

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING IN WASHINGTON SQUARE

by

ISRAEL STOLLMAN

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Signature of author.....  
Dept. of City and Regional Planning  
September 10, 1948

Certified by.....  
Thesis Supervisor

.....  
Chairman, Departmental Committee on Graduate Students



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*Page 16*

Cambridge, Mass.

September 10, 1948

Professor Frederick J. Adams  
Department of City and Regional Planning  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Mass.

Dear Professor Adams,

I submit this thesis, entitled Neighborhood  
Planning in Washington Square, in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of Master in City  
Planning.

Sincerely,

Israel Stollman

## FORWARD

That part of Manhattan known as Washington Square, and as Greenwich Village, presents a cross-section of the problems encountered in the built-up centers of our larger cities. Diverse elements often found scattered in downtown areas are here combined in one district. Comparing Greenwich Village to analogous sections in Boston, for example, we find a high-rental district containing old remodeled homes as on Beacon Hill; an Italian community settled in a North End slum; a supply of cheap rooming houses similar to the South End's, as well as a fringe of the Bowery (Dover St. in the South End); some of the more genteel rooming houses of the Back Bay are also duplicated here, and several institutions of higher education add to the resemblance. Greenwich Village weaves these elements into a unique combination, but solutions to its planning problems may have a general significance.

The problem explored in this thesis is the adequacy of planning theory to deal with the facts of the large city and with the task of rebuilding its large central areas. Specifically, this thesis attempts to discover what modifications are necessary in the neighborhood theory in order to adapt it for use in the urban situation.

The purpose of the thesis is not to develop a method, but to offer a program for achieving reconstruction without sacrificing the goals of health standards or the social scheme of urban dwellers.

The methods used correspond to the three parts of the text. Part I relies on field observation and on study of existing reports covering selected features of Greenwich Village. It attempts to describe the major characteristics of the district, and to compare its problems with the common picture of the central problem area. Part II has selected a publication which gives a recent consensus of planning standards for neighborhood units, and compares those standards with existing conditions in Washington Square, a portion of the Greenwich Village area. Emphasis is directed to the margin of discrepancy which appears when one standard is applied strictly, and others varied to suit local conditions. Part III analyses some of the recommendations in existing planning studies for effectuating new plans. These recommended procedures are compared to a case study of private planning and its effectiveness. The final section of Part III gives a rudimentary outline of a program intended to reconcile standards and social goals with the requirements of effective local action.

I am grateful to the planning faculty at M I T, Profs. F. J. Adams, R. B. Greeley, Arthur D. McVoy, Burnham Kelly, Lloyd Rodwin and Draveaux Bender, and to Mr. Flavel Shurtleff, for guiding the direction of my approach to planning.

In preparing this thesis, I had the help of many persons who patiently answered my questions, and a few who stimulatingly asked some. The following persons generously assisted me with the use of their materials relevant to Washington Square:

Mr. Arthur C. Holden,

Mr. Robert C. Weinberg,

Commissioner Cleveland Rodgers of the New York City Planning Commission.

Mr. A. Leshin and Mrs. E. Paepcke of the commission's staff.

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PART I

A PERSPECTIVE OF GREENWICH VILLAGE

A project determining the suitable boundaries for comprehensible communities in Manhattan may begin by listing Greenwich Village. Many of the criteria for dividing cities into urban communities are excellently met by conditions in Greenwich Village.

Containing a population of 77,811 in 1940<sup>1</sup>, and covering about 800 acres on the lower West Side of Manhattan, it is a more manageable unit than other areas which have also a strong tradition of self-identification: Harlem, for example, or the Lower East Side. Its maximum boundaries have been approved by local consensus. Heavily traveled Canal St. on the south, and the Hudson River on the west have been "natural" boundaries. On the east, some have considered Broadway the limit; others, Fourth Ave. and Lafayette St.; or, still further east, Third Ave. and the Bowery. The easternmost line is considered to be the boundary in this study. In the thinking of local people and organizations, this maximum area shrinks down to its residential core, cutting off most of the blocks between Houston (the local pronunciation is How'stn and not Hus'tn) and Canal Sts., the blocks along the river, and as much of the eastern portion as will leave both sides of Fifth Ave. in the Village. The northern boundary has enjoyed greatest approval. In the words of one local person, "You're not in Greenwich Village if you're on the

---

<sup>1</sup>All data of the 1940 U.S. Census is taken from the compilation of the Welfare Council Committee on 1940 Census Tract tabulation for N.Y.C., Census Tract Data on Population & Housing, New York City, Sept. 1942.

north side of 14th St."

The high degree of consciousness of, and identification with, the village among its residents is reinforced by extensive organization of local voluntary groups. Sixty organizations and institutions exclusive of churches and schools are listed in the files of the Hudson Park Library.

## Resume of Population History<sup>2</sup>

During the 1700's, Greenwich Village was an increasingly popular community for the wealthy and prominent. The first families of New York built their country mansions here in large, pleasant estates. After the Revolution, migration into the village grew. A series of yellow fever epidemics at the toe of Manhattan sent waves of newcomers to the healthy higher land north. By 1823, settlement had become sufficiently thick to encourage the abandonment of the city's potter's field, and its conversion into a parade ground later to become Washington Sq.

The population quadrupled from 1825 to 1850, making Greenwich Village a section of the city peopled by older American families of a prosperous middle-class. This growth tapered off and fell behind the rate of growth for New York City during the next quarter century. The number of immigrants who found their way into Greenwich Village was also much lower than in other parts of the city. In 1875, only 32% of the population of the village were foreign born, a proportion low enough to bring it the name of the "American Ward".

That name didn't long keep its meaning. Twin invasions of tenements and immigrants breached the village by way of

---

<sup>2</sup>Caroline F. Ware, Greenwich Village, 1920-1930, (Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1935), ch.2.  
Federal Writers' Project, New York City Guide, (Random House, New York, 1939), pp.124-143.

recently established shipping areas along the river, and by displacement of an old Negro settlement south of Washington Sq. With two older groups long part of the Village, the Irish added a third wave in the 1870's and a fourth in the 1890's. South of 4th St., Italian immigrants extended the 'Little Italy' of Mulberry Bend.

The Italian immigrant community became the dominant element in the population of the Ninth Ward. That dominance was soon shared by a new group. In the years before World War I, the low rents, central location and possible anonymity of its residents attracted to it men and women who were dissatisfied with the prevailing social atmosphere in their own communities. Those who came to Greenwich Village were not all of the types which have made the area synonymous with bohemianism. That reputation, though still prevalent even among many local people, soon became a myth. When the influx of young people new to the city reached its height, many flocked to the rooming houses of Greenwich Village, particularly those <sup>newcomers</sup> of literary or artistic aspirations. The strains of their adjustment to an urban life, and of their struggles for a career, were projected against a cosmopolitan background in downtown Manhattan, and merged with the picture of painters, sculptors and craftsmen who had moved into the high-ceilinged, large-windowed rooms often obtainable in the district. In the course of forty years, this district sheltered first writers and artists who came for its convenience and

economy, and who afterwards often became successful; then those who came for its economy and anonymity, then the imitators and the confused, and the seekers for atmosphere, Now, the much higher cost of renting or owning a place in the village gives the decision to move here to a new group: those willing to pay for the central location and, <sup>who</sup> perhaps, are also pleased by the address.

Throughout these changes, the groups which lived in the early village, in the American Ward, or the Ninth Ward, were still represented in the composition of the local people. Only the one-time largest Negro settlement in New York City disappeared. The large Italian community and the colony of "Villagers" shared the village with Irish, Spanish, Jewish, German and other scatterings of ethnic groups, as well as with descendents of some of the old families in the area, and the latest arrived business people.

### Manhattan's Growth and the By-passing of Greenwich Village

The famous gridiron pattern that was given to New York City in 1811 was fitted to the non-conforming pattern already developed in this area. An attempt to have carried the regular pattern into the village would have produced severe congestion in its vicinity because of the tapering shoreline south of 14th st. The avenues west of Fifth would have ended on a marginal street if extended straight south, and provided wide entrances into a constantly narrowing southward path. With growing traffic, a gridiron pattern in Greenwich Village might have turned it completely into an industrial and shipping center. The odd street pattern encouraged the growth of New York to flow around it, perhaps accelerating that growth up a narrow neck along Broadway between the Village and the residential areas of the east side. Commerce paused briefly in the vicinity of Union Square before moving further uptown to its present center at 34th st.; the entertainment center leaped ahead to Times Square. Before industrial uses could expand in their wake, and filter into the Greenwich Village area, high land values resulted from complete development and from the conviction of local owners that its central location should command a premium.

The completion of the Pennsylvania Station and of Grand Central terminal in 1910 and 1913, coupled with the growth of population north of 59th St., in the Bronx and in Queens, further increased the tendency to by-pass Greenwich

Village. The "Save New York" movement in the latter years of the same decade, fighting to preserve Fifth Avenue as a limited business street, succeeded in directing the expansion of the needle trades and garment district north of 14th St. and west of Fifth. With the establishment of zoning in New York in 1916, local real estate people, social workers and certain residents persuaded the Zoning Commission to place the heart of the Village in a residence district. South of Washington Square and on the western edge of the Village the districts were left unrestricted. These developments halted the growth of the industrial area. Again, the successive invasions of new land uses did not displace entirely the preceding uses. Industrial penetration remained.

"Greenwich Village--Like the Beacon Hill Section in Boston"

This was the title of a brochure, issued perhaps in 1916, by a real estate group in Greenwich Village. It describes the success of certain Bostonians in rehabilitating the old homes on Beacon Hill, thereby reversing the trend which had removed many of Boston's first families from their one-time stronghold of aristocracy. The backflow of well-to-do families onto Beacon Hill revived dropping land values and promised to stabilize them on new high levels. With a list of prominent persons in New York who had chosen to settle in remodeled homes in Greenwich Village, the brochure proceeded to outline the advantages for other New Yorkers who should decide to make this their Beacon Hill.

The proximity of Greenwich Village to downtown facilities was similar to that of Beacon Hill, as was the quiet of its side streets relative to surrounding districts. Here was also a tradition of occupancy by the city's elect: the estates of colonial times as well as the mansions of Washington Square North. Many substantial houses remained from that period which could be remodeled into a revived district of higher-class residence.

A backflow of population into Greenwich Village was also promoted by the exhaustion of new areas in Manhattan to develop. Harlem on the north, consolidating as a Negro ghetto, and the solidly built up slum areas in other parts of the island, turned the attention of real estate

developers to the possibilities of rehabilitating older areas for high-rental dwellings. Encouraging them in this direction were the beginnings of a reaction against movement to the suburb and the long journey to work.

Greenwich Village has not become "like Beacon Hill". One reason is physical. Its land long ago leveled into a gentle slope toward the river, it hasn't that distinctive topographical setting of Beacon Hill, which provides a view without resort to skyscrapers, and discourages trespass of its streets by commercial traffic. More important, perhaps, the familial, if not the historical, associations are less intense in Greenwich Village. Those who have established themselves in reconditioned houses here and who figure most prominently among its families, have been the more successful artists, writers and theatrical people.

As well as a partial cause, the result of this difference in development is the lack of mixed land use on Beacon Hill, and Beacon Hill's solidarity of interest which has repeatedly fought off the threats of invasion offered by Boston's constricted downtown center, and by tall apartment buildings. In Greenwich Village, of the half dozen blocks which are wholly in the residence district, not one is free from non-conforming uses: generally stores, occasionally a loft or garage building. The largest concentration of remodeled dwellings is north of Washington Square on both sides of Fifth Avenue. On most of these blocks, the ends facing the avenue have been pre-empted by

tall apartment buildings. In other parts of the village, remodeled buildings are sprinkled among the tenements. Many of the corner lots which face broader segments of street or wide intersections have been filled with tall apartment buildings.

### The Planning Area

In a report prepared for the Washington Square Association in 1946, Arthur C. Holden presented recommendations with the following objective:

- "(1) Protect the existing values;
- (2) Permit the realization of potential values;
- (3) Help to correct long years of neglect during which there has seemed to be no means for making comprehensive plans effective." <sup>3</sup>

First of his recommendations<sup>4</sup> is division of Greenwich Village into five planning areas: A - stabilized residential, B - business fringe, C - obsolete area, residential and loft, D - Greenwich Village, residential, and E - trans-shipping. These areas correspond to functional districts. Each area is thought of as a potentially homogeneous unit, whose values and uses can be stabilized by taking steps that will protect the predominant use. The pursuit of those planning techniques is recommended which will eliminate non-conforming uses or reconstruct an area in large units to produce a uniform pattern of development. Delineation of planning areas according to this principle is best suited to conditions where:

- 1) ultimate boundaries of proposed homogeneous

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<sup>3</sup>Arthur C. Holden, Planning Recommendations for the Washington Square Area, (Prepared for the Washington Square Association, 1946), p.13.

<sup>4</sup>ibid., p.17.

developments are established;

2) it is decided to plan physically uniform districts.

3) the relation of planning districts to a wider framework of city or metropolis is established in an overall plan.

4) a planning program can be carried out independently of programs for the surrounding districts (not planned independently, but executed independently).

An industrial or shipping district is the type of area that will most often fulfill these requirements in urban centers.

In most cities, these conditions are far from being fulfilled by patterns of existing predominant land use. In replanning the typical urban area, many of the problems which call for solutions deal primarily with the relations of neighboring districts, and especially with the intermingling of disparate land uses which occurs along their edges. In these edges, non-conforming uses are most numerous, and it is not easy to predict the path of a zoning boundary by inspection in the field. The zoning use map of Greenwich Village shows an intricate pattern and variety of classification. Treatment of these "border" areas is not only a problem of planning future changes and of re-zoning; it is also a job of determining the extent to which a predominant use should be promoted; of determining how much variety of use can be planned for by

methods supplementary to zoning.

Any area has nuclei of relatively homogeneous use. The extent of homogeneity is seldom coterminous with zoning district boundaries. If planning districts are established around predominant uses as their core, the assumption is that the territory within each district should be planned to favor its predominant use.

In everyday thinking, the identification of different parts of the city is made by association with a focus of homogeneity not with enclosing boundaries. Wide areas in New York are referred to as Herald Square or Times Square or Wall Street. In Boston, Winter and Washington Streets refers to a shopping area covering more than the intersection which is visualised as its center. Injection of this crossroads image into the legal zoning concept of the uniform district may produce 100% planning only for the 100% location. Planning for a whole district may be geared to the needs of that part of it which has achieved highest value and greatest stability. Some of the needs which become neglected in this process are:

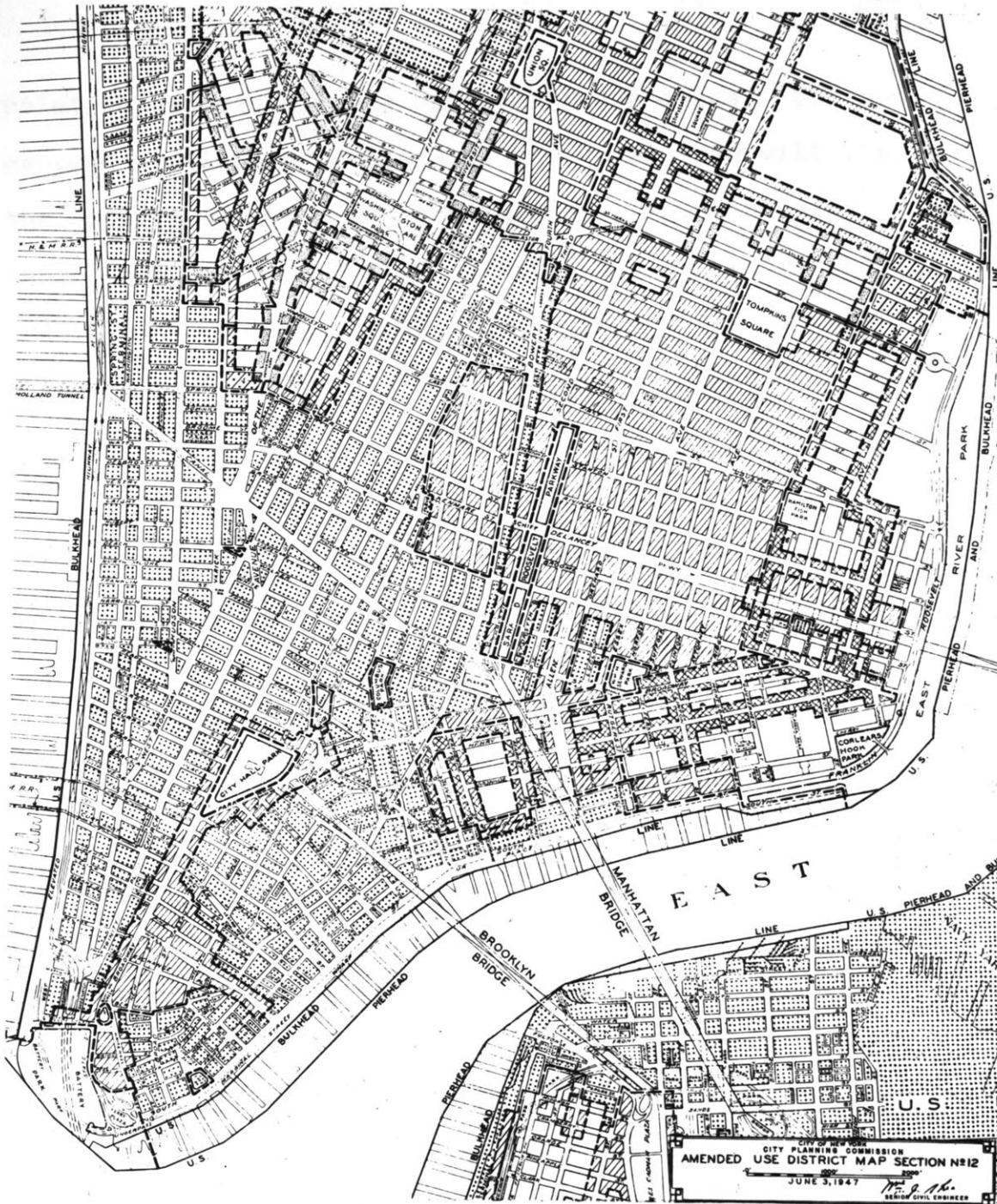
- 1) provision of central areas of low land cost;
- 2) allowance of a certain degree of mixed land use;
- 3) prevention of over-zoning for intensive uses;
- 4) prevention of speculative rises in land value.

