

ARCHITECTURE **plus**

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF ARCHITECTURE JUNE 1973

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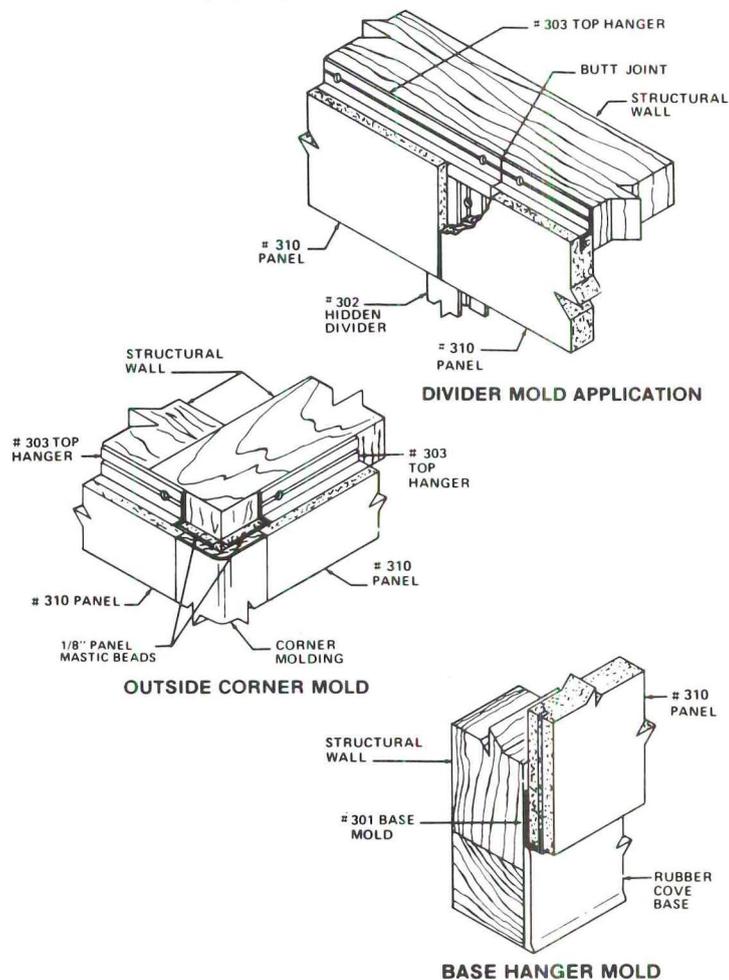
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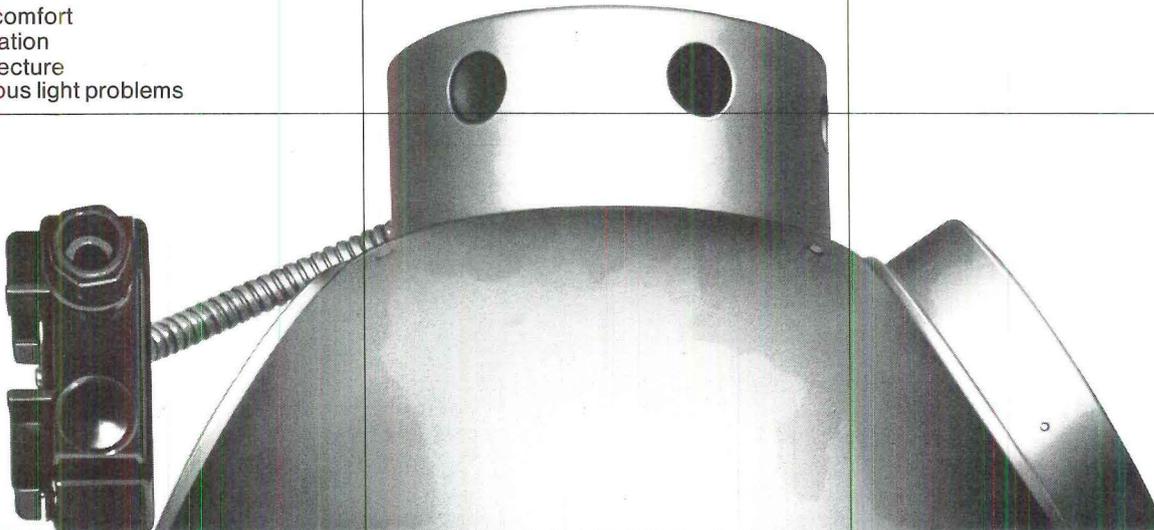
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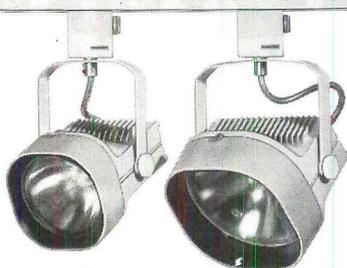
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The International Magazine of Architecture June 1973

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Cover design based upon a photograph of Robin Hood Gardens by Alison and Peter Smithson.

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Archigram edited by Peter Cook, supported by Warren Chalk, Dennis Crompton, David Greene, Ron Herron, and Michael Webb. Published by Praeger Publishers, New York. 1973. 144 pages. Illustrated. \$12.50.

Reviewed by Les Levine

The first illuminated gospel for the coming of the un-architect

The first four pages of Archigram's new book, celebrating the group's 10th anniversary, are taken up with comments from Arata Isozaki, Reyner Banham, Hans Hollein and Peter Blake. All of these comments are praising reviews of Archigram. In general, what they had to say was:

"Then Archigram struck and my world hasn't been the same since. I really would not have known where to look if it had not been for Archigram. Everything, absolutely everything, suddenly became architecture. So we all owe something very important to Archigram: the dramatic broadening of our perceptions, our visions. And because of what they have done, the world of architecture in this century and the next will never again be quite as projected. Whether they like it or not, the Archigram gang is a gang of wide-eyed poets.

"Archigram's esthetic is not functionalist nor is it mere idle fantasies. It is at once daring, hilarious, angry and socially concerned, enough to ask questions like, 'Do we really need cities?' Primarily they are concerned with the development of ideas by way of design as the mode of experiment. They disintegrate the structure of their work from within almost as soon as it can be defined. This is consistent with their attitude toward change and their mistrust of 'definitive' architecture.

"In this society where information is privileged above all else, Archigram has created the only style capable of inducing radical change. They have directed a virtual shower of projects at the entire world and maintain that shower over a period of 10 years. Their work has been totally divided from the patterned logic architecture has created within itself. Archigram has established a new structure of values, a new syntax and demonstrated the possibility of an independent sub-culture. Pre-established systems of every kind are disintegrating before our eyes. What Archigram has done is to demon-

Les Levine is an artist, a professor of environmental design at New York University, and President of the Museum of Mott Art, Inc. in New York.

strate clearly one part of this process.

"My son helped pack and fold Archigram 7! They're in the image business and they have been blessed with the power to create some of the most compelling images of our time—urban identity, spatial integrity, alienation, and all that. There's been nothing much like Archigram since Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies and Corbu.

"Suddenly the dialogue started and has not stopped yet. As expressions of common hidden sub-conscious longings, Archigram became part of a new architectural vernacular."

Marshall McArchigram

After reading such a choice lush of gush (easily 50 times as long) where can a reviewer begin—Well—what do you think about the cover? A music book or science fiction or a book about another world. Is there any harm in that? Do architecture books have to look boring? No, but if I was in a bookstore, it would just be something I would pass over. But the interesting thing about Archigram for me is that they have over a number of years created some kind of pop discourse on what architects should see and the way people should look at architecture. Essentially it's conceptual architecture.

The book is innovative from the point of view of architectural discourse; it attacks all the genres of architecture. In a way it says that architecture is a locked-in system, so what you have to do is approach it from a sensing, feeling, opening up of your mind towards many things outside that system and look at them differently. But what seems to be happening here is that while they're doing that, they've created their own genre which is as boring or even more boring than some of the genres they're attacking. The book itself as a physical object, not what they're talking about because what they're talking about I think is damn interesting—you could describe it as a *Whole Earth Catalog*. It comes off like a video freak catalog or homemade graphics. Have they swallowed the McLuhan pill—whole—and given birth to Marshall McArchigram? The pages remind me conceptually of profiles of neurotic art students. The arbitrary graphic outlines look like the edge of a jigsaw puzzle and don't make much sense in terms of the structure of the book, and they don't attack the structure of a book to make you think, this is a new way to cope with a book, because one is very much aware of this kind of layout and mixing of things.

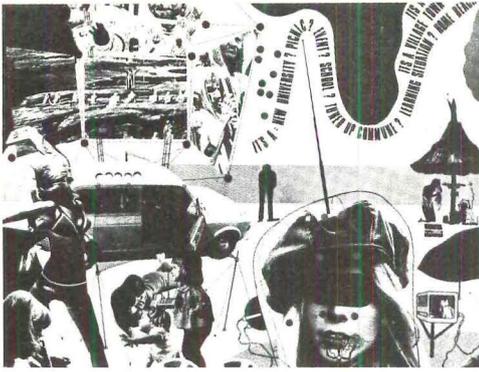
'Groovy'

It should reach the people who are already working so that they can consider these problems in their future work because usually established architects set up one pattern and by the time they reach 50, when they're really doing a lot of work and have a lot of business, they just

keep going on that pattern because that's what they're expected to do. But maybe what Archigram figures is that these architects will not be interested in it really and that they should try to reach students or young people. Yes, but don't students always turn out this kind of stuff anyway? Yes, but they don't have as much thinking behind it. Usually what happens with architecture students, from what I've seen, is that they mistake design for architecture. What you see with architecture students a lot is a great deal of 'groovy' graphic design with not much serious thought behind it and the discourse that they're involved in is always very shallow. Whereas in this book, I think the discourse is intense and good and powerful, but they've used a medium which has created the worst sense of that word 'groovy.' It's 'groovy' for the sake of being 'groovy.' You think they've been looking at bad art like pop art and op art and minimal art and tech art too much? That page is very much like a Bridget Riley with that sort of optical effect. But it's impossible for anybody to be pop today because the whole pop thing has lost currency. There's a lot of pretty extraordinary writing in here, extraordinary from a point of view of ways of looking at things and expressing a certain kind of phenomenology of the world and the way it's made and the way you can look at the way it's made. And all of a sudden it's over-burdened by this intense concern with the medium of design. It looks to me like a cross between pop art and a Letraset catalog. I think they should make real models and photograph real models of their ideas rather than this. Yes, but they've done *this*. An argument could be, so what! It is confusing because the subject they're dealing with is confusing to some degree. There's a lot of confusion within the structure of what they're concerned with. Architecture and urban design and media design, and the way media influences design and architecture and urban design is somewhat of a confusing subject. But that's the point. If these people have broken down enough confusion already so that they can get it together in words, their layouts should eliminate any further confusion.

'Way-out' In England

I don't think there's any reason to make an excuse to defend the graphics. They're not graphic designers. They just want to be 'cool.' They want to be 'hip' and 'with-it.' I really think that this is their idea of being 'cool.' But then there might be the problem that they're English so that they create a formalism about being 'cool' because this is a very formal, structured approach to being 'with-it.' And the English sensibility is to formalize everything. England is the only country in the world where hippies were accepted as a normal eccentric element within society. Hippies didn't repre-

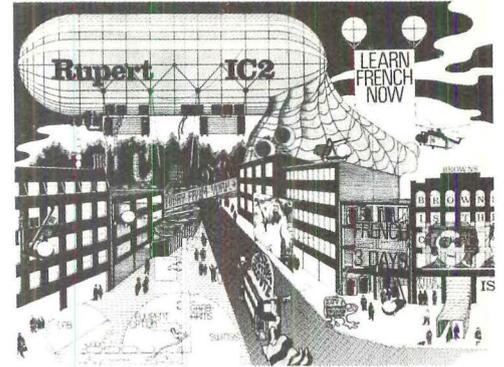


sent any kind of revolution in England. There is a formalist way of being 'way-out' in England.

But Gordon Bunshaft wouldn't want to read this book. But Gordon Bunshaft is not exactly at the center of any radical architectural development. Anyone who can put up a few imposing, gigantic buildings in some of the most important cities in the world certainly has to be considered, right? Yes, but what Archigram is saying, is that putting up a few gigantic buildings in the most important cities in the world, is not really what it's all about. The easiest thing in the world in this society, that is so geared towards the making process, is to go ahead and build and make, but not enough people stop and think long enough to figure out the outcome of all this building and making. Exactly, and that's why they should read this. I think in this day and age, an architect is not needed as a builder or a maker. Builders themselves are pretty good at building and making. And maybe an architect in this day and age should be somebody who's really seriously thinking about what is going to be made and the effect it will have on society and on individual personal feeling in the long run. But realistically there will still be architects, so this should be read by the architects who are still going to keep designing these things. But these people who are makers will not consider this book because of the way it's put together. Exactly! Exactly! Well, what about Walt Disney's work because he's the only person who is considerate of But I don't want to get into Walt Disney because I'm doing a book review of Archigram and I don't want to review Disney World.

A kind of phenomenology

Archigram presented a very powerful kind of turbulence within the notion of what architecture is as a concept. They weren't so much involved in the idea of what people should be building and making, but how people should be thinking about what they're making and how they should be thinking about what is already made. And relative to that, what kinds of societal systems force the kind of development in architecture that is occurring all the time. And I think that's what an architect should be doing. He should be thinking, what is the societal problem of architecture right now? What do people want of a living space, of an office, of a factory, of a subway, of a car? How can you make a symbiotic relationship between man and his environment? And it seems to me that Archigram has created turbulence in a system that has blinded itself to the fact that its product is used by human beings, that are not systemic—people that are subject to all kinds of in-flows of information, emotions, habits, that by their nature create a kind of phenomenology that doesn't collate easily with systemic structures. Maybe it's



ARCHI GRAM NO6: THE 40's



better to direct it to the people instead of the professionals because the people are the ones who are going to make the final decisions about what they want anyway.

Media soup

Running a review in *Architecture PLUS*, almost exclusively criticizing the format although simultaneously praising the writing, is going to really put people off even more. I think you should stress the good and underplay the bad. Sure, I like what they're doing, and I use 'like' in a very definitive way, not just as a question of taste. I use it because I've read what they do and I think it has quality. The academic's view would be to approach it by trying to understand the structure. Now the easiest way to understand the structure is to simplify the structure to the point where it has absolute perfect form. The problem here is that the structure and the form are so at odds with one another that their message is almost wiped out by their medium. I think it would be unfair not to say that. I think criticism should be constructive discourse and some kind of feedback to the maker, but I also think that this book should be read. I hope I've said that. I say, if you have this book in your hands today and you are a person who has the possibility to affect design or architecture or any kind of urban planning, you are in the same position as the individual in pre-Gutenberg days who had the Bible in his hands. It's the first illuminated gospel for the coming of the un-architect. And illuminated gospels have always been confusing. You have access to an extraordinary kind of thinking and if you disregard that kind of thinking, you're cutting off a channel. The channel is a little mixed up, but there is certainly a lot of information coming through that channel. So what I'm saying is, as an overall object, Archigram's book doesn't succeed because it's allowed itself to be 'groovy' to the point of boredom, on the one hand with its graphics and with its over-fascination with mixing elements together to the point where you've got MEDIA SOUP. But on the other hand, the contents, what they really have to say and what they're thinking about and what they're concerned with, is vital to any consideration that an architect or planner should have at this moment.

Archigram has made them have them

I think we need Archigram. But I want them to get to the point where we won't have to go through all this jumble to get their ideas. Their concerns are crucial. They're concerns that people should have had and Archigram has made them have them, but as a book they have put together a muddling object. In a way it seems to be saying, "Instead of sitting down and talking about the problem, try standing on your tongue and whistling Dixie."



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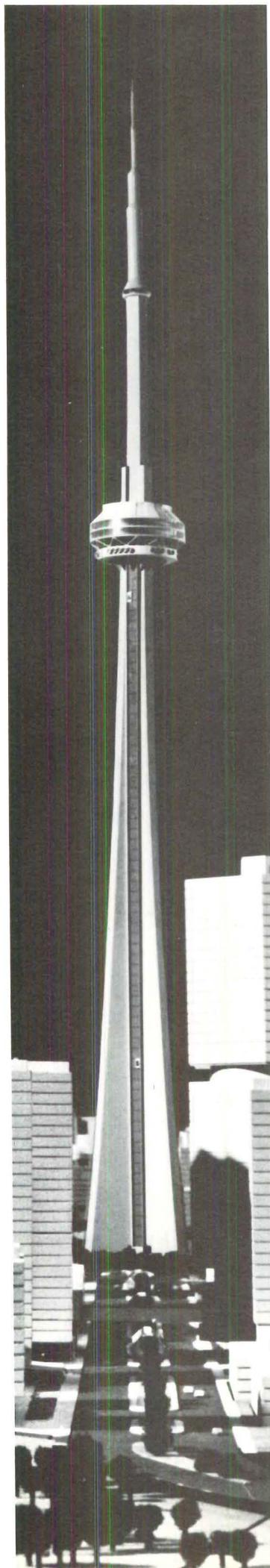
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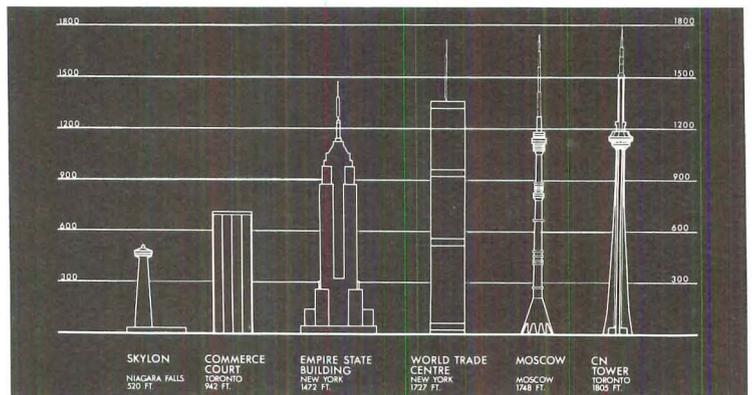
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Last month, at the annual convention of the American Institute of Architects in San Francisco, there were the usual speeches and presentations and other intellectual offerings of varying quality (or lack thereof). There was also a brief talk by Sam Hurst, the dean of the School of Architecture and Fine Arts at the University of Southern California. Hurst addressed himself to the "Challenge of Change", and proceeded to ask some fairly challenging questions (e.g., What if the AIA were to call for the nationalization of the housing industry?). And he concluded with this one: "What if this convention declared itself to be the last annual national convention for a three-year period, and initiated a new three-year cycle... with enormous conservation of public and professional energy?" All the thousands of compulsive convention-goers present were, predictably, stunned. And, of course, that was the end of it.—PETER BLAKE

The top of the world is in Toronto



Comparison of the world's towers. Below, 6-story sky pod



The art of one-upmanship knows no bounds, or at least no height limits. Metro Centre, a 15-year development on 190 acres in Toronto, is nursing its first seedling—a beanstalk called CN Tower that will

grow to a formidable 1,805 feet, leaving behind (or below) all other contenders for the world's tallest structure.

Between 1,100 ft. and 1,200 ft., a six-story "sky pod" will house broadcasting studios, sightseeing decks, and a revolving restaurant which CN (Canadian National Railways) officials are threatening to name "High Dive." A slender steel transmission mast will occupy the top 305 feet.

Below the "sky pod" the tower will be slipformed post-tensioned concrete. Above that it will be structural steel. Cost is estimated at \$21 million.

Elevators in glass-faced shafts will carry visitors for a one-minute

Many of the news reports and comments are from our regular field editors: John Donat (London), Gilles de Bure (Paris), Detlef Schreiber (Munich), Vanna Becciani (Milan), Charles Correa (Bombay), Neil Clerehan (Melbourne), Yasuo Uesaka (Tokyo), and Leonardo Aizenberg (Buenos Aires). Plus correspondents are identified by their initials; other contributors by their full names. The remainder is contributed by our New York staff.

ascent to the pod for dramatic views stretching 75 miles.

The site is being excavated through 35 feet of overburden into 20 feet of rock. Special forms will be set and a concrete shaft poured continuously, around-the-clock, using the slipform method. The tower is expected to rise at the rate of 16 feet a day. To maintain non-stop operation, sets of forms will be elevated by a ring of "climbing jacks" around the structure. As the forms move up they will leave a continuous extrusion of hardened reinforced concrete. The tower is scheduled for 1974 completion.

Consulting architects are John Andrews/Webb, Zerafa, Menkes, Housden.

Managua—off to the side?

A commission of experts, established at the request of the Government of Nicaragua and operating under the auspices of the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, have studied the problem of the reconstruction of Managua, capital of Nicaragua, which was destroyed during the earthquake of December 3, 1972. The commission experts do not represent any government or organization in particular; they were chosen for their abilities in various fields. The commission consists of Rubens Costa, president, Bank of Housing, Brazil; John Dyckman, professor of Urban Planning, University of California; Nicolaus Ambraseys, professor of Seismic Engineering, Imperial College of London; Pierre St. Amand, seismologist, Naval Station, China Lake, California; Carlos Acedo Mendoza, president, Foundation for the Development of Venezuela; and A. J. Harrison, Chief, Urban Transportation Div., Dept. of the Human Environment of London.

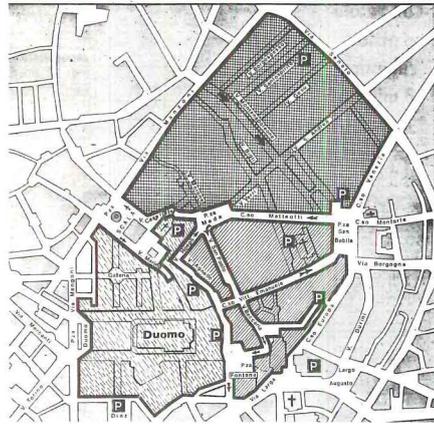
After a preliminary meeting in Washington, D.C. the experts went to Managua for a first-hand assessment, and looked over the proposal already made by a group of Mexican planners for the rebuilding of the ruined city. Their recommendations will be given to the Government of Nicaragua, who will decide later if new Managua will rise on the site of the old, destroyed city, or be moved off to the side a few kilometers.—L. A.

Stop! One goes on foot

An international competition, "The City as a Significant Environment," organized by the Association of Industrial Design (ADI) and the Italian magazine *Casabella*, was announced a year ago, and 122 entries from all over the world have now been sent to Milan. The jury, composed of Yona Friedman, Ales-

ECCO COME SI CIRCOLERÀ NEL CENTRO DI MILANO

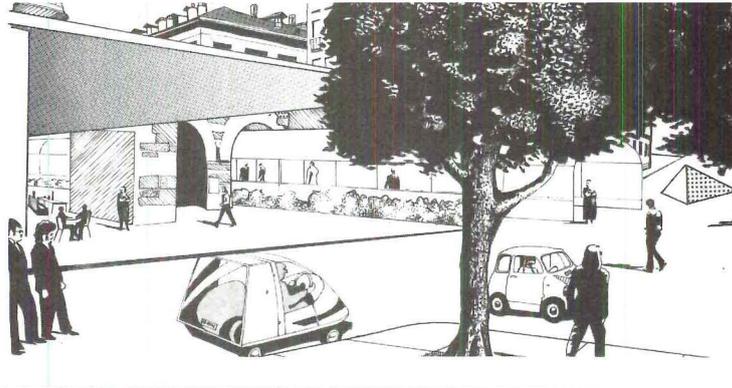
Alt! Si va a piedi



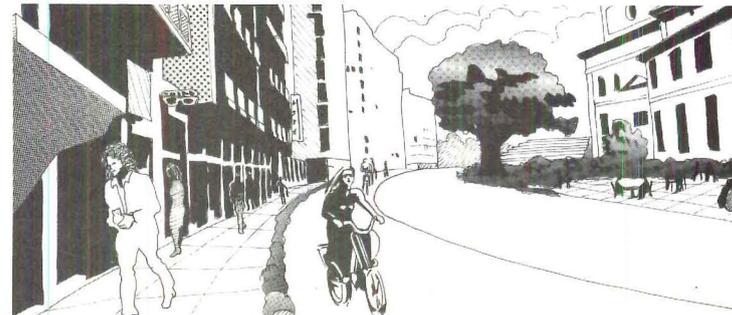
Headline, *Corriere d'Informazione*, April 30. Map shows area affected



Piazza Cavour, business as usual. Below, proposed moving sidewalk "tubes"



Via Fabio Filzi, Porta Nuova, above; with proposed bicycle lanes, below



sandro Mendini, Bruno Munari, Herbert Ohl and Joseph Rykwert, has given equal awards to a number of these projects.

One of them which is expected to be put into effect by the Municipality of Milan is called "Milan Instead of Milan" (this title may have lost something in translation). It is the work of a team composed of Gae Aulenti, Nanni Cagnone, Corrado Cresciani, Antonello Maniscalco, Elsa Milani, Roberto Pieraccini, Luigi Respighi, Richard Sapper, Sandra Severi Sarfatti, Takashi Shimura, and Maurizio Turchet.

The plan calls for the establishment of bicycle routes and of moving sidewalks for pedestrians, as the first stage in a comprehensive traffic solution. An indispensable premise is the eventual exclusion of all private cars from the central business district, and the construction of subway lines and multilevel roads.

In the past, cars moved sluggishly through Milan at an estimated five kilometers an hour. In the Aulenti plan, one now leaves his car in a free parking lot at the edge of town, and uses the subway, bicycle routes or moving sidewalks, which would take him within 200 meters of any central destination.

This plan marks the end, in Milan, of an old Italian custom—driving onto the sidewalk whenever traffic becomes unpleasant.—V. B.

Metric inches closer

The U.S. Department of the Interior has announced that it will prepare 31 quadrangle maps of part of Alaska (Anchorage and vicinity—an area of about 4,157 square kilometers) using the International Metric System, instead of the "English" system (which even the English have abandoned).

The project is the first U.S. large-scale mapping job to be published with metric units, in anticipation of the eventual conversion by the United States to the metric system.

General Motors Corporation, the largest manufacturer in the U.S., has announced that it is switching to the metric system for all its new products. This action is seen as a very powerful step forward toward total metrification in the U.S. since GM purchases tools, parts and components from 40,000 other companies—\$14 billion worth last year; GM spokesmen are already talking about "supplier coordination" and metrification.

Wilson Riles, superintendent of public instruction in California, has announced that the schools in his state will switch to metrics in 1976.

Meanwhile, back in Washington, D.C., S. Scott Ferebee Jr., President of the American Institute of

Architects, was speaking before a government subcommittee: "We are opposed to the concept of evolutionary metrification, or 'let it happen naturally'. Increasing use of the metric system without some program of coordination could cause difficulties which might eventually reach disastrous proportions." He said that architects would be able to convert in far less than ten years. The AIA has advocated conversion to a metric system since 1944.

Dead but not dirty

The Pentagon, in a pious concern for pollution problems, has submitted to the U.S. Council on Environmental Quality a paper stating that the B1 strategic bomber now being developed for long-range nuclear bombing attacks, "as compared to current military aircraft . . . will have less of an adverse environmental impact." It may drop bombs, but its engine will be quiet and "will not emit smoke." That's a relief.

