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Places: Forum of Design for the Public Realm
Volume 19, Number 3 2007 www.places-journal.org

EDRA/*Places* Awards 2007

Caring for Places: Sustaining Attention
Donlyn Lyndon

2007 EDRA/Places Awards

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*SMWM; Baldauf Catton von Eckartsberg;
Page & Turnbull*

The House of Dance and Feathers Mardi Gras
Indian Museum—New Orleans, LA
Project Locus

Planning

The Money Point Sustainable Revitalization Plan
Crisman+Petrus; UVA School of Architecture

Los Angeles River Urban Wildlife Refuge
Community Development by Design

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Forum: AIA Committee on Design

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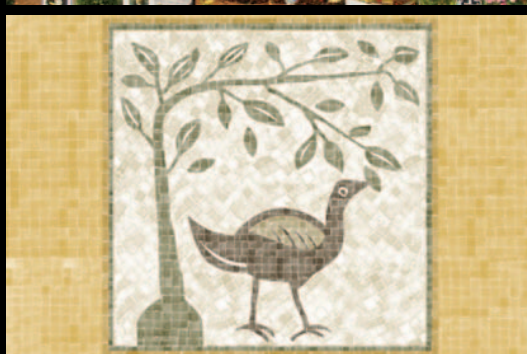
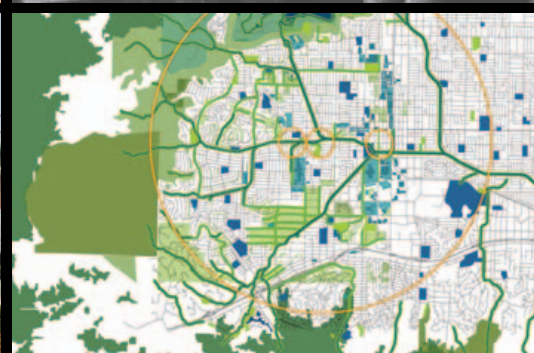
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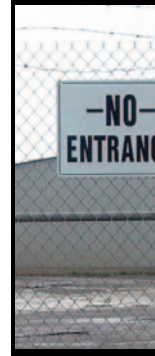
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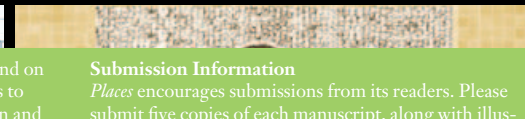
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On the Covers

In this issue we present the winners of the 2007 EDRA/*Places* Awards for Design, Research and Planning.

Front and back covers: The ground-floor market hall of the renovated San Francisco Ferry Building.
Photo by Richard Barnes.

Front inside cover, top to bottom, left to right: Money Point Learning Barge designed by students at the University of Virginia; gardens behind French shelters in World War I; 9/11 Living Memorial tree-planting in the Bronx, NY; the House of Dance and Feathers in New Orleans' Ninth Ward; Money Point creosote tank cleanup; House of Dance and Feathers structural and decorative detail; soldiers harvesting corn in Iraq; House of Dance and Feathers panel detail; World War II ghetto greenhouse; Money Point Learning Barge; 9/11 Living Memorial in Staten Island, NY; the Canoga Park district at the headwaters of the L.A. River; 1948 scale model of the L.A. River channelization; floor mosaic from San Francisco Ferry Building; Money Point tidal wetland restoration area; the San Francisco Ferry Building at night; new ground-floor restaurant in the Ferry Building; Brooklyn, NY; 9/11 Living Memorial.

The EDRA/*Places* awards program, now entering its eleventh year, will be held for the first time in 2008 in cooperation with *Metropolis* magazine, and will be expanded to include a book award.

For more information about the 2008 awards see the announcement on page 39. To obtain entry forms or brochures visit www.places-journal.org or www.edra.org. Write-ups of previous year's winners may be seen in our archives, at www.places-journal.org or in *Places* issues 12.1, 13.1, 14.1, 15.1, 16.1, 16.3, 17.3, and 18.3.

The postmark deadline for entries for the 2008 EDRA/*Places* Awards is February 7, 2008.

Michael Ross, FAIA

The American
Institute of Architects
Committee on Design

On the Waterfront



These Forum pages were produced under an agreement between *Places/Design History* Foundation and the American Institute of Architects. They report on the AIA Committee on Design's (COD) 2007 conferences in Miami and Minneapolis. Michael Ross, FAIA, served as AIA COD Chair in 2007. Roberto Espejo was the Conference Chair in Miami, and Tim Carl, AIA, was the Conference Chair in Minneapolis.

In 2008, the COD conferences will take place in Detroit/Cranbrook (April 3-6, 2008) and Copenhagen/Denmark (August 31-September 3, 2008). The venues were chosen because they are important centers for the design of everything from automobiles to housewares. During the conferences we will meet with designers in many different fields to explore how their understandings of design may reinvigorate our roles as architects. An AIA COD Ideas Competition for the design of a home within an automobile will be held before the April Conference, and will be open to all.

For more information about this and other AIA COD programs, go to www.aia.org/cod.

River Renaissance and Waterfront Awareness



This year marks the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of the American Institute of Architects. All year, events have celebrated American architecture and attempted to offer a blueprint for the country's future. Commensurate with this theme, the Committee on Design (COD) focused on the rejuvenation of American cities on the water, organizing two design conferences and an ideas competition to examine the creative interface between waterfront redevelopment and architectural place-making.

Historically, rivers and coastal waterways were the liquid highways of American commerce, carrying people and goods from the heartland to the coasts, and across the seas to Europe and Asia. From the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, waterways were essential to American business and culture.

In 2007 the AIA COD presented a tale of two cities: Miami and Minneapolis. While different in many ways, they have parallel histories: both cities were centers of commerce in the early twentieth century; both had waterfronts that later declined and

deteriorated; and both are now bustling cultural centers driving a design and development renaissance in the twenty-first century.

What convergence of factors made this possible? One could name enlightened political leaders, active AIA component presidents, dynamic cultural institutions, and informed and generous donors. But talented, risk-taking architects have also helped catapult Miami and Minneapolis into the forefront of design excellence.

Miami today is a true cultural hub, home to migrants from Cuba, Central and South America. The city is fast paced, colorful, raw and new: think *Miami Vice* (the movie and the TV series) and the Miami Heat basketball team. Minnesota was settled in the nineteenth century by farmers from Scandinavia—hard-working, god-fearing people: think *Fargo*, the movie, and Grant Wood's painting *American Gothic*. But don't forget the state was also the birthplace of Bob Dylan, Prince, and the Target Corporation. It may be cold in Minneapolis, but the city has a long history of embracing the visual and performing arts.



Miami Waterfront

From these geographically and demographically disparate places we are seeing an explosion of design and a celebration of the arts on the water's edge. Transforming a decaying industrial waterfront into a vibrant cultural gathering place requires time, money, and the passion and commitment of visionary political leaders. One such figure, Miami's Mayor Manny Diaz, welcomed us at City Hall and outlined his ongoing efforts to transform the

city. These include the "Miami 21" overhaul of the city's zoning code to encourage development, the creation of an art and culture complex overlooking Biscayne Bay, and a landmark sustainable design program to make the city one of the greenest in the country.

The art and culture complex will be situated in Bicentennial Park, master-planned by Alex Cooper of Cooper-Robertson. The park's concept brings together flora, fauna, and water works to create a major public space to be framed by the Miami Art Museum (MAM) and the Miami Museum of Science (MMS). Terry Riley relocated from New York's Museum of Modern Art to serve as Director of MAM and help achieve this vision. Both he and Gillian Thomas, President of MMS,

believe design innovation should be a key criterion in architect selection. Riley has selected the Pritzker Prize-winning Swiss firm Herzog & de Meuron; Thomas has selected Grimshaw Architects of London. Now the challenge will be to create individual works that respect and complement each other. We will watch with keen interest as the process unfolds.

While in Miami we had tours of the new Federal Courthouse, led by Laurinda Spear of Arquitectonica; high-rise mixed-use complexes by Kohn Pederson Fox and Chad Oppenheim; and the Carnival Performing Arts Center by Cesar Pelli. We also learned about the history of Miami on a boat tour with Paul George, Ph.D. From the water, we could better see the evolution and growth of the city

Previous: The Guthrie Theater has transformed the Minneapolis riverfront as a place. Photo by Margaret McCurry, FAIA.

Above: Aerial view of the Carnival Performing Arts Center on Miami's Biscayne Bay waterfront. Photo by Paul Morris, courtesy of Morphoto and the AIA.



and appreciate the contrast between Miami Beach's Art Deco District and the stunning new American Airlines Arena by Arquitectonica.

Minneapolis Riverfront

The great Mississippi River begins three hundred miles north of the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. It was the natural power of St. Anthony Falls that led to their birth in the 1800s. From 1880 to 1930 Minneapolis was the flour milling capital of the world. Today it produces no flour whatsoever.

For the last thirty years enlightened citizens, political leaders, and dedicated architects have been working to envision the transformation of both cities' waterfronts. In Minneapolis, the Mill City Museum

by Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle won a 2005 national AIA design award and brought attention to the possibilities of its waterfront. Mixed-use complexes and restaurants have also helped revitalize it, but the recent addition of the Guthrie Theater, designed by Jean Nouvel, has truly transformed it as a place.

Joe Dowling, Artistic Director of the Guthrie Theater, gave an impassioned and inspiring talk to COD attendees. He was joined by Tom DeAngelo, Executive Architect of the Architectural Alliance, and John Pfeffer, General Contractor of McGough Companies. Dowling, an enlightened client with a clear vision of the performing arts in Minneapolis, explained how the decision was reached to replace the original Ralph

Rapson-designed Guthrie Theater of 1963. The new structure would house three venues: a thrust stage (as in the old building), a more traditional proscenium stage, and a black box theater.

"We wanted an iconic building," Dowling explained. But, originally, he rejected Nouvel's idea of raising the three theaters eighty feet off the ground so theater-goers would gain views of the river. To convince Dowling, the architect rented a "cherry picker" to lift them to the suggested height. It was there, with just the two of them in the small

Above: The Bigelow Chapel was one of several highly refined works by lesser known regional architects on the tour. Photo by Michael Ross, FAIA. Inset photo by Photo by Paul Warchol.

mechanical basket and the river spread beneath them, that Dowling changed his mind. The resulting building is stunning both as a river-front icon and a complex of spaces.

We also visited the Walker Art Center addition designed by Herzog & de Meuron (with John Cook of HGA as Executive Architect) and the Central Library by Cesar Pelli (with Tom Hysell of Architectural Alliance as Executive Architect). Both are extraordinary civic projects.

It was heartening that several smaller projects selected for National AIA Honor Awards were also on our itinerary. These included the Dayton House by Vincent James, the Streeter House by David Salmela, and the Bigelow Chapel by HGA (with Joan Sorrano as design team leader). This refined, carefully crafted work by Minnesota architects was as inspiring as the large cultural institutions designed by architects of international prominence.

Interface with Academia

In both cities the program integrated academic and practice perspectives. Our Miami visit closed with a thought-provoking panel discussion led by Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Dean of the University of Miami School of Architecture. The discussion focused on the dichotomy between the city's decaying downtown and flourishing waterfront. Bringing cultural richness and dynamic design to all citizens and all neighborhoods also remains a long-term challenge in Miami.

In Minneapolis we closed with a panel discussion among regional architects, led by Tom Fisher, Dean of the University of Minnesota's College of Design. One participant was Ralph Rapson, Dean of the university's School of Architecture



from 1954-1984. Rapson influenced a generation of architects in the region, many of whom were present at the panel discussion. Still spry at ninety-two, Rapson challenged us to integrate planning with architecture and landscape architecture.

Reflections on Design in Miami and Minneapolis

The "Bilbao" effect is working. Long-range planning has combined with dedicated, talented architects to produce designs that are becoming positive catalysts for change in the urban environment. Our explorations indicated this may be nowhere more apparent than on America's new urban waterfronts.

It is also reassuring to see that academic exploration and architectural practice are informing each other throughout the land. And while international architectural luminaries such as Frank Gehry, Herzog & de Meuron, and Jean Nouvel are creating individual works that attract most of the attention, regional talent is flourishing in

cities such as Miami and Minneapolis. One may hope that enlightened clients, visionary leaders, and talented architects will continue to collaborate to transform American cities.

Michael Franklin Ross, FAIA, Chair 2007 AIA Committee on Design, is principal-in-charge of the Los Angeles office of HGA Architects and Engineers. He has served as Chair of the AIA Los Angeles Design Awards and Chair of the AIA California Council Design Awards. He has contributed more than seventy-five articles to the architectural press, including work for *Architectural Record*, *Progressive Architect*, *A+U*, *Architecture & Urbanism*, as well as *LA Architect* and *arcCA*. His is also the author of *Beyond Metabolism: The New Japanese Architecture*, published by McGraw-Hill. He can be reached at mross@hga.com.

Above: The cantilevered entrance to the Walker Art Center addition. Photo by Michael Ross, FAIA.

Opposite: View in and view out of the Walker Art Center addition. The original structure is at the back. Top photo from the new sculpture garden by Margaret McCurry, FAIA. Bottom photo by Tom Holden, AIA.

Caring for Places: Sustaining Attention

Urban design that is sustainable allows development energies to build on each other, using the imagination of many people to bring energy and commitment to a locale and to form places that will add value to the lives of those who live there. Excellent places structure the encounters of those who live, work and learn in them in ways that direct our attention to enduring significance and creative potential: nature, individuality, common purpose, cultural connection, and invention. Such places also bring to mind our collective responsibilities to the Earth, to each other, and to those who will follow. Good places help us keep track of who we are and where we fit within a larger system of relationships.

In the end, our capacity to establish lasting conditions depends on our being able to hold the interest and affection of the people who inhabit patches of our world and who will make them sustainable. Making places that grasp the imagination of those who inhabit them is a necessary part of creating cities and countryside that will be effective over the long term and that will be deemed worthy of passing on through generations.

The places we should care about define territories that are lived in, have fellow beings, are subject to the sun and its cycles, are rooted in the earth and its processes. They are here and now, but are connected to their past, and bear seeds that anticipate a future. They are built in ways that explore the evolving capabilities and interests of their cultures. Such places will not endure without change, but will keep adjusting to the conditions of growth. They will not be wasted by neglect or wanton destruction; nor will they be wasteful.

Many call now for a total revamping of ways in which we inhabit the earth, insisting that nothing less than a wholly new vision will allow us a viable future. They may be right, but if so, this must be achieved incrementally. The advocacy of total transformation always arrives in error; the conditions of our lives, and the interests that we hold, are so numerous that any singly motivated encompassing vision must be suspect. Sweeping modifications have so often led us to disastrous consequences that our search for measures of global effectiveness, must seek paths that are based in local knowledge and will secure continuing engagement and care.

Concern for sustainable design is motivated, surely, by a growing awareness of climate change and by the growth in population, with its consequent demands upon resources. Those demands manifest themselves in the lives of most people, though with radically different consequences: strife and starvation in far too many parts of the globe; inconvenience, changes in lifestyle, and expanded opportunities in most of the places where this journal will be read. These disparities are not casual, nor can they be sustained. There must be, and will be, substantial change; our choice is between the management of effective transformation and the onset of cataclysmic consequences. The latter will come not all at once, but will be camouflaged in patches of decay, in destruction and terror, in events and conditions apparently remote but embedded nevertheless in our own lives. As designers and stewards of environments, we should commit ourselves to countermoves, to creating a bright patchwork of places that embody potential. These will result from the inventive pursuit of forms, visions and policies that secure individual and community support, yet bring attention to issues that reach well beyond local concern.

These will be places of responsible promise.

— *Donlyn Lyndon*

Call for Submissions

2008 EDRA/Places Awards, in Cooperation with *Metropolis* Magazine

Places and the Environmental Design Research Association announce the eleventh annual EDRA/*Places* Awards for Place Design, Planning and Research—this year in cooperation with *Metropolis* magazine. We seek entries of exemplary work from practitioners and researchers 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 into design and planning practice. The jury selects six winners from three categories: place design, place planning, and place research. This year they will also award a book prize.

The deadline for entries is February 7, 2008. The awards jury will be held February 29–March 1 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, with winners announced the week following. Official presentations will be made at the EDRA annual conference, May 2008, in Veracruz, Mexico. Winning projects will be announced in *Metropolis* and on the *Places* website, with full write-ups and commentary published in the Fall 2008 issue of *Places*.

For more information about the awards program and to obtain entry forms or brochures, 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.

Book Award. New this year. Recently published books advancing the critical understanding of place and design of exceptional environments.

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Dennis Frenchman, Professor of Urban Design and Planning, MIT

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Fritz Steiner, Dean of the School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin

Susan S. Szenasy, Editor in Chief, *Metropolis*

Jane Weinzapfel, FAIA, Principal, Leers Weinzapfel Associates Architects

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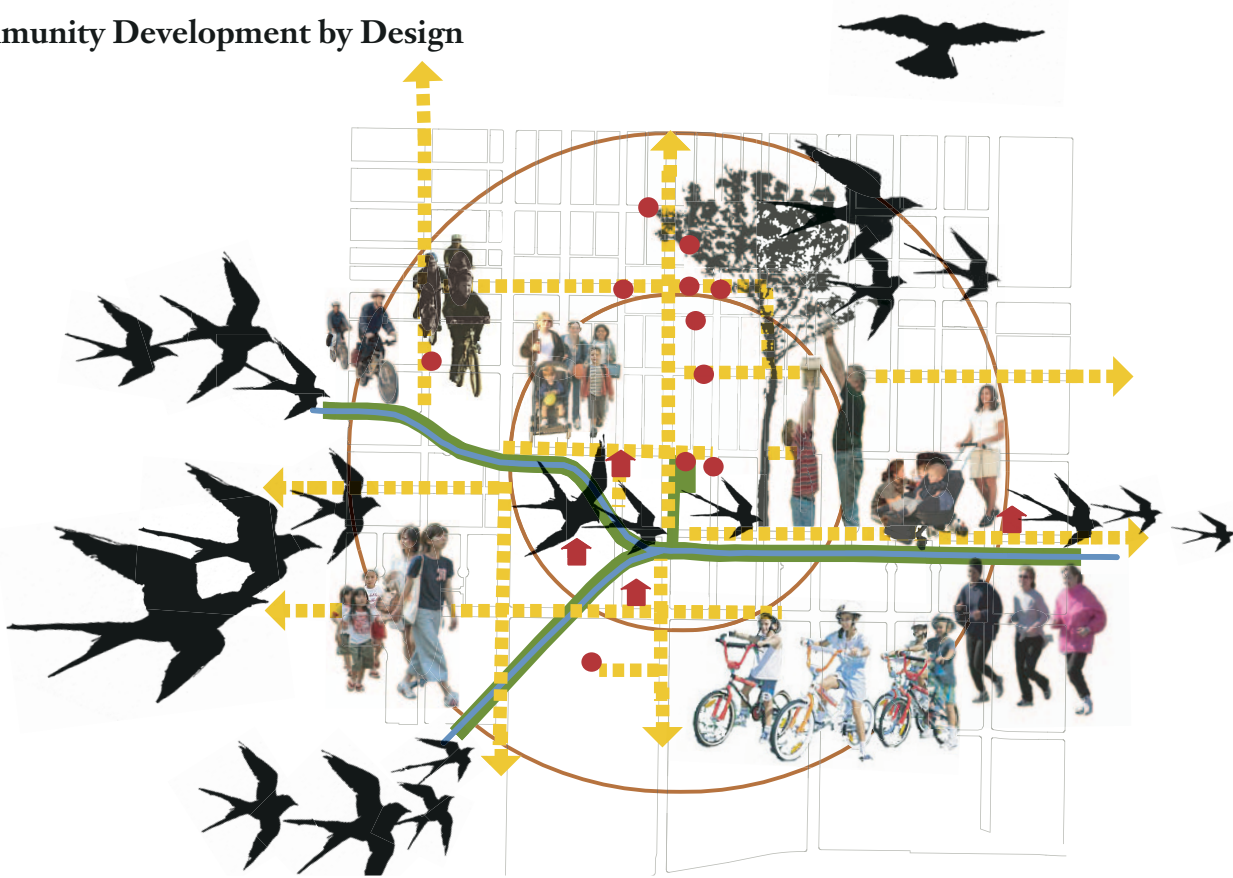
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E-mail: edra@edra.org

The postmark deadline for submissions is Feb. 7, 2008.

Los Angeles River Urban Wildlife Refuge: A Vision for Parks, Habitat, and Urban Runoff

Community Development by Design



Los Angeles, the second most populous urban region in the third most populous nation in the world, is a global city of unquestioned importance. It is also a city that for years people of supposedly good taste were expected to loathe. Los Angeles was William Whyte's "Exploding Metropolis," David Rieff's "Capital of the Third World," and Mike Davis's "City of Quartz." Yet this home of so many daunting urban problems has also become a hotbed of original urban problem-solving—that is, when time has been taken to understand it as a place.

The Los Angeles River Urban Wildlife Refuge: A Vision for Parks, Habitat, and Urban Runoff study is a prime example of how achieving a deeper understanding of a region can lead to innovative solutions. To the jury, this document was no less than "amazing" as an example of the type of strategic thinking that could signal a major turning point for the Los Angeles River.

At first glance, the client and planning team for the study appear to be the picture of contrast, and the goals of the project are a seeming object lesson in contradiction. The client, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, is a landscape-scale state agency. Created in 1980, it has helped preserve more than 60,000 acres of parkland and improve more than 114 public facilities in Southern California, with the goal of creating "an interlinking system of

urban, rural and river parks, open space, trails, and wildlife habitats that are easily accessible to the general public."¹ The planning team, on the other hand, was led by Community Development by Design, a small Northern California firm that, in the words of its project director Marcia McNally, usually takes on only a few clients and "works with them for decades."²

Together, this professional pairing set out to create an internal vision plan that would demonstrate how an agency focused on mountains can also care for a river, and how the densely developed Los Angeles region can simultaneously become home to a "Big Wild." The basis of that vision is a single, bold proposal: to create an urban wildlife refuge centered on the long-mistreated Los Angeles River that may one day be entered into the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The study notes there is presently no refuge "that is a riparian corridor stretching through a large city." But it then asks, "What better place to begin...than along the Los Angeles River?"

How the team arrived at such a proposal, and how the document suggests the Conservancy address the challenge, are both a product of place.

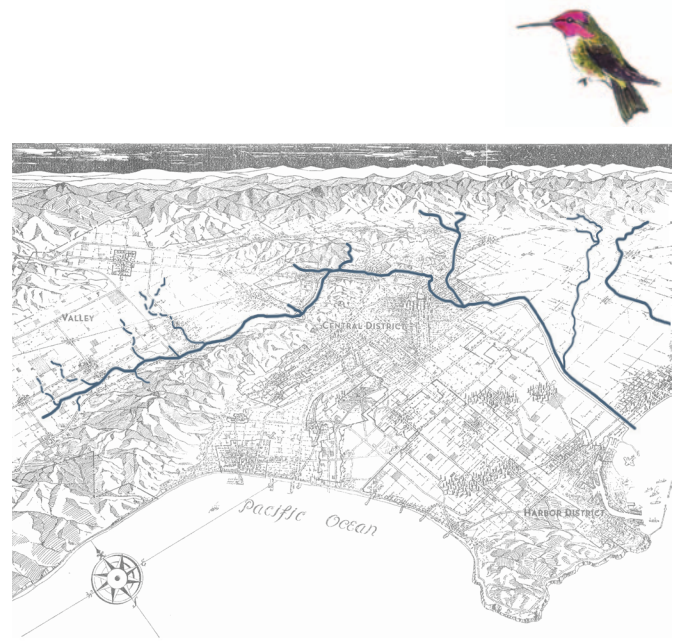


The Beginning

Flowing from the western end of the San Fernando Valley to the Pacific Ocean at Long Beach, the Los Angeles River carries runoff from mountain ranges north and east of the city. During the nineteenth century it was a major natural feature, providing drinking and irrigation water. Its tendency to flood and the pressures of twentieth-century urbanization caused local and state government to transform much of it into a concrete flood channel, and it may now best be known as the cinematically famous site of numerous car chases and the backdrop for countless noir movie deeds.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has been working with Community Development by Design on projects related to its mountain lands since 1985. But this most recent collaboration began in 2003 when the state acquired two large riverside properties, the Cornfields in Chinatown and Taylor Yard in Cypress Park.

When the Conservancy took over these former railroad properties, it was immediately besieged by groups with competing agendas. The Los Angeles River watershed is home to almost three million park-starved people, and some 110,000 Angelinos live within a quarter-mile of its main stem. Many in the neighborhoods adjacent to the new properties saw them as places to satisfy a pressing need for recreational space, particularly new soccer fields. But for others, such as the Conservancy, the properties also



held the potential to be part of a larger ecological network of green spaces linking the Santa Monica Mountains to the sea. It was a classic planning conundrum: how does one plan for diverse local concerns in a way that can also serve a regional goal?

In search of an answer to these larger questions, McNally spent three years leading twenty-three neighborhood studies within the Los Angeles River watershed. With her students from the University of California, Berkeley, where she is an associate adjunct professor of in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, she surveyed neighborhood after neighborhood, collecting data, creating field guides, and working to understand the area. Eventually, the research led upriver from the Cornfields and Taylor Yard sites, to the river's source, and resulted in work that is truly comprehensive.

Re-envisioning

Composed of four sections—Vision, Logic, Application, and Implementation—the study proposes a course of action that extends from the vision of broad hopes to the practicalities of local execution. The ideal “is to re-envision the watershed...as an urban wildlife refuge,” and thereby accommodate the wide differences of scale addressed in the proposal.

Opposite: A green vision for L.A.'s Canoga Park neighborhood.

Above left: The L.A. River drainage and the location of the headwaters management area.

Above right: The L.A. River in aerial perspective.



Methodologically, it begins with the conceptual division of the watershed into separate units, each small enough to engage individual communities and address neighborhood and site-specific issues (such as those in Chinatown and Cypress Park), yet large enough theoretically to be home to a top-level predator (used as a guide for the amount of land necessary for a fully-functioning ecosystem). The result of this re-envisioning is a series of twelve 20,000-acre units along the main stem of the river.

As an example of local implementation, the document then focuses on one of these units, the Headwaters (where Bell Creek and Arroyo Calabasas join to form the river). This area is home to more than 220,000 people and a diversity of land uses. Tying this portion of the city to the river experientially, and then linking it ecologically to all the other units along the river, would require an approach that employed science, design, and close attention to public concerns and capabilities.

The Brilliance of Birds

The opportunity to link these varied concerns was found not in the river, but in the sky. Birds emerged as the prime indicator of ecological health, the organizing agent for proposed new land geometries, and the psychological link between the citizenry, the river, and the larger environment.

As the study notes, the San Gabriel and Los Angeles River watersheds together support 444 bird species. And the twelve Audubon Society chapters in the L.A. basin alone prove that birds and bird admirers are both abundant here. This use of birds as a basis for the plan's organizational logic was the breakthrough that most impressed the jury.

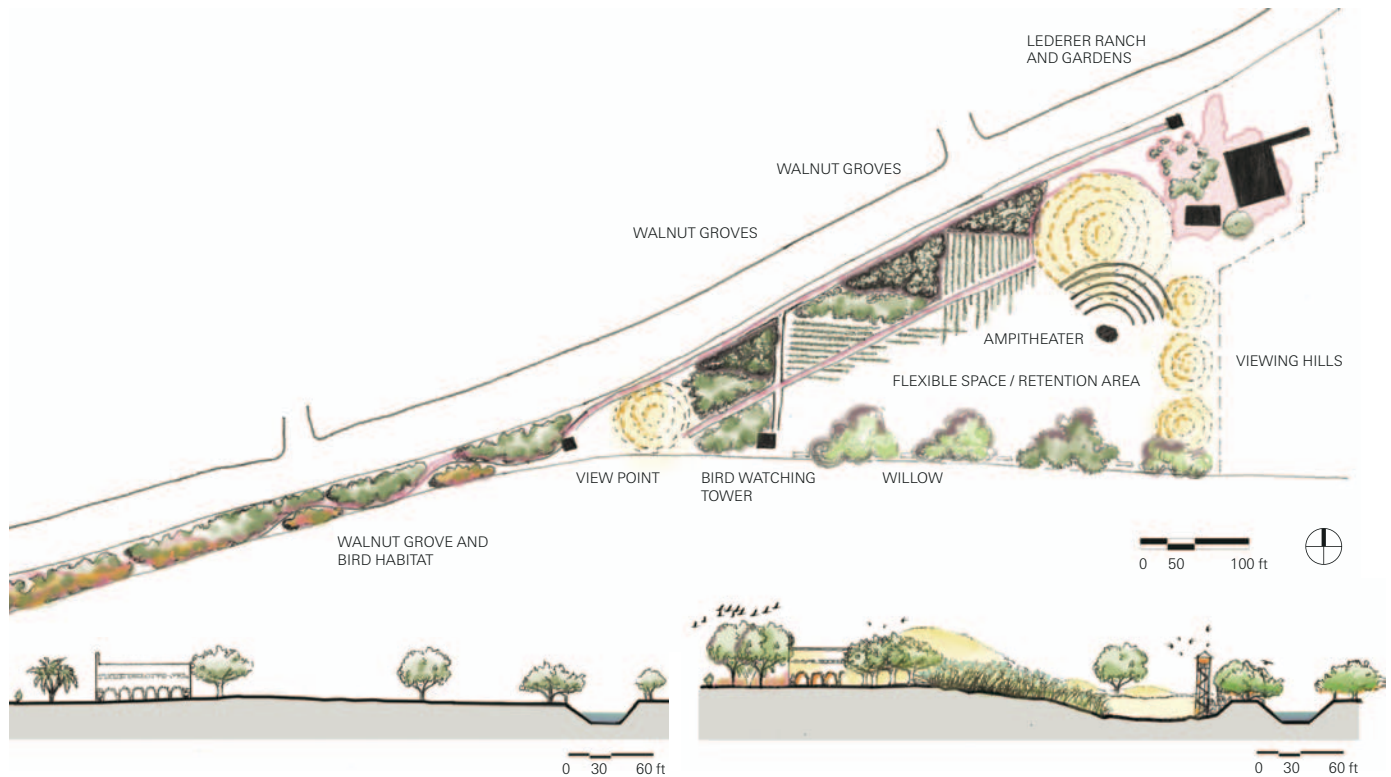
Conceptualizing the landscape from the perspective of avian species requires a simultaneous understanding of a whole bioregion as well as its individual component parts. Viewing it this way, McNally and her team realized that change that can be accomplished on individual, nonadjacent lots matters as much as that achieved on large swaths

Sample Juror Comments—L.A. River

Anne Whiston Spirn: For me the strategic thinking was how to help the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. They have been very successful getting space in the mountains. But now they have decided to look at the L.A. River, at the city itself. And they were stumped. What they did was figure out how to transfer the Conservancy's successes from the mountains to the river. And they did that partly by talking about birds and the birds' need for habitat.

