

# new jersey Architecture



Jan/Feb/Mar 1979



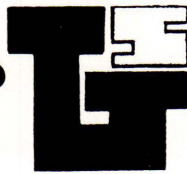
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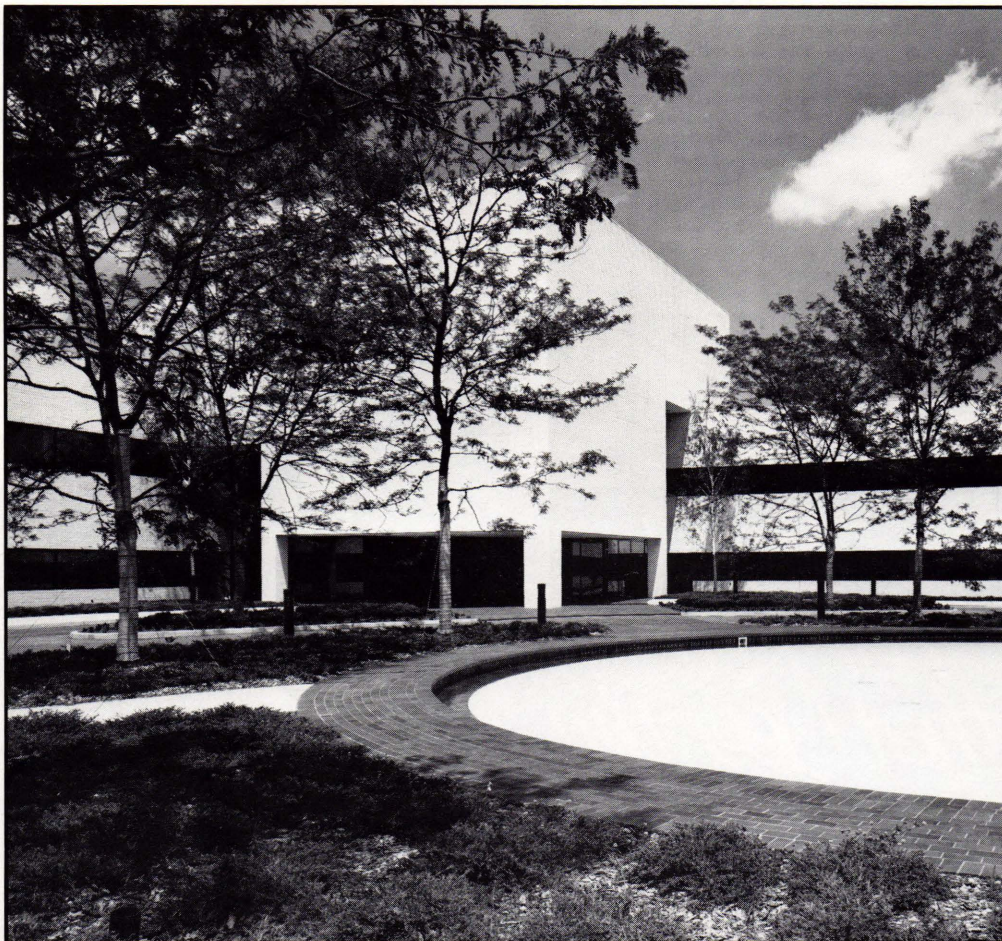
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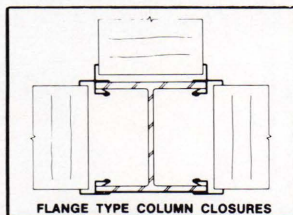
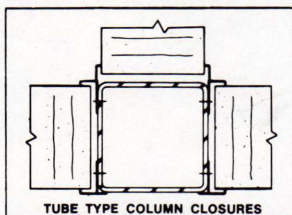
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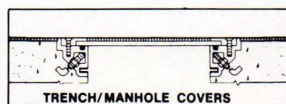
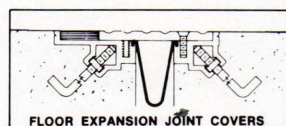
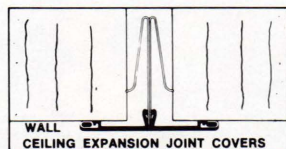
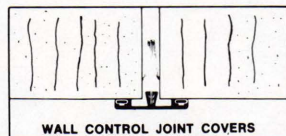


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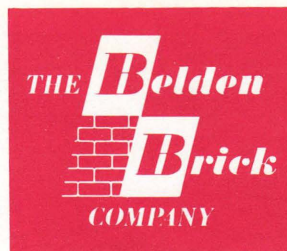
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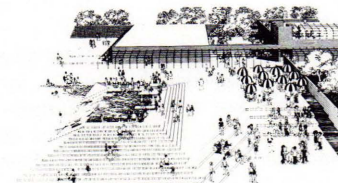
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# new jersey Architecture

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# viewpoints

An architect is a professional, a specialist on building design and construction. He is prepared for this by four, five or six years of concentrated study in a school of architecture in, possibly, one of our great universities and then by several more mandatory years of experience, (an internship, or clerkship, it is called in other professions) before he is qualified to take his professional examination. He must pass this examination before he can call himself an architect.

There must be a great volume of knowledge and a great amount of skill to be absorbed by this arduous expenditure of time. A medical doctor and a lawyer go through a similar preparation. There the similarity may end. Seldom does a patient describe explicitly to a doctor how his operation must be performed or does a client rise to his feet in court to tell a judge how his lawyer shall proceed with the case. For some mysterious reason, it frequently becomes the unhappy experience of an architect to find himself with a client who, innocently and as casually as he would talk about what suit a person should wear, tells him what "style" the building should be.

"It's his money," you might say and "he has a right to tell you what he wants." That is true, but too many of us confuse the means with the end, the method with the objective. An owner is a very important and indispensable member of a design team. His function is more like that of a patient, whose function is to define the symptoms. The architect's function is to come up with the cure. If the owner does not like the cure, he can make his architect come up with a better one. This, by the way, is a liberty his doctor would never allow him.

The development of a plan layout, an architect must share with the owner, but in matters of esthetics, the architect should be the boss (subject, of course, to dismissal). If not, he is either being interfered with in the performance of his normal function or he is incompetent, and the latter is a very strong word to use against a professional.

Architects themselves are to blame for this situation. They need to tell the public more clearly what it is they do. Doctors and lawyers have no need to explain to people the function of their profession, although they, too, are troubled by people who enter the darkness unassisted, "knowing not what they do."

It is always a professional's objective to make a client happy but, more than that, it is a professional's obligation to prevent a client from leading both of them into a very bad mistake.

The writer has had a number of such experiences. Below is a letter which dealt with one of these:

RE: Proposed Building

Dear Mr.:

Thank you and the entire Board for your mark of confidence in selecting me to be the architect for your proposed new branch building.

Naturally, I assume that you expect me and my associates to apply to this project all of our skills and talents. This we expect to do fully.

However, since we have signed an agreement for this project, before we proceed with the work, we must note that there have been some last minute expressions of opinion that the design should be "colonial." Because of this, we must make a statement for the record to avoid any misunderstanding which could have serious consequences for all of us. May I make several points as follows on this subject:

1. My understanding when I accepted this project was that the Board would be open-minded on this subject and that I would make more than one design to show what I meant by "contemporary" design. Backed-up by many years of experience, I was fully confident that your reaction to this presentation would be favorable. This kind of presentation, to be successful, must be made to open minds. I suspect now, I hope incorrectly, that we do not have this impartial atmosphere.
2. Colonial architecture was a period in the history of architecture. In its time, it was logical, practical and beautiful. It went with a period that was without television, automobiles, telephones, steel, reinforced concrete, mass production and all of the products which make building construction what it is today. In fact, colonial architecture today is only a romantic stage — set, which most of us leave, approximately, to Walt Disney. More importantly, true colonial architecture is impossible to reproduce today because it needs the skills, the materials and the social structure of the 1700's, without which we can achieve only the very poorest imitation obtained at unreasonable cost.
3. Contemporary architecture is today's period of architecture. Regretfully, it is brutally bastardized when misunderstood (as witness the many examples on the Clifton Avenue Extension), but it is here to stay. Like all good periods of architecture, of which colonial was one, contemporary architecture applies the basic principals of esthetics and design to contemporary methods and systems of construction, including the available labor skills (of which there is a scarcity) and the available materials (of which there is a fabulous variety and abundance). If the inventive people of the 1700's who settled this country

could have used machine-produced lumber, plywood, structural steel, large sheets of double glazing, mass production, power saws, modern plumbing, heating systems, electricity, etc., etc., does anybody think they would have copied the architecture of their native England (which they did, you know) and built the way they did?

4. The colonial "style" is not distinctive. It blends into the surroundings because, like most of the surroundings, it imitates a common model. A business building needs a strong, pleasing character which sticks in the mind. Good contemporary design will do this.
5. Any style is a straight-jacket which demands a fixed arrangement of elements, of space and of its parts (windows, dormers, etc.). Contemporary architecture is the exception. It takes its design not from a book but from the demands of modern life, the needs of the occupants, technology and the elements of the environment (the automobile, office equipment, the site, etc.).
6. With a traditional style, one cannot fully solve the problems and difficulties of a set of given conditions, such as a site. With contemporary architecture, because of its non-traditionalism and freedom, one can accommodate, adjust and "tailor" a building to suit any of the conditions — sometimes even all of them. This project has several peculiar conditions that need this flexibility.
7. I hope you begin to see from the above that to me, because I am professional, this matter is of great importance. Once or twice, 25 or 30 years ago, I had to argue this matter but never once since then, except for one or two residences which I then declined to do.
8. In short, I believe we can do an excellent job for you with contemporary architecture, but a poor one with colonial architecture. Therefore, if we produce for you the best design possible under the circumstances, and you then reject it and instruct us to do a colonial design, we would have to respectfully refuse and ask to be relieved of our contract. I hope you understand this.

I would appreciate an expression of opinion from the Board at its convenience.

Yours truly,  
Arthur Rigolo, FAIA

## EPILOGUE

To those readers who are curious about the result of the above letter, I am happy to say that, except for only one minor objector, the Board gave me a vote of confidence and later approved the preliminary drawings as presented.



# outlook

by Alan Spector, AIA

## Annual Report

Construction activity in New Jersey remained healthy during 1978, and closed the year 19 percent ahead of the 1977 pace. Nonresidential construction contracts led the way for improvement in the level of building activity, though these contracts levelled off at mid-year, and dipped below 1977 figures at the year's end. Residential construction activity remained moderately above the previous year's rate, but much of this dollar volume increase represents inflation in building costs.

A surge in new office construction was a major factor in the improved building picture. During 1978, office building increased more than 200 percent over the 1977 rate, and there are indications that this activity will continue into 1979. Government and educational building each registered over 100 percent increases, contributing to the healthy non-residential construction activity in 1978.

In Atlantic County, new construction posted a remarkable 137 percent gain, leading all other metropolitan areas in New Jersey during the year. Mercer and Middlesex Counties also registered sizeable increases over the previous year.

