

TOWARDS A METHODOLOGY FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION  
IN DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

by

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I.

Towards a Methodology for Community Participation  
in Development and Design

by  
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Submitted to the Department of Architecture  
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Master of Science in Real Estate Development and  
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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses community participation in the development process. It focuses at the scale of individual development/redevelopment projects within established communities, exploring issues of professional roles, skills, and attitudes, and discussing opportunities and techniques for engaging the participation of a community in all phases of a development project. Heavy emphasis is given the conceptual design phase as the vital area of development decision-making from the point of view of an existing community's involvement in change and growth within its own neighborhood. A design methodology is presented that attempts to bridge the "knowledge gap" between non-designers (community groups and often developers) and design professionals by making explicit the relationships between building types and their primary qualities in order that non-designers (community and developer) can replace designers as primary decision-makers in schematic/conceptual design. The work concludes that many latent opportunities exist for community involvement in the development process, and that such participation need not expose the developer to undue risk, but may in fact offer certain reward. The risks and rewards of community participation are most likely to be accepted by not-for-profit, community-based development organizations, but may well become accepted in other areas of development as environmental awareness and activism in our communities grows.

Thesis Supervisor: N. John Habraken  
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II.

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Table of Contents

Introduction to the Participation Issue . . . . . 1

Chapter One: The Southwest Corridor Experience . . . . . 8

Chapter Two: Players, Decisions, and Responsibility . . . 32

The Participation of Existing Residents . . . . . 34

A Developer's Responsibility . . . . . 50

Future Users in Development Decision-Making . . . . 55

The Design Professional's Responsibility . . . . . 57

Chapter Three: Roles and Skills for  
a Participatory Process . . . . . 60

Developer: The Leading Role . . . . . 60

Planners and Architects: Dual Roles . . . . . 66

Chapter Four: Opportunities for Participation . . . . . 71

Part One: Pre-Design Opportunities . . . . . 72

Part Two: Opportunities in the Design Phase . . . . 81

Part Three: Realization of the Plan . . . . . 88

Chapter Five: A Participatory Design Methodology . . . . . 98

The Ordering System . . . . . 105

Procedures: Using the Ordering System . . . . . 116

Using the Methodology in the SWC Process . . . . . 120

Conclusion . . . . . 125

Selected Bibliography . . . . . 130

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PARTICIPATION ISSUE

Community participation is a phrase we've all heard a great deal, particularly those of us educated since the 1960's, when planning and architecture schools took up the banner of citizen involvement in the making of their environment. We, as planning and design professionals, were taught that civic and/or personal involvement in the making of environments ensured a greater sense of ownership, pride, and responsibility with respect to one's daily surroundings. A great deal of thought and research went primarily into two areas of public involvement in the development process - that of community-wide planning and policy making, and that of "user" participation in the design of housing and individual homes.

The former of these two areas of community participation, dealing with mid-to-long range community-wide planning, has been developed primarily by planners like <sup>1</sup>Susskind and <sup>2</sup>Rosenbaum. Their work proposed various techniques for community organization, citizen-sensitive planning strategies, and methodologies for making policy decisions and master plans that in some way incorporated some degree of public opinion or sentiment. Little of this work approached the scale of individual development projects, particularly small or medium-scale developments, though some of it was instigated by particular projects.

Some amount of careful and thoughtful work has also been

accomplished at the level of user participation in the design of facilities, be they residential, commercial, or institutional. Many individuals and academic institutions contributed to this body of research and writing, among them Sanoff, Howell, Armillas, and Habraken<sup>3</sup>. For the most part, user participation methodologies begin with the premise that the future user or occupant is identified at the beginning of the design process. Understandably, one of the greatest problems in the field is that a great deal of housing production is done speculatively, without the opportunity of knowing in any specific way who is to inhabit the space, what their individual preferences are, or how they want to live. The best of these user-participation methodologies allowed for post-occupancy reorganization of space, mainly accomplished with non-load-bearing partitions, full height furniture, etc. In this country particularly, little speculative housing has been built that reflects these attitudes, for a number of reasons (not the least of which are rigid and archaic building code restrictions and a myopic banking industry.)

This work aside, one notes a big gap in the middle of the spectrum of participation methodology (that which at the largest scale addresses regional master planning and at the smallest scale accomodates the preferences of home buyers and renters). In my mind, that gap exists mainly at the level of the individual development, and becomes particularly apparent in the struggle of existing community to obtain some degree of

control over developments in their neighborhood. Time and time again the subject of dealing with abutters and existing community in the development process arises.

Until just recently, developers have regarded the community as non-existent, unless certain funding requirements or permitting processes (like the requirement of Environmental Impact Reports) forced them to engage in discussions with abutters or "submit" to community review. The history of adversarial relationships is long and painful, particularly from the point of view of the consumer, who has suffered the most. Professor Bernard Freidan, in his book The Environmental Protection Hustle recounts how the adversarial nature of citizen group-developer relations has driven housing prices sky-high in most urban parts of California, and has kept them there for over a decade.

Though most developers grudgingly admit that the result of citizen participation, even when forced upon them, has been positive, they for the most part demonstrate little interest in grappling with the problem head-on with positive programs to understand and accomodate the needs and demands of existing community residents. The "state of the art" of community relations in development is embarrassingly primitive, as was evident at the 1984 Urban Land Institute Conference session entitled "Successful Strategies and Tactics for Obtaining Project Approval."<sup>4</sup> There, "highly successful" developers from around the country recounted "horror stories" of dealing

with an unreasonable and malicious public. None of the developers presenting at this, the most august, meeting of the development industry had positive participation of the existing community built into their development strategy at the onset. It was an appalling indictment of an industry that presumes to be professional.

It cannot be said, however, that the development industry alone is to blame for this poor state of affairs. The planning and design professions must share in the blame for this adversarial situation, for they are the professional/technical instrument through which developers must act. Exclusionary attitudes and practices on the part of planners and architects have contributed to the alienation of the public, largely because professional education and training has failed, for the most part, to equip design professionals with the skills and attitudes necessary to utilize ordinary people in making design decisions. How often do planners and architects assert their own values into the decision-making process when those of others more directly affected by design decisions should rightfully prevail? Is the jealous hoarding of every design decision by planners and architects inevitable in this age of complex programs and requirements, especially with professional responsibility highlighted in today's litigious environment?

