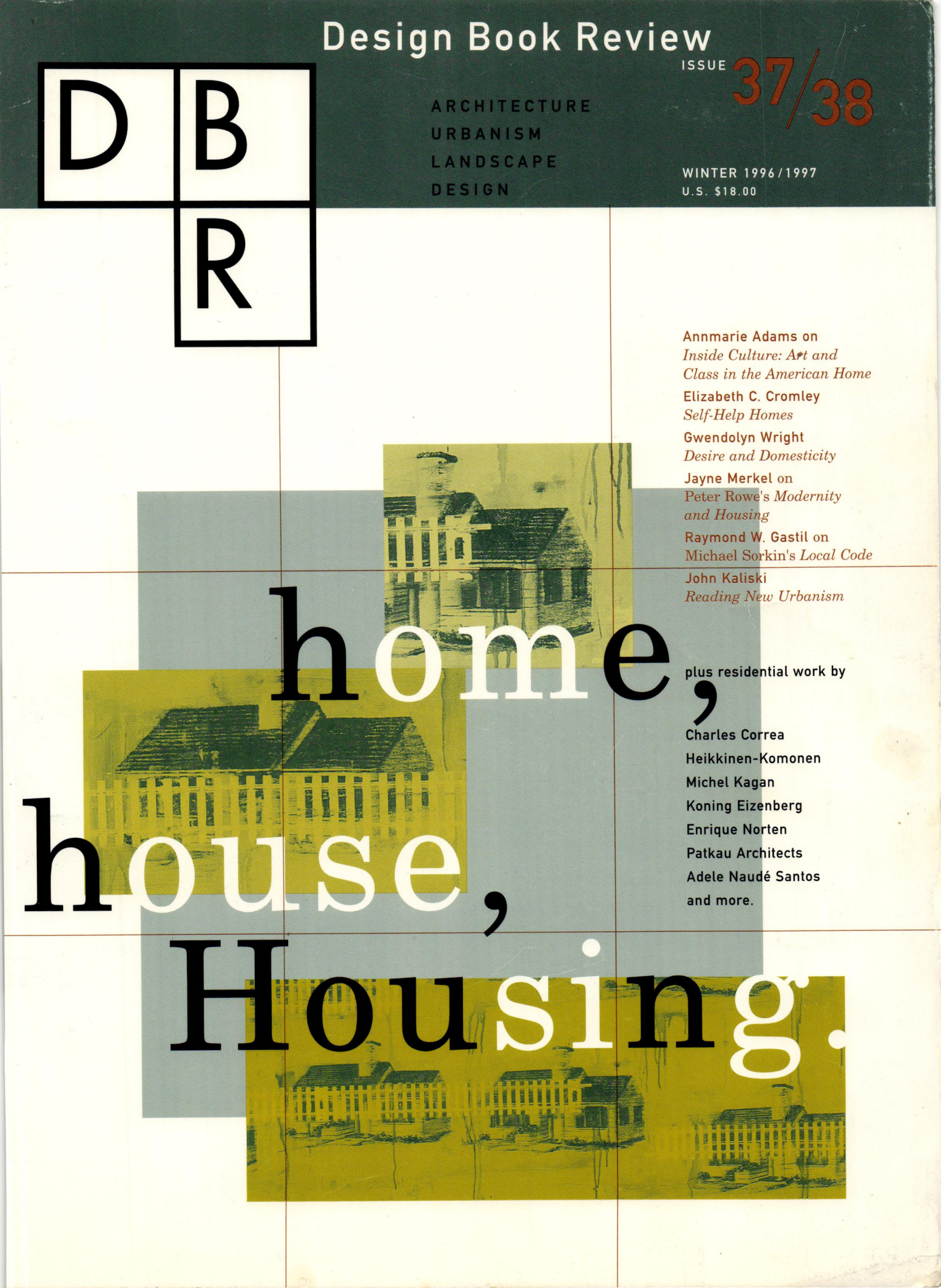Annmarie Adams on
*Inside Culture: Art and
Class in the American Home*

Elizabeth C. Cromley
Self-Help Homes

Gwendolyn Wright
Desire and Domesticity

Jayne Merkel on
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Michael Sorkin's *Local Code*

John Kaliski
Reading New Urbanism

home,
house,
Housing.

plus residential work by

Charles Correa
Heikkinen-Komonen
Michel Kagan
Koning Eizenberg
Enrique Norten
Patkau Architects
Adele Naudé Santos
and more.

Dear Reader,

More than a year has passed since the last issue of *Design Book Review* was published. As we announced in that issue (volume #35/36), The MIT Press decided on rather short notice to discontinue as our publisher. During the long process of terminating our distribution agreement and reestablishing the magazine as an independent venture, we have made a few changes in format, which you will notice with this issue, and have also explored possibilities of broadening our base of support.

We hope you will forgive this long interruption, and that you will understand how difficult it is these days for a small magazine (or a big one, for that matter, considering the demise of *Progressive Architecture*) to stay afloat. When we began publishing in 1983 out of a small Berkeley cottage, we were both pleased and surprised to discover a solid contingent of apparently incurable biblioholics. Over the years the magazine has evolved into a unique vehicle of expression, addressing scholarly, professional, and popular interests alike. Many of you have remained faithful readers from the earliest issues—for this, we thank you.

We are happy to be back and would welcome any comments you might have about our relaunch issue. Drop us a line, let us know who you are.

Sincere regards,

the editors and publishers

Design Book Review is the only publication to cover the literature of the fields of architecture, urbanism, landscape, and design in a **comprehensive and critical** manner. The articles, written by scholars of the highest caliber, are an immense help to all of us in the design professions.

— **Alberto Pérez-Gómez**
Director of the Architectural History and Theory Program, McGill University

DBR **stands alone** as a publication of exceptional clarity and pertinence among the current proliferation of architecture and design magazines.

— **Kenneth Frampton**
Ware Professor of Architecture, Columbia University

Forthcoming Issues of *Design Book Review*

ISSUE
39/40 SPRING/SUMMER 1997
[Anti] Humanism

ISSUE
41 FALL 1997
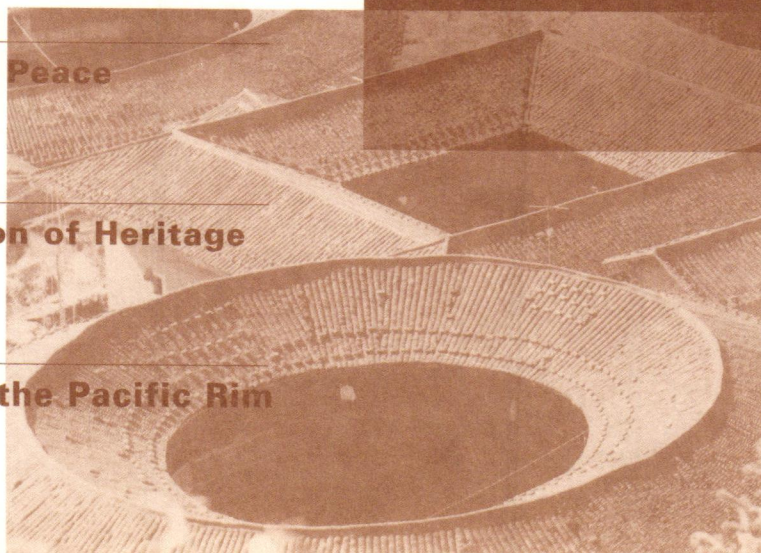## The Arts of Peace

ISSUE
42 WINTER 1998
The Invention of Heritage

ISSUE
43/44 SPRING/SUMMER 1998
Designs on the Pacific Rim

Friends of *DBR*

During this difficult transitional period, an overwhelming number of you contacted us with offers to help, so we are now sufficiently encouraged to establish the Friends of *DBR*. This group of individual, corporate, and institutional sponsors will be acknowledged in the front pages of the magazine, and will also be entitled to a free one-year subscription. If you are interested in becoming a Friend of *DBR*, please return the reply card at the back of the magazine.

Back Home

In 1983 my sister-in-law, Elizabeth Snowden, proposed the idea of starting a magazine that would review current books on architecture and design. The initial plan was quite modest: *Design Book Review* would be a simple newsletter, serving as a sort of buying guide to the most significant works of recent design literature. The result was clearly much more complex than Elizabeth's distant proposition, involving both our families and, over time, an extended family of scholars, practitioners, and readers.

It was our great stroke of luck to attract the interest of critic and historian Richard Ingersoll. Very early on, he became the editor and impresario of *DBR*, and his innovations—the theme issues, interviews, symposia, and now "Works of the Day"—have given the magazine the breadth and depth that have earned it a steady and distinguished following. Richard's knowledge and instincts have made for a remarkable series of issues, each with an exceptional set of contributors. In Herbert Muschamp's *New York Times* obituary for Manfredo Tafuri, he recalled Richard's rare interview with the inimitable historian. The reference was not only a remembrance of Tafuri, but an acknowledgment of *DBR*'s cultural importance. We owe this to Richard, first and foremost.

In the early 1990s, we were joined by the remarkable Ho sisters, Cathy and Betty, who have shaped *DBR* with equal measures of love and talent. The International Architecture Book Publishing Award we received in 1995 from the American Institute of Architects, recognizing "Other Americas: Contemporary Architecture and Issues in Latin America" (#32/33, Spring/Summer 1994) as the most outstanding journal of that year, was very much a tribute to their editorial and design skills. John Loomis, who served as that issue's guest editor, deserves the highest praise for planning the issue and finding funds for its publication. Similarly, Liane Lefaivre of the Netherlands has proven to be an indispensable editorial collaborator. A longtime contributor to *DBR*, she guest-edited the Fall 1994 issue devoted to the theme, "The Architecture of Humanism" (#34), and is currently helping to prepare the sequel to it, entitled "[Anti]Humanism" (due later this year).
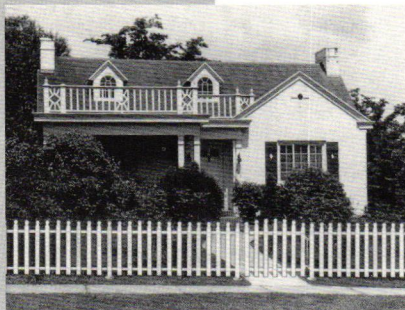
Like most cultural enterprises, *DBR* spends much more money than it takes in. The decision made by The MIT Press to drop us from their publication list in early 1995 was a purely financial one. Throughout our four-year partnership with MIT—indeed, throughout our fourteen-year history—*DBR* has never turned a profit. The benefits of our copublication arrangement with MIT were mostly administrative, alleviating from us such burdensome tasks as subscription fulfillment, distribution, and advertising. All of these functions have returned to our office in Berkeley. Despite the added work, we welcome the chance to be back in direct contact with our readers, advertisers, and booksellers. Many thanks to all of you who have renewed your subscriptions, and took the time to wish us well (including notes like "*DBR* is a gift from God" from Michael Brill, and "*DBR* is the only architectural publication in the world worth reading," says Charles Correa). Your sentiments mean a lot to us, and affirm what we have always believed: that it is not only possible for an intelligent, independent design publication to survive these days, but necessary.

Admittedly, in order to continue, we will require funds beyond what is earned through subscriptions, newsstand sales, and advertising revenue. In the past, we have consistently received grants from organizations and institutions such as the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. (In fact, the forthcoming issue "[Anti]Humanism" is made possible in part by an NEA grant, perhaps one of the last direct grants to organizations to be awarded by this crucial and sadly threatened agency.) Because so many sources of public funding are becoming less reliable or are disappearing altogether, we are establishing the Friends of *DBR*, a sponsorship group for individuals who value our existence and would like to make contributions toward our continued work. We invite you to join this special group, and to be assured a lasting place in our hearts and in our pages.

Over the past several months, many people have generously offered their advice and encouragement with regards to the future of the magazine. Key among them has been David Meckel, vice-president and dean of the architecture program at the California College of Arts and Crafts, who has kindly offered us space in the school's new San Francisco campus. We are also grateful to James Fulton of the Design History Foundation, the publisher of *Places,* and Harrison Fraker, new dean of the College of Environmental Design at the University of California at Berkeley, for taking the time to advise us on our fundraising campaign.

We hope you enjoy this, our relaunch issue, devoted to the theme "Home, House, Housing." It is dedicated to the memory of Don Terner who, with his Bridge Housing Development Company in San Francisco, was the leading nonprofit builder in the United States. He fervently believed that the provision of housing for all was a step toward a better world.

John Parman
Copublisher

home, house, housing

house and home

housing

works of the day

community

history, theory, practice

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Deborah Oropallo, *Door to Door,*
1996, oil on canvas, 96 x 76 inches.
Courtesy of the artist.

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House on Arosa Island, Galicia, Spain;
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1993. (From *Patkau Architects.*)

The Resistible Little House

One of the cruelest punishments practiced in premodern Europe was the vindictive demolition of a family's house. A political demolition, such as the one carried out against the Uberti family in Florence during the 13th century, was an "act of justice" that conveniently enlarged the city's public space while literally erasing a family's name from the text of the urban fabric. While the practice may persist in the West Bank or in Bosnia, such a form of ostracism would be meaningless in most societies today because house, name, and geography are no longer contingent to modern identity. The U.S. Census of 1970, and every census since, has confirmed the presentiment of physical banishment: the average American changes place of residence at least once every five years. The house has become a disposable consumer good to which individuals are not closely attached; and, as if to compensate, the relationship to possessions proves to be ever more enduring. Could it be that modern identity is better reflected in the fittings of the house—the decor, the furniture, the stereo, the plants—not to mention the automobile, the clothes, and more recently the "home page," than by one's place of habitation? The popular success of design magazines that deal primarily with interiors such as *Domus* and *Architectural Digest* compared to those devoted solely to architecture may be attributed their superior capacity to narrate modern living through the signifying details of furnishings. Conversely, when the professional architectural press addresses houses and housing, it almost completely ignores the real subjects of domesticity, presenting interiors before they have been lived in or as if they have never been lived in. This systematic repression of the historical and sensual identity of the dwelling begs for a confrontation with the culture of architecture.

The 18th-century novel *La petite maison,* a product of the French Enlightenment—recently translated and presented by Rodolphe el-Khouri as *The Little House: An Architectural Seduction* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996)—seems a retroactive indictment of architecture's emotional arrest. This minor tale of libertinage by Jean-François de Bastide is the pretext for discussing taste in design. A saucy marquis known for his sexual exploits wagers that the beauty of his *petite maison* will be powerful enough to seduce the object of his desire, a noblewoman known for her virtue. After touring its elaborately decorated Rococo salons and thematic gardens and marveling at the sensual delights afforded by the home's hidden musicians and mechanical services (including a flushing toilet and a dining table that retracts into the floor to be discretely set for the next course of a meal), the defenses of the discriminating lady finally dissolve into rapture. Despite her strong resolution, she recognizes the value of her new lover's character in the details of his house and is thus unable to resist his advances. The noblewoman's erotic catharsis is not induced by the little house's Pythagorean proportions or innovative compositional strategies; rather, it emanates from digressions into the particulars of taste, such as foliated moldings, panels painted with mythological scenes, novel gadgets, a well-chosen menu, and an appropriate sound track.

A comparison of Bastide's little house of dalliance, which is described without images, with most of the houses in John Welsh's lavishly illustrated *The Modern House* (London: Phaidon, 1996) makes one wonder if the criterion of eros has been deleted from the text of architecture. The twenty-nine selected houses, all built during the last decade, range from the hyperminimalist approach of John Pawson and Tadao Ando to the overwrought expressionism of Bart Prince and Enric Miralles. Most of them give the impression that they are ghost houses, designed only for the appreciation of their proportions and the effects of light and shade they achieve. Both the designs and the pre-

It would difficult, indeed, to carry out a seduction in this spare room. Kidosaki House, Setagaya, Tokyo; Tadao Ando, 1982–86. (From *The Modern House.*)

sentations make it difficult to imagine the workings of daily life, let alone acts of seduction, in such environments. Certainly Le Corbusier, who is the grandfather of this aesthetic, believed that his compositions of bare planes and minimal furnishings was a superlative stimulus for the libido, and in his 1925 letter to Madame Meyer, a potential client, he pursued a progress of seduction similar to Bastide's, substituting for ornate decorations and sensual encrustations the revelation of abstract features such as interpenetrating spaces and fluid circulation. That Le Corbusier lost his wager of seduction, however, points to the divergence between the chaste conception of the canonical modern house and the consumer's taste for the decorative and mechanical signifiers of the little house.

Considering the increased mobility, both social and physical, of the modern dweller, it becomes ever more difficult to determine who are the intended subjects of the standard unit of housing in contemporary Europe or the typical tract home in the United States. In either case, these dwellings are usually designed for a phantom "next resident," someone who statistically conforms to the demand for housing, which is programmed by either the state or the market. The resale value of the American house regularly takes precedence over other priorities. Thus, the bedroom, rather than belonging to its current occupants, always pertains to some statistical "other" who will enact seductions there in the future. The sole exceptions are those special houses built by famous architects for very wealthy clients; these represent a sort of architectural concupiscence analogous to Bastide's *petite maison.* Almost all of the thirty-four not very petite houses featured in Kenneth Frampton and David Larkin's *American Masterworks: The Twentieth-Century House* (New York: Rizzoli, 1996) fall into this category, from Greene and Greene's Gamble House to Stanley Saitowitz's De Napoli House. A few cases, such as Philip Johnson's Glass House or Paul Rudolph's New York apartment, being owned by their designer, of course embody shear narcissistic desire.

Not many houses today, however, qualify as *petites maisons,* since there is a deferral of eros both in the modern design aesthetic and in the normal amortizing process. Pope John Paul II, whose ideas about sex are best characterized by his renewed emphasis on the virgin birth as well as his claims that St. Joseph was also a virgin, made an unexpected appeal to the Italian state this spring for more housing so that young people could move out of their parent's homes and make families of their own. (Italy has the lowest birth rate in Europe.) Despite his good intentions, he obviously has no idea how difficult it is to carry out a seduction in a new little house. —**Richard Ingersoll**

Home Smug Home

TERRENCE DOODY

"We must labour to be beautiful."
—W. B. Yeats, 1899

"The most beautiful house in the world" began as a shed in which architect and writer Witold Rybczynski planned to build a boat to sail around the world. He made the first sketches for the shed in 1975; in 1980, he and his wife moved into it, christening their new home "the Boathouse." *The Most Beautiful House in the World,* the book he published in 1989, recounts the evolution of his hobby shed into their dwelling. In this charming book, he also ruminates about barns and cathedrals, *feng-shui*, the architectural use of toy blocks, and the inevitable differences between formal intentions and accidental results. Although Rybczynski's prose is casual and personal, this book is actually part of an academic trend: the postmodern autobiography that confronts the discrepancies between theory and practice, convention and desire, profession and identity. Rybczynski writes:

> I had started with a boatbuilding workshop and had finished with a house; I also acquired a client—Shirley [his wife]. ... Once it was decided that we would live here ... I found myself having to explain what I was doing and what I was going to do. I had been able to talk my way around paying clients, but this one knew me too well. Although I put up a brave professional front, the problem was that she was more cognizant of house design than I was—not of construction but of the details, the minutiae of everyday life that constitute a home.

Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes (New York: The Noonday Press, 1975) is an early example of this type of autobiography. Historian Martin Duberman, anthropologist Clifford Geertz, feminist Jane Gallop, and Jacques Derrida himself (in *The Post Card,* Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987) have also written important books in this vein. Barthes confronts his own contradictions with more rigor than Rybczynski does, while Gallop writes with greater political urgency. This is not to say that Rybczynski does not raise many important issues. But those he raises in *The Most Beautiful House in the World* are easy to resolve because he does not argue them; while those in his breakthrough book *Home* are not so easy to resolve because his argument fails.

I am a lay reader of Rybczynski's architectural polemic, but I am accustomed to academic standards of argument and evidence. Rybczynski seems to "win" his case against Le Corbusier and all the pomp and achievements of high modernism only because his basic premise—that modernism fails to provide or account for comfort—remains uncontested, and because his arguments exclude too much of both logic and history. He is popular nonetheless, it seems, because his conclusions make him both a "moralist" (a term of praise he uses regarding Leon Battista Alberti) and an apologist for the readers who encounter him in literary and general interest magazines such as *The Atlantic* and *The New York Times Magazine.* His readers are presumably educated and culturally literate, and often skeptical (in the good American way) of most theoretical speculation, especially when it's unrelated to their own professions. They are much less likely to design and build their own homes than to remodel the kitchen or enclose a porch, and their decisions along these lines will probably not be featured in *Architectural Digest.* To have, therefore, an apologia for their own limits and possible situation written as a historical critique of modernism's excess, to be able to think that their conventional tastes are both "natural" and "good" and that their soft sofas and easy chairs are exactly the right stuff—this, from within architecture's own camp, is a vindication and a comfort. In *From Bauhaus to Our House* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux, 1981), Tom Wolfe issues a similar populist critique of modernism, with its white princes and imperatives, but his argument does not flatter his readers' tastes any

comfort was a crucial issue in preparing for the architecture professions, like justice in law, or health in medicine," Rybczynski surmises. But this is an unbalanced analogy, and a reductive one at that. Health may be the ultimate human concern of medicine, but there is certainly more to the law than justice, just as there is a lot more to architecture than comfort. In Rybczynski's argument, architecture is limited to the domestic, and comfort to the idea of familial coziness—ideas he credits to the Dutch households of the 17th century. As he tells the story of the historic evolution of the family household, one inevitable theme is the growth of specialization: "This underlined not only that the insides of houses were being thought of as very different from the outsides, but also that an important distinction was being made between interior decoration and architecture." This is a distinction Rybczynski ignores, however, when his argument makes its most interesting turn, in chapter seven, where he joins the notion of coziness to the regimen of efficiency.

This chapter, entitled "Efficiency," is the heart of Rybczynski's feminist politics and cultural materialism. The heroines of his account are 19th-century American women like Catherine Beecher, the sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, who rationalized housekeeping by adapting the principles of efficiency engineer Frederick Winslow Taylor to the domestic workplace. Taylor and Taylorism are not often presented in such a positive light, but the efficient factory is in no way like the efficient kitchen of the woman who cares for her family without servants. This is the best part of *Home*, for it makes a point that is important by any standard, and is as interesting as Rybczynski can be when the homework he does leads to unexpected places. And if integrating the principles of technology with Dutch coziness is something of a stretch, that is exactly Rybczynski's evolutionary point. At a time when Beecher, Christine Frederick, and Mary Pattison were developing their efficiency principles in books and magazines like *The Ladies' Home Journal*, the British architect C. J. Richardson was proposing in *The Englishman's House* seventeen rooms and six thousand square feet as the norm for the gentleman's "suburban villa." No question here who wins the evolutionary struggle. This would have been a good place to end the argument.

But Rybczynski takes another turn and argues that Le Corbusier's own reading of Taylor is the source of everything that is wrong with modernism's abstraction, universalism, austerity, and coldness. I am unusually sympathetic to this kind of materialist argument and side with Jane Jacobs when she makes her case against Le Corbusier. Jacobs, however, attacks him on the grounds on which he has taken his stand—unlike Rybczynski. "Like most architects," he says, "Le Corbusier did not understand, or would not accept, that

more than his prose reflects his readers' minds. No one writes like Wolfe. Rybczynski, however, writes with the tone of moderate common sense.

Home is subtitled *A Short History of an Idea,* and Rybczynski summarizes some of the elements of this complex idea at the end of the chapter entitled "Intimacy":

> Comfort in the physical sense was still awaiting the eighteenth century and the improvement of such technologies as water supply and heating, as well as refinements to the internal subdivision of the home. But the transition from the public feudal household to the private family home was under way. The growing sense of domestic intimacy was a human invention as much as any technical device. Indeed, it may have been more important, for it affected not only our physical surroundings, but our consciousness as well.

Intimacy may have been the result of this new consciousness, however, rather than its cause. Rybczynski does not mention the role that literacy played in the creation of this interior space; nor does he mention the impact of Protestantism and its relationship to work and capital formation, or early theories of democratic individuality. He is more interested in the matter of rooms and furniture because his focus is restricted to the realm of "comfort." He writes in *Home*'s brief preface, "It was only when my wife and I built our home that I discovered at firsthand the fundamental poverty of modern architectural ideas. I found myself turning ... to memories of older houses, of older rooms ... to understand what had made them feel so right, so comfortable." By "poverty of ideas," he means only one thing: architectural education and modern architectural theory are not interested in comfort. "One would have thought that

the advent of domestic technology and home management had put the whole question of architectural style in a subordinate position." The arrangement of kitchens, baths, and laundry rooms is hardly "the whole question of architectural style." The division of the inside of the house from the outside is like the division between consciousness and circumstance in modernist fiction, and only nostalgia makes these inevitable divisions an evil.

Modernism itself can be understood as the investigation of the new and problematic relationship between parts and wholes—which Rybczynski, unfortunately, confuses. This confusion leads to the gesture on his final page, on which his readers' allegiance is surely based: "We should resist the inadequate definitions that engineers and architects have offered us. Domestic well-being is too important to be left to experts; it is, as it has always been, the business of the family and the individual. We must rediscover for ourselves the mystery of comfort, for without it, our dwellings will indeed be machines instead of homes." Can a broken contract and a broken leg, therefore, both be repaired by the same amateur as well? Justice, health, and comfort being equal, of course, and doctors, lawyers, and architects interchangeably incompetent.

Similar instances of Rybczynski's insouciance recur elsewhere in the text. The following is one of my favorite examples:

> But the historically accurate reconstruction of an *entire* house, both inside and out—and not meant as a museum exhibit but for daily living—is less common. Such a house has recently been designed by David Anthony Easton for a family in Illinois. Although it's made of modern materials ... and it accommodates air conditioning, central heating, and electricity, its appearance, plan, and room arrangement are those of two hundred years ago. The details are also historically correct—everything from the door handles to the crown moldings. The furniture consists solely of either authentic antiques or reproductions of eighteenth-century period designs. It is neither a copy of a specific house nor a modern "version" of a historical style. Nor is it an interpretation of the past. Rather it is the work of an architect from the eighteenth-century who, somehow, has found himself in the American Midwest in the twentieth. It is, as much as such a thing is possible, the real thing.

I'm not sure what this passage means because it does not seem ironic; nor can it be a distant allusion to Luis Borges' fiction. It does seem to suggest, however, that by extension, the authentic period details of the film *Sense and Sensibility* would make it *real* Jane Austen. Rybczynski uses Austen's *Mansfield Park* to make points about privacy, and he marshalls his evidence fairly. Yet elsewhere he says, "Consequently, the sedentary eigh-

teenth-century English bourgeois spent most of their time at home. . . . It was the age of conversation—and of gossip. The novel became popular. So did indoor games; men played billiards . . ." From where I sit, the rise of the novel is an epochal transformation of human consciousness. The rise of billiards isn't. Materialist explanations of historical development are constantly necessary, but Rybczynski's is, in the final account, too reductive. In making fun of modernist austerity and Marcel Breuer's 1925 Wassily chairs (which, to him, resemble "exercise machines"), he says, "There is something charmingly naive about the belief in the power of art to overcome physical reality." But it is equally naive to believe that coziness is all, and false to hold that comfort and beauty are mutually exclusive. Even *Metropolitan Home* can manage the coordination of these hardly polar features. In its fifteenth anniversary issue (March/April 1996), *Met Home* editors stated, "Our goal has always been to inspire you to experiment, to be bold, to define beauty for yourselves and to put it proudly into your life at home—without surrendering practicality or comfort." This seems reasonable and completely in keeping with the principles of Catherine Beecher, Christine Frederick, and Mary Pattison, whom Rybczynski celebrates. But ultimately, his own argument is neither comforting nor inspiring because it panders to complacency.

TERRENCE DOODY teaches in the Department of English at Rice University.

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Art, Class, and Home

ANNMARIE ADAMS

Did you ever wonder what the cluster of baby photos on your mother's night table says about her self-image? Why your free-thinking friends are so obsessed with African masks? Or why it has suddenly become difficult to find good reproductions (especially full scale) of Leonardo's *Last Supper*? David Halle's *Inside Culture: Art and Class in the American Home* offers answers to these and other contemporary cultural queries by exploring the images that adorns the walls, tabletops, and bookshelves of the American home.

Halle, a sociologist at SUNY-Stony Brook and the University of California, Los Angeles, bravely takes on the intelligentsia of art history and cultural theory in this book, arguing that the home and its occupants—ordinary people—have had as much to do with the development of art in this century as famous artists, academic scholarship, and museums. Through detailed interviews with 160 households in four neighborhoods in New York City and Long Island, Halle explores the relationship between social class and the sorts of things people typically display in their private rooms, such as paintings, prints, sculpture, family photographs, and religious figures. The neighborhoods range from "urban upper-middle class" to "suburban working class."

Halle's interpretation of his data takes direct aim at three mainstays of cultural theory: first, he describes as no less than "scandalous" the notion articulated by Thorstein Veblen in 1899 and extended by others, that art functions as a status symbol in society. From the perspective of a social scientist, Halle sees this "status striving" theory as seriously lacking in evidence. Second, he attempts to discredit the theory advanced by the Frankfurt School as early as the 1930s, that images of mass or pop culture are means by which large corporations (via the advertising industry) dominate and repress the public. Halle claims that this theory ignores the unique "meaning" that works of art hold for different individuals. Finally, Halle takes to task the theory of "art as cultural capital," which purports that high culture plays a central role in reinforcing and perpetuating the two-part class structure of the dominant and the dominated. This notion, associated primarily with Pierre Bordieu and Paul DiMaggio, is predicated on the belief that an appreciation of art is a learned, or acquired, capacity (cultural capital), passed on through an elitist educational system and the socialization of wealthy families. Followers of this school of thinking stress that the poor have no opportunity to appreciate the high arts. In this case, Halle does not dispute that the American working class has limited access to the arts, but he does suggest that very few members of the dominant class actually care about culture at all.

Halle presents his research in six thematic chapters; in each, a study of "context" illuminates the flaws in the above-mentioned cultural theories. Unfortunately, he seems completely unaware of changes in the fields of art and architectural history over the last twenty or thirty years. The focus of scholars has shifted from an almost exclusive preoccupation with form and intention to an increased awareness of the ways in which works of art and architecture function in a larger cultural arena. Even more egregious, however, is the fact that Halle seems oblivious to the whole field of material culture, whose basis is precisely what he has taken on in his book. In more than 250 pages of counterargument with outdated theories of cultural history, there is not a single mention of the "new" understanding of the home as revolutionized by institutions such as the Winterthur Museum, the rise of vernacular architecture studies, and the material culture courses now a standard part of university curricula. He makes no reference to the interdisciplinary scholarship that considers "cultural context," published in journals such as the *Winterthur Portfolio*, *Material Culture*, and *Material History Review*. In calling for

Large displays of photographs of family members are common throughout the homes of the middle and working classes, as this den of a Manhattan house illustrates. Halle contrasts this with the minority of the Manhattan sample which believes that family photos are not art and must therefore be confined to albums. (From *Art and Class in the American Home*.)

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house and home

Religious figures displayed in the bedroom of a sixty-year-old bachelor, in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, a working and lower-middle-class urban neighborhood. This grouping is an exact reconstruction of the way his mother displayed the figurines in her bedroom. From left: Madonna, St. Anthony, baby Jesus, St. Patrick, Madonna, St. John the Baptist, Joseph, and the Infant Jesus of Prague. (From *Art and Class in the American Home*.)

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a "materialist approach" to the study of home, Halle appears oblivious to the work of Elizabeth Cromley, Henry Glassie, Dolores Hayden, Bernard Herman, J. B. Jackson, Gwendolyn Wright, and others.

In addition to this shortcoming, his explanations of Americans' preference for certain images and objects seem somehow unconnected to or insufficiently supported by the elaborate quantitative analyses that pervade *Inside Culture*. Halle suggests, for example, that Americans like landscape paintings because their imagery compensates for the chaos of contemporary urban life; that the ways in which people arrange family photographs, in clusters of framed prints, reflect the fragility of the nuclear family today (i.e., members can be removed, divorced, substituted); and that Democrats display African masks with respect while Republicans present them with derision, demonstrating varying levels of acceptance of African-Americans according to the political bias of the individual. In the chapter on religious iconography, the author notes that the Virgin Mary is typically depicted from the waist up, a portrayal that de-emphasizes her virginity by avoiding her reproductive organs.

Halle's assertions, though entertaining, are purely speculative and have no obvious relation to the book's more than thirty tables concatenating class and culture. I was left wondering, for example, whether rural home owners were equally fond of landscape painting; whether the popularity of portable photo frames could be equally tied to the development of plastics or the penchant of Americans to move frequently; and why African masks are also popular in countries with relatively small black populations, such as Sweden, Canada, and England.

In chapter six, "The Truncated Madonna and Other Modern Catholic Iconography," for example, Halle refers to three such tables in which social class is factored against the religious orientation of the household, the number of Catholic homes displaying religious items,

and the content of the religious imagery, respectively. (Halle's categories for the imagery are amusing in themselves: Mary, "truncated" or "full-length"; Jesus, "as a man," "crucified," "Sacred Heart," "as a boy," "as a baby," "other"; Saints; the Pope.) But how do these distributions explain the disappearance of Mary's genitalia? In one of the author's rare nods to gender, he attributes the disappearance of da Vinci's *Last Supper* from Catholic dining rooms to the fact that women no longer wait on men at home and thus are less interested in men-only eating scenes. While some of Halle's speculations are insightful (though never substantiated), this one made me groan.

Despite these criticisms, *Inside Culture* may be useful in many respects to scholars engaged in the material world of family life. Perhaps its most important contribution is that it makes a strong case for studying the consumers—not just the producers—of culture. Some scholars have suggested this same reform for architectural history, recognizing that it is essential to include in our historical record those who commission, inhabit, transform, and demolish buildings, because they, too, make informed and influential decisions about the city. Bestowing this agency upon the consumers of culture is an essential tenet of material culture studies. In addition, Halle's rigorous sociological studies of the frequency of certain images in the home, although never restricted to any time frame, may inspire more architecture scholars to look at contemporary home life. Even today, many architectural historians use Edward Laumann and James House's classic 1970 study of the furnishings of living rooms and social class as a model sociological approach to examine the domestic realm. Another virtue of *Inside Culture* is its inclusion of more than ninety photographs and illustrations of real houses. While the measured drawings are rather amateurish, the black and white photographs are clear and well chosen, providing rare glimpses into the homes of a range of Americans today.

In his conclusion, Halle anticipates critics who may decry the narrowness of his sample (neighborhoods clustered around New York) and his privileging of some themes over others. New Yorkers, after all, may be more interested in art and culture than people in other urban areas. However, Halle challenges would-be critics to go out and gather evidence from other places themselves— a response that is characteristic of the brazen style that permeates this daring effort.

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Self-Help Homes

ELIZABETH C. CROMLEY

A house is an artifact, built of tangible materials on an actual site, exposed to the wearing effects of the weather. A home is that artifact inhabited, made of emotional and psychological materials deployed in and around the physical artifact. The title of Clare Cooper Marcus' book, *House as a Mirror of Self: Exploring the Deeper Meanings of Home,* obfuscates the difference between "house" and "home," misleading readers to think that the book is about architecture, when it is in fact about the "self" whose condition is discovered through its relation to the house.

Her analysis is premised on the ideas of Carl Jung and introduced by James Yandell, former president of the Jung Institute of San Francisco. He explains Jung's view, that "unconscious potential is put out into the world and then brought back in at a realized, conscious level and integrated into the expanding personality." When we create our own environments, as in furnishing our dwellings, we see ourselves mirrored, "see what had been not yet visible."

Jungians believe that everyone is on a journey toward wholeness, and the places we live both reflect and affect that process. Our stage and props change to suit different stages in our lives. The author finds that the exterior of the house and its location are chosen to express "the social identity we wish to communicate," but the interior and its moveable objects are our symbols of self.

Cooper Marcus sets out to discover why people have such deep feelings about their homes, seeing them as a vessel, a refuge, a cocoon. She pursued her project by interviewing some sixty people over the span of twenty years. How she found her subjects is captured in this quote: "When [Jean] heard about my work, she grew very excited and asked me to come talk with her about her desire to leave her unsatisfactory apartment." Her subjects were all volunteers, all living in the San Francisco Bay Area and all middle class—all "average" owners or renters of houses or apartments.

Cooper Marcus used the Gestalt psychology technique of role playing in order to give her subjects tools to reveal their deep feelings about their homes. First, she asked her subject to address their houses ("House, the way I feel about you is . . ."); then, they reversed roles, the house responding to its dweller. Subjects were also asked to use drawing techniques to gain access to their deep feelings. The drawings and the author's interpretations of them are used to bear out such chapters as "The Special Places of Childhood," "Always or Never Leaving Home," and "The Lost House: Disruptions in the Bonding with Home." Several exercises are listed at the ends of chapters for readers to try. An example: you and the person with whom you share your dwelling space each take a sheet of drawing paper and colored markers, and put down in words, pictures, and diagrams what the house means to you; compare to locate irritants, then analyze issues of territory, control, et cetera.

According to Clare Cooper Marcus, "A California study suggests that people with little control in their outer lives tend to create highly controlled gardens." She provides a photograph of her own garden (right) as a counterpoint: "Those with more freedom of choice in their outer lives create more wild or rambling gardens." (From *House as a Mirror of Self.*)

home, house, housing

The author asked her subjects to use drawing as a medium to access their feelings about their homes. At left is Cooper Marcus' rendering of her memories of her childhood environment; at right is a drawing by a woman who hated her home because it was furnished by her husband's first wife. (From *House as a Mirror of Self*.)
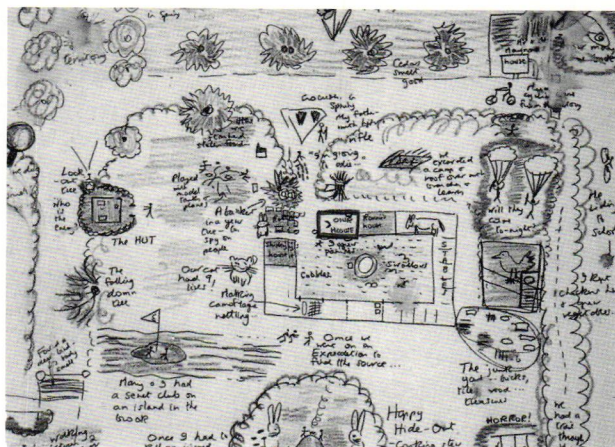
Readers who have a taste for the therapeutic may welcome the book and find it useful. The schematic nature of the learning process—unconsciously putting feelings into the home, gaining enough distance to name these feelings, bringing them into consciousness—sounds accessible and potentially rewarding. But for me, the writing style, assumptions, and a historical tone outweigh any possible benefits or "awakenings" this book may precipitate.

For one thing, the author writes with so many qualifiers that reading her text is like squinting through fog. "Often," "frequently," "apparently," "almost always," "rarely"—no statement goes unqualified. This tic indicates that Cooper Marcus doubts her own assertions, that her method only might work, sometimes, maybe. Further, her decision to interview only middle-class dwellers reveals an assumption that only those in this segment of the population express themselves through their homes. She attempts to rationalize this assumption by stating that the poor do not have the means to make conscious choices, while the rich avoid making personal statements by hiring decorators. Such a narrow view excludes the expressive creations of so many others, for example, the homeless in many cities who have claimed and transformed unused plots of land to create highly personal landscapes. A theory of the self coming into consciousness should be true for *all* human beings; if the self is only available to middle-income reflection, then Cooper Marcus' enterprise is mere entertainment.

The "self" itself is a problematic concept. First, it ought to have a historical dimension and in this universalizing account, it does not. Definitions of the self have evolved and varied over time and across cultures, conceived in relation to religion, nature, the state, and so on. But Cooper Marcus gives Jung's early 20th-century conception of the self a timelessness and universality that it doesn't deserve.

This notion of the "house as a mirror of self" is more complicated when it comes to houses that shelter more than one person. For then, the question arises: whose self does the house express? In the literature of home

decorating, home improvement, and other architectural handbooks from the past hundred and fifty years, there is an evident assumption that the house should reflect the character of its owner. But this assumption changes historically. In the patriarchal 1850s, for example, a house that expressed the male head of household's social position and character was not considered problematic for the wife and children who trailed in his wake. By the early 20th century, this view broadened to assert that the home should express the "personality of the family." However, the fact that each household member has a separate personality undercuts this idea. The notion of a unified expression of the self in the house may simply defy logic.

Because of her focus on the self and on individualism, Cooper Marcus pays no attention to the virtues of a home as a collective endeavor, in which people learn to live as a group, attend to each other's needs, make families, and find ways of sacrificing individuality for the good of the whole. She locates "the beginning of the act of dwelling" in the child's desire to make a secret hut or fort, away from the adults, where environment can be molded to the child's needs. Children do make forts for their private enjoyment, to be sure, an experience that is intentionally solitary. But much of children's play-building is collective, too, with shared space produced as a result of negotiated group construction processes. With such an overemphasis on the individual, Cooper Marcus' analysis ignores the multitude of social and collective dimensions at play in achieving a self. The way the house figures in that social construction of the self would be worth exploring.

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Living by the Rules

BRUCE C. WEBB

Reading Denis Wood and Robert Beck's *Home Rules* is a little like listening to a late night bull session between a couple of inspired wits, with someone keeping score. The scoring in this case has to do with identifying the rules that personify a family's attitudes about the contents of a single room. They take as an example the living room of Denis and Ingrid Wood's at 435 Cutler Street (in an unnamed city), which, at first glance, is nothing extraordinary. Part of an early 20th-century Georgian Revival builder house, the room is furnished with an eclectic collection of family possessions, among them a Mies van der Rohe lounge chair and coffee table, a couple of house plants, framed lithographs and drawings, a stereo, several pieces of folk art, and a bookcase. These are the kind of things you might find in the homes of any number of young professional (or professorial) families—what the authors call the "dominated fraction (artists and intellectuals) of the dominant class (bourgeoisie)." But the room abounds with social awareness as these class identities vie with one another. The family's possessions play across the spectrum of paradigms of social and cultural interpretation (is it "primitive/peasant/industrial" or "folk/popular/elite"?), forming a fractionalized identity that defies simple classification.

This book is premised on the authors' observation that rooms and their contents are the subject of the rules. For the Woods' living room in particular, the authors cite some 223 of them: rules that protect things, rules that protect kids, rules that concern the appearance of a thing, rules that control the appearance of a kid. Together, they reveal values and meanings in the domestic landscape. And because the rules are aimed almost exclusively at the couple's children ("What is a home for a child but a field of rules?" the authors ask rhetorically), they constitute a kind of homegrown cultural code through which family values are passed from one generation to the next.

The rules themselves are not remarkable and will, for the most part, be familiar to anyone with children. There are rules about the stairs ("Don't play on the stairs"; "Don't stomp on them") and about the Mies chair ("Don't sit on it real hard"; "Don't bounce on it"; "Don't stand on it"; "Don't untie the leather"). On one level, the rules might be taken as terms of a comparative audit for parents anxious to protect the house and its contents from energetic tyros who consider the world as infinitely malleable and always forgiving. Adults, of course, know better, and rule by rule, the world is brought into fuller consciousness to the child who learns to dwell in ruled space.

But the rules are only yardmarkers in a book that is really a collection of informal discursive essays ("divagations") on everything from the percentage of family income spent on the various possessions in the room and the class distinctions embedded in each, to the etymology of the word "barbarian," which they use as a metaphor for the kids ("a prominent class of the phylum Barbariana, which in other classes embraces rabbits, rats, snakes, kids, mildew, foreigners, wire grass, dry rot, male cats, the lower classes, bats, slobs, jerks and blue jays, all of which are equivalent from the perspective of the paranoia that is Culture"). The essays are balanced between finely drawn, almost clinical descriptions and more free-formed interpretive commentaries. Wood and Beck are adept at elaboration, describing, for example, the material composition, technical construction, and aura of some of the surveyed objects. There is a particularly insightful meditation on the Mies chaise, which they begin by framing as a technical challenge—"to make a chair as a falling leaf." They continue by describing it as a utilitarian object, a product of mass production, a work of art, and a political symbol, "serious enough to be censored by the Nazis—the furniture was deviant, cool, and airy (it rejected the father [hence the fatherland])." These brief essays place these homey

The simplicity of Denis and Ingrid Wood's living room belies the fact that it is a minefield of rules. (From *Home Rules*.)
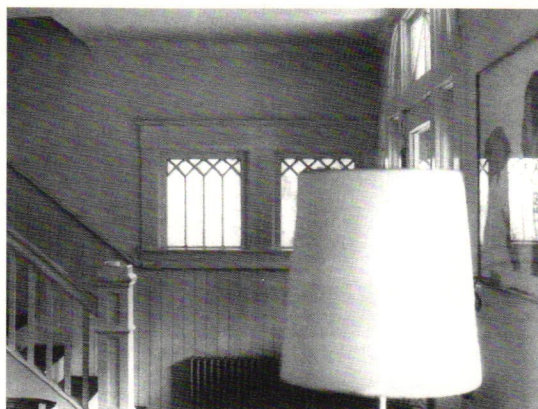
objects in a gallery of reflections on domestic materiality and culture.

Wood and Beck dedicate the book to the memory of Roland Barthes, one of the founders of semiology. Anyone who has read Barthes' writings knows how deftly he could move between intricate and profoundly literary interpretations of various cultural phenomena (as in his essay "The Eiffel Tower") and rigorously systematic, quasi-scientific discourses (*The Fashion System*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1983). Just as Barthes in his investigation of fashion separated the language of the fashion world from that of the daily wearing of clothes, Wood and Beck are careful to distinguish the two ways of perceiving, and hence describing, any object, place, or experience. For example, a living room may be analyzed either in architectural terms or as a social artifact, as space that conveys a lifestyle through "the things in it and their significance." This distinction is germane to architecture because the terms of description invariably color our understanding of what is being described. In the special culture of architecture, buildings are often thought to exist (as they are most often photographed) in a kind of theoretical laboratory where they are treated to impenetrably solipsistic discussions—chains of reasoning that forge concepts and interpretations out of the act of architectural formation.

But the rules of the "house" are different from those of the home, and to understand the difference is to acknowledge the associative nature of interpretation. The connotations that cling to something are often a result of prior experiences, naturally. The gap between the denotative formulations of the architect or designer and the multitude of connotative interpretations which they generate is not easily mediated by theoretical explanations.

In this book, the authors' interpretations are carried primarily on streams of metaphors, which flow distractingly uncontrollably. For instance, the screen door in the Wood's house is "a plenitude," "a mathesis," "a functional tissue of the organ of the house," "a reflection of an economy," "a part of a curriculum," "a regulator," "a generator of a taxonomy of persons, a taxonomy

based neither on sex, nor size, nor color, nor age," leading to this final anatomical trip through the subjunctive: "If the room were a stomach, the screen door would be the esophageal sphincter." Not all of these rampant renamings will hit home with readers. The authors also give in far too frequently to their urge to include every observation, quotation, name, definition, quip, parallel idea, analogy, and reference that flits across their minds. But this is that kind of book—open-ended and never-ending—a bit like a diary, only with subheadings. It's unfortunate that Wood and Beck's work was not treated to a conscious editing job, which might have kept the overflow of descriptions and often overblown cleverness in tolerable check.

The plan of the book is complicated. It proposes to proceed systematically through the room, describing its contents, placing them in "rule space," and then examining the individual objects in "value and meaning space." This structure is not always entirely coordinated with the content, however, despite the abundance of metatextual commentary which often just gets in the way. Nor do their allusions to other, more systematic studies in a wide range of disciplines (environmental psychology, philosophy, semiotics, anthropology) succeed in convincing that theirs is of like genre. Rather, one can't help but suspect that what the authors are really up to is writing a novel, as their text is littered with snippets of dialogue (". . . causing Denis to thunder, 'God dammit, no running on the stairs'") and overly onomatopoeic passages ("Plop, one of the kid's feet hits the floor. Shuffle, shuffle, creak, plap; the toilet seat hits the tank. . . . Shuffle, shuffle, creak, plop, back to bed"). With its quirky, self-conscious organization and hypertext strategies, the book is as nonlinear as a CD-ROM might be. The authors themselves occasionally throw up their hands, saying "the book can be read in any order," and providing a list of suggestions of how to best approach it.

With these caveats in mind, *Home Rules* can be both entertaining and provocative. It certainly demonstrates that sustained, inductive observation and thoughtful reflection can yield bountiful offerings indeed. Still, the book is a bit too close to its subject, a bit too down-home and informal. The elaborate "unwrapping" of so many familiar objects is often disconcerting, off-putting, disorienting, or arguable. Wood and Beck's study would have benefited greatly from a larger frame of reference, one that took into account how other families and other classes construct their ruled space. Without this larger context, it is not clear whether *Home Rules* is a study of objects and rules or an examination of the Woods' unique neuroses. The book also fails to account for the other factors that influence the children's behavior and outlook. Among the contents of the living room, for example, a television set is noticeably

absent. True, it could be elsewhere in the house, but this book has us believing otherwise. One photograph depicts Denis Wood, flanked by his two sons, lounging on the white sofa, staring television-style at a portfolio-sized book called *People and Places of the Past*, propped up on the Mies coffee table. The photograph summons one of the most iconic of class-conscious pretensions: "Oh, we never watch TV."

