COUNCIL REPORT

III IV

COUNCIL III • ON STYLE
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNCIL IV • ON CODES
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

By Members of the Congress for the New Urbanism

Major funding for this Council Report provided by the

Knight Program in Community Building

Pushing the Boundaries of New Urbanism and Smart Growth

The Knight Program in Community Building addresses today's urgent issues associated with community building, including the complex problems of suburban sprawl and inner-city disinvestment. The program's goal is to advance the knowledge and practice of New Urbanism and Smart Growth across disciplines through an innovative series of initiatives. The program is funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which promotes excellence in journalism worldwide and invests in the vitality of 26 U.S. Communities. The Knight Program extends the Knight Foundation's commitment to community service with a mid-career program of professional development.

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Publications

A variety of publications on topics of community-building, smart growth and New Urbanism are sponsored by the Knight Program. These include the quarterly *New Urban Post*, the semi-annual *Council Report*, books, journals and other material. The Knight Fellows' projects are published in case studies, research and journal articles on a variety of related topics.

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The program sponsors seminars, conferences and an annual charrette in a Knight city. Past seminars include the "Transect Seminar," "New Plazas for New Mexico" and "Civic Art 2002." The Knight Program's charrettes have focused on an inner-city neighborhood in Macon, Ga., and the Evergreen-Eastridge area of San José, Calif.

Contact:
Charles C. Bohl, Director
305.284.4420
cbohl@miami.edu.
www.arc.miami.edu/knight

Key West Rooftops. Drawing by Martha de Quesada, Miami School of Architecture.

Council Report III/IV

Diane Dorney
Publisher/Editor

Laurence Aurbach, Jr.
Sr. Assistant Editor

Jason Miller
Assistant Editor

Chuck Bohl
Associate Editor

Claire Fleischer
Copy Editor

Bill Dennis (Santa Fe)
John Massengale (Charleston)
Council Organizers

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Council Report III

Council III was sponsored by:

The Council
The Knight Program in Community Building
and
Mayor's Office, City of Charleston
Charleston Visitors Bureau
Gibbs Museum
The City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs
Institute for Traditional Architecture
South Carolina Coastal Conservation League
CNU Student Chapter, University of Georgia
Program in Historic Preservation and Community Planning, College of Charleston
George Holt
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Council IV was sponsored by:

The Council
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The McCune Foundation
HUD / Enterprise Foundation
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Santa Fe Southern Railway
Moule & Polyzoides
Charrette Center

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Contributors

Joanna Alimanestianu has an architectural practice in Brussels, Belgium, and Southampton, N.Y. Already by the late 1980s, Joanna was a new urbanist by instinct if not by training as she took on the role of urban and architectural advisor to the Rue de Laeken redevelopment project in downtown Brussels.

Thomas Daniel Camp is the designer, builder and developer of the Cotton District in Starkville, Miss. He and his family also manage the rental properties of the District. Camp was previously a professor of industrial education at Mississippi State University. His work has been featured in numerous videos, magazines and lectures nationwide.

Maricé Chael, AIA, is a principal of the South Miami architecture firm Chael, Cooper & Associates. The firm practices in affiliation with the town planning firm of Dover Kohl & Partners.

Rick Chellman is founder of TND Engineering, and has more than 25 years experience worldwide in zoning, civil and forensic engineering, land surveying, traffic engineering, development planning, engineering consulting and expert testimony. Chellman has lectured and taught extensively, has authored numerous publications, and serves on ITE and ASCE professional committees.

Rick Cole is city manager of Azusa, Calif. He is head of the Administration Department, which manages an $80 million a year city operation with over 450 employees. A former mayor of Pasadena and Southern California director of the Local Government Commission, Cole has extensive public and private sector experience.

Paul Crawford is a principal of Crawford Multari & Clark Associates; he has over 30 years experience with planning agency leadership, zoning ordinance preparation, comprehensive planning, and computer applications for cities and counties. Crawford is an AICP Fellow, a professor of planning at Cal Poly, and has served as president of the California Planning Roundtable.

Bill Dennis is an architect and urban designer with Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists and is based in Albuquerque, N.M. He is co-chair of the new urban council and was organizer of the Santa Fe Council on Codes.

Victor Dover is an architect, town planner and principal in the firm of Dover Kohl & Partners located in Miami, Fla. He has served on the board of several nonprofit organizations and works to change existing outdated zoning and transportation policies.

Andrés Duany, FAIA, is one of the founding members of the Congress for the New Urbanism. He and his wife, Elizabeth, are partners of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, an architectural and planning firm based in Miami. He teaches new urbanism principles at the University of Miami.

R. Geoffrey Ferrell is principal of Geoffrey Ferrell Associates, LLC in Washington, D.C. As an urban designer and consultant, he has produced numerous codes and town plans for localities throughout the United States. Ferrell has been director of urban design for the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and a faculty member at the University of Miami.

Ray Gindroz, SAIA, is a co-founder and principal of Urban Design Associates and a member of the CNU board of directors. Gindroz is an AIA Fellow and has taught urban design for over 20 years. He has been published widely in government reports, journals and books.

Besim S. Hakim, FAICP, AIA, has been researching and writing about codes from the Mediterranean region since 1975, with the goal providing lessons and models for contemporary and future architects, urban designers, city administrators and officials and lawyers. He has practiced architecture and urban design and taught those disciplines for over two decades.

Rick Hall is a practicing, registered transportation engineer dealing with planning, design and regulatory issues. Since becoming a consultant in 1980, he has worked on urban transportation plans, developments of regional impact, service analysis and transportation/land use interrelationships. Hall is a visiting professor at Florida State University and has served as president of the ITE's Florida Section.

Peter Katz is an author and real estate development consultant. He has advised a wide range of government agencies and has worked abroad for many international clients. Katz was the founding executive director of the CNU and is author of "The New Urbanism: Towards an Architecture of Community."

Chip Kaufman is co-director of Ecologically Sustainable Design Pty Ltd., a planning and consulting company based in Melbourne, Australia. His international practice includes urban design, code writing and policy analysis. Kaufman leads seminars and workshops on townscape improvements, urban revitalization, and suburban development alternatives.

Brian Herrmann is a student at the College of Charleston, Charleston, S.C., pursuing undergraduate degrees in Historic Preservation and Community Planning Urban Studies - Planning and Administration.

Kevin Klinkenberg is a principal of 180° design studio in Kansas City, Mo. His work focuses on urban planning, community development and master planning for institutions and neighborhoods. Klinkenberg serves on the board of the Center for Understanding the Built Environment.

Tom Lyon co-founded Wolff Lyon Architects in 1977, working as architect, contractor and occasionally developer. He oversees the design and documentation processes as well as producing color renderings. Lyon's work has won many awards and has been featured in numerous national publications. He is a visiting lecturer at the University of Colorado.

Paul Murrain is director of the Urban Programme for The Prince's Foundation in London. He has 25 years' experience in urban design consultation, design team leadership, academic research projects related to new urban settlements, and large-scale residential and mixed-use development in the United Kingdom and internationally. Murrain is an author on urban design and has taught at several universities worldwide.

Robert Orr lives with his wife and four children in new Haven, Conn., where he has an architectural practice. He has been involved with traditional neighborhood design for many years.

Stefanos Polyzoides is a principal of the firm Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists. Co-founder of the Congress for the New Urbanism, he has been a professor of architecture and is the author of numerous articles and books.

John Reps is a Cornell professor emeritus in city and regional planning. Referred to as the father of American urban design history by the American Institute of Certified Planners in 1996, Reps is the author of 14 books, including "The Making of Urban America." He is the recipient of numerous prestigious fellowships awarded over the past 45 years.

Joel S. Russell is a planner, land use attorney, and principal of Woodlea Associates. His firm assists municipalities in protecting open space, community character, and revitalizing downtowns. As a land use and environmental consultant and attorney, Russell's clients include local, state and federal governments, conservation organizations, and developers.

Mark Sofield is town designer for Prospect New Town in Longmont, Colo. He has worked as an ESL instructor, an etching printer, and a cabinetmaker. He holds degrees from Brown University, The Rhode Island School of Design, and Yale University.

Randolph Stewart is principal of R. Stewart Design, LLC in Bluffton, S.C. Stewart has designed custom, award-winning homes and historic home restorations throughout the southeastern United States and is co-author of the Bluffton Historic Preservation District construction guidelines. He is design facilitator for Celadon, S.C.

Peter Swift is principal of Swift & Associates in Longmont, Colo., where he consults in transportation engineering and urban design. Swift has lectured and published and has partnered with local governments to study the linkages between street typologies and public safety.

Matt Taeker is co-founder of Catalyst and has nearly two decades of professional experience in urban design, planning and architecture, as well as teaching those disciplines at several universities. Taeker's work includes policy frameworks for cities and regions, master plans and building designs for developers, and extensive work in distressed urban neighborhoods.

John Wolf has worn the hat of carpenter, general contractor, architect, developer, and chairman of the planning commission over the years. He has taught at the University of Colorado and is president of the Affordable Housing Alliance in Boulder.

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Council III Introduction

What I Learned Last Spring

By John Massengale

There's a story about Winston Churchill during World War II: Ensconced happily in the bathroom with his newspaper one day, he was told that the Lord Privy Seal wished to see him. "Tell the Lord Privy Seal," barked the Prime Minister, "that I'm sealed in the privy and can only deal with one shit at a time."

New urbanists have had a hard time talking about architecture. We can agree about most of the principles of the Charter, but the two points in the Charter about architecture — that buildings "should be seamlessly linked to their surroundings," and that this issue "transcends style" — don't satisfy many. The godfather of new urbanism, Léon Krier, refused to sign the Charter because of it.

If we build on the strip, are we supposed to seamlessly link to Wal-Mart and all the other detritus of sprawl? Of course not. And having agreed that the city is more important than the building ("this issue transcends style"), how do we transcend style when it comes to the designing the building? By ignoring style? Show me where that's been successfully done.

Apparently, this is more ___ than the CNU can deal with. For the good of the movement, the six founders of the CNU — architects all — must have tacitly agreed to disagree. And to never discuss the source of their disagreement, architecture.

The 150 or so other architects in the CNU passionately hold a lot of different positions about what architecture should be. They come together under the "big tent" of the Congress but represent a lot of different groups: ideological Modernists, Fundamentalist Classicists, eclecticists, Romantic Traditionalists, Progressive Classicists, environmentalists ... and more.

In general, they get along very well. When the subject of architecture comes up, though, they're prone to debating the number of angels on the head of a pin. And whether the angels are lined up axially or informally. And which of those two is more "natural" or divine.

My old boss Bob Stern used to say there's good architecture and there's bad architecture. Implicit in that statement is the idea that neither modernism nor traditionalism has a monopoly on either.

As a result of the Council meeting, two architecture charters have been proposed. [*Editor's note: See Andrés Duany's "Principles Essential to the Renewal of Architecture" on page 23 and Steve Mouzon's charter of traditional architecture on page 32.*] I admire both, but I only support one, because the other one (the one I don't support) is anti-modern. Andrés', the one I do support, is brilliantly polemical, but not anti-modern. One of its aims is to encourage a modernist language that is usable for urbanism and new urbanism. The other charter attacks modernism in a way that the new urban Charter never would.

It is easier to attack sprawl than modernism. Modernism isn't just the anti-urban buildings we don't like. It's also all the good modernist buildings in every important city of the world, all the modernist landmarks that we (and tens of millions of non-architects) enjoy, and even the work of Walt Whitman, e.e. cummings, James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Igor Stravinsky, the Beatles, Bob Dylan ... desegregation, universal education, and machines in general.

Modernism is a period we went through that left us inevitably different than we were before it started. We can't just turn the clock back and pretend it was all a mistake. And even if we could, most people would disagree with us, so we would be limiting our potential allies.

It's the Rush Limbaugh paradigm: You can create a passionate following if you make everything a matter of Us versus Them, but on the other hand, Rush can never get *enough* followers to win an election.

We live in a time of plurality and diversity, and most people do not hate modernism.

It's easier to attack sprawl than traditionalism. Architectural education attempts, usually successfully, to brainwash architects into believing that traditional architecture is nostalgic kitsch, and worse, but the general public usually doesn't believe that either.

In fact, we are at a turning point when general ideas about modernism and modernist architecture are clearly changing. Twenty years ago any college, university or museum that wanted to be considered first class knew it had to have a modernist building. Today, many of the best institutions around the country are reskinning or replacing these buildings with traditional designs.

Architects are the last people to figure this out. As a profession, we still think that modernism is somehow better or more "of our time." We thereby acknowledge that modernism and traditionalism are different in character, without explaining why only one is relevant or useable. When we visit a Palladian villa, it is not to pretend we are 17th century Venetian counts, but for the pleasure of the architectural experience. If a geometrically proportioned classical space made of natural materials is the architecture we resonate with, why should we be limited to a completely different space made with steel and glass or Dryvit?

The argument that these traditions are somehow tainted by past association with bad activities doesn't wash either. There is virtually nothing associated with humans — including the city, democracy and spirituality — that has not thereby been tarnished by disgusting and even evil human actions. If we were angels, we wouldn't be here. Which is not to say we shouldn't always strive to be better.

Having said that new urbanists have had a hard time talking about architecture, I should also say that the give and take at the Council between Andrés Duany and Dan Solomon (only partially recorded, unfortunately) shows a great advance since the Charter Congress in Charleston six years earlier. At this Charleston meeting, there was a clear hunger to talk about architecture.

We don't yet discuss architecture as well and as peaceably as we discuss urbanism, and we don't yet have a popular text for architecture like *Suburban Nation* or Jim Kunstler's new urban paeans, but we should remember that that it took the CNU four years of existence to produce its charter.

For an architecture charter, it's important to include the voices of classical and traditional architects who have not necessarily been at the center of the CNU, as represented in Charleston by Michael Lykoudis, chairman of the architecture school at the University of Notre Dame, and Anne Fairfax and Richard Sammons, from the Institute of Classical Architecture and Classical America.

In time, this will improve the quality of the architecture in TNDs and for spec building in general. The level of architecture at TNDs has been rising, but with a few exceptions it still isn't good enough. It's still a struggle to achieve just what Lizz Plater-Zyberk calls plain old good architecture.

To improve what's built in America, we must deal with the mass market. Just as new urbanism grapples with policy, zoning and codes, we must deal with the building and building supply industries.

But in the end, of course, that's just a means to an end. The goal is not to reform Pulte but to support the Good Life.

The Cover

By Maricé Chael

At left:

St Michael's Episcopal Church

Charleston, named after Britain's King Charles II, was established in 1670 at the peninsula between the Ashley and Cooper rivers. The original 1680 British Colonial plan of Charleston identified Charleston's Civic Square at the intersection of Meeting and Broad Streets, where the site site eventually became known as the "Four Corners of Law." St Michael's Episcopal Church symbolizes ecclesiastical law and occupies the southeast corner of Meeting and Broad. Completed in1761, it is Charleston's oldest church. The architect is unknown, but likely drew inspiration from Colonial pattern books, such as James Gibbs' *A Book of Architecture*, published in 1728. The steeple, at 186' in height, has remained one of the City's most prominent landmarks.

At right:

Santuario de Guadalupe

Santa Fe ("Holy Faith") was established in 1610 under the Spanish crown, and is the oldest capital city in the United States west of the Mississippi. Among the the tasks of the Spanish colonists in the New World was the conversion of the native Pueblo Indians towards Christianity. As a result, Spanish missions proliferated. These missions were built of adobe bricks, a sun-dried mixture of indigenous earth, sand, charcoal, and chopped grass or straw. Many of these missions date from the 18th Century and still exist today. Among these is The Santuario de Guadalupe, which dates from 1781. The church was built by Franciscan missionaries and is located on Agua Fria Street, just west of the Santa Fe Plaza. It is the oldest shrine in the country dedicated to Saint Guadalupe.

Council IV Introduction

Framing the Discussion

By Bill Dennis

This Council and its subsequent report propose to answer the burning question: How did we make such a mess of our collective nest, and how do we go about fixing it? Previous Councils have focused on design, both urban and architectural, and the results of our efforts to shape the public realm. The second Santa Fe Council dealt with the regulatory framework that establishes the playing field – one that is generally not level for the new urbanism.

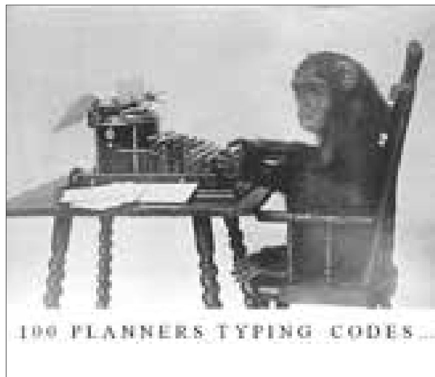
A friend of mine remarked that a gathering of 100 planners trying to rewrite zoning codes is like 100 monkeys trying to write Shakespeare. But try we must, because the present use-based system that has been in place for the last 50 years is a fog of confusion and unintended consequences. In the 1940s and '50s, zoning codes promised a bucolic countryside dotted with tidy homes, streets and lives, with nature just beyond your front door. What this type of coding delivered was exactly the opposite, however. Relentlessly monotonous housing tracts, shopping malls, office parks and other detritus of suburban sprawl with nature trampled and nowhere in sight. This code is the same wherever you go. It focuses, unvaryingly, on the separation of uses, and while it has kept the hog-rendering plants from moving in next door it has also spawned a profound sense of isolation for many.

How should we respond to this struggle that begs our attention? We know that some regulations are necessary. As new urbanists, one wants to establish form-based codes as the standard, so that each new building, road, park and tree adds up to something worth caring about instead of banal, random buildings studded in a spaghetti pile of roads festering our country. Changing codes from use-based is necessary; it is not sufficient, though. The human environment deserves the same study and care we have given other natural environments. A truly remarkable physical environment comes from the education and encouragement we can give to each other to create better place-based, environmentally aware and beautiful streets, buildings and neighborhoods. This is something that will never come out of a book of regulations, but will only extend from our individual and collective efforts.

As is the nature of the Council, we have taken time to learn from history. Besim Hakim begins the discussion chronologically in the 5th century, with the esteemed historian John Reps jumping ahead eight centuries to the founding of new towns in France. Paul Crawford explains the more recent history of use-based codes informed by his 15 years as a planning director in the sausage factory. Peter Katz and Geoff Ferrell present a lucid approach to form-based coding, while the CNU Codes Project committee updates its research. Utilizing the transect as a common system for all new codes to plug into is explained in great detail by Andrés Duany, along with an explanation of how the SmartCode, a code his firm created, accomplishes this in practice. Chip Kaufman, Tom Lyons and John Wolf, Rick Cole and Matt Taeker ably cover the experience of implementing new codes around the United States and Australia. And Rick Chellman, Peter Swift and Rick Hall report from the front lines on the transportation code wars.

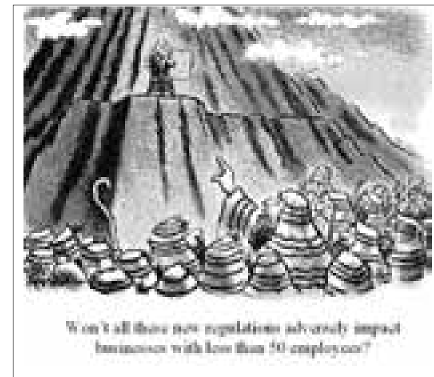
On the last day of the Council, an effort was made by attendees to develop solutions to problems being faced by municipal officials, developers and planners as they face the challenge of implementing the new urbanism. One result was the creation of a new urban code assessment checklist, which is included in this report in draft form. This checklist is to be refined by CNU/Council Code Committee, a committee that was formed during this Sunday morning session.

This remarkable collection of thought and initiative points to one inescapable conclusion: There is much work to do. Let's get busy!

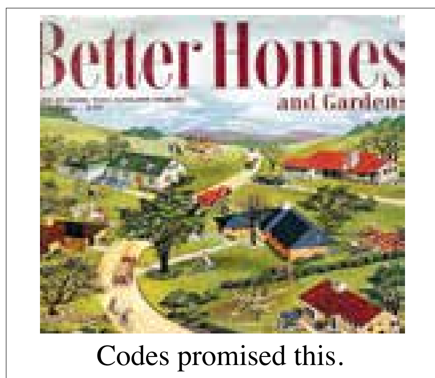


100 PLANNERS TYPING CODES...

Changing the Codes

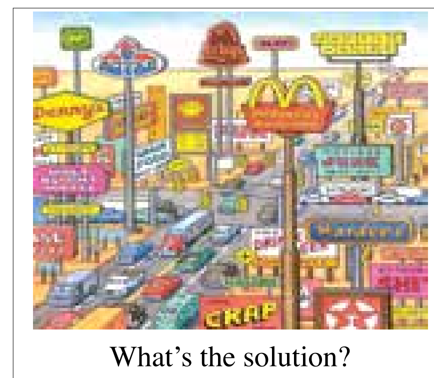


Won't all these new regulations adversely impact businesses with less than 50 employees?



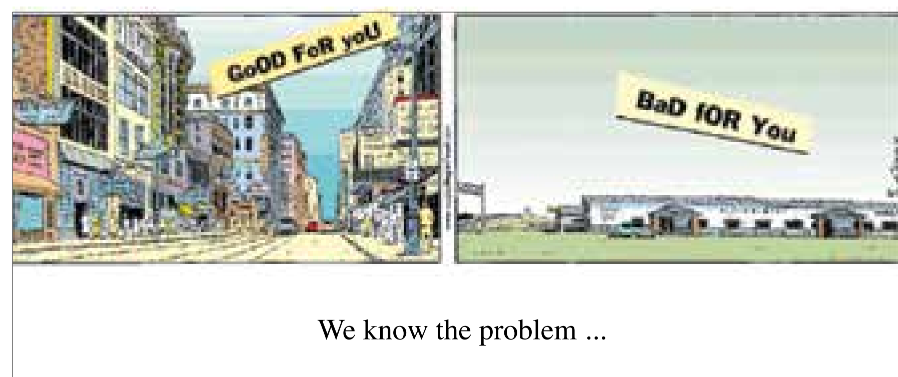
Codes promised this.

Codes delivered this.

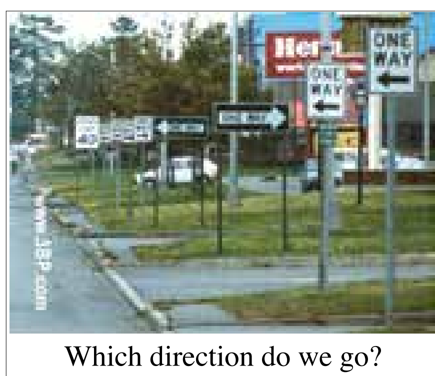


What's the solution?

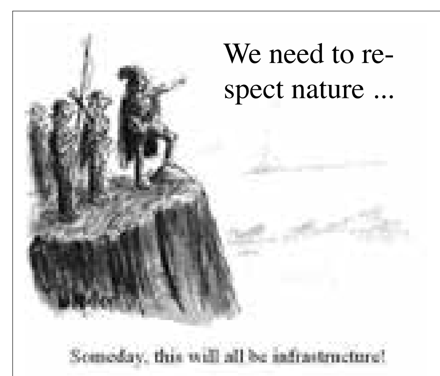
Regulations are necessary...



We know the problem ...

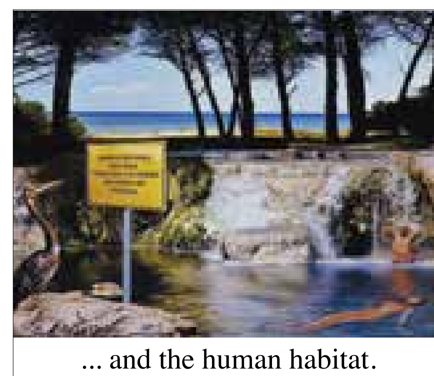


Which direction do we go?



We need to respect nature ...

Someday, this will all be infrastructure!



... and the human habitat.

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Andrés Duany
New Urban Assessment Checklist

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13th Century Town Planning
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Gianni Longo
Ellen Greenberg
Mark White
Paul Crawford

Thoroughfares and Codes
Rick Chellman
Rick Hall
Peter Swift

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Cotton District

THE TOWN PAPER

A Renewal of a Mississippi Neighborhood

By Dan Camp

In 1967, when the Urban Renewal Laws were adopted by the city of Starkville, Miss., the small neighborhood located between Mississippi State University and downtown Starkville was designated the Urban Renewal Area. This part of Starkville became very important in 1926 when the Sanders family built a cotton mill. Tenant housing was provided for the workers by the cotton mill. These houses were small, one room wide, several rooms deep, on small 25 by 100 feet lots. Schools, shops, churches and rail facilities were located in this area when the cotton mill was in full production. The cotton mill stopped production in 1964 after having scaled back in the early 1950s. By the mid 1960s, most of the tenant housing was in a state of disrepair. However, when the urban renewal lines were drawn, a small part of the cotton mill tenements on Lummus Drive and Holtsinger Street was left out of the redevelopment plans.

I became interested in acquiring property for student housing in 1969 and started plans for a small, eight-unit group of townhouses. Alexandria, Va.; Vicksburg, Miss. and New Orleans, La., were drawn upon for their historical architecture styles in designing this first group of small townhouses. The location for these townhouses was to be on Lummus Drive. (Most folks, when asked about this location, thought it unwise.)

After successfully completing the first units, I began to purchase other property on Lummus Drive, each piece offering a different problem. In most cases, the lots were too small for more than a single family dwelling.

It became necessary for each piece of property to be carried to the Planning Commission so that the square footage requirements of the lots could be relaxed. Over the years, it became common for me to appear before the Board of Alderman and Planning Commission on a regular basis. Interestingly, it was stated by several members of the Board of Alderman, as long as I stayed in the area, they would allow for variances.

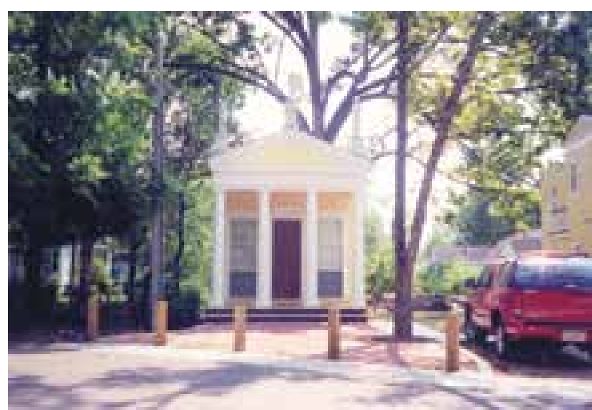
Over the years, as I added new buildings to the neighborhood, it gave the area a unique appearance in regard to the rest of the community, and the demand from professionals to live on Lummus Drive increased. To give the neighborhood a feeling of permanence, I designed a patio home group that sold out quickly, each lot being only 30 by 36 feet. This grouping was done through a planned unit development with the covenants allowing commercial activity on the first floor, and living space above.

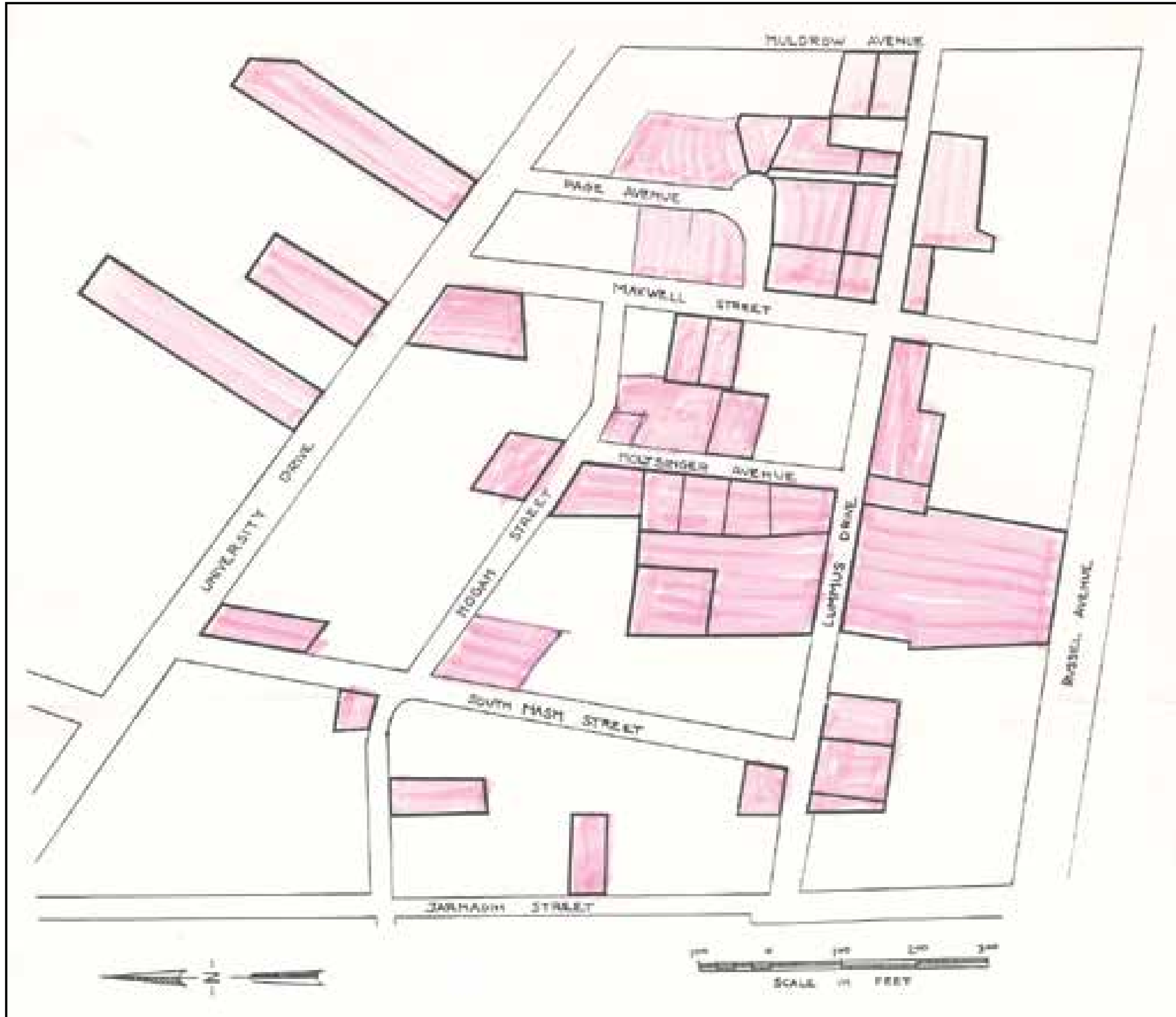
With the density increasing on Lummus Drive, Holtsinger and Maxwell streets, we had restaurants, beauty salons and quick-stops to locate in the immediate vicinity. Designing in small spaces has allowed me to explore the development of small cottages for the student market. The typical cottage will have between 300 to 550 square feet.

It has been necessary over the years to facilitate construction of certain millwork for the cottages and other structures in an on-site shop. French doors, curve top windows, wood molding, dormers, wood siding and door transoms made in that shop have given me great flexibility in my designs. Lightweight concrete has been used in casting our own column caps, bases and window treatments, along with real concrete stucco for walls.

It must be noted that, even with the redevelopment of the neighborhood, we have those residents who continue to live in the area; they did not sell, but chose to stay and become a part of the new emerging neighborhood. The future looks promising for the next five to 10 years for continued construction on Holtsinger Street and nearby University Drive.