Theoretically, proper zoning practise should provide such results. In its operations, however, zoning tends to consider the eventual elimination of non-conforming uses as a fact established by enactment of the ordinance. Actually, land owners are still influenced by the continued intermingling of uses. It is a commonplace observation that a legal zone prevents new prohibited uses, but does not necessarily encourage redevelopment to conforming uses. Where planning is centered on extending the influence of a stable, homogeneous use, the highest value in its area, such redevelopment may become even more contingent upon private policies of waiting for:

- 1) possible extension of high value uses and re-zoning or
- 2) large-scale institutional redevelopment, public or semi-public, which will bring a "bail-out" price.












Where the second happens, the first possibility becomes probable for surrounding areas. The erection of Stuyvesant Town raised the values of slum areas around it.

This complex of forces will be more consciously a part of our planning process, if we draw planning district boundaries centering on the problem areas: where one "natural" area shades off into another, where there is indecisive land use and blight. A unit which straddles the area of intermixture, and cuts through homogeneous sections, can focus efforts upon creating a satisfactory



# ZONING USE DISTRICTS

## LEGEND

- USE DISTRICT MAP DESIGNATIONS
-  indicates the boundary of a Use District.
  -  indicates Residence District.
  -  indicates Local Retail District.
  -  indicates Restricted Retail District.
  -  indicates Retail District.
  -  indicates Retail-1 District.
  -  indicates Business District.
  -  indicates Business-1 District.
  -  indicates Manufacturing District.
  -  indicates Unrestricted District.
  -  indicates Undetermined area for which no restriction or regulation as to Use has been established.



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relation between diverse but contiguous areas. The homogeneous sections of conforming use which then will lie on the borders of our area have less need for, and offer more resistance to, programs of change. Their greater social and economic stability may then be depended on to knit the planning units into eventual communities.

### The Washington Square Area

This approach has been taken in adopting a section of Greenwich Village for closer study. What is here called the Washington Square Area, is a section bounded by 14th Street on the north, Third Avenue and the Bowery on the east, Houston Street on the south and the Avenue of the Americas--until recently called, Sixth Avenue--on the west.

The south side is the 100% side of 14th Street, and is part of a city-wide center for less expensive women's wear and allied shopping services. The blocks between this street and 13th Street have grown in land value and intensity of use during the last twenty-five years as shown on comparison maps 1 and 2. Lots have been assembled into large store sites often running through the block from street to street. In other places, stores and lofts on 14th Street are backed by lofts and factories on 13th Street. Further south, use changes abruptly to residence on the western half of the area, and merges with a remnant of the downtown industrial district which thrusts up Broadway and Fourth Avenue.

The Avenue of the Americas is largely lined with local food stores, service and repair shops. On either side of it, lie two residential segments of Greenwich Village. Eighth Street, Greenwich Avenue and Christopher Street run together into Sixth Avenue to form the recently

named Village Square. This intersection is a shopping node made by the coming together of the tree store-lined streets. Below Carmine Street, Sixth Avenue was extended through the previous street pattern, leaving segments of former blocks and giving the avenue an extra wide width. Construction of the Independent subway, in the early thirties, left vacant a strip of lots along the east side of Sixth Avenue from Waverly Place south. The northernmost one has been used as the annual site of the Greenwich Village fair. The next one south is in use as a commercial parking lot. Others have been made into playgrounds, as have a number of similar lots on the north side of Houston Street.

On its southern and eastern sides, the Washington Square area as delineated here departs further from planning area "A" as shown in the Holden Report. The latter carefully draws a line about the high grade residential area north of Washington Square. An earlier version of planning area "A" drew its boundary along Washington Square south. Later the tier of blocks along the park's southern edge, a thin crust over the slums south of the square were included in the high grade area. This study includes the blighted slum area south to Houston Street, and the loft district east to Third Avenue and the Bowery. Houston Street, now slicing through slum housing and industrial loft space, is scheduled in several alternative

# WASHINGTON SQUARE



DEPT. OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING      M I T      MASTER'S THESIS      SUMMER 1948      ISRAEL STOLLMAN

## LEGEND

- LOFT BLDG    INDUSTRY, WAREHOUSE, GARAGE
- COMMERCIAL    OFFICES, RETAIL STORE BLDG
- PRIVATE INSTITUTIONAL
- PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL
- PLAY AREAS
- RESIDENTIAL
- VACANT

## LAND USE

SOURCE: MAYOR'S COMMITTEE ON CITY PLANNING, NYC '36  
BROMLEY ATLAS

schemes to be developed into a more effective traffic artery.

The eastern strip has often been treated as a peripheral area by studies dealing either with the lower east or west sides. Such treatment means it has largely been neglected. Thinking of it as a fringe area has also banished it to the periphery of planning thought. This was sensed by one of the twenty-six booksellers along Fourth Avenue. "We're not represented really by a local paper of the east side or of the west side." On the south, this strip contains a fringe of the Elizabeth-Mott-Mulberry slum district which extends to Canal Street. At Astor Place, the John Wanamaker department store occupies two blocks, and Cooper Union, a block on Third Avenue. The used-book center is known, widely; a stock of 3 million books is the basis for a business relying partly on passing browsers, largely on the mail-order trade. Between Fourth and Third Avenues, the scattering of tenement dwellings is related to the district east of Third.

## Blight

The symptoms, causes, and effects of blight have been discussed in an ample literature. This section of the study will outline the condition of certain residential and industrial portions of the Washington Square area to show how they conform to the usual picture of urban blight.

### Blighted residence:

The Greenwich Village area contains section M-10 of the sections marked for clearance, replanning and low-rent housing as part of the master plan of New York. This section is in two parts, one of which includes the tenement blocks to the south of Washington Square, <sup>and</sup> part of M-12, a clearance section usually considered with the projects into the area studied here. The gap shown between sections M-10 and M-12 on the map is also the gap between the two sections of "Little Italy", filled by industrial lofts.

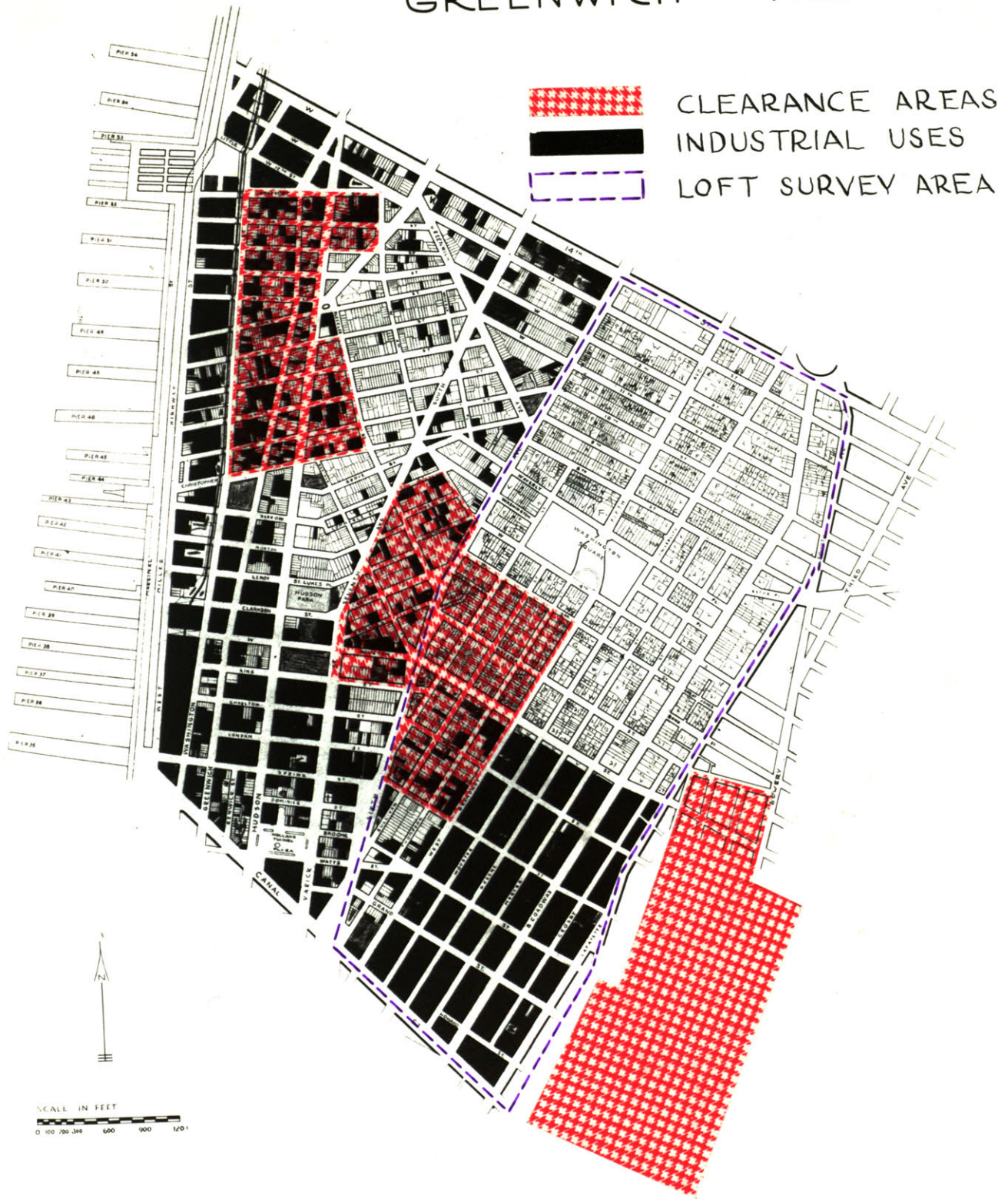
The criteria for choosing "sections containing areas for clearance" were:<sup>5</sup>

1. Proper relation to other component parts of the Master Plan, with special emphasis on a desirable future land use pattern and opportunities for local community replanning.

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<sup>5</sup>City Planning Commission of New York City, Adoption of a City-wide Showing sections Containing Areas for Clearance, Replanning, and Low Rent Housing as a Part of the Master Plan, 1940, p.3, p.5.

# GREENWICH VILLAGE



2. Permanent residential character, either now assured, or capable of being assured by appropriate amendments to the zoning maps.

3. Opportunity for clearing blighted, sub-standard residential districts, or unneeded and blighted non-residential districts, included vacated properties in both cases.

4. Opportunity to walk to work without detriment to housing project because of too close proximity to nuisance industries. (...).

5. Accessibility to rapid transit: generally not over one-half mile walk to nearest station.

6. Availability of existing public improvements and facilities, as follows (...):

- a. Paved streets, water mains, sewers, drains, etc.
- b. Recreation facilities within walking distance, other than facilities that can reasonably be included in housing projects.
- c. Schools within a reasonable distance.

"these areas include practically all those districts that are now built up predominantly with old law substandard tenements, and which at the same time meet the other criteria used by the commission."

### Evidence from the census

A summary of data contained in the 1940 census shows the condition of dwellings relative to all of Manhattan.

#### CENSUS REPORTED DWELLING CONDITIONS

|  | Washington Sq.<br>blighted area | Manhattan |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------|
|  | (% of total units)              |           |
| built before 1899                              | 42.30                           | 39.0      |
| vacant in 1940                                 | 14.400                          | 10.8      |
| occupied by 1.51 or more<br>persons per family | 8.56                            | 5.66      |
| need major repairs                             | 6.64                            | 4.33      |
| have no bath                                   | 53.00                           | 17.6      |

## "Ailing City Areas"

The areas designated for clearance and rebuilding in the Master Plan were studied in 1941 by the Citizen's Housing Council to determine their "relative economic status ...in comparison with the remainder of Manhattan."<sup>6</sup> The criteria used were tax delinquency, mortgage foreclosures, vacancy, and the use of rear buildings for residence.

Summing up the position of section M-10 (the Greenwich Village section) this report says:

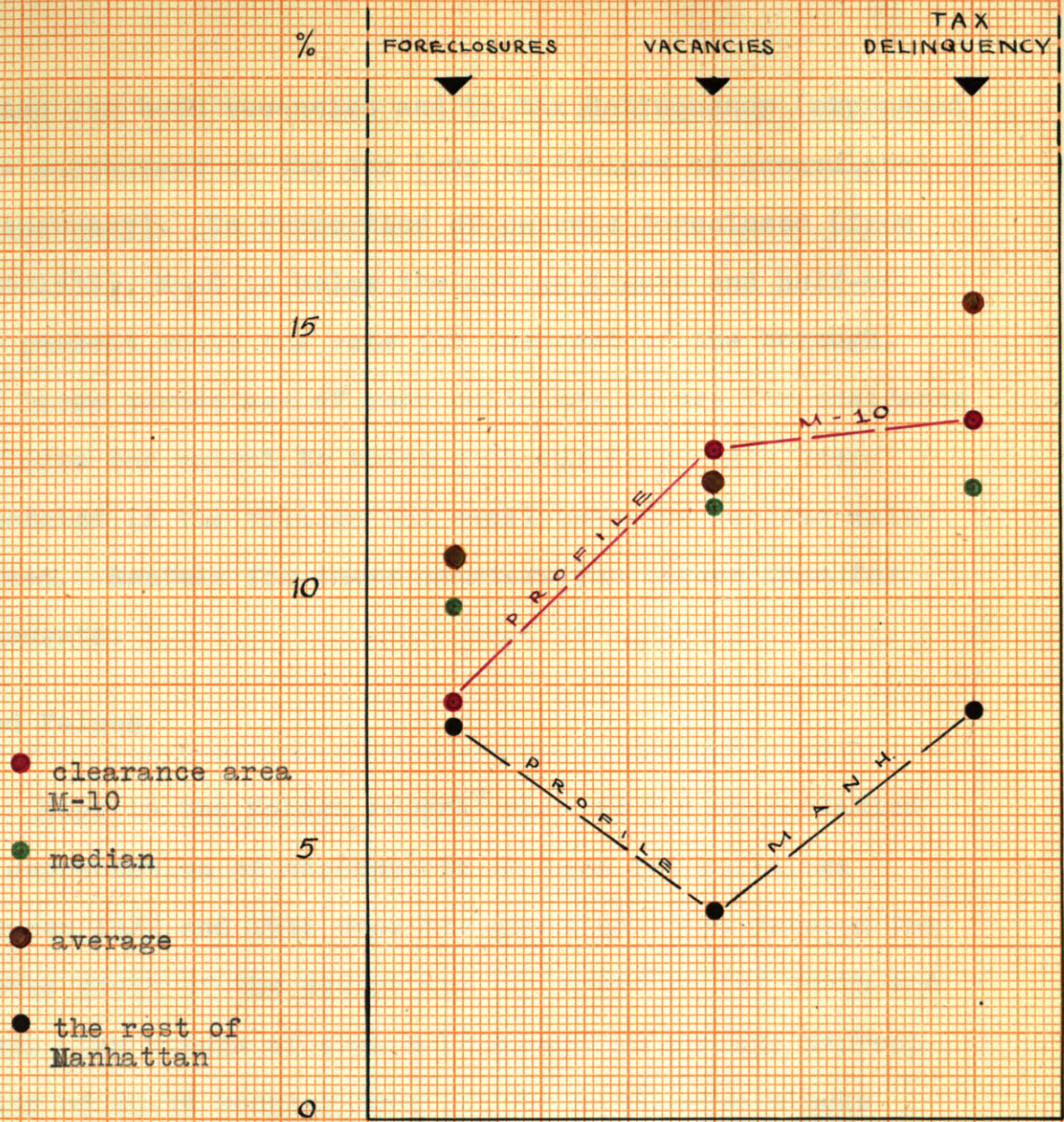
"Streets in all this section were narrow and irregular. Houses strewn along them seemed particularly haphazard in design. Rear buildings were numerous. High rental buildings recently constructed were interspersed with old dilapidated buildings and extensive remodeling has been going on....