Neither Wood nor Beck were trained as architects. Wood holds degrees in English and geography and teaches design and psychology at North Carolina State University; Beck studied human development and psychology and is now a research fellow at the Meadows School of Art at Southern Methodist University. Although they are well informed about architecture and design, they do not give favored status to either field. Their point of view is a kind of middle ground, conscious of the world of designed and crafted objects while extendable to the reality occupied by most people, which is far removed from the privileged realm of custom-designed and decorated homes. Working inside the home and outside the profession, the authors succeed in removing the layers of slickness and hyperbole that idealize and mythologize what the design professions can do. (And, as if in antithesis to professional slickness, the book is illustrated in a sort of *verité* manner, with seventy muddy and badly composed photographs).
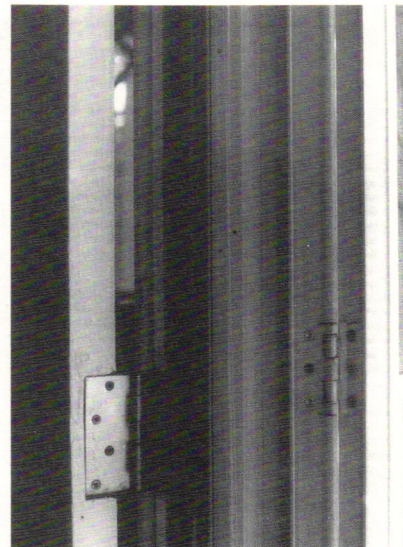
The room described in *Home Rules* comes across, then, not as a synthesis of intentions or sensibilities expressed by a particular style, but as a lively mix of many voices speaking at once—"the voice of comfort, the voice of convenience, the voice of high culture, the voice of a certain easy formality, the voice of a well-ordered life." It is like looking through the smooth surface of an allegory and finding a novel brewing inside. Think of the valuable critical perspective that could be gained if this kind of candid analysis was applied to the those oft-reproduced images of high-styled living and domestic tranquility that grace the pages of such glossy magazines as *Architectural Digest* and *Interior Design*—fantasy places created by distinguished architects for the well-to-do.

The highly personal ruminations that pervade *Home Rules* bring to mind not only the numerous sourcebooks with which the authors acknowledge kinship but also the critical framework of Ellen Frank's *Literary Architecture* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979). In particular, Wood and Beck's stance echo Frank's observation that, although architecture is the only art object in which we actually live, "we live in another construction—we do not commonly call it art—also of our own making: consciousness." In order to create this consciousness, "the writers who select architecture as their art analogue dematerialize the more material art, architecture, that they may material-

ize the more immaterial art, literature." The procession from physical room to emotional room is hardly objective; rather, it is always conscious of how consciousness takes possession of what it experiences and what it describes. Frank cites how the rooms remembered by Marcel Proust came to signify not only certain physical and ambient qualities, but the very shaping of the writer as well. "The mind, like the liquid poured into a container, assumes the room's shape," writes Frank. "Marcel recalls 'a room in which my mind, forcing itself upward for hours on end to leave its moorings, to elongate itself upwards so as to take on the exact shape of the room'; he succeeds in 'filling the room with my own personality until I thought no more of the room than myself.'" In other words, a room can be a private fiction in which the observer struggles to find the equilibrium of a recording consciousness. The remedy for this loss of subject is not simple; by feigning objectivity and adopting methods of the hard sciences—as environmental psychologists did during their brief period of influence in the early 1970s—there is an even greater danger of losing the essence of a place by reducing it to a field of recorded data.

The abundance of observed detail and inspired commentary in *Home Rules* never quite coalesces, unfortunately, so that the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts. The truth of the matter is, very little can be said in broad and general terms in a study that is so intimately focused. Although *Home Rules* purports to be systematic, in its high-flying connections and wacky correspondences, the book often borders on the surreal. It demonstrates the triumph of imagination over memory in the formation of consciousness. By seeking to reveal the intricate construction of that consciousness, *Home Rules* might be better taken, then, as a potential precursor to another book, one with the magic of a real narrative which might successfully thread together all these fine observations while providing more insight into who the hell these people are and how they really talk to their kids. And how their kids talk back to them.

The spring-loaded screen door, which shares the door frame with the proper entry door, commands its own set of rules: "Don't push on the screen"; "Don't slam it"; "Don't open it to strangers"; "Don't talk through the screen door to guests or friends." (From *Home Rules*.)

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house and home

Writing Home

RENÉ DAVIDS

As the population continues to grow increasingly diverse, ironically, residential environments continue to become ever more homogeneous. Growing numbers of households are headed by single parents or same-sex couples, the elderly population is expanding, and more and more families are seeking alternatives to the still-predominant living arrangements designed for the traditional nuclear family. Moreover, with the constant flux of the labor market as a result of technological advances and global competition, many people are finding themselves without stable or secure jobs, and hence, unable to afford decent housing. Despite these profound social and economic changes and their implications for housing, surprisingly few architects are developing creative solutions to address them.

The reason may be a combination of the limitations imposed by the marketplace and a range of historical factors. Like other large industries, housing production in the United States is governed by economies of scale. As buildable land becomes ever more scarce and expensive, houses and housing are more likely to be the product of such factors as unit production cost and resale value rather than individuals' desires or needs. Moreover, by the 1960s and 1970s, books such as Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961) and Oscar Newman's *Defensible Space* (New York: Macmillan, 1972) had exposed the shortcomings of postwar redevelopment projects. These "failures" prompted architects to move away from housing experiments to concentrate instead on what they considered to be their exclusive prerogative: architectural form. While housing as a social and formal issue has not yet regained its place as a special concern of leading architects, it at least recovered some ground in the 1980s. Several projects in recent years have indicated a renewed interest in residential design as a theoretical and pragmatic proposition, in particular, "House Rules," an exhibition held at the Wexner Center for the Arts in 1994, documented in *assemblage* 24 (August 1994); *Center* 8 (1993), entitled "Dwelling, Social Life, Buildings, and the Space Between Them"; not to mention this issue of *Design Book Review* and the many publications that are reviewed within these pages.

"House Rules" included the work of ten teams of architects and theoreticians, which represented Latino, African-American, feminist, and gay perspectives, as well as mainstream ideologies. This seemingly all-inclusive list in fact has many omissions. For example, it does not include a senior architect despite the fact that the population over eighty-five is likely to double in the next twenty years. Mark Robbins, curator of architecture at the Wexner Center and the exhibition's organizer, wanted to give designers and thinkers "a platform for experiment, whether or not it resulted in buildable design." Both the curator and the editors of *assemblage* readily concede the weakness of the premise—that is, of relating ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation to the determination of architectural form. Nevertheless, Robbins believed that raising the issue of house and housing design was in itself a worthy goal, even if the results it generated were not necessarily original or practical.

Unfortunately, much of the material in the catalogue/issue of *assemblage* 24 is more concerned with avant-garde posturing than genuine exploration. The text and graphics are often obscure, imprecise, full of jargon, at odds with each other, or all of the above. Here is one example of the sort of exchanges that occur between the practitioners and the thinkers: architect Suzan Selçuk asks, "Does immateriality shift gender roles?" to which writer Allucquere Rosanne Stone responds, "Does a bear shit in the woods?" If Stone's intent was to supply a metaphor for inevitability, she goes on to contradict herself: "To be more precise, immateriality shifts gender roles only as much as participants want it to." In other words, participants have a choice, not at all like bears.

Assemblage's confusing presentation of visual material is at least consistent with the quality of most of the texts. For example, the collaboration between feminist theorist bell hooks and architects Hank Koning and Julie Eizenberg deals with the zoning restrictions applied to detached single-family dwellings. As a reaction, their house would "provide a variety of spatial experiences rather than a bunch of boxed functions." Further, hooks describes vernacular architecture as a vehicle of cultural expression used by poor African-Americans in a racist society, and refers to her own experiences of adversity. But readers are left to wonder what this house—emblematic, presumably, of what would be possible in a world without zoning laws, or a potential instrument against racial oppression—would look like, because the eight-page spread does not contain a single plan, section, or perspective. Instead, there are three views of the same model, each with
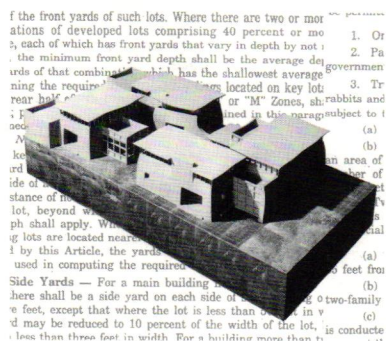
"Housing Without Boundaries: Race, Class, and Gender," a collaboration/ correspondence between bell hooks and architects Julie Eizenberg and Hank Koning, for "House Rules"; exhibition at the Wexner Center for the Arts, 1994. (From *assemblage* 24.)

a different textual background, and never an attempt to establish a connection between text and work. And whereas "Case Study House: Comfort and Convenience" by design curator Ellen Lupton and architect Jane Murphy does include plans and a seemingly coherent proposition, the messy typography makes it illegible. The loss is the reader's, who must work to get at their idea for a one-story house, made of factory-built components, intended to make the structure easily convertible into multiple dwellings.

John Randolph and Bruce Tomb of the Interim Office of Architecture (IOOA) and writer Henry Urbach focus on the closet, which they contend keeps the improper aside but within reach, in order to sustain fantasies of purity and control. For them, closets separate homosexuality from heterosexuality, isolating each from its fearsome counterpart. "The ante-closet," Urbach writes, "is marked by the swinging door, a destabilization of boundaries." But the project is based on notions about living environments that are more at home in the 1950s than in the 1990s. While discrimination against homosexuals is still prevalent, some significant barriers have fallen in the last forty years. Recently a front-page article in the New York Times reported that 32 percent of all homosexuals and bisexuals in the United States live in the suburbs, many of them openly. Furthermore, the physical plan of middle-class houses has itself undergone a substantial shift. Closets are no longer dark, cramped, and secretive but are now walk-in rooms with attached dressing areas. More significantly, family rooms and kitchens have replaced living rooms as the center of the home of the 1990s, signaling that the separation between clean and dirty, presentable and hidden, public and private, are quickly fading as distinctions of the past.

Amid the clutter and posturing of "House Rules," "Mi casa es su casa" by Margaret Crawford and ADOBE LA (Architects and Designers Opening the Border Edge of Los Angeles) provides a clear exposition of an interesting subject, extolling the cultural transformations of the existing suburban fabric of East Los Angeles by Latino immigrants. However, their enthusiasm becomes sentimental when they write: "As a form of social action, the continuing use and transformation of the existing houses questions the need for architectural intervention and the need for reinventing the house." The transformations they describe are the product of immigrant resilience in the impoverished and often hostile urban environment of East L.A., which in fact could benefit from more architectural intervention than it currently receives.

Unlike "House Rules," Center's issue "Dwelling: Social Life, Buildings, and the Spaces Between Them" offers a sober treatment of the subject and a more conventional graphic design—in other words, illustrations that support the text. Guest-edited by Robert Mugerauer, the articles analyze different aspects of dwelling and the built environment, and are consistently serious even if some lack convincing conclusions. Among those that fit the latter category is Enrique Larranaga's "On Patios and Fireplaces: Building, Dwelling, and Order," which attempts to distinguish the Anglo-American from the Hispanic-American modes of understanding and representing the world. He writes, "The traditional Anglo-American town results from the i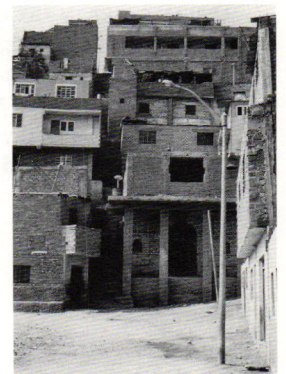nteraction of the independent elements defined by the individual houses, with each house somehow defining a territory of its own and the urban world resulting from the collection of microcosms formed by the houses and the fireplaces. The Latin American town, in contrast, is first experienced as a homogeneous mass, out of which the individual parts detach themselves only to the extent that the overall sense of the whole is not compromised." To demonstrate that these contrasting notions are still alive, Larranaga sets up a comparison between Venezuelan architect Carlos Raúl Villanueva's house in Caracas (1950), and American architect Frank O. Gehry's house in Santa Monica (1978). Nearly three decades and several aesthetic shifts apart, these two houses have little in common. Had Larranaga compared Villanueva's house with one of the many houses built in Los Angeles during the 1950s by disciples of Walter Gropius or Le Corbusier, or Gehry's house with some recent house in Caracas by an admirer of Gehry, the cultural differences would surely be more difficult to detect.

As architecture becomes everywhere more homogenous, it is tempting to believe that the combined creative resources of the disenfranchised will ensure a diversified environment. However, in "Creating a Sense of Community: Low-Income Urban Neighborhoods in Lima, Peru," Henry A. Dietz warns that, "regardless of how inventive and positive informal settlements may be, they are still symptomatic of enormous economic and social inequities, and they still contain enormous numbers of people living under extremely poor conditions, especially during extended periods of economic crisis such as [those] Peru has experienced since the mid-1980s."

Greg Hise analyzes the impact of theoretical work on the formation of the contemporary environment in his excellent article, "Building the World of Tomorrow: Regional Visions, Modern Community Housing, and America's Postwar Urban Expansion." He focuses on the role that housing and home-building played in the mid-20th-century shift to decentralized regional planning. According to Hise, it was the prosaic single-family dwelling, with its rational, efficient plan which was so amenable to replication, and not the glamorous experimental houses inspired by the imagery of the technological revolution, that was the seed for the new mass-produced suburban landscape. Hise's conclusion, that the world of today does not exactly bear out yesterday's ideas for the "world of tomorrow," is well to note when absorbing the theories on domestic form presented in all of these themed publications.

The built environment is a product of a variety of processes, both theoretical and pragmatic. Architecture is increasingly threatened by powerful economic forces, driven as much by image as by market share. In the midst of these stringent yet shifting circumstances, how may we evaluate old and new models for homes and housing and their ever-questionable suitability to the needs and desires of individuals and the societies of which they are a part? Despite the uneven results, these publications ultimately deserve commendation for encouraging genuine research and debate about a topic of crucial relevance to us all.

Communities like this one in Lima, Peru, are created in an ad hoc manner, for poor urban dwellers in developing countries are typically left no other alternative but to build their own neighborhoods. This means they illegally occupy land (usually marginally or peripherally located) and construct housing that tends toward large-scale oversettlement. (From Center 8.)

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House Calls

KATHLEEN JAMES

In the last quarter of a century, there has been a proliferation of books and articles addressing the origins of modern American ideas of domesticity. Most reinforce the sentimental view of women's moral and spiritual authority within the home, a view held by Victorians on both sides of the Atlantic. Annmarie Adams provides an important antidote to this familiar cliché in *Architecture in the Family Way: Doctors, Houses, and Women, 1870–1900*, a study of the impact of the public health movement on late 19th-century British domestic architecture. Along with Dolores Hayden's earlier study of housekeeping, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), Adams' new book challenges us to look beyond the parlor and examine the more neglected aspects of the 19th-century middle-class dwelling.

While Hayden drew attention to the kitchen and, more broadly, to the house as a workplace, Adams is interested in the spaces and systems devoted to the care of the body: plumbing, sickrooms, and lying-in rooms (a room of confinement for pregnant women). Moreover, it is not just the details of domestic architecture that interest her but the public discussion of these issues that transpired at the time. As in previous studies, here is an example of reform-minded women (in this case, allied with the medical profession) challenging the authority of architects in determining domestic arrangements. While many of these women remained housewives, others, such as Dr. Alice Hamilton in the United States, embraced the equation of public health with women's work to build a pioneering career, in her case, as a professor at the Harvard Medical School.
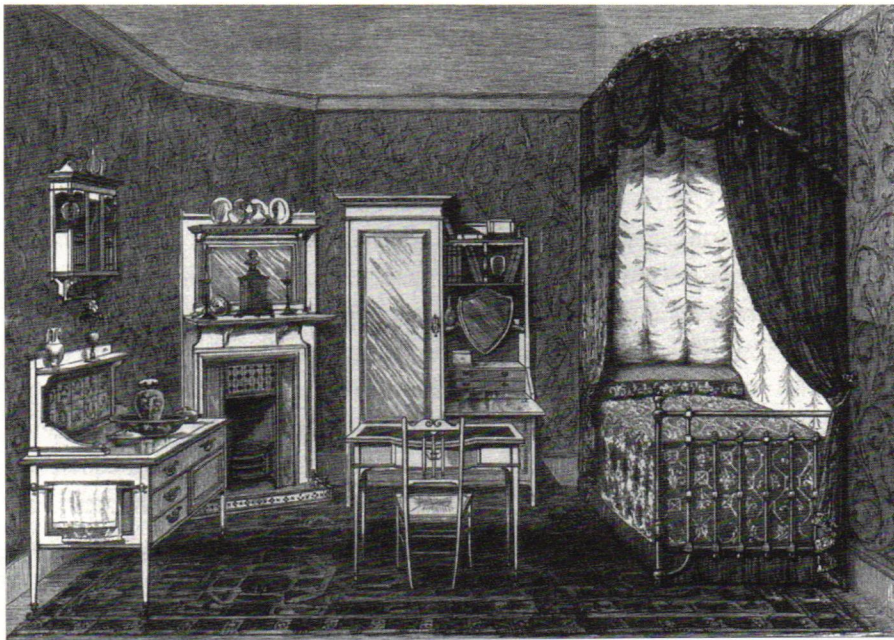
Victorian women were entrusted not only with the religious and moral education of their children, but with the physical well-being of their entire households. At a time when only the poor made use of public hospitals, the home's sickroom was as important a part of women's domain as the nursery or the kitchen. Requiring a very different approach to interior decoration than the more public rooms of the house, it was supposed to be as easy to clean as later International Style living rooms. Indeed, the belief that metal bedsteads were healthier than wooden ones presaged the popularity of tubular steel furniture of the 1920s. At the time, women were also charged with the inspection of the mechanical systems of the increasingly complex modern dwelling. Sewer gas leaks were especially feared, and popular manuals directed at housewives taught them how to detect this threat. Other dangers included arsenic-laced wallpaper and contaminated drinking water.

In turning from the parlor and the schoolroom to an examination of drains and ventilation, Adams demonstrates the degree to which "scientific" practices infringed upon the sanctuary that the Victorian home supposedly provided from modern rationalism. "The house was not a safe, protective shelter, removed from a dangerous and unpredictable Victorian city. Between 1870 and 1900, middle-class homes were considered much more poisonous and dangerous than public spaces or working-class neighborhoods," writes Adams. At the same time, the author makes clear that, in addition to
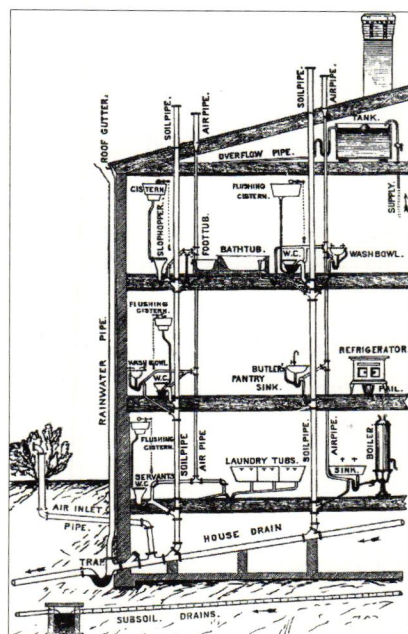
This illustration, taken from Harriette M. Plunkett's 1885 book *Women, Plumbers and Doctors,* is labeled, "A properly plumbed house—Woman's Sphere." (From *Architecture in the Family Way.*)

empirical data, society's assumptions about gender greatly influenced discussions of public and individual health, much as they continue today. For instance, she makes impressive use of the time-honored equation of the female body with the domestic interior, writing, "Victorian doctors revealed, time and again, their frustration with the basic fact that pregnancy—as well as other female ailments—was beyond their sight. They could not control what they could not see, they implied, echoing the sanitarians' attitude towards domestic architecture. Just as the sanitarians had dissolved the walls of the house, the medical profession tried to break down the opaque barriers between the outside and inside of women's bodies by confining the pregnant woman to an easily controllable and observable environment."

The close relationship as perceived by Victorians between women's bodies and the home created new opportunities for their involvement in architecture. Earlier historians of sentimental domesticity have revealed the degree to which, beginning in the 1850s, decorative-arts reform enabled women like design reformer Candance Wheeler and landscape designer Gertrude Jekyll to build careers that extended, though didn't necessarily challenge, conventional definitions of women's work. Adams, by contrast, draws attention to such topics as Victorian women's criticisms of the presumed domestic ideal of the single-family house, their advocacy of the continental-style apartments, and their banishment of children from the sites of adult entertaining. Particularly interesting is her discussion of the apartment hotels erected by and for single working women in London.

Adams' arguments are securely grounded in an impressive survey of late 19th-century publications on public health, especially in relation to the dwelling. However, it is difficult to judge to what extent the prescriptions made in this literature were actually implemented. How were the interior arrangements of English houses in 1900 actually different from what they had been thirty years prior? Did the often strident voices of the health manuals command respect in their time? Why or why not? Adams provides tantalizing hints, but never fully describes the degree to which reformers' visions succeeded or failed in transforming the behavior of housebuilders and buyers.

Also unclear are the chronological limits of the phenomena she describes. Adams concludes that "the close association of houses, bodies, and women in England was short-lived—approximately thirty years," but fails to adequately explain the reasons for its decline after the turn of the century. Certainly middle-class acceptance of the hospital as the site of childbirth and care of the seriously ill shifted much of the responsibility to professionals. But did women, once "denied their role as inspectors and designers of domestic architecture, return to motherhood," as Adams claims? Her chapter on domestic architecture and feminism would seem to belie the simplicity of this conclusion, pointing the way instead toward women's continued activities as architects, interior decorators, and social reformers. The scholar who disproves Adams on this point, however, will remain in her debt for drawing attention to so many neglected and intriguing aspects of Victorian domesticity.

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Briefly Reviewed

MEDIEVAL LONDON HOUSES, John Schofield, Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1994, 288 pp., illus., $60.00.

John Schofield's *Medieval London Houses* is a monumental study of the city's domestic spaces from 1200 to 1600. More an encyclopedia than a historic account, this massive tome comprises six chapters, ordered thematically, on such topics as "The Topographical Setting," "Properties and Buildings," and "Development of Rooms and Open Spaces." The chapters are followed by a "selective gazetteer" of 201 sites in London. The book is illustrated throughout with historic images of the sites and exquisite measured drawings that reflect the author's extensive archaeological explorations.

The range of Schofield's interests is exhaustive. He touches on everything from the impact of London's topography on building patterns to the development of particular rooms in a house; from the materials used in house building to the methods of construction. He uses material evidence to argue the "metropolitan progressiveness" of London compared to other cities at the same time. His nearly anatomical reading of house plans yields a range of insights, for example, the fact that individuals and families valued domestic privacy as early as the 13th century, or that the great diversity of construction methods may be attributable to the city's fluctuating immigrant population. These themes, along with others that are consistently explored throughout the book, are commonly associated with later periods in London's urban history.

Schofield's meticulous use of sources may serve as a model for other historic studies. For example, he manages to reconstruct medieval and Tudor London from surviving buildings, archaeological excavation, documentary records, visual evidence, and contemporary descriptions. The author acknowledges that a particularly important point of departure for his own study was John Stow's *Survey of London*, published in 1603, which included descriptions of two hundred secular buildings. Schofield selected 128 of Stow's sites and then attempted "to delve behind [Stow's book] into the buildings he passes over with little or no comment."

Readers interested in urban history and the history of housing will not be disappointed with *Medieval London Houses*. It is necessary reading for anyone drawn to the minutiae of medieval domestic life.
—**Annmarie Adams**

AFRICAN NOMADIC ARCHITECTURE: SPACE, PLACE, AND GENDER, Labelle Prussin, with essays by various contributors, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995, 245 pp., illus., $55.00.
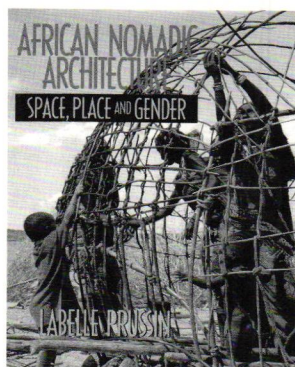

It may be said that, throughout the world, women use and exercise more control over domestic spaces than any other parts of the built environment. For few cultures, however, is this observation as evident as with the African nomads who, from Mauretania to Somali, inhabit the inhospitable terrain of the Sahara desert. For them, dwellings are their only buildings and these portable tents are almost entirely erected, packed for transport, and re-erected by women, who in many cases also own them. In *African Nomadic Architecture: Space, Place, and Gender,* author Labelle Prussin speculates on the cross-cultural association between women and interior space, while describing the historical, technological, environmental, and ritual conditions that shape the design and inhabitation of African tents.

Prussin and her collaborators go on to detail the construction and overlapping domestic and ritual use of tents among eleven different nomadic peoples. The authors draw upon the methodology of material culture to examine their subjects, for example, buildings that can be reconfigured into palaquins to shelter women and children as they move from one tent site to the next. Of these mutable, temporary structures, Prussin states, "The 'permanence' [of the tent resides] in the minds and behavior of those who build it, from the repetitive reassemblage and reconstruction of the architectural elements into an almost identical assemblage at each new point in space." The permanent position of furnishings within this impermanent architecture is particularly important. Many are integral to rituals such as marriage ceremonies, in which new tents are created to establish new households. Simultaneously extending and challenging familiar assumptions about domesticity, this far-reaching book encourages a holistic approach to architecture which welds construction, function, and meaning. —**Kathleen James**

BUILDING THE WOODEN HOUSE: TECHNIQUE AND DESIGN, Konrad Wachsmann, with new essays by Chirsta and Michael Grunig and Christian Sumi, Birkhäuser (Basel, Boston), 1995, 172 pp., illus., $62.00.

The republication of *Building the Wooden House,* Konrad Wachsmann's 1935 paean to wood construction, is indicative of the current appetite for repackaging and reconsuming the past. Recognized in his day as an experimenter in wood, Wachsmann wrote
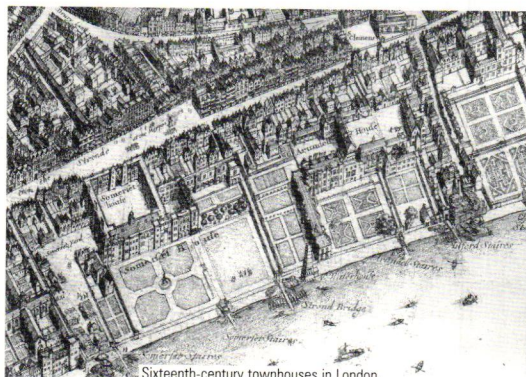
Sixteenth-century townhouses in London.

Contemporary Hadendowa (Beja) tent in the Sudan.

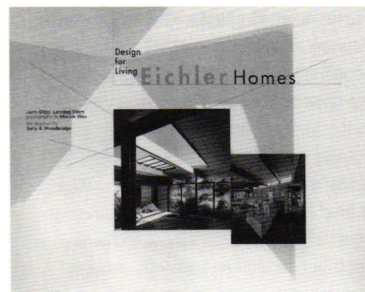Leupnitz-Neuostra Housing Development.

this book to disseminate his "innovative" understanding of wood construction. A fascinating timepiece, this slim volume betrays the original publisher's attempt to capture the enthusiasm for the architect of Albert Einstein's house. Wachsmann won the commission to build an almost entirely wooden house, at Einstein's request, bestowed by the city of Berlin to one of its most famous adopted sons. Though much is made of this link to Einstein in the original book and in the new essays, in fact, the house was rather modest and reflected little of the genius and unorthodox thinking of its owner, or of its purportedly inventive architect.

In the republication, two new essays attempt to locate Wachsmann among the masters of modern constructive techniques but a careful reading of this book shows him to be more enthusiastic than savvy about the potential of wood construction and engineering. In Wachsmann's original introduction, he provides a theoretical overview of construction methods, then proceeds in the next three chapters to provide line drawings and photographs that illustrate the wood-frame, wood-panel, and log-house approaches, respectively. Though the book perhaps served as a useful primer to this type of building in its time, today it offers little beyond an enthralled and often incorrect description of American wood-frame techniques of the 1920s. Paying much lip service to the virtues of industrial and mass production (reminiscent of Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture*), Wachsmann describes panel construction as a panacea to the housing needs of industrial society. Indeed, such was Wachsmann's conviction that he and Walter Gropius later developed the "General Panel System" for an architecture based on a factory model. Together they formed a company to imple-

ment their idea that the industrial production of wood-framed housing was the solution of the future. Their venture proved ill advised, however, and ended in bankruptcy.

As is often the case, these architects were seduced by their own rhetoric. Industrial production ultimately did not address the pressing housing needs on the scale that many presumed it would. In Europe, industrial panel construction was favored over what was considered the preindustrial or frame construction preferred in the United States. It is this misreading of the subject that makes the book interesting, revealing something about the early modernist European views of American wood-construction techniques and their possible application in Europe. As many have observed, the genius of wood-frame construction lies precisely in the fact that no factory work is required: all that is needed is two carpenters, handtools, and supplies. A closer look at American housing construction would have revealed this fact to Wachsmann.

Wachsmann's vision for modern housing for the masses in the era of mass production—which he saw as realizable through wood construction—no doubt contributed to this book's appeal in its time. But one can only wonder why Birkhäuser decided to reissue this volume, particularly given that the book ultimately failed to expose the real possibilities of this method of building. Perhaps reinvested with contemporary vigor, Wachsmann's admirers are positing him as a precocious visionary, restoring his place at the zenith of modern explorations with renewable resources. The rhetoric of the introductory essays, however, is out of sync with the book itself, and thus obscures this virtue of Wachsmann's work. **—Tim Rempel**

There was a brief moment in architectural culture when the spirit of the California house represented a clear alternative to both sterile modernism and nostalgic revivals. Lewis Mumford in 1947 deemed it the "Bay Region Style," thinking of the work of William Wurster, Joseph Esherick, and Vernon de Mars, which combined a modern attitude to structure and materials with plans that were particularly sensitive to the forces of local climate and landscape. The California spirit also pervaded the work in Southern California of Craig Ellwood, Charles and Ray Eames, and Richard Neutra, whose similar application of modern techniques in an informal landscape resulted in innovative "indoor/outdoor" schemes.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, Eichler Homes, a development corporation, set out in 1949 to mass-produce a large variety of homes based on this new spirit. The beautifully produced book *Eichler Houses: Design for Living* does not pretend to be a comprehensive history or analysis of Eichler's legacy, which rivaled that of Levitt and Sons on the East Coast. Instead, through an artful
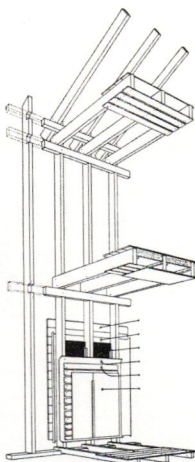
Wachsmann's on-site wood-frame method.

Inner court and plan of Eichler homes.
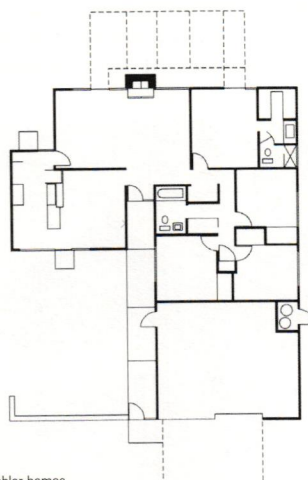
presentation of photographs of exteriors, interiors, and landscapes, this book pays simple homage to these exceptional, modest designs which, when compared to current models of middle-class developer homes, demonstrates how much of the modern California spirit has been lost. A brief introduction by Sally Woodbridge establishes the originality of Eichler's contribution, and an essay by Joseph Eichler's son, Ned Eichler, provides a personal account of the company's evolution from the earliest production of fifty $10,000 houses in Sunnyvale, to the production of nine hundred houses a year by 1955, ranging from $18,000 to $25,000. This resulted in a patrimony of over ten thousand homes in the Bay Area over the span of eighteen years.

Eichler's enthusiasm for Frank Lloyd Wright's open plan, clear structure, and honest use of materials led him to hire young architects such as Robert Anshen and A. Quincy Jones. The designs of Eichler homes insisted on straightforward post-and-beam construction, usually left exposed. Typically, they had flat or single-pitched roofs with skylights and trellises to mediate daylight. Large plate-glass windows and frosted-glass partitions as well as internal clerestories contributed to the fluid quality of the interiors, where the kitchen and dining areas opened to the central living space. The garages were particularly well integrated into the proportions of the front elevations. Overhanging eaves, floating canopies, and independent planes all contributed to the effect of extending the house into the landscape. One of Eichler's most original innovations was the introduction of the atrium plan—an expression of his commitment to a more lateral, Californian way of life. The photographs reveal the general excellence of construction and versatility of the plans, as well as their adaptability to remodeling.

Eichler Homes went bankrupt in 1967, defeated by the competition that could provide air-conditioned, icon-ladened fantasies

at lower prices. But Eichler's legacy—so well captured in these photographs—still offers an inspirational and fresh alternative, and proves that developers do not always have to be the antagonists in architectural discourse. —**Richard Ingersoll**

A CONSTRUCTED VIEW: THE ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF JULIUS SHULMAN, Joseph Rosa, Rizzoli, 1994, 264 pp., illus., $55.00.
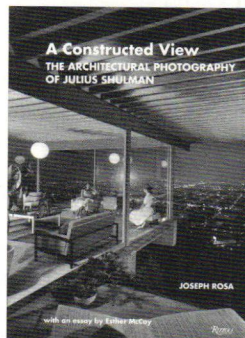
From the 1930s through the 1960s, Julius Shulman—architectural photographer *par excellence*—definitively shaped our view of the contemporary Southern California house. Although landscape, ceramics, and sculpture all appeared as Shulman's subjects, it was the dissemination of architectural images that forged his fame. Capturing the essence of West Coast outdoor living, he stilled an ethereal dream where walls dissolved into reflections of pools and skies, where gardens and desert merged with interior spaces. Shulman was not only the documentarian, by appointment, of Richard Neutra's work—photographing over 90 percent of his buildings between 1936 and 1968—but he was also the primary recorder of the works of other modernists such as R. M. Schindler, Gregory Ain, Charles Eames, Pierre Koenig, Raphael Soriano, Craig Ellwood, J. R. Davidson, and Albert Frey.

The array of professional and shelter magazines in which Shulman's photographs were featured matched the extended list of architects he represented. They included *Arts and Architecture, Progressive Architecture, Architectural Record, Architectural Forum, Life, House and Garden, Ladies' Home Journal,* and *Good Housekeeping. House Beautiful,* however, was not among them, for editor Elizabeth Gordon saw in the modern houses Shulman proselytized only "poverty and unlivability." But it was this very starkness that lent Shulman's work such iconographic power. With scenographic flair, he staged photographs such as the famous night view of Case Study House #22 (Pierre Koenig, 1959), featured on the book's cover, and his twilight rendering of the Kaufman House in Palm Springs (Richard Neutra, 1946).

Shulman and Neutra's symbiotic relationship and their respective acumen as publicists and businessmen are well known. The photographer marketed Neutra's American image internationally; what is perhaps less known is how the architect manipulated Shulman's photographic output, framing to conceal problems in execution, rearranging interiors, and enhancing landscapes with a device that could be termed the "instant" or "portable" gardens—that is, tree branches hand-held strategically within the frame of the camera. Perhaps the two views of the Maslon House living room (Cathedral City, 1962) best reveal the impact of Neutra's eye on the construction of Shulman's photographs. In the image composed by the architect (below left), minimal furnishings allow the interior to flow into the garden. The subsequent photograph (below right), executed without the input of Neutra, whose dictatorial attitude toward the clients' tastes Shulman resented, remains far more conventional.

A Constructed View: The Architectural Photography of Julius Shulman features a


Glassed-in A-frame Eichler home.

Shulman's photographs of Neutra's Maslon House.

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handsome collection of Shulman's images taken over five decades—until 1986, when he retired, as an act of protest against "bad buildings." The book opens with a reprint of Esther McCoy's short personal assessment of Shulman's career, which he himself recounts in an essay entitled "My Odyssey." The chapters by Joseph Rosa document Shulman's trajectory from amateur photographer to ambassador of modernism; a short exposé of the artist's "Method and Philosophy" and curt sections titled "Dressing the Photograph," "Selling Architecture," and "The Historical Frame" fill out the text.

What the book offers visually, it lacks in rigor, content, and any sense of temporal context. Relying widely on recurring anecdotes, the text seldom explores the issues it raises. Instead, it appears to weave together Shulman's own stories with little structure. Rosa does address, however cursorily, the photographer's treatment of shade and shadow, with the former expressing massing and the latter revealing texture. He also provides brief discussions on Shulman's darkroom technique, his predilection for the depth-enhancing play of light and shadow, his preference for black-and-white photography over color, and his manipulation of settings with the use of infrared film. But the chapter "The Historical Frame," for example, would have gained from a comparison between Shulman's and other photographers' representation of architecture, or how Shulman's methods and products differed from those of Marvin Rand, Jason Hailey, Roger Sturtevant, or Ezra Stoller, to name a few of his contemporaries. Rosa examines Shulman essentially in isolation.

In this book, the photographs do the talking, with Shulman as an author and a *metteur-en-scène*, a conjurer of landscape and light, and an artist who folds planes and layers into a single frame. —**Dorothée Imbert**
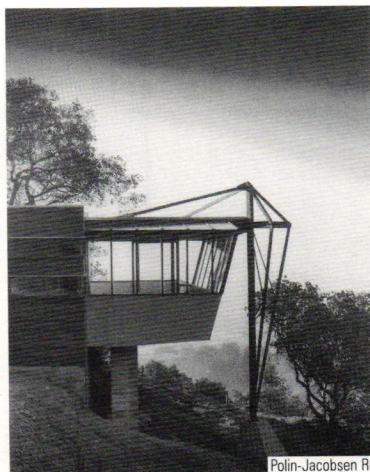
JOHN LAUTNER, ARCHITECT, Frank Escher, editor, Birkhäuser (Basel, Boston), 1994, 296 pp., illus., $55.00.

The 20th century is rife with anachronisms—a symptom, perhaps, of our irrepressible tendency to announce the future before its time. Inevitably, then, we find ourselves observing with bemusement, and sometimes horror, as the past lingers on. Older, more traditional concepts are forced to compete with portentious new forms (or theories of them), as we waver between desires for the past and ideals for the future.

John Lautner, an architect whose career began in 1940 and continues to the present, has produced a body of work that is closely associated with the peak of modernist experimental buildings which erupted from Southern California in the middle of this century. Highly expressive and tectonically adventurous, Lautner's work is beautifully presented in *John Lautner, Architect*, a luxurious vanity monograph. With emphasis on the residential projects (mostly for well-to-do clients) that comprise the bulk of his practice, this weighty tome treats its subject reverentially, and the man comes across as an iconoclast. His idealistic words exemplify a bygone modern era, and are illustrated, in pointed contrast, with inventive work that speak of things to come. It is anachronistic indeed to discover that projects which appear fresher, more innovative, and better detailed than much of what is being currently produced in Southern California in fact date back fifty years.

The book's editor, Frank Escher, places Lautner above and beyond his contemporaries and only associates him with his mentors, Frank Lloyd Wright, Eero Saarinen, and Oscar Niemeyer. However, the work itself locates him safely alongside Bruce Goff, Felix Candela, and the California moderns, who all struggled with the notion of the modern house in changing times. Lautner was fascinated with new technology and the mildness of his adopted region's climate. These factors, combined with the desires of clients who sought a new life in postwar California, drove his architectural vision of the house. His constructions, frequently on difficult terrain, boldly use the curve, concrete, and the exposed steel strut, firmly holding ground between past and present. The extended legs supporting the hillside Polin-Jacobsen Residence (Hollywood, 1947) stretch out strikingly a half century later, and the glowing water glasses plugged into the concrete roof of the Sheats Residence (Los Angeles, 1963) still fascinate as a quirky use of common objects to create lighting.

Throughout his career, Lautner was preoccupied with defining "house" and strove to reconcile the ideas behind it with the practicalities of building it. Lautner laments the disparity between idea and result, stating, "In the business of building, when people become commodities or merchandise, we have facilities to house and shelter, but no Architecture." No doubt Lautner believes what he says, although he speaks as if "Architecture" (which he repeatedly capitalizes) occurs in isolation, as if his trade was not about the resolution of clients' needs but about the realization of his own good intentions. Still, much as Lautner would have us think otherwise and quick as he is to admire his own inventiveness, his brilliant designs undoubtedly owe greatly to his clients' desires and their budgets.

Lautner's pronouncements will touch readers as endearingly bombastic, while the monumental fonts mediate a mythology which Lautner's words attempt to deplore: "Superficiality reigns supreme via Media-promoted Fad-Fashion-Name-Merchandise! Nothing to do with people inside! i.e. missing main purpose of Architecture!" When printed at 24-point bold-faced type across two 9½-by-12-inch pages, somehow the sincerity of his sentiments seems a bit strained, the words a bit too loud and superficial, the man behind them absent.

Polin-Jacobsen Residence; J. Lautner, 1947.
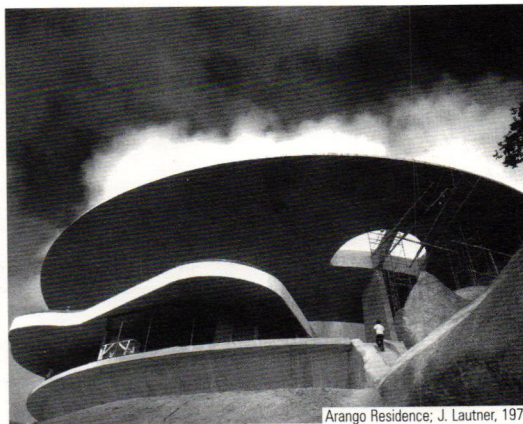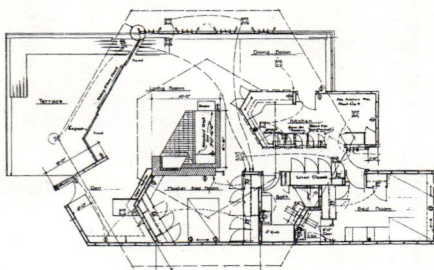
Arango Residence; J. Lautner, 1973.

Whereas people most assuredly struggle against their transformation into a commodity or merchandise, it is architecture that seems to have succumbed. The detached tone of Lautner's voice may just be the sound of resignation, an acknowledgment of patronage being displaced. —**Jay Powell**

AMERICAN MASTERWORKS: THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY HOUSE, text by Kenneth Frampton, edited and designed by David Larkin, Rizzoli, 1995, 300 pp., illus., $65.00.
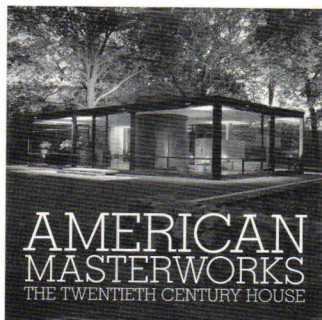
While this book is safely within the coffee-table genre, with luscious photographs of the sort that one of the authors frequently condemns, there is more beneath its seductive surface than meets the eye. During a second cup of coffee, one discovers that the text is rigorous, limited to the essential formal, material, and structural information of each house, without digressions into lifestyle or patronage. Moreover, the choice of the thirty-four houses follows a clear geneology of what is known in the real estate business as "contemporary style." Beginning with Greene and Greene's 1908 Gamble House in Pasadena, the apotheosis of the craftsman style, Kenneth Frampton pursues the development of a hybrid synthesis of European modernism and American individualism, focusing on houses that are formally stunning yet in most cases more abstract than what the American dream house would be perceived to be. Among them are familiar classics such as
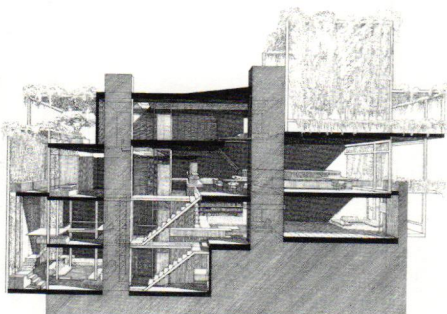
Rudolph Schindler's bohemian house shared by two couples, one of Frank Lloyd Wright's textile block houses as well as Fallingwater, Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House, Philip Johnson's Glass House, the Eames House in Pacific Palisades, Richard Meier's Douglas House, as well as lesser known works like Peter De Bretteville's Los Angeles house for two families, David Rockwood's own house in Portland, and a steel and glass house by Krueck & Olsen in Chicago, finishing with Steven Holl's Stretto House.

Among the pleasant surprises are the sleek International Style house built for movie star Dolores del Rio by her husband, Cedric Gibbons, premiere set designer for MGM, and the virtiginous four-level apartment that Paul Rudolph designed for himself in New York, which uses bizarre combinations of highly polished steel members and sheets of Plexiglas. The astonishing progeny of Le Corbusier—the Miller House in Lexington, Kentucky, designed by Jose Oubrerie, Corbu's last studio assistant, and Cecily Wylde—has a demeanor quite similar to the master's works in India.

The photographs (five or more per project) are uniformly excellent and depict details that are usually not noticeable, such as the strange reveals on the facade of Schindler's 1926 Lovell Beach House. Most of the examples share features such as flowing interior space, industrial aethetics, exposed members, and shifting planes that abide by the modernist code. The authors tolerate a few postmodern exceptions, such as Michael Graves' historicist house for himself, conceived in emulation of John Soane; Frank Gehry's chaotic house for himself in Santa Monica; and Antoine Predock's Fuller House, with its pyramid by the pool.

The vision of the American house that emerges does not correspond to what one finds out on the street but instead, conforms closely to the exacting taste of Frampton. In truth, the majority of the works should not be classified as houses but as

villas. Excepting a few examples like Charles Moore's unit at Sea Ranch and Mark Mack's Summers House in Santa Monica, the starkness and coldness of the modernist interior is still an anathema to the American middle class. That about half of the works selected were designed by architects for themselves or for a family member might explain the proponderance of the purist interiors, a sign of the architects' struggle against prevailing traditional ideals based on historic simulations. —**RI**

THE NEW AMERICAN HOUSE: INNOVATIONS IN RESIDENTIAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, 30 CASE STUDIES, Carlos Riera Ojeda, editor, Whitney Library of Design, 1995, 264 pp., illus., $55.00.
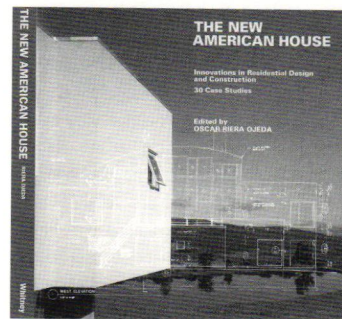
Joining the recent swell of large-format books dedicated to late 20th-century trends in home building, *The New American House* straddles the coffee table and the drafting board. Each entry in this compilation of thirty "innovative residential case studies" is an expeditious graphic display of many fine photographic images, sketches, presentation drawings, and construction details. Included, too, is a tightly formatted text that carefully cites the project team and consultants, site, program, construction systems, materials, hardware, finishes, plus a three-part statement about the project, subheaded "Site," "Design," and "Construction." The careful reader, whether seated at the coffee

Paul Rudolph's own house in New York; 1978.

Lovell Beach House; R. M. Schindler, 1926.

Greene House; Office DA, 1990.

table or the drafting board, will find *The New American House* to be more than a style guide or a sourcebook, for its near-pathological listings (and it's interesting to note here that the etymological cousin of "to list" is "to lust") reveals something of how we live and build and document these activities today.

Roberto de Alba's ego-thumping opening statement in the foreword—"The house is perhaps the single most important design problem for the architect"—might suggest that the contemporary architects whose residential work is presented in this volume might be located along the lineage of acknowledged masters who investigated, polemicized, and built to suit their visions of personal living space. He goes on to inform that the book's selections were chosen for their "emphasis on design excellence, economy of means, ecological responses to and innovative use of materials and construction methods." The first criterion is less disputable than the others, although even the "design excellence" of many of the examples fails to escape the shadow of their famous predecessors.

There are a few houses in this book that refer to premodern or traditional house forms; these may be appreciated as a matter of historical refinement. But the vast majority of the entries have direct modern antecedents, and often appear as dressed-up follies (i.e., modern-*styled* houses as opposed to modern houses), paying questionable homage to Wright, Mies, or Le Corbusier. The scantily edited tripartite text appears to have been gathered from the architects themselves and is a great thumbnail survey of architectural disclosure, denial, and obfuscation. For example, the text for Villa Amore, a sprawling Southampton vacation estate by Diana Agrest and Mario Gandelsonas, reads: "the house suggests a cluster of 'found objects' framing the agricultural landscape, rather than presenting itself as a homogeneous
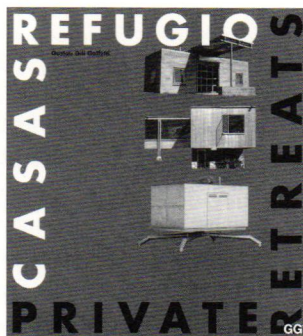
whole." Fortunately, the images help to straighten out the multiple contradictions in this sentence.

