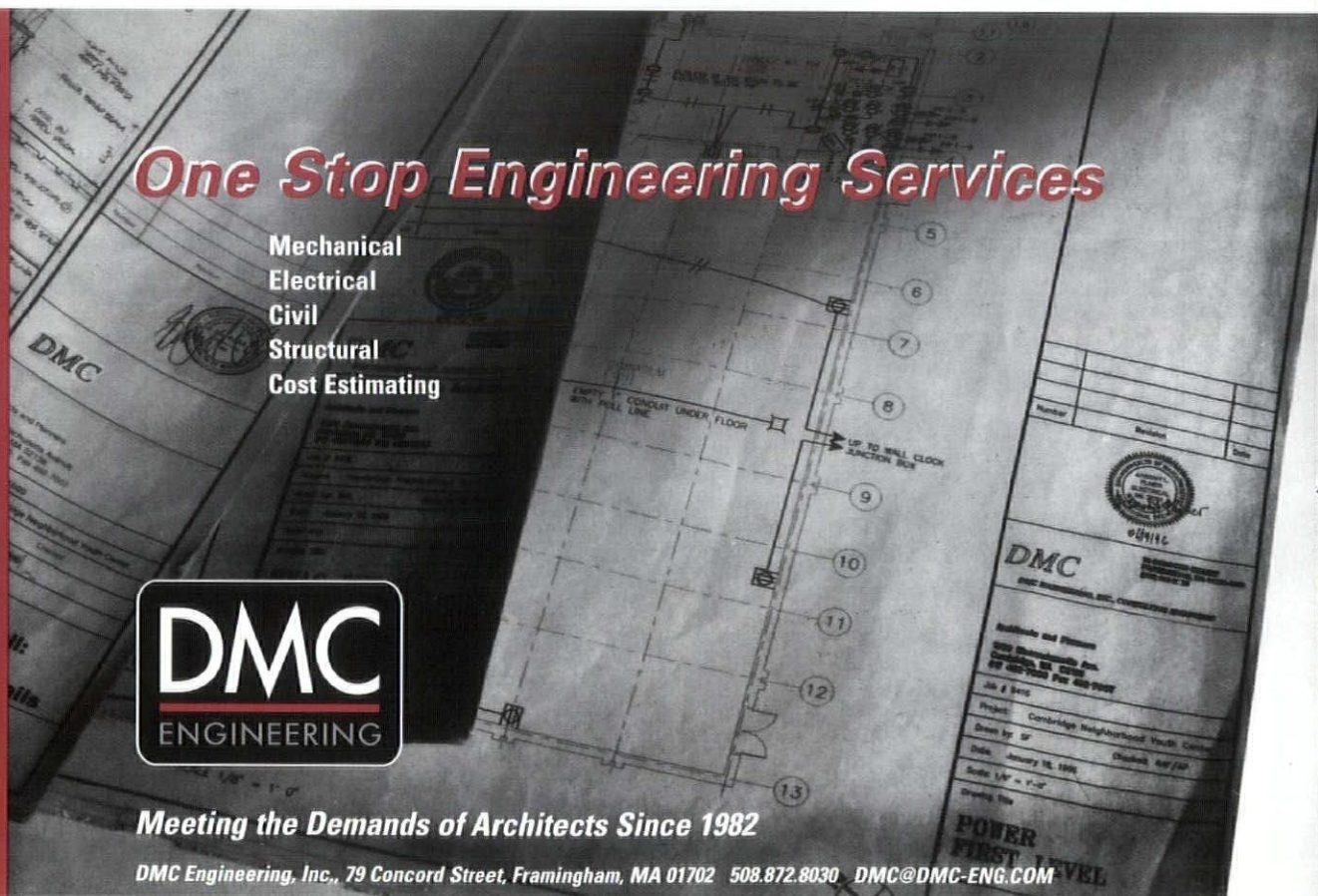
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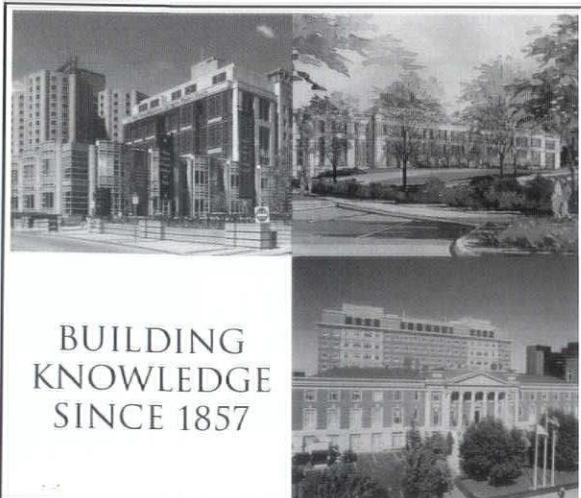
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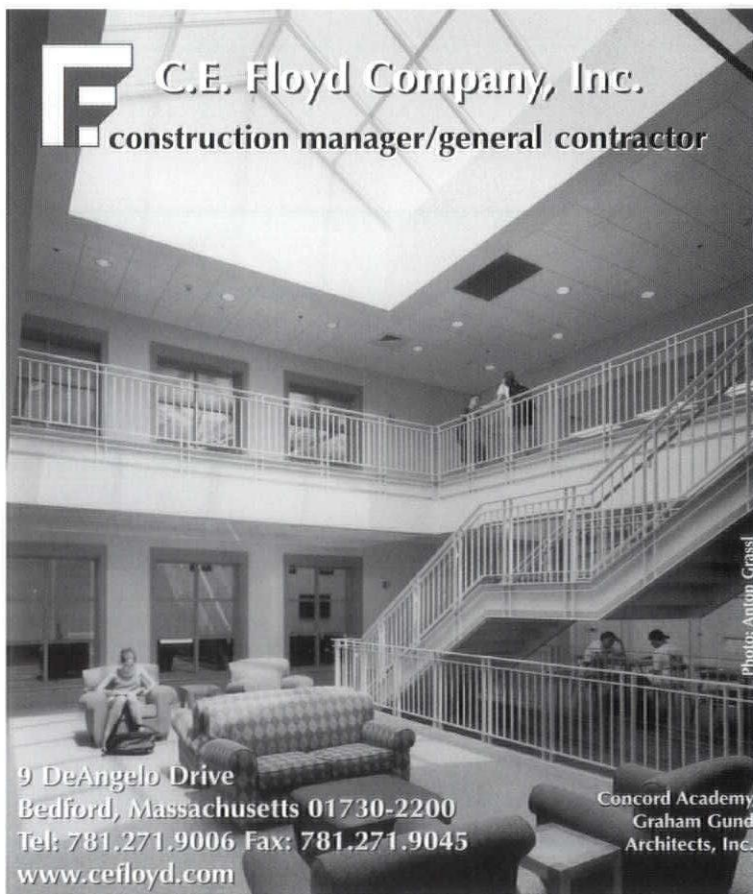
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The Home Makers

In suburb after suburb, new housing is sprouting up in seemingly identical subdivisions. Like it or hate it, *someone* is buying it. But who is building it? And what do they know that architects don't?

Participants:

Joseph Demshar AIA is director of design for AvalonBay, a real estate investment trust that develops and manages luxury multi-family rental housing throughout the United States, with approximately 40,000 apartment homes under ownership.

Jeremiah Eck FAIA is a principal of Jeremiah Eck Architects in Boston and a former lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He has taught many courses on the house and is currently writing a book, *The Timeless House*, which will be published by Taunton Press in 2001.

Douglas Govan AIA is chief designer for Acorn Structures/Deck House in Acton, Massachusetts, designers and manufacturers, producing 200 to 300 houses worldwide each year.

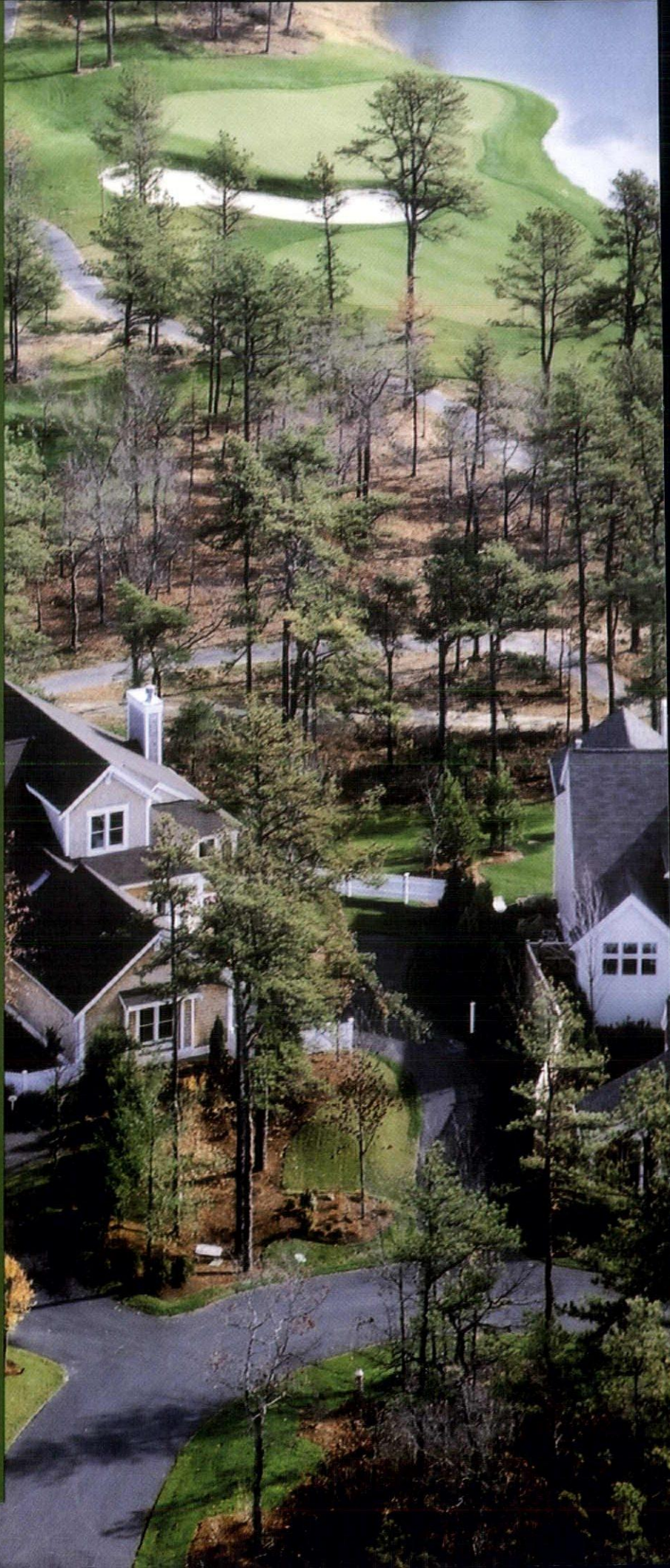
Tony Green is the managing partner of Pinehills, a new 3,000-acre community in Plymouth, Massachusetts. He was formerly a principal with The Green Companies, residential developers in metropolitan Boston.

Elizabeth Padjen FAIA is editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

Geoffrey Rendall is the New England director of marketing and sales for Pulte Home Corporation, the largest home builder in the U.S., with 37,000 homes built nationwide in 2000.

Alfred Wojciechowski AIA is a principal at CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares in Boston and is the chair of the BSA Housing Committee.

Thomas Zahoruiko is vice president of construction lending at Enterprise Bank in Lowell, Massachusetts, and has been a residential developer for over 10 years.



Elizabeth Padjen: Architects tend to look at so-called "builder houses" or "production" houses with smug righteousness — they talk about the builders and makers of new suburban housing as if they were ignorant children who aren't eating their broccoli. But more and more of these houses are built, with very little input from mainstream architects. It's led me to curiosity about the market, because something is obviously going on that architects don't understand. Otherwise, they'd have a greater influence on it. What drives the market? What do consumers want?

Joseph Demshar: Right now, the market is responding to demographic shifts. We're finding that the greatest potential growth in our markets is in the under-25 age group and the over-45 age group. These are either people who are graduating from college and entering the housing market or the baby-boomers who are now becoming empty-nesters. And the empty-nester market is different from the senior housing market — they don't want the isolation of a community that's totally elderly. They want an active, active lifestyle.

Jeremiah Eck: Are you saying that the 25-to-45 age group is stable?

Joseph Demshar: There's still a market in that age group, but there won't be much growth in it.

Douglas Govan: There are two trends that we see that don't fit the markets that Joe is describing. One is the under-45 couple who are building a second home in a desirable location, larger than second homes used to be, with the intent of retiring to it later. The other, perhaps a result of the dot-com phenomenon, is that there are people of all ages, including young clients, with large budgets.

Geoffrey Rendall: We're also seeing a market that is driven by traditional preferences — most people still prefer a single-family detached house on a deeded lot. Some people will settle for attached housing for financial reasons, or sometimes for cultural and social reasons. But the preference is to get something that looks like, tastes like, feels like, and acts like a single-family detached home. So that's something that I see a resistance to some forms of cluster zoning, some forms of zero-lot-line zoning, and most efforts to push the masses into more dense housing. We build cluster homes and they do very well, but usually they do very well when the market's hot and people want a house. In a market like this, it's tough to make a lot of sense out of things. Sure, a lot of people are moving into the 55-and-older category. I think in general that that market's been over-saturated. Those people have an awful lot of housing

choices. It's hard to get a grip on where they're going to go and what they're going to spend and what they want in a home, although they're certainly filling up communities that are targeted to a higher-age group. The younger group is a little more predictable.

As for the affordable end — it's tough in Massachusetts right now. We have had a bear of a time trying to find any site that will allow us to do an affordable development — and when I say "affordable" I mean something that's reasonable for a young family. We have a traditional subdivision in Worcester now that is doing very well. The houses are in the low \$200s. And that's considered affordable.

Jeremiah Eck: How many square feet are they?

Geoffrey Rendall: Eighteen-hundred square feet. So they're selling for a little more than \$100 a square foot. We're building them for \$75 to \$85 a square foot, depending on what you include in the costs. It was, frankly, a risk for us, but it's done very well. The town is gentrifying in some respects, and the growth along Route 495 is starting to spill over into Worcester. It's hard to find anything "affordable" inside the 495 beltway.

Elizabeth Padjen: You're not building much affordable housing, then, because of the lack of land rather than because of higher profit margins in more expensive housing?

Geoffrey Rendall: Right. It's very hard to overcome a bad land purchase by tweaking specifications and lowering construction costs. So, we're very cautious about spending too much for land. And land is very expensive right now.

Douglas Govan: There is a state initiative that addresses the problem of affordability in the suburbs — it says to cities and towns that if they expect to receive the level of state aid that they've been used to, they're going to have to come up with as much as 10 percent of their housing stock qualifying as affordable housing. And the positive side of that initiative, besides developing and supporting the market, is that towns are beginning to wake up to the effects of a growing phenomenon: builders are buying modest houses, tearing them down, and replacing them with 5,000-square-foot, even 10,000-square-foot houses. That is sometimes the only new housing that's available. And that means that there's no place in some towns for young people who grew up there, or for the teachers and police, or for people who have lived there all their lives and want to stay and retire to something smaller.

Facing page:
Houses overlooking
golf course and pond at
Pinehills in Plymouth,
Massachusetts.

The Home Makers

Thomas Zahoruiko: I've been with Enterprise Bank for a year; I was also a lender 15 years ago. For most of the '90s I was developing single-family detached units in the North Andover area — I built probably 10 or 15 percent of the stock in North Andover in the '90s. So I look at these issues from both a production and a financial perspective as opposed to a marketing perspective. The affordability issue is something that's near and dear to me. I've been living and building in the town of North Andover — which is considered a very affluent community, and where affordability is anything under \$400,000 or \$500,000. I don't think there's anything on the market that's new that's under a half million dollars right now. Why — is it the cost of land? That may be part of it. But the bigger issue is the regulatory environment that restricts the use of the land. Take a typical suburban community like North Andover, which has two-acre zoning. But you may really need a gross area of three or four acres for every new unit to be produced, because of lot configurations, geometry, overlay districts, watershed protection, drainage issues, stormwater management, wetlands conflicts, contiguous building area requirements — all of those things, which drive up the sprawl effect and the consumption of land per unit produced.

Most suburban communities don't have any provision for any multi-family housing whatsoever. The average lot size of the existing stock in an older community is probably a third of an acre. Compare that to the three or four acres gross that you really need to produce new housing. If an acre costs \$100,000 and you need four of them to build a house, you start at a very high level. As Geoff mentioned, most people want a single-family detached house in the suburbs. But they don't really care if they're five feet away from their neighbor or 25 feet or 50 feet away. They just want to have their own private space. So, you can conceivably put six or eight units very comfortably on an acre in most suburban environments. And instead of having four acres per unit, you may have six units per acre, and all of a sudden the cost of land goes from \$400,000 per unit down to roughly \$17,000 per unit. It is really that simple. The issue is the way we use the land, not the land cost itself.

