

# PLACES



2003 EDRA/Places Awards  
Dialogues With History



PEI COBB FREED & PARTNERS  
LIBRARY





**Places, a Forum of  
Environmental Design**

Volume 16, Number 1

**Editorial:**  
**Looking Across Time**  
Donlyn Lyndon

**2003 EDRA/Places Awards**

**Design**  
Outdoor Classrooms at Eib's Pond  
and Roy Wilkins Parks  
*Marpillero Pollak Architects*, 8

Abercrombie and Fitch Headquarters  
*Anderson Architects p.c.*, 12

**Planning**  
Development Plan and AWI Vision  
for the Southwest Waterfront  
*Beyer Blinder Belle, Hamilton  
Rabinovitz & Alschuler, Greenberg  
Consultants*, 16

First Nations Community  
Planning Model  
*Cities and Environment Unit,  
Dalbousie University*, 20

**Research**  
*Reclaiming the American West*  
*Alan Berger*, 24

*Sento at Sixth and Main:  
Preserving Landmarks of Japanese  
American Heritage*  
*Gail Dubrow and Donna Graves*, 28

**Commentary**  
The EDRA/Places Awards,  
1998-2003  
*William L. Porter*, 32

Informing Places  
*Mark Francis*, 33

The Place of Research  
*David Brain*, 37

**Portfolio**  
Twenty-Three Years Later:  
Two Moments on New York's  
Lower East Side  
*Brian Rose*, 42

**Speaking of Places**  
Il Magistero: De Carlo's Dialogue  
with Historical Forms  
*John McKean*, 54

**Research and Debate**  
Fixing Historic Preservation:  
A Constructive Critique of  
"Significance"  
*Randall Mason*, 64

The Changing Place of Interpretation  
in American Public Space  
*Ronald Lee Fleming, assisted by Jeannie  
Miller and Melissa Tapper Goldman*, 72

**To Rally Discussion**  
*Andrés Duany*, 78

**Contributors**

**Editor**

Donlyn Lyndon

**Publisher**

Richard Shepard

**Managing Editor**

David Moffat

**Editor at Large**

Todd Bressi

**Consulting Editors**

Randolph T. Hester, Jr.

Allan B. Jacobs

Cervin Robinson

**Design**

ORG inc.

**Business Manager**

Chris Cudebec

**Contributing Editors**

Stanford Anderson

Richard Bender

Peter Bosselmann

Donald Canty

John de Monchaux

Wendy Feuer

Ken Greenberg

Paul Groth

N. John Habraken

Thomas Hanrahan

Robert S. Harris

Ellen Dunham Jones

Clare Cooper Marcus

Roger Montgomery

William R. Morrish

Anne Vernez Moudon

John R. Myer

William L. Porter

Roy Strickland

Ron Shiffman

Michael Southworth

Lawrence Vale

**Board of Directors**

**Design History Foundation**

Stephen Blecher

Todd Bressi

Harrison Fraker

Frances Halsband

Priscilla H. Lambert

Donlyn Lyndon

Samina Quraeshi

Thomas F. Schutte



Two views of Giancarlo De Carlo's Magistero.

**Front cover:** Looking out through keyhole window to Urbino countryside. Photo by Antonio Garbasso.

**Back cover:** Looking down into the central Congress Hall. Photo by Fulvio Palma.

**Call for Submissions  
Seventh Annual  
EDRA/*Places* Awards**

*Places* and the Environmental Design Research Association announce the seventh annual EDRA/*Places* Awards for Place Design, Planning, and Research. We seek nominations for exemplary work from practitioners and researchers in any environmental design or related discipline.

Awards will be presented at the EDRA annual meeting, June 2-5 in Albuquerque, NM. Winning projects and commentary will be published in the Fall 2004 issue of *Places*. **The postmark deadline for submissions is February 23, 2004.**

The EDRA/*Places* Awards are unique among the programs that recognize professional and scholarly excellence in environmental design. The program is distinguished by its interdisciplinary focus, its concern for human factors in the design of the built environment, and its commitment to promoting links between design research and practice.

The awards program invites participation representing the full breadth of environmental design and related social science activity, including architecture, landscape architecture, planning, urban design, interior design, lighting design, graphic design,

environmental psychology, sociology, anthropology and geography.

Confirmed jurors include Roberta Gratz, Author, *The Living City*; Ray Gastil, Executive Director, Van Alen Institute; Ken Smith, Landscape Architect, Harvard University; Jack Nasar, Professor of Planning, Ohio State University; Mary Miss, Artist, New York City; James Timberlake, Architect, University of Pennsylvania.

For more information about the awards program, prospective entrants are encouraged to visit [www.places-journal.org](http://www.places-journal.org) and/or <http://home.telepath.com/edra>. Past award winners have appeared in *Places* 12.1, 13.1, 14.1, and 15.1.

To receive an entry form, please contact:

Janet Singer

Environmental Design Research Association

PO Box 7146

1800 Canyon Park Circle

Building 4, Suite 403

Edmond, OK 73083-7146

405-330-4863

[edra@telepath.com](mailto:edra@telepath.com)

## Looking Across Time

Looking across time—not just at it—is a necessary part of forming, re-forming, and caring for culture. While this is true in general, it is particularly true for places...whose forms and consequences unfold over time. Their significance lies in that unfolding and in the interactions with many lives that ensue, not simply in the moments of their conception.

In this issue we look across time in several ways. In an extended Speaking of Places, John McKean examines the thinking of the Italian architect Giancarlo De Carlo as embedded in a great university building. De Carlo's Magistero, now nearly a quarter of a century old, modulates its position in a setting that has evolved over centuries, caring for the inherited structure of the place as well as investing it with new uses, meaning and vigor. In our Research and Debate section, Randall Mason examines the conceptual bases of preservation, and particularly the concept of significance, as it confronts contemporary challenges. Also in that section, Ron Fleming examines various new strategies by which designers may embed interpretive markers in the landscape to reveal history and focus people's attention on processes of change. Finally, our portfolio of photographs, by Brian Rose, compares views from 1980 and now of the streets of New York's Lower East Side—an area that, more than most, reveals many patterns of living and layers of initiative, assembled by time in a place of grit and intrigue.

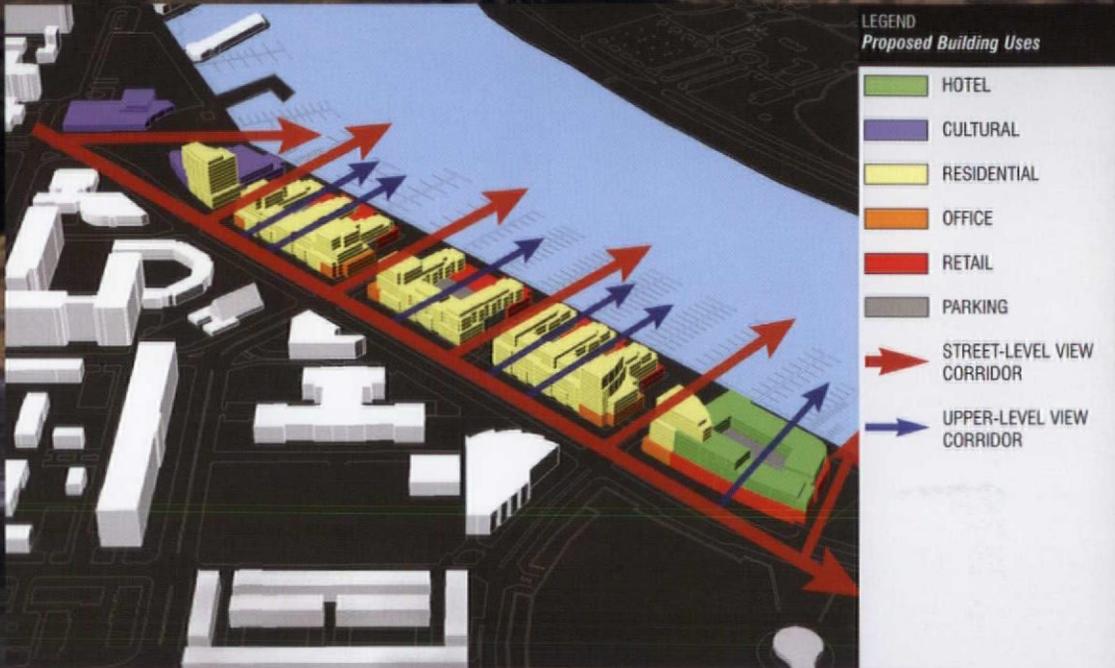
The issue opens with a presentation of winning projects from the EDRA/*Places* Awards Program for 2003. As in the past, each project is discussed at length and accompanied by representative graphics and a sampling of comments from the jury, which this year was composed of James Corner, Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Setha Low, and Walter Moleski.

This is the sixth round of these awards, sponsored jointly by *Places* and the Environmental Design Research Association. So we have also asked three people to examine the awards program across time...to consider the range of prizes awarded, the issues raised, the distribution of efforts they represent... and to comment on the value of the program and its special commitment to bringing together the research and design communities. William L. Porter was co-editor of *Places* when it was founded, and now leads the Design Inquiry program in MIT's School of Architecture and Planning. Mark Francis, a landscape architect on the faculty of UC Davis, was Chair of the EDRA board in 1996 and was instrumental in initiating this program. David Brain is a sociologist at New College in Sarasota, Florida, where he has been especially concerned with how research can inform development, and vice-versa. The three bring differing perspectives and modes of analysis to their task, and together they construct a comprehensive picture of the program.

The issue concludes with our feature To Rally Discussion, which brings your comments into a continuing discussion over time. Here, Andrés Duany participates in an evolving debate on the value of public, private and semipublic space that began with an article by Emily Talen in *Places* 15.1, and continued with a response from Clare Cooper Marcus in *Places* 15.2. The discussion will certainly continue. Join in!...or start a new line of thought, commenting on articles that have captured your attention, roused your ire, or inspired new observations. Help form, re-form, and care for our evolving cultures.

—Donlyn Lyndon

# 2003 EDRA/Places Awards

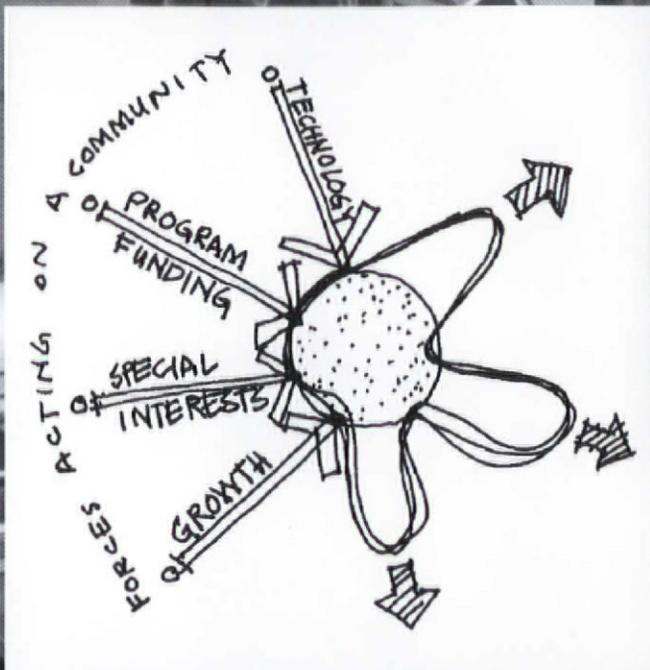


/ Place Planning Award / Development Plan and Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Vision for the Southwest Waterfront /  
/ Hamilton Rabinovitz & Alschuler, Inc. / John Alschuler, President; Joshua Sirefman, Principal; Rebecca Center, Project Manager /  
/ Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners, LLP / Frederick Bland, Partner-in-charge; Neil P. Kittredge, Project Manager; Maxwell Pau,  
Project Manager; Galit Motchan, Planner; Lissette Mendez, Planner / Greenberg Consultants, Inc. / Kenneth Greenberg, Principal /  
/ Prepared for the National Capitol Revitalization Corp. and the District of Columbia Office of Planning, Anthony A. Williams, Mayor /  
/ Site analysis of new development along Washington's Southwest Waterfront. Computer graphic courtesy of Beyer Blinder Belle / see page 16 /

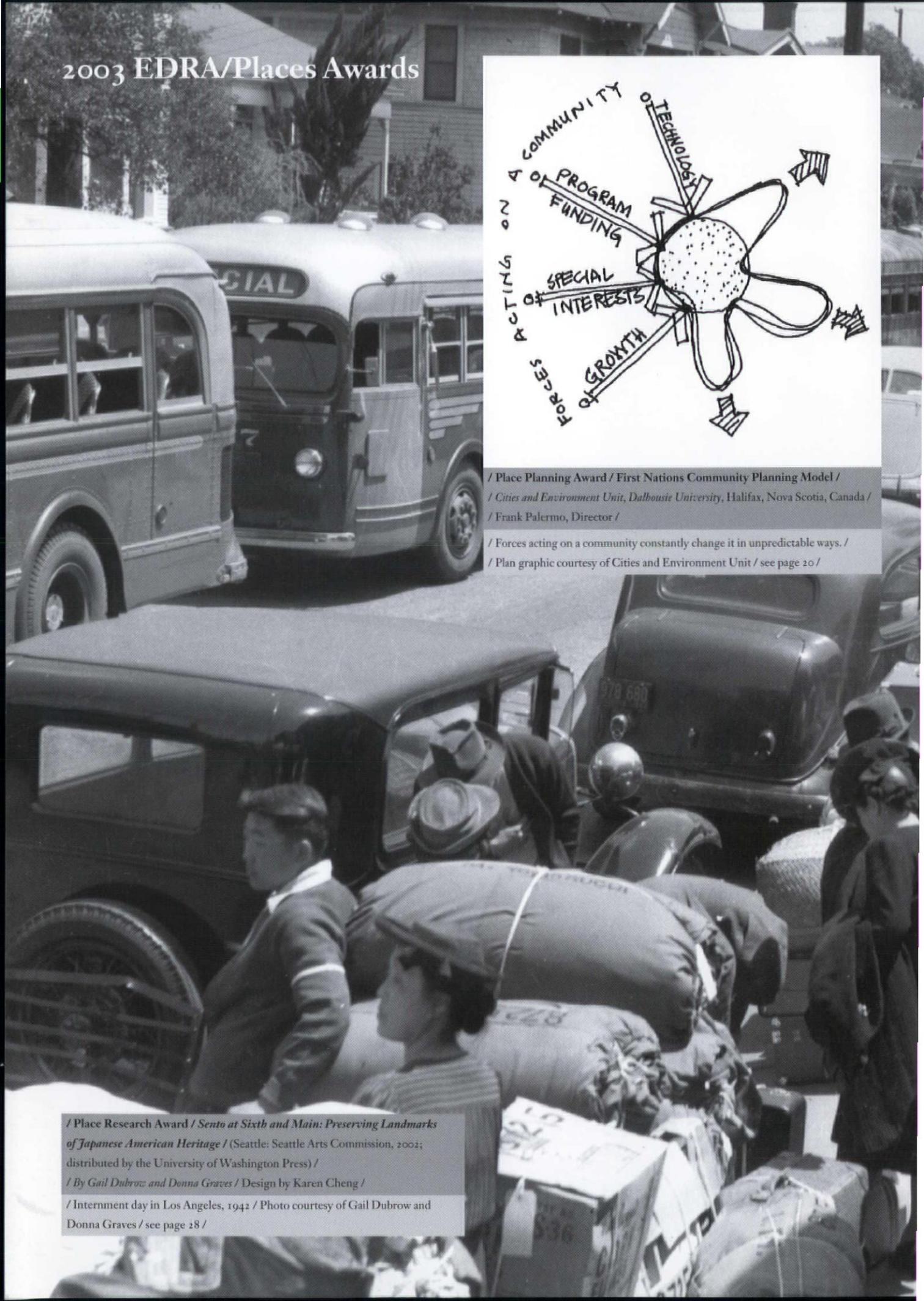
/ Place Research Award / Reclaiming The American West /  
/ (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002) / By Alan Berger /  
/ Introduction by Frederick Turner /  
/ J.R. Simplot plant near Pocatello, Idaho, which processes phosphate for frozen potatoes / Photo courtesy of Alan Berger / see page 24 /



# 2003 EDRA/Places Awards



/ Place Planning Award / First Nations Community Planning Model /  
/ Cities and Environment Unit, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada /  
/ Frank Palermo, Director /  
/ Forces acting on a community constantly change it in unpredictable ways. /  
/ Plan graphic courtesy of Cities and Environment Unit / see page 20 /



/ Place Research Award / *Sento at Sixth and Main: Preserving Landmarks of Japanese American Heritage* / (Seattle: Seattle Arts Commission, 2002; distributed by the University of Washington Press) /  
/ By Gail Dubrow and Donna Graves / Design by Karen Cheng /  
/ Internment day in Los Angeles, 1942 / Photo courtesy of Gail Dubrow and Donna Graves / see page 28 /



*/ Place Design Award / Abercrombie & Fitch Headquarters / New Albany, Ohio /  
/ Anderson Architects p.c. / Ross Anderson, FAIA, M.J. Sagan, Scott Lauer, Mike Nikolajuk, Caroline Otto,  
Matthew P. Greer / With NBBJ (Architect of Record) / Joe Karr & Associates (Landscape Architect) / Gilbane /  
/ Lantz Jones Nebraska (Structural Engineer) / M-Engineering (Mechanical/Electrical) / EMH&T (Civil) /  
/ BBC&M (Geosciences) / Kugler Tillotson Associates (Lighting) / Hammer Design Associates (Dining) /  
/ Plus One Health Management / (Fitness); and Sedlak /  
/ At Abercrombie and Fitch headquarters, building entries are called out for special treatment. /  
/ Photo courtesy of Anderson Architects / see page 12 /*

**2003 EDRA/Places Awards Jury**

**James Corner**

Principal, Field Operations; Chair, Landscape Architecture, University of Pennsylvania.

**Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris**

Chair, Department of City Planning, University of California, Los Angeles.

**Setha Low**

Professor of Environmental Psychology, City University Graduate Center, New York.

**Walter Moleski**

Director, Graduate Architecture, Drexel University, Philadelphia; Executive Director, ERG/Environmental Research Group.

The awards jury met March 21-22, 2003, in Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Fine Arts. EDRA and *Places* would like to thank the school and its dean, Gary Hack, for serving as host, and for continuing to support the awards program.

# Outdoor Classrooms at Eib's Pond and Roy Wilkins Parks

JC There's one design project I really think is worth looking at [Eib's Pond and Wilkins Park Classrooms]. It's such an intelligent project, that's why I feel strongly about it. WM I thought it was a beautiful piece. Architecturally,

its superb. JC It's not only that it's beautiful. The way in which they use the building, the structures, actually concentrates a lot of things about the larger landscape. There is a lot here about the processes of learning. The

way certain apertures are cut into walls and rooms has a lot to do with tying the structure very specifically to the local horizon, the wetlands, the landscape condition. SL And it's participatory project. They worked

Designated "natural" landscapes within urban parks are special places that provide relief from the structures of urban life. As such, they have great potential as community resources, offering urban dwellers a chance to better understand the complex ecological and social environments that surround them. Unfortunately, such landscapes are some of the last places people look to build community strength. A lack of clear program ideas, definitions of path, and places of destination often cause these natural areas to slide into neglect.

The problem can be particularly acute in parks bordering underserved and low-income communities. Here, a lack of political and financial resources may create difficulties preserving even the most typical park features, let alone sensitive natural areas. Indeed, in such areas of many American cities, natural landscapes are often more than just neglected—they may be fearful places, harboring a variety of dangers for nearby residents.

Two outdoor classrooms designed by Marpillero Pollak Architects of New York City set out to address this problem in small parks in Staten Island and Queens, New York. Both seek to create new spaces of opportunity and pride, where people may establish new and meaningful connections with the natural environment. Submitted as a single design entry, the classrooms drew high praise from jurors, eliciting such superlatives as "sensitive," "intelligent," "beautiful," and "superb."

## A Complex Interaction: Natural, Urban, and Social

Marpillero Pollak Architects became involved with the outdoor classroom projects through partner Linda Pollak's relationship with The Parks Council, a New York City nonprofit. MPA is a small firm that includes architects, landscape architects, and urban designers. Pollak was initially asked to serve on a jury for the Council's Winslow Award, and later became involved with its Green Neighborhoods program.

In 1998 Pollak's connection to the organization led to work by the firm on a new strategic plan for Eib's Pond Park on Staten Island, and to the design of a small bridge/bench at the narrows of the pond. The bridge helped the firm understand how small, appropriately designed structures could greatly strengthen people's understanding of place, context, and path in such natural settings. To explore these ideas further, MPA agreed to design an outdoor classroom at the park for the Council on a pro-bono basis. This, in turn, led to the second classroom project, also for the Council, at Roy Wilkins Park in Jamaica, Queens.

Both outdoor classrooms are simple structures, but they

are informed by careful consideration of relationships between social and natural worlds. Specifically, research into the natural qualities of both parks, their history of use and abuse, and the character of surrounding neighborhoods led MPA to seek design interventions that might transcend categories of architecture and landscape architecture. The idea was to create places that were simultaneously "natural and urban," and/or "natural and social"—and so allow the parks to become more of what they already were.

In the design process, such a philosophy was immediately reflected in concern for the relation between the edges of the structures and the larger landscape. Large in-situ models and an abundance of site photography were used to establish an in-depth understanding of topography and other important qualities of place. Sectional studies were also used to focus on how each structure might become an integral part of its landscape.

In both projects, MPA became interested in how visitors might experience qualities of pond, forest, and park both at the immediate edges of the new structures and through views to more distant natural and urban features. Both classrooms were primarily intended as resources for nearby schools. But they were also seen as general community resources that might allow people of all ages a more intimate experience of their environment at a variety of scales.

## Neglected Space to Community Place

The classroom at Eib's Pond Park was finished in the Fall of 2000. The park itself consists of several ponds and grassland on the last remaining seventeen acres of a wetland originally carved out by glacial action. Through the years, as New York developed around it, the area was transformed from a dairy, to a golf course, to a military training camp, and a World War II prisoner of war detention center.

Most recently, as a city park, it has suffered from neglect and served, among other things, as an informal dumping ground. Cut off from the rest of Staten Island by a freeway and a railroad, it is today bordered by low-income housing, a public school, and a recently built tract of suburban-style homes.

As part of MPA's design strategy, each side of the Eib's Pond classroom was developed with its own program. That facing the main portion of the pond was provided with a pier allowing visitors to venture out over the water. A slotted deck here also becomes submerged during periods of high water to illustrate the constantly changing nature of the pond. A second edge offers a new perspective into an existing birch tree that is an important bird habitat.

with the students and neighborhood youths on trying to construct a space. There was a lot of appropriate involvement of the community, and it was very sensitive to the environment. ALS In social design criteria I think this is the best. WM I found it interesting that they built prototypes or

mockups to scale of the facility. It's a research method that is not used very often. They did mock-ups out of foam core and mock-ups of real furniture. It makes a lot of sense in this case, where they could sit and talk about issues of construction and design.



This side also features a “nesting wall,” to which are attached birdhouses built by local children.

The other two edges, meanwhile, orient to the pond’s grassy shore. One receives a ramp that connects to the park’s larger path network, bringing visitors out to the classroom (and through it, onto the pier).

Overall, MPA felt there were several benefits to an open-frame structure. The appearance of transparency might provide users with both a sense of safety and a measure of privacy. A flexible layout was also considered important since the classroom space needed to be usable by several groups at the same time without creating conflicts.

Part of MPA’s work at Eib’s Pond included consultation with a diverse group of interested parties to ensure that what was designed, and even where the classroom was sited, would be meaningful and useful. These included teachers and schoolchildren at nearby P.S. 57, and interested community residents as part of the Fox Hill Tenant Association. Among other things, these conversations helped MPA understand the importance of siting the classroom within easy walking distance of the school. It also brought a number of new ideas to the project. Among these is a “water table”—a workbench with a slotted top that can be used to hold containers for sampling pond life.

### From Pond to Forest

MPA’s work at Eib’s Pond and its connection to The Parks Council soon led to the firm’s second project in the New York park system. The site for this second

classroom, at Roy Wilkins Park Natural Area, was in a very different landscape. However, the decision was made to use a similar language to create a sense of position within the natural world.

The Wilkins classroom is situated at the edge of a three-acre wood that is part of the larger 54-acre park. MPA wanted the classroom to provide a gateway to this wood. Thus, as completed in 2001, the entire project consists of a path that leads up a ramp, through the classroom structure, and out to a viewing platform into the tree canopy.

As at Eib’s Pond, the classroom is organized through differing treatments of its edges, which allow visitors to explore their relationship to the forest in a number of ways.

Particularly impressive is the way its roof accentuates the effect of filtered light through the tree canopy above and around them, allowing visitors the sense of being in the trees themselves.

### Building Process

The choice of materials and methods of construction became an important part of MPA’s work on both projects. Each had to be realized on a budget of about \$25,000, a constraint that had important impacts. For maximum cost effectiveness, MPA eventually chose to build the classrooms using recycled plastic lumber, corrugated translucent plastic roofing, and redwood framing cut and milled from a sustainable forest.

Eib’s Pond Park outdoor classroom. Photos courtesy of MPA.

The use of small-dimension lumber allowed both projects to be built by hand by local AmeriCorps youth. MPA did worry, however, that the use of standard framing sizes, such as 2x4s, might result in the classrooms being misinterpreted as unfinished. To remedy this impression, they chose to use off-size lumber for the open-frame portions of both structures.

Pollak says MPA never intended to oversee the construction of the projects. But as The Parks Council shifted its agenda, the firm took on this added responsibility, directing the work of a construction crew of AmeriCorps volunteers from surrounding neighborhoods. Every week Sandro Marpillero would use a framing model and sketches to explain the next steps in the building process. Eventually, such a hands-on method yielded important benefits, allowing experimentation and adjustment throughout the period of construction.

The use of local volunteer labor and the unforeseen involvement of the firm in directing the construction of the classrooms ultimately strengthened the connection to place, Pollak believes. In particular, it helped give the structures a sense of having emerged from their communities, rather than from the intervention of outsiders.

### Larger Considerations

In the previous issue of *Places* (15.3, p. 45), Galen Cranz and Michael Boland discussed the emergence of the “ecological park” as a new type of public space, one based on “providing solutions to ecological problems and expressions of the human relationship to nature.” Both classrooms clearly embody such an attitude toward integrating human use into the ecological well-being of a park—and a city as a whole. And by fostering a more intimate relationship between people and their natural surroundings, the hope is that they will eventually generate wider appreciation for the benefits of such natural areas within cities.

To achieve this goal, however, MPA had to question the notion that the natural landscape is best preserved by keeping people away from it. Their vision was rather of a place that would allow maximum public contact with and experience of the environment—without harming it.

Furthermore, by allowing urbanity of form to coexist with an intimate experience of nature, the classrooms foster a dynamic, sensual experience of place. This gives them great potential as spaces of community interaction, cultural learning, and memory.

The projects at Eib’s Pond and Roy Wilkins Parks have also helped MPA foster an interest in the power of “not-buildings”—that is, buildings with a floor area ratio of zero. MPA believes that “not-buildings” have the power to be multifunctional, and to make a big difference in a community. Such structures function well for multiple agendas by layering ideas and relationships in ways that enhance their power and meaning, Pollak says. As such, they can become both parts of landscapes and communities, and artifacts within them.

In the years to come, MPA hopes to carry on such work. The firm has already designed other such projects for private clients. And since completing the classrooms, MPA has applied for grants from the Design Trust for Public Space to continue its relationship with Eib’s Pond Park by designing and developing a plan for the park’s thresholds.

— *Chris Sensenig*



# Abercrombie and Fitch Headquarters

WM There are several reasons I like this project. As a work environment it's extremely human. You look at this and say, "Boy, I would really want to work here." Image-wise, there is a strong match between architecture

and corporate identity. And there are some very nice architectural features you don't normally find in office buildings. I also think there's a strong connection with the landscape. It makes, in summary, a very nice work

environment. ASL Unfortunately, the most common office environment are cubicles. They're anonymous and conventional, and there's nothing to like about them. They come from a confused idea of efficiency at work,

As a clothing company, Abercrombie & Fitch emphasizes a hip, fun feeling and a healthy, outdoor lifestyle. When the company set out to create a new headquarters for itself they wanted a place that would reflect these values. They also wanted a place that employees would feel lucky arriving at each morning. And they wanted a work environment that embodied flexibility, communication, and fun—qualities they hoped would lure talent from such urban centers as New York and San Francisco to a quieter, more conservative part of the country.

Eventually, these concerns coalesced into a single question in the mind of the company's CEO Mike Jeffries: "If Abercrombie & Fitch were a place, what would it be?"

How does the image of a leading clothing manufacturer translate into building and site design? For Anderson Architects, it meant approaching the headquarters project as if creating a scene in a movie—one where it is possible to leave the everyday world behind and enter a wholly Abercrombie and Fitch experience.

Creating a sense of place through corporate branding: the idea, while it might make some squirm, can have powerful results. In this case it led to a playful corporate campus in the woods near New Albany, Ohio.

## Site Design as Narrative

According to the New York architecture firm's principal, Ross Anderson, establishing a sense of context was the first important goal of the project. In its marketing, A&F relies heavily on the lush, evocative photography by Bruce Weber which often depicts the vitality of youth and physical sensuality in simple but powerful landscapes. The architects wanted a similar sense of narrative to animate their site design.

"As soon as you entered their landscape," Anderson says, "we wanted to make sure it felt like them, not like the rest of New Albany. A place that was to itself. About itself."

New Albany, located near Columbus, was once a mill town. But recently it has become better known as the headquarters for a number of well-known apparel makers, including Victoria's Secret and The Limited, A&F's parent company.

The area offers a strong workforce, inexpensive land, an accessible airport, and most importantly, the test-market consumer that many mainstream American apparel companies prefer. But the recent influx of development has also meant that open fields and forests are fast being replaced by suburban-style office parks. And Anderson Architects understood they would need to take a completely different course if they were to succeed in embodying A&F's image.

Their first response to the headquarters project, therefore, was to secure the rural benefits of the company's 300-acre property. This involved proposing that much of the company's land be dedicated to permanent preservation. Fortunately, this was something A&F had in mind from the start. Against such a rural backdrop Anderson felt they could establish a narrative of the company's presence.

The story now begins after one turns off the main road. The infrastructure here changes immediately; curbs disappear, and discreet signage points out site-specific street names, such as "Smith's Mill Road" after an old sawmill on the property.

The road twists, forcing cars to slow down. Then it passes over a bridge into a series of small parking lots carefully screened from view. From here, visitors must continue on foot—first across a boardwalk that perches above wetlands, then through a relatively narrow gap in the trees that provides an intimate entry point to the campus itself.

The extended entry sequence provides a contemplative tour that helps establish an image of the company in the mind of visitors. By the time they actually encounter a building there can be no doubt they have departed one realm and entered another.

## At Home in the Forest

The narrative of youth and fitness continues when one arrives at the main campus buildings. The built area is designed as a street that winds through the trees. Among precedents for such a design, Anderson points to Charles Moore and William Turnbull's Kresge College at the University of California at Santa Cruz.

As one continues, the path widens and narrows, creating opportunities for intimacy and for larger gatherings. The intent was to demand continued interaction with the site, and between the people who work there. Part of this strategy was to create outdoor spaces that would be inviting at all times of the year. Several outdoor fireplaces, which are supposed to remain lit during cold weather, help create this atmosphere. The largest and most memorable fireplace is located in a covered outdoor room. This space, which is also dominated by a monumental chandelier, provides a truly theatrical setting for large gatherings.

The campus has several other notable landmarks, deliberately distinguished from the common shed forms of the main work buildings. Perhaps most noticeable is a "tree-house" containing a conference room, located at the widest

**Top:** Site plan shows how buildings cluster along an internal street.

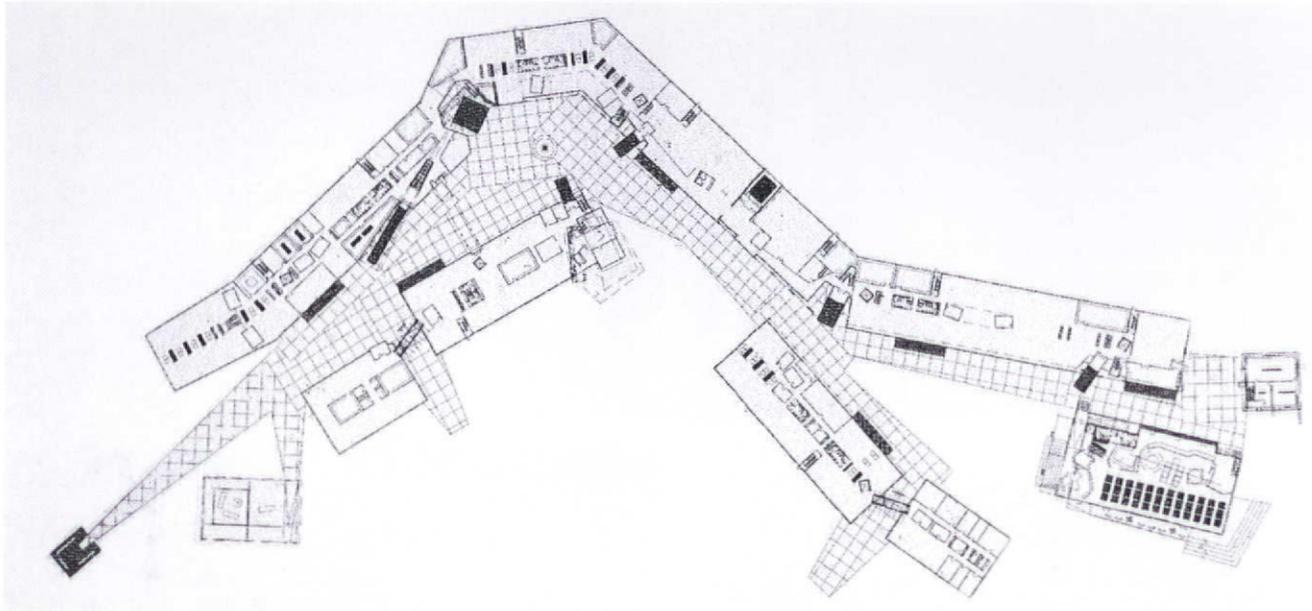
**Bottom:** View of the dining barn at the east end of the campus.

