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## POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

December, 1963 • Volume 8, Number 2

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION • POTOMAC VALLEY  
CHAPTER OF MARYLAND AMERICAN INSTITUTE  
OF ARCHITECTS

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The articles in this magazine represent the personal opinions of the authors and/or the editor and should not be construed as representing the viewpoint of the Potomac Valley Chapter of the A.I.A.

### THIS MONTH'S COVER

An unfamiliar view of some familiar Alvar Aalto furniture. From the current Octagon Exhibition. Photograph from Mr. Aalto's own files.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chapter member Stanley Arthur has been appointed to the Judiciary Committee of the AIA Middle Atlantic Region.

Norman Genaro has been named an associate in the firm of Thomen & Cromar, AIA.

## EVENTS and EXHIBITIONS

### AIA OCTAGON

through December 29  
Exhibition of the work of Alvar Aalto

### NATIONAL HOUSING CENTER

through December 22

Tapiola, Finland

through January 12

"The Tiny Town"

### SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

through January 2

26th Anniversary of the Metropolitan Art

Exhibitions sponsored by the American Art League

through January 6

Woodcuts by Hans Jelinek

January 11 through 30

Volkmar Wentzel Photographs

through January 31

Masterpieces of Javanese Art

January 11 through February 2

Mead Painting of the Year

through February 4

Photographs by Elliott Erwitt

### PHILLIPS COLLECTION

through December 30

Recent Gouaches by Vieira da Silva

### PAN-AMERICAN UNION

through January 8

Oscar Capristo — Oils

through January 8

Leo Vinci — Sculptures and Drawings

January 8 through 31

Contemporary Art of Costa Rica

### WASHINGTON GALLERY OF MODERN ART

through January 26

Ellsworth Kelly

February 2 through March 17

Van Gogh — 60 paintings, 60 drawings

### CORCORAN GALLERY

through December 29

Progress of an American Collection

December 13 through 16

Area Exhibition

December 17 through January 11

Gene Davis

January 21 through February 15

Richard Lafean

### LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

through January 2

Photographer and the City

### TEXTILE MUSEUM

through January 15

Spanish Rugs & Textiles; Castles in Spain

### CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS INSTITUTE

December 19, 6:00 P.M., Corinthian Yacht Club

Specifications Panel — Reservations, please

### NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

December 15, 4:00 P.M. —Lecture

"Architecture in Washington After the Civil War"

Speaker: Richard H. Howland

December 17 through March 1

Paintings from the Museum of Modern Art, New York



# ALVAR AALTO: A NEW EXHIBIT

*opened at the Octagon on December 10. Text and photographs are by G. E. Kidder Smith, the show, commissioned and assembled by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition service, will be available throughout the country following its debut here.*



Roofscape; Cultural Center; Wolfsburg, Germany; 1962



One of the interesting features of the exhibit is the detailed coverage of recent projects. The well known Enso Gutzeit Headquarters (*below*) is critically evaluated, as is this year's Bremen apartment house (*right*). Two projects in Wolfsburg, Germany, including the impressive Cultural Center are being published for the first time in the United States.











Outgoing president Cromar admires his half gavel for his extra half years service. Incoming president Madden, Regional Director Nes and Mrs. Nes look on.

## NEW OFFICERS

The officers for the coming year of 1964 were elected at our November meeting. The new officers were installed by Middle Atlantic Regional Director Charles M. Nes, Jr., F.A.I.A. on December 4, 1963 at our dinner meeting.

Elected to office were:

Dennis W. Madden, President  
John E. Moore, Vice President  
John W. Lawrence, Secretary  
Philip Mason, Treasurer  
Eugene A. Delmar, Director for 2 years.  
Harold Esten has one year re-

maining of his term as Director and Past President Theodore Cromar will serve one year as Director to complete your Executive Committee for next year.

As most of us well remember there has been no custom in the Chapter of automatically "climbing the ladder" of offices, with routine uncontested elections. This year was no exception with a contest for every office except president.

In my opinion, this depicts a healthy Chapter attitude, for as long as we have a surplus of good men with a keen desire to serve,

our Chapter will continue to prosper and grow.

We know that 1964 will be a banner year for the Potomac Valley Chapter with the reins in the capable hands of Denny Madden. Denny has served the Chapter well in every office and his keen legal mind has benefited the Chapter on many occasions.

T.R.C.

## RHEES E. BURKET

The Potomac Valley Chapter extends its sympathy to the family of Rhees Burket, who died Sunday, October 20, 1963 at his home in Sherwood Forest, Annapolis, Md.

Rhees was a Corporate member of the Washington-Metropolitan Chapter but to maintain close ties with his friends here in Maryland, he became an Unassigned Member of our Chapter. A native of Silver Spring, he attended Central High School in Washington and graduated from the University of Michigan.