Alfred Wojciechowski: And the regulations that control the way we use the land tend to be absolute. They don't offer flexibility or a range of possibilities that would allow you to look at a whole subdivision more creatively. Maybe five feet or 25 feet between houses is not much of an issue for many people, because they just want to see single-family housing. But when the zoning is written, everything will be set at 25 feet.

Tony Green: Not every town looks at zoning that way. The town of Plymouth created new zoning that is the antithesis of grid subdivision — "open-space, mixed-use development." The Pinehills experience has been different — but it's unusual both in its size and the way in which it was permitted. It's 3,000 acres. Three thousand acres is a little bigger than the town of Belmont, but it's contained within the town of Plymouth.

Our permit allows 2,854 houses and 1.3 million square feet of commercial space, and up to four golf courses with trails and other recreation. But we will only build on 30 percent of the land, leaving 70 percent as open space, including golf and other recreation.

Elizabeth Padjen: What kind of housing are you providing?

Tony Green: We're primarily oriented to empty-nesters, demographically a giant gap in the whole region. Plymouth is three-acre-zoning town, but we have some lots under 6,000 square feet. We received a special permit after working with the town under an overlay zone called "open space/mixed-use development." We started permitting in June of 1997 and began construction in 1999.

Elizabeth Padjen: Several of you seem to be suggesting that the market would actually embrace housing on much smaller lots than we're seeing right now, that people don't mind hanging over their fence and seeing their neighbors' dogs and cats and kids and laundry. Is that really true?

Joseph Demshar: As an exclusive multi-family builder, I would say yes, because in Massachusetts we're 99 percent occupied. And our market is very discretionary — people who are renting by choice, not by necessity.

Jeremiah Eck: Don't we have to sort out what market we're talking about here?

Elizabeth Padjen: I'd like to know about the average buyers, people who may not be worrying about the planning and design issues that occupy us. But they go out, they want to buy a house, and they know what they want. I'd like to know more about how they make choices. Suddenly we see a proliferation of 7,000-square-foot houses on two or three acres. Is that driven by regulatory issues, or is it driven by market desire?

Thomas Zahoruiko: Nine years ago I received approval in the town of North Andover for the first cluster subdivision in that town. It was 40 homes on 80 acres. We consolidated those homes on the 22 or so acres; the other 70 percent was a permanent preserve. After the planning board voted to approve the plan, the chairman said, "Well, good luck, Tom. You think anybody's going to want to move to North Andover and not live on two acres, go ahead." Now, this was 1991 and the market was not that good. We started and finished 38 units in 38 months. And had people waiting out the door in the worst economy in most memories for these units on half-acre lots. Which is not necessarily a small lot, but is certainly smaller than what was expected in that community.

ose houses sold for \$185,000 to \$225,000. I live that subdivision. And most of those folks who there would just as soon have a smaller lot than at they have. It's an interesting phenomenon. not saying that it applies to everybody — there always be people who want a large estate. I'm working now on a project with houses on 30,000-square-foot lots that will sell in the \$800,000-to-\$1,000,000 range. It's the third cluster subdivision that we've done with three-quarter-acre or smaller lots. And the buyers range from retired folks with kids to single people to families with little kids to families with college-age kids. It appeals to everyone across the spectrum.

Geoffrey Rendall: We just don't see that. Clearly, households without children are going to accept small lots much more readily. And buyers in towns without other options are going to accept cluster developments more readily. But in the 495 belt and suburbs with move-up families, we find that lot size is very important. Very important.

Douglas Govan: I have a slightly different perspective. The people who come to us are looking for a custom house with a degree of predictability. They can't afford what they want, and want what they can afford. The majority of them will be spending \$500,000 to \$750,000. I am encouraged, however, that more and more people are walking in the door with copies of *The Not So Big House* — the best-seller about building smaller, more tightly designed, more livable houses. There seems to be a shift, at least in some people's minds, toward questioning the standard of the big house on a big lot.

Emilia Eck: But we're still talking about different sectors of the market. Which sector or sectors are we discussing? The patron, client, consumer, or victim? I assume that the patron and the victim are not our market. But the difference between the consumer and the client is enormous, and it may well be the difference between the 10,000 homes a year built by the developers in this discussion and the 10 a year designed by a firm like Pulte. We started this discussion with the notion that architects feel they have to make homebuyers eat their broccoli. But that's not going to happen. I'm wondering why homebuyers find a developer house so much more appealing than an architect house. Is it the consumer versus the client? Is it the price? Is it the money? Is it the design? What is it that drives this giant chasm between the 1.3 million houses that get built in a year and the 1 percent of those that are designed by architects — the way architects were taught to design them.

Tony Green: I think the biggest confusion is exactly the one that we're experiencing in this discussion: Who are the buyers? There are 1.3 million new houses constructed annually. Of those, only a million are bought; the rest are rented or built by individuals for themselves. But there are another five million houses that are bought that are existing houses. And all those people are home consumers, too. People — at a ratio of five-to-one — choose to buy existing houses over new houses. And that suggests that time is an incredibly important factor that influences a whole series of decisions. The time that it takes to be a buyer of a custom-designed home, or even of a customized home, is gigantic compared to the time it takes to buy an existing house.



Geoffrey Rendall: It's a good point. Buyers have different levels of interest in terms of how much time and energy they want to spend in the design of their home. All of Pulte's homes are designed by architects, but I would say that 90 percent of our buyers don't want to spend the time that would be necessary to work with an architect to design a custom home. They want to have some input, and they want to change a few things, but they're only willing to spend a day, maybe three days, doing it. We get over that by pre-designing as many options as we can, pricing them, and having them available for the customer right there. And that has broad appeal to people — it gives them the sense that they've customized the home that they're going to share with their families. But on the other hand, it

Rollins Square multi-family housing, South End, Boston
by CBT/Childs Bertman
Tseckares.



photo: Aaron Grassl



photo: Aaron Grassl

Architect-designed houses within the context of existing suburban subdivisions, by Jeremiah Eck Architects.

doesn't take them away from their work and their day-to-day life. A lot of them have no interest in working on the design of their home. They just want to move in and decorate it.

Elizabeth Padjen: That's going to shock a lot of architects.

Joseph Demshar: My wife is also an architect, and she recently designed a house with a free-standing bathtub in the middle of the master-bedroom suite. As production builders, we wouldn't touch that — too risky for our stockholders. I don't think "custom" is the right word for the architect-designed home. "Idiosyncratic," maybe, which I mean as a compliment, because the architect brings out what the individual client really wants. Production builders can't take that risk. But we're building a series of high-rise towers with loft-type apartments in San Francisco, and we've hired respected, signature architects — Fisher Friedman and Backen Arrigoni & Ross. We're very serious about getting the mix right and being very thoughtful about the design. But as soon as you start to do something different, you don't know if you're going to get it right. Our biggest concern with architects who do something different is the simple stuff — you can't fit a queen-sized bed and a dresser, or there isn't enough closet space.

Jeremiah Eck: But aren't you attacking the problem from the wrong end? Isn't it really the consumers who are determining what their house is? It's the client who determines what my design for a house is.

Thomas Zahoruiko: One of the things that's different here in New England, in greater Boston especially, is the fact that we have a severe shortage of permissible building lots. So, the interests that control those lots really don't have a huge incentive to let the process be slowed down in any way, including taking the time to be creative. We have a supply and demand problem, and almost anything that gets produced is going to get bought if it's at all reasonable in price, even if it's the same old box that was built before.

Alfred Wojciechowski: We're making a distinction between the single architect who's designing 10 houses a year and the developers who hire firms and produce hundreds, even thousands of houses. But in fact, they're both dealing with a lot of the same issues — making

the bed fits, making sure the closets are adequate, and understanding front entries and back doors. And a lot of firms take these things very seriously, because they deal with issues of usability and emotional appeal.

Jeremiah Eck: The big guys here are saying they have architects designing houses, and I appreciate that, but the fact they're not designing houses the way little guys like me are designing houses. We consider the site, not just the landscape, in a very intimate way. We look at the needs of the particular client in a very particular way, idiosyncratic or not. Our houses don't look like the parts have been slapped together, they have some sense of balance. And if there's some "amenity" like a fireplace or a stair, it's used in a way that makes some sense. That takes a great deal of time, not just for me but for this real live person who is my client. And so I'm very encouraged when I hear you guys saying nobody wants to spend the time — you haven't said money — and that the process makes it too hard.

Geoffrey Rendall: When house prices in Massachusetts grow \$100,000 in two years, money isn't the issue. It really isn't. It's time. People want to invest a certain amount of time, emotion, and energy in designing their home, but they've got a budget for that and it ranges from a day to a couple of weekends. Because the rest of their life is tied up with their jobs and other interests.

Jeremiah Eck: You're spending \$500,000 or a million dollars, and you're only going to spend two or three days thinking about that? In what other endeavor would we invest that kind of money without spending a good deal of time researching it, bringing our hearts into it, making sure it was the right decision — other than playing the stock market? People really don't care?

Stephen Demshar: Because they know someone else has thought about it. We've been doing this for 20 years, and we constantly pore over plans and think about functionality and talk with architects. So I would counter that by saying everything we offer has 20 years of thought into it.

Elizabeth Padjen: Is design simply not important to many people?

Geoffrey Rendall: Design is one thing on the list. But it's not always at the top. Homebuyers have a lot of other things on their lists, too — interior finishes, the quality of the neighborhood and its location, price, the size and shape of the house — and they have to balance those things against the different priorities of other household members.

Glas Gowan: There is design on the one hand and image on the other. And then there's this thing called "curb appeal." That's what a lot of people are really looking for is predictability. That's a concern expressed repeatedly in our market research.

Tony Green: I believe people will pay more for good design, but the integration of the home with the landscape — the choice of site and the preservation of the natural setting — is as important or more important than the architecture or the floor plan. That idyllic image of rooted permanence — a house set into the landscape — is powerful.

Elizabeth Padjen: I'm curious about the design process in a big company like Pulte. How does a house design evolve? And how does it influence other builders? Smaller builders probably look at an organization as large and successful as Pulte and figure it knows what it's doing — and end up copying the latest Pulte model. I suspect we're seeing the development of a new kind of vernacular housing.

Geoffrey Rendall: One statistic that has always struck me is that 10 percent of homes in America are built by the 100 biggest builders in America. Which means that 90 percent of the homes in America are built by everyone else. So this is a business of small companies. One of the advantages of working for a big company like Pulte is that we're talking to homebuilders and home marketers and home designers all the time. To some extent, we're a laboratory of design — we're always developing new ideas. We listen to the customer, because that's where the bills are paid. So we do an awful lot of market research. We spend a lot of time on demographics, on focus groups, on listening to customers in our sales centers, and on listening to our sales managers on the sites, who tell us what customers want. Our corporate view is that our people in the field, who talk to the customers and to the subcontractors, are doing the work of the company. When we bring them all together, we talk about design issues, and we implement those changes. And so our floor plans are continually evolving as customers talk about more space for computer rooms, more flexible space, more great rooms, higher-volume ceilings — all those kind of things.

Elizabeth Padjen: If everyone is asking for a fanlight over the front door, then that's what your next houses will have?

Geoffrey Rendall: Practically speaking, that's how we do it. We have a base floor plan that's evolved over many years. Then we'll have a list of options, maybe 30 or 40, that could be applied to that plan. But if a buyer comes up with an idea that we haven't thought of and that fits into the plan, we'll build it. If we sell two of those, we'll start thinking about it seriously. If we sell four or five of those, we'll start saying, hey, this ought to be a standard option.

Jeremiah Eck: Do you ever go back and ask them, "Were you right in your decision? Was your initial thinking correct, or is there something missing?"

The Home Makers

Geoffrey Rendall: We do. We survey them after they're in the home for a month, and then we do it again after their first year. So we try to ferret out any problems. But I think most of our plans, because they're customer-driven and not theoretically driven or driven by one person or one mind, appeal to a broad spectrum of people.

Elizabeth Padjen: I wonder if that notion of a time-tested plan isn't what appeals to that vast majority of homebuyers who buy existing houses. A lot of those houses have a basic four-square plan. And the beauty of the four-square plan is its flexibility. The style might vary — maybe it's Georgian or Federalist, maybe it's Gothic Revival or Victorian — but its fundamental simplicity and its symmetry have made it very adaptable over time. What might have been a front parlor is now a home office, and what might have been the back pantry is now, who knows, a mud room for ski equipment.

Tony Green: But I think things are changing there, too, and aging baby-boomers are driving it. You see it in the demand for features like master bedrooms on the first floor, not upstairs as in those older houses. We run a workshop at Pinehills to help people be better home buyers. One of the things that we might ask a couple to do is to draw their existing home, and then we ask each of them to distinguish by color their own rooms and the rooms they share. Usually the striking thing is the number of rooms left uncolored, unused. It turns out that it's a complicated issue to figure out how to create a new house by looking at the house you already live in. How do you get someone to think critically about what they really do, how they really live? But if you can think objectively about how you use your house, you can apply the same thinking to your neighborhood. And you will be a better home buyer. About 700 people have participated in these workshops. There are lots of common themes, but there are lots of differences, too. I have a close friend from college. He's 44-years-old and an empty-nester. My great-uncle is 96-years-old and he's an empty nester, too. Now, those guys have pretty different ideas about what they'd like to do with their day and the kind of house that they'd like to live in. But they fit the same category. If you start applying income variables, you get even more market segments. And empty nesters have very different ideas about where they want to live — in the country, within walking distance to shopping, in a traditional neighborhood, in an urban downtown. It's a blurry macro market; in fact, households with school-age children generally represent only 20 to 25 percent of the households



photo courtesy AvalonBay

**Avalon Estates
Hull, Massachusetts
by AvalonBay**

a community. And the big homebuilders can only meet one of the needs of such a diverse market.

Jeremiah Eck: Approximately half of all the single-family houses in this country have been built in the last 50 years. But I think most people feel that something is wrong — there's a growing, underlying discontent with what we've been doing. Maybe we need to support our local aesthetic police more — make sure that there's someone in the building department with training and ability who can apply objective criteria to determining if a house is beautiful or not.

Alfred Wojciechowski: I support the aesthetic police, but in reality, beauty is rarely a black-or-white issue. Aesthetic concerns are a tremendous gray area.

Thomas Zahoruiko: I read a lot of bylaws, and one of the serious things about them is that aesthetic-related bylaws focus on ensuring that designs are consistent and very much the same. I have yet to read a bylaw that actually promotes design diversity.

Andy Green: There are two issues that upset people the most about new developments, I think, and they're very different. One is that so much looks the same. Levittown was the original poster-child for that issue, and now, ironically, it's the answer to that. When Levittown was built, all the houses were identical, row after row, street after street, without a stick of landscaping. If you go back there now, none of the houses look alike because the landscape has grown and everybody's added on or changed the look of the houses. The same thing is going to happen to the houses that are built today — people are going to add on, change, move, redo. That's a completely different issue from the second issue that upsets people: seeing houses in every old woodlot and field. And that's a question of zoning. Most towns, in order to make things stay the same, have actually caused this very phenomenon by requiring large lots, wide frontage, fewer homes to the acre. They've developed rules based on geometry. But land, particularly in this region, has nothing to do with geometry. The rules are counter-productive and yet the solution — more density in the right places — seems counter-intuitive.

Geoffrey Rendall: Tony is right. You can look at photos of Victorian neighborhoods in older communities right after they were built — they have little, two-inch-caliper elm trees stuck in the front yards, the houses are lined up straight, and they look like the worst subdivision you can imagine. And today, they're gorgeous. Everybody would want to live there.

Andy Green: It helps to remember that people vote with their dollars. And our economy is set up so that, theoretically, people are paying for what they believe is quality. Nobody intentionally spends money on something they don't think is good. You might choose to do things differently from your neighbor or your friend, but being able to make that choice is part of the foundation of our whole country.

Elizabeth Padjen: Isn't that a modern phenomenon, though? In the past, perhaps those choices existed to some degree, but they were much more limited. They were limited by technology, needs, materials. And by a far more pervasive common culture than we know today. So choices were limited by things other than regulatory means. Today we see a much greater range of choice.

Joseph Demshar: This is a dynamic industry that responds to the choices people make, because people do vote with their pocketbook.

Alfred Wojciechowski: The pocketbooks we've been talking about are pretty big — we've been talking about this magic figure of \$500,000. Which may, to us, seem like an average cost for a house. But I think it's an extraordinary number. I would like to see equivalent energy put into design and livability issues for dwellings that cost substantially less than that. I would like to think that architects could accommodate someone who walks in and says, "I don't have a lot of money. The total project cost including the site is \$250,000. Will you take my commission?" And the reason I bring this up is that good design does require time and money.


Jeremiah Eck: I just did one of those \$250,000 houses. And the simple solution was this: I told the client, "I'll do it, but I'm only going to give you six sheets [of drawings], and they will be the six sheets that my 25 years of experience tell me are necessary to build a nice little house." But I think, in general, that our culture has made money the difference between whether you have something that's beautiful or not. In the past, beauty wasn't a function of money.

Douglas Govan: I would suggest that some of the ugliest houses are examples of situations where there was lots of money to spend.

