

POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

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OCTOBER, 1962



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*Eric Mendelsohn — sketch for Einstein Tower,
Potsdam, 1920. From a group of 100 Mendelsohn
sketches at the Octagon thru early October.*

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POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

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EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

AIA OCTAGON

Through early October
Drawings of Eric Mendelsohn
October 23 - November 11
Contemporary Canadian Architecture
Massey Medals for Architecture

NATIONAL HOUSING CENTER

October 5 - October 25
"Collaboration: Artist and Architect"
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
September 23 - October 14
American Prints Today
Opening October 28th
Old Master Drawings from Chatsworth

CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART

October 4 - November 11th
Retrospective Exhibition of William Ranney
Opening September 28

Edith Gregor Halpert Collection

PHILLIPS COLLECTION

November 4 - 25

Kurt Schwitters

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Through October 15
Architectural Exhibition on Pre-Hispanic America
Through October 30
Ancient Glass

CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS INST.

October 16, 8:00 p.m. National Housing Center
Thermal Insulation

Thermal Insulation

TEXTILE MUSEUM

Through January
Indonesian Art Exhibit

LETTERS

The following letter from Neville Miller, chairman of the RLA, is in reply to an inquiry from PVA concerning his recent trips to Europe.

Dear Editor:

Last fall Mrs. Miller and I visited Scotland, England, and Ireland, seeing several of the new towns - Cumbernauld, Crawley, Cwmbron, and others. Cwmbron, near the Welsh border in an area where the inhabitants insist on the traditional arrangement of yard and garden, consists entirely of single houses.

This past summer we were in Scandinavia. I have written down some scattered impressions of the trip.

The most interesting development was Tapiola, outside Helsinki. I hope to have available this winter an excellent 20-minute film in English on the project.

Denmark is experimenting with new techniques of prefabricated concrete housing.

In Scandinavia, the effort is to get the people out of the cities into small new towns in the country. They found it difficult to understand our efforts to entice people back to the city, as in Southwest.

The traffic conditions are of course different. Cars are smaller and fewer, bicycles and motorcycles widely used. Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen have excellent mass transit systems.

Nowhere in Scandinavia did I see a slum. The emphasis is on new development rather than renewal. Their design appears to make more provisions than ours for children, older people, and invalids.

A mutual exchange of ideas would prove beneficial to all concerned.

Very truly yours

Neville Miller

Chairman

District of Columbia

Redevelopment Land Agcy.



Editor:

This letter is in answer to the "WARNING! To All Architects Registered in the District of Co-



BLACK RESIDENCE

WILLIAM PROCOPIOW, ARCHITECT

LOCATION: Highland, Maryland

OWNER: Mr. & Mrs. Harold D. Black

CONTRACTOR: P. G. Burdette

lumbia" appearing in the September, 1962 issue of "Potomac Valley Architect".

Your article is entirely erroneous. It states that the "D. C. Board does not send you notice that you are delinquent." It further states that "It is inconceivable that a professional registration board could operate in this archaic fashion."

The Board of Examiners and Registrars of Architects is a part of the Department of Occupations and Professions of the District of Columbia. If you were as familiar with the regulations governing the control of the various professional registration boards in the District of Columbia as you imply in your notice, you would know that they have nothing at all to do with the collection of registration renewal fees. All money goes to the Collector of Taxes, D.C. and if "many renewal checks were lost" as you state, the "primitive bookkeeping system" would be that of the District of Columbia.

It is strange that a group of practicing architects from another political jurisdiction should make such misleading statements in its official publication about an official board from another state.