For almost three decades of practice in our area he was a leader in the design of schools and was dedicated to the progressive ideas of better design. Two of his most recent projects, the Parkland and Randolph Junior High Schools, are outstanding examples of compact air conditioned schools representing his progressive thinking and design talent.

Rhees was dedicated to the affairs of his community, serving as chairman of many committees and as President of the Montgomery County Civic Federation for two terms. In 1947 he was awarded the Evening Star Cup for outstanding civic service to Montgomery County. He was an active member of the Silver Spring Rotary Club.

At the time of his death, he was a partner in the firm of Burket, Tilghman and Associates, maintaining offices in Silver Spring. His death leaves a void in the Profession, but he leaves behind a legacy in the many outstanding structures created during his practice.



Messrs. Lawrence, Esten, Moore, Madden, and Mason at the Installation banquet.



# POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER OF MARYLAND THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS



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.is this the best we can do?





Urban design has not been recognized as an integral part of the total planning concept in the suburban counties. The inevitable and continuing urbanization of Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties proceeds without coherent direction and definitive goals. Visual aspects, civic amenity and transportation are seriously neglected. The result is chaotic and ugly juxtaposition of buildings, advertising signs, and utility services; functionary failures in traffic movement; inadequate parking; and the almost total disregard of the pedestrian.

This process has resulted in the progressive decay of suburban business districts. As new retail centers develop, offering greater convenience, amenity and a more concentrated selection of shops, this process is accelerating.

To help arrest this decay, and to incorporate significant architectural and planning values into the forces of growth, the Potomac Valley Chapter of the AIA has undertaken a pilot project demonstrating how urban design can be included as an integral part of planning in our counties. The result is a sketch study of Silver Spring, showing what is wrong. And showing what can be done, with the help and support of the business community, the county and community governments, and a truly concerned citizenry.

In this presentation we hope not just to familiarize the community with our plan; but to stir up indignation and outrage, to end apathy, neglect, and cynicism, and to promote enthusiasm, hope, and conviction among all responsible parts of the community. **NOTHING WILL HAPPEN UNLESS YOU CARE.**

Silver Spring is in a state of growth and changing land-use patterns. A forward look at this growth and its consequences and a creative grasping of the opportunities implicit in this growth can result in an environment of quality. If these opportunities are ignored, the result will be continued chaos, ugliness, and inconvenience. Change is not evil, it is inherent in any healthy community. Change is the opportunity for progress!

What the community has been offered so far by County planners is zoning, which is a very blunt and sometimes negative tool for producing a quality environment. Zoning is a sledge hammer; what is needed is a much lighter touch. For in addition to the public safety and convenience, the main aims of zoning, a pleasing environment depends on many "simple things."

"Such simple things," said James M. Hunter, an architect in another part of the country facing the same problems, "as curbing the degradation of our highways by signs, billboards, and neon gimmicks . . . Such simple things as insisting that public utility lines be buried and put out of sight in our cities . . . Such simple things as insisting that our public buildings be designed by the best architects . . . so that our environment can be an investment in the culture of the next generation. Such simple things as insisting on spaces and bits of greenery and even a tree in the midst of our asphalt jungles. Such simple things as protecting the common heritage of our countryside."

In these pages we have summarized the problems affecting downtown Silver Spring.

We have proposed some goals, which if agreed on by all concerned, could serve as a basis for planning.

Included is a sketch plan of what the future Silver Spring *could* look like. It is neither a plan for detailed physical development, nor a final solution to all our ills. It is a response to the problems and goals we thought most urgent and important. We hope it will stimulate constructive discussion and criticism, and be a goad to action.

Silver Spring Planning Committee, Potomac Valley Chapter, AIA

J. Cohen, Chairman; E. Noakes, J. d'Epagnier, F. Montgomery, J. Moore, D. Shaw, T. Cromar, D. Holtz, E. Ball, N. Greene, L. Flouton, H. Esten, E. Delmar, L. Haft, D. Madden, J. Dennison, B. Elliott, J. Lawrence, R. Senseman, R. Lee, J. Gruss, R. Riley.



# A REVITALIZED SILVER SPRING

## THE PROBLEM

Too much land has been devoted to the automobile and too little to the pedestrian. Auto traffic makes movement between stores on opposite sides of shopping streets difficult and dangerous.



Large, open, unscreened parking lots are everywhere. Ugly in themselves, these lots "dilute" the shopping areas, spreading stores out and making walking distances greater. Business districts want to be compact for convenience, and the automobile is the wedge driving them apart.



Pedestrian travel is relegated to inadequate and unattractive concrete sidewalks and back alleys. Examples of attention to paving material and landscaping are rare, timid, and uncoordinated.

