



perspecta 30

Settlement Patterns



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the yale architectural journal **perspecta 30** Settlement Patterns

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Perspecta 30 addresses the landscape and development formats that have come to dominate America in the twentieth century, engaging a wide range of disciplines, across the boundaries of architecture, geography, and history. The title of this volume, *Settlement Patterns*, recalls America's earliest colonial communities, the great continental march westward, the platting of the countryside, territorial annexation, land speculation, rapid industrialization, and population migrations.

Settlement Patterns calls to mind the legacy of planned communities in America—the Pullmans, the Amanas, the Shakers and other built utopias—as well as the streetcar suburbs of the 1920s, the defense housing of the 1940s, the Levittowns of the 1950s, along with the gated communities and edge cities so familiar today. The journal takes up the temporary encampments of homeless citizens in America's cities and acknowledges the survivalists who, disinterested in and distrustful of the community at large, are determined to live "off the grid." At the end of a tumultuous century, this journal examines some of the major influences that have shaped the way Americans house themselves and build communities.

Perspecta 30 began with the editors' common interest in contemporary, affordable urban housing, and our view that the architectural elite—characteristically preoccupied with designing houses for the rich—had surprisingly little to say about the topic. To advance the discourse about housing, we organized the national Yale Conference on Housing in 1993, which was widely attended by architects, students, developers, and urban planners. *Perspecta 30* evolved to address the larger and more complex issues raised by the conference and reflects our belief that housing in America—and architecture's relation to housing during this century—can only be understood in broad socio-economic and historical terms.

Perhaps the most familiar determinant of American settlement this century is the iconic single-family detached house, which became widely

accessible in the suburbs after World War II. Yet the individualism manifested in the notions of "single-family" and "detached" are at odds with competing American desires for strong communities and collective good. Sprawl is the contemporary legacy of the postwar suburb, the rule that allows the exceptions in the form of downtown revivals, transit-oriented development, neo-traditional town planning and even some heady political platforms favoring controlled growth. Notwithstanding this ascendant backlash, suburban sprawl still dominates the built environment, as well as popular and academic discussions in America at the end of the century.

Much excellent scholarship has been done on the American built environment and we find ourselves rereading such seminal authors as

twentieth-century american patterns

Grady Clay, William Cronon, Cushing Dolbeare, Robert Fishman, Dolores Hayden, J.B. Jackson, Kenneth Jackson, Leo Marx, John Stilgoe, and Gwendolyn Wright. In formulating this volume, however, we have come to reconsider the line of reasoning that views the postwar suburb as a sea change in American settlement patterns—a deathblow to the American city and the catalyst for the rapid erosion of America's urban identity. This commonly-held view regards America's settlement history prior to the second World War largely in terms of a Eurocentric model—specifically, steady growth of cities fuelled by rapid industrial expansion. According to this historical model, America's cities grind to a halt with the transition to a service-based economy following World War II and become artifacts. Such a view has its utility, but also its limitations. *Perspecta 30* attempts to cast a different light on American urbanism and settlement. We regard the American city from its inception as a less stable, less secure form than its European counterpart, one continually challenged by the lure of the frontier and pervasive anti-urban ideologies. In America, the covered wagon train has as much mythic appeal as Main Street. Indeed, Americans' ambiguous relationship to an urban

identity is deeply rooted. Philadelphia's colonial elite, by keeping dual residences within and outside the historic downtown, offer an early example of the inherent American ambivalence about living in cities. Frederick Law Olmsted's mid-nineteenth century parks domesticated and romanticized the urban landscape by locating aspects of the country in the city. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, garden city developments like Forest Hills, Queens, offered residents urban amenities and densities amid lush landscape settings, embracing the rural/urban tension.

In the early part of this century, when issues of hygiene fuelled the debates about slum clearance, the "country" came to be identified with domesticity and cleanliness, while the "city" became synonymous with work, ill health and poverty. For the middle classes, streetcar suburbs provided at once a link and a separation between the country and the city, and tapped into an American preoccupation with both migration and fixity. And Frank Lloyd Wright's mid-century Broadacre City plan proposed to disperse both houses and factories across the national landscape, prefiguring the erosion of the central city as the dominant place for work.

When linked, these legacies are not merely isolated instances or historical footnotes against the inevitable rise of America's cities. Rather, these examples become strident challenges to the very nature and definition of urbanism in America. All of them predate postwar sprawl and collectively contribute to the slow, steady weakening of the form of the American city just after its industrial incarnation. We argue that the American city had an all-too-brief 'moment in the sun.' From the very beginning, it was, and continues to be, challenged on numerous fronts.

Settlement in this country, like so many other socio-historical patterns, might best be understood in terms of the 'American exceptionalism' which de Toqueville keenly observed as early as 1835. In this light, the seven public housing projects, *American Modern*, documented in this volume are viewed as isolated, European-influenced experiments, never achieving a wide

following. The International Style may have become the dominant architecture of the academy, but it never captured the American popular imagination and taste. The editors encourage a reexamination of these projects as much for their explicit ideas about community and social betterment as for their modern designs.

Within the volume, Gabrielle Esperdy writes of the collusion between architects, planners and financiers for dedensification in low-income areas, contributing ultimately to the creation of what we now call "the projects." Margaret Crawford examines the patterns of twentieth-century company towns and the demands for disguising the links between work and factory after the 1894 Pullman strike. Mike Davis documents a tangled web of political motives and profiteering that allowed rampant land speculation to mar the Los Angeles regional landscape, while documenting the failed efforts of planners and advocates who offered alternative visions. Edmund Bacon, with characteristic hubris, recalls his own plan to introduce suburban housing patterns into Philadelphia's dominant gridiron. Doug Hassebrook offers commentary on Bacon and assesses his legacy at the Philadelphia Planning Commission and that of urban renewal more generally. Neil Smith calls out specific instances in which police policy masquerades as planning, resulting in large-scale relocations of the city's most marginal occupants. Keller Easterling argues that it is organizational systems and commercial formats, rather than housing, which have become primary determinants of settlement at the end of this century. Mark Wigley offers a critical reading of the Unabomber cabin as a cultural artifact—a retreat that is both familiar and terrifying. Interspersed throughout the journal, leading architects and educators, who came together as participants in a roundtable discussion, offer candid comments on contemporary settlement issues. And finally, established and emerging photographers provide vivid visual testimony of the dramatically patterned landscape of this American century.

Louise Harpman and Evan M. Supcoff, editors
New York City, July 1999

american century

The timeline on the following three pages highlights notable settlement developments and

related events this century. Bold type indicates milestones in American housing. The editors owe special thanks to Gabrielle Esperdy, Pratt Institute; Catherine Gudis, Northern Illinois University; and Eric Mumford, Washington University, St. Louis, for their valuable assistance.

1900 25.5% of Americans live in metropolitan areas; of these, 77.3% live in central cities and 22.7% live in suburbs **1901** New York's "New Law" Tenement Act enlarges light court requirements of 1879 Act, provides model for tenement legislation in other U.S. cities • Senate Park Commission (McKim, Burnham, Saint-Gaudens) plan for Washington, DC, includes new Union Station **1903** Wright Brothers' first powered airplane flight, North Carolina **1904** Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis •

Panama Canal construction begins • New York subway opens, Philadelphia subways open the following year (Boston subway opens 1897) **1907** Oklahoma becomes 46th state • Standard Oil of California opens a "drive-through" gasoline station, Seattle **1908** Queensboro Realty Company purchases Jackson Heights, Queens, New York and in 1911 constructs first apartment buildings • Model T ("Tin Lizzie") introduced by Ford **1909** First municipal land-use zoning ordinance, Los Angeles • Burnham Plan of Chicago • Raymond Unwin, *Town Planning in Practice*, influential manual of garden city planning • Forest Hills Gardens, Queens, New York (Atterbury and Olmsted), designed according to garden city principles • Queensboro Bridge opens, Queens - Manhattan, New York



Oklahoma City, four weeks old, 1889

1910 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) founded **1912** New Mexico and Arizona become 47th and 48th states **1913** Indian Hill, Worcester, Massachusetts (Atterbury) **1914** World War I breaks out **1915** First transcontinental telephone call in U.S • Lincoln Highway opens as first designated transcontinental route in the U.S., constructed as a private venture **1916** New York Zoning Ordinance divides city into business, manufacturing and residential zones and requires setbacks on tall buildings • National Park Service established **1917** U.S. enters World War I **1919** Bauhaus founded in Weimar, Germany, by Walter Gropius • All 48 states have established highway departments, enabling them to administer federal funds allocated in 1916



Rail yards, Chicago lakefront, 1917

1920 During this decade, great migration of African-Americans from rural south to urban north; from WWI to the end of the 1920s, more than a million and a half migrate. In New York, Puerto Rican immigrants total 50,000; in Los Angeles, the downtown Mexican community numbers 100,000 • U.S. Census Bureau declares that America is for the first time an urban nation • Equal Suffrage (Nineteenth) Amendment passed, giving women the vote • First commercial radio show is broadcast **1921** Federal Highway Act marks the start of a publicly funded national road system. The legislation creates a Bureau of Public Roads to plan a highway network connecting all cities of 50,000 or more inhabitants

1922 J.C. Nichols opens Country Club Plaza, Kansas City, Missouri, the first auto-oriented shopping center **1923** Regional Planning Association of America founded in New York (includes Lewis Mumford, Benton MacKaye, Clarence Stein, Stuart Chase) • National Origins Act passes, radically restricting immigration, especially of Asians and eastern and southern Europeans. An added provision in 1929 excludes Japanese immigration entirely • Bronx River Parkway, first modern limited-access highway **1925** F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* **1927** Holland Tunnel/Pulaski Skyway completed, four-lane limited-access link between Manhattan and New Jersey **1928** Dunbar Apartments, Harlem, New York City (Thomas) **1929** Radburn, New Jersey (Stein and Wright) • New York stock market crash, prefigures Great Depression • Sunnyside Gardens, Queens, New York (Stein and Wright) • Phipps Garden Apartments, Sunnyside, Queens, New York (Stein)

1930 Chrysler Building, New York City (Van Alen) • Amalgamated Dwellings, New York City (Springsteen and Goldhammer) • Mies van der Rohe becomes director of Bauhaus • Buckminster Fuller takes over *T-Square Club Journal*, renamed *Shelter* in 1932 **1931** Road construction is the largest item in the national budget • Empire State Building, New York City (Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon), tallest building in the world until 1970s • George Washington Bridge opens, New York – New Jersey

1932 Christie-Forsyth proposal, New York City (Howe and Lescaze) • Museum of Modern Art Exhibition 15, "The International Style: Architecture since 1922," organized by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson • Reconstruction Finance Corporation established, first government effort to revive housing construction during the Depression **1933** Hitler takes power, German National Socialists close Bauhaus and remove modern architects from positions of power in Germany; official persecution of German Jews begins • Franklin Delano Roosevelt sworn in as president and establishes the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), which refinances homeowners debts, standardizes residential real estate appraisal and institutionalizes existing racially discriminatory lending practices • Roosevelt forms National Recovery Administration (NRA); Civilian Conservation Corps; Public Works Administration (PWA); Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) • Farm Cooperative Housing, Chandler, Arizona (Cairns and De Mars) • Chicago Century of Progress exhibition • Early version of television developed **1934** National Housing Act establishes Federal Housing Administration (FHA) • Indian Reorganization Act passes, halting sale of tribal land and supporting Indian business and educational opportunities **1935** WPA and Resettlement Administration begin work, decentralized greenbelt towns begun in Maryland, Ohio, and Wisconsin • Carl Mackley Houses, Philadelphia (Stonorov and Kastner) • Rural Electrification Administration helps bring power to rural areas • Hillside Homes, Bronx, New York (Stein) • Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City model

1940 U.S. public housing programs shift to projects for defense workers • Pennsylvania Turnpike, first long-distance four-lane limited access highway in U.S., begun **1941** Attack on Pearl Harbor, U.S. enters World War II • Robert Moses begins clearance of Gas House District in Manhattan for Stuyvesant Town • Defense Highway Act passed, laying groundwork for nationwide system of federally supported, limited-access roads • Early suburban subdivisions laid out near defense and auto plants • Race riots in U.S. cities between groups of wartime workers **1942** Baldwin Hills Village, Los Angeles (Stein, Alexander et al) • Aluminum City Terrace, New Kensington, Pennsylvania (Gropius and Breuer) **1943** Construction begins on Vanport City, Oregon, a "complete city" for Kaiser Shipyard (Kaiser and Wolff) • Executive Order 9066 forcibly relocates over 110,000 Japanese-Americans from four Western states • Channel Heights housing for shipyard workers completed, San Pedro, California (Richard Neutra) • Race conflicts erupt between blacks and whites in Detroit; "zoot-suit riots" in Los Angeles and New York between Mexican-Americans and Anglo servicemen **1944** G.I. Bill of Rights passes, guarantees loans and provides educational and employment benefits to returning veterans; includes Veterans Administration (VA) mortgage program. By the late 1940s, over \$20 billion in VA and FHA loans are backed, and 55% of Americans own homes • Congressional approval to create a 41,000-mile National System of Interstate Highways **1945** Germany surrenders; Japan surrenders after first use of atomic bomb • John Entenza begins Case Study House program in California, *Arts and Architecture Magazine* **1947** Better Philadelphia Exhibition • William Levitt opens Island Trees, later called Levittown, Long Island; 17,447 houses ultimately built **1948** U.S. Supreme Court rules racially restrictive covenants to be unconstitutional • U.S. suburban building boom begins, including Levittowns in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania and the development of the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles **1949** U.S. Housing Act passes to support a national housing policy making it easier to buy homes and more profitable to sell than rent homes; also expands "slum" clearance program



Nathan's world-famous hot-dog stand, Coney Island, New York, 1940s

displayed at Rockefeller Center, New York City • First Houses (Ackerman) constructed by the New York City Housing Authority, the first public housing authority **1936** Hoover Dam completed • Lakeview Terrace, Cleveland (Weinberg, Conrad, Teare) • First parkways in New York City completed under direction of Parks Commissioner Robert Moses **1937** Golden Gate Bridge opens, San Francisco • Congress creates the U.S. Housing Authority to help finance slum clearance and construction of low-rent housing; it abides by the policy of maintaining the racial composition of existing areas • Greenbelt, Maryland (Wadsworth and Ellington) • Jersey Homesteads, Hightstown, New Jersey (Kastner and Kahn) • Williamsburg Houses, aka Ten Eyck Houses, Brooklyn, New York (Shreve, Lescaze, et al.) • Harlem River Houses, New York City (Brown, Ginsburn and Wilson) • First jet engine **1938** 40 hour workweek established in U.S. • End of New Deal reforms • Federal-Aid Highway Act, first federal authorization of design standards for landscaping highways and regulating roadside businesses and advertising **1939** New York World's Fair, including General Motors' Futurama, opens

1950 56.1% of Americans live in metropolitan areas; of these, 58.5% live in central cities and 41.5% live in suburbs
1952 Holiday Inn starts to franchise nationally • *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* begins the trend of family television sitcoms, joined by *Father Knows Best* (1954-62) and *Leave It To Beaver* (1957-63) **1954** U.S. Supreme Court rules racially segregated schools unconstitutional (*Brown v. Board of Education*) **1955** Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycotts • Disneyland opens in Anaheim, Orange County, California • McDonald's starts franchising nationally • William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* **1956** Federal Highway Act funds national system of limited access highways • **Lafayette Park, Detroit (Mies and Hilberseimer)** **1957** First African-American family moves into Levittown, Pennsylvania; restrictive covenants in homeowners' contracts had previously limited Levittown sales to whites only **1958** Pruitt Igoe, St. Louis (Yamasaki) **1959** Alaska and Hawaii become 49th and 50th states

1970 U.S. Census finds that more people live in suburbs than central cities or small towns • Environmental Protection Act (EPA) passed **1971** Disney World, Orlando, Florida, opens **1972** Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, *Learning From Las Vegas* • **Demolition of Pruitt-Igoe, St. Louis, hailed as end of modern architecture** **1973** Federal Express • World Trade Center, New York City (Yamasaki) **1974** Sears Tower, Chicago (Skidmore Owings and Merrill) **1975** America withdraws from Vietnam • **Marcus Garvey Park Village, Brooklyn, New York (Todd and the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies)** **1976** Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market, Boston, historical marketplace reopens, setting precedent for "festival marketplace" model of urban revitalization **1977** South Street Seaport, New York City • New York City plagued by near-bankruptcy, blackouts and looting **1978** **Battery Park City Masterplan (Cooper and Eckstut)**

1990 **1991** Muir Commons, Davis, California, first co-housing community in the U.S. • Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) passes, promotes intermodalism **1992** Acquittal of police officers accused of beating Rodney King triggers riots in Los Angeles and other

cities • Mall of America, Minneapolis, Minnesota, megamall with indoor amusement park • The Forum Shops at Caesar's, Las Vegas, themed mall resembling ancient Roman street • Masterplan for Times Square redevelopment, New York City (Robert A. M. Stern) • **Masterplan for Celebration, Florida, developed by The Walt Disney Company (Cooper Robertson and Partners, and Robert A. M. Stern)** **1993** North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) reduces barriers to trade by Canada, U.S., and Mexico **1999** New York City Council approves Kennedy Airport transit link (train to the plane), first stage to be a two-seat ride from Manhattan

1960 Greensboro, North Carolina lunch counter sit-ins • 87% of Americans own television sets **1961** Freedom rides in the Deep South • Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* **1962** Reston, Virginia, planned town **1963** President John F. Kennedy assassinated • Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* • Pennsylvania Station, New York City (McKim Mead and White), demolished **1964** New York World's Fair opens • President Lyndon B. Johnson launches War on Poverty as part of Great Society domestic programs, also includes founding of National Endowment of the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Medicare/Medicaid • Civil Rights Act passed • Wilderness Act launches environmental movement • **Society Hill Towers, Philadelphia (Pei)** • **Habitat, Montreal (Safdie)** **1965** Highway Beautification Act, supported by Lady Bird Johnson, regulates roadside advertising, commerce, and auto junkyards • **Guild House, Philadelphia (Venturi), elderly housing** • Watts riots enflame South Central Los Angeles, followed by racial unrest in other cities • **Crawford Manor, New Haven, Connecticut (Rudolph), elderly housing** • Immigration and Nationality Act abolishes immigration quotas in effect since 1924 • **Kips Bay Towers, New York City (Pei)** **1966** Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* • Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* • William H. Whyte, *The Last Landscape* • **Sea Ranch, Gualala, California (Moore Lyndon Turnbull and Whitaker)** • **Construction begins at Columbia, Maryland, a new masterplan city by the Rouse Company** **1968** Civil Rights Act for Fair Housing passes, aiming to dismantle segregative housing practices • Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Act passes, encourages home ownership among low and moderate income families, includes Model Cities bill and New Towns proposal • **Co-op**

City, Bronx (Jessor) **1969** Neil Armstrong walks on the moon • Stonewall Hotel riots, New York City, open era of gay militancy • **Church Street South, New Haven, Connecticut (Moore Lyndon Turnbull and Whitaker), low-income housing**

1980 Cable News Network (CNN) begins broadcasting • Rouse Company's Harbor Place opens in Baltimore, catalyst for Inner Harbor revitalization **1981** AIDS recognized as a disease • Coalition for the Homeless founded, New York City **1982** **Seaside Masterplan, Florida (Duany, Plater-Zyberk), new urbanism model** **1983** Introduction of Apple Macintosh personal computers • **Charlotte Gardens (South Bronx Redevelopment Corporation), suburban ranch-style houses with fenced yards in densest part of the South Bronx, New York; becomes model for urban redevelopment praised by Presidents Reagan, Bush and Clinton** **1986** Light rail line opens in Portland, Oregon, model for other light rail systems nationwide and for transit-oriented development **1988** Tompkins Square riot, New York City, sparks conflict over homelessness and gentrification

defying the grid

a retroactive manifesto for

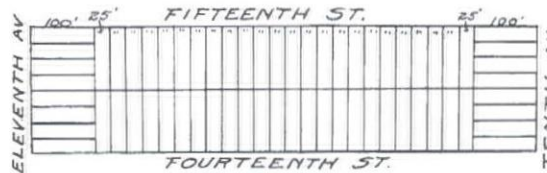


The anti-grid: detail of Olmsted's plan for Riverside, Illinois, 1869 (left)

1 The Grid: commissioners' plan for Manhattan, 1811 (right)

In *Delirious New York* Rem Koolhaas hypothesizes that Manhattan's Grid has, since 1811, been the overriding theoretical and practical influence on the development of the city of New York. **1** **2** The Grid "[made] the history

of architecture and all previous lessons of urbanism irrelevant," forcing not only the creation of new values and strategies of designing and building, but also the recognition of a new architectural control—the single block as the "maximum unit of urbanistic Ego." Thus, Koolhaas argues, every individual architectural intention must be "realized fully within the limitations of the block." Consequently, the city evolved as a "mosaic of episodes," each representing a distinctive "form of human occupancy," each "with its own particular life span," and each confronting the other "through the medium of the Grid."¹ By establishing the primacy of the Grid, Koolhaas situates it as the singular generative force which gave birth to the "culture of congestion" known as Manhattanism—that urban condition of hyper-density which asserted itself most expressively, though not exclusively, in New York City's commercial skyscrapers, a group of structures which accounted for half of the nation's tall buildings by 1929.² Contemporaneously, however, even as the towers of midtown and



2 The Grid: typical New York City block, 1811

the culture of decongestion gabrielle esperdy

lower Manhattan, and of smaller urban cores across the country, were engaged in an intricate ballet of mass, bulk, and setback, an alternate drama was unfolding within the confines of the Grid. In this drama the protagonists were not high-rise offices, but low-rise dwellings, and the climax was not hyper-density, but its opposite. If *Delirious New York* serves as a "retroactive manifesto" for the culture of congestion, what follows here is a counter-manifesto, one which seeks to expose retroactively another equally significant enterprise born of the Grid, namely, the culture of decongestion.

Like its antipode, decongestion had an ambitious program. While "decongestion" may not have been explicitly named, it was coherently articulated in theory and practice. There exists an accumulation of evidence—of words, buildings, and site plans—as yet unconnected and an hypothesis as yet untested, both of which require the recuperation of the Grid not as a laboratory of congestion, as Koolhaas would have it, but as a laboratory of decongestion instead.

the grid Before the grid spawned its dueling urban American offspring of congestion and decongestion in the first half of the twentieth century, it had, of course, already existed as a dominant spatial construct for several millennia, from the ancient Egyptian worker village at El Kahun to the Hippodamos of Miletus to the foursquare towns of the Roman Empire to orthogonal urban design of the Renaissance. While the grid in the classical world undoubtedly expressed the rational social aspirations of democratic Athens, republican Rome or humanist Italy, it was in the New World that, as J.B. Jackson has noted, this particular settlement pattern acquired a decided ideological dimension and an obvious cultural significance.³ In the United States, though the grid was imported from Europe early on, as the plans of Philadelphia (1683) and Washington, D.C. (1792) make clear, it was in the nineteenth century that the grid was nationalized and Americanized, becoming a normative tool for imprinting the doctrine of Manifest Destiny upon the expanding national landscape. This was especially true after the massive land acquisitions of the Northwest Territory and the Louisiana Purchase, requiring subdivision and settlement of so much raw, unincorporated acreage. The grid was thus platted both east and west of the Mississippi not only to exert rigid order and disciplinary con-

1 Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York* (1978; rpt. New York: Monacelli Press, 1995), pp. 20-21. Koolhaas' celebratory polemics color his arguments concerning the grid. For a more evenhanded approach which summarizes a number of critical positions on Manhattan's grid, see Edward K. Spann, "The Greatest Grid: The New York Plan of 1811" in *Two Centuries of American Planning*, ed. Daniel Schaffer (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), pp. 11-39.

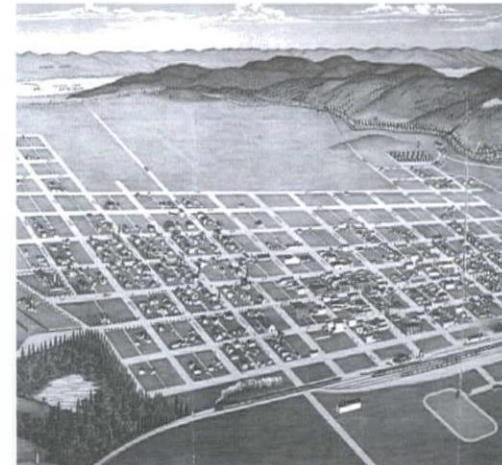
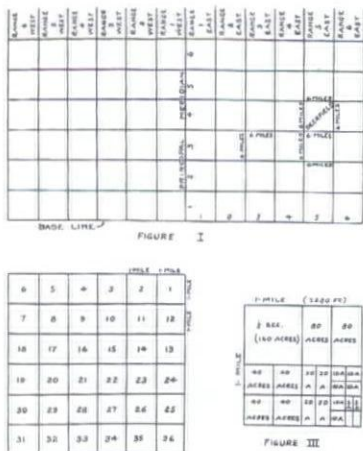
2 According to M. Christine Boyer, New York City possessed 188 of the 377 skyscrapers standing in the U.S. in 1929. See Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), p. 162.

3 J.B. Jackson, *Landscapes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), pp. 1-9.

- 4 Christine Boyer identifies the "quest for disciplinary control" as a constant in the history of American city planning. See Boyer, pp. 9-32.
- 5 Lewis Mumford leveled all these charges against the grid in 1924, in "City Planning and the American Precedent," *New Republic* 39 (11 June 1924), pp. 79-80. Mumford concluded that however much the grid originally embodied the American pioneer spirit, it ultimately served only the haste and avarice of real estate speculators.
- 6 Federal Housing Administration, *Planning Neighborhoods for Small Houses* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1936), p. 10. For further description and analysis of these districts see Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), especially chapter 1. See also James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), especially chapter 3.

control over the chaos of nature, but to claim territory for the newly formed nation.⁴ ³ The platted grid emerged as a politically practical and commercially efficient means for taming the wilderness, regardless, as its critics would later complain, of topography, aesthetics, or humanity.⁵

Eventually, from within the matrix of this national grid American cities emerged. In some places, as in Manhattan, the grid was imposed upon existing seventeenth and eighteenth century settlements; in other places, as in Columbus, Ohio, (1815) and Chicago (1830), it determined settlement location and growth.⁴ In either case, by the end of the nineteenth century, especially following the urban-industrial expansion of the post-Civil War period, gridiron towns and cities from the Atlantic to the Pacific had been platted, parceled, and sold and were being rapidly built-up. ⁵ ⁶ In the process, the grid's congestive pathologies were becoming all too apparent. What had been conceived as an initiatory gesture of order had, by 1900, fostered the decided disorder of rampant, anarchic, real estate speculation. Block after relentless grid block was built to capacity with tenements in New York, triple-deckers in Boston, two-flats in Chicago, and, with lower density but equal shabbiness, identical free-standing houses in cities like St. Louis, Detroit, and Cleveland. ⁷ This was the situation not only in the downtown cores, but in contiguous residential districts as well, those urban and ultimately ex-urban neighborhoods which accompanied the advance of streetcar and subway lines. Regardless of their building types, these sprawling peripheral districts were characterized by numbing regularity, overwhelming density, and lack of open space. "The monotonous gridiron plan has but little character or appeal," declared a government planning bulletin which utilized the grid as the problematic starting point of its before and after site plans. ⁶ ⁸ ⁹ The advent of the skyscraper and automobile in the 1910s and 1920s exacerbated the situation, with more buildings, vehicles, and people jammed into the unregulated checkerboard of congested urban blocks, from New York to Los Angeles. Even Emporia, Kansas, far removed from the vertical and horizontal extremes of the



3 The national Grid: checkerboard plans for land surveys following congressional land ordinance, 1785 **4** Platting the midwest: Columbus

- 7 The results of the 1935 Emporia Real Property Survey (WPA Project Number 530) are cited in Federal Housing Administration, *The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighborhoods in American Cities* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1939), pp. 9, 13. The purpose of the Real Property Surveys, undertaken in 64 American cities beginning in 1934, was to provide the building and real estate industries with comprehensive statistical data on the existing building stock.

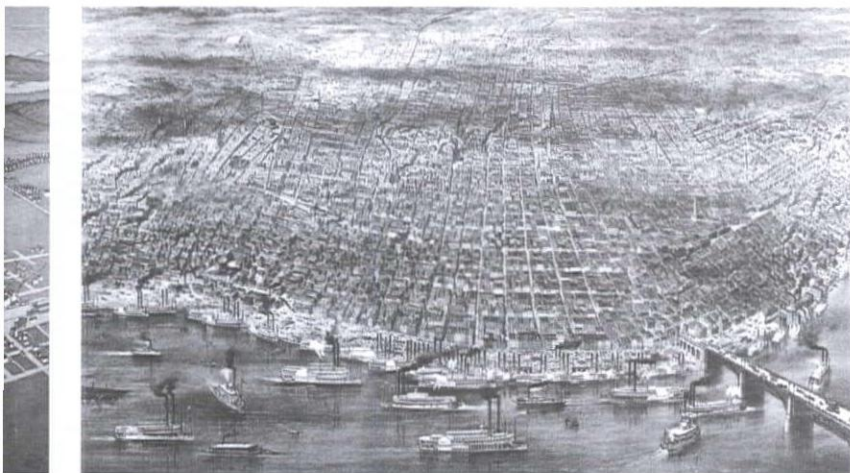
coastal cities, was cited in a 1935 government survey as "typical" of American urban patterns and land use: gridded ground plan, "solidly occupied center blocks," "hollow squares" of outer blocks, partially developed subdivision blocks, eventually giving way to countryside and farm land.⁷ ¹⁰

Such was the American built environment—a generic version of Koolhaas's Manhattanism—from which a reactive culture of decongestion arose in the 1920s and 1930s. Certain decongestive tendencies had been present on the American scene since at least the mid-nineteenth century, manifest especially in the work of Frederick Law Olmsted. By his own description Olmsted's urban parks, such as those in New York, Boston, and Buffalo, were intended to open up "the interior parts of large and closely built towns" acting as "lungs" both physically and figuratively. Olmsted believed that Central Park (c. 1865) and the Back Bay Fens (1878) would provide actual "clean and purified air" as well as psychological breathing space to oppressed city dwellers. His suburban residential communities were also planned to correct the "misfortune" of speculative subdivisions which,

according to Olmsted, were “staked off with rule and pencil in a broker’s office” as ill-conceived extensions of existing towns. Riverside, Illinois (1868), for example, was designed to be “exactly the opposite” of such “constantly repeated right angles [and] straight lines.” Olmsted planned its curvilinear and varied streets, open spaces, and lavish landscaping as a decongestive remedy to the “unhappy” grid of nearby Chicago.⁸ **11**

In its simultaneous advocacy of opening up the urban core and developing the urban periphery, Olmsted’s work is prophetic of the decongestive planning efforts of the interwar decades, which took a similarly dichotomous approach to solving the problems of urban density supposedly engendered by the grid. Some efforts embraced the inner city and sought to rebuild the gridded core; other efforts rejected the inner city and sought to build afresh on the *tabula rasa* of the periphery or in remote outlying areas. All efforts shared a grid-defying consciousness characteristic of the reformist culture of decongestion. For a generation of American planners the grid existed, to paraphrase Colin Rowe, as a fact and a symbol—an unavoidable physical feature of the urban landscape and a virtual Pandora’s box of urban ills.⁹ To defy the grid was to condemn it in theory and reject it in practice.¹⁰ At times this took on aspects of a heavyweight boxing match: “Superblock vs. Gridiron” announced the headline to a 1940 article appearing in both *Architectural Forum* and *American City* which claimed that aesthetically, economically, and socially “the superblock has it all over the conventional grid pattern of U.S. cities.”¹¹ **12** **13** The superblock, a large-scale curvilinear or rectilinear planning unit based on Raymond Unwin’s garden city or the German modernist *Zeilenbau*, had by that time become the ultimate grid-defying weapon, though not the only one. From Henry Atterbury Smith’s sawtooth geometries to Stein and Wright’s perimeter blocks to Howe and Lescaze’s slab blocks, American planners and architects invented, developed, and borrowed a variety of anti-grid paradigms. Many of these were the product of intensive housing research labs which

- 8** Frederick Law Olmsted, “Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns (Cambridge, 1870)” and “Plan for Riverside, Illinois (New York, 1868)” in *America Builds*, ed. Leland M. Roth (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), pp. 184-5, 197, 201.
- 9** See Colin Rowe, “The Chicago Frame” in *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976).
- 10** Manifestations of this early rejection of the grid anticipate the late twentieth century survivalists and militia members who choose to live “off the grid.” While it is the power grid from which they are removing themselves, one could argue that they are also rejecting a menacing urbanism perceived in and signified by the street grid.
- 11** “Superblock vs. Gridiron,” *Architectural Forum* 73 (July 1940), 66. See also, “Superblock vs. Gridiron,” *American City*, August 1940, pp. 72-3.

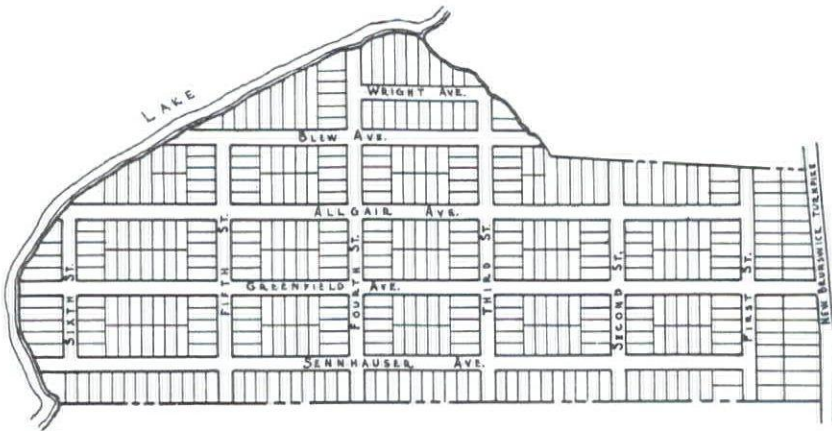


Ohio, 1817 **5** Kalispell, Montana, 1897 **6** St. Louis, Missouri, 1874 **7** Congestive pathologies of the grid: Chicago tenement blocks, 1935

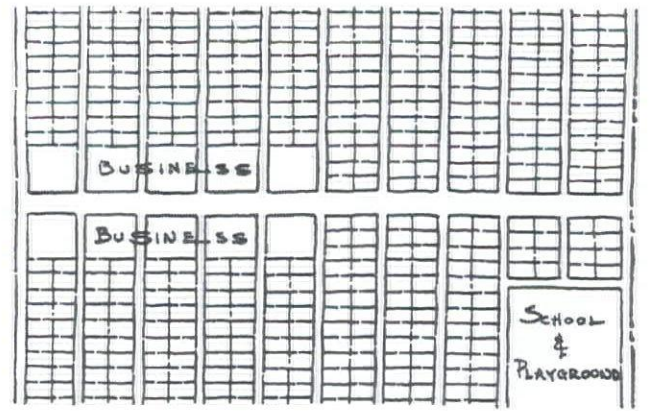
subjected the grid, as a theoretical and practical model, to a battery of tests, to extended analysis, and to eventual dissection.¹² Though somewhat decentralist himself, Lewis Mumford offered a more charitable view of urban congestion, if not of the grid, which in his view was characterized chiefly by its “blank imbecility”: “the congested metropolis is not primarily bad or miserable: it is merely wasteful, inefficient, technologically obsolete.”¹³

decongestion If intense scrutiny of the grid produced a certain multivalence, this was because, as Koolhaas suggests, the grid itself tended toward an episodic urbanism. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the conflicting plans, proposals, and projects which, utilizing diverse anti-grid patterns, formed a “mosaic” of community rebuilding initiatives in the 1930s. In that decade, while the Depression temporarily disabled the economic engine of Manhattanism, it permanently empowered a bureaucracy of decongestion.¹⁴ By 1937, when the Urbanism Committee of the National Resources Committee (NRC) of the Public Works Administration (PWA) presented *Our*

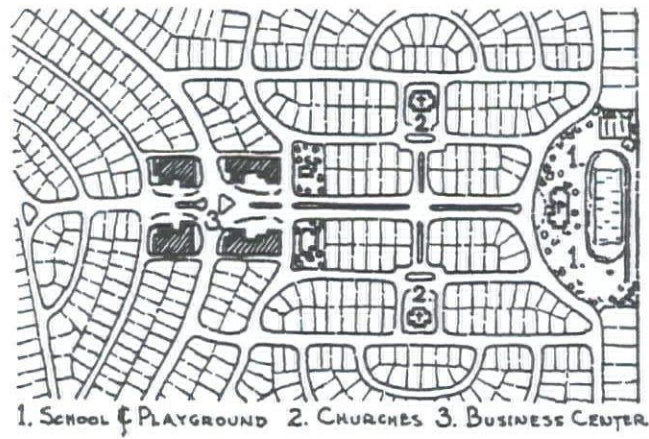
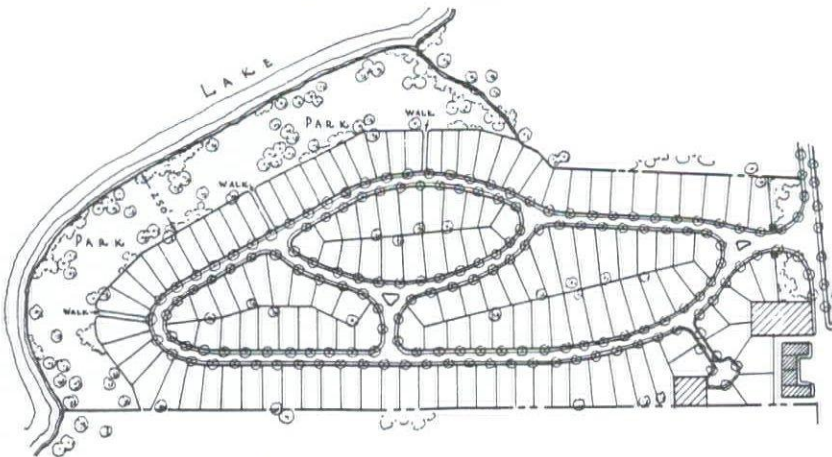
- 12** See Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), especially chapter 6.
- 13** Mumford, “City Planning and the American Precedent,” p. 79 and “The Intolerable City: Must It Keep Growing?” *Harper’s Monthly*, February 1926, p. 290.
- 14** Earlier “bureaucratic” attempts at decongestion lacked national coordination. The situation changed with the New Deal, although no single agency was responsible for decongestion.



8 Grid/defying: original subdivision plan (above) and revised plan (below), as per the U.S. government, 1938



9 Bad plan (above) and good plan (below), 1938



while the Depression temporarily disabled the economic engine of Manhattanism, it permanently

15 Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes established the National Resources Committee (originally the National Planning Board) in 1933. For the next ten years it served as an *ex officio* organization promoting and coordinating planning efforts at the federal, regional, state, and local levels.

16 Alex Krieger identifies the skyscraper as "the primary antagonist of the city" in the twentieth century. See Krieger, "The American City: Ideal and Mythic Aspects of a Reinvented Urbanism," *Assemblage* 3 (July 1987), p. 43.

17 National Resources Committee, *Our Cities: Their Role in the National Economy* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1937), pp. 6, 58, 73.

18 For economic aspects of bigness, see Thomas K. McCraw, "The New Deal and the Mixed Economy" in *Fifty Years Later: The New Deal Evaluated*, ed. Harvard Sitkoff (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985), p. 62.

19 See "The Problems of Urban America," *Our Cities*, pp. 55-70.

Cities: Their Role in the National Economy to President Roosevelt, it was clear that decongestion and its attendant grid-evacuation had been codified, if not into coherent public policy, than at least into a critical position. 15 This report, generally regarded as the first major contextual study of American cities and prepared by a group of prominent planners, economists, and sociologists, including Frederick A. Delano, Charles Eliot, and Milton Friedman, was fully engaged in a discourse of decongestion.

This discourse is most obvious in the report's treatment of the skyscraper which, by the time *Our Cities* was published, had already become the principal object and signifier of congestion. 16 Thus, it is not surprising to find that in the report, unlike in *Delirious New York*, the skyscraper is cast as villain, the simultaneous cause and effect of congestion. At various points in *Our Cities* the skyscraper is vilified for its "grotesque" profile rising up from the "mechanical monotony" of the grid; decried as the "visible symbol of congestion"; and problematized for the "philosophy and aspiration of bigness" it represented. 17 In the context of the New Deal this "bigness" referred specifically to a lopsided economy of centralized wealth and control embodied by Wall Street and located in its skyscraper "citadels of high finance and big business" – institutions regarded by antitrusters as the root cause of the Depression. 18 Regardless of economic philosophy, however, in terms of sheer physicality, the bigger the skyscraper, the more acute the condition of congestion supposedly facing the city. According to the NRC, that condition of congestion extended well beyond the central business district occupied by skyscrapers. It reached the furthest physical limits of the city and affected, negatively by the NRC's account, nearly every aspect of urban life, including population density, family stability, public health, crime and delinquency, insanity and suicide, noise and air pollution. 19 In its condemnation of the skyscraper the NRC echoed concerns about congestion and density that urban activists, especially proponents of zoning regulations, had been voicing for several decades. While passage of the 1908 land use law in Los Angeles and the 1916 setback law in New York had put some congestion-checking controls in place, the building boom of the 1920s had pushed development densities to levels considered socially dangerous.

The dark villainous aspect of skyscrapers was recognized even by their own defenders, such as contractor William A. Starrett, whose firm erected the Empire State Building and who observed in 1932 that beneath the “upper band of our great beautiful skyscrapers” lay the “genuine social menace” of urban blight.²⁰ The opposition between skyscraper and street, expressed metaphorically as the opposition between tower and dungeon, was not uncommon in the decongestive rhetoric of the period, which at times became virulently anti-urbanistic.¹⁴

In *The Disappearing City* of 1932, Frank Lloyd Wright unambiguously condemns “the overgrown city” which he likens to a “malignant tumor” grown “far out of human scale.” He is equally censorious of the skyscraper and the grid, which together formed a “man-trap of gigantic dimensions,” creating a constant “roar of congestion, confusion...[and] spasmodic movement.”²¹ In Wright’s schema there is no escape from the distorting forces of the grid, for the only place of retreat is itself a victim of congestion, of exploitative landlordism—the “soulless” tenement, row upon row of “cubicles [as] remote from nature as any coffin.”²² In her 1935 book *The Next Step*, the California architect, planner, and feminist Alice Constance Austin similarly contrasts the skyscraper penthouse, “the acme of achievement” for the successful urbanite with “the slum-dweller in a sort of medieval dungeon cellar below all this grandeur.” She further decries the grid as a tool for laying out cities, likening the grid-makers to wrench-wielding monkeys whose inept fumbblings have led to the utter victimization of the American urban environment.²³ Social commentator and decentralist Ralph Woods was even more explicit in his condemnation of the “underlying evil” of congestion which he equated with “urbanization gone wild,” concluding not only that it took “an enormous toll physiologically, psychologically, and economically,” but that it actually “threaten[ed] civilization.”²⁴

empowered a bureaucracy of decongestion

Like these critics of the city, the NRC viewed with alarm the degraded environment of many congested urban areas. Also, because the committee recognized the increased prominence of cities on the national scene—as cultural, economic and industrial centers possessing two-thirds of the country’s population and wealth—it recognized urban congestion as a problem of national significance. The “elimination of congestion” was therefore crucial to the future well-being of not just American cities, but the country as a whole. While decongestion would “involve enormous costs,” the NRC, perhaps following Mumford, believed that it must be attempted because “the aggregate cost of permitting this congestion in our cities to continue represents an imposing waste”—of national resources, material and human.²⁵ Likening congestion and its resulting economic and social ills to “infections which an otherwise healthy organism can check,” the NRC recommended expectorant action to “loosen up” the urban phlegm. This action would take the form of decongestive city planning that would by-pass the densely-built, skyscraper-studded, traffic-clogged business core, leaving Manhattanism, and its schizophrenic capitalism, to run amok.²⁶ Instead, employing a selective strategy of social and economic intervention, this city planning would seek to “abolish those urban areas of congestion commonly called slums.”²⁷

new york city laboratory Throughout the NRC report one urban center, with the country’s most teeming slums and its biggest skyscrapers, functions as a veritable poster child of infectious congestion. Not surprisingly, that urban center is Koolhaas’ own epicenter of hyper-density, New York City. Because New York’s congestion was so extreme, its relevance was believed to transcend the particularities of local conditions, becoming instructive for the nation as a whole. Earlier, the editors of *American City* had noted in the preface to a 1934 article by Frederick Ackerman that New York’s “amazing” congestion had “all too general application to cities, towns, and villages throughout the United States.”²⁸ In the article, as Ackerman relates New York’s efforts to zone against congestion he never refers to the city by name. Instead, he identifies New York only as “Megalopolis,” thereby universalizing, and rendering relevant, the otherwise potentially unique experience of this one city.²⁹ In the present context, we also begin with *Delirious New York* itself to

²⁰ Quoted in John M. Gries and James Ford, *Slums, Large-Scale Housing, and Decentralization* (Washington, DC: President’s Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership, 1932), p. 91.

²¹ Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Disappearing City* (New York: William Farquhar Payson, 1932), pp. 21–22.

²² Wright, p. 59.

²³ Alice Constance Austin, *The Next Step... Decentralization* (Los Angeles: E. Norman Johnson, 1935), pp. 5–7. Austin’s work as a planner and architect is discussed in Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), pp. 242–8.

²⁴ Ralph Woods, *America Reborn: A Plan for Decentralization of Industry* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1939), pp. 86, 93 & 106.

²⁵ *Our Cities*, p. 59.

²⁶ Though “scatter the skyscraper” was rallying cry of many urban and regional planners in the 1920s and 1930s (Boyer, p. 184), it remained largely untried as a policy, with planners instead concentrating on the creation of vast networks of highways, parkways, bridges, and tunnels in the mistaken belief that these arteries would alleviate congestion in the downtown cores by enabling the free flow of traffic from urban to suburban areas. See John Nolen and Henry V. Hubbard, *Parkways and Land Values* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937). See also David A. Johnson, “Regional Planning for the Great American Metropolis,” in *Two Centuries of American Planning* and Mark S. Foster, *From Streetcar to Superhighway: American City Planners and Urban Transportation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981).

²⁷ *Our Cities*, p. 84.

²⁸ Frederick L. Ackerman, “Population Expectations, Zoning, Appraisals and Debt,” *American City*, October 1934, p. 49.

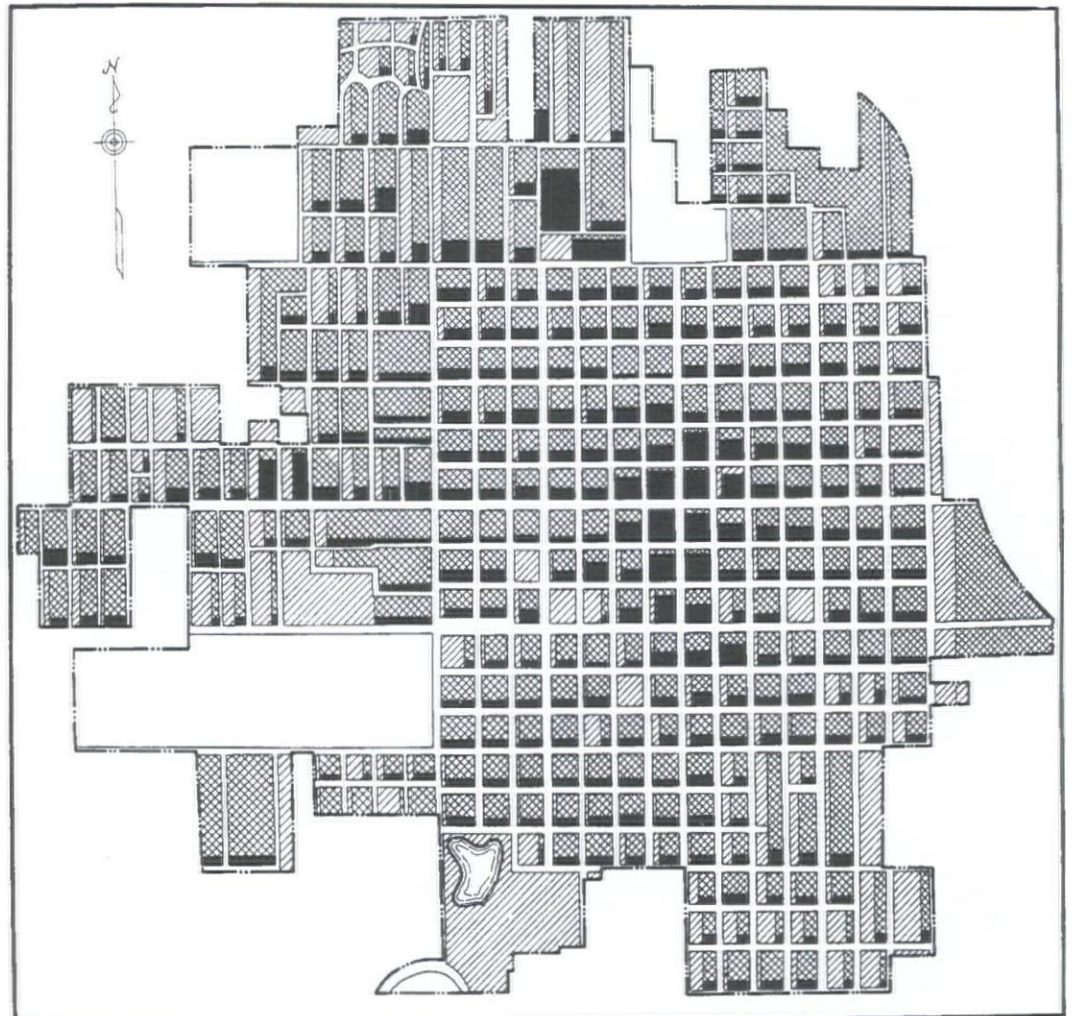
²⁹ More recently, Richard Plunz has argued that New York City, while unique, represents a “microcosm” of all urban housing developments in the United States. See Plunz, p. xxxv.

see how the city's own efforts to clear slums and rebuild blighted areas in the 1930s anticipated, influenced, and reflected decongestive efforts elsewhere. In other words, we begin in the laboratory of decongestion before venturing into the field.

While the whole of New York City represented a fertile area of investigation, one locale in particular was viewed as a laboratory *extraordinaire*, not only because its slums were so congested but because this congestion was so famous. This was Manhattan's Lower East Side, which, as a superlative of congestion in the United States, functioned for decongestive theorists and practitioners as a worst case scenario and as a test case for decongestive action. Here a variety of prototype solutions were applied to a singular urban landscape which possessed two critical congestive constituents: people and buildings. In the early twentieth century the Lower East Side was one of the most densely populated areas in the world, as Jacob Riis had revealed in the confrontational photographs of his 1890 book *How the Other Half Lives*. While the average density of New York City was roughly 143 persons per acre, for that district south of 14th Street and east of Broadway the ratio could reach an astounding 800 persons per acre—a density surpassing even the most crowded districts of Bombay. Despite repeated reform efforts, the Lower East Side was also one of the most densely built, its standard city lots of 25 by 100 feet so packed with tenements, row houses, and back buildings that frequently only a few inches of space remained between structures. The worst blocks boasted land coverage as high as 90 percent. One typical block with 70 percent land coverage was East 3rd Street, bounded by First Avenue and Avenue A. **15** It was here in the mid-1930s that a decisive episode in the drama of decongestion took place.

In 1930, on this particular block of East Third Street, with numerous forms of human occupancy (to use Koolhaas' terms) confronting each other through the medium of the grid, Manhattan's newest

an initial gesture of order had, by 1900, fostered the decided disorder of rampant, anarchic

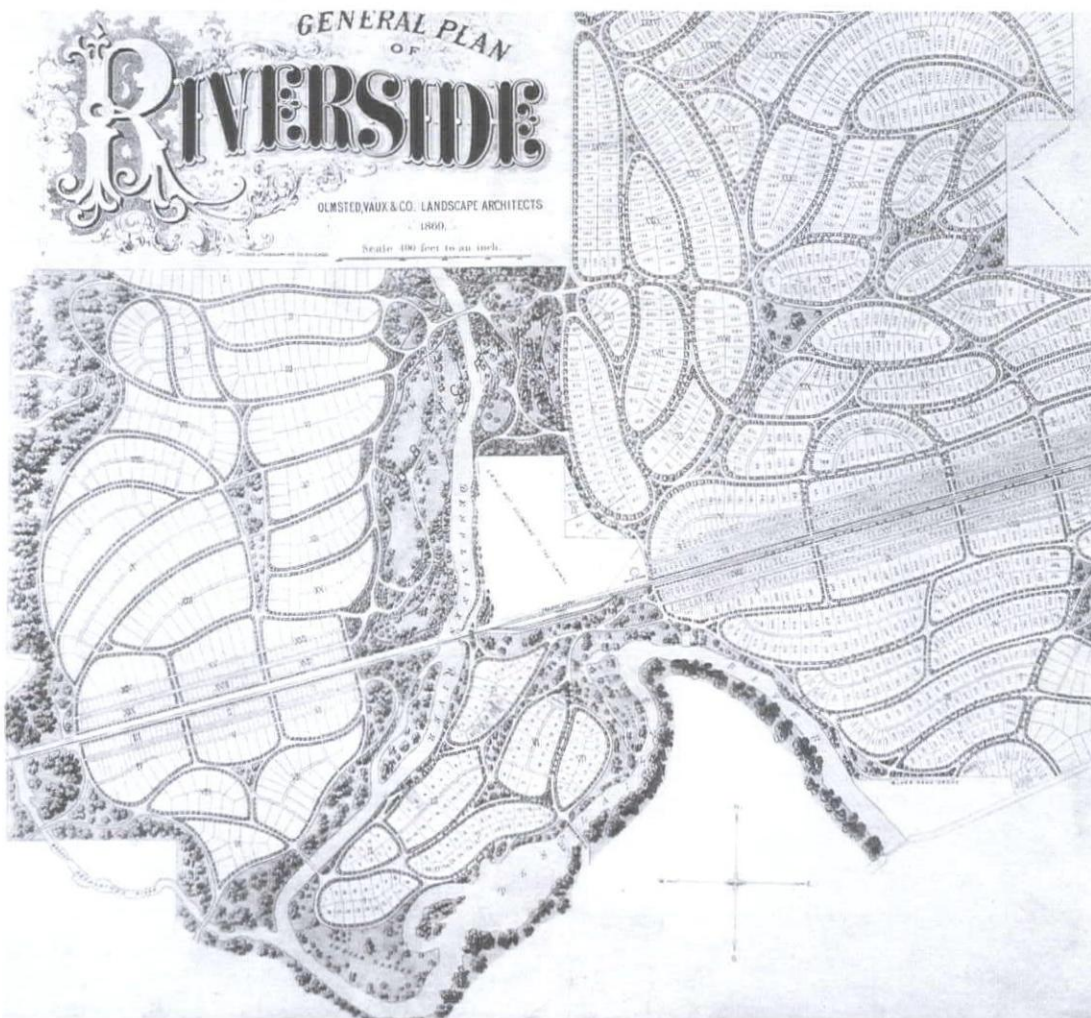


10 "Manhattanism" in America: land coverage map of Emporia, Kansas, 1935

form of congestion faced off against its oldest. A recently-completed high-rise apartment building on the north side of the block, known as Ageloff Towers, confronted over three dozen grimy old-law tenements and back buildings on the south side of the block.³⁰ The tenements were mostly five-story dumbbells dating from the 1880s and described by their landlord and owner Vincent Astor as "older than the hills."³¹ ¹⁶ These tenements were generally regarded as overcrowded, obsolete slums, housing some 400 mostly poor immigrant families, not including an additional permanent population of, as identified by Lewis Mumford, "rats, bedbugs, and roaches."³² Before either of these congestive forms could dominate East Third Street, the invisible hand of the market intervened. The stock market crashed; the Depression set in; and housing conditions on the Lower East Side worsened. According to local apocrypha, the financially ruined developer of the Ageloff threw himself off the top of his eponymous towers. Vincent Astor, with significantly less bravura but far more media coverage, offered to sell the south side of the block to the city for an experimental housing project. His price was a mere \$189,281.31—a figure well below the property's assessed value of \$600,000.³³

decongestive practices In March 1934 when Astor offered his East Third Street property to the city at a budget price, housing advocates across the country were engaged in heated debates concerning just this issue—the availability of cheap land at the urban core. Actually, it was the supposed lack of such land in American cities that prompted designers, theorists, and critics like Clarence Stein, Catherine Bauer, and Lewis Mumford to promote the development of new housing on the urban periphery where, they argued, land was cheaper and economies of scale in development were possible. Indeed, in Bauer's influential *Modern Housing* of 1934, she singled out the cost of land due to inflated values as the "great stumbling block" and the "most significant single factor" in constructing new housing where it was needed most, in New York and other large

real estate speculation



11 Frederick Law Olmsted, plan for Riverside, Illinois, 1869

³⁰ The Ageloff was an obvious example of a Manhattanistic movement toward the conquest of the grid block by a single structure; it was physically and visually imposing in the midst of run-down low-rise tenements. Built by developer Samuel Ageloff, the towers were among several "luxury" high-rise apartment houses planned or erected in the area during the 1920s, including Frank Lloyd Wright's unbuilt designs for the St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie Towers. See "Ageloff Towers," *American Architect* 135 (5 May 1929), p. 621; "Odd Type Buildings to Overlook Church," *New York Times*, 19 October 1929, p. 24 (1); Terence Riley, ed., *Frank Lloyd Wright: Architect* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994), pp. 222-23; Norbert Brown, "The First Experiment in Municipal Housing," *Real Estate Record*, 21 December 1935, p. 17.

³¹ "Landlord's Offer," *Architectural Forum*, 60 (April 1934), p. 318.