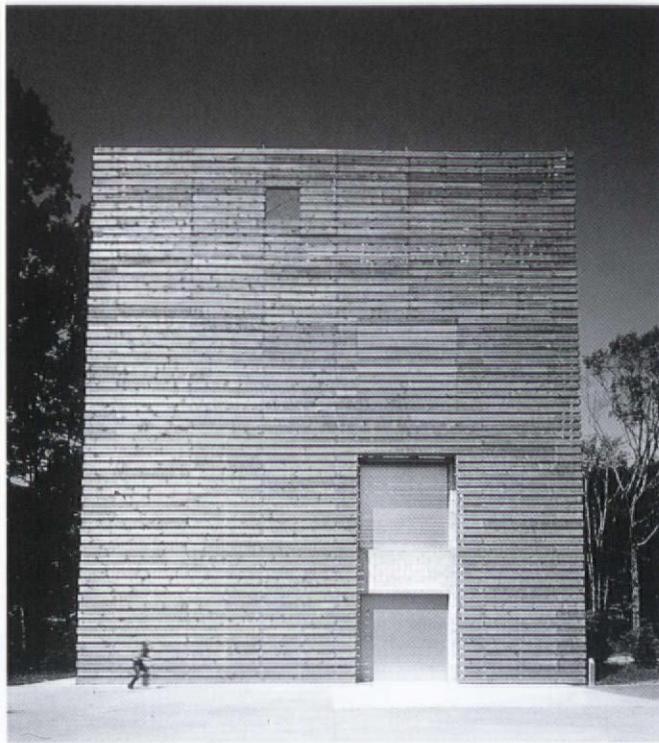
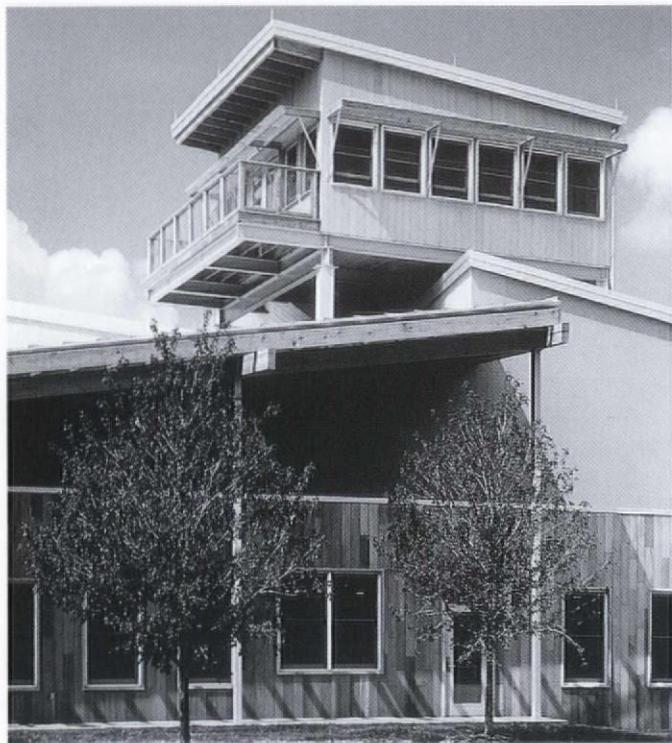
Images courtesy of Anderson Architects.

that we shouldn't be distracted. Here you find a much different view of what a work environment should be. It is more humane, more sympathetic to nature. There is a better relationship between inside and outside spaces. There is also a public realm, which is indoors and outdoors, where people

can congregate. WM It's light on the landscape. It is an incredible site plan. And the idea of social structure and how you bring people together so they can communicate as teams is a good example of incorporating existing literature on the new office environment. Yet it doesn't make the mistakes

that some new offices do; you don't find any of the clichés. ALS And I really liked the honesty of materials. If there's wood, it's wood. If there's concrete, you know it's concrete. The material is not hidden. It's exposed. WM There's an interesting play in this building of ordinary materials used





point of the complex, near its entrance. The intent was to call this out as “the center of the place,” Anderson explains.

Another featured piece is a dining “barn.” Clad in rusted Corten steel, it can be found at the eastern end of the project, where it opens onto an undeveloped common area.

**Above left:** “Treehouse” at the campus entry provides meeting space.

**Above right:** Utility building can glow at night through wood slats.

**Below left:** Outdoor room for ceremonial gatherings.

**Below right:** Work areas feature natural light and operable windows.

Photos courtesy of Anderson Architects.

A third striking element is a mechanical room, wrapped in wooden slats, that glows at night at the edge of the campus like a lantern.

Anderson and CEO Jeffries advocated fiercely for such special design features. They believed they would inspire employees by encouraging them to get up from their desks and walk around. Such elements also lend a sense of vitality and inhabitation to the central outdoor space even when it is unoccupied.

A similar design strategy was also employed inside the shed-like buildings that provide the bulk of workspace in

**Abercrombie and Fitch Headquarters**

extraordinarily—as well as some very sophisticated detailing. Some of the window walls are really well done. As an architect, I think they fell down on the coordination of some of the building systems; but that's being picky. SL But it's not perfect. They only interviewed the heads of the

departments, rather than employees. There's a big difference between people on the ground and those who boss them. Their site plans, topography, climate and geoscience, the wetlands analysis, toxic-waste analysis, and archeological analysis, were all stronger than the social—as is often

the case, unfortunately. It's a very beautiful, competent, well-thought-out design, but not all the right questions were asked.

the complex. Thus, just as the exterior fireplaces and dining barn provide landmarks articulated against a more anonymous backdrop, entrances and gathering spots are given special treatment on the inside.

One way this happens is through changes of materials. The project is mostly built of durable materials such as cement board, plywood, slab floors, and galvanized panels. However, at places of importance, the texture changes noticeably, and wood is introduced for its tactile qualities. In other locations such as the dining hall, where people gather, the building framing is also singled out for expressive treatment.

Anderson believes such details encourage a more personal interaction with a building. He also believes treating these spaces in special ways increases the chances for spontaneity and chance interaction.

Another factor that played an important role in the project was its severely constricted timetable (two years from hiring the architect to occupying the buildings). "Literally, we were hired one day, and told the next we were behind schedule," Anderson laughs.

Simplicity and consistency were crucial to meeting such a schedule. Decisions could not be second-guessed, and a model had to be adopted that embraced flexibility. Among other things, this meant that decisions about important spaces had to be made right away, while the character of other spaces was left for users to personalize and modify later.

Interestingly, such an approach matched the design team's insistence that the workplace they were creating be flexible and simple at its core, with only special areas called out as important. In effect, the abbreviated schedule created an even greater mandate for such simplicity, and allowed architect and client to push this approach even further.

### A Democratic Workspace

The jury was impressed with the beauty of the outcome. But they also praised the depth of research underlying the design, particularly the master site plan. Analysis here involved assessment of sensitive wildlife and wetland issues. Initial investigation also uncovered Native American archaeological sites that yielded significant artifacts. The project not only preserves these resources, but highlights them as features in the site.

A considerable effort was also made to understand the needs of company workers. A&F is structured into twenty-one distinct, but related departments. To better understand the nature of their activities and provide for necessary adjacencies, the architects interviewed the heads of all these departments. Several jurors did question why lower-level

employees were not interviewed, however, since their views might have added considerably to the effort.

In negotiating a balance between a traditional office and a more open campus, the primary precedent was A&F's vision of an open working environment. But the design also benefited from a growing body of research on new forms of office design, especially notions of community and democracy in the workplace, jurors noted. As part of this strategy, the usual order of private cubicles and common break rooms is inverted, with only a handful of employees receiving individual offices (largely to allow privacy for legal and/or personnel matters). Most everyone else works at adaptable groupings of tables, separated from one another by sandblasted Plexiglas dividers.

The work areas in the main shed structures are also distinguished by a series of so-called "subway-cars," which run down their center and contain pin-up space, conference rooms, bathrooms, clothing display areas, and storage space. Built of a variety of materials from concrete block to wire mesh, they create a sense of scale within the larger whole.

In the end the principal goal of the design was to afford workers flexibility in carrying out their assigned tasks. At any given moment an employee might be working alone, collaborating with others at a group of desks, or visiting members of an adjacent department in a conference room or at a larger table.

A certain amount of respect for employees comes with such a diminished sense of hierarchy in the workplace. And CEO Jeffries wanted to show that he was not exempt from this spirit. Originally, the "treehouse" at the entrance to the campus was intended to contain his office. But this was changed in later versions of the design to a conference room for the entire company. In addition to signaling a desire for less exclusivity, Jeffries believed the change would make him less isolated from everyday activities at the company.

In summing up his feelings about the project, one juror praised the "extremely human work environment" created by the design team. The complex consistently takes advantage of the rural setting and context to establish a vital and almost urban sense of place.

"This is a company that doesn't like email," Anderson says, "because it discourages contact." Such a bias is clearly manifest in the emphasis on diverse work spaces and alternate meeting areas, and in the attempt to encourage personal interaction in a more democratic workplace design.

—*Laura Boutelle*

# Development Plan and AWI Vision for the Southwest Waterfront

SL This is an important site in a very poor neighborhood that has had a lot of problems. It's an incredible resource, this waterfront. And the neighborhood wants it developed.

But nobody's been able to succeed on this site ever before. They did it here by being more comprehensive, I would argue, and getting more committed. JC This is a serious,

significant, fully comprehensive body of work. It's not being diagrammatic or schematic. SL It's part of a huge process that starts at a very large scale and works down. At each scale, not



Good revitalization plans often succeed by making the complex seem simple. In established urban settings, one reason may be that only the clearest visions can lure entrenched stakeholders to put aside their fears of change and pull together for a common future.

The difficult legwork behind such visions, however, often belies their veneer of inevitability. Much hard-headed investigation must normally take place behind the scenes to sort through the complexities of local real estate economics, regulatory structures, and patterns of ownership and to realistically account for such physical problems as infrastructure upgrading and environmental mitigation. And then there is the political process. Success here often hinges on effective outreach, identifying objections and accommodating concerns before they can create difficulties during later phases of the approvals process.

Jurors in 2003 identified the Development Plan and AWI Vision for the Southwest Waterfront of Washington, D.C., as just such a comprehensive, professional product. In a nutshell, it envisions transforming the lands adjacent to the Washington Ship Channel into "a world-class waterfront district" for the nation's capital.

In addition to praising the plan—by a primary consultant team of Hamilton Rabinovitz & Alschuler, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners, and Greenberg Consultants—for its thoroughness and clarity, the jury also cited its potential to bring real change to an area long bypassed by such placemaking efforts.

## A Troubled History

The condition of lands along the Washington Ship Channel has been an embarrassment to officials in the nation's capital for years. The channel, itself, was created at the end of the nineteenth century to provide port facilities and reduce the severity of seasonal flooding. During the early twentieth century it served this purpose well, while adjacent neighborhoods accommodated port-related businesses and worker housing.

The current character of the waterfront area only emerged during the urban-renewal era of the 1950s and 60s. This was when large swathes of southwest Washington were declared "blighted," and redeveloped with new mid- and low-rise housing and commercial structures. About the same time, the area was also cut off from the nearby Capitol Mall by construction of Interstate 395.

In many ways, southwest Washington provides a textbook example of the ills of such heavy-handed government intervention, says Neil Kittredge, Southwest Waterfront project manager for Beyer Blinder Belle. Across the country, many poor urban communities were similarly devastated during this period. But after fifty years, it should be possible to take a new look at the real quality of places like southwest Washington today, he says, and build on what is there.

In positive terms, Kittredge points out, Washington's southwest now accommodates a viable neighborhood of mixed income and ethnicity. Architecturally, the area also provides an almost pure example of modernist space, consisting of rental and co-op housing superblocks with green, airy interiors. On the other hand, the near complete destruction of the southwest's historic fabric created featureless intervening spaces that are almost completely dominated by vehicles. And this is nowhere more apparent than along the waterfront, where urban renewal met the channel in a series of access roads and parking lots that came to serve little more than private marinas, tour-boat operators, and isolated, pavilion-style restaurants.

The Southwest Waterfront Plan envisions a two-stage approach to the transformation of this area. First, a "Development Plan" addresses things that can happen

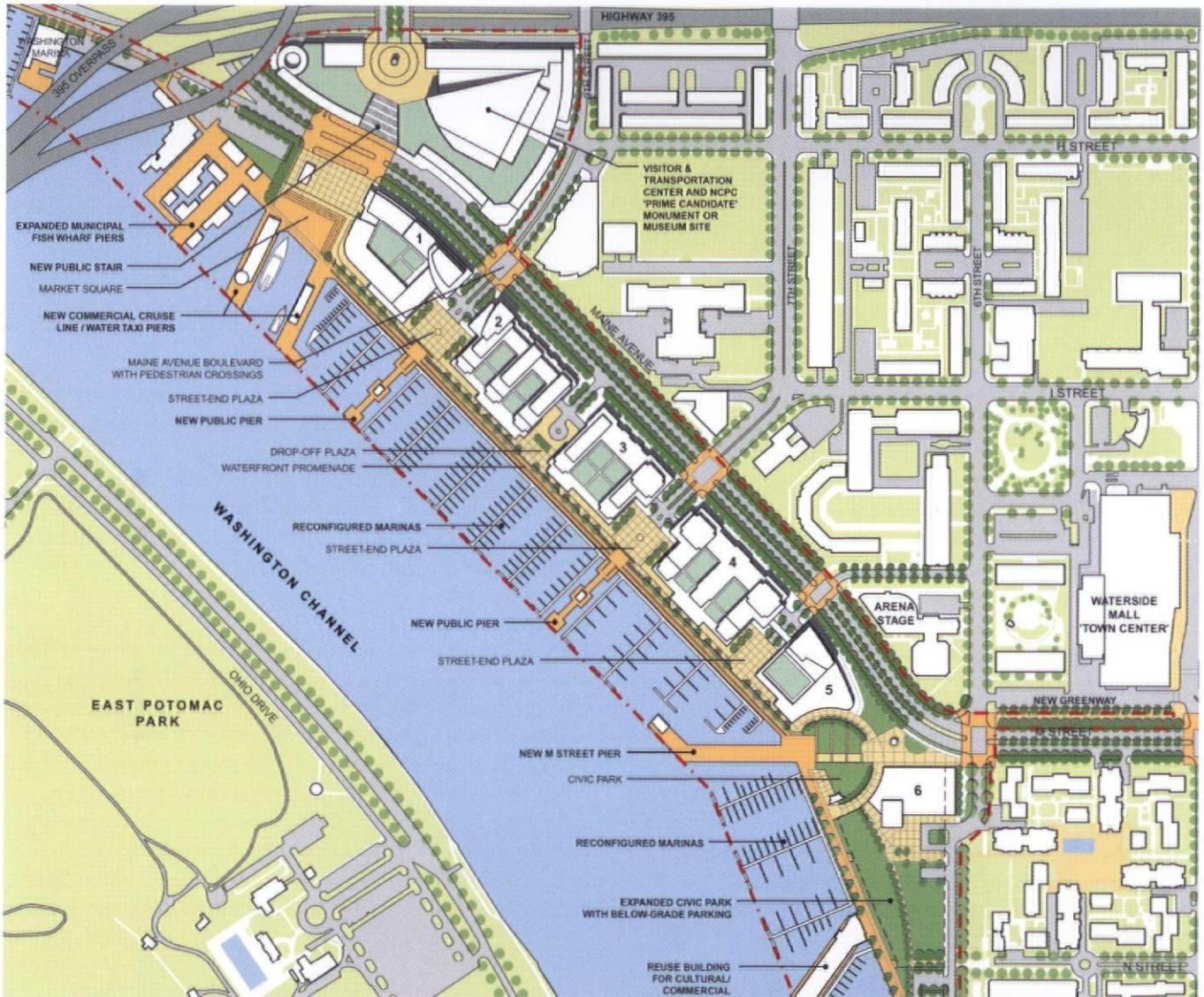
**Above:** Outreach to neighbors played a significant role in establishing the form of new mixed-use buildings along the Ship Channel. Computer collage courtesy of Beyer Blinder Belle.

**Opposite:** The larger opportunities for the area are contained in the "AWI Vision" portion of the plan. Numbered buildings would be developed during the earlier "Development Plan" phase.

only did they have public hearings, but they went back to the community. It's an incredible piece of work. You can see the depth of the study. You can see the broad range of the overview. And it's politically endorsed, so I guess it's really going to happen. JC But they didn't leave

it at that point. They get absorbed in envisioning what this place could be. It's not just analysis. SL And it's beautifully presented and it's clear and understandable, which I think for this kind of document is important. I think that's one thing we haven't said today. I know readability has made a

difference. I think that how you present your material, it's not just the quality of the graphics but the order and the logic of it. There needs to be a kind of internal logic. The graphics need to be clear. The vision needs to be out front. The details need to follow the design. Those are small



right away to establish the basis for a new waterfront neighborhood. A second "Vision" section then proposes longer-term actions to consolidate its character and establish better connections to the city around it.

### A Larger Vision

Over the years, a number of studies have addressed the potential for redeveloping lands along the Ship Channel, says Uwe Brandes of the District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP). But none have come to fruition, in part because of the great difficulty overcoming the legacy of urban renewal. A perennial lack of communication between federal and District agencies has also stalled redevelopment efforts in general in the nation's capital.

What finally appears to have broken the logjam is the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, a comprehensive effort to use redevelopment of lands bordering the District's "forgotten" second river to revitalize its entire southern half. AWI was inaugurated toward the end of the Clinton Administration through a memorandum of understanding between the District and some twenty federal agencies with jurisdiction over land bordering the Anacostia River.

District of Columbia Mayor Anthony Williams has been a major force behind AWI. Since his election, Williams has sought to bring a new focus on economic revitalization to local politics. Indeed, one of his stated goals has been to attract 100,000 new residents to the District.

In terms of the southwest waterfront, Brandes also

things, but yet they're important professionally. And this is an incredibly professional job. ALS It certainly has an eye toward implementation. There's market analysis, some preliminary cost estimates. It really goes as close as possible to actually finding the money and doing the project. I was

impressed by the comprehensiveness of this project. WM I would agree. It's an exhaustive research. It is so well done it has the power of getting built. The goal of all these things is to get something done. SL The biggest problem would be the threat of gentrification, if and when it does happen.

That's not really necessarily talked about here. If this were to happen, would the residents still be able to live on this waterfront? Or does it really ultimately mean relocating them?

points to the significance of a new partnership between his agency (DCOP) and the National Capital Revitalization Corporation. A public economic-development corporation which began operation in January 2001, NCRC controls much of the property along the Ship Channel through a subsidiary which succeeded the District's old Redevelopment Agency. Today, while DCOP has been managing the larger AWI effort, NCRC has been driving its southwest waterfront element.

The reason why NCRC has a special interest in the area is obvious. Other parts of AWI focus on rebuilding public housing, developing new sites for offices and government buildings, and restoring parks and the natural quality of the river itself. But because of their largely undeveloped character, the lands along the Ship Channel have long been seen as the ideal location for an entirely new mixed-use community.

Altogether, the plan estimates such a development would result in \$9 million in annual tax revenue for the District, 1,500 permanent jobs, 800 new housing units, sites for several new cultural buildings, and improved public access to the water.

### **A New Waterfront Community**

The core of the initial Development Plan for this area is the consolidation of six new mixed-use development parcels facing onto the Ship Channel. These, in turn, are to be set in an entirely new armature of public space. To the north (adjacent to the city's existing Fish Market) it envisions a new market square; to the south would be a more naturally landscaped park; and the waterfront would then be tied together by a widened promenade.

The key to creating this new spatial hierarchy is the replacement of redundant parking lots and vehicle circulation with a single, well-designed boulevard along Maine Avenue. "Without changing the road patterns you cannot create land areas that are big enough to do much development," Kittridge says. Once the parcels have been assembled, the plan calls for them to be developed privately. Each would include retail and office uses oriented to the new public spaces, apartments on the upper floors, and parking in their interiors to make up for the lost surface lots.

Among other things, the plan specifically argues against the establishment of a themed retail setting similar to New York's South Street Seaport. A critical mass of new residents is extremely important in this regard. Only full-time residents can create the constituency for "a real urban place," Kittredge says. To show the viability of such mixed-use buildings, the plan includes extensive economic analysis by Hamilton, Rabinovitz and Alschuler.

Another key proposal involves strict design guidelines

to ensure a "high-quality modern architecture." If there is one area of Washington where traditional styles are inappropriate, it is here, Kittredge says. Innovative modern design could be very important in terms of complementing the better qualities of the older urban-renewal areas.

### **Further Connections**

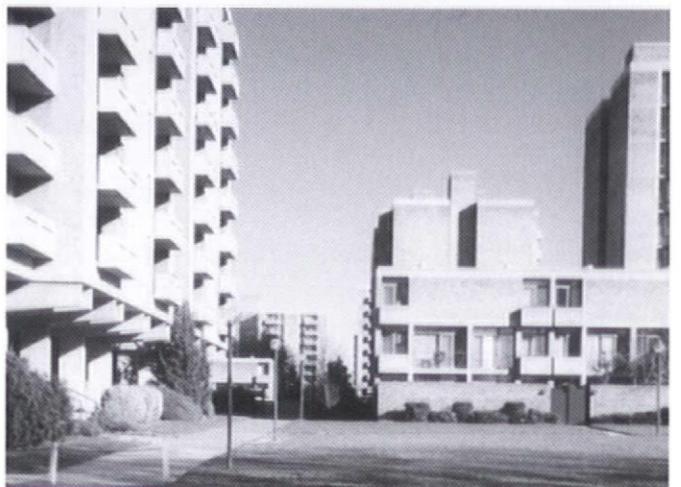
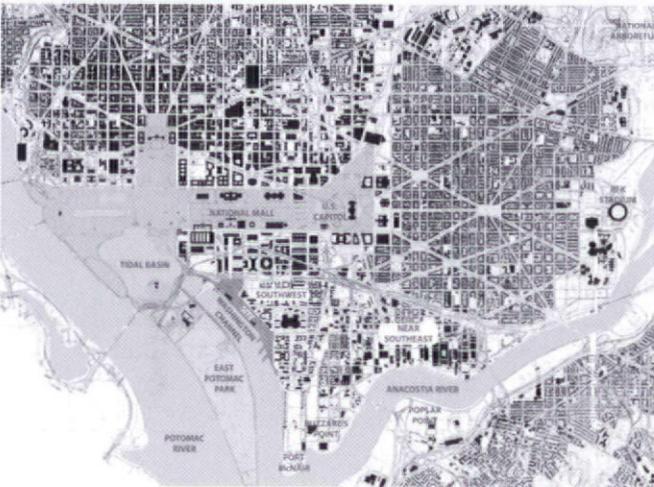
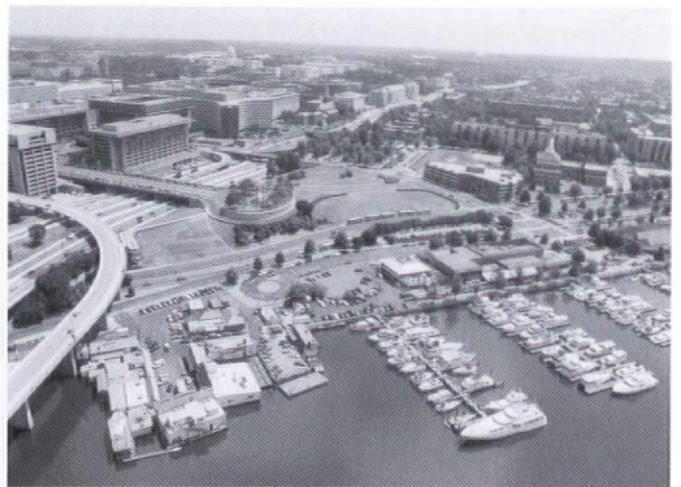
Once the impact of the new mixed-use buildings and waterfront public areas has been established, the plan imagines that aspects of its longer-term, "Vision," section would come into play. Of particular importance here is the rebuilding of a hill south of I-395. The hill was originally formed out of material excavated during freeway construction, and today it is occupied by an oval waterfront overlook that serves as little more than an architectural conceit at the end of L'Enfant Way.

According to Kittredge, this overlook was once intended to connect to the waterfront, but it never did because of grade difficulties. As a result, anyone wanting to walk from the Capitol Mall to the Fish Market today must bypass the homeless people camped at the oval, then clamber down a thirty-foot hill, and dash across a high-speed multilane roadway.

In its Monuments and Memorials Plan, the National Capital Planning Commission has already identified the oval as the site for a major new federal structure. But the Vision section goes further by pointing out some of the important urban design goals such a monument of memorial might fulfill. Most importantly, if it were to incorporate a grand public staircase, it might create a rewarding pedestrian connection between the waterfront, the Metro station in the nearby L'Enfant Plaza office complex, and the Capitol Mall beyond. Equally significant would be the establishment of a parking and multimodal transportation hub on the podium floors of the new building. Such a facility would have immediate access to I-395, and could provide space for idle tour buses that now clutter the waterfront. Such a transportation facility might also be tied to important "waterside" changes. One might be expansion of the city's historic Fish Market to include restaurants and other commercial uses.

More difficult, but equally significant, would be a swap of location between current private marina berths and a new cruise-ship pier, Kittredge says. The transportation facility would be key to such a reorganization because it would allow parking for cruise and party-boat operators to be removed from the southern end of the waterfront. This, in turn, would allow a more appropriate gradient of uses to be established, from the bustle and energy of the northern end, to a quieter, more residential character in the south.

Finally, the Vision section proposes a number of public



improvements that might be paid for with tax-increment financing. These include public piers, a pedestrian bridge to East Potomac Park, and the expansion and redesign of the currently dismal walkway beneath I-395 and Rte. 1 that connects the southwest waterfront to well-used parklands around the Tidal Basin.

The Vision section even mentions the possibility of cutting a ship canal across East Potomac Park. Not only would this allow boats more direct access to the Potomac, but it might re-establish the cleansing flow of water through the Ship Channel that was lost when the gates at the head of the channel were permanently closed to protect the scenic qualities of the Tidal Basin.

### A Complete Product

Jurors not only complimented the plan for its ideas, but for its consistent layout, clear writing, and helpful graphics. In later sections, its individual recommendations are accompanied by images of successful urban design interventions elsewhere. This gallery of success stories provides a spur to the imagination, and ranges from housing prototypes in Vancouver; to the detailing of the water edge at New York's Battery Park City; to the construction of light rail transit in Portland, Oregon, and a pedestrian bridge in Bilbao, Spain.

Jurors also noted that the basis for many of the proposed changes is amply documented in appendices to the plan. These fill nearly half its length with analyses of market,

transportation, infrastructure and environmental issues.

Finally, they noted that the planning effort also made a serious attempt to include the views of nearby residents and waterfront stakeholders. "The plan will absolutely have an impact on people who own or rent there," Kittredge notes.

Among other things, the size of the proposed new buildings were subject to careful scrutiny at community meetings, where massing simulations were analyzed from a variety of viewpoints. The plan was also subject to periodic review by a working group combining major stakeholders and representatives of federal and local agencies.

Ultimately, the plan "is as much a reflection of the community's views as it is of ours," Kittredge believes. Some residents will lose unobstructed views of the water, but on balance it will add tremendous value to a neighborhood currently dominated by speeding traffic and parking lots.

— David Moffat

**Upper left:** The Ship Channel during its heyday in the early twentieth century.

Photo courtesy of Martin Luther King Library, Washington, D.C.

**Upper right:** view of southwest waterfront today showing Fish Market in foreground and 10th Street overlook. Photo courtesy of DCOP.

**Lower left:** Map of Washington, D.C., showing location of Anacostia River and the southwest waterfront plan area.

**Lower right:** The open spaces and modern design of existing apartment complexes in southwest Washington. Photo courtesy of Beyer Blinder Belle.

# First Nations Community Planning Model

SL I would propose this because of its cleverness from a research point of view—not from the point of view of design. Because of the quality of the questions it asks and the scope of what it will do. JC Public participation

outreach methodology? SL Done by an indigenous group. WM It really went in-depth in terms of participatory design. But it doesn't get to a lot of physical things. JC It doesn't get to any, does it? ALS This is such a

wonderful model of how the planning process should be born. SL Yes, it is really good and it's clear. SL This never would have happened in the United States. It can be done in Australia. And it can be done in

Few people would argue that community planning is easy. But one only has to read between the lines of the First Nations Community Planning Model to see how extraordinarily difficult it is. To engage hard-pressed communities, such as those of Atlantic Canada's first nations, in a truly participatory process that helps them seize control of their futures requires great skill, intelligence and perseverance.

In a foreword to the First Nations Model, Frank Palermo, who directed its production, describes just a few of the obstacles: "There isn't enough time; there aren't enough resources; it's not considered important...but the most significant barrier is that many communities don't know the difference it makes and don't often understand how to do it." It is this last difficulty that the First Nations Model sets out most directly to address.

The model emerged from an initiative of the Wagmatcook First Nation and the Joint Community Planning Committee (JCPC), a group that combines first-nation representatives with representatives of Canadian federal departments. According to Palermo, "rather than continuously reacting to government programs and day-to-day crises," first-nations individuals came to the committee seeking help in developing a more forward-thinking way to manage development issues.

On one level, then, the model addresses the need to improve the effectiveness of Canadian-government development programs. As a model, it attempts to do this by establishing a replicable framework for action beneficial to both funding agencies and first-nation recipients. But to see this as all that is involved would be to miss its potentially much greater impact, Palermo says.

First-nation communities in Canada suffer from many of the same problems as their counterparts in the U.S. Among these are untreated health problems such as diabetes and drug and alcohol abuse, poor housing and infrastructure, high dropout and suicide rates, and unemployment. A sense of hopelessness is further fostered by an all-too-apparent disconnect between traditional values and the pressures of the modern world. The First Nation Model proposes that an integrated process of physical planning can actually be an important tool by which to address such larger issues.

## A Question of Process

The First Nations Model was created by the Cities and Environment Unit within the Faculty of Architecture at Halifax's Dalhousie University. Jurors reviewed the first edition of its overall program guide and documentation of three initial pilot projects at the Abegweit, Metapenagiag

Mi'kmaq, and Pictou Landing communities.

As the pilot efforts indicate, this is not glamorous, high-profile work. Instead, it involves the nitty-gritty of small-town projects done on something more than a shoestring. Yet, as the model points out, these projects have importance both in their own right and as indicators of a larger process of empowerment intended to build self-reliance, self-esteem, and leadership skills.

Such an emphasis on process spurred considerable discussion on the jury. One juror argued that EDRA/*Places* planning awards should principally recognize projects with exceptional physical outcomes. But others felt the awards should also recognize superior initiatives where specific physical impacts may be of less importance. In some circumstances, the establishment of a clear framework for community outreach and decision-making may have a more profound impact on qualities of place than a gloriously illustrated design plan, they said. And, while the physical outcomes of the First Nations Model pilot projects might seem unimpressive in an urban context, they would likely have greater meaning in bypassed, rural communities.

As part of their discussion, jurors also noted that it has now become almost routine to consider the building of tribal casinos as a panacea for the troubles of native communities. With money, talented outside design professionals can also be hired to create a pastiche of symbols that fetishizes first-nation identity. But the most significant efforts may ultimately be those that arise from within a community itself, several jurors pointed out.

Furthermore, while planning efforts today routinely herald the staging of "community meetings," rarely do these rise to the level of true participation, several jurors said. At the same time, experience worldwide has now shown that such an additional level of engagement, combined with the ability to "ask the right questions," is crucial when working with native communities.

## A Simple Framework

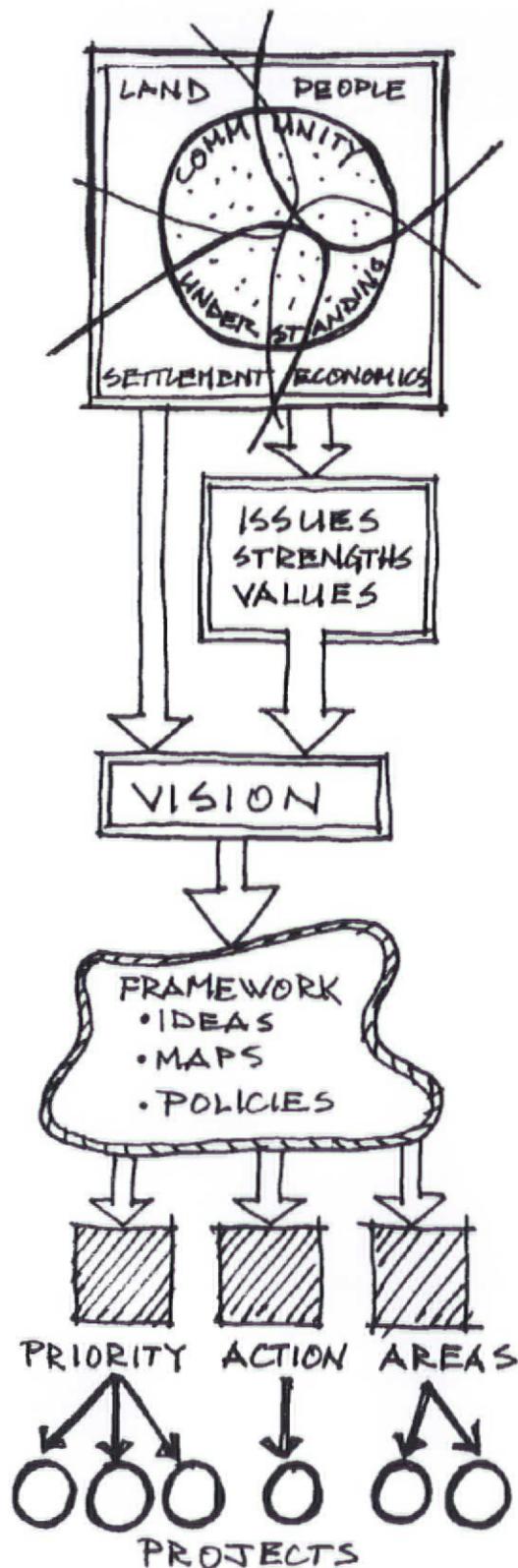
The ultimate beneficiaries of the First Nations Model are some 32 first-nation bands in Atlantic Canada, ranging in size from 100 to 3,000 residents. "Standing still is not a choice" for these communities, the model argues. "A community can be pushed by the constant current of local pressures and global forces or it can take control over its own destiny."

*There is a season for planting and one for harvesting; for repairing traps and for hunting; for preparing the boat and for catching fish; for tapping trees and for collecting the maple syrup; a time for working and playing and resting and celebrating.*

Canada. But it is so politically organized it would be very difficult to pull it off here. ALS On the other hand, a lot of Native American communities could gain from following such processes. I don't see it as so farfetched. WM I was wondering about the outcomes. Maybe there just

isn't the capital to produce something really slick. ALS But they do have a series of policies. And actually they show what projects were implemented. SL We have seen so many projects that either have no information on community process or say, "we had public hearings"—just the minimal

amount of participation and community outreach without explaining how you actually go about doing it. Those of us who do it know that it's really difficult to get serious participation. So here's a project that clearly describes what was done, adds to our knowledge base about how to do it,



*We understand these cycles and prepare ourselves to take appropriate action at the right moment. Our survival depends on it. Both individually and as a community we need to be ready. We need to get the ground ready, to find the right equipment, to identify the best location, to decide on the best time. We need a plan of action.*

Where this community-based planning effort differs from past government-sponsored initiatives, however, is that it argues against employing outside professionals for other than the most difficult and/or technical stages. If planning is to succeed as a larger source of inspiration and motivation, a premium must be placed on a community's willingness to direct its own effort.

Toward this goal, the model offers a simple framework of action consisting of eight separate, but sequential, stages: Gathering Background Information; Identifying Strengths & Issues; Searching for Connections; Establishing a Vision; Building a Framework; Developing Projects; Implementing Projects; and Monitoring. These stages are further broken down into subsections dealing with Principles; Steps and Methods; Expertise and Skills; Involvement; and Products. Finally, the main text is augmented with conceptual diagrams, illustrative photos, and sidebars that expand on the best practices of other first nations.

### Pilot Projects

To date, three trial uses of the model have been completed, each lasting roughly sixteen months. And based on their initial success, another eight projects are underway. Each pilot application to date has been led by a project coordinator from the Cities and Environment Unit—typically a recent graduate of the university's planning program. In addition, members of first-nation communities from throughout the region have been included on project teams to help build community contacts and a reservoir of training and skills.

Completed and contemplated projects from the three pilot communities are extraordinarily diverse. For the Metapenagiag Mi'kmaq Band of Red Bank, New Brunswick, completed projects included a community playground and outdoor adventure lodge. A heritage park was in design and development, while renovation of an old band office as a youth/training center was under consideration.

