

arcca

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housing
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- ❖ The Next American Suburb
- ❖ Architects, Value, and Used Houses
- ❖ Yes in My Backyard

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Comment

You may have seen the gorgeous book of Julius Shulman's architectural photographs, *Modernism Rediscovered*, recently published by Taschen. It turns out that Mr. Shulman, for his part, has seen the most recent issue of **arcCA**. Reading the article in that issue on Harwell Hamilton Harris's Havens House, with the photos by Man Ray, he was prompted to call up Weston Havens. The upshot is that Mr. Shulman, at age 90, recently joined Mr. Havens, age 98, for coffee in the house that Mr. Havens commissioned and profoundly influenced and in which, sixty years later, he still lives. Which is ultimately what magazines are for: to bring good people together over a cup of coffee.

If such encounters are one way to judge the success of a magazine, another, of course, is to listen to what people say about it. Most of what people have been saying lately about **arcCA** has been gratifying. Some voices, however, lament the intrusion of advertisements. Everyone understands, of course, that advertising provides both income to the magazine and information to the readers. There is, however, a less obvious benefit. It has been pointed out to me that if you sell someone an ad for the Fall issue, you damn well better put out a Fall issue. Consequently, advertising may be the force that makes a truly quarterly magazine out of what has long been one in name only. It is a good discipline for those of us who work to deadlines or not at all.

The goal of our advertising is to make **arcCA** self-sustaining, no longer dependent on the AIACC's dues-based budget. We're not there yet. A painless way to support the magazine would be to show it to ven-

dors and consultants whose products and services you value. They are the folks we most want to advertise.

Another painless—indeed, comfy—way to support **arcCA** is to buy one (or several) of our handsome, long-sleeved, black t-shirts. All proceeds go to our graphic design budget. ELS donated the shirts and the printing, and the following firms have contributed to our effort by buying bundles of them. Thanks to these firms and to the many individual purchasers, as well. To order one for yourself, send a check made out to “ELS **arcCA** t-shirts,” along with your name, address, and size, to ELS, 2040 Addison Street, Berkeley, California, 94704. ☉

Tim Culvahouse, Editor

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The logo for arcCA, featuring the lowercase letters 'arcCA' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'a' and 'c' are white, while the 'r' and 'C' are black. The logo is set against a dark background.

Contributors

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John Kaliski, AIA, is principal of Urban Studio in Los Angeles, concentrates on urban design and housing projects, and teaches design at the Southern California Institute of Architecture.

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Erik Lerner, AIA, practiced architecture from 1982 until 1997, when he joined Mossler Deasy & Doe, a Beverly Hills-based real estate brokerage that has specialized for 24 years in representing buyers and sellers of architect-designed houses.

Morris Newman is a senior contributor to *California Planning & Development Report* and writes regularly for *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*. He is currently writing a book about urban infill housing with Johannes Van Tilburg, FAIA.

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The Next American Suburb



Desire and the Middle Landscape

John Kaliski, AIA

1. BUILT-OUT SUBURBS

As the multinucleated California metropolis spreads out, the built-out suburbs remain, squeezed between physical and social patterns that define the old and new economies. These suburbs sit between the industrial gridscape of the early twentieth century and the newly formed gated communities, tilt-up business parks and infotainment destinations of the ex-urbs. Much like the Victorian neighborhoods that were chastised after World War I and then left for decades slowly to decline, the post-World War II suburb is a frontier for what were previously thought to be exclusively inner-city issues.

I am interested in reconsidering a specific breed of suburb: the production suburbs of the 1950's through 1980's. I base my observations on endless hours of driving through Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Sometimes this wandering was done in the context of municipally-sponsored urban design projects in Anaheim, Santa Ana, and the San Fernando Valley. At other times, observation was structured within the context of teaching a design studio. Often I just drive to places where large tracts of single-family housing are built behind endless miles of commercial strips.

These suburbs have long since shed their "organization man" bedroom-community image. Today, suburbs are places to witness contemporary social dynamics. They are the

home of a graying population of small homeowners with a lot of time on their hands. These are the folks who put down their roots and raised their families in the gray-suit 1950s, go-go '60s, and silent-majority '70s. Now they go to endless numbers of community meetings.

The suburbs are also the melting pots of twenty-first century California. Monterey Park is Chinatown on steroids. Westminster is Saigon without scooters. Huntington Park is the home of a real as opposed to themed Olivera Street. As new groups assume leadership roles in these communities in development, culture, politics, and education, the vibrancy and tensions of these enclaves are revealed in the same community meetings.

Unlike the inner city neighborhoods of a generation ago, no Jane Jacobs has yet emerged to observe the fine-grained relationships between social interactions and physical form that occurs in these suburbs. Unlike the city with its coterie of academic, professional, and populist boosters who after forty years of effort have reinvigorated our intellectual and development interest in the city—efforts that can be traced back to the publication of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*—elite culture has not yet decided to like, much less endorse, the middle landscape of the suburbs.

Despite elite culture's rejection of suburbia, it is useful to remind ourselves that there are traces of a higher will to order in the suburbs. In the best suburbs, frontage roads parallel thoroughfares, and children are able to walk to local elementary schools without crossing major streets. Abundant parks and shopping nodes are spaced at even, and even walkable, half-mile intervals. A variety of low-density housing types are well integrated with garden apartments and higher density condominiums built on top of parking decks. Still, even those of us who seek these traces of finery admit that the idyllic intentionality of the best suburbs is the exception rather than the rule in most of Southern California. In general, the suburbs of the 1950s through the 1980s are the zones that are the least likely to be held up by architects, critics, city officials, and even residents as interesting or having a "sense of place."

Revivalists may praise the individual landmarks of the google era, but few have anything but negative thoughts for endless super streets with no trees, half vacant strip malls, housing tracts clustered about cul-de-sacs cut off from their surroundings, and overcrowded garden apartments quickly deteriorating into slums. Suburbs are also places with excessive numbers of adult entertainment venues, used car lots, body shops, psychics, tarot card readers, and swap meets. The plethora of these uses in suburbs is often the result of



Brea Main Street—an organic place even though it was created all-at-once from scratch.

parcelization patterns not in sync with today's real estate market trends. Narrow and long parcels stretched along strips cannot be assembled into deep lots for the placement of up-to-the-minute big boxes. The big boxes go someplace else. The leftovers are cheap to rent. The suburban streetscape becomes a non-brand, non-chain, no-name landscape, and it frustrates city and community leaders who want to raise the local tax base. This type of suburban environment is the locus for increasing disaffection, particularly when combined with the increasing crime rates associated with overcrowded housing, the frustration of poor schools, and social problems—including racism—formerly identified only with the inner cities.

Since issues previously confined to the inner-city have found their way deep into the sinews of suburbs, it is not surprising that redevelopment scenarios invented for the revitalization of late nineteenth or early twentieth century downtowns are increasingly applied to post-1940s landscapes. The current trend for physical repair of disaffected suburban communities, like the downtowns of the '60s, favors wholesale clearance. In Brea, the goal is to replace the strip with the small town Main Street adjoined by housing featuring front porches, all wrapped in the styles of yesteryear. In Orange, clearance promotes the hyper-urbanism of the retail entertainment destination. While both of these projects are extraordinarily successful, concepts complementary to the suburban ideal, both formative and yet to be invented, are too often left unexplored in the rush to promulgate global neo-urbanism. Suburban virtues, barely remembered, are at their fashionable nadir.

In the areas I have worked in Anaheim and the San Fernando Valley, I have first and foremost been impressed by the commitment of existing homeowners, business people, and other stakeholders to build upon the affirmative choice of suburban, not neo-urban, lifestyles. They feel that their suburbs are being ruined by out-of-sync and inappropriate devel-



Deteriorating and overcrowded apartments in North Orange County.



Total branding of experience at 'The Block' in Orange, California.

opment, ignored by city leaders, and disrespected by design and planning consultants who all too often view the suburban ground plane as urban, a place for strategic design and development interventions out of proportion or unsympathetic to the actual situation on the ground. These people, long-term stakeholders as well as recent transplants of all ages, genders, nationalities, and ethnicities, are seeking to tune, or perhaps retune, their communities while maintaining the value choices associated with a suburban sense of place.

As in the inner cities of a generation ago, it is better to consider incremental as opposed to overarching solutions for the repair of suburbs. Unlike in the inner cities, this means accepting as starting points the cul-de-sac planning, separation of pedestrians from vehicles, garden settings, and strip-like linearity of suburbia. At the same time, making suburbs too rich, too neat, too tidy, too organized, and too based upon any set of "Wonder Years" ideals would miss the genius and potential of present suburbs. In the final analysis, the toolbox for suburban revitalization must create a hybrid condition, part garden and part global city.

2. HYBRID SUBURBS

To reformulate, revitalize, and reinvent a suburb, one must start with optimistic observation of existing conditions. For instance, rather than define the high vacancy rates of the major thoroughfare strips as under-performing real estate, I find it useful to consider their reuse as entrepreneurial and social incubators. The strip more than any other metropolitan location is now the cutting-edge for mom and pop, artisan, and small businesses. Cities should carefully consider how to encourage these activities in these locations rather than lumping them in with the massage parlors and body shops. Inexpensive major thoroughfare space is also ideally used for institutional and non-profit purposes such as childcare, primary, secondary and higher education centers, and recreational facilities such as boys and girls clubs. Civic uses such as satellite city halls, police and fire stations, libraries, and linear parks can also be accommodated on lots that contemporary retailers reject.

In Anaheim and the San Fernando Valley, the narrow lot depths of typical strip parcels (between 100 and 250 feet), the vast preference for single-family lifestyles, and the need to mitigate high commercial vacancy rates further suggest the introduction of housing on these sites. Production builders and developers including the Olsen Company, Kaufman and Broad, and The Lee Group have already demonstrated the ability to realize densities that approach twenty single-family dwelling units to the net acre on infill sites along major suburban boulevards. These densities double and triple the older suburban patterns realized in the 1950's, coincidentally encourage the introduction of transit, and maintain the essential pattern of daily suburban life.