Acting as a Borgesian palliative to the texts, the wonderful encyclopedic lists reveal an array of details such as cost (cited seven times), client (nineteen), granite countertops (seven); Maytag (two); projects that were renovations or additions (twelve); and so forth. But in their acts of disclosure, the lists become a springboard for numerous questions. For example, why are additions and renovations treated as broken-off pieces rather than as whole houses, with the earlier structures and the incorporation with the new represented? And where are the innovative residences *without* the luxurious granite, glorious sites, and embarrassment regarding the cost?

The New American House is a show-and-tell of how the affluent live and how architects today are facilitating their lifestyle through the right choices of materials, appliances, and fixtures. But this book never conveys how these expressions of domesticity are "new," how they are American, or how they reflect "attitudes in contemporary American residential design." These are tall orders and perhaps fodder for another book. What we have here, instead, is a talented troupe of players for whom the stage is the site, the script is the broadened modern vocabulary, the plot is the exigencies of program, and the director, a handful of dead architects. The result, unsurprisingly, is an excellent spectacle. —**JP**

CASAS REFUGIO/PRIVATE RETREATS, Gustau Gili Galfetti, Editorial Gustavo Gili, (Mexico City), 1996, 144 pp., illus., $45.00.

In the landscape of domestic architecture, the genius and creativity of an architect is often the product of severely limited conditions. Like the vernacular indigenous architecture of nomadic cultures, buildings with a minimal program and a limited amount of resources often serve as a real test of the capacity and the artistry of the designer.

Casas Refugio, a slim book of "private retreats," includes a number of small structures dating from the early 1920s to the present. The architects behind these works are well known—such as Le Corbusier, J. J. P. Oud, Marcel Breuer, Walter Gropius—but interestingly, in many cases, the work predates their fame. This crop of dwellings offers great insight into these important figures, for many of the houses were conceived, drawn, and perhaps even built by their authors during the formative years of their careers. As retreats (i.e., secondary or vacation homes), the majority of the examples in the book are compact and modest—and intriguingly not "houselike." Smallness often leads to a lesson in anthropomorphic building, for such minimal enclosures must be molded to the body and its functions as intimately as a piece of clothing.

The book is organized into four different categories: "Assembly," "Framing," "Siting," and "Camouflage." But this taxonomy is not clearly grounded on any significant criteria and tends to reduce the buildings' attributes to a singular feature. The result, then, is that the book fails to convey a sense of the overall quality of the structures. The best of the compilation are in fact those works that possess a powerful, singular concept of minimal habitation yet at the same time, through skillful construction and ingenious articulation, transcend their modest function. Such examples thus become worthy of consideration as exemplary house building in any terms. —**Antonio Lao**

Cook Residence; Mockbee/Coker Architects, 1991.
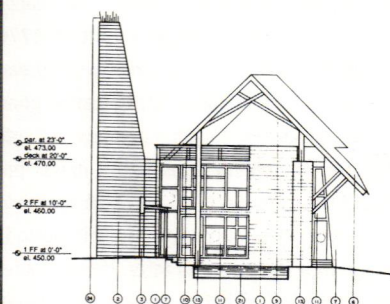
Plywood "retreat" by Herzog & De Meuron, 1985.

Modernity and Housing

JAYNE MERKEL

Cultural critics may disagree with Peter Rowe's contention that postmodernity is merely a late phase of modernity. However, given his agenda—to resurrect a commitment to decent housing for everyone—he has little choice but to argue that modernity is alive and well. For in architecture, the modern has always been associated with progressive ideals, and the postmodern, a retreat from social concern. The book that heralded the retreat, Charles Jencks' *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, began: "Modern architecture died in St. Louis, Missouri, on July 15, 1972 at 3:32 p.m. (or thereabouts) when the infamous Pruitt-Igoe scheme, or rather several of its slab blocks, were given the final *coup de grâce* by dynamite."[1] With witty words and well-chosen pictures, Jencks ridiculed "simplistic ideas taken over from philosophic doctrines of Rationalism, Behaviourism and Pragmatism," and promoted a smaller scale of building instead—i.e., buildings that looked like buildings, that were recognizable symbols, respectful of tradition and regional variety.

Modernity and Housing may not be as influential as *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* was, but it certainly deserves to be. Unlike Jencks' book, which is flip and photographic, Rowe's is dense and demanding. In it, he argues that postmodernism was prefigured by contradictions within modernism itself, contradictions which emerged much ear-

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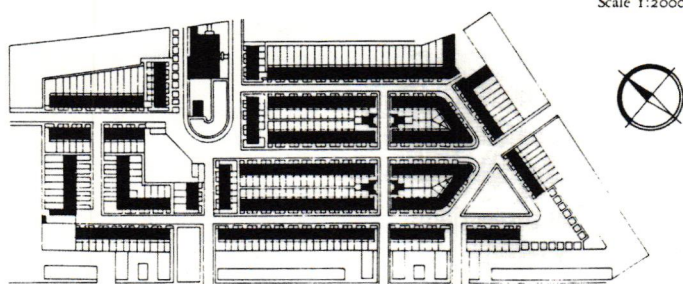
A block of the Kiefhoek Housing Estate in Rotterdam, the Netherlands; by J. J. P. Oud, 1925–30. Even with the rowhouse arrangement, each unit has a definite front and back. Over time, the private garden spaces to the rear of each unit became the locus of individual expressions. (From *Modernity and Housing*.)

lier in the writings of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. He further contends that the housing of the future should emerge from these inherent contradictions, combining the best lessons of the technological early modern and the humanistic postmodern periods. Rowe's response to the challenge of creating appropriate modern housing is typically modern: optimistic, technical, and rational. His approach, however, is more postmodern: historical, cultural, and multilayered.

Before he discusses exemplary projects—which he does in considerable depth, and from a variety of points of view—he considers what distinguished the modern era from others: "a technological way of making things, a technocratic way of managing things, and a technical way of interpreting people and their world." The technological way of making things came first, with the invention of the steam engine in 1776. This "first" industrial revolution continued through the 19th century, with widespread mechanization, urbanization, and economies of scale which yielded inexpensive goods. Then, around 1890, there emerged a "second" industrial revolution—actually, an era of management expertise and occupational specialization, characterized by mass production, mass consumption, increased throughput (faster production), and still greater economies of scale with larger, multiproduct, even multinational corporations. This period, which lasted until the 1970s, led first to more intense urbanization and later, through advances in transportation, to suburbanization; it also coincided with the postmodern movement in architecture. This late phase was marked by worldwide economic instability, slowed growth, and "serious ques-

tions about prevailing doctrines of mass production and economies of scale." At the same time, this period gave rise to further technological advances, particularly in electronics, which led to increased flexibility and diversity—e.g., more mobility, less dependence on geographic location, greater knowledge of cultural differences, and smaller companies with more products directed toward more types of clients.

In his seventy-page historical survey of modernity, Rowe shows how some technological innovations lead to similar kinds while others trigger changes in direction; how all technical progress creates social change; and how the ramifications of change fall out over long periods of time. Although the "first" industrial revolution began in the 18th century, it was not until the late 19th that the crowding in cities was considered a crisis, and the 1920s before large-scale solutions were built, expressing the modern technical orientation of the International Style. By the turn of the century, Marx's theory of class struggle, Nietzsche's belief in innate intemperance, and Freud's discovery of the subconscious had already foreshadowed the limits of self-

Instead of simply explaining that the industrial revolutions created massive dislocation, crowding, and unsanitary housing, Rowe points out, with characteristic specificity, that even after the first wave of exemplary housing projects had been built (in Great Britain),

in 1951, the census revealed that for the 13.12 million households in Britain, there were only 12.08 million dwellings, an absolute disparity of 1.04 million units, or almost 9 percent of the total housing stock. . . . [L]arge proportions of the British housing stock were old-fashioned, dilapidated, and inadequately serviced 45 percent of all households shared a bath, and 38 percent lived without a bath; by one estimate "4,850,000 households in England and Wales were dependent upon public washhouses or a galvanized tub, hanging out in the garden."[2]

The situation was similar in Europe and in the United States, where a smaller percentage of the housing was substandard but which still suffered "chronic imbalances between supply and demand" as a result of increased mobility, new household formation, and the baby boom.

ORIGINAL PLAN

SUGGESTED REVISED PLAN
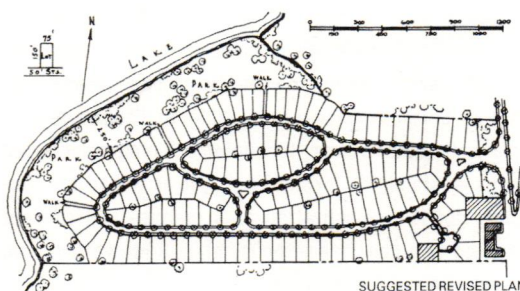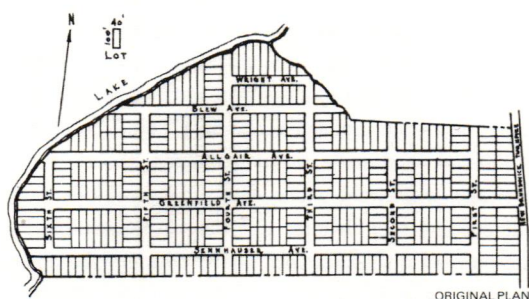
determination. Nevertheless, it was not until the 1970s—when the fruits of technology and rational planning began to disappoint *and* make more diversified production possible—that the "postmodern" reaction to orthodox modern architecture began appearing in housing and other spheres.

In Rowe's discussion of the housing that modernity produced, he cites numerous projects, providing complete statistical profiles on forty-five of them and analyzing six in enough detail to avoid the superficiality (and incomprehensibility) of other discussions that attempt a similarly broad sweep. Of the projects that receive special focus, three are modern examples, dating to the 1920s, and three are postmodern schemes from the 1970s. The inclusion of the latter projects is important because, although they have all been published, none are as well known as the earlier, modern examples. Moreover, the later examples overturn the widespread misconception that housing was a casualty of the postmodern revolt.

Sanitation and uncrowding were the primary goals of most early public housing. Two of the three modern projects Rowe discusses in depth—Ernst May's 1,182-unit Romerstadt in Frankfurt-am-Main (1927–28) and J. J. P. Oud's 300-unit Kiefhoek Housing in Rotterdam (1928–30)—*look* hygienic and machinelike with their smooth white walls, flat roofs, ribbon windows, and undifferentiated facades. They spread over the land in their suburban locations in ways that make them seem spacious, even though most of the units they contain are in fact quite small (430 to 650 square feet) and rather densely clustered in rowhouses and lowrise apartment buildings. The third modern project, Sunnyside Gardens in Queens, New York (1924–28), by Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, and Frederick Ackerman, draws more on the local vernacular, with its red brick walls, porches, bay windows, traditional wood trim, individualized units, and sloping roofs. The 1,202 slightly larger units occupy fifty-six acres and surround blocks within the existing city grid. But like its European counter-

Redevelopment of a quarter section tract development according to Federal Housing Administration principles. By the 1930s, the rectilinear grid-iron layouts were considered problematic, so the FHA devised guidelines aimed at improving neighborhood safety, efficiency, and amenity. This included pushing traffic to external arterial roads and placing park space at the center of the subdivision. (From *Modernity and Housing*.)

GROUND FLOOR 10   FIRST FLOOR.   SECOND FLOOR   THIRD FLOOR

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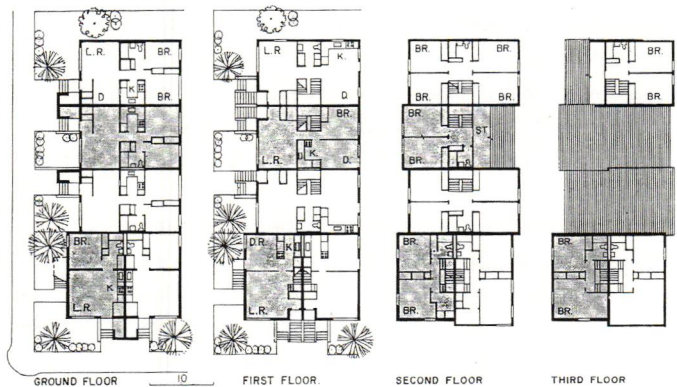
parts, this project lies outside the old city center, on land made newly accessible by public transit.

Despite their formal differences, Rowe finds these three projects suitable for comparison because he is less concerned with style and more interested in what makes them modern—i.e., why and how they were built. The changing, modernizing world may have helped create the housing crisis, but new technology and management expertise also made it possible to build large numbers of houses at once. In fact, doing so permitted economies of scale that made even more production possible. Technical achievements in other fields made people real-ize that better housing was possible, and therefore nec-essary. In other words, technological progress created norms or standards for housing, just as it had for con-sumer goods. Specialization as a practice and concept even led to a new kind of house plan. Rowe writes of an example in the Netherlands:

> The year 1916 also marked the time at which the new building codes, stemming from the original 1901 Housing Law, became fully effective. With a vigorous stress on expanding size and particularly the public health aspects of dwelling units, the quality of housing in Rotterdam improved signifi-cantly. A typical house, however, still had a large multipurpose living room with bedroom alcoves adjoining it: a form of housing that was only really discontinued during the 1920s. At this time the first modern houses, especially among the lower middle class, were built, with separate rooms for functions like sleeping, cooking, living, and so on.

This kind of thinking, along with industrial develop-ment, inaugurated the notion of zoning regulations. Initially aimed at solving specific problems of adjacen-cy, such regulations ultimately carved up cities into dis-tricts according to function. Just as production had been divided into piecework on the assembly line, so had housing been distributed within the cities.

The strength of Rowe's analysis is that it ventures beyond merely describing a series of actions and reac-

tions, causes and effects, but also explains the concep-tual framework in which decisions that affected housing were made. But reactions did play an important part in this history. The best projects of the 1970s are in many ways critiques of the mistakes of the 1940s and 1950s, and these receive scant attention. Pruitt-Igoe is men-tioned only in connection with Jencks' criticism (and is misspelled). The only American Corbusian "tower in the park" schemes discussed are the middle-class and social-ly (if not aesthetically) successful Stuyvesant Town in Manhattan (1943–49); the gargantuan, horrific Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago; the more enlightened but sim-ilarly disastrous Columbia (Harbor) Point in Boston (1950–54); and some luxury buildings. We all know, basically, what went wrong with projects of this kind, but because their failures were largely responsible for the growing disillusion with public housing, the aban-donment of social goals in architecture (except among housing specialists), and the form that subsequent housing took, a good dose of Rowe's subtle, multifac-eted analysis would have been valuable.

Rowe's method, instead, is to teach by good example. So he concentrates on Villa Victoria in Boston by John Sharratt (1969–82); the Byker Redevelopment Project in Newcastle upon Tyne, England, by Ralph Erskine and others (1970–75); and the Malagueira Quarter Housing in Evora, Portugal, by Alvaro Siza Vieira (1977). To Rowe, each exemplifies "underlying principles for the design for good housing" and counters technocratic orthodox modernism. Each project also represents some kind of balance between universal and local, general and individual, rational and expressive forces. All were designed for specific sites, specific communities, and specific circumstances.

Villa Victoria, for example, consists mostly of row-houses with front stoops like those in the surrounding old South Boston neighborhood. But instead of resem-bling these "high-shouldered, comfortable red brick or brownstone houses, bow fronted, high-stooped and with mansard roofs," they are simple, flat, brick and stucco,

gabled structures, built with modern lightweight steel forms, interspersed with a midrise apartment building and an eighteen-story tower. Their stucco wall panels are painted the bright colors preferred by their Puerto Rican habitants, who were actively involved in its planning. Individual buildings, such as the Torre Unidad for the elderly and the Vivendas La Victoria apartments, have Spanish names, and the large, paved Plaza Betances, with its ceramic murals, pedestrian arcades, and central seating area sheltered by trees, reflects the inhabitants' cultural traditions. But most of the rowhouses face the street Boston-style, and the street grid of the nineteen-block area is maintained, except where the streets loop to discourage through-traffic or to surround outdoor recreation space.

Although nine historic houses were preserved and remodeled to contain thirty-six new apartments, the 736-unit complex as a whole looks more suburban than indigenous. This may be attributable to the design's "emphasis on individuality and a sense of private space," and its response to the long-term "aspirations of the residents" to someday move beyond the inner city, as previous immigrant groups have successfully done. While accommodating residents' desires is a valid goal, the impact of the solution on the city fabric may have its drawbacks. In the case of Villa Victoria, such a population-specific approach not only creates disjunctions in the area (for example, some of the materials are not entirely appropriate to the climate), but could also limit the project's adaptability in the long run. What happens to such culturally charged building stock when the Puerto Ricans move on and the Russians arrive? Given that change and impermanence are among the most salient characteristics of the postindustrial, now digital world, less specific accommodations to cultural mores make more sense.

The Byker Redevelopment Project houses a more stable community of about sixty-three hundred people, primarily descendants of shipyard and factory workers who began to settle here in the early 19th century. To house these workers, long undifferentiated rows of plain, brick, one- and two-story cold-water flats were crammed onto a hillside overlooking the River Tyne. As with Villa Victoria, the two thousand units of replacement housing at Byker were built in consultation with the community over time, in order to minimize displacement. The new housing stock is a complete departure from its dilapidated, congested, and poorly sited predecessor. More assertive, original, and modern than those at Villa Victoria, the new buildings at Byker have an industrial building-system style. The rowhouses sport shed roofs and clapboard and sheet siding, and are interspersed with private gardens. They are terraced to embrace the hillside and take advantage of views. The north end is anchored by Byker Wall, an undulating, L-shaped perimeter-block building which rises up to eight floors in some sections. Its multicolored patterned brick facade is enlivened by irregular windows and attached balconies. This wall of dwellings separates the complex from a railroad right-of-way, while functioning as a visual and sonic buffer as well as a landmark. A variety of loosely defined courtyards, patios, pedestrian passageways, and traditional streets divide the two-hundred-acre site into twelve residential neighborhoods, each with its own character. And although the original housing blocks have been demolished and radical changes

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General view toward the perimeter block from inside the Byker Redevelopment Project at Newcastle upon Tyne, and aerial perspective; 1969–82. Ralph Erskine served as planning consultant. The total unit count was to be 2,216, the majority of which would take the form of lowrise dwellings. (From *Modernity and Housing*.)

home, house, housing
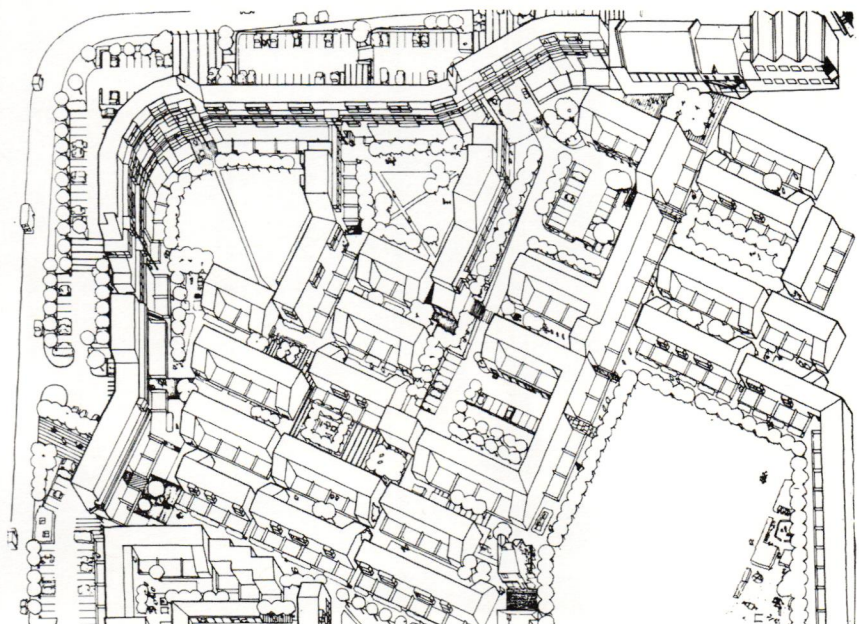
made in the planning and design of this community, some of the original institutional buildings have been preserved to provide some historical continuity.

Like Byker, the Malagueira Quarter was developed over an extended period of time and designed to accommodate possible future additions and alterations. Built in the mid-1970s on a slightly sloping sixty-seven-acre site on the edge of the provincial town of Evora, the Malagueira Quarter contains twelve hundred low-cost, single-family units. These are divided into neighborhoods, each with its own grid set slightly askew from those nearby. With smooth white-walled houses lining grids of streets, the Malagueira Quarter seems more urban than more contemporary projects built in developed city centers. It combines modern forms, like those of Kiefhoek and Romerstadt, with traditional Portuguese features, such as courtyards facing the street, second-story patios, and a big stone arched aqueduct (which, here, contains utility lines).

All of these projects exemplify the balance Rowe promotes between typically modern and postmodern impulses—between flexible provision for the future and appropriate continuity with the past, standardization and individuality, ordinariness and distinction, simplicity and complexity. They manage to mediate excessive abstraction and mimicry of traditional forms, emphasis on product and emphasis on process, integration with the city and the creation of communities with local character and a sense of place. The reader comes to understand what the author means by balancing conflicting demands because he shows exactly how it has been achieved in built work.

Modernity and Housing contains both a convincing argument and a wealth of information—so much, in fact, that the argument is sometimes hard to follow. A few more subheads might have helped, and some of the voluminous data might have been easier to grasp in chart form. With so much material, it seems egregious to ask for more. But Rowe himself acknowledges the value of convention, and convention calls for doing so in a review of this kind.

Given the author's interest in Garden Cities and his stated preference for rowhouses and lowrise buildings with easy access to the outdoors, one would have expected some consideration of the American Greenbelt Towns of the 1930s and 1940s for they prefigure many, though not all, of his ideals. Moreover, his sociological orientation would seem to warrant some reference to Ebenezer Howard's social program, especially his protofeminist attempts to create housework-free communities. And for all his emphasis on industrialization, mass marketing, and mass production, readers will be surprised at the scantness of his discussion on the early modernists' enthusiasm for mass-produced housing.

The cube-volumed Malagueira Quarter housing project in Evora, Portugal; Alvara Siza, begun in 1977. Opposite page: The sketch by Siza conveys the evolutionary process of urban development while the plan shows the project's relationship to its existing context. (From *Modernity and Housing*.)
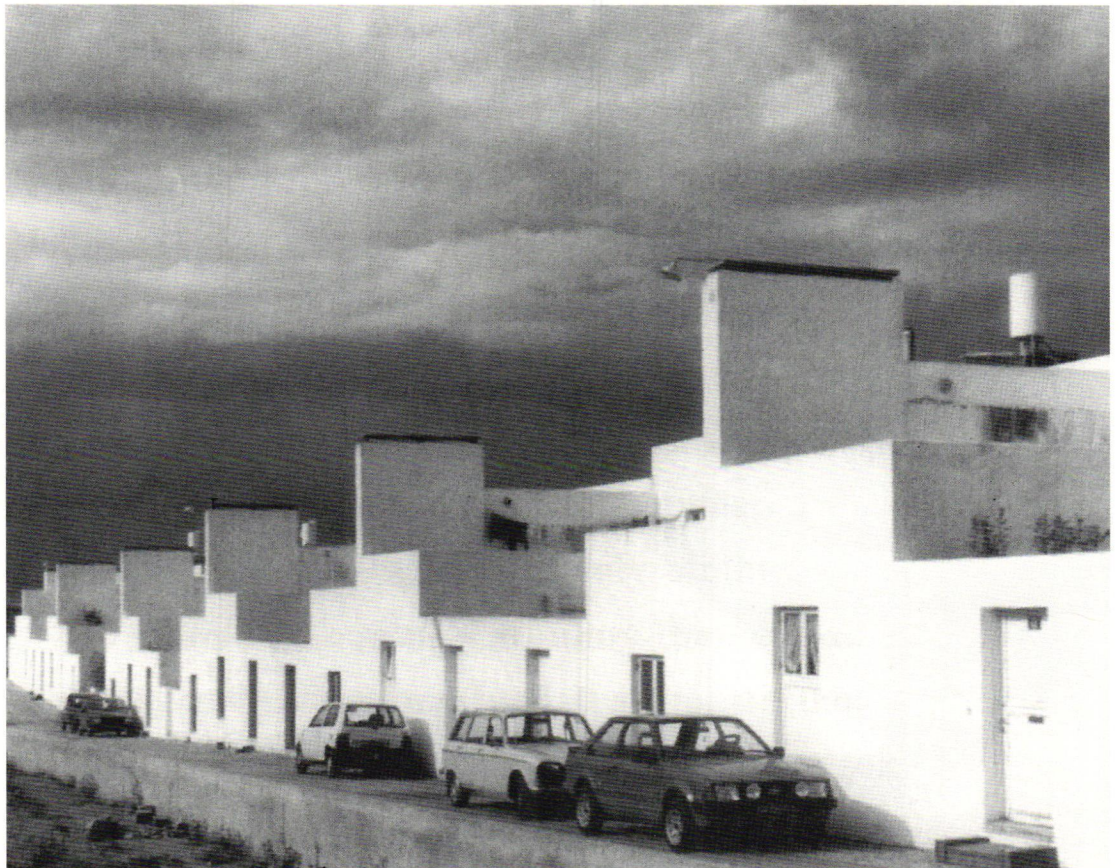
Though mass production did not factor as significantly in the production of housing as was expected, it still had broad and lasting influence, which Rowe acknowledges only briefly. For example, the Levitt Brothers employed mass-production techniques in the field, turning entire subdivisions into giant assembly lines. To what extent are similar strategies used today? Rowe says nothing about mobile homes, the "manufactured housing" that continues to serve a substantial segment of the unsubsidized low-income American market. And, like most writers on "housing," he says very little about the housing produced within the free market system of the United States. In this country, publicly supported housing has historically faced an assortment of social and economic biases, consistently reinforced by powerful real estate, banking, and other special interests. From Richard Plunz, Barry Checkoway, and others, we now know the role these interests played in the postwar period.[3] What role are they playing now? Rowe, with his cool head and patient research, would be the ideal person to outline how to ensure the provision of decent housing for everybody, in even the most excessive of capitalist societies.

A last criticism for Rowe's selection of projects is that all three of the later examples he discusses are large and self-contained, despite the fact that some of the most interesting recent housing projects are smaller scaled, built as infill, or rehabilitations of existing buildings. Many of these are financed through a variety of less conventional economic mechanisms, such as neighborhood-based nonprofit developers. These trends grow logically from the type of planning Rowe promotes but take citizens' involvement further, resulting in even more incremental development and varied physical form.

But why quibble? This book is the most significant discussion of modern—and postmodern—housing yet to appear. Important ideas come across loudly and clearly. A sampling: "[A]rchitectural developments did not move in a manner that was drastically independent of broader socio-technical and economic conditions"; "[G]ood modern housing is for a specific population, rather than a specific type or category of population." With the help of Rowe's fine work, we come to understand that good modern housing is designed for local topographical and cultural conditions, in keeping with historical traditions but not in such a manner that it cannot accommodate changes over time. These are pretty good principles for anybody to design by.

NOTES

1. Charles A. Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977), p. 9. Many of the ideas he espoused had been advanced earlier by Robert Venturi and others, but Jencks managed to make them immediately palatable and popular.

2. Rowe refers to a study by A. W. Cleeve Barr, entitled *Public Authority Housing* by (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1958), p. 24.

3. Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Barry Checkoway, "Large Builders, Federal Housing Programmes, and Postwar Suburbanization," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 4 (1980): 2–39; reprinted in *Critical Perspectives on Housing,* Rachel G. Bratt, editor (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).
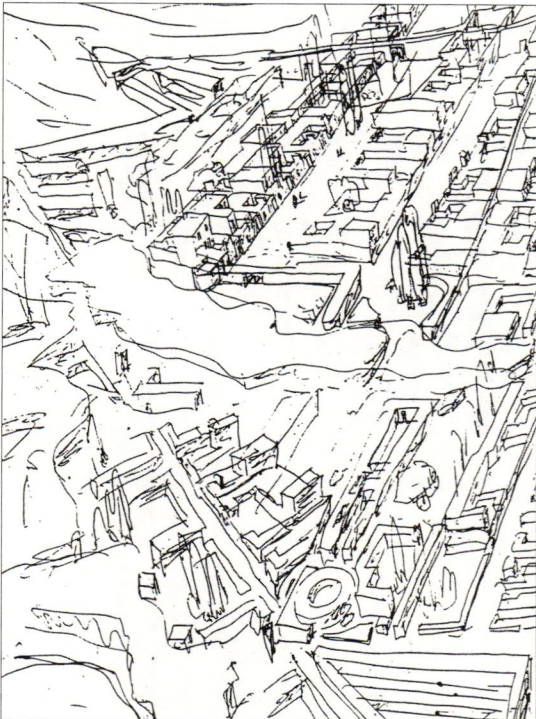
JAYNE MERKEL is the editor of *Oculus,* the magazine of the AIA-New York Chapter, and is working on a book about the architecture of housing.

home. house. housing
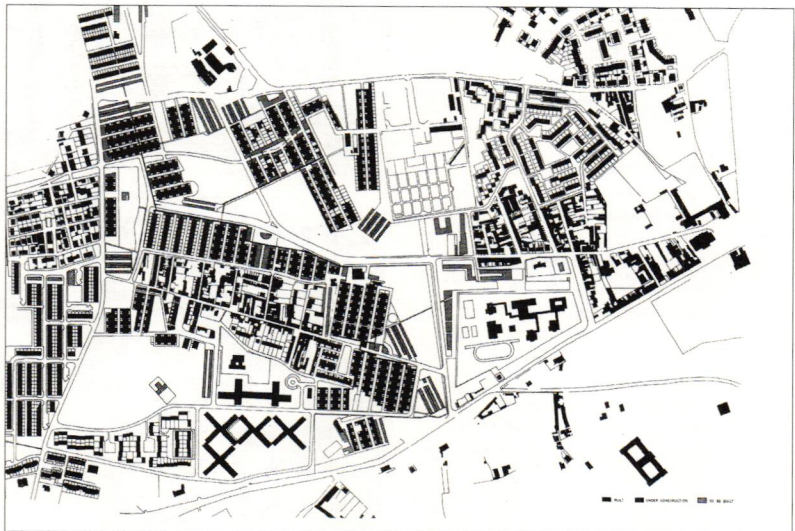
Desire and Domesticity

GWENDOLYN WRIGHT

Every domestic environment evokes multitudes of associations. Experiences, both positive and negative, intertwine with fears and desires, archetypes and innovations, social expectations and personal tastes. All are inscribed in architectural form, whether as icons proclaiming status, as typologies conveying family structure or levels of privacy, or as regulations prohibiting whatever society wishes to repress. In turn, to the best of their ability, people choose and modify their places of residence, creating domestic forms and meanings whether they live in single-room-occupancy hotels (SROS), suburban tract houses, or architect-designed "statements."

This model breaks down, however, when we admit that a large and fast-growing number of people have very few choices—often none at all—about how and where they live. While the single-family dwelling is clearly the aspired-to archetype, especially in the United States, another scale of building has been equally significant in shaping settlement, if only as an inferior alternative that further heightens the desirability of the iconic detached dwelling. Classified as "housing" (to distinguish it from the reality and illusion of individual houses), this higher-density, multiple scale of production includes apartment buildings, rowhouses, cluster housing, and other collective forms.

From the Victorian housing developments of the 1880s to the modernist *Siedlungen* of the 1920s and the American condominiums of the 1960s, the constraints of cost and mass production have presented an enticing challenge to many architects. Likewise, social reformers (who often called themselves "housers" in the 19th century) avidly seized upon housing, for it could be used to instill middle-class domestic values among the poor—and to reaffirm those values among themselves.

So why does "affordable housing," the latest designation for this residential form, evoke so little interest within the architecture profession or even within the remnants of liberal society today, despite evidence that social and economic disparities are growing ever more extreme? Although Sam Davis doesn't tackle this question directly, his book *The Architecture of Affordable Housing* does seek to "re-enchant" housing as a design problem. While Davis favors the European term "social housing," for it "expresses both the intention and the needs," he defers nevertheless to the American preference for economic determi-
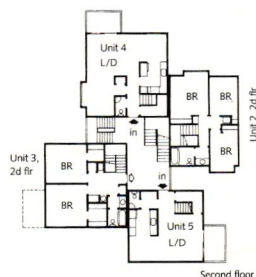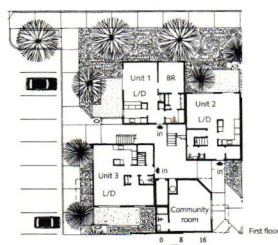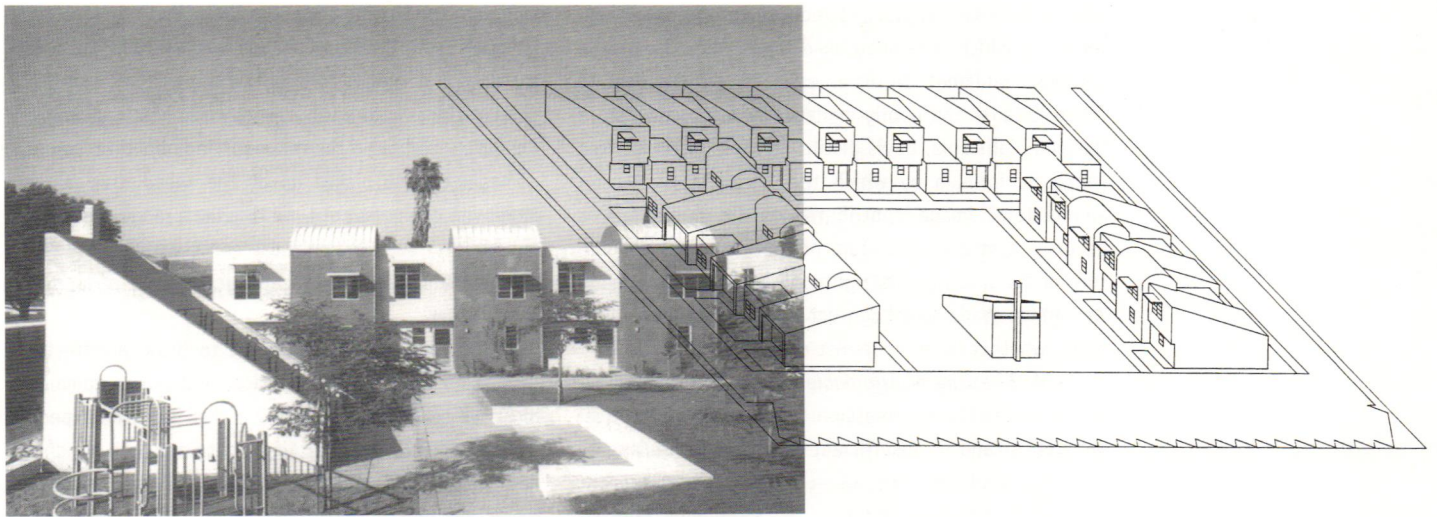
Acorn, a seven-hundred-unit project in Oakland, California, was designed by Burger & Coplans in 1964. Lauded in its day, it combined rowhouses with corner buildings, or quatrefoils (above), which allowed end units to address the courtyards as the interior units do. Despite intentions to create a human-scaled community, the unobserved entries and unclear territories made the project ultimately unsafe. (From *The Architecture of Affordable Housing*.)

Daybreak Grove in Escondido, California; Davids Killory, 1991. The central courtyard and children's playground are formed and protected by identifiable house volumes. (From *The Architecture of Affordable Housing*.)
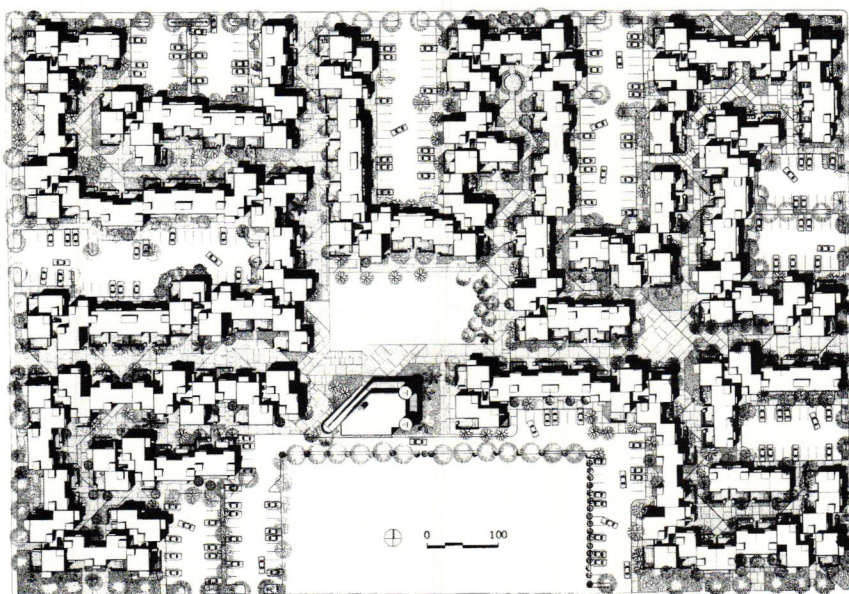
nants. The book promotes the cause of "housing that is developed outside the purely market-rate private system," but does so without really confronting that market. He chides star designers, burdensome regulations, and the social fixation on private ownership of detached dwellings, yet his critique stops short of analysis. Instead, his book implies that a compendium of good data, good intentions, and good models will triumph, even over powerful cultural and economic forces.

Recipients of housing assistance have always been marginalized in American society. Today this group includes not only homeless families, but also single parents, the elderly, the young, the unemployed, and the working poor (many of whom pay as much as 70 percent of their income for rent, leaving them constantly vulnerable). The public sector has a responsibility to meet their needs—if only to balance out the fact that American homeowners receive such massive government assistance in the form of tax deductions.

Davis wisely evokes Catherine Bauer's germinal *Modern Housing* (1934) and her vision of this building type as an exciting challenge for designers. All the same, his book lacks the critical energy of Bauer's vigorous attack on social inequalities and architectural indulgences. Instead his "optimistic interpretations" rely upon a simple Whiggish history: things went badly in the past, but now we can straighten out the problems. Indeed, his narratives about hard-working, well-intentioned architects like "Sam and Lisa" resemble Victorian morality tales. The book resonates with a belief in (and redemption of) the noble effort, evoking *The Little Engine That Could* more than Friedrich Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.

In fact, the right to affordable housing seems a given in this book—even though, the truth is, not everybody would agree with this presumption. With the controversy around this premise rendered moot, the definitive issue then becomes that elusive attribute, "quality." But by what criteria does one evaluate affordable housing? How are the tenants' need for conventional symbols of domesticity balanced against the public's insistence on visible difference and the profession's desire for innovation? Is there a universal formula or does it vary with history, setting, economic and political conditions, not to mention an architect's personal convictions?

Rigid categories make such dilemmas even more elusive. The discursive terms and formal archetypes of "housing" do not replicate those applied to "house" (or "home"), and vice versa. Books and conferences about one domain typically stigmatize the other, or simply ignore its existence. Davis therefore poses an intriguing question: What happens when the architectural symbolism and even the location of these two cognates are juxtaposed?

In effect, this question challenges prevailing notions about formal beauty, domestic propriety, and social obligations. All dwellings must respond to the same basic needs for privacy, shelter, and dignity, reinforcing the common conditions of our humanity. Disdain for the poor has often legitimized authoritarian rights to experiment, socially and architecturally, with their mode of habitation or has spawned outright, callous disregard. An artificial opposition between "house" and "housing" thus perpetuates not only stylistic dichotomies, but also more fundamental class and racial antagonisms.

Unfortunately, Davis then reasserts a narrative of stylistic hostilities. He justifies a preference for traditional or contextual forms, arguing that such familiar tropes appeal to those who cannot afford what the market offers. He gives due attention to other factors, such as services, costs, security, and maintenance, yet they become subordinate to purely formal details of design. One heading implies that "Ornamentation, Details, and Dignity" are virtually interchangeable.

His dismissive critiques of modernism likewise overstate the role of architectonics. Modernist housing

reform, in Davis' analysis, is reduced to one failed aesthetic, in which "the unadorned forms were also sterile and dehumanizing." In his assessment of the decline of Acorn, a large and poorly managed housing complex in Oakland, California, Davis distills multiple problems to a simplistic formula by which the "strength of Acorn's architectural image contributed to its failure." This becomes a reverse caricature of the modernist agenda, sure of its sincerity, its righteousness, and its appeal. We cannot evade social conflict by asserting a universal norm, whether it be modernist or traditional.

The Architecture of Affordable Housing gently chastises the architectural profession for its modernist formal preferences and its insufficient attention to housing as a design problem. Yet all such concepts disappear entirely in the last chapter, "Is Affordable Housing Significant Architecture?" Here, Davis profiles ten examples from various parts of the country. A strong bias toward California is evident in his inclusion of the Mendelsohn House in San Francisco (Herman Stoller Coliver Architects); 202 Island Inn in San Diego (Rob Wellington Quigley); Davis' own energy-conserving project, Pajaro, in Davis (near Sacramento); infill housing in Santa Monica (Koning Eizenberg Architects); Daybreak Grove and Sunrise Place in Escondido (Davids Killory); and Colton Palms in Southern California (Valerio Associates). Looking farther afield, Davis also describes Langham Court in Boston (Goody, Clancy & Associates); traditional scattered-site infill housing in Charleston (Bradfield Associates); and the Beach in Albuquerque (Antoine Predock).

Each of the examples in this chapter was honored in the last decade with either a *Progressive Architecture* Award or an AIA National Honor Award. Davis rightly praises these annual professional competitions and exhibitions for raising the visibility of such projects, and for encouraging practitioners to explore less mainstream solutions, like those yielded by the 1927 Weissenhof-siedlung in Stuttgart or the New York Architectural League's Infill Housing Competition of 1985. Still, quality does not always win out. For example, one 1879 competition, featured in *New York Plumber and Sanitary Engineer,* celebrated the infamous "dumbbell tenement," a model eagerly picked up by the speculative market. Moreover, competitions tend to elide a range of very real constraints, such as political conservativism, growing commercialism, and the academic nihilism of architecture culture.

That being said, Davis' effort to bring architectural discussion back to the physical and moral domain is most welcome. The author is at his best with specific design analyses. By and large, these are both insightful and instructive, whether critiques of the obsessive, iconic details of Donald MacDonald's "Monopoly-box" configurations in San Francisco, or praise for the elegant comfort of Moshe Safdie's Habitat, a demonstration project for the 1967 World's Fair in Montreal. Davis focuses on details such as square footage, privacy, entry security, and accessible play areas. He asks not only who designs housing, but also for whom it is designed, to whom it is available, and how the inhabitants and their needs are represented in the built reality. Architecture cannot solve all of society's problems, as many once believed. Still, settings *can* tip the scale toward dignity or despair, community or anonymity, and even toward work or welfare, although they certainly do not determine any of these conditions.

Housing represents a universal need, yet American culture, especially since the late 19th century, has become ever more sensitized to personal needs and desires, whether based broadly on class, gender, and location, or narrowly on individual memories, beliefs, fears, and longings. As a result, the dwelling has increasingly come to be seen as a poetic personal statement. For residents it proclaims status, individuality, intimacy; for architects it celebrates the designer's sensibilities; for producers it embodies consumer desires in a burgeoning market. The reduction of "housing" to the opposite of this narcissism, to anonymous standardized design, understandably makes it seem threatening or boring. Perhaps the greatest contribution of Davis' book is that, in rejecting this dichotomy, the full range of these issues—from identity to uniformity, personal expression to social responsibility—is restored to the domain of architecture.

In Montreal's Habitat by Moshe Safdie, the technological imperative yields humane housing. This demonstration project was conceived for the 1967 World's Fair. Three decades later, it is thriving, fully occupied. (From *The Architecture of Affordable Housing.*)

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Living Downtown

BARBARA KNECHT

"People live in hotels, full time, throughout the United States." This simple and provoca-
tive statement opens *Living Downtown: A History of Residential Hotels in the United States,*
Paul Groth's impressive social and architectural history of this long-maligned housing type.
A lucid and fascinating story of American culture, politics, and prejudice, this book care-
fully reconstructs the role that hotel housing has played in the economic and cultural
development of American cities since the 18th century. Because the legacy of residential
hotels has been systematically rewritten over the last fifty years, *Living Downtown* is espe-
cially important for, in resuscitating the richness and diversity of this housing type, it
combats its current negative image and ultimately argues for its legitimacy as a housing
option today.

In the 1970s the media turned public attention to the destruction of inexpensive hotels
in urban downtowns and highlighted its effect on the growing housing crisis. The term SRO
(Single Room Occupancy/Occupant) came into popular usage to describe inexpensive hotel
housing or its inhabitants. The widespread coverage was important for raising public aware-
ness of the destruction of low-income housing, yet at the same time, it created the myth
that residential hotels were the sole provenance of single adults, mostly male, usually on
public assistance or without stable work, and otherwise considered homeless.

Despite activities in the last two decades to slow the destruction of existing hotel hous-
ing and to create new units, SROs still are considered a substandard housing type. Debates
have raged among community activists, architects, social reformers,
urban planners, politicians, and homeless advocates about the place
of this housing in American cities. The belief that only the poor and
transient have ever lived in hotels sets this type of housing in dis-
tinct opposition to American ideals of what constitutes desirable or
acceptable dwelling. Hotel housing also challenges entrenched cul-
tural ideas about what constitutes a proper household and how indi-
viduals regard, organize, and use domestic space. The fact that hotel
housing was a lifestyle choice for many "respectable" people is sim-
ply unknown. Historically, hotel housing was diverse not only in
terms of its architecture, but in terms of its residents: people of all
income levels lived in hotels with and without private kitchens,
baths, and living rooms. Virtually any configuration existed, serving
a range of needs and budgets. The dramatic disappearance of a visi-
bly heterogeneous hotel dwelling population occurred only in the last

The Tubbs Hotel in Oakland,
California, soon after its open-
ing in 1871. Gertrude Stein's
family lived here while waiting
for the completion of their
house two miles away. With its
resortlike facade, this example
dispels some of the prevailing
attitudes toward residential
hotels. (From *Living Downtown.*)

several decades. *Living Downtown* provides a valuable historical perspective that may serve
as the basis for reasoned discussions and policies about alternatives to the ubiquitous
single-family dwelling type.

Reform movements and the forces of urban renewal have carried the greatest responsi-
bility for the destruction of hotel housing, but Groth examines the many other complex
reasons that also contributed to its decline. He distinguishes between the market forces
that effected the proliferation of upscale hotel housing and the moral judgments about
lifestyle, which clearly had as much to do with the destruction of downscale hotels as the
stated concerns about residents' health and safety.

With its first chapter, *Living Downtown* introduces the myths and preconceptions about
hotel living, and proceeds in the next four chapters to present residential hotels according
to building type and social status. The last four chapters of the book analyze the individ-
uals, events, and trends that precipitated the near-elimination of this way of living. The
chapters are woven together so seamlessly that, even though the material is not present-
ed in a chronological manner, readers gain a clear understanding of this history and the

circumstances behind it. Groth conducted primary research on examples in San Francisco and drew upon national sources to support his conclusions. His meticulous and wide-ranging research is couched in a lucid and lively prose that blends statistical, cultural, and architectural analysis with political and social history. The text is liberally illustrated with vintage and contemporary photographs of people, buildings, and streetscapes, as well as architectural plans and quirky artifacts such as menus and advertising posters. He deftly handles this wealth of material, which also includes personal accounts and literary references, forming a rich picture of this marginalized housing type.

While the book covers the period from 1800 to 1980, it focuses in particular on the time between 1880 and 1930, when the greatest variety of hotel housing types was built. Palace hotels were opulent and grand, providing residents with spacious apartmentlike suites and freeing them of the responsibility of cooking, cleaning, or supervising servants. Families were not uncommon in these upscale residences; nor were they strangers to the more modest mid-price-range hotels. Unlike the luxury hotels, the latter lacked the variety of public rooms and back entrances that the very wealthy favored for their entertainment options and added privacy. Still, they offered comparable convenience and sufficient amenities to be a clear choice for many people. Most residents of both mid-level or upscale hotels maintained lifestyles conventional enough to be free from society's scrutiny if not its ultimate disapproval.

In contrast, rooming houses carried "subtle cultural opposition, while lodging houses existed in flagrant opposition to the rules of the middle and upper class," writes Groth. In other words, the more transient the

clientele, the further removed they were from material society. Compared to residents of the mid-priced or upscale hotel suites, which resembled private apartments, rooming house residents brought no possessions or other objects that might connote identity, class, or relationships. Herein, according to Groth, lie the roots of the attitudes that have ostracized and segregated hotel residents until this day.

Groth reveals the close relationship between the social status of a building's residents and its architecture. A building's style and plan, the existence, function, and arrangement of lobbies and other public rooms, and the manner in which services (meals, housekeeping, laundry, et cetera) are provided are all intricately bound to the income, social status, and lifestyle of the residents. Palace hotels used appropriately aristocratic architectural imagery, as did lodging houses built after the turn of the century, which borrowed such motifs in order to gain a measure of respectability.

The second half of *Living Downtown* details the circumstances that created and then destroyed the hotel housing market. "For two hundred years, hotels have served a series of domestic roles in urban vernacular environments and subcultures," states Groth. "For at least one hundred years, the keepers of official culture have aimed at eliminating these roles." This elimination was motivated in part by the allure of serving business travelers, a more lucrative endeavor. (The imposition of rent controls further reduced hotels' interest in having residents.) Wealthy hotel dwellers are another matter, of course. They still exist but they have all but disappeared from the public eye and hence, do nothing to confer legitimacy on this lifestyle at other levels. Less well-off hotel dwellers remain marginal, visible only in their failure to conform to mainstream ideals, socially stigmatized for being "poor and single in a country [that] expects people to be prosperous and family oriented." In spite of dwindling numbers, the nuclear family remains the dominant model for housing development, and those living outside this structure are faced with fewer and fewer dwelling options.