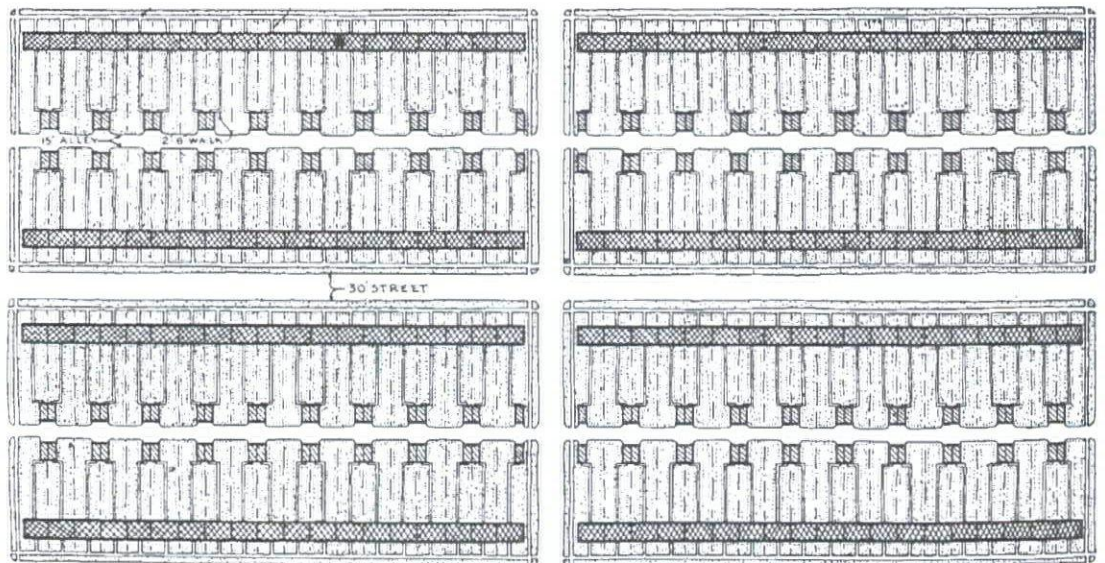
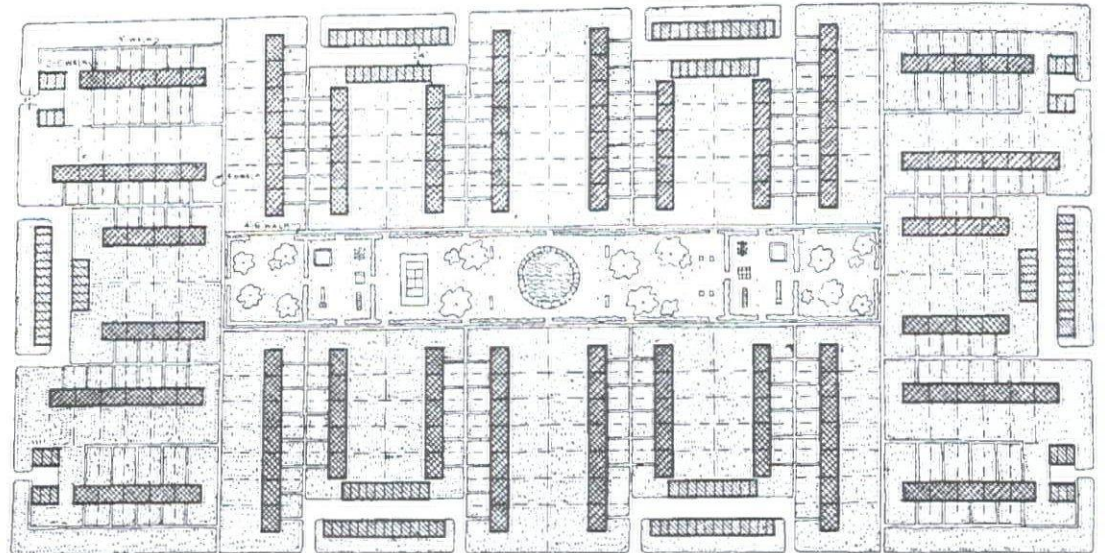
³² Lewis Mumford, "The Skyline: The New Housing," *New Yorker*, 7 December 1935, p. 105.

³³ Astor's beneficence was richly garbed in *noblesse oblige*. "My desire is to do anything I can do within reason to clear these slums," Astor solemnly stated, adding that the offer was meant as a contribution to the recently established federal housing program (PWA Housing Division), which he believed to be "tremendously worthwhile." His generosity was equally motivated by self-interest. Throughout the 1920s, while divesting himself of a significant portion of his real estate holdings, Astor held on to a number of East Side slum properties. In 1926 he redeveloped the uptown slums into an exclusive high-rise residential district known as Gracie Square, but had no such plans for his downtown properties. Apparently Astor could tolerate slums as long they were turning a profit, but that changed with the onset of the Depression. Once the properties "stopped paying their way" as landlord Astor put it, he was "glad to get rid of them," even at a loss. See "Vincent Astor—Landlord," *Architectural Forum* 61 (July 1934), pp. 73-75 and "Landlord's Offer," p. 318.

34 Catherine Bauer, *Modern Housing* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 244. For an analysis of Bauer's role in the development of new housing forms in the United States see Radford, especially chapter 3. For a discussion of urban tenements across the country see Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), especially chapter 7.

35 Bauer, p. 247.

cities.³⁴ Yet, according to Bauer, slum clearance was an obsolete planning model which should be logically replaced by new town or garden city developments in outlying areas, as at Sunnyside, Queens, (begun 1924) and Radburn, N.J. (begun 1927). These projects, designed by Clarence Stein and built by the limited-dividend City Housing Corporation affiliated with the Regional Plan Association of America, were anti-speculative, pro-decongestive model suburbs intended to demonstrate that low cost and low density were possible in new housing. But because the row houses and garden apartments of Sunnyside and the detached houses of Radburn were always intended for a



12 Superblock versus gridiron: comparative plans, 1940

middle-class population these projects didn't really represent an alternative to slum clearance targeted at the most blighted areas, like the Lower East Side, where the poorest urban dwellers resided.

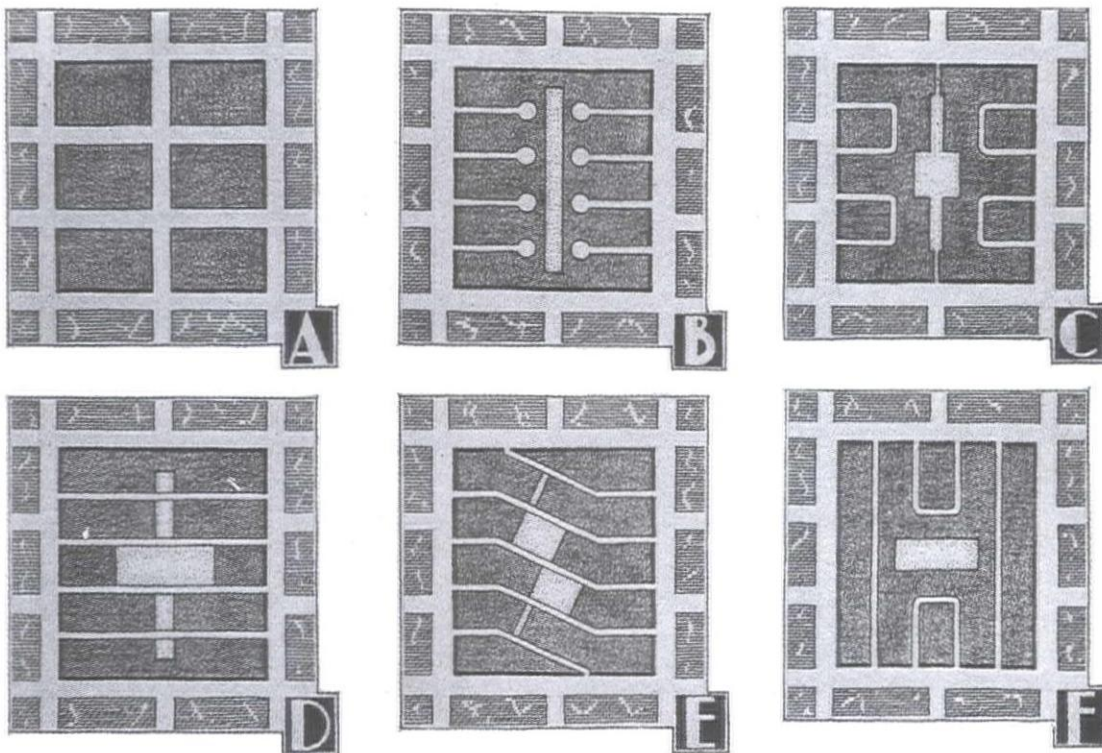
Vincent Astor's land deal would seem to have offered New York City a singular window of opportunity, but one which would soon disappear in the wake of inflated land values, potentially rendering the redevelopment of this small blighted area an isolated experiment. Bauer cautioned against random "model" housing projects in a "patchwork" approach that had more in common with the "old pattern" of nineteenth-century philanthropic reform than with the large-scale exigencies of the "American slum problem" of the twentieth century.³⁵ However, many slum clearance advocates would have disagreed with Bauer's assessment, believing instead that a patchwork approach, whether undertaken by municipalities, corporations, or public-private partnerships, rep-

represented a necessary first step toward solving the large and extremely complex problem of urban housing. For example, housing experts John Gries and James Ford, reporting to President Hoover's 1932 *Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership*, argued that it was both possible, and even desirable, to remove slums selectively block by block, "cut out by the surgeon's knife," concluding that even if "a single block in a city like New York can be successfully [cleared and] developed, it will be possible ultimately to rebuild the greater part of our cities."³⁶ ¹⁷ Though they believed that large-scale redevelopment of units ten blocks in size or larger was preferable to single block projects, they recognized that this would not be possible because of the existence of certain legal and constitutional obstacles to slum clearance, including the lack of eminent domain laws empowering municipalities to clear blighted areas and the fact that housing was not regarded as a public use. Until these obstacles were removed (which would occur in the coming years with the arrival of the New Deal) "piecemeal" slum clearance and redevelopment would remain viable.³⁷

The same year *Modern Housing* was published other advocates of slum clearance attacked the position of Bauer and Stein on the grounds that it failed to represent accurately the state of land values in blighted urban areas. Such was the case in a comprehensive, but hypothetical, replanning study for Astoria, Queens, prepared by an impressive group of associated planners and architects—Carol Aronovici, Henry Churchill, Albert Mayer, William Lescaze, and Stein's one-time associate Henry Wright. Their study, which received national media attention, proposed the transformation of 488 acres in Astoria into exemplary modernist and grid-busting *Zeilenbau*en. In their proposed design schemes the associates purposely varied building densities and heights to avoid the visual monotony of speculative subdivisions, projecting an average of 158 rooms per acre in three-story buildings. In the text accompanying their super-block plans, the associates make clear that their study, while using New York as a "focal point," was meant as a schematic model which would be "appli-

³⁶ Gries and Ford, p. 54. This use of medical metaphor was not uncommon in decongestion rhetoric. In 1929 housing reformer Lawrence Veiller had used the exact same terms. Slums and blight were "a civic cancer which must be cut out by the surgeon's knife." Congestion was the pathogen or carcinogen; the slum caused by congestion was the disease; slum clearance was the invasive surgical procedure necessary to cure it. Pushing the metaphor further, housing researchers and planners assume the role of urban epidemiologists while architects and designers become the all-powerful surgeons. See Veiller, "Slum Clearance," *Proceedings of the Tenth National Conference on Housing*, January 1929, p. 75. A few years earlier, Le Corbusier had also used a surgical metaphor when describing the Haussmannization of Paris and when calling for his own replanning of the city. See Le Corbusier, *The City of To-Morrow and its Planning* (1925; rpt. trans. New York: Payson & Clarke, LTD, 1929), pp. 155, 253-73.

³⁷ Gries and Ford, p. 55. If housing was not defined as a public use, taxpayers could not be made to bear the burden of development costs.



¹³ The superblock from the grid: the existing block pattern (A) replanned in five schemes (B-F)

cable anywhere," since similar blighted areas "exist[ed] in virtually every large city in the country." While in agreement with Bauer that the limited "Model Housing" approach to slum clearance should be rejected in favor of "large-scale attack," the associates argued that "it is not necessary to go to outlying land" because "new communities can be created within the city" on cheap, tax-delinquent land laying between the "inner core of unnecessary congestion and the outer belt of cheap

38 Associates Aronovici, Churchill, Lescaze, Mayer, Wright, "Realistic Replanning," *Architectural Forum* 61 (July 1934), p. 50. This study was one of the major projects of the Housing Study Guild founded by Mumford, Wright, and Mayer in the early 1930s. See Richard Pommer, "The Architecture of Urban Housing in the United States during the Early 1930s," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 37 (December 1978), pp. 253, 256.

39 See "Thousands of Tenants Seek Homes in Model East Side Tenements," *New York Times*, 11 November 1928, p. 1 (13), for the published findings of the Home Survey Board's first report.

40 Joseph Platzker, "Replanning Old Areas for New Housing," *Architectural Record* 75 (February 1934), p. 103.

41 Platzker, p. 104.

42 This analysis of slum/blighted district modernization is part of the author's larger study (forthcoming) on the modernization of commercial and residential buildings during the Depression.

By 1932 the American Institute of Architects was counseling its members to seek out modernization work to avoid unemployment. See Arthur B. Holmes, "A Plan to Create New Business for the Architect," *American Architect* 141 (June 1932), p. 14.

43 This insurance was made possible by Title I of the 1934 National Housing Act which initiated the Modernization Credit Plan and related programs and activities designed to promote building modernization.

44 In 1932 the Home Building Conference recommended the "reconditioning of buildings" and the "modernization of homes" with the hope that such individual efforts would stimulate the resuscitation of entire blighted districts. Modernization would enable a district, and its individual properties, to achieve financial viability and thus increase contributions to the tax base. The Conference concluded that slum modernizations would also "greatly aid in the housing of the lower income groups, improving their health, morals, and the morale of the population." Gries and Ford, pp. 11, 157.



14 *Glow of the City*, Martin Lewis, 1929

speculation." This land was not only "immediately available" but also "completely serviced" by public transit, schools, shops, and other "amenities" which were crucial to the creation of a cohesive community, but were too expensive to build all at once.³⁸

This point in particular was underscored by another slum clearance advocate, Joseph Platzker, secretary of New York's powerful business consortium the East Side Chamber of Commerce.³⁹ Arguing in *Architectural Record* that planners who favored developing new housing on outlying "cheap land" were misguided, Platzker disputed claims that land values in blighted areas were even that inflated given that so many older areas possessed crucial "municipal services" which made land fundamentally more valuable than that located on the less developed urban periphery.⁴⁰ This, Platzker argued, was the case on the Lower East Side where the City had spent \$55 million since 1929 to improve community services. Thus, Platzker contended that ultimately it would be most cost effective to locate new housing in such blighted areas, "modernizing a good old section" by replanning it as "large neighborhood units."⁴¹ Platzker's terminology here is significant, for it evokes two parallel movements in architecture and planning which intersected the theory and practice of decongestion in the effort to clear urban slums.

modernization In the 1930s modernization was even more pervasive in architecture culture than decongestion, especially after the federal government began promoting it as an economic stimulus to counteract the effects of the Depression.⁴² This occurred in 1934 when the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) started to insure low-interest loans made by private lenders for the physical improvement of existing commercial and residential buildings.⁴³ New Deal modernization and decongestion came together in rehabilitation projects for individual buildings—usually tenements, houses, and stores—multiple buildings, or multi-block sites.⁴⁴ As a method for neighborhood improvement, modernization seemed to offer a practical alternative to a demolition model of slum clearance and the FHA issued several booklets, including *Community Planning* and *How to*

Finance Tenement Modernization, which promoted modernization as a step-by-step slum revitalization program in which municipalities, neighborhood groups, and individual property owners could all participate.⁴⁵ The FHA promoted modernization-cum-slum clearance as offering immediate, often highly visible results: a new facade on a run-down tenement would be perceived by slum dwellers as a sure sign that conditions on a blighted block were improving. In practice the modernization of tenements functioned decongestively to open up floor plans, to reduce the number of apartments per floor and the number of windowless rooms per apartment, and to open up overbuilt alleys and back courts, converting them into recreation spaces.⁴⁶ With easy federal loan and credit terms, slum clearance or, more accurately, slum effacement, could be undertaken without delay, on an *ad hoc* basis, building by building, avoiding protracted land acquisition, condemnation proceedings or costly multi-block demolitions. Tenement modernization was thus viewed, by its supporters and its critics, as a stop-gap measure, a temporary expedient, to be replaced eventually by a long-range public housing construction program. This was the view held by Joseph Platzker who further recognized the short-term necessity of modernization because of the "single-parcel" pattern of individual building ownership that existed in most American cities. Platzker cautioned, however, that such one-shot modernizations would prove "in the long-run an unsuccessful investment" unless they were part of a coordinated program to wholly transform slum areas into coherent neighborhood units based on the typology developed by Clarence Perry in the late 1920s.⁴⁷

Perry's ideal neighborhood unit was a 160-acre subdivision located in an outlying urban area and planned according to "principles which would give added character, convenience and safety" to the district. These principles included a size limit of 5,000-6,000 people, inclusion of shops and community institutions within neighborhood boundaries, provision for open recreational spaces, and an internal street system which avoided the grid in favor of "short, curving and intimate highways."⁴⁸ According to Perry, the grid should be abandoned not only for aesthetic and psychological reasons, but for an economic one as well: he posited that the prototypical curvilinear street plan would accrue a savings of \$400,000. Perry's grid-resisting ideas were put into practice in so many cities and towns that Gwendolyn Wright has identified the neighborhood unit as "the most important model for [pre-war American] residential design."⁴⁹ Notable neighborhood unit residential developments include Stein and Wright's Radburn and Stein's Hillside Homes.⁵⁰ The latter, under construction in the Bronx beginning in 1933, was assailed by Joseph Platzker, who argued that while the project was built on inexpensive land (70 cents per square foot), it contained monumental hidden and future costs in the municipal services which would be required to meet the needs of the new development's residents. Both Perry and Stein would have agreed with Platzker's assertion that "new housing alone does not make a community," since they believed that community centers, schools, playgrounds, and shops were an integral, indeed crucial, component of any neighborhood unit—components which would have to be built from scratch when developing new housing projects in any outlying urban area.⁵¹ In Platzker's view—and here he departed from Perry's ideal—replanning an area with extant infrastructure and services, like the Lower East Side, was a far more viable option for new housing.

Housing officials, advocates, and lobbyists in many other cities saw the logic of such a view and urged the utilization of Perry's model in the replanning and rebuilding of the urban core. Indeed, the Planning Committee of the 1932 Home Building Conference resolved that "the 'neighborhood unit' should be adopted as the basis of reconstruction" of blighted areas.⁵² By the late 1930s municipalities across the country were drawing up neighborhood improvement districts. In 1937 the city of St. Louis, whose trends regarding land use and population densities were considered typical of the nation, was attempting to counteract "suburban sprawl" (already named as such in this pre-World War II period), urban blight, and decreased city land values through the "development of neighborhood units embracing all residential areas of the city." The City Plan Commission divided St. Louis's 62.5 square miles into 81 units to "furnish the most logical basis for all forms of housing control and construction." These forms included "several modern large-scale low-cost housing projects" to be erected in the most severely blighted districts.⁵³

⁴⁵ The FHA encouraged tenement landlords to undertake modernization to meet the requirements of municipal building codes and as a way of increasing rents and property values. This interest in urban housing was an aberration in general FHA policy, which tended to favor new construction in suburbs to reconstruction in the city.

⁴⁶ Other typical tenement modernizations included the installation of electricity, hot water, and bathing facilities in apartments.

⁴⁷ Platzker, p. 104.

⁴⁸ Clarence Perry, "Planning a Neighborhood Unit," *American City*, September 1929, pp. 124, 126. This article is a reprint of Perry, "The Neighborhood Unit" in *Neighborhood and Community Planning, Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs*, Vol. VII (New York: Regional Plan Association, Inc., 1929) and Perry, *The Rebuilding of Blighted Areas: A Study of the Neighborhood Unit in Replanning and Plot Assemblage* (New York: Regional Plan Association, Inc., 1933).

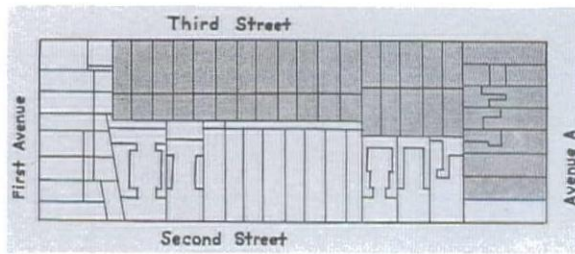
⁴⁹ Wright, p. 29.

⁵⁰ For a discussion of these projects see Clarence Stein, *Towards New Towns for America* (1957; rpt. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978) and John R. Stillgoe, *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1959* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

⁵¹ Platzker, pp. 103-4.

⁵² Gries and Ford, p. 11.

⁵³ "From Sprawling Suburbs Back to Urban Neighborhoods: The St. Louis Land Policy," *Architectural Record* 81 (June 1937), p. 59.



15 First Houses site plan

neighborhood seemed to underscore the feasibility of Astor's East Third Street property for housing redevelopment. The land had many of the municipal services cited by Perry, including transportation, an elementary school, and a house of worship—all within a one-block radius.⁵⁴ The City was aware of these infrastructure advantages. Moreover, Astor's asking price brought the square foot cost down from \$10 to around \$3.50. In the spring of 1934 Langdon W. Post, chairman of the newly created New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), was keen to accept Astor's offer and use the site as a "bricks and mortar" testament to the City's seriousness about "clear[ing] slums and build[ing] houses." With no municipal funds available for either land acquisition or construction Post was forced into exasperating inactivity and, perhaps worse, into recognizing the possibility that his agency, the first of its kind in the nation, would prove to be nothing more than "a debating society or a propaganda bureau."⁵⁵ Thus, Post went straight to Washington and presented his case to Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) head Harry Hopkins who agreed to provide \$300,000 for building materials, with the WPA providing a grant of \$50,000 for the necessary relief labor. Subsequently, Post convinced Vincent Astor to accept brand new NYCHA bonds, bearing

Housing officials in New York City were only too aware of the devastating physical, social, and economic effects of urban blight. They realized early on that the slums of the Lower East Side needed radical treatment if the contagion was to be checked and the still viable components of the existing "neighborhood unit" were to be resuscitated. That the Lower East Side was already a vital

housing experts... argued that it was both possible, and desirable, to remove slums selectively

⁵⁴ These services were, respectively, the Second Avenue El, Public School 63, and the Church of the Holy Redeemer. A housing study of two adjacent blocks also undertaken in 1934 indicated that this immediate area was ideally situated in terms of a wide range of "geographical and environmental advantages" such as business, transportation, and schools. See "Regional Resurrection without Demolition," *Architectural Forum* 61 (September 1934), p. 191.

⁵⁵ Langdon W. Post, *The Challenge of Housing* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1938), pp. 180-81.



16 Astor's tenement properties, site of the First Houses, 1935

only 3.5 percent interest, and tax-exempt, in lieu of a cash payment for the land. This deal was followed by a protracted condemnation process with a recalcitrant landlord who refused to sell to the city two tenements bisecting Astor's property. The landlord went to court to challenge the constitutionality of the NYCHA's exercise of eminent domain. His lawyers argued that the creation of housing was not a valid public purpose, but the state appellate court disagreed. The landmark decision *NYCHA vs. Muller* upheld eminent domain and the legitimacy of housing as a public use. Thus, the decision was a boon to all urban housing programs then in their infancy, not just the one in New York City.

urban evacuation In Washington FERA's Harry Hopkins had proved sympathetic to the proposed New York project not only because he was well-acquainted with conditions on the Lower East Side, having spent his early career as a social worker in that neighborhood, but because he knew that slum clearance was part of President Roosevelt's personal vision of urban decentralization—a vision then being codified into New Deal policy. The initial legislative underpinning of Roosevelt's decentralization policy was an amendment to Title II of the 1933 National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) which earmarked \$25 million of the \$3.3 billion Public Works and Construction Projects appropriation to "provide for aiding in the redistribution of the overbalance of populations in industrial [mostly urban] centers."⁵⁶ According to government statistics, by 1930 nearly 75 percent of workers in American manufacturing industries were crowded onto less than 5 percent of the country's land and of that 75 percent, some 60 percent were supposedly living in areas affected by varying degrees of blight.⁵⁷

Decentralists hoped to reverse this situation through a radical population shift, relocating industries, factories, and workers from congested urban areas to entirely new communities to be built

⁵⁶ Quoted in Russell Lord and Paul H. Johnstone, *A Place on Earth: A Critical Appraisal of Subsistence Homesteads* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1942), p. 24.

⁵⁷ Division of Subsistence Homesteads, *A Homestead and Hope* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1935), p. 5 and Gries and Ford, p. 90.

Block by block, "cut out by the surgeon's knife"



17 Selective incisions: First Houses, 1935

58 For a thorough assessment of the design of these communities see Diane Ghirardo, *Building New Communities: New Deal American and Fascist Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989). A more policy-oriented study is Paul K. Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World: The New Deal Community Program* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959).

59 As Lewis Mumford wrote in 1926, "manifestly, the suburb is a public acknowledgement of the fact that congestion and bad housing... are not humanly endurable." Mumford, "The Intolerable City," p. 287.

60 "Subsistence Homestead Projects," *American City*, February 1934, p. 75.

61 Frank Lloyd Wright, "Broadacre City: A New Community Plan," *Architectural Record* 77 (April 1935), 243. This article coincided with the first public exhibition of the Broadacre model.

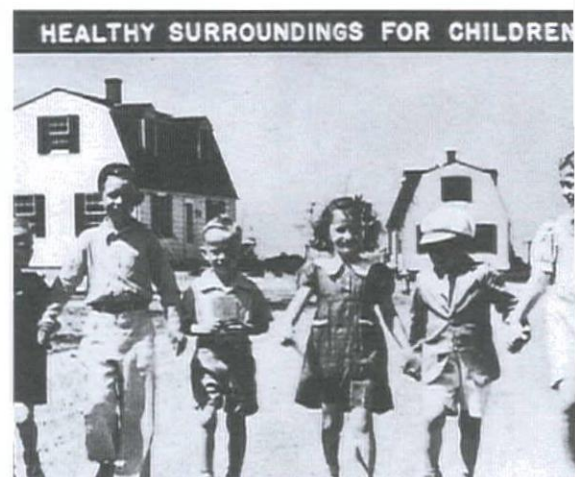
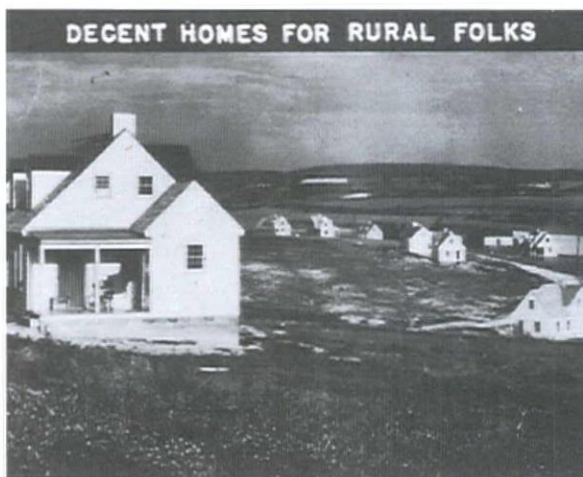
first on undeveloped peripheral land and eventually in wholly rural locales. A number of model decentralized communities were built in the 1930s as a result of New Deal policy including rural industrial communities, subsistence homesteads, and the greenbelt towns erected by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads and its successor agencies, the Resettlement Administration and the Farm Security Administration.**58 18 19**

In many respects decentralization was allied with general decongestive trends toward suburbanization and edge settlement which began in the 1920s.**59** It differed from these trends by virtue of its conscious physical and economic planning, as opposed to the haphazard growth and speculation of urban rim development typified by the streetcar suburbs and commercial strips of the 1920s. Nonetheless, as *American City* noted, both decentralization and suburbanization were stimulated by "the automobile, the hard-surface highway, and the electric power line."**60** These three stimuli were also crucial to the development of perhaps the best known theoretical model of decentralization—Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City (1935), a project contemporary with federal decentralization initiatives. **20** In Broadacre City Wright combined the liberating effects of new technologies, which he identified as electrification, mechanical mobilization, and organic architecture, with the (supposed) liberating effects of a return to the land. Wright's Broadacre City was a utopian vision of a totally decentralized America in which people and industry were dispersed into low-density individual communities along a great network of superhighways with shopping, business, recreational, and cultural centers located at highway crossings—a large-scale version of Perry's neighborhood unit. Broadacre's inhabitants lived on multi-acre homesteads with large subsistence gardens and, occasionally, working farms. Decentralized factories and offices were nestled among the homesteads and open fields with no clear differentiation between commercial and residential zones. As Wright described his visionary city—careful to distinguish it from the typical large-scale

an essential opposition exists in American culture between urbanism and pastoralism, between

62 Peter Rowe (building on Leo Marx) identifies this urge to create a mediated territory between urban and rural as modern pastoralism, which accepts the technological advances of modernity while embracing the rustic, nostalgic virtues of pastoralism. Rowe, *Making a Middle Landscape* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 232-237.

63 Frank Fritts and Ralph W. Gwinn, *From Fifth Avenue to Farm: A Biological Approach to the Problem of the Survival of Our Civilization* (New York: Harper & Row, 1938). Back-to-the-landers rejected the capitalist modernity which cities represented. See Ira Katznelson, "Reflections on Space and the City" in *Power, Culture and Place*, ed. John Mollenkopf (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1988).



18 The Resettlement Administration's goals for Americans, 1936

metropolis—each Broadacre consisted of "coordinating groups of small farms, small factories, small homes, small schools, and small laboratories."**61** Unemployment and substandard living conditions were nonexistent; workers were prosperous industrialists and thriving farmers, dwelling in a flourishing technological and arcadian landscape somewhere between town and country.**62**

The decentralized community, in both theory (Broadacre City) and practice (federal new towns), was ostensibly motivated by economic efficacy, though this was frequently, if not purposely, occluded by a larger social agenda. This agenda related closely to the contemporary, often unabashedly romantic back-to-the-land movement which called for a retreat from urban modernity and a nostalgic return to rural life, as evident in the 1938 manifesto *From Fifth Avenue to Farm*.**63** Many back-to-the-land notions were incorporated into Wright's and the government's decentralization ideology, including an embrace of Jeffersonian agrarianism, a belief in the psychological benefits of

contact with the land, and an espousal of pioneer virtues and traditional family values. Such ideology was predicated on what Leo Marx identified, in his classic work *The Machine in the Garden*, as an essential and continuous opposition in American culture between urbanism and pastoralism, between the moral turpitude of the city and the moral rectitude of the country.⁶⁴ In the 1930s this cultural tension was understood in spatial terms as a dichotomy between the congested city and the decongested countryside, or, as PWA planner Albert Mayer put it, in simple human terms between the “urban worker and farmer.”⁶⁵

For many decentralists, the most critical feature of life for the worker in the congested city was the overcrowded conditions of apartment dwelling, especially among the poor and working class. This provided an even more potent ideological opposition—that between the multi-family walk-up tenement and the single-family detached house. Indeed, the house itself was signifier of the “modern decent” way of life that a decentralized existence would presumably engender—a way of life that was both geographically and psychologically distant from the supposedly sordid and morally-lax conditions of the crowded tenements from which the newly decentralized workers would come.⁶⁶ Decentralist literature published by the government and private organizations often included visual propaganda to underscore this opposition. One typical image juxtaposed city-dwelling children with those in the countryside; not surprisingly the city children were depicted in tattered clothing picking through garbage cans in a filthy back alley while their country counterparts happily interacted with friendly barnyard animals. Such imagery was particularly effective in older East Coast cities, including Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington. The Fresh Air Fund and like organizations had, since the 1890s, been shipping children out of crowded slums to the healthier atmosphere of the suburbs or the country.⁶⁷ Given the extreme living conditions in New York especially, and on the Lower East Side in particular, it is perhaps not surprising that an early group of

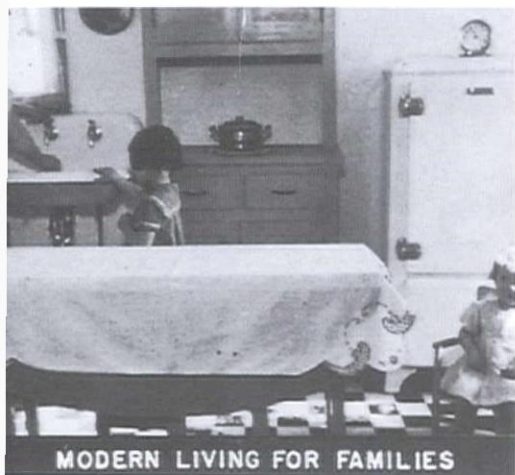
⁶⁴ Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

⁶⁵ Albert Mayer, “The Greenbelt Towns: What and Why,” *American City*, May 1936, p. 59.

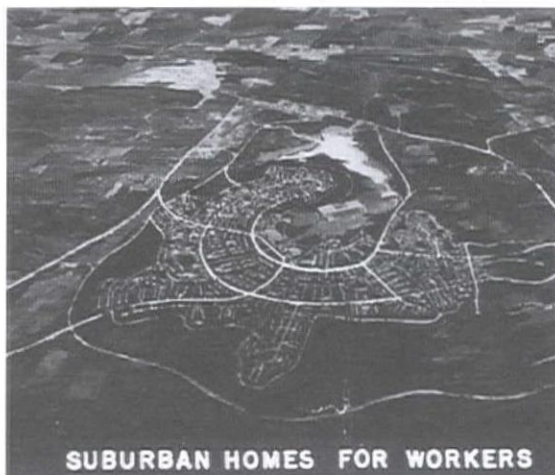
⁶⁶ Division of Subsistence Homesteads, *Homestead Houses* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1935), p. 1. See also Resettlement Administration, *First Annual Report* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1936), p. 63.

⁶⁷ See *A Homestead and Hope*, p. 10.

the moral turpitude of the city and the moral rectitude of the country



MODERN LIVING FOR FAMILIES



SUBURBAN HOMES FOR WORKERS



RECREATION FOR EVERYBODY

government-sponsored self-decentralists sprang from this community in 1934. Some 200 Jewish garment workers, most of them members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) headquartered on the Lower East Side, organized themselves to escape the city's needle trades by forming an experimental community in rural Mercer County, New Jersey, to be known as the Jersey Homesteads.

Following their European counterparts, American labor unions, especially in the garment trades, had been active developers of housing since the 1920s, in New York City and other manufacturing centers. As developers, the unions' goal was to provide members with decent, affordable housing, since much of the stock then available to workers was congested, expensive, and substandard. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union was especially active, forming its own limited-dividend housing corporation and developing projects in the Bronx and on the Lower East Side, mostly

68 For a detailed analysis of the development of the Mackley Houses see Gail Radford, chapter 5, "Hosiery Workers' Model Development," pp. 111-44.

69 As Gail Radford has shown, the "single-family" nature of row-house life was, by the 1930s, somewhat specious, since many houses had been divided into accommodations for up to three families. See Radford, pp. 119-20.

70 In the years following the completion of the Mackley Houses, the surrounding blocks would become increasingly congested with this type of row house development.

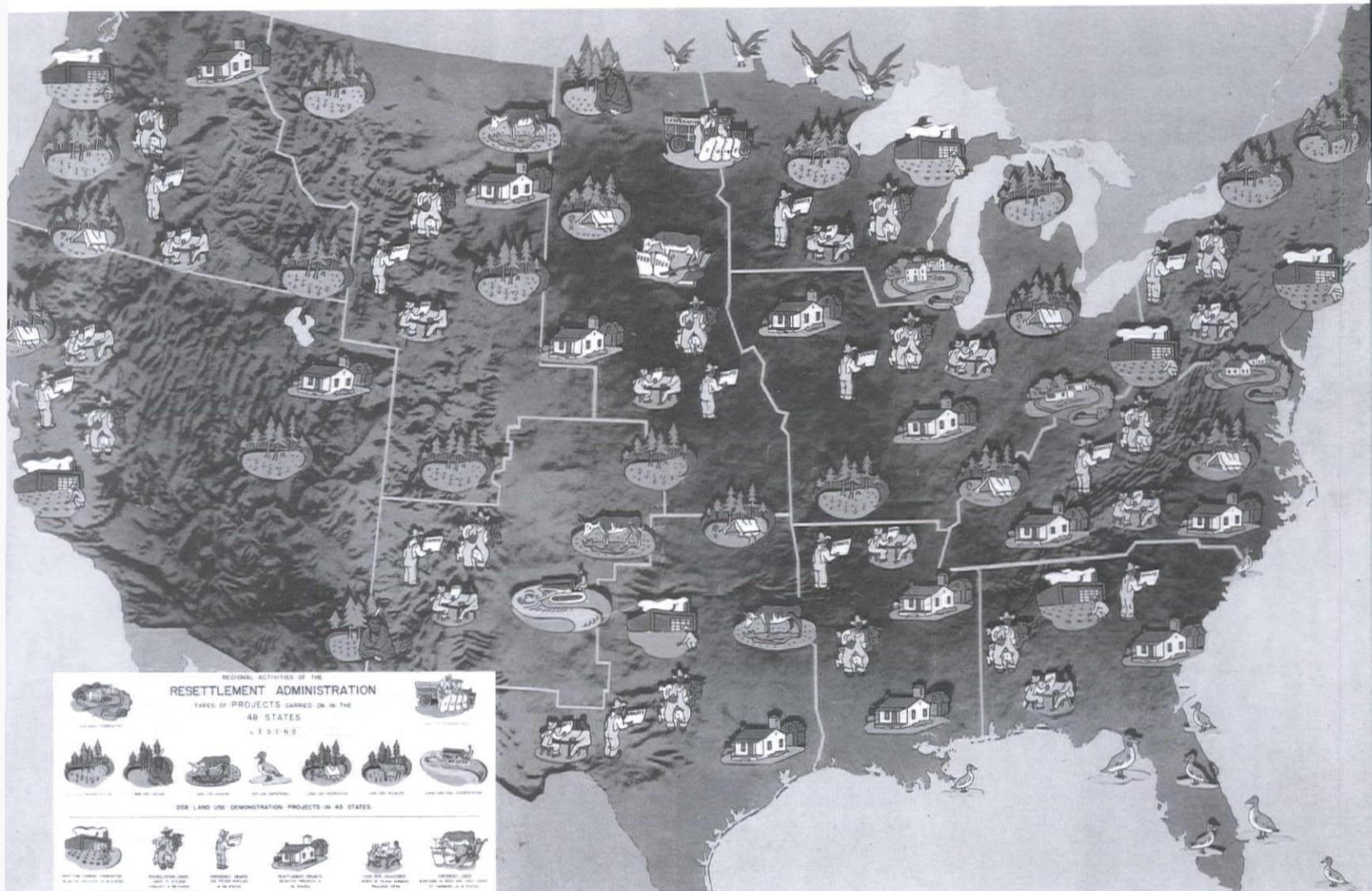
71 For a full account of the history of Jersey Homesteads (renamed Roosevelt) see Edwin Roskam, *Roosevelt, NJ: Big Dreams in a Small Town and What Time Did to Them* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1972).

perimeter block garden apartments. Other smaller unions, along with Jewish community groups, formed housing cooperatives which constructed and managed buildings for their members in addition to running a variety of co-op based cultural programs. In Philadelphia the Hosiery Workers' Union utilized PWA funds—the first loan made by the PWA Housing Division—to build the Carl Mackley Houses, planning for which began in 1932 with designs by Oscar Stonorov and subsequently, Alfred Kastner. The latter would soon turn his attentions to the decentralized community of the Jersey Homesteads, designed for another group of needle workers. Kastner's work at the Mackley Houses and the Jersey Homesteads represents two distinct forms of decongestive design strategy as well as the earliest modern housing schemes built in the United States.

The Mackley Houses were located in the Northeast section of Philadelphia, an area that in the 1920s was neither the over-built urban core or the under-built urban periphery, but was instead a highly industrialized, yet residentially undeveloped district, ideally situated for worker housing.⁶⁸ The Mackley site consisted of two undeveloped city blocks which were combined into a superblock by demapping interior streets. For this site Stonorov and Kastner, recent European immigrants, designed four modified *Zeilenbauen* of four stories each, with a total of 300 apartments, as well as a community hall, kindergarten, laundry facilities, a swimming pool, and even an underground parking garage. These multi-family apartment buildings and their communal services represented a decided departure from the traditional single-family attached row house for which Philadelphia was known (80 percent of its residents living in such dwellings).⁶⁹ The developers and designers of the Mackley Houses rejected this tradition for several reasons. Not only did they want to explore the social and economic potential of cooperative housing and collective living, which the isolated single-family house disallowed, but they also wanted to combat the built congestion endemic to the row house and the gridded street pattern. In a typical Philadelphia rowhouse development land coverage was around 66 percent. While the remaining 34 percent of land was open, it was usually not contiguous and presented no opportunity for the development of recreational space.⁷⁰ By reversing these land coverage ratios, the Mackley Houses could accommodate three large interior spaces with pedestrian walkways, landscaping, and play areas.

The hosiery workers who developed the Mackley Houses built their project in the midst of the urban industrial landscape which provided their livelihood, reterritorializing that existing landscape into a zone of production in which not only stockings could be manufactured, but community as well. By contrast, the garment workers who developed the Jersey Homesteads built their decentralized project in the midst of a rural landscape. Though the landscape itself required development to produce a community, even more crucial was the transformation required of the needle workers who, far removed from the urban congestion of Manhattan's Lower East Side, had to reinvent themselves as farmers.

The Jersey Homesteads, like the Mackley Houses, were built with federal NIRA funds, here channeled through the PWA's Division of Subsistence Homesteads. The community was originally to include a cooperative garment factory, a consumer co-op, and a cooperative farm, in addition to individual garden/farm plots for each single-family house.⁷¹ The plan, designed by Resettlement Administration engineer Frank Schmitt and based closely on Stein and Wright's Radburn idea, was a model of decongestion.²¹ As in Hale Walker's contemporaneous plan for Greenbelt, Maryland, the grid was banished here in favor of a hierarchical curvilinear scheme. One major distributor road connected the Jersey Homesteads to nearby Hightstown and served as the primary thoroughfare for the disposition of public facilities, including the town hall, post office, and combined community center/elementary school. Secondary loop roads and cul-de-sacs provided access to the compact individual houses on one- and two-acre plots with space for garden plots and chicken coops. With single-family detached houses as the primary building type, Jersey Homesteads stood in marked contrast to the house clusters and apartment blocks of Greenbelt. It also differed from Greenbelt in its lack of a comprehensive system of walkways to insure separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. However, as at Greenbelt, a modernist aesthetic was predominant. The houses Alfred Kastner designed in collaboration with Louis I. Kahn, who also collaborated on the school, were spare,



19 Resettlement Administration map showing type and location of projects nationwide, 1936

flat-roofed, concrete block, one-story units with five- or six-room plans: three or four bedrooms, kitchen, living room with dining alcove, and in addition, a full bath and storage/utility room. The houses were also equipped, as befit a Radburn era/motor age community, with carports or garages. Kastner and Kahn used these standard room elements in varied combinations to produce twelve different house types. These types were notable for their irregular perimeters, the variety of which was heightened by their staggered placement in the site plan and by the occasional, seemingly random, joining of two types into a double house, both maneuvers serving to remove the Jersey Homesteads from the mechanical monotony of the grid.⁷²

Some housing reformers and critics initially applauded government-sponsored decentralization projects like the Jersey Homesteads, at least in theory, because they seemed like a viable tool for slum clearance and improved living conditions for industrial workers. Catherine Bauer, for example, acknowledged that it would indeed be better for slum dwellers to have “instead of canned rations in a tenement, or soup in a flop-house, fresh vegetables and healthy outdoor work amid pleasant surroundings” as they supposedly would at the Jersey Homesteads.⁷³ Lewis Mumford praised Kastner and Kahn’s designs for the individual houses at Hightstown, in particular their use of a Wrightian projecting roof, as well as the “abandonment of the old-fashioned block” evident in Schmitt’s site-plan.⁷⁴ Both Bauer and Mumford realized however that such “urban evacuations,” as one ardent decentralist described them, might ultimately result in the further exploitation and degradation of the city. Unless careful attention was paid to the replanning of evacuated slum districts, no decongestion would take place. Left to its own devices the free market would surely guarantee another cycle of vacancies, sub-standard housing conditions, and an eventual return to overbuilding and over-crowding.

Occasionally, despite antithetical (anti-city/pro-city) urbanistic agendas, decentralization and slum clearance were planned as companion projects. In Cleveland, for example, a limited dividend housing corporation working with the Mayor’s Business Recovery Commission secured a PWA loan in

⁷² David Brownlee and David DeLong have observed that the irregular perimeters of the houses “were more like the picturesque tradition of the American suburban home than modern European-style worker housing.” Brownlee and DeLong, *Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), p. 26. Alternately, one could argue that the irregularity of the Jersey Homesteads houses recalls the picturesque tradition of worker cottage designs by A.J. Davis and A.J. Downing (1840s), while simultaneously evoking the pinwheeling European modernism of Mies van der Rohe’s brick country house project (1923), which itself borrows from Wright, as do the Jersey Homestead houses.

⁷³ Bauer, p. 248.

⁷⁴ Lewis Mumford, “The Skyline: Houses and Fairs,” *The New Yorker*, 20 June 1936, p. 34.

complex that was to be the first urban public housing project in the United States.⁷⁸ The First Houses, as they came to be known, were wholly sponsored, funded, owned and managed by the government, providing 122 low-rent apartments for low-income families drawn from the slums bordering the project.

the first houses The three- and four-room apartments of the First Houses into which these families moved in December 1935 were spacious and well-appointed. They were disposed four per floor in eight gut-rehabilitated buildings which had been carved out of the 38 existing structures on the site; the remainder were demolished. In the final configuration there were five five-story walk-ups along East Third Street and three four-storys on Avenue A. Each unit consisted of a double-lot 50-foot frontage with a 25-foot break on either side; on Avenue A the breaks were occupied at street level by one-story commercial space. Together the units formed an L-shaped, partial perimeter block surrounding a landscaped interior court that functioned as a garden and play area for the tenants. This court also provided access to the individual buildings as entrances were removed from the street to the rear. This layout relied on the precedent of the garden court which had become a standard typology for middle-class housing in New York in the 1920s, epitomized by such projects as Clarence Stein's Phipps Garden Apartments at Sunnyside (1929) and Andrew Thomas' Dunbar Apartments in Harlem (1928). That this precedent should have been used for the city's first public housing complex is not surprising since the project's chief designer was Frederick L. Ackerman, who had worked with Stein and Wright at Sunnyside and was now the head of the Technical Division of the NYCHA. Ackerman was a devoted housing advocate who favored perimeter planning throughout his career. As planning was underway for the First Houses, Ackerman organized a comparative study of 23 low rent housing projects to serve as potential models for upcoming municipal projects; nearly all were perimeter-block garden-court types.⁷⁹

The perimeter block, as used at Phipps and Dunbar, represented an intermediary step in decongestive efforts to defy the grid. While the grid's street lines were maintained, and from the exterior the perimeter-planned building appeared to represent the congestive take-over of an entire block by a single edifice, in fact the opposite was happening. For the perimeter block was just that—a perimeter—with an open court at its center. This open space, depending on the articulation of the court-side walls which could, as at Dunbar, sometimes result in a double perimeter, virtually guaranteed a low building density. At Phipps the land coverage was 43 percent; at Dunbar it was 49 percent—a figure which was remarkable in the context of congested Harlem, where building and population densities rivaled those of the Lower East Side. Indeed, land coverage of the block just south of the Dunbar site was well over 70 percent with its packed rows of old- and new-law tenements. At the Harlem River Houses (1937), located just north of the Dunbar apartments and in the development stage as the First Houses were coming to completion, land coverage was reduced to 32 percent, although with 574 units, compared to 511 at the Dunbar, the complex had a higher resident population.

In addition to lowering land coverage, the open court represented a conscious spatial and social internalization intended, when located in a slum district, to separate the project as much as possible from its external environment and foster a sense of community among the inhabitants. This is exactly what happened at the Dunbar apartments where residents, including Countee Cullen, Paul Robeson, W.E.B. Dubois, and Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, formed a vibrant, middle-class, African-American community that made the Dunbar a cultural landmark of the Harlem Renaissance. Downtown, because the First Houses occupied only a partial block, the rear elevations of the tenements on East Second Street remained visible from the project's interior court. Thus, the insulating advantages of the perimeter plan could not be fully exploited. Eventually, trees and shrubs planted in the



21 1929 plan of Radburn, New Jersey

⁷⁸ There had been earlier attempts at wholly public housing, most notably in New York the Chrystie-Forsyth corridor, a narrow strip of Lower East Side land running seven blocks from Canal to Houston Streets. The city acquired the land in 1929, demolished all existing tenements by 1931, and by 1933 had collected numerous proposals for model housing, including a boldly modernist slab scheme by Howe and Lescaze. By 1934 the redevelopment effort languished under the weight of fiscal and political indecision, which made it fair game for newly-empowered Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, who managed to appropriate the site and transform it into a park and playground. For an analysis of the Howe and Lescaze design see Pommer, pp. 251-52. For Moses's involvement see Robert A. Caro, *The Powerbroker* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), p. 375.

⁷⁹ See Frederick Ackerman and William Ballard, *Survey of Low-Rent Housing Projects in New York City* (New York: Technical Division, NYCHA, September 1934). Richard Plunz analyzes Ackerman's ideas and his NYCHA work in *A History of Housing in New York City*, especially chapter 7.

80 Plunz, p. 209.

81 All decorative embellishment was removed, including window hoods and sills and the stamped metal bracketed cornice. Modernization experts considered such ornaments obsolete. See Kenneth Stowell, *Modernizing Buildings For Profit* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1935), pp. 11-15.

82 The initial expenditures of \$350,000 eventually more than tripled to over \$1 million. See Walter Kruesi, "Cost Analysis: The First Municipal Housing Experiment," *Real Estate Record*, 19 September 1936, pp. 7-11.

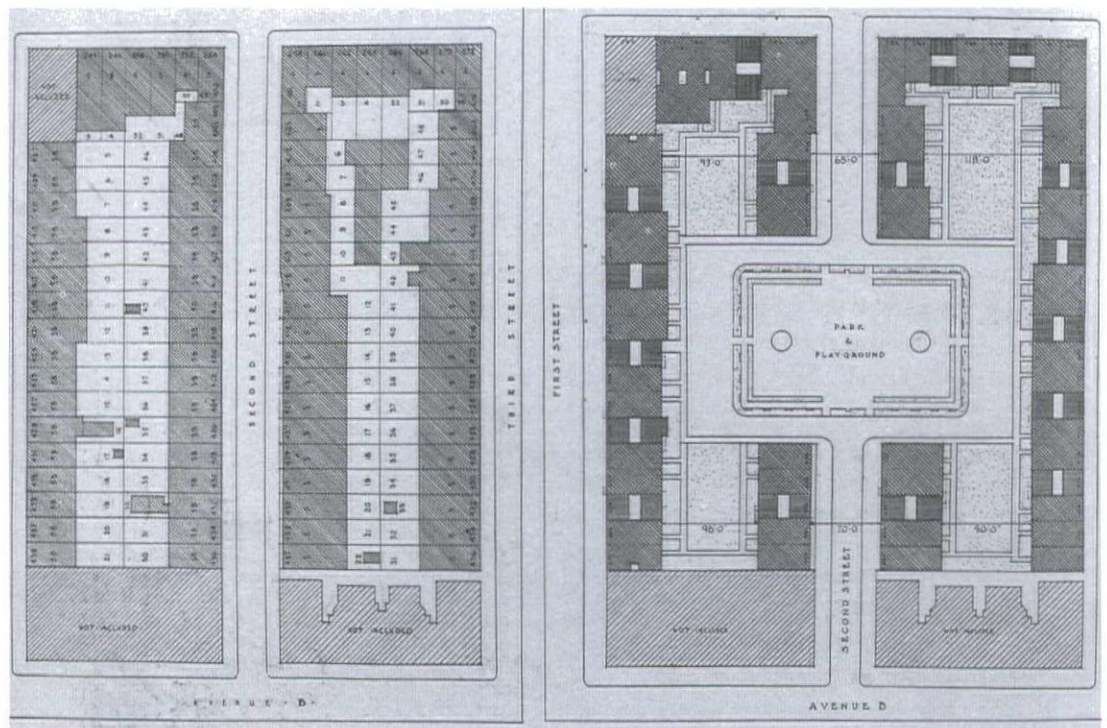
83 "\$6.05 Per Room in Manhattan," *Architectural Forum* 64 (January 1936), 67. These criticisms discount the satisfaction of the tenants of the First Houses with their new apartments, renting at around \$18 per month. For tenant views of the project see Catherine Mackenzie, "120 'First Families' Get New Homes," *New York Times* 1 December 1935, p. 10(4) and Rachel L. Swarns, "60 Years Later and Still a Success," *New York Times* 18 December 1995, pp. B1 & B4.

84 John F. St. George, "An Analysis of the City's 'Astor' Housing Project," *Real Estate Record*, 4 May 1935, pp. 4-5 and "Architects Oppose Remodeling Plans," *New York Times*, 21 April 1935, p. 22 (1). The latter article quotes the Guild's open letter to Mayor Fiorello La Guardia.

interior grew tall enough and thick enough to give the illusion of a full garden court. Because of the First Houses's similarities to projects of the 1920s Richard Plunz characterizes the design of the complex as "an anachronism and atypical of what was to come in the following three decades of public housing."⁸⁰ While the First Houses were indeed atypical of the low-rise superblock and the tower-in-the-park morphologies associated with the public housing of the New Deal era and the post-World War II period respectively, they are not exactly anachronistic. Rather, the design of the First Houses was of the *Zeitgeist*, the product of not only the culture of decongestion but also the contemporaneous modernization movement which proposed tenement rehabilitation as an alternative to wholesale demolition.

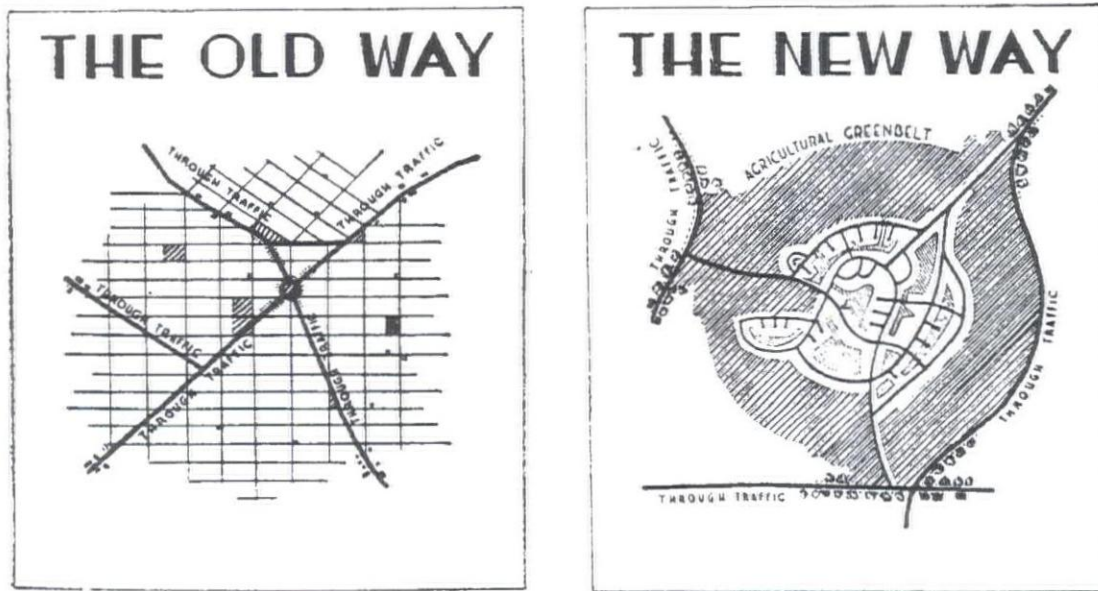
The modernization effort which metamorphosed the old law tenements on East Third Street into the First Houses was exceedingly thorough.²² While the old foundations were used, steel centerings were added to all spans, and new roofs were installed. Along Avenue A, keeping with standard modernization practice, new storefronts incorporated asymmetrically composed facades with large plate glass windows and off-center entrance doors. The exterior walls of all eight buildings were rebuilt with the original brick into the simplified, unornamented, stripped-down facades typical of those that were perceived as modern and up-to-date.⁸¹

The complete top-to-bottom makeover of the First Houses was carefully and critically scrutinized, assumedly because of its role as the curtain-raiser on Government-financed low cost housing. *Architectural Forum* sharply disparaged the actual modernization effort taking place on East Third Street and deemed the First Houses excessively expensive and therefore of benefit to no one but Vincent Astor.⁸² Though the *Forum* stopped short of calling the project a total boondoggle, the implications of stating that the NYCHA "had decided to bake cake, not bread, with its dough" were obvious enough.⁸³ Meanwhile, the Architectural Guild of America undertook an independent



22 From grid block to perimeter block: East Third Street modernization, New York City, 1934

analysis of the project and concluded that its plan was impractical, its finances unsound, and its structure unsafe. The Guild publicly opposed the modernization and called instead for the site to be totally cleared and rebuilt from scratch.⁸⁴ This opinion was shared by Lewis Mumford who reviewed the First Houses in his *Skyline* column in *The New Yorker* the very week the project opened in December 1935. He too complained that the cost of renovation was so great that "one



23 The grid and the greenbelt: old way versus new way according to Albert Mayer, 1936

might as well tear down these lousy quarters and make a fresh start," preferably somewhere else.⁸⁵ But Mumford's most opprobrious criticism was directed at the NYCHA's most decongestive act, namely the demolition of every third building on the site to provide the remaining structures with light, air, and open space—"the minimum housing requirements of every American no matter how small his income," according to Langdon Post.⁸⁶ According to Mumford, this selective demolition was a clear demonstration of "precisely how not to rebuild the blighted areas of New York" and he mocked those who promoted it as either "innocent or deluded."⁸⁷

Maybe they were both in these early years of public housing, but the bureaucrats of decongestion were just getting started. On East Third Street they had succeeded in reducing the congestion from 70 percent to 40 percent by punching out every third building. But even as Eleanor Roosevelt was cutting a red, white, and blue ribbon to open the First Houses, drastic work was underway in Brooklyn to decongest 12 of the borough's densest blocks. The four-story Williamsburg Houses (also known as Ten Eyck Houses), completed in 1937 with full PWA financing, reduced land coverage from 90 percent to 33 percent with twenty buildings disposed in four superblocks across a "pseudo-*Zeilenbau*" site plan. William Lescaze's arrangement of the individual buildings on the superblocks was intended as a gesture of grid-defying bravura. By shifting the buildings 15 degrees to the northwest, Lescaze effectively rent the Williamsburg Houses from the surrounding gridded urban fabric. Unfortunately, as Richard Pommer's analysis shows, this "attention-getting aesthetic effect" resulted in vicious wind channels and poor sun exposure in many apartments.⁸⁸

the triumph of congestion While William Lescaze was responsible for the individual design elements of the Williamsburg Houses, the man in charge of overseeing this massive decongestion project was Richmond Shreve, designer of the Empire State Building. The Empire State was of course a preeminent symbol of the culture of congestion: well in advance of Rem Koolhaas, the editor of an anti-urban tract called *Cities are Abnormal* made this clear, denouncing it as "a monument to congestion."⁸⁹ Shreve's role in the oppositional Williamsburg and Empire State projects, icons of decongestion and congestion respectively, might seem a product of what Koolhaas identified as the inherent schizophrenia of Manhattanism. However, this interpretation is perhaps too cynical when considering the housing projects of the 1930s, when architects, planners, and policy-makers—members of what Catherine Bauer would recall as a genuine "social front"—were earnestly working to achieve urban decongestion.⁹⁰ Indeed, at the time, William Starrett, contractor for the Empire State Building, saw no contradiction in a single mind producing both the hyper-dense skyscraper and the hypo-dense housing project. For Starrett, skyscrapers were a supreme American achievement. In his view it was only natural that the men who created them should turn their tal-

⁸⁵ Mumford, "The Skyline: The New Housing," pp. 105-6. Mumford advocated abandoning the "bleak, filthy, ugly" Lower East Side in favor of the "open spaces and green" of the far northern Bronx, where Stein's Hillside Homes had just been completed.