Costly culture

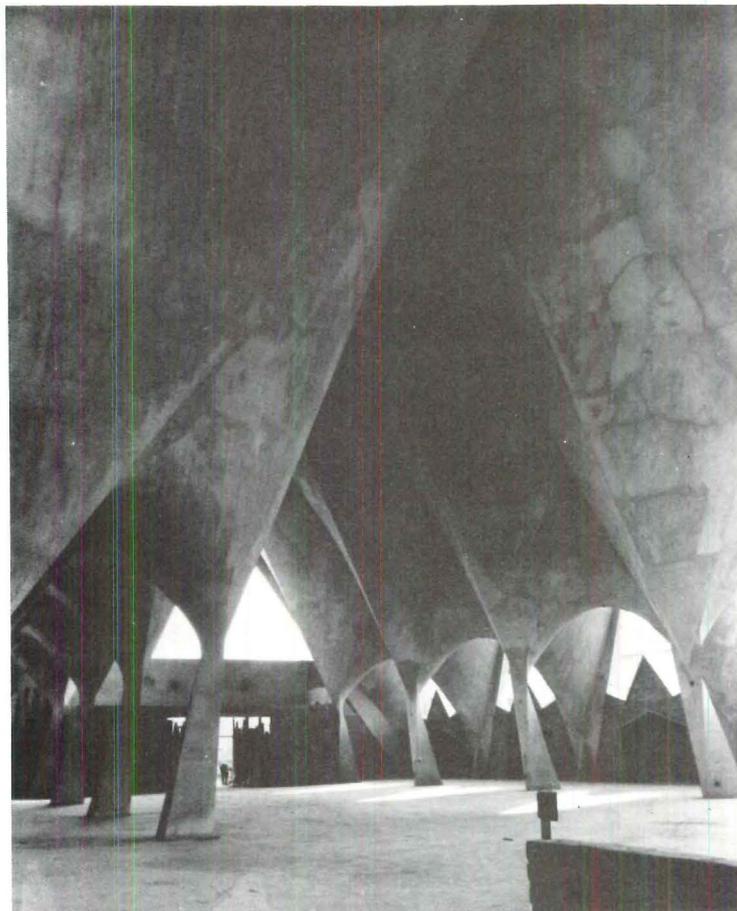
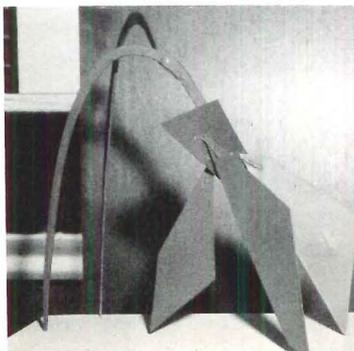
A stabile by Alexander Calder is to be erected next spring in the plaza of Mies von der Rohe's 42-story Federal building now under construction in Chicago. At \$325,000 this is going to be the most expensive work of art ever provided by the Federal Government for a public building.

A model of the bright red, three-legged, ten-ton, carbon steel stabile was unveiled at the end of April, and showed the legs as parts of a complex of intersecting planes. "It is supposed to be a stabile," said Calder, "but with Chicago's wind we have to be careful it doesn't become a mobile."

Two other major outdoor works of art are more or less around the corner: the 50-ft. high metal sculpture by Picasso stands in the plaza of the Civic Center, and a mural by Marc Chagall is under construction in the new First National Bank plaza.

The Feds have come a long way from the day in 1855 when Congress hired Constantino Brumidi to paint frescoes for \$8 a day.

Chicago's Calder stabile



Church of the Miraculous Virgin, Navarte, Mexico, Felix Candela, 1954



Kenzo Tange, *Domus* 1965

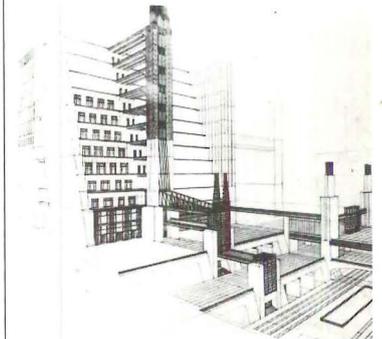
Another tango in Paris

Domus Magazine celebrates its 45th anniversary at the Louvre's Museum of Decorative Arts from May 31-September 23, 1973.

Each of five periods of the magazine's history is to be illustrated by design works and music appropriate to that era. (The tango at the Louvre sounds terrific.)

Gio Ponti founded *Domus* in 1928, and directs it still today in an editorial policy aimed at reflecting the cultural climate of the moment—a kind of documentary or *magazine verité* demonstrating how architecture, art and contemporary design have developed in Italy and around the world.

Happy anniversary, *Domus*.



Antonio Sant'Elia 1914, *Domus* 1931



House, Hans Scharoun, *Domus* 1943

Academia

Reginald F. Malcolmson will step down as dean of the College of Architecture and Design at the University of Michigan some time next year, and resume a teaching and research career there.

Malcolmson, dean at Michigan since 1964, received several Fulbright lectureships (1968-69) in Ecuador, Peru, Chile and Argentina, and was awarded a Graham Foundation fellowship for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.

He went to Chicago in 1947 to study architecture under Mies van der Rohe at the Illinois Institute of Technology, and later, as acting director of the architecture department there, worked with Konrad Wachsmann on prefabricated buildings.

The Dublin-born dean, an authority on linear principles of city growth, is currently researching studies of suspended and cable structures. His successor has not yet been named.

Student design competition

A program which combined music and reuse of an existing structure brought more than twice the usual number of entries to the eleventh annual InterRoyal Student Design Competition. Sixty-seven student designers submitted proposals for an audio lounge to be built inside a sixty-foot diameter concrete silo, forty-two feet high, located on an agricultural college campus.

The first prize (\$1,000) went to Jeffrey Magnuson of the University

of Minnesota. Second prize (\$500) was awarded to John C. Leggitt of Rhode Island School of Design, and third (\$250) to Timothy L. Hutchinson of Miami University (Ohio). Three honorable mentions were awarded to: Stephen W. Wraight, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; L. Grant Gay, Kansas State University; and Robert Jay Palmiter, Jr., University of Notre Dame.

Jury members were Judith Edelman of Edelman and Salzman, architects, chairman; Olga Gueft, editor of *Interiors*; Hans Krieks, interior and furniture designer; and James D. Morgan, Senior Editor, *Architecture PLUS*. The program was prepared by Architect John Varrachi. While the entries ranged between solid but uninspired tech-

nical solutions and fanciful ones that would not work acoustically, the jury felt the best entries had in common a strong appreciation for human needs. They allowed maximum choice with minimum regimentation, often with a touch of humor. The first prize winner included a sliding pole and the second suggested that the individual listening spaces be recycled milk and bread trucks parked on the bottom floor.

Progress is pigs . . .

It is a forward looking man who for the last 17 years has been running his car on high-octane pig manure. The fuel has pushed British inventor Harold Bate's 1955 car up to 78 mph; it creates no pollution, and costs 3¢ a gallon.

Bate says that pig manure (and even its human equivalent) can yield odorless methane gas and he has devised an engine that runs on methane. He puts the gas into small steel cylinders in the trunk of his car, runs a hose from the cylinders to the engine, and then relies on a small valve that works on suction created by the carburetor and feeds the gas to the engine.

Bate sees his prospects as limitless. One human creates enough waste each day to make one cu. ft. of methane; 30 cu. ft. of manure equals one gallon. (Urban dog owners could even become local heroes!) Bate has learned that Britain produces 200 million tons of assorted manures each year: "Imagine what it must be for the whole world!"

. . . and sailing ships

In another effort to conserve energy, shippers are reexamining commercial sailing ships. There are now plans on the boards for a 400-ft., 17,000-ton freighter with square-rigged sails. Computers would set, reef and furl its sails and push it at 12 to 16 knots, while auxiliary engines would help during calms or in harbor areas. (The diesels in existing ships average 10 to 15 knots.)

The sailing ship is being designed at the University of Hamburg's Schiffbau Institut and, while it will recall the sails of days of yore, its operation will be thoroughly modern. It will use the latest navigation aids, require a crew even smaller than on a normal freighter today, and will use computers not only in its rigging, but in finding appropriate weather and directing the ship there. The design calls for four masts, each one 200 ft. tall; sails would roll out from the center of the masts, which would rotate on command by a kind of hydraulic winch.



Wood and twine mask, from Bete people Mask of Baule people, Ivory Coast



African show, Black Arts Gallery, Houston. Menil Foundation collection



Visitors looking at Zaire drinking jar and Southern Nigeria Yoruba carvings

Africa in Texas

The Black Arts Gallery in Houston, Texas, opened an art show in April to mark the first anniversary of the Black Arts Center, a complex of art gallery, theater, and bookstore-library.

The anniversary exhibition will have ceremonial and domestic objects from West African tribal societies; many of the pieces in the show are from the Menil family collection of African art.

The Center is in a renovated movie house, the DeLuxe Theater, and operates as a culture center for the surrounding neighborhood. Its many activities include creative writing workshops, production of plays by high school students, movies and art shows.

Ironically, and quite appropriately, the Black Arts Center is housed in a theater which was abandoned when racial segregation was abolished.

The 1973 Rome prizes

The American Academy of Art in Rome has announced the winners of its Rome Prize Fellowships in architecture. They are: Marc Balet, Waterbury, Conn.; Franklin David Israel, New York, N.Y.; and Robert Livesy, Montclair, N.J.

The Fellowships carry \$4,620 a year and free residence and studio at the American Academy in Rome. The purpose of the prizes is to encourage young American artists and scholars by enabling them to pursue their interests independently in Rome.

Rotch Traveling Scholarship

Craig D. Roney, Andover, Mass., is the winner of the 1973 \$10,000 Rotch Traveling Scholarship for travel abroad, awarded annually, since 1884. The Rotch scholar is chosen after a two-stage design competition and personal interviews. To be eligible, a candidate must be a U.S. citizen under 31 years old, and have an architecture degree from a Massachusetts school or a degree from elsewhere and one full year of professional experience in a Massachusetts architecture office.

The jury consisted of Peter Blake, editor of PLUS, Barnett S. Gruzen of Gruzen & Partners, and Wm. J. Conklin of Conklin & Rosant.

Past Rotch scholars include a few names you might recognize—Ralph Walker (1916), Louis Skidmore (1926), Edward Durrell Stone (1927) and Barnett S. Gruzen (1930).

Co-op City

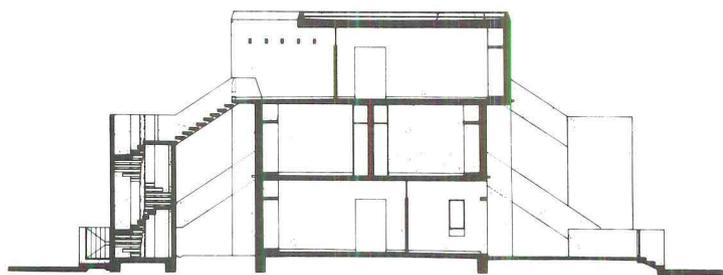
The tenants of Co-op City in the Bronx, New York, are suing the State of New York and the Riverbay Housing Corporation for \$115 million.

The huge non-profit housing complex of 15,000 apartments is owned by its tenants, who are charging "mismanagement."

Just plain old inflation is the real cause of the raise in the monthly carrying charges, which jumped from a very low (for New York City) \$27 per room to approximately \$43 per room.

Many people still think it's the best bargain in town, with its central air conditioning, parquet floors, and room-to-eat-in kitchens.

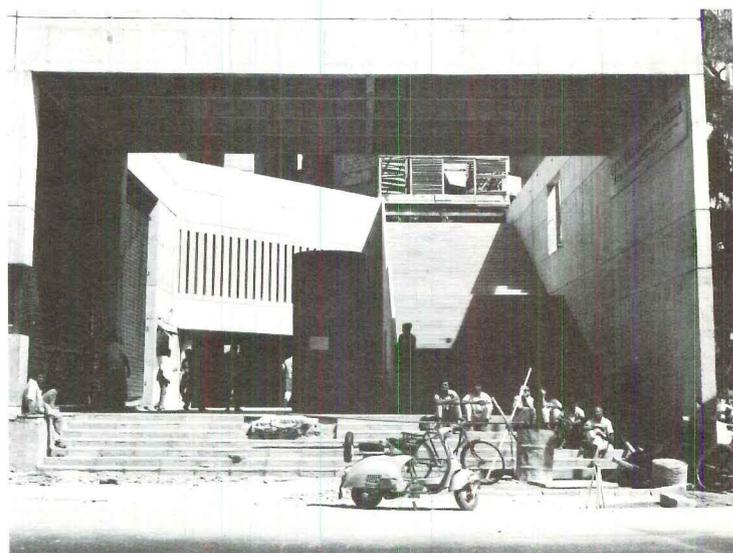
The tenants have engaged the famous flamboyant lawyer, Louis Nizer, to represent them. And they and he will see what they and he will see.



Bombay

In the Air India housing project for its employees at Santa Cruz Airport, every tenant has a private garden entrance and individual outdoor stairs, washed by the rain and dried by the sun. The arrangement of living spaces was largely determined by local social custom. Verandas insure a sense of privacy

while one sits or sleeps outdoors. The houses are brick covered with plaster, whitewashed each year after the monsoon season. The architects were Harry Weese & Associates of Chicago, in collaboration with the National Design Institute, Ahmedabad, India. The Ford Foundation assisted in the design costs.



Ahmedabad

The Central Bank of India, designed as a prototype for future tower blocks in Ahmedabad, has the largest precast post tensioned beam structure in India for any multistoried office building. The clear span is 45 feet. The Central Bank occupies the ground floor and mezzanine; the six floors above are columnless office spaces. The plaza,

20 feet above the street, will link with adjoining buildings to create a pedestrian street removed from the traffic below. A suspended restaurant is level with the pedestrian plaza. Two floors below grade contain vaults, storage and parking facilities. At the top is a penthouse apartment with roof garden. The architect is B. V. Doshi.

continued on page 62



A Palacio of Commerce

Generally known to residents of Mexico City as the Iturbide Palace, this distinguished landmark, in the hands of Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta, has now been transformed into offices for one of the country's most important private credit institutions, Financiera Banamex.

The *palacio's* original use was as the residence of the Marquis de Jaral de Berrio, and it was built in 1780 to the design of Francisco Guerrero y Torres, one of the most accomplished architects of Mexico's colonial period. Only later did it come to be Mexico's Viceroyal Palace, during which time it was inhabited by Don Agustin de Iturbide. Later uses, or misuses, of the building included the housing of a College of Mining and of a company hotel for the General Diligences Company.

Almost two centuries of such varied occupancy had, of course, resulted in many building modifications, and architect Legorreta was presented with a landmark somewhat bastardized. What to save and what to eliminate were difficult decisions.

Legorreta's general policy was to return the building, as far as possible, to its 1780 form. A major exception, however, was that, for both esthetic and structural reasons, he retained many of the changes made by the architect Donde at the end of the last century.

The central space, originally open to the sky, had been covered with a distractingly elaborate glass skylight. This was removed



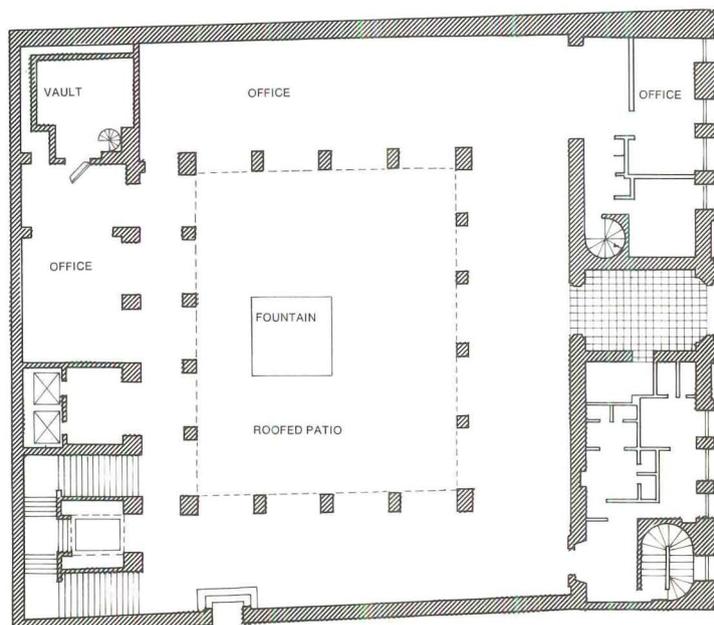
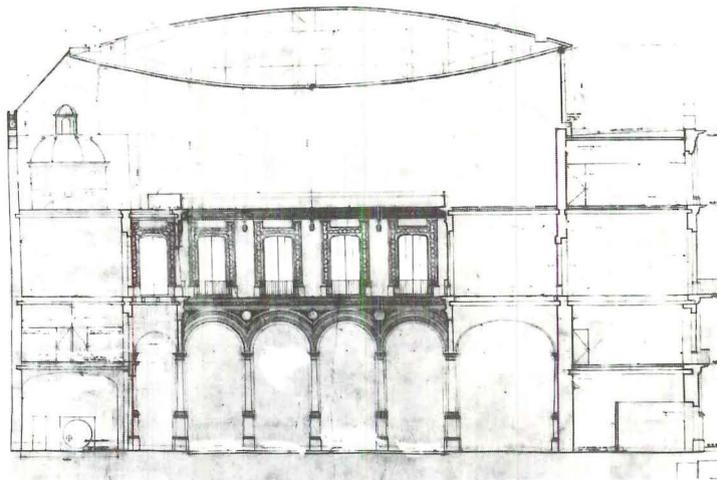
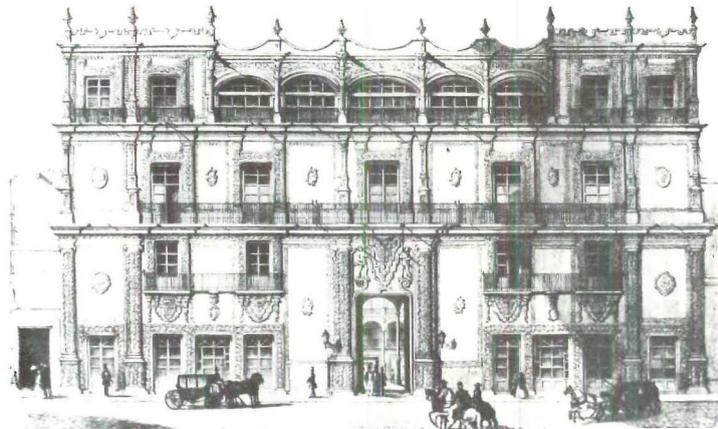
Left, the ground floor reception area with a tapestry by Sheila Hicks. Right, an upper floor gallery along the side of the central courtyard.

and replaced by Legorreta with a new roof shaped somewhat like an airplane wing, its smooth lower surface curving upward to clerestory windows at two sides of the court.

Several layers of floor paving were ripped up to reestablish original floor levels: Mezzanines which had been built, for commercial purposes, under the arcades of the main floor were removed. A small stair and elevator that had taken the place of the original grand stair were also removed, and the grand stair rebuilt.

Obviously, not everything in the restored building is authentic. Where the function of banking offices demanded spaces or furnishings for which no 1780 counterparts existed, and in cases where there were no reliable documents to show what the original conditions may have been, Legorreta has eschewed speculative period imitations in favor of frankly modern solutions. The new courtyard roof, the simple fountain beneath it, the new doors, stairs and wooden flooring, the art works are all unashamedly new. And although occasionally spiced with a colonial chest or wardrobe, the office furnishings are generally the latest thing.

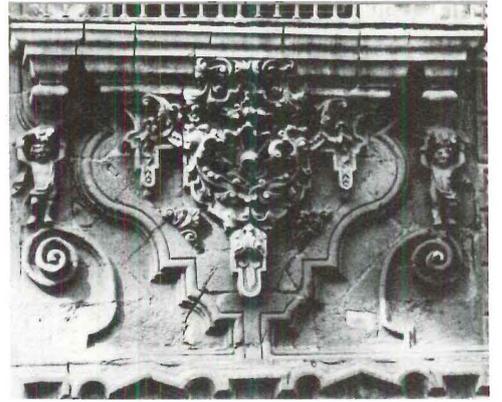
The end result accomplishes, with considerable panache, Legorreta's aim of "keeping the original atmosphere of tranquility and colonial splendor." Whatever other owners and architects may come to the Iturbide Palace in the future, they will find it, in this latest of its transformations, as handsome as ever.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

At top, a 19th century view of the building, then in use as a Viceroyal Palace. Center, a section through the courtyard and the new roof form covering it. Below, plan of the ground floor. Opposite page, an upper floor office area. The carpet design is by architect Legorreta, and the painting on the far wall by Pedro Coronel.





Top, a detail of the exterior stonework. Left, two views of an office area typically furnished with a mixture of new and colonial objects. Right, the great central courtyard with its new fountain.



Urban renewal goes underground

By Marguerite Villecco

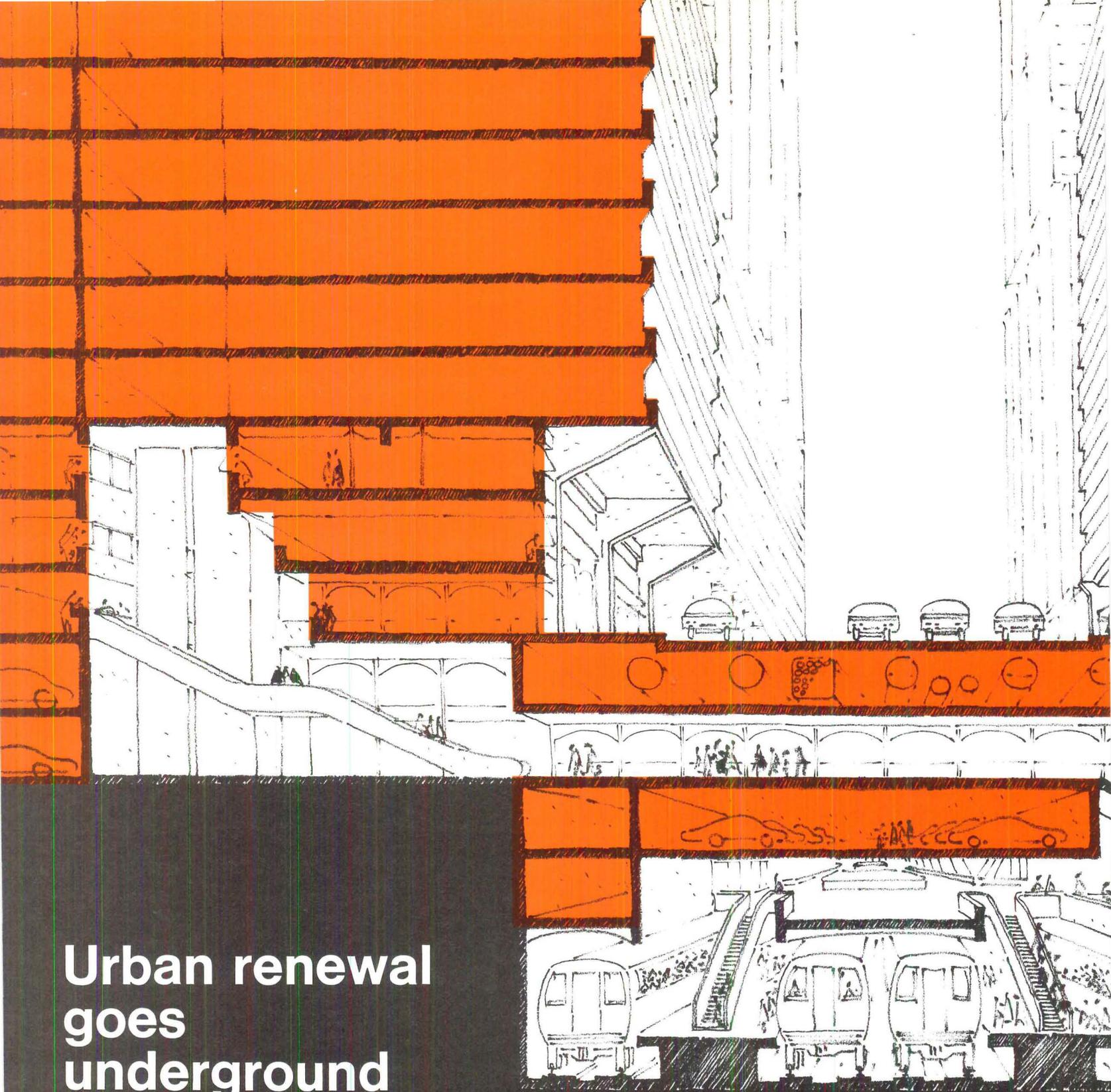
A young architect/planner came into our offices last winter with an elaborate and impressive scheme for turning Manhattan's generally mundane Second Avenue into the most wonderful kind of underground kingdom. She showed us how the buildings could cantilever over the current sidewalk areas of the avenue and described how their lobbies would start 30 ft. above the ground. The spaces opened up by the building's virtual removal from the sidewalk would then become a window into a below-grade city of shops, boutiques, restaurants and places to sit, sip or stroll. And, better than most pedestrian malls (especially in New York City), this hidden thoroughfare would be free of rain, wind and temperature extremes, as well as buses, cars and on-duty cabdrivers.

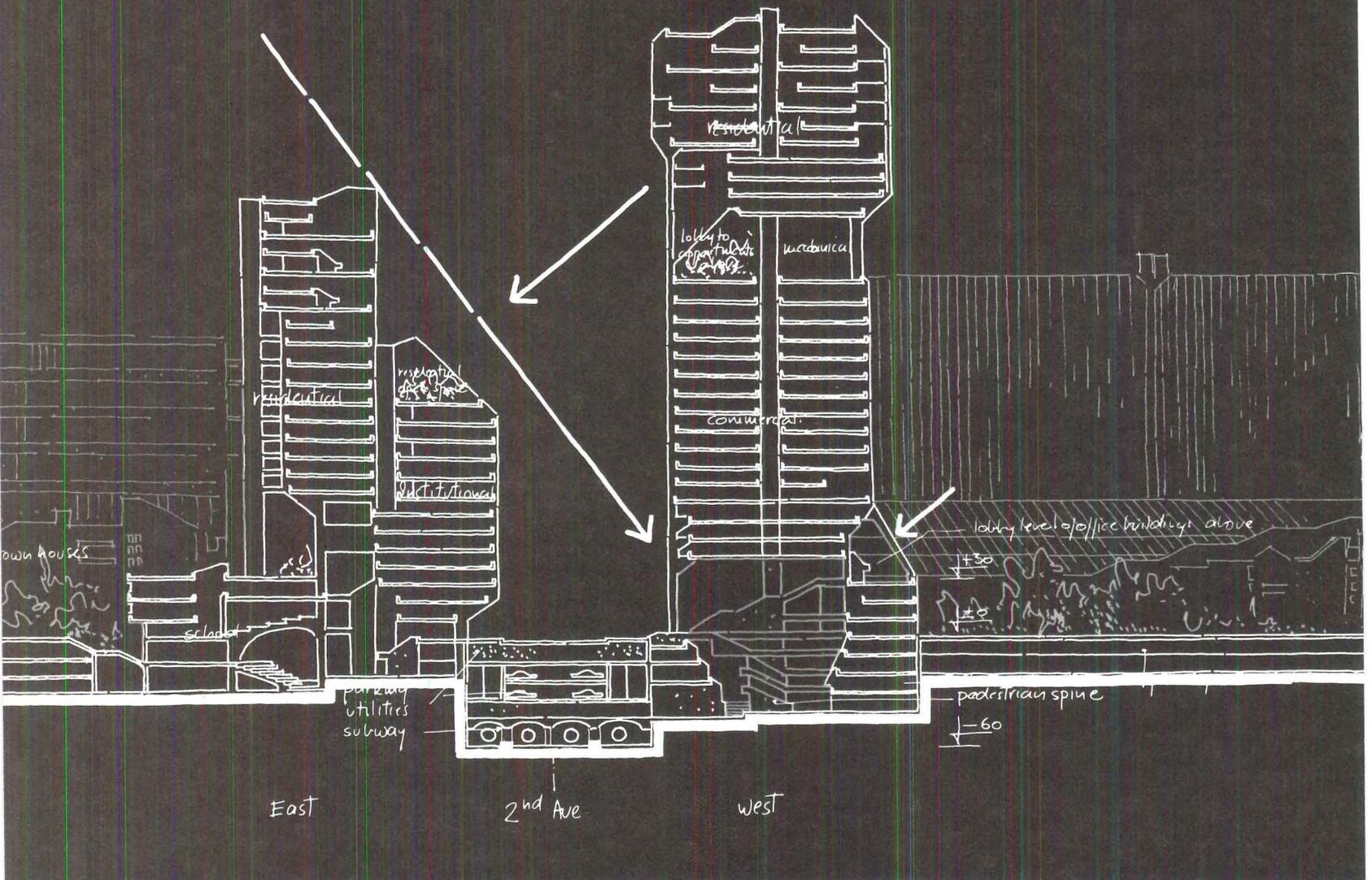
The concept sounded not only fascinating, but even logical. The Second Avenue Spine, as the scheme is named, is designed around the new Second Avenue subway that New York City insists it will build. The spine will grow around and along that train's

route from 48th St. to 60th St. The pedestrian corridor thus created would grow wider and deeper as it approached a subway station and then diminish between stations, where fewer people are expected to use its facilities.