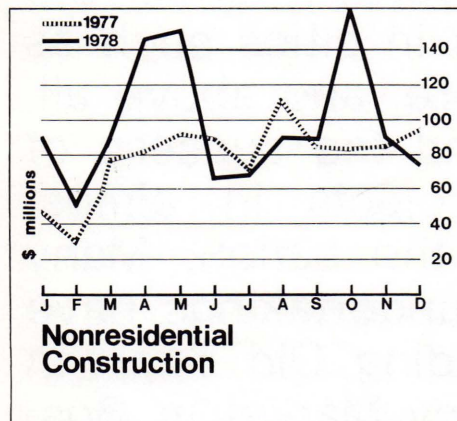
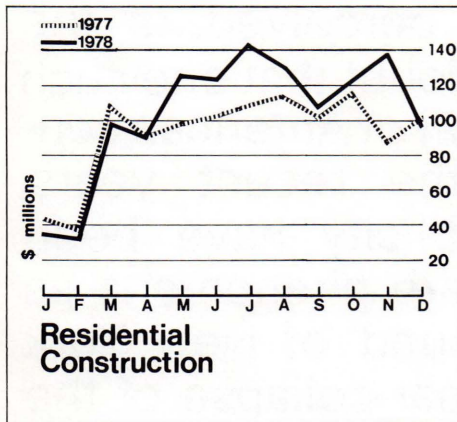
### Forecast for 1979

The projected economic slowdown in

1979 is expected to cause a moderate decline in construction activity. As the effects of tighter monetary policy are felt in the construction industry, homebuilding should turn downward in the first half of the year, and nonresidential construction should decline slightly. Later in the year, monetary policy should gradually loosen, and a recovery in construction activity is expected by the second half of the year.

According to reports from McGraw-Hill Information Systems Company, the decline in nonresidential building will be centered almost entirely in construction of stores. The outlook for office and manufacturing building construction is healthy, and institutional buildings are not expected to be greatly affected by tighter monetary policy.

Current reports of new plans on the drawing boards in New Jersey should reflect the prospects for new construction during 1979. According to these reports, new plans for stores and shopping centers are almost 200 percent ahead of last year's pace, indicating that the projected construction decline may not be felt very severely. In addition, the increased quantity of new plans for offices, medical buildings, and manufacturing plants augurs well for construction activity during the year.



## Statewide Construction Activity

	Oct. '78	Nov. '78	Dec. '78	Yearly Totals (5) 1978	1977	% Change 1977-78
Nonresidential (1)	\$173,891,000	\$87,650,000	\$75,741,000	\$1,150,428,000	\$916,536,000	Plus 26%
Residential (2)	123,025,000	139,132,000	97,904,000	1,291,512,000	1,128,475,000	Plus 14%
TOTAL BUILDING	296,916,000	226,782,000	173,645,000	2,441,940,000	2,045,011,000	Plus 19%

## Statewide Nonresidential Construction in 1978 Jan. — Dec. 1978

	Bidding Volume (6)	%Change 1977-78	New Plans (7)	% Change 1977-78
Stores & Shopping Centers	\$53,745,000	Plus 6%	\$355,008,000	Plus 197%
Office Buildings	112,118,000	Plus 209%	452,842,000	Plus 51%
Medical Buildings	29,241,000	Minus 67%	243,189,000	Plus 55%
Educational Buildings	66,288,000	Plus 108%	224,752,000	Plus 20%
Government Buildings	151,328,000	Plus 105%	124,985,000	Plus 20%
Manufacturing Plants	9,970,000	Plus 14%	164,600,000	Plus 46%

## FOOTNOTES

- (1) Nonresidential buildings include commercial, manufacturing, educational, religious, administrative, recreational, and other buildings not designed for shelter.
- (2) Residential buildings include houses, apartments, motels, dormitories, and other buildings designed for shelter.
- (3) Statistics for selected counties shown are based on figures derived from standard metropolitan areas within the counties.
- (4) All statistics are based on monthly reports of contracts for future construction, prepared by F. W. Dodge Division of McGraw-Hill Information Systems Co.
- (5) Cumulative figures for "Year-to-Date Totals" reflect adjustments not distributed to the individual months.
- (6) Based on figures for projects actually bid and under construction in 1978, as compiled by Engineering News Record.
- (7) Based on figures for projects on the drawing board in 1978 but not yet out to bid, as compiled by Engineering News Record.

## Construction Activity by Counties (3)

	Yearly Total 1978	% Change 1977-78		Yearly Total 1978	% Change 1977-78
<b>ATLANTIC COUNTY</b>			<b>MIDDLESEX COUNTY</b>		
Nonresidential	\$67,240,000	Plus 261%	Nonresidential	\$179,467,000	Plus 64%
Residential	29,931,000	Plus 34%	Residential	120,369,000	Plus 26%
TOTAL BUILDING	97,171,000	Plus 137%	TOTAL BUILDING	299,836,000	Plus 46%
<b>CUMBERLAND COUNTY</b>			<b>MONMOUTH COUNTY</b>		
Nonresidential	19,192,000	Plus 70%	Nonresidential	42,433,000	Minus 33%
Residential	15,452,000	Plus 22%	Residential	135,990,000	Plus 14%
TOTAL BUILDING	34,644,000	Plus 44%	TOTAL BUILDING	178,423,000	Minus 2%
<b>HUDSON COUNTY</b>			<b>PASSAIC COUNTY</b>		
Nonresidential	33,829,000	Minus 26%	Nonresidential	38,913,000	Minus 22%
Residential	27,829,000	Minus 36%	Residential	48,019,000	Plus 105%
TOTAL BUILDING	61,658,000	Minus 31%	TOTAL BUILDING	86,932,000	Plus 19%
<b>MERCER COUNTY</b>					
Nonresidential	84,972,000	Plus 102%			
Residential	44,467,000	Plus 9%			
TOTAL BUILDING	129,439,000	Plus 56%			

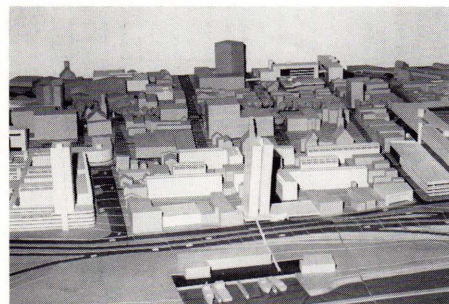


## The Revival of New Jersey's Cities: Myth and Reality

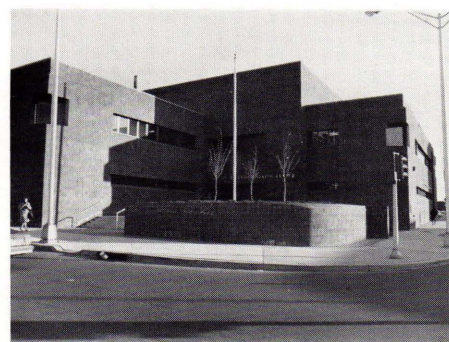
by Alan Mallach



FIRST NATIONAL STATE BANK BUILDING, NEWARK, THE GRAD PARTNERSHIP, ARCHITECTS (Photo: Gil Amiaga)



NEW BRUNSWICK TOMORROW



PATERSON PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER, HAROLD J. COMERRO, AIA, ARCHITECT.

When future historians begin to study the trends, real and perceived, of the 1970's there is little doubt that one such trend will be the revival of American central cities. During the recent years, vast amounts of publicity have been given to such disparate phenomena as the apparent 'turnaround' of New York City after the fiscal near-collapse of the mid-1970's; the process of gentrification (an interesting new word) in once run-down neighborhoods in cities such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, and above all, Washington, D.C.; and the success of innovative reuse projects in almost every major city in the nation. Many specific projects or undertakings have been heralded, including Old Town in Alexandria, the Quincy Market in Boston, or Citicorp Center in New York City. The increasing popularity of historic preservation activities, coupled with the growing willingness of the private sector to invest in urban development, appears to have set the stage for a growing transformation of cities which, as recently as the 1960's, had been consigned by many to the historical trashcan.

This article, in the context of these trends, is a preliminary and impression-

*Alan Mallach is president of Alan Mallach Associates, a housing and community development consulting firm with offices in Philadelphia and in Trenton, New Jersey.*



istic status report on New Jersey. We do not question that something is happening in the United States with its urban centers. The trends, however, appear to be both limited and selective; few cities, even the most visible, appear to be undergoing revitalization *in toto*, while many cities appear, so far, to have been largely unaffected by the trend. Many urban analysts question whether, with the possible exception of Washington, D.C., any American older city can really be said to have 'turned around'. Despite its favorable publicity, New York City's fiscal crisis is as serious in 1979 as it was in 1975. Given this uncertainty, therefore, what can we say about New Jersey's cities?

In the following pages, we attempt to give the reader both an overview, of what is happening and what is not happening in New Jersey's cities, as well as a number of examples of activities that illustrate such changes as are taking place. If it is a picture that is perhaps less rosy than some would like to believe, it is nonetheless not without its bright spots, and its hope for the future.

#### **New Jersey's Cities — An Overview**

Whatever the future may bring, and whatever small signs of hope we can identify, the present state of New Jersey's cities remains bleak. During the 1970's nearly all of the larger, older, cities of the State have shown massive losses of population and jobs, and if anything, have continued to deteriorate economically relative to their suburban rings, and to the State as a whole. Since 1970, the four urban counties of North Jersey have lost nearly 250,000 people, many of whom have left the state altogether. Despite increasing amounts of State and Federal aid, property taxes in urban centers are high, and the level of services provided often well below those available in suburban communities. Although they appear to have levelled off (and in

Newark, actually declined) from a few years ago, rates of violent crime are still ten or more times higher in central cities than in suburban areas. The poor are still overwhelmingly concentrated in the core cities, while the movement of the middle class to the suburbs, although perhaps slower than it once was, continues.

This is not new. Indeed, we begin with this description to make clear that *whatever positive changes are taking place, the problems of the older cities of New Jersey are as serious as ever*. As a result, it would be unrealistic, particularly in the short run, to expect fundamental changes in this reality as a result of recent developments and activities. At best, perhaps, the significance of the recent developments that we discuss here is first, that it is indicative of hope, or potential for the future; and second, that it is a demonstration that, despite the many problems, there **are** good things in New Jersey's cities, and that the picture is not unrelievedly bleak.

Cities, in New Jersey as elsewhere, function principally in two ways; as economic and employment centers, and as communities of people, or residential centers. During the past decades both have deteriorated, as the New Jersey center of gravity has become more and more suburban. Suburban population growth since World War II drew large parts of the middle class out of the cities; by the 1960's, retail trade activity, manufacturing, and other social and economic units had come to follow the population out of the cities. By 1972, five of the seven largest retail centers in New Jersey were suburban — Paramus, Union, Wayne, Woodbridge, and Cherry Hill — and only two — Newark and Jersey City — were central cities. The greatest job growth was taking place in suburban areas, as both blue and white collar employment clustered around the new in-

terstate highways, most notable in Middlesex and Somerset Counties.