Presentations are still made to the Planning Commission and the Board of Alderman for setbacks and lot variances. However, it becomes easier and easier each time, as the true feeling and beauty of the area have become evident.





PLAN BY DAN CAMP

Project Name: Cotton District

Location: Starkville, Mississippi

Classification: Infill

Designer: Dan Camp

Consultants: N/A

Architect: Dan Camp

Developer: Dan Camp

Design Date: 1969 – present

Construction Begun: 1969

Status (Design, under construction, etc.): Approximately 210 units completed to date; construction is ongoing

Site Area (acres): N/A

Project Construction Cost (total): N/A

Residential (no. of units):
Houses: 40
Rowhouses: 14
Apartments: 160
Live/Work Units: 10 (5 work units)

Residential Price Range (Initial Target): 1969: $115 per month; 2002: same apartment $575 per month

Current Range: $300 – $1,200 per month

Commercial: Retail: 5,000 sq. ft. (six different spaces)

Commercial Price Range: $1 per square foot per month, $12 per square foot per year

ALL PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS IN THIS SECTION COURTESY DAN CAMP.

Peer Review

Dan Camp's Cotton District

By Victor Dover

Like its maker, Dan Camp's Cotton District is folksy, amiably rebellious, and practical. It teaches. It's humble and gregarious and is full of stories. It works hard and has a sense of humor.

The Cotton District disproves many myths and proves new truths, in its business model, in the evolving design of the neighborhood, and in the architecture. A tour of this little, six-block area would be useful instruction for every American town official, planner and developer.

Good Business

Dan Camp was practicing new urbanism for at least 20 years before new urbanism had a name, and he is an idealistic fellow. But he is also a bottom-line businessman. He is self-trained and self-made, having grown wealthy (anyone who gets to live in a house that nice should consider himself wealthy) by building well. And what did he build? *Affordable housing without a government subsidy*. Many people think it can't be done in modern times, but there it sits, beautifully.

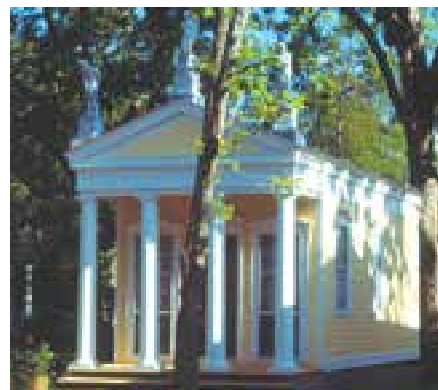
He reinvented the rental housing biz in Starkville, dropping the distinctions between developer, property manager, architect and contractor, preferring to do it all himself. In the process he confirmed an alternative model for delivering a traditional neighborhood development. Camp says his real estate business is "not about location, location, location — it's about cash-flow, cash-flow, cash-flow." Fulfilling the new urbanists' emphasis on infill and redevelopment, he went to work on a part of town other investors had neglected or abandoned, and he made money doing it.

The Cotton District story ought to be looked upon as an economic overhaul, not just a physical one. Camp saw the match between his market and his vision — drawing in many college students, the "last great pedestrian population" as tenants — and proved that design matters more than size. His cottages and apartments are reasonably priced at least in part because they are petite; the tenants pay for dignity and charm, not square footage.

He's built out the Cotton District in small increments over a long period of time, sustainably adding more investment each year to what he started in 1968. Much of the construction has been done by residents of the old community, recruited by Camp himself for training in building trades. Gradually the District grew more diverse and more mixed-use; his recent District Exchange building integrates more businesses into the mix. (An homage website points out that the District Exchange "ad campaign" consists of the Common Ground coffee shop's $2 open/closed sign.)

Good Neighborhood

Experience has taught the new urbanists to be suspicious of any situation in which one landlord owns and designs and controls everything. Walter Kulash has warned us about what he calls "the cold, dead hand of common management." But the Cotton District proves a shiny exception to that rule. It's not boring or homogenized or static or corporate at all. I think this is partly because Camp has built out the quarter slowly, pondering each piece, even changing his mind now and then and rebuilding. He's also combined new construction and adaptive reuse (sometimes gently, sometimes thankfully not) within the same blocks, in the way traditional cities always have. He approached the larger project as a collection of smaller buildings, each whole in its design. The Cotton District is the opposite of a megacomplex broken down into little facades to simulate incremental construction; it's real.



Renters and owners are close neighbors here. Overall there is a remarkably high density (one acre has 28 units) but you'd never know it, largely because the parking is cleverly dispersed and screened. The street scene is quiet and green.

During one of my visits, I watched a workman who was very meticulously building a staircase on one of the "Four Apostles" cottages. After a while he explained that he was being extra careful because he "was going to have to look at it when it's done." He wasn't kidding: He lived in the rowhouse across the street. Carpenters share the neighborhood with well-scrubbed college kids and people of independent means.

This livable density and economic mix has been accomplished in a way that can easily confound purists. Camp refused to be restricted to the conventional relationship of one-building-on-a-lot; blocks in the District are more like compounds, organized collections of buildings. One is reminded of the blocks of colonial Philadelphia or Charleston, where the grand mansions hugged the block edges while servants' quarters, kitchens, workshops and stables formed midblock compounds of cottages and outbuildings. The Cotton District has a similar juxtaposition of building sizes and character. Small but dignified dwellings are integrated among large ones and yet there is a surprising sense of privacy. In this respect the Cotton District can be compared to George Holt's eccentric Tulley Alley in Charleston — another case of a maverick builder adding pieces incrementally and holding the property for its long-term value. Camp persuaded the city of Starkville to assign PUD status for just 1 acre, which allowed him to outflank the usual setbacks and other zoning complications.

The Cotton District has homespun street spaces, not just homespun buildings. There is no single universal pavement or curb detail or dimension applied throughout, but rather a big quilt of changing brick patterns, street widths, terraced sidewalks, garden walls and fences. Along the streets, most of the buildings align not to a single build-to-line, but in site-by-site customized positions, dodging trees. The adjustments are slight, but deliberate. The combined result feels personal and authentic.

Good Architecture

The architecture in the Cotton District is traditional folk art and has always irked the architecture school people who consider it subversive. The language is comfortable and familiar, but not corny. Camp bends tradition as it suits him, cheerfully filtering his experiences in New Orleans and Europe into new buildings. Duany compares his napkin sketches of elevations to naïve American drawings by 18th century planters. The outcomes tend to prove how robust the language of traditional architecture actually is. Despite the fact that so many parts are a little bit off — headers above windows seem short, proportions stretched and squashed, ornaments oversized or undersized, porches so shallow, and so on — the whole is still charming. The Starkville tourism folks say the Cotton District is the most photographed historic area in town, which is astonishing only when you realize that the buildings being photographed are almost all less than 20 years old.

To pull off the small-is-beautiful vision his way and on a budget, Camp is almost certainly doing things that conventional building codes in the big cities won't permit. A number of the cottages have wood post foundations — copied from a long-lasting kind he found in historical Mississippi examples. Camp tells of how his traffic details were determined by whether his elderly mother could navigate them in her big car. Stairs and doorways are narrow, clearances are tight, but it's all seemingly workable.

Above all else, craftsmanship flourishes in the Cotton District. Operating out of a workshop shed behind his house, Camp has alternated between building his own windows, from scratch, and modifying store-bought ones. If he can't buy what he needs, he builds it or reconstructs it, and reuses everything. Naturally he maintains that he does it all for practical reasons, having been landlord over much of the property for long enough to see cheaper fixtures wear out. The craftsmanship extends to finishes, too. His crew works tint into the stucco, to get the watercolor tones. He disdains putting control joints in the stucco. Instead, he deliberately lets it crack, and then the patching and retouching gives his walls their handworked character. He mixes marble dust into the cast concrete steps to make them shine like stone.

The humbler early buildings in the District contrast with the newer ones, which, while still tiny, are fitted with more decoration. Camp has begun experimenting with increasingly elaborate ornament, including more sculpture, more mouldings and tassles, and one wonders if he's trying to provoke the architecture school people anew or just trying to prove he can figure out ways to build the stuff. Good for him either way.

America Needs More of This

The struggling neighborhood flanking the old Sanders Mill in Starkville was once called "Needmore." Dan Camp was exactly what it needed more of. Now is there a way America can get 10,000 more Cotton Districts, 10,000 more Dan Camps?

Peer Review

Dan Camp and the Cotton District

By Kevin Klinkenberg

If you're in doubt of what to do, just do it. Don't ask someone if it's OK. That, among many others, is a bit of wisdom from Dan Camp — the iconoclastic builder/developer/designer/entrepreneur from Starkville, Miss. It's difficult to even begin to write about Dan's many accomplishments, let alone critique them. Trained as an industrial arts teacher, Dan is a self-proclaimed member of the "unwashed" amongst the architectural crowd. Without the burden of an architectural education, and all the philosophical confusion that goes with it, Dan set about building the Cotton District in 1972. He had none of the baggage of obscure French philosophers or anti-human avant-garde architecture. Instead, he simply wanted to make a better mousetrap, and make some money doing it. Thirty years later, he's built a magical place that offers incredible lessons not only for new urbanists, but also for society at large.

Lesson 1: Love your craft. It's not enough for Dan and crew to simply build with durable, long-lasting, beautiful materials. No, they take it one impressive step further and make many of their own building elements. From windows to bricks, moldings to columns, Dan fabricates some or all of these for his projects. Most importantly, though, is that it's done with an obvious love of the craft itself. Dan speaks of dormers as if they are fine pieces of furniture. Gutters are not utilitarian — they are works of art. Newel posts are aligned in the finest Southern tradition. We should all enjoy our labors so much.

Lesson 2: Build for the long-term. From the beginning, Dan took the approach that this endeavor was a marathon, not a sprint. He started with his worst land, as any smart developer does, and saved the best for later on. He very admittedly was looking for a way to make some money. The path, however, was through owning income-producing property, not the all-too-common build it and flip it technique. In fact, the only property he sold was a money loser to the tune of $250,000. Now, the banks bid for the rights to lend him money.

Lesson 3: Use creativity to achieve livable higher density. It would be an understatement to say that Dan has created some of the most unique small-residence solutions in America. From the 14- by 22-foot Dixie playhouses to the 16- by 20-foot cottage with a sleeping loft, these apartments are little jewels unto themselves.

The easy thing would be to say, "well, it's a college town; of course he can get away with tiny, unique units." However, anyone who has experienced the depressing monotony of typical "student housing" would be wise to question that assumption. In fact, the easy thing is to simply throw up any cheap, utilitarian structure, as it is surely guaranteed to be rented. Camp's whimsical, creative residences (built at 28 units to the acre) shows us that even the beer-drinking, 3 a.m. partying, American college student can enjoy the benefits of traditional architecture and urbanism.

Lesson 4: Have fun with it. There's a simple word that comes to mind when thinking of the Cotton District: joy. Oftentimes we fill hundreds of pages of books with theories, postulations and rationalizations for what we do. But, how often do we say, "I just did that because it makes me smile, and makes other people smile as well?" The Cotton District, and Dan Camp's approach to neighborhood-building, can't help but make you smile.

Lesson 5: Sometimes the best regulation is no regulation. The world tends to be divided into people who respond to carrots and those who respond to sticks. Why not craft regulations and public processes that deal appropriately with both, rather than giving everyone the stick treatment? In the Cotton District, Dan enjoys a unique relationship with the folks at City Hall; one that would make most of us envious. Very often this means building without even having plans. It might mean simply doing what he knows is right, and not waiting for bureaucratic approval. That approach is sure to send shivers down the spines of municipal officials everywhere — especially the ones who require developers to have every conceivable detail drawn before any aspect of a site can be disturbed. And yet, in the Cotton District in Starkville, Miss., it works. If we truly want to create more great places (especially ones that are accessible to the general public), we will need to find ways to trust people, in ways that will make us nervous. But life is full of pleasant surprises, when people are actually treated like adults.

Lesson 6: Take your inspiration from great places. Dan first started in the Cotton District after being inspired by Alexandria, Va., and its wonderful historic fabric. His fascination with places such as New Orleans, Rome and Charleston have led him to produce buildings of not only wide variety, but also great beauty. It's a continuing lesson for us — take inspiration from the good things, not the bad. Industrial processes may be scientific fascinations, but beautiful places they do not make.

Lesson 7: Treat people with great respect. In every aspect of his business, whether it's building, designing, sales, marketing or maintenance, Dan believes in treating people as a gentleman. It sounds trite and over-simplistic, but doing unto others as they would unto you truly does pay dividends. And the beauty of it is, it's not a difficult thing to do.

So what else to say about the Cotton District and Dan Camp? Very simply, how do we make more? How do we create a world where there is a Dan Camp in every town? As the new urbanism matures, and becomes the plaything of the nationals and the multinationals, let's not forget about little Starkville, Miss. The Cotton District truly embodies the notion that small increments of great quality and joy, built over a number of decades, may produce the most satisfying places of all.

Psychosociology of the Cotton District

By Brian Herrmann

In recent years the Cotton District has garnered the attention of a number of professionals and media outlets working in fields related to planning and architecture. Often, those expressing initial interest find it necessary or beneficial to make a personal pilgrimage to visit this atypical neighborhood. In return, both the Cotton District and Dan Camp have received national acclaim.

I have completed an internship in which I lived with, worked and studied under Camp at the Cotton District in Starkville, Miss. As a result of my own visits and studies, I became interested in a concept that I deemed the "functioning of a neighborhood" — true diversity of daily routines. I chose to focus my attention on the potential impact that planning and architecture might have on this concept. If a causal relationship between the two existed, then I felt the Cotton District had the potential to demonstrate it.

The Great Conflict

Many older neighborhoods and newer subdivisions are considered to be works in progress. So too is the Cotton District. Yet, it has more in common with the former than the latter, as progress here entails transforming a conventional subdivision into a multifaceted functioning neighborhood. The Cotton District neighborhood appears to be a bastion of American civic life, and may very well be. Its slow transformation from residential neighborhood to mixed-use institution or town (in function, not incorporation) certainly resembles the pre-sprawl growth patterns of yesteryear. On the surface the *potential* town seems the perfect throwback to the way things were. Herein lies the great conflict. Everything related to the beautiful exterior is really the creation of one man. In essence the idyllic all-American town is actually a privately owned real estate (rental) business.

Dan Camp, the man behind the operation, is every bit the determinist planner, authoritarian ruler and successful capitalist. The real Cotton District is by definition a capitalist success story. Yet, it took determinist planning and authoritarian rule in the presence of a larger democratic government to create this façade. Camp is the ultimate capitalist. He uses authoritarian rule as means for creating his "all American" neighborhood that, through its very existence, scoffs at many federal and local government regulations that promote a type of development not adhered to in the Cotton District. In so doing, Camp exposes the fact that many of these land-use "regulations" disregard true democracy and purist notions of freedom from government regulation. One is left to question whether or not the ideal American town-building model is still realistic, or whether it now requires overwhelming private control and determinism to counteract an equally laden and burdensome system of government regulation, codes and zoning. There are a number of new urban projects underway that will either provide answers or change many of the "regulations" in the process of attempting to find answers.

Pride of Ownership

Quite often, Camp and his family perform the same tasks as his workers, yet the family views the entire district as their home. Though family members are aware of the outside attention given to the Cotton District, this is not their motivating factor. The pride that the family demonstrates is not atypical of ownership, especially home ownership. Because they view

See HERRMANN, page 38.

THE TOWN PAPER

Melrose Arch: How and Who

By Paul Murrain

It is necessary to remember that the original intention was to put a shopping mall on the site. Designs had been done and things were ready to go. The owner, the Sentinel Mining Industry Retirement Fund, had previously bought and land-banked 90 suburban subdivisions, built in the early 20th century and in full occupation.

A major financial institution like the Retirement Fund is extremely conservative by nature. It traditionally funded and developed what it knew: the usual business parks, shopping malls, etc. Therefore, the key challenge and ultimate success was in persuading the Retirement Fund that its investment was better spent and better protected by building traditional urbanism.

This involved not only illustrating many things from the new urbanism movement in the United States, but also engaging them in what was happening in the post-industrial economy. That is, how lifestyles and work practices were changing across the world, and that what they were proposing was at best a short-term expedient and at worst a complete dinosaur.

Of course, all the usual "specialist advisors" were somewhere between skeptical and downright hostile, predicting financial disaster for a dense, mixed-use scheme in South Africa, trotting out the usual mantras about South Africa being different from the rest of the world, etc. But it is worth noting that while South Africa was different in some respects politically and socially, it was no different in what people wanted from their built environment.

Nothing short of a revolution had happened in 1994 with the institution of black majority rule. This had taken the spatial controls of apartheid away, if not the balance of economic power. Therefore, despite the remarkably smooth nature of the transition, there was in many respects a greater desire to protect, isolate and bunker each use category and development, because violence and certainly the perception of violence had grown enormously. The significant point here is that this political/spatial dimension added an even greater element of investment risk to the Pension Fund from putting enormous amounts of money up front for mixed-use traditional urbanism.

The credit within the client group for believing that traditional mixed-use urbanism was the way of the future belongs primarily to the wisdom of Mike Cullabine, executive officer of investments and properties of the Sentinel Mining Industry Retirement Fund and Mines Official Retirement Fund. He was surrounded by many doubters and skeptics but has remained convinced and committed to "building town," an expression he has used on several occasions to emphasise his point.

Cullabine has been advised and supported by John Dovey, managing director of Osmond Lange Architects and Planners; James Oppenheim, director of Arup Planning and Development; and Graham Wilson, the town architect from Osmond Lange who has been the guardian of the design and seen it through with great passion and commitment. These three were the core of the Melrose Arch Management Committee, charged with the design and delivery of the project.

An architecture and urban design practice called Urban Solutions played a vital role in the early stages of the plan and was instrumental in getting Paul Murrain (a CNU Charter signatory) involved as urban design consultant in early 1997, to lead a first charrette exercise. Murrain has made several visits over the subsequent period.

The Plan, the Built Form and the Process

Overall development rights are for 330,100 square meters (3,630,000 square feet) including offices, shops, businesses, hotels, residential, social halls, places of entertainment, places of instruction, and a parking garage. The first phase consists of all the above uses amounting to 80,304 square meters in total (approximately 881,000 square feet). It is complete and fully occupied. Extra residential is allowed, but not at the automatic expense of any other use. The extra residential would entail increasing height.

The plan has an interconnected network of streets, including a new tree-lined boulevard, a main street and two new urban squares.

The main street, anchored by a square at each end, is the focus of the mixed-use. The main street consists of narrow frontage, mixed-use, four-story buildings with retail on the ground floor, offices on the middle two, and penthouse apartments on top. A corporate office building forms one side of the main street in the first phase but has a double height colonnade and ground floor retail, including a supermarket/deli/café, hairdressers and music store. These ground floor uses did not deter the commercial occupation of the floors above; in fact quite the reverse.

This resulted in a somewhat unconventional main street with a fine grain of buildings on one side of the street, each with their own small colonnade and a large commercial building with its own continuous double height colonnade opposite. The next phase of the main street will be crucial in introducing a similar scale and rhythm to both sides of the street.

There is on-street parking throughout; all other parking is underground. The first basement level is for shoppers and visitors in general. The two lower floors

See MURRAIN, page 12

Project Name: Melrose Arch

Location: Johannesburg, South Africa

Classification: Center

Designer: Osmond Lange Architects and Planners, Arup Planning and Development

Consultants: Urban Solutions, urban design; Paul Murrain, urban design

Architects: Albonico & Sack, BK, Comrie Wilkinson, Koseff Radford Louw, Kruger Roos, Lee Sanders Architects, Meyer Pienaar Tayob, OMM Design Workshop, Osmond Lange, Paragon Architects, Pheiffer Vincente & Englund, Savage & Dodd, TC Design, Thetaplan, TPC Architects

Developer: Sentinel Mining Industry Retirement Fund & Mines Official Retirement Fund

Design Date: 1997

Construction Begun: 1998

Status: Phase I complete

Site Area: 18 hectares

Project Construction Cost (total):
R3.5 Billion ($350 million)

Cost to Date: R1 Billion ($100 million)

Residential: 170 units
- Houses: 0
- Rowhouses: 0
- Apartments: 150
- Live/Work Units: 20

Initial Residential Price Range:
R1 million – R5 million ($118,000 – $591,000)

Current Residential Price Range:
R2.5 million – R5 million ($295,000 – $591,000)

Commercial (planned):
- Office: 2,286,000 sq. ft.
- Retail: 400,000 sq. ft.

Commercial Price Range: R85 – R110 per square meter per month ($0.85 – $1.10 per sq. ft.)

Public & Civic Program: Two public squares, hotels, social halls, places of instruction, 3,850,000-square-foot underground garage beneath entire site

ALL IMAGES IN THIS SECTION COURTESY PAUL MURRAIN AND OSMOND LANGE ARCHITECTS.

Peer Review

The Creative Energy of Melrose Arch

By Joanna Alimanestianu

I left the Council perplexed. Within a new urbanist plan, how can "architecture of invention" (not to be specified as modern, avant-garde, deconstructivist or postmodern) be acceptable in certain contexts and not in others? Why did I react so differently when viewing the images of Prospect, Colo. and those of Melrose Arch? Both followed the principals of new urbanism! Both allowed, even encouraged, architectural experimentation.

Since I am a traditionalist at heart I should have felt uneasy with both. Well, no. Prospect made me uncomfortable while Melrose Arch left me intrigued.

Was it because I prefer cities to towns? I hope not. Like many people, perhaps it is simply my expectation of what a city is all about. Urbanity allows and encourages variety and extremes. We go to the "city" to be aroused, inspired and to absorb the energy. Smells of all sorts merge, loud noises mix into a continuous hum, bright and colored lights flicker in the background. Spiky hair, piercings and tattoos walk among grey suits. The unexpected is expected. We don't have to like it all — in fact, much of it we don't — but we aren't bothered. With the intensity and density of urbanity comes tolerance.

This also seems true about the buildings of a city, those buildings that create the spaces. In a dense, strong, well-defined ground plan, unexpected architecture, even awkward architecture, blends together to become an ensemble.

In a village or rural setting the parts that make the whole are more visible. Everything and anyone who is different immediately comes to our attention. That which is strange can quickly become disturbing, even irritating. If you want to be noticed, just walk down a local neighborhood street with pink hair and a boom box. In a city, on the other hand, you have more freedom to express yourself, be yourself and yet remain anonymous. At Prospect the problem might just be that the architectural experimentation is too visible. It certainly can't go unnoticed.

Just from the images I could tell that there was something special about Melrose Arch. I wanted to know more. Once back home I called my South African friends who live in Johannesburg and asked them whether they knew Melrose Arch. Their response was enthusiastic: "There is nothing like it anywhere around. We love it. Everything is there in one neighborhood. It's a place where you feel free, you feel alive." They were intrigued that even though the housing part was not yet finished and the offices were closed on the weekend, the place was bustling with life as they ate Saturday lunch at an out door café.

They explained that it exudes that "creative energy" that is so South African. They insisted, "It's really a place you must visit!"

Congratulations, Paul! How could you ask for more?

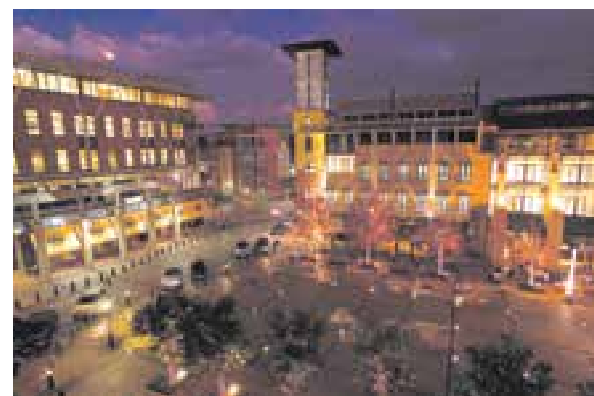
Though I am convinced that Melrose is a wonderful place and a great success, especially considering the context, I am left with some thoughts, some questions.

I see the intense "creative energy" people are talking about. But I wonder whether the exuberant environment it has become will in turn have the capacity to inspire creativity. It could also have the opposite effect and intimidate or numb those who occupy it.

My South African friends tell me not to worry!

And yet I continue to wonder if the objective for most of the designers wasn't to express themselves, striving by all means for something new and different, rather than designing a place in which others can think

See ALIMANESTIANU, page 39



MURRAIN/How and Who

From page 10

are parking for the office users.

The Office Typology

A significant change in the form of the office buildings is of great importance. There is no deep plan space. Depths are between 12-15 meters with central courtyard spaces.

These offices are to remain under the ownership of the Pension Fund until decided otherwise. It was acknowledged that the flexibility of celluralisation was more important than obtaining maximum efficiency in net-to-gross space.

The Code and the Architecture

Despite the fine grain of the architecture, particularly along the main street, it was understandable that the Pension Fund would want to use its usual shortlist of architects. This ran the risk of one or two architects attempting to achieve variety rather than many hands responding to a code; a familiar issue to new urbanists, but not to major property investors.

The benefits of producing and policing a code were discussed and debated at length. It was not an easy one to win. But an additional argument in favour was the very essence of the spirit of the new South Africa: to include less established, multi-racial, talented, younger practices. The existence of a code and the overview of the "town architects" gave the investors confidence to go this way, at least for the first phase.

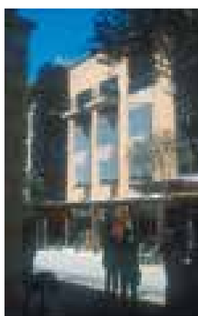
The nature and content of the code, particularly with reference to the tectonics of the architecture, has been and remains one of the most discussed issues of Melrose Arch. The urbanism is traditional, the architecture is modern. How a country with a dubious past views its new beginnings via its architectural expression is a profound issue. Allied to this is the fact that its architectural education typically abandoned any real pursuit of colonial traditions decades ago.

The real challenge of this code and its review process was how the discipline of the urbanism – street, block and plot, with architectural codes addressing the assemblage of materials and elements – could harness the inherent tendency towards "originality" and allow the whole to be greater than the sum of its parts. The degree to which this has been achieved in the first phase rightly remains a topic of great debate.

The project is felt by those involved to have been a success of urbanism over architecture, although to suggest that kind of polarity is perhaps controversial in itself.

The Selection of Architects

A limited competition was held over an intensive few days. An invited selection of architects across the country was brought to Johannesburg and given a day-long briefing on the tenets of new urbanism, as well as technical briefings. They were given a specific building to work on, a copy of the code, and then they left to produce their designs. Those chosen did not necessarily work on the building they had been given initially, but the 11 buildings of the now occupied first phase were procured this way. The residential buildings came along slightly later and are currently under construction.



Conclusion

Melrose Arch is a commercial success. This is as much to do with the creation of a coherent active public realm of streets, squares and mixed use as it is with the specification of the commercial architecture. Perhaps this is no surprise to a new urbanist audience, but it was a great risk taken at the time by a major pension fund. It is a thrill to see them financially rewarded for believing and trusting what new urbanism espouses. It

is now accepted by the property industry that Melrose Arch is *the* address. In the evenings and weekends, traffic is already a problem as the street cafés, bars, and restaurants draw the crowds.

It must be pointed out that security is a major issue in South Africa at present; hopefully not for too long. Melrose Arch is far more open than any other recent or contemporary property development, and that openness includes bringing public transport along the boulevard. In South Africa this is an extraordinary step forward in itself.

In Melrose Arch, design codes and review have been introduced to South Africa with considerable success. The first phase results are the test bed for any future alterations to the coding. All urban design can do is to put in place a street system (that takes the permeability to the boundaries in as fine a grain as possible), introduce mixed-use public places, and leave the political process to do the rest.

Peer Review

Urbanity in Age of Change

By Ray Gindroz

A new, lively urban place has recently appeared on the Johannesburg scene. The streets of Melrose Arch have become a destination of choice for a diverse population of South Africans. Lined with shops and cafes, with tables and revelers spilling out in to them, these streets provide an alternative to the walled and fortified environments of recent development practices.

Paul Murrain's presentation of this remarkable project generated a good bit of discussion on several key issues. Two in particular were discussed at length: Open Urbanism in an Age of Fear and Traditional Urbanism and Untraditional Architecture. Its design and implementation offer some important lessons to all of those working to restore urbanism, urbanity and civility to our cities and regions.

Open Urbanism in an Age of Fear

This is a complex issue. A combination of high unemployment and the

stresses of a society in transition from apartheid to a new multiculturalism create major obstacles for urbanism. The crime statistics are daunting, and the fear they instill in the population is very real.

Melrose Arch has a gridded pattern of streets, intended to connect with surrounding roads in later phases. Its internal form is that of an open and interconnected city. And one of the most stunning achievements was obtaining agreement to have three bus lines run right through the development along the boulevard. In a society in which buses are part of longstanding racial and social segregation, this is a very important accomplishment.

But in the current phase of development, the grid is entered from controlled points. Ironically, it is perceived to be a "protected" place and therefore is considered a safe place in a nation with high crime rates and great concerns about public safety. The hope is that this is only a phase, and once some of the root causes of the high crime rate are dealt with, it will be possible to make the connections and fulfill its ambition of an open urban environment. This, therefore, is a strategy for extreme conditions.

In spite of this, the urban atmosphere of the place itself has become a key part of its success. The workers who come to serve the families that have bought condominiums, or to work in the shops and restaurants, use the street spaces as social places, just as do the middle and upper class whites who come to the restaurants. This is new.

With the prevailing fear-driven mindset resulting in increasingly fortified and isolated urban places, the streets of Melrose Arch themselves help us understand how can we create urban environments, for a diverse population, that are perceived to be safe and secure.

The first and most important step was to establish an interconnected network of streets and blocks. The blocks are filled with mixed-use structures, all of which have street facades with a high ratio of windows to wall, ensuring "eyes on the street." Ground floors are public spaces, with shops and cafés dominating the commercial street and lobbies and other public uses on other streets. Parking is underground, which not only hides it from view but also means that the interiors of the blocks have been developed as gardens. More importantly, this makes it possible to have active facades on the streets. There is also on-street parking which further animates the space. The cumulative effect creates an space that is urban in the sense of promoting urbanity and civility. People are in the same "room" as many other people — they can enjoy the company of strangers and feel part of a larger community. Although much of this is due to the nature of uses, it could not succeed without this quality of place.

The streets are animated. Sidewalks are wide enough for cafés and landscaping. The design of the streets encourages cars to behave in a civil manner as they move through the space at slow speeds. In the discussion, there was some concern about specific aspects of the design and cross section. For example, is the diagonal pattern disruptive or effective? Are arcades appropriate for a commercial street? Does the landscape in the median on the Boulevard creates a barrier in the center which compromises the urbanity of the space? The photographs in the presentation were taken shortly after the complex opened. It will be important to document the success and failure of various parts of it as the development matures and as additional phases are completed. And most importantly, subsequent phases should be conceived as part of a unified overall concept that integrates the phases.

Nontraditional Architecture and Traditional Urbanism

There is a conscious effort in South Africa to develop an architecture for the new society it is creating. The use of traditional forms raises many difficult social issues. What is the tradition? Is it Dutch or British Colonial? If so, does that raise the specter of social traditions that have now been rejected? The society is looking forward to a new age, but what is the architecture of the future?

Therefore, the second most important aspect of the development is the system of architectural codes or guidelines that were based entirely on urban rather than architectural issues. Once the basic massing of the blocks was established, great care was given to articulating those masses. Several key decisions were made.