What can be done to improve the contentious situation between developers, their professional consultants, and

existing communities? The following work discusses issues of community participation in the development process toward developing the thesis that involving a community in the development process in substantial and positive ways is an effective means of overcoming the prevalent and growing public suspicion and resentment of inevitable and necessary change in our existing urban and suburban environments. It discusses responsibility, skill, and professional attitudes related to the notion of a participatory development process, and further explores opportunities for engaging community participation in the process of development within existing communities, with an emphasis on the conceptual design phase.

As my interest in this particular issue is in part due to a personal involvement in a development situation of this sort, I have used that experience as a vehicle for discussion and, at times, a model for method or technique for engaging community participation at various stages in the development process.

Chapter One is a narrative description of the Southwest Corridor Housing Development planning process as I have experienced it to date. Major questions and points to be explored are raised within the narrative, in much the same way as I encountered them in my actual experience as a relatively inexperienced "development design consultant."

Chapter Two explores the issue of the allocation of decision-making responsibility amongst the actors in a

participatory development process. That lays the foundation for a discussion of professional roles, attitudes, and skills related to participatory development in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four looks at of opportunities for community involvement in every stage of the development process, from initial market investigation to propoerrty management. Chapter Five focuses on conceptual/schematic design, a vital phase of the development process from the point of view of an existing community's involvement in growth and change. A design methodology is presented that attempts to bridge the communication gap between non-designers (community groups and often developers) and design professionals.

The thesis ends with a brief discussion on the important emergence of non-profit community-based development organizations as the major success story about engaging those most affected by development in an existing community, and a look at prospects for the future of community participation in the development process.

NOTES

(1)

The following give a good background to issues related to Susskind's work on citizen involvement in broader community planning and policy:

Lawrence Susskind and Michael Elliot (and Associates):  
Paternalism, Conflict, and Coproduction;  
Learning from Citizen Action and Citizen Participation in  
Western Europe,  
New York: Plenum Press, 1983

Lawrence Susskind:  
The Importance of Citizen Participation and Consensus-  
Building in the Land Use Planning Process,  
Cambridge: M.I.T. Laboratory of Architecture and Planning  
Environmental Impact Assessment Project, 1977

(2)

The following is an excellent review and analysis of the history and practice of citizen involvement in land use planning and regulation:

Nelson M. Rosenbaum:  
Citizen Involvement in Land Use Governance;  
Issues and Methods,  
Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1976

(3)

The following will give the reader an idea of the range of ideas in the area of user participation in design:

Henry Sanoff:  
Designing With Community Participation

Ignacio Armillas:  
Gaming-Simulation: An Approach to User Participation

N. John Habraken:  
Supports: An Alternative to Mass Housing

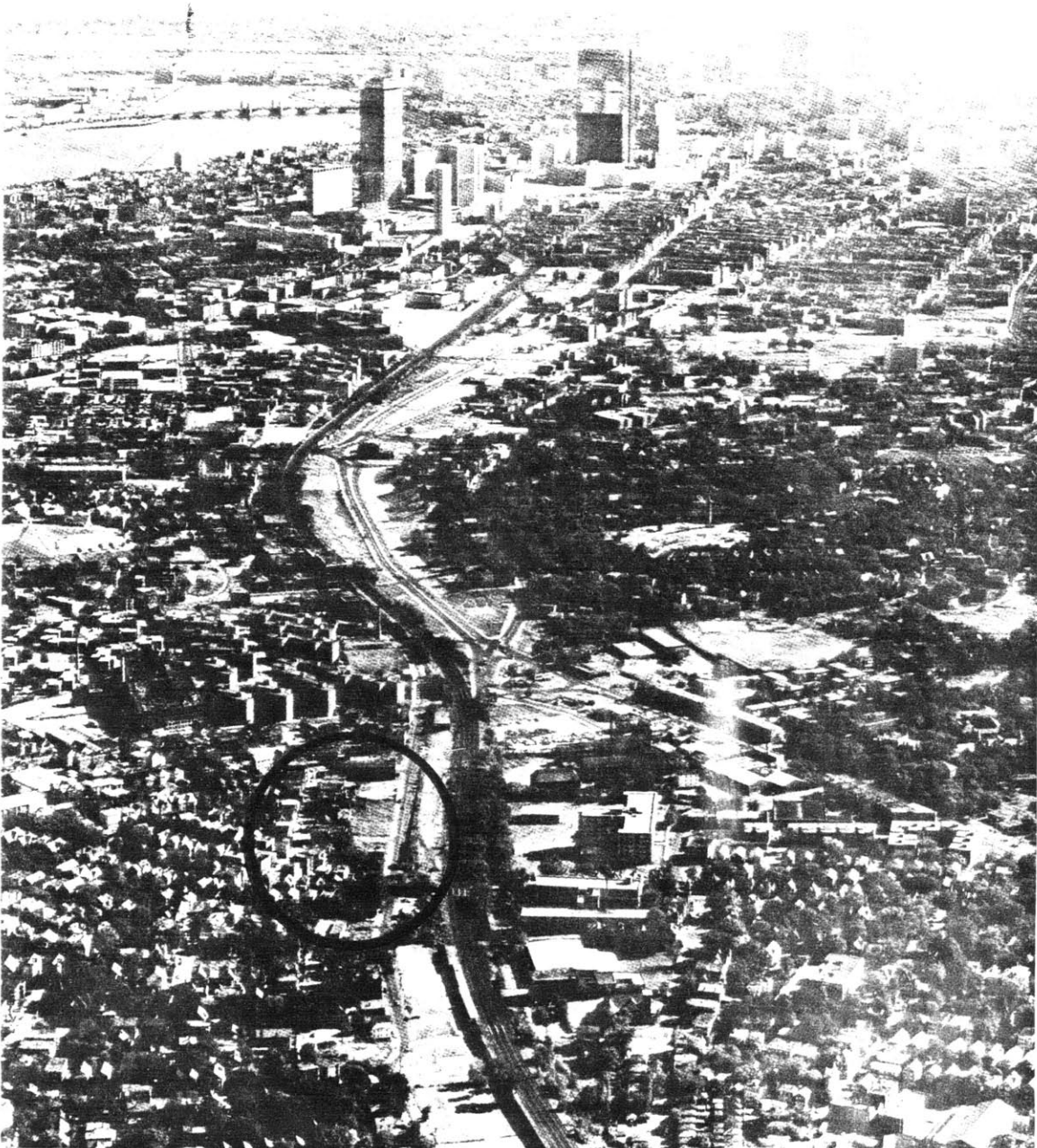
(4)

