

PLACES

Caring for Places: Change
Donlyn Lyndon

2006 EDRA/Places Awards
Design
Buckeye Village Community Center—
Columbus, Ohio
Kay Bea Jones, The Ohio State University

Planning
Sense of Place—Alberta, Canada
*Beverly Sandalack, Ann Davis, Len Novak
and Bob Sandford*

The Paleo Project—Fossil, Oregon
Jenny Young, Rowell Brokaw Architects

Habitat Trails—Rogers, Arkansas
*Stephen Luoni and Aaron Gabriel, University of
Arkansas Community Design Center*

Research
*Compassion in Architecture: Evidence-Based
Design for Health in Louisiana*
Stephen Verderber

Places for People 2004—Melbourne, Australia
Gehl Architects and the City of Melbourne

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How Leonine Features Enhance Bridge Capacity:
A Short History of Traffic Engineering
Walter Kulash, Sandy Curran, and Jay Hood

Dispatch
Rebar
Catriona Stuart

Thread
Places Archive: Downtown
John King

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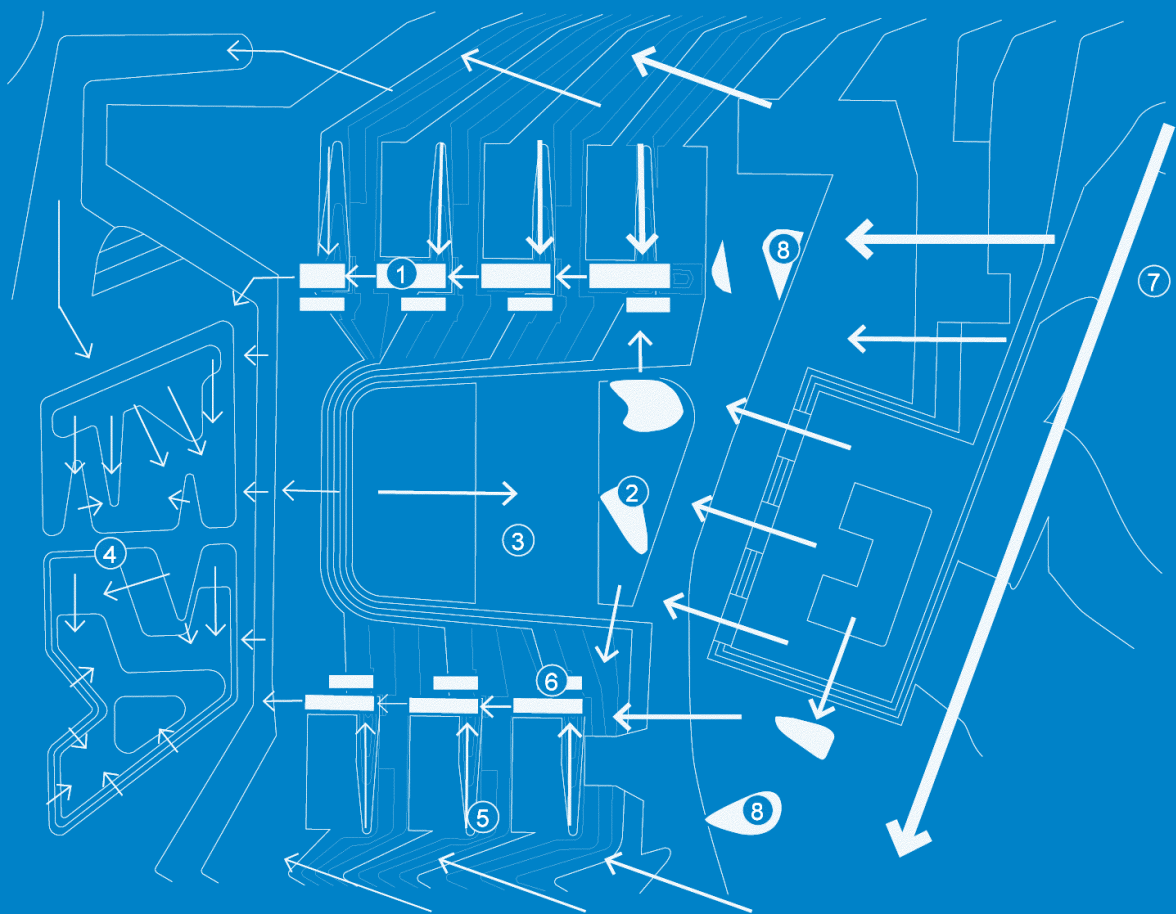


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Volume 18, Number 3 2006 www.places-journal.org

EDRA/Places Awards 2006

The hydrological design of the Habitat Trails project retains stormwater on site and slows its flow by increasing the amount of pervious surface. Image courtesy of the University of Arkansas Community Design Center.



Water Shed and Catchment Plan

1. Bioswale-conveyance/treatment
2. Infiltration trenches-sudgrade retention
3. Sheetflow-recharge
4. Wet meadow-treatment/recharge
5. Side yard bioswales-treatment/conveyance
6. Parking filter strips-sediment control
7. Piped civil stormwater catchment
8. Stormwater gardens

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Compassion in Architecture: Evidence-Based Design for Health in Louisiana

Stephen Verderber

Too often, Stephen Verderber believes, architectural practice is overly concerned with formal composition, siting and materials, and relatively unconcerned with a building's lived qualities, social standing, and representational impact. *Compassion in Architecture* examines these issues in light of a fifteen-year initiative he has directed to improve the delivery of public health services in Louisiana.

Published by the Center for Louisiana Studies in 2005, the book combines Verderber's background as a practicing architect with his research activities as a Professor of Architecture at Tulane University. It showcases his twin passions: concern for social justice in the delivery of health services to poor, frequently minority populations; and the development of a new paradigm for architectural practice rooted in a closer correlation of design intent and design effect.

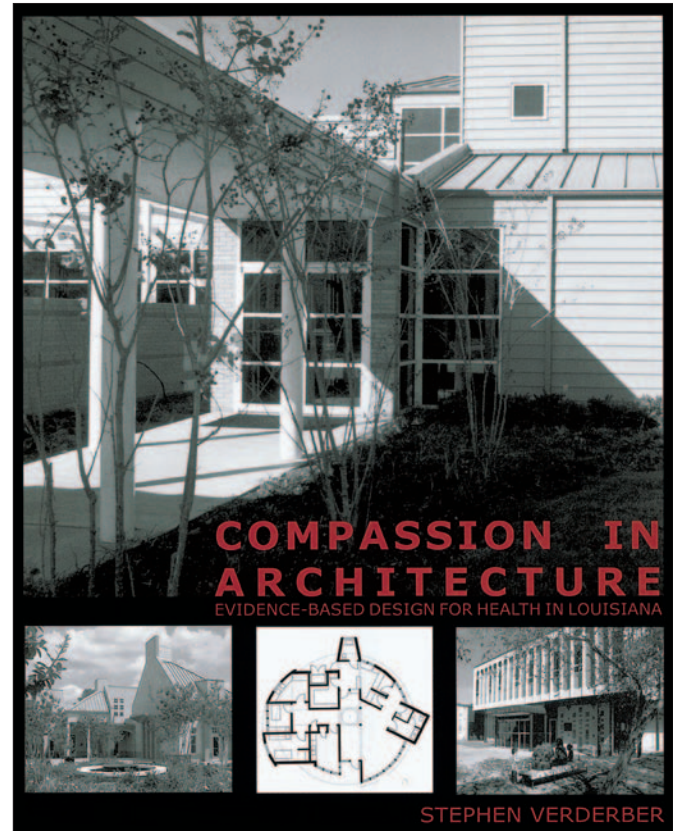
Since 1991, Verderber has been involved in a state-funded effort to rebuild neglected community-care clinics in Louisiana's 64 parishes. The book investigates the history, purpose and design of these clinics, emphasizing the personal stories of those who work and are taken care of there. According to the jury, the result is a convincing argument that such facilities work best when they are conceived as "healthplaces," and as sources of community pride and dignity.

Verderber's evidence-based approach attempts to tie research directly to design, based on what he believes is "the longest ongoing post-occupancy study of this kind in the world." It concludes by offering 140 planning and design principles derived from the Louisiana work, but adaptable to many other types of outpatient facilities. As its title indicates, it also presents a critique of mainstream architecture and a call for a new era of social advocacy based on the rediscovery of an attitude of compassion.

Louisiana Paradigm

Verderber's work on the project began when he received a phone call in 1990 from the Louisiana Office of Public health. They had just found a stack of five-year-old surveys detailing the conditions at public health centers across the state, and were looking for help determining if their data was still relevant. The new director of the agency had just become aware of the deplorable condition of the health centers, and realized that further improvement to its programs would be impossible without a parallel effort to improve these obsolete buildings.

Above: The research contained in *Compassion in Architecture* has contributed to a massive rebuilding campaign that is transforming Louisiana's community health clinics.



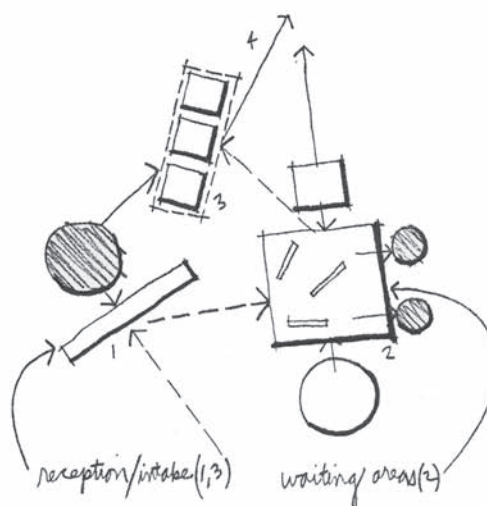
A parish in Louisiana has much the same function as a county in other U.S. states. In each parish, the health unit is charged with providing state and federally funded clinical, environmental, nutritional, and vital-records services. As a walk-in health center, this includes such services as immunization, blood-pressure monitoring, women/infant/children nutrition, communicable diseases treatment, family planning, prenatal counseling, and health education in such areas as domestic violence, tobacco use, and obesity. Each health unit also contains the offices of the health inspectors responsible for monitoring water quality, milk safety, restaurant sanitation, etc.

Along with nine state-run charity hospitals, these parish-owned, state-operated clinics provide the backbone for health delivery to the uninsured and working poor in Louisiana. The size of this group has grown rapidly since 1980, as the number of state residents who today lack health insurance is now estimated at 750,000 out of a total population of 4.2 million. For these and other reasons, Louisiana in 1996 was deemed the unhealthiest state in the nation.

A system of local public health centers was first funded

4.3 THE RECEPTION AND WAITING MILIEU SHOULD SUPPORT MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS

The reception-intake area is a nucleus of activity. It is typically the center of administrative operations and the initial point of contact for the patient. It should be a welcoming place as well as a screening and control point--the gateway to the clinic. Staffing limitations may necessitate that a staff person must assume multiple roles, particularly in small facilities in rural settings. By the same token, the waiting area may have to double function as a seminar room for community health education or a prescreening area in addition to its basic function as the place where one waits before the examination. Clear signage at the entry and intake reception will direct people to the sign in, waiting area, counseling, treatment, and administrative areas. Seating in the waiting area should be flexible to allow rearrangement in response to these changing uses. The waiting area should be large enough to allow for movable partitions to subdivide the space as warranted, particularly on days of peak utilization.



in Louisiana by the Rockefeller Foundation following a massive Mississippi River flood in 1927 that spread disease and suffering across the region. The program was made an official part of the state constitution during the populist governorship of Huey Long in the 1930s. After World War II a great number of parish facilities were built using money from the federal Hill-Burton act. At the time, these

progressive, modernist-styled structures were a source of great community pride and a symbol of the importance of local government, Verderber writes.

But in a four-volume study that won a PA Award in 1992, a research team led by Verderber documented just how far this system had deteriorated. In many of these now-outmoded buildings leaks and faulty air conditioning

Sample Jury Comments—*Compassion in Architecture*

McNally: I was completely bowled over by this one. It presented a really strong, compelling, well-documented story about public health clinics in Louisiana. This person knows the place and how it works politically. They've been doing this project for fifteen years. They've spent \$52 million implementing it in 44 projects. They've tested it and done the postoccupancy work. They take you right up to different design

patterns. And each of the projects they profile explain how all this gets pieced together and set in place.

Ahrentzen: It takes time to figure out how the pieces are connected, and how one relates to the other. I was sort of confused, but I was also compelled. It's not as smoothly connected as you'd be able to find in a fast read.

McNally: It is also the first exposé of how defunct and corrupt this whole system was. How people were still

trying to operate out of these clinics that should have been torn down many years ago.

Jones: Yes, but too often we generate these formula books as a generic kit, but stop shy of actually making it.

Hull: Say you are an architect and you were going to be doing a health clinic. Would this be of value to you, reading this book?

McNally: Yes.

were common; hallways and waiting rooms were so overcrowded patients had to wait outside in the rain; records and supplies were improperly stored and poorly secured; and privacy and confidentiality were poor or nonexistent. Furthermore, in many of those instances where new facilities had been provided to replace older ones, these had been relegated to dismal sites far from “Main Street.” One was even located in a former bowling alley and bar.

Verderber’s 1991 study provided the catalyst for what would become a new statewide participatory planning and design effort. Known as the Strategic Facilities Initiative, it has since sought to replace or renovate old buildings, but to do so in a way that prioritizes the needs of the patients, and of the nurses, clerks and sanitarians who work there.

For the last fifteen years, on contract to the state, Verderber has directed many aspects of this program. When a parish initiates a project, he is available to help with due-diligence and best-practices research, tax and budget analysis, and planning and design services. Many new facilities are subsequently designed as joint ventures between his office and local architects of record. But in the simplest cases, he has performed the architectural work himself.

Design Quality and Effect

Verderber believes that the quality of an environment, even the simple configuration of space, can have a powerful effect on social intercourse. To be truly effective, therefore, the parish health units should have the same dignity and public presence as a library or a school.

Such views grow out of a background in environment-behavior studies. Indeed, Verderber places SFT’s theoretical roots in positivist, empirically based management theories. But recently, most work in this area has neglected concern for the effects of physical space on organizational creativity, he writes.

This has been a particular problem in facilities management, where outsourcing and exclusively cost-driven analysis have also undercut concern for “user needs” and the benefits of a better person-environment “fit.” As he writes, “These once linked facilities management via productivity to strategic facility planning.” But now the prevailing view is of “space (versus place) defined solely as a commodity to be bought or sold.”

One of the central aspects of this story is the failure of the mainstream architectural profession to become more engaged with environmental advocacy. The health care pyramid rarely takes an interest in either the patient or the caregiver, he believes. After all, the client is usually a wealthy patron or a cash-strapped state agency. “Value engineering” has further reduced concern for caring buildings to marketing slogans.

But forces within the architectural profession have made the situation worse. Modernism first added the elitist vision of the architect as the aesthetic purifier, for whom the indigent public was largely a contaminant. But, he also believes that, since architecture lacks a tradition of verification, the success of many designs is frequently also a “hit or miss” proposition. This has compromised the architect’s ability to stand up for known principle during the design process.

As an answer, Verderber offers evidence-based design and planning. This involves a much more rigorous cycle of preparation, participatory engagement, coordination, commitment, and assessment.

But it also involves a renewed humanistic vision that emphasizes a noninstitutional attitude toward community health care facilities, one that projects a spirit of warmth,

Opposite: The book includes 143 guidelines intended to govern the rebuilding of community clinics as places of dignity and community pride.

Hull: That’s what I find strange about some of the research projects. They’re interesting, but you can’t use them.

Kelbaugh: That’s a good point. At the back is a “how to”—maybe a bit too formulaic, but it’s qualitatively different.

Ahrentzen: And it’s not just for architects. It might be a facility manager who has to deal with an architect, and can look at this and actually challenge a person. And it is in a particular place—Louisiana. It’s really specific, but there are probably implications to other places as well.

Hull: I still distrust the architecture side of this a little bit.

Ahrentzen: He does a lot of different types of research. Part of it is ethnography—just talking to people. But he also has surveys. All of that helps direct not only the case studies in terms of the designs, but also the schematic design principles.

Jones: But isn’t this more along the lines of a statewide health infrastructure than a place?

Hull: Did it make the facilities more place-like?

Ahrentzen: If you put down a health clinic in a poorer

area there is a real sense of that being an important place in the community.

McNally: It is going to have a huge impact. They are trying for a wholesale replacement. And they figured out how to mobilize this enormous machine. They could have just panicked. Or they could have continued to ignore it, which is the way so many things are done in Louisiana. Instead, they said we can be calm, teach ourselves about what needs to happen, and then go for it.

Site Context- Suburban:
1.1-1.6, 3.1, 3.2, 6.1

Daylighting/Passive:
6.9, 6.10, 7.5

Subwaiting:
4.2, 4.16, 6.16

Examination "Houses"/Clinic:
2.3, 2.8, 2.9, 4.15, 4.17, 4.27,
4.35

Conference/Classroom Wing:
1.7, 4.30

Articulated Bandwidths:
6.3, 6.8, 6.11, 6.26

Exterior Play Space:
4.19-4.26

Canopy-Seating Area:
3.5, 3.6, 6.18-6.20

Environmental Health Section
(Level Two):
2.3, 4.46-4.48

Internal Transparency/Intake-
Consult/Clerical Admin:
6.11, 6.12, 6.16, 6.17

Views of Nature:
3.8, 4.19, 4.22, 4.23-4.26, 6.7,
6.9

Nursing Administration:
4.36-4.39, 4.41, 6.15

Nutritional Education:
4.31-4.34

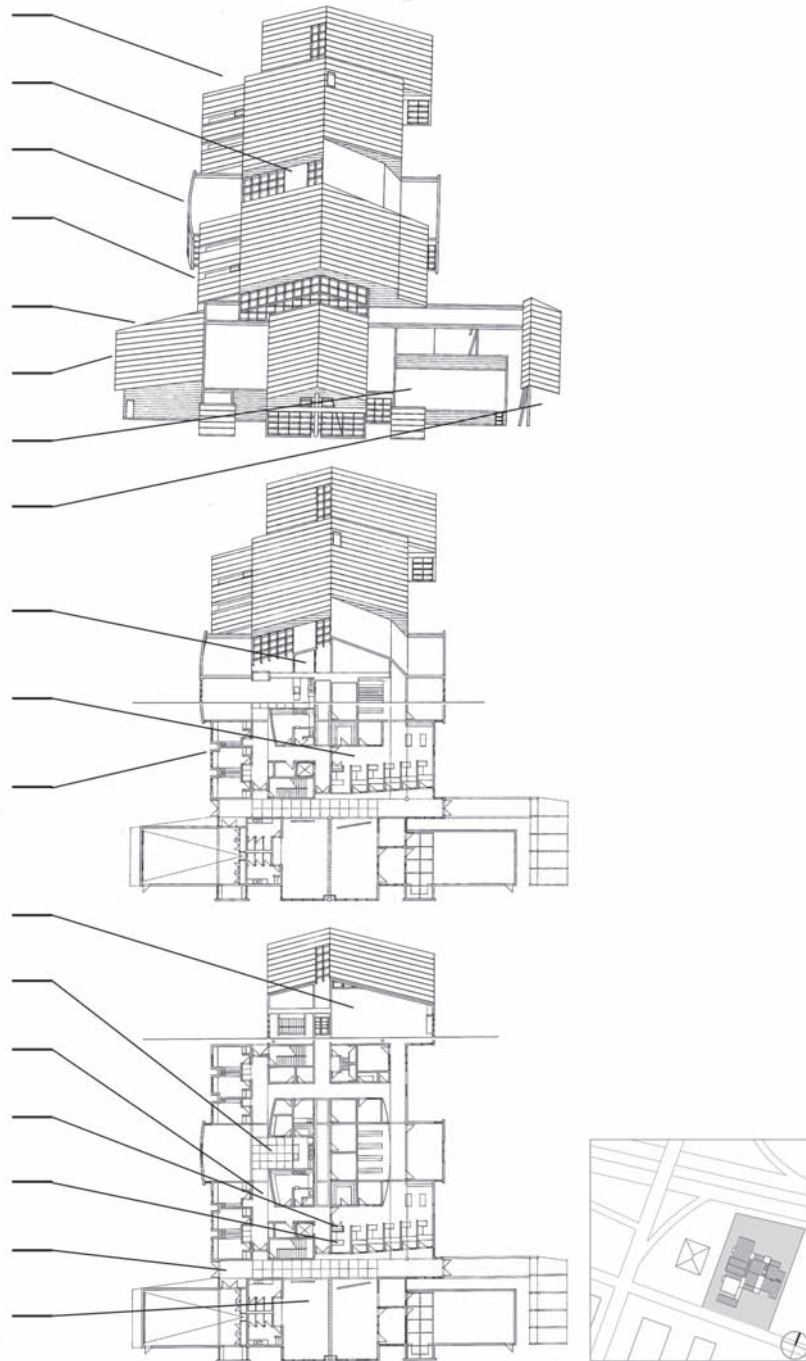
Legibility/Wayfinding:
3.6, 6.4-6.6, 6.21-6.23

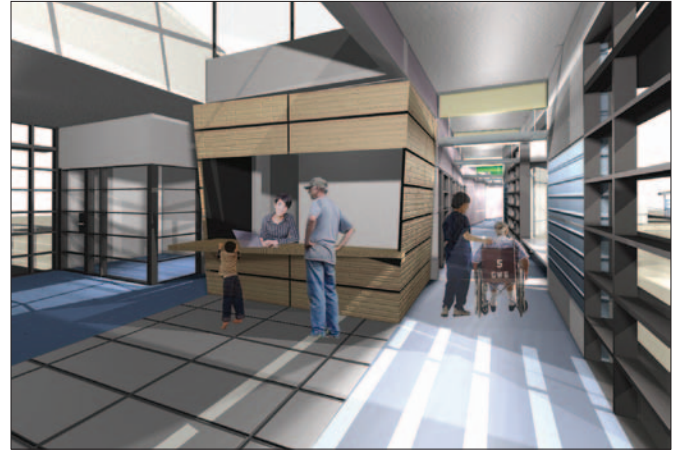
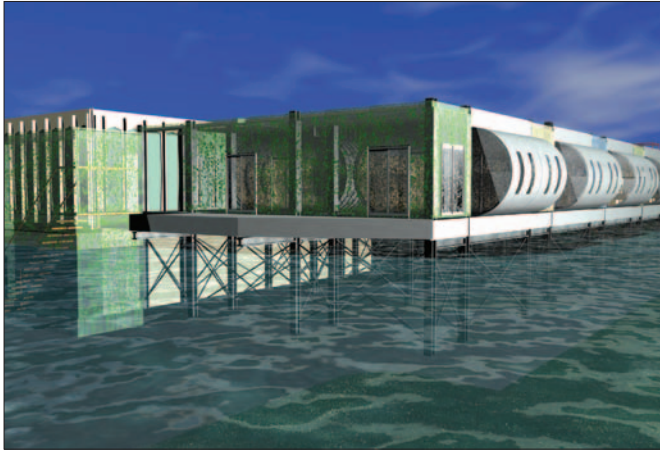
Patient Intake/Consult:
4.4-4.7, 4.9, 4.13

Reception/Sign-in:
4.8, 4.11

Serialized Arrival:
1.1, 1.4, 3.3, 3.5, 4.12, 6.1

Main Waiting:
1.5, 4.1, 4.3, 4.10, 4.18, 4.20,
6.32-6.34





caring, and human scale. It is compassion for the needs of those who use a building that should drive major decisions regarding its siting, spatial organization, and “language of materiality”—the palette of materials and objects used.

A Record of Success

Compassion in Architecture combines analysis of these larger social and theoretical issues (largely framed in terms of extended quotations from patients and caregivers), with a history of parish-based health services in Louisiana, an extended section of case studies, and a lengthy set of 143 illustrated guidelines.

The case studies involve a range of actual work under the SFI program, from large to small, from new construction (in various forms and styles) to renovation. Not all Verderber’s collaborations have turned out as originally planned; indeed, some of the more compelling designs presented were not built for political and/or budgetary reasons.

Interestingly, the book was also conceived and written before Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. Yet the jurors were impressed that in several crucial respects, it predicted the social outcomes that followed these disastrous events. Indeed, one of its case studies described plans for a modular health center, deployable by boat, train or truck in the wake of a natural disaster.

In the tradition of Christopher Alexander’s work, the illustrated guidelines emphasize a broadly scaled range of physical and policy priorities: from developing community support; to sensitively siting individual new buildings and laying out spaces inside them; to ensuring proper daylighting, workflow and ergonomics.

Some embody practices that seem relatively obvious, like designing an effective wayfinding system and avoiding win-

dowless double-loaded corridors. Others are less so, such as creating a tiered system of waiting areas after check-in to reduce patient stress. In general, their goal is to create environments that are secure, yet lively and uplifting.

Verderber stresses that the content areas all originally emerged following a series of meetings, discussions and focus groups. They have all since been “tested” and adjusted through postoccupancy evaluation of completed SFI projects.

In general, the guidelines are less important as individual instances of dramatic revelation than as an enumeration of important concerns that should not be ignored or forgotten—a kind of task sheet for a more humanistic practice. For this reason, Verderber says, the book has great relevance to an array of community-based health centers, such as clinics for outpatient oncology and kidney dialysis centers, which are taking over from increasingly beleaguered hospitals.

What may be most enduring about his book, however, is not its ability to shape any particular building form or style, but the impact of its call for a renewed attitude of design awareness and compassion.

—David Moffat

Left: One of the proposals documented in the book is for a mobile clinic that can be delivered to flooded areas by truck, train, helicopter or barge. Image by Julia Ford and Claudia Foronda.

Right: The new Richland Parish health unit replaces a prefab metal structure where occupants had endured the stench of sewage and where staff complained of headaches, muscle aches, and nausea. Image by Romy Diaz and Jessica Gramcko.

Opposite: The new community health clinic in West Monroe, Ouachita Parish, and the specific guidelines used in its design. Drawing by Stephen Verderber, Victoria Yee, and Jessica Gramcko.

Call for Submissions: Tenth Annual EDRA/*Places* Awards

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

The deadline for entries for the 2007 EDRA/*Places* Awards is January 30, 2007. The awards jury will be held February 24-26 at Arizona State University, Tempe, with winners announced the week following. Official presentations will be made at the EDRA annual conference in Sacramento, CA, May 30-June 3. Winning projects and commentary will be published on the *Places* website and in the Fall 2007 issue of *Places*.