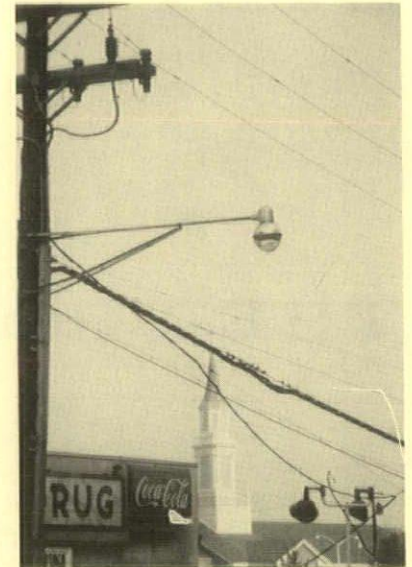






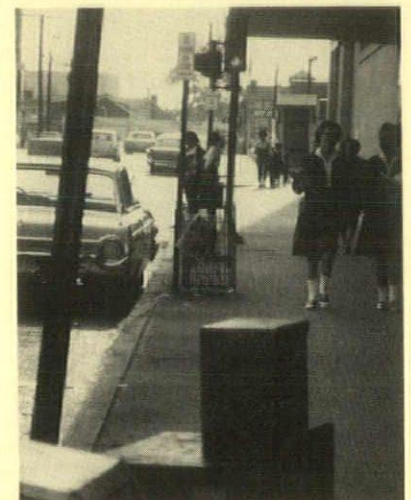
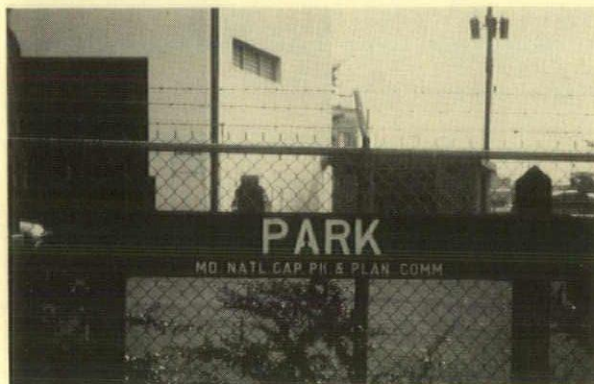
Vast, meaningless open spaces add to the sense of desolation.

Obsolete and neglected buildings create a shabby atmosphere.



Telephone poles, overhead wires, signs, and unconsidered, badly designed street furniture add to the chaos. Benches are almost non-existent.

Conflicting land use is common. Two excellent parks are bounded primarily by industrial and commercial use, yet they reflect no truly urban spirit.