Hotel development continued into the beginning of this century, peaking with economic and political events such as the 1906 earthquake and fire for San Francisco and, more broadly, World War I. In the post–World War I era, shifts in work and living patterns as well as criticism from social reformers coalesced into a concerted effort to eliminate hotels as a legitimate housing choice. Housing historians are, of course, familiar with the effect of reform movements on urban development, but Groth ventures further, to examine how the specific regulation of urban hotels exceeded physical matters and were aimed at changing "aberrant" social behavior. There were direct attempts to control alcohol consumption, dancing, gambling, and sexual contact,

The floor configuration of many downtown hotels could shift from one-room units to five-room units according to client demands, as this floor plan of the Algonquin Hotel in New York City illustrates. (From *Living Downtown*.)

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The urbane Hyde Park Hotel in Chicago, which opened in 1887, was a classic mid-priced hotel. Featuring a huge skylit lobby, public rooms on the ground floor, electricity, telephones, bell service, and suites with two to five rooms, it was labeled a "family hotel" or "private hotel" and took few transient guests. (From *Living Downtown*.)

although ultimately, most of these codes proved too difficult to enforce.

More effective and well-known methods of controlling this realm included raising rents along with living standards. Federal standards and policies during the interwar years consistently supported the suburban housing model. Housing that did not meet these arbitrary "ideal" standards was routinely excluded from statistical counts of housing units. If hotel units are not considered part of the permanent housing stock, then the people living in them cannot be considered permanent residents (an especially easy conclusion to make about people who are single). As a consequence of this statistical exclusion, these housing units need not be replaced when they are destroyed, and their residents need not be relocated. Thanks to Groth's work, readers may better understand the massive loss of housing units that has resulted from the social and economic priorities that have shaped American cities as we know them today.

As brilliant as the author is at piecing together the complex history that has formed contemporary perspectives on hotel housing, he is less successful when he projects future trends. Alternative housing is a timely and hotly debated topic, which is why *Living Downtown* is so valuable and also why Groth's task is so difficult. "Hotel life can be virtually untouched by the social contracts and tacit supervision of life found in a family house or apartment unit shared with a group," he states, reminding us that hotel residents historically enjoyed substantial individual independence, whether they lived in hotels by preference or by economic necessity. With today's diversity of urban lifestyles and definitions of what constitutes a household or a home, Groth's reminder, that hotel housing provided a bed for every income level, from luxury suites to overnight cubicles, is instructive indeed.

Groth describes a healthy regeneration in recent times of new housing types aimed at middle- and upper-

income groups. But people of means nearly always have housing options; it is the alternatives available to those in lower income groups that reveal cultural attitudes toward diversity. Although the situation has been improving on the low-income scale, the number of units being saved and replaced compared to those destroyed is still minuscule. And of those units, the vast majority is available only through controlled means. Most SROs today are developed to combat homelessness, and are often publicly financed and built by not-for-profit social services organizations. Such developments are frequently opposed, however, by neighborhoods that mobilize to keep "undesirable," formerly homeless people out. To gain community acceptance, most SROs screen tenants carefully, and many require participation in on- or off-site social service programs. In short, this new wave of SROs—heavily subsidized, heavily controlled—is a far cry from its predecessor, which simply served as an inexpensive and accessible housing option.

Groth's predictions for the future are not nearly as sophisticated as his analysis of the past. Avoiding a discussion of such problems as community rejection of SROs, the ongoing subsidy they usually require, and issues related to their substantially different populations, Groth's picture for their future is overly simplified. Still, this shortcoming is minor considering the extraordinary contribution this book makes to housing scholarship and to the public debate on government control over private lives. It is precisely because of this exceptional work that it is possible to intelligently critique current directions in housing development. As Groth explains in his preface, this study is targeted at "narrow thinking and the insidious power of both inadvertent and deliberate ignorance." With its inclusive research and insightful analysis, *Living Downtown* will help architects and developers to expand their ideas about SRO housing. Even more importantly, it could influence public officials and housing policymakers to address the economic and political mechanisms that continue to limit and homogenize American housing opportunities today.

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Briefly Reviewed

ROMA ANNI NOVANTA: L'EDILIZIA RESIDENZIALE PUBBLICA E LA NUOVA FORMA DELLA CITTÀ, Franca Bossalino and Alessandro Cotti, editors, Sapere 2000 (Rome), 1992, 214 pp., illus.

Rome in the Nineties: Public Residential Building and the New Form of the City is an atlas of the Rome that has grown over the last thirty years on the outskirts of the historic city. It is a testament to and condemnation of a political and professional process of urbanization. With color aerial photographs and detailed plans corroborating the text, it tells a depressing story of the incapacity of modern planning to even feign good intentions. Rome, Italy's capital city, has publicly assisted in the production of more housing than any other city in the country. The result of a dispersive master plan and layers of corrupt contracting methods is a series of monstrous projects, shabbily built and fragmented in the form of huge baroque figures which are completely disinterested in patterns of use. Most of these projects did not undergo a public review process. While such megastructures are now endemic to most modern cities, the new Rome revels in them, with case after case of huge volumes that are not integrated in any coherent manner into the urban fabric or landscape. The largest of these housing projects (the book documents eighty-three examples) have populations the size of small cities, from twenty to forty thousand. These settlements lack public spaces, access to services, efficient public transportation, and decent parking.

While the authors inculpate bureaucratic snarls as responsible for the these inferior projects, they also hold architects responsible. "The role of the Italian architect continued to be epidermic, superficial, and baroque in spirit. They essentially concerned themselves with scenographic effects for episodes destined to remain isolated and to produce more surprise than good urban life." And sure enough, here are surprising, grand compositions of concentric circles, fanning shapes, ovals, and mile-long linear superstructures that are quite impressive for their sculptural effects, but leave little possibility for urban interaction. "Saving Rome," the authors argue, "requires not only saving the historic center but also saving the peripheries by consolidating them and then 'inventing' these new quarters as pieces of the city stitched in with ample vegetation, astutely placed cultural services, entertainment, and sports facilities which have a sense of respect of all of its components and which follow clear objectives and precise programs tied to them." —**Richard Ingersoll**
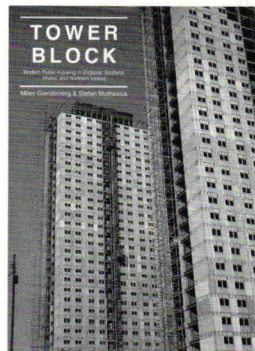
TOWER BLOCK: MODERN PUBLIC HOUSING IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND, Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius, Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1994, 420 pp., illus., $65.00.

In Great Britain, the population's revulsion against publicly financed highrise apartment buildings is nearly unanimous. Architects, planners, and the general populace alike scorn such constructions as the nadir of the modern movement, condemning them as a result of a conspiracy on the part of city governments and others responsible for their development to warehouse the poor in unsightly quarters—in their view, a bleak alternative to the traditional working-class neighborhood.

Although organized in a manner that will deter all but the most dedicated, *Tower Block* tells an extremely important story. Its authors, Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius, debunk the myths that surround these unpopular structures. Focusing on policy decisions and design debates, they describe how local politicians and their potential constituencies clamored for such buildings, often against the advice of government planners who preferred to resettle former slum-dwellers in far less urban new towns. The book reminds us of how enthusiastically the provision of such amenities as individual bathrooms and central heating was originally received. The authors also recount debates about prefabrication and the appropriate mix of high- and lowrise construction. According to Glendinning and Muthesius, in these cases it was local authorities, with their widespread political support—and not design professionals—who did the most to promote what are now seen as inhuman living conditions.

Noting the popularity of this housing type for all income groups in many other parts of the world, the authors conclude that poor management is ultimately to blame for the deterioration of living conditions in many British tower blocks, especially in the case of housing for already alienated, unemployed tenants. The significance of Glendinning and Muthesius' conclusions is often overwhelmed by the bureaucratic detail of their account, however. It is unfortunate that neither the buildings nor the point of many of the short, choppy chapters comes into clear focus in what is otherwise an important study. —**Kathleen James**

BLOCK HOUSING: A CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE, by Pere Joan Ravetllat, Editorial Gustavo Gilli (Barcelona), 1992, 189 pp., illus., $59.95.
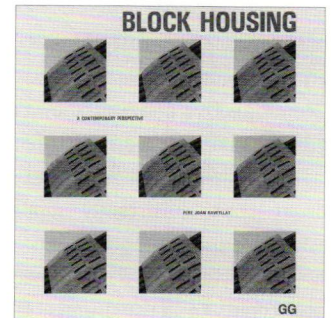
Block Houses presents twenty-six apartment buildings and projects for apartment buildings, including work by such notable architects as Alvaro Siza Vieira, Aldo Rossi, Jean Nouvel, Daniel Liebeskind, and Stephen Holl. Most examples are European and share an ambitious scale. The lavish photographs, many of them in color, of the exteriors of these schemes are often supplemented by plans of the site, the building, and the individual units. As is often the case with such pictorial surveys, the text is a disappointment. Inelegantly translated, Pere Joan Ravetllat's introduction attempts to tie these projects to the most prominent housing schemes of the modern movement but fails to provide any sustained consideration of the contribution of this building type to the fabric of the European city. Furthermore, his discussions of individual buildings avoid a consistent point of view with regards to some of the most intriguing questions posed by the buildings selected. For example, what of the quite varied relationships that the various examples have with the "tower in the park" model initiated by Le Corbusier? Or what about the financing mechanisms that allowed them to be built? How are readers to understand the difference between government sponsorship and private initiative which so distinguishes the IBA (International Architecture Exhibition, 1992) housing in Berlin, for instance, from Seaside in Florida? Readers must turn elsewhere for such pertinent details. —**KJ**

North Country Blues

E. PERRY WINSTON

The cover of Camilo José Vergara's book, *The New American Ghetto,* features a series of photographs taken over the last decade and a half of a single location in the South Bronx. This comic-strip-like sequence of images reprises, albeit in reverse, the old "country versus city" polemic, as epitomized by the children's book *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton. In this 1942 classic, a house in the country gets swallowed up frame by frame, first by suburban sprawl, then by urban development, and ends up a tiny, faded object squeezed imperceptibly between tall office buildings. But whereas *The Little House* had a happy ending (the house is moved to the country), Vergara's tale has a postmodern twist: the gritty city, the "old" ghetto, gets demolished and modular "little houses" pull up on trailers to be assembled into a stage-set row of neat suburban houses, replete with fences and front lawns. But something is missing: no one sits on the the brand-new stoops, or peers out from the doorways or windows. The street looks too quiet and sterile. This is Vergara's "new American ghetto": an enclave of middle-class homeowners surrounded by vacant buildings, social service institutions, fortifications, and street murals.

A pungent mix of documentary photography and social commentary, Vergara's book is both a personal vision and a witness to the urban landscape. Though not a thorough analysis of how various cities in the United States grew and decayed, *The New American Ghetto* raises provocative questions about the current national attitude toward cities. The author uses photography as the primary means of absorbing and conveying their reality. He came to this subject by engaging in street photography while a student at Notre Dame University in South Bend, Indiana, and later in New York City. He went on to study sociology at the graduate level at Columbia University. Vergara describes in the introduction how his economically insecure childhood in Chile led him to be "attracted to what is shunned, falling apart, and changing. . . . Close encounters with poverty have shaped my character and driven me, perhaps obsessively, to the ghettos." But ghetto ruins are of much more than personal interest to Vergara: "They point to both the seriousness of the community's current problems and the fact that things were once better."

In order to to tackle such a broad subject, Vergara devised a methodology in which he concentrated on "hyperghettos" (areas with more than 40 percent of the people living below the poverty level) in New York, Chicago, Detroit, Newark in New Jersey, and Gary,

Wrapped around the corner of Saratoga and East New York aveneus, this SRO, designed by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, houses about two hundred homeless men, some with AIDS, some mentally ill; Brownsville, Brooklyn, 1991. (From *The New American Ghetto*.)

community

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home. house. housing

Indiana, as well as a bit of Los Angeles. He organized the more than nine thousand photos he's taken since 1977 into categories that form the book's chapters, beginning with "The Ghetto Cityscape," "Housing," and "Commerce and Industry." These are followed by chapters that focus on topics that arose from the accumulated evidence of the photographs themselves: cultural expression, responses to the environment, and traces of history in discarded objects. Aware of the subjectivity intrinsic in the act of making and selecting images, Vergara has "included dull as well as exciting images," permitting "communities to reveal themselves despite my personal tastes and inclinations." He weaves the photographic evidence with his "meditations" on their content, interviews with ghetto residents, and graffiti poems found on the walls of abandoned buildings— "disconnected ways of seeing . . . an inventory of declining neighborhood." This is his effort "to write the history of our ghettos from the inside, otherwise the official story will prevail."

The results are often powerful. The section entitled "Requiem for Columbus Homes" documents the dynamiting in 1994 of four of the eight highrise public housing buildings in the Central Ward of Newark. The decision to destroy rather than repair the buildings was an extension of the Pruitt–Igoe myth, that architecture is to blame for poor living conditions. But Vergara, who ran a summer youth program in these buildings fourteen years earlier, questions the destuction of scarce low-income housing, particularly when adequate replacement is unlikely. Indeed, the one hundred shoddily built townhouses that replaced another demolished public housing project in Newark were badly damaged in a windstorm and had to be torn down. "What next?" Vergara asks. "Townhouses for all? And then failing townhouses? These are so flimsy that they will save the federal government the cost of dynamite." By giving voice to the "Greek chorus" of residents of the four

remaining Columbus Homes buildings who attended the demolition of their neighbors' dwellings, he underlines the class conflict being played out under the guise of "slum clearance" and "privatization." They chanted, ensemble:

> He may blow your home up, he may blow you up.
> They have good homes, nice cars.
> I'll take your home.
> I'm going to blow up your home.

Through interviews, graffit quotations, and photographs, Vergara penetrates the brick facades to examine the life inside the derelict buildings. The section "Fleeting Images, Permanent Presences" includes color photos of the interiors of apartments and homes, wall murals, religious imagery, and recreational spaces. Informing what he calls his "bleak message" is an artistic sensibility that amplifies the tension between what was and what is, between fantasy and reality. He credits literary (Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*), cinematic (Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker*, the work of Luis Buñuel), and musical (tangos, John Coltrane) influences on his vision. His photographs of the ghetto streetscapes, storefronts, and decaying buildings are generally unpopulated, adding to the bleak tone—like a long, slow saxophone solo—that runs through the book. The final chapter is a virtual crescendo of urban desolation, much of it the cluster of empty skyscrapers in downtown Detroit, a "skeleton city by the riverfront."

With the majority of Americans now living in the suburbs and lacking direct contact with the city (never mind the inner city), Vergara's book offers a chance to venture beyond verbal discussions of the decline: "Those interested in what happened to our cities will ask to see what happened." Statistics and socioeconomic theories about urban poverty take on more meaning when the physical environments that produce and result from them are experienced, if only in two dimensions.
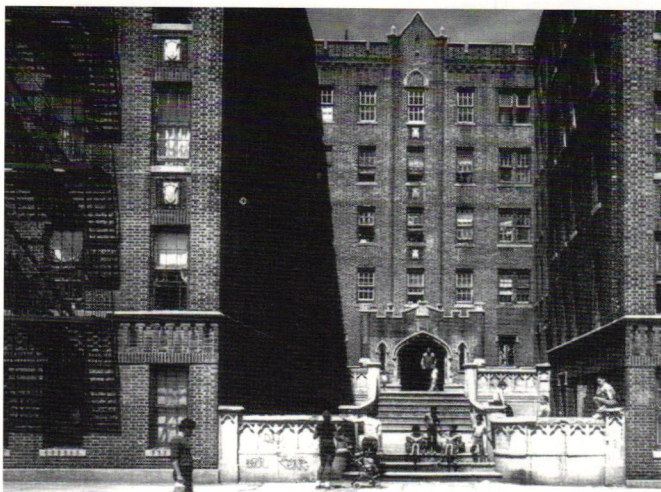
Vergara's photographs are quietly impressive, especially the time sequences of specific sites or city blocks, and the deserted train stations and empty canyons of downtown Detroit. The shots of neat, bright apartment interiors contrast with those that depict the desolation on the streets outside. His photos regularly scan from macro-views of entire neighborhoods down to details of street facades, while his text and captions call proper attention to the larger economic, social, and political forces that shape the ghetto: "the executives who moved businesses from poor communities, the real estate brokers who fostered panic among white homeowners, the banks and insurance companies that redlined inner-city neighborhoods, [and] the federal government [that] built the highways to the suburbs, thus lowering the cost of doing business outside the city." He also shows how the photographic medium itself is used by society to foster attitudes within the ghetto: billboards with liquor ads endorse warmth and intimacy over empty parking lots; white and black two-year-olds hug each other above the slogan "Nobody's Born a Bigot." These messages seem to appear only in ghetto areas and on subways—implying a highly contestable boundary to racism.

Taken as a whole, however, the photographs are not as vivid as one might expect after eighteen years and nine thousand slides. The shots of building facades and empty streetscapes dominate the book's offerings. Of the 409 photographs in the book, 226 have no people at all, not counting the murals or statues of human figures. This might be attributable to the depopulation of the areas pictured, but also to the author's subjective criteria. Inadequate justice is done to the hardscrabble but funky and often visually outrageous life that continues in the ghetto. We are shown the signage of an auto parts store in Los Angeles, but not the customized car bodies that distingush the "low-rider clubs." We see facades of empty factory buildings but not the crowded

sweat shops that have been quietly established inside many of them. After stating in one section about a project in Newark, that "the emblem of Islam, the star and the crescent, was much more popular than the cross," Vergara offers only storefront churches—not one storefront mosque. Where are the squatters, the vacant-lot vegetable gardens, the informal social clubs (*casitas* in the Bronx, or "ice houses" in Southern ghettos), the clothing styles and ghetto designers that inspire the youth of Paris, Tokyo, Johannesburg, and São Paulo? In his introduction, Vergara maintains that "today's dazzling pictures seldom take us beyond the surface and thus cannot raise our consciousness, much less promote social change." This disclaimer is unconvincing, however, given the opportunity that any image possesses to make connections between surface phenomena and underlying forces.

Although the photographs maintain a consistent tone, the text is uneven. The portions Vergara worked on and published previously as articles in *The Nation* and other publications are the sharpest—focused, vivid, building to a clear point. Other portions do not reach this level, and in several chapters, like "Commerce and Industry," the photographs carry the argument completely. The combination of reprinted articles with newly written text works within the chapters, but the introduction and conclusion do not adequately tie them together. Though he makes the provocative statement in the introduction—"one inevitable conclusion of a closer look [at the ghetto] is that present policies lead to ever-greater division, mistrust, and destitution"—he does not sufficently examine such policies in the text. He does critique the tendency of the new townhouse developments, the "reclaimed ghettos," to exclude the dependent poor and the institutions that serve them. Also, in the first paragraph of the conclusion he makes some good points about the lack of coherent national economic and social policy with regards to staving off

178th Street and Vyse Avenue in New York City's South Bronx, as it appears (left to right) in 1980, 1982, 1986, and 1994. Once "a castle of brick and iron, filled with Puerto Rican and African American children," arson fires drove the tenants out; by 1983, the building was completely abandoned. Today, in place of the old sixty-four-unit building stands three light-colored wooden-facade townhouses, accommodating six families. "Two Bronxes are visible in these photographs," writes Vergara. "One that died too soon and one too flimsy to last." (From *The New American Ghetto*.)

home. house. housing

This defended Miami house, encircled by a barbed-wire chainlink fence, appears in the chapter entitled "Our Fortified Ghettos." (From *The New American Ghetto*.)

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the decline of the city. But these ideas are set aside too quickly as he launches into a prolonged discussion about urban ruins, their meaning, and what to do with them.

In fact, the author's fixation on ruins and decay taints his analysis of the contemporary urban situation. He explains early on that he "documents how things end." But clearly things don't "end" once their picture is taken. Not all the derelict buildings he photographs—like the one at 178th and Vyse in New York's South Bronx, shown on the cover—ends up demolished. Largely overlooked in his account are the efforts of individuals, nonprofit organizations, and local governments to rebuild the ghetto. The "struggling reconstruction" mentioned on the jacket overleaf is little noted within. Vergara himself wrote a long critique of the successes and failures of the $10 billion housing program undertaken by New York City in 1985. His article, "Lessons Learned, Lessons Forgotten: Rebuilding New York's Poor Communities," was published in the New York Municipal Arts Society's "Livable Cities" newssheet series in 1991. The omission of this meaty article from *The New American Ghetto* is both curious and unfortunate. Without the essay, the book may have a tighter and more coherent look, but sacrifices the chance of being a deeper, more analytic survey.

Another imbalance is the heavy emphasis on public housing projects in the chapter "Housing," which allows only the briefest look at privately owned substandard apartments and ramshackle houses. These buildings are not dynamited in the mass media to dramatize efforts to "clean up" the ghetto. Instead, they collapse slowly—on occasion, suddenly—around their residents, or burn up, or are emptied by "vacate orders" sought by landlords who, inspired by ripe market conditions, finally tend to the code violations they have ignored for years. Or, such buildings may simply be abandoned by the owner who falls too far behind in taxes after sucking as

much profit out of the property as possible. Surely there is material here, including the daily scene at the Municipal Housing Court, for a few good photos. Vergara's photo selection reinforces the "official story," that public housing and public social programs in general are a total failure. This overall impression overcomes his interesting writing on the topic, wherein he questions the demolition of public housing and praises the efforts of Chicago's Housing Authority to recapture some of the worst projects in the city.

On the whole, *The New American Ghetto* is a valuable addition to the literature on the inner city for its graphic expression of the breadth of the problem. It is a strange mix: the photographs are dispassionate documentaries while the text is the more expressive medium, conveying the author's ideas and proposals as well as the ghetto residents' thoughts. This book would be a good introduction for urban planning students looking for provocative visual and written material on recent urban conditions, but it would be best accompanied by more in-depth treatments of urban strategies, on both the political and the cultural front. Two good examples are Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar's book *Streets of Hope: The Rise and Fall of an American Neighborhood* (Boston: South End Press, 1994) and the 1995 documentary film *Hoop Dreams* by Steve James. The former tells of the residents of the Dudley Street area of Boston who struggle to fight urban decay so that the neighborhood's youths are not compelled to leave to get ahead. The latter provides a vivid picture of how two boys made it out of the very Chicago housing projects portrayed in Vergara's book and into college through their basketball skills. In an ironic echo of Vergara's project, one of the *Hoop Dreams* filmmakers replied to the perceptive comments of these two young men—now graduated, with degrees in communication—during a roundtable discussion on public television that he couldn't wait until his subjects went into white middle-class neighborhoods to make their documentary.

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Redefining Home and Garden

DIANA SCOTT

Writing about the gardens of the homeless is at once an engaged and aestheticizing act. While acknowledging the design merits of an overlooked garden form and advocating its ecological premises, it also runs the risk of minimizing the dire living conditions that impel the dispossessed to "design" outdoors and of romanticizing with excessive praise their unschooled compositions. In *Transitory Gardens, Uprooted Lives,* landscape historian/ designer Diana Balmori and photographer Margaret Morton explore the gardens of the poor and homeless and succeed to a remarkable degree in avoiding these pitfalls, while positing a redefinition of "garden."

This richly illustrated and thoughtful volume documents in fine detail a series of now mostly vanished "gardens" located on the New York City's Lower East Side. Balmori's thoughtful descriptions and Morton's serenely factual black-and-white photos—printed on lustrous matte paper and deliberately framed with heavy black rules—confer a dignity on these outdoor compositions, and by extension, on their creators. This study emerged as an offshoot of Morton's long-standing research on the dwellings of the homeless, while Balmori, an advocate of a sustainable approach in landscape practice, brought the focus outdoors to include exterior spaces and their users. (See page 46 for reviews of *The Tunnel,* part of "The Architecture of Despair" series Morton initiated before this publication, and *Redesigning the American Lawn,* which reflects Balmori's environmentalist perspective.)

The elemental landscapes described in *Transitory Gardens, Uprooted Lives* are created with materials discarded by mainstream society, under pressure of necessity in the extreme, and are constantly in danger of being dismantled. Until now, these modest constructions have escaped the serious notice of writers and designers. With subtly toned photos and elegantly layered text, Balmori and Morton offer access to places which, in real life, most people would hurry past or feel uneasy about observing at length. Morton's calm, straigtforward images portray the essential material settings which marginalized people fashion for them-selves; avoiding sentimentality or sensationalism, they invite closer contemplation.

The "gardens" that are the subject of this book are the grounding for a timely and ambi-tious inquiry into the nature of the garden form itself, an aim that is partly stated, partly implicit. Balmori notes:

> The color graded, English perennial border of house and garden magazine, a garden for viewing only, a garden of plants only, may in fact have lost its meaning as space and form. All of its bases have disappeared: a nineteenth-century notion of domes-tic life, an inexpensive labor force, a craft approach to garden making. The kind of garden that is based on these premises, though still being built, does not correspond to the way we live, and it can only reflect the image of a past world.

Elsewhere she has observed that, since the demise of modernist orthodoxy, the landscape design profession, which never fully embraced a modernist aesthetic, has found new inspi-ration in the minimalist art of the 1960s, while paradoxically, architects have moved on to mine historic styles and forms (*P/A,* August 1991). Expanding the focus and vocabulary of landscape design to include the stripped-down gardens of the urban poor and homeless is the book's boldest contribution, and for landscape literature, it is a logical step given the growing pressure to shepherd scarce resources (land and water), end petrochemical pollu-tion, and recycle post-consumer waste. The "new garden" may not be anything like the lush green landscapes of romantic parks or manicured yards to which we are accustomed, but "they speak the language of our time," the authors assert. "[They] are not uninhabited green areas for viewing. They are spaces of active life, very small, not dominated by plants. They are filled with icons, toys, flags, and also the symbols of freedom and of nationality. At times, they are places of violence, danger, and death; and they are always ephemeral."

home, house, housing

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community

In this appropriated garden, one New York City resident has staged startling tableaux with stuffed animals and fractured dolls. (From *Transitory Gardens, Uprooted Lives*.)

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In the first half of the book, the authors propose three separate but overlapping categories: "community," "appropriated," and "squatters'" gardens. These categories are based less on discrete physical design characteristics than on the circumstances surrounding the garden's creation, the security of its tenure, and its social use. "Community" gardens, a widespread, legally authorized type, are initiated by individuals or groups of people who live near the garden site. Many receive some sort of support from agencies such as Operation Green Thumb. While recognition of this sort assures a certain degree of stability, the physical designs of community gardens tend to be formulaic, as standardized as the chain link fences that enclose them. Typically, they are organized as allotment gardens, in which official participants receive a specific plot or planter bed in which flowers and vegetables are commonly grown. In the authors' view, community gardens which were autonomously created, formed prior to the infusion of outside resources, usually have more interesting designs. For example, Tranquilidad, a community garden on East Fourth Street, is a serene, green oasis valued for the common social space it offers to its keepers, and is not productive of vegetables or seasonal blooms. Designed without agency assistance but now legally recognized, its mixed stylistic vocabulary is the work of several makers who have combined rustic wood fencing, brick paving, and wrought-iron gates with an unexpected field of metal flowers.

Balmori defines "appropriated" gardens as those created by people with legal housing nearby, who have claimed unused plots of land without seeking permission or outside resources to do so. The proximity and stability of the tenant-caretakers guarantees these gardens more continuity and a longer life than gardens created by squatters and homeless people, which are also technically "appropriated." But appropriated gardens are closer to—and as the authors suggest, the likely precursor to—community gardens.

They present two examples of appropriated gardens which offer a striking contrast in terms of social ambience and material construction. One, built by unidentified designers on an empty parking lot, started out with playground equipment and over time gained concrete block-and-board benches, brick-bordered planting beds, and a sculpture-topped fountain. The garden also salvaged hexagonal pavers from the repair work done at Tompkins Square Park following the riots that erupted after its homeless dwellers were evicted.

The second, "Anna's Garden," is a more solitary, expressionistic realm, its entry gate guarded by a stuffed dog, echoed by a real dog within, and a sign that reads "Beware of Thieves." Edenic in summer foliage and ghostly in winter starkness, it teems with stuffed ani-

mals and dolls missing heads or limbs. Its reclusive creator is said to be a concentration camp survivor. Like many gardens of squatters and homeless individuals, it possesses a uniquely expressive argot of effigylike icons, narrating stories of personal and universal meaning. For example, in one garden, a dagger stuck in a mannequin's head telegraphs a warning to trespassers; in another, a tear-stained, painted stone face juxtaposed with a map of South Africa cries for freedom.

The third category, "squatters'" gardens, are sites that have been appropriated by people who closely control access to the land by living illegally on the premises or in a neighboring vacant building. In the words of a squatter-gardener named Pitts, "One of the only ways of holding onto the parts of the East Village that have not been gentrified is through gardens. . . . It gives me a political base to fight from legally, within the system. It also covers everything within the political spectrum today for those of us who call ourselves revolutionaries. It covers recycling, artistic expression, and safe places for youth in the communities."

Several penetrating insights emerge from these distinctions of types. For instance, Balmori and Morton reveal a dark side of community gardens in a case which represents the displacement of an earlier, though unauthorized, use of a site. When the homeless residents of Tomkins Square Park were scattered by police raids, they relocated to nearby vacant lots, creating social spaces that were essentially outdoor rooms. Fires forced them to disperse a second time and police barriers were erected to prevent their return. Now, in place of at least one "illegal" garden is a sanctioned community garden, with morning glories climbing the chain-link fence that was installed to protect the site. A telltale sign of the events that led up to the site's current status is the stenciling that appears on the wooden planks of the new raised planter beds. They read "POLICE LINE," for the boards were recycled from the police barriers. This gentrifying displacement prompted former occupants to object that the city cared less for people than for plants.

Perhaps because of this sort of authorized land-use succession, many keepers of appropriated and squatters' gardens are not interested in securing legal recognition for their activities. With reason, they are wary of the bureaucratic regulation and restrictions that usually accompanies formal status.

The second half of the book is entirely given over to the gardens of homeless individuals and communities. Balmori makes the observation that, unlike community, appropriated, and squatters' gardens, homeless gardens tend not to have plants due to the difficulty of obtaining water and the seasonal timetable for growth. Rather, they are likely to have matting, simulating grass, and other such low-maintainance effects.

The distinctions between the garden types that the authors have taken such pains to define unfortunately blur and coalesce in this part of the book. Balmori herself readily acknowledges the breakdown of the categories, echoing the fluidity with which these several types are created and dismantled. Her disclaimer only

further begs the question: what did the classifications accomplish? In part, they suggest a developmental pattern in which illegal gardens prepare the groundwork for authorized ones. They also argue on aesthetic grounds for greater design autonomy and against institutional regulation, with its multiple agendas. Nonetheless, the lack of a strong transition between the more theoretical first part of the book and detailed profiles in the second half remains confusing.

Although the black-and-white photos are used consistently throughout, the narrative becomes more colorful and vibrant in the second section, where descriptions of seventeen homeless gardens incorporate excerpts from Morton's tape-recorded interviews with the garden-makers themselves. The more personal focus on people in their self-made habitats reinforces the book's larger ideas about sustainability, for these environments clearly reflect resourcefulness and individual (as well as social) empowerment. Indisputably, the homeless who reject conventional shelters and construct their own at the city's unclaimed edges are unceasing recyclers who direct much of their energy into improving the land. Transitory gardeners commonly construct from nighttime gleanings, when scavenging is least visible: rich "swamp dirt" from riverine excavation sites, bricks or tiles from demolition sites, and assorted curbside or dumpster discards are painstakingly accumulated, piece by piece, pail by pail, and arranged improvisationally with great resourcefulness and spiritual energy.

A striking example is the garden and home of a fifty-five-year-old Puerto Rican man nicknamed Guineo, also called "the peasant" by his neighbors. He considers home improvement his occupation. He scavenges daily for street finds with which to make his appropriated lot more comfortable, beautiful, and functional. In summer, Guineo grows bugbane as a natural method of warding off insects. He draws water from an off-site source (perhaps a fire hydrant), transporting it with a large plastic bucket. Presumably, he bathes in a galvanized metal tub that sits conspicuously in his dwelling. A fretwork of refrigerator shelves encircling the top of his walls allows cross-ventilation in summer; boards enclose it in winter. He's self-reliant and independent, as any survivor must be. Says James, another homeless garden-maker, "Man, you understand, we are homeless, we are not helpless." Like many of the homeless people profiled in the book—mostly men of African-American, developing world, or rural origin—Guineo is not so much consciously "greening" the city as he is intuitively recreating the bare-bones construct of "garden" in his newfound home. His makeshift residence, with its treasured inflated plastic palm, may be seen as reminiscent of the ambience of his native Puerto Rico.

Of New York's varied transitory garden-houses, many can be appreciated as traces of transplanted, rural or developing world design traditions. Though the authors do not make the comparison in their book, Guineo's house resembles the *casitas* (small wooden shanties) assembled on scores of lots in New York City's Latino neighborhoods. These small dwellings, patched together from found materials, have symbolic "power to evoke

memories of rural Puerto Rico," as one *New York Times* writer put it (February 20, 1994). New York authorities have essentially tolerated *casitas* for almost two decades, even though they don't meet building code requirements. Many *casitas* sprang up as a result of a city program to rent vacant lots to communities for one dollar a year. Their diminutive size, as well as intense community use, may account for their designers' free hand, but like community and appropriated gardens, they are ever threatened by development.

A generic, dictionary definition of garden is "a piece of ground for the growing of fruits, flowers or vegetables . . . usually close to a house." While some authors and designers have embraced the resurgence of community gardening with its harvest of fruit, vegetables, and flowers as the latest manifestation of an age-old paradigm of urban regeneration (notably Sam Bass Warner, Jr., in *To Dwell is to Garden,* Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), Balmori and Morton have sidestepped this popular horticultural emphasis. Instead, they've opted to promote a more individualistically expressive, physically pared-down sustainable model which breaks ties with traditional standards of landscape aesthetics. To them, the new garden is "an exterior composition in space, consisting of recycled elements, requiring little expense and maintenance, and creating an imagery that reflects the situation of its makers."

Yet abstracting a landscape aesthetic of sustainability from poverty seems overly reductive at times and not entirely convincing. Perhaps the problem in part has to do with the basis of a broad approach on a landscape form that is, above all, ephemeral. But this effort is a small piece of a larger picture. A full-fledged paradigm of urban landscape sustainability would necessarily incorporate the best of old and new concepts of "habitat," "home," and "garden." It would reject the condition of scarcity for the many as the price of surplus for the few; it would be grounded in an ethic of self-reliance as well as resource conservation; and it would apply appropriate and available technology in order to nurture the body as well as the mind and spirit.

Transitory Gardens beckons readers to take the longer, deeper view. This lovingly composed volume refracts the idea of garden through the urgent, complex realities of urban life today. It enhances our visual literacy, uncovering creativity where we'd least expect it. And it reasserts the undeniable power of gardens and garden-making to wrest habitats from often inhospitable surroundings.

Gardens by homeless are usually connected in some manner to their ad hoc dwelling. "Two small toy gardens," composed of granite pavers taken from an old pier on the Hudson River, where its maker, Angelo, lives. (From *Transitory Gardens, Uprooted Lives.*)

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Briefly Reviewed

THE TUNNEL: THE UNDERGROUND HOMELESS OF NEW YORK CITY, from "The Architecture of Despair" series, Margaret Morton, Yale University Press, 1995, 160 pp., illus., $45.00 (cloth); $20.00 (paper).
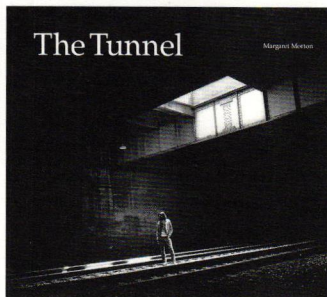
Margaret Morton's photodocumentary book *The Tunnel: The Underground Homeless of New York City,* is a sister publication of *Transitory Gardens, Uprooted Lives,* a collaborative project with landscape historian Diana Balmori. *The Tunnel* is both bleaker and more powerful than *Transitory Gardens*, featuring fourteen cameo biographies of individuals who have made their homes in a disused New York City subway tunnel which runs the length of Riverside Park. The minimal texts are essentially oral histories, edited by Morton, and serve as accompaniment to her beautifully detailed, deeply human portraits. These full-frame black-and-white gelatin silver prints convey the trust and openness with which her subjects regarded Morton's mediating lens.

The people to whom this slim volume is devoted are so marginalized by their personal histories and lack of economic means that they've been forced underground, into unheated, waterless "rooms," demarcated and fashioned out of discarded materials from the streets above. Most of Morton's subjects are single, male, and people of color (one heterosexual couple and a single woman among them). These are the kind of people who in another, more humane time would have resided in boarding houses.

Both the setting and the presentation are stark. Morton's dead-on photographs depict her subjects in their gritty, rudimentary habitats, which are only occasionally relieved by ad hoc decor, wall murals, or resident cats. Taken together, the images and text provide painfully sharp, revelatory insights into this "invisible" world of deprivation. The effect recalls the work of Jacob Riis and Walker Evans earlier this century, whose photos exposed the shockingly impoverished living conditions in urban slum tenements and ramshackle rural shacks.

No aesthetic insights or theoretical analysis mitigate the hard edges of the dark, cold tunnel or the hard-luck circumstances of its residents. Light rays do, at intervals, interrupt the gloom, nourish the exceptional plant, and illuminate the murals, which run from Dali-surreal to classical and folk. A fascinating, well-researched prologue places this particular makeshift community in the context of local land-use history.

This post-rustbelt encampment recalls the apocalyptic dimness of the futuristic *Bladerunner*; it is also reminiscent of the time-worn scenario of transients huddled together around a blazing trash can. But in this tunnel, most live alone. A number of residents have been living there for years, scavenging food, defending their turf, receiving public assistance, and working odd jobs. They consider themselves lucky. While their individual stories may show varying degrees of coping, loving, dysfunction, tragedy, and despair, what can be said of a society that condones cutting off their water supply or sealing up the entrance to their tunnel home?

Morton's contribution is to give faces and voices to these unseen human beings, and to bring light to their salvaged lives and homes. —**Diana Scott**
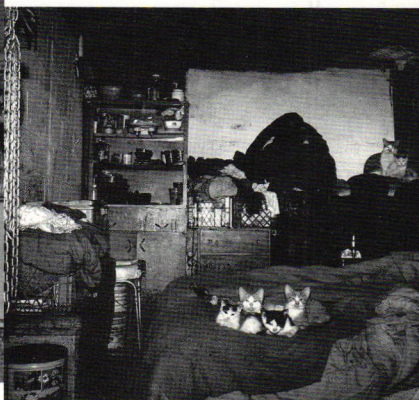
REDESIGNING THE AMERICAN LAWN: A SEARCH FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HARMONY, F. Herbert Bormann, Diana Balmori, Gordon T. Gebelle, and Lisa Vernegaard (editor-researcher), Yale University Press, 1993, 148 pp., illus., $25.00.
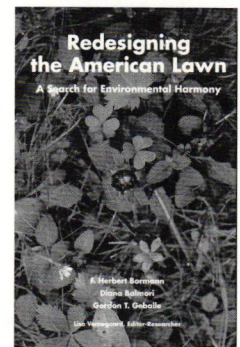
This little-publicized book by three Yale University environmental scholars marks a fundamental shift in thinking about landscape design in the late 20th century. *Redesigning the American Lawn: A Search for Environmental Harmony* is an ecological critique of a centuries-old landscaping convention: the lush, continuously green, weed-free, regulation-height American lawn. Coauthors F. Herbert Bormann, Diana Balmori, and Gordon T. Geballe have created an engaging hybrid compendium that is part history, part exposé, part manual for the ecological reconstruction of this beloved, yet most unnatural, landscape idyll.

Grounded in ample fact, contributed in part by graduate student researchers in forestry and architecture at Yale, this small volume cogently articulates a far-reaching thesis: that the lawn as we know it— suburban icon, integral component of college campuses and New England town centers, and *sine qua non* of parks—is unsuited to the widely varied ecological

Two subterranean homes.
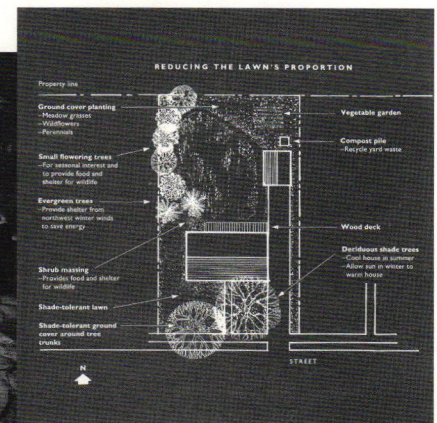
Reducing the lawn's proportion by using shrubs, flowers, and decks.

conditions of the United States, where it is firmly entrenched. The authors remind readers that lawns are a hold-over from late 18th-century English landscape aesthetics. But whereas Britain's moist, mild climate nurtured the manicured grassy swaths that visually extended vast aristocratic estates to the horizon, the ecological cost of maintaining their American counterpart three centuries later is enormous indeed. In fact, the authors reveal that the lawn's cultural persistence against natural odds is attributable to the unceasing efforts of the billion-dollar petrochemical-derived lawncare industry. These corporate interests propagate this difficult-to-maintain landscape standard with the same tenacity with which their products stalk crabgrass.

But across the United States, dozens of individuals have been breaking from lock-step conformity—often over the opposition of their neighbors—by experimenting with the form and substance of their lawns. An article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that in 1992 there were at least twenty legal incidents nationwide in which self-styled environmentalists rebelled against the conventional, uniform, "industrial" grass lawn. Their protests were manifested in "freedom" lawns, micro-pastures, wildflower meadows, streetside vegetable gardens, and other varied expressions. Such insurgents are hailed by the authors as pioneers of a new landscape strategy that has heartening global implications.

Balmori provides a brief introductory history of lawn aesthetics, from the nature-dominating designs of 17th-century French palatial gardens, through the expansive green vistas created by William Kent and Lancelot "Capability" Brown, to American adaptations by Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing, who popularized lawns as pastoral frames for country bungalows. This informative opening gives way to a more probing, even shocking, look at the toxic fall-out and other ecological costs of maintaining this synthetic standard with chemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides. Facts speak for themselves: homeowners in the United States use ten times more pesticides per acre of lawn than farmers do; pollutants emitted by a power lawn mower in one hour are equivalent to a car being driven 350 miles; and residential lawns—20 million acres of them—constitute our nation's single largest crop! Warning of grim impacts as the loss of biodiverstiy and the depletion of the world's clean-water supply, the book provides some less costly, low-maintenance, ecologically sound alternatives.

Overall, *Redesigning the American Lawn* is optimistic, for the authors apparently agree with Maragaret Mead's assertion that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens is the only thing that can change, or has ever changed, the world. Marking the threshold (though far from the groundswell) of a movement, this book is a useful reminder that our choices—as good stewards of our one-third acre—have the potential to yield substantial rewards, both locally and globally. —**DS**

BETWEEN FENCES, Gregory K. Dreicer, editor, National Building Museum and Princeton Architectural Press, 1996, 88 pp., illus., $17.95.

In the kingdoms of Western Europe, acts of "enclosure" were completed by the late medieval period. By then, once-common lands had been carved up by treaty or tradition—acts made formal by the erection of fences. Many of the earliest interruptions in the landscape borrowed from nature, including hedges, ha-ha's (a sunken trough which
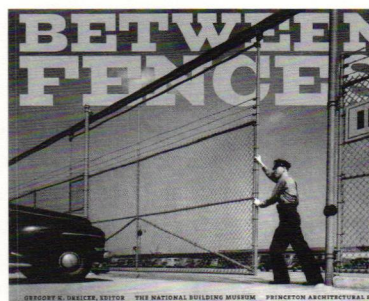
allows land to be divided without defacing the landscape), and stone walls.

The westward settlement of what would become the United States precipitated the rapid organization of the land and the urge to systematize, stabilize, and exploit cheap, plentiful resources. *Between Fences*, a catalogue to an exhibition at the National Building Museum (May 1996 to January 1997), traces the uncoiling of the fence across the American landscape. Edited by Gregory Dreicer, the eight informative and occasionally contradictory essays examine this little-considered but pervasive feature of the American landscape.

Fences were used to "create" property in the settlement period, and to secure it later on—their best-known function today. With no real attempt at synthesis, all the essays are historical in nature. Only Anne M. Lange and J. B. Jackson touch upon the broader, more difficult issue of the tension between the ideals of democracy, the need for security, and the baser compulsions of capitalism.

More than the essays, it is the plethora of images that ultimately conveys both the human struggle to own the land and (to paraphrase from Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Wealth*) the consequences of the land now owning us. —**Jay Powell**
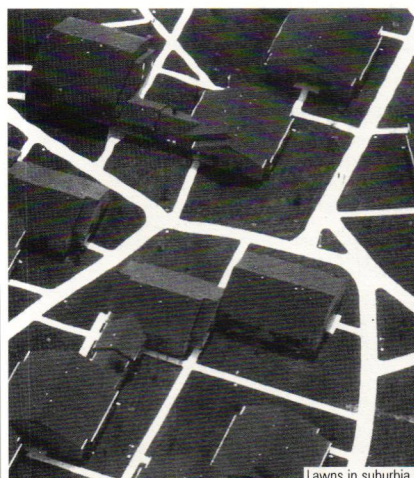
Lawns in suburbia.
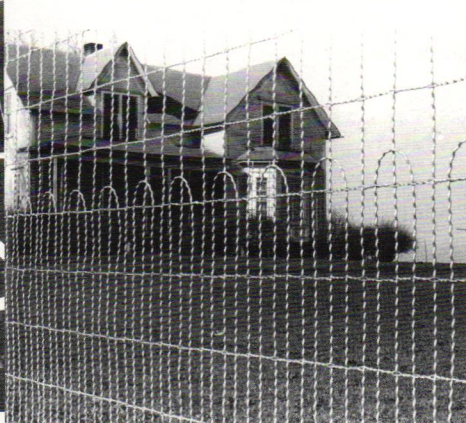
Secured spaces.

Remembering J. B. Jackson (1909–1996)

John Brinckerhoff Jackson, the great connoisseur of the American landscape, died shortly before this issue of *Design Book Review* went to press. His memory will live on for a long time in the design fields as he ingrained in several generations a new way of understanding the environment—of looking not *at* a landscape or for anything in particular but of looking more empathetically into the land. His view from the motorcycle during the course of several decades as he criss-crossed the country between semesters at Harvard and Berkeley inspired a different, more democratic mode of perception among his students, colleagues, and readers. Like Walt Whitman, he elevated the common, the plural, the open into a new motorized "song of the open road." In his academic pursuit of such details as barbed wire and mow lines, he demonstrated that the human capacity to interpret the land was commensurate with the urge to shape it. As an essayist and teacher, he eluded any clear professional category yet drew the respect of specialists in fields as divergent as geography and product design. If he fit into any niche it was as a community member in Santa Fe, his adopted home, where he devoted most of his energy in his last years to local community service.

These few paragraphs from the essay "Working at Home," excerpted from his last book, *A Sense of Time, a Sense of Place*, appeal to the theme of this issue and no doubt serve as a better tribute to his spirit than a conventional necrology would.

I have used the word *community* very often,

and I'm afraid, very loosely. I have meant that I was interested in establishing, very roughly, the *boundaries* of a kind of working-class neighborhood where everyone is mobile, has limited leisure time and a limited income; a community where everyday domestic needs can be satisfied by the people who live nearby; by the contribution each household can make to the smooth flow of existence. A community of this sort does not derive from any utopian dream or any compact. In many instances it comes into being imperceptibly and naturally, and it seems to work surprisingly well. I attribute that, at least in part, to the way in which people in the community define and use their house or home.

Many years ago I suggested that the low-income house, whether owned or rented, whether a trailer or a bungalow, could be likened to a transformer in its effect on those who lived in it. "The property of transformers," I wrote, "is that they neither increase nor decrease the energy in question, but merely change its form. . . .

[The house] filters the crudities of nature, the lawlessness of society, and produces and an atmosphere of temporary well-being, where vigor can be renewed for contact with the outside."

That was a definition emphasizing the privacy of the house, the interior as a refuge, and I still believe that this can be an important aspect. But the family itself, to say nothing of the public, judges the house as it relates to its surroundings, natural as well as social. We see the house as a sign not only of membership in the community, but of its interaction with the community. So I am now inclined to believe that a better metaphor for the average house is as the *extension of the hand*. It is the hand we raise to indicate our presence; it is the hand that protects and holds what is its own; the house or hand creates its own small world; it is the visible expression of our identity and our intentions. It is the hand which reaches out to establish and confirm relationships. Without it, we are never complete social beings.
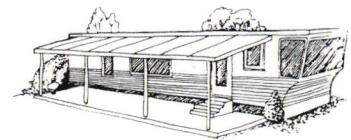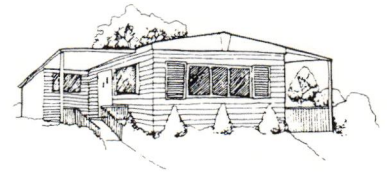
works
of the
day

is a new section of *Design Book Review*
featuring contemporary
designs that exemplify the theme of each issue,
in this case, "Home, House, Housing."