Buzz Yudell: This discussion about transforming the L.A. River has been going on for quite a few years. This has been seen by almost everybody as beyond hope. At one point it wasn't even worth talking about. Then it was worth talking about, but it was still impossible. Then in just the last couple of years it has actually gotten traction in terms of multiple initiatives, lots of attention. The mayor is behind it. This kind of thing is an important key. This is really regional.

Anne Whiston Spirn: This is an in-house document for the state agency to help them to completely rethink their strategy. They are taking good ecological research in terms of thinking about patches and reserves and corridors, and they are looking at little places. They are saying that there is not enough local open space now, and this would increase it considerably. There is also thinking about flood storage. If we're going to take away concrete, how do we keep as much water from



of land. The study notes that in the past thirty years the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife Habitat program has certified more than 35,000 backyard habitats, and now includes schools and larger communities. So many individual backyards add up over time.

The cumulative benefits of such lot-by-lot change extend well beyond the realm of birds. For example, the collective effect of many individual property improvements can lead to an enhanced hydrological cycle, which in turn provides the opportunity for broad-based habitat restoration within portions of the Los Angeles River channel. With half of all rainfall in the city falling onto impervious surfaces such as parking lots and being channeled directly out to sea, concern for bird habitat will inevitably translate into more water percolating into the ground; and if more water percolates through the soil instead of running off immediately into the river, the need for large-scale concrete bank protections will be reduced. Through integrative

planning such as this, the regional ecological goals of the Conservancy can be realized through coordinated efforts on numerous individual sites within a variety of neighborhoods.

The plan's vision, then, is of a program of coordinated but noncontiguous actions aimed at benefiting residents, wildlife, and the general hydrological cycle—with the health of local bird populations as an index and direct measure of success. Programmatically as well as geographi-

Opposite left: Birdwatchers at the mouth of the L.A. River. Photo by Randy Hester.

Opposite right: A heavy rainstorm in 1938 was the inducement to begin channelization of the L.A. River. Following the storm, a reporter and a photographer from the L.A. *Herald-Express* attempted a humorous boat journey from Hyperion Ave to Long Beach. From the collection of the L.A. Public Library.

Above: Within the headwaters area, the illustrative Lederer Ranch site plan proposes decorative gardens that double as habitat and river nature-park facilities. The left section shows the site as it exists. The right shows it with the proposal implemented.

coming in? They are saying, "We've got to look at the entire watershed." It's amazing.

Buzz Yudell: Somehow being able to communicate something that complex into something this legible is really fabulous.

Anne Whiston Spirn: I think the birds were key. Because other sets of folks would have been talking about fish, squirrels. It's the birds! It's the birds! And look at the beautiful graphics!

Buzz Yudell: Its very accessible, but it's also well

written and not patronizing. Putting a very complex story together in a way that is accessible is a huge part of the success of this project.

Ann Forsyth: What was nice also was how it took a fairly large plan down to detailed design. Their prototype park designs are very nicely done, very evocative. They are designs for small parks that you can imagine. They call them nature parks, but they also allow for human use.

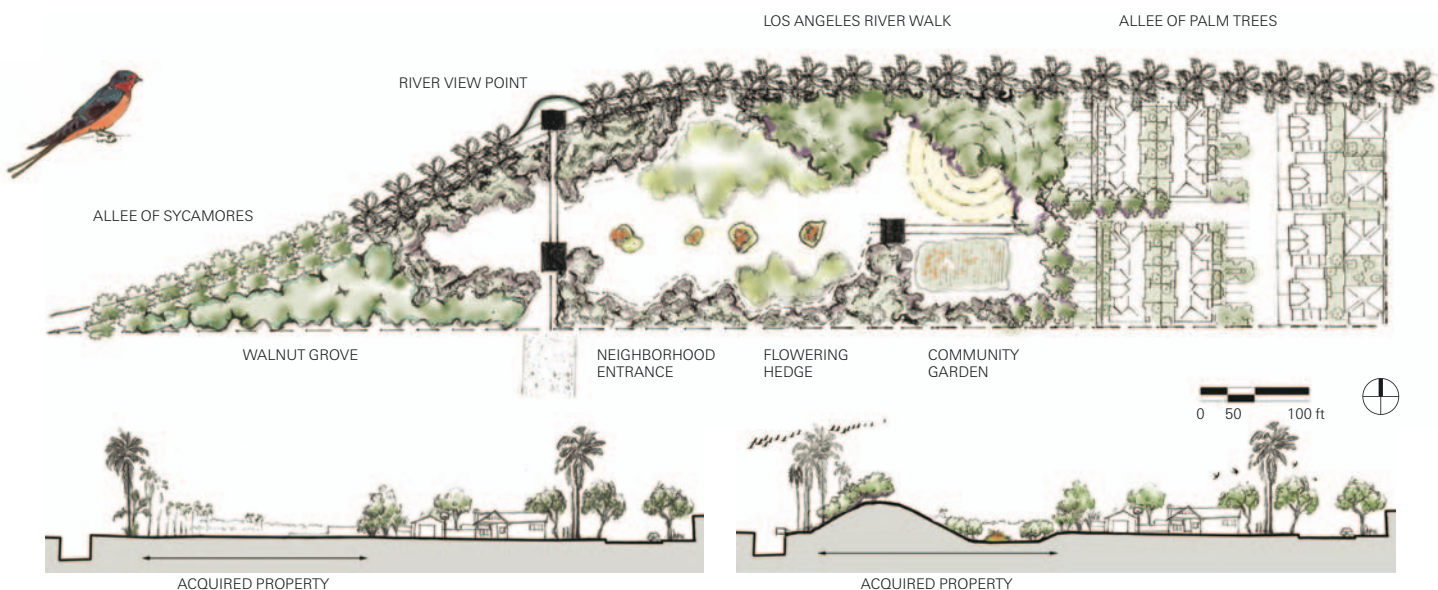
Anne Whiston Spirn: The designs are not sophisticated

by any means—they are diagrammatic. But I think that's as it should be, because it is not overly prescriptive.

Buzz Yudell: And they connect them back to the region. I think we are going to look back, when the L.A. River does start getting transformed, on it as a major turning point for the whole metropolitan region.

Anne Whiston Spirn: They are saying, collectively, these small parks are going to add up to the habitat that you need.

Roberta Feldman: And that's what is particularly



cally wide-reaching, it imagines interventions across property types (from public to private, and from residential to industrial), and across uses (from roads to storm drains to the riverbed itself). These may potentially include everything from the construction of swales, wetlands and rain gardens, to programs to educate and reward the public for efforts at backyard stewardship.

Above: Working with a developer, the second illustrative park plan shows how infill housing and habitat can coexist along the L.A. River. The left section shows the site as it exists. The right shows it with proposed swales, hills and vegetation to create a riverside amenity.

Opposite left: Permeability of land areas in Canoga Park near the L.A. River headwaters, from open space (white) to industrial (black).

Opposite right: Existing Canoga Park destinations near the L.A. River headwaters. The circles indicate one- and two-mile radii.

Application and Implementation

The Application and Implementation sections of the document demonstrate how this vision can be turned into on-the-ground projects by the Conservancy and other public agencies.

Focusing on the Headwaters region, the plan, first, calls for the creation of three new nature parks, each intended to bring neighborhoods closer to the river. The first, Lederer Ranch (6.15 acres) will include a bird-viewing stand, new habitat, and decorative gardens along the river. The second (3.5 acres) will provide a water retention area, a riverwalk, and a community garden, with approximately the same amount of land designated for affordable housing. The third, in the Canoga Park neighborhood, will be one block from the river's headwaters. A site plan for each park is included in the document, as are proposals for environmentally friendly details, such as building eaves that can accommodate barn-swallow nests.

remarkable about this project. Most conservancy projects involve big pieces of land. This is a political shift, an environmental shift, a design shift, a cultural shift to a different model. To organize around the idea of small pieces of land is quite remarkable. This is a political feat as well as a design model.

Anne Whiston Spira: And the birds are part of that too. There's a bird-watching tradition, so they bring in bird counts and flyways, and that's another way of linking the scale of the small pieces to a larger scale that's continental.

Birds can fly, so they are not limited like fish to water, or other mammals to traveling across the ground.

Roberta Feldman: What's so interesting is this link between an ecological phenomenon and also getting financing for the project.

Buzz Yudell: And changing people's understanding of where they live and how it is connected to the greater system. Part of the success of groups like the Santa Monica Conservancy financially has been that often very wealthy people understand or find it appealing to

save a big chunk of pristine land. The same people have typically not understood or found it appealing to put money into degraded areas, or small urban areas, and this somehow makes that connection.

Roberta Feldman: It has all the ingredients of a good plan. It has involved the public in a way that gets the buy-in. It has careful research to back up the plan. It understands the political system involved and the change in politics from large areas that are not populated to areas that are.



Second, the document proposes a comprehensive twenty-year plan specifically for Canoga Park, a scenario that starts with the last of the three small parks but builds into something much more comprehensive. A “healthy river walk” network will connect river parks and other neighborhood destinations. “Wet habitat” sites will be developed at the end of roads and runoff will be controlled and reused. Cooperative management of vegetation across property lines will be instituted and a wildlife refuge neighborhood certification program will be implemented.

Third, the study proposes a series of larger initiatives across the watershed. The refuge idea will be launched with a science-based conference. A database will be created for further research. Partnerships between multiple agencies will be developed. A rivershed policy zone, extending a quarter-mile on either side of the river, will be established by the city. And a full process of neighborhood certification will be developed.

An Accessible Vision

The jury noted that in addition to containing a compelling vision, the document worked well to engage all readers, regardless of their education. Regional history and historic photographs are combined with maps, information on local bird species, indexes of possible interventions in the neighborhood landscape, and renderings of potential



park designs. Thus, just as its vision calls for building an ecologically healthier region by acting on as many individual, small portions of the landscape as possible, the document itself, through a layout and organization, is directed to as wide an audience as possible—building support one reader at a time.

The message it communicates, the approach to place planning it demonstrates, and the end goal it envisions were all reasons the jury proclaimed this EDRA/*Places* award-winner to be “amazing.” The approaches place in a way that is holistic yet specific, and in doing so presents the citizens of Los Angeles with a goal, a methodology, and a plan. This is a concept *for* place and *of* place—a place that may have a great deal more to teach the rest of the country.

—Jason Alexander Hayter



Notes

1. See: <http://smmc.ca.gov/>. The website further explains the Conservancy works, “[t]hrough direct action, alliances, partnerships, and joint powers authorities...to strategically buy back, preserve, protect, restore, and enhance treasured pieces of Southern California.”
2. For example, the firm has worked since 1980 for the small Outer Banks town of Manteo, North Carolina. They are currently working together on a third town plan.

All drawings by Community Development by Design.

Living Memorials National Research: 9/11 and the Public Landscape

USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station



Before the media circus began around the design and construction of an official 9/11 memorial in Lower Manhattan, more personal and perhaps more meaningful memorial activities were taking place across the United States. In countless communities, private citizens sought to express their grief for the victims and sympathy for their families. Some gestures were small, spontaneous acts by largely anonymous groups of people; others were deliberate and public, involving the support of local governments. But all involved a heartfelt desire to respond to the events of that tragic day by honoring its dead and beginning to heal the wounds in personal lives and in the national psyche.

At the urging of Congress, the U.S. Forest Service initiated its Living Memorials Project in response to this outpouring of public emotion. The project sought both to provide

funding to memorial projects nationwide and to study the effects of tree planting and other alterations of the natural environment on collective resilience and emotional recovery.

“Living memorials are spaces re-created, used, or appropriated by people as they seek to embed memory in the landscape,” explains Erika Svendsen, one of the principal researchers at USFS. “They may involve simple acts like tree planting, more elaborate memorial gardens, or the restoration of entire forests or other natural areas.”

Initially, the USFS effort began with a singular focus on trees, an enduring and universal symbol of life and renewal. The goal was “to invoke the resonating power of trees to bring people together and create lasting, living memorials to the victims of terrorism, their families, communities, and the nation.”



However, the project soon expanded to chronicle more than seven hundred sites throughout the country where communities and individuals have used the natural environment to respond to the 9/11 attacks. And its findings have been made public in an online project inventory and a virtual map (livingmemorialproject.net), presentations to professional audiences, a general technical report, a multimedia exhibition of twelve “journeys” to visit these sites, plus a DVD and catalogue.

The audience for this research is potentially huge, including urban planners, designers, natural resource managers, stewardship groups, and the general public. And the awards jury was particularly impressed that it had been sponsored and largely carried out by a federal agency. Given the cumbersome and trouble-prone efforts to estab-

lish official memorials at the 9/11 crash sites, they were unanimously moved by the qualities of the many smaller and, in some cases, unofficial memorials documented and facilitated by the work. They praised the simple recording of these sometimes-temporary sites, which will provide a treasure for future understanding of how human care and investment in small alterations to the landscape can transform the ordinary into the sacred.

Left to right, top to bottom: Cedarhurst, NY; New York, NY; Scarsdale, NY; New York, NY; Leonia, NJ; Rockaway, NY; Staten Island, NY; Lyndhurst, NJ; Breezy Point, NY; Boston, MA; Woods Hole, MA; Stirling, NJ; Brooklyn, NY; Long Island City, NY; North Hempstead, NY; Quantico, MD; Wyckoff, NJ; Brooklyn, NY. For credits and information on individual memorial sites, see www.livingmemorialproject.net.

Precedents

Throughout history, working through collective grief has involved the creation of places to embody meaning and memory. So many damaged places come to mind: Auschwitz, Chernobyl, Dresden, Hiroshima, My Lai, Verdun, Wounded Knee, the Soviet gulags.... In light of the confusion and fear that followed 9/11, there could perhaps have been no better role for a government agency than to help the nation come to grips with the scope of its grief.

Yet, the events of 9/11 were also not without precedent, and new tragedies are sure to follow. After the battle at Gettysburg, President Lincoln looked out over its fields and forests and claimed them to be “hallowed ground.” Such sites of tragedy and violence abound throughout the world. As a nation, we look at them to discover who we are, how we respond to violence, and how we seek solace in its aftermath.

Among the examples of 9/11 memorials documented by the Living Memorials research are plantings of sunflowers in street medians and vacant lots in New York City; a line of street trees in the Bronx; and various impromptu memorials installed near the World Trade Center. The project sought to capture the full range of these community memorials and simple shrines to friends, neighbors, and family members.

Initially the work concerned itself with the three crash sites, as the researchers tried to better understand the role of trees, open space, and nature in memorial activities. Then they began to realize that these activities were taking place not just in New York City, or even the Northeast, but also across the country.

The research method involved an initial identification of sites by a newspaper database search. The researchers then conducted interviews, field observation, and photo documentation in the course of personal journeys to visit

more than one hundred and fifty memorial sites throughout the U.S.

One particularly valuable activity was the creation of an online national registry, allowing communities to report to the USFS about new memorials. As this information grew, the researchers created an interactive map to chart the emergence of sites nationwide.

Outcomes

To foster understanding of this outpouring of design activity, the Living Memorials project built on the work of writers from a variety of disciplines, including Durkheim, Foote, Fraser, Halbwachs, Jackson, Pogue-Harrison, Sunstein, and Young. It also received generous assistance from landscape designers, sociologists, ecologists, local city government officials, and private citizens.

As the project grew, the Forest Service also developed a grant program to support smaller towns and communities in their memorial activities. The grants were allocated mainly for plantings, site restoration, and signage; they stipulated that the memorials honor the original intent of “the resonating power of trees.”

To observe uses of the natural landscape and resources, the grant selection committee posed four questions. What is the purpose or mission of the memorial? What are the plans to use the space? Why was a location selected. And finally, was the site considered “sacred”?

Answers to these questions gave researchers great insights into the sites and their creators’ intentions.

“For me personally, it was the location piece that enabled me to look at these sites in a different way,” Svendsen says. “There were very complex detailed stories about ‘why here?’ These sites were under the flight path if they were near the Hudson River, in the viewshed of the Twin Towers, always a significant place. It may be a portion of a

Sample Juror Comments—Living Memorials

Roberta Feldman: There is no doubt that 9/11 had an impact that went well beyond the physical devastation of those buildings. Trying to understand how the public dealt with this process in this really troubled time for our country I think was a very important research project. And the way that they wrote the research up was truly moving. It could have been written in a very dry document style. Instead, the

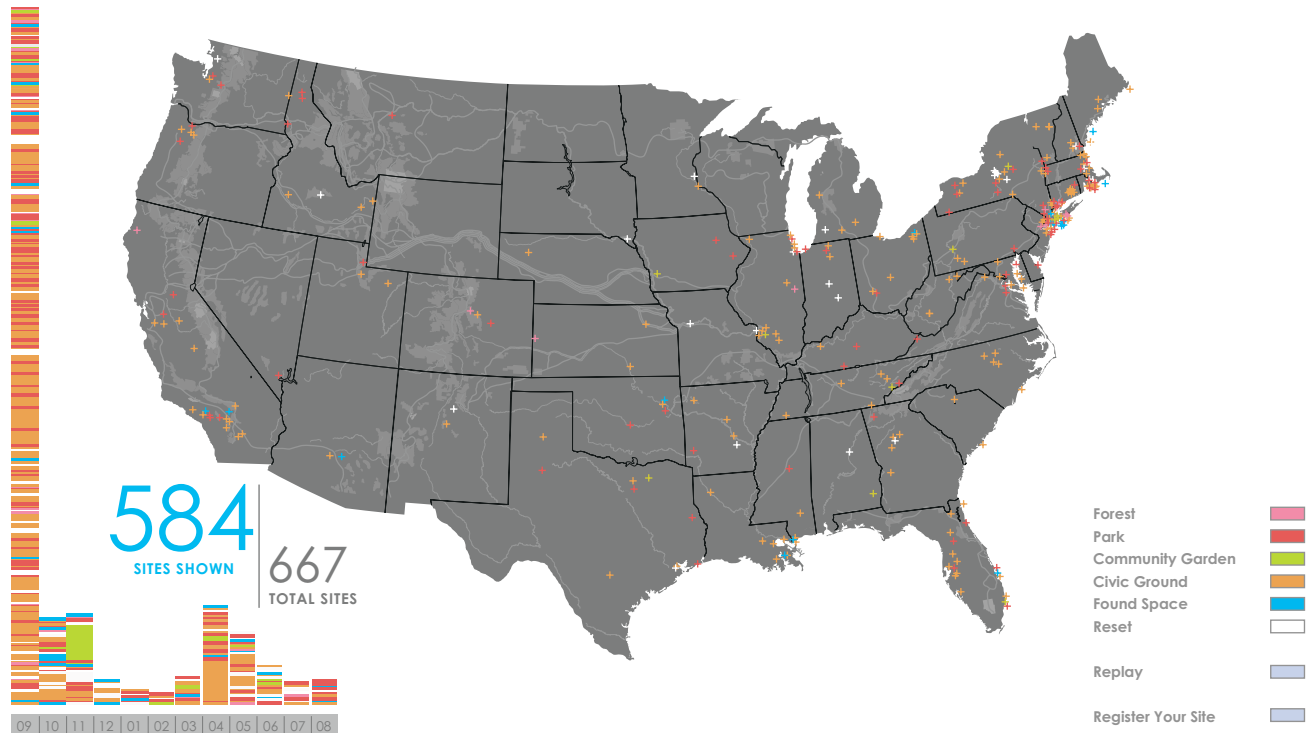
way they organized the material, the narrative they developed about the findings, has a definite feel. It is very clear and demanding. It is not sentimental.

Ann Forsyth: What’s interesting to me is that it is one research project with multiple products, and it includes an inventory of memorials. But I was particularly impressed with the journeys. There are twelve journeys that helped the reader to move through a

series of memorials. It is actually a wonderful model for other research projects to help people journey through the landscape in an instructive way.

Anne Whiston Spira: I actually wanted to join those paths.

Roberta Feldman: The journeys were the personal journeys of the researchers, and their voices and their emotions come through. So the research is



park or a community that has great meaning, sometimes to an individual, sometimes to the whole community.”

On the interactive map, the project shows the sites as they developed. At first, clusters appeared near the crash sites. Later, they emerged in other areas, such as California, where the planes were headed.

Recognition of the broad-scale patterns emerging on the map led to the next project phase. Called “Land-markings: 12 Journeys through the 9/11 Living Memorials,” this took the form of a multimedia exhibition of twelve digitally authored

personal journeys culled from four years of research.

According to the other principal researcher, Lindsay Campbell: “The location function informed the journey portion of the land-marking part of the exhibit. It drew on our own experience of collecting the field data and the patterns that were beginning to emerge about geographic clusters and thematic threads that ran through the idea of living memorials.”

Above: The Living Memorials Project National Map, created by urban-interface.

objective and very personal at the same time, and those wonderful drawings they have of their journeys are very evocative of the scope of all of these memorial activities. The exhibit catalogued those. The first document was much more of a research document. In the exhibit catalogue, they had the freedom to be more expressive, and the graphic design is beautiful.

Anne Whiston Spinn: It could have had some more

analysis. And it definitely could have had linked to literature more. But it is a lovely project.

Roberta Feldman: I think there are different kinds of research that have different purposes. These documents are intended for a nonresearch audience, but you can find everything—the question, the method, the findings, the literature, and so on. For a general audience it is even a little more sophisticated

than I would have expected. It is competent research; the interpretation resonates; it’s very emotionally moving because of the subject. It has every ingredient I could imagine in a research project.

Buzz Yudell: Another thing that gives one some hope in difficult moments is that the federal government was actually involved in this.

Roberta Feldman: And what’s also really important

For example, one journey crossed Long Island from south to north. Many of the firefighters and rescue workers who perished at the Trade Center had families on the southern part of Long Island. Traveling across the island, to its northern shore, the exhibition catalogue notes, demonstrates the “social and eco-cultural diversity on the island and renders the search for order or pattern in memorial form and function a challenging one.”¹

Journeys such as this highlighted the diversity of responses to the 9/11 attacks. Yet the research and interactive map attempted to convey a politically neutral reading of the personal and political narratives embedded in the memorial sites.

Meaning and Memory

One enduring theme at each of the sites was a quality of “sacredness.” Without intending to proscribe anything at the onset of the project—just starting with a simple hypothesis that trees, open space, and living things matter to people—the researchers found the word “sacred” was used all the time. According to Svendsen: “It seemed to be a word that helped expand that space between life and death.” It had no specific religious meaning, rather a spiritual one by which people could indicate the creation of hallowed ground, marked with significance.

Such a notion expands the idea of a memorial for 9/11 beyond Ground Zero. The act of setting aside a space and caring for it, whether it is a box of sunflowers or a garden in the center of town, imbues a site with meaning and memory.

As disagreements born in the wake of the 9/11 attacks continue to boil, from the contest of egos and financial ambitions surrounding the rebuilding of the Trade Center site to the national debate over the wisdom and conduct of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the Living Memorials project carries a far more human message. It also continues



to support our collective response to the tragedy, away from the tourists and the television cameras.

Historians looking back on the events of September 11, 2001, may argue about how they changed politics, culture, and national identity. But few will contest 9/11’s impact on our sense of the American landscape. The Living Memorials project illustrates myriad responses, unified in their lyrical temporality, their affirmation of life, and their desire to steady our nerves against a tide of fear and uncertainty.

—Lisa Sullivan

Note

1. Erika S. Svendsen and Lindsay K. Campbell, “Land-markings: 12 Journeys through the 9/11 Living Memorials,” exhibition catalogue, United States Department of Agriculture.

Above: New York firefighters at the Living Memorial Trail, Bronx, NY.

Sample Juror Comments—Living Memorials

is that they note a lot of these interventions, these memorials, are temporary, or are going to change over time. So that there is importance to documenting them immediately, early on, because so much of it is going to be lost or changed.

Buzz Yudell: It brings up an interesting irony or paradox, which is the kind of richness of these temporary memorials and expressions versus the kind

of turgid work that is happening right now on the actual Ground Zero site.

Roberta Feldman: It is interesting too that they have some permanent memorials documented. And the impromptu ones have a design richness about them that the permanent ones don’t have. The permanent ones pick a singularity of purpose, whereas the impromptu ones involve multiple people’s perceptions

or actions. And it creates a much more diverse display. It’s fascinating. Each place is really different. And the title “Living Memorials,” rather than speaking about memorials to the dead, gets back to this notion of affirmation of life that we looked at in *Defiant Gardens*. A lot of these are gardens, and involve trees, flowers, and so on. This is also life affirming.

The Ferry Building—San Francisco, CA

SMWM; Baldauf Catton von Eckartsberg; Page & Turnbull



In American cities, the second half of the twentieth century saw a pervasive expansion of freeways, an industrialization of food supplies, and a transformation of restaurants and cafes by national franchises. But as this design award to San Francisco Ferry Building indicates, the first half of the twenty-first century may see a turning of the tables. The need to create a sense of place, focused on local identity and cultural values, may once again be taking hold in the American psyche.

Above: The restored San Francisco Ferry Building dominates a revived waterfront. Photo by Richard Barnes.

Inset: The double-deck Embarcadero Freeway once cut the Ferry Building off from the rest of the city. Historic photo courtesy of BCV Architects.

Opposite: Illustrative site plan of restored Ferry Building and surrounding plazas. Illustration by J. F. Mahoney, copyright 1998. www.candraw.net. Courtesy of SMWM.

As the San Francisco newspaper columnist Herb Caen once put it, the Beaux Arts Ferry Building was once “a famous city’s most famous landmark.” But for years it languished in obscurity, hidden behind the double-decked Embarcadero Freeway along a largely abandoned waterfront. A four-year, \$110 million renovation and reinvention has returned it to its former status as one of the most significant civic monuments in the western United States and a cornerstone of the public realm.

After the demolition of the damaged Embarcadero Freeway following the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, the mandate from the Port of San Francisco was specific: use the reconstruction of the Ferry Building along a newly designed grand Embarcadero boulevard to draw San Franciscans back to the waterfront. Since its reopening, the Ferry Building has done just that, providing a spark for surrounding redevelopment, and establishing a self-sustaining

center for the sale of local food and produce.

As one juror noted, “it is a catalytic piece, and incredibly important piece of the city, and the region.... it is once again the center of San Francisco’s Noli map.”

The jury agreed the project also defined design excellence on a number of levels. It held to strict preservation standards while applying innovative techniques and using new materials to stabilize the structure and update building systems. Dramatically, it also restored the building’s original 660-foot-long skylit second floor nave and brought it through to the ground level for the public to enjoy. This magnificent transit hall had been partly demolished and infilled in the years since ferries had ceased to be the primary means of travel around San Francisco Bay.

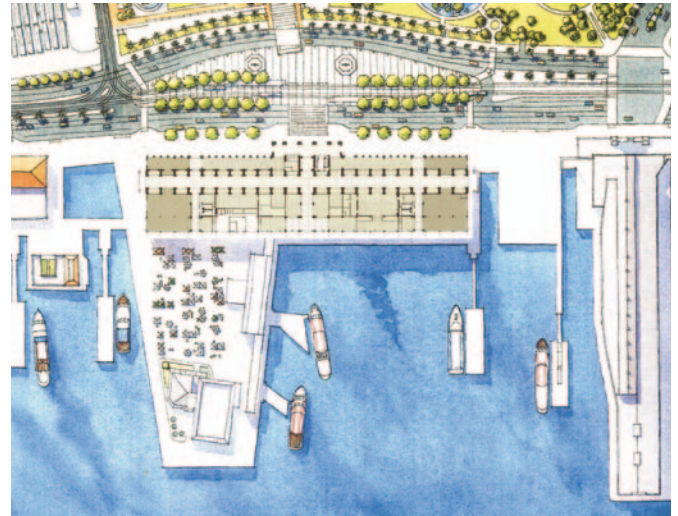
A Storied Past

The story of the Ferry Building is synonymous in many ways with the rediscovery of urban waterfronts across America. Built in 1898, the Ferry Building quickly became the second busiest transit terminal in the world, with as many as 50,000 people passing through it each day.¹ Until the construction of the Bay and Golden Gate Bridges in 1936 and 1937, all residents of the region, except those coming from the south, entered the city there. However, the construction of the bridges all but ended ferry service around the bay and led to the marginalization of the once great central terminal.

In 1950, the Ferry Building went through its first major renovation. Its owner, the Port of San Francisco, removed some of its signature public archways and filled in part of its nave to create general office space. Then, in 1957, the double-decked Embarcadero Freeway was built along the downtown waterfront, obscuring views of the Ferry Building’s majestic facade and cutting the city off from the water.

After decades of marginalization the Ferry Building’s transformation began with a near disaster. Had the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake lasted seconds longer the entire freeway structure in front of it might have come crashing down, as did a sister structure in Oakland. Following the quake, voters chose to tear the freeway down rather than pay for an expensive seismic retrofit. The demolition, combined with the relocation of commercial shipping to the container terminals of the Port of Oakland across the bay, opened up a vast new public waterfront space.

Although a series of improvements have been made to this space in the years since, including a tree-lined boulevard and a new trolley line, it has been the rebirth of the Ferry Building since 2003 that has most activated it effort both in place and in history.

