Downtown Portland is currently a busy place on Saturday nights. People are hurrying to films, eating out, and listening to music. A good reason for the popularity comes from the Town Plan of the City, after ten years a reasonable set of tools with which to continue the development of downtown Portland.

In the middle 1960's, Portlanders saw commercial and downtown buildings assuming a new scale and proportion. The city's unusually small blocks traditionally accommodated quarter-block buildings until the 1948 Equitable Building, designed by Pietro Belluschi, FAIA, occupied a half-block. In 1960 the Portland office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (which purchased Belluschi's firm when he moved to M.I.T.) created the city's first full block building. Standard Pacific, when the South Auditorium Urban renewal project (Master Plan by SOM) was built from 1967 to 1968, Portland stopped building for unattractive, habitable city on the Willamette River. It was growing straight up, with even larger office towers proposed. The human scale and energy of retail commerce were starting to be displaced.

Simultaneously, the city sprawled into suburbs, and shopping malls lured consumers to the edge of their tolerance. A freeway system by-passed the urban core. Fueled by monumental parking facilities, the freeways left the city in automobiles at 5:00 p.m., downtown Portland was changing into a central business district. Civic and business leaders, city planners, and Portland's Development Commission were aware of the growing problem. But planning guidelines had not been previously formulated to deal with development issues.

...hard edges, hard surfaces, scale of structure, and concentration of humanity definitely foster a quicker pace than a forest trail.

Downtown merchants wanted their customers back and insisted on more parking. In fact, Moore & Frank Department Store applied to construct a large parking garage across from the landmark Pioneer Court Hotel, but the pleas from the merchants were credible. The city hired consultants to study the downtown's retail commerce were starting to be displaced.

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Dear Readers:

Each of this issue's articles takes up some aspect of design in an urban context. We think it is important for architects and designers to consider the implications of their work. In a city this includes an impact on pedestrians, treatment of a formal building type, congruence with public planning objectives. Of the following articles, the "downtown tour" has perhaps the greatest potential to enlighten. It is a tale of the way one downtown dweller perceives elements of the urban composition and incorporates them into his daily life. His selections are instructive as to how the designer's hypotheses and devices, transformed into construction, are translated into the experiences of an individual who lives amongst their effects.

No fooling. The Editors

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Mark Ashley

Mark Ashley is an editor of ARCADE.

ROSSI

Rossi's scalpel is reductivist typology by which a vast literature of architectural expressions is reduced to a handful of elemental symbols.

To the Editor:

Allow me to offer these thoughts, following a lecture by Aldo Rossi at the University of Washington on March 1.

Aldo Rossi provides a valuable service to those who search within architecture for evidence that the product of the designer's theories and devices, transformed into construction, are translated into the experiences of an individual who lives amongst their effects.

No fooling. The Editors

Rossi does not equivocate. He has bad news, and he is not about to prescribe a palliative for those with an eye for form and place. In his own words: "I have placed myself at the boundary between architecture and the, trying void. Some may recoil and hurry on their way; others may join him in giddy vertigo. Skeptics about..."

Rossi's surgical technique must be commended for; some legitimized by copious publication, its minimalist palette affords quasi heroic beauty. Best of all, its relentless alienation and malevolent murmur tend to discourage criticism. Like the tragicomic booser of the Blues, Rossi's followers can be heard to croon, "The doctor said it'll kill me, but he didn't say when."

URBAN BOUNTY

There are at this time no less than five independently-organized major events scheduled in the next two-and-a-half months with urban design and planning as their common focus.

There must be something funny in the Seattle Air. The sixties men are breathing recently — something emanating from all the new towers under construction. Everyone seems to be getting the same idea. There are at this time no less than five independently-organized major events scheduled in the next two-and-a-half months with urban design and planning as their common focus.

The intensity of the schedule indicates a peak of interest in the subject, although there has been a long, if not steady climb, in the range of subjects covered is immense: houses, urban design, workflow and new development in the Northwest region, the very different concepts and separate paradigms of typological purity, a Marxist analysis regardless of contradictions. Thus it does not matter that houses held up as paradigms of typological purity, a Marxist analysis regardless of contradictions. Thus Rossi does not equivocate. He has bad news, and he is not about to prescribe a palliative for those with an eye for form and place. In his own words: "I have placed myself at the boundary between architecture and the, trying void. Some may recoil and hurry on their way; others may join him in giddy vertigo. Skeptics about..."