⁸⁶ "City Built Homes will Open Dec. 3," *New York Times*, 21 November 1935, p. 3 (1).

⁸⁷ Mumford, p. 106.

⁸⁸ Pommer, p. 255. Richard Plunz calls the project's alignment "an abrupt schism." See Plunz, pp. 216-18.

⁸⁹ Elmer T. Peterson, ed., *Cities are Abnormal* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), p. 7. See also Koolhaas, pp. 132-51.

⁹⁰ Bauer, "The Social Front of Modern Architecture in the 1930s," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 24 (March 1965), pp. 48-52.



24 Robert Taylor Homes, Chicago, 1964. Hube Henry, Hedrich-Blessing

91 Quoted in Gries and Ford, p. 92. Gries and Ford describe Starrett as "a builder of bigger and bigger buildings."

ents and energies to solving a supreme American problem—the urban slum: "It is the hope of people who are discussing this [slum] problem that those same brains that put together the great skyscrapers... will turn toward this." Starrett predicted that the "same great, magnificent structure of building ability, our great architectural skill, can develop out of this social order something just as fine in the end as the skyscraper...it will not be so conspicuous...but it will be none the less real." 91

It is debatable whether public housing ever reached the heights of achievement Starrett optimistically predicted. Certainly, the potential for slum eradication, community enhancement, and decent, affordable apartments was present in those first federal projects of the 1930s—in First Houses, Mackley Houses, Lakeview Terrace, Harlem River Houses, and Williamsburg Houses—which, as Richard Pommer claimed, "set the pattern for the architecture of housing projects in

many cities of the nation for the rest of the decade."⁹² Certainly too, the potential for decongestion was present in these projects; indeed, decongestion was more than merely present, it was a cultural determinant and a collective *raison d'être*. These slum-clearing/decongesting potentials, largely realized in the projects of the 1930s, were still present during the war years in defense housing projects, such as Gropius and Breuer's Aluminum City Terrace (1942). Though based on the decongestive paradigms of the recent past, like Radburn and Greenbelt, these war-time projects gave decongestion a present-day, military spin. ²³ "Scatter for safety" and "low density decreases slaughter" became the new urban planning battle cries as the grid was condemned not because it was a slum-producing congestant, but because it was an easy target for air-raid attack. Decongestion seemed destined to win this particular battle, defeating even the towers of Manhattanism which, like the grid, possessed a "strong geometr[y]" and "prominent artificial[ity]" which made them "impossible to camouflage" from enemy war planes.⁹³

Aside from the issue of national defense, Catherine Bauer was confident in 1941 that housing ideals had shifted away from the skyscraper—that "romantic idolum for most Cities of the Future in the roaring twenties." The housing projects of the 1930s had made this a reality, pointing "definitely toward two and even one-story structures; the top limit for walk-ups [descending] from five to four to three stories." Likewise, Bauer was certain that the mechanistic grid would finally give way to the superblock, which was not only cheaper to build but was "more human."⁹⁴ But in the shift to large-scale public housing, which Bauer predicted for the postwar period, there was something to be learned from the skyscraper after all, something the war-time projects had already understood.

After World War II, despite predictions to the contrary, the skyscraper became more than just an organizational paradigm. Planners and architects had learned the lessons of the tower too well, and it became a model for public housing as an actual building typology. In some ways the postwar tower-in-the-park represents the ultimate expression of the 1930s culture of decongestion, with its buildings widely spaced on superblocks with astoundingly low ground coverage. However, in the shift from low-rise to high-rise, the tower-in-the-park also represents a perversion of that earlier, hopeful culture. In the postwar decades when high-rise became synonymous with high-density—not of buildings, but of people—an important tenet of decongestion was forgotten. American planners and architects were still defying the grid in their slum clearance efforts, but that defiance now held the implicit danger of over-crowding, of re-congestion. As Lewis Mumford tren-

the postwar tower-in-the-park is the ultimate expression of the 1930s culture of decongestion

chantly observed in 1950, the superblock might just generate the super-slum.⁹⁵ The new high-rise towers of the postwar era, "the projects," were nothing more than "super-tenements." The seeds for these towers had been planted, Bauer argued, by the "strange... skyscrapomania" of federal postwar housing policy and now, in the 1950s, "a nation-wide crop of behemoths" was being harvested: congestion-producing towers which bore "about as much resemblance to the ordinary American idea of home as lower Manhattan does to Concord."⁹⁶ Any visitor to an American city can easily identify the "projects," while an early twentieth-century city could camouflage the destitute within the regularity of the street grid.

Beginning with the dramatic implosion of Pruitt-Igoe in 1972, a steady stream of public housing towers have been demolished, culminating recently with the notorious Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago. The congestion/decongestion debate has effectively come full circle. ²⁴ As the postwar projects, themselves decongestive artifacts, now come tumbling down, the ideology of decongestion born in the early decades of this century continues to shape the American urban landscape in profound, if ironic, ways.

⁹² Pommer, p. 235.

⁹³ Douglas Haskell, "What Does Military Design Offer the Planning of Peace?" *Architectural Record* 85 (March 1939), pp. 68-75.

⁹⁴ Catherine Bauer, "Planned Large-Scale Housing: A Balance Sheet of Progress," *Architectural Record* 89 (May 1941), pp. 89, 97, and 99.

⁹⁵ Lewis Mumford, "The Skyline: The Gentle Art of Overcrowding," *New Yorker*, 20 May 1950, p. 83.

⁹⁶ Catherine Bauer, "Clients for Housing," *Progressive Architecture* 33 (May 1952), pp. 61-2.



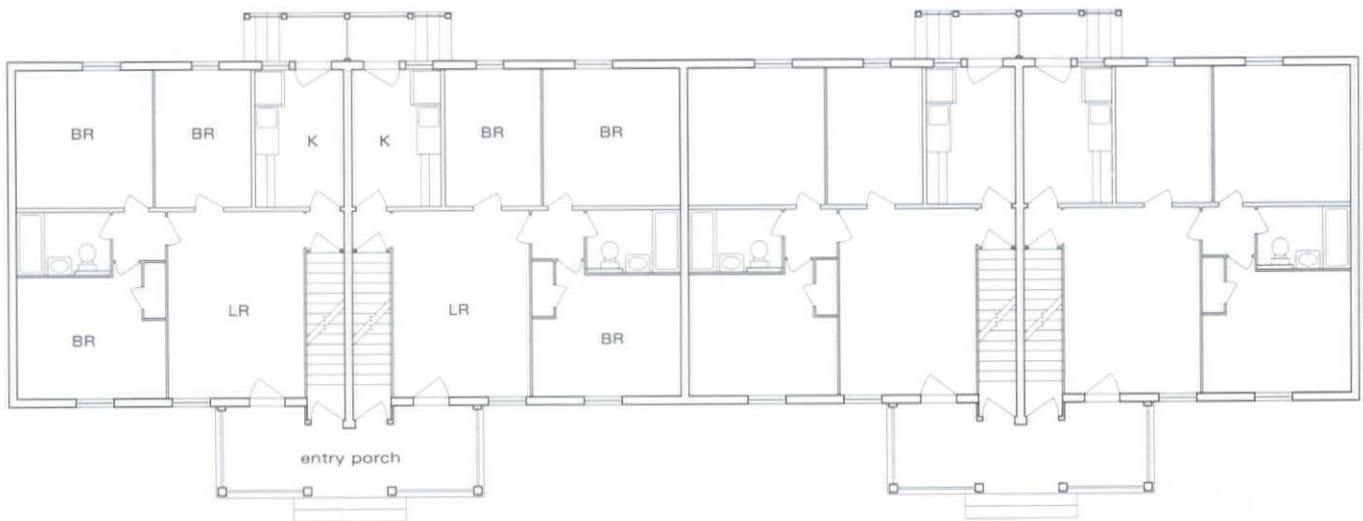
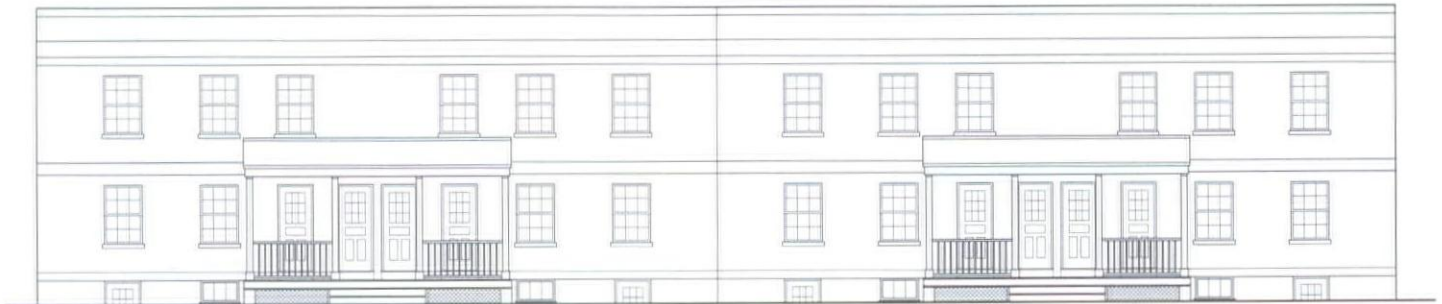
Street view of Sunnyside Gardens, 1920s



Shared green with private garden plots beyond, 1928



Site plan showing successive building stages:
1 = built 1924, 2 = 1925, 3 = 1926, 4 = 1927, 5 = 1928

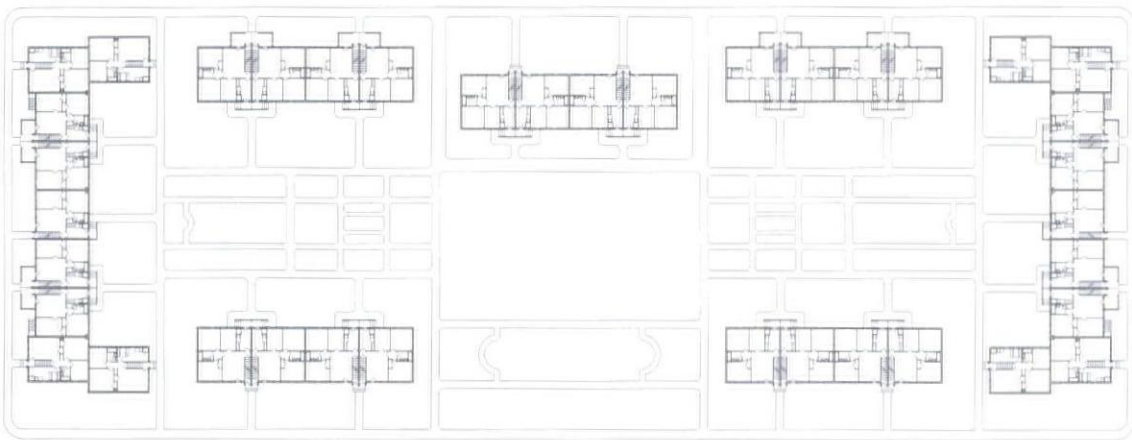
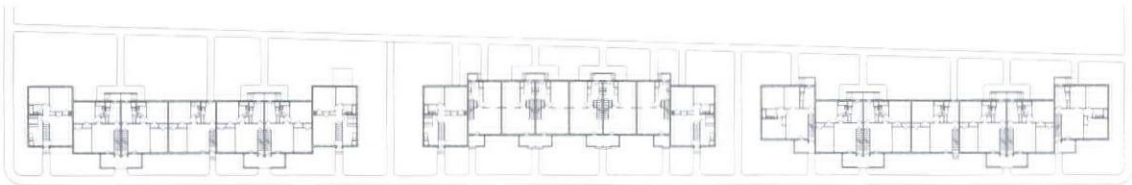


Typical unit plans and elevations: 1" = 16'

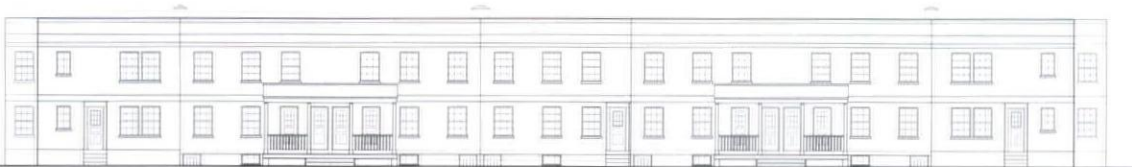
sunnyside gardens Stein and Wright Queens, NY 1929

lot area 55.82 acres | **apartments** 1,202 units, all two stories above a basement; three-family houses, two-family houses, single-family houses, flats | **social amenities** private gardens, common garden space, playground, tennis court, rapid transit station, community center | **parking** remote garage compounds | **original occupants** mainly non-professional workers, mechanics, office workers, tradesmen, chauffeurs, salesmen – of varied racial and religious background | **current occupants** middle-class | **construction type** stock framing, unpainted Hudson River brick exteriors | **drawings** Rosemary Suh

Sunnyside Gardens, a development of the City Housing Corporation in New York, was an early experiment in garden city living. Intended as housing for middle-income families in Queens, Sunnyside was regarded as a social, economic and architectural experiment in building a low-density residential community. The project was viewed as a laboratory in which to work out a modified perimeter block scheme offering private garden plots as well as a shared green.



Block unit plans: 1" = 100'



Street elevation: 1" = 32'



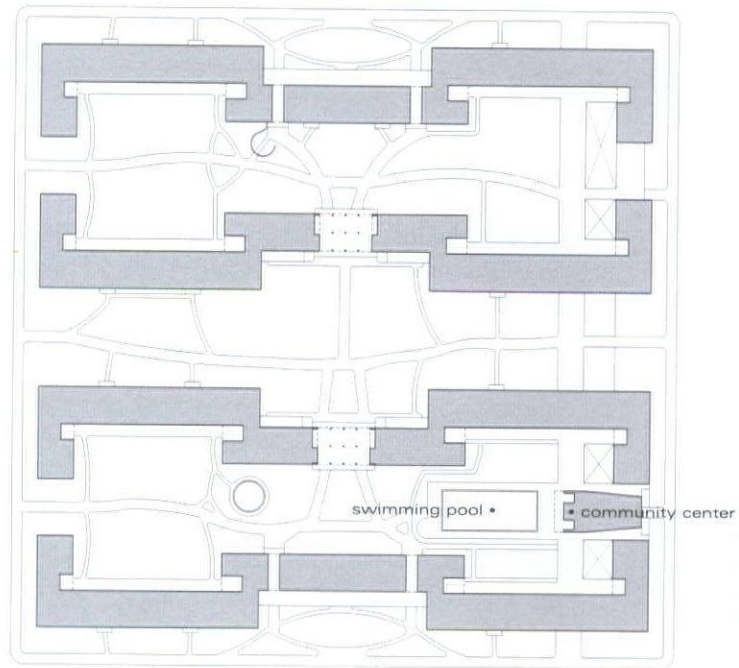
Back of row houses with shared entry, 1999



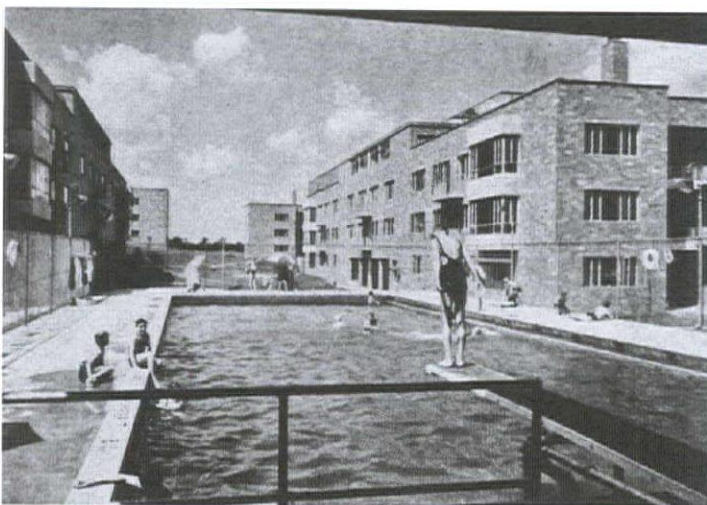
Private gardens opening onto common green, 1999



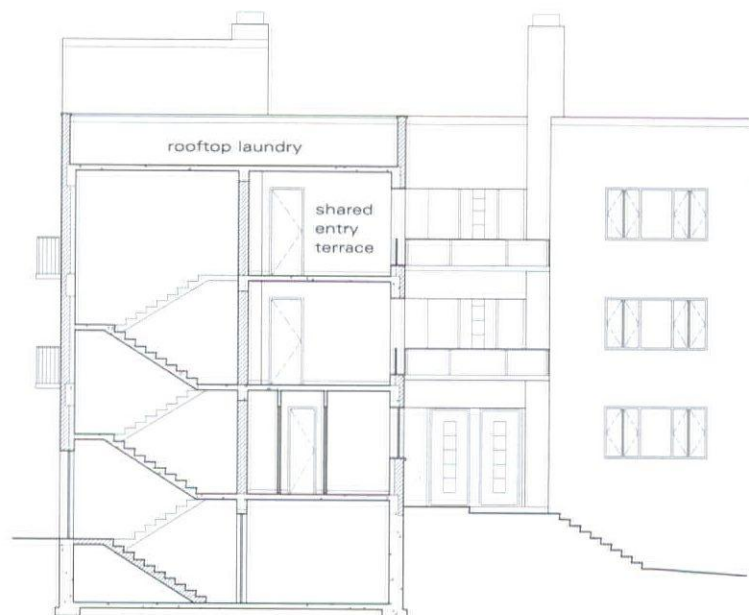
Mackley Houses, 1935, with the hosiery factory where most residents were employed



Site plan: 1" = 150'



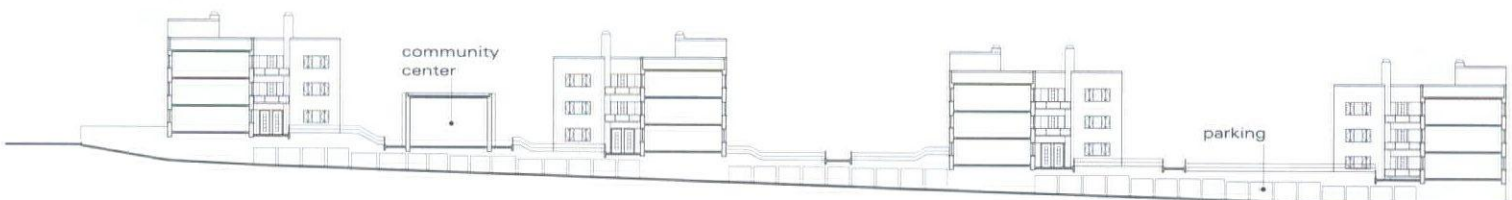
Community swimming pool in courtyard, 1936



Section at unit entry: 1" = 16'



Courtyard elevation: 1" = 64'



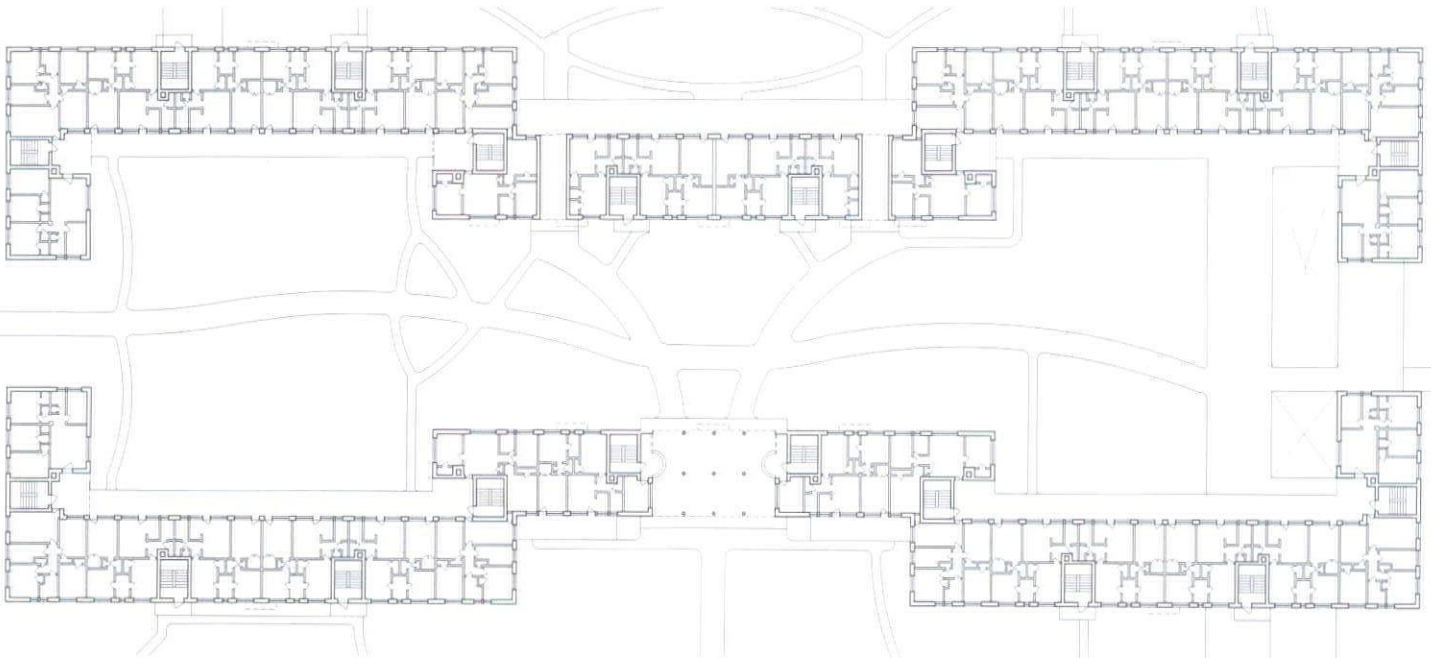
Site section: 1" = 64'

mackley houses

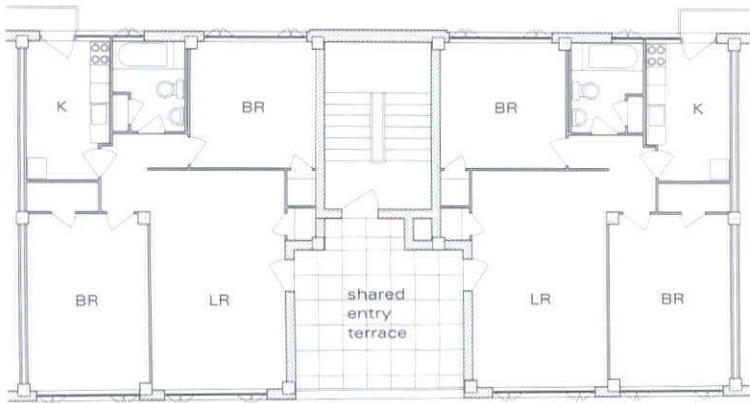
Stonorov and Kastner Philadelphia, PA 1935

lot area 4.5 acres	apartments 284 total units, 26% five-room, 45% four-room, 29% two-and-a-half room	lot coverage 32%	project cost \$1,153,607	cost per room \$1063	rent per room \$10.75	social amenities community hall, swimming pool, kindergarten, roof laundry and play areas, tennis courts, shops and filling station	parking lower level garage	original occupants American Federation of Hosiery workers	current occupants lower-income	construction type industrial tile facing, steel casement windows, reinforced concrete floors, asphalt-tile flooring, electric ranges	drawings Mike Harshman
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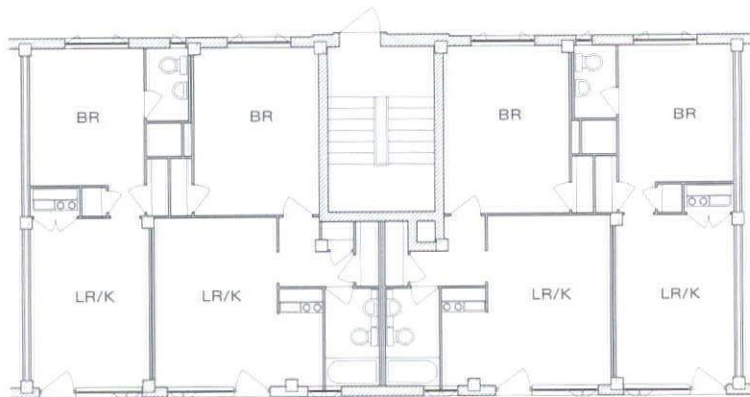
The Carl Mackley Houses, built with federal funds, provided community living for hosiery workers in Philadelphia. Breaking from the local tradition of row houses, the Mackley Houses won high praise for its European-inspired modernist design applied sensitively in an American context. Notable features included interior landscaping and open spaces, below-grade parking, common rooftop laundry facilities, swimming pool and community center. Apartments were grouped around common stairwells, and small ground-floor apartments opened onto shared courtyards.



Block plan: 1" = 64'



Unit plans, typical floor: 1" = 16'



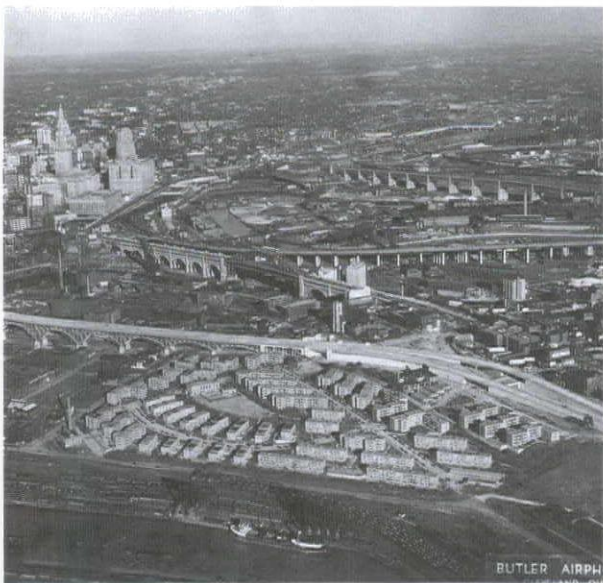
Unit plans, ground floor: 1" = 16'



Views connect interior courtyard spaces, 1999



Bar building seen from courtyard, 1999



Aerial view of Lakeview Terrace, 1936, sited at urban periphery between rail yards and major arteries



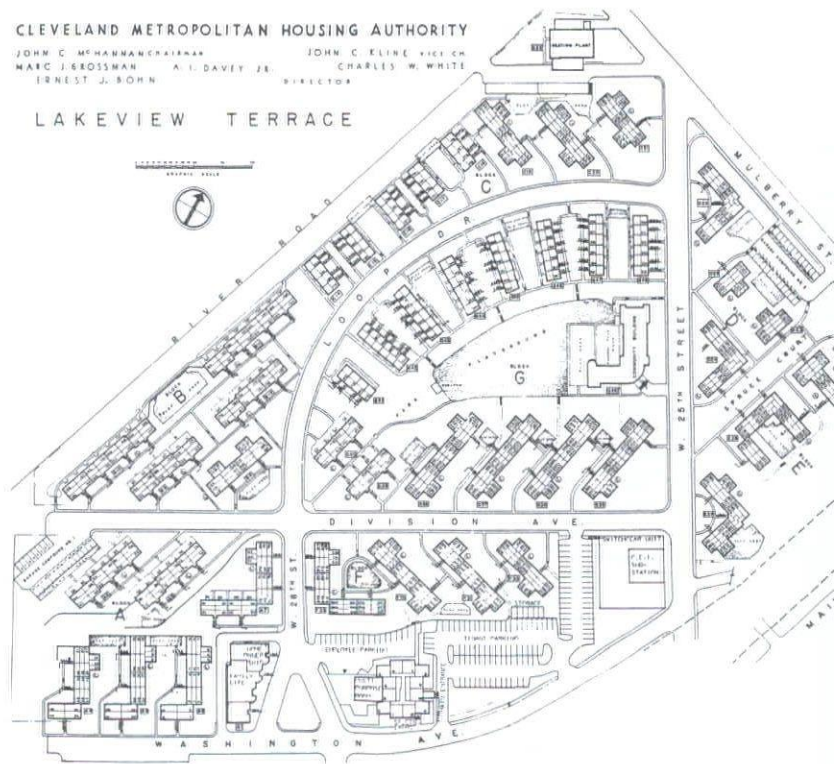
Townhouse unit, 1936



Projecting private balconies modulating elevations of terrace units, 1936

CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN HOUSING AUTHORITY
 JOHN C. McHANNACKERMAN JOHN C. ELINE, VICE CH.
 MARC J. GROSSMAN A. I. DAVEY, JR. CHARLES W. WHITE
 ERNEST J. BOHN DIRECTOR

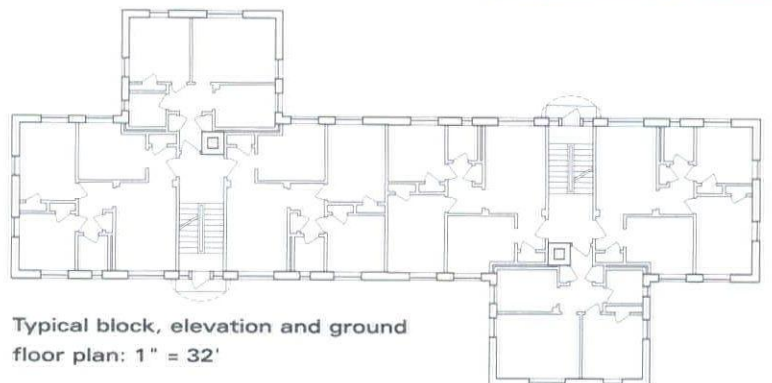
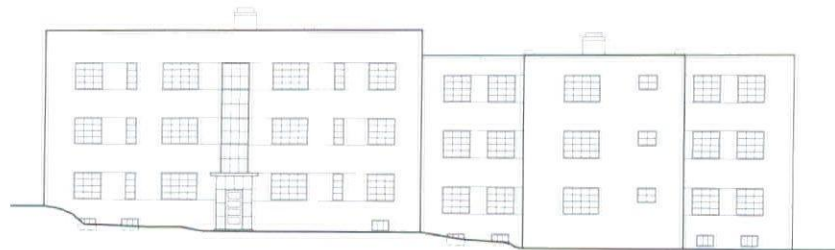
LAKEVIEW TERRACE



Site plan



Typical plan: 1" = 16'



Typical block, elevation and ground floor plan: 1" = 32'

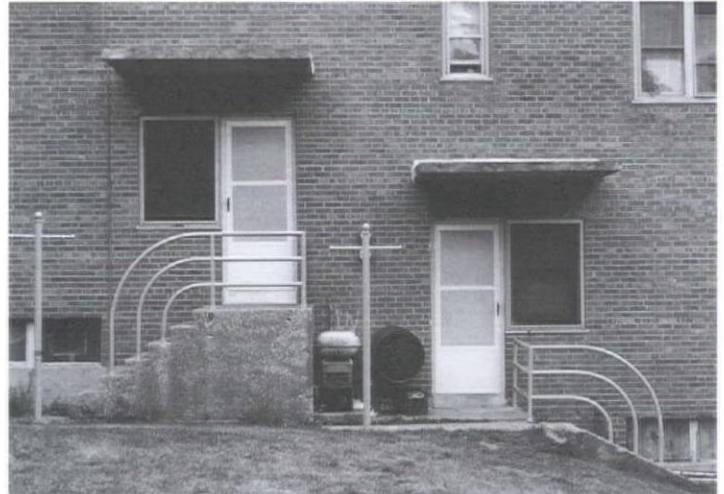
lakeview terrace Weinberg, Conrad, Teare Cleveland, OH 1936

lot area 33 acres (formerly a slum)	apartments 620 total units, 44% two-room, 37% four-room, 6% four 1/2 room, 13% five-room	lot coverage 47%	project cost \$3,470,230	cost per room \$1265.48	rent per room \$5.84, or \$7.37 with utilities
social amenities community building with nursery, kitchen			parking some separate garages provided		
original occupants low-income			current occupants low-income, high vacancy		
construction types Face brick walls with tile and plaster, concrete slabs, steel casement windows, central steam heat, gas range, electric refrigerator					
drawings Mike Harshman					

Lakeview Terrace, built with federal funds, was a *Zeilenbau*-style housing development intended for low-income residents and located on the periphery of central Cleveland. A central open space, recreation area and a community building with nursery were features of the community. Individual gardens and chicken coops were also incorporated into the original concept as a source of self-sufficiency for residents.



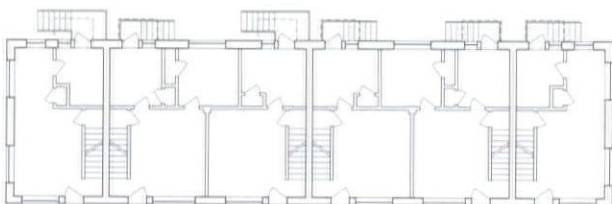
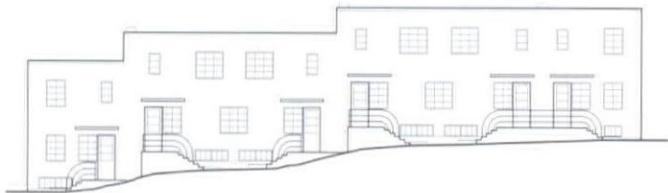
Townhouses, garden view, 1999



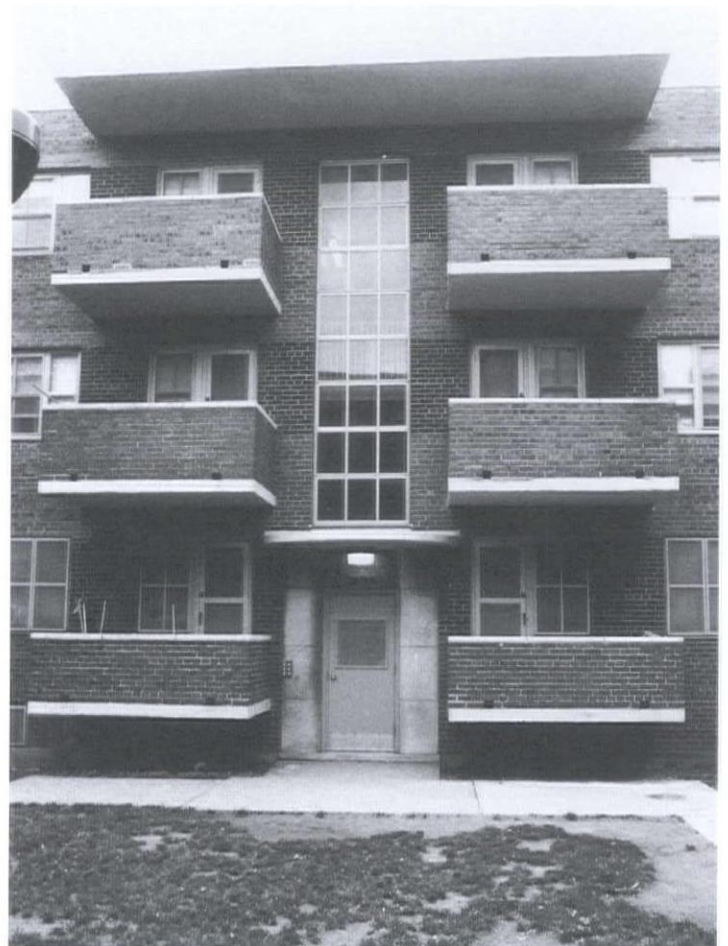
Handrails and projecting brows at townhouse entry, 1999



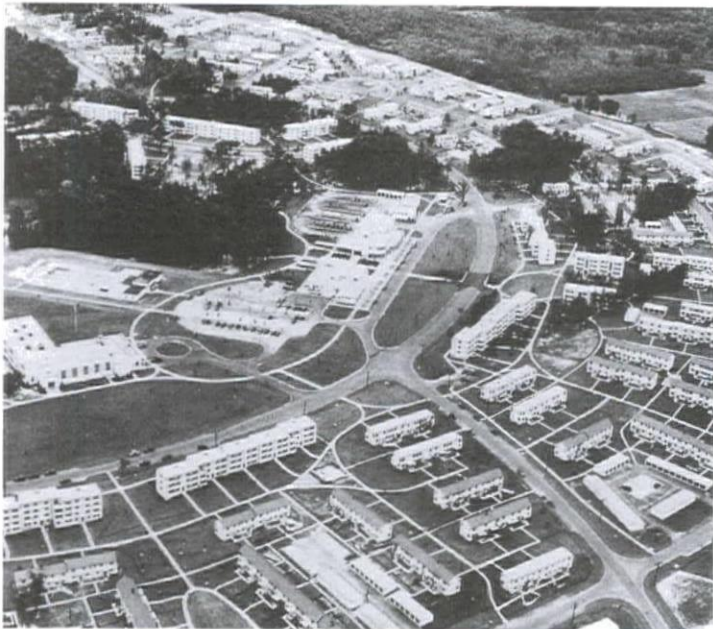
Townhouse, ground and second floor plans: 1" = 16'



Townhouse, elevation and ground floor plan: 1" = 32'



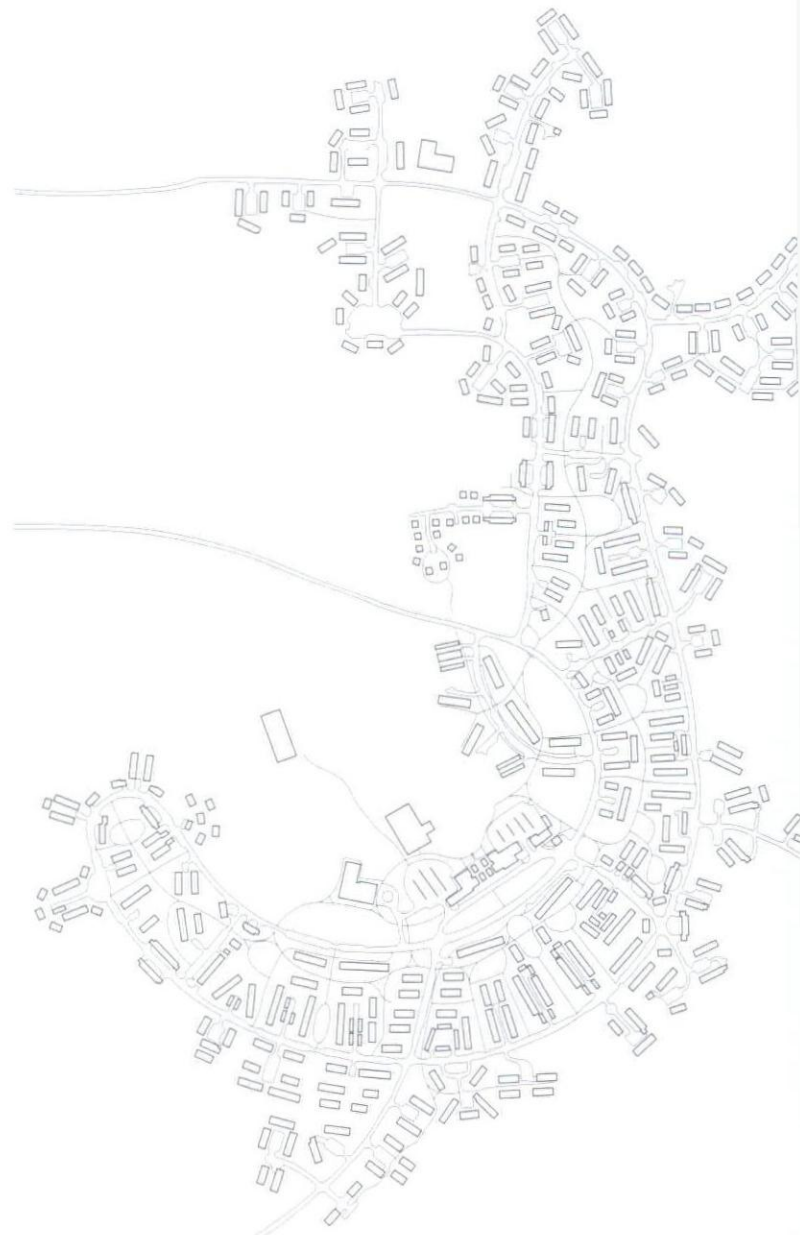
Projecting balconies at terrace unit entry, 1999



Aerial view of Greenbelt, Maryland, 1937



Walkways designed to separate vehicular from pedestrian traffic, 1937



Site plan: 1" = 1000'



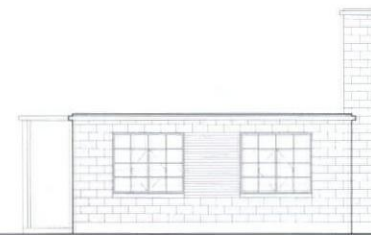
Row house elevation: 1" = 32'



Apartment block elevation: 1" = 32'



Honeymoon cottage, elevation and plan: 1" = 16'



greenbelt

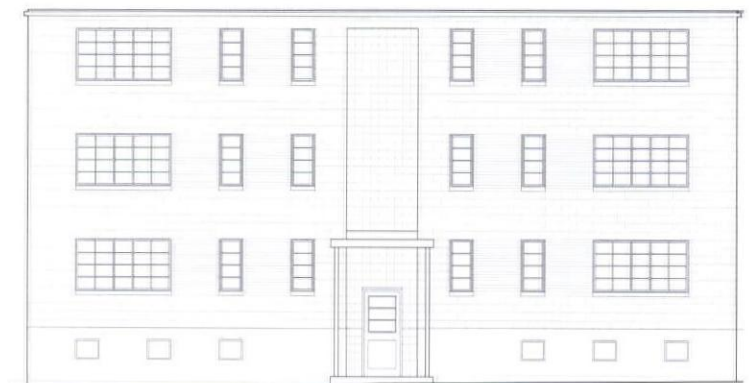
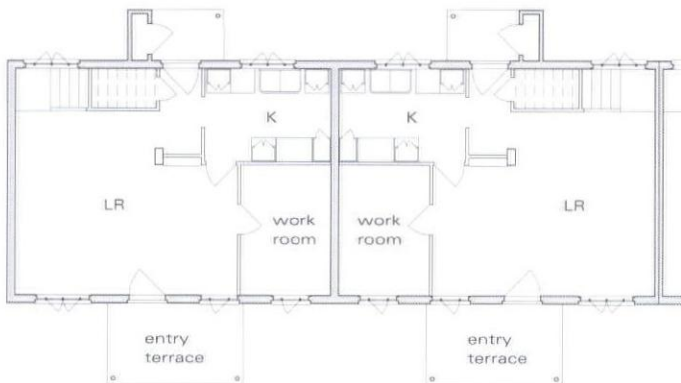
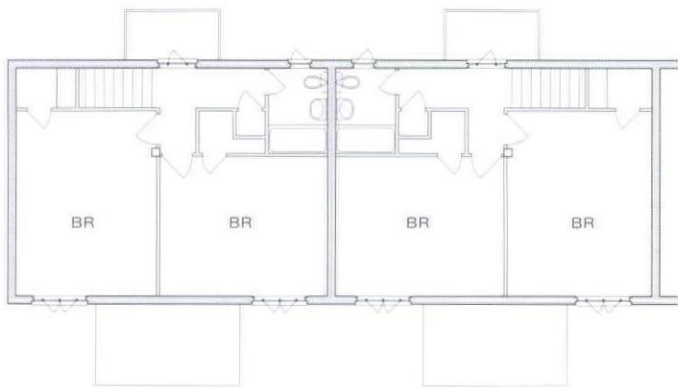
Wadsworth and Ellington Greenbelt, MD 1937

lot area housing on 250 acres | **apartments** 885 total, 574 row houses (four to seven rooms), 306 apartments (one-and-a-half to three rooms), 5 houses | **project cost** \$9,325,000 | **cost per room** \$5,423 per dwelling unit | **rent per room** \$5.90 without utilities | **social amenities** schools, shopping center, athletic field, lake for boating, hiking trails | **parking** garage buildings | **original occupants** destitute or low-income families | **current occupants** middle-class families | **construction type** brick veneer over wood sheathing and framing, concrete block, three-coat plaster walls, first floor slab-on-grade with asphalt composition tiles, second floor hardwood over wood joists, slate roofs, steel casement windows, gas range, electric refrigerator, forced hot water, heat fired by oil | **drawings** Devon Perkins and Rosemary Suh

Built as a model for numerous new greenbelt towns sponsored by the federal government, this project was intended primarily for resettlement of destitute or low-income families during the Great Depression. Conceived as an immediate source of jobs and as a complete town, Greenbelt provided large common areas, a network of protected walkways and underpasses, and cooperative businesses, shops and a community center.



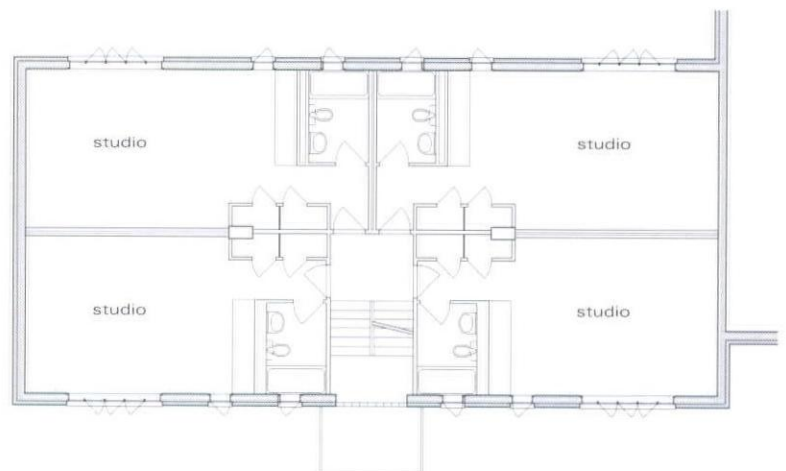
Details include projecting window sills, corner windows, 1998



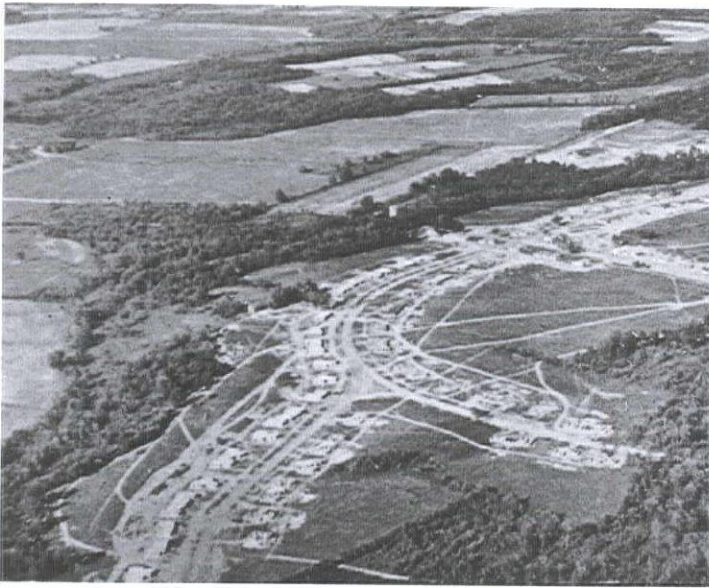
Row house, elevation, ground- and second-floor plans: 1" = 16'



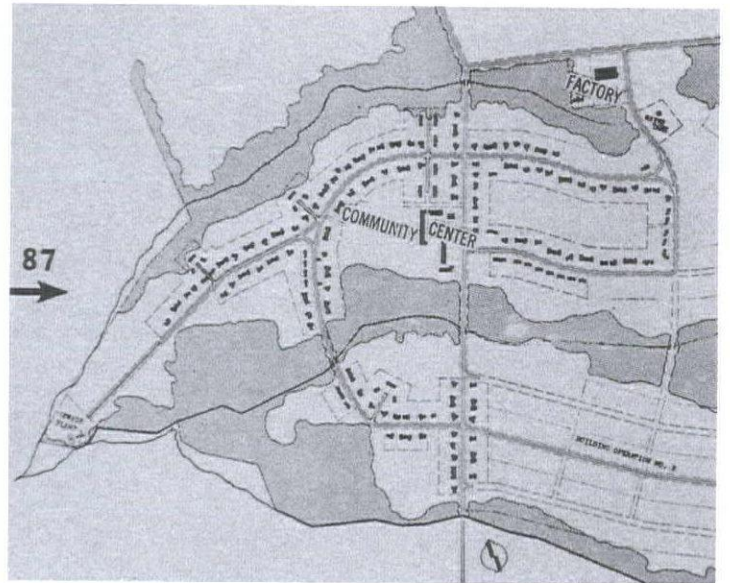
Honeymoon cottage annexed to larger bar buildings, 1998



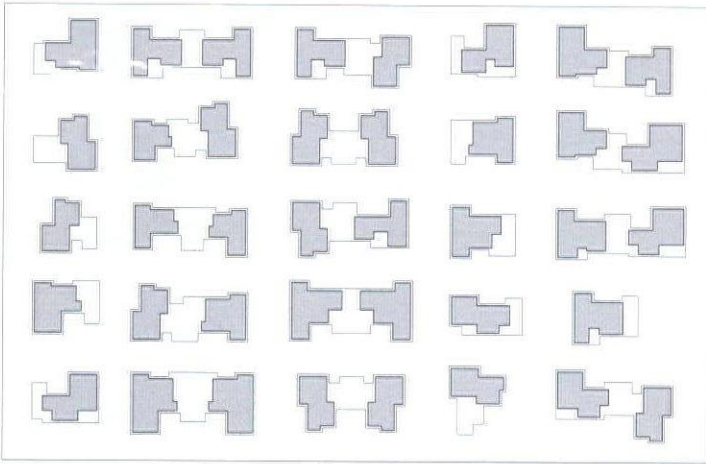
Apartment block elevation and plan: 1" = 16'



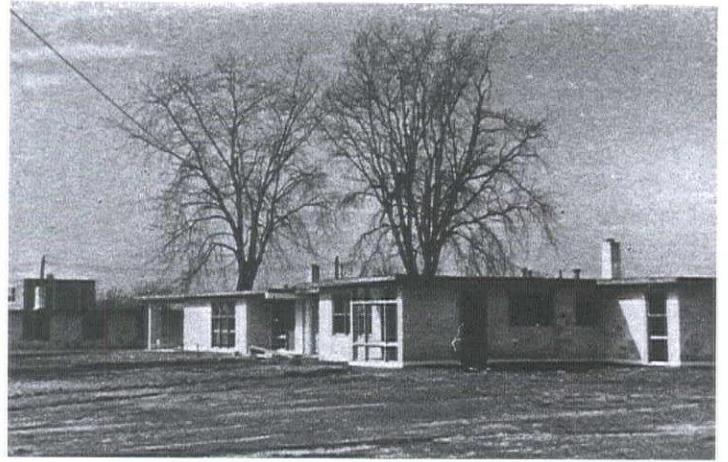
Aerial photo of Jersey Homesteads, 1937



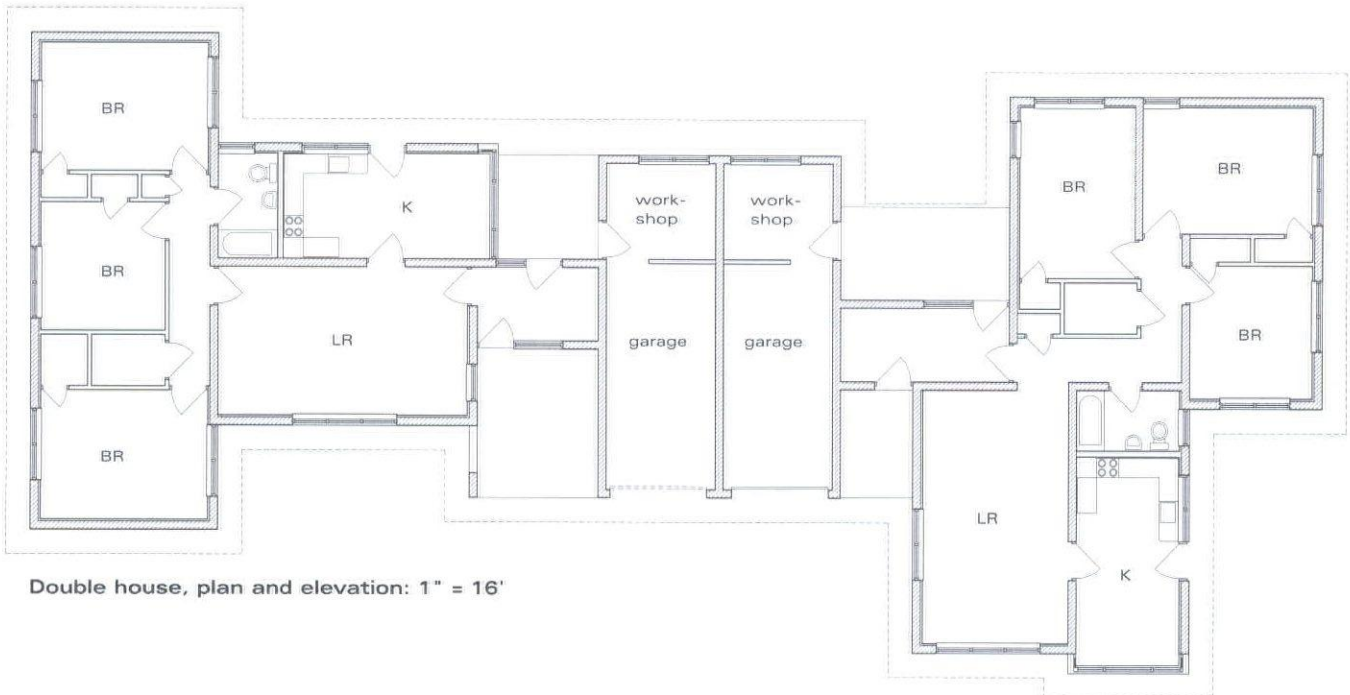
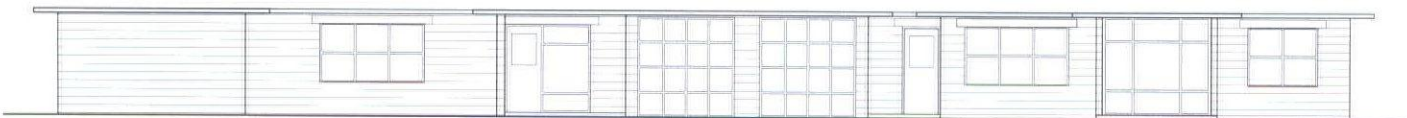
Plan showing the first building program, 1937; dotted lines indicate future construction sites



House plan types



Double house, 1937



Double house, plan and elevation: 1" = 16'

jersey homesteads

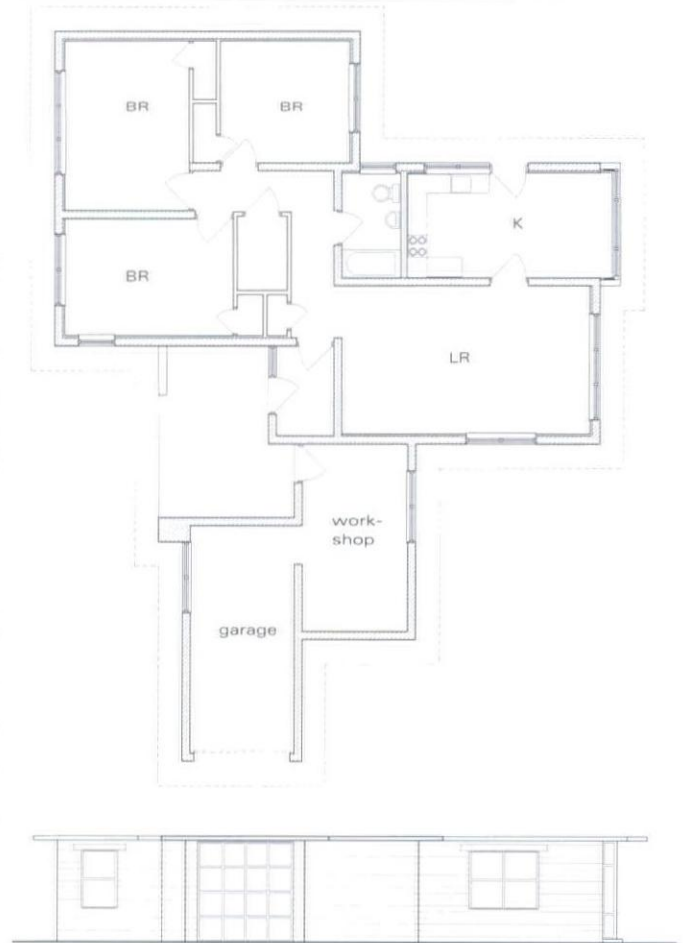
Kastner and Kahn Roosevelt, NJ 1937

lot area 1.93 square miles	apartments 200 units, 146 three-bedroom (five room), 54 four-bedroom (six room)				
lot coverage one acre per unit	project cost \$1,000,000	cost per room \$950 (\$5,000 per house)	rent per room \$24 per month for full ownership at 40 years	social amenities garment factory, land for farming, school, cemetery	parking carports
original occupants skilled needle workers from Manhattan	current occupants commuters, artists	construction type reinforced concrete floor slab and roof, rigid insulation and 4-ply rolled roofing, wood parquet floor glued to slab, concrete-block exterior walls with furring, two coats plaster on metal lath, wood double-hung windows	drawings Joseph Pikiewicz and Mike Harshman		

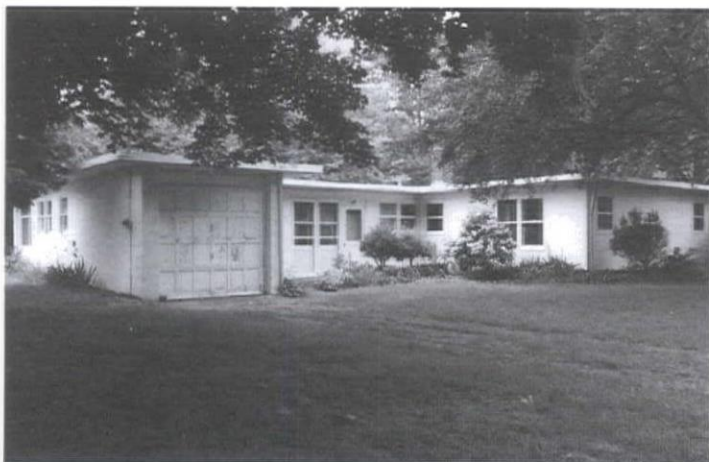
A project of the U.S. Resettlement Administration, Jersey Homesteads was an experiment in cooperative living. Opened to much fanfare, including the endorsement of Albert Einstein, the project originally provided a rural community for several hundred Jewish skilled needle workers from New York City. The community was comprised of modern flat-roofed, one-story concrete block houses of 29 plan types. A communal garment factory, school, synagogue, cemetery and short-lived farm were included as part of the original design.