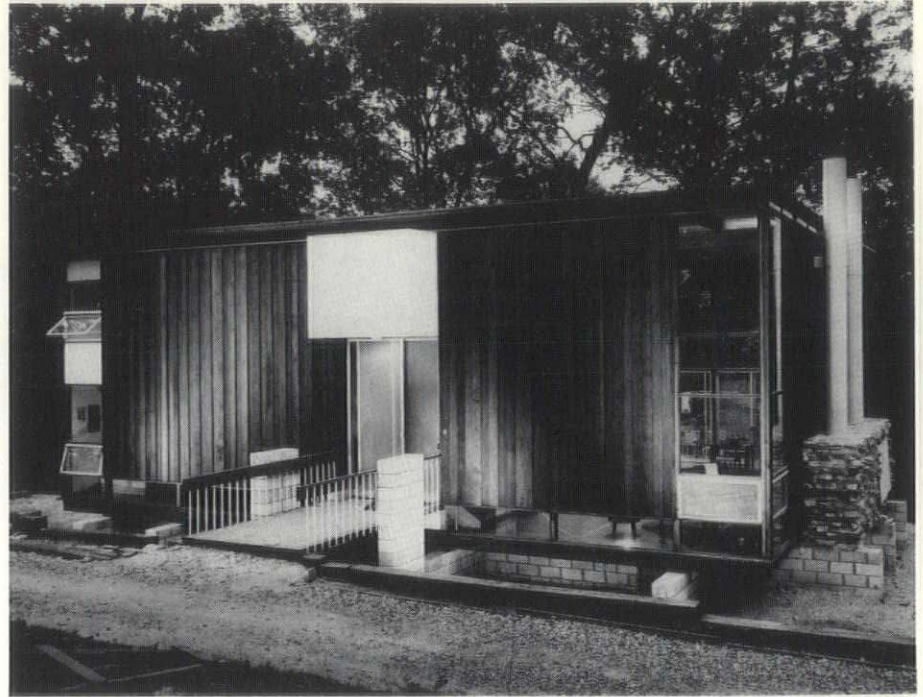
Very truly yours,

Leon Chatelain, Jr., FAIA
President
Board of Examiners and
Registrars of Architects

NEW MEMBERS

The Potomac Valley Chapter welcomes three new members this month.

Neil Greene, born in New York received his B. Arch. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1956. Entering the Air Force after graduation, he completed flight school and served a tour of duty as planner in the Air Installations Office, Andrews Air Force Base. Having worked locally for Werner-Dyer Associates and Ronald Senseman, he is currently a designer and land planner with Cohen, Haft and Associates. Mr. Greene, his wife and



MAHR RESIDENCE

TATAR AND KELLY, ARCHITECTS

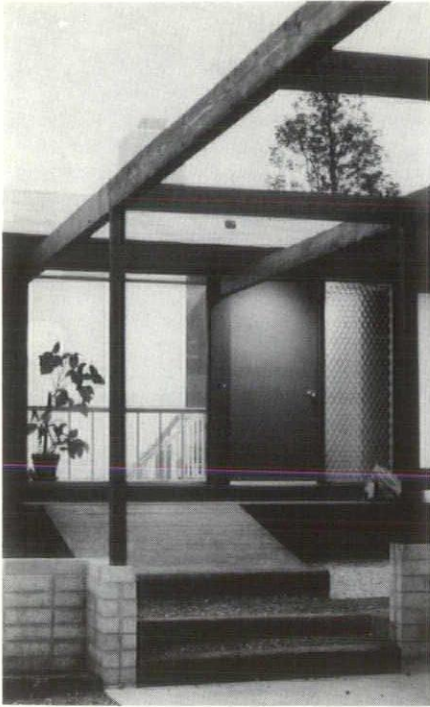
LOCATION: *Suburban Baltimore*
OWNER: *Mr. & Mrs. Malcolm D. Mahr*
CONTRACTOR: *George J. Arold*

two children have recently bought a town house in the Southwest renewal area of River Park, where he is chairman of the community relations group. His enthusiasm for planning and urban renewal is reflected in his spare time work on the Potomac Valley Planning Committee, and the Washington Junior Chamber of Commerce.

William Procopiow, another native New Yorker, attended Hunter College, Catholic University, and Columbia University, receiving a B. Arch. from the latter in 1954. After working for the New York area firms of Perkins and Will, and Harry M. Prince, he joined John S. Samperton Associates in 1958, becoming an associate in 1960. Mr. Procopiow lives in Chevy Chase with his wife and three daughters, ages two years, two months, and two months. Though he is a golfer and football fan, his major enthusiasm is classical music, particularly opera.