At Pictou Landing, on Prince Edward Island, completed projects included the cleanup of a river, a beach, and a schoolyard and improvement of a trail that will provide a first link in a more extensive network. Progress

Projects build on each other to implement the Framework, reinforce the Vision, and improve the local quality of life.

and was able to implement it at the community level. ALS I use the word “model” because I think this is an optimal process that can be replicated. The other thing is I don’t know how many of you have been to these reservations, but the architecture is horrific. Buildings built by the

government are boxy structures that have absolutely nothing to do with tradition and connection with the land. Here we see an attempt to go back to their roots, to train children about a very rich history. This is very important, this connection of the past to the future. WM One of the

things I like about small-scale intervention is it is probably meaningful for these people—rather than some giant concept they probably don’t need or can’t afford. I like the whole idea of planning and community design as making small improvements that really matter. ALS It’s one of

was being made toward construction of a new health center and band office. Construction of a new sidewalk along the main road through the settlement was also under consideration.

Work with the Abegweit First Nation, in Nova Scotia, had produced a long list of suggested projects. These were grouped into such areas as Health and Recreation, Youth, Education, Environment and Resources, Housing and Growth, Economic Development, and Governance.

Under “Community Connections,” for example, the plan recommended construction of a Maw’idum’kewey Building in each of the band’s three principal reserve areas. It argued that through architectural design (for example, using traditional bent-wood structure) these buildings would be significant in helping identify each community as Abegweit.

Other actions proposed under “Community Connections” were less tangible in terms of physical traces, but were thought to be equally important in the establishment of a sense of band identity. These included the intimation of a shuttle service between the reserves and the creation of a formal calendar of events to “reintroduce traditions of gathering, celebrating, and participating in community events.”

### Ongoing Engagement

Unlike stand-alone studies, another significant feature of the First Nations Model is that it proposes that community-based planning become a permanent activity of each band. Thus, a community’s engagement with the planning process is not complete when a framework of action emerges. Rather, application of the model continues through the development and execution of projects; the review, renewal, and/or alteration of plan goals; and the creation of subsequent cycles of action.

To sustain such an ongoing commitment, the model proposes that the completion of each stage be accompanied by the creation of specific products, and that each moment of completion be marked by a public celebration. The model also stresses the need to tell the story of the planning process through news reports, public displays, and bulletins. If some people prefer not to actively participate, they will at least hear about the effort and feel included. If they are participating, public recognition of their efforts is a key reward for their commitment of time and effort.

Each stage of the model also mandates specific opportunities for public input, particularly that of elders, schoolchildren, and young adults. As Palermo points out, the special identity of first nations will only be preserved if new links can be established between younger

band members and older people who may be the repositories of traditional knowledge and values.

Over time, the model will change to reflect ongoing experience, says Beata Dera, a Community Planner and Research Associate who worked on the Pictou Landing pilot project. And already, a second edition is under production that will simplify the model from eight stages to seven.

One problem so far, Palermo notes, has been the heavy reliance of the model on the leadership of a planning work group. First-nation communities do not have “a huge tradition” of volunteering, he says. And even though there is a high level of unemployment, people with the interest and skills to serve effectively on such a body tend to be overextended already.

On the other hand, Palermo points out, there have been few political difficulties in applying the model. Quite the opposite, its implementation has invigorated tribal councils. People seeking election to these bodies are now proud to say, “You know, I worked on ‘the plan’.”

Based on the initial work, “a new kind of spirit” is also already evident in the three pilot communities, Palermo believes. And beyond Atlantic Canada, the model has begun to attract attention from other universities, professional planners, and native communities.

— David Moffat

**Upper left:** Implementation map from Pictou Landing pilot project.

**Lower left:** New platform with benches marks the beginning of an improved trail network at Pictou Landing.

**Upper right:** The Abegweit pilot project imagined a bridge using traditional bent-wood construction.

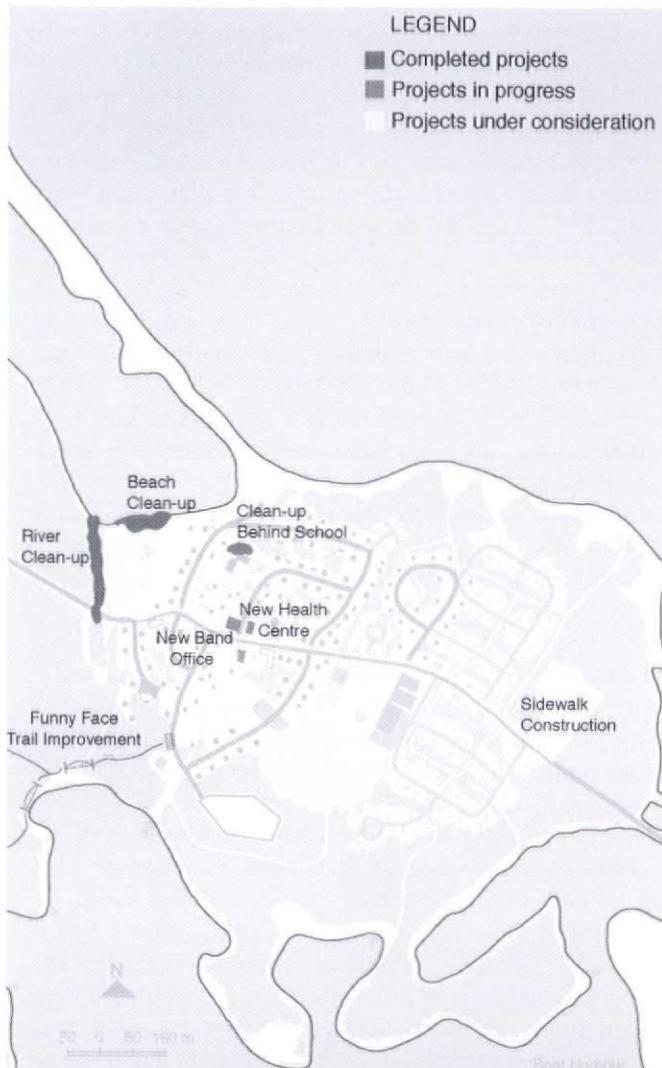
**Mid-right:** bridge under construction.

**Lower right:** using experience and knowledge from within the community is both satisfying and efficient.

All Images courtesy of Cities and Environment Unit.

the very few projects that doesn't see design as a sort of isolated activity. There is thinking here about economic development, about bringing resources back to the community, about homeownership problems. WM And it's planning for native communities that

doesn't come up with a casino. ALS Economic development that doesn't come up with a casino.



# Reclaiming the American West

JC I can speak to this one. It's original by virtue of the fact that it takes on these devastated, huge-scale mining and quarry-type areas. It's not unlike Mississippi Floods, although this is actually much more analytical. And

bear in mind, these vast landscapes—talk about tens of thousands of acres of mined landscape—no one knows what to do with them. As they are closing, increasingly over the years you get this huge bank of acreage and no one

knows what to do with it. This is the only book that I know that deals with that. ALS Can you talk a little about the research methodology? JC I think he spent probably four or five years researching these sites in terms of

Anyone who has flown over the Intermountain West has likely wondered about the origins of the sublime and bizarre landforms below—smooth circles, steep cuts, uniform piles, concentric terraces, chopped-off peaks, and mysterious polygons in strange concentrations of whites, reds, greens, and blacks. Anyone who has wondered about these landscapes and then read Alan Berger's *Reclaiming the American West* will be left with one practical answer: mining—and many more questions.

The questions follow complicated meanders. If one follows them, one comes to see how these intermountain landscapes—cut and framed by the deceptively reassuring lines of section, township, and range—were created by such forces as frontier quests, suburban dreams, far-away wars, cultural demands, political proposals, and a seemingly ubiquitous taste for French fries.

Berger's research traces many of these meanders while treating the emerging typology of the post-mine landscape of the American West as a related set of site challenges. Jurors argued for the importance of his work based on its timeliness, his unique research methods, and the potential generalizability of lessons drawn from reclamation on such a vast scale.

## A Ubiquitous Presence

Berger notes that active and abandoned mines now cover more than 100 million acres of the Intermountain West. In 1977, the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) required planning for the eventual reclamation of these mines. As a result, the Western landscape, already shaped by such large-scale human uses as livestock grazing, water diversion, logging, national parks, and mining is now set to be further recontoured by the curious new activity of reclamation.

As Berger points out, the Surface Mining Law now means mining can be considered no more than a temporary land use. Yet each form of mining (surface, underground, coal, and hard-rock) requires a unique approach to reclamation and presents a different set of regulatory challenges. And despite the best reclamation techniques, some impacts persist even in reclaimed lands. By-products of mining operations such as air pollution from smelters, toxic runoff, and contaminated soil constitute a legacy that will endure in landscapes and communities of the American West for ages.

In effect, Berger writes, mining creates a "fluid process of landscape production, and it sets off a chain of events perpetually fueled by cultural needs." These cultural demands—for copper, gold, coal, and even for phosphate to process frozen potatoes—are what ultimately shape the land around us.

Through word, cartography, mapping and image, Berger examines this intricate regional story. He explores the large-scale flows of resources that affect single sites. And he presents an overview of key determining elements: the implications of the grid survey system; the West's particular context of barbed wire and local hydrology; and the Surface Mining Law's requirement that mined land be returned to its "approximate original contour."

## Ties to Larger Issues

Berger's deep look at these Western states of rectangular perimeters and wild topographies is captivating in its own right, but the strength of his research lies in its broad applicability. The same questions that Berger asks about the reclaimed, post-mine landscape of the Intermountain West can be asked about any piece of remade land: decommissioned military sites on the West Coast, industrial brownfields in the Midwest, and war-altered places and abandoned cities all over the globe.

Acknowledge history, or cover it in fresh turf? Include industrial topography as part of a landscape narrative, or return it to its "approximate original contour"? Approach legacies of contamination honestly, or use pleasantly green landscapes as tools of comfort and deception? Follow the urban-renewal model of easily cleared and developed superblocks, or proceed slowly and carefully?

Because of its desire to establish such a broad vision, *Reclaiming the American West* should be seen as kin to such other books as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*, and Marc Reisner's *Cadillac Desert*. Such books call for serious rethinking of the way we do things. Rather than solely addressing local places, they explore the global networks that affect them.

Berger sees the mined landscape as one challenge among many which are created by American cultural demands. Mining of the West—along with grazing, suburbanization, and other familiar land uses—supports the larger patterns and everyday decisions of American consumption.

The findings of such work can be alarming at any scale. For example, on pp. 31-32, Berger discusses issues surrounding the reclamation of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, north of Denver.

*Beginning in 1993, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal was reclaimed to be the nation's largest urban wildlife refuge, now known as the Rocky Mountain Wildlife Refuge. Guided public tours point out abundant fauna species and unique habitat. Neighboring Commerce City's Office of Economic Development promotes the Refuge as a "natural" wildlife asset for all to enjoy and a place to discover nature right in the city!*

collecting base material. He interviewed the operators and the managers of the companies that deal with this. He spent some time at the Environmental Protection Agency finding out how they grade different sites in terms of toxicity and environmental damage. A thesis of the

book isn't only that you ameliorate these landscapes technically, by biochemistry or whatever, but that you deal with these landscapes through representation, to reshape people's imagination. There's a lot there that is at the same time analytical and technological, and on the other hand

representational, artistic, imaginative. It's incredibly original and substantial. WM One of the things I really liked about it is how he uses graphics. Combining photographs and charts really makes everything come alive in terms of information. SL This is using the visual as a methodology. This is



*Prior to becoming a refuge, the Arsenal was home to chemical weapons manufacturing and munitions and pesticide production for more than three decades. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency once believed the Arsenal to contain the most toxic square mile of land on the planet! In late 2000, almost eight years after the site was opened for public tours, ten Sarin (a nerve agent) bombs were unearthed by a construction crew working near an area open to the public. Tours of the wildlife refuge by schoolchildren were canceled during the ensuing process to dispose of the bombs.*

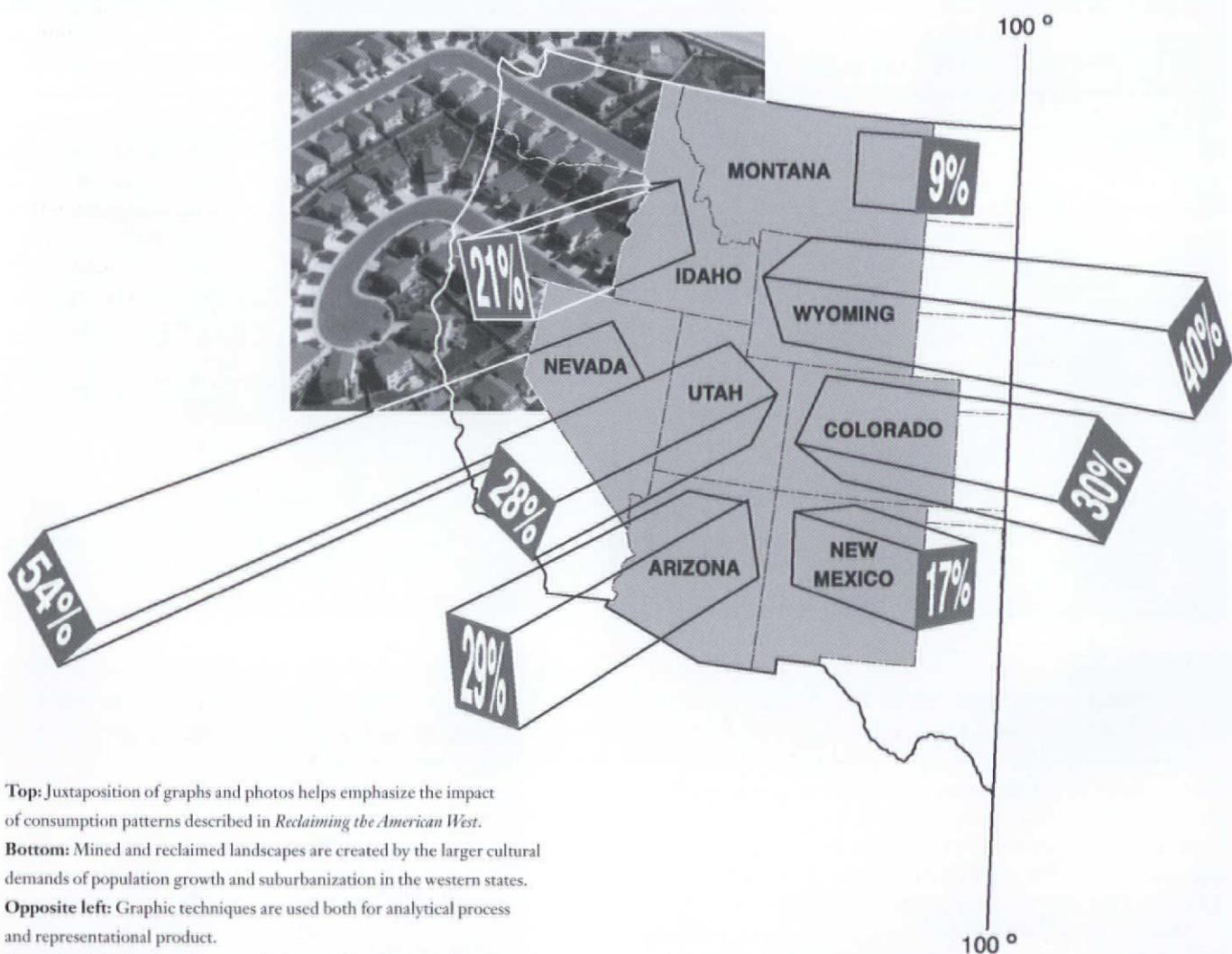
*The U.S. Department of the Interior, in cooperation with the U.S. Army, manages the Arsenal and Refuge. Reclamation activities are estimated to cost two billion dollars and are expected*

*to continue until the year 2011. The Arsenal is home to a winter-roosting population of American bald eagles, as well as other threatened and endangered species that share ground with constant reclamation activities.*

### Graphic-Driven Research

*Reclaiming the American West* is supported by considerable amounts of data, which Berger makes accessible through effective visual display. Berger operates in the tradition of

As part of his research, Berger flew over mining sites to document vast patterns of landscape alteration.



**Top:** Juxtaposition of graphs and photos helps emphasize the impact of consumption patterns described in *Reclaiming the American West*.

**Bottom:** Mined and reclaimed landscapes are created by the larger cultural demands of population growth and suburbanization in the western states.

**Opposite left:** Graphic techniques are used both for analytical process and representational product.

**Opposite right:** Reclamation tests the limits of familiar land-shaping concepts like "angle of repose."

using mapping as a research tool in and of itself. I think you are totally right. ALS I think it is a book that people can grasp easily because of the visual power. What I would have liked to see is, what is the politics of reclaiming space? What are the economics? I think it's covered a little

too visually. SL One of its findings is that, at the conceptual level, the landscape is a combination of both nature and culture. I wouldn't consider that new enough. But the other finding is an argument for reclaiming a landscape by looking at it with new eyes. By re-looking and re-imagining,

we can reclaim space and create new landscapes that are places of cultural use as well. I think that's where visual technology takes us—to imagine new spaces where we only see destruction or degradation or erosion or whatever.

Edward R. Tufte, whose books have argued for visual clarity in the presentation of statistical information.

In effect, the jury noted, Berger uses mapping, image-making, and graphic representation both as presentation tools and research methods. They praised this effort to create a new visual language, and noted that he had taken an analytical step beyond the mapping techniques of *Mississippi Floods* (winner of a 2001 EDRA/*Places* award for research).

Berger presents poetry about remaking land next to percentages and quantities, handling data in a way that advocates careful attention to qualitative experience. In doing so he constantly reminds his readers of what the data mean on the ground—its spatial implications and what it *looks like* in the landscape. Conversely, he also digs beneath the surface of many everyday images—presenting some astounding numbers behind the innocent image of a single-family housing development in Colorado, for example.

Many pages feature hybrids of graphed data, mapped data, and photographic images—three ways to understand the consequences of land manipulation. In arguing for his new graphical systems, Berger writes that section and plan drawings—customary devices of miners, conventional tools of reclaimers, and revered traditions of designers—are often inadequate to express the spatial and narrative possibilities of reclaimed land.

### A Long-Term Challenge

According to Berger, mine reclamation—measured by spending and scale—will be one of the largest infrastructure undertakings in the history of the United States.

And he urges landscape planners and designers in the American West to join the conversation about how to treat post-technological landscapes now, for challenges surrounding them will likely show up on their drawing boards for years to come.

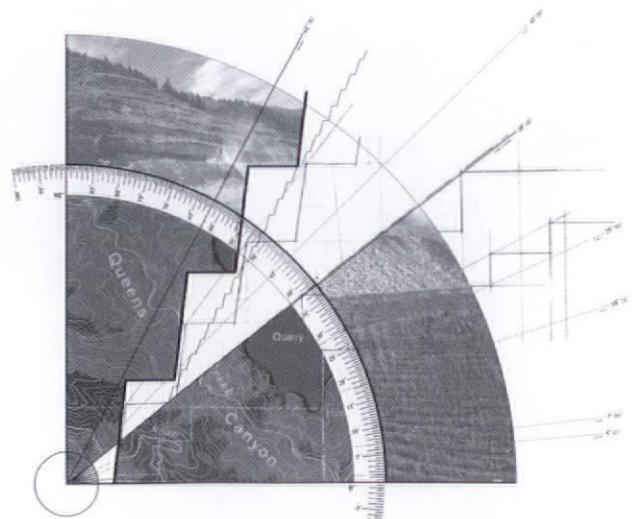
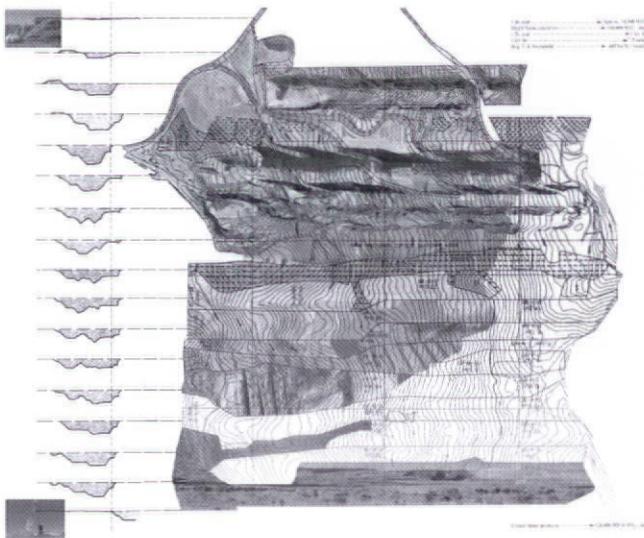
Unfortunately, Berger says, the response from landscape architects to these issues has so far been virtually nonexistent. Miners, reclamation professionals, conservationists, and architects have all been enthusiastic in asking that he speak to them. But the very profession that should be best equipped to handle the challenge seems to be simply not paying attention. It continues to focus on formalism within site boundaries while missing the implications of larger forces that affect the site.

Thus, when Berger asked a room full of 200 landscape architects how they might contribute to the new work of reclaiming mined landscapes, the room was sadly silent, until one person responded that it would be interesting to have the opportunity to “make cool landforms.”

In *Reclaiming the American West* Berger questions the one-prescription approach to reclamation, and he encourages others to do the same. In doing so, he argues for the multiple possibilities of *place*. Just *who* will provide the vision for these new places, and *how*, remains in question. As a landscape architect and researcher, Berger has taken an intriguing first step. Other design professionals will do well to consider the prospectus presented in *Reclaiming the American West*.

— Andrea Urbiel Goldner

All images courtesy of Alan Berger.



# Sento at Sixth and Main: Preserving Landmarks of Japanese Heritage

SL Would you speak to Sento and Sixth? When I read it I was just incredibly moved by the depth of the research. ALS I think this is a prime example of research that is completely

collaborative. This is important to the experience of groups that are not necessarily visible or that have been marginalized. Particularly with Japanese Americans, there is a lot of history

that is completely hidden or destroyed. It's just a very extensive collection of materials that show everyday life. SL And at the end it talks about the implications for designing

A woman bathing, chin buried under the still water, folded washcloth balanced delicately on her head, eyes shut to the world. The image, on its cover, is typical of the portraits of people and places presented in *Sento at Sixth and Main* by Gail Dubrow and Donna Graves. The book uses such intimate views to re-imagine the sense of calm, of ritual and normalcy, that imbued the everyday built environment of Japanese-American communities in the early/mid-twentieth century. In seeking to recapture such moments and places, the authors hope to bring home racism's effects on place—not only in the development and existence of certain institutions and neighborhoods, but in the process of selecting places of architectural and historical significance to remember and protect.

As most Americans are now aware, the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941 led the federal government to order the removal of all Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. Their forced relocation to isolated inland internment camps caused once-vital communities, from Seattle to Los Angeles, to be scattered—their property seized, their heritage irreparably endangered.

Since the 1980s, various attempts to recognize and redress this injustice have largely involved commemorating and memorializing the experience of relocation. Indeed, in the National Register of Historic Places internment camps are the most frequently listed landmarks associated with Japanese Americans.

Dubrow and Graves agree such sites are powerfully important to U.S. history, but they see them as inadequate representations of the people displaced. The tragic power of internment is still evident in *Sento at Sixth and Main*. But it is conveyed by unfolding a deeper story of exclusion

and discrimination, and by making us care about places that once sustained a community, but which have now been lost.

By questioning what has been set aside as representative of Japanese-American history, their book also raises the issue of how places of historical significance are identified. In particular, Dubrow and Graves criticize official preservation initiatives for failing to adequately include the views of represented communities. Only such a policy can combat the “lens of our cultural biases,” they write.

## A Surprising Discovery

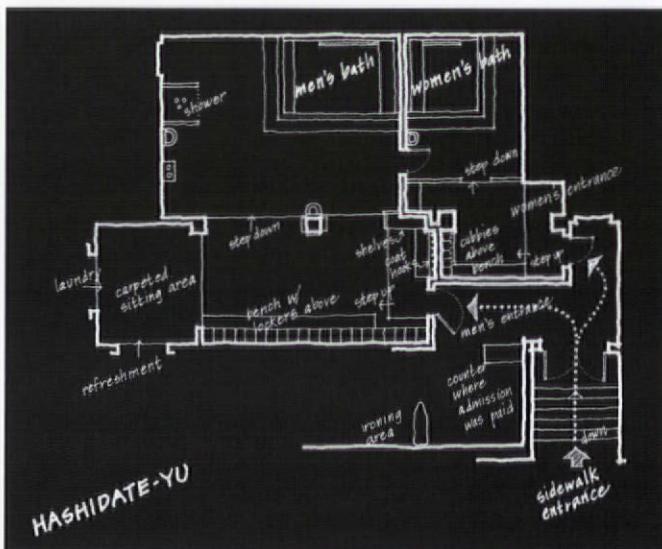
*Sento at Sixth and Main* evolved out of Dubrow's involvement with planning projects to protect and document Japanese-American cultural resources at both the state and local level. A professor of history at the University of Washington in Seattle, she had read of the hundreds of bathhouses built by Japanese immigrants, but she had never seen evidence of one. Finally, someone pointed her in the direction of the Hashidate-Yu in the basement of Seattle's Panama Hotel, one of only two such spaces still known to exist. That was when she realized she had some work to do.

“What struck me [was] that such an extraordinary resource could exist in the International District, right at the corner of what had been Japantown, and that it had never been documented in all the preservation planning work done.”

Such bathhouses were once known as *sento*: thus the title of the book. But as the project grew, it came to include research on nine other historic buildings/sites of importance to pre- and postwar Japanese American communities. Each was chosen for specific reasons of local significance, but the intent was also to provide an overall cross-section of cultural space. As sites of quotidian rituals and gatherings, the sites further hint at the importance of vernacular buildings to the fabric of a city or culture, and the ease with which such cultural traces can disappear.

In some cases, these places of Japanese-American identity came into being indirectly as refuges from discriminatory attitudes. Holiday Bowl in Los Angeles, for example, was one of a limited circuit of bowling alleys open to Japanese Americans—a reaction to rules which, until the 1950s, made bowling leagues ineligible for awards if they had nonwhite members.

In other cases, patterns of exclusion were more direct. For example, Dubrow and Graves document how worker housing at the Selleck Lumber Camp (near Tacoma, Washington) once included a special segregated district



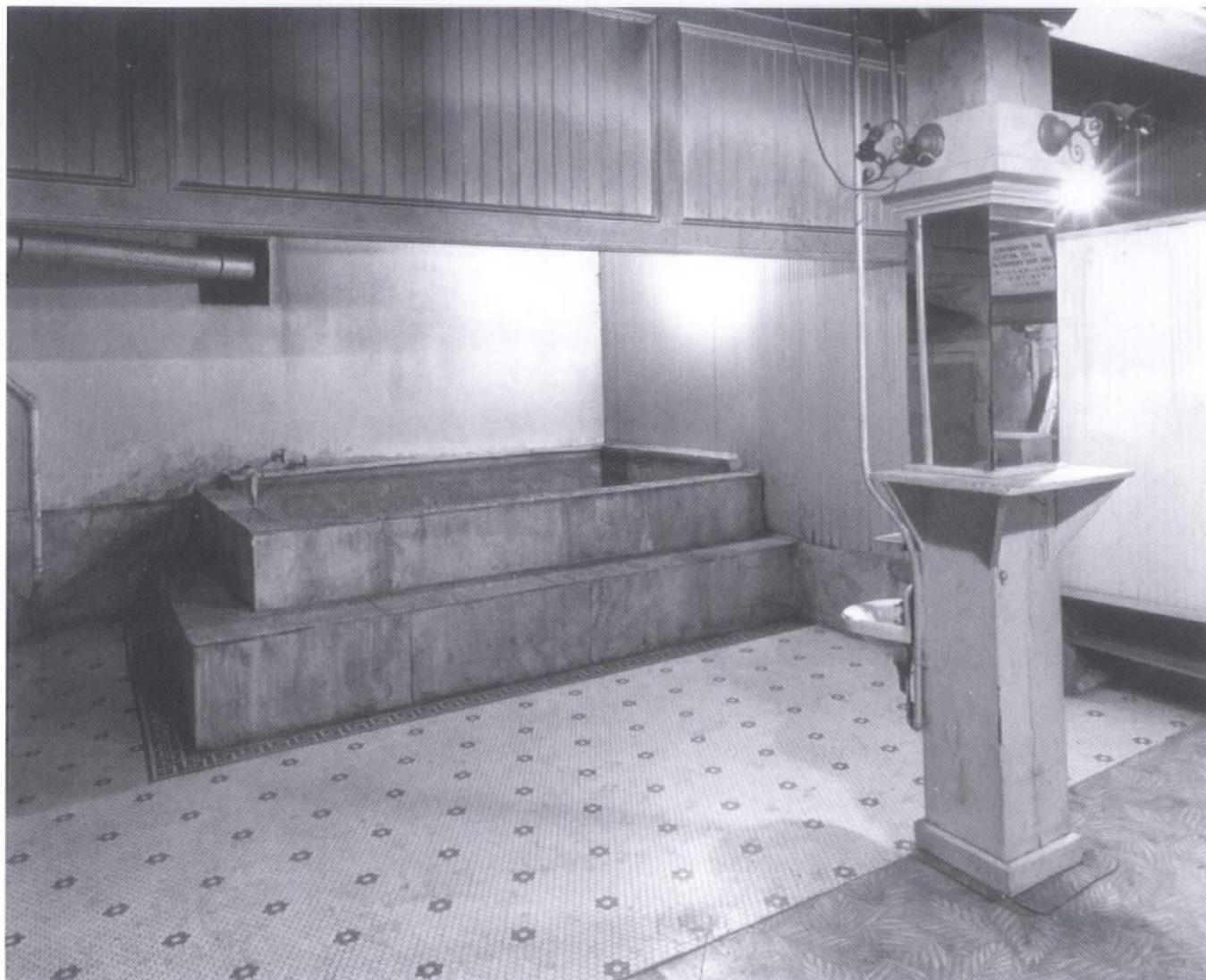
Left: Plan of the sento in the basement of Seattle's Panama Hotel.

Opposite: Men's bath at the sento.

and commemorating the spaces. JC I didn't see that. SL Take a look at the end. They are talking about trying to give physical form to these memories. That is part of the struggle of this work—to give it design form. Whether or not you agree with the forms, a real imperative is to reclaim

these histories in ways that are meaningful and beautiful and important. JC When Venturi and Scott Brown did this type of thing it was much more emphatically related to design and planning practices. ALS Brown's work is primarily design and spatial analysis. It doesn't involve talking to people,

trying to realize how people utilize these spaces, how people feel about them. SL If we take as a criterion that work be forward-looking, I think both [the two research award winners] are important. It may be that the design implications of the second [Sento] aren't as clear, but I think they are just



for Japanese-Americans. They also discovered that the houses in this district were so poorly constructed they had not stood the test of time. And so, while the houses of the more privileged white workers were currently under consideration for national landmark status, the important contribution of Japanese Americans to the Northwest lumber industry was in danger of being lost.

The effects of the war-era internment are immediately evident with respect to many of the sites examined in the book. An important reason is that once their populations were removed, many Japanese-American communities never regained their previous density or significance within their respective cities. When residents of Little Tokyo in Los Angeles returned after the war, for example, they found their neighborhood swallowed up by “Bronzeville,”

now home to thousands of African Americans, prohibited from living in white areas.

The scattering of the Japanese American population also meant a dilution of demand for businesses serving specifically Japanese-American needs. And after the war a stigma came to attach to these businesses. Before internment, Japanese Americans had destroyed personal documents and artifacts to avoid being suspected of loyalty to the Japanese government. Now, upon returning to their former communities, they avoided culturally specific rituals and places that might draw unwanted attention to them.

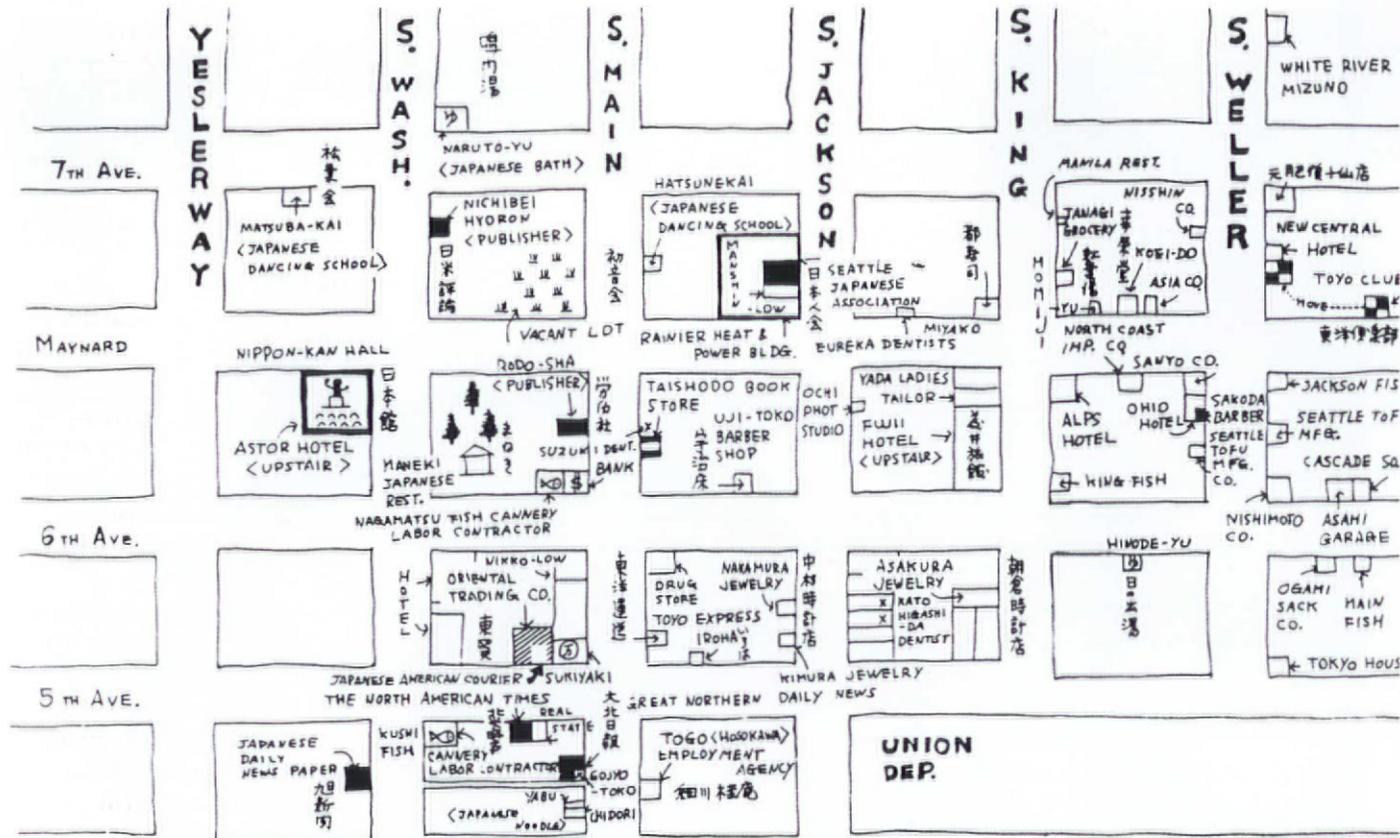
#### **A Collaborative Method**

By documenting key building types and communicating the meaning of these places in an evocative way, Dubrow

as important. ALS It concerns making things visible. A larger population may pass through some of these spaces and have absolutely no idea that they were once significant for people of a different color or race. Either by policy or bulldozers, these imprints of ethnicity have been eliminated from

the landscape. SL I know this research on Holiday Bowl is setting it up as a possible landmark site in Los Angeles. So here is a direct design and preservation outcome that is incredibly important to a community. Without this in-depth historical and ethnographic research, we can't begin to

reclaim these places and the cultural imaginations that created them. WM We preserve high-style buildings by significant architects, but there's an awful lot about cities that gets forgotten. The importance of books like this is to make you aware of the ordinary places that make up a city.



and Graves help readers personally identify with this history of displacement. In their work the authors used such traditional methods as archival research and field investigations. But the source of much of their most important material was extensive public involvement. This effort included both collection of individual oral histories and meetings with community groups.