The Program

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.

We invite participation from 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.

Each year *Places* and EDRA assemble a jury with diverse backgrounds in design, research, teaching and practice. The jury evaluates how each project, no matter what the discipline, addresses the human experience of well-designed places. Special attention is paid to the transferability of research about human experience of place into design and planning practice. The jury selects six winners from three categories: place design, place planning, and place research.

In addition to the 2006 winners appearing in this issue, past winners have appeared in *Places* 12.1, 13.1, 14.1, 15.1, 16.1, 16.3, and 17.3. For more information about the awards program, or to obtain additional entry forms or brochures, prospective entrants are encouraged to visit www.places-journal.org and/or www.edra.org.

Submissions are accepted in the following categories:

Place Research. All types of research about the design and use of places can be entered, including (but not limited to) projects that document the form or perception of places or landscapes; evaluate the use or management of recent projects or established settings; or provide background for specific designs or plans.

Place Planning. Any plan that makes proposals for the future use, management or design of a place can be entered—including master plans, specific plans or elements, management plans, vision documents, or charrette proposals. Plans must have been sponsored by an organized entity (such as a public agency, community group, or private business or institution), though they need not have received official approval.

Place Design. Any design project completed within the last five years (but long enough to assess how well it functions for its users) can be entered. Projects can consist of individual structures, spaces or elements, or groups that work together as a unit. They can involve the design of something new or the reuse of existing resources. The scale may be large or small.

2007 Jury

Roberta Feldman (Professor of Architecture, University of Illinois, Chicago)

Ann Forsyth (Director, Metropolitan Design Center, University of Minnesota)

Michael Pyatok (Pyatok Associates and Arizona State University)

Anne Whiston Spirn (Professor of Landscape Architecture, MIT)

Buzz Yudell (Principal, Moore Ruble Yudell)

Please send entries to:

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Environmental Design Research Association
Post Office Box 7146
Edmond, OK 73083-7146
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Fax: 405.330.4150
e-mail: edra@edra.org

The postmark deadline for submissions is January 30, 2007.

Urbanism and/or Architecture: Toward a Theory of Norm and Scale

Douglas Kelbaugh



While serving on this year's *Places* jury and recently visiting the Venice Biennale and Poundbury in England, I was reminded of how remarkably rare and difficult it is to *simultaneously* produce good architecture and good urbanism.

Too often we see superior new architecture that is part of inferior urban design and planning, or good urbanism compromised by poorly designed buildings. An obvious example of the former would be an accomplished building by a talented architect set along a freeway or arterial strip or lost on the circus skyline of a Dubai. The latter might be a tritely designed and thinly crafted neotraditional buildings facing an exemplary mixed-use street with a light rail line.

The above assertion is admittedly full of subjective values and personal sensibilities—as well as humanist belief in the possibility both of agreeing on what is good and making progress toward it. Nevertheless, I would like to try to unpack some of my underlying assumptions in order to open an important dilemma for discussion.

Some Basic Premises

Premise 1. Norms and regulations are necessary for a healthy and productive society, just as personal rights and creative freedom are essential to human growth, dignity and happiness. A dynamic and robust balance of these competing but complementary tendencies must be maintained within a given society.

History is replete with examples in which excessive swings in one direction or the other have resulted in dysfunctional societies, characterized by various combinations of oppression, indulgence and stagnation, or disorder, profligacy and anarchy.

Functional societies are self-organizing, self-regulating and self-repairing, much like ecosystems, with their feedback loops, as well as the (*very* occasional) sudden shift or unpredictable leap that punctuates the equilibrium. These cultures constantly check and balance their laws, institutions and norms.

This dialectical loosening and tightening are overlapping, messy and continuous, although the cycles of change have accelerated recently as economic, political and cultural forces have become more globally interdependent, electronically connected, diverse and polarized. Society and the metropolis combine to form an evolving whole with a soupy texture more akin to a biosphere or quantum mechanics than the clearly articulated and interacting parts of Newtonian physics.

Today, the clashes and mergers, diasporas and agglomerations, and benefits and unintended consequences of technology (real and virtual) have all combined to make humankind's future both daunting and promising. Similarly, the planet's natural systems and carrying capacity are increasingly stressed by our individual and collective ecological footprints.

Premise 2. Both a desire for individual agency and a social need for shared norms are expressed and reflected in the built environment, especially the city. (Villages tend to be more like tribal communities, where there is greater emphasis on unity—often at the expense of external enemies or internal “others”—than on the individual rights, anonymity and autonomy that typically obtain in the city.) Conversely, buildings and cities have a pervasive if under-recognized effect on individual and collective behavior and well-being.

Typically, needs and desires tend to be actively *expressed* at the architectural scale and passively *reflected* at the urban scale. Obviously, the smaller the scale of design and production, the more personal and direct the expression can and is likely to be. For example, architectural details and the facade have long been within the purview of individual expression.

At the larger scale—from the neighborhood and district up to the metropolitan area—there is less ability to proactively and holistically design the built environment. Except in the case of prescriptive zoning or autocratic political regimes, the built environment at this scale becomes a more inadvertent embodiment of market economics, real estate development practices, and political forces.

Premise 3. It is not good to be expressive, creative and inventive—or, conversely, to be normative, standardized and prescriptive—at *every scale* of the built environment. Totalizing consistency risks losing the balance between the individual and society, tending toward disorder and chaos on the one hand or regimentation and ennui on the other.

Examples of either excess abound, whether it be homogeneous suburban sprawl (where an isotropic monoculture and repetition tend to be the rule), or the heterogeneous,

mixed use cityscape and informal settlements of global cities (where buildings fight each other for public attention or scarce construction materials). Thus, in the fantasy extravagance of Dubai or the exuberant but composed spectacle of Singapore, one would be hard-pressed to identify a building by Zaha Hadid or Rem Koolhaas (whose research firm AMO first made this observation, suggesting that a great many firms can do flashy and creative designs, if not with equivalent skill and competence).

At one extreme of imbalance are places of disorienting if vibrant heterogeneity, such as Tokyo, whose urban fabric consists of a *mélange* of one-off, exceptional buildings set amidst a tangle of infrastructure and circus of advertising. At the other are places of numbing, monochromatic uniformity, such as the carpet-like residential subdivision in America. In the former case, the architect's job may be to calm and bring order to the visual cacophony—to add some repetitive bass notes; in the latter, it may be to intensify or corrupt the monotony with some bold, treble riffs.

Premise 4. There are some scales that are more appropriate for the exercise of personal expression and creativity, and other scales more suitable for society's imposition of norms, standards and restrictions.

Intimations of a Theory

Premise 4 is where my argument takes a subjective leap and complicates itself. Specifically, it requires positing some of the essential differences and similarities between architecture and urbanism. This is unavoidable if one wants to tentatively approach a unified theory of scale and norms, despite the suspect quality of the universal and master-narrative in this poststructuralist, posthumanist theoretical and academic climate (in decline ‘tho it is.)

We might first consider the characteristic physical dimensions of a work of architecture and how they are typically represented. Despite recent and worthwhile attempts to blur the distinction between conventional modes of representation, of the basic drawing types used to produce buildings, elevations tend to be planar, while plans and sections tend to be spatial. Movement through space adds the fourth dimension of time, as does the weathering and adaptation of a building.

The spatial and temporal aspects of architectural tend to trigger more primordial and universal human instincts and senses than stylized form. The olfactory, auditory, kinesthetic

Opposite: Tokyo provides a vivid example of the disorienting quality of design heterogeneity at too many scales. Photo by author at Venice Biennale exhibit.



senses are harder wired and have a smaller comfort zone, and they therefore offer less latitude for and adaptation to arbitrary or superficial manipulation and stylizing.

Although various cultures and epochs may emphasize them differently, the physiology of our senses—or, for that matter, the reach of our arms or length of our stride—have changed little if any over historic time. In the same way, certain pleasures and fears closely tied to survival and evolution are deeply programmed into our psyches.

Take the example of Venice. Most people feel innately comfortable and titillated while exploring its narrow streets and being released from their spatial and auditory compression into a more luminous and open piazza. Likewise, our psychological need for refuge and privacy is provided

by the security and sanctuary of a home base (e.g., a hotel room) in which we can collapse and recharge ourselves. Our basic curiosity for prospect is accommodated by a view from a roof garden or campanile—not to mention the equally satisfying flirtation with hazard and kinesthetic confusion that energize us in its narrow passages after dark. And our instinctual desire to get to down to water, which we seem to share with other animals, is readily satiated.

To the extent architecture is experienced two-dimensionally, statically and pictorially, it tends to be less timeless and less constrained by physical and functional demands.

The design of vertical surfaces can more easily and inexpensively be expressive, even whimsical, than a plan or section. An incredibly broad range of period styles and fashions have emerged to satisfy the seemingly insatiable human appetite for aesthetic variety and change—from Classical to Cubist, Ruskinian to Richardsonian, Byzantine to Baroque, Mughal to Modernist. It is in the vertical dimension, the manipulation of building materials, pattern,

Above: The natural pleasure of walking Venice's confusing narrow streets and discovering open plazas reveals that spatio-temporal experience is harder-wired than the aesthetics of architectural style.

texture, transparency, etc., that these styles are most readily expressed and understood.

Although plans and sections can also vary radically from style to style—as can tectonics—the manifestation of most styles tends to be most easily produced and read in the essentially planar exterior and interior elevations. That is why a building's style can be dramatically transformed, for instance, by a skin-deep facelift.

Urban design is also two-, three-, and four-dimensional, and it is subject or not to style in the same ways. But as scale enlarges to encompass the urban realm, increasingly functional and operational concerns begin to dominate. Furthermore, although there are examples of long-lived structures adapted and utilized for different purposes by successive occupants of differing cultures, cities must function over a longer span of time, and for a larger and broader pool of people than individual buildings (although they too can and should be built to be more adaptive over time, with some parts more permanently constructed than others).

In a sense, then, the stakes are higher and time cycles longer with the city. At the same time, urban projects can now be so large and the pace of urban development so fast that there isn't time to evaluate, learn from, and relate to adjacent increments of the city. Indeed, buildings can be thrown up so rapidly as to be "weapons of mass construction." Urbanism, fast or slow, is less susceptible and conducive to arbitrary styling than architecture.

It is nonetheless possible to plan at a large scale. However, providing from the top down a vision, metaphor, conceptual diagram, planning framework, comprehensive plan, infrastructure plan, illustrative plan, zoning code, and/or adopting from the bottom up a self-generating algorithm, pattern language, field of emergence, or community process is less about aesthetic experience than about the structure, operation and character of a city. *To be sure, there can be big ideas and large-scale patterns in urbanism, including at the metropolitan and regional scale, but on the ground and in the senses they are inherently beyond reading in the optical or visual sense.*

It may be possible (and effective) to design an urban ensemble or skyline in a visually compositional mode. But no matter how based on facts or systems thinking, it is indulgent and ineffectual for architects or urban designers to consider whole cities in terms of precise master plans or as painterly canvases. In the contemporary world the ambition to be totalizing, whether dystopian or utopian, is a conceit doomed to frustration and failure in all but the smallest or most autocratic of political contexts.

Unlike the metropolis, buildings, building complexes, urban precincts, and even whole neighborhoods, districts, corridors and urban centers or downtowns can be conceived from or as a single formal idea or system. And form-based codes can bring a balance between community and design freedom. But whole cities are too complex, incremental and dynamic to be captured by a singular hand or *parti*.

Norms and codes may help shape a city, but the design of a whole cloth city is beyond the normative—initially because it is too large, complex and specific to its site, topography, climate, and historical origins; and over time because of changing technology, demographics, and cross-fertilization with its own and other cultures.

Implications for Design

What does this mean for physical, on-the-ground architecture and urbanism? Here, an architect or urban designer must disclose his/her personal aesthetic tastes and sensibilities (which are to a large extent hard-wired early in life), and his/her design values and principles (which are learned later in life, usually programmed in architecture school, and subsequently either developed or rebelled against).

Although raised in several American suburbs, with some early years in urban settings, I was trained as a Corbusian modernist, and educated to think critically, independently and creatively. (The big unspoken norm was that you never designed a project that looked like anyone else's in studio.) Soon after, I was swept away by the social and cultural tsunami of the 1960s and 70s, working first in what was then called the ghetto and then in a municipal architecture office. This led to starting a passive-solar architecture firm, part-time teaching, and ultimately a full-time academic appointment. This path included more than a passing interest during the 1980s in Critical Regionalism and phenomenology. And for the last two decades I have been involved in New Urbanism, which was founded by former colleagues and friends, and which I continue to support, but not without reservations and criticism.

With this background, I am torn between Modernist and traditional orientations, and appreciate both avant-garde and vernacular modes. The best, perhaps only, way for me to resolve this tension is to sort it out by scale. In short, I have come to believe that while Modernism and the "critical project" are superior at some scales and have produced some exquisite buildings, New Urbanism offers a sounder and more enduring vision for organizing cities at most scales, at least in most North American cities.

However, despite the great promises of its Charter,



New Urbanism's lofty goals are often not achieved, partly because the architecture and building tectonics that the movement has utilized are frequently disappointing. These failings cannot be entirely blamed on middle-class taste or the marketplace, as is often the refrain. New Urbanists need to be as assertive and passionate about the quality of design and construction as they are about compact, mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods. And they should not be so normative at every scale and across the entire cross-section of the city. For example, there needs to be an alter ego, right side of the New Urbanist Transect where some hell can break loose once in a while—within a let-it-rip entertainment district, for instance.

Alternatives to New Urbanism currently come primarily from two directions—although Landscape Urbanism is fast emerging as another, if somewhat more sympathetic, position. On one side, Neo-Modernism (or, as I

Left: Barcelona shows how a gridded, normative plan with standard and consistent architectural types can provide sufficient and elegant urban variety. Photo by author at Venice Biennale exhibit.

Right: Lower Manhattan shows how stylistic consistency is rarely a hallmark of a vibrant, diverse and market-driven urban environment, especially when the architectural types are so varied. Photo by author.



have called it, Post Urbanism) also mixes up land uses, but it sexes up the architecture, devalues contextualism, and focuses too much on the spectacular solo building or urban fragment. As a result, it remains captive to an attitude of change for its own sake and an ever-escalating race for media attention, transnational capital, and brand recognition, all of which favor the treble over the bass clef. It's not particularly friendly or humane, either. On the other side of New Urbanism is Everyday Urbanism, which is admirably committed to social equity, but sets its goals too low for urban formal coherence, and places too much design hope in the ordinary.

Having criticized the avant-gardist and sometimes the vernacularist approaches to urbanism, I must admit that the superior design talent of the former and the egalitarian community-mindedness of the latter often give me pause. Many of the designs by "star architects" are stunningly and seductively beautiful. Likewise, the social justice and community-based design of Everyday Urbanism is exemplary. But the Latinate clarity and humanity of New Urbanism, as well as its program to rebuild our cities and rethink our suburbs, are also compelling. And the ecological sensitivities of Landscape Urbanism are positive. If there were only a way to combine the best of them!

The following is an attempt to sketch the initial outlines



of such a resolution—not by resolving or compromising their differences or robbing them of their frisson or long-term power, but by letting them coexist proportionally and synergistically rather than awkwardly and antagonistically.

Principles of an Integrated Urbanism

Accept that cities rarely can be aesthetically conceived, composed or built as a whole. Although the size of urban development projects may be increasing, cities are increasingly large, dynamic, chaotic and beyond the normative—i.e., neither controllable by rules and customs, nor based on shared cultural values. They can and often should be guided by big visions, but these should involve flexible frameworks and infrastructure rather than totalizing or aesthetic *uber* ideas.

Recognize that the most effective scale at which to be normative, even prescriptive, is that of urban design and infrastructure. Useful norms at this scale include Transit-Oriented Development, connective street networks with small block sizes; a clear hierarchy of street types frequently defined by continuous street walls; a rich mix of uses and of building types and architectural types; pedestrian and bicycle friendliness; buildings that are as low-rise as possible (with high-rise towers in central cities as required); on-site energy production and conservation; sensitivity to and

preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods; sustainable water and waste reuse and recycling; a clear hierarchy of public and private buildings and spaces; and a use of foreground and background architecture, respectively, for honorific and everyday purposes.

Try to be as typologically consistent as possible along a street without giving in to excessive repetition or banal formulas.

Architectural typology and its coherent deployment is an increasingly effective and needed ordering device as messier mixes of use continue to replace the single-use zoning of the Modernist city. And as projects get bigger, it is more challenging to create an adaptable and nuanced urbanism, because of the greater granularity of development. New tools are needed to encourage a finer grain, as well as to require large-scale developers to be less repetitive and formulaic.

Accept that it is not reasonable or equitable in heterogeneous societies to highly regulate architectural style. Because human expressivity is irrepressible, style is unavoidable, which means a diverse population will naturally produce incon-

Above: As the size of developments get bigger and societies become more diverse, it becomes more challenging to create an urbanism that is incremental, contextual and culturally sensitive. Photo of Montonde Casitas in Ixtapaluca, Mexico, by Oscar Ruiz.

Table 1 Normative(N) and Free(F) scales in architecture/urbanism.						
	Architectural detail/ component	Building architectural style	Architectural type. building massing	Street, plat., block size, configuration	Neighborhood, Cor- ridor and District size +	City and Metro Region
Modernist/ Post Urbanist	N	F	F	F	F	N
Traditionalist/ New Urbanist	F	N	N	N	N	F
Proposed Synthesis/ Resolution	N or F	F*	N*	N*	N	F

Zone of individual expression	Zone of community control	Zone of less control
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* Key area of compromise—Traditionalists/New Urbanists need to be less normative at the building scale, especially about architectural style and façade design.

Modernist/Post Urbanists need to be more normative at the urban design scale, especially about building massing and block size.

sistent styles. Although norms, incentives, and form-based codes can effectively promote common architectural types and massing, it is unrealistic and sometimes falsely communitarian to expect or demand stylistic consistency (unless a clear majority favors such uniformity).

As the scale of buildings and developments enlarges, societies become more diverse, and demographics more dynamic, we need to find new ways to design contextually sensitive buildings, (perhaps by requiring common materials, colors, and landscaping rather than forcing a common architectural language or style). As global culture bleaches out regional differences and challenges the creation of authentically local place, it becomes less tenable to hope for an architectural consistency that is organic and rich, not overly repetitive or staged. But ways can and should be devised to voluntarily achieve more design harmony at the scale of the street and square.

The small scale of the architectural detail and component, e.g., windows and doors, is an appropriate scale at which to promote craft and individual self-expression. Craft can be achieved by machine as well as by hand. Computerized fabrication can be developed that is as sensitive to the shaping and joining of materials as traditional handcraft. This is also the right scale in some building types to allow for spatial flexibility over short-term cycles and adaptability over the long-term, by providing movable and replaceable partitions, doors and windows within structural frames and cores built to last longer, in the tradition of “Open Building.”

Normative and Free, Local and Universal, Customary and Open

As cities and urban agglomerations across the world explode in size, we want to strive to balance the individual and the collective. There is neither the time nor the resources to reinvent architecture and urbanism every few years, or to solve our legion of problems one at a time. The risks are becoming higher and the odds worse. The planet will survive, but will the fragile and irreplaceable ecosystems that support human life be sustained? At present, we seem to be headed for very inconvenient, painful discontinuities and involuntary downsizings.

We need to get it right—*soon*—by focusing more on enduring and sustainable models at all scales—from the window to the watershed. In addition to knowing when to be normative/prescriptive and free/open at the right scales, we must find ways to make our cities more restorative and sustainable in environmental, economic and social terms. They are, after all, forecast to receive the next two to three billion increase in world population, should the planet end up permitting such growth. And we need to attend to the social and ecological consequences of our architecture and urbanism, or *nature will respond* in ways that we haven’t planned for or can’t adapt to.

Success in these endeavors might just bring an additional if trivial pleasure: awards jurors would be able to premiate good architecture and good urbanism in the same place at the same time.

Caring for Places: Change

Change is, of course, the very stuff of life; without it we would not be who we are; we would not be where we are.

Perhaps because it is so pervasive and fundamental, change provokes many forms of anxious attention...from the left and the right, from individuals and groups, from governments and corporations, from those eager to capitalize on new opportunities, and from those who think it likely to tear away moorings that are essential in their lives.

Change is puzzling; change is invigorating, change is called for, change is threatening.

It is not change that is at issue, it is the management of change. Words like “vision” and “conservation,” “practical” and “modulated” come to bear; metaphors like “engines of change” and “maelstrom of change” call forth the purposeful and the chaotic, but share the sense of driving force, just as “stability” projects a steadying influence—a resistance to transformation, a ready ability to hold one’s bearings.

Getting straight about change in our environments is one of the challenges of our time. In forty years we have seen an increase of 100 million people in the United States alone; more than half again the population that many of us were born into. In another forty years, the predictions now run, our population will have increased another 100 million...far less, of course, than the growth of other segments of the world. And the transformations in our media of communication have in themselves been transformative, as discussed in our last issue.

Change is not in question; it’s all too clear that the present “world order” is neither stable nor tolerable. The question is whether we can maintain a viable sense of what it means to be human and to care about what that means for others...and whether we can gather the will to manage changes that will improve rather than destroy the understandings that presently hold societies together.

Changes in place are often the most startling; buildings are torn down, buildings appear, whole areas of cities or landscapes are wasted in neglect while others are transformed by “the market.” Change that makes a real difference in how we construct our world—projections for the public realm, and the mindful encounters between peoples and place it makes possible, need to be imagined, debated, and given constructive form at various scales, from infrastructure to individual habitat.

Change we must. Not with disregard for the existing, but with care and respect for the lives of others, with cautious regard for conserving what’s been gained and a long-term understanding of resources and their futures..., and, yes, with boldness when necessary; with will and persuasion and persistence equal to the task of unseating conventional wisdom and bringing new insights to bear.

The 2006 EDRA/*Places* Awards program highlights examples of the quiet, deliberate consideration that brings effective transformations into place: research, planning, and thoughtfully implemented designs that reckon their consequences in lives and the places that surround them.

—Donlyn Lyndon

Buckeye Village Community Center—Columbus, Ohio

Kay Bea Jones, The Ohio State University



Imagine a village community comprised of shared back yards and common play areas, small homes laid out to fit the meager budgets and varied needs of single mothers—all designed to the specifications of those who would live there. Now imagine that such a grand experiment in co-housing would be located just off the Ohio State University campus, in a section of Columbus not known for innovative housing, where it would provide a much-needed resource for students with a tenuous hold on their college careers.

This was the original vision for Buckeye Village, a university-sponsored student-family housing project, whose community center was the winner of a 2006 EDRA/*Places* award for Design. The most ambitious of the co-housing-

inspired ideals for a new off-campus village never materialized. Instead, older student-family housing was adapted and redesigned to provide living facilities. But the new community center at the heart of this repurposed enclave now provides a joyful and dignified location for a cluster of shared facilities that express much of the essence of that vision.

On a site originally developed to provide housing for married World War II veterans returning to the university, Buckeye Village maintains an important connection to the past. But it also updates the university's mission to assist students with families. Reflecting changes in enrollment, many such families today are headed by single mothers, and research shows that without organized support, it is very difficult for them to complete their education and move up the socioeconomic ladder.

Opened in January 2005, the community center includes space for nine classrooms, a daycare center, an art studio, a family room, meeting space, an exercise room, and a community garden. Glazed classroom windows open

Above: The interior spaces of the Buckeye Village Community Center reassert an older commitment by the university to student-family life. Floor-to-ceiling glazing draws natural light through classrooms to the main corridor and provides a strong visual connection to adjacent outdoor play areas. Photo by Brad Feinknopf.

directly onto age-specific playscapes that are isolated from car entrances and parking areas. Meanwhile, child-scaled openings allow even mundane parts of the building to be transformed into spaces for play and exploration.

“We really came at it from the standpoint of trying to provide places for the families to come together, and make it visually a community,” says Kay Bea Jones a Professor at OSU’s Knowlton School of Architecture and principal designer for the project. “People have been, and are, living that way. This type of community building just makes it easier.”

A Fight for the Past

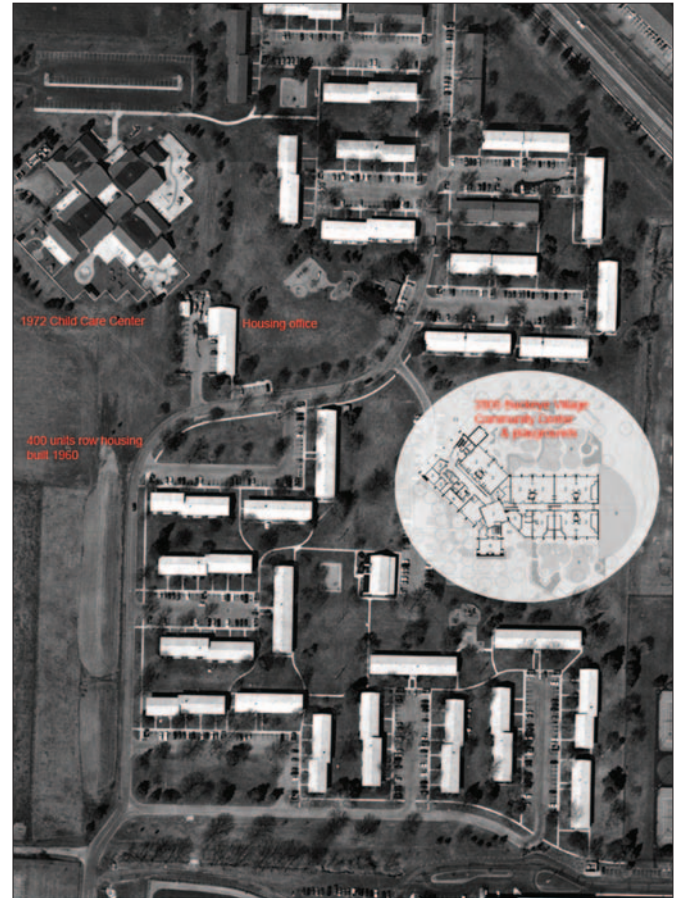
As a bright and nurturing place for childcare, tutoring, group activities, and counseling services, the community center is a distinguished design in its own right. But what really attracted jurors to the project was the compelling story behind it.