"Vacancies again were high, above the average for the thirteen areas, although both foreclosures and tax delinquencies fell somewhat below the average. Foreclosures were almost equally divided between institutions and private mortgage holders."<sup>6</sup>

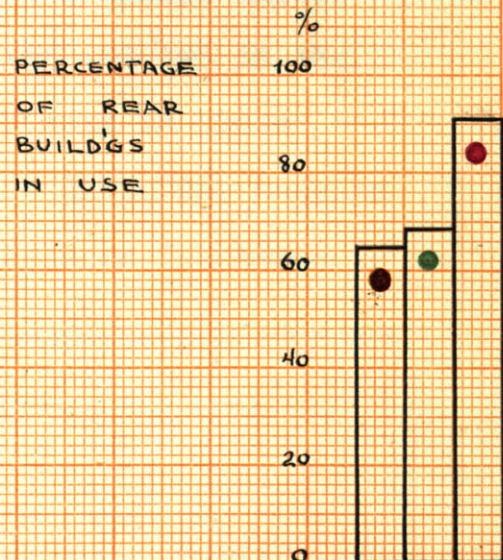
A comparison of the standing of this area with the average for all thirteen areas, is somewhat misleading. One area on the lower east side of Manhattan shows extreme figures which weight the average heavily. The chart on page therefore indicates the median percentage for each characteristic. These show that area M-10 is above the

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<sup>6</sup>Sylvia W. Stark, Ailing City Areas, (Citizen's Housing Council of New York, 1941), p.20, tables pp.35-40.



source: Stark, op. cit.



"AILING CITY AREAS"

median for both vacancies and in tax delinquency (expressed as a percentage of the tax levy in dollars of accumulated delinquency). In proportion of parcels foreclosed (from 1935-1939), M-10 is below the median figure and half-of-one percent above the rate for the rest of the borough. The large percentage of rear buildings in use for residence reflects the extent to which such buildings have been remodeled in the village and small interior gardens maintained. Rentals for these quarters run higher than for tenements.

#### Land Values

Maps in the Holden report<sup>7</sup> showing the appreciation or depreciation of assessments on land and buildings between 1922 and 1946 show the great contrast between the blocks south of the square and the areas to the north and west. Ten blocks of area M-10 showed an average depreciation of 20.1% ranging from 2.3 to 26.9%. Two blocks showed increases of 4.2 and 2.6%. In the other residential areas, every block showed appreciated values except four small ones: two south of the square and two on the western margin. Twenty-one out of 60 blocks in these areas appreciated in assessed value more than 60%, ranging up to 203%. The eastern part of area M-10 is not homo-

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<sup>7</sup>Holden, op. cit., pp.41,45.

geneous in respect to land values. East of Sixth Avenue, the depreciation described on page has taken place. West of Sixth Avenue blocks included in M-10 have shared the contrasting appreciation of values.

### Industrial Blight

The loft district centered about Lafayette Street and Broadway, and running west to West Broadway, is a center for miscellaneous light industry and warehouses. Activities include the manufacture of men's hats and caps, artificial flowers, haberdashery, buttons and novelties; the processing of paper, wastes, rags and metal junk; storage of hardware and chemical supplies.

Most of the structures in the area are old and of obsolete size and design. A survey conducted by the Real Estate Board<sup>8</sup> provides data which shows that construction in this area came almost to a standstill after 1917. Four competitive loft districts are studied each year for the comparative vacancy rates in different parts of Lower Manhattan. Two of them are above 14th Street, including the large garment center, and are sufficiently similar in characteristics to be reported as one in this discussion. One other includes the loft district of Greenwich Village bounded by 14th Street, Fourth Avenue, Lafayette, Center

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<sup>8</sup>The Real Estate Board of New York, Inc., An analysis of competitive loft space in Manhattan, 1939-1947, annual reports.

and Canal Streets, and the Avenue of the Americas. The fourth loft district is south of Canal Street.

From 1919 to 1939 the uptown loft district built 65.7% of its buildings. The Greenwich Village district had built 84.7% of its buildings before 1917. This contrast is the result of the shift of the needle trades uptown to the north and the west, which by 1920 had been decisive. Compared to more than 66% of the loft buildings south of Canal Street which are at least 50 years old, the structures in Greenwich Village show more than 75% that age. Except for a spurt of construction in the mid-twenties, no significant building activity has occurred in storage or industrial space.

One criterion of obsolescence is the amount of floor space per unit. Newer structures have conformed to the trend of providing more space in single, large unpartitioned units. In the uptown district, a sampling of 491 buildings had a total of 58,664,901 square feet of space; the sample of 420 buildings in Greenwich Village totaled 21,715,624 square feet. This is an average of 120,000 square feet per building uptown, compared with an average of 51,700 square feet per building in the Village. The significance of these figures is still larger because of the sampling system used. Only buildings which have a minimum of 25,000 square feet of space, which have heat and elevator service, occupy generally a lot of 50' x 100'

or more, and are used by tenants engaged in manufacture were selected. Many of the buildings in the Greenwich Village section are smaller, occupying a standard 25' x 100' lot; and they often revert to use for storage only.

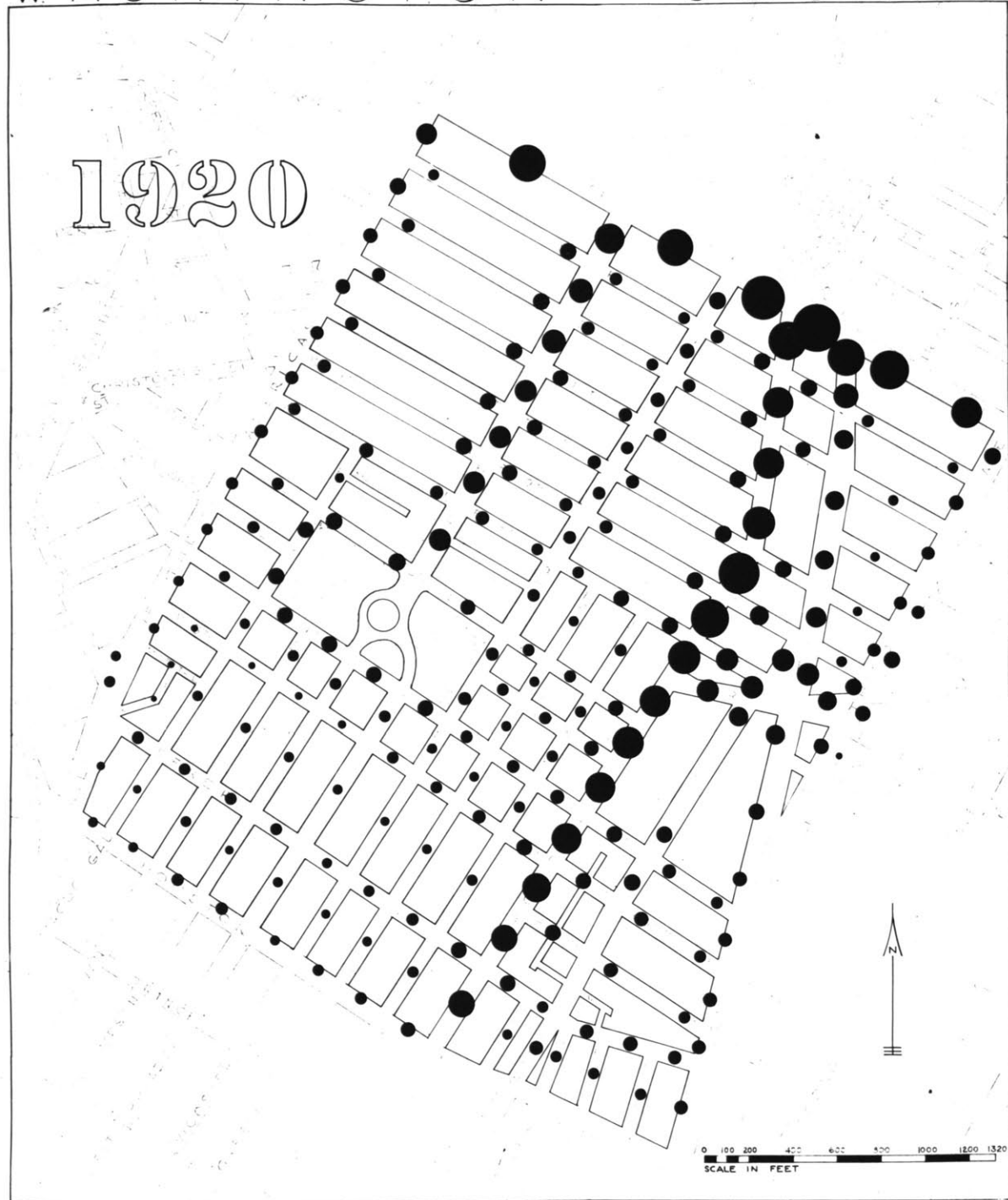
The relation of building value to land value seems to be very favorable. For all of Manhattans 7,418 loft buildings, land is assessed at \$507,446,650 and buildings at \$401,558,150.<sup>9</sup> The building value is 44.2% of the total assessment. In a six block sample, the older structures in the Greenwich Village district are 64.6% of the total valuation in 1947-48. Yet assessments declined over a 24 year period for these blocks an average of 37% and land alone declined 25% over a similar period. The answer to the apparently strong position of predominantly obsolete structures is probably held in the war-boomed demand for small manufacturing space--a demand beginning in 1940 and perhaps now starting to taper off. Temporary changes in value are expressed, under the assessment procedure, as changes in building value; land values reflecting long-term changes. A clearer picture of long-term stability and direction would be provided by the trend in land value.

Comparison maps show graphically what has happened to land values along Broadway and adjoining commercial streets

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<sup>9</sup>City of New York, Report of the Tax Department and the Tax Commission, Jul. 1, 1945 - Jun. 30, 1946, p.43.

# WASHINGTON SQUARE



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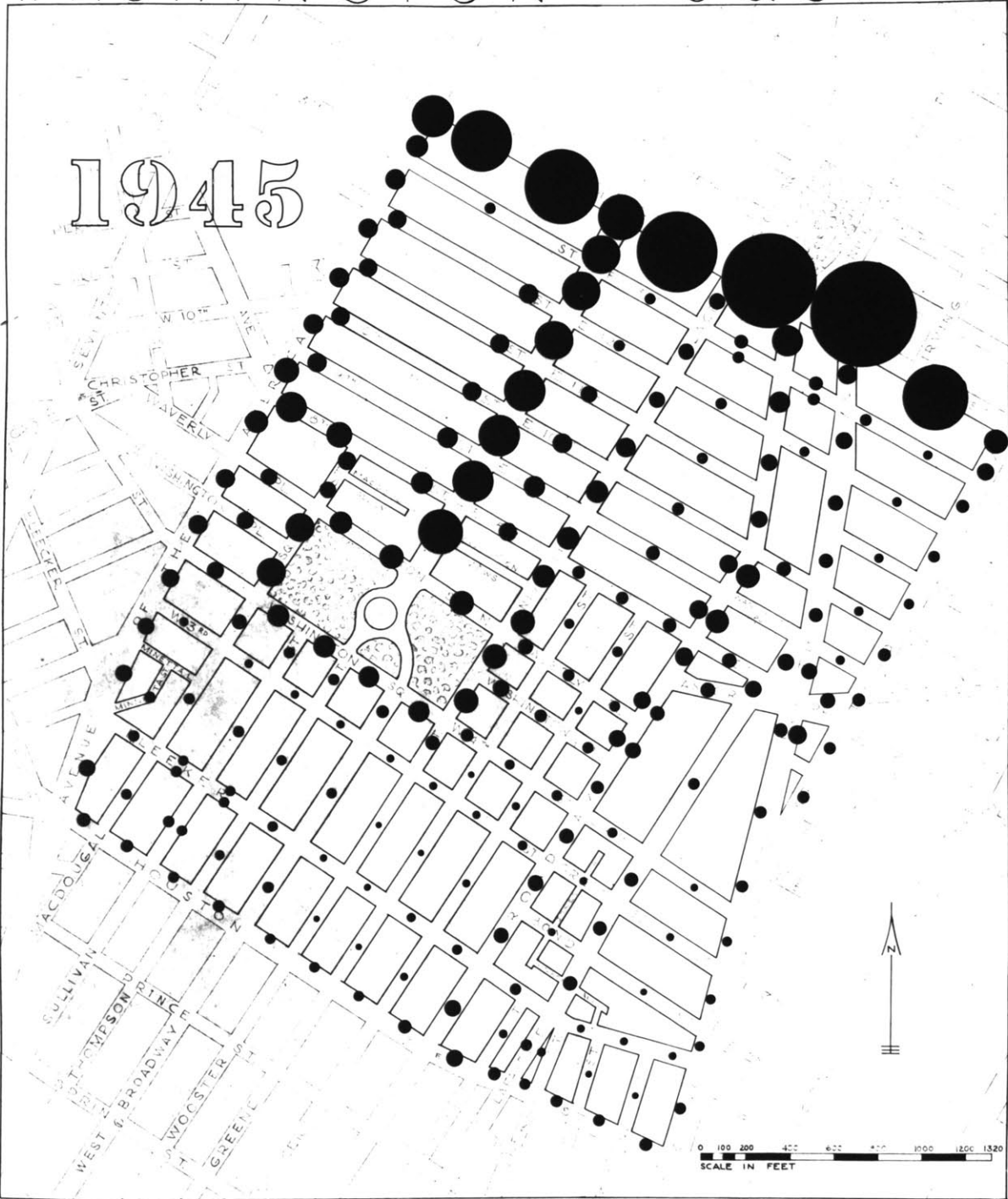
## LEGEND

● 1/8 INCH RADIUS =  
\$1000 PER FRONT FOOT

## LAND VALUES

COMPARISON MAP 1

# WASHINGTON SQUARE



## LEGEND

● 1/6 INCH RADIUS =  
\$1000 PER FRONT FOOT

## LAND VALUES

COMPARISON MAP 2

between 1920 and 1945. The "ridge" of high value has been transferred from Broadway to Fifth Avenue; from an industrial to a residential street.

The same picture is shown in the history of loft vacancies for this area. The survey of the New York Real Estate Board indicates that vacancies disappeared between 1940 and 1945. In 1946 no vacancies were reported in the sample studied. The 1947 figure, while not enough to base conclusions upon shows a return of vacancy at a rate faster than that of the competing districts. The rental range in this loft district still based upon a high demand for space, is 80¢ to \$1.00 per square foot, the same that loft space commands in the rising market for suburban space in Westchester County.

#### Summary of Part I

Each of elements described in Part I add up to a picture of a heterogeneous urban area: a crossroads where every current of life in the center of a metropolis has passed and left its residue. As a perceptive study by Caroline F. Ware has reported:

"Throughout the hundred years from the time when Greenwich Village was a boom town to the years covered by this study, none of the successive changes in the village was complete. Middle-class homeowners survived the tenement house invasion; industry did not wholly supplant residence; much of the tenement population stayed on when the process of reclamation was well under way, and factories continued to operate,

though the tenement section was remodeled for high-rent occupants. Many of the old Americans who gave the Ninth Ward its American reputation mingled with the German and Irish newcomers; the latter did not disappear when the Italians took possession; and the Italians, in turn, remained the largest element in the community when the Village and the apartment houses were filled with artists and Babbitts. It was these remnants of successive stages in the Village's history which gave to the district much of its confusion and its heterogeneity." 10

Greenwich Village, in short, is an old area where 180 blocks out <sup>of</sup> 194 have buildings averaging over 45 years old; an area where every land use has invaded and none has been totally displaced. Few vacant lots are available for new construction; almost all existing quarters are occupied.

Washington Square is a model of the epigram: "People who live around the same square do not necessarily travel in the same circle".

Clarence Perry's neighborhood principles which he publicized first in a monograph of the Regional Plan Survey of New York,<sup>1</sup> have been maintaining momentum as stimulants to city planning action and thought.<sup>2</sup> Some of the directions in which planning has been led by the neighborhood concept have recently been questioned, however, and controversy is growing about its place in planning theory and in planning technique. Chief of the criticisms provoked by the neighborhood theory in practise are that:

1) it promotes the establishment of large areas to be lived in by a limited class of families, areas that are homogeneous by income, or by race, or other criteria of stratification. In this country, such homogeneity has been promoted ~~in~~ for the sake of preserving economic values; in Europe, it has been made a policy for the sake of maintaining psychological security of the individual.<sup>3</sup>

2) The neighborhood theory has been used to advance programs of decentralization with insufficient study made of the need for, and the implications of, the decentral-

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<sup>1</sup>Clarence A. Perry, "The Neighborhood Unit, a Scheme of Arrangement for the Family-Life Community", The Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs, vol. 7, (New York, 1929)

<sup>2</sup>James Dahir, The Neighborhood Unit Plan, Its Spread and Acceptance, (Russell Sage Foundation, 1947)

<sup>3</sup>Reginald R. Isaacs, "The Neighborhood Theory", Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Spring, 1948

Charles Abrams, "Racial, Social Bias Blemishes Europe's City Planning Movement", article in the New York Post, July 12, 1948, p.30

ization of cities.<sup>4</sup> The commuting problem and the journey to work, the shifting needs of the family cycle, the distribution of housing vacancies, have been suggested as some of the aspects needing study.