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Finally, the Urban Land Institute will hold its Spring meeting in Seattle at the Sheraton and Westin Hotels from March 5 through 7. ULI is a non-profit land use and land preservation, and new development in the Northwest region, the very different concepts and separate paradigms of typological purity, a Marxist analysis regardless of contradictions. Thus it does not matter that houses held up as paradigms of typological purity, a Marxist analysis regardless of contradictions. Thus Rossi does not equivocate. He has bad news, and he is not about to prescribe a palliative for those with an eye for form and place. In his own words: "I have placed myself at the boundary between architecture and the, trying void. Some may recoil and hurry on their way; others may join him in giddy vertigo. Skeptics about..."

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THE DOWNTOWN PLAN

INTERPRETATION AND IMPLICATIONS

The working draft policies for the Downtown Plan will be released by the City of Seattle on May 1, 1983. The Metropolitan Governmental Affairs Committee of the Seattle Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, through this brief introduction, stresses the major zoning changes, encourages active participation in the process of finalizing the City's policy.

Metropolitan Governmental Affairs Committee, Seattle AIA

In May of 1982, LUTP published the Downtown Alternative Plan. During the intervening 11 months, the AIA Metropolitan Governmental Affairs Committee and the Urban Design Committee have continued a dialogue with LUTP staff reviewing proposed changes in policies and providing feedback. The following discussion of the proposed policies is based upon conversations with the LUTP staff.

To fully cover all proposed zoning changes would require more space than is pertinent in this article. This discussion is limited to outlining the major proposed changes that will affect nearly all future design work in downtown Seattle. These proposed changes include: (1) Density limits; (2) Changes to the FAR bonus system; (3) Height limits; (4) Street edge definitions and upper setbacks; (5) Housing requirements in downtown; (6) Transportation and parking changes.

1. Building Density Controls

The Plan proposes several districts based upon floor area ratios as a measure of density. Each district will have floor area allowances appropriate to the uses which are permitted. The floor area allowances will represent a balance among: (1) the capacity of an area for future development, (2) the objective of structuring a variety of downtown environments through the mixing of different uses, (3) the need to ensure a compatible relationship in scale and intensity of activity between different parts of downtown, and (4) availability of transit and transportation.

The number of FAR districts in the Downtown Plan will be reduced from the thirteen proposed in 1982 to ten or eleven districts similar to the existing zoning which defines ten districts. The FAR values have not been set; however at this time, in the office core the proposed base FAR is 10, as in the existing zoning. A maximum FAR of approximately 18 is proposed regardless of the amenities or transfers of development rights that may be involved.

2. Bonuses and Transfers of Development Rights

Bonuses and transfers of development rights (TDRs) are mechanisms for increasing the allowable floor area on a particular site. These mechanisms include public bonuses that will be developed or preserved in exchange for allowing an increase in density up to a predefined upper limit.

Most of the people who have discussed the Plan with this Committee have favored existing policies. Any changes that have been in effect since the mid-1960s for Seattle’s Central Business District (CBD). This need for revision is especially clear with the bonus-able amenities that have been the primary method of increasing the allowable floor area ratio (FAR). Above the base of FAR 10, FAR 12 allows the equivalent of a 10-story building to be built over a full building site in the existing CM and BM zones in the CBD. In exchange for providing amenities that were deemed public benefits under existing zoning, office buildings have generally been developed to densities between FAR 10 and FARs in the mid-20s. These benefits include open plazas, shopping arcades, and similar spaces that are accessible to the public. Some of these amenities work very well; others are less successful. The group of amenities available as bonuses under existing zoning is considered by many to be too limited. This limitation has encouraged the downtown evolution of public space or retail arcades, regardless of functional implications, in order to achieve a maximum FAR. Here lies an opportunity for a bonus system which will involve a wider variety of public amenities.

The May 1982 Downtown Plan almost completely eliminated bonuses for on-site amenities. It proposed that the inclusion of low and moderate income housing and social services would be the primary way to increase density. The May 1982 Plan also introduced the idea of transferring development rights anywhere downtown where the rights were transferred in order to preserve either an historic building or housing in the downtown. Under the May 1982 Plan, bonuses for open space would be allowed only in the vicinity of four street level pedestrian connections chosen by the City’s planning staff.

In some areas such as the office core, height limits proposed in the May 1982 document may be eliminated.

3. Height Limits

The existing zoning ordinance has no height limits in the downtown core (CM and BM zones). The May 1982 Downtown Alternative Plan proposed height limits for the entire downtown that would attempt to shape the overall profile of development to reflect the topography of the CBD. The Plan and the concentration of public聚集性 activity. The draft policies to be published in May 1983 include a more simplified set of height limit zones; and, in some areas such as the office core, height limits were altered in the May 1982 document to allow for the existing level of housing for rents.