Geoffrey Rendall: But beauty is also a taste issue. One thing that we're seeing here in New England is a large market for houses that are not traditional New England homes. They appeal directly to the people moving into New England from other areas of the country. Moreover, a huge part of the market in the western suburbs of Boston is people from other parts of the world. And their taste is different. People are bringing with them their own ideas of what a good home is and saying, We want this in our home.

I do think things are changing. I believe most people want a single-family detached home on a lot if they can have it. But the reason we're going to get away from this is because we're chewing up all the available land close to the employment areas. We've got to continue to work to find ways to build housing that is less land-intensive but at the same time appealing, practical, and affordable. ■ ■ ■

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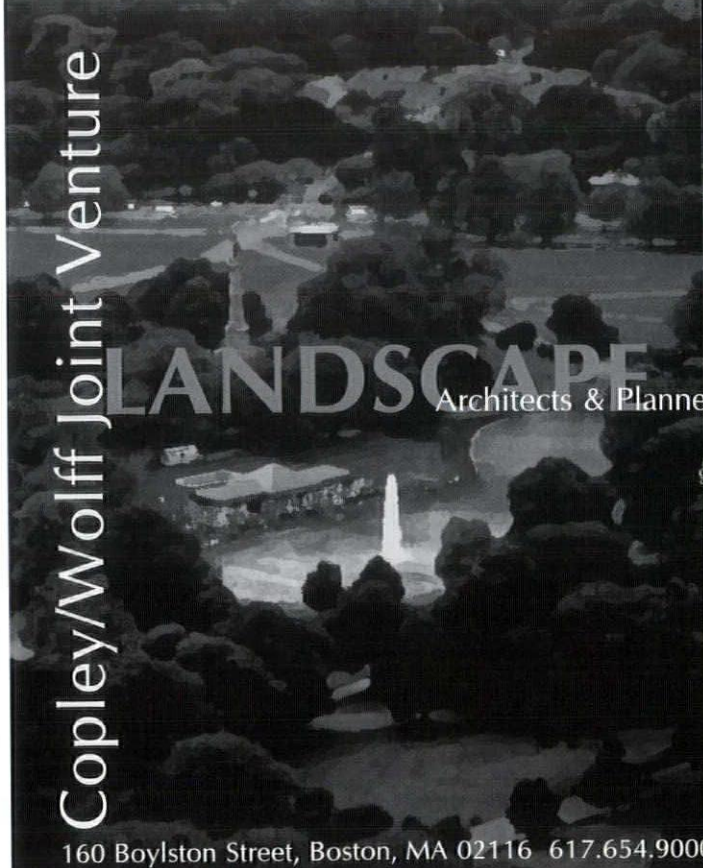
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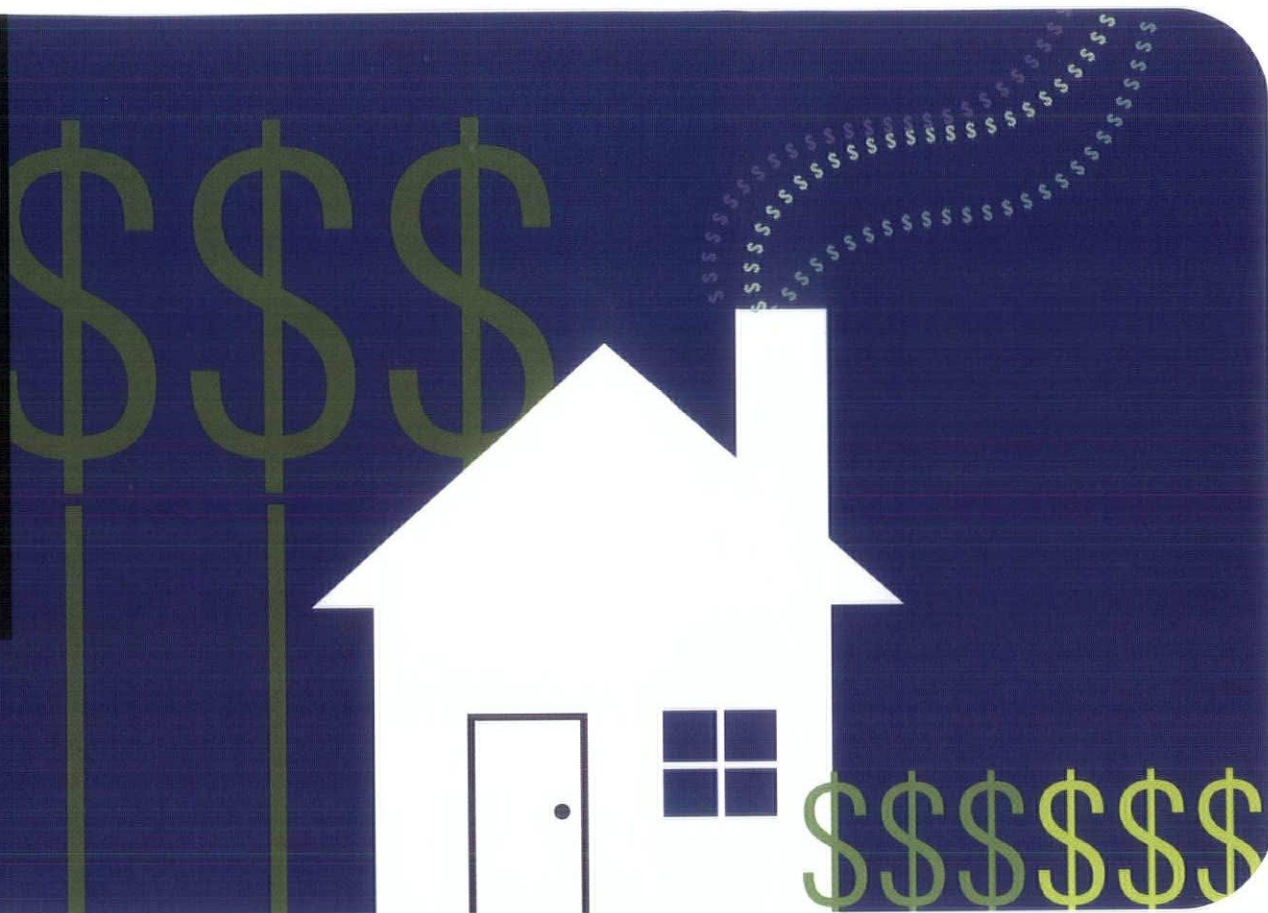
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There's No Place that Likes Homes

by Willy Sclarsic AIA

We are not in first place yet — we are still only number three — but with the fastest rate-of-rise of residential costs in the nation, metropolitan Boston should soon be first. If we sustain our current momentum, we will soon enjoy the highest cost of housing in the United States.

What is the secret of our success? Some say it's the high cost of land. Others blame the difficulty and unpredictability of obtaining required permits, or the lack of infrastructure, or the unregulated and volatile community review and approval process, or pre-emptive environmental regulation, or high construction costs.

The cause may in fact be some or all of the above. The cause of the cause, however, can be found in the anti-housing policies implemented in the last two decades by cities and towns in metropolitan Boston. As a direct result of these policies, the supply of new housing, particularly housing

for low-income and working-income individuals and families, has been severely restricted. As the supply of new housing grew at a slow and inadequate pace, the demand for housing, fueled by an expanding economy, increased enough to reduce vacancy rates to extremely low levels, creating a competitive climate and resulting in constant upward pressure on residential rents and sale prices.

In most cases, cities and towns have refused to accept any planning responsibility for the region's constantly growing and evolving housing needs. They have refused to implement any meaningful process to assess the region's diverse and complex housing needs and to plan — with vision, specificity, and purpose — to meet them.

Instead, they have retreated behind a community veto process, which has created an unreliable and unpredictable approval process, resulting in an unmanageable level of financial risk for would-be developers. This situation has discouraged and dissuaded most non-profit and for-profit housing providers. Although a few high-income projects have been financially strong enough, and a few low-income projects have been politically strong enough to survive their development process, the number of units produced has been far short of the demand. The community review and

approval process was originally intended to allow communities and neighborhoods to preserve their character, identity, and populations. In many cases, particularly in the city of Boston, the process has had the opposite result. The increased value of real estate, caused by the lack of supply, has enticed many long-time residents to sell their properties and relocate, and sharp rent increases have forced many other long-time residents to leave their no-longer-affordable neighborhoods. This economic transition is significantly changing the demographics of neighborhoods. A carefully managed planning and zoning process could have identified, designated, and endorsed areas for new housing development, thereby increasing the supply and easing the price pressures caused by unsatisfied demand. New housing production would have protected long-time neighborhood residents much better than the municipal policies that were specifically designed to discourage it.

Can this situation be corrected?

Can a climate be created that will allow for the resumption of housing production, with a variety of options designed to meet the diverse and evolving needs of individual communities, and in numbers significant enough to adequately increase the supply? Probably not! Only a thorough, binding, planning process, complemented by clear, reliable zoning that identifies areas where new housing is desired and allowed, will reduce uncertainty, risk, and community conflicts. In most of the United States, housing is plentiful, of good quality, and affordable. This housing responds to market demand and to a clearly articulated planning and zoning process. The secure and predictable development climate that prevails in much of the rest of the country minimizes risk and encourages residential development in numbers adequate to meet demand, resulting in much more affordable and marketable housing costs. The implementation of such a planning process locally would require a regional approach and a good deal of political will — neither of which has been recently experienced here.

Could this situation be corrected?

The high cost of housing is not a problem for everyone. It is not a problem for home-sellers, for landlords, for real estate agents, or for real-estate assessors. It is however a long-range problem for young workers, for renters, for young families, for the low-income elderly, and, increasingly, for middle-income people. These groups will be forced

to assume a high level of cost or debt in order to pay for housing, resulting in a certain decline in their standard of living. Housing costs will be a significant problem for Boston and other similar older metropolitan areas, where the high cost of housing will eventually have a tempering effect on the ability of expanding economies to attract and retain a work force. The unavailability and unaffordability of housing will eventually lead to relocation of this workforce to other more affordable parts of the country. Unless the current direction is corrected, older metropolitan areas may eventually consist of only rich and poor residents.

If livable cities are the antidote to suburban sprawl, then metropolitan Boston must remain livable, not just downtown, but in all its neighborhoods and surrounding cities and towns. Focused and meaningful planning and zoning will be necessary to successfully address and resolve the current housing problem. However, in order to preserve the values of Boston's heritage, such planning and zoning must be part of a powerful new urban vision.

New housing should not be built in an uncoordinated, project-by-project basis, but should be part of a new urban visionary context designed to allow Boston to remain attractive and livable in the 21st century, while creating a new image for the neighborhoods. In the mid-19th century, many European cities struggled with similar issues. In Paris, Baron Haussmann implemented a new visionary system of boulevards as organizing elements of a new masterplan. However, it was the housing built on each side of these boulevards that created the new image of Paris and also paid for the costs of the construction of the masterplan.

Bostonians may be more familiar with the somewhat later but similarly successful process that created the Back Bay. The implementation of a well-managed, meaningful, and visionary planning process, grounded in well-defined, reliable clear zoning could offer a comprehensive solution. It would help to reduce the adversarial relationship between communities and development entities and define new directions for aging neighborhoods, particularly for their main streets. Boston and its neighbors, while preserving the best elements and character of a proud heritage, must accept the responsibility for bold, visionary leadership, and actively enable the kind of new development required to preserve livable and affordable environments in the 21st century. ■ ■ ■

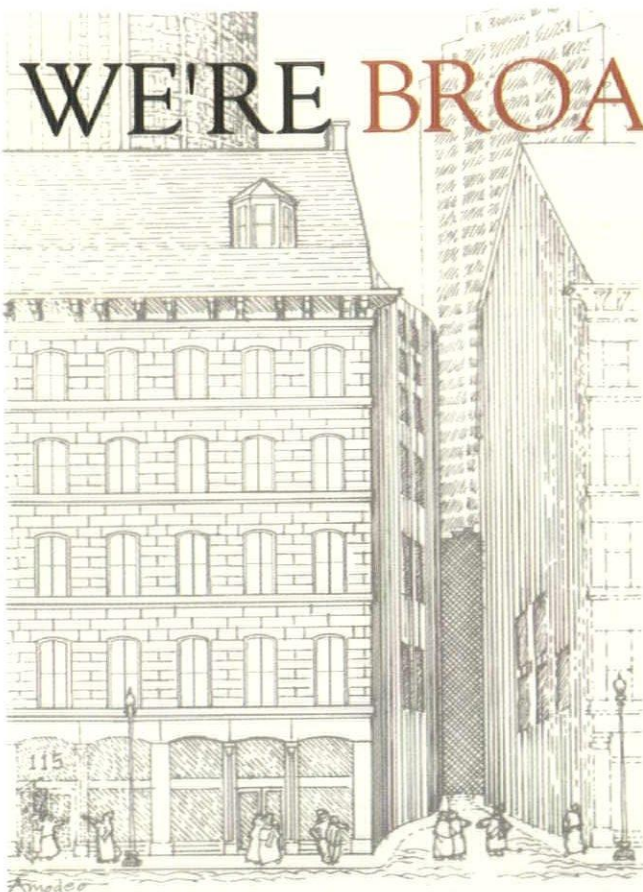
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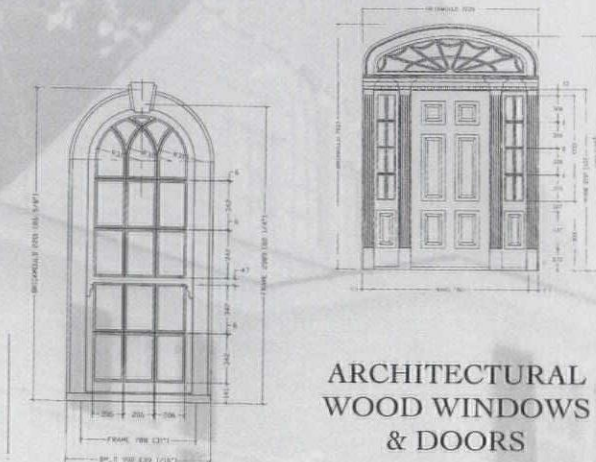
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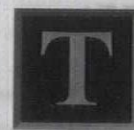
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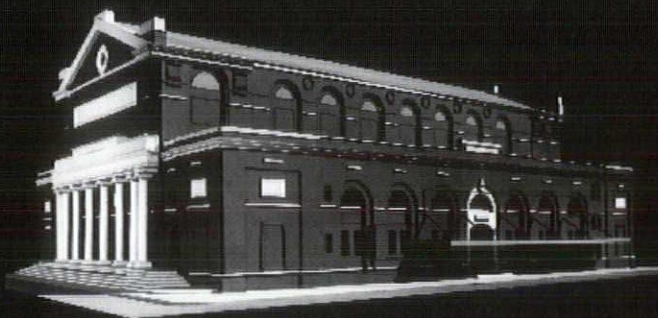
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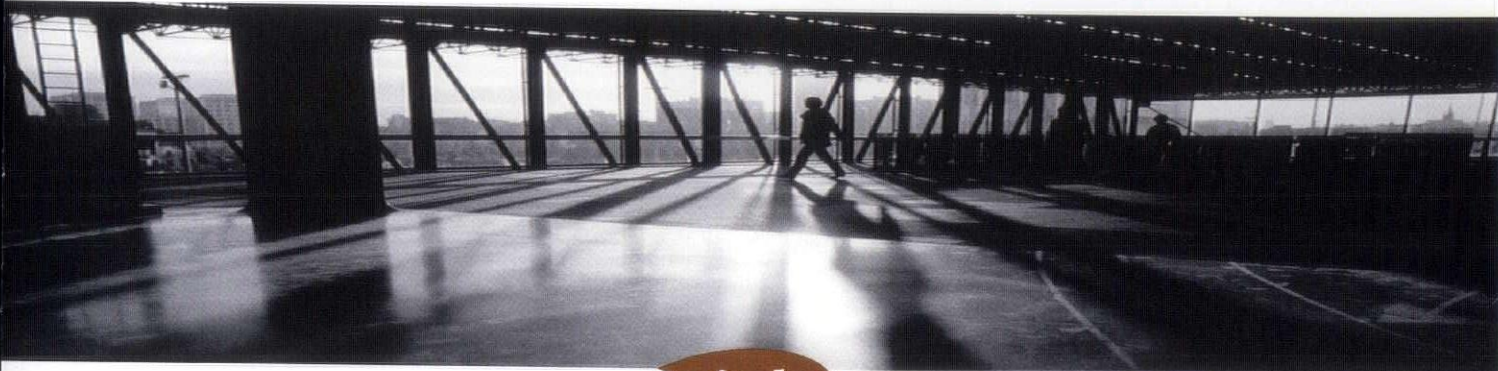
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Home Pages:

The world of "shelter" magazines

by Gretchen Schneider,
Assoc. AIA

Traditional Home. *Metropolitan Home. Better Homes and Gardens. House and Garden. Old House Journal...Remodeling Ideas. Window and Wall Ideas. Home Plan Ideas...Country Homes. Southern Living. Log Home Living. American Homestyle....*

Welcome to the world of the "shelter" magazines — a world much larger than you might think. I recently counted 14 titles at the checkout at my local grocery. My local pharmacy? 22. And Out-of-Town News in Harvard Square — the granddaddy of local newsstands — had 78. 78! And that's not counting the architecture trade journals, the landscape and gardening magazines, or all those house-plan catalogues. You know these magazines. The publishing industry calls them "shelter mags," but we know them as the ones we slyly slip into our shopping carts, hidden by that issue of *Harper's*. Distinct from the few "legitimate" architectural publications — the ones that architects commonly subscribe to — shelter magazines are that genre of popular publications that discuss the home.