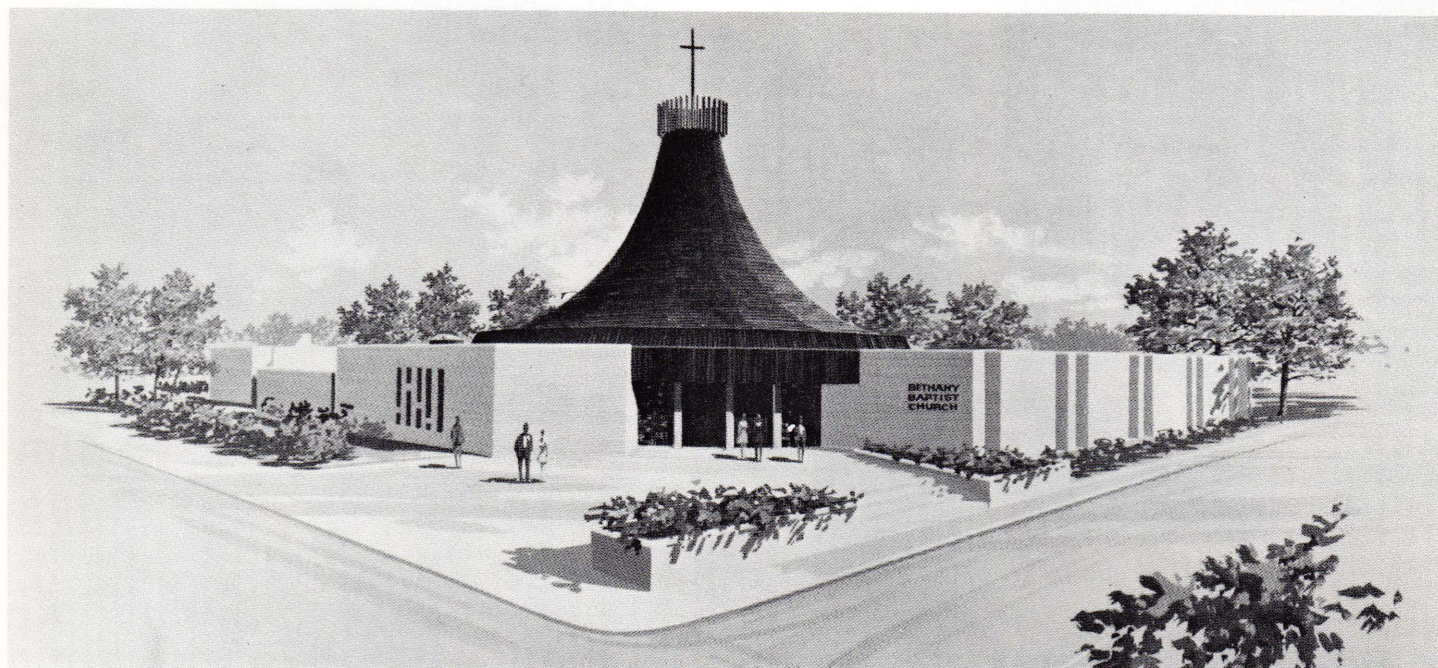
At the same time as cities began to lose their central economic roles, the pressure on their housing stock increased. During the 1960s the combined effects of the poverty of the urban population, the age of the housing stock, and the increasing unprofitability of owning or operating urban housing triggered the massive abandonment of both owner-occupied and rental housing in almost every central city in the State. In many ways, the early 1970's can be seen as a crisis point in urban housing, as the deterioration of the 1960's was exacerbated by the effects of the near-depression of the early 1970's, rampant inflation, and the collapse of the Federal Section 235 and 236 programs. Abandonment increased, and the Federal government found itself the reluctant owner of thousands of urban properties, particularly in such 'rowhouse' cities as Trenton and Camden.

It is in these two areas that we must look for evidence of revitalization: investment and development in central city areas, and reconstruction of deteriorating residential neighborhoods. Below, we discuss each in turn.

#### **The City Centers**

If one can make the comparison, it is apparent that deterioration in city centers has been far greater than in most, if not all, residential neighborhoods. During the past five years, New Jersey's central cities have been losing jobs at an unparalleled rate. More importantly, the loss of jobs has been in areas such as wholesale and retail trade, finance, and business, the lifeblood of the downtown. Newark, by general recognition, is the one city in New Jersey which continues to be a major center of private busi-

**cont'd.**



BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH, NEWARK: BROWN & HALE ARCHITECTS



*Myth and Reality, cont'd.*

ness activity - between 1972 and 1977, the City of Newark lost over 8,000 jobs in finance, insurance, and real estate, a drop of 30%! This took place despite the construction of the massive, and highly visible, Gateway complex immediately adjacent to the Pennsylvania Railroad Station. In percentage terms, the loss of similar jobs was even greater in cities such as Trenton or Camden.

During the past two years, however, a

number of specific ventures have begun which hold out promise, perhaps, of change. These include both specific building projects and in a few cases, a more comprehensive look at the reconstruction of a downtown:

In Newark, the construction of a new headquarters building for Public Service Electric and Gas is under way;

In New Brunswick, the construction of a new headquarters building for Johnson & Johnson is ready to begin; in addition, New

Brunswick Tomorrow, a business—community coalition spearheaded by J & J, has prepared a comprehensive master plan for the redevelopment of the CBD.

In Trenton, a new office building, Capitol Place is nearly complete, and the new State of New Jersey Justice Complex has begun to rise from the ground;

In Camden, the approval has been given for construction of a new Veterans Administration Hospital.

**cont'd.**

## Jersey City: Stimulating Private Investment

It is common for new visitors to Jersey City to express surprise at its overall vitality, and in particular the attractiveness of some of its housing. Since many visitors see only the Turnpike Extension or the Holland Tunnel entrance, they often miss the quiet brownstone neighborhoods that in some cases are only blocks away from the major highways.

In recent years, a number of Jersey City neighborhoods have undergone a healthy comeback: professionals, young couples, and executives have discovered \$20,000 brownstones five minutes from Wall Street. In other cases, long time residents have sensed an upward trend, and have begun to make substantial investments in their own properties.

A significant force in this process has been the Jersey City Redevelopment Agency which has enjoyed strong support from Mayor Thomas F.X. Smith, and the City Council. Using several million dollars in Federal and State grants the Redevelopment Agency established the Neighborhood Preservation Program. The idea was to concentrate public funds, private investment, and City services in 10 carefully selected Preservation areas: those with concentrations of useable housing stock, and ac-

tively involved residents. For those neighborhoods, a program was created that would stimulate, not replace, the private sector as a major factor in neighborhood reinvestment.

What resulted was a program whereby Federal and State funds were used to make owner investment attractive: the availability of home improvement loans at 3% interest. The device was to use grants to reduce commercial bank rates to that level. The result was a healthy response from owners, and a public investment of \$1,449,748 resulted in new construction totalling \$3,555,427.

In the course of operating the Program for four years, 263 property owners have been assisted. The Program results, however, are not limited to mere dollars, units, or buildings. There has been a substantial preservation of the city's older areas and historic structures: turn of the century ornamental ironwork has been restored, ornate facades have been carefully repaired, City parks have been improved and whole blocks of brick townhouses look new. There is also a growing community spirit and effort among neighbors to further this effort — on their own.



Mr. Barnes is Director of the Jersey City Neighborhood Preservation Program.



DISTINCTIVE BUILDINGS REHABILITATED IN JERSEY CITY. (Photos: William Tremper)



Each of these projects represents a substantial investment in the center of one of New Jersey's core cities. Perhaps most impressive is the commitment that Johnson & Johnson has made to downtown New Brunswick, not only in the construction of its own new headquarters facility, but even more in its support for a meaningful and comprehensive effort to develop the entire downtown area as a modern city center, around the centerpiece of the J & J complex.

At the same time, in many ways, the New Brunswick story may well be the exception that proves the rule; namely, that private investment in New Jersey's cities is still a rare and exceptional thing. In recent years, the only city in New Jersey which has attracted any private CBD investment of note has been Newark. Indeed, the Public Service headquarters is the logical outgrowth of the development of the Gateway complex — two major office towers, a hotel, and a small shopping and services area, all linked to the commuter railroad lines, by which (one assumes) the executives get to Newark, by an enclosed, elevated, pedestrian bridge.

One wonders — is a complex of this sort a triumph of urban design, or rather, if not a disaster, at least a highly dubious approach to urban redevelopment? In essence, the developers of Gateway, and the related activities, are taking advantage of the railroad link to construct a complex that may be in, but is certainly not of, Newark. These office towers are little more than an enclave, more meaningfully linked to the suburbs served by Conrail than to most of the downtown city of Newark.

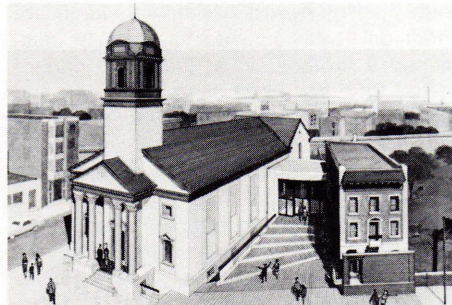
Much the same can be said, unfortunately, about the plan for the new Johnson & Johnson headquarters. A rendering of the complex shows a campus-like setting wherein large green areas separate the facility from the rest of downtown New Brunswick. It is likely, although not clear from the rendering, that there will be a fence surrounding the complex. In this case, rather than the railroad, the umbilical cord of the development is the new State Highway 18. In fact, J & J was unwilling to make the commitment to construct their new headquarters in New Brunswick until they had received a commitment from the State that the highway would definitely be constructed.

The Justice Complex in Trenton, a new state facility costing more than \$50 million, is magnificently situated along the Delaware River (although Route 29 makes direct access impossible), but it is also located so far from the downtown shopping area that few workers, we suspect, will utilize its facilities. One must wonder why the State of New Jersey, operating under far fewer constraints than a private developer or corporation, failed to plan or locate this major facility in a way that would more substantially benefit the City of Trenton. As a result, the state will have constructed a largely self-contained, isolated, architectural monu-

ment, when the resources, more carefully directed, could have significantly upgraded some part of the community.

Isolated office towers and masses of concrete do not, as sociologists and economists know well, make a city center. A city center is the product of the interaction of physical facilities, economic activities, and human behavior, each one enhancing the other. Where we have viable city centers, in the United States and elsewhere, we see that it is in the relationships — street life, diversity, combinations of residential and commercial uses, and the like — that make these areas more than the sum of their parts. Except for the rateables that they will bring, it is hard to see any meaningful enhancement of the cities in which they are located in any of the center city development projects so far undertaken. If the New Brunswick Tomorrow plan gets underway, and achieves or even approaches the goals that it has set for itself, this could be the exception. So far, it is the only venture, even on paper, that offers hope for a New Jersey city center.

It is arguable that casino development in Atlantic City should have been included in this survey. We believe that both the nature of the activity — gambling — and the fact that its economic effects are dependent on maintaining artificial scarcity (since Atlantic City will have the only casinos in the area) make it a special and unrepresentative case.



IRON BOUND EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL CENTER, NEWARK. THE GRAD PARTNERSHIP, ARCHITECTS.