The more we talked to Ada Karmi-Melamede, a partner of Karmi Associates (architects) of Tel Aviv, Israel, and creator of the proposal for Second Avenue, the more we saw the thoroughness of her study and its applications to other cities. Not every city will have a Second Avenue that is underdeveloped and about to get a new subway line, but the process and concepts the plan involves are certainly not grounded to Manhattan Island. We decided to publish the project. And then came more surprises: the plan, or some version of it, may actually become reality.

Reality came first in the form of \$50,000 won from the City Edges competition held by the National Endowment for the Arts. That award was complemented by another \$12,500 from a de-





books that she carries around for presentations. The drawings seem to cover every contingency, yet remain schematic in nature. One of the most important things about this project is that it starts with a careful analysis of what already exists or is planned in the area and how these elements work together.

The givens for the project include the new subway. It will be built 60 ft. below street level and is expected to relieve some of the congestion on the older, parallel Lexington Avenue subway line. The spine project will not change established, major traffic patterns, nor will the city's existing street grid pattern be changed. Only one-third of the edge sites on the avenue are now fully developed. The rest remain vulnerable to speculators.

The city has been a pioneer in using "incentive" zoning to get developers to provide social amenities in return for extra rental space. But if the city decides to legislate new or special zoning requirements for Second Avenue, it will have to develop an entirely new concept of what zoning is, says Raquel Ramati. Zoning all over the world deals primarily with buildings as they rise from the

ground—regulations rarely apply to underground development, and this is the essence of Ada Karmi's concept. The zoning now existing for Second Avenue is the same for the east and west sides and limits construction to 30 residential floors and two stories of commercial space. Such uses may cover 40 percent of the site at the tower level and 66 percent at the base. This bulk is allowed only if the builder provides a plaza or arcade on 33 percent of the site.

The new proposal would call for different standards on either side of Second Avenue (see drawing above). On the west side, it would allow a building's tower to cover 50 percent of the site and a building's base to cover 100 percent. Instead of arcades, however, the developer would have to provide escalators to the subways and 50 percent store space adjacent to the underground spine; he would also have to construct the spine, an average 25 ft. underground, according to specifications; preserve townhouses in mid-block when required; and provide open space on intermediate roof levels for residential portions of the buildings.

The east side proposal calls for mixed use structures, but 60 percent would be for residential use and only 40 percent for commercial and institutional (including school and hospital) structures. The new law would allow a 20 percent increase in bulk, greater site coverage and no plaza or arcade requirements. But it would require escalators to the subways, a double-height pedestrian route, a 50 percent space allowance for residentially-oriented shops, and a roof plan that allows sun to shine on the west side of Second Avenue. Builders would also have to create street-level openings so that strollers could see the townhouse gardens in back, to preserve townhouses if required, and to create vest pocket parks in mid-block areas.

The configurations of the buildings may seem a little odd. They can overhang the sidewalks as long as the resultant profile does not block sunlight from the opposite side. On both sides of the avenue, building lobbies must be located 30 ft. above the ground, with cross street, not avenue, access.

Ada Karmi and Raquel Ramati have received favorable reactions and even enthusiasm from some of the developers they have approached. They have also talked to local community boards and will participate in a committee that the Municipal Arts Society is assembling. The community, developers, city planning agencies, transit authority, American Institute of Architects and others will be represented, and progress documented. If the project doesn't succeed, Ada Karmi will know why.

One problem may be in explaining the proposal to the layman. The new office for the Second Avenue Spine will prepare an exhibition as one of its first projects. With it, Ada Karmi hopes to make Second Avenue a popular issue for politicians and laymen alike. But the concept is not easy for people to grasp, partly because it is three-dimensional in nature, and its dimensions and amenities change from one block to another.

The sketches at right illustrate some principles underlying the proposal's conclusions:

1. Second Avenue and the subway below will act as parallel systems that touch each other at predetermined points called stations. Every meeting point, or station, needs space for changing transportation modes and for related activities.

2. Second Avenue is one component of the overall Manhattan grid system as a north-south connector to other boroughs. Changes must therefore respect the avenue's total and regional functions.

3. If sidewalks were to remain as they are now, they could not accommodate the numbers of future pedestrians. Additions to these can be made above, at, or below ground level. On Second Avenue, an extension at grade would not solve the problem, and there is nothing to justify going up, so the spine plan calls for sidewalks to go below grade, toward the subways.

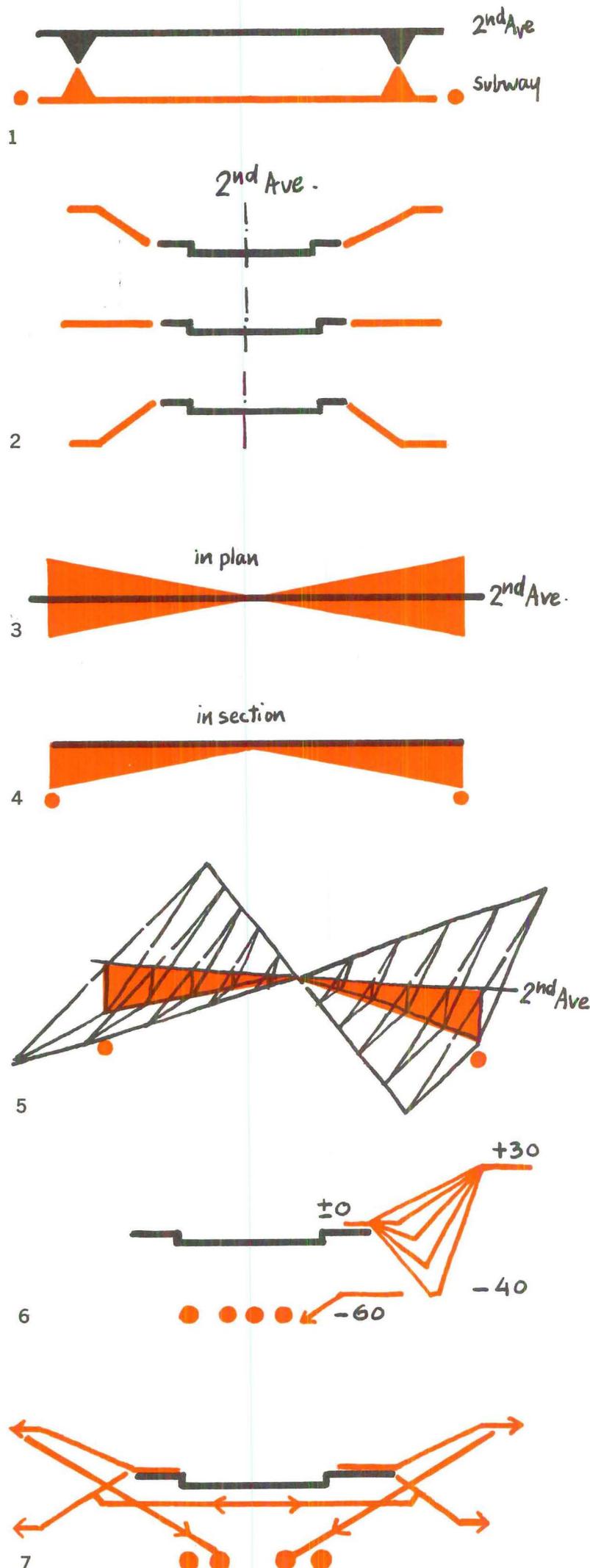
4. The density of pedestrians intensifies near the station areas. The pedestrian corridor should therefore vary in depth and width accordingly. Cross streets create a similarly variable, but more complex form.

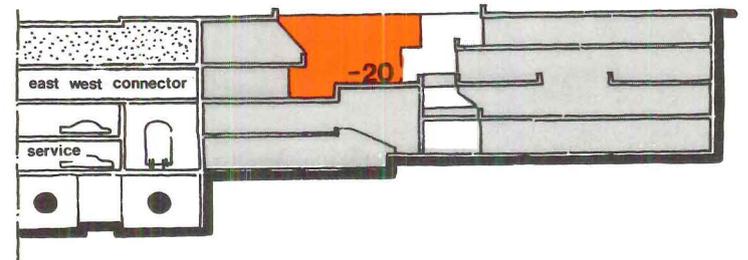
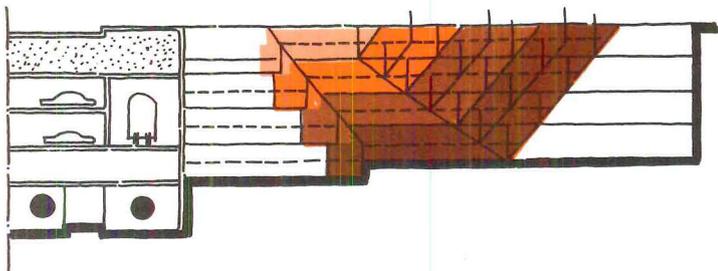
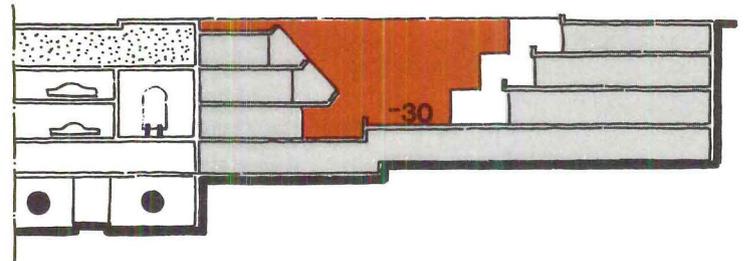
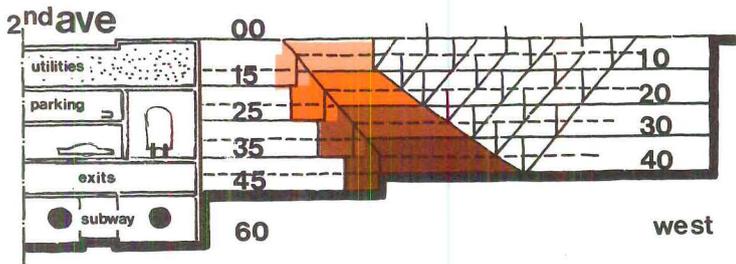
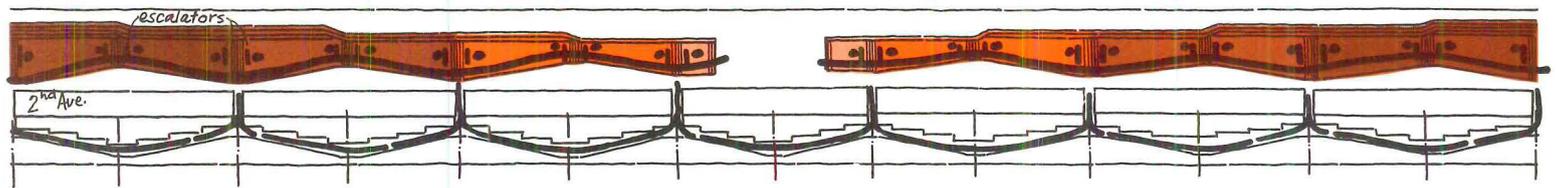
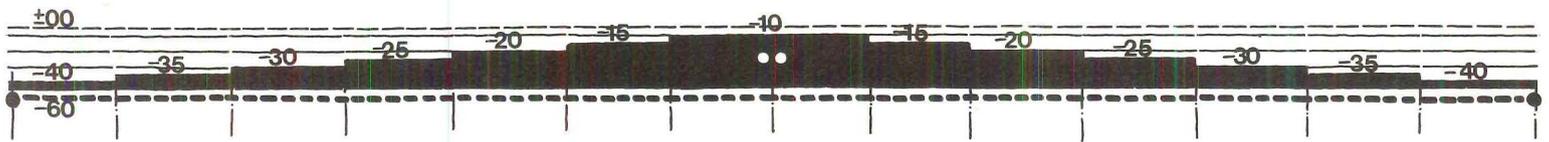
5. Given the decision to extend the sidewalk below existing grade, Ada Karmi then proposes a continuous pedestrian route connecting the stations in midtown (a 12-block project). The route would slope from the station levels to just below grade at the midpoint between stations. As the route varies in width and depth, so do all the related elements, such as public spaces, commercial areas and light and air exposure.

6. Within the lot line the route is a continuous space, open to the outside. It houses the connections between the three major levels: subway at -60 ft., sidewalk at ± 0 , and the lobby level at +30 ft. Therefore this space is used simultaneously as a gate, a threshold and a destination. The route may also be extended to join areas of regional importance, other underground developments or major activity areas. The main route is located on the west side of the avenue and is linked to the east side through underpaths at two-block intervals.

7. The existing sidewalk would then return to its more leisurely origins and become a ridge overlooking a pedestrian valley below.

How these concepts become an urban-scaled plan is detailed in the following pages.



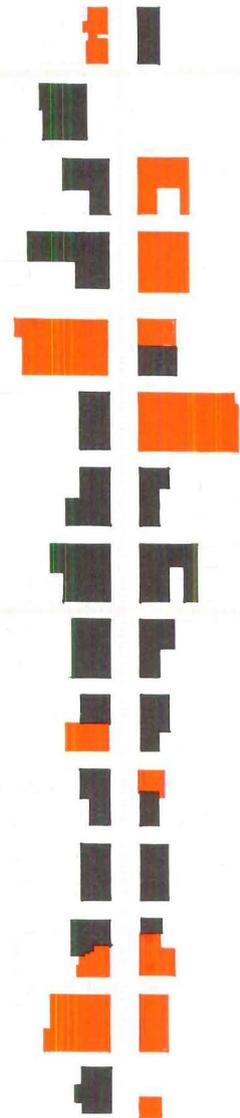
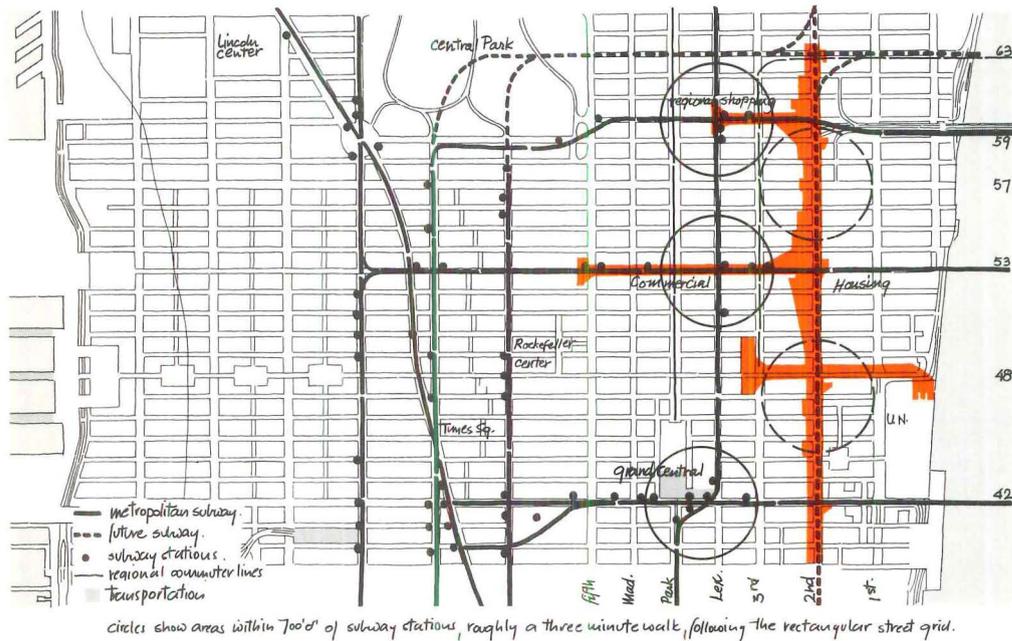


Above (top) is a schematic section through the pedestrian spine on the west side of Second Avenue. At midpoint between the two subway stations at 46th and 59th streets, the route climbs to its highest level and the corresponding open space decreases, reflecting the fact that pedestrian densities, and therefore pedestrian activities, are greatest at subway stations. At future stations, the route will descend to its lowest (-45 ft.) level and the enlarged space resulting will contain tiers of underground shops, services and sight-seeing attractions. Such larger spaces will also offer the greatest number of routes to and from the street sidewalk areas.

The second horizontal illustration is a plan detailing the movement options within the spine. The west side enjoys continuous passage, uninterrupted by vehicular movement, but will have escalator connections to ground level at each cross street intersection above. The east side is quite different. The pedestrian levels here are more constant than on the west side of the avenue because there is no direct subway access on the east and because the amenities on the east side are mostly service and convenience shops for the area's residents. While there are underground connections between the east and west mezzanines, the distance from a subway station is not nearly as important in planning the east side's development as in planning the west's.

The four small illustrations above are cross-sections of the west

side proposal. The upper left drawing depicts the geometry of the Second Avenue spine by superimposing each level of development from -45 ft. to -15 ft. (see color key); it shows what lies on either side of the route and the size of the route at each level. Corresponding commercial areas are shown at each level. Each new mezzanine level steps up 1/2 floor at each block and becomes more narrow as the pedestrian walks further from the subway stations. The lower left drawing shows the geometry of the underground volumes as a whole and how these change considerably according to the level of the pedestrian route at a given point. The two drawings on the right are not superimposed; each is an example of a particular development level. The top section is at -30 (or about 56th St.); the lower is at -20 (or 54th St.).

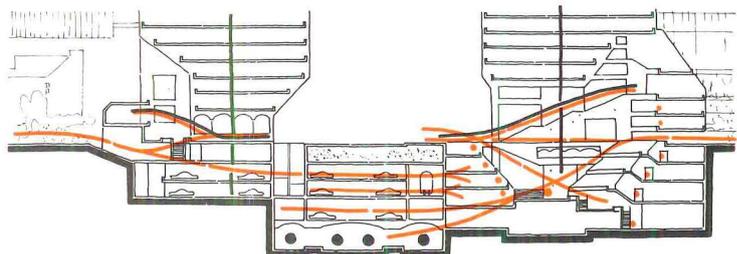
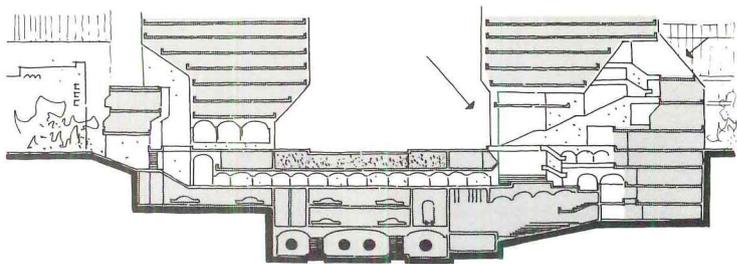
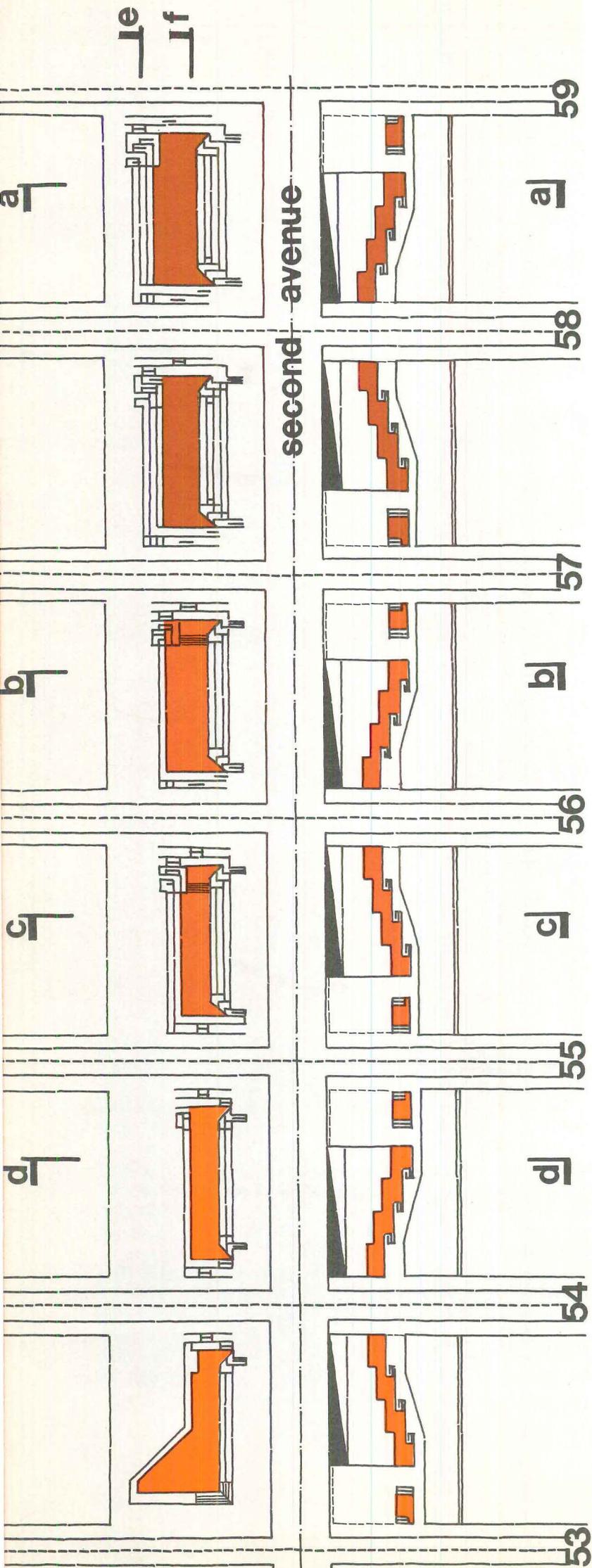


New York City seems ideally suited to this kind of spine development at this time, in part because its population density requires a corresponding concentration of services and in part because Second Avenue will soon be made into a major transportation corridor, with or without coherent plans for land development along the route. The top map on this page is a land use plan of central Manhattan, from the East to the Hudson Rivers, its east and west boundaries respectively. It shows commercial development most prominently in the center of the island; what it does not show is that such commercial enterprise is increasing rapidly and pushing major housing areas out and eventually away. On the east side, Second Avenue stands as a buffer zone between encroaching commercial land uses and residential areas. The proposed spine project would preserve the commercial nature of Second Avenue's west side while protecting the residential character of its east side.

The vertical map at right is a close-up of the project area outlined in the land use map. It shows that it is not too late to exercise control over Second Avenue; the area has in fact been called the last reservoir of Manhattan land still available for major development. The map's orange portions indicate hard (fully developed) sites and reveal that these are far outnumbered by the black areas, which are now either underdeveloped or not yet developed. In

fact, only 25 percent of the avenue edge sites can be called hard, and where these might conflict with the proposed spine's continuity, they can be circumvented under Second Avenue.

The third (lower) map illustrates how the underground mezzanines created by the Second Avenue spine plan may be naturally integrated into the city's other transportation and major activity areas. This is a plan of the design proposal itself. As the color key indicates, the spine will ultimately form a continuous pedestrian space that will link two future subway stations in midtown. This space will connect the existing sidewalks, an elevator level inside the buildings and a subway exit/entrance at -60 ft. The spine can also extend to other underground mezzanine levels in the city and to areas of regional importance, such as the United Nations and the popular shopping areas around Bloomingdale's department store. The circles, showing areas within 700 ft. (or a 3-minute walk) from a subway station, nearly overlap and so demonstrate that the Second Avenue spine would be easily accessible from most points in east midtown Manhattan.