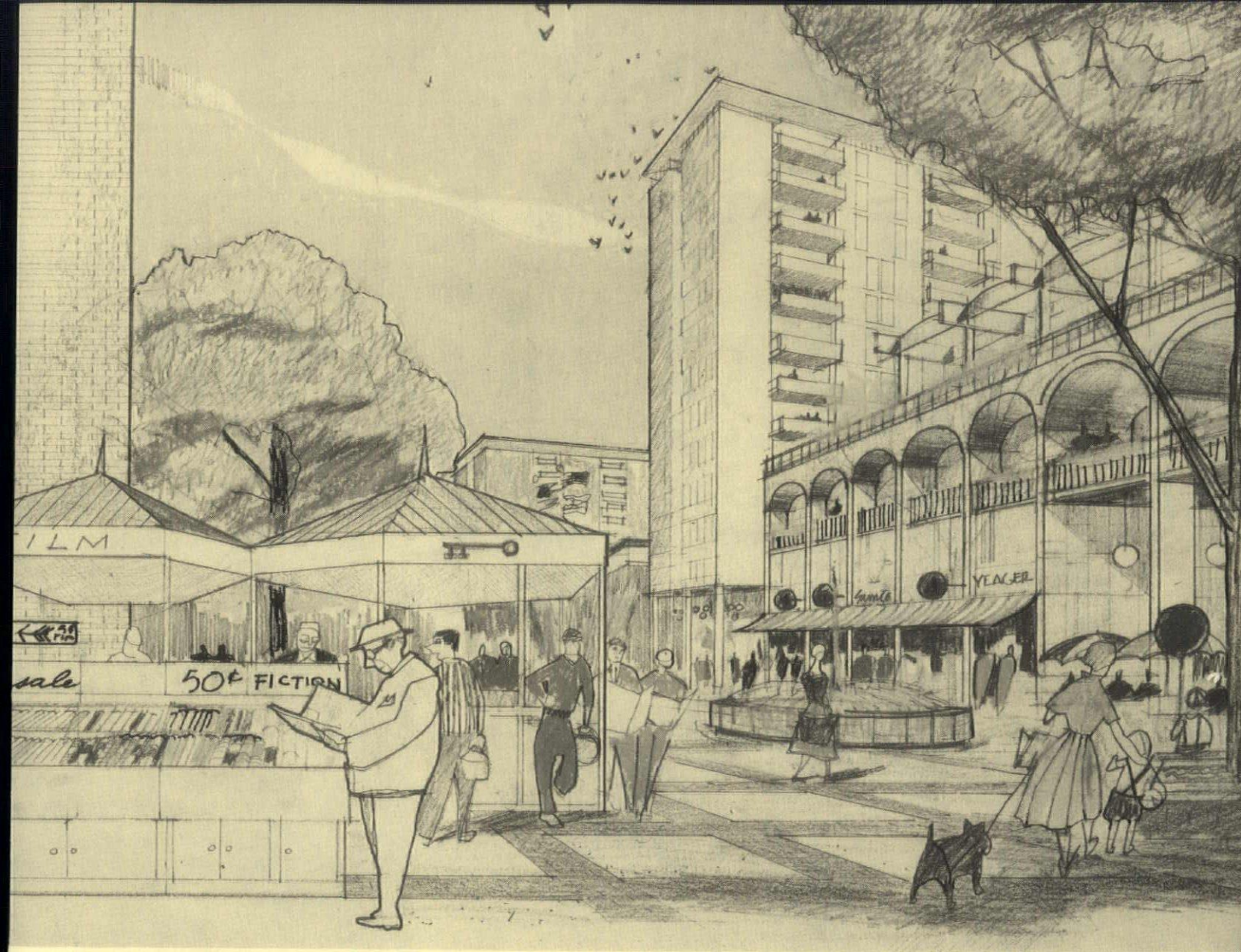


The result of all this neglect and don't-care attitude is an atmosphere completely lacking in intensity, excitement, interest, convenience, or visual delight. There is a complete absence of identity—nothing distinctive which makes this place different from any other Roadtown, U.S.A. There is no evidence of exuberance or showmanship—displays are handled in the most mundane manner. Expediency and indifference is the prevailing spirit.

In short, the Silver Spring Business District is not a place to live, work, and do business in with any pride or pleasure.







Sketches by J. Handwerger; Photographs by J. Cohen and J. Handwerger; Map by N. Greene, Jr.

## GOAL: Social and Economic Vitality

A new zoning category should be introduced which allows the mixing of apartments and shops. Apartments can exist over and next to shops. This mix has been successful both in this country and abroad.

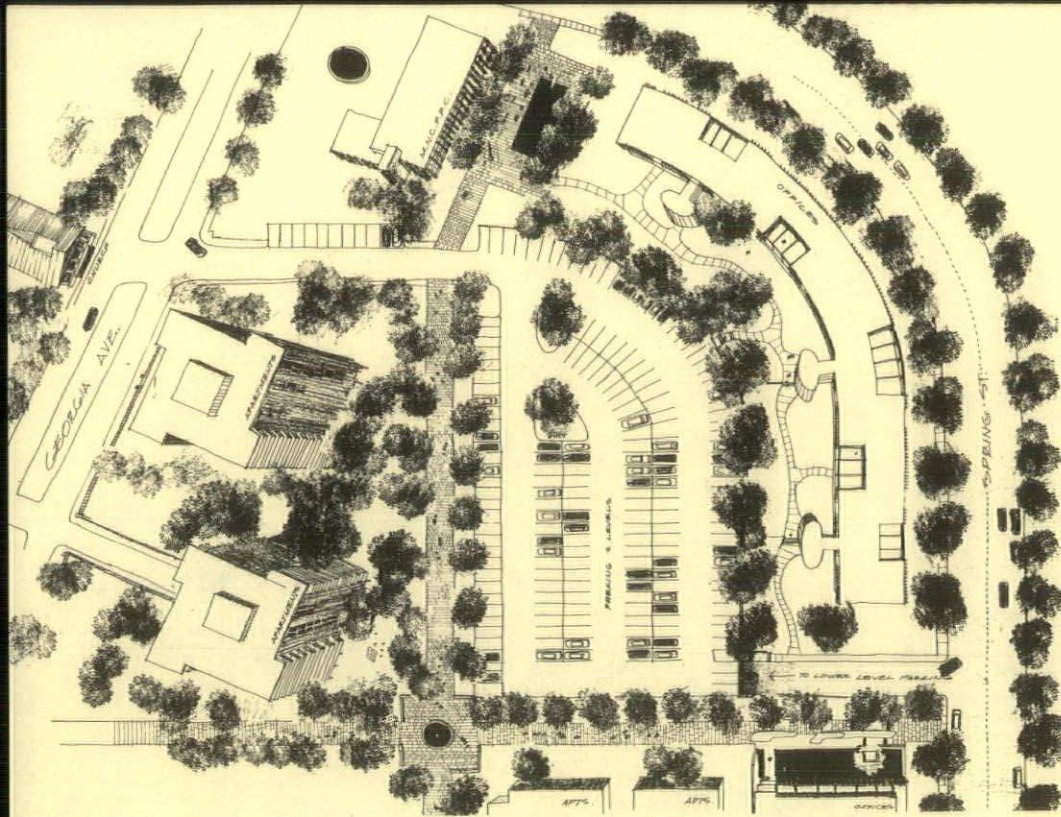
This touch of urbanity is badly needed in downtown Silver Spring. Nighttime use of the downtown area would create around the clock vitality instead of the deserted look it now has when the shops close. Efficient double use of parking facilities would result, in addition to an increase to the county tax rolls. The increased value of downtown property would make many of the things suggested above financially feasible. The simple factor of more people in the shops would encourage merchants to upgrade their facilities, and the sheer increase in number of people on the streets would give the area the intensity and excitement it now lacks.