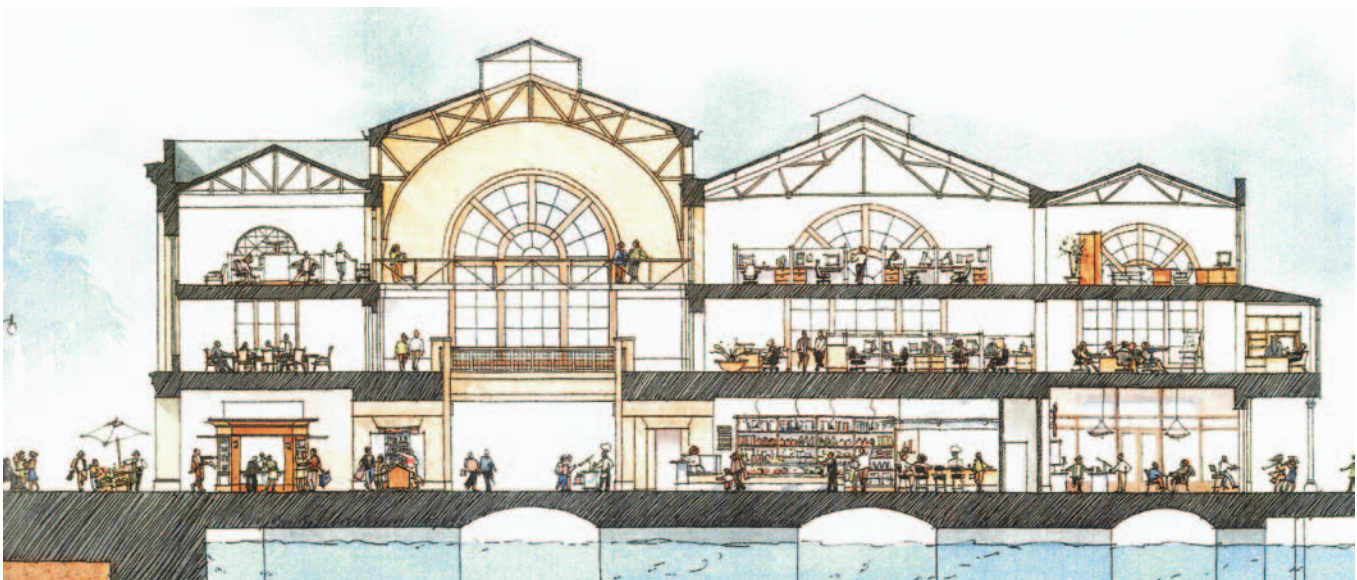


The Transformation Plan

The transformation of the Ferry Building has been a long process, one that has involved nearly ten years of public input and review. In 1998 four teams submitted proposals to redevelop the landmark building. The winning proposal stood apart from the rest for two important reasons that have subsequently played an important role in the success of the project.

The first was that the team decided to open the 660-foot-long passenger concourse, its central nave which had formerly been a second-floor space, all the way to the ground floor. When the building had been a bustling transit facility the ground floor had been used for baggage handling and other “back-of-house” uses. However, opening this nave to street level with two dramatic 30-by-150-foot openings allowed sunlight to penetrate all the way through the building. It also revealed the beauty of its ceiling vaults to the ground floor, paving the way for the creation of a unique and inspiring interior street and marketplace.

Cutting these openings through the second floor concourse, although critical to the success of the ground floor, was a difficult and complicated restoration decision. The marketplace mosaic flooring on the concourse level was considered an integral part of the building’s historic character. But the bold decision to cut two big holes into it paid off, creating a truly great public space, and the removed mosaic tiles were ultimately reused to patch sections of floor elsewhere that had been damaged in previous building modifications. Glass railings were also used around the floor cuts so one could envision the second floor concourse without the holes.





The second key decision by the renovation team was to reserve the marketplace for local culinary businesses, restaurants and vendors. This retail approach has been unique, offering what one juror referred to as “the best of Northern California” in terms of produce and food service.

By concentrating on local businesses, the Ferry Building marketplace now offers a reflection of the values and aspirations of area residents. As jurors amply noted, this focus sets it apart from other festival marketplaces across the country, which are dominated by franchise outlets with little connection to local culture. Indeed, many of these marketplaces have become tourist traps, indistinguishable from one another, rarely visited by locals, and offering little insight about region or place.



A Complex Formula

Although the award cited the physical and programmatic reinvention of the building, jurors noted that these accomplishments could hardly have been achieved without equally creative financial ideas. While preserving the nave and the ground floor for community use and 65,000 square

Opposite above: The ground-floor market hall features Bay Area products.

Photo by Richard Barnes.

Opposite below: Illustrative section showing relation of ground-floor commercial areas to offices and meeting areas above. Illustration by J. F. Mahoney, copyright 1998. www.candraw.net. Courtesy of SMWM.

Left: Organic produce on sale in the ground-floor market. Photo by David Wakely.

Right: The renovation opened up the second-floor concourse to the ground floor, making it a popular event location. Photo by Richard Barnes.

Sample Juror Comments—San Francisco Ferry Building

Ann Forsyth: The Ferry Building, I think, is really worth a discussion. I wish they had talked a bit more about design research and such in their materials.

Buzz Yudell: But to me there is. I see the Ferry Building not as just another, but as an extraordinarily unusual and successful public project that also provides an almost antithetical model to the big festival market. What really impresses me about the Ferry Building is that somehow they put together the programs, and

then financed it, and got it built in a way that reinforces some of the best qualities of the Bay Area. It is all organic, local produce from the Bay Area, basically. So it's the best vintners, the best food, olive oil, the best cheese, the best oysters. And then it's also high-end restaurants and quite a few moderate places.

Anne Whiston Spirn: I think that's what Pike Street [in Seattle] did....

Buzz Yudell: But I'm not sure if it was as complex as

this. With the Ferry Building, a lot of its financing was because they were able to create office space above that helped pay for the public spaces below. What is intriguing is that the space that is least valuable for the public is generating the most money, which then helps support this extremely public space. And the process involved the public sector going out and saying here is this problem, we have to restore this place and keep it an important part of the city. This was the only



feet of retail market space, it was supported by public-private cooperation and a long-term development/management model that created 175,000 square feet of leaseable Class A office space on the upper two floors.

The Port of San Francisco entered into a 67-year ground lease with Equity Office, a private investment firm, which invested \$110 million in the restoration. Like most mixed-use projects, the leaseable office space created the opportunity for the public spaces and retail market. The

Above left: Outdoor areas around the Ferry Building host a popular farmer's market. Photo by Richard Barnes.

Above right: A popular ground-floor oyster bar. Photo by David Wakely.

Opposite: Ground-floor restaurant with view of the Bay Bridge. Photo by David Wakely.



ground lease includes a public thoroughfare through the building, access to the grand hall, and public restrooms.

The project has been a huge financial success. In a challenging leasing environment following the dot-com crash, the Ferry Building, in its first four years, has achieved financial viability, a 100 percent lease-up of both office and retail space, and is generating positive returns. The second-floor grand hall has even become a popular event space, holding, on average, two private events a week.

Meanwhile, the farmer's market and the local businesses create a symbiotic relationship, each thriving off the other's clientele, making the Ferry Building marketplace a true neighborhood, regional, and even international epicurean destination. Since it was inaugurated, the farmer's market has increased from 5,000 to 8,000 weekday visitors, and from 10,000 to 25,000 Saturday visitors.

Sample Juror Comments—San Francisco Ferry Building

plan that leveraged market forces to actually create something that was not about commodities, but about the best of the region. I'm not sure I can think of another place that has been commercially successful at leveraging an important piece of architecture and restoration. So it walks a fine line. It creates a destination, even a tourist attraction, but all within the highest aspirations of the region.

Ann Forsyth: What I like about it is it's a public/private space, but it looks polished. And it is nice to have something that has a high quality.

Roberta Feldman: And what makes it an important preservation project is that it was a restoration project. The spaces in the building had been enclosed. They were no longer visible. We can't overlook the value of sustaining and restoring these architectural treasures.

And it is done in a way that values public life as a community, rather than just the money and promoting the tax base. What's interesting is that this model attracts probably just as many tourists as the other.

Ann Forsyth: I also liked that it shows what can happen after you take the freeways down, and how to create a fairly grand public space out of an area that had been pretty marginal.



The rejuvenated Ferry Building has also served as a catalyst for more than \$257 million of future development on the bordering waterfront. Restaurants are already taking up shop on adjacent piers. And nonprofit organization that produces the farmer's market has reported that its corporate underwriting and sponsorship has increased since it moved to the Ferry Building, providing room for new vendors to join, and strengthening the agricultural growth of small farms in the region.

Thus, in addition to offering locally based farm-fresh produce, specialty retailers, open-air cafes, and opportunities for bay-front dining, the Ferry Building is supporting many of the region's social goals: sustainable agriculture, environmental health, and economic growth.

Finally, the Ferry Building is not only a new center for food and agriculture, but it is once again becoming a hub

of transit. Its redesign has brought a resurgence of ferry service around the bay, a trend that is scheduled to increase as local freeways reach their maximum capacity. In the next nine years the San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority is looking to add upward of three new births and more than double the number of ferry routes connecting San Francisco to such outlying cities as Redwood City, South San Francisco, Berkeley, Richmond, Hercules, Martinez and Antioch. The Ferry Building is once again at the heart of San Francisco and the San Francisco Bay.

More than a Historic Time Piece

The importance of the Ferry Building as a catalyst was not lost on the former mayor of the city, Willie L. Brown, Jr.

"The rehabilitation of the Ferry Building is a lasting legacy for San Franciscans," he said at the grand public ceremony to rechristen the building's 245-foot-tall clock tower.

"The re-starting of the clock signals the Ferry Building's return to public service as an icon on the vibrant waterfront. The restoration would not have come to fruition without the tremendous public support and backing by the Port and the Ferry Building investors and stakeholders."

—Chris Sensenig

Note

1. From wikipedia: In the 1930s the San Francisco Ferry Building was the second busiest transit terminal in the world, second only to London's Charing Cross Station. It served as the embarkation point for commuters to San Francisco from the East Bay who rode the ferry fleets of the Southern Pacific and the Key System. A loop track existed in front of the building for streetcars. A large pedestrian bridge also spanned the Embarcadero in front of the Ferry Building until the late 1940s.

Anne Whiston Spurr: That's one of the things that impressed me. Many of the festival market places transformed previously private spaces. This was an extraordinarily important public building at one time. The spaces are so grand. It's a matter of a retrieval of a grand public space to be enjoyed by the public and a reminder of how public buildings were once designed. They put beautiful tile work and detail in the building. It was a statement of how important this was to the City of San Francisco, to the public. I was also moved by the

fact that the shops in the Ferry Building are featuring the best of California, not chains.

Buzz Yudell: The other thing that isn't talked about too much, but that I think is effective, is that it's not just the building. It's the building and all of its adjacent sites, so that it still activates the pier. The ferry still comes in there. There are new plazas on multiple sides that get used for specific events. And farmers markets are now happening four days a week because they are so successful. It is also connecting to updated transit

modes. It has become a catalytic piece, an incredibly important piece of the city, and the region, by extension.

Roberta Feldman: What is also impressive is that the initial photographs give you a sense that this space is actively used. The density of people is really remarkable. You understand that this place is successful by the people doing exactly what they hoped people would be doing in these spaces. That kind of presentation is unusual. Normally, a preservation project is presented as an artifact, not a building, which implies activity.

2007 EDRA/*Places* Awards

Six exemplary projects were named winners of Environmental Design Research Association/*Places* Awards in 2007. The awards recognize 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 EDRA/*Places* Awards are unique among programs that recognize professional and scholarly excellence in environmental design. They are distinguished by their interdisciplinary focus, concern for human factors in the design of the built environment, and commitment to promoting links between design research and practice.

The awards for 2007 were presented May 30 at EDRA's 33rd annual meeting, in Sacramento, CA. Judging of submissions took place February 24-25, 2007 at the Herberger Center for Design Research, at Arizona State University. *Places* and EDRA would like to thank ASU for sponsoring the event, especially Janet Holston of the Herberger Center, and Professor Sherry Ahrentszen and Dean Duke Reiter of the College of Design.

Jurors for the tenth annual EDRA/*Places* awards were

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

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

Anne Whiston Spirn, Professor of Landscape
Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Buzz Yudell, Principal, Moore Ruble Yudell,
Los Angeles

The postmark deadline for submissions for the next cycle of the EDRA/*Places* awards, this year in association with *Metropolis* magazine, is February 7, 2008.

For more information on the awards program,
visit www.edra.org or www.places-journal.org.



Award for Place Design

The Ferry Building—San Francisco, CA

SMWM (Architect); Baldauf Catton von Eckartsberg (Retail Architect);
Page & Turnbull (Preservation Architect)

Owner: Port of San Francisco; Developers: Equity Office, Wilson Meany
Sullivan LLC; Primus Infrastructure LLC

Photo above by Tom Paiva



Award for Place Design

The House of Dance and Feathers Mardi Gras
Indian Museum—New Orleans, LA

Project Locus: Patrick Rhodes, Executive Director



Award for Place Planning

Intertwined Human + Environmental Ecologies: The Money Point Sustainable Revitalization Plan—Chesapeake, VA

Crisman+Petrus Architects; University of Virginia School of Architecture with the University of Virginia Institute for Environmental Negotiation
Client: The Elizabeth River Project



Award for Place Research

Defiant Gardens: Making Gardens in Wartime

Kenneth L. Helphand

Published in 2006 by Trinity Press, San Antonio, TX.

Photo above of gardeners in the Warsaw Ghetto courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.



Award for Place Planning

Los Angeles River Urban Wildlife Refuge: A Vision for Parks, Habitat, and Urban Runoff

Community Development by Design: Marcia McNally, Project Director
Client: The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy



Award for Place Research

Living Memorials National Research: 9/11 and the Public Landscape

USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station: Erika Svendsen and Lindsay Campbell, principal researchers

The House of Dance and Feathers Mardi Gras Indian Museum—New Orleans, LA

Project Locus: Patrick Rhodes, Executive Director

In the months following Hurricane Katrina the forces of nature seemed to have defeated New Orleans. Professionals questioned the wisdom of rebuilding a city lying largely below sea level on a storm-prone coast, and government officials seemed helpless in organizing the cleanup and beginning a rebuilding process. As recovery plans got under way elsewhere on the Gulf Coast, it seemed New Orleans, and especially its poor, largely African-American districts, would remain forever in ruin.

Some residents, however, refused to accept this prospect. For them, New Orleans was not a “disaster waiting to happen again”—a possible trap—but rather home to a vibrant community with a rich cultural heritage. One of these was a community activist, Ronald Lewis. In the Lower Ninth Ward, Lewis was known as the founder and curator of the House of Dance and Feathers Mardi Gras Indian Museum. Housed in a garage alongside his home, the museum had contained an extensive collection of relics celebrating the city’s African-American heritage, including costumes from its largely forgotten “second-line” Mardi Gras festivities.

Like most structures in the Lower Ninth Ward, the museum was destroyed by the flooding that followed the storm. But its redesign and reconstruction eloquently express the importance of rebuilding New Orleans as a living city, rather than a tourist site. At the core of the effort was an activist collaboration between Lewis and the architect and educator Patrick Rhodes, but it also involved countless hours of volunteer work by students, professionals, and community residents, aided by a significant grant from the Charles Engelhard Foundation.

Despite its small size, the project’s design sophistication and timeliness won the jury’s admiration. Its impact on the community and the lives of those who worked on it was also evident. During the summer of 2006 it was the only ongoing “public” reconstruction project in its area. And in the absence of larger institutional or government support, it demonstrated the power of small organizations and communities to respond to crisis using local design-build strategies.

Above and opposite: The rebuilt House of Dance and Feathers in the backyard of the Lewis home. Jurors praised the project for its sophisticated design on a minimal budget, and for leveraging the commitment of a diverse group of contributors to produce a demonstration of hope during a time of crisis and indecision in New Orleans. Typifying an “architecture of front-porch sitting,” the project includes a patio linking the house and the museum that can serve as a place for barbecues and live music performance. Photos by Patrick Rhodes.



Action

According to Rhodes, the story of the “Mardi Gras Indians” illustrates the struggle of a fringe culture to become integrated into mainstream society. “When blacks were not permitted to celebrate Mardi Gras with whites, they invented their own Mardi Gras,” he explains. “Their feather costumes and American Indian regalia were meant to honor those who helped them, hosted them as run-aways, and accepted them as part of their families.” Until the 1950s, this second-line event existed in parallel to the city’s main celebration.¹

Before the storm, Lewis’s House of Dance and Feathers had made great headway in reconciling the black and white cultures and educating the public about the beautiful traditions of the Mardi Gras Indians. But following the failure of New Orleans’ levees, in the last days of August 2005, Lewis was forced to evacuate his family to



rural Thibodaux, a 45-minute drive away. Fortunately, he was able to save most of his collection by packing it into large suitcases as he was evacuating. But weeks later, when the floodwaters were finally pumped out of the city, he realized the effort might have been in vain. Without a place to present this collection to the community, and without the community to which it belonged, the purpose of this heritage and its preservation were in jeopardy.

Nevertheless, Lewis met the challenge head on. He told everyone he met that he planned to rebuild, despite a present lack of resources, and he encouraged all his neighbors to do the same. However, because there was neither a support network nor commitment from the government to protect low-lying areas of New Orleans from another flood, few had the courage or wherewithal to begin the process. In search of outside professional support for the museum, Lewis turned to the anthropolo-

gist Rachel Breunlin, director of the Neighborhood Story Project, for help.²

Whether New Orleans should or should not be rebuilt was likewise never a question for Rhodes. A great lover of the city, at the time of the storm he was teaching at Kansas State University. As the executive director of Project Locus, a nonprofit dedicated to building community structures in areas of need, he knew full well that losses from the flooding involved not just a physical city but also a living community.

As time passed without government action, Rhodes came to believe that only individual activism would bring policy change. To jump-start the city-wide rebuilding process, he organized a pair of conferences with Dan Etheridge, the assistant director of Tulane City Center.³ The first, "Reinhabiting NOLA," was an information-gathering session, addressing what was needed in the short



and long term to move toward recovery. The second, at the University of Arkansas, brought together design professionals interested in immediate action.

One outcome of the second conference was the establishment of CITYBuild, a national consortium of colleges and universities focused on ameliorating social, economic, and environmental conditions through architectural, development, and research responses to the New Orleans crisis. Attendees at the second conference also committed to engaging immediately in design-build projects that would send a message to the world about the future of New Orleans.

A number of projects constructed in the city in the first eighteen months after the hurricane were conceived as a result of the Arkansas conference. But, perhaps most important, when Rachel Breunlin presented the story of Lewis's museum there, Rhodes realized its reconstruction would be a perfect project for his own Project Locus to take on.

Above and opposite: Construction details and interior views of the rebuilt museum. Jurors noted how the project's use of movable panels, ordinary materials, and simple but expressive structural details was reminiscent of Auburn University's design-build Rural Studio. Founded in 1993 by the architect Samuel Mockbee, it produced well-constructed and inspirational homes and buildings for poor communities in rural Alabama. The museum, housing cultural artifacts related to the history of New Orleans' largely African American Ninth Ward, was formerly housed in a garage on the Lewis property. Photos by Patrick Rhodes.

"We viewed the House of Dance and Feathers as an immediate response in one of the most devastated areas and a catalyst for rebuilding," he says.

Realization

The project officially began when Rhodes and a group of students from Kansas State University traveled to New Orleans during spring break, in March 2006, to conduct research, hold a community design charrette, and produce a schematic design. At first, the idea was to rebuild only the museum; but because the overall goal was to rebuild a living city, it soon became apparent that Lewis's house would need to be reconstructed as well.

The decision to move ahead without delay involved both risk and controversy. Not only was the double design-build effort larger than any Project Locus had yet been involved in but it also drew criticism from other professionals and academics.

"[They] believed that what we were doing was irresponsible, putting people back in harm's way," Rhodes says. But he points out that residents of other cities prone to natural disasters are not told whether they can rebuild or not.

"They are landowners, and are allowed to make their own choices. Ronald Lewis is not a child. He is a landowner, and should be free to make his own choices. Ronald understands that the Lower Ninth is about water, and always will be. These issues can be addressed through good design."



He adds: “If our society really felt concerned for the welfare of the residents of the Lower Ninth Ward they wouldn’t have relegated them to snake, alligator and malarial mosquito-infested swampland two hundred years ago.” For now this is the only land they have. Furthermore, for families like the Lewises, moving to the city had once been a huge step up from life in the sugarcane fields.

Following the charrette, the students developed construction documents and budgets. And in April, the Charles Engelhard Foundation offered a \$50,000 grant for construction, the result of fundraising efforts by the University of Montana’s Department of Environmental Studies.

In addition to the gutting and rehabilitation of Lewis’s house, the project consists of a new 384-square-foot

museum in his backyard. Its design incorporates two cultural concepts. One is the masking of space, manifest in prefabricated screens made of recycled materials, which can move and change to accommodate various exhibition configurations. The other is front-porch sitting, provided for on a patio that links the museum to the residence and creates open space for accessory activities like barbeques and live music performances.

Actual construction of the new buildings began in May 2006. Though much of the work was carried out by students from Kansas State, they were joined by students from Harvard, Tulane, UC Berkeley and IIT, among other schools. Project Locus is part of a small national network for those interested in this type of pro bono work.

Sample Juror Comments—House of Dance and Feathers

Roberta Feldman: I found the whole story moving and the design really very strong. Granted, I am responding to the crisis, and all these people moving through, and the community interaction, which I imagine probably would only have happened in times of a disaster. But the fact that it did happen, that the process was clearly able to be sustained, and that they could produce a good building at the end that the community appreciated. Gee! If you could replicate that!

Buzz Yudell: Wasn’t that on a thirty- to forty-thousand-dollar budget?

Roberta Feldman: It was phenomenal!

Buzz Yudell: I also thought it was great that they started right after Katrina.

Roberta Feldman: And that it was in a minority community that even today is not getting attention. Pretty much those communities are being abandoned.

Buzz Yudell: It is a very sophisticated design and a lot

of research. It’s very nuanced. They didn’t want it to be overly fussy. There should be a roughness. Yet there is this relevance about the process.

Roberta Feldman: And it is not frivolous design where you do a form just for the sake of a form. There are reasons for each of the moves.

Ann Forsyth: And it doesn’t stand out too much. At the moment everyone wants to stand out, particularly students. I was a little worried that it was just one



Thus, when the New Orleans project became a reality, Rhodes had only to put out a call for volunteers. “Like students everywhere they were hungry for an opportunity to build, to help, to be able to use their skills to make a difference,” he says.

Nevertheless, because of student schedules, the logistics were difficult, and successful completion was sometimes in doubt. None of the students received pay or academic credit. And most could work on the project only during vacations from summer jobs. Five or six students did remain on site over the summer, but a detailed schedule was needed to maintain a construction crew of ten to twelve over the entire construction phase.

“The team did it all,” Rhodes says. “All I did was

drive around in my truck picking up materials and writing checks.”

The project was also affected by the need to use low-cost materials and fabrication methods that did not require advanced skills. Rhodes claims, however, that these very qualities complement the hand-crafted costumes that will be displayed, since great emphasis was placed on thoughtful composition and careful detailing.

While the new museum looks fresh and provocative, it combines elements that are old, allowing it to seem as if it had been there for some time—as if it belongs. Even though the building takes advantage of modern technologies, it also draws on Southern architectural vernacular in a manner reminiscent of projects by Sam Mockbee’s Rural Studio.

Sample Juror Comments—House of Dance and Feathers

building, and a fairly modest one.

Roberta Feldman: But it was a very significant building. It wasn’t *just* a building. It maintained artifacts and images that were very important to the community.

Buzz Yudell: I think it was powerful on many levels, starting with the process. They were able to harness the energies of many people from multiple universities, people in the community, the owners of the property and the museum, people living in the city, and

somehow move this project ahead very expeditiously in a very short time and get some money for it. And they leveraged a very tight budget into a very thoughtful rethinking of the museum and the house. I thought the way they respected the uniqueness of that place while still being inventive with the materials and the way it was constructed was really amazing.

Anne Whiston Spirn: What they managed to do with that budget! It’s really a very beautiful and simple

building, very nicely detailed. Quite a nice space for such an extraordinary tiny budget.

Roberta Feldman: It tells a compelling story about the culture of the Ninth Ward. Its residents were able to develop a museum to put their culture on display. And then they were able to develop and maintain this process [to replace it] under circumstances that were so difficult. And you can’t forget the caretaker. The program changed once people became involved and

“It is vibrant and bold and not afraid to celebrate loudly,” Rhodes now says. “Just as New Orleans does, it celebrates life and death.”

It reminds Lewis of an old Creole cottage.

Pride of Preservation

Rhodes notes that this small, first step toward rebuilding New Orleans was conducted despite devastation, lack of resources, basic services, and an architectural profession that is rarely committed to helping the poor and is slow to respond in times of crisis.

In a statement accompanying the award submission, he noted, “Our intention was to promote design as a tool for affecting positive community change, to generate public awareness and encourage community involvement, to preserve the history of the community and to help reconstruct the shattered social networks of the Lower Ninth Ward and New Orleans. Also, we wanted to bring a family home.”

He now adds: “During the summer hundreds of people stopped by, and even a few said that they were coming back because Ronald had. But there will never be any way to gauge the effect it has had or will have.”

The importance of the project for the design profession, claims Rhodes, lies mostly in the way the students learned to approach the community and their exposure to building as a social process. Learning from Lewis about the Lower Ninth Ward and the rich culture of New Orleans was also an end in itself.

As volunteers for Project Locus, the students were not supported by Kansas State. They received no college credit, and participated at their own expense, some for more than twelve weeks.

After its completion, the project was exhibited at the

Venice Biennale and published in the Italian design magazine *Domus*. As a case study consulted by other organizations working on community-based design-build projects, it will serve as a model for future projects.

For the students who took part in realizing the project, says the architect Larry Bowne of Kansas State University, this experience was one of commitment and a sense of belonging that turned them from youth to confident adults.

—Yael Alkweil

Notes

1. A smaller second-line Mardi Gras exists even now. Alongside the event on Bourbon Street involving mostly white revelers, there is another, only a few blocks away, under the I-10 bridge at Claiborne Avenue, whose participants are almost entirely black.
2. A New Orleans-based nonprofit that publishes books of photographs and stories by community members.
3. The Tulane City Center houses the urban research and outreach programs of Tulane University's School of Architecture.

Opposite left: Student volunteers at the building site. A key feature of the project was its ability to offer a learning experience to young people. The students paid their own way, but benefited from on-the-ground construction and design experience, and also learned to view building as a social process.

Opposite right: Ronald Lewis with a Second-Line Mardi Gras artifact. Many of the museum's artifacts celebrate the historic connection between African American and Native American cultures. Photos by Aubrey Edwards.

realized that you could not rebuild the museum without also rebuilding his home. So there was a learning process in which the participants adjusted their goals to meet some real needs.

Anne Whiston Spirn: But, you wonder, how much does it contribute to the public realm? This is a public building, and I became convinced that it provides the community with a place to focus.

Roberta Feldman: This is done a lot like in the Rural

Studio. Imagine taking that same process with more schools involved, under the circumstances of this horrendous environmental as well as political and economic devastation, and pull it off. And produce quite an interesting building that considers a lot of important architectural issues.

Anne Whiston Spirn: And what was impressive about the submission were all the letters of support that talked about the importance of the building and how it

was transformed so people would understand it.

Buzz Yudell: What really caught my attention was that this was the only project to physically have work done on it that whole summer in the Ninth Ward.

Anne Whiston Spirn: The symbolic support.

Buzz Yudell: The sense of hope. When the entire region was paralyzed up to the federal government, this was an expression of posterity.

Dwell on Design

Lisa Sullivan



Since its inception, in 2000, *Dwell* magazine has appealed to what might best be described as a new-urbanite constituency, defining a residential style for Generation Xers who embrace modernism and green living. The *Dwell on Design* conference and show, held in San Francisco from September 14 to 16, provided an excellent look at the components of this lifestyle.

The conference's triple theme, of modern design, sustainability, and smart growth, sought to connect attendees to "a community of thought leaders offering bold ideas, interesting materials, and new products designed to inspire you to express and enhance the beauty, simplicity, and sustainability of your living space."

The accompanying exhibition showcased programs, products and imagery that support the kind of living readers are offered cover-to-cover in each issue of the magazine.

Presentations

Moderated by the journalist John Hockenbery, the conference sessions included many familiar faces from the worlds of progressive architectural design and community development.

Kathryn McCamant, a pioneer of co-housing, spoke about the need for clustered housing to yield more open space. "The community is the secret ingredient of sustainability," she noted.

Alice Waters, the founder of Berkeley's Chez Panisse restaurant,

presented a slide show of gardens and vegetables that illustrate her advocacy of organic, locally grown food and the need to change the eating habits of American children.

Gwendolyn Wright, a Columbia University architectural history professor known for her appearances on the popular PBS television show "History Detectives," described the longstanding role of the shelter press in disseminating new ideas about housing and public space. There is a continued need "to think beyond the opposition of traditionalism and modernism," she said, adding that it is important to trace the roots of both ways of thinking to understand the ways people really make places for themselves.

The UC Berkeley professor and

landscape architect Walter Hood asked the audience to move beyond single-purpose ways of approaching their environments. He offered instead the ideal of the public realm as an amalgam of multiple perspectives. And he cited the power of blurred boundaries in the design process.

Other presenters included David Bushnell, Andrea Cochran, Frank Harmon, Craig W. Hartman, Michelle Kaufmann, Reed Kroloff, Mark Lakeman, Dan Maginn, Geoff Manaugh, Michael McDonough, Bill Mitchell, Lorcan O'Herlihy, Richard Parker, Gwynne Pugh, Kirsten Ritchie, and Jennifer Roberts.

Products

In each issue, *Dwell* offers readers articles on modern architecture and design, but it also includes passionate essays on icons of modernism and their output, such as Eames chairs, Noguchi tables, and an array of prefab minimalist dwellings. The “design exhibition and community forum” that accompanied the conference thus advertised itself as “a hands-on marketplace created to spotlight and demonstrate top products and services inspired by modern design.” It contained displays of “product design, prefab, green building practices, architectural innovation, landscape design, and more.”

