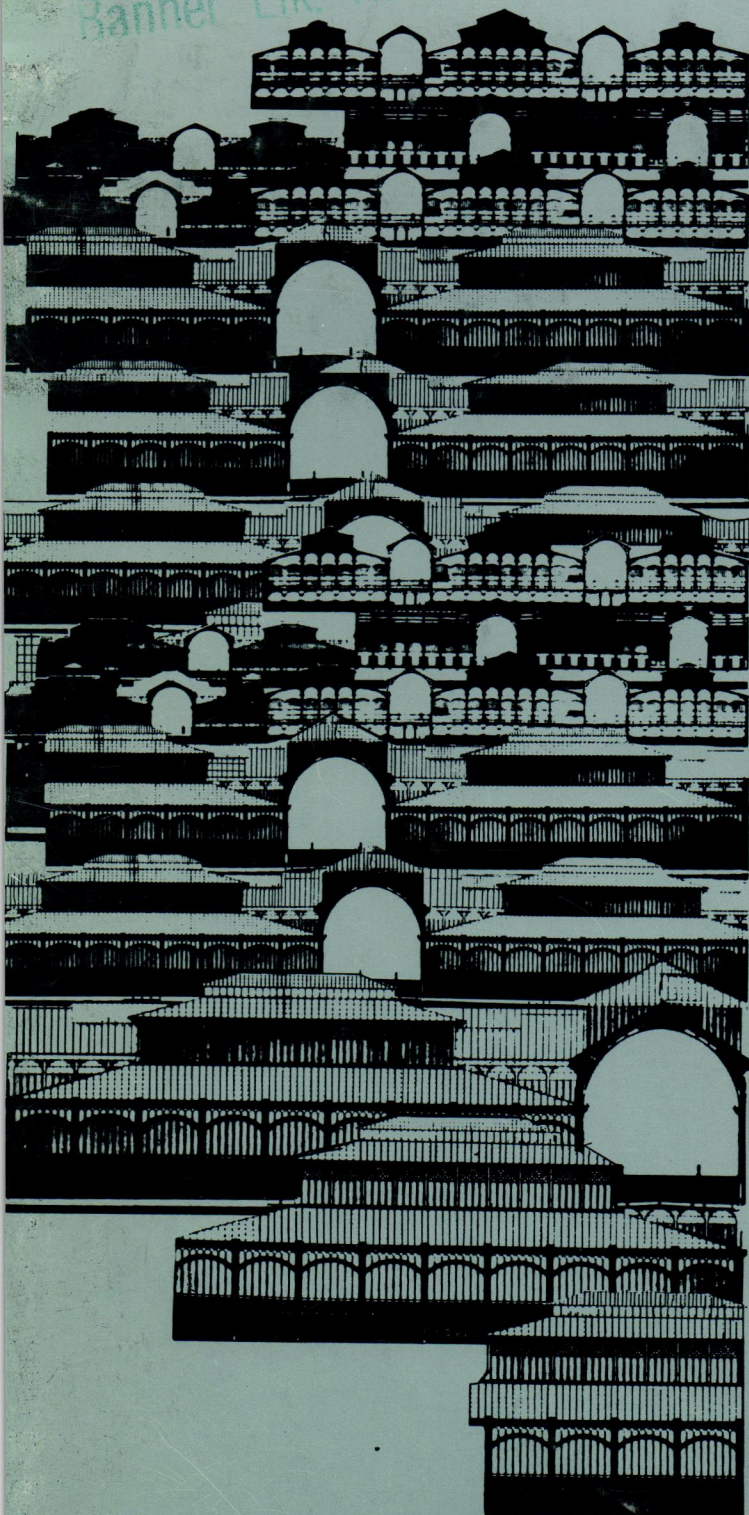


Urban Redevelopment: 19th Century Vision 20th Century Version

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Editor's Notes

DQ 85 juxtaposes two disparate views of the urban redevelopment question. In the first part of this issue Peter Wolf analyzes several 19th century utopian (or what Mr. Wolf refers to as "older and bolder") proposals for transportation/pedestrian linked planned developments for London and Paris, which contain ideas still applicable but, thus far, only tentatively applied to today's cities. Only Baltard's *Les Halles* development was brought to fruition and ironically, it is now in the process of being destroyed to make room for yet another "renewal" project whose efficacy has been widely disputed.

The idealism and concern for the general good contained in these early proposals is undeniable, yet when *Les Halles* was constructed (over a forty year period) thousands of people were displaced, but because of the lengthy construction time span there were no large-scale repercussions. The current redevelopment of *Les Halles*, and the consequent total destruction of its six pavilions, has been the subject of many editorials and the cause of street rioting, sit-ins and venomous polemics throughout Paris. This fiasco is yet another demonstration of an emerging fact of late 20th century urban sociology. Large-scale urban redevelopment is not going to be tolerated any longer, without consideration for both immediate and long-term consequences. The wholesale clearance of land for renewal projects that took place in urban America from 1950-70, with its attendant destruction of architectural landmarks and, more critical, its mindless dislocation of thousands of primarily poor and elderly people, is no longer a viable government or corporate practice.

Twenty years of urban renewal in the United States (under the 1949 Housing Act) produced primarily civic and corporate structures and little housing (and that primarily luxury and middle income). The majority of public civic projects (e.g. Lincoln Center, New York; The Golden Triangle, Pittsburgh; Charles Center, Baltimore; and Society Hill, Philadelphia), aside from their inherent qualities as architecture, are in almost all cases islands in a sea of urban chaos, and other than raising the tax base in some instances, have done little to alleviate the profound shortage of low-cost housing, public transportation, pedestrian amenities, public schools and recreation facilities so desperately needed in urban America.

The symposium on urban renewal, edited for presentation in the second part of this issue, brings together eight professionals with distinct approaches to redevelopment problems. Among the questions raised during the two days of the symposium were:

- 1) To what extent has urban renewal achieved community or societal goals and to what extent has it merely met bureaucratic or special interest objectives?
- 2) How can we resolve the conflict between planning on the basis of an overview of regional and metropolitan systems (the professional and academic approach) and planning done incrementally by local interest groups for limited areas (the political and conventional economic approach)?
- 3) What can metropolitan areas do to open housing opportunities outside the central cities and to what extent is such a policy important to future central city renewal efforts?
- 4) What are the possible alternative actions, programs and/or priorities to urban renewal as we know it or even as we hope it to be?

These are difficult questions and there are no pat answers, however, the conversations included here do illuminate some areas of concern to both professionals and laymen. The symposium participants raised a number of issues critical to any understanding of how large-scale programs function in our cities and how the citizenry can contribute in an effective way to the planning process.

Design Quarterly is grateful to Peter Wolf for the illustrational material included in his essay. We also wish to thank all of the participants in the urban renewal symposium for permission to publish portions of the two-day meetings. MSF

Urban Redevelopment 19th Century Style: Older, Bolder Ideas for Today

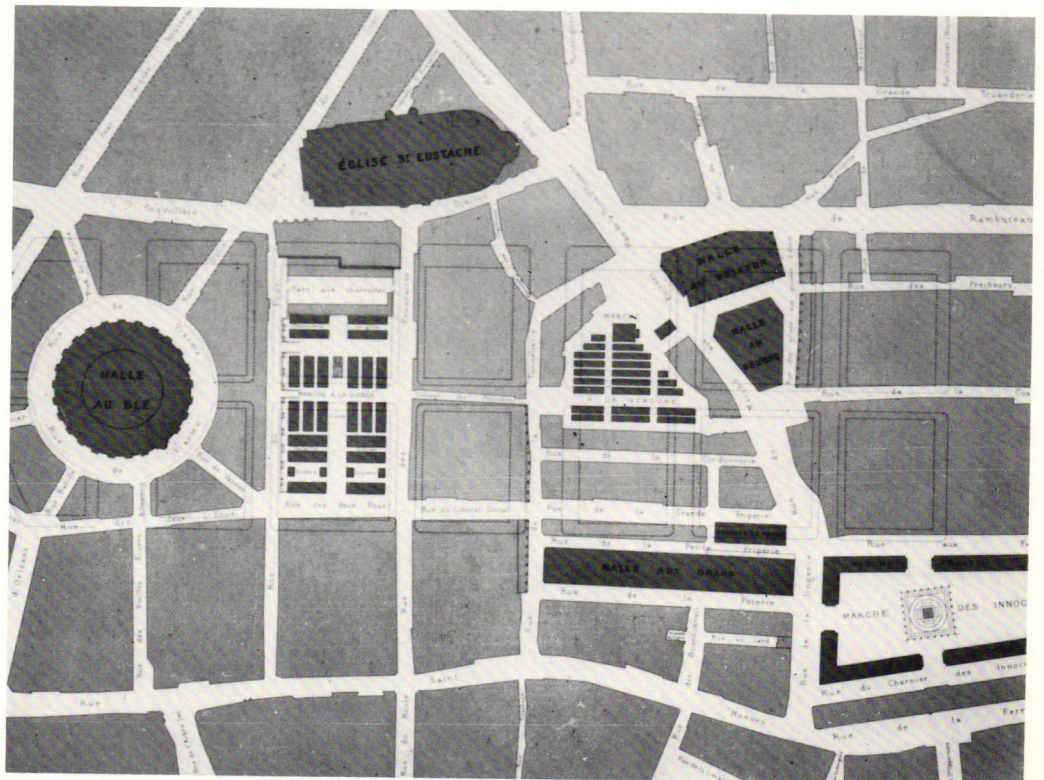
Today, when idealism and progressive social philosophy stimulate advanced urban planning and transportation schemes for existing cities, the plan is usually compromised or destroyed before it can be realized; obliterated by the exigencies of economic realism, protective legal structures, and a political conservatism supported by a system of representation generally responsive to well financed lobbying, representing the strongest organized appeal rather than the greatest public interest.

In the mid-nineteenth century, a period bolder than our own, possible solutions (now generally forgotten) linking transportation to urban "renewal" schemes were put forward in England and France by a succession of architects and optimistic amateurs who mixed varying measures of social idealism with devotion to urban life. Aspects of their work contain some regenerative qualities and ideas appropriate to our own time. Other aspects of these proposals suggest that the inherent contradictions involved in mixing plans for urban physical regeneration with the goals of social renewal have been with us longer than is generally recognized.

In this regard, it is seldom recognized that the massive building project and district reordering accomplished by the construction of *Les Halles Centrales*, in the heart of Paris, toward the middle of the nineteenth century was instigated as early as 1810 by Napoleon I, partially to clear and reconstruct a heavily populated, deteriorating *quartier* of central Paris (fig. 1). In his memoirs, Victor Baltard, principal architect and planner of the *Les Halles* structures and district, recalls that "... towards the close of 1810, visiting the *Halle au Blé* with the architects and some officers of his retinue... the Emperor glanced around at the area. He was struck by the reigning confusion and spontaneously traced an immense parallelogram with his fingertip, indicating the *rue St. Denise* at the base and the *Halle au Blé* at the summit."

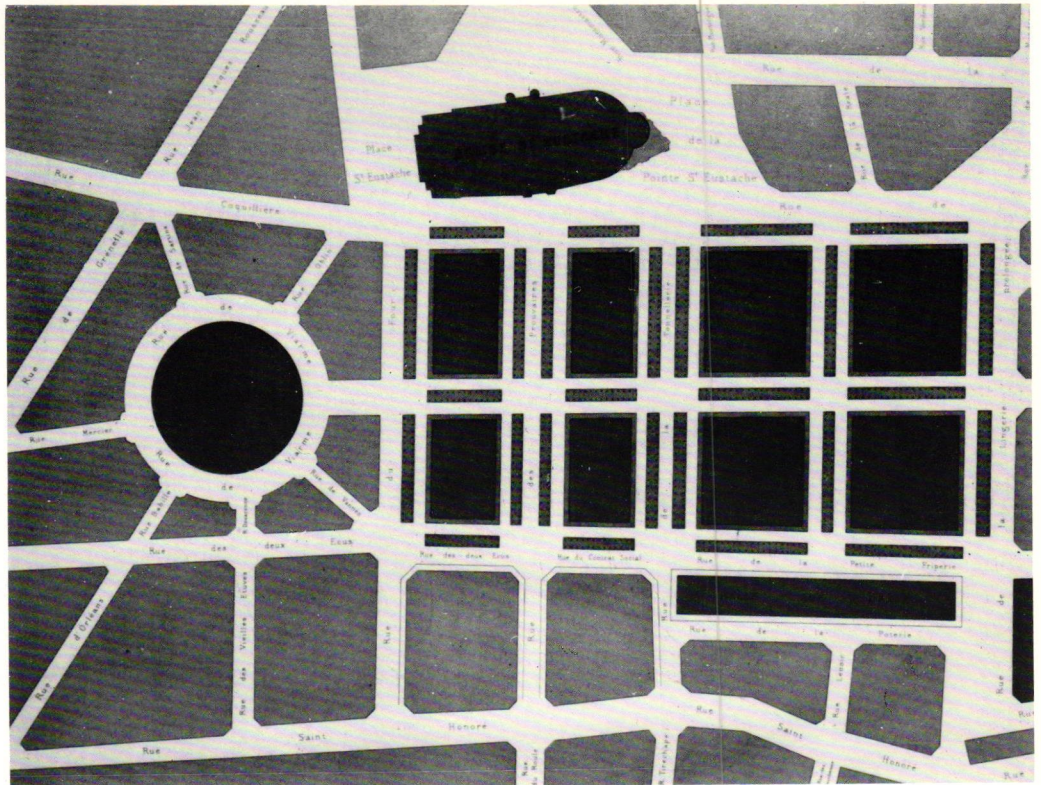
Thus the confines of an early nineteenth century urban "renewal" program were described, and the initiation of a program of well planned, high quality utilitarian structures followed, partially at the expense of existing area residents (figs. 2-7). Forty years later, with the former resident population scattered, construction was

Les Halles, the central market of Paris, was developed as an immense urban renewal project to clear a poor, heavily populated *quartier* in the center of Paris. Napoleon I, who instigated the scheme in 1810, was offended by the disorder in the area. At the expense of local residents, a vast redevelopment project produced one of the most useful and best planned central markets in the world.