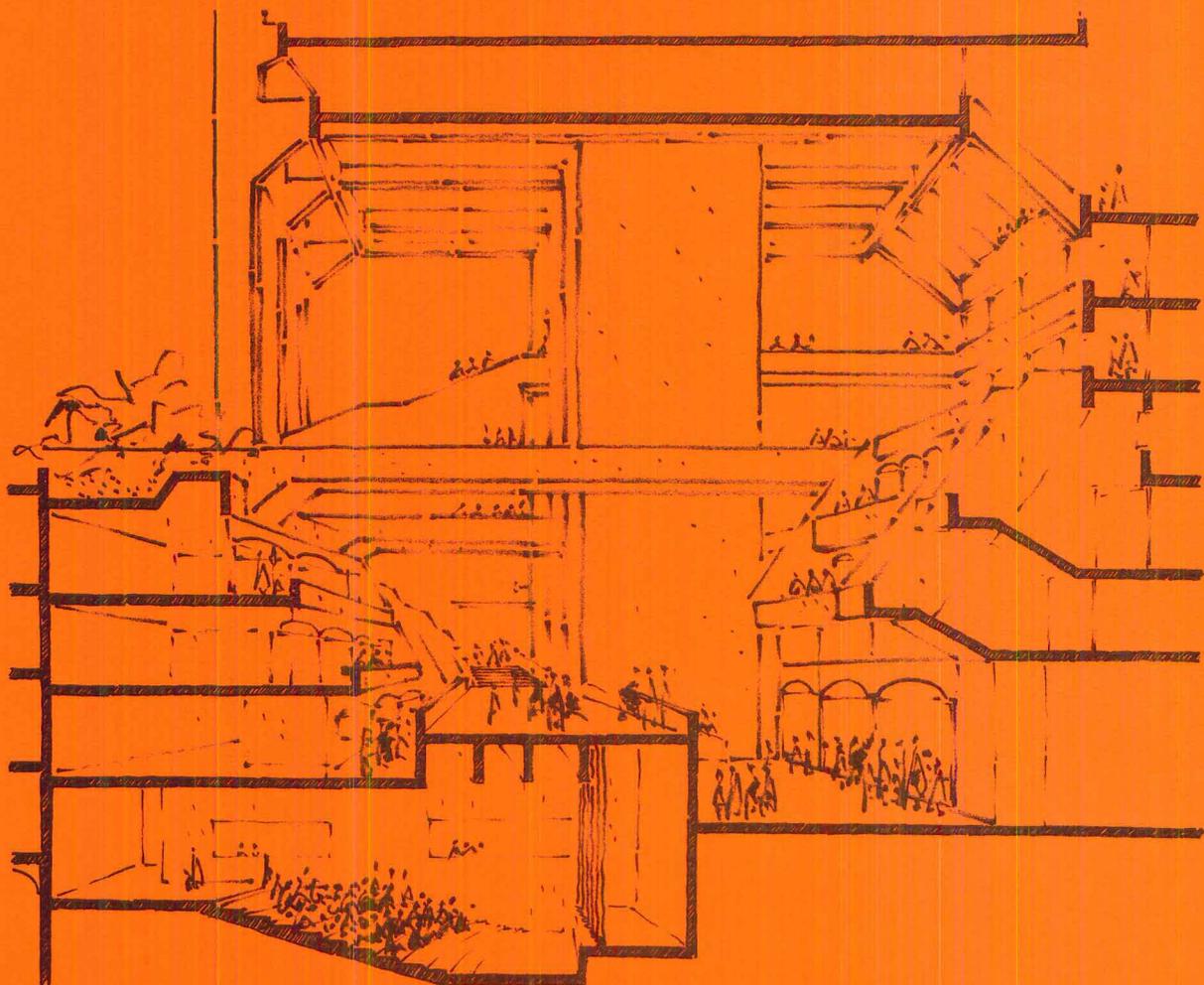
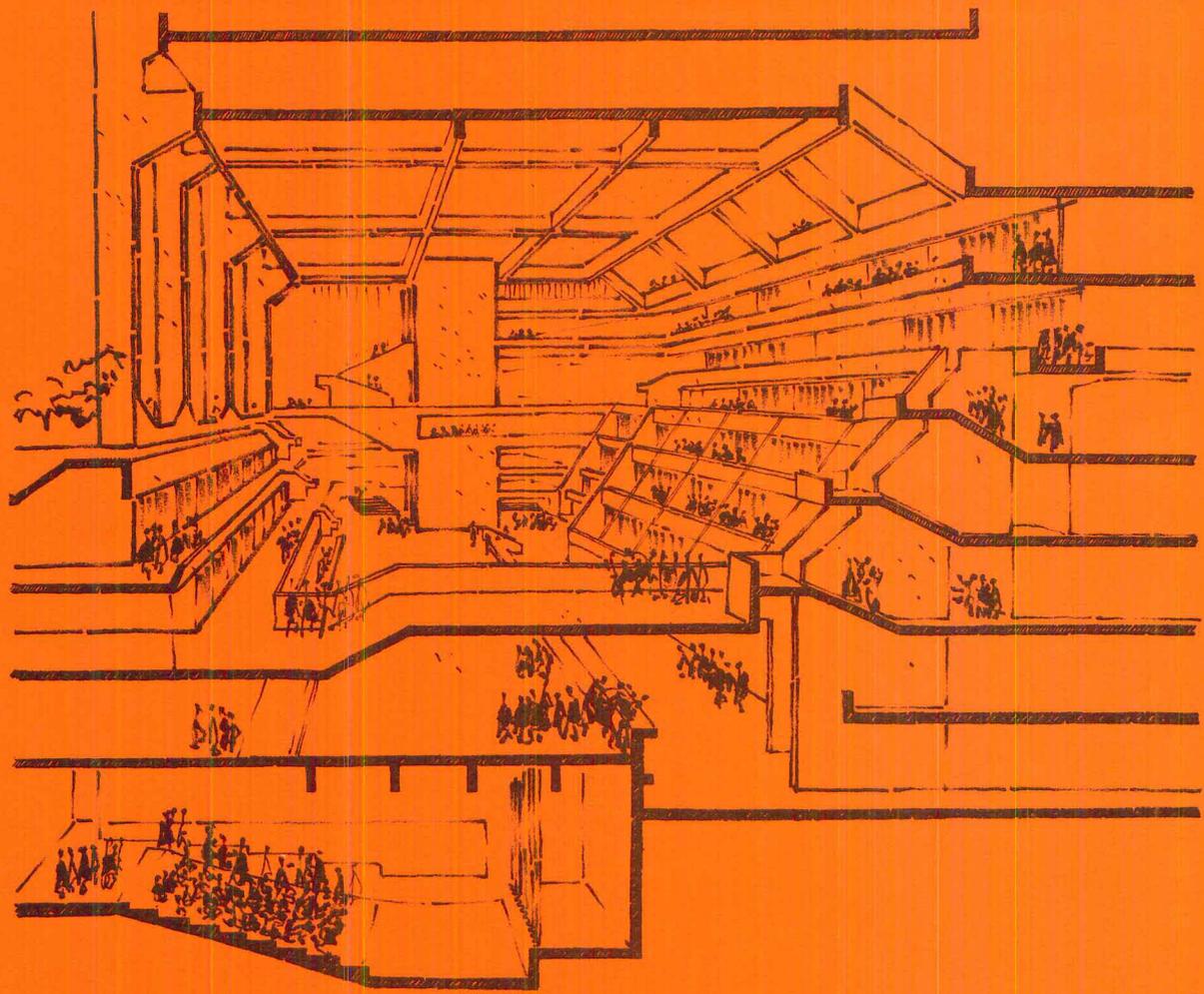


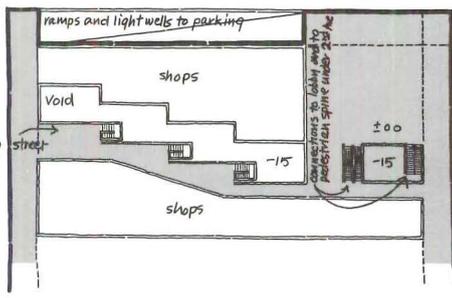
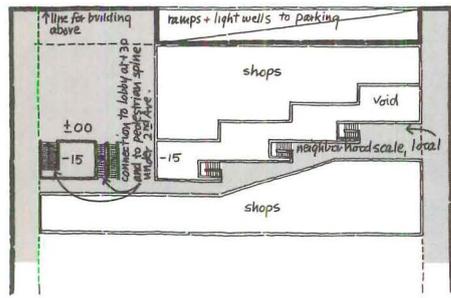
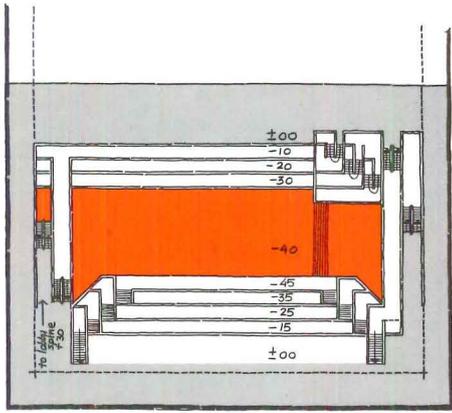
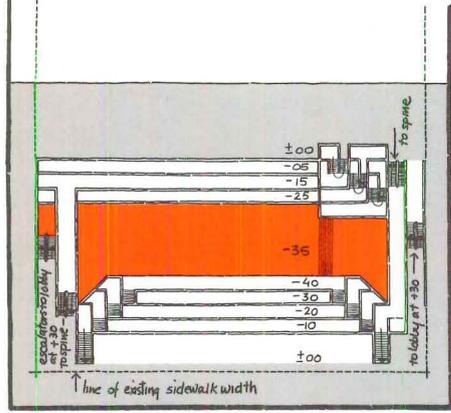
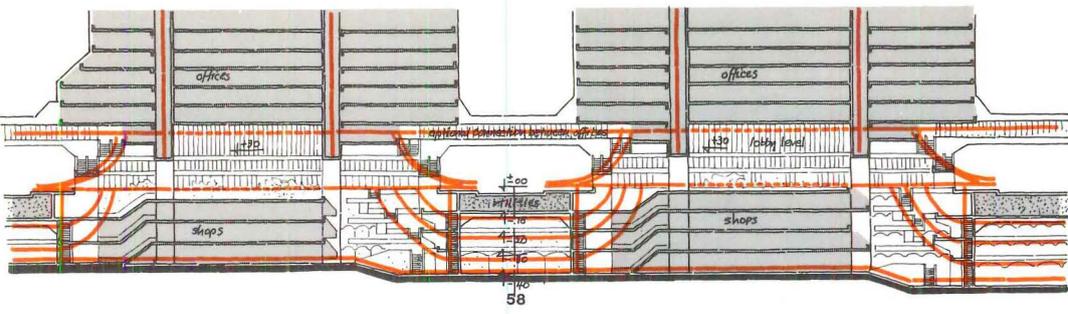
— Hue for controlled private movement
 red for public movement, through open spaces day or night.

The plan at left is a close-up view of underground development from 53rd St. to 59th St. Since the station at 59th St. will attract huge numbers of people, this block corridor on the west side goes down to -40/45 ft., with at least four tiers of stores, boutiques, restaurants, etc. The east side is at -15 ft. and has local shops. The first drawing for this story is a section perspective of activities at 59th St.

The top section above is at 54th St., which extends down to -20 ft. and does not have nearly the array of attractions that the 59th St. area has. Since 54th St. is far away from the subway entrance, there will be relatively few people using the pedestrian spine there. The lower section illustrates the movement options available to pedestrians in the underground areas. A person may go to street level on either side of Second Avenue, go into the buildings along the avenues, to the parking lots or subways, or to the sidestreet areas in back of the avenue structures. A shopper could spend days just inspecting the shops on each interior mezzanine level.

Opposite are two section perspectives drawn from different directions. The top sketch is of the spine on Second Avenue's west side at 56th St.; the lower version is a continuation of the same, but diminished, corridor near 55th St. Though only one block apart, the sections show a marked difference in the spine's development.

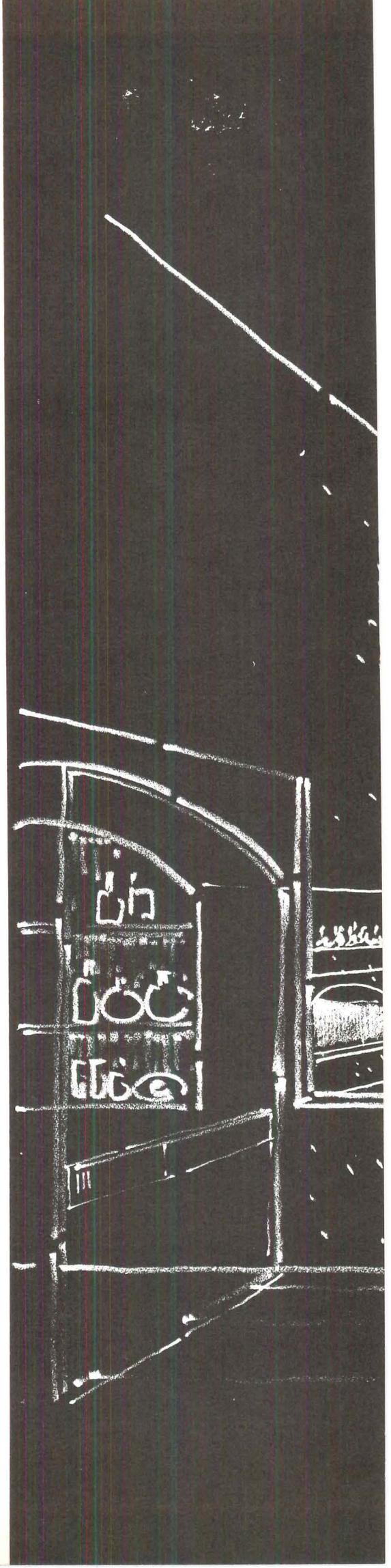


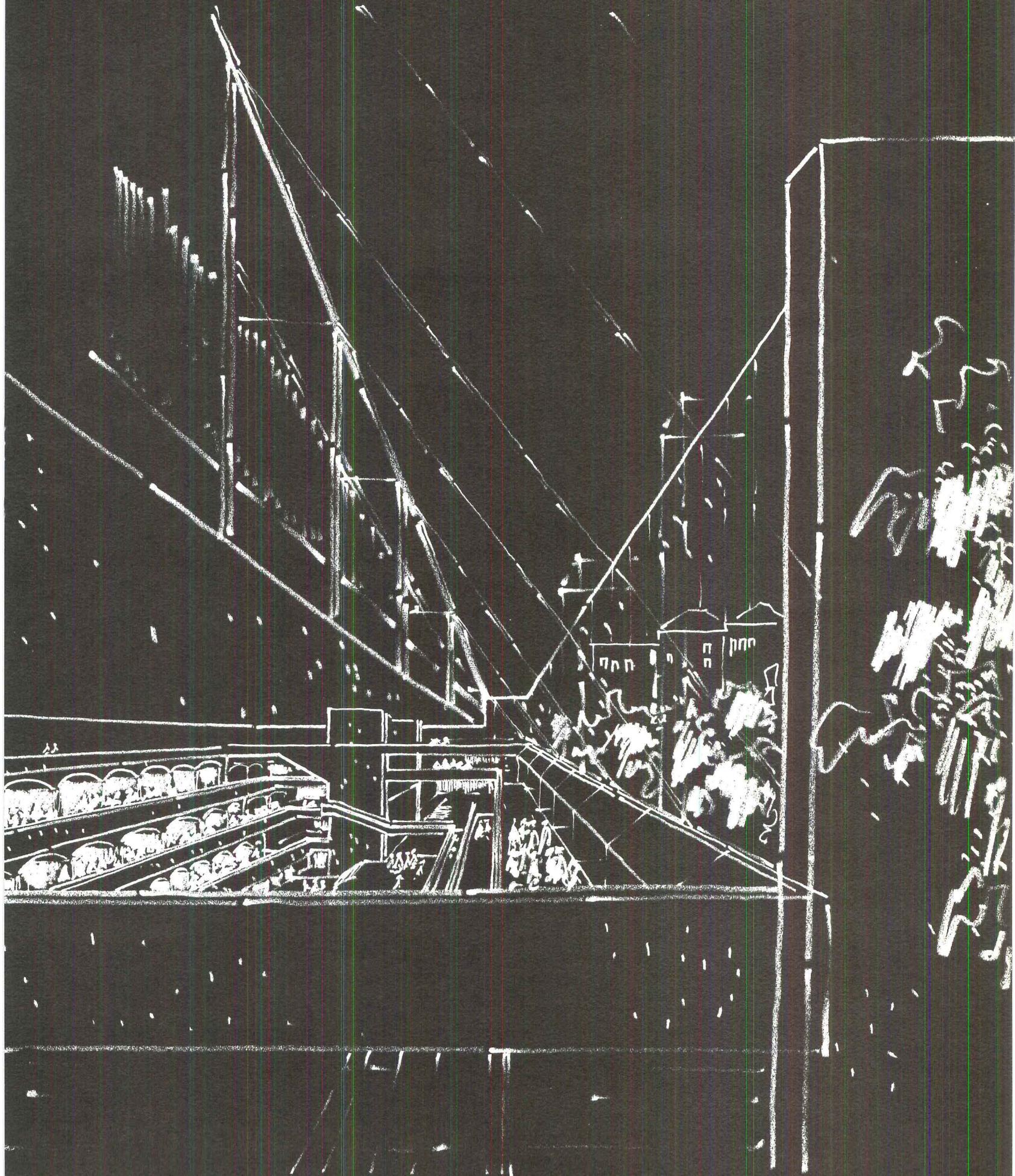


The section at top was drawn facing west on Second Avenue at 58th St. (see plan on p. 26). The superimposed lines indicate the large number of entry and exit possibilities at cross street intersections. Pedestrians may remain underground and walk beneath the cross street at several levels, or they may ascend to sidewalk level or go directly into the buildings that line Second Avenue. All subway access and most major commercial facilities are on the west side. But this section also shows the changes that occur on the west side of the avenue as the streets are further removed from the subway; the spine loses depth and width as well as patrons.

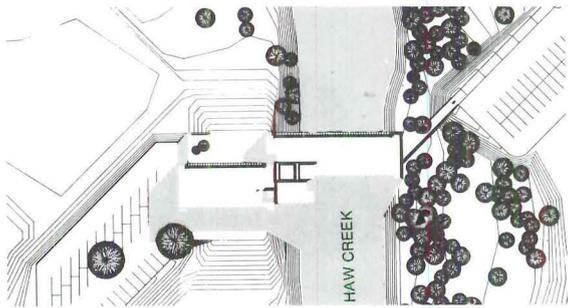
The plan contrasts the east and west sides of Second Avenue. The west (top) side corresponds to the section above it and indicates development at -40 ft. Across the avenue, the spine descends to -15 ft. and the area is more shallow, and of neighborhood scale with a mid-block (off the sidestreet) entry to a small shopping arcade; one must cross the avenue to catch a subway.

At right is a view of the Second Avenue spine from the sidewalk above it. The planners hope their proposal will restore the sidewalk to its original use of years ago—a pleasant place for a leisurely stroll—with the added excitement of a few peeks down into the new underground wonderland possible every now and then.





A bridge to health



Columbus, Indiana—the town with an extraordinary collection of buildings by the best American architects of the fifties and sixties—is entering a new era. “Process buildings” have begun to join the masterful but often self-conscious works that can be found there. And even though the new projects, which are designed by such firms as Roche and Dinkeloo, Mitchell/Giurgola, and Hardy, Holzman and Pfeiffer, are seldom completely successful in blending into the Columbus townscape—there is still a “museum” quality about it all—they seem to be more modest, to be trying harder to fit in.

It is perhaps in the nature of the process-oriented approach to architectural design, as opposed to that based more on sculpture, that the “set-piece” quality of the completed building is substantially mitigated. Process, in the case of the Region Ten Mental Health Center by James Stewart Polshek and Associates, profoundly determined the form of the resultant building. And Polshek insists it was the broadest possible connotation of “process” that was involved, not just orderly manipulation of elements in a pre-digested program handed him by his client.

In the first place, his client proved to be several agencies with varying interests in the proposed structure. The National Institute for Mental Health, for instance, provided guidelines for the design of the center (but has still not provided any funds to help build it). State agencies, which in fact have funded 60 per cent of the construction, also had a voice. The primary client was the Region Ten (five Southern Indiana counties) Mental Health Foundation, whose sophistication, claims Polshek, allowed the design development process to run its course objectively. Finally, because the site chosen, adjacent to the Bartholomew County General Hospital, was in the floodplain of Haw Creek (a stream running through Columbus), the Corps of Engineers was also involved.

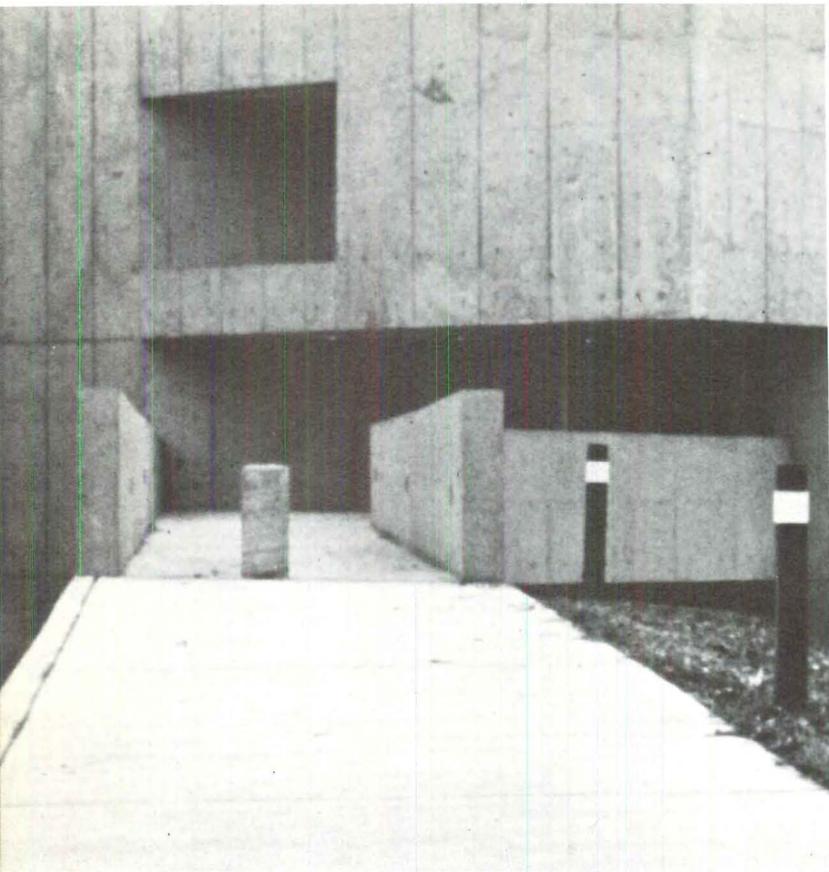
As a center providing comprehensive mental health services, the building was to include in-patient facilities, out-patient counseling offices, occupational therapy and administrative spaces. The concept of a bridge over the creek was not arrived at easily. Although he sensed possibilities when he first saw the site, Polshek says that it was when he heard that the Corps of Engineers planned to “straighten” Haw Creek, taking out two stands of mature sycamores, that the idea of bridging came to mind as an ecologically sound concept. Since the building had to be built at bridge height in any case (due to flash flood conditions), the tying together of the two banks not only meant saving the trees but allowed people to enter the building from either side of the stream. The east bank is adjacent to the hospital while the other entrance gives patients and visitors easy access to a large park and main streets. Unfortunately, provision for public passage across the creek as part of the building was abandoned early in the design stage.

Caseloads have so exceeded the volume projected for the first year that the building is already over-crowded. But rather than handle the overflow by expanding this center, the organization has established branches in the other counties served and plans another unit for children and adolescents in Jennings County, also to be designed by Polshek’s office.

“A feeling of openness was an important symbolic goal in the design,” says Dr. George C. Weinland, director of the center and one of those most deeply involved in the planning. Along both





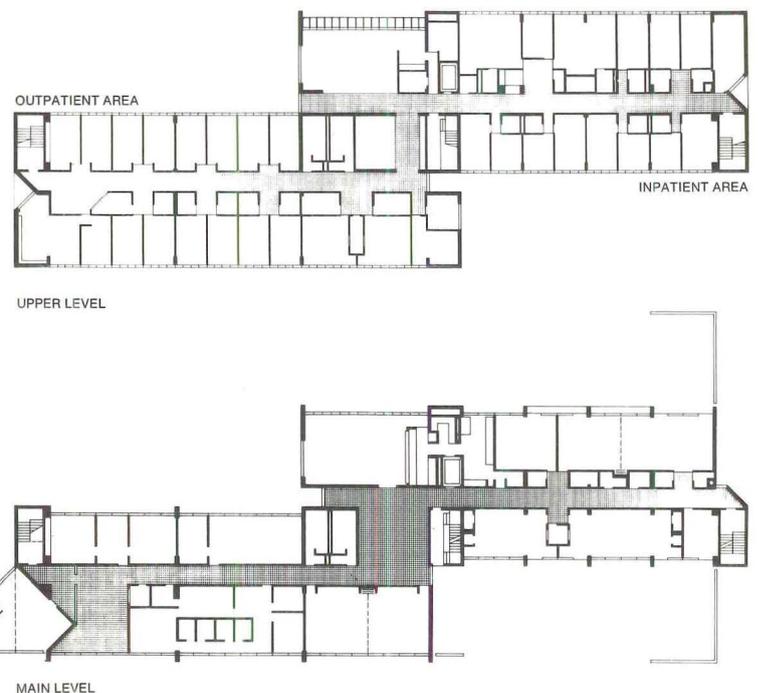


sides of the building, especially on the upper floor, a window wall which combines vertical and sloping glass opens patient rooms and offices (page 34) to the creek and trees along it. The ends of the building, in contrast to the linear character of the long elevations, are very solid concrete elements. It is here, unfortunately, that one feels most the "architecture" of the design. It is here that Polshek seems to fall between two stools, perhaps one should say, "schools."

Like so many other architects *d'un certain âge*, he feels pulled in two directions, by process but also by product. On the one hand, he has done a remarkable job of letting process and developed program, with their potential for accommodating unforeseen change, dictate and shape the design. In this case, his early interest in becoming a psychiatrist and his work experience in hospitals has helped him to be objective. But on the other hand, he still sees himself as an "architect" who must make a formal statement, who must tidy up the consequences of the process and program. Unable to forget his architectural history, specifically Chenonceaux in the Loire Valley, he has insisted on a symmetrical facade for the wing crossing the creek (page 31). The cantilevered concrete masses at each end seem to follow from that decision. In his own words, Polshek wanted "to make the distinction between the east entrance (mostly service and employees but some patients) and the west entrance unclear so there would not seem to be a 'front door'." Furthermore, he says that he did not think so much about entering as being and working inside the building. In fact, late in design the entry bridge was shifted to the diagonal and the mass lightened as much as possible to provide more sense of openness.

But this pastiche of modish yet brutal forms does not help. What is basically an austere building becomes, at this crucial point, a forbidding building. Where openness is most needed, to welcome those approaching for the first time with fears enough, there is none. What seems to have been overlooked "in the process" is the basic humanistic concern for the people who will use the building. In the case of a mental health services center, it is an especially regrettable oversight.—JIM MORGAN

An entry bridge leads visitors and patients directly to the reception area (above). Adjacent to it on the lower floor of the wing bridging the creek is the administration section. Above it are the counseling offices. In the wing of the east bank, occupational activities are on the lower floor with in-patient facilities above. There is also a basement. A two story space (right) joins the two wings and is a focus of activity for the entire building.







The patients' recreation room (above left) is directly over the cafeteria. Both have views over the stream (above) as well as through the aluminum window wall which is continuous on both sides of the second floor. The window detail, which combines sloping and vertical glass, works with the concrete spandrel to emphasize the linear quality of the building (right).

Facts and Figures

Quinco Consulting Center, Columbus, Indiana.
 Owner: Region Ten Mental Health Foundation.
 Architects: James Stewart Polshek and Associates.
 Associate-in-charge: Dimitri Linard. Engineers:
 Pfisterer, Tor and Associates (structural); Dalton and
 Dunne (mechanical and electrical); Ramoot
 Associates (subsurface investigation). Landscape
 Architect: Clarke and Rapuano, Inc. Interior design:
 Polshek. General contractor: Repp and Mundt.
 Building area: 27,840 sq. ft. Building construction
 cost: \$1,135,763. All photography by Balthazar
 Korab except page 33, upper left, Francis Galbraith.
 Building Suppliers listed on page 72.



Beyond Golden Lane, Robin Hood Gardens

London housing by the Smithsons is based on years of theory

By Anthony Pangaro





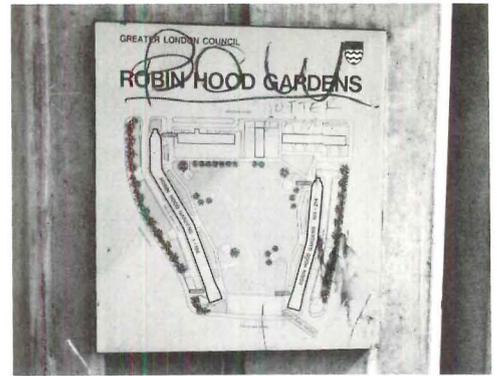
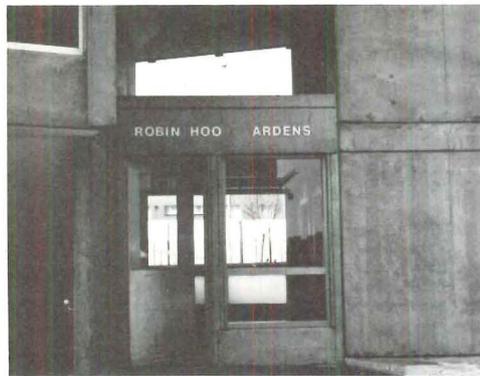
Alison and Peter Smithson, London architects, planners and theoreticians, have at last built an important block of city housing. The body of ideas which the Smithsons helped establish is one of the profession's most respected formal and ideological models, looked to by many in the United States as a tantalizing alternative to what we have been content to build as publicly assisted housing. Robin Hood Gardens, the Smithsons' first concrete realization from that model, is indeed far superior to most American public housing of the past two decades, and it deserves close scrutiny.

I consider it here from an American context, from the point of view of the American social and environmental dilemma: how does Robin Hood Gardens provide for community, for privacy, and (a particularly American question) for security? The answer seems to be that, while we still have much to learn from the Smithsons, the built reality of Robin Hood Gardens is less convincing than the theory behind it.

The Smithsons first came to international prominence with their competition-winning secondary school at Hunstanton in 1951. A straightforward work of steel and glass, it was Miesian with a difference; and for this difference a new phrase was added to our vocabulary: the New Brutalism. Five years later, a group of architects and planners led by the Smithsons, by Candilis and Woods from France, Bakema and van Eyck from Holland, and others, was entrusted with the program for the 10th assembly of the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) in Dubrovnik. After the meeting, CIAM, having grown diffuse and unwieldy, disintegrated, and the spirited new group, called Team 10, took its place as the theoretical establishment of the modern movement. In further meetings, in many published writings, and in specific unbuilt proposals (beginning with the 1952 Deck Housing project for Golden Lane), the Smithsons have been conscientiously refining their concepts for housing.

Robin Hood Gardens is also the child of the Greater London Council, an agency well known for its extensive governing and rebuilding efforts since World War II. The

Anthony Pangaro is an architect with the design staff of the New York State Urban Development Corporation and teaches at the Columbia University School of Architecture.



Council owns more than 200,000 housing units in London now, and their rents average about \$45 per month.