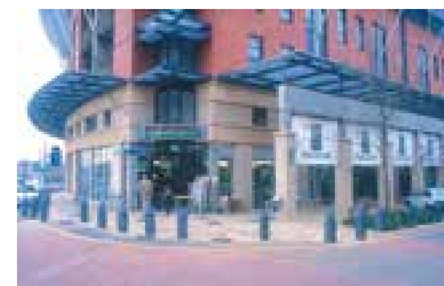
First, the development program established important conditions to stimulate diversity. Development lots are relatively small, which results in each block having several buildings. In addition, several different architects were selected to work on the project, ensuring urbanism rather than large scale architecture. The architects have different approaches and work with various architectural vocabularies. Therefore, by its very nature, the development program has created a framework for diversity and individual expression for the parts.

Secondly, strong urban codes were developed to establish the continuities and harmonies that create urban space. Ratios of solid to void, articulation for the first and second floors, criteria for window patterns on upper floors, cross sections, key landmark locations, scale and rhythm of facade articulation, and definition of entries were described verbally and graphically.

Thirdly, there was an interactive process. The architects were invited to working sessions in which they developed designs for individual buildings, testing the codes in both plan and study models. By interacting with each other, within the framework established by the design codes, they were to create urban space.

The quality of individual buildings vary in the built development. In the discussion, some respondents felt that the more exuberant buildings in key locations disrupted the continuity of the space, while others felt that it was just the right amount of vitality and energy. Where buildings violated basic urban principles such as the amount of shop front on street facades or continuity of street character, there was more consensus on the quality of the result. It is as if the common ground (or least most solid ground) for the uncertain fields of current architectural thought is urbanism!

Therefore, the Council found this to be an encouraging and powerful development. It faced the difficult question of security and managed to convince investors that it would be possible to create such a place. And it provides us with a way of understanding of those key qualities of urbanism that can be an integral part of many different architectural vocabularies.



Mark Sofield

Kiki Wallace

Prospect: Project Evaluation

By Mark Sofield

New urbanism, at its best, can accommodate a broader range of living patterns than other suburban development models. It is also quite successful at promoting that capacity. The success and high profile of the new urbanism was a key factor in Prospect's acceptance by Longmont, the municipality that contains it. More importantly, the weight of experience and knowledge behind the new urbanism was critical to Prospect's design.

In its smaller moments, new urbanism seems little more than a marketing scheme, albeit an effective one. It has sold itself so well that its founders' utopian aims are now often overshadowed by its developers' pecuniary ones. The originally broad and inclusive concept has been narrowed to a nostalgic, easily marketed image of a time that never even existed. In Prospect, the weight of early homebuyers' expectations for the homogenous, quasi-historic building styles of so many other TNDs nearly collapsed the whole enterprise.

The Plan

The charrette that produced Prospect's land plan was an unusually fertile one, so much so that the ultimate design had to be synthesized from three complete, and completely viable, alternatives. The plan is as intelligently composed as it is experientially rich. I am continually impressed by its subtlety, and I work in apprehension of not designing up to its full potential.

A number of awkward instances in the plan result from a limiting over-attention to market considerations. For me, the most problematic one is the requirement that similar building types face each other across public streets or parks. The plan's adherence to this precept has led, ironically, to the dilution of the urban form, especially at some key four-way intersections. Prospect is also frustratingly insular. Of its five vehicular entrances, only one could be made to continue an existing street. We are alienated from the subdivisions that surround us, and I wish there were more opportunities for connection.

The Regulations

Prospect's Urban Regulations — the documents that control the size, shape, use and position of the buildings that fill out the plan — are as clear and comprehensive a set of instructions as one could hope for. Likewise, the covenants that set out the official relationship between the commercial and civic aspects of this venture are a model of efficient but comprehensive legal structure. They are also the underpinnings of what will eventually be an efficient and comprehensive community.

The Architectural Regulations are an ongoing problem. Already much revised, they still fail to convey the full breadth of the building types we seek to promote. While these regulations are an unavoidable legal necessity, we may never be able to completely control such a physical, material undertaking through written prescriptions.

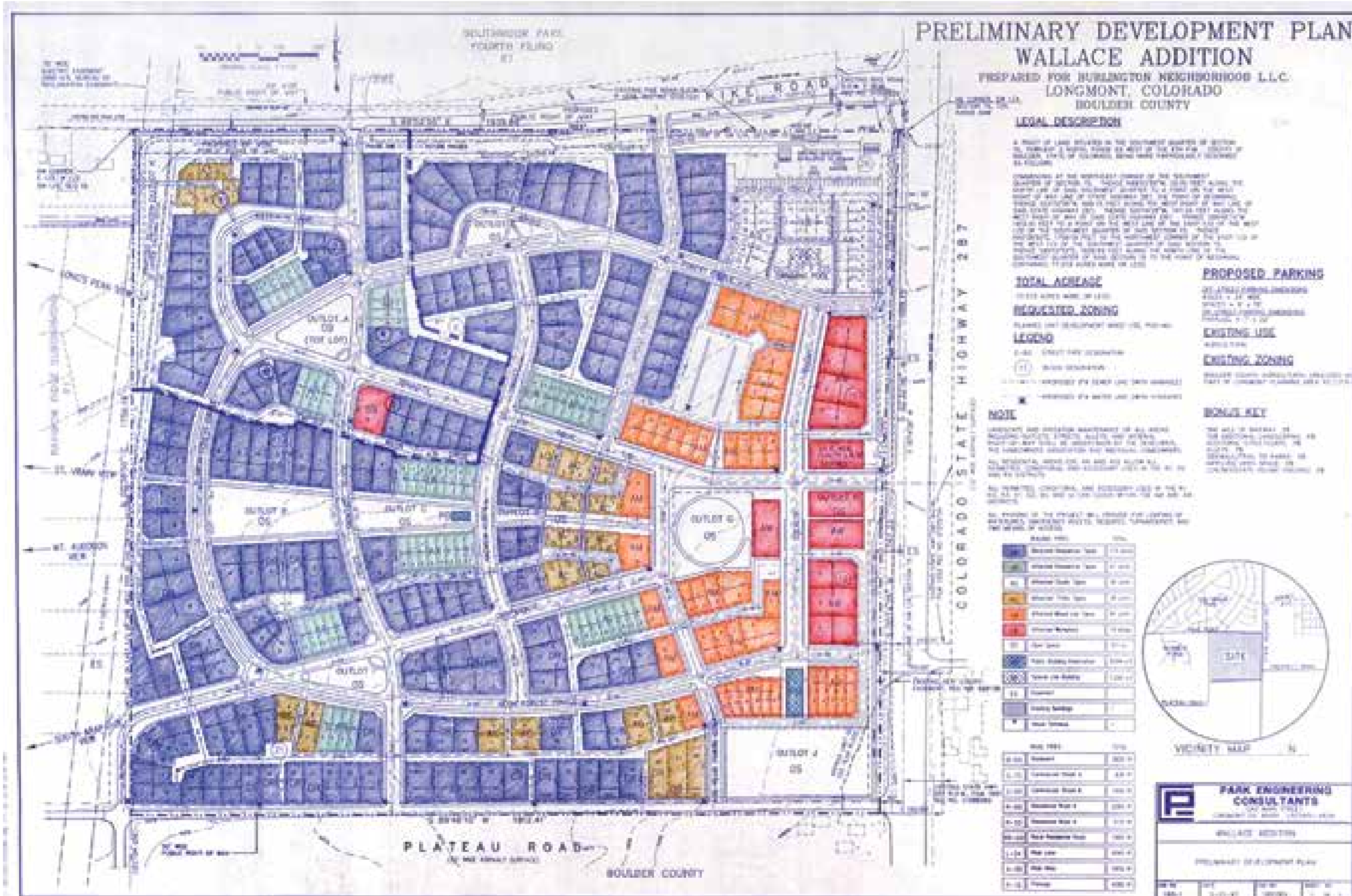
The Buildings

The best aspect of the architecture in Prospect is its diversity. This follows more from our desire to accommodate a range of tastes, living patterns and incomes than from a desire for novelty. The architectural variety enlivens the public spaces and expands the usefulness of the private ones. The dwellings and workplaces are tailored to their users in a way that no other speculative subdivision I am aware of attempts. The strongest designs synthesize local building forms, modern construction technologies and tectonic theory, and the emerging sensibility of the place itself.

The multiformity comes at the expense of cohesiveness. I have more than once been accused — by residents as well as distant critics — of destroying the urban fabric of the project and the clarity of the plan. Our least successful buildings, often by non-local architects, are unfortunately also some of our highest profile ones. As Prospect progresses I hope to get better at integrating the streetscape without suppressing the individuation that is so important to our idea of community.

The Town

Ultimately, a lot of what's wrong with Prospect is also what's right about it, and this paradox gives the neighborhood its particular energy and flavor. Other projects seek to displease as few potential buyers as possible. We try instead to please those home and business owners who are more interested in choice and character than in conformity. The consistency of our diversity is one of our key attributes. It is also the most difficult one to convey in photographs. To really understand Prospect it is necessary to come here. A walk through the neighborhood will show that the range of building types, forms, materials and colors do often coalesce into pleasing and coherent urban compositions.



Project Name: Prospect

Location: Longmont, Colorado

Classification: TND

Designer: Duany Plater-Zyberk

Consultants: Douglas Duany, Sandy Brown; Landscape

Architects: Many

Developer: Kiki Wallace

Design Date: January 1994

Construction Begun: November 1996

Status: Phase Three under construction

Site Area: 80 acres

Net Site Area: 77 acres

Project Construction Cost: $10 million infrastructure only; $145 million including building construction

Cost to Date: $5 million infrastructure only; $67.5 million including building construction

Residential: 700 units
Detached Houses (including accessory units): 297
Attached Houses: 123
Apartments: 198
Live/Work Units: 82

Initial Residential Price Range: $125,000-$275,000

Current Residential Price Range: $190,000-$700,000

Commercial: Current: 15,000 sq. ft., projected: 150,000 sq. ft.
Office: 75,000 sq. ft.
Retail: 75,000 sq. ft.

Commercial Price Range: $125-$250 per sq. ft.

Public & Civic Program: Skating rink, pool, community building, playground

ALL IMAGES IN THIS SECTION COURTESY MARK SOFIELD AND KIKI WALLACE.

Peer Review

Of Pot Roast and Sushi

By Bill Dennis

For those who like that sort of thing, I should think this is just about the sort of thing they would like.
— Abe Lincoln

Prospect represents a noble experiment in the ongoing testing of new urbanism. Many of the principles of the Charter are in evidence here and are accomplished with a sure and steady hand. The neighborhood structure, variety of streets, building types and uses, and a general regard for the civic realm are all visible. The experiment that Prospect undertakes is about what effect style has upon the character of the neighborhood. There are three questions that this experiment tries to answer:

1. Is there one style that is more appropriate to our time and this particular location?
2. Do we live in certain way today that calls for a new expression of style?
3. How do we allow freedom of individual expression and still create community?

Until recently, the word "modern" used to refer generically to the contemporaneous; all art is modern at the time it is made. Léon Krier makes this distinction between "modern" and "modernism." Modernism is a style that represents a certain philosophy and has certain stylistic elements, ironically including some motifs that could by now be considered historical. Kiki Wallace

and Mark Sofield have stated that they wished to go to "modern" architecture because they feel that the traditional styles that they started with were not authentic to our time (the 21st century) or to the particular place (the Front Range of Colorado).

Andrés Duany said that he was unable to find any true vernacular architecture in the area and that all of the older architecture was imported from elsewhere. The Historical Commission lists 46 historical styles that occur in Colorado, not including native architecture, and several of these are considered vernacular versions of historical styles. As is true with many places in the West (indeed in the world), styles of architecture are imported from elsewhere and then adapted to the local conditions. There existed dozens of accomplished architects, especially during the 1920s, who were able to adapt styles from elsewhere to respond to the unique history and climate of Colorado. These "other moderns" could have served as a rich source for further development.

In any case, the makers of Prospect decided to look for other inspiration to create an architecture of today. Did they look at nuclear power plants? Or silicon chip fabrication centers? Or shopping malls? No, surprisingly they looked to the simple, temporary and somewhat charming buildings that were built 130 years ago at mining sites, as well as agricultural buildings such as barns and silos. The "mine-shaft modern" vernacular has a striking look about it, but fails to be a serious answer to modernity on several counts. First, the structures that occurred at mining sites were meant to shelter machinery, not to house people. Therefore both the material and the construction were not oriented to the way anyone would live, let alone how we would live today (very few windows, if any, for example). Secondly, these structures were agglomerated into piles on precipitous pitches, and were never meant to be laid out as individual buildings on a street within a neighborhood. The use of barns and silos in a neighborhood are also mixed metaphors — while one can renovate a barn and live in it, it is questionable as a building type on a Neighborhood General or Center street (maybe okay on the Edge).

Sofield claims that the traditional styles were not well suited to sun, wind and snow of the West. But the flat and low pitched roofs, lack of overhangs, lack of sheltered outdoor space and materials (metal siding, board and batten) of the mining vernacular do not seem to respond to the unique climatic conditions of the Front Range. If one starts with the materials that weather the best in a region, and respond to sun, wind and moisture, the vernacular that would develop should have a shared group of traits, regardless of stylistic orientation.

In the beginning of Prospect, some "authentic" old Craftsman houses were moved in. These houses are considered by the developer to be okay (not like the other "Disneyland" houses, because they are not compromised; they are really from the 1920s). But if there is truly a way that we live today, a way we must live today to be considered "real," then how can anyone justify living in these houses? My suspicion is that the people who live in these houses, and the ones who live in reproductions of these houses, and the people who live in the mineshaft modern houses all live pretty much the same way. They all have internet connections, drive cars, don't have outhouses, have a wide variety of furniture and family structure, and come from all political and philosophical stripes. They all eat, sleep, have sex and are conversant with all of the latest gadgets. No hoop skirts or carriages are in evidence at the traditional houses, because they have completely modern people living in them doing completely modern activities. So it turns out that there is not a particular style that represents how we live today, and neither modernist nor traditionalist architecture has moral superiority on this subject. What it all comes down to in this experiment is choice, and what we like as individuals, neighbors and communities.

Easily 90 percent of all housing built today falls under the broad category of traditional style. New urbanists recognized early on that the problem was not so much the preference, but the quality. After the great national stroke of the Depression and WWII, we had lost the transmission of a common tradition that could be advanced and modified in an authentic way. We have instead been building "tradition-lite" with nothing to act as a corrective. New urbanism communities such as Civano, Windsor and Haile Plantation pursue traditional styles in a rigorous way to correct the abuses of the recent past, but they also as rigorously pursue buildings that deal with how we live now. The important lesson they have for Prospect is not the styles, but the fact that the individual buildings that are built "look around" — they consider their neighbor, their street, their town and their region.

Where Prospect fails in its experiment is in this careful consideration of the ensemble. If one chooses to live in a modernist style of house, then it seems that one would not want to look across the street to a traditional style of house. The reverse would of course be true. It is like the gentleman who had lunch everyday in the Eiffel Tower and was asked by a friend if he really enjoyed the famous edifice. His response was "No, it is the only place in the whole of Paris that I can get away from seeing the damned thing." This is the situation at Prospect. It seems as though neither stylistic camp is particularly happy with the crazy quilt of styles, which seems to mock the "realness" of either style. The cooks at Prospect have started out making a pot roast, and in the middle of dinner have brought in sushi. Both can be good, but not together.

There are three suggestions on how this experiment might be completed more successfully. The first approach is to have similar styles face each other. This is an extension of the new urbanist dictum of having

like building types face each other. In this example, traditional building styles could be on both sides of one street, and they could change at the next block down or over to all modernist styles. This is similar to what was done in many of the best developments of the 1920s, such as Coral Gables. The effect would be to strengthen the imagery through an immersive environment. There would be both harmonies of styles by street, and variety within the neighborhood. This is what is implied by the Charter principle of buildings being seamlessly linked to their surroundings.

The second approach would be to strictly regulate the form and allow all manner of treatment. The overall mass of the buildings would act in support of the street, with careful definition of height, roof pitch, porches, fences and any other element that helps to define the street as a place. The treatment, consisting of materials and colors, could be uncoded and be allowed to vary according to the individual homeowner's wildest desires. This is not so different from what Prospect is evolving into, as many of the traditional houses are picking up on the exuberant color schemes — however, the form of the modernist homes is still too much at a variant to form good streets.

The third approach is to strictly regulate the treatment, but allow the form to be free. This does not guarantee as strong a street space, but it can create a certain degree of harmony from the relatively narrow range of materials and colors. The Weissenhofsiedlung project used this approach by keeping everything white and allowing the forms and configurations of windows to vary. On a strong site plan this could be a worthy approach. It would create another type of street where the creative joys wrought by the many might be discovered over a longer period of time.

Unfortunately, Prospect illustrates the problem of changing horses (or houses) in midstream. There is little in the way of remaining regulations for either form or treatment, resulting in a cacophony of styles. As good as any single building is (and there are many of both styles) altogether they don't yet add up to a town.

Of course, in all approaches the ultimate savior is landscape. Eventually the street trees will grow up and take the curse off of any of the styles. In this way, urbanism always trumps architecture.

Andrés defines urbanism as the contribution of the many over time — and perhaps the raucous jumble that is Prospect will coalesce over time and meld into something that will be seen historically as a place that both exists nowhere else and could exist at no other time. It will then interestingly become a period piece instead of timeless, but it will have a definite character, one that reflects its founder, town architect and the pioneers who remained in the wagon train for the whole wild ride.

Peer Review

The Prospect Vernacular and Charter Principles

By Randolph Stewart

First I would like to qualify a few things. I am not an expert in new urbanism; however, I have lived in traditional urban neighborhoods in Virginia, Georgia, Florida and now South Carolina, providing me with a rich living awareness of the urban experience. I have never visited Prospect, nor read its Code and Architectural Guidelines. I do not know several important facts about Prospect such as: what the existing percentage mix is in the variety of styles for the homes built there, how many traditional vs. contemporary homes have been built within the last year, what the composition is of the ARB, and what style homes are found in surrounding neighborhoods. I trust the reader will judge this critique keeping in mind that it is written by a "Southern Traditionalist" and forgive me for any misstatements concerning Prospect.

When I first viewed the material and presentation provided by Kiki Wallace, the developer, at the CNU Charleston seminar, I thought to myself — have I been sitting in my rocking chair on the front porch in Beaufort, S.C., too long? Am I missing something? I had to find out what it was.

Let's look at the positive. Prospect has an urban plan that accounts for the "DNA" code, natural and man-made terminating vistas, public spaces, mixed-use buildings, the use of siting and control of light in the architecture to sustain the dwellings from the cold winters and hot summers, and the opportunity for a broad palette of color — reflecting the earth tones and rich reflections from the setting sun and distant mountain range. When I was shown the wide variety of housing styles I asked myself, was this the same TND? Why the use of such broad architectural style? What is the determining architectural style of Colorado in general? Is it late 19th- early 20th century traditional, Colorado mining vernacular, contemporary … or this strange mixture of styles and materials I found in Prospect?

As a basis for my analysis I found that I must return to the Charter of the New Urbanism. A TND must be more than a street plan with a code guiding the regulating plan with written architectural standards, providing a mixed-use residential and commercial marriage with transect within the region, and a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood with quality living spaces. If the right architectural language or vernacular does not become an integral part of the development at the onset, the TND is nothing but a contrived marketing plot for "Neo-New Urbanist Capitalists" — and the cause to fulfill the charter will not completely succeed.

New urbanism cannot be about a Disney-like development where everything can be made perfect because it is in Mr. Roger's neighborhood. It requires the right urban design, the approval of the municipalities to allow a mixed-use development, and a sense of time and place that is achieved by, among other things, the right mix of architectural design, both in the public and private realm.

So where did Prospect deviate from the Charter?

Let's consider the following:

§ *The Charter requires stability with a coherent and supportive physical (architectural) framework.*

Urban design without coherent predictable architectural style produces confusion in the marketplace and provides new urbanist critics with plenty of ammunition to slow advances that have been made through the years.

Prospect has the right urban plan, fought for and won by the developer and town architect, and with the blessing of the "zoningists." Initially, Prospect tried to create a sense of time by introducing a variety of historically styled homes. Various architects, with the ARB's approval, then began introducing a style that took on a life of its own for Prospect … but was not coherent and predictable in regards to other styles within Prospect. This "Prospect Contemporary Vernacular" as I call it, established an identity that was not initially intended. The Colorado mining form, even though stylized, finally established a true vernacular that had been missing. I do believe that contemporary architecture has a place in TND — if planned, codified and balanced correctly with other styles (if used) from the onset, which permits it to be coherent and predictable.

§ *The Charter states that the development and redevelopment of towns and cities should respect historical patterns, precedents and boundaries.*

§ *Architecture and landscape design should grow from local climate, topography, history and building practice.*

Prospect began with a mix of nostalgic historic architectural styles – but soon began to show uncertainty, as if searching for an identity. It found that vernacular by borrowing from known visual history. The "Prospect Vernacular" that evolved, though well designed in it's own right, ignored earlier patterns and began a competition among the design professionals, at the expense of the relationship of the variety of styles that previously existed within Prospect. This created conflict within the neighborhood, and confusion in the public realm.

In regards to the Charter's statement of respect for historical patterns, perhaps it should go further and clarify what should happen in the absence of historical precedents — when, where and how they should be borrowed, modified or created. Perhaps more clear strategies should be created at the onset for market or developer concerns in regards to architectural style.

§ *The Charter states streets and squares "… should be interesting to the pedestrian … enable neighbors to know each other. …"*

As a Southern traditionalist, many of the "Prospect Vernacular" homes are not, in my opinion, sufficiently focused on the sidewalks and streets. The porch size used in traditional style homes was reduced and forgotten in many of the "Prospect Vernacular" homes. Many of these stoops are small and the railing industrial in nature. Certain forms appear contrived and do not follow function. The size of the windows on the street facade was minimized, leading to a feeling of "stay away" instead of "welcome." It is as if designers were saying, "how unique can we make the houses? There is a wide color palette available with the natural tones from the mountain ranges and sunset reflections. The intensity of some of the color schemes used are severe and, although interesting, make it impossible to blend with other homes that exist in Prospect. The eccentric variety of roof forms adds to the confusion. As one walks down the sidewalks, an emotion of harmony should be evoked ... pleasant and understandable. Having permitted the extremes, the sense of time and place that came before was ignored and can no longer be placed in proper context. The woven mosaic that was intended went awry. Now it seems as if Prospect, even though presumably successful, is on parade, so people will come through the neighborhood, as if a circus came to town.

§ *The Charter states that individual architectural projects should be seamlessly linked to their surroundings and that this issue transcends style.*

As the "Prospect Contemporary Vernacular" began to appear, it too met all requirements of the regulating plan ... and also established a genre that I feel, and the developer has yet to admit, should have been apparent from the onset. Viewed separately this vernacular has appeal and merit, but not in context with other styles of architecture as found in Prospect. The "Prospect Vernacular" shows elements that create sense of time and place as a contemporary Colorado mining town. This provides a seam and links Prospect with its surroundings. One must make development decisions predictable. Extreme changes in architectural style cause uncertainty. New urbanist communities, either new, renewed or infill, must weave a fabric that is continuous and unbroken. Individuality is encouraged, but not at the expense of what the people who came before envisioned and were led to believe. Dynamics with evolving styles, details and trends are healthy; however, the original intent must be pure and not diluted.

§ *As stated in* New Urban News, *"When a block is constructed, it looks like a collection of many individual buildings. … Looks like a lot of different things."*

The key here and the contradiction of Prospect is the word "collection" ... not the word individual. The size, scale, proportion, product mix and siting are the same for both the "traditional" and the "Prospect Vernacular." The earlier forms of traditional architectural style have become compromised and an extreme mix of style and color can now be found. Who were the losers, the new urbanists and the original buyers who perceived a neighborhood that would look one way and began seeing it turned into something totally different? Had they known, would they have built their homes in Prospect? What does it do for appraised values when an extreme mix of styles are found within the same TND? We continue to strive for governmental code changes and stand to lose advances of new urbanism with market driven architectural changes that dilute the Charter as we strive to improve on TND's quality of life and chances of success.

§ *EPA smart growth principles foster distinctive attractive communities with a strong sense of place.*

Prospect confuses that sense by attempting to blend extremes. Could a new urbanist community existing exclusively of "The Prospect Vernacular" become successful? Yes, and I for one would love to participate. Does a fractured architectural style and palette offer the opportunity for failure for the TND? I believe so and would not like to participate. Does a TND with the same monochromatic, mundane architectural styling from the beginning to end provide a sense of time and place? I do not believe so. As design professionals we walk a fine line between market demands and creating an environment that provides the sense that it evolved thru time. This creates the sense of place.

Los Alamos, Stone Ave. AND Arboleda

Stef Polyzoides

Bill Dennis

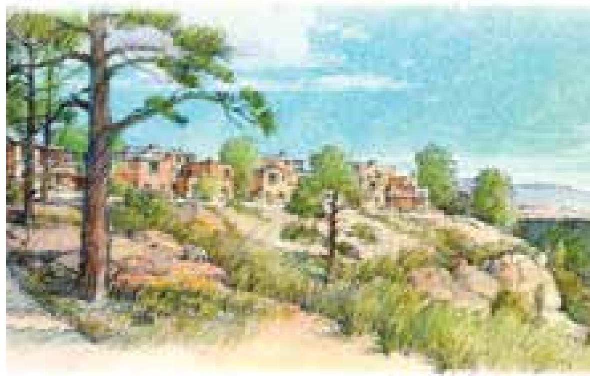
Moule & Polyzoides

Moule & Polyzoides - Architects and Urbanists was founded in 1982 to provide fine, comprehensive and personalized architecture and urban design services.

They have pioneered a new approach to architecture and urbanism, focusing on physically reconstructing the American metropolis, rebuilding a sense of community, and addressing the environmental dilemmas of suburban sprawl. Their work is known for its respect for historic settings. Its aesthetic root is in the exploration of design in the context of cultural convention and of nature.

Moule & Polyzoides' team is made up of both principals and project managers; the principals are Elizabeth Moule and Stefanos Polyzoides. Twenty-five members, including six registered architects in California with licensing reciprocity nationally, are organized around project teams that follow the work from its inception to its realization.

The firm has an international reputation for design innovation and a strong track record demonstrated in over 100 completed projects. Their work has been published all over the world, showcased frequently in various museum and university exhibitions. In addition, Moule & Polyzoides has received numerous awards for excellence. Design activities encompass campus architecture and planning, preservation and transformation of historic buildings, neighborhood and town center design, housing, and civic architecture.



Three views of Los Alamos redevelopment.

Streets and Buildings

By Bill Dennis and Stefanos Polyzoides

In the work of the new urbanism, we start with the premise that buildings and the space between (streets and squares) must be a balanced ensemble of pavement, streetwalls, green and building walls. In the three projects we are presenting, we are looking at this fundamental relationship at the level of the Neighborhood, the District and the Corridor.

Neighborhood: Arboleda – King City, Calif.

Arboleda, a new 120-acre neighborhood on the edge of King City, is a farming community of 10,000 in Monterey County, California. The existing town is a square mile gridded plan, with four main existing neighborhoods aligned with a main street, bound together by schools where they overlap. Development in the 1950s – 60s ignored the traditional grid pattern and created edges that were cauterized by building cul-de-sacs. The rears of houses "mooned" the agricultural greenbelt, with fences displaying a blank face to the open space view. Part of our task was to heal this seam.

There is a Spanish term, "ensanche," which means to create an addition that ends up completely transforming the existing situation for the better. To do this required a careful study of existing conditions and examination of precedents for street types and blocks from regional examples, such as Pacific Grove, Monterey and Carmel. We were able to document a full catalogue of existing street types appropriate for the new neighborhood: commercial street with diagonal parking, commercial street with parallel parking, parkway, street, edge street, and lane. These streets are, first and foremost, places. Their calibration of width, configuration, materials and definition by building types is what gives a neighborhood its unique character. It is important to get the streets right, because while buildings may change over time, streets are forever.

As in the existing neighborhoods of King City, we used the school to bind the two halves of the neighborhood. A parkway to the south of the project acts as a mediating element for the existing clipped edge and allows for that edge to be opened to new neighborhood over time. A neighborhood center along the main corridor that leads to Main Street offers a wide "throat" (with mixed-use buildings around a green) to catch as much activity and passing traffic as possible. The building types around this civic green are neighborhood center — two to three stories, with retail or office on the first floor and residential above.

There are two zones of Neighborhood General. Neighborhood General I is contiguous to Neighborhood Center and has closer setbacks, fences, and more buildings that touch — courtyard buildings, townhouses and duplexes. Neighborhood General II has greater setbacks, no fences, and is mostly individual house forms. Neighborhood Edge is the least dense, with substantial setbacks, larger lots, no curbs, no sidewalk and fronts facing the agricultural greenbelt. The details of the streets in all cases reflect the particular density and character of each transect zone.

The code for Arboleda consists of one page for each transect zone, with both technical and illustrative diagrams provided for ease of administration. In addition, we have provided by request of the developer, who will build the majority of buildings, an architectural code that describes building types (courtyard, live/work, townhouse, etc.) and regional style (Monterey, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Craftsman). It is unusual in our work to code style, but it is done in the interest of improving production housing and creating a strong link to the existing neighborhoods by means of a common treatment, as well as the form of the building types and network of streets.

Finally it is worth noting again the example this project provides in its treatment of the edge. Léon Krier states that for a town, a center is a necessity; an edge is a luxury. A clear edge to nature provides not only a five-minute walk from edge to center, but a three-hour walk in nature from the edge. The turning of a stable edge to the greenbelt is a rare occurrence in California, but it is necessary to create a general understanding of what makes a town different from conventional sprawl development.

District: Los Alamos, N.M.

Los Alamos is perhaps one of the ugliest towns in America, with one of the most beautiful settings in the world. It is composed of a number of mesas separated by steep canyons that give it the appearance of Greek islands in plan. Because of topography, conventional sprawl is not possible. However, the downtown imploded through standard development practices of the past 50 years. Los Alamos began as a closed "secret" city in the 1940s to develop the Manhattan Project. As befits a military town, it was laid out on a strict Roman castrum grid that created a fine grain of blocks and streets. It contained one of the first pedestrian shopping centers, which worked very well, as everything was within a five-minute walk. Over time a new shopping center was built a 10-minute walk away. This single act doomed the downtown as a functioning unit and created two districts that required the constant use of vehicles for all daily activities.

The diagnostic drawings, consisting mostly of figure/fields of road networks, blocks and buildings, show very clearly the dysfunctional nature of this town. Over time the fine grid of streets became superblocks, with quarter-mile intersections over a mile length of corridors. This automatically creates traffic that goes 55 mph (posted 35 mph) as well as a discouraging pedestrian environment. Another drawing shows that 70 percent of the downtown is asphalt — roads and parking lots. Fully one-third of the traffic in the downtown is cars going from one parking lot to the next. The amount of parking space keeps land value low and discourages density and mixed-use.

The present day confusion is created by use-based codes and streets that only respond to the care and feeding of automobiles. Our strategy for remaking the downtown focused on changing the area through the integration of street types and building types that would work together to create unique and memorable places. The Regulating Plan created four main districts, based on intensity of use and the five-minute walking distance. There is a Civic District, Main Street District,

See POLYZOIDES AND DENNIS, page 20

View of Arboleda neighborhood development.

Los Alamos

Project: Los Alamos Downtown Master Plan

Location: Los Alamos, New Mexico

Classification: Infill Master Plan

Designer: Moule and Polyzoides

Consultants: White Mountain Survey, Lloyd & Tryk, Thomas Leatherwood, RCL, Inc.