Dubrow recounts how her first impulse in researching the history of the Japanese-American community in Seattle was to hold a meeting to introduce her mission and ask for help. But she quickly realized this was the wrong approach, since she was not known to the people she wanted to meet. Moreover, the power of historical neglect, which had endangered these sites to begin with, was so strong many people no longer cared for them. They were "those old places"—not socially important in the present; and it was certainly not worth digging up painful memories to help a stranger.

At this point, Dubrow changed her strategy and began to assert her position as a stranger—albeit one with credentials as a historian affiliated with the University of Washington. Rather than hosting her own meetings, she began contacting already-established community groups and asked to be placed on their agendas. She then used these existing forums

to present her case, emphasizing it as part of a larger struggle to discover, document, and protect places of importance to Japanese Americans. At this point, "people came out of the woodwork," she says, and *Sento at Sixth and Main* came to incorporate hundreds of individual memories.

In this sense, the book embodies a truly collaborative, multifaceted approach to understanding the significance of place. Its hundreds of individual stories give body to the book's idea of historical memory. We see pages from an etiquette book and illustrations from a supply catalogue; we hear about comfort foods of salted plums and pickled bean curd; we are presented with photos of schoolgirls doing calisthenics, and of tins of grease paint for the opera.

Parts are comic. Quite a bit is tragic. But all is tied together by a desire to re-establish a sense for the full spectrum of daily life. In this account, place is not a stage for action to occur, but a confluence of ritual, of community networks and cultural identity.

In this way, we come to understand how Seattle's historic *sento*, Hashidate-Yu, is more than a defunct bathhouse. When women who grew up bathing there visit today, they giggle at their first-ever sight of the men's baths. And when men see the size of the women's areas,



they are shocked by the inequality of the space distribution. But the visits unlock memories of a daily cycle of social activities that once revolved around the site.

The importance of preserving such places as repositories of historical memory is further brought home by the trunks of belongings left behind at the *senjo* by families leaving Seattle for internment. Even today, dozens of these trunks remain unclaimed. A Japanese American museum of has expressed interested in moving these to Los Angeles. But much of the power of visiting this site comes from seeing these abandoned fragments of the past.

"You can know that Sixth and Main was the historical epicenter of Japantown," says Dubrow. "But if all historic signage is removed, all the artifacts, it's hard to understand viscerally how this was the case. The presence of resources in these places allows those who lived there to say 'This was the place I grew up.' And it allows the present visitor to understand how Japanese came, settled, and thrived. We can begin to reflect on the significance of our loss."

### Intangible Qualities of Place

In their comments, jurors noted how *Sento at Sixth and Main* offers the type of design research that is invaluable to historical preservation efforts. Without such an understanding of their less tangible attributes, important places will continue to suffer neglect. Even though they are outstanding examples of vernacular buildings, these important sites of Japanese-American identity are not one-of-a-kind

buildings of overarching significance—the type of sites usually nominated for National Historic Landmark status.

Dubrow says this battle to recognize the historical importance of the fabric of a city is "one of the real challenges of our time." And she sees herself as an activist in efforts to push preservation policy in a more inclusive direction. Several jurors applauded such efforts to identify and preserve examples of important vernacular environments, no matter what ethnic or cultural group they might be associated with.

To date, Dubrow's and Graves's work has also had concrete effects. Among the specific policy results of the research that Dubrow can point to is that the Panama Hotel has made it through several levels of review for National Historic Landmark nomination. But in addition to informing specific preservation initiatives, Dubrow sees her book as a tool for public awareness. The process of research itself has involved Japanese-American communities to such an extent that many are now active advocates for historic preservation.

In this regard, it has been particularly gratifying for her that the Seattle Arts Commission bought and donated 1,000 copies of *Sento at Sixth and Main* to educators, policymakers, and members of the community who participated in the research. To be able to present copies of the book to those who cooperated in gathering this history seems the best reward. The book takes us beyond "those old places" to tell a story that is funny, spooky, sad. In a word, accessible.

— Laura Boutelle

All images courtesy of Gail Dubrow and Donna Graves.

**Opposite:** Map of important sites to the Japanese-American community of Seattle in the 1920s and 30s.

**Above:** Japanese miners at the Selleck lumber camp.

# The EDRA/*Places* Awards 1998-2003

William L. Porter

It is apparent from a review of the first six years of this awards program that the joining of EDRA with *Places* has had wonderful effects. There is evidence of various kinds of convergence between researchers and designers, implying the evolution of a hybrid community—a group whose activities engage both research and design, who have strong competencies in both arenas, and whose professional identity includes both research and design. There has also been a distinct movement in the awards program toward greater depth of research, greater awareness of action implications of the research, and challenges to conventional ways of working in design and planning.

Some award winners join the domains of research and design so well they make old boundaries difficult to discern. But awarded projects in the category of “research” that do not seem immediately to address how the future might be shaped, nevertheless indulge the design imagination, creating a more useful foundation for future planning and design projects. And projects that have received awards in the “design” and “research” categories successfully incorporate research into the stream of professional practice.

One might ask how this is different from what designers and planners normally do when they look into a situation. And superficially, the projects may look the same. But beneath the surface are ideas that demonstrate important differences from conventional practice. All these ideas do not necessarily show up in every awarded project, but taken together, they suggest both important reforms of professional practice and strengthened commitment to the underlying values of American society. While evident in the earliest EDRA/*Places* awards, these ideas stand out in bold profile in the latest set.

## Society and Environment

The social context of design has long been a concern of these awards. The distribution of power and wealth in our society forces attention, as well as resources, onto specific groups, leaving others less visible, or even invisible. Such bypassed groups are less able to participate in the shaping of the environment to their own purposes and ideals, and less able to enjoy the fruits of a careful understanding of their own heritage and history. Many of the people attracted to EDRA and *Places* have been committed to redressing this wrong. They believe underrepresented groups should be brought further into the vital processes of everyday life and the special provinces of understanding opened by the design and research disciplines. As one of these people, I believe the payoff of these activities cannot be overestimated. Such work allows sometimes invisible groups to achieve a greater sense of self, a stronger identity,

and a place in the larger schemata of society.

Enhancing the presence of underrepresented groups also expands environmental designers' and researchers' definitions of society, making them more inclusive and respectful of its immense diversity. By deepening our understanding of groups whose priorities have *not* influenced the shape and character of our environments, we discover new possibilities for the conception and design of places. The new perspective adds to our understanding of existing places and increases the richness with which society may become visible through changes to the form of its environment.

Concern for the natural environment has also been a hallmark of the EDRA/*Places* awards. And much the same reasoning surrounding the need to enhance the presence of bypassed social groups can be applied to parts of our environment that have been neglected or abused. While their status today may be symptomatic of past societal priorities, these priorities need not characterize, and should not limit, our vision of future environments. But understanding such environments in light of the interests they once served does provide an important prelude to understanding how those places can be made a richer part of our lives today.

In particular, in the U.S., even though such environments may once have been exploited for the benefit of narrow interest groups, they sometimes also served to bolster the larger economy. In the early stages of our growth as a nation, the consequences of exploitation, understandably, were neither understood nor paid for. But the EDRA/*Places* awards, reflecting the increased responsibilities of a more mature nation, seeks to revisit our democratic foundations, and take fuller account of the diversity of the people who comprise this society and who ought to reap its benefits.

## A Question of Values

With such an exploration of diversity, different sets of values inevitably emerge to propel inquiry. One might argue that, at their origins, both EDRA and *Places* were dominated by the concerns of relatively small groups lying off the center of mainstream professions. But today the EDRA/*Places* awards demonstrate that these concerns did not then, and do not now, reflect a narrow set of values. Nor do they promote self-serving strategies to carve out new niches in the professional marketplace. Instead, they demonstrate real leadership in the quest to understand and express our society and its environment in all of its richness and variety. And they reflect a heightened sense of responsibility to ourselves, as ever more inclusively defined.

In the research conducted, within or outside the

framework of a design or planning project, this latest round of awards continues this sensitivity to a questioning of values.

In any particular project, whose values dominate? How do we know, or at least find out? What guarantees do we give to the user? Who controls the content and conduct of research?

These questions open up further paths of inquiry. Who are the legitimate stakeholders? What are their interests, and how do the consequences of the research bear on those interests? What aspects of a project may benefit the self-interest of the researchers as opposed to those under study? All of these questions are more apt to be addressed today than in projects of the past.

#### A Final Word

One of the most elusive issues for these awards has been that of the design quality of projects and, related to that, the creative contributions of gifted designers.

To their credit, the awards program juries to date have

respected both research and design, narrowly and broadly conceived, and they have recognized extraordinary projects that have not satisfied criteria of thorough and explicit reasoning from research-based findings to design expression.

Some jurors have argued that, for these awards, the connection between research and design should be made explicit. But should explicitness be up to the authors or to the jury? Do we care how Mondrian thought about his wonderful series of abstractions of the tree? Or is our care more properly directed toward how we think about it and how we can appreciate it more fully? Doesn't reasoning from research to design imply exactly the kind of linear thinking that may not be characteristic of great designers?

If responsible social and environmental action requires such reasoning, and if the achievement of extraordinary quality requires the mysterious integrative processing of talented designers, can the two be reconciled? The EDRA/*Places* awards program is an ideal venue in which to continue to address this question!

## Informing Places

Mark Francis

Design is not research; research is not design. This was long the view of both professional designers and scholarly researchers. On the one hand, design is principally an intuitive process involving invention, creativity, and independent action. Research, on the other, requires reflection, systematic investigation, and analysis of data. The two activities exist across a divide between understanding and action, knowledge and invention, theory and practice, meaning and form.

Such positions were fundamentally challenged in the 1960s with the development of the new field of environmental psychology.<sup>1</sup> At that moment increased interest in socially and environmentally responsive design also led to increased interest in design methods, the development of postoccupancy evaluation (the radical idea of returning to a project to see if it works as intended), and the emergence of design research. For thirty-three years the Environmental Design Research Association has been a leader in advancing this point of view. More recently, it

has been joined by *Places*, now in its sixteenth year of publication. Today, there is also a large and active group of designers and researchers who work together to try to improve design practice through research. Encouraged by a growing and cohesive body of published work in books, journal articles, and conference proceedings, this group provides a counterpoint to trends in high-style and fashionable design.<sup>2</sup>

Ten years ago, a few of us gathered in the back of a small café in Montreal to discuss the prospect of a new awards program to celebrate the very best of research-based design and design-based research, and bring it to the attention of practitioners.<sup>3</sup> The idea was inspired in part from the demise of the *Progressive Architecture* Research Awards. But it also grew from the mutual desire of two different but like-minded groups (EDRA and *Places*) to explore how research could inform design, and design could inspire research. This intersection intrigued some of us who had worked for years to bridge the gap between

environmental-design research and design practice. The result are these awards, which recognize exemplary design research, place design, and place planning.

My observations here are based on a review of the material published on the awards program by *Places*, now in its sixth year—along my own experience as a jury member for this and other professional award programs. What impact, if any, has this program had on the making and understanding of places? Do the winners present a coherent body of work that can guide our thinking about designed and natural places? More importantly, can their theories and methods inform the making of future places?

### The Purpose

The goal of the EDRA/*Places* Awards Program, as stated by its sponsors, is to bring exemplary place design and research to a larger audience beyond usual professional and academic boundaries. It is about the need for knowledge based not just on speculation and assumption but on reflection, research, and critical thinking. As Donlyn Lyndon pointed out in a 2000 editorial, this award program seeks to find work that helps designers to “learn to see and think with appropriate complexity.”

Unlike all other award programs, this one is concerned with places informed by research and research that informs places. A consistent idea has been on “informing”—trying to find projects where links are apparent between research and form, idea and action, assumption and evaluation. While juries have struggled with this notion each year, the winning projects show a coherent group of projects, all with some merging of design and research.

In addition to seeking the best work being done today, the intent has also been to present the projects in an informative and even provocative way. Published accounts appear each year in *Places* with project descriptions, high quality photos and plans, narratives by jury members, commentary by local professionals, and reflective articles by some jury members. Lacking is user and public commentary about projects, something that would help the jury and reader assess if projects are as successful as presented. Also missing are site visits and detailed evaluations of impacts, something that entrants could be required to provide.

### The Awards

A look back at the first six years of the awards, as well as a look forward to the next years of the program provide evidence of a fledging but encouraging integration of research and design.

The thirty-six winning projects represent some of the very best work being done in environmental design

(see accompanying summary and analysis). What distinguishes almost all of them is that they are not single-author or even heroic design works. While most deal with the form and shape of places, each explores in some interesting way the deeper levels of place-making processes, collaborations, controversies—but most importantly guiding ideas and perspectives.

Juries have awarded projects in categories of place design, place planning (added in the third year due to the large number of unbuilt plans submitted) and place research. There have been fourteen winners in the design category (including one featured as both design and planning), eight planning projects, and fourteen in the research category. The six awards each year are drawn from over a hundred or more entries, a number that has grown over time. Unlike other award programs, the focus here has been on a smaller number of high quality projects, something that makes this program stand out from other professional award programs.

In addition, *Places* sometimes publishes, along with the winners, a number of entries the jury may deem particularly meritorious. Many of these are as interesting as the winners and illustrate the large body of exemplary work being done on the design, planning and evaluation of places including studio work, international housing design, and scholarly books on places.

### The Winners

Winners have been as diverse in content as they are in geography and discipline. Winners have included several urban parks and open-space projects, neighborhood plans, a school, a corporate headquarters, regional landscape strategies, a street redesign study, a memorial (to Rosie the Riveter), community-wide urban design plans, and several books on topics ranging from plazas to healing gardens, mining reclamation, and building comfort. Taken together, these winners reflect a hopeful view of the quality of work being done today and the important contribution research is making to the design and management of urban and rural places.

Content analysis shows that landscapes made up the majority of winners, followed by books, neighborhood projects, buildings, and master plans. The greatest number of winning entrants have been from landscape architects, followed by urban designers, nonprofit organizations, architects, planners, psychologists and sociologists. It is noteworthy that winners have also included artists and art consultants, and that many of the projects have involved interdisciplinary collaborations between designers and artists, designers and communities, researchers and the

## 1998–2003 EDRA/Places Award Winners and Meritorious Projects

Design	Planning	Research	Published Projects/ Meritorious Entries
Bryant Park, New York City (Hardy, Holzman, Pfeiffer; Olin Partnership)	Hindman-Knott County Master Plan, Kentucky (Lander/Klein Landscape Architects)	<i>Public Spaces, Public Life</i> , Denmark (Jan Gehl/Lars Gemøze, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts)	North Philadelphia Urban Initiative Project (Temple University School of Architecture)
Waterworks Gardens, Seattle, WA (Lorna Jordan)	Portland Pedestrian Master Plan (City of Portland Office of Transportation)	<i>Blueprint for a Sustainable Bay Area</i> , CA (Urban Ecology, Marcia McNally)	Urban and Housing Project, Karimabad, Pakistan (MIT)
Radnor Gateways Enhancement Strategy, PA (Ron Fleming, Townscape Institute)	Above the Falls: A Master Plan for the Upper River in Minneapolis, Minnesota (URS/BRW, Inc.)	Alzheimer's Special Care Units, New England (John Zeisel, Hearthstone Alzheimer Care)	Los Angeles Central Library and Maguire Garden (Hardy, Holzman, Pfeiffer; Larry Halprin)
Living Water Park, Chengdu, China (Betsy Damon; Fu Nan Rivers Renovation Bureau)	Designing a City of Learning, Patterson, NJ (Roy Strickland; Edwin Duroy/Patterson Public Schools)	<i>With People in Mind: Design and Management of Everyday Nature</i> (Steve Kaplan, Rachel Kaplan, Robert Ryan)	Tanglewood Master Plan (Architecture)
Diggs Town, Norfolk, VA (Urban Design Associates; CMSS Architects)	New-Land-Marks, Philadelphia, PA (Fairmount Park Arts Association)	Design for Comfort (Gail Brager, Richard de Dear)	Beth Israel Memorial Chapel (Daniel Solomon/Gary Strang)
Thames Landscape Strategy, London (Kim Wilkie Environmental Design)	Collier County Community Character Plan, Collier County, FL (Dover, Kohl and Partners)	From Yard to Garden, Ames, Iowa (Susan Herrington, Kenneth Studtmann)	<i>The Chair: Retinking Culture, Body and Design</i> (Galen Cranz)
Rosa Parks Elementary School, Berkeley, CA (Ratcliff Architects)	First Nations Community Planning Model, Atlantic Canada (Frank Palermo, Dalhousie University)	Three Public Neighborhoods, Boston, MA (Lawrence Vale)	<i>The Long Walk: The Placemaking Legacy of Howard University</i> (Harry Robinson and Hazel Ruth Edwards)
Lafayette Square, Oakland, CA (Walter Hood)	Development Plan and AWI Vision for the Southwest Waterfront, Washington, D.C. (Beyer Blinder Belle; Hamilton Rabinowitz and Alschuler; Greenberg Consultants)	<i>Healing Gardens: Therapeutic Benefits and Design Recommendations</i> (Clare Cooper Marcus, Marni Barnes)	Santa Ursula Public Lavandra and Water Collection System, Cuernavaca, Mexico (Daniel Winterbottom and Design Build Studio, University of Washington)
Gantry Plaza State Park, Queens, NY (Thomas Balsley with Lee Weintraub, Richard Sullivan, Laura Auerback, William Harris and Sam Lawrence)		Mississippi Floods: Designing a Shifting Landscape, Mississippi Basin (multistate) (Anuradha Mathur, Dilip da Cunha)	Design Build Studio, University of Washington)
Constructing Memory: Commemorating Rosie the Riveter, Richmond, CA (The Office of Cheryl Barton, Susan Schwartzberg)		The New York City Privately Owned Public Space Project (Jerold S. Kayden, NYC Department of Planning, Municipal Arts Society of New York)	<i>People and the River</i> , Chicago (Paul Gobster, Lynne Westphal)
Allegheny Riverfront Park, Pittsburgh, PA (Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, with Ann Hamilton and Michael Mercil)		Growing up in Cities, 14 countries (Louise Chawla)	<i>The Evaluative Image of the City</i> (Jack Nasar)
Cultural Landscape Goitzsche, Bitterfeld, Germany (Commission Cultural Landscape Goitzsche; Knoll Ecoplan) (recognized in both design and planning categories)		<i>Technology and Place: Sustainable Architecture and the Blueprint Farm</i> , Texas (Steven A. Moore)	People, Memory and Haptic Experience: A Rural Way of Knowing (Maire O'Neill)
Abercrombie & Fitch Headquarters, New Albany, OH (anderson architects p.c.)		<i>Sento at Sixty and Main: Preserving Landmarks of Japanese Heritage</i> , Seattle and California (Gail Dubrow with Donna Graves)	Listening to Lost Voices, Forest Park, St. Louis (St. Louis Development Corporation)
Outdoor Classrooms at Eib's Pond and Roy Wilkins Parks, New York City (Marpillero Pollak Architects, The Parks Council)		<i>Reclaiming the American West</i> , Western U.S. (Alan Berger)	Cultivating a Civic Vision: The Seattle Charrettes (Douglas Kelbaugh)

## Content Analysis

Place Types 1998–2003 EDRA/Places Awards	Winners 1998–2003 EDRA/Places Awards	Geography of Places 1998–2003 EDRA/Places Awards	Jury Background 1998–2003 EDRA/Places Awards
<b>Buildings</b> 3	Landscape Architects 12	New York - New York City 4	Architects 10
Schools 1	Urban Designers 7	California - SF/Bay Area 4	Landscape Architects 7
Corporate Headquarters 1	Non-Profit Organizations 6	Pennsylvania 3	Environmental Psychologists 6
Alzheimer's Care Units 1	Architects 5	Washington - Seattle 2	Planners 3
	Planners 4	Massachusetts 2	Urban Designers 2
<b>Sites/Landscapes</b> 9	Psychologists 4	Minnesota 2	Public/Non Profit Administrators 1
Parks 7	Public Agencies 3	Western U.S. 1	
Schoolyards 1	Sociologists 2	D.C. 1	
Memorials 1	Artist 2	Florida 1	
	Cultural Consultant 1	Iowa 1	
Streets 1		Kentucky 1	
District/Neighborhood 4		New Jersey 1	
Citywide 5		Ohio 1	
Regional 4		Oregon 1	
Statewide 1		Texas 1	
Multistate 2		Virginia 1	
Global 2			
<b>Built Projects</b>		Canada 1	
Master Plans		China 1	
Design Guidelines 2		Denmark 1	
Books 5		England 1	
Studio Projects* -		Germany 1	
* Published but not winner		International 1	
			<b>Methods Used (Partial List)</b>
			1998–2003 EDRA/Places Awards
			Award Winners
			Participatory methods
			Case studies
			Research on historic places
			Interviews
			Observations
			Archival research
			Personal memories
			Photographs
			Typologies

public, and between ecologists, community developers and planners. Several projects have reflected the multiple roles that people take in place-making—such as researcher and teacher, practitioner and author, designer and researcher.

The high number of landscape winners may be explained by the fact that landscape architecture today typically includes research and evaluation as part of the scope of projects. The low number of buildings as winners may reflect a greater resistance of architects in adopting advances in research, although there are many more research-based building projects that should be submitted.

The projects also cover a wide geography of places. New York City, San Francisco, Pennsylvania, Washington State and Massachusetts all have had multiple winners. Winning projects also came from ten other states and nineteen countries. One of the most encouraging trends is the diverse scale of projects with many done at the citywide, regional, statewide, multistate and even global scale. While places are local inhabited environments, they are also part of a larger community of places, a fact that collectively these winners make clear. Especially rich is the mix of methods people bring to their work beyond typical pencil and paper or computer techniques including postoccupancy evaluation, case studies, typologies, observations, interviews, research on historic places, personal memories, and symposia.

Particularly striking is that many of the projects do not simply create or evaluate places but result in unique outcomes including books, voter initiatives, curriculum, training materials, or public-awareness campaigns. This speaks well for what jury member Randy Hester called the need for greater “inquiry, substance, outcome or advancement” (*Places* 14.1, 2001, p.34). Good place-making often involves a proactive approach for professionals and researchers that start well before playing clients or project funding and last long after projects are built.

### The Juries

Jury deliberations published in *Places* are especially informative and cover a range of issues central to environmental design today. They go beyond form and fashion to focus on content and impact. How does work shape both places and people? How is research-based design good place-making? Must form result from the research for the project to be successful? Can the intuitive hypotheses that often guide design be derived from research? I expect these issues will continue to plague future juries as this still-young field continues to evolve and define itself.

The juries also represent a unique coming together of points of view from a wide array of fields and backgrounds

not common in most evaluations of designed places. Jury members have included leading design practitioners as well as academics, architects, landscape architects, urban designers, planners, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, deans and department chairs of schools of environmental design, and nonprofit administrators. The organizers have done an excellent job of attracting outstanding jury members, although they could do a better job of including public officials, such as mayors, and members of the public in their mix.

Noticeable is a marked absence among the winners of New Urbanist plans and projects, even though several leaders of the New Urbanism have been on juries. This may be due to the short history of built projects and lack of evaluation documenting the benefits of New Urbanist projects. Several of the winners, such as Bryant Park, have been well publicized before or won previous awards. I would like to see more modest and lesser-known work featured. One important benefit of awards programs and design competitions is to recognize up-and-coming designers, planners and researchers and bring their work to the attention of professionals and clients.

Each jury also brought its own set of interests to the discussion. The jury I participated in (year two) struggled between the differences between built and proposed projects. Another jury (year three) paid particular attention to projects that involved participation. This past year's jury (year six) was especially concerned with inventive form, and whether place research in itself is good place-making.

### Future Issues

The EDRA/*Places* Awards Program has brought to light a cohesive and critical mass of high quality work on places. In this regard, both EDRA and *Places* have done environmental design a great service by running this program. For *Places*, it has served to expand the number of stimulating projects it brings to its readers, and served to focus debate on the essential qualities that make good places. For the Environmental Design Research Association, it has opened its doors to more practitioners and served to close the long-standing gap between theory, research, and design practice. It has also brought place design to the attention of academics and researchers, which should serve to produce more design-oriented work.

One of the implications of the work presented is the limits of current design education and curriculum. I do not think we are doing a good job of preparing students to use state-of-the-art methods in design research, and even a poorer job of integrating this approach in the studio. The fact that such a large body of high-quality work exists is

encouraging, but I worry that this small but energetic group of scholars and designers alone can turn the tide from current fashions in design. I also wonder if the categories used in the awards are really that helpful, serving to further separate design from research. Perhaps the window should be opened wider to encourage the very best place-making work—be it design, planning, research or management.

In the end, what is most interesting about this awards program is that they focus as much on ideas about places as the places themselves—why they are important, how they are designed and managed, and how people come to attach meaning to them. Form alone is not as important as how the form develops or evolves over time. The emphasis here is informing future action through understanding how places—both good and bad—become what they are. It is place debate and design criticism at its best.

The EDRA/*Places* Awards is a unique and informative source of the best work being done at the intersection of design, planning and research. As the awarded projects find their way into office brochures, web pages, annual reports, and tenure packages, there are encouraging signs the program is having an impact. The real test will be if this work successfully changes the minds of educators and students, practitioners and their clients, and the public. I, for one, am hopeful of this.

#### Notes

1. A watershed moment for research-based design was a modest request in the early 1960s from an architect designing a children's psychiatric hospital in the Bronx.

Was there any research, he asked, that could make his design more fitting for children, staff and visitors? Three psychologists at the City University of New York—Leanne Rivlin, Harold Proshansky, and Bill Ittelson—eagerly responded, and eventually helped write a program to guide the architect's work. Though this project won no design awards, additional requests from architects and city agencies soon led Rivlin, Proshansky and Ittelson to establish a doctoral program in Environmental Psychology at CUNY. The first of its kind in the country, its aim was to train a group of design researchers who could work hand in hand with architects and planners to improve the quality of the built environment.

2. This group meets at conferences by organizations such as the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA), and many others, publishes their work in journals such as *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, *Landscape Journal*, and *Journal of Architectural Education*, and supports itself through commissions and grants from nonprofit organizations, community development groups and public agencies.

3. As I remember this meeting, it included Donlyn Lyndon and Todd Bressi of *Places* and Jack Nasar and myself from EDRA. Serving as somewhat of a bridge between the two groups was Randy Hester, a *Places* Associate Editor and longtime EDRA member. In retrospect, I thought the idea would be a hard sell, but we all agreed that a new awards program was needed and was in the interest of both *Places* and EDRA. The pitch to the EDRA board the following year in Salt Lake City proved more difficult, but in the end they agreed to try it for a year. I was not part of the similar discussion with the *Places* board, but imagine that it involved similar hesitation and concern, especially about how to sustain it financially over the long term. A grant from the Graham Foundation helps keep it alive past the first year. The fact the awards program has completed its sixth year is a testament to its the importance of this partnership.

## The Place of Research

David Brain

It is an illuminating and inspiring experience to review the history of the EDRA/*Places* Awards Program as it has been beautifully documented in the pages of *Places* since 1998. Reading through the descriptions of the award winners, one gets an introduction to a wide range of issues and challenges addressed by designers in the making of good places. The awards have honored a great variety of projects, from the detailed design of specific gardens, parks or buildings, to designs intended to bring coherence

and identity to whole stretches of river corridor or the development of an entire region.

Operating at different scales and in response to a wide range of mandates, the award winners have provided an impressive survey of the challenge of making places that are engaging, satisfying, livable, sensitive to the beauty and functioning of natural landscapes, reflective of the character and social life of communities, and responsive to human needs and experiences.

As a sociologist with a design background, I very much appreciate the idea of combining awards for design and research in the same program. Although the integration isn't perfect, it has seemed to produce a new level of sensitivity. The awards for design and planning seem consistent in recognizing efforts that are appropriately self-conscious, that include a clear articulation of the grounds on which they claim to know what they are doing, and that in many cases take advantage of different kinds of available knowledge. The awards for place-based research consistently recognize work that is either explicitly aimed at producing clear directives for the design of places, or, at the very least, clearly engages issues relevant to design as an intentional form-giving process.

One of the most significant and useful aspects of the program, in my opinion, is the relative extent to which *Places* has made the jury process transparent. In addition to descriptions and brief critical reviews of each of the projects, we are given tantalizing comments by jurors themselves, hinting at some of the differences underlying their selections. We are also given short essays by some of the jurors reflecting on the experience. In their commentary, jurors often offer important observations with regard to overall patterns in the submissions and emergent agendas among the jurors themselves. I would suggest that this is the case not just within each jury but over the years and between juries.

In reviewing the awards over the years, I was struck by a few questions that I thought worthy of more emphasis and discussion. My observations are organized below under three headings, each of which bleeds into the other: design, place, and research.

### Design

On the design side, there seemed surprisingly few projects and little commentary that addressed those aspects of place-making that we might associate with urbanism, and much more emphasis on landscape. Several awards were given to urban parks or squares (Bryant Park in New York in 1998, Lafayette Square in Oakland in 2000), and these are certainly wonderful projects. But it was striking that there were only two projects that seemed to directly address issues of neighborhood: the work by Lawrence J. Vale investigating perceptions of public-housing neighborhoods among residents, and applying this understanding to redesigning these neighborhoods ("Three Public Neighborhoods," 2000); and Urban Design Associates' dramatic transformation of public housing in Diggs Town (1999). Otherwise, there seemed surprisingly little representation of the challenge of designing neighborhoods in

different settings, from the inner city to the rural hamlet.

This is not just a question of the scale of design—somewhere between the building and the region—or of the particular kind of geographic entity or social unit at stake. It should also be understood as a question of the temporal dimensions of place-making. Although there has been some discussion over the years of projects that reflect certain things about the historical past of a place, I saw less attention to the ways in which the design of a place may, in itself, be part of the making of history. I know there is a recognition of this temporal dimension in work like the Community Character Plan for Collier County by Dover, Kohl and Partners (2002). But I didn't see any explicit discussion of the practice and meaning of designing places that will be made in collaboration with future generations.

### Place

In the descriptions of many projects, references to the "place-based" character of the design were sometimes too abstract, referring to aspects of the specificity of place without always substantiating claims that these specificities were operationally significant. One of the challenges in trying to think systematically about "place" as a social phenomenon is that *places*, by definition, tend to resist generalization and reduction, even as they become part of our repertoire of typification and institutionalization.

In general, therefore, I thought that the phrase "place-based" is sometimes used a little loosely and perhaps unreflectively. I always worry that "place" as a critical concept is susceptible to being invoked without sufficient critical care, appearing as a kind of talisman for the presumed authenticity of the local. For my tastes, I'd like to see more discussion of the different kinds and conceptions of place being mobilized in different projects. One exception here is the commentary by Karen Franck, under the title "What is This Place? What Could it Be?" (*Places* 14.1, 2001, p. 30).

In the research category, there seemed to be no distinction drawn between the kind of research that produces generalizable knowledge, and the kind of research that is a matter of assembling data about a place, often with the assistance of concerned citizens and stakeholders. It is very important to be clear about the difference between knowing relevant things about a particular place for the purpose of making design and planning decisions, and knowing, in general, about the conditions that affect the quality and character of places. Aside from the methodological issue of being clear about the foundations of one's knowledge, one needs to be clear about the difference between technical knowledge (and the place of technical experts in the process) and the knowledge of citizens and stakeholders.

Projects like Roy Strickland's "City of Learning" (2002) are something else altogether, putting forward not only a design solution to a familiar problem, but a thorough reformulation of a whole set of problems related to education, the integration of schools into neighborhoods, the revitalization of decaying inner-city neighborhoods, and more.

One of the methodological difficulties encountered by research on "place" is that the object of investigation is not simply given as an unproblematic or self-evident thing. If place can be understood as "practiced space," as one juror commented (quoting de Certeau), then it is a social phenomenon characterized by a symbolically constructed identity, by relations to other places, and by a history. It becomes both more difficult to circumscribe the thing you are studying and more important to pay attention to the way you define the field as well as the object of inquiry.

This is why research such as John Zeisel's on the design of Alzheimer's special care units (1998) can look so strong: it is relatively (and I do mean relatively) easy to draw the boundaries around the thing under study, to construct a robust typological conceptualization of the place, and compare outcomes across cases. Given that most places are what they are at least in part because they are configurations of historically specific conditions, "place-based" research has to begin with the tricky work of abstracting some kind of typological characterization. This can sometimes mean abstracting away from the very things that make a place meaningful or valuable, or abstracting in ways that might obscure the patterns that matter for one purpose, while illuminating the patterns that matter for other purposes.

By contrast, in the Alzheimer's care unit, the criteria of salience can be derived with a lot more clarity and certainty, given the well-defined therapeutic purpose of the institution and the designers' relatively unambiguous charge. Just as it is harder to design successful places that are less functionally specific, it is a lot harder to do "place-based" research, or research relevant to place-making, when you are dealing with places that are more idiosyncratic and historically contingent, and functionally more "open minded" (as Michael Walzer once described urban public spaces).

Many of the projects clearly recognized the importance of participation as one way to deal with this kind of complexity. And in a few cases the significance of a project is to be found not in the evident brilliance or creativity of the design but in the way the project reflected the building of a certain kind of local knowledge and place-making capacity. Two examples are the Appalachian Community Development Initiative in Knott County, Kentucky (2000) and the Community Character Plan for Collier County (2002). Both efforts reflect a certain understanding of the character of a

place back to its residents, with the intention of empowering them to do a better job of becoming what they aspire to be.

Stephan Klein raised some excellent questions about the importance of participation, suggesting that it should not just be a token nod to holding a few public workshops to make people feel involved. In the contemporary world, he observed, "participation all too often becomes an instrument for solidifying status quos and maintaining current, often asymmetrical power distributions" (*Places* 14.1, 2001, p. 39). In this regard, I was surprised not to see more submissions that had to do with the development of tools to systematize local knowledge.

There are always questions of representativeness in participation: who IS the public that participates? Behind the questions of representativeness, however, I think there are more fundamental questions concerning what participation is really supposed to accomplish. It's not just a matter of figuring out what kinds of participation are more "effective." But effective at what? In relation to what kind of collective purposes?

Among award winners so far the question of the process of place-making seems to be more clearly engaged in larger-scale projects, where there is often a required public process. But even then it doesn't always seem to be very clearly posed. Stephan Klein pointed this out: "Too many of them included statements such as 'the public participated in a series of workshops,' without ever mentioning who the 'public' consisted of, what the workshops accomplished, or whether the participants had decision-making power or only offered suggestions or provided information about existing conditions" (*Places* 14.1, 2001, pp. 39-40). Patsy Owens raised similar questions the preceding year, noting that few submissions made effective use of new communication technologies (*Places* 13.1, 2000, p. 34).

Participation often seems to be reduced to a matter of simply generating "input"—data to be crunched into a report as a kind of legitimating nod to democratic process. By contrast, real engagement between designers or planners and residents, participation could potentially be a more fruitful (if risky) process. Such a strategy would go beyond merely ensuring that all categories of stakeholders are heard. It would ask what kind of capacity for sustained engagement one is creating in and through a work of design. And engagement in what? In their discussion of the Diggs Town project, Ray Gindroz and Stephanie Bothwell referred to their project as an "architecture of engagement." It is worth thinking a lot harder about the various kinds of engagement that might be at stake in different kinds of places, at different levels of scale.