Partial site plan, showing unit type variations



Single house plan and elevation: 1" = 16'



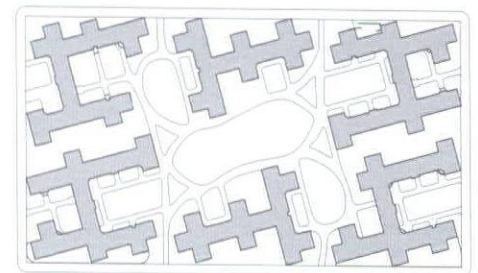
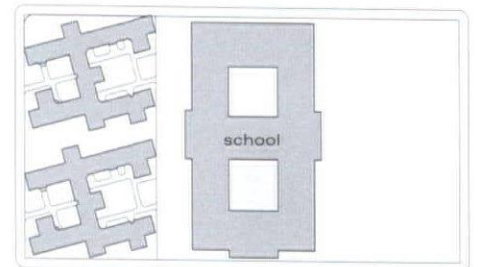
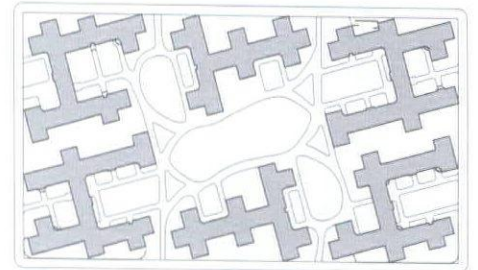
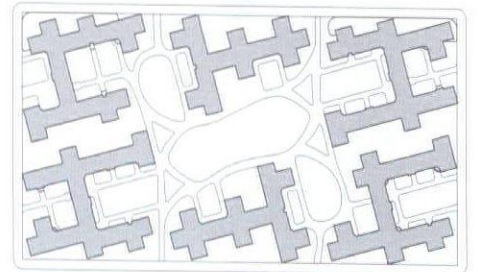
Single house, 1998



Single house, 1998



Williamsburg Houses under construction, 1937



Site plan: 1" = 300'



Housing blocks rotated 15 degrees off dominant street grid, 1937

williamsburg houses

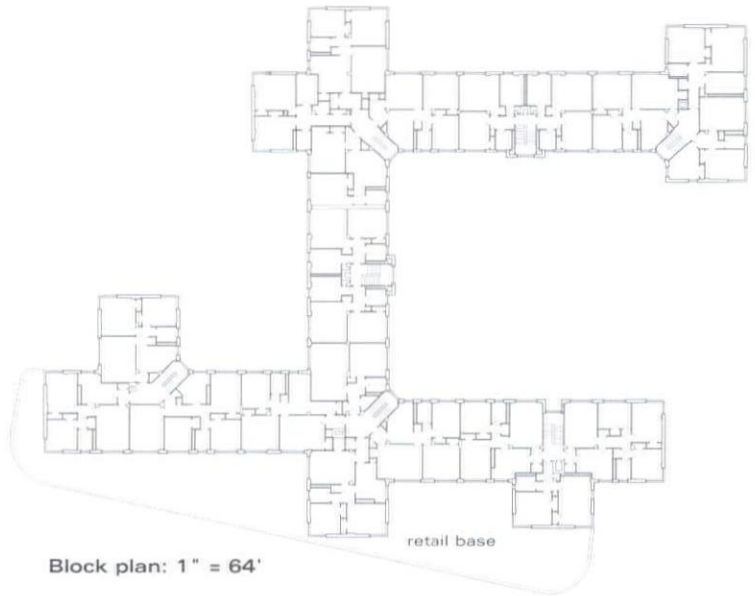
Shreve and Lescaze Brooklyn, NY 1937

lot area 25 acres over ten city blocks | **apartments** 1,622 apartments – all four-story walk-ups, 49 two-room, 769 three-room, 737 four-room, 67 five-room | **lot coverage** 32.1% | **project cost** \$12,483,193 | **cost per room** \$1500.84
rent per room \$7.12, or \$8.52 with utilities | **social amenities** stores, school, open spaces and play areas | **parking** none
original occupants low-income | **current occupants** low-income | **construction type** brick veneer with back-up clay tile, exposed concrete spandrel beams, interior walls of two-inch solid plaster, concrete slab floors and roof, steel sash casement windows, wood floors glued to slab, linoleum in kitchen, tile in bath | **drawings** Andrew Wolfram

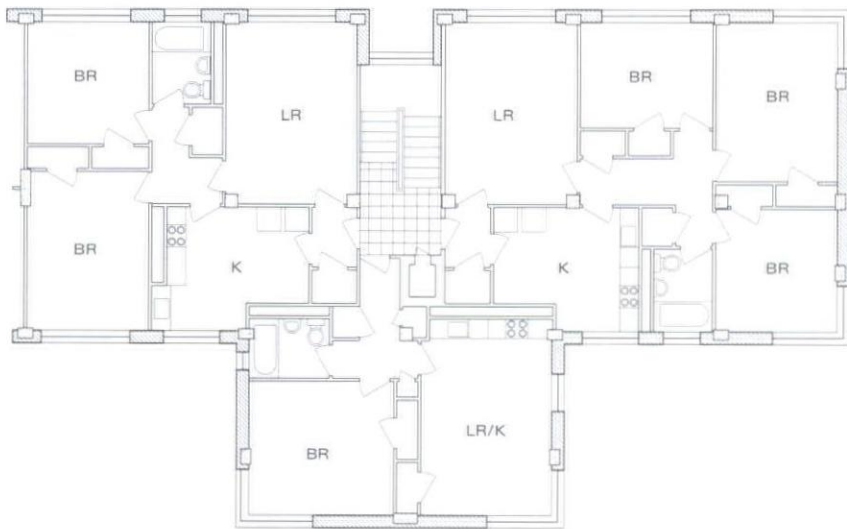
The Williamsburg Houses, also known as Ten Eyck Houses, utilized federal funds to decongest twelve of the densest blocks in Brooklyn. The project included community rooms, recreation spaces and a public school. Comprised of twenty modernist buildings in four superblocks, the project's most radical physical feature is its uniform displacement fifteen degrees off the surrounding city grid.



Corner with retail base aligned to city grid, 1999



Block plan: 1" = 64'



Unit plans, typical floor: 1" = 16'



Planted courtyards and play areas link spaces between housing blocks, 1999



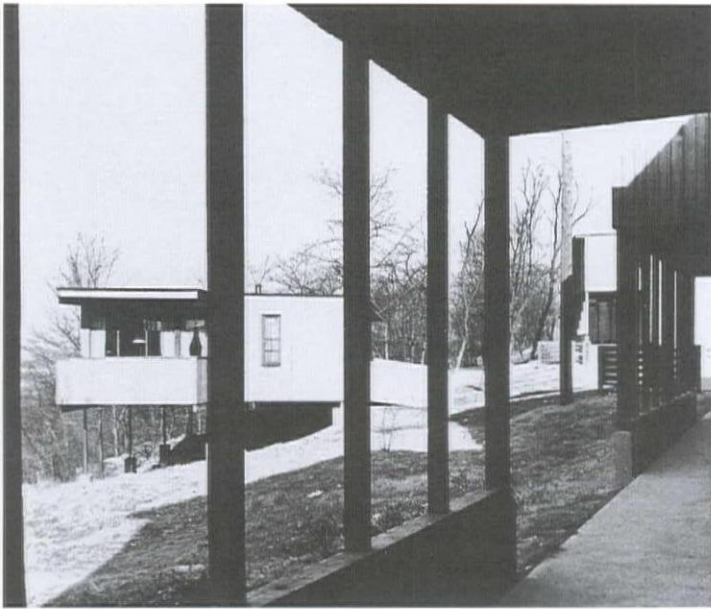
Elevation: 1" = 32'



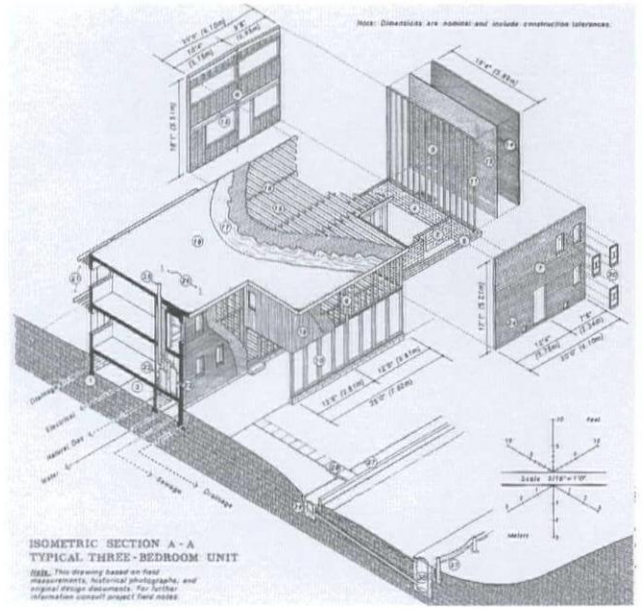
Terrace buildings from nearby hilltop, 1944



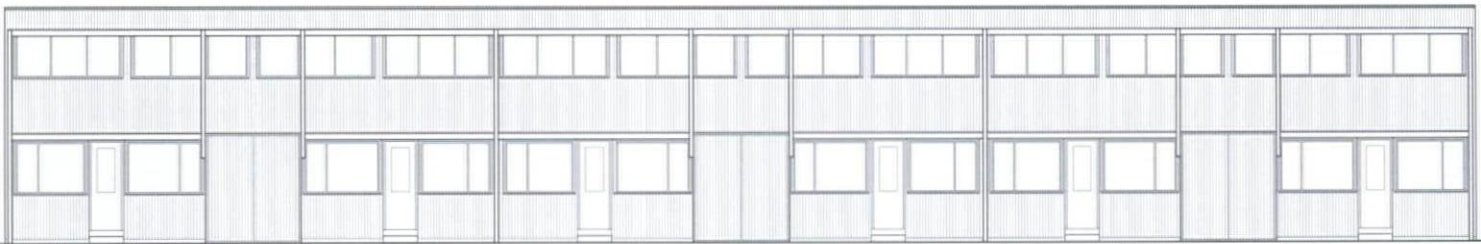
Site plan, not to scale



Hillside double house seen from arcade of row house, 1944



Construction axonometric



Row houses, street elevation: 1" = 16'



Row houses, rear elevation: 1" = 16'

aluminum city terrace

Gropius and Breuer New Kensington, PA 1942

lot area 45 acres	apartments 240 total, 202 two-story two- to three-bedroom groups, 30 one-story one-bedroom rows, 8 one-bedroom semi-detached units	project cost \$1,228,470	cost per room \$709 per room, (\$3,188 per unit)	rent per room \$14-32 per unit, according to income
social amenities community building	parking none	original occupants intended for wartime production workers but Alcoa plant did not expand as planned	current occupants middle-class families	
construction type brick veneer front elevation, vertical cedar siding (unpainted) with continuous windows across rear, wood framing	drawings Joseph Pikiewicz			

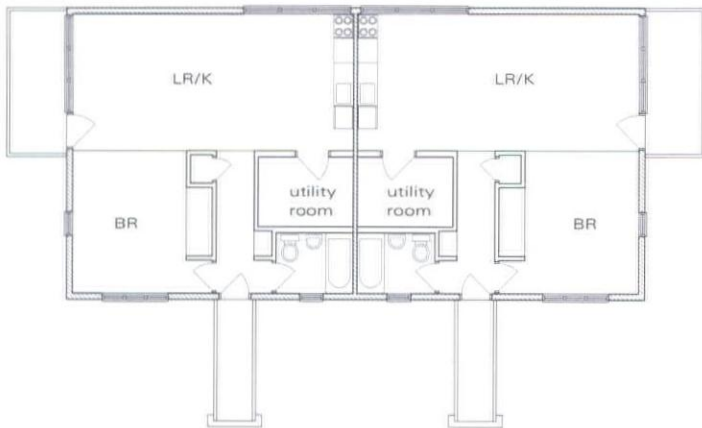
Aluminum City Terrace, strategically located near an Alcoa plant supplying war materials, was sponsored by the federal government as defense housing. Located over two and one-half miles from the town, the area had no streets when planned. The buildings were sited to take advantage of views and to allow for maximum sunlight. The hillside complex of one- and two-story modern houses incorporated ribbon windows, sun-shading devices and other architectural innovations. Amenities included a community building and attached tool sheds.



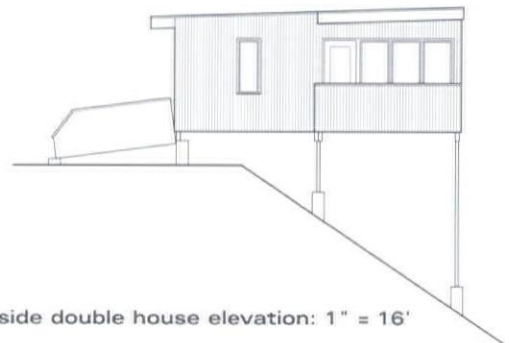
Entry view of typical row house, 1998



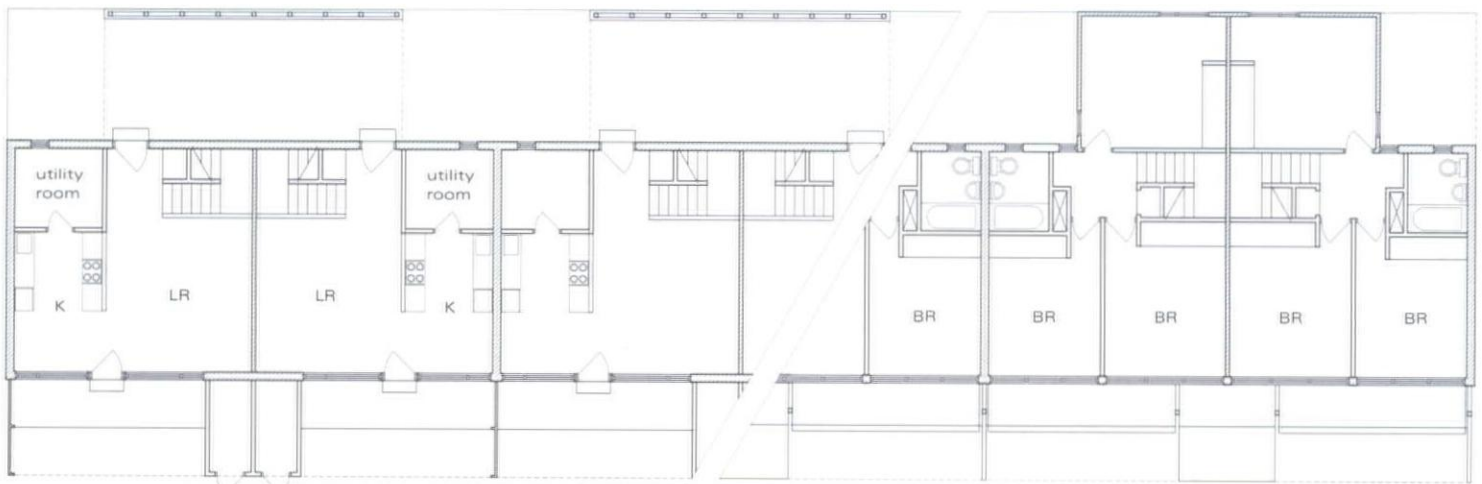
Row house terraces and walkways, 1998



Hillside double house plan: 1" = 16'



Hillside double house elevation: 1" = 16'



Row houses, ground and second floor plans: 1" = 16'

The “new” company town constitutes a distinct chapter in the history of American industrial settlement. Designers of new company towns created fictional environments and established an important episode in a continuing American design tradition of “themed living.” Until 1900, most American company towns were industrial landscapes, direct translations of the technical and social necessities of a particular method of production into a settlement form. Based on expediency, structured by habit, and laid out by pragmatic owners or company engineers, their patterns mirrored the demands of industrial processes. After 1900, professional designers—architects, planners, and landscape architects—took over the task of designing company towns. Unlike vernacular expression, professional design explicitly effaced the visual connection between the living environment and its industrial origins. Overlays of physical and social planning rendered the towns’ industrial purpose almost unrecognizable as designers replaced the rigid geometry and hierarchical order of earlier company towns with picturesque imagery and garden city planning, all aimed at promoting social harmony and industrial peace. These new company towns constitute an important chapter in a continuing American design tradition of fantasy environments. Carefully constructed landscapes acted as a form of social engineering, synthesizing architecture, landscape, and planning into coherent images that embodied illusions of social unity and coherence during periods of dramatic social and economic change.

Designs for new company towns resemble those of elite planned suburbs such as Forest Hills Gardens, New York, or Mariemont, Ohio, and rival them in the skill and sophistication of their design. However, in spite of the formal planning similarities, the two settlement types are significantly different in their intent and meaning. If barely legible in the plans, these differences become immediately evident when examining the physical and social contexts in which the towns were built.

In contrast to the convenient access of the elite suburb, located within easy commuting distance of city centers, the new company towns were, like the older company towns, still linked to the factory. The primary requirement was physical proximity to the workplace, usually measured in pedestrian distances. Unlike earlier company towns, however, visual separation from the factory was a key element in their design. These locational determinants often came into conflict, dictating remote and inconvenient sites. Cost considerations also influenced siting decisions; large tracts of inexpensive land, necessary for the layout of the new towns, were often hilly, inaccessible, or otherwise undesirable. Scale issues also became design determinants for the new company town. In contrast to ample suburban lots, winding streets, and substantial houses characteristic of the elite planned suburbs, company towns were miniaturized. Small houses, lots, and settlements cost less, met workers’ limited expectations, and could be easily navigated by foot. The gap between the plan and the towns as they were finally built is even more revealing. Architects and planners designed the settlements as both social and physical entities, focusing their plans around town centers with social and community facilities and providing numerous parks, playgrounds, and other recreational amenities. However, invariably, companies neglected to build these amenities, providing housing and commercial services but little else. Thus, these towns were left incomplete—a visible gap between the designer’s vision and what the sponsor was willing to pay for.

rethinking the company town Vernacular company towns, spawned by regional industries all over the country, followed no single pattern. In contrast, new company towns embodied a consistent ideology, adapted from the Industrial Betterment movement, and a coherent formal vocabulary, derived from the English garden city.¹ These settlements constituted one aspect of a broader effort to create a more systematic industrial order. During the late nineteenth century, manufacturers began to replace time-honored methods of shop organization and labor relations with

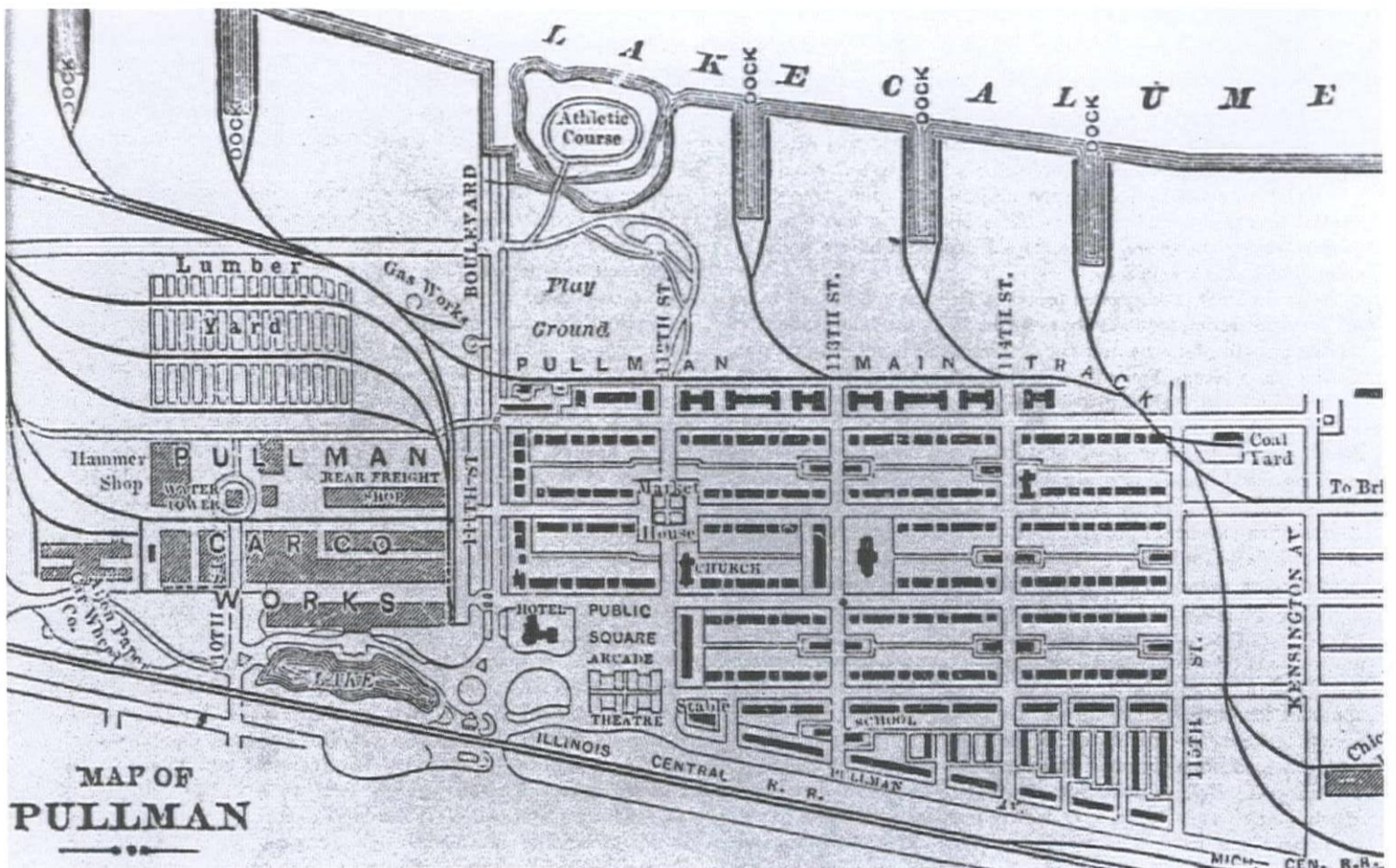
¹ For discussions of the Industrial Betterment or the Welfare Capitalism movement, see Stuart Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Daniel Nelson, *Managers and Workers* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975); Gerald Zahavi, *Workers, Managers, and Welfare Capitalism: The Shoeworkers and Tanners of Endicott Johnson* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Sanford Jacoby, *Modern Manors* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). Standard works on the Garden City movement include Walter Creese, *The Search for Environment* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966) and Raymond Unwin, *Town Planning in Practice* (London: Unwin, 1909).

- 2 On Taylorism, see Samuel Haber, *Efficiency and Uplift* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964) and Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974).
- 3 *The Survey* (30 December 1911), pp. 1430-31.

newly coordinated managerial systems. Introduced by trained mechanical engineers, this approach culminated in the scientific management system popularly known as Taylorism, named after its founder, Frederick Winslow Taylor.² Similarly, an allied field, the industrial betterment or welfare capitalism movement, transformed the informal and highly personal paternalism that prevailed in company towns into an institutionalized and professionalized operation. Under the direction of "expert" welfare workers, firms introduced systematic social programs designed to improve workers' living and working environments.

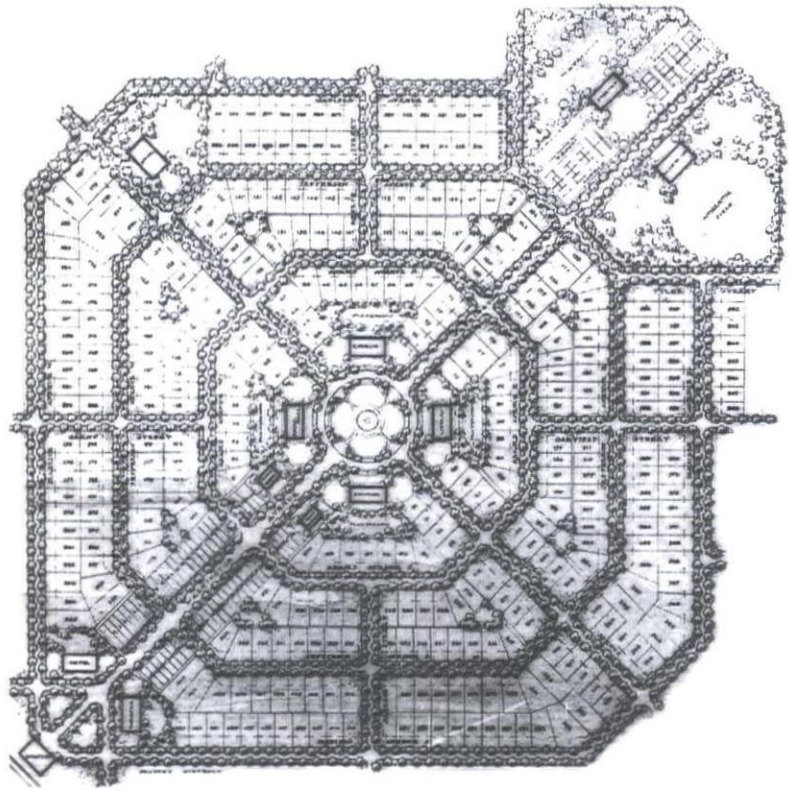
The political and social motivations behind these new methods of "social engineering" were complex; one clear impetus was the growing tension between labor and capital. After 1870, increasing numbers of strikes and the development of new labor organizations such as the Knights of Labor demonstrated the growing power of bigger and more militant working classes. The 1873 panic brought a wave of strikes, and the subsequent depression led to the "Great Upheaval" of 1877, the first mass strike in America. After 1880, new waves of immigrant workers from eastern and southern Europe strained the gulf between employers and employees even further. The panic of 1893 brought widespread layoffs, triggering a dramatic march of the unemployed on Washington known as "Coxey's Army." Strikes occurred at an unprecedented rate and broad scale. The 1894 Pullman strike paralyzed rail traffic across the country and cost more than five million dollars in lost wages and earnings. After 1905, a new series of strikes broke out, bringing with them radical labor organizations like the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). By 1911, labor struggles were so intense that a group of social workers, philanthropists, and college professors, interviewed by *The Survey*, a social work journal, concluded that "actual class warfare exists in the United States and the conditions leading to such warfare have to be changed."³

Pullman, Illinois, created as a model of urban beauty and industrial harmony, now served as a



1 Plan of Pullman, Illinois, 1885

Progressive reformers appointed themselves as the agents of change. Their position, articulated by intellectuals such as Richard Ely and Jane Addams, occupied a middle ground in the increasingly hostile stand-off between capital and labor. If the reformers feared the unfettered power of huge corporations, they also rejected the growing strength of militant labor organizations. As labor upheavals multiplied, reformers sought to act as mediators. Seeing their goal as an orderly and stable society, the progressives replaced class conflict with a vision of social harmony under the leadership of the "competent," that is, the educated middle class. These concerns overlapped with the growing size and power of the urban middle class, then demanding a strong voice in setting the nation's social and political priorities. Concerned with improving social and environmental conditions, progressive reformers proposed a scientific reorganization of the social environment, a task that demanded full-time, organized and skilled efforts. This inevitably expanded the realm of middle-class professionalism. In turn, architects, landscape architects, and planners, seeking to strengthen their own professional position, allied themselves with these reform movements.



2 Proposed plan of the Aladdin Company's town, 1911

object lesson about outdated and excessive paternalism

Searching for scientific solutions to the urgent problems presented by the slum and the factory, reform agendas and professional aspirations converged on a single solution, namely, the planned industrial community. Far from the bad influences of the city, planners believed, a socially-engineered environment could offer a *tabula rasa* on which capital and labor could renegotiate their differences. Financed by employers and designed by professionals, the planned industrial community appeared to provide a comprehensive answer to urban and industrial problems. Employers, acknowledging their social responsibilities, would upgrade working and housing conditions for their workers. Designers would create new types of exurban communities. The resulting decentralization of industry and housing would reduce urban congestion, thus improving living conditions in cities.

The confluence of interests between social reformers and design professionals provided the basis for the new company town, but realizing it in physical form took the support of industrial employers. Their willingness to sponsor costly housing, town planning, and welfare programs was closely related to the crisis in industrial relations. Concerned with attracting skilled workers and avoiding unionization, employers hoped that appealing and well-designed communities would build loyalty and stability and thus head off more strikes. Designers claimed to offer new and more effective ways of addressing these persistent problems while avoiding paternalism. The 1894 railroad strike, ignited by George Pullman's refusal to lower rents in his company housing after lowering wages in his plant, dramatically demonstrated the dangers of excessive personal control. The town of Pullman, Illinois, created as a model of urban beauty and industrial harmony, now served an object lesson about outdated and excessive paternalism, no longer appropriate in a large-scale corporate economy. 1 To avoid such problems, employers turned over the task of building company towns to independent professionals, who, they hoped, would act as buffers between capital and labor.

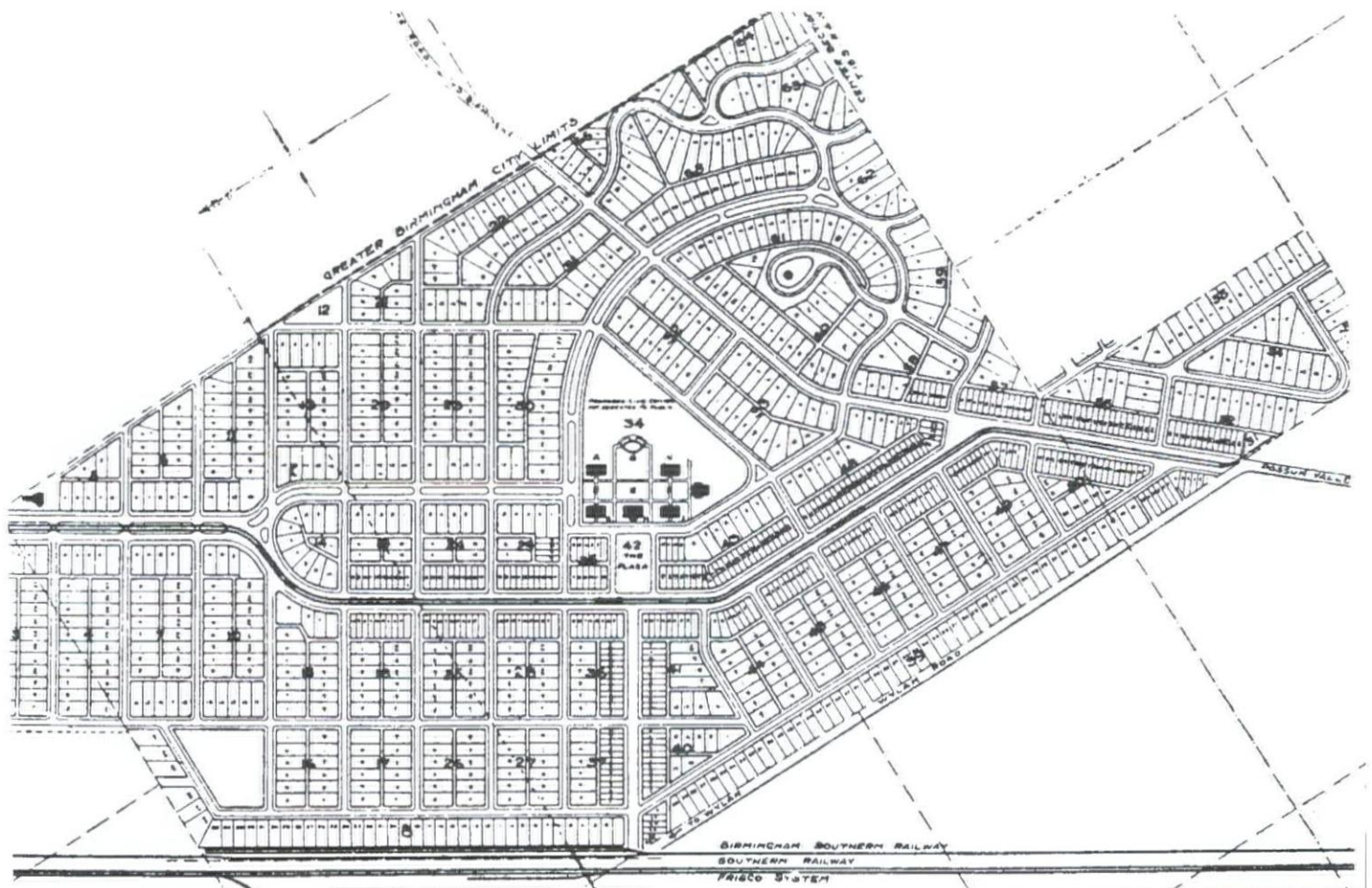
The company town provided the design professions an ideal medium to demonstrate their growing expertise. For architects, the complete town was a laboratory situation where they could test the profession's new self-definition as "modern," that is, systematic, rational, and socially efficient. By adopting the role of mediator, architects could claim at least rhetorical independence from their tradi-

tional client base of wealthy individuals. For planners, private commissions such as company towns offered opportunities to develop comprehensive plans without obstacles such as individual ownership, real estate speculation, and conflicting political demands, all of which plagued large-scale planning projects. Landscape architects brought an existing ideology of social and moral improvement and an aesthetic vocabulary, dual legacies of Andrew Jackson Downing and Frederick Law Olmsted.

Whatever their professional intentions, designers faced contradictory demands from their clients and the users—the employers and the workers. Large corporations, under increasing public scrutiny, incorporated designers and their work into the company's publicity, focusing national attention on their efforts to improve living conditions. At the same time, concerned about protecting their investments, employers refused to take excessive risks. Attempting to attract a stable force of skilled workers, they began to finance homes for sale. To convince their employees to buy, employers had to address them as consumers as well as workers. Increasingly beset with strikes and labor problems, employers were anxious to demonstrate their lack of paternalism. Looking beyond merely improving the workers' living conditions, they became interested in satisfying their housing preferences. In response, employees began insisting that they be given the type of houses they preferred, with prices and styles that would appeal to them. This in turn forced architects to begin investigating workers' tastes and concerns. Employers sponsored informal surveys and meetings, but workers made their housing preferences known directly through their purchases. Thus, with the company's investments at stake, the workers became the final arbiters of a town's design and success.

the search for a style Although the design professions enthusiastically assumed responsibility for these new settlements, initially there was no consensus about their form or style. The sponsors of the new company town were generally large-scale corporate enterprises, operating on a national scale. With limited local interests, they usually selected nationally-known practitioners

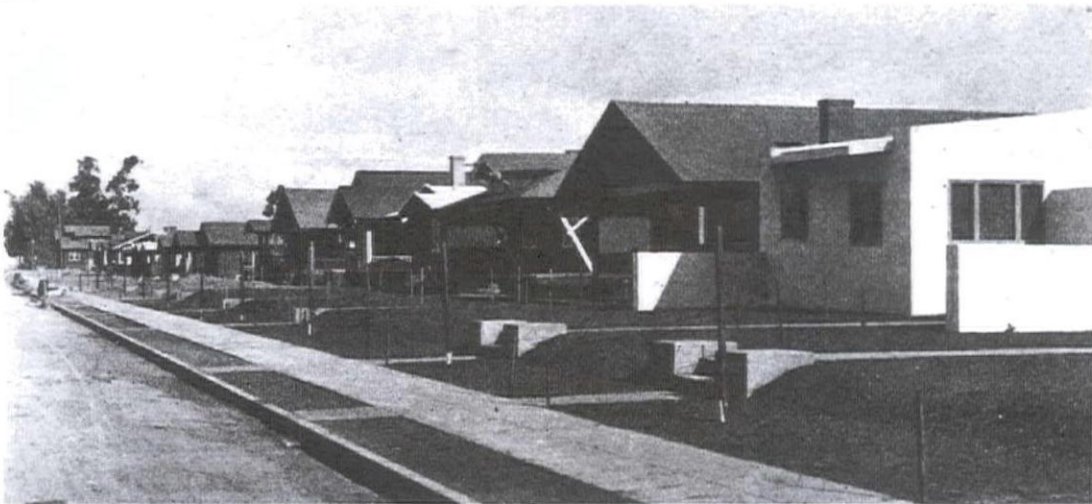
like most reform ideologies of the progressive era, company towns offered generalized an



3 Fairfield, Alabama, built for U.S. Steel, 1910

with offices in large cities, rather than local designers. These architects, with well-established approaches to housing and town planning, reinforced professional aspirations to establish nationally-accepted norms of good design. Thus, like most managerial and reform ideologies of the progressive era, company towns and their architects offered generalized and standardized solutions. Designed by outsiders unfamiliar with industrial processes or the local situation, new company towns rarely reflected these concerns. Instead, architects sought to distinguish themselves from aggressive commercial competitors. Manufacturers of prefabricated housing such as the Aladdin Company and Sears, Roebuck, boasted that they could erect a complete community in only

4 Early modern houses designed by Irving Gill in Torrance, California, 1910

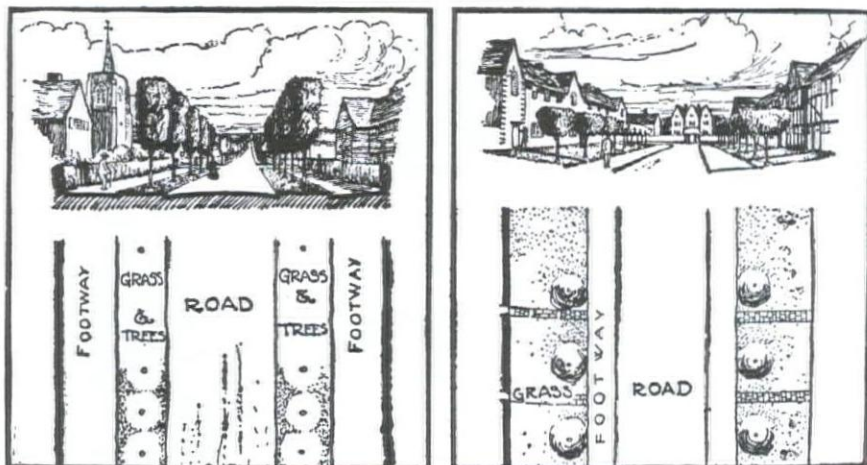


standardized solutions

twenty-six days.² Sears marketed simple, inexpensive houses for under 400 dollars, far undercutting even the cheapest architect-designed house. To compete, architects focused on their most secure professional skill: aesthetics. They designed inexpensive houses in distinctive styles, searching for imagery that counteracted the influence of the factory. Landscape architects and planners similarly looked for new ways of combining planning, landscape, and architecture to create a new coherence.

In Fairfield, Alabama, an ambitious town sponsored by U.S. Steel in 1910, planner George Miller and architect William Leslie Walton designed a range of bungalows in a park-like setting.³ The craftsman style, with its natural building materials and complex detailing, symbolically counteracted in the domestic sphere the realities of the workers' daily activity in the steel mill. But the style's beneficial associations had limits. Fundamentally domestic, the craftsman style was difficult to adapt to urban and public uses; it couldn't be used at the scale of a comprehensive plan or provide the town with a unified identity. Instead, Fairfield had two separate images—an attractive, informal residential area and a commercial block indistinguishable from that of any other small town. The same year (1910), in the company town of Torrance, California, planner Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and architect Irving Gill tried to overcome the same challenges of architectural expression and urban design, and met opposition. Engineers hired by the developer, objecting to the high costs and wasted land in building the gently curving streets, plazas, and public areas that Olmsted planned, eliminated them. Similarly, the town's working-class home-buyers emphatically rejected the modern housing models Gill designed.⁴ They found their pure cubic forms, concrete floors, and stripped down planes too much like the town's factory buildings, also designed by Gill. They believed that Gill's designs were more suggestive of poverty and austerity than the emancipatory values intended by the architect. Instead they opted for heavily detailed California bungalows, identifying them with a sense of home, comfort, and flattering associations with upper middle class individuality.

Ultimately, it was the English garden city movement, particularly the work of Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, that provided design solutions for the new company town. Although Ebenezer



5 Letchworth, England, the original "garden city," designed in 1904

Howard's original conception of the garden city contained more radical features, such as cooperative ownership, economic self-sufficiency, and innovative living arrangements, the movement also had strong ties with picturesque English company towns built in the 1890s, such as Bournville and Port Sunlight. Designed as theatrical evocations of pre-industrial villages, these towns offered self-consciously rural and English alternatives to urban and industrial life. Parker and Unwin's 1904 design for Letchworth, the first garden city, expanded on this, creating a new planning style with an extensive repertoire of techniques. Letchworth's trademarks, a formal center spreading out into a loose network of roads lined with houses, low density and extensive landscaping,

along with a range of devices such as "street pictures," subtle changes in street patterns, cul-de-sacs, and group housing, provided new towns with a strong and unified physical identity. 5 6

Letchworth had an immediate impact in the United States; architects, planners and urban reformers quickly adapted it as a new ideal. In 1909, the first, and probably the most sophisticated, adaptation of the style appeared at Forest Hills Gardens, just outside Manhattan in the borough of Queens. 7 Sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation, the garden suburb was a demonstration project to educate the public about the benefits of decentralization, comprehensive planning, and good housing. Planner Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and architect Grosvenor Atterbury utilized a number of tech-

new company towns embodied a formal vocabulary derived from the English garden city

- 4 Samuel Howe, "Forest Hills Gardens," *Architectural Record* 67 (January 1930), p. 14.
- 5 Initially intended to house those of modest means, the high cost of land so near Manhattan immediately altered the town's social composition. Since the Sage Foundation had to earn a 3% return on its investment, it passed these costs onto buyers, driving up housing prices, thus ensuring that Forest Hills Gardens would become an upper middle class enclave.

niques from Unwin's book, *Town Planning in Practice*, which had been published earlier that year and included many of the ideas of the Austrian architect Camillo Sitte. Olmsted and Atterbury orchestrated a sequence of scenographic spaces that moved from the enclosed space of Station Square through streets defined by continuous row houses, culminating in the open fields of Forest Park. Atterbury's picturesque architecture worked perfectly with Olmsted's landscaping and carefully calculated site planning to create a highly compelling suburban environment. Like the English picturesque company towns, Forest Hills was a newly created old place. Its vague medieval associations—one writer compared it to "a college or cathedral city," 4 — offered suburban commuters an escape from modern life, only minutes from Manhattan. 5



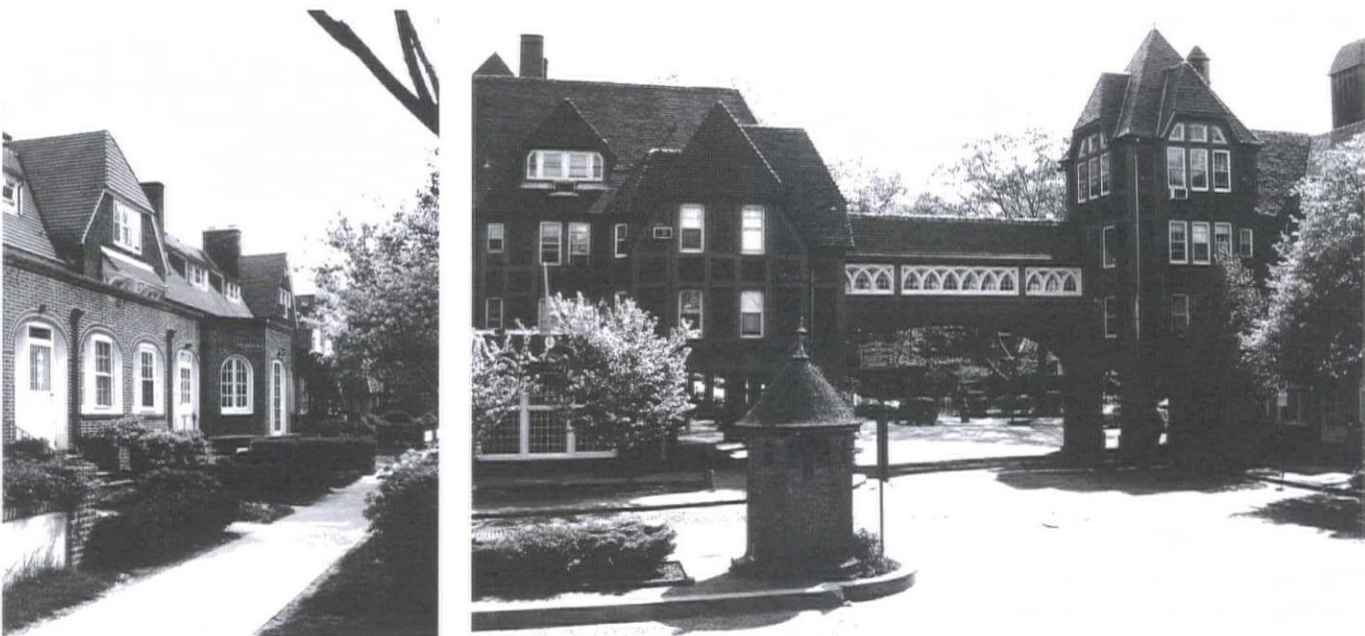
6 Letchworth's low density, extensive landscaping, and formal center radiating out into a loose network of roads became the model for a new generation of company towns

Atterbury took this lesson from Queens, now acting as both architect and planner, and transformed the company town. The industrial suburb of Indian Hill in Worcester, Massachusetts (1913) was the first full-fledged example of the new company town. 8 Synthesizing picturesque imagery, colonial revival architecture, and garden city planning, Atterbury created the image of a charming new England village with cozy colonial cottages, tree-lined streets, and a town square. Communicating stability, domesticity, and traditional American values, Indian Hill's design was intended to encourage

social harmony and industrial peace. A complete, if fictional, environment, it offered the Norton Company, beginning to experience labor problems, an alternative to the troubled industrial landscape. Other architects and planners quickly followed Atterbury's example. Bertram Goodhue adapted garden city techniques to a southwestern setting in Tyrone, New Mexico. ⁹ The planner John Nolen standardized company town design, producing more than 25 company town plans, ranging from New England textile villages to Arizona copper camps. The new company town reached its peak during World War I. Responding to desperate housing shortages, high labor turnover rates, and the threat of strikes, government agencies began to build housing for war workers. Thoroughly familiar with the issues of designing workers' housing and complete living environments, architects and planners took full advantage of government support to produce even more comprehensive (and better funded) projects such as Union Park Gardens in Wilmington, Delaware, and Yorkship Village in Camden, New Jersey. ¹⁰

the end of the line By the end of the 1920s, the new company town was all but dead. Over the preceding twenty years, designers had produced more than 40 new industrial towns. ⁶ Designed as complete and coherent communities, they provided a community life near to but out of sight of the factory. Almost obsessively avoiding the monotonous gridirons and repetitious rows of identical houses typical of early company towns, architects invented numerous varieties of inexpensive single family houses. Planners and landscape architects perfected site plans complete with parks and extensive landscaping. In spite of their increasing sophistication, by the mid-1920s such towns had become less necessary to their sponsors. During the prosperous 1920s, the implicit assumption behind many company towns—that workers could not afford their own houses—began to erode. Then, after 1929, with the economic downturn and deterioration of business conditions, spending on perceived luxuries such as housing and welfare programs was eliminated.

⁶ These include: **Alabama** – Bayview, Chicasaw, Fairfield, Kaulton, Westfield; **Arizona** – Ajo; **California** – Torrance; **Connecticut** – Danielson, Endee Manor (Bristol); **Georgia** – Atco, Chicopee, West Point, Silvertown; **Illinois** – Kincaid; **Indiana** – Mark; **Kentucky** – Lynch; **Maryland** – Perryville; **Massachusetts** – Indian Hill, Shawsheen Village (Lawrence); **Michigan** – Jefferson Rouge, Marysville; **Minnesota** – Morgan Park; **New Mexico** – Tyrone; **New York** – Massena, Riverdale, Rome; **North Carolina** – Spindale; **Ohio** – Firestone Park, Goodyear Heights; **Pennsylvania** – Hershey, Kistler, Marcus Hook, Midland; **South Carolina** – Laurens, Pacolet; **Tennessee** – Alcoa, Happy Valley, Kingsport; **Wisconsin** – Eclipse Park (Beloit), Janesville, Kohler.



⁷ Atterbury and Olmsted's 1909 model suburb in Forest Hills, Queens, was the first major adaptation of the garden city style in the U.S.

The availability of inexpensive automobiles also contributed to the demise of the company towns in a number of ways. Used cars or Model T and A Fords bought on credit gave workers mobility and freed them from the need to shop at the company store, worship at the company church, and ultimately, to live in company houses. Automobiles lessened physical, economic, and social distances between residents of company towns and their neighbors. Increasingly mobile workers gained access to a broader range of job opportunities. By connecting residents with the world outside, the automobile mitigated the repressive aspects of the company town. This new mobility encouraged



8 Indian Hill, Massachusetts, built for the Norton Company in 1913

7 In 1935, the Wagner Act asserted workers' rights to collective bargaining. As a result, union organization increased dramatically with union membership tripling in the years from 1935 to 1943. Having lost the battle against unions, companies abandoned welfare and housing programs.

8 David Watkin, *The Picturesque in Architecture, Landscape and Garden Design* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), p. ix.

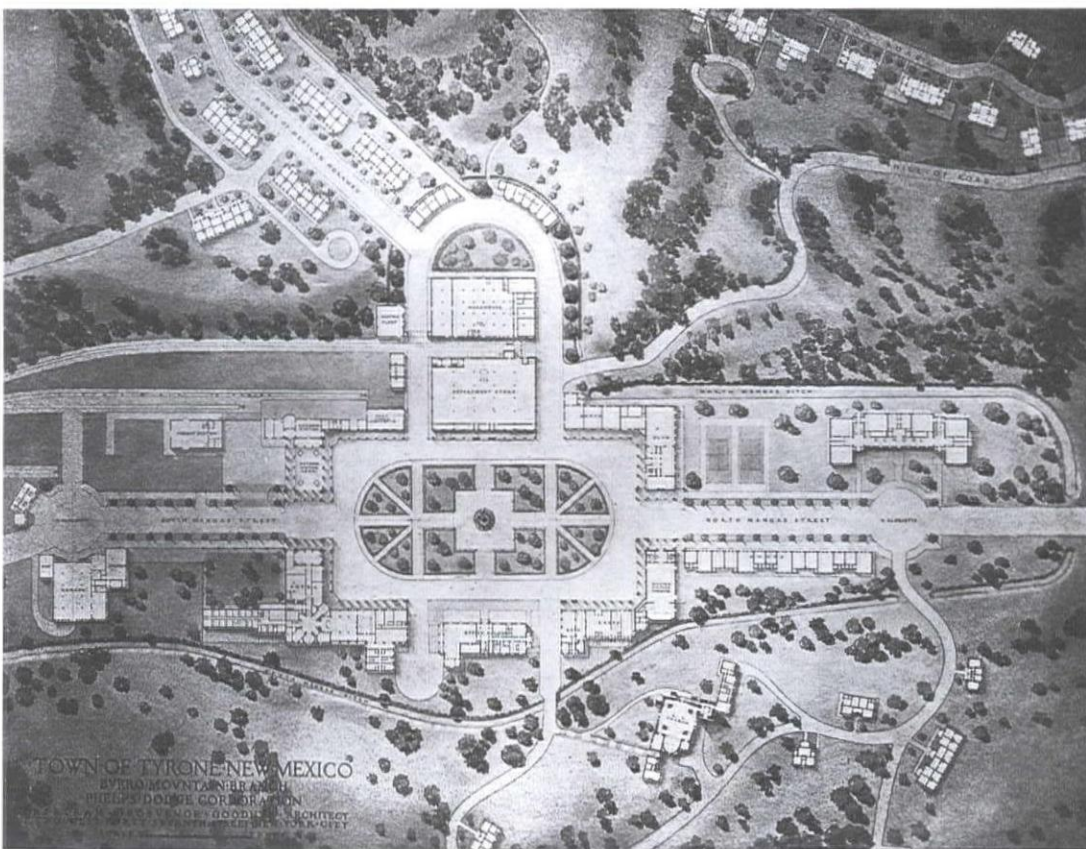
individual mores instead of the community ethos that formed the social basis of the company town. As a consumer durable and a form of transportation, the automobile blurred class consciousness, an apparent equalizer of consumption and mobility masking continuing economic inequalities.

The New Deal dealt company towns a more serious blow. In 1932, beginning with the Cotton Textile and Coal Industry Codes, the Roosevelt administration vigorously attacked company-sponsored housing and welfare programs urging instead industrial self-government and higher wages. Perhaps more significant, government guarantees of workers' right to collective bargaining attacked the anti-union premises of many company towns.⁷ Less directly, New Deal mortgage insurance, by extending the possibility of mortgage financing to large segments of the working class, eliminated the need for industry-subsidized housing. In fact, by the 1950s, most firms had begun selling their company housing to the occupants, at vastly reduced prices. The New Deal also began its own ambitious housing and town-planning programs. New federal agencies, such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Public Works Administration, the Resettlement Administration, and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration began to construct housing and entire communities. Acknowledging for the first time the government's responsibility to provide shelter for low-wage and unemployed workers, these efforts drew directly on the expertise of the new company town designers. John Nolen, Earle Draper, Tracy Augur, Russell Van Ness Black, Clarence Stein, and Elbert Peets utilized the concepts they had developed twenty years earlier in designing these new government-sponsored towns.

"new" towns/"new" urbanism The advent of postmodernism in the 1970s led to a revival of interest in the design of planned communities. Rediscovered and republished, the plans of new company towns now serve as inspiration for a new generation of neo-traditional town planners attempting to give American suburbs a new visual coherence and unity. In hindsight, the new company town can be seen as an episode in the continuing tradition of picturesque design. Rather than one specific style, the picturesque incorporates different styles chosen for their associative meanings. According to architectural historian David Watkin, deception is one of the dominant themes of the picturesque.⁸ In the picturesque village, the element of make-believe usually takes the form of a preoccupation with the past and with the creation of a *genius loci*. Expressed through architectural form and landscape design, cliché, nostalgia, and escapism served as defense against the dramatic social and environmental changes brought by industrialization. The picturesque village conveyed a reassuring social meaning by projecting a heightened image of a carefully structured society held together by traditional values and hierarchies. Visibly separated from and contrasted to the chaos and changes in the world beyond, the picturesque village simulated coherence and community. Throughout the nineteenth century picturesque images were repeatedly invoked

at moments of acute social and economic upheaval to defuse class conflict, producing environments such as Central Park in New York City, Riverside, Illinois, and the new company town.

Today, this tradition of fictional landscape design continues in themed environments such as Disneyland and in neo-traditional towns like Seaside and Celebration, Florida, and Kentlands, Maryland. These environments, selectively representing places from the past, function in a similar fashion, offering visitors and residents the temporary comfort of a less complex and more orderly world. Although they differ from the new company towns in degree of simulation, both types utilize the same principles. Highly controlled and controllable settings, both are designed to convey a unified image, based on a carefully selected set of themes presented with a consistency and coherence not found in everyday life. Reducing a complex past to a limited set of stylistic and spatial themes that communicate nostalgia and comfort, these new themed environments are spaces drained of ambiguity and contradiction. Like new company towns, new urbanism offers certainty, reassurance and the image of a coherent social order—comforting illusions for a nation again undergoing radical social, economic and ethnic transformations.