The City of Anaheim is pursuing the implementation of overlay zoning that encourages these types of residential projects at existing commercial infill sites. At the same time they are seeking means to improve upon the developers' formulas that are driven mainly by market analysis. Anaheim

is gradually implementing design standards that seek to ensure that new housing along major boulevards doesn't simply tuck behind walls and gates. For example, along South Anaheim Boulevard attached townhomes will be permitted under a new zoning overlay on commercially zoned land. To ensure that the resulting streetscape is more active, entry to individual units in this location will be required to face the street, with garages facing a parallel service alley.

In Anaheim, zoning is being architecturally exploded by three-dimensional considerations. Anaheim imagines greenways of higher density, single-family housing prototypes interspersed with pockets of civic, commercial, and institutional uses. In essence, the suburban boulevard evolves from a single-purpose commercial land use into a hybrid: in plan, a mix of uses within easy walking and biking distance; in section, a mix of higher intensity mixed typologies that better buffer adjacent single-family homes and neighborhoods from the activity of the major streets.

3. DESIRABLE SUBURBS

The dream of the suburb is to live in harmony with the outdoors and at the same time enjoy the benefits of city life. Unfortunately, too many suburbs have evolved into single purpose land uses complemented by over-engineering. Yet channelization of arroyos and creeks can be gradually reversed. Ubiquitous power transmission right-of-ways can be safely used as trails and community gardens. Land uses can be redefined to reflect a better mix of residential uses interspersed with a greater complexity of other uses. Given the wide roads, numerous easements, and quiet secondary streets, suburbs are potentially a bicyclist's everyday paradise, where the concept of the quarter-mile walker's radius can be complemented by the exponential increase of activities and resources found within the cyclist's wider sphere of access. In short, the suburbs can be converted into high-quality, physically networked environments with minimal evolution of existing physical frameworks.

Today, planning and design discourse generally rejects suburbs as hopeless examples of low-density waste that should be reformed. Ironically, suburbs' wasteful lack of density is the enduring pattern that may ensure their long-term vitality. The fact that suburbs offer generous open space resources, most particularly at the scale of the individual house, will never be duplicated in older cities or new communities. At the same time, suburbs will increasingly be seen as conveniently placed between the job-rich inner and outer belts. In essence, suburbs will become desirable again because they offer the amenity of space, the opportunity to

design this space, and the consequent lifestyles afforded by this redesigned space.

Suburbs are special simply because nobody builds, nor can build, suburbs any more. The rebuilding and infill intensification of underused commercial sites along major strips is a relatively low cost to assume for the enduring preservation of neighborhoods that cannot be duplicated. As in Anaheim, cities will soon realize the irreplaceable value of these underappreciated and now historic neighborhoods and will act appropriately to ensure their revitalization.

In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs described a series of conditions that contributed to vital inner city neighborhoods. These included old and new buildings, multiple pathways between locations, small blocks, eyes on the street, a healthy mix of mom and pop businesses, functional inefficiencies, and redundancies of all sorts that were perceived by "modern" planning to be undesirable. As she brilliantly noted in this book, the opposite was true, and she helped set in motion a re-evaluation and revitalization of the inner city based upon piece-by-piece rehabilitation and infill that continues into the present. If one squints and uses a bit of imagination, the same observations and conclusions can be reached regarding the present suburban condition.

The mix of people, businesses, and situations found in the suburbs is today just as rich as the daily life described by Jacobs in her seminal writings. The suburb is more interconnected, vibrant, flexible through time, and full of the creative inefficiencies of daily life than the giant franchised subdivisions being produced on the outer fringes of the urbanized landscape. Unlike the city, the suburb has the space to get away from urbanism even as it depends upon urbanism. The problem is not the suburbs but the conceptualizing power of all of us who for too long have not realized their potential.

The original promise of the American and Californian suburbs was that they were a green adjunct to the city. The great majority of the American populace now lives in, will continue to live in, and wants to live in the suburbs. As space becomes a more and more desirable commodity, ever greater economic, market, and social interest will be focused on the redesign of suburban space to meet contemporary aspirations. The promise of the next twenty years is that suburbs will build upon their existing spatial assets, their social dynamism, and their inefficiencies of scale and use. Architects can best contribute to this suburban redesign if they remain open to suburban virtues. Suburbs can become greener, more sustainable, and in the best sense interconnected places of daily life, work, and play. The existing California post World War II suburb is the next American design frontier. Let's go to work. ●

Affordable Housing Today



Michael Willis, FAIA, founded his own architecture firm in 1988. He believes that architecture can be a unifying social force. His firm focuses on multifamily housing, civic and community facilities, urban design, office interiors and water treatment plants. Michael Willis Architects has offices in San Francisco, Oakland, and Portland.

arcCA: We have been designing affordable housing for over fifty years in this country. Are we learning anything?

MW: We have learned that affordable housing is not “one size fits all.” Housing is regional, in terms of economics, society, and design. We have learned that successful affordable housing connects people on several levels. It is important to have personal space indoors and out, space where you can meet your immediate neighbors, and a place where an entire community can come together. Security is essential, but security that does not isolate you. Affordable housing that is not connected to transportation, shopping, education, and social services will probably fail. And now, connection also means a DSL line in the apartment. From the aesthetic point of view, it is important that clients recognize these places as housing. But not recognize them as “poor people’s housing.” We have learned that using poor people to test an architect’s grand experiment is not a good idea. Some aspects of these experimental housing types fail and fall apart, and then we forget to look to the successful housing that has been built all over the country, and we think that we have to reinvent a new type. The result has been that we have created

islands of experimentation that are not connected to the city. By contrast, I still think the mixed income approach resembles the condition in the city without any intervention at all.

arcCA: Acorn Village in Oakland and LaClede Town in St. Louis were both intended to be mixed income. Why didn’t they work? Why didn’t they reflect the city?

MW: I think LaClede Town is an interesting case because in form it looked like Marquis and Stoller’s St. Francis Square, with balconies and a village setting on streets. There were some key differences. St. Francis is a co-op, it’s owned by the people who live there. LaClede Town was rental. St. Francis Square’s hierarchy of public and private space was very good, and the design picked up on some subtle regional cues. LaClede Town’s incredibly eclectic tenant mix came as a result of something that would not be permitted today: the managers of LaClede Town selected who would live there—not on a first come, first served basis, but on the basis of creating an interesting mix. Early on there were artists, athletes, jazz musicians, writers, business people, and mail carriers. It was like mixing the invitations for a

great party. You had people of incredibly disparate incomes living next to each other in a vibrant gumbo of arts and business and social interaction, which was also racially mixed. Over time, the diversity was not sustained. Management changed, and that wonderful stew disappeared. It is also important to remember that few architects could have designed affordable rental housing that would withstand the drug epidemic that hit lower income urban communities in the last few decades.

arcCA: So do you think maintenance, management, and the drug epidemic contributed to the failure at Acorn?

MW: That's part of the story. Acorn had a fascinating design, and I hope the renovation kept some of its best aspects. From everything I understand, it was very handsome when it opened—it looked like a modern Mediterranean village. Some of the details, like the flat roofs, resulted in leakage problems for which there was insufficient maintenance. When maintenance goes, pride goes with it. But the hierarchy of spaces—from personal to community—many of them worked. The apartment plans were very generous. But the density was just too great. This resulted in unobservable courtyards and little sense of immediate community. In the corners there were passageways that were dangerous.

When we were asked to renovate the project we looked at all of these physical issues. First we addressed some of the detail problems. We decided to build pitched roofs, which address the water leakage problem but also read like “home.” We looked at the hierarchy of spaces to understand where it worked and where it broke down. In some places, private and public clashed. Our plans incorporated the mature landscaping and refined the hierarchy so it's clear what is public, community, and private. We also removed almost 20% of the units to bring the density down. In one place we took out an entire row and extended the street pattern into the complex and built a new community center and training facility. Elsewhere we removed units so courtyards could be seen from the streets. We wanted to make the complex less like a fortress but also more secure and less porous. So in addition to the public spaces that the complex shares, each grouping of units, or cluster, has a common courtyard, and each unit has its own private terrace.

arcCA: What about the maintenance issue now? Seems like a lot still hangs on that.

MW: This goes back to the “one size fits all” Federal subsidy issue. I think that private ownership, at least at Acorn, will improve maintenance. In a public ownership project, you are competing for attention with the other projects that the public entity owns. The result has been that you have ended up with situations where folks stockpiled warehouses full of mustard yellow paint that were not used for 20 years. That is an inefficient way to run housing complexes. With private ownership, and because it is mixed income, it's in the owner's best interest to maintain the property in good condition so that it can command the kind of rent necessary to pay the debt service.

arcCA: Throughout West Oakland, pitched roofs are replacing flat roofs. Aren't we running the risk of pandering by making affordable housing look like middle class suburban housing?

MW: We are not interested in gluing over-scaled columns or pediments onto our buildings. But there is nothing inherently suburban about a pitched roof. There is a difference between designing buildings that are recognized as houses across the American culture and imposing a middle class suburban bias. We look at older projects to see what works in terms of identity, but also what works for low maintenance.

arcCA: What are some of the key patterns that we need to be cognizant of that can work in affordable housing?