Hottest Bath Looks!
33 Pages of
Products and Ideas!

7 Perfect Powder Rooms!!

What's New?
Leather and Cork Floors!

Try reading several of these at once. If your home didn't seem inadequate, it will now. When looking at these magazines covers side-by-side, several trends emerge. The titles tend to focus on specialized aesthetic themes — Southern style or Modern decor — or on specific building elements — "kitchen and bath" or "window and wall." Regardless of focus, each magazine generally follows a similar formula: public glimpses into the private lives of the rich and famous, real-life stories, latest must-haves, and helpful how-to's. They purport to discuss not only decoration, but more important, *lifestyle*. But don't be fooled. Their real goal is to influence how we shop. The final message remains clear: What you have is not right. It's too fat, too thin, too last-year; with this tummy tuck or that kitchen rehab or this new flooring product, you too will have a happier home and thus a happier life. In short, these are the women's magazines for the housing industry.

However, to simply disregard these magazines for their blatant consumerism or dismiss them as yet another example of skin-deep design in our much-maligned suburbs fails to recognize their collective power. I am one of those who like to complain about the lack of public discussion about architecture in this country. But as I counted these titles, I began to wonder if maybe, just maybe, I had stumbled upon evidence of an enormous discussion going on around me. I had been looking in the wrong place.

A home — in whatever form we may recognize — is the strongest connection most people have towards a building. The home is the building-block of our neighborhoods, towns, and cities. With their focus on the home, these magazines shape public perceptions about the house, the built environment, and thus about architecture. One big-city architecture critic can't possibly match this vast array of voices.

475 Top Manufacturers
134 Family Friendly Home Plans!
23 pages of Traditional
and Regional Favorites!
10 Top Furniture Trends
to Take Home!
All the Best Buys!

This is big business. Through the 20th century, the United States was purposely transformed from a nation of urban renters to a nation of suburban owners. In 1931, President Hoover established the private house as a national goal to promote American long-term economic growth. Since then, federal policies and programs — including mortgage loans, income-tax deductions, the GI Bill, and the interstate-highway systems — have weathered the Depression and the wars, inflation and recession, to make the middle-class single-family house the largest housing subsidy our nation has ever offered.

So far, the results are impressive. According to U.S. Census statistics, in 1940, 44 percent of Americans owned a house. By 1950, that percentage had risen to 55. By 1998, 64 percent of Americans were homeowners. *Architecture* magazine estimates 100 million houses were built in the U.S. during the 20th century.

his big business continues to accelerate. Nearly one-third of the existing housing stock has been built in the last 25 years. *Architecture* magazine reports that more than 10,000 American houses change hands each day. And the National Association of Home Builders predicts that between 1.3 and 1.5 million units of new housing will be added annually through the year 2010.

The Smartest Kitchen Ever — Almost Cooks and Cleans by Itself!!!

How many times have you read that headline? Unbelievably, it still makes covers, as it has for nearly a century. In fact, the shelter-magazine industry pre-dates our national housing policy. Beginning in 1895, *The Ladies' Home Journal* regularly published "model house plans" by architects, including several by Frank Lloyd Wright, and offered general information on decoration, domesticity, and "good taste." By 1919, the *Journal's* circulation reached two million. Theodore Roosevelt reportedly said of Edward Bok, the *Journal's* editor, "Bok is the only man I ever heard of who changed, for the better, the architecture of an entire nation, and he did it so quickly and yet so effectively that we didn't know it was begun before it was finished."

The shelter-magazine industry grew markedly at the close of WWI as companies shifted from wartime production to new consumer markets for domestic appliances and automobiles; during the same period, modern advertising was born. Historian Dolores Hayden relates these two trends, arguing that purchases for the home became the key to business success for these post-war companies. Even the earliest advertisers suggested that a home must provide more than shelter; it had to be equipped with garage, play room, washer, vacuum cleaner, carpet. Hayden argues that ads such as the 1929 *Selling Mrs. Consumer* instructed business and government leaders in the use of advertising to manipulate American women into buying more household goods and desiring home ownership. Young married couples were also prime targets; *Selling Mrs. Consumer* advised that "there is a direct and vital business interest in the subject of young love and marriage." Could Martha Stewart disagree?



The World of Shelter Magazines



The message today's magazines promote has changed remarkably little. As Mr. Bailey tells his son George in *It's a Wonderful Life*, "It's in the race for a man to want his own roof, and walls and fireplace." Thanks to this enduring (and unrelenting) message, supported by national policy, the well-equipped private house has become synonymous with the American Dream.

**You're not just building a house...
You're building your dream.**

**Embrace Your Space;
Create the Home
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**Add the touches only
you can add to make
your house your home!**

Our homes not only shelter us; they also speak reams about us — or so we are led to believe. Americans believe in the possibility of reinvention, of rising beyond one's heritage to strike out for a better life. The house and all its furnishings embody that progress. The house is the place to give the next generation all that we didn't have, be it a backyard, family room, media center, jacuzzi... The dream house is the spatial representation of American hopes for the good life.

Yet ironically, most of our houses are "production houses," mass-produced for cheap construction and broad market appeal. There's not much that is inventive or unusual about most individual American dwellings. Enter the shelter magazines once again. These magazines offer the possibility of personalization.

Our society, after all, is based on individual freedoms and individual rights, not on the collective. Thus our architectural heritage is reflected in our individual domestic — not public — buildings. The private American house is our national architecture.

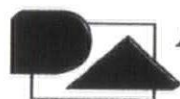
We know that architects design housing for the very rich and the very poor, but not for the bulk of Americans. For the middle class, the magazines serve as the architectural experts, giving technical advice, suggesting options, offering alternatives, advising on latest trends. The shelter magazines offer opportunity where none could be imagined before.

This architectural expertise is remarkably accessible and uniquely appropriate to our nation of equal opportunity. Maybe the fact that our housing is a mass-produced product, and that all its parts and accessories are for sale, is not a bad thing. After all, it's been this way since Sears and Montgomery Ward sold mail-order house kits in the 1800s. Americans today can pick out their dream house at the local supermarket. Along with their gallon of milk. ■■■

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA, teaches architecture at Smith College and writes the "Covering the Issues" column for *ArchitectureBoston*.

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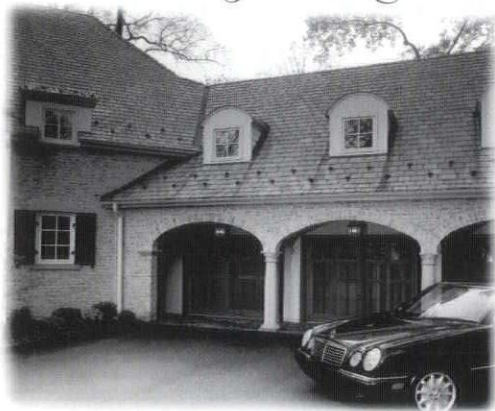


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Lofty Ideals: Artists' Housing at 300 Summer Street

by Bob Kramer

I remember the thrill of moving into my first studio in the Fort Point Channel area of South Boston in the '80s. Not only was it a place to set up my tripod, but it was also a place filled with other artists like myself.

In many ways, we were naïve to think that the powers-that-be would let us occupy prime real estate forever. The great political winds were already whirling down the streets with their intent of pushing us out to make way for higher-paying corporate tenants. Yes, I was dislodged from my studio space and set adrift like so many other artists. I decided to bolt from the city and let others make their stand.

Years later, I find myself in Fort Point Channel again. This time I am photographing the artists at 300 Summer Street who stuck it out and made this place their home. Artists have long lived in the Fort Point Channel area, some living illegally in their lofts/studios. This building, owned and developed by an artists' co-operative, may soon be the last remnant of what was a thriving community.

I have never understood why a city like Boston doesn't respect the idea of an artists district — a place where artists work, live, and create. How drab a city can be with its tall buildings filled only with commerce!

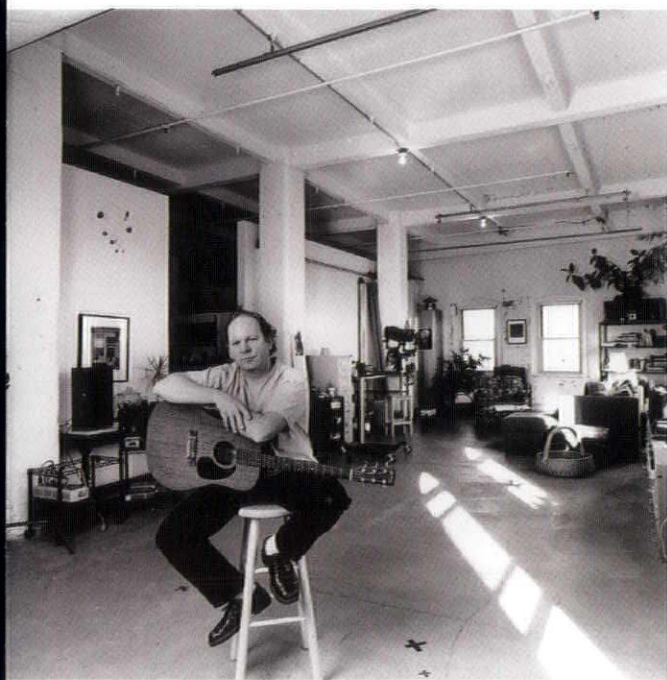
And how wonderful it would be to have an area of the city filled with galleries with work created by those who actually live and work there. Is it too late for Fort Point Channel to be that stronghold for artists? ■■■

Bob Kramer is an architectural photographer in Boston.



photos © Bob Kramer

Rob Reeps
painter



Clark Quinn
photographer



Ben Freeman
artist

Lofty Ideals



Dorothea Van Camp
artist

Jeffrey Heyne AIA
architect/painter

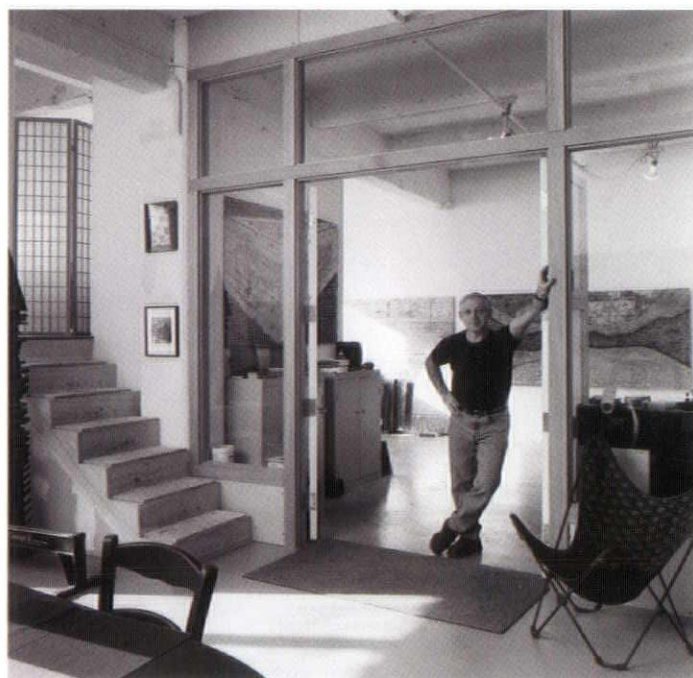


Jesseca Ferguson
artist (pinhole photographer)

Mark Pevsner
composer

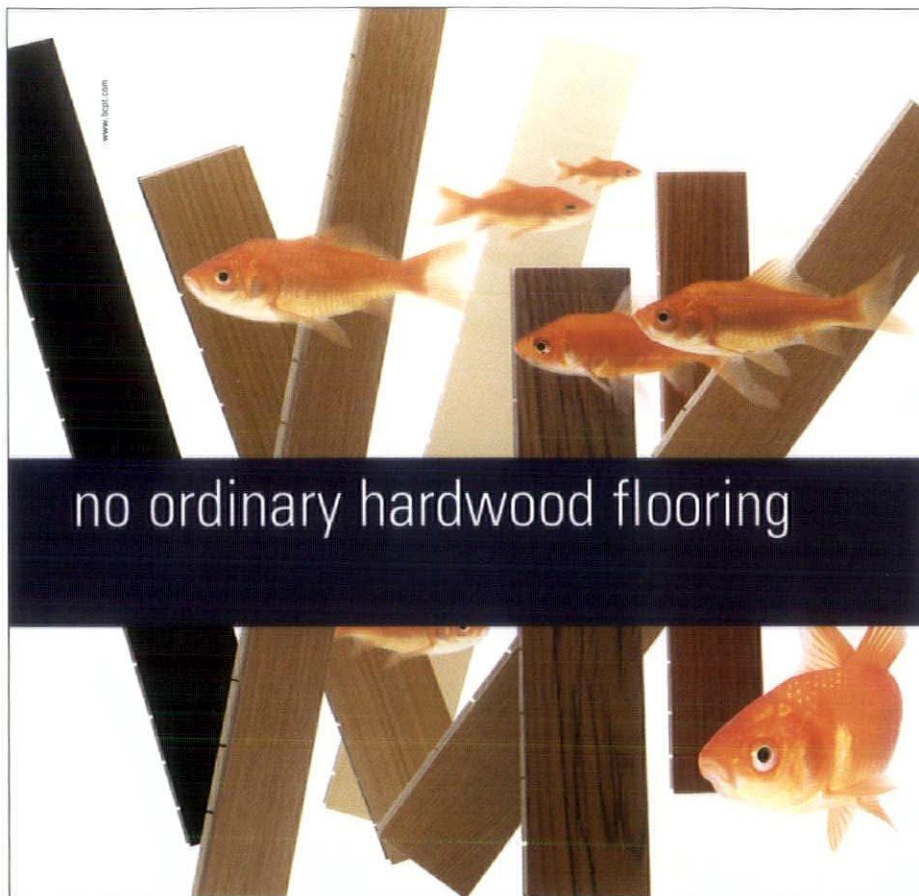


Christine Vaillancourt
painter



Mario Kon
artist

photos © Bob Kanner



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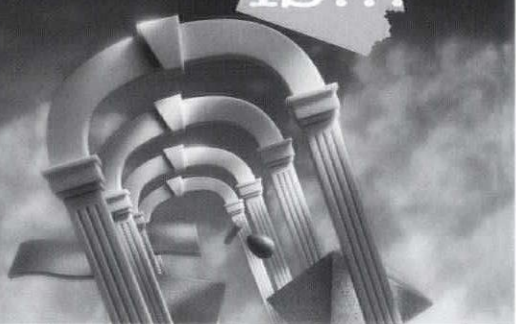


Photo: S. Rosenthal

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It's Not Your Father's Trailer:

From the Mobile Home to Manufactured Housing

by Carol Burns AIA



Quick...What is one of the fastest growing segments of the U.S. housing market, comprising 25 percent of new houses? (Hint: It's not McMansions.)

What is the only type of housing that is built in conformance with a federal building code that pre-empts state and local codes?

What is one of the least expensive, most easily financed, and technically innovative forms of housing available today?

The answer: Manufactured housing. You used to know it as the "mobile home."

Because of the familiarity of trailer parks and highway convoys of mobile homes, people might think that they know all about manufactured housing. But manufactured housing has evolved — and continues to change — in response to complex processes of regulation, production, and supply that have shaped this house type, largely without public awareness. Today, American manufactured housing dominates the global market for factory-built structures. The manufactured-home industry has contributed to the growth and expansion of industrialized housing (which includes modular housing) by producing a complete, unsubsidized house characterized by economy and by innovative techniques and materials. With its identifiable physical, cultural, and sociological characteristics, manufactured housing is undeniably significant, affecting people, communities, and settlements.

Quick-Change Evolution

The history of the "chassis-based house" is remarkable for its rapid change within a short time. Physical transformation, in association with changes in use and meaning, spun off a succession of entities with different names. The "travel trailer" emerged in the mid-1920s and its production continued until around 1940; the era of the "house trailer" spanned from 1940 until 1953; the "mobile home" period lasted from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s; the current period began in

the mid-1970s when the mobile home officially became "manufactured housing." Each name change signified an effort to create a new image and public perception of the chassis-based house.

The "travel trailer" originated in the recreational-vehicle industry. Through the 1930s, travel trailers were viewed as recreational housing for households with mobile lifestyles and temporary housing needs and they were, indeed, highly mobile. Travel-trailer manufacturers introduced a variety of designs offering alternative appearances in order to relate this invention to accepted forms from the past as well as to popular images of the future.