Two particularly disheartening presentations at the  
Development Regulations Council Workshop (U.I.L., 1984):

Greenlaw Grupe, Jr., Chairman/Chief Executive Officer  
The Grupe Co., Stockton, California:  
"The Stuckee/Stuckor Syndrome"

Douglas W. Hall, President  
The Santa Fe Land Improvement Co., Chicago, Illinois:  
"Developer Meets the Martians: A Lesson in Constituency  
Development"

Chapter I: The Southwest Corridor Experience



My involvement with the development of housing on vacant parcels along Boston's Southwest Corridor began in early 1985, when I was approached by the Director of a local not-for-profit housing rehabilitation and development corporation, who also happened to be a fellow graduate student. He knew I was

interested in housing and had some experience in housing design and construction; he also knew I was interested in community and not-for-profit development. We drove around his target neighborhood, a distressed area southwest of downtown Boston called Jamaica Plain, looked at vacant land, and talked about the Southwest Corridor. He explained that land was taken and cleared for a highway project twenty years ago, that the community had fought the highway construction, and that the transit and regional rail line (the Southwest Corridor) construction that the community had approved was going to be completed within the year. He showed me the ragged edges of neighborhoods on either side of the Corridor, and explained that a lot of the vacant land along the Corridor was part of the original taking and demolition, and that it was going to be "disposed of" by the State transportation authority (the MBTA) later in the year.

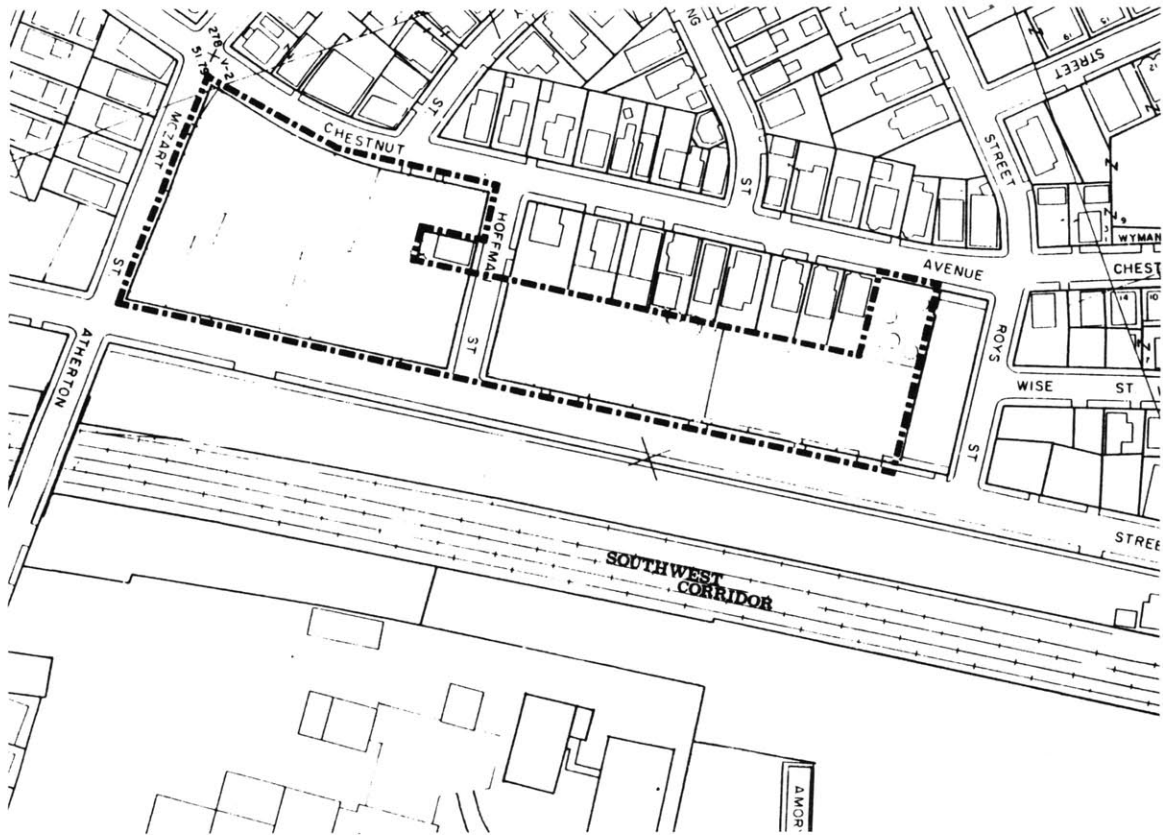
We both saw the opportunity to be involved in the closing of the wound that had left Jamaica Plain (as well as other parts of the city) open and vulnerable to decay, arson, and neglect. We also couldn't help but realize the unique possibility to acquire land for low- and moderate-income housing at reasonable prices at a time when city land prices had skyrocketed, even in downtrodden areas like Jamaica Plain and Roxbury.

We tentatively agreed to explore the idea of new housing development along the Southwest Corridor together, my contribution to be largely in the area of physical planning

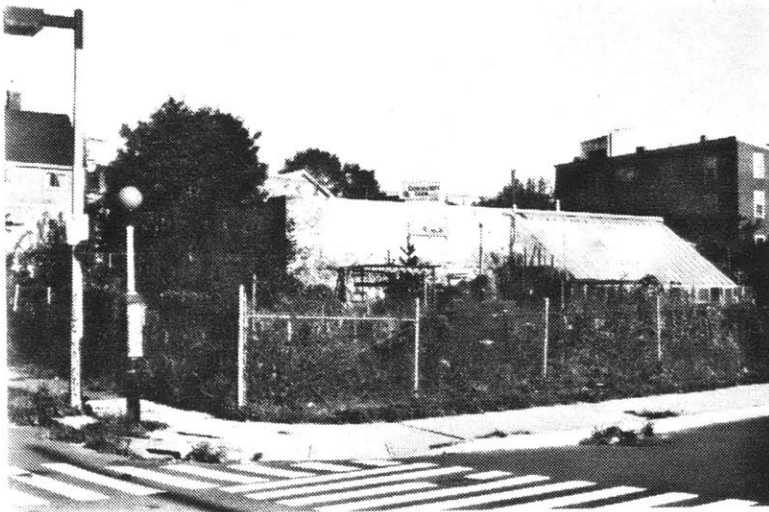
and design, his to be in technical and financial aspects of development in addition to his contribution as an established community-based developer with an excellent track record.