3) it does not recognize the possible desirability of distinctively urban associational behavior. In repeatedly combining suggestions for the physical improvement of residential units with hopes for the encouragement of neighborly units, the neighborhood theory is trying to scuttle a potential urban ideal in favor of a weakening rural one.

It is important that these criticisms do not attack specific proposals that neighborhood unit plans suggest for improvement of physical design. No issue is taken with the suggestion that children walk safely to school or play without interference from traffic -- the school as a determinant of neighborhood population may, however, be questioned. The accessibility and convenience of shopping facilities is accepted as desirable -- but an attempt to weave neighborly relations into the use of common facilities may be looked at askance.

The issues between "pro-" and "anti-" neighborhood thinking resolve themselves into questions of socio-

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<sup>4</sup>Svend Riemer, "Escape into Decentralization?", Land Economics, February 1948, Vol. 24-1, p. 40.

psychological policy. In willingness, and even eagerness, to tie neighborhood unit plans in with hoped for social ends, planners have risked the advancement of environmental standards based on physiological requirements. It is very true that there are other needs than the purely physiological which require satisfaction. Yet, and with no intention sharply to split human needs into two divisions, it must be recognized that psychological standards are so far from being developed that the phrase sounds strange. Until we are on the way toward developing such standards, we must be careful not to preconceive them; and even more careful not to prejudice their eventual accomplishment by constructing physical environments which embody the preconceptions. We must allow for variation throughout the entire range within which it is still possible for a standard to fall. This is acknowledged as a reasonable procedure in all physical problems. It is equally reasonable a procedure for attacking social problems, although our great emotional investment in the latter makes it difficult to forget a fondness for some particular portion in the entire range of possibility.

A recent report called Planning the Neighborhood,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>American Public Health Association, Committee on the Hygiene Housing, Planning the Neighborhood, (Public Administration Service, Chicago, 1948.

makes "an attempt ...to bring into focus the basic health criteria which should guide the planning of residential neighborhood environment."<sup>6</sup> Agreeing that "the extent of the Neighborhood will be determined by the service area of an elementary school." the report recognizes that "In practice the size of the neighborhood may well depend on physical boundaries such as arterial ways or topographic barriers, which do not coincide with limits of the school district."<sup>7</sup> Essentially, this report organizes expert consensus on health, or physiological standards for neighborhood design. Its attitude on possible psychological standards is expressed in the following paragraph:

"While this concept of a neighborhood (physically self-contained in respect to most of the daily necessities of life, dependent on the larger community for its basic employment, transportation, and cultural facilities.) depends essentially on matters of physical arrangement, it has social implications in that it aims at promoting the conscious participation of residents in community activities. The argument is frequently advanced that the ideal neighborhood unit would be one where positive encouragement is given to the elimination of racial, occupational and economic segregation. For instance, a wide range of shelter costs within a neighborhood is often urged. The Committee is sympathetic to these views, but specific recommendations on this subject are beyond the scope of this report and the present competence of the Committee. Further research is needed to determine to what extent housing segregation or housing aggregation of differing population groups may create mental tensions or otherwise affect health."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid. p. v.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. p. 1.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. p. 1.

This part of the thesis will examine some of the social and physical characteristics of the Washington Sq. area, and measure them against neighborhood standards as suggested in Planning the Neighborhood. The general objective will be to determine the extent to which the standards for Washington Sq. must vary from those presented as "base lines for various types of planning calculations".

Many cautions are distributed through the text of Planning the Neighborhood, warning against too rigorous or universal an application of the standards. Concerning their applicability to the urban redevelopment problem, the report says:

"Emphasis is given...to developments in open or partially built up areas, for such sites are expected to be used for much of the housing required to fill the accumulated needs. As urban redevelopment usually involves demolition of existing structures and general replanning, the present standards should also be applicable to that type of program."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid. p. vi.

Population Size: Washington Square

Greenwich Village conforms to the history of Manhattan's older areas in having grown faster than the rest of Manhattan and, after 1910, having lost population more rapidly than the borough as a whole. Map No. ? charts the changes that occurred between censal years for the Washington Sq. area since 1905.

An estimate prepared in 1945 compares 31,045 families in Greenwich Village that year with 26,500 families in 1940. This means the increase of 17.1% for the period. A more recent estimate, based on Consolidated Edison Co.'s meter distribution for a district including all of the lower west side, shows 152,000 persons living in the district in 1948 compared with 131,786 persons in 1940.<sup>10</sup> This increase of 15.3% contrasts with 3.4% increase for all of Manhattan and 7.4% increase for all of New York during the last eight years.

Both demolition and construction of dwelling units in the Washington Sq. Area. have been negligible since the last census. An estimate of population growth in the seven census districts concerned can be made, therefore, from the number of vacant units which were avail-

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<sup>10</sup>Consolidated Edison Co. of New York, Industrial and Economic Development Dept.

able to 1940. The number of these units for each tract was multiplied by the 1940 average family size for that tract, to give the growth in persons.

Results, as charted on Map No. show an increase of 13.4%. If the Edison Co. figure of 15.3% is adjusted to exclude 608 families,-- the number added by the only large scale housing project constructed during the period: Elliot houses, in Chelsea-- the increase for the lower west side becomes 13.7%, quite comparable to the Washington Square estimate.

There are factors which diminish the accuracy of this estimate. Changing family size, doubling up of families, variations in the availability of 1940 vacancies, the small amount of demolitions, construction, and rehabilitation, are the most important. For present planning purposes, however, it is close enough; and figures from the 1950 census will be available in ample time to modify any longer-range plans.

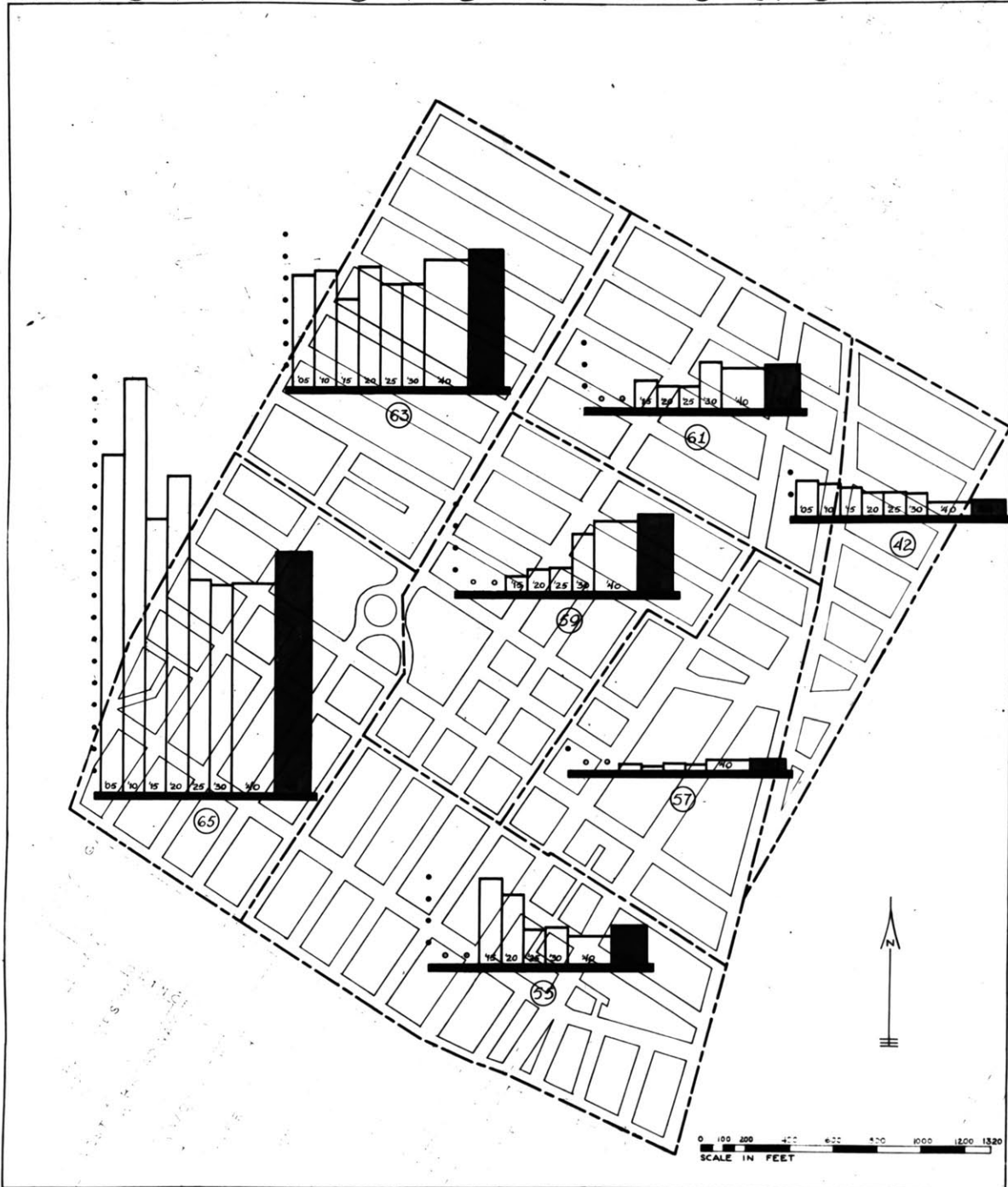
The pertinent current data is summarized in the table on the following page.

## POPULATION SIZE DATA: WASHINGTON SQ.

| Census Tract No. | Average Family Size<br>(No. of Persons) | 1948 Population |
|------------------|---|-----------------|
| 42               | 3.91                                    | 783             |
| 55               | 5.66                                    | 1,793           |
| 57               | 5.20                                    | 583             |
| 59               | 2.10                                    | 3,580           |
| 61               | 2.35                                    | 2,063           |
| 63               | 2.14                                    | 6,343           |
| 65               | 3.42                                    | <u>11,068</u>   |
|                  | Total Population                        | 26,213          |

Sources: Column 2 computed from 1940 census  
Column 3 computed as described in text

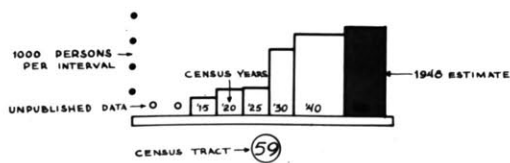
# WASHINGTON SQUARE



DEPT OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING M I T MASTER'S THESIS SUMMER 1948 ISRAEL STOLLMAN

## LEGEND

## POPULATION CHANGES



The salient characteristics of population size in the study area are 1) population size is comparatively stable under present conditions which include: a) high demand for dwelling and commercial space; b) all available space is in use. (The New York City Dept. of housing and Building reported 99.7% occupancy of residential units as of June 1945, for New York City. In 1940, occupancy was 92.1%) c) Plans have been filed for the erection of an apartment building on the only suitable and available site in the area, Ave. of the Americas between Waverly and Washington Places. This construction may provide for from 400 to 600 persons. Other vacant sites are few, are too small, and poorly located. Eviction of families from existing buildings to make way for denser development is now unlikely, particularly in view of a recent local controversy to be reported in Part III.

2) Average family size in 1940 varied from 2.10 persons per family in tract 59, to 5.66 persons per family in tract 55. With the exception of tract 57, a little-populated tract, small size of family is positively correlated with growth in numbers of persons. Tracts with higher size of family are those which have declined in population. This fact indicates:

a) change in the proportions of different classes of families. (Correlations of small-family size with differences of income, religion, occupation, degree of acculturation, education and choice of place of residence have not been studied or documented for this thesis, but the connections are assumed to be familiar.)

b) more dwellings units have been provided per 100 persons who migrated into the area than were vacated by 100 persons migrating out.

c) a continuing trend of rehabilitation or redevelopment, lifting the income level of the people rehoused and lowering the average family size, means a higher density in terms of families and a lower density in terms of children, given the same number of persons per acre. The implications of this trend will be commented upon later. The city-wide trend of smaller average family size -- it has decreased from 3.64 in 1940 to 3.56 persons per family in 1946 -- is exaggerated in the Washington Sq.

area, by the shift from classes of families which have been the last to lower their birth rate and family size to those classes which have been among the first.

#### Population Size -- Neighborhoods

This point cannot be over-emphasized, and FNB<sup>11</sup> takes every opportunity to declare it: all the several elements of neighborhood planning are so intimately meshed together that it is possible reasonably to discuss any one factor like density, community services, or neighborhood size, without discussing its relation to each of the other<sup>s</sup>. Any over-all standards for neighborhood units can only be derived when the standards for a given factor are overlaid on the standards for the other factors, and a common denominator range found for all. Mechanical transparencies can even be devised to accomplish this literally for specific sets of standards. As long as the numbers can be changed, slide-rule planning need be no more mechanical than the use of tables, and as much a greater convenience as the mathematical slide-rule.

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<sup>11</sup>Planning the Neighborhood, hereafter referred to as FNB.

If it is remembered, then, that standards quoted from the PNB have been developed from hypothetical neighborhood units where each factor has been influenced by and has influenced an adequate solution for each of the other factors, the cumulative comparison of Washington Sq. data with the suggested standards will be of significance.

The range of population suggested for neighborhood units by PNB is 4,000 to 5,000 persons. Assuming, temporarily, the rehousing of all the present population in the Washington Sq., its 26,213 persons could form about six such neighborhoods. PNB also footnotes, (p.p. 70) (ft. #8,) a British report which suggests the possibility of neighborhoods ranging from 5,000 to 10,000. This suggestion would give Washington Sq. as few as three neighborhoods.

The average family size assumed by PNB is 3.6 persons. Two tracts, 42 and 65, which are in opposite corners of the area have family sizes close to this figure: 3.91 and 3.42 respectively. Their respective populations are 783 and 11,068. Three contiguous areas have an average family size of 2.20 with a total population of 11,986. The remaining two tracts, also contiguous but with discontinuous population concentrations, have an average family size of 5.43, and 2,376 people.

These variations, of course, would call for considered modification of standards in order to accommodate them. Additional questions are raised by the problem of providing a full range of dwelling unit sizes. "The range of dwelling types for an entire neighborhood should provide for a normal cross section of the population."

A normal distribution for tract 65 families will not be the same as a normal distribution for tract 63. Distinctions in family sizes may influence, therefore, division of the population to be served by various types of neighborhoods. With the figures given above, there are the following alternatives:

- 1) providing 2 or 3 neighborhoods each, for the large fairly uniform blocs south and north of Washington Sq., and planning for the absorption of the scattered families in the three eastern tracts into neighborhoods in other areas, probably the contiguous ones to the south and east.

- 2) providing a full range of dwelling units for all the families involved without any attempt to group them as the families have now grouped themselves. This policy entails mixing families of various characteristics.

- 3) <sup>re</sup>moving from the area, those families which are surplus to neighborhood patterns.

Density. - Washington Sq.

The following table gives densities in persons per predominantly residential acre for each tract. A predominantly residential acre is one acre in an area of population concentration. It includes some acreage of residences which straggle beyond its borders into space predominantly devoted to some other use, such as industry.

## Population Densities-- Washington Sq.

| Census Tract<br>No. | Predominantly Residential<br>Acreage | Population per<br>P.R. acre |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 42                  | 2.5                                  | 313                         |
| 55                  | 3.2                                  | 560                         |
| 57                  | 2.8                                  | 204                         |
| 59                  | 15.2                                 | 236                         |
| 61                  | 7.4                                  | 279                         |
| 63                  | 32.2                                 | 197                         |
| 65                  | 30.6                                 | 362                         |

## Densities -- Neighborhoods

PNB recognizes that the application of density standards to congested urban centers is as needful as it is to more open areas. "There has been too much tendency to justify high densities because of excessive land costs. Sound density standards must take livability

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## LEGEND

## POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

-  EACH DOT = 5 DWELLING UNITS
-  EACH DOT = 25 DWELLING UNITS

and healthfulness as their points of departure."<sup>12</sup> But unfortunately, "It is recognized, of course, that high land costs may for some time to come force the use of tall apartments in the reconstruction of congested areas of urban centers."<sup>13</sup> PNB proposes, however, that dwelling types be diversified, nevertheless, and "at least some low walk-up apartments be provided."

Comparisons of actual densities with recommended standards is difficult. The PNB definition of neighborhood density is the most meaningful to use. The expression includes the relationship of community facilities and their land requirements to density. Existing densities can't, however, be expressed as accurately. Many of the community facilities used by families in a given area are situated outside the area and serve others. Nonresidential uses share residential land to an extent which has not been assigned a definite figure. This is true especially of the frequent occurrence of stores on the ground level which serve non-neighborhood functions. The net effect of these additional variables is probably to increase the true density. The figures of existing conditions, then, would be lower than actual.

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<sup>12</sup>PNB, p. 71

<sup>13</sup>PNB, p. 26

The highest density possible under the standards recommended in the table of PNB is 31 families per neighborhood acre. This is possible only with a design providing apartments uniformly 13 stories high, which is not recommended. ((p 66)) The calculations, upon which this density is based, assume the family size to be an average of 3.6 persons. Different figures of land area per family should be computed for neighborhoods with a different average family size; but the correlations of family size, income, and space used, tend to diminish, though not cancel, the significance of the difference. Smaller families with higher incomes do buy more space per person than larger families with smaller incomes. Density as determined for the average family of 3.6 persons has therefore been used with the different averages in Washington Square to calculate the maximum recommended persons per neighborhood acre.