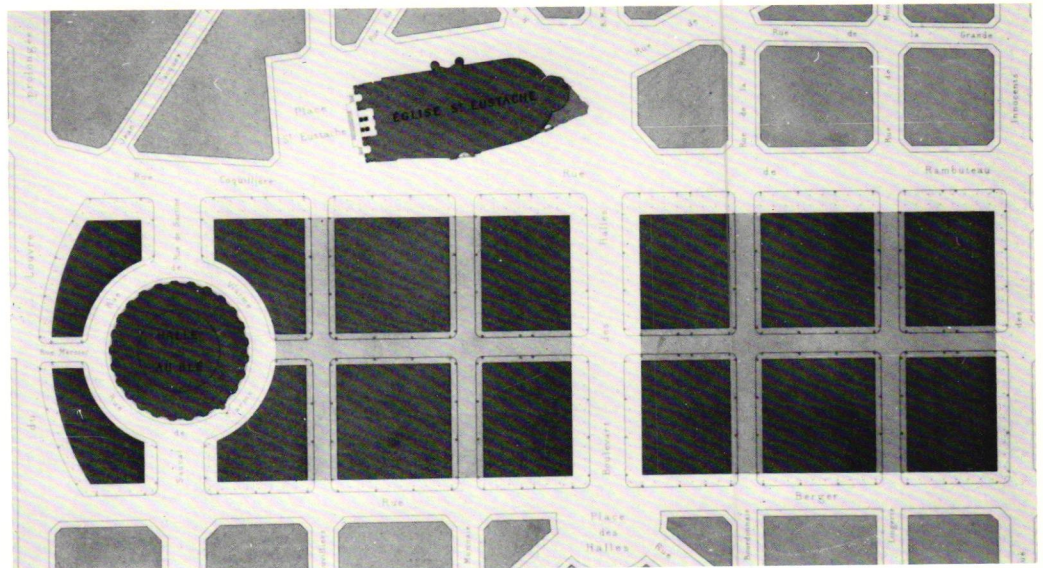


1 V. Baltard and I. Callet, *Les Halles quartier*, Paris, c. 1825

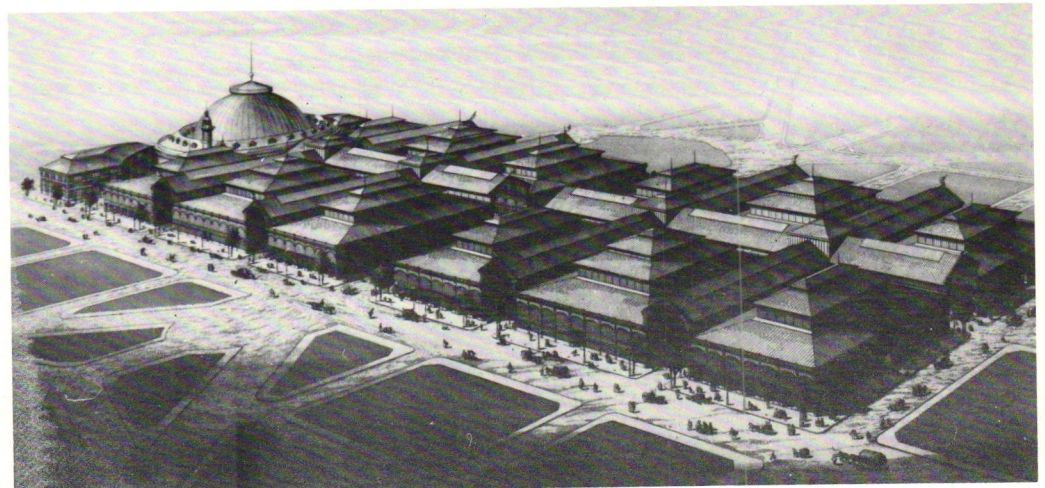
Victor Baltard's rather arid first idea was to build a regular grid street arrangement for eight blocks east of the *Halle au Blé* with broad, open, landscaped street passageways between the large block square market buildings.



2 V. Baltard and I. Callet, *Les Halles Centrales*, Paris, plan of c. 1847

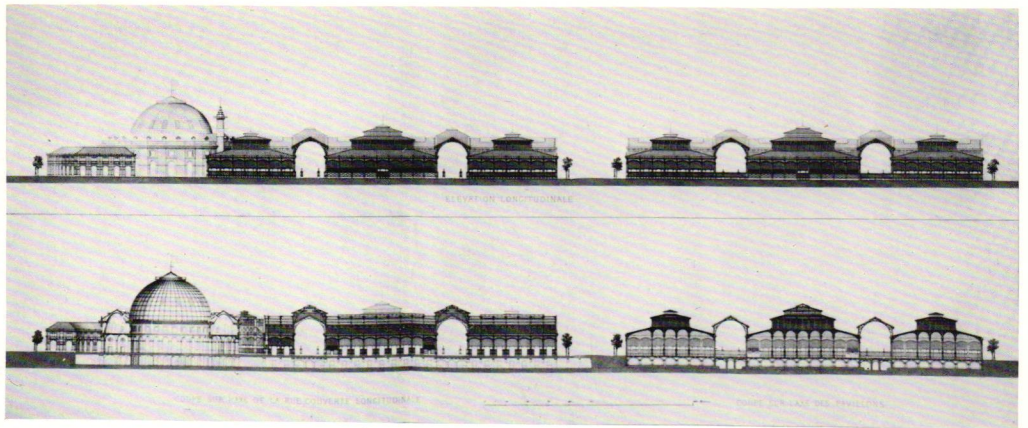


3 V. Baltard and I. Callet, Plan, *Les Halles Centrales*, Paris, 1848-1850

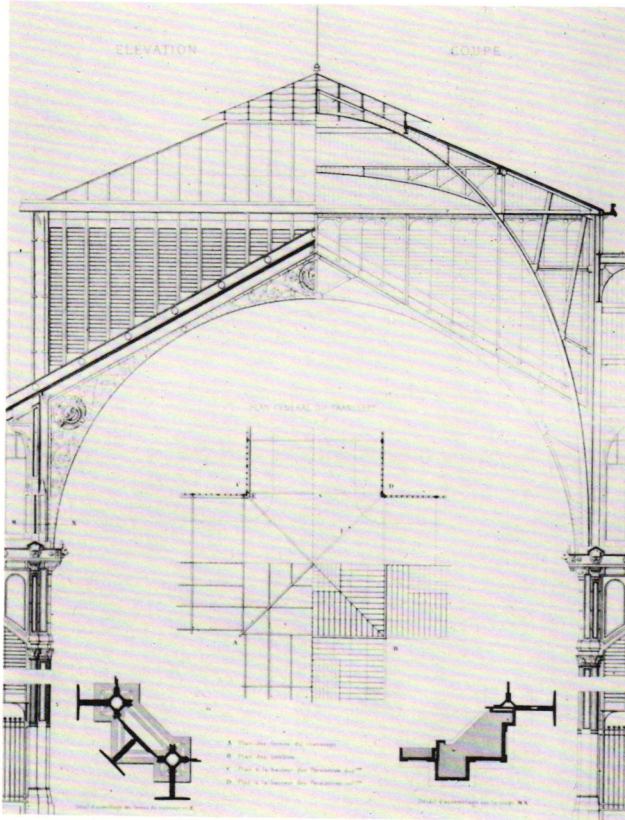


4 V. Baltard and I. Callet, Perspective, *Les Halles Centrales*, Paris, 1848-1850

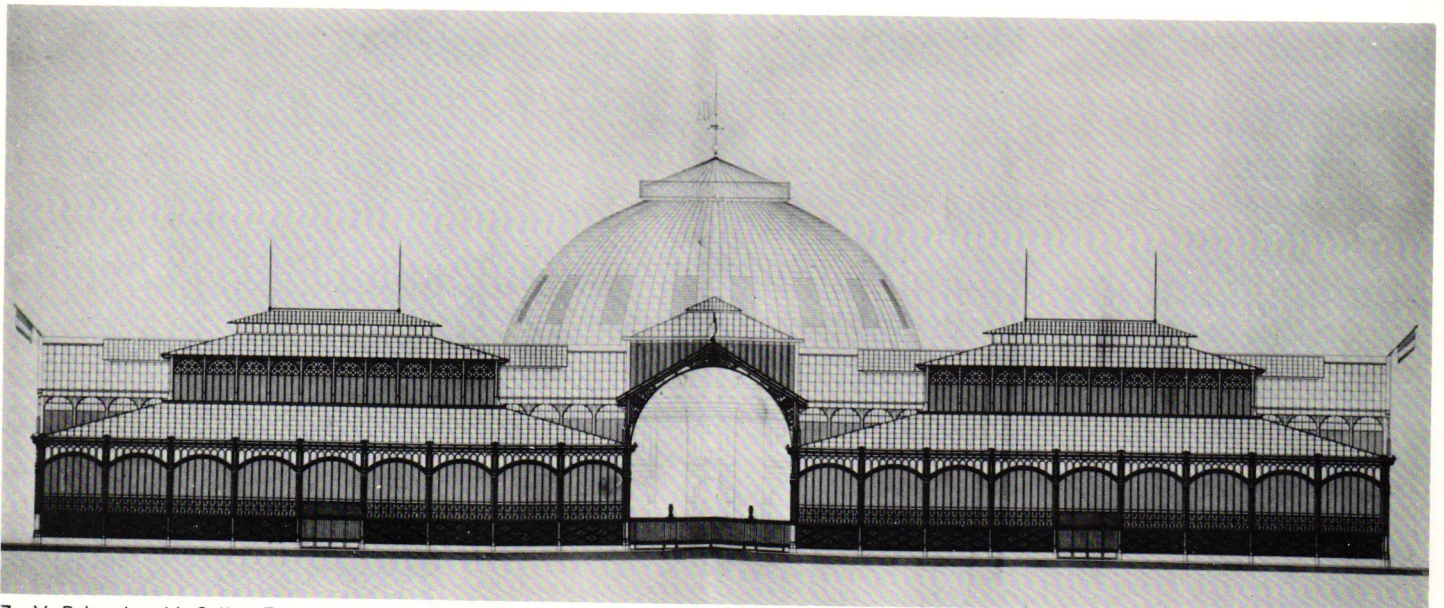
The plan grew to include about 14 square blocks, extending nearly to the *rue St. Denise* and incorporating the *Halle au Blé*. Pavilions were linked by roofed over streets. A single major through street, *Boulevard des Halles*, extends from the new *Place des Halles* through the market, past *St. Eustache* and north on a redesigned and straightened *rue Montorgueil*. The total redesign of the area, and the tight functional linkages required to service and activate an immense wholesale market made *Les Halles* an exceptionally functional and attractive enclave at the center of Paris.



5 V. Baltard and I. Callet, Elevations and Sections, *Les Halles Centrales*, Paris, 1848–1850



6 V. Baltard and I. Callet, Covered Street, Section detail, 1848–1850



7 V. Baltard and I. Callet, Facade detail, 1848–1850

under way. Baltard reordered the neighborhood, making it accessible and convenient. Light and air became available. Pedestrian ways within the market were protected by covered streets. *Les Halles* became a source for many local jobs, and structures of utility and integrity were built (figs. 8, 9).