One site that particularly interested us was a vacant area of about a block and a half, a third of which was occupied by the Southwest Corridor Community Farm. The Farm was a community "victory garden" that had grown over a number of years into a solid, fairly well funded non-profit community organization that served to provide families and individuals with garden plots, support facilities and services for such, and educational opportunities related to urban gardening and ecology. The Farm facility was technically a "temporary use" on land owned by the State; the original organizers of the Farm had agreed that, when the Corridor construction was complete, the land should revert back to housing (which



existed on the site before the condemnation and demolition.)  
But all that had been said a long while back. In the  
meantime, the Farm had become somewhat institutionalized in  
the neighborhood, certainly in the minds of its long-time



Southwest Corridor  
Community Farm



members and a majority of its community Board. It had certainly served the community, or at least the part of the community that gardened or was concerned with urban ecology. We knew that if we wanted to develop housing in the area, the Farm would be an important actor in the Community, not only because it was using land originally designated for housing, but because it was an important social institution in the



area, with long-term relations with residents, the city, and the State.

We began our pre-development activities by contacting a local not-for-profit social service agency, the Oficina Hispana. Ron knew the community around this site fairly well, and understood it to be primarily Hispanic. Coincidentally, the Oficina headquarters was immediately across the Corridor from the SWC Farm site. Ron and his organization had established several training programs in conjunction with the Oficina in years past, and felt that they might be interested in our ideas.

Our first meeting with the Executive Director and Board of the Oficina established a working relationship directed toward organizing community input and support around our still-forming ideas about housing on the site. The Executive Director of the Oficina, Miguel Satut, was especially interested in being involved with this particular site because

it could help to strengthen relations with the Hispanic population on the opposite side of the Corridor from the office of the Oficina (this led to the suggestion to physically link the two sides of the Corridor with a pedestrian bridge in order to improve access to the Oficina.) The Oficina Hispana was also able to contribute some staff time for the project, which would prove very helpful in communicating with the Hispanic residents of the neighborhood.

Together, myself, Ron, and Miguel went to see the Director of the SWC Community Farm, Leroy Stoddard. Leroy was at that point a full-time Director for the Farm, and lived in a privately-owned, leased building adjacent to the farm site that also sheltered the farm's office and meeting room. Though he was not one of the "founding" members of the farm group, he had been around quite a while and had established himself as a skillful community leader and organizer. Leroy was aware of the State's impending action to dispose of the land the farm occupied, and in fact had already begun discussions with officials at the MBTA and the City about the Farm's presence and their wish to remain on the site, undisturbed.

Leroy was interested in exploring the possibility of working together on a development plan that would ensure the continued presence of the Farm on the site. Since the farm occupied such a large area of the total site, it was not immediately clear that the interests of the farm were not

substantially in conflict with the interests of housing, although the housing interests were represented by a not-for-profit developer who was sympathetic to the urban gardening organization. It was clear to all parties that some degree of compromise would be in order for all parties involved if a cooperative plan was to eventually come about. Though the Farm had become somewhat institutionalized over the past few years, many people in the community (as well as within the Farm) remembered that the farm's founders had agreed that the area on which the farm stood should eventually be utilized for housing when they first organized and obtained permission from the State to use the land. That original gesture recognized the acute housing need as well as the fact that housing had existed on the site before the original highway project had been begun and the land cleared. Leroy explained that though this situation complicated the Farm's claim to the land, it was not officially recognized by the present Board of Directors of the Farm. However, the Farm Board did feel that, just as the Farm relied on community support for its creation several years ago, the surrounding community should have a strong voice in any decision to alter the farm's presence (in addition to any decision to construct new housing on the site.)

Though our agenda was to build affordable housing, we knew this was an active, politically involved neighborhood and that it was important to find out what the community's

interests were regarding the vacant land and the Farm area. We knew this meant organizing a community-based planning process for this development, but weren't immediately sure we knew what that really meant. We did know that a Jamaica Plain-wide planning process, known as the Jamaica Plain Planning Coalition, was going on under the auspices of another area community development corporation. The Planning Coalition, however, was concerned with broad policy and procedural guidelines for all development within Jamaica Plain, and was not dealing with specific parcels of land, nor individual neighborhoods within Jamaica Plain. While this planning process was certainly deeply committed to citizen participation, it wasn't addressing our immediate problem, which was to develop a sound, community-backed development proposal for this specific site in time for the official land disposition process coming in September.

How should we approach involving the immediate neighborhood in the planning of this development in such a way as to ensure community support through the public disposition and approval process, which in that market and that City a difficult and arduous one at best? Our strongest hunch was that the community should feel, as much as possible, that they were involved in every step of the development planning and that the resulting proposal was theirs, not that of some outside force intent on changing their community whether they liked it or not. But how does a developer and his technical

and professional staff and consultants go about involving the neighboring community in development planning without losing control, time, or money?

We began our community participation process by asking the people at the Community Farm to invite some of the neighbors to our next meeting, where we planned to talk about the eminent public disposition of a good part of the vacant land they had been living with for the last several years. (About a third of the vacant land that we included in our "planning process" was privately held; some with back taxes and into the City foreclosure process, some with no back taxes.) In the meantime, we were gathering data on the parcels from various sources, trying to get an early assessment of how the MBTA would deal with disposition of their land, and querying other officials at the City level about any possibility of their involvement in this project.

Within one weeks time we were meeting with a small group of five neighborhood residents at the office of the Farm. We brought nothing to this meeting except a map of the area showing existing conditions, our notes on ownership and the disposition process as we understood it, and hopes for a receptive first meeting. We described who we were (almost everyone present knew of the community development organization as well as the Oficina Hispana) and that our purpose was to explore opportunities for development of the vacant land with the community. There was a great deal of

"feeling around" on the part of the residents; their first instinct was to be extremely suspicious of anyone interested in development. It helped greatly that the Farm was involved in sponsorship of the meeting, as most of the people present had been involved in some way with the Farm within the last few years. In several hours time we were able to agree that a community-based plan for the vacant land was worth pursuing, that we should continue to meet on a regular (weekly) basis, and that more people should be urged to come to the meetings.