The demand for high rise apartments in Montgomery County is undeniable. Permitting these apartments in the business district, where shopping and public transportation are convenient, should have the further advantage of taking pressure off the county for rezoning more and more single-family residential land and wooded open space to high-rise residential use and supporting commercial use.

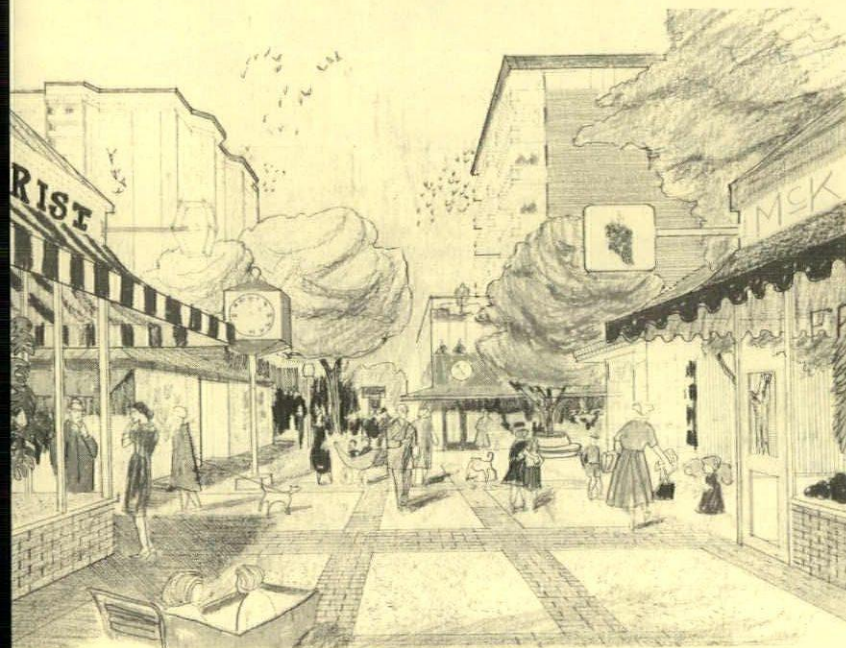
Improved transportation facilities are vital. Silver Spring must be not only an attractive place to work, live and visit, but convenient as well.

To serve the growing research and industrial facilities in the area, we must cater more efficiently to the growing number of business visitors. This means improved hotel, restaurant and convention facilities—in the heart of downtown.

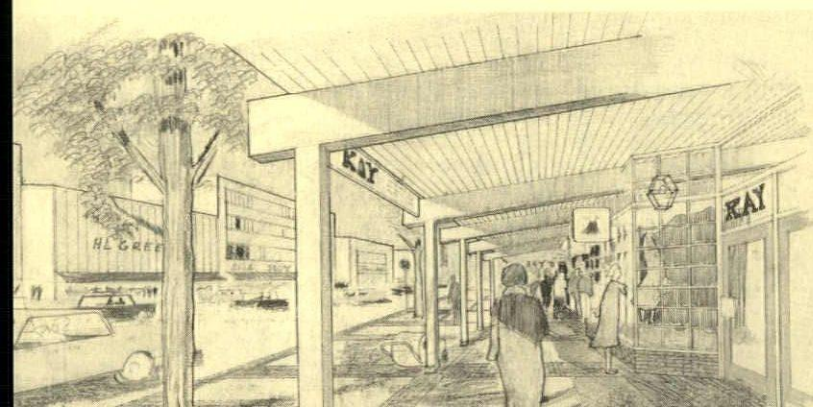




A new approach to an old problem—parking. Sale of the land fronting Spring Street for private low office development would net enough money to build a two deck parking structure in the interior of the resulting super block. The result—the replacement of a stockade fence with a truly urbane street facade, and truly efficient parking. As a bonus—an increase in the tax revenue from the new office space.