Acres of land were completely cleared, and all but market uses were removed from the once thriving area of multiple shops and mixed housing which had changed little in character in over a century. Replacing the random, irregular street pattern and seven separate market areas, a bold master redevelopment was initiated. Streets were changed to suit market needs and to regularize circulation in the 14-block *Les Halles* area. Especially notable, and far more ambitious than most programs realized today, were the streets, linked directly to the pavilions and roofed. The whole district became a series of interlinked, free spaces, physically associated and protected from severe weather. Below grade storage vaults were built beneath the pavilions, and above grade utilitarian shed buildings and street roofing structures were conceived and executed in iron (then a relatively new material) using up to date technology combined with a finesse in detailing and a feeling for volume that makes the whole quite beautiful.



8 *Les Halles Centrales*, Market Pavilion Interior, 1968



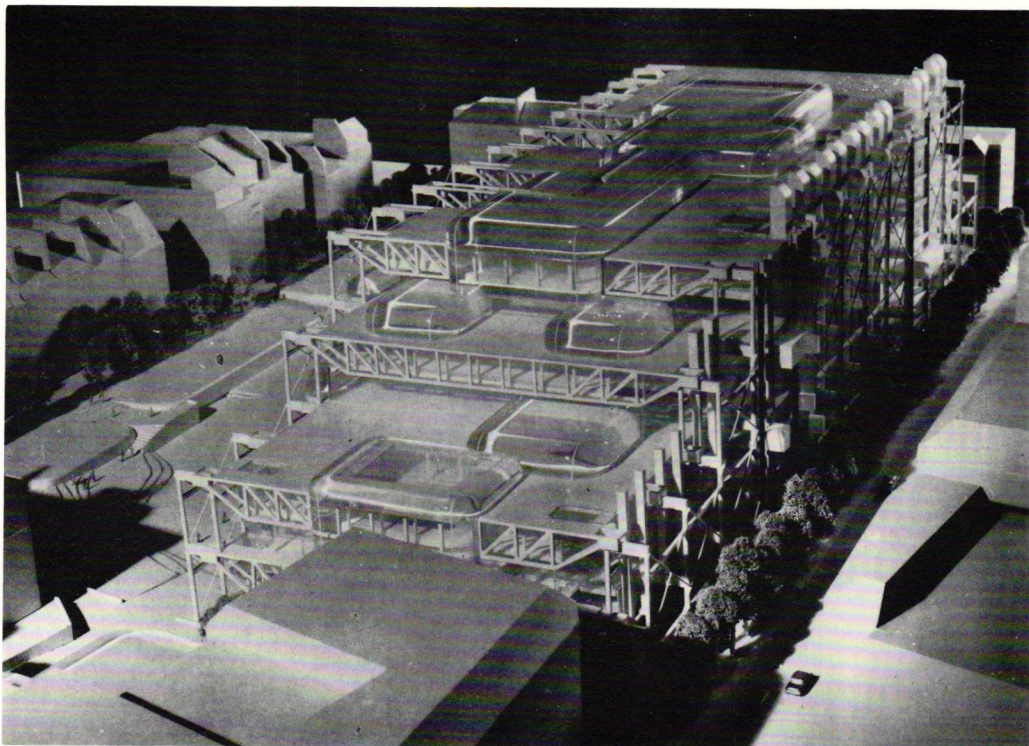
9 *Les Halles Centrales*, Interior Street and Market Pavilion, 1968

Piano + Rogers were the winners of an international competition for the design of Beaubourg Center for Contemporary Arts and Information. Floors, elevators and walls are movable, and the exterior will be an ever-changing information area with graphics legible to moving traffic as well as to pedestrians. *Place Beaubourg* is across the street from *Les Halles* and the proposed Metro interchange, programmed to service Beaubourg Center, will replace a number of the market pavilions.

The ever-increasing volume of business handled, French wholesale market politics and economics, as well as the undesirability of large diesel trucks entering and parking in central Paris, have combined to make the market functionally obsolete. Consequently, this large district of about 14 square blocks in the center of Paris is again facing, as it did over 100 years ago, the prospect of radical surgery. And again, the district is being described as unsavory, decrepit, and its critics are once again "struck by the reigning confusion."

Though its use must change, it is unfortunate that Baltard's basic urban plan, still more advanced than most today, and its beautifully proportioned, well made market pavilions, cannot be retained for new purposes. Improvement of the immediate environment and its usefulness to Paris and to neighboring city districts seems tantalizingly possible if the positive value of this plan and these structures is recognized and exploited. Instead, of course, like many districts of quality around the world, the area is currently threatened with total destruction by real estate, government and building interests anxious to incur new costs that will again make urban transformation a destructive social process, and a profitable commercial one for developers. It is all the more unfortunate now because the anticipated physical transformations are basically unnecessary and, in fact, not desirable. Since the market moved out, viable new uses for the space have been demonstrated by lively arts and theater groups moving into the pavilions. Couldn't a fantastic combined theater, arts and shopping center be developed within the enclosed streets and lofty pavilions? This question must be asked since shopping centers are being thrown up all over France using inferior versions of the *Les Halles* plan. The sanctioned destruction of these buildings, along with a number of other recent decisions by the present regime, reveals a breakdown in French government tradition which has been for so long aware of the quality of Paris as one of the world's most beautiful cities.

(Across the street from *Les Halles* the Beaubourg Center for Contemporary Arts and Information is to be built (fig. 10). This building, if ever constructed as initially planned, could stimulate a gradual regeneration of this central Paris neighborhood so that it is used again by many people as a regional center—now for the arts. However, it is unlikely that the building will survive in its original design, program and intention.)



10 Model of *Le Centre Beaubourg*, Piano + Rogers, architects and G. F. Franchini and Ove Arup, 1971
Photo courtesy of the architects and The Museum of Modern Art, New York

About the same time Baltard was working in Paris, William Moseley, an enterprising architect in London, entered the field of urban development and transportation planning with an ambitious and impressive scheme for the linkage of the St. Paul's area in the City to Regent Circus, more or less "uptown." At the time, this corridor was very heavily traveled and of mixed physical quality (fig. 11). Mobility within it, by horse-drawn carriage, was constricted by excessive demands on the inadequate street capacity. Also, surrounding structures off the main arteries were generally in deplorable physical condition. Consequently, as part of his transportation scheme, Moseley suggested residential and commercial renewal on a grand scale.

Moseley's idea (fig. 12), presented to the House of Commons in 1855, involves the creation of a double level circulation way, pedestrian above and rail below, all contained within a continuous structure whose lateral edges are devoted to a variety of residential and commercial uses. The rail concourse, cut twelve feet below grade, does not interfere with street traffic, but it provides rapid transit service and simultaneously relieves congested surface roadways.

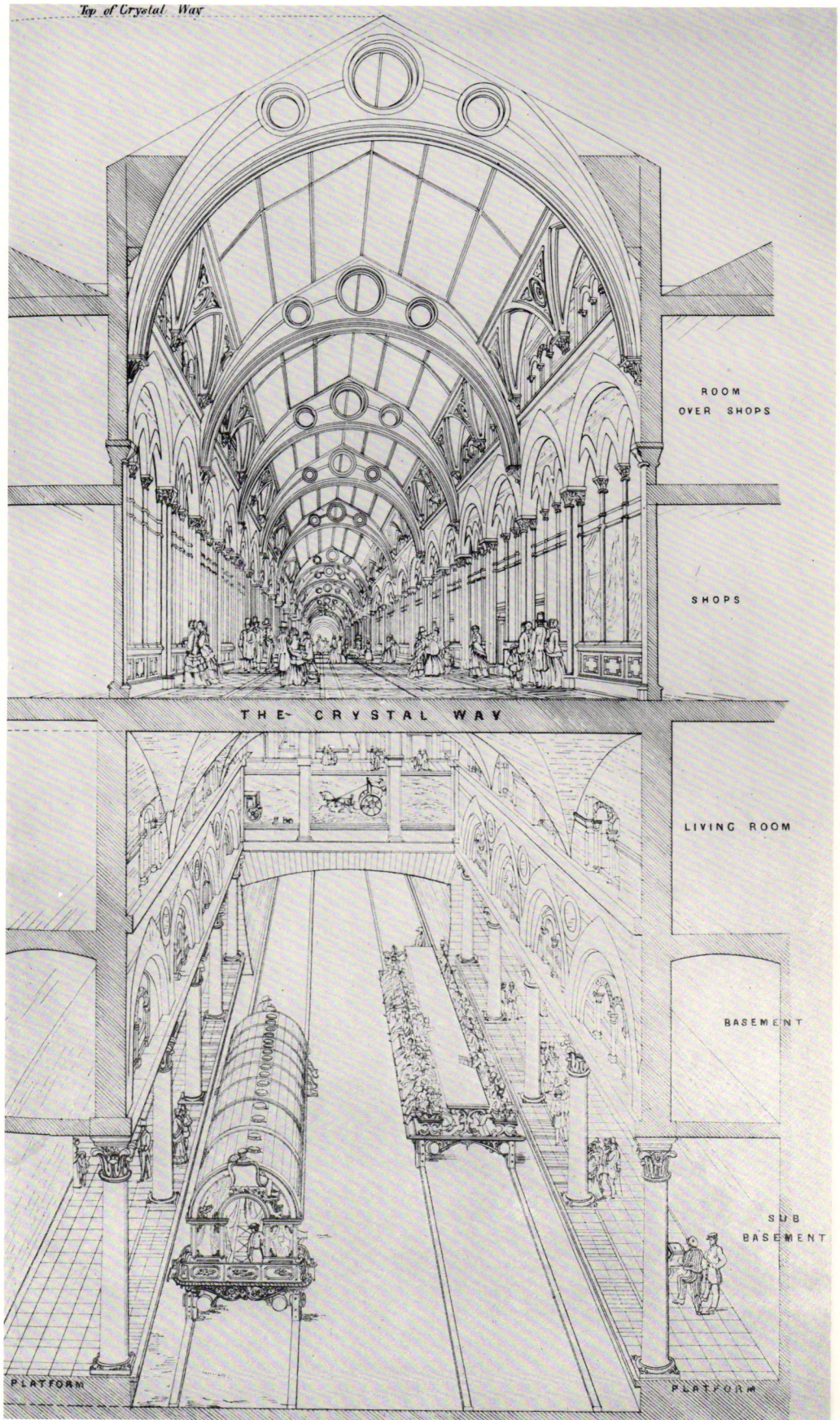
Twenty-five feet above the rail line, thirty feet wide, and rising to an arch height of forty-seven feet is the "superway" or "Crystal Way:" a continuous, enclosed, glass-roofed pedestrian arcade flanked by shops, hotels, cafes and other commercial facilities.

The delights of Milan's *Galleria* and the imposing structural form of Paxton's new Crystal Palace alluded to in Moseley's architectural scheme are combined with a convenient transportation system linking major activity centers. It was designed to traverse those deteriorated areas of central London which Moseley described in testimony to the House of Commons as ". . . the very sink of vice, filth, dirt and misery. Therefore from a sanitary point of view I think the opening of this thoroughfare would be of vast importance."



11 William Moseley, Corridor route, The Crystal Way, London, 1852

Moseley's scheme was proposed, in part, to relieve chaotic traffic congestion between Regent Circus and St. Paul's in the City, and in part as a commercial redevelopment plan through a low income corridor in London. At the upper level a long arcade is lined with shops, hotels, residences and cafes. The traditional town house of the European bourgeoisie commercial street is totally integrated with a multi-level pedestrian way and transportation corridor. Rapid transit lines (before any subway existed) are below street level, but directly connected to building basements, as well as to public passageways. Cross streets continue through the linear corridor. Rapid transit of a most elementary sort is provided in immediate proximity to centers of pedestrian activity, residences and commercial service facilities, all through a prepared financing scheme that might have subsidized the public transit system.



12 William Moseley, Cross section, The Crystal Way, London, 1852

Removal of existing blighted urban concentrations are here mingled with a development strategy and proposal for the multilevel interlinkage of a new transportation form utilizing a decked platform to create air rights over a rail right-of-way. This imaginative urban "renewal" scheme that incorporates transportation and land development planning, could be accomplished, however, only with major dislocation of people for whom no subsequent provision was made.