Comparison of Neighborhood Density Standards

With Existing Densities

| Census Tract No. | density:<br>Existing | persons per acre<br>Recommended |
|------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 42               | 313                  | 121                             |
| 55               | 560                  | 175                             |
| 57               | 204                  | 161                             |
| 59               | 236                  | 65                              |
| 61               | 279                  | 73                              |
| 63               | 197                  | 66                              |
| 65               | 362                  | 106                             |

source: Recommended density of 31.2 families per neighborhood acre in a neighborhood of 5,000 persons, family size 3.6 persons (PNB, p.65)  
 Col. 2 from table on p. 50 herein,  
 Col. 3 computed from Col. 2 and table on page 43 herein

It is not suggested here that the authors of PNB would accept the "recommended" densities as derived above. The maximum number of persons per neighborhood acre obtainable from the tables in PNB is 112 (31 families x 3.6 persons per family). Above this figure, added space required for circulation, possible duplication of some community facilities, and considerations of family composition may flatten the curve of desirable densities. Density in terms of persons has some significance which is independent of density in terms of families.

The contrast indicated in the table on page remains of importance. The average existing density is 309.3 persons per predominantly residential acre; the average recommended density is 109.6 persons per neighborhood acre. At the latter density, 240 acres of Washington Sq. would be required compared to 93.9 acres occupied by families under

existing densities. The total acreage of the Washington Sq. area is approximately 269.

In PNB, the area for a maximum density neighborhood as derived from neighborhood density allowances is 44 acres.

If no area is added to the total now in residential use, there is, at most, space for 2 neighborhoods (less because present residential areas are not one unbroken tract of land, but form a number of segments). If enough additional area is converted to residential use, (about 150 acres more), to accommodate the total of present families, there will be room <sup>for</sup> 5 or 6 neighborhood units.

The alternatives are:

1) displacing existing non-residential uses from 150 acres, to be replaced by residences in neighborhood units.

2) displacing families which are in excess of the number desirable in 2 neighborhood units. On the basis of 5,000 person per neighborhood this would mean displacing more than 16,000 persons. Additional decisions would have to made concerning the nature of the resulting units: What portions of the existing population they would be designed to satisfy? or in what combination? (Other

factors, such as the relative economic stability of different areas, and suitability for rebuilding are omitted at this point.)

3) allowing higher densities to persist in the Washington Sq. area.

4) a combination of these three alternatives.

SCHOOLS: Physical Condition

None of the public schools which serve the residents of Washington Sq. are located in the area treated here. The elementary schools which are used by most of the children in the area are west of Sixth Ave.

Data on schools, school services, and school population are not complete because their collection was limited to a period during the summer, when offices were closed. Children in the southeast corner use a school on Mulberry St., south of the area; children in census tract 42 use schools in the district to the east ("St. Mark's area.")

Two elements in the history of this community are of significance in explaining the position of its public schools today. The decline of population during the twenties, was translated for the schools into an attendance drop of 42.5% between 1920 and 1930. As one result, "such impetus for expansion and innovation as came from the headquarters of the city school system was directed toward the schools of the outlying district where equipment and new techniques were tried out on the growing, in preference to the declining, schools." p. 321 Ware. The comparison between capacity of schools and actual attendance is shown on Table No. . During the School year 1944-45, 51% of the capacity of the elementary schools in the area was used.

Condition of School Buildings

| SCHOOL                                | P.S. #3<br>(J.H.S.) | P.S. #8   | P.S. #41  |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| year built                            | 1905-1916           | 1887-1905 | 1867-1908 |
| class of construction                 | A                   | A,C       | A,C       |
| capacity                              | 1,666               | 572       | 1,096     |
| attendance (May, 1948)                | 989                 | 277       | 459       |
| area of site (sq. ft.)                | 22,339              | 16,055    | 21,043    |
| area of building<br>(on ground level) | 21,978              | 8,606     | 14,225    |

source: Annual Financial and Statistical Report  
of the Board of Education of the City of New York  
for the fiscal year, 1944-45.

Attendance figures: from Board of Education,  
Statistical Division.

A second change in the Village, was the loss of some of its insularity with the extension of the north-south avenues, Sixth and Seventh. They formed new traffic barriers to the passage of children from home to school, made accessibility a function of distance and of being situated within the same north-south strip of blocks as the school.

It is not necessary to belabor the inadequacy of the school site for these schools. For the measurement of adequacy in the adoption of a master plan of schools, the City Planning Commission set these standards:

"50 square feet of usable outdoor open space per pupil as the minimum for elementary schools, 75 sq. ft. for junior high schools, and 100 ft. for high schools. Standards for vocational schools vary from 50 to 100 ft., making allowance for the nature of the school and its location. It should be pointed out that these factors fall considerably short of the standards considered adequate by such authorities as Drs. Strayer and Engelhardt of Teachers College, Columbia University, and other recognized specialists in this field. They are also considerably lower than the standards advocated by the Board of Education's Architectural Commission, according to its report of 1936!"<sup>14</sup>

27 Table # indicates the existing space per pupil, of largely unusable outdoor space around the buildings, as much less than the recommended low figures for usable space.

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<sup>14</sup>City Planning Commission, City of New York, Adoption of a Master Plan of Schools, p. 4.

One public school structure that is located in the Washington Sq. area. is the annex building of the Food Trades Vocational High School. Built in 1847, with some renovation in 1861, the building is of class C construction, and it fills its site. Its average attendance in 1944-45 used 345 places of its capacity of 635. The structure is not listed in the master plan of schools as one of the usable or salvable buildings, plans have been considering its replacement by a new Food Trades Vocational School on a different site. Budgetary considerations will probably delay this project for ten years. No connection with the district requires its continued location here. It serves essentially an out-of-the-neighborhood function.

SCHOOLS: social factors:

Assuming that the percentage of children within the age group 5-14 is the same now as it was in 1940, the table on the following page derives the number of children in the potential 1948 school population.

## Potential School Population, 1948

| Tract No. | 1940 Pop. | No. in age group 5-14 1940 | %    | No. in age group 1948 |
|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|------|-----------------------|
| 42        | 658       | 29                         | 4.40 | 34                    |
| 55        | 1300      | 147                        | 8.85 | 159                   |
| 57        | 525       | 29                         | 5.25 | 31                    |
| 59        | 3223      | 94                         | 2.92 | 105                   |
| 61        | 1915      | 30                         | 1.57 | 32                    |
| 63        | 5877      | 224                        | 3.82 | 242                   |
| 65        | 9608      | 917                        | 9.55 | <u>1056</u>           |
|           |           |                            |      | <u>1659</u>           |

Sources: Cols. 2 and 3, 1940 U. S. Census; col. 5 computed from col. 4 and population estimate in table .

Again, the wide variation among the tracts of this area is shown, and the extent to which this element of family composition contributes to the diversity of average family size.

Without the actual figures of distribution among the various school facilities of these children, information pieced together from other sources will indicate roughly what that distribution may be. For the first 8 grades, in 1920 and in 1930, the percentages were:

|                | 1920 | 1930 |
|----------------|------|------|
| Public schools | 66.0 | 62.6 |
| Parochial      | 32.5 | 33.1 |
| Private        | 1.5  | 4.3  |

Source: Ware, Table X, p. 467

In 1948,

|                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Public schools | 59%                |
| Parochial      | 41%                |
| Private        | data not obtained. |

No significance will be read into the apparent rise of parochial school enrollment. Part of the data entering the 1948 computation is too rough to be reliable. For this discussion, the only use made of distribution figures will <sup>be</sup> based upon the considerable enrollment in parochial schools, arbitrarily set at one-third the total school enrollment.

#### SCHOOLS -- Neighborhood

The standards in FNB are developed for a normal range of population characteristics. More, perhaps than for other standards, the report emphasises that they

"cannot substitute for accurate information from local school authorities as to the specific requirements for a proposed development. Public school requirements may be locally affected by parochial or private school facilities."

The data for children in the Washington Sq. area indicates that conditions here are considerably affected in just this way. Computing from the table on page 39, the total pupils available, for a 6 year elementary school and a 3 year junior high school, (based on a straight line distribution of the group 5 - 14 years old),

gives the following breakdown by census tract:

Elementary and Junior High School Pupils

|    | Elementary School | Junior High School |
|----|-------------------|--------------------|
| 42 | 20.4              | 10.2               |
| 55 | 95.4              | 47.7               |
| 57 | 18.6              | 9.3                |
| 59 | 63.0              | 31.5               |
| 61 | 19.2              | 9.6                |
| 63 | 145.2             | 72.6               |
| 65 | <u>633.6</u>      | <u>316.8</u>       |
|    | 995.4             | 497.7              |
|    | 996 pupils        | 498 pupils         |

PNB recommends a size standard for schools for the sake of administrative efficiency of 400 to 800 pupils. A minimum school may have as few as 180 pupils. On this basis only, there are enough pupils in Washington Sq. for 2 neighborhoods, in the elementary grades.

Assuming the normal proportion of 15 pupils per school year per 1000 population, the PNB recommendation of a 30 pupil classroom will require, for an average school with one classroom per semester-grade, a supporting population of 4,250. (p.45)

If the normal proportion of the yearly school population of 1.5% prevailed in Washington Square, the age group from 5-14 would include 15% of the total population. The actual percentages as shown in table are much lower,

varying from 1.57% to 9.55%. More than 55% of the total school population, however, lives in the census tract where it forms 9.55% of the total population for ten school years. In this tract we have ten pupils per thousand per school year; it would require a population of 6,425 to support an average school under these conditions.

By coincidence, the remaining population of this census tract (11,068 - 6,425), is enough to support one-third of the school population in a minimum school (1 classroom per grade); this is the approximate proportion which goes to a parochial school in tract 65. The total neighborhood will have 11,068 persons.

There are scattered throughout the rest of the Washington Sq. about 360 more elementary school pupils. In tracts, 59, 61, and 63, a large percentage of school children are sent to private schools, either in the vicinity, or in some other part of the city, or to boarding schools. In tract 55, the proportion of parochial school children may also be estimated at one-third. One public school established for the remaining pupils of Washington Sq. will for these reasons have too few pupils to be an efficient size. (In urban conditions, there should be no reason for using a minimum size school, and even such a one may be too large for the number of

children left to it.) The size neighborhood centered on this small school would be 15, 145 persons, assuming no displacement of present families. If the population were consolidated into a unified residential area, accessibility of the school would be affected as follows:  $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile walking distance, 126 acres of land, density of 120 persons per acre. This compares with a density of 39.6 persons per acre, given the same amount of land, and the same accessibility to the school, if the neighborhood is limited to 5,000 people who provide the normal 15 pupils per grade, per 1000 population.

**Summary:**

The large variations found in the Washington Sq. area in family composition, both variation of the local median from the norm, and variation about that median, make it necessary to depart from the base-line standards offered in FNB. If we assume that the school standards are to be honored more than others, (FNB itself shows that 8,250 persons are needed to support a standard elementary school containing 2 classrooms per grade; i.e., exceeding a presumed limit to unit size of 5,000.) then these neighborhoods must contain more people than the maximum recommended, and be denser than is necessary for populations

that conform to the assumed characteristics.

This effect is produced by the smaller number of children per family, and by the number of children who do not attend public school. It increases as the number of children in private and parochial schools increases, until it may be possible for a neighborhood unit to be built around a private school, with a consequent return to a small unit and an efficient school. This possibility raises further questions concerning homogeneity of neighborhoods which will be discussed later.

The problems of Greenwich Village have been reflected in its mixed schools. Ware characterised the public, parochial and private schools as being primarily concerned with, respectively, citizenship, salvation, and personality development. The mere existence of difference and separation among the groups has caused

"keen antagonisms between various school groups.... 'He's a private school sissy,' was a favorite taunt from public school children. 'Ahhhh, public school roughneck!' was a typical answering insult."<sup>15</sup>

The recent response to this problem was formation of an Interschools Community Affairs Committee to provide for combined play activities among the different groups of children.

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<sup>15</sup>Irma Simonton Black, article in the New York Star, July 3, 1948.

The adequacy of school sites has not been discussed in relation to neighborhood units. Densities in terms of FNB's neighborhood acre include provisions for standard play areas. Traffic circulation as it relates to the problem of this section will be discussed later.

### Shopping - Washington Square

Facilities for shopping in Washington Square are diffuse. The only streets which have no shops are the long blocks of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Streets, on either side of Fifth Avenue, and the frontages on Washington Square. Fifth Avenue has few stores south of 12th Street; there are higher-priced restaurants with fair-weather sidewalk service a la francais, a drug store ("chemist"), and hair dresser serving the well-to-do trade. Grocers, soda and magazine stores, tailors, and other service stores line University Place and Sixth Avenue to serve the area between them. As is common in the Greenwich Village area, local service shops are interspersed with businesses drawing a wider clientele.

South of the square, local service shops are distributed on many streets between West Broadway and Sixth Avenue. Some of the stores in this area are devoted to non-shopping activities: light manufacture, wholesaler's storage. Third Street is lined with restaurants, night clubs, and bar and grills.

Stores in the loft area which are not used for purposes similar to the activities of the floors above, provide space for the many eating places and candy stores which give service to the daytime population of workers. Broadway, answers to this description along the segment included in Washington Square.

The John Wanamaker Store, one of the blocks of which occupies the pioneer department store that was A.T. Stewart's, has resisted the movement of other large department stores to the midtown section. It has established a clientele which continues and will continue to use its facilities throughout the metropolitan area. This custom is based in a large part upon a tempo and style of doing business which contrasts with its flashier, dashing brothers uptown. Departments in Wanamakers have larger selections of merchandise displayed along wide circulation aisles. The sedate architecture and a sales approach which does not say, "Next!" combine to allow leisurely shopping. A special route of the Fifth Avenue Coach Co. detours to Wanamaker Place, carrying matrons from the 'East of Fifth' crowd in Midtown Manhattan to the department store's door. The green spot of Grace Church just north of Wanamaker's cooperates to make this strip between Broadway and Fourth Avenue less confused than the surrounding blocks. Macy's and Gimbel's display giant candles, run parades with huge balloons on Christmas or Easter; Wanamakers provides a choir to sing accompanied by an organ.

Union Square, also a city-wide shopping center, serves a mass trade in the low-income scale. S. Klein's, on the northeast corner of 14th Street and 4th Avenue, sets the key by running a low-price women's wear store, covering a

block front, in cafeteria style. Ohrbachs and Hearn's are the largest stores on the south side of 14th Street. Lining the frontage between them are specialty shops and five-and-dimes. East of Fourth Avenue an entertainment center and variety store street unrolls continuing to Second Avenue.

Third Avenue shops sell cheap men's wear, "army & navy" goods, hardware. Pawnbrokers are frequent. The Bowery is a center for dealers in restaurant and hotel equipment as well as the cheap flophouses which are more widely known. Eighth Street is diverse. It gives space to frame makers, antique dealers, two small movie houses, real estate dealers, curio shops, bookstores, and dress shops. These are broken by a storeless stretch in the vicinity of Fifth Avenue. The block next to Sixth is filled with restaurants and clubs catering to visitors.

Studies are not available to show the economic position of stores and their uses. One scrap of information obtained from a 1945 market analysis raises several implications and questions. Although the population grew 17.1% between 1940 and 1945 according to its estimate, a New York Times count of grocery stores in Greenwich Village show that the number of grocery stores in the area decreased 21.4% over the same period. This drop from 228 to 184 grocers may be a resultant of several factors:

- 1) change in the predominant form of merchandising in favor of the chain store and super-market.

2) change in the population composition which brought more families of a high income and small size, favoring the use of supermarkets over family stores.

3) squeezing out of marginal stores between war-time rationing and controls on one hand and the attraction of war-time industrial employment on the other.

Since store vacancy is low, we may wonder what type of activity replaced the grocers: particularly whether new tenants provided shops with local services or with out-neighborhood functions.

## Shopping - Neighborhoods

Three aspects of the problem of providing neighborhood shopping centers are pertinent to establishment of neighborhood units in Greenwich Village; with pertinent comments from PNB, they are:

1) types of services and facilities to be provided--

"Neighborhood shopping facilities are considered to include only those stores and service establishments which are used frequently by all families and which should be easily accessible to the home."

2) the existence of marginal stores--

"A sound economic approach in the choice of stores and services will avoid an oversupply of small marginal stores which tend toward frequent change of ownership and instability.

The neighborhood shopping center should contain only the types and number of stores which can be well supported by the population."

3) location of the shopping center--

"Location of shopping and other community facilities close together is generally desirable. Under normal conditions all shopping facilities in the neighborhood should be combined in one location, for the convenience of the shopper."

Because of its location and history of mixed land use, special difficulties lie in the way of achieving a shopping center in this area of the nature suggested. A large portion of the existing stores are given over to functions which do not serve the neighborhood and which draw their

trade from the whole city and from visitors to the city. The used book center is traditionally tied to Fourth Avenue. Previous attempts to move it to other locations, in order to get room for expansion where rents are lower, have failed. Continued use of space on Fourth Avenue has become a business requirement to the bookseller. The night clubs and restaurants depend upon city-wide patrons and tourists. Part of the attraction of the district to these patrons is its atmosphere and its embalmed bohemian reputation. Here is one of the metropolitan institutions which has an interest in the maintenance of decrepit glories.