Developer: Los Alamos Main Street Futures Committee, Sid Singer, Los Alamos County

Design Date: Summer 2001

Status: Plan adopted Fall 2002 , Downtown Development code to be adopted Spring 2003

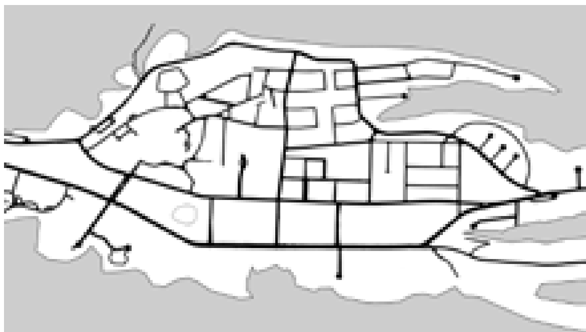
Site Area: 200 acres

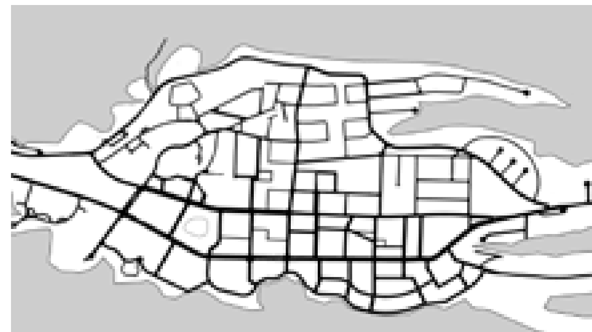
Project Cost: N/A

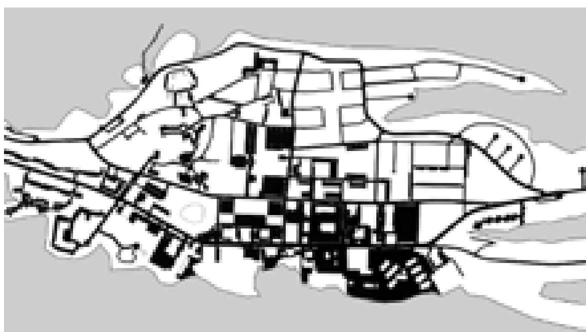
Residential: 400 – 800 units

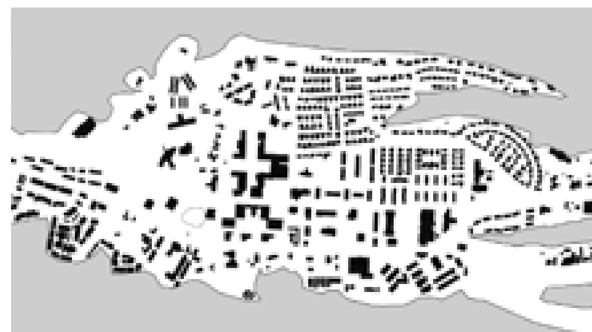
Commercial:
Office: 500,000 – 600,000 sq. ft.
Retail : 200,000 – 400,000 sq. ft.

Public & Civic Program: Performing arts center, community center, outdoor amphitheater, "park once" structures, Science City center, government center, parks









Top: Los Alamos Regulating Plan. Middle left: Existing street network. Middle right: Planned street network. Bottom left: Existing paved surfaces. Bottom right: Existing structures, figure/ground diagram.

Arboleda

Project: Arboleda Neighborhood

Location: King City, California

Classification: TND

Designer: Moule & Polyzoides

Consultants: Crawford, Multari & Clark

Developer: Creekbridge Homes

Design Date: Spring 2002

Status: Approval expected Spring 2003

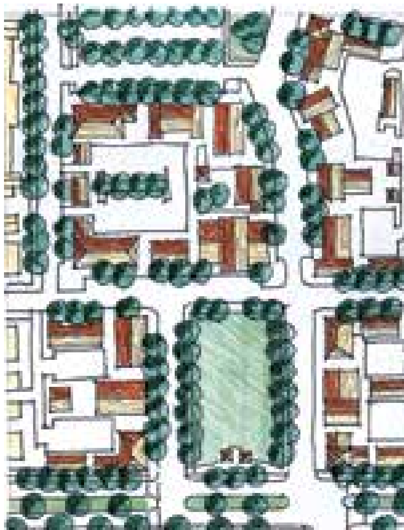
Site Area: 120 acres

Project Cost: N/A

Residential:
Houses: 400
Rowhouses: 100
Apartments: 150
Live Work: 150

Commercial:
Office: 50,000 sq. ft.
Retail: 50,000 sq. ft.

Public & Civic Program: Elementary school, post office, community center, parks



Top: Arboleda Regulating Plan. Bottom left: Detail of town square and commercial center. Bottom right: Aerial of King City with Arboleda plan.

ALL IMAGES IN THIS SECTION COURTESY MOULE & POLYZOIDES, ARCHITECTS AND URBANISTS.

Stone Avenue

Project: Stone Avenue Corridor Design

Location: Tucson, Arizona

Classification: Infill

Designer: Moule & Polyzoides

Consultants: TND Engineering, Parsons Brinkerhoff

Client: City of Tucson

Design Date: Fall 2001

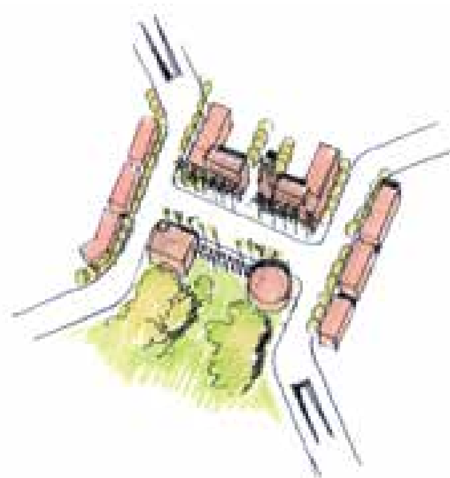
Status: Under review

Site Area: 2 linear miles

Residential: Townhouse, courtyard, live work (total unknown)

Commercial: Unknown

Public & Civic Program: Addition of University main street



Top left: Stone Avenue and Speedway Boulevard, existing conditions. Top Right: Proposed redevelopment of intersection, including underpass. Center: Four alternate designs. Bottom: Redevelopment plan for the Stone Avenue corridor.

POLYZOIDES AND DENNIS/Streets and Buildings

From page 18

Portion of the Los Alamos plan, including amphitheater.

Infill Neighborhood, and a new Office and Residential District. All of these overlap but contain a combination of building types and intensity of uses that make each distinct. All of the streets are keyed to the character of each district, with the continuity provided by the main east/west parkway.

"Park once" is the strategy applied to remove asphalt and create land value. By building three new parking structures as civic infrastructure at strategic locations, development is encouraged to densify, and citizens can "park once" and take care of more than one activity without returning to their cars. Also, we encouraged the formalizing of streets that are de facto streets through existing parking lots (parking aisles). These can remain private but must have the same detailing as public streets. All of the street type specifications consist of engineering statistics, pictures of existing examples, and description of the intent. These are then linked to building types.

The figure/field drawing of current-condition buildings shows a no man's land. One is unable to discern where the roads are. We looked to Santa Fe for precedents for both street types and building types and found a wealth of vibrant examples. The plan of Santa Fe shows complete definition of the streets and plazas by a myriad of building types. It is completely mixed-use and fully occupied. It is this strategy (not the Santa Fe style) that we imported in the repair and rejuvenation of Los Alamos. The full range of civilized activities will be once again available to the citizens of Los Alamos, from the central marketplace of the new Main Street, to a district for office and housing, to a live/work district that encourages small business, to the shared experience of the civic district. A child, an elder, a single mother, a handicapped person, as well as the average Joe, can have a full public life linked to other citizens through beautiful streets defined by buildings of variety and harmony.

Corridor: Stone Avenue, Tucson, Ariz.

This small one and a half day exercise looked at a very common situation of trying to fix a corridor that had become dangerous and depressing. The existing conditions consisted of Speedway, a 60,000-car-per-day thoroughfare that connected west to the highway, and Stone Avenue, a north/south corridor carrying 20,000 cars per day that went to and from downtown Tucson. This intersection represents an inflection in the development of Tucson from the more historic neighborhood to conventional development. Surrounding the intersection is a park, a community college (with no public face), and various motels and run-down retail. This noplace is common throughout the West, where the continuous square mile grid creates corridors with unlimited commercial development. This results in buildings that are one-third vibrant, one-third tired, and one-third really crummy. Both the nature of the road and the building types along it prevent its changing to other, more appropriate and needed uses, such as higher density housing.

Initially, we were asked to take a "band-aid" approach to the intersection, a 100-foot swath of angry asphalt. We quickly realized no amount of painted walkways or public art would help — the intersection itself needed to be radically changed into a place. We again looked at precedents for road and places, and as this part of the West has little but roads, we were forced to import examples. The first idea was a Dupont Circle (Washington, D.C.) -type of intersection. This creates a place, but would not be defined enough by the surrounding two-to-three-story buildings (as well as being hampered by the excessive level of traffic) to be a usable pedestrian space.

The second example was the New England Green. This would create shaped green spaces off of the main flow of traffic. The negative feature of this solution is the gap created by the corridors. The final idea was also borrowed from Washington, D.C. This consisted of an underpass of two lanes each way acting as an unimpeded thoroughfare along Speedway to serve the highway traffic. The cost of this is comparable to overpasses that the city engineers are building at other intersections, with much less disruption to the fabric of surrounding neighborhoods.

The most important advantage to this solution is that it turns Stone Avenue into more of a local street that can be cranked at a 45-degree angle to create a "university mainstreet" where before there was only a vacant intersection. This provides terminated vistas from all roads and a new front door for the community college. New building types that can be appropriate to higher-density housing create a mediating edge from the corridors to the neighborhoods. Motion is balanced by buildings in a particular pattern.

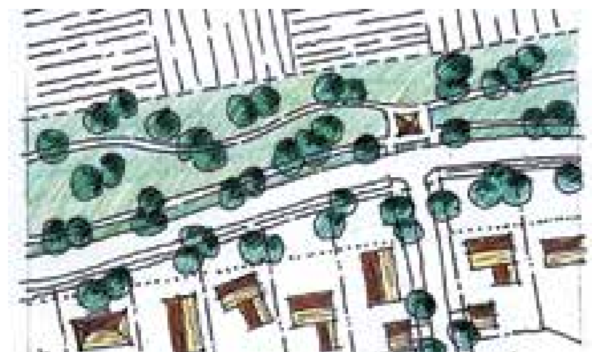
Corridors in the West (and elsewhere) often have the appearance of continual blight. We must effect a total transformation of these corridors, from the centerline of the pavement to deep within the neighborhood, to create real estate and civic positives instead of the wasteland that presently exists. This can only be done through placemaking, not engineering.

Peer Review | Arboleda

By Robert Orr

Andrés Duany began the critique by saying, "Stef is always disappointed that we're not harder on each other. He had a little rant on that yesterday. You know: 'We must really be critical. This is what this is about.' For me, it's very difficult to be critical when I see work like this. I mean, it's very, very hard and it's not just ... what can I say? It's complete, it's competent, it's efficient, it's exactly the right thing to do, it's clear. The only thing I can truly think of is that I really dislike the color yellow and the green that you use. And perhaps we could talk about that." From this point of view, one might surmise that the project is bit like Portnoy's mother in Philip Roth's novel: If she had one problem, it was that she was too good.

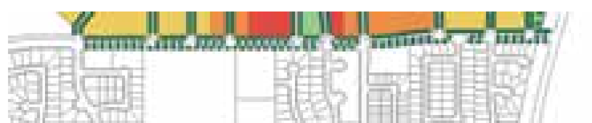
Within the boundary around the existing edge, one sees typical California development, broken off and cauterized from the regular grid of traditional neighborhoods further in. Here the streets wander in shapeless fragments and cul-de-sacs, never coalescing into an urban form. At the edge, backs of buildings line up to form a wall against the open space. The tough calluses formed over this wounded way of seeing presented the biggest challenge for M&P in their efforts to integrate their new fragment into the existing community.



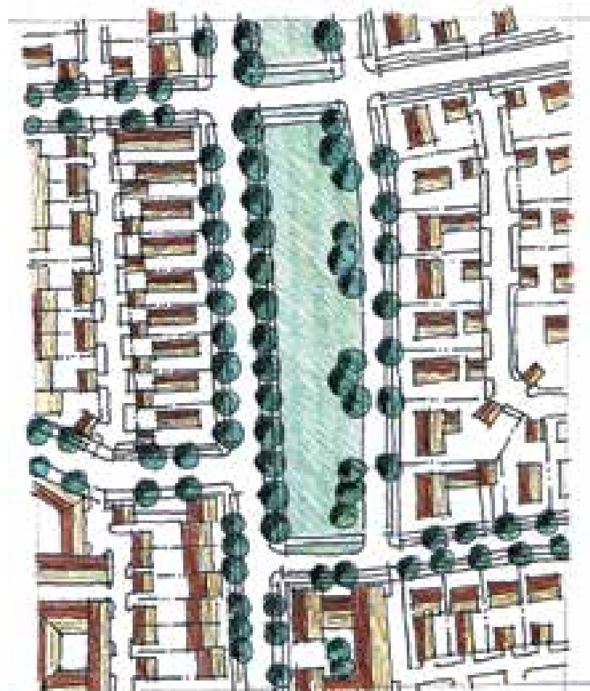
To address the boundary condition, M&P place the street at the edge rather than properties and houses with their backs facing out. In this way M&P's design engages with the natural beauty of the agricultural open space as well as anticipates future expansions of the city with a more hospitable seam condition.

Indeed, in reviewing the project, the checklist on new urbanism can be checked off right down the line. It is an excellent example of the language now emerging in the common practice of several offices, which could be used to illustrate the everyman how-to manual on new urbanism. It is contextually sensitive to endemic local development, it is eminently walkable while giving nod to the fire marshal's concerns, it is exquisitely "transectual," as Bill would say, both in its transition from center to edge and in its transition from existing edge to new development. The street patterns, anomalous breaks in the grid and sensitive magical treatment of alleys are all remarkable and consistently rewarding of close inspection. However, there are a few issues outside the purview of new urbanism that may deserve discussion.

Let us begin with M&P's handling of the existing "cauterized cul-de-sac neighborhoods." Bill Dennis makes reference to Rem Koolhaas, so perhaps it would not be too farfetched to enjoin Koolhaas's reference to Salvador Dali's "Paranoid Critical Method," by which scholars and other promulgators display compulsive tendencies to ignore data that does not support their theses. It might be said that M&P lean toward this method in creating distance through their efforts of engagement. The cul-de-sacs are neighborhood types that present tenets antithetical to new urbanism, and admittedly for M&P to engage them is a bit like the ACLU finding itself defending David Duke and the Ku Klux Klan.



At the connection with the old boundary, M&P inserted a parkway aimed at knitting the new and old pieces of the town together, one that "introduced a mediating space to soften the horrible condition of backs." By creating distance with the parkway, the unglamorous wall of backs would recede and their offending character would be softened.



The main street through the project is widened slightly by the insertion of a long narrow park. This provides a way of getting slightly more density and creating a memorable place.

However, there are people, and unfortunately a lot of them, who like these types of neighborhoods. Our firm used to take pity on these neighborhoods and tried to devise imaginative methods to bring respectability to them. In every case, inhabitants leapt out of the woodwork with fists raised in spittle-sputtering defiance against any changes to their loved environments. One angry resident admonished that he purchased his house hidden on a cul-de-sac for a reason and God help the bastard that tampered with his isolation! Resisting for a moment the temptation to dismiss such people as so many Bin Laden pranksters, one might better focus on what virtues draw people to these locations. For example, the cauterization might be reinterpreted as satisfying a quest for individualization, the pastoral American dream. Think Henry David Thoreau.

Within neighborhoods, M&P developed a palette of building types and of appropriate materials and styles. These included the Monterey and Spanish Colonial Revival styles, and prescriptions on how these styles might go together in the different building types within the various neighborhoods.

Arboleda engages neither the bad points nor the good points of the cul-de-sacs. Rather, Arboleda distances itself from these neighborhoods. Despite Stef's contention that "it is terribly important for this street (the parkway) that you see separating the two places to be understood as a connecting street, not a separating street, and that has to do entirely with the design of the street itself," it must be stated that a lane is a better connector than a parkway, as M&P themselves pointed out in their forays through Arboleda Drive and other lanes at the beginning of their presentation. The notion of a parkway gives greater convenience to cars through widened vistas. The widened vista of the parkway distances the two sides from one another and makes the line of back walls, and their ugliness, more prominent.

Rather than a parkway, one might consider a lane in this location, with the parkway, if it's desirable, inserted a block away. M&P's obvious skill with lanes could have produced an exquisitely intricate meander, erasing all memory of boundary. In addition, a lane's acceptance and embrace of individuality and peculiarity might shed light on the more positive virtues of the cul-de-sac neighborhoods.

An alternate plan showing how the school board's scheme could be accomodated. Inspired by King City's pattern of using schools to tie double neighborhoods together, M&P also inserts a school between two neighborhood types. The playing fields are intended to double as recreational space for the neighborhood, an active town green.

Bill and Stef talked enthusiastically about including the school in the design, citing the successes elsewhere in King City where schools cemented double neighborhoods. However, the school is out of scale with the Arboleda plan, despite Bill's contention that it "... is a smaller school than it looks." Compared to the intimacy of the surrounding neighborhoods designed by M&P, it is difficult to imagine how it could possibly cement any double neighborhoods. Instead it seems to disrupt neighborhoods, driving a large wedge between them.

Editor's note: The project manager writes, "This layout was an illustration to show the school board their scheme could fit on the site, although we intended to revise the school layout after the overall plan was approved (which is why the final version of the regulating plan does not show a school layout).

Much of the incompatibility of the school with the project probably could not be helped. Schools today carry enormous space requirements, even for "small" schools, and M&P did an admirable job in keeping the school building to one side to allow the potential for a precinct with the adjacent neighborhood, and in grouping the playing fields so they might be used as open space by residents when the children aren't using them. However, the total assemblage taken together comes off as monolithic and insensitive, as confirmed in several of the reviewers' comments. The space to structure ratio is far looser than other areas of the design, and the playing fields bear no resemblance to recognizable urban space, let alone a town green. Despite valiant efforts, the complex comes off looking pretty much like a modern-day school with prescriptive playing fields.

Schools today offer a real challenge to the new urban town planner, more formidable than that presented by traffic engineering and fire operations. Schools are traffic engineering/parking, fire and safety, environmental, accessibility and socially conscious issues all rolled into one, with each of those interest groups hotly in pursuit of any who might challenge their domains. In addition, besides being based on the same myopic visions of each of those specialties, school requirements carry high moral imperatives. If one questions any of their precepts, parents and the politically conscious leap in from all quarters to mark the designer with the unshakable label of anti-education, or worse, anti-children.

To date there are but fledgling efforts to challenge school requirements or seek alternatives. These come mostly from preservationists, who see historic school

See ORR, page 35

Style Discussion

A Conversation

With Andrés Duany and Dan Solomon

Dan Solomon: I understood this as a conversation — not as an address. So I don't have an address prepared, but I will enter the conversation.

I can't disassociate the experience of being here from the experience of getting here. I left my office in the very complex and politically-fraught neighborhood of South Market in San Francisco, went through a succession of taxi rides, bus rides, plane rides — to Philadelphia, and then to Charlotte and here — and traversed a set of environments and landscapes — rooms and places and non-places — that were, I thought, what the movement of the new urbanism was to address. And then I came here and ascended the steps of the Daughters of the Confederacy, to a beautiful room where we have a breakfast of red herring, in a conversation that seems to me largely delusional.

I joined with colleagues 10 years ago because the limits of my architectural practice did not address the set of rooms and landscapes and experiences that I moved through, getting here. And to be circumscribed in this beautiful room and concerned about its relevance or potential relevance to that world, seems a very, very circumscribed and self-circumscribing view for us new urbanists who banded together to deal with the journey — not with the destination. I'm really interested in that journey, and only to the degree that this room and the traditions it represents serves what that journey has been, is this room interesting. Otherwise, it's uninteresting and irrelevant to a much larger set of concerns, which, I think, have liberated me, personally, from a very circumscribed architectural practice to one that is really grappling with something much larger.

I think that the attempt to repeal the

Andrés Duany THE TOWN PAPER

20th century is so fundamentally doomed that it marginalizes those who subscribe to it. We looked yesterday at a project that I think is extraordinary — well, extraordinary, but not unique — and that is Paul Murrain's Melrose Arch, which seems to me in every way a healthy project, and one that joins a whole series of other things around the world, which I'd like to cite, and to which I think the conversation about style becomes irrelevant. It seems to me that every conceivable nuance of a cogent statement on this subject has been said and resaid, to the point where we should simply move on, because the examples are powerful ones — Melrose Arch is certainly one. Addison Circle and the other Post Properties projects — Uptown and Legacy Town Center outside Dallas — are moving experiences to me in the same way, as is the new fabric of Vancouver.

I think that all of these places show that the deficiencies of the modern movement — its mistakes, its bad urbanism, its granting of autonomy (a destructive autonomy) to individual buildings and individual architects — can be addressed. And they can be addressed without renouncing and without alienating ourselves from the culture that produces the new, and the inevitable, unalterable human impulse — or the impulse of our times — to gravitate to the new.

The questions about longevity of buildings, their imperviousness to water, etc., seem to me [to be more] questions of skill and of budget than of style. The beautiful buildings that RTKL and others did in Addison Circle are going to last a long time; they are beautifully made and beautifully detailed, and they're done with great skill. The buildings of Vancouver, which are very much in a modernist aesthetic, are producing a beautiful new city of great streets, great parks, enormous vitality and enormous economic energy. Melrose Arch seems to be a similar sort of place; one can only hope. If it creates an architecture that embraces everything that is hopeful and fearful —but more hopeful than fearful — in South Africa, what a glory that is, if urbanism can represent the best aspirations — the best political aspirations — of what's occurring in South Africa.

To the degree that we distance ourselves, alienate ourselves, make ourselves irrelevant to that set of aspirations, we doom ourselves. We doom ourselves to breakfast in the Daughters of the Confederacy, as opposed to engagement with the journey from South Market in San Francisco, through Philly airport, on the bus to here, which I think is the much more interesting set of questions.

But before I leave this, I want to cite one architect as a model — for me as a model. He's a model in some ways, and not in other ways. He's not a model, because I think he has so far proved himself not adept at dealing with the normative problems of low-budget buildings. But enormously adept at taking the aesthetic of modern architecture and transforming it to both an urban and an environmental poetic of enormous power. He's a student of Kahn and he's gone far beyond Kahn, and that's Michael Hopkins.

Michael Hopkins has produced a kind of modernism; he has moved from Norman Foster's office to an independent practice of enormous power. He has taken Kahn's attitudes toward tectonics and embraced environmentalism and the handling of daylight, the handling of air — all of the issues of an environmental and urban aesthetic in buildings that are new, inventive, and richly contextual. It seems to me that those are the kinds of models — Vancouver, Melrose Arch, Addison Town Center, Addison Circle, the works of Michael Hopkins, and so on — that make this question of style utterly irrelevant, just simply not part of the conversation of what our mission needs to be. I think our mission is clear, and I think it doesn't reside in this room.

Thank you.

Andrés Duany: I usually find myself agreeing with the new urbanists when they speak about architecture — just as I find myself disagreeing with the academics. And I think that it's because those within the ambit of the CNU have disciplined their propositions by the common good

The Style Discussion panel, from left to right: Andrés Duany, Milton Grenfell, Daniel Solomon (with microphone) and Michael Lykoudis (in pink shirt). THE TOWN PAPER

and the higher morality of urbanism. That's why we all make sense. Although I do disagree with Dan in one major way: It is not that we are irrelevant to modernity because we're concerned about traditional architecture, but that modernist architecture is, unfortunately, irrelevant to our mission. It does not serve our needs in certain ways.

I have begun a list of what I believe architecture needs to become. It can serve as a kind of proto charter for New Urban Architecture. [*Editor's note: This was further developed since this Charleston Council, and appears in the column to the right.*]

First, architecture needs to work off an open system of construction. By that I mean that it needs to be made by something that you can find in a lumberyard, brickyard or Home Depot. There were two projects presented yesterday that did that, while Paul Murrain's did not. Everything about the buildings in Paul's project seemed to require special fabrication. There are very few areas of the United States where you can get special fabrication well done at a decent cost. Now, as it happens in this country, classicism is an open system. You can get everything you need — the windows, doors, doorknobs, claddings, gutters, columns — off the shelf, from multiple manufacturers. And they interlock visually and tectonically. I would personally love it if modernist architecture was to gradually become available as standard stock.

Solomon: IKEA.

Duany: IKEA? Well, it's a good emergent trend for furniture. But IKEA is not the world of the builder, or my world for that matter. I've never been in an IKEA. I don't live in San Francisco. Right now we need the whole kit of parts to be in Home Depot. I really mean that — not San Francisco. Most new urbanists are in the muck, working in the primal ooze culturally. We need an architecture that communicates to the consumer — not an architecture that's dependent on patrons.

Patrons are people who know an awful lot about architecture and are willing to pay for it and, in some cases, are willing to suffer discomfort for it. This is who commissions Richard Meyer, Michael Graves, and Frank Gehry — patrons.

Then there are also the clients. Dan, you and I sometimes have clients commission our work. These are people whom you meet with and who you bring along to an acceptable level of sophistication. You have the chance to teach them enough about architecture to have them, in your case, understand modernism.

However we, the urbanists, don't have clients; we have customers. I don't meet the people at the sales office to explain to them an architectural idea. It is the building they see and visit that confronts them, unmediated by contact with an architect. If it does not communicate with them, they walk out and go live somewhere else. We cannot provide clients who trust us with their livelihoods with a product that will not sell. It bankrupts them. And the community, which is what we are primarily about, will not be built. As urbanists, it is more important that we build better communities than that we advance the art of architecture.

So lets ask: What would it take for modernism to actually begin to communicate with the common person — the American middle-class customer? Two things, I would say. First, modernism has to stabilize its language long enough so that the customer can begin to understand it and read it. I often see what happens because it does not. For example, I went with some people to see Steve Holl's building at Cranbrook. They hated it, of course. Then I undertook the time to explain the ideas involved: the materiality, the structural relativism, the perceptual composition, the fundamentalism. After some effort, they understood enough to accept it, and a couple of them even started getting into it. Then we went on to the building by Todd Williams … well, again, it was, "What the hell is going on?" Once again, nothing in the language communicated with them. It was another personal vocabulary.

Now, it is obvious how this continually undermines the ability to establish a common language. People are capable of being brought to modern architecture, but the modern architects have to stabilize their language, among themselves, and to hold it still for a substantial period of time — not just a fashion cycle. If not, it is all quite useless to the needs of the new urbanism. I should add that this is not too much to ask. It has occurred before, and with great success, when ex-Bauhauslers built most of the buildings in Tel Aviv. These were and are popular with the people as they were able to assimilate the common language. Neal Payton has written about

this in "The New City."

Solomon: If people don't like modern architecture … then why are certain units selling so well?

Duany: I'll tell you why. There are victims. We misunderstand each other because you operate in a world where there is a scarcity of housing, where people have little choice. They are so grateful to find a dwelling in San Francisco (or Manhattan) that they put up with housing that they may not like. The world that I operate in — the suburban Sunbelt — has the opposite: enormous choice. Once you qualify for an $80,000 mortgage, you enter the threshold of choice. There are 10 projects to choose from with four models each. I am referring to unconstrained markets where there is good old American *choice*. When one of our projects doesn't meet their expectations the customer just drives off to buy some shitty Colonial or Mediterranean, and that's a big difference. That's *the* difference. One of the reasons that we can do modernist buildings in Aqua is that Miami Beach is a victim situation. We're doing modernist high-rises across from Manhattan, and it's no problem. But anywhere else out there in the 'burbs — all those the places that you said you drove by — try to put modernist houses out there and you will bankrupt the community builder.

Mind you, I'm not saying that we must be traditionalists. What I'm saying is that we need to establish a cadre of modernist architects that will share and stabilize the language so that both the people and the producers of construction materials can follow it. New urbanist architects must differentiate themselves by eschewing exaggerated individual expression and try not to follow fashion, which changes too often to support the cycle of urbanism. When we look at architecture and judge it, we must be aware if it was created for a patron, a client, a victim, or a customer.

Now what language should the modernist one be? It should grow out of an integrated, passive environmentalism. A modern architecture that is no less good than the traditional vernacular at providing a matter-of-fact environmental response. And it must do another thing: Do you know Stuart Brand's book "How Buildings Learn"? It is about how buildings must be adaptable if they are to respond to the evolving needs of society. We, as urbanists, must have architecture that is robust (to use Paul Murrain's term). If not robust, our communities will fail in the long run. As we know, modernist architecture is notorious for preventing modification and rejecting additions. For example, in the Dutch new town of Alemere, which is an interesting place designed with a combination of traditional urbanism and modernist architecture, there is a large complex of housing in the downtown that is only a couple of decades old. However, it must now be torn down because it cannot

See CONVERSATION, page 39

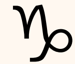
The Charleston Debate

By Andrés Duany

The controversies swirling around architecture have not ceased since the signing of the Charter seven years ago at CNU IV in Charleston. Indeed, on that day a protest regarding the modernist bias of the wording threatened to break apart the coalition that was to sign the document. But a few words were altered at the very last moment and the event was dramatically salvaged by White-Out.

The third Council's debate, inconclusive as it was, reinforced the obvious point that the issues of architecture cannot be covered by just the one of the 27 principles of the Charter.

The following is an open list of principles striving towards a definition of what new urbanists believe in architecture. It may lead to a supplementary charter. The statements are not in order of importance or taxonomy — that will occur later.

Principles Essential to the Renewal of Architecture 

In response to an age rife with ecological and social stress, within an economy so powerful that both the urban and the natural are decisively affected by the pattern of human dwelling, for a design profession burdened by a conceptual overstructure consumed by the esoteric and the transient, we set forth these principles:

It is essential that the discipline of architecture take substance from its own tradition and not be subjected to artistic and intellectual fashions.

It is essential that the disciplines of architecture engage the disciplines of engineering and sociology but not become dependent on them.

It is essential that the discipline of architecture interacts with the imperatives of economics and marketing but not be consumed by them.

It is essential that the language of architecture be in continual evolution but not in the thrall of the short cycles of fashion.

It is essential that certain self-designated critics, those who do not possess the craft and experience of building, should not be granted undue influence on the reputation of architecture and architects.

It is essential that architects take an unmediated voice in the press to explain and defend their work themselves. (Architects should affect this demand by canceling their subscriptions to those publications that do not comply.)

It is essential that the design schools accept the responsibility of teaching a body of knowledge, and not just attempt to incite creativity and individualism. Students should be exposed to the general vernacular and not just to the very few geniuses that each generation produces. Emulation of the exceptional does not provide a model for general education.

It is essential that students be exposed to the realities of design practice, not excluding the apprenticeship system, as there has been no more effective and realistic method of education. Most of the finest buildings of all time were the result of apprenticeship.

It is essential that architectural expression assimilate the culture and climate of its region, and the urban context of the building, no less than the will to form of the architect.

It is essential to a true urbanism that architecture be practiced as a collective endeavor and not as a means of brand differentiation in pursuit of the attentions of the media.

It is essential that architecture retake general responsibility for an urbanism that is currently desiccated by the statistical concerns of zoning, building codes, traffic and financing.

It is essential to recognize that while architects may not be native to a place, architecture does tend to be; and that any architect is free to practice anywhere so long as their design acknowledges the character of its place. It also necessary to acknowledge the opposite: that architectural influence has traveled along cultural and climatic belts to positive effect.