### The City Neighborhoods

It is in the residential character of New Jersey's core cities where we are more likely to find changes that go beyond the cosmetic. Unlike the city centers, which are still at an overwhelming disadvantage relative to suburban areas, a series of developments in the 1970's have begun to make many urban neighborhoods economically competitive, even desirable. The inflation of housing costs, sending suburban new housing prices to astronomical levels, has made many households look more closely at urban alternatives. This, in turn, is supported by two other trends, neither perhaps massive in itself, but nonetheless contributing to urban interest — the growing interest in historic preservation and rehabilitation, as noted earlier, and the increasing costs of long journeys to work.

Despite rising costs, the cost of urban housing is still exceptionally low in many

cities. In Trenton, a city with a good quality housing stock in many neighborhoods, the median house price in 1977 was \$16,400 compared to \$47,600 or nearly three times as much in the rest of Mercer County. In more expensive north Jersey, virtually the only housing available for under \$40,000 is located in cities such as Jersey City (median price \$28,000), Paterson (median price \$32,000) or Plainfield (median price \$37,000). The house one can buy for this money is often substantial; indeed, in parts of most older cities one can often find housing in good condition that is larger, and more substantially constructed, than housing selling for two or three times the price in nearby suburban communities.

The movement back to the cities has brought another discovery for many, which had been largely overlooked in the panic about urban collapse in the 1960's: *nearly every city in New Jersey contains one or more neighborhoods, often large parts of the city, which have remained attractive, largely viable communities, and which, by virtue of their urban location, had become drastically undervalued during the 1960's and early 1970's.* These have typically included two types of neighborhoods: (1) working class areas, often of distinctive ethnic character, which have maintained strong neighborhood cohesion and solidarity, including such areas as Chambersburg in Trenton, Ironbound in Newark, or the Hungarian community in New Brunswick; (2) areas of historically affluent character, often with homes that were the mansions of the rich of yesterday, including Hiltonia in Trenton, Sleepy Hollow in Plainfield, or Forest Hill in Newark. Although house prices in these areas have begun to rise during the past year or two, it was not long ago that even the most palatial home in Hiltonia, for example, could not bring as much as \$50,000.

There is considerable evidence, although impressionistic in character, that areas of this nature are being strengthened today by an increase in young, middle class, homebuyers, both white and black, for whom the cost savings as well as the often impressive quality of the structures involved make up for the disadvantages of urban living. This process has been accelerated by the provision of reduced interest rate mortgages in many such areas through the program of the New Jersey Mortgage Finance Agency. Despite high crime rates in cities as a whole, many of these relatively sound neighborhoods have levels of crime not significantly higher than many suburban areas. Although urban education may be a problem, many households may not have children, or if they do, are likely to send them to private schools in any event. It should be noted that dissatisfaction with inadequate public schools is hardly a phenomenon limited to central cities today. A third potential disadvantage, the high property tax rates of central cities, is largely illusory. Although urban property

cont'd.





Photo: Hess Photography, Inc.

#### *Myth and Reality, cont'd.*

tax rates are exceptionally high, often double suburban tax rates, as a percentage of market value, the difference in market value often balances the higher tax rate. The urban homeowner often finds him or herself paying little or no more in property taxes than a suburban counterpart on a house of similar size or character.

Although the continuing stability of largely sound urban neighborhoods is valuable, it is likely that a substantially larger part of the housing stock of most cities is located in more problematic neighborhoods; areas that have deteriorated significantly, or that are showing serious signs of potential deterioration. It is in the stabilization of such neighborhoods, or in the reversal of deterioration that has already taken place, where the true signs of urban revival are likely to be found.

There is no question that this is taking place in many cities around the United States. The process has been going on longest, it would appear, in New York City, where brownstone neighborhoods in Manhattan and Brooklyn attracted middle class attention all through the late 1950's and 1960's. Today, major activity is taking place in Manhattan in the conversion of industrial lofts into housing (principally in lower Manhattan), and the rehabilitation of old apartment buildings and rooming houses, typically in the Upper West Side. The stock of relatively inexpensive, rehabilitatable, brownstones or rowhouses, in or near Manhattan in New York City, however, is largely exhausted.

This discussion into New York City urban revitalization is necessary since, as far as it can be determined, it is precisely that which has triggered, more than anything else, the most significant examples of older

neighborhood revival in New Jersey, the brownstone movement into Hoboken, and more recently, parts of Jersey City. Although it is difficult to pin down the level of revitalization activity, there is little doubt that by now it has had a significant effect on Hoboken, and has clearly established a foothold in at least two part of Jersey City, the areas of Paulus Hook and Van Vorst in the old 'Downtown' part of the city, if for no other reason than the introduction of annual house tours in the latter area.

All of these areas in Hoboken and Jersey City contain a substantial stock of sound, potentially rehabilitatable, row houses available for a fraction of the cost of either comparable housing in New York City, or good quality suburban housing. Still, it is

JERSEY CITY ROW HOUSES. (Photo William Tremper)



the proximity to Manhattan, or more specifically, the proximity to the relatively efficient PATH mass transit link to both lower and midtown Manhattan, that has brought about largescale rehab activity in these areas. No other city in New Jersey has seen activity at even a remotely comparable level.

There are, however, at least some modest signs of revitalization in other New Jersey cities. The City of Newark has encouraged rehab activity in the James Street historic area, the proximity of which to the college campuses of the city is an attractive feature. In Trenton, the city has invested considerable money and energy during the past decade or more in support of rehab in the Mill Hill neighborhood, a small area of historic townhouses in close proximity to the downtown business district and State offices. There appears to be some scattered activity in Camden, although the continuing availability of rehabilitatable rowhouses in Philadelphia makes the creation of a south Jersey Hoboken unlikely.

Although all of these are positive signs, the evidence available suggests that, unlike major cities such as Washington or New York, the flow of affluent 'urban revival'-ers into New Jersey's cities is at most a trickle. No city in New Jersey maintains the central city functions — economic activity, social activity, culture, recreation, and the like — or the critical mass of economic and population activity, that appear necessary to sustain a largescale movement of the sort hoped for. If New Jersey's cities are to turn around, as it were, it is unlikely that it will be through a process of gentrification. It will come, rather, through the stabilization of older neighborhoods as decent housing and environments for working-class households, white and black, for whom the cities (and some older, inner suburbs) represent the available stock of moderately priced housing.

This is particularly important for black and hispanic households. Almost every city in New Jersey has one or more neighborhood where upwardly mobile minority households began to buy houses during the 1960's and early 1970's — Weequahic in Newark, West End in Trenton, Greenville in Jersey City, and Parkside in Camden. Many of these neighborhoods have, in the process of transition, begun to show serious problems; the age of the housing stock, the lower incomes of the new home buyers, coupled with increased housing costs, the inexperience of the new home buyers, and other factors have created the potential for both present and more serious future problems. The ability of these neighborhoods to stabilize, and for the new homeowners to sink roots into their neighborhoods, is likely to be an important factor in the future of New Jersey's cities. It is to their credit that many cities, as well as the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs neighborhood preservation program, are aware of this issue, and are directing much of their atten-

**cont'd.**



## Myth and Reality, cont'd.

tion toward it.

This is important, since it strongly suggests that our expectations for the revitalization of New Jersey's cities must be far more modest than some people may believe. It is unrealistic to expect a flow of 'glamour' projects either in city centers or residential neighborhoods. Society Hills and Georgetown will be the rare exception in New Jersey's older cities, not the rule. Although there will be some modest movement of middle class and affluent populations back into the cities from suburban areas, the numbers will be small, and furthermore, they will locate predominantly in those areas that are already sound, attractive, living environments. The future of the cities lies as much, if not more, with the people who are already residents of the cities, than with those who can be enticed to move there. In that regard, cities are in a potentially favorable position; the mas-

sive population movements of the 1950's and 1960's, when drastic population shifts were the norm in New Jersey's cities, have largely abated. Cities are, therefore, in an excellent position to begin serious planning for the future of their neighborhoods, on the basis of reasonable assumptions about future stability.

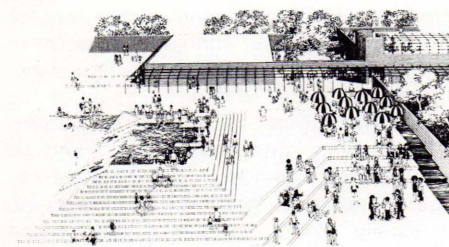
For the design professions — architecture and planning — the future in New Jersey's cities lies less in the construction of center city monuments, or anything that is typical of architecture in relatively 'pure' form, but in a greater understanding of the social and economic fabric of both urban neighborhoods and city centers, and integrating design activities into that fabric. To the degree that major new building projects, public or private, are undertaken, a major element of the architect or planner's work should be to ensure that the siting and design of the project generates the maximum potential positive effect on the building's

surrounding environment, not just (or even principally) from a visual standpoint, but from an economic and social perspective.

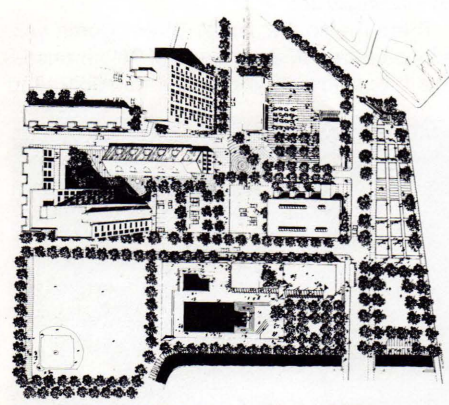
It is likely that greater emphasis will be placed on the residential neighborhoods, in most New Jersey cities, than on the city center. There is an urgent need for neighborhood planning that is sensitive and responsive to the social and economic characteristics and concerns of the residents of each neighborhood, and for designers who can plan physical improvements that will meaningfully enhance the neighborhood, as perceived by the residents, within the constraints of today's limited resources.

The 'planting' of a new building, be it a corporate office building or a housing project, does not, in most cases, significantly contribute to the future vitality of the city. If the design professions are to make a significant contribution to New Jersey's cities during the 1980's, that contribution will lie elsewhere. ●

## Trenton in Transition

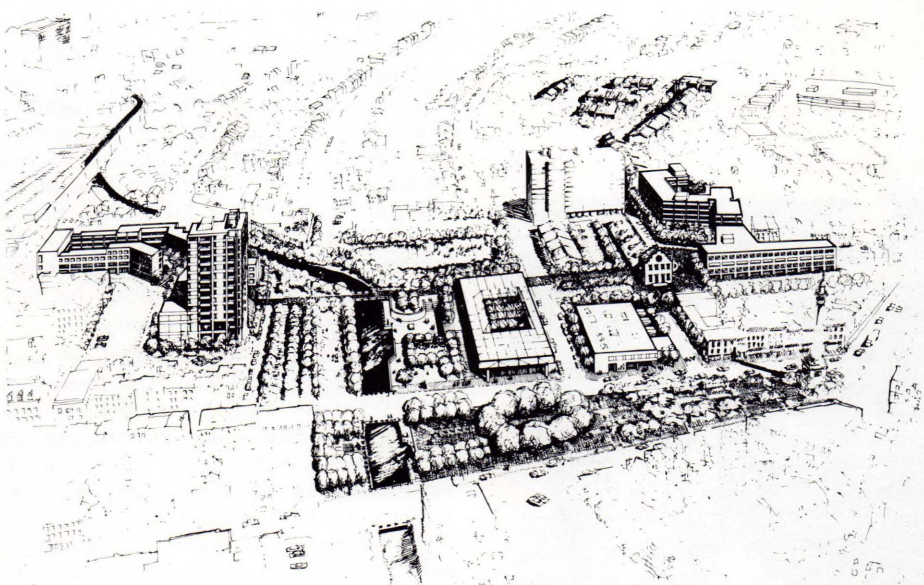


NORTH 25 REGIONAL URBAN PARK



TOP: NORTH 25 REGIONAL URBAN PARK

TOP RIGHT: ARTISTS CONCEPTION OF NORTH 25 REDEVELOPMENT AREA.