Sketches above and below show what closing of streets, mixture of uses, and careful attention to the amenities of street design might accomplish in the present business area.



Stockholm



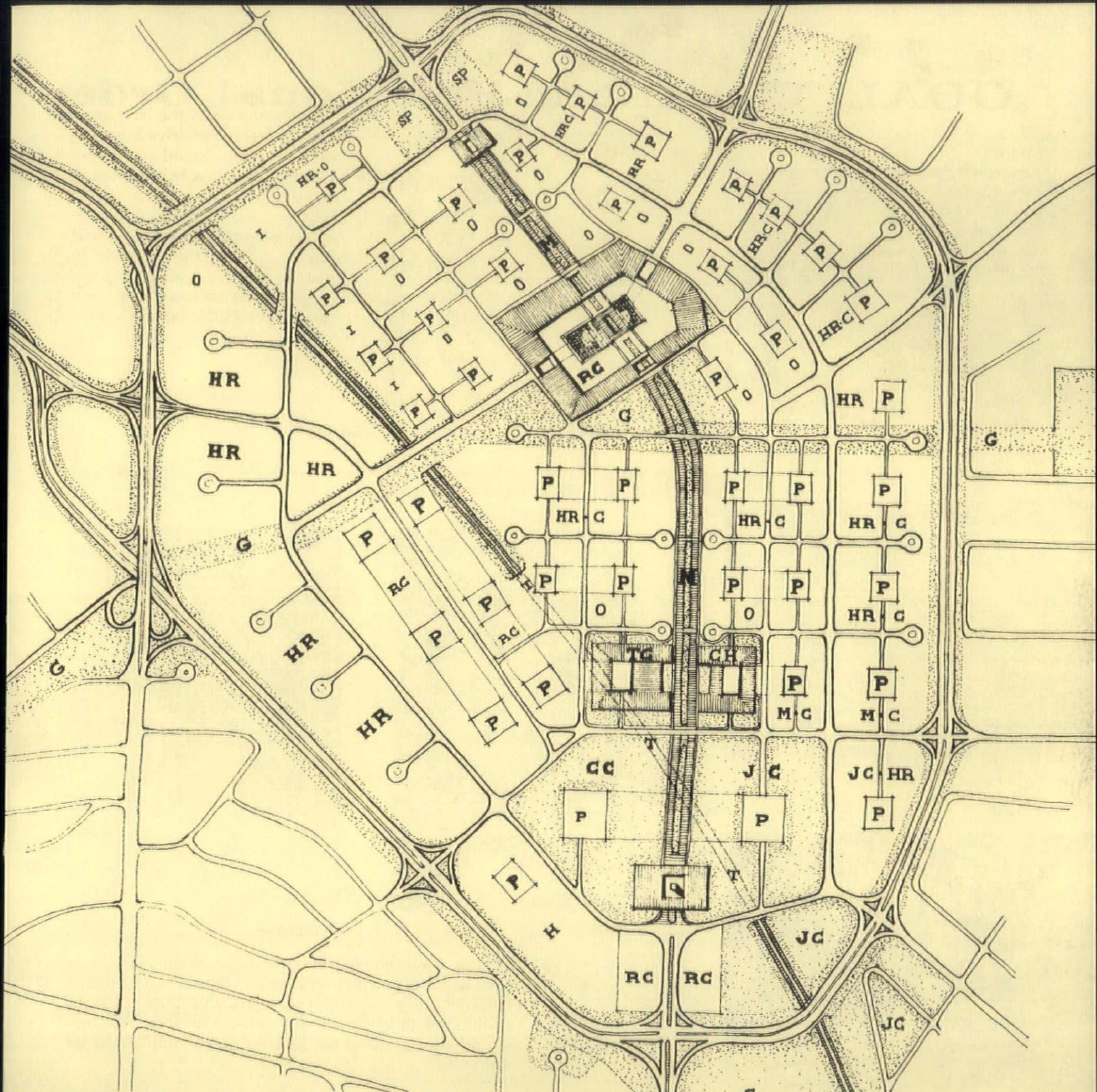
Paris



Knoxville







## GOAL: a Coherent Plan

### LAND USE

- H.R. — High Rise Apartments
- H.R.C. — High Rise with commercial below
- H.L. — Hotel
- R.C. — Retail Commercial Shopping Centers
- O. — Office Buildings
- IN. — Industrial
- S.P. — Special Purpose
- P. — Parking Garages
- G. — Green Area, Parks, Bicycle Paths

### ROADS

- I — 40 MPH perimeter limited access thru road (staggered lights, merging traffic)
- II — Secondary route, access road for inter-city circulation
- III — Local access road for parking service and pickup
- IV — Service alleys between parking buildings

### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- M — Minibus on shopping mall.
- T — Commuter and downtown rail line
- B — Shuttle bus on secondary road
- H — Helicopter service to airports

### FACILITIES

- T.C. — Transportation Center
- C.H. — Convention Hall
- C.C. — Cultural Center
- J.C. — Junior College (combined with above)
- M.C. — City Municipal Center



# GOAL: Visual and Functional Order

Switzerland



Pedestrians are to be given a fair break. More space should be devoted to convenient pedestrian movement. Some streets, where possible, should be closed to vehicular traffic, resurfaced and landscaped, and turned over to pedestrian use.