It is essential to observe that architectural style is independent of politics. The most rudimentary observation will reveal that buildings and cities are neither democratic nor fascist; that they easily transcend the ideology of their creators to become useful and beloved to other times.

It is essential that architecture not become a pawn in the culture wars. It is a falsification of history to considered a style permanently representative of this or that hegemony or this or that liberation. Such relationships can be easily proven or not with a glance at the production of Roosevelt and Mussolini — they are tenuous to the point of being meaningless.

It is essential that codes be confined in their prescriptions to building type. Typological discipline is necessary to the creation of urbanism; architectural expression is the responsibility of the architect.

It is essential to observe that participation in a permanent avant-garde is an untenable position that consumes those who do. Architects at the peak of their craft must not be marginalized merely because their cycle of fame has passed. Architecture is not a consumer item.

It is essential that the architectural schools be liberated from the thrall of sociologists, linguists and philosophers. Those who are primarily dedicated to other disciplines should depart to their own departments from which they can continue to educate architects in the proper measure.

It is essential that architecture should incorporate authentic progress in material and production methods, but not for the sake of innovation alone.

It is essential that architects endeavor to harness the most efficient systems of production in order to make the best design available to the greatest number. Only those artifacts that are reproduced in quantity are consequential to the needs of the present — we have the problem of large numbers.

It is essential that we engage the mobile home industry, the prefabrication industry, and the house plan industry. These are efficient methods to provide housing. The current low quality of their production is a result of nonparticipation by architects.

It is essential that architects endeavor to publish their work in popular periodicals. How else will the people learn?

It is essential that the techniques of mass production affect the process of design, but not necessary that it determine the form of the building.
It is essential that the techniques of graphic depiction, whether actual or virtual, not determine the design of the buildings. The capabilities of computer-aided design must remain as an instrument for the liberation of labor and not a determinant of form. Just because a form can be easily depicted does not mean that it should be constructed.

It is essential to understand that it is a humiliation for architects to accept the star system wherein they perform for the opinion of an absurdly small number of critics. Such critics are empowered only because they are recognized as such by the architects themselves. This applies only to self-designated journalists, not to architectural historians, who earn their standing through research and documentation rather than through mere personal opinion. Historians, on the other hand, are an essential support to the knowledge base from which architecture evolves.

It is essential to recognize that each building should, insofar as possible, be coherently composed. A building is not to be the simulacra of an absent urbanism. Authentic variety in urbanism can only result from the multiplicity of buildings by multiple designers. True urbanism is the result of many eyes, hands and thoughts, preferably intervening sequentially.

It is essential that traditional and contemporary architectural styles be considered to have equal standing, as they represent parallel, persistent realities. They may be used badly or well, but their application and their critique should be on the basis of their appropriateness to context, and their quality, rather than fashion.

It is essential that we not grant contemporary buildings relative dispensation for having been created in the so-called modernist era. They must be held to a standard as high as those of our predecessors. After all, the means available to us are not less than theirs.

It is essential to state that aesthetic review boards are objectionable and to acknowledge a preference for controls by rules and laws rather than be subjected to the whims and opinions of individuals.

It is essential that architects work concurrently with landscape architects in the process of design. Landscape architects in turn must respond to buildings rather than impose their autonomous layouts. The ground is not a canvas and nature is not material for an installation piece.

It is essential that architects, like attorneys, dedicate a portion of their time without compensation to improve the quality of design available to those who do not otherwise have access to professional design.

It is essential that architects should participate in the political arena so that those who affect the built world at the largest scale may have their advice. It is intolerable to have pervasive decisions made by those without an adequate design education.

It is essential that architects vow to support each other against those who, through relativist argument, undermine architecture's potential as a social and ecological instrument for the good. Time and effort spent weakening and denigrating architectura and architects harms us all.

It is essential that we not impose untested or experimental designs on the poor, as the likelihood of failure in such cases has proven to be very great, and they are powerless to escape its consequences. Architects should experiment, if at all, with those wealthy enough to patronize the avant-garde. They can afford to move out.

It is essential to understand that there is a confusion between creativity, which we accept as a necessary element of design, and originality, which is a false ideal that when pursued at all costs is destructive to architecture. The worship of originality condemns our cities to incoherence and the architect's life's work to unwarranted obsolescence.

It is essential that, because so much of the craft of building has been lost, architects allocate a portion of their time to its research and recovery and to the sharing of the fruits of this endeavor by teaching and writing.

It is essential that buildings at the very least incorporate a passive environmentalism in siting, materials and the performance of its mechanical elements.

It is essential that the analysis of current everyday building not result in the conclusion that the people are automatically prone to kitsch. It is pandering to give them only what they already know.

It is essential that architectural history present as role models not just the form-givers but the masters of policy: Cerda, Haussmann, Burnham, Frank, Moses, Bohigas, Stimman, and Madragal should be as well known to architects as Palladio, Mies or Venturi. After all, they had a greater effect on the built environment. Talented students who are not seduced by form making should not be lost to architecture when municipal administration is sorely in need of their abilities.

It is essential that architects learn to respond to the natural, architectural and urban context if it is of value. If the context is not suitable, then the proper response is to inaugurate it to be so. Buildings have been able to be fitting without loss of creativity. Not until this is common will the proliferation of architectural review committees cease to bedevil both good and bad designers.

It is essential that the architectural vernaculars of the world are the subjects of systematic study in schools and, more importantly, that they be available as models for the design process. We must recover the vernacular mind. Good, plain, normative buildings must again be dependably available everywhere and to all.

These principles derive primarily from the notes of Andrés Duany, but also include comments made by Dan Solomon, Douglas Duany, Milton Grenfell, John Massengale, Steven Mouzon and others.

Style

By Daniel Solomon

The combined effects of the denial of style (architecture is *truth*) and the harsh realities of media culture have precluded the possibility of a stable canon. The most meteoric architectural careers are based upon a particular form of nimbleness; that is, the ability to produce work that simultaneously is *news* and *truth*. The combination of both phenomena is essential. For the publication and exhibition opportunities that careers depend upon, the news part is crucial, but by itself insufficient; it has to be news about social and technological imperatives. This means that the social and technological imperatives of the age have to change all the time. Of course, not all architects are adept at coining new imperatives as the occasion demands, and an important function that media serve is to transmit newly minted imperatives of the times from their discoverers to their awaiting legions of acolytes. Since building technology and social conditions do not change rapidly enough to keep up with media culture's demand for news, new architectural imperatives have to come from extrinsic sources farther and farther afield — linguistics, post-structuralism, airplane design software, feminist literary criticism, global consumerism and so on. Soon architectural discourse will require its own channel, like C-Span, where tenure candidates and others whose livelihood is involved can keep abreast of fast-breaking events in the realm of *Zeitgeist* imperatives.

To be fair, it must be said that there is resistance to all this within the modernist establishment. Some of the world's most celebrated modernists have chosen to act as if the original canons of modernism were as true and stable as they claimed to be. Richard Meier's relentless excellence assumes that the formal language of Le Corbusier is an inexhaustible and sufficient resource for whatever comes along. Switzerland's Herzog and DeMeuron treat the architecture of Mies van der Rohe in somewhat the same way. There is nothing wrong at all with this kind of supremely refined, revivalist architecture, except the absurdity of its denial to be what it is. Just talk to some of the subcontractors for Meier's Getty Museum about how hard and demanding it was to build, about how much every detail cost, and then make some claims about the technological imperatives it is based upon. The refinement of Meier's architecture is anything but the automatic by-product of the technology of the times.

John Massengale (center with microphone) addresses the style discussion at the Charleston Market Hall.

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Since the hegemony of mainstream modernism, there have been two fiercely held ideas about style: First, that it doesn't exist; second, that it is inexorably linked to time. Both of these ideas have been crippling to the ability of architects to respond stylistically to the demands of place, which is in fact specifically what people most frequently hire architects to do. This divergence of view causes most pedigreed architects to think of much of their potential source of patronage as hopelessly philistine and kitsch, and it causes significant segments of society to run as far and as fast from pedigreed architects as it possibly can.

It is possible to accept the existence of style in a way that it is not in fact a phenomenon related to time. I think it was no less than Diana Vreeland, the legendary editor of *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, who made the distinction between style and fashion, claiming that style, unlike fashion, has a timeless component to it, and the truly stylish are frequently somewhat indifferent to fashion. Style in fact can be all sorts of things. It can be related to place, as in the buildings of Charleston, related to time, as in say Art Deco, or it can be personological like Frank Gehry's style or Picasso's.

In the 19th century and the first third of the 20th century, the architectural world's concept of style was a bit more like Diana Vreeland's and less like the *Zeitgeist* ideologues of today's academy. One sees this phenomenon clearly in Northern California. From the late 1890s until the end of the 1920s, the public institutions of Northern California were built for the most part by a small group immensely gifted and superbly well-trained architects, educated at

Dan Solomon

the *Ecole des Beaux Arts*. For the whole of their incredibly prolific careers, this little group that included Bernard Maybeck, John Galen Howard, Willis Polk, Arthur Brown and Julia Morgan built a world that was in urbanistic terms a very satisfactory place. They built city fabric, public monuments, rural retreats, grand campus plans, and retail streets of great vitality, and they did it all without any theory to speak of (they were too busy for theories), but with virtuoso skill, unabashed eclecticism and a complete absence of *Zeitgeist* hang-ups and ideological proscriptions. Julia Morgan had no problem at all, leaping from the from Renaissance Florence as a source for the Fairmont Hotel on top of Nob Hill in San Francisco, to rustic timber vernacular for the Ahwahnee in Yosemite. It was exactly this eclectic skill that was considered so out of date after WW II that she was denied all further opportunity to build.

Unlike Gropius and his generations of progeny, Julia Morgan's contemporaries did not pretend that style did not exist, or that it was a bad word denoting a bad thing like *masturbation*. The Gropius dogma had effects not unlike those of the Cultural Revolution in China, another instance of crazy pieties run amok. Architects systematically unlearned how to do architecture. For 40 years there has hardly been an architect

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The Case for Traditional Architecture and Urbanism

By Michael Lykoudis, AIA

Architecture is the art of building shelter and the essential ingredient of the physical fabric of communities. Traditional architectural forms come from nature and are represented in the many regions of the world through the rustic, vernacular and classical ways of building. Place has much to do with the character of architecture. Climate, culture, geography and time have much to do with differentiating the characters of one place from another. At the same time, the principles of the traditional architectures of different cultures illustrate the continuities between them.

Most traditional architectural form has its origins in two bodies of knowledge: tectonics (the idealization and representation of principles of construction) and urbanism (the idealization and representation of the public and private aspects of life). More simply put, it is how we build and how we live together. It is therefore essential to make and understand the extricable link between urban design (which includes the patterns of circulation, the proximities of civic, commercial and private life, formal hierarchies of public and private space) and architecture (which is the confluence of urbanism and tectonics).

The validity of the traditional city of today rests on its polycentric organization, pedestrian scale and integration of multiple uses. These criteria are a response to the environmental, socio-economic and political issues that have been raised as sprawl endangers more than our aesthetic sensibilities. With respect to architecture, many believe that the construction industry is one of the largest contributors to pollution and global warming. The extraordinarily poor quality of construction throughout the world in the post-war period has led to an enormous hidden deficit when it comes time to renovate or replace obsolete crumbling buildings.

The process of architectural design unfortunately is still being considered more as a personal response, and therefore style, rather than being placed under the same ecological scrutiny as urban design. The "stylistic" approach limits one's knowledge to one style or another, perhaps one personal "style" or the "style" of a period. One can know many styles but that still does not allow for broader principles to be extracted and applied to new problems. The emphasis on style limits our perceptions on how knowledge transcends time and place and its application to new situation.

The typological approach on the other hand engages knowledge without regard to time and place, while at the same time this knowledge can be applied to specific and unique conditions. Only through type can we see the continuity between Greek and Chinese architecture. Both have similar tectonic and urban principles that yield very different "styles" or characters of architecture. Similarly the knowledge of the past can be applied to solutions of the problems of the present without focusing on the image or character of the building as the most important criterion. How the building looks is not as important as how well the building resolves the many criteria that we establish for good architecture and urbanism.

One of the most important criteria for architecture today revolves around the environmental issues that threaten our very existence. Therefore style will not help us find solutions, but a typological examination of cities and buildings around the world illustrates the principles that can be extracted and used to produce ecological and sustainable built environments.

Michael Lykoudis

There are three interdependent and inseparable typological levels for establishing environmentally sustainable criteria for building architecture: urban, architectural and tectonic. (I would exclude those structures that may be built for temporary entertainment value or specific utilitarian uses). What is offered here is a starting point. It is understood that the problem

See LYKOUDIS, next page

Remarks on Style

By Milton Grenfell

Let us agree, at the outset, that style is inevitable. The word means simply a manner of expression characteristic of an individual, artistic school, time period, culture, *et al.* Note that the origins of this word are with writing, as evidenced by its obvious close kinship to the word for that earliest writing instrument, the stylus, used by for mankind's first markings on clay tablets. Now writing always bears the mark, or style, of its author. Grammatical construction, turns of phrase, spelling, penmanship, etc., comprise a "manner of expression" that collectively enable a handwriting analyst to distinguish a written line by Abraham Lincoln from one by Thomas Jefferson, or from a bad forgery. Similarly, papyrolgists can, with just a line or two from a several thousand year old manuscript, date it to within a few decades, identify its place of origin, the particular cultural identity of its author, and even attribute different documents to the same writer. Along the same lines, a good scholar of Gothic architecture, can, through an assortment

David Brain comments on the issue of style.

of stylistic clues, can identify its place and time of construction to a specific region and to within a few decades.

So while style is inevitable, the crafting of a particular style is very much a product of individual selection. For example, in selecting our respective attire each morning, each of us does so in his own personal style. Yet, no doubt, a photo of this assembly looked back on, in say 100 years from now, will also clearly show us all to be attired in the style of the early 21st century.

So style is ultimately a paradox. It holds together a pair of opposites — inevitability and free will. If this sounds familiar to some of you, say rather like the paradox of predestination and free will, I would suggest that this reflection of the theological in the earthly is no mere coincidence. This parallel between divine and human creativity is the subject of another much longer article, but for those interested, I would simply recommend the excellent book on the subject, "The Mind of the Maker," by the English mystery writer and sometime theologian, Dorothy Sayers.

Now as to these two aspects of style, it would seem of little use to discuss the inevitable, so let us turn to the aspects of style that involve choice. How does an architect, or any artist, consciously decide in questions of style? With most decisions in life there are good ones, bad ones, and the whole range of degrees between these extremes. I submit that design decisions about style can be judged to have been good or bad or something in between by subjecting them to the principles and practice of new urbanism. But alas, we discover in the CNU Charter that: "Individual architectural projects should be seamlessly linked to their surroundings. This issue transcends style." I believe this statement is both true and false. It is true that for two starving people, the issue of obtaining food transcends matters of culinary style. But false, in that once beyond the desperate state of starvation, whether one eats pizza or French *haute cuisine* is no longer transcended, but rather a decision of central importance to that moment. I would argue that 10 years ago when new urbanists were desperate and starved for the right ideas and techniques needed to recreate good urbanism, questions of style were transcended. But 10 years later, with new urbanism culturally secure and intellectually well fed, I believe it is false that issues of style can continue to be transcended. I believe it is central to this moment that questions of style be addressed project by project, building by building.

Back to the Charter. Just three paragraphs down from the aforementioned, we find that "Streets, and squares should be safe, comfortable and interesting to the pedestrian." The question I believe before us now is, are there styles more appropriate for a particular new urbanism project than others, and more to the point, are there some style decision which might be inappropriate, or dare we say "less good" for new urbanism in general, due to evidence that these decisions render places less "comfortable and interesting"?

I would contend that the style of architecture marked by its radical rejection of all historical styles, namely Modernism, is a style inadequate to the task of creating "comfortable and interesting" places because it is deficient in three aspects which are crucial to such places, namely:

1) intelligibility,
2) complexity within order,
3) connectivity.

First intelligibility. There are three ways abandoned by modernism that architecture has traditionally made itself intelligible: typology, ornament and tectonics. Typology transmits information through association that convention has assigned to forms. Traditional typologies tell us what is a house of worship, what is a bank, what is a school, what is a house, and where the front door is. Typologically, shed roofs are for rabbit hutches, outhouses and other such modest outbuildings. Quonset huts are for temporary military encampments.

Ornament as a means of making buildings intelligible has, until the modernist movement, been inseparable from architecture. The totemic devices painted and carved into the wooden posts of even the most primitive shelter proclaimed the owner's lineage or his powers in battle or the hunt. Before typology or tectonics, when we lived in mere holes in the earth, mankind adorned the walls of his caves with pictures that still delight us. Indeed, delight, that third prong of Vitruvius' timeless Triad — Commodity, Firmness and Delight — is inseparable from ornament. Since we ornament where we live, where we are buried, and even our own bodies, man might well be described as the

Milton Grenfell

"ornamenting animal." Such behavior is peculiarly and inextricable human.

Finally, that term beloved of architects, tectonics, which might be defined as a building's expression of the craft of building. This expression often operates on the level of actuality and metaphor. For example, a cornice projection actually shelters a building's fabric and occupants from sun and rain, but also creates a metaphor for shelter. Whereas the swelling, or entasis, of a column shaft is purely a metaphorical representation of the column's load bearing. Nevertheless, such metaphors speak of truths about building that transcend mere fact.

The second crucial deficiency is modernism's lack of complexity within order. Recent Russian neurological research on perception suggests that we are hard-wired to seek out ordered complexity. Deprived of it children become autistic, and adults prone to ennui and violence. Modernism's reduction of architecture to a mere assembly of industrial components has left us with buildings of numbing simplicity. A doorway in I. M. Pei's East Wing of the National Gallery is simply a rectangular hole in a limestone veneer wall. In contrast, just the door casing of John Russell Pope's West Wing changes plane and shape a dozen times or so in the space of 1 foot. It is complexity organized to sculpt light for specific aesthetic effects all within the ordered language of high classicism.

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is quite complex and difficult and there needs to be an ongoing discussion.

1. Urban Typologies: Streets, Squares and Blocks – Durability of the city fabric is essential to a sustainable environment and building communities. The traditional city's pedestrian environment, with its proximity to life's basic necessities, allows citizens to walk from their homes to commercial and civic centers, thus ensuring that all are included in the life of the city (for example, the young and the old who cannot drive). The interconnected networks of streets allow citizens access to the parts of the city without labyrinthine or physical barriers, therefore saving energy. For instance, a citizen can walk a few meters to run an errand. It would take a suburbanite driving a 3,000-pound car 10 miles to accomplish the same chore. Because of its dependence on large amounts of energy to support its structure, suburban sprawl wastes energy while the traditional city conserves it.

2. Architectural Typologies: Public and Private Buildings – The organization and spatial qualities of a building should be able to accept successive adaptive reuses. Using a typological design process as opposed to a functionalist or stylistic approach can ensure flexibility to accommodate diverse future occupancies. In this manner, both embodied and expended energy are conserved as fewer resources are used to rehabilitate building instead of demolition and replacement construction. Fabric buildings should be as durable as public buildings. Building with the typological approach facilitates a shared understanding of the physical environment by the citizens of a city while at the same time offering many possibilities with respect to architectural character and maintaining an open creative process.

3. Tectonic Typologies: Walls, Openings and Roofs – Traditional architecture uses the most durable materials and methods in the most vulnerable places of a building, and the best materials and methods appropriate to each aspects of construction. In wet climates, pitched roofs keep water and snow off. Trabeated and arcuated construction has proven to withstand the test of time for more than the 30 – 40 year life span of most contemporary buildings. (Less reliable assemblies could still be used in protected areas.) Locally available natural materials used thoughtfully behave in a way that reduces heat gain and loss; at the same time these materials have low embodied energy. In contrast, the indiscriminate use of glass and steel has a high embodied energy, and overall these materials have poor heat loss and heat gain properties.

Traditional urbanism and architecture are and will continue to be the most effective passive solar heating/cooling and energy saving systems we have. At the same time, this method of building will be durable for generations and will support the cultural and political aspirations of communities. Ultimately the issue of architectural "style" will be with us for a long time. We live in an eclectic consumerist world where lifestyle and aesthetics are seen as exclusively personal choices without much regard for how the physical fabric of the city supports the idea of environmental sustainability and community. Building traditionally is building ecologically. If we build ecologically we

Julie Cofer remarks during the style discussion at the Charleston Market Hall.

will build with a sense of shared purpose for an improved quality of life that will also bring a renewed integrity to architecture, and the style wars will become irrelevant.

ALL IMAGES IN THIS SECTION BY THE TOWN PAPER.

The Great Style Debate

The Great Style Debate

Over the spring and summer of 2002, an online discussion continued the themes broached at the Charleston Council. On the TradArch listserv, an exchange titled "The Great Style Debate" began with Steve Mouzon's declaration on style, and ranged from the particulars of individual buildings to abstractions of broad principles. While the participants held differing views on the merits of specific styles, there was overall agreement that architectural style is indeed highly relevant to urbanism.

Laurence Aurbach
Editor, *Great Style Debate*

From: Steve Mouzon
Date: April 25, 2002

Here are a few follow-up thoughts on the architectural style discussion at the Charleston Council Sunday:

The core question is, "Should architecture matter to an urbanist?" The debate, as anyone may imagine from similar debates on this listserv, ranged from the notion that style is totally irrelevant to the idea that it is momentous.

My one-liner response is: "Dare anyone to try to make the case that Charleston would be as wonderful if most of the buildings were done by architects of the Miesian school?"

My (hopefully) more thoughtful response is: Let's take two items out of the discussion at the outset. First, I do not believe in the primacy of any single style for all places and all building types. So this will not be an attempt to sell a particular style as a panacea. Second, I do not believe in the architecture of nostalgia. If we advocate construction of cities as architectural history museums, we become nothing more than relics ourselves.

With those two common objections to style discussions out of the way, let's move forward. One of the most common complaints about NU projects from within our own ranks is the regrettable quality of the architecture. So the architecture clearly matters to a large number of people. The proposition that the fabric of the city is immaterial to the urbanism is about as silly as the notion that fabric of a garment has no bearing on clothing design. Can anyone say that an elegant suit would not be markedly different if made of burlap? Clearly, then, architecture matters. But how so?

What standard or criteria do we use to determine an architecture that is better from that which is not? I propose a very simple criteria: A building's ability to communicate with its users is a measure of its worth. In other words, buildings ought to speak in a language that people understand, rather than in some sort of "machine language."

What do people understand? I maintain that the architectural languages of man are found in four realms: the universal, the national, the regional, and the local. The universal part of the vocabulary includes elements that express the desire for objects that reflect our human form in some way. The national part of the vocabulary includes items that have proven themselves over the years in a particular culture and have become part of the heritage of that culture. The regional part of the vocabulary contains items that reflect the climate, topography or resources of a particular region within a nation. The local part of the vocabulary contains items that have been developed in response to a particular place such as a stretch of sea coast. Architecture deeply encompassing all four realms of architectural language is likely to be counted among the best-loved places. So while the issue of style alone is eminently unprovable, the effectiveness of a building's communication is immediately obvious to even the untrained eye.

One of the greatest failures of modernism is caused by the fact that the movement is star-based, promoting private languages that are accessible only to the most zealous adherents. Private languages by definition cannot communicate with average citizens. And they never will. Communication must occur with a public language. This is not to say that it is impossible for modernism to communicate with the masses via a common language, but it must certainly humble itself if it wishes to do so.

Another interesting aspect of public languages is that they evolve. Modernism crows about being on the cutting edge, but the languages of modernism are quite the opposite. Private languages generally do not evolve. A single architect such as Robert Venturi or Philip Johnson may invent multiple languages over the course of a career, but they are usually distinct languages and not the evolution of a single language. Private languages are generally stillborn. Public languages, on the other hand, always evolve, containing at any time the collected wisdom of perhaps centuries of a culture or region. So a public language can change to meet new conditions, while a private language quickly tarnishes in the ashbin of time.

The interesting thing here is the one issue about which new urbanists are nearly unanimous: the notion that the urban-scale vocabulary should be derived from "models that work." These models consist almost entirely of elements in existence before 1925. In other words, the language is definitely a public one, and it is also quite traditional. Why, then, do half of them vigorously protest any public language (especially traditional ones) when they reach the scale of the building and smaller? If urbanism should communicate, why shouldn't architecture? It is high time for someone to stand up and make a case for the notion of a sharp divide between larger-scale and smaller-scale patterns. Why should the philosophical basis of all scales of patterns not be the same? And why should they all not communicate?

Addendum:

I should add that I certainly favor the evolutionary approach to architectural languages that traditional architecture has generally followed for millennia. I do believe, however, that it is possible to develop a new language in a relatively short period of time that relies heavily on some of the aesthetic devices of modernism. The key to the success of this new "modern vernacular" will be recognition of the legion of patterns in the four realms of architecture mentioned earlier. I should also note that while possible, the prospects aren't particularly bright. The only two building types that have developed in the century of modernism that fulfill the original promise of inexpensive machine-built structures for the masses are the metal building and the house trailer. These two alone can lay claim to the status of "modern vernacular" at this time. The task is certainly daunting.

From: Dino Marcantonio
Date: April 25, 2002

"A building's ability to communicate with its users is a measure of its worth." It seems to me that a more complete criterion might run something like: "A building's ability to communicate **beautifully** or **well** with its users is a measure of its worth." To make an analogy, I communicate well enough, but I ain't Shakespeare.

As for your suggestion that a modern[ist] language might be developed if it took into account the universal, the national, the regional and the local, in my humble opinion modernism's aesthetic devices are as doomed as Esperanto. Imagine Esperanto tailored to suit national, regional and local differences: One is compelled to ask, what is the point? What's wrong with the languages we have? Unless of course the point is to make as complete a break with the past as possible ...

From: Oscar Machado
Date: April 25, 2002

To Dino: These two criteria of determination you pose are dependent on culture. You may as well be describing Guggenheim-like buildings. We are addressing style issues in a project in China, where imported European-style architecture is determined to be a symbol of an era that reminds the people of an imperialistic state. The fact that they themselves built it does not convince them that it is a good model to follow — believe me, we have tried. They said, "Yes, but we had no choice at the time, we were commissioned to do it for our patrons. If we had had a choice or opportunity, we would have built more of what we had in the past — vernacular-inspired architecture — and potentially these buildings could have evolved in perfection and economy." Ironically, modern buildings are now seen as a symbol of prosperity and national pride. The courtyard compound's resurrection in China is not easily sold as a viable concept from which to work. This building configuration was for another period of history, we have been told!

To Steve: I believe that if modern architecture deals with the appropriate meeting of the building with the ground to help outline the premise of the public and private spaces, a constructive contribution to the built environment can be made. Look at the early works of the modern masters such as Loos, Aalto, Mies, Le Corbusier (yes even he).

It is that kind of modern building, very urban in my opinion, that can be used in the rebuilding of cities in a traditional/modern syntax.

From: Edward Erfurt
Date: April 26, 2002

Oscar said, *"I believe that if modern architecture deals with the appropriate meeting of the building with the ground to help outline the premise of the public and private spaces, a constructive contribution to the built environment can be made."*

I must completely disagree with this point. Cities are not diagrams. Cities must be understood as places that are about a perspectival experience that can never be achieved only by creating edges. Mies' Seagram building in New York is a prime example of a building that outlines the public and private spaces in a clear diagram, but it is a complete urban failure.

Modernist thought does not allow for buildings to interact with each other, and therefore the building can not relate to the city as part of the whole. The machine aesthetic is just that, a wrapper for a function. Mies would roll in his grave to hear that his architecture is nothing more then the wrapper on a box. Mies wanted to find truth through the machine which, we failed to realize then, leads us to nothing.

The modernist architects have left a very heavy toll for their experiments and attempts to change the basic needs of humans. Modernists have led us down a road of disposable buildings and an architecture that does not rely on the artist, but on the mathematician.

From: Michael Franck

Date: April 26, 2002

Sorry, but I must disagree with this point as stated by Mr. Erfurt: *"Mies' Seagram building in New York is a prime example of a building that outlines the public and private spaces in a clear diagram, but it is a complete urban failure."*

In my humble opinion this is a very beautiful, classic modern building and the space formed in front of it is hardly a complete urban failure. The building is set back from Park Avenue, allowing for a raised public lobby to the building flanked by a pair of very understated fountains. These fountains are particularly beautiful in December as they are chock full of evergreen trees. I find this exact point along Park Avenue to be the most thrilling. This "square" created by the Seagram Building allows for a place to pause along Park Avenue, to look up and enjoy the skyline.

If this isn't an example of how to effectively achieve a good "traditional" urban space with the use of modern architecture, nothing is!

From: Oscar Machado
Sent: April 26, 2002

Yes Mr. Michael, I also agree with your description of Mies' Park Avenue building, as also with the exceptionally well executed group of five buildings Mies designed in Toronto, Canada. There within the very dense and clearly outlined public realm formed by modern and traditional architecture, these buildings create a well-defined plaza, like no other of this kind I have seen.

But please note we are discussing an exception to the rule of what I was describing. Mies' buildings are intended, in these two examples, to create a public space underneath them and in front of them. The contribution of the other buildings' precision in the urban outline, around Mies' buildings, is what makes them work so well.

I suspect that the opponents to these comments I've made have a different image than I have in mind.

p.s. The power of Letarouilly's figural plan of Rome, drawn in 1840, is the clear form it portrays. The best cities are the ones that have a diagrammatic-like parti.

From: Steven Semes
Date: April 29, 2002

As someone who worked in the Seagram Building every day for almost five years, I came to admire the virtuosity of the building and its plaza, while at the same time regretting that so many less-skilled designers tried to adapt it as a model for dozens of bad towers set in bad plazas, for example, along Sixth Avenue. There is no question that the Seagram Building looked much better when it was surrounded by classical masonry buildings, as it was until the mid-1960s. The loss of the historical context made it into an isolated artifact surrounded by high-rise noise. It is now quite easy to walk right past it without noticing it, something that was not possible before. This reminds us that modernist architecture derived probably 90 percent of its interest from the contrast with the historical city around it. Once that historical city was replaced by other modernist objects, the frisson was gone. While the dialogue between the Seagram Building and the Racquet Club across Park Avenue is very satisfying on an abstract level, Seagram and the Lever House diagonally across the street have nothing to say to one another. I must (secretly) admit to admiring the Seagram Building, just as I (again secretly) admire Johnson's Glass House. These are the two modernist monuments that I can admit to approving of, although I do so with the knowledge that both are inevitably incapable of generating connections with other buildings or, for that matter, composing a city.

When I worked at Johnson/Burgee, I thought that one way to make the Seagram Plaza more humanistic and less abstract, would be to have bronze replicas of the Laocoon and the Burghers of Calais installed in the two fountain pools. Seeing these monumental tragic figures sloshing through the pools would, I thought emphasize the tragic dimension of the architecture and bring a degree of human feeling into what is a pretty cerebral place. But, like Michael, I'll be happy to enjoy the evergreens at Christmastime. I agree with the last paragraph in Steve Mouzon's posting: A public language of architecture is as important as a public language of town planning. Modernism cannot provide either of these, despite a handful of admirable examples. The traditional buildings that formerly lined Park Avenue **did** compose a city.

From: Michael Mesko
Date: April 29, 2002/Revised February 3, 2003

Lack of consensus regarding the new urbanist debate on style makes the traditional architectural and urbanism movement less defensible and less influential than it might be otherwise. Predominant contemporary definitions of style are rather limited — by-products of an understanding of the world that dissects time into distinct, unique and isolated periods of compartmentalised history. For many contemporary architects, an understanding of style has been influenced greatly by an education that places parentheses around particular periods and places. Two general approaches to the use of history have emerged and currently dominate architectural practice as a result — revivalism and modernism.