MW: There is not a single style that should be promoted. In each circumstance, we look at the way things work. For instance, something that works most of the time is the notion of safe personal space, a good place outside of your house, and some place that allows you to interact with the people who live around you. I think that hierarchy of spaces works as a general approach to housing. We are still trying to understand the best size for a cluster. Right now we are thinking that maybe it is 8 to 10 houses, where you can reasonably know everybody in your half-block or so. You know their kids, you know whether they live in that neighborhood or don't. It is important to point out that this kind of connection does not replace the role of security personnel, but is part

1-2 Town Center & Courtyards at Acorn, Oakland, CA

3 Self-Sufficiency Center, Oakland, CA

4 Cecil Williams Glide Community House, San Francisco, CA



1



2



3



4

of what makes a place safe—a kind of informal way you have of observing who is around you. If the numbers get too great, as they did at Acorn, the fabric breaks down.

arcCA: High rises have been largely discredited for low-income populations. And yet you did a high rise for the poorest population, the homeless. How do some of these thoughts apply to this dense, high rise project?

MW: The Cecil Williams Glide Community House is a high rise that requires a high degree of social interaction. It is designed into it. At Glide House you are signing up for a kind of interaction with a community that prevents isolation. You get connected not only to the people in the house, but to the larger Glide Community, and that helps you feel protected in the Tenderloin neighborhood. When you come off the streets and into the Community House, you learn the skills you need to be financially more successful. There are job skills, social skills, taking care of your family skills, there are clean and sober workshops, there are any number of outreach approaches that keep each and every one of those members from being isolated. In the typical, low-income high rise—and I'll certainly say this of Pruitt-Igoe where I lived as a young boy—we were not connected. People were isolated from each other, and there was an uncontrollable ground plane. You had no idea who was going in and out, so you kept your kids on the "streets in the sky," which were actually corridors. When those became unsafe, you drew in the barricades until you were isolated behind your locked door.

arcCA: In addition to appropriate levels of social support, what else makes for successful affordable housing?

MW: Security is a paramount concern. Poorer people have no less need for security than their more economically successful counterparts. In the so-called better neighborhoods, the security is less obtrusive, but no less there. In the poorest communities, residents are often preyed upon by other poor people. So security needs to be a lot more visible. In Acorn and at Pruitt-Igoe it was impossible to feel secure—to get your groceries to your front door. Suburbia is secure in a very different way. It's removed from the presumed influences of people preying on your economic and societal status. Police are not seen as a hostile occupying force.

arcCA: You've mentioned that housing is about jobs and society. We are seeing huge changes in welfare reform and in the subsidy of affordable housing.

MW: The country moved to the right, and some would say moved to the right and rested in the middle. As it moved to the right, the notions of personal responsibility and welfare reform and the idea that society would no longer subsidize a kind of urban underclass took hold. The housing subsidies from the public sector were trending to zero. That's something that the rightward tilt of Congress put upon HUD. In self-defense, HUD had to get out of the housing subsidy business. The HOPE VI programs were a response to that. Basically they said, "The Federal Government does not know how to do housing in St. Louis and Oakland and San Francisco and Cleveland. We'll let you compete for a block of money and you solve it." Different jurisdictions responded in different ways. As the housing subsidy was going to zero, so was the welfare subsidy. When those two lines hit zero, the notion is that the poor have learned the skills it would take to earn money so that they can pay rent to stay in the housing that was going to be charging something closer to market rent. So what did we see? We saw that the welfare centers should not be dispersed by program. AFDC, Food Stamps, Job Access, Interview Training, Job Training, Dress for Success programs need to be centralized and close to public transit. We designed one of these "Self Sufficiency Centers" in Oakland. They have become successful at getting people to work. The skills training is part of the affordable housing picture.

arcCA: So what happens to this new workforce if we have a downturn?

MW: I have to point out that we are seeing black unemployment figures below double digits for the first time in my memory. We hope the recent economic boom will make some permanent inroads in that entrenched unemployment base. There remains the concern about "last hired, first fired." We have to understand the role of the Federal government. If we go back to FDR, I think there is a real role to ensure that all Americans can get up to a certain level that is the basis of hope for people to collect themselves and work towards a more secure future. With public housing, the idea was that it should be temporary.



On-site social services like child-care help keep residents connected to the community

Cecil Williams Glide Community House, San Francisco, CA

For all kinds of economic and societal reasons the Federal Government ended up supporting a permanent underclass. There were generations on welfare and living in substandard conditions.

arcCA: How do these ideas apply to the planning work that you are doing?

MW: Some of our thinking here sounds simple, but has to do with some of the other themes I've touched on. It is still about eliminating isolation. We are trying to reconnect the housing complex with the rest of the city. Some of the projects that we have been working on were created when authorities and their architects clipped the streets off and made islands of brave new housing. As residents, we didn't think of it as isolated from the city; we thought it was this "special" place. We now understand that the best thing that can happen is to increase the links between housing and the rest of the city. It's elementary. We are often working to correct a '60s urban renewal approach by finding ways to reconnect projects through their historic links with the rest of the city. We go back and look at the networks. How is this place connected to every part of the city? How would I take a bus home? How would I drive home? How do I walk to a park? Is there a park? We begin by asking questions that are basically organizational. Before we start talking about design, we just try to understand the place. We are working in a terribly devastated area in Eastern Detroit, and it's not far

from Grosse Point, where people are sitting out on the sidewalks drinking cappuccino. Race plays a big role in this. When St. Louis tried to extend their successful Metrolink light rail system out to the suburbs there was a huge controversy. And that's because a scenario was promoted in which somebody was going to come to your suburban house, knock you on the head, steal your television, get on Metrolink, and ride into East St Louis — that's where the black population is.

arcCA: Whether we are talking about individual units, a complex, or a whole new plan, you are saying that housing design is about connecting people to economic opportunity?

MW: Yes. Your access to information, transportation, financial markets, is key. We are arguing for increasing the links. Almost like the heart surgeon, going in and clearing out the blocked arteries and reconnecting them with good arteries and letting the blood and the oxygen flow. If we have problems, we are not going to solve the problems by killing the organism, which is what I feel has happened to the cities. As your access to other parts of society grows, your access to a range of housing types grows. In community meetings, we tell people that they are city dwellers. But so often, because of these issues that we have talked about, they think of themselves as block dwellers—200 feet in any direction. But if you are a city dweller, you can have access to everything. You can go to the symphony, you can go downtown, you can go to the river, but your thinking, successfully conditioned by people whose advantage it was to keep you thinking small, keeps you from thinking about yourself as living in the city. You really are a city dweller, not a block dweller, not a house dweller, not a locked-in-a-room dweller. If we give people the liberating idea that they can actually live in any part of the city, they will start demanding access and demanding better connections to work, recreation, and education.

arcCA: What do you think is going to happen next?

MW: We see housing being built by two groups. One of those groups is the pure capital market, the people who can build the towers down by Pac Bell Park in San Francisco. The other significant force we are seeing here is the non-profit and not-for-profit housing corporation. The non-profit housing corpo-

ration is a significant player in keeping a mix of housing types in the city. I am speculating that we may see corporations building private sector housing. Not because they want to be in the housing business, but because they need housing for their workers. One of the reasons that the Stanford campus is expanding is housing for their faculty.

arcCA: And that will include low-income housing?

MW: It will include low-income because of where private corporations would be getting the land. They probably don't own all the land that they are going to need for the housing. If they see that land is in public hands, and if alert economic development agencies realize they can get housing, there may be some interesting new partnerships. Cities won't let corporations have land to make enclaves only for highly paid workers. I am quite hopeful that necessity is going to bring private corporations, public agencies, and non-profit housing developers together.

arcCA: Is there anything else you want to add?

MW: There is an unintended consequence to the improvements that have been made in racial tolerance and housing integration. There was a wonderful sense of intact neighborhoods that many black people my age grew up with. I was in a coffee shop recently and overheard a group of black people just laughing and talking about their old neighborhoods where everybody watched out for you. You could not misbehave because "Mrs. Carter was watching from across the street and the news would get home before you did." That sense of community is a shared memory. So now some of us can live in places where eighty years ago there were no blacks or Jews. And yet the thing that we must be concerned about is losing that sense of community, and that brings me back to some of your earlier questions about design. There may be a change of emphasis not only in the design of the houses themselves, but in those interaction spaces—those places where you could have casual links with the people around you. We want to create places where you can be Mrs. Carter to somebody else's kids; where there is small-scaled shopping, the barbershop, benches to sit and observe. I think we have to be mindful that we don't gain a world and lose that soul. I am not willing to give up the soul. ●

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Jacqueline Leavitt

THEN AND NOW

Architects once advocated for and designed public housing, allowing low-income, working class people to move from cold water tenements into affordable apartments. Today's scenario is different. At a time when rent increases outstrip wages and when, in Los Angeles, four households compete for each affordable housing unit, many architects actually help reduce the number of affordable units.

The vehicle for dismantling conventional public housing is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s HOPE VI Program. By act, if not intent, the architecture profession and allied fields endorse a policy that minimizes government intervention and increases reliance on the private market, in spite of the longstanding reluctance of private, for-profit developers to satisfy the housing needs of low-income people.

HOPE VI, an acronym for Homeownership Opportunities for People Everywhere, is reducing the number of permanently affordable public housing units through several policies. One is to reduce federal subsidies, forcing housing authorities to increase rents to market prices to cover their costs. A second policy lowers the percentage of very low income households who can qualify for public housing, thereby shifting subsidies to higher income families. Third, authorities are advised to sell

units; existing public housing households are offered an option to buy—an unrealistic option, given that about 70 percent of all Section 8 or public housing households had incomes below 30 percent of the median in 1999.

As of 2000, HOPE VI is in 119 communities in 32 states. Overall, 82,000 public housing units will be demolished. Of these 82,000 units, 37,000 public housing rental units will be rebuilt; an additional 16,000 units will be rebuilt for low income homeownership and market-rate rentals. 29,000 units will not be replaced.