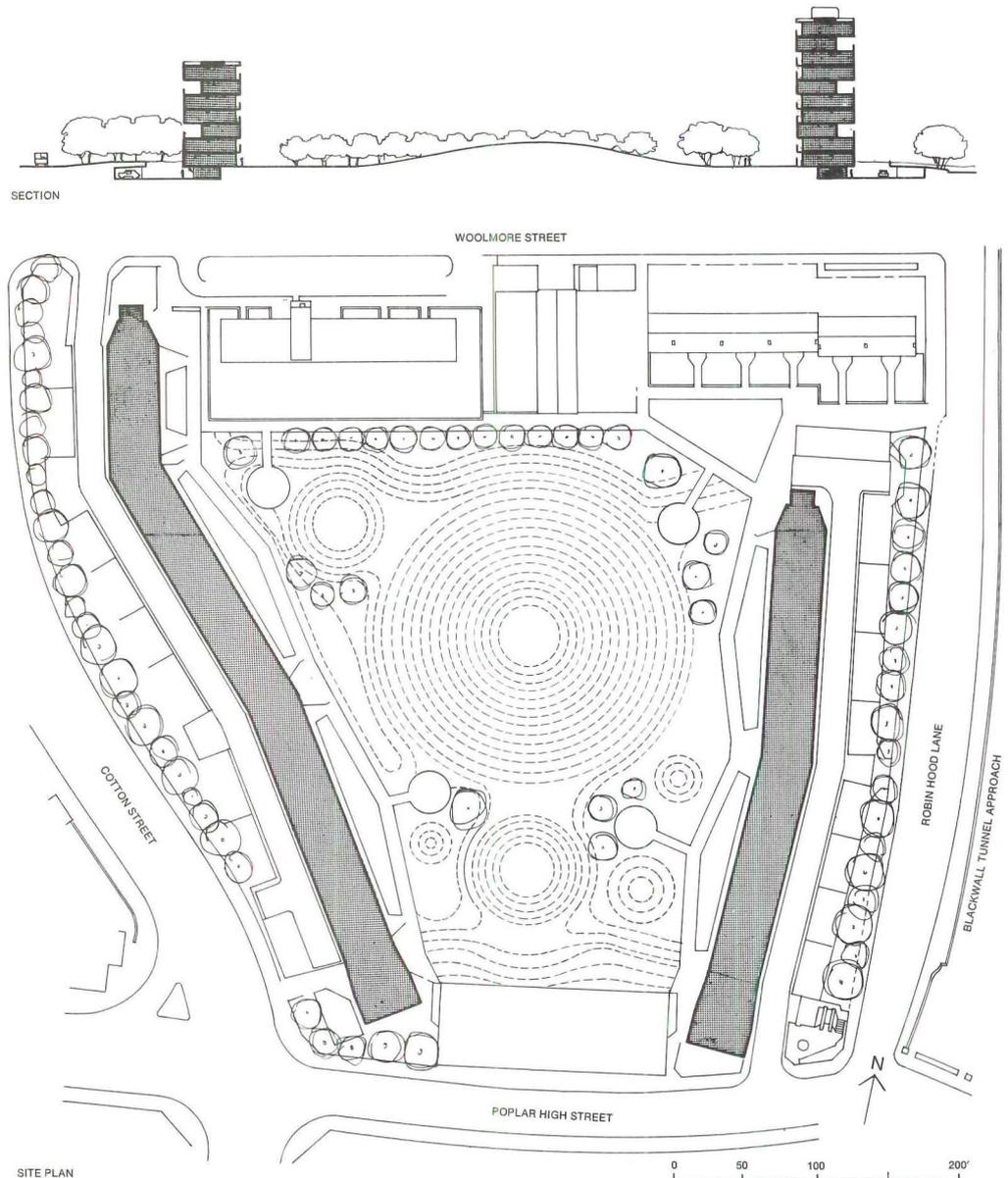
The Council program for Robin Hood Gardens was based directly (as many of our American programs are based indirectly) on Parker Morris standards. In 1961, the British Ministry of Housing and Local Government, chaired by Sir Parker Morris, produced a beginning for housing design standards. They considered, among other things, family sizes and differing needs, and the furnishings of an average home; they translated these into dimensional, cost, and other numerical parameters. Like many other attempts to quantify the building requirements of family life, its intent was somewhat perverted when it later became administrative law and not, as intended, a *minimum* guideline. This was especially true in the cases of the U.S.'s FHA Minimum Property Standards and Section 236 Minimum Room Sizes.

The site for Robin Hood Gardens is no Sherwood Forest, but a slum clearance area in London's East End, bordered by the London Motorway as it emerges from the Blackwall Tunnel, by a heavily trafficked surface road, Cotton Street, and by the more residential Woolmore Street. Completed last year, Robin Hood Gardens houses 700 people in 210 dwelling units on five acres of land.

The housing client

The Smithsons' earlier Golden Lane proposal is the model on which Robin Hood Gardens is based, and Robin Hood Gardens may, in turn, become a model for future building. Such models—along with more abstract concepts such as “pedestrian ways,” “open space,” and “mass housing”—can be valuable parts of design methodology, but we must guard against their prolonging myths of generalized human use. We often symbolize behavior by formal paradigms because we lack knowledge of the necessary correlations between form and behavior.

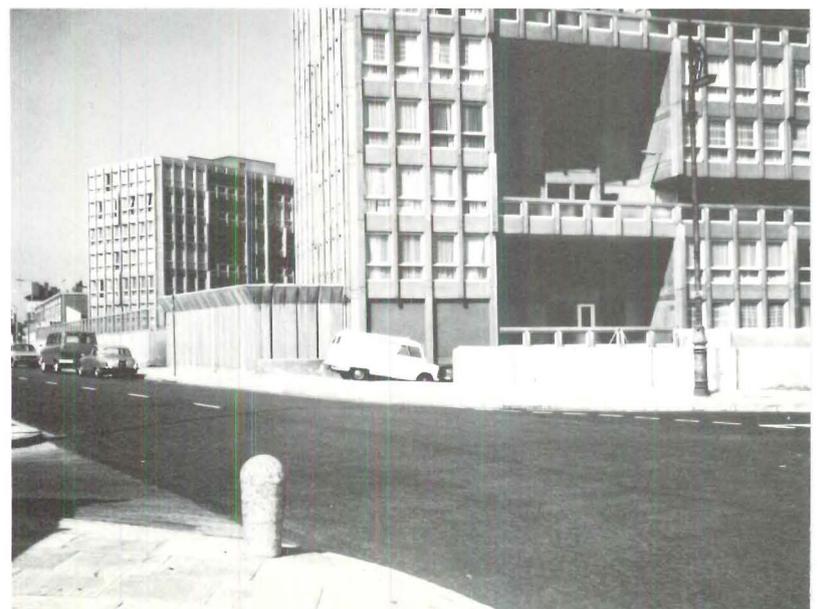
The abstract generality of such models can distort our intent and make us ineffective as shapers of environment. Because we derive our franchise from the occupant, the crucial client of any publicly assisted housing, it is necessary to identify him, his behavior and his needs. We can *then* design



Top left, the building entrance and directory both show signs of wear and vandalism. Center left, a section through the parking depressions on the perimeter of the development, the two buildings, and the man-made hill in the central open space. Below left, the site plan. Below, the concrete grid of one building's facade forms a backdrop to the hill.



Top, one of the "streets-in-the-air." Below left, a circular concrete play area recessed in the artificial hill. Below right, the depressed drive between parking areas and buildings. The building facade is divided by two "streets." Opposite, three tenants' uses of their own parts of a "street."





and test our intentions for his housing with all the participation-observation and interview techniques made available to us by those with sociological insight.

Some recent feedback of this type has alerted us to dangers in the organization of highrise housing intended for use by families with children. Crime, family disintegration and anomie, once written off as characteristic of low income groups, are suddenly being correlated, in some degree, to building types themselves.

The design solution that attempts to recognize the occupant must deal with his activities, activities often so basic that we overlook their significance. For example, the observation and supervision of children from the dwelling; the sense of neighborhood and of security that comes from being able to see who comes and goes; the use of the dwelling for simultaneous activities without conflict, and so on. Work for the New York State Urban Development Corporation (the UDC) by the Cornell Center for Urban Development Research, College of Human Ecology, has already verified many such factors as being of expressed importance to residents. In that light, the post-occupancy evaluation of seven UDC housing developments is now in progress.

The street in the air

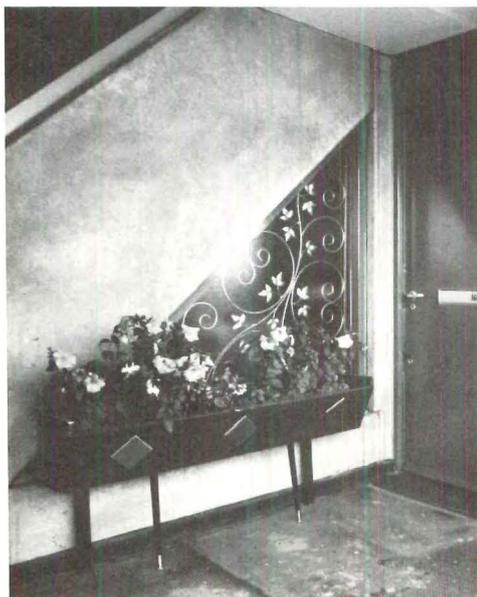
At the 1953 congress of CIAM, the Smithsons said that in modern urban society there are no natural groupings above the level of the family. The consequence of their realization, because they believe that valid social entities can result from architectural decisions, has been a search for new physical equivalents for the old levels of association in the house, the street, the district and the city. The hierarchy of functions outlined in CIAM's 1933 Athens Charter (work places, living places, circulation places) needed to be replaced, the Smithsons noted, by a hierarchy of *human* associations. Indeed, they said in *Team 10 Primer*, the "idea of street, not the reality of street... is important: the creation of effective group-spaces... making the socially vital life-of-the-street possible." Such thinking was logical enough and a real step forward, but, to the extent that it overlooked the basic activities of those using the built product, it was short of the mark.

Robin Hood Gardens, like Golden Lane before it, is based on the idea of a "street-in-the-air," and critical to the success of the scheme is the success of that "street." Even in the Smithsons' visualized multiplication of Golden Lane housing into Golden Lane City, with its pedestrian system a "multi-level continuous complex," these "streets" could function as intended only if they did *more* than link pedestrian paths—that is, only if they served as the physical links between human activities.

In the Robin Hood Gardens model, neither the streets nor the dwellings accommodate activities useful for supervision or socialization. The wide access galleries are primarily circulation spaces and are only incidentally available for neighborhood exchange. The outdoor areas adjacent to the dwelling units miss their chance to serve as front porches or stoops because they allow no definition of private territory or any sense of occupant ownership. The dwelling units are all but disconnected from the "street" (imagine the difference if there were only a kitchen window on it, and a real stoop), and turn away from the link to the rest of the estate.

The "street-in-the-air" is therefore only a shadow of what it is meant to be—there are no real play spaces (except the stairwells), no gathering spaces, and no activity connections to indoor communal spaces. It seems that once the presence of shops, views of outside community life, and the automobile have all been taken away, the thing that remains is only a corridor. Given public housing budgets, at least in America, it is unlikely that this can be otherwise. We often hypothesize that a deck can be a street, yet the inclusion of enough deck-level space for communal activities is prohibitively expensive, and self-supporting commercial space would not find an adequate market there. Even our New York City tenant of last resort, an Off-Track Betting parlor, would not find enough exposure there.

The real action at Robin Hood Gardens is on the ground, and the only real connection to it is via that great interrupter, the elevator (already in this case, in "civilized" London, badly defaced and vandalized). The spaces at ground level are also generalized and impersonal, perhaps in theory because "people will decide what to do with them." Certainly some spaces



Right, the interior of a typical flat. Below, typical partial floor plans. Flats are entered from the open deck at their middle level, which also contains kitchen-dining areas; living areas are either on the floor above or the floor below. Opposite, a grade entrance to one of the flats set aside for the elderly. Above the entrance, the narrow bedroom balcony of another flat.



of this sort are needed, but, because these are so isolated from any surrounding activity, they can only be ill-used or serve as a static stage for the built objects. Because of their size, the large number of their potential users, their many access points and their disconnection from the dwelling units, these spaces do not aid the socialization or security of the housing environment. Don't forget that I am talking about Robin Hood Gardens as a general organizational model. As a specific case, much of its site planning may be justified by difficult constraints—in particular, the noise and pollution of surrounding roadways, and the lack of any other neighborhood open space. Even so, a connection between the open space and the dwelling units is badly missed. Further, the spaces do not provide for a hierarchy of uses by different and limited age or interest groups, each in its particular physical relationship to the dwelling or the street.

What's missing is the life of the conventional street. The irony of this is that a basic tenet of the Smithsons' theory has been their proposition of the "street-in-the-air" as a surrogate street, and yet the street's very removal from the ground seems to destroy its essence. How do we get into this mess? Perhaps because of that other great planning abstraction, density.

The density myth

I believe that we continue to work while suffering under the illusion that higher density, per se, encourages more activity and therefore higher interaction. At the same time we feel that rampant access and an open ground plan signify, or even cause, an open society. And this numbers game, as architects and some community groups play it, brings with it the seeming obligation to provide the largest open space possible in order to offset the highest density possible. More density, more open space, more access ways.

The problem, however, is both quantitative and qualitative—the numbers game should never be played for its own sake. Rather, we should first establish criteria for relationships between activities, specify the resultant physical forms for each user group, apply these to given site conditions, and *then* measure density. In this manner, density will be determined by the holding

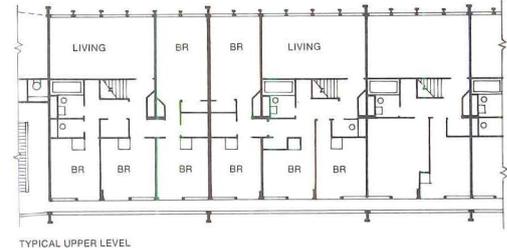
capacity of each particular site, and architects can balance programs within density ranges appropriate for land cost amortization as well as for social interaction.

It may be said, of course, that density is a quantifiable indicator of the threshold necessary to encourage certain relationships among human activities. Below a certain minimum threshold, relationships cannot occur because of improbability or insufficient interaction; above a certain maximum threshold, relationships may be excluded because of conflicts in use due to juxtaposition. That is, the appropriate density for the occurrence of "neighborhood" lies within certain limits. This range is one in which human contact is facilitated, one where mechanical intervention is not required. At the present time it seems clear that the use of the elevator in many urban situations and the use of the automobile in much of the life of the suburb should be limited in order to allow a more adequate relationship of activities.

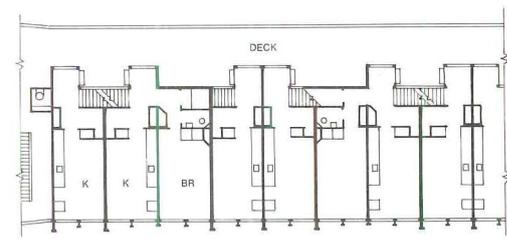
The meaning of numbers

Can we be more specific about desirable density levels? The well-known tragedy of St. Louis' Pruitt-Igoe housing should help reveal the fallacy of highrise family housing. It would be misleading, however, to attribute the ills of the project to density. At 55 units per acre, its density was hardly high. It failed not because of population density but, partially, because of the *distribution* of that density on the site (and also because of the large number of low income families concentrated in one sector of the city without adequate cultural and social services). There was no neighborhood. The physical distribution of spaces ignored the pattern of human activity and markedly contributed to the disaster. The failings of incorrect activity relationships all apply to Pruitt-Igoe, but density should not become the scapegoat for incorrect physical organization.

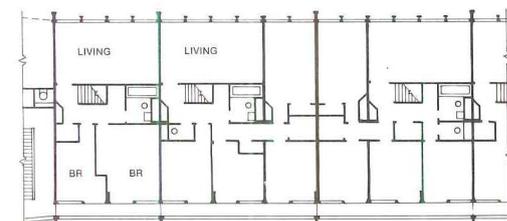
I have already suggested that the maximum threshold may be reached when mechanical intervention is required. It is obvious to many that young children should not have to use the elevator in getting to play spaces. Pruitt-Igoe actually recognized that fact and sought to provide play spaces in proximity to small groups of dwelling units. Strangely enough, the density of



TYPICAL UPPER LEVEL

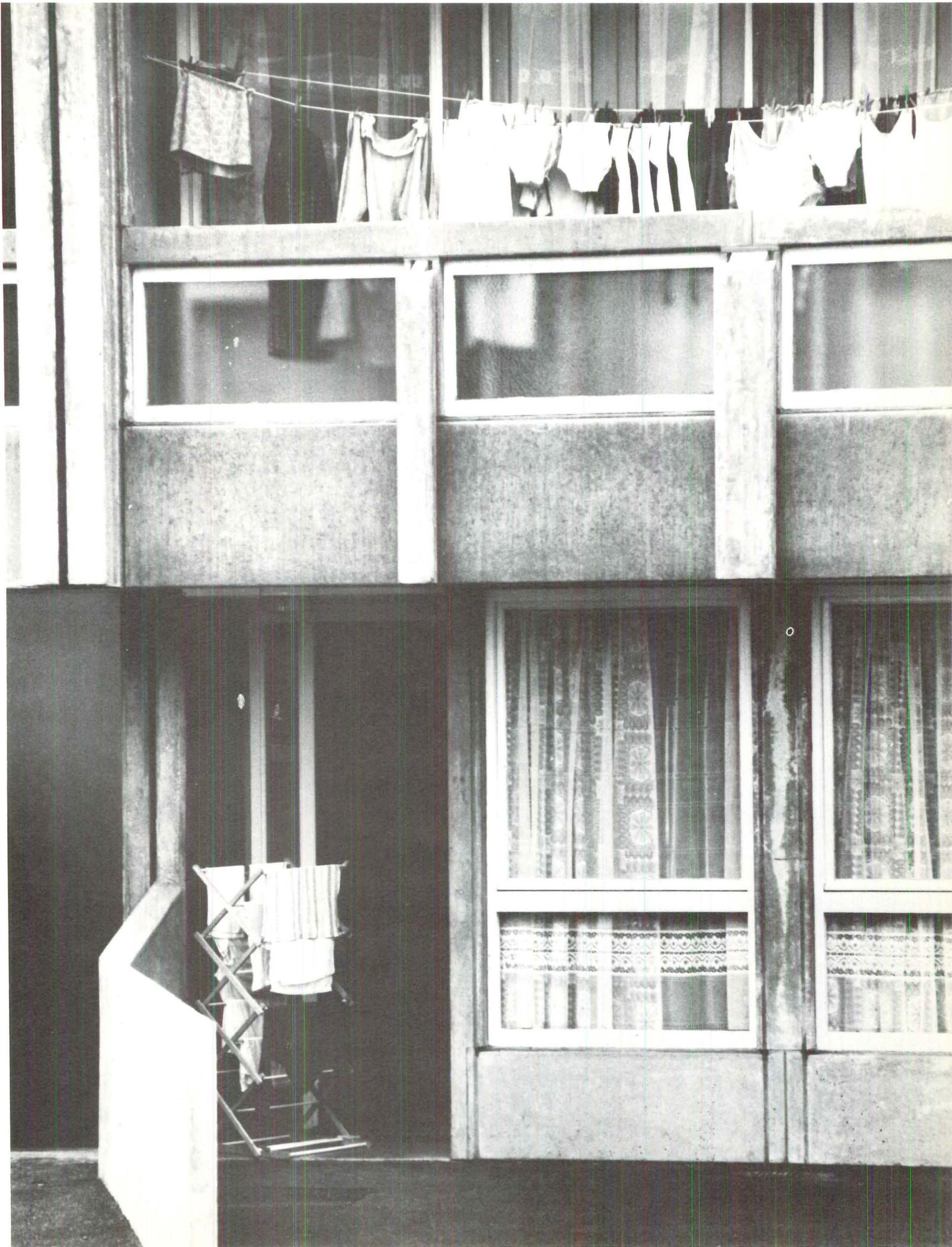


TYPICAL MIDDLE LEVEL

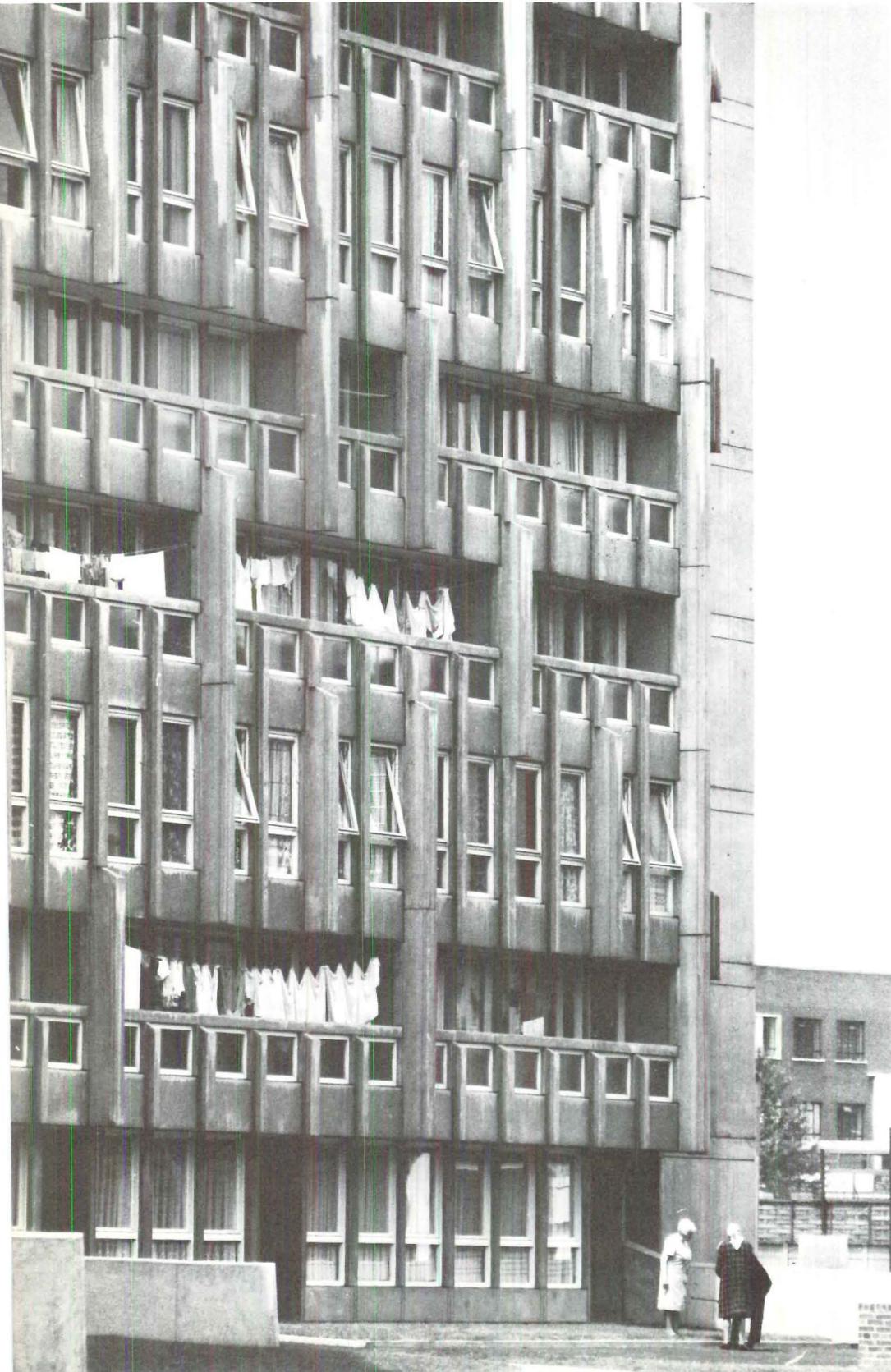


TYPICAL LOWER LEVEL

0 10 20'



Below, a corner of the garden side of one of the blocks. Right, an "acoustic" wall (intended to reflect traffic noise back to the street) is a formidable visual barrier as well. Parking is on a lower level between the wall and the building.



activity in those spaces was not enough to sustain their continuous or varied use. Their connections to the dwelling units were incorrect: the play spaces became the unobserved and inactive spaces which encourage vandalism and crime.

It is clear that other physical organizations are possible at the same density. Most successful British housing projects are close to the density of Pruitt-Igoe (Bonamy Street, 47 units per acre; Winstanley Road, 45), but all have a better physical organization. Recent study by the UDC staff together with the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies indicates that densities up to 80 units per acre are possible without elevator access.

At Park-Hill in Sheffield, England, the density more than doubles that of Pruitt-Igoe. Here the designers were ingenious in trying to eliminate the disruption of activity relationships caused by the elevator. First, they tried to lift the conventional street as an appropriate channel of public activity from the ground in order to maintain a correct physical connection from dwelling to access. Then they guaranteed density along the "street-in-the-air" through the use of a *private* stair system from alternate floors, and finally they extended most streets through the length of the building to adjoining grade.

A good try, but still not enough. The elevator still interrupts activity even though it is shifted to a better position. The Park-Hill street is still little more than a corridor. At such density (125 units per acre), we seem unable to sustain neighborhoods within construction cost limits because we cannot economically transpose large activity places from the ground.

In comparison, Robin Hood Gardens, at about 40 units per acre, is of rather low density, but it is the distribution of this density and of open space that determines the development's character and pattern of use.

Community vs. privacy

Although Robin Hood Gardens fails as a model for community, it does not as a model for privacy. The anonymity of its occupants is all but guaranteed, and, were it not for the American problem of security, its suitability as a design for mobile, small, upper middle class families might be high.



Perhaps this anonymity makes the design perfectly appropriate in a British context or in a middle class context, although for large families with children I doubt this to be the case. Taking highrise dwellings from the rich and giving them to the poor would be an *injustice*.

The individual dwelling units of Robin Hood Gardens must be discussed in relationship to the project's overall organization. The units are small, even by U.S. federal standards (whereas the outdoor spaces, by our standards, are very expansive). The units do, however, provide through ventilation and dual aspect, seldom achieved in multi-story American construction. They also allow the useful separation of domains for children and adults by their duplex arrangement and by removing the dining space from the living space, so that the home can serve simultaneous and conflicting activities.

Conclusion: getting beyond Golden Lane

The gap between theory and application, between model and actuality, must be closed. We observe that the things we build don't work; is the theory behind them unfulfilled or is it wrong? As guiding principles, the heuristic theories we presently use are too general and too vague, presenting as models bare representations of what we assume the physical framework of behavior ought to be.

The task is to determine, and then to insist upon, the set of amenities appropriate for a particular group in a particular context. We cannot continue to let land economics, in a realm of minimum standards and maximum saturation, determine quality of life. This policy has clearly produced unsatisfactory results.

The Smithsons were among the first to express concern for the proper relationship of the dwelling to the street, and for the continuum from dwelling and street to neighborhood to city. Now they have given us at least a fragmentary physical manifestation of their intentions. It is imperative that we thoroughly test it, both philosophically and socially, before we continue to retail it.