We have invited fifteen architects to
comment briefly on notions of dwelling and habitation;
the works range in scale from
the nomadic furniture of Lars Lerup to
a residential villa in Japan by Adele Naudé Santos to
social housing in Mexico City by Enrique Norten.

In many cases, these works have appeared
in a recent monograph, which we have
faithfully cited, and we hope that this will
in some way compensate for the lack of
attention given in *DBR* to this substantial
sector of design publishing.

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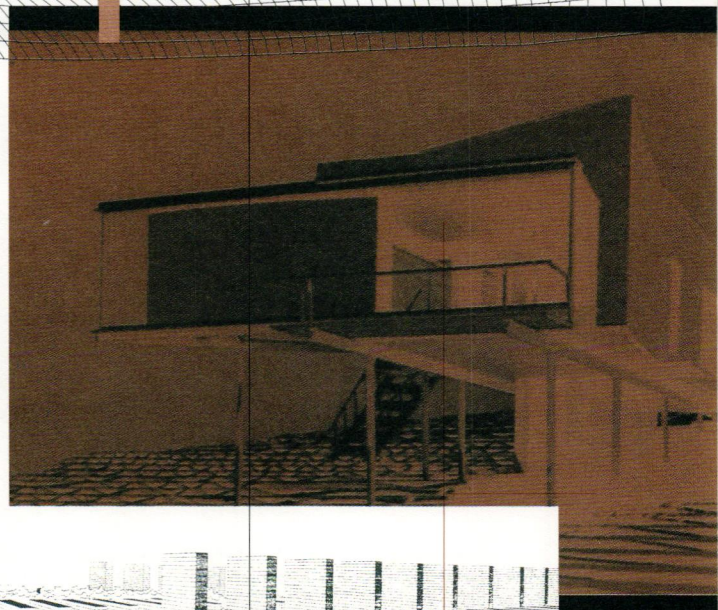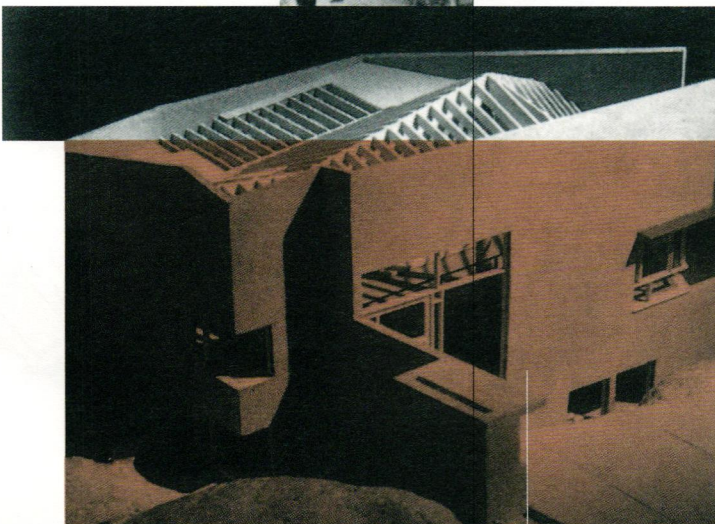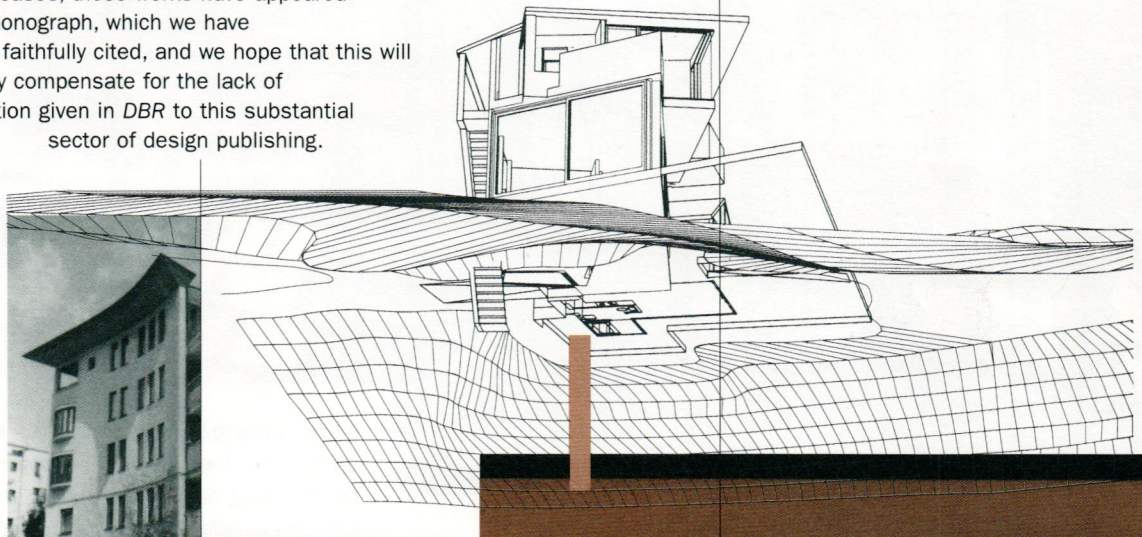
Charles Correa

Incremental Housing, Belapur, New Bombay, 1986

CHARLES CORREA, essays by Kenneth
Frampton and Charles Correa, Thames &
Hudson (London) and Perennial Press
(Bombay), 1996, 272 pp., illus., £40.00.

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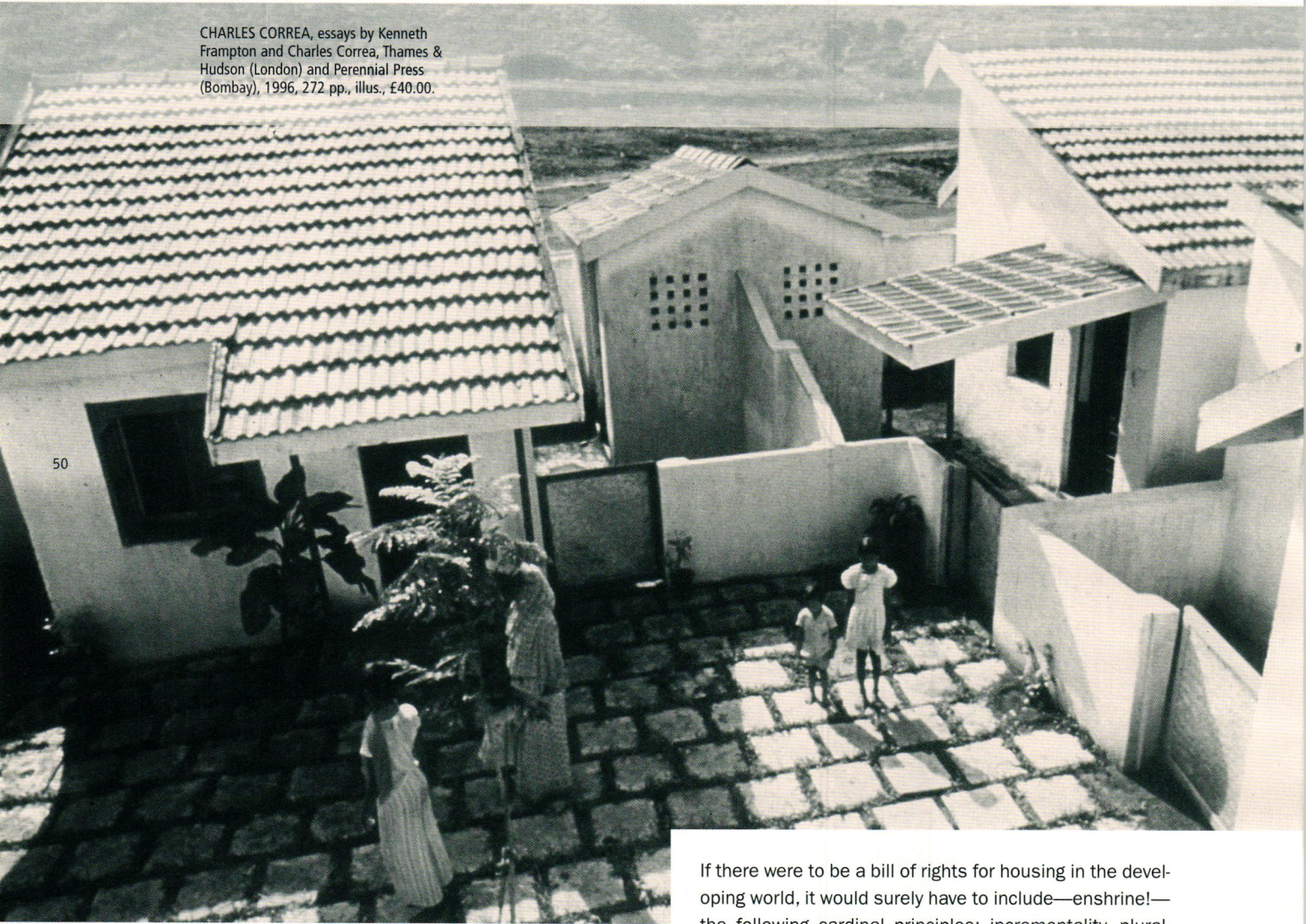
If there were to be a bill of rights for housing in the developing world, it would surely have to include—enshrine!—the following cardinal principles: incrementality, pluralism, participation, income generation, equity, open-to-sky space, disaggregation.
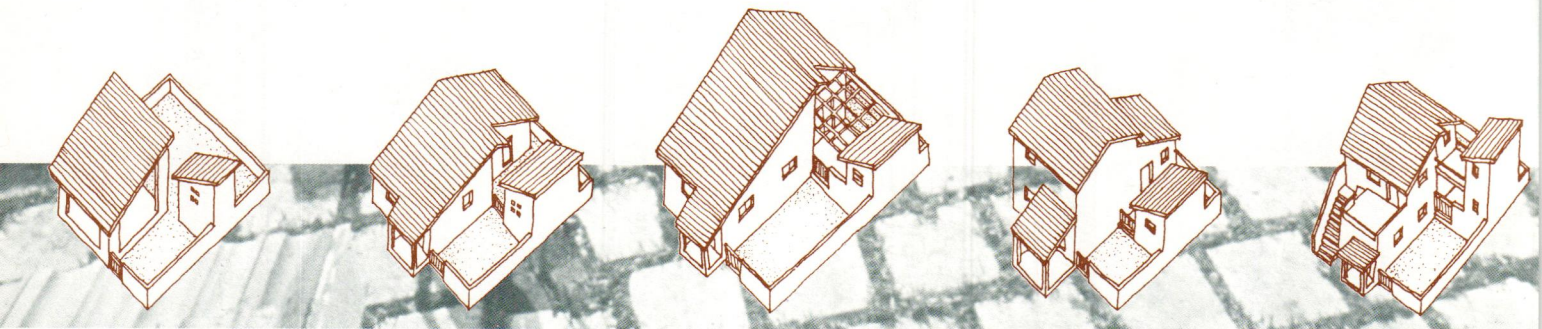
Two kilometers outside the city center of New Bombay, this development demonstrates how high densities (500 persons per hectare, including open spaces, schools, et cetera) can be achieved with a lowrise typology. Here, clusters of seven houses are arranged around a courtyard. This development was commissioned by the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO), which was established by the Government of Maharashtra in 1970.

Léon Gaignebet

Shoreline Housing, Tel Aviv, 1990

works of the day

Shall we put theories first, words, and then build on these assumptions, or shall we follow our intuition—and find words later to fill in the gap between what we did and our own understanding of it, between what we did and other's reactions to it, or both?

Maybe architects always do something they do not mean to when they reach beyond the reassuring limits of implicit rules. Anyway, we must ask ourselves: are we sweating for a few connoisseurs, for a public, for our clients, for other architects, or for Mandelbrot?

One can always conceal a full load of messages, of symbols, of erudition, but who has the time to look for them? One may use contrasting geometries—fractAAAl, Euclidean, spasmodic—but who has the patience to decipher them? One may juggle with scales, but are we ready to think farther than the human? One may also enjoy ornament, decor, profiles, capitals, festoons, and wreaths, but will he become the laughingstock of the critics?

Building is a game, played with many figures on a four-dimensional board. The architect, as the fool running sideways, is the first to be pushed out if he takes risks. Once out, however, he should return to the shelter of Leonardo, the smell of fresh concrete, the noise of the crane, the pleasure of the chalk sketch, the fascination of the Bolean functions in his computer, the smile of the woodworker who has tied a sensuous moulding onto a cornice.

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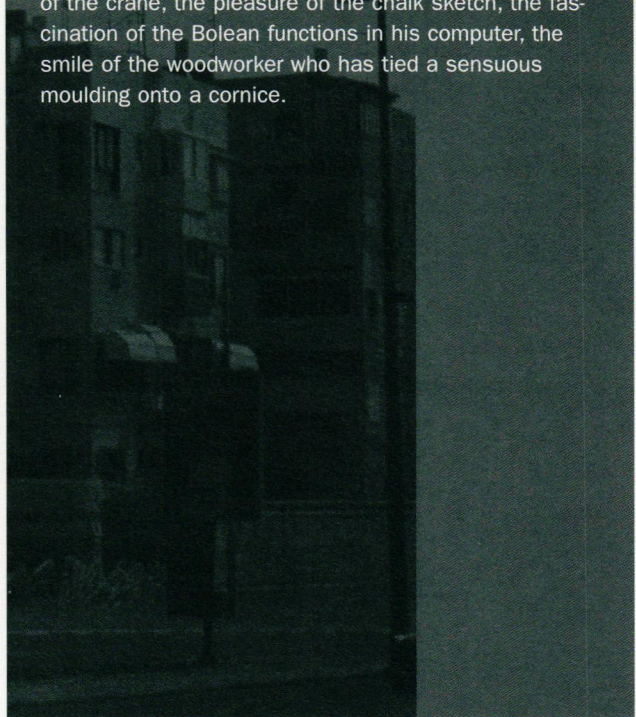
This upscale apartment building was conceived twenty years ago, but construction did not begin until 1981. When completed in 1990, journalists nicknamed it "The Fools' House." Privately funded by a Swiss investor, the four levels of double-storied apartments have the best sea view in Tel Aviv. All of the units were sold upon completion.

Fernau & Hartman

Cheesecake Consortium Cohousing, Mendocino County, California, 1993

Housing — a Circumstantial Architecture

Design begins with a recognition of the particulars, finding and articulating the real circumstances of a given situation. These include not just physical, social, and financial constraints but also a willingness to acknowledge the unknowable.

This is only the beginning. Inevitably, the clarity of an overall diagram is at war with the complexity of the particulars. Attention to this "battle" and a readiness to improvise in response to it leads to a circumstantial aesthetic. Improvisations that interpret and elaborate on diagrammatic order reflect the fluidity of dwelling.

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Photo: Richard Barnes
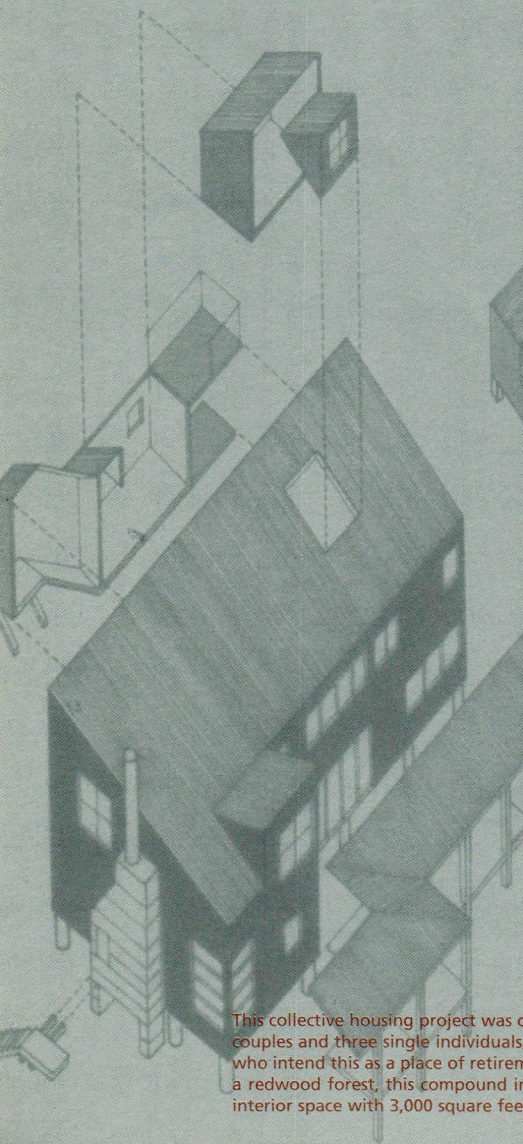
This collective housing project was commissioned by a group of four couples and three single individuals, ranging in age from 40s to 60s, who intend this as a place of retirement. Located on a 13-acre site in a redwood forest, this compound incorporates 5,000 square feet of interior space with 3,000 square feet of exterior space.

Heikkinen-Komonen Architects

Foibe Housing and Amenity Center for Senior Citizens, Vantaa (near Helsinki), Finland, 1994

Like the unchanging patterns of dollhouses and gingerbread cottage, homes for both the young and old are limited in their own uncreative stereotypes. The standard (Scandinavian) recipe for children's spaces calls for hyperactive, dwarf-scaled puppet architecture—a kind of postmodern apotheosis. Meanwhile, the elderly are often confined to Jane Austen–style settings, of the sort commonly found in open-air museums.

Today, seniors are more heterogeneous than ever. The architecture for a mature population must serve the universal experience of the slowing pace of life, but it need not be preoccupied with creating romanticized images of what "leisure life" should be. Architecture's response to aging entails more than merely the provision of handrails, technical appliances, and service or security software. When the radius of anyone's daily territory is reduced, the dwelling must change to meet totally new demands. Is the TV the only window to the outside world? The entry, the corridor, and the stairway are no longer the unconscious distance from the home to the car, but grow to form a whole city for the dweller. How shall this home/world give pleasure and comfort to its dweller? How will it accommodate the need to receive friends or help, when wanted or necessary? In other words, how does the private meet the public?
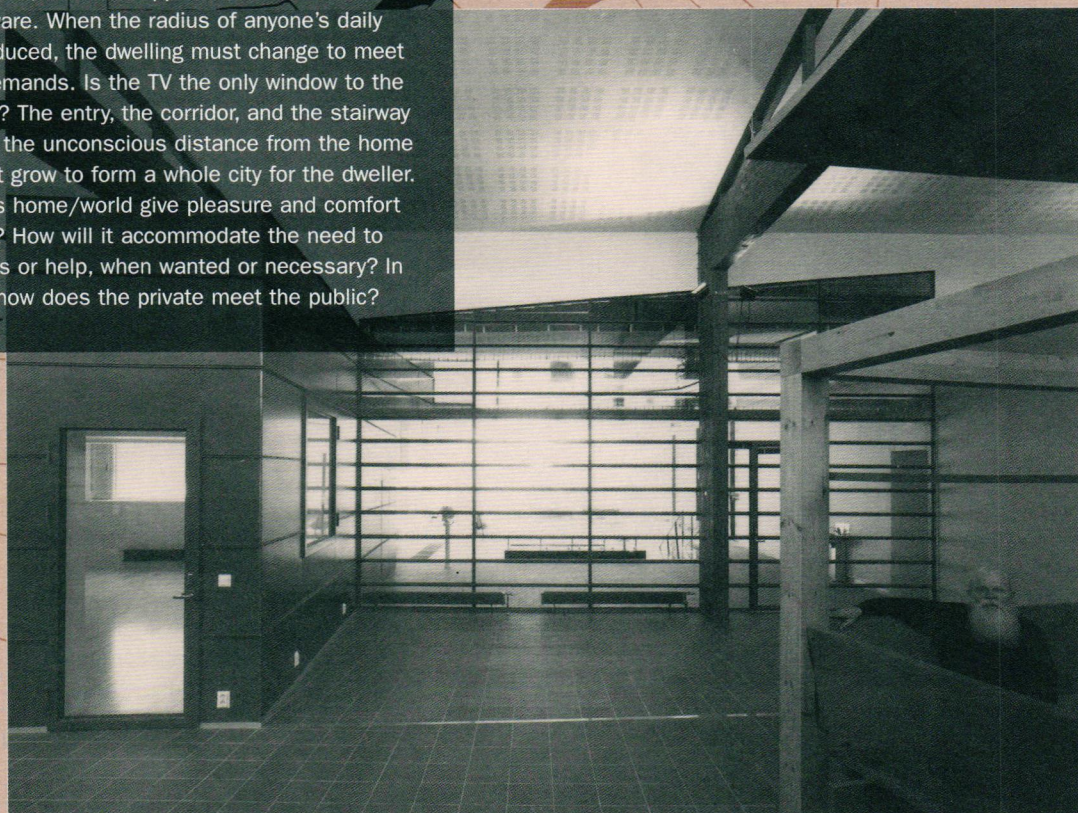
This 50,000-square-foot senior housing project was commissioned by the Foundation Foibe, an agency of the Parish of Vantaa, in order to establish and maintain social projects for the welfare of its citizens. The residential units occupy four rowhouses and two glazed multistory blocks, which connect to the multipurpose service center. The arrangement of the various functions in the center—the swimming pool, gym, saunas, hobby shops, library, restaurant, club rooms, and others—recalls a street in a traditional fishing village.

Photo: Jussi Tiainen

works of the day

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Franklin D. Israel design associates, inc.

Goldberg-Bean House, Hollywood, California, 1991

FRANKLIN D. ISRAEL: BUILDINGS AND PROJECTS, introduction by Frank O. Gehry, essays by Thomas S. Hines and Franklin D. Israel, Rizzoli, 1992, 224 pp., illus., $60.00 (cloth); $35.00 (paper).

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The house serves two primary functions: to shelter the individual and to build the collective form of the community. Through proportion, space, geometry, and materials, the house may engage as well as contribute to the external forces of the urban fabric. The house, however, must also provide shelter from the harsher elements of climate and of the outside world. It is simultaneously a part of and a refuge from the collective of the city.

(This statement was provided by Steven Shortridge, project architect of the Goldberg-Bean House and longtime associate of Frank Israel, who passed away earlier this year.)

Howard Goldberg and Jim Bean commissioned a remodel, plus a 1,500-square-foot addition, to their 2,500-square-foot 1950s ranch-style home.

Photo: Grant Mudford

Michel W. Kagan Architecte

Cité d'Artistes, Paris, 1992

MICHEL W. KAGAN ARCHITECTE, foreword
by Richard Ingersoll, Rockport Press
(forthcoming).

Considering the Space of Dwelling and a Plan in the City

The city of today is endless. It can no longer extend beyond itself, but rather, it expands within itself, within its own territory—an urban interior without limits. The challenge in each project is to find the limits of the "city without limits," of the experimental structures that are integrated within it, while maintaining the awareness that the city that now surrounds us has become the city-region, the city-state, or what the Italians call *la città diffusa* (sprawl).

Today, more than ever, architecture is not a question of making buildings that mirror the world, or of constructing yet another anguish in the city. On the contrary, it is a question of organizing spatial wealth, of providing a possible order, a form of clemency, a right to rest in the city. The "architectural promenade" so dear to Le Corbusier contains a profound dialectic between the thing that is "lived" (as a person's passage from the street to his apartment) and the plasticity of forms. The architectural promenade creates a social link within a democratic architecture, and becomes the aesthetic key to modern contextuality. Buildings should be able to breathe and (despite my high regard for Rem Koolhaas) struggle against the culture of congestion. The architectural promenade is an effective means of being in space; it satisfies a desire for space that, from vision, engenders an idea of possession.

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Commissioned by the Régie Immobilière de la Ville de Paris, the Cité d'Artistes consists of thirty-eight live/work studios, as well as twelve apartments, which were financed separately. It is located in the 15th Arrondissement, facing Citroen-Cévennes Park.

Koning Eizenberg Architecture (in association with Glenn Erikson)

The Electric ArtBlock, Venice, California, 1988

KONING EIZENBERG BUILDINGS, introduction by William J. Mitchell, essays by Aaron Betsky and Julie Eizenberg, Rizzoli, 1996, 224 pp., illus., $60.00 (cloth); $40.00 (paper).

Living with Work

Attitudes toward work and living are rapidly changing. Mixed-use zoning has evolved out of the desire to incorporate housing into commercially zoned areas, however, the mental image we hold of places for work and places for living has been slower to change: emotionally or psychologically, we continue to divide the two realms of activities. Loft dwellings with flexible or open spaces are still considered anomalous as residences, and are rarely built new. (Most are conversions of existing warehouses, and even newly built projects typically amount to little more than a repackaging of conventional apartment living.) Although loft housing has become the clarion cry for cities wishing to revitalize deteriorated manufacturing districts, it is still not considered an appropriate housing model in more traditional residential or suburban neighborhoods. Mixed-use developments address the issue of mixed uses but not of mixed attitudes.

Constructed on commercially zoned land (the site of an abandoned streetcar easement), this twenty-unit artist loft housing project was developed by Glenn Erikson, who was also our architectural collaborator. The Electric ArtBlock was allowed to be built under the city's Commercial Art/Craft District Specific Plan Zoning, and was perhaps the first new large-scale artist-loft housing built in Los Angeles.

Photo: Roland Bishop

Lake/Flato Architects

Carraro House, Kyle, Texas, 1990

Adaptive reuses, recycling existing buildings—this is the truest practice of "green" architecture. All the cities in the United States are filled with empty or disused buildings; converting them to housing (a still uncommon proposition) would not only demonstrate that living spaces can be anything you make them (humans are adaptable beasts), but would also encourage an emphasis on the existing. It would reverse the urge to move outward, to the suburb, and allow people to look inward instead, to the city. The beauty of taking and reinterpreting the existing is that it requires resourcefulness and inevitably leads to rich, unexpected outcomes.

The bulk of housing development strives for a consensus shell. The house styles within these developments may change, but whether Georgian or ranch, such variations make no difference. The buildings still don't respond to climate, context, or the inhabitant. The market may choose to ignore such things as physical or personal legacies, but perhaps homebuyers, too, are to blame. Do we care more about what's on TV than what we live in?

The problem is also larger than architecture: beyond the individual styles of houses and housing, the organization of suburbs and residential development has seriously impaired the way we live. The zoning and infrastructure that have shaped our present city have effectively flattened out complexity of the urban collective which once brought us together.
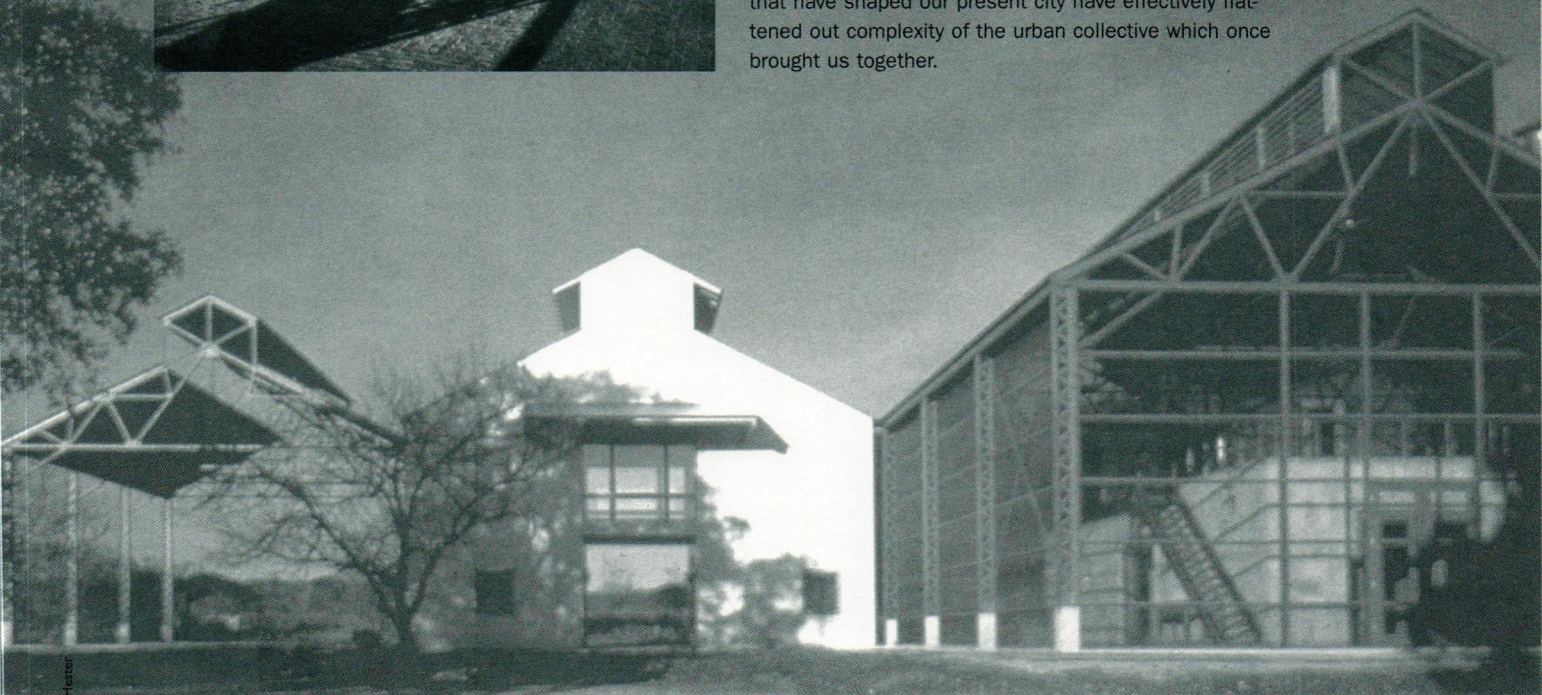
This 20-foot-high 7,200-square-foot shed, formerly part of the Alamo Cement Plant, was disassembled and moved from an urban industrial location in San Antonio, Texas, to a rural 40-acre ranch south of Austin. It is the private residence of a couple.

works of the day

Lars Lerup

"Watt: A Round-up of Automatons," 1996

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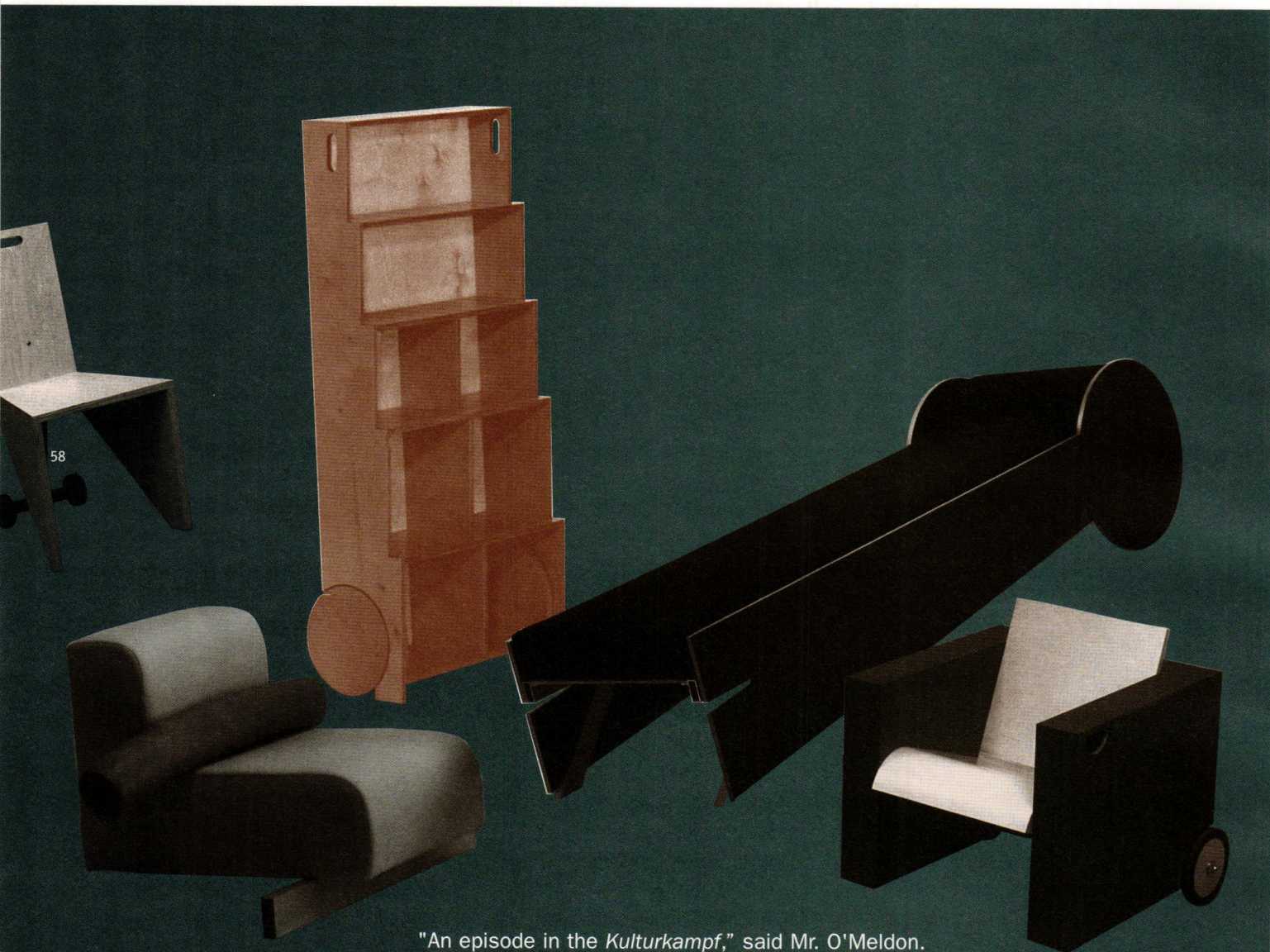
"An episode in the *Kulturkampf*," said Mr. O'Meldon.
—From *Watt*

In the near future, we will all live in the same house
design (one good-sized room), financed by the only
remaining bank (the hyper-mortgage Homefree Savings
and Trust). We will be surrounded by automatons, who,
in their innocuous manner, prop up our existence. We
eke out a life with bionic interactive humming in our
heads—or is it the sound of Beckett's *Watt* softly
being read? At night, the automatons—our shadows,
our alter egos—gather to plot their next move.

"WATT: A Round-up of Automatons" is an independent art project
about the future of domestic space, and has been exhibited in
Houston, Texas.

TEN (Taller de Enrique Norten) Arquitectos

Workers' Housing, Mexico City, 1992

Among the most disgraceful traits of modern urbanism is the systematic emptying of the downtowns of our cities. Moreover, despite their great potential, they continue to be neglected: instead of taking advantage of the possibility to enrich *real* cities with a new, modern way of life, the tendency is to abandon them altogether and reinvent them—in a poorer manner—and in the process, lose the connection between tradition and modernity, between history and contemporaneity. But we are forgetting that history is an ongoing process, a continuum of impulses and events.

The creation of urban infill housing demands a modern vocabulary that would add to the various layers of information contained in older and historically rich cities, while simultaneously fulfilling the universal aspirations of a building's inhabitants, such as the desire for comfort, safety, affordability, and community.

The intersection between tradition and modernity, between the local and the universal, recognizes the specific conditions of place without nostalgia or guilt, and also refers to the complexity and richness of the global culture in which it is immersed. The traditional city, with its single center, is no doubt considerably less complex than the multicentered contemporary city.

At the same time, many human needs and patterns of living remain essentially constant. The lower the income, the less universally a person or group of people is understood, in part because these individuals have less access to the amenities of modern life. But that doesn't mean that the spirit of a worker, for instance, is any less modern than that of a professional. They, too, dream of achieving modern conditions of life while craving, as we all do, a link to our past.

This project was commissioned by the National Funding Institute for Workers' Housing (INFONAVIT), and was developed as part of the Urban Infill Program for the Central Colonial District of Mexico City. This limited-budget project consists of twenty commercial units and twenty-one dwellings, occupying a total of 1,800 square meters.

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Photos: Luis Gordoa

works of the day

Patkau Architects

Barnes House, Nanaimo, British Columbia, 1993

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Creating a place of dwelling within a purely "natural" context requires finding some natural boundary within the site, some point between the separate realms, where the dwelling can assert its own presence while affirming surrounding natural presences. This is a place of simultaneity, a place at once natural and constructed, sharing the richness of each adjacency while creating further riches of its own.

This 2,500-square-foot single-family dwelling is the permanent residence of Dave and Fran Barnes, and occupies a rocky outcrop overlooking the Straight of Georgia.

Photo: James D...

Jorge Rigamonti Arquitecto

Visitors' Campground, Cayo Crasqui Parque Nacional Archipielago Los Roques, Venezuela, 1994

Primitive, nomadic tents express the archaic and some-times transitory condition of dwellings in a natural world which is vulnerable and delicate. These structures remind that buildings should respect and express the environment in which they are situated, rather than stand against it.

Nature is simultaneously in flux and permanent. The sparing and appropriate use of natural materials and the achievement of biologically self-sufficient building need not be reserved solely for "protected" or "natural" lands. These ideas are extendable to "private" land as well, and allow a true response to the specific regional needs of a building's inhabitants.

Situated in a coral reef in the Los Roques archipelago, the Cayo Crasqui campground is comprised of twenty-five "green" vacation dwellings. Only biodegradable materials (wood and canvas, which also allow for shade and ventilation) were used to avoid the poten-tial damage caused by permanent buildings. The encampment as a whole generates its own electricity and collects and desalinizes water.

Photos: Jorge Rigamonti

works of the day

Adele Naudé Santos

SDC Guesthouse, Ninomiya, Japan, 1991

What are the themes that guide the design of housing, whether the individual house or a grouping of dwellings? Central to the design process is the client and the client's cultural context, or (as is more often the case) the invisible user whose needs must be assumed. The architects are the outsiders invited to invade the private personal realm of the clients or to be presumptive about the habits of anonymous others. Part voyeur, part psychologist, part family doctor, we help frame a complex set of ideas and priorities about the act of dwelling, and express it through design. The ambiguity of this seemingly simple task stems from the fact that housing is entangled with multiple meanings. For most, the dwelling is also called "home," whether the place of retreat for an individual or the focus of family life. For the well-to-do, house/home is the shelter not only from the elements but also from society. Home is a private place which comforts the soul and protects possessions. It can be the symbol of family life, the inheritance of multiple generations, or the cornerstone of socioeconomic progress. The house/home can simultaneously express the identity, taste, and status of its inhabitants. As architects, we also desire to express our creativity, to be pragmatists but also poets. Housing design is difficult because, in a very acute way, it challenges us to balance our role as professionals with our creative impulses.

Located on a wooded, sloping site overlooking Tokyo Bay, this 3,000-square-foot house is used by the client, a developer, as both a private residence and a place for business entertaining.

Photo: Hiro Sakaguchi

Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects

MAXmin House, Damascus, Pennsylvania, 1993

House and Housing

The house and housing are two quite different matters. One is specific and the other general. Urban and rural dwellings, too, have their unique departure points from each other, with the city or the countryside exerting specific pressure points on the domestic program and its architectonic resolution.

The rural house wants what the city dwelling doesn't have—a view, open space, and a more informal relationship between inside and outside; and yet the weekend house always latently refers to the city.

What if the weekend house didn't leave everything behind? What if it carried with it some of the urban formality and cultural devices that an urban dwelling might possess? How would the two conditions cohabitate?

Often, all that is brought from city to country is a suitcase, the dog, some supplies that can't be purchased in the "wilderness." What if a building brought something along as well? The efficiency and compactness of a city apartment? The open casualness of a loft-type living space? The single secured point of entry?

Mobile Home

The pairing of these two words offers immense promise. They are so modern. Who wouldn't want to engage in the possibility of a *mobile* home (or the *mobility* of a home)?

What is mobile about a mobile home? It rarely moves. It probably moved once in its life, and it hardly needed its own wheels for that. After its single move—once the home no longer needs to be mobile—the wheels underneath it shrivel up like the leaves of an unwatered plant.

Economy and efficiency make the mobile home general to the occupant but extremely specific to its production, delivery, and installation. The mobile home is the result of the assembly of "lightweight" products such as prefabricated shower enclosures, wall panels, doors, cabinets, and floor systems, made of plastics, fiberglass, particle board. The material descriptions are modern and optimistic. It is interesting that a mobile home is actually installed—like a kitchen sink—rather than built. Installation implies a part of some larger whole. The difference between house and housing.

Photo: Paul Warchol

Weekend house for Kenneth Frampton and Sylvia Kolbowski.

Cino Zucchi

Urban Renewal for Former Factory Workers' District, Giudecca Island (opposite Venice), 1995
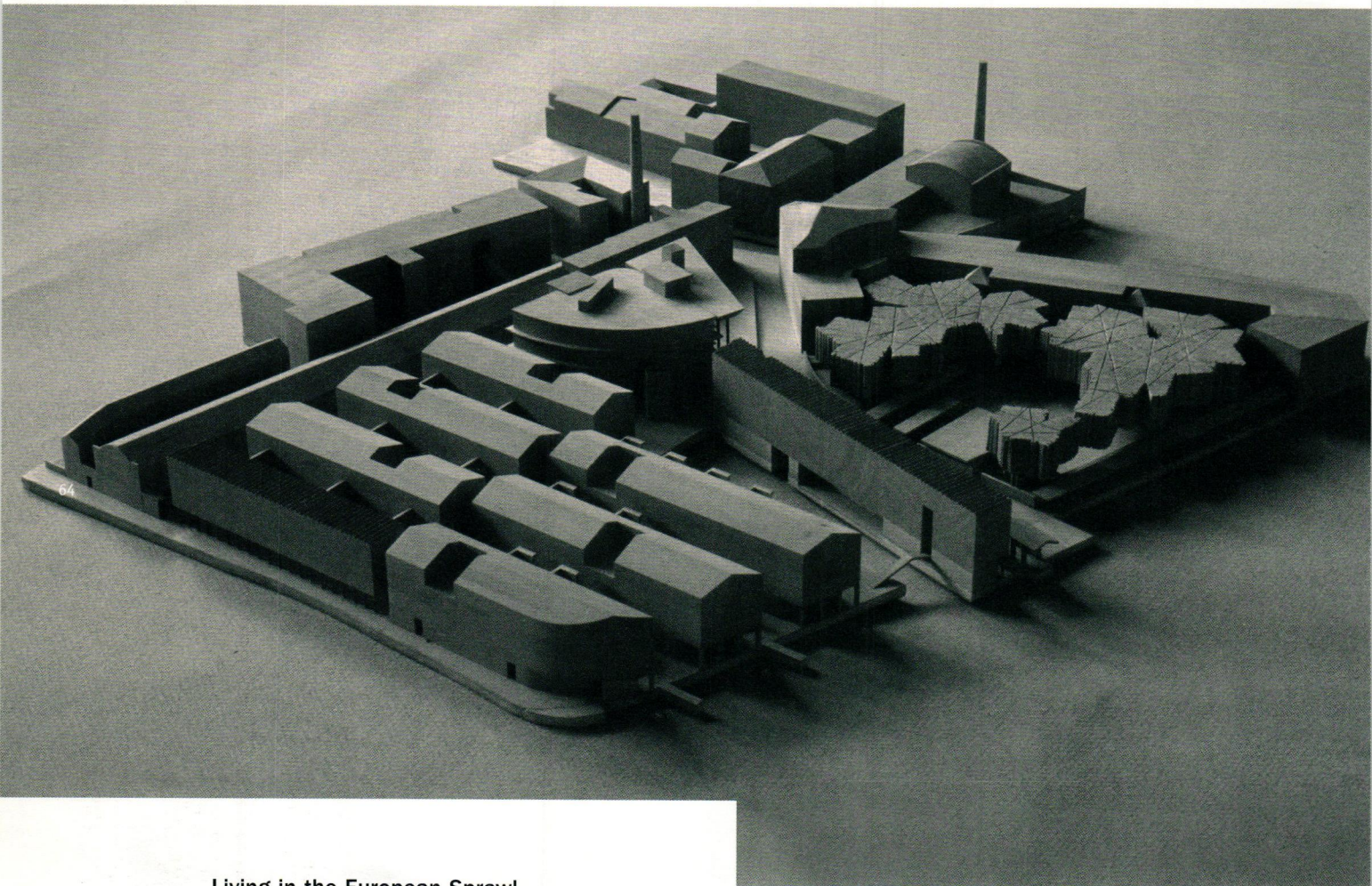
Living in the European Sprawl

What is the connection between today's supply of mobility and the demand for domestic permanence? The relation between the dwelling (the art of the interior) and the city (the flowing landscape) is now fragile and problematic. One's house is only a subliminal vision to other people, a fleeting form seen from the street or highway. The inside and the outside of a building are perceived as two separate entities, achieved through different circumstances. Those of us involved in building are as incapable of controlling the exterior landscape as we are of providing a comfortable interior. And we are continually losing control of the intermediate scale of urban design.

The glass house, the isolated pavilion, spatially continuous and open to nature, requires godlike inhabitants. The sublime—the only aesthetic permitted by the modern—is incompatible with "the domestic." As Adolf Loos understood so well, *chez soi* resists architecture as art. A man in his slippers is looking for comfort, not formal excitement. Inside, the pathos of the house; outside, the functional city. To the modern idea of the glass house we can oppose interiors without facades. As a drawer or a closet, then, a building works because it *denies* vision.

We should rethink the interface between habitation and landscape, producing figures only where needed. The historic city, the coherent fabric, the places that are human scaled—these will survive, whether in their original form or as copies. They will be more and more thought of as interiors, with regulated access, as medieval simulations. Arcadias made possible through technology.

Winning project in a closed competition for the development of the old Junhans Factory precinct on Giudecca Island. The result of public-private initiative between the current owner of the site, Judeca Nova s.p.a., and the Comune di Venezia, this proposal encompasses 370,000 square feet of built surface, mostly residential, including the readaptation of existing industrial buildings as well as the construction of new buildings. The housing spans a range of types, from subsidized to middle-income to student.

Privatopia

MICHAEL ROBINSON

What happens when social utopian theory collides with the harsh realities of a freewheeling capitalist democratic society? Evan McKenzie nicknames this accident "privatopia" in his lively, well-written, and extensively researched book, *Privatopia: Homeowners' Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Governments*. Utopian concepts reflect a natural human desire to live peacefully and supportively among each other, in a civil society that checks the potentially beastly dimension of unabridged individual freedom. In the "civilized" clearing of human settlements, people have learned that they can flourish by trading the ties of kinship (and perhaps some personal liberties as well) for the ties of community. Such relations have been historically predicated on two things: living in geographic proximity with others and establishing a collective agreement about how to live well together.

Maintaining these relations and developing a shared vision of collective purpose are increasingly difficult, however, in a world where global capital, telecommunications, and technological advancements seem to render geography ever less relevant, direct human exchange ever less necessary. Furthermore, the social contract that once bound us—traditionally unwritten but implied through customs of governance, inhabitory practices, and spatial orders carved into the landscape—has been steadily eroded by the concepts of individualism and private property ownership that are so central to capitalistic societies. In the United States in particular, current political rhetoric advocating less government involvement in people's lives indicates that privatization may well serve as an analgesic for an urban psychosis of a postmodern sort—perhaps an advanced state of the agoraphobia that plagued urban dwellers in the 19th century following widespread attempts to "modernize" cities in Haussmannesque fashion.

McKenzie warns that the most insidious privatization schemes are modern housing developments that assume functions typically within the purview of municipalities, such as sanitation, security, and the maintenance of public space. He suggests that these developments are a "unique, ad hoc form of privatization, carrying with them significant social and political consequences that have never been adequately considered by governments or academics." The rise of these "bourgeois utopias" is symptomatic of the loss of a vibrant and vivid political landscape that once served to bind and center communities and guarantee public life. The modern civic clearing, lacking permanence and continuity, is apparently losing its power to balance countervailing concerns for private rights and private wealth, social responsibility and the common good.

McKenzie senses that people in the United States are experiencing a profound loss of confidence in their ability to govern a liberal democratic society in the face of postmodern capitalism. They are therefore seeking—and are willing to pay the price for—more private forms of housing enclaves which provide additional infrastructure and public services. A significant recent response to this perceived loss of community and subsequent loss of control over public life is the New Urbanism, which promotes the urban-scaled pedestrian neighborhood as the quintessential political and communal unit. Criticism of this planning trend notwithstanding (see John Kaliski's "Reading New Urbanism" in this issue of *DBR*, page 69), it has offered some proven physical models of how to civilize the modern wilderness and reify the commitment to public life and the common good.

This small-town ideal may have its attractions, but McKenzie warns that constitutional rights (equality, equity, right to travel, due process, et cetera) may be threatened by the corporate fiat exercised by residential private governments. A host of economic organizations has emerged, what he calls "common-interest developments" (CIDs), which use restrictive covenants and administrative association by-laws as instrumental civic contracts. CIDs may include condominiums, cooperative housing, planned-unit residential developments, and commonly owned apartments.

CIDs usually mandate participation in the form of some homeowners' association, as well as abidance by the rules of these private residential governments. They also typically
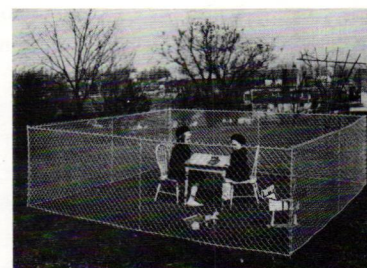
Tea for two (and not for you).
(From *Between Fences*.)

home, house, housing

restrict the ownership, use, and modification of privately owned or exclusive-use property within the development. Often, some amount of real property is owned or held in common.