The North 25 neighborhood represents the City of Trenton's most concentrated redevelopment effort to date. The site, spanning approximately 25 acres in the North Ward, is within walking distance of the Central Business District, contains an important historic site, and had been in need of housing and physical improvements.

The City responded by locating two new municipal buildings in the North 25 neighborhood: the Calhoun Street Firehouse and the Henry J. Austin Health Center. Both facilities have had a positive effect: the Firehouse by providing a round-the-clock public service; the Health Center by providing walk-in health care and by increasing the daytime population of the area.

The two municipal facilities are institutional anchors for the housing component of the overall redevelopment plan. The North 25 Housing Corporation, in partnership with the City of Trenton, received financing through the New Jersey Housing

Finance Agency for the construction of 233 units of family and elderly housing. This housing, the unifying element of the North 25 project area, includes an 11-story senior citizens' tower, 2-story garden apartments, and 2, 3, and 4-bedroom townhouses. The design attempts to avoid the public housing image by maintaining traditional relationships of house to street. Two new interior streets with row houses on either side act to weave the new housing into the existing neighborhood fabric. Additionally, a new community facility will be constructed, and the former Reading Railroad terminal, a local landmark, will be rehabilitated as a service center for the elderly.

Finally, the City has received Green Acres funding for an urban regional park to be developed along the Delaware & Raritan Canal, which winds through the project area. The park is envisioned as a major node on the Canal State Park which is to be developed by the State of New Jersey.



# Newark Redevelopment

In 1964, the Master Plan for the City of Newark contained the following:

"For 1980, the city's population has been estimated in the following manner: (1) that renewal will take effect in two principal forms — it will (a) dampen the extent of out-migration, and (b) bring in new population through increasing the supply of sound housing units."

Although Newark did suffer a decline in the post war years, as did many mature urban areas, the last ten years have seen a revitalization reflected in all sectors and in both renewal and new construction.

New and recent construction can be found at Newark International Airport, institutions of higher education, health care facilities and commercial structures, as well as in the areas of housing and industrial growth both in the center city and the industrial meadowlands.

Along with this new growth, urban renewal programs in the James Street and Lincoln Park areas, and unified efforts of public agencies and private groups, are adding to this turn-around.

Some of these developments in new construction in the last ten years include three new commercial high-rise structures, Gateway I and Gateway II on the west, across McCarter Highway; Gateway II, the 18-story Western Electric headquarters, and the 19-story Blue Cross/Blue Shield headquarters. In addition, the future commercial growth picture includes a \$60 million office building being erected by Public Service Electric & Gas Company.

The single, three-block stretch of Raymond Boulevard between Park Place and Penn Plaza will, therefore, by 1980, house three commercial structures between 18 and 27 stories high, a motel and the Seton Hall University School of Law, none of which stood a dozen years before.

Also important is the refurbishment of existing structures, which adds to the upgrading of city facilities. The Prudential Insurance Company, for example, will be making considerable interior improvements in its 24-story Plaza building over a four-year period. The former Military Park Hotel,

taken over by the city in the early 1970's, has been converted into a modern recording studio and filming center. New Jersey Public Television recently announced plans to convert a former automobile showroom at 980 Broad Street into a permanent color television studio facility.

In mid-October, Newark saw the opening of the Ivy Haven Mall, a 60,000 square foot shopping center in the Vailsburg section, funded entirely by private capital with no governmental assistance. The Newark Economic Development Corporation (NEDC) also reports that there are plans for three other strip shopping centers underway.

In the Newark Meadowlands, industrial development is quite visible. One of the major projects completed is the Ideal Toy Company's one million square foot factory. Located on 35 acres of land, Ideal Toy is scheduled to add another million square feet to its facility within the next four years. There are also many other corporate plans which together comprise a total of almost half of the original meadowlands parcel assembled in 1967. And new improvements in the area continue to spur additional growth.

Newark is at the center of a varied and complex transportation network and a stable labor force. As the area continues to grow and develop, the needs of its labor force must be met, and among the most important of these is housing.

In the last 10 years, more than \$200 million has been spent on the construction of new housing in Newark, and over 7,000 dwelling units for low and middle income families, as well as senior citizens, have been completed or are in the design stage. This includes the To-Sault complex in the city's Central Ward, the High Park Gardens at Prince and Court Streets and Somerset and Waverly Avenues, certain University Court Gardens at West Kinney Street and University Court, in the city's Clinton Hill area, senior citizen housing in projects such as Broad Street, Essex Plaza on Broad Street.

There is also the James Street Commons. A two-block, 65-acre area of townhouses, small businesses, religious, medical and



ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE, NEWARK. THE GRAD PARTNERSHIP, ARCHITECTS (Photos: Otto Baitz)



cultural institutions, James Street Commons is the scene of urban residential revitalization in the city's first historic district.

Private efforts at rehabilitation and improvement of property have also been on the increase in the city, most notably in the Ironbound section where carefully maintained homes and neat yards belie the typical city street image. In addition, interest in purchasing homes throughout the city has been on the rise.

Newark real estate firms have noted that the interest in land and property is not limited to prospective residential owners. Some prominent firms are reporting 1978 as a banner year in land transactions. Many local firms are seeking additional land and buildings for expansion.

At Newark International Airport, the "new" Newark Airport, a \$500 million, satellite design facility, is only five years old, and the Port Authority is forecasting the growth of Newark International into the area's second busiest airport, calling for it to surpass LaGuardia by the year 1990.

Of all the architectural changes and developments in Newark, perhaps the most dramatic has been the emergence of the city's university complex. On streets that once housed row after row of tenements and slums, a small city of modern educational institutions has been built that now provides opportunities for higher education to some 25,000 students from the city and surrounding areas.

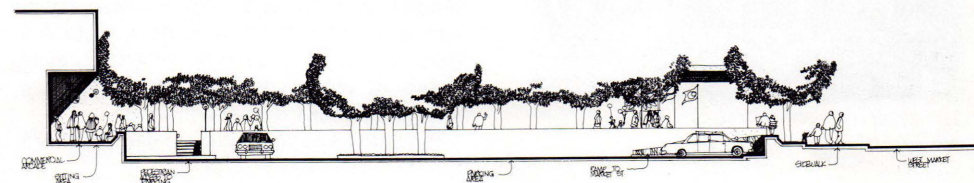
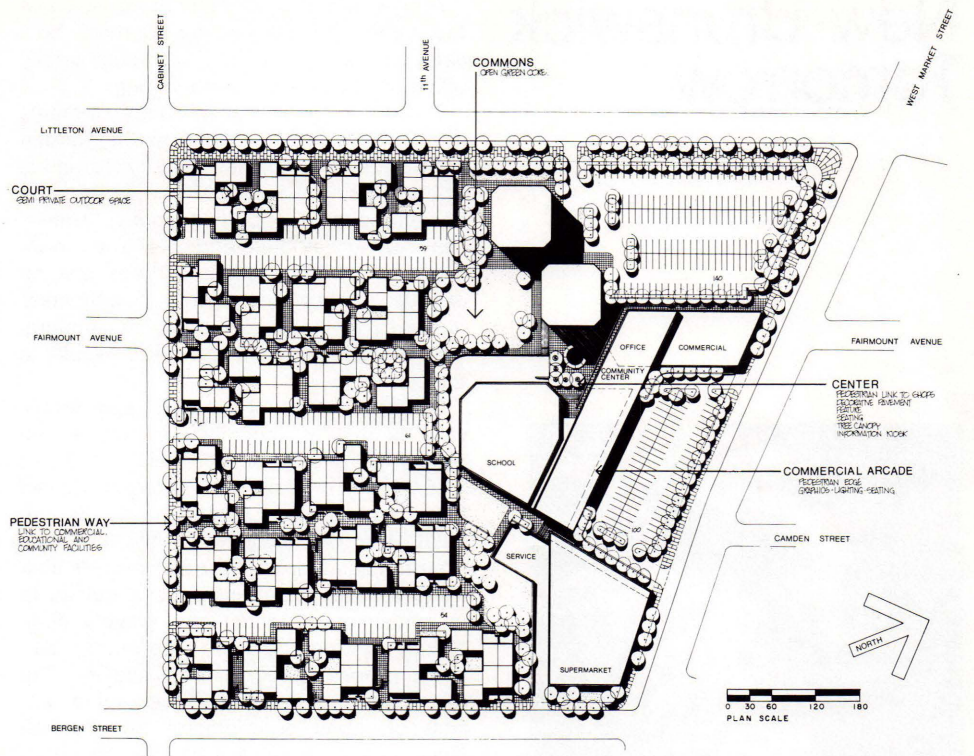
Such notable projects as Essex County College; the Newark campus of Rutgers University, which in the last decade has added \$16 million in new projects, among them the 1973 chemistry building, 1974 Engelhard Hall, a six-story parking deck and the newest addition, a geodesic gold-domed gymnasium on Washington Street; New Jersey Institute of Technology, and potpourri which includes the Seton Hall School of Law.

Among the dramatic new educational facilities, perhaps the most symbolic is the \$200 million campus of College of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey, built almost on the site of the 1967 disturbances that rocked Newark and other cities around the nation in a summer of urban unrest.

Since 1965, Newark's voluntary hospitals have spent more than \$90 million in expanding, modernizing and rehabilitating their facilities.

Health care, education, transportation facilities, neighborhood improvement, senior citizen housing, commercial and industrial development have all combined to provide a complex picture of growth and revitalization in Newark.

What supplements this is the expansion of recreational facilities; rehabilitation of park facilities and urban transportation systems; health care centers; and the culture of the city itself. And although the pace has mellowed somewhat recently, Newark has indeed "come back".



SITE PLAN TO-SAULT, THE GRAD PARTNERSHIP AND BROWN & HALE, ARCHITECTS



TO-SAULT, NEWARK, THE GRAD PARTNERSHIP, ARCHITECTS. (Photo: Otto Baitz)



# New Brunswick Tomorrow

After World War II, New Brunswick was the center of activity for Central New Jersey. Retail activity and commercial office development were booming.

Then, the major highway improvements following World War II, such as the Garden State Parkway, the New Jersey Turnpike, Route 18 and Route 287, generated the phenomenon of suburban sprawl. Suburban residential developments and shopping centers mushroomed. There was an exodus of businesses and middle-class residents to the suburbs and an in-migration of lower income, unskilled people to the central cities.