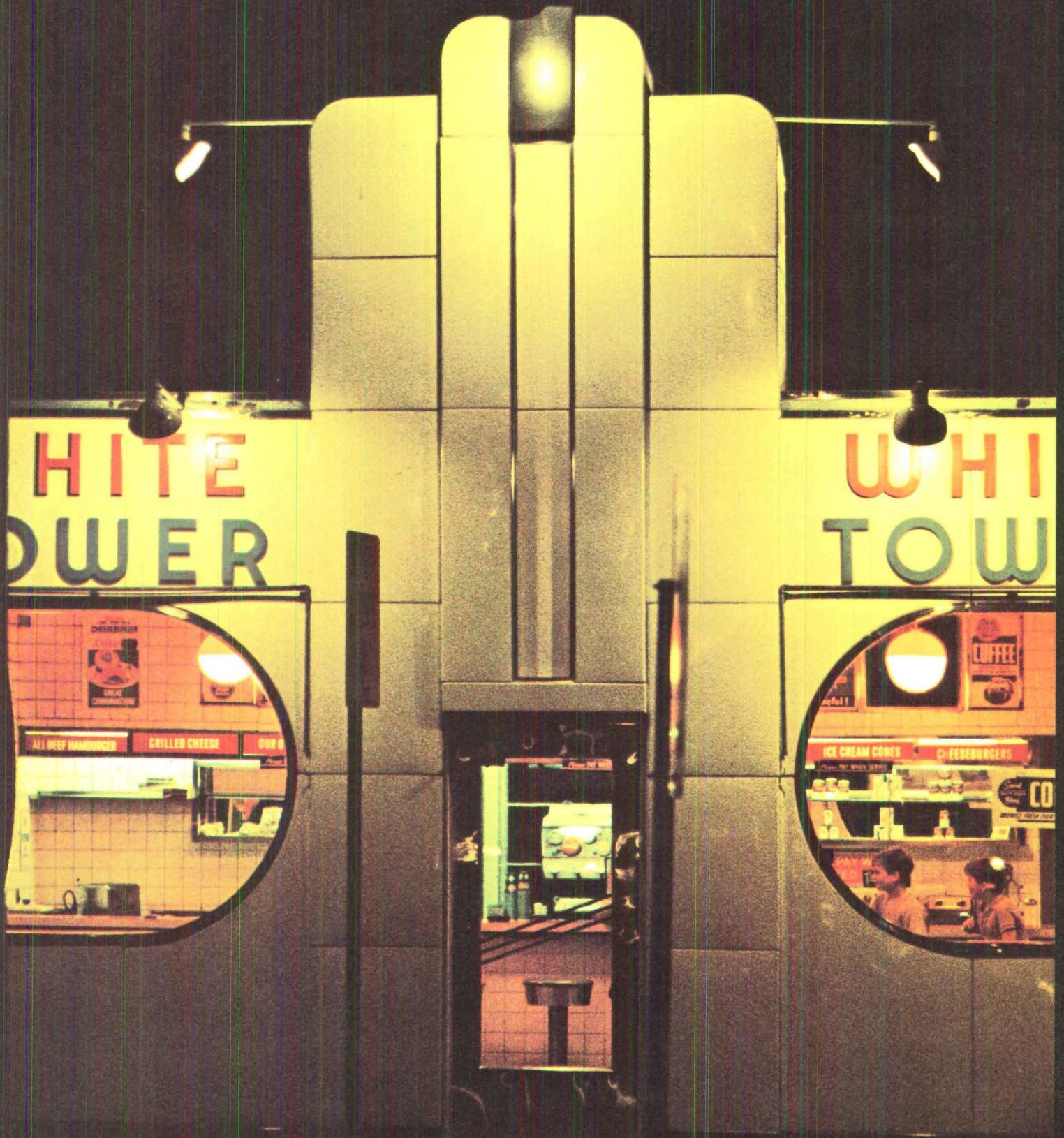


Photographs: Sandra Lousada, Whitecross Studio Ltd., except pages 38, 40 (bottom), 45 by Peter Blake.

Learning from Hamburgers

The architecture of White Towers

By Paul Hirshorn and Steven Izenour



Everyone on the East Coast of the U.S. knows them: gleaming porcelain enamel boxes in downtowns (1) and along the roadside strips of the 40's and 50's, open all night, serving hamburgers and coffee (2), but few are aware of their remarkable architectural history.

The White Tower system, founded in 1926, is one of the oldest short order food chains in the country. Its development parallels that of the commercial vernacular of the last half-century. White Tower buildings are part of an extraordinarily complete story of stylistic variation and ingenious adaption to circumstances on one strict functional and symbolic theme. In tracing their evolution from downtown sites to the suburban commercial strips, a broad range of architectural conditions is encountered. Architectural decisions were always based on business and economic criteria, except when formal decisions affected business "image." White Tower managed to maintain its identity through many style changes

The authors are both Philadelphia architects who lunch frequently at Philadelphia #14. This deadpan dissertation may earn them an Honorary Doctorate in Pop History—or it may not.

and project an image of cleanliness and speedy service by a multitude of subtle (and not so subtle) architectural devices.

White Tower #1

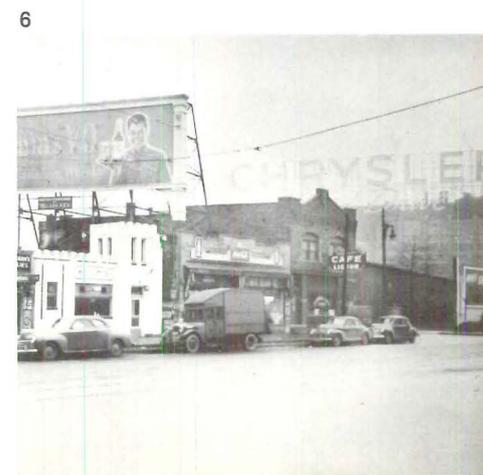
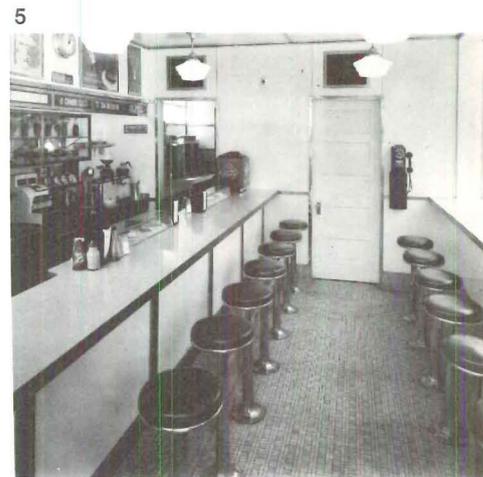
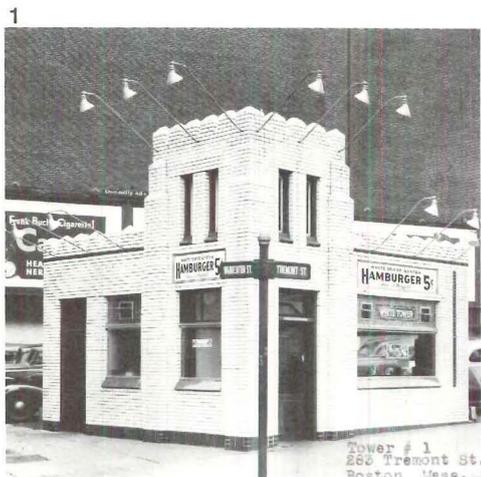
In the mid 20's Thomas E. Saxe, a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota, saw promise in the idea of a chain of street corner lunch counters located in industrial and commercial areas and offering a limited menu with fast service and moderate price. The first 5¢ White Tower hamburger was sold at Milwaukee #1 on November 17, 1926.

Milwaukee #1 had most of the characteristic elements of all future White Towers. The building has the form of a white glazed brick block with an asymmetrically placed tower over the entrance (3). The gooseneck exterior lamps transformed a "Tower" by day into an oasis of light by night. The simple white interior was a first attempt at creating an atmosphere of cleanliness both real and imagined. A typical feature of this original tower was its monumentality, derived from its minimal decoration and large-scale openings, and the two-dimensional effect of its facade (4), emphasized by the shallow tower and pseudo mission-style buttresses on either side. The detached

neon sign was unique, although the message—"Hamburgers 5¢"—was basic.

To popularize the 5¢ hamburger White Tower relied on an evocative name with strong symbolic overtones. "White" implied wholesomeness and cleanliness, and "towers" evoked social and gastronomic prominence.

After a year of modest local expansion and architectural experimentation, White Tower established itself as a large chain in 1928 and 1929. This was essentially done by recognizing the potential of their working man's restaurant in industrial Detroit, and then taking a big risk. In one year they built over 40 White Towers there! These Detroit towers, built for less than \$10,000 per building, were small and their interior finishes were modest (5), but their exteriors all were in the glazed brick style that was to become standard for the next five years. More important than architectural style was location and siting. In many photographs of early Detroit White Towers, an industrial giant (Chrysler, Sears) (6) looms in the background. In Philadelphia a new station on the Broad Street subway line would produce a new restaurant at the top of the subway stairs. But Detroit in 1928 and 1929 set the pattern of a clean,



wholesome building, serving good food at a popular price. In the next year the Depression made everybody a White Tower customer and success was assured.

In the early years T. E. Saxe concentrated on day-to-day operations of White Tower while his father, J. E. Saxe, wheeled and dealt in the real estate aspects of the business, which were not inconsiderable, since White Tower bought and leased sites, remodeled existing buildings, and sometimes even moved their own (7). In fact, ease of movement was always part of White Tower design.

Porcelain enamel

By 1933, White Tower had over 100 glazed brick towers spread across the industrial cities of Central and Northeastern U.S. Its clientele was firmly established. White Tower now moved to consolidate its image with its first major change of material and style. They first experimented with Vitrolite, a colored opaque glass. The most radical experiment was a checkerboard Tower sitting on a triangular corner site in Chicago (8). The literal tower imagery was abstracted into a stepped Moderne motif. The checkerboard pattern was of such colossal size and precision that it seemed to

have no thickness as it stretched across the small box, knocking off the corners of the windows and just barely being contained by the black borders. But unlike many buildings in the Moderne style, which carefully integrated and controlled graphics on the facade, here the sign was elevated and illuminated as a separate extravaganza—"Hamburgers 5¢."

New York #10 continued the experiment with Vitrolite. It employed the same form and proportion as the standard glazed brick models as well as their corner tower, but was more expressive in its use of material. Chrome trimmed pale green columns supported the beveled cornered tower. Slit windows became mirrors, and crenelations (on cornice as well as tower top) became floral panels. The whole was whimsically topped off with a translucent hemisphere which glowed at night (9). The "Hamburger 5¢" sign was now baked into the Vitrolite panel above the window, where it became as much surface decoration as advertisement. The interior now fulfilled the promise of the facade by using the same luxury materials—Vitrolite and stainless steel. The overall design image of the representational tower was contradicted by the flush details of the International Style. This

combination of the representational symbol with abstract forms and details has been used frequently by White Towers to their advantage.

The Syracuse #1 porcelain tower, while not quite as lavish as the New York #10 (10), was a more direct development from the glazed brick towers. In fact, it was as if a brick tower has been clad in porcelain overnight, right down to the tripled pilaster motif on the towers. This transformation was not literally true in this instance, but became true as buildings were renovated over time.

Applique towers

The next variant of this style in 1935 and 1936 strengthened the overall impact of the tower by eliminating the colored pilasters and floral appliques. Since the applied facade became increasingly popular in the built-up areas of older New England cities, a device was needed to make the tower stand out from the building of which it was a part. The trick of surrounding the white tower in black paint or porcelain enamel, proved simple and effective. The most elegant example of this occurred at Hartford #1 (1935) (11) where the black porcelain background for the corner tower (here

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jazzed up with stainless steel stripes) continued past the tower to provide a unifying base for the entire building, the tower's pilasters echoed in the black porcelain enamel. The whole composition was set off with a Renaissance roundel over the main stair, in this case advertising the Hartford Academy of Hairdressing which resided on the Piano Nobile.

Hamburgers under glass, interiors

By simplifying their materials to white porcelain enamel and stainless steel for decoration, the White Towers achieved a very clean image. Due to the inexperience of porcelain fabricators the stainless steel strips were necessary to mask the frequent control joints. But the stainless steel also served another important function. The metal would shine, thus indicating a clean place to eat. The White Towers of the Depression not only looked clean; they were. There was no shortage of men willing to staff the White Towers, and the buildings were completely washed down twice a week inside and once a week outside. The glossy White Towers and the 30's movie palaces both tried to transform the everyday world into something special. "In those days, the more 'gingerbread' there was on a building, the

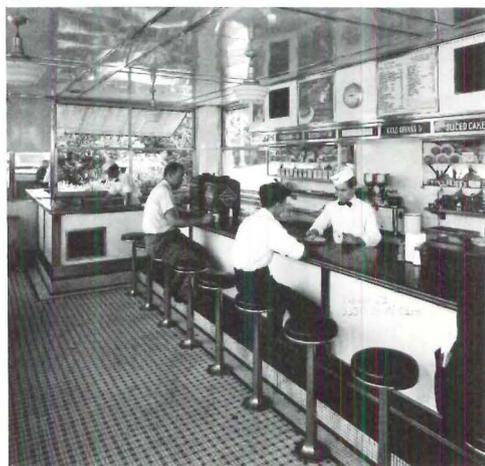
more luxurious it seemed . . . A prominent theatrical designer in New York mentioned that they create gracious and ornate theaters so that when a person pays his buck and a half admission, he feels that he is part owner and he's in his own palace. It was similar with White Tower. The more metal that was on . . . people asked if Andrew Mellon was behind White Tower," says Charles Johnson, White Tower architect.

The interiors fulfilled the expectations of the exteriors. What was done on the exterior by word, symbol, and material, was done in the interior, except hamburgers were substituted for symbols. A typical tower had nine or ten seats at the counter, plus another six or seven facing the window. Walls and ceilings were carefully detailed white porcelain panels framed and edged in stainless steel (12). All fixtures, stools and trim were also stainless steel, while floor and base were patterned glazed tiles. The total effect of these shiny white surfaces was antiseptic and wholesome, and a perfect foil for the display of graphic menu boards (13), real food under glass (14) and hamburgers prepared at a grill consciously set where you could see and smell your hamburger cooking, served up by a Towerette topped off with a zig-zag tower cap (15).

Deluxe towers

Occasionally White Tower built deluxe towers which more closely achieved the "palace" image that they alluded to in their buildings. In 1935, they hired B. Sumner Gruzen of Jersey City, New Jersey, to design Paterson #1 (16). He approached the design with the vocabulary of the International Style rather than the evocative imagery of hamburger salesmanship. The obligatory entrance tower, porcelain facades and goose-neck lamps were there, to be sure, but the overall curving shape, due to the triangular shape of the property, was entirely new to White Tower at the time. The large bands of curving glass, set flush with the porcelain panels gave this giant tower a giant scale. Rather than resolving the verticality of the tower with pilasters or graphics, Gruzen chose the dramatic sweep of the awning trough which connected the exhaust fans in the back to the asymmetrical illuminated vertical on the tower. The stylish touches were picked up inside as well, where the basic sparkling White Tower interior was accented with special display cases with rounded corners set flush in the wall, and a special stainless steel message board with recessed lighting fixture slung

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over the serving counter (17).

Camden #5 was another deluxe tower bought by White Tower in 1941. It had been built in 1936, its design based on the Cushman Bakeries of New York. The building was already a porcelain enamel box with a central tower and the goose-neck lamps, all basic White Tower elements. Here it was, however, a sophisticated exercise in manipulating roadside scale. The over-large wrap-around windows imply a much larger building. This contrast of a small building with large scale elements is a basic device for gaining attention along the highway (opposite, top). An elaborate effort was made to achieve the effect. The "cantilevered" windows were made to appear continuous by using radiused glass corners (opposite, bottom), butt jointed, and set flush with the porcelain skin. The corners were actually supported by slender, recessed lally columns. The large scale of the streamlined facade would still have considerable impact on today's fast-moving motorists if a highway realignment hadn't made access impossible for half the passing traffic. Camden #5 was demolished unceremoniously in the summer of 1971. It is interesting that these two buildings, one by design, the other by circumstance, di-

luted the traditional forms of the White Tower imagery with a modern vocabulary that made them sophisticated formal compositions, but uneconomical to build and therefore poor White Towers. They did however become occasional sources of stylistic inspiration.

Further experiments

In November of 1935, Charles J. Johnson joined White Tower as its "in-house" architect, a position he has held with great energy and inventiveness for over 37 years. His work can be characterized by the economical expression of the symbolic and practical needs of the Company. Economy and his design sensibilities directed him towards simpler tower designs. In his first year, however, his designs struck out in three directions at once. In new, free-standing buildings like Baltimore #1 or New York #18 (18), he merely polished the current design, by enlarging windows, abstracting the stainless steel decoration into pure vertical and horizontal stripes, and thinning down the black enamel base. These changes had the effect of increasing the scale of the building.

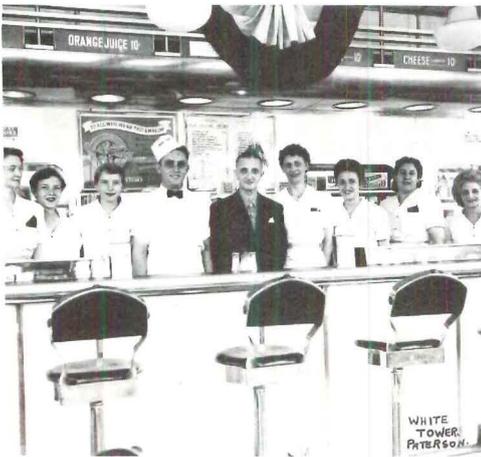
He also experimented with a two-dimensional streamlined tower, mostly on towers built into existing buildings. Its

streamlined shape, and vertical chrome stripes (borrowed from Paterson #1) gave the tower the appearance of a Hindu temple. On the whole, it was not successful since its two-dimensional qualities always made corner towers appear disjointed. The most successful example of this style was Washington #3 (1936) (19) which ingeniously transformed a center block site to an apparent corner by creating an alley along one side. Besides creating the "corner" for tower image purposes, it provided light for the deep interior as well as providing the opportunity of exploiting the back of the site with a rental property.

White Towers on the strip

In the mid-30's, the phenomenon of the roadside drive-in, which had its start in California, was introduced by White Tower in Camden, N.J., in the midst of early strip commercial development such as car dealers, gas stations and tourist cabins (20). People thought White Tower was committing economic suicide by building Camden #2 on the roadside along Admiral Wilson Boulevard, the major arterial leading to the Ben Franklin Bridge and Philadelphia. But on opening day cars lined up through the night to buy 5¢ hamburgers and experience

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18



19



20



this taste of the streamlined future.

These roadside towers had a new symmetrical design similar to Camden #5 with large, wrap-around windows and a stepped tower over the central doorway. The buildings were kept close to the road so they could act as signs. Although the windows were over-large and the building form simple, the large scale achieved in Camden #5 with over-large windows and normal sized door, was lost somewhat in the roadside towers by increasing the door height to line up horizontally with the windows and by making the tower disproportionately small. The resulting smaller scale reduced the building's impact at 40 mph and called for a change in approach from symbols and large scaled openings, to symbols and signs.

The problem of visibility on the strip was resolved in two deluxe roadside restaurants built in 1938. The first, Camden #3, was built directly across the road from Camden #2 and called "Marbett's" to avoid direct competition (21). It was a sizable porcelain rectangle, with horizontal windows and a cantilevered curving canopy of stainless steel supporting the concealed exterior lamps. This horizontal, a basic stylistic element of drive-ins, was a break with the traditional form of the White Towers. The tower was no longer a symbol but a signpost,

with the addition of a streamlined cantilevered high reader sporting neon decoration and advertising "restaurant" (22). The building sat in a sea of asphalt and was serviced by an army of jauntily uniformed car hops and supervisor equipped with rollerskates. The facade of Marbett's and its twin in Silver Spring, Maryland, was eventually covered with all sorts of signs, applied and illuminated. The building was a sign, a signpost and the image of speed and modernity (23). The implied motion of Silver Spring #1's streamlining makes it seem the speediest machine in the parking lot (24). Unfortunately, the deluxe White Tower failed economically where it succeeded visually. The country just wasn't ready for the 10¢ hamburger.

Variations on deluxe towers

Johnson had time for one more experiment before the war brought an end to new construction. At Washington #2A (25) he abstracted and simplified the deluxe tower theme to a fine edge. The windows were enlarged and the frames diminished and painted out, giving a big scale and curtain wall openness to the long wall. Stainless steel trim was concentrated in the bold horizontal cantilevered overhang (borrowed directly from the deluxe restaurants), which con-

tains recessed down spots and makes emphatic the division between the windows and doors below, and the porcelain enamel and tower above. The tower, a very different broad squat block, was really a tower within a tower because of the large 'white tower' sign set in relief at the corner. The letters were large, about 3 feet high, and made of white porcelain enamel with narrow black channels giving them an illuminated quality (opposite). In the 50's the sign on Washington #2A became even more dramatic when the letters were formed out of tripled tubes of red neon.

The towers built just before and just after the war reverted to the standard asymmetrical corner tower theme. The tower was essentially a plain block with no decoration or graphics (26). The facades were smooth porcelain planes, broken only by the one "White Tower" sign above the window. When old brick towers like Detroit #6 (1946) were covered with porcelain, their planar austerity was reminiscent of the original 1926 building, Milwaukee #1. Except for their larger windows and occasional stainless steel bands, it was almost impossible to tell the new from the remodeled. This fact helped unify the "White Tower" image among the various towers, some of them nearing their 20th birthdays.

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WHITE
TOWER

P
A
R
K

RE
AG

RE
AG

220

RESTAURANT
WITH DRIVE-UP

RESTAURANT
WITH DRIVE-UP

RESTAURANT
WITH DRIVE-UP

Post-war "classic" towers

After the war, Johnson developed the style that was to serve White Tower extraordinarily well for almost 20 more years. Aided by accurate porcelain enamel work he simplified the buildings to pure white cubes. The tower returned to being both a symbol and a signpost as the stylish "White Tower" logo was redundantly put on the actual white tower (27). The leitmotif of "hamburgers," banished in the 40's when price rose above 5¢, returned as a sub-title above the windows, underlined by a vestigial strip from the deluxe restaurants. As Charles Johnson said: "We still liked the word 'hamburgers.' Hamburgers, we think, brings in the business." As White Tower expanded its system to over 230 units in the 50's, the new simplified style, working equally well for renovations and new buildings, reinforced the chain image.

Perhaps the most successful of these classic models were the 15 prefabricated towers, 10 ft. by 25 ft. in size, built by the Valentine Company of Wichita, Kansas. Due to their small size and method of construction, these buildings had to be visually and functionally as efficient as possible. The inside dimensions allowed only one counter for 10 customers (28). The tower was over-large and

pushed to one end of the rectangle (29). The openings were proportionally very large, and combined with the simple large graphics, gave these tiny buildings a gigantic scale. The effect of a six-foot man entering the door which is only six foot-four inches high is startling to the point of perceptual trickery (30). These little, but big, buildings are the perfect combination of tower symbol for recognition, large scale openings for the highway, and bold graphics to reinforce the message—hamburgers.

The result of competition

The 60's brought extreme competition from fast food chains such as McDonald's. At the same time many inner-city White Towers began to suffer as their neighborhoods deteriorated. They lost their economic viability and were abandoned. In the early 60's, suburban locations were chosen, and White Tower had to find new ways to attract customers who drove automobiles. They developed a new chain of restaurants known as Brock's Eating and Drinking Houses. Since the essence of success of the White Tower chain was the simplicity and moderate price, Brock's also featured a simple luncheon and dinner menu, with liquor service, aimed at the middle class residential and business markets in the suburbs.

The building image is similar to an Irish Country Inn—the style is half timbered—rustic.

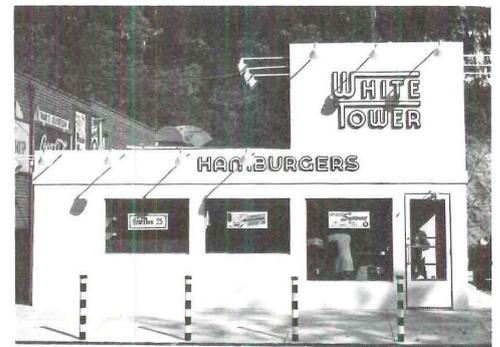
This radical change in symbols and image is typical of many other areas of the commercial vernacular. There has been a turning away from the hard-edged, gleaming materials and the streamlined automobile-inspired imagery of the 1940's and 1950's to natural materials and the rec-room mansard imagery of suburban residential design. We might still be a nation on wheels but we see ourselves as a nation at home in a tasteful suburban house, so our "palaces" have to be homey.

White Towers have acquired their impact and meaning from a conscious use of style and symbol. The architectural styles, the materials, the dresses on the towerettes, the cars parked outside, the prices, and the signs all change. But while surface and style change as a function of taste, the symbolic tower remains constant as a function of market and cultural image. Unlike many recent excursions into an architecture of process and style, White Towers never confuse abstract forms, or function, with symbols. Towers have a strict reason for being—hamburgers—and they remain, in whatever form, "decorated towers" (31) at the service of those ubiquitous meat patties.

27



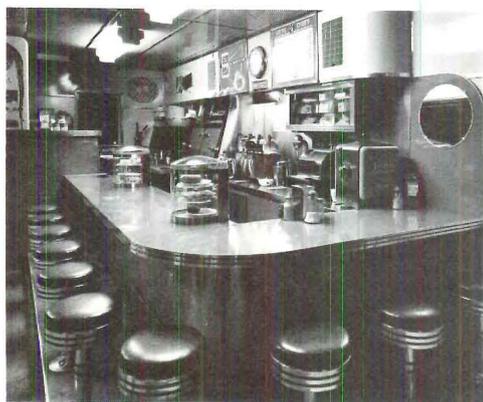
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Art in the wilderness

By Rosalind Constable

George Staempfli has built his dream house—in the wilds of New Mexico, eight miles from Capitan, a tiny town on the edge of Lincoln National Forest. It was built in an incredible 90 days. Furthermore, the house cost very little more than the original fairly modest estimate. Nor is that all: George Staempfli and his architect, Harvey S. Hoshour of Albuquerque, New Mexico, are today close friends. Compliments fly. “George is the ideal client,” says Hoshour. The contractor, George Walters of Albuquerque, also comes in for his share of praise. “He is not just a prince among contractors,” says Staempfli, “he is a prince among men.” It is all too good to be true. And it is all true.

George Staempfli owns the Staempfli Gallery in New York, one of the city's most prestigious, with a leaning towards clear-cut elegance, both in painting and sculpture. Staempfli for some years had a “second home” in Cadaques, Spain, a small fishing village near the French border, sold it when tourists became too numerous. He and his wife, Barbara, ranged far and wide in search of what they now wanted: a large piece of land with no neighbors. Florida and California were dismissed out of hand. Arizona was considered, and Mexico itself, before they began to explore New Mexico. Santa Fe was too social, and Silver City too expensive, as was land around Ruidoso, in the southeastern part of the state, where the booming Sierra Blanca Ski Area is operated by the Mescalero Apaches. Finally they found what they wanted nearby: 120 acres surrounded by Lincoln National Forest. “It was an incredible stroke of luck,” says Staempfli. “We found the land in a snowstorm New Year's Eve 1971, and put down some money right away. We bought in April, started building the 1st of May, and moved in the 1st of August.”

Hoshour admits it sometimes takes him 90 days just to draw up the plans. But Staempfli asked him to fly to New York, and the plans were virtually completed over the weekend. Staempfli chose a New Mexico-based architect for the very good reason he would be familiar with local conditions and problems. Harvey Hoshour

Rosalind Constable is an art critic now living in Santa Fe. She has written extensively for Time, Life, and Fortune, and is a Contributor to Architecture Plus.

“... a stark modern presence in an undulating, age-old and deserted landscape.”





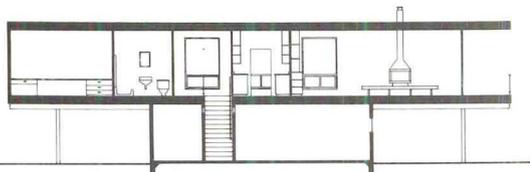
was recommended and, says Staempfli, "very soon after seeing his own clean house I asked him if he wanted to do ours. Luckily he had time, and it worked out very well."

"We wanted a house just as large as our apartment in New York," says Staempfli. "Two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a big living room." What he got is best described (by Staempfli himself) as a matchbox on stilts. The main house (72 feet long by 24 feet wide) is built of stucco over wood, and is balanced on a concrete block, the extremities supported on steel I-beams. The concrete block yielded a bonus, at almost no extra cost, of two rooms, one of them now a utility room. "Picture windows," uniformly 7 feet by 5 feet, frame the last ridges of the Rocky Mountains to the north, the Sierra Blanca to the south.