9 Tyrone, New Mexico, 1915



10 Yorkship Village, New Jersey, 1918



The *Perspecta 30* Settlement Patterns Roundtable was held at the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, on September 29, 1994. Leading architects and educators participated; Katie Winter moderated.

Winter *At the end of the twentieth century, what do we see as the dominant settlement patterns in the United States? If most people live in places that are neither cities nor towns, why (and for whom) is our profession spending so much effort on reviving/inventing cities and towns?*

Scott Brown It's interesting that this *Perspecta* started as a discussion of housing and then grew to mean something closer to settlement. But immediately, your question says, "If most people live in places." It seems there's still a tendency to confound housing and cities and people. I think when you say "live," people think of house that a person lives in. But most of one's day is spent out of that house in a place called work. And I think that the confusing of communities and settlement and housing as all being the same thing is something that architects tend to do. We need to start out with a definition that says that the city has many scales. The dominant land use in settlements may be roads and if you put roads and public infrastructure together, that probably outweighs housing. It's very easy to think about the housing environment as the total of what we're talking about, and I think that we should start off by saying that that isn't the case, or else say we're really talking only about the housing environment and we're not so concerned with the work environment, the movement infrastructure, the

industrial environment or the structure of community facilities.

Shiffman There's something about the word "settlement" that bothers me—it's transitional in nature; it doesn't imply, at least to me, that there is a building of a community and a civil society and civic structures within this. A settlement is not something that's permanently planted.

Winter We're interested in the larger picture, not just housing. That's why we've suggested settlement patterns as a framework, in order to expand the scope of the discussion.

Plattus The uncoupling of workplace and dwelling place, that is, the demonstrably transitory nature of most peoples' habitation patterns and work patterns, and even their family structures, is a historical phenomenon that we're all familiar with. In traditional communities work and dwelling and other functions were directly related spatially. Often they were the same place. The process of modernization is, in part, characterized by the uncoupling of work and dwelling, creating new settlement patterns. "Settlement patterns" is a geography term, and it reeks of objectivity. We try to neutralize deeply held values by talking in that fashion. And yet maybe we have returned to "settlements" and, in the process, lost "communities." Another dimension that can be historicized is the temporal dimension of our lives. Not

roundtable settlement patterns: throwing stones



Suburban rooftops, Tampa, Florida, 1994. Alex MacLean



Stephen Kieran Fred Koetter Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk Alan Plattus Denise Scott Brown Ron Shiffman Katie Winter

only in terms of daily cycles of work and sleep and eating with your family (or not, as the case may be), but life cycles as well. Traditional communities were places where you were born, grew up, lived, worked and died. If you moved it was a major manifestation of upheaval. This is now the exception rather than the rule. This notion of a nomadic culture has both a spatial and a temporal dimension. We configure and reconfigure our personal communities many times in the course of our lives.

Scott Brown Also the balance between where we live and where we work is shifting once again, and you could talk about the “re-cottagification” of industry with the computer. So it’s not just a question of saying we accept the present balances.

Kieran To get past the semantics of this and towards your question, couldn’t we just ask, “What do we see as the dominant patterns of where people live, work, shop and lead a mercantile and civil life in the United States at this point in time?”—and offload the question of whether it’s a “settlement” or not.

Plattus But let’s always remember that the gross statistics about who lives where at a given moment mask the fact that the average American in the course of his or her life now lives in several or even many places, in different kinds of settlements.

Plater-Zyberk Coming back to your question, I’m not sure that we could all agree on what is the dominant pattern of settlement or community in the U.S. now. But we do know that at least 50 percent of people live outside of the traditional city. The last part of your question, about why so much time is spent on re-thinking (I would say reviving or re-inventing) cities and towns, has to do with responding to social, political and environmental problems. But I think the reason that we’re addressing this is because as a profession we’ve been taught that it’s our role to provide leadership. In this one kind of settlement pattern, which is often referred to as “edge cities,” we are provided with places to live, work and shop – but not much place for civic interaction or even recreation outside of those three uses. In other words, these parts of our cities are made primarily as a business endeavor rather than a higher-minded effort to provide a place for community. We’re not building communities, we’re building businesses.

Koetter The point that Liz makes is an important one. Because if these places don’t come with an intention to provide certain common amenities like those associated with civic or public life, then how do they come to exist? The town where I lived as a small boy was made in the late nineteenth century along the rail-



Platting hills for housing, Los Angeles, 1989. Alex MacLean

road line. When it was laid out it had parks and the things that we are talking about built into the plan. It was an economic business venture, but somehow it also had the values which ensured the presence of those civic amenities.

Plater-Zyberk Even outside of the values that you're referring to, there are functional problems. I walked here from a hotel to an office building and went by a church and a shoe store within probably 150 feet. But you can't do that in most places in the U.S. these days. Many places are being made without even understanding the daily trajectories that Denise referred to and the lifetime trajectories that Alan referred to.

Koetter That's probably why they won't be sustainable.

Kieran I think that we all may like to think that this type of development is not sustainable, but evidence points to the contrary. We could say that the historical pattern of American cities has been expansion from the center out. And they've done so with each new change of transportation infrastructure since the 1850s. Will that stop? I can certainly point to one instance that would suggest that we're just in the middle of this at best, and that's Atlanta. They have not only built the beltway, but they're now building an outer beltway five times the circumference of the first for the purpose of the economic development of rural Georgia. It's underway, and it's going to go on with or without us.

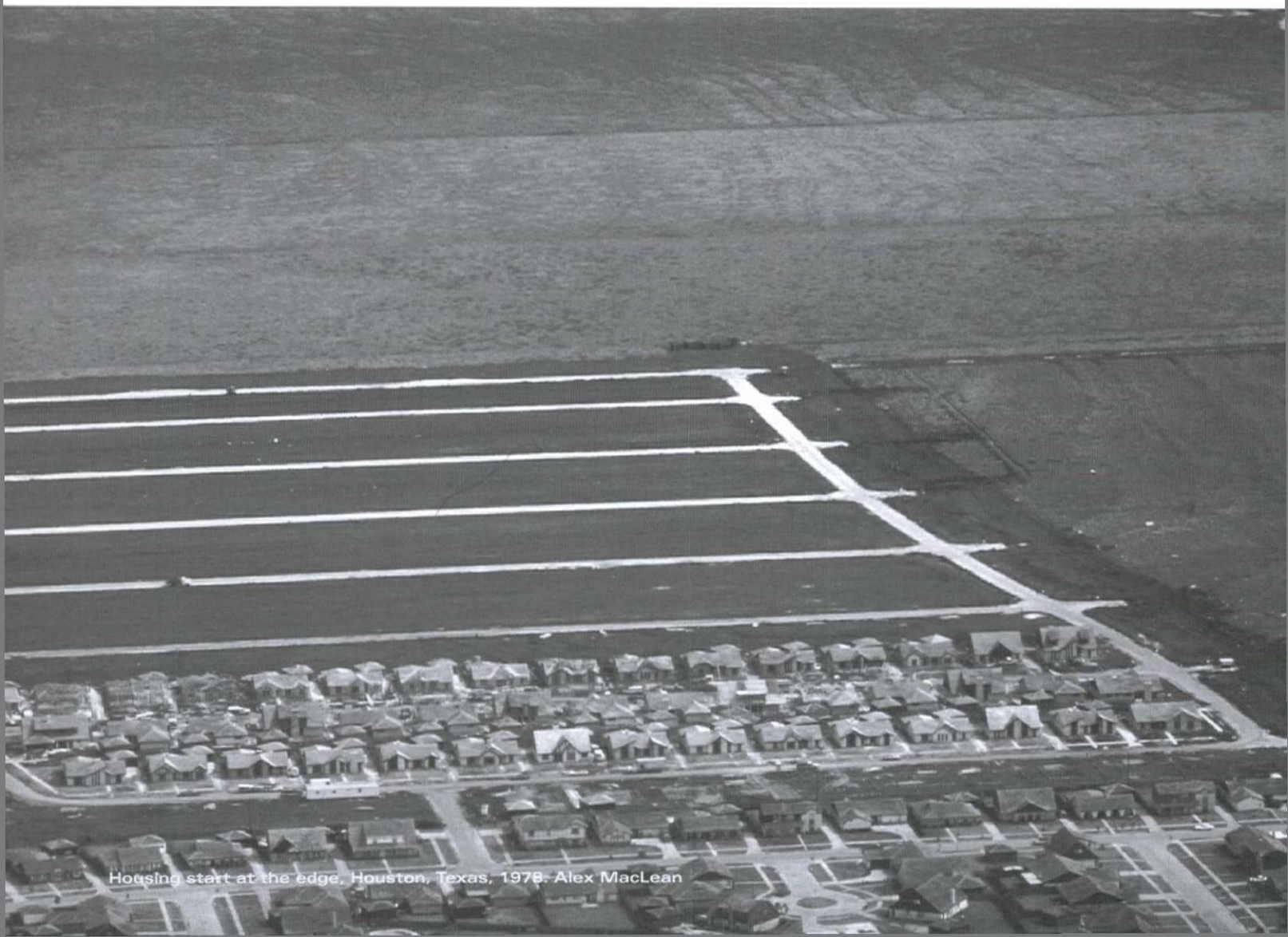
Plater-Zyberk I agree with Steve. In spite of the fact that some people have shown that this pattern might be unsustainable, the fact remains that it's still continuing.

Plattus Except that there are a couple of "drop dead" issues: clearly, if we had another fuel crisis—and this time a permanent one—this type of development would not continue. Water is another thing. It seems dumb, but we all know what happened to Imperial Rome after the aqueducts were destroyed.

Shiffman You mean what's happening to Miami.

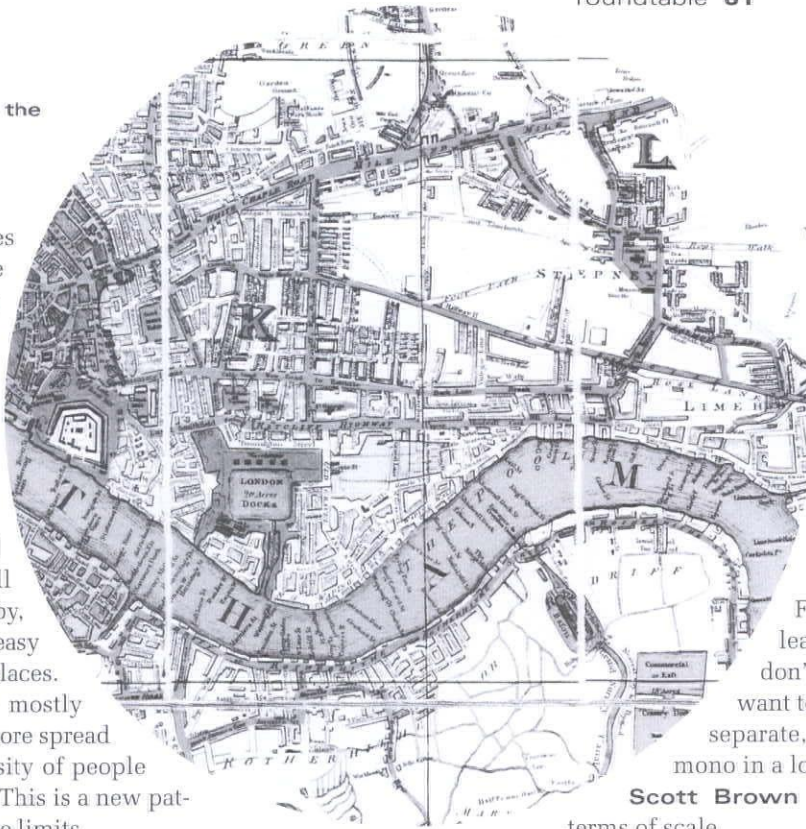
Plattus It's more dramatic in cities like Phoenix, which are totally artificial creations. Just as the Federal government subsidized highways after the war, they're now subsidizing water supplies to cities which are fundamentally unsustainable. I think part of our role as architects is to be hard-headed like Stephen is suggesting and to say, "This is going on. We're not affecting this; shouldn't we be?" Part of our role is also to imagine alternative conditions and to point out how artificial it all really is.

Scott Brown There's another aspect to this development, not a drop-dead issue but a capacity one. You can't have fewer than one person per car traveling on the road. And the time available for commuting is not endless, so eventually a balance is reached. There are limits to the size of car-based urban settlements. The railroad city established its limits, and I think the automobile city will, too. Far-flung auto empires eventually re-nucleate in some way. When stores and jobs follow housing to the suburbs, people stop going downtown every day. The journey to work in fact gets shorter. That's the new balance. During the nineteenth century, as the railroad was creating a continuous urbanism along London's old trade routes, the city became known as "the



Housing start at the edge, Houston, Texas, 1978. Alex MacLean

Trade routes of 1812 London, the "Great Wen"



Great Wen." And Los Angeles became "a Great Wen" at the scale of the automobile during the mid-twentieth century. But now Los Angeles has re-nucleated. When the King of Prussia regional center was formed outside Philadelphia, its market was some millions of people in Philadelphia; it became a huge suburban retail nucleus. So did the Cherry Hill mall. Given the mass city nearby, a large population was within easy driving distance of these two places. Los Angeles' subcenters are mostly smaller because the city was more spread out in the first place, the density of people within reach was not as great. This is a new pattern, but it does in the end have limits.

Shiffman There are two parts of this question that disturb me. One is the fact that because there's a dominant pattern that means we should be focusing our attention there. As if the things that are not dominant are not as critically important. But the other issue that comes out of this discussion is that while we have all these nucleated places, what's really happening is the turfing of society.

We are creating a structure that separates us by race and class. In many cases, because of economic circumstances, the issue of gender also enters. These are issues that we must address as a profession.

Koetter Don't you think that the dominant patterns reflect the desires that produced those distinctions? For instance, some people leave the city because they don't want that complexity; they want to be somewhere that is more separate, more mono-cultural, more mono in a lot of ways.

Scott Brown Also more manageable in terms of scale.

Koetter Yes, and for more people just like themselves.

Shiffman But there are also public actions and publicly sanctioned private actions that facilitate this segregation. Good planning has to take into consideration those public actions to make sure that outright segregation doesn't happen. For example, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) policy which dominated



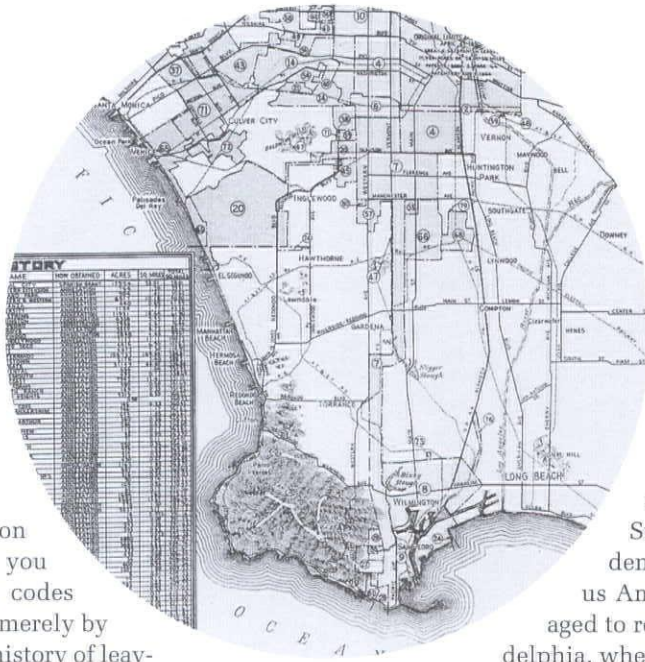
Agricultural field, Palm Desert area, California, 1989. Alex MacLean

the development of the suburbs discriminated against female heads of households and against African-Americans and other minorities because the agency took on the biases of the banking industry. The FHA codified it into national law, and that had a great deal to do with settlement patterns. That's been continued through red-lining practices in various cities.

Plater-Zyberk The discrimination against older buildings in which you couldn't fund housing, or zoning codes which devalued existing buildings merely by building placement, are part of the history of leaving places in this country. We're talking about a disposable city. We're very willing to leave behind something that may not be working. It's happened from East to West.

Shiffman A lot of what you're talking about is natural and very healthy. What makes it unhealthy has been the disparities in the assistance that we've given to people.

Scott Brown It goes further than this. I believe this society has apartheid, and supports it by law. The measures don't have to be as draconian as they were in South Africa because the population proportions are different. U.S. apartheid starts with our be-



lief in grass-roots democracy—this beautiful thing. But how does the belief get translated? If you live in Narbeth or Paoli, Pennsylvania, you see yourself as a citizen of a separate small town, you pay your property tax locally, and the town gets a pretty nice school district. The atomizing of urban governments is the primary means of achieving apartheid in this country. Suburbanites say, "This is our precious democracy at work, this is what makes us American." But that's how we've managed to remove support from cities like Philadelphia, where the school district and the cultural

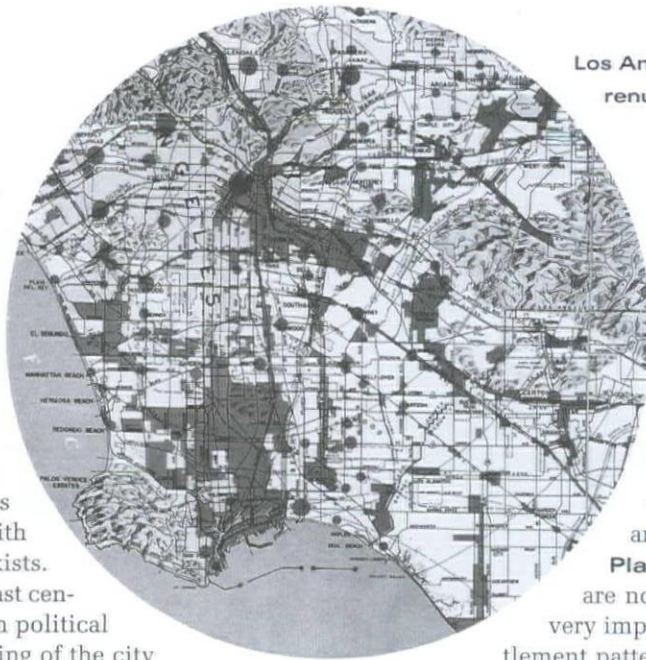
facilities languish for lack of funds, and low income people have less and less chances to escape from poverty and segregation. I think fractionized local and regional government and land use zoning are our two primary means of maintaining segregation—the FHA was a temporary one, it came and went.

Kieran Just one observation about the term "dominant." I don't believe that it's an appropriate term to use today. And that in itself is a historical event—that there is no "dominant pattern." Yes, for the first time in history more than 50 percent of people are living outside of conventional cities. But it's not much more



Metro traffic control, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1993. Christopher Faust, Suburban Documentation Project

Los Angeles in the 1930s, left, and the city renucleated, right, by 1954



than 50 percent. I think that another way to look at this is that there are just more choices for Americans of sufficient means.

Shiffman It's an issue of measurement quite frankly. Right up to the beginning of this century, cities followed the patterns of growth by annexation, and now we will not allow annexation because of the issues of American apartheid. I agree with Denise fully. I think that it exists. New York is the only city in the last census to have grown within its own political boundaries. But in reality, thinking of the city

the process of modernization is characterized by the uncoupling of work and dwelling

as not having grown is almost like thinking that a wheel is only the rim and the tire, and not the hub and spokes. So it's really important for us to begin to look beyond the patterns or the political patterns towards the city-state.

Plater-Zyberk Maybe the word dominant can come back. I think we have some agreement that there is fragmentation, there's separation, that there's a kind of centrifugal force that's not just geographical but social. And the social issues that sepa-

rate us are being reflected in the physical environment. But it's very well ensconced in things like zoning, land-use and the business that builds it. The people who build the shopping center don't want to build housing, because they're afraid of it, or vice versa, because they only know how to do one thing. And so there are a lot of forces at work to keep us separate, and I think a lot of people are following very happily.

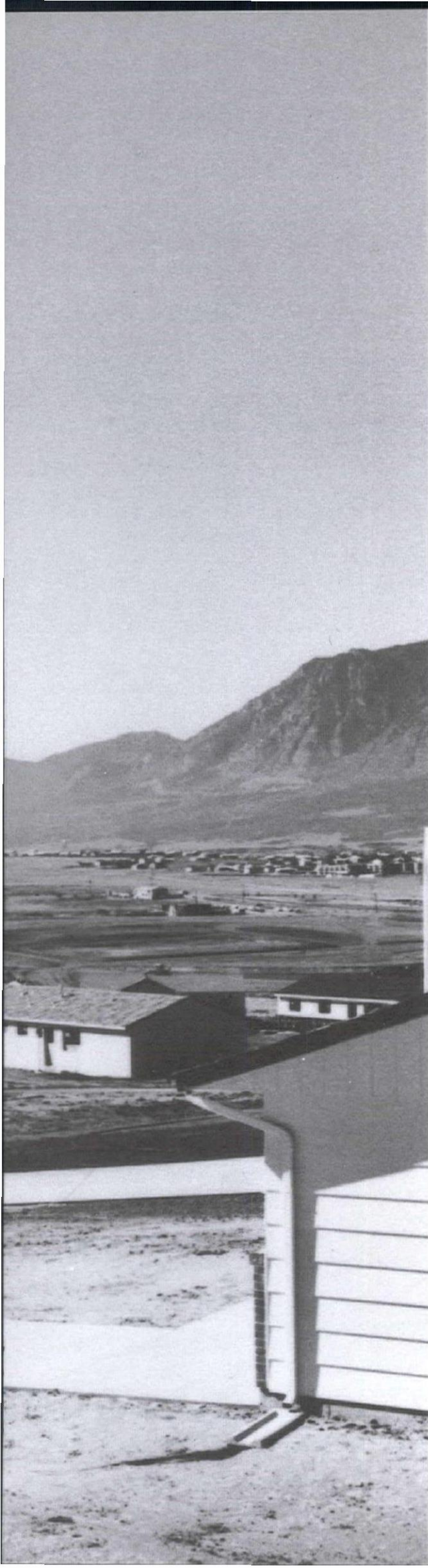
Plattus Yes, but these forces of separation are not natural forces. I think Ron's point is very important—maybe instead of dominant settlement patterns, we should be talking about settle-

ment patterns of the dominant class. We understand that these are created conditions, and that certain patterns have been heavily subsidized, and that certain choices have been made more attractive. And the result, interestingly enough, is to limit everybody's choice, because young families often feel that at least one choice is now being taken away from them, and that is the choice to move back into the city. Because of these subsidized patterns, many people who would otherwise make this move cannot.



how eden lost its garden mike davis





The ambitious time traveler, *pace* popular science fiction, doesn't need to know anything about Lorentz transformations or black holes—a good road map of Los Angeles County will suffice. Thirty miles north of downtown, just past the 41-story-high “Superman” ride at Six Flags Magic Mountain, but before the exit for the county sheriff's enormous jail complex at Castaic, the traveler should turn west on California Highway 126. Following the channel of the Santa Clara River as it cuts through spectacularly colored sandstone and shale formations to the ocean at Ventura, this eucalyptus-arbored, two-lane blacktop turns back time to a Southern California golden age when garden cities nestled in acres of orange, lemon, and avocado groves.

More than a generation after the last fruit trees were bulldozed to make way for tract houses in the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys, the Santa Clara River Valley still looks much as it did before 1940. Here, the formal order of the orchards offsets the wild angularity of the sedimentary hills. The citrus towns of Piru, Fillmore, and Santa Paula initially strike the visitor as movie sets or nostalgia theme parks. There are no minimalls or fast-food strips, just quiet main streets with old-fashioned stores, soda fountains, and the town movie theater. It is shocking to realize that these are, in fact, real towns, homes to orchard owners and their Mexican workers, and not just clever simulations designed for the pleasure of tourists.

At Camulos, once the estate of the Del Valle family, the visitor now finds a working rancho with its regiments of orange trees sloping down to the Santa Clara River, which is almost indistinguishable from its portrait on turn-of-the-century postcards. This picturesque landscape, of course, masks the citrus industry's long history of paternalistic exploitation, social segregation, and labor violence. Still, what shocks some visitors even more than the endurance of the unsimulated past in the valley is the fact that most of the mailboxes in front of tidy Victorian cottages and 1920s bungalows are stenciled with last names like Gonzales and Hernandez. That such a luscious setting so close to Los Angeles has not yet been devoured by white-flight commuters, million-dollar homes, gated subdivisions, and antique malls is surely remarkable.

The very beauty of the valley can't help but prompt thoughts about the near extinction of such landscapes elsewhere in urbanized Southern California. Millions of newcomers were once drawn to the Los Angeles area by the promise of homes and orchards soaking in sunshine at the foot of snow-peaked mountains. Postcards and orange crate labels advertised this idyllic image to the world for decades, and unlike so much else about the region, it was not entirely fake. Even at the end of the Second World War, metropolitan Los Angeles still possessed inestimable scenic capital. What happened? Why is the Santa Clara River Valley the last refuge of Southern California's most famous dream?

the underproduction of public space In March 1930 the most distinguished citizens' committee in Los Angeles submitted its final report to city and county authorities. A letter of transmittal signed by movie

- 1 Olmsted Brothers and Bartholomew and Associates, *Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region* (Los Angeles, 1930), p. xiv.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. xiii, 1-3.
- 3 Charles Fletcher Lummis, *Los Angeles and Her Makers* (Los Angeles, 1909), pp. 244-45.
- 4 Dana Bartlett, *The Better City* (Los Angeles, 1907), pp. 33-35.
- 5 Testimony of Mrs. Noel of the National Women's Trade Union League to the Commission on Industrial Relations, Los Angeles, 1914 (*Final Report and Testimony Submitted to Congress by the Commission on Industrial Relations*, 64th Cong., 1st Sess., 1916, S. Doc. 415, vol. 6, p. 5735).
- 6 Judge Silent as quoted in the *Los Angeles Herald* 1 March 1910.
- 7 Robinson's proposal for weaving the city's parks into a continuous greenbelt system was later amplified by Park Commissioner J.B. Lippincott, who envisaged magnificent, intersecting park corridors from Westlake (today's MacArthur Park) to Silverlake, and from Elysian Park to Griffith Park. See *Los Angeles Express*, 27 May 1911.
- 8 Charles Mulford Robinson, *The City Beautiful: Report to the Municipal Art Commission* (Los Angeles, 1909), p. 32.

stars like Mary Pickford, bankers like Irving Hellman, and corporate lawyers like John O'Melveny warned of a situation "so disquieting as to make it highly expedient to impress upon the public the present crisis in the welfare of Los Angeles."¹ With nearly one-quarter of the city out of work in that grim depression year, it might be presumed that the report, so urgent in tone, was about unemployment relief or soup kitchens for the hungry. In fact, the attention of the 162 prominent members of the Citizens' Committee on Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches was concentrated on the "parks and recreation crisis." This was less strange than it might seem.

As the report's authors, the celebrated urban design firm of Olmsted Brothers (with planner Harlan Bartholomew as an associate) pointed out, accessible open space was the foundation of an economy capitalized on climate, sports, and outdoor leisure. But the region's scenic beauty was being eroded on all sides by rampant, unregulated private development. They warned that Los Angeles' future prosperity was directly threatened by the increasing discrepancy between tourists' buoyant expectations and their disillusioning experiences. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Harlan Bartholomew further observed that "the things that make [Los Angeles] most attractive are the very ones that are the first to suffer from changes and deteriorate through neglect." Although Los Angeles spent more than other cities to advertise its charms, it invested less to preserve or enhance them. The deficiency of parks was "positively reprehensible," and the region fell "far short... of the minimum recreation facilities of the average American city." Moreover, as the authors acknowledged, "all this has been realized for years."²

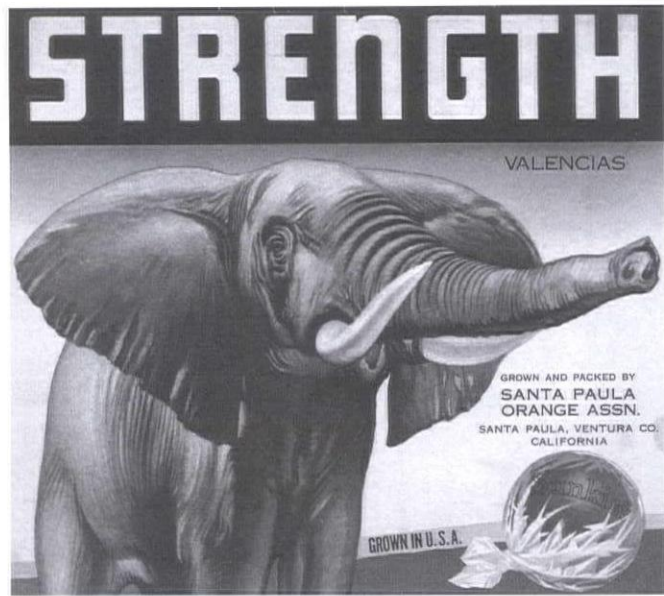
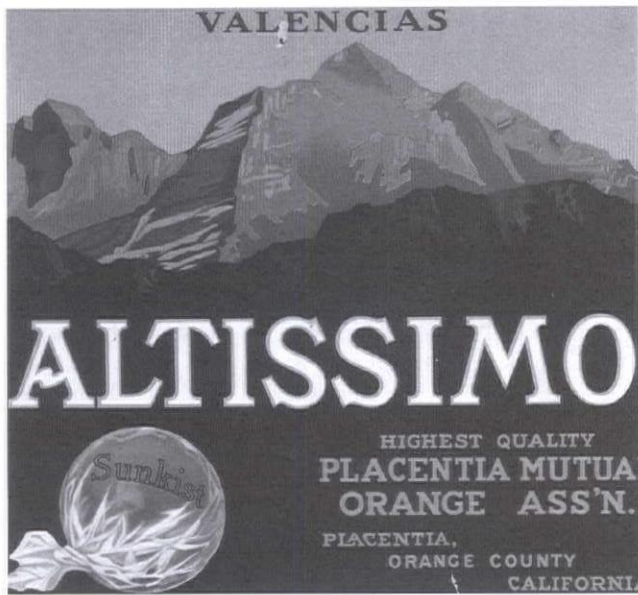
Indeed, at the turn of the century, Charles Fletcher Lummis, editor of *Out West* and impresario of the local franchise of the Arts and Crafts movement (the "Arroyo set"), had thundered against Los Angeles' Victorian elites for "impoverishing the future" through their reckless alienation of the original pueblo lands.

As late as 1856 the city owned eighty per cent of its area of some 17,000 acres. It gave this priceless heritage away—generally for nothing, and altogether for next to nothing—without even once getting an equivalent or a good bargain.... We would have the finest parks in the world, and the finest public buildings—and all endowed beyond the dreams of avarice. As it is, nothing was left... but the Plaza and some riverbed when we began to take notice.³

By the early 1900s, even this remnant was under threat, as the once arcadian landscape of the Los Angeles River was pressed into service as a sewer for the city's expanding industrial district. The Reverend Dana Bartlett, planning advocate and settlement house pioneer, battled the Southern Pacific Railroad (the largest floodplain landowner) in an unsuccessful crusade to reclaim the riverbed as a nature preserve and playground for the children of the "congested areas" east of downtown Los Angeles.⁴ Labor leaders, who supported Bartlett's struggle against the railroads, also blamed traction magnate Henry Huntington for refusing to lay track to newly donated Griffith Park while keeping fares so high on his Ocean Park line that working people could not afford to go to the beach.⁵ Middle-class Progressives, meanwhile, indicted Los Angeles' meager and poorly maintained parks as the "shame of the city": "Some of our parks are filthy to the grade of a public nuisance and should have been condemned long ago."⁶

In his 1907 report to the Los Angeles Municipal Art Commission, Charles Mulford Robinson, the renowned apostle of the City Beautiful, advocated a comprehensive plan for parks, boulevards, beautification of the Los Angeles River, and a civic acropolis on downtown's Bunker Hill.⁷ In order to finance his heroic proposals, he urged the city to "grasp the big idea" and become a land developer in its own right.

There will be great gain if the city can obtain that authority which the cities of Pennsylvania and Ohio have already secured, and by which the great municipal improvements of Europe and South America have been financed—the right to acquire property on the edge of a public improvement, in order to protect that improvement, and to recoup [its] cost by the resale of the property at the enhanced value which the improvement bestows.⁸



Orange crate labels depict California as the "promised land"

He cautioned that "the tourist metropolis of the country... simply cannot afford to stand still... [and], with increasing population, to go from bad to worse in congestion, in city discomfort and ugliness."⁹ Robinson hinted that if Los Angeles wavered in its commitment to public space, other more attractive cities would usurp its destiny.

By the time Olmsted and Bartholomew surveyed the same problem twenty years later, nearly two million more people, the equivalent of the population of Philadelphia, had moved to the Los Angeles region. Their 1930 report was a stinging critique of the giddy twenties building boom.¹⁰ Developers had stubbornly ignored official pleas to dedicate parks for their subdivisions, and powerful homeowners' groups had opposed every attempt to pass specific assessments for parks or recreation; thus, as the population soared, per capita recreation space shrank drastically. By 1928 parks comprised a miserable 0.6 percent of the surface of the metropolis, and barely half an inch of publicly owned beach frontage was left for each citizen of Los Angeles County.¹¹ No large city in the United States was so stingy with public space.

A selfish, profit-driven "presentism" ruled Southern California, according to Olmsted and Bartholomew. "The benefit of parks bought now will accrue largely in future years and even to future generations. We can get along without them a while longer, anyhow. And if land at those prices is a good purchase, we would rather use our money to get lots on speculation for personal profit than give it up in taxes for our share of a park system."¹²

Indeed, speculation – "excessive and fictitious prices for raw land" – was the crux of the landscape crisis. The "high capitalization of future rental values" in the most marginal or hazardous of terrains made a comprehensive program of park building prohibitively expensive.¹³ Ironically, the entire inflationary process was subsidized by local government. Olmsted and Bartholomew were especially critical of the public outlays for roads, sewers, fire protection, and flood control meant to encourage promoters to subdivide scenic canyons, streambeds, and foothills.

It costs so much in the long run to adapt rough mountain lands satisfactorily to ordinary intensive private uses that their real net value as raw material for such use is generally far less than their value for watershed protection and for public recreation. Unfortunately in the local speculative land market this fact is often ignored and subdivision sales are made which commit the community to extravagant wasteful private and public expenditures for converting a good thing of one kind into a poor thing of another kind.¹⁴

The Gordian knot of land speculation, however, could have been cut with a single, decisive blade: hazard zoning. Since the "burden of wrong development does not fall on the purchaser alone, and scarcely ever on the vendor, but most heavily on the community at large," the municipality could justifiably have invoked its powers to limit or even bar development of floodplains and hillsides (and, by implication, of earthquake fault zones and chronic wildfire corridors).¹⁵

Together with radically enlarged public ownership of ocean frontage, the redemption of Los Angeles' riparian landscapes was the key to Olmsted and Bartholomew's elegant design for a unified

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁰ Testimony of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to Citizens' Committee on Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches, *Los Angeles Times* 22 February 1928; and Los Angeles County, Regional Planning Commission, *Preliminary Report on Existing County Parks* (Los Angeles, 1928), p. iv.

¹¹ Olmsted and Bartholomew, *Parks*, p. 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

regional system of beaches, parks, playgrounds, and mountain reserves. At their 1924 conference, Los Angeles County regional planners had already recognized the crucial role of river courses as the “easiest and often the shortest connection between the mountain and the beach playground areas.” In addition to advocating public ownership of the oceanfront, the conference recommended “that all principal natural drainage channels be acquired and controlled by the community for the highest public use.”¹⁶ Olmsted and Bartholomew argued that greenbelts flanking these channels could simultaneously provide flood control, recreation, and transportation. Using hazard zoning to force land values downward and “stop the ill-directed spread of the population,” they proposed to transform the major flood channels and associated wetlands into a 440-mile network of multipurpose parkways reminiscent of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.’s, famous 1887 “emerald necklace” design for Boston’s Back Bay fens.¹⁷

suburbanization is one of Southern California’s natural disasters – recurrent and inexorable

“Parkways should be greatly elongated real parks ... several thousand feet in width,” parallel to broad natural flood channels and offering a variety of recreational experiences.¹⁸ Regional highways would be embedded in these attractive, tree-lined corridors, screened from adjacent industrial and residential developments. Parkway thus designed would reinforce the role of natural hydrology in dividing up the otherwise monotonous coastal plain into attractive, well-defined community landscapes. Finally, Olmsted and Bartholomew’s plan explicitly redistributed park and open space resources to the advantage of the neglected working-class districts south and east of downtown. “Those of lower incomes generally live in small-lot, single-family home districts, and have more children and less leisure time in which to go to distant parks and recreational areas. These families comprise 65 percent of the population, and they should be given first consideration.”¹⁹

killing the los angeles river The 1930 report is a window into a lost future. A heroic culmination of the City Beautiful era in American urban design, it was also the final fruit of the Olmsted Brothers’ intense, decade-long involvement in California landscape planning.²⁰ Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Harlan Bartholomew were quiet, conservative reformers whose personal utopia was park-rich Minneapolis, not Soviet Russia. Yet if their proposals had been implemented, the results would have been revolutionary. The existing hierarchy of public and private space in Los Angeles might have been overturned. A dramatically enlarged commons, not the private subdivision, might have become the commanding element in the Southern California landscape. Preserved natural ecosystems (Olmsted was a passionate champion of native flora) might have imposed clear boundaries on urbanization. The speculative real estate market might have been balanced by a social democracy of beaches and playgrounds.

But even if a civic consensus had existed, neither the city nor the county had the wherewithal, in the bleak early days of the Depression, to undertake a massive park-building program. Only Washington had the resources. Ironically, when New Deal agencies finally came around to the fiscal rescue of Los Angeles, local government used federal capital to pave over the wetlands and streams that were so central to Olmsted and Bartholomew’s vision. The death of the Los Angeles River, in particular, was a dismal portent of the continuing role of government in reshaping and degrading the regional environment.

For most modern visitors, the very concept of a “Los Angeles River” has always seemed like an old Jack Benny joke. This is because none of them have ever seen it in full flood. As the Army Corps of Engineers has often reminded its critics, Los Angeles, sited in an alluvial plain at the foot of a rugged, rapidly eroding mountain range, has the worst flood and debris problems of any major city in the Northern Hemisphere. Before 1940, at least half of the city’s flatland area was subject to periodic overflow from the Los Angeles River.²¹

Olmsted and Bartholomew emphasized in their report that flood control could be accomplished by different combinations of land-use planning and public works. Their preference was to strictly limit private encroachment within the 50-year floodplain. They wanted to conserve broad natural chan-

¹⁶ Regional Planning conference, *Minutes of the 1924 Session* (Los Angeles, 1924).

¹⁷ Olmsted and Bartholomew, *Parks*, pp. 14–16. The multiple-use strategy for riparian corridors was an Olmsted design trademark. For an earlier example, see Olmsted Brothers, *Report upon the Development of Public Grounds for Greater Baltimore* (Baltimore, 1904).

¹⁸ Olmsted and Bartholomew, *Parks*, p. 22.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Cf. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Harlan Bartholomew, and Charles Cheney, *A Major Traffic Street Plan for Los Angeles* (Los Angeles, 1924); Olmsted Brothers and Ansel Hall, *Proposed Park Reservations for East Bay Cities* (Oakland, 1930).

²¹ *Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers and Their Tributaries, and Ballona Creek*, Calif., 76th Cong., 3rd Sess., 1940, Doc 426, serial 10599, pp. 11–26.



Hover, 1996-7. Gregory Crewdson

nels in which storm waters could spread, irrigating and fertilizing the riverside landscapes that would serve as nature preserves, recreational parks, and scenic parkways out of flood season.²²

The opposing solution was to deepen and “armor”—that is, pave—a narrow width of the river’s channel in order to flush storm runoff out of the city as efficiently as possible, and thus allow extensive industrial development within the floodplain. Beneficial to large landowners, this strategy would force the natural river into a concrete straitjacket, destroying the riparian ecology and precluding use of the riverway as a greenbelt. Not surprising, support for this approach was first organized and financed early in the century by the Southern Pacific Railroad.²³ Their so-called Flood Control Committee portrayed the river as an apocalyptic threat to the city’s “humble homebuilders.” “It should be remembered,” read one of its campaign ads, “that prior to 1824, the Los Angeles River, when in flood, flowed southwest through the present location of the city into Santa Monica Bay. If we had another flood like that of 1889, and a steel bridge fell to the river and dammed it, this might happen again, causing a calamity equal to that of Johnstown or Galveston.”²⁴

The unprecedented loss of 87 lives in the great deluge of 1938, which turned 300,000 acres of the San Fernando Valley and Orange County to inland seas, seemed to justify the flood control lobby’s morbid predictions. There was broad agreement that the urban-riparian interface had to be reconstructed to take account of the huge population explosion of the 1920s. Urbanization, of course,

²² Olmsted and Bartholomew, *Parks*, p. 16.

²³ See “Land Index Map of Railroad and Utility Property,” in California, Railroad Commission, Engineering Department, *Report on Railroad Grade Crossing Elimination and Passengers and Freight Terminal in Los Angeles* (Sacramento, 1920).

²⁴ *Flood Control Advocate*—a four-page tabloid distributed by the Flood Control Committee before the 20 February 1917 election. The major issue in the election was whether flood control works would be financed by a special assessment of flood plain landowners or by general revenue bonds. The heavily promoted bond measure passed.

25 Richard Neutra, "Homes and Housing," in George Robbins and L. Deming Tilton (eds.), *Los Angeles: Preface to a Masterplan* (Los Angeles, 1941), pp. 189, pp. 194-95.

had itself inexorably increased the menace of such floods by reducing the porous surface area available to absorb runoff. But Olmsted and Bartholomew's greenbelt alternative, with its explicit assertion of communal sovereignty over private interest, was never seriously debated. Nor did anyone seem to pay much attention to the Olmstedian proposition that it was cheaper to keep property away from floodplains through hazard zoning than to keep floods away from property through vast public works. A decisive political factor was the promise that flood control construction would generate thousands of temporary jobs for the unemployed. Fletcher Bowron, Los Angeles' new reform mayor, was under tremendous pressure from his trade union allies to expand public works employment in coordination with Washington. As a result, both local New Dealers and the city's traditional Republican elite campaigned for the comprehensive plan that Congress eventually approved as the Flood Control Act of 1941. The Army Corps of Engineers was authorized to reshape the county's natural hydrology into a monolithic system of concrete storm sewers. The Los Angeles River—the defining landscape of the nineteenth-century city—was sacrificed for the sake of emergency work relief, the preservation of industrial land values, and a temporary abatement of the flood problem.

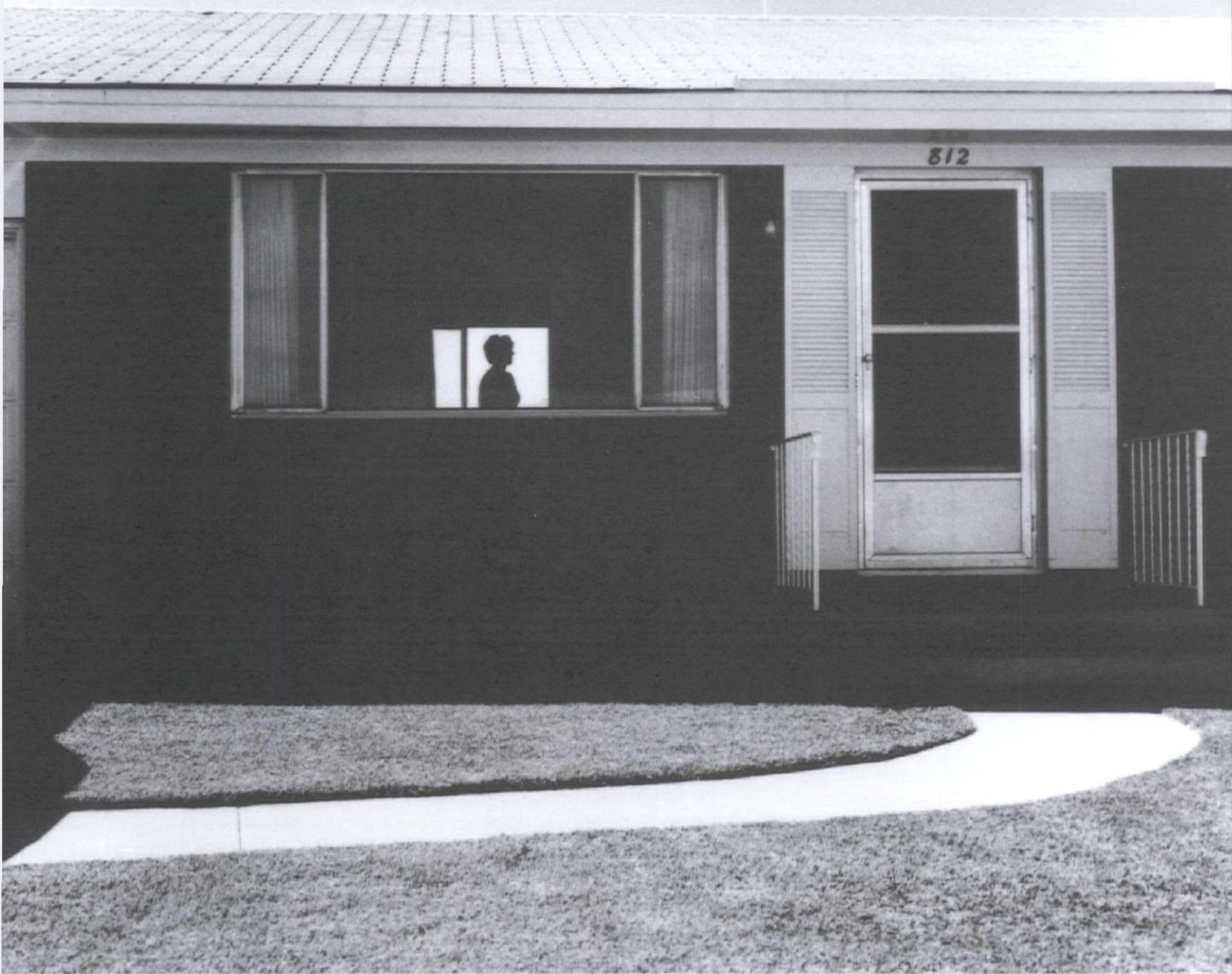
battle of the valley At a symposium which included the region's leading architects and planners on the eve of the Second World War, Richard Neutra, the architectural representative on the new State Planning Board, denounced the disfigurement of Los Angeles' hillsides, the dispiriting uniformity of most of its subdivisions, and, above all, the corrosive impact of extreme privatism. "Beautiful and broad views from individual dwellings," he argued, "can hardly atone for the lack of a comprehensive and convincingly landscaped neighborhood design and for lost communal opportunities." Large-scale government housing projects rather than private developments, Neutra argued, offered the best opportunity for integrated community design.²⁵

the very concept of a "Los Angeles River" has always seemed like an old Jack Benny joke

Neutra's derision of private homes in the hills rings odd today since it is for precisely such projects that he and other first-generation Los Angeles modernists are most remembered. Yet, in the war years, domestic architecture scarcely made an appearance in the Los Angeles-based *Arts and Architecture* magazine, aside from the influential Case Study Houses. The war mobilized an unprecedented coalition of architects, planners, and New Deal reformers committed to a common vision of regional planning, slum clearance, social housing, and environmental conservation.

In a score of federal housing projects, as well as in several exemplary private subdivisions, Southern California's leading modernists attempted to define an alternative urbanism based on medium-density groupings of bungalows and garden apartments around dramatic common spaces. If Neutra's Channel Heights project, built to house shipyard workers in the Los Angeles Harbor area, is justifiably recalled by architectural historians as the finest single design of the period, then Baldwin Hills Village has been the most successful enduring community. Completed in 1942 after a long struggle to obtain federal financing, the village consists of 630 row houses and apartments, in five styles, arranged in a continuous S plan around garden courts opening onto three large greens connected by tree-shaded malls. Unique for Los Angeles, automobile traffic is confined to the project's periphery, while the center is an oasis of pedestrian calm. At every level of organization, the village's design sustains a superb dialectic between private and communal space. After more than a half-century—integrated and ungated—it remains one of Los Angeles' most vibrant neighborhoods.

In its original context, moreover, the village was envisaged as a prototype "democratic community," an alternative urban building block to the automobile-dominated private subdivision. One of the most influential contemporary advocates of this new urbanism was Robert Alexander, a member of the architectural team that created the village and a future partner of Richard Neutra. Appointed to the Los Angeles City Planning Commission at the end of the war, Alexander boldly attempted to use agricultural greenbelts—much in the spirit of Olmsted and Bartholomew—to force postwar suburbanization along a new design path, based on the commons-centered, pedestrian-scaled examples of Baldwin Hills Village and Channel Heights.



Newly Occupied Tract Houses, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1968. Robert Adams

Alexander foresaw that the voracious postwar demand for housing, if left to the speculative marketplace, would repeat the 1920s boom on a larger and more destructive scale. The remaining agricultural areas of coastal Southern California, especially the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys, would immediately become enormous real estate casinos where speculators and builders would lay their bets on farmland and wait for population growth to pay off. In the San Fernando Valley, in particular, rural and urban land uses were already precariously balanced.

Alexander and city planning director Charles Bennett recognized that the San Fernando Valley, under tremendous pressure from real estate speculators, would be the first and most decisive battlefield. Accordingly, they proposed a zoning strategy that opened the Valley to hundreds of thousands of house-hungry ex-GIs and aircraft workers but concentrated new development at medium-density levels around 16 existing suburban nodes permanently separated by 83 square miles of citrus

26 Robert E. Alexander, "The San Fernando Valley," unpublished manuscript, 1990, p. 80. Cf. Charles Bennett, "Planning for the San Fernando Valley," an address intended for the war-canceled convention of the Urban Land Institute, November 1944 (in John Randolph Haynes archives, UCLA Special Collections); and Los Angeles City Planning Commission, *Accomplishments—1944* (Los Angeles, 1945), pp. 5-12.

27 From a conversation with Alexander in 1992.

28 Alexander, *San Fernando Valley*, p. 82.

29 *Ibid.*

30 *Ibid.*

31 William H. Whyte, "Urban Sprawl," *Fortune* 57 (January 1958), p. 302.

32 See Mark Northcross, "Los Angeles County: Biting the Land That Feeds Us," *California Tomorrow* 36; and Raymond Dassmann, *California's Changing Environment* (San Francisco, 1981), p. 81.

33 County Citizens' Committee, *op. cit.*; and Richard Jahns, "Seventeen Years of Response by the City of Los Angeles to Geologic Hazards," *Geologic Hazards and Public Problems: Conference Proceedings* (Santa Rosa, 1970), p. 255.

and farm greenbelts.²⁶ Alexander's implicit vision was of a virtuous circle in which the protection of open space through strict zoning simultaneously preserved landscape integrity, promoted clustered housing, reduced the costs of school and utility provision, and ensured sufficient population densities to sustain rapid transit systems, including the famous interurban "red cars." This new urban fabric would, he believed, be especially conducive to strong neighborhood identity and to increased democratic participation—key values in the New Deal paradigm of planning.²⁷

At the end of the war, greenbelt zoning for the Valley was actually passed into law by the city council, but it lacked the broad political support to survive the relentless counterattack of developers and landowners. As politically naive planners were shocked to discover, other units of government became active accomplices in the destruction of Los Angeles' agricultural periphery. The county tax assessor, for example, increased the pressure on farmers to sell out by reappraising their land as "prime residential real estate"—a self-fulfilling prophecy which spread like wildfire.²⁸ The Federal Housing Administration, already notorious among African-Americans for its endorsement of racially restrictive covenants and white-only suburbs, refused to lift a finger to preserve natural landscapes or to discourage leapfrog development.²⁹

Alexander's virtuous circle was inexorably transformed into a vicious circle: the total loss of horticultural landscape, excessive accumulation of vacant lots, expensive utilities and schools, a dramatic balance of homes and jobs, minimal community cohesion, and low-density populations transportable only by private cars. By the early 1960s, instead of a "balanced self-sufficient constellation of communities" bordered by greenbelts, the valley had become a paved-over "undifferentiated slurb" of nearly one million people.³⁰

greening the urban desert? In 1958 sociologist William H. Whyte, author of *The Organization Man*, had a disturbing vision as he was leaving Southern California. "Flying from Los Angeles to San Bernardino—an unnerving lesson in man's infinite capacity to mess up his environment—the traveler can see a legion of bulldozers gnawing into the last remaining tract of green between the two cities, and from San Bernardino another legion of bulldozers gnawing westward." When he reached New York he wrote an article for *Fortune* magazine, describing the insidious new growth form that he called "urban sprawl."³¹

by the early '60s, the valley had become an "undifferentiated slurb" of nearly a million people

After the debacle in the San Fernando Valley, there was negligible political or bureaucratic opposition to the obliteration of the rest of Southern California's picture postcard landscapes. Although L.A. County paid homage in its 1941 master plan to the "major importance" of protecting choice agricultural land from subdivision, its actual land-use policies continued to encourage sprawl. In a 1956 report, for example, the Regional Planning Commission confirmed that all the remaining citrus orchards in the eastern San Gabriel Valley would soon be bulldozed and subdivided. The commission's only concern was that "this transition to urban uses should be encouraged to take place in an orderly manner" to minimize the "dead period" between land clearance and home construction."

For a decade, meanwhile, at least one thousand citrus trees were bulldozed and burned every week. Between 1939 and 1970, agricultural acreage in L.A. County south of the San Gabriel Mountains (the richest farmland in the nation according to some agronomists) fell from 300,000 to less than 10,000 acres. One of the nation's most emblematic landscapes—the visual magnet that had attracted hundreds of thousands of immigrants to Southern California—was systematically eradicated.³²

Hillside and canyon environments fared little better. Both Olmsted and Neutra had denounced the privatization of hillside vistas, and Olmsted had urged public ownership of key tracts in the Santa Monica Mountains. A 1945 county citizens' committee, after reminding political leaders that the quality of recreational landscape was "the goose that lays our golden eggs," proposed extensive open space conservation in the Palos Verdes, Baldwin, Montebello, Puente, San Raphael, and Verdugo Hills. But the postwar demand for "view lots" was unquenchable. Within L.A. County as a whole, over 60,000 house sites were carved out of mountains and foothills during the '50s and early '60s.³³



Kitchen Sink, Tract House, Longmont, Colorado, 1973. Robert Adams

The automobile also devoured enormous quantities of prime land. By 1970 more than one-third of the surface area of the Los Angeles region was dedicated to the car: freeways, streets, parking lots, and driveways.³⁴ What generations of tourists and migrants had once admired as a real-life Garden of Eden was now buried under an estimated three billion tons of concrete (or 250 tons per inhabitant).³⁵

the last landscape Time travel is becoming increasingly difficult. Traffic on California 126 is halted while a convoy of huge bottom-dump semis, each filled to the brim with the dark rich soil of the Santa Clara River Valley, lumber onto the asphalt. Farther west, even larger Caterpillar graders are leveling roadbed for the four-lane widening of Highway 126. A wrathful dust devil whirls in front of the lead grader.³⁶

Eventually to be widened to eight lanes, Highway 126, once a bottleneck blocking the urbanization of the Santa Clara River Valley, will become the conduit for rapid and overwhelming growth. Transport planners already foresee its fate in the early twenty-first century when, gridlocked from Ventura to Santa Clarita, it will accommodate a staggering 360,000 trips per day. The major cause of this congestion will be Newhall Ranch, a master-planned city of 70,000 which will occupy a 10-mile corridor along the Santa Clara River. The Newhall Land and Farming Company, one of the West's largest developers, will begin building it in the year 2000.³⁷

This project should be a legal impossibility. More than 25,000 housing units are designated for an agriculturally zoned floodplain of a wild river in Los Angeles County, which contains several endangered species protected by the state of California. Newhall Land and Farming, however, has

³⁴ Donald Coates, *Environmental Geomorphology and Landscape Conservations*, vol. 2, Urban Areas (Stroudsburg, PA, 1974), p. 273.

³⁵ Calculated by architect Christopher Wegscheid (Southern California Institute of Architecture, 1994) using data that I supplied on historical aggregate (sand and gravel) production in Los Angeles County.

³⁶ What follows is largely based on Jim Churchill's detailed critique of the Newhall Ranch Environmental Impact Report in 1996 and subsequent interviews with Barbara Wample of the Friends of the Santa Clara River in fall 1997.

³⁷ *Newhall Land Fact Sheet*.

38 *Los Angeles Times*, 3 November 1996 and 24 November 1996. Newhall Land and Farming Company's campaign contributions 1992-1996 furnished by Jim Churchill.

39 *Los Angeles Times*, 24 November 1996; and Newhall Ranch brochures.

40 Newhall Ranch brochures.

the kind of political "juice" that makes the eyes of politicians pop. A lavish contributor to the campaigns of three of the five Los Angeles County supervisors, the company is also one of Governor Wilson's most faithful corporate supporters. By promising to preserve an 800-acre beauty strip along the Santa Clara River, and counting a large area of undevelopable mountainside as integral "open space," the company purchased enough environmental legitimacy to satisfy its undemanding political allies. By the beginning of 1998, Newhall Ranch had easily cleared most of the principal zoning and regulatory hurdles. **38**

The stakes for the company are immense. Over its 30-year development schedule, each completed phase of the Ranch will further raise the value of remaining raw land within the 19-square-mile parcel. Similarly, the growth of Newhall Ranch and the addition of more workers and consumers will consolidate the role of adjacent Valencia—an earlier Newhall Land and Farming Company community—as the industrial, retail, and cultural hub of northern L.A. County. The Ranch will also become an Archimedean lever inflating land values and ensuring urban development in the nearly 16,000 acres of orange and lemon groves owned by the company west of the Ventura County line.