4. Street Edge Definition and Upper Floor Setbacks

One of the 1982 Downtown Alternative Plan’s objectives was to integrate new development with existing patterns of continuous street fronts in order to facilitate street level retail activity. Another intention of the Plan was to assure light, air, and views for pedestrians in Seattle’s CBD. The Plan proposed an extensive set of requirements for creating street edges with specific alignment of construction at ground level and upper floor setbacks.

After considering the major impact of these setbacks on development potential and their minimal effect on preserving views, the LUTP staff has recently eliminated the requirement for upper level setbacks east of First or Second Avenue on east/west streets. In another recent change, preservation of light along major pedesdrian routes is to be based on light penetration to the street rather than on a specific uniform setback.

5. Housing

One objective of the Downtown Alternative Plan is to encourage creation of housing in Seattle’s urban environment. This concept implies relatively high population densities, a diverse population profile, and availability of residential services. The Plan proposes several districts to be specifically residential in character. The major physical environment of these areas according to the Plan will be lower height limits than neighboring commercial districts. In the opinion of this committee, the lower height limits proposed for these special character areas may discourage construction of residential units and may not provide adequate economic incentives to support the development amenities and the variety of amenities necessary to develop vibrant neighborhood environments.

It has been noted in numerous background reports that a substantial population and activity level is needed to form a sense of neighborhood. Population targets for the downtown, approximately 18, is proposed regardless of the number of people living downtown. It is expected that 75 percent of the new housing units will be built in the Denny Regrade.

As of this writing, the Plan will require the construction of below market-rate housing or a voluntary cash contribution toward such housing by office space developers in the downtown area. This is essentially a tax upon new office construction.

In this way the Plan relies heavily upon private development to achieve its housing objectives. In a slow market this linking of housing and commercial development would bring the provision of below-market-rate housing to a halt. While some attention has been devoted to preservation of low-income housing, the Plan seems to avoid the fact that low-income housing for Seattle’s citizens is a community responsibility and should not be placed upon the property owners.

There do appear to be strong incen­
motive mechanisms for creating low-income housing. Such housing is needed to increase the housing stock and attract the amenities needed to create these new residential "neighborhoods." Application of bonus opportunities, for example, general assistance for preservation, compete with housing objectives. In a slow market this linking of housing and commercial development would bring the provision of below-market-rate housing to a halt. While some attention has been devoted to preservation of low-income housing, the Plan seems to avoid the fact that low-income housing for Seattle’s citizens is a community responsibility and should not be placed upon the property owners.

6. Transportation

Transportation, as a partner in the land use planning process, has been given much consideration in the 1982 Downtown Alternative Plan. The transportation element and, in turn, the land use development potential are based upon a number of significant goals and assumptions regarding the design of transit systems (e.g., a transit mall on Third Avenue and Pine Street) and changes in people’s travel habits (increase in average vehicle occupancy from 1.25 to 1.5 persons per car, and spreading of the peak hours). The vehicular circulation element calls for maximizing use of the regional highway system and minimizing through-traffic on downtown arterials, especially in the Denny Regrade, Pioneer Square, and the International District. The Plan is working toward shifting commercial truck traffic and ferry traffic away from the CBD.

These objectives are reinforced by encour­aging higher density development along the freeway and locating peripheral long-term parking around the edges of the CBD. People using these peripheral lots continued on page eleven.
of measuring out one's life "with coffee spoons" it captivates the imagination by
leaping into existence on the shoulders of
great machines which perform incredible
feats of strength and grace. Skyscrapers
and bridges are wonders contrasting mark-
dedly from the construction of modern sub-
division housing where materials are the
common ones of any workbench or garden.
There is nothing heroic in a 2x4, but those
tiers supporting the West Seattle bridge!
My God, what champions! They excite
one as does anything that is larger than
life, and as anything superhuman, they
leave one incapable of rational evaluation;
one's critical faculty is overwhelmed by
the vicarious drama of construction.