Moseley's corridor land development scheme, according to his calculations of land acquisition costs, construction costs and maintenance could operate successfully by charging a nominal sum for use of the rail line and for entrance to the Crystal Way. This was possible because of income to be derived from city ownership and rental of bordering properties. Thus he proposed a transit subsidy program mingled with a now familiar real estate development device: capital expenditures are made in depressed areas for transportation related "joint development" projects to create values greater than the sum of separate real estate and transportation investment. With this kind of operation, used over and over to put the United States Interstate Highway System through existing communities, the provision of a "public amenity," somewhat ironically, generally creates such high land values that escalation of rent structures and local housing costs inevitably forces the evacuation of existing residential and commercial tenants in the corridor area of influence. On the other hand, Moseley's scheme proposed a rather equitable way to finance the high cost of transit services throughout cities. In effect, he suggests that property owners who most benefit from the transit line, that is those who border it, pay for a substantial portion of operations. He does not investigate the matter in detail, but he does expose a concept which offers promise today when transit fares are rising at a hopeless rate and operating costs even faster.

What is also very creative in Moseley's scheme, besides the physical design and the financing concept, is the use of the pedestrian street as a positive central element. Rather than left over space, as it often was in the nineteenth century, and is nearly always today, the street lends value to the abutting structures, is pleasant for people to use and is indeed at the center of social interaction in urban places. The proposed elevated street reserved for pedestrians, which Moseley shows filled with leisurely shoppers and strollers, is a concept only now regaining respect, and commanding renewed emphasis in urban street closings, shopping center design and large scale redevelopment proposals for places such as Battery Park City in New York.

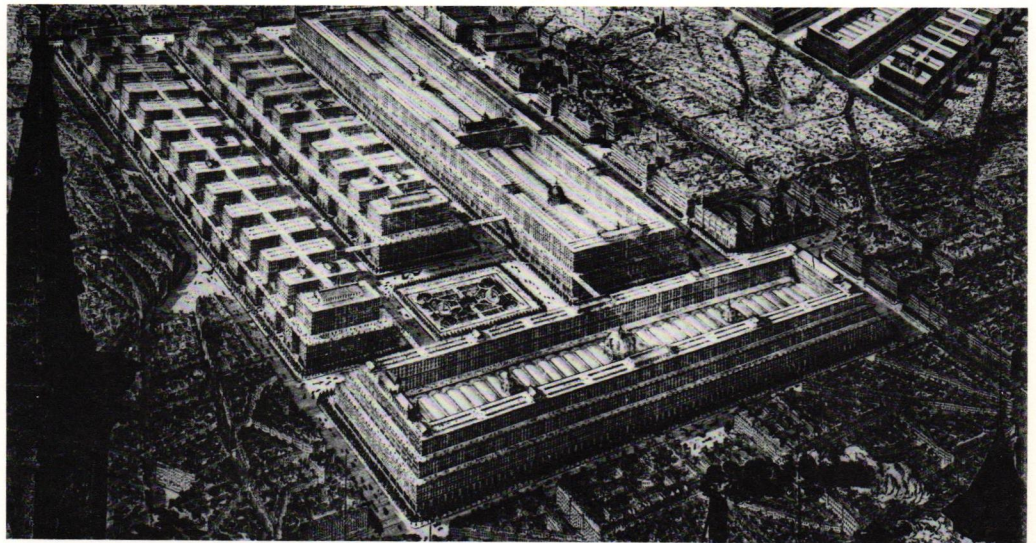
Moseley's utopian vision of a transportation type and an urban development strategy, mingled with his cynical if already popular appeal for urban hygiene (fear of tuberculosis was one of the principal sources of urban "renewal" schemes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) aroused wide debate in the House of Commons before it was rejected. Several years later funds for the first subway-rail line were authorized in Commons; less than ten years after Moseley's scheme was presented, the first underground passenger rail line anywhere was opened in London. The subsequent real estate development generated by improved public transportation in London proceeded along with the rail, but unplanned and uncoordinated. (In this connection it is interesting to recall that the Toronto subway, which opened in 1954 and cost about 67 million dollars to construct, triggered a building boom valued at over 10 billion dollars, and simultaneously created land values of three to ten times their pre-subway level, completely transforming the character of the travel corridor.)

About a decade after Moseley's proposal, Henri-Jules Borie, an engineer and socialist philosopher in Paris, published drawings and supporting documents for a vast urban "renewal" scheme which he considered applicable to all densely populated cities. His prototypical proposal, published as *Aérodômes, Essai sur un nouveau mode de maisons d'habitation applicable aux quartiers les plus mouvements des grands villes*, Paris, 1865, was widely circulated and finally re-issued in

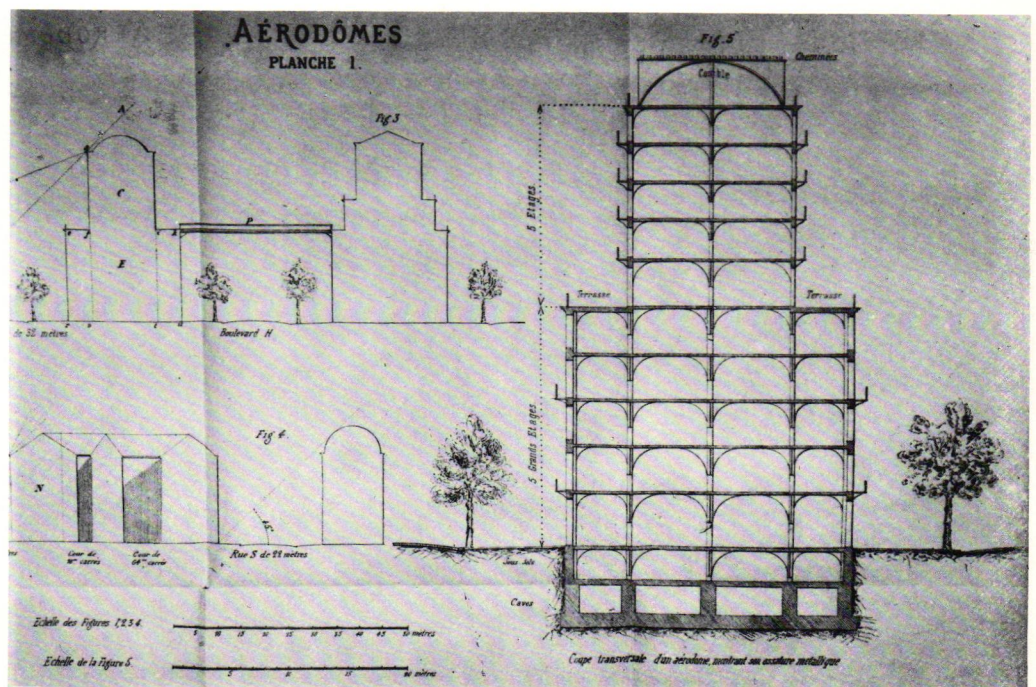
a modified second edition in 1867. These publications are significant though generally unknown documents in the early history of modern urbanism.

Borie was anxious to discover an economically feasible means by which crowded neighborhoods could be reconstituted with more and better housing, parks, sufficient sunlight, cleaner air and good circulation. "Everyone knows," Borie wrote, "that in densely populated urban areas, the air is polluted; light is meager . . . that the noise produced by vehicles is disturbing to everyone, and unbearable for the sick; that there is almost no way to avoid inclement weather when circulating through the area; that existence itself is more difficult, and notably, that rent is unreasonably high."

Borie's solution to the deplorable housing conditions in central Paris was the invention of *Aérodômes*, structures of unprecedented scale, complexity and in certain ways refinement (fig. 13). Borie designed four prototype variants. Each contained the same basic elements with different emphases. In each, a masonry foundation with sub-grade levels supported ten stories of iron skeletal construction sheathed by a masonry wall (fig. 14). At convenient intervals elevators provided vertical circulation to each floor of the structure.



13 Henri-Jules Borie, Overview, *Aérodômes*, Paris, 1865



14 Henri-Jules Borie, Section, *Aérodômes*, Paris, 1865

Borie, a Utopian Socialist engineer, lived amid the grandiose plans of the Second Empire's aristocratic and autocratic Napoleon III—Haussmann regime. His concern for radically improved living conditions for the working man led to the postulation of *Aérodômes*. Departing from the previously accepted scale for housing and, from the previous height of buildings in Paris, his ten story "mega-structures" reordered space, created their own urban organization, increased living densities, reduced housing costs, and provided for institutional needs for *Aérodôme* community residents. He also developed innovative elevated pedestrian ways and bridges over the existing noisy, muddy, street network.

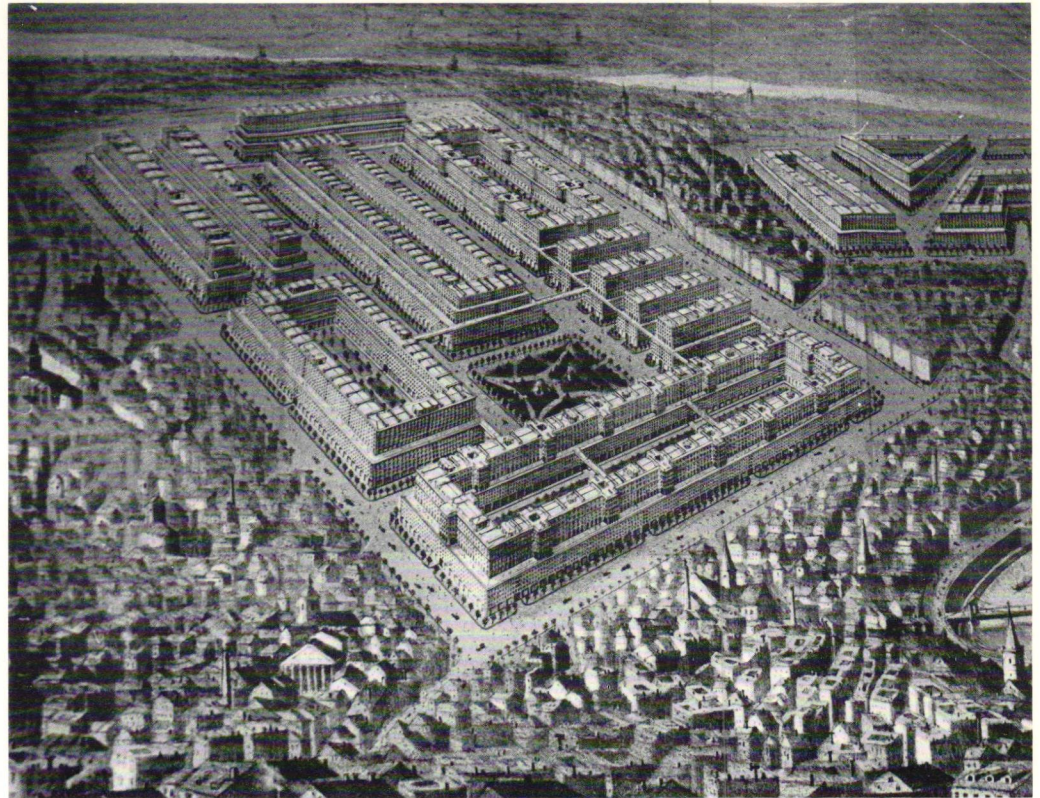
The inner courts of the *Aérodôme* were devoted to institutional and cultural needs such as churches, meeting halls, theaters, winter gardens, bazaars and markets. Building roofs were devoted to promenades and schools. Pedestrian passageways were provided along the building perimeter at the fifth floor, major structures were linked by elevated pedestrian bridges, and vertical circulation was satisfied by elevator.

An iron skeletal construction system combines with a concern for building economies, increased light, improved ventilation and purer air—criteria that led several years later to the evolution of the skyscraper. A number of these same criteria have been used to justify superblock public housing programs throughout America with physical limitations as obvious as those which mar this early attempt at a new housing form.