In this regard, although there were a few references to

Dolores Hayden's *The Power of Place*, I was struck by the fact that none of the design projects or the research seemed to focus much attention on the way places can be a focus, a reflection, an instrument, or a resolution of different kinds of social conflict. Even when the projects clearly implied the relevance of such issues, I didn't see a lot of attention to the problematic nature of collective memory and the challenge of memorializing a past about which there are mixed feelings. The same can be said for struggles over interests and identities reflected in public space and issues surrounding inner-city revitalization and the cultural dimensions of gentrification.

The above comments are, of course, not intended as criticism of the awards program as such. I was greatly impressed by the extent to which the projects selected and the comments of the jurors all showed sensitivity to issues of history, community participation, and the social complexity of place. The critical comments of the jurors were especially good for raising many of the issues that I thought were missing in the projects themselves. To a certain extent, these observations reflect limitations in the way the connections between design and research are generally being drawn—from both sides.

### Research

As a social scientist, I found the selection of design projects to be much more varied and representative than the research projects. Much of the research is in the "environmental and behavior" genre, studies that look for the psychological or behavioral effects of specific design decisions. John Zeisel's work on the design of special care units for Alzheimer's patients is the most impressively detailed example of this. Marni Barnes's and Clare Cooper Marcus's collection of work on "healing gardens" is another excellent example (2000). At a more general level, there is also Jan Gehl's *Public Space, Public Life* and the recognition of the importance of the study of varied kinds of interaction in public space by the Copenhagen Group (1998). Then there is the sort of data collection represented by the *Blueprint for a Sustainable Bay Area* (1998), the Portland Pedestrian Master Plan (2000), or the Community Character Plan for Collier County (2002), all of which involve drawing on past research as well as on efforts to collect data reflecting the views and experiences of citizens in the area. One unusual project is the international research initiative called *Growing Up in Cities* (2002), which revisits an earlier UNESCO-funded project by Kevin Lynch.

This is all important work, but it is limited in important ways that leave me wondering if there isn't some way to expand the scope of the submission pool. For example,

research on urban public space tends to focus on behavior and interaction patterns as rather isolated phenomena, whereas I see no research represented among the awards that moves from this level to an analysis of the normative order of the public realm in a larger context of social and institutional structures.

I was initially surprised to find that the lists of awards included no representatives of the fairly substantial body of anthropological and sociological work on place, on material culture, on the sociology of technology, or on the relationship between community and place in different cultural and historical contexts. As I thought about it, however, I realized that I should not have been surprised. There is an understandable affinity of the designer for research that focuses on ways one can manipulate behavior and induce experiences by manipulating the environment—rather than research that focuses on (for example) the complexity and relative tenuousness of social relations in public settings, or the whole structure of social, political, and economic relations that lie behind the achievement of civility and comfort in public places. It's true that much of this kind of research goes beyond what designers can control. But perhaps designers should also learn to participate in processes that they can't expect to control, and to understand something about the logic and structure of place-making as a form of collective action—as a thing we do together, and not simply as a kind of design and engineering problem.

Places are both a product and a medium for human action. They are patterns of relationships, implying opportunities and constraints, and they are a kind of collective action—some of which are mediated by material things, some of which are a matter of spatially organized practices. Every design decision in the making of places is not only a technical response or a value proposition, but also a proposition regarding our relationships with nature and with one another, and a proposition that constitutes certain possible ways of materializing those relations. In a certain respect, we don't need research to tell us that design matters, because design is partly the way we *organize* our understanding of what matters and *transcribe* that understanding into built form. Each decision also implies a politics, even when it is grounded in technical knowledge that seems to obviate questions of power.

In this regard, research can be oriented to answering different kinds of questions in relation to the design of places: questions of technique (how to design doors that don't upset the calm of Alzheimer's patients, how to create public spaces that facilitate and don't obstruct social interaction); but also questions related to *process* (the relation of design to the social and communal relations in the

context of which it operates), and related to *purpose* (the appropriate ends as well as means in the design of different kinds of places, and how we can know).

For example, although I'm all in favor of face-to-face interaction, I'm often distressed by the unwarranted privilege given to the ideal of facilitating face-to-face interaction as the only form of social engagement to which design seems relevant. Part of what goes on in the design process is figuring out what is worth doing, what is worth inscribing in the relatively obdurate reality of a shared world, what is worth sharing (and, implicitly, what is to be discreetly obscured). Part of the process of the design of places ought to be a process of clarifying the questions that the designer can't and shouldn't answer for us. I don't see much recognition of the role that various kinds of social research might play in helping us arrive at such clarity.

One exception to the overall pattern in the research projects recognized is Steven Moore's book, *Technology and Place: Sustainable Architecture and the Blueprint Farm* (Austin: University of Texas, 2001), which was recognized for a 2002 award. Although this study looks at the rather specific case of the Blueprint Farm in Laredo, Texas, it represents the one example of research focused on key questions having to do with the embedding of the work of designers in a larger social process, drawing on recent work in the sociology of science and technology in order to illuminate the way techno-science is integrated into the heterogeneous collaboration entailed by a place-making project of this kind.

Another suggestive example is the study called "From Yard to Garden: Interventions in the Landscape of Play," by Susan Herrington and Kenneth Studtmann (1999). This study seems to suggest a somewhat different way of thinking about the way design accomplishes social goals. It focuses on the use of natural materials and the arrangement of a landscape that facilitates the self-structuring and creative spontaneity of preschool children's play, in that way contributing to the cognitive and social development of the children. Notice that the idea was to build a set of techniques that would give the landscape characteristics to make it good to move through, react to, think about, differentiate, and give meaning to as the physical infrastructure for a geography of play. It doesn't try to reflect the culture of the children as interpreted by the adult designers. Instead, it tries to understand the kids' play as process, as culture-producing work in itself, and to provide them with safe but eminently flexible material with which to work. The success of the design techniques is indicated by the way the kids themselves come to name different places within the playground, by the way it becomes a meaningful geography that

undergirds what sociologists have called the idioculture of the place (essentially, its idiosyncratic culture).

Some of what I see as the imbalance in the overall pattern of awards is clearly a reflection of an asymmetry between designers and researchers in the social sciences. Designers often know more about the relevant research than social scientists know about the qualities of physical form or the practices of design—even those social scientists ostensibly interested in issues of space and place. Researchers from different disciplines often come to the task of studying place with a generally impoverished grasp of the way built environments are formed, tending to see them as only aggregations of physical attributes rather than as particular forms and patterns with emergent properties, situated most immediately in the practices and technologies of design, planning and building. For this reason, I've been making the case to my colleagues that a sociology of place needs to incorporate a capacity for typological analysis of the material reality of both buildings and landscapes. They would make propositions more sufficiently context-sensitive and useful as contributions to design.

On this note, I think there may be something of a missed opportunity here. Much more could be done to get designers listening to the kinds of questions that researchers ask—as well as understanding the way they ask them, the way different kinds of inquiry are carried out, and the way different kinds of answers are validated. As Clare Cooper Marcus pointed out:

*Certainly, in the area of environmental design we need more discussion of what constitutes research. Is a commendable site or contextual analysis prior to design, research? Does a trip to the library to look up a few articles on parks prior to designing one, constitute research? Unfortunately, the semester-bounded studio-teaching of design rarely includes time for anything beyond relatively superficial fact-finding. While this is understandable in terms of primary focus of design-training, it does tend to leave some designers with a rather hazy idea of what research is, and hence what might be appropriate to submit for an award in place-based research (Places, 12:1, 1998, p.59).*

At the same time, there is much to be done to prepare researchers in the social sciences to pay attention to the kinds of understanding that only designers can have of the material with which they work, the conceptual and practical problems with which they wrestle, and the ways they go about resolving those problems. For some time, it has seemed to me that we need to work on creating new places for these collaborations to take place, since neither the constraints of typical projects undertaken for hire, nor the traditions and constraints of studio education, are necessarily ideal for this purpose.



PTICIANS

118

WITHIN ONE HOUR  
*Mod.*

GLASSES FITTED  
PRESCRIPTIONS FILLED  
1 HOUR SERVICE

SOL MOSCOT  
OPTICIANS

ENTRANCE 118 ORCHARD ST.



SOL MOSCOT  
SPECIALISTS SINCE 1920  
118

BOSTONIAN

CHILDRENS

COMPLETE PAIR \$9.95

DICAID ACCEPTED

NORTHQUE OPTICS

THUR. SEWING



OPTICIANS

WEAR

WILLIAMS

BILL BRESLER



Delancey Street 1980



## Twenty-Three Years Later: Two Moments on New York's Lower East Side

Brian Rose

*Immediately across Avenue D from the projects is what I call the war zone. Though the area is much smaller, it is crumbling and burning just like the South Bronx. It's in this area, however, that one finds groups of people attempting to renovate buildings themselves. The residents of one famous building on 11th Street attempt to supplement their electricity with a windmill on the roof. Below Houston Street in this zone the neighborhood is equally run down, but still there is an amazing array of shops along Orchard Street and Delancey Street.*

*On Sundays, this area is jammed with tourists looking for good deals, and for many it is a pilgrimage back to the oldest Jewish neighborhood in America. The Lower East Side has been an entry point into mainstream America for its entire history. Even now, low rents bring students, artists and young people from middle-class backgrounds here to make their start in the Big Apple. But now, the pressure of gentrification is on. No one wants to discourage the development of a healthier neighborhood, but will the process force the present residents out to Brooklyn or Queens? Our pictures are being made at a critical juncture. What will this place look like in ten or fifteen years?*

That was written in 1980 when I was photographing the Lower East Side of Manhattan with Ed Fausty. After he and I graduated from nearby Cooper Union, we began a yearlong documentation of the neighborhood. Our project was an experiment in collaboration, as well as a sensible way of approaching a sometimes dangerous environment. We used a view camera for its descriptive quality, but also because it provided a means for us to work together, taking turns looking at the ground glass, one or the other of us grabbing for the shutter release to capture a spontaneous moment.

New York City had hit bottom in the 1970s, and by 1980 parts of the city, like the Lower East Side, had become frightening tableaux of abandoned buildings and rubble-strewn lots, while many street corners bustled with milling crowds of the drug trade. As bad as things were at that time, however, the Lower East Side remained a vibrant and colorful place full of expressions of hope and the visible seeds of rejuvenation.

After 1980, Fausty and I parted amicably, convinced we had done something special, but not necessarily repeatable. It is now 23 years later, and I have begun making photographs of the neighborhood again. Phase two of the project is a work in progress, but I have spent enough time on it to offer a selection of new photographs. The obvious questions have to do with the passage of time. How has the neighborhood changed or remained the same?

Photographing the Lower East Side—and most of Manhattan—requires an acceptance of the street grid and

the generally continuous street wall. One can stay visually aligned to the grid, or one can work against it at angles, but the rigor of this armature remains a constant. There are instances, however, where the basic pattern opens up—across vacant lots, parks, etc. In 1980 there were many such moments created by destructive urban forces. Today, some of these gaps have been filled or show evidence of a repaired urban fabric—neighborhood gardens, for instance, or new construction. Much of this change stares one in the face, but I guard against reading things into the cityscape that may not, in fact, be there. It is a mistake, I think, to see everything iconically—to believe that a broken window represents decay while a new door represents rejuvenation.

The Lower East Side, now as in 1980, is dominated by tenements and postwar housing projects. The tenement lots—25 x 100 feet—establish the basic scale, and the stoops and storefronts open out to the street. The housing projects, forty to fifty years old at this point, still represent a discontinuity on the landscape, not so much because of their height as because of the tenuous way they meet the ground. The present streetscape includes more and more infill construction—often minimal brick boxes, but every now and then something more conspicuously designed. Even a bit of suburbia encroaches here and there, as in the Pathmark supermarket just beneath the Manhattan Bridge.

Historic photographs of the Lower East Side typically show large crowds of people in the streets, kids playing, and pushcarts lining the curbs. Now on Sundays, when Orchard Street is closed to cars, there is a momentary sense of *déjà vu*, but the throngs shopping there, and on Delancey Street, tend to display a more middle-class mien. Chinatown, perhaps, still has the density of the old Lower East Side, and its burgeoning population spills increasingly across Roosevelt Park into the traditional Jewish part of the neighborhood. The collision of ethnic groups, and the different ways in which they make use of the same streetscape, remains a constant fascination for me.

When I first approached the Lower East Side with Ed Fausty, I had the sense of it as a rather separate part of Manhattan, off the main avenues and in the shadow of Wall Street's towers. Today, I feel that it is more integrated into the city. Barriers have come down over the past couple of decades. Some of that can be attributed to gentrification, but the Lower East Side is still a gritty, economically precarious place. Locating its unknown qualities goes to the heart of why I am photographing it anew.

Cherry Street Manhattan Bridge 1980



Allen Street 2003

Cherry Street Manhattan Bridge 2003

Houston Street 2003





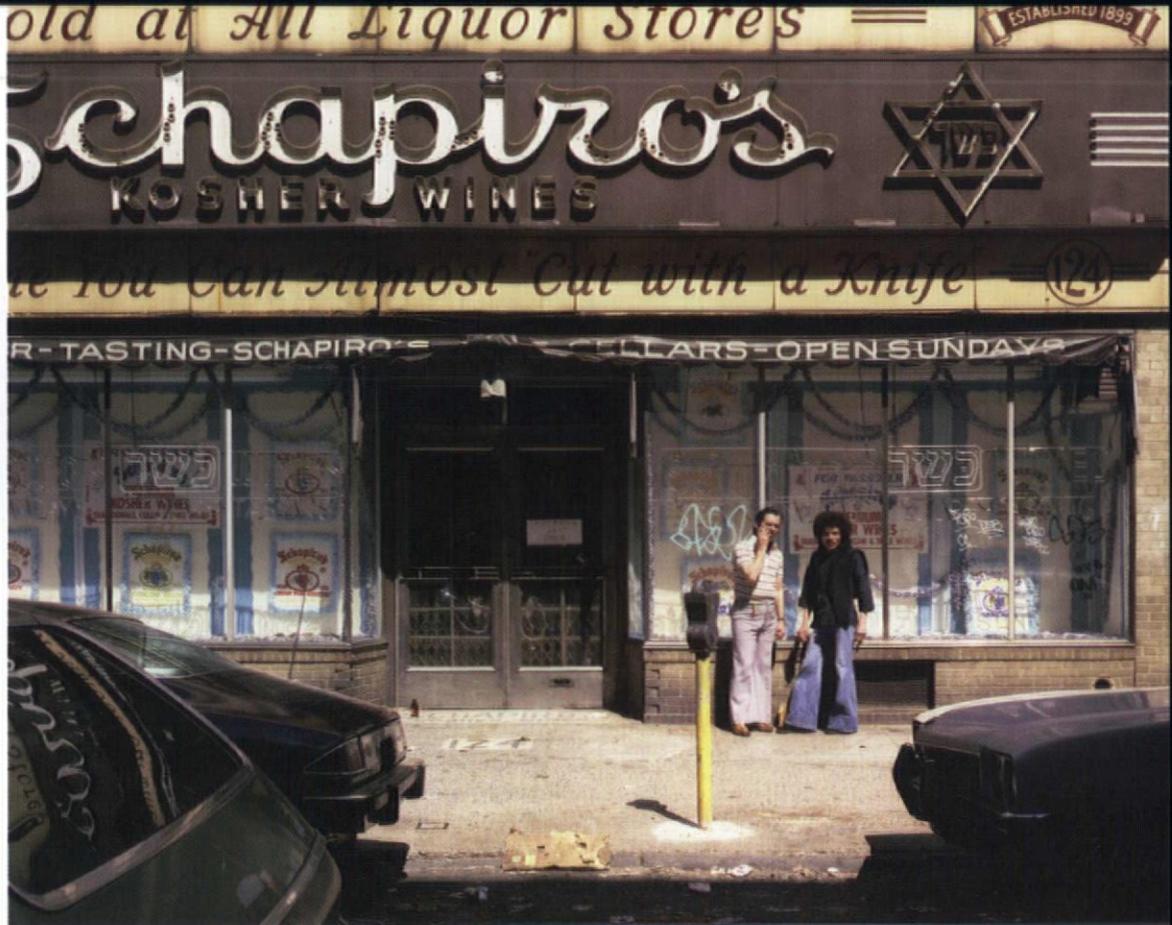
Houston Street 1980





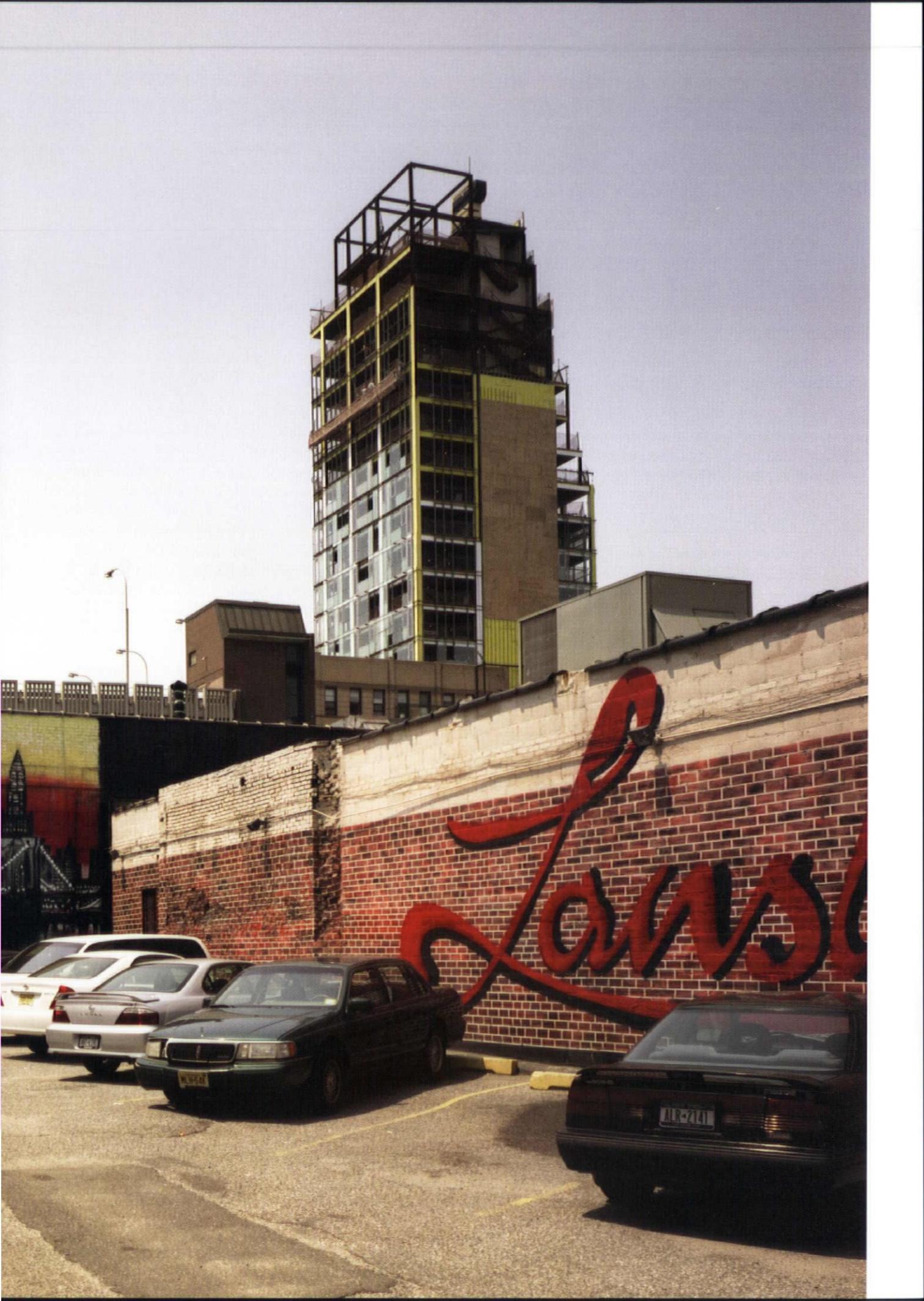
Stanton Street 1980

Ridge Street Williamsburg Bridge 1980



Rivington Street 1980  
Eldridge Street 1980





# Il Magistero: De Carlo's Dialogue with Historical Forms

John McKean

If there is one architect of the twentieth century who can lead us, through his work, toward a grown-up discussion of how we might further our built heritage, it is Giancarlo De Carlo. Since the 1950s, when he was a member of CIAM's rebellious Team X, De Carlo has been a consistent advocate for engagement with the historical forms of the traditional city.<sup>1</sup> But this advocacy has gone far beyond simple notions of conservation. De Carlo has challenged us to understand, and extend, the complex conversation between culture and built form.

In a 2001 editorial in his journal *Spazio e Società*, the ever-active 82-year-old reaffirmed his belief in the deeper dialectic between space and society:

*The essential purpose of architecture is to organise and shape space for use, to consign it to individual and collective experience, to expose it to the effects of time: so that it ages, becomes stratified, continues to be enriched with meanings, until at a certain point it begins to design and redesign itself, seemingly by its own volition, to endure and hand down the most eloquent records of human events.*<sup>2</sup>

The more you read this statement, the more extraordinary appear its claims, and the more far reaching its implications. And yet the more right it seems.

De Carlo's long career has been marked by an effort to ground his designs in a dialogue with what exists: from farming's marks on a landscape, to the aspirations of tenants for housing. His architecture cannot "live" without the participation of those who inhabit it, and whose lives it serves to record. The more layers of humanity that accrue to a topography, the more it embodies a vital history of place. To design responsibly in such a landscape, one must view history less as a "past" which can be dammed, than a stream one alters when one steps in.

Few buildings illustrate De Carlo's ideas about the role of architecture in social and physical renewal better than Il Magistero, the School of Education for Urbino University, completed in 1976. A quarter of a century since its completion, the Magistero still provides a benchmark of sorts against which to measure subsequent efforts at using the techniques of modern architecture for place-making.

## Town of doubles, *urbs bina*

To understand De Carlo's achievement, one must begin with its setting, the hilltown of Urbino, the

Renaissance city-state of Duke Federico di Montefeltro, with its ancient university.

Built on the saddle between two hills, Urbino is a binary, double town (that its name is derived from *urbs bina* was a pseudo-antique joke). Today, arriving along the road that snakes up from the Adriatic coastal plain, the physical shape of the Renaissance city still appears miraculously among the wonderful forms of the Marche hills. From here, Urbino's silhouette ornaments the skyline with spires and the tops of the unmistakable twin fairy-castle towers, the *torricini* of the Ducal Palace.

However, the paradox of this tiny city is that it is always ambiguous, double-imaged; while wonderfully comprehensible, it remains powerfully elusive. In particular, the town seems to exist in a landscape of surprise and variety that changes as one's viewpoint moves. Thus, an urban window may look out horizontally to a field. Or after descending steeply to its ramparts, one may still find the market square and Valbona Gate far below.

Characteristically, the town's natural and built areas reflect these contrasts, juxtaposing the wild and cultivated, and "inside" and "outside" become difficult categories despite the obvious clarity of rampart and gate.

Even with its buildings, inside and out can seem to reverse. Thus, San Bernadino, a quiet brick church on the outside, inside reveals Francesco di Giorgio Martini's formal Renaissance facades and spaces. And along Via Saffi the strong, unfinished facades of Duke Montefeltro's Palace give no clue to the precise, classic cortile within. This great palace faces into the town with a restrained, even domestic expression, while to the countryside it offers "a magnificent and glorious lack of restraint."<sup>3</sup> It is the signal achievement of De Carlo's Magistero that it interprets these qualities perfectly in a building that burrows into the ground with the same drama with which the Ducal Palace reaches to the sky.

Most visitors reach the Magistero by continuing past the Ducal Palace along the Via Saffi. Just past its crown this timeless city spine reveals a view of distant hills through the narrow slit between masonry walls. Descending, one passes the plain, freshly scrubbed Palazzo Battiferri, recently reformed by De Carlo as a setting for the university's business school.<sup>4</sup> Then, at the next equally reticent, domestic-scaled block on the left, two steps lead up to the discreet double doors of the Magistero.

In 1528, Castiglione wrote that Duke Federico's palace appeared "not so much a palace as a city in itself."<sup>5</sup> Such reciprocity is central also to the Magistero. Inside, De Carlo has created a modern spatial narrative that continues the spatial experience of the historic town.

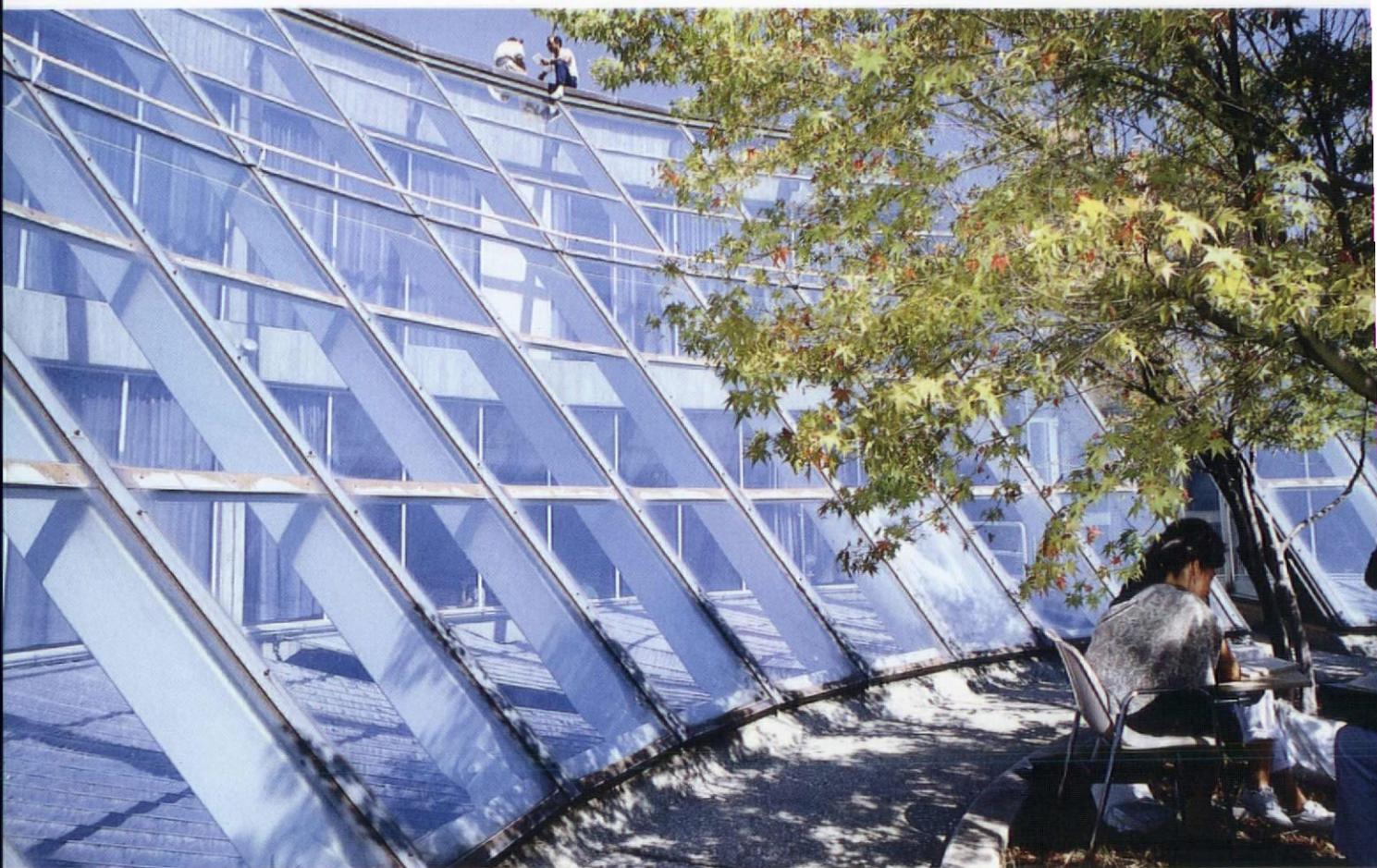
**Upper:** The Magistero, with its several levels of roof terraces and giant fan of glass, reconstructs a portion of Urbino in a modern vocabulary.

**Inset:** The hill town of Urbino, with the Magistero center right.

**Below:** From the floor of the Congress Hall looking up.

Photos by Fulvio Palma.





Entering, one first passes through the thickness of an old house whose form has been retained to provide a continuity of external forms. But then space opens ambiguously, formed less by its edges than by the shapes embedded in it. To the right, a bright hollow drum reveals the upper branches of two trees whose bases are rooted far below. Ahead is a much larger curved form, offering—as such convex shapes always do—a sense of pregnant anticipation for what it encloses.

There are no corridors here. Amidst the “urban” palette of materials—site-formed concrete structure and circulation, spray-plastered walls—both the cylinder and the larger, focused semi-cylinder occupy space like buildings in an internal town. Between is an urban landscape, lit by casual “street” lighting. And the levels of this internal city are linked by a curving ramp, which is stepped in section like the town’s steep streets.<sup>6</sup>

As in the city at large, one feels both inside and outside this space. But then, continuing on, one finds oneself on a narrow bridge looking into a lecture room—which itself seems to hang within an even vaster hall, the *aula magna*, which vanishes far below. It is here that one realizes how the dominant forms of the Magistero are paradoxically

**Above:** A secret garden lies beyond the inverted cone of glass on the entry level. Photo by Antonio Garbasso.

**Opposite:** The Magistero blends with the historic urban fabric. **Top Left:** Via San Girolamo. **Top right:** Via Saffi. **Bottom left:** Via S. Maria. **Bottom right:** Main entrance on Via Saffi. Photos by Chris Sensenig.

hollow. The great glazed half cylinder, in particular, focuses light rather than gathers solid form.

The building’s surprises do not end here. As one continues out beyond the great waterfall of inverted conical glass, one discovers a secret garden where small trees grow. There, straight ahead over a parapet, sits the distant church of San Bernardino, with the extraordinary shapes of the Marche hills beyond.

### History and Form

For De Carlo the ability to reinterpret the past for the needs of the present begins with a deep “reading of the territory.” He has described this as an iterative process, involving tentative design and feedback. Since the forms themselves are participants in this dialogue, it is critical that the architecture not be misunderstood. Yet neither can such a dialogue survive mere repetition: as with a human relationship, it requires recognition and understanding to move forward. The concern is always how far can things be changed without losing balance, without rupturing the thread of continuity.

In 1992 De Carlo explained these principles to Benedict Zucchi:

*I believe a lot in the revelatory capacity of ‘reading’...If one is able to interpret the meaning of what has remained engraved, not only does one come to understand when this mark was made and what the motivation behind it was, but one also becomes conscious of how the various events that have left their mark have become layered, how they relate to one another and how,*



*through time, they have set off other events and have woven together our history.<sup>7</sup>*

Shortly before designing the Magistero, in his parallel role as town planner, De Carlo noted how contemporary activities in Urbino had become disconnected from the city's pattern of historical forms. In his words: "the pattern of urban activities [had] progressively slipped out of its original morphological mould, dissolving people's originally sharp awareness that urban forms are where they are because they clearly fulfil a given role."<sup>8</sup>

The site for the Magistero had once been the eighteenth-century convent of Santa Maria della Bella. Acquired by the university in the early 1960s, it was surrounded by distinguished, even-older buildings (many of them in poor repair). As a convent, the western edge of the site, which sloped steeply toward the south, had been built up in large domestic blocks that climbed the Via Saffi from the south. There was a small church at its top corner and some buildings along its top edge and in its eastern corner. Its southeastern corner had long been occupied by a terraced convent garden.

In more recent times the convent's domestic structures had been adapted as an orphanage. But when the university acquired them, they had been abandoned for a number of years. Only the church remained in restorable condition. To the university, the ruins on site were *un ammasso di rottami*, a mass of rubble. Nevertheless, the site's great peripheral brick street walls still defined the urban spine of Via Saffi, the tight urban streets of Via S. Girolamo and

Via S Maria to the north and south, and the court to another church to the northeast.

The Magistero project eventually involved a complete reconstruction of the territory within these street walls. Conceptually, it involved three main forms. First were a series of domestically scaled spaces that wrapped the site from the southwest, and that today contain small classrooms and meeting spaces. Second was a deep partially indented cylindrical court, onto which face four stories of professors' offices. Third was the great half circle containing the major teaching spaces, all lit from above by a great fan of glass.

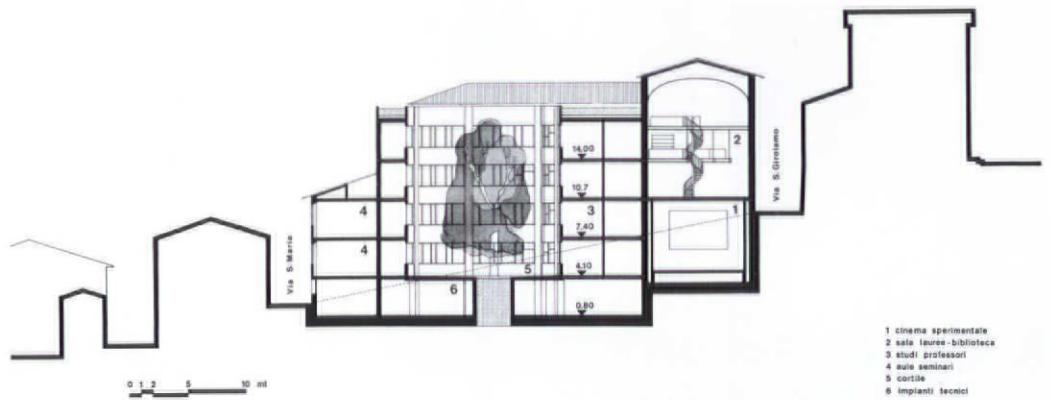
In planning, De Carlo neither works from inside out, as a classic modernist, nor by infilling an existing carapace, as a classic postmodernist. Instead, the Magistero exhibits a dynamic tension between the skin of the city and the needs of building component activities.

Within this overall tension, however, the figures upon his urban ground are clear and identifiable. Thus, the semicircle suggests a gathering place, a focus, which one can locate from anywhere by the direction of beams and the shape of walls. Meanwhile, the deep indented cylinder of the internal court, with its central trees, implies a private, quiet space; and one always feels as if one is intruding when one looks across it to the windows of the academics, screened by transoms and curtains.<sup>9</sup>

But this dynamic overall geometry does not settle simply. The components do not align absolutely, and so the bold shapes imply a sense of slower, more piecemeal development. Between the given envelope and the formal figures, space billows and tightens, creating a range of unexpected spaces, corners and niches, in which students gather to talk or study. Windows, too, are individually placed to frame views (as to a church pediment beyond), or link spaces and enhance their prospect (as with the tall, keyhole windows to the south, with their semicircles cut from the upper floor).