SURFACES

The street's infinite variety can be bro-
ten into fractions which bear only remotely
on the larger whole. These surfaces are
examples of images which I react to as
explanations of Space, aside from their
being wall fragments or paving units.
The atmosphere of the Northwest provokes
this response. Other skies are essentially empty
tracts in which light moves undeterred in
its path. In such atmospheres, buildings or
trees seen against a northern sky exist in
high relief and bold color; the same objects
appear bleached and ill-defined against a
south sky. These "clear as a bell" skies
give a sharp and colorful aspect to an
environment. By contrast, the heavy and
tight atmosphere over Seattle plays with
light, throwing beams and rays into every
corner. These beams are split and fused
into a textural matrix, neither blue nor
yellow nor white but grey, a grey modu-
lated only by densities of tone or structural
patterns. The atmosphere supports a medi-
tative relationship with these hardened sur-
maces, marred by graffiti or signage, which speaks
more of Time than of History. Against the
backdrop of such skies, these surfaces function as windows on the infinite opening into the
Vacuum of Laotse. Okakura Kakako refers
to this vacuum as all potent because it is all
containing. "In vacuum alone motion be-
comes possible."

The Pink Wall (1530 2nd Avenue) is one
of these static compositions, a magnifier
against which the grey sky rubs. Its details,
enlarged and set by this lens, show as scraps
of blue, yellow, and fragments of black and
brown. On most occasions, the sky behind
the wall is full of light; but during those
rare periods of transposition when there is
absolutely nothing in the sky, the Pink
Wall dissolves into space while the sun's
rays behind it solidifies into a hard
plane of blue.

Conversely, the north wall of the build-
ing at 2007 4th Avenue, painted a uniform
brown, is expressive more of structure than
of tone. The abstract surface exposes a
grainy consistency of concrete and rebar.
When the Northwest sky is most turbulent,
it reveals this same ordered support and
structure. The city did not have time
to wait for the turning of
capital.

TERRA COTTA

On a clear day the surprise and delight
one feels when looking up at the Melbourne
Tower (3rd and Pike), the Kress building
(across the street on 3rd), or the Medical-
Dental building (5th and Olive Way) and
seeing that the quatrefoils and tracery have
become perforated are the result of a blue
wash on terra cotta. The light which pol-
ishes the surface of terracotta, as if they were vertical snow
served for the Watermark Tower (1st and
Spring in, again, due to the plasticity of
clay and glazing. These are only six of a
hundred examples of terra-cotta building
surfaces in Seattle. Whether it is light or dark,
sealed and colored by the reddish-brown
soil from which it was taken, as in the
Seattle Tower (3rd and University), or is
brightly glazed and spun into ornate con-
fection, terra cotta brightens the city.

Seattle's growth occurred at a time when
the hand-working of stone into rich friezes
and courtyards was on the wane. Additionally,
carving was labor-intensive in an active
construction market where labor was in
shortest supply. The city did not have time
for the turning of capitals. Ruskin refers with disgust to machine-made work;
but if Seattle was to be decorated, it
would need to be decorated with mass-produced detailing.
Whether the surfaces from the Arctic or chi-
meras from Pompeii, much of Seattle's dec-
oration and sheen are terra-cotta products.

STILL LIFE

The tumult and cacophony of the mar-
ketplace are invigorating. The color, earthy
banner, and merchandizing are energeti-
cally vivid and lie close to the heart of the
community. This is as true of the Public
Market in Seattle as it is of a marketplace
anywhere. The flowers, vegetables, fish,
and meat fill stalls and excite a physical
response to their freshness and quality. By
contrast, gazing into the chef's window at
Shuckers' (4th and Seneca in the Olympic
Hotel), one is exposed to a carefully ar-
 ranged still life. In the market one is too
active to savor the positioning of prawns,
lemons, and a bottle of wine set on ice
before a shucker in a stiff white jacket who
deftly prepares oysters; but through the
window, one's detachment allows him to
view and consider the riches of the sea as a
voyeur.

The consideration given to materials as
expressed by this arrangement is vital to
establishing the tension inherent in still
design. Examples of this are rare, but where
they exist, they have an immense impact.
The flower arrangements by Neville's in
the Alexis Hotel (1st and Spring) rank espe-
cially high because of great exuberance and
sublimity, the poised distillation of flow-
ers presented in the Dutch manner. This
care of presentation, a considering of the
effect of color and texture placement, can
also be found in the displays of the Boehm
Association (1213 Pine), Philip
Monroe, Jeweler (527 Pine), and the Medi-
terranean Boutique (517 Pine).