We continued to meet as a small, relatively informal group for several weeks, discussing general neighborhood issues and trying to get a feeling for what the communities concerns were. Before long, we all realized that it was important to get many more people involved. The few residents that attended the early meetings did not feel that they could fairly represent their neighbors' interests, and we knew that support would eventually be needed from a more substantial number of neighborhood residents. This led us to plan a full neighborhood meeting, scheduled for May 15th. It was to be held in the evening, in the middle of the vacant block. Every resident within roughly a three-block radius of the site was contacted through hand-delivered leaflets in Spanish and English, inviting them to attend a neighborhood meeting to express their concerns and feelings about the area. In addition, leaflets were posted on the streets and in neighborhood stores, and notice was published in the community

paper. The meeting was held outdoors in the middle of the vacant block on May 15th, 1985.

Approximately fifty (50) residents of the area attended the meeting. The Directors of the three organizations sponsoring the meeting introduced themselves, their organizations, and the reason for their joining together to address community concerns about development on this site. The agenda of the meeting was twofold. First, it was necessary to establish what the residents felt were important issues to be addressed in developing the site. Secondly, the sponsors wanted to recruit community members to join an open working group, the purpose of which would be to organize a program and a general development plan based on issues raised at this and later community planning meetings. Every person attending was asked to speak about their concerns related to the immediate neighborhood and potential development of that site. The following issues were brought to light in the meeting of May 15th:

-Housing:

- for whom? - a majority of residents speaking called for "low and moderate-income housing" or "housing for poor people"; people also mentioned that they would like the housing to go to people "who will respect it and be responsible for it"
- what kind? - many said they would not support a "housing project" such as that at Jackson Square; some said "no condos"; others said they would like to see apartments
- what scale? - most supported smaller-scale housing; many mentioned a preference for "townhouses"

-Recreational/Open Space:

- how much? - a tot lot?, half a block for a baseball field?, does the Farm "count" as recreational space?

- for whom? - many wanted a recreation area for small children; many liked the existing ad hoc softball field; would it be for old residents or new residents?
- potential problems - several mentioned the problems with drugs, etc. at nearby Mozart park
- control/maintenance - how would a new park be maintained?

-The Community Farm:

- should it remain? - many said it should remain
- how much land should go to the farm? - does it have to be in one area, or could it be distributed?

-Displacement

- a woman living in the only remaining building on the Mozart-Hoffman block asked that there be no displacement if and when development took place

-Save the Existing Trees

- the mature trees in the center of the block were irreplaceable and should be saved

-Traffic problems in the neighborhood

- speeding and the problem of the lack of police patrol were of major concern to families with young children

-Drug problems in the neighborhood

- someone mentioned that drugs being sold in the street was not good for the neighborhood

Beginning on May 30th, we met with members of the community on a regular basis throughout the summer as a "working group" to derive a general working plan to communicate to the community as soon as possible. Invitations to each of the summer meetings were mailed to everyone who had attended any of the previous meetings in order to encourage the greatest possible direct participation by community residents.

We started the summer meetings by looking at the site and its existing qualities. We all shared the desire to save the trees and to respect the existing house in the Mozart-Hoffman block, and accepted as a goal to do so. The next task was

look at the various uses that had been brought up in the community meeting, and to try to figure out how to allocate our scarce land resources amongst the desired uses.

We tried to look at "land uses" as areas, but also think about relationships among/between uses as we went along. At the meeting, residents expressed a desire for housing, recreational space, and a continuation of the community gardening use in some fashion. The question was not so much what?, but how much? land should be given to each of the three uses, and where? should the uses be located.

As might be expected, various "interest groups" represented their own desired uses in the discussion. A certain group of residents, primarily those living on Mozart across from the vacant block, wanted play space directly across from their houses. Most of them liked the existing ad hoc baseball field in terms of size and location.

The "housing group," which included the developer, supported the allocation of as much land as possible to housing. They reacted to the "baseball group's" idea as claiming too much land (they wanted roughly a third of the entire block.) They argue that the land had been used for housing before the Corridor project began and that the housing should be replaced in light of the severe housing shortage in the city. Housing advocates proposed that only a small corner of the Mozart-Hoffman block be used for a play area, but that several small "tot lots" be distributed in with the new

housing to accomodate the recreational needs of the families with young children that they hoped the new housing would attract. They further suggested that the Farm should be reduced to a "core," defined by Hoffman St. and the end of the existing greenhouse, but suggested that the "lost" garden space be "replaced" in the Corridor parkway (an idea that received tentative approval from the Southwest Corridor's Director of Development.) This idea was sketched out, with a general number of housing "units" indicated in each area that was derived using a square footage rule-of-thumb.

When they saw the sketch of the proposal, the "Farm group" was furious that anyone had suggested their giving up some of the garden space they had worked so long and hard to make productive. They argued that fertile land was the most precious commodity of all in an urban environment, and that ten years of "back-breaking" cultivation deserved recognition. They further argued that they could not support a proposal that diminished the working area of the farm, but did offer to support an increase in housing density elsewhere on the available land "in exchange" for their garden space.

The housing group's sketch also met with disapproval from the "baseball group." They followed the Farm group in announcing that they could not support a plan that wiped out the opportunity to play baseball and kickball so close to their houses. They argued that there was no place for their children to play, noting that the nearest large playground,

though it was in a largely Hispanic neighborhood, was a "hangout" for dope dealers (true - the Mozart playground was a terrible scene.) Hispanic children, they claimed, were not welcome in other playgrounds in the area, that were "controlled" by blacks or unfriendly whites.

By the end of June (meeting every other week), we had worked through a great deal of usually friendly negotiation, and had finally come to a general "working consensus" for land use. The configuration of the Farm remained, in the end, pretty close to its original area, but the plan now called for an increased number of housing units between the Farm and the Hammond Office Products building. The recreation constituents agreed to a compromise on the size of the playing area, limiting it to barely less than a quarter of the block. The plan did, however, indicate three tot lots - one at the corner of Mozart and Chestnut (for the children of "existing residents") and two in the new housing areas (for the children of "future resident families.")