McKenzie approximates that 12 percent of Americans today live in over 130,000 developments ruled by this sort of contractual private government. As recently as 1964, there were only five hundred homeowner associations in the U.S., but the last twenty years has seen a precipitous rise and alarmingly, McKenzie estimates that the number of residential private governments will double by the end of the century. He blames the explosion of politically insular communities on avaricious land speculators and developers, who have been empowered by the political events and economic cycles of the last half century. Between 1950 and 1975, the price of undeveloped land ratcheted up with the expansion of urban systems and urban infrastructure; real estate interests began to seek higher densities in order to increase profits and decrease development costs. Federal subsidies and policies, initiated in the 1930s to encourage the new construction of suburban single-family houses, were extended in later decades to include all forms of CIDs and multifamily dwellings. More importantly, the boom of CIDs must also be seen as an inevitable response to the alienating effects of modern urban life and politics.

Whatever the reasons, McKenzie warns that the growth of the number of residential private governments is profoundly capable of further balkanizing the American landscape into class cultures. While "privatopia" may be a reflection of real desires for an orderly, safe, convenient, and civil society, McKenzie's criticism stems from the basic and somewhat appalling fact that, as economist Robert Reich has put it, "the fortunate fifth [of American society] is quietly seceding from the rest of the nation."

McKenzie sees the secession of the affluent from cities into privatopia as a threat to the public realm, for it saps the resources, energy, expertise, and participation of an entire segment of society from the daily affairs of urban life in this country. He repeats the now-common lament of urbanists and social critics alike, that suburbanization has eradicated the American landscape of any semblance of civic or shared responsibility by isolating and alienating individuals from community and society in general. Holding up as evidence the fact that the 1992 presidential election was the first in which a majority of the voters were suburbanites, McKenzie maintains that the U.S. has become a "suburban nation with an urban fringe and a rural fringe." The perverse undoing of urban culture by the removed realms of private privilege is attributable to failed social and economic policies, which McKenzie discusses at great length. Through the micro-politics of residential private governments, the exponential growth of CIDs has begun to challenge the very notion of "citizenship." According to McKenzie, as CIDs spread, housing choices will be increasingly restricted and eventually many Americans may well be living in CIDs, under the rule of private governments, regardless of their housing preferences.

Privatopia is the first book to comprehensively address and critique this important subject. It is structured in an interesting historical and chronological manner, beginning with the development of common-law restrictive covenants which emerged in response to "enclosure" in medieval England (the process of dividing common lands into private parcels enclosed with fences or barriers). The author draws on social theory, public policy, economic pragmatism, and detailed case studies of housing developments in order to trace the origins and evolution of common-interest housing developments. With admirable historical detail, McKenzie surveys a number of archetypal housing developments in the U.S.: Gramercy Park in New York; Louisberg Square in Boston; Llewelyn Park in West Orange, New Jersey; the Country Club District in Kansas City; Forest Hills Gardens in New York; Radburn, New Jersey; Greenbelt Towns; and Housing and Urban Development new towns. He also reviews the significant and lasting influence of Llewelyn Haskel, Rexford Tugwell, Abraham and William Levitt, and other major community-builders of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Using Ebenezer Howard's Garden City as a model, McKenzie compares privatopia to the socially and economically motivated housing reform of the turn of the century—illustrating the shift from a 19th-century concern for exclusivity to a 20th-century concern for exclusion. For example, he cites the National Association of Real Estate Board's Code of Ethics, revealing the instrumental role that the real estate industry played in segregating neighborhoods by race and ethnicity, even as recently as the early 1960s. He furthers credits federal policies such as the 1934 National Housing Act for fueling rapid suburbanization and institutionalizing segregated housing patterns. Many of these public and private policies, which advocated the use of race-restrictive covenants, remained influential until 1948, when the landmark Supreme Court decision of Shelly v. Kramer declared race-restrictive covenants unenforceable.

Throughout *Privatopia*, McKenzie advances three primary ideas: residential private governments are unregulated; their organizational structure departs from accepted notions of liberal democracy; and the rapid spread of CIDs is changing political discourse and alliances in this country. In light of current national debates over property rights, the sound of McKenzie's warning bell is welcome indeed. With clear, poignant, and persuasive arguments, *Privatopia* will hopefully alert scholars and the legal establishment alike of the need to examine the consequences that these nascent, quasi-municipal governments may hold for constitutional democracy.

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Recoding Utopia

RAYMOND W. GASTIL

In *Local Code: The Constitution of a City at 42° N Latitude*, Michael Sorkin has conceptualized a code intended to generate the new city—not an imagined city, but a real city, a place for dwelling, business, pleasure. This compilation of codes is deliberately unillustrated: there are no photographs, no renderings, no diagrams, no zoning envelopes, no figure-grounds. Sorkin attributes his graphic reticence to his desire to leave the application of the Code open to anyone's vision and thus allow for greater possible outcomes. But beyond his taste for freedom lies his distaste for the work of his cousins in utopianism, New Urbanists such as Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, whose work combines the discipline of a code with spare diagrams and lush illustrations. Sorkin is determined to distinguish his approach from what he considers intrinsically (or effectively) nostalgic, consumerist, theme-park-like.

This is a challenge because Sorkin wants so many of the same things that the New Urbanists do: walkable communities, neighborhoods with convenient, accessible amenities and services, ample public spaces, clear limits between town and country. His task is doubly difficult (and admirable) because he waives the support of visual aids—designing, in effect, with one hand tied behind his back. Sorkin, a genius of critical mockery and anecdote, restricts himself in this text to making a city rather than tearing down others, leaving himself vulnerable with every line. At first, the result seems dry. One craves the telling, invidious comparison, or more positively, an illustration, a cross-reference, a glossary to ease the work of keeping all the pieces of the evolving city together. Yet *Local Code* is ultimately a profoundly heartfelt effort, for it is a catalogue of everything the author loves about buildings and the spaces between them, of cities both imaginary and real. As he states in the afterword, he wrote this book for pleasure.

Sorkin offers a new world with a new language. Instead of the *quartiers* of the Krier brothers, there are the square-mile "Fragments" that comprise the "Mosaic," an abstraction that perhaps derives from landscape ecology's "mosaic" breakdown of ecosystems into patches and corridors in a matrix. Instead of neighborhoods or even the "neighborhood unit"—a building block of contemporary planning since architect Clarence Stein's designs for Radburn and Sunnyside Gardens in the late 1920s—there are "Nabes." The language is intent on allowing the reader to visualize beyond experience, to imagine "Nets," not streets, without either Paris or science fiction in the mind's eye. The mind's eye glazes over a bit, however, at such lines as "Habnets are classified as Class A or Class B. Class A Habnets link six or fewer Habs to Grade, Goods, or Waternets. Class B Habnets link between six and thirty Habs to Grade, Goods, or Waternets." Yet for anyone who has read municipal land-use and building codes, this is still literature.

Casual readers may rebel against the Code for its seemingly dictatorial neologisms, but the patient will be convinced by Sorkin's faith in the potential to rearrange the way we live and work through urban form. Still, the insistence on novelty sometimes seems strange in a text redolent of history in its language and program. Take, for example, the "Habs," individual dwelling units aggregated into "Habmasses." Because the language (habitat plus biomass equals habmass) does have a historical resonance (Expo '67)—the mind is bound to place Sorkin's vision in the past. This is even more true when we learn that, like the discrete, terraced dwelling units of Moshe Safdie's 1960s designs, the "Habs are to be distinguished, one from another, tectonically, even when massed." There is even outdoor sleeping, in case anyone has forgotten Richard Neutra's Health House in the Hollywood Hills. Sorkin's design base is the same as Neutra's: sunshine, hygiene, and unprecedented tectonically derived form.

Local Code's greatest virtue is its attempt to formulate an ideal through fresh design as opposed to historical associations. Sorkin demands that the missions of modernism—the

expression of new technologies and social organizations in novel built form—be tied to the sustainable ethic, with the overarching goal of "homeostasis," or dynamic stability. Accordingly, the Code's "Bill of Rights" guarantees both "the right to change" and "the right to memory."

But what would a *Local Code* city be like? All Nabes are to be mixed use—no more zoning. This is like Krier without royalty. There are to be 100 Nabes in the city; and each Nabe will have a minimum of 1,000 and a maximum of 1,500 Habs (dwelling units). That adds up to about 300,000 people, if one calculates 2 people per Hab and the maximum build-out. This means a city larger than, say, Lexington, Kentucky, smaller than Portland, Oregon, and just about the size of Padua in the Veneto region. And what about density? This we learn indirectly. No point on the inside edge of the city's "Ring" (the new city has clear limits and edges) is to be more than three hours' walk from any other point on the inside edge of the Ring. Assuming that people walk at four miles per hour, that means a (circular) city about 12 miles across at its largest, with an area of about 113 square miles.

That is a big city for 300,000 people: 2,600 per square mile, or 4 per acre—a suburban density. Of course, this is the maximum size, and the Code includes a plethora of public spaces that would result in a much higher net density. Still, it is instructive to realize that the Code does not insist on the densities of Paris, Amsterdam, or Greenwich Village. The scale and density suggest a city closer to Washington, D.C., or Toronto. The United States Census considers land with more than 1,000 residents per square mile urbanized. Sorkin expands the American township, 6 miles by 6 miles, trebles it, and fills it with the types of places, circulation, and spatial relationships that he considers citylike, or more specifically, urban in a way that people like, which is what cities have to be in a world where people can choose to ignore them. Urban is as urban does.

Yet no matter how much the Code strives toward the relational essence of things and away from imagistic assemblage, cities of memory do come through. They may not be outlined by the Code but they are intrinsic to it. Rising out of the Joints and Nets and Nabes are the places that Sorkin clearly loves, especially New York, a city on the forty-second parallel that has clear "Nabes," and where planners and architects have worried its 200-foot-deep grid pattern into modernist schemes ever since someone had a better idea than rowhouses and tenements. For some readers, Sorkin's Code will resonate with another forty-second-parallel city, Rome. Even his definition of the square-mile Mosaic seems derived from the shattered map of ancient Rome which Piranesi and, more recently, architects trained at Cornell under Colin Rowe, have reinterpreted and reassembled.

Sorkin writes that the Code is for an American city, but it would be a very European place indeed, not much like the existing forty-second-parallel cities of Boston, Detroit, Chicago, Omaha, Salt Lake City or Sapporo in Japan. Sorkin is hardly coy about his affinities: it is possible to read through the Code, ignoring the Vectors and Nets and noting instead the places and things with the names they have always had, such as piazzas, ravines, and cafes. How would it be for a place like Omaha to have a piazza (not to be counted as a "Green") that is to have a fountain, a timepiece, and adjoining cafes (with with outdoor dining yet)? The neologisms just fade back into the text and Padua, Rome, and Venice come into focus. "Every time I describe a city I am saying something about Venice," Marco Polo tells Kublai Khan in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974). For Sorkin, with every line he writes of *Local Code,* he is saying something about the cities he loves.

And why not? If he can inspire people to imagine an ecologically sound, sustainable city, who wouldn't wish him well? But in the discourse of power it is hard to see where Sorkin's city will climax, where it will generate the spectacle of a metropolis which, if not part of the utopian vision for cities, has certainly been part of the argument for their survival as an urban form. Sorkin may like some spectacle, but his Code opposes passive consumption. When we get out of town to the sports fields, "No more than 5 percent of the total area of all Sportsgrounds may be devoted to the apparatus of passive spectatorship." That may be well and good but are we so sure that power and its spectacles inhibit, rather than inspire, urban pleasure? Are we so sure that the best urban life is where there is sunlight in all the rooms and fountains in all the squares? These are questions for the New Urbanists, too, questions which *Local Code* leaves begging.

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Reading New Urbanism

JOHN KALISKI

The poetics of small-town life, the virtues of sustainable communities, and the appeal of environments that emphasize the pedestrian over the automobile are key to understanding the growing fascination with New Urbanism. However, for most architects, this increasingly popular movement remains either an enigma or a public relations coup. The technical and pragmatic details behind realizing New Urbanism are rarely discussed; disproportionate attention is given to more easily understood and more emotionally accessible issues such as the use of neotraditional architectural styles and townscapes. But these digressions are unfortunate given that the agenda and influence of New Urbanism extend far beyond questions of taste.

Though the movement has roots in the 1970s, very little information on New Urbanism and its practices has been available until just recently. A trickle of publications began to appear, starting with Doug Kelbaugh's academic *Pedestrian Pocket Book: A New Suburban Design Strategy* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1989). The claims and production values of this pamphlet now seem quaintly modest compared to the recent torrent of articles and monographs proclaiming the all-encompassing success of New Urbanism in cities, towns, and suburbs. The current swell of books (and one can imagine that it's just a matter of time before *Sunset* produces a "how to" New Urbanism manual) demands an extended consideration of key New Urbanism texts and a substantive evaluation of their varying approaches, messages, and audiences.

New Urbanism seems to have generated three literary genres: tour guides, pattern books, and treatises. *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community,* edited by Peter Katz, best fits the tour guide framework. It provides an overview of New Urbanism, tracing the movement's history and leading the tourist to the most colorful attractions. While some guides are written to transcend the limitations of the genre and become literature in and of themselves (James Morris' 1960 writings on Venice come to mind), few are expected to last beyond a season or two.

If tour guides are inevitably ephemeral, pattern books with their rules and guidelines are meant to have a longer shelf life. They appeal to the pragmatically minded—those who know what they want but just need the recipe. Thus, readers of Peter Calthorpe's *The Next American Metropolis: Ecology, Community, and the American Dream* will probably find little to argue with, for this book describes the pattern of the environmentally sustainable urban order which they seek.
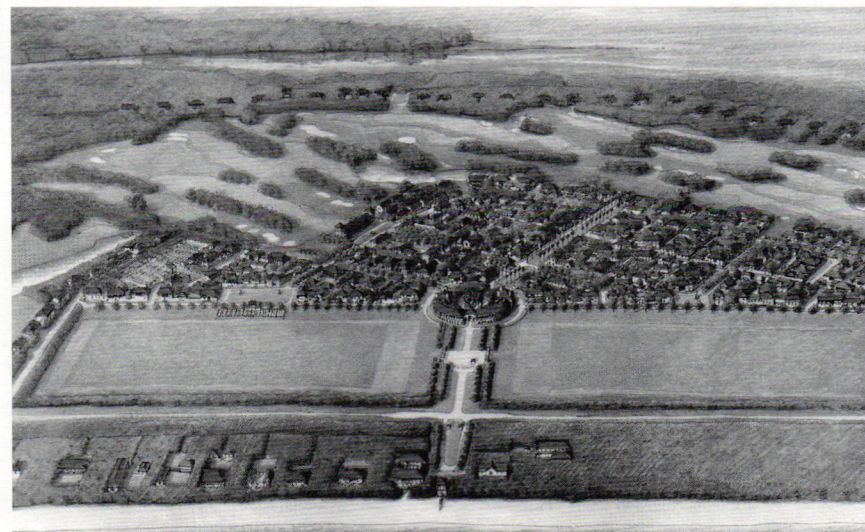
Bird's-eye view of Windsor, an exclusive upscale resort community occupying 416 acres of Florida coastal land; Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, 1989. The plan and street geometry of Windsor draw from the site's surrounding polo fields and eighteen-hole golf course. Residents of this private development are required to be members of the sporting club. (From *The New Urbanism*.)

home, house, housing

And unlike tour guides and pattern books, which typically do not invite a critical relationship between author and reader, a treatise usually advances principles based on the writer's real experiences or research and thus easily engages a professionally oriented audience. Daniel Solomon's *ReBuilding* fits into this category, its polemic for architecture and urbanism directed to practicing designers. A reading of all three books provides a range of New Urbanisms, suggesting the strengths and weaknesses of the movement and offering a glimpse of some possible roles that the architect may play in a rapidly urbanizing world.

Katz's richly illustrated *The New Urbanism* is a breathless voyage to the movement's landmark projects and places. Examples from inner as well as edge cities are presented and classified as "brownfield urban infill" (i.e., previously urbanized sites) or "precedent-setting clearfield pattern" (open land). The latter type is explicated in a section entitled "Establishing the Urban Pattern," a compendium of projects built on sites with little or no existing infrastructure. Here, readers find the Duany Plater-Zyberk (DPZ) projects that made New Urbanism famous: Seaside (Walton County, Florida, 1981), Kentlands (Gaithersburg, Maryland, 1988), Windsor (Indian River County, Florida, 1989), Wellington (Palm Beach County, Florida, 1989), and others. This section also features lesser-known DPZ projects such as Rosa Vista, a mobile-home park in Mesa, Arizona (1991), which is more rooted in the conventions of the enclave trailer parks of the last half century than in the planning techniques of New Urbanism's 1920s heroes John Nolen, Werner Hegemann and Elbert Peets.[1]

Any rigorous observation of DPZ's work reveals such design flexibility that it is no wonder that their consistent use of regional and historic styles is the locus of

academic discourse. The "anything goes" sense that runs through the movement's various projects (hence the ubiquitous hipped and gabled roofs) is reinforced by the inclusion in this section of both Peter Calthorpe's Laguna West, a low-density exurban outpost with builder-standard cul-de-sacs (Sacramento County, 1990), and Daniel Solomon and Katherine Clarke's design for Communications Hill, an infill, medium-density, grid-iron new town set on a promontory within the flat sprawl of urbanized San Jose (1991). While all of these projects could be claimed as precedent-setting in their respective locales, the illustrated patterns and attendant land-use policies are strikingly dissimilar, leaving the reader confused as to what in fact is a New Urbanist approach to a clearfield situation.

The confusion over what precisely constitutes New Urbanism principles continues in the section "Reconstructing the Urban Fabric," a collection of brownfield urban redevelopment and inner-city revitalization projects. Some of these, such as the urban design plan for Riviera Beach by Mark Schimmenti and the firm Dover, Correa, Kohl, Cockshutt, Valle (Palm Beach County, Florida, 1991) and Solomon's Downtown Hayward Revitalization Plan (Contra Costa County, California, 1992), subtly utilize building-by-building urban repair strategies, following design guidelines aimed at nurturing existing urban places.[2] Others, however, such as Peterson and Littenberg's Cité Internationale (Montreal, 1990) and Calthorpe and Skidmore, Owings and Merrill's Atlantic Center (Brooklyn, 1986), are almost indistinguishable in terms of scale, scope, and corporate gigantism from projects found in redeveloped downtowns from coast to coast—all seemingly modeled on Battery Park City. The inclusion in this chapter of apparent clearfield projects such as the twelve-hundred-acre
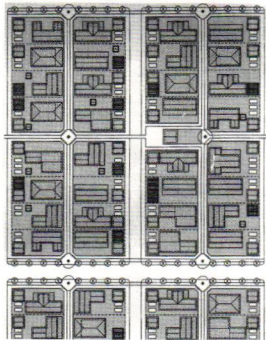
Plan of Rosa Vista, a mobile-home village near Phoenix; Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, 1991. This project proposes a rethinking of a much-maligned housing type which in fact has many virtues: it is 35 percent cheaper than conventionally constructed housing and accounts for one-third of all new single-family homes sold in the U.S. DPZ's plan (right) incorporates many street types, such as narrow pedestrian-only *paseos* that cut through the blocks (see above). Further, the multisized lots accommodate a broad range of unit types, including smaller detached outbuildings or carports that line the rear lanes. (From *The New Urbanism*.)
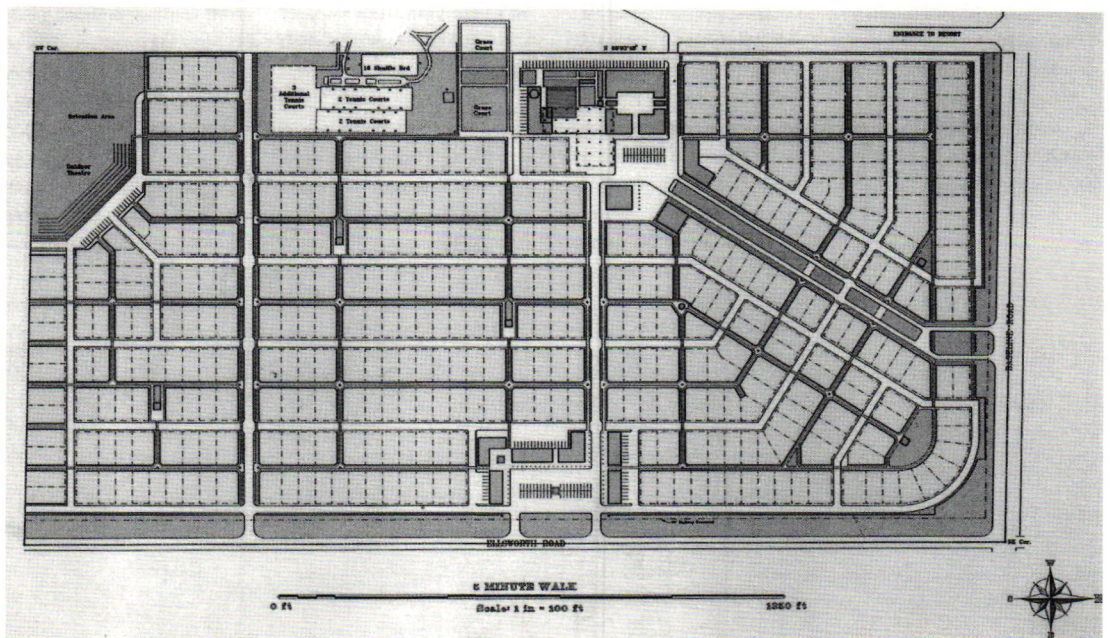
Playa Vista (1989) further confuses the issue of just what qualifies as urban infill. Playa Vista, occupying West Los Angeles' last remaining undeveloped open space, is more akin to DPZ's Windsor (minus the polo fields) than the type of in-town repair projects that one would expect to find in this portion of the book.

The common thread throughout this compendium of work is not, ultimately, any particular set of principles; rather, it is the presence of DPZ. The broad range of their architectural practice is amply represented, from resorts and new towns to urban redevelopment schemes such as the Downcity Providence Master Plan (1992). While much of their work is remarkable for its unabashed elitism, other projects, like Rosa Vista, are poetically prosaic. In fact, the professional flexibility and nondogmatic nature of their work are demonstrated by the inclusion of both Seaside and the Strategic Plan for Downtown Los Angeles, two efforts that could not be more different in every possible way. Katz's relentless boosterism and failure to discern between urban, suburban, and exurban locales and between various densities lead skimming readers to the unfortunate conclusion that all new projects in North America that are based upon a loose interpretation of "compact, close-knit community" are, as long as one squints one's eyes, New Urbanism. At best, this does not do justice to DPZ. At worst, it betrays the movement's lack of rigorous purpose and principle.

Accompanying the projects in Katz's book are three essays by certified founders of New Urbanism, intended to lay its theoretical groundwork. Calthorpe, in his essay "The Region," defines New Urbanism as an approach wherein the "pieces" (neighborhoods) of the region are inexorably tied to the wellness of the whole. Never precisely stating how one might go about defining the physical boundaries of a region (for instance, he could have utilized Patrick Geddes' valley section or Ian McHarg's watershed), he relates environmental sustainability to the managed growth of cities and suburbs. To this end he advocates urban growth boundaries, infill construction and revitalization, and the selective building of new towns.

While the patterns of managed growth proposed by Calthorpe are eminently sensible, his argument, that New Urbanism represents a continuity with a forgotten planning tradition, indeed, a break from the modernist past, is problematic. In this regard, Ebenezer Howard's Garden City, the bedrock of the English town-planning movement, is described by Calthorpe as a "Luddite's vision of small towns built for workers surrounded by a greenbelt, combining the best of city and country." Calthorpe goes on to contrast Howard's new town, with its "powerful civic spaces surrounded by village-scaled neighborhoods," to Tony Garnier's Cité Industriale of the same period. Like Howard's Garden City, Garnier's model

town is surrounded by green and connected by rail to a greater region. But Calthorpe dismisses it for its segregation of industry from other uses and placement of buildings facing pedestrian-oriented greenways as opposed to streets. Ignoring the fact that these same design principles are easily read into Howard's diagrams—never mind that Howard never produced anything but diagrams and lived in cooperative housing much like that advocated by Garnier—Calthorpe splits hairs and inexplicably declares the Garnier's modernism as failed compared to Howard's supposedly successful Luddite vision. Calthorpe goes on to exhort that the work of New Urbanism must learn from these failures, yet a few paragraphs later, without missing a beat, he sounds like a reincarnation of both Howard and Garnier when he states, "[W]ithout greenbelted satellite towns or stable Urban Growth Boundaries, a fast growing region will continually expand into and threaten close-in natural edges and open space." Further obscuring matters, Calthorpe offers little to suggest how urban growth limits will manage to suppress the economic and political forces that drive sprawl, such as increasingly flexible economies and job markets, instantaneous communications, ever-cleaner cars, and a land-value system that continues to maintain cheap acreage at the periphery of development.

Calthorpe's confused survey of kindred modernist visions as justification for New Urbanism is poor history. He claims that the difference between New Urbanism and its various precedents is the present need for regions to act as big neighborhoods. However, one could easily argue that this brand of regionalism is merely the latest iteration of the ideals of Benton McKaye, Lewis Mumford, and Clarence Stein, some of the founders of the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA). They, too, related the neighborhood to the health of the region, though none of them would have cared to be labeled neotraditional.

Duany and Plater-Zyberk's essay "The Neighborhood, the District and the Corridor" also presents suspect historical justification for New Urbanism. They cite both Thomas Adams' 1929 New York Regional Plan and McKaye's RPAA work as influences. While there is nothing wrong with citing these precedents, one suspects that Duany and Plater-Zyberk don't mean to endorse the aspect of Adams' work that justified "tower in the park" schemes, rejected Garden Cities, and supported high-density centralization.[3] At the same time, their use, like Calthorpe's, of RPAA principles aligns them in many ways with the suburban, antiurban planning of the 1930s through 1970s—a comparison they would surely resist.

No two architects are more able to convince a lay public of the need for common-sense town building than Duany and Plater-Zyberk. Their assault on the stupidity of many existing planning and transportation standards

is legendary and important. And there is no question that they would vigorously defend against charges that their theory is antiurban. But by defining New Urbanism as small neighborhood centers with pedestrian districts and linking yet separating corridors, they unwittingly endorse an old RPAA model of suburbanism—a suburbanism responsible for the destruction of many American cities.

The very form so embraced by Calthorpe, Duany, and Plater-Zyberk in fact defies the traditional urban hierarchies of manifest interest to them by contributing to the further fragmentation of regions into multitudinous centers spread over the landscape. But the dynamic of this contradiction never ripples to the surface of their arguments. Their emphasis is on the convenience and sustainability of walkable communities, particularly with regard to new peripheral urban development. Yet abstracting this idea to a universal planning model— irrespective of topological, political, social, and other factors unique to specific places—posits an abstract and impractical New Urbanism, something of little use to those seeking specific physical tactics to improve or revitalize existing communities.

The third essay in Katz's book, "The Street, the Block and the Building" by architects Elizabeth Moule and Stefanos Polyzoides, provides a rough framework for understanding and utilizing abstract building typologies. Focusing on the architectural and physical dimension of any urban design or planning problem, they insist that solutions take into account specific circumstances such as a building's siting, method of construction, occupancy, and management over time. The authors coherently critique the rigid single-purpose land-use zoning that has dominated American planning for more than a century, proposing instead that buildings be "designed by reference to their type, not solely their function. This allows for some changes in use and for multiple adaptations over time without compromising a building's form or rendering it obsolete."

Borrowing with impunity from the coherent physical codes first promulgated by DPZ, Moule and Polyzoides argue for piece-by-piece architectural pattern-making, set within the grid-iron plan of the typical American city. They define as the key tool of New Urbanism physical design codes that incorporate various types of streets, open space, and buildings. In essence, they suggest a kit of parts that can be applied according to the varied environmental, regional, historic, and cultural factors that shape a specific place. Unlike the other authors who get tangled up in the history of planning, Moule and Polyzoides provide a design model that can test and modulate any number of scenarios, from edge cities to inner cities. In essence, their argument is an unreferenced homage, evolution, rationalization, and quantification of Aldo Rossi's typological explorations of the early 1960s.[4] Moule and Polyzoides succinctly bridge

architecture and city planning through an architectural medium of understandable pieces. The kit of parts makes alternative plans visible. Here, a three-dimensional diagram is worth a thousand words.

What never emerges from these three essays is a clear definition or rationale for urbanism, new or old. Why should people come together? Why do we need cities at all in the age of global telecommunications? While a direct paraphrase of Hannah Arendt's "common" or public sharing is offered as one possible answer, the absence of any rationale for the urban in the projects and in the critical essays is explicitly and sometimes apologetically recognized in the concluding essays by Todd Bressi and Vincent Scully.[5] One could almost say upon reading Bressi's and Scully's contributions that Katz's *The New Urbanism* delivers the most damning evidence against its own subject, that this movement is neither new nor urban.

Bressi, a planning and urban design editor and writer, frames New Urbanism in relationship to a renewed quest for the American Dream. The totality of what constitutes that dream is mostly assumed. However, Bressi does recognize that, when placed in a political context, New Urbanism's contribution to the dream will not be judged on the basis of its stated intentions or claims; rather, it will be measured by the ability of the projects to present viable alternatives to existing patterns of development which offer an increasingly narrow range of choices in a consumption-driven marketplace. In this regard, it is not surprising that he concludes that New Urbanism's fascination with the mechanics of large-scale suburban and exurban projects may in fact promulgate the very sprawl that New Urbanists contest. Bressi flatly states, almost directly challenging the precepts of Calthorpe's positivist history, "New Urbanism has not yet fully tackled some fundamental metropolitan development issues."

In his afterword to the book, "The Architecture of Community," the venerable architectural historian Scully is even more blunt than Bressi, referring to the New Urbanism as "the New Suburbanism." Though he relates the pleasure of having taught Duany at Yale, the positive influence the two had on each other, and his admiration for Seaside and New Urbanism in general, Scully recognizes that much of the movement's discourse comes to naught if the principles only have utility in the production of enclaves for the privileged. Given the preponderance of resorts, upper-income redoubts, and gated communities that dominate Katz's book, it is apt that he writes, "[T]he rich, who can choose, choose community, or at least its image. How much more must the poor, who must depend upon it for their lives, want community? If Seaside and the others cannot in the end offer viable models for that, they will remain entirely beautiful but rather sad."
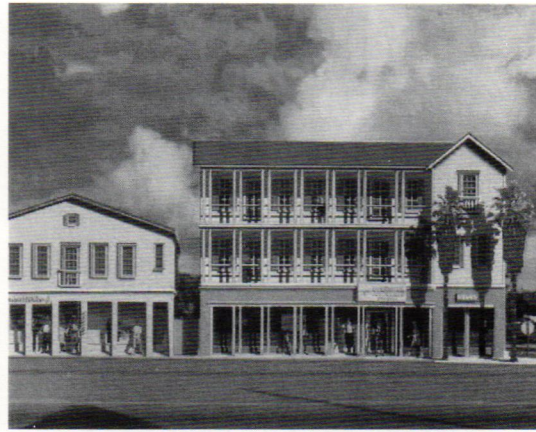
The questions that Scully and Bressi ask undermine the authority and authorial intent of the book's images and introductory essays. *The New Urbanism* is sad, then, as Scully pronounces, precisely because it remains a voyeuristic journey, a come-on, a compendium of images that, like a theme park or resort, is pleasurable but a retreat from daily life, as easily consumed as it is left behind. While one should not discount the role of dreaming an American Dream in the shaping of the landscape, the dream in Katz's book is too fuzzy and soft-focused, bathed in rosy light and amnesiac history and ultimately cushioned in endless leisure and homogeneous values. Even when Scully states in the afterword that "there are a number of active contemporary strategies for the healing of center city that are not mentioned in this volume, [and] the historic preservation of neighborhoods and their inhabitants is one [of them]," his is only a gentle admonishment. Like a kind great-uncle he points New Urbanists to the overlooked vitality of existing places and the difficulty and struggle of finding and managing the necessary tactics for their evolution and revitalization.

Despite the inclusion of some inner-city redevelopment projects in *The New Urbanism,* one must conclude that the roadmap presented in this book leads too easily to the same dilemma that planners have always confronted: it is easier to imagine the new than to fix the old. Scully's position is ultimately in direct opposition to the continued emphasis on the production of the new, represented by most of the examples in this book. Why can't a new urbanism start with learning to value, tinker with, and fix what already exists and surrounds us? This dilemma is broached but never addressed in a sustained manner in this volume. No doubt, the book does not purport to be anything more than a tour guide, and on most tours, one learns not to ask in-depth questions. Still, Katz, who is now the director of the Congress of the New Urbanism, would do well to heed Scully's polite advice.

In contrast to Katz's touristic approach to the subject, Calthorpe clearly intended *The Next American Metropolis: Ecology, Community, and the American Dream* to be a handbook for planning the American city. While Calthorpe aligns himself with the New Urbanism, he sees his polemic as a variant orthodoxy. Accepting neotraditional town and grid-iron planning as starting points, his ethos evolves beyond the design of the individual town toward the holistic management of the regional landscape. It is a vision that includes city, suburb, and the natural environment, all linked by light rail—an all-encompassing pattern for managed growth.

Calthorpe, like Bressi, posits this vision as a further iteration of the American Dream. Indeed, the use of collective pronouns and possessives ("We cannot sustain the crisis of place represented by sprawl"; "Our history and traditions . . . ") and the appeal to "tradi-
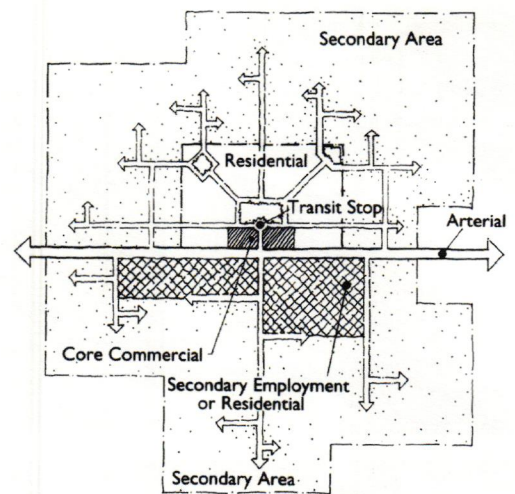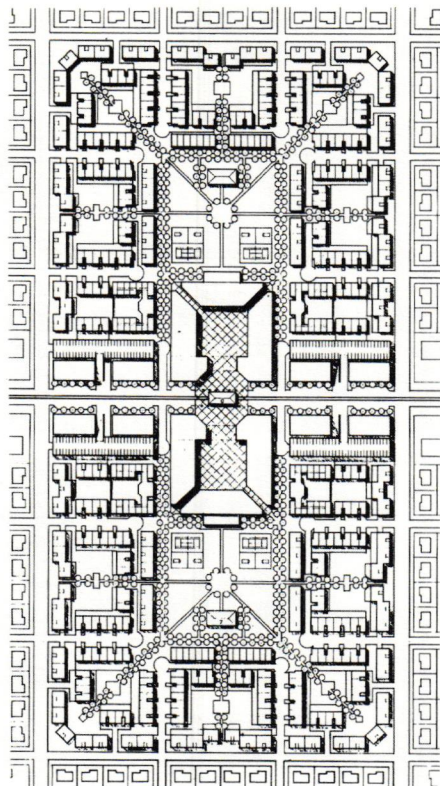
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tional values" (defined as "diversity, community, fru-
gality, and human scale") presume a consensus and
project a plain-cloth certainty that positions the book
as more than merely a proponent of common-sense
planning. *The Next American Metropolis* is clearly meant
to be a new "American Vitruvius," an urban design pat-
tern book intended to remedy the ills of automobile-in-
duced sprawl.[6]

Calthorpe's stated objective is to explore "how the
ecological principles of diversity, interdependence,
scale, and decentralization can play a role in our con-
cept of suburb, city, and region." From this deceptively
simple starting point, which takes a relatively innocu-
ous view of sprawl, the argument leads to an updating
of Howard's previously cited "Luddite vision of small
towns." To arrive at this town-planning ideal, he first
establishes an ecological imperative, stating that "envi-
ronmentally benign places and technologies are funda-
mentally more humane and richer than those which are
demanding and destructive of natural ecosystems." He
then presents a variety of facts and figures to back up
his argument, and concludes that decentralization
works when it takes the form of multinodal centers
spread across the landscape. He argues, "[Q]uite simply,
we need towns rather than sprawl." Calthorpe's pre-
ferred pattern is infill redevelopment in urban areas sur-
rounded by small towns, a metropolitanism with "a
regional system of open space and transit comple-
mented with development patterns which are pedes-
trian-friendly."

However, despite the well-intended references to
urban repair and the presentation of several projects in
existing settings, the majority of the book serves as a
primer for those designing suburbs at the periphery of
the metropolis. Among the book's commendable fea-
tures are its prescriptions for utilizing the grid-iron
plan, applying narrow street and alley types, using curb-
side parking to buffer sidewalks, and implementing
pedestrian-friendly intersection design standards. Such
recommendations are valuable in that they challenge
the banal standards of the traffic engineering establish-
ment in the United States. Illustrating quantifiable
design criteria in this manner is critical if civic design
standards are to be demystified and absorbed into the
planners' lexicon of tools. Like Moule and Polyzoides' kit
of parts, the distillation of this knowledge is an impor-
tant contribution of New Urbanism and of this book.

Unfortunately, other important areas of considera-
tion, such as the complex ins and outs of density, are
not as well studied and could result in urban designs
that don't necessarily uphold the goal of sustainability.
For instance, throughout the guidelines section,
Calthorpe refers to optimal residential densities, defin-
ing the ideal minimum as ten units per net acre. But this
is precisely the type of density already found through-
out suburban America and it is virtually incapable of
supporting the type of rich mixed-use urban variety por-
trayed in the book's renderings.

Likewise, although the guidelines for mixed use and
main street commercial concepts are correct in their
estimation of setback controls and the need for upper-
story uses, the simultaneous suggestion that commercial
"intensities" should be at a minimum floor-area-to-site
ratio of 0.30 belies any type of main street logic. This
type of density is akin to that of the highway strip and
it is difficult to understand how it ends up having such
a prominent place in a book about walkable communi-
ties. The problem here lies not so much with the type
itself (for a lot of people like drive-up mini-malls), but

with the book's tone, which authoritatively presents numbers and rules and then associates them with a prescription for small-town ambience. According to history and experience, disappointment will result if these rules are followed too literally.

While Calthorpe proposes a density model that is, at best, a slight variation of the average densities found throughout car-oriented American suburbia, he promotes throughout the book a transit vision based on the implementation of light-rail technology. Calthorpe correctly notes that the planning of American cities based upon a single mode of transit does not adequately serve the great numbers of individuals—old, young, and often poor—who do not have cars. He proposes Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) as a means of making transit more broadly accessible, and of encouraging present commuters to leave their cars at home, walk to the station, and commute by rail instead.

1.00 FAR

At first glance, the utilization of clustered mixed land uses in combination with fixed modes of transit seems an efficient and balanced land-use model. However, this model does not take into consideration the short tenures of employment people have today, with jobs scattered all about; the rise of two-, three-, and four-worker households with each member going in a different direction; and the need for people to have access to jobs, services, and goods throughout vast metropolitan regions. In other words, even if more people lived in a small-town atmosphere, it would not mitigate

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0.30 FAR

the immense problem of the suburb-to-suburb commute or any of the other numerous reasons (the search for the ideal school, services, entertainment, activities, et cetera) that drive Americans into their cars multiple times during the course of a day and beyond the immediate areas in which they live. These realities diminish the utility of fixed transit systems and development patterns based upon them. Coupled with Calthorpe's favored density scenarios, which maintain suburban standards, his prescription for fixed rail amounts to a disastrously costly justification for building new towns.[7] Even if it were possible to realize complete networks of rail transit for new development—as currently proposed for many American cities with fast-growing metropolises, such as Portland and San Diego—such systems would still barely serve a small minority of their settled landscapes, and only at tremendously inequitable costs per trip.

Calthorpe additionally avoids discussing modes of transit which may suggest alternative patterns of new development. Dial-a-rides, private jitney services, and other flexible means of "automobility," for example, would allow for low-density growth along a course contrary to Calthorpe's favored model of nodes connected by fixed lines.[8] However, automobility is just one of the many alternative ways of encouraging and accommodating the evolution and growth of the American urban landscape. While the book does illustrate the rehabilitation of failed shopping malls and other adaptive reuse projects— a course of development that will become increasingly necessary in coming years—the preponderance of projects discussed remains overly dependent upon the ability of developers to assemble large open sites at the periphery of existing communities. According to the examples in *The Next American Metropolis,* incremental growth, parcel-by-parcel transformation, and the evolutionary adjustment of existing places are not the primary means of mediating change in the American landscape. Rather, if Calthorpe's lead is to be followed, the preferred tools for implementing the next metropolis seem to be large-scale capital and the heavy hand of government-sponsored redevelopment land-assembly mechanisms, which have already largely failed to revitalize the existing cityscape.

At the scale of the region, Calthorpe tries to create a model that is both visionary and practical, cognizant of social and ecological needs and of the forces that underlie housing production and town building. However, such broad intentions lead to ambiguities. For example, he defines TODs as an orderly growth-management pattern separated by greenbelts and natural and agricultural preserves. But the book is illustrated throughout with diagrams that acknowledge the presence of "secondary" areas—highway commercial, big-box retail, single-use employment centers (i.e., office parks)—in short, all the accoutrements of the typical car-oriented suburb or edge city. While professionals might be able to discern a usable New Urbanism from within Calthorpe's guidelines (or misuse them to justify the further subdivision of the landscape), many others would be understandably baffled when they realize that his model encompasses just about any type of suburban settlement pattern. This is unfortunate because the guidelines are certain to be interpreted by lay readers as virtual commandments for a sustainable urbanism.
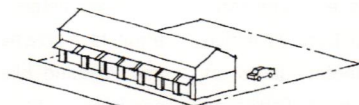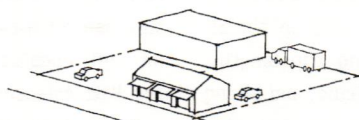
"Retail must have a minimum FAR [Floor Area Ratio] of 0.30 with surface parking," Calthorpe intones. "For both office and retail development, higher than minimum FAR are strongly encouraged; maximums should be set by local plans." (From *The Next American Metropolis.*)
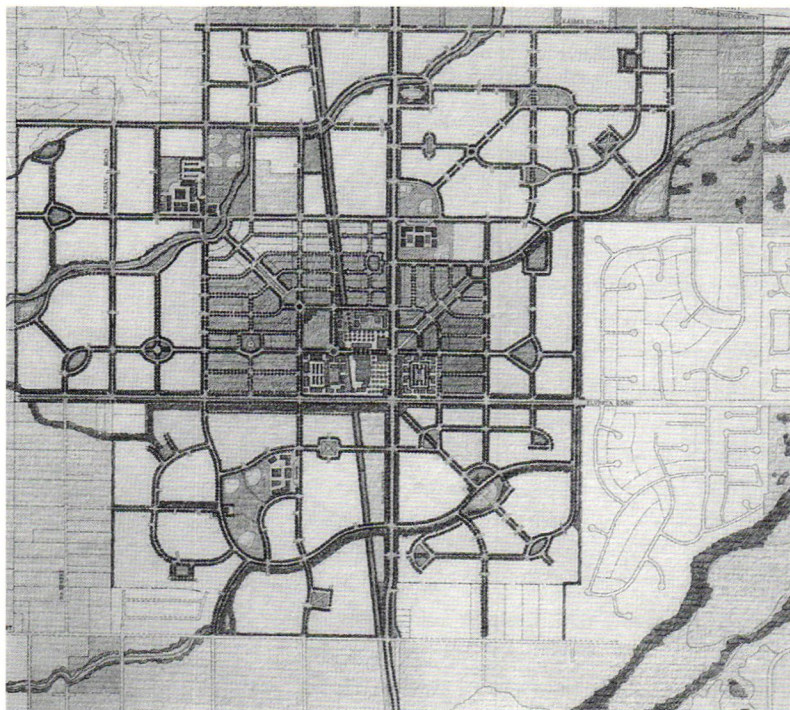
Master plan of Dry Creek Ranch, located in a semi-rural area north of Sacramento, California; Peter Calthorpe, 1991. The village is structured around a system of open-space corridors and tree-lined streets emanating from the commercial core and village green. (From *The Next American Metropolis*.)

Perhaps the most alluring—and problematic—aspect of Calthorpe's arguments is the promise that a specific form of urbanism can lead naturally to environmental sustainability. Unlike his essay in Katz's book in which he neglects to define the environmental limits of regions, in *The Next American Metropolis* Calthorpe defines the boundaries in terms of natural ecologies: water, air, and the form of the earth. He then rationalizes TODs with sustainability/economic arguments, stating at one point, "[A]ir quality standards often restrict industrial growth as pollution from cars 'use up' the air shed." Elsewhere he writes, "[R]educing trip lengths, combining destinations, carpooling, walking, and biking are all enhanced by TODs." For Calthorpe, implementing TODs is equivalent to reducing the use of the car, limiting air pollution, and increasing the ability of regions to support industries that would otherwise have to locate elsewhere. The reality of air pollution is in fact much more complex and may not have as much to do with Calthorpe's preferred urban form as he would like us to believe. For instance, the nation's dirtiest air shed, Los Angeles, has seen a substantial improvement in its air quality ever since federal and state air regulations have required automobiles to be cleaner. Though automobile-patterned growth continues to be accommodated by pushing the city farther out, which means a significant increase in the number of autos and miles driven, air quality has improved faster than the generation of sprawl, suggesting little relationship between urban form, the use of cars, and pollution.[9] One study suggests that TODs may actually precipitate more car trips than the traditional suburb.[10] This study observed that urban designs geared toward making daily life more convenient

could very well induce the disorganized denizens of compact suburban communities to make even more automobile trips rather than carefully planning singular shopping excursions. Perhaps the most logical conclusion one may draw is that the link between sprawl and lack of sustainability is not so much a matter of form but of political will and consequent behavior.

The final section of *The Next American Metropolis* is devoted to Calthorpe's designs and divided into three categories: "Regional Plans," "Station Area Plans and New Neighborhoods," and "Towns and New Towns." Many of the projects incorporate explorations of rudimentary transit and land-use relationships. Of particular note are some of the regional projects, such as the LUTRAQ (Land Use, Transit, Air Quality) Plan for Portland which was generated as a response to a proposed $200 million dollar highway beltway. This project clearly demonstrates Calthorpe's New Urbanist alternative to auto-oriented planning and growth. Likewise, some of the smaller projects, such as Dry Creek Ranch outside of Sacramento, are good examples of how the principles outlined in the first part of the book may be realized in a recentered and connected suburban landscape idyllically set within a greenbelt.

Nevertheless, there is a numbing sameness to the projects. Sacramento begins to feel just like San Diego, and Portland like San Jose. This is due in part to the persistent use of aerial-perspective drawings which abstract and flatten natural features. But the sameness is also attributable to Calthorpe's apparent (even if unconscious) belief that, with minor variations, one formula fits all. True, there are cultural similarities between all urbanized areas in the United States, which translate into oft-repeated formal patterns. Still, the model in *The Next American Metropolis* is either too crude or too underdeveloped to build in the subtle regional and local variations one hopes to see. These plans seem as divorced from the stated ideal of mixed-use street experiences and differentiated, hierarchical townscapes as the existing single-use planning models they purport to replace.

From the land-use diagram on the front cover of *The Next American Metropolis* to the reassuring illustrations of single-family housing that appear throughout the book, Calthorpe's world is eminently sublime and familiar, even as it is terrifying. It is the suburbs organized and safe, writ relentlessly over the landscape, Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse morphed with Seaside. With doses of small-town boosterism and a thin brand of appliqué regionalism, Calthorpe's vision denies the complexity, pluralism, and diversity of American urban landscapes. In the hands of skillful practitioners, a convincing architecture of place may well result from adherence to Calthorpe's precepts. But it is just as easy to imagine half-built suburbs in empty fields, new towns never con-

nected by hideously expensive and never completed fixed-rail transit systems that exclusively serve commuters, and regional planning that continues to overlook what already exists. Despite Calthorpe's insights, which apply to many urban design situations, and his general advancement of suburban design, his metropolis and architecture are not based upon a desire to evolve everyday places; rather, *The Next American Metropolis* is yet another modernist manifesto about reinventing the present city.

Sustainability is more than the balancing of energy flows. It is also the complex, open, and democratic pursuit of the spectrum of ecological, cultural, economic, and formal options which are available at any given moment. Calthorpe cites Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) as a resource and indeed, the organization of *The Next American Metropolis* reflects the organization, rules, and sought-after common sense of its predecessor. However, Alexander has moved on since writing *A Pattern Language*, and his later work, *A New Theory of Urban Design* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), emphasizes participation, process, and piece-by-piece making—an approach that is potentially much more fluid and unconstrained by preconceived form models than the didacticism of *The Next American Metropolis* specifically, and of New Urbanism generally. While Calthorpe alludes to the need to incorporate multiple voices into the design process, it remains a secondary concern. As a result, *The Next American Metropolis* delivers a detached formalism, which is clearly reflected in its view-from-above perspectives and well-organized diagrams, so uniformly and neatly colored in yellow, orange, red, and blue.