Well designed street furniture—benches, lamps, trash receptacles, signs, telephone booths, planters, etc.—should replace the present shoddy devices now cluttering the streets and sidewalks.

Special paving — brick, tile, mosaic, etc.—should be introduced in pedestrian areas to provide relief from the concrete and asphalt.

Paris



Overhead utility services are to be eliminated and prohibited by ordinance.

Mexico City



St. Paul Devance, France



Bologna

Signs are to be controlled, but not eliminated. Signs have a useful purpose and properly used add vitality to the urban scene, but some rules and limits must be established to eliminate the present chaotic free-for-all. Advertising need not be confined to bill boards or windows.

Business men and property owners should be encouraged to upgrade the appearance and quality of their structures and display techniques.

Design attention must be given to parking lots. Parking structures should be used where possible to reduce the amount of land used for open parking. Open lots should be screened from view as much as possible.

Gaping holes in the city fabric must either be filled, or planned for vital, healthy, use.

Sienna





# the Photographer and the City

The Library of Congress has on display a collection of photographic interpretations of the city, dating from 1843. Ranging from the textural studies of Kalischer and Campbell through the architectural photographs of Stieglitz to the social documentation of Riis and Shahn, the show will fascinate anyone with an affection for the city.



61st STREET • Walker Evans, New York City, 1938. Farm Security Administration.





TRUOGOLI di S. BRIGIDA • A Noack, Genoa, 189<sup>o</sup>



COPLEY SQUARE IN THE SNOW • Florence and Karl Maynard, Boston, 1917.