The impact on a city such as New Brunswick is vividly illustrated by these statistics: In 1943, New Brunswick collected \$1.8 million in taxes in constant dollars from the central business district. In 1976, the City collected only \$300 000 from the same area. New Brunswick's ability to provide social and other services to its remaining residents was gravely diminished, while at the same time the tax burden on those residents grew heavier. The result was the steady and inexorable process of urban deterioration that has afflicted virtually every major American city.

In 1974, a representative group of area business and institutional leaders spearheaded by Richard B. Sellars, then chairman of Johnson & Johnson, decided to act. They financed a comprehensive study to determine the potential for revitalizing New Brunswick.

The study was completed in January 1975

and subjected to three months of community review. It defined the key problems in New Brunswick, found significant potential for revitalization and recommended an effort based on partnership among businessmen, political leaders and the community-at-large. It reaffirmed that New Brunswick possessed unique assets for a small city. It is the county seat for a rapidly growing area, the home of Rutgers University and the home of one of the world's largest companies, Johnson & Johnson.

## Unique Urban Experiment

On July 1, 1975, New Brunswick Tomorrow was officially organized as a unique urban experiment in which private, public and community interests joined together literally in the form of a corporation with a board of directors. The 24-member board included eight representatives each from the business and corporate community, from city and county government and from the general community. John J. Heldrich, a corporate vice president of Johnson & Johnson with a long record of civic contributions, was elected chairman.

The initial assignment was defining the goals of revitalization and establishing priorities for action.

New Brunswick Tomorrow began its work with a number of key advantages. As a private, non-profit corporation, it is not mired in the bureaucracy that exists in the public sector. It is not heavily burdened with political pressures. It does not have to spend most of its time and energies dealing with the day-to-day issues and crises that



J&J WORLD HEADQUARTERS, I. M. PEI, ARCHITECT



GEORGE STREET RENEWAL



preoccupy City Halls, resulting frequently in neglect of the real long-range needs of the community. Like a private business organization, it can set goals, do its job and look to the bottom line at the end of the year to determine its success and chart future activities.

To finance the operations of New Brunswick Tomorrow, a fund-raising effort was undertaken. It resulted in pledges of approximately \$1 million to operate New Brunswick Tomorrow over a three-year period. The money came not from government but from pledges ranging from \$10 to \$200,000 from individuals, companies, and institutions. The depth and purpose of the community's commitment to revitalization in New Brunswick is dramatically demonstrated by the fact that 98 per cent of all the initial pledges have been collected — an outstanding achievement by any fund-raising measurements.

A small professional staff was hired, headed by the president of New Brunswick Tomorrow, Abraham Wallach, who was director of planning for more than six years for Jersey City.

As priorities, New Brunswick Tomorrow decided to concentrate on the crucial issues of economic development and neighborhood preservation.

#### **Original Focus**

Recognizing that it could not be involved initially in these issues in the entire city, New Brunswick Tomorrow focused on economic development in the central business district.

For neighborhood preservation, the city's Second and Fifth Wards were selected because of the problems they exhibited, the opportunities they offered and their relationship to the central business district. The Second Ward, a neighborhood in transition, has a heavy Black and Hispanic population. The Fifth Ward, a stable ethnic community of predominantly Hungarian residents, is beginning to feel the pressures of urban problems.

An implementation arm to New Brunswick Tomorrow was established at the beginning of 1976, the New Brunswick Development Corporation. The nine-member Board of Directors is headed by Mr. Sellars and includes some members of the New Brunswick Tomorrow board.

The corporation was established to function as a for-profit private developer. All earnings not required for reinvestment or internal administration are to be made available to continue and expand the community planning and revitalization activities of New Brunswick Tomorrow. The two organizations are housed in adjoining offices and there is a high degree of coordination and interaction.

In January 1976 planning and architectural consultants were engaged. They have recommended new parking facilities, improved traffic patterns, the landscaping of George Street and other downtown retail side streets, facade design to provide a better sense of aesthetic unity in the down-

town area and improved merchandising strategies for retail businesses.

These recommendations have been submitted to the City Administration and Council to be considered for a specific development plan for the downtown renewal district established by the Council.

Dynamic revitalization progress and action is already well under way in downtown New Brunswick. Johnson & Johnson announced it would construct a new worldwide corporate headquarters complex in the heart of downtown New Brunswick at a cost in excess of \$50 million. The project will transform a deteriorating tract of mixed uses into a striking new corporate complex in a campus-like setting.

Based on the analysis of New Brunswick Tomorrow, the Development Corporation acquired a 14-acre urban site in the heart of the business district that had been cleared a decade ago but had been a vacant eyesore ever since. The \$6.5 million, 200,000 square foot Plaza II project will provide New Brunswick with its first major new office building in 15 years, more than \$150,000 in new tax dollars annually and over 500 new jobs. It is scheduled for occupancy in February 1979.

The Development Corporation recently announced plans to construct an \$18 million, 300-room hotel and conference center at the gateway to downtown New Brunswick. The Prudential Insurance Company is prepared to finance the project and Hyatt Hotels, Inc., one of the nation's leading hotel firms, would operate the hotel under contract.

On the fringe of the central business district, Middlesex General Hospital has received State approval to proceed with a \$38 million expansion project and construction of a \$12 million medical education building in conjunction with the College of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

New Brunswick Tomorrow launched two projects that have improved tremendously the appearance of the central business district. In cooperation with the city an area nurseryman, the Railroad Plaza was beautified through landscaping and graphic design. The George Street railroad overpass was converted by modern graphics from an ugly, rusting eyesore to a colorful gateway to the downtown shopping district.

Johnson & Johnson constructed an attractive mini-park, Joyce Kilmer Park, on what had been a vacant lot at George and Albany Streets, downtown crossroads.

When a vacant department store building became available, New Brunswick Tomorrow played a key role in the decision by Rutgers to locate its Mason Gross School of the Arts in the structure, bringing a new dimension of students, faculty and the arts to the downtown area.

To stimulate this new spirit of optimism and activity in the downtown area, New Brunswick Tomorrow has sponsored the annual George Street Festivals in the fall, the "More Streets for People" series of performing arts events in the heart of the

business district, and a major series of outdoor summer cultural performances in the city's parks.

The neighborhood preservation aspect of the citywide revitalization movement received a major lift this fall when Paul J. Abdalla, president of the Development Corporation, announced an innovative plan to acquire, rehabilitate and re-sell abandoned houses throughout the community. The program has the twin goals of eliminating blight-residential properties while helping to alleviate an acute housing shortage.

A series of neighborhood revitalization action projects for the Second and Fifth Wards have begun. They include improving the recreational uses of three parks and the greening of a major artery, Throop Avenue, in the Second Ward. Work also began on conversion of traffic islands in the Fifth Ward into attractive green parklets.

New Brunswick Tomorrow has come to the forefront as a facilitator in seeking solutions to community problems. It spearheaded the community effort that raised the necessary funding to meet the deficits to keep open the Family Health Care Center of Middlesex General Hospital, which provides vital health services to the medically indigent.

The concept of making New Brunswick a regional cultural center — long discussed but never activated — is finally taking form.

New Brunswick Tomorrow has now moved boldly into the action stage. Developers and investors are showing substantial interest in becoming part of what is being recognized in Washington and throughout the nation as a unique approach to solving the urban crisis.



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# Joining Forces For Neighborhood Preservation

*Editor's note: This article combines information supplied by the office of Martha L. Lamar, Administrator, Housing Demonstration Program, N.J. Dept. of Community Affairs.*



NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION IN HOBOKEN: OLDER HOMES GET A FACE-LIFT.



COMPLETELY RESTORED HOMES IN NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION DISTRICT OF JERSEY CITY. (Photo: William Tremper)

ing blocks of municipalities. As long as its neighborhoods remain healthy and desirable places to live, the municipality will retain strength. The process of neighborhood preservation can take many forms, depending on the needs of the neighborhood, but the Department's experiences in preservation so far have shown that a partnership must be formed among the government, the neighborhood residents, and the local lending institutions so that problems and priorities can be correctly identified and a strategy for the neighborhood mutually developed.

Early neighborhood preservation efforts of the Department tested various techniques for housing rehabilitation including the first interest-reduction grant program in the nation, which initiated the idea of leveraging private dollars for home improvements. In the course of these demonstrations, it became apparent that although housing rehabilitation is a very important ingredient of neighborhood preservation, it does not by itself provide the answer to the problems of neighborhood decline. "You cannot change a neighborhood unless the people are behind it," says Ed Tunis, President of the Neighborhood Advisory Board in Phillipsburg, where an on-going preservation program has been dramatically successful.

Experience has shown that there are critical elements which must be developed and cannot be omitted if there are to be results:

1. A strong commitment on the part of the municipality to the program, particularly in terms of working closely with residents and in providing services and public improvements in the neighborhood.
2. Involvement of neighborhood residents in the program from the beginning, helping to define problems, priorities, and solutions.
3. Commitments from local banks to give loans in the neighborhood.
4. A comprehensive strategy that focuses many resources on neighborhood problems.
5. Concentration of resources in a target area of manageable size so there can be visible impact and positive effect rather quickly.
6. A housing rehabilitation assistance program tailored to the incomes of people in the neighborhood and the condition of the buildings.
7. A concentrated or systematic program of housing inspections (combined with counseling and financial assistance) to ensure that all property is at least brought up to minimum code standards.

In administering the Neighborhood Preservation Program, the Department acts as a catalyst, helping municipalities to pull together many different resources for neighborhood preservation. Program requirements are kept as flexible as possible because, in the end, successful solutions will depend upon local initiative, energy, and resourcefulness.

In a little more than two years, the trends of the past 20 years have been turned around in some New Jersey communities, through innovative projects in the state-wide Neighborhood Preservation Program.

The Department of Community Affairs has a long-standing commitment to neighborhood preservation and housing rehabilitation, and is currently providing funds totalling \$7,200,000 for neighborhood preservation efforts in 38 New Jersey communities. These efforts are bringing together local government, neighborhood residents, and private businesses and institutions in a common effort to restore a favorable climate for investment, and to improve the quality of life in those neighborhoods. New Jersey architects are involved in preservation activities in nine of these communities. Funding is being used for numerous purposes which will lead to restoration and rehabilitation of threatened but still viable neighborhoods.

Neighborhood preservation is a process based on the concept that residential neighborhoods are the social and physical build-



# Liberty State Park: Lessons in Urban Design

Recent proposals for the development of Liberty State Park in Jersey City illustrate the urban forces which architects and urban designers must integrate in their designs to significantly improve New Jersey's cities.