Marginal stores may be one of three types:

- 1) In the usual economic sense, stores dependent upon the last fraction of purchasing power for its commodities. It fails when purchasing power declines, or its customers turn too often to the larger, better equipped, better located stores. Limiting the establishment of this type would benefit all parties.
- 2) Stores offering a service or goods for which the market is very small. These are usually highly specialized shops which must tap a large population center and be located where there is a large traffic volume. If they are successful, they leave the category

of economic marginality and become an accepted type of store with a calculable population base that is needed to support one.

3) A store duplicating the services of existing stores in a given locality. This may be done as a result of mistaken judgment of the potential purchasing power of the neighborhood, as often happens when there is enough business to keep one place very busy but not enough to be profitable for two. Or it may be a deliberate attempt to displace an existing facility which appears to have a vulnerable hold on its trade.

Because of its central location, and the heterogeneous cross-section of the population which lives or visits in its vicinity, Greenwich Village is attractive to the latter types of stores. Planning of shopping centers which intends leaving the field for such experimenting restricted to central shopping centers, would eventually wipe them out. Demand for space and rentals would be too high for experimental, marginal stores. In planned neighborhood or district shopping centers, such attempts would be frozen out by having space measured strictly to conform to known buying power for listed commodities. Space allotted for possible expansion would require large capital investment for construction arguing for conservative choice of business activity.

The alternatives for Washington Square are:

- 1) Making larger shopping centers than required for the neighborhood units alone, in order to accommodate shops which serve a narrow market and experimental shops.
- 2) Limiting the latter types of stores to a district shopping center, larger than the district shopping center based on needs of a small number of neighborhoods.
- 3) Establishing separate centers for these stores as well as for stores which serve non-neighborhood functions:

A note should be added here concerning an obvious factor in the determination of purchasing power. In an area as heterogeneous as Washington Square, space for specific functions in a shopping center must provide for buying power which is split up not only by types of goods and by income levels, but also by group tastes. Grocers catering to special cuisines, for example, must be related to a population base of their clientele. <sup>In</sup> A recent article relating shopping centers to urban redevelopment, the principle of locating neighborhood shopping centers at the corners of units, or on their edges was questioned in favor of a location central to the neighborhood.<sup>16</sup> In urban areas, it

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<sup>16</sup>Robert M. Lillibridge, "Shopping Center in Urban Redevelopment", Land Economics, May 1948, pp. 152-153.

was argued, automobile use is too small to make the advantage, of stopping on the way home to shop, a real one. This view is reinforced by the quotation above from PNB, advocating the combination of shopping with other community facilities. In general, a central location is best for such a group.

Arguments remaining in favor of the edge location are:

- 1) elimination of interior delivery traffic;
- 2) greater variety and flexibility in planning the shopping center because of its possible use by more than one neighborhood unit
- 3) stations on transit lines may serve the same function as entrances for automobiles in providing a location where shopping may be done on the way home.

### Traffic and Transportation - Washington Square

The web of transit and transportation facilities which enmeshes downtown Manhattan is thick across Greenwich Village. The New York Central freight line runs through industrial buildings over an elevated road a block from the river, ending in the Spring St. terminal. South of it, is the entrance to the Holland Tunnel, at Canal Street. The waterfront north to 14th St. has 15 piers, a ferry slip for the line from Christopher St. to Hoboken, and a 5-pier meat market.

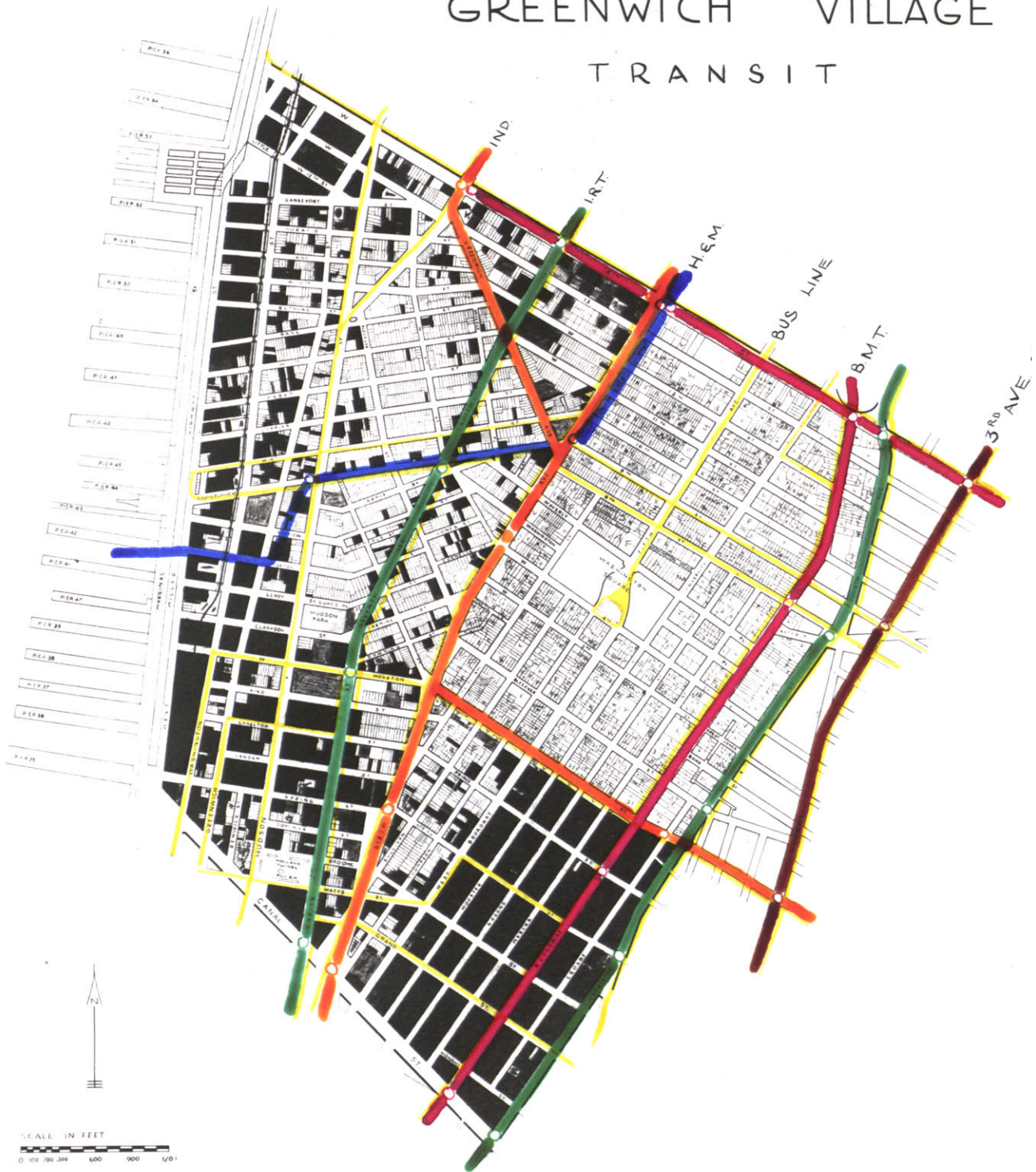
Of the total traffic coming off the Manhattan, Brooklyn and Williamsburg bridges, 13% is destined for Greenwich Village. Traffic generated by industrial uses on the west and east sides of the area crosses the residential zones between. With sections designated as congested areas north of 14th St. and south of Canal St., Greenwich Village between them, is not far behind in getting its major streets clogged.<sup>17</sup>

All subway trunk lines traverse this district, plus the Third Ave. "el" and the 14th St. crosstown subway: a total of 7 lines. The Hudson and Manhattan tubes

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<sup>17</sup>Gilmore and Clarke, Report to the Port Authority of New York on Congested Areas in New York City, 1945.

# GREENWICH VILLAGE TRANSIT



entering from New Jersey at Morton St., makes an 8th. Each north and south avenue carries a bus line, and four more run on crosstown streets.

Thick transit and traffic arteries run north and south along the area's eastern edge. Double-decker Fifth Avenue busses make their terminal in Washington Sq. Park where they turn around to head uptown. Sight-seeing busses carry the wide-eyed into Washington Sq. So. from Broadway, then down Macdougall St. and on to Chinatown.

Seventh Ave. was connected into Varick St. with the building of the IRT subway, and Sixth Ave. extended later during the early twenties. Together, they removed the insularity of the village. Families removed from their homes to make way for the improvements, broke a large segment away from the local community life. With these wide streams of traffic introduced, the community was cut into the same pattern of elongated north-south areas as is most of Manhattan.

The number of people who enter the Washington Sq. area during the day is very large. Hourly figures were supplied by the Board of Transportation giving the number of fares collected during a two-hour period in the morning rush hour and a two-hour period during the evening on a typical,



recent week-day.<sup>18</sup> They indicate the turnover in day-time population. The results are not exact because of the necessity of splitting fares arbitrarily between areas on either side of a station.

Between 7 and 9 in the morning, about 11,000 persons left the area by subway and elevated. This figure may be taken to represent residents leaving the area for their occupations. By the same calculation, about 26,700 persons went home from a job or from one of the schools in Washington Sq. between the hours of 5 and 7 in the evening. More people work, or attend a school, in Washington Sq., than live there.

#### Traffic and Transportation -- Neighborhoods

The policy of keeping through traffic out of neighborhood units, of leading vehicles into smaller streets as they enter smaller residential units, and of putting heavy traffic lanes between neighborhood units, is familiar.

Concerning the effect on neighboring of the local traffic network, Ware comments:

"The physical basis for the neighborhood was restricted to very small areas by the presence of wide traffic lanes.

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<sup>18</sup>New York City Board of Transportation, Statistical Division, -- data presented is for March 24, 1948, a Wednesday.

"When the children east of Sixth Ave. had to cross two major arteries to reach their school, it seemed to their parents that the distance to which they were required to go, even when it was only 6 short blocks, was excessive. Once such traffic barriers had been introduced, the qualifications for getting about and across them were the same as for going greater distances, and the advantages of physical proximity were lost. The local music school pointed out that it was easier for some uptown children to come to their lessons than for many of the neighborhood children a few blocks away. If they could get into the subway near their homes, they had no traffic artery to cross when they got out and only had one avenue to cross to get back into the uptown subway entrance."<sup>19</sup>

The New York City "Master Plan" of express highways, parkways and major streets indicates every north-south avenue as a major street to be continued in use. Other studies of traffic conditions in Manhattan, show that part of any traffic solution would include more effective carriage of traffic north and south.

Washington Sq., west of Broadway, is cut by only one north-south artery, Fifth Ave-West Broadway. This portion of the Village, is, in that respect, better adapted for a neighborhood treatment of its traffic. If one crosstown street is permitted between Houston and 14th Sts., four areas of approximately 50 gross acres each will be left for 4 neighborhood units. Two crosstown streets will leave 6 areas for neighborhood

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<sup>19</sup>Ware, op. cit., p. 82

units, of approximately 33.5 acres each, a size which will provide for 5,600 persons at 112 persons per acre. Three crosstown streets, will cut the area into 8 pieces of 25 acres each; as neighborhood units, that would mean 5,000 persons at a density of 200 persons per acre or 2,800 persons at 112 to the acre. There are now 10 crosstown streets through the Washington Sq. area. Reducing their number would require a combination of three measures:

- 1) reduction of total traffic, the path of which lies across this section of town;
- 2) provision of more efficient highways for through traffic;
- 3) construction of residential service streets for the retained or rebuilt residence units.

## Community Composition

The adjustments which have been discussed, in attempting to fit standards based on normal neighborhood statistics to a central urban district, spring from variations in the make-up of the local population. One variable standard was analysed at a time, while other factors were considered fixed. Although they were at times grotesque, the results may draw more sharply whatever implications standards have for the area considered. This section will make explicit some elements of community composition which remained in the background of the preceding discussion.

### Village Center:

The Village Center is a triad. Three distinct points have the atmosphere, characteristics and uses of the center of a community. Each is situated on one of the chief avenues which cut through the Village: Fifth, Sixth and Seventh. Washington Sq. is a center for park recreation, and periodical outdoor art exhibits. The Village Sq., at Sixth Ave., 8th St., and Greenwich St., is a shopping center and one of the points of entry to the Independent Subway lines. Sheridan Sq. is a station on the west side IRT, and a restaurant-night club center.

These three centers, however, are far from sharing the institutions of the Village among them. Schools, churches, settlement houses, theatres, museums, and libraries are scattered as widely as the shopping facilities.

This lack of centrality among community facilities is symbolic of an equal lack in true community consciousness. In an excellent chapter detailing the manifold processes by which one-time Village relations assumed their modern urban character, Dr. Ware describes the "break-up of the old neighborhood".

"It has long been the presumption that living nearby makes people into 'neighbors' -- that it molds them to a common pattern or brings them together and gives them, in spite of personal differences, a common point of view as members of the same 'neighborhood'. The neighborhood has, in fact, been very dear to the heart of the sociologist as being, with the family, the primary face-to-face group which is 'fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual.' It has held an important place in the American culture pattern largely because of the assumption of American democracy that community of interest is identical with common residence, and that interest groups and social classes do not exist.

"Where a community has been subjected, as Greenwich Village has, to physical disintegration and to the juxtaposition of diverse elements, the effectiveness of the neighborhood as a functioning unit is put to the acid test. The evidence of this community indicates that where such forms of urbanism as can here be seen are at their height, the neighborhood very largely ceases to be a basis for social intercourse and a formative influence on the lives of its residents. Only selectively did 'neighbors' in Greenwich Village know each other, identify themselves with the 'neighborhood', and engage in common

activity, either informally or formally. The social code enforced by the public opinion of the neighborhood group was effective only upon the element which led its life in the street."<sup>20</sup>

That the idea of neighborhood should persist in Greenwich Village is largely the result of artificial promotion. "Formal organization of the community on a neighborhood basis was sponsored from one of three sources, social workers, real estate agents, or persons seeking to exploit the Village." When such interested groups got together into a civic association to better the community, they "immediately encountered the old problem of whether real estate values or social conditions were to be 'bettered'-- whether children's play should be made safe or streets made quiet."

Consciousness of community became a veneer pasted on by interest groups in hope of particularistic betterments and not general community improvement. Even the altruistic sentiment of the social workers at Greenwich House was a clinging to the relation once enjoyed between the House and its 'neighbors'. Its founding had been based upon the idea of drawing part of its leadership from among the people served.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Ware, *op. cit.*, p. 81

<sup>21</sup>Simkhovitch, Mary K., *Neighborhood: My Story of Greenwich House*, (Norton, New York, 1938).

By 1930, the House was playing a smaller role in the lives of local participants, and drawing from the whole city for members of its specialized activity groups.

The Villager, the successful local newspaper which has been publishing since the early '30's, has its destiny tied to the preservation of a complex of interests involving the higher-rental residents, the real estate groups, and local business patronized by non-local customers. Expressed in the symbols of neighborhood spirit and the 'Village atmosphere', its notices and articles maintain a consciousness of 'charming back gardens' and a factitious 'small town atmosphere.' In the course of an account of Greenwich Village history, the newspaper has typified its approach:

"The rental secret in Greenwich Village and the Washington Square area lies in offering the public something different -- not as good 'as they have uptown' but something different and something better, apartments with personality."<sup>22</sup>

Recently, the Villager expanded its news coverage to serve the residents of a new neighborhood on the other side of town, with a page headed: "Stuyvesant Town - Peter Cooper Village".

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<sup>22</sup>The Villager, April 10, 1947, p. 3

Census Tract 65:

The diversity of people and places in Greenwich Village was a keynote of Part I. Extreme heterogeneity resulted from the succession of different groups of people, the dynamics of commercial and industrial land use in Manhattan, and the backflow of higher-income families into remodeled old houses and new apartments.

One measure of this result is the range of income in the area. Although 40% of the families in Greenwich Village were estimated to spend less than \$1,800 a year in 1940, the average family expenditure was \$2,942; families spending more than \$10,000 a year were 2.52% of the total.<sup>23</sup>

In Washington Square, 34 blocks had average 1940 rentals below \$40; 22 blocks had average rentals above \$60; in the middle range, only 8 blocks showed average rentals between \$40 and \$60. West of Sixth Ave., more dwellings rented in the middle range.

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<sup>23</sup>News Syndicate Co., Inc., The New York Times Co., Daily Mirror, Inc. Hearst Consolidated Pub., Inc., New York City Market Analysis, 1943

## Average Monthly Rentals

|             | Washington Square    | West of Sixth Ave. | Total |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------|
|             | ( number of blocks ) |                    |       |
| below \$40  | 34                   | 18                 | 52    |
| \$40 - \$60 | 8                    | 20                 | 28    |
| above \$60  | 22                   | 8                  | 30    |

Source: 1940 Census

Important differences may be erased by averaging data for whole census tracts. Tract no. 65 is examined in greater detail in this section to show a breakdown of its characteristics. Ten of its sixteen blocks are included in blighted area M-10. With 11,068 persons, it is the most populous tract.