PICO-ALISO

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) successfully submitted an Urban Revitalization Demonstration (URD) application to HUD in 1994, targeting Pico Gardens and Aliso Apartments (a.k.a. Aliso Extension South and Aliso Extension North) in the Boyle Heights area. The plan included a one-for-one replacement of units and retained a number of existing buildings for rehabilitation. In a move to forestall a conservative Congress making good on its threat to abolish HUD, the agency's reinvention plan relied on a campaign against public housing, one of the more vulnerable and visible of its programs. In response to the "new" HUD, HACLA submitted a revised plan in 1995, and another in 1997, finally reducing the number of con-



New Urbanism at Pico-Aliso
obscures the very issue
that HOPE VI is supposedly
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ventional public housing units by about one-quarter. Taken together with a similarly successful HOPE VI submittal in 1999 for the adjacent Aliso Village, the 1,262 public housing units drops to less than half.

NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION

The Pico-Aliso “project” might be a matter of memory if not for the actions of *Union de Vecinos*, the Union of Neighbors, who fought to guarantee a house in the new Pico-Aliso for everyone who wanted one; succeeded in changing the configuration of new units in terms of bedroom size and eligibility for occupancy; and insured that 42 new units at Las Casitas would be public rental housing and not for sale, at least in the short run.

Membership in *Union de Vecinos* numbers 120 households, of whom 30 are very active. Its formation was linked to shallow participation techniques that HACL A employs and that HUD endorses. The flashpoint at Pico-Aliso was a flier posted on 36 doors at Las Casitas. Tenants learned they had 60 days to vacate, because HACL A wanted to expand an adjacent park. HACL A offered no guarantees for the residents’ return. Instead, the housing authority repeatedly sent documents declaring their right to remove tenants without cause. One hundred families filed grievances and refused to sign the documents. In retaliation, the housing authority threatened eviction and loss of relocation benefits, and demolished surrounding buildings. For 30 residents who withstood intimidation, and after *Union de Vecinos* threatened a lawsuit against HACL A, the agency provided a written guarantee that they would not displace the thirty from Pico Gardens.

Rarely do architects learn about the vibrancy of existing communities within public housing. Pro forma workshops are meant to satisfy federal participation requirements as a quid pro quo for funding. Amid the rhetoric, information dribbles down and issues are never fully explained to the satisfaction of many residents. HUD designates elected resident bodies, known as Resident Advisory Councils (RACs), as the official endorsement bodies to housing authority proposals. In turn, HACL A applies pressure on the RACs, transferring to them HUD’s impatience and threats of loss of funding. Tenants come to meetings and offer suggestions; architects typically respond by acknowledging feedback and may make some changes. In the case of Pico Gardens and Las Casitas, however, the out-of-town architects were not easily accessible, and tenants relied on HACL A to accurately convey their opinions and feelings. Detailed letters were sent to HACL A requesting information; consistently, response times dragged out. Moreover, by this time in the process, the parameters of the architects’ contract were set and basic decisions difficult to change.

In its campaign to better reflect the opinions of tenants who did not want to move and to protect the rights of those who did, the *Union de Vecinos* visited homes, held meetings where the tenants lived, waged its own survey, published newsletters, invited lawyers to explain tenants’ rights, hired an engineer to review structural conditions at Aliso Village, collaborated with artists to disseminate information, demonstrated, protested, and participated. The Union’s campaign was waged through a combination of two volunteer organizers, tenant volunteers, professionals donating services, and minimal funding from membership fees, private donations, and foundation grants. The Union’s small office, in a house located across from the old Aliso Extension Apartments, became a sanctuary for people, largely women and their

households, whose everyday lives have been in upheaval since HACLA targeted their communities.

CONVERGENCE WITH NEW URBANISM

Around the same time HOPE VI was introduced, architects and developers began publicizing the virtues of neo-traditional design as an alternative to suburban sprawl. In 1993, the Congress of New Urbanism (CNU) formed around principles including diversity, safety, neighborhoods, and accessibility. Proponents argue that these principles are relevant to infill and redevelopment projects. HUD embraced New Urbanism in its publication, "Principles for Designing and Planning Homeownership Zones." Oakland-based architect Michael Pyatok has written, "It is not surprising that HUD's public housing division has recently grasped the New Urbanism for help in face-lifting, and, as some critics contend, in gentrifying many of its older public housing projects under the guise of 'mixing' incomes before selling them off and getting out of the business of helping those most in need."

New Urbanism's design principles—seen in its site plan, bedroom distribution, and architectural features—distinguish Las Casitas from Pico Gardens. At Las Casitas, more vegetation surrounds townhouses that average 970 square feet; clustering houses around parking minimizes the intrusion of cars. Private housing surrounds part of the site, and some of these structures show signs of being rehabbed. By contrast, Pico Gardens' smaller units, averaging only 860 square feet, are located in a less desirable location, with some units directly abutting one of L.A.'s busier freeways. A yet-to-be-built fence around the entire development will only reinforce its isolation.

New Urbanism at Pico-Aliso obscures the very issue that HOPE VI is supposedly addressing—that is, the concentration of poor people. New Urbanist principles call for a broad range of housing types and price levels within neighborhoods in order to "bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community." At Pico-Aliso, however, New Urbanism reinforces income segregation and reduces units. Authority policies have "skimmed off the cream" of the tenants, identifying those who might qualify for purchase and thereby removing the mix of incomes that existed prior to HOPE VI. Consequently, Las Casitas is entirely rental and inhabited by public housing residents from the former Pico Gardens or Aliso Apartments.

CONCLUSIONS

These issues are not confined to Los Angeles. In the wake of HOPE VI, the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Community Change organized a Public Housing Residents National Orga-

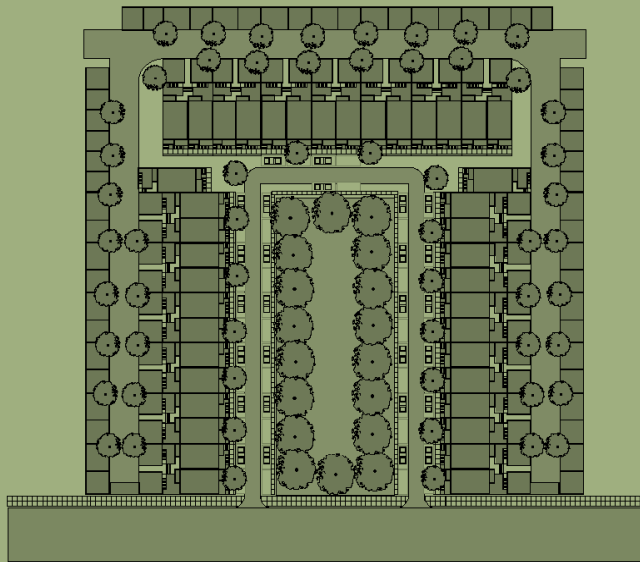
nizing Campaign, with general principles about resident participation. These principles ask HUD to:

- ❖ 1. define resident participation in all relevant documents concerning HOPE VI;
- ❖ 2. state in writing that housing authorities must—not merely should or shall—include residents in formulating and developing HOPE VI application documents and in every other substantive step of the application and implementation process;
- ❖ 3. structure meaningful participation that involves residents in interviewing and selecting all consultants and developers;
- ❖ 4. grant HOPE VI funds provisionally, so that genuine participation is assured after the grant is awarded;
- ❖ 5. provide resources and funding for resident training and technical assistance, including procurement, planning, evaluation, relocation/re-housing, Section 8, mixed income, fair housing, income budgeting, job training, and all subjects critical to residents;
- ❖ 6. require housing authorities to write explanations to residents when their proposals are excluded, or when authorities' decisions differ substantively from the submitted application or in other processes.

Even if these principles were adopted, monitoring would remain difficult under circumstances in which housing authorities stonewall tenants' requests and ignore conflicts among tenants, and in which there is no *Union de Vecinos*. Architects might consider their obligation to go beyond design and to adopt or develop a set of principles about participation. Prior to signing contracts with housing authorities, architects might require face-to-face meetings with dissatisfied tenants and the open airing of conflicts among tenants as well as between tenants and the housing authority.

Architects need to be more than handmaidens to policies such as HOPE VI that reduce units, camouflage segregation, and draw attention away from issues such as economic development and quality education for poor and working poor households. The architecture profession may be unable to forestall HOPE VI, but architects can do more than advocate for diversity; they can help ensure more democratic participation.

In Boyle Heights, at *Union de Vecinos*, the struggle continues. Across from the new Las Casitas townhouses, tenants continue to meet. On Fridays, they run a de facto restaurant that serves the neighboring businesses. Displaced tenants, some of whom purchased homes, return here on a regular basis. Residents across the city with ties to public housing, along with their friends and relatives, rely on the *Union* as a place to get accurate information, support, and companionship. They are expanding the community ties that existed in public housing in the pre-HOPE VI era. ●



The Housing Squares of London

:A Worthy Precedent

Sam Davis

I've been asked often this year what new advances we can expect for housing in the next millennium. As housing shortages increase, as costs rise and the disparity between price and income widens, people want to know the way out of this intractable problem. I've maintained that lowering the cost of construction through factory production of units, or by minimizing the size of dwellings, or by stripping the architecture of all embellishments will not have a significant impact on housing costs to the occupant, and will certainly have a detrimental effect on the quality of housing and neighborhoods.¹ The harsh lessons of public housing in the last millennium provide plenty of proof for that.

AMENITY, DENSITY, COMMUNITY

For the thirty years I've been building, teaching, and writing about housing, I have reiterated that a primary goal is to provide the amenities of the single family house at increasing densities. The traditional detached house continues to be the mainstay of the industry, despite the fact that it is inefficient in terms of land and resource use, it is expensive, and its proliferation throughout the countryside increases commutes and

the concomitant environmental degradation. Yet it continues to be the favored dwelling form, even though the nuclear family for which it was intended is no longer the dominant household type. If we can increase density with an acceptable housing form and with amenities comparable to the detached house, greater affordability and acceptability will be achieved. Certainly this will have a positive impact on suburban sprawl. But what about cities?