Robert B. Riley, a graduate of the University of Chicago, studied under Mies van der Rohe at IIT and took his B. Arch. at MIT in 1954. He spent four years in the U. S. Air Force as a weather forecaster and is a captain in the Air Force Reserve. Having worked in the Washington area since 1958, he is presently an associate of the firm of Kea, Shaw, Grimm and Crichton. Now living in Silver Spring with his wife and daughter, he devotes his spare time to architectural reading, running in an occasional sports car rally, and editing PVA.

NOVEMBER MEETING
12 Noon November 7
Sirloin Inn
Wheaton Plaza Shopping Center



NEWS

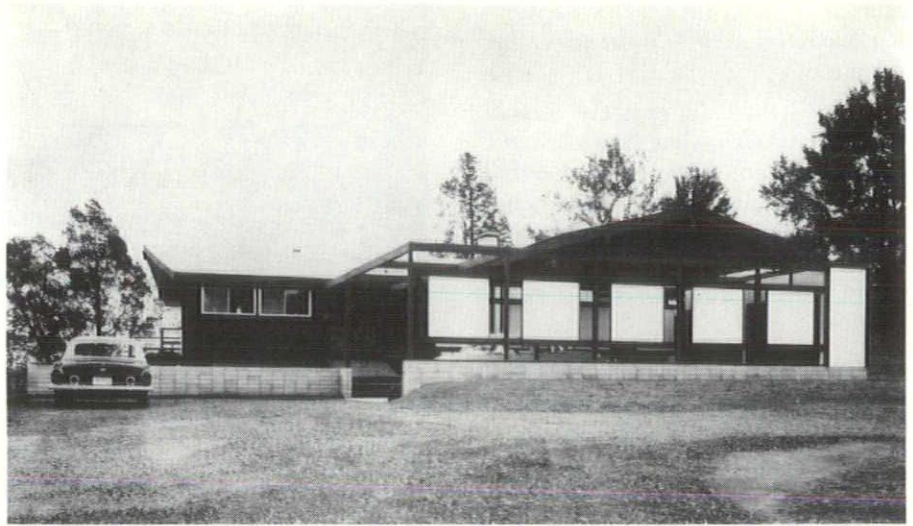
Wheaton House Apartments, by Cohen, Haft and Associates, is featured in the September issue of ARCHITECTURAL RECORD. This project won a First Award in the recent Potomac Valley Chapter Biennial Competition.

David H. Condon, of Keyes Lethbridge & Condon, has been appointed to a national panel of consultants whose function will be to assist the Public Housing Authority in improving the design of low rent housing.

Albert A. Fox, local lighting equipment manufacturers representative, was a top winner in the national 1962 Applied Lighting Competition. The prize, awarded for the lighting design of the Jarboe Residence in Potomac, is the ninth won by Mr. Fox in local and regional competitions.

Planning Group Progress Report

The Plan for a new Silver Spring of the year 2,000 is gradually taking shape. During the weekly meetings the Planning Group of the Potomac Valley Chapter has evolved a concept of what Silver Spring should be.



JONES RESIDENCE

JOHN C. CAHILL, ARCHITECT

LOCATION: *Silver Spring, Maryland*
OWNER: *Mr. & Mrs. Herbert O. Jones*
CONTRACTOR: *Payne Bros.*

We visualize Silver Spring as the biggest Maryland city in the vicinity of Washington. A hub of business, federal office buildings, research-oriented firms and perhaps a new technical college or institute devoted to research. From the center of the plan will be developed transportation, convention, shopping and trade centers, with major attention given to rapid transit commuter lines, express bus lines and automobile parking. The automobile will be subordinated to the pedestrian in the city, and the truck to the automobile. But the city shall have a handsome limited-access landscaped parkway conducting traffic freely around the city with convenient access to an inner loop for local traffic. Emphasis will be on making Silver Spring a city with a theme; an interesting place to visit, work, play and be entertained — a place where it can be fun to walk, a place you will not forget when you leave.

A major design aspect in the plan will be a physical boundary limit. Its density would grow by vertical development, and zoning would prevent encroachment beyond the surrounding parkway. High density office buildings and high-rise apart-

ments would be encouraged for the convenience and efficiency of service for the occupants. Density of the city might be increased tenfold, without crowding, by efficient aesthetic design. Parking may be contained in 8-story buildings in the cores of city blocks, surrounded by handsome office buildings and high rise apartments fronting on pedestrian squares and parks. Land use would be mixed, but generally controlled by enforcement of the plan, urban renewal authority and contingent zoning.