During World War II, the rapid development of war industries spawned dispersion and mobility of the labor force. An immediate need for housing resulted, and the travel-trailer house satisfied it with a combination of mobility, affordability, and availability. Many units were used as permanent homes in single installations or in trailer parks, even as the units themselves remained potentially mobile.

Housing shortages after World War II increased the use of such homes as year-round residences. A newly renamed entity, the "house trailer," provided shelter that was both immediate and within economic reach of many. Families could move these units following employment or whimsy, keeping wheels, axles, and hitches in place for easy transport. Recognizing, however, that the interest in mobile housing was increasingly an issue of economy rather than mobility, the industry redirected its focus toward developing and marketing this industrialized housing type in competition with other forms of factory-built housing. This shift signaled the beginning of the process by which the potential mobility of the structure became evermore incidental in value.

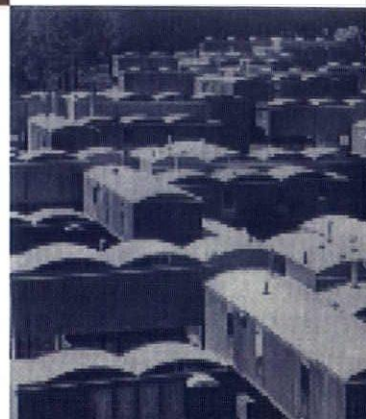
The "mobile home" emerged as a distinct entity in the mid-1950s with the first production of a 10-foot-wide unit. Too big to pull behind the family automobile, the mobile home soon

attained lengths in excess of 30 feet. With a growing demand for longer and wider units, the industry produced an array of size and material variations for what remained a basic rectilinear unit set on



Above:
Airstream
designer, Wally Byam
First produced in 1935,
with few body changes
to this day

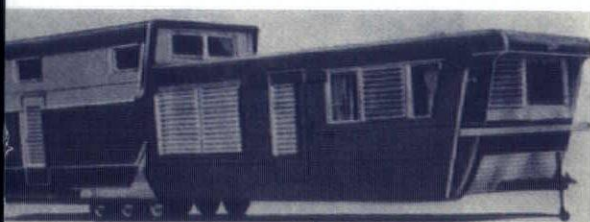
Top of page:
Manufactured Housing Institute
demonstration project,
Washington, DC
Susan Maxman Architects



steel travel chassis. Long, extra-long, doublewide, multilevel, foldout, pop-up, expandable, and multisection units enabled physical configurations more akin to those of conventional housing. Similarly, pitched roof forms, interior and exterior finishes typical of conventional construction, and site designs were adapted to make the mobile home more house-like and less hickular. The shift from the house trailer to the mobile home involved a change in attitude as well as in use: The industry began to produce dwellings that happened to be mobile rather than trailers that could also serve as dwellings.

Soon, manufacturers were faced with the choice to remain in the travel-trailer business, to produce larger mobile homes exclusively, or to manufacture both products, essentially for different markets. In 1963, the two industries formally split, with travel-trailer manufacturers identifying themselves as the recreational-vehicle industry. By the mid-1970s, one-fifth of all new houses were mobile homes, primarily for people seeking affordable starter housing.

Having emerged from the recreational-vehicle industry, chassis-based houses were initially subject to little or no regulation for construction or installation. Manufacturers were either small firms turning out a few units a month or large automobile companies producing mobile homes on the side. As mobile homes became a permanent housing choice for more people, concerns about public health and safety arose. Governmental recognition of the importance of mobile homes in satisfying demand for affordable housing led to federal legislation regulating their construction. In 1974, Congress passed what is now known as the National Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act, which directed the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to develop national building standards and a federal oversight program for the construction of manufactured homes. In June 1976, the Federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards became law. Known as the "HUD Code," it distinguishes manufactured housing from other forms of housing. Its passage marked the end of mobile-home production.



Left:
Mental Masonic Gardens
New Haven, Connecticut
designer, Paul Rudolph
ca 1971

Above:
Pacemaker
bilevel, 1950



Left:
Committee Trailer
FHA/War Production
Board (war housing)
original cost, \$750
1942

Above:
Tenwide
Marshfield Homes
designer, Elmer Frey
1954



photos: collection of Carol Burns AIA

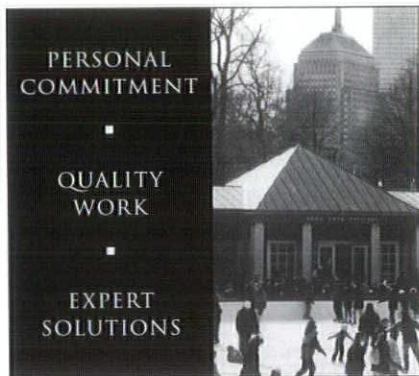
Public Reception, Then and Now

Historically, manufactured housing has suffered disfavor from the public, local and central government, housing finance institutions, and the design profession (though a few architects, including Frank Lloyd Wright and Paul Rudolph, have worked with the concept on occasion). Even today, it continues to create controversy. Limitations of structural forms by transportation restrictions and the banal use of basic construction materials to maintain low market prices have led to the perception that it is less than "real" housing. The current stock of chassis-based houses still includes older, lower-quality units that were built prior to the adoption of the HUD code, propagating the perception that manufactured houses are unsafe "tornado magnets."

Compared to mobile homes of the past, however, manufactured-housing units built today vary widely in appearance and can be indistinguishable from conventional "site-built" housing. Homes produced today are comparable to site-built homes in terms of maintenance, wind safety, fire safety, and thermal efficiency. Manufactured housing satisfies the preferences of many consumers who want to own a single-family, detached house with a private yard. As such, it appeals to diverse household types, including young first-time homebuyers, older homeowners and retirees, and others seeking an affordable "starter home" as the first step on the ladder of home ownership. Affordability is perhaps its most important feature; households often have few other low-cost housing options. Recognized as a realistic option by both those who build them and those who buy them, manufactured houses continue to become evermore indistinguishable from conventional dwellings. ■■■

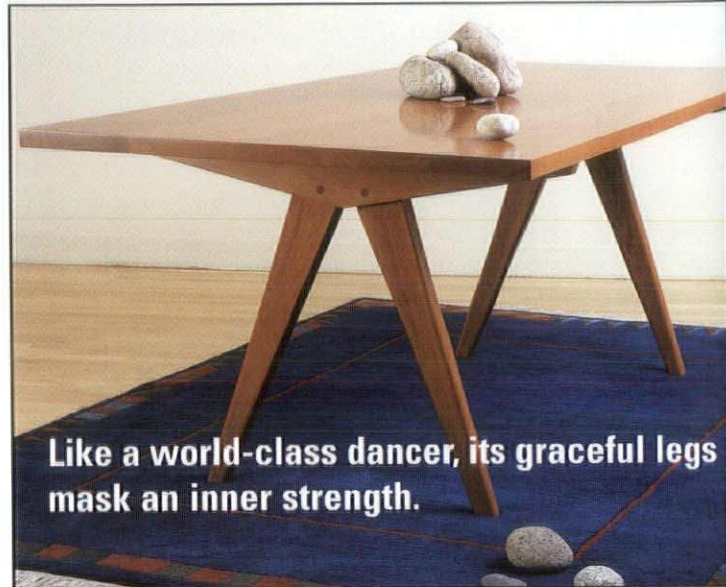
Carol Burns AIA is a principal of Taylor & Burns Architects in Boston and is a housing fellow of the Joint Center for Housing at Harvard University. Research and student work from her studio on manufactured housing at the Harvard Graduate School of Design may be found at: www.gsd.harvard.edu/~gsd1300a/

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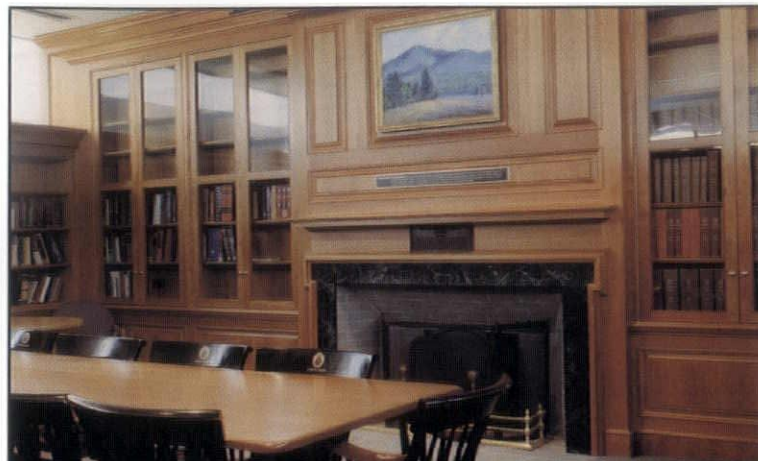
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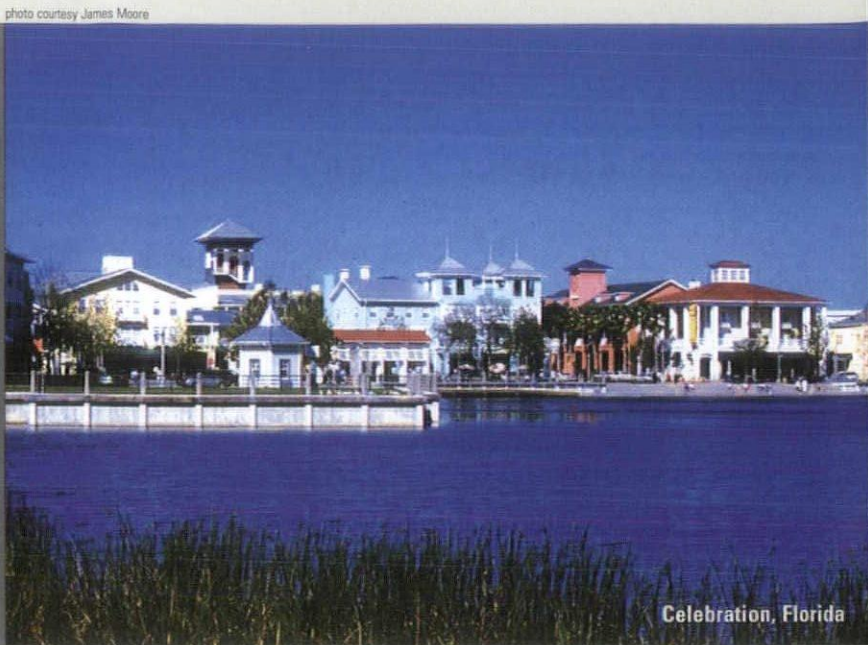
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Letter from Florida

Coming of Age
in the
Sunshine State

by James A. Moore, Ph.D., AIA

photo courtesy James Moore



Celebration, Florida

James A. Moore, Ph.D., AIA, is the community-design principal at HDR, Inc., an architecture, engineering and planning firm, and an associate professor at the University of South Florida.

The excruciating closeness of Florida's presidential election highlights the paradoxical nature of the Sunshine State. While some view Florida as the poster child for what is wrong with post-war planning and development, others see us as a bellwether for the tough issues that will eventually affect the entire nation.

A demographer I know likes to contrast Florida with Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania, he notes, 82 percent of the population is from Pennsylvania. In Florida, by comparison, 75 percent of the population is from somewhere else. The stability of the Quaker State makes it easy to achieve consensus and relatively difficult to innovate. In Florida, consensus is a rare commodity, but change is second nature.

Increasingly, however, a consensus is emerging, if only as a reaction to the status quo. People feel that things today are not as good as they could be, and that they may get worse before they get better. Fear is a great motivator; many people, ranging from private citizens to business and political leaders, worry that current problems may keep us from properly addressing our future.

The dominant industries in Florida are still related to construction, tourism, and retirement. All three industries are temperamental, and all three are parasitic, eating into the very essence of what makes Florida attractive in the first place. Construction and related industries contribute massively to the state's economy. Conversely, the product of these industries — sprawl — is the number one concern of most residents today. For every economic development official who welcomes another office park, retail center, or condo complex, increasing numbers of people are saying, "Enough is enough."

Tourism, too, is a mixed blessing. Our 50 million visitors each year spend their money here. Much of it, however, goes to poorly-paid service workers. Meanwhile, the tourists use up valuable infrastructure, perpetuate sprawl (particularly near Orlando and the beaches), and are notoriously fickle. Economic downturns or bad publicity quickly prove the fragility of a tourism-based economy.

Gone, too, is the easy assumption that the majority of each year's retirees will come to Florida for its combination of golf, low prices, and nice weather. Analyses suggest that the state's lock on the elderly may be slipping, particularly among the more educated and affluent. As early as 1994, *The Wall Street Journal* noted a shift in retirement venues away from Florida. Current surveys pick locations as diverse as Idaho, Washington, North Carolina, and Wisconsin as prime retirement destinations.

Additional studies track the changing nature of retirement itself. Part of the change is the apparent unwillingness of the baby-boom generation to actually slow down. Over half of the boomers surveyed plan to continue working, at least part time, past the age of 65. These people will alter the nature of old age. Healthier and wealthier than the generations that made Florida a haven, the boomers are experience junkies, with a taste for variety and high quality. Those locations that can provide these attributes will succeed. Those that can't, won't.

Economic changes also portend a different future. Recently, the Urban Land Institute convened a panel to discuss the implications of a digital society. Coming from diverse disciplines and locales, the panelists seemed united in one sentiment: The future belongs to communities that can provide a

a quality of life. By this, they did not mean prices and sunshine. Instead, they favored density of experience; a range of social, cultural, aesthetic choice; and a diverse population. Specifically, they were discussing the resurgence of America's great urban areas, particularly automobile cities such as New York, Boston, Chicago, or later cities that mimic earlier models, such as Austin, Pittsburgh, Portland, and San Francisco.

The panelist addressed high-tech industries, the holy grail of development officials everywhere. He pointed out that it's no longer an issue of state or local politicians offering financial incentives. Today's corporations recognize that people can and increasingly will choose to work where they want to live, instead of the other way around. The important factors today include urban lifestyles, diversity of choice, variety of experiences, and an educated populace. It's not just universities, he said. How good are the grade schools, the museums, the neighborhoods?

Florida puts Florida in a curious position. The archetypal post-war suburbia, Florida has few traditional urban centers to revitalize. It has almost no mass transit, only a handful of truly historical neighborhoods, and a weak educational system. Our roads are overcrowded, and much of the ecology is threatened, if not spoiled. Our constitution prohibits a personal income tax, so we paradoxically rely on growth to pay for things — a Faustian bargain at best.

What Florida does have, however, is a tradition of transformation. Increasingly, people recognize that if they want change, they need to start at home. Perhaps because so much of the state is defined by sprawl, Florida is also the home of the greatest number and variety of "traditional neighborhood developments" (TNDs, as they are known to planners and developers), including two of the best recognized — Seaside and Celebration. "Smart growth" initiatives abound, and everywhere, citizens are inserting themselves into the community planning process, if only to gain a say in their future. The state that is notable for its generally low-quality built environment is also the state with the most aggressive programs for purchasing environmental easements to protect them from development.

Dignified urban centers are being nurtured back to health. A recent *New York Times* article highlighted Florida's rediscovery of downtown living by noting that major residential projects are under way

"... in once-seedy downtowns of Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa and St. Petersburg, and they are so popular among would-be downtowners that most are spoken for long before they are even built." Older suburbs are also being transformed, becoming at once more diverse and more focused — in short, more urban. Failed malls throughout the state are being converted into mixed-use centers, many including housing. The governor has unleashed a program challenging the schools to improve and has also charged a blue-ribbon panel with rectifying the weaknesses in our growth-management legislation.

Lost in the uproar over our inability to pick a president is that we were solidly in favor of amending the state constitution to mandate a high-speed inter-urban rail system, to be under construction by the end of 2003 — further proof that people understand that auto-oriented suburban growth is not sustainable.

Recently, I was asked to discuss ways of corralling the state's burgeoning sprawl. Reviewing best practices from around the country, I distilled the material into ten recommended approaches. Ironically, all ten can already be found, to some degree, within Florida today.

The recommendation that stirred the most debate was the call for regional government, something that citizens (who want less government) and local jurisdictions (which don't want to relinquish power) both resist. But regional governance itself is not the goal; regional cooperation is, and recent events indicate that we may already understand the benefits this brings.

A November press conference in Tampa unveiled the state's bid to win the 2012 Olympic Games. While Tampa is the official host city, the mayors of the seven largest cities in Florida were all in attendance. Their sentiment was that this effort was not just about Tampa, or even about Tampa and Orlando (which will also host many events). Rather, the bid is a vision for the "Olympic Corridor," running from St. Petersburg to Daytona Beach. By extension, it is a vision for the entire state.

The mayors understand this. More and more citizens understand this. As a state, we are still young, still transient, and still growing. We will undoubtedly continue to argue over the best approach to the future, but the consensus seems clear that it won't be business as usual.