As households have changed, diverse types of dwellings, mostly in cities, have evolved. We now see specialized housing for people with various illnesses and disabilities (AIDS housing and congregate care for seniors), those with extremely limited means (shelters), and young professionals with high salaries (lofts and live-work). These trends are generally positive, as they revitalize cities, making them attractive to a diverse community. They do not account for people, particularly those with children, who want or need more urban housing that meets their needs as well as does a detached house. We need to find housing that allows various household types to live together at a density high enough to be economically feasible and a form that contributes positively to the neighborhood.

Throughout the latter part of the century, many architects have pointed toward existing housing typologies as a way to reverse mid-century mistakes. More recently, New Urbanists have proffered systems of rules for housing layered upon sets of public spaces and amenities that together form coherent, walkable neighborhoods. Generally, these approaches attempt to revive old patterns, with the hope that the nostalgic images counteract what has gone awry. What they do not do, however, is relate the image to the economics.

THE VENERABLE ROWHOUSE

Two traditional types of dwellings seem to offer great possibilities, which is why they have proliferated. Whether a brownstone in the East or a Victorian in San Francisco, the venerable rowhouse achieves significant densities (as great as 50 units/acre), while providing most of the amenities of the detached single family house. The public and private domains are unambiguous, and the rows of attached dwellings reinforce the form of the city street. Streets are the public domain, linear rooms that serve both as corridors of movement and as a backdrop for social activity.

But in spite of these advantages and the efficient construction, the rowhouse lacks two elements. First, it does not easily accommodate the car. Each dwelling requires a curb cut that breaks the continuity—and ultimately the quality—of street and sidewalk.² Furthermore, while the continuity of the building façades helps reinforce the urbanity of streets, the rowhouse does not provide for a semi-public realm, a place that provides a focus and a community amenity.

COURTYARD HOUSING

I have always been a proponent of courtyard housing. The semi-public space formed by the housing around it serves as a territorial boundary, a protected respite from the city beyond. This, in fact, was the main motivation for the form. The first public housing in the country was a courtyard building meant to keep out the undesirable elements of early 20th century New York. But courtyard housing also has drawbacks. It, too, does not easily accommodate the automobile. Cars are parked on the outside, the city-side, of the buildings, destroying the relationship of the dwelling to the street. Repeating the form results in

open lots with housing set beyond. There is no three-dimensional definition to the street, and little social life along it. The remedies, such as placing cars beneath the court, are costly. Parking beneath the unit also raises the house, reducing its immediate connection to the street, yard, and court.

The best feature of courtyard housing is also its disadvantage. The semi-public space focuses the activity inward, and in so doing diminishes the liveliness and friendliness of the street and ultimately its security.

THE LONDON HOUSING SQUARE

While living in London during the mid-1960s, I became intrigued by that city's eighteenth and nineteenth century housing squares. (fig 1) My initial interest was how the overall form provided a focus for the housing, but also an amenity for the neighborhood, in spite of the fact that the space was fenced and accessible by key only to those who lived around it (unless you're Julia Roberts and Hugh Grant).

Years later I began to appreciate these places as a means of increasing density without excessive height. In their original incarnation, the dwellings around the square were large homes, sometimes with flats partly below grade and with apartments for the domestic staff above the garages or carriage houses in back. By the middle of the 1900s, many were divided by floors into flats. The units along the mews (narrow service access roads behind the main houses) became increasingly popular as independent dwellings, as did the basement or subway flats, which always had a separate entrance for services to the main house. (fig 2)

Most recently, as I searched in my own housing designs for ways to accommodate increasing numbers of automobiles, I looked again at the London squares as a form with ample parking for the numbers of units they now incorporated.

Throughout the thirty-five years, I have been intrigued by Georgian and Victorian housing squares of London and by all they seem to accomplish, and curious why we didn't see more of it in this country. There are a few examples in the United States; South Park in San Francisco is but one, although it is not primarily housing and the park is more public. The courtyard housing of Los Angeles



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has many comparable features, but the open space is rarely even viewable by the public. I have assumed that we have not borrowed this form because many aspects of them would not meet our codes or zoning.

Older European cities were not designed for the automobile. That is probably why we like them. Narrower streets, many corners, and few curb cuts make them varied and interesting. While European car ownership may not be that of the United States, there are significant numbers of cars, and cities like London have found ways of accommodating them without changing the nature of the place. First, parking spaces are smaller. In the housing courts I measured, the average marked space for a car is 5 - 1/2 feet wide and the driving lane only 11 or 12 feet wide. (fig 3) In the United States, the norm is 8 - 1/2 to 9 feet wide, and driving lanes are sixteen feet wide to accommodate garbage and emergency vehicles. In London, garages exist, but they are not the norm; even Bentleys and Porsches are routinely parked in public view. Nevertheless, residents of housing squares to whom I spoke claim always to find a suitable parking space near their dwellings, and most report car ownership at two per family.

There are also several code issues. Because the townhouses that form the squares were individual dwellings, many of the spaces that were intended for service lack sufficient access, light, and ventilation. For example, the stairs that lead to the basement flat descend from the sidewalk into a lower court (often no more than a lightwell) and are quite narrow (as little as two feet wide), steep, and winding. Although there is also an interior stair, it too can be treacherous. (fig 4)

The upper level bedrooms, often in the attic space, are accessed by equally narrow, winding stairs. These rooms are usually on the fourth floor without a second means of exiting other than rooftop access requiring escape through another unit. This configuration would not be permissible under current US codes.

The typical width of these dwellings is 17 to 18 feet, accommodating a well-proportioned room, a hallway, and a stair. As bedrooms were inserted over time, this width now accommodates two rooms side-by-side, each very narrow. By our standards, bedrooms are at least 10 feet wide, so this dwelling width is insufficient.

Of the six housing squares I investigated, all in the Chelsea and Kensington areas of London, no two were alike, but there were several recurrent elements that are essential in establishing the common character.

The most obvious is the square itself. These range in size from 32 feet wide to over 200 feet wide. The streets around the larger squares allow traffic to pass through to other streets. In smaller and more intimate squares, the street loops around to a main city street.

Because the housing squares were primarily for the relatively wealthy and those who so aspired, each house has a prominent individual entry. The center units along each side of the square have an embellished cornice, making the entire group appear as one grand house.

In the more complex configurations, there are several dwelling prototypes. Occasionally, for example, there are dwellings immediately adjacent to the square, rather than the more common form in which the square stands independently, with a roadway on all sides. In a few cases, cars are parked in small parking courts formed by the unit itself. More often, parking is in the street between the house and square or in a garage reached through the mews in back.

Regardless of the relationship of the dwelling to the square and to the car, the units themselves are relatively consistent. There are the aforementioned lower units and their access courts immediately off the sidewalk. The main level is most often a few steps up, forming an entry porch with a portico. The main level originally contained public rooms (kitchen and dining), but the living and entertaining space were on the second floor, which is likely why the English refer to this floor as the first. This floor has a higher ceiling and a wonderful view to the square and often also to the yard in the rear.

THE PROPOSAL

While all my housing designs have courtyards of differing scales and uses, none emulates the London housing square, in spite of my long-standing interest in the form. Therefore, I set out, in the spirit of the “model tenements” movement of the late 1800s, to see if a design based on this form were possible using current US zoning, codes, and development standards.

My assumptions were that a design must attain at least thirty units/acre to make it economically feasible, plumbing must stack, and spans must be economical and recurrent. Furthermore, the design must incorporate a variety of unit types and sizes, so those with different incomes and household types can live together.

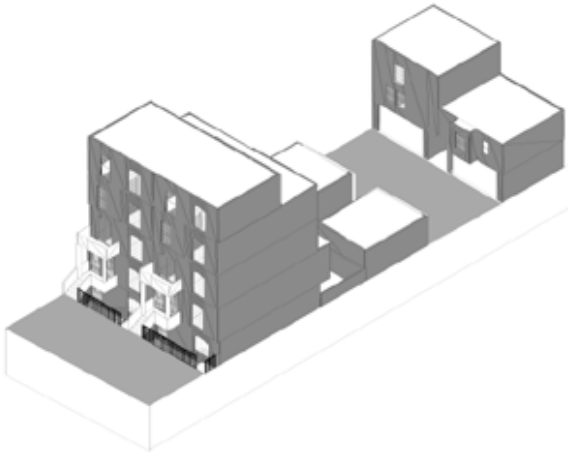
I discovered that it is indeed possible to achieve significant densities given our current standards for parking, unit types, and sizes. On a hypothetical four-acre rectangular site, 120 units fit comfortably, and, with a few liberal code interpretations, up to 160 units are possible. The essential elements of the London housing square are intact. A loop roadway around the square does not allow through traffic, but with minor adjustment, through traffic would be possible.

The major code issue is that of a second means of egress from upper levels. The code currently allows up to 500 square feet on a third level, although in some instances, if that level is part of a two-story townhouse entered at the second level, more than 500 square feet might be allowable with a single stair. In the example, this interpretation allows for the additional ten units/acre, a very significant difference. Yet even at 30 units/acre, the pattern works efficiently. (fig 5)

Placing an apartment partially below grade is necessary to gain the needed density within the overall height limitation of our codes for walk-up units and fire exiting. Within the same footprint and allowable height from grade, another unit is possible, albeit with excavation. Like the London examples, this unit would not be a full level down, and the unit above would be a few steps up, providing the front stoop and gracious entry. This slightly above grade entry would have to be interpreted as an “at grade” unit, or the upper levels would need an additional exit stair.