Dwell's progressive stance emphasizes how environmental responsibility and commitment to green design can inspire innovation and new products. Yet the mixture of serious discourse on design and the promotion of lifestyle patterns and products is a tricky business. For the *Dwell* community, what you wear, what you sleep on, what you eat, and where you live are all consumer choices that imply a need for serious environmental and social awareness.

Among those with booths at the exhibition was YouthBuild U.S.A., based in Somerville, Maryland, a nonprofit organization that works in low-income communities to build affordable housing. But their space was adjacent to such eommercial enterprises as Heath Ceramics, Room & Board, and Design Within Reach as well as a slew of sustainable-building material producers and prefabricated housing manufacturers.

A particularly lively discussion at the event was the role of manufactured housing as an alternative to developer- or custom-built houses. Recently, this type has found favor among shelter book publishers and even the mainstream magazine *Sunset*. Another conference speaker, the architect Michelle Kaufmann, a leader in this genre. Her own trademarked Glidehouse is among several designs that attempt to combine high style with low cost and sustainable production. For its part, *Dwell* has teamed with the design firm Empyrean International to create its own “Dwell Home.”

Precedents

Dwell is not the first magazine to create a publishing niche by building a constituency for a certain style of living and the class consciousness that goes with it. Within the arenas of design, architecture, and the arts, journals have long served as rallying points for popular movements, forums for targeted debate, or mirrors of certain forms of social order.

One *Dwell* predecessor that came particularly to mind at the conference was *Arts and Architecture*. Published and edited in Los Angeles by John Entenza from 1938 until 1962, it promoted new building methods and a streamlined industrial modernism. In its pages, the photographer Julius

Schulman documented the work of Charles Eames, Craig Ellwood, Pierre Koenig, Richard Neutra, and others in support of a new aesthetic rooted in the California landscape, the promise of a new age and a celebration of materiality and structure.

As a precursor to the present *Dwell* phenomenon, the Case Study houses, which helped define the style of *Arts and Architecture*, aimed to bring low-cost, high-quality design to an emerging middle class. Yet, perhaps predictably, considering the aspirations of the architects involved, designs originally conceived as “worker housing” eventually became the jewel boxes of mid-century modernism in Los Angeles. Last year Pierre Koenig's Case Study House #21 was purported to have sold at auction for some three million dollars.

With more than 250,000 subscribers, *Dwell* has a commercial reach that is much more robust than that of *Arts and Architecture*. Yet, like its precursor, *Dwell* serves an expository function. As the conference and show demonstrated, its goal is both to sell a lifestyle and move its adherents toward a new mode of living.

Where a previous generation looked for a style that would express the hope of a world free from the crises of two world wars, current devotees of the green revolution may be seeking one that expresses hope for a world free from the crisis of climate change.

Note

For more on the conference, visit www.dwell.com.

Opposite: Among the displays at the *Dwell* conference was a prefab panelized construction system developed by the Oakland, CA, architect Jim Zack. Images courtesy of Zack/DeVito Architects.

Meeting of the Minds

H. Fernando Burga

By the time you, the reader, finish this *Places* dispatch, about two thousand people will have migrated from the countryside to the city. Weekly, about 1.4 million people around the globe make this arduous transition. The emergence of metropolitan areas as home to a majority of the world's population framed the agenda for the Meeting of the Minds conference in Oakland, California, September 11–13.

The event, sponsored by the University of California at Berkeley's College of Environmental Design, in partnership with Berkeley's Global Metropolitan Studies Initiative and the statewide UC Transportation Center, brought together experts from academia, the nonprofit sector, and business to discuss challenges to metropolitan areas and explore sustainable strategies for transportation, land use, and urban design. Toyota USA, Inc., provided major funding, while the Urban Age Institute provided assistance in conference management.

The conference's point of departure was that the growth of metropolitan areas worldwide is affecting nature, the built environment, and society in profound ways. Providing a high quality of life in the world's metropolises will be one of the most important challenges of the twenty-first century, and is especially urgent in light of global warming.

The event sought to set in motion an exchange among experts in architecture, urban design, city and regional planning, public policy, vehicle design, traffic engineering, and related fields. And it sought to show that academics and practitioners from different disciplines share many common problems, and could benefit from each other's ideas and proposals.

(E)Merging Thoughts

The support from Toyota was particularly noteworthy for a conference like this. Mobility and access are a big part of the metropolitan challenge, and the company is intent on staying abreast of evolving notions about the shape an character of cities to come.

The company was represented at the event by Irving Miller and Bill Reinert. Miller explained how high the stakes are: "We...will go from the current 250 million vehicles on the globe to three-quarters of a billion in the next twenty years." For companies like Toyota, this transformation to a motorized world calls for a new vision of the relationships among manufacturers, cities, and other sectors of the economy to produce "sustainable mobility"—a new approach that embraces technological innovation, reduces CO₂ emissions, and effectively manages the other social, economic and environmental challenges brought about by urbanization around the world.

Echoing these thoughts, Dean Harrison Fraker of Berkeley's CED spoke of the need for new types of vehicles that better fit urban conditions, especially in China, India, and other emerging economies where high densities and limited road space are the rule. "The central questions which dominate this conversation are: What will cities look like in the future? How will vehicles fit into the vision of the future?"

According to Fraker, the innovative frame of mind must expand to include new designs for buildings, districts and regions as well as technological innovations in vehicles, fuels, and their use. He also called for new "public-private partnerships which reward efficiency, technological innovation and social innovation." Places like CED are the incubators for new

ideas, places where new paradigms are invented and the links between theory and practice are forged.

Steven Chu of Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory also discussed the prospects for new fuels, an important direction for research and development in view of the finite supply of oil as well as the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the next two decades. According to Chu, new fuels could reduce emissions by a substantial amount, but are unlikely to suffice to meet Kyoto or California standards in the time available.

Ways of Thinking: Alternative Approaches, Scales, and Designs

Elizabeth Deakin, director of the UC Transportation Center and co-director of Berkeley's interdisciplinary Global Metropolitan Studies Initiative, noted that currently there are several alternative visions of the road ahead. "Business as usual" will likely result in increased congestion, pollution, and global warming. An alternative vision emphasizes new vehicles powered by new fuels, with high tech highway operations and management to keep the traffic flowing. A contrasting vision focuses on coordinated land use-transportation planning to facilitate transit, walking, and biking, with the private automobile playing a smaller role.

In Deakin's assessment, the major challenge for the next decade will be to find the best path forward: "What is at stake is the character of cities; how we redesign and rethink the connections between engineering, land use, urban design and policy will help determine the livability of our metropolitan regions and the future of the world's environment, economy, and social relationships."

Robert Cervero, Chair of the Dept. of City and Regional Planning

at Berkeley, analyzed the city at different scales: the region, the district, and the neighborhood. For Cervero, the goal of planning is to achieve land uses at the neighborhood and district levels which provide choice, a healthy environment, social interaction, and economic opportunity, and then use transportation investments to link these neighborhoods and districts, to create a sustainable region. Cervero showed how rail transit or bus rapid transit can complement sustainable neighborhoods and districts.

Urban designers and Berkeley faculty members Elizabeth Macdonald and Allan Jacobs brought the role of creative design into the conversation. Their presentations showed how design excellence coupled with creative city planning and progressive political leadership have made such places as Curitiba, Brazil, and Vancouver, Canada, excellent places to live. These successful cities have defined urbanism broadly, integrating built form, transportation, social equity, and ecological function.

As Jacobs noted, the establishment of regional transportation corridors—as in Curitiba’s “structurals” or Copenhagen’s finger plan—can shape city and regional development while at the same time offering healthy local communities.

Macdonald pointed out that street design goes two ways: “Just as the design of the car influences the design of the street, the design of the street should influence the design of the car.” She argued for more flexibility in both street design and in vehicle design, “inventing new combinations which offer possibilities beyond accepted mandates and conventions.”

Other speakers included innovative technology experts Susan Shaheen, Robin Chase, and Pravin Varaiya; developing countries experts



Nancy Kete, Lee Schipper, Tim Campbell, and Aaron Golub; and urban development/design consultants Martin Tillman, Peter Crowley and Paul Farmer. California Attorney General Jerry Brown gave a dinner talk, and Executive Director Jose Luis Moscovich of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority was a luncheon speaker.

Innovative use of vehicles, whether in the car sharing programs discussed by Shaheen or the dynamic ridesharing projects being designed by Chase, offers new ways of providing mobility. In addition, many cities are pursuing demand-management strategies, from the constellation of measures reviewed by Tillman to the transit investments and road-pricing experiments discussed by Moscovich.

At the same time, Varaiya pointed out, engineers are developing new approaches to vehicle control and highway operations that could make the motor vehicle and its use safer and more efficient. And Brown promised



to insist that California land use plans meet global warming mandates.

Thinking Ahead

The Meeting of the Minds conference exhibited several examples of best practices and suggested possible solutions to both present and future urban challenges. It is hoped such interdisciplinary encounters between academics, practitioners, and industry will create the basis for ongoing dialogue.

The last word arising from the conference reinforces this notion. If today we witness the effects of globalization on cities halfway across the world, in our lifetimes we will feel the effects of climate change in our own backyards. The Meeting of the Minds Conference sought to demonstrate that it is not too late to influence this process of change—thoughts can translate into actions.

Above: Relative transportation impacts. Photos courtesy of Martin Tillman.

The Money Point Sustainable Revitalization Plan—Chesapeake, VA

Crisman+Petrus; UVA School of Architecture

Money Point is a 330-acre peninsula on the Elizabeth River in Virginia that acquired its name as a result of jobs and wealth created during its heyday as a site of shipping terminals, factories, and wood-treatment plants. In 1963, however, a catastrophic fire released a vast quantity of creosote into the river, and industrial runoff over subsequent decades has added to the toxins in the soil, groundwater, and river sediment. For years, the quality of the local environment was essentially written off, despite the continued presence of a small, largely African-American residential community and the industrial workers whose jobs still brought them to the area's remaining scrap, cement, and petroleum businesses.

After years of neglect by local, state and federal agencies, a nonprofit environmental group, the Elizabeth River Project, undertook the revitalization of Money Point in 2005. The group convened a task force that joined with the award-winning consultant team to engage in a two-year public process to envision an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable future for Money Point.

The result is a ten-year action plan, unveiled in October 2006. As its descriptive subtitle (“Intertwined Human + Environmental Ecologies”) suggests, this job will require attention to both human and natural needs. It identifies five goals and corresponding implementation strategies: clean up the river at Money Point, prevent new releases of pollution there, enhance the quality of life for its remaining residents, establish an ethic of environmental stewardship among remaining industries, and restore and conserve the area's natural resources.

Most impressive about this planning effort, the jury agreed, was its linking of environmental restoration to renewed concern for Money Point's remaining residents. They also praised its ability to engage government and industry in the process. Individuals have been designated “keepers of the vision,” and the plan identifies milestones and the agencies responsible for reaching them.

The jury also praised the design of a “learning barge” by architecture students at the University of Virginia under the direction of architecture professor Phoebe Crisman. The barge will allow schoolchildren to experience the river ecosystem up close and at small scale, and it will also raise

public awareness of the Elizabeth River Project's restoration efforts at Money Point and elsewhere.

A Grassroots Campaign

Home to 1.6 million people, the Norfolk-Chesapeake-Portsmouth area grew up largely around the navigable, three-forked estuary of the Elizabeth River. Native Americans had long occupied its fertile wetlands before English colonists arrived, in 1607, at nearby Jamestown. Its strategic location, at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, eventually led to its becoming the site of a major Navy base and one of the oldest and largest shipyards in the U.S.

During the twentieth century, towns in the area grew together, and many of the wetlands were filled in for military facilities, shipping terminals, and industrial plants. As a result, the Elizabeth River is now one of the most polluted waterways on the Eastern Seaboard, earning it a place in the Environmental Protection Agency's Urban Rivers Program. And along the river's southern branch, Money Point is one of the most contaminated stretches of river anywhere in the U.S.

In 1992, the Elizabeth River Project set out to change this legacy of industrialization and restore the biological health of the Elizabeth River watershed.¹ The organization's goal was to work “one creek at a time” to build a constituency for change. It mobilized local communities through such activities as planting new oyster beds, cleaning up trash, and restoring growths of *Spartan alterniflora*, a native marsh grass.

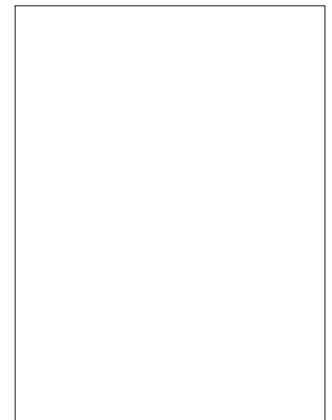
In a politically conservative region, the strategy also entailed working with industry and seeking voluntary compliance with environmental regulations. The group's board includes leaders of industry, scientists, government officials, and military officers as well as engaged citizens and environmental activists.

According to Crisman, such a “willingness to sit down with the enemy” has led to criticism from other environmental groups that the Elizabeth River Project has not taken a hard enough line against polluters. But raising awareness and instilling a sense of stewardship may be the best long-term tactic for the region. “The whole economy is based on the Navy and shipping. I don't know if you can achieve anything if you don't work with them,” she says.

The executive director of the Elizabeth River Project, Marjorie Jackson, a former journalist, has a reputation for being “a dynamo” when it comes to bringing people together, Crisman says. The task force behind the plan includes politicians, residents, business owners, design professionals, members of nonprofit and academic organizations, and federal, state, and local government officials.

Opposite top: Panorama of Money Point. Photo courtesy of Crisman+Petrus Architects and the Elizabeth River Project.

Opposite bottom: *Virginia Pilot* newspaper photo of the 1963 fire at Eppinger and Russel. Maps of the lower Chesapeake Bay and the Elizabeth River estuary showing the location of Money Point. Images courtesy of Crisman+Petrus Architects and the Elizabeth River Project.



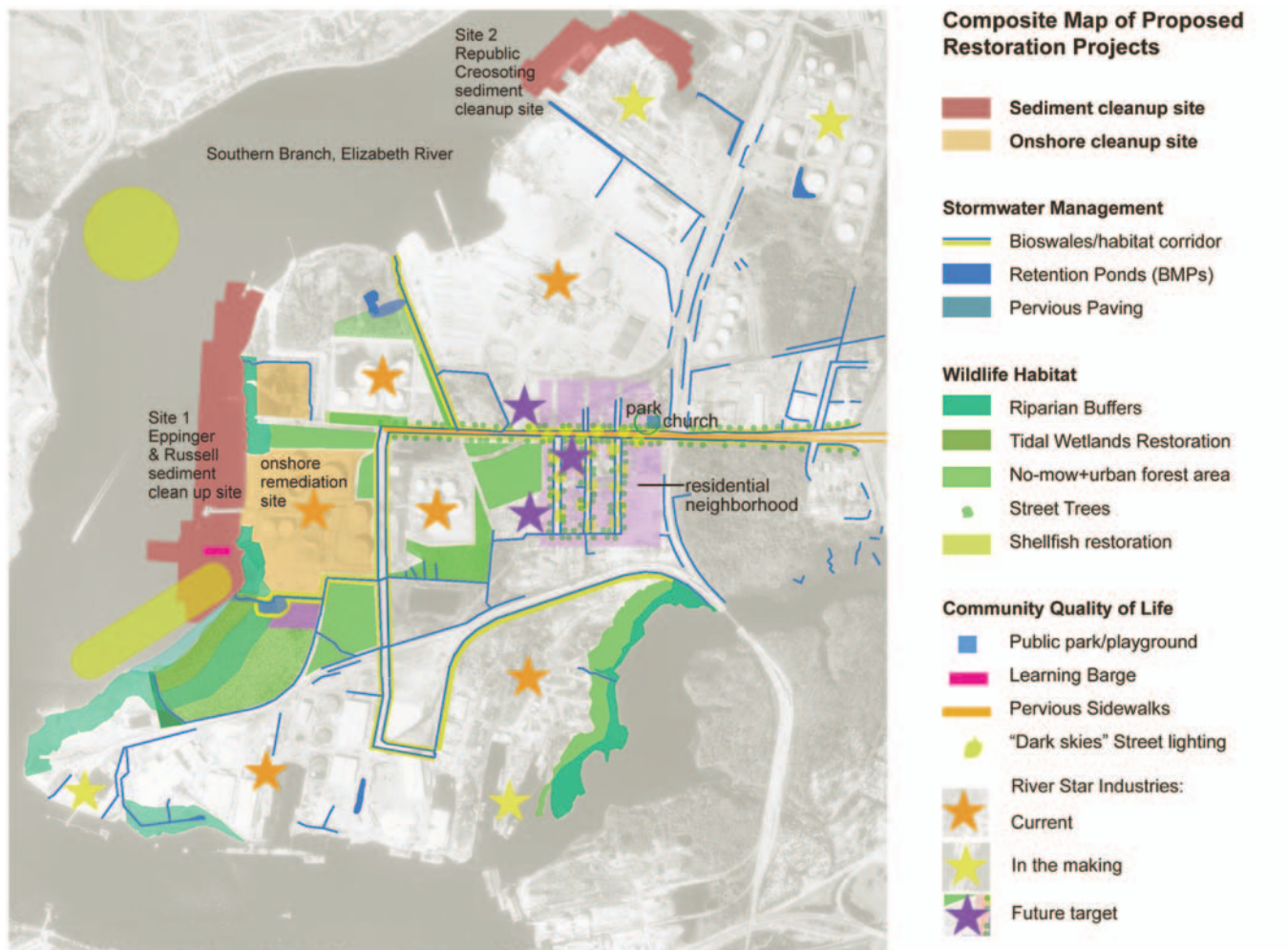
The Process Begins

According to the revitalization plan, the fire at the now dismantled Eppinger and Russel wood treatment plant, in 1963, transformed the nearby river bottom into a “35-acre biological dead zone.” Everybody knew the damage had been severe; one had only to look at the diseased and dying fish. But, amazingly, nothing was done about it. In a perverse way, Crisman says, the spill even confirmed the prevailing view that Money Point was a “nonplace.”

A plan to remedy this condition finally began to take shape in 2005, when \$5 million became available through the Living River Restoration Trust, a fund set up to disburse money collected as fines from polluters and impact

assessments for new industrial development. With this money, the Elizabeth River Project realized it could begin the cleanup of the river at Money Point. But as a small nonprofit, it lacked the skills to bring all aspects of this vision to fruition. Therefore, the connection to Crisman and her firm, Crisman+Petrus and students at the University of Virginia’s School of architecture was vital.

The university’s Institute for Environmental Negotiation, which was working with the Elizabeth River Project on Money Point, had a grant to help communities in transition. The institute’s director, Frank Dukes, suggested that Crisman take the lead in providing design and planning services. She agreed, and also enlisted the support of



her students at the University of Virginia's Department of Architecture.

What Crisman and her team brought was a sense for the spatial issues involved, the skill to produce maps and other

Above: Ten-year integrated plan of action to revitalize Money Point. Graphic by Crisman+Petrus Architects.

visualization tools, and an ability to organize strategic vision. For example, the task force didn't initially grasp that to clean up the river at Money Point the land that adjoined it also had to be cleaned up, Crisman says. This was a "big leap," because it meant restoring the view of Money Point as a "place" and confronting its legacy of social as well as environmental neglect.

The residential community at Money Point had once

Sample Juror Comments—Money Point

Ann Forsyth: This is an incredible story, involving a really disenfranchised area with incredible environmental clean-up problems, and how multiple groups of people got together to work on a plan to clean up and improve it.

Roberta Feldman: All the buy-ins blew me away. There should be an award just based on that.

Buzz Yudell: I also thought that the way they communicated felt quite site specific. A lot of the things

you look at, even the ones that are good, are very generic.

Anne Whiston Spirn: What really captured my imagination was this learning barge. It's a floating classroom for sixty people that includes a constructed wetlands that recycles river water and demonstrates how the marsh, the wetland community, pollutants and sediments interact. It will travel up and down the river.

Ann Forsyth: It's an environmental-education project designed by university students. It's a combination

of disenfranchised groups, incredible environmental problems, and corporate, government and civic groups and universities getting together to make a difference, and raising all this funding. How many of our other groups have \$15 million worth of funding?

Anne Whiston Spirn: I think the brochure is also cleverly put together. "The Keepers of the Vision." You go on down to Hess Corporation, the mayors, the cities, the U.S. Congressmen...to the pastor of the First



been known as Buell and even had its own post office. Prior to the vehicular age, people living there had walked to work at nearby industries. But in the 1960s the area was cut off from the rest of the City of Chesapeake by an elevated highway, and in the years that followed, the community was virtually ignored. Hoping that it would just die off, the city even rezoned the area for waterfront industrial use, rendering its remaining houses virtually worthless as real estate, Crisman says.

But the community did not die. To an outsider, large areas of it appear to be a no man's land, without streetlights or sidewalks or storm drainage. And the levels of contamination are so bad that people probably shouldn't live there, Crisman says. But they do anyway. Their resilience is symbolized by the First Baptist Church of Money Point, to which many former residents return on Sundays to retain a sense of connection.

Diverse Funding Sources

The Money Point plan is moving forward. Although the cost of the actual cleanup of river sediment will be higher than the \$5 million initially allocated, that work will begin next summer, Crisman says.

But that grant represents only one third of the funding the plan is expected to generate. For example, the EPA has already spent \$1 million to clean up old creosote tanks, and a memo has been signed for an additional \$5 million for construction of a system of bioswales, riparian buffers,

Above left to right: Existing transportation and industrial infrastructure, including extensive impervious areas; proposed integrated biological network of stormwater management and habitat corridors; coexistence plan integrating the existing industrial and restored biological infrastructure. Graphics by Crisman+Petrus Architects.

Baptist Church of Money Point. And the revitalization task force is even a longer list. They also have a series of milestones, and for each action step there are key implementers and where the resources are coming from. It is a reminder to all these people that they are keepers of making sure the milestones are met.

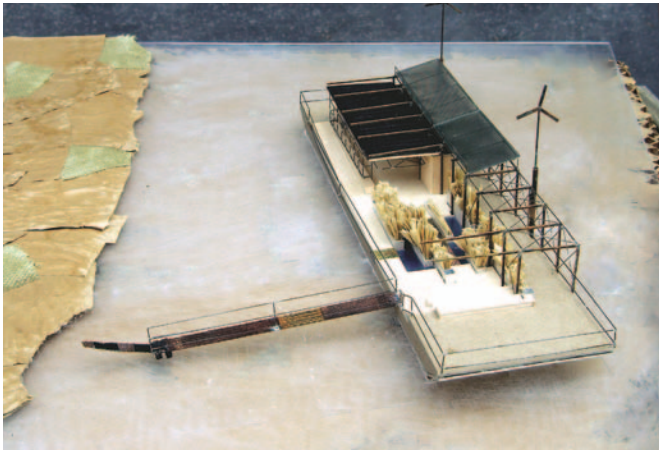
Buzz Yudell: I think the way the milestones are described also takes it from dry planner language to something which really connects to the community.

There is an effort throughout to have a narrative that is powerful, to go from thoughtful expert planning to something that really has flesh.

Anne Whiston Spira: In that sense it has some commonalities with the Los Angeles River project. It is strategically conceived; it knows who its audience is. The milestones are within the control of each of the Keepers of the Vision. One of the milestones is that the church is listed on the historical register. That's within

the power of the congregation—the pastor can do it. On the other hand, the EPA does such and such. So it takes the larger vision and brings it down not only to the tangible design proposal, but also the very specifics of who's going to be responsible for what.

Buzz Yudell: The classic critique of a lot of planning studies is that they sit on shelves, get updated every eight to ten years, and then sit on the shelves some more. This project and the L.A. River study both find



retention ponds, and new wetlands to slow, filter and collect stormwater. Such work is essential, because without it, toxic residues will continue to leach out of the soil and run off during storms.

In addition, the City of Chesapeake has pledged \$340,000 to design and seek funding for a stormwater system. The City will also target street improvements to known hazardous areas for pedestrians, and for the trucks that rumble through, many transporting petroleum products.

Steps have also been taken to achieve other goals of the plan. A history of Money Point has been produced by students at the university, and efforts are under way to list the First Baptist Church as a historic structure. The Hess Corporation, which owns a major portion of the Eppinger and Russel site, has agreed to a voluntary program of contaminant isolation and phytoremediation through tree planting. Major industries that line the shoreline are being recruited into the Elizabeth River Project's "River Star" program for

environmental stewardship. And, as a prelude to more extensive efforts, four acres of tidal wetlands are being restored as habitat on property belonging to Elizabeth River Terminals.

Finally, through a grant from the EPA, Crisman is creating model sustainable urban design guidelines for use along other polluted rivers and estuaries throughout the country.

A Floating Schoolroom

Crisman and her students designed the learning barge, which is now being built.² When it is finished, in 2008, it will be owned by the Elizabeth River Project and primarily moored off Money Point, though it will travel to other locations along the river.

Crisman explains that the barge will be totally off the grid. Electricity will be generated with solar panels, and rainwater will be collected for use by visitors. As a green architecture project, the barge will provide a public viewing platform for ongoing environmental restoration

Sample Juror Comments—Money Point

ways of being about action and vision.

Roberta Feldman: What also is remarkable is the range of partnerships, not only to get the work done, but to sustain the human activity necessary to keep the project going. You go from a low-income community all the way up to the polluters. You look at the educational projects, the art projects, the preservation project for a church....

Anne Whiston Spirn: It gives everybody a role.

Roberta Feldman: And it is very respectful of a community plagued by environmental racism. It involves them in a remarkable way through education, because those folks...who knows what kinds of health problems they might have? They could have been ignored.

Buzz Yudell: But then it could have been set up almost as an adversarial situation, given the histories.

Roberta Feldman: Correct. It is remarkable that they

have engaged everyone. I just think it is fantastic. I want to see what happens in ten years.

Buzz Yudell: Also, in terms of structure, communication and reporting, there are five goals. They are highlighted and very succinct. The graphics are very acceptable. The whole thing is done in twenty pages. We are used, in the professional world, to the more pages, the more you've earned your keep. It just seems like a great model.



work. But it will also serve as a classroom, simulating the natural processes around it.

In one simulation, graywater resulting from use of the barge will be cycled through fresh-water plant beds to clean it before it is released to the river. In another, polluted brackish water will be pumped from the river and run through a second circuit of biofiltration. Tests before and after the water enters the system will reveal how healthy plants and natural processes can restore the river's chemistry. An EPA grant Crisman received through the university is allowing development of a curriculum in which the barge will be used to teach middle-school students about the river's ecology.

The barge will provide a conspicuous symbol of the Elizabeth River project, Crisman said. Currently, the group has little public presence, but as the barge moves up and down the river, it will help dramatize the group's efforts to restore the watershed.

Not the End

On the one hand, the case of Money Point highlights the dangers of government fragmentation and lack of accountability, both to the environment and to marginalized populations. On the other, it indicates how a web of nonprofit groups, research organizations, and dedicated professionals galvanized by a common vision can achieve wonders.

The tie between the University of Virginia and the Elizabeth River Project has been particularly fruitful in this regard, Crisman says. Access by university researchers to grants has been leveraged into initiatives that have inspired industry and government to fund this restoration. And their findings are now being made available to groups elsewhere in the country.

The plan demonstrates that for environmental cleanup to be sustainable it must be supported by as broad a coalition as possible. This effort involves linking wild nature to human nature.

—David Moffat

Notes

1. The organization and its activities are more fully described at www.elizabethriver.org.
2. More on the barge can be found at www.arch.virginia.edu/learningbarge.

Opposite left: Learning Barge model with solar and wind energy systems, planted filtration basins, and classroom.

Opposite right: Storytelling steps make a place for gathering. Images by the Learning Barge studio.

Above: Ongoing wildflower meadow restoration on CITGO's Money Point site. The company is a River Star industry. Photo courtesy of Crisman+Petrus Architects and the Elizabeth River Project.

Riverfront Redevelopment

Tim Culvahouse

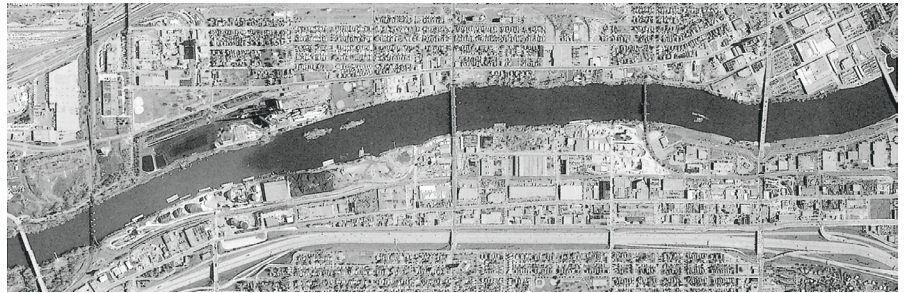
“Understanding how environments inhabit people, rather than the other way around, remains a difficult subject.... Rivers in particular enter deeply into our minds and lives, making our depictions of them impossible to fully rationalize.”

So writes Jamie Horwitz in a review of *Mississippi Floods: Designing a Shifting Landscape*, a book by Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha that received an EDRA/*Places* award for research in 2001. A collection of *Places* articles on riverfront redevelopment not only informs efforts to revive the urban waterfront, it also demonstrates the value of dissimilar perspectives and approaches.

A good place to begin is Ken Greenberg’s article in the Summer 2007 issue, which presents the riverfront redevelopment of Saint Paul, Minnesota, as evidence that this is “A Good Time for Cities.” One reason may be that cities from Chattanooga to Kalamazoo are attending to their riverfronts with fresh eyes, discovering the particularities that lend themselves to distinctive place-making. To make such places requires thinking along several lines at once: geological, technical, historical, economic, and (not least) institutional. Greenberg describes, for example, the role of the Saint Paul Design Center, as a place where city staff could discuss design issues outside formal channels.

Likewise, of the Minneapolis plan “Above the Falls,” winner of a 2001 EDRA/*Places* planning award, an article observes how “the path to implementation...has allowed for quick, opportunistic actions, mostly initiated by the private sector, while longer-term, public arrangements for infrastructure and regulatory frameworks are still falling into place.”