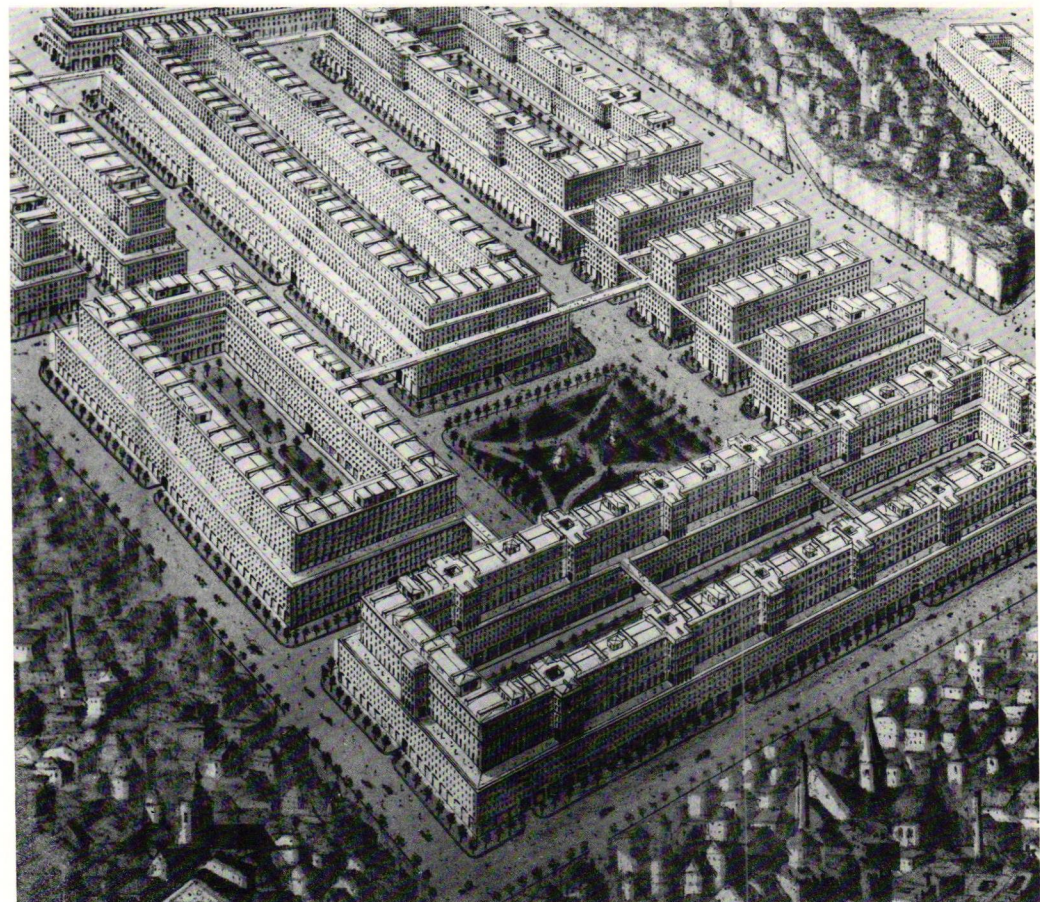
Old style urban renewal, always begun by wholesale land clearance, has early sources in idealistic and even utopian urban planning schemes. Its failure is still not fully reflected in new policies and programs.

The second edition of his scheme, two years after the first, indicates that Borie had undertaken a careful analysis of the *Aérodôme* concept, eliminated some romantic but redundant conceits such as the gothicization of institutional buildings in courts and on the roof. As a result he arrived at a large-scale scheme of city organization that was meant simultaneously to increase the livability of older neighborhoods and provide more housing within them.

His desire to improve living conditions for the working man and to discover an economical housing system obviously led to design solutions which anticipate the mundane massing of large-scale public housing schemes. But his consideration of circulation needs and their possible resolution goes further than even the most progressive notions today in these respects.



15 Henri-Jules Borie, Overview, *Aérodômes*, Paris, 1867.



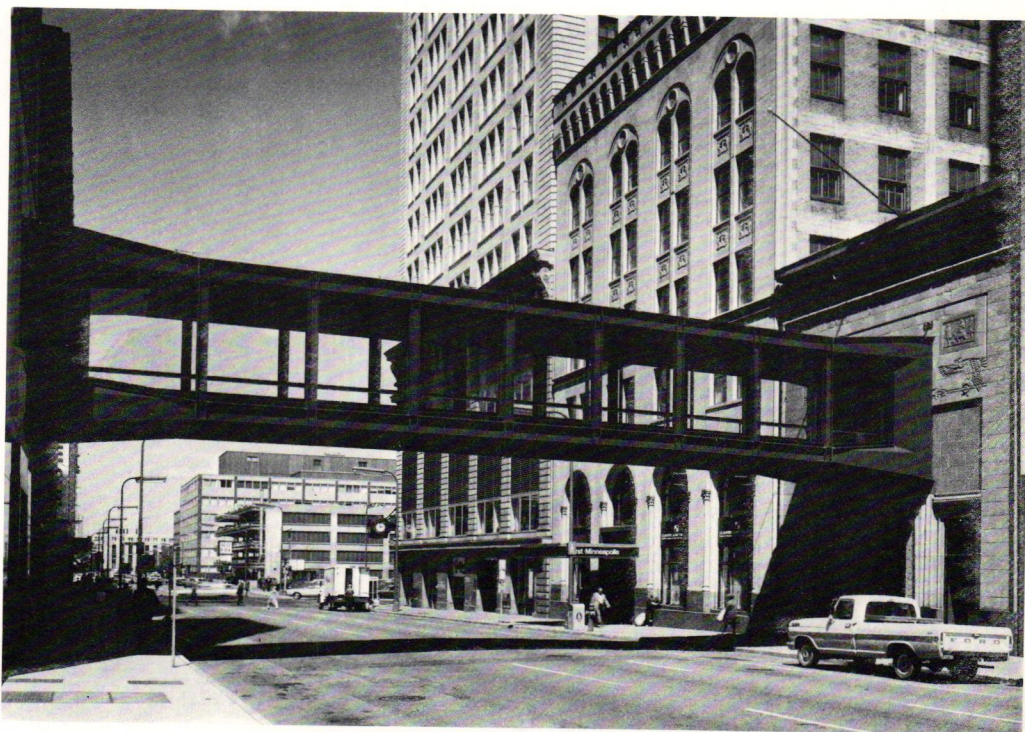
16 Henri-Jules Borie, Detail, *Aérodômes*, Paris, 1867

Circulation within the *Aérodôme* complex as well as on municipal streets surrounding and traversing Borie's structure was carefully and imaginatively provided on a number of levels. The perimeter of the roof on the fifth level of each *Aérodôme* became a pedestrian way by means of setting back the sixth to the eleventh stories of the building (figs. 15, 16). Along these elevated pedestrian streets, served by lobbies and adjacent to elevator towers, people could walk free of interference from surface hazards and surface annoyances. Glass covered bridges at the fifth level crossed existing city streets and boulevards and linked structures within the *Aérodôme* complex. The set back, as is now recognized in many zoning ordinances, also allowed substantially more light into the street below, an important consideration to Borie (fig. 16). These elevated pedestrian ways, parallel to the sidewalks below, would increase the capacity of the pedestrian circulation system as habitation increased in the area.

(If some equally imaginative solutions, such as on-grade mid-block pedestrian ways, continuous covered pedestrian concourses through the lobbies of buildings or upper level pedestrian ways, such as Minneapolis has initiated (fig. 17) through buildings, are not devised to supplement overcrowded sidewalks and make walking in all weather more pleasant, the sidewalks in city centers around the world will soon become as onerous and impassable as the antiquated single level urban street is already. The wisdom and necessity of a separate pedestrian route at least, and perhaps levels for circulation, clearly recognized by Borie and a succession of late nineteenth and early twentieth century urbanists such as Harold Speer in New York (fig. 18), Sir John Wolfe Barry in England and Eugène Hénard in France, and proven in a smattering of projects throughout this century, remains unrealized as a fundamental necessity of large-scale urban organization. Without them the multiple, simultaneous and random high volume movement requirements of contemporary city life and commerce cannot be satisfactorily accommodated.)

The roof of Borie's *Aérodômes*, accessible by elevator, is conceived as a place of intense activity related to the general needs of *Aérodôme* inhabitants (figs. 13, 14). On some, tree-lined promenades were suggested; others become places or institutions for public use such as schools, gymnasiums and churches. The enclosed central courts at ground level, created by the linked arrangement of several of Borie's *Aérodôme* prototypes, are roofed with glass to serve as large auditoriums, theaters, winter gardens, exposition halls, bazaars or markets. Others form open, but shielded, interior parks on the land surface.

A skyway plan to bind together the urban center of Minneapolis has been worked out by the Minneapolis Planning and Development Department. Eventually 64 skyways, of which 11 are existing or programmed, will form a second level mid-block concourse network linking existing and new buildings with pedestrian ways free of all auto traffic conflict, surface noise and annoying vehicle exhaust. Underground concourses and fringe parking garages are programmed to link directly to the skyways. Extension and growth is expected as private entrepreneurs realize the value of linking their buildings to this comprehensive system. If the network expands as planned, Minneapolis could develop the first urban center second level pedestrian system which effectively relates existing buildings and can accommodate new construction. Enlightened self-interest in a city that has cold weather about half the year and declining downtown business could combine with good planning to make downtown Minneapolis a more agreeable place to work, to shop and even to live.



17 Elevated Pedestrian Bridge, Minneapolis, 1970, architect Cerny and Associates, Minneapolis
photo: Eric Sutherland

Borie's extension of structure beyond the confines of existing building block scale creates an early proposed superblock or megastructure organization for housing reminiscent of Baltard's radical reorganization and reordering of the *Les Halles* district in central Paris. The required scale and the necessary height to make a suitable place with sufficient economies for people to live a better life within the existing, densely populated central cities was already apparent to Borie. With its expansive scale, multiple uses including markets, recreation and residentially related institutions and the exploited roof areas, constructive concepts for apartment housing for all income levels make an early appearance that precedes later schemes by Le Corbusier and many others.

(Fundamental to Borie's motivation for building tall were conditions not unlike those encountered in Chicago some decades later; limited and expensive land; a growing urban population that required commercial and residential accommodation; a strong desire to utilize available technical innovations to provide the amenities of better and cheaper housing with easy vertical circulation; access to clean air above the noisy, filthy street; and, unobstructed light. This combination of a tall, skeletal, vertically serviced building, proposed about fifteen years before Jenny's Home Life Insurance Building of 1883, and undoubtedly influenced by contemporary structural experiments, indicates that the resolution of many elements necessary to the formulation of the skyscraper took place considerably earlier than is generally recognized—and possibly in Europe.)

Borie's *Aérodômes*, for which he proposed central heating, full interior plumbing, and fireproofed iron construction were to be built by the city of Paris and then rented or sold as condominium apartments. As sales were made, Borie suggested that the city of Paris allocate recaptured funds partially to amortize its investments and partially to reduce the rent on units tenants could not afford to purchase. A mixed income housing program could have resulted based on sound municipal economics.

A separated pedestrian level of activity is expanded to include drawing rooms, chairs and benches for comfort during the mechanized excursion along the second level of building facades. Stops are at regular intervals, at fixed stations.

One of the effects of such an electrically propelled system today would certainly be the reduction of noxious motorized vehicular traffic, and a closer interrelationship of buildings serviced by the closed pedestrian loop. Such a system could define and connect activity zones within wider, dense city areas. It could also service, in an ideal manner, the local journey to work and to shop from bordering residential areas and transportation centers.



18 Harold Speer, *Elevated Moving Sidewalk Planned for Lower Broadway, New York, 1874*

This suggested financing strategy far exceeds in imagination and workability housing subsidy schemes currently in use in the United States, with the exception of some tentative rent subsidy programs in New York under the Urban Development Corporation program. Public financing powers can be used to assemble land, plan and supervise construction. This would keep building costs down, as conventional financing accounts for about 1/4 of all monthly home rental or ownership costs. Public financing of projects, with funds borrowed at lower rates, would reduce this burden considerably. In addition, the municipality can sell its improved property, thereby recouping expenditures and, based on some reasonable formula, also use a portion of the recouped money to subsidize necessary rental units or monthly maintenance charges. This scheme would promote families living together with a wide income range, one of the overt goals of all urban renewal housing today; and the goal could be achieved at modest cost compared to present failing public assistance and urban renewal programs.

Though problems of temporary relocation for residents during construction were not considered by Borie, an oversight consistent with attitudes prevalent during the Haussmanization of Paris, it is clear that his *Aérodôme* proposal contained advanced concepts of social responsibility, scale, arrangement, space allocation and economics that are still not today fully accepted. It is also clear that his utopian Socialist theories and commitment to the public interest ran counter to Haussmann's abhorrence of the proletariat. Borie's views were asserted through bold suggestions that challenged the scale, scope, organization and quality of previous housing proposals.