Ethnically, tract 65 is comparatively homogeneous, with 86.5 of its 1,475 foreign-born, white heads of families of Italian origin. Total families with foreign-born heads, however, account for about one-half of the population, and one-third of the dwelling units.<sup>24</sup> The average family size of 3.42 which was computed earlier is, therefore, an average between one group of families which, by itself, has a family size over 4 persons per family, and another with less than 3 persons.

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<sup>24</sup>1940 Census

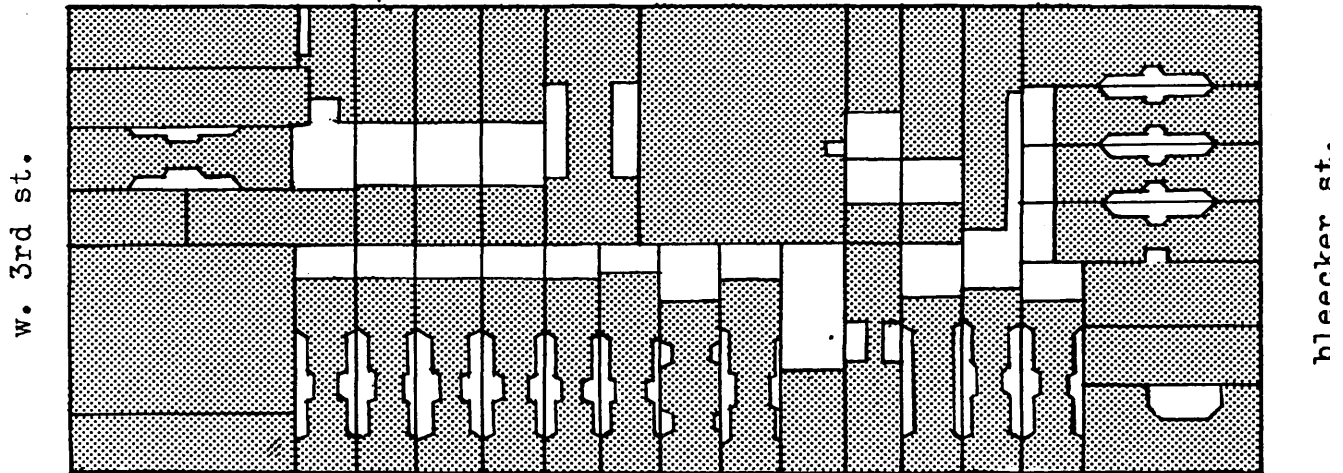
One of the blocks in this tract has 128 dwelling units, out of a total 130, that were built before 1899, but an average rental of \$65.16. This block has small houses of the pre-tenement era which make neat uniform facades down both long frontages. In 1921, an association was formed to buy all the houses and create a garden block. The Sullivan-Maccougal Gardens Association rehabilitated the buildings, threw the back lots together into a common garden and play yard, and drew up a contract for the continued maintenance of the common garden.

A number of such associations were formed where the physical layout of old, shallow structures, facing each other across the rear lots, made a common garden possible. The discussion, in Ware, of the organization in one of these small communities, quite possibly the Sullivan-Macdougal, makes clear the attitude of the cooperators toward 'neighborly' neighborhoods.

"The contract for the members of this community was framed by the original group of purchasers with a view to encouraging a community where parents could have the freedom and variety typical of urban life and where their children would have the advantages generally found only in the suburbs--space in the home, space outdoors for unsupervised play, and free relations with other children. Its provisions related only to such points as necessitated joint action -- requiring every house-owner to contribute his yard to the common garden, to pay maintenance fees for the garden, and refrain from building additions which would reduce its size, and to share in the expense of a central heating plant. Some of the houses were owned by their occupants, some rented on long

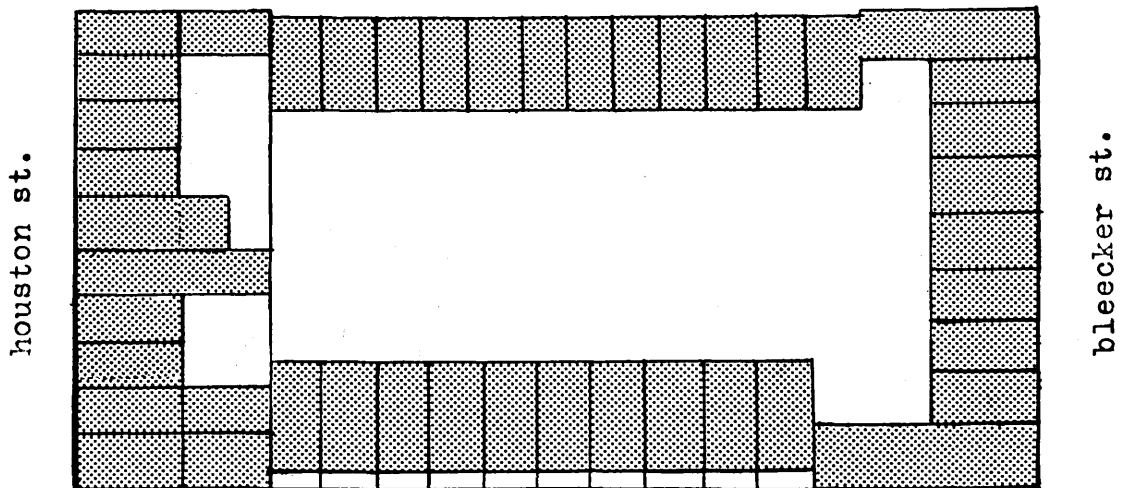
COMPARISON OF INTERIOR OPEN SPACE

TYPICAL BLOCK  
sullivan st.



macdougall st.

SULLIVAN-MACDOUGAL GARDENS BLOCK  
sullivan st.



macdougall st.

leases, and the rest turned into apartments.

"The group which came to live in these houses was homogeneous in taste and social attitude and ready to cooperate in the necessary business arrangements. They were cultivated, interested in their families, appreciative of freedom and space for their children, and in agreement on educational matters. They provided their own nursery school for their pre-school children and sent those of school age to the same local progressive schools. They administered the garden through a committee.

"But with all their common interests, common tastes, and practical cooperation, they resisted the tendency for their community to become a 'neighborhood'..... Their only interest in group living was the fact that it facilitated the solution of problems faced by families with children in an urban situation. By conscious effort, they kept the group free from the practise of neighboring. .... Except for cooperation on all problems that demanded joint action, the members of the group led the same sort of social life that they would have led if they had not lived in a garden community."<sup>25</sup>

The relation of this block to the surrounding community also is formed by the effort to control the urban environment so that its disadvantages are eliminated or mitigated without destroying freedom of association. Some of its residents have participated in the work of the local Children's Aid Society, which provides a play area, meeting and game rooms. Leaders of the society, in turn, have assisted the garden block to fight a suggestion which threatened to demolish it two years ago. A new public school under consideration for the children east of Sixth Ave., was proposed for the Sullivan-Macdougal

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<sup>25</sup>Ware, op. cit., pp. 103-104

block in 1946. The plan was reconsidered. (Beyond this level of interaction on questions involving local physical facilities, there is less prospect of neighborhood relations between this group and the surrounding people of different income and cultural groups than there is among themselves. There are, in fact, many ways in which social organization in the tenements is more highly developed than among those who live in apartments.)

Another discrete group is added to the local population by the situation of the Mills Hotel on Bleecker St. between Sullivan and Thompson Sts. It is one of a chain of well-known hotels for men, the maintenance and management of which puts it above the flophouse class. By providing cheap space in its accommodations for 1,542 lodgers, it attracts a group of unattached men which in no way adds to the amenity of the district. They give local mothers worry, increase the intensity of use of Washington Square Park and add to the number of panhandlers, most of whom spill into the district from the nearby Bowery. The present practise followed by the police, of periodically clearing them from the Bowery streets, has the effect only of distributing them among the contiguous residential areas.

Non-neighborhood Uses:

Neighborhood unit planning calls for integration of all land uses within its boundaries into the plan of development and control. This means isolation of any nuisance uses; location of non-neighborhood functions in places where traffic to and from will not interfere with local residential traffic; and planning existing community facilities into common centers with new facilities when possible.

Washington Square presents large obstacles to plans for introducing neighborhoods for local neighbors. In addition to the large increase in daytime population brought by incoming workers, the area is a center for a number of other activities which add to the temporary population and the traffic.

These uses are:

1) shopping: books, restaurants and night clubs, sightseeing, curio and craft shops, and antique stores;

2) schools: New York University, Cooper Union, and the New School for Social Research; private progressive schools in Greenwich Village are the Little Red Schoolhouse, the City and Country School, and the Bank St. Schools.

3) churches: Seven churches about Washington Square draw participants from a wider area than the immediate neighborhood.

4) theatres: experimental and small-company theatres are the Provincetown, Greenwich Mews, New Stages, On-Stage, and, in Commerce St., the Cherry Lane.

5) art center: the Whitney Museum; semi-annual outdoor exhibits in Washington Square.

Summary of Part II

Once more it may be underlined that standards are only guide lines by which to judge the relative adequacy of things we make. PNB begins and ends by giving such notice.

"The present volume should be considered not as a manual of design but rather as a formulation of those principles and standards which the technician will use in combinations to be determined by him in the course of his design solutions."<sup>26</sup>

"Local conditions and practical limitations will require different solutions in each case, and the recommendations given here can be used only as a guide."<sup>27</sup>

The purpose of reviewing their application to a built-up, and seemingly unusual section of a large city is not to approve or discard them. It is an attempt to discover which of them are most vulnerable to modification by stubborn, local facts; and to guess at what point a modification in degree becomes a modification in kind.

It is significant that it hasn't been found necessary to comment upon the discussion in PNB's chapter II, concerning the development of land and the provision of utilities and services. Knowledge of health needs in these fields have been made precise enough, and the

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<sup>26</sup>PNB, p.v.  
<sup>27</sup>PNB, p. 72

techniques of providing for them are sufficiently developed to be able to meet them by drawing up checklists. New work in this field proceeds to develop greater economy, refine techniques, and keep up with new discoveries. A more important distinction, perhaps, is that it's the larger city which has managed to provide such services and utilities in fullest measure.

Most of the questions have come up in discussing health needs which conflict with, or seem to conflict with the present organization of large cities. The standards most often attacked by the facts of existing city structure were those of density, neighborhood size, land use separation, and traffic reorganization. The decision to modify, or not to modify, a standard is equivalent to the decision not to give up, or to give up, some existing characteristic of urban life.

In Washington Square, achievement of the standards means considering the following consequences:

- 1) displacement and resettlement of a good portion of the present population; or retention of high density development;

- 2) enlargement of neighborhood sizes beyond the range recommended, in order to accommodate an efficient school where the population provides too few public school

children; or making the school an uneconomical and less efficient size;

3) provision of a new center to contain functions which serve out-of-the-neighborhood functions; or removal of population to a new location where the neighborhood will not be affected by "out-functions"

4) expansion of residential use at the expense of central industrial and commercial use; or the elimination of residential use.

5) removing the need for a good part of the present traffic flow through the area; or removing residential use from the area.

6) elimination of non-standard stores from the area.

Adequate standards can be applied and these questions can be satisfactorily answered by a solution which introduces complete decentralization of larger cities and complete separation of functional areas. This solution raises some further complex issues:

1) whether the desirability of decentralization can be deduced from considerations of health and amenity alone;

2) whether the obstacles to urban redevelopment can be outflanked by fighting to carry the countryside into the city;

3) whether people want to be reshuffled into homogeneous communities. This issue is so stated because a chosen portion of the urban population will be larger than any recommended neighborhood size if the two other conditions are met that a) a mixed neighborhood be established; b) a population base large enough to support the various types of schools, shops, churches and other facilities be obtained.

This last issue is one which is becoming the focus of controversy concerning neighborhood units. By embracing all the elements which are now in the front lines of planning -- neighborhoods, urban redevelopment, decentralization, and the establishment of standards-- it may be one of the points of integration for a planning philosophy.

In no way exhausting the implications of homogeneity and heterogeneity, a list of the advantages which are claimed for each is suggestive of the psychological needs which inspire them.

For homogeneity, it may be claimed that:

1) It is conducive to that sense of security which comes from understanding the operation of the social environment and knowing how to manipulate its machinery.

2) It avoids the tensions which are produced by

attempts to emulate the behavior or adopt the values of a stranger group.

3) A homogeneous unit can adjust itself to the special needs of the group and cater to its individual taste and cultural demands.

4) The use of a common social language encourages participation in community action and self-government.

5) Maximum membership is given to probable friendship and probable marriage groups.

For heterogeneity:

1) Enforced segregation by race or class, and the ensuing attenuation of personality and community development, is prevented.

2) Maximum social experience is provided for children.

3) Physical expression of mobility in income level, the family cycle, and other changes of status, is possible within a single community.

4) Balanced land use can distribute the load of supporting city service, to produce self-sustaining communities. Large areas containing blight or subsidized activities on the one hand, or "tax colonies" on the other, will be avoided.

5) The innumerable mixtures of physical facilities that become possible can produce a richer, more stimulating

milieu.

6) Association is on a voluntary basis, friendships may be based upon a wider selection.

7) Minority shadings of political opinion can be better represented.

It is almost obvious that these lists paraphrase the social "pros" and "cons" of the small town versus the big city. This is important. It means that the implication of neighborly neighborhoods for big cities is their conversion into small-town clusters. The case for this conversion is built on evidence of failure in the physical structure of large cities; it is built on evidence of economic failure, and on evidence of neglect for health in housing. While the small town may be taken as a model that would give cities a more healthful environment, aspiring to emulate its social organization as well goes far beyond the evidence. Urban dwellers may well be fed up with the physical shape of their surroundings; this does not constitute a readiness to give up the urban social climate.

The proposal advanced by some contributors to neighborhood thinking, that heterogeneous units be planned, is a response to the shortcomings of neighborhood theory as applied to the large city. Although neighborhood units would eliminate some urban characteristics which have

become desirable, one characteristic, which we must value as undesirable, tends to become frozen into the new physical patterns. That characteristic is segregation. Whether heterogeneity can be consciously produced, or be successful if produced, cannot be concluded from the techniques suggested. Multiplying the variety of housing types by price range and family composition will allow mixture. But that very mixture would require additional variety in the community facilities that are to be provided. This requirement fights against the idea of a neighborhood as a unified development of limited size and centralized facilities.

One more trait of the area studied suggests the need of departure from a neighborhood norm. Greenwich Village and Washington Square are a home to many activities which have their place in large cities. These have been mentioned as non-neighborhood functions; in small number they may be dealt with by incorporating them into the community center or on a traffic edge. Residential areas which are close to the heart of a metropolitan area, however, become a center for small-scale activities which serve many people. To this extent, an in-town area does not completely belong to its residents. Requirements of traffic access and space ~~to~~ allotted to outside users, diminish the practicability of a traffic scheme that

progressively discourages use by the unfamiliar.

Conclusions:

The standards provided by the neighborhood unit must be adapted to the special needs of residential areas in urban centers. Modifications that can be specifically recommended are:

1) Omission of neighborhood unit size standards. The size of an urban neighborhood can be determined from the other factors of school service area, density and site design, shopping facilities. As illustrated in the Washington Square area, these factors can operate to produce a wide range of size both in population and in area. These variations should not be questioned in the name of producing neighborliness. One planner, for example, has suggested giving up maximum school efficiency:

"Many educators favor large schools catering to as many as 1500 or 2000 families. It is questionable how much of a quality of neighborliness is left in a residential unit of so large a population. It would seem better, if need be, to sacrifice ultimate efficiency in the use of the school plant to keep the neighborhood unit down to not more than 1000 families."<sup>28</sup>

Two things are being sacrificed here: school efficiency

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<sup>28</sup>Tracy B. Augur, "Objectives of Neighborhood Planning", The Architectural Forum, April 1944, vol. 80-4, p. 80.

and urban social patterns.

2) Heavy traffic through residential areas should be prevented not by making local roads discouraging, but by making major streets the shortcuts: the path which through traffic prefers.

3) Shopping centers may be broken up into knots which are distributed throughout the neighborhood, the smallest containing the basic food shops and drug store. In apartment developments, there need be no conflict between two or three shops on the ground level and the general neighborhood amenity. There are advantages to concentrating major shopping facilities at transit stations. There also advantages to the retention of minor facilities that on the housewife's local paths.

4) Community facilities should be located with reference to a service area which often cuts across neighborhood lines. A community center would be smaller than is often envisaged, with an emphasis on provisions for children and young people. The scattering of churches, private schools, museums and the like is better encouraged than tolerated.

5) Least modification is necessary of density standards. Though formulated in mathematically exact terms, they are accompanied by the most generous cautions

concerning their probable modification under local conditions of population composition and of site design.

If these cautions are followed, density standards can have an almost universal application as ~~a~~ rough guides to the adequacy of space.

6) Social neighborhoods should be entirely volitional. They should be free to occupy any part of a physical neighborhood, to occupy several of them, or to be independent of physical neighborhood. The urban community should be based on city service and administration areas.