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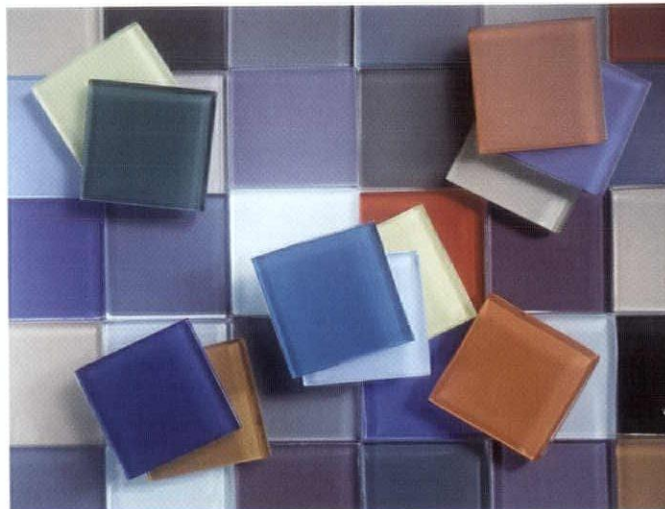


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A Roof of One's Own

Charlotte Golar Richie
talks with
Leland Cott FAIA

Charlotte Golar Richie is the chief of housing and director of the Department of Neighborhood Development for the city of Boston. Prior to her appointment by Mayor Menino, she served as a state representative representing Boston's Dorchester and Roxbury neighborhoods, and served as House chair of the Joint Committee on Housing and Urban Development in the Massachusetts legislature. She was previously a newspaper and television reporter.



Leland Cott FAIA is a principal of Bruner/Cott & Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts and is a design critic at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he teaches seminars and studios on housing and urban design. He is a past president of the BSA.



Cott: As the director of the Department of Neighborhood Development, you currently administer \$200 million in city, state, and federal funds. You also oversee 300 employees. Taken together, this makes you a very powerful person. What's more important, it makes you the largest developer of housing in the city of Boston.

Golar Richie: We have a profound effect on the quality of life of people in the city. So this role is a privilege, but it's also a chance to do some creative things. It's a chance to look at issues like design, issues like affordability. Are we doing all we can to make housing affordable to, let's say, the hard-pressed middle class? They're the ones who often get caught in the middle.

Cott: It's really the vast groups of people in between the very wealthy and the very poor, who have the most difficulty finding housing.

Golar Richie: Yes. I would say that there's general public support for housing for the homeless. That doesn't mean that people want that homeless shelter located next door to where they live, but they understand that society has a role to play in supporting people who are the poorest of the poor. We've seen approximately a 30 percent increase in the number of homeless families. We're getting the sense that it's easier to get a job than it is to get housing in the city.

Mayor Menino has said from the beginning that he wanted to support middle-income families. A family of four, let's say, with two people earning \$10,000 apiece. That doesn't make them wealthy. I think most of us embrace the notion of a city that is diverse economically. We want to see that working families are able to live here and raise their children here.

Cott: It makes you wonder what the future of Boston will be if it continues to have the reputation of being a difficult place in which to find housing. Our mission statement says that this department is committed to making Boston "the most livable city in the nation by working with communities to build strong neighborhoods through the strategic investment of public resources." The word "strategic" jumped out at me. How do you see employing public resources to maximize the number of units you can develop?

Golar Richie: We want to use this money wisely and responsibly. The mayor recently unveiled a housing strategy for the city of Boston. We talk about it in terms of the five P's: production, preservation, public housing, partners, and performance.

Cott: The sixth P is design, but we'll talk about that later.

Golar Richie: It took enormous energy and cooperation among various city departments, including this department, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Boston Housing Authority, and the Inspectional Services Department. But this is a pragmatic and achievable approach to our housing challenges. On the production side, we picked a number — and that wasn't easy — 7,500 units over three years, which we broke down based on what we felt we could get in terms of funding and the need in the city. We in this department felt we could, over three years, aggressively create 2,100 units of housing for low- and moderate-income people. The Housing Authority felt they could return 1,100 vacant public units back to productive use. That would leave a balance of 4,300 units, which we'll allow the private market to bring in. So, that's the production piece.

In terms of preservation, we have boarded-up units that we need to bring back online. We've got so-called "expiring use" units — affordable units created through federal and state programs that are at risk of going market-rate if we don't intervene. We have seniors out there who are homeowners with vacant apartments in their houses because they can't afford to renovate those units. They worry about contractors coming in, worry about not being able to handle that. And we want to help them. Those are just some examples. We set as a goal 10,000 units over three years that we will plan to preserve, in addition to the 7,500 new units. In three years we will have no vacant public-housing units in the city of Boston.

Cott: That's aggressive.

Golar Richie: The mayor put \$30 million toward this housing strategy, going to bricks and mortar. It also helps us leverage dollars, so what we have is, in effect, a \$2 billion program, if everything goes as planned. But we need to make sure that our partners — the federal government, state government, and the private sector — join us in this effort.

Facing page and below:
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And then the last thing is performance. People come up with grand plans for addressing all sorts of societal ills. But then they have a press conference, and everybody congratulates one another, and then they go their merry way, and years later you say, Whatever happened to that? This is different — we are putting ourselves out there. There is a list of goals, and you can check them off.

Cott: I want to get back to the issue of design and your sense of the role of design in the production of housing. I think we too often get hung up about the number of units we're producing — how quickly we're doing it, what the costs are — and we tend to forget that once they're built, people actually live in them. If they're not designed well, there's a problem.

Golar Richie: Design is critical to our success — it's critical to our ability to go to a community and encourage them to accept an affordable-housing development. A bad-looking development will always get pointed to and will become the reason not to do affordable housing. It's something that we are very mindful of.

Cott: Has the topic come up in your weekly meetings with the mayor?

Golar Richie: No. I wouldn't say it comes up weekly, but it comes up with my staff. You can bet that if we support a bad-looking structure, that will come up. You hear less about people saying, "That really looked good." But you will hear when it doesn't look right. There is an ongoing tension between the desire for first-rate design and the ramifications on cost.

Cott: The assumption being that good design costs more?

Golar Richie: Yes. Right now, to create a unit of housing here in the city, we're finding that the cost is over \$200,000 a unit.

Cott: That's a phenomenal number. Not so long ago, it was \$65,000 or \$70,000.

Golar Richie: So if you say to me, it would really look better to have some beautiful oak floors instead of linoleum or carpet, I'll go with you. I like the oak.

Cott: But you also have to weigh it against how many units that eliminates.

Golar Richie: Right. We know that the public wants to see good-looking design. I think people have an aesthetic sense, even if they don't have a trained eye. If it's too nice, it looks too extravagant. People will question whether that was the best use of funds. But I think in the main, if you have some good, clear, crisp design with good lines, structures that respect and blend with the existing landscape, those are the kinds of things that are applauded. Housing that doesn't look like it's for "those people." Housing that doesn't discriminate.

Cott: Or stigmatize.

Golar Richie: That's right. I think it's safe to say that, as a society, we've moved away from the notion of warehousing poor people in multi-level developments.

Cott: We're also more interested in dispersing affordable housing units throughout the community, so the low-income units are not as identifiable.

Golar Richie: Absolutely. And that goes for supportive housing too. I'd much rather see a program for homeless people, for example, that is integrated throughout the city and not just a home for homeless people.

Cott: How did you become interested in housing issues?

Golar Richie: Maybe it's hereditary. Both my parents worked in housing in New York, and in fact my grandmother and my father lived in public housing. My dad eventually worked his way through law school. He was the chairman of the New York City Housing Authority for many years under the Lindsay administration. My mother was an elementary-school teacher. After staying home with us kids, she went back to work and landed a job as a manager in New York's housing preservation department.

Cott: Was housing discussed around the dining table at night?

Golar Richie: Not quite the way I'm discussing it at my house. We probably talked more about politics.

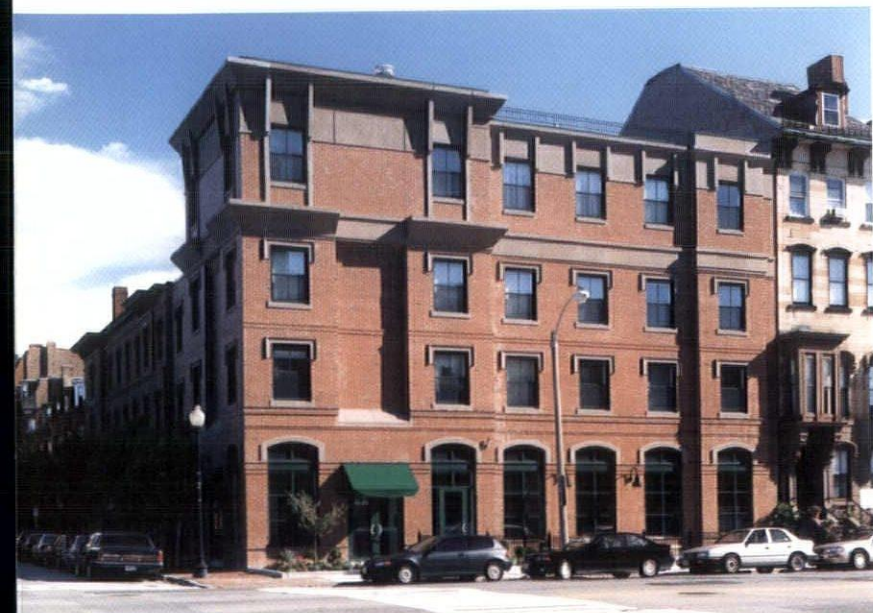


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tt: How do you think you have matured in your look or in your expectations about housing? You're a seasoned politician, but you probably started out with a lot of idealism.

lar Richie: I think idealism gets worn down a little bit. I was a Peace Corps volunteer — that's a good example of idealism. I'm on the side of believing in activist government. I think that we can do a whole lot to improve the lives of people — so I'm a little idealistic in that way. But my feet are firmly planted in the ground — I know it takes work.

tt: Do you feel you can raise the bar on what's being done for housing and how we're doing it? Are there any innovative things that are being looked at?

lar Richie: That's our responsibility. The mayor is looking for new ideas. One example is housing grand-families — grandparents who are raising their children's children. The first development of that kind in the nation, as I understand it, is in Manchester. And it has been hugely successful. We've been working with groups to support housing grand-families raising foster children. And I'm working with the Boston Society of Architects — we are going to develop a plan for what we call "Main Streets housing."

tt: And what is that?

lar Richie: Our neighborhood Main Streets are filled with one-level businesses, and we could build housing above those businesses.

tt: That's why I keep coming back to design. In communities that support design innovation, sparks seem to fly and wonderful things happen in terms of how people feel about housing. We can't think of people in housing as a homogeneous group — they come from different backgrounds and different family structures. Design can accommodate those differences. For example, you can imagine housing single parents with children, in which there would be common recreation facilities, perhaps a common kitchen for an occasional communal meal.

lar Richie: I will say that one group that we've focused on is the disabled community. And we've looked at ways of making our housing more accessible.

tt: Can you see the political processes around housing as a means to make the city more livable for all of its citizens? Boston still has a reputation of being a somewhat segregated community, especially in terms of its neighborhoods.

Golar Richie: I would argue that Boston's probably not a whole lot different in that regard from other major cities in the U.S. But we vigorously uphold our fair-housing laws. Yes, we know that there are a lot of people who want to remain in the neighborhoods where they grew up, but we also know there are a lot of people who come to the city, or who have lived in the city, and would like to try living somewhere else. And that should be supported. I welcome interaction with different kinds of people, but I know everybody's not like that. Some people just want to be with their own kind. But my job is not necessarily to preserve that kind of thing. It's to make sure this is an open society.

As this country of ours gets more accessible to a lot of people, we all interact more. Your children interact with mine and with the neighbors'. So it is incumbent upon us, if we want to be a safe, productive, prosperous society, to ensure that everybody has a chance to succeed. And that means you've got to have a good place to live. Housing is not a privilege. It's a right. I like the idea of reinventing public housing. ■■■



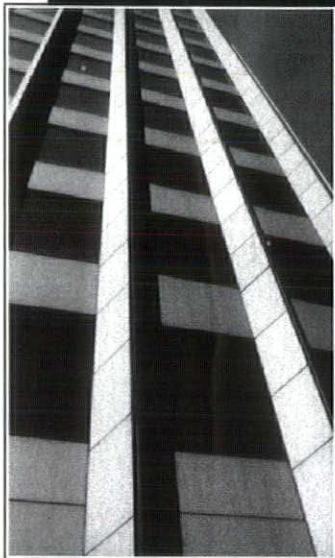
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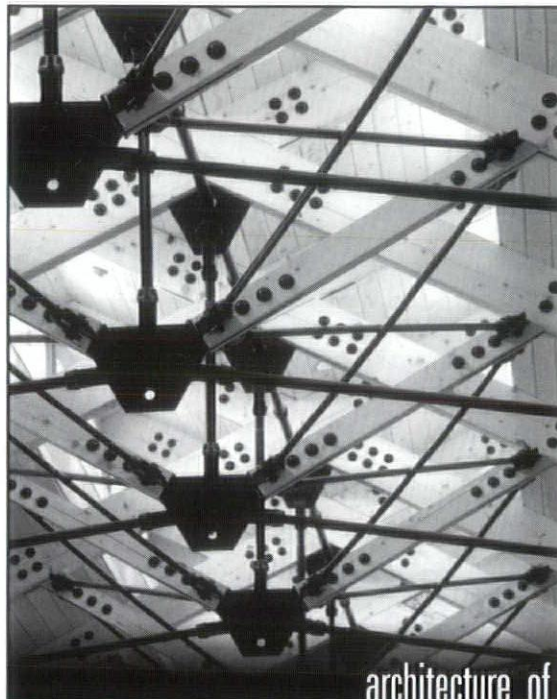


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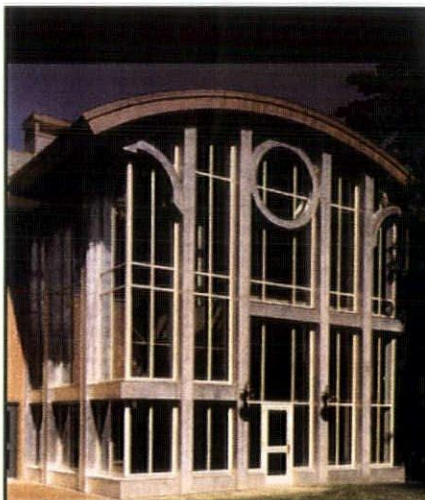


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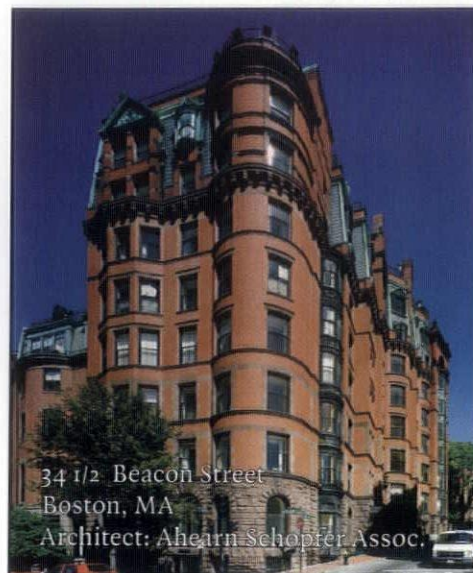
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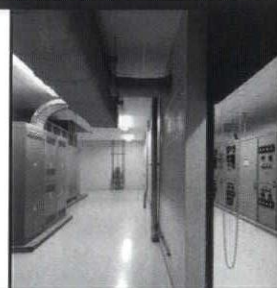
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The affordable housing crisis in this region is searing and deep. Housing experts project that we will need 78,000 new units in the next five years. A *laissez-faire*, the-market-will-handle-it approach may produce only 36,000 — leaving thousands of low- and moderate-income persons and families hanging like chads, while thousands of educated workers, critical to our information-age economy, are forced to seek their fortune elsewhere. If we are indeed a responsible, enlightened community, as we like to think, then we must take aggressive action throughout the region, not just in Boston, in order to have a meaningful impact.

If programs, regulations, and money are tools, then commitment to resolving the crisis is the toolbox. These tools can be put to work now:

- The state has already established a clear goal: Ten percent of the housing stock in every city and town must qualify as “affordable.” Older generations have benefited greatly from government-supported programs and should not squelch development of multi-bedroom dwellings because subsequent tax increases may be necessary to fund more children’s education. The state can enforce its goal by withholding “local aid” funding from communities that show no progress.
- Municipalities control land. Each must commit to a set-aside for affordability and avoid excessive demands for open-space reservations. Massachusetts’ new Community Preservation Act can help towns address both interests. In former industrial areas, we can use “brownfields” funds to clean up contaminated sites for new housing.
- Municipalities could offer density bonuses and tax credits for mixed-use developments that provide mixed-income housing and commercial uses that meet economic development goals while reducing sprawl.
- Over 2,600 publicly supported units in this region have been “stripped” from the public domain because of expiring Section 8 agreements and conversions to mixed-income developments. Another 10,000 are at risk of conversion to higher-income dwellings in order to maximize owners’ profit. We must commit to funding the preservation of *every* public housing unit and *every* expiring-use property.
- Many rooming houses have been converted to more “productive” uses, but we haven’t replaced their original function. The region needs single-room-occupancy (SRO) housing for the working poor, who need permanent housing more than temporary shelters.