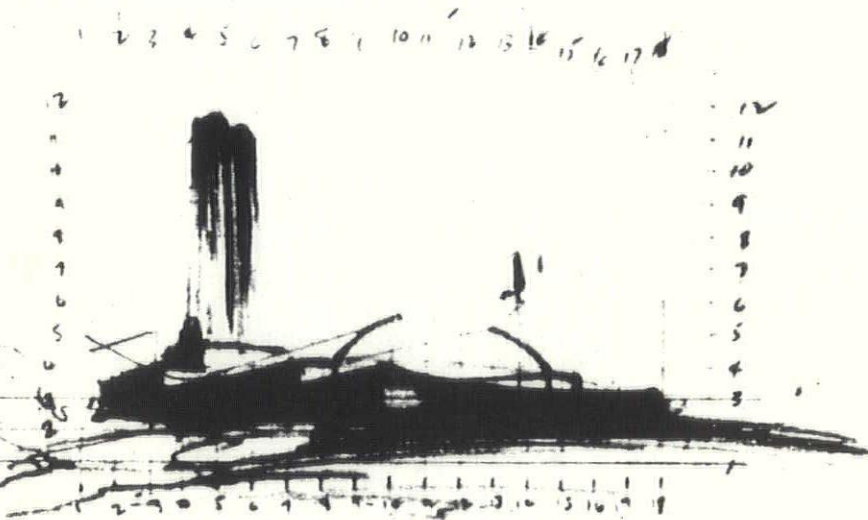
A prime concern, and perhaps the success of the program, will be in the staging of planning and construction of the various components of the plan and the establishment of immediate and tangible goals. Attention will be given to the findings of the new regional plan of the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission, National Capital Transportation Agency, Urban Renewal Administration, and the Silver Spring Progress Group. Various schemes will be considered to arrive at the best solution for the implementation of the overall plan. The work of the Planning Group has been very encouraging and the sense of accomplishment has been rewarding.

SKETCHES BY ERIC MENDELSON

Monument to six million Jews killed by the Nazis, 1949.

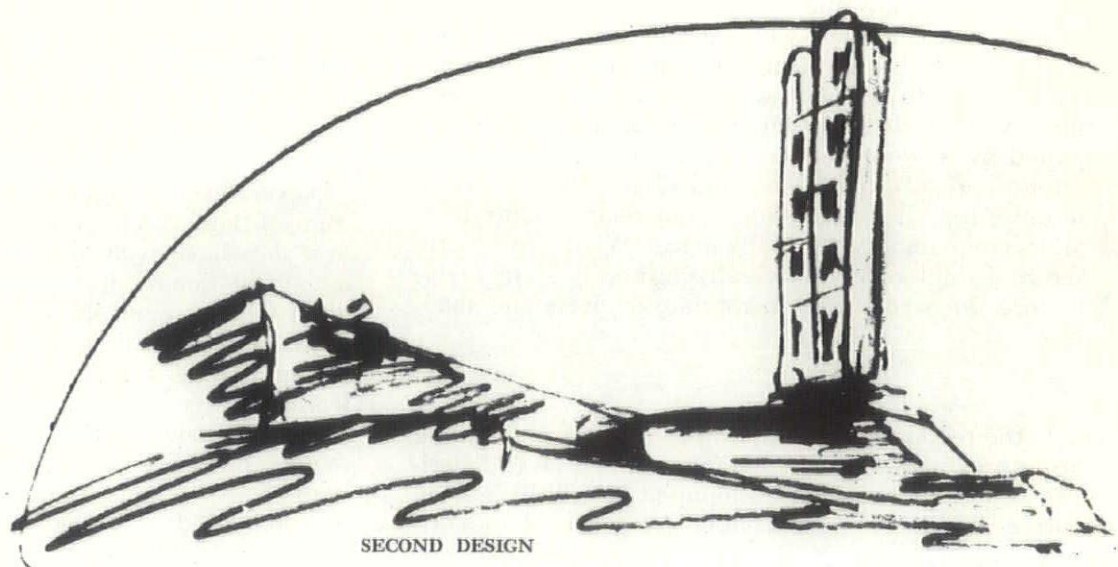
More from the Mendelsohn Exhibit at the Octagon, circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

Perhaps in no other significant modern architecture is the sketch more truly the essence of the building. Mendelsohn once said: "Look at my sketch, there is everything in it."