PART III

PLANNING ACTION

## Existing Plans

The discussions of Part II have proceeded under the assumption that a mechanism is ready to operate upon Washington Square and alter it into whatever pattern is determined to be the most suitable. Urban redevelopment, however, is still more an idea than a tool. In focusing that idea on the economic problem and on the legal problem, redevelopment studies have tended to remain separate from thinking done on new community patterns. This is unfortunate. New neighborhoods have taken the small-town as an index and the suburb as a laboratory. Redevelopment schemes have abstracted some of the features of neighborhood unit schemes, like large-scale replanning and building, unit development, remodeled street patterns; and they have often discarded others, like density control, varied dwelling types, provision of community facilities. Neighborhood patterns, on the other hand, have been superimposed over built-up sections without discriminating among existing facilities. The result has been to foster suspicion of any change.

The problem of neighborhoods and the problem of redevelopment have at least one decision to make in common: what part of the present pattern to discard and replace, what part to keep. That decision should not be made academically, but only with full participation by every

interest.

Corequisite with the effort to attain any local objectives must be the endeavor to get reforms in civic administration and stronger tools of planning. These tools and reforms include:

- 1) master planning, regional and local;
- 2) revision of municipal tax systems;
- 3) control over the length of building life;
- 4) metropolitan-wide government or administration.

Washington Square has not been without planning activity. Two reports based on intensive study of the area have been published. Report "A": Greenwich Village Community Study, sponsored by the Mayor's Committee on City Planning, 1937. Report "B": Planning Recommendations for the Washington Square Area, sponsored by the Washington Square Association, 1946. There are, in addition, two unpublished studies: "C": prepared about 10 years ago, and "D": which is now in progress.

These reports are in general agreement concerning analysis of the land use problem and the recommendation of changes (partly, perhaps, the result of "interlocking directorship" of the studies). They agree that:

- 1) The districts south of Washington Square are

suitable for redevelopment.

2) North of the square, measures should be taken to protect present uses of high-rental housing.

3) The rest of Greenwich Village should be provided with a method of rehabilitation.

4) A large part of the obsolete loft district should be converted to housing.

Item four should be regarded as the key to replanning in Washington Square. This change in land use will make it possible to move some of the present residents within the area in the process of redevelopment. It will improve the environment of residential structures that are to remain, and it will encourage individual builders to enter the district with new residences.

Report "B" suggests a land use pattern, traffic improvements and possible methods by which landowners in the vicinity of Washington Square can cooperate to effectuate the plans. Chief of these methods are:

1) pooling of owners' equities into large blocs of land which can be planned as units; this method would be especially effective in Washington Square because of many large holdings by single estates.

2) creation of new public parks, the cost of which would be absorbed by distributing their land values among surrounding blocks. The increased desirability of

the new park frontages should provide the inducement necessary to private investors to redevelop the blocks involved.

There are disadvantages inherent in these methods. Method one is focused on the need for preserving existing values. Reliance on it for success in general replanning, is lodged in the initiative of those who control the large plottages. Their influence, it is hoped, can be extended if they form the 51% of property owners in a potential redevelopment area who may, under the Urban Redevelopment Laws of New York State, acquire the right to exercise the power of eminent domain. These large land-holders are generally in the position of fiduciaries, however, and they adhere to the conservatism of investment which is generally associated with those who hold in trust. The interests which they represent, are, moreover, particular ones in regard to local land uses, and may not qualify them to act as trustees for the general interest as well. The two largest of these plottages are owned by the Sailors Snug Harbor and by New York University. The former includes a bloc of land stretching from Fifth Avenue to Fourth Avenue and including both of the blocks occupied by the John Wanamaker Store. The income from these properties supports a haven for retired seamen, on Staten Island.

Method two has a double aim: redevelopment of the blighted area and the creation of new values in that area.

Incidental to these purposes is the greater protection that would be provided for existing high-value uses. The proposal, again, is to recoup the cost of creating more open-space, from the increment in the value of surrounding land which is caused by the improvement. It is an application of the "benefit assessment" principle calculated to produce new parks at no cost to the city and with no loss of taxable values. Report "B" supplies figures for sample blocks to show what this process would mean. One block, whose value is a typical because of the presence of buildings belonging to utilities, is here omitted:

| <u>Block</u> | <u>Present Value</u> | <u>Added Value</u> | <u>Total Value Suggested</u> |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
|              | <u>per</u>           | <u>square</u>      | <u>foot</u>                  |
| 500          | \$ 8.47              | \$1.07             | \$ 9.54                      |
| 515          | 10.37                | 2.65               | 13.02                        |
| 513          | 8.21                 | 2.65               | 10.86                        |

These increases in value range from 12.6% to 32.2% of the previous values.

This process would make the new uses of redeveloped land pay for the greater amount of open-space and parks provided. If the new uses are residential as proposed, it means high-rent residential. We have seen what happened

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur G. Holden, op. cit., p. 55.

on land costing less than ~~\$5.00~~<sup>8.00</sup> per square foot in Stuyvesant Town. The high density of 373 persons per residential acre, despite subsidy, despite the gift of streets, despite omission of community facilities, and despite private use of public powers, is being justified by producing rooms at \$17 a month. If redevelopment is tied in with a mechanism that raises the price of \$10 land to more than \$13, the major consequences are:

- 1) continual displacement of low-rent and low-middle rent families to compete for a supply of cheap space which is constantly shrinking;
- 2) no provision of new open-space or park areas in low-rent urban districts;
- 3) limiting the extent of urban redevelopment to the market for high-rent space; redevelopment stops when that market is satisfied.

Study "D", which is unpublished and still in progress, has begun by redesigning the street system to the south and west of Washington Square. The pattern it proposes is composed of superblocks made by joining two or three existing blocks. This is accompanied by widening of the remaining streets and by extension of some crosstown streets, gridiron fashion, through the area west of Sixth

Avenue. These superblocks are to be marked for redevelopment: those west of Sixth Avenue at some time far in the future. Details such as the location of schools and shopping centers and the proposed densities, are not yet developed. As for the method of redevelopment, and policies to be followed on costs and on the relocation of families or other displaced uses, the procedures already established by the urban redevelopment laws of New York, plus possible public housing units in the area, are assumed. Given the land costs in the blighted area south of the square, a redevelopment of the Stuyvesant Town type would theoretically produce a density of 750 persons per residential acre, at rents from 2 to 3 times the present rents.

In eight recent public housing projects in Manhattan, the average land cost was \$6.32 per sq. ft.; the average density, 407 persons per net residential acre. In those blocks of Washington Square where total redevelopment is desirable, the average cost of land is \$11.71 per sq.

Given this combination of land costs, a built-up area, and the variety of goals to be satisfied, the problem of Washington Square resolves itself into determining what action will achieve rebuilding.

### The Expansion Program of New York University

The history of a recent controversy involving two blocks on Washington Square South illustrates the operation of local group interests on land use.

New York University has been on Washington Square since its founding in 1830. In spite of its newer center on University Heights in the Bronx, the constantly growing enrollment has cramped the University and promoted plans for its eventual expansion. Some of its expansion has been accommodated in converted loft buildings in the vicinity of the college center.

These additions to the space used by the University have not been sufficient or permanent solutions, and ways have been sought to obtain more land on which some of its component schools could be settled. Its Law School, for example, had an enrollment last year of 461 students, half the total of post-graduate law students in the country, housed in a crowded main building. Officers of the University planned to acquire property in the vicinity, suitable for a building program. The block facing the southwest corner of Washington Square, between Sullivan and Macdougall Street, was well located and on park frontage. It had in addition the advantage of belonging to a single owner, Columbia University, which held it as an investment.

The acquisition process thereby simplified, New York University started to negotiate for the block and began a drive to raise money for erecting a new Law Center on it. Although the specific location of the proposed center was not announced, residents of the block deduced it from auxiliary facts that were issued and began a campaign to fight off the loss of their homes. In order to widen the support of their campaign, they formed the Save Washington Square Committee, and appealed for help to preserve the residential atmosphere of that section. The major participants were people occupying quarters facing the park and facing the interior garden. The Macdougall Street side is largely rooming houses with cabaret below. On 3rd Street cold water flats and rooms. The Committee received small support from other groups. During the process, NYU confirmed that location of the planned Law Center.

Meanwhile, the attention of local people became focused on activity two blocks to the east, on the frontage between Thompson Street and West Broadway. This block had been assembled in 1920 by James Speyer as a proposed site for the Museum of the City of New York, now on upper Fifth Avenue. The Thompson Street corner had been vacant for some years, and supplied additional space to the semi-

annual art exhibit. In 1944, a building contractor bought the block for \$325,000 and proposed to erect an apartment building on it 12 to 15 stories tall. His project, also, ran into opposition. The residents on this block organized to fight eviction, but met greater response in their appeal for support from the neighborhood.

Four of the buildings on the Washington Square side were associated with persons who had achieved literary or artistic fame. The one-time residence of Theodore Dreiser, Eugene O'Neill, O. Henry, Adelina Patti, and Will Irwin in them was the basis for calling the buildings "Genius Row". These sentimental associations were sufficient to spark a campaign for the preservation of the structures. Opponents of the apartment house plan reminded the public that tall apartments would add a large additional load to the already overburdened park; and that any tall structure on the south side of the square would create long shadows over the open-space. The Save Washington Square Committee joined the fight to gain strength behind its own program for preserving the character of the Square; after this, however, they had often to point out that two blocks were involved in the controversy.

In January of this year, the builder won his evictions in court on a decision which stressed the multiplication of housing units to be brought by the apartments replacing the present structures. But on March 6th, the Committee for the Washington Square Living Art Center was formed. This Committee proposed to raise an asking price of \$750,000 with which to buy the block; its purposes: "to save 'Genius Row', to provide a center where artists and writers could both work and have living accommodations within their means, and to preserve the historic, cultural, and architectural character of Washington Square." The builder granted an option to the Committee for this purpose, but its last extension ran out in June finding the Committee unsuccessful in acquiring donations sufficient to make the purchase.

Three weeks after the expiration of the option, it was announced that NYU would buy the block, the builder finally cancelling his plans to erect an apartment house. This block would be the site of a new Science building.

On September 3rd, plans were filed for the Law Center building, which will be four stories on the square and six stories tall behind, of Georgian Colonial design.

This history has been spelled out in detail in order to emphasize the interaction of different interests on an issue of land use and to illustrate the grounds on which

they are fought out. The points made for each interest involved were:

New York University:

1. Low buildings of four stories will be erected, cutting out no sunlight, and designed to fit in with the character of the square.
2. Expansion of the University of cultural benefit to the city. By expanding into these blocks, the institution will forever safeguard the south frontage from more intensive uses.
3. The NYU program will facilitate redevelopment of the whole district.

Apartment house building:

1. Sentimental values are not enough reason for the maintenance of worn-out structures.

2. Only a tall apartment can take full advantage of and make full return on the value of the land.
3. More needed housing units will be provided.

Residents on site:

1. Provision of a "reasonable" length of time in which to move is not an adequate relocation procedure in times of shortage.

Neighborhood groups:

1. The residential character of the square should be preserved by keeping out university uses or intensive development by apartments.
2. The traditions of the neighborhood should be preserved in its structures.
3. By surrounding the square, NYU would gradually usurp the entire park as a campus supported by public funds, further decreasing the little recreational space now available.

Interests seeking to maintain values in the Washington Square area favor the NYU plans, as does the controlling interest in the city's administration, affecting construction policy.

The center of the problem as it is illustrated here is not maintenance of values, but the creation of space: space for residence, space for university expansion, for recreation, and for community functions (the art center). This need for space, and the uses to which the space must be put, argues for deflation of values and consequent decrease of taxable values.

Planning Action Proposals:

Decentralized city planning: A report issued by the Citizen's Union of New York has favored subdividing each borough into communities.<sup>2</sup> Each community would replace the overlapping districts which are now used by various city services with uniform districts among which administrative functions could be decentralized. Uniform boundaries for police, fire, health, schools, and welfare administration would simplify gathering information, coordination of work, and establishment of closer contact with the people served.<sup>3</sup> Greenwich Village should be one such community.

The boundaries of Greenwich Village community should be as delineated in this study with the exception of the southern boundary. Changes in land use planning should anticipate removal of residences south of Houston St. and west of Lafayette Street. This area should be combined with the business and industrial sections south of Canal St., to be planned as a group of organized industrial districts. Houston St. would become the

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<sup>2</sup>Citizen's Union Committee on City Planning, "The Citizen's Union Program for Community Planning", The Searchlight, vol. 37, no. 1, July, 1947 (Publication of the Citizen's Union)

<sup>3</sup>Neva R. Deardorff, "Uniform Neighborhood Boundaries", The Architectural Forum, vol. 80-4, April 1944, p. 125.

boundary of Greenwich Village community. As long as residential uses remain in the industrial area, however, short-term planning problems and current administrative work of the section containing them should be dealt with by Greenwich Village.

One function which should be added to the other community administrative functions is an official, local planning office. This office would maintain all planning data and material pertinent to the community, be the headquarters for all local research and surveys, and provide copies of finished maps and reports to the central city planning office. The staff would be flexible in size, varying from one full-time technician to a complete team when engaged on survey or on drafting of plans. The relation of the local to the central staff should not be autonomous; it should have the position of a field office.

Community organization: A community Common Council should be set up in a non-political framework. Representation on the council to be by delegates from all associations, institutions, clubs, and neighborhood groups in the community. All existing associations would be charter electors, and new associations invited to apply for the right to send delegates as they are formed.

The board of officers of the council should meet

regularly, and function as the council executive; the board should also function as a local planning board, with a relation to the local planning staff similar to that obtaining between board and staff in the central planning office.

The several inter-group organizations which now exist in the Village may become the nuclei of the new set-up. One of these groups is the Lower West Side Council for Social Planning. The Interschools Community Affairs Committee may become a functional committee of the new organization. Other functional committees should be set up to deal with each aspect of community life. These would include the committees on housing, on recreation, and on real estate; on traffic and transit, on local shopping, and on business and non-local shopping; on health and welfare, on settlement house use, on churches, and on university-community relations.

Problems to be worked out carefully in promoting this method of organizing the community include:

- 1) origin of the initiative to organize;
- 2) the council's relation to official government;
- 3) creation of rapport with the stronger, better-organized interests in the community: the political clubs for example;

4) creating a mechanism that will prevent over-representation of particular interests.

Committee on location: One of the cross-committees should be the committee on location; its function: to study the locational needs of families and businesses in the community, and to advise and assist in re-location. It may serve as a clearing house for vacancies within the community and cooperate with similar committees in other communities. The aim of the committee would be to help re-locate businesses and families which are to be displaced in the process of changing land uses. Many people and businesses are located where their margin of preference for the site is no larger than a combination of inertia and the inability to discover more suitable quarters. By cutting away this margin, the location committee would help to stabilize the users of this and other areas.

The nature of this function makes it probable that a paid staff would do the work during periods of maximum usefulness, as in redevelopment. In other periods, work would be at a minimum, partly because of the difficulties involved in tampering with the occupancy ratios of existing facilities. Except in the redevelopment situation, the committee's activity will not often be concerned with

individual cases.

One of the problems created by present relocation policies in redevelopment areas is the dispersion of displaced uses. At the Governor Al Smith housing project in New York City, for example, many of the stores which were forced to move from the site, moved into quarters which are situated in the next logical redevelopment area. The investment in remodeling these new quarters, plus the other monetary and energy losses entailed in the removal of a business, will make the path of further redevelopment more difficult. Organized relocation policies may avert this tendency.

A sub-committee of the committee on location should deal with zoning.

Physical planning: The general land use plan suggested in the Holden report,<sup>4</sup> plus studies now being made of the possible design to be used in redevelopment south of Washington Square, can be adopted as a tentative master plan of land use. Modifications of these plans should consider the following elements:

- 1) Providing rental levels similar to those now

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<sup>4</sup>Arthur C. Holden, op. cit., pp. 20, 26

prevailing;

2) Location of a public school south of the Square;  
3) Building of major traffic arteries along Houston St. and along Lafayette St.;

4) Limiting light industry in Washington Square to a strip on both sides of Lafayette St., along which through-traffic might be carried on an elevated highway;

The north-south avenues may be made one-way streets, except for the circumferential road around Manhattan, and some of the central avenues, perhaps Fourth, Fifth and Broadway. This possibility should be worked into the local plan. A permanent design is needed for traffic distribution at Astor Place. This may consider a traffic circle into which Fourth and Third Aves., Lafayette and one crosstown street can interchange traffic.

Short-term plans should consider the continued existence of facilities as at present, and provide for more healthful and more efficient use of them without prolonging their life to the detriment of long-range plans.

A satellite town: The community council and the local planning staff should consider the establishment of a Greenwich Village-sponsored satellite town. This community may cooperate with others to provide the backing

and the population base of a new town to be planned on a fresh site, perhaps in New Jersey. The possible advantages that may be derived by relating an in-town community to a new town are:

1) Financial merger of the building operations in the two communities. Increment in land values of the new development can offset the deflation in values upon which redevelopment in the in-town area is contingent.

2) Provision of accommodations into which a good part of the population of local blighted areas can be decanted while rebuilding is in progress.

3) Establishment of complementary areas to provide for shifts of family environment in response to the family cycle. An orderly and definite mechanism for adopting suitable living facilities is created, without giving up permanently the respective advantages of city or of country. Within this framework, it may even be possible for group relations to be maintained among those families whose requirements change at about the same time, and who remain neighbors in either environment.

4) A vivid connection is established between the twin needs of contemporary large cities: redevelopment of the centers, new development at the edge.

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