Opposing the Ranch is a small band of ranchers, artists, and environmentalists known as the Friends of the Santa Clara River. They are acutely aware that northern Los Angeles County is evolving into a second Orange County, fueled by white flight from the aging suburbs of the San Fernando Valley. The population of the region, which has tripled since 1980, is expected to reach one million sometime around 2010. As the Friends have argued to the Regional Planning Commission, unrestrained development on this scale will soon destroy the landscape "amenities"—including clean air, beautiful vistas, abundant open spaces, and relatively uncongested highways—that have attracted so many to northern Los Angeles County in the first place.

The Newhall Land and Farming Company, of course, would vehemently disagree. Newhall Ranch, like the dozens of other masterplanned communities that offer "prestige lifestyles" in the white-flight belts, is meticulously planned down to the last cul-de-sac and red-tiled roof. The company claims, moreover, to have designed Newhall Ranch in conformity with the deepest longings of Southern Californians for an idealized "hometown America." Using "psychographic" surveys and focus groups, the company found that 98 percent of potential homebuyers want to live near nature and that vast majorities said they wanted entertainment opportunities, to feel safe, and to avoid the homogeneity of many of today's suburban tracts. **39**

Newhall Ranch, the company promises, will be this utopia. Like Disney Corporation's model community of Celebration in Florida, it has been planned to the fairytale standards of the "New Urbanism," with all homes located in traditional villages ("Riverwood," "Oak Valley," "The Mesas"), a short walking distance away from shops, open areas, and sports facilities. Billed as "A Community by Nature," it will supposedly "re-create elements of the lifestyle prevalent in Southern California before World War Two." **40** The Friends of the Santa Clara River are quick to point out the dark irony in the nostalgic trappings of Newhall Ranch. The last authentic landscape of that prewar way of life—Eden's last garden—will be destroyed in order to build its suburban simulation.

The widening of Highway 126 is then a primal scene—the familiar tremor heralding an eruption of growth that will wipe away human and natural history. Suburbanization is like another one of Southern California's natural disasters—recurrent and inexorable. The big machines shifting dirt along the Santa Clara River today are the direct descendants of the bulldozers that ripped freeway corridors through the San Gabriel Valley and Orange County in the 1950s. The cast is the same, but the play is now in its final act. After the Santa Clara River Valley dies, there is only desert to feed the developers' insatiable hunger.



Hover, 1996-7. Gregory Crewdson

Winter *Let me ask now, to what degree does our modern idea of community depend upon a cohesive identity?*

Kieran I think that by defining community as a place, we fundamentally miss a major contemporary community. Place is only one form of community. It remains important, particularly at certain points in our lives, but each of us belongs to many other communities that are not traditionally associated with place, such as professional communities. I guess my question comes back to the importance of civic space in these new places. I think that there's a reason why there's not much of it. If the market determined that there was a demand for civic places, they would be there. The reason they're not is that other forms of community have supplanted the need for traditional civic places.

Plater-Zyberk I think that there are communities that have no alternative to place-related community. In a place like Miami, there are only two places with any civic character, and they are overloaded by people driving for hours. It's like Greenwich Village in New York; for many decades people were driving in from New Jersey. There is a market for that kind of civic place, but there's no way to provide it.

Scott Brown An interesting community event happened recently. I saw it on TV, which is part of my community. Rosa

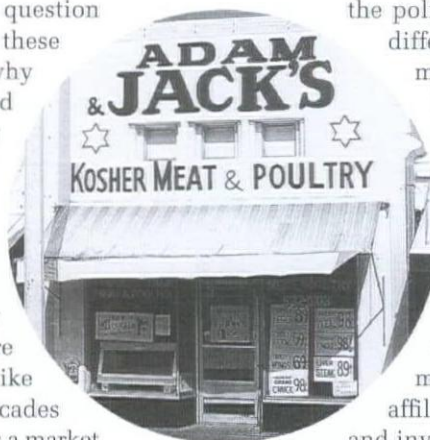
Parks got mugged and robbed. The young man who did it bought beer, cigarettes and crack; he said he was sorry he beat up Rosa Parks and she could smack him if she wanted. Well, in that very low-income community where Rosa Parks lived, a woman said, (not an exact quote) "Even the gang kids are outraged. He committed four other crimes and everyone knew he did it, but no one

told the authorities till he hurt Rosa Parks; then the kids told the police who he was." Now that community has different layers—like all communities, it's really many communities. If you merely rough up local citizens your friends will protect you.

But if you harm Rosa Parks, even the kids who are most rebellious will join the greater community in condemning you.

Plattus I think that there has emerged—as always happens in debates—a kind of either/or position that we all fall into. Either we believe in this galactic metropolis of placelessness where modernity and the fax machine require that we no longer have any affiliation with place at all, or we're so focused and invested, as I think that many of us in this room

are, on trying to reconstruct some semblance of a place-based community that we don't really want to deal with the other end of it. Elizabeth's description in alluding to places like



roundtable aesthetics, demographics and cohesion

The "strip," Washington Avenue, South Beach, Miami



South Beach in Miami reminded me of the show that Bob [Venturi] and Denise [Scott Brown] put together years ago where you [Denise] coined the phrase "the street on the strip" or something like that—this notion that people do choose place-based communities when they're available, but they choose other ones as well. A lot of what I keep coming back to is that, as architects and as citizens, we have to be in the business of supporting the choices that we value. Because what now defines what my colleague, Doug Rae, calls "the first city" is that the people who live in the inner city are precisely those who have no choice about where they live. And because they have no choice, we have trouble choosing that place for ourselves now.

Plater-Zyberk This is important, Alan, because I think that no one disagrees with Steve about the levels of community that exist. I think that many of us count ourselves in some way as part of an international community. I have friends around the world now, which just astounds me compared to my childhood. But I think that we're talking about place-based community being extremely important for people who cannot make a choice.

Plattus Children for example.

Plater-Zyberk It's all age groups. It's children; it's particularly adolescents and the elderly. These people are not being well served either in the approach to community in older places—where it's physically there, but it's not there in other ways—or in places where the physical pieces are coming apart. I think that it's

really showing up in the younger generation, in kids, schools and adolescents.

Shiffman By the way, we do not have to accept the distinction between "communities of interest" and "place-based community." There are many intricate linkages between the two, be they connections to the

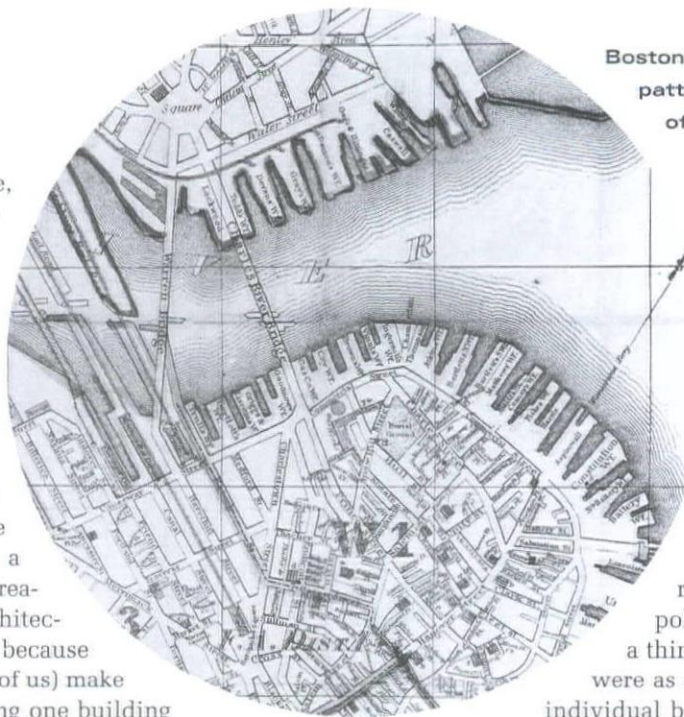
home countries of new immigrants or to the intellectual communities that link us through computers. We're beginning to see linkage of low-income communities; the base is beginning to talk to the base across the world, because the problems of the Lower East Side of New York are probably more similar to problems in parts of Santiago than they are to midtown Manhattan.

Koetter Architects have to consider whether certain arrangements of buildings may affect the quality of these communities. If they don't, then any pattern is interchangeable. I think that some patterns do work better than others. There are some long-lived communities in Boston which have had the capability of sustaining different kinds of communities over time. I'm thinking of some parts of the North End which have had tremendously different kinds of people move through the same patterns of building. Maybe as architects we can look at some of these kinds of patterns to get cues as to what kinds of building patterns have that capability.

Plater-Zyberk It's interesting that you come back to the words architects and architecture, especially since we're talking about a lot that can be discussed without speaking about architecture at



Laguna Beach, California, 1987. Alex MacLean



Boston's North End, 1857: the same pattern houses successive waves of populations

all. And I think many people, especially our students, are wondering, "What can practicing architects really do at the kind of scale we're discussing?" What does one building do, and why should we get involved in this discussion of community, especially since we are sometimes the least powerful people in influencing the patterns? That might be worthwhile dwelling on for a while. But I think that there are reasons that this is part of an architectural discussion. One reason is because all those other forces (for some of us) make a pretty dismal context for doing one building at a time. It means either that you're working with a patron who's going to spend a lot of money on a building to make it stand out, or that you're going to be working with people who have very little appreciation of architecture, building, or aesthetics.

Scott Brown Can I take that up in a slightly different way? Using the word "role," singular, for architecture is, I think, a basic mistake in the first place. There are not only different types of

architects, but an individual architect may play different roles at different times. Herb Gans would simply ask, "Who pays you?" If I'm being paid by an insurance company or a developer, my role isn't going to be that of a rabble-rouser. That's another role. And if you do take on that (honorable) role, developers aren't likely to employ you. One has to be realistic about one's role in a given situation. One of Le Corbusier's important roles was as a journalist. He wrote. He polemicized. He had a huge influence as a thinker and pamphleteer. His other roles were as an urban visionary and a designer of individual buildings. The possibilities are wider

why should we get involved in the discussion of community, especially

than these three, but architects are mistaken if, having been hired for one role, they think they can play another.

Shiffman I'd like to build on what Denise is saying. Max Neff, who is a South American observer of the urban scene, is calling for a transdisciplinary approach to the problems we're facing. He describes a discipline as something that's descriptive—being



Greater Miami area, Florida, 1999. Alex MacLean

able to describe a problem. He talks about interdisciplinary as a way of explaining a problem. But a transdisciplinary approach is one where you get a greater understanding of the phenomenon. I think architects and urban planners have a variety of roles to play. One is the role they play in each project, and the other is the role that they play in the community of professionals. That community of professionals and educators, I think, has a civic responsibility. Our skills have to go beyond traditional building skills. They have to include the ones of communication; we have to understand the sociology, the economy, and the history of the cities and the environments that we create.

Plattus I was at a conference recently where an urban planner came up to me afterwards and said, "Don't you think that the real problem with architecture schools is that they're trapped in their original alliance with the Beaux Arts, with the fine arts—they have affiliations with sculpture, and art and design, whereas they should really be someplace else?" I think she thought that the more appropriate alliance would be with the

the city had become an incommensurable phenomenon—that it was no longer amenable to those simple ideas of order—the earlier theoretical structure broke apart. Now you can take a despairing attitude and say, "Well it was never any good to begin with" or "It's no good to us at all today," or you can say that we now need to reconstruct an idea of architecture that includes the civic dimension. That's the key word. The Vitruvian triad was firmness, commodity, and delight. Civics wasn't there. It didn't have to be, because it was understood that those things applied to a fountain pen as well as to the city. It is very much an architectural issue. I would argue that you have to make a conscious effort to put civics back into the definition of architecture.

Koetter Alan, I think part of the problem is that compositionally we inherit the cities, and we can't actually make them like you make a placemat. From an ideological point of view, modern architecture would allow the architect to entertain the fantasy that the survival of society depended on the architect's presence. I like Denise's idea of asking who's paying you—that really cuts through a lot of this.

...ce we are often the least powerful people in influencing the patterns?

social sciences. I think it was a well-taken point, except that it ignores the fact that once upon a time, the arts of design didn't draw a boundary and say that the city and society were outside their bailiwick. There was a theoretical basis for architecture with one set of ordering principles that applied to either a column or to a city. It was recognized in the nineteenth century that

There's tremendous stratification in the city. Some policies are good; some are bad, but they continue to co-exist. And that is going to be confrontational.

Plater-Zyberk When you say these things, I think nothing is really new. Philadelphia is an example of a city that was extremely fragmented ethnically, to the point that they had to invent the Mummer's Parade... to relieve some of the tension.



Las Vegas, Nevada, 1983. Alex MacLean

Kieran We started this discussion by asking, "What do we do as architects?" I'd like to come back to this. We do have an obligation. Every day, we try to make things that address the nature of contemporary community. And all the electronic media aside, the medium in which we continue to function is not a lot different; it's just bricks and mortar, the same thing that it was a few thousand years ago. So what do we do about community, how do we show the way forward, how do the students find their way? These are very difficult questions to address, but one observation that I can make is that larger-scale unified civic design is probably not the way forward, because society doesn't believe in it

we've given away the expertise that people expect from us as architects - we have to reco

anymore. However, it does seem that the idea of community can be introduced into every building project at some level.

Plater-Zyberk Is community internal to the building, or is it how that building relates to other things?

Kieran It's both. It's how it relates to what's around it, and the decisions that you as an architect make as to how to....

Plater-Zyberk But then you're contradicting yourself. Because if you believe that community has something to do with the surroundings, then you are engaging in the kind of civic act that you started off saying is no longer valid.

Kieran I don't think that it's no longer valid. I think it's one of many civic acts. There are dozens of valid civic acts that have been devalued overall. It used to be that the only civic act was

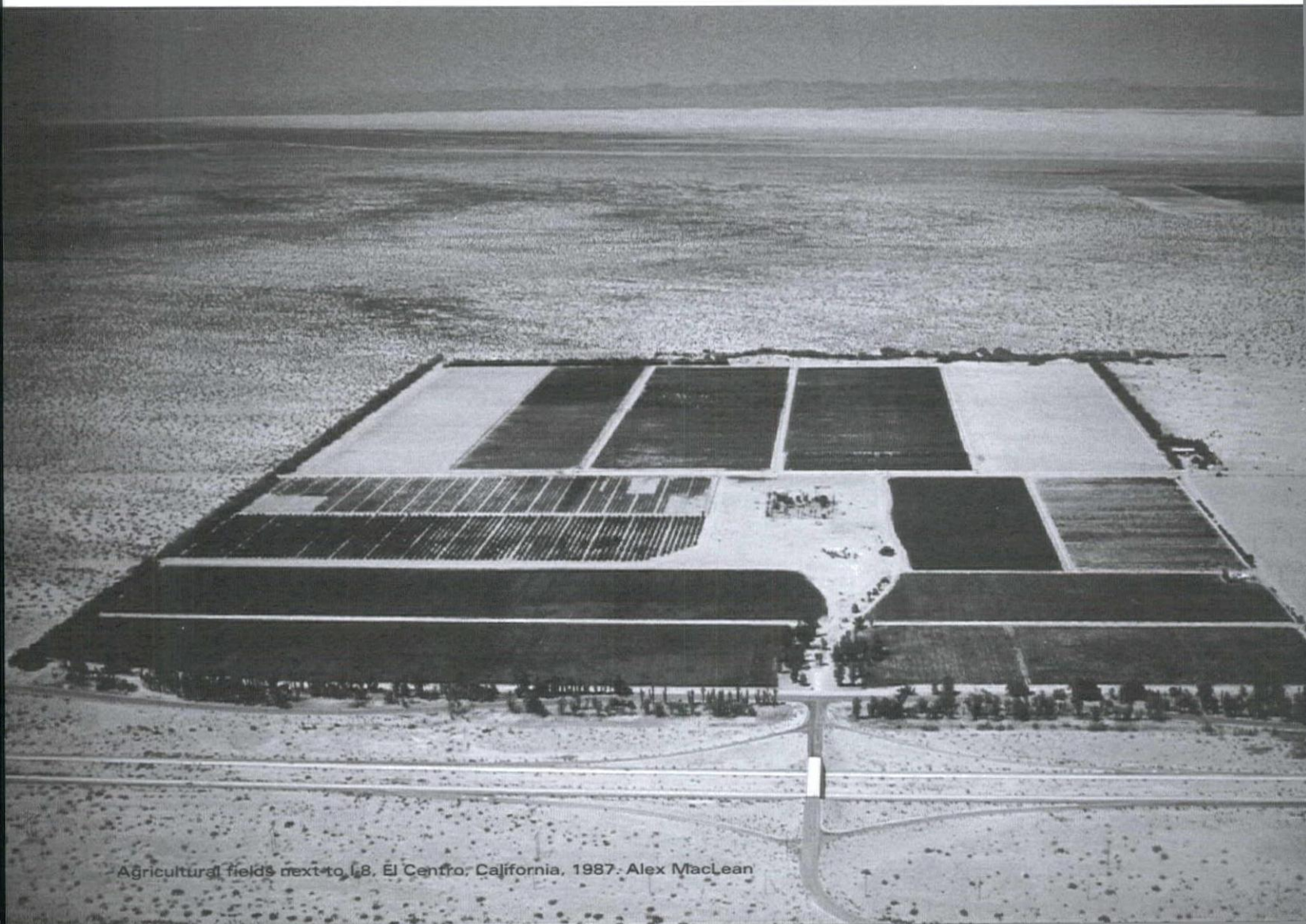
going out into the piazza - now it's one of many. The community where I live still has conventional, traditional civic places where you go to do conventional, traditional civic things. But on top of that there are fifteen or twenty options.

Koetter Years and years ago in a piece that appeared in an earlier *Perspecta*, Shad Woods made a distinction between Sunday urbanism and everyday urbanism. Sometimes parts of a city are transformed by forces which are beyond our knowledge and comprehension. Then there are literal civic gestures which people like architects make with the idea of having them be there for a long time. Some of the other everyday spaces are not there for

very long. They change with the occupation of the neighborhood, but they are just as much public spaces. In that piece I think Shad Woods was making a case for everyday urbanism, but he was ambiguous as to whether he imagined it coexisting with Sunday urbanism, which it seems in my mind it should.

Scott Brown There is a little bit of Sunday within the everyday. For example, the front door of the building is different from the rest of those in the building.

Koetter I think it's a question of whether some of these overtly civic places have the same kind of role in the city that they used to. I'm glad that those traditional civic spaces are in our cities, because I don't know if we would be capable of producing them anymore. Take the strip of land down Commonwealth Avenue or



Agricultural fields next to I-8, El Centro, California, 1987. Alex MacLean

Copley Square in Boston. Could we, through the planning process we have today, come up with that again?

Scott Brown When I work with a small community on a little Main Street, I can tell if the people involved are used to working together. They know how to argue with each other. And it's much better that way. Someone asks a seemingly irrelevant question and immediately someone else says, "She always asks that question. You don't have to listen to her." They all know she owns a property she's trying to get rezoned. Her remark sounds like public interest, but it's her own private interest. Internal community controls work beautifully at that scale. But now we're the archi-

professional standing

tects for a civic building in Manhattan. We won a public competi-

tion, through a public process, but a few architects decried our design. They were joined by a local community and a politician who owed no allegiance to the competition sponsors—and the scheme looks done for. And that's called "community participation" too. If the project goes forward, we then get to go before more community boards where we may find the equivalent of the lady with zoning issues, but probably no one will recognize it. And, in the middle of everything, we'll be told, "Now please paint a big green stripe down the front of the building because some important person wants it." And you begin to die. So I ask people like Herb Gans, "Does the professional have no rights at all?"

Shiffman It's an issue of power. Do we let the elites make the decisions, or do we have some respect for the democratic process?

Scott Brown What I've tried to point out is that in a democracy, in a great democracy like New York, I think we'll be unlikely to get great new civic architecture because of this whole interplay of interests and, often, undeclared private agendas. The question is what do you do about art in a democracy?

Shiffman Great planning and great art are a balance between reason and democracy. I think that's one of the legacies from an architect named Jefferson. What I mean to say is that he helped design democracy, but also taught us that reason is important. And it's the critical tension between the two.

Scott Brown The issue is private agendas posing as public issues.

Shiffman There are always private agendas! When you work for a corporation or for anyone who pays you, that's a private agenda. In a democracy, you have whole sets of private agendas. The issue is how do you resolve conflicts in the most rational way. How do people with different interests get represented? And how do you develop a rational basis for making a decision?

Scott Brown Let me put it this way. If I work for a developer, where there's a unified and crisp decision-making process, I still need to get all the issues on the table and to consider them in the very best way I can, then to get the approval of the client and go on to the next phase. In the next phase, other issues come up, are handled to the satisfaction of the client and I go on once again. But in projects of high public interest and many private interests there's often no mechanism for choosing between conflicting



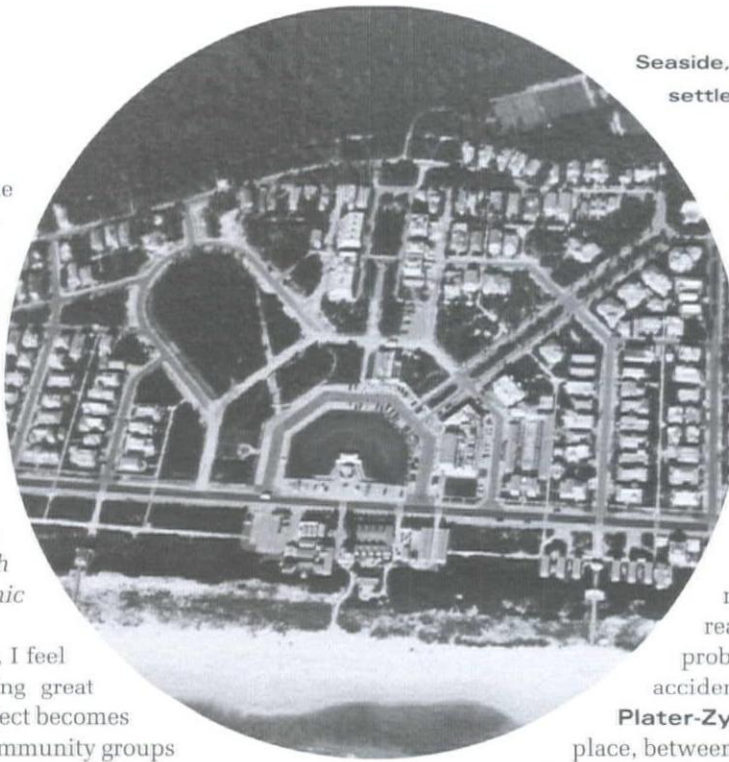
Destin, Florida, 1994. Alex MacLean

Seaside, Florida: model New Urbanist settlement

goals, there's no ratchet in the process. People flounder, seeking consensus through compromise, and they continually go back to square one. You're given instructions at the end that should have come up at the beginning. That's not rational either. It's difficult to get rationality, let alone artistry in such situations.

Winter *What, then, is our role as architects in dealing with diversity, be it cultural, economic or aesthetic?*

Scott Brown As you can see, I feel the odds are against producing great civic architecture when the project becomes a honey pot for city agencies, community groups and powerful individuals. The procedures for going from one step to another get completely upturned. What if an architect were to say, "Look, this is a great scheme. We listened carefully to you, we did everything you asked. You had all these requirements, and we met them. Now, please, if we can just get on and develop it. And if you tell us to take out one more column, we will resign." Should an architect do that or not?



Shiffman Well, part of this confusion is how the architect defines who the real client is. The real client in a public building is not necessarily the agency.

Scott Brown In law, you are responsible whether your client tells you to do it or not. For example, if a client tells me, "You must accept this scheme," and I say, "But buses are likely to run over pedestrians." If the client still instructs me to do it, I must refuse, for moral reasons and because the court will probably hold me liable if there's an accident.

Plater-Zyberk I think we've lost that third place, between public and client. I wonder if it's not because we don't have, except for a few technical issues, one impressive body of knowledge to present and say, "It has to be this way because we know this."

Scott Brown If I say "The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) regulations make me do it this way," people can understand that. But if I say, "I did it because it's beautiful," that's subjective. Where do you go with that?

savior of the streams edmund bacon

From 1949 to 1970, Edmund Bacon served as the Director of Philadelphia's famed City Planning Commission. He was one of the staunchest defenders of cities at a time when the U.S. was moving from a primarily urban to a suburban nation. The projects for which Bacon received most of his recognition were located in the two square miles which comprise Philadelphia's Center City. The following autobiographical piece describes Bacon's lesser-known plan for the city's "Far Northeast" section, built near and around Pennypack Creek.

I awoke one morning of my eighty-fourth year, with a sudden compulsion to revisit the outer reaches of Northeast Philadelphia, to a neighborhood I had designed some forty years ago. I wanted to see how the visions I had created had passed into the realities of today. I boarded a commuter train to the Torresdale Station and proceeded on foot to see the fruits of my labors. As I stepped into Pennypack Creek the water engulfed my feet in a cool embrace. Here was a stream that had gurgled over these rocks for thousands of years. Because of me, this stream was gurgling still. I was comforted by the realization that, at some future time, people may rediscover this bit of beauty and remove from it the debris that has accumulated. My little stream will then recover its full glory.

* * *

By what right do I claim the stream as my own? By the fact that all of the numerous other streams between William Penn's Center City and my Far Northeast have been systematically murdered. Between the areas designed by artists Penn and myself, over the three hundred intervening years, the engineers who planned the area had paved over the streams, channeling their water through underground pipe. True, William Penn had introduced the rectangular grid in the first place, but only as a finite background for his grand design of five public squares and two intersecting avenues.

philadelphia's

In 1951, a notably theatrical groundbreaking ceremony marked the beginning of construction of downtown Philadelphia's Penn Center, a modernist mixed-use office complex integrated with the city's transit systems. Five-year old Miriam Penn-Gaskell Hall, the youngest descendant of William Penn, waved a Geiger counter over a box and set off a small explosion. A mushroom cloud rose into the air, and the gathered audience, dusted with "fallout," applauded the near-atomic spectacle. This event launched what would come to be known as Urban Renewal. The participants of the ceremony could not have foreseen that the project, along with its creator Edmund Bacon, would come to symbolize the shortcomings of modernist urban design.

Between the years 1949 and 1970, Edmund Bacon headed the most aggressive and well-known planning commission in the country. With no real equal nationally in the totality of his influence, Bacon quickly became a celebrity of American urban planning. Bacon's persua-

Plater-Zyberk I think there is actually information around which we could coalesce as a profession. Part of the problem is that we have given away the expertise that people expect from us.

Scott Brown There used to be rules: three columns are better than two; dualities are bad; "L" shapes are bad. Do you really want to disseminate that kind of "information?"

Plater-Zyberk It may not be that, but it might be saying that, empirically speaking, a street space that is made within a certain range of proportions is good.

Scott Brown But people say, "Who are you to declare this range of proportions aesthetically better than the other? Why can't it be taken to a vote?"

Plattus But we're appealing to judgement or, in the case of citizenship, a sense of shared responsibility, which can't be codified.

Plater-Zyberk However it is accomplished, I think we have to recover [our professional standing]. Denise has described very well the situation in which the architect is at best the secretary to hundreds of people. You write it down and then somehow it has to appear. At that point you are no longer acting as a professional.

Scott Brown You really want to be receptive to all those people and you try your very hardest and you put it all together, and go through a good community process. You even get the vote of the city council. Then two meetings later, three newcomers say "You didn't follow a public procedure." And you say you did, and they say, "Well, why wasn't I there?" Suddenly you find your whole design is changing again, because some irresponsible indi-

vidual is wrecking a process for his or her own purposes. For the community to understand what is happening, you have to spend enough time with them, and no one pays you to do that.

Koetter I think Liz raised an important point about the need for some consensus. But before discussing things like the proportion of the street, we have to realize that it might be tough to get a consensus as to whether there ought to be streets. I think you have to build up those kinds of agreements. A lot of people live on streets, and they don't think about them or talk about them in architectural terms.

Plater-Zyberk We need to make what we know as architects accessible to people. If I go back to the complaint about the academia of architecture, there is still a feeling in some places that architecture should be mysterious, that our power is in being inaccessible.

Koetter There are a lot of different kinds of architects and there are a lot of different levels at which an architect can operate. Some architects want to be mysterious, and that's great, but not all architects have to be.

Scott Brown If you grow up thinking that as an architect you will work at your drawing board, you have to profoundly change your approach. You realize you must become a lawyer, sociologist, politician and psychiatrist, in order to be an architect. I think many architects want to be like cobblers. For them, architecture is a craft. It's a finger thing—they wish someone else could do all the other stuff.



Penn's plan had been so visionary that it had sufficed for the expanding city until 1854, when a quantum leap was taken. The state legislature passed the Consolidation Act under which all of the County of Philadelphia had become the City of Philadelphia, and the vast rural surroundings were planned for urban development. Great autocratic powers were given to a newly created Board of Surveyors, to lay out streets and to control the form of the city that would arise.

And what did these engineers do with this absolute power? In a single act of barbarism, they imposed the grid pattern, a conceptual straitjacket, on thousands of acres, most of the remaining rural land in Philadelphia. Penn and I designed our interventions around the anatomical structure of the land; the engineers between us had no vision beyond the grid and the single block unit, destroying everything that stood in the way. In one fell swoop, bulldozers flattened each hillock, filled in each valley, obliterating forever the special characteristics of each bit of the landscape, condemning the streams to flow in dank concrete sewers. These acts transformed the land from its natural state to the engineers' vision of what it ought to be: a blank piece of paper to be efficiently cut up and sold as a commodity. And so the greater part of this city is built on engineers' dreams of rationality, efficiency and economy. Row houses, block after block of them, all essentially identical, paper the landscape with streams still flowing under them unseen.

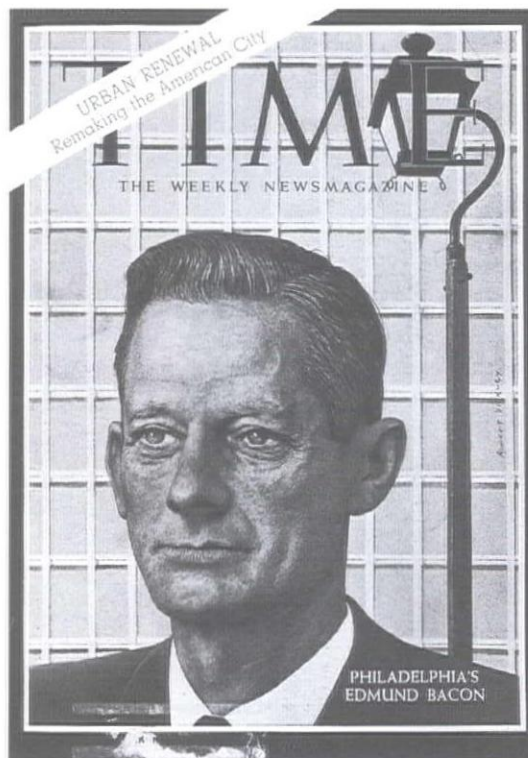
Nature has a way of getting back at those who do not listen to its messages. In the Logan section of Philadelphia, a stream bed was not filled well enough. The underground streams rebelled. The valley returned to being a valley. Houses cracked, were cordoned off and abandoned, a ghost town.

The 1854 Consolidation Act continued the rigid and mindless grid over every bit of the topography except for that outermost stretch between the Pennypack and the Poquessing Creeks, which they left alone. That is the part of God's country I seized upon and made my own.

postwar moment doug hassebroek

sion extended beyond the profession into the mainstream public dialogue as he consistently worked to "sell" his ideas to an indifferent public. This need to sell, combined with his personal flair for publicity, became a hallmark of Bacon's career.

It was in combat in the Pacific Theater when Edmund Bacon, already a graduate of Cornell and Cranbrook architecture schools, first strategized on the future of his hometown of Philadelphia through letter correspondence with the architect Oscar Stonorov. After the war, in 1947, Bacon became a land planner at the newly created City Planning Commission and worked with Stonorov on the design of the city's "Better Philadelphia Exhibition." The Better Philadelphia Exhibit was equaled in scale and ambition only by Norman Bel Geddes' "Futurama" at the 1939 New York World's Fair. If Futurama embodied the giddy utopianism of a country eager for grandness yet still coming to terms with the effects of the automobile, the Phila-



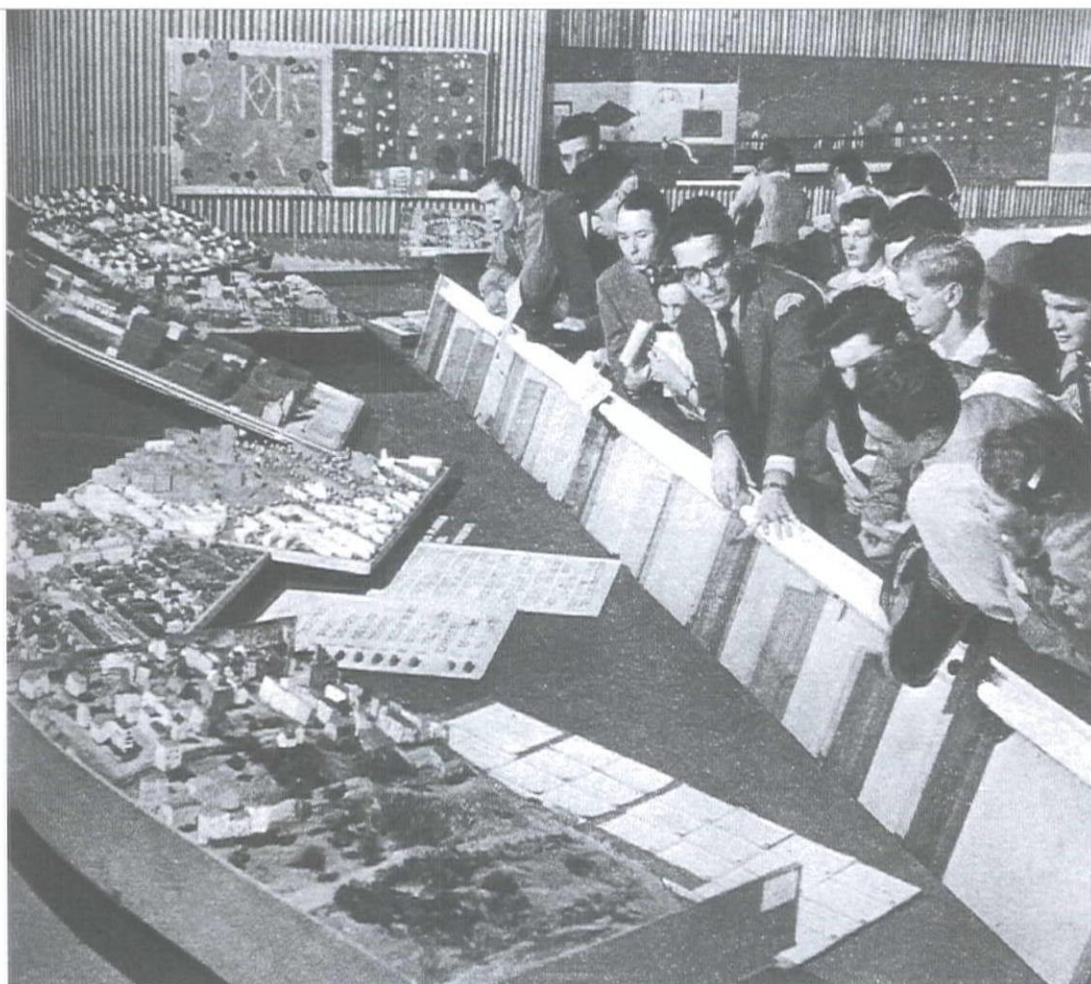
Ed Bacon on the cover of *Time*, 1964

First, I had to wrest control from the Board of Surveyors, to destroy a power which they had exercised unchallenged for a hundred years. Here a curious thing happened. Instead of martyring myself as the victim of bureaucratic arrogance and political misdoing (as so many planners do), I used the "vector" approach. I went directly to the aged engineer who was the absolute czar of the Board of Surveyors. I showed him that there were other methods of land planning and development. Amazingly, instead of throwing me out of his office, he listened, intrigued. It had not occurred to him that there was another way, a way of letting the land form the basis of design rather than imposing onto it a rigid mechanical preconstruct.

In 1952, after 60 years of corrupt administrations, a Democratic mayor was elected, and Charter reform enacted. This gave me the opportunity to incorporate my interests into legislation. Quietly, I wrote a section of the new Charter requiring that all official street plans of the city receive the approval also of the City Planning Commission, thus ending over a hundred years of absolute power by the Board of Surveyors.

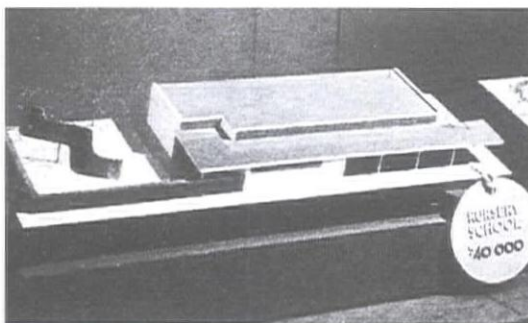
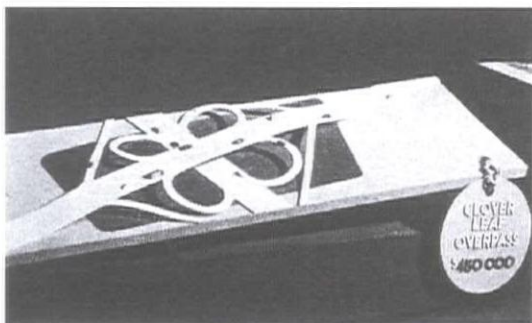
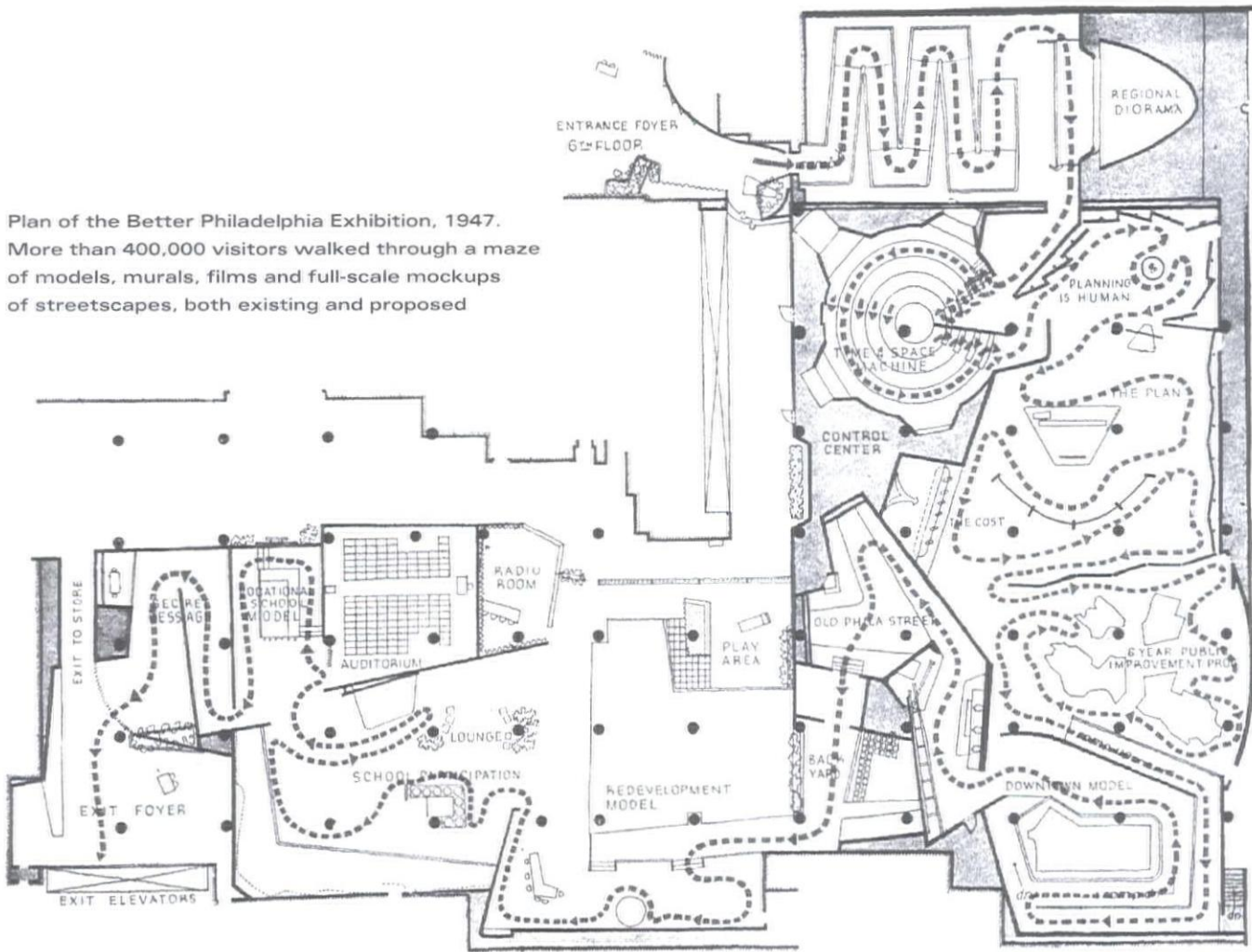
Once the Planning Commission became a player, we tackled the issue of zoning, the most powerful tool at the time for shaping a neighborhood. Housing construction was channeled into one of four zoning categories:

- *A Zoning - Single-family detached houses, the pattern of most American subdivisions.*
- *B Zoning - Twin houses with 8-foot side yards, a more economical development with more houses to the acre. It can make a pleasant community.*
- *C Zoning - Twin houses with 4-foot side yards. I consider this a poor arrangement. Side yards are too narrow to be useful, and the 8-foot separation of houses is too narrow for privacy.*
- *D Zoning - Row houses, the most economical shelter known.*



Feature display at the Better Philadelphia Exhibition, 1947, showing proposed improvements

Plan of the Better Philadelphia Exhibition, 1947. More than 400,000 visitors walked through a maze of models, murals, films and full-scale mockups of streetscapes, both existing and proposed



Proposed improvements from the Better Philadelphia Exhibition. Left, clover-leaf overpass, \$450,000; right, nursery school, \$40,000

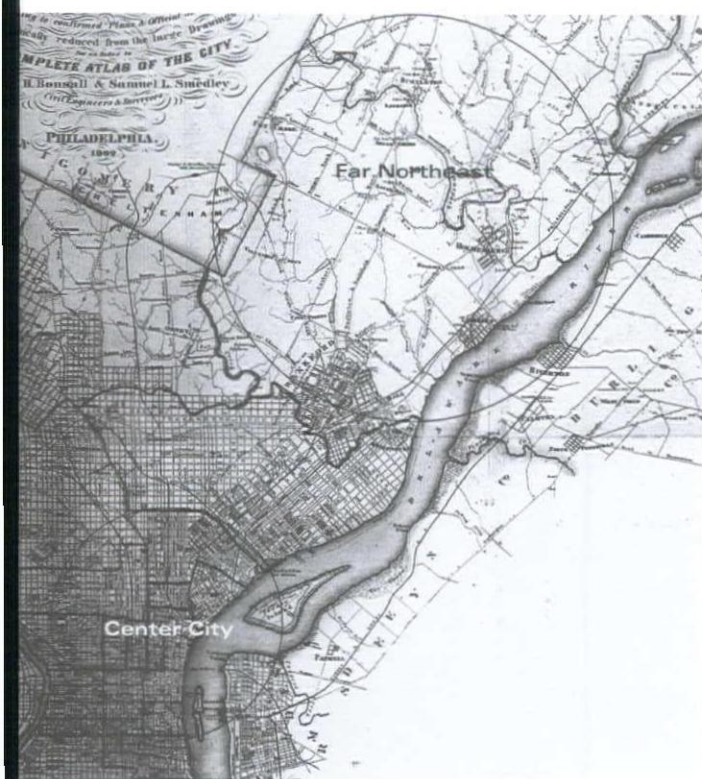
- 1 Introduction to *Architecture Culture 1943-1968*, p. 13-24. Joan Ockman, editor, New York: Rizzoli, 1993.
- 2 Philadelphia's most radical urban design occurred as part of the earlier City Beautiful movement, in the creation of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway (completed 1922) and Independence Mall (consolidated in 1945, constructed 1952-1969).

Philadelphia Exhibition echoed the more sober sensibilities of the post-World War II period. After the war, architects from Walter Gropius to Buckminster Fuller were employing alternatives to the "genius" culture of modernism, putting the new technocracy at the service of the very real problems of the country.¹ The Philadelphia Exhibition aimed at selling the practical value of planning to a city and a nation unfamiliar with the profession but fearful of blight and sprawl.

Taking over two floors of Gimbel's department store, the exhibition led some 400,000 visitors through a maze of models, murals, films and full-scale mock-ups of streetscapes, both

existing and proposed. The feature display was a 14- by 30-foot model of the existing Center City, with motorized hinged panels that flipped in sequence to reveal the Commission's extensive proposals. If the presentation was somewhat dramatic, the design solutions were themselves quite modest. Philadelphia rejected the slash-and-burn strategies of New York's Robert Moses in favor of more collaborative planning—and this distinction was not lost on the Exhibition's visitors.²

By 1949 the success of the Exhibition propelled Bacon to the directorship of the Philadelphia Planning Commission, where he took



1862 map of Philadelphia, showing the Far Northeast section, annexed but undeveloped

I discovered that working with people and communities is just as much an art as the design of a house or the design of a city. The rural-minded residents scattered among the farms of the Northeast regarded D Zoning as anathema, and forged an unspoken agreement in City Council that D Zoning would never penetrate beyond Pennypack Creek into the Far Northeast. The land owners and developers paid little heed to this until virtually the entire city below Pennypack Creek had been covered with gridiron row houses, early in my term as Planning Director.

Then, the pressure was on. The community divided itself into two warring camps: the builders and their allies at the south bank of Pennypack Creek, and the rural residents and their supporters on the other side, determined to repel the invasion. I did not back either side. Rather I created a new, third hypothesis based on a wider, more inclusive view. This dislodged the warriors from their positions and opened up new coalitions.

The developers wanted to continue with D zoning, the residents were promoting C Zoning. Both assumed that the existing patterns of development were fixed, and that the pattern of building would continue the form it had taken ever since William Penn's day. Neither side saw that the configuration of the streets was at least as important as the nature of the houses that would be built on them. I saw the very intensity of the conflict as an opportunity to promote an entirely new zoning category: C-1 Zoning.

3 Mitchell had tried to distance himself from the fervor of the Exhibition, but faced with increasing public momentum to implement the plans, he resigned his post. He was succeeded by Raymond Leonard, who died shortly after taking office.

4 Both cities produced equally technocratic work after the war, Berlin rebuilding its center and Paris developing its perimeter. The *Wiederaufbau* had more humane beginnings in 1945, but as its scale increased so did its anonymity.

5 From "The Philadelphia Cure," *Architectural Forum*, April 1952, p. 112-119. A less sanguine interpretation regards Society Hill as federally subsidized gentrification which directly displaced the lower income resident population. For more information, refer to "The Political and Social Construction of Revitalized Neighborhoods: Society Hill, Philadelphia, and False Creek, Vancouver" by A. Cybriwsky, David Ley, and John Western in *Gentrification of the City*. Neil Smith and Peter Williams, editors. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986.

the reins from his less architecturally-inclined predecessor Robert Mitchell. 3 Bacon then set to work implementing the projects of the Exhibition. Viewed together, Bacon's work over the next two decades spanned a broad spectrum of intent, with no single underlying ideology. Penn Center's monotonous towers and empty pedestrian plazas have been criticized as mediocre architecture and can be likened to similar anti-septic urban renewal projects including Berlin's *Wiederaufbau* and Paris' *Grands Ensembles*. 4 By contrast, the transformation of Philadelphia's impoverished Washington Square East neighborhood into tony, upper middle class Society Hill (1952) was considered innovative for its day. Called "slum clearance with penicillin, not surgery," Society Hill sponsored a mix of new residential towers and townhouses by I.M. Pei, modern infill projects, pocket parks, and extensive restoration of the majority of existing row-houses which formed the historic fabric of the neighborhood. 5 Society Hill thus became a model for a still-fledgling preservation movement. A few projects even proved to undermine each other. The Commission's closing of Chestnut Street to automobile traffic (1976) arguably

hastened the decline of this once-grand shopping thoroughfare, and the opening of The Gallery at Market East, a competing indoor shopping mall along neighboring Market Street (1984) dealt Chestnut Street a deathblow.

Collectively, Bacon saw the body of his work in Center City as both a continuation of William Penn's legacy and a resistance to the suburbanization of the region. Meanwhile, in his lesser known planning efforts for the "Far Northeast," the section of Philadelphia being settled in the 1950s, Bacon adopted the ascendant strategies of the suburbs to the outer reaches of the city. At the Far Northeast, Bacon essentially rejected the extension of Penn's orthogonal grid in favor of the curving streets of Garden City models. 6 Bacon's major achievement in this area was to develop a master plan and zoning guidelines which speculative developers had to accept.

Within ten years of taking office, Bacon and his Commission had gained international attention, and in 1962 the American Institute of Architects (AIA) held their annual convention in Philadelphia to highlight the work of the city. At the event, an aged Le Corbusier received the AIA's Gold Medal, but the most memorable

Amazingly, it won the day and was enacted into law. In the C-1 category, gridiron plans were replaced by curving streets, the size of row house groups was limited, and streams would be allowed to continue in their natural course, protected by public easements. Here I conceived the idea of having the Planning Commission prepare an overall plan for the entire area, requiring the developers to receive approval for any deviations. I did this to break out of the eviscerating syndrome typical in planning, whereby planners are limited to tinkering with developers' plans—usually bad in the first place. All of this produced much controversy, of course. Yet, in the long run, my ideas prevailed and were incorporated into legislation.

Suddenly I was faced with an appalling question. Now that I had established the requirement that everyone submit to my plan for a community, what was my plan?



The ordinary neighborhoods of the Far Northeast, surrounded by greenbelts, 1999

moment was a presentation given by Edmund Bacon. For the occasion Bacon assembled a stage show that was filmed and entitled *Form, Design, and the City*. Bacon served as the master of ceremonies for the show, and started by giving an extensive pictorial history of Pope Sixtus V's efforts to bring order to Rome. He then compared that effort to his own in Philadelphia, calling out the challenges of implementing the necessary "total design concept" in a democratic society with democratic planning principles.⁷ Bacon then narrated the historical development of Philadelphia as architects Stonorov, Pei, Vincent Kling, Robert Geddes and others entered on cue, chalk in hand, to sketch their contributions onto a giant plan of Center City. Members of the Planning Commission staff, some pushed on rolling ladders with others ducking underneath, furiously filled in the voids with future infrastructure improvements. All the action was set to the music of seventeenth century Italian composer Arcangelo Corelli—no doubt to promote Bacon's historical place among both William Penn and the Pope. It is worth noting that Denise Scott Brown, then a junior faculty member at the University of Penn-

sylvania, respectfully panned the film in one of her first published pieces.⁸ She criticized Bacon both for the presumptions of his Roman reference and for what she saw as his preoccupation with Center City at the expense of regional issues and the difficulties of sprawl.

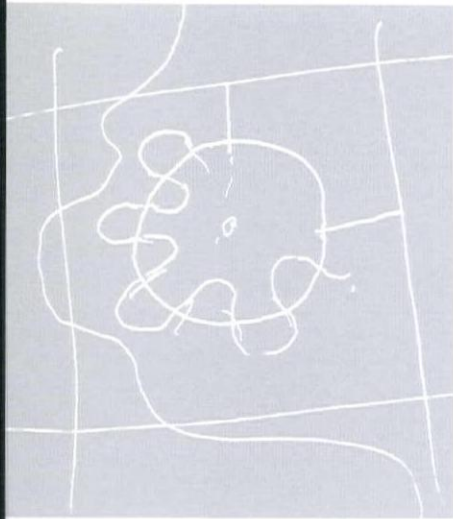
It may be all too appropriate that at the AIA convention Bacon shared an historical moment in the spotlight with two figures from the flanking periods of the postwar decades: the architect of the Ville Radieuse, at the end of his career, and an author of *Learning from Las Vegas*, at the beginning of hers. Bacon's work in Philadelphia spanned these two eras, promoting an architectural agenda half modern, half historicist, at once looking forward and backward. Yet despite the ardent theorizing about the city, Americans continued to move *en masse* to the suburbs.

A figure of declining influence in a city with its own declining influence, Bacon still defends the remnants of his Philadelphia plan from encroachment by successors. Parallel to the growing disfavor of Bacon's *grands projets* since his retirement was a series of personal transformations of his public persona, from bureaucratic practitioner, to self-styled genius,

6 The Federal Housing Administration had long encouraged these patterns in the disbursement of housing loans. See *Neighborhoods for Small Houses*, Technical Bulletin No. 5 (FHA, 1934.)

7 *Form, Design, and the City* (film) Reynolds Metal Company 1962.

8 "Form, Design, and the City" (review) by Denise Scott Brown in *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, November 1962, p. 297-299. Scott Brown would later focus on issues of sprawl in private practice with Robert Venturi. Public servant Bacon, his canvas almost entirely urban, had only one opportunity to work in a semi-suburban setting, in Philadelphia's Far Northeast.



The Far Northeast plan, as drawn by Bacon (left) and William H. Whyte (right)

Like many planners, I thought I could buy the answer. I went to my friend Clarence Stein, designer of world-famous Radburn in New Jersey. If anyone could provide a concept for the new community, it would be Clarence. He came down at my request, considered my plea, stayed for two days, told me it was impossible, and went home.

Suddenly it came to me, clear as a bell: a simple circle, with loops that cross and re-cross along its perimeter, forming quiet residential enclaves. It was a grid formed into a circle, bordering streets turned back into themselves, with a clean edge bordering on the stream valleys. Repetitive units were introduced only after the basic anatomy of the

overall development was defined, and were directly related to it. This seminal diagram was translated into an overall plan which has since been imprinted on numerous neighborhoods in the Far Northeast.

There were other developments in this plan. After the introduction of the car, virtually all row house construction in Philadelphia was based on bisecting the rectangular blocks with a new street running down the center, a concrete alley giving access to the garages under the houses. I thought

9 *Form, Design, and the City.*

10 According to a Ford Foundation survey of the implementation of city plans around the world, Philadelphia's was the most faithful. From "Where is Philadelphia Going?" by Thomas Hine, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11 November 1984.

and finally testy elder statesman. Bacon's most recent and perhaps final public battle is over the storied stretch of colonial real estate known as Independence Mall.

The initial clearing of the city blocks north of Independence Hall to create Independence Mall was a project of the City Beautiful Movement, and predates Bacon's tenure as head of the Planning Commission. Still, Bacon's Commission oversaw the landscaping and design of plazas for the Mall. In recent years, as a debate has raged over building a new visitors' center, a replacement Liberty Bell pavilion and a new National Constitution Center, Bacon has become a chief defender of preserving the open space and axiality of the Mall. Bacon's own proposal for the Mall is to preserve its formality and openness by burying the new construction below the existing plazas. With only himself as a constituency, Bacon has managed to insert his voice into a heated public dialogue among city officials, the National Park Service, and charitable benefactors. He has scorned solutions from a succession of architects, including Scott Brown, as they produced plans that have, to varying

degrees, attempted to demonumentalize the Mall and knit it back into the surrounding pedestrian scale of the city.

At the end of a tumultuous century, the issues of monumentality and contextualism are still evident in the debate over remaking Independence Mall. And Bacon is still taking sides. In an attempt to bolster support during a 1995 presentation of his Mall plan, Bacon roused the audience to join him in the singing of "America the Beautiful." In this, and other projects including his Far Northeast planning efforts, Bacon has cleverly sold his designs through an unabashed appeal to sentiment.

Bacon saw his work as something between urban planning and architecture, producing a rough form that awaited "the designer's touch to bring it to life."⁹ Yet, with few notable exceptions, Bacon commissioned architects known more for their political savvy than their design ability. Notwithstanding architectural criticisms of the buildings and urban design completed in Philadelphia on Ed Bacon's watch, those projects represent a concentrated body of work still unmatched in scope by any American city.¹⁰

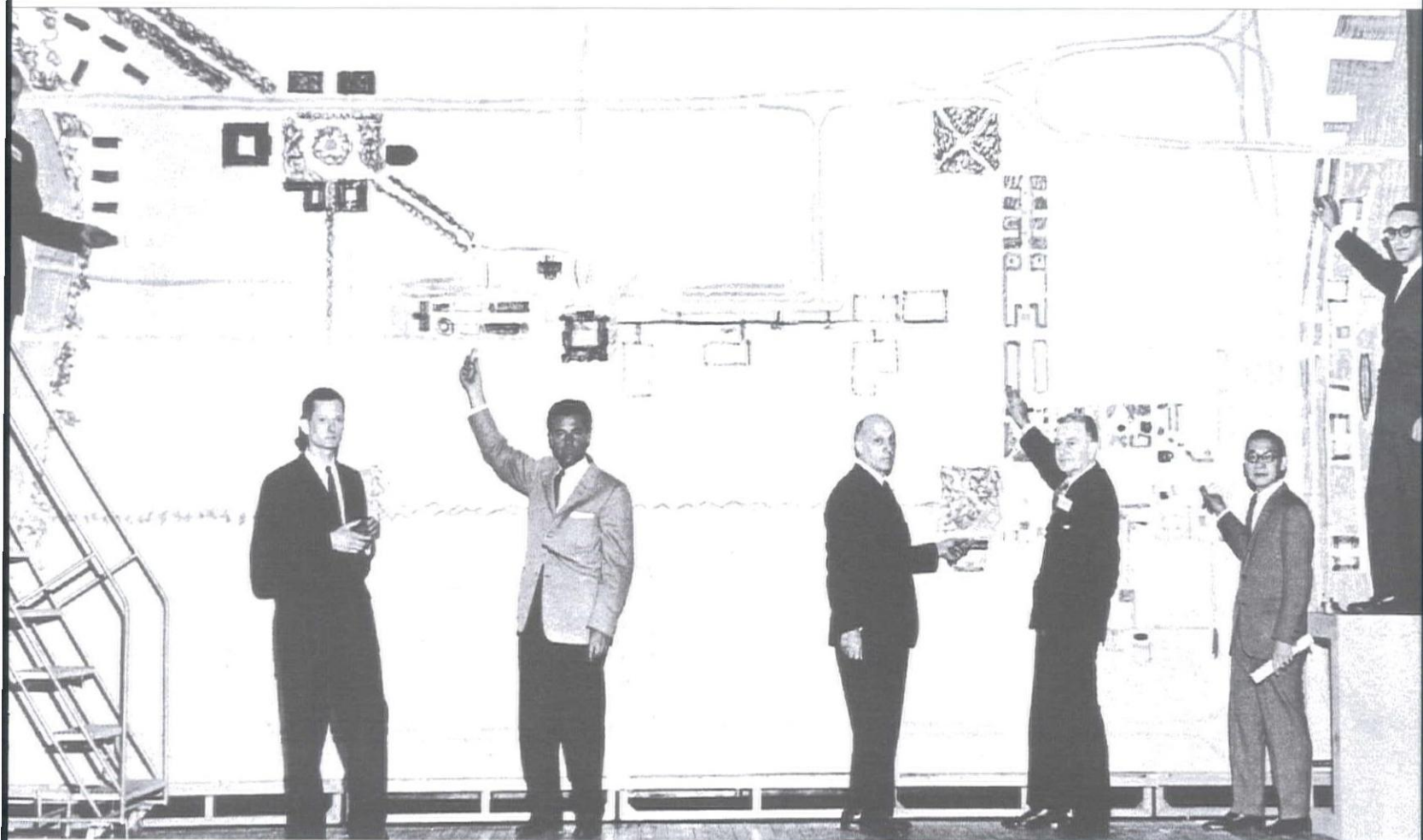
this was insane. The street front had a tiny grass bank, too steep to be used for anything, leading up to the first floor of the houses over the garage. The rear, which had been a walled garden, became another roadway, hostile to children. Everything for the automobile. In Long Island I had seen garages opening in front, with the back a garden again. I made a demonstration of this in the 1947 Better Philadelphia Exhibition, but little attention was paid to it.