One important element of the traditional London housing square is the overall scale of the façades facing the square. Usually four or five stories, they give a gracious and grand feeling to the whole complex. Certainly, adding a top floor, even if it were an attic or “storage” space, provides for this same feeling, were the code to allow it.

In this model, parking spaces and road widths are minimal but are within the current standards.



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The garages tend to be smaller than optimal given our increasing numbers of large vehicles. (London seems to have very few SUVs, a function of the high price of gas and the difficulty of getting around in dense traffic.) The size of the garage is a result of keeping the module to twenty feet wide. At twenty feet, two cars can fit, even with a passage between garages to the mews, and two rooms can be side-by-side, although each is slightly less than the ten foot minimum we expect. (fig 6)

The unit mix varies from 400–500 square foot studios over the garages to three- or four-bedroom apartments as large as 1700 square feet. The overall sizes are normal for affordable and mid-market rate developments. At 40 units to the acre, there is a preponderance of smaller units, but the mix is also variable, as is the configuration. For example, the larger townhouses could begin below grade, with a one or two-bedroom unit above, providing the larger unit with a private, open garden at the rear. In this configuration, however, there would be four units in a module and 30 units to the acre overall.

Housing around an open space is not a new concept. Because this form includes several typologies (rowhouse, courtyard housing, access mews, granny units), it makes possible economical, lowrise, walk-up housing at significant densities within our current space standards and zoning. At the same time it contributes a public amenity and maintains the urban fabric of streets. This housing can have many amenities and features that people, particularly those with families, have come to expect—individual entry, direct access to their car, views to a yard (albeit a shared yard), and a sense of community. Most importantly, many different types and sizes of units are possible, providing housing opportunities for the increasingly diverse populations in our cities.●

Notes

1. Davis, Sam, "Why Affordable Housing Isn't," in *The Architecture of Affordable Housing*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 63-81.
2. Jacobs, Allan B., *Great Streets* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993).

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Architects, Value, and Used Houses

Erik Lerner, AIA, Realtor®

Architecture is famous, at least for now. Maybe it's the titanium museum, maybe the Target teapot and housewares. Architects have always been favorite protagonists for television writers from "Once and Again" back to "Mr. Ed." Today, real-life architects proliferate, sitting for talking head interviews and posing for Jockey underwear ads. *The Los Angeles Times* even has a weekly real estate gossip column breathlessly namedropping Hollywood personalities and their designers. Everybody wants an architect, wants to meet, show off, or even be one, or wants some kind of piece of one—if not a house, then a plate, a poster, the teapot....

"Architect." The definition has thinned with overexposure. In a cheesy bid for borrowed dignity, the general press and unrelated disciplines have appropriated the word: "Foreign Policy Architect," "Information Architect," "Software Architect," etcetera. Nevertheless, good design is celebrated, and the contribution of the "Architect" is more widely than ever understood to add value to a product or a building. Nowhere is this more apparent than in residential real estate.

SELLING ARCHITECTURE

Several California real estate firms boast "Architectural Properties" and feature architects' names prominently in advertising.

STYLISH, TASTEFUL ARCHITECTURAL ESTATE

\$3,350,000

CLASSIC PAUL WILLIAMS

\$1,095,000

One Sunday ad audaciously blithers about a "dramatic Lautner *style* contemp...." The late architect would rightly cringe—or sue. Cleverly inverting the dictum

about the promise of wealth in "underestimating the intelligence of the American public," one realtor who actually understands design warns it's "not possible to get rich just selling architecture." Maybe not, but the promotion of architect-designed houses as a specialty by increasingly monopolistic house-selling mills is evidence of an important market share.

Respondents to these "architectural house" ads articulate many of their house-buying criteria in identical terms: Price, of course; Number of bedrooms and baths; Location (near the studios, near the beach, near houses of worship); Geography (the hills or the flats); Views (city lights, canyon, ocean). But the architecture component of a wish list distinguishes the prospective homebuyers from one another as well as from the general home-buying public:

ARCHITECTURE BUYERS

❖ **The Label Buyers:** Budgets vary. Like buyers of label clothing, they seek a comfort level in name brands to compensate for lack of personal expertise. Typical quote: "Do you have any Nootra's?"

❖ **The Trophy Seekers:** Label Buyers, but with more money and time. Acutely aware of famous or

fashionable architects. Often Trophy Seekers have trophy vehicles, trophy spouses, other trophy houses. Sometimes famous themselves. Typical quote: “My Neutra was in much better shape.”

❖ **The Architecture Groupies:** Needs often exceed budget. Frequently knowledgeable, they use the real estate pages as a kind of architecture tour guide. Typical quote: “This isn’t his best. Did you see that Neutra two years ago in the Valley?”

❖ **The Too Rich:** Budget often exceeds needs. As money is no object, they help to drive prices beyond the reach of others and can be cavalier in their treatment of landmark-quality houses. Like landed nobles of yore, many have a fondness for properties at higher elevations. Typical quote: “Is it gated?” Also: “Is there room for a (tennis) court?”

❖ **The Restorers:** Realistic approach to budget. True believers, respectful of the architect’s intentions and admirable in their desire to revive, with authenticity, the essential qualities of whatever it was. Typical quote: “This is so cool. I wonder if we can match the tile?”

❖ **The Sc-rapists:** Opportunistic developers who buy and tear down sometimes serviceable, sometimes historic buildings to “maximize” the financial yield of a property with new structures usually excessive in lot coverage, square footage, and profile. Cold blooded in their disregard for the physical and cultural landscape. Typical quote: “This is a tear-down. It doesn’t make any sense at this price. The site’s okay but the house is garbage. I’m just going to scrape it (off the face of the earth).”

❖ **The Oblivious:** Dialed the wrong number or wandered into the wrong open house. Just need three bedrooms and two baths. Typical question: “Why is this priced so high? Is the plumbing new?”

All but the last of these buyer-prospects have one thing in common: they pay extra for architecture (at least they would if they could). So, as in the recently hyperactive real estate market, they keep the inventory tight and prices relatively robust.

Architecture, then, isn’t just a marketing tool. It is a true component of the worth of a house.

THE VALUE OF ARCHITECTURE: REWARDS

So, the abiding if redundant holy trinity of real estate value, “Location, Location, Location,” works in counterpoint to the Vitruvian trio, “Strength, Commodity

and Delight.” Some real estate appraisers, upon whom lenders depend in determining loan amount and suitability, will boost their assessment of a property five or ten percent to account for extraordinary architecture.

When such a house is sold, the architecture premium rubs off on nearly every player in the game and some, like the city and county governments, who simply provide the venue.

For combing multiple listings to match up people and property (creation isn’t the only endeavor that’s a patient search) and negotiating and documenting the ensuing deals, buyer’s and seller’s real estate brokers usually divvy up between them five or six percent of the sales price. For identifying and insuring against liens and other “clouds,” the title company charges several cents per thousand dollars of the sales price. For acting as a neutral intermediary holding and disbursing funds, the escrow firm charges around a dollar or two per thousand of the sales price. Home warranty policies frequently purchased for buyers can cost five hundred dollars or more. Cities collect various taxes upon each property ownership transfer, and the county annually assesses one and a half percent of the most recent sales price. The seller, of course, gets the remaining proceeds. (And, the buyer gets to live in the house.) If the house sells again in ten years, or five, or two, all involved reprise their roles, and their income.

But not the architect. After the initial, sometimes hard-won client fee, there is only reputation. Accountants call this “good will in the marketplace.” Like the architect’s stock-in-trade, talent, it is not fungible.

So much for rewards.

What about the work, the architecture? What about the creative, analytical, evocative efforts of those architects living and (as with so many in public favor) dead. A case in point:

THE VALUE OF ARCHITECTURE: RESPECT

The heirs of a well-known and respected Los Angeles architect put their childhood home up for sale. The principal of an international firm, the architect designed his only small-scale residential work for his own family in 1959. In this way, as well as in many

of its design features, the post-and-beam home on a secluded acre of land in a canyon above Beverly Hills was unique, and was recognized as such in text and photographs by several publications of its day, including *Architectural Record* and *Arts and Architecture*.

With families and homes of their own, the heirs had no use for the house but did have the very pragmatic requirement to maximize the proceeds of its sale. Believing they were entrusted not just with their own legacy but that of the design community, they preferred that the house be preserved. But with no legal or societal imperative to underpin this wish, a wish it might remain. Could a buyer be found within a reasonable time frame who would respect the architecture?

Supply and demand is the rule in property as in commodities, evidenced by the common real estate lore which holds “the market sets the price,” or anyway the price range. (To many practitioners, the market is a living, or at least a speaking, entity. The market “will tell you” if your price is too high.) Within the range, though, the price can to a certain degree influence the fate of a house. With a price set beyond the pencil-out reach of serious sc-rapists, advertising for the “One-of-a-kind Post-and-Beam” attracted an initial group of about hundred realtors and prospective buyers, which quickly yielded one “qualified,” which is to say high-paying, bankable buyer.

The price-setting dodge doesn’t always work—not with *The Too Rich*. The ultimate disposition of the house in question remains uncertain. The new owner was heard contemplating an addition to the property of a tennis court and servants quarters, as well as general remodeling intended to convey “a Japaneesy, Zen sort of feeling.”

So much for respect.

A thoughtful Los Angeles architect said not long ago that after serious consideration he rejected the opportunity to buy a house designed by Rudolph Schindler because he realized the house was better suited to someone more comfortable with the responsibility—and the constraints—of what he called “stewardship” of a masterpiece. If only such ethical restraint were widespread, the work might endure.