Two Views

Politicians, policymakers, and planners have all recently offered their solutions to this region’s affordable-housing crisis. *ArchitectureBoston* asked two people who actually build housing: What do *you* need?

by Philip Giffie



Philip Giffie has been Executive Director of NOAH (Neighborhood of Affordable Housing) for 13 years. NOAH is a multi-service community development corporation in East Boston.

- Interest rates substantially affect affordability for homebuyers. The region’s corporate giants — including the mutual fund and financial-services industries — should contribute matching funds to community-development financial institutions (CDFIs) to help underwrite lower-cost loans.
 - We must regulate predatory mortgage companies that raid seniors, immigrants, and unsophisticated borrowers through excessive interest rates and needless foreclosures. We should support financial literacy training and credit counseling programs to curtail these unethical “equity stripping” practices.
 - The governor has rightly claimed that excessive regulation drives up the cost of housing. A coalition of housing organizations and professional associations such as the BSA should recommend ways that public, private and quasi-public financial intermediaries can reduce “oversight” and regulation.
 - Money matters. Tax rollback measures, such as the \$1.2 billion cut fiercely championed by Massachusetts Governor Cellucci and President Bush’s \$1.3 trillion cut, threaten government’s ability to fund affordable housing. A moral commitment to fund housing based on today’s undeniable housing crises should supersede the political capital accumulated by elected officials.
- Can we house all residents of Greater Boston? Yes — *if we’re committed*. Are further studies needed? No. Nic Retsinas of Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies has said, “We don’t need more conferences to build housing. We know how to build housing.” The cost (\$1.5 billion) would be less than depressing the Central Artery (\$14 billion) or cleaning the harbor (\$5 billion). If a basic human and economic need as housing is unmet, we should question the wisdom, foresight and values of this community.



Affordable Housing



by Lisa Alberghini

Lisa Alberghini is the director of the Boston office of The Community Builders (TCB). She is a private non-profit developer which has helped develop more than 15,000 units of affordable and mixed-income housing.

For more information on affordable housing, visit www.tcbinc.org.

Reports and studies on affordable housing may be found at www.chapa.org.

Within the span of eight weeks in the fall of 2000, Cardinal Bernard Law of the Archdiocese of Boston released a report identifying "a new paradigm for housing in Greater Boston," Massachusetts Governor Paul Cellucci issued two significant studies on increasing housing production, and Boston Mayor Thomas Menino identified a five-part strategy for tackling the affordable housing problem with renewed commitment and vigor. When you stop to think about it, this collection of work by local leaders in such a short period of time is extraordinary. Who in the industry can recall a time when more attention has been paid to the challenge of providing affordable housing?

So, what more could we possibly need?
Action.

We need clear and decisive action. Coordination of efforts and resources. Speedy application processes and funding decisions. Cooperation rather than competition for attention among political and program leaders. A commitment by private developers to invest in all segments of the housing industry, not just the most profitable. And leadership from private-sector businesses and financial institutions, universities and unions, to match that of our public sector leaders. The affordable-housing crisis is not putting itself on hold waiting for reams of regulations to be prepared, for one political faction to position itself more favorably than another, or for the private sector to find perfect solutions that do not interfere with profits. We cannot wait any longer. It's time to get moving.

Cardinal Law, Governor Cellucci, and Mayor Menino have all exhibited real leadership in promoting affordable housing, even though they have clear differences in approach, emphasis, and required resources. We can focus on those differences or we can challenge each other to see the shared commitment, to pay attention to the true need that has brought the industry together over the past year, and to insist upon moving forward with solutions.

How do we do that? We get the state's new Housing Trust Fund up and running quickly. We support the mayor's efforts to expend the \$13 million recently approved by the City Council for new affordable-housing projects. We work with the state to implement changes that are called for in its studies. We establish productive incentives for suburban communities, clearly the farthest behind the curve on this front, to muster the courage and capacity to provide more affordable housing. We insist that approvals needed to move projects along are being granted (responsibly, of course). And we ask more of private developers — when only 40 unsubsidized affordable housing units were added to the stock in Boston last year, during a time of unprecedented profits, the development community itself must acknowledge culpability in a system near the breaking point.

Fortunately, almost all of our leaders are paying attention. They are initiating programs, filing legislation, and preparing regulations. Let's recognize their efforts, and understand that every detail of each new thought may not always be completely worked out. In a time of crisis, we can't wait for the 100-percent solution. Let's use our judgment and balance the need for programmatic perfection, political positioning, and profits with the needs of families. Let's allow our programs to evolve as we learn more, and continue to work hard for more resources, but not let either of those things hold us up from taking action immediately.

We have made remarkable progress in the past year. Our leaders must continue to be unrelenting in their commitment and conviction, and we must all hold ourselves to a strict standard of performance over politics. We can't let this opportunity slip away or dissolve into a meaningless memory of the year we almost made a difference. ■ ■ ■



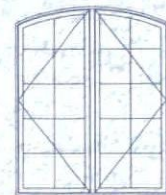

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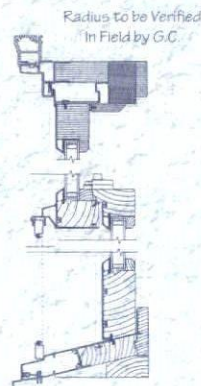
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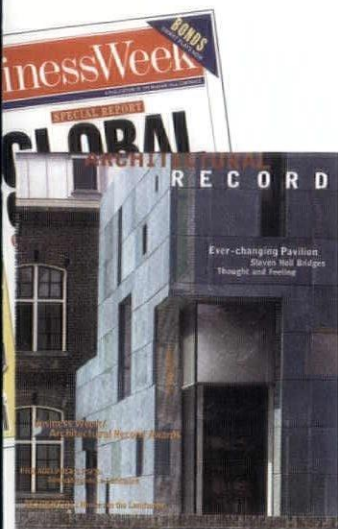
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Covering the Issues Periodical roundup

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc. AIA



Design matters... "Good design can be the difference between success and failure." This holds true not only for buildings, but for magazine articles, too. "Super Structures" boasts the headline in the November 6, 2000 *BusinessWeek*. "Making Good Design Pay Off," claims the October 2000 *Architectural Record*. Both articles independently

tribute the winners of the 4th annual joint *BusinessWeek/Architectural Record Awards*, sponsored by the AIA in conjunction with McGraw-Hill, publisher of both magazines. These are the same awards given to the same projects, though you would never guess that by the wildly different ways they're presented in these two magazines. The story is the story. By the numbers: *Record's* 20-page awards section includes a variety of visual material and text. On average, each winning project is presented through 4.4 project photos; a client/owner photo; a listing; a list of key facts, explanatory paragraphs describing the challenge, "the solution," "the benefits," and "key players"; and finally, jury comments. *BusinessWeek* offers a 15-page editorial section. On average, there are 1.9 project photos, no listings, a list of key facts, and text that is sharply and concisely abridged. *Record's* clear, comprehensive treatment of the projects leaves the reader understanding both the architecture and why it was good for business. *BusinessWeek's* truncated, jumbled presentation leaves the reader still searching for the story of buildings. These awards, and the collaboration between the design and business worlds, deserve praise. But the collaboration is to carry through all the way to the published, public page. Now it just highlights the cultural divide.

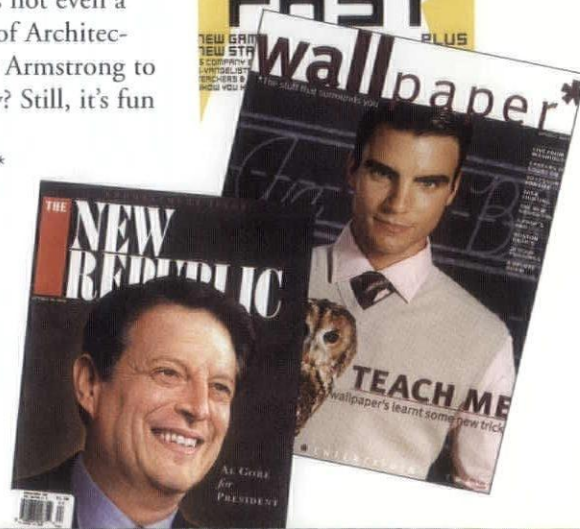
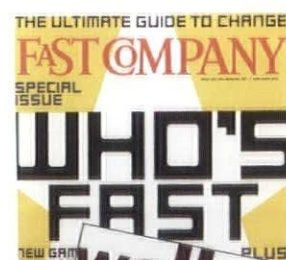
Urban affairs... OK, maybe it's a little weird to review a review. Nathan Glazer is always worth talking about. In *The New Republic*, (October 30, 2000), he calls recent books by Joseph B. Grew and Janet L. Abu-Lugod "necessary examples of how the city can be intelligently loved." The review is a necessary example of how the city can be intelligently discussed.

Practical wisdom... Sam Mockbee and his students seem to accomplish what many only dream about. In Mockbee's "Rural Shelter" — a semester "abroad" program at Auburn University

— students spend a semester in Hale County, creating and constructing innovative, low-cost houses for residents of one of America's poorest counties. The dream: Low cost does not mean low-quality design; innovation does not mean high-ego, high-minded Modernism. *Fast Company* (November 2000) profiles Mockbee and his students. Made primarily from natural or found materials, each house is given away, no strings attached. This is far from a handout: Students gain hands-on construction training and down-to-earth, real-life experience as they work with "regular" people and materials and learn to make the theoretical real. The ground rule: Every house must be one that students would live in themselves. While using architecture to improve lives, the semester changes students' attitudes toward poverty. By every measure, this astounding project should be celebrated. Could this happen elsewhere? Could this happen here?

Home turf... It's always odd to read about one's own place in print, especially when that print is the über-hip *Wallpaper** (October 2000). In "Mass Education," Stephen Armstrong and this British mag visit our Cambridge to check out the famous scene and schools at either ends of Mass. Ave. Armstrong's observations are surprisingly well-detailed and wide-ranging, touching on topics from the extreme pressures students face to nightspots like the Hong Kong and the Middle East, from the renovation of Baker House to the collapse of rent control, from the skateboard kids at the Out-of-Town News "Pit" to the drinking deaths at MIT. The key word there is "touching," as this article only skims, and makes obvious admissions. Why does Harvard's Graduate School of Design get text and photos, but there is not even a mention of the School of Architecture at MIT? Who sent Armstrong to the Hong Kong anyway? Still, it's fun to see familiar scenes through the *Wallpaper** lens. ■■■

Gretchen Schneider, Assoc.
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Books

A Decent Place to Live: From Columbia Point to Harbor Point — A Community History by Jane Roessner

Northeastern University Press, 2000

reviewed by
Anne Gelbspan

A Decent Place to Live describes the history of the collapse of the public-housing development at Columbia Point and its eventual transformation into the mixed-income community known today as Harbor Point. It tells the fascinating history of how public housing evolved from the original intention in the 1950s of serving as temporary housing for the working poor into housing of the last resort for the poorest families.

In the beginning, Columbia Point transcended racism through shared values and active involvement and volunteer work by the residents. But because of local political pressures, problem families were disproportionately assigned to Columbia Point. Eventually, operating costs were no longer covered by the insufficient rents and, as a result, the management deteriorated and maintenance was deferred. By the mid-1970s, this model community had become a symbol of failure. In this complex of over 1400 units, only 350 families remained, living in fear, in a dreaded wasteland of vandalized apartments, drugs, and crime.

The revitalization was driven by the fierce determination of a small group of residents, almost all women, and the vision of the developer Corcoran Jennison. The key to success was the 50/50 partnership between the residents and the private developer, which restored strong management, instituted resident screening, and integrated social support services and programs. The redesign by Joan Goody FAIA took advantage of the spectacular ocean views.

There are still some problems at Harbor Point. The isolation of the site is hard to overcome. Businesses have failed and collaboration with

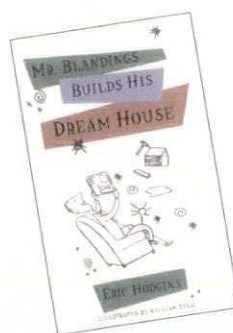
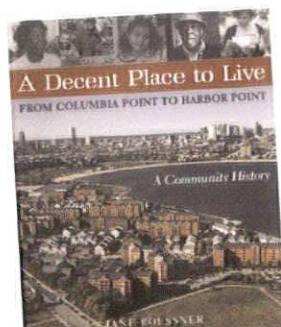
the other institutions on the peninsula has not been completely successful. Some low-income residents resent the conflicting lifestyles of the "market" residents. Others are dissatisfied with the inadequacy of programs, especially for young people. While the low-income residents tend to stay long-term, the average "market" tenant, often a student, is more likely to move on after a year.

Harbor Point's success inspired HUD to redevelop its housing stock under the HOPE VI program into privately-managed, mixed-income communities. Emulating Harbor Point, the HOPE VI program now integrates social services and programs for residents. In Boston, that model is also guiding the rebirth of older public housing developments such as Orchard Gardens and Mission Main. The program is controversial because it fails to replace the low-income units lost to new market-rate units. Nationally, only about 60 percent of "lost" units are replaced, due to social planning goals and lack of federal funds. However, as the book points out, the cost to the federal government of the home-owner's tax deduction vastly exceeds funds designated for subsidized housing.

Amplly illustrated, *A Decent Place to Live* offers a useful blueprint for planners and policy makers. But its stories are what make this book so compelling — the moving stories of personal struggle set against a background of class and racial conflict. Together they remind us of a forgotten piece of Boston's history. ■■■■

Anne Gelbspan is a project manager at the Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development, where she develops affordable housing in the Boston area.

(This book is available from the BSA: bsa@architects.org).



Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House

by Eric Hodgins
Illustrated by Willaim Steig

Academy Chicago Publishers, 1999

reviewed by
Julianna Waggoner

The title of this book is misleading: *Mr. Blandings* is building his dream house, but he's not alone in this fiasco (and did you expect it would be anything but a fiasco?). The Mrs. appears demurely but solidly in the second paragraph, and together they endure the purchase of property, the design of their dream house, and subsequent disasters that skew their best-laid plans.

Observations about early 20th-century gender bias aside (*Mr. Blandings* was written in 1946 and reprinted in 1999), this story is still apt today. Anyone who has designed or built a habitable structure will relish the book's humor and cringe at its accuracy. Of course the toilets show up several months before the house is even built. Of course said toilets spend the interim time languishing under trees in a nearby field, looking "unspeakably vulgar" — nothing less bizarre has ever happened on most jobsites.

Interior designers will enjoy Mrs. Blandings' instructions to the painter, which deteriorate from "the color is to be a soft green, not as bluish as a robin's egg" to "please match the piece of thread which I have wrapped in the little piece of tissue paper enclosed. *Be careful not to lose it.*"

The author's wry, witty style is reminiscent of Thurber. Urban urbane, it is full of delightfully polished phrases: "...there was way on earth to cut a \$31,000 house down to a \$21,000 house more than there was a way of making marmosets out of a zebra by trimming down and rearranging the zebra."

Note, please, the lovely sum of \$31,000 for one's dream house! *Mr. Blandings* is a nicely compact illustration of how much has changed in 55 years...and how much has not. The astounding financial figures that shock the Blandings make us chuckle at how cheap every darned thing used to be. But the descriptions of the flighty, purely intellectual architect the Blandings first hire (did someone say "fresh out of MIT"?), and his later replacement, a more practical professional, seem oh-so-relevant today.

The reader is also treated to the frighteningly canny appraisals of the Blandings by the supposedly ignorant residents of the town in which they have purchased their property. For it appears that the Blandings have scooped up the choicest piece of property on the highest hill in the county — just like arrogant rich city folk. I cannot help but be sympathetic to the Blandings' plight as inveterate Manhattanites who dream of country bliss, even if we do feel a dutiful Smart-Growth outrage at their urban audacity.

Mr. Blandings dreams of becoming the king of his very own castle and ends up being the uneasy ruler of his very own Big Dig. Yet in our profession couldn't relate. ■■■■

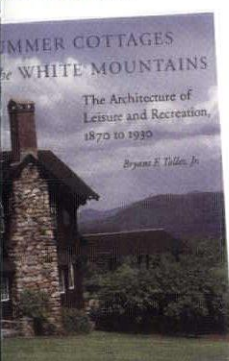
Julianna Waggoner is the marketing director for Dietz & Company Architects in Springfield, Massachusetts. She performs standup comedy, and comed improvisation with the troupe The V Jidiots. She lives in Haydenville, Massachusetts (a blissful country setting).

Summer Cottages in the White Mountains: The Architecture of Leisure and Relaxation, 1870 to 1930

Bryant F. Tolles Jr.

University Press
New England, 2000

Reviewed by
Linda R. Weld AIA



is the story of deeply felt emotions and enduring passion. Against the stunning background of the Presidential age, it is the on-going saga of architecture in New Hampshire.

waters do run deep. In spite of its unambiguous title, academic approach, and objective narrative, Bryant Tolles reveals to an audience willing to read between the lines the enduring passion of a scholar for his subject, the evocative power of an image, and our own emotional response to the symbolic qualities of architecture.