In contrast to Calthorpe's attempt to create a unified theory of urban pattern making, Daniel Solomon treads the same territory and reveals a "complex and contradictory" approach to such endeavors in his treatise *ReBuilding*. Embracing reality, acknowledging tastes and values beyond his own, incorporating the forces of myth and simulation, and revealing a zest for the ironies and peculiarities of the built urban landscape, Solomon

offers a dialogic view of the world. Filled with anecdotes, observations, travel notes, and stories, *ReBuilding* is ultimately a personal journey through the light and dark moments of architectural practice. Success is defined as having an architectural dialogue, gaining experience, moving on to the next project, and getting a chance to apply what has been learned.

Like Ahab in *Moby Dick*, Solomon announces his intention, "to leap aboard the juggernaut and to steer it, to endow this immense machine with some qualities of mind and soul so that the built world it leaves behind is not so desolate, ugly, and bereft of meaning as it has been." He proceeds to describe the need to develop a "new urbanism" (definitively lowercased) shaped by a variety of influences, including the forces arrayed against it. Solomon leads readers through the thicket of factors that drive simulation, juxtaposition, and ephemerality in the modern world. Introducing us to "Todd and Mindy," prototypical marketers of suburbs, he establishes a framework for understanding the developer's simultaneous desires to accommodate style and individual taste, tradition and the modern premium for light, air, and privacy, not to mention the architects' urge to remain true to architectural culture. He writes:

> What is demanded now is a simulation of origins that must be produced in a cacophony of simulations—some subtle, some gross—of multiple and long-hidden origins. As each referent or potential source of origin is buried under an avalanche of simulacra, each seeking different referents, the task of the architect/archaeologist/simulator becomes more and more impossible. . . . *The simulation of origin which is so much in demand, only works when there is tacit agreement.* [Italics in original]

For Solomon, tacit agreements about architecture and urban design must be formed by open public discourse, with architects as skilled participants rather than as experts or team leaders. He forgoes the role of the expert in part because he is acutely sensitive to the limits of professional knowledge. He allows, "[N]o part, no single private simulation is any more correct or rooted than any other." With this outlook, Solomon
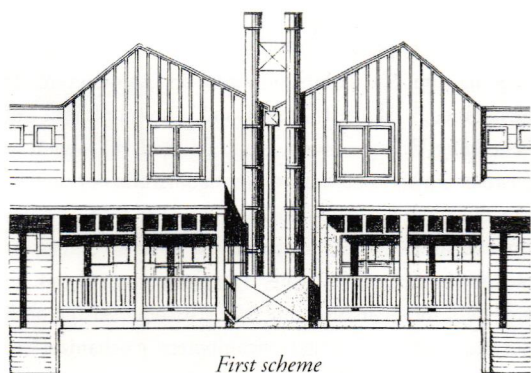
First scheme

Final scheme

Marketers for a suburban townhouse demand that the architecture convey "private luxury" and "rootedness, a sense of origin." They rejected Daniel Solomon's first scheme for its displeasing exposed metal chimney stacks, porch roofs of corrugated cement board, and asymmetrical gables. The revised scheme was more "sentimental, accessible, familiar"—in Solomon's words, "like a forced feeding of apple pie." (From *ReBuilding*.)

home. house. housing

then goes on to advocate an architecture that starts with the structure and design of public right-of-ways, streets, and the platting of property lines. It is in this particular regard that he aligns himself with the New Urbanism of Katz, Calthorpe, DPZ, Moule and Polyzoides, and others.

Similar in tone to the introductory essays in Katz's *The New Urbanism*, Solomon states, "Buildings alone don't matter: it is only the ensemble of streets, lots, and buildings, and the way they fit together that comprise the basis of town-making." Like Moule and Polyzoides, he advocates an architecture comprised of an ensemble of urban elements. He also acknowledges his debt to Calthorpe with regard to the development of the Pedestrian Pocket. Yet unlike Calthorpe, Solomon resists staking oversized claims, calling his approach not New Urbanism but "the new model."

For Solomon, "abstract systems, like grids, have vitality only when they are animated and modified by the qualities of a particular landscape." Eschewing the idea of a "contextless, abstract, universal formula," Solomon seeks the particular. In this regard, both the Downtown Hayward Plan and the Communications Hill Plan possess a temporal specificity that is subtly informed by the existing context. Bedroom community Hayward (adjacent to the freeway) boasts a "Billboard Park," while the plan for Communications Hill revolves around left-over spaces formed by "accidents" of topography. In contrast to Calthorpe whose diagrams always appear to be overlaid on Cartesian coordinates, one trusts that Solomon will manage to extract and highlight the *genius loci* of a site no matter how dreary, flat, or featureless it may be.

If Calthorpe revels in the abstractions of new town thinking at the regional scale but sometimes slips with the details, Solomon is a self-described "urban repairman." As such, he gives due attention to architectural detail and unique typological solutions. When he pushes urban typologies, as in his forty-four-unit-per-acre starter townhouses in San Francisco or twenty-four-unit-per-acre mini-townhouses in San Jose, he is not making abstract patterns to fill a landscape but creating specific places based upon historic precedent and the exigencies of site and use. And unlike most New Urbanists who promote a pat ideal of small-town life, Solomon's new urbanism is rife with a palpable-present quirkiness. While Katz and Calthorpe look backward in time to find a basis for their intellectual and architectural arguments, Solomon embraces the present as his source for inspiration. He states, "What is demanded in the world from all parties is not the authentic, but a truly convincing simulation of the authentic." For Solomon, the market and consumerism are appalling in their ability to level difference, but also irresistible for their potent symbols and icons which may be manipu-

lated through design: "The limitation of possibilities becomes attractive: and memories and places—real or simulated—are cherished."

Solomon's willingness to indulge individuals' varying tastes, to explore and accommodate consumer culture, and to open himself to the turpitude and vagaries of "nimbyism" as he produces his architecture allows him to enjoy and impishly use for his own purposes the contradictions of conservative-versus-radical architectural practice. Well-versed in current theoretical discourses and practices, he is quick to recognize that "the avant-garde-looking buildings, the provocative ones, all have the most bourgeois programs and are actually docile citizens of the right." With this knowledge, he goes on to describe a subversive—indeed liberal and perhaps liberatory—practice of architecture that can fold radical programs within conservative clothes. In contrast to modernism's analogical abstractions, Solomon the postmodernist declares, "To *be like* is to be kitsch, not real. In subversive conservatism . . . things are like other things that they are not." In Solomon's upside-down and dialectical world, buildings constantly speak in a chorus of voices. Meaning is graspable by the lay person and the devotee alike, irony and sincerity side by side.

Upon acceptance of Solomon's point of view, which embraces both architectural and popular culture, the work illustrated in *ReBuilding* takes on new resonances. Unlike Venturi, whose work always announces its ironic pop posture with amplified tenor, Solomon is not afraid of being quietly contextual, ironic, pretty, modest, modern, and postmodern—all at the same time. His multifamily housing projects in particular demonstrate his keen ability to manipulate the program and the look of housing to satisfy both an architectural culture that always seeks the new, and the spirit of tradition which demands references to something that already exists.

Solomon's strength is that he carefully balances the art and craft of a personal architecture with the necessarily public, collaborative, and often popular act of town building. He manages to develop an architecture and city design that is normative, critical, and nonformulaic. In this regard, his critique of Kenneth Frampton's important 1983 essay, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points Towards an Architecture of Resistance," is instructive and the highlight of *ReBuilding*.[11] This seminal essay pointed the way to a postmodernism that was neither neohistoric nor universal. Championing a regional architecture that emerges from local forms and materials as well as universal/global technocratic culture, Frampton constructed an argument for an architecture that critically resisted both nostalgia and unfounded, meaningless mechanization. Yet in developing his argument, Frampton maintains
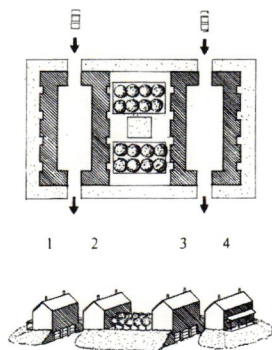
Diagram plan and axonometric view of an urban townhouse complex, with tuck-under parking crammed sideways onto little lots—a type Solomon characterizes as the "six-pack." (From *ReBuilding*.)
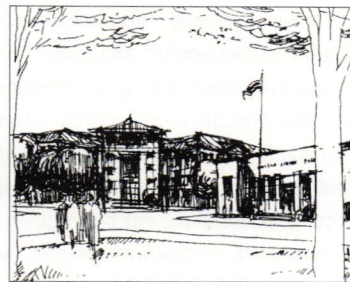
that the architect is a lonely creator who abstracts from reality (albeit a critically regionalist reality) to engage in the production of authentic and autonomous forms. It is this last aspect of the discussion that Solomon uses as a wedge to introduce the notion of the everyday in the production of place and building.

Solomon asserts that Frampton's obsession with resisting consumer culture devolves into elitist distaste for low and popular culture. He argues that critical regionalism refuses to acknowledge the popular by poaching from low culture to produce a separate, self-referential high culture. For Solomon, when architects abstract regional culture through the "critical" borrowing of folk or vernacular production techniques or forms, they often drain these sources of their everyday communicative power. Once architecture is abstracted and emptied of content, Solomon feels it becomes too limited. The language of forms becomes too rarefied. Challenging Frampton, Solomon argues for the collapse of traditional notions of high and low so as to allow architecture to serve as a bridge between culture and the production of "place" in the city. He states, "Criticism of the destruction of the City still permits engagement with the ordinary citizens of direct experience, but critical disengagement from the culture at large drives us into the vicarious world of coded messages to distant, defeated co-conspirators." Solomon accepts that he is part of an architectural culture that has its own history, rules, and expectations. Yet he also grounds himself in the mundanities of daily life. This means that Solomon will utilize whichever principles of New Urbanism are useful for a given circumstance. At the same time, he will use a variety of additional means to establish an architecture and urban design that is true to the vagaries of the moment, always fresh and never formulaic, always learning and grounded in myriad possibilities.

An emphasis on the art of listening sets *ReBuilding* fundamentally apart from *The New Urbanism, The Next American Metropolis,* as well as Frampton's critical regionalism. Solomon's architecture and urban pattern-making are meant to speak in multiple ways and reflect multiple realities and stories. Ultimately, *ReBuilding* is a treatise on how to utilize the medium of architecture to better the city in all its topological, political, and human complexities. When the architect no longer adheres to a closed system of rules, he or she is also able to put aside classical and hermetic notions of beauty. The designer thus becomes more of an intermediary who engages in the discursive and practical matters of building places well—and work well done is certainly a critical facet of beauty.

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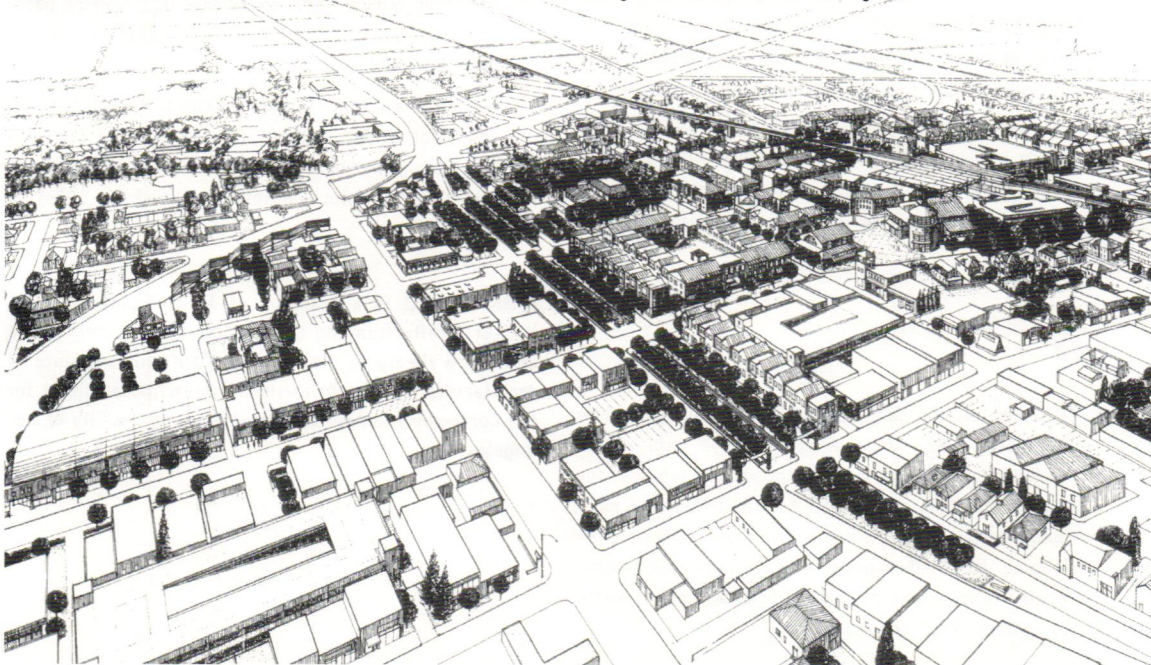
While Katz and Calthorpe are skilled in the techniques of persuasion and tote a useful grab bag of tricks, they have a singular message compared to the multifocal outlook of Solomon. Given the sorry history of planning efforts of the 20th century, one would think that New Urbanism and its participants would tread more cautiously and not be so quick to replace one big-picture point of view with another. New Urbanists would do well to examine Solomon's quirky treatise, with its personal stories and provisional architecture.

For a movement and theory that so eagerly wraps itself in an image of Americana, the basic American notion of incorporating a range of visions into the project of democracy is mostly absent from *The New Urbanism* and *The Next American Metropolis*. Perhaps the difference between the three books is best summed up in their titles: *The Next American Metropolis* and *The New Urbanism* both propose a clean break from the recent urban past, while *ReBuilding* begins with an acknowledgement of existing human and built situations. Though all the texts revive the lessons of several decades' worth of planning and urban design discourse—from Ebenezer Howard to Jane Jacobs, through advocacy planning to the situational politics of the present—only *ReBuilding* firmly asserts that redressing the past, with its rotting inner cities, declining suburbs, and undeveloped periphery, is the primary work of city design.

The architecture of the rebuilt city is unavoidably messy and informed by countless voices in debate. Of the three authors, only Solomon convincingly declares these voices to be beautiful and useful. As architects, in order to rebuild well and to realize a truly viable built urbanism, it is necessary not only to cease proposing new cities, towns, suburbs, and urbanisms, but to give in to democratic impulses and accept the imperfections of existing cities. As the New Urbanists debate these issues and consider the place of democracy in the building of community architecture, perhaps their "next" urbanism will eventually shake its obsession with the past-imperfect "new," and allow the "rebuilt" to become the primary inspiration for the evolution of the everyday present city.

NOTES

1. I served on the jury for the *Progressive Architecture* Awards in 1992, which recognized Rosa Vista with a design citation. What most impressed the jury was the manner in which this project borrowed from and modestly improved upon a known prototype without challenging its fundamentals. The designers attempted neither to restore an established precedent nor to create an entirely "new" concept.

2. The Riviera Beach Plan was also premiated by the 1992 *Progressive Architecture* jury.

3. Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 157–58.

4. Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982).

5. Compare Katz, p. xxii, with Hannah Arendt, "The Public Realm: The Common," in *The Public Face of Architecture: Civic Culture and Public Spaces,* edited by Nathan Glazer and Mark Lilla (New York: Free Press, 1987), pp. 9–10. I suspect the format of Katz's book did not permit footnotes.

6. Werner Hegemann and Elbert Peets, *The American Vitrivius: An Architect's Handbook of Civic Art* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1922; reprinted by Princeton Architectural Press, 1988).

7. See King Cushman, "Exploring the Land Development and Transit Connection" in *Transit, Land Use and & Urban Form,* Wayne Attoe, editor (Austin: Center for the Study of American Architecture, The University of Texas at Austin, 1988). Cushman suggests that local neighborhood transit service requires seven dwelling units per acre to be marginally efficient, and fifty units per acre to have more transit trips than auto trips; this is double Calthorpe's requirement of twenty-five dwelling units per acre.

8. For a general introduction to the concept of automobility, see Marvin Adelson's "The Car, the City, and What We Want," *The Car and the City,* edited by Margaret Crawford and Martin Wachs (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

9. Frank Clifford, "Rethinking the Environment: Twenty-five Years after Earthday," *Los Angeles Times* (April 22, 1995): A–1.

10. Randall Crane, "On Form Versus Function: Will the 'New Urbanism' Reduce Traffic or Increase It?," working paper UCTC #266, University of California Transportation Center, Berkeley, California.

11. Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post-Modern Culture,* edited by Hal Foster (Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983).

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The Value of Community

LIANE LEFAIVRE

Like the Pritzker Prize, the Rudy Bruner Award for Excellence in the Urban Environment was established in the mid-1980s, a boom time for architecture and real estate development. Both awards offer unique opportunities for recognizing outstanding work in the fields of architecture and design. The perspectives of the two prizes, however, are dramatically different, which may explain why the Bruner Award has gone almost totally unheeded by the architectural press compared to the more glamorous Pritzker. By ordaining their own celebrities, prizes like the Pritzker, which awards a lotterlike sum of $100,000 to one fortunate architect a year, do help in promoting fine design and raising public awareness of architecture. But at the same time, in casting a seductive, gold-tinged spotlight on these personalities and their distinct, typically monumental works, they have also made it much harder for practitioners to care about the deterioration of the environments in which their projects are built.

This is precisely the purpose of the Rudy Bruner Award. Few architectural organizations are less concerned with glamour than the Bruner Foundation, which gives priority not to the formal qualities of a building but to how a building performs in its social context—in other words, how it is used and contributes to community. This value is not easily captured in glossy photographs, as the Bruner Award's invisibility in a world hypnotized by image-oriented media attests. The $50,000 biannual Bruner Award was founded in 1986 by architect Simeon Bruner in memory of his father, Rudy Bruner, owner of Horizon Press, the primary publisher of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. The Bruner jury weighs social, ecological, and economic factors in addition to aesthetic concerns when evaluating competition submissions. Interestingly, the honorees are not necessarily architects; rather, they represent a broad spectrum of interests and have included landscape designers, urban planners, community activists, real estate developers, economic advisors, as well as municipal and state agencies or foundations. The projects are diverse, spanning urban and ecological revitalization and preservation programs, mixed-use, public and private ventures, and community development strategies.

The Bruner Award grew out of the idea of community-centered design which blossomed during the 1960s. At the time, Simeon Bruner was an architecture student at Yale University, an important forum for architectural debate. The hopeful spirit of the Kennedy period and of the Great Society policies of the Johnson Administration precipitated an "American Renaissance," so to speak, when for a brief moment, new technologies, ecological concerns, and the value of community all came together and shaped actual design practice. Many architects of Bruner's generation saw the work of traditional architects as overly concerned with the surface appearance of design. What really mattered, according to them, was not how buildings looked but how they functioned. This value of process over product grew out of notions first posited by Louis Kahn and Team X, which deployed such concepts as "flow," "rivers," and "mobility" as a means of encouraging community through the regulated movement of people in the big housing and urban projects so prevalent at the time. These ideas were further refined in the writings of critics and theoreticians such as Jane Jacobs' *Life and Death of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), Kevin Lynch's *Image of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960), Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander's *Community and Privacy* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1963), Chermayeff and Alexander Tzonis' *The Shape of Community* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), and Michael Harrington's *The Other America* (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

In fact, the publication of Harrington's *The Other America* was one of the major events that brought Bruner's generation to its feet. This shocking book disclosed that in the midst of a society called affluent was another America, somewhere between forty and fifty million people (20 percent of the population) living below the poverty line. The ideal of

community could not be satisfied, this generation felt, if such a significant segment of the population—the underprivileged, marginalized, poor, or newly migrated—was not taken into consideration.

The idea of community "process" as adopted by this generation was subsequently shaped by the idea of participatory politics put forth by political scientists and sociologists active during the Johnson Administration. These included Saul Alinsky, Paul Davidoff, Chester Hartman, and others who recognized the need to redress the situation of the "other America." They proposed welfare programs that had a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach, reversing the structure of support that traditionally ran from the government to the experts to the people. This is how participatory and advocacy architecture and planning was born.

Unfortunately, by the end of the 1960s it was already becoming clear that housing projects based on the good intentions of the 1950s—such as Toulouse-le-Mirail in Europe and Pruitt-Igoe in the United States—were actually graveyards in terms of community. With the eclipse of the Great Society programs by the mid-1970s and the total collapse of the American version of the welfare state by the end of the decade, experimental social architecture ceased being funded. But at least by then, this brief renaissance had produced numerous professionals able to cope with the architectural and planning problems of the "other America."

Despite the vacuum of federal support, this subsequent period proved to be unexpectedly fruitful. These professionals continued to struggle, adapted to new conditions, or found their way into academia where they prepared the next generation of specialists. Out of their efforts emerged a new, hybrid paradigm for developing social architecture, and housing in particular: the so-called "private-public partnership," which combines the old participatory model with a financial approach adapted to the withdrawal of public funds in the fight against poverty, homelessness, and urban decline. In other words, the development of social architecture

would no longer be seen as the result of solely architectural, urbanistic, and civic processes, but of financial ones as well. In fact, the latter came to be seen as an essential factor in fostering community.

The archive of the Bruner Foundation charts this development, with information on over four hundred projects (entries from the course of the Award's history) which provides insight into the various social and financial mechanisms that underlie community-oriented development. The archive is a repository of uniquely rich and detailed material that would not otherwise be readily available. Indeed, among its distinctive features, the Bruner Award makes a point of publishing the five finalist and award-winning projects, clearly explicating the criteria and rationale behind their selection. These biannual publications also include detailed post-occupancy analyses which bear out the importance of comparing a design's anticipated function with its actual performance and use.

The Bruner Foundation's publications are useful in their own right. In particular, the ones written by Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener—*Connections: Creating Urban Excellence* (New York: Bruner Foundation, 1991) and *Rebuilding Communities: Recreating Urban Excellence* (1993)—are exemplars of rigorous method and should be basic reading for any architectural student, developer, or foundation administrator seriously interested in the vitality of the urban realm.

It is difficult to generalize about the Bruner projects but one characteristic they share is that they all provide some direct benefit to the communities in which they are located and improve the quality of the social relations of their users. These projects are also unified by their emphasis on participation, which means they function as a sort of school for responsible citizens: people learn to identify their individual well-being with that of the neighborhood and of the larger natural environment, and hence gain a sense of personal empowerment. This is just one of the many therapeutic, de-alienating lessons imparted by these projects.

But this is where the common features end. Demonstrating that "urban excellence" takes a diversity of forms, the projects vary from highly aesthetically oriented designs, such as the restoration of the Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux's Harlem Meer in Central Park, to the immaterial, buildingless Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in the Roxbury and Dorchester areas of Boston, which established a community-based organization consisting of social service organizations. There are also considerable differences in terms of size, type, and use, ranging from the gigantic, million-dollar Lowertown Redevelopment Project in St. Paul, Minnesota, which involves residential, cultural, and commercial uses, to the small-scaled Maya Angelou Community Initiative in Portland, a housing project for

The Maya Angelou Community Initiative was the 1995 winner of the Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. Granted a full loan by the Portland Redevelopment Corporation, this forty-two-unit housing project for single mothers was developed by Housing Our Families: A Women's Community Development Corporation; Martha Andrews Architect, 1993–94. (Courtesy: The Bruner Foundation)

forty-two single mothers. Although most of the projects are located in blighted or fast-declining urban areas, there are exceptions. The Brooklyn-Queen's Greenway, for example, is an ecologically conscious "ribbon of green" linking Coney Island to Little Neck Bay on Long Island Sound. It is aimed at making the cultural institutions located along the route, such as the Brooklyn Museum and the Queens Hall of Science, more accessible to bikers, joggers, and walkers.

Among previous recipients of the Bruner Award, the one most often singled out is the New Community Corporations in Newark, New Jersey. Founded by Monsignor William Linder as a remedy for the community after it suffered from race riots in 1967, it is not only one of the oldest community development corporations in the country but it is the largest and wealthiest. It has an annual budget of over $100 million and has developed projects worth more than twice that. The most inventive aspect of this project is that it incorporates housing into broad-based, multifunctional complexes containing a variety of commercial activities—a necessary mixing of uses in a world of ever-shrinking government subsidies. The most significant provider of affordable housing in Newark, the New Community has redefined the very meaning of the term "housing," expanding it to include a diverse array of services and facilities for the needy, as well as several privately owned for-profit businesses including a shopping center, a restaurant, and a newspaper. As a developer, Monsignor Linder has displayed remarkable financial acumen in leveraging his assets to support both social service programs and commercial buildings. In addition to being effective at securing grants, he is recognized as a genius at syndicating tax credits from his profit-making enterprises to fund new projects. These achievements have earned him an award from the MacArthur Foundation.

In 1995 the finalists for the Bruner Award include a highly entrepreneurial multi-use revitalization project modeled loosely on Monsignor Linder's New Community. Campus Circle in Milwaukee was the brainchild of the president of Marquette University, Father Albert DiUlio. In 1991 DiUlio recognized that enrollment at Marquette had dropped because of the soaring crime rate in the area surrounding the campus. Applications to the school were down at least 50 percent. If nothing was done to intervene, DiUlio envisioned a fate for Marquette not unlike that of the University of Detroit, which has seen its student body shrink by half in recent years. His options were to make the University into an isolated enclave or to use its resources to improve conditions in the neighborhood. Joining forces with a local real estate developer and armed with a gift of $9 million from the University's Board of Trustees and matching funds from an anonymous donor, he opted for the latter. As a result, social and economic decay has been stopped in no less

than a ninety square-block area. All the deteriorated housing stock has been renovated without rent increases, new construction and rehabilitation have provided 153 new units of off-campus student housing, 88,000 square feet of commercial space has been created providing neighborhood residents with additional services, and crime has been dramatically reduced.

In a similar vein, the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation, a nonprofit, non-governmental organization, has revitalized the riverfront district in St. Paul, the northernmost navigable point on the Mississippi River. Conceived and directed by Weiming Lu, a planner by profession, the Redevelopment Corporation's purpose is "to intervene where government alone would be very cumbersome or slow." While it was not involved in projects directly, it played some role in almost every project, often catalyzing action between private developers, public agencies, and funding entities. Lu acted as promoter, banker, coalition builder, negotiator, liaison, and ombudsman. His plan was to turn Lowertown into what Herbert Ganz has called an "urban village," and he has succeeded in creating the conditions that has enabled seventy new projects to be carried out since 1978, some privately, some by public agencies, and some by a variety of joint public-private entities. As a result, many historic buildings have been restored (Lowertown has great architectural value, with fine industrial buildings such as warehouses by Cass Gilbert) and new construction has included a large mixed-use project, a studio for the public television station, a parking garage, and infrastructural improvements. A total investment of $428 million has created 6,700 jobs, and 1,500 housing units, of which 25 percent were for tenants with low or moderate incomes. This translates to $3.84 in million property taxes annually for the city (up fourfold from previous years) and an additional $1.6 million in sales taxes. Today, Lowertown has a real sense of place, with an employed populace, expanded tax base, and housing for all income levels. It is widely acknowledged that, were it not for the Redevelopment

The Tilsner Building is one of the many buildings in the historic riverfront district of St. Paul, Minnesota, that was rehabilitated as part of the Lowertown Redevelopment Project. Completed in 1993 at a cost of $7 million, this warehouse now contains sixty-six apartment/studios for artists and a shared atrium lobby. (Courtesy: The Bruner Foundation.)

Another 1995 finalist, the Harlem Meer Restoration Project, was part of a larger effort to revitalize Central Park. Undertaken by the Central Park Conservancy, the restoration of Harlem Meer entailed restoring the eleven-acre-long lake and its surroundings. (Courtesy: The Bruner Foundation)

Corporation, the area would now be one big parking lot.

The Harlem Meer Restoration Project, located in the northern part of Central Park bordering the poor and predominately Latino neighborhood of East Harlem, is the only high-style design among the finalists. The Meer, comprising a lake and the surrounding bucolic landscape, designed by Olmsted and Vaux, had once been among the park's most popular attractions. However, by the mid-1970s city budgets had been radically curtailed and deterioration set in. As a result, the once green lawn turned into bare, dusty, gullied hardpan and the gentle slopes of the terrain became littered with refuse. Silt filled the lake, weeds choked its surface, and the crime rate soared. Then Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, a planner, formed the Central Park Conservancy, a private non-profit corporation that administers Central Park in cooperation with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. In a joint venture with the city, the Conservancy provides for half of Central Park's funding and two-thirds of its staff. The restoration of Harlem Meer comprised only part of the project. In order to combat what was perceived as social polarization between Harlem and the Upper East Side, the Conservancy established contact with community leaders in those neighborhoods. In a highly participatory process, the Conservancy organized several activities aimed at improving the Meer for enjoyment by all. The lake was dredged of twenty thousand cubic yards of silt and restocked with thousands of fish. Almost all of the lake's edge has been restored with turf, rocks, or sand. Today, the Meer is perceived by its again abundant users as safe and accessible.

The winner of the Bruner Award for 1995, the Maya Angelou Community Initiative in Portland, is in a category of its own. Although it is exceedingly modest in scale, involving only forty-two units of low-income housing, the jury gave it top honors because it is so daring and because of its immense potential as a model for other neighborhoods. Initiated entirely by very poor

women with children and located in a neighborhood beset with drugs, crime, and deteriorated businesses, the project evolved out of a highly organized advocacy group which had, in turn, emerged out of African-American feminist consciousness-raising activity. With consultation from the National Congress of Neighborhood Women, the project got off the ground with a 100 percent loan from the Portland Development Corporation (PDC), which provided nearly $1.2 million at an interest rate of 3 percent. The funds were drawn largely from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOME program. About half of the funding has since been replaced by private financing.

This project, which was developed by Housing Our Families: A Women's Community Development Corporation, could not have happened through private mechanisms alone, as Farbstein and Wener stress in their report. The PDC's loan covered the hard cost of purchasing the property as well as the soft costs of rehabilitating it. While the PDC typically finances only parts of a project and turns to private lenders for the rest, they took a chance in this case and provided full funding in the hopes that later private refinancing would return about half of their investment. Their risk paid off. The city got the return it wanted and the housing is profitable today. Moreover, as a result of the revitalizing action of these women, crime has vanished from the neighborhood, property values are higher, the number of houses in the area defaulting on taxes has dwindled, private investment has increased, and people feel more optimistic about their future.

The world recognized by the Bruner Foundation may be invisible as far as the mainstream media are concerned, but that hardly means it is not active and well. In fact, judging from the growing number of submissions to the Bruner Award every year (over one hundred entries in 1995), one can say with certainty that the realm of socially minded architecture and urban development is robust. Today the Pritzker Prize and the Rudy Bruner Award speak to different constituencies within the design professions. This disparity only highlights the need to narrow the gap between the two ends of the architectural spectrum, between formal aesthetics and notions of community, so that ultimately the same projects may be eligible for both Pritzkers and Bruners.

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Briefly Reviewed

PARALLEL UTOPIAS: SEA RANCH AND SEASIDE, THE QUEST FOR COMMUNITY, Richard Sexton, with essays by William Turnbull, Jr., and Ray Oldenburg, Chronicle Books, 1995, 168 pp., illus., $50.00.
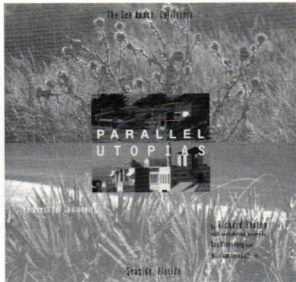
Second-home developments make strange candidates for prototypes of ideal communities. Nevertheless, this is Richard Sexton's thesis in *Parallel Utopias: Sea Ranch and Seaside, The Quest for Community.* A curious balance between a coffee table book and a scholarly history, *Parallel Utopias* contains essays by Sexton, architect William Turnbull, Jr., and urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg. Sexton's introductory essay places the two communities in the context of contemporary discourse on planning in America, ranging from the ideas of Jane Jacobs to Joel Garreau. He also writes two separate essays on the development of the original Sea Ranch and Seaside respectively. Sea Ranch, a ten-mile stretch of Northern Californian coast, was born in the 1960s and owes its plan and distinctive idiom to Lawrence Halprin, the firm Moore Lyndon Turnbull Whitaker (MLTW), and Joseph Esherick. Seaside, the famed new town located on the Florida panhandle, was designed by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk in the early 1980s.

While Sexton does not directly compare the projects, he does address in some depth the parallel issues that contributed to their formation, such as context, precedents, environmental and social concerns such as pedestrian-versus-automobile traffic, and the planning and architectural guidelines of each. The Sea Ranch essay in particular

analyzes how the project's initial promises have played out over its more than thirty-year history, accommodating such unexpected circumstances as coastal protection laws and skyrocketing real estate prices.

The essay by Turnbull, entitled "Houses, Homes, and Dreams," is a brief meditation on the dialogue between architect, landscape, and future generations of homeowners, and the evolution of houses into homes. Oldenburg's piece, "Prospects For Community," traces the evolution of the concept of "togetherness"—both enforced and voluntary—through the advent of the automobile, zoning laws, and housing trends.

Many of the book's limitations stem from its thesis, for viewing second-home communities as a model for utopian ones is akin to idealizing vacation time as everyday life. For example, it does not allow any discussion of school districts or security, two of the biggest development concerns today. As second-home communities, Sea Ranch and Seaside will never have the socioeconomic diversity or range of jobs and services needed to sustain *real* communities. Clearly, much is lost when the idea of viable utopia is equated with what is realizable by developers and insurance companies.

That being said, *Parallel Utopias* does raise a wide range of topics which are probably new and hopefully important to a lay audience. Meanwhile, some specialists may find its upbeat message a welcome relief from the narrative of loss that pervades so much of the current writing about cities and community. —**Andrew Cruse**

A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE: RESHAPING THE AMERICAN SUBURB, Philip Langdon, University of Massachusetts Press, 1994, 270 pp., illus., $35.00.

"In recent decades Americans have been focusing too much on the house itself and too little on the neighborhood, too much on interior luxury, and too little on public amenity," opines Philip Langdon, author of

A Better Place to Live, a well-written account of the problems with postwar suburban development. This book makes a case for a return to gridded neighborhoods with a mixture of housing types and pedestrian access to commercial and civic amenities. While it contains little that will surprise the expert in the field, it nevertheless makes an excellent introduction for general readers into contemporary critiques of suburbanization. It also suggests alternative ways of designing new communities and of improving existing ones.
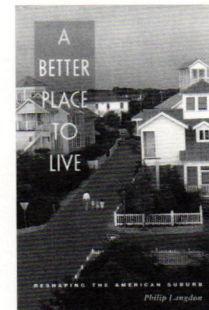
Part of the book's appeal to a broad audience may be attributable to its reasonable, accessible tone. Langdon, a former editor at *Progressive Architecture,* originally published portions of this book as essays in the *Atlantic Monthly.* Himself a product of small towns and medium-sized cities, Langdon understands and sympathizes with the cravings that most people have for privacy, nature, safety, and simply a better life—which explain Americans' predilection for the suburbs. Based in part on interviews with such figures in planning as Peter Calthorpe, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Andres Duany, who have led efforts to reconsider status quo residential development, Langdon's book is ultimately motivated more by a desire for reinvigorated community and automobile-independent living than by an allegiance to any particular design philosophy. While neither radical nor original, *A Better Place to Live* offers a cogent analysis of the preconceptions that shape and limit the environments in which most Americans live. —**Kathleen James**

Sea Ranch and Seaside

Typical suburban tract.

Great Streets

D. Grahame Shane

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It is difficult to write a book on the street. The street contains the life of traditional cities. It uses and values change from day to day, from generation to generation. It registers seismic shifts in our culture while remaining, paradoxically, a constant index. Perhaps because of its many complexities, there is still no comprehensive history of the street. (Walter Benjamin died before he could complete his study of Parisian streets and arcades of the 19th century.) A chapter in Sigfried Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941) perhaps provides the best treatment of this subject in modern scholarship. A more recent brief history can be found in a chapter in *The City Assembled* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1992) by Spiro Kostof, produced in collaboration with his colleagues at the University of California at Berkeley. Indeed, many of the additions to the literature on the street have links to what might loosely be called the "Berkeley School," which would include Christopher Alexander and Don Appleyard. Appleyard cowrote *The View from the Road* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1964) with Kevin Lynch, who taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, providing an East Coast connection. This link extends to Stanford Anderson (now a professor at Harvard), who edited *On Streets* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978).

Recent additions to this tradition include *Public Streets for Public Use* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987), edited by Anne Vernez Moudon in memory of Appleyard, and *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Urban Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), edited by Zeynep Çelik, Diane Favro, and Richard Ingersoll, a tribute to Kostof. There is also Peter Bosselmann's research for the city of San Francisco, undertaken at U.C. Berkeley's Environmental Simulation Laboratory, which was founded by Appleyard and is devoted to the study of streets through computer modeling and photographic collage techniques.

The position of Allan Jacobs, author of *Great Streets,* in this constellation is quite clear: besides teaching at Berkeley with Bosselmann, Jacobs is an active city planner in San Francisco. When faced with the task of proposing a design for Van Ness Avenue, the city's central north-south corridor, he found that there was no equivalent to an *American Graphics Standards* for streets. No one had ever tried to define what made a "Great Street," despite the accumulation of European

rationalists' theories, the figure-ground studies of the Cornell contextualists during the 1970s, and the vast research of urban historians. Nor was there a book that provided concrete examples of proven, successful streets with pragmatic measured drawings and details. Jacobs set out to remedy this situation in a series of unpretentious, amiable, illustrated chapters (drawn especially for the book) which fall into four sections. The first section, which is also the longest, attempts to define the typological elements of a "Great Street" through descriptions of much-loved examples and their peculiar characteristics. For example, the author details whether they are curved or straight, planned or unplanned, medieval or in the "grand manner," with great ensembles or sequences, with or without trees, water, and so on. Examples range from the pedestrianized Strøget in Copenhagen to Market Street in San Francisco and the Ramblas in Barcelona.

The second part of the book contains a closer look at these and other streets, with a portion of each depicted in a scaled plan, section, and sketch (traced from a photograph), accompanied by notes on its use. Here one finds the surprising inclusion of Main Street in Disneyland, California, lovingly drawn in plan and section like any other street. Part three examines some of these Great Streets (and their supportive off-streets) as networks forming an urban context, using a variation of the figure-ground notation: Jacobs counts the number of intersections in these networks to develop an interesting argument, that more frequent and closely spaced intersections are preferable to longer uninterrupted blocks. Finally, part four consists of three short chapters which outline the desired qualities of a Great Street and their relationship to urban planning. An appendix further notes the volume of pedestrian traffic on some of the streets studied in this book.

The main strength of *Great Streets* is the author's pragmatism, his ability to set clearly defined, limited goals and to test these goals against a select urban reality using a set of generic criteria. Rob Krier, at the end of *Stadtraum in Theorie und Praxis* (1976; translated as *Urban Space,* New York: Rizzoli, 1978), joked that one day a great social scientist would take on the impossible task of cataloguing all the streets of the world. Though Krier spoke as an idealist, Jacobs shows how such a task might actually be

This and facing page: Strøget is the main central street in Copenhagen. The long-continuing medieval street is narrow and winds slightly. It maintains a sense of mystery as a result of its tightness, its relatively tall buildings, and the lack of clear sightlines from end to end. Above is the urban and building context; opposite are a plan, section, and sketch of Strøget at Højbro Plads. (From *Great Streets*.)

undertaken. *Great Streets* can be seen as a quasi-scientific process, for it methodically examines precedents on a global scale, establishes a controlled sample of streets, leads to generalizations about their common characteristics, and elaborates their differences in a loose-knit set of largely visual codes. In the course of this investigation, Jacobs and his team have produced a treasure trove of measured drawings that will be useful to many generations of designers and historians. The drawings include notations that mark the scale of property ownership along a part of a given street, the frequency of doorways, the degree of transparency from the street to interior spaces, the texture of the ground plane, the dimension of landscape elements as well as (in some cases) the frequency and size of lamp posts or other street furniture. Not since *Les promenades de Paris*, written by Baron Haussmann's landscape architect Adolphe Alphand in the 1880s, has there been such a rational, positive compendium of exact and detailed material, combined with a welcoming and user friendly text. (In Krier's book, the tiny diagrams had no scale.)

The texts that accompany the illustration-heavy midsection of *Great Streets* are less effective than the opening and concluding narratives which, written from an experiential viewpoint, naturally enfold a richer range of detail. In the long first section, Jacobs reveals his idea of a Great Street through thoughtful reflections on the rhythm of their life over the course of the day and seasons, the articulation of sidewalk cafes within the streetscape, and the dappling effect of light filtered by leaves onto the pavement and facades. At the same time, these evocative descriptions contain many precise measurements and pragmatic details, such as notes on tree spacings, facade protuberances, the pace of pedestrians, and the relationship between pedestrians and vehicles. The changing nature of the street over a lifetime is traced in one autobiographical example, Jacobs' own multigenerational family experiences of Market Street.

The far shorter texts at the end of the book are more prescriptive than impressionistic, listing elements that contribute to Great Streets: a sense of beginning and ending; places to pause along the way; gentle slopes; a diversity of smaller buildings; special design details such as street furniture; easy accessibility; nearby parking; dense surroundings; and more. The

visual definition of a street is crucial to these prescriptions, which are aimed at ensuring the physical and psychological comfort of places used by pedestrians.

Near the end of *Great Streets,* Jacobs provides a set of perceptual-formal diagrams to illustrate the dynamics of visual comfort in a street, amplifying Vitruvius' and Leon Battista Alberti's proportional, sectional formulae. He offers a very simple diagram linking the greater horizontal spacing of buildings to a decreasing sense of definition and spatial enclosure on a street. (This neatly reverses Walter Gropius' diagrams supporting the wide spacing of the *Siedlung* slab blocks.) This argument for street enclosure and visual definition takes into account eye movement and depth perception. Referring to James J. Gibson's *The Perception of the Visual World* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin,1950), Jacobs writes:

> Buildings along streets are likely to provide a sense of (weak) definition when height to horizontal distance ratios are at least 1:4, with the viewer looking at a 30-degree angle to the right or left of the direction of the street. . . . [A]t height to distance ratios of 1:3.3 there always seems to be definition, and at 1:2 definition is strong.

Jacobs argues in his brief concluding paragraph how significantly practical design factors such as proportionally correct visual reliefs matter in the creation of a Great Street, which is a distinct human artifact in need constant maintenance. Still, in every design there is always an element of "magic" which defies analysis. This undefinable power possessed by so many Great Streets poses a problem to any author writing about this topic. Despite the personalized and subjective elements that run through most of the writing, Jacobs' analysis remains intent on detaching the "magic" street as a discrete visual object, removing it from its larger culture and from the city. But what of its relationship to and the fate of its surrounding not-so-great streets? In the first part of the book, each sample Great Street is inadequately located in its home city in a tiny thumbnail line diagrams, often set to the side, in the page margin. The documentation in the second part gives attention only to the interior logic and dimensions of the street, while the third section of the book makes the detachment of the street especially clear with the enumera-

Strøget at Højbro Plads

Strøget at Højbro Plads: plan and section

Approximate scale: 1" = 50' = 1:600
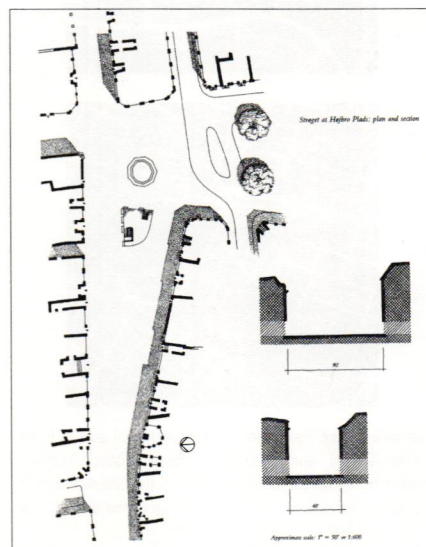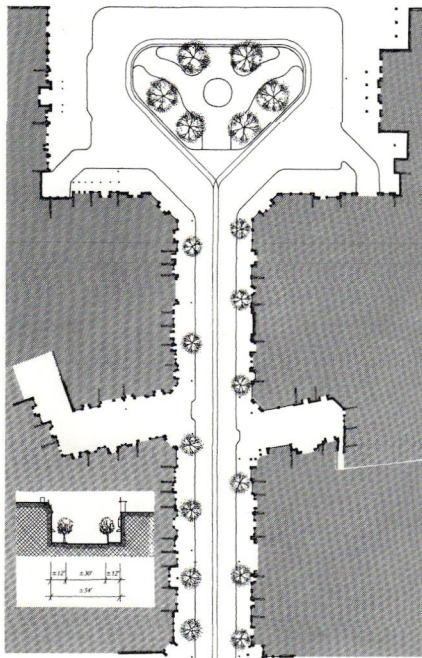
Plan and section of Main Street in Disneyland, Anaheim. An idealized small-town street, it possesses such pedestrian-friendly features as doorways every eighteen feet (some real, some not), many windows and signs, and trolley tracks. And above all, it is clean. (From *Great Streets*.)
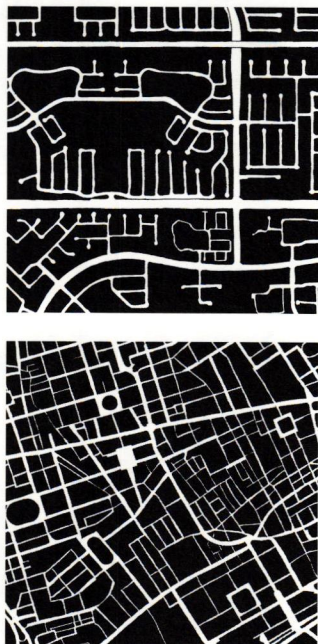
One-mile-square figure-ground of a residential area in Irvine, California (top), and of London's Mayfair district (bottom). Note that all of the public spaces in the Mayfair district, except for Hanover Square in the middle of the diagram, are depicted in black. (From *Great Streets*.)

tion of intersections in the modified figure-grounds. In the drawing of Irvine, California, for instance, only the road surfaces available to cars were shown in white. All the buildings, parks, and landscape features that shape a town or a street are blanketed under a uniform black, which represents the surrounding urban ground. While counting the number of intersections is a useful and original reading of the figure-ground, it all too poignantly reflects the global restructuring of the city as part of a car-based regional system—a restructuring which has forever altered the traditional role of the street. The implicit argument is that Great Streets must now compete as urban fragments against malls and theme parks, as enclaves of investment in the larger web of the motorized city-machine. Great Streets must therefore rely on the power of their imagery to attract people whose dreams and desires, shaped by the media and advertising, give coherence to the new urban system. The inclusion of Disney's Main Street as a "Street That Teaches" perfectly illustrates this dimension, for it epitomizes the detachment of an image of a main street from what was once its normal, necessary urban surroundings.

The detachment of the street as an image and discrete object is part of the larger condition of postmodern urban design, though *Great Streets* takes a largely uncritical stance in relation to the commercial forces shaping this phenomenon. Jacobs never articulates the fact that the proliferation of malls and theme parks in the age of television has everywhere spelled the death of main streets in small town and suburban America. All the picturesque, visual prescriptions for good street design advanced by Jacobs could, theoretically, be applied to self-contained malls and theme parks. Like streets, the promenade within malls have a sense of visual enclosure; they have a beginning and an end; they have irregular resting places along their length; and their facades are usually broken down into small, varied units. They are, of course, also accessible, with ample parking; they are typically surrounded by residential areas; and often they include trees, indoors as well as out. Indeed, Jon Jerde's L.A. Citywalk (1993) fulfills these criteria exactly, resulting in a simulacra of Los Angeles street architecture, replicated on site. This instant-drag/outdoor mall facilitates commercial activity as the traditional, evolutionary street once did.

This American "malling" disease is no doubt infectious, and will probably wreak the demise of many of the European streets so lovingly chronicled in *Great Streets*. While it is true that EuroDisney has been a disaster to date, recent articles have reported that four thousand bistros are closing every year in France (*New York Times,* December 22, 1994). In the carefully regulated Parisian region, many working and middle-class people now live on the outer periphery of the city as a result of state planning; this has created an increasingly isolated and auto-dependent citizenry which is driving to buy frozen food at malls in suburban Paris, staying at home in the evenings, watching TV.

Part of the difficulty of writing a book about streets in the late 20th century is their multiplicity of images and uses: they are the backdrop for spectacles, the favored marketing device, the complex leisure-shopping-work phenomenon. Walter Benjamin demonstrated in the 1930s that it is the fate of street as a commercial commodity to be in a constant state of flux—abandoned here, redeveloped there, started anew elsewhere, depending upon a range of social and economic mechanisms. (See Benjamin's *Reflections,* edited by Peter Demetz, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978.) He argued that our cities are "ruins," displaying the archaic shards of past capitalistic enterprises, slowly sinking into decrepitude, creating a surreal image of decay. Giedion was far more aggressive in his condemnation of the antique forms of *la rue corridor* and vehemently advocated the progressive modernist agenda which called for total street clearance in order to yield a free city-ground plane. Neither Benjamin nor Giedion ever doubted that the street and its image could become a commercial commodity traded in the global economy. Today, the street functions as a code image for the larger collective, both positively and negatively. The collective significance of the street is exploited in countless advertisements, TV programs, and films as an emblem of urbanity, community, or isolation. Real estate marketing specialists, too, have tapped into its symbolism, creating subdivisions of urban simulacrum, scenographic fragments evocative of tradition or sophistication. In the United States, with the right marketing and exposure, streets can make a comeback, as Berkeley's Peter Calthorpe and other New Urbanists have shown in numerous new peripheral developments. As a consumable object, the street in America floats in a void, a detached urban element, subject to the whims and desires of market players.