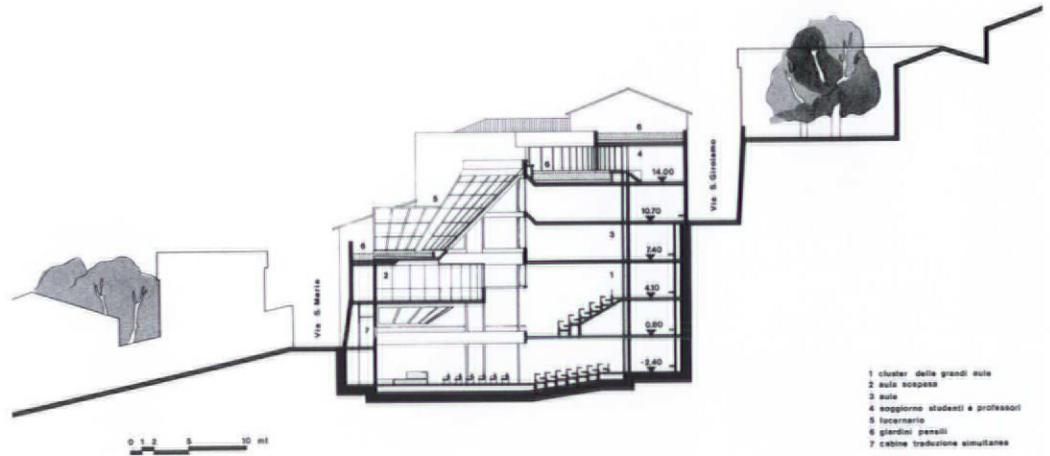
In a further extraordinary gesture, De Carlo carved out space for an experimental cinema beneath the little church on the Magistero's most prominent corner. Meanwhile above, within the space of the former church, he inserted two floors of library above a meeting room. Here book storage and forty study spaces float over a hall where the traditional culmination of Italian academic study, the defense of the thesis, takes place.

Such a space shows how De Carlo's dialogue with historical forms often brings unexpected spectacle. But this confrontation is neither gratuitous nor jarring; rather, it is elegant and airy. The shapes of the library platforms are carefully designed so they don't quite touch the back wall, yet they extend into the space apparently randomly.



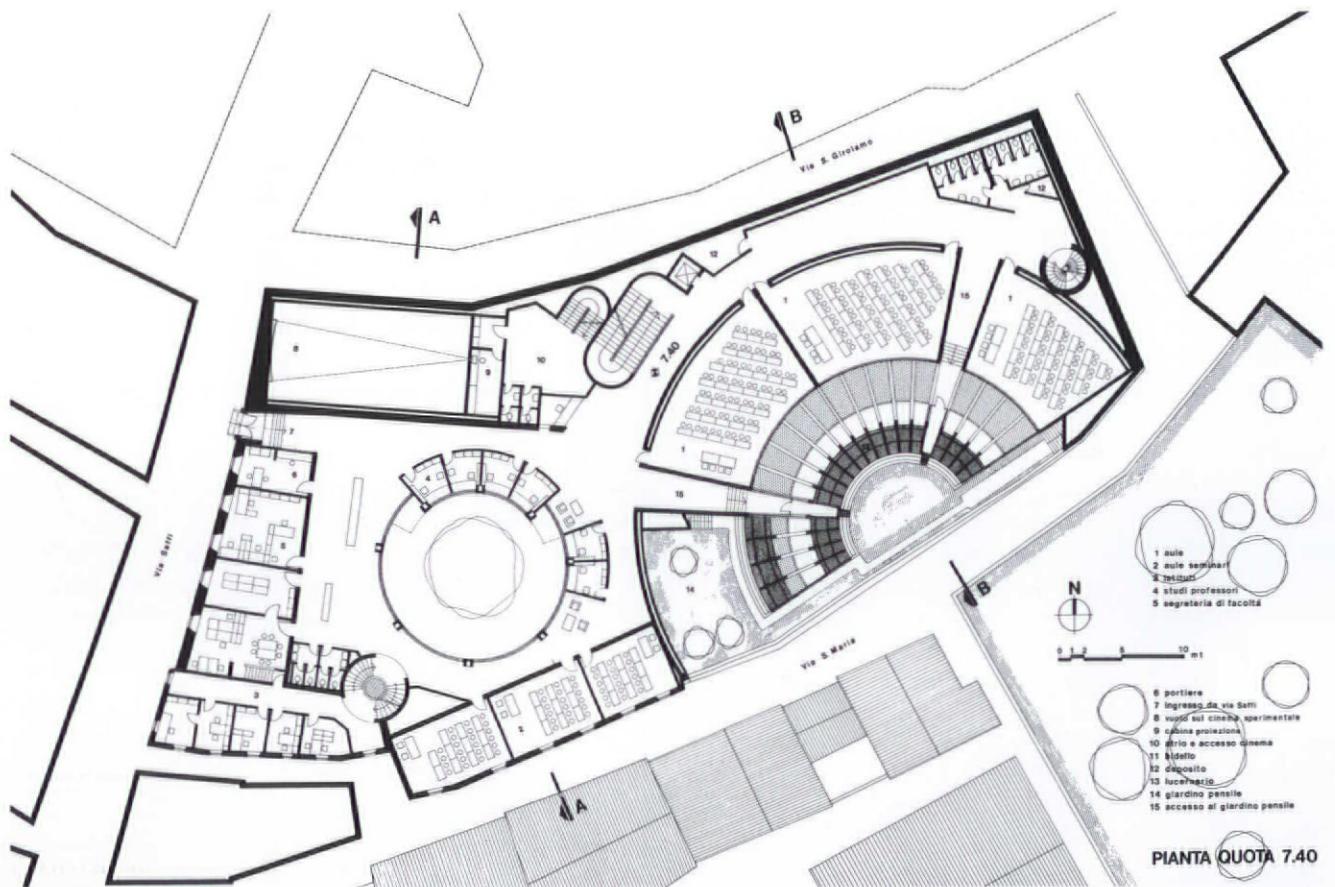
- 1 cinema sperimentale
- 2 sala lauree-biblioteca
- 3 studi professori
- 4 aule seminari
- 5 cortile
- 6 impianti tecnici

SEZIONE AA

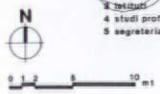


- 1 cluster delle grandi aule
- 2 aule scopese
- 3 aula
- 4 soggiorno studenti e professori
- 5 laboratorio
- 6 giardini pensili
- 7 cabine traduzione simultanea

SEZIONE BB

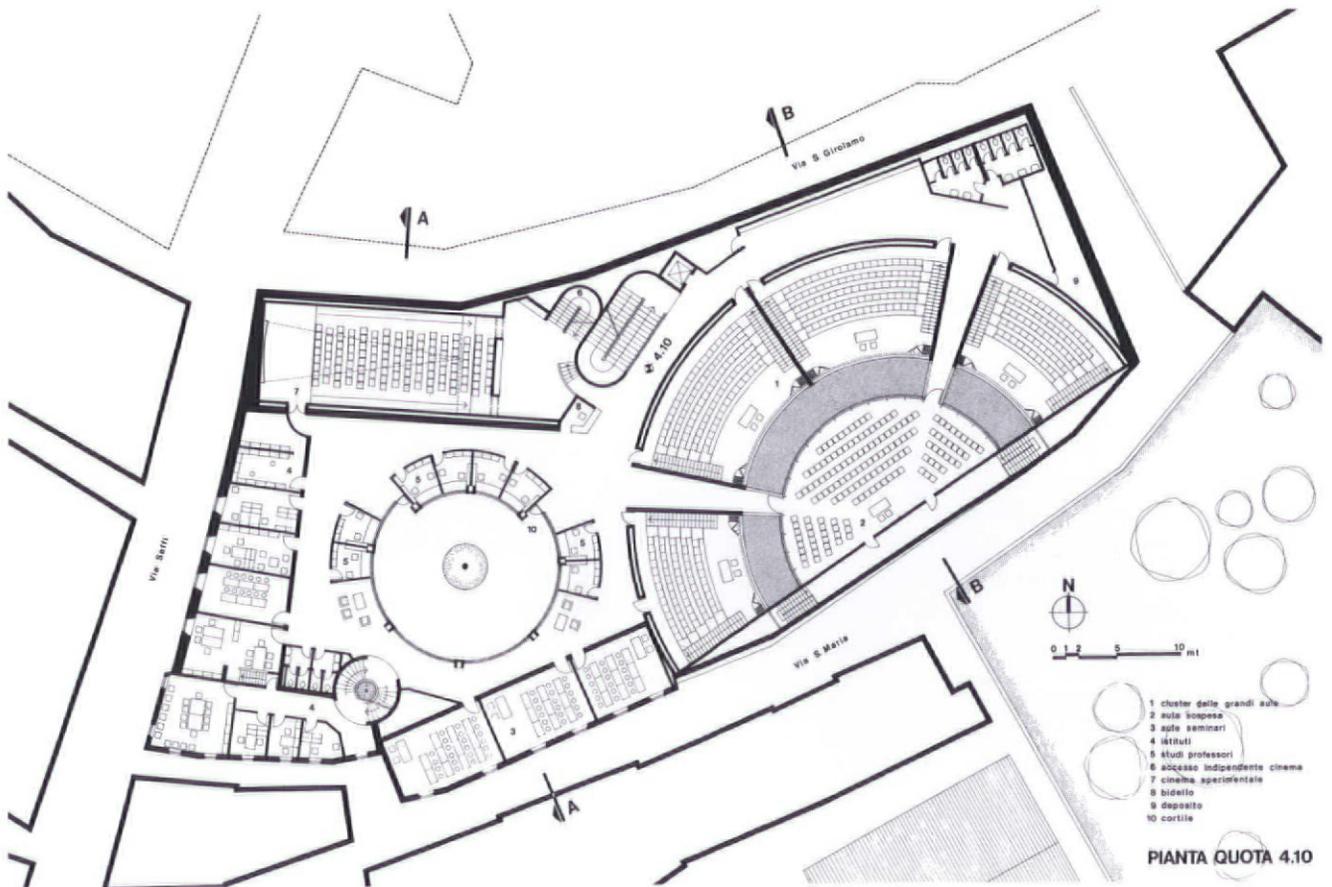
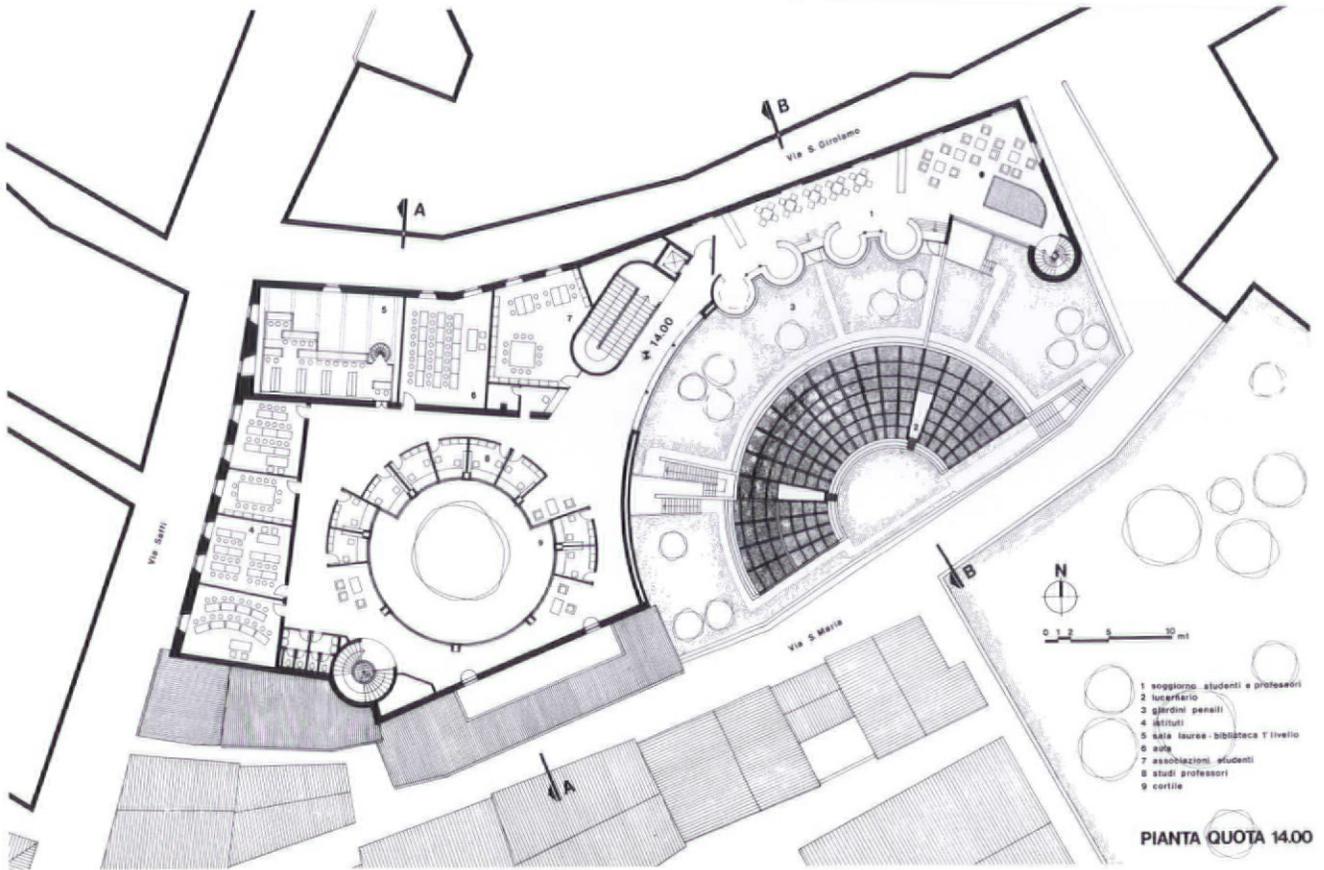


- 1 aula
- 2 aule seminari
- 3 teatri
- 4 studi professori
- 5 segreteria di facoltà



- 6 portiere
- 7 ingresso da via Sali
- 8 vuoti sul cinema sperimentale
- 9 raffine proiezioni
- 10 atrio e accesso cinema
- 11 bidello
- 12 deposito
- 13 lucernari
- 14 giardino pensile
- 15 accesso al giardino pensile

PIANTA QUOTA 7.40



Such an insertion veils, but does not deny, the existing space.

Despite such obvious care, material preciousness is not one of De Carlo's main interests. It is not that he doesn't enjoy detail; he loves virtuoso concrete detailing, with elements swinging through space and not quite touching each other. But the ingenuity is always spatial—to make places. And virtuosity in the Magistero is almost all in board-marked reinforced concrete: in the café with its curving outdoor seat, in the stairs and ramps, at structural edges such as the return corners in the cylindrical court, which are set off half a bay from the column rhythm so the glazing can play at wrapping around.

Of course, nothing of this internal form can be grasped from adjoining streets. The Magistero's southern wall, along Via S. Maria, is broken only by emergency exit doors, while its long northern wall along the Via S. Girolamo has only a few ambiguous slit windows (into storage spaces) and two street doors—one offering direct access to the basement cinema and another to the top-floor café and roof garden.

Most characteristically, like the exuberance of the Ducal Palace, the great conical rooflight can only be seen from outside the city.<sup>10</sup>

### Interior Form and Space

Clearly, it is ridiculous to try to understand this building in horizontal terms. Its drama derives from the way it opens downward toward its major spaces and out toward the countryside. Interestingly, first-time visitors rarely remember there is a roof garden on the same level as the main entrance.

One secret to the building is that although they appear as large, simple semicircles in plan, the spaces of the central hall offer an extremely complex three-dimensional section. Yet, four floors beneath the main rooflight this is all gathered together into a single great hall which can seat 1,500 people. To create this *aula magna* (best translated as "congress hall"), De Carlo had to dig deep—its floor is 16 m. below the preexisting garden.<sup>11</sup> But the resultant experience is remarkable, offering vertiginous Piranesian glimpses upward, as well as a wonderful sense of excitement when completely full.

To enrich its functioning, this great central space may be divided into separate lecture rooms with sliding partitions (the bottom hall divisible by two, the galleries above into four). And moving upward, there are more radiating lecture rooms, one suspended extraordinarily over the central lecture platform.

Because these upper spaces are all glazed, they offer unusual views and reflections: up from the bottom hall to

distant structure and glazing; across faceted curving reflections; from deep within one lecture gallery across the central space to another. At the top, the fan-shaped rooflight is cut through by access bridges, its outer segments either folding back down or lying flat, so that it rises a complete two stories only in the center.

De Carlo clearly delights in pushing the extremes of top and bottom, and his designs often weave multiple layers together. But with its seven levels, the Magistero is particularly complex. There is a fascinating personal origin to this obsession:

*I lived on the fifth floor of a big building. One day, I think I was just six years old, I was going up the stair, and on the last landing, suddenly, I met an animal. I thought it was a dog, but it had very long legs and the head of a cat. It could have been a lynx, a Siberian hare, or a very big felix serval (an African wild cat). Whichever—and I'm certain this actually happened, even though everyone always denied it—at one point, the animal in my path forced me to measure the surrounding space, to take in its dimensions, comprehend where I was, as I tried to find a way to escape.*

*That was the first time I felt conscious of the height and width of a place, of the horizontal and inclined planes, of going forward and backward, up and down. From then on the idea of stair was impressed in my mind, and it still fills my dreams and my thinking today. I am never so stimulated by flat places as by those on different levels.*

*With that experience, confronting that fast and cunning lynx, I learned to measure a space, to comprehend it and project my body into it in all directions. To measure out an architectural event means to take its dimensions back to those of the body, to understand the space with your mind and with your senses. Only by this measure can you appreciate dimensions and qualities. Through measuring space we grasp the totality through the detail, and the detail through the totality.*

### University and City

De Carlo's Magistero (and his other work for the University of Urbino<sup>12</sup>) might also not have been possible if not for the architect's strong personal relationship with Carlo Bo, rector of the university until his recent death (in his nineties). De Carlo first met Bo during the period between the fall of Mussolini and the allied liberation of Milan. At the time, a young De Carlo was an important figure in the resistance to German occupation. Bo, also an anti-fascist, was an important intellectual.

After the war, Bo became rector of the free university of Urbino.<sup>13</sup> Although a Renaissance foundation, by the 1930s it had few resources, less than 140 students, and just one large building. Yet soon after his arrival in 1948, Bo set

about its renewal. Among other things, he sought to radically overhaul teaching practices. But he also believed that every change in pedagogy should involve a transformation of physical space. And a decade later, with his university renovation going badly, Bo approached De Carlo to take over.

It is the special nature of their friendship De Carlo remembers best. According to De Carlo, Bo was a man of few words. "We had short meetings—not short in time but short in words. We'd sit together, and every ten minutes we'd have a sentence. Communication. We are very close friends. Intense communication, but short in words."

It is not entirely flippantly that Bo is today spoken of as the last Duke of Urbino. And De Carlo's friendship with him put the architect in a position of power perhaps paradoxical for one of known libertarian views. "Bo was a man of the eighteenth century—a *grand seigneur* of the Enlightenment," muses De Carlo. "How much did a man of the Enlightenment really want a democratic organization? Not very much, I believe."

Typical of the university's planning processes was the way the program of the Magistero was developed. "Il Magistero" literally means "Teacher Training School," but in Urbino the school encompasses a much wider range of studies and is often translated "Faculty of Arts." The university's aim was to concentrate these activities, which were then housed at various sites around town, into a single building. But the programming of this new structure involved only Bo, De Carlo, and a small group of professors. The requirements included the expected professors' rooms, library, seminar rooms, and smaller lecture halls. But other program elements indicated how far Bo entrusted the larger vision of the building to De Carlo. And, in particular, De Carlo insisted on permeability between the university and the town.

Still today, having spent much energy on university planning schemes from Dublin to Pavia, Siena to Catania, De Carlo is opposed to the idea of a campus. For De Carlo, a university should be both an urban microcosm and part of a larger city.<sup>14</sup>

*The university must be an active, open part of society, of the town, towards which it has both rights and duties. Usually it takes its rights, but it is less concerned with its duties. Just as the university is using the city and its territory, in the same way the university should reciprocate, and be usable by the city and its territory. There are, obviously, parts which should be closed and private (though these are far fewer than might be imagined), but all the rest can be more public.*

Ironically, the Magistero's small, almost invisible entrance offers no promise of such permeability. But De Carlo's argument is not about this kind of overt legibility.

*In a university really worthy of the name, every citizen should be free to enter and listen to a lecture. You could say, "well, what stops anyone from attending a lecture now?" I believe the answer is the architecture itself. Thresholds, for instance, are the expression of authority and institutionalization. And the most important barriers are those thresholds which you cannot touch.*

*The issue of easing access should be much more important than simply concern for disabled entrances. In a way, we are all disabled when we cannot use a particular space. Thresholds built up in words are more powerful than physical thresholds.*

It is not the visual form of the Magistero's discreet entrance which promises welcome, but the knowledge of shared space beyond, as in a church. Thus, while you must enter as an individual, not in a crowd, there is a certain recognition that a public, "urban" realm lies within.

Typical of these views was De Carlo's suggestion that the bottom floor of the building be used for an experimental cinema.

*You know . . . within the Magistero faculty there is a Film Institute which had a wonderful film library. So I said "shouldn't this be shared with the town?" In Urbino the movie theaters are terrible! If we had this film theater, the experience of showing their films publicly might lead to organizing other things with the citizens, perhaps even making movies. . .*

There was also the vast *aula magna*. Such extreme focus on the lecture, the *ex cathedra* pronouncement, might seem to embody a very old-fashioned view of education. But, according to De Carlo,

*. . .the aula magna had wider powerful purposes. First, it would celebrate the unique freedom of this university and assert the role of the small university. Second, it would also celebrate the bond between the town and the university. Its specification was agreed between university and civic authority with the aim that it would be used for all town celebrations.*

On such occasions the *aula magna* is at its best. Filled with people and buzzing with conversation, it is then that it most confidently fulfills its role as palace within this city of a building.

### Finally

An integral feature of the city, the Magistero today changes with the seasons. Each autumn the trees in the hidden garden, which offer solar shielding through summer, turn from bright green to burning ochre. And as the low winter sun shines through their bare branches, the space inside is altered completely. Likewise, the roof garden walls, soft with Virginia creeper during the summer, change to blood red in fall. During winter the vines are revealed as naked scratchings on sharply-cut board-marked concrete. Twenty-five years old now, the

two trees in the central court have been cut back by half. And yet they climb up again.

In its design, De Carlo struggled to take account of many factors: historical traces on the ground the building was to occupy; its relation to the larger fabric of the city; and his vision for a new relationship between university and town.

Yet for the architecture of the Magistero to become embodied and accepted, he also argued it needed to become embedded and layered with new stories. It had to allude to and reverberate with these—even those of the young students, who may come to Urbino only temporarily and from quite different cultures. Indeed, when the building was dedicated in 1976 De Carlo gave a lecture in which he encouraged the university and the town together to make it their own.

In the years since, Urbino's response to the Magistero, and its now-thriving university, have been conditioned by an explosion in student numbers. Social pressures and rising prices have pushed some residents out of the historic center, while allowing others to prosper from student rents.<sup>15</sup>

It is a fragile equilibrium, yet the townsfolk clearly support the university and are proud of its buildings. De Carlo is only slightly exaggerating when he suggests, "Urbino is one of the few cities in Italy where contemporary buildings are considered as part of the citizen's heritage. They recommend visitors to the Palazzo Ducale and the Magistero, drawing no distinction between new and old." It is certainly one of the few places where postcard stalls display the new among the old, Magistero next to Raffaello.

Of course, the dialogue between the building and its users has not gone entirely as planned. In particular, its ideal of town-gown cooperation never truly materialized. For example, I have never found the door leading directly to the Magistero's underground cinema unlocked. The same is true for the street door leading directly to its top-floor café. In fact, this café was never installed. Instead, this space is normally packed with students poring over books. Desperately short of places to study, they say they can always go elsewhere for a coffee.

Of the unfulfilled promises of another of his Urbino buildings De Carlo said recently: "there are places which are not discovered yet. But they will be. An architect must do what he believes is right, not just because it will be made real immediately. But you suffer. You ask why they are

**Opposite:** The bold, hollowed-out forms give the interior spaces of the Magistero an urban quality. View on the 14.00 level: cylindrical courtyard to the right, keyhole windows to left. Photo by Giorgio Casali.

not using it? Is it because they are lazy, or do not have enough imagination?"

Nevertheless, the promise of the architecture remains embedded in the structure of its spaces. "People will always use it as they want," he says. "But the space suggests how to use it. Creating this space, this potential, is the essential of architecture."

The Magistero was never meant to "reconstruct" a defined past. Instead, it refers to the city's many transformations: from the fifteenth century, when Renaissance geometries were overlaid on the medieval town; to the twentieth, when Catholic churches were replaced by more contemporary centers of urban culture. The same might be said of its future.

In this regard, De Carlo says, "It is impossible to imagine that an architectural or urban configuration might have just one codified message to which everybody has to refer. We live in a society of conflict and not of spontaneous consensus. And therefore what represents these realities has, of necessity, to be polyhedral, many sided, manifold."<sup>16</sup>

In the same editorial with which I began, De Carlo writes:

*If the purpose of restoration is to preserve an identity and make it significant for all—for the permanent inhabitants as well as the occasional ones—then we need to lever the valued events of the past out of the system of meanings they had originally, and insert them into new systems of meanings that correspond to their present contexts: to destructure and then restructure them, reinserting them with an active role in the circuit of contemporary activity.*

In a world of instantaneous messages and sound bites, this notion of an extended conversation with the past must seem stubbornly old-fashioned. Yet, paradoxically, it acts to open a real awareness today. This is what the Magistero has achieved.

#### Acknowledgement

Much information and all uncredited quotations from Giancarlo De Carlo come from long conversations he had in 1999 and 2000: with me (in English, taped but unpublished); and with Franco Buncuga, published in Italian as *Architettura e Libertà, Conversazione con Giancarlo De Carlo* (Milan: Elèuthera, 2000); French translation to appear in 2003; English translation by John McKean still has no publisher).

#### Notes

1. In the 1950s De Carlo was invited to join the Italian CIAM group. At the time, CIAM (Congress International d'Architecture Moderne) had become becoming arthritic—increasingly identified with the International Style, as codified by Siegfried Giedion. De Carlo (who had already published praise for William Morris, Frank Lloyd Wright, and rural peasant architecture) was scathing of those CIAM disciples who felt, for example, that Le Corbusier's recent church at Ronchamp had betrayed them. According to De Carlo, it was the pomposity of Giedion and his



cronies that led to the birth of the oppositional Team X, so called as its young members were asked to prepare the tenth CIAM congress. They included Jacob Bakema, Ralph Erskine, and Shad Woods; but at Team X's intellectual heart were Peter and Alison Smithson, Aldo van Eyck, and De Carlo. Though they were tough with each other, they offered among the first and strongest criticisms of Modernist assumptions. To them, the takeover of the machine and planning for *existenz-minimum* implied not just a negation of the user, but the loss of place, local character, and history. The last words in the documentation of the final CIAM meeting were Bakema's: "The aim will be to develop architecture and town-planning towards a language which can communicate about human behaviour." This has remained one of De Carlo's core principles ever since.

2. Giancarlo De Carlo, "Editorial," *Spazio e Società* 92, (2001), p. 4.

3. Giancarlo De Carlo, in Denys Lasdun, ed., *Architecture in an Age of Scepticism* (London: Heinemann, 1984), p. 54.

4. See "The New Faculty of Economics, Urbino," *Domus* 826 (2000).

5. Baldassare Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano* (Venice, original 1528), Book I, Ch. II.

6. The ramp provides a clear echo of Urbino's other famous social hinge, Francesco di Giorgio's *rampa* at the foot of the Ducal Palace. This older spiral within a bastion links the upper and lower portions of the city; it was designed to allow the Duke to ride directly from outside the city walls up to his palace. Later, it was filled with rubble and capped with a theater. It was revitalized as part of De Carlo's restoration. See John McKean, "Unearthing the Future: De Carlo in Urbino," *Building Design* 24 (February 24, 1984), pp. 22-44.

7. De Carlo, interviewed in Benedict Zucchi, *Giancarlo De Carlo* (London: Butterworth, 1992), p. 167.

8. Giancarlo De Carlo, *Urbino: The History of a City and Plans for its Redevelopment* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970), p. 104.

9. Indeed, the cylinder around which the professors' rooms cluster may consciously echo in negative the central cylindrical building in the famous painting of the

"Ideal City" no longer attributed to Piero, which hangs in Urbino's Ducal Palace. 10. The same is true of the Magistero's keyhole windows, which appear on the tapestry of the city like shadows of the Ducal *torricini*.

11. Both his other university faculties nearby also burrow down and protrude with skylights; at the Business School he even managed to lift precious Roman remains a few meters to make room for its sunken *aula*.

12. The university has restored many extremely valuable buildings in the historic center, saving them from abandonment and destruction. But there have been only three complex restructurings, all by De Carlo: the Law Faculty (completed in 1973), the Magistero (1976), and the Business School (opened in 2000-1). De Carlo's buildings outside the town include the residential Collegi dei Cappuccini on a nearby hilltop.

13. The only "free" university in Italy, Urbino neither belongs to the state, nor to a private foundation. It is set up by its own statutes (one of which had confirmed Bo as "rector for life"). Although it works within state educational rules and is supported by state funds, it retains a unique freedom in the use of its funding, setting its own priorities and avoiding interminable bureaucratic delays.

14. Throughout his career De Carlo has taught architecture. For many years he held a chair in Venice, then one in Genova. For twenty years he has also run his own International Laboratory for Architecture and Urban Design (ILAUD). But he has always remained keen to distance himself from the educational establishment. "I never liked the academic community," he says. "It is lazy, conservative, authoritarian, and with a Mafioso tendency." De Carlo is particularly disillusioned by the general retreat from radical intentions that dominated Italy's campuses after 1968. Today, he says, with staff increasingly self-important, "university buildings are mostly filled by rooms for tutors who are there for a few days every other week, leaving overcrowded lecture rooms, where students squeeze in, unable to watch and listen."

15. Student numbers jumped from 500 to 10,000 in the 1970s. The enrollment is now 20,000. A total of 15,000 are housed in the area, 7,500 of them in the old town.

16. De Carlo, quoted in *Domus* 826 (2000).

# Fixing Historic Preservation: A Constructive Critique of "Significance"

Randall Mason

The idea of "significance" is exceedingly important to the practice of historic preservation. In significance, preservationists pack all their theory, ideology and politics—and their wonder at the capacity to use historic fabric to reflect on the past. A "statement of significance" gathers together all the reasons why a building or place should be preserved, why it is meaningful or useful, and what aspects require most urgent protection. Once defined, significance is used as a basis for policy, planning and design decisions.

There are problems, though, with the use and conceptualization of significance. The overriding one is that the preservation field fails to fully appreciate its contingent nature. By making the fixing of places and their meaning the primary emphasis of preservation, we have unduly objectified and scientized our understanding of memory and historicity. Since significance is the field's primary tool for doing this, it is worthwhile to break down the problem.

First, significance has too often been used as a blunt instrument—or worse, a black box. Judgments about significance are narrowly drawn, pegged closely to the architectural history canons and historical associations validated by academics. As a field, preservation has shown little appetite for thinking critically about significance, or theorizing a way of handling significance.<sup>1</sup> Instead, it has tended to rely on a standard of self-evidence similar to that used by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart in 1964 to define pornography and obscenity: "I know it when I see it."

**Top:** Pueblo Bonita at Chaco Canyon, New Mexico.  
Photo by author.

**Bottom:** Fajada Butte at Chaco Canyon.  
Photo by author.

Second, once judgments are made about a site, its significance is regarded as largely fixed. Such inertia needs to be overcome, and each site's significance needs to be seen as time bound and in need of periodic revision.

Third, many decisions about significance are made by experts, whose mindsets are often quite unreflective and uncritical. By contrast, the imperative of preservation—as in the rest of society—should be to allow more voices to be heard.

Recently, more critical and progressive uses of the concept of significance have begun to appear. This has corresponded with a shift in the core purpose of the field from simply preserving material fabric to the more complicated tasks of preserving the significance of fabric and places. In this regard, the point of this essay is not just to noodle around with the significance concept, but to revisit the questions of why we preserve and what theories inform our decisions. As such, it may serve as the prelude to proposing ways to retool this important concept.

## Why We Preserve

At the nineteenth-century roots of the field, the goals of historic preservation were curatorial and memorial: to represent aspects of the past for contemporary society through the preservation of physical remains. Today, however, historic preservation has expanded to encompass a number of different agendas: developers seeking profits in adaptive-reuse projects; community advocates (wealthy or disadvantaged) attempting to block undesirable development; anti-sprawl advocates lobbying for a more sustainable world; cities seeking new heritage tourism attractions to promote economic development; and, of course, myriad social groups pursuing specific historical and memorial

projects that tell their particular stories. The broadening of preservation from its curatorial roots has been a very important and salutary development—these other goals increase the diversity, inclusiveness and robustness of historic preservation as a social movement—but it has also led to some confusion about core purposes and methods.

Conceptually, the heart of historic preservation lies in the intellectual and emotional connections we make between memory and environment—what I'll call the "memory/fabric connection."<sup>2</sup> The connection is what allows old buildings to be seen as sources of wonder, documents about the past, or ways to reform wayward citizens and advance political causes. The rich relationship between memory and built fabric has concerned such diverse scholars, designers and practitioners as Bachelard, Boyer, Halbwachs, Hayden, J.B. Jackson, Lowenthal, Lynch, Nora, Rossi, Ruskin, and dozens of other anthropologists, geographers, sociologists, historians, architects and planners. These writers have celebrated the wonder we find in old buildings, and also mapped society's uses of the material past. But the preservation field has not always availed itself of continuing scholarship on the subject, often simply looking to find validation in it, and too rarely opening itself to self-critique. The question we should ask more aggressively concerns the proper balance between two approaches: shaping buildings and places in the physical sense (protecting, restoring, reconstructing, tearing down, etc.), and assuming these material efforts tacitly shape memory; and concerning ourselves with reshaping memory, and using buildings and places as a means to this end.

As the preservation field became professionalized over the twentieth

century, it has overemphasized the fabric side of the memory/fabric connection.<sup>3</sup> The reasons for this focus are clear: the scientific methods and objective standards used to treat fabric gave legitimacy. Specialized knowledge about materials and decay gave the new profession an area of activity distinct from that of architects, planners, historians, and others concerned with the built environment. The result has been a dominant preservationist mentality of *fixing things*, literally and metaphorically: fixing broken buildings and deteriorating structures, gentrifying downcast historic districts, standing in the path of bulldozers, and (not least) fixing the meaning of preserved buildings and sites.

In the last decade or so, an alternative view has started to gain ascendancy. It considers the *raison d'être* of historic preservation to be the cultivation of memory, and it argues that techniques to protect fabric are simply one means to achieve this. Whatever additional benefits flow from preservation, the new thinking goes—well-preserved buildings and artifacts, profits to investors, a healthier downtown, a beautiful landscape, an ecologically more sustainable city—the core benefit is the cultivation of society's collective memory. Fabric is essential to sustaining memory. According to sociologist Maurice Halbwachs: "[I]t is the spatial image alone that, by reason of its stability, gives us an illusion of not having changed through time and of retrieving the past in the present."<sup>4</sup> But to the alternative view, material matters have now become the tail that is wagging the dog.

In other words, preservation's "fixing" mentality, rooted in the fabric-centered traditions of the field, has gotten transferred to how we think about significance. This has led us to ignore the essential nature of



significance—which is that as an expression of cultural meaning, it must be expected to change, involve multivalence and contention, and be contingent on time, place, and other factors.<sup>5</sup>

Preservation theory traditionally doesn't deal with this reality. It needs to be re-"fixed" to embrace cultural change and social process (the driving forces behind significance), and this is a whole lot different from arresting decay. We can predict that collective memory will change, though we can't predict *how* it will change.

Contrast this with the theories underlying fabric-centered preservation: physical scientific laws documenting unidirectional change (things fall apart) and enabling prediction of outcomes. The fixing mentality, though it works very well for theorizing change vis-à-vis stone or wood deterioration, falls short

in explaining how society's contemporary use of historic preservation is related to contemporary social issues—for instance, the burgeoning presence of African-American histories in U.S. public memory of the post-Civil-Rights-era generation.