The idea for Buckeye Village originated in 1996 when Dr. Beverley Toomey, a Professor of Social Work at OSU, and Jones, paired up on a collaborative teaching grant. One poll that they conducted during their research showed that more than 350 low-income single-parent students would be eligible for a program aimed at keeping them in school. Toomey and Jones began looking around the country for an institution that might serve as a model for a program that might provide housing and support services to this at-risk group. But they came up almost empty-handed.

“The students who come to the university today are not necessarily the same ones the campus was designed for,” Toomey said in an interview with the *Nontraditional Students Report*. Indeed, some are young mothers, frequently of color, whose child-rearing responsibilities and life needs frequently conflict with academic obligations. However, Toomey believes the university has a special obligation to serve this group. “If we don’t educate [them], many will be doomed to poverty,” she said.

Jones and Toomey enlisted the help of several other university departments in an effort to understand and provide for these students. Among them were the Offices of Student Affairs, Human Resources, and Minority Affairs, as well as the Colleges of Social Work and Engineering/Architecture. Another key player became OSU’s ten-year-old ACCESS program, “an academic and social support program to assist low-income, minority, single-parent students who are pursuing a college education.”

As ideas for the physical and social character of a potential co-housing project began to take more concrete form, the university was deciding to help resolve some of the



problems of crime and physical decay in areas adjacent to campus. It was at this time that they began the south campus Gateway program, a mixture of stores, entertainment and housing. In collaboration with the City of Columbus, the university had also developed a master redevelopment strategy for a 51-acre swath of land next to the Olentangy River that included plans for commercial development, the connection of a series of park areas into a greenbelt, and a set of expanded recreational and sports facilities. That redevelopment plan, however, also called for demolition of a working childcare facility and an area of preexisting student-family housing with associated gardens and playgrounds.

After months of research and planning, Jones and Toomey’s plan to build a co-housing development for

Above: The community center is located amid a rehabilitated cluster of student-family residences. Site plan by Kay Bea Jones and Acock Architects.



single-mother students hit a snag. They had tried and eliminated several sites for their proposed project. They had looked at the Gateway area of campus, then decided that it was too crowded with rowdy undergraduates. They explored an area within one of the most densely populated sections of Columbus that had been cleared for an electrical substation, and eliminated that too.

The last remaining option was a section of the Olentangy redevelopment area, most of which had already been claimed for wetland restoration or for the construction of new sports facilities.

Above: On the exterior, the design of the Community Center expresses the different qualities of its interior areas. The use of brick ties the building to the surrounding neighborhood of two-story student residences.

Inset: The bright, playful interior court at the center of the building is known as its “lighthouse.” Photos by Brad Feinknopf.

Against All Odds

The site where the Buckeye Village now stands was originally a parcel of farmland donated to the university. Located across the Olentangy River from the OSU football stadium, it had been used for student-family housing since the years after World War II, when returning veterans going to college on the GI Bill had first created the need for such a housing option.

Even though the housing looked worn-out and substandard by 2000, its barrack-like complexes had originally been considered adequate. They were small and functional, and they included nearby “victory” gardens for use by the student families. In the intervening half century, the faces of the residents at the complex had changed significantly, but the physical structures and layout had not.

With the demise of their original plan for an off-campus project, Jones and her team successfully convinced university leaders that transforming these structures for a new generation of student families would be a more valuable

use of the site than constructing new athletic facilities.

Working largely behind the scenes to avoid the need for a state appropriation, Buckeye Village advocates then quickly crafted a finance plan that would allow rehabilitation of the existing housing and other facilities, subsidized rent for approximately fifty new target families, and construction of a new 28,000-sq.ft. community center.

The advocacy campaign included black-and-white photographs from the 1940s and 1950s showing the site as a complex of newly constructed residences. Advocates also dug through the university archives for images of past residents. One collage showed pictures of bobby-sock-clad women with perfectly curled tresses digging in their victory gardens. Another showed snapshots of today's residents, a global village of smiling international students and their families.

Finally, they brought testimonials from a new generation of intended residents—mostly poor, African American single mothers, many of whom would likely not finish their programs at the university without the support Buckeye Village would provide.

Participatory Design at Its Best

A distinguishing element of an EDRA/*Places* Design Award winner is its ability to demonstrate how it benefits from a specific program of research. In preparing their original co-housing scheme, the team spent countless hours consulting with women in the ACCESS program on how best to design their living spaces to be functional yet flexible, and how to create outdoor spaces that were at once communal and private. Considerable effort also went into documenting how a supporting environment might break the cycle of poverty these students and their children might rejoin if they dropped out.

When Jones decided to adopt the site's preexisting housing, the Buckeye Village Project risked losing the benefit of this valuable research. But as the project progressed through design and into construction, Jones and her architectural team found they could incorporate many of the women's concerns into the design of the community center.

In a postoccupancy survey, residents today give high marks to the new centerpiece of their community. They mention the wide hallways and clear floor-to-ceiling windows which visually connect the indoor childcare rooms to outdoor play areas. They note the aesthetic appeal of its comfortable, decorated family room, atrium, and secluded second story. Above all, they appreciate the many nooks that children find to hide and frolic in.

"College studies are demanding, and scheduling classes, studying for tests, and writing papers can be especially difficult for students who are also single parents and living on a low income," said Ohio State President Karen Holbrook at a 2003 groundbreaking for the community center. The Buckeye Village community center, "is a sound investment in their future and our community."

—*Catriona Stuart*

Sample Juror Comments—Buckeye Village

Ahrentzen: Of the ones we looked at this is just the most compelling story.

Hull: It's a really meaty program.

Ahrentzen: And they put the childcare and community center right next to the existing housing.

Hull: The support for single mothers—that is really strong too.

Ahrentzen: There was also a considerable amount of research that went into this, including a design workshop with the single mothers that was part of their original cohousing idea.

Jones: I think this is all impressive research, especially the workshops with the women.

Kelbaugh: It certainly deserves it based on social merit and program content.

McNally: They didn't really cast it that way, but the story is incredible. They've been hanging in there for nine years. They find outside funding. They fend off the athletic department of Ohio State—that's an amazing thing, in itself.

Ahrentzen: There are very few universities that target housing for low-income single parents.

Kelbaugh: It certainly does raise the bar.

McNally: Can we say it was not the physical design that was most important, but the idea.

Hull: We should really hit that hard. We really liked the program.

Hollywood Panorama

Karen Pinkus



On a rundown strip of Hollywood Boulevard, at the confluence of two neighborhoods recently baptized Thai Town and Little Armenia, the artist Sara Velas rented an abandoned fast-food stand with a domed ceiling in 2001, and painted a 360-degree panorama titled *Valley of the Smokes*. For about three years, until 2004 when she lost her lease to a proposed redevelopment, the “Velaslavasay Panorama” stood as a found object in the landscape of Hollywood.

Above: The former site of the Velaslavasay Panorama at 5553 Hollywood Boulevard. Photo courtesy of the Velaslavasay Panorama.

Open limited hours for a small suggested donation, it bore an uncanny resemblance to those (principally European) nineteenth-century structures that housed a succession of proto-cinematic spectacles. The rhetoric, typography and imagery adapted by Velas also referred to this strangely “democratic” period of peepshows, magic lanterns, zoetropes, and other visual marvels.

The building that accommodated Velas’s Panorama, the former South Seas-themed Tswuun-Tswuun Rotunda, provided an unusual complement. Built in 1968 in the exuberant Googie style, it was roofed with faded sky-blue shingles and capped with a glowing orange ball. Despite

its interim use as a travel agency, when Velas moved in, a worn sign with a golden crown still enticed passing drivers to stop for pizza and ice cream.

As an icon of local “exotica,” the Rotunda had long served as a landmark for motorists. Yet, despite its visual prominence, its milieu typified the largely bypassed nature of East Hollywood. Adjacent land was partially filled with weeds and rusted car parts. A prop rental agency—Jose’s Art Yard—occupied another part of the property, displaying Aztec gods and Rococo fountains cast in plaster. Behind was a rather down-and-out bungalow court, of a sort common in the area.

Amidst this jumble, the Rotunda appeared to hover like an ultra-modern spaceship, mirroring the form of the Art Deco Griffith Observatory in the hills above. This was no accident, since the Googie style, in celebration of Los Angeles' euphoric car culture of the 1950s and 60s interpellated the driver rather than the pedestrian.¹

In its roundness, the Tswuun-Tswuun also owed a formal debt to the drive-in restaurant. According to Alan Hess, round or octagonal shapes "...allowed carhops to glide from kitchen to car fast enough that the barbecue stayed hot."² "Roundness" also created a sense of panoramic, vertiginous openness, as customers arriving by car could look in on three sides to see their food being prepared.³

In its particulars, the Rotunda could be seen as a more modest, anonymous variation on a recognized icon of the style, the 1953 McDonald's in nearby Downey.⁴ This building was rescued from demolition and listed by the National Register of Historical Places in 1984 (an outcome that was, however, never seriously considered for the Rotunda).⁵

In theory, then, the Velaslava-say Panorama might have opened itself to ironic critique based on the paradox of low-tech effect in the capital of hyperreality. Yet, against all odds, it managed to inhabit the peculiar geographical space of East Hollywood in a natural and affective—one might even say, democratic—way.

An Artwork

The word "panorama" is pieced together from the Greek roots *pan* (all) and *borama* (view). As a painterly form, the panorama originated in England during the industrial revolution and spread rapidly through Europe. Asso-



ciated with geognosy (the production of knowledge about the earth), it developed in a reciprocal relation with surveying tools and techniques.

Stephan Oetermann has argued the modern use of the word to represent a broader pattern for organizing visual experience only developed, "...when the technical terms coined to denote a new type of round painting came to be applied generally to mean 'circular vista, overview' (from an elevated point) of a real landscape or cityscape; this was very soon followed by metaphorical use to mean a 'survey' or 'overview' of a particular field of knowledge."⁶

From its beginnings, panoramic painting was also conflated with the built container. Robert Barker's patent application in 1787 read: "There must be a circular building or framing erected, on which this drawing or painting may be performed; or the same may be done on canvas or other materials, and fixed or suspended on the same building or framing."⁷ A late-nineteenth-century dictionary of building terms similarly defined panorama as "a

building in which a painting referred to as a panorama is exhibited, that is to say painted on the inside wall of a rotunda, covered by a cupola or cone-shaped roof."⁸

During the nineteenth century, before the advent of commercial cinema, painted panoramas achieved significant popularity. Yet their production provoked a certain tension, and some panoramas were criticized as pandering to the masses, in spite of—or perhaps precisely because of—the great skill and artisanship involved in their creation.⁹

Panoramic painting also raised a series of ethical questions about truth and vision that would become better elaborated in early film criticism. In his 1807 *Handbuch der Aesthetik*, J.A. Eberhardt criticized the panorama for evoking nausea and vertigo, and for the lack of freedom to escape the

Above: The Panorama gardens contained such "supplementary attractions" as a mock Avian Alcove, a mobile camera obscura, and furniture salvaged from a Polynesian-themed restaurant by Armét and Davis. Photo courtesy of the Velaslavasay Panorama.



painterly illusion.¹⁰ Thus, viewers of seascape panoramas sometimes complained of seasickness, and the panoramic experience was said to provoke hysterical reactions in female viewers.¹¹

Before setting out to produce her own work, Velas, a one-time intern at the Museum of Jurassic Technology in Venice, California, studied the great painted panoramas still in existence: Alpine landscapes in Austria and Switzerland, sweeping battle scenes in Scandinavia, and so on.¹²

To achieve the proper perspectival illusion, early panoramists frequently

used artificial devices such as an “Alberti’s veil,” a square frame with string stretched across it, or even a camera obscura. The invention of daguerreotype allowed naturalism to be achieved at considerably less expense. But for her part, Velas worked from preliminary charcoal drawings that she stretched over the rounded wall as she developed her ideas.

The visitor to Velas’s Panorama first navigated a semi-dark corridor. Inside, her low-key, earthy *Valley of the Smokes* offered a fantasized, naturalist view of the Los Angeles basin in the nineteenth century. The work depicted a series of hillsides, with native plants and small brush fires emitting curls of smoke that faded

into a calm sky. It was quite moving in its sparseness, and it made no effort at glitz or glamour.

Velas’s painting was decidedly unironic. When viewed in context of a work like Mike Davis’s *City of Quartz*, one might wonder what it did *not* say about the lived reality of early Los Angeles as a space of labor struggle, racism, and genocide toward the indigenous population. But, fundamentally, *Valley of the Smokes* was about the land, about Los Angeles as a collection of sparsely inhabited micro-climates or ecologies.

An interesting sidelight to many of the early panoramas was that they offered adjunct spectacles for the price of admission: gardens, statuary,

Above: Installation view of the panoramic painting *Valley of the Smokes*. Photo courtesy of the Velaslavasay Panorama.



costumed ushers, simulated meteorological conditions, sonorous effects, or appropriate odors diffused into the air. A “visit to the panorama” might have included a variety of different sensory experiences not limited to contemplation of the painting itself.¹³

In a sweetly parodic register, the Velaslavasay Panorama paid homage to such supplementary attractions. It boasted an Avian Alcove, where “exotic birds,” some painted on a backdrop, some sculpted or stuffed, emitted calls recorded on a lo-fi soundtrack.¹⁴ Pet rabbits could be seen hopping around the yard. And Velas and her friends often sat outside on wrought-iron furniture, where the landscaping included elements salvaged from a Polynesian-themed building by Armét and Davis, the supreme masters of Southern California kitsch.

Velas also added a mobile camera obscura to the Panorama grounds. It allowed spectators to view the building and its contents from various angles, projected with crystalline (one could almost say, digital) clarity on an interior screen, but upside down. The effect was extremely disorienting, since even with the naked eye, the Panorama seemed to waver, its edges slightly blurred, almost as if surrounded by a haze of gasoline.

A Building

Viewing *Valley of the Smokes*—which appeared rather squat, especially compared with its apparently infinite width—one couldn’t help think of the various technologies of wide-screen cinema. In fact, the Velaslavasay Panorama explicitly referenced the Cinerama Dome on Sunset Boulevard in its publicity materials. Even more resonant, however, were the associations produced by its execution inside a prominent Googie building.

Googie, also known as Coffee Shop Modern, was a style often characterized by “Mesozoic” (“Flintstone”), space-age or atomic details, vibrant colors, and tropical vegetation set off with floodlights. Although Googie was related to organic forms, it was deliberately not supposed to look natural. Indeed, at its best, it appeared to defy gravity.

In contrast to mid-century minimalism, Googie buildings shunned “high” modernist glass and steel, and made use of plastics or any available materials. For this reason, the term “googie” soon evolved into a pejorative that critics associated with sloppy workmanship and cheesy materials.¹⁵

But Googie style has also been hailed as genuinely American and democratic, something that “brought

modern architecture down from the mountains and set ordinary clients, ordinary people free.”¹⁶ Like the “dingbat” homes scattered around Hollywood, it was meant to be widely accessible: inexpensive, a bit ludicrous, an exciting antidote to the boredom of the postwar office inhabited by the man in the gray flannel suit.

Googie represented a freedom to consume joyfully, and pluralistically. And in the case of Southern California, traces of such freedom can still be found—as can a few extant remnants of the style—in overlooked areas, small corners of underdeveloped space such as that once occupied by the Tswuun-Tswuun Rotunda.

A Neighborhood

Shortly after I completed a first draft of this essay, Velas announced that her Panorama would be forced to close. The land it occupied (along with the adjacent prop yard) had been purchased by the developer of a large mall at Sunset and Vine (as well as a smaller one at Sunset

Above and following pages: The panoramic painting *Valley of the Smokes* was on view at the Velaslavasay Panorama from 2001 to 2004. It was approximately 60 feet in circumference (18.3 meters). Photo by Lawrence Underhill.



and Western—where a Walgreen’s had replaced the former Pussy Cat Theater). The announcement forced me to shift from present to past tense, and to consider the importance of Velaslavasay Panorama as a phenomenon of limited duration.

When Velas moved in, the neighborhood, while still rather downtrodden, seemed to be on the upswing. Yet, in contrast to other art-developers, she did not seek to turn it around.¹⁷ Likewise, there are few signs of the type of gentrification that usually follows when artists move in. While a few cafes dot the landscape, the area around the intersection of Hollywood and Western has no art galleries, studios, mid-century-modern furniture stores, or hip bars.¹⁸ And it is still common to see homeless wheeling shopping carts and elderly residents buying wilted produce from the back of trucks.

Nevertheless, the City of Los Angeles is undergoing a crisis of conscience and planning, as regional population growth brings a radical realignment of its semi-urban, semi-suburban space. The Panorama stood at the vortex of transformation, more as a witness than a catalyst.

As part of this urban restructuring, the developer of the Rotunda site, the Bond Company, plans to build

a Whole Foods Market there. Like Starbucks, Whole Foods styles itself as ecologically considerate, youth oriented, and politically conscious.¹⁹ But its New Age, organic aura veils an aggressive corporate growth strategy based on demographic research, conservative labor policies, and strategic real estate investment.

By contrast, the Panorama was a unique landmark, not because it was architecturally or historically significant, and not simply because it was atavistic. Rather, in the play between its interior and exterior, its high-art concept and pop-culture form, its historical and futuristic referents, it improved its environment without displacing residents, destroying characteristic structures, or imposing new levels of consumption.

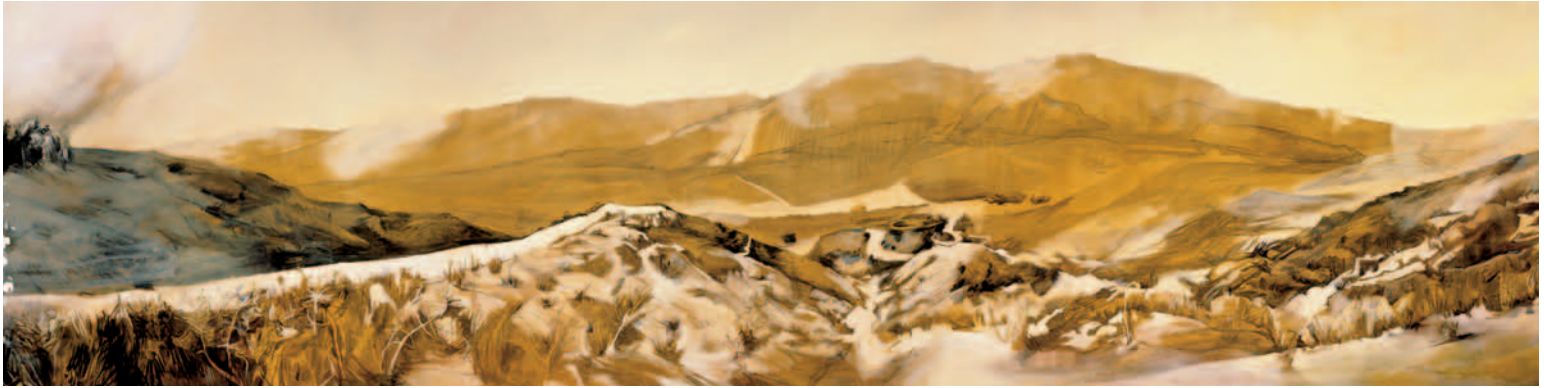
Velas does not feel her Panorama helped pave the way for designer produce and juice bars. And, truthfully, while Whole Foods may be part of a larger process of “revitalization,” it will probably not displace the small Armenian and Thai vendors nearby.²⁰

The area near the intersection of Hollywood and Western has also never had a history, in the words of Paul Goldberger, of being a “grand civic environment.”²¹ A shopping mall was recently built there, but this stretch of Hollywood Boulevard also

features the Downtowner, a low-budget motel with a Flintstone facade, flashing neon sign, and dioramas of exotic plants lit by green-filtered flood lamps.²² There is also the St. Francis hostel and SRO; the Saint Gabriel retirement home—a down-and-out hall with a halo for a logo; Le Sex Discount Shoppe; and the Thai Town Hot Dog stand (the current owners of this establishment made the unusually felicitous decision to keep an existing large hot dog atop their Asian takeout, which is located catty-corner from the Red Line subway station).

Several blocks away Thai Elvis performs. On Western Avenue, a rather dubious-looking, windowless bar called The Study has apparently managed to stay in business next door to a Thai beauty parlor and a casino-dealing school. A Korean church has purchased an arid plot of land filled with enormous candelabra cactuses on a block that also includes the neo-Federal-style Coral Sands Motel, a halfway house, a prosthetic limb shop, and an employment agency with a scrolling red neon sign.

In terms of neighborhood residents, Armenian families generally populate the extant stucco-box apartment complexes between Hollywood and Franklin Avenues. Developers of the mall just within view of the former



Rotunda constructed affordable housing above the stores in accordance with LA's inclusionary zoning regulations.²³ And a complex of senior-citizen apartment units set off by Mondrianesque primary-colored rectangles has cropped up above the Western/Hollywood subway stop, complementing the bare, functional townhouses to the immediate south.

As a work of art, the Panorama did not strive to empower these people or even create new public space for the neighborhood. Malcolm Miles has written about how a new genre of public art "acts as a catalyst for other people's creativity, political imagina-

tion being perhaps as valued as drawing skill." It "reflects a critical realism derived from Marxism, feminism and ecology which implies that artists act for and with others in reclaiming responsibility for their futures."²⁴

Far from developing such a critical realism, the Velaslavasay Panorama appeared to inhabit the landscape passively, waiting to be discovered, existing not as an intellectual monument so much as a quasi-organic growth. It was neither a commissioned, nor a site-specific work. Indeed, Velas's plans to display a painted panorama predated her felicitous location of the Rotunda building.

Of course, curious locals did, on occasion, come to visit. And Velas did distribute brochures in various languages (including Armenian and Thai; but also Korean, Italian, Japanese, and Esperanto). A number of articles also appeared on the Panorama; and Huell Howser, host of a PBS show on California oddities and landmarks, filmed an episode there.²⁵

But while public art groups—notably the LA-based Power of Place—have worked with defined communities to retrieve repressed cultural memories, the Panorama seemed more intent on imposing a fictional American memory on a noncommunity of various ethnicities.²⁶

Epilogue

In the late spring of 2004, friends and neighbors were invited to a wake for the Panorama. The ritual was attended by a heterogeneous group, including "Modcom hipsters," punks, and elderly residents of East Hollywood. Even Huell Howser, himself, attended briefly. Velas gave out cuttings from plants that had graced the yard. Mourners sipped champagne

Above: Thai Town Express takeout occupies a former hotdog stand near the corner of Hollywood Boulevard and Western Avenue. Photos by Bernard Yenelouis.



cocktails and ate slices of homemade purple bundt cake. Someone climbed to the peak of the rotunda and pulled down the orange ball that had glowed there for so many years. It seemed a truly democratic moment.

In early September 2005 the Rotunda was finally torn down. Plans for the site currently call for 42,000 sq.ft. of retail space on the ground floor, with the second floor and rooftop levels used for parking. Drawings show how the two sides of the building will meet in a rounded series of glass bands resembling both the Capital building at Yucca and Vine, and the Staples Center downtown.²⁷

Some members of the local neighborhood council have embraced the project, while others have expressed concerns about parking, congestion, and other impacts. But at the time of this writing it is almost certain Whole Foods will eventually move in.

Meanwhile, Velas has located another venue, the abandoned Union movie theater on 24th Street in the West Adams neighborhood near the University of Southern California.²⁸ Here the salvaged orange ball from the Rotunda tops the marquee, lit at night courtesy of a grant from the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles.

She expects to unveil a new painting in the near future—an arctic scene

accompanied by a timed light show and soundtrack. It is not specifically related to Los Angeles. But, as she explained, it is exotic “without being exotic in a bad way.”

The new work will not fit organically inside the new building. It will instead be installed on rounded walls built inside a square room. Nevertheless, like *Valley of The Smokes*, it promises to engage its environment in interesting ways. Too small and peculiar to transform an entire landscape, its very localness promises to help define and delimit the idea of a neighborhood in the megacity.

Notes

1. Among relevant works on building in relation to the automobile, see Jonathan Bell, *Carchitecture: When the Car and the City Collide* (London: August Press, 2001); Richard Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture, the Automobile, and Retailing in Los Angeles, 1920-1950* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997); and Peter Wollen and Joe Kerr, eds., *Autopia* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001).
2. Alan Hess, *Googie* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1985), p. 39.
3. Another round building that bears mention is Hollywood's famous Brown Derby. Most of LA's original hat-shaped Brown Derby Restaurants (a chain partly owned by Cecil B. DeMille) were demolished without fanfare, but the LA Conservancy pushed hard to save the one at 4500 Los Feliz Boulevard. Its site had been proposed as part of a luxury redevelopment

project (ironically also containing a Whole Foods market) that one commentator described as “Spanish colonial by way of Disneyland,” and that (like similar complexes such as The Palazzo at Park Labrea) would create a kind of fortress selling a gated lifestyle. See <http://ggpnc.org/gg-4500lfrrenderings.html>.

4. This oldest-extant drive-in McDonald's is discussed extensively by Alan Hess in *Googie*, pp. 96-107.

Although it is not round in form, the golden arches that were part of the original design bought from the McDonald brothers by Ray Kroc (founder of the McDonald's Corporation) proved a much more enduring means of expressing the same design spirit. 5. Admittedly, the Rotunda was probably not worth saving, although there was much discussion on the ModCom message board (<http://www.lottaliving.com>) about ways to move it or convince developers to include it in their plans for the site. In some ways, though, the point of this article is that while the structure was not historically significant, its very unassuming typicality made it important in the context of the neighborhood.

6. Stephan Oetermann, *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium*, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (New York: Zone Books, 1997), p. 7.

7. Cited in Hans Buddemeier, *Panorama, Diorama, Photographie: Entstehung und Wirkung neuer Medien im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: W. Fink, 1970), p. 163.

8. Cited in Bernard Comment, *The Painted Panorama (Le XIXème siècle des Panoramas)*, trans. Anne-Marie Glasheen (New York: Abrams, 1999), p. 7.

9. “The artistic elite felt threatened by the panorama: they feared that their artistic activities would be snatched away from them, especially as panoramists were about to venture into territory close guarded by



the academies—that of war and battles—that could be incorporated from near or far away into historic painting.” Ibid., p. 87.