ASSOCIATION

Of all the categories of images given in
this article, Association is the most subjec-
tive. It refers exclusively to an individual's
troubling of memories summoned by chance encounters which recall fragments
of the past: a madeleine dipped in tea, a
slippery penny stone, or the appendage to
a letter from a stockbroker? Each individual
is surrounded by these images which lay
 dormant until a particularly exquisite chain
of sensations links them to the viewer.
There is nothing that does not have some
role to play. A flight of pigeons is capable
of lifting the magic curtain behind which
memory rests as are, for me, the gingko
trees before the Public Library (4th and

The Pink Wall (1530 2nd Avenue) is one
of these static compositions, a magnifier
against which the grey sky rubs. Its details,
enlarged and set by this lens, show as scraps
of blue, yellow, and fragments of black and
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rare periods of transposition when there is
absolutely nothing in the sky, the Pink
Wall dissolves into space while the sun's
glances off their cream-colored
terra cotta, as if they were vertical snow
served for the Watermark Tower (1st and
Spring in, again, due to the plasticity of
clay and glazing. These are only six of a
hundred examples of terra-cotta building
surfaces in Seattle. Whether it is light or dark,
sealed and colored by the reddish-brown
soil from which it was taken, as in the
Seattle Tower (3rd and University), or is
brightly glazed and spun into ornate con-
fection, terra cotta brightens the city.

Seattle's growth occurred at a time when
the hand-working of stone into rich friezes
and courtyards was on the wane. Additionally,
carving was labor-intensive in an active
construction market where labor was in
shortest supply. The city did not have time
for the turning of capitals. Ruskin refers with disgust to machine-made work;
but if Seattle was to be decorated, it
would need to be decorated with mass-produced detailing.
Whether the surfaces from the Arctic or chi-
meras from Pompeii, much of Seattle's dec-
oration and sheen are terra-cotta products.

STILL LIFE

The tumult and cacophony of the mar-
ketplace are invigorating. The color, earthy
banner, and merchandizing are energeti-
cally vivid and lie close to the heart of the
community. This is as true of the Public

The Pink Wall (1530 2nd Avenue) is one
of these static compositions, a magnifier
against which the grey sky rubs. Its details,
enlarged and set by this lens, show as scraps
of blue, yellow, and fragments of black and
brown. On most occasions, the sky behind
the wall is full of light; but during those
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Man is incapable of remaining satisfied with anything; he will, sooner or later, come to take beauty for granted and will be bored by it. It is the inclusion of beauty among the ordinary which stimulates a healthy and spontaneous populace.

When I moved to Chicago years ago and first came under the spell of the Great American City, I was stunned and tantalized by my exposure to the contrast between conspicuous misery and opulence. Both were foreign to me; such a range was absent in the middle class plains city in which I grew up. But the contrast challenges one. It keeps one on his toes. Promising and threatening. . . . The richness and depth of the place is visible, it is not an illusion; there is always the feeling that the earth is full of gold, and who will seek and strive can mine it.750

THE WALK

I have been discussing categories of images to which I respond regardless of place and illustrating my points with local examples. In laying out this walk, however, I am dealing with Seattle. By coincidence the walk highlights many of the amenities which make Seattle an hospitable environment for the pedestrian. If one begins the walk at Yesler Way and Western Avenue and proceeds up Western, he will have a relatively innocent climb to the heights of 8th Avenue and a rapid descent (the sites have been numbered with this routing in mind). Following this walk, one will find four public comfort stations (at the hill climb, on the first floor of the Bon parking garage, in Freeway Park, and in the Public Library), several public drinking fountains, clocks, and resting areas, both outdoors and inside. The existence of these personal services confers a considerable degree of freedom and independence on the pedestrian by relieving him of necessity to either ask or pay for them ("restrooms for patrons only," etc.) The coupling of existing amenities with the number of eateries, watering holes, and shops creates a supportive environment that encourages participation in it.

SUMMARY

The images I have selected in this article are familiar and beautiful examples of my view of the city; they were chosen with the intent of establishing a visual context comfortable to the reader. However, other less striking examples, certain new boxes and parking stripes, would have been as pertinent. Beauty alone does not provide the vigor necessary to keep an individual interested in his environment. To John Ruskin, . . . it is not good for man to live among what is (only) most beautiful,750 for it will lose value. Man is incapable of remaining satisfied with anything; he will, sooner or later, come to take beauty for granted and will be bored by it. It is the inclusion of beauty among the ordinary which stimulates a healthy and spontaneous populace.

Jeff Johnson is a painter who exhibits with the Greenwood Gallery, 89 Yesler Way, Seattle. He lives downtown.

Jeff Johnson

References

1. T. S. Eliot, The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, line 50
2. Okakura Kakuzo, The Book of Tea (Charles E. Tuttle, Co. 1936), p. 45
4. Three experiences which served to recall the past for the narrator in Marcel Proust's Remembrance of Things Past.
7. This is the second of John Ruskin's seven lamps of architecture, in Seven Lamps of Architecture (Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1925). Under this heading he discusses materials.
8. This refers to Ambrogio Lorenzetti's fresco series in the Palace Publico in Siena, Italy, the Allegories of Good and Bad Government.