During the summer meetings several issues came to light in addition to those brought up at the large community meeting. The first was the need to look at small vacant areas in the immediate area. Residents were concerned about the trash, bombed-out cars, and crime that the vacant lots seemed to attract, and felt that an "infill" program for individual lots was equally important as planning for the larger vacant areas. The second major issue concerned the needs of the

abutters on parcel 66. The largest abutter, Hammond Office Products, needed to accomodate their requirements for a proper off-street loading area to continue efficient operations. The only room for such a loading area was alongside the back of their building, actually on Parcel 66. If some arrangement could not be made, they would be forced to move from the site, taking their long-time neighborhood relations and valuable community jobs with them. Other abutters, Mr. Berardi and Mr. Rizza, were long-time residents who had each started small gardens on Parcel 66 over a decade ago. Many in the neighborhood supported their request that these lush and productive gardens be respected in the development program. The need to incorporate these additional issues in the agenda of the working group was recognized by everyone involved. We then worked with representatives from Hammond to understand their needs and incorporate them into the land-use plan, and agreed to preserve the Berardi and Rizza gardens if at all possible.

By this time, the middle of July, people were beginning to get frustrated because they didn't know what kind of housing we were talking about. How should we go about deciding what kind of housing to build?

The developer had some ideas about the housing, largely based on its current involvement in an "infill" project using buildings manufactured off-site. It seemed that manufactured buildings were desirable because the city was undertaking a

number of "demonstration" projects using manufactured housing, and was allocating a substantial amount of its housing subsidy money for such projects. Two other area community development organizations had recently completed townhouse developments utilizing manufactured housing that seemed fairly appropriate to this requirements of the Farm site.

We began to talk about the scale of buildings, and the kinds of qualities people were generally interested in seeing. No one had any specific ideas in mind, although a number of residents had (coincidentally) indicated a desire for "townhouses." People were, however, very concerned about the issue of respect for, and maintenance of, property. This translated into a general preference for owner-occupied housing over rental housing. In addition, residents liked the idea that owners be responsible not only for their building, but also for the space adjacent to it. This also seemed to fit in with the idea of townhouses as opposed to block-type apartment or condominium buildings. It seemed that a number of things pointed toward townhouses as a desirable type of housing to pursue in putting form to the land-use plan.

We decided to go and have a look at a number of recent townhouse developments, to get a sense of what people might want to look at in their neighborhood. It seemed like a relatively easy way to get people talking about what they liked and didn't like. In late July, interested members of the working group got in a big van and visited four very

different townhouse developments. They included the "Warren Gardens" cooperative townhouse development in Roxbury, the "Madison Square" development, also in Roxbury, the "Lilac Court" condominium townhouse development in Cambridge, and the "Cherry Street" townhouse development, also in Cambridge. It still surprises me to think that only one of these four developments was immediately attractive to the working group, and that the positive sentiment toward the "Cherry Street" development was almost unanimous.

The reaction was so positive, in fact, that we mutually agreed that a good next step would be to adapt the "Cherry Street model" to our particular site and see what it looked like. As it turns out, the idea worked, at least for a schematic design. It worked so well that the working group decided to take the schematic design back to a major neighborhood meeting to see how it fared with the broader (but still immediate) community.

Finally, we had a plan that everyone involved in the open working group agreed would respond well to all the issues raised. It was a compromise among various interest groups that all felt would work for the good of the neighborhood.

A second major neighborhood meeting was called for the evening of September 11th. Unfortunately early darkness prevented holding this second meeting in the open air of the vacant block. It was held across the Corridor at the Oficina

Hispana headquarters building - free transportation was available for those who didn't want to walk. Like the first large meeting, it was highly publicized, with mailings, hand delivery and posting of flyers, and telephone calls.

Approximately twenty-five people attended to listen to the presentation of the working group. The meeting was begun by neighborhood resident Mary McCarthy, who explained the planning process to date, the events and activities the working group had engaged through the summer, and summarized the issues that the committee had dealt with in preparing its plan. Next, after a brief presentation concerning the coming MBTA land disposition process by resident Clementina Acebado, Leroy Stoddard from the Community Farm explained the disposition and location of different uses on the site, and how the plan had evolved. Bob Smith from Hammond Office Products then rose to explain that his company's needs were met by the working plan. Ron Hafer of Urban Edge explained the "working" plan for building from thirty-five to forty-five attached residences on areas designated for housing, and the "working mix" of income groups to be targeted with the help of City and State subsidies. He also described the proposed forms of ownership for the residences. Finally Miguel Satut of the Oficina Hispana discussed the next steps to be taken, should those present at the meeting find the general ideas acceptable. Emphasis was made on the fact that many issues were yet to be resolved, however the need to move into the

broader community with the working plan was strongly felt, with the MBTA's disposition process looming perhaps only weeks away. Residents with concerns of any kind were strongly urged to participate in further meetings of the working group in order to make their concerns known, and to suggest ways of accomodating those concerns.

On the basis of generally positive response to the working development plan as presented September 11th, we began contacting the broader community to elicit support for our still "working" development proposal. We approached other organizations in the near-immediate community, and began our "attack" on officials at the City and State levels. Our first major meeting was with the Director of Development for the Southwest Corridor Dan Ocasio and his design consultant David Dixon. We had contacted Ocasio several times earlier in the year, to inform him that we were "working together" toward a general development plan for the "Farm site" and to inquire as to the schedule for disposition of the State-owned land critical to our development. Ocasio and Dixon were very pleased that we had managed to work with the Farm group and the neighborhood in preparing a plan. The success of our planning process meant that they had a lot less work to do in order to "dispose of" the site than would have been the case if they themselves had been left with the job of dealing with the Farm and the community. They commented on the proposal, which they generally felt comfortable with, and we discussed

the disposition process at length. To make a long story short, they recognized the great value of our planning process given the activist nature of the community and the generally contentious atmosphere surrounding the entire Corridor disposition process. Because we had done our homework, they supported our plan and made the road to designation much smoother than it normally would have been.

The support of several City agencies was also essential to the success of our project. Unfortunately, the chain of command and distribution of power is incredibly confused in the various City agencies important to our designation as developer and recipient of critical subsidy monies. Though we had been in contact with a number of people in a number of agencies, it was not clear who, if anyone, was willing to support our plan, even though Ocasio (and hopefully his superiors at the MBTA) was "on-board." The only strategy to follow, given the chaos of the City bureaucracy, was to present our case to Mayor Flynn - we did so in late September.