10. Ibid. pp. 97–103.

11. I am grateful to Natania Meeker for pointing me to the above sources regarding panoramic vertigo.

Another is Adolf von Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst* (Strassburg: Heitz, 1901).

12. More recently she has been invited by the International Panorama Council to speak about her work. Last year she attended a conference and workshop in China, where panoramic painting is still a highly-valued form of public art.

13. Comment, *The Painted Panorama*, p. 87.

14. I want to suggest a conceptual or thematic link between this Avian Alcove and another “exotic” Southern California landmark of the Googie era, Disneyland’s Enchanted Tiki Room. Opened in 1963, it featured animatronic parrots who led the audience in a chorus of “Let’s All Sing Like the Birdies Do.” See Francesco Adinolfi, *Mondo Esotica* (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), pp. 8, 99.

15. Hess, *Googie*, p. 62. The term was actually introduced in an essay titled “Googie Architecture,” *House and Home*, 1 (February, 1952), pp. 86–88. Also see Ed Leibowitz, “Out from Under the Wrecking Ball,” *Smithsonian* 31, n. 9 (December 2000), pp. 112–22.

16. Cited in Hess, *Googie*, p. 62.

17. When the Panorama was relatively new, an article in *Los Angeles Magazine* recounted plans by developer Urs Jakob and artist/designer Karim Rashid to transform the neighborhood, starting with a hip, upscale hostel in the single-room-occupancy St. Francis Hotel. Since this time, the St. Francis has continued to operate as a mixed-use (SRO and hostel)

building. The lobby still boasts a few mod, curvy Rashid chairs, although they are starting to appear faded.

But over the course of the last few years, Jakob was forced to sell his properties to condo developers. See Ed Liebowitz “From Bleak to Boutique,” *Los Angeles Magazine*, vol. 46, issue 11 (Nov. 2001), pp. 60–65.

18. In “Tall Drinks, Short Hops,” *L.A. Weekly* (Sept. 30–Oct. 6, 2005), p. 58, Caroline Ryder claims, “This intersection is known more for its crack dealers, cheap Thai barbecues and adult bookstores than its hot bar scene.”

19. See Jon Gertner, “The Virtue in \$6 Heirloom Tomatoes,” *The New York Times* (June 6, 2004), Section 6, p. 44.

20. Most of the new market’s affluent customers will likely come down from the hills above, as they have since at least the 1920s and 30s to shop on the “flats.” See Longstreth, *City Center to Regional Mall*, p. 83.

21. Goldberger was referring to the transformation of the area around New York’s Union Square. Cited in Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), p. 3. Deutsch describes how the change in Union Square from “a deteriorated yet active precinct” to a “luxury ‘mixed-used’ neighborhood” is an example of the recent “unprecedented degree of change in the class composition of New York neighborhoods” (p. 12). There are certain similarities with the area of East Hollywood formerly occupied by the panorama. Yet in LA, residents do not have the same sense of neighborhood history, development tends not to be so immediately politicized, corporate interests are smaller, and class changes occur more slowly and with less visible impact.

22. As an element of vernacular, “democratic,” Los

Angeles architecture, see John Chase’s comments on Flintstone detailing in *Glitter Stucco & Dumpster Driving* (New York and London: Verso, 2000).

23. For the effect of inclusionary zoning regulation in Los Angeles, see Robert Greene, “Welcome to Planning 101,” *LA Weekly* (Nov. 19–25, 2004), p. 33.

24. Malcolm Miles, *Art, Space and the City* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 12.

25. “Visiting with Huell Howser,” program 911.

26. About the Power of Place group’s work in Little Tokyo, Malcolm Miles noted: “whilst this project fits many of the requirements of alternative public art, in collaborating with a defined community to embody memories of place, in dealing with local rather than global history, and in its low-key intervention in the physical environment arising out of a lengthy link to the social environment, it also raises the question: once a community is empowered to the extent of regaining its cultural identity, what do they do with that empowerment to become co-designers of their city, to occupy that place where the form of the city is determined?” *Art, Space and the City*, p. 178.

27. For the upcoming plans for construction, including conceptual images, see <http://www.cajaeir.com/portfolio/wholefoods.html>.

28. During this transition period, a view of *Valley of the Smokes*, now dismantled, can be viewed at the history section of www.panoramaonview.org.

(Park)ing Day—September 21, 2006

Catriona Stuart



Take a sunny downtown parking space, add a layer of sod, a few wooden benches, and a pocketful of donated quarters, and what was once a place reserved solely for cars becomes a sunlit respite from the daily grind.

On September 21, 2006, in nine cities across the globe, artists took to the streets with these instructions in hand and installed more than thirty temporary parks in areas where asphalt is usually king. It was the birth of the first international Park(ing) Day—where for a brief moment, the lofty goal of improving the quality of urban life overcame the more practical consideration of where to store automobiles when they are not in use.

(Park)ing Day was the brainchild

of Rebar, a San Francisco-based arts group known for installations that challenge common thinking about space, urbanism and absurdity. Their first project was the Cabinetlandia library—a three-drawer filing cabinet archive located in an uninhabitable stretch of desert once slated for development, but which is now a faux-country owned by *Cabinet* magazine. Rebar once processed and canned sections of an art gallery housed in former can company—their attempt to sustain the physical connections and the spirit of the gallery as the building underwent a seismic retrofit.

This latest venture centered on one simple question—why parking rather than parks?

“It’s a creative, thoughtful and imaginative way to draw attention to a critical need, and to do it in a playful manner,” said Will Rogers, President of the Trust for Public Land, which sponsored the (Park)ing Day event.

A few friends hatched the plan several years ago over drinks at the Latin American Club in San Francisco. According to their calculations, more than 70 percent of the outdoor public space in downtown San Francisco is devoted to the automobile. The question was, what could they do about it?

“We looked into the law and discovered that actually in San Francisco County it doesn’t appear to be illegal to program a parking space for



another use,” said Matthew Passmore, one of Rebar’s founders and a lawyer by training. “We then set about thinking about what kinds of programming we would like to put in the space.”

They obtained a Department of City Planning map detailing areas of downtown San Francisco that were underserved by green space. Though the group had settled on using a parking space as their stage and wanted to say something about public space, the hard part was figuring out just how to put those two things together. A swimming pool? A brothel? A number of proposals were put forth until they hit on an idea that worked both logistically and philosophically—build a temporary park inside a metered parking space.

Since the meter functions effectively as a short-term lease on the space, the park would last only so long as the meter was running.

Passmore and his colleagues set about designing a portable yet functional urban green space. It had to be easy to copy, easy to assemble, and, most importantly, easy to disassemble, in case they were forced to move by a police officer or meter maid.

Then, on November 16, 2005,

from noon until 2 PM, a park sat on Mission Street between 1st and 2nd Streets. It added “24,000 square-foot-minutes of public open space that Wednesday afternoon,” read the group’s website.

Less than a year later, Rebar returned to the same place to create another parking space. Despite the midday traffic, Passmore peddled his bicycle down Mission Street, toting a cartload of sod and equipment behind him. Another pedal-powered pick-up transported the tree and benches; others followed. The army of volunteers quickly jumped from their bicycles and set to work—first laying down a tarp, then gently rolling out the sod while Rebar members collected donations for the parking meter. This was the third (park)ing spot of the day in San Francisco. Others included a hanging garden, a bioswale, and a beach party. Even Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi and Mayor Gavin Newsom donated their city parking spaces for the day.

Parks were also temporarily established in Manhattan, London, Milwaukee, and Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

As the late Jane Jacobs wrote in her book *The Death and Life of American*

Cities, however, it is not enough to merely have parks. In order to be truly effective, people must actually use the space. To this end, Rebar included a tree for shade and two comfortable benches for seating. Some merely stared at the installation as they passed by, trying to decide whether it was art, or whether it was intended to be truly functional. A few took a seat and enjoyed the summery afternoon.

The best part is just having the patch of grass nearby, commented San Francisco resident Kay Hoskins. Though there is a park within walking distance of her home, the nearest glimpse of grass is at least four or five blocks away. That’s not usually a problem for Hoskins, who has three dogs. But while her foot is broken, it can be a long way to walk, she said, pointing at the heavy cast wrapped around her leg.

“A tiny mini-park, even the size of a parking space, would help,” Hoskins said.

This is an important point, said Rogers.

“Cities are recognizing that not only is it great for quality of life and making them competitive and attracting the twenty- and thirty-somethings that they desperately need for vitality, but it is also a really, really good economic play,” he said.

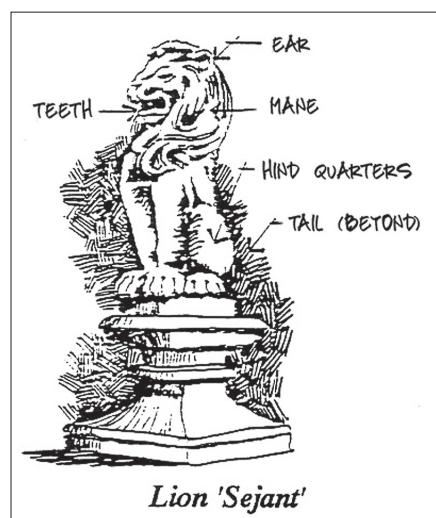
“The other side of the story is that while large central parks are thriving in many cities, neighborhood parks aren’t there where they need to be.”

Above: San Franciscans enjoy (Park)ing Day. Photo by Andrea Scher.

Opposite: Using a pocketful of change to feed the meters, Rebar activists created a global network of temporary public parks, like this one in downtown San Francisco. Photo by Andrea Scher.

How Leonine Features Enhance Bridge Capacity: A Short History of Traffic Engineering

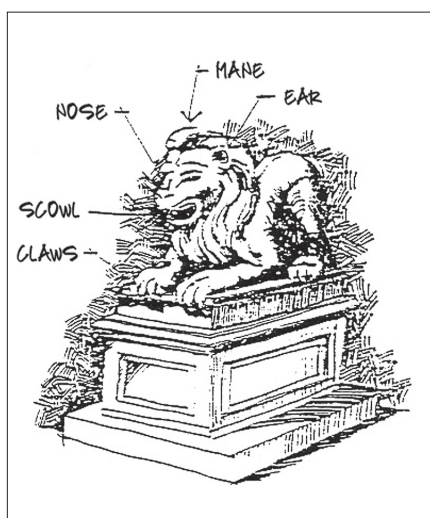
Walter Kulash, Sandy Curran, and Jay Hood



Statuary traffic-enhancing devices (statues for improving traffic flow) were well understood in antiquity. Statue types included “leonine” (those of lions), “feline” (wildcats), “bovine” (cattle), “elephantine” (Republicans), and “asinine” (public figures of various types).

Lion gateways on bridges and other transport facilities appeared in the earliest recorded history of transportation. Perhaps the oldest and best known is the Sphinx near Cairo. In ancient times, Greeks and Romans installed lions on hundreds of bridges.

The capacity-enhancing value of bridge lions was recognized early. Research on the Via Appia HOC (High Occupancy Chariot) lanes (circa 200 BC) estimated that a capacity increase of up to 500 CPH (chariots per hour) could be obtained from a pair of standard marble lions



on the bridge rail. Increases of as high as 800 CPH were observed from a high-performance bronze pair on the Tiber River Bridge.

In the early Christian era, the number of lion bridges increased dramatically.¹ This popularity is attributed to two important factors: the high profile that lions were enjoying due to an extensive undefeated streak in the then-popular competition in the Coliseum, and the continued growth in the understanding of lion bridges on the part of traffic engineers. This era, generally regarded as the first golden age of traffic engineering, eventually saw lions installed on almost all important bridges. The CXXIV Via Libris Capacitus (“Highway Capacity Manual”) devoted an entire chapter to bridge lions.

Traffic engineering, like all other arts, waned following the collapse of the Roman Empire. The Dark Ages, a period of catastrophic descent in the quality of traffic and life in general, brought attrition in lion bridges, the bubonic plague, pillaging by infidels, the four-way stop sign, protected left turns, and other

signs of societal collapse. Traffic engineering emerged from the Dark Ages with lion bridges diminished in number and aging, but still viable and once again growing in popularity. Perhaps the best known advocate of leonine devices in this era, King Richard the Lion Hearted, ordered the erection of more than two hundred pairs of bridge lions in England during his reign.

The Renaissance once again brought a golden age of leonine devices, with members of the Rome chapter of the ITE (da Vinci, Michelangelo, et al.) installing masterworks that are still enhancing traffic capacity today. Research and development flourished during this era, with work extending to sophisticated traffic devices such as the cherub fountain with naiads at traffic circles.

By now an established and durable element of traffic engineering, lion bridges enjoyed an unbroken period of steady use, extending through the industrial revolution, the railway age, and well into the motor age.² Indeed, the state of the art of statuary traffic-control devices of all kinds was advanced considerably during this period. For example, in the early 1920s, significant progress was achieved using the equestrian Confederate soldier monument as a measure for improving courthouse-square traffic in county seats in the American South.³ Also in the 1920s, the landmark ASSTO road test of 168 pairs of bridge animal statues (the now classic “Noah’s Ark” road tests) confirmed the wisdom of ancient engineers: namely, that lions deliver the greatest increase in traffic capacity of all statuary devices.⁴

Sadly, the use of bridge lions, along with many other road amenities, virtually disappeared during the suburban traffic age (1950s onward).

Above: Lions Sejant and Couchant. See “recommended methodology” facing page for impact. See note 9 for source.

The last mention of the bridge lion as a traffic-engineering device was in the 1941 Manual on Uninformed Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Lions, it seemed, just didn't have a place in modern suburban traffic.

Fortunately, conditions are ripe for statuary traffic devices to stage a comeback. The thrust of traffic engineering, toward systems management (TSM) and demand management (TDM) has once again directed attention to bridge lions as a way to gain more effective use of existing road facilities. Local city councils are rediscovering the civic pride (sic) of lions.⁵ The New Urbanism movement, already deeply into unusual and unheard-of measures (e.g., pedestrians, neighborhood schools, corner stores, etc.), sees bridge lions as a road feature whose time has come again.⁶

Current research at the Center for Zoological Transportation Research (CZTR) has correlated the capacity increase of lion bridges to two features: (1) lion size directly; and (2) lion ferocity in the parabolic relation classic in traffic-flow theory.⁷ Thus, to a certain point, capacity increases as the ferocity of the lion increases (see Table 1). At an optimal level of ferocity (empirically around the "scowling" level), capacity reaches a maximum. Beyond that point (say at the "snarl" level), capacity begins to fall, due to the temerity factor rising sharply in vehicle operators.

Interestingly, the CZTR research found that the gender of the lion is largely irrelevant to capacity. As a result, current design practice calls for either the unisex model of lion, or his-'n-her pairs.⁸ This design is also technically efficient, avoiding, as value-engineering experts note, "the expensive detailed carving of tricky appendages."⁹

Recommended Methodology

The Center for Zoological Transportation Research recommends the following formula for computing the capacity of bridge lions:

$$SV_I = 200 \times N_I \times f_I \times f_f$$

Where:

SV_I = hourly increase in service volume ("capacity") due to bridge lions

200 = Base (unadjusted) flow per lion (vehicles per hour per lion)

N_I = Number of lions on approach

f_I = Length factor = length of lion (nose to tail, including tail tuft)

f_f = Ferocity factor, from Table 1

Table 1 Traffic Capacity as a Function of Ferocity

Smiling	0.5
Frowning	0.9
Scowling	1.0
Snarling	0.8
Teeth Bared	0.5
Foaming at Mouth	0.5
Object in Mouth	0.1
Lunging	0.0

Notes

1. Dimitrius, Gladiators & Associates, "Feed 'Em to the Lions," *Journal of Roman Sports Nutrition*, Spring, CCMV.

2. Emu Foundation, "Statuary Statutory Traffic Devices," *Transformation Quarterly*, Spring 1920.

3. "The South Will Rise Again: A Traffic Perspective," Wilbur Jones & Associates, for the Daughters of the Confederacy, Natchez, MS, 1924.

4. Transmutation Research Board (TRB), Special Subcommittee on Public Transit and Other Bizarre Travel Phenomena, Special Report #563.

5. For example, "City Council Roars Approval of Lion Bridge," St. Augustine (FL) *Sun Herald*, April 14, 1990; and "Snarl Gone, Traffic Purrs on Liongate," Vancouver, B.C., *Post*, November 17, 1964.

6. DIZ Architects, Miami, FL, "Neotraditional Lions: Will the TRRRRaffic Work?" *NTD Journal*, Summer 1989.

7. Center for Zoological Transportation Research: "Parametric Analysis of Statuary Traffic Control

Devices," September, 1990.

8. This subject recalls the now-legendary incident involving Frank Lloyd Wright and the lion pair he designed for Chicago's Michigan Avenue bridge in the 1920s. When asked by the foundry if he wanted the pair mounted, the Great One snapped, "No, just holding hands."

9. William Fentree and Jack Frickey, "Value Engineering Comparison of Sejant Versus Couchant Bridge Lions," *Quincy Journal of Applied Engineering*, Winter 1989. Table 1.

Article taken from *CAT Journal*, Vol. XXIV, June 1992.

Sense of Place—Alberta, Canada

Beverly Sandalack, Ann Davis, Len Novak, and Bob Sandford



According to the latest census, Calgary is now the fastest growing metropolitan area in Canada. Fueled by twenty years of growth in Alberta's oil and natural gas industries, it has become a magnet both for migrants from other parts of Canada and Native peoples leaving tribal lands and immigrants from all over the world—a reflection Canada's national policy on immigration, largely regarded as one of the world's most liberal.

Today, as housing starts keep pace with population, major issues related to growth have prompted questions about the changing sense of regional character. In the introduction to *Sense of Place: A Catalogue of Essays*, Brian Sinclair writes: "Current debate rages on the question of a Canadian national identity. And if the debate extends to the city, to Calgary, is there any substance to be found? Is there an architectural character that might capture this

place where the prairies greet the mountains? Is there a design quality that emanates from the landscape where the Elbow and Bow Rivers join?"

As a way of celebrating the centennial of Alberta, a year-long effort known as Sense of Place, attempted to answer these questions and explore the range of difficult issues involved in understanding place and placelessness. Organized by the Urban Lab at the University of Calgary and the Nickle Arts Museum, with assistance from the Department of Canadian Heritage, the effort eventually grew to include a museum exhibition exploring the intersection of nature, culture and form in Alberta; a three-day symposium on urban design with a special focus on Calgary; ongoing film and video screenings on the topics of place and placelessness; university classes; two book-length publications; and guided excursions to five typical Alberta set-

Sample Juror Comments—Sense of Place

Ahrentzen: This was a rich understanding of the history of place, the sense of place from both inside and outside, bringing in different perspectives to help them eventually in doing something. So for me it's a planning study.

Hull: We could move it over.

Jones: It could be our third planning award.

Hull: Talk about memorializing space and place! But are they leading up to something?

Ahrentzen: It seems to me its outcomes are principles that can serve as a guide for future development.

McNally: They really tried to understand sense of place and how you experience things.

Ahrentzen: It also has a strong educational component. To be able to take all these excursions with experts....It was really powerful in drawing people to ask what directions they should go from here.

tings—aboriginal lands, mountains, foothills, prairies, and urban Calgary. Through such efforts, the project explored such differing “views” of Alberta as a thousand-year-old meeting place for the Blackfoot Confederacy, a highway grid laid over the prairie, and the Bar U cattle ranch.

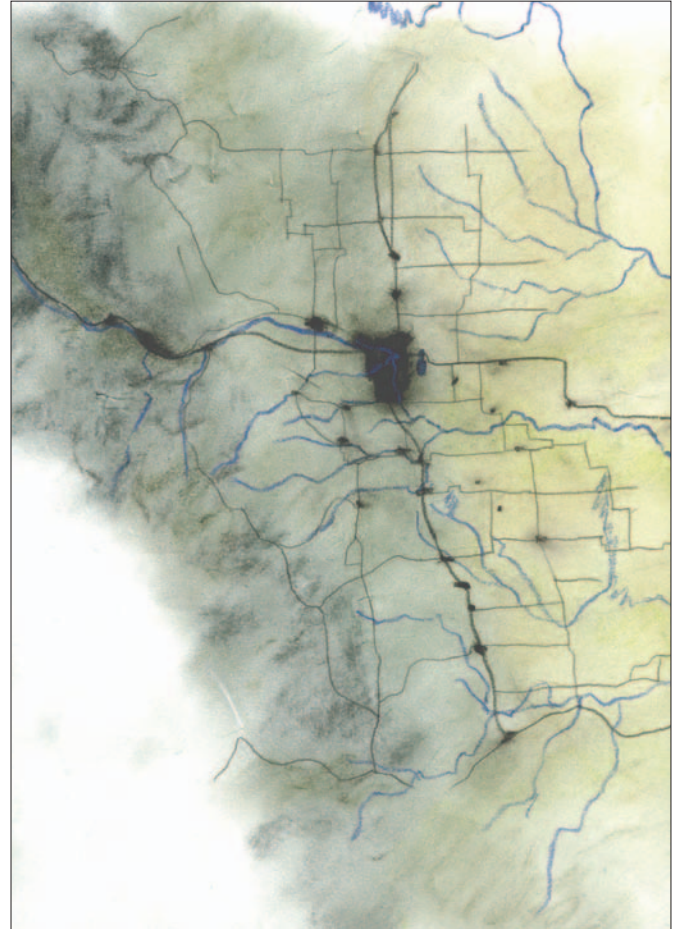
The jury praised the project’s commitment to understanding an entire regional cultural landscape as the type of groundwork needed to produce sensitive public policies. According to one juror: “The real strength of this project is the developing of public imagination and appreciation of what makes Calgary and Alberta special. This tends to show that planning can be far more than just drawing on paper. It has to deal with public conscience and awareness, and prepare the way for zoning, planning, site planning, and natural planning.”

From the very beginning, those involved with organizing the work also saw it as an opportunity to create a methodology useful to other regions struggling with similar issues of meaning and memory, and with powerful forces of economic, environmental and demographic change.

Growth of an Idea

Typical of the groundswell of interest in Sense of Place was that it began as a plan for a simple museum exhibit, but expanded through five years of planning and discussion to encompass such a broad range of products and activities. Ann Davis, Director of the Nickle Art Museum, initially invited local representatives of such disciplines as art history, Canadian history, architecture, urban design, landscape, and education to plan the exhibit. Almost immediately, the group decided something far more wide-ranging was needed if the effort was to do encompass the province’s physical and cultural diversity.

The group also wanted to depict how places were being transformed, explore how a sense of place is developed, and answer other important questions about awareness of place in Alberta. For example, what made newcomers to Alberta



Above: Alberta and its capital city, Calgary, occupy a transitional landscape between prairies and mountains. Pastel on velum by Beverly Sandalack.

Opposite: Located in the foothills of southern Alberta, the Bar U Ranch, founded in 1882 and now a National Historic Site, is emblematic of a sense of Alberta that is fast disappearing. Photo by Fraser Shaw.

McNally: If you are going to talk about a hundred-year anniversary, there is something to be said for standing back and saying this is a great place, and we are going to experience it together and through different people’s points of view and the whole breadth of the landscape. There is something high-road about that I like.

Kelbaugh: It is about celebration of place. Price of

place, sense of place, history of place.

Ahrentzen: Also about educating about place. And also trying to reinterpret.

Jones: And they did address the connection of the natural and the urban.

Hull: If I was a resident of Alberta I would feel really proud of this effort. If I am a rancher, it would help me realize what a beautiful place we live in.

Jones: It’s a really nice public awareness effort—and it’s ongoing, which is encouraging.

Ahrentzen: I think it will be effective. There are some really good planning models out there that are not master plans and campus designs. This one and Fossil and Habitat together show a range of what good studies can be about.



feel at home? When was it that they could begin to say, “I understand this place and its culture”? What do immigrants bring that can make a place feel more like home? And, most importantly, how might the things that make a place distinctive be preserved and still accommodate transformations and innovations?

Beverly Sandalack, Director of the Urban Lab, a research and consultancy center dealing with urban design, community planning, and regional development issues, put it succinctly: “We couldn’t just talk about sense of place within the four walls of a museum.”

As work progressed, a four-member steering committee composed of Sandalack, Davis, Len Novak, and Bob Sandford became more and more concerned with creating a series of events and publications that would allow a new generation of Albertans to understand the interrelatedness of historic forces. Some of the stories they wanted participants to understand concerned how the city of Calgary had

expanded over the last century, how Alberta’s family farms had been consolidated, and how a certain type of small-town life that once defined the province had now largely faded.

“Like so many [urban] places in the contemporary Western world, many people...do not have the experience of landscape. As a result of this trend, a lot will be lost in the direct understanding of the regional landscape as well as its historical evolution and how places come to be,” Sandalack says.

Involving Students

An important element of the work was the involvement of students at the University of Calgary. Courses were developed that focused on Alberta’s cultural landscapes. Students helped with exhibits, graphic design, and the Sense of Place publications (the book of essays, and an illustrated description of the excursions).

Sandalack, in particular, believes that students may provide the nucleus for a new generation of informed



design professionals. However, she was concerned that at present many had little or no appreciation of Alberta as a region, and much of their conception of the landscape is derived from computers.

One exercise that proved particularly valuable involved students taking a series of self-guided excursions. They would start at a point in the center of the city and follow one of five “transects.” For example, from the city center they could travel east to where the prairies began; or they could travel west to foothills. These trips allowed students to explore the evolving impact of the city on its formerly rural and natural edges. By starting at the center and working outward, they could get a sense of historical evolution.

Such excursions were intended to deal with critical issues about how Calgary should grow and expand. What should the relationship be between the city and the prairie and the foothills? What is the relationship between the city and farmland and ranchland? The students recorded their experiences and presented their findings at the urban design symposium.

In its effort to raise awareness of the need for new growth-planning and management policies, one of its more critical and longstanding benefits, then, may be a new crop of involved citizens: the students involved in these excursions.

Another extremely valuable product was the catalogue, containing a wonderful collection of essays, poems and photos. Many of the pieces start off as simple travelogues, but end up as strong examples of writing about place. As the reader moves through, they unfold an extraordinary range and diversity.

Among the tales of experience and encounter with land-

scape and the city is Sanford’s “A Sense of a Mountain Place,” about the Canadian Rockies as a focus of imagination and substance. Davis contributed a detailed exploration of the problems of curatorial practice and the limits of the museum in shaping collective consciousness of place.