Jules-Antoine (Tony) Moilin, a medical doctor who combined his expertise in respiratory diseases with a strong interest in Utopian Socialism, extended Borie's suggestions through an 1869 book which he called *Paris en l'an 2000*. In an effort to satisfy foreseeable goals and needed solutions to central city housing and transportation, Moilin proposed, within the context of improving the existing housing stock in Paris, a comprehensive system of intra-urban transportation and pedestrian circulation. He recommended that continuous pedestrian ways be attached to existing buildings so that they would extend throughout the city, a suggestion possibly stimulated by the block long, glass covered arcades which merchants constructed in the 1820s and 1830s in Paris as cooperative efforts along the street perimeter of their properties for elegant, weather-protected display galleries and circulation ways. Moilin, who assumed that all property would be owned by the State before the year 2000, remarked that the only opposition to his plan, which would protect people from the Parisian rain, wind, fog, humidity and traffic dangers, would come from makers of umbrellas, rain wear and his medical colleagues.

Where housing stock and building inventory were what architects and planners today call "soft" (a curious term of mixed physical, computer and pop association) Moilin suggested, as did Baltard and Borie, and as has been the predominant impulse in American urban redevelopment until recently, full scale destruction followed by phased rebuilding. In place of the old enclaves, groups of structures were to be assembled, each group composed of units physically much like Borie's *Aérodômes*, which were of interest to Moilin. These were to become, as Moilin wrote, *cités-modèles*, model cities. (The existing Model Cities program in the United States is quite evidently a venue for much the same process as Moilin recommended over a century ago.)

Moilin's model cities were composed of ten story structures, serviced vertically by elevators, and directly linked to one another. Unlike Borie's scheme, however, Moilin linked his enclave to the rest of the city by an impressive array of communication and circulation channels. Below grade, a railroad transported goods and brought all necessary commodities and food stuffs to store rooms within each building. Also below grade, in a well-lit, accessible channel, all service conduits for water, gas and pneumatic postal service were provided. As new construction took place, and as older structures were renovated, Moilin expected this service

level of the city initially developed only in the *cités-modèles* to extend throughout Paris.

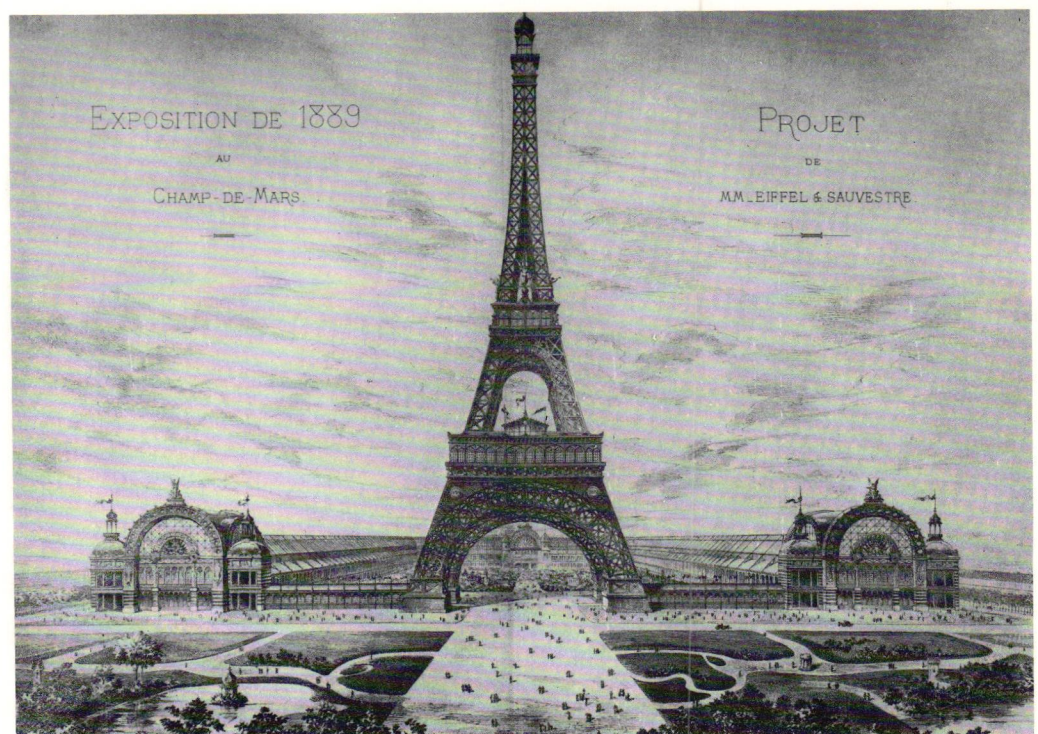
Moilin also recommended that a Paris transit network be constructed to link all parts of the city together. It should be composed, he proposed, of a double level of elevated rail lines carried on iron bridges above the streets. The lower level was to be radial, and converge on the center of the city. The upper lines were to be a series of widening concentric circles surrounding the city. These two formations, much like the efficient, abstract, rationalistic patterns still imposed on cities by some highway engineers, would be, in Moilin's opinion, "... so light and wonderfully bold that, far from harming the beauty of the city, would form one of its principal ornaments."

Enthusiasm for the potentialities of iron skeletal structures underlies Moilin's rationalistic system for a comprehensive rapid transit network on exposed iron bridges throughout Paris. This esthetic of the beauty of iron in structural formation, celebrated conclusively in the Paris *Exposition Universelle* of 1889 and the years immediately following (fig. 19), combined with the stimulation of the opening of the first metropolitan rail line in London in 1863, while none existed in Paris, probably combine to explain Moilin's unfortunate recommendation for elevated rail trusses all over Paris.

During a quarter century, 1850–1875, these large schemes, briefly described above, were proposed for urban reorganization linked in remarkably advanced ways to pedestrian and public transportation networks. The inspiration for each of them was the creation of a better city environment according to the goals of each sponsor. The justification for a few of them, notably Borie's and Moilin's, was the utopian hope for a better life for people living within congested and dehumanizing conditions. However, the implementation of any of them would have required the dispersion of many people, especially those the projects were conceived to help.

These earlier planning schemes by Baltard, Moseley, Borie and Moilin are the product, in most cases, of amateur urbanists. Nevertheless, in each of them, the boldness of physical solution imparts a quality generally lacking in our own era.

The Eiffel Tower is the only fragment that was accepted of Eiffel and Sauvestre's proposed site plan for the *Exposition Universelle* of 1889. The great "U" shaped exposition halls, which were on two levels and through which a suspended monorail was meant to take visitors for an excursion and over-view of all exhibits, were not built. This plan and Contamin's *Galerie des Machines* are the culmination of the French infatuation with the esthetic of exposed structural iron.



19 G. Eiffel and S. Sauvestre, Proposed Site Plan, *Exposition Universelle* of 1889, Paris, 1886

The concern with creative municipal economics in several of the schemes recognizes a fundamental requirement if any successful urban redevelopment is to take place at a meaningful scale. Focus on the individual, the pedestrian, the urban resident and the urban street are characteristic of all the projects—a focus so often forgotten today that we hardly recognize its absence.

In some, the depth of social concern is remarkably reinforced through innovative planning suggestions whose originality and appropriateness indicate how little advanced thinking is available in our own time. Even these, however, finally indicate that the requirements of social renewal and the demands of urban renewal, double demands whose contradictory and allusive qualities still haunt physical and social planners, cannot be satisfied simultaneously in the context of the built environment. At the same time, it is clear that these earlier schemes contain a core understanding: solution to either social or physical renewal in the city, to succeed, must include carefully conceived and closely related transportation and pedestrian planning. Even this insight is not generally recalled today.

Peter Wolf

Peter Wolf, an Economic and Transportation Consultant, is also a Fellow of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, New York. He has written articles for Art in America and Perspecta and has recently completed a book, sponsored by the Ford Foundation and the American Federation of Arts, entitled The Evolving City. He is participating in a number of development studies throughout the country, including an economic analysis and demonstration study on "New Forms of the Urban Street," for the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. A Yale graduate, Dr. Wolf received a Ph.D. in History of Architecture and City Planning from New York University, was a Fulbright Fellow in Paris, 1966, and a Graham Foundation Fellow, 1968.

Urban Renewal in America, 1950–1970: A Symposium

To assess the environment created by urban renewal in American cities over the past twenty years and to examine the prospects for the urban community in the next decade, a symposium was sponsored by Walker Art Center and The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts on June 4 and 5, 1971.

The participants were:

Donald Canty (moderator), Editor, *City* magazine, Washington, D. C.
Denise Scott Brown, critic and planner, Venturi and Rauch, Philadelphia
Chester Hartman, lecturer in the Department of City Planning, Berkeley
Barry Jackson, planner, Applied Design Methods, New York
Arthur Naftalin, Professor in the School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota ⁽¹⁾
John Pastier, architecture critic, *Los Angeles Times*
Bernard Spring, Dean, School of Architecture, City College of New York
Allan Temko, critic and lecturer, Social Science Integrated Courses, Berkeley
Richard Saul Wurman, architect and planner, Murphy Levy Wurman, Philadelphia

(1)
Mr. Naftalin was not present when the tape segments transcribed here were made.



Symposium participants, left to right: Bernard Spring, John Pastier, Chester Hartman, Barry Jackson, Allan Temko, Donald Canty, Denise Scott Brown, Richard Wurman, Arthur Naftalin
photo: Tom Berthiaume



Following are excerpts from two days of conversation.

- Canty** To what extent should professionals in architecture and planning concentrate on performing as professionals, and to what extent should they be involved in political and social change? Do these two worlds come together? As there is a paucity of architectural and planning information available to the citizenry and to professionals, a) what role might professionals have in improving the information flow and, b) how might that goal otherwise be reached? We are challenged to more clearly delineate points of leverage in urban strategy, in ways that could be convincing to those who vote and pay taxes. Let's begin by talking about advocacy planning.
- Spring** My firm, Davis, Brody and Associates, started out as what I think would be called conventional advocacy planners. We worked with a group in Newark that was likely to get a piece of land on which to build a project. We listened to them, we wrote up a program, went back to the drafting room and designed something we thought met all their requirements. We brought it back and they said, "This is wonderful, we love it," and it was taken to the Mayor's office, and he said, "I love it too," and then the political situation changed, as it always does, and all we had were drawings. At that point in time we saw that maybe we were taking the wrong strategy and maybe it was more important to teach people how to do this for themselves, and also to teach them to do it in a very resilient way so that as political patterns changed, they were able to change, and not have to go back to get someone to draw up a whole set of new drawings. That conclusion led to the invention of the movable model which all of our clients now enjoy using.
- There was a stigma on all our earlier work in that it seemed to be designed for poor people, and I realized that we had devised, with the movable model, a design method good for anybody, and we didn't have to make distinctions between an approach for poor people and an approach for rich people; if it was any good it was good for all. We as professionals provide the method, the group provides the values and goals they fight for.
- Hartman** In my experience, even when the so-called community does become a client, usually one, two, three or four people are really involved and there is rarely truly broad-based participation. Community organization and political organization involve long term development and a lot of our time spans, in terms of developing a housing scheme, are short. We want to get it done rather quickly. Because the process of getting anything done takes so long, if you have to go through several years before you have a community that can do that planning, the houses never get built. In practice, we wind up doing a lot more advocacy ourselves than we believe we should be doing. (See Mr. Hartman's piece in DQ 82/83, "Harvard's Urban Field Service: A Retrospective View.")
- Spring** That's true, but I don't think it's special for people who have been previously disenfranchised. Our office had a job for a very powerful client who wanted to build some housing in New York. It took fifteen years. I suppose you could say our office was an advocate during that period.
- Brown** Why should the client do the designing if he wanted you to do it? If he came to you and he trusts you, and you have a good relationship with him so that you will eventually find out what his needs are, why should he deflect himself from his other concerns to do it himself? Maybe he should be much more politically involved. When I say he, I mean the community client. In other words, if he came to you for a certain piece of expertise, why shouldn't he get it? Must every lawyer teach the community to do its own law, must every doctor teach the community to provide its own medicine?
- Jackson** I would disagree with that because one of the major problems is the fact that the planner often goes away when the project is incomplete. The community is left without its technical arm, so we must develop the know how and leave it in the community.