*"Draw as you write,
Write as you talk
Talk as you think"*

FIRST DESIGN



SECOND DESIGN

This article, and the article following by Herbert J. Gans, are reprinted with the kind permission of LANDSCAPE magazine, where they originally appeared.

THE MANY GUISES OF SUBURBIA

Anyone who has been around will have no trouble immediately recognizing this kind of community:

It consists of a hundred or more small dwellings, almost identical as to size, construction and plan, all apparently built at much the same time. The community, located by itself in the midst of farmland, appears to have been designed all of a piece: in the layout of the streets and roads, in the siting of the houses, in the central location of the public square there are traces of an overall plan — usually a modified grid. Every family in this community has pretty much the same income, the same schooling, the same religious background, the same way of life. Early in the morning the men go off to work and leave the place to the women and children; they come back tired late in the day. There are few if any jobs in the community itself, and very little commercial life; a trip from the house to get food is one of the chief diversions of the women. Religious activities and women's organizations flourish, and so do men's organizations during their free time. Considerable thought is given to correct and colorful holiday attire, both by men and women. There is no cultural life in the urban meaning of the term, but on the whole the inhabitants seem to enjoy their routine existence. They do not openly object to the pressures of convention and are suspicious of eccentricity — particularly when it takes an ostentatious form. Family life is made much of, and children are early taught to respect the unwritten laws of the community. Outsiders visiting the place are usually appalled by it; they wonder how anyone withstands the atmosphere of conformity, and object that the community, for all its isolation, is not really country; for all its compactness, not really urban. What they chiefly see and deplore is an overall uniformity — in architecture, in occupation, in routine, in dress and manners.

If the reader has identified this community as being an approximation of the average middle class American suburb or housing development he will have been correct; but he will also have been correct if he identi-

fied it as a Southwestern Indian Pueblo or a Chinese farm village or an Italian village like Silone's Fontamara or a farm community in Eastern Europe or Asia or Latin America. Such communities all differ as to economy, land tenure, geographical situation, size and age and degree of technical proficiency, but the way of life is in many important respects the same in all of them. Whatever the means of livelihood of their wage-earners — office or factory work, work on a neighboring estate or on a small plot of ground — these places appear to exist because their inhabitants want neither the isolation of the open countryside nor the anonymity of the city; what they seem to prefer is a small scale society where happiness comes (or is supposed to come) from conformity to a generally accepted set of traditions and not from the pursuit of individual freedom. Nations older than we take this point of view more or less for granted and even assume that it contributes to the common good. Certainly few of them have examined the tradition-minded community as closely and as critically as we have examined our new suburbs. The absence of men from most European farm villages during the daylight hours, for instance, does not seem to have produced anything like the abundance of psycho-sociological analysis that the same situation has inspired in America.

Nevertheless it might be well if we ourselves studied some of those communities in order to find out a little how they have evolved, physically as well as socially, and what quality it is that they possess which enables them to multiply and endure. For it looks as if suburbia and a suburban way of life would be with us for a long time to come; and if we somehow learned to see them as belated American versions of an ancient and relatively effective world-wide community form instead of as land-speculation induced nightmares we might adjust to them a little more gracefully and intelligently than we are doing now.

SUBURBS AND PLANNERS

BY HERBERT J. GANS

Sociologists have long been concerned with the effects of media content on the audience, but urban sociologists have paid little attention to a parallel topic, the effects of the community on its residents. They have usually assumed that the community — whether defined ecologically, sociologically, or politically — can have a direct effect on the lives of its residents. In recent years, journalists — and some sociologists — have argued that the move from city to suburb has direct effects on the family stability, sociability patterns, religious participation, voting behavior and mental health — not to mention conformity and status-seeking — of previous city residents. The city planner proceeds on the basis of a similar assumption: that the re-arrangement of the physical environment not only increases the efficiency, orderliness, and esthetic appeal of the community, but that these in turn will enable — and perhaps encourage — the citizenry to practice a middle class version of the good life.