Developing Methods to Understand Place

In addition to the EDRA/*Places* award, Sense of Place has received a Canadian Society of Landscape Architects Honor Award, and the City of Calgary Heritage Authority Lion Award.

It is important, however, that the EDRA/*Places* award specifically commended Sense of Place for the valuable methodological lessons it held for all who seek less franchised, more authentic, and more memorable places.

The exercise of looking at the potential loss of place—at a time when places worldwide are becoming more homogenized, and being reformed and rebuilt as a result of often-extreme demographic and economic pressures—provides a set of much-needed tools for examining what is place, how we remember places, and what is critical to understanding and conveying a sense of place.

—Lisa Sullivan

Left: The architecture of Calgary combines local pioneer heritage with a new global awareness. Stephen Avenue photo by Mackenzie Stonehocker.

Right: Photo of C-Train leaving Olympic Plaza station by Francisco Alaniz Uribe.

Opposite: Prairie agriculture is part of Alberta’s longstanding heritage.

Mossleigh photo by Beverly Sandalack.

The Paleo Project—Fossil, Oregon

Jenny Young, Rowell Brokaw Architects



In an economically bypassed corner of central Oregon the Paleo Project represents a big vision for a small town. It also provides evidence that planning projects can have as powerful an impact in the life of small communities as large ones.

With 430 residents, the town of Fossil lies three and a half hours east of Portland and is site of the only stop light in sparsely populated Wheeler County. As its name implies, Fossil also sits at the center of paleological treasure trove. The surrounding juniper-studded hills are littered with petrified logs, and the local shale abounds with the

fossil remains of redwood, alder, and other plants from what scientists refer to as the “Bridge Creek Flora”—as well as bugs and other small creatures alive 40 million years ago during the Oligocene era. When a cut-and-fill operation leveled space for a football field behind the high school in the 1970s it accidentally created one of the best-known public fossil-digging sites in the nation.

In the past, the county’s economic base included sheep-herding and forestry. But the main underlying activities today are cattle ranching and government work. Faced with limited economic opportunity, many young people have no choice but to leave the area to seek a livelihood. This led local residents to consider ways to sustain the town for a new generation. According to Jeanne Burch, a local judge, “we looked around us and realized our future may be in our rocks.”

Above: The plan envisions the transformation of Fossil’s high school into a Paleo Center that would be a regional edu-tourism site. The existing building will be opened to natural light to create workshop, meeting and display spaces. Section through building, above; view of entry court, below, showing a new Dawn Redwood, a species also extant at the time nearby fossil beds were created.

To help them plan and design their vision, they hired the Eugene, Oregon, architect Jenny Young in association with Rowell Brokaw Architects, also of Eugene. The work that formed the basis of the award involved developing consensus within the community, preparing detailed schematic proposals for a new Paleo Center, tying this work to a consolidation and revitalization of the town's public schools, and proposing an initial phasing and financial plan for the entire effort.

They jury was particularly impressed by the commitment and sensitivity to small town concerns displayed by the planning team. According to one: "this project shows is that really good work doesn't have to happen on a grandiose scale. An urban designer or planner can have a tremendous effect on small communities if they are watchful and care enough."

Besides, the jury noted, where else can a consultant work with a slogan like "Fossil Rocks!"—or be part of a project timeline that spans 40 million years?

Origins of the Plan

The project began with a grant application from Wheeler County to the Oregon Solutions program, which promotes rural development. This led to the establishment of the Paleo Board, composed of local business leaders, county officials, and ex-officio members from state and federal agencies and scientific and educational institutions around the state.

With the initial grant, the board hired Young and Rowell Brokaw to produce a vision and planning document to capture people's imagination. With that plan in hand, the board has now been able to win a private foundation grant to hire a director for the project, the noted Northwest geologist/paleontologist Ellen Bishop.

As a small partnership, Rowell Brokaw has specialized in such public and community projects as buildings for Oregon Head Start, facilities for the developmentally disabled, and assisted living centers for the elderly. Both John Rowell (one of the firm's founders) and Jenny Young are faculty members at the University of Oregon School of Architecture. A main interest of Young's is the structure of small towns, which she feels hold many lessons about quality of place and connection to the landscape. A good building by a skilled architect can have a tremendous impact in such a setting, she notes—particularly when it reinforces local character.

When the RFP for the Paleo Project came out, Young recalls that a friend pointed out how it would be a perfect match for her interests. As a long shot, she sent in her proposal and credentials. She had no idea the work would



develop into a commitment that is still vital five years later.

There is precedent in the region for the type of "edutourism" site that might be created at Fossil. A similar facility in remote Republic, Washington, today attracts more than 10,000 visitors per year. The bigger idea, of course, is that people who come for the hands-on experience of fossil-digging will also stay for a meal or a night, and buy supplies, artwork and souvenirs.

The vision developed in the Paleo Project is also closely tied to the revitalization of the town's school facilities. With only 100 students, these are currently underutilized, expensive to operate, and in need of renovation. Ultimately, the plan calls for their consolidation on a single site. This would free up present Wheeler High School, located prominently at the top of Main Street, to be redeveloped as a comprehensive learning center for visitors exploring the geology of the region.

As it is envisioned architecturally, the Paleo Center would open up some existing spaces in the old high school to the outdoors and to natural light. Programmatically, it would contain resource, display and interpretive areas, and have the feel of a big workshop. The idea is for it to be a place where boots and rocks and pickup trucks would be welcome, and where first-time visitors could mingle with experts.

The other half of the development/consolidation effort would be accomplished by constructing a new two-story high school wing, containing six classrooms and a shop, behind

Above: The small town of Fossil is located near the John Day National Monument in sparsely populated eastern Oregon.



the existing 1926 Fossil K-8 school. Together with the older building, this wing would create a sunny, sheltered courtyard. The social challenges of a K-12 mix would be addressed by creating age-appropriate spaces and groupings for students, including a second, smaller kindergarten addition.

Both the new Paleo Center and the single-campus K-12 school would be state-of-the-art facilities. As future town landmarks and centers of community life, they would incorporate building elements that reflect the latest research into learning environments and energy efficiency.

Local Problems, Local Charms

Since the vision document was completed, the project has moved in a slightly different direction than initially envisioned. Most notably, Rowell explains, there is now agreement that the conversion of the high school may be too big a bite to take right away. As an interim step, the county has bought a residential property near the courthouse, which Young and Rowell Brokaw are now completing designs to remodel and add on to. As the initial home of the program, this site is a ten-minute walk from the fossil beds. But, as Rowell points out, it is well within an imagined “10,000-square-mile classroom,” and will give the project an immediate physical presence.

The conversion of the high school is still the best plan, Rowell says, and is still the guiding vision for the program. Not only is this site immediately adjacent to the fossil beds, but there are good reasons why a combined K-12 school facility would be more efficient in terms of energy efficiency, staff usage, and adaptability to changes in the local school-age population. But, as Young points out, the funding mechanism for the school improvements that were part of the initial vision plan were always uncertain.

The difficulties indicate how—even though discussion in the project documents are all about fossils, education programs, and the adaptive reuse of school buildings—the real story of the Paleo Project concerns developing a vision that fits the tenor of life in a small town.

The Fossil area is home to a surprisingly heterogeneous population, which has only grown more so as electronic communication has allowed closer connection to urban culture, Rowell says. He points out that in addition to those dependent on ranching and government work, it includes artists, scholars and professionals, as well as many who seem to get by with no regular form of employment.

Sample Juror Comments—Paleo Project

McNally: My favorite was also the Paleo Project, because it celebrates a point of view which I think is important sometimes. I have worked with so many small towns that have no money, that think badly about themselves in some way, and have to really dig deep and be resourceful. As we say in our office, they have to “find the fish head,” which is taking the landscape and the people and making something out of fish bones and guts. I think they do that brilliantly.

And the way they figured out how to phase the thing was just a great move.

Ahrentzen: The story section is very convincing, how they start out talking about a couple that comes there and stumble across a fossil, and take it into town and say “What’s this about?” Then they’re there long enough so they’re looking for a place to stay. It’s interesting how they use that to generate all these different ideas.

Hull: They comment “This town is about rocks.”

Kelbaugh: This town rocks! It is transformative and very well thought out.

Hull: We saw several projects that were trying to look for an economic reason to do something. But they are still floating around. Here, they were really specific. That’s what’s so nice about it. And that specificity has all sorts of potential for this community. I thought they nailed it on this project.



Over the last four years, he has come to know quite well how such people don't necessarily want the same kind of progress as those on the other side of the Cascade Range. In some ways, Young also points out, the main reason the town's original form is still intact is that it is not located on a main road.

"Rural towns have a roughness that urbanites sometimes don't understand," Rowell says. "It is that roughness that makes a town like Fossil delightful, and that gives it a special quality of place."

At the same time, in architectural terms, this equates to an understandable suspicion that things will get "too fancy."

"How do you walk that line?" he asks. "You have to ask yourself: If you drive 300 miles to get there and it still looks like every other place, is it worth it?"

Part professional practice, part community service, and part research into rural Oregon culture, it is that sense of commitment that offers much hope for Fossil's future.

—David Moffat

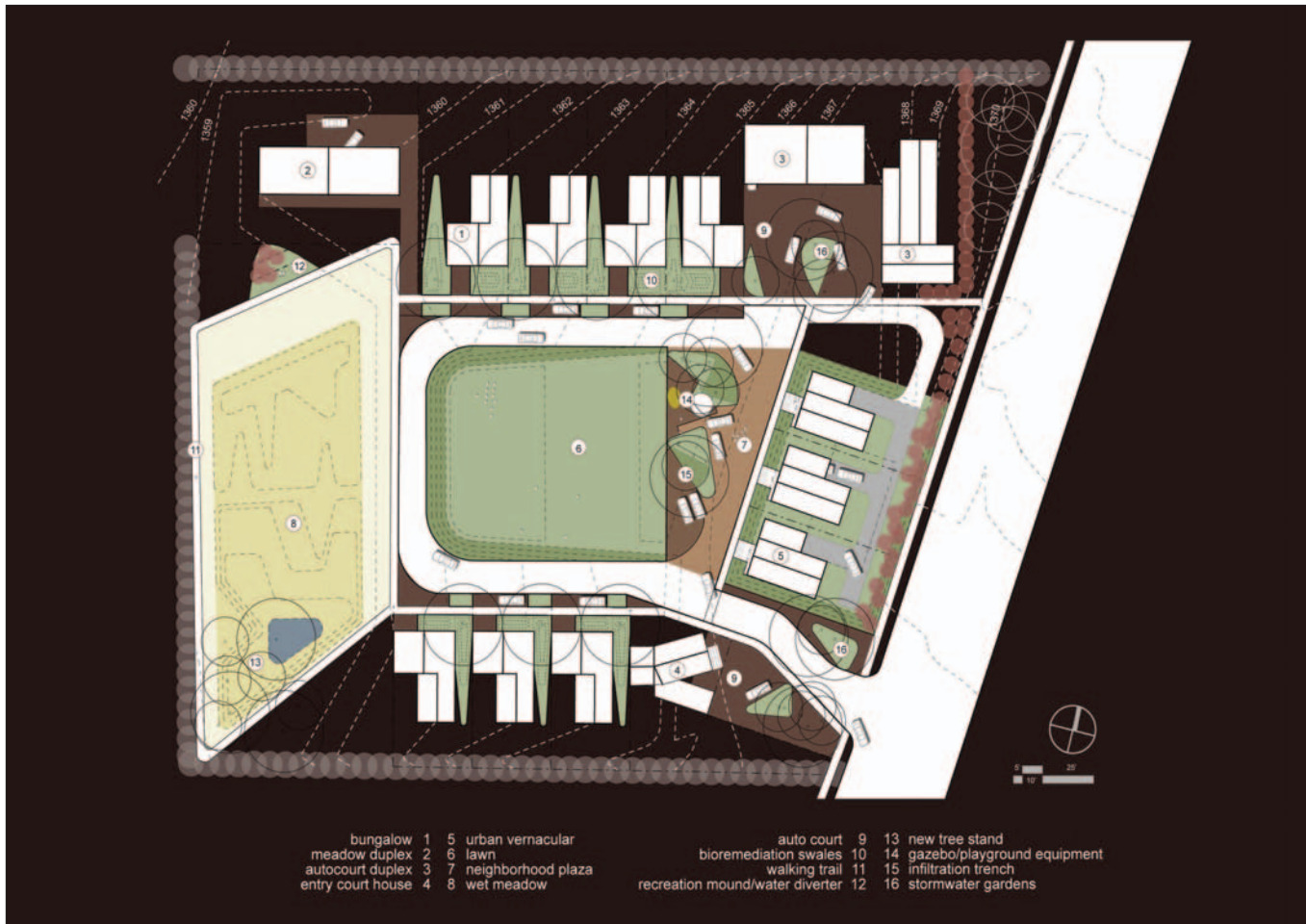
All images courtesy of Rowell Brokaw Architects.

Top: Construction of the new high school wing behind the town's existing historic K-8 school will allow consolidation of all of Fossil's education facilities at a single site, surrounding a sunny courtyard.

Opposite: The present high school is located at the top of Main Street (top site in drawing) next to existing fossil beds (shown as dotted outline). To allow establishment of the new Paleo Center, the plan calls for a new high school wing to be built on the grounds of the nearby K-8 school (lower site in drawing).

Habitat Trails—Rogers, Arkansas

Stephen Luoni and Aaron Gabriel, University of Arkansas
Community Design Center



For socially and environmentally conscious designers, every new plan to build on a greenfield site should beg a fundamental set of questions: Should we be building on such undeveloped sites at all? Are there more resourceful solutions, such as urban infill? How can we reconcile the act of building with a broader responsibility to keep the social and environmental costs of new development in check?

These are tough questions—none answerable by any single project. But as this winner of a Place Planning award shows, there are concrete ways to move—and build—out of this ethical dilemma. The key may be to develop in ways that look beyond simply minimizing a project's own

ecological footprint and, instead, seek to substantively improve the larger physical and social landscape.

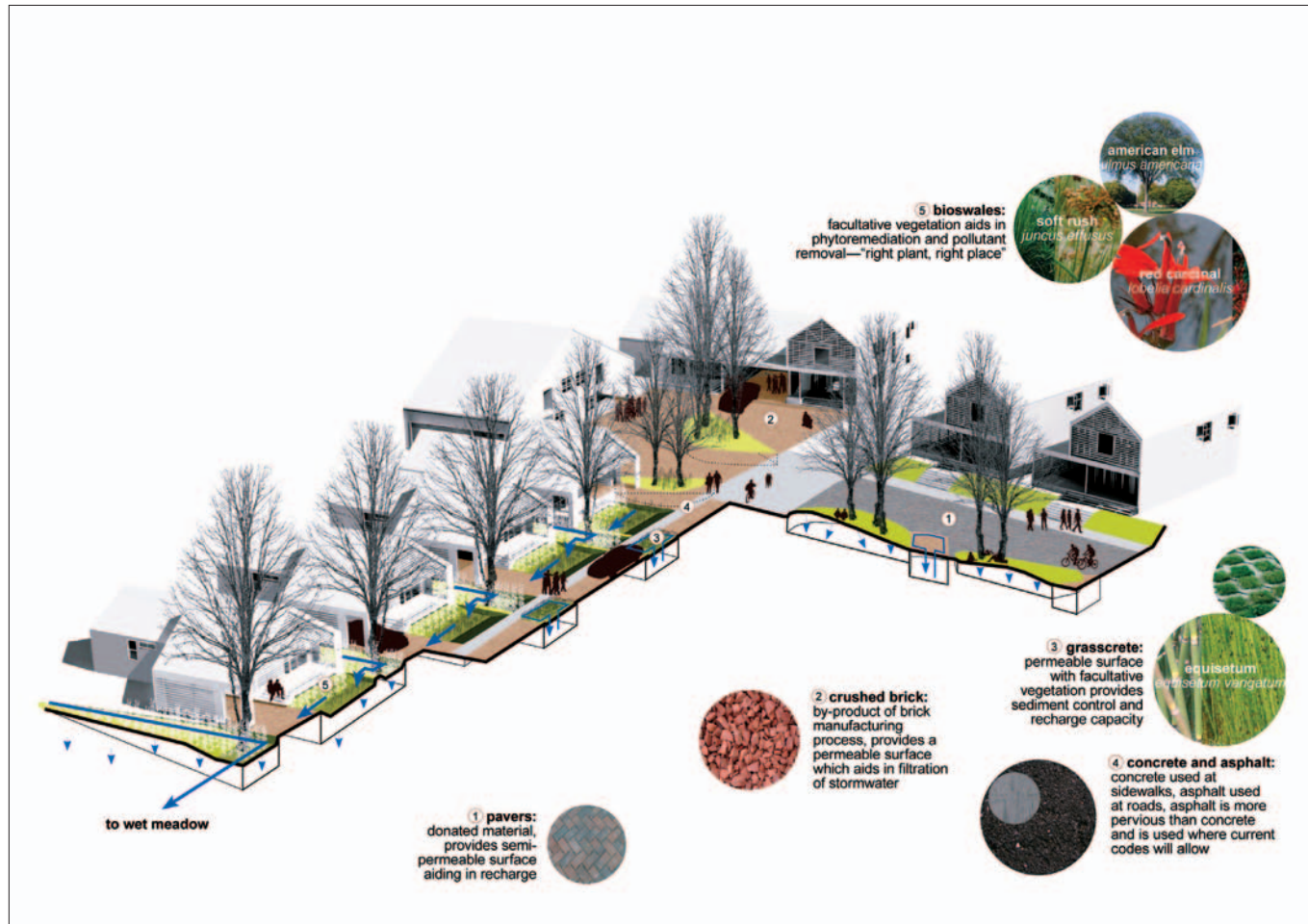
The plan for Habitat Trails clusters seventeen new homes on a five-acre former agricultural site in Rogers, a city of 40,000 in northwest Arkansas. As the first “green” residential development in the state, it paints a convincing picture of how a new development on previously open ground can do this.

The project involved investigation of four target fabrics: open space, green streets, hydrology, and vernacular house typologies. It proposed mechanisms to retain and treat all storm runoff on site; it set aside significant areas as common open space; and it offered schematic proposals for seven house types that could be built within a limited construction budget of \$55 per square foot.

The jury chose the project, submitted by Stephen Luoni, director of the University of Arkansas Community

Above: Site plan for the Habitat Trails development.

Opposite: A system of green streets and pervious surfaces will slow runoff and reduce the flow of pollutants into streams and lakes.



Design Center, because of its resourcefulness in weaving together the built and hydrological landscapes, its innovative adaptation of vernacular house typologies, and its commitment to pushing local government to adopt important modifications to existing sprawl-inducing zoning codes.

Treading Lightly, Cutting Deep

The client for the project was the well-known nonprofit housing developer Habitat for Humanity. Founded in 1976 by Christian missionaries, Habitat chapters around the United States and overseas build homes for the working poor through a program of donations, volunteer labor, and sweat equity by prospective homeowners.

The work of the Benton County, Arkansas, chapter had recently been stymied by increases in local land values, however. In effect, it had been priced out of local real estate markets by private developers who had been carpet-

ing the area with standard 200-to-400-house subdivisions, presumably in response to the opening of Wal-Mart's corporate headquarters in neighboring Bentonville. Debbie Wieneke, the chapter's executive director, eventually realized the chapter would need a new approach if it were to continue its mission to build affordable homes.

In a recent interview with the University of Arkansas student newspaper, Wieneke explained how the new project takes the chapter's effort to a whole new level. "Normally we have one simple home on one lot," She said. "Now, boom: we're going to put 17 families on five acres with a wetlands area in one corner, a neighborhood park in the middle, and a vast variety of plants, trees and landscaping that we've never had an opportunity to do before."

If Wal-Mart is to blame for pricing Habitat out of the local land market, the multinational retailer can also be credited for helping it get back in. It provided the largest



single donation for Habitat Trails—\$200,000—enough for Wieneke to buy a site for the project from Benton County. Wieneke then relied on Habitat’s national philanthropic network and donations from local small businesses to raise the \$1.8 million needed to build Habitat Trails.

According to Aaron Gabriel, Assistant Director of the UACDC, not only are the site’s seventeen homes clustered in a U-shape around an expansive “neighborhood lawn,” but most of the western edge of the site is given over to a newly

graded wetland largely intended to intercept and treat storm runoff from neighboring development. In all, more than one-third of the five-acre site is given over to these remediation areas which, in effect, act like giant sponges.

“Statistics say that stormwater has a contamination level twice that of raw sewage in the first half hour after it hits the ground,” Gabriel says. “By creating the infrastructure for bioremediation on this particular site, we are actually providing a hydrological service—which means improving water quality—for the whole city.”

The plan contained a number of other features designed to achieve these ends. Bioswale corridors, or gently sloped

Above: The autocourt house type integrates its porch with vehicle parking.

Sample Jury Comments—Habitat Trails

Kelbaugh: Here’s a case where the architecture is traditional but it is a little bit inventive. It’s fresh, not cloying. These are really clever little porches, and the horizontal lattices give it a more contemporary feel.

Hull: Absolutely.

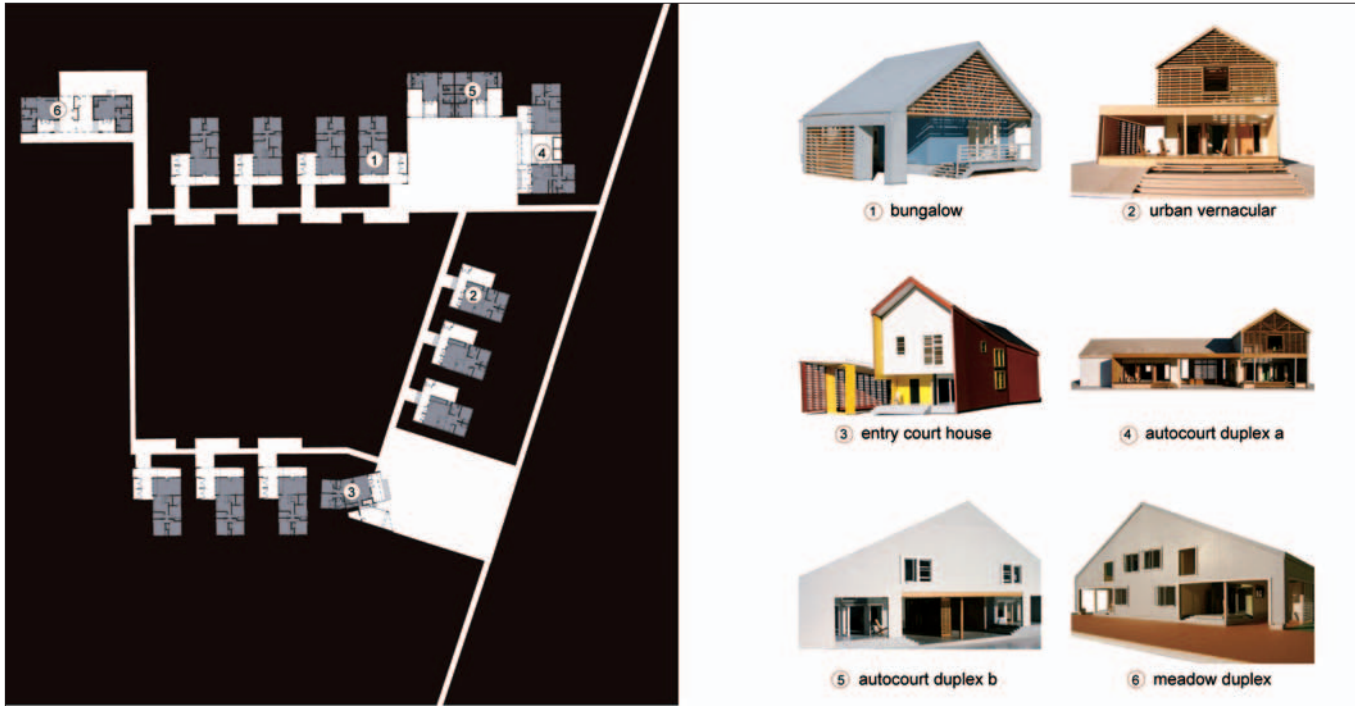
Kelbaugh: And this is the most interesting morphological survey I’ve seen of porches.

Ahrentzen: But I couldn’t figure out what they were trying to with that study.

Kelbaugh: It’s not social. It’s strictly morphological—a real tour de force. And every one of them has a different sort of porch, a contemporary interpretation of these older porches. It’s normative and inventive. It’s also a pretty good little plan.

Jones: I thought the novel thing is, as far as I know, Habitat for Humanity never really deals with site aspects. So here they were trying to bring together the building and the land.

Kelbaugh: Finally, a Habitat project that adds up to more than the sum of its parts. I think this is the most amazing Habitat project I’ve ever seen.



areas filled with vegetation to aid in the removal of silt and pollutants, are located adjacent to houses, and double as front and side yards. Infiltration trenches and stormwater gardens add variety to streetscapes. And its streets are paved with pervious material—crushed brick and alternating patches of grass—that add color and texture to the project while slowing the flow of surface water.

The idea was to treat stormwater runoff “as a resource, not a liability,” Gabriel says—and in the process, create a new model for the relationship between architecture and infrastructure. The integrative approach also means adding to the city’s recreational amenities, since both large reme-

diation areas on site double as neighborhood parks.

Inspired by Wendell Berry’s adage that a “good solution in one pattern preserves the integrity of the pattern that contains it,” the plan was also cost effective. At a modest price of \$250/linear foot, Habitat Trails’ stormwater management system costs about half that of a standard curb-gutter-pipe solution.

Above: Designs for housing typologies based on vernacular models are a key feature of Habitat Trails.

Ahrentzen: But I don’t think about it as the one about porches. This is a way to make an architectural statement on a really plain house, I agree. But what impressed me was the multiple layering that they are doing and the ecological orientation. They are trying to create a small neighborhood prototype for doing that.

McNally: I have a masters student who looked at two Habitat projects in Oakland and was interested in sustainable design. She wanted to do a pattern book of

some sort, and try to understand how people who live in those units would be willing to modify their sites. This would be perfect for her.

Kelbaugh: Too often pattern books are so literally historical. This is a breakdown of that.

Ahrentzen: Also, this is really site specific, going back to the nature of place.