Stylistic revivalists, which is what many (not all) traditional architects are today, copy particular periods, or more specifically, motifs from these periods, often with little understanding or consideration of their constructional (tectonic) or symbolic origin or regional appropriateness. Modernists reject these stylistic periods as being of nothing but passing historical interest, irrelevant to contemporary practice. In place of copying styles they invent entirely new ones, with their own languages composed of signature motifs and legions of followers ("Deconstructivist" style, Mies style, Corbusier style).

The new urbanist debate regarding style suggests that strong differences in opinion exist that echo these two approaches among some practitioners. On one side seem to be revivalists who believe it is necessary to require compositional devices (i.e., a pattern book, a very specific code, a necessary adherence to certain proportions for traditional motifs such as columns, etc.) that promote a stylistic uniformity or limit architectural expression to a few options. In doing so, the authority of the architect tends to be undermined; architectural design becomes static, a passive response to requirements that leave little room for anything but the most modest variation. Working within these constraints, the architect is concerned less with how to adapt traditions to the circumstances of a particular client and context — making well contained urban space with enduring and appropriate architecture — than with adhering to codes that specify motifs or compositional devices to achieve some preconceived stylistic effect.

A second group of practitioners consists of modernists who, suggesting style is irrelevant, believe that any new urbanist plan can successfully accommodate modernist architecture (at the very minimum some "less aggressive" modernist style). Some have argued that modernist buildings could be reserved for the most important edifices in the community. Those still carrying the banner for modernism seem to have forgotten that one of the foremost underlying premises of much modernist architecture is that every building must be an idiosyncratic expression of the architect and his or her private ideas. Designing a building that is appropriate to its rank among other buildings is impossible, since each modernist building is a self-contained and closed system. Modernist architecture, incapable of making cities of discernible hierarchical legibility, is quite contrary to the distinction of hierarchy in new urbanist plans, where some streets, urban spaces and building sites are more important than others.

Since both modernism and revivalism, in part, originate from an art historical designation of stylistic categories, the results of which are not particularly desirable, then the usefulness of those categories should be in question. Removing the parentheses surrounding particular artistic and architectural periods would have significant implications for the practice of architecture. Rather than judging the merits of a particular building based on the closeness to which it approximates some contrived ideal representation of a stylistic period, its usefulness as a precedent would be determined by how well it does certain other things. For example, is the building constructed in an enduring manner of appropriate materials, is it distinguishable from other buildings as a consequence of its programmatic content and hierarchy, does it delineate urban space, etc. Since buildings from different times do similar things (with varying degrees of success), comparison of buildings across the imagined bookends of stylistic periods is possible. Particular buildings and their unique urban configurations are simply examples of things that architecture concerns itself with: structural types (types of walls, roofs, and openings), building types, urban types, types of urban spaces and modification by existing buildings, and so on.

When historical examples are understood and used this way, precedents can appropriately inform any new set of design requirements. Style becomes simply an unavoidable product of the manner in which an architect employs these types, and not a self-conscious, all-determining goal. Both new urbanists and traditional architects have embraced some of these ideas.

New urbanists have demonstrated the need to reclaim traditional examples of urban typologies (streets, blocks, and urban spaces) and have adapted socially and environmentally appropriate examples to relevant contexts. However, some seem to confuse the example with the type, being a bit overzealous in their attempts to standardize the exact measure of these types. For every type, there are innumerable examples that differ in dimension and character as a response to a myriad of variables, ranging from client to climate. It is these unique expressions, results of actual contingencies, that have enriched the finest urban spaces and sequences and helped render cultural distinctiveness to particular places. Over-standardization can result in a numbing sameness of urban experience in even the finest new urbanist communities. Nevertheless, new urbanists have been most successful in making the argument for a return to civilized urban patterns.

Traditional architects have been particularly good at reclaiming building typologies. The general programmatic content, type, and constituent parts of a traditional building can be clear because these elements may be compared to other similar examples. Traditional architects have been less successful in designing buildings that ameliorate inferior contexts. Their buildings, though sometimes beautifully detailed and crafted, tend to be objects that contribute little to the containment and delineation of good urban space (though many times this is a result of over-restrictive zoning or codes). As a consequence of being object-like, many contemporary traditional buildings tend to be compositionally

over-articulated and disinterested in regional character.

Contemporary preoccupations with style have caused both groups to neglect to some extent the methods and materials of which buildings are built: structural typologies. The lack of attention to this category has resulted in some of the most lamentable aspects of some contemporary traditional architecture. Structural typologies, as Richard Economakis has remarked, "emerge from traditional constructional techniques and constitute the basic vocabulary of forms that comprise building traditions. When one speaks of architectural details, stylistic and decorative elements, embellishments, etc., it is important to remember that these invariably have a constructional or symbolic origin." When architects and new urbanists indiscriminately apply or require these motifs, the effect is often kitsch.

Without some consensus on the subject of style and some effort to distinguish themselves in theory and practice from modernism and revivalism, traditional architects and new urbanists could restrict the capacity of their movement to influence anything but the most superficial aspects of architectural appearance. Eclectically "styled" architecture could suffer the same fate it did in the first half of the 20th century, and being intellectually indefensible, could constitute an ever dwindling percentage of the built world. Possibly, it could be completely supplanted by another form of historically relativist, modernist architecture. Regional distinctions in architecture would continue to evaporate and distinctions amongst types of buildings would be increasingly nonexistent. Alternatively, the percentage of revivalist veneer architecture (aided by an industrial complex providing products that make possible any style, anywhere, anytime) might continue to rise. Either way, both scenarios would continue to contribute to the erosion of any substantive tradition of the crafting and constructing of buildings, any real distinction of place and subsequently any possibility of real local or regional culture.

From: Steven Semes
Date: April 29, 2002

In reply to Michael Mesko: I'm not sure I understand your proposed architecture beyond style based on "structural types." Are you suggesting something like Christopher Alexander's Pattern language? The idea of defining elements from vernacular building independent of place or period and regardless of ornament etc., is useful, but in practice seems to result in a kind of architectural Esperanto.

My (limited) knowledge of the history of the issue leads me to conclude that architects have for at least the last two centuries tried to sidestep style, or invent new styles, or avoid style, and have not succeeded. Style keeps establishing itself in spite of our attempts to dismiss it. As a card-carrying revivalist, I see no alternative to creating new architecture out of what we can understand of historical and vernacular architecture. If we are diligent in trying to understand why things were made the way they were and apply elements and forms with sympathy for their rationales and origins, I think some modicum of success is possible.

I like what Sir John Soane said: We need to understand not only what the architects of the past did, but **what they would have done**. If I am adding to a historical (or "period") building, I try to think what the original architect might have done if he were to return to make the addition himself. Another way of putting it is to try to read the DNA that produced the building and let the building grow according to its own rules and identity. I think a neighborhood could do this as well as a new building. The style of a work grows out of defining the rules of growth that apply to that place and building task. These rules would include not only structural elements but the ornamental, proportional and decorative aspects.

Why can't the buildings that occupy an NU town plan grow in like manner to the layout of streets and squares? It seems to me that the best NU communities do this. Comments welcome.

From: John Massengale
Date: May 8, 2002

To Michael Mesko:

It is difficult to reply to your post because A) it is long and makes many good points, and B) when it comes to new urbanism it is clearly an outsider's view, thereby also requiring a lot of discussion. You might consider coming to CNU X in Miami to get a wider view.

Some quick notes:

"Lack of consensus regarding the new urbanist debate on style makes the traditional architectural and urbanism movement less defensible and less influential than it might be otherwise."

One can not deal with all the various constituencies the CNU deals with if the only arrows in your quiver are classicism and traditionalism. Notre Dame's and the New School for Traditional Architecture and Urbanism's more specialized positions, as good as they hopefully are, still automatically write off a very large portion of the country, particularly among those responsible for building and regulating building. They even write off a significant percentage of the original six founders of the CNU.

Private offices can work with that, because they can be selective in a way the CNU can not, needing only to appeal to enough to clients to do good work and make a living. The CNU is more like a politician who needs majority appeal just to get started.

Eighty percent of America has been built since World War II, most of it by people who instantly smell out academics and idealists and simply ignore them. You may be right, and they wrong, but if you want them to respect your ideas, you have to be more accommodating. Many of your potential clients, as well as their potential buyers, simply will not agree with you.

It is **no** knock on university professors of classical architecture to say, as I'm sure they will agree, that they could not build the practice DPZ has, with over 200 city and town designs behind them. Everyone has their goals, and theirs has never been to work with Toll Brothers or the Hovnanians.

In 2002 we are indeed a pluralist country, and any organization which aims to have the broadest possible effect on the way America develops at this point in time must have pluralist positions.

At the last Council meeting new urbanists tried to discuss architectural style, detail and construction and didn't succeed very well. My take on why comes down to two points: The CNU founders tacitly or otherwise agreed not to discuss issues such as traditionalism versus modernism because it was divisive and/or not in the best interests of the organization; the arguments for traditionalism have not been as well debated in public and need more development for our current situation. There are outstanding publications like *The Classicist*, but there is no contemporary equivalent of the New Urban Charter, which is essentially a public policy book.

I agree completely with you that we now need to get all the voices into the debate. One of the best voices at the Council was Michael Lykoudis's. His points, although pragmatically based, were very different from Duany's urban performance standards for modernism. Each speaker reflected the differing demands of where and how they work.

Not too long ago, the *New York Times* had a story about the advisers to Bush's advisers. These were people like Myron Magnet, editor of the conservative *City Journal* (who has recently published work by Franck Lohsen McGrery and Robert Adam), and various Harvard government professors. Ultimately, Myron is responsible for some of Bush's ideas, but Bush's staff has significantly popularized them before selling them to the public, and it usually takes something like that to get a majority of the public vote. As presented by the Harvard professor, the idea might get 10 percent, but through this trickle-down process of adviser to adviser to Bush, the idea gets majority acceptance.

You wrote: *"The new urbanist debate regarding style suggests that strong differences in opinion exist that echo these two approaches among some practitioners. ..."* There are many more positions than this, even within individual offices. To oversimplify, however, a major divider is between those who code for style and those who code by region and typology. Celebration is an example of the first, most DPZ towns of the second, although there are exceptions. "Charleston" is not a style, but a regional typology. In Charleston itself, it was done in many styles and levels of size and complexity.

But the latter part of your statement makes it clear that you've never studied new urban codes. The criteria you discuss have little or nothing to do with the criteria used by new urban codes. The first concern of the UDA codes for Celebration is precisely the streetscape and its shaping. To get the spec builders of Florida to do what they did is a major accomplishment.

Historically, many American and European cities such as Williamsburg, Siena, and Paris have had much more restrictive codes than most new urban developments have.

It seems strange for a traditionalist to take the position that to work in the tradition of the Greek Revival would be limiting. Greek Thompson never found it so, although every third-rate modernist would.

From: Lucien Steil
Date: May 08, 2002

John, I think that you and Michael have very good points, as do the preceding posts on the topic!

What I find the most disturbing among new urbanists is not their refusal to look into traditional architecture primarily, but their obstinate rejection of architecture as an integral part of a urban design task. To apply architecture as a secondary ingredient, either as final imagery or labeling, or as a casual circumstance of the location of the project and the choice of architects, etc., is an attitude which, I agree with Mesko, ultimately weakens the whole NU strategy.

NU projects have so far mostly been criticized for the mediocrity of their architecture, not for the mediocrity of their urbanism: I think that what has to pass into the NU ranks is the necessary organic complicity of architecture and urbanism. Despite what new urbanists often say, it is architecture that is the most easily grasped and experienced factor of urbanism, rather than planning or type coding. All of the technical, legal, urbanistic, etc., design decisions that ultimately guarantee the success of NU are materialized and experienced at the scale of architecture, and architecture cannot remain like the optional and experimental division of NU.

From: John Massengale
Date: May 08, 2002

Lucien, on the whole, you and I don't disagree. The question in my mind is how to move not only the debate but the quality of the architecture in new urban projects ahead. And thereby the quality of the urbanism.

Many CNU members, including Board Members like Lizz Plater-Zyberk and Stefanos

Polyzoides, would agree wholeheartedly about the importance of design. This was a founding principle of the CNU, but the struggle to get good architecture has been one of the most difficult sides of new urbanism.

After one of the recent congresses, I went to visit six NU projects in three days with Rob Steuteville, the editor of the *New Urban News*. At the third project, he said, "You know sometimes this gets really depressing. When I started the *New Urban News* eight years ago, I thought we'd be a lot farther along than we are now. On a scale of one to ten, I can't give this more than a two."

At the fourth project, the next day, he said, "Now this one's a seven."

To which I replied, "If this is a seven, the Campidoglio's a twenty-seven."

One of the earliest charrettes I went to was for Mashpee, a DPZ project on the Cape. I remember a long, serious debate about chimneys, load-bearing construction and honesty. The question was this: If a brick chimney disappears into the house under the roof, did the brick have to continue all the way to the foundation, or was it acceptable to substitute load-bearing concrete block?

Within a few years, DPZ's town architect for Kentlands was designing his own house at Kentlands with a gas fireplace vented by a little button on the side of the house. In between had been many lessons about what developers and builders would accept, what could be built for $85 a foot, and what the market demanded.

Nobody is more critical of the architecture of Kentlands than Lizz and Andrés, but to make new urbanism succeed on a national scale, they had to accept many compromises. Which is not to say that they didn't fight for better quality every step of the way, or learn how to do it better the next time.

"What I find the most disturbing among new urbanists is not their refusal to look into traditional architecture primarily, but their obstinate rejection of architecture as an integral part of a urban design task."

So let's move the debate to the next level. What, specifically, should have been done better? How do we do better in the future, working with the limitations of the American development and regulatory systems as they exist today? And don't forget that over 3,000 of the 3,500 members of the CNU don't care as much about design as you do.

One answer, obviously, is programs like the ICA's AIBD classes. Another is the CNU's Hope VI program. Another is the work going on at Notre Dame, the University of Miami and Viseu.

But we all agree we need more. Where do we go from here?

"NU projects have so far mostly been criticized for the mediocrity of their architecture, not for the mediocrity of their urbanism: I think that what has to pass into the NU ranks is the necessary organic complicity of architecture and urbanism."

This is very abstract. What does it mean? How does one, specifically, apply it in NU projects?

A lot of my response to Mesko was not disagreeing with him. If we're going to improve the level of discourse, we have to go beyond short statements of ideological positions to more complex ways of dealing with problems. You've spent your life dealing with this in Europe, England and America. What do you think?

From: Oscar Machado
Sent: May 10, 2002

John asks: "Where do we go from here?" My pessimistic answer is: "Not far for now." Unfortunately we have not made much progress in the past 20 years with respect to architecture. In fact, we have succumbed to the odious suburban stereotypes invading new urban territory.

I agree with John's critical assessment of his tour of new urban projects. I have seen these projects also and the most noticeable problem they have is the implementation of architecture. It is at the architectural scale that new urbanism is failing, in 95 percent of the cases. This is the fault of the implementers and architects without a doubt. Amazingly, in some cases it is even the fault of the urban "master" planners that just don't know how buildings work within the urban fabric.

In the architecture I notice the lack of understanding of scale, composition, balance, rhythm, authenticity, function, materials, site disposition, room arrangements, patterns, elements, attachments, characteristics, style. Should I go on — no! Why should I? We just don't have time to teach architecture to the implementers of urban projects. The best we can do for now is set traditions. Usually the projects heavy on tradition are the better ones.

I think it is going to take another 20 years at least, with perhaps another generation of architects, for architecture and urbanism to work in synchrony. I accept mediocre architecture (to my dismay and that of many others, I am sure) but have no tolerance for bad urbanism.

The immediate solution to this problem is simple: Have both urban and architectural designers learn more about building types as they relate to the triad of constants: site disposition, configuration and function. And with more descriptive urban and architectural standards, these three critical constants that define building types can hopefully guarantee better urbanism.

The gradual solution is to teach architecture in context with urbanism in architecture schools. This is for the longer haul, for we have unfortunately begun with a clean slate as a result of modernism's destruction of tradition.

Then, some other day, we can debate style.

From: Lucien Steil
Date: May 09, 2002

Bravo Monsieur Oscar. I hoped you would say it!

Where do we go from there?

Architectural education of course is a priority, and you give the direction. NU has to interfere very aggressively in this matter, and I know that this is happening in the very moment!

However the scission between architecture and urbanism is not only a general fact in the academies, but it is also a quite common practice in NU. The reason is not an ignorance of the importance of architecture, but the belief that architecture is a discipline which is autonomous of the larger scale of the city. Some classicists think that a good building creates, by its excellence, its own context, and some new urbanists think that excellent urbanism can take any architecture. Both are fallacies!

Oscar, you are very pessimistic and slightly disillusioned. My experience with first year students is very encouraging, because the argument is so limpid that there can't be much resistance. When learning urban architecture in context and with clearly articulated civic responsibilities, the students feel it is an honor to serve the community rather than to meditate on their private torments. Working in a complex and real social and urban context makes their project endeavors so much more stimulating… the limitations and rules increase the challenge of creativity rather than destroy it! To develop a particular character and a proper originality within the conditions of a precise program and a local culture offers incredible opportunities for emulation to students and architects alike!

I think it depends very much on whether the CNU takes the challenge to define far more clearly how architecture and urbanism have to relate to one another. It is definitely a choice to be made in favor of a more articulate architectural integration within the urban planning process, acknowledging that the principles which guide the urban design cannot be abandoned when it comes to architecture. The liberality and opportunism of architecture compromises the strength of NU; even if style might not be the central preoccupation, the consistence and excellence of architecture should in no way be inferior to those concerns which are central to NU.

The terrain of masterplanning and typological coding has been quite thoroughly consolidated. It might be very appropriate, if not urgent, to go at architecture with a similar rigor and intelligence. Besides the definition of general principles, it seems very reasonable to me to consider architectural coding in a far more comprehensive way and above all in a perspective of legal instrumentality. This has happened all through the history of architecture and has demonstratively not prevented genius from flourishing within a freedom with rules.

From: Sandy Vitzthum
Date: May 27, 2002/Revised December 3, 2002

I am interested in a design philosophy that avoids assumptions of modernism, and a major one is the separation of the artist from his art. This can be seen in the comparison of art and kitsch (Demetri Porphyrios) or art/myth and symbols/signs (Roland Barthes). In one mode of creation one searches for the essence of a relationship, and the product has infinite interpretations (like poetry), and in the other mode one reduces interpretations to ensure that a message is communicated.

Barthes explains this difference with a great example: "If I walk in the Basque country, I may well notice in the houses an architectural unity, a common style, which leads me to aknowledge the Basque house as a definite ethnic product. ... I see only too well it was here before me, without me. ... It does not call out to me or provoke me into naming it. ... But if I am in Paris and I catch a glimpse of a natty white chalet with red tiles, dark brown half-timbering, and asymmetrical roof and a wattle-and-daub front, I feel as I were personally receiving an imperious injunction to name this object a Basque chalet. ... It is a real call the owners send out to me, and it has agreed to all manner of impoverishments." (Drastically abbreviated; see "Myth Today" in *Mythologies*.)

In the making of art there can be no separation of the artist from his work; in kitsch there must be a separation in order to judge how well the design communicates its preconceived message. This distance has been written about in many other fields — literature, painting, etc. — and it is often called the distance of irony.

It seems to me the major distinction of the modern condition is a separation of the artist from his work.

As I see it, modern (for the last 200-plus years) designers use the term "style" to classify rich traditions into more easily manipulated languages. The designs may be poetic, but they are primarily about communicating messages ... messages about the owners, the designer or the modern condition. They are kitsch ... and I try not to think of that as a negative term since it includes so many great classicists' work!

A traditional architect in the midst of the modern era cannot use this language. He must instead search for the richness and meaning in the place where he is designing, and understand the character of the building's program, its users, and its context (spiritual, political, and physical). That is what I mean when I say a fresh reading of style as the perfect fit of form and function (where nothing may be added or subtracted, so that it becomes a larger whole) works for me. That powerful definition was co-opted by modernists and ridiculed by post-modernists, but it continues to be relevant if you define function for yourself.

From: Steven Semes

Date: May 27, 2002

Lucien wrote: *"It is essential to not consider architecture as an afterthought or a flexible datum, but to consider it as an intrinsic part of the urban design process."*

This is totally correct and I believe it works both ways. Architecture and urban design must be considered as different points along a continuous spectrum distinguished only by the scale of the problems they examine and the particular tools they bring to the task. The cultural underpinnings must be common to both.

While reacting to the posts about new, modernist projects in historical settings (Rome, for example) or the modernist additions to historical buildings in New York that have recently been approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, we are faced again with the question of style. As we all know, the standards that guide "official" preservation activities encourage designers to create new interventions in historic settings without replicating the style of the original buildings. The standards further encourage sensitivity to scale, materials, proportions, etc., in an attempt to bring harmony in general terms without conforming to the historical style. (This is what one of the quoted speakers says about the proposals for Rome, i.e., since the materials of the Piano building are familiar, the building is somehow in harmony with Roman building traditions.) But it is precisely the absence of stylistic grammar in these projects, or the use of a grammar that is irreconcilable with the traditional pre-existing context, that make these proposals so awful and potentially devastating. It is only the historical style that supplies that missing grammar.

In truth, I know of no project in which modernist buildings have been designed in historical settings that do not, in fact, diminish the quality and value of the original structures or districts. Modernist architecture cannot coexist with traditional architecture without conflict. Many modernist buildings in historical contexts have been celebrated and given awards, but I can think of no example where the whole architectural entity would not be better were the modernist intrusion not there. So the notion of consciously designing in conformance with the character of an existing setting must be considered in a way that takes the original style seriously.

From: Andrés Duany
Date: May 29, 2002

Most of the general arguments regarding style and tradition within the CNU have been addressed here, very insightfully in my opinion. They have been, as they say, nailed.

Now allow me to personalize the issue:

I have absolutely no problem discussing or incorporating the concept of style or tradition into our written and built propositions. Where I disagree is in the very limited range of styles that are acceptable to my best traditionalist friends, who also happen to be among the most skillful of practitioners.

These gentlemen exclude from tradition some of my preferred styles: the Prairie school, early Corbu; Islamic architecture in its many geographic manifestations; particularly the Persian, Ottoman and Moghul ones; and also the Style Moderne as well as the elastic Scandinavian neo-classicism of the 1910 – 1930 period known as Swedish Grace; and I even have use for the beautiful, popular, and forgiving, Barragan-Legorreta school.

Are these not styles, each with its canon? Why are they not also considered traditions worthy of being further developed? Whenever I explain why I value them, my case is met with blank incomprehension, and that deadly, subliminal sniff of the style snobs.

Why?

I believe that traditional architecture in this country could use the new genetic material provided by these styles. If these styles can travel (and they have, all of them, covering half the world), why are they not acceptable styles for us? Why does it remain implied in this discussion that when we refer to tradition we only accept the Western canon prior to 1920? Among the many things that I appreciate about my friends, the traditionalists, I cannot include these unacknowledged prejudices.

From: Dino Marcantonio
Date: May 29, 2002

My worry — perhaps it's not legitimate — is that we not descend into a formal relativism. Are all forms equal, just different? Are all traditions equal, just different?

From: Steve Mouzon
Date: May 29, 2002

Andrés, I won't speak for the others, but my thoughts are as follows. You wrote,

"Are these not styles, each with its canon?"

Absolutely ... as are a huge selection of other styles, or languages, put forth in the past century, including Mies, post-Falling Water Wright, post-Johnson Wax Wright, pre-Portland Graves, pre- or post- (take your pick of any 5 – 7 years) Johnson. You'll get no debate from me concerning whether any of these are a legitimate language (or style), with its own set of rules.

"Why are they not also considered traditions worthy of being further developed?"

The point I will debate is whether they are indeed traditions. You'll notice that all of the styles I listed above are tied inextricably to their inventors. They were private languages which in most cases disdained the common architectural heritage of mankind (much less a culture or region) in favor of heretofore-unseen exclusivity. Daniel Liebskind probably achieved an ultimate exclusivity of sorts when he proclaimed 20 years ago at a lecture I was attending that "If you even compromise so far as to draw in a drawing type that someone else has invented (plan/section/elevation/etc.) you have sold your soul. ..." or words to that effect.

A tradition is not something held closely by a genius and their chosen initiates. A tradition by definition is a shared thing, repeated again and again and handed down from one generation to the next. To have meaning as a traditional language of architecture, it must come from the people and be of the people. Where, then, is the place of the architect? Is this mobitecture? Not at all. The function of the architect is to insightfully take the needs, the hopes, the memories and the aspirations of people and express them in the place they are making.

"Whenever I explain why I value them, my case is met with blank incomprehension, and that deadly, subliminal sniff of the style snobs. Why?"

Speaking again just for myself, I hope that's not the case. I hope we're all literate enough in the history of the past hundred years that incomprehension is not our response. Nonetheless, architecture should not just be about what I value or what you value. If we hope to do things which resonate with average citizens, then we've got to engage them. Can we expand their minds? Of course. But we shouldn't do it with dynamite, which is what the avant-garde appears to be all about. A new allegory has arisen amongst average people for Decon and its derivatives: "It looks like the wreckage of the WTC."

"If these styles can travel (and they have, all of them, covering half the world), why are they not acceptable styles for us?"

Precisely because they do travel. Styles have traveled in the past with a culture, such as when America was colonized by the British, French and Spanish. That's legitimate, in my opinion. But to import an entire style (or language) with no ties to a local culture is about as effective as trying to import a spoken or written language which has no ties to the local culture. It simply doesn't resonate and is incomprehensible. The average person turns away.

Any style that can cover half the world regardless of the indigenous culture has by definition no ties to the local culture, climate, terrain or materials. If it is a style that resonates profoundly with the deepest universal human needs, then that's acceptable, but that would be a ridiculous claim for any style that is loved by less than 5 percent of the public.

This does not by any means preclude cross-cultural pollination, which has happened since the dawn of time. Travelers have for millennia gone to another place, seen an idea which meets a need that they have, and have come home and incorporated it into their local traditions. That is a natural process, and one that should continue today. But that's a far cry from entirely destroying local traditions to make room for foreign ones, which is one of the greatest legacies of the modernists. Cross-cultural pollination should be a process of evolution, not revolution.

I should note that were I to design something in a place where the Persian, Ottoman or Moghul dialects of Islamic architecture resonated with the people to the point of being a living tradition, I would consider it my duty to learn everything possible about them so that my building or place could communicate with the people that use it. I would consider the imposition of Jeffersonian Classical architecture in such a situation to be an enormous waste of resources and highly offensive.

"Why does it remain implied in this discussion that when we refer to tradition we only accept the Western canon prior to 1920?"

That implication only applies to work in places where Western culture traditionally predominates. But the reason, in my opinion, is because it was at about that time that the Great Disconnect occurred. Why is it any great surprise that architects such as Wright who advocated the burning of architectural libraries should find themselves excluded by future generations?

I've got to say again, however, that if we close the book in 1920, we will build nothing but historical artifacts and will become relics ourselves. Architecture must evolve with culture. But to evolve, there must be a shared living language. Those shared living languages were effectively destroyed between 1900 and 1940 by the men whose early work you admire. I've got to admit a huge personal distaste for them because of the horrific damage they did later, although the work you mention is quite seductive.

In any case, our task should be to revive the shared languages, so that they can begin to evolve with culture once again. To do so, we've got to go back to the last living languages and begin the revival there. There is fertile ground, in my opinion, for this revival. Many of the great traditions here never died, but have just been in hibernation, waiting for decades for an architect to finally invoke them again. I've had people I've never met walk up to me on the street and say " Thank you for finally designing buildings our city can be proud of again."

I believe that once we have reawakened the living traditional languages, they will begin again to evolve naturally in ways that we cannot really anticipate today. Much of the evolution will occur because of skillful architects meeting common needs, but the development of the new vernaculars will also profit from the insights of owners, builders and users, who will finally be engaged in the process again after a century-long exile by the "specialists" of architecture. I hope to be one of those architects.

"Among the many things that I appreciate about my friends, the traditionalists, I cannot include these unacknowledged prejudices."

Speaking again just for myself, I gladly acknowledge prejudice against anything that spits in the face of the common man and dares him to admit that he doesn't understand. I am also proud to be associated with people such as those on this list (of all different stripes) who are part of the great renaissance of architecture and places that are human-based.

Thanks very much for your post: This is exactly the sort of debate that should occur here, in my opinion.

From: Oscar Machado
Sent: May 29, 2002

Prairie school; early Corbu; Islamic architecture; Persian; Ottoman and Moghul; moderne; Scandinavian neoclassicism; Swedish Grace; Barragan-Legorreta school… are not styles; they **have** style.

"that deadly, subliminal sniff of the style snob," Oscar Machado.

From: Lucien Steil
Date: May 29, 2002

Steve, let me react to some of your points, as much as I agree with most of what you say.

1) The styles Andrés mentioned are not person-related styles uniquely, not even F.L. Wright and Barragan. They draw from the ambient popular culture and its historical foundations and develop an eventually personal reading of it. This can occasionally degenerate into private idioms or provocative heresies, but not always. Sometimes the rediscovery of forgotten or fractured traditions passes through these private windows which then can open the vistas on to the larger universals of the same traditions. Consider Krier, Rossi, Graves and others who, without setting a tradition, led to it. So also did Brunelleschi, Bramante, Michelangelo ...

As concerns other contemporaries, I would like to mention Hassan Fathy, Abdel Wahed El Wakil, and Geoffrey Bawa who, through an admittedly personal itinerary, came to a generalizable understanding of traditional architecture, offering by means of a personal rediscovery and re-formulation the keys to a general methodology!

2) There are many worthwhile examples of traditional works after the twenties, even if generally we can consider Art Deco the last consistent style period. However, there are numerous local and architect-related incursions into regional and neo-regional styles, and neo-vernacular and classical schools of local dimension that should not be rejected, as they offer so many stimulating operational strategies to more universal cradles of inspiration. By the way, all of these local and personal articulations of the genius of traditional culture confirm the very potential for inventiveness and true originality in a well-understood tradition.

3) Introducing (as Dino does) the concept of "relativism" into these explorations seems to set our objectives into an excessively restricted terrain. It seems also to misinterpret the truly vicious nature of relativism: To acknowledge variety and diversity does not contradict the unity of truth. The fallacy is to consider that beauty in its true perfection can only be achieved within a limited range of historically established styles.

4) Coming back to person-related styles and their validity within a geographic transfer, I would like to again mention Geoffrey Bawa, whose Sri Lanka work is perfectly adapted to

See Great Style Debate, next page

Our New Architecture and the Many World Cultures

From: Chris Alexander
Date: Aug. 9, 2002

My dear colleagues,

In the last few weeks I have been reading many contributions to the TradArch listserv. I have not said anything, up until now, because I have simply been enjoying the community, the joy expressed in ancient things, and ancient wisdom, the renewal of the right to be careful with buildings and to take pains with details of buildings. Above all, I have enjoyed seeing the way many of you talk to each other, respect each other, and try, genuinely, to talk.

However, I have been genuinely puzzled by one thing, enough for me to want to speak about it; at least mention it. So here are my thoughts.

Some of you take seriously the idea of classicism (not merely classicism in the sense of something "classic," a different use of the word, but in the sense that is anchored in the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome, the Florentine renaissance, and the English and European styles from the 17th to the 19th century, that specifically used these details: egg and dart, Doric columns, Palladian windows, and so on) as a model for our building activities in the 21st century.