- Brown** As a long-term aim I would say that's right, and one of the ways you do it is by helping the community to go to school.
- Jackson** Well, that's fine, but on a shorter term basis what we try to do is get into a non-design sort of thing, so the design is really irrelevant, and we work to develop a kit of parts so the community can design its own buildings.
- Spring** I don't think there's a matter of principle here. If the community wants to act in the old patron model, they have that right, and if they want to learn to do it themselves, then they have that right. I don't see any conflict if we just make it a matter of options.
- Wurman** The idea is to put in front of people the ability to learn how to articulate constructive demands that are sensible. The problem I see is that people have the ability only to ask for what they already know, which is often a product, instead of asking for the kinds of performances they would like to have in the area in which they live. What I mean is, they even see a park as a product, and they want more parks. They should be able to ask for places of recreation which might or might not be a park. To provide the tools so people can make that leap is the real issue. Of course, we're in the physical business here, but all the performances people want don't necessarily relate to physical things. They might be answered by people, or law, or something else.
- Spring** What you referred to as a leap I would prefer to call a judgment, and in some cases you can actually ascertain whether a certain form will allow for a certain activity to occur. The workbook ⁽²⁾ of which the movable model is an element, has two parts: a part where you express the need or desire for a certain activity, and a part where you have a catalogue of physical forms and then make a judgment about which physical form will allow the desired activities. That's the toughest part.
- Wurman** I still prefer the leap, because I think it's a change in the way people think. We are so trained to ask for the product. We want a lightbulb rather than lighting, and I think it's very important to understand that what we really want is lighting, and that lighting could occur on business streets if everyone kept storefronts lit 24 hours a day. In that case we might not need the lightbulb at all.
- Temko** I think better than having everyone his own doctor, because everyone can't be a brain surgeon, is the analogy with a big effort now being made to improve diet. If poor people know how to feed themselves, and spend money wisely on food, they're going to become healthier. This is something that can be taught and can become part of the culture.
- Pastier** There's still something that gets lost. Everyone has talked about a situation where the community is a group of people in a residential environment, and that isn't necessarily their entire world. For instance, there are two downtown Los Angeleses, one with 60-story buildings, and right alongside the remains of the old downtown—now pretty much Chicano and Black. These people are customers and employees in this area but they have no turf rights in a political sense, and yet this area is part of their city. I wonder if things will evolve to the point where a situation like that can be intervened in through advocacy methods.
- Canty** One of the things this panel has been asked to look into is scale. Can you elevate the scale of the individual project to a larger part of the city and relate it to larger forces and larger contacts? Have we an evolving competence, a professional competence, a communal competence, to cope at that scale?
- Jackson** No. Our problem is that we can't understand complexity when it grows beyond bite-size. You can analyze within the values of a single block what the best solution is there. As soon as you have two blocks you have the interaction between

⁽²⁾ *Planning and Design Workbook for Community Participation*. Research Center for Urban and Environmental Planning, Princeton University for the State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

them, then traffic and maybe a school, and as you keep moving out the complexity gets so large, the political dimensions so great, you never can make the trade-offs that are required. And attempts to address these problems to the computer have failed dismally.

Brown Computer people who have pushed physical planners down because they have been much too global, have become more omnivorous than the physical planners ever were.

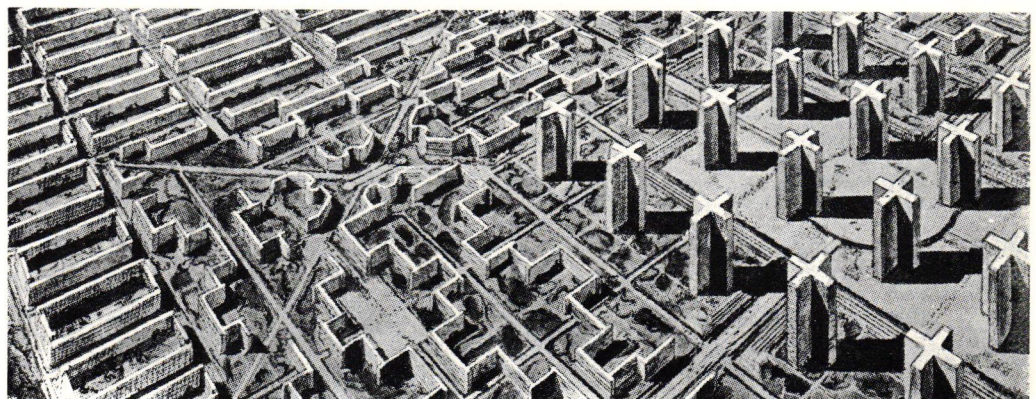
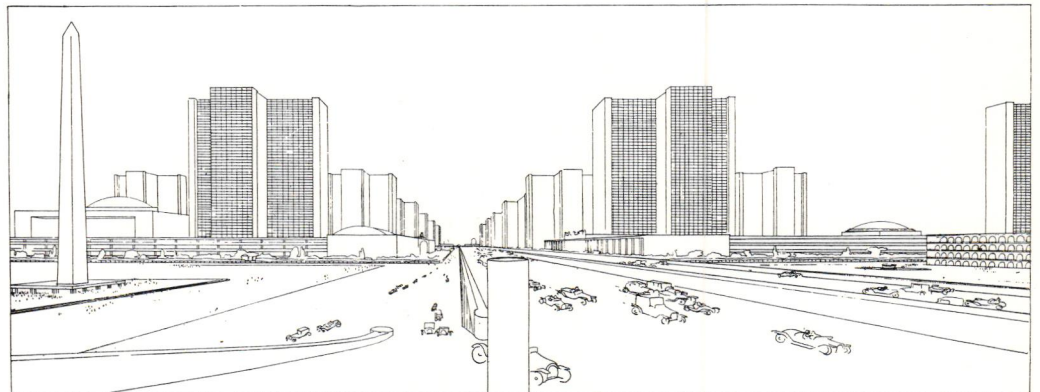
Jackson None of the computer models have been successful. Nobody is communicating through the literature—and we all have different data bases so we can't even use each others models without all new data.

Wurman I think what we do as a profession, with less expertise than anything else, is communicate to each other what we're doing; putting it in a form that other people can use. You only understand something relative to something you understand; architects and planners don't put information out in a way that allows for universal understanding.

Pastier In general, planners don't really want to be in the public process, they want to appear to be. If the conclusion is that things can't be handled except on a small scale, shouldn't that conclusion be followed up by saying that we can save a lot of money by getting rid of institutions that pretend to do something that is, in fact, impossible.

Spring Do you have any proposals for how to get rid of an institution?

Canty I'm a reformed ex-urban renewal commissioner from Englewood, New Jersey, where we were fighting the city's urban renewal plan partly on the ground that it could attack only one block at a time in a very large blighted area. It would attack it solely on the basis of building something cleaner than what existed at the time. Our argument was, if we spruce up this one block, and leave the surrounding



Le Corbusier's 1925 "City" seen from the main road above, with civic buildings left and right; the plan view of a neighborhood is shown below
photo courtesy Artemis Verlag, from *Le Corbusier 1910–1965*, by Boesiger and Girsberger

blocks in a state of physical and social decay, the forces which originally blighted this block will converge upon it once more and blight will reappear. I am suggesting that, perhaps, even though we may find the bite-size project more compatible and durable, there may still be a need to look for ways to extend our scope.

Spring I just discovered that we may be having a language problem. When I talk about disjointed incrementalism (the traditional American planning method), I'm willing to see a large system and deal with it, but I'm talking about making one decision at a time. That's different from the other definition of bite-size, which is an old geographic definition.

Pastier That suggests a way of getting rid of the dinosaur bureaucracy that is really extinct, though we keep subsidizing it. Create an alternate agency that deals rationally with whatever infra-structure decisions can be made and have to be made, rather than leaving them to a special purpose agency, like a highway department.

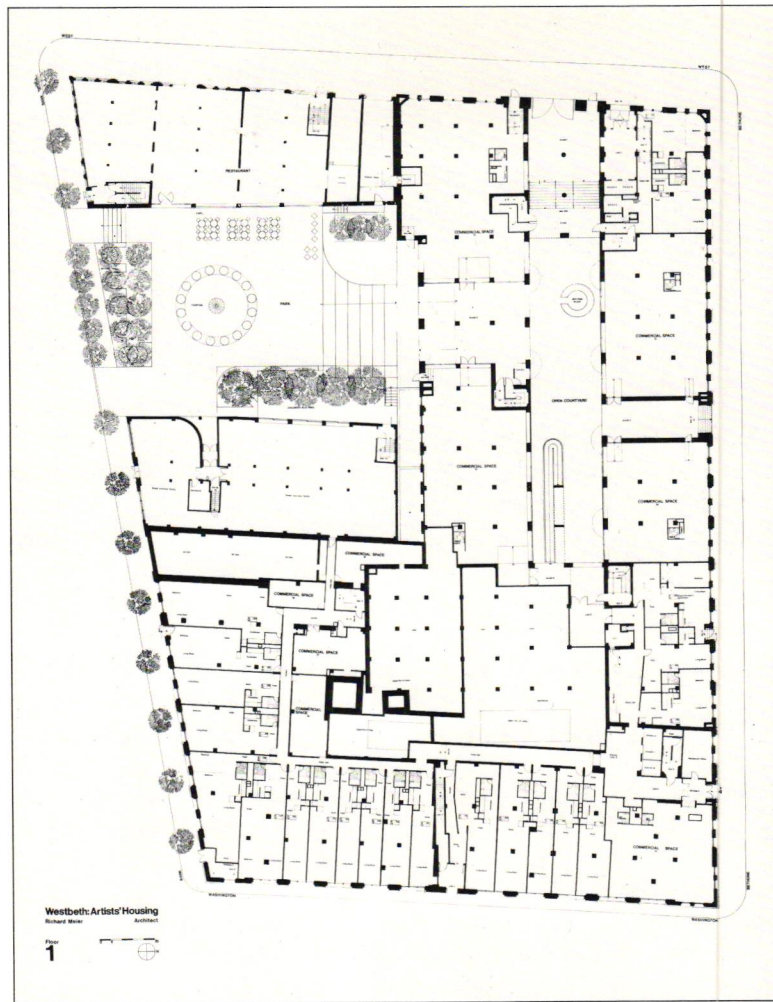
Temko Many great things have been done on a very large scale in our country in a mixed economy. I don't know how many people have gone to see the TVA⁽³⁾, but it's a pilgrimage worth making. Nowhere in the country will you see recreation centers, restrooms, drinking fountains, the details of the whole facilities, the lakes, docks, done with such love as the architects showed who worked for TVA in the 30s. You can make policies on a very large scale, and leave them to individual interpretation which is something good or bad according to local ability.

Pastier Your looking at TVA and finding good things is like looking at a light in a sepulchre, because TVA is a big strip mining customer and if you see a good-looking dam, that's only half the equation—a strip mine is there too.

Brown We can work with human scale forms and in a general way work incrementally, permissively. We like the old architecture, we're going to put new with it and think that things can go well together. That's an approach that leads to a physical solution and it's the exact opposite of the traditional urban renewal approach. Urban renewal took its stance from Corbusier who said of New York—when the streets are straight the mind is clear, and he went back to Paris and said, let's get rid of this whole city, it's an ugly old hag—and he showed you terrible blocks of medieval Paris with his towers rising pure and pristine and separated by great green fields. We have taken that model and we have said no to medieval Paris, yes to a Cartesian formal ordering system of straight lines, of much clearance, of hopefully green, but parking if we must, and it seems to me that all architects who say that physical questions are unimportant, have allowed themselves to take a set of physical values without investigating them to see if they are, in fact, socially feasible. Now the Meisian ordering of forms which involves wide open spaces and a rectangular ordering of blocks has been very difficult to impose on cities that aren't doing a lot of clearance—even if you take Society Hill (Philadelphia) where there's been a careful relationship between colonial architecture and the pristine modern of I. M. Pei, it's involved a great deal of clearance, because even if colonial is O.K., you still need large, open spaces. I think we have been accepting, unconsciously, a set of very tyrannical, formal prescriptions. We thought that when we had modern architecture we would just ignore the whole question of form, because function is what determines form, yet we've allowed ourselves to have an academy of formalism imposed upon us. We've imposed it on ourselves, which is more tyrannical, because it has been so unconscious on our parts. Now we're saying we have to start allowing a much more messy, much less simple, ordering system.

There are also the fine arts commissions who inevitably say—make a slab with a big space around it. The point is there are definite formal preconceptions that these commissions and design review boards have. They have a religion about what architecture is, and it's all based on a kind of Mies van der Rohe model.

(3) Tennessee Valley Authority, an independent agency created by Act of Congress in 1933, launched the Federal government into a huge regional planning and development effort related to the Tennessee river basin.