Hull: For me, there were two sides to this project. One was this idea about solving issues of surface water

and runoff. But I also liked the sense of community it gave, combining sustainable ideas and social ideas. I don’t see the porches as being superficial. They have social content and solve some things about shade and outdoor spaces. I also thought they were a great binder for the project—rather than all roofs shall be this, or whatever. I thought they put a couple of really good ideas together.

Porches for Humanity

Following Habitat protocol, Wieneke and her colleagues will choose Habitat Trails' resident families from a pool of local applicants based on financial need and the ability to make required low monthly mortgage payments. Eleven of the families will occupy three-bedroom single-family homes, and six will move into two-bedroom homes in three duplex structures. The size of the homes range from 1,100 to 1,400 square feet.

The designs for these houses were based on a series of models derived loosely from local vernacular prototypes. The innovative nature of this adaptation process was praised by several jury members. What you don't see at Habitat Trails is the romanticized historicism of houses at Seaside or Celebration; nor is there any sign of tongue-in-cheek post-modernism. The UACDC team instead concentrated on reviving an architectural type: the house with a front porch.

Design research included detailed analysis of historic American porch traditions, and *Porches*, a tidy 76-page publication accompanied the Habitat Trails submission. It studied some seventy porch types in morphological terms, as the interface between private and public space, where "each realm is projected onto the other." It also discussed porches in terms of their social value in the American South as meeting area and places for the display patriotism and wealth.

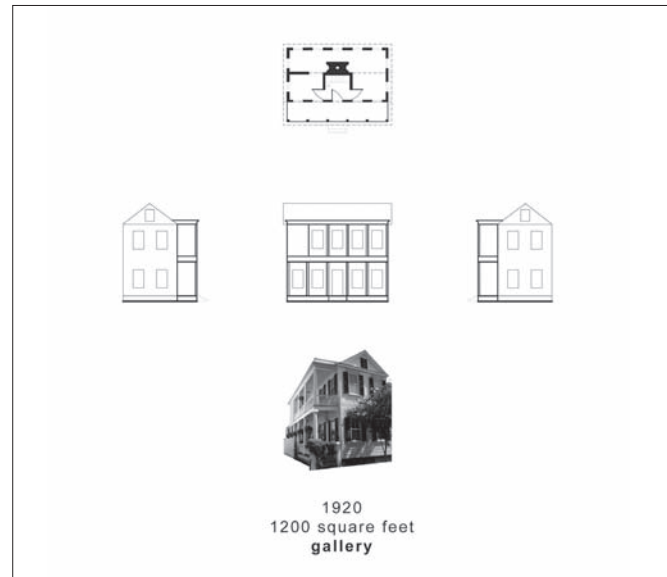
The plan was not explicit as to how the study informed the design of Habitat Trails—except for the obvious fact that each house includes one. Depending on the prototype, these are either rectangular or L-shaped, and made of slatted wood to provide shading and privacy.

But the most innovative aspect of the porch-houses is that even though they harken to traditional modes of encounter, they maintain a welcoming attitude toward that most elemental symbol of American modernism: the car. In the "autocourt duplex," for example, the porch frames two covered parking spaces, increasing its public/private zone. Thus, when the parking spaces are not occupied, the porch and parking spaces can act as one big space that encourages social interaction.

A Concerted Effort for Change

In developing the project, Luoni and Gabriel's team of twelve architecture students collaborated with the University of Arkansas' Ecological Engineering Group and Division of Agriculture, as well as industry consultants.

Their most prized collaborator, however, may have been their lawyer. By annexing the land and rezoning it for residential use—just in time for groundbreaking last April—the City of Rogers showed clear support for Habitat's new clustered subdivision model. But according to the *Rogers Home-*



town News, the Habitat team requested dozens of changes to city zoning codes, and a total of 34 were finally approved.

In most cases the changes were required to increase the compactness of the project and decrease its environmental impact. For example, to slow traffic and decrease runoff, a change was needed to allow interior streets to be twenty feet wide rather than the standard thirty. And although such changes have only been approved on a conditional basis, the city has agreed to consider formally incorporating them into their codes if they prove successful at Habitat Trails.

"Rogers was ready for a new idea," Gabriel says. "We illustrated the project in a way that the city thought made sense. Ours was a model that committee members could really get behind."

"It helped a lot that we were working for a nonprofit developer," he adds. "It was clearly not a situation where we were asking for variances to increase profit."

Over the next year, seventeen families will move into the houses at Habitat Trails. But a wider public could ultimately benefit. While it may not provide a comprehensive alternative to greenfield development in Arkansas, or Benton County for that matter, Habitat Trails represents a collaborative effort to raise awareness of the importance of socially responsible design.

—Julie Kim

All images courtesy of University of Arkansas Community Design Center

Above: The work included detailed research into historic porch typologies.

Places for People 2004—Melbourne, Australia

Gehl Architects and the City of Melbourne



There was a time when the images of “urbanism” and “Australia” met only in postcards of the Sydney skyline. City plans from Australia that interpreted international trends may have appeared in books published north of the equator—from Charles Compton Reade’s Garden City plan for Colonel Light Gardens to Walter Burley Griffin’s expansive City Beautiful plan for Canberra. But for years a distinctly Australian urbanism was left largely to the imagination.

Places for People 2004 is proof of how times have changed. Produced by Gehl Architects for the City of Melbourne (the capital of the southeastern state of Victoria), it documents a decade’s worth of publicly encouraged urban change based on the desires of the government and on recommendations made by Gehl in 1994. It is a testament to how good research can inform high-quality urban design, and how both research and design can act in tandem as part of a continuous, on-going process of urban change.

Above: Melbourne from the air.

Melbourne, 1994 and 2004

Places for People 2004 begins with a quote from a 1978 newspaper article that laments how Melbourne’s city center had become “empty” and “useless”—an evaluation that might have fit many American cities of the time. During the 1980s the city government realized the importance of saving this urban core. In 1993 Copenhagen architect Jan Gehl was invited to Melbourne to do that for which he had become very well known in Europe: studying public space and public life within the built realm and utilizing gathered data for proactive urban change.

The result of these efforts was Places for People: Melbourne City 1994. This report provided in-depth documentation of the character of Melbourne’s streets, paths, parks, and other public spaces. It also made a series of recommendations for improving the city’s pedestrian network, linking the city core to the adjacent Yarra River, and activating streets, arcades and alleyways.

Places for People 2004 provides a ten-year follow-up and reassessment of these efforts. It documents physical and demographic changes since 1994; presents the results

of public-life research conducted in the same locations and with the same methodologies as in 1994; and recommends future structural and policy changes. The ultimate goal of these efforts is to create spaces that are inviting, comfortable, accessible, equitable, safe, secure and meaningful.

It is rare that a consultant is allowed the chance to revisit earlier work so assiduously. The 1994 report set ten-year targets for attracting people to the city, and established benchmarks against which to measure progress. The jury praised Gehl and Associates for their analysis of earlier recommendations and for their honest commentary on which did and did not predict success. This is a much-needed form of analysis, they noted, in a field prone to changing theory and untested claims.

The jury also praised the City of Melbourne for not only maintaining a sustained commitment to rekindling public life, but for thoroughly utilizing the 1994 recommendations in programs to regulate the built environment, encourage new investment, and develop the public realm. Urban character often takes many years to change, and the fruits of this commitment are now finally becoming evident. The city's tangible, on-the-ground transformation was praised by several jury members who had been there a decade ago and again recently.

Renaissance of Public Life

Since the 1994 report, numerous changes have occurred in central Melbourne. While the 1994 *Places for People* began on a somber note, *Places for People 2004* presents an optimistic picture, showing how positive, designed change has been reshaping the heart of a metropolitan area that now covers more than 3,400 square miles and is home to 3.6 million residents.¹

One of Gehl's credos is that people like to go where other people are. Today the city center is increasingly becoming a place full of people. The number of downtown residential dwellings increased from 736 in 1992 to 9,900 in 2002. More importantly, these new residences are not concentrated in a few developments, but distributed throughout the central area. Additionally, the number of college students (a demographic now coveted in downtown development schemes in the United States) either living in or attending academic institutions in the central city has increased by 64 percent since 1993.

The public spaces in the city center have improved as well. The length of the network of lanes, arcades and alleys has increased from 300 meters (984 feet) to 3.4 kilometers (2.1 miles), and the quality of the urban environment along this network has improved markedly as well. Streets

have been physically enhanced with materials such as local "bluestone" paving and with street furniture regulated by new public codes. They have also been planted with numerous new trees, enlivened with public art (introduced as part of a city art strategy), and activated with both new commercial establishments and newly opened facades retrofitted as part of an "active edges" policy.

Melbourne's Yarra River, which runs through downtown, now has new promenades. Parks throughout the city are being reconsidered as part of a network of open spaces. And, not incidentally, visitors and residents have many more places to go, including museums and galleries, an aquarium, a library, and a casino.

The list of successes goes on, from additional benches to new tramways, pedestrian-friendly lunchtime street closures to full new public squares.

Data and Recommendations

The basis of the 2004 report is a location-specific comparison of the presence of people in the city center. The effort incorporates a great diversity of locations, from streets to bridges to pedestrian malls. This provides a fascinating, and useful, comparison between public life in 1994 and today.

Overall, since 1993, weekday pedestrian traffic in the city center has increased 39 percent during the day, and 98 percent during the evening. Some locations such as Swanston Street now host more pedestrians per day than Regent Street in London. So-called "stationary activities," such as standing, sitting, and utilizing cafes, have increased considerably as well.

Such data shape a new set of recommendations that in some cases highlight weaknesses in the 1994 report, and in others respond to new challenges. The report points out that, since 1994, not all locations have seen an increase in pedestrian traffic; not all portions of downtown have experienced an equally impressive amount of revitalization; and not all of the development that has occurred may be considered beneficial.

With these concerns in mind, *Places for People 2004* recommends expanding certain programs, such as the integration of the pedestrian network, lunchtime street closures, and provision of new benches. It also recommends more focused initiatives such as providing links to public transportation, upgrading cityscapes along major thoroughfares and retail corridors, linking the Yarra River and Docklands to the rest of the city, controlling commercial advertising, and increasing the regulation of building height and form.

Rhetoric into Method

Of course, there are areas where a strategy like that of *Places for People 2004* is open to criticism. Its recommendations are focused almost exclusively on urban uses associated with consumption and recreation, as opposed to production. Issues of affordability and gentrification, now discussed as a matter of course in American redevelopment documents, play no significant role in it. And issues of sustainability, while mentioned, are not fleshed out with much substance. But what is important is that Gehl and his team utilized their considerable research skills and experience to help a community move from where it was to where it wanted to be, and in the process created a method for others to follow.

Based on a rhetorical expression, “places for people,” they took a proclaimed problem, applied both theory and public opinion as to what an ideal solution might be, then used on-going, place-specific research to shape the transformation of a real world place toward that ideal.

In the literature of design, “the people” often appear as little more than a rhetorical device—an ethereal, fictive force, ready to support the efforts of the heroic designer fighting the enemy of the day. *Places for People 2004* takes this chimera and grants it meaning and substance.

Australian Urbanism

It is an unfortunate and unfair fact that for much of the twentieth century the native urban visions of Commonwealth nations such as New Zealand, Canada and Australia were framed by the two foreign, yet highly exportable con-



Above: The project has included a major effort to add trees to downtown streets.

Opposite: The work documented a remarkable increase in public life between 1993 and 2004, as measured in pedestrians per day.

cepts of urbanism found in Europe and the United States. *Places for People 2004* is evidence of a different future.

Urban design publications produced by New Zealand’s Ministry for the Environment have been appearing in classrooms in the United States, making the streets of Wellington as representative of that country as its otherworldly natural landscapes.² In Canada, attention is

Sample Juror Comments—Places for People, Melbourne 2004

Kelbaugh: In some ways this is the most typical example of an EDRA/*Places* prize winner. But in some ways it’s a duplication of work done in Copenhagen.

Ahrentzen: I use the Copenhagen work in my class, and in some ways this is just as thorough. It’s an excellent piece of work. It’s very rich in detail and uses very simple graphics to make striking representations of some dramatic things that are happening.

McNally: I would feel great if it were submitted by the city. I would like to acknowledge that.

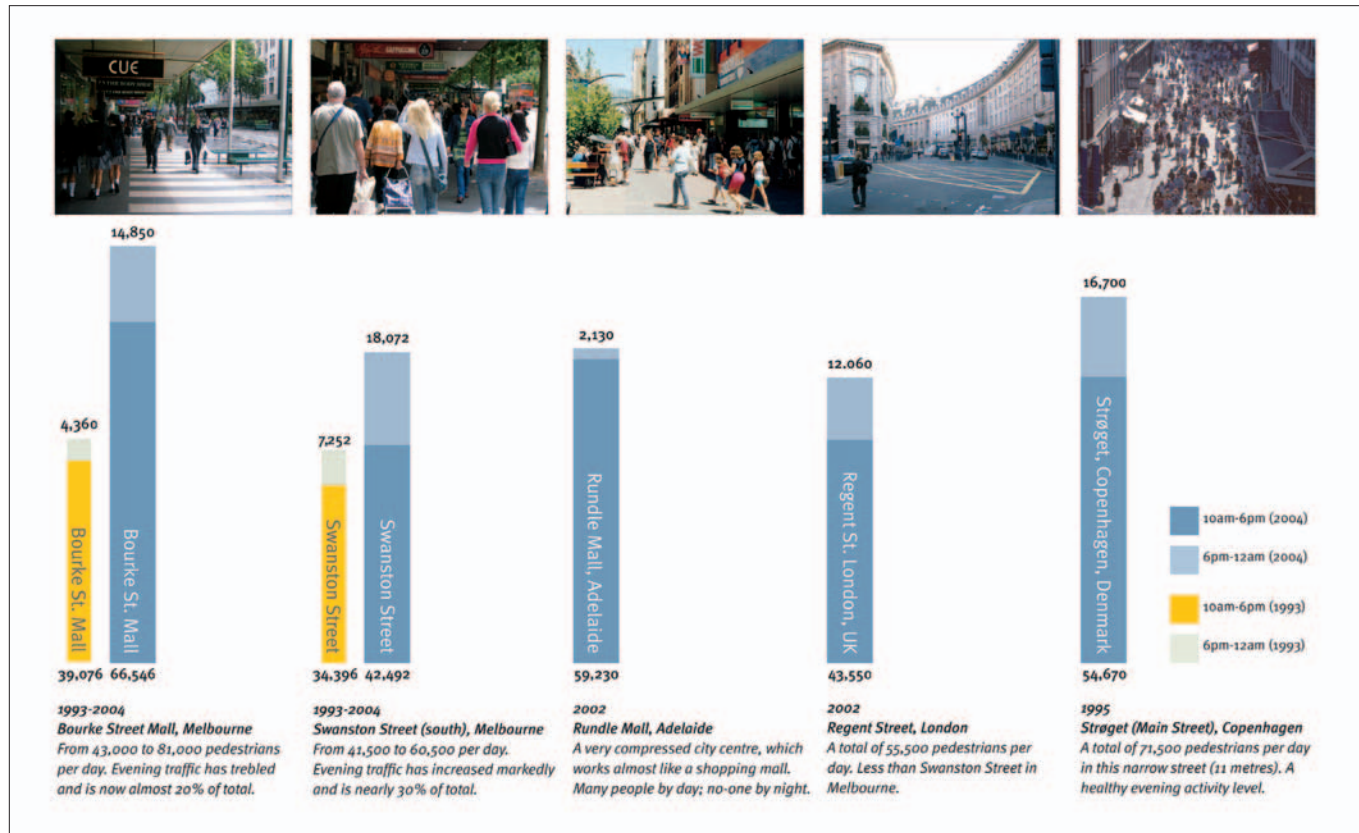
Kelbaugh: What Melbourne is doing is remarkable, especially what they did over the railroad tracks. Its very ambitious.

Jones: In terms of the long-term evolution of a really wonderful place that meets all the public-realm, pedestrian criteria, it’s outstanding. The tools have been

tested and applied, and Melbourne is on the march.

Ahrentzen: That’s an interesting way to look at it—in the long run. The Copenhagen work was more about tools, but this is more about how to use those tools to influence policy. It’s a lifelong work of keen observation and then really dissecting particular places.

Jones: I think he ought to be given an award for convincing the power structure of Melbourne.



moving beyond the gleaming skyline of Toronto and the preserved Old World streetscapes of Montreal to new definitions of North American urbanism being formulated in Vancouver and the creative planning experiments emerging in far-northern locations such as Iqaluit.³ In Australia, cities such as Brisbane and Perth are asserting their place in the international scene and re-creating an interna-

tional image that no longer frames the entire nation as the duality of Sydney-Outback. But it is Melbourne that has truly taken the prize of late, literally and figuratively.

Places for People, 2004 has been lauded in both the mainstream Australian press as well as specialty publications such as *Urban Design Forum* and *Property Victoria*. It has won the Australia Award for Urban Design from the Urban

Melbourne was derelict for years and years. It was the pits.

Kelbaugh: I was there about ten years ago, and they have done a lot of stuff he was talking about.

Jones: Which is totally remarkable given the way our political/municipal structure has changed and flip-flopped.

Hull: They needed money to do that, didn't they?

McNally: And commitment and political will.

Ahrentzen: They hired the right person.

Jones: And that right person somehow sold the power structure on the simple notion that cities are for people. So all these things that they measure and have done are people based, pedestrian based.

McNally: I would say that we are adding to our list of awards criteria: research that impels change, impels the power structure to do something.

Hull: If you are successful in one place, that does not stop you from using the same methodology in another.

Kelbaugh: We could make it clear we are not awarding this for its template or its tools. It's for the successful application with great outcomes for a particular city.



Design Chapter of the Planning Institute of Australia and the Award for Excellence for Research and Communication in Landscape Architecture from the Victoria chapter of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.

According to Gehl: “When cities in good old Europe can do it, and when major cities in Australia can do it, then any city anywhere, of any size should be able to succeed with a people-oriented strategy.”

Urbanism may mean something different on the banks of the Yarra than it does along the Hudson or around the North Sea. But the success of Melbourne not only proves Gehl correct, it speaks to a future when those of us in the rest of the world may someday be importing expertise from Melbourne just as we once imported it from Copenhagen.

—Jason Alexander Hayter

All images courtesy of Gehl Architects.

Notes

1. “Melbourne—A Snapshot,” City of Melbourne website: <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au>
2. See, for example, Ministry for the Environment (New Zealand), “The Value of Urban Design: The Economic, Environmental and Social Benefits of Urban Design” (Wellington, NZ: Ministry for the Environment, 2005).
3. See, for example, Elizabeth MacDonald, “Street-Facing Dwelling Units and Livability: The Impacts of Emerging Building Types in Vancouver’s New High-Density Residential Neighborhoods,” In *Journal of Urban Design*, Volume 10, No. 1 (February, 2005), pp. 13–38; and Jason Hayter, “Iqaluit Core Area and Capital District Redevelopment Plan—Nunavut, Canada,” *Places*, Volume 17, Number 3 (Fall 2005), pp. 18–23.

Above: Among the project’s goals have been 24-hour attractions, improved streets, a citywide arts program, new squares, promenades and parks, and more places to sit and pause.

Placetelling

Keith Diaz-Moore



The EDRA/*Places* Awards have at their heart the creation and experience of good places. The 2006 awards jury was held at Washington State University's Interdisciplinary Design Institute, located in Spokane, Washington—just such a good place.

Spokane is an amazing mid-size city whose renaissance aim is to live up to its slogan “near nature; near perfect.” However, like many other cities of the American West, its story is one about a *genius loci* of place that is bountiful, but where human settlement has often operated to extract rather than sustain.

The story of Spokane is an apt prelude to some general reflections about the awards program, which were conveyed to students of the Interdisciplinary Design Institute at a plenary session held following the judging of the entries.

Spokane, Washington: A Placetelling

The site of Spokane was initially that of a Native American trading post. It occupied a place on the Spokane River where Spokane Falls provided a plentiful supply of salmon.

The first permanent European settler there was James Glover. He came west via the Oregon Trail, and like so many other trailblazers, he simply had a dream. When he bought the land that would become downtown Spokane from squatters in 1873, he believed the natural beauty of the Spokane river valley and the timber and mining resources from the nearby Selkirk Mountains was a true gift that would provide the basis for a vital and prosperous new city.

At first Glover was wrong. After four years, the population had grown to only twenty people. But when the railroad came in 1881, Spokane's population swelled quickly to 21,000 by 1889, with residences and businesses built as fast as possible.

As with many American cities in the late 1800s, Spokane's initial rapid growth was cut short by a great fire. But rather than slipping into despair after this 1889 calamity, Spokane ambitiously planned an Industrial Exposition in 1890 to illustrate the confidence of its citizenry.

The following thirty years bore out this faith in the future. The year 1893 brought electric streetcars, leading by the 1910s to one of the most extensive systems in the country. Through the 1890s and early 1900s great investments were made in city parks that expressed the love of the citizenry for nature. By 1910, powered by cheap, plentiful hydroelectric power from the river, Spokane had a population of 104,000, and was a center for trade and commerce.

Unfortunately, the river also became the city's sewer; and to this day the Spokane River remains a significantly polluted waterway. Also, as was the case in many other cities during the mid-twentieth century, outside interests convinced Spokane to replace its trolley lines, powered

Left: Spokane's connection to its river was once severed by a series of railroad tracks that created a “great wall.”

Right: Relocation of the train tracks allowed creation of a river park. All that remains is the campanile. Photos courtesy of author.



by local electricity, with autobuses, reliant on petroleum brought in from outside.

Pride of place was also sacrificed to a regional transportation infrastructure. For decades the railroads remodeled, crisscrossed and polluted the Spokane River with a double-deck of graded trackbeds known as “the great wall of Spokane.” The Interstate Highway system followed in the mid-1960s, tearing a swath through downtown and destroying the Olmsted brother’s Liberty Park, the jewel of the city’s beloved park system.

Construction of I-90 also facilitated the hemorrhage of commerce from downtown. Throughout the mid-twentieth century, as the city turned its back on the river, literally and figuratively, Spokane stagnated. In its first forty years, through 1920, Spokane grew to 162,000 people. But its population had only reached 170,000 by 1970.

The railroads and the Interstate had remade Spokane into the inconsequential inner working of a regional machine, severing the city’s original connection with its natural setting. However, in the 1970s city residents worked hard to relocate five rail lines from downtown and reclaim the banks of the river. This became the site for the 1974 World’s Exposition, which they gave an ecological focus. After the Expo, the land became the 100-acre Riverfront Park.

By embracing the river this park allows it to again be seen as the Native Americans and James Glover had seen it, as a gift. And the past couple of decades have built on this view. They have emphasized river clean-up, attempts to return the wildlife to the waterway, development of the Centennial Trail (a bike/pedestrian way which runs along the river), and the envisioning of the last piece of the Olmsted brothers’ vision for Spokane, the Great River Gorge Park.

Architecturally, the downtown has also had a renaissance over the past six years, and great effort has been expended on rehabilitation of the early-twentieth-century housing stock.

Spokane’s best times have happened when its citizens have cherished the river and its bountiful natural setting. Its worst times have come when it has turned its back on the river, believing that technological contraptions, whether they are the railroad or the automobile, afford greater freedom and convenience than the river in its own backyard.

This approach provides only an illusion of freedom. It has made Spokane dependent on the state and federal governments and multinational corporations for the supply of services and infrastructure. And, in deeper terms, it embodies a “taking,” robbing the local *genius loci* and

leaving the city and its residents unwealthy and unhealthy.

However, that was mid- and late-twentieth-century Spokane: stagnant and depressed. The story of Spokane has now turned a page, bringing a new bountifulness in recent decades. One can only imagine the further development of the story once the next page is turned.

Placetelling Elements

I tell this story not only to create a sense of understanding of Spokane, but also to illustrate that what makes places are their ever-unfolding qualities.

Donlyn Lyndon has elegantly defined place as “a space that can be remembered.”¹ *How* we remember is through stories. In *The Literary Mind*, Mark Turner wrote: “Narrative imagining—story—is the fundamental instrument of thought....It is our chief means of looking into the future, of predicting, of planning, and of explaining....Most of our experience, our knowledge, and our thinking is organized as stories.”²

This connection between place and story became apparent during the jury process of the 2006 EDRA/*Places* Awards. It was clear that an important but implicit criterion in the jury deliberation was the quality of the story being told. What makes a project compelling? Moving? Memorable? Why does it involve a place that people should know and care about?

Through the discussion of the eventual winners at a plenary panel with the jurors in front of students the Monday morning following the jury weekend, several themes of good place storytelling became recurrent: backstory, a context in conflict, a resolution rooted in archetypal experience.

Backstory. Without question, each award winner compellingly presented a backstory presenting what had happened previously to create the need for inquiry, whether through design investigation or a more formal program of research.

The Sense of Place project of the University of Calgary Urban Lab developed a good backstory describing the changing nature of the Province of Alberta as it cel-

Opposite: Typical of Spokane’s self-rediscovery has been the renovation of a prominent industrial facility that once provided steam heat to most major downtown buildings. Steam Plant Square won the 2001 National Preservation Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the 2001 Award of Merit from the American Institute of Architects, Pacific and Northwest Region. Its dramatic Steam Plant Grill, shown here, includes the reuse of furnaces, boilers, and towering smokestacks as meeting and dining areas. Photo courtesy of Ron Wells & Company.

ebred its centennial. The set of initiatives undertaken by this project collectively create a gripping history of the ever-changing cultural landscape that is Alberta—from Canada's frontier, to Canada's breadbasket, to its diversity of landscapes from natural to rural to urban today. Such a backstory makes clear that the views one has of a landscape reflect not only one's worldviews, but also shape one's sense of place—and in so doing, one's sense of self.

Places for People 2004 illustrated a much more common approach to setting backstory in environmental design research. It is a follow-up to a design proposal by Gehl and Associates for the city of Melbourne that set ten-year benchmarks. The present study revisits those goals and initiatives.

Context in Conflict. What spurs a person to action is recognizing a conflicting situation demanding resolution. As such, a value determination is being made, for it is a person's values that shapes the lens through which they assess each experience.