I went to the home builders and pleaded with them to try this different way of doing things. They said that they knew the market from long experience, that no housewife would take her garbage out through her front parlor, and the idea never would be accepted. I found just one man, a young home builder named Norman Denney, who said, "I'll try it" and he did. Overnight the market swung 180 degrees. So instantaneous was the success of his project that the traditional builders immediately changed their course, and back alleys were never seen again in Philadelphia.

* * *

It was a strange experience, wandering through the loop streets I had conceived forty years before, observing the back yards with their rose arbors, swings, plastic swimming pools, and barbecue patios where there would have been concrete driveways if things had been left alone. Lawns were manicured, flowers were in bloom, and the loop streets were eminently livable, quiet enclaves with no speeding traffic. The streams still flow in their natural courses. The handsome trees will be there forever, giving articulation and beauty to the neighborhood. The environment is very different from that provided by the gridiron plan in the rest of the city.

It was not I who did this. It was the power of the plan I generated. I felt a renewed sense of confidence in my dictum, "the city is an act of will."



The *Form, Design and the City* show at the 1962 AIA convention in Philadelphia. Left to right, in front of giant map of Center City Philadelphia: Wilhelm Von Moltke, Edmund Bacon, Vincent Kling, Oscar Stonorov, Roy Larson, I.M. Pei and Robert Geddes

Winter *I'd like to consider for a moment private spaces that serve public functions. Is a private space that serves a public function equal to a public space that is truly public? Also, how can housing communities achieve a balance between public and private?*

Plater-Zyberk Like a shopping mall.

Winter *Like a mall. Can that satisfy our need for civic space?*

Kieran I'd like to point out that much of the infrastructure of this country is, and always has been, put in place privately and then been taken over by the public sector. In fact, if you quantify it, there is probably more privately-built infrastructure. It goes back to the nineteenth century. Look at the electric streetcar—the first one in Atlanta was put in by a developer who owned a downtown office building and some property that he didn't know what to do with. So he built the streetcar line to improve the value of his property at either end of it. Now, the question really ought to be, at what point does this kind of development come back into the public realm, and what is it that the public is assuming the responsibility for? The immediate question is the privately-owned shopping mall; a couple of cases have gone to the Supreme Court about free speech in malls. The question about the real nature of that space is now before us.

Scott Brown I'd call it "virtual" public space.

Plattus We need to ask if what we make is for the immediate client, that is, whoever pays the bills, or if it is designed so that it

could become public sometime in the future, even if not at the outset. I'll use the example of Elizabeth's work at Kentlands. They started out trying to build a shopping center that could, first of all, function in a more public way, and eventually get re-absorbed into the public life of the place. It became extremely difficult, because the formulas that were applied by the developers were not predicated on that level of generality. The prime developers get their money out of those developments so quickly that they couldn't care less about what they become ten, twenty or thirty years from now.

Koetter It seems to me that planning has become extremely programmatic, immediately representing a particular interest. But if these projects are going to last longer than the moment, they have to be trans-programmatic. If a plan is imposed on a community, it's bad. But if there's no consensus as to what that plan ought to be, no settlement pattern is going to emerge. I think there's a distinction between process and pattern. They're related, but some of the patterns which remain the most useful in Boston, for example, have been there a long time. In and of themselves, they are adjustable and allow for accommodation of various kinds across time. But here again, if we're involved in the question of identifying things which may be useful over time, we may be getting too specific from a design point of view.

Shiffman But what we're really doing is privatizing what was originally public space. We all agree that suburbanization and

roundtable public and private space

Times Square, themed entertainment, 1999

the malls get great public transfers and subsidies. This undermines the city, in many cases not by the choice of the people, but by market choices, the way we condition things for Main Street to be destroyed.

Plater-Zyberk There's something important we haven't really talked about today. The fact is, public space is a problem in this day and age because people think it's impossible to maintain adequately. When you work in any urban area, the first thing that people will tell you, before any other issues, is "Make it clean and safe, or don't make it at all," especially parks. And that's something that the private sector has been able to deliver with a vengeance. People who can make the choices are running to the places that are as close to guaranteed safe and clean as possible. So there's a governance issue here, a management issue that is really difficult for us as architects to deal with.

Scott Brown Perhaps there's another model. I once heard Ivan Illich describe the uses, historically, of the commons in the small English and New England town. The commons was public but not in our sense of public—different people in the society had different rights over it. Some could cross it, others could graze cattle on it, and some could gather its twigs for firewood. Public ownership



was much more specifically allocated than we would do today. Could the commons provide a model for augmenting our private malls with public activities?

Plater-Zyberk One pattern—or settlement pattern, if we go back to the initial topic—that is truly American, is that of residual space, of the object building in space. In cities in other parts of the world, they're very clear about territoriality, about what's public and how it's maintained, and about defining the proper behavior in those places. It's clear what's private, including great apartment courtyard buildings or even individual houses, in which there are courtyards. There's a clear definition of who takes care of what, and of who gets to participate in what.

Shiffman That's changing dramatically, because those cities were originally homogeneous societies with class differences—so they were able to impose those class differences. Now they're becoming much more heterogeneous. We're using the architectural discipline to address the problem of crime, when we really need to go to a transdisciplinary approach. We're not going to solve the problem of crime by just manipulating space. We really need to start looking at some of the fundamental reasons for crime. Otherwise,



Clay, New York, 1997. Alex MacLean

we're going to be constantly finding ourselves in a defensive posture. Shopping malls are becoming more and more threatening. They are where carjackings occur. People are realizing that this is the territory in which to commit crimes.

Koetter I think there's a relation between building pattern and crime. Many traditional cities took the form they did because they were dangerous. I've been reading accounts of central European medieval towns, where it was impossible to go outside. The territoriality that you associate with the city was at least in part not a civic gesture but a condition of a differentiated public. The ground plane was structured in such a way that distinctions were real.

Kieran I think we can make one observation about the two examples being talked about here. Whether we are discussing the shopping mall or Oscar Newman helping existing low-income or urban neighborhoods gate themselves, we are really talking about the same issue—that you can only control public space today in small quantities with rather specifically defined boundaries and with some kind of internal management system. At best, fragmentation results in a quasi-public enterprise in which you can control some of the issues that keep us all from using these spaces.

Scott Brown Fairmount Park is a particularly interesting example of a bounded public space. It winds through upper-middle-class, residential areas of northwest Philadelphia. On summer weekends the rich go to the Poconos and the poor go to the park; they picnic and hold block parties throughout the northwest neighborhoods, yet you hear no outcry. Thirty years

ago African-Americans were not welcome in the Park; since then it has desegregated, yet I've never heard complaints. Perhaps this is because the Park runs through a river valley and doesn't seem to be part of the residential areas bordering the valley.

Kieran There's a physical separation?

Scott Brown Yes.

Plater-Zyberk I'd like to go back to something Ron has brought up twice: this transdisciplinary work, which I think is critical. I don't think schools are preparing architects to think or work in those terms.

Scott Brown It's not easy. In the 1960s, interdisciplinary education gained a bad reputation in architecture because it was underfunded and run by amateurs. To have a good interdisciplinary program, you need a faculty who can make connections between disciplines, and they must work hard. A worthwhile interdisciplinary studio requires the studio critic to spend as much time with individual lecturers in preparing their lectures as the lecturers spend themselves. It takes hours of preparation, but most schools don't know this is necessary and, in any case, couldn't fund it.

Plater-Zyberk It's a contradiction in terms for the university as it is currently defined in the U.S., because the territoriality of disciplines is highly structured.

Plattus And the system of tenure is based on them. As funds become more restricted, one of the things that goes away first is the margin on which you can operate genuinely interdiscipli-



New Orleans, Louisiana, 1997. Alex MacLean

much of the infrastructure in this country is, and always has been, put in place privately

nary work, and the same thing is true of the funding structure of projects. When one looks at Requests for Proposals and Qualifications now, so much is already determined by the definition of who the prime contractor is going to be. It's just like public space. If we truly value it, then we have to admit that it doesn't pay for itself. It is a choice that we make. You know if we continue to fool people into thinking that we can do genuinely interdisciplinary work or make a public space that polices and cleans itself without any investment at all, then we have only ourselves to blame.

Kieran The question of what we should be doing in the schools is a very difficult one. The first priority I suppose is to develop people within a discipline, and it's questionable whether or not that can be done in three years, let alone asking them to go out into another discipline.

Shiffman It's an attitude that you communicate to your student body. How many of us ask our students when they walk into a class what they've read in the newspaper that day? What books they're reading that do not have anything to do with the profession? How can we interpret civic life? We tend to isolate our students so much from their environments and from other ones that we are not creating the kind of practitioner that we need.

Scott Brown For years I taught interdisciplinary—in your terms, transdisciplinary—studios. I don't believe architecture students should take more than one such studio, because they have many other skills to learn as well. But few of the students

who took my studios, particularly the early studios, ended up as architects. They became good administrators.

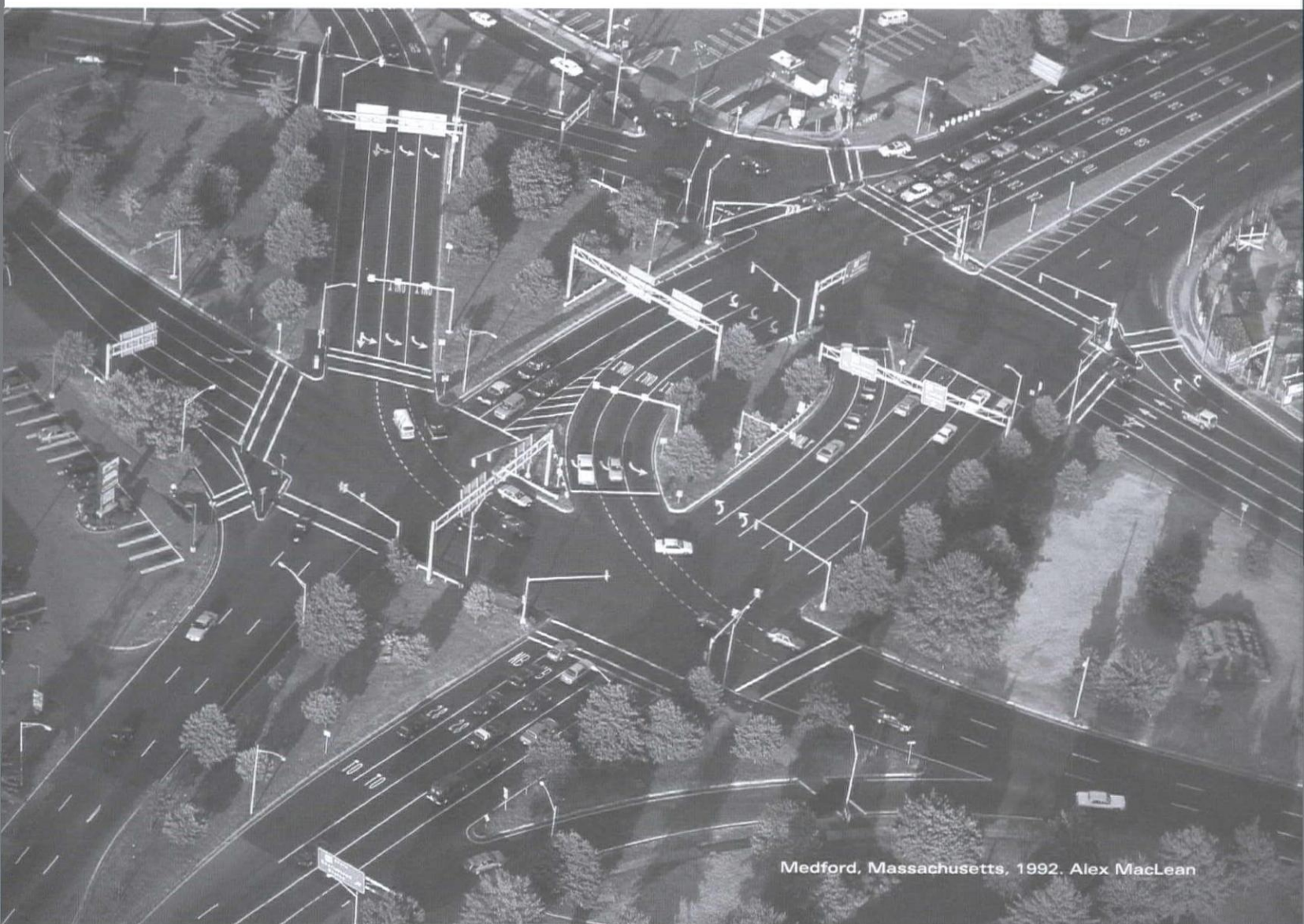
Shiffman Is that more of a phenomenon of the time?

Scott Brown Not necessarily. They may have self-selected to become administrative types because they had administrative ability. Administrative ability is even rarer than design talent. Also, though I tried hard, I feel I didn't help my students learn to design—to become skilled in translating verbally stated requirements into three-dimensional form. This, with all it entails, is very difficult to do. And it's very difficult to teach.

Winter In what ways has the market's preference for standardization and gentrification influenced the way in which individual communities are designed and developed? How have developers and architects contributed to a commodification of architecture?

Koetter I think two things are happening: one, in many American cities, portions of the historic core have been transformed into gussied-up shopping centers. I don't think this phenomenon is isolated to the U.S. The center of Arezzo is like a big up-market shopping center. It's not only the question of consumer pressure, but also people's perception of what cities are. It's the universalization of Disney World's Main Street—you transform huge portions of a real city into that sort of environment and what does that say about public space?

Shiffman There's a fundamental difference when commercialization is anchored to the existing fabric, as opposed to going in unanchored. When it is unanchored it creates certain dynamics



Medford, Massachusetts, 1992. Alex MacLean

that can erode the existing fabric; it may adapt or change the nature of that fabric – with various degrees of success, depending upon the sensitivity of the designer and managers of the process.

Koetter You're saying that in the case of Arezzo the buildings will still be there after Giorgio Armani goes away.

Shiffman It won't be the case if they build outside the city.

Kieran We're always asking what we can take from the center city to learn about the edges. I think that the economic reality is that the center is learning more from what's going on at the edges, and starting to implement strategies that heretofore were considered anti-urban. I'm not sure they necessarily are. One example is the accumulation of large groups of buildings into a district that comes to have an identity independent of the city. I would argue that these are fundamentally not too different from a mall; you're making a grouping of buildings for a thematic purpose with some sense of identity and control within a context. Whether or not it is entirely healthy is another matter.

Shiffman In New York City we're having a large debate about whether to accommodate these new large footprint category-killer retail boxes. My argument is that it is a new form of marketing, and that they should be in the city of New York. Don't put them out in industrial areas away from the existing commercial strip. Now they're taking over the old department stores, and they're reinventing the department store along Sixth Avenue. If you put them out in Red Hook or the isolated areas of our cities,

they become auto-dependent, and they become competitive with the existing districts. The conglomeration effect is lost.

Plater-Zyberk I agree. This goes back to something I was trying to talk about earlier – the idea of working with existing places and accommodating changing patterns of settlement. For many reasons we haven't done that very well. We tend to leave things behind. It is more difficult than going someplace where no one will care. Somehow we need to say that it is worth doing that. But long-term planning is not in our national ethic – we cut and run whenever we can.

Plattus But in order to do that kind of planning, we have to be willing to exercise an unprecedented faculty of judgment that we hope we possess. The enemy is sometimes the developer's baggage: the Wal-Mart that says "I can only do it one way, and I won't let you have a chance to show me a different way."

Shiffman Actually the phenomenon in New York was that with the real estate collapse, market pressures were released on those retail facilities and they moved in on their own.

Plater-Zyberk To get back to the question, you're implying that this kind of gentrification is desirable because it keeps places intact, but there is also another exclusionary gentrification which I know a lot of people are concerned about today.

Shiffman I think that when gentrification leads to the displacement of people because they have no options or economic wherewithal, it is a terrible phenomenon. But what has occurred

we're always asking what we can take from the center city and apply



Lincoln, Nebraska, 1993. Christopher Faust, Suburban Documentation Project

because of the fear of gentrification in some cases is that in low-income areas we are building inferior neighborhoods. We are building the permanent ghetto of the future because we think low-income neighborhoods mean low-cost housing. I think that we should be creating the best possible places we can. We need to develop the programs, the subsidies, and the public policies that protect people from displacement.

Scott Brown Those are not the only two options. I think there's one other: mixed-use is often something that will keep a mixed population. If you have work opportunities, commerce and housing mixed together, which could be like a traditional neighborhood, you will probably have less risk of gentrification.

Shiffman How do you feel about Soho and Tribeca in New York City? These are mixed-use areas but are places where probably the largest gentrification took place, resulting in the displacement of low-wage jobs.

Koetter This question of what kind of places undergo gentrification is interesting. There's not very much 1950s public housing or Council Housing in London that people are clamoring to get into to gentrify. So there's a question concerning what types of buildings and urban situations are attractive to gentrifiers. I think these buildings and areas have some higher degree of inherent value.

Plattus We talk about this constantly in Connecticut. The Northeast has this unfortunate self-image that if you don't have a

little white clapboard church and a green, you're nowhere. And yet you discover these small mill towns where the physical fabric is often wonderful and absolutely dirt cheap. It will go through cycles, which are in many ways natural, as well as unpredictable. But there are certain buildings and urban strategies that lend themselves to reuse, predictable or unpredictable, and those are what we should be making and remaking.

Scott Brown I think you can make the cycle of reuse slower and that may be all that you can do. If we have produced a 25-year cycle rather than a five-year cycle, that may already be quite an achievement.

Shiffman But maybe we've framed the question wrong. When we talk about gentrification as the problem, that may be the result of not addressing what is really the problem, namely that people don't really have access to the resources by which they can get stability in their housing. We should talk about interventions in the market. Our tax code favors the wealthy to acquire housing; more money is transferred to subsidize housing for higher-income groups than for low-income people. In one year the wealthy accrue the equivalent of fifteen years of subsidies for public housing. Since this is the phenomenon, we need to look at those public policies that have an impact on the nature of gentrification. It's not the architect's problem.

Plater-Zyberk But architects may sometimes be the people who recognize those things and propose or promote change.

the edges... the economic reality is that the center is learning more from the edges



1 The revanchists in late nineteenth-century France represented the right wing that today would be associated with family values and militia politics, Christian fundamentalism and death penalty pugilism, patriotic bigotry and racism. They were reacting against the perceived liberalism of the Second Empire and the socialism of the Paris Commune, the ignominy of defeat by Bismarck and the decadence and apparent impotence of the late-century monarchy. On all sides the sanctity of bourgeois nationalist order was threatened; a bitter revenge was to be exacted against those at home and abroad who had stolen the nation. Led by Paul Déroulède and organized as the *Ligue des Patriotes*, the revanchists mixed militarism and moralism with claims about public order on the streets.

2 Bob Herbert, "The Big Chill," *New York Times*, 31 May 1998, p. 17.

In the vacuum created by the dismantling of liberal urban policy since the 1980s, New York City has increasingly been governed by a vicious revanchism synonymous with "Giuliani Time." Revanchism blends revenge with reaction.¹ It represents a reaction against the basic assumption of liberal urban policy, namely that government bears some responsibility for ensuring a decent minimum level of daily life for everyone. That political assumption is now largely replaced by a vendetta against workers and "welfare mothers," immigrants and gays, people of color and homeless people, squatters, and anyone who demonstrates in public. They are excoriated for having stolen New York from a white middle class that sees the city as its birthright. Blaming the victim has been raised from a common political tactic to a matter of established policy. According to Bob Herbert, "the erosion of rights and liberties in New York City has become far more serious and far more dangerous than most people realize."²

zero tolerance and homeless removal On August 9, 1997, after police were called to break up a fight at a Brooklyn nightclub, Abner Louima, a Haitian immigrant who had tried to intercede in the fight, was arrested and thrown in a squad car. Apparently assaulted *en route*, he was hauled into a bathroom at the precinct, where four white cops allegedly beat him and one sodomized him with the handle of a toilet plunger, then thrust it into his mouth. Left in a crumpled heap, he was eventually taken to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with severe internal organ damage. As word of the brutal police attack filtered out from enraged hospital nurses, it was also reported that during the attack, the police chanted, "It's Giuliani time, not Dinkins time." An attempted cover-up was in this case insufficient to prevent criminal indictments against several police officers. As federal authorities stepped in to level their own charges, a recovering Louima

which new urbanism? the revanchist '90s neil smi

was later reported to have retracted the claim that his attackers chanted "It's Giuliani time." But the sensational image was already fixed in the popular imagination.

Giuliani time, in some formal sense, began in early 1994 when Rudolph W. Giuliani took over as mayor of New York City from David Dinkins. But Giuliani time began for real a few months later with the issuance of the innocuously named *Police Strategy No. 5* dedicated to "reclaiming the public spaces of New York." Bearing the names of both the mayor and the police commissioner, William J. Bratton, this document more than any other was a founding statement of a *fin-de-siècle* American revanchism in the urban landscape.³

The economic depression that belatedly followed the 1987 stock market crash lasted in New York until at least 1994. With the national economy already well into a restructuring that would be captured in the language of "globalization," social and economic identities were giddily destabilized as local economies were turned inside out. The end of the 1980s seemed to lead back to the 1970s, when fiscal bankruptcy inaugurated a major retrenchment and restructuring of city services while simultaneously reestablishing the private economy. While hundreds of millions of dollars in tax abatement "geo-bribes" flowed regularly to attract or keep megacorporations in the city, the official unemployment rate soared to over 10 percent. Public fear replaced self-centered optimism in the early 1990s and it was this fear that Giuliani skillfully played upon.

"The downward spiral of urban decay" was real enough, but rather than indict capitalists for capital flight, landlords for abandoning buildings, or public leaders for a narrow retrenchment to class and racial self-interest, Giuliani led the clamor for a different kind of revenge in *Police Strategy*

³ Rudolph W. Giuliani and William J. Bratton, *Police Strategy No. 5: Reclaiming the Public Spaces of New York* (New York: Office of the Mayor, 1994).



4 Ibid, p. 5.

5 Sharon Lerner, "Anatomy of a Drug Craze," *Village Voice*, 12 May 1998, p. 52; John H. Cushman Jr., "Serious Crime Fell in U.S. For 6th Year in a Row in '97," *New York Times*, 18 May 1998, p. A1.

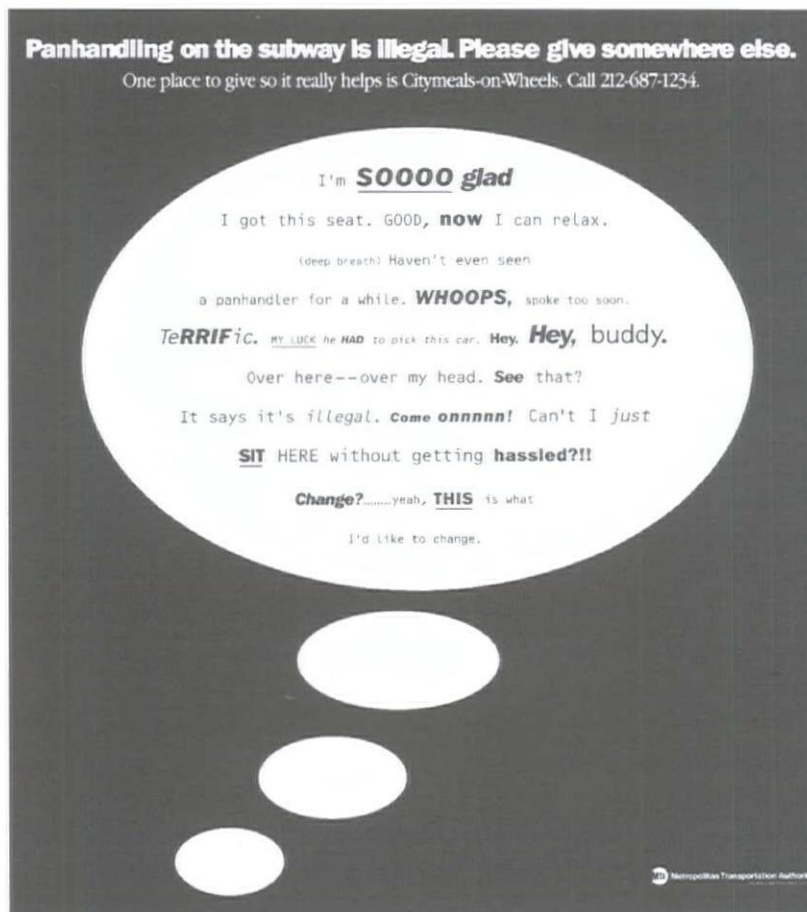
Number 5. He identified homeless people, panhandlers, prostitutes, curbside squeegee cleaners, squatters, graffiti artists, "reckless bicyclists," and unruly youth as the major enemies of public order, the culprits of urban decline generating widespread fear. Disorder in public spaces presented "visible signs of a city out of control."

*New Yorkers have for years felt that the quality of life in their city has been in decline, that their city is moving away from, rather than toward the reality of a decent society. The overall growth in violent crime during the past several decades has enlarged this perception. But so has an increase in the signs of disorder in the public spaces of the city.*⁴

Criminality is spatialized, postmodernized even, insofar as the sign and the symptom are the same thing; it is identified with certain kinds of social presence in the urban landscape. Urban decline, street crime, and "signs of disorder" are here galvanized into a single malady. Deep-seated fears and insecurities are enlisted to conflate physical and psychic safety: the symptoms are the cause. Sanitizing the landscape would reverse the urban decline. With the advent of Giuliani time, revenge against the sources of disorder was raised to a moral obligation, as exemplified in the subway poster campaign which blared, over simultaneously demeaning and threatening images of homeless people, "Don't give them your money!" With the malefactors identified, the solution to "spiraling urban decay" was to eradicate the disorder that littered the urban landscape.

The anticrime campaign initiated in 1994 was a central plank of the emerging revanchist city. The police were ordered to pursue with "zero tolerance" any and all supposed petty criminals whose actions "threatened the quality of life." A database was established for tracking homeless people, and precinct commanders were given widely expanded powers to bypass legal and bureaucratic checks on police behavior. "Pro-active" policing is how *Police Strategy No. 5* describes it. How

deep-seated fears and insecurities are enlisted to conflate physical and psychic safety: the



"Thought bubble" above seats on New York subway cars, 1996

they cleaned up the streets was their business, Giuliani advised the New York City Police Department, qualifying the *carte blanche* only with the caution that, of course, they were supposed to stay within the law.

Falling crime rates in the 1990s were invoked as evidence of the success of the zero tolerance initiative, and Police Commissioner Bratton and others spanned the globe, from Vancouver to Berlin, proselytizing on its behalf. But crime rates nationwide were already dropping at the beginning of the 1990s; New York City's declining rate was steeper than in other large cities. In New York, the incarceration of record numbers of people, many of them on minor crimes, probably contributed to the lower rate. However, the end of the crack epidemic, which had run its course by the early 1990s, seemed a much more likely cause of reduced crime rates.⁵

The brunt of 1990s revanchism, however, was borne by homeless people. The antihomeless antagonism that smoldered in the 1980s burst into flame as official urban policy in the early 1990s. For New York City's homeless population, as many as 100,000, the beginning of the decade brought a crippling combination of economic depression, public attack, and the evaporation of public sympathy. Evictees from the private and public housing

markets inhabiting the barest interstices of public space quickly passed from being front-page news in the late 1980s to public blight number one in the 1990s. In 1991 the city administration embarked on a campaign to remove evictees from central gathering points, settlements, and gentrifying neighborhoods—from the bridges, tunnels, parks, and empty lots they occupied—eventually pushing them out of Manhattan altogether. Whereas most Manhattan neighborhoods hosted some kind of homeless settlement in 1991, six years later the Giuliani government could boast that it had demolished Manhattan's "last shantytown" in the railway tunnels of the old Penn Central Railroad.⁶

As the 1990s progressed, homeless people—driven from the spaces of the central city, ever more desperate and no longer commanding the headlines—were pushed to places offering the last secluded shelter on the urban margins: coastal scrublands, boardwalks, highway onramps in the outer boroughs, the fenced-in desolation around airports, or the wooded bluffs of the Palisades in New Jersey. The political geography of eviction became an outer-borough phenomenon—out of Manhattan, out of the news.

Police Strategy No.5 registered the centrality of homelessness via omission. Sensitive to the fact that disregard for the homeless might provoke anti-Giuliani sound bites, the mayor and his police commissioner dangled a redefinition of homeless people in front of precinct commanders and street officers. The homeless became "dangerous mentally ill street people." This euphemism was never fully defined, and the range of interpretation is as broad as it is vague. Meanwhile, the city administration and the mayor were regularly held in contempt by the state supreme court for outright refusal to follow legal requirements for sheltering evictees. Unconstrained, Giuliani announced in May 1998 that he was firing half of the staff in the Department of Homeless Services with a view toward closing the agency and privatizing remaining activities.⁷

Symptoms are the cause

If the different threads of the new urban revanchism came together by 1994, that was also the year that New York began to emerge from the depths of recession. Wall Street led the charge but real estate was quick to follow. Languid markets in SoHo, newly fashionable Chelsea, the Upper West Side, even Inwood heated up quickly, and apartments that could not be given away in the early 1990s routinely attracted bidding wars. The unprecedented feeding frenzy in Tribeca real estate was likened to "truffle pigs" following "the law of the market."⁸

But the return of economic delirium to the city, ever more slickly packaged, came without one central ingredient of the last boom: while the number of homeless people in the city increased an estimated 15 percent between 1994 and 1997, there has been no resurgence whatsoever in public sympathy for homeless people. Drastic cuts have decimated the facilities and services for homeless people as well as those supports that prevented people from becoming homeless in the first place. The gathering revanchism of the early 1990s may have been provoked by economic recession, but late-1990s prosperity did nothing to quash the cries for revenge. In retrospect, difficult as it is to admit, the avarice and venality of the 1980s does actually appear to have included a kinder, gentler urbanism than the chilling 1990s.

In addition to homeless people and those threatened with homelessness, welfare recipients have also been targeted. Between 1995 and early 1998, over 363,000 people were squeezed off the city's welfare rolls. Child welfare was especially targeted. Welfare was made workfare, with recipients only receiving checks if they performed work. The stated aim was to "wean" people from welfare. The rules were tight—students, parents responsible for child care, disabled people were all required to work. But a 1998 investigation revealed that very few workfare recipients graduated to full-time jobs as intended, intensified hardship far outweighed benefits, and child care was endangered.⁹ Moreover, workfare represented a double attack: the welfare rolls were pared while the number of available city jobs was slashed, many replaced by workfare positions.

Giuliani has made no secret of the fact that his policies are explicitly designed to rid New York of homeless and other poor people. Planned shrinkage, the 1970s doctrine devoted to reducing public expenditure, is back in monstrous form with the targets now clearly identified as neither budgets



Homeless settlement being cleared in Manhattan's East Village, near Tompkins Square, 1991. Elizabeth Felicella

6 Sarah Kershaw, "Police Remove Encampment of Homeless," *New York Times*, 28 February 1997, p. B1.

7 Dan Barry, "Giuliani Plans Cut of 1,000 Workers Who Aid Homeless," *New York Times*, 16 May 1998, p. A1.

8 Sam Sifton, "Tribeca in Transition: Truffle Pigs and the Law of the Market," *New York Press* 10, no.10, 5-11 March 1997, p. 1.

9 Alan Finder, "Evidence is Scant That Workfare Leads to Full-time Jobs," *New York Times*, 12 April 1998, p. A1.

nor infrastructure, but people themselves. Shrinkage of the poor population in general, including homeless people, is "not an unspoken part of our strategy," the mayor once explained at a "confidential" meeting of newspaper editors. "That is our strategy."¹⁰

the revanchist '90s The new urban revanchism may be best developed in New York, but it is by no means restricted to that city. Decimation of social programs combined with outspoken attacks on social rights have been a hallmark of much anti-crime, anti-immigration, and anti-welfare legislation and popular mobilization from California to Washington, D.C. More than forty municipalities now have legal statutes explicitly designed to repel and deport homeless people. In Santa Ana, California, for example, the city has developed a "vagrant policy" which sends the message that "vagrants are no longer welcome... In essence the mission of this program will be to move all vagrants and their paraphernalia out ... by continually removing them from the places that they are frequenting in the city." These and other legal initiatives comprise what Don Mitchell has called a strategy of "the annihilation of space by law."¹¹

At different scales revanchism represents a response spearheaded from the standpoint of white and middle-class interests against the people who, they feel, stole their world (and their power) from them. But its expression is by no means so narrowly confined, drawing in significant numbers of the white working class and black middle class. This was the theme of Tom Wolfe's brilliantly twisted *Bonfire of the Vanities* back in 1987, but it has also been picked up elsewhere. *Harper's* editor Lewis Lapham connects a turn toward "reactionary chic" with the bitterness of downward mobility experienced by many in the upper middle class. Unemployment, generally associated with the industrial working class, has transmogrified in the 1990s, along with shifts in the structure of the U.S. economy, into a broadly white-collar experience too.¹²

more than 40 municipalities now have legal statutes explicitly designed to repel and deport

¹⁰ William Barrett, "Rudy's Shrink Rap," *Village Voice*, 9 May 1995.

¹¹ Don Mitchell, "The Annihilation of Space by Law: The Roots and Implications of Anti-Homeless Laws in the United States," *Antipode* 29 (1997): pp. 303-335; *Tobe v. City of Santa Ana*, 27 Cal. Rptr. 2d 386-8, Cal. Ct. App. 1994.

¹² Lewis Lapham, "Reactionary Chic," *Harper's*, March 1995.

¹³ Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "From Military Keynesianism to Post-Keynesian Militarism" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1997).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Even if victims of welfare reform succeed in scratching out a living at or above subsistence levels, a large additional surplus population is nonetheless in the making. Whereas in the late 1960s the response to many social crises involved a massive infusion of funds aimed at buttressing standards of living for the marginally employed and at appeasing opposition, today all the signs point to "legal repression" as the strategy of control. The massive expansion of the prison population and the rise in prison construction from California to Texas, even in the face of declining crime rates, tells us that this solution is already in place.¹³

Fear of crime is not just a white middle-class issue, of course. Revanchism is in every respect the ugly cultural policy of neoliberal globalization. The decimation of more traditional means of social reproduction and work has spawned a range of alternative economies, from street mugging and burglary to prostitution and the drug industry, which disproportionately affect working-class and poor neighborhoods. Yet there is a clear dissonance between angry demands for public safety by the mothers of Harlem or South Central and the fact that almost half of the male youths of these neighborhoods are "clients," in one form or another, of the corrections system. Long-term incarceration is a grossly inefficient response to petty crime, yet it is the threat felt by the well-off white middle class that has scripted the official response. In fact there is another neat confluence of interests here: throughout the most extensive prison-building spree in the world, beginning in California in 1982, crime rates were actually decreasing. Prison-building became the latest economic development package in the burgeoning suburbs of the South.¹⁴ And the revanchist city is the place where both alternatives to state abrogation—the market and intensified policing—operate simultaneously and intensely, welded into a proximate postmodern politics.

new urbanism - geography as revenge All this may seem a long way from the central concerns of urbanists and architects, but of course it isn't. The new urban revanchism, which emerged in the late 1980s, is parallel to the movement in architectural design known as the "new urbanism." Steeped in a critique of modernist design and suburban strip mall development,

the new urbanism proposed to construct a new generation of suburbs replicating the dense scale of the pedestrian city and the nostalgic architecture of various bygone eras and places. Initially led by architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, whose Seaside resort in the Florida panhandle is widely seen as the prototype new urbanist project, the movement matured in 1993 into an organization adopting the expansive title, Congress for the New Urbanism. New urbanist developments now dot the country and new urbanist rhetoric has come to dominate the professional and popular discourse. If Herbert Muschamp, the architecture critic for the *New York Times*, is to be believed, the new urbanism is "the most important phenomenon to emerge in American architecture in the post-Cold War era."¹⁵

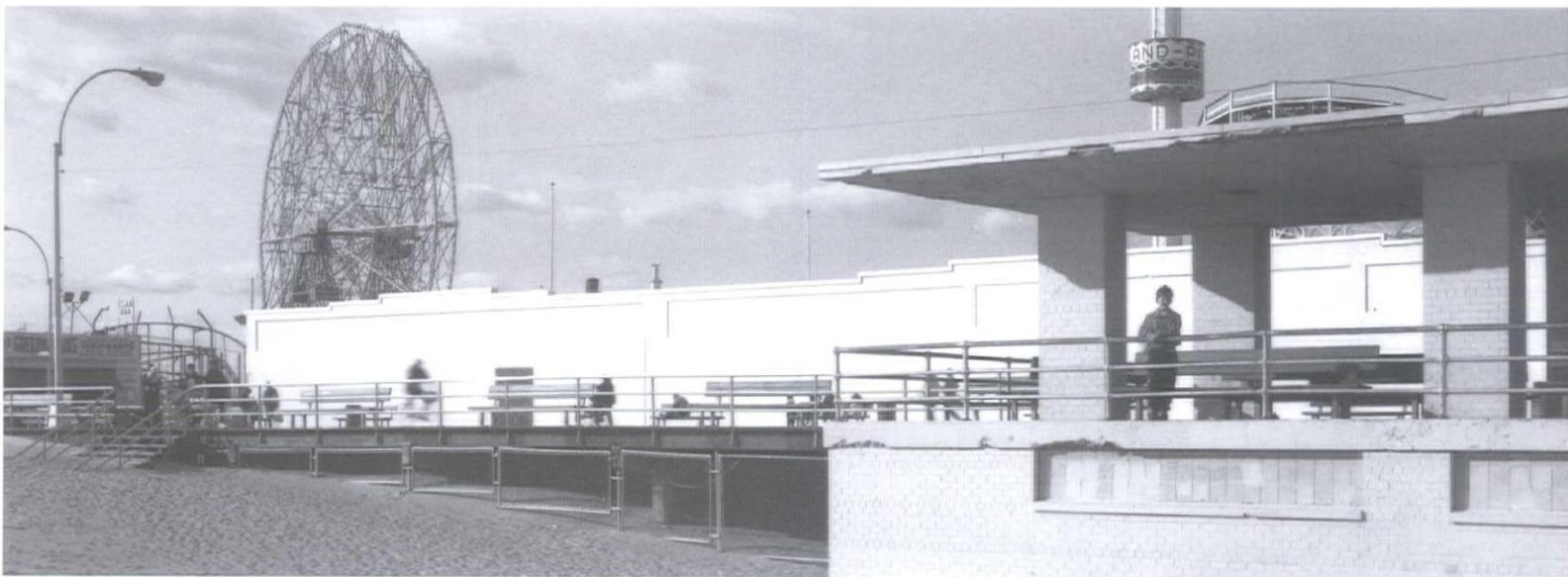
Architectural new urbanism and the new urban revanchism would seem to be disconnected developments dealing with different worlds. Getting away from the big city to embrace the mythic small town is precisely the point of new urbanist design. The picture postcard Victoriana of Seaside, replete with white picket fences, pedestrian-friendly streets and alleys, and unrelieved middle-class congeniality, not only exudes a one-dimensional vision of the urban future dressed up as nostalgic recall but rigidly polices the present. Developed along a silver beach in a Florida county with a large minority of black residents, Seaside is both stylistically and statistically white and wealthy. Very few non-white faces venture into town, although Andres Duany, one of its primary designers, is eager to point out that some of his best architects were black.¹⁶

There is no mystery about for whom this new urbanism is built. The design styles enact the most traditional social assumptions of gender, class and race. Dripping with sentimentality for "the human scale"—a mushy metaphor that hides more than it reveals—Seaside openly and exuberantly celebrates the nineteenth-century urban ideal of yeoman New England. The past evoked

¹⁵ Herbert Muschamp, "Can New Urbanism Find Room for the Old?" *New York Times*, 2 June 1996, p. 27.

¹⁶ See Duany's marginal comments in Smith (1993).

omeless people



Under the boardwalk, Coney Island, 1998. Elizabeth Felicella

in the promise of a new urban future is the narrowest and most elitist of founding fantasies, and the resulting landscape codifies a wide plank of privileged presumptions of the social norm. In its discreetly bounded single family homes, assumptions about gender roles are as neatly kept up as the postage stamp gardens. There is no sign on the road as you enter Seaside to say "No Irish need apply," or its less verbalized twentieth-century equivalents: "If you're black, stay back," "If you're working class, be out by five," or "Women in the kitchen, please." The design style already speaks the exclusionary message with delicate, handkerchiefed smugness.

17 Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*
(London: Verso, 1991), p. 224.

Celebration, Florida, exudes much the same elitism cloaked in populist garments. Designed and controlled by the Disney Corporation, Celebration is theme-park living without the rides and amusements. Unlike other Disney theme parks, however, the Disney presence in Celebration is not ostentatiously advertised. The town center features numerous upscale leisure shops around a pond and water fountain, but the main square is dominated by a four-story tower overlooking the whole development. The base of the tower, where a tourist information office might reasonably be expected, houses "Celebration Realty," clearly the fulcrum of the town's activity. Exhibits and a video presentation at Celebration Realty steer prospective customers toward homes for sale. At Celebration Realty there is a rare hint of the hidden hand of Disney: on the door where one might usually read "Employees only," a sign says "Cast Members Only." Such a merger of urban design, architecture and the corporate apparatus into a "single comprehensive security effort" represents what Mike Davis has in a different context described as "the bad edge of postmodernity."¹⁷

The new urbanism is different things in different places. Nonetheless, the evolving crossover between the style and politics of the new urbanism and the new Disney landscapes of the urban ideal should put all of us with critical ears on edge. As long as Disney theme parks accumulated the exotic past and distant future as a means of transporting their "customers" through time and space, the distance between fact and fantasy was always palpable. But the collapse of space-time between Disney recreations and the world it purports to romanticize shovels all of the investment of Disney fantasy into the new urbanism. The traffic of social and architectural signs between Disney and urban planning reaffirms a future past that is aggressively exclusionary in the present. It is fitting, therefore, that the makers of "The Truman Show," a darkly troubling movie portraying a life of total surveillance, chose Seaside's new urbanism as the appropriate landscape of a dubious future.

What is the connection between this new urbanism and the revanchist city? At its most obvious, the new urbanism represents an escape from the city, but its significance goes deeper. The glaring white landscapes of Seaside are umbilically tied to the revanchist city as scripts of an alternative source of power. New urban landscapes are fantasies that the world might be different, fantasies that, within the rigidly controlled spaces of new urban developments, are made real. Here within the design concepts and site plans of the new urbanism, the world can be made safe for a self-conscious liberalism. The anxiously relaxed, self-referential traditionalism of the white picket fences at Seaside conceals its mirror image. The revanchist city is the alter ego of the new urbanism, its



Subsistence fisherman at Far Rockaway, Queens, New York, 1998. Elizabeth Felicella

Frankenstein—the monster of its own making. The revenge of the new urbanism is not the visceral revenge of New York streets and politics. It is a revenge hardwired into the institutional control of the landscape and its spatial location. Precisely in its escapism the new urbanism posits geography as the means of revenge.

Without the revanchist city, the new urbanism has no rationale; the past it evokes has no future except perhaps for a small elite. It is not a solution to, but an accomplice of, the revanchist city. It expresses revenge in the delicacy of urban design rather than the declamatory rhetoric of Giuliani. The revanchist city, rather than Seaside's picket fences, shapes most people's experience of a "new urbanism." However, if we are to take seriously the inevitable task of prescribing and enacting a new and different urbanism, it is important to begin to consider alternatives to a deepening revanchism in our nation's cities as well as their escapist towns.

alternative futures Scandalizing the revanchist city is important. But it is not enough. Revanchism was neither a politically nor a socially necessary outcome of economic crisis and restructuring. It was a choice by a narrow group of political and corporate leaders who really do constitute, with others, a ruling class. But the revanchist amalgam of market and police power does not exhaust the menu of social choices. Exposing the scandal of revanchism has to be a means of priming rather than occluding alternative urban futures. There are other choices.

The homily that "all politics is local" is fatuous and self-defeating in the face of global neoliberalism. Not that the local is irrelevant, far from it; only that it is not exclusionary. It is the connection between the local and global, and all scales in between, that is the most vital political project. We need to recapture the sense that a different global is possible. As the momentum of identity politics begins to dissipate, it is important to retain the central insight of the profound range of social difference that inscribes the politics of the revanchist city and, equally, the motivation for alternatives. The problem today is not that there is no politics but that there is little political movement.

But a happy ending to the developing revanchism story will take a lot of political work, a lot of analysis coming together with a lot of vision. With liberalism "dominant but dead," to appropriate Habermas's famous diagnosis of modernity, the field is wide open and the possibilities immense. A very different time and space are the prize for organizing an alternative.



Winter *In what ways has the market's preference for standardization affected the way individual communities are designed and developed? How have developers and architects created a commodification of architecture?*

Kieran As part of my research I read brochures from real estate brokers. One of the ones I picked up was from Solomon Brothers. They do analyses of major real estate markets in the U.S. They used the term "commodification" in a way that I thought was rather curious. They were referring to Atlanta and its edges and said that that market was no longer behaving like a monopoly. In other words, as a developer you couldn't find a position for housing or for a mall where you could get monopoly returns anymore because there was another one five miles down the road just like it. In fact, there were 82 housing developments just like it. If you map out, as we have been doing, the positions of all the housing developments or all the malls, you see the area no longer performs like a monopoly but rather like a commodity. One of the conclusions that this economist made is that as a developer what you have to do in this commodification circumstance, is make your building different from every other building. You have to segment and fragment your market.

Scott Brown So you niche market to reestablish a monopoly. Economists also talk about "absorption;" they say "If we are trying for only five percent of the total market, then we're probably safe." That's the way they calculate when they face competition.

Kieran One of the consequences of this, I think, is the theme park approach, because it's one of the ways that you make yourself different. Everybody wants to be in a park first of all; you can sense that just by the names of these places.

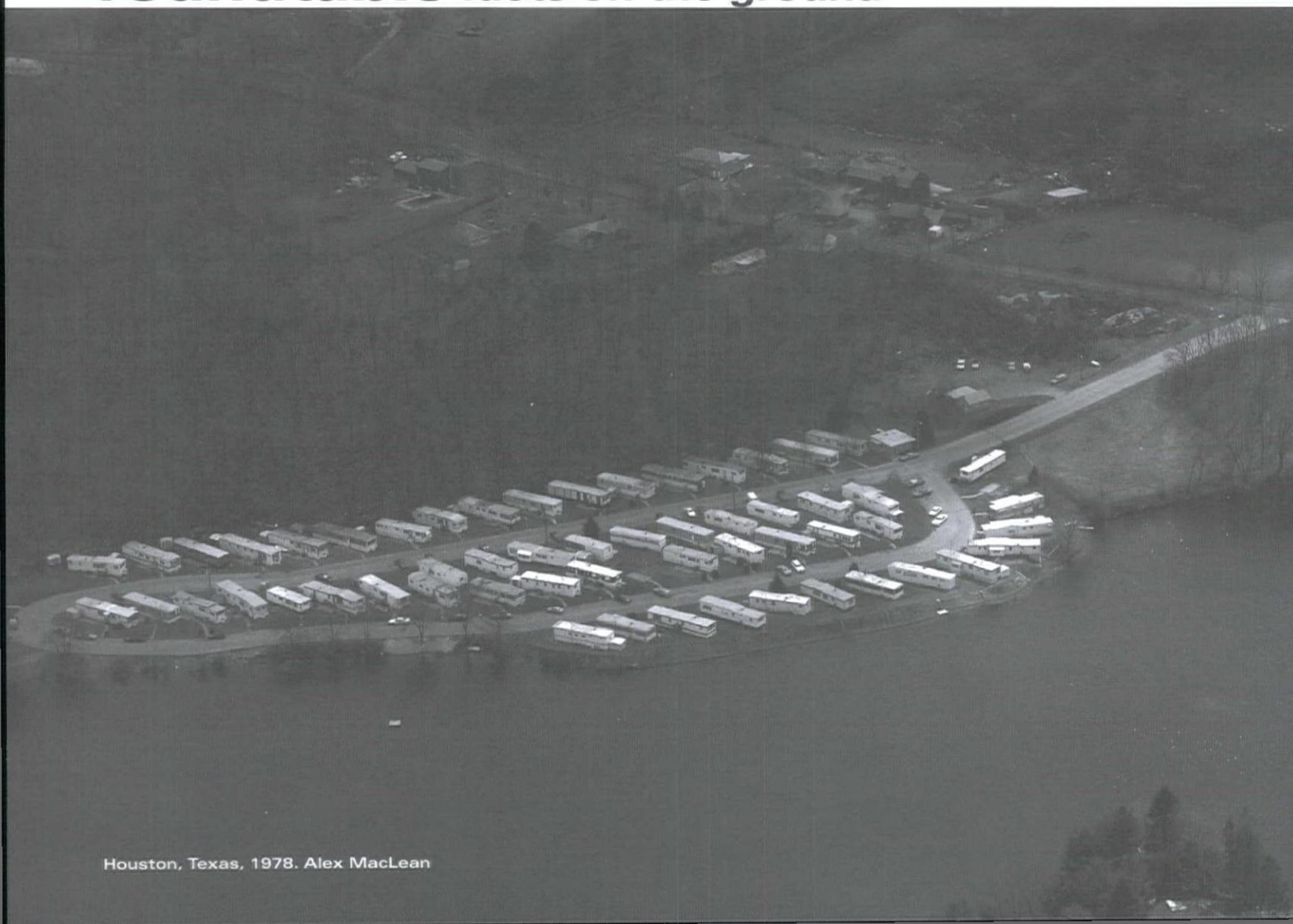
Plattus The inner-city office market has been working like that at least since the 1920s.

Kieran There are some serious consequences to this. First of all, what are the real differences between these places? There are differences in image and appearance but probably few in terms of substance. They certainly contribute to the segregation of society since each of them is a place unto itself. On the other hand, what are their possible social benefits? One that occurs to me is that because these things are commodities and they're price-competitive, people can choose where to live. Say you're a working couple with specialized jobs. You can choose to live in a housing development and work in opposite directions that may be 100 miles apart. One of the consequences of the commodification of housing is that it does make this lifestyle possible.

Scott Brown What age group does this kind of development appeal to?

Kieran These people are highly educated and between the ages of 25 and 55. They are seeking fairly specific employment and have a working spouse, so they have to compromise about where to live. They wind up covering huge territories on a daily basis and consuming incredible resources to do so.

roundtable facts on the ground



Houston, Texas, 1978. Alex MacLean

Shiffman That would argue for moving toward the center because the more you move toward the center the more options you have. Not towards the edge.

Kieran Not necessarily. If automobiles are the dominant means of circulation and you have the beltway, you can get anywhere in Atlanta in half an hour without traffic.

Plater-Zyberk You may be describing a pattern that's going to be in place for some time, and that's hard to argue with. Why shouldn't those people, except for issues of cost and environment and so on, live out on the edge? But at a smaller scale, choice is lost. It is in fact dictated by things like the way developments occur and how that housing relates to school districts and jobs. But their daily life is very much affected by development patterns which have to do with zoning codes and banking practices.

Koetter You can imagine this beltway as having a continuous pattern of different kinds of jobs, different kinds of housing, different kinds of day-care, and different kinds of shopping centers. If that is the ultimate model, then any couple or family with diverse occupations could find a compromise position.

Kieran If you change jobs within the region you don't necessarily have to move anymore.

Shiffman But realize that that family is getting a double subsidy from society: you are subsidizing them twice to have two cars—they produce twice the pollution, in addition to all the other transfers they receive.

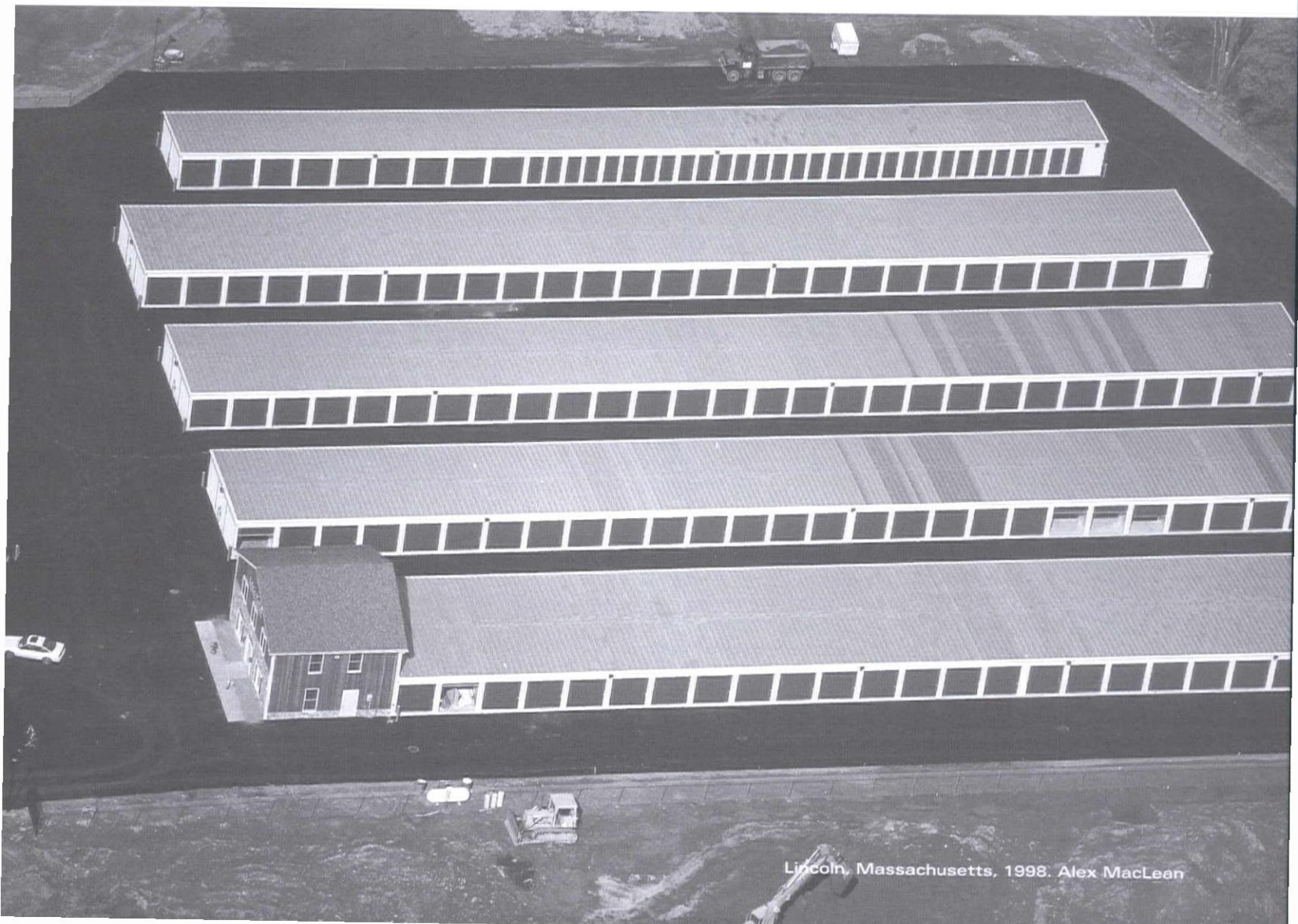
Plattus And, even with the subsidies, they're using up all their discretionary income paying for their cars plus childcare. It's inherently inefficient at all levels. I'm not proposing that we take away their homes and force them to live in the city, but it's unfortunate that we don't offer the city as a viable choice. The city is really not for that family that Steve described, unless their income has gone through the stratosphere, so they can move back and send their kids to private schools.

Plater-Zyberk Even if you fill up the core-city again, you're still going to have a metropolis of some size, but it will be a future city with multiple centers. But even that pattern can be reformed. At some point, and many cities are facing this now, re-injecting transit into this morass is making us confront the fact that these city centers really need to be centers, that that is an efficient organization. You can't keep expanding forever. This one car, one person stuff does congest itself. Then you really do have to start thinking about the physical form of this larger community because there are certain efficiencies for transit.