In describing a 2002 EDRA/*Places* design award winner, Pittsburgh’s



Allegheny Riverfront Park, David Moffat explains how technical expertise was harnessed in the service of poetic experience. About the project, designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, the juror Louise Mozingo marvels, “Talk about making a silk purse out of a sow’s ear. There are two tiers of roadway with 250 feet to the edge of the water, an enormous grade change, all concrete; no remnant habitat that you can work from.... This is significant place-making in an incredibly difficult urban condition.”

In almost all American river cities, the riverfront has long been a sequestered industrial zone. How to transform a degraded working landscape into a meaningful civic one? We might look to a riverfront historically devoted to culture, like that of Agra, traced in Terence Harkness and Amita Sinha’s “Taj Heritage Corridor: Intersections between History and Culture on the Yamuna Riverfront.”

A different sort of thought exercise is provided by Mark Anderson’s review of *Delta Primer: A Field Guide to the California Delta*, Jane Wolff’s book and deck of playing cards crafted to explain the intricate contradictions of California’s Sacramento and San Joaquin River Delta. As Anderson observes, “The systems here are so complex, the knowledge so incomplete, and the players often so disconnected from the big picture that the chance readings and incomplete

vignettes dealt out in a game of cards are perhaps more effective than any comprehensive explanatory text.”

Places’ editor, Donlyn Lyndon, has written, “The most pressing challenge for designers is to learn to see and think with appropriate complexity.” *Places* on the riverfront offers access to that complexity.

Articles

Ken Greenberg, “A Good Time for Cities,” *Places*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Summer 2007), pp. 4–11.

Jamie Horwitz, review of award to *Mississippi Floods: Designing a Shifting Landscape*, *Places*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Fall 2002), pp. 42–45.

David Moffat, review of award to Allegheny Riverfront Park, Pittsburgh, *Places*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Fall 2002), pp. 10–13.

“Above the Falls, Minneapolis, Minnesota,” *Places*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Fall 2002), pp. 26–29.

Terence Harkness and Amita Sinha, “Taj Heritage Corridor: Intersections between History and Culture on the Yamuna Riverfront,” *Places*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 2004), pp. 62–69.

Mark Anderson, review of *Delta Primer: A Field Guide to the California Delta*, *Places*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 2004), pp. 54–61.

Written in conjunction with the AIA Committee on Design Minneapolis conference, this thread discusses articles available from the *Places* online archive at www.places-journal.org

Above: Aerial view of “Above the Falls” planning area in Minneapolis. Photo courtesy of URS/BRW, Wallace, Roberts & Todd.

Sergeant Crabtree of Green and the Road from Kara Balta to Bishtek

Photographs by Margaret Morton

Places come in any number of forms, but there are two ways in which even a few photographs say “place.” One is when pictures give an eloquent sense of time passing and passed; the other is when the place is presented as an easily imagined dimension, one bigger than design: a tense border, an active coastline, or a significant roadway, say. Each of these can be edited down if necessary and still give a sense of place. Otherwise, a place photographed is simply a place catalogued, guidebook style. In that case, the pictures will need explanation, and the more there are the more thorough the catalogue or guide. People inspect such a set to find what may be missing.

Experienced photographers often specialize in one or the other of the two ways to describe place. A student of time, Robert Polidori photographed the rot that follows radical change—after nuclear disaster in Pripyat or Chernobyl for *Zones of Exclusion* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2003), and in ruined houses in New Orleans in *After the Flood* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2006). Gabriele Basilico photographed both the north coast of France for *Bord de Mer* (Udine: Art&, 1990 and 1992) and what he came upon in following the roadway from Piacenza to Rimini for *L.R. 19/98 La requalificazione delle aree urbane in Emilia-Romagna* (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2001).

Margaret Morton has recently photographed two places, producing

two sets of pictures illustrating in the simplest, most straightforward way each of the approaches. One set is of a place near where she grew up, in Ohio, when it was simply a crossroads in farming country. Over the last fifteen years those crossroads have been filled with businesses, and as part of a “township” it was given first a “village” and then a “city” name—Green—as though it had come from a novel by Paul Auster. What gives her set the sense of time passing and passed is that on the weekend when she took the photographs, all the signs in this decorated-shed town remembered a local soldier who, in his early thirties, had just been killed in Iraq.

The second set is of bus stops on a road from Kara Balta to Tokmak by way of Bishtek, Kyrgyzstan. There the land is still farming country, and the bus stops are not on cross streets or at towns that would have given them names. Instead, each is decorated with tiles depicting an image by which it can be remembered: a landscape, a wild animal, a pair of medieval knights, a Kyrgyz horseman, a Soviet tank, a hammer and sickle. One stop is in the form of a traditional local hat. As often happens with a set of pictures of an easily imagined road, coastline or border, there is also in this second set a sense of time passing. Here the stops were erected under the Soviets, and now need repair.

—Cervin Robinson















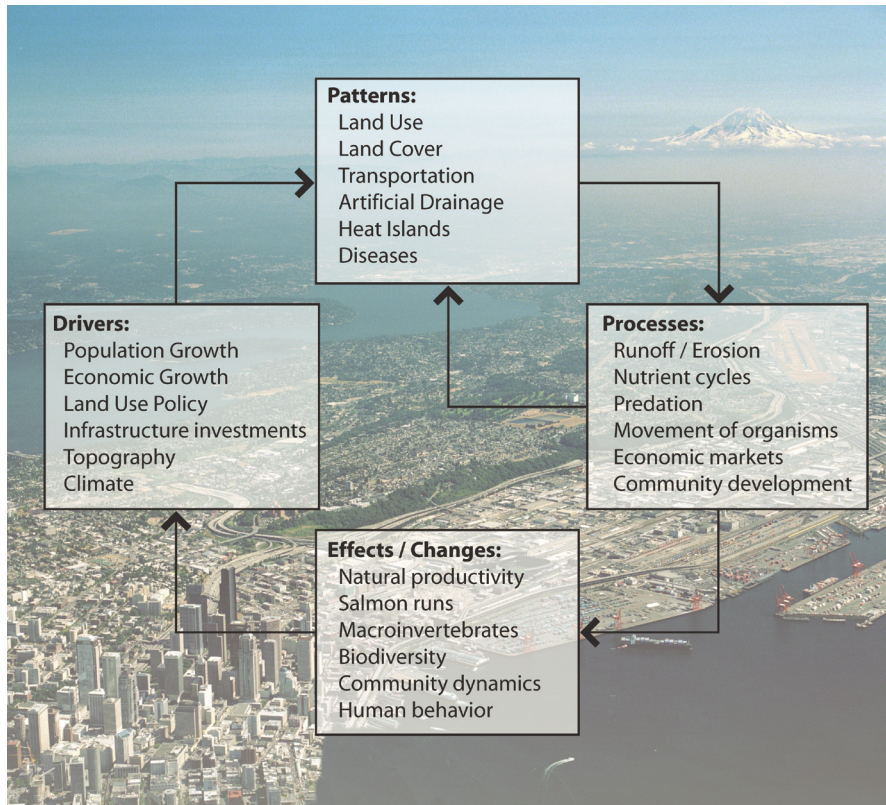






Ecological Signatures: The Science of Sustainable Urban Forms

Marina Alberti



Urban development across the United States dramatically transforms the natural landscape and its ecological function. It fragments and impairs habitat, simplifies and homogenizes species composition, alters hydrological systems, and modifies energy flows and nutrient cycling. In turn, these changes affect the ability of ecosystems to support human functions, the quality of urban environments, and ultimately human well-being.

While it is known that different patterns of urban development have predictably different impacts on ecosystem functioning, the exact effects of different forms, densities,

and levels of urban connectivity are not well known; nor is the way these interactions vary from place to place. For example, compact development patterns are typically associated with lower impacts on the natural surroundings. But the complex interactions between the patterns of built and natural landscapes in urbanizing regions are actually not well understood. Despite much debate on the ecological impact of alternative urban forms, the proposed relationships between urban patterns and ecosystem functions are still only hypotheses.

In an effort to provide designers and planners with insight on the functioning of coupled human and natural systems, a new research collaboration between the Urban Ecology Research Laboratory (UERL) at the University of Washington and the Global Insti-

tute of Sustainability at Arizona State University is developing the concept of ecological signatures.¹ The effort is aimed at quantifying and comparing the actual ecological effects of different development patterns using established scientific tools. This knowledge is essential if future design and planning will be able to lower the impact of new development on a regional scale.

Our contention is that the complex interactions between *human* and *biophysical* processes at a variety of scales give rise to distinctive *landscape patterns*. We call these “ecological signatures.” We further propose that the challenge for urban designers and planners in coming decades will be to understand how these patterns emerge, evolve and affect ecosystem dynamics in a much more accurate and fine-grained way.

Detecting Landscape Signatures

In the past, studies of urban environmental impact have focused on the aggregated effect of residential and employment densities on energy consumption and emissions. A prominent view within this literature has been that compact urban form is more ecologically sustainable than dispersed form.² Proponents claim that compact form is less energy- and pollution-intensive because it reduces land consumption, preserves open space, and reduces dependence on the automobile.³

The empirical evidence for these relationships is, however, limited and controversial, mostly because of methodological problems and the limited generalizability of findings.⁴ More robust approaches are emerging on the relationship between urban form and transport efficiency.⁵ But the relationships between urban patterns and ecosystem function are still virtually unknown. Furthermore,

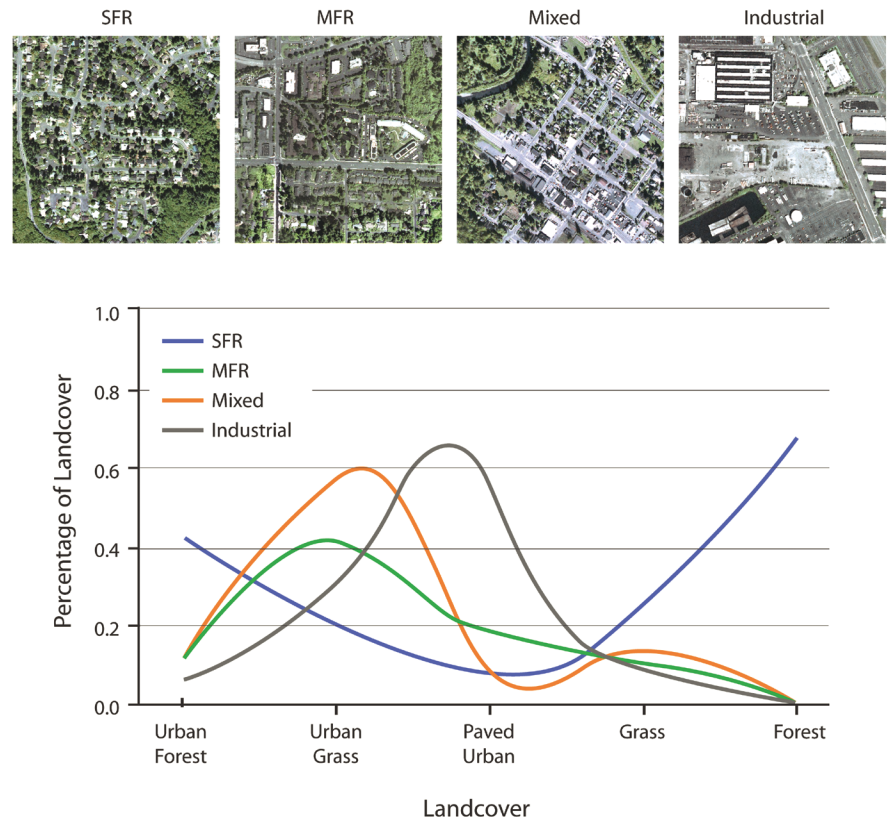
Above: Urban Ecological Model. From Alberti et al., “Integrating Humans into Ecosystems.” Background photo © Aerolistphoto.com.

current study of the interactions between urban patterns and ecosystem processes lacks the conceptual framework to systematically investigate these relationships. Before the effects of urban patterns on ecological resilience can be determined, testable hypotheses must be articulated about the mechanisms linking urban patterns to ecological processes, and significant factors governing these interactions at various scales must be identified.⁶

In urbanizing regions, human actions create both direct and subtle changes in biophysical and ecological processes. For example, urbanization may affect primary productivity, nutrient cycling, hydrological function, and ecosystem dynamics by causing changes in microclimate, hydrology, geomorphology, biogeochemical processes, and biotic interactions.⁷

Emerging studies in Baltimore, Phoenix and Seattle are now showing that such complex interactions generate unique landscape patterns.⁸ Despite the variability of local biophysical settings and socioeconomic activities within cities, the coupling of human and natural processes may be creating an identifiable biogeochemistry. For example, it has been shown that during the summer Baltimore's mean maximum temperature is higher than in surrounding rural areas.⁹ In contrast, the city of Phoenix is cooler than the surrounding desert. In Baltimore, annual nutrient and carbon cycling increases during the longer growing season, while warming in arid Phoenix can suppress photosynthesis during the summer.¹⁰

Urbanization has been shown to affect biogeochemistry through the clearing of vegetation and the increase in impervious land surface. Urban infrastructure, particularly wastewater and artificial drainage



systems, has also been identified as a significant mechanism of change through its effect on waterborne nutrients. Research, however, also reveals that there is no single measure to evaluate the impact of urban form on ecological function. Likewise, we cannot evaluate the aggregated impact of urban form if we do not understand, at a much finer scale, the interactions between development and ecological processes.

As a result, despite much debate and controversy, we still do not know what development pattern is most effective in supporting ecological function. Unfortunately, scientific literature over the last twenty years has not provided the right answers, partly because we have not asked the right questions or used the right methods.

Linking Development Patterns to Ecosystem Function

Emerging approaches in landscape ecology provide a framework for the explicit quantification of the relationships between forms of urbanization and ecological function. At the UERL we are applying these methods to the detection of *distinct ecological signatures* of urban development.¹¹ Our goal is to provide designers and planners with systematic ways to assess the ecological implications of alternative development patterns and design and to help them plan more sustainable urban landscapes.

Above: Landscape Signatures of Development Types. From Alberti, "The Effects of Urban Patterns on Ecosystem Function," modified. Photos courtesy of Emerge 2002.

These efforts are largely based on the development of new tools to understand the effects of development patterns on biophysical processes and ecological conditions. This work has involved characterizing landscapes in the Seattle metropolitan area according to objective measures of composition and configuration. It has then used these measures to study emerging relationships between landscape patterns and ecosystem dynamics. And using advanced GIS and remote sensing techniques, we have combined longitudinal socioeconomic and ecological data sets to extract signatures of development patterns and simulate future scenarios.

As technology advances the range and availability of data, researchers in landscape ecology have developed a number of metrics for quantifying landscape patterns and their effects on ecological processes.¹² These metrics can also be useful to measure the impacts of urbanization. For example, we have applied measures of percent land cover, mean patch size, contagion, and Shannon diversity index to quantify urban landscape patterns in the Seattle metropolitan area. Percent of land cover occupied by patch type (i.e., paved land, forest, or grass) is an important indicator of ecological function. Mean patch size of forest cover is a measure of fragmentation and an important indicator of natural habitat. Contagion measures the degree of aggregation of a particular form of land cover by measuring the probability that two randomly chosen adjacent cells belong to the same class. The Shannon diversity index represents the number of land use classes in the landscape. We also quantify landscape configuration using indices of aggregation (AI) and percent like adjacency (PLADJ).¹³

To better relate patterns of urban

development to ecological processes, we have also developed a typology based on real estate types and land development characteristics, which includes predominant land use, number of units, parcel size, and road infrastructure. We have intersected a 150m vector grid with several GIS layers representing each land use and land-cover dimension to quantify and relate land development types to land cover and built structure characteristics.

Using these metrics we have developed and tested formal hypotheses of the effect of urban development patterns on such biophysical indicators as bird communities and aquatic macro-invertebrates. We have also attempted to determine what factors determine and maintain an urban ecological gradient.¹⁴

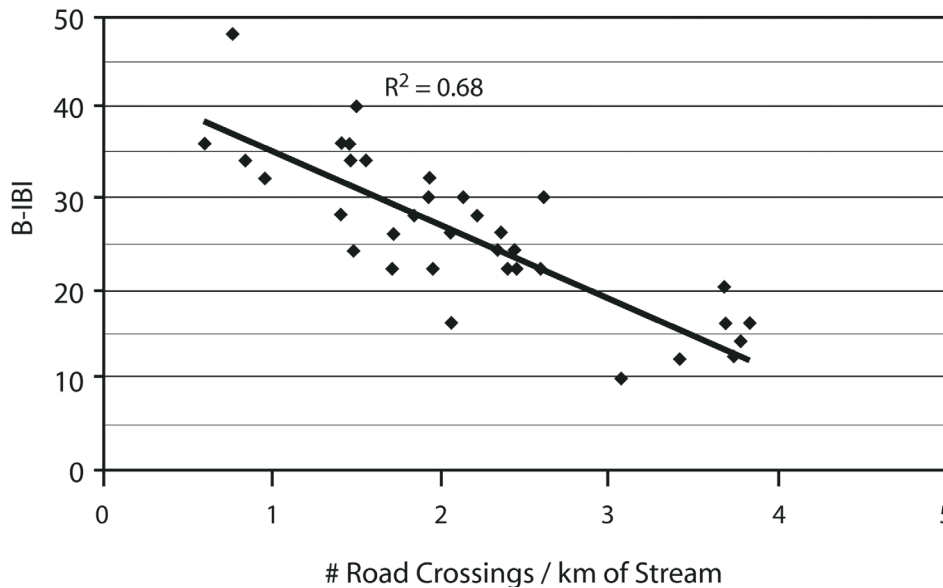
These initial studies indicate that complex relationships exist between land use, land cover, and ecosystem processes. However, different land uses can be discerned based on the character of their land cover. For example, when studied on a parcel scale, single-family residential landscapes have less impervious surface than multifamily parcels (although multifamily development parcels may accommodate a greater number of households, thus reducing the requirement for impervious surface at a larger scale). The percentage of impervious surface is greater on both mixed-use (residential and commercial) and on industrial parcels. And, in general, more forest cover is found on single-family residential parcels.

Although such trends may be generally predictable, there is great individual variability depending on parcel size, the location of a parcel along an urban-to-rural gradient, and the year a parcel was developed. Our results do, however, show that the amount of natural land cover that can

be preserved is determined by land-development type, and that the level of fragmentation that will be generated will be determined by land use.

We have also studied the effect of urban patterns on biotic integrity of streams. These patterns cause changes in runoff and a replacement of riparian vegetation.¹⁵ At the drainage-basin scale, previous research has shown that impervious surfaces result in altered and often extreme hydrologic conditions.¹⁶ However, using the Benthic Index of Biological Integrity (B-IBI) developed by James Karr, we found that the percentages of impervious area and forest in a contributing watershed are only a coarse predictor of biological conditions.¹⁷ Not only the total amount of impervious area but also its spatial configuration were found to affect stream health. The best individual predictors of BIBI we could determine were the number of road crossings and overall road density. Indeed, the location and spatial configuration of forest patches and paved areas explained most of the variability in BIBI.

We have also studied how bird populations respond to urban development. This work explored how regulating mechanisms such as nest predators, vegetation, competing species, and food resources respond to human settlement.¹⁸ We found that bird richness remained high in the settled Seattle region if the percentage of forest in each 100-hectare unit remained at approximately 20 percent or more. But this was not a linear relationship. Bird richness peaked at approximately 50 percent forested landscape. Furthermore, since bird species richness is determined by the balance between retention of native forest birds and the gain of synanthropic species (those that benefit from people) and early successional



species (those that use grasslands and other open forest), bird communities at the urban fringe were found to have high species diversity.¹⁹

Urban Landscape Patterns as Emergent Phenomena

Such work leaves many questions unanswered. Although many scholars are starting to study the effects of urban development on ecosystems, we do not yet know how urban landscape patterns emerge from complex interactions between human and ecological processes. Furthermore, we do not know how patterns of clustered versus dispersed development control the distribution of energy, materials and organisms in urbanizing landscapes.

This is why participants in the new research project at the University of Washington and Arizona State University have begun to investigate the complex coupled human/natural system dynamics of the Seattle and Phoenix metropolitan areas.²⁰ The study aims to empirically test hypotheses about how the interactions of human agents (i.e., households), real

estate markets (i.e., housing prices), built infrastructure (i.e., roads and wastewater), and biophysical factors (i.e., topography and land cover) drive current patterns of development, and how these patterns affect human and ecological function in two very different bioregions.

In urban areas, the study imagines that changes in land cover may have a complex interactive influence on biophysical processes and biodiversity. In particular, change in land cover may feed back on choices of household location and affect land value and real estate markets.

The study addresses four questions: 1) How do dynamic landscape systems help generate the patterns that we see in emerging urban landscapes? 2) What nonlinearities, thresholds, discontinuities, and path dependencies explain divergent trajectories of urban landscapes? 3) How do emergent urban landscape patterns influence biodiversity and ecosystem function? and 4) How can planning integrate this knowledge to develop sustainable urban landscape patterns?

Designing Sustainable Urban Landscape Patterns

The interdependence of human and natural processes places unprecedented challenges to integrate ecology in urban design and planning. Strategies for managing urban growth and guiding urban form require a new understanding of the complex interactions between human and ecological processes to prevent and minimize unnecessary impacts. Ecological resilience in urban ecosystems depends on simultaneous maintenance of natural and human functions over the long term.

Because different urban development patterns imply diverse amounts and levels of interspersed of built and natural land cover and because they present varying demands on natural resources, we know that alternative patterns of urban development will have different ecological signatures. But the ability to specify which degree of compactness, density, connectivity and heterogeneity of the urban fabric, at scales from building to region, best sustain ecological function should be based on much more research. Furthermore, decisions about alternative strategies for urban design, land use planning, transportation and wastewater infrastructure require an understanding of the mechanisms that link urban patterns to both human and ecosystem functions.

Empirical evidence indicates that patterns of urban development do matter in balancing human and ecological function. But it also indicates that ecosystem responses vary according to ecological processes and place. These relationships are sometimes nonlinear,

Above: Number of roads crossing a stream vs. stream biotic integrity in Puget Sound lowland. From Alberti et al., "The Impact of Urban Patterns on Aquatic Ecosystems."

with sharp thresholds where ecological conditions may change abruptly.

Despite the rush to create explicit design and planning guidelines, current research has found no one form of development that fits all ecological processes and best helps protect biodiversity. The optimal landscape form depends on specific conditions. Moreover, maintaining a diversity of landscapes and thus promoting diverse development patterns may be crucial to ecological resilience and to support a diversity of species and ecosystem functions.

The lesson to be learned is that the environment is much more variable and complex than has yet been conceptualized. Change in environmental systems is also inevitable. Furthermore, in real systems there are multiple equilibria, and the best response may change under varying and evolving conditions. Such an understanding is critical to creating sustainable urban landscapes.

Notes

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8. N.B. Grimm, J.M. Grove, S.T.A. Pickett, and C.L. Redman, "Integrated Approaches to Long-Term Studies of Urban Ecological Systems," *BioScience*, 50 (2000), pp. 571-84; Pickett et al., "Urban Ecological Systems"; and M.A. Alberti and J.M. Marzluff, "Ecological Resilience in Urban Ecosystems: Linking Urban Patterns to Human and Ecological Functions," *Urban Ecosystems*, 7 (2004), pp. 241-65.
9. J.P. Kaye, P.M. Groffman, N.B. Grimm, L.A. Baker, and R.V. Pouyat, "A Distinct Urban Biogeochemistry?" *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, 21 (2006), pp. 192-99.
10. Ibid.
11. The UERL Team involved in the study of ecological signatures of urban development involves several research associates and assistants, including L. Hutya, S. Walters, S. Coe, D. Spirandelli, Y. Jang, M. Russo, and K. Puruncas. See Alberti et al., "Integrating Humans into Ecosystems."
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Defiant Gardens: Making Gardens in Wartime

Kenneth I. Helphand



With great sympathy for his subjects, the landscape architect Kenneth I. Helphand, in *Defiant Gardens; Making Gardens in Wartime*, vividly describes the privations suffered by soldiers and imprisoned or interned civilians in wartime. He does so in order to point out the origins, assets, and ironies of the most expressive countermeasure taken by these stalwart individuals—the garden—grown on blasted battlefields, in barren ghettos, among squalid prisoner-of-war barracks, and in arid internment camps.

The title belies the humanity of the gardens' makers and the spirit of the gardens themselves. Not just defiant statements or demonstrations of anger, these frequently meager, tenderly tended plots are representations of life, evocations of home, the result of constructive labor, expressions of hope, works of art, and, above all, mechanisms for physical and emotional survival. They are also places and symbols of peace.

Defiant Gardens (published in 2006 by Trinity University Press) will be a revelation to those who don't know about such gardens and an affirmation for those who do. Written for both the general public and an academic audience, this humane and scholarly synthesis depicts the corporeal and the spiritual with equal insight. It simul-

taneously elucidates history, speaks to the present, and addresses universal themes. And although Helphand claims it is not a political statement, it is nonetheless a well-timed treatise on an age-old response to man's inhumanity to man.

In presenting the book with a research award, the jury noted that it represents an area of landscape study that has never been completely documented. They were equally impressed by the moving and difficult quality of the material and the testimony to life illustrated in its case studies.

Inspiration

A professor of landscape architecture at the University of Oregon, where he has taught courses in history, theory, and design since 1974, Helphand has always been interested in what gives gardens meaning—in gardens as the grand metaphor of landscape architecture.

This book, however, had a specific inspiration: an undated stereopticon photograph he found in an antiques store, showing French soldiers in a trench during World War I flanked by their planting beds. Helphand immediately grasped its importance—the contrast between the horrors soldiers suffered in the war and their gardens. But

his exploration of this insight did not start immediately, and when he did take it up, it did not advance evenly.

For years Helphand kept the picture propped up on his bookshelf. Though he lectured on garden images and ideals—paradise and so on—he did not have a name for situations that were not ideal. Finally, the word “defiant” came to him, and “stuck.” With this concept in mind, he began pursuing the subject in a formal way in 2003. With the photograph as a catalyst, he expanded his research to gardens grown in other difficult circumstances.

In 1997, he presented a paper, essentially the book’s first chapter, in Britain, at a comparative literature conference whose theme was gardens (that paper was later published in the *Journal of Garden History*). But after this, he became involved in writing another book, *Dreaming Gardens: Landscape Architecture and the Making of Modern Israel*. He also taught in Israel, and traveled.

Throughout this period, the defiant garden idea continued to “fester,” he says. Then, just as he was beginning to think seriously about writing a book on it, he met Barbara Ras, an editor who attended a talk he gave on the subject in Nevada. She suggested they collaborate on the project. He accepted her proposal and devoted his sabbatical, from 2003 to 2004, to giving its research and writing his full attention. The result is the seven chapters that make up the present volume.

The book begins with “War and Gardens,” in which Helphand explores gardens’ peacetime cultural properties and introduces the ways these become both exaggerated and diminished in wartime. He defines the defiant garden:

Gardens—even individual plants growing in bits of soil—in deserts, prisons, hospitals, highway medians, vacant lots, refugee camps, rooftops, dumps, wastelands, cracks in the sidewalk: these are examples of what I call defiant gardens, gardens created in extreme or difficult environmental, social, political, economic, or cultural conditions.

From here Helphand discourses on the word “garden,” explaining that it is both a verb and a noun. “The activity can carry equal, or even greater meaning and significance than the place itself,” he writes. In many ways the battlefield is the antithesis of the garden, and the will to garden during war can be read as an attempt to restore a sense of order to a world gone mad.

The following four chapters present the bulk of Helphand’s historical research. Chapter two describes the trench gardens of the Western Front in World War I. Chapter three advances in time to a revelatory discussion

of ghetto gardens in World War II. Chapter four addresses what he calls the “barbed-wire” gardens, grown by prisoners in Europe and Asia during both world wars. Chapter five treats the “stone gardens” of Japanese-American internment camps.

By letting many of the gardeners speak for themselves, in quotations from archives, diaries, interviews, memoirs and testimonies, Helphand underscores their resilience and resourcefulness in the face of unspeakable hardship. By drawing on his prodigious research and sticking to fact and statistic, he conveys the appalling treatment his heroes underwent and their horticultural defiance in a voice whose matter-of-factness is both piercing and compassionate.

The sixth chapter, “Postwar: Gardens after the War,” addresses the return of wartime landscapes to nature. Helphand notes, “The defiant war gardens we have examined were short-lived, but their duration is not at all proportional to their meaning.”

In the last chapter, “Digging Deeper,” Helphand expands on the themes of life, home, work, hope, and beauty discussed at the beginning. He also touches on gardens grown in more recent conflicts: Korea, the Balkans, Desert Storm, 9/11, and Iraq.

Historical black-and-white photographs of people at work in their defiant gardens and, particularly affecting, their artwork and war-sited garden-plan drawings, punctuate the text. A thoughtful feature of the book’s back matter is a directory that lets the reader know what became of the individuals so empathetically portrayed in the book.

Research

Though Helphand has drawn on an extensive bibliography, it does not include any source as comprehensive as his own book. In fact, his research is the first to document in one place the defiant gardens of the two world wars—their ghettos, their prisoner-of-war camps, and their internment venues.

Helphand believes that the best research method is just to “tell people what you are doing.” Thus, one conversation on the book might lead to another, which might lead to an unexpected new source.

For example, a friend who was conducting research on Anne Frank had come across an account of the Warsaw Ghetto that described its gardens. Likewise, his early

Opposite: Growing celery in a trench garden during World War I. Photographed Aug. 15, 1918. Directorate of Agricultural Production. Courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, IWM Q9782.



travels took him to the Imperial War Museum, in London, where, in the reading room under its dome, he discovered a trove of garden-related accounts and photographs. But it was here that the archivist brought his attention to the World War I detention site at Ruhleben, a former race-track whose transformation by the British led him to write the chapter on prisoner-of-war internment camps.