The Buckeye Village Community Center entry by the Ohio State University's Kay Bea Jones presented the design for a community center that provides childcare facilities and social and academic gathering areas for single-parent, low-income graduate students. It is located on a site where post-World War II, Ohio State had built housing for the families of veterans returning to college via the GI bill. Fifty years later, the university viewed its usefulness as having been drained away, and the property better seen as an asset to leverage into commercial development. Yet the meaningful content of the site's history reflects its character is one to support access to higher education for nontraditional student populations. The design intervention became compelling by seizing this site's marrow and resolving the external conflicts which were obscuring this fundamental nature of the site.

Similarly, the Habitat Trails project attempts to navigate the treacherous terrain of affordable housing, environmental sustainability, and vernacular architecture, yielding a rich solution with numerous creative permutations possible.

Archetypal Experience. The jury discussion also made clear that in each case, the place narrative somehow made a visceral connection with its readers. The Paleo Project in Fossil, Oregon, describes a project that yes, is a learning center, but is truly about a small, socially and economically depressed town yearning to enhance its self-esteem through a sense of place identity. This project embraces the uniqueness of the site's character, involving precious

fossil beds that nature left them. In so doing, it allows the citizens of Fossil to embrace their uniquely bestowal as essential to their place identity.

Compassion in Architecture, by Stephen Verderber, is a book that argues that the neglect in providing community-based healthcare in the poorer communities of Louisiana has had and would continue to have devastating impacts on those in society who are on the precipice of disaster. Given that this book was completed one month prior to Hurricane Katrina, it firmly evoked the sense of tragic irony within the jurors.

Coda

These three elements—backstory, context in conflict, and archetypal experience—together help make each of these projects imageable, visceral and therefore memorable. If place is indeed a "space that can be remembered," a place must speak profoundly about the human condition. Herein lies the importance of good research in placemaking: to understand the situation so well as to as accurately and emotively identify its core essence.

The 2006 EDRA/*Places* award winners go beyond that high calling however, by doing so both reverently and poetically. Together with previous EDRA/*Places* Awards winners, they serve as exemplars of what may be termed "placetelling." The evidenced respect for the cultural landscape, the people who enliven it, and the meaningful content that connect the two may be what sets this awards program apart from any other. Perhaps these qualities distinguish a good place from just a place.

As for Spokane? Its next chapter has yet to be written, but I hope those who will collaborate in shaping its future will have the sensibilities of the award-winning designers and researchers discussed here, making it, in Ray Oldenburg's words, a "great, good place."³

Notes

1. Donlyn Lyndon, as cited in Barton Phelps, "Serial Colonizations, Succession Landscapes, and the California Problem," *Places*, Volume 17, Number 3 (Fall 2005), p.74.
2. Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 4-5.
3. The term comes from Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts and How They Get You through the Day* (New York: Paragon House, 1989).

Chapters in Compassion

Marcia McNally



Stephen Verderber's award-winning book *Compassion in Architecture: Evidence-Based Design for Health in Louisiana* led me to think about the important and misunderstood role of compassion in design. As a teacher of community design it is a challenge to effectively demonstrate to students how to use both head and heart in problem solving. Verderber's book is a wonderfully told tale of a sorry period in state-supported health care in the United States, providing timely, carefully gathered evidence about Louisiana's institutionalized neglect of the public good. It also sets up an interesting discussion about the role of compassion and passion in professional practice.¹

According to the 2004 *American Heritage College Dictionary*, compassion is "deep awareness of the suffering of another coupled with the wish to relieve it." Passion, on the other hand, is "a powerful emotion, such as love, joy, hatred, or anger."

To sort it out how these might be applied to design, I consulted with an expert—my husband, landscape architect Randy Hester. His views on the subject were quite strong: "In doing design you are creating something. Anything

worth anything is a passionate act. If made without passion it is utilitarian and relatively uninspired. One of the great sources of inspiration is passion. But it isn't enough on its own to do design. You need intelligence, knowledge, and a deep understanding of the problem."

And that is where the compassion comes in—that and being able to identify and respond to the real needs of those who will use the places we plan and design.

Chapter 1: Making Distinctions

My first instinct for this essay was to ask a public health expert to read the book, and then have a talk about the need for compassion in our respective professions. The opportunity presented itself in the form of Dr. Cherri Hobgood, a doctor of emergency medicine at the University of North Carolina. Hobgood also happens to be

Above: Public health clinics in Louisiana serve a poor, frequently minority population, whose needs are often ignored by other providers. Photo from *Compassion in Architecture*, courtesy of the photo archives of the Morehouse Parish Health Unit.

married to one of my husband's cousins, and she lives down the road from us in Hester's Store, North Carolina.

When we met last summer on my front porch, I quickly learned that the compassion-passion dialectic is very much alive in medical practice. From Hobgood's perspective, compassion is still the first instinct of many in her field of emergency medicine: "Anytime, anywhere, anyone. You don't say no to anyone in emergency but we are the only ones in medicine who do this anymore. I just interviewed someone for a job who is being forced to give up 'charity cases' because the numbers don't pan out [even though] the patients' situations haven't changed."

Her words brought back for me Verderber's depiction of the "plight of the minority and medically underserved" in Louisiana. But as Hobgood went on to tell me, things aren't necessarily so different in the affluent Research Triangle area of North Carolina.

"47 million people in the U.S. are uninsured. So we are getting people who are a lot sicker by the time they come to the hospital than they might be if they had access to routine health care. In 1995 Carolina built a brand new, beautiful facility. Within two years we had stretchers in the hall. [That was when] we realized we couldn't build our way out of [this] crisis."

This was shocking, and made me feel a little superficial for asking the next question—whether she felt there was a role for passion in medicine. I assumed the answer would be no, that everything had to be by the book. Instead, she was adamant to the contrary: "It is the fuel. It's the thing that keeps you going at 4 a.m. It is a belief that there is something bigger than you, that taking care of people is important. It is juice, it is the creativity. You have to be creative in addressing the 'what if?'"

Chapter 2: Compassion 101

Earlier in the summer Hobgood had regaled us with stories that made TV hospital shows seem tame. One in particular had stuck with me; it involved a medical student who was visibly shaken when he returned from notifying a family that their son had died. This caused Hobgood to realize that Carolina students received no training in dealing with the human side of emergency—a drunk, a rape victim, let alone a death. As a response, Hobgood developed a course in death notification which involves "simulated survivors," a trained variant of the "standardized patient," with whom students can practice protocols particular to this delicate task.

This process has become somewhat of a sensation in her circles, so I asked Hobgood how she would teach Compas-

sion 101. Her ideas reminded me of exercises that a colleague, Clare Cooper Marcus, developed to help students discover the childhood spatial experiences that influence their design instincts.

"I think I need a fertile field to start with," Hobgood said. "A strong belief system in my students. So I just try to tease out the part of them that I know is there and play on it. In doing the death notification training I get them to face their own death, to face the possibility of their failure as a doctor, and answer the question 'what if that had been me?'"

Apparently, this must be a hard sell with some of her students. And so she also makes a point of addressing the question of "what's in it for me?" Specifically, she continued, "I try to make the case that compassion is something that will keep them out of court. It is a translational skill that has value."

Certainly, the techniques (or "technology") of community design will not protect practitioners in my field from litigation. But they are a necessary currency in much of design practice today with national and legislation mandating public participation. Many firms boldly assert a design philosophy that involves working with a community to find the right solution. But are they all doing it well, or compassionately?

I felt it was important to run this by Verderber. In particular I wanted to ask about the methods described in his book to see if they were distinct from social factors techniques and space-programming practice. And I wanted to know how to teach these skills, and how to get the social factors data into the design and planning tool kit.

Verderber started by saying that the methods he advocates couldn't merely be a mechanical process, "because then it is aloof." And like Hobgood, he gets his students to role play, do predesign workshops and scenario building. He wants them to "walk in the shoes of others—social workers, psychologists, doctors, public health specialists." This is a lesson he learned from Cooper Marcus, with whom he has collaborated on hospice designs. It was she who encouraged him to put a face on his research by including interviews, knowing the impact of personal testimony is hard to avoid.

I also learned from Verderber that not everything is going smoothly with the \$3 million neighborhood planning process the Rockefeller Foundation has funded in New Orleans. Just the week before our conversation he had met with one of the design teams that had been selected. His Tulane-based group had been collecting data from the displaced who were living in temporary FEMA villages. But this seemed inconsequential to the design team.

“At the first meeting they showed up with a bunch of maps depicting issues that they’ve identified. They didn’t want our input, they didn’t want information being generated at the grassroots, they just wanted validation.

“There are a whole set of trailer villages, housing that is like an encampment or concentration camp. The people are stigmatized and ostracized. Yet the planning teams are only focusing on five to ten years from now. People are screaming ‘we want to go back to our neighborhoods.’ No one knows what to do.”

Chapter 3: Is Elegance Paternalistic?

Probably the best-known compassionate community designer is the late Samuel Mockbee.² He based his Rural Studio in Hale County, Alabama, a “left-behind place” that sounds little different than that which Verderber has found in Louisiana.³ Working with the Department of Human Resources, Mockbee and his architecture students from Auburn University have designed and built homes and community facilities for the county’s mostly African-American residents for more than 10 years (the work has continued since his death in 2001).

What has impressed me about this remarkable experiment were its intentions. Mockbee wanted to accomplish the “design and construction of modest, innovative houses for poor people,” which translated into “warm, dry, and noble” housing made from creative reuse of salvage.⁴ He also wanted his students to “respect clients they wouldn’t have acknowledged on the street before,” inducing empathy through exposure rather than preaching.⁵

Indeed, the Rural Studio’s mission statement begins with the hope that students “cross the threshold of misconceived opinions,” and learn “to work as citizens of a community.”⁶ They achieve this through a year-long immersion gained by living in the place. It is usually their “first intimate experience with the smell and feel of poverty.”⁷

Cherri Hobgood would agree. She believes medical school must bring out and blend the compassion and passion learned through life experience. But charismatic role models are also needed to teach, motivate and emulate.

“I show them that as a doctor, I see it all. I never know what’s coming. This is exciting and very real. I convey to them ‘bring it on, we can deal, I’m up to this.’ It’s definitely macho, but I remind them that I’m a diagnostician and this is an intellectual endeavor. You need to figure things out. You get to ‘make stuff.’ And then people get better and are able to leave.”

Samuel Mockbee operated from a strong sense of the moral high ground. He was adamant that architects had

“an ethical responsibility to help improve living conditions for the poor...[and] should challenge the status quo into making responsible environmental and social changes.” He believed that architectural education was a place to “sow the moral seed of service.”

Apparently, he did this by setting a passionate example. “If you’re going to do this you gotta pack your bags, kiss your wife goodbye, and go to war.”⁸

Mockbee is also of interest, of course, because the designs that came out of his Rural Studio were stunningly beautiful. This, too, is in contrast to much of the product generated by community design—which I increasingly find institutionalized, safe, and compromised. But any discussion of form-making in the context of community design is dicey. For example, the one criticism of the Rural Studio work that really stings is that it is paternalistic.

The debate is an important one. Yet the undeniable outcome is that the clients are satisfied—admittedly only after a long period of uncertainty about motive, during which trust had to be gained.

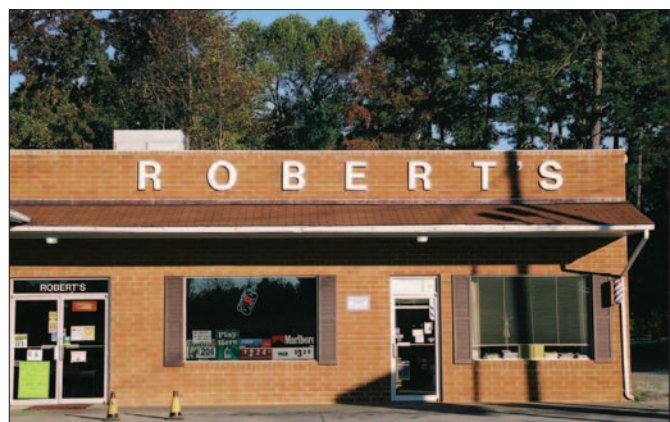
“Big white man from Mississippi named Sambo giving something away, saying, ‘We don’t want to change you, just want to help you.’ You’d be apprehensive too.”⁹ This was how one client described his first meeting with Mockbee. This client eventually agreed to let Mockbee and his students work on his house, and he enjoyed working with them so much he often fed them.

Another client said of her new hay-bale house: “I was glad to get my house. The children was glad, even the chickens and the dogs was glad. I’m proud of my house.”¹⁰

Chapter 4: Finding FDR

Trying to expand on Mockbee’s deliberately intimate work, I thought about examples of public design where the compassion of the designer was evident, and arrived at what Larry Halprin and his team of artists had accomplished in the FDR memorial. As he says in opening his book on making the memorial, “My early life was intertwined with the influences of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as far back as I can remember.”¹¹

Drawn to a presidency that was marked by “a multitude of crises,” Halprin said he sought an “emotional” form that “would express universally shared human experiences.”¹² The challenge was how to convey the tenure of a president well known for his language of compassion. “I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.” “I always try to remember that their deepest problems are human.” “The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we



provide enough for those who have too little.”¹³

In the context of design and compassion, I am most interested in the Memorial’s second-term room, which presents the Great Depression. Here Halprin’s team communicated the human struggle of America through figurative sculpture of everyday people, bas relief, and stone-carved

quotes. These showcased the experience of living through these times when “the poverty, the economic failures, and the natural disasters” gripping the country were overwhelming, as well as the impact FDR had on them.¹⁴ As Halprin says, “his was a hero’s journey.”¹⁵

A trademark of the Halprin design process is being able

to anticipate how people will feel when they experience a space. He often responds with a choreographed or scored design. In the FDR Memorial he wanted to create a “slow-paced, personal experience which would take place over sufficient time, could transmit the importance of this era to future generations.”¹⁶ Such a design not only is an act of compassion; visitors feel the compassion of a man for the people he had been elected to lead.

Chapter 5: Circling Back to Place

An article in this journal must finally address the question “what does this tell us about making better places?” I have learned much of what I know about place making from Hester’s Store. This corner of rural North Carolina is in a state of rapid transition, as once-productive tobacco farms are being replaced by double-wides and other forms of low-cost housing. Yet it remains special.

People from out here grew up “cared-for” in some way by the place. The place has since provided a source of confidence and creativity in their lives. Readers familiar with the work of my husband know this. It is here that he acquired the ability to work with everyday people to achieve long-held dreams for their community. Compassionate, yes, but not without passion.

At its core, Hester’s Store is still rural and modest and requires a certain kind of professional community to provide service. As it turns out, Hobgood’s husband, a retired doctor, also has this gift.

“This is the power of Jimmy Jay Winslow,” she explained. “His patients believed he understood what they were saying, that he cared, and that he would work on their behalf. A big issue now in medicine is cultural competency. He had it in Roxboro. It’s a hard place to work, our graduates don’t want to go there. These rural people are hard to figure out, they are hard to connect with. You need to be able to make a space and inhabit it with your patients and you do this by finding what that thing is that you have in common as human beings. He could do this.”

The spark for this piece came from Verderber’s book and its compelling story. The notion that you could program compassion into what in effect was an institutional makeover was intriguing. So then why end up talking about the passion two doctors and three designers bring to their work? Because of the inherent contradiction between passion and compassion in my field as well as others.

Through a collaborative process, a community designer seeks to relieve the suffering, often of popula-

tions oppressed by unjust government policy, or simply by poorly executed “designer design.” I think we avoid passion because it is so closely associated with egotistical, solitary acts. But successful practice requires acknowledgement of both forces, one an altruistic instinct emanating from a strong belief system, the other a heady “fuel.” Both are strong—yin and yang—interdependent and potentially transformative.¹⁷

A successful blend of compassion and passion produces charismatic leaders in any profession. And I believe it can yield memorable landscapes in our common realm.

Notes

1. Stephen Verderber, *Compassion in Architecture: Evidence-Based Design for Health in Louisiana* (Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, 2005).
2. Most of the discussion about Mockbee’s work and the Rural Studio comes from Andrea Oppenheimer Dean and Timothy Hursley, *Rural Studio: Samuel Mockbee and an Architecture of Decency* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002).
3. In 2000 the poverty rate of Hale County was 40 percent. Quote and statistic about Hale County from Dean and Hursley, *Rural Studio*, p. 2.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 1, jacket cover.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
6. <http://cadc.auburn.edu/soa/rural%2Dstudio/mission.htm>.
7. Dean and Hursley, *Rural Studio*, p. 3.
8. All quotes on Mockbee’s beliefs about the moral responsibility of the profession are laid out plainly on the opening page of Dean and Hursley, *Rural Studio*, p. 1.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 33. Story of the Harris house, pp. 32–47.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 18. Story of the Bryant house, pp. 16–31.
11. Lawrence Halprin, *The Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1997), p. 1.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
13. In *FDR Memorial*, Halprin uses a number of memorable Roosevelt quotes. These can be found on pp. 62–69.
14. Halprin, *FDR Memorial*, p. 6.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
16. *Ibid.*
17. See Wikipedia discussion for more, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin_and_yang.

Opposite: The nurturing qualities of a rural place. Views of Hester’s Store, North Carolina. Watercolor by Randy Hester. Photos by author.

2006 EDRA/*Places* Awards

Six exemplary projects were named winners of EDRA/*Places* Awards in 2006. The awards celebrate distinguished work in three areas: Place Design (completed projects that demonstrate excellence as human environments); Place Planning (projects that make proposals for the future design, use or management of a place); and Place Research (projects that investigate the relationship between design and human behavior, culture or experience).

The awards were presented at the Environmental Design Research Association's 37th annual meeting, in Atlanta, GA. Judging of submissions took place this year at the Interdisciplinary Design institute, Washington State University-Spokane. *Places* would like to thank WSU for hosting the event—and especially Prof. Keith Diaz-Moore, who served as coordinator.

Jurors for this ninth annual EDRA/*Places* awards cycle were:

Sherry Ahrentzen, Associate Director for Research, Stardust Center for Affordable Homes and the Family, Arizona State University, Tempe

Robert Hull, FAIA, Principal, Miller/Hull Partnership, Seattle, WA

Ilze Jones, AIA/FASLA, President, Jones & Jones Architects and Landscape Architects, Ltd., Seattle, WA

Douglas Kelbaugh, FAIA, Dean of the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Marcia McNally, Partner, Community Development by Design, Berkeley, CA; Associate Adjunct Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, University of California, Berkeley

The postmark deadline for submissions for the next (2007) cycle of EDRA/*Places* Awards will be January 30, 2007. See announcement on page 47. For more information, visit www.edra.org or www.places-journal.org



Award for Place Design

Buckeye Village Community Center—Columbus, Ohio

Kay Bea Jones, The Ohio State University

Research: Dr. Beverly Toomey. Student Research Assistants: Tony Freitag and Winna Japardi. **Site and Building Design:** George Acock, AIA, Andrew Rosenthal, and Dave Lee. **Interior Design:** Suzanne Toney. **University Architect:** Ruth Miller. **Images:** Brad Feinknopf.



Award for Place Planning

The Paleo Project—Fossil, Oregon

Rowell Brokaw Architects, PC: Jenny Young, RA; John Rowell, AIA; Gregory Brokaw, AIA; Peter King; Chad Kirkpatrick; Joanne Hogarth.

With: Lovinger2 Landscape Architects (Justine Lovinger, Ron Lovinger); John S. Reynolds, Energy Consultant; Solarc Architecture and Engineering; AE Group, Structural Engineer; EEC Engineering, Electrical Engineering; Construction Focus, Cost Estimating.



Award for Place Planning

Sense of Place—Calgary, Alberta

Sense of Place Committee: Beverly A. Sandalack, Ann Davis, Leonard Novak, and Robert Sandford. The Urban Lab, University of Calgary. The Nickle Arts Museum. Publication design: Francisco Alaniz Uribe. Exhibition design: James Sloane and Ainsley Davidson.



Award for Place Research

Compassion in Architecture: Evidence-Based Design for Health in Louisiana

By Stephen Verderber, published in 2005 by the Center for Louisiana Studies, Lafayette, LA.



Award for Place Planning

Habitat Trails—Rogers, Arkansas

University of Arkansas Community Design Center: Stephen Luoni, Aaron Gabriel, Jeffrey Huber, and Isaac Moran. For: Habitat for Humanity of Benton County, Debby Wieneke, Executive Director. **With:** University of Arkansas students: David Anderson, Jared Hueter, Remick Moore, Cari Paulus, Lauren Ratley, Rachel Smith, Mat Snyder, John Starnes. UA School of Architecture, UA Department of Landscape Architecture, UA Ecological Engineering Group, Morrison Shipley Engineers, JKJ Architects, Crossland Construction, Adams Excavation.



Award for Place Research

Places for People, Melbourne 2004

Gehl Architects, Urban Quality Consultants, Copenhagen, Denmark: Jan Gehl, Project Manager; Henriette Mortensen, Project Coordinator. Project Team: Paule Ducourtia, Isabel Sandra Duckett, Lisa Hilden Nielsen, Joan Maria Raun Nielsen. **The City of Melbourne:** Rob Adams, Director Design & Culture; Ros Rymer, Urban Design Researcher; Jenny Rayment, Senior Urban Designer; Rob Moore, Manager Urban Design; Alastair Campbell, Urban Design Officer.

Settlements: David Spero

Camilla Brown

Over the last three years British photographer David Spero has been working on a number of interrelated series that explore architectural structures and ideological beliefs. "Settlements" is one of these, a series of photographs of low-impact settlements around the U.K. Spero has chosen to focus on dwellings that are self-built by communities wanting to live on the land in a sustainable way. The aim of these communities is to be at least partially self-sufficient and inhabit dwellings with a minimal ecological footprint. To do this, where possible, renewable energy sources are used, and building materials are recycled or locally sourced, such as timber, thatch, daub and turf. Some structures are temporary, made of canvas and tarpaulin, designed to be easy and quick to dismantle. Several of his images show isolated, distinct buildings, while in others, taken at different times of year and across the seasons, the structures are hardly visible, camouflaged in the rich and dense foliage that surrounds them.

Proximity to nature is essential to these communities. The dwellings themselves seem reminiscent of a preindustrial age when most of the population lived in small rural communities. The shift by modern

societies to a more urban existence has led to an increasingly sanitized and remote relationship to the natural environment. Mainstream consumer society, with its focus on material wealth and mass consumption, stands in stark contrast to the way these people have chosen to live their lives.

In *Low Impact Development: Planning and People in the Sustainable Countryside* (1996), Simon Fairlie explained how settlements such as these have often been hindered, and at times prevented, by local and national government edicts and planning acts. U.K. planning laws since the World War II have been predicated on the assumption that all forms of development, except agriculture, are a threat to the countryside and needed to be strictly controlled. Although this has allowed the protection of national parks and forests and the establishment of greenbelts around cities and towns, it has also prioritized and encouraged large-scale industrial farming over small-scale land use. This has been especially damaging to small groups wishing to live an ecologically sustainable existence on the land.

Over the past few decades, political awareness has started to change, as the need to reduce pollution and waste, limit the use of energy and raw mate-

rials, and protect fragile ecosystems has become more urgent and pressing. These settlements serve as examples and models of this approach.

The structures themselves have an organic, fluid and ramshackle appearance; since they are predominantly hand-made, they feature few straight lines and little symmetry. Their individual character is further reflected in their names, which include reference to the people who live in them. The names also reveal how over time the communities share spaces as they evolve.

Through these images we can start to understand and appreciate the beauty of the dwellings themselves and the surrounding landscape. Photographed in contemporary Britain, they stand as powerful visual and architectural testimony to people who choose to live according to their ideological beliefs.

For further information

Chapter 7 (Sustainable settlement planning campaign group): www.tlio.org.uk/chapter7

Ecovillage Network UK: www.evnuk.org.uk

Diggers and Dreamers (intentional communities database): www.diggersanddreamers.org.uk

Steward Community Woodland: www.stewardwood.org

Brithdir Mawr: www.brithdirmawr.com



Steward Community Woodland

A small low-impact settlement near Mortonhampstead in Devon. Set up in 2000 as a cooperative, based on permaculture and vegan principles combining woodland conservation management techniques with sustainable living. Granted five years temporary planning permission in 2002. Currently about eight

adults and four children. Electrical energy is sourced from solar cells and a water turbine. Wood is burned for cooking and heating. Income is mainly from the woodland, running courses, and local environmental, community and care work. Children are home educated, and some organic food is grown.

Above: John, son, Daisy, Marley and Asher's under construction, Steward Community Woodland, Devon, August 2004



Above: “The Longhouse” communal space and new kitchen, Steward Community Woodland, Devon, November 2004

Opposite: Emma and John’s, Tir Ysbrydol (spiritual land), Brithdir Mawr, Pembrokeshire, October 2004



Brithdir Mawr

An intentional community founded in 1994 on a former 165-acre farm in Wales. Home to a mixture of projects aiming at ecological sustainability. Currently around twenty residents. The two projects photographed by Spero, Tir ysbridol and Tony and Jane's roundhouse, have been seeking planning permission, and fighting demolition orders from

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park since being "discovered" from the air in 1998. PCNP have decided to defer their threat of demolition until their new policy on Low-Impact Developments comes into force in July 2006. The projects will then be able to apply for planning permission and possibly become the first legal low-impact settlements in Wales.



Tinkers Bubble

Founded in 1994 on a smallholding near Little Norton in Somerset with the objective of creating sustainable livelihoods with minimal environmental impact. In January 1999 it finally received five years temporary planning consent. Renewed in 2004. Consists of 43 acres of conifer plantation, orchards and gardens, with a community of around ten adults and three children.

Solar and wind electricity sources. Steam powered saw mill. Wood burning for heating and cooking. Water is pumped from a spring. There is one shire horse for logging and field work. No fossil-fuel engines are used on the land. Income is from a mixture of organic market-farming, greenwood crafts, and value-added products derived from the land.



Above: Tinker's Bubble, Somerset, June 2004

Opposite: Shannon, Chris and Alex's under construction, Tinker's Bubble, Somerset, February 2005



Kings Hill

Near Shepton-Mallet in Somerset. Started in 1992. Granted permanent planning permission in 1998 (for sixteen eco-dwellings). Sixteen adults and ten children living on a four-acre meadow. Electrical energy is sourced from solar cells and wind turbines. Food is grown and income is from rural work in the local community.