This became clear in recent TradArch discussions about classicism versus Gothic, whether Gothic could be admitted to "the canon," and the idea that Byzantine, anyway, could not.

The point of paying serious attention to traditional architecture is something very much larger, is it not? All traditional architecture – that is, almost all the architecture built in Indonesia, Japan, Russia, Africa, Turkey, Iran, India, China – this dazzling wealth of forms, representing building, and art, and design for several millennia, is our heritage; and it is important because, regardless of its particular style, nearly all these buildings exemplify, in one way or another, a deeper thing: the presence of living structure. It is this living quality which inspires us, and which we, rightfully, must consider as our heritage and our great teacher. It is great, and it is a great teacher, because it shows us the existence of a fund of living architecture and asks us and inspires us to emulate that fund, in our own way, and to become part of it with our own buildings, in our own time.

The problem with the production of the last 80 years is that much of it has turned its back on this heritage, often deliberately, and has therefore been on a deliberate course to substitute empty imagery for living structure in a way that harms us all, and harms all humankind.

That it seems to me is our common point, what we hold in common.

If we hold too narrowly to the pure historical classicist forms, we run a very severe danger that this could be perceived as an elitist game, not relevant to seven-eighths of the people on Earth, and possibly colonialist in its meaning if not its intent. Yes, we might say that the classical forms of building, from a tiny sliver of culture in space and time, were exported, for example to Peru and Colombia. That is just the same as the export of the Spanish language, or the English language, which had both good and bad effects. I know you do not mean to export the production of 18th century England and France as a new kind of elitism. But it can be perceived this way.

The same will be true if we try to export Doric columns to Nigeria, or Queen-Anne window shapes to Uttar Pradesh.

Certainly, contemporary architecture represents economic colonialism at its worst; it exports monstrous towers and glass facades that erase local traditional culture the world over, whereas classicists fundamentally respect human values in both the scale of buildings and in the way they interact with people. It is also true that the third world, or at least its governments and the ruling power elite, love to replace their timeless architecture by the latest avant-garde absurdities. Sensitive classicism has offered an alternative to this madness.

The issue is, it seems to me, that we must renew our attention to forms that have life, and like nature, originate from life and joyfully celebrate life. This must be focused, above all, on the forms that we ourselves make from our contemporary technology. But it does have a great deal to do with what we view as proper models. We must eschew forms that fly in the face of the search for life (90 percent of the current modern canon); and we must try to learn how the shapes of living structure can come to our work, and to our hands, of their own accord. It is that deeper structure we must understand, celebrate and search for in our projects so that ultimately we may learn how to construct a living world again, as people did centuries ago without even trying because it was so obvious to them.

But that is a very different activity from copying the shapes of classicism, in a literal sense. I understand that classicism has a well-defined set of rules, which can be learnt and applied, whereas the corpus of other traditional architectures has either been lost, or totally neglected in our times. In an emergency situation, the times of total architectural and social nihilism that we live in, it is possibly better to build classically than to follow the glossy architectural magazines and what is taught in architectural schools nowadays. It is now time to expand our scope, however.

I deeply love and understand the beauties of the classical tradition. I learnt Latin and Greek when I was 8 years old and was nurtured in the classic European tradition in England and Austria. My parents were both classical archeologists, and I grew up with respect for all these things. But I learnt anthropology, too, and have lived all over the world, and I have joy in the paintings of aborigines in Australia, and in the starry friezes of Islamic buildings, and in the beasts of Persepolis, and the long houses of Borneo, and the mud houses of the Cameroon.

We, as the architects of the new millennium, need to broaden our scope. Otherwise the fire that exists among the people who write to this listserv might be extinguished, because other people (at least five billion of the six billion on Earth) in the larger parts of the world will pay no attention, and might resent what is implied.

That would be a tragic misunderstanding. Of course, what classicists believe in is not *meant* to be slighting. It is meant to celebrate the reality of living structure as it has been observed, and loved, by many of us. It is that living structure, and the deep nature of what it is, and how it must be produced, that is what ought to guide us and lead us on.

It would perhaps be helpful for us to spend a little more time discussing the rules of deep structure which create life in buildings in general.

This is positive in intent, and will hugely broaden our base.

be moved to Florida and the Caribbean Islands. This is an absolutely justifiable endeavor!

5) Some areas and suburbs have neither a tangible memory, nor an impressive landscape, nor a set of myths. There can only be an appropriate importation of models and precedents and the creation of particular myths to blend into an experiencable reality. This is a method that has been used for the construction of antique cities and colonial ones alike!

From: Dino Marcantonio
Date: May 29, 2002

Lucien, you have a good sense of humor. In a perverse way, I actually enjoy being accused of falling unwittingly into a more subtle relativist trap.

I must ask: How is it possible to have a discussion at all if we don't rule out relativism? Such an exchange would amount to nothing more than a series of monologues as each of us describes life in his own universe (and that's setting aside the language/communication problem). To avoid relativism is not overly to restrict the terrain of the debate — **au contraire**, it is to establish that there is a terrain.

I do think that beauty can only be achieved within a limited range of historically established styles, though I prefer to use the term tradition instead of style. To phrase it your way suggests that the existing canons are closed, and I don't believe that's true. However, it is unavoidable that we work within the context of a tradition, otherwise our forms simply will not be understood.

I value variety, and I even accept (in theory) that two traditions may be about equal in terms of the beauty/sophistication of their conventions. I simply ask the question, are all forms equally valid? Personally, I think not. Had you asked me 10 years ago to design you a door surround, I can assure you it would have been hideous by any measure. Likewise, younger cultures, or ones that for whatever reason do not develop a very sophisticated architecture, won't have traditions with as much to offer as those which come from cultures that have made a successful concerted effort to perfect their traditions.

So the following questions remain for us, it seems to me.

1. What do the various forms do or accomplish (not only in the materialist sense)?

2. Which forms achieve their end best, considering not only the form's innate properties, but also its external context?

These are the questions generations of architects before us have asked, and their answers comprise the terrain upon which we work.

From: Milton Grenfell
Date: May 30, 2002

First let me say that I do "acknowledge my prejudices," or as I would rather "style" them, personal taste preferences. Islamic architecture in its many styles, and 20th century Scandinavian neoclassicism are all traditional styles. Islamic architecture contains numerous classical styles, and 20th century Scandinavian neoclassical is, of course, a classical style. That notwithstanding, I'm not particularly fond of these for strictly personal taste reasons, rather like my lack of fondness for Tex-Mex food. The issue here is the distaste these styles have for the built image. I'm simply not that fond of iconoclastic architecture. Although differences in personal taste are often perceived as snobbery by those whose fancy is rejected by the "snob," surely the world would be intolerably dull if we all liked the same things.

However, I do regard the Prairie school, early Corbu, and Barragan-Legorreta as anti-traditionalist or "secessionists" (in H. H. Reed's terminology). In rejecting the infinite wisdom inherent in tradition, and in that most human of attributes, culture, they produce an architecture that is invariably foolish and subhuman. English architect and Arthur Ross Award recipient, Quinlin Terry, regards secessionists' works (I refer, of course, to architectural secessionists only — deo vindici!) not as architecture, but rather as anti-architecture. It's an extreme view, but one with which I'm inclined to agree.

If, by Style Moderne, you mean those 1920 – 1940 watered down popular culture versions of the International Style, then I would judge them secessionists as well, although the fact that they were softened for mass appeal does give them a certain humanness. Their ocean-liner aesthetic is so quaintly dated that they are admittedly not without a nostalgic charm. For me they always conjure delightful images of Fred Astaire's dancing, and P. G. Wodehouse plays. Dandy for movie sets, but inadequate for cities. Just how much can you do with portholes, strip windows, pilotis and flat roofs? The only thing that prevents South Beach in Miami from being boring (aside from the people) is the frequent infusions of Art Deco. If by Style Moderne, you include Art Deco, then a finer analysis is in order. While Art Deco ornament is secessionist, the plans, massing, fenestration, and tectonics are traditional. But since the Art Deco architects were classically trained, its secessionist ornament was all developed from the same generative devices employed in classical ornament. Hence the likable, familiar-yet-strange quality of Art Deco decoration. In short, Art Deco is a hybrid of the classical and secessionist, the lack of hardiness of which can be assessed by its relatively brief life span.

From: Steve Mouzon
Date: May 22, 2002

I'm leery of the way the argument [for a charter of traditional architecture] is framed right now. "An Architecture" and "A New Urban Architecture" imply that a single language can do everything, at least in a single locality. It's one of modernism's original sins: One style fits all. The charter should recognize that there are at least three primary dimensions of the matrix of traditional architecture: the urban to rural transect, the classical to vernacular spectrum and the great third dimension of location, which encompasses culture, environment and available building materials. There are some constants, to be sure, that do not change but are common to the human condition anywhere. These include the yearnings for architecture that delights me, that reflects me, and that puts me in harmony with my world. My suggested charter follows the format of the CNU charter in that it includes a preamble stating the problem and the framework of the solution, then breaks the guiding principles down according to four degrees of scale (as opposed to three for the CNU). It also includes every concern originally listed [after the Charleston Council]. It is as follows:

The Congress for the New Urbanism (or whatever group introduces this charter) views the pervasiveness of disposable buildings, placeless buildings, forgettable buildings and unlovable buildings as the natural end-product of any theory of architecture that is not based primarily on human beings.

A century of experimentation has shown that such architecture will never have the popular support of the majority of the population. Without widespread support, it must scream for attention at the expense of its neighbors. Without widespread support, there is no comprehensive engagement of the architecture by non-architects, condemning it to be forever a private language cared for by few and understood by even fewer. Private languages cannot evolve in a natural manner and die with their creator.

Human-based architecture, on the other hand, has always evolved with time. It embraces technological advances not for their own sake, but for what they can do for human beings. Because it engages the public at large, human-based architecture has the power to make technological advances ubiquitous, mass-produced and therefore affordable. Human-based architecture is, therefore, the only truly modern architecture.

Human-based architecture has the ability to touch the minds, hearts and possibly even the spirits of those who use it because it is able to communicate with them. It communicates through a language of architectural patterns that tell stories as complex as the heritage of the culture or as simple as how to find the front door. These patterns have power precisely because they are commonly-held and widely understood.

Patterns that make up human-based languages occur at the full range of scales. Some are universal, reflecting deep-seated human habitational needs that do not change over time. These patterns are analogous to universal forms of expression such as the smile or the hug. Other patterns are national or cultural in scope, and define a nation just as clearly as does the national language. Yet other patterns are regional or sub-cultural in nature, and are comparable to regional dialects of the national language. Finally, some patterns are local in nature, created by the power of a particularly strong local feature such as a mountainside or sea shore.

Human-based languages create the only truly modern architecture because they change with time and with technology just as spoken languages do. But human-based languages are also by definition traditional in nature, handing down the ever-changing languages from one generation to the next.

Vernacular languages are built up of the simplest human-based patterns and are eminently suited to meet the most basic human habitational needs. Vernacular languages have the capability of creating thoroughly sensible, very beautiful buildings and places with little or no involvement by dedicated designers. Classical languages include both the vernacular patterns and the higher patterns and must be employed by a skilled hand. Together, the vernacular, the classical and all gradations in between make up the entire spectrum of traditional architecture.

Traditional architectural languages have existed since the dawn of civilization, but died a very quick death over the course of little more than a generation beginning about 1900. They were replaced with a series of private, elitist languages that failed miserably in a legion of ways, creating a landscape worse than our ancestors' worst nightmares.

We believe it is not only possible to revive the traditional languages, but that it is imperative to revive them now. The last generation to reach adulthood in an immersively traditional environment is now dying. The next generation visited immersively traditional places as children, but did not often live there. Each successive generation knows less and less of places created by living human-based languages. We therefore dedicate ourselves to reclaiming the traditional languages of architecture before they are lost forever.

We assert the following principles to guide public policy, development practice, and design of the new traditional architecture:

The Universal

1. Architecture should be visually and factually in harmony with unalterable natural laws such as gravity, thermodynamics and other aspects of physics.

2. The proportions of architecture should reflect those which make up the great harmonies of nature. These include the simple proportions of 1:1, 2:1, 3:2, 4:3, etc., and also the irrational ones such as the Golden Mean. Reflection of these proportions should be stronger on the classical end of the classical/vernacular spectrum.

3. Elements within architecture should also reflect the proportions of appropriate elements within the human body, such as doors proportioned to the standing human body and

window panes proportioned to the human face.

4. Architecture should reflect the foot/body/head form of the human body in both massing and detail.

5. Architecture should reflect both the bilateral symmetry of the human face and the variable symmetry of the rest of the body. More formal buildings may reflect the more rigid symmetry of the human body standing at attention, whereas less formal buildings may reflect the countless informal or relaxed poses the human body may take.

6. Architecture should be sensitive to human needs for the basic sensual delights associated with light, sound, temperature and tactile comfort.

The National (or Cultural)

7. Architecture should tell the history of the origins of the culture in which it is found. Much of this history is very ancient, leading all the way back to antiquity. These patterns are often shared with neighboring cultures that developed out of the same mother culture. Ancient cultural history is read most eloquently in buildings at the classical end of the traditional spectrum.

8. Architecture should also tell of the history that is more recent and that serves to differentiate the culture from those around it. Recent cultural history is still found at the classical end of the traditional spectrum, but is spread further down the spectrum.

9. Architecture should tell the story of cultural or national aspirations. It should uphold the values the culture holds most dear and should embody the dreams that give it hope.

10. Architecture also has the more utilitarian responsibility of telling the story of the city. One should not have to read a sign to know whether a building is the city hall, fire station, place of worship, post office, school or private home. There will be some regional variations, but buildings of a particular type in a particular culture at a particular time should generally be built from a very similar language of patterns.

The Regional (or Subcultural)

11. Available building materials should often be the most formative influence on an architectural language at a regional level. Available materials include specialty manufactured items at major retail chains, but preference should be given to locally manufactured materials of a massive nature in order to reduce dependence on heavy interstate freight.

12. The sun should have a great regional influence on architecture. Natural light should be incorporated into daytime building lighting. Solar heat should be used and/or excluded in passive manners appropriate to the region.

13. Architecture should be shaped by prevailing winds, both to admit them during seasons requiring cooling, exclude them during seasons requiring heating, and to protect from them in places where they are often violent.

14. Architecture should be shaped by the precipitation of a region and its many effects, particularly in conjunction with extremes of temperature.

15. Respect for all of the naturally-occurring influences above will create an architecture that is environmentally responsible, particularly if all of these influences are incorporated in such a manner as to reduce waste of energy and other natural resources. Traditional architecture was once enormously conservative of natural resources because they were obtained with such great effort. It is sensible to build that way now, because our current resource glut cannot last forever.

16. Tyrannical mass-production tends to gloss over regional differences in the interest of finding a single product that can be produced an enormous number of times. This can work to the advantage of architecture in the case of building components that truly do not need to change from region to region. It cannot work to its advantage, however, for the building as a whole if the building has any hope of responding to regional influences. Building crafts particular to a region should be encouraged, because they are primarily responsible for elevating the level of execution of the architecture of the entire region.

The Local

17. Architecture should be shaped by powerful local influences such as a mountainside, a sea shore or the shape of a peninsula.

18. Because traditional architecture is eminently practical, it adjusts itself naturally according to its location on the transect of urban core to rural preserve.

19. Because traditional architecture is eminently practical, it also adjusts itself according to the prominence or humbleness of a particular building within its town or neighborhood. Traditional architecture should place everything from monuments to barns correctly on the classical/vernacular spectrum.

20. Because traditional architecture is eminently practical, it shapes itself closely according to the contours and confines of particular sites.

21. Traditional architecture is not just responsible to its particular site, however, but to the public realm beyond. Traditional languages of architecture have always informed individual buildings concerning their own level of vigor and their responsibilities for enclosure based on that of their neighbors and the public spaces they border upon.

We understand that the first step to reclaiming traditional architecture is education. We cannot build better than our ancestors until we learn to build as well as our ancestors. Only then will the languages become alive again, able to advance in step with the cultures and technologies of mankind.

The first step is to educate ourselves thoroughly concerning human-based architectural patterns. The next step is to create an argument so compelling that the architectural academies begin to understand the imperativeness of our mission and begin again to teach based on these timeless principles. We hereby commit ourselves to these noble tasks.

Contributors

Christopher Alexander, architect, scientist, builder, and painter; Emeritus Professor of Architecture, University of California, Berkeley; Founder and President, Center for Environmental Structure; author of "The Nature of Order," "A Pattern Language," and 14 additional titles.

Andrés Duany, Architect and Town Planner, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, Miami, Fla.; Co-founder and Board Member, Congress for the New Urbanism.

Edward Erfurt, Graduate Student, School of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame.

Michael M. Franck, Principal, Franck Lohsen McCrery, Architects, Washington D.C. and New York, N.Y.

Milton Wilfred Grenfell, Principal, Grenfell Architecture PLLC, Charlotte, N.C.

Oscar Machado, Architect and Urban Designer; Lecturer, University of Miami School of Architecture; Author, "About Urbanism."

Dino Marcantonio, Assistant Professor, University of Notre Dame School of Architecture, Notre Dame, Ind.

John Massengale, John Massengale Architect and Town Planner, Bedford, N.Y.; Executive Director, New School for Traditional Architecture and Urbanism, Charleston, S.C.

Michael Mesko, Architectural Designer, Michael Mesko Traditional Architectural Design; Professor of Architecture, University of Notre Dame Rome Program.

Steve Mouzon, Architect, Mouzon & Associates Architects, Huntsville, Ala.

Steven W. Semes, Principal, Steven W. Semes, Architect, New York, N.Y.; Fellow, Institute of Classical Architecture/Classical America; Author, "The Architecture of the Classical Interior."

Lucien Steil, New School of Architecture and Urbanism of Viseu, Catholic University of Portugal.

Sandra Vitzthum, Principal, Sandra Vitzthum Architect, L.L.C., Montpelier, Vt.; Author.

Tradarch Listserv

Richard John runs an electronic mailing list from the University of Miami devoted to the discussion of the theory and practice of traditional architecture. The list is an open forum for all topics related to this area, including the posting of images of historic buildings and photographs of list members' own work. It is affiliated with the New School for Traditional Architecture & Urbanism (TAU) and the International Network for Traditional Building Arts and Urbanism (INTBAU). If you are interested in subscribing to this list please send an e-mail to Richard John at rjohn@miami.edu.

Pro-Urb Listserv

The Pro-Urb listserv is a moderated discussion of new urbanism. It is aimed at practicing professionals and has no official connection to the Congress for the New Urbanism. Subscribe by sending a note to listserv@listserv.uga.edu with a message body reading: SUBSCRIBE PRO-URB (your first name) (your last name).

CNU Listserv

The CNU listserv is a free-ranging discussion of all aspects of new urbanism. It is aimed at a general audience and has no official connection to the Congress for the New Urbanism. Subscribe by sending a note to LISTSERV@LSV.UKY.EDU, with the words "SUBSCRIBE CNU" in the body of the message.

Classicism, Traditionalism and Urbanism

By John Massengale

Over 80 percent of America has been built since World War II, and it's not pretty. (Actually it's unsustainable and sordid.) Unless we do something, it's going to get worse.

Saving a few neighborhoods isn't enough, and building a good house in the non-places that whole regions like Northern Virginia have become isn't enough. What good is it to have an exquisite house on a terrible street surrounded by shopping malls and big boxes? Or a good neighborhood adjoining a dead downtown, so that you have to drive to Edge City to work or shop?

At the same time, you can not build a good town or city without good buildings. Urbanism without good architecture is no better than architecture without good urbanism.

Dana Beach, the director of the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, often says the future will be a few pockets for billionaires — Manhattan, Charleston, Santa Fe* ... — surrounded by Kunstler's 3,000-mile parking lot.

I don't think it will happen *quite* that way, but to be as effective as possible, classicists, traditionalists, new urbanists, old urbanists, preservationists and environmentalists all have to work together.

Preservationists have to stop insisting that traditionalism ended a hundred years ago, and environmentalists have to stop passing regulations that make it impossible to build a new Manhattan, Charleston or Santa Fe.

Architects have to stop making the perfect the enemy of the good, and urbanists have to better learn how to raise more clients to the level of the good.

It's interesting that CNU X and ICA X came only a year apart. It's indicative of the history of the two that while both were held in New York, one attracted 1,200 architects, planners, environmentalists, activists, government employees and elected officials, and the other attracted 250 (?) architects and lovers of beauty, much like the first CNU.

That is NOT (!) a criticism of the ICA, which is a great organization that has accomplished an enormous amount in 10 years and that put on a great show. IF YOU THINK I'M PICKING ON ANY CLASSICAL ORGANIZATION OR SCHOOL IN THIS POST, JUST ASSUME I HAVEN'T EXPRESSED MYSELF WELL. I am a classicist.

Persuasion

All over the country, sprawl is either the first or second most important local political issue, and smart growth and new urbanism have been easier to sell to the general public than good building design. It should be pointed out that among the best tools new urbanists have had have been the perspectives they use to explain their designs, because the drawings show buildings, and places, much better than the public expects.

At one point, "Suburban Nation" was the fourth best selling book in Florida. Duany, Calthorpe and Plater-Zyberk are invited to meet with presidents and presidential candidates from both parties. HUD hired new urbanists to teach it how to tear down its modernist slums and replace them with mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods in the Hope VI program, and Maryland hired a new urbanist to create a cabinet-level Department of Smart Growth and rewrite its laws.

There are 473 neighborhood-scale developments underway in the United States, which is a great achievement, and smart growth and new urbanism are the buzzwords in development and planning. On the other hand, less than 3% of the construction in America can currently be called smart growth, and few or none of the most prolific new urbanists can say they don't have a few projects with buildings that make their teeth hurt when they visit them.

There is no question that classicists and traditionalists have a lot to contribute to this, in better buildings, and in programs like the ICA's AIBD classes. On the other hand, as Bob Stern said in the introduction to the ICA book, most classicists are only building houses for the rich:** All the hard-won knowledge achieved in that work now needs to be applied to a broader context than it has been most of the time up until now.

It's surprising there hasn't been more cooperation between the classicists and the urbanists. They fight like cats and dogs at certain notable university programs, when until 1940 or so ALL good architects understood BOTH classicism and urbanism better than virtually any of us today understand either. There is nothing in our brain patterns that says that's any harder than walking and chewing gum at the same time. We just have to put our minds to it.

So far, there is no polemical architecture book with the power and popularity of "The Geography of Nowhere" or Suburban Nation." And as essential as they are, Vitruvius and Normand will never be those books. Witold Rybczysnki's books sell as well as Kunstler's, but Witold doesn't attempt to sell traditionalism the way that Kunstler promotes new urbanism.

And Witold's book sales are the exception for traditionalists. On the whole, the traditionalists don't try to capture the public fancy in the same way the new urbanists do. To oversimplify for the purpose of discussion, they can be compared to the knight who raises his beautiful banner over his castle on the hill and says, "Come admire my beautiful sanctuary." Some with the best taste do come, but most of the population are too busy fighting it out on the plains below the castle, where there's so much dust that they can't see the distant banners.

The new urbanist rushes out to engage the battle, where he or she inevitably suffers some losses. And people complain about the losses, commenting that his armor — dented and covered in mud and dirt — is not as beautiful as the knight's on the hill.

Nevertheless, I have to take exception with some of the characterization of new urbanism and Windsor in this thread. Windsor is not new urbanism: It is a gated resort designed by new urbanists. It is also one of the best architectural ensembles built in America since before World War II. And it was carefully designed so that, if ever desired, the gates can be taken down and one of the polo fields turned into a functioning town center.

Vince Graham's early development of Newpoint has some views that can make you believe it's a hundred years old. His later development, I'On, has a few streets that are as good as just about any in South Carolina outside the absolute best in Charleston. Even Celebration, which can't be called better than "good," is better than 90 percent of all the towns in Florida, new or old.

These are accomplishments. All these places could be better if we better worked together.

John Massengale leads a tour of the Tully Alley development in Charleston.
THE TOWN PAPER

Cooperation & Success

Classicists could learn to be more effective on the bigger stage if they studied some of the lessons of new urbanism. And new urbanism and classicism could be better if they better allied with the preservation and the environmental movements, which have members in the hundreds of thousands. All the readers of all the new urban books in all their printings combined don't equal an eighth of the number of viewers who see Martha Stewart in a single appearance on the "Today" show.

The preservationists get good exposure with "This Old House" on cable and public television, and the environmentalists are the epitome of the successful grass roots movement. For the new urbanists, nothing has succeeded like success: Once the first good project gets built in an area, new urbanism takes off in that area.

DPZ goes through compromised projects like Kentlands because it opens the door to more. Seaside, which is indeed just a resort (as its critics say), led to regional plans and meetings with the governor. Which led to more regional and city plans in the state, and more than 20 large projects currently under way in Florida. The governor of Maryland has said that Kentlands helped to open his eyes to what smart growth could be, and that led to his creation of the smart growth department and regulations.

The average American has very low expectations for new development — with good reason, since they say that almost every change is for the worse. When they see a better vision, they respond enthusiastically. Traditional architecture needs more examples the public can see, which is one of the weaknesses of all the house commissions: On the whole, they can not be seen. (And all their custom work doesn't lead to much industry reform.) Léon Krier says we need "our own Bilbao": i.e., a public building that will cause as much excitement as that Guggenheim.

Architecture is a more personal creation than urbanism, and therefore more difficult to talk about. We talked about architecture at the third new urban Council, with promising but mixed results. It became clear during the later Council discussion that some of the consensus and advancement in new urbanism came about because there was often implicit agreement not to focus on architectural differences.

Classicists and traditionalists also argue about architecture, but the topic needs to be addressed for us to advance. Andrés agreed to work on the upcoming conference for classicism and traditionalists, and he is one of the best to open a conversation on this. Part of the conference will be a discussion on how to broaden all our successes.

* I was born in the first, have lived in the second, and have two immediate family members in the third – and I'm not prepared to pull up the drawbridges.

** The problem here is not the fact of working for the rich, but that the private results have so little public effect. The interiors are inaccessible to all but a few, and the exteriors are often hidden from view too. The exquisite custom craftmanship has little effect on the mass-production building industry.

Council V:
EuroCouncil in BrusselsandBruges
April 1 – 6, 2003

The EuroCouncil will be the first organized meeting of American new urbanists and the European traditional and new urbanists.

The purpose of the EuroCouncil is threefold:

1) To bring together the leading American new urbanists with the most interested European traditional urbanists.

2) To share the experiences and knowledge gained in successfully building urban projects in Europe and America.

3) To foster the establishment of new urbanism in Europe, and to reevaluate existing structures, operational potentials and possible synergies between European and American new urbanists.

For more information:

http://luciensteil.tripod.com/eurocouncil2003/

ORR/Arboleda
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buildings brought before the wreckers ball by school standards, and from financial watchdogs, who see taxpayer waste in the excessive cost of tearing down/rebuilding new schools when compared to the lesser cost of renovating old buildings to bring them into code compliance. These efforts are causing a closer look at the relative compactness of older schools and cataloguing the positive contributions these schools offered their neighborhoods as ammunition to support historic preservation and tax relief.

But no one is addressing how new school standards are ruining neighborhoods, whether they ruin existing neighborhoods, or new ones. The assumptions expressed by M&P, for example, though admirable, align more with old school formats than new ones. It would be great if a school could become the heart of a neighborhood, or cement two separate neighborhoods together the way they used to do. But the truth is, current standards prevent this from happening. School requirements simply demand too much land area and too little building area (even though the building areas are huge too) to be effective. Modern standards cause schools to be disjointed from their neighborhoods, even in the best examples. M&P's inclusion of a school in their design may unwittingly plant the grim Ebola of surburbia, knocking out some of their good works.

Some very good suggestion on how to approach the school came out during the reviewers' comments, including separating the playing fields from the school (next block over) and designing the playing fields to look like town square(s) that just happen to work as playing fields; breaking the large school building mass into what appear to be smaller components of separate buildings, even if they are joined so the internal program can act as one building, to create a streetscape of school buildings; and taking a creative view on parking, buses and other traffic requirements. One may recall the early days of TND design in which one was forced to invent clever interpretations within the parameters of sprawl codes in order to create recognizable streets and neighborhoods

The alleys also receive sensitive attention. Configurations are articulated to block long views and create spaces that are charming in and of themselves. Particular attention is focused on keeping the alleys narrow and irregular, a common failing in many NU developments where alleys begin to compete with streets in terms of sizes and vistas. M&P's alleys purposefully deflect in short intervals to abbreviate vistas, reduce the scale of service areas, and create intrigue.

because it was too daunting a task to challenge the code boys at that point. These early efforts saw great success in taking requirements for parking lots, for example, and laying them out a bit differently so they resembled streets with parallel parking. Perhaps one needs to approach school design in similar ways, at least until a momentum for change has formed.

The discussion about designing the school's playing fields to seem like parks and town squares led to the realization that Arboleda lacks open space. King City is unique in offering its citizens open countryside so abruptly at the edge of its urban development. People who currently live at the edge of King City are used to the close proximity of open space. Arboleda will radically transform this asset by suddenly pushing the open space far away. Andrés offered that, "Just as we're concerned that people be within a five minute walk of the main street, I think we should make the proposal that people should be within a five minute walk of the countryside, that actually, anybody who lives in a town like this should be within five minutes of the main street and five minutes of the countryside." "Countryside" must be seen as metaphorical countryside, realized in city parks and town squares.

Perhaps the program assigned to the school playing fields could become the metaphorical open space of a city park or town square, or perhaps there could be John Nolan-type "park streets," as described by Milton Grenfell, which could introduce open space rivulets seeping in to the development from the agricultural countryside just beyond the border. Such a link would become a memory totem of the outside world. Neither of these approaches, town squares or rivulets of open space, would take away appreciable land available to development (understandably hard-won in the 20-year political battle to get it) and either one would add significantly to the value of lives and property within.

Arboleda is a well researched and finely designed project that achieves genuine empathy with its context and responds well to the patterns of use and settlement of the surrounding area. M&P identified marvelous inspirational examples, and used their lessons to great effect, especially in the design of lanes. One looks forward to the prospect of exploring all the sensitive detail lavished on the neighborhoods and discovering all the quirky anomalies found hidden in the laneways. It will be a project that will reward close inspection.

Successful for its smart observance and clever applications of new urbanist planning principals, Arboleda turns out to also reveal topics pregnant with controversy for their challenge to new urbanist principals.

M&P clearly focuses on solving the dilemma of connecting to such a large border of cauterized cul-de-sacs, but falls short in truly creating a handshake with its type of planning. Perhaps cul-de-sac planning is so repugnant to new urbanists that M&P just couldn't bring themselves to it, but whatever the reason, they manage to create distance from rather than connection to these neighborhoods. In this failing they shed light on the need for new urbanists to embrace a privacy oriented lifestyle, which is as prevalent and well liked on the American landscape as it is ignored and avoided in new urbanist practice. Rather than try to change (or blot out) every last cul-de-sac, it might be better to explore how to identify and incorporate their assets into new urbanist planning.

