Nothing Succeeds like Failure

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school; sometimes it doesn't."

ing. Sometimes learning goes on in

Products have only coincidental rela-

tionships. Sometimes, they are merely
used as a method to achieve something
else. In this context, the word 'no'

solved by saying 'more' (more building,

understand something relative to some­

thing you understand...public informa­

tion...by the way...from the point of view...a

decision was made...to make it or they, in turn,
to use it. These decisions are made in

risk."

"A child learns..."
QUALITY HOUSING

OVERVIEW

The Housing Marketplace

Today's housing is controlled almost completely by the rules of the marketplace. All housing is built for profit, except a small portion of public housing. The principle of "build cheap and sell dear" has become the controlling force in most projects.

Because the owner/developer and the contractor are frequently the same person, corner-cutting becomes the norm of the game. This thus becomes difficult or impossible for the designer to control the actual building. The designer is often regarded as an adversary - a necessary evil in the building process who must be manipulated and controlled lest he produce too costly a design. And, as the developer often has no identification with the building product, he is rarely impelled to produce an outstanding building.

Further controls are established by an accumulation of government regulations at the federal, state and local levels. Many of these regulations are out of date, remnants of land-use and construction rules of past generations. Consequently, there has developed over the years a Byzantine set of rules subject to capricious and arbitrary interpretations.

Government Programs

Special government agencies have been created to provide housing, often for specific groups, such as family, elderly, and more recently the handicapped. Need is based on a housing plan, which determines housing stock, delineates deficiencies, and establishes parameters of need. Projects may involve new construction or substantial rehabilitation. Except for the handicapped, this is all housing for low- and moderate-income persons.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has a wide variety of programs, ranging from block grants which may be administered by local agencies, through mortgage-end interest assistance, to rental supplement. An example of Section 8 is an example of the latter; it provides direct rental assistance based on a person's income. Renting a house at the very low cost of $17 per square foot.

The Department of Agriculture has programs for rural housing through bond issues, which are repaid through tax-advantaged mortgage payments. The Federal Housing Administration, which acts much as a conventional lending agency, also lends directly, but it lends through a network of correspondent agencies across the country. Loan commitments are made directly to an agency, which in turn issues a mortgage to the owner/developer. Construction is usually in response to requests for proposals, a design, development, and a management plan. Design considerations are prescriptive as explicated in the multi-volume "Standards of Minimum Property Standards."

What follows is a review of four projects that excel in the great attention they give to design, development, and a respect for their surrounding environment.

FOUR PROJECTS

Introduction

To achieve a quality living environment for people in multi-family housing has long been a dream of the architect. Within the uncertain palpitations of the marketplace, the ever-changing government programs and policies, and the competing priorities, it is a wonder we get anything built at all. The ideal environment described by the classic book "Community And Privacy" is reviewed in this issue of four projects in Los Angeles that are attempting to achieve a level of pragmatic, innovative design and a respect for their surrounding environment.

The two completed projects represent responses to the demands of the private sector. These include Carolwood Condominiums by Ron Goldman, AIA and Brent Robbins & Bown, and the Orlando/Waring Condominiums by Kamnitzer, Cotton, Vreeland, and the Promenade Condominiums by Kamnitzer, Cotton, Vreeland, and the Orlando/Waring Condominiums, consisting of twenty-four units, is completed with a series of raised and glass lobbies. Community areas open from the lobby to a garden court and pool area. It was built in 1974 at the very low cost of $17 per square foot.

The Orlando/Waring Condominiums consist of sixty-five units on a sloping site. Completed in 1976, the building cost $28.50 per square foot. The interplay of vertical chimney elements and the interlocking facades forms a straight-forward geometric system that is visually pleasing and reflects the simplicity of the plan. The two-story townhouses step up the hill to the four-story penthouse building, taking maximum advantage of the panoramic views and the changing topography.

CRA Rebuilds Bunker Hill

The completion of the Bonaventure Hotel and the elegant remodeling of the Biltmore have helped attract many visitors to downtown Los Angeles, but for many years the City has needed better-quality housing for the permanent downtown residential population. This need will be filled in part by two new projects currently in development - a condominium project and a senior citizens' rental project, both of which are underway in the general attention they pay to public and semi-public open space.

The Promenade by Kamnitzer, Cotton, Vreeland, under the design direction of Peter Kamnitzer, will ultimately cover five parcels of the Bunker Hill Redevelopment Area with a total of 800 units to be built in four phases. The total site plan calls for an interlocking series of stepped low-rise units which define public plazas and outdoor recreation areas. Kamnitzer refers to these as "textural units." Although the site plan

Kenneth Dillon, AIA
reads somewhat like an oversimplified diagram, the development of Phase One, with its stepping profile and varied facade, should prove to be a very positive addition to downtown. Preliminary estimates by the developers, Shapell Government Housing and Goldrich Kest & Associates, indicate the condominiums will start at $70,000 per unit. According to Elliot Maltzman, President of Shapell Government Housing, public response thus far has been "sensational."

The Senior Citizen Housing Project by Daniel Dworsky and Associates will total 1,100 units to be built in two phases. Phase One will contain 700 units in three sixteen-story blocks set around a multipurpose social service center. The housing units are all identical one-bedroom plans based on the Forest City-Dillon System of prefabricated concrete units. The repetitive nature of the housing blocks is offset by the stepping social service center which attempts to recreate the cascading hillside of the old Bunker Hill. Built under the auspices of the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency and the Retirement Housing Foundation, the non-profit sponsor, the project will serve the residents as well as the adjacent community. HUD will provide Section 8 rent subsidies to residents.

Conclusion

Within the constraints of the marketplace, certain public agencies and private developers are striving to improve our stock of quality housing. Jim Hosenfeld, of the Los Angeles County Housing Authority, perceives the need for a family housing program that would provide low- and moderate-income families with quality housing in a series of small cluster developments integrated into the existing residential areas, rather than through the traditional concept of the single large housing project with the negative connotations it has acquired.

For example, Shapell Government Housing has joined with Goldrich Kest & Associates to develop housing projects in the downtown areas of Los Angeles and San Diego which were once considered taboo by the private developer. These trends represent a shift in consumer attitudes which promises to bring professionals back downtown and foster the revitalization of our central cities through the rebirth of a social fabric which includes all age groups and all levels of our society.

Downtown Los Angeles already boasts some of the finest culture and entertainment in the country. The new hotels, office buildings, and other commercial enterprises combined with a large resident population, at varied income levels, should produce one of the most vibrant downtowns in the United States.

Quality multi-family residential architecture, whether it's a 40-unit condominium or a 1,000-unit urban complex, is possible if the client is well-informed and the architect is creative enough to meet the demands of budget, schedule, and good design.

Michael Franklin Ross, AIA

The 3:14pm meeting of the SCC/AIA Board of Directors: On April 4, 1978, the Board of Directors met in the Chapter offices to hear Jerry Pollak and Judy Nelson on the Sullivan Park Plan, recommending Charter endorsement of the Plan which the Board subsequently granted, the Charter position and other comments to be outlined in a letter prepared by Pollak, a discussion of Board support for the CCAIA move to Sacramento, to be stated in a letter to the CCAIA, approval of David Martin’s letter regarding the CCAIA planning process, approval of the formation of a Professional Liability Committee, to be headed by David Sack, Board recommendation of the appointment of Burnett Turner to the Los Angeles Bicentennial Committee, a membership report by Secretary Stanley Smith.

A public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Los Angeles Central Library Renovation and Expansion is scheduled for June 15, 7:30 pm, in the Los Angeles City Council Chambers. Last date for written comments is June 19. Call 485-6445 for further information.

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