Restoration and rehabilitation of the historic maritime terminal at Liberty Park is currently under way. Designed by the architectural firm of Geddes Brecher Qualls Cunningham (GBQC), the building will be adapted for a variety of new uses. The terminal building is part of a larger master

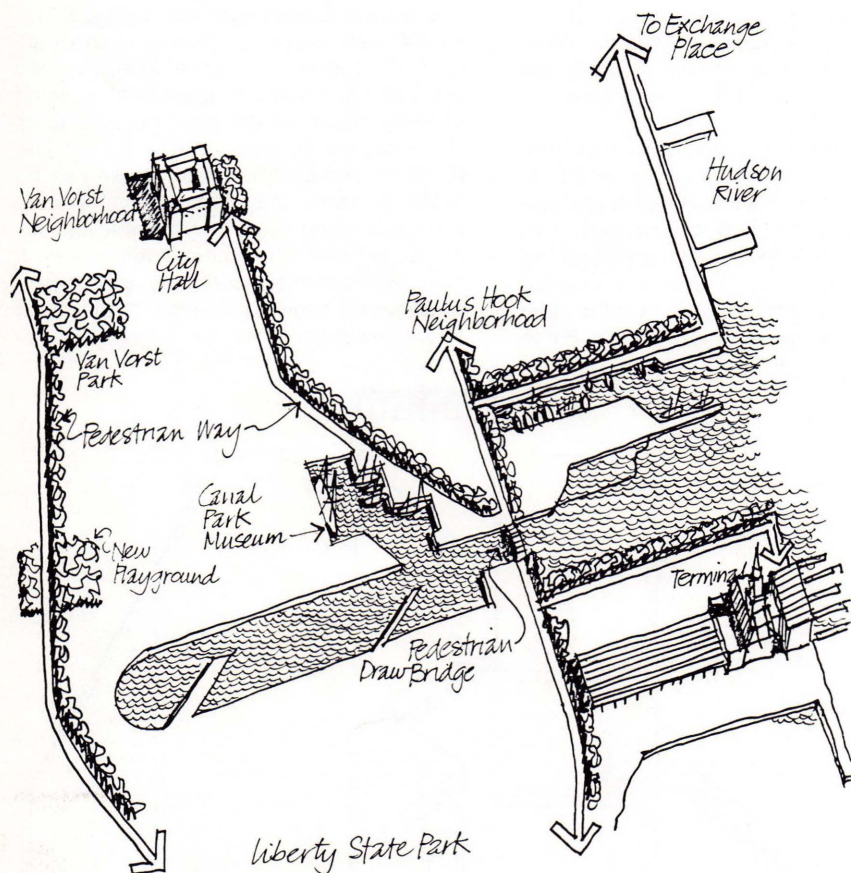
plan for the park, also designed by GBQC, consisting of five components: a tree-lined crescent walk along the harborfront, a green park, a variety of water and wetland elements, zones for intensive recreational and cultural activities, and zones of development for urban economic and natural environmental purposes.

When the American Institute of Architects' Regional Urban Design Assistance Team (RUDAT) was invited to assess the redevelopment of land adjacent to the park, their conclusions differed sharply from those of the original park design. Evaluating the original plan for Liberty State Park, the RUDAT team noted that park "facilities are not only physically removed from the (surrounding) neighborhood, but separated by an explicit barrier from it." In addition, the plan "fails to respond to many of the concerns and needs of the user population."

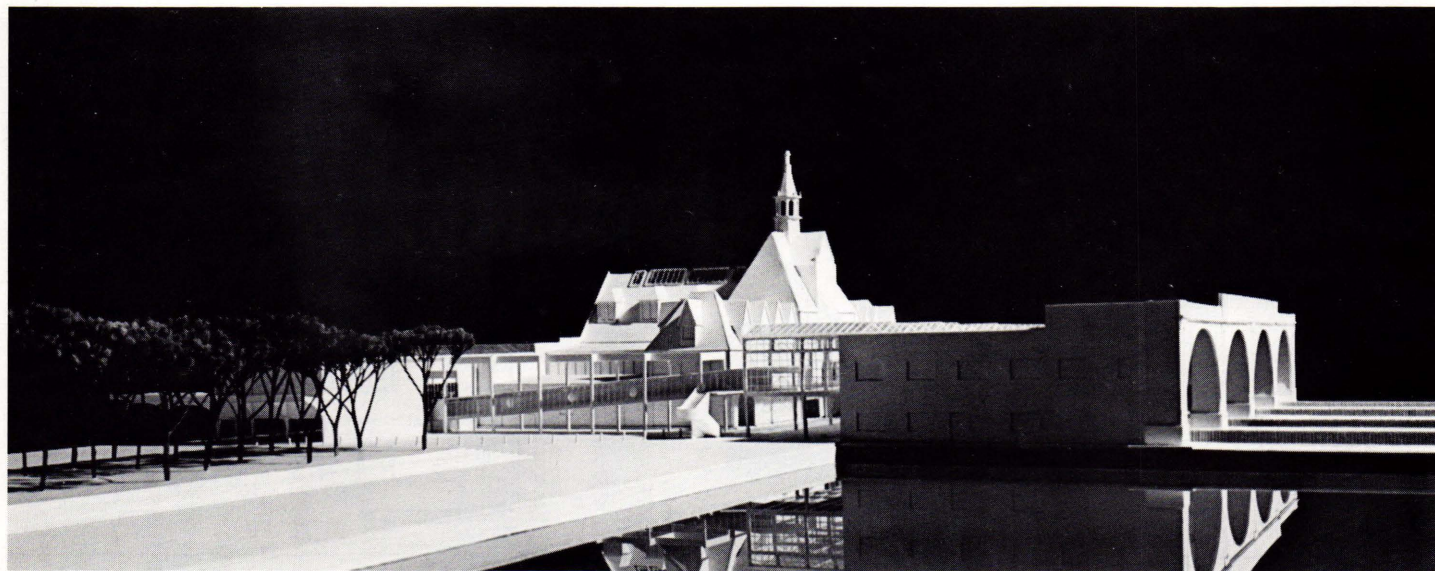
Proposals by the RUDAT team suggested creating physical linkages between the park and the surrounding neighborhoods, and developing recreational and commercial facilities serving the community.

It is clear that these two proposals differ substantially in emphasis. The sensitive design by GBQC emphasizes the regional importance of Liberty State Park, providing urban facilities which primarily relate outward towards the water and spectacular views of New York City. The RUDAT proposal emphasizes that park development must enhance the stability and quality of life in surrounding neighborhoods, and become an integral part of Jersey City.

This brief illustration of differing design approaches to an important urban project in New Jersey suggests that plans by architects and urban designers must achieve a balance among all urban forces acting upon a project. The revival of New Jersey's cities will depend upon sensitive design which is responsive to the needs of city residents, and which provides a coherent physical structure which is integrated into the urban fabric.



RUDAT PROPOSALS FOR LIBERTY STATE PARK SHOWING SUGGESTED PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS.



RESTORATION OF MARITIME TERMINAL AT LIBERTY STATE PARK. GEDDES, BRECHER, QUALLS, CUNNINGHAM, ARCHITECTS (Photo: Lawrence S. Williams)



# The Affordable House

*Editor's note: Information for this article was taken from the "Affordable House Conference" published by the N.J. Dept. of Community Affairs.*

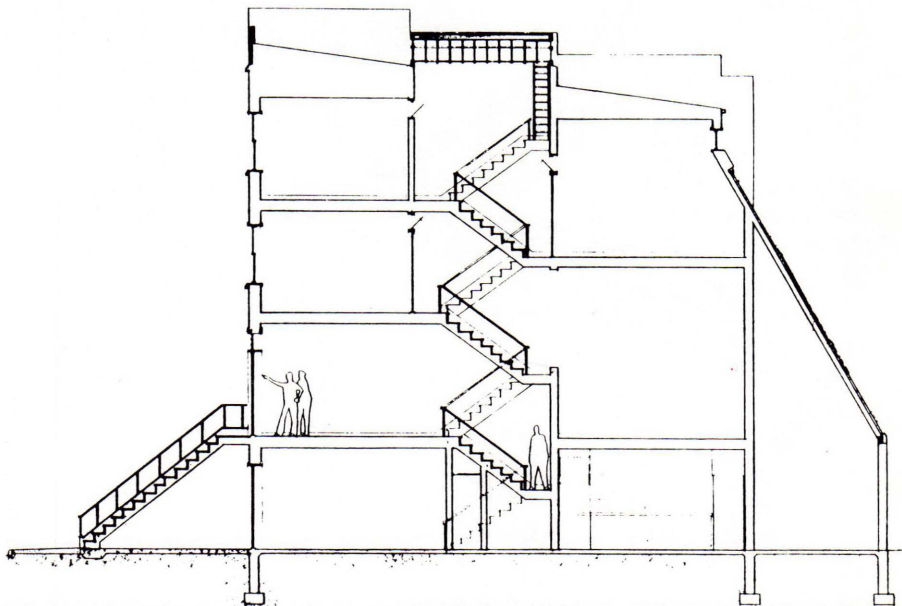
The American dream of homeownership is in danger of becoming a privilege of the well-to-do. The gap between family income and housing costs has steadily widened since 1970, and by 1985 it is anticipated that the sales price of new homes will have grown twice as fast as family incomes. To compensate for spiraling housing costs some New Jersey families, especially city-dwellers, are withdrawing from the homeownership market and becoming renters.

To encourage the design and construction of affordable homes for New Jersey's cities, a competition was sponsored by the Housing Demonstration Program of the Department of Community Affairs. Three of the entries won design awards, and several projects are now under construction.

The contestants demonstrated that inexpensive land is available in the cities. At a time when suburban developers are paying upwards of \$25,000 for improved lots, the contestants came up with improved lots for \$1,000 and less. There is a plentiful supply of useable improved land in the older cities, such as Jersey City, Newark, Paterson,

Elizabeth, Camden and others, available for development with the proper program. It is anticipated that the ideas engendered by this competition will stimulate the interest and commitment of all those interested in producing modest cost houses for the great number of citizens who sorely need them. The positive benefits of such construction in New Jersey's older cities should enlist the support of the municipalities and all levels of government.

"These designs, which open up some promising possibilities for cost saving, may inspire others to think through solutions to affordable housing and urban revitalization," said William Connolly, director of the Division of Housing and Urban Renewal. "We are looking forward to the actual building of these ingenious designs," he continued, "to demonstrate conclusively for all the doubters that an Affordable House can be built. If, from this competition, people are encouraged to build affordable houses on vacant sites in their communities, we will have accomplished our goal, and maybe the dream of homeownership will not vanish for city dwellers."