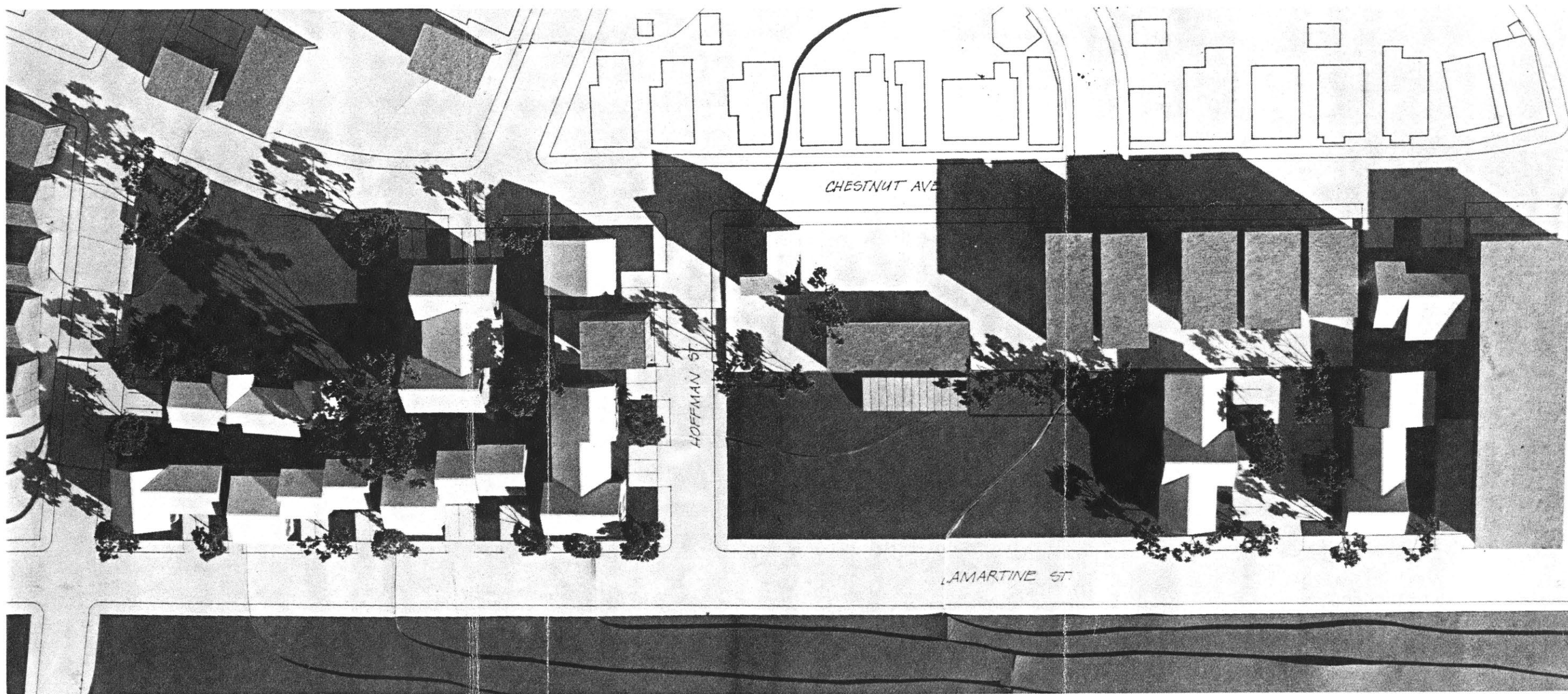
Since then, we have continued to meet with members of the community to work through final details of the development plan. It changes a little each week, though it is still in "schematic" form. It will remain so until the final request-for-proposal is in hand, at which time the design and the development proposal will be developed along the specific lines of the RFP. The RFP should substantially reflect the schematic plan as it now exists, because of MBTA and city

support of our planning process and its resulting plan. Barring serious intervention due to political upheaval or bureaucratic coup d'etat, we should be in business by March.

Unfortunately, because the deadline for this thesis has arrived, the story of my involvement with this experience must end here. The process, however, (and hopefully my involvement as a consultant to the process) will undoubtedly continue until thirty-five units of new housing are occupied in a pleasing development nestled comfortably in a restored neighborhood along the Southwest Corridor.

One can't deny that this process has been blessed by the spirit of cooperation and general good will. The incentive to negotiate for all parties involved was always the fear of "division and conquest." From the start it was clear that if we could work together with the Farm, the abutters, and the general immediate neighborhood residents, we could all get through the disposition and development process whole. If any one of those parties split in any substantial way from our "coalition," the official disposition process could well be lost, especially given the history of political favoritism and the incredible shortage of available land for housing in the City of Boston.

"So far, so good."



THE WORKING PLAN of SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>

## CHAPTER 2: PLAYERS, DECISIONS, AND RESPONSIBILITY

One of the many problems one encounters in understanding and organizing a "participatory development process" involves the allocation of decision-making responsibility. Who should rightfully have a part in which decisions in the process, and why? In beginning to think about the SW Corridor development project, the one question I kept asking that no one could answer to my satisfaction was "if this is really a participatory process, who should decide what?"

After preliminary meetings with the sponsors and residents I realized that some residents, once given an entre' into the process, wanted to get involved in every decision short of kitchen sink selection. Certainly they were entitled to a voice in some decisions about what was to be built in their neighborhood. Where and how did their concerns and demands figure into the process?

I also realized that my natural inclination as a design consultant was to want to retain as much discretionary power as I could to make decisions, particularly about the "best way to organize this site, etc...." In some ways my status as a design "professional" led me to think that only I was adequately trained to make design decisions, that such were too complex for "laymen", and that once I heard some general statements about preferences from my "clients" I could go off and produce a plan to be approved or disapproved. If I as a designer were to engage in a truly participatory design

process, would I be involved in decision-making, and what would my professional role be?

Likewise, the developer in me kept saying, "why should these people be telling us what we should be building, when we're the ones taking the risk and the responsibility?" Yet I knew that the people in the existing community would be the ones eventually living with any development, and as such deserved some degree of input. I was understandably reluctant to give up any control over development decision-making, and uncertain as to the developer's role in a participatory development process.