In the "Summit House" on Mount Washington to Miss Annie May's carriage house, it seems as if Tolles has recorded, researched, analyzed every piece of architecture of significance in New Hampshire. Beginning with *New Hampshire Architecture: An Illustrated Guide* (1979), followed by *The Grand Resort Hotels of the White Mountains* (1998), Tolles is developing a significant body of work that documents New Hampshire's previously overlooked architectural heritage. He takes us from the resort hotels of the post-Civil War period to the late seasonal retreats of the 1920s in his new and noteworthy

volume, *Summer Cottages in the White Mountains*.

"Summer cottages" are not as easily defined as Tolles would have us believe when he asserts that there is "near unanimity as to the meaning of the term." Certainly the Gothic Revival cottages of A. J. Downing present a form and scale at odds with the summer "cottages" of the Gilded Age in Newport. Summer-cottage architecture of the Victorian and Edwardian age was rich with expressive possibilities. Architectural styles changed as often as the proper Victorian lady changed her frock. Eclecticism and eccentricity were indulged. "Castle in the Clouds," for example, is a mannerist romp through the style books by a wealthy Bostonian who fired three architects before finishing the project himself. While such an extravagant summer cottage would hardly be noticed in some resort communities, it is, in Moultonborough, New Hampshire, an example of self-indulgence to an unusual degree. New Hampshire's summer cottages in general tend to be more expansive than impressive, and more informal than overwhelming. They do not constitute a type; rather, they present a showcase for the stylistic movements popular at the turn of the century.

In spite of his title, Tolles does not elaborate on this theme. Instead, with a zeal for documentation and detail, Tolles tells the stories of the owners, designers, and builders of nearly 100 summer cottages in the White Mountains. The result is a scholarly guide, copiously annotated, with a complete appendix of architects, commissions, and clients, and an extensive bibliography. Generously illustrated with historic photographs, drawings, maps, and the author's own evocative photos, Tolles' new volume is a valuable addition to the documentation of New Hampshire's historic architecture. ■■■

Linda R. Weld AIA lives and practices in Milton, Massachusetts, and frequents "Avoca," a summer cottage in the White Mountains.

The Not So Big House

Taunton Press, 1998

Creating the Not So Big House

Taunton Press, 2000

by Sarah Susanka AIA

reviewed by
James McCown

Everybody complains about McMansions, but nobody ever does anything about them. Enter Sarah Susanka, author of *The Not So Big House* and its recently released "case study" sequel, *Creating the Not So Big House*. These are refreshing, jargon-free books that lay out the author's contention that, in this age of affluence, people often build houses that are vastly larger than what they actually need, and that the resulting rambling, soulless abodes work against the notions of family and community.

Some tenets of the *Not So Big House* credo: Formal, separate living and dining rooms are a vestige of Victorian propriety and end up wasted; the commercial homebuilders' focus on raw square footage yields big, awkwardly proportioned rooms that are cold and uninviting; and — can we get a hallelujah on this one? — much of residential design is driven not by human need but by the conventional resale wisdom of real estate agents. The author's voice is gentle, straightforward, and aimed at the non-architect: Think in three dimensions; think proportion; think sequence and ritual; think rich details. Further, she manages to criticize the suburban *status quo* without descending into the almost reflexive contempt many elite architects have for the American *haute bourgeoisie*.

Susanka often cites Frank Lloyd Wright's dicta that variation in ceiling heights and the use of nooks and crannies lend a sense of differentiation and coziness to otherwise unbroken spaces. (My own favorite detail, the window seat, is aptly called an "embrace from the house.") She also contends that

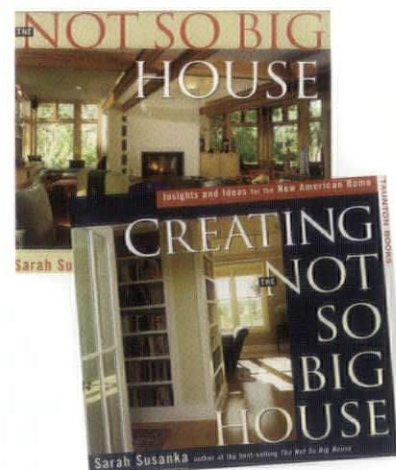
built-in storage can make up a lot for lost raw square footage, but the cost — ouch! Has she priced custom cabinetry lately? *Caveat emptor*.

The books are beautifully illustrated and laid out simply and clearly, with plans and sections accompanying each example. But in the *Creating* sequel, Susanka presents too many examples in *Architectural Digest*-like settings — the coast of Maine, the Napa Valley — instead of in the typical suburban subdivision whose residents could most benefit from her advice.

We hear a lot about today's workplaces being "in step with our casual lifestyle." Similarly, these books present the concept of the private residence as freed from any notion of formality whatsoever. But this begs a question. For generations, formal living and dining rooms have served important ritualistic roles in American life, even if not in daily use. As appealing as Susanka's thesis is, and as well executed as her books are, what are we getting rid of here?

Hmm — I'll have to curl up in my favorite window seat and think about this one. ■■■

James McCown is director of communications at Moshe Safdie and Associates Architects in Somerville, Massachusetts.





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Mies van der Rohe
1929

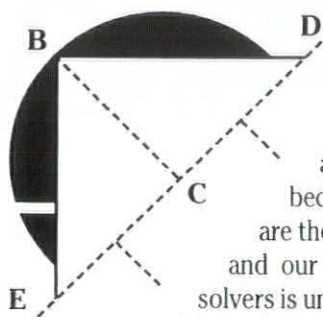
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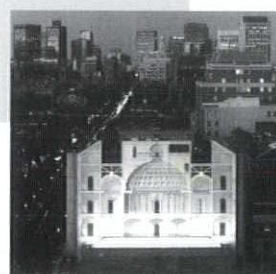
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Shooshanian Engineering	www.shooshanian.com	47
Steelcase	www.steelcase.com	50
Stone Source	www.stonesource.com	40
R.W. Sullivan Code Group	www.rwsullivan.com	33
TAMS Consultants, Inc.	www.tamsconsultants.com	46
Thoughtforms	www.thoughtforms-corp.com	outside back cover
Tofias Fleishman Shapiro & Co., P.C.	www.tfsandco.com	47
Marc Truant and Associates, Inc.	www.mtruant.com	40
Van Lumber		32
Walker Parking Consultants	www.walkerparking.com	4
Charles Webb/CI Design	www.charleswebbci design.com	36
Richard White Sons, Inc.	www.rwsons.com	46

Site Work

Web sites of note

Levittown: Documents of an Ideal American Suburb

www.uic.edu/~pbhales/Levittown.html

A fascinating, thorough documentation of the suburb that has attained almost mythic status. Photographs show both the original development and its transformation.

Citizens Housing and Planning Association

www.chapa.org

This respected non-profit organization is the "only statewide group which represents all interests in the housing field" in Massachusetts. As you might expect, it produces *the* go-to Web site. Be sure to check the "public policy" and "what's new" areas.

Shelter, Inc.

www.shelterinc.org

A worthy and effective organization that combats homelessness. Click on the "homelessness" button for some startling facts about the hurdles facing homeless and near-homeless families in the Boston area. Artists and designers can help: Contribute work for the May 31 "Images of Home" art auction.

U.S. Housing and Urban Development Research Department

www.hudusers.org

A federal agency that's actually user-friendly! Download reports and studies such as the "American Housing Survey," search a bibliographic database, sign up for listservs, and explore Web links.

B4UBuild

www.B4UBuild.com

A cheerful, non-threatening site that tries to demystify the homebuilding process for consumers. But professionals will find it helpful, too — there's an amazing compendium of information and materials resources.

Outhouses of America

www.jldr.com/ohindex.shtml

Everyone needs a hobby...a light-hearted tour of surviving outhouse structures by an outhouse fanatic. Makes you wonder what common present-day structures will someday be considered quaintly obsolete. The three-car garage, maybe?

Manufactured Housing Institute

www.mfghome.org

Did you know the governor of Arkansas is living in a triple-wide? Sure, it's temporary, just while the official mansion is being renovated, but it shows you how far the manufactured housing industry has come (*see page 34*). "Mobile homes" aren't just shelter anymore — they're a *lifestyle*.

CIA-Boston

www.ciaboston.org

No, no, not that CIA. This is Christmas in April, which every April organizes teams of volunteers who rehabilitate houses of low-income homeowners. The Boston program celebrates its 10th anniversary this spring.

We're always looking for intriguing Web sites, however enigmatic the connection to architecture. Send your candidates to: epadjen@architects.org

Other Voices by Margo Miller

The Zimmerman House

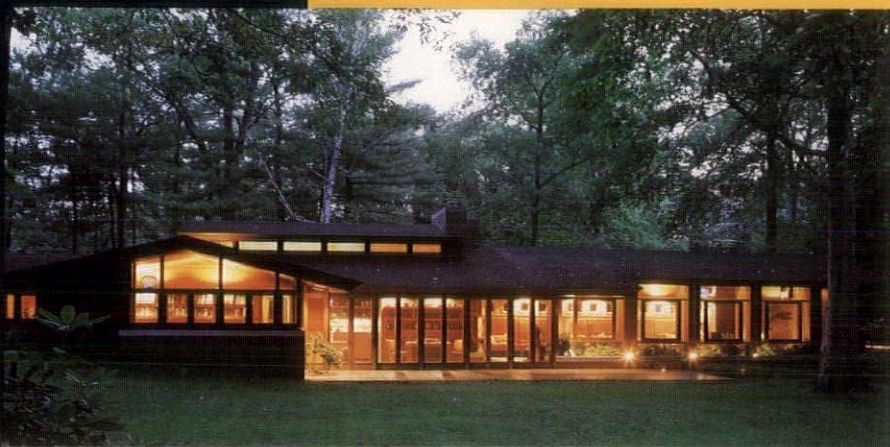


photo courtesy of the Currier Gallery of Art

Whenever I lust after a designer house,

I think back to a visit to Tom and Lucilla Marvel when I was given the task of arranging the flowers. Lucilla, who is my very oldest friend, brought out an Aalto vase and I messed about, drooping posies prettily into its plump folds. Lucilla gave a whoop of laughter, and grabbing the flowers, she hauled them upright. "Remember," she said, "Tom designed this house. This is an Architect's House."

With that playful rebuke sitting like a parrot on my shoulder, I recently visited another Architect's House, one of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian. This one was commissioned by Isadore and Lucille Zimmerman of Manchester, New Hampshire, and after both had died (and were interred in the garden), it went to the Currier Gallery as a house museum. I had seen another Usonian-as-museum near Washington, DC, and found it confining. Would the Zimmerman be different? And who were the Zimmermans? For one attraction of visiting house museums is poking around in the lives of the people who lived there.

My first question was, How tall were they?

As the world knows, Usonians were a housing manifesto, Wright's answer for people of modest means. He eventually designed several dozen, some grander than others, but all in some way

reflecting his own diminutive stature. The Zimmerman Usonian is rather like a submarine hull, revealing nothing till you are inside. And while Wright asserted the Usonian layout was truly American, I was interested that his design for the Zimmermans has a "carriage entrance" and a "garden front" like an English Stately Home; and the route from the carport to the front door mimics the progression from farm yard to portico in a Palladian villa. What is truly different is the compression.

Lucille Zimmerman, according to the expert Currier guides, was about five-seven, tall for the time, and her husband was a tad shorter. He was a successful urologist and pianist and she, his office manager and cellist. They had come to hate their big Colonial Revival for all it said about ultra-conservative New England. And so in June 1949, Dr. Zimmerman wrote to Wright asking for "a home that would be an integrated expression of our personal way of life rather than a coldly efficient building." When the couple told Wright that on Tuesdays they invited friends over to play chamber music, he designed a communal music stand as stately as a lectern in a medieval library.

And so there was music on the afternoon of my visit. It was a low November day, tawny oak leaves scything down on the red-tile roof and a pianist playing Liszt at his most melancholy as we sat

on little stools. The music followed, Bach and Rachmaninoff, as we toured the two bedrooms (master and guest); the brick-and-wood interior made a powerful acoustic. I could imagine Mozart keeping Lucille company in the galley kitchen.

My second question was, What did they sit on? The answer was, where Wright wanted them to sit. Lucille, we were prided herself on good posture and said she would be content with a stool at the dining table. No, said Wright, you must have a chair, and it must be well-padded. For dinner parties, the couple's little table was combined with other tables to seat a multitude along a very long banquette in the living room. Made comfy by the cushioned backs and seats, guests could lounge and talk. But purely as sofa, the banquette did strike me as constrained, a farmhouse's side porch with just enough room for a row of rockers facing forward. And where did the Zimmermans sit to read or chat? In bed, under the stout bookshelf above? In the two little armchairs, which, tellingly, are not by Wright? Nature does bring release, brought indoors through glass walls, and there were the patio months when the Zimmermans were further cosseted by Wright's garden. With its Great Lawn and woodsy Ramble, it is Central Park in miniature.

There was a lot to admire at the Zimmerman house. Much in little, an enormous elegance of detail and finish, though the box bed frame barked my shin, and I know those bricks will never mellow. I would love to like this house, but the truth is, like many Americans of the early 21st century, I am no longer mannerly enough for a Usonian.



Margo Miller was a writer-reporter for *The Boston Globe* for 37 years.

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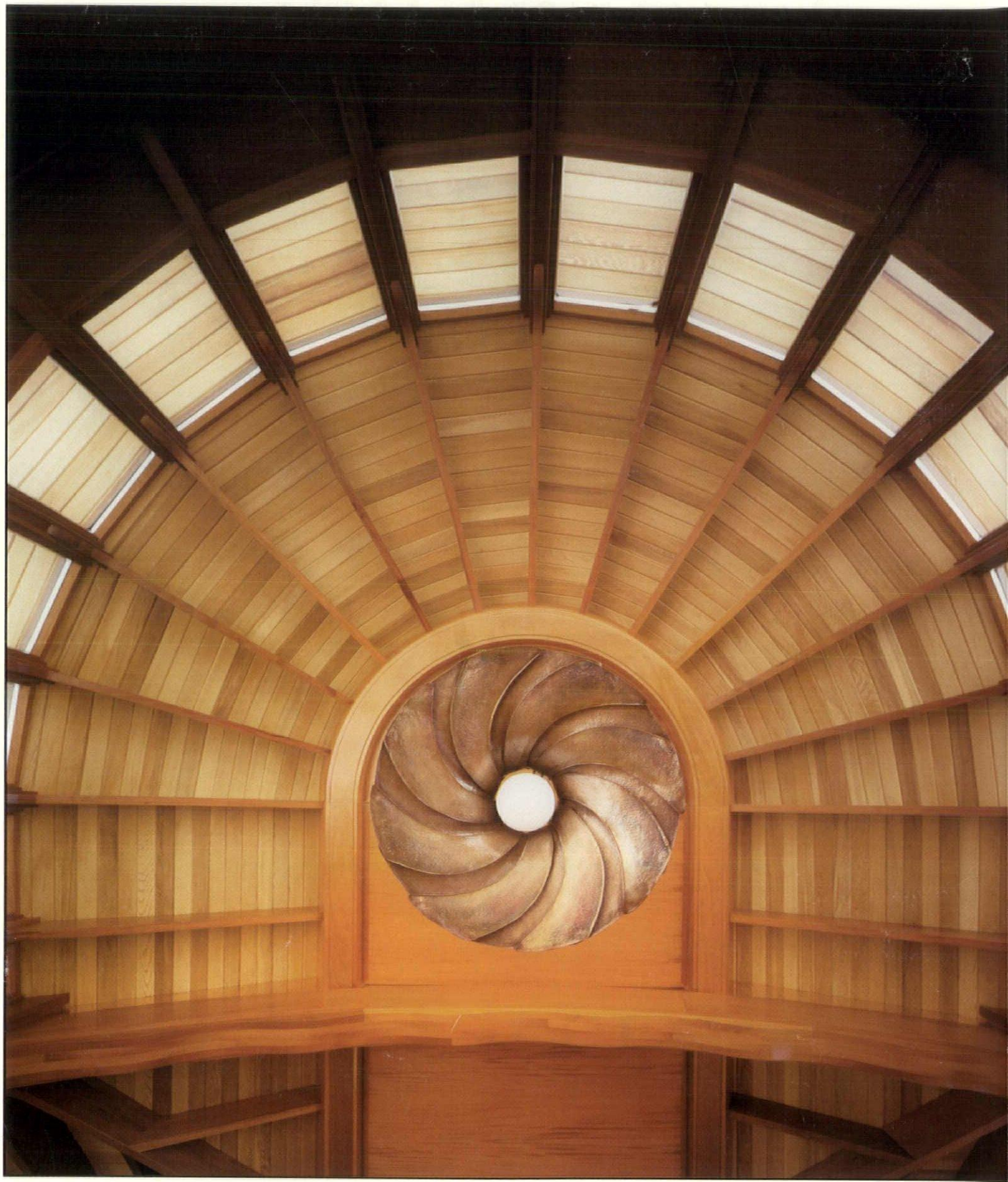
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