Helphand has no personal association with the gardens of World War II; he had no family in the Holocaust, though he knows Holocaust survivors and many Japanese Americans who were interned in U.S. camps. Nonetheless, what he learned about the ghettos affected him profoundly, not only because he is Jewish but also because, he says, the ghetto historians were heroes—they recognized the urgency of recording life at the camps, knowing they would not survive. He was also surprised by the pervasiveness of the ghetto gardens and that their creation was enabled by such prewar institutions as Toporol, the Society to Encourage Agriculture among Jews. And, though initially daunted by the seeming lack of primary material on them,

he persevered, unearthing a wealth of first-person accounts and engaging a small army of people with connections to the war to translate them.

No one had written specifically about the ghetto gardens until Helphand's book brought to life the singular stories quietly housed at such repositories as the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, in New York, and the Lodz Ghetto archives. He also consulted the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., and archives in Warsaw and Israel. In the end, Helphand feels he pretty much depleted this archival material. On the other hand, he says he barely scratched the surface with respect to documentation on gardening in prisoner-of-war camps. There were hundreds of these camps for each nation in World War II alone.

Helphand believed it was essential that he visit the sites he discussed. Though nothing remained at many of them, his foreknowledge allowed him to intuit many of their intangible qualities. The most powerful of these visits were his days walking the Warsaw Ghetto. He had maps from the 1940s, and by overlaying them on contemporary charts,

Sample Juror Comments—*Defiant Gardens*

Ann Forsyth: It is an incredibly moving book. It is really about the human spirit in extraordinary circumstances and how people relate to place and manipulate their places in the most challenging conditions. Gardening really is a core human activity. I must admit, I am an avid gardener. I just felt like every part of me was drawn into this book.

Anne Whiston Spirn: The garden is also a place of life

and rebirth. The most powerful thing is the author's conclusion from all of this research that in extreme times of death in war, in the Holocaust, etc., there is also this drive to plant gardens, tend gardens, which is about life and renewal and hope. So it is like the human condition: you can't have despair without hope. Some individuals find unbelievable ways to have life go on, even if they know that they may not be there.

Buzz Yudell: It also selected for so many issues and dimensions—culturally, geographically, issues of power, issues of just dealing with survival—all kinds of activities. It really is opening up new perceptions.

Anne Whiston Spirn: It is existential. It says in the most extreme situations people have to make gardens.

Roberta Feldman: A testimony to life—the notion that somehow, no matter how bad it gets, you are

he was able to pinpoint exact garden addresses and visualize precisely the actions of the people who had made them.

Understandably, he found these investigations “wearing.” He conducted them in chronological, historical order, the way they appear in the book. Emotionally exhausted, however, he needed to take a four-week break part-way through. Altogether, the book took eighteen months to research and write and another year to edit and print. Six people read the manuscript from cover to cover and offered comments; historians reviewed chapters relevant to their fields.

Aftermath

In a general discussion of winning entries this year one juror noted a tragic theme that seems to run through all of them. This is certainly true of *Defiant Gardens*. Yet like the others, it also involves themes of collaboration, everyday people, the importance of place and its meaning in people’s lives, and inventiveness in lean times.

Reviewers elsewhere have noted the book’s strong emotional undercurrent. According to one posting at Amazon.com: “Keep a hankie close by. You will be a better person for having read this book. It repeatedly illustrated resilience in people of all ages and races. People, like plants, want to live. Even if it is a daily struggle to survive, it is worth it to have another day. Read this book. You will be grateful.”

Since its publication *Defiant Gardens* has received awards from distinguished organizations in history, botany, and garden writing, and it has been acknowledged by the publishing and environmental-design fields.

Everywhere Helphand speaks these days, people come up to him to recount their own stories. An American soldier who spent time as a prisoner of war in Poland during World War II, told him he had restored derelict greenhouses there with the Germans’ permission and then grew food in them from seeds provided by the Red Cross and

the YMCA. He is the only American soldier to have won the Bronze Star for Gardening. Another audience member gave Helphand a list of Japanese World War II prisoner-of-war camps, telling him there was a garden in every one.

Images and stories continue to pour in. Helphand received a note from a woman whose daughter, in prison, reads the book to other inmates and contributes to the prison garden. A helicopter pilot who served in Vietnam sent him a picture of a garden he grew there, citing its meanings to him and noting that the book validated those feelings.

Helphand is not planning a “sequel” to *Defiant Gardens*, but he has launched a website (www.defiantgardens.com) to record these pictures and narratives. The book’s ghetto chapter may become an exhibition that will include photographs that do not appear in the book. A University of Oregon colleague has suggested that the ghetto section serve as the basis for a play.

Finally, though Helphand does not teach a full course on defiant gardens, he speaks about them in his landscape architecture courses, especially with respect to what he learned about research methods while working on the book; he now has a much deeper understanding of places and people and the interaction of the two. He also came to believe even more strongly that gardens (and gardening) are not only vital to everyday life but also, like the other arts, fundamental to human existence.

—Susan H. Packard

Opposite left: Clearing rubble for a garden in the Lodz ghetto.

Opposite right: Scarecrow in the vegetable garden of the Lodz ghetto hospital. Images from the Ghetto Fighters Museum/Israel.

Reprinted with permission of the Archive of Modern Conflict/London.

celebrating life through that act of gardening.

Anne Whiston Spirm: And the worse it gets, the more the impulse is there.

Roberta Feldman: I find it also an impressive work of research. When I read the proposal I wasn’t excited. Then, when I picked up the book, I went “Oh, my gosh, the sources!” How does one find information in these circumstances? It is a labor

of love because it is a hunt for archival research in sources that are disparate and all over the world. It is truly remarkable.

Buzz Yudell: I think it is also very compelling.

It presents a diverse set of examples, yet in a very straightforward way. And very memorable.

Ann Forsyth: The illustrations were very well collected, and they obviously took a lot of work to uncover.

Roberta Feldman: The story to me is also about human dignity. Gardening not only speaks to sustaining a sense of living, but also creating something out of earth, sustaining a sense of self-dignity under these hideous circumstances.

The Sublime “Jackass”: Transgression and Play in the Inner Suburbs

Andrew M. Shanken

A fire hose dangles from a massive crane that sits like a monumental mechanical giraffe in a desolate, parched landscape. A man clings to the hose, which is turned on full blast, causing its force to whip him around like a fly on a string. As the hose snaps back and forth, the camera pulls back and pans the horizon, highlighting the puniness of the man’s body amid endless brown hills. The glimpse reveals recent bulldozer tracks, and the raggedy body (out of which we hear screams) seems to mirror this dramatically denuded land. All the while the crew behind the camera laughs. The devastation of it all is brought home when the viewer realizes the crane and water hose may be a contraption assembled precisely to wash these hills away.

This scene is one segment from the show “Jackass,” an MTV production carried around the world and made into two feature-length films (2002 and 2006), in which a group of young men perform short stunts, some just seconds in duration. Many are simple, involving a skateboard, a stretch of concrete, and random props drawn from the environment. The perverse fascination of “Jackass” comes, in part, from the way it layers social, bodily and geographical transgression with elements of performance art, classic forms of physical humor, and modes of play common to the post–World War II suburbs. That the producers tumble together a volatile mixture of conventional comedic tropes, familiar categories of aesthetic experience, and “generation x” sensibility misses the point. “Jackass” roams this terrain with unconscious delight.

For all of its staging, the essential facts of “Jackass” couldn’t be simpler: adolescent male group experimentation, a video camera, and an audience. And yet, none of it would be

possible without the spaces that foster their play. Even though some of the scenes take place in cities, the show’s creative crucible is the suburb—and in particular, its apotheosis in postwar California. Here, sun, expansive subdivisions, light-industrial and business parks, and ambiguously bounded spaces have produced some of America’s finest athletes and delinquents. But “Jackass” speaks to a more generic geography, as well, one where the suburb uneasily abuts the commercial and industrial, or leaches out to a nonurban frontier. These spaces are “sublime” in multiple ways that contributed to a specific postwar culture of play that, in turn, produced “Jackass.”

A Space for Jackasses

This generic topos, the ill-defined realm between city and country, helps explain the easy way “Jackass” taps into the cultural potential of the suburbs. Depending on context and period, these indeterminate areas have been variously defined as exurban, edge city, and sprawl. As early as 1955, A.C. Spector’s *The Exurbanites* drew attention to villages on the fringes of cities that were being claimed as places of escape by urban elites.¹ But with postwar prosperity and national investment in highways, areas like Long Island’s Garden City slowly filled with subdivisions and commercial developments.

In 1991, the journalist Joel Garreau coined the term “edge city” to describe more recent developments around suburban highway interchanges, where malls, business parks, subdivisions, and in some cases, entire “crystal cities” have sprung up to take advantage of cheap land and changes in telecommunications and regional traffic flow.² Tysons Corner, Virginia, a mere village a couple of decades ago,

is now an immense aggregation of commercial areas and office buildings. But it remains unincorporated, its political structure mirroring its indeterminate morphology.

Many suburban and exurban areas, edge cities, and areas of sprawl share this ambiguity of governance and physical boundary. That they also share an abundance of neglected and remaindered spaces makes them attractive places for adolescent play.

This enormous ring of ordinary environments dwarfs the conventional centralized city. Its scale alone resists easy comprehension, and its spatial indeterminacy intensifies the effect of encountering the un beholdable. Part of this ambiguity is socioeconomic: the same forces that created sprawl—laissez-faire development—apply to its management and oversight. We have a bloating belt of lawlessness in the unmonitored areas outside our cities. Much of “Jackass” takes place in these areas—in parking lots, alleys, and fragments in and between suburbs—exploiting their openness, both practically and aesthetically.

“Jackass” as a Form of Culture

The epic opening shot to the first *Jackass* film plays on this landscape. We see the Jackasses loaded into a Brobdingnagian shopping cart as it hurtles down a stretch of asphalt. Eight men hold on desperately as explosions threaten, until the cart finally crashes into a vegetable stand, sending them into the air.

Here in condensed form are all the elements of the more modestly financed television show: the felicitous use of ordinary props (the shopping cart), speed, the chance of injury, an ambiguous and seemingly empty landscape, and the violent camaraderie of daredevils egging one another on. The aesthetic is one of young male

bodies unleashed in space, breaking social and corporeal boundaries.³ The Jackasses, however, are filled with a light-hearted irony, which rescues the show from the puerile hazing and homophobia (often played out as homo-eroticism) that also characterize it. On the surface, the segments seem to filter fraternity stunts through extreme sports. The Jackasses watch as a skateboarder traverses impossible terrain to an inevitable, painful “wipeout.” Or they stuff one of their fellows into a section of plastic culvert tubing and roll him down a hill; as he spills out, woozy and bruised, they stand by, laughing.

At first, the myriad ways in which “Jackass” uses pain, corporal transgression, and public humiliation recall the vogue in the last generation or so for body modification or mutilation. It might also suggest ties to a more fluid sense of the body—allowing its use as a vehicle for entertainment, even via potentially harmful behavior, to seem more normative. Indeed, forty years after the rise of performance art, and especially the more extreme forms of it, “Jackass” seems quite tame, extending traditions of humor to a new milieu.

On reflection, the show can be seen to inhabit a cultural space somewhere between the comically painful “Three Stooges” and the serious performances of Chris Burden, who shot himself in 1971 as part of an art piece.⁴ Larry, Moe and Curly performed gags that were choreographed and conventionalized, but could still be quite painful. Likewise, the Jackasses violently wax off body hair, kick one another in the testicles, pole vault into palm trees, and throw themselves into ceiling fans and cacti. But “Jackass” is never as serious or disturbing as Burden’s work—nor as conceptually scripted.



The show does, however, draw on the perverse appeal of disgust, pain, risk, humiliation, and other forms of transgression. This list, as much “classical” as “sublime,” has obvious ties to slapstick or Vaudeville, but implies, in its broadest sense, an ancient spectacle. “Jackass” carries on the physical humor of Charlie Chaplin in an aesthetic mode of decadence. But such a Roman summation is too neat. Decadence is a form of exhaustion, or a harbinger of it, an expression of power with nothing better to do. Such self-involvement requires an essentially anti-social stance. “Jackass” uses anti-social posturing to achieve something intrinsically social.

Just as the medieval jester mocked the high seriousness of the king, his floppy cap the foil to the crown, so “Jackass” poses as the self-conscious jester for the court of the suburb. While these affable outcasts on skateboards and other improbable vehicles are there to entertain, their stunts also reveal the disturbing qualities of this environment, and their Puck-like gestures subvert its notions of order. Yet they do so with such harmless good cheer that their terrible honesty holds the court together.

The way the audience watches

“Jackass” reveals another level of sociability. The show seems to grasp unconsciously that a generation or more of television viewers now treat the erstwhile culprit of anti-social behavior (the television itself) as a catalyst for building community. People are no longer alone together when they watch TV: they talk throughout their shows; review the last episode while at work; and visit on-line chat groups devoted to their shared interest. “Jackass” was among a vanguard of shows that present a knowing product to this new generation of viewers, one that grew up in the spaces in which Jackass is performed. The television, the suburb, and the court in which the Jackasses play are parts of the same kingless realm.

The very confusion over what to call the Jackasses goes right to the cultural ambiguity of the show. They are not actors in the conventional sense. Nor are they performers in the sense of buskers or break-dancers. As an alternative, performance artist is too pretentious, athlete or stuntman too generous, and “reality TV” partici-

Above: Opening shot of the first *Jackass* film. Image courtesy of Paramount Pictures and MTV Films.



pant too passive. Instead, the merry band of pranksters has let us into their “living room.”

This is not a staged pseudo-event, polished with oleaginous promotional techniques, starring hand-picked opportunists intent on turning their fifteen minutes of fame into a career. “Jackass” appears to present just a bunch of guys willing to try pretty much anything.⁵ While the show does place “real people” in front of the camera, it does so in a way that feels more like a home movie. This sense of overgrown kids shooting footage of their delinquent fun also seemingly grew out of the trouble the unsupervised areas of the suburbs invite. In short, the Jackasses are a product of their spaces, and the same confusion about what to call them extends to the areas in which they act.

Sublime Play, Sublime Landscape

The show occasionally hits deeper chords of misery. In one segment, two Jackasses pack themselves into what looks like a wheelbarrow on four wheels. A third pushes them down a

hill, as in a bobsled race, until they hit a short, rickety ramp, and they are thrown, legs and arms akimbo, concussively on their rear ends. One Jackass writhes in agony. “Oh, dude! My...tailbone is seriously broken! I’m not even kidding!” His friends laugh hysterically. One quips: “That’s all right, we don’t have tails anymore, what’s the point of having one?”

Schadenfreude like this is central to the show. But so is the setting: a desolate stretch of road where they can test the limits of flesh, bone, and nerve. Moreover, the segments are almost always filmed by mirth-filled cohorts, who in turn are watched by the television audience. The layering of audiences, a technique used more explicitly in “Beavis and Butthead” and “Mystery Science Theater,” creates just enough distance so the viewer, safely ensconced and armed with a channel changer, can experience “comfort tinged with terror,” Edmund Burke’s pithy definition of the sublime.

Minor torture, extreme stunts, and body mutilation are not, in and of themselves, sublime. But in this filmic state—photogenic, streaked with humor, and oftentimes cleverly conceived—they enter the realm of an aesthetic category. Burke set out to explain a class of aesthetic experience

that beauty could not compass. Beauty, as he understood it, is a thing of perfection. Orderly, symmetrical and smooth, it creates the sense of repose exemplified in Classical art. The sublime, by contrast, is terrible, the province of pitiless nature. Avalanches, hurricanes, and mountains that soar beyond imagination are sublime.

Gothic novels emerged out of a sensibility for the sublime at the turn of the eighteenth century, and horror films continue the tradition today. They titillate with the terrible. Anything we cannot bear to watch, but watch in spite of ourselves, is sublime. “Jackass” plays into this aesthetic. Much of its appeal derives from anticipation; thus, the camera watches the actor prepare for the stunt, flitting uneasily between the Jackass *du jour* and his devilish friends. This is not quite the tension of a horror film. In place of the high polish and artifice of, say, *Friday the 13th*, there is a rougher verism. Nevertheless, the substitution of audience for “actor” is seamless, and without effort, we suspend disbelief and insert ourselves into the piece.

The show repeatedly sets up extreme encounters between body and nature or built environment. A similar improvisational aesthetic drove the early freestyle skateboard-

Above and opposite: Filtering fraternity stunts through extreme sports—antisocial posturing to achieve something intrinsically social. Images courtesy of Paramount Pictures and MTV Films.



ers in Southern California, who transposed the thrill of surfing to the basins of empty swimming pools—a mid-1970s cultural efflorescence beautifully described in the documentary *Dogtown and Z-Boys* (2002). Like the surfers and skateboarders who gave some initial impetus to this sort of play, the Jackasses often choose expansive, empty spaces in which to perform their tricks. Self-consciously they also draw attention to the relationship between the fragility of their bodies and the danger of these spaces. While few scenes approach the sublimity of a colossal wave crashing as surfers narrowly miss the pilings of the abandoned Pacific Ocean Park Pier (a Z-Boys favorite surfing spot near Venice Beach), the territory of “Jackass” evokes terror in other ways, as with the figure of a Jackass attached to a fire hose thrashing about in a bulldozed wasteland.

“What they do on that show, over and over,” wrote Ocean Howell, an urban historian and retired professional skateboarder, “is fling themselves onto the escarpment, run out in front of the avalanche, get buried in it, then poke their heads out of the top, smiling and maybe bleeding a little, too.”⁶ Their avalanche is not the ocean or the glacial edge, but the untamed concrete edge where nature

and the built environment collide.

“Jackass” exploits this complicated “stage,” one that gives texture to the American suburb, using the unsettling quality of home video. Freud called this effect *Unheimliche*: literally, “unhomely,” but it has been translated, with some loss of meaning, as “uncanny,” or “eerie.”⁷ Even as video recorders become ubiquitous, the shaky hand-held camera image still sets up an expectation of nostalgic or wholesome home videos. “Jackass” ruptures this illusion through its content, but not without first inviting us into the comfort of the “home.”

Its stunts are also often performed in the sorts of interstitial places that polite society avoids—but that its kids cannot get enough of. These are places where order is threatened, where adolescents go to reject the world view of their parents. In addition to broad, empty suburban streets, this territory includes gritty areas where the sprawl of unplanned development has left swathes of disordered fabric to be neglected like the city before it.

Such left-behind spaces form not only a convenient site for stunts, but a critical landscape in which the stunts gather poignancy for being rooted in place: the transgression hits right where physical and social boundar-

ies are weakest. Where are your kids? They are “lost” between the mall and the subdivision with a culvert and skateboard. It is a place where cars are scarce, where police do not patrol, where parental eyes and ears are missing. And the kids are having fun, the sort of fun parents don’t want to know about.

In particular, this world of “Jackass” reveals the suburban street as being as potentially interstitial and dangerous as any other space. With households including only working adults, and garage-forward housing ensuring the privacy of the domestic realm, many such streets were never intended as places to play. But like cities, where streets became de facto play spaces, intentions hardly matter. Several postwar generations have taken to these spaces, using the materials at hand: random pieces of wood, rocks, cinderblocks, bicycles, skateboards, and mind-altering substances. “Jackass” grew out of the cultural geography of the postwar suburb. It speaks of unmonitored spaces; the cheap, handheld video camera; the liberalizing cultural revolution of the 1960s; and feminism in the 1970s, which sent women back to school and work, and their children into an unsupervised world of play.



The Inner Suburb

The success of “Jackass” hinges on its ability to render the lustful joy with which several generations have imposed their own ludic structure on these in-between spaces. In this sense, the show calls out the need to develop new names for suburban places, names that extend beyond the limitations of “exurb” and “edge city.” The first of these terms implies a condition of transportation and employment and a desire to surpass the suburb on an axis of work and domesticity. The second gets at an unsettling sense of dissolution, a devolution into incoherence. But as the city has lost its gravitational pull, the suburb’s once neat orbit is increasingly one that traverses cold, forbidding, ungridded deep-space.

Dolores Hayden has noted the rush since the 1980s to invent new terms for the ring of development around the “sitcom suburbs” of the postwar era: “outer city, shock suburb, outtown, edge city, boomburb, and exopolis.”⁸ I propose “inner suburb” to get at the combination of forsaken ground, dislocation, and the lawless mentality these spaces evoke. “Inner suburb” acknowledges the latchkey underbelly, but also describes a new geographic imaginary, one based on chaos, fragments, detritus, neglect—the polar opposite of most associations about suburbs.

“Inner suburb” clearly does not designate a literal geography. Rather, it attempts to link historically with other neglected geographies—like the inner city, which is similarly nongeographical. And it grapples with this geography aesthetically, something that art and architectural historians tend to neglect—Robert Breughmann and Hayden excepted. It is an agoraphile’s aesthetic of movement, play and danger.

The inner suburb is not any one, definable phenomenon, and not all suburbs behave like the ones in which “Jackass” takes place. The term calls on a cultural geography of abandonment and savage play, intended, in Johan Huizinga’s sense, to convey an activity in which social boundaries are tested and set.⁹ Huizinga argued for an understanding of play as an amoral social function through which people negotiate ever-changing limits of behavior and culture. The inner suburb is such a place for postwar America—a place where social order breaks down, where rules can be tested. We have all heard of places where police will not go, or where they simply cannot impose order because of the vastness and marginality of the spaces. Such areas allow new rules to be tested, new boundaries to be drawn, new social contracts to be drafted. The seemingly fallow ground of the inner suburbs has

been bearing new cultural products for some time. “Jackass” was among the first to package that product to the consumers (also, perhaps, the producers) of those spaces.

Part of the power of the inner suburb derives from its scale, or more properly, its scalelessness—which brings back Edmund Burke’s notion of the sublime. These environments approach the sublime by suggesting capitalism’s infinitude, its unchecked reach, both environmentally and socially.

As an aesthetic category, the sublime first emerged during the eighteenth century, a time when industrial capitalism was beginning to transform Europe’s medieval patterns of settlement. Burke looked to nature as the source of the sublime, but Europe’s burgeoning cities and industrial landscapes fit his definition just as well. Nature does not own the sublime; culture too can create sublime effects. And soon architects like Claude-Nicolas Ledoux would reach for what the architectural historian Anthony Vidler has called the “public sublime,” in buildings and urban spaces.¹⁰ But what Ledoux had done willfully, sprawl has achieved haphazardly, creating a popular sublime of highways, unfathomably large malls and subdivisions, and the equally inapprehensible fragments in between.



One response to the popular sublime of the inner suburb has been to ignore it. One can still connect the dots from subdivision to mall to highway, creating a conceptual order through attention to the speedometer and traffic light—if not through the television and reruns of suburban dramas such as “The Brady Bunch.”

Or, one can create codes of conduct in keeping with the sublime. The subaltern of the suburbs—the teenager—takes this tack, making an aesthetic performance of these spaces. “Jackass” revels in this performance, making mass entertainment of the personal performance cultivated by and for the sublime environments in which it grew up.

Spaces of and for Adolescence

In the end, then, “Jackass” is a parable about adolescence. The spaces of American sprawl offer a place exactly suited to the moment between the parentally ordered world of childhood and the self-control of a mature super ego.

These spaces, too, are in their “adolescence”—to use a term too often thrown around as a metaphor for anything in that awkward stage between birth and maturity. If the city can be understood as aged, an emblem of what some economists call the mature economy (and some of

the older suburbs likewise have succumbed to a level of urbanization and economic maturity), then the energetic development of subdivisions and commercial strips that lie on the fringes of both provide the bumptious, boisterous, awkward, and unpredictable spatial analogue to the teenager.

What will these spaces be when they grow up? That depends on how Americans choose to shape them. In an age that has tidily dispensed with modernist faith in built space as an agent of social reform, “Jackass” reminds us how powerful the built environment is in shaping society.

Notes

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1. A.C. Spector, *The Exurbanites* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1955).

2. Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York: Doubleday, 1991).

3. “Jackass” did not invent this form of play. I played with shopping carts in the parking lots of suburban Phoenix in the early 1980s.

4. In one episode, one of the Jackasses does submit

himself at close range to a barrage of “bullets” from a paint gun. While these guns are generally harmless, part of a mock war game, their output is extremely painful when fired directly at someone, as this segment demonstrated.

5. Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961).

6. Ocean Howell, from an e-mail to the author (Feb. 13, 2007).

7. Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny” [“Das Unheimliche”] (1919), from *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, v. XVII, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955), pp. 217–56.

8. Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820–2000* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003), p. 16.

9. Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949).

10. Anthony Vidler, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux: Architecture and Social Reform at the End of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990).

Above and opposite: Self-conscious jesters in the court of suburbia—Puck-like gestures that subvert notions of order. Images courtesy of Paramount Pictures and MTV Films.

In the Shadow of the Tree of Strange Fruit

Theresa Hamilton Proverbs



In the early 1990s, the city of Labelle, in central Florida, a sleepy agricultural community and the seat of rural Hendry County, faced a road-widening project. Its main east/west artery, State Road 80, connecting Palm Beach to Fort Myers, was to be expanded to four lanes, and as is typical of such projects, a number of structures were scheduled for demolition. Two of those structures—wood-frame buildings in a style generally referred to as Florida vernacular—attracted the attention of a group of local citizens. In 1996, the group formed the Labelle Heritage Museum and moved the buildings at private expense to a county-owned site just south of the courthouse.

The stated mission of the museum was to preserve and protect local history. It was also imagined the buildings would help the community retain the memory of a distinctly “Southern” heritage. Florida vernacular is an austere but deceptively elegant style that speaks to the delicate geometry of hammocks and glades and the slow, subtle movements of rivers and wetlands. It was important that the buildings had once belonged to a prominent local judge, Herbert A. Rider; the larger had served as his home, the smaller as his office.

On the surface, the effort appeared to be just another example of small-town historic preservation. A showpiece would be created where tourists might spend an hour or two. And as a container for memory, the museum would allow local residents to present a solid civic image. But inquiry into the Labelle Heritage Museum reveals a much more complex story—one of greed, violence, and shifting identity; one that reveals much about how we give, and deny, meaning to places and buildings.

At the center of Labelle’s history is



a cruel and violent act—a lynching. It is tempting to conceive of that story as an isolated act of barbarism on a long-ago May afternoon, but the place of memory in the built environment is rarely that clear. And in this case the history is complex and circuitous, bending back and forth through time, weaving together issues of class, race and economics. A new chapter is also now being written, as steps are being considered to again move the buildings that once belonged to Judge Rider.

The Incident

Labelle achieved national prominence during the Florida land boom of the 1920s. Henry Ford made a substantial investment in real estate there. And in 1925, Sears Roebuck announced plans to build a factory south of town to produce prefabricated houses. Labelle’s moment of national notoriety, however, came on May 11, 1926, when Henry Patterson, a black construction worker, was lynched there.

Against this story, Judge Rider has sometimes been portrayed as Labelle’s version of Harper Lee’s fictional Atticus Finch. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Finch struggles to defend a black man

convicted of raping a white woman. For his part, Rider attempted—unsuccessfully in the end—to prosecute those accused of lynching Patterson.

Patterson’s lynching and Judge Rider’s role are common knowledge in Labelle, but they are rarely discussed openly. Likewise, although Rider’s house and office were determined to be historically significant and were saved expressly to form the basis of the Labelle Heritage Museum, neither the lynching nor the conditions of the land boom are explicitly represented in the museum’s public display areas.¹

Most of the museum’s collection of documents and photographs is stored in boxes and scrapbooks. A determined and careful search of these will reveal a 1983 article from the local *Caloosa Belle* newspaper titled “A Terrible Misunderstanding” that attempts to explain the lynching. Another

Opposite: The Hendry County line at the time of the Florida Land Boom. Historic photo reprinted by permission of Barron Library.

Above: The Captain Hendry House in Labelle as an example of Florida vernacular architecture. Historic photo reprinted by permission of Barron Library.



possible acknowledgement is a single undated Polaroid with a handwritten note, "Doty's garage," in an album of similar photographs (Doty's Garage was where the lynching began).² The museum also has a collection of period newspapers, but these are held in its office and are not accessible to the general public.³

Those wishing to learn the circumstances of the lynching, and Judge Rider's role, may, however, find a detailed examination of the events in an article by Jerrell Shofner in the *Florida Historical Quarterly*.⁴ In

particular, the article investigates the conditions that prevented Rider from successfully prosecuting the perpetrators, and it suggests that Rider paid a personal price for his efforts.

A further primary source is the NAACP. Beginning in 1912, it compiled, as much as it was able to, detailed files on every lynching in the United States. Its file on the Patterson case includes newspaper articles and correspondence between NAACP executives, their affiliates, and individuals in Labelle. These documents permit a clearer picture of the events.

The Consequences of Construction

The Florida land boom was a famous speculative bubble based in part on the new mobility of the American middle class, the unchecked ambitions of often unscrupulous real estate developers, and the feeling there was easy money to be made.

In 1925, the construction of a highway through Labelle was considered fundamental to local participation in the boom. Labelle and the newly formed Hendry County needed highway access to enable the car-driving tourist to become a real estate investor, but it was assumed that construction-related jobs would benefit the local economy and that those jobs would go to local white boys and men. Instead, crews of black men were brought in as laborers.