FRUITS OF THE ARCHITECT’S LABOR: RE-SLICING THE PIE

A house is usually designed under a contract between architect and owner. The resulting building is what lawyers call a “work for hire.” The original client and subsequent holders of the property deed own the right to keep or dispose of the house any way they see fit. The architect is left with a booby prize: ownership of the drawings. Copyright protected drawings can’t legally be copied, even by their originator. A New York apartment building owner sued his architect and the developer of a subsequent building which reused elements of the architect’s earlier plans. The winning premise was that the second building diminished the uniqueness, and thus the market value, of the plaintiff’s building. Simultaneously, the case proved the value of the creative labor and limited the architect’s participation in its fruits.

Screenwriters can share in profit “points” of their films, actors receive residuals for repeat broadcasts of programs and commercials, recording artists can participate in income from album sales. What if every time a house sold, the architect got a cut? What if the work were protected by deed restriction, by covenant, by contract, or by easement in ways clearly beneficial instead of confiscatory? What would be the results, in terms of rewards and respect, for architecture, for architects, and for everyone?

Before architecture, before law, before fame and popular culture, before money, when wealth was measured by, maybe, sloth pelts.... In those days a warm dry cave within walking distance of a good fishing hole was valuable real estate.

2 CHAMBER CAVE

WALKING DISTANCE FROM FISHING

5 PELTS



Now along comes the creative individual with the notion to cut a few branches or move a boulder so the fishing hole can actually be seen from the property.

2 CHAMBER CAVE

WALKING DISTANCE FROM FISHING

LAKE VIEWS

6 PELTS



The idea is worth an extra pelt.●



YES

in My Backyard

:Failure and Success
in Bringing Housing
to the Center City

Morris Newman

The notion that housing belongs on Main Street seems universally accepted in the design and building communities. Architects and planners have long since embraced the concept that housing is a crucial element for vital city areas that are full of people on foot, shopping, going to work, going to sporting events and concerts, and socializing. Throughout California, homebuilders are proposing projects on infill sites, and many of these projects are comparatively new types of housing, such as mixed-use, transit-oriented developments and live-work projects. A number of cities have demonstrated a strong commitment to new downtown housing. In Oakland, Mayor Jerry Brown has promised 10,000 new housing units in the downtown-Lake Merritt area, while the Mission Bay development in San Francisco is alone expected to provide 6,000 units.

If the design profession is in love with urban housing, the general public does not always appear equally enthralled. A number of downtown projects, particularly in Southern California, have experienced difficulty finding tenants. Other projects find themselves opposed by surrounding homeowners and commercial property owners, as if housing



One principle, not always easy to achieve in the early days of redevelopment projects, is avoiding what might be called “outpost housing.”

were a NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) land use. People seem particularly galvanized by apartment complexes and projects for low-income renters.

Although I do not agree with these attitudes, I find them understandable. The act of bringing housing downtown, especially at a large scale, means that downtown will be a new and unfamiliar kind of place. The Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno once said that people invent the future by imagining an idealized past. Yet the truth is we are creating, perhaps improvising, a new kind of urban neighborhood built atop the fossilized bones of the old industrial city. As it turns out, housing can be an awkward fit on Main Street. The downtowns that we built in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, with their wide streets, tall buildings, and vast parking lots, were not designed with housing in mind. Downtown areas often lack the amenities we associate with housing—wide sidewalks, landscaping, neighborhood-serving retail, 24-hour businesses.

The new push for urban housing means that downtowns are changing in meaning, from being solely centers of government and business to being neighborhoods, as well. No wonder the transition has been awkward: we have been unsure of the best way to create neighborhoods, or, more accurately, to add a residential layer to existing areas. This transition has put local government in the difficult role—never relished by government—of experimentation and innovation, sometimes at great financial cost. Redevelopment authorities find themselves attempting to introduce housing in areas that have little or no previous market acceptance, and then are criticized when projects flounder. In the 1980s and early 1990s, for example, projects in Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Jose were slow to fill up, and several were costly failures. Today, fashions have changed, because parts of the public, such as Web-related businesses and their employees, are comfortable in “creative” buildings in downtown areas. Further, housing has become so expensive that people have become much more open-minded about living in unconventional neighborhoods. And commuting has become so tortuous that in-town housing has become attractive—and increasingly expensive.

If timing and fashion figure into the success of projects, so too do well-conceived urban planning ideas. Success also relies on good planning. If

some of the following principles seem unremarkable, even commonplace, they are far from being universally applied.

One principle, not always easy to achieve in the early days of redevelopment projects, is avoiding what might be called “outpost housing.” It is hard to be the first in anything, and damnably hard to be the first housing development in an area that has no other residential projects. A case in point is South Park, a redevelopment-sponsored attempt to create a residential neighborhood *ex nihilo* in downtown Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency has sponsored at least three large, not-so-friendly looking apartment buildings, in the attempt to create some “critical mass” of residential units. The project might be called a modest success: after years of mediocre leasing, these drive-in, drive-out buildings are fully tenanted, and the agency has created a public park in the area. Yet South Park remains cold and inert, with few people on the sidewalk and no discernable street scene. Urban design, at least urban design that encourages pedestrian activity, is lacking.

One way to avoid the outpost phenomenon is to develop several projects simultaneously, in a cluster. This is the lesson taught by developer Tom Gilmore, who has purchased several old office buildings in a neighborhood that is off the radar of most of the suit-and-tie crowd in the Central Business District. He has rehabbed the buildings more or less at the same time and marketed them under a single name as the “Old Bank District.” The fact that the buildings are clustered together suggests neighborhood, or potential neighborhood, and relieves the tenant of the fear of isolation in a tough urban environment. The first building to open for leasing is reportedly nearly full.

For housing to flourish and blossom in downtown areas, we need more than housing; we need functional neighborhoods. In the rush to build “entertainment centers” anchored by multiplexes and chain bookstores, city officials sometimes forget that neighborhoods need to have their own life and their own merchants—the grocer, the dry cleaner, the florist, and the newsstand. One project that has struck a balance is Brea Town Center, in the Orange County city of Brea, particularly the retail-and-housing portion known as Birch Street Promenade devel-

oped by CIM Group. The project features everyday uses such as a drugstore and a storefront for post-office boxes, as well as glitzy, “national credit” retailers. The project has been well accepted: 20 townhouse units atop a storefront retail strip, designed by Koning Eisenberg of Santa Monica, leased out almost automatically, even though loft housing was an untried product in quasi-suburban Brea.

Another unremarkable principle is that urban housing must not close itself off entirely from the street and pedestrians. Defensibility must be balanced with sociability; windows, not blank walls, should face the street. Buildings should not appear to be fortresses or jails, depressing and even antagonizing pedestrians by sending a message of exclusion. Suburban-type projects, with their high walls, cheap finishes, and defensive landscaping, are anathema. Also out of place are traditional “housing projects,” whose oddity screams out that the residents live in subsidized housing and are thus to be feared. One notably social building is 101 San Fernando, a high-density project in downtown San Jose. The architect, Daniel Solomon, provided seven separate entrances to the building, each with its own small courtyard. In this way, the large building resembles a row of smaller courtyard apartment buildings. This design feature humanizes the mass of the building and makes it more attractive and less oppressive to passers-by. Another virtue of 101 San Fernando is that it is located near an existing retail center, giving residents the motivation to walk the neighborhood and patronize local stores. Here, retail and housing support each other in an environment where they would likely fail in isolation.

At the risk of sounding glib, the single most important factor that will change attitudes about urban housing is success. People, in general, cannot imagine living in ways they have not lived before. They will not be intrigued by the possibility and promises of urban living until they see actual, functional urban neighborhoods with their own eyes. And that is entirely fair. If projects are well-designed—that is, if they are livable, attractive and safe—they will gain acceptance, and the humanization of the city will take a step forward. ●



?

Housing Futures:

Making Place or Marketing Product?

Buzz Yudell, FAIA

A monoculture
is the surest way
to limit the viability
of a community.
We need to strive
for typological,
programmatic,
and social diversity.

The creation of dwellings for communities is a primal activity. It is central to our understanding of our place in the world and to our ability to survive and thrive. Complex and sophisticated built communities have been created for at least eight thousand years. Early Mesopotamian and Anatolian settlements already exhibit hierarchies of public and private space, complex infrastructure, and a carefully evolved connection to the landscape.

As with most other enterprises, the making of communities is presently a far more mediated process than ever. It is a relatively recent phenomenon that our communities are planned, financed, built, and marketed by a complex and often remote mechanism. We are increasingly trading a locally crafted artifact for a commoditized and repetitive product.

A facile comparison would suggest a duality in which traditional or vernacular communities built in compact configurations are in stark contrast to the suburban sprawls, which appear to metastasize throughout the landscape. As striking as is this contrast, there is no simple choice or solution in contemporary society. For all the apparent harmony of the traditional hill town, it is the expression of a

It was essential
to the project's success
that we were working
within a culture
that understands and supports
the importance of a diverse
mixed-use community
designed to integrate itself
in to the greater context.

Karow Nord Master Plan



hierarchical society where birth not choice was the prime determinant of occupation and habitation. For all the desperate anomie of the suburb, it does at some level reflect the cumulative choices of individuals in a democracy seeking greater freedom and a larger personal domain. There are endless layers of irony and complexity in both these paradigms, and the fact that we lurch between unsatisfactory experiments is a testimony to the extraordinary complexity of the issue.

The urgency of finding more satisfactory models is ever increasing. Land and natural resources are neither infinite nor fungible. The centrifugal forces of contemporary living are corrosive of a civic and civil society, and the divide between the affluent and poor is expanding. The need for high quality, affordable housing is surging in ways that are often obscured.

The recent study *Sprawl Hits the Wall* (Los Angeles: Southern California Studies Center, USC, 2001) documents several alarming trends in Southern California, which may well be a bell-weather for the whole country. It demonstrates the ways in which the accelerating need for affordable housing goes unmet, while the predominant mode of housing production continues to be suburban sprawl—all this while land, resources, infrastructure, education, and governance are strained and drained.