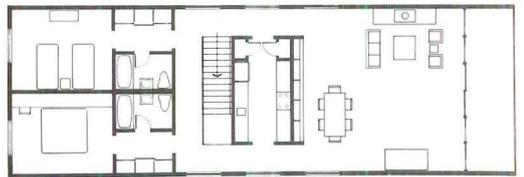
Harvey Hoshour comes by his "purity" through having worked first with Harry Weese, then with Mies van der Rohe in Chicago, and with I. M. Pei in New York. In 1962 he left New York and, accompanied by a pretty French bride, moved to Albuquerque. But Hoshour himself attributes his "purity" to his Pennsylvania Dutch ancestry. "I come from a long line of Lutheran ministers, which is why I am such a pure architect," he says only half-jokingly. The glass, steel and concrete structures (office buildings, small branch banks, private houses) he has designed since moving to Albuquerque have earned him both prizes and criticism from adobe-oriented New Mexico. Ironically, Hoshour himself lives in an adobe house, an old farmhouse which he remodeled, the pure white walls of the interior constructed and finished by hand by Indians from nearby Santa Ana Pueblo. The entire furniture of the large living room consists of four Mies van der Rohe (Brno) chairs and a Mies van der Rohe glass table.

Not surprisingly, Hoshour tries to persuade his clients to preserve the purity of his architecture by keeping furnishings to a minimum. But Staempfli was determined to furnish his house to his liking. "I had no intention of living with four chairs and a table," he says. As a result there was, for example, a slight hassle over the kitchen stove. Hoshour had selected an electric stove of exquisite simplicity. But it did not have a self-cleaning oven, which Staempfli insisted on. So he chose one himself. When





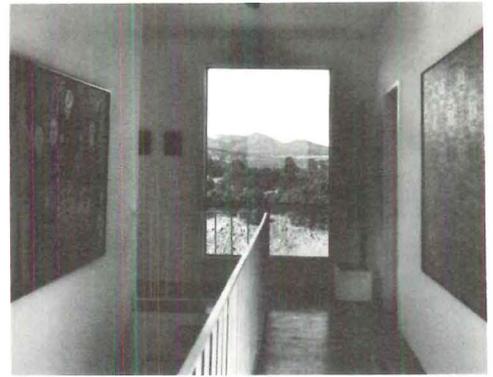
SECTION



PLAN

The contrast between new and primitive is seen not only in the house but in its furnishings. Left above, looking southwest from the stair hall towards the Sierra Blanca mountains. Left below, next to a prefabricated fireplace, Staempfli's collection of ceremonial clubs and paddles from South Pacific islands. On this page, simple cabinetwork housing West African wood carvings, contemporary bronzes and carved *uchus* from the San Blas Islands.





Hoshour saw it he shuddered. "It has *knobs!*" he said. In an attempt to mollify his outraged architect Staempfli told him: "We have a white marble table in the living room." "Thank God!" said Hoshour.

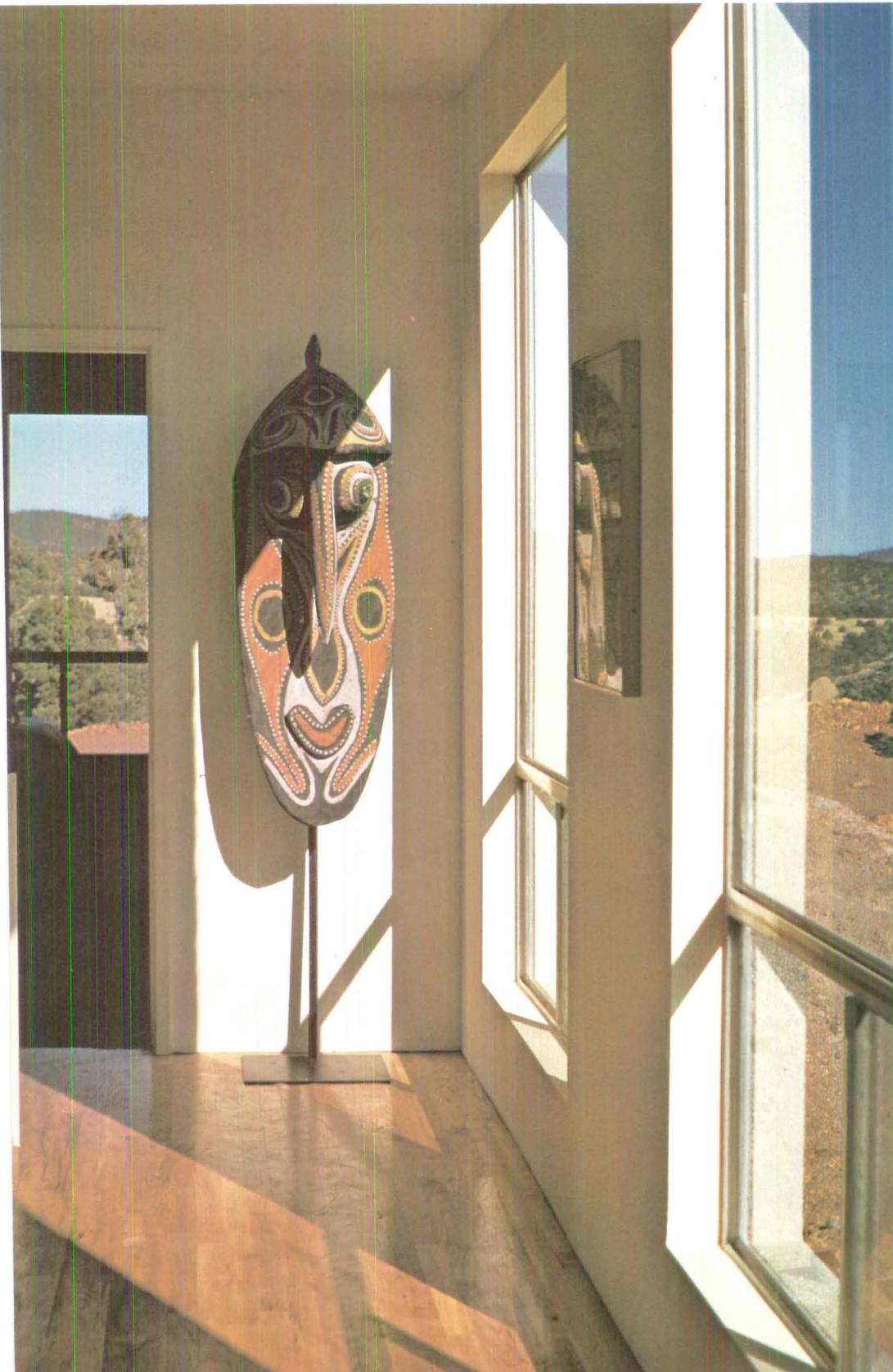
But Hoshour soon discovered that the marble table was not the only furniture in the living room. "I like certain comforts," says Staempfli. "I can get esthetic enjoyment out of things that are not as calculatedly pure as the things he likes." In consequence, the large (23 feet square) living room is comfortably splattered with furniture, some of it designed by sculptors Harry Bertoia and Isamu Noguchi, some by Marcel Breuer. The white walls are liberally covered with art and artifacts.

Because it is raised on stilts, and is built on a hillock, Staempfli's house dominates the piñon, juniper and cedar-studded landscape like a fire tower. But because of the thick growth of spruce, pine and fir in adjacent Lincoln National Forest it is barely visible from the highway. It is only on rounding a bend in the bumpy dirt road that leads to the house that it becomes visible: a stark modern presence in an undulating, age-old and deserted landscape.

A logical question is why Staempfli did not build a traditional New Mexican adobe house, whose white interior walls would seem an ideal background for the modern art and ancient artifacts he has brought to New Mexico. Explains Staempfli: "We did consider adobe, simply because we felt it might fit better into the landscape. But with adobe we could never have had this many large windows. I think an adobe house is a place to feel secure in, *against* your surroundings. And in this place I feel secure *with* my surroundings. We don't even have curtains." If Staempfli's surroundings are mercifully free of humans, they are filled with wildlife: bears, badgers, bobcats, hares, deer etc., as well as an occasional mountain lion in the Sierra Blanca.

Staempfli, like many European children, was in love with the American West. "We lived, dreamed and played Indians," he recalls. Now he is actually living only 25 miles from the Mescalero Apaches Reservation where once, in imagination, he lived as a boy.

Photographs: Annette Del Zoppo.
Building suppliers listed on page 72.



Left below, a Kwoma carved head from New Guinea. Left above, a stair hall window frames a view of the Vera Cruz mountains between paintings by Muriel Kalish and Ono Sato. Below, a teak sculpture by Takao Kimura on an open balcony with stuccoed walls and teak floor.



continued from page 13



Brushed aluminum wall sculpture, "Five into Three", by Tania



Glass partitions and fluorescent ceiling lights create prisms

Prisms in Wall Street

A new branch of the Dresdner Bank (a wholesale, as opposed to a retail, bank) has opened in New York City's financial district.

The lighting system is the most important element of the design concept. It harmonizes with the multi-angled perimeter shape of the space and emphasizes its uniqueness. The angle is strongly articulated by means of continuous, regularly spaced, flush troughs of fluorescent lighting.

All interior partitions stop 4½ ft. below the ceiling. Where privacy is essential, clear glass without mullions continues the parti-

tion to the ceiling. This solution has the double effect of not interrupting the clear view of the light-patterned ceiling, and of creating a prismatic effect—a result of the diagonal lighting pattern crossing the right-angled grid of glass-topped partitions—with a startling visual impact.

The colors are simple and subtle: off-white through gray to small accents of black. Designers: Interior Concepts, Inc. of N.Y.

"Five into Three," a sculpture eight feet tall and 27 feet long, of brushed aluminum, is by the New York artist, Tania.

Argentine stadium

The winning entry in the competition for a sports stadium, held by the City of La Plata, Argentina, was submitted by a team of three architects: Antonio Antonini, Gerardo Schon and Eduardo Zemborain.

The project requirements included meeting International Soccer Federation guidelines, and flexibility, allowing the grandstand to be divided into two sections for spectacles of lesser magnitude.

The covered section consists of a continuous graded area 63m. by 160m.

The roof is a suspension type metal structure, projecting 21m. in both directions.—L. A.

What are you working on these days—Monticello?

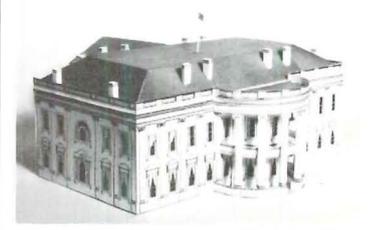
Have you been secretly envying Perry, Shaw and Hepburn their commission to restore Williamsburg? Now you can build the Governor's Palace yourself. Or the White House. Or Monticello.

Several Williamsburg model kits, in cardboard, at 1/8" = 1', are available from Freund Enterprises, P.O. Box 800, Brooklyn, N.Y., 11202, for as little as \$3.65. And for even less money, at the scale of 1/10" = 1', Monte Enterprises, P.O. Box 2391, New Bern, N.C., 28560, offers the Robie house, the Renwick Gallery, and others mentioned above. If you're really ambitious (or absolutely out of work), Monte can supply you with the 13-building village crossroads of Cooperstown, N.Y.

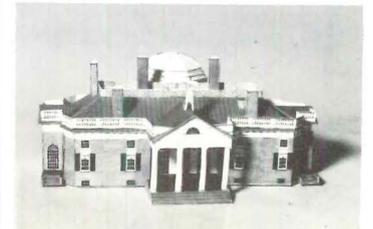
Governor's palace

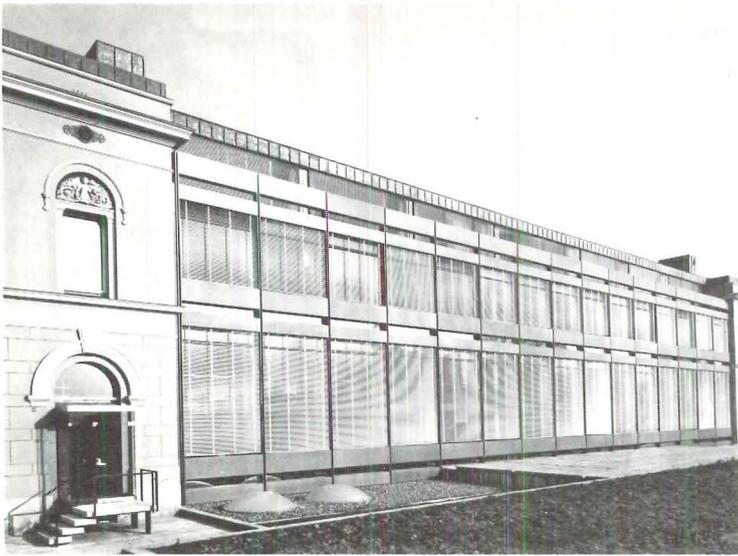


White House



Monticello





Rear facade was designed completely in aluminum



The main facade restored



Interior, bank offices

Reynolds Metals Company 1973 design prizes

The bombed-out and burned shell of a Renaissance-style railway station in Braunschweig, West Germany, has been handsomely reconstructed for use as bank offices; and its designer, Hannes Westermann, has won the 1973 R. S. Reynolds Memorial Architecture Award of an original aluminum sculpture (by Richard Hunt of Chicago) and \$25,000. The award is given annually for "a distinguished architectural design in which a significant use is made of aluminum."

The jury, consisting of Max O. Urbahn, past president of the AIA, Worley K. Wong of San Francisco, and Willi Walter of Zurich (last year's winner) praised the German architect for "the sensitive way in which he restored the classic railway building for a useful purpose, as offices of Norddeutsche Landesbank."

A prefabricated solar living unit has won for its designers the Reynolds award of \$5,000, given annually to architecture students "for the best original architectural design in which creative use of aluminum is an important contributing factor."

The winners, Raymond D. Snowden and Steven Lee Kinzler, both fifth-year students, will share the

prize money with their school, the University of Arkansas.

The students' solar mechanical system utilized thin aluminum bonded to transparent plastic to form concave mirrors reflecting the sun's rays into a solar collector.

Santiago's new town

The Chilean Government, in a joint effort with the International Union of Architects, last year sponsored a design competition for a most ambitious project—the total redevelopment of 25 hectares of downtown Santiago, capital of Chile.

The first prize was won by a team from Argentina: Architects Enrique Barés, Santiago Bó, Tomás García, Roberto Germani and Emilio Sessa. Design problems included the integration of public areas, housing structures, parking facilities, some green area, commercial and office spaces into one complex with half the area committed to housing. In addition, commercial and public spaces had to be sufficient to serve the entire city.

A major artery—Norte-Sur Avenue—bisects the center of the town, and a double perimeter-ring of vehicular circulation circum-

scribes and defines the pedestrian zone. Interior streets are only for services and access to parking areas. The pedestrian walks, separated from vehicle roads, are on two levels: one 5.60m. high connecting the public areas, and the other 3.00m. high giving access to the residential buildings.

The living units are contained in towers of 21 floors and walk-ups

of four floors. All housing is located in four sections near the center of the complex.

Commercial and government offices are found in a band of buildings.—L. A.

Rumor has it that several submissions from the U.S. were "passed over" on ideological grounds by a jury made up largely of Cuban and Chilean judges.—Ed.

India design competition

The all-India middle-income housing competition was concluded in April. Staged by the Delhi Development Authority on the truly remarkable initiative of its vice-chairman, Mr. Jag Mohan, this design contest drew a great number of entries, not only from all over India but from Indians working in the U.K., the U.S. and elsewhere.

Three sites were given to the competitors, and each had its own range of prizes. The largest site was Dilshad Garden (35 acres); the next was Malviya Nagar (22 acres); and the smallest was Kalkaji (16 acres). The entrants were asked to submit integrated layout plans, including parks, shops and playgrounds. The housing units were to vary in size from 25 sq.m. to 60 sq.m.; and in cost from 5,000 to 20,000 rupees (\$700 to \$2,800).

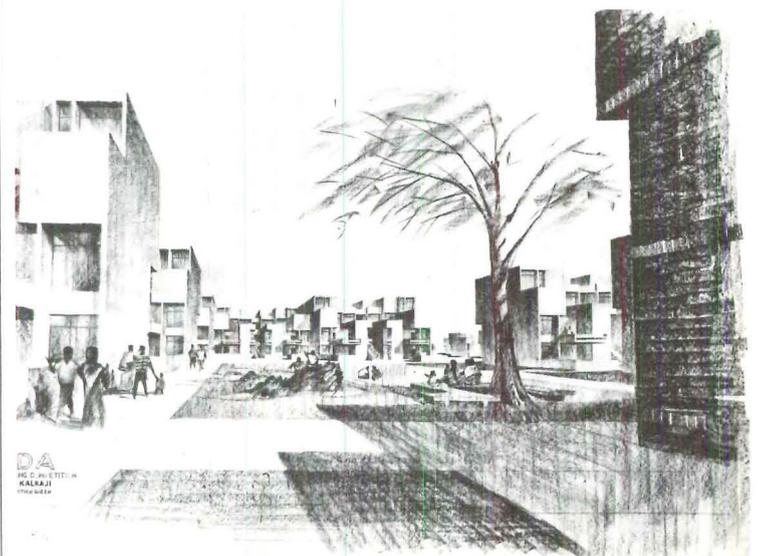
Since the densities specified in the residential areas were in the range of 280 persons per acre, most of the winning schemes were reasonably clever low-rise high-density solutions. Shown are two of the winners, both from the Kalkaji site: Kalkaji 2nd prize winner, Environ-

ment Design Facility (Mathur, Pereira, Ganju and Bhan); and the Kalkaji third prize winner, Suresh Goel & Associates.

Commendable as were the efforts of both the DDA and the prize-winning entrants, the fact remains that the 5,000 rupee purchase price is strictly a middle income figure, at least five times as much money as 40 percent of the Indian population can afford. What India needs, in order to solve the housing problems of lower income groups, is accommodations which will not cost more than \$100 for each family. And \$100, alas, will not even purchase brick and concrete for a simple dwelling. All we can afford here are patterns of sites and services. But perhaps Jag Mohan will make this problem the basis of the next DDA competition.—C. C.

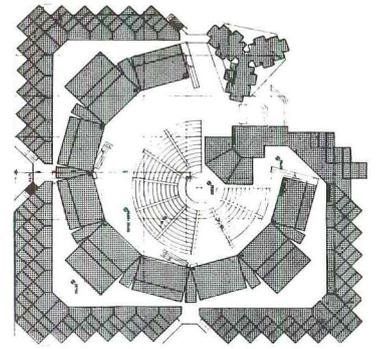
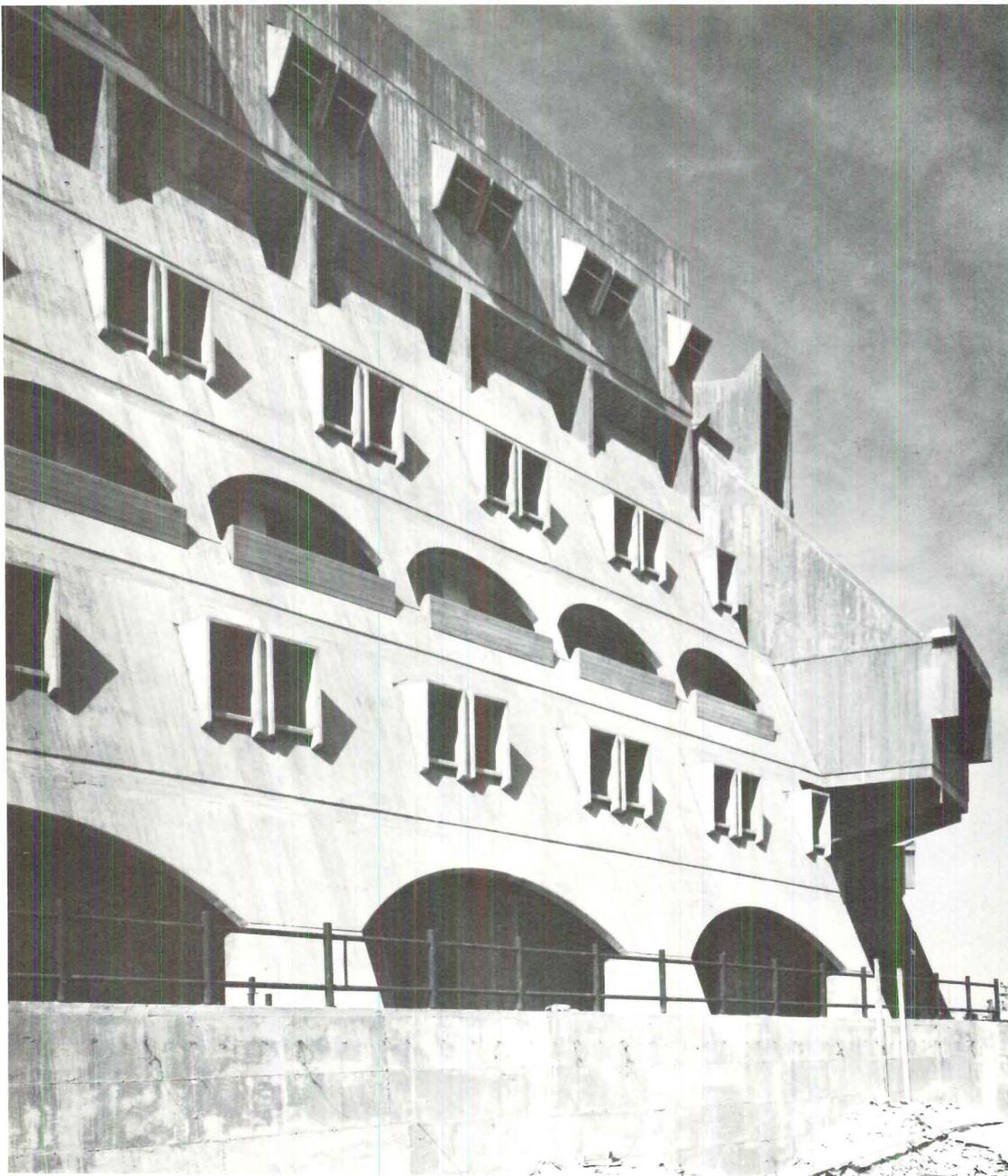
The Consulate of India in Washington explains that the "purchase price" of the housing built by the government, such as those described above, buys a 99-year lease on the unit; the government retains ownership of the land, and eventually reclaims the dwelling.

Third prize, Kalkaji scheme, Suresh Goel, architect



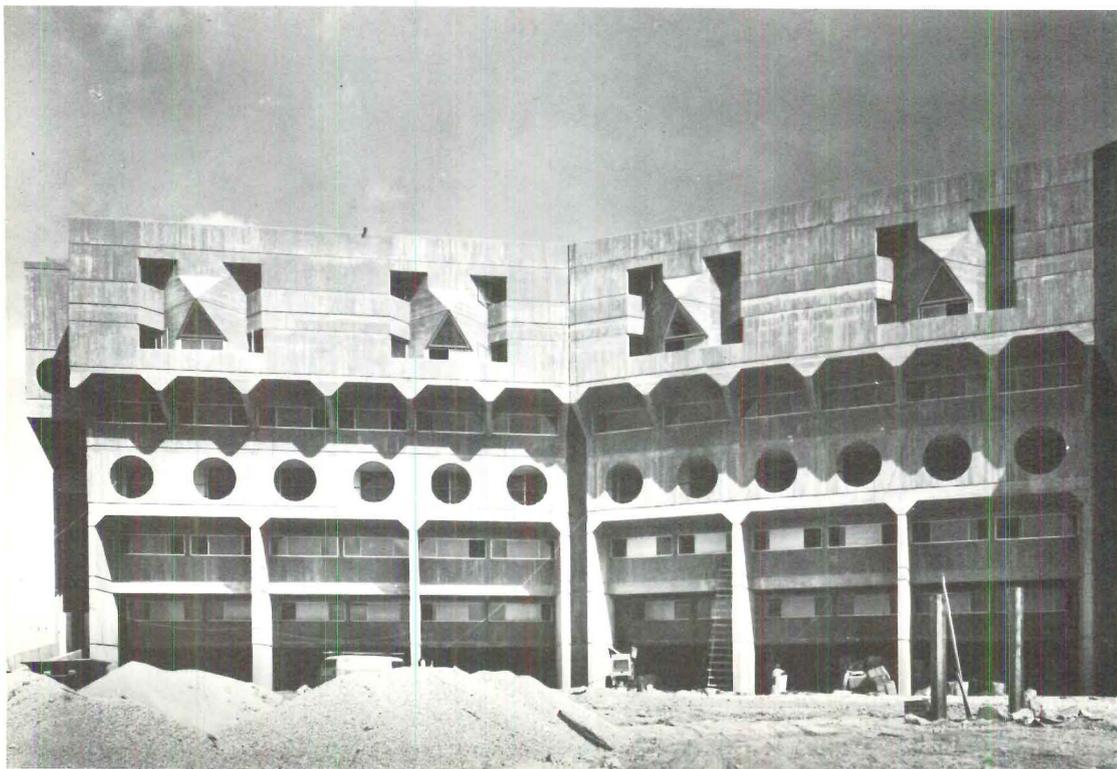
Second prize, Kalkaji scheme, Environment Design Facility, architects





Israel

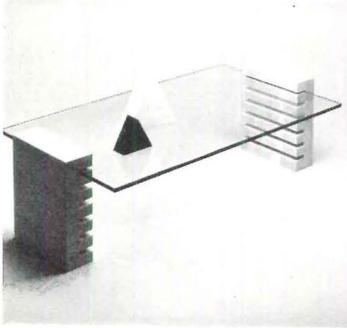
The Negev University Student Residence is a concrete oasis responding to its desert environment. Nine angled structures form a spiral of links around a plaza with an open-air forum below grade, each link a self-contained entity of seven stories. The circulation towers cantilever outward like big eyes (left) watching the nearby town of Bersheeba. The facade with the whimsical windows is actually a shell with access corridors between it and the "structure" inside, protecting the interior spaces from the hostile desert climate: intense glare by day, quite cold by night. Three of the nine buildings are completed and occupied; another three are under construction. Clinic, cafeteria, shops, laundry, discothèque and other communal facilities are at ground level. In the plan (above) three-story units form a square around the spiral. These perimeter units and the three-leaf clover shape representing a 14-story tower, are larger apartments for married students and instructors. The architects are Ram Karmi, Ada Karmi-Melamede, and Pelleg Associates.



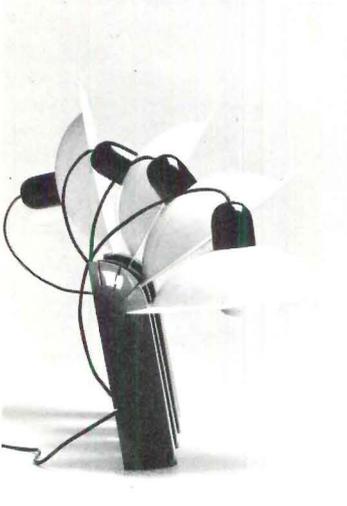
A few things from Milan

The Lampiatta has been designed by De Pas-D'Urbino-Lomazzi, and produced by Stilnova of Milan. Four cuts in the trunk of the lamp allow the reflector to be inserted at various convenient positions. Photo shows all four variations.

The travertine and crystal table is called "Oberon" and was designed by Silvana F. Bertoldi of Milan.—V. B.



Oberon above, Lampiatta below



Subway in Saint Germain

A new subway station has just been opened in Saint Germain en Laye, a suburb west of Paris. Multicolored panels of tile and elegant chandeliers are part of an ambitious decoration scheme. This was most certainly not a bad idea to have been executed just before the elections.

The construction of this one underground station of the RER

(Réseau Express Régional) is, of course, not going to solve the horrendous traffic circulation problem which has been building up in and around Paris for years (and for which Paris has long been famous) but it will help, and that little bit of progress is much appreciated by the long-suffering French citizen, including this weary traveler.—G. de B.