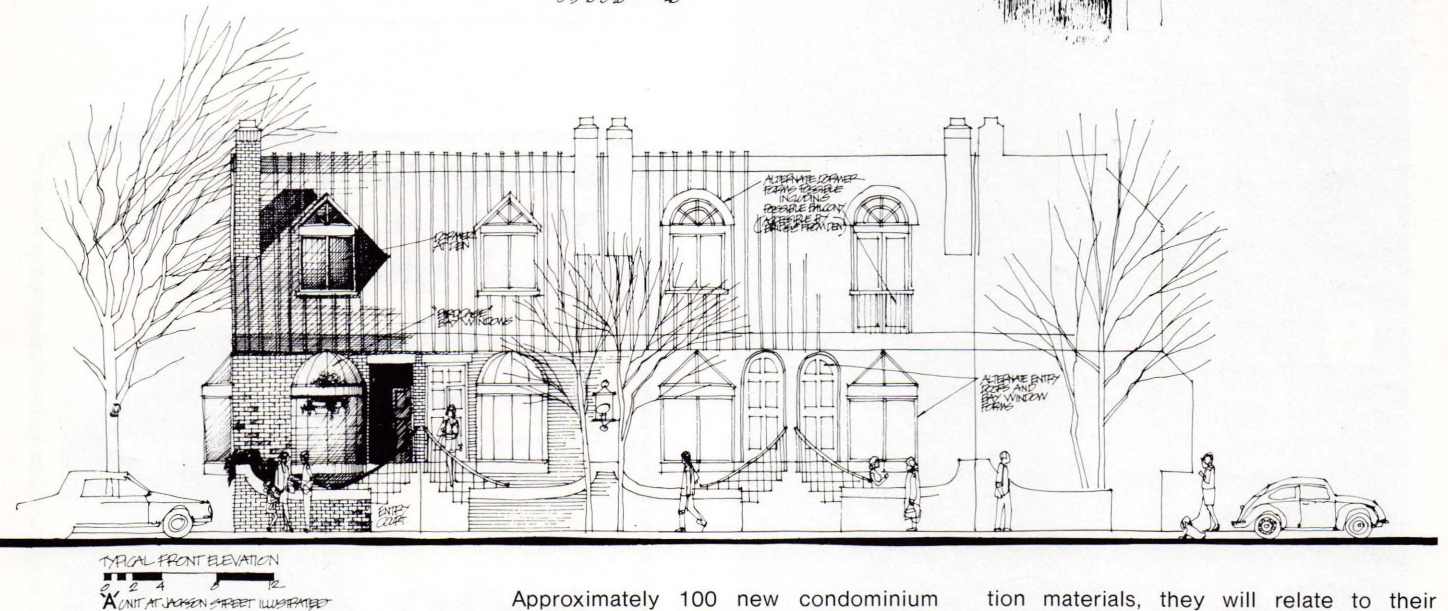
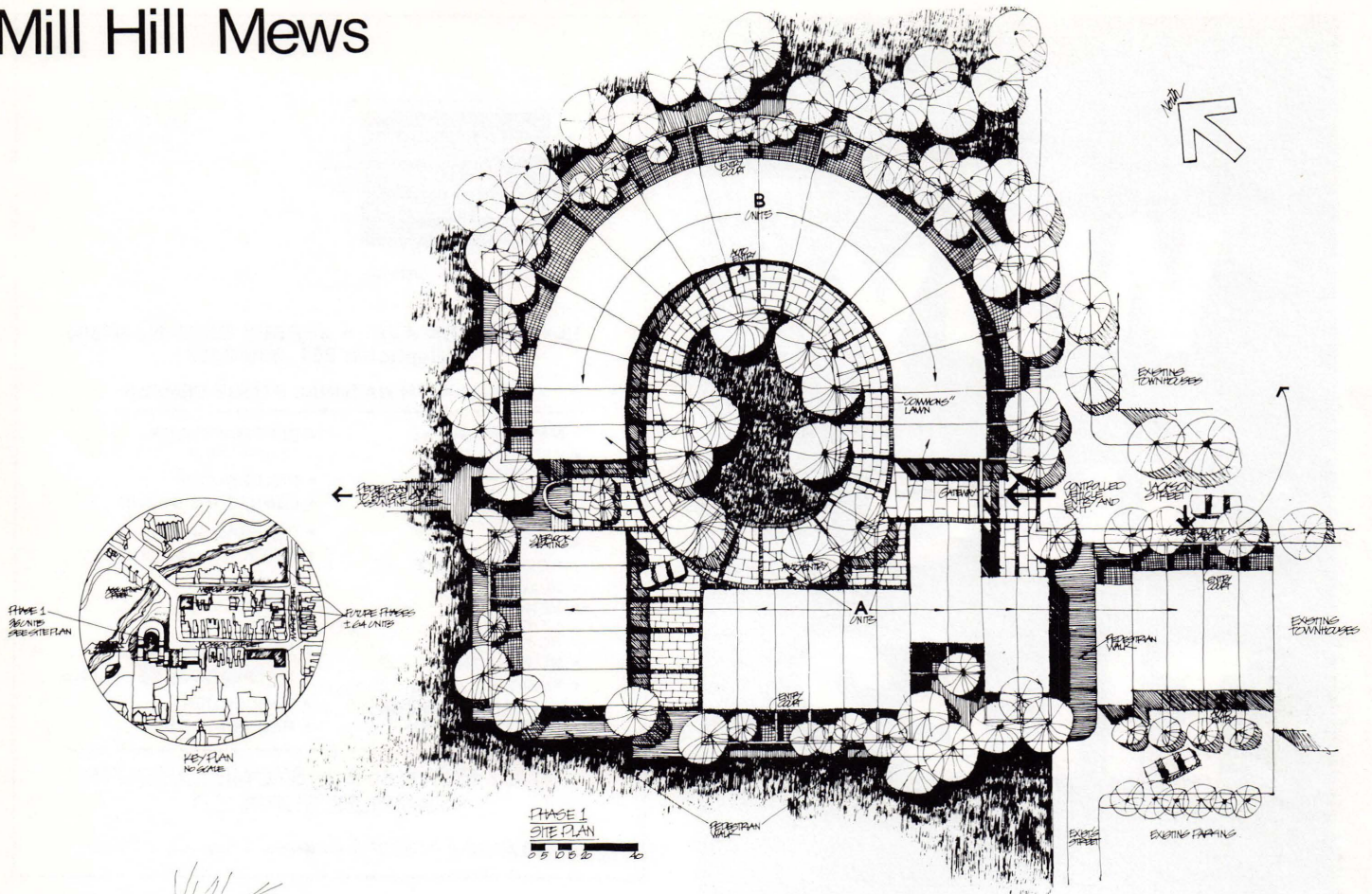
AWARD-WINNING DESIGN OF "IN-FILL" ROW-HOUSE IN JERSEY CITY. ALBIN ROTHE, AIA, ARCHITECT



TWO-FAMILY HOME PROPOSED BY NEW COMMUNITY CORPORATION IN NEWARK, DESIGNED BY GREGORY ARNER, AIA, ARCHITECT



# Mill Hill Mews



Approximately 100 new condominium town house units will be built, as a part of the upgrading of Trenton's Historic Mill Hill area, by Mill Hill Mews Associates, Inc. The group, comprised of Far Hills architects Cahill/Prato/McAneny, A.I.A. and associated engineering, construction management, law and real estate firms, is developing middle income housing with private financing; A method not employed in downtown Trenton for many years.

The units will be built in four phases on separate parcels of land left vacant by the earlier razing of buildings either beyond repair or of little or no historic significance. Through scale of design and selec-

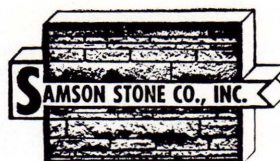
tion materials, they will relate to their older adjacent neighbors and will help to preserve the area's fine visual character. The 36-unit first phase, as illustrated, borders on the Mill Hill Park and the Assumpink Creek and its plan will maximize the views of both for both new units and those homes now existing in the area. Architectural accent will be given to the entrance courts, recapturing the flavor of earlier street life. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation will be separated as much as possible by providing scenic walkways at the fronts of the units and automobile courts behind. The bridge spanning the historic creek becomes the focus of an axis, featuring an overlook, penetrating the project.



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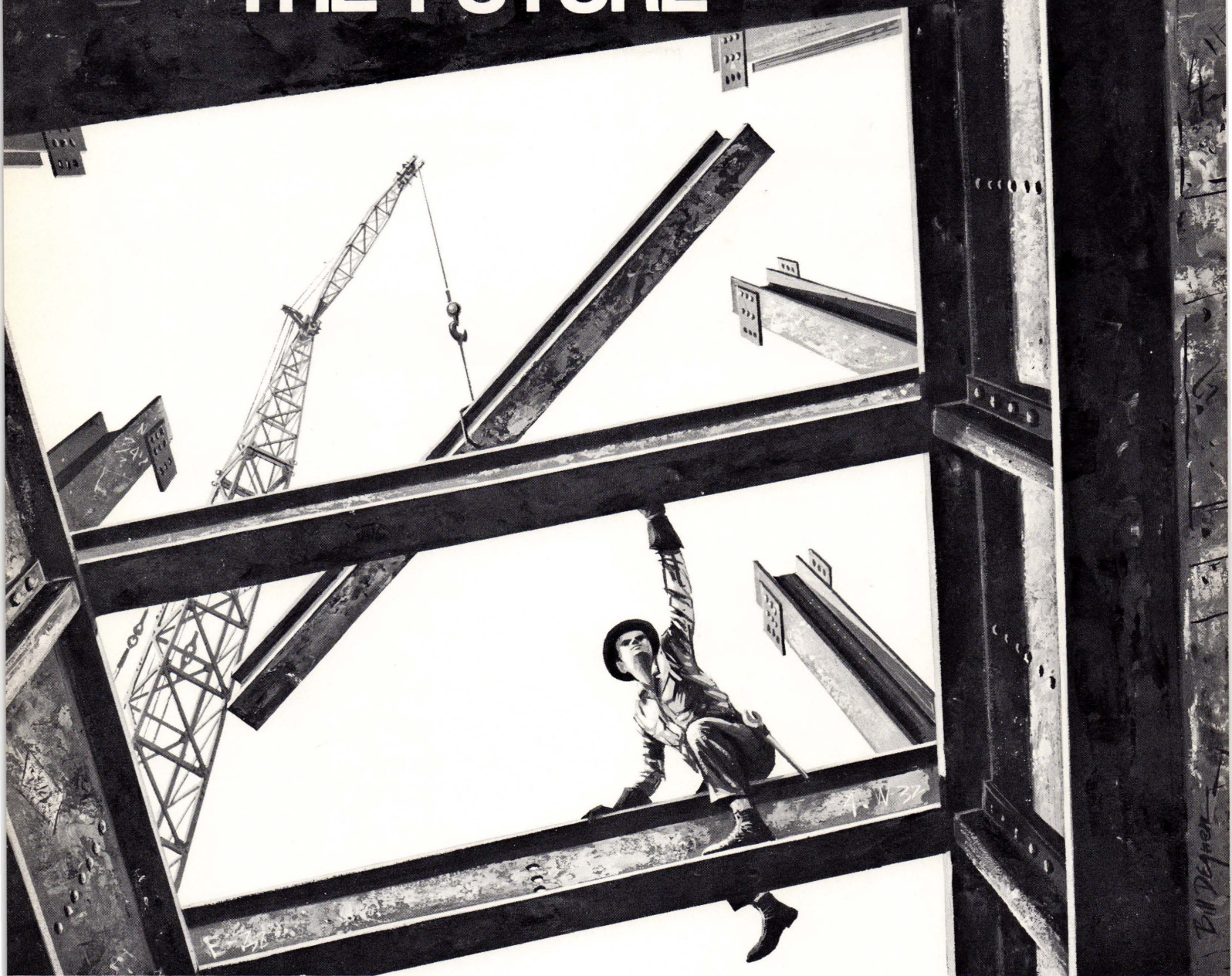
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