#### Trouble-Shooting "Significance"

Significance is shorthand for the meanings of a place, and the ways a place is made useful—a sort of mission statement about why a place should be preserved. "Statements of significance" occupy the central position in planning and decision-making models widely used in the preservation field.<sup>6</sup>

Like all definitions useful in policy-making, significance reduces the complexity of a situation so that logical decisions can be made and defended. Significance reduces many shades of gray to fewer lines of black and white.<sup>7</sup>



City Hall Park,  
New York.



A statement of significance considers all the meanings of a place, and winnows out the few most important ones. The way significance has traditionally been used and talked about makes it seem clear and objective—in keeping with the “fixing” mentality, and sticking to the experts who “know it when they see it.” Once “found,” significance is taken mostly as a matter of faith, and a priesthood (historians, architects and preservation professionals) and group of the faithful (preservationists) interpret the results for the public. Such a view

**Above top:** City Hall Park, in the early twentieth century; City Hall in middle right. Photo courtesy of National Trust Library, University of Maryland.

**Above bottom:** The site of the African Burial Ground, just north of Chambers Street, lower Manhattan. Photo by author.

**Opposite:** McSorley’s Old Ale House. Photo by author.

of significance presumes that a building will always mean the same thing, that all of society views the building in the same way, and that there is only one kind of significance. But overemphasizing (and even fetishizing) preservation of fabric in this way reflects an underlying assumption that culture can be treated as a static set of artifacts. And the methods and epistemology aligned with such an assumption lead us away from a real understanding of cultural and individual attitudes toward place.

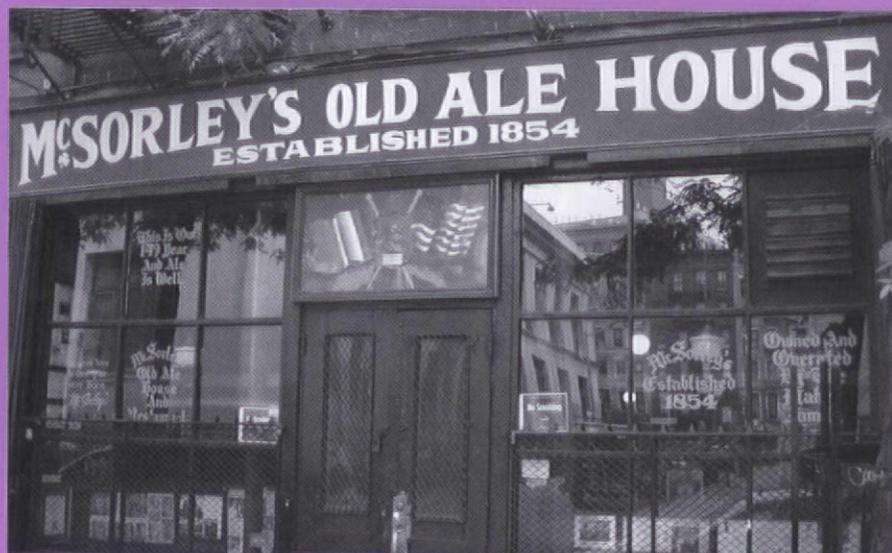
The traditional conception is focused on architectural and historical canons; it is succinct, clear and definitive. The more progressive notion seeks to be more extensive, detailed, and complicated; it suggests that there may be multiple valid arguments about the meaning of a place.

### Some Examples

Indeed, newer thinking about preservation recognizes that significance is made, not found. It is socially constructed and situational, and it recognizes that appraisals of significance may have as much to do with the people and society making them as with any actual site.<sup>8</sup>

On reflection, such views reveal how problems with significance may crop up when meanings become overly narrow; when they stress the assessments of experts and ignore alternative and popular views; and when they fail to acknowledge change over time. Chaco Canyon National Historical Park, in New Mexico, provides an excellent example of the changing significance of a heritage site. Chaco is an extensive National Monument, centered on the impressive ruins of a complex Native American culture, abandoned about 700 years ago. However, since the nineteenth century, white archaeologists have defined the official significance of the site as consisting largely of the historic ruins of indigenous Chaco culture and their value for scientific research. By contrast, Native American groups ascribe sacred and symbolic value to the place, which they believe to have been created by their ancestors. And, more recently, New Age tourists have begun using the site for their own purposes, invoking their own version of sacred value. As each stakeholder group has asserted a different notion of significance—some of which are clearly incommensurable (New Agers burying crystals in *kivas* transgresses the values of both Indians and archaeologists)—conflicts have arisen.

In relation to such conflict, the “fixing” culture can only remove preservationists further from the needs and desires of contemporary culture and society, and further into their



shells of professional expertise.

The corrective to this is greater transparency and participation in the decision-making and significance-defining processes—particularly, participation by nonexperts and other outsider stakeholders.

The issues of changing significance of a place, and the assertion of new stakeholder groups, converged powerfully around City Hall Park in New York City in the early 1990s. This was when traditionally narrow conceptions of the significance of the City Hall area were forcefully broadened by the “discovery” of the African Burial Ground.

As the seat of civic government and a remainder from the city’s colonial landscape, City Hall Park has long held historical value: it was the Commons of the colonial town; it has served as the focal point of government for two centuries; and it has been the site of innumerable protests, celebrations and commemorative events. In addition, City Hall, itself, has long been appraised as a fine historic building, a product of New York’s most accomplished early-nineteenth-century architect, John McComb. For at least 125 years, threats to this canonical significance have arisen from the park’s other obvious values: the economic value it adds to surrounding properties; the utility value of the transportation infrastructure for which it serves as a hub; and its value as a social space—a place to walk, sit, picnic, protest, watch a parade, etc.

Preservation efforts over the years have linked the official significance of the park to its historical and architectural values, while limiting its economic and social values to secondary status. However, in the early 1990s the significance of the whole area of lower Manhattan centered on the park became hotly contested. Public outcry over excavations of free and enslaved

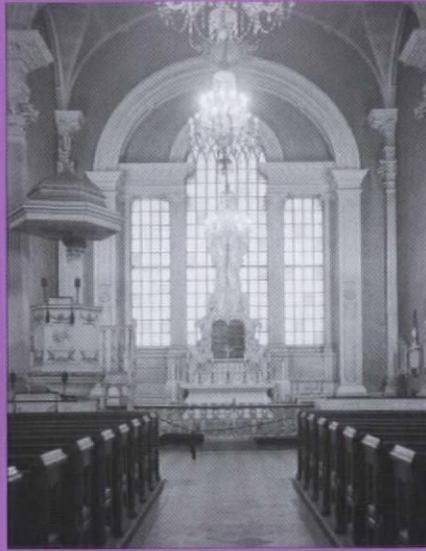
Africans’ graves on the site of a new federal office building just north of City Hall resulted in the designation of a municipal historic district called “The Commons and African Burial Ground Historic District.” Though the location of the burial ground had been known to professionals, it was assumed that the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century graves had long since been destroyed. The sudden “discovery” of hundreds upon hundreds of intact graves stirred a broad community of stakeholders to action.<sup>9</sup> Powerful African-American politicians such as U.S. Representative Gus Savage and New York City Mayor David Dinkins mobilized these stakeholders to demand the rewriting of the significance of lower Manhattan as an historic site. The inclusion of African-American narratives reflected the cultural politics of the day as well as the abiding recognition that City Hall Park is a richly layered historical landscape with many values.

The City Hall Park/African Burial Ground story epitomizes the changing significance of a particular place, and how the interpretation of site significance often reflects broader cultural politics. Another, longer-term effort in New York City embodies the broad desire to acknowledge and preserve landmarks across the city representing new, alternative, and changing conceptions of significance. Place Matters is a partnership of City Lore and the Municipal Art Society, formed in 1998, to “promote and protect places that connect us to the past, contribute

to vital communities, and sustain what is distinctive about New York.” Their pioneering work centers on identifying places that clearly function to New Yorkers as “cultural landmarks,” yet which fall outside (or in addition to) the canons of architectural style and historical association that dominate decisions on city landmarks. One outcome of Place Matters’ work is an alternative inventory of cultural landmarks, places important to contemporary citizens and communities, without architectural criteria attached. The list includes such places as unmarked sites of civil unrest, an auditorium where Tito Puente and friends played their pioneering Latin music, and a forgotten Revolutionary War battleground (long since built over). This list—and the extensive public outreach and programming Place Matters does—are a memory-centered complement to the City’s extensive inventory and regulatory regime for more traditional historical and architectural landmarks.<sup>10</sup> McSorley’s Old Ale House, on East 8th Street in Manhattan, is one of hundreds of sites in the Place Matters Census. A bar housed in a typical East Village building, McSorley’s is significant in terms of social history through its long, continuous life as a neighborhood saloon, and its notorious exclusion of women until 1970.

### Values-Centered Theories of Preservation

If one of the obstacles to renovating significance is the fabric-centered



bias of the preservation field, and its accompanying myth of objectivity, what are some alternatives?<sup>11</sup> Values-centered theories of preservation shift the balance, giving priority to the memories, ideas, and other social motivations that drive the urge to physically preserve the built environment. The basic idea is that decisions about preservation are premised on the appraisals people, institutions, and groups make of the built environment's values. Therefore, decisions must be reached by prioritizing some values over others (say, the memorial value of a great writer's birthplace over the economic value of building a strip mall on the same spot). Obviously, knowing about the range of different values, and who speaks for them, becomes crucial for understanding the preservation process. Through the lens of a values-centered theory, the role of memory—as well as

other values and uses of heritage, like economic and political values—takes center stage in explaining the motivations and outcomes of preservation.

The idea of a values-centered theory of preservation as an alternative to traditional, fabric-centered thinking has several sources.<sup>12</sup> To some extent, values- or memory-centered theory has always been part of preservation—the idea of memorializing and shaping culture lies at the roots of preservation. But recently, the social complexities of globalization, migration, culture wars, economic shifts, armed conflict, and so on have provoked many of us associated with the preservation field to question the traditional fabric-centered approach and reconnect preservation with the pressing social issues of the day. Research undertaken by the Getty Conservation Institute in the past several years has sought to pull together various threads and advance the field's discussion along these lines. The abiding goals of these research threads have been (1) acknowledging the diverse and socially constructed values of heritage; (2) doing something pragmatically that enables practitioners to deal with all the values more robustly; and (3) making connections between preservation theory and practice that are rigorous, analytical, transparent and collaborative.

Getting back to significance, per se, what is useful about values-centered theories of preservation is that they can yield much more detailed, sensitive appraisals of significance. Additionally,

the understanding of different values, and the nonexpert stakeholders that advocate them, forces preservationists to break out of their shells and collaborate widely. A few essential ideas underpin the values-centered approach.

First, "values" are understood in the sense of qualities, not morals or ethics. Any particular building, site, or place has many different values; indeed, the multivalence of the historic built environment is one of its fundamental qualities. The historical, cultural and aesthetic values traditionally at the center of preservation discourse, as well as economic, social, educational/research, ecological values, are equally present.<sup>13</sup> These values, said collectively to be a place's "heritage values," are the source of the place's significance (which can be defined as the most important, urgent values at a given time).

Second, heritage values are acknowledged to be constructed and situational, not inherent. The assessment of values depends to a great extent on who is assessing them, and on the historical-geographical moment in which the value is articulated. Thus, an economist, historian, architect, schoolchild, ordinary citizen, or elected official might have different views of the value of the City Hall Park. Furthermore, some stakeholders will have direct experience and association with a place, while others will seldom if ever visit it, yet still value it highly. So a professional study of values must be done in

**Above left and middle:** St. Paul's Chapel, exterior and interior. Photos courtesy of Historic American Buildings Survey/Library of Congress.

**Above right:** Pews in St. Paul's Chapel, showing conserved marks made by rescue workers. Photo by author.

**Opposite top:** Aerial view of Mostar, Bosnia, looking upstream toward the Old Bridge over the Neretva River (center). The predominantly Muslim Old Town is to the right. Photo courtesy of Aga Khan Trust for Culture archive, from the former Yugoslavian state news agency.

**Opposite bottom:** Recent view of the Old Town, on the left bank of the Neretva, including traditional stones houses (some reused as shops and cafes) and mosque. Photo by author.

parallel with understanding and consulting with the stakeholders—i.e., the people and groups doing the valuing.

St. Paul's Chapel in New York City illustrates these two principles about values superbly. The values of St. Paul's are many and changing, and they yield a shifting sense of why the building has been significant. Situated on Lower Broadway, the chapel has long been treasured as an architectural and historical landmark remembering "Old New York." Completed in 1766, the chapel is one of the oldest and finest buildings in Manhattan, its colonial beauty enhanced by the presence of its surrounding graveyard in the midst of ultra-dense lower Manhattan. Today the value of the building is further guaranteed by the fact that George Washington worshipped there immediately after his inauguration (his pew is clearly marked).

Less vaunted, but equally valuable has been the chapel's ongoing use for worship and community service, a value not really represented in its preserved physical fabric. And in the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy, St. Paul's took on a new kind of significance. Located very near the World Trade Center but miraculously unharmed by the destruction all around, the chapel became a shelter for relief and rescue workers, a place for them to rest, eat, and recover in every sense. This function left its marks on the building, and in deciding how to repair and renew the building after service as a shelter, it was decided to retain the scuff marks made on the pews by sleeping rescue workers and their tool belts, thus preserving this important memory in the fabric of the building. Appreciating the values of the chapel as they stand today, then, would require acknowledging these most recent marks and the enormous social and symbolic value



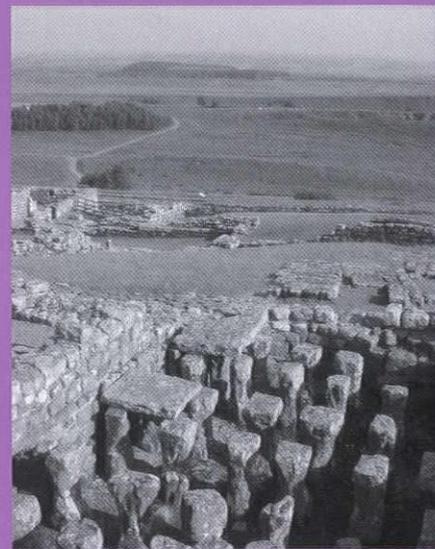
attached to them, as well as the traditional architectural distinctions and historical associations, as well as other factors such as the economic values tied up in the land and buildings.

A third idea underpinning the values-centered approach is that it is understood that heritage values sometimes conflict. One cannot maximize all kinds of value at once—for instance, a battlefield's historical and aesthetic values would be destroyed by maximizing its economic value as a shopping center. Why consider all the values of the historic built environment, and not just the historical and cultural values at the core of preservation's memorial project?

Empirically, what this means is that all the values of heritage should enter into decisions about the management and fate of the historic built environment. It is untenable to simply ignore

the values of some stakeholders because we may disagree ideologically. Preservation as practiced is not a zero-sum game; it is full of compromises (like most planning and design work). Real estate developers keenly perceive the economic values of the historic built environment, for instance. And indigenous peoples have asserted their interpretation of history in stark contrast to traditional, great-white-man notions. (Consider how the Custer Battlefield National Monument in Montana is now known as the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, de-emphasizing the importance of the Custer story in that landscape).

We cannot and should not wish these alternative views of value away; nor should we ignore them. Why adopt a theory of significance that purposely excludes influential factors



shaping how society values the historic built environment? Why resist change in appraisals of value? Even though preservationists advocate long-term views of the value of the historic built environment, this shouldn't be taken to mean that values are timeless.

The challenge of preservation planning and policy, therefore, is to strike and sustain a reasonable balance of values. Preservationists do not have to advocate all the values of a heritage site, but they should have to understand them, and this requires not only collaboration among professionals and laypeople but familiarity with the valuation methods of many disciplines (economics, anthropology, architecture, history). Without this broad understanding, preservationists will only act on what is valuable to them, not why the environment does or does not have meaning for society at large.

Will significance always be anchored by traditional canons of architectural and historical value? No doubt, events will continue to push preservationists to revise traditional notions of value and significance. Otherwise, their work will become irrelevant to the daily challenges and long-term concerns of ordinary citizens.

In the city of Mostar, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the preservation field's struggle over divergent and changing notions of significance is today being

starkly played out in responses to an historic urban place deeply damaged and socially divided during the Balkan wars of 1992-95. Mostar's Old Town suffered considerable damage during this time, including destruction of the iconic Old Bridge (Stari Most) by Croatian forces.

In recovering from the war, and dealing with the reality of a city divided between Croatian and Bosnian "sides," there is an ongoing debate about the value and significance of iconic structures such as the Old Bridge, versus the reconstruction and preservation of more "everyday" buildings. To those in the international community (whether E.U. politicians or potential tourists), Mostar is significant because the bridge was destroyed, then repaired—metaphorically stitching together a city and region horribly divided by war. To Bosnian Mostarians, the significance of postwar reconstruction and preservation lies as much in the schools, houses, mosques, streets and shops that support their everyday life and long-standing roots in the Old Town.

### **Process and Product**

Historic preservation theories and tools need to reflect the notion that culture is an ongoing process, at once evolutionary and inventive—not a static set of practices and things. As a field, we need to be more rigorous, analytical, and transparent with our decisions.<sup>14</sup> The significance concept needs rethinking to meet these challenges.

Today, the fabric/memory balance in preservation is shifting as younger preservationists are more compelled by Dolores Hayden's work than Bernard Feilden's (though we all recognize that the technical ability to diagnose a building and arrest its decay is what enables us to remember.)

Values-centered theory is a useful way for the preservation field to engage these challenges. It acknowledges the dynamics of preservation and allows us to model (if not solve) the reality of the multiple, contested, and shifting values ascribed to historic preservation sites and projects. It is a body of theory that leads, in practice, to a significance concept that is flexible and multivalent, instead of an older model that succeeded best in placing buildings and sites "under glass," segregated from society like museum objects.

One can see such ideas about a more encompassing, flexible notion of significance being implemented, for instance, in the management of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site in England. Consisting of remains of an 80-mile-long Roman defensive wall, built in the first to the fourth centuries AD, the site has been designated since 1986. Its management through a complex partnership led by English Heritage and other public agencies involves myriad local jurisdictions and landowners to care for this extensive place as both a working landscape of towns, farms and pastures, as well as a remarkable archaeological site long attractive to tourists. The management and planning regime for

Hadrian's Wall and the excavated ruins of Housesteads Roman fort. Photos by author.

the site (updated every five years) sensitively takes these different significances into account.

The arguments in this article are not simply seeking a better *result* for preservation—i.e., more perfectly preserved buildings, or more accurate and eloquent statements of significance. The *process* of articulating and assessing values is salutary in itself, and it can lead to more relevant and useful ways to understand and manage the built environment as a connected landscape, instead of a disconnected collection of historic buildings.

In order to accomplish any of this, the historic preservation field must stop seeing itself so hermetically. Where are the anthropologists and economists working on preservation? Where are the foundations carrying the flag for collective memory? Who is pushing preservationists to think creatively and critically about the role of preservation in the society of the future? Not all these answers are right at hand, but perhaps we'll know them when we see them.

#### Notes and Acknowledgement

The author wishes to thank Laura Hansen and Marci Reaven, of Place Matters, for inviting the lecture that was the basis for this article, as well as anonymous reviewers and the journal's editors for a number of insightful and constructive critiques.

1. There are two very notable exceptions to the dearth of critical thinking about significance: a collection of papers from a 1997 conference and a 1984 article by Tainter and Lucas questioning the theoretical assumptions behind significance. See Michael Tomlan, ed., *Preservation of What, For Whom? A Critical Look at Significance* (Ithaca, NY: National Council for Preservation Education, 1998); and Joseph Tainter and John Lucas, "Epistemology of the Significance Concept," *American Antiquity*, vol. 48, no. 4 (1983), pp. 707-19. Both of these works have strongly informed this article.
2. "Environment" and "historic built environment" are used here as catch-all terms referring to material culture at a variety of scales: buildings, sites, districts,

settlements, landscapes, objects and collections.

3. For example, Bernard Feilden cemented the notion that preservation was about "arresting decay" of historical fabric. In the U.S., James Marston Fitch, the pioneering preservation educator, subtitled his major work on preservation "The Curatorial Management of the Built Environment."

4. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, Francis J. Ditter, Jr., and Vida Yazdi Ditter, trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1980; original, *La Mémoire collective*, 1950), p. 157.

5. The pioneering work on collective memory as a social process was by Maurice Halbwachs. See *On Collective Memory*, Lewis Coser, ed. and trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Other interesting works include M. Christine Boyer,

*The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994); Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, Lawrence Kritzman, ed., Arthur Goldhammer, trans. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-98, three volumes); and Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994).

6. Martha Demas, "Planning for Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites," in Teutonico and Palumbo, eds., *Management Planning for Archaeological Sites* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2002); and Sharon Sullivan and Michael Pearson, *Looking After Heritage Places* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995).

7. As my U.K. colleague Kate Clark puts it, a statement of significance is only useful if it helps a site manager say "no" to some proposals. It should define the meaning and use of a place such that it excludes *some* possibilities (personal communication).

8. Howard L. Green, "The Social Construction of Historical Significance," in Tomlan, ed., *Preservation of What, For Whom?*

9. The fate of the African Burial Ground site, including long-debated plans for memorials and other historical interpretation, is still in question as of this writing. A reinterment ceremony for some of the human remains is scheduled for October 2003. See <http://www.africanburialground.com/>.

10. Place Matters' web site is [www.placematters.net](http://www.placematters.net).

11. Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), on the notion of

objectivity in the historical profession, provides an excellent base for critique of preservation.

12. The Getty Conservation Institute has produced several reports on values-centered theories, including Avrami, Mason, and de la Torre, eds., *Values and Heritage Conservation: Research Report* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2000).

(see [www.getty.edu/conservation/resources/](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/resources/)). For a summary, see Randall Mason and Erica Avrami, "Heritage Values and Challenges of Conservation Planning," in Teutonico and Palumbo, eds., *Management Planning for Archaeological Sites*.

13. There is little agreement on what constitutes a universal typology of heritage values. Many different schemes have been proposed, each with its strengths and weaknesses. See Avrami, Mason, and de la Torre, eds., *Values and Heritage Conservation*.

14. My occasional use of the first-person in this essay reflects the idea that I see myself as both outsider and insider to the preservation field. Though my teaching and research are intimately concerned with historic preservation practice, my graduate training is in geography and urban planning, not historic preservation.

# The Changing Place of Interpretation in American Public Space

Ronald Lee Fleming

Assisted by Jeannie Miller and Melissa Tapper Goldman

Every historical form in the built environment carries a language of power. Thus, in today's public realm, manmade structures communicate the values of many eras, providing a variety of perspectives on our own historical time.

Older buildings, in particular, imbued with the authority of rich stylistic traditions, may still conjure up the manners and mores of lost societies. In times when people dressed formally on the street, respecting an aesthetic of expressive detail, the elegance of building cornices and street lamps was more readily understood. By contrast, today's American city is largely experienced through the windshield of a speeding car, and new construction often lacks an ability to communicate on the scale of the pedestrian.

This shift in perception has affected the substantive form of design—both built and graphic. However, in our present multiperspectival system today, we accept a variety of environmental forms. In other times of economic boom, landscapes were destroyed and rebuilt to celebrate contemporary values, but we currently *embrace* these varied styles and influences. We do this both by respecting historic buildings and sites and by retelling their stories in our own language. By reimagining past experience and laying claim to it through new and varied lenses, we often find new meanings for our own times.

Throughout history, *intentional* interpretation of place has also occurred through structural inscriptions, markers, monuments, and decorative reliefs. Representational artwork can also be considered a type of conscious interpretation.

In past societies, the intentional interpretation of place was largely the work of the government and propertied interests. Thus, monuments in

public space were state sanctioned, and the inscriptions on buildings attested to the civic virtue and authority of dominant powers. But in American cities today other voices are being heard. Direct action by residents, new communicative methods, and alternative commissioning structures have expanded the possibilities for telling such stories, and contributed to a new pluralism of interpretative messages.

## Interpretation Today

Narrative expressions have been present in the public realm from Nimrud to medieval England to art-moderne America. However, the narrative approach to interpretation largely disappeared in Western countries after World War II. At that time, practitioners of the Modern Movement stripped away decoration on built form, and sought to express the beauty of materials and form directly.

The tie between narration and traditional power was particularly objectionable to Modern architects. Through the International Style they sought to transcend the existing power system, and so avoid the claims of the nation-state or the encoded triumphs of the local bourgeoisie. In a sense, the projects of Modern architects were still interpretation. But the central message, a protest against older languages of power, was usually neither locally specific nor universally applicable.

Following a cultural reassessment of Modernism's impact, narrative eventually returned to the American city. However, in the late twentieth century it took a more rebellious demeanor. Transformed by abstraction's critique, it shunned past formations of decorative elements and gave voice to perspectives hitherto ignored in the public arena.

Today, the perspectives of the powerful are no longer the only stories



Telling the story of place in its structure. A sculpted metal panel on this nineteenth-century Berlin bridge depicts the growth of the city during the seventeenth century.

that may be told in public space. And rather than attempting to escape the power system, narrative interpretation of place often seeks to comment on its own origins. Such an open and sometimes ironic approach has democratized the interpretive function, rather than hoarding it for a small elite who understand the structure of the city.

Interpretation now points out the events that shape the physical character of places, and comments on the patterns of architectural, economic and social development that are translated into form. Gone are the simple event-oriented plaques and dry chronological litanies of built history once affixed to poles or granite plinths for centennial celebrations. In their place has emerged a richer and more refined system of complex graphics and multiple messages. It is this sense of changing perspectives and a candid, even humorous acknowledgement of shifting viewpoints that imbues the new interpretation with dynamism.

Recent narrative interpretation of American cities has also often focused on the *condition* of neighborhoods, with a particular eye toward the human values of those who have occupied them. This attention to local life has provided a robust armature for place-making art. By building up the information base that can inspire

artistic metaphors, such interpretation has enabled artists to create works that both comment on local conditions and are accessible to those who may not be aware of local history.

The political character of such locally based interpretation may be powerful. Local relevance can be used to spark controversy, reminding people of concealed wounds and hidden conflicts. At the same time, it can also become a positive interactive device, inviting a community to participate in civic planning and design. Strengthened by new technologies and the experience of confronting controversy, both interpreters and artists are initiating dialogues with the public that can be catalysts for social change in such a democratic, accountable process.

Today there is also greater self-consciousness in our placards and artistic works. Mirroring our postmodern age, we have learned to see that representations of the past are etched in the style of *our own* hand. The hope behind such self-reflection is that we may gain sensitivity of perspective, and bring to reinterpretation the values of sympathy, respect, humanism and empowerment.

### New Points of View

A good example of these new layers of interpretation is a recent memorial built to honor a 1936-37 strike in the Flint, Michigan. The strike, at the factories of General Motors, included a worker sit-down that paralyzed production and helped force the company to recognize the American Auto Workers Union. However, as the American auto industry boomed in the 1950s and 60s, the importance of this event was gradually forgotten.

In the late 1980s, when the Flint city government, along with union leaders, began looking for ways to revitalize a diminished downtown,

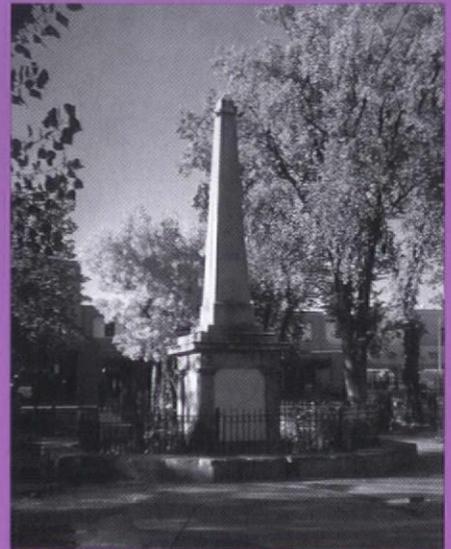


The Sit-Down Strike Memorial by artist Johan Sellenraad commemorates the hard-won victory of the American Auto Workers Union in Flint, Mich. Drawing on a local pottery tradition, Sellenraad designed ceramic tiles incorporating photographic images from the strike. The multifaceted memorial also includes cement auto seats fabricated by union workers and bronze castings of the auto hinges that workers fired at sheriff's deputies with slingshots when the local government tried to break up the strike. Predella-like images bordering the larger panels add historic quotations on the worth of the labor movement. The final panel in the sequence shows robots replacing humans in the production process—a "solution" to the labor problems depicted, but also an ironic comment on current challenges to organized labor.

one response was to recover this important event through a memorial. Eventually, the city commissioned a memorial to the strikers with the assistance of the Townscape Institute, which recruited New York artist Johan Sellenraad.

Sellenraad's monument today combines photographic evidence, a local ceramic tradition, and union-manufactured goods.<sup>1</sup> It marks the entrance to the historic Carriage Town neighborhood where the auto industry had its roots, and provides a backdrop to an outdoor amphitheater that slopes toward the Flint River (once used to float hardwood logs to the early carriage factories).

Like the statue of the man on horseback in the public square, the Sit-Down Strike Memorial refers to a single event in history. But by giving voice to labor, it goes beyond traditional memorialization. And by



This limestone obelisk from Santa Fe, N.M., commemorating American military conquests over the native population was "edited" by chiseling out the word "savage" from next to the word "Indians."

integrating text and graphic techniques, it provides an extraordinarily rich and complex interpretation of events.

Another technique that has emerged recently has been to comment critically and directly on earlier efforts at interpretation. Thus, older memorials may be subject to "editing," as interpretation itself is reinterpreted.

Activists pursued this strategy in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1974 by altering the inscription on an obelisk commemorating a nineteenth-century military commander who fought the local Native Americans. The original inscription on the obelisk read "To the Heroes, who died in various battles with Savage Indians." But as part of the American Indian movement, anonymous protesters scratched out the word "savage."<sup>2</sup>

Rather than take down the obelisk after its message was altered, authorities chose to place it in a center for Native American traders. Here the history of racism remains visible, and the deep scratch in the stone draws warranted attention to past insults.

### Avoiding Interpretative Overkill

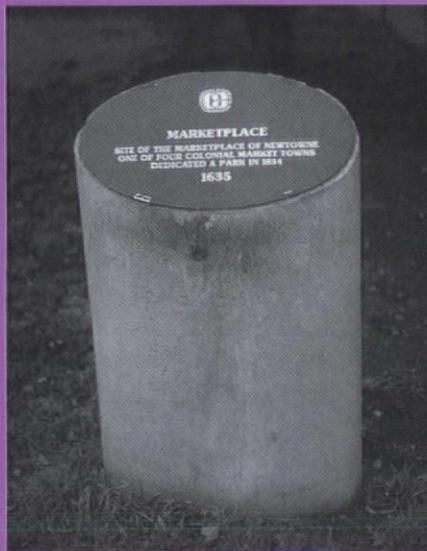
With new interest in interpretation and new media strategies for transmitting information, today's designers and planners need to exercise restraint. It can be particularly ironic when an historic marker obliterates the very character of the place it is attempting to interpret.

This is the case with the giant, tombstone-like markers erected on a small traffic island near the Common in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This site, where George Washington took command of the Continental Army, has today become a giant textbook. Huge concrete pages offer dense paragraphs acknowledging the complex forces that came together there. Yet, while the slabs ostensibly exist to help recall the past, they demean the character of this famous place and make it difficult to feel any connection to history.

Of course, the minimalism of earlier markers in Cambridge was equally unsatisfactory. These denoted important local events with simple blue plates citing a few uncontroversial facts. In both cases, however, designers have been focused on a single purpose, thinking only of the content to be publicized.

Today it is possible for markers to take a more humanistic approach, not only in their politics but in their presentation. Their appearance may be inviting, their meanings accessible, and their style as revealing of their purpose as their content.

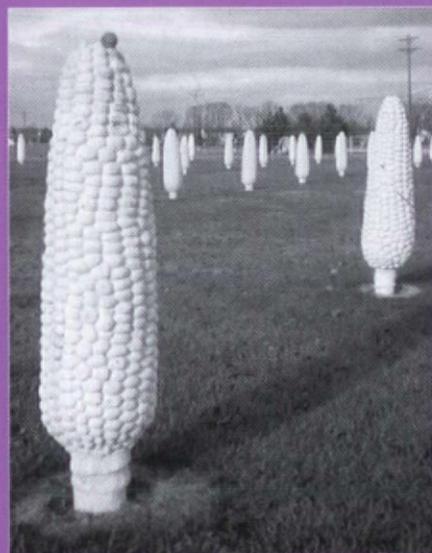
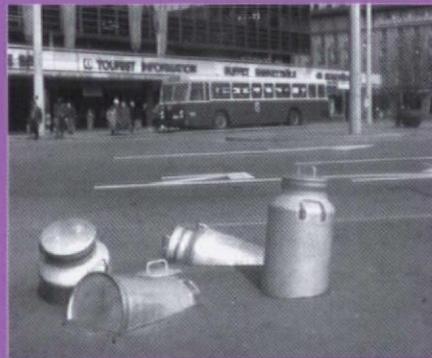
In designing such new historical markers it is also possible to draw from a powerful new public visual language. This exists across media—from magazine montages to interactive graphics on the Internet. Anodized aluminum plaques, for example, can today present photography as well as text, allowing an old form to make use of potent new techniques.



Recent attempts to identify historical sites in Cambridge, Mass., have abandoned these traditional blue markers, which avoid infringing on the site, but which add little to our understanding of it (above, top). An example of the newer historical markers in Cambridge describes the ride of William Dawes during the Revolutionary War (above, bottom). In this picture, the marker is disrupting an historic reenactment.

### New Interpretation as Cultural Criticism

In contrast to such interpretive overkill, many cities leave their cityscapes opaque to the casual visitor. For some cities, this is evidence of an aloof attitude, civic dysfunction, or even cowardice—a refusal to address issues of urban design or architectural preservation.



Unlike the graphically dull Cambridge markers, these monuments use nothing but form to express historic information. Guerrilla artists in Bern, Switzerland, installed the milk bottles without municipal permission to commemorate a site's history as a transfer point for milk arriving in the city from the countryside (above, top). A "cornfield" in Dublin, Ohio, expresses the importance of agriculture to local history (above, bottom).

Contemporary interpretation may even threaten existing political arrangements by making transparent the failure to develop effective policies. Thus, programs of interpretation may ask tough questions about relationships and motives in the cityscape. Why were certain buildings demolished?<sup>3</sup> Why weren't others better designed? Why weren't different voices heard?<sup>4</sup>

On a larger cultural horizon, historical interpretation may even suggest new solutions to controversial issues that affect communities more broadly. In this regard, the simultaneous presence of a multitude of perspectives, and the self-criticism they engender, may be extremely beneficial, allowing individual stories to attain a dignity and honesty normally unavailable in the exclusionary mainstream of public history.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, even when interpretation of such information may empower artists' imaginations, few alliances have developed between graphic artists and local arbiters of interpretation systems—such as historic commissions. While interpretation has the potential to provoke such thinking, it is often squelched for fear of offending powerful constituencies.

Acts of interpretation can also make people aware there are alternatives to any given design. Over time, this sort of communication can anchor a design-review policy, and prepare people to play a greater role in civic design. To display a history of civic change is to be honest with the public; to present future possibilities is to welcome their participation.

Unfortunately, in this regard, interpretive markers have rarely been used to reveal the impact of public design decisions directly. One such program did explore such issues for the Bicentennial in Lexington, Massachusetts. It used the technique of photo metal aluminum to present various alternative development scenarios. For example, the marker adjacent to the town hall noted that the green there might have evolved into a commercial strip if the town's leadership had not protected it by changing its zoning in 1922. For emphasis, it showed a picture of a New Hampshire village in which the entry sign to a historic district sat

hauntingly amid commercial detritus.