In the past, some members of this proposed "Berkeley School" have had difficulty in confronting the ceaseless dynamics of free market capitalism and the role of the street as a commodity/image in constant flux. The manifestation of this problem in *Great Streets* is a selection process that has privileged the noble, rational, Social Democratic path of a planned economy of a small country like Denmark (hence the emphasis on Strøget). A second preferred planning scenario seems to be the technocratic model of centralized, small nation-state, corporate market planning as developed in Italy, France, Japan, Switzerland, or Spain (which explains the inclusion of streets in Paris, Zurich, and provincial capitals like Barcelona and San Francisco). The examples in *Great Streets* reflect these preferences without making explicit their social, political, and economic consequences. European streets like Strøget are the product of complex market manipulations, a gracious and generous welfare state (which means no homelessness), high taxes, restrictive building codes, and Social Democratic controls imposed by the city and state—factors that are mostly nonexistent in the United States. The Copenhagen master plan limits the growth of the city through building height controls and the demarcation of greenbelts. The state owns and is planning the new development zone northwest of the city, toward the projected bridge to Sweden. Few cities in the U.S. have height controls in place in their centers, let alone state-owned developments on their edges.

Another unstated criterion that has informed *Great Streets* is what might be called "family values." Most cities with global, metropolitan ambitions do not well embody such Disneyesque ideals. These mercantile but still democratic cities produce another class of streets which are invariably messy, unstable, disturbing, even downright nasty. These dynamic streets have too many illegal and illicit activities or are too surreal to register on Jacobs' restricted palette. The enormous, sprawling, webbed complex of gathering places for youths, immigrant bazaars, pubs and clubs, and other effects of alternative night life are quite impossible to document using the formal and visual tools proposed in *Great Streets*. For example, the traditional English high street and street market that make up the Camden Town and Camden Lock constellation would fail to be recognized according to Jacobs' filter, regardless of the liveliness of this scene. Similarly, some of the great streets of New York City, like the

fourteen-mile-long Broadway and its many commercial offshoots, could not be adequately portrayed. The New York meat district with its architecture of refrigerator trucks, delivery bays, chic cafes, late-night clubs, drag queens, and leather boys in chains would also be invisible. The appearance of the showy prostitutes after ten o'clock at night on Kurfurstendamm, Berlin (one of Jacobs' "Streets That Teach"), also escapes observation.

These streets clearly have their own naughty "magic," constituting a highly personal, liberatory realm for some, or perpetuating a negative mythology of the street for others. The latter is the more popular picture in the collective imagination, casting colorful, bawdy, or marginal streets as places of shame and social pathology. The reason for this is logical: it is constantly exploited by an endless loop of television cop shows and alarmist, antiurban news reports and other filmic representations. (Jacobs' beloved Market Street served as the opening location for the 1994 Hollywood movie of Anne Rice's *Interview with a Vampire*.) These "dangerous" streets are reason enough for most people to seek out the touristic, highly controlled "Great Streets"—the mall, Disneyland, Universal's L.A. Citywalk, not to mention a sojourn for kids to Sesame Street or Street Fighter II in cyberspace.

Great Streets is a useful documentary achievement and primer on the dimensions and details of a variety of street designs. The fine quality of its large format makes one long for even more documentation, plans, sections, and sketches. Jacobs' text is eminently readable and accessible, even if it skims the surface of a potentially vast discourse. The book has an admirably clear focus, and its author accomplishes precisely what he sets out to do, without pondering the larger political, socioeconomic, and regulatory fields surrounding this already large task. *Great Streets* continues and enriches an honorable, diverse Berkeley-MIT tradition, which younger scholars will no doubt revise and update in their turn. Despite its limitations in terms of its historical, theoretical, and literary scope, it must be acknowledged as a valuable addition to the literature on the street. As a frustrated author of articles and books on the street, I have to salute Jacobs' gentle acumen and his ability to so precisely delimit his topic. One hopes that this study will lead to a wider appreciation of streets in all their strange mutations, as liberatory, participatory, and communal urban events—which, ultimately, can contribute to making freer and more democratic societies.

Two views of Market Street at California Street in San Francisco. The top drawing is based on a photograph taken in 1937; the bottom depicts the same intersection in 1992. (From *Great Streets*.)

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Burnham and Bennett: Plan of Chicago

KEVIN HARRINGTON

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Plan showing Nero's circus at Rome, Basilica of St. Peter, and the present Cathedral of St. Peter, all three built on the same site during successive epochs. This illustration appears in chapter two, entitled "City Planning in Ancient and Modern Times," where Burnham discusses the characteristics and subsequent transformations of several European capitals. (From *Plan of Chicago*.)

Daniel Burnham demonstrated his famous imperative "Make no little plans" with his work on such projects as the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the 1901 Plan of the Monumental Core of the District of Columbia, and the 1909 Plan of Chicago. With his colleague Edward Bennett, who was the "planning expert" at his firm just as John Root or Charles Atwood were his "architectural experts" at other times, Burnham replaced Chicago's chaotic character with a comprehensive order that would eventually earn it status as one of the most admired cities in the world.

Beginning in 1903, leading Chicago businessmen, first linked to the Merchants' Club and later to the Commercial Club, took it upon themselves to produce a plan for their city. From the outset, Daniel Burnham served as the group's architect. Their findings resulted in the 1909 publication of the *Plan of Chicago*. None of the participants held public office; nor was the plan an official public document. Despite its private creation, the purpose of the Plan, as stated on its first page, was to persuade a broad public that

> The complicated problems which the great city develops are now seen not to be beyond the control of aroused public sentiment; and practical men of affairs are turning their attention to working out the means whereby the city may be made an efficient instrument for providing all of its people with the best possible conditions of living.

The Plan of Chicago, like many of Burnham's buildings, was assembled from the careful analysis of some of the most highly respected models of the time, including the idiosyncratic modern planning solutions of rapidly growing older cities such as Vienna, London, and Paris. Because Chicago was a young city, Burnham would not have to destroy it to build another, as Haussmann had done to Paris. Nor did he have the opportunity to redevelop a large piece of open space, as in the case of the ring of Vienna. Instead he inherited a city less than a century old whose limits were then being defined by such decisions as the designation of Lake Michigan for drinking water; the reversal of the Chicago River to flow into the Mississippi system to discharge sewage; and the consolidation of railway land, which

was in the midst of debate at the time.

Burnham's Plan of Chicago did effectively reshape the city, though his ambition was decidedly greater than the realization of his designs. The civic center was not relocated to a point of centrality in the region, despite the recommendation of the Plan. In fact, the central east-west axis of Burnham's plan has been developed as an automobile expressway, symbolizing the dispersal of the region rather than its concentration. His effort to rationalize and consolidate the rail service at the center of Chicago also failed. On the other hand, the banks of the river as it flows east to west and then south have been developed over time as a series of elegant walkways, which passers-by may quietly enjoy in the midst of the hustle of the city. The lakefront parks, now a nearly complete continuous strip of green along the shore of Lake Michigan running from the northern to the southern edge of the city, are by far the greatest of Burnham's built legacies.

In other ways, Burnham's vision for Chicago has been indirectly achieved. It is important to recall that he understood that the key to the city's success would be hinged on its mid-continent location. His efforts to rationalize the rail system have been replaced by the concentration of auto, air, and water systems of transport—in addition to rail—in and through Chicago, continuing to make it the leading intermodal transshipment site in the region. Burnham's impulse to create a grand place in the plains and prairies between the Appalachians and the Rockies still operates. Chicagoans continue to strive to keep their region growing. In considering the scale of the city itself, he pointed to the arc defined on the west and north by the Fox River Valley and headlands, and to the south by the Kankakee River Valley (with Lake Michigan providing its eastern border). The city and region today have nearly filled the area designated for its development by Burnham. Recent census data, however, suggests that the great and rapid growth of the region is over. In the future, growth is likely to occur in the slowly expanding periphery, while population densities decline at the core.

The presence of this new facsimile version of Burnham and Bennett's *Plan of Chicago* will bring the text into many more hands than the 1,650 copies originally printed for the Commercial Club in

1909, or the facsimile published by Da Capo Press in 1970. Burnham's original publication, aimed at those in a position to put its ideas into effect, was supplemented by the Wacker Manual, a smaller, more widely distributed book. The Wacker Manual described the series of steps needed to achieve Burnham's ideas, but more importantly, it offered its ideas to schoolchildren, creating a large and continuing constituency eager to see the Plan fully implemented. A friend of mine who studied the Wacker Manual when in school in the 1940s and 1950s recalls that it was taught in the same rote question-and-answer manner as his Baltimore Catechism was.

The wider public will find this recent edition powerful for addressing many issues of city formation still of relevance today. Burnham's work clearly addressed the middle class, but he envisioned it as an expanding entity, able to absorb and integrate those who were climbing up the ladder of success. Youth gangs, random violence, family-destroying circumstances were all just off the page of Burnham's text, as his readers well knew.

This is where Kristen Schaffer's new introductory essay is most suggestive. It is no secret that Burnham's text for the Plan was preceded by a longer draft, which was reduced and sharpened during the development of the project. The common argument is that Burnham's discussions on such matters as housing and childcare were deleted because he lacked the ability to properly address them. Schaffer studies the original draft to show that Burnham touched upon a wide range of social issues in terms of their impact on urban development, as well as the effect of urban development on social patterns. While the Plan examines community issues largely through the proposals for park and field house developments, Burnham's draft also dealt with the reciprocal relationship between physical form and social organization. Although this approach probably derives from the transcendental Swedenborgianism with which he was raised, Burnham substantiates these ideas by invoking the ancient Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus, who understood that notions of citizenship grew out of opportunities offered by a city to its children. Schaffer contends that this broad, progressive vision of urban design is the real basis of the Burnham Plan.

To assess the character and quality of the facsimile, I compared it to an original copy (numbered 118) presented to Martin A. Ryerson by the Commercial Club of Chicago, which he and his wife in turn donated to the Burnham Libraries of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1937. It is dated 1909 on the title page, and 1908 on the copyright page. The 1993 facsimile I used for the comparison is in the collection of the Art Institute. No indication is given in the facsimile of which copy or copies of the original were used for the reprinted edition.

From this comparison, the following points may be made: the text and images of the facsimile are reprinted at the exact size of the original edition, however the trim size of the pages and the binding are slightly smaller. The paper used in the facsimile is of lighter stock than that in the original, and is used throughout the entire book, whereas the original used a heavier stock for the sewn-in illustrated plates. Unlike in the original, the frontispiece and other illustrated plates in the facsimile are printed on the back of text pages, and are not sewn in separately. Generally, the colors of the facsimile plates recreate the soft, dreamy tonality of the illustrations in the original, but they tend overly toward brightness, with colors slightly more pronounced (reds redder, blues bluer). In some images, large monochromatic areas such as the lake lose their uniformity, in part a result of their being printed on the back side of text pages which causes some show-through. By and large, however, the color variations are minor and tolerable. Finally, the error in the caption for figure xxxiii— identifying it as a view of Florence though it is in fact an aerial view of the Piazza del Campo in Siena—goes uncorrected and unnoted in the facsimile.

Despite these and other small differences, the new edition will make it possible for contemporary readers to hold and feel this document and gain a sense of its initial purpose: to show through the deft combination of text and images that a city may be modern, coherent, efficient, and noble.
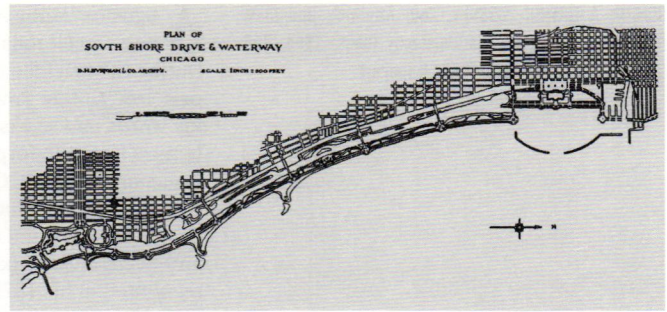
Daniel Burnham's modified plan of 1904 for the Chicago lakefront, extending from Jackson to Grant Parks. (From *Plan of Chicago*.)

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Pugin: A Gothic Passion

David B. Brownlee

Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin—the name itself rolls like evening thunder. During the brief life of this great and most perfervid Gothic Revivalist (1812–1852), his words and works stirred English architecture from the torpor of its late Georgian summer. As G. G. Scott, architect of the refulgent Midland Grand Hotel at St. Pancras Station and one of the leading architects of the next generation, recounted in his 1879 *Personal and Professional Recollections*, "Pugin's articles excited me almost to a fury, and I suddenly found myself like a person awakened from a long feverish dream, which had rendered him unconscious of what was going on about him."

Pugin: A Gothic Passion captures this thunder and records its echoes. Edited by Paul Atterbury and Clive Wainwright and published in conjunction with the exhibition they curated at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1994, the volume is not the grand and fully documented biography that its subject deserves and that we have long awaited from Phoebe Stanton, whose insightful but unfootnoted *Pugin* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971) remains indispensable. But it is as much as one can expect, perhaps, from the limiting format of an anthology of essays by multiple authors, which also has the responsibility of serving as a catalogue for a decorative arts–oriented exhibition. This publication includes much new information and insight, and is wonderfully illustrated with numerous color plates which have been unstintingly reproduced.

The Pugin with whom we part company after this reading is a figure more securely placed within the context of early 19th-century art and religion. At last we have a firm grip on the impossibly romantic and tragic personal life of the designer who won royal commissions in his teens; the yachtsman who found solace aboard his lugger in the tumult of the North Sea; the man who was twice a widower; and the international celebrity who died an invalid at forty. We also know vastly more about those for whom and by whom his designs (especially for the decorative arts) were executed, and we share some hard-won wisdom about Pugin's historical importance.

Pugin is organized in twenty-one chapters assigned to seventeen authors, with the most and best work coming from coeditor Clive Wainwright and contributor Alexandra Wedgwood, who each wrote four essays. There is also an exceptionally fine *envoi* by Andrew Saint, entitled "The Fate of Pugin's True Principles," which closes the book. The complicated presentation of this anthology can only be reviewed by giving some consideration, however brief, to each contribution.

The first chapter, by Wainwright, is used both to establish some of the salient details of Pugin's persona and his circle of friends, and to describe his historical significance. The resulting essay is awkwardly bifurcated and strangely unfootnoted (was there a last minute change of writing assignments?), but Wainwright does succeed in dissolving the romantic mist that has clouded some of the more fabled aspects of Pugin's life, notably his yachting adventures. More importantly, Wainwright also compels us to see Pugin as an *early* 19th-century artist: a full-fledged Romantic.

The following chapter is the first of Wedgwood's four essays, and is a sensitive account of the art and theology of the architect's early life, up to the time of his first works in architecture and his conversion to Roman Catholicism—equally epochal in human terms. Pugin's participation in his father's antiquarian publications and his first furniture designs (including work for Windsor Castle) are clearly recounted for the first time, as is his wondrous series of eight manuscript books dating from 1832 to 1834, which prefigure the style and argument of his brilliant 1836 treatise *Contrasts*. Wedgwood describes the early texts as Pugin's "exploration of the Catholic faith in intensely visual terms."

Next is an account by Lionel Lambourne of Pugin's heretofore unstudied youthful designs for the theater—a discussion that would have fit rather logically in the previous chapter. Lambourne's research places Pugin even more firmly in his Romantic context, begging (without answer) for comparisons to the theatrical designs of Karl Friedrich Schinkel and the settings for state pageantry devised by Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc.

This theater chapter establishes the model for most of the chapters that follow: each is devoted to one of the media in which Pugin worked. An architectural historian will regret that Pugin's architecture is the central subject of only two of these, but at least they come first. Wedgwood gives a very creditable review of his residential commissions, whose relative scarcity allows her to discuss the clients in interesting detail. Roderick O'Donnell has no such fortune in his chapter on Pugin's numerous churches, and his narratives will seem rather sketchy to those who have some familiarity with the buildings and who think of Pugin first as an architect. The development of his architectural style cannot unfold within
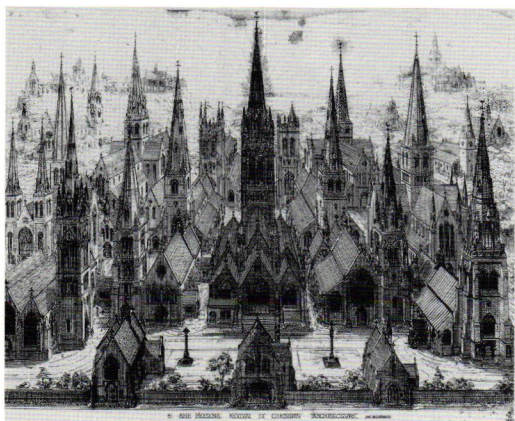
Frontispiece to Pugin's *Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture,* published in 1843, illustrating his church designs. (From *Pugin: A Gothic Passion.*)

the narrow compass of religious architecture, although the author ties the design work effectively to issues of liturgy. This is where one most regrets that the book was apparently shaped by the exhibition, with its emphasis on Pugin's spectacular furniture, metalwork, and other small objects.

At this point, Wainwright takes up the story again with a nicely detailed consideration of Pugin's omnivorous appetite for antiquities. What follows, however, will be another disappointment for the architectural historian: Margaret Belcher's intelligent but limited chapter on Pugin's extraordinarily effective polemical writings. From the outset Belcher unconvincingly identifies *Contrasts* as Pugin's greatest work—despite the fact that its turgid résumé of church history cannot rank with its rightly celebrated satirical illustrations. In this vein, Belcher chooses to emphasize Pugin's role as religious controversialist who navigated with great assurance through the complexities of the liturgical debates that occupied Roman Catholics (Pugin among them) during his lifetime. While this information is most welcome, Belcher's emphasis regrettably excludes the books that represent Pugin's architectural views so brilliantly: *True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (1841), *Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England* (1843), and *Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England* (1843).

The next two decorative arts chapters, by Joanna Banham on wallpaper and Wainwright on furniture, go a long way toward making up for this downplaying of architectural theory, however. Banham does a fine job of setting wallpaper design in the context of design theory, and Wainwright's furniture chapter is, quite simply, the heart of the book. Here, rather than in the architecture chapters, Wainwright provides the best account of Pugin's use of historical models and the surest chronology of his stylistic development.

The subsequent seven chapters—which cover ceramics (the sole authorial contribution of coeditor Atterbury), book making, jewelry, metalwork, funerary monuments, stained glass, and textiles—have much in common. They underscore the fact that Pugin exploited new manufacturing technologies as they became available, thus placing himself at a good distance from the quasi-Ludditism of his spiritual successors in the Arts and Crafts movement. They also provide much interesting detail on the craftsmen and contractors who served him, although some of this is wearyingly repetitive: the birth of Pugin's collaboration with the great

Birmingham manufacturer John Hardman is recounted at least six times by as many authors in discussions of different media.

After these chapters, the pace quickens with two splendid essays by Wedgwood. The first of these offers a succinct version of Pugin's collaboration with Charles Barry in the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament, drawing, naturally enough, on M. H. Port's magisterial *Houses of Parliament* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976). The second tells of Pugin's great foray into the territory of those he called "pagans," an anecdote-rich story of the medieval court which Pugin concocted, together with his art manufacturer friends, within the Crystal Palace.

Architecture remains the central subject from here to the end of the book. Brian Andrews discusses the nine Australian churches that were more or less directly based on Pugin's suggestions, devoting about as much space to each of these fairly modest buildings as any of the great English churches received. Roderick O'Donnell gives a sympathetic reading to the works of Pugin's sons, among whom pride of place belongs to the often irascible Edward Welby Pugin, who was himself no mean architect.

Finally, the book concludes with Andrew Saint's luminous essay which lays out the essential chicken-or-egg ambiguity with which Pugin defined the relationship between good architecture and good society. Which must be reformed first? Pugin never made clear whether Gothic architecture made Gothic society or vice versa, and Saint recognizes the impact of this fertile ambiguity in the 20th century, notably in the work of Le Corbusier. Saint also, at last, provides a good analysis of Pugin's *True Principles*, taking pains to show that his functional and structural principles are plaided with his concern for propriety. Pugin's other great injunction, to limit ornament to the enrichment of construction, is even more illuminatingly examined: Saint explains for the first time why, despite the apparent meaning of this rule, Pugin placed so much of his ornament on elements of small or no structural significance. The French sources of these arguments are nicely explicated.

A. W. N. Pugin has always seemed an artist of many, sometimes contradictory, qualities. Prolific and varied in his art and passionate in his writing, he has eluded cool analysis. Atterbury, Wainwright, and all of their collaborators deserve much credit for examining so much without devaluing the variety or extinguishing the passion of this man's work.
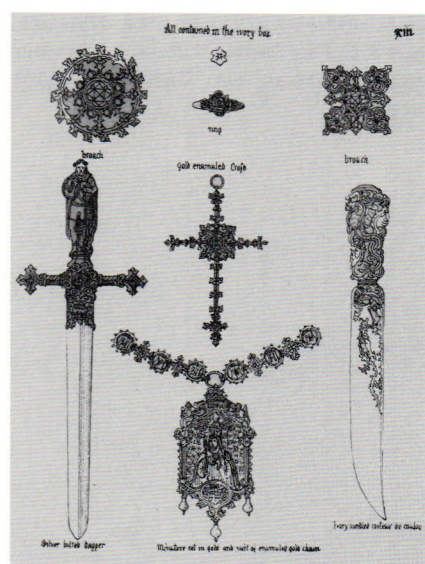
Illustration from Pugin's manuscript book "The Chest" (From *Pugin: A Gothic Passion.*)

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The Art and Architecture of Islam, 1250—1800

NASSER O. RABBAT

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A common objective of culture-specific surveys of art and architecture is to advance an audience's knowledge of the aesthetic and spatial aspects of the work under review, while weaving in the range of factors that define, sustain, and differentiate it from the creative output of other cultures. Most authors choose one of two prevailing art historical frameworks: they present their material either in a chronological order or according to typology. The field of Islamic art and architecture is no exception. The majority of books devoted to the subject are chronological accounts, starting with the rise of Islam in the early 7th century and ending around the middle of the 18th century, when the Islamic world supposedly became irreversibly dominated by Western culture and ceased to be creative on its own. A few textbooks try to break the perceived teleological grip of the chronological narrative by dividing the topic into building types (mosques, madrasas, palaces, citadels) rather than reinforce sometimes questionable historical boundaries.

One recent historical survey, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250–1800* by the wife and husband team of art historians Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, fits in the former category: arranged chronologically, the book was commissioned as a "continuation" of the 1987 publication *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650–1250* by Richard Ettinghaussen and Oleg Grabar. Together, these volumes constitute the Islamic component of Pelican's long-standing History of Art series, initially edited by Nikolaus Pevsner and recently acquired by Yale University Press. The scope and methods of Blair and Bloom's book necessarily conforms to the format established by Ettinghaussen and Grabar.

A sequel or series immediately invokes the broader notion of "tradition" in the Hobsbawmian sense, that is, the legitimation of a project by its association with an existing network of studies and conventions. Such a connection offers a reminder of the historical, epistemological, and cultural practices that encourage, in fact *demand,* studies to be framed within exclusive,

clearly defined brackets of time, space, and culture, and assigned their proper place in a constellation of other literature on the field. For Islamic art and architecture from all times and all places to be the topic of two volumes in a larger series on world art and architecture (around forty volumes in the original Pelican series, plus several new volumes published by Yale) underlines two widespread and now inadequate assumptions: the first is that the art and architecture of a vast expanse of land, extending to parts of Europe, across Asia, and to Africa as well (although many "peripheral" areas are left out of these books), has clearly discernible unifying factors which warrant grouping them as a single topic of study. The second assumption, and one that does an especial disservice to the student, is that Islamic art has contributed so little to the world or is so little known that it can be satisfactorily presented as an independently developing tradition in two volumes.

Blair and Bloom succinctly question the former assumption in their introduction though, with passing acknowledgment of the limitations of the Pelican format, proceed to use it anyway as the framework for their study. In their twentieth and last chapter, "The Legacies of Later Islamic Art," they do offer an intelligent if brief account of the impact of Islamic art in the 19th and 20th centuries. In extending their discussion both outside the Islamic world and into the present, they indirectly debunk assumptions about its limited range of influence and tacitly argue its continuing pertinence. This chapter may have been an afterthought, however, or perhaps a defiant postscript by Blair and Bloom for the book's title refers only to the period 1250 to 1800.

The book is essentially divided into two sections: the first covers the period from 1250 to 1500, when the Iranian world (and later, Mamluk Syria, Egypt, the Maghreb and Anatolia) provided the impetus for the architectural and artistic developments that came to be known as Islamic. The second part focuses on the period from 1500 to 1800, alternating between the three

imperial loci of monumental architecture and refined art in the premodern era: Ottoman, Safavid, and Mongol. Part two also extends the discussion from the part one on Central Asia and the Maghreb. The authors present their information chronologically, dynastically, and geographically, and in most cases, by artistic medium. Seven chapters deal exclusively with architecture; six address all genres of exalted and everyday art (manuscript illustration, calligraphy, ceramic, glass, metalwork, textiles); and four are devoted to a mixture of architecture and art, presumably because the periods covered in these chapters are less central to understanding the evolution of Islamic art and architecture or because information about them is sporadic and incomplete.

Each chapter is prefaced by a synopsis of the political and social history of the period, emphasizing primarily the tremendous role that royal patrons played in the creation and dissemination of Islamic art and architecture. This background detail serves a larger purpose than providing nonspecialists with some historical orientation: it represents the foundation of the authors' approach to the study of Islamic art and architecture. Blair and Bloom, both trained under Oleg Grabar at Harvard University, see the sociocultural context as a canvas upon which architectural and artistic history is painted. Therefore, the aesthetic value of the examples studied is barely discussed, as the authors deem it "self-evident." The result is that the book comes across more as a history in the sense of sequential causality or evolutionary development, and less as an interpretive work that can penetrate and ultimately help readers to appreciate the aesthetic sensibility or technical inventiveness embodied in a culture's artifacts or buildings.

The prose is lucid, jargon-free, and at times witty. It flows almost effortlessly, especially in the sections on architecture, giving readers the joyful feeling that they are on a guided tour. The footnotes and bibliography are extensive and up to date, and reflect the emphasis of the field at large, with the

architecture titles outnumbering those on art and decorative arts. The text is generously supplemented by 150 color plates (a handful of which are unfortunately blurry) and an equal number of black and white illustrations, plus one hundred line drawings. As another reviewer has observed, in a 314-page book this amounts to more than one image per page, a very impressive ratio indeed. It is a pity, however, that architectural plans seem to be the least important means of illustration. Those included are rendered in a range of techniques—sometimes with bold contours, sometimes black, sometimes hatched. Or they are drawn in a variety of scales and measurements (meters as well as feet) or with the scale missing altogether (as in the case of the Bu 'Inaniya Madrasa in Fez), all of which makes it difficult for readers to perceive the relative size of the various buildings.

This volume is without a doubt the most comprehensive and exhaustive English-language record of medieval and premodern Islamic art and architecture. Together with its predecessor, it may be regarded as the definitive textbook for any survey course on the subject. This in itself is no small achievement. Yet this reviewer senses that this publication marks the end of the tradition of the culturally defined survey of art and architecture. Despite Blair and Bloom's attempt in the last chapter to "connect" its subject to the West and to open vistas to the modern world, the book remains essentially a self-contained discourse. The book competently charts the evolution of one culture's art and architecture but does not relay the interdependence among its various expressions or with those of other cultures. This is not the fault of the authors but of the dominant historiographical paradigm that affirms a self-conscious, autonomous, and historically evolving identity for the West and reduces other cultures to the status of minor or passive contributors in the chain of general artistic and architectural evolution. Thus, for example, inquiries into the common classical heritage of art and architecture in the
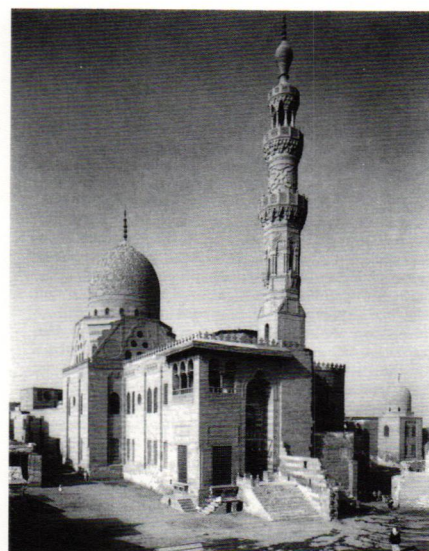
Funerary complex of Sultan Qa'itbay in the Northern Cemetery, Cairo; 1472–74. (From *The Art and Architecture of Islam*.)
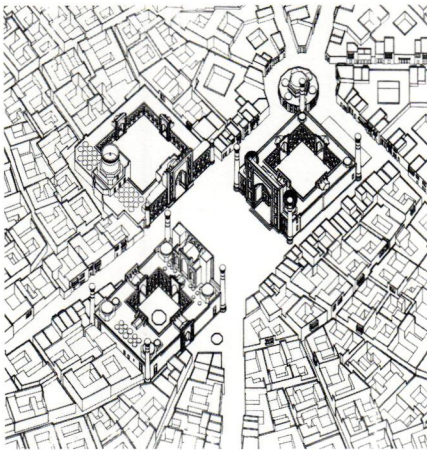
Axonometric view of the Registan Square, Samarquand, with its three madrasas built between the 15th and 17th centuries. (From *The Art and Architecture of Islam*.)

Islamic Middle East and Christian Europe, or the rich and fruitful inter-action in the medieval period between the Islamic East and India and China and their similar historicizing attitudes in the premodern era, are usually neglected, simply because they do not fit within the accepted (Western) scholarly construct of art and archi-tectural history.

Only recently have cultural studies begun to eschew this epistemological framework, with its anthropological and essentializing manner of examining "other" cultures and their creative production. Alternative methods, how-ever, have long been proposed in the field of world history, under the gen-eral rubric of "world systems." One of the most original, though least studied, examples of this approach is Marshall Hodgson's magisterial three-volume study *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), in which he considers the inter-dependence of regional developments on a global scale. Starting in 1954, he developed his "hemispheric interre-gional approach" as a way to recon-ceptualize world history and the place of the West in it. For Hodgson, it was imperative to

> recognize the limited role in history of our West, as one region among others, during much of its develop-ment distinctly peripheral; and even in modern times, as not the sub-stance of the age, into which other lands are merging insofar as they are significant at all, but instead as the center of important events affecting both the West and other lands, and significant from an interregional point of view in their interregional rather than their local aspect. As a corollary of this placing of the West, we must leave behind the Westward pattern of history and the "East and West" dichotomy in studying the development of the oikoumenic con-figuration; and we must free our the-orizing of the turns of thought which arise from assuming the Westward pattern.[1]

Echoes of this method have found their way into architectural history. Spiro Kostof's *A History of Architecture:*

Settings and Rituals (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985; revised second edition, 1995) was among the first broad surveys to offer more than a token chapter on non-Western architecture. Kostof outlined a new direction for architectural historians, emphasizing patterns of architectural interdepen-dence across geographical bounds. In his significantly dubbed "cross-cul-tural chapters," he analyzed important synchronous architectural events in various regions within single discus-sions. Through sensitive synthesis, he managed to introduce the architecture of "other" cultures as equal partners in the development of the architecture of the world, while acknowledging his heavy reliance on the Western tradition of writing a history of architecture. He accomplished this without feeling obliged to define exact perimeters of time or space, or claiming to be exhaustive—an approach that may still serve as a model for future surveys, general and culture-specific alike.

NOTES

1. The full scope of Marshall Hodgson's approach can now be fully appreciated in the collection of his essays published posthu-mously as, *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam, and World History,* edited with introduction and conclusion by Edmund Burke, III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). The quotation is from p. 292.

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Architectural Histories of Two Small Nations: The Newly Defined and the Well-Traveled

Janey Bennett

The histories of Estonia and Finland, which are separated by the Gulf of Finland, an expanse some eighty miles wide, have many parallels. Their languages both belong to the Finno-Ugric linguistic family. Because of their locations, strategic in terms of trade and defense, both countries have been overrun by foreign powers throughout their histories. Estonia has been governed by Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany. The Estonian capitol, Tallinn (which literally means Danish fortress), was a member of the Hanseatic League in the 16th century. Finland was also ruled by Sweden or Russia throughout much of its history. Religion and culture came from Germany via the Teutonic Knights and later, the Lutheran church.

Despite the onslaught of foreign influences, both countries have managed to develop architectural traditions and approaches uniquely reflective of their cultural identities. Liivi Künnapu's book *Estonian Architecture: The Building of a Nation* is the first published survey of the entire history of the architecture of Estonia which, alone among the republics of the former Soviet Union, has produced a vigorous, independent body of work by a volatile and impressive group of young architects. The built legacy of Finland is as well known as it is admired, and Riitta Nikula's *Architecture and Landscape: The Building of Finland* is one of the most recent additions to a rich list of historic and thematic studies.

In the 19th century Estonia and Finland defined their nationhoods by collating their oral folklore traditions into sagas. Between 1856 and 1861, the Estonian saga of *Kalevipoeg* was published as a result of the efforts of two physicians, Friedrich Robert Fählmann and Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwaldin. And in 1847 Elias Lönnrot assembled the traditional runes of Finland into the *Kalevala*. During the period of European Art Nouveau (called National Romanticism in Scandinavia and the Baltics), both countries, under Czarist rule, expressed their national separateness in an architecture that reflected their myths and legends. Rough-cut stone, hand-hewn wood, primitive

details, and carved figures from their respective legends appeared on the exteriors of the buildings in both countries at the turn of the century. In Finland this was especially notable in the architecture of Lars Sonck, Eliel Saarinen and his partners, Herman Gesellius and Armas Lindgren. Saarinen and Lindgren also worked in Estonia, creating works that were responsive to the National Romantic desires of the Estonians who at the time had no native-born trained architects.

In the upheaval of the Bolshevik Revolution, both Finland and Estonia declared their independence from Russia and fought to achieve the status of independent parliamentary republics. Estonia achieved its independence in 1919 and Finland in 1917, although in the latter case, a bitter three-year civil war ensued thereafter. Nearly two decades later, in August 1939, the Molotov-Ribbentrop nonaggression pact between Hitler and Stalin contained a secret clause that divided territories not within either nation's power at the time: the Soviet Union was to receive Estonia, Latvia, and Finland, while Germany was to receive Lithuania (which Germany later traded back to Russia in exchange for more of Poland). This is where the histories of these two nations diverge.

Finland's subsequent wars against Russian invasions concluded with a treaty that wrought financial and territorial hardships but preserved its status as independent of Soviet governance. Meanwhile, Estonia was absorbed into the Soviet Union, overrun by Germany at the height of the second world war, and then "liberated" by the Soviets soon afterward. The years that followed, especially prior to Stalin's death in 1953, were filled with horrors, such as the disappearance of countless Estonian men (most were transported east, never to be seen again). In "A Reporter At Large (Estonia)" in *The New Yorker* (September 18, 1989), David Shipler observed, "Before the accession of Gorbachev . . . elementary facts were excluded from Estonia's official history. In the Soviet version, still promulgated in tourist guidebooks, independent

The ultimate example of Finnish National Romantic architecture: the Finnish pavilion at the Paris World's Fair in 1900; by Gesellius, Lindgren, Saarinen. (From *Architecture and Landscape: The Building of Finland.*)

"Happy and enthusiastic workers" from the Soviet period, building an apartment house for scientists on Lenini (now Rävala) Avenue in the early 1950s. The reconstructed Estonia Theater in central Tallinn is in the background. (From *Estonian Architecture: The Building of a Nation.*)

Estonia was 'a bourgeois-nationalist dictatorship,' which was finally overthrown by 'the working people' with Soviet help. Estonians had to preserve their history privately."

Estonia declared its independence from the Soviet Union in August of 1991. Künnapu's book, published the following year, introduces a subject and defines its divisions—something never before done. How many 20th-century scholars have the opportunity to chart new territory while recounting a history they have experienced firsthand? As it unfolds, history does not accommodate historians by falling into neat categories. Although her taxonomy of the trends of architectural intent may sometimes seem arbitrary, the prospect of identifying them must have been exhilarating.

While *Estonian Architecture* seems timid in contrast to the more rigorous standards of academic scholarship to which most readers will be accustomed, it lifts the curtain for the first time on the impact of Soviet oppression on the cultural independence of Estonia. It also provides a basis for further research into the phenomenon of the country's defiant architectural separateness. The preservation of Estonian history by means of a covert celebration of national myths and traditions was in fact integral to a heightened sense of nationalism; such sentiments ultimately propelled the Baltic States into the dangerous period of visible dissent during the Gorbachev years.

Künnapu's book is a necessary first. It processes information, codifies known and less known, acceptable and controversial facts, and attempts to define the key moments and elements of Estonian architectural history. This breakthrough study represents an activity that had been forbidden until recently; in essence, its author changed from rebel to scholar overnight.

Such a transition is doubtless difficult, but Künnapu has handled it impressively. One example of the sort of ironical criticism that would have been dangerous up until a few years ago is the caption of a photograph from the Soviet period: " 'Happy and enthusiastic workers' building an apartment house

for scientists at 11 Lenini Avenue (now Rävala Avenue) in the beginning of the 1950s." The quotation marks around "Happy and enthusiastic workers" clearly betray Künnapu's critical position, though her more straightforward presentation of information elsewhere in the book gives the sense that she is still looking over her shoulder from time to time.

Among the more intriguing areas of recent Estonian architectural history is the sudden appearance in the 1970s of a group of talented young architects known as the Tallinn School. Though no longer together as a group, many of the original members (Künnapu's husband among them) continue to practice as individuals. Much of the work was unrealized, and what has been built has been saddled with shoddy materials and poor workmanship and has taken years, even decades, to complete. Many of the Tallinn architects were also artists, producing drawings, paintings, sculpture, and performance works because they were chronically underemployed in their architectural practice. Despite their difficulties, their designs came through with an undeniable vigor. A self-organized exhibition of their work in 1978 at the Museum of Finnish Architecture in Helsinki featured some clearly satirical pieces aimed at the bureaucrats in the (Soviet) Architect's Union. The group managed to secure exhibition time again a few years later, at the Alvar Aalto Museum in Jyväskylä, Finland. This showing was accompanied by a catalogue entitled *Nine Architects from Tallinn* (Helsinki: Museum of Finnish Architecture, 1984), which remains the credo for this strong and noteworthy movement. The work may be characterized by its vehement opposition to the Soviet style of domineering-scale symmetrical classicism. It resonates with the work of the Russian constructivists as well as the early contextual postmodernism of Americans like Robert Venturi. Their aesthetic was founded on discord. Interestingly, they traveled an expressly Estonian route to arrive at a result similar to deconstructivism, and got there more than a decade sooner.

Estonian Architecture is an admirable effort to organize and define an enormous subject. Künnapu's deft assembly of a no doubt daunting amount of information has resulted in a useful historic document. While the author's reverential attitude toward the survival of the Estonian spirit and creative production creates a clear and sometimes problematic bias in her reading of events, her sharp text will nevertheless provide a basis for future, more dispassionate scholarship on the nationalism of Estonian architecture.

Nikula's *Architecture and Landscape: The Building of Finland*, by contrast, does not suffer from the lack of detachment that can sometimes impede a historian or critic's ability to fairly and fully evaluate a topic. Perhaps scholarly detachment only comes with the security afforded by political stability, which allows close and repeated examinations of a subject. An accomplished scholar, Nikula is a professor of art history at the University of Helsinki and until recently was the director of research at the Museum of Finnish Architecture. Nikula's work benefits from the wealth of published material on Finland's architectural history, and manages to maintain a steady level of detail even through periods that are not as well documented. She also dutifully directs readers to her sources for further reading.

Previous English-language histories of Finnish architecture include Nils Erik Wickberg's *Finnish Architecture* (Helsinki: Otava Publishing, 1962) and Sir J. M. Richards' *800 Years of Finnish Architecture* (Newton Abbot, Eng.: David & Charles, 1978). Richards' history is particularly flawed, filled with misinterpretations and errors. Nikula's book serves as a reliable overview and is an invaluable visual resource as well, illustrated with photographs on every page, although more maps and plans would have been helpful.

Her book is divided into seven sections, followed by a useful bibliography. She begins by defining Finland's physical features and identifying the qualities and limitations of the country's two dominant building materials, stone and wood. The Fennoscandian bedrock

shield consists of granite and several other types of hard stone, none of which are soft or easily quarried. This explains why rusticated stone was so widely used in Finnish vernacular and National Romantic styles of architecture. Furthermore, Finland's rich forest reserves (covering nearly 70 percent of the country's surface) provide the basis for the masterful tradition of wood construction and detailing that continues to define Finnish architecture.

Nikula proceeds chronologically, with her chapters on the Middle Ages through the 18th century consisting primarily of analyses of vernacular building types, such as castles, stone churches, wooden churches, and farm buildings. In her chapters on the 19th and 20th centuries, she continues her chronological treatment with discussions of significant buildings and the circumstances surrounding their development. For example, some of the subsections within the chapter on the 19th century are labeled "Carl Ludvig Engel and Helsinki," "Industrialization of Finland," and "Theodor Høijer and the Gowing Capital." Meanwhile, the chapter on the 20th century is divided into discussions on "Finnish History and the New Style," "From Romanticism to Rationalism," "The New Urban Ideal," "Technological Advances," and "Pluralistic Prosperity." Nikula connects her later chapters to the earlier ones by noting the recurrence of traditional elements in modern work, such as that by Eliel Saarinen, Alvar Aalto, and contemporary architects such as Juhani Pallasmaa and Kristian Gullichsen.

Though nationalism is often criticized as exclusionary and as the source of discrimination and conflict, it also reflects a process by which a common language, cultural heritage, and political condition produce a distinct sensibility and body of work. Architecture may well be the arena in which the ineluctable national soul, a concept identified by Johann Gottfried in the 18th century, is most visible. The national souls of Estonia and Finland are embodied in their extraordinary built legacies, as Künnapu's and Nikula's attentive studies make eminently clear.

Heureka Science Center, Vantaa; Mikko Heikkinen and Markku Komonen, 1988. The building wears science experiments like jewelry. The stones in the foreground are samples of all the types of granite found in Finland. (From *Architecture and Landscape: The Building of Finland*.)

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JANEY BENNETT was a Fulbright Fellow in Finland in 1990. Her research on Erik Bryggman was included in the Museum of Finnish Architecture's catalogue, *Erik Bryggman: Arkkitehti, Arkitekt, Architect* (Helsinki: Museum of Finnish Architecture, 1991). Bennett is an independent scholar, journalist, and landscape designer.

Don't Ask

David Clarke

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What Is Architecture? is an annoying, self-indulgent romp. It reminds me of the undergraduate papers I wrote at Wisconsin thirty years ago under the influence of economy-size capsules of Dexedrine. The papers glowed with brilliance when I handed them in, addled with drugs and lack of sleep. They didn't seem so brilliant when I read them a week later, trying to find the words under the chastening red ink. Some one at The MIT Press should have lorded it over the book's author, London-based architect Paul Shepheard. As it is, his cup runneth way under. The cover of the book shows an tight echelon of nine jets (the Orange Maliks?) zooming over the pyramids in Egypt. This is supposed to be deeply meaningful, I guess 'cause they are, like, really far apart in time or technology or something. Shepheard's writing reminds me of Salman Rushdie's, who wouldn't have become so famous if he didn't have a death warrant. I bought one of Rushdie's books while I was living in France recently (after awhile, you'll read anything that's in English—recipes, insurance policies) and I found it very "writey." But if I want catchy English, I can listen to Hoagy Carmichael. What I want from books—especially nonfiction—is something like clear communication.

What Is Architecture? is too free-associational for me; too conversational, too many incomplete sentences, too much gratuitous wandering about. The phrase "attention deficit disorder" springs to mind. Also Shepheard's obvious boyish charm notwithstanding, I could do without tampon jokes in my architecture books. One wonders, frankly, how such sophomoric musings ever got published. But then architecture is a forgiving, soft, tolerant profession, a hive full of five-legged, perennially saucer-eyed animals, sporting feathers or horns as the occasion demands—or permits. My advice, if you like your architectural essays literated, is that you would be much better off with Robert Harbison's 1977 *Eccentric Spaces* (reprinted edition,

New York: David R. Godine, 1991).

But Shepheard's book is annoying in a harmless, fey sort of way. Andy Pressman's *The Fountainheadache: The Politics of Architect-Client Relations,* on the other hand, is annoying for its ethical sleight of hand. It purports to be a reasonable inquiry about the complicated relations between the profession and its patrons. In fact, it is little more than a labored rationalization of why the author's clients have repeatedly rejected him. I could have saved him a lot of trouble. It's because he's a lousy designer. My favorite example is a goofy little house addition he proposed which shows (in his own drawings) a bit of latticed appliqué decor stuck up in the apex of a gable. There's no reason for it to be there in the first place but to make it worse, the bottom of it is not horizontal but gratuitously askew. Pressman peppers his prose with marching slogans about how clients won't make a commitment to excellence, or about pushing the design envelope, or about (boy, am I tired of this one) how the process is more important than the product (did you ever drive past an attractive process?) but the simple fact is, if someone in my neighborhood filed for a building permit for a Pressman project, I would attack it like a McD in Montmartre.

The book is not only annoying but useless as social science because the proffered client/architect relationships are not randomly selected from a stratified sample of such relationships as they actually occur in our society. Instead, in obvious ways, the relationships are selected on the basis of his personal acquaintanceships—except when he needs a token minority or woman. In this case, geography is no hurdle, as he slips out of his New York bounds to net his African-American in Wichita and his female in Chicago. The other distasteful aspect of these tales is that they are one-sided. I'd like to hear some of the clients' versions of the stories.

The best part of this over-priced piece of denial is the foreword by Weld

Cox, in which he holds forth well on the subject of agency and professionalism. The beating heart of his three-page missive follows:

> The legal concept of "agency" gives social standing to the relationship. The architect, as a professional, is different from the vendor, supplier, contractor, or other businesses that are part of the building process. As a professional, the architect is agent for the client—legally an authorized extension of the client—and obligated to put the client's interest above self-interest.

Pity Pressman failed to absorb any of Cox's insight.

Norman Potter's *What Is a Designer: things.places.messages* is interesting in several ways. The foremost is that it was first published in 1969 in England, was republished in 1980 and reissued again, in this third edition, in 1989. I don't know how I could have missed it. The book is really a 109-page essay followed by a hundred Halloween-colored pages of appendices that proffer nuts-and-bolts sort of advice to designers, including lists of equipment that professionals should have; dos and don'ts of effective communication; glossaries; how to write reports; what pre-design courses to take; what books make up a basic design library. In other words, lots of helpful self-improvement hints (there's plenty of high moral purpose here) for prospective designers. The tone of the book is a bit precious— even arrogant—but part of this is, well, just being British and another part is justified by the obvious mental effort that went into writing it. A sampling: "If 'free men govern themselves,' then let education be the nursery of responsibility, which can only be nurtured in a world of open discourse and credible behavior."

Admittedly, there is that distracting bit of designyness, like leaving off the question mark in the title and rendering the subtitle as the e-mail address from hell. But this must be forgiven, for underneath such fussiness is a C.-S.-Lewis-like moral rigor that makes the other two volumes seem like brain lint.

For one thing, Potter eschews illustrations as potentially corrupting.

He begins with a real and effective effort at defining what a profession is and how design might fit into this firmament. It is refreshingly stodgy. He bares his breast up-front as a left-winger who cannot abide Thatcherism. Once, and only once, he goes further and identifies himself as a radical Christian of the libertarian left. I have no idea what that means but I would be careful about putting it into print as long as those Orange Angels are thick in the air. Only rarely does he intone like an Episcopalian sermonette. For the most part he nostalgically pipes up the fervent (and I do not mean this disparagingly) optimism of the 1960s. Such ringing anthems as Aldo van Eyck's dictum that place and occasion should replace space and time sound as good and do about as much good now as they did back then. Potter also betrays a real affection for the Arts and Crafts movement—excellent sentiments but lousy economics, then as now. Idealism slips into elitism too easily, I am afraid. But I have real affection for this book anyway. (You wouldn't understand—it's a war baby thing.)

To draw a crass conclusion, the hardest part of doing a book review these days is selecting the best tax year in which to donate the copies to your local library. Potter's book is the little pig that stays home.

DAVID CLARKE has a bachelor's degree in philosophy and professional degrees in management, architecture, and urban design. He teaches management to technical students at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and is the author of *The Architecture of Alienation: The Political Economy of Professional Education* (New York: Transaction Press, 1994). He invites you to visit his digital digs at www.siu.edu/departments/ats/.

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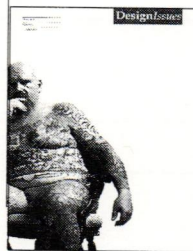
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