Koetter I don't know if you've seen the 1930s trolley system in New Haven. It's probably the same in many cities in America. It's fantastic, the accessibility that existed in that city.

Shiffman It didn't disappear by accident, but as a concerted effort of the automobile industry to destroy it.

Kieran One of the things that's going on is when mass transit is extended to the edges of cities it parallels the highways. They are using the rights-of-way which the highways had to fight 20 years



Lincoln, Massachusetts, 1998. Alex MacLean

to gain. The road going out of Atlanta (I-400) now has mass transit going right ahead of it in the median. As a result the transit structure is identical to the highway structure.

Plater-Zyberk It's park and ride. It's still driving. The New York City region is talking about a transit retrofit that's no longer hub and spoke but will try to pull together the outer rings just like vehicles have. That's very hard to organize without some sort of priority being set for density and redevelopment.

Shiffman The interesting thing is that it's being done very sectorally. The Port Authority and the transit people are each designing their own system, but they don't talk to each other. We're going to have a train to the plane that takes you nowhere.

Plater-Zyberk Can I make a connection back to the issue of public space? Does anybody think there can be public space outside of circulation space in the U.S.? And what about the kind of public space that's a place outside of movement? Philadelphia had four or five initially. It's not in our history to think that way so maybe it's not so odd that this century we haven't.

Plattus Even in the earliest cities, there was an explicit relationship between infrastructure and open space.

Shiffman You do have a lot of states that allow exactions from developers for public space.

Plater-Zyberk That's because people are demanding it. It gets back to the issue of business and public and private control. Think of the American prototypes—the New England green for

instance. I think there were ideals about building community when New England towns were settled.

Further South and West, the towns were in effect business settlements, where trains crossed the grid. Often they were laid out without public space, and many of us live in cities that continue to build that way. I would say that the outer parts of our cities are the continuation of that business tradition, not the community-building tradition.

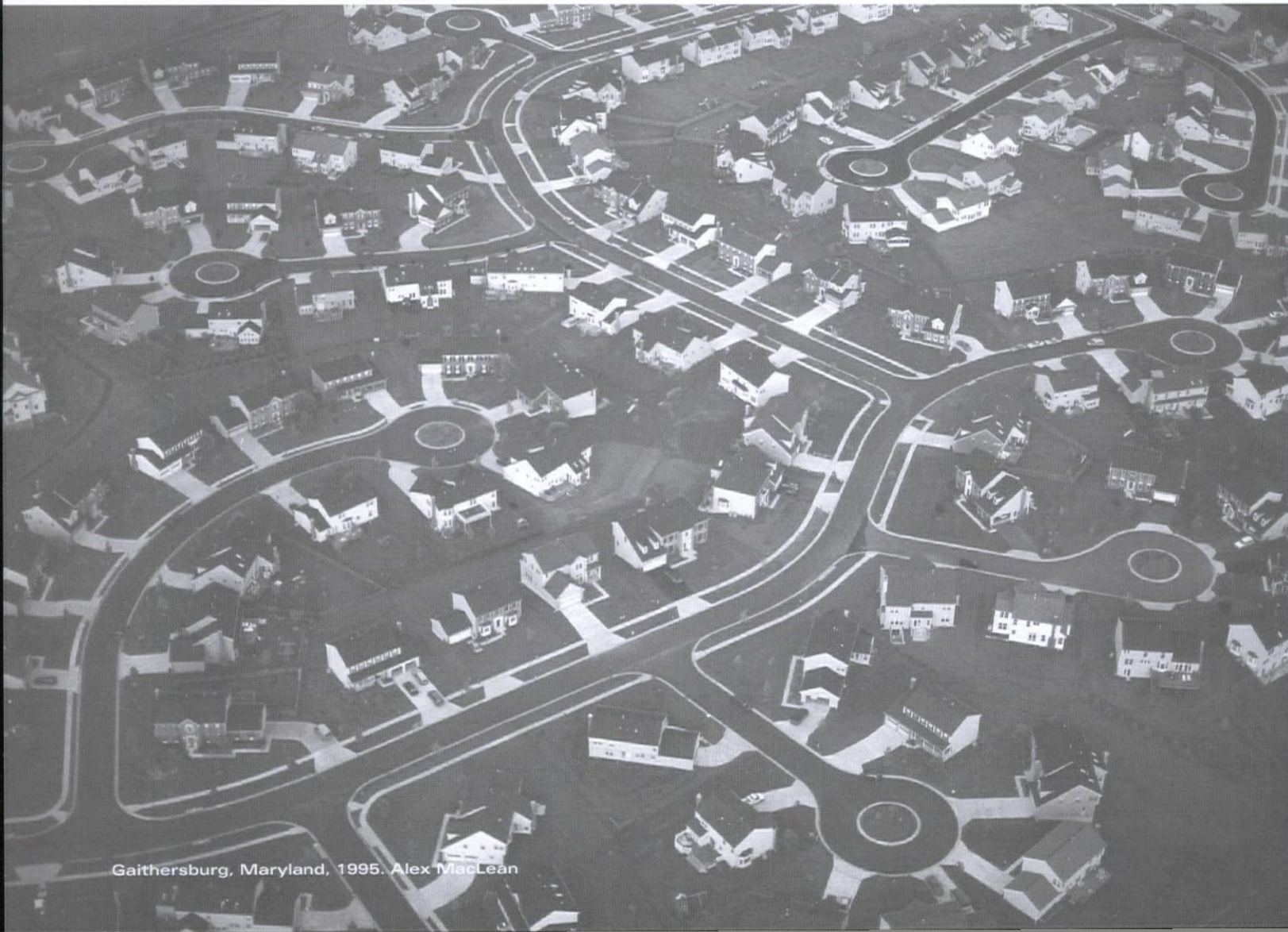
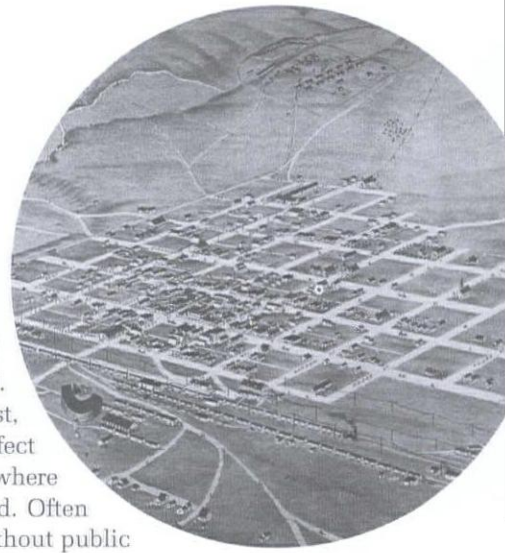
Koetter You know all these towns have Main Streets and that's pretty powerful public space, isn't it?

we should distinguish between public space and civic space

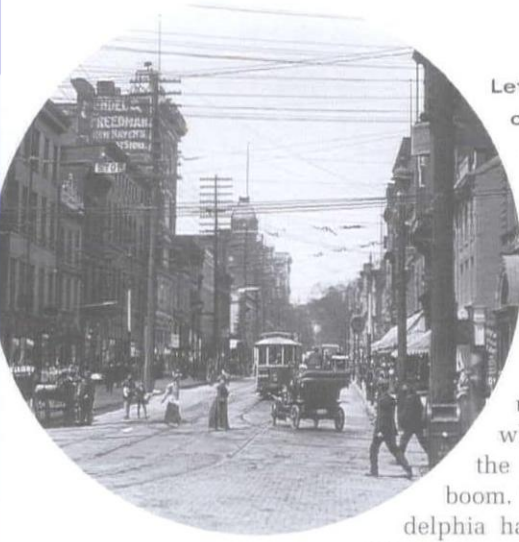
Plater-Zyberk They can be wonderful if they are preserved and cared for as public space, but they're usually just infrastructure.

Kieran What is the relevance of public space today that is not associated with movement infrastructure? Will people use it and for what purposes and when do they use it? If you can answer that question you can answer whether or not it will occur again.

Plater-Zyberk There are many examples of public space that is valued and used, even overused because there isn't enough of it.



Gaithersburg, Maryland, 1995. Alex MacLean



Left, Wyoming town built at the intersection of the railroad with the grid. Right, New Haven, Connecticut, early twentieth century

Scott Brown And there are also new uses of public space. The office lunch-hour park is a latter-day use for some spaces, which developed during the 1980s office building boom. Two squares in Philadelphia have become intensely used lunch-hour parks.

Plater-Zyberk Somebody brought up the automobile and its effect on community—there's a whole bunch of things which are set up for private rather than public use. Public circulation spaces now have a private character because you're alone inside your car.

Scott Brown We should distinguish between public space and civic space. In public space—for example, a beach—we do things together merely because we're all using the same facility. In civic space, we act or think as a community, whether we're voting or going to a concert or asserting our first Amendment rights at the Liberty Bell.

Plattus Popular culture, in cities in particular, has always been unbelievably inventive about finding the spaces left behind by the movement of official culture and wealth. An example is early modern Paris, where whole categories of street theater were cre-

ated by the progressive outlawing of other aspects of street theater. Pantomime was actually invented when the official theater groups forbade the street theater companies to have speaking parts. The opportunism of seizing upon spaces and modes of expression is part of a dynamic process. If there is anything that now characterizes the failure of Sunday urbanism, it's not that we don't make it in great enough quantities, it's that we don't make it in ways that it can coexist and interact with the ordinary stuff. I find myself using more and more images from the 1920s because it was a transitional moment. You get streets that look horrendous, like a civil engineer's nightmare. They have trolleys running down the middle, lots of cars, on-street parking, lots of pedestrians, pushcarts.

Kieran It's the image Le Corbusier used with an X through it.

Scott Brown At the Frank Lloyd Wright show I looked very carefully at the Broadacre City plans. It's fascinating, because the early plans have a streetcar and a station, but he leaves them out of the later one. And on the later plans he says, "No slum no scum."

Shiffman That is the argument now. You try to expand the New York City subway system, but the outlying communities want to be exclusive. They don't want people having access, meaning, they don't want low-income people having access.

Kieran He (Wright) still has the most brilliant definition of the American city in *The Living City*. He basically said the following: that each citizen defines the city every day through the summation of his or her daily path of movement. That was his



Forest Hills, Maryland, 1995. Alex MacLean

zoning codes have been almost silent here this morning, but the fact

definition of the American city. So if you just map out where everybody goes every day, that's the city.

Shiffman By the way, there are two ways of interpreting Wright's "no slum no scum." One of them is exclusionary. The other is so inclusionary that there are no longer slums and there is no longer poverty, depending on how you frame the quotation.

Koetter But if the plan involves the elimination of streetcars, you can imagine which one was intended.

Shiffman Oh, I can imagine, but I would argue that part and parcel of the planning process has to be the provision of opportunity for people to grow economically. So you actually nurture the middle class—you nurture the next level of gentrification for the people that are there rather than by a replacement process.

Scott Brown In other words you don't want to *bring back* the middle classes from the suburbs, you want to *grow* a middle class from the low-income community that's there right now.

Plater-Zyberk One thing that may not work as well as it could is the current pattern of commercial building. Suburban shopping centers have a very narrow definition of who a shop owner or manager is—so start-up businesses or somebody who is not a franchise have a more difficult time in the suburbs than in older areas where that was the original form of commercial organiza-

tion. Now one of the big watchwords in cities with new immigrant groups is incubator business.

Shiffman When you look at the macro data, you think that there is a demise in manufacturing and new enterprises in the New York region. But looking at it on the micro level, neighborhood by neighborhood, you see a resurgence of new small enterprises, many of them started by minority groups and women and new immigrants that cannot find their way into the new horizontal industrial parks. They are going into the old multi-story buildings and starting glass-blowing industries and using high technologies in textiles and lamp manufacturing.

Kieran I think we're already seeing a tremendous amount of retro-fitting in what appears to be a monolithic suburban office-park culture. If you look at some of the places that have been around for twenty years, you see that ground levels of buildings are no longer all offices; they are now services. The newer office parks are being built with services and stores.

Plater-Zyberk I think we're making it sound like everything is just fine, and it really isn't. If we go back to some of the issues we started with, like housing, it's not happening. The hoped-for things are not happening without help, because there are impediments. I think policy still needs to be addressed. It's either roll-

the matter is that people follow the rules because it's cheaper and faster

ing back impediments to sensitive community development or mixing costs of housing in one area, which means they'll all be fairly decent. Zoning codes have been almost silent here this morning, but the fact of the matter is that people follow the rules because it is cheaper and faster.

Shiffman One of the great benefits of the Riverside South project in Manhattan, for instance, was that for the first time the city planning commission voted that a large-scale development had to include low-, moderate- and middle-income housing. It's a 20 percent minimum—these are good planning principles.

Plater-Zyberk But there are two scales that are missing in this discussion. One is the regional picture; the much smaller one is the daily community. The daily trajectory—I'm not talking about the job—is taking the kids to school or going for a bottle of milk. We need to operate at both levels. We've learned from the city that there is very little room to move in redoing things. You can't deal with a lot of people's property all at one time. You really have to look for the single-owner property, like an office park or shopping center, that can be retrofitted. We need to understand what that model can be, the ways in which that new center can be a focus for transit, social, and other functional and environmental issues.

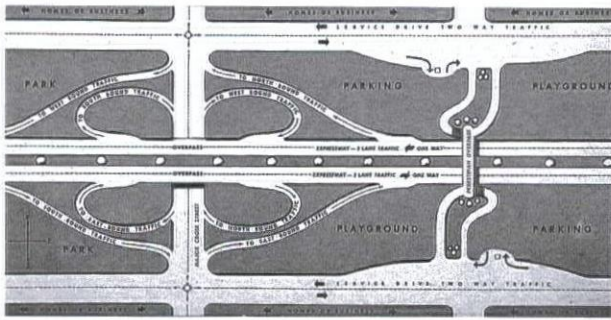
Plattus Let me try to stitch these themes together, because I believe that we have gotten ourselves trapped at an inefficient in-between level. We're dealing with jurisdictions that aren't small enough to be effective locally and empower people, but aren't big enough to create economies of scale. Just as there are no easy political answers to the drug problem or health care, there are only tough political answers to the questions that have been raised here. Furthermore, they're questions that politicians are unlikely to raise. Insofar as we can see those changing relationships—both the potential reinvestment of energy in smaller units to empower people and accommodate diversity, and the necessity of getting beyond the in-between scale units especially in the areas of economic development and sustainability, we have a responsibility to try to bring some of those issues to the fore.

Plater-Zyberk And offer models for them. I think that's the role of our profession—there's nobody else out there who is going to say, "It could be different if we did it this way." There will always be a desire for improvement. We're never going to get things right the first time out the door. We've made mistakes, but always with good intentions. It's nice to go back and say, these positive things came out of it. Let's recognize and keep them but then address the problems with real models.





interchange and container



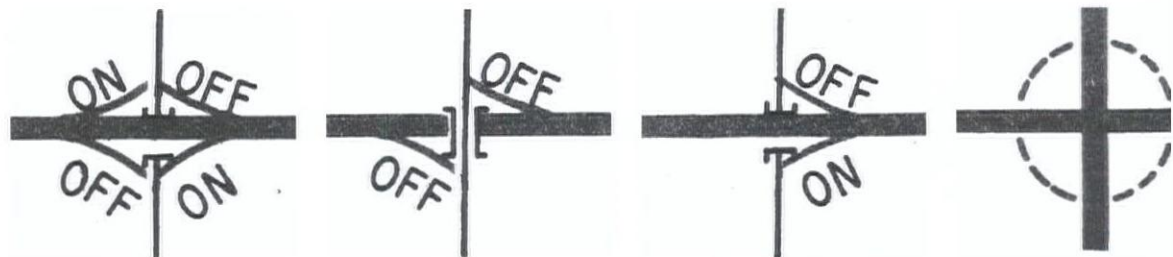
Traffic diagram identifying "park" and "playground" spaces between highway interchanges, 1947

One could argue that architectures of the orgman are expressed by a very different species of site, one which incorporates building crafts but occupies both the software and the hardware of spatial organization. In other words, this architecture provides instructions for not only the formal, morphological attributes of building, but also operatives affected by time, patterns of connectivity and changing populations of multiple components. Geometries and motion trajectories may be less important here than triplets and cycles or subtractions and parallelism. Form returns in partial, interstitial or distributed sites rather than in a single totalizing entity or system, and though the repertoire of these sites may be precise, the long-

term effects cannot be designed or represented in conventional architectural formulations. The most powerful, and possibly the only significant architecture within an active organization, involves not control but adjustment and amplification within an organization's shifting constitution. Perhaps the real power of many urban organizations lies within the relationships between distributed sites that are disconnected materially, but which remotely affect each other—sites which are involved, not with fusion or holism, but with adjustment.

infrastructure networks While most of the nation's infrastructural networks were public works designed within giant bureaucracies or hyper-capitalistic partnerships between federal and private powers, many of the most interesting innovations and design inventions appear on the cusp of change from one network to another, when one system is being subsumed by another system presumed to be more fit. In electronic networks, the system's intelligence relies on smart and flexible patterns of switching between heterogeneous components and multiple scales of activity. Multiplicity, differentiation and diversity are understood to strengthen a network, and the smarter the system the more its operation runs counter to conventional notions of efficiency. Redundancy and parallel processing within the system multiply pathways and circuits for increased speed and cross-reference. Transportation networks, on the other hand, have traditionally been segregated and developed through cycles of expansion and obsolescence rather than cross-reference, convertibility and exchange between carriers. Traffic engineering, a discipline which claimed to be capable of dealing with the complexity of variable populations of vehicles, actually made a generalization of that complexity by addressing only one aspect of highway dynamism, that is the movement of vehicles at relatively high speeds. America's interest in the highway interchange was not about the invention of some ingenious method of switching between infrastructure networks, but rather about simply switching direction within a single dominant transportation system. The Interstate Highway was segregated from interaction with other transportation modalities and valued as a frozen system of neutralized equivalence, or in network terms, as a dumb system with dumb switches. Before the highway became a fixed protocol, however, the most innovative proposals almost always involved increasing the intelligence of the highway by creating some communication between old and new transportation networks. A few experiments in the Interstate's prehistory merged the highway repertoire with that of other networks, borrowing intelligence, for example, from the railroad to create intermodal switching at interchanges and urban terminals. The character or position of these switches or network innovations as proposed or built by designers, federal agencies or commercial enterprises reflects the shifting organizational intelligence of the highway network.

terminal switching and wayside parallelism In early highway history, some architects and designers considered the arrangement of interchanges, roadways, intermodal protocols and national highway networks to be under their purview. Many of these early and unusual



Traffic switching diagrams from a 1963 map of Los Angeles

- 2 Warren H. Manning, *A National Plan Study Brief*. Special Supplement to *Landscape Architecture*, vol. 13, no. 4, (July 1923).
- 3 Benton MacKaye, "Motorway Legislation: Dual Transport vs. Monotransport," Office Memorandum to Tracy Augur, Head Planner from Benton MacKaye, Regional Planner (February 19, 1936, 1939); and Benton MacKaye, "Cement Railroads," *The Survey* 68, 1 November 1932, pp. 541-2.

proposals for highway networks outlined an organization entirely different in character from the eventual design of the Interstate Highway. Some were strung between national parks, some were, like railroads, straight transcontinental routes across the country with exurban junctures. They often intensified the capacity of the highway network by involving other active organizations like terrestrial ecologies or allied transportation networks. Perhaps most significant, the highway and the railroad were treated as an interdependent system of networks that might use each other's interchanges and wayside rights-of-way to develop intelligent switching and parallelism. For instance, in 1923, landscape architect and planner Warren H. Manning proposed an early limited-access highway system of "Trunk-Line Traffic Tracks" where junction points and waysides operated as sites of inter-modal exchange between railroads and waterways. Manning also doubled the network, creating both a commercial and recreational network in parallel, thus increasing the complexity and intelligence of the system by giving it some internal means of flexibility and adaptation.² In 1931 geologist, forester and self-proclaimed planner Benton MacKaye proposed a network of highways which he called "Cement Railroads" not only because they would be built on abandoned railroad rights-of-way but also because, together with the railroad, they would "serve as links in an allied system."³ MacKaye's infrastructure prototypes always recognized the power of linear strands of utility or transportation networks to organize a larger field of landscape, development or commerce along its

the spatial currency for the earlier organization man was the suburban home. The container



Container landscape, Port Elizabeth, New Jersey, 1999. Jeffrey Sturges

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Intermodal infrastructure,
Algeciras, Spain, 1996.
Elizabeth Felicella

fills the same need for a generic box

route. Norman Bel Geddes' "National Motorway Plan" (1939) was something of a hybrid between highway and airport networks with straight links and exurban hubs, and it was to be detailed in much the same way as were the designs for his Futurama exhibit at the 1939 World's Fair. Bel Geddes' idea that the network would become more intelligent by way of electronic controls and radio broadcast instructions to the vehicles remained a persistent dream in highway design throughout the century.

The Bureau of Public Roads, the federal agency that finally designed the Interstate, chose to base the system on automobile populations, and their statistical calculations provided equations and self-reinforcing data to galvanize legislation. Most of the decisions, therefore, logical or illogical, equated greater design and fiscal fitness with greater volume of automobile traffic. Consequently, a roadway designed for long-distance travel was routed through the cities as an intercity network. In this system, interchanges were not switches but assertions of the singular dominance of the long-distance highway format even in the city. Not only were there no exurban interchanges, but with a few exceptions, no federal guidelines for urban terminal exchange were implemented in any organized way, and the intercity highways joined several other layers of segregated transportation corridors in the city. Even with the highway almost stacked on top of the several existing rail, mass transit and water transportation networks it almost never provided any interface or exchange between them. Though each of the transportation networks fought for dominance, the failures and excesses of any one network were largely due to strains which could have been avoided by allowing multiple carriers to specialize in particular modes of travel and delivery.

Think tanks and city planning agencies, however, continued to propose schemes for urban automobile terminals. Some terminal plans, like those for New York's Port Authority, were actually built for exchange among bus, automobile and mass-transit systems as well as among freight, storage and manufacturing needs.⁴ In 1946, industrial designer Egmont Arens proposed a "Manhattan Inner Loop Skyway," an elevated arterial roadway with a continuous loop of terminal facilities "for every type of vehicle, including several decks of parking space, bus terminals, mail freight and package sorting stations" as well as airport links and helicopter transportation.⁵ Parking garages and housing towers would rise above the arterial, and the entire system was designed to link with Robert Moses' plans for elevated cross-town corridors, like the proposed Mid-Manhattan Expressway. In the 1960s and 1970s, both federally and privately funded research teams worked on problems related to urban highways. Like the earlier terminal proposals, Lawrence Halprin's "traffic architecture" proposed to sort and consolidate traffic through vertical stacking of roadways and specialized building sections incorpo-

4 U.S. Bureau of Public Roads. *Toll Roads and Free Roads*. House document 272, v. 20, 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939; President of the United States, *Interregional Highways*, House document 379, 78th Congress, 2nd Session, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1944.

5 Egmont Arens, "Design for a New Skyway," *New York Times Magazine*, 13 January 1946, pp. 18-19.

6 Lawrence Halprin, *Freeways* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1966), 95, 113-148; and Geoffrey Jellicoe, *Motopia: a Study in the Evolution of Urban Landscape* (New York: Praeger, 1961); and United States Urban Advisors to the Federal Highway Administrator, *The Freeway in the City: Principles of Planning and Design, A Report to the Secretary, Department of Transportation* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968).

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 212-223, 136.

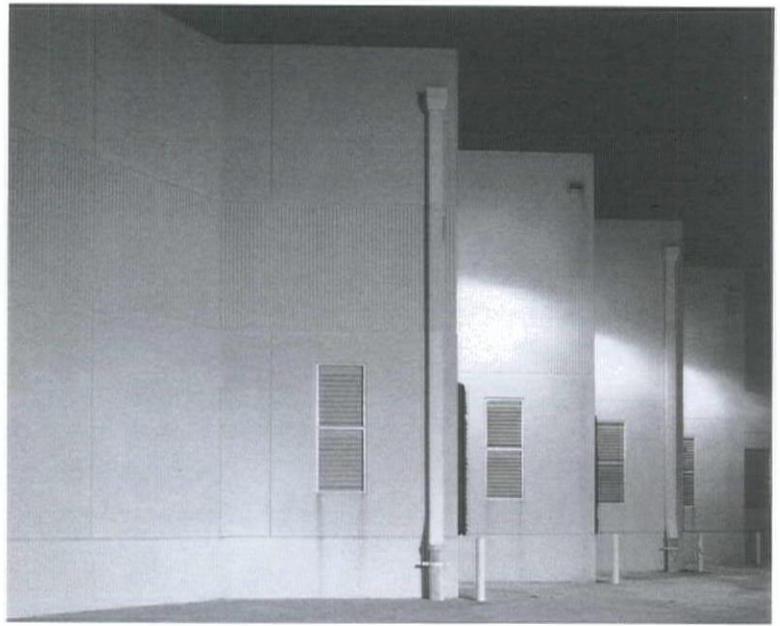
rating roadways with office, commercial and recreational programs like hotels, convention centers and sports facilities.⁶

Most urban cores contain several layers of overlapping networks including canals, piers, passenger rail, freight rail, mass transit and automobile expressways. Coordination among air, rail and surface freight

delivery has become increasingly reliant on trucking despite the congestion it must overcome on urban highways. Considered opportunistically, these redundancies and excesses ironically provide fertile ground for switching and differential exchange between modalities. The cycles of obsolescence and abandonment in the development of these transportation networks often mean that available sites are physically adjacent to the networks they might adjust. Transportation corridors are repetitive protocols, and in many cities this web of segregated corridor spaces, tunnels and rights-of-way sustains a similar sectional condition over an area several miles in extent. Repeated fittings and adjustments to that section potentially recondition and recircuit longer segments of the network. Not unlike the redundancies that are intentionally built into an electronic web to amplify its intelligence, these sites support a kind of parallelism that, through connection, strengthens all of the associated networks.

As it was finally built, the Interstate's wayside right-of-way was a vacancy, rather than a point of exchange or the site of a parallel network. It was neither property nor land but rather a linear corridor of space fused to the highway and defined by a visual field originating from inside the car. In the 1960s, as the highway was taking shape, architects looked at this wayside non-site in aesthetic rather than organizational terms. Some of the critics, like Peter Blake, author of *God's Own Junkyard*, were in righteous crisis over its ugliness. Others, like J.B. Jackson, were cool enough to take the mess, if soothed by a new romance with driving and an advance nostalgia for small-scale roadside commerce. William Whyte, in *The Last Landscape* (a suburban foray that followed *The Organization Man* in 1968), recognized the wayside as a site that might be partially separated from highway, though he still largely understood it as a landscape to be viewed from inside the moving car. His recommendations largely supported the goals of environmentalists and preservationists as cautions against wasting or abusing land.⁷ Most of these aestheticians shared J.B. Jackson's sentiments that Lady Bird Johnson's beautification program was "hopelessly superficial," but the program did succeed in identifying the wayside as a separate site, one that would differentiate the national network simply because different soils and climates supported different species of vegetation. As part of the beautification program, federal agencies developed perhaps the most perverse reaction to the wayside with their guidelines for "scenic" highways—guidelines which fused the most generic landscape rules with the tacit assumption that traffic engineering itself produced its own natural contours.

As a linear site adjacent to a national network, the wayside has several unusual qualities. It abuts commercial, agricultural, residential and public properties and it is constituted by many different jurisdictional designations that together form a fairly dense legal topography as critical as any phys-



Loading dock, Newark, New Jersey, 1999. Jeffrey Sturges



Loading dock, Newark, New Jersey, 1999. Jeffrey Sturges

ical landscape feature. The most recent advocacies surrounding the use of the wayside resemble some of the aesthetic proposals for scenic highways in the 1960s since they often portray the wayside as an eco-style greenway preserve, free from commerce, facilitating healthful exercise and extending non-vehic-

ular connections to parks and larger land preserves. But this is just one default position. The idea of a national web of sites lying between waterways, rail lines and roadways, might sponsor and facilitate a diverse set of uses positioned to build parallelism and intelligence among several networks. Most critical is the perception of this roadside, not as a vacancy, in the traditional use of the word, but as a site partially cleared of dominant programs and overlain with a topography of terrestrial, legal and commercial contours.

container intermodality While architects and planners were in their usual holding pattern over aesthetic concerns, lamenting the monotonous environment of the poor organization man and attempting to restyle his suburban and highway landscapes, the most enterprising orgmen representing rail and highway interests were actually conducting experiments in the switch sites of the national networks, experiments that would come to determine commercial patterns in the late twentieth century. One might expect that railroad and highway interests, each lobbying for complete transportation supremacy, would not be on the forefront of intermodal research, but, as early as the 1950s these concerns already knew that there was revenue in the exchange of goods between networks. They also knew that each network was best suited to certain kinds of tasks and that there was an economy in sharing shipping responsibilities.

The container idea, which would become the dominant intermodal format at the end of the century, was introduced earlier in the 1920s and 1930s. Just as the Interstate was being legislated in the 1950s, however, a succession of companies serving the trucking and railroad industries began developing competing protocols for another format, the piggyback container method that loaded the entire chassis of a truck onto a flat car. Each new piggyback invention was almost preposterously direct in addressing the mechanical problems of transferring trailers onto railroad cars. Each vehicle, coupling, crane, ramp or rail yard choreography was given an optimistic name like the "Flexi-Van," the "Trailer Train" or the "Translift" method. Containers similar to those used today were used during the 1950s, even aboard ocean-going vessels. But it was not until the 1980s that they became the standard unit of domestic and international intermodality. The economic and organizational equation has relied on not only volumes of the global trade, but the relatively new protocol of stacking containers on special double-decker rail cars.

Container intermodality was born in the interstitial spaces of rail, air, and highway networks. Intermodality is not necessarily prompted by the replacement of one network with another, but by the interchange between them. Combinations of air travel and shipping have become prevalent, accom-

8 McKinley H. Conway, *Airport Cities: And the Future Intermodal Transportation System* (Atlanta: Conway Publications, 1977); and David J. Deboer, *Piggyback and Containers: a History of Rail Intermodal on America's Steel Highway* (San Marino: Golden West Books, 1992).

panied by projections that air travel will assume more and more highway and rail traffic. Fly-in industrial parks or subdivisions have not materialized, however, and some highway and air traffic may actually be absorbed by high-speed rail carriers. Rather than subsuming highways or freight rail, the airplane has provided the global link in domestic commerce as well as the air link within the highway network. New airport cities and superhubs that concentrate the intermodal transfer and storage of global or domestic goods and that act as centers of distribution have helped relocate a set of exurban switches for exchange between rail, highway, air and sea. The hubs supporting Federal Express, Emery, Transway, Maersk and other intermodal concerns, along with superhubs like Alliance Airport in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, are freight exchange cities that are forming at critical junctures of the Interstate system. 8

New intermodal protocols are formatted by not only the space between carrier networks but by the container as a unit of intermodality. Today, perhaps, the spatial currency for the reorganization of commercial production and distribution is calibrated in part against the container and the new patterns of global trade that it both follows and helps to propagate. The spatial currency for the earlier organization man was the suburban home. It was the commodity that organized banking and building trades and then served to format an endless stream of products that would serve as accoutrement to the home. The container in some ways, has fulfilled the same desire for a generic box capable of streamlining production according to a common format. Now almost every product and commercial process in America could be described in terms of its relationship to the economies of container shipping. Each of those products is formatted according to a process of packaging and palletting that must eventually interface with the container and maximize its use. The containerization of goods has contributed to a new pattern of production and distribution that has not only altered the points of switching between highway and rail but has formatted the buildings that populate airport cities. In these cities, generic box buildings warehouse goods according to temporal and physical dimen-

the Interstate's wayside right-of-way was a vacancy.... neither property nor land but rather



Algeciras, Spain, 1996. Elizabeth Felicella

sions or house the "containerized" tasks that have been out-sourced among companies both here and abroad. These airport cities facilitate, even physicalize, the actual object-oriented software within which the protocols of these processes are rehearsed and recorded.

adjustment sites The new orgman inherits a logistical environment whose architecture only pretends to be based on aesthetics. He is heir to a national network that comes with dumb surfaces and dumb switches but suggestive sitings relative to other infrastructure networks and the landscape. New points of switching in the urban core, as well as the exurban ribbons of wayside territory, remain valuable sites for not only differ-

entiating the highway network but building new networks along the spine of the old. Projects for mammoth new rail and airport terminals within conglomerate entertainment, transportation, shopping formats have begun to sponsor a new form of urbanism. However, these new megasites – airport and transportation hubs – are not the only new sites of infrastructure intelligence. The same network



Newark, New Jersey, 1999. Jeffrey Sturges

ear corridor of space fused to the highway

understanding is also found in smaller sites within existing infrastructure fabrics. These are not sites sanctioned by an urban plan for a single entity like an airport or transportation hub. Rather they are distributed sites within those areas of easement and rights-of-way where segregated and redundant networks overlap or communicate.

The sites of adjustment for highway and transportation protocols, those that have the largest spatial consequences and provide the most profound degree of convertibility, may reside within, between and overlapping several transportation networks. From these sites it is possible to reinterpret an illogical sequence of infrastructure building as a series of happy accidents. In fact, the mid-century Interstate can be understood as a relatively new strand of infrastructure capable of adapting its initial neutral protocols into a more flexible interface—an interface from which a new, diverse series of intelligent national networks may arise. A site might, like the container, be a spatial component that calibrates hundreds of processes. Another site might be a detail that is powerfully amplified by those repetitious patterns which we commonly regard as monotonous. The new orgman writes the procedural software for generic commercial processes that are formatted to this transportation landscape. Claiming economic imperatives, these protocols often have the power to affect the use and even the physical presence of the highway network, and they offer many sites to architects—sites that may be temporal and procedural as well as physical. The spatial by-products of these processes are capable of loading intelligence into our national networks.

cabin fever mark wigley



December 2nd 1997. A small hut that had been hidden in the sparsely populated woods of Montana is lifted onto a flatbed truck, covered with a black tarpaulin and transported 1100 miles to Sacramento, California. Shadowed by a caravan of photographers and a swarm of helicopters, it takes three days for the 10 by 12 foot wooden box to make the epic journey from isolation to metropolitan center. For the first time, a whole building is to be presented as evidence in a court case. Architecture is brought to trial. A seemingly innocent structure is accused of sheltering the target of the biggest manhunt ever, the infamous unabomber who had terrorized the nation for eighteen years.

Not much for the jurors to look at though. Everyone can picture the building before seeing it. Any child could draw it. Indeed, people are always drawing it, dreaming about it. The simple form plays a key role in the American imagination. The cabin in the woods is the generic retreat that is meant to tame restless city dwellers and has long been institutionalized in the camp hut, the holiday house, the fishing lodge. In fact, the unabomber's building is a copy of the cabin to which Thoreau so famously withdrew from the city between 1845 and 1847. It self-consciously participates in a long cultural tradition.

Yet the unique power of this form is precisely that it is not seen as a cultural artifact. It is understood to be the form that precedes the arrival of culture. The retreat is always a retreat in time, a withdrawal to a lost simplicity, purity, immediacy, harmony...a lost beginning. In the romanticized national mythology of the immigrant pioneer, the domestication of the wild by the independent settler begins with the construction of a simple domestic space using primitive means. The wooden box with a pitched roof symbolizes the moment of settling down, the erection of an isolated house in the wilderness that precedes collective settlement. The cabin is that which precedes pattern, a solitary point in an unmapped terrain. Indeed, it is the pattern of the house itself, the newly defined limits of an interior carved within an unlimited and threateningly mysterious space, that makes possible the domestication of territory and the eventual rise of settlements.

This is not simply an American fantasy. It is a generic fantasy about a generic form. Each culture dreams of the mythical isolated hut and each has its symbolic retreats, its designated sites of withdrawal from the dominant patterns. It may not even be possible to think about the patterns without thinking of these sites. Settlement is always conceived in terms of its other.

The unabomber used his settler's cabin to unsettle the dominant pattern. His carefully written manifesto on the horrors of industrialized life condemns the modern city for its stressful, crowded existence in which people are kept prisoner under constant surveillance by police, cameras, and the manipulations of social programming. The enemy is technology, as exemplified by the computer that has united the world into a single social and spatial organization. The solution is to go back to the purity of "wild nature" in the age of the humble log cabin. Everyone should withdraw from the computer to the cabin. Within such a retreat, sixteen bombs were built and targeted with deadly effect against symbols of the technological order: computer scientists, airline executives, biogeneticists, electrical engineers. The point of the violence, said the ex-professor of mathematics, was to break society down into small units, to break the pattern.

The cabin itself is a manifesto, a puritanical polemic. No electricity or water softens the bomber's life or connects it to the national infrastructure. The only furniture is a single chair, a small table and a bed made of a sheet of plywood covered with a thin layer of foam. There are two tiny windows. Neither provides a scenic view. One is at the top of a wall and offers a square of sky. The other, a little lower on the facing wall, monitors the access path. There is a single door at the center and a storage loft suspended under the roof. Built by its occupant with simple tools and reused wood from an abandoned cabin, the house is immaculately constructed. The dark stained wallboards are neatly matched. Roof joists are rhythmically arranged. Windows, door and air vent are triumphs of minimalist anti-detailing. Every nail pinning down the green tar paper on the roof is exactly spaced. The house is a display of control—even if it was never meant to be seen by anyone other than its reclusive occupant.

Likewise the bombs. They had exactly the aesthetic of the house in which they were built. Most were hand-crafted boxes that were carefully carved, sanded, polished and repolished – even if they would only be seen for a few moments by the victim before their devastating disintegration. Each was repeatedly taken apart, rebuilt and refinished with fetishistic but deadly care. The mechanism of the fifth one did not work and the ninth one looked suspicious, so the boxes survived. X-rays revealed that their delicate interior organization was assembled out of recycled materials held together with handmade screws and fittings. Many of the key parts were made of wood. The rest were reworked household items – untraceable because generic. The everyday as weapon.

Symptomatically, the cabin too had to be x-rayed for fear that it was booby-trapped. Every surface was scanned for “secret spaces.” After all, no piece of wood could be trusted. Two of the most deadly bombs had been designed to look like simple blocks. For days, the cabin could not be entered normally. Robots were sent in through the end walls to scan each of the 700 objects found inside and, sure enough, detected a finished bomb ready for delivery. The very technologies that the unabomber rebelled against were brought to bear on his hideaway.

Even the woods were scanned. The FBI had taken detailed pictures from a spy satellite and laced the trees with motion detectors, microphones, television cameras and infra-red scopes before waiting two months for their chance to move in. This was not simply the sudden intrusion of contemporary technology into an isolated place. Retreats are already part of the technological network, part of the pattern they seem to have escaped. Thoreau was never really isolated. On the contrary, his withdrawal was a very public act described in a best-selling book. The ideology of his cabin was actually constructed in the urban milieu. The settlement always includes within itself what it nominates as its other. “Isolated” is an urban concept. It is a product of the city. To leave the map behind is a uniquely urban fantasy. It is those at the center of the pattern who talk the most about escaping it. But their escapes are usually just extensions of the pattern, demonstrations that the city knows no limit.

The cabin in the woods is actually at the center of the city. Far from disconnected, the terrorist ruthlessly exploited the ever-present intimate ties between isolated cell and dense urbanization. His frightening talent was the ability to hide his points of connection. While refusing to attach himself to the telephone, water and electricity lines that were only a quarter of a mile away, he kept his rural mail box on the roadside nearby, using the mail network to distribute his terror and get his manifesto published in national newspapers.

This is why a seemingly isolated hut could exemplify one of the greatest fears of urban life. The cabin has always belonged to the downtown to which it was eventually brought. It is quite at home in the public spaces of the media, including the pages of this journal. In the striking images by Richard Barnes that are presented here, the anti-technological wooden house has been lit by electronically-controlled lights and photographed with a computerized camera. Every detail is ruthlessly exposed. The Sacramento warehouse in which the building still remains has been blackened out. This remobilizes the house, sending it on countless more epic journeys as we can easily see it standing on any of the sites where the archetypal form has typically been installed – whether real or imaginary.

But the all-important interior remains hidden, mysterious, threateningly obscure. The photographer, like all the journalists visiting the original site, was not even allowed to look through the windows. In over twenty-five years, the bomber had let only two people see inside. And it would be the interior that was on trial. The terrorist's lawyers wanted to exhibit the actual cabin to demonstrate his insanity. They rejected the prosecutor's conventional scale model, arguing that to be taken inside the brutally minimalist building was to be taken inside a deranged mind. The prosecutors were going to counter with photographs of the space at the time of the arrest. It was, they said, as well organized as an all-too-sane calculating mind. But the defendant preferred to plead guilty than to be judged insane. The cabin was not entered and no images were ever released. The interior escapes us.

To look at these photographs is to scrutinize the exterior surfaces of an archetypal architecture for clues as to its explosive contents. The rigorous aesthetic of simplicity, natural materials, craftsmanship, and geometric purity has become an unsettling agent of horror.

credits

cover

General Plan of Riverside, Illinois (1869), partial view. Olmsted, Vaux & Co., Landscape Architects. National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

Aerial view of Daytona area, Florida (1986). Alex MacLean.

frontispiece

East ramp, Mall of America, Minneapolis, Minnesota (1993). Christopher Faust, Suburban Documentation Project.

american century timeline

7 Bird's-eye view of Oklahoma City, I.T., four weeks old (1889). A. Miller. Archives and Manuscripts Division, Oklahoma Historical Society. View northeast at lakefront across Illinois Central railroad yards (ca. 1916-1917). No. ICHI-05225. Chicago Historical Society.

8 Postcard of Nathan's Famous, Inc., Surf and Stillwell Avenues, Coney Island, "World's Largest Hot Dog Stand. Open All Year. Visit Nathan's of Long Island, Long Beach Road, Oceanside, L. I."

defying the grid

10 General Plan of Riverside, Illinois (1869), partial view. Olmsted, Vaux & Co., Landscape Architects. National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

The Grid: Commissioners' Plan for Manhattan (1811). Commissioners' Plan of 1811, No. 29.100.2730, J. Clarence Davies Collection, Museum of the City of New York.

11 The Grid: Typical New York City Block (1811).

12 The National Grid: Checkerboard Plans for Land Surveys following Congressional Land Ordinance (1785). Platting the Midwest: Plan of Columbus, Ohio (1817). Reprints, John W.; *Cities of the American West: A History of Frontier Urban Planning*. Copyright © 1979 by Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.

The National Grid: Bird's Eye View of Kalispell, Montana (1896). No. 79-110, K. Ross Toole Archives, The University of Montana-Missoula.

13 Platting the Midwest: View of St. Louis, Missouri (1874). Reprints, John W.; *Cities of the American West: A History of Frontier Urban Planning*. Copyright © 1979 by Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.

Congestive Pathologies of the Grid: Chicago Tenement Blocks (1935). No. ICHI-05803. Chicago Historical Society. *Chicago Daily News*.

14 Grid/Defying: Original Subdivision Plan and Revised Subdivision Plan (1938). Federal Housing Administration.

Grid/Defying: Bad Plan and Good Plan. Federal Housing Administration.

16 "Manhattanism" in America: Land Coverage Map of Emporia, Kansas (1935). Federal Housing Administration.

17 General Plan of Riverside, Illinois (1869). Olmsted, Vaux & Co., Landscape Architects. National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

18 Superblock vs. Gridiron: Comparative Plans. *Architectural Forum* 73 (July 1940).

19 The Superblock in the Grid: Six Schemes for

Replanning Existing Urban Blocks. *American City* (September 1939).

20 *Glow of the City* (1929). Martin Lewis. Brooklyn Museum of Art.

22 East Third Street, Site of the First Houses: Block site plan. *Real Estate Record* (21 December 1935). East Third Street, Site of the First Houses: Astor's Tenement Properties. *Real Estate Record* (21 December 1935).

23 Punched out Buildings: First Houses (1935). The LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, LaGuardia Community College/The City University of New York.

24 Resettlement Administration map (1936), inset photographs.

Courtesy of Borough of Roosevelt, New Jersey.

27 Resettlement Administration map (1936). Courtesy of Borough of Roosevelt, New Jersey.

28 Utopian Decongestion: Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City (1934-5). Copyright © 1999, The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Scottsdale, AZ.

29 General Plan of Radburn, New Jersey (1929). Reprinted from Werner Hegemann, *City Planning Housing, Volume III: A Graphic Review of Civic Art 1922-1937* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1937).

30 From Grid Block to Perimeter Block: F. Burrall Hoffman's East Third Street Modernization Project (1934). *Architectural Forum* 61 (September 1934).

31 The Grid and the Greenbelt: Old Way vs. New Way. Albert Mayer, *American City* (May 1936).

32 Robert Taylor Homes on South State Street, Chicago (1964). No. HB-27549 C. Chicago Historical Society, Hube Henry, Hedrich Blessing.

american modern

34 Sunnyside Gardens. Contemporary drawings: Rosemary Suh. Contemporary photographs: Jeffrey Sturges. Period photographs: Photograph 1073-B5, Jefferson Court, 1920s. Photograph 1073-C1, The Playground in a Model Community, 1928, Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

36 Mackley Houses. Contemporary drawings: Mike Harshman. Contemporary photographs: Devon Perkins. Period photographs: reprinted from Werner Hegemann, *City Planning Housing, Volume III: A Graphic Review of Civic Art 1922-1937* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1937).

38 Lakeview Terrace. Contemporary drawings: Mike Harshman. Contemporary photographs: Herman Gibans and Fodor, Inc., Architects. Period photographs: Courtesy of Herman Gibans and Fodor, Inc., Architects.

40 Greenbelt, Maryland. Contemporary drawings: Devon Perkins and Rosemary Suh. Contemporary photographs: Devon Perkins. Period photographs: Reprinted from Werner Hegemann, *City Planning Housing, Volume III: A Graphic Review of Civic Art 1922-1937* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1937).

42 Jersey Homesteads. Contemporary drawings: Joseph Pikiwicz and Mike Harshman. Contemporary photographs: Devon Perkins. Period photographs: reprinted from Werner Hegemann, *City Planning Housing, Volume III: A Graphic Review of Civic Art 1922-1937* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1937).

44 Williamsburg Houses. Contemporary drawings: Andrew Wolfram. Contemporary photographs: Jeffrey Sturges. Period photographs: Photograph 0134-D2, Bushwick Avenue, north of Scholes Street, 1957; Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, The New York Public Library; Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

46 Aluminum City Terrace. Contemporary drawings: Joseph Pikiwicz. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). Contemporary photographs: Devon Perkins. Period photographs: *Architectural Review* 96 (September 1944).

the "new" company town

48 Plan of Fairfield, Alabama (1910), detail. Courtesy of Margaret Crawford.

50 Map of Pullman, Illinois (1885). Reprinted in Stanley Buder, *Pullman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 76. Original illustration, Richard T. Ely, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 70, no. 417, 1885.

51 Plan of Aladdin (1911). Courtesy of Margaret Crawford.

52 Plan of Fairfield, Alabama (1910). Courtesy of Margaret Crawford.

53 View of Torrance, California (1910). Printed in *The American City* (October 1913).

54 Plans for Letchworth, England (1904). Parker and Unwin. Courtesy of Margaret Crawford.

55 Forest Hills, Queens (1999). Joshua Brandfonbrener.

56 Plan of Indian Hill, Massachusetts (1913). Courtesy of Margaret Crawford.

57 Plan of Tyrone, New Mexico (1915). Plan and view of Yorkship Village, New Jersey (1918). Courtesy of Margaret Crawford.

roundtable throwing stones

58 Suburban rooftops, Tampa, Florida (1994). Alex MacLean.

59 Platting hills for housing, Los Angeles, California (1989). Alex MacLean.

60 Housing start at the edge, Houston, Texas (1978). Alex MacLean.

61 Agricultural field, Palm Desert area, California (1989). Alex MacLean. New Map of London, Langley & Belch (1812). Reissued by the London Topographical Society, 1971. Reprinted courtesy of the London Topographical Society.

62 Metro Traffic Control monitoring facility, Minneapolis, Minnesota, (1993). Christopher Faust, Suburban Documentation Project. Map of Los Angeles, 1931. J. Jessup, city engineer, Map Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

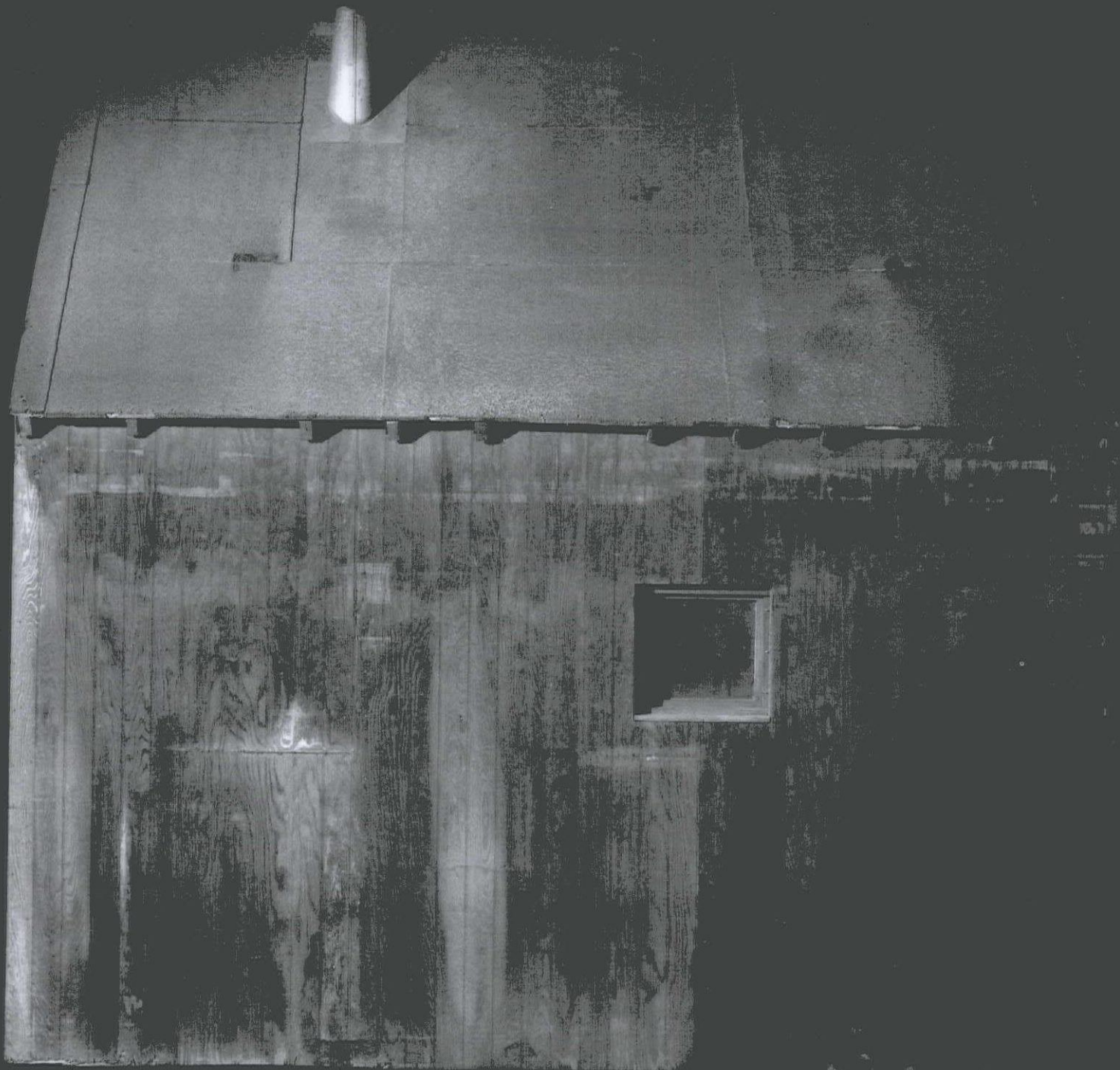
63 Greater Los Angeles Industrial Areas and Commercial Centers, 1954. Brewster, Map Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

how eden lost its garden

This article is adapted from *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*, by Mike Davis, 1998. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt & Co., LLC.

64 Colorado Springs, Colorado (1968). Robert Adams. Courtesy of the Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, CA.

67 Orange crate labels. Courtesy of Peter DeBretteville.



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Finally, a memorial note. This volume was originally supposed to be *Perspecta 31*. However, because of the tragic death of Myriam Bellazoug, one of the editors of the issue preceding ours, this volume became *Perspecta 30*. Myriam died in the TWA Flight 800 crash and for all of us who knew and admired her, we bid her farewell yet again.

69 Hover (1996-7). Gregory Crewdson. Courtesy of Luhring Augustine, New York.

71 Newly Occupied Tract Houses, Colorado Springs, Colorado (1968). Robert Adams. Courtesy of the Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, CA.

73 Kitchen Sink, Tract House, Longmont, Colorado (1973). Robert Adams. Courtesy of the Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, CA.

75 Hover (1996-7). Gregory Crewdson. Courtesy of Luhring Augustine, New York.

roundtable aesthetics, demographics, and cohesion

76 Daytona area, Florida (1986). Alex MacLean. Storefront on Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, Florida. Courtesy of Venturi Scott Brown and Associates.

77 Laguna Beach, California (1987). Alex MacLean. Storefront on Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, Florida. Courtesy of Venturi Scott Brown and Associates.

78 Greater Miami area (1999). Alex MacLean. Map of Boston (1857), inset of North End. Map Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

79 Las Vegas, Nevada (1983). Alex MacLean.

80 Agricultural fields next to I-8, El Centro, California (1987). Alex MacLean.

81 Destin, Florida (1994). Alex MacLean.

82 Eagan, Minnesota (1992). Christopher Faust. Suburban Documentation Project. Aerial view of Seaside, Florida. Courtesy of Duany Plater-Zyberk.

savior of the streams

philadelphia's postwar moment

84 Photo montage of Penn Center, Philadelphia (1995). Doug Hassebroek.

85 Edmund Bacon, Cover of *Time Magazine*, 1964, Time, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

86 *Architectural Forum* (December 1947), v. 87, 85. Philadelphia City Planning Commission.

87 *Architectural Forum* (December 1947), v. 87, 68, 73. Philadelphia City Planning Commission.

88 *Smedley's Atlas of the City of Philadelphia* (1862), inset. J. B. Lippincott & Co.

89 Far Northeast neighborhood, Philadelphia (1999). Doug Hassebroek.

90 Sketch of Far Northeast site plan (1997). Courtesy of Edmund Bacon.

Plan of Far Northeast (1968). Courtesy of William H. Whyte.

91 "Telling the Philadelphia Story," *AIA Journal* (June 1961), 91; Reprinted with permission from *Architecture*, 1961, BPI Communications, Inc.

roundtable public and private space

92 Greater Miami, Florida (1999). Alex MacLean.

93 Clay, New York (1997). Alex MacLean. Times Square snapshots (1999). Louise Harpman.

94 New Orleans, Louisiana (1997). Alex MacLean.

95 Medford, Massachusetts (1992). Alex MacLean.

96 Little House on the Prairie, Alamosa Drive, Lincoln, Nebraska (1993). Christopher Faust. Suburban Documentation Project.

which new urbanism?

This article is adapted from "Giuliani Time: the Revanchist 1990s" in *Social Text* 57, vol. 16, No. 4, Winter 1998.

98 Far Rockaway, Queens (1998). Elizabeth Felicella. From the project *Idlewild: An Atlas of the Periphery of Kennedy Airport*. Project

funding from the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of the Design Trust for Public Space, Inc.

100 Panhandling on the subway is illegal. Poster, Courtesy of MTA Connections.

101 Aerial view of forced clearance of East Village squatter camp (1991). Elizabeth Felicella.

103 Under the boardwalk, Coney Island (1998). Elizabeth Felicella. From the project *Uneasy Spaces: Security and the Public Realm*. Project funding from the Design Trust for Public Space, Inc.

104 Far Rockaway, Queens (1998). Elizabeth Felicella. From the project *Uneasy Spaces: Security and the Public Realm*. Project funding from the Design Trust for Public Space, Inc.

roundtable facts on the ground

106 Houston, Texas (1978). Alex MacLean.

107 Lincoln, Massachusetts (1998). Alex MacLean.

108 Gaithersburg, Maryland (1995). Alex MacLean. Aerial view of Wyoming town: Reys, John W.; *Cities of the American West: A History of Frontier Urban Planning*. Copyright © 1979 by Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.

109 Forest Hills, Maryland (1995). Alex MacLean. New Haven, Connecticut, Thomas S. Bronson, 1907. Courtesy of New Haven Colony Historical Society.

110 Brooklyn, New York (1998). Elizabeth Felicella.

interchange and container

112 Augusta, Georgia (1991). Alex MacLean.

113 Warren Manning's 1923 mapping of Transcontinental Highways from Warren H. Manning, "A National Plan Study Brief," *Special Supplement to Landscape Architecture*, July 1923 vol. 13, no. 4, 17.

114 From G. Donald Kenney, *Modern Urban Highways* (Washington Conference Committee on Urban Problems, 1947), 14.

Freeway and Arteries Map, Los Angeles (1963), inset of switching diagrams. Reproduced with permission granted by Thomas Bros. Maps. This map is copyrighted by Thomas Bros. Maps. It is unlawful to copy or reproduce all or any part thereof, whether for personal use or resale, without permission.

115 Newark, New Jersey (1999). Jeffrey Sturges.

116 Port Elizabeth, New Jersey (1999).

Jeffrey Sturges.

117 Algeciras, Spain (1996). Elizabeth Felicella.

118 Loading docks, Newark, New Jersey (1999). Jeffrey Sturges.

120 Algeciras, Spain (1996). Elizabeth Felicella.

121 Newark, New Jersey (1999). Jeffrey Sturges.

cabin fever

122 Unabomber cabin (1998). Richard Barnes. Courtesy Richard Barnes and Henry Urbach Architecture, New York.

125 Unabomber cabin (1998). Richard Barnes. Courtesy Richard Barnes and Henry Urbach Architecture, New York.

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