Jeffrey Johnson
DRAFT DEPARTMENT NEWS


Mechanical Behavior and Pneumatics March for a strong proposal for the new MAC Hall in April. Sponsored by COA, 6-1/2.

Expansions in Steel: Steel Design Competition sponsored by the American Institute of Steel Construction.


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some protection, of at least a visual nature. Beware the tenant of Watermark who sits on his or her window sill! Watermark’s skyline makes it absolutely identifiable, for this is where the building comes down rather ruthlessly on the horizon. Although the architects hesitate to affix any stylistic label to this decorative explosion, they wanted to associate the top of the two nearby towers, the old Federal Office Building and the Seattle Tower Building, each strikingly Art Deco in surface decoration. The setbacks do relate it to the Tower Building, especially when seen from the ferry terminal, but this comparison also points out that Watermark is perhaps too squat for such a grand hat. This choice of models is also curious since these buildings are office, not residential, towers. The diversity of form that the penthouse units lend the top of Watermark Tower is lively and exciting, and the idea of providing decorative elements that speak to both inhabitants and the city is admirable, but there is not enough that is really new here. We must do more than “relate” to the past or admire it. We have a responsibility to interpret and express the reality of our present situation. “Architecture might make the effort to maintain its completeness and preserve itself from total destruction, but such an effort is nullified by the assemblage of architectural pieces in the city. It is in the city that these fragments are piously absorbed and deprived of any autonomy, and this situation cannot be reversed by obstinately forcing the fragments to assume articulated, composite configurations.”

CONCLUSION

Having looked at these buildings with this tripartite set of formal criteria, what can be said about their place in the city in a particular sense? Are they any more or less innovative than Drexler’s choices, and do they deserve an exhibit themselves? They have been exhibited here verbally, and their innovation springs from the fact that they speak with louder voices than other Seattle buildings to some basic issues that skyscrapers face in any city. In some ways each of them furthers our demise, but in other ways they improve our understanding of the city. One Union Square unequivocally states the nature of our relationship with a technological age, and Watermark Tower, regardless of its confusing historical pastiche, stands as a beacon for a neighborhood that will not let us forget the importance of our past.

References

6. Ibid
7. Italo Calvino, Ibid, p. 77

Catherine Barrett

Catherine Barrett is a member of ARCADE’s Planning Board and practice architecture in Seattle.
PARC DE LA VILLETTE
A NEW PARK FOR PARIS

“The goal is to successfully devise the concept of a park of the twenty-first century... The goal of the project is not simply to create a park, but rather, through the Park, to successfully carry out an operation of urbanism that is particularly complex and original.” Noble? Yes. Practicable? That is unknown.

PARIS' first major park since Baron von Haussmann's nineteenth century masterworks was the subject of an international design competition last year. The 75-acre Parc de la Villette site (comparable in size to Seattle Center grounds) is envisioned as an indoor and outdoor cultural complex which will respond to local community and international visitors long into the future. The program was ambitious and modest in its challenges: “The goal is to successfully devise the concept of a park of the twenty-first century... The goal of the project is not simply to create a park, but rather, through the Park, to successfully carry out an operation of urbanism that is particularly complex and original.” Four Seattle landscape architectural firms responded; Rich Haag and Associates, Jones & Jones, Lee and Associates, and Sugino Kubayashi. Ulman Inc. entered, but did not win the competition.

THE COMPETITION: WHO AND WHY

The 1982 competition, third for this site, was billed as an open, one-step, anonymous competition. The first place winner was to receive the commission of Park Designer. Winning plans were to be refined and immediately implemented. The appeal of the event was far reaching; more than 800 teams from 43 countries registered. Some were drawn by the opportunity to design for an unusually diverse group of users, others by the imaginative, even whimsical ideas incorporated within the program elements. This was not a typical sports fields-and-picnic-shelters park, but a grand idea in a romantic city with an international jury. Each team received an impressive four-bookpackage of background, site, and program information in French and English. Between June and October 470 teams prepared the required 3-foot by 6-foot drawings. (All drawings are on display at the Place de Beaubourg Museum.) The competition package materials were broad in concept and specific in detail. Years of thought concerning the re-use of the La Villette site and controversy about the proper adaptive re-use resulted in a complex variety of program elements. The information package included site photos, detailed site data (decibel readings), demographic information, a history of Paris planning, and descriptions of philosophical objectives.