And M&P clearly seeks to visualize their project for its subordination to the whole city of King City. Calling up the spirit of ensanche, they seek "enlargement that addresses the structure of a whole place, not only the mechanical act of addition." However, despite their conscientiousness in connecting to the existing street grid, and despite their masterful and sympathetic design of neighborhoods that reflect successful prototypes in the vicinity, M&P never really considers how their addition, which is no small piece by comparison, might shed influence back and alter the city to which it connects. Once connected, M&P seems to leave King City behind. Though respectful to its host, Arboleda is just as self-contained as an isolated Seaside or Civano. It does not seem dependent on King City nor poised to offer amenities to the neighbors it abuts. As identified by the reviewers, it actually diminishes the value of abutting neighborhoods by removing the open space that used to adjoin them. M&P's failing in this regard sheds light on the need for new urbanists to take a more honest look at the challenge of connecting to or altering existing cities or towns, and to the challenge of this word "ensanche." Colored pencils (or markers in the case of M&P) need to bleed out into the surrounding community and not only soak up inspiration, but also infect back into the whole region in their thinking. Ideally a transition should be seamless and indistinguishable, but everything around is somehow magically made better. One should never see so clear a break, the new with the old, as new urban projects so often display in their site plans (even if M&P's area plan didn't identify Arboleda with color, it would still stand out as distinct from anything around). In distancing itself from white-man ways, a Native American parable implores, "In one's walks through life, it is important to watch where you're going, but also to watch where you've been."

To initiate their design, M&P began by looking at six nearby towns with the intention of identifying grid patterns and street types found locally that might offer lessons for having emerged organically over time in a similar regional context as King City. Through these explorations M&P assembled an inventory of parts offering inspiration on how to extend a town grid, and how to heal a seam between two towns.

Comments by Bob Gibbs

"I want to underline what Stefanos was saying about the parking decks. We've been converting suburban strip center developers into doing three-story buildings with parking decks because it only adds $2 per square foot of rent to the office to park in a deck rather than surface parking. And then the developers figure out that they get the land for free for the building. And when it's a three-story building, they get 2 square feet of land for free. So it's actually cheaper and it costs less to do a three-story building with parking decks with office above retail than all surface parking. So the economics are there and we've been converting guys that have only done strip centers to doing three-story."

The Lasting Effect
By Robert Orr

Anyone who has tried to lose weight or get in shape knows what an ordeal it is. Fasting or using the treadmill for three days in a row produces tremendous hunger and aching muscles, but very little difference in body weight or body hardening. It takes a regimen over a long period of time with *averages* making significant advances over the previous *averages* to see any difference. The good news is that it works the other way too. Stuffing yourself for a meal or two or remaining sedentary for a day or two does not produce a spike in weight gain or abs loss. In other words, the average over a long duration of repetitive acts is much more important than occasional exigencies in either direction, no matter how extravagant or fantastically good or bad they happen to be. In a similar way understanding what will have a lasting effect on community living standards has more to do with long-term repetitive practices rather than occasional moves of Quixotic originality or demented depravity, no matter how brilliant or obtuse these individual feats might be. Therefore, in learning the principals of town planning and in practicing them, it is much more important to reach a deep understanding of the continuity of even threads through history, the larger the time span the better, than it is to ignore those and create a unique signature for posterity. Whether at the scale of miniscule detail or at the scale of the encompassing region one must connect with those aspects, which resonate in balance over time. The exigencies will just come. We can't help it. The hook of originality is a poor excuse for lack of talent.

The Urban Assembly Kit: Building New Urbanism

By Raymond L. Gindroz, FAIA

As urbanists, we strive to build whole places, with the quality and richness of our most beloved urban spaces, in which all the parts of the space work together to create an urban room. The system within which we work tends to tear apart our urban rooms and divide them up into separate parts as defined by separate fiefdoms — the traffic department, the arborist, the park board, the school board, the zoning officer, the assessor, the surveyor, the civil engineer, the "department of the underground," the real estate agent, individual architects, the builder, and the developers.

In order to more effectively work within this system and to be able to build "whole places," we have developed a concept we call the urban assembly kit. It is a means of visualizing the separate elements that must be designed, approved, funded and built by these separate fiefdoms, and then putting them together as a kit of parts. The process begins with an understanding of the whole, and then the parts are identified and separated.

Our analyses of traditional neighborhoods and cities have helped us to develop the concept of an "assembly kit." For example, Ghent, a neighborhood in Norfolk, Va., is a complex structure with many neighborhood streets, each with its own character, a seemingly endless variety of houses with no two exactly alike, and a series of grand and elegant public spaces.

Complex though it is, Ghent, like all American neighborhoods, was built in a short period of time in a remarkably systematic way. Understand that the neighborhood consists of a series of elements, each under control of different entities, but coordinated by the way they are put together.

We think of these elements as an "Urban Assembly Kit" that can be applied to strengthen the fabric of existing neighborhoods or to create new ones. Understanding the separate parts of the neighborhood enables you to both design it and implement it. Through analysis of the individual elements, you gain a full appreciation of the interrelationships among them as well as a foundation for addressing the specified goals in appropriate, achievable ways based on the needs and concerns of the different implementers.

Let's take an overall look at the elements that make up our Urban Assembly Kit:

A framework of streets, public open space, blocks, lots, and buildings.

The most general element is the framework of streets and public open spaces. The overall hierarchy of streets and parks can be seen clearly when illustrated in the form of a diagrammatic perspective drawing (Figure 1). Institutions and civic buildings find their place (with dignity) in the public open spaces. For example, in Ghent, the art museum is placed at one end of the canal-like space called the Hague.

A botanical garden is at the other end of the canal — and a series of churches occupies spaces along its length. Schools are in the middle, in public spaces.

Within this larger framework, blocks of housing and individual streets are placed. A hierarchy exists from house to street to block to neighborhood. While the character, shape and size of these parts vary with each local condition and in response to local culture, the elements as elements are constants across the nation. It is that commonality of generic form and function that makes UDA's Urban Assembly Kit a valuable tool for city-building.

The revitalization plan for the Park DuValle neighborhood in Louisville, Ky., provides an example of how this urban assembly kit is applied.

The diagram on the next page (Figure 4) illustrates how this relatively simple set of parts is assembled. The result is an urban environment as complex and rich as the traditional neighborhoods from which it gains its inspiration.

Park DuValle Existing Aerial (Figure 4a)

An aerial view of the Park DuValle neighborhood as it existed prior to redevelopment shows two isolated public housing projects that were severely cut off from the adjacent neighborhoods. The housing projects were rife with the poverty, crime, and drug trafficking that so often occurs under these circumstances, and the problems were spilling over into the surrounding neighborhoods. Viewed from this perspective, it became clear that part of the solution was to end the isolation of this neighborhood both physically and socioeconomically. The plan, therefore, called for demolishing these public housing structures and creating a new, mixed-income neighborhood that would be linked seamlessly with its adjacent neighborhoods.

Figure 1: Diagrammatic perspective of Ghent, Norfolk, Va.

Figure 2: Heirarchy of the kit of parts, ranging from neighborhood to lot.

Figure 3: The kit of parts assembled, resulting in a design as rich as traditional neighborhoods.

Framework of Streets (Figure 4b)

The first step was to establish the framework of streets. The new interconnected network of streets extends through all parts of the new development and connects them to adjacent neighborhoods. The geometry of the street plan was influenced by Frederick Law Olmsted, whose historic work can be found in so many street and parkscapes in neighborhoods throughout Louisville, including one at the edge of the site. A range of different street patterns exists — from small-scale neighborhood streets with a 28-foot cartway, to 36-foot-wide community-scale streets, to gracious parkways with landscaped parks separating the two-lane streets.

Cross Sections (Figure 4b.1)

A full inventory of public space can be achieved with only six or seven different cross sections. But this inventory must have elements that are relevant and correct for the specific town. Therefore, the proposals needed to be based on research of local models, and then described as a set of standards — here, a wide parkway; there, a small-scale street. For Park DuValle, we measured many of the most beloved streets and spaces in Louisville, which became the model for the different types of street proposed in the plan.

By basing the design on local precedents, it becomes easier to get these elements approved, even by a technocratic process that normally advocates streets that are too big to be human.

Public Open Space and Civic Buildings (Figure 4c)

This framework is then augmented by public open space and institutions — parks, playing fields, and greens that provide dignified settings for civic buildings such as schools, churches, and other public buildings. This interconnected network of streets and public open space establishes the character and scale of the neighborhood. In Park DuValle, the land was primarily publicly owned and therefore administered by various public agencies. Being able to see the area as a three-dimensional framework facilitated the process by which these agencies collaborated to turn the plan for Park DuValle into reality.

Block Patterns (Figure 4d)

The framework of streets and open space establishes the addresses for development sites. The streets define blocks for development; blocks are targeted for particular types of development — such as residential or commercial. Within those general categories, other distinctions exist: for example, some blocks may have alleys, others may be serviced from the street. Appropriate dimensions for blocks are also identified. Each block has its own specific criteria.

At Park DuValle, for example, we included commercial blocks, mixed-use blocks, alley-loaded residential blocks, front-loaded residential blocks, and single-sided blocks.

Commercial Blocks (Figure 4l)

Commercial blocks tend to be larger in order to accommodate the footprints of larger buildings and to provide adequate service and parking behind the buildings. In successful traditional urbanism, parking is available both in front and in the rear of buildings.

Commercial Buildings

In Park DuValle's town center, there is a mix of buildings, some single-use and some with residential over retail.

Residential Blocks (Figure 4e)

Typically, residential block sizes vary depending on the type of development they carry. In addition, block sizes should be compatible with the existing patterns in the community. At Park DuValle, residential block sizes range from 200 feet by 300 feet to 250 feet by 500 feet. The block designs include provisions, such as setbacks for buildings, to further define the character of the public spaces.

Lot Types (Figure 4f)

In our Urban Assembly Kit, residential blocks are divided into individual lots. Each block type may have

See GINDROZ, page 38

K **Park DuValle Aerial After**
When all the parts from the assembly kit are put in place, the completed neighborhood has the complexity and diversity of traditional neighborhoods.

J The block and its various lot types, are filled with a variety of building types, in a variety of architectural styles. Basic rules, such as setbacks and the location of porches enable the houses to create the appropriate character for public spaces.

I The five lots on the corner accommodate four building types in three architectural styles.

H **Architectural Styles and Pattern Book**
Three architectural styles are codified in a Pattern Book, which provides patterns for massing, windows and doors, porches and other special elements, materials and color.

G **Building Types**
Each lot type can accommodate one of several building types. The corner lot could have a large single-family house, a duplex, or the apartment building illustrated. The buildings are placed within the building zone of each lot.

F **Lot Types**
Lot types include a corner lot mid-block types of varying widths. The setback zones are indicated in dark green and establish the building zone, within which buildings will be placed.

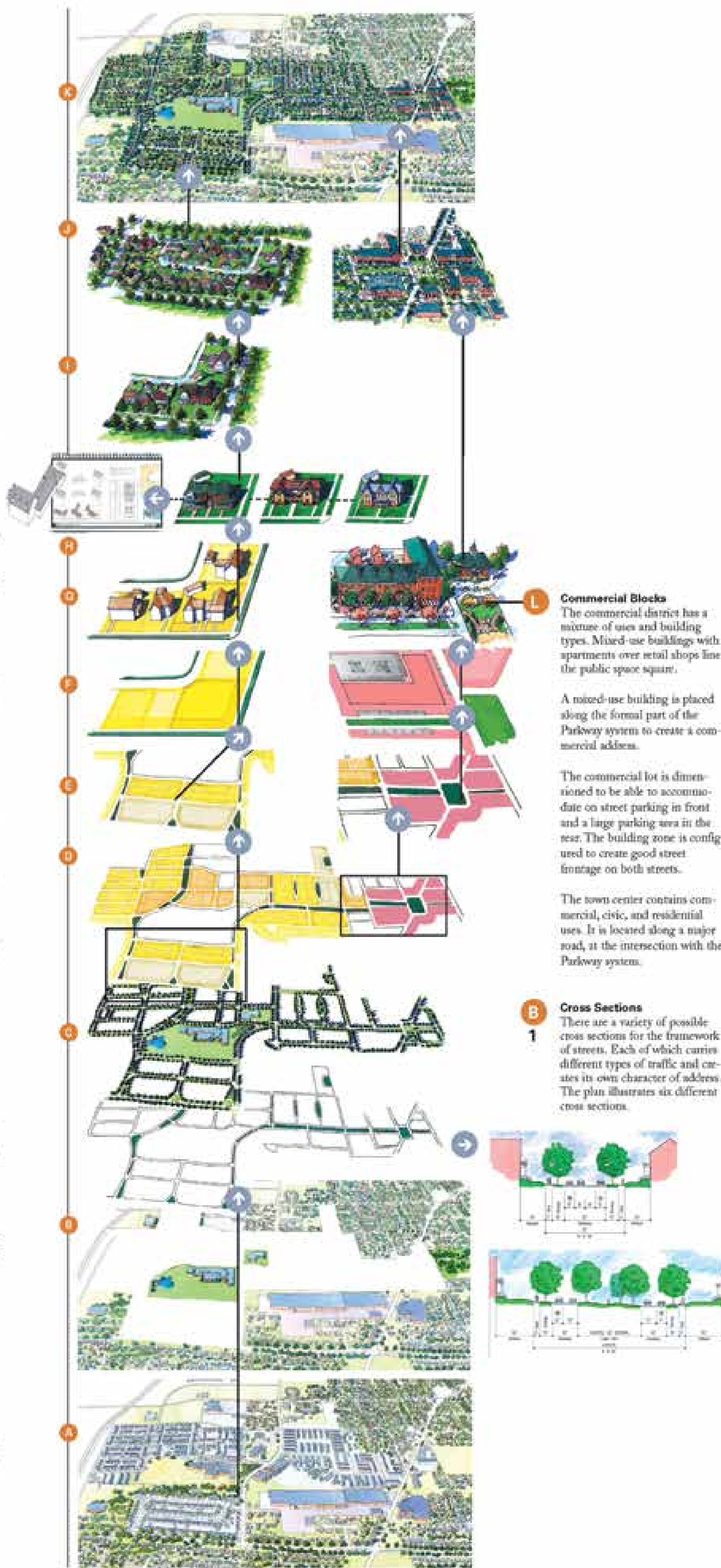
E **Residential Blocks**
Some of the first phase residential blocks are examined in more detail.

D **Block Patterns**
The urban assembly kit provides a choice of development block types. Some are alley loaded, others front loaded. Deeper blocks can accommodate commercial and multi-family development, while standard 100'-0" deep blocks accommodate houses. The plan illustrates six block types.

C **Public Open Space and Civic Buildings**
The blocks are served by a framework of streets and public open space. Different designs for streets and landscape create a variety of addresses, each with its own character. The plan illustrates eight street and pubic space types. These include parks, institutional campuses, parkways, and neighborhood streets.

B **Framework of Streets**
The framework is established by the pattern of streets. These frameworks fit into a site and connect to the adjacent patterns of streets, public open space and blocks.

A **Park DuValle Existing Aerial**
The area to be rebuilt is surrounded by other uses and neighborhoods whose future is linked with the site to be developed.



L **Commercial Blocks**
The commercial district has a mixture of uses and building types. Mixed-use buildings with apartments over retail shops line the public space square.

A mixed-use building is placed along the formal part of the Parkway system to create a commercial address.

The commercial lot is dimensioned to be able to accommodate on street parking in front and a large parking area in the rear. The building zone is configured to create good street frontage on both streets.

The town center contains commercial, civic, and residential uses. It is located along a major road, at the intersection with the Parkway system.

B1 **Cross Sections**
There are a variety of possible cross sections for the framework of streets. Each of which carries different types of traffic and creates its own character of address. The plan illustrates six different cross sections.

THE URBAN ASSEMBLY KIT

URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES

Figure 4, including figures 4a-4k: The Urban Assembly Kit.

ALL IMAGES IN THIS SECTION COURTESY URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES.

GINDROZ/Urban Assembly Kit

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six or seven different lot types. Each lot type might have any one of a number of setback or massing provisions. These provide for variety while preserving the overall aesthetic integrity of the block and the neighborhood. The illustration shows four of the options developed for Park DuValle.

Building Types (Figure 4g)

Each lot type can accommodate any one of several building types. For example, one illustration for Park DuValle depicts a small apartment building on the corner lot. However, that lot could, alternatively, be used to accommodate a two-unit corner building or a large, single-family house. The illustration also shows how duplexes and single-family houses might be deployed on a single block to help give a mixed-income character to the neighborhood.

Architectural Style (Figure 4h)

Architectural style is another important element in the kit. Drawing on the finest characteristics of regional architectural styles and traditions ensures that the new or revitalized neighborhood can claim a place of "belonging" in its larger context. For Park DuValle, this meant creating three architectural styles for each building type. For example, the small apartment building on the corner lot that was mentioned previously was illustrated in three distinct styles: Louisville Classical, Victorian, and Arts & Crafts.

Block Types (4i & 4j)

This assembly kit of simple elements has the power and flexibility to produce a rich and complex environment. The potential for different combinations is practically limitless. Consider Park DuValle. We have three architectural styles for seven building types on seven different lot types, for seven block types that are defined by seven distinct types of street space. The block aerial view only begins to show the incredible breadth of possibilities within the design parameters established for Park DuValle. But it is a testament to the ultimate functionality of the Urban Assembly Kit that it serves as a kit of parts that can be assembled in various ways to respond to local conditions.

Overall Environment (Figure 4k)

When all this relatively simple set of parts is assembled, the result is an urban environment as complex and rich as the traditional neighborhoods from which it gains its inspiration. Eleven hundred units of distressed public housing have been replaced by this new mixed-income neighborhood.

Houses (Figure 6)

The "houses" in this photo are, in fact, rental units with a mix of one-third public housing, one-third moderate subsidy, and one-third market rate. Their character is reassuringly Louisville. Their diversity — and the complexity of the neighborhood character — makes these differences invisible and contributes to the overall strength and cohesiveness of the neighborhood.

Note: The description of Ghent and the Urban Assembly Kit is an excerpt from "The Urban Design Handbook" by Urban Design Associates, published by Norton Books in 2003.

Figure 5: Park DuValle.

Figure 6: An ensemble of houses in Park DuValle combines market rate, partially-subsidized and public housing.

HERRMANN/Psychosociology

From page 9

the entire district as their home, Camp and his family apply this attitude to the neighborhood. Conversely, the attitude that the majority of Camp's workers conveyed was no different from that found at many construction sites. They lacked this "ownership connection." While they displayed individual pride in their work, the fact that it occurred in the Cotton District seemed to have little impact.

Design and Age Diversity

The Cotton District is a mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood in which structures demonstrate a variety of architectural styles and types. Diversity takes on an added dimension because of the large student population and students' varied routines. Students' interests, routines, and levels of spontaneity are in constant flux. A neighborhood containing a large student population will have more diversity (daily routines of its inhabitants) than a neighborhood void of such a population. In the Cotton District I found age rather than income to be more critical to obtaining a psychosociologically diverse neighborhood. "Economic diversity" does not necessarily result in *true* neighborhood diversity, and the typical day of the $180,000 household is often not that different from that of the $1.4 million household, in terms of the 9 to 5 routine. By incorporating a student population, Camp presents an alternative method of achieving constant circulation. He averts the risk of creating a neighborhood with little psychosociological diversity despite the fact that the district lacks a great deal of economic diversity.

Design and Behavior

The Cotton District was built with students in mind. Interior and exterior circulation patterns demonstrate this. So too do the higher than normal density levels (over 20 dwelling units per acre) and fewer square feet per individual unit. Students and young professionals gravitate to these efficient, friendly and aesthetically pleasing designs that are geared toward their lifestyle. This observation furthered the need to explore critical questions concerning behavioral attachment and design influence. Design can influence choice, but does it have the ability to affect behavior? Is the same type of pride in one's neighborhood that the Camp family demonstrates also found in the general population, and does it translate to changes in behavior?

The Cotton District: "Seven Sisters" of Maxwell Street and "The 4 Apostles."

Many students indicated that they feel and act as if their behavior impacts their own neighborhood. They view the district as a neighborhood rather than a large housing complex. I believe that this particular neighborhood carries with it a sense of pride dictated by surroundings. It arises from the design and architecture of the district. These feelings have the power to impact behavior, and in the Cotton District they do influence behavior.

A number of well-rounded and highly successful (older) adults who also live in the Cotton District or have a second home there espoused similar views. These adults love the vitality that the students offer, but it is the quirky architecture, layout and pedestrian-conducive location that promotes the feeling that those living elsewhere in Starkville are missing out on something special. All residents seem to agree that the "student-oriented" design and resulting age diversity make the Cotton District a truly *unique* "functioning neighborhood."

The Economic Generator

Camp's business will not run if his obligations and duties as a landlord cease to exist. Despite the presence of a number of privately owned structures, it is the rental units that make up the Cotton District's economic nervous system. These provide Camp's district with a constant economic generator. As with the towns of yesteryear, Camp's approach to building is market driven. Time provides stability and allows him the opportunity to finesse certain variables. Timelines are not essential to Camp. He is surrounded by his life's work. The next project will only add another dimension to the main project.

Traditional design principles extend beyond the built environment and into Camp's philosophy on growth as a whole. He has established a situation — much like pre-automotive towns — where the next closest lot is the most logical lot for development (for any use). This is rare. Even rarer is the type of control and patience necessary to see such an approach to growth through.

Dan realized many years ago that students, faculty and certain professionals were willing to pay a little more to live in an environment that was not only conducive to their lifestyle, but also beautiful. This approach puts his buildings in high demand, constantly generates a monthly return, and allows him to have the majority of projects paid for in seven years. Two typically non-economic factors prove to be essential. *Design* influences both demand and price point, and Camp is able to foster a design advantage because of his accumulated *knowledge* in many building related activities. He knows how and where to be creative so as to cut overall costs. The money that is saved is devoted to design. Eventually it is returned in the form of higher payments from higher price points than those found in the surrounding market.

The "All American" Ideals of an Authoritarian

My impressions of the "district as a whole" are vast. The related and intrinsic elements that are often relevant to forming such impressions almost always trace their genesis to some aspect of the Camps' private life. The family is the creator and primary force behind Cotton District life. Their actions stimulate or suppress how life in the Cotton District will initially function. They are running a business; therefore they have years of experience in gaining customer allegiance. They are quite realistic as to what living with students constitutes. This fact is critical to the district forming its own character and becoming a "functioning neighborhood."

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alive with a fraction of the sheer skill of Arthur Brown or Julia Morgan. Drawing, detailing, building, site work and garden design, solving problems in plan, understanding how architects throughout history had done these same things — practically no contemporary architects come close to them. And they were masters of style and to a lesser degree inventors of style, and they used whatever was stylistically appropriate for what and where they were building.

Architects who love cities can rummage through history of architecture to find times and places like Northern California in the 1920s, when time and place were not adversaries, when architecture motivated by the stirrings of the new was built in the service of the city. One doesn't have to go far to find architecture of this kind. Certainly a little of it is being produced right now, and some was produced throughout what we must now call the last century, but as a general convention you have only to go back to the first two decades of the 20th century worldwide, to the generation that Nicholas Pevsner referred to as the "pre-moderns." There you can find an abundance of architecture that might serve as a model for those who think that placemaking is the most important thing that architects have to do these days. Otto Wagner in Vienna, Gunnar Asplund in Stockholm, Eliel Saarinen (not Eero) in Finland and then in the United States, Puig and Domenic in Barcelona (more than the hyper-mannerist Gaudi), Placnik in Lubiana, Berlage in Amsterdam, Sullivan in Chicago, Maybeck in Berkeley, the list of master stylists and place makers is easy to write.

In considering this list, it is interesting to note that Eleil Saarinen's magnificent and timeless Cranebrook campus was where young Wu Liangyong went to study in 1951. Eero Saarinen, Eleil's gifted son, had a meteoric career producing spectacular modernist monuments until he died in 1961 at the age of 51. For the most part Eero Saarinen's flashy works have not stood the test of time, and now look as dated as the cars of the 1950s. It is Professor Wu who is the true spiritual heir to Eliel Saarinen.

What Professor Wu learned from his great mentor is what all architects should learn from the so-called *pre-moderns*. It is a concept of style and a mastery of styles that allowed them to be interested in the new, but not obsessively, and interested in the past, but not slavishly. It was a concept of style that never produced a dogma more important to them than the places in which they built. Architecture in the service of place demands a stylistic literacy that was all but banished from architectural education as anachronistic, just as all classical Chinese learning was denounced as feudal during the Cultural Revolution. We too are now faced with repairing the damage caused by an ideology of unlearning.

Excerpted from "Global City Blues," Island Press, 2003.

ALIMANESTIANU/Melrose Arch
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and grow into who they want to be. In an agitated, overpowering environment, is one encouraged to think — does one have the space or the time to think? As Descartes has implied, when we can think we can exist. "Je pense donc je suis." (And then again perhaps this doesn't really matter: If it is too much for some they can go somewhere else to think!)

Looking at the slides and listening to Paul's presentation, I automatically assumed the architecture at Melrose expressed a dramatic break with the past. Talking to my friends, it became apparent this isn't really the case. At least to the layman, the architecture at Melrose Arch doesn't appear to be that different from other places in South Africa. For them, it is more the density of Melrose Arch, its mixed use and the variety of materials and colors that make it exceptional and delightful.

Whether or not it is new to South Africa, I find it curious that the architecture at Melrose Arch resembles that of the 1920s and '30s de Stijl movement. Is this just pure coincidence? Is it the Boer blood in the veins of the young generation!? Isn't this expression similar to many places in the world today?

I found some words by one of the de Stijl architects, Gerrit Rietveld. It's interesting how they could have been spoken by those who designed Melrose Arch:

"We didn't avoid older styles because they were ugly, or because we couldn't reproduce them, but because our own times demanded their own form, I mean, their own manifestation." [1]

And when Gerrit Rietveld speaks of one of his sites it could also be a description of Melrose Arch architecture, though I hope at Melrose Arch the "what" did matter:

"It was a deserted place, where anyone who wanted to pee just did it against this wall. It was a real piece of no-man's land. And we said, 'Yes, this is just right, let's build it here.' And we took this plot of ground and made it into a place with a reality of its own. It didn't matter what it was, so long as something was there, something clear. And that's what it became. And that's always been my main aim: to give to a yet-unformed space, a certain meaning." [2]

How intriguing that these new South African buildings remind us of architecture conceived last century in Northern Europe. At the time, the de Stijl architects believed that architecture should be the synthesis of all the arts. They were primarily interested in the aesthetic and formal aspects the new modern movement. Unlike the disciples of the Bauhaus they were not concerned by the social project. They actually ignored the subject matter, opposed symmetry and concentrated on abstraction, polychromy and the idea of dematerialization.

At Melrose Arch "dematerialization" probably wasn't the objective, at least not consciously. Nonetheless, the play of juxtaposed abstract, geometric shapes and forms, and the use of so many materials, patterns and colors has created an agitated environment. Some things seem confusing, others imbalanced. We can wonder how it all holds together, asking ourselves if this is all for real. Doesn't this vibrant world of abundance appear fragile, even precarious?

My South African friends assure me that it doesn't. They insist that Melsose Arch is simply strength and creative energy!

1. The Rietveld Schroder House, by Paul Overy, Lenneke Büller, Frank den Oudsten, ed. MIT Press, p. 73.
2. Idem, p. 52.

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And finally, modernist architecture is crucially deficient in connectivity. Since modernism has severed itself from the inherited traditional languages of architecture, it speaks a language known only to its author and those who fancy themselves among the elite initiates of these arcane utterances, i.e. art historians. In contrast, the traditional languages are part of our inherited cultural patrimony, and as such, are to varying degrees understood and shared by all. Traditional architects, with a common language are able to enter into an ongoing critical conversation about their work with other traditional architects, lay people and, most importantly, with the great host of architects who have preceded us and left a record in thoughts, drawings or buildings. If new urbanism is about community, then surely it is traditional architecture that most fully understands and embodies community in this broadest and most profound sense.

It has been said that the biggest enemy of traditional architecture isn't modernism; it's bad "traditional architecture." Accordingly, these arguments have been presented primarily to engender a deeper conviction among those of us practicing traditional architecture. For without conviction there can be no passion, and without passion no love. Love is essential if we are to significantly improve our practice. For as John Ruskin noted, "When skill meets love, expect a masterpiece."

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be modified, because it is so specifically made by one-of-a-kind elements. No one makes the stuff anymore. So out they go — hundreds of units. Now, had they used an open system of bricks, clapboard or stucco, they would have been able to cut it, open it, add to it, remove parts of it, etc. We as new urbanists need such an architecture, one that has the ability to learn.

Another thing that I have noticed about modernist architecture is that when the building syntax is self-expressive — as it usually is since the demise of Mies' reputation — it does not lend itself to achieving mixed use. For example, to have a house near an apartment building and be acceptable to the consumer, that apartment building cannot be an eggcrate of balconies. And an office building cannot be a steel-and-glass cube; people will hate it and fight the mixed use. On the other hand, when the syntax is shared, there seems to be no problem (providing the parking and noise controls are worked out). Style is camouflage, and that is its principal use to an urbanist. That is why we code for a shared syntax. When we were working in downtown Birmingham, Mich., there was a notorious building that people disliked. We went to see it and found that it shared the local setback, was only three stories tall, and was made of brick. The only reason that it caused a visual crisis is that it had horizontal strip windows! People are quite sensitive. Imagine an avant-garde architect let loose, what that would do to the consensus required to achieve urbanism. There's efficiency of design.

There is also the attitude of the modernist architects. The genius model that is requisite with the style. When we recommend a modernist architect to one of our developer clients, it goes like this: "Please pay me a higher-than-usual fee so that I can take your project away for a real long time to agonize over it; and when I bring it back to "defend" it don't try to point out that there are not-enough-closets-sort-of-thing, and when it busts the budget just come up with more dough because it cannot be changed."

What an agony it is for us to overlook such architects! And it is incomprehensible to the community builder who can just retain certain traditional architects and get done what they need efficiently and well with a traditional building.

Furthermore, there is the problem of the locations of modernist architecture on the Transect. We need to have architecture that is rural in rural areas, suburban in suburban areas, urban in urban areas, and metropolitan in metropolitan areas. The language of modernist architecture is very deficient in the middle range of Transect Zones, which is the most widespread in the United States. It's fantastically good on the metropolitan end — the concrete or glass or steel high-rise, but as you get into suburban contexts modernist architecture does not perform. In the rural areas, with buildings separated by distance and buffered by landscaping, it does fine again, as one uniquely expressive building cannot be seen simultaneously with another. Glenn Murcutt does a particularly good job in rural Australia and Lake Flato in Austin — but even then there is the problem of a specialized construction. All of these architects achieve their rural character through craft. They are practically Ruskinian in their use of "honest" materials and craft building, so it is not economical. It is not from Home Depot. Be that as it may, the real problem remains the absence of a modernist proposal of the middle ranges of the Transect where the majority of American urbanism occurs and where most the new urbanists consequently operate.

And finally, there is the win/loss ratio. Dan, you and I know that there are between 300 and 3,000 modernist masterpieces. We've visited them , we admire them, we understand them. They are not the problem. The problem is the 30 million failures of modernism that have destroyed our cities and our landscapes. You cannot have one without acknowledging the other. There were very few failures prior to modernism. Architects and builders could rely on tradition to give them a base below which quality would not drop while not preventing masterpieces. The problem with modernism is that without acknowledging tradition there is no bottom it does not reach. Too many architects, unsupplied with genius, are asked to emulate the design methods of Wright, Mies, LeCorbusier, and the few geniuses there have been. And the result has been a comprehensive, world-girdling disaster. We cannot, as urbanists, for the sake of the occasional masterpiece, tolerate such an abysmal win/loss ratio. No one would in any other field. Why should architects be exempt? Especially when there is evidence that other fields don't fail at such a rate because they all build on tradition — and incidentally this does not exclude the master art of our time, cinema.

The plea that I'm making is to create a modernist architecture, based on the tradition of modernism. Because this does not occur, we the new urbanists resort to the vernacular tradition of architecture. So let's get modernism going, so that it meets the criteria of the normal, the useful, the dependable. Let's write a charter on those conditions.