Stepping back from the picture and attempting to think somewhat objectively about such a situation, I realized the value of a full understanding of the reasons why each actor felt they should or should not participate in each step of the development and design process. With such an understanding in hand, an examination and understanding of necessary roles, techniques, and skills could be reasonably undertaken. Of course it would be naive to assume that every situation should be treated alike with respect to the allocation of decisions, but an initial point of departure concerning decision-making responsibility that enjoys some degree of clarity and reason would probably be valuable to those concerned with development in established communities.

### The Participation of Existing Residents

Quite obviously, the residents of any existing community will probably have strong feelings and concerns about development in their community or neighborhood. While communities differ in the extent to which concern is present and the extent to which it has organized or can organize itself to express its concerns, almost any development activity within an existing community brings forth some expression of citizen concern. After all, the existing community must live with new development activity and absorb its impacts, both positive and negative. While zoning and land use controls have been developed and utilized almost everywhere (to differing degrees) in an attempt to legally control development, they usually operate at a very general level within which relatively wide ranges of development are legally acceptable (at least to the planners and zoning officials who created and put them into place.) In addition, existing zoning and land use regulations are almost uniformly simplistic, segregational, and out-of-date. While they legally establish the rights of land owners and developers to build within certain limits, they seldom reflect anywhere near the range of concerns that citizens of a community have with respect to specific developments.

What areas of development and/or design decision-making should existing community residents be involved in?

Perhaps the most appropriate way to address this

question is to consider what aspects of development (most) impact existing residents. Because citizens of the existing community will probably live with new development rather than in it, the range of legitimate concerns for abutters and, existing community tends to lie with "external" aspects of any new development (i.e. those which impact its surrounding environment) rather than what it "is" internally (the latter concern probably belongs most appropriately to the eventual users of the development.)

The "external" aspects of development that many existing communities are concerned about can be organized into several areas: uses (what?), social composition and form of tenure (who and how?), image (what does it look like?), and density (how much?). Many of these aspects follow from the very broad traditional category of "land use," yet remain in the author's mind sufficiently distinct or important to be discussed individually.

#### Land Use

The uses within a new development or even a significant redevelopment are of primary concern to existing residents. For the most part, people are concerned that new uses do not in any way threaten existing ones, and hope that any new development will positively reinforce or add to the existing community. In many cases, any change from the status quo is threatening, and residents will make it clear that an

extension of existing uses will be most acceptable.

In the case of the SWC housing development, we found that only a few residents wanted nothing to be built. Most were interested in strengthening the neighborhood by re-establishing viable residences on the unused and unattractive parts of nearby vacant land, but retaining the existing uses on areas of the site that were positively utilized. This translated into retaining as much of the Farm as possible and keeping a large area for recreation that had been claimed and maintained over the years as an informal softball diamond.

Perhaps because the area was generally run down, any new development that supported the present housing was perceived by the community as positive. The community wanted the wound repaired, partly because of the still-present fear of arson and partly because older residents had positive memories of what the streets were like when there were houses on the vacant land. Most people had strong positive feelings about the ad hoc play area and the Farm because they had been a part of both activities. Even those who weren't interested in gardening enjoyed watching others work in the gardens, and appreciated the flowers and abundant foliage of the Community Farm. Likewise, the informal softball and kickball games that took place on the vacant land were nightly entertainment all Summer long for the families in the neighborhood. It was a natural meeting and play space for residents of an otherwise dense neighborhood.

Because people generally have a very good sense of the weaknesses and strengths of their own community, it is often in a developer's best interest to listen carefully to what the community is really saying about land uses and appropriate locations for such, particularly for a developer unfamiliar with the immediate community. In the Corridor development process, for example, residents were quick to point out the importance of the ad hoc playing field and its location at the corner of the vacant block. In our preliminary evaluation of the block, before discussing it with the community, we totally overlooked the need for a recreation area of that type in that particular location, thinking that the nearby Corridor right-of-way parkland would suffice for the neighborhood's open space needs. Residents emphasized, however, the need for a play area within eyesight of the existing houses on Chestnut and Mozart, where a great number of young children lived (in homes lacking enough suitable yard space for play.)

Such localized knowledge and information can also serve as basic information for use in focusing on a potential market for the development. It is essential to understand the particular nature of an existing community before making important decisions about what particular uses and market to address. If a new development is substantially incompatible with the existing neighborhood uses, character, or socioeconomic structure, it can be difficult or costly to market.

Of equal importance, however, is the need for goodwill and positive feelings within the community about the new development and the uses within. If proposed uses are really unwanted, a developer can be assured of encountering substantial difficulty from the community, drawing out the development process and imposing costs of both time and money through long and contentious arguments and negotiations. The circumstances surrounding the development of the "Tent City" site adjacent to Boston's Copley Place development is a case in point.

In the late sixties, community activists from Boston's then very downtrodden South End staged a rather dramatic demonstration to focus the public eye on the situation of Boston's homeless on a site at the edge of their neighborhood, two blocks from the famous Copley Square. They pitched tents and lived on the vacant site for weeks - the parcel came to be known as the "Tent City site." Since then, a number of probably-workable proposals have been made for the development of market rate residences on the site, which is now in one of Boston's most desirable, lately gentrified neighborhoods. Each time the parcel has come up, the still-active residents rise in protest, demanding that low-income housing be built on the site instead of (now very) profitable market rate or luxury residences. It is now some twenty years later and Tent City is a parking lot, though a community-based not-for-profit developer is finalizing plans to provide subsidized housing on

the now-famous site.

Usually when a developer has a use in mind that is in conflict with the expressed interests of the existing community, he or she must openly discuss the merits of such use(s), so that the community understands what benefits the developer sees, both for himself and for the community. When such a situation arises, it is often necessary for the developer to alter his plan, including uses and/or amenities that the community desires in exchange for acceptance of less desirable uses to demonstrate the tangible benefits that the new development can bring to the community in addition to the developer's sincere willingness to cooperate with the community and its interests. Hopefully a consensus can be reached, once both parties understand the objectives of the other and are committed to resolving the issue of use. In the Southwest Corridor planning process, the sponsoring developers began with the idea that most of the available land area would be used for housing, with some small area continuing as Community gardening use. When the community argued that they could not support a plan that did not address their support for more land for the gardens and the need for a good sized playing field, it was necessary to listen and adjust the plan. Compromise