URBAN DESIGN AS POETRY: THE PROGRAM

The program—a dense 78-pages long, was a curious and inspired document. The program also expressed the hope that the atmosphere of the park should awaken all the human senses. “The Parc de La Villette will serve as a meeting place and an area of dialogue. Between the scientific and technical area to the north and a ‘sensitive’ area (Music City) to the south, it will constitute a place of interaction and mutual enrichment of both parts of Western culture. Located to the northeast of Paris in a working-class neighborhood which includes a large amount of foreigners, open to everyone regardless of income or origin, the Park must distinguish itself as one of mixture and integration. The symbols of this park will therefore be ones of pluralism...”

There were seven key elements to the program. 1) The Museum of Science and Technology, a performance hall, music institute, research center, and museum, is not yet a performance hall, music institute, research center, and museum. 2) The Music City complex containing a performance hall, music institute, research center, and museum, is not yet designed and may be ripe for a later competition. 3) Open-air and sheltered areas to accommodate programmed entertainment such as a circus and rides at fair activities are to be integrated with a series of areas within the park along with entertainment that can occur spontaneously. 4) A series of garden rooms will be designed to engage visitors in play situations in which they will be involved with scientific or artistic ideas in informal learning experiences. 5) Thematic gardens will provide a series of experiences that will be directly informative about plant growth.
The symbols of this park will therefore be ones of pluralism...

"A pluralistic garden is not a simple hodgepodge of assorted fragments. The designer must give an indispensable poetic and sculptural unity to it." From a strictly functional point of view, it would be possible to achieve a unified park under these conditions only if design control is firm. Based simply on the outcome of the competition — the jury could not agree on a single winner — the reality seems to be more like that "in France, cooking exists as a veritable cultural phenomenon, whereas in the US, it will be a common pastime to meet friends in congested streets; it is hoped that ultimately the population has easy access to a park. The French have long been constrained by limits of etiquette which allow them only to walk on park paths and sit on park benches. Lastly, however, Parisians are often seen "abusing" their formal parks by sitting on the lawns — another impetus for the development of a large public green space like La Villette. In 1977 regional planners decided to create a greenspace network (the Croissant Vert or Green Crescent) leading to a wooded buffer between the urban fringe and the rural landscape. Parc de la Villette will be integrated into the network through the canal pathway system. The park is also tied into the planning for the Paris World's Fair, 1989. Several exhibition sites along the Seine River, plus the La Villette site and 'liaisons France' area, will be selected to house the upcoming "Exposition Universelle." The politics of the situation were discussed in Progressive Architecture (June 1983) by Rene Lipshitz. Architects on the La Villette jury are winning plum commissions for various other Expo projects, the Mayor is setting the stage for his 1990 Presidential candidacy, and, because of the current financial crisis in the city, it is thought that the Expo-related adaptive uses of the sites provide "the only budgetary hope that the monumental ambitions will be realized."
A large structure on Sixth Avenue between Union and Pike Streets in Seattle recently opened. It is the Sheraton which was reported to have cost in excess of $200,000. A major hotel chain is the tenant in the one which reflects the taste of Sheraton. . . . "The structure, as part of the urban environment, seems to advertise itself with a taste much like gold.

Each citizen, every ordinary architect, ought to think how a's and a's respond to a building without regard for the owner's program, the architect's stated objectives, or the public interest. It is a situation which architects and other design agents. A building, like a symphony, must be judged on whatever there is to be heard or seen by everyone. Architects' works are all public affairs, particularly those in the metropolitan area such as the King County Business District. The Sheraton project as

Can the citizens of Seattle . . . protect themselves . . . against projects which are inimical to the common standards of decent design?

results Seattle's CBD as an acting calculator and critic on at least mindless annulla.

THE SETTING

There are many things about Seattle's CBD that almost any pedestrian appreciates. In particular, Seattle is composed of buildings and places scaled to pedestrians by means of shrubbery windows on the sidewalks, smashing views downhill to the harbor, a few well-considered public resting places, a variety of little side elevations which fully respond to their sloping hillside sites, and many older building facades made with fine materials at space to invite investigation by eyes or hands. These examples are a tradition of worldwide urban design that considers and cares about us, the anonymous pedestrians.