This is how Sheriff Dan L. McLaughlin rationalized the killing of Patterson, in a statement published in the *Tampa Tribune*, May 17, 1926 (and reprinted in the *New York Evening Post*, May 31, 1926):

These boys have a lot of right on their side and it is time their side of the case was presented.... It started when we were having a campaign down here for a bond issue to build good roads. People who were pushing the bond issue promised work to all the boys if they would vote for it.... The next thing the contractor imported a lot of Negroes and the voters who supported the bond issue could not get work on the roads. They felt they were tricked, and naturally, they resented the presence of the Negroes here. This is the story behind the trouble.⁵

The killing of Henry Patterson was driven, in part, by frustrations of working-class whites over a perceived



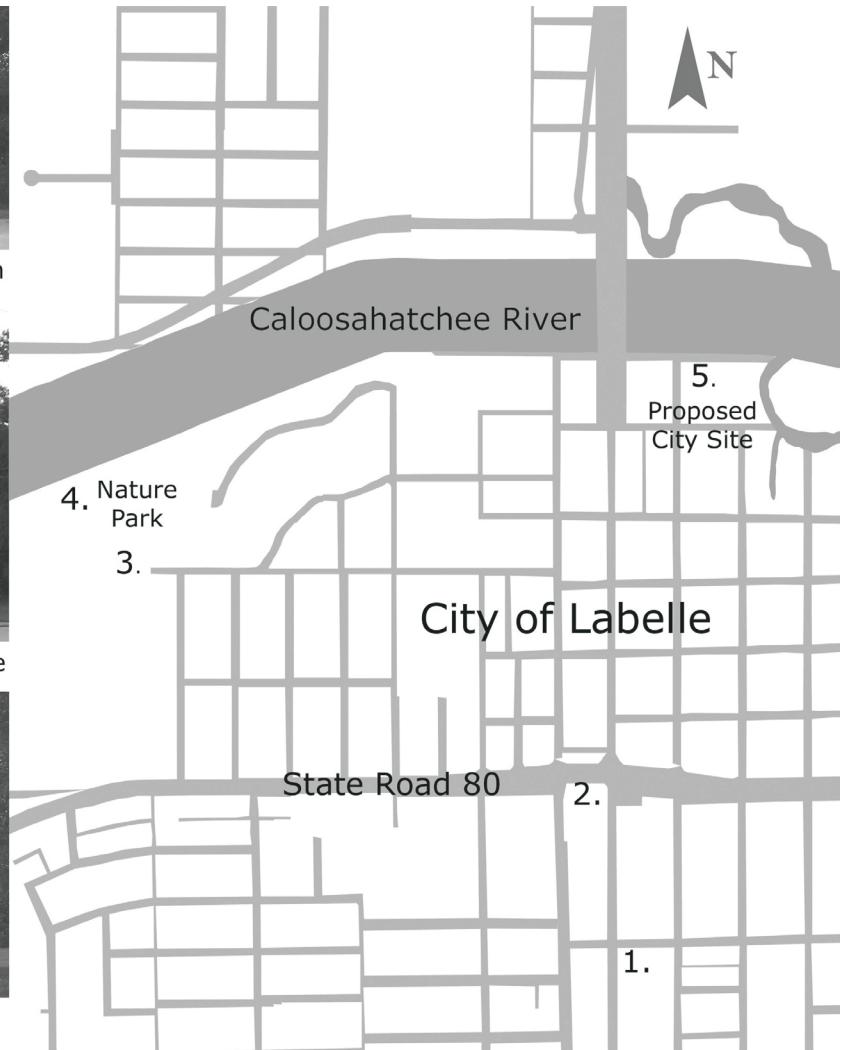
1. Labelle Heritage Museum



2. Hendry County Courthouse



3. Captain Hendry House



loss of jobs and the money to be made from the Florida land boom.

Wealthier whites had a different view, however. They were principally troubled by the loss of real estate sales as a result of the negative publicity surrounding an unpunished lynching. This worry became obvious in a statement by the Florida Chamber of Commerce that appeared, for example, in a July 1, 1926, article in the *New York News*, entitled “Four Lynchings Rouse Florida’s Business Alarm.”

Based on such concern, public support emerged to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the Patterson lynching. However, the funding for this effort did not come from the Florida Chamber of Commerce or the governor’s office. Rather, Judge Rider and other local officials turned to members of the African-American community.

In a letter dated July 15, 1926, John Weber, of the Labelle Chamber of Commerce, described the situation as follows to James Weldon

Johnson, Secretary of the NAACP in New York: “It is true that the State Chamber of Commerce is backing us, in a moral way, but we cannot look to it for financial assistance nor can we look to the Governor for certain assistance that we need.”⁶

Opposite: The Hendry County Courthouse shortly after its construction. Historic photo reprinted by permission of Barron Library.

Above: Location of historic sites in present-day Labelle. Photos and map by author.

The NAACP was actively seeking a test case in its fight against lynchings. Because local government and business interests endorsed the investigation, the Patterson case offered the potential for a successful prosecution, and so it was willing to lend its support. But Johnson and other members of the African-American community had no illusions about the white community's financial self-interest. In a letter dated September 18, 1926, Johnson wrote to Bishop John Hurst, of Edward Waters College, in Jacksonville, Florida:

I note what you say about the two men with whom you were talking being interested in land developments in Hendry County and that they are interested in having the criminals punished because the offense committed by them has paralyzed the land business in that county. I do not believe this motive on their part is in no way disadvantageous. It is quite likely that they will go further toward having justice done in this matter because they are financially interested than they would if they were merely actuated by abstract ideals of justice.⁷

The case against the accused lynchings went before a grand jury in December 1926. During the subsequent investigation and trial, some witnesses were threatened, others fled, and supporting evidence was lost. In the end, a verdict of "death at the hands of persons unknown" was returned.

The New Land Boom

For those seeking to advance their fortunes in Hendry County and across the state, the verdict hardly mattered. The lynching had occurred

in May; by the summer of 1926 the speculative bubble in Florida real estate had already begun to burst.

Northern newspapers, previously favorable to Florida development, began to print negative articles. An unseasonably cold winter in 1925-26 deflated the myth of Florida as a semi-tropical Eden, and the deadly hurricane of 1926, which caused massive property damage, settled the matter. By 1927 Florida entered a period of statewide economic collapse, exacerbated by canker damage to the orange crop of 1927 and another devastating hurricane in 1928. Nationally, the stock market crash followed, in 1929, and ushered in the years of the Great Depression.

It was not until after World War II that prosperity slowly returned to the state. But by this time Labelle and Hendry County had reverted to an agricultural economy based on citrus and cattle.

Recently, however, Labelle has experienced a new surge of change and expansion. The 1990s highway widening and a general boom in construction across southwest Florida have brought speculative real-estate activities back to the area in a way unseen since the 1920s.

Labelle's past as a cattle town is fast disappearing as it is transformed into another suburban bedroom community. Yet even as old ways are disappearing, those profiting from its makeover are capitalizing on its image as a traditional Florida town. In their marketing efforts, real-estate developers routinely use the preserved Rider buildings and nearby Hendry County Courthouse as evidence of "Southern charm" and "old Florida architecture."⁸

There are problems with the presentation of local history through the museum's preserved Florida vernacu-

lar buildings, however. One is that the county never formally granted the Labelle Heritage Museum title to the land on which the Rider buildings sit. Many boosters also feel the location lacks visibility and adequate parking, and a number of alternate sites have been suggested that would allow the museum to grow into a more financially viable civic institution. The most prominent lies on the grounds of the Captain Hendry House, adjacent to the Labelle Nature Park.

Captain Francis Asbury Hendry, a Confederate Army veteran, was also known as Florida's cattle king. An early developer in the area, he built a two-story wood-frame structure at the edge of town in 1914, just prior to his death, in 1917. In 1996 the house was purchased by the City of Labelle and placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The current proposal is for the heritage museum to be combined with the Hendry House as a recreation of a Florida homestead. This type of museum collection, often called an immersion experience, is increasingly popular. But some have noted that it is similar to the dioramas and exhibitions used to promote tourism and investment in Florida at nineteenth- and twentieth-century World's Fairs. Thus, it echoes the dubious relationship in the state between historical presentation and real-estate promotion.⁹

The site raises other questions as well. Captain Hendry had taken up permanent residence in Fort Myers when he built the house that now bears his name. Indeed, he built it as a secondary residence and used it only for brief periods at the end of his life.

Meanwhile, the undeveloped land that forms the Labelle Nature Park was created when the Army Corps of Engineers dredged the Caloo-

sahatchee River. It does contain numerous and varied examples of natural vegetation and wildlife. But the claim that it represents Florida as it appeared when the Caloosa Indians occupied the site is undercut by the fact the site did not exist when the Caloosas camped on the banks of the river nearby.

Considering these objections, the City of Labelle has offered another alternative, a site contiguous to an existing public park and library that would preserve access to valuable riverfront property. Some developers and community leaders also see it as consistent with efforts to redevelop Labelle's downtown in a historic, pedestrian-friendly manner.

Yet, while this proposal would undoubtedly create a significant and attractive public space, how it would further the museum's mission to preserve, protect, and present local history is unclear.

The Paradox of Place

The unresolved question of an appropriate location for the museum reveals a paradox. Although the exact site of Henry Patterson's lynching is probably lost to time and memory, the most specific newspaper and eyewitness accounts place it two blocks south of the courthouse. In a disjunction of time, it would probably now be possible to watch the events of the lynching unfold from the present location of Rider's back porch.

At present, the museum also sits close to the Hendry County courthouse. Traditionally, the courthouse was the preeminent public space and symbol of justice in rural America. But in Florida during the land boom of the 1920s it also played a vital role as the place where real estate and property transactions were processed and recorded. Indeed, one of the

reasons Hendry County was created, in 1923, was so that the citizens of eastern Lee County could participate fully in land development.

But in the South there is another meaning to many courthouses. In the thousands of documented lynchings, the victim was often dragged from a jail cell, tortured, and killed nearby; the courthouse thus became the backdrop to scenes of public mutilation and death.

In addition, then, to the association between Rider and these tragic events, the current placement of these two wood-frame buildings begs the question: what is the power of this place?

Certainly, a small heritage museum must be subject to fiscal reality, and it should present exhibitions that attract and encourage patronage. It cannot fixate on the horrors of a lynching as a means to draw visitors. On the other hand, it should not ignore parts of the past it finds too difficult to address. But most important, perhaps, its location should not be a secondary consideration; its place should be one that engenders thoughtful investigation.

The creation of the Labelle Heritage Museum and the conservation of the courthouse and the Rider buildings were, and are, grounded in a desire to remember. In some ways, for some people, the preservation of architecture is a desire to see ghosts—to imagine the people who once inhabited the rooms, to glimpse traces of the dead. These shadows exist in the spaces between theory and practice, between meaning and mortar.

Labelle was once a small town on the banks of a river, shaded by massive oak trees. In Florida, this past is now being lost to an onslaught of highways, strip malls, and tract housing. In such circumstances, it is easy to argue for preservation and

protection of old buildings. But how do we hear the voices within, however distant and far away they seem?

Notes

1. The museum did recently acknowledge the lynching in its fall 2005 newsletter by excerpting part of a 1984 *Gulfshore Life* magazine article.
2. James R. Doty was the local state representative. The best available information indicates that Patterson was running for his house or garage as a possible sanctuary. The violence, the killing, began there, but Patterson's life had clearly been in danger for hours prior.
3. A lack of funding has prevented the museum from hiring professional curatorial staff to manage and exhibit its collections. Other artifacts related to the Patterson lynching may exist within its collections, but their significance is neither recognized nor documented.
4. Jerrell H. Shofner, "Judge Herbert Rider and the Lynching at Labelle" *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 59, Issue 3 (January 1981), pp. 299–300.
5. The Papers of the NAACP, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Series C, Box 351, Reel 8, Part 7.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Of course, it is no small irony that buildings whose actual historical significance lies in a period of rampant real-estate speculation are now being used, during a new real-estate boom, to sell the illusion of a pastoral, idyllic Florida.
9. Joel M. Hoffman, "From Augustine to Tangerine: Florida at the U.S. World's Fairs," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, Vol. 23 (Miami Beach: The Wolfsonian-FIU, 1998), pp. 48–86.

Where is the Urban Design Discourse?

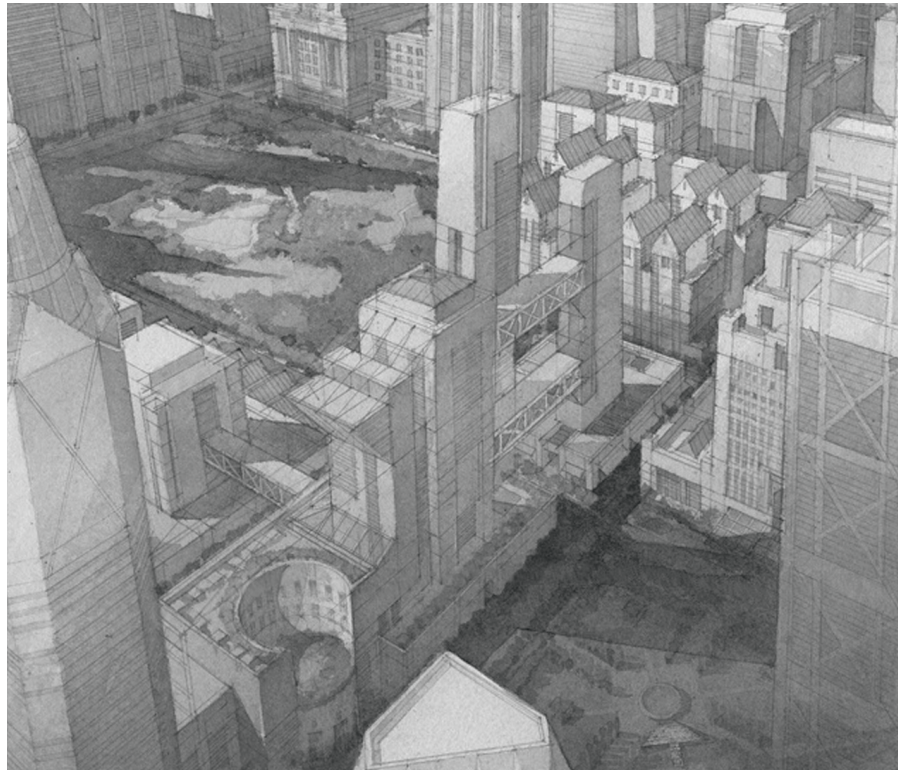
Harrison Fraker

Reading Doug Kelbaugh's "Toward an Integrated Paradigm: Further Thoughts on the Three Urbanisms" (*Places*, Vol. 19, No. 2) brought to mind an attempt I recently made to distinguish current modes of urban design thinking. What Kelbaugh has identified as schools of thought, I tend to see more as "force fields." And where he identified three, I have identified at least six.

The context of my effort was a position paper for the "Urban Design: Practices, Pedagogies, Premises" conference held by the Columbia University Graduate School of Planning and Preservation, in New York, in 2002. My comments were intended to spark debate on the nature of urban design discourse in the various master-degree-granting urban design programs (among them, Berkeley), and in what appeared to be an expanding "market" of urban design practices.

I wrote that the last five (plus) years had witnessed the emergence of a remarkable number of publications that theorize about or analyze the urban condition and that propose approaches to its design challenges. I noted that these highly varied modes of thinking were consistent with the multidimensional considerations of the city—its layers of social, political, economic, experiential and aesthetic meanings.

I further wrote that any attempt to identify specific "force fields" in this contested discipline is dangerous and potentially arbitrary. Some certainly could be broken down into finer grains of distinction; whole regions may be missing; and still other different, perhaps "weaker" fields remain to be identified. Nevertheless, a lack of open dialogue was forcing students to reflect on these theoretical differences and arrive at their own conclusions. I therefore identified six "force fields"



that appeared to have enough coherence to warrant examination: Everyday Urbanism; Generic Urbanism/Hyper-Modernity; Hybrid Urbanism; New Urbanism; Transformative Urban Morphology; and Urban Ecological Reconstruction.

The chart on the following pages encapsulates what I called a "highly fluid constellation." I attempted to show that each had its own internal assumptions, theoretical underpinnings or roots, analytical or representational tools, teaching pedagogies, and design practices.

Charting these positions revealed some interesting dynamics. For example, many of the outwardly opposing positions cited the same texts as theoretical roots (i.e., Jane Jacobs for New Urbanism, Everyday Urbanism, and Empirical Urban Morphology). How do variant read-

ings of these common texts spawn such different trajectories? Would articulating these differences shed light on what each group deems essential for a "good" city?

Why are many of the representational modes or analytical methods similar across "force fields"?

And what is the formative role and importance of the constituents served (or foregrounded) in shaping practices and pedagogies? How do the assumptions and values of "clients" or agencies sponsoring work (the people who have to say "yes") "legitimize" different theories and methods?

Above: Views of the "good" city depend on one's position with regard to the force fields detailed on the following pages. However, this imaginary view shows how different kinds of urban form can participate in a larger public dialogue. Drawing by Al Forster.

EVERYDAY URBANISM	GENERIC URBANISM / HYPER-MODERNITY	HYBRID URBANISM
PREMISES • Focuses on the everyday space of public activity, the common place. • Explores the completely ignored spheres of daily existence as a crucial arena of modern culture, seeing them as sites of creative resistance and liberatory power. • The city is above all a social product; the goal is to make a work of life. • The temporal is as significant as the spatial. • Challenges the “proper” places of the city. It constitutes counter-practices; its tactics are the “art of the weak,” incursions in the field of the powerful.	PREMISES • Denies traditional concepts of order and omnipotence. • Looks to create “the staging of uncertainties.” • Searches for “enabling fields” or frameworks that accommodate hidden processes. • Discovers “invaluable hybrids.” • Recognizes “bewildering immersion” in the overwhelming forces of urbanization fueled by the flows of global capital and consumption. • Advocates for a “new newness.”	PREMISES • Believes that there is no such thing as the “traditional” or “modern” city. • Tears apart assumed dualities and introduces the “logic of hybridity” (“not only, but also”): a third place. • The new “identity” or “other” defies the norm and challenges the hegemony of a dominant majority.
THEORETICAL ROOTS • References the writings of Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, Michel de Certeau, and Fredric Jameson. All these authors have linked theory to social practice in an effort to provide “a new meaning for life’s experience.”	THEORETICAL ROOTS • Postmodern, poststructuralist writings of Derrida, Baudrillard, Foucault, Jameson, and Lefebvre. • It casts a critical “gaze” in an attempt to recover elements of the modernist project.	THEORETICAL ROOTS • Postmodern, poststructuralist writings of Derrida, Foucault • Cultural analysis of colonial and postcolonial conditions.
MODES OF REPRESENTATION • Diagrams of activities, their repetitive and cyclical or linear nature. • Photographs of everyday activities, documenting the “performance vernacular.”	MODES OF REPRESENTATION • Through graphics and narrative, it challenges and interrogates all the traditional elements and modes of the city.	MODES OF REPRESENTATION • Primarily a theoretical construct. Affects the interpretation of “hybrid” architectural types and the “identity” of urban places. • No distinct mode of visual representation beyond those of traditional architectural and urban analysis. Primarily represented by narrative. Therefore, perhaps, “storyboards.”
PEDAGOGIES • Studio problems focus on unofficial, visible but hidden, underexplored, sometimes marginal urban sites. • Students are asked to document the everyday life of these places. • Students then propose imaginative transformations of these unpromising sites.	PEDAGOGIES • Uses classic studio formats to explore the generic programs of late capitalist cities, i.e., the highrise, big-box retail, office parks, etc. • Programs are “XL” architecture as urban catalyst.	PEDAGOGIES • Embedded in cultural studies; does not have an “urban design” pedagogy as such. • Primarily interpretive, not generative.
ROLE OF DESIGNER • A radical repositioning of designs, shifting power from the professional expert to the ordinary person. • Immersed in everyday life rather than superior to or removed from it. • Illustrates alternatives; lets constituents build arguments for preferred solutions.	ROLE OF DESIGNER • Takes the stance of curious aesthetic observer (perhaps “ooyear”) of late-capital urbanization. • Attempts to give aesthetic presence to urban chaos and octality: “the hypermodern dystopia of the city as a shopping mall.”	ROLE OF DESIGNER • Attempts to create a “hybrid” language of urban and architectural form, one that is neither traditional nor modern, but a third form.
PRACTICES • Not necessarily mainstream; projects are community based. • Focuses on previously unrecognized activities. • Frequently led by critical, academically assisted practices/ teams. Tactical rather than strategic.	PRACTICES • Best represented by the practice of Rem Koolhaas’s OMA. • Incorporates social components of the city, like the street, in projects of “XL” architecture.	PRACTICES • The subject of global and multicultural practices
CONSTITUENTS • Disenfranchised and marginal groups, community groups, neighborhood organizations, “unsponsored” activities.	CONSTITUENTS • Large global corporations, large institutions, large developers.	CONSTITUENTS • Designers themselves, because it is a conceptual approach, subject to interpretation. Perhaps multicultural clients; corporations searching for a distinct identity.
IMPORTANT TEXTS • Chase, Crawford, Kaliski, <i>Everyday Urbanism</i> • Hood, <i>Urban Diaries</i> • Alexander et al., <i>A Pattern Language</i> • Scott-Brown, <i>Urban Concepts</i>	IMPORTANT TEXTS • Koolhaas, <i>S,M,L,XL</i> • Dear, <i>The Postmodern Urban Condition</i> • Sorkin, <i>Wiggle</i>	IMPORTANT TEXTS • AlSayyad, <i>Hybrid Urbanism</i> • AlSayyad, <i>Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review</i>, the journal of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments • Bhabha, <i>The Location of Culture</i>

NEW URBANISM	TRANSFORMATIVE URBAN MORPHOLOGY	URBAN ECOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION
PREMISES • Opposes the dominant, car-dependent, single-use zoning, suburban model. • Believes in the nineteenth-century walkable, transit-accessible development model to support urban life. • Believes the proper focus of design is the walkable “neighborhood,” with a “lexicon” (or hierarchical “transect”) of streets, blocks, and building types, including a traditional range of public open-space types, from the “country” to urban sidewalks, parks, and squares. • Believes in a contemporary transformation of historical precedents and the creative/critical application of regional styles.	PREMISES • Believes in the empirical analysis of existing urban patterns and posits incremental improvements or revisions to existing types. • Conducts analyses of both the physical and social dimensions of the city and tries to interpret multiple readings and meanings.	PREMISES • Advocates a “postmodern ecological vision” described by Charlene Spretnak as crucial to humanity’s survival. • Calls for a resurgence of body, nature, and place as a rejection of the abstractions of modernity.
THEORETICAL ROOTS • Team 10, Jane Jacobs, early twentieth-century town planning, Vincent Scully and Robert A. M. Stern, Kenneth Frampton’s “Critical Regionalism” • Furthering the positive results of the Enlightenment, i.e., rational analysis and critique.	THEORETICAL ROOTS • Advocates the intellectual reconciliation of Enlightenment and postmodern agendas by refusing to choose between humanism and science, by insisting on preserving (and using) the positive achievements of both. • Roots in American “pragmatism;” complex mixture of phenomenological and structural; Team 10 critique of CIAM as a beginning. Includes the work of Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch, Donald Appleyard, and Robert Venturi/Denise Scott Brown, Kenneth Frampton’s “Critical Regionalism,” and selectively, Colin Rowe’s “Collage City,” in its lineage.	THEORETICAL ROOTS • Derives from the Enlightenment’s concerns for a more humane application of science. • Following Ian McHarg, seeks to understand and manage the complex interdependence of man and nature, not to dominate or exploit nature.
MODES OF REPRESENTATION • Figure/ground analysis, rendered plans of building and landscape types; axonometric views of building types, a “code” of mixed-use building types, etc.	MODES OF REPRESENTATION • Diagrams of activities and movement, “cognitive” mapping figure/ground analysis, diagrams of natural systems, typological analysis, empirical measures, three-dimensional representation, and simulation.	MODES OF REPRESENTATION • Layered two and three-dimensional mapping • Geographic information systems • Layered axonometric diagrams of ecological systems, including geomorphology, soils, drainage, hydrological systems, flora, fauna, ecological succession, and climatic processes.
PEDAGOGIES • Employs classic design studio models of analytical synthesis. • Analysis of historical precedents and types, including regional styles • Searches for appropriate prescriptive codes. • Programs range from neighborhoods to regions.	PEDAGOGIES • Follows traditional studio models of critical analysis and synthesis in interactive cycles. • Students usually tackle problems that are real in that they have been targeted for study or development by clients, agencies or institutions. • Projects range in scale from specific infill projects, infrastructure design, neighborhoods, and districts to regions.	PEDAGOGIES • Mapping the suitability of joint human-use and natural systems; mapping of historic conditions and ecological successions to discover latent restoration potentials • Ecological reconstruction as physical amenities for other redevelopments (i.e., Design Center for American Urban Landscape Projects) • Studios which explore the “greening” of urban open-space types like streets, parks, etc. Ecological processes as a functional and aesthetic design generator.
ROLE OF DESIGNER • Expert analyst and synthesizer • Client educator (especially about the efficacy of the agenda of the Congress for the New Urbanism).	ROLE OF DESIGNER • Designer is cast as expert analyst and is expected to develop design alternatives and build an argument for a specific proposal using empirical evidence and aesthetic insight and judgement.	ROLE OF DESIGNER • Expert analyst, illustrates ecological reconstruction as design and development potential.
PRACTICES • Include regional master plans, general plans, subdivision plans, neighborhood plans. • Best known through work of DPZ, Calthorpe Associates, and other Congress for New Urbanism members, but has become one of the dominant modes of urban design practice.	PRACTICES • Represents the more typical urban design practices. • Professionals produce infill proposals, area plans, strategic master plans, infrastructure designs, regional plans, design guidelines, etc.	PRACTICES • Ecological reconstruction and environmental planning have become major sectors of landscape practice (see the work of EDAW, SWA, Hargreaves, Pogenpoll, etc.).
CONSTITUENTS • Developers, planning boards, city councils, neighborhoods, regional agencies	CONSTITUENTS • Local and regional planning agencies, cities, institutions, corporations, citizen groups, etc.	CONSTITUENTS • Large public agencies, regional and local park boards; city planning departments and public works, developers, large institutions, organized citizen groups.
IMPORTANT TEXTS • Calthorpe, <i>The Next American Metropolis</i> • Duany et al., <i>Suburban Nation</i> • Congress for the New Urbanism, Charter for the New Urbanism • Kelbaugh, <i>Common Place</i> • Kelbaugh, <i>Pedestrian Pocket Book</i>	IMPORTANT TEXTS • Smithson, <i>Team 10 Primer</i> • Jacobs, <i>Life and Death of American Cities</i> • Lynch, <i>Image of the City; Good City Form</i> • Brown, <i>Urban Concepts</i> • Rowe and Koetter, <i>Collage City</i> • Kostof, <i>The City Assembled</i> • Bosselman, <i>Representation of Places</i>	IMPORTANT TEXTS • McHarg, <i>Design with Nature</i> • Sporn, <i>Language of Landscape</i> • Nassauer, <i>Placing Nature</i> • Morrish, <i>Civilizing Terrains</i>

Lund SUDeS: In Search of Strategies for Sustainable Urban Design

Tiina Sarap



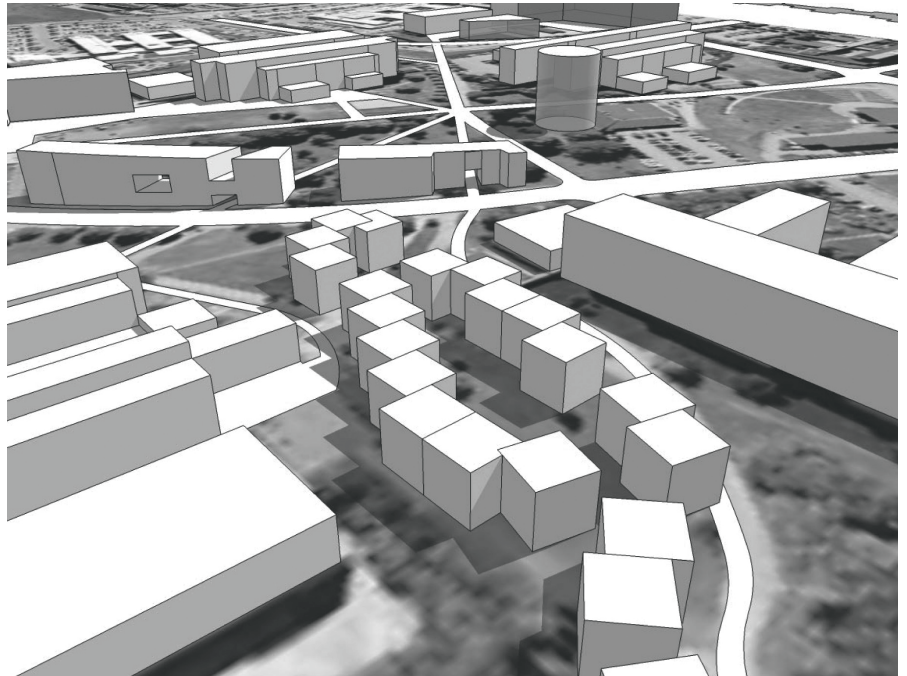
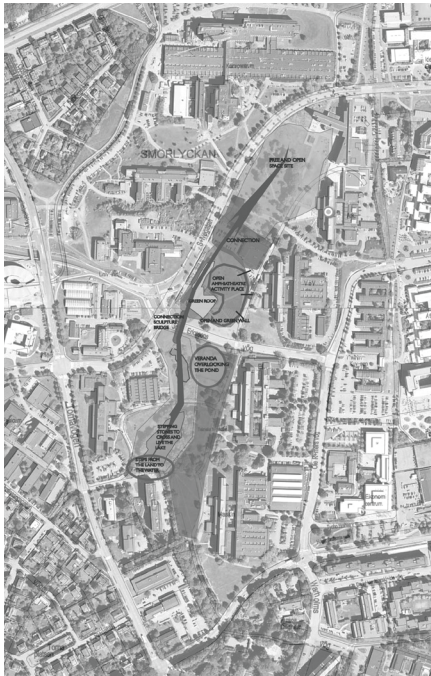
The faculty of the newly established master's degree program, Sustainable Urban Design (SUDeS), at Sweden's Lund University, held its second international conference over two days in early September 2007, assembling a group of thirteen planning and design professionals and academics from Sweden, Denmark, and the United States. The event, sponsored by the Ax:son Johnson Foundation and *Places*, allowed participants to exchange ideas and experiences in a flurry of lectures and discussions, and then join with students from four universities in a charrette examining ways to make the campus of Lund

Institute of Technology (LTH) more sustainable.

Dominated by more than thirty thousand students who study and live there, Lund is a vital part of the burgeoning metropolitan area of Malmö/Copenhagen, a district created by construction of the Oresund Bridge. Spanning the mouth of the Baltic Sea, from Sweden to Denmark, this area is now considered one of the "hottest" growth areas in Europe. The program for Sustainable Urban Design in the School of Architecture at Lund University intends to channel these creative energies into projects that address changing urban conditions and

create enduring, livable communities.