By communicating in ways that are easy to understand, such interpretive markers may make the significance of local government policy more transparent. In the process, they may encourage people to adopt a greater sense of ownership toward the public realm. By describing the changing conditions of place, they ask people how they want a place to be.

### Strategies for Interpretation

One useful way to encourage the interpretation of place is to work within the auspices of public works departments and existing streetscape budgets. In this way, small projects are possible without the more formalized process of commissioning place-making art.

The use of multiple funding sources for smaller projects may also bring in new schemes and perspectives. For example, funding may be solicited from individuals and local businesses, broadening the scope of outlook. Thus, in the Bidy Mason project, multiple funding sources allowed several interpretive projects (in print, inside of a retail center, and outside in public) to come together in a single place-making scheme.<sup>6</sup>

Public-works and planning departments also provide a more fruitful general locus to initiate change, since every city, and most towns, carry out these functions—while only a few have full-fledged arts commissions and councils. Rudimentary components of the streetscape, such as street furniture, shelter systems, trail and historic-site markers, and street signage usually fall within the purview of these city departments. Typically, these elements are installed in a generic and mundane fashion, when they could become far more informative aspects of the public realm. Signage, and graphic design, as well as

## Interpretation in Transit Shelters

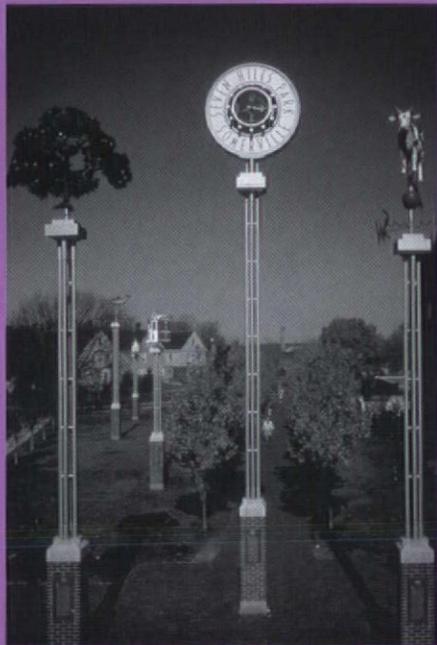


The strategy of using interpretive street furniture to convey information about a specific locale and its history is particularly applicable to transit facilities, where people are required to sit and wait, and where time and space can be profitably used for interpretation.

The brightly colored spools at the Vernon MTA Station in Los Angeles (top), built in 1994, express the identity of the surrounding neighborhood as the city's garment district. Designed by artist Horace Washington, they also provide distinctive seating.

To design a bus shelter in Seattle's International District in 1998 (bottom), artist Laura Brodax first did extensive research in the local community, a primarily Asian neighborhood of about ten square blocks. The exterior of the shelter displays colorful pictures from the community's history, while the interior contains pictures with captions for every decade starting with the 1880s. The pictures from the 1970s show protests against the building of the nearby Kingdome stadium.

## Comprehensive Interpretation through Trail Systems and Trailheads



Only recently have interpretive elements been linked together in America to orchestrate increased meaning from an ensemble. Connecting such a system to a centralized information bank, or "trailhead," is even rarer. However, the examples here hint at the possibility of such linkages to nurture dramatic encounters with information.

The Seven Hills Park trailhead (above) in Somerville, a densely populated city northwest of Boston, is located at the beginning of a walkway that follows an old rail line to Lexington. These sculptural forms were designed by Steve Purcell to celebrate the historic development of the town's seven hills. Each hill is represented by a different symbol mounted on a pole in a grassy area of Davis Square, adjacent to the Red Line train station and the trail. The marker in the foreground commemorates Walnut Hill, where Charles Tufts founded Tufts University. In the background is a view of a Bullfinch-designed mansion that stood on an adjacent hill, which later became the site of McLean Hospital. A dairy was once located on another hill. The general design of the trailhead was by Clifford Selbert Design of Cambridge, Mass. If further developed, the cluster of poles could serve as the starting point for a system of trails and markers connecting the different hills and commemorating these sites.

Similarly, in blue-collar Chelsea, a waterfront community just north of Boston, an interpretive



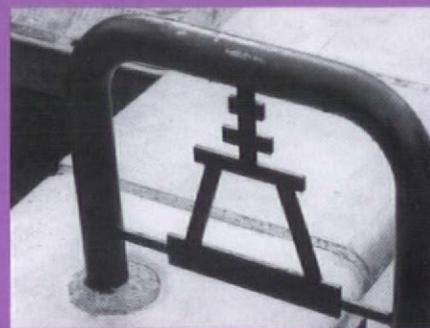
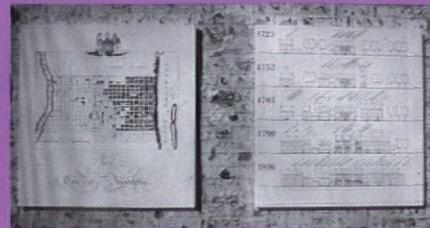
"memory wall" of ceramic panels (above) was conceived in 1979 by Ronald Lee Fleming, Peter Johnson, and Susan Roberts. The portion of the wall shown here is devoted to Laura Lee, an early bohemian whose comments are still arresting today. The author and his associates designed this wall in an alley connecting Chelsea's main street to a parking lot. But the panel was later moved due to the lack of a long-term site management strategy to address the ever-present problem of vandalism. The wall might have served as a guide to other interpretive elements that were part of a "two-percent for pedestrian orientation" program along the street, when the area was revitalized with a \$3.1 million grant

One reason that these elements—a trail system, interpretive panels, and place-making public art—have rarely been integrated is that they are often fall within the purview of different governmental agencies, whose activities are rarely coordinated. However, the introduction of trail systems is probably the best way to encourage interaction between different commissioning or sponsoring agencies, because it provides a framework for physically and mentally linking disparate sites.

Trail markers can introduce the political and social history of an area; its architectural styles and built character; its natural environment, including geography, flora and fauna; and even its lexicon, through a history of place names that reveals the complex associations of particular locales. Combining this didactic approach with small elements of public art can even offer the transcendence of enchantment.

Paradoxically, even cities with an extraordinary sense of place can benefit from such integrated interpretive strategies. A self-contained, self-guided walking tour is a great way to reveal the mysteries and complexities of an area, which a casual observer could fail to comprehend for years.

## Interpretation as Street Signage



Some street markers have a graphic style suggesting a place's character. The complexity of a place can sometimes be revealed by graphically using complicated images which depict timelines or changing physical conditions over time.

The Philadelphia marker (above, top) reveals the change in one street over time. It shows both a map of the city's former Pine Street, as well as a series of historic streetscapes arranged chronologically from top to bottom.

The state marker on the Erie Canal in Waterloo, N.Y. (above, middle), demarcates historic time periods with text and photographic images. As an interior exhibit, it can be more elaborate and display more information. Its elegant sequencing also makes it easy to understand.

In addition to serving an eminently practical purpose, the skateboard guard in Riverside, Calif. (above, bottom), uses the image of a bell to represent the city's historic Mission Inn. The guard also employs a local graphic identity.

the introduction of craft, may humanize essential elements of cityscape and build curiosity for more ambitious place-making efforts.

Since many public-works projects have been increasingly geared toward pedestrian amenities, we may be on the cusp of an historical change that benefits the larger place-making objective. Several examples of interpretation worked integrated into streetscape street furniture, infrastructure are illustrated here. In general, their strategy is to introduce valuable site information in the course of providing for people's more immediate needs.

### An Ongoing Activity

Why interpret the past in the built environment today? One reason is to confront our own passivity in the face of social complexity. As decision-making becomes more cumbersome, with multiple players and interests, the rift between decision-makers and the general public widens, diminishing the sense of public choice and proprietorship.

Nevertheless, the simple fact that every building, standing or demolished, represents a choice made in the public sphere means that historical change is intimately linked with the world we see around us. To raise awareness of this timeline of *choice* puts every citizen in a better position to sort out the meaning of both past and present impacts.<sup>7</sup>

We are all heirs to a resonant story that continues to evolve through the public mechanisms of design and design review. That such choices lie in our hands is often obscured. But it can be reactivated with sensitive and effective interpretation that reveals choices and motivations.

Representations of the impact of public policies have rarely become part of an integrated interpretation

strategy. But when they do, they can be very powerful. For example, preservation advocates in Seattle used city markers to display photographs of an elegant hotel demolished to make way for a parking lot in Pioneer Square. Similar photographs showed a city-sanctioned apartment-tower proposal that would have destroyed the Pike Street Market—had not the proposal been defeated in a citizen-initiated referendum.

By raising consciousness among residents, such acts of interpretation can give the layman a greater perspective on policy options, ensuring more strength and continuity in responses. Ideally, some cities might even recognize that a permanent exhibit of such elements would serve as an excellent setting for the meetings of a civic design-review commission.

In a 1993 op-ed article, the author suggested that the city of Boston "...require that every new project include, in a publicly accessible place, a photography of the structure or structures that used to stand on the site, and some history of the area, as well as the architect's drawing of the original proposal for the site, to allow citizens to better understand how the Design Commission influenced the project."<sup>8</sup>

In this essay we have advocated that these presentations be made permanent, and that they be designed by artists to not only encourage citizen participation, but to promote place memory. Over time, interpretation must empower and inform residents, visitors, and designers alike, helping us all to recall and reimagine so that we will actualize our true position, at the point of acting as well as reacting.

### Notes

This essay is a shortened version of a chapter taken from the upcoming book *The Art of Place Making: Public Art, Urban Design, and Interpretation That Tell You Where You Are*, by Ronald Lee Fleming.

Unless otherwise noted, all photos are courtesy of Ronald Lee Fleming, The Townscape Institute.

1. Unfortunately, the memorial now has to endure water damage that erodes the delicate ceramic during the harsh Michigan winters.
2. Information courtesy of artist Charlene Teters. For SITE Santa Fe Third International Biennial, Teters created a temporary sculpture outside New Mexico's capitol building, a full-scale obelisk with an inscription reading simply "To The Heroes." The reference remains strikingly ambiguous. Quoting Charlene Teters, correspondence August 22, 2003: "People would ask who are the heroes and who are the savages? My response was, It depends on who is telling the story." See also "Monument's Word Removed," *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 8, 1974, p.1.
3. The Preservation Society in Saratoga, New York, has not accepted the gift of a plaque, which shows where the magnificent Grand Union Hotel was destroyed for a suburban-style Grand Union shopping center in 1963. See Ronald Lee Fleming, *Facade Stories: Changing Faces of Main Street Storefronts and How to Care for Them* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1982).
4. Dolores Hayden's work on interpretive history in downtown Los Angeles is an innovative illustration of this process. It follows in the graphic mode of the earlier Chelsea Memory wall, discussed in a sidebar to this essay. For analysis of the link between public art and public memory, see *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), p.46.
5. *Ibid.*, p.96.
6. Dolores Hayden, "An American Sense of Place," in Harriet F. Senie and Sally Webster, eds., *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content Context and Controversy* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), p.268.
7. See also Lucy R. Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New York: The New Press, 1997).
8. Ronald Lee Fleming, "Public also has a role to play in city projects," Op-Ed, *The Boston Globe*, October 4, 1993.

# To Rally Discussion

Dear Clare (Cooper Marcus):

First, let me thank you for taking care to secure a place in American urbanism for semipublic space. It is undoubtedly an important tool in the pursuit of human happiness. I wasn't aware until I read your article in *Places* 15.2 that you had been dedicated to this campaign for as long as you have. In response to that article ("Shared Outdoor Space and Community Life"), and following your request to comment on it, here are my thoughts:

You are not entirely correct in concluding that semipublic space is absent in the practice of New Urbanism. You grant only one exception of the alley, and attach it to the critique that it really isn't a good enough place for children. Actually, I believe that it is a good place for children—not necessarily when it is an alley (which is an urban place), but when it is a rear lane (which is a rural place). This can be observed in action in our better communities.

I must also call to your attention Dan Solomon's beautiful parking courts in San Francisco, and Stef Polyzoides and Liz Moule's twenty-year campaign for courtyard apartment buildings, now beautifully executed in several variations. There are also the DPZ walkways and closes in Rosemary Beach and Kentlands; these look similar to your illustrations on pages 35 and 36R. All of these create variations of semi-public space which must be socially similar to your version.

But your contention that these are incidental practices is correct when it comes to the blocks of single-family houses and rowhouses. With these, which are the bread and butter of American residential typologies, the New

Urbanism indeed does not allocate to semipublic space the importance that your argument supports. Why?

This is hard to explain, as there is a robust tendency in the New Urbanism to be omnivorous, assimilating to its practice "anything that works well in the long run." The following are some tentative thoughts that may explain this absence.

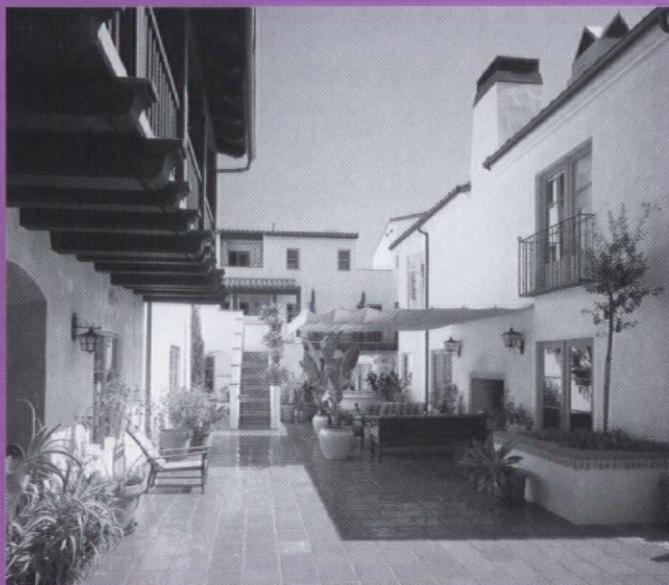
First, hat New Urbanism is a reform movement recoiling from the failures of the 1960s. As such, the first and classic social/spatial critique was Oscar Newman's *Defensible Space*. His strong condemnation of "unassigned space" is something that we have assimilated, perhaps thoughtlessly. We *do* try to eliminate such unassigned space wherever possible. You may have noticed that those HOPE VI projects that are exclusively based in New Urbanist practices attempt to eliminate all such unassigned space, allocating it to either private yards or public street space. Reports are that this has worked well to reduce crime, so we feel no pressure to alter the practice in affordable housing layouts.

Another reason that semipublic space is avoided may derive from the argument by Leon Krier that urban design should concentrate human interaction. (He goes on to suggest that hallways should be eliminated so that pedestrians should be dumped as soon as possible onto the street, where they can interact). American sedentarism has led us to the conclusion that those few who are "out walking" should tend to meet each other, and therefore that all potential social condensers (AKA destinations) should be concentrated.

It is one of the reasons that rather than dispersing public buildings throughout the community (which would nicely structure the urban fabric), we have a tendency to concentrate commercial and civic uses in one place. This argument is: "If there are twenty people walking around at any one time, let's do it so they have the chance to run into each other." This has yielded monofocal neighborhoods and also the elimination of the semipublic space that may dilute interaction by providing an alternative.

A specific reason that semipublic space within the block is habitually eliminated is that developers want to sell the biggest lot possible to those who do comparison shopping. If one project sells a 4,000-sq.ft. lot plus some semipublic space, it cannot readily compete with another that sells 6,000-sq.ft. lots and no semipublic space. Not only is the market dumbed down in this manner, but, worse, the real estate appraisal industry is rigorously limited.

The main courtyard at Moule & Polyzoides's Harper Courtyard apartment building. Photo courtesy Moule & Polyzoides Architects



Their comparison protocols are circumscribed to a set of statistical correlations. These value the size of the lot—period. There are other negative social consequences to this, among them that porches are not permitted to count toward the valuation. Since appraisals are the basis upon which mortgages are calculated, this means that semipublic space and the porch are not “mortgageable” (i.e., you cannot buy those elements at 10 percent down and a 6 percent interest rate over thirty years; they must instead be paid for with the equivalent of cash on the barrelhead). This is a significant problem.

Yet another reason for the elimination of semipublic space within the block is that New Urbanists are in pursuit of increased density. These days (and for the foreseeable future) density is directly correlated with the number of cars that can be parked, and this is determined by the parking capacity of the block. Since most real estate financing formulas cannot afford parking below a deck, the best we can do with surface parking lots is to confine them to the inner block (better than sprawled all over the frontages which, as you know, would devastate the walkability of the street). As a result, whatever would have been available for semipublic space is usually allocated to center-block parking (remember Solomon’s and Moule and Polyzoides’s types).

Then there is an argument that involves the dialectic between front and back yard and the “social contract” that the New Urbanist planner makes with the residents.

As you know, we code many aspects of the building frontage in pursuit of the creation of pedestrian streets. In exchange for this degree of constraint in public, we generally allow the back yard to be a place that is self-defined—we control the front and liberate the back. We think of the back yard as the place where people can be as slovenly as they like: barbecuing disgraceful foodstuffs in their underwear, and having veritable explosions of vulgar toys if they so desire. We have observed that when the back is semipublic, as with a golf course, this degrades their “rights” to be slobs. We have also found there is a general dislike for greenways and bike trails across their backyards, while there is no objection to having them along their frontages. It seems that the house frontage is resilient enough to accommodate public use while the rear is too soft and vulnerable to do so. There is thus a problem when an unbuffered semipublic space is located in the rear of a dwelling. I have seen this kind of semipublic space in Dutch new towns and find that it severely constrains people’s freedom to be themselves.

It is definitely possible to create a private backyard and then the semipublic space beyond, but semipublic

space as the sole back yard is not popular enough to be common practice. Not even its prototype at Sunnyside Gardens survived.

And one last thing: in greenfield projects the environmental requirements are becoming so rigid that by the time every species and presumed wetland has been preserved, most of the potential open space has been allocated to “nature” (wherever “nature” happens to be), and it is then used to supply the requisite “open space” of the community.

So, the absence of semipublic space is not a matter of policy; it is arguably not even a matter of carelessness on the part of the New Urbanists; and it is certainly not a matter of undervaluing the role that you have proven that it has, particularly in the lives of children. It is just a matter of being in the crossfire of so many other variables that it hardly comes up for consideration.

I do promise you this: I will propose some inner-block public space in our current projects to see if they survive.

Best,  
**Andrés Duany**

P.S. The houses of American military bases are not subdivided into lots. They therefore lack the coordinates for backyard definition through hedges and fences to create private space. It is all semipublic in the back. These inner block areas seem to be very similar to your definition of shared outdoor space. I have observed that they do not necessarily work as well as you describe, and surmise that this is because there is just too much of it. It seems that shared common space should be a controlled commodity.

# Contributors

**Laura Boutelle** inherited an interest in architecture from her grandmother, historian Sara Holmes Boutelle, and a love of writing from her mother, poet Annie Boutelle. She is in her second year of the Masters of Architecture degree program at the University of California, Berkeley.

**David Brain** studied architecture at the University of Cincinnati before finishing his undergraduate work in sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, and receiving a Ph.D. in that field from Harvard University. He currently teaches Sociology and Urban Studies at New College of Florida, where his focus is on connections between place-making, community-building, and civic engagement.

**Andrés Duany** is one of the founding members of the Congress for the New Urbanism. He is a principal of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co. of Miami, Florida.

**Ronald Lee Fleming** is an author, planner and preservationist who lives in Cambridge, Mass. A pioneering figure in the Main Street revitalization work of the 1970s, his more recent projects have focused on place-making public art, based on an advocacy of work that relates the mental landscape of association to urban design decisions.

**Mark Francis**, FASLA, is a Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of California, Davis. His most recent books are *Urban Open Space: Design for User Needs*, and *Village Homes: A Community by Design* (both published in 2003 by Island Press).

**Andrea Urbiel Goldner** is a graduate student working toward a Master of Landscape Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. Her thesis "Detroit: Revision" is about a landscape that has been reinvented at least twelve times, and also happens to be her home.

**Melissa Tapper Goldman** studied art history at the University of Chicago, with a focus on product and vernacular design. She works at the Townscape Institute as a researcher.

**Donlyn Lyndon** is Eva Li Professor of Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, and Editor of *Places*. He and Giancarlo De Carlo were awarded 2003 Seaside Prizes.

**Randall Mason** studied geography, planning, and urban history, and holds a doctorate from Columbia University. He is currently an Associate Professor of Architecture in the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at the University of Pennsylvania. He formerly directed the historic preservation program at the University of Maryland.

**John McKean** is Professor of Architecture at the University of Brighton, England. He is an historian as well as design teacher and widely-published critic, previously writing in *Places* on Alexander Thomson and nineteenth-century Glasgow. His major study of the work of Giancarlo De Carlo will be published in 2004 to coincide with an exhibition at Centre Pompidou, Paris.

**Jeannie Miller** is a graduate of Harvard University's History and Literature program, who is currently working for the Axumite Heritage Project in Ethiopia. Her interests include art and mythology of the West, as well as in Ethiopian and Arabic traditions.

**David Moffat** is Managing Editor of *Places*. He also works as an architect and planner in Berkeley, California.

**William L. Porter** is Leventhal Professor of Architecture and Planning at MIT. As Dean of the School there during the 1970s he introduced and supported reforms aimed at making education more humanistic and humanely responsive. Begun with Donald Appleyard, he later co-edited *Places* with Donlyn Lyndon. His forthcoming book *Design Representation* is co-edited with Gabriela Goldschmidt.

**Brian Rose** is a photographer of architecture and landscape who splits his time between Amsterdam and New York City. His pictures have been collected by the Museum of Modern art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Selections of his work can be seen at <http://www.brianrose.com>

**Christopher Sensenig** is Assistant to the Editor of *Places* and a graduate student working toward a joint Masters of City Planning and Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. He has a B.A. in Architecture from Washington University in St. Louis, and recently took part in the International Laboratory for Architecture and Urban Design in Venice.

1.  
Start a subscription  
for yourself.

# PLACES

## A Forum of Environmental Design

Yes, I want useful, readable knowledge about making places that matter. Start my subscription now!

NAME/TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_  
CREDIT CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ EXP DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

- Supporter** \$500  
Acknowledgement in *Places*,  
advance notice of editorial  
projects, invitations to special  
events.
- Friend** \$100  
Acknowledgement in *Places*,  
advance notice of editorial  
projects.
- Subscriber (2 yr)** \$60
- Subscriber (1 yr)** \$35
- Bill me later
- Charge my:
  - American Express
  - MasterCard
  - VISA

Subscription rate \$45 in Canada,  
\$55 elsewhere. Library rates  
higher. For airmail delivery  
outside U.S., add \$15.

2.  
Send a copy  
to your office.

# PLACES

## A Forum of Environmental Design

Yes, I want useful, readable knowledge about making places that matter. Start my subscription now!

NAME/TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_  
CREDIT CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ EXP DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

- Supporter** \$500  
Acknowledgement in *Places*,  
advance notice of editorial  
projects, invitations to special  
events.
- Friend** \$100  
Acknowledgement in *Places*,  
advance notice of editorial  
projects.
- Subscriber (2 yr)** \$60
- Subscriber (1 yr)** \$35
- Bill me later
- Charge my:
  - American Express
  - MasterCard
  - VISA

Subscription rate \$45 in Canada,  
\$55 elsewhere. Library rates  
higher. For airmail delivery  
outside U.S., add \$15.

3.  
Give a gift  
to a colleague.

# PLACES

## A Forum of Environmental Design

Please start a gift subscription for:

NAME/TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_  
CREDIT CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ EXP DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

## A Forum of Environmental Design

Please bill:

NAME/TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_  
Charge my:

- American Express
- MasterCard
- VISA

- One year (three issues) \$35 U.S. (\$45 Canada, \$55 elsewhere)
- Two years (six issues) \$60 U.S. (\$80 Canada, \$100 elsewhere)
- For airmail delivery outside U.S., add \$15.



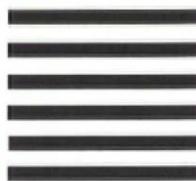
NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES

**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST CLASS PERMIT 613 LAWRENCE, KS USA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**PLACES BUSINESS OFFICE  
PO BOX 7065  
LAWRENCE, KS 66044-9706**



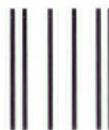
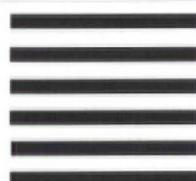
NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES

**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST CLASS PERMIT 613 LAWRENCE, KS USA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**PLACES BUSINESS OFFICE  
PO BOX 7065  
LAWRENCE, KS 66044-9706**



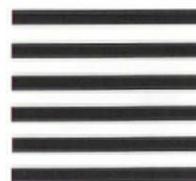
NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES

**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST CLASS PERMIT 613 LAWRENCE, KS USA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**PLACES BUSINESS OFFICE  
PO BOX 7065  
LAWRENCE, KS 66044-9706**



*Places*, a Forum of Environmental Design, is published three times a year by the Design History Foundation, a nonprofit, charitable organization that sponsors a range of educational, publishing and research activities. The Foundation's mission is to establish forums in which designers, public officials, scholars and citizens can discuss issues vital to environmental design, with particular emphasis on public spaces in the service of the shared ideals of society.

#### Sponsors

Pratt Institute School of Architecture  
University of California, Berkeley,  
College of Environmental Design  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology,  
School of Architecture and Planning

#### Places Partners

University of Michigan, Taubman College of  
Architecture and Urban Planning  
Georgia Institute of Technology,  
College of Architecture  
University of Miami, School of Architecture

#### Forum Partners

American Planning Association, Urban Design  
and Preservation Division  
Charles W. Moore Center for the Study of Place  
Environmental Design Research Association  
U.S. General Services Administration,  
Center for Urban Development  
Project for Public Spaces

*Places* and the Design History Foundation depend on support from foundations, firms and individuals to continue their activities. To support our mission and to learn the benefits of joining us as a Sponsor, Patron, Supporter or Friend, please contact our Business office: (305) 284-3439.

#### Editorial Office

Donlyn Lyndon, Editor  
*Places*  
Center for Environmental Design Research  
Room 390, Wurster Hall  
University of California  
Berkeley, CA 94720-1839  
Tel: (510) 642-1495  
Fax: (510) 643-5571  
places@uclink.berkeley.edu

#### Advertising and Business Office

Richard Shepard, Publisher  
*Places*  
Center for Urban and Community Design  
University of Miami  
School of Architecture  
1223 Dickinson Dr.  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
Tel: (305) 284-3439  
Fax: (305) 284-5597  
places@pratt.edu

[www.places-journal.org](http://www.places-journal.org)

#### Patrons

James F. Fulton and Priscilla H. Lambert  
Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates  
The Dobbins Foundation  
New York Community Trust, Blecher Family Fund  
Centerbrook Architects  
Ingram Yuzek Gainen Carroll & Bertolotti, LLP  
Stuart L. Pertz

#### Supporters

Charles W. Moore Center for the Study of Place  
Richard Nash Gould  
Frances Halsband and Robert Kliment  
Willard Hanzlik  
Jones and Jones  
John Kriken, FAIA  
Donlyn Lyndon, FAIA  
Victoria Reed  
Moore Ruble Yudell  
Shapins Associates

#### Friends

Ellenzweig Associates  
Ann Beha Architects  
Bizios Architects  
Francoise Bollack  
Bryant Park Restoration Fund  
Adele Chatfield-Taylor  
Chermayeff & Geismar  
Cooper, Robertson & Partners  
Esto Photographics  
Wendy Feuer  
Linda Gillies  
Jeanne Giordano Ltd.  
Dorothy Globus  
Adam Gross

#### Submission Information

*Places* encourages submissions from its readers. Please submit five copies of each manuscript, along with illustrations, to our Berkeley editorial office. Color transparencies, black-and-white prints, and line drawings are acceptable for initial review. Copies of our current Call for Submissions and editorial guidelines are available from our editorial offices upon request.

All articles published in *Places*, except for Forum essays and Dispatches, have been reviewed by at least four people, including consulting and contributing editors and other scholars and/or professionals with specific background and expertise in the subject matter. All final editorial decisions are made by the editor.

#### Copyright and Reprint Information

© 2003, Design History Foundation

*Places* is protected by U.S. copyright law. No copying, reproduction or excerpting of *Places* or any of its contents is permitted, including duplication for academic course readers, without prior consent of the publisher and payment of applicable fees. Please contact the publisher for authorization to copy from *Places*.

*Places* is available on microform:  
University Microfilms  
300 N. Zeeb Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106  
(313) 761-4700

*Places* is indexed in the Architectural Periodical Index, Art Abstracts, the Art and Humanities Citation Index, the Art Index, the Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals, the Design and Applied Arts Index, and Uncover.

Hartman-Cox Architects  
Susan Henshaw-Jones  
Randolph T. Hester, Jr.  
Reed Hilderbrand Associates, Inc.  
Romaldo Giurgola  
Allan B. Jacobs  
Margot Giselle Jacqz  
Michael Kwartler  
Hillary Lewis  
Lloyd D. Lindley II  
Maynard Hale Lyndon and Lu Wendel Lyndon  
Peter Mattson  
Mitch Menzer  
Leigh and Lynden Miller  
Keith Diaz Moore  
Laurie Olin  
Fred Papert  
Anthony Parrish  
Lucy Hodgson Robinson  
John Ruble and Cecily Young  
Shoji Sadao  
Roger L. Schluntz  
John Sheehy  
Mark Simon  
Mike Solomon  
Brian Sullivan/H.W. Wilson  
Dhuru Thadani, Ayers/Saint/Gross  
Brinkley Thorne Associates  
Jane Thompson  
Thomas Vitanza  
Julia A. Walker  
Jan Wampler  
Joe Douglas Webb  
Martha Welborne

#### Subscription Information

Subscription orders, single copy orders, address changes and mailing list correspondence should be addressed to:

Chris Cudebec, Business Manager  
*Places*  
P.O. Box 1897  
Lawrence, KS 66044-8897  
(800) 627-0629x217  
(785) 843-1274 (FAX)  
ccudebec@allenpress.com

Annual subscription for individuals: \$35 U.S.,  
\$45 Canada, \$55 elsewhere. Add \$15 for airmail  
(outside U.S.).

Annual subscription for institutions: \$55 U.S.,  
\$65 Canada, \$75 elsewhere. Add \$15 for airmail  
(outside U.S.).

Single copies, \$12. Add \$3 per copy for postage and  
handling; add \$5 per copy for airmail (outside U.S.)

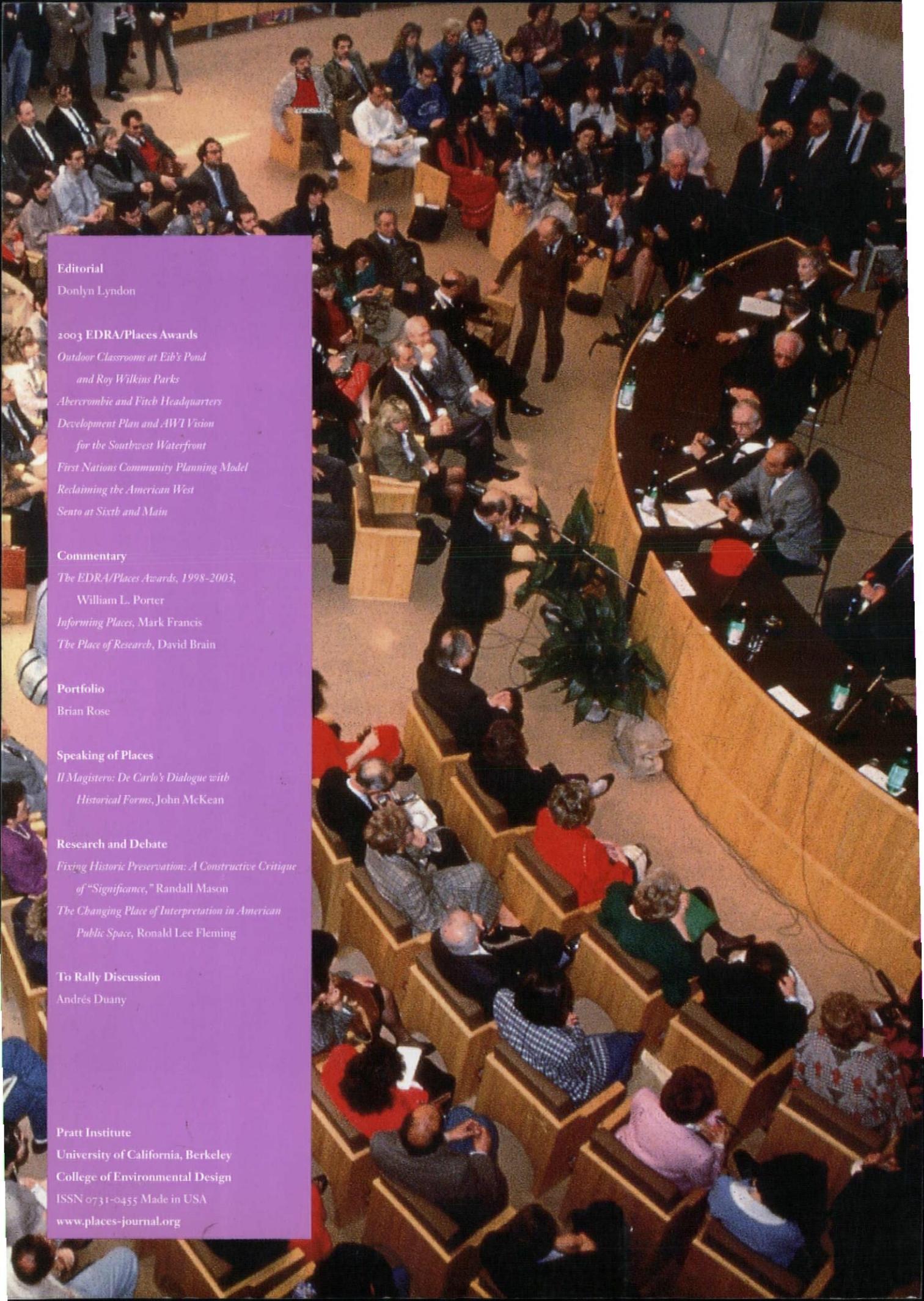
All payments must be in U.S. funds.

#### Missing Issues

Claims must be made immediately upon receipt  
of next published issue. Call Chris Cudebec at  
(800) 627-0629x217.

#### Postmaster

Send address changes to:  
*Places*  
P.O. Box 1897  
Lawrence, KS 66044-8897



**Editorial**

Donlyn Lyndon

**2003 EDRA/Places Awards**

*Outdoor Classrooms at Eib's Pond  
and Roy Wilkins Parks*

*Abercrombie and Fitch Headquarters*

*Development Plan and AWI Vision*

*for the Southwest Waterfront*

*First Nations Community Planning Model*

*Reclaiming the American West*

*Sento at Sixth and Main*

**Commentary**

*The EDRA/Places Awards, 1998-2003,*

William L. Porter

*Informing Places, Mark Francis*

*The Place of Research, David Brain*

**Portfolio**

Brian Rose

**Speaking of Places**

*Il Magistero: De Carlo's Dialogue with*

*Historical Forms, John McKean*

**Research and Debate**

*Fixing Historic Preservation: A Constructive Critique  
of "Significance," Randall Mason*

*The Changing Place of Interpretation in American*

*Public Space, Ronald Lee Fleming*

**To Rally Discussion**

Andrés Duany

Pratt Institute

University of California, Berkeley

College of Environmental Design

ISSN 0731-0455 Made in USA

[www.places-journal.org](http://www.places-journal.org)