A theory which separates actual effects from spurious ones, and thus indicates the real determinants of community behavior would be useful not only to our sociologist and the city planner, but to a variety of professionals concerned with the betterment of community life. Probably the best way of approaching community effects is to study people who move from one community to another, and to observe the changes in behavior and attitude that take place through a series of before-and-after-the-move interviews.

Behavior changes can be classified into two types, intended and unintended. *Intended* changes are those which were stated or implied by residents as predispositions held before the move. They are thus achieved predispositions. Often, they are the reasons for making the move. *Unintended* changes have come about independently of prior predispositions, and may have resulted from the change of the community. Before such changes can be attributed to various physical and social features of the new community, however, the sociologist must eliminate other possible causal factors. This can be done by showing how the community impinged on the residents to bring about the changes so attributed, and what features of the community were involved.

For example, people who have newly arrived in the suburbs usually report improvement in family morale. This change is due primarily to the fact that suburban residences are larger than urban ones, so that individ-

ual family members no longer get in one another's way. This is an intended change, and one of the major reasons for the move to the suburbs. Conversely, increased interest in local political affairs is for most people an unintended change. It comes primarily as a reaction to rising taxes, which in turn is due to the fact that suburbs attract predominantly families with school age children.

This, briefly is the effects model with which I have been working. At present there are few studies against which to test it, and most of these involve only the move from city to suburb. A review of these studies, and of my own as yet uncompleted research in a new suburb near Philadelphia suggest the following generalizations.

The amount of behavior change following the move to the suburb is relatively small, and most of the behavior patterns involved are of minor importance. Berger's study of California autoworkers and my study of a white-collar population which moved to the suburbs show that people do not adopt the behavior patterns which have been postulated as an effect of suburban living, or urge their children to do so.

Most of the behavior change which does take place is intended. The satisfactions of home ownership and the increase in family morale resulting from more living space step form the two major reasons for suburban migration. Mothers who are free from constant supervision of, and worry about, their children's activities indicated that this was an important pre-suburban wish. Respondents who reported an increase in sociable activities indicated that they had hoped to find this in the suburbs, having been lonely in city neighborhoods occupied by residents of a different age and class.

Unintended changes take place, but their effects vary not only with the community but with the characteristics of the people involved. For example, in large suburban communities like Park Forest or Levittown, residents are exposed to neighbors with a wide variety of religious, ethnic, and regional backgrounds. For most people this is a refreshing, although unintended, change, since it adds enrichment and variety to everyday life. For people who have been used to living within a single ethnic or religious enclave, however, the new heterogeneity may prove disturbing.

Some other unintended changes which had different effects on different people were: Improvements in health and disposition; separation from close relatives; financial problems, resulting from the fact that the cost of suburban living is always higher than initially estimated; becoming direct taxpayers, and therefore developing a more direct interest in the activities of those who set tax rates; greater use of the car for shopping; somewhat longer commuting time; less spare time, mainly because of the amount of attention devoted to the house and garden.

Incidentally, another effect of suburban life: being farther away from the city's cultural facilities, both-ered almost no one. For the suburbanites I studied the city spelled only dirt, crime and congestion, and since they had not used the city's cultural facilities before they moved, they did not miss them now.

Most of the changes, whether intended or unintended, can be attributed not to the community but to the house type. The major behavior changes are a result of the move from apartment to house, and are reported by previous apartment dwellers whether they lived in the city or the suburbs. Surprisingly few behavior changes can be attributed to the overall community social structure, or to the suburban qualities of the physical and social environment.

The fact that the community itself does not stimulate significant behavior change would seem to conflict with sociological research which shows the effect of group structure and group norms on individual members of the group. However, the community is a group only in the most liberal sense of that term. Most people have little interest in the community affairs, except in times of crisis, and most of the community's laws, institutions, and public actions have little effect on the basic routines or the significant goals of its population. Participation in community affairs is voluntary, and unlike the primary group, the clique, the cohesive ethnic enclave, or the classroom, the community demands little attention or loyalty — that is, community spirit — from its members. The overall community climate of opinion may require minor readjustments in highly visible behavior patterns, but, otherwise those who deviate are usually allowed to pursue their own way of life as long as it does not conflict with the majority's.