STANDARDS FOR JUDGING

Seattle's citizens have long been involved in efforts to design the city. More than a decade ago the Seattle 2000 Commission proposed goals for the physical development of the CBD. These goals were stated in generalities and accepted by Seattleites as readily as Motherhood and Apple Pie. Since then some goals have been translated into strategies embedding material guidelines by such organizations as standard bulk, height, orientation. There are bonuses for going beyond the standard in the pursuit of design which provides substantial public benefit. Currently, new design studies offer examples of reconsidered and new ideas for making the CBD a richer and more vibrant place for people. Among these are some principles which one ought to apply to the Sheraton, because it is the latest and greatest challenge to the common sense of these design criteria.

Any project constructed in the public domain along its streets should do the following:

- Maintain the visual definition of streets and thus control the street edge or have a good reason for not doing so.

- Provide easy accessibility to quiet, slow-paced sanctuaries adjacent to the street. These places should have comfortable seating and offer a glimpse of street activity.

- Design entrances and transitions for pedestrians that have meaning as an extension of existing or new pedestrian paths.

- Plan for handicapped access in unobtrusive and safe ways.

- Provide retail services (functional relief) and visual relief along the sidewalk edge.

- Utilize arcades for shelter and connections between buildings; they will enhance retailing located along them.

- Reduce conflicts with autos by minimizing driving cuts across sidewalks.

In general then, the overall impression one should receive from a project is that there is an investment in the public well-being as well as in the owner's future profits.

A CRITICAL TOUR / WALK OF ANGUISH

The Sheraton project epitomizes an approach to design which ignores the pedestrian's existence.

4) Hurry along to Seventh and Pike. Look around; is something missing? A plan for anticipation that an entrance will be found when you see that beneath one of the clipped corners is a void. It holds some curiosity to the stairs and a confusing column. Obviously not a handicapped entrance. Actually, it is the only pedestrian entrance to the hotel lobby, although you cannot see the lobby to verify your hunch. Nor does the stair reach out to invite you in. If you do hazard an approach, you will be confronted with an array of carpeted spaces across an escalator. If you support the escalator, a likely choice, it will not deliver you to the hotel lobby, but to the stand-out upper convention lobby. This actually is the back entrance, although your best guess would be that it is the primary entrance.

6) The prize view is to the south along Sixth Avenue. At last, something is happening at the Sheraton. Buses and cars come and go across two вполне lines which slash the sidewalk where pedestrians once walked. Beyond the vehicles, there is an entrance to the lobby, right at grade. Here is the Westin Hotel drive-in solution matured to full expression and dimension, serving drivers and defeating pedestrians. Once again the setback destroys the definition of the street edge as effectively as the Divisadero Street Union. The conflict between pedestrians and autos could hardly be more intense. It seems that here at the portal of the hotel, where it receives the world, almost every criterion established for common sense is violated.

Pedestrian entrance at Alaskan Hotel, the void reveals a remote courtyard and signs entry below, scaled to people.

SYMBOLISM

Notice that little attention has been given to the triangular tower rising from a nearly rectangular base. The triangular shape is usually employed in symbolically important structures. The tower is immeasurable in its proportions, spanning gable which do not attempt to express the individual guestroom. Farther along is a garage which isn't all that head high, concreted and textured like an upturned sidewalk. Do concentrate on a diagonal in order to avoid walking small shops across the street; they are prone, some with tacky-looking merchandise. Better not look at them too closely, Seanly you know.

5) Upon reaching Sixth and Pike with anticipation that an entrance will be found here, your suspicion is partially confirmed when you see that beneath one of the clipped corners is a void. It holds some curiosity to the stairs and a confusing column. Obviously not a handicapped entrance. Actually, it is the only pedestrian entrance to the hotel lobby, although you cannot see the lobby to verify your hunch. Nor does the stair reach out to invite you in. If you do hazard an approach, you will be confronted with an array of carpeted spaces across an escalator. If you support the escalator, a likely choice, it will not deliver you to the hotel lobby, but to the stand-out upper convention lobby. This actually is the back entrance, although your best guess would be that it is the primary entrance.

Here is Seattle, a provincial capital, made irreplaceable for people. Its sidewalks are places from which to view the humanity and tradition of its urban form. Let's take a walk, not a drive, around the Sheraton, for to walk is to receive changing images.

3) Start at Sixth and Union. Look east along Union. On the right you'll see a finely-detailed terra cotta tricon of the tower to the north. (Remember the Westin?) Feeling better, hurry along to Seventh Avenue, and for a moment look back down Union Street as though you have just entered downtown from the freeway. Do you see the "attractive" to the city? Make sure you ask:

- Does the concept of fulfilling the public interest one should receive from a project is that there is an investment in the public well-being as well as in the owner's future profits.