Floor plan and exterior view of Westbeth, 1970, the old Bell Labs building converted by architect Richard Meier into housing and studio spaces for artists
photo: Ezra Stoller courtesy Richard Meier & Associates

- Temko** You are unfair to caricature the work of a great master who was not arrogant in the way Le Corbusier was; a lot of things make sense with grass around them.
- Brown** Architects have used a set of grammar which is not a suitable grammar to most situations. I don't think it was very suitable even for much of Mies's own work, and I think it's less suitable for downtown renewal.
- Temko** The Chicago lake front is no different from a Corbusien idea. The fact that you get knifed there is not any reason to do what Jane Jacobs would do.⁽⁴⁾ Jane Jacobs has won in the West Village. She wishes to perpetuate the 19th century city. You ought to see Westbeth, the old Bell Labs Building which has been converted to artists' housing, and the next five blocks, which have five-story walkups for families. They're duplicating the 19th century village. There's no open space to speak of—just a street for the garbage trucks Mrs. Jacobs likes and thinks are educational. She prefers that a tree grows in Brooklyn—one tree to a lot of trees. Right next to the 19th century village is the waterfront: degraded, ruined by a freeway. A potentially marvelous river which any kind of vision would have said we have to deal with in a broad way. The things we admire in Europe that work well are big, abstract pieces of land, like the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris.
- Brown** I heard the same argument in Philadelphia made to the people on South Street. A planner there said, ". . . In the last century a great many people sacrificed their estates and now we have Fairmont Park and it worries me that you people won't sacrifice your housing now so we can have a great freeway in the future." That argument seems to me to be a terrible non sequitur.

(4) Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Random House, 1961.



Society Hill, Philadelphia, showing I. M. Pei's Washington Square East apartments in background, 1965
photo: Robert Damora courtesy I. M. Pei & Partners

- Temko** I am mentioning things like the Luxembourg Gardens that give joy to innumerable—
- Brown** Yes, but how much housing would you remove to make it now?
- Temko** I wouldn't have the slightest objection to destroying housing—first of all, all of this sentimentality about slums rests on the idea that people want them.
- Brown** It all has to do with priorities. We are not building public housing—if we were building public housing we could have much bigger clearance projects. If we're not building new housing and people have to go on living in slums, in that context how can you ask for Luxembourg Gardens?
- Temko** Everyone should have the best, and I think you've done a terrible injustice to the founders of the modern movement. They had a premise that you've lost—which is that we never had a civilization, that civilization is junk. They grew up and saw people slaughtered at Verdun, they saw the fighting in 1915; you see, they didn't give a damn for ancient civilizations.
- Brown** I have a great admiration for the early modernists; I am criticizing their latter day descendants. I was being descriptive of Corbusier, and I strongly criticize using his attitudes today. We have brought his ideas across the Atlantic and used them for rich people's housing on Society Hill. The social content has been lost.
- Temko** I don't think that's true. I'm for rehabilitation if it makes sense, but I think designing down for the poor is wrong. You've done a disservice to the memory of the great masters because they thought the poor deserved the best.
- Brown** So do we.
- Temko** Well, is Las Vegas the best? Is Levittown the best?
- Brown** There's something to be learned from Las Vegas and from Levittown, and there's something to be learned from Chartres. We are not giving the people of South Street Las Vegas or Chartres. Both are manipulative situations in a social sense, both are physical situations from which an architect can learn a great deal. They're very parallel in that. Now, I wouldn't say we're giving South Street anything except a fair amount of time. I hope I'm helping people find out what they need and how to get what they need. I think urban renewal in America shows that we can't trust ourselves (architects and planners), by ourselves, to renew cities.
- Temko** I'm not advocating the brand of urban renewal taking place in most cities.
- Brown** Except that it was a great big mistake by experts who gave the formal vocabularies to other people's aims—so why is Levittown all that much worse?
- Temko** The Levitts have a double-frosted vanilla milk shake idea of architecture, except when it comes to cost, and the houses are pretty interesting technically. They claim they tried some "fancy" architects who could only bring in houses at fifty thousand dollars a number. That's simply not true, because many builders are building much better houses, competitive in the market elsewhere. The fact that Levittown stumbled through is not so important as that it could have done something greater and didn't.
- Canty** There's fairly little enthusiasm around the table for what has been bought under the urban renewal program; there's an argument about its antecedents and perhaps what should have been built. I would like to ask a question. Does the nature of what has been built reflect the nature of the enterprise of the program; is there a connection between what we see when we look out at these vast urban renewal projects and the nature of the program that should lead us to amend it so we can amend that?



Luxembourg Gardens, Paris
photo: Philip Larson



South Street, Philadelphia, 1971
photo: Denise Scott Brown

- Wurman** I think what is generally being built, whether under urban renewal, private enterprise or commercial development, is all equally pretty bad. The urban renewal projects that have been talked about are perhaps more personally offensive because they're inhumane in the way they deal with people. This goes back to the problem of how architects and planners react to performance. Too much architecture is made on the basis of how the product looks. We don't ask how it performs—the magazines don't, the city planners don't, the critics don't. There are many ways to get our environment to perform the way it should, and these need not just be applied to urban renewal, but to schools and other public environments that also don't perform well.
- Brown** People seem to love to go to Las Vegas, they seem to love to go to Disneyland, whether we think it's viable or not.
- Wurman** I agree, there is something to be learned about performance from Las Vegas and Disneyland. What are the things people feel? Why do people like to be in Disneyland? What do people like about going to an Expo? I believe they like being there because they can see other people doing things freely, go in and out of places with no feeling of hostility. I think the physical environment looked awful, and its impermanence is rather shocking to me—but there are a lot of performances in looking at the city that are parallel to looking at Expo, and the cities are missing the ingredients that made Expo work.
- Pastier** I think what has happened to our cities is that people have decided the city is no longer a public situation. One way they decided this was by moving away from it as much as possible— "If I have to work downtown I'll still live eight miles out"—that's one way of doing it; another is institutionally. For example, renewal projects will build in certain kinds of security things—the green belt is a form of security. If you walk off the sidewalk toward a building we can see you there, know that you are going, and watch you. Ultimately that points to a society that is not at ease with itself. If the society is in trouble, our architecture and our cities are going to reflect that. As designers, we can fight against that, but it's not going to make as much difference as we would hope.
- Audience** Yesterday we talked about a lack of public information. I wonder if you would be willing to consider some sort of public policy statements by designers as part of their initial contract with a client. If they would demand that design decisions and information be published in the public media it would constitute a self-reporting on the part of the design profession.
- Spring** If you compare the amount of public evaluation we have of television programs, theater and all the other arts, to the amount we have of buildings that directly affect people's lives, there is no comparison. We are beginning to see some architectural criticism in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, but why isn't every building reviewed in the same way that every show that opens is reviewed?
- Pastier** Because a building is much bigger than a show and because it also is not intended to be a work of art. A Broadway show has to succeed at least on some grounds of being a good show, and a building isn't defined that way. Its purposes are not really architectural.
- Spring** My question was really rhetorical, but why couldn't we urge that this happen?
- Hartman** I had a friend who was reviewing for the Boston Globe and promptly got fired because he started to attack department store architecture which is a major source of revenue for the paper.
- Canty** We have no means of measuring the non-financial costs of public works undertakings such as urban renewal or even housing projects. For example, with highways, we know the gross financial outlay involved but we don't know the impact on the environment or the people, and we really don't know how to measure that.



Suburban housing from "Learning from Levittown" project
photo: Denise Scott Brown



The Las Vegas strip by day
photo: Denise Scott Brown

- Brown** We appoint fine arts commissions to take care of the public interest, but I would much rather see the public interest debated in the paper than have a set of experts making the decisions.
- Hartman** I'm wondering really if it's possible to develop any more democratic approach to design review in a true sense of people. People feel an enormous sense of importance about a building—they see a public building going up and becoming a major force in the environment and have no say about it—I wonder what would happen if architects were required to present their buildings to the public for review.
- Brown** If a million people say a building is bad—is it bad? Maybe ten million people over a period of one hundred years, starting fifty years from now will say it's good.
- Canty** What kind of tool do we need? Is urban renewal it? If not, what would be it?
- Audience** What effect will the new cities and new towns now being built with great rapidity have on existing cities and is this going to affect what we know as urban renewal?
- Jackson** Hopefully it will make it obsolete.
- Hartman** I think the scale is going to be much too small to make any dent and that's kind of a prediction of fact. There won't be enough of them, and they won't be large enough to make a real dent in city problems, and over and above that, they strike me as a real "cop-out" on the city. I see a whole lot of developments now like mobile home parks and developments for the elderly and developments for young twenties people, all as an attempt to escape certain people and certain problems.

photo: Donald Luckenbill



Oriental Masonic Gardens, New Haven, Connecticut, 1971, a "plug-in," movable housing development by Paul Rudolph, using units fabricated in Baltimore, Maryland and trucked to the site

- Jackson** Some people predict that we're going to have twice as many people in the year 2000. In other words, we'll have to rebuild the country entirely, and either have twice as many cities or expand the ones we now have.
- Hartman** I think we'll see the rise of multiple cities much like the megalopolis Los Angeles is now, with four or five metropolitan centers instead of one major center.
- Jackson** You're predicting real chaos.
- Canty** New communities—if we judge by the new ones we have built thus far—would be a “cop-out.” However, if they were built according to the specifications of Title 7 of the 1970 Housing Act, which requires a high level of public services and a range of housing, they could make a contribution in the total growth picture, though a small one. Their utility would be that they would provide options more quickly than we're going to provide them either by rebuilding in the city or by breaking down suburban barriers. Secondly, they might teach us some lessons in terms of innovation.
- I have a modest proposal that could be an alternative. First we stop such abominations as wars and the interstate highway program and seriously make up our minds to start spending where the need really is, and taxing ourselves to do so. I suspect if we don't do that, nothing is going to happen, especially for those whose needs are greatest in our society. As a first step we should consider Richard Burton's proposal that we amend the constitution to allow for new states comprised of metropolitan areas of one million or more inhabitants. Metropolitan areas realistically defined by economic and social relationships. These states should leave local jurisdictions intact as operational entities but aggregate their development power with development controls such as zoning, and positive powers including the things we tried to make happen with urban renewal. To accomplish these things, these new states, with Federal aid, begin to buy virtually all land in the path of future urban development. The deployment, disposition and development of this land would be placed in the hands of new elective state development agencies, elected from population-equal districts, many of which would be at a neighborhood scale within existing big cities. These districts would have specific power, but not veto power, over the development agency. I would suggest that this mechanism could be the only way to make design and planning possible.
- Jackson** The question is—what dynamic of society will make it want to rebuild the cities?
- Brown** The great mechanism is catastrophe and fear of it (e.g. the San Francisco fire). Realistically, when something terrible happens then legislation is passed.
- Wurman** We could simulate a catastrophe in terms that people would understand.
- Brown** That's what the ecology movement is trying to do.
- Jackson** I think the kind of fear we're talking about is incomprehensible. You can comprehend being mugged, because it's small scale.
- Canty** We could answer the question in terms of projection, including the element of apprehension (to avoid the word fear) about the consequences of inaction. One could project a future of increasing division and then project an alternative, drawing upon social concern and the new interest in the environment, attempting to project a future that would result in more amenity and convenience for the middle class.
- Pastier** Something very similar to what Don describes was done in California. A group of conservationists put together an alternate state plan, and their format was: California zero, what has happened until now; California one, what's going to happen under trends; and California two, what's going to happen under their proposals. It's an abstraction to most people—it never got off the ground as a broad concern.

It might be possible in a small area or a small project; in California it was just another piece of information overload.

Spring We're talking about disasters that have nothing to do with the nature of the physical environment, because we lack knowledge of disasters that are caused by the nature of the physical environment. We're talking about subtle things, like the quality of the street, and the kind of information you get on that street, whether it's trees or grass or signs. We don't know what kind of impact that has on people. There is no convincing research that says if you live in a certain kind of environment, such and such will happen to you. That's why we haven't been able to convince people to care about it—that's the power of knowledge.

Canty What about other alternative programs that might replace urban renewal as we know it?

Hartman The one thing I could throw into this programmatic cover is some notion of one of the things we're doing at Berkeley. In the School of Law, we've been trying to develop a housing allowance, a housing entitlements scheme, that would solve the housing problem of an entire metropolitan area within a relatively short time—four to five years.

I think housing problems may be the key to all urban problems. We know about the problems and the programs that haven't worked and we know what could work, and we think it's possible to design a system to solve the housing problem. We would like to spend the necessary money and demonstrate that it could be done, and in the process demonstrate that it would be feasible to do it nationally.

Spring The question usually asked is how can we improve without changing? The answer is we can't. So a reasonable proposal would be something relatively hard to take and something you have to fight for. My list of priorities is as follows: 1) redistribution of income and power so that we have an equality of options for all the people in the country, mind you, talking about physical change in the city; 2) work toward self-regulating systems; 3) work toward increasing the amount of information available about alternatives and the consequences of those alternatives. All three of these things are very hard to accomplish. It's a political battle, but it's necessary for bringing about change in the city.