These generalizations are based on preliminary findings, but, if they can be verified by systematic research, they raise some important questions both for sociological theory and planning policies.

If the move from one community to another does not result in numerous or significant behavior changes, the effects of the community stipulated in ecological and planning theory must also be questioned. Thus, the planner's ability to affect behavior through physi-

cal re-arrangement of community features is likely to be minimal. Moreover, if most behavior change is intended, the realization of a community plan is affected strongly by the predispositions of its intended occupants. Plans must either accord with these predispositions or the plan must attempt to change them. The planner assumes that new plans will stimulate new predispositions, but there is no evidence to suggest that this always happens. Equally often, such plans are rejected because they frustrate existing predispositions.

The planner has traditionally paid little attention to the relationship between plans and predispositions. Planning began as a reform movement, not a client-centered service, and when predispositions conflicted with the requirements of planning ideology they were rejected. Consequently, plans that catered to client predispositions have usually been pre-empted by the private housing market, although even the builders have not been sufficiently concerned with the customer's detailed wishes, except in periods of a buyer's market. When planners have come up with better ways of achieving predispositions than builders, their recommendations have usually been accepted. The curving streets that are now commonplace in suburbia were first advocated by planners. They found ready acceptance because they slowed down auto traffic, and thus made it somewhat safer for children to play on the street; they also had status functions, by distinguishing the suburb from the city. They were accepted by the builder because he could get more lots out of the same acreage than with the grid plan. Generally, however, the planner has advocated policies that fit the predisposition of the upper middle class, but did not fit those of the rest of the population. For example, his advocacy of high density urban housing has so far found favor only with the cosmopolitan upper middle class. His proposal for increasing suburban density to cut down urban sprawl is rejected by people who feel that row-housing lacks privacy, and that it is less desirable for other reasons than the single family house. The planner's advocacy of more open space has also received little support, partially because the kind of open space he favors is not very important to the people who are supposed to use it.

The planner can find better ways of achieving people's existing predispositions, and he may be able to change them. However, he can do so only if he attempts to understand and respect the existing predispositions, and tries to find solutions that will take them into account. Where a change of predisposition is in order, the planner must be able to prove that the change will be beneficial to the people for whom it is intended. This can probably be done only through carefully planned innovations, which must first be treated as experiments and studied systematically for advantages and disadvantages before they can be advocated as more general policies.

Utility is beauty, and has been so for all ages. The angry critic who accepts the barracks architecture at home is crossing to Europe by the planeload to see the outpourings of other cultures and other ages. It is quite clear to me that the Parthenon could never have been built under the watchful eye of GAO. Notre Dame at Paris would not have been attempted with GAO approval. We need not fear for our country when we are putting up great buildings of imaginative design. We need fear for ourselves when we stop doing it.

Congressman Clem Miller

The American Institute of Architects recently sponsored a public discussion of the question: "Who is responsible for ugliness?" This is like the Jets and Sharks sponsoring a conference on "Who is responsible for juvenile delinquency?"

Ralph Caplan in INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

... the greatest preservatives of architecture in the past have been either poverty or plutocracy. Plutocracy gave us Rome, Newport, Tuxedo Park, Versailles. Poverty gave us Nantucket, Natchez, Annapolis and those lovely slumbering southern towns I visited as a youngster — Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia.

Grady Clay in the AIA JOURNAL

The beautiful cities of the earth, from Venice to Cambridge, from Charleston to Prague to Kyoto, mostly reflect the supremacy of a cultivated minority enabled by the politics of their environment to impose their values on the majority.

James Morris in ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

No one ever moves happily into a house with an ordinary opaque roof who has been privileged to live under ceiling transparencies, for he has known the pleasure of looking up to see the rain come plopping on the pane until a slather of water obscures the separate drops, and he has seen the snow deposit as single crystals and build up into translucent drifts. Rob such a man of his view and the chances are that he will feel grubby and claustrophobic.

Elizabeth B. Kassler in ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

Reason is the basis of all human work. I throw out everything that is not reasonable, even things very dear to my heart. I don't want to be interesting, I want to be good.

Mies van der Rohe

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