Above: Michael's, 'Tinker's Bubble', Somerset, June 2004

Opposite: Tony and Jane's, Brithdir Mawr,
Pembrokeshire, July 2005

Setting Straight the Priorities: A Conservation Report from Kerala

Patricia Fels



For thousands of years, urban civilization has flourished on the Indian subcontinent. In modern, independent India, the fate of historic monuments (temples, mosques, palaces, and forts) varies: some buildings are protected; some have become heavily visited icons; others have been left to decay. Completely off the heritage radar, the Indian vernacular (housing, shops and warehouses) remains unrecognized and ignored, left to slowly deteriorate or be demolished. Frequently massed in historic enclaves, these structures display an artisan skill with local materials, an appropriate response to climatic con-

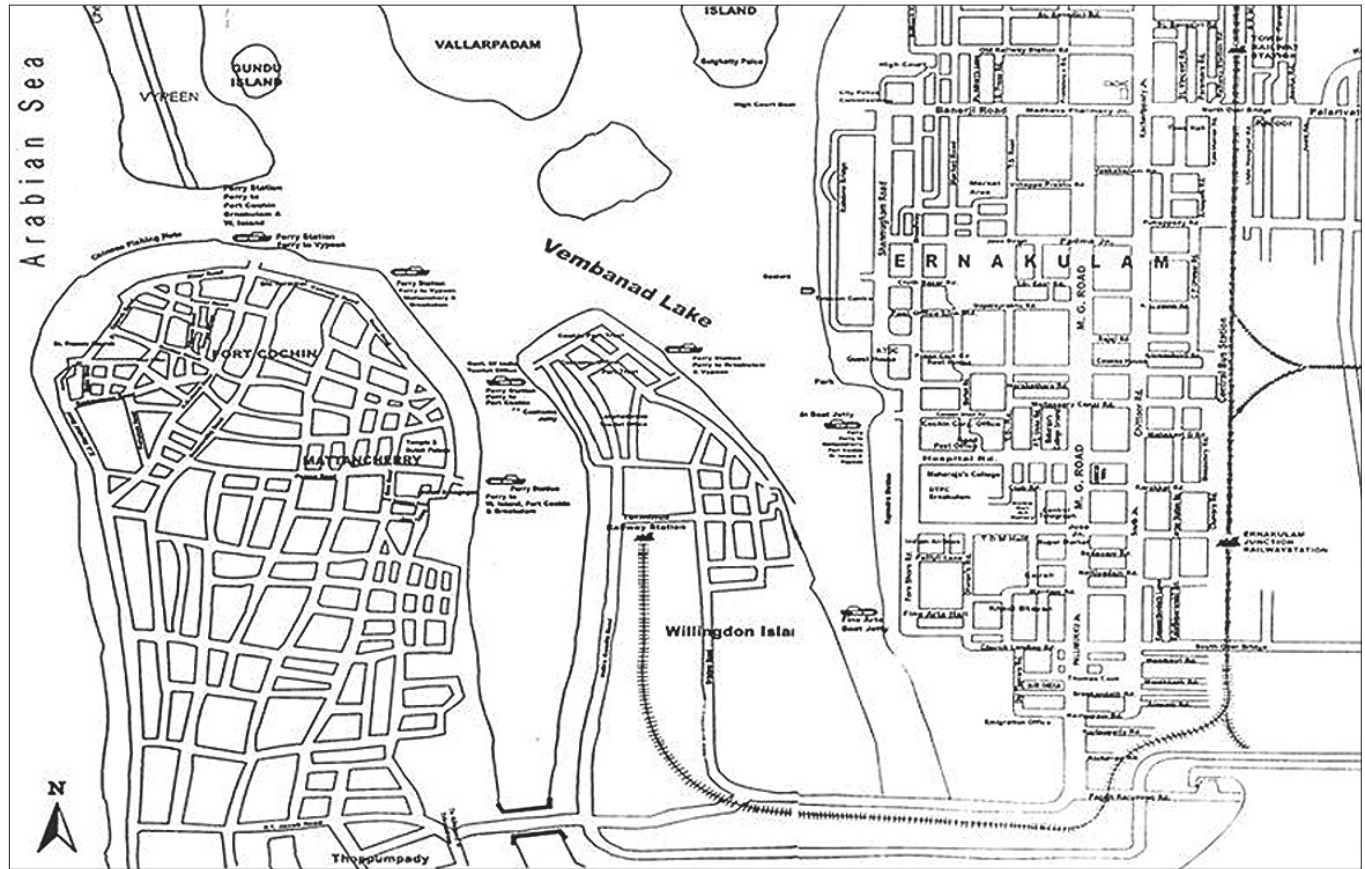
ditions, and designs that reflect social and religious patterns.

The state of Kerala stretches along the Malabar Coast, in southwestern India. Isolated for millennia from the rest of India by the dense forests and mountain peaks of the Western Ghats, the people along the coastline peacefully interacted with traders from the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. The exotic spices that grow there have long been objects of desire around the globe. They were freely traded to Arabs, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, North Indians, Chinese, and Southeast Asians—until the Portuguese arrived seeking control over the trade.

Midway up the coast, Cochin (recently renamed Kochi) is a jewel of this trading culture. It gained

ascendancy after the great flood of 1341 silted up the historic port of nearby Kodungalloor. The arrival of Vasco da Gama at the end of the fifteenth century began a long period of European domination. Fort Cochin, at the tip of the peninsula, became a colonial outpost, the first European settlement in India, and one of the few with a history of Portuguese, Dutch and English presence. Meanwhile, the adjacent, older settlement of Mattancherry remained home to the ruling maharaja and site of the port. Here, the storage, shipping and trading of regional products (from spices to rices) took place. A unique vernacular architecture developed, reflecting the local environment, the trade, and the traders.

Above: A wholesale man sits in his shop on Bazar Road.



The Cochin Peninsula Today

The state of Kerala is well known in development circles for its high rates of literacy, life expectancy, and live birth—comparable to those of developed nations. The people of Kerala may have low incomes, but they uniformly experience a quality of life unique in India. After Indian independence, a radicalized Kerala state government instigated broad land reforms along with social mandates that brought health care and schooling to all residents of the state.

However, the Cochin peninsula slipped into a daydream as the mainland area of Ernakulam became a modern city and a new port was built on an adjacent island. Lack of demand meant the buildings of

Cochin were not torn down; but neither were they maintained. Now, with an expanding tourist industry and soaring property values, local government has taken the first steps toward recognizing this rich patrimony. The city tourism office has declared the colonial center (Fort Cochin) a heritage zone, and a Center for Heritage, Environment and Development has been established. Yet, despite a series of studies on the importance of Cochin/Mattancherry heritage, legislative action has not been forthcoming. No state or local guidelines for a historic district have been enacted, and no legal status has been given to historic buildings.

Part of the problem is that the Mattancherry area and its inhabitants,

labeled “marginal” (i.e., poor) by the government, have in fact been “marginalized.” Instead of examining innovative ways to reinvigorate the urban settlement or help the spice trade metamorphose into a twenty-first-century activity, local officials continue to turn obsessively to tourism. As a result, historical buildings are visualized as museums or tourist destinations, while residents remain unaware of their uniqueness, or potential for reuse. Meanwhile, many areas still have no water service or sewer,

Above: Map of the greater Kochi area. The Cochin/Mattancherry Peninsula is to the left. The modern city of Ernakulam is to the right. The new port is in-between.



and open drains carry a foul mixture of refuse. The inventive spirit of post-independence is no longer discernible.

Elements of Urban Form

In terms of layout, the Cochin Peninsula has two principal foci linked by a commercial spine. The Fort Cochin neighborhood, site of the original Portuguese fort, is bounded on three sides by the sea. A large parade ground, surrounded by huge

Above: A Catholic Church on Bazar Road shares the neighborhood with Hindu temples, a synagogue, and many mosques.

rain trees, occupies the center of this old colonial area, and is in continual use today by local youth for cricket and soccer matches. Around this space are a series of historic bungalows and the oldest European church in India. Private individuals have renovated some of the bungalows (many turned into tourist guesthouses or hotels). The adjacent streets are lined with rowhouses. Both the bungalows and the rowhouses in this area show signs of Dutch, Portuguese, English and Keralan influence. These buildings were once home to major players in the history of Cochin: coffee and

tea merchants, Jewish businessmen, the Dutch governor who compiled Hortus Malabaricus, and many more.

The Fort Cochin area is connected to Mattancherry by Bazar Road. At its southern terminus is another important building complex that includes the maharaja's palace (now called the Dutch palace) and a Hindu temple. Immediately adjacent is Jewtown, once home to Middle Eastern traders. Here, godowns (Asian vernacular for warehouses) stretch along the waterfront, while shophouses line the lanes leading to a sixteenth-century synagogue.

Today, Jewtown has become an



antique center where aged godowns are packed with old furniture, building parts (including granite columns, wood carved gable ends, and doors), religious artifacts (Hindu, Jewish and Christian), and a dizzying array of lamps, statues, photographs, jewelry and household containers. Few buildings remain in use for the spice trade, and it is almost a shock to see a warehouse full of ginger.

However, moving north toward Fort Cochin, the activities of the city's older trading days continue. Rice, ginger, rubber, cashews and spices are moved in and out of large godowns. Hard-

ware stores and numerous wholesalers of goods occupy small ground-floor shops. On roads leading inland, ethnic communities with connections to local trade maintain unique historic enclaves, such as the *agrabaram* of Tamil Brahmins (an internal street off the temple with rowhousing). Even today, thirteen different linguistic groups can be found in Cochin. And within a one-kilometer radius can be found Hindu and Jain temples, a Catholic church, a Syrian Christian shrine, a Jewish synagogue, and at least four Muslim mosques. This is the heart of Mattancherry—a center pulsing with diversity.

Godowns and Courtyards: An Urban Typology

Narrow and long, Bazar Road was once a bustling regional marketplace. In its heyday, its two-story buildings, with decorated windows, patterned eaves, and carved doors, must have presented a formidable, unified facade.

In general, the impressive Mattancherry godowns run perpendicular to the street. Grand doors lead from

Above: The shophouses of Jewtown once housed Middle Eastern traders, but now its streets are primarily for tourists. The building at the end of the street is the sixteenth-century synagogue.



Bazar Road to expansive courtyards surrounded by structures that extend to the water's edge. Designed for storing goods in a hot climate with two monsoon seasons, these wharf buildings have steep wood-framed gable roofs covered with clay tiles. Their thick, stuccoed, brick walls are punctuated by air vents in a medley of styles.

These vernacular buildings offer countless opportunities for adaptive reuse. New electrical services, plumbing, and cable could be installed within them, and their walls could be replastered. A set of guidelines, neither complex nor intimidating to local owners, could include information on proper window and door treatments, the technology of brick and plaster walls, timber and tile roofs, and concrete floors. Private restoration work could be paired with civic utility improvements, especially new water, sewer and electricity lines.

The combination of a linear streetfront with the deep godown courtyard forms a marvelous urban typology. Viewed from the water, the massing of the godowns presents a unique panorama, in which basic rectangular shapes gain complexity from their juxtaposition and from the attendant intersections of their large gabled roofs. In terms of use, the layout of buildings and courtyards also provides the invaluable urban amenity of protected open space with waterfront access.

The Bazar Road ensemble is an excellent example of a townscape touched by daily activity and the styles of many diverse lands. Over time, this kaleidoscope developed into an identifiable whole through the process of people working together. Merchants from the Middle East, North India, and Europe adopted and adapted the local vernacular.

A Vision for the Future

The history of the spice trade and the power of the architectural spaces in Cochin provide potent images. In particular, the Parade Ground and surrounding colonial gardens contrast dramatically with the linear, dense Bazar Road streetfront. These historic patterns of a trading culture are major cultural resources begging for protection.

Unfortunately, some state planners have labeled Bazar Road "obsolete" because of its narrow width. This judgment might be valid if one were only concerned with commercial access by truck. But before writing the area off, planners should seek alternatives; in particular, the tendency to think that "new" cities must all have wide roadways needs to be more closely examined, especially in a city founded on water transport.

Cochin is blessed with an extensive network of navigable waterways (the famous Kerala backwaters). Until quite recently, all goods were moved by boats plying these waterways. A recent study found that moving freight by water is more fuel efficient, economical, and environmentally friendly than moving it by road—for example, using one-sixth the energy consumed by auto freight.

In Mattancherry a revitalized system of barges could be combined with a schedule of off-peak truck deliveries. For residents and visitors, ferry and bus terminals at each end of Bazar Road could provide a foundation for regional transport. Bicycles, auto rickshaws, and small electric buses could then move employees, residents, merchants and customers around the neighborhood.

Cochin has the opportunity to lead the way in reexamining the workable patterns of a pedestrian city. Street-front shops and markets, narrow lanes, green spaces, water transport, walled

compounds, and godown courtyards can all work together to create density and livability.

It is a fact that the spice trade is no longer a dominant force in Cochin. And Fort Cochin and Jewtown are, and will likely remain, tourist centers—hopefully with graciously restored buildings, not cheap imitations. But Bazar Road offers a counterpoint, a chance to maintain a vital commercial center. With improved infrastructure, new businesses could move to the godowns there. Printing operations, digital technology, software designers, call centers—all current fixtures of global commerce—could reinhabit vacated spaces.

In addition, the pepper exchange and other still-active segments of the spice trade could be encouraged to remain. The use of medicinal plants and spices is gaining popularity, and the flower oils/scent trade remains strong. Much trading today in these commodities is done electronically, and with improved infrastructure this activity could continue.

Indians want to modernize, but only a few realize the potential role of old structures such as those of the Cochin Peninsula within the modern context. Indeed, problems regarding housing, employment, sanitation and infrastructure may all be better resolved by reinvigorating older parts of cities than building entirely new ones.

Housing can be rehabilitated, sanitation systems installed, and small businesses encouraged to move in. Development funds could be better spent funding public transit in existing areas than building new roads over

Opposite: Tamil Brahmins created *agrabaram* settlements where rowhouses line the street leading to the temple. The sidewalk is decorated with *kolams* (traditional chalk designs).



open ground. Making use of its fine old building stock, Kochi, a metropolitan area of 1.5 million people, could maximize its urban resources, containing sprawl and protecting nearby agricultural land.

Conservation and the “New” City

Why are Indians, who are otherwise socially conservative and reluctant to break with tradition, so complicit in the erasure of their native patterns of city building? Historic preservation has a limited following in India, and interest in vernacular conservation is even more circumscribed. However,

improving the relevance of the conservation movement could be crucial for Indian cities. The global city of the future need not be uniform; it could be specific to place, reflecting differences of site, culture, and human networks.

Following a trend seen in much of Asia, construction of skyscrapers, apartment blocks, and wide roadways has splintered many older, still viable urban settings. Instead of seeing conservation as a guide for maintaining the integrity of the existing urban fabric, preservationists, government officials, and developers appear oblivious to the value of older urban

centers: preservationists focus on individual buildings (monuments); government officials (including planners) look to their paper schemes, many of which include no survey of extant buildings; and developers follow the glossy trends of superficial modernism, demolishing old buildings at a rapid pace.

Concern for the collectively built and owned city of the last four centuries has dissolved. Speaking about the Indian city in general, one professor noted how “the historic city has been ignored or at best represented as a blob in the city master plan.” And so,

in Kerala, old towns are being transformed by bleak, concrete-framed buildings punctuated by glitzy shopping centers.

The tools of historic preservation were largely developed by Europeans. But the effort in India will need a different focus. Western experts come from a different climate, build with different materials, and have much wealthier home economies. Their conservation plans deal with arcane matters of “which period should be restored,” and “what uses are appropriate.” Such experts often seek to set what (in the West) are reasonable standards for a “proper” restoration. But the sheer quantity of buildings in India requiring assistance indicates the need for a different approach, one involving a simpler set of standards and a strong partnership with local property owners.

Cochin does not have a Taj Mahal—it has a townscape. Local vernacular building is known for quality of execution, simplicity of form, and functionality. Even the famous maharajah’s palace is just an expanded version of the basic Kerala house. When trying to save a nineteenth-century structure with a deteriorating roof, it is essential to stress the importance of providing a new “in-kind” roof. The authorities don’t need to study the “options”; money spent studying and consulting could pay for two new roofs. Projects are needed that are affordable in rupees—not euros. When the same seriousness is devoted to saving a nineteenth-century warehouse as a fourteenth-century temple, it is no surprise that people feel historic preservation is too costly.

It is time for an Indian version of conservation—one that is flexible and innovative and responds to the natural chaos and energy of Indian

cities. When renovating vernacular ensembles, the strict tenets applied to monuments (in India, almost an entombment) should be relaxed. New procedures are needed whose primary purpose is to return buildings to a useful role in the twenty-first-century city.

In India there is a desperate need to provide low-cost housing, shops and schools. Conservation could play an important role. While it is important to understand proportion and appropriate materials, it is imperative to remember that purity has never been part of India’s layered, eclectic urban landscape. To lose integral parts of the city fabric because owners cannot afford, or do not understand, historic preservation is a great tragedy for India. Owners, residents and community activists need to see conservation as a tool for upgrading their neighborhoods, not displacing them. This will only be possible when real projects are instigated and completed.

The media today constantly extols the wonders of a new home, but rarely expounds the beauty of older “vernacular” designs. Likewise, sustainability advocates rarely celebrate the natural cooling techniques of traditional buildings or the ingenious use of local materials. Neither sexy enough for future-oriented youth or affordable enough for the masses, preservation has cut itself off from reality. As a result, few are restoring or expanding old buildings. Even maintenance is rare; a pattern of consistent neglect reigns, from government facilities to two-room homes.

The Indian architectural community is today looking for that which is distinctively Indian. But much current design is clearly Western inspired, creating a new form of imperialism, as damaging to regional cultural assets as colonialism.



Western styles and attitudes do not have to be imported unchanged for Indian cities to become dominant players in the world economy. The passage to global status will be more humane for everyone if revitalization efforts are encouraged that maintain the scale and pattern of neighborhoods like Mattancherry. City dwellers need to have something familiar. Architects need to use the existing patterns as both restraint and inspiration. In the rush forward, Indian conservationists, developers, and government officials must remember to bring everyone along.

All Photos are by the author.

Above: The impressive Mattancherry godown reflects its initial use: a storehouse for the wealth of goods that came through Cochin.

Opposite: The canals of Cochin provide protected moorage for transport & fishing vessels.

Places Archive: Downtown

John King



Downtown, like beauty, is in the eyes of the beholder. It marks the triumph of civilization and the hollowness of authority. It stands for architecture, politics, culture, the future and the past—all depending on your point of view.

What better word to test the keyword search in the *Places* archive; and the four pieces I selected offer their own Rashoman-like take on what we should value and how we can measure a society's health.

"A Redevelopment Success Story," by Jay Claiborne (*Places* 15.2), shows

one perspective, the established order consolidating territory and proclaiming victory. We read about "highly talented city officials" and "an influential group of local leaders" and "the importance of a civic context for private development"—hence, the use of redevelopment funds for everything from sycamore trees to light-rail lines.

But another school of thought would hold that what cities need is an aesthetic vision rather than a public-works checklist. In "Urbanism Downtown" (*Places* 13.2), Todd Bressi explored renewal efforts in Albuquerque and Milwaukee that map out how things should look and where growth should go: "both rely on carefully calibrated architectural

imagery—suggestive in character but generic in representation—to convey a sense of place."

All of which ignores the box for the wrapping, Michael Pyatok would argue—and looks right past the inner-city residents who are struggling to gain access to the American Dream. His eloquent "Martha Stewart vs. Studs Terkel?" (*Places* 13.1) says the first priority is not the "picturesque architectural qualities that will attract people with more discretionary income." It is "designing neighborhoods that promote economic opportunity for people who are already there."

The only author who takes downtown as it is Louise Mozingo. In

Above: Revitalized First Street in downtown San Jose—from Jay Claiborne's article in *Places* 15.2. Photo courtesy of San Jose Redevelopment Agency.



“Women and Downtown Open Spaces” (*Places* 6.1), she studies two San Francisco plazas to see why women prefer one and men prefer the other. The answers involve benches and trees, staking out turf vs. fading into the landscape; but the real point is that design shapes every aspect of the cities we share, even a decision as ephemeral as where to eat lunch.

Four sets of values, four schools of thought, four ways to be. And here’s the beauty of it: each one rings true. Downtown—the concept, as well as the place—is as complex as modern

life itself. It needs to be viewed from as many angles as possible, keeping in mind that no one view is absolutely right.

Top left: New Urbanist proposal for downtown Albuquerque — from Todd Bressi’s article in *Places* 13.2.

Top right: New neighborhood-oriented housing near downtown Oakland — from Michael Pyatok’s article in *Places* 13.1.

Bottom left: Women and men use San Francisco’s downtown open spaces differently — from Louise Mozingo’s article in *Places* 6.1.

Places on the Web

In November *Places* launched a new website and digital archive at www.places-journal.org. The world of publishing, particularly academic publishing, is changing, reflecting a shift toward the Internet as an important method for seeking and disseminating scholarly and technical information. Within this larger universe of media, printed copies of journals remain a critical companion to the increasing prominence of virtual publishing. A printed journal also serves as tangible proof that ideas are highly esteemed—of enough lasting value to sustain a spot on a personal bookshelf. But it is with this larger understanding that the Board of the Design History Foundation and the Editorial Advisory Board of *Places* also

launched a year-long effort in 2006 to enhance the journal’s online presence. Throughout, our idea has been to take advantage of current trends in design practice and scholarship by establishing a website that is more interactive and will allow expanded dialogue with our readers.

Websites provide new opportunities, many of which are playful and investigative. At the same time, we wanted our new site to provide a useful online resource. For this reason, our site contains several new features. One is a news and events section, which will report on activities taking place in and around our affiliated partner schools. Another is the aforementioned digital archive of more than twenty years of content—which is fully searchable. A third

feature is what we have called “threads,” short essays inspired by articles from the archive.

John King, urban design critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, assisted in development of this last feature. He also bravely tested the waters by writing the first thread, on “downtown.” Our graduate-student editorial assistant, Catriona Stuart, has now written a second thread on “public space.” We continue to look for new writers for this section. Please consider this an invitation.

We hope that you enjoy the new website, the archive, and our ever-expanding community both in print and in cyberspace. Thank you for your current and continued support. We welcome reader comments by email to places@berkeley.edu.

Contributors

Camilla Brown is Senior Curator of the Photographers' Gallery in London, England. Previously, she was Exhibitions Curator at Tate Liverpool. She contributes essays to books on photography and writes for specialist magazines. Her published essays include "Looking at the Overlooked," in *Stilled Contemporary Still Life Photography by Women* (Iris publications 2006); "Willie Doherty: Somewhere Else" (Tate Liverpool, 1998); and "Up in the Air" (2000).

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Jason Alexander Hayter is a Ph.D. student in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley. His research areas include urban design, environmental planning, and cultural landscape studies.

Douglas Kelbaugh, FAIA, is Dean and Professor at the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning. He received his two architecture degrees from Princeton University. In 1978, he founded Kelbaugh and Lee, a firm that specialized in passive solar design and won over fifteen regional and national design awards and competitions in half as many years. In 1989 he edited *The Pedestrian Pocket Book*, a national bestseller in urban design, and has since authored *COMMON PLACE: Toward Neighborhood and Regional Design* and its sequel *Repairing the American Metropolis: Common Place Revisited*.

Julie Kim is a freelance writer living in San Francisco and a graduate of the UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design. She recently completed a Master's thesis on the role of prototype buildings in the production of supermarkets after World War II.

John King is urban design critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in criticism in 2002 and in 2003, and recipient in 2006 of the first Gene Burd for Urban Journalism, presented by the Urban Communication Foundation.

Walter M. Kulash, P.E., is a Principal and Senior Traffic Engineer with the Orlando-based community-planning firm Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin, Inc. Since the early 1990s he has specialized in the rapidly emerging field of livable traffic design, which attempts to balance traffic performance against other desired qualities of streets, such as their value as an "address," their retail friendliness, and their role as public space.

Marcia McNally is an Associate Adjunct Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning and a partner in the firm Community Development by Design. Her work combines practice, advocacy, research, and service to address environmental and social issues in community design in the Pacific Rim.

David Moffat is an architect in Berkeley, California, and Managing Editor of *Places*.

Karen Pinkus is Professor of Italian, French and Comparative Literature at the University of Southern California. She has published widely in literary and visual culture. Her current research is a cultural studies approach to alternative fuels explored through questions of automobile design, mobility and social space.

David Spero has shown work at *Photo España* (Madrid 2005), *The Art of the Garden* (Tate Britain 2004), and *Breathless! Photography and Time* (Victoria & Albert Museum 2000). A current project of his, photographs of London-area evangelical churches housed in buildings never intended to be churches, will be published in early 2007 by SteidlMack. "Settlements" was first shown at the Photographers Gallery, London, December 2005.

Catriona Stuart is an Editorial Assistant at *Places* and a freelance writer who frequently trips on the dividing line between written and multimedia storytelling. She lives in Oakland, California, alongside 400,000 other people.

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Cover: Synagogue on the Cochin Peninsula in the Indian state of Kerala. Photo by Patricia Fels.

In this issue we present the winners of the 2006 EDRA/*Places* Awards. This cooperative program between *Places* and the Environmental Design Research Association is entering its tenth year. Its goal remains to bring attention to design, planning and research projects sometimes bypassed by other awards programs and professional publications, but which promote care and understanding for qualities of place. Our presentation this year includes commentary by two jurors and the host of the 2006 jury.

The remainder of the issue consists of contributions that fill our regular sections. In "Speaking of Places," architect Patricia Fels argues that India is home to a rich and underappreciated vernacular heritage whose rediscovery offers a valuable resource for modern-day cities. As a "Portfolio," we present a selection of images from British photographer David Spero, whose recent work documents the worlds of those whose impassioned beliefs force them to the margins of contemporary society. Our "Research and Debate" section contains Karen Pinkus's investigation of a strangely fortuitous meeting of art, architecture and neighborhood that defined a transitional, democratic moment in fast-changing Los Angeles. As a "Dispatch," we feature Catriona Stuart's description of (Park)ing Day, a global effort designed to reclaim parking spaces as temporary public parks.

In this issue we also inaugurate a new section, "On Second Thought..." intended to provide humorous views of environmental design and planning endeavors. "How Leonine Features Enhance Bridge Capacity: A Short History of Traffic Engineering" was originally submitted as a part of our "Building Community Across the Transect" issue. We hope you enjoy it here, and that it spurs similar contributions from fields that rarely take enough time to have fun at their own expense.