Lund University is more than three hundred years old, and its town center and historic university areas have a small scale and a dense urban structure that reflect their medieval origins. However, their many picturesque buildings, narrow and curving streets, and well-defined open spaces contrast starkly with the vast new spaces and large, self-contained, modern laboratory buildings of the LTH part of the campus. The problems created by this disjunction served as both the setting and subject of an intense program of investigation, proposal and critique.



The Conference

The conference introduced strategies for sustainable urban design from a variety of perspectives. The speakers, from three countries and several professional orientations, set out an array of compelling tactics for change. They examined ways that we think about cities and landscapes; how we build places, use them, and move through them; and how we imagine and sustain the evolving social life they support. In the end, the Swedish, Danish, and American perspectives formed a fruitful basis for interchange and provided some surprising areas of overlap.

In the first day's morning sessions, the Swedish traffic planner Christer Ljungberg stated bluntly that climate change means "no more business as usual," and he pointed out the importance of thinking in terms of "accessibility" instead of "mobility." The Danish architect Annette Gronbaek, working on the revitalization

of Copenhagen's urban core (now dominated by anonymously passing heavy traffic), proposed that public space, if imaginatively cared for, can be a generator of innovation. Christer Malmstrom, a Swedish architect and professor, reminded the audience to look for every city's "raison d'être"; as an important aspect of its identity, this knowledge will allow for spirited evolution of its form.

Gunilla Kronvall, a Swedish architect working on large development projects for the City of Malmö, argued for the importance of public "encounter," and called for study of the potential for gathering in all kinds of urban spaces. Kjell Forshed, another Swedish architect, explained how a few locally connected small-scale houses he has been drawing his entire life are now providing a basis for larger plans to integrate change with tradition. The American architect Andrés Duany stressed the urgency of sustainable urban develop-

ment. However, because of different attitudes toward climate change, which he categorized as committed, indifferent and skeptical, he said that compact sustainable development needs to become a compelling alternative, not a punishing or regulated one.

After lunch, the Danish architect and professor Jens Kvorning used a French example, the riverfront at Bordeaux, to argue for adding complexity and capacity to urban contexts, so they may support changed behavior. Meanwhile, the Swedish economist Peter Elmlund, from the

Opposite: The vital urban quality of Lund's historic areas. Photo by Donlyn Lyndon.

Above left: The modernist-inspired LTH campus with its large, self-contained lab buildings was once set in an open landscape. The town has since grown around it. Historic Lund is off the map at lower left.

Above right: One of the student proposals for increasing the sustainability of the LTH campus by intensifying the use of space.



Urban City Research program at the Ax:son-Johnson Foundation, observed that “complexity is always good for small business” and provides for a wider distribution of economic initiatives. He noted that small buildings with internal and external connectivity allow for enterprises that foster local commitment.

The American guest professor at Lund, Donlyn Lyndon, called for making distinct places within the urban fabric, using the imagination and entrepreneurial energy of many different people to invest areas with human presence and provide the care required to sustain effective environments. Jeppe Aargard Anderson, a Danish landscape architect, then poetically described urban places and parks with sustainable design and large vision. He reminded the audience of the long “delivery time” of big trees, but noted that a single pocket can hold a whole forest as seeds.

It was the American architect and professor Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk who delivered specific tools and measurements for a city with human quality, citing the recommendations of several groups that have been influential in preparing new development standards in the U.S. Finally, the American architect and professor Ellen Dunham-Jones (previously a guest professor at Lund) brought the discussion directly to issues involving places of learning and the need for more creative interaction between them and the forces of the city. She showed an example from her home campus, Georgia Tech, which integrates private research-and-development space with the university’s research activities by extending the campus into the city. She explained that this connection creates a compact, livable, and walkable urban structure that sustains many kinds of interaction.

The Workshops

The conference then turned to speaker-led student workshops, charged by Peter Sioström, director of the Lund program for Sustainable Urban Design, with imagining the LTH campus in a new way.

The Lund Institute of Technology was founded in the 1960s on open agrarian land north of the town center. Its architect, Klas Anselm, worked with modernist forms and ideals. Every building on its campus was designed as an autonomous structure, equipped with laboratories, offices, and coffee shops. The entire layout’s character derived from the linear configuration of a grass landscape with a few powerful groups of trees but almost no evidence of people and activity. During its forty years of existence, the campus has been interfered with by the expanding city, and its formerly pure modernism has been picked away at so that it has lost its architectural identity.

The 150 students attending the conference (who study architecture and urban design in Lund and Copenhagen, planning in Karlskrona, Sweden, and landscape architecture in Alnarp, Sweden) were formed into teams and asked to conceive approaches to intensifying the educational experience and making more effective use of the campus land. Within the twenty-four-hour charrette, the interdisciplinary teams brought forth vivid proposals. Generally, they imagined the LTH campus as more urban in character than its current makeup, accommodating a wider range of housing and shops and giving greater definition to the open spaces. Some envisioned distinct elements within a varied green stretching through the campus; others pictured tight urban spaces absorbing existing buildings in a pattern of streets and meeting places more akin to Lund’s medieval layout.

The teams attended to various pressure points in the campus and to an adjacent but poorly connected private business and research complex. They also considered transit links that, while already active, could be improved, and in some cases relocated. The proposals included one experimental suggestion that the whole unbuilt area be subdivided into tiny rental spots available to anyone, which could then later be assembled into permanent structures as entrepreneurs prospered and needs required. Other schemes firmly established development envelopes able to accommodate an expanded variety of living quarters and a strong network of connections and informal activities suitable for a campus.

While little respect was shown Anselm’s original isolated brick architecture and structural ideals, all the student proposals anticipated the town’s growth onto the campus by stipulating that its forms be complex and engaging. The teams proved able to think schematically in strong and distinct shapes. This clarity was evident in both the design of buildings and the configuration of open spaces and parks. A persistent concern was for internal and external connectivity, which was eagerly pursued as an element of educational space.

Together, the conference and workshop created vital opportunities for sharing ideas. They involved both speakers and students in bringing new insights to specific places. And they set the stage for more general consideration of design that uses resources effectively and creates places of lasting value.

Opposite: One experimental vision called for subdividing the entire unbuilt area of the LTH campus into rental allotments, which could then be assembled to allow more permanent structures as needed.

Meeting of the Minds

H. Fernando Burga

By the time you, the reader, finish this *Places* dispatch, about two thousand people will have migrated from the countryside to the city. Weekly, about 1.4 million people around the globe make this arduous transition. The emergence of metropolitan areas as home to a majority of the world's population framed the agenda for the Meeting of the Minds conference in Oakland, California, September 11–13.

The event, sponsored by the University of California at Berkeley's College of Environmental Design, in partnership with Berkeley's Global Metropolitan Studies Initiative and the statewide UC Transportation Center, brought together experts from academia, the nonprofit sector, and business to discuss challenges to metropolitan areas and explore sustainable strategies for transportation, land use, and urban design. Toyota USA, Inc., provided major funding, while the Urban Age Institute provided assistance in conference management.

The conference's point of departure was that the growth of metropolitan areas worldwide is affecting nature, the built environment, and society in profound ways. Providing a high quality of life in the world's metropolises will be one of the most important challenges of the twenty-first century, and is especially urgent in light of global warming.

The event sought to set in motion an exchange among experts in architecture, urban design, city and regional planning, public policy, vehicle design, traffic engineering, and related fields. And it sought to show that academics and practitioners from different disciplines share many common problems, and could benefit from each other's ideas and proposals.

(E)Merging Thoughts

The support from Toyota was particularly noteworthy for a conference like this. Mobility and access are a big part of the metropolitan challenge, and the company is intent on staying abreast of evolving notions about the shape an character of cities to come.

The company was represented at the event by Irving Miller and Bill Reinert. Miller explained how high the stakes are: "We...will go from the current 250 million vehicles on the globe to three-quarters of a billion in the next twenty years." For companies like Toyota, this transformation to a motorized world calls for a new vision of the relationships among manufacturers, cities, and other sectors of the economy to produce "sustainable mobility"—a new approach that embraces technological innovation, reduces CO₂ emissions, and effectively manages the other social, economic and environmental challenges brought about by urbanization around the world.

Echoing these thoughts, Dean Harrison Fraker of Berkeley's CED spoke of the need for new types of vehicles that better fit urban conditions, especially in China, India, and other emerging economies where high densities and limited road space are the rule. "The central questions which dominate this conversation are: What will cities look like in the future? How will vehicles fit into the vision of the future?"

According to Fraker, the innovative frame of mind must expand to include new designs for buildings, districts and regions as well as technological innovations in vehicles, fuels, and their use. He also called for new "public-private partnerships which reward efficiency, technological innovation and social innovation." Places like CED are the incubators for new

ideas, places where new paradigms are invented and the links between theory and practice are forged.

Steven Chu of Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory also discussed the prospects for new fuels, an important direction for research and development in view of the finite supply of oil as well as the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the next two decades. According to Chu, new fuels could reduce emissions by a substantial amount, but are unlikely to suffice to meet Kyoto or California standards in the time available.

Ways of Thinking: Alternative Approaches, Scales, and Designs

Elizabeth Deakin, director of the UC Transportation Center and co-director of Berkeley's interdisciplinary Global Metropolitan Studies Initiative, noted that currently there are several alternative visions of the road ahead. "Business as usual" will likely result in increased congestion, pollution, and global warming. An alternative vision emphasizes new vehicles powered by new fuels, with high tech highway operations and management to keep the traffic flowing. A contrasting vision focuses on coordinated land use-transportation planning to facilitate transit, walking, and biking, with the private automobile playing a smaller role.

In Deakin's assessment, the major challenge for the next decade will be to find the best path forward: "What is at stake is the character of cities; how we redesign and rethink the connections between engineering, land use, urban design and policy will help determine the livability of our metropolitan regions and the future of the world's environment, economy, and social relationships."

Robert Cervero, Chair of the Dept. of City and Regional Planning

at Berkeley, analyzed the city at different scales: the region, the district, and the neighborhood. For Cervero, the goal of planning is to achieve land uses at the neighborhood and district levels which provide choice, a healthy environment, social interaction, and economic opportunity, and then use transportation investments to link these neighborhoods and districts, to create a sustainable region. Cervero showed how rail transit or bus rapid transit can complement sustainable neighborhoods and districts.

Urban designers and Berkeley faculty members Elizabeth Macdonald and Allan Jacobs brought the role of creative design into the conversation. Their presentations showed how design excellence coupled with creative city planning and progressive political leadership have made such places as Curitiba, Brazil, and Vancouver, Canada, excellent places to live. These successful cities have defined urbanism broadly, integrating built form, transportation, social equity, and ecological function.

As Jacobs noted, the establishment of regional transportation corridors—as in Curitiba’s “structurals” or Copenhagen’s finger plan—can shape city and regional development while at the same time offering healthy local communities.

Macdonald pointed out that street design goes two ways: “Just as the design of the car influences the design of the street, the design of the street should influence the design of the car.” She argued for more flexibility in both street design and in vehicle design, “inventing new combinations which offer possibilities beyond accepted mandates and conventions.”

Other speakers included innovative technology experts Susan Shaheen, Robin Chase, and Pravin Varaiya; developing countries experts



Nancy Kete, Lee Schipper, Tim Campbell, and Aaron Golub; and urban development/design consultants Martin Tillman, Peter Crowley and Paul Farmer. California Attorney General Jerry Brown gave a dinner talk, and Executive Director Jose Luis Moscovich of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority was a luncheon speaker.

Innovative use of vehicles, whether in the car sharing programs discussed by Shaheen or the dynamic ridesharing projects being designed by Chase, offers new ways of providing mobility. In addition, many cities are pursuing demand-management strategies, from the constellation of measures reviewed by Tillman to the transit investments and road-pricing experiments discussed by Moscovich.

At the same time, Varaiya pointed out, engineers are developing new approaches to vehicle control and highway operations that could make the motor vehicle and its use safer and more efficient. And Brown promised



to insist that California land use plans meet global warming mandates.

Thinking Ahead

The Meeting of the Minds conference exhibited several examples of best practices and suggested possible solutions to both present and future urban challenges. It is hoped such interdisciplinary encounters between academics, practitioners, and industry will create the basis for ongoing dialogue.

The last word arising from the conference reinforces this notion. If today we witness the effects of globalization on cities halfway across the world, in our lifetimes we will feel the effects of climate change in our own backyards. The Meeting of the Minds Conference sought to demonstrate that it is not too late to influence this process of change—thoughts can translate into actions.

Above: Relative transportation impacts. Photos courtesy of Martin Tillman.

The Importance of “Place” at the Bellagio Global Summit

Harrison Fraker

I was recently surprised to discover how central the concept of place is within the emerging international debate about how to design more sustainable cities. The occasion was a week-long meeting that served as the last session of a month-long global summit seeking “Innovations for an Urban World,” sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, at Bellagio, in Italy. The event brought together thirty-five specialists from five continents, all with an interest in new forms of planning and design practice and pedagogy to help meet the needs of the world’s rapidly expanding urban poor.

The participants included architects, planners, professors, four deans from three continents (including me), journalists, historians, United Nations

officials, and the directors of planning associations, unions of architects, and research centers. As can be imagined, the disciplines and theoretical backgrounds represented by this group were as diverse as the titles on their business cards.

The workshop’s format included morning plenary discussions that explored the experiences of participants with regard to specific questions. Afternoons were taken up by breakout sessions charged with formulating issues, new questions, recommendations, etc. The overwhelming conclusion from these discussions was that place-based problems and challenges are central to future teaching and research on urban sustainability and to improving the lives of the urban poor.

As the workshop progressed, consensus emerged that there are too many hidden dynamic processes in global cities which are unstudied, undocumented, and poorly understood. Alternatively, knowledge about these conditions may be compartmentalized into bureaucracies or professional silos. At other times, knowledge may reside only in local constituencies, who are not included in political decision-making processes. It was further agreed that place-based explorations need to be deeply interdisciplinary, building a multilayered whole-systems representation of issues and problems. While these conclusions may not come as a surprise to readers of *Places*, the discussions at Bellagio served as a powerful affirmation of this journal’s mission.

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Glessner House Museum
Henry Hobson Richardson, Architect, 1885-87

The great granite house that unequivocally rules the corner of 18th Street and South Prairie Avenue is the only surviving building by architect H. H. Richardson in the Midwest; his celebrated Marshall Field Wholesale Store Glessner, it is also one of the few remaining mansions from the heyday of this residential avenue, when the neighborhood was considered to be the most desirable in the city. These factors, and many more, make it a place of enormous cultural and architectural significance—a Chicago treasure.

Nephritic in distant Brookline, Richardson was fighting time; his massive, nearly immobile body was, by then, an impediment to his agile mind and creative hopes. Dead in 1886 at age forty-eight, he did not see this house completed, nor what he considered his mightiest work of all, Pittsburgh's Allegheny County Courthouse. Just like that building, the Glessner's carapace is a statement of strength, impregnability, and permanence, as if the world; lintels seem as though they can carry the weight of the world; softer, wooden interior with all the domestic comforts, carefully zoned (it is thought to have influenced Frank Lloyd Wright); a significant trove of Arts & Crafts furnishings and William Morris textiles and wallpapers.

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Interrogating Tradition: Epistemologies, Fundamentalisms, Regeneration and Practices

International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments, Biennial Conference, Dec. 12–15, 2008, Oxford, U.K.

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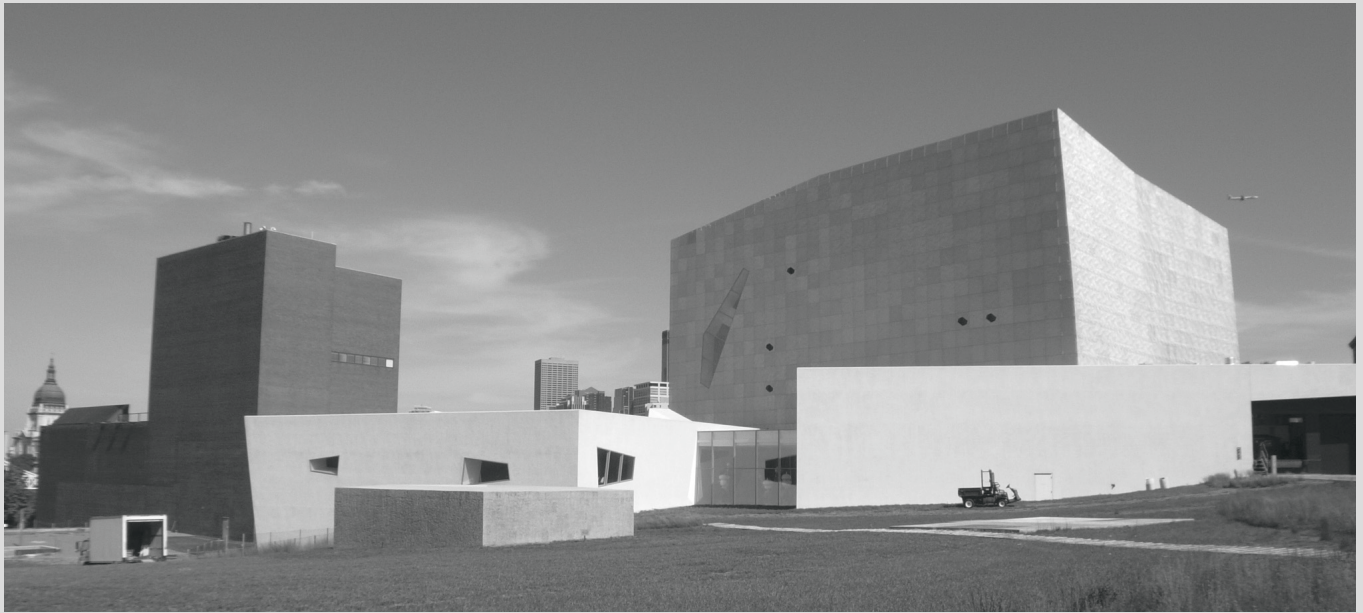
Tradition has become a keyword in modern global design practice, its meanings inextricably linked to the issues it seeks to explain. The exercise of interrogation is therefore essential to understanding the social and political contexts in which it is mobilized, and the ways it may bind the cultural imaginary to the reality of the built environment. For example, tradition is often a marker of nationalism and economic progress orchestrated in part to stabilize local cultures, legitimize invented histories, and frame social practices. The invocation of tradition has accordingly become instrumental in various nationalisms, regionalisms, and fundamentalisms. Paper proposals are invited in three tracks related to the conference subthemes.

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Mike Mense, FAIA

The American
Institute of Architects
Committee on Design

Thoughts on Place-Making after a Visit to Minneapolis



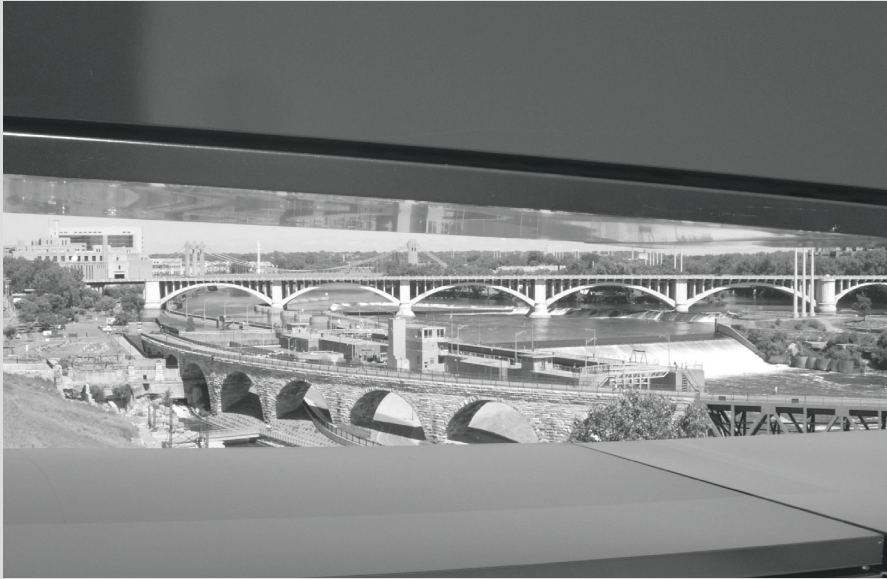
Does it start with architects or our clients? Minneapolis, like most American cities, doesn't evidence much faith in local architects. For major facilities, clients hire designers from the coasts or Europe.¹ For its recent addition, the Walker Art Center brought in Herzog & de Meuron (teamed with Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, Architects of Record, led by John Cook, AIA, Project Architect).

In this case, it seems, as has happened in other American cities, a monument has been funded before the beneficiary organization fully knew what it needed. Even great architects benefit from a client that knows its needs. The tension between program and vision nourishes architectural creativity: architecture is not just sculpture. Further, a community rightly expects its leaders to prioritize needs and spend resources accordingly. This Walker addition primarily provides a theater, a sculpture garden, and a parking garage. With everything else going on in Minneapolis, it is hard to imagine these as appropriate priorities.



Since the client did not have heartfelt goals, it appears the architects created their own. In response to the Walker's existing opaque Edward Larrabee Barnes building, they sought transparency—in part by exposing their new corridors. Yet, the wrinkled, perforated metal

portion of the skin (installed like empty gabions about 24 inches proud of the exterior wall) is not transparent at all. Although it presents some arresting visual reflections of the sky and the sun, it also provides a home for birds and insects and seems vulnerable to damage from freeze-thaw



cycles. Birds nesting in the deep recesses required subsequent screening which now makes it impossible to clean the windows.

To deal with the sloping topography, the architects developed the idea of a commons. Galleries would be discrete, expressed masses with level floors, while the commons would fill the interstices, allowing for changes of grade. However, the differentiation between figure and ground did not survive design development: the ink has run on the Nolli map.

Meanwhile, it is hard to understand why the new complex does not strengthen the relationship to the Walker's crown jewel, the existing Minnesota Sculpture Garden across the street. And why doesn't the building provide easy access to the new sculpture garden adjacent to the complex designed by French landscape architect Michel Desvigne

(under construction)? Furthermore, why is the main pedestrian entrance on a street (Hennepin) with 50-mph traffic? Do European architects assume that all Americans arrive by car? Finally, in relation to its ambiguously proportioned and trendily cantilevered younger sibling, the massing of the 1971 Barnes tower stands stuffy and aloof.

The most successful aspect of this project is the galleries themselves. Here instead of making something new, the architects created spaces almost identical to the existing galleries, but improved based on the staff's experience.

The tragedy at the Walker is the demolition of the original Guthrie, designed by Ralph Rapson, FAIA. How can Minneapolis, with more than fifty theater companies, the home of Prince and Garrison Keillor, not find a use for an outdated architectural landmark? It's legitimate to hire nonresident architects when they know something we don't know. Minneapolis should import a few architects from Rome. They know how to remodel.

Above: View of the Minneapolis riverfront through the slit end of the Guthrie Theater's infinite bridge. Photo by Michael Ross, FAIA.

Nouvel and the Guthrie

The story of the Guthrie may not be well known outside the region. In 1959, Sir Tyrone Guthrie, seeking to do noncommercial theater, put out a call for a new home. Seven Midwestern cities responded, but it came down to "Minnie" or "Milly" (Milwaukee). Minneapolis was selected, and the new building, designed by Rapson as an addition to the existing Walker Art Center, opened in 1963.² With Tanya Moiseiwitsch as theater designer, it contained an exposed stage, "thrust" out into the audience.

A number of years ago, the Guthrie was struggling, limited apparently by the aging nature of its building and its lack of a proscenium stage (one with more traditional "wings"). Meanwhile, the Walker, too, was looking to expand. The powers that be decided to move the Guthrie. Inspired, it seems, by characteristically Midwestern frugality and respect for elders, the original Moiseiwitsch thrust stage was then re-created as one of several performance spaces in the new building.

Sir Tyrone had originally wanted his theater to be sited along the Mississippi. The new Guthrie is located there, designed by Jean Nouvel (associated with local architects Architectural Alliance, led by Tom DeAngelo, FAIA). It is a magnificent building, a real presence in the city. The performers and their directors also seem very happy.

The building, along with the adjacent Mill City Museum of 2004 (by local architect Tom Meyer, FAIA, of Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle) also seems to promise a strengthening of the Mississippi River's role in Minneapolis life. If urban life takes hold around the Guthrie, as seems to be happening, the "public" spaces of the building may grow up to be a valuable

community amenity. Minneapolis planners, though, are already struggling with this development. Do they attempt to maintain the gritty run-down industrial feel that was/is the appropriate foil for Nouvel's vision? Or do they give in to the new residents who want street trees?

The curiosity here is not with the building but with its creation story. When Nouvel came to the site, he said he would design the building if he could raise the stages so that theatergoers could see the river. The artistic director of the Guthrie, Joe Dowling, is exceptionally well-spoken, appropriately Irish, and apparently exceedingly competent. A practical man, he imagined the nightmare of lifting scenery and props fifty feet and balked. Nouvel then lifted Dowling into the air in a cherry picker, and Joe saw the light. Never mind that Nouvel had recommended a similar move a year before in Pittsburgh at the Carnegie Science Center. Never mind that the important view in a theater is onstage. Never mind that the rehearsal rooms and costume shops where people work long hours are located on or near the ground, without access to the grand view.

A Minneapolis staple, a sky bridge, facilitates the real benefit of Nouvel's strategy. Most companies build sets in a shop, take them apart, cart them to the stage, and reconstruct them. At the Guthrie, the sky bridge allows the sets to be constructed just once and rolled into place on both main stages. Lifting the stages made it possible for the scene shop to be above the parking garage across the street. This saved the rest of the riverfront property for more appropriate uses.³

The new Guthrie sits at one end of a line of old millworks (factories and silos) that have a certain scale, mass and geometry. The raised stages also



foster an urbane contextualism. The expressed form of the thrust theater mimics the silos, and the mass of the new building fits right in. Nouvel could have chosen to punctuate the line. Instead, his building seems to suggest another facility, someday, south of the Guthrie.

From the west, the Guthrie is a wonderful presence, its dark, shiny skin and vertical billboards creating an exuberant new urban presence. It will be good if this presence remains visible from points on the city's new light rail line. On the east it shows off another example of unleashed structural engineering. Like the thrust stage on the inside, Nouvel thrusts a dramatic cantilever out into the public view—what he calls the “infinite bridge.”⁴

Shopping with Mary Tyler Moore

There is a sense that things move more slowly in the middle of the country, and Minneapolis reflects this. Hardly anyone lives in the city center—yet. Light rail will probably change that (just when it becomes reasonable to live in the suburbs, every-

one will move into town).

Beginning forty-five years ago, Minneapolis became the first city to skywalk itself to death, connecting downtown buildings at the second floor with enclosed pedestrian bridges. That pretty much killed commerce (and life) on the street. Today, however, a rebirth is underway as the result of new pedestrian-friendly streets, farmer's markets, professional sports, and conventioners. But the street-level shopping all seems aimed at Mary Tyler Moore—Macy's, Saks, Nieman Marcus, but not much else. It feels like an old-fashioned downtown where dad works and mom shops. Except that now mom works too.

When New York was building Woolworth and Chrysler, and Chicago the Wrigley Building, Minneapolis was building the Foshay Tower (designed in 1929 by Léon Eugène Arnal, chief designer for the

Above: The Guthrie Theater thrusts a cantilever, its infinite bridge, out into the public view. Photo by Louis Pounders, FAIA.



architects Magney & Tusler). People don't put their names on their own buildings much anymore. Nowadays the rich fund libraries and theaters, and corporations put their names on ball fields. With the public realm ravaged by the anti-tax tsunami, it's surprising how often we demolish and rebuild hundred-million-dollar facilities.

In an apparent attempt to spur downtown domesticity (and catch up with the coasts), Minneapolis has just built a new headquarters library. Pelli Clarke Pelli were brought in from New Haven to do the design (teamed with local architects Architectural Alliance, Tom Hysell, AIA, Project Architect). The building consists of two very simple boxes connected by an atrium—think Johnson at IDS

or more thoroughly Meier in The Hague. This is Pelli taking it easy.

The curve of the river occasionally reorients the Minneapolis street grid. The library site is at such a point, so that the two boxes align with separate grids, creating the forced perspective of the atrium. In a deep way, this is the river informing the architecture.

The architects and the librarians are very proud of the transparency of the building (glass skins being one of the fashions of the moment), but in daylight, this skin is as opaque as stone. And from a distance, the building looks like books on shelves, layer-cake architecture with no expressed structure. Maybe this avoidance of visible structure is a form of homage to the wildly attenuated columns of the original Reliastar building designed by Minoru Yamasaki in 1964 a few blocks away.

Inside, a forest of mushrooms holds up the painted concrete slabs. The

greatest success of this building is the clarity of these slabs and the resolution of the consequently exposed utilities. With all the interior and exterior glass and reflective surfaces, however, the sad thing about this building is that Minneapolis probably traded some librarians for window washers.

Notes

1. The coasts needn't be smug about this. Frank Gehry had to design the Weisman Art Museum in Minneapolis (1994, with Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Executive Architects; John Cook, AIA, Project Architect) to make his name before receiving a major commission in Los Angeles.
2. Ralph Rapson, a Michigan boy schooled by Eliel Saarinen at Cranbrook, went on to become the great-grandfather of Minnesota architecture through his own practice and his contributions at the University of Minnesota School of Architecture. Architects of a certain age in Minneapolis are frustrated with Rapson. They want to retire, but they are not about to quit before Rapson. At age ninety-three, he continues to churn out the work. Speaking to us early on a Sunday morning, Rapson suggested that we would be much better off if we were in church.
3. During our visit, the collapsed remains of the I-35W bridge were visible from this site. It will be interesting to see if the rebuilt bridge contributes or detracts from the community's rediscovery of the river.
4. When Will Bruder pulled off a fancy cantilever at the Central Library in Phoenix, it was what it was. Now you make a big box and give the structural engineer an inappropriate portion of the owner's budget to fill that box with steel, and you get an entry in the world's-most-audacious-cantilever contest. It does seem, though, that with Polshek's Clinton Library, this contest is appropriately over.

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Above: The two main pieces of the Minneapolis central library align to different grids, reflecting the unseen curve of the river. Photo by Tom Holden, AIA.