Florence & Karl  
Maynard

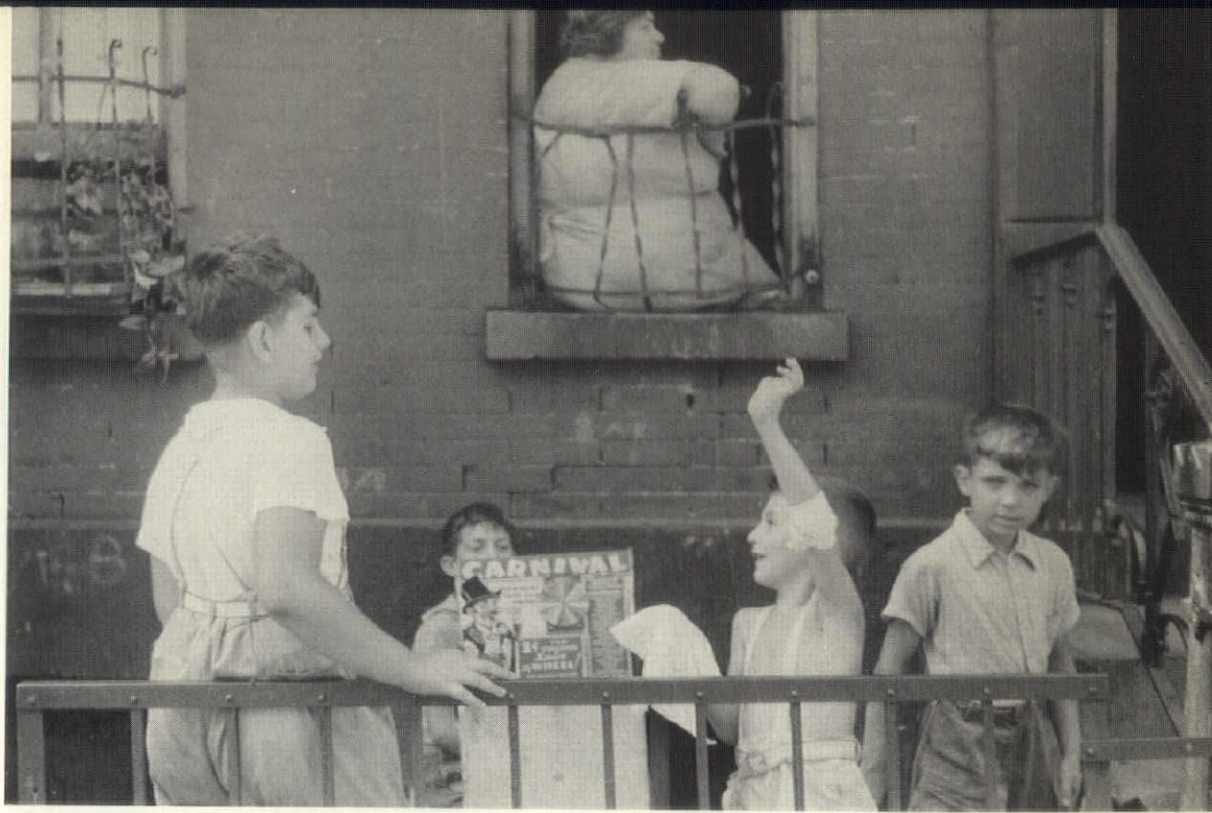




A VIEW OF BOSTON • William Black, 1860.

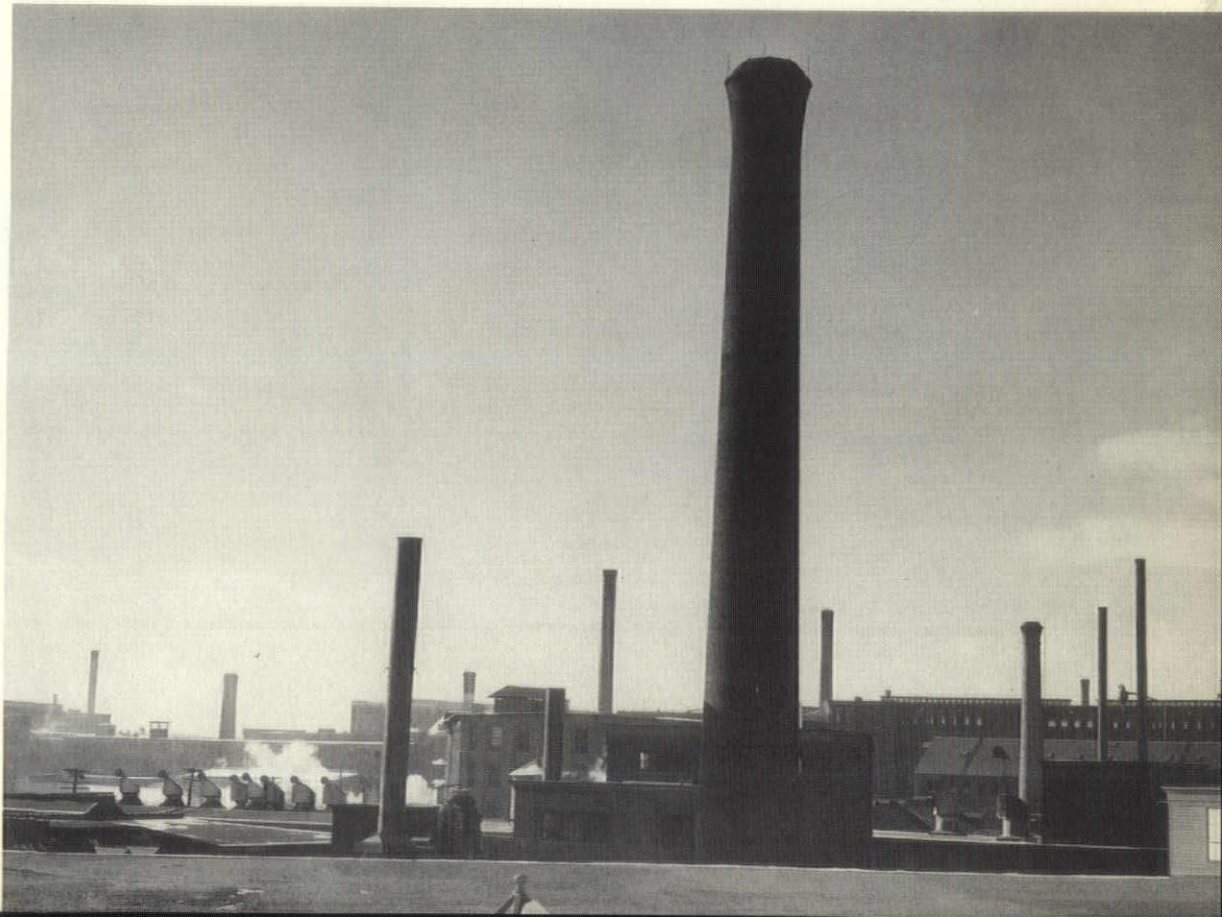
*This picture, taken from a balloon, is believed to be the first successful aerial photograph taken in America.*





61st STREET • Walker Evans, New York City, 1938. Farm Security Administration.

SMOKE STACKS • Jack Delano, 1941, Farm Security Administration.





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