Ostentation in the subway of the suburbs



Consider the tent

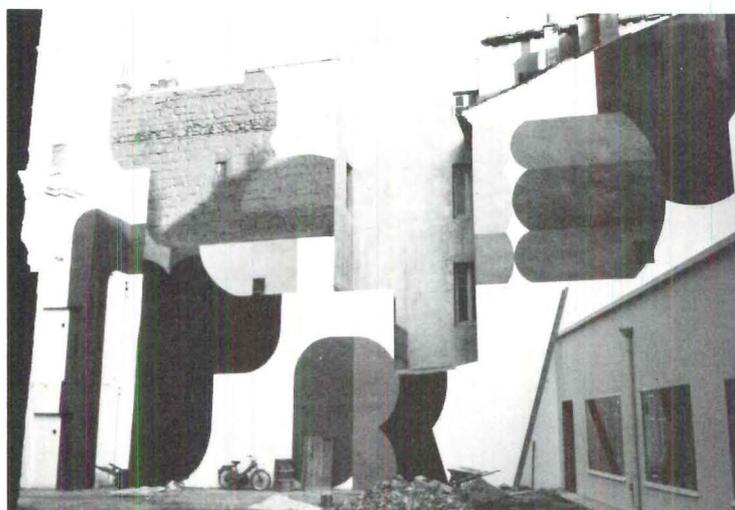
LaVerne College, a privately supported liberal arts school in California, needed more space—and fast. Their architects, The Shaver Partnership, solved the problem with a permanent lightweight structure. It's cheap to build and to maintain, and simple to erect. The tensile skin, a tough, strong fiberglass coated with Teflon, is lifted by the attachment cone, distributing weight and stress uniformly. The structural beam is reinforced concrete.



Painting the town

Paris has another painted wall. After Morellet's now famous one on the Plateau Beaubourg, it is the Portuguese painter, René Bertholo, who puts color on the old walls.

Located in the rue Dussoubs, in the heart of where Les Halles used to be, this delightfully cheerful,



René Bertholo, left; Anne Rochas, above

mostly blue wall is situated between two elementary schools.

The sponsor of the wall is a builder, M. de Hody, who is a specialist in the renovation of old houses.

One good paint job deserves another; it seems we are becoming

fond of this art form. This one is painted in bright primary colors, and is located in Valence, a small town south of Lyon. It's a parking lot wall, 300 meters square. Anne Rochas designed it, and with help from a friend, Gérald Perrier, she painted it, too.—G. de B.

Photographs: Page 10 (top) *Corriere d'Informazione*. Page 12 Hickey & Robertson. Page 13 (top) M. S. Sal-sanghi; (bottom) Prantal K. Patel. Page 62 (center) John Bechtold. Page 63 (bottom right) Studio New Light. Page 64 Ricarda Schwerin. Page 65 (left center) Rodolfo Facchini; (bottom left) Jean Pierre le Bihan.

Footnote

Christo (the *other* one, the sculptor who likes to wrap up things, including things as big as Australia) is alive and well and operating in Milano. Or so it seems; as of a few weeks ago, most of Milan's Duomo had been wrapped up in polyethelene to facilitate repair work on its crumbling facades. (They are crumbling either because of the newly excavated subway nearby, or because the wooden pile-foundations are rotting, or because everything else in Italy is crumbling.) In any event, the Duomo has never looked better—or more mysterious, anyway.



Letters

Ellen Leopold's article on the 747 was very interesting and informative. It belongs in your fine thought-provoking magazine. But she must not draw conclusions that downgrade the architectural profession without doing a meaningful study of architectural design as practiced by large architectural firms. She would be surprised at the computerized techniques that are employed in analyzing, structural design, and specification writing. But the practice of architecture is more than advanced technology. Too often our people, after studying at length in our architectural schools, emerge with a masters degree in "non-architecture." They often become advocates of mechanical systems and technology as the means for resolving all of society's design problems. Shelter for people is more than an assembly of minimum life-support systems. When Pan American wants a single airline terminal building to be erected to enhance and serve an existing community of people it selects an experienced architectural firm to design the project. The result is what we call "architecture." The difference between architecture and engineering should be understood by our journalists and it doesn't help to clarify the issue by suggesting that because the 747 is wonderful architects should be replaced by engineers.

HOWARD B. CAIN
Architect, Cleveland

I have read with great pleasure your handsome first issue of Architecture PLUS. You should be very proud of this accomplishment. I wish I could think of some criticism to pass on, but you haven't left me any opportunities.

Mrs. Miller and I look forward to enjoying future issues.

IRWIN MILLER
Chairman, Cummins Engine Co. Inc.
Columbus, Ind.

I wonder if you have the courage to publish my evaluation of Architecture PLUS, which naturally is of greater use in your pages than in any of the other American architectural magazines. . . .

If your publication continues only to exhibit the exhibitionists, it

will, in my opinion, commit suicide and contribute to the death of the noble art of architecture.

Why can't you return to examples of town planning and buildings shaped by basic human values?

Why not publish examples where harmony, protection, enclosure, view, orientation, materials, function, economy and adaptation to the existing environment are the dominant factors?

Why not show examples by unknown, anonymous architects, examples chosen by non-architects?

HANS ASPLUND
Professor of Architecture
University of Lund, Sweden

Why not, indeed? (For an example, see the White Tower article in this issue.)—Ed.

Why The Pop?

With toilet tissue, you skirted the issue

Of the tallest Boston topic,
We're wondering whether your news editor

Has spent the past year in the tropics.

The Hancock Tower
Has gone quite sour
We thought we'd just let you know,
For by this poem,
We hope to show 'em
What was totally omitted
From your report.

Why the pop?!
At the Hancock Tower.

Why the pop?!
It's a real glass shower.
You've done no service just made us more nervous at the sight,

It's the Plywood Palace,
Not Wonderland, Alice,
It's a Goddam shame.

We're involved,
We're the local gentry,
We're concerned
For the shiny tower.

Please tell us soon that the truth is near at hand,

'Cause, Peter, we're at the bottom,
Why the pop?!

VILMA BARR
Cambridge, Mass.

For detailed comment on the Boston John Hancock Tower, see the April 1973 issue, page 76.—ED.

I heartily agree with Editor Blake's opening sentence in his editorial: "... this will be a magazine that interprets architecture in the broadest possible sense—geographically, conceptually, technologically, philosophically." Yes, indeed.

MAURICE LAVANOUX
New York

As a "collaborator" listed on the masthead of the original Plus, I was delighted to receive the new Architecture PLUS. When the original Plus arrived in December 1938 as a supplement to the *Architectural Forum* it opened up to me the wealth and sophistication of world architecture and the relation of all the arts to our own art. It was sad that the original Plus had to fold after three issues but I suppose that this is often the fate of a good idea born before its time.

I believe that with the auspicious first edition of Architecture PLUS it is off to a flying start which will carry forward its aims and ideals for many years to come.

HARRIS ARMSTRONG
Architect, St. Louis

In my experience I have perused many, many architectural magazines, but I cannot remember an issue as interesting as the March 1973 issue of Architecture PLUS.

ROBERT E. SPAULDING
Architect, Mt. Prospect, Ill.

In response to my article on the Niagara competition in your April issue, I have received two letters requesting that further credits be given. The submission attributed to Paul Willen should have been attributed equally to him and to Virendra Girdhar. The submission attributed to Russell C. Lewis was actually a team effort by his group, Planning Research Organization for a Better Environment (PROBE), the other members of which are William Ahlstrom, Mark Attwood, Paul Chu Lin, and Ted Nolte.

CHARLES HILGENHURST
New York State Urban Development Corporation

Cancel my subscription—I'm already non-plussed with PLUS for its handling of an A-plus building (re. Boston City Hall). Do you really want to cater to the "untrained eye"? There are some remarkable successes in Miami and Disneyland.

CHARLES H. WHEELER
Architect, Paris

P.S. If you publish my letter, don't cancel my subscription as I won't get to see it.

I am most gratified at the universality to which PLUS is committed. I have read the letters from your readers and have to agree with them that Architecture PLUS fills a long recognized void. It is like *Architectural Review*, *Architecture Aujourd'hui*, and *Japan Architect* all rolled up into one. . . . It already appears to me to be the number one architectural-urban journal in the world.

CHARLES A. BLESSING
Director-Secretary
City Plan Commission, Detroit

Congratulations! I have just seen Architecture PLUS. Looks like a great potential for a truly international flavor.

JAMES M. SHILSTONE
President,
Architectural Concrete Consultants
Dallas, Texas

Errata: We regret the misspelling in our April issue of the names of Guatemalan architects Jose and Raúl Minondo.

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Film Review

The Built Environment: A Film Festival

Reviewed by Dorothy Alexander

ARCHITECT FILM FEST



Happily some hisses for the heroes

The arrival of the first full-fledged North American architectural film festival at Columbia University, April 16 to 20, happened to coincide with a certain restlessness in the air. Leaves were about to appear. The nights were prematurely warm.

The event, sponsored by the Graduate School of Architecture and Planning assisted by a grant from The National Endowment for the Arts, was intended to produce environmental consciousness-raising through visual media. If, for me at least, the festival as consciousness-raiser was somewhat overshadowed by previous *tableaux vivants* in the same locale, the festival still had some interesting aspects.

To begin with, if the zoom lens had been outlawed, there would

Dorothy Alexander, our roving film critic, is an architect practicing in New York.

have been (except for animations) only two films left in the festival, Ousmane Sembene's *Borom Sarret* and Michael and Sanford Wurmfeld's *Primaries 1970*, both fine films (described below), but two films just don't make a festival. As it was, a convenient catalogue of cinematic clichés was compiled. Most of the films shown were loud in all the senses of that word—visually loud, aurally loud, meaningfully loud. They zoomed and flickered and stopped and zapped until the senses reeled, and you were left looking for the Chinese jar that "still moves perpetually in its stillness." But this doesn't mean that all the work shown was equally irritating or pointless, and the whole thing a waste of time. In some way, the event did become a whole thing and began to function like some creaking megalopolitan structure, overcoming the sum of its parts.

Each of the five evenings was given a loose category. Each evening a different jury selected four films in order of excellence. Appropriately, because of this jury structure, there were no grand prize winners. Each evening the audience was informed that the jury of the previous evening had wrestled on the floor "into the wee hours" to come to a decision. This, together with the size and responsiveness of the audiences, gives an indication that, whatever was happening, a lot of energy was being exchanged.

In only one instance did the choice of the jury, the response of the crowd and my own response combine in a sustained Bravo! And this clearly for the finest film shown, *Borom Sarret*, so maybe there is something to be said for the democratic process.

Monday was devoted to "Viewpoints on Architecture." It was the most conventionally architectural of the five evenings. Some of the films actually showed architects' work, among which that of Gaudi, Goff and Kahn. The first prize winner, however, was *My House* by Peter Simmons. Described in the catalogue as "a documentary study of the housing development, Westlake, California," this short (five minutes), fuzzily black and white



My House: rerun of ticky tacky boxes



Scenes From NYC Transit



Borom Sarret: sardine pack of roofs



Borom's memorably ordinary face



The approaching cart grows gradually

film was completely without any curiosity about, or even interest in, its subject. Instead, it gave us a visual rerun of that familiar sixties stereotype, ticky tacky boxes. Another in the genre that Andrew Sarris has called "we're good, they're plastic" was the fourth prize winner of the evening, *A Trip Through the Brooks Home*. This neat little rip-off of "a couple whose retirement dreams have come true" managed to suggest that, while it is wildly unfashionable to consider Blacks as non-people, it's perfectly okay in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Brooks.

Tuesday was travelogue night, with a long, lush look at Holland in George Sluizer's *Hold Back the Sea*; an unbelievably hokey excuse to visit Easter Island called *Easter Island Rises*; as well as the green fields and quiet lanes of England in a wonderfully dull, decent English pitch for preservation titled *A Future for the Past*. First prize winner of this evening was an animated film *Garbage*. The next night's audience found the combination of first prize and garbage very funny, which, I guess, says something about the location of our heads.

Speaking of garbage, Wednesday was devoted to "City Life" and I half expected a horror show of rats and garbage seasoned with a pinch of riot and rape. Not so; it was an international grab bag of aspects of city life, which, I guess, is what we were there for. There was a friendly look at New York, *The City* (which it is) by Mark Johnson, Young Filmmakers Foundation, Inc. This was the single film in which stop motion seemed forgivable and even funny.

There are those who go to the Esalin Institute to touch and feel and smell, but you can get it all for 35¢ on the New York subway. None of this came across in the lyrical (unintentionally?) *Scenes From New York City Transit*, which stressed the currently fashionable idea of alienation.

A Swedish film, *Description of the System of Parking Automation*, succeeded in transcending the stereotype of automation as metaphor for madness, so familiar in the last decade, only to fall into

continued on page 71

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Product Literature

ACRYLICS

Swedcast Division, Swedlow, Inc. has prepared folder including data sheets on their commercial acrylic sheet.

Reader Service Number 241.

BUILDING SYSTEMS

Three new systems brochures for selecting and specifying building materials have been released by Sonneborn Building Products Division of Contech, Inc.

Reader Service Number 242.

CARPETING

The Jute Carpet Backing Council has announced the 15th printing of their architectural guide specification for glue-down installation of double jute-backed carpets.

Reader Service Number 243.

Construction and performance specifications, and installation recommendations are provided in pamphlet on Milstar® carpet developed by Deering Milliken, Inc.

Reader Service Number 244.

Hercules Incorporated offers 24-page brochure providing performance characteristics, construction, installation, and specification information for Herculon® fiber.

Reader Service Number 245.

CEILING SYSTEMS

Installation data for the Gold Bond Panelectric ceiling system, comprising a radiant heating system as an integral part of a gypsum drywall ceiling, is given by Gold Bond Building Products Division of National Gypsum Company.

Reader Service Number 246.

CERAMIC TILE

Udono, Ltd. of Japan offers details on their natural tile and pebble stone.

Reader Service Number 247.

From Milan, Italy Cedit Ceramiche D'Italia offers brochure covering their complete line of ceramic tile.

Reader Service Number 248.

Elon, Inc. announces availability of color catalog including specification data for handmade Mexican tile.

Reader Service Number 249.

CHALKBOARDS

A new brochure is being offered by the AllianceWall Corporation which contains a color chart of all the firm's standard chalkboard colors.

Reader Service Number 250.

COATINGS

Devoe Paint Division of Celanese Coatings Company has issued a specification manual for their complete line of protective and decorative coatings for all types of surfaces and environments.

Reader Service Number 251.

DECORATIVE GLASS

Pittsburgh Corning Corporation 15-page booklet contains selection and application information on decorative glass block.

Reader Service Number 252.

Unusual design possibilities created by Plexiglas™ mirror are illustrated in six-page pamphlet released by Rohm and Haas Company.

Reader Service Number 253.

DOORS

Amarlite, the architectural products division of Anaconda Aluminum, presents the new Safetyline concept of aluminum framed glass entrances in literature now available.

Reader Service Number 254.

DRAWINGS

A booklet of drawing shortcuts designed specifically for architects is offered by Eastman Kodak Company.

Reader Service Number 255.

FENCING

An entirely new, 12-page color booklet, "Redwood Fences" is now available from the California Redwood Association.

Reader Service Number 256.

FLOORING

The 1973 edition of Azrock's catalog of resilient flooring products, containing information on sizes, gauges, uses, installation, and light reflectance values, is now being offered.

Reader Service Number 257.

GLASS

A comprehensive guide to architectural glass products for windows and doors is available from PPG Industries.

Reader Service Number 258.

HANDRAILING

Carlstadt acrylic/wood handrailing combines the natural beauty of fine hardwood with the hardness of reinforced plastic, explains a new brochure from Julius Blum & Co., Inc.

Reader Service Number 259.

HARDWARE

Konan Industries, Inc. of Japan has available literature on their line of

door locks and builder's fasteners.

Reader Service Number 260.

INSULATION

A brochure outlining shipping information and specification data on Johns-Manville fiber glass building insulation can now be obtained.

Reader Service Number 261.

KITCHEN, LAUNDRY, WASHROOM EQUIPMENT

General Electric Co. provides a colorful, 24-page idea stimulator containing illustrated kitchen and laundry concepts for large and small areas.

Reader Service Number 262.

A toilet compartment catalog for 1973, including additions to their laminated plastic product line, has been released by Bobrick Washroom Equipment, Inc.

Reader Service Number 263.

LIGHTING

Wide-Lite Corporation has announced a new indoor luminaire for HID lamps offering a computer-designed reflector and optional high-strength film lens.

Reader Service Number 264.

PANELING

Application and specification data for flexible fire panel is given in a 10-page brochure issued by BASF.

Reader Service Number 265.

Fire-test paneling that meets building codes and safety requirements for interior construction is available now from Marlite, Division of Masonite Corporation.

Reader Service Number 266.

PLUMBING FIXTURES

Eljer Plumbingware Division, Wallace-Murray Corporation, has available a specifying guide for architects covering their line of hospital/institutional plumbing fixtures and fittings.

Reader Service Number 267.

PLYWOOD

A new, full-color brochure introducing Finnish plywood is offered by The Finnish Plywood Development Association—USA.

Reader Service Number 268.

Alstergren Pty. Ltd. of Australia provides pamphlet on prefinished plywood panels and particle board.

Reader Service Number 269.

ROOFING

Specification information for Terne-Coated Stainless Steel, developed for

a broad range of applications including roofing and weathersealing, is given by Follansbee Steel Corp.

Reader Service Number 270.

SEALANTS

The entire family of General Electric silicone rubber sealants is described in four-page pamphlet recently released.

Reader Service Number 271.

SEATING

JG Furniture Co., Inc. has prepared a specifications catalog for their auditorium seating.

Reader Service Number 272.

SECURITY SYSTEMS

Hager Hinge Company has published "Building Security into Building Plans." The booklet lists facts about major components and optional security equipment available from Hager.

Reader Service Number 273.

SIGNAGE

Jas. H. Matthews & Co. has prepared a color catalog on their identification systems, featuring custom designed packages using unified signage, pictorial systems and color-keying.

Reader Service Number 274.

WALL COVERINGS

James Seeman Studios, Inc. displays their supergraphic murals screen-printed on vinyl in color booklet recently released.

Reader Service Number 275.

WALL SYSTEMS

U-Forms International, Inc. makes available information on a new structural wall system that cuts heating and cooling energy requirements while increasing investment return.

Reader Service Number 276.

A 12-page brochure containing specification, performance, and test data on Inryco wall systems is offered by Inland-Ryerson Construction Products Company.

Reader Service Number 277.

The Acordial-Group, Europe's largest wall manufacturer, offers color brochure on the Planacord mobile wall system with maximum sound insulation.

Reader Service Number 278.

WATER TREATMENT

A new line of low priced reverse osmosis water treatment plants are announced by Ajax International Corporation.

Reader Service Number 279.

Film Review

continued from page 67

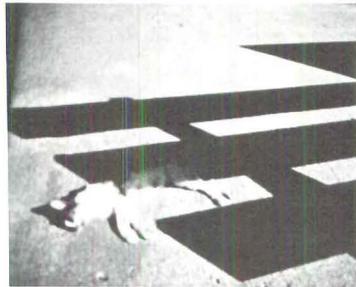
that worn sexist subplot of bumbling father figure upstaged by sexy superior Lolita. In this case, father and daughter trying to escape from a parking garage of the title after losing the exit token.

The two overt propaganda films of the evening were both French, *La Cité Des Hommes*, representing the right (or, all's for the best in this best of all possible worlds) and *Histoire d'un Crime* representing the left (or, all's for the worst in this worst of all possible worlds). It would be difficult to decide which laid it on thicker but, predictably, at Columbia, the left was cheered, the right was hissed, and nobody seemed to make the French connection.

The expected horror show only surfaced once in *Eddie*, which the catalogue listed as "an attempt to dramatize conditions in welfare hotels . . . and the needs of the elderly and lonely living there." Instead, we were treated to seventeen titillating minutes in the life of a drunken Irishman (racism, mine), complete with roaches, shit in the bed and dozens and dozens of empty bottles. But the Irishman put on a tie when the movie people came calling, and I can't help wondering where some of those bottles came from.

Racism as a subject never came up, exactly, but there was the well-bred Eastern-accented voice-over in *Festival of Playgrounds*, saying perfectly pleasantly that, while there had been no (Black) community participation in the (form of) making the playground, there would be community in the MAINTAINING of it. But the Black community managed to demonstrate its extraordinary resilience as well, as its ability to recognize a Yale man, in *One Way*, described as "the explosive beginnings of the Black workshop at the Yale Graduate School of Art and Architecture."

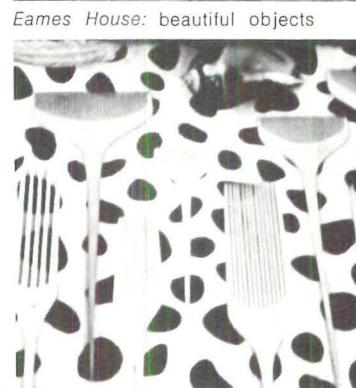
In spite of these distractions, Wednesday was dominated by a film about people and power and powerlessness. *Borom Sarret*, the work of Ousmane Sembene, is set in Dakar, Senegal. The Borom Sarret of the title is a Black man who makes his living with a horse and cart which functions as a rather ca-



Side Issue: tastefully discomposing



Skyscraper: 1959 Fifth Avenue



Eames House: beautiful objects



endless fresh flowers

sual form of public transportation. The story line, the road, leads to a brief but incisive look at aspects of his community, beautifully presented visually in a sequence of spare, haunting black and white images—the curve of a road in which the approaching cart grows gradually to dominate the space; a sardine pack of roof tops; a beggar looking up at Borom and Borom looking back, his outstretched feet cradling the subtitle, "What's the use of answering? There're so many beggars"; or his memorably ordinary face with subtitle, "The new life may have brought me to this slavery." Although not explicitly stated, it seems from the frequent repetition of the words *Borom Sarret* that this might be a general expression of prohibition, roughly meaning "Black worker, keep out." So the man and his name are particular expressions of the universal experience of oppression and powerlessness. Because the people who abuse, defraud and eventually defeat Borom are all Black, there is no *One Way* confusion of class and skin color. Again, as in real life, the man Borom is neither good nor bad. Up to a point, he has compassion. The money that he refuses the beggar is willingly handed over to a *shaman* who sings to him that his ancestors were brave men. Feeling brave, he takes the chance of entering symbolically "high" forbidden ground and loses everything but his horse which he leads slowly back to his own quarter, where his wife will go out to find the evening meal in an errand that is left to the imagination, but which has always been available to the oppressed.

Coming down from this, Thursday was concerned with "Experimental Images." On the whole, the films shown seemed more concerned with underlining preconception than with expanding perception. A notable exception was the Wurmfeld *Primaries* which won no prizes but almost made the evening worth sitting through. It consisted of a screen full of silence and pure primary color changing gradually, leaving the viewer to figure out what was happening (which I didn't). It didn't try to make you sick or confused or exhausted or

embarrassed as did, in that order, *Side Issue* (the American roadside tastefully draped with dead and decomposing animals), *Oakland Ed Ace*, *The House Construction Home Movie*, and the first prize winner, *Corridor*. The last used the camera's repeated penetration of the corri or as a metaphor for a, uh, universal experience which just didn't get it up there like the Stones' "Goin' Home".

Ah well, nothing like four evenings of four hours of film to scour out the old deadwood of the mind. On Friday the first prize winners were reshowed, together with some classics, somewhat disrupted by problems at the Museum of Modern Art film department which didn't provide the expected films. In spite of which, Shirley Clarke's *Bridges Go Round* went around twice, and her 1959 *Skyscraper* perfectly embalmed the look of 1959 Fifth Avenue. But where was that look? In the length of a skirt, the men wearing hats, the quality of light or the buildings no longer there? The disappointment of the evening, however, was Charles and Ray Eames' *House* (1955). I've know about the film for maybe 15 years and thought how wonderful it would be. But it wasn't wonderful, or tomatoes-at-the-screen awful, just discreetly sad. If I see the Katsura detached palace, I don't lose my lunch; I don't say, that was fifties or sixties or forties. The Villa Savoye, I'm embarrassed to say, is the same way. Maybe the Eames house isn't as bad—surely not—as the Eames film. Endless beautiful objects, endless fresh flowers, endless breakfasts with *croissants*. It reminded me of a voice on the radio in the car going home, a young woman singer talking about a song she had presumed to write for Janice Joplin: a year ago *I decided to stop singing* and went-into-a-meditation-center. So exquisitely and self-consciously unself-conscious, so unimportantly important. And Janice: *Freedom's just another word for nuthin' left to lose* . . . What's that got to do with the Katsura detached palace? Something? Truth is beautiful? No, no, babe, it may not be beautiful, but it's not sixties or fifties or forties.

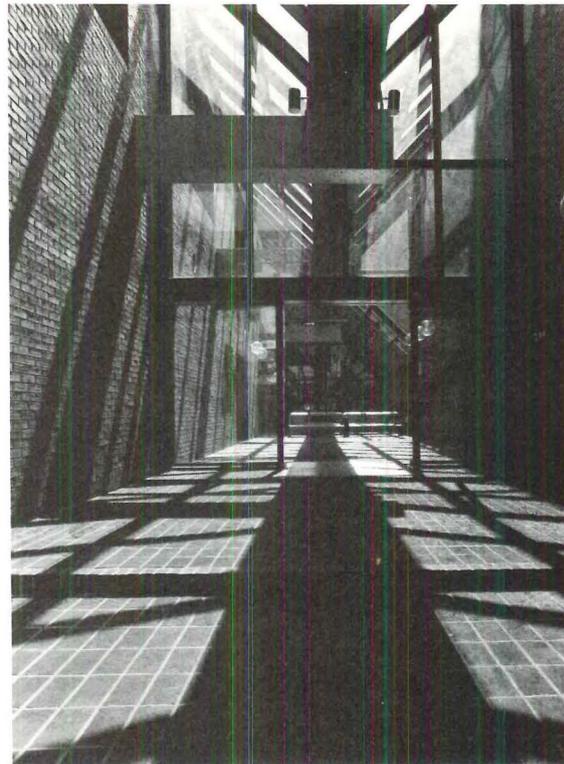
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Looking ahead



"... Thick windowless walls covered in a blend of dark brick; skylights admitting sun even on gloomy winter days; extensive glazed openings for views of the leaden sky..." says Architect Shin'ichi Okada of his Niigata Faculty, Nippon Dental College, to be featured in the July issue of PLUS.

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QUINCO CONSULTING CENTER

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Concrete & Cement: Baker Forms Co., Louisville Cement, Ryerson. *Acoustical Materials:* Johns-Manville. *Glass:* PPG. *Elevators & Electric Stairways:* White-Evans Elevator Co. *Doors:* PPG, Weyerhaeuser, Emenco. *Hardware:* Sargent, Hager Hinge, Glyn Johnson. *Interior Materials:* Flintkote, Lees Carpets. *Paint:* Pratt & Lambert, Devoe. *Electrical Equip:* Continental. *Lighting Fixtures:* Metalux Corp. *Plumbing Fixtures:* American Standard. *Heating Boilers:* H. B. Smith Co. *Unit Ventilators, Radiators, Convectors:* Dunham-Bush. *Heating Valves, Piping, Controls:* Honeywell. *Air Conditioning Compressor, Fan Unit:* McQuay, Inc. *Diffusers, Ducts, Pumps:* Bell & Gossett, Flygt Corp., Titus Mfg. *Special Fans & Ventilators:* Buffalo Forge Co., Clarage Fan Co. *Intercom Systems, Radio & TV Systems:* Dukane Corp. *Sprinkler System & Fire Protection Equip:* Standard Fire Hose Co., Simplex System. *Ceiling Materials:* Johns-Manville, National Gypsum. *Water Coolers:* Halsey Taylor. *Venetian Blinds & Shades:* Alcan Aluminum Corp. *Kitchen, Laundry, Laboratory Equip:* Foremost-McKesson Systems.