As architects, we stand in the nexus of forces of great influence and momentum. Our concern for creating dwellings that both ennoble the individual and enhance the spirit and place of community is increasingly marginalized. Yet housing is at the core of the character of our civilization, and our engagement and concerns are critical.

While the challenge of creating humane and nurturing communities is daunting and while no simple model seems satisfactory, I would submit that we know many of the characteristics and components of a successful community. A successful new community should be rich in its variety of occupants, places, architectural typologies, scales, and social opportunities. It should allow for a strong sense of its own identity while establishing sympathetic connections to its surrounding context and environment. It should embody diversity and choice, surprise and delight, and yet possess coherent underlying principles of organization and growth: a kind

of urban genetic code that allows for orderly and diverse growth but prevents chaotic metastasis.

The most vital communities we admire and study have usually developed over many generations and embody a vernacular and evolutionary wisdom in their urban fabric. They involve the ongoing and active participation of their inhabitants in the shaping of their own environments.

It is not surprising that most utopian, idealized, or master-planned communities have been disappointing if not disastrous in their realization. On the “high-art” end of the spectrum, the failure is usually due to an overly diagrammatic urban conception, which, in spite of the success of some individual iconic buildings, fails as a place of daily life and community. For all their heroic elegance, Chandigarh and Brasilia are eminent examples. In the private sector, most new development suffers from a preoccupation with marketing and security. A tendency toward exclusivist planning leads to monotonous, geographically and socially segregated enclaves. These suffocate from a lack of cultural and economic diversity. Spatial and social isolation limit connections and exchange, further exacerbating the anomie. The utopian and the market-driven community both suffer from the creation of a monoculture, which is nearly certain to lead to the stunting of community.

During the past twenty years we have struggled to find ways in which we can contribute to the shaping of vital communities. In the U.S., we have found great opportunity in the realm of campus, civic, and cultural architecture but have often been stymied in our efforts in multiple-unit housing. Here, marketing and focus groups seem to drive the development of “product” aimed at particular demographic niches. Placemaking and community are often the orphans of a market-driven process.

In Europe, we have had the chance to participate in the urban and architectural design of a diverse group of housing projects, where, despite complexities and compromises, we have been gratified to be part of teams creating richly inhabited new communities. These have ranged from green and brown field to urban infill and from affordable to market rate housing. While each of these projects has been daunting in the complexity of its process and participants, each has produced places of diversity and

vitality and held lessons that are instructive for us as North Americans architects.

Two recent projects provide very different challenges and yet, for all their constraints and complexities, allowed us a degree of exploration and satisfaction that we have not yet experienced in housing projects closer to home.

KAROW NORD

In Karow Nord, a new town on the northeast edge of Berlin, we worked with a large group of clients, city planning staff, and other architects to design a new town of 5,000 housing units to address the housing shortages of the newly unified country. The site is bordered by the *autobahn* and high-density block housing to the north, agricultural land to the east, the historic village of Karow to the south, and the regional rail line to the west. The bow tie-shaped site is bisected by a north south artery connecting to old Karow.

WEAVING INTO THE REGION

The existing network of paths and landscape features became the starting point for the geometric armature of the town. A highly inflected network links to existing neighbors at multiple scales. It accommodates different modes and speeds of movement. More than ten different street types are derived to express the social, spatial, and circulation needs of districts and neighborhoods. An equally rich matrix of landscaped open spaces evolved out of connection to the adjacent conditions. Together, these create a hierarchy of usable and identifiable figures for the project. (opposite)

TYPOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

A hierarchy of block and housing types creates spatial, social, and environmental diversity. City blocks are dimensioned to allow a set of private, semi-private, semi-public, and public zones. More than twenty block types and five major housing types are woven into a highly articulated fabric. Perimeter blocks allow for higher density and protected inner courtyards. Mixed-use terraces enfront important linking spaces. “Villas” containing multiple units allow for individuated housing along key diagonal boulevards and adjacent to identifiable landscape areas. “Karow courts” modeled on the spatial rela-

tionships of houses in the old village provide multi-unit housing at a transitional scale that can help to feather the new community into the village. Agrarian scaled row houses help make sensitive linkages to the south and east.

COMMUNITY AND PRIVACY

Central to the success of the community is great attention to the sectional relationship through each housing type and its associated open spaces. The resulting grain and hierarchy are tangible: lively streets, open yet protected porches, yards and gardens that occupy the transition between community and privacy, and even parking that animates streets and courts. Given that most of the housing units are modestly scaled at 45 to 95 square meters, these transitional zones of habitation are critical to humanizing the multiple domains and to giving a sense of individual and shared identity.

A CULTURE OF COMMUNITY

Critical to the vitality of any community is a rich mix of opportunities and uses. It was essential to the project's success that we were working within a culture that understands and supports the importance of a diverse mixed-use community designed to integrate itself into the greater context. At Karow Nord, we were able to site schools strategically at neighborhood nodes and within walking distance from housing. Commercial office and civic uses are disposed to create a link across the bifurcated form of the site. These typically have dense housing above and access to transit nearby. We were able to structure a physical nexus that is given life by the programmatic diversity that the government and developers were willing to support. The civic uses were subsidized, and even the commercial uses were understood as necessary community building elements that might not be immediately profitable.

HOUSING AS EXPLORATION

More recently, we've had the pleasure of participating with a group of European architects in exploring opportunities for introducing contemporary information and green technologies into a new piece of urban fabric. The site, on Malmö's western harbor across the Öresund (Golden Sound) from Denmark, is a relatively fine grained piece of urban fabric. The

project named BO01 "City of Tomorrow" is being developed as part of the 2001 European Housing Exhibition. One thousand dwellings will be augmented by workplaces, restaurants, day-care, schools, and libraries. Here architects are encouraged to follow fairly straightforward urban guidelines, such as the maintenance of the street wall, the activation of the ground level, and relative consistency in building height. The material and formal expression of each project is then at the discretion of the architects and their developer clients.

Our scheme for thirty housing units is based on a courtyard typology with a clear formal exterior and a more articulated and surprising interior. The street facades are restrained in their quiet but rhythmic geometry. Cast stone and window walls are articulated with considerable depth to catch and amplify the precious northern light. Inside the court the individuality of each unit is expressed as they rotate to optimize sun and view exposures. Solar towers top each unit, turning toward the sun in expression of the project's aspiration for sustainable urbanism. Units are loft like and flexible but anchored by the "smart technology" walls, which house all the operations and data components of the houses. The integration of technology is part of a cooperative exploration with Ericsson.

While each unit has sun-facing porches, the shared social space of the courtyard is given identity by its palette of native grasses and streams renewed by recycled rainwater.

As in Karow Nord, the carefully wrought hierarchy of public to private domains is central to the humanity and social sustainability of this urban community.

LESSONS FROM ABROAD

We hope that as American and Californian architects we have brought some fresh dimensions to the shaping of community in Europe. We know that we have brought lessons back with us.

First, I would suggest that we resist abdicating the civic conversation. It is tempting to retreat to the relative protection of working with the few private clients who recognize the artistic importance of our work. The public arena is a daunting tangle of argument and bureaucracy, but our collective professional participation is critical.



B001 Street Elevation



B001 Interior Court

We can take inspiration from a culture that still understands the value of weaving civic life into our neighborhoods. The street, the market, and the school are essential to a supportive and democratized urban life. Communities and regions must insist on the recognition and inclusion of the public realm in new housing developments.

As in nature, a monoculture is the surest way to limit the viability of a community. We need to strive for typological, programmatic, and social diversity. In Europe, this is achieved in part through incentive and subsidy. However it is accomplished, it must begin with awareness of and commitment to the value of the public realm.

Successful community building requires public-private dialogue and benefits from public-private partnerships. While competing interests are inevitable, the model of a partnership, which balances divergent needs and aspirations, can usually achieve greater goals than the extremes of a *laissez-faire* or an over-controlled process.

A COMMUNITY OF INTERESTS

The shaping of community is an enormously complex task. The creation of housing which exists within a vital and diverse context can seem nearly impossible amidst the forces of the market and circumscribed by the narrow ambitions of most projects. The grinding pressures of competing interests threaten to diminish quality and vision.

Yet for all these barriers, the team of architects, landscape architects, planners, community and governmental groups can engage in a productive and creative interaction. At stake is no less than the cultural and environmental vitality of our communities.

As architects, we can help to shape places that enhance human habitation. When we work at multiple scales, this process offers us the chance to develop richly wrought neighborhoods, supporting civic life and helping to build vital and diverse communities. ●

Note: This article was adapted in part from "Scales of Habitation" by Buzz Yudell, published in Moore Ruble Yudell/Building in Berlin. (Australia: Images Publishing, 1999).

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Coda



Housing in the Landscape

Bill Turnbull's work is celebrated in a new monograph, *William Turnbull, Jr.: Buildings in the Landscape*, recently published by William Stout Publishers. The book explores twenty of Bill's projects, all but two of which are dwellings. Among these is the modest Sea Ranch Employee Housing of 1986, shown here in one of the many exquisite photographs by Morley Baer that grace the book. In his introduction to the monograph, Donlyn Lyndon, FAIA, writes,

"Bill's most fundamental mentor was the landscape itself. His closeness to the forms and processes of nature made him ever alert to its demeanor. In placing buildings, he was especially adept at finding positions of advantage and imagining ways of building that complemented the character of the site. His approach to the landscape—as to his life—was not one of emulation, but of cultivation. The land, the family, the acts of building, the joys of inhabiting, all merged in Bill's mind into homes for the imagination. He created places that are both precise and alive, that inspire even as they accommodate. The integrity of his buildings, delineated with quiet care, reflects the intensity of their conception and the passion with which they were nurtured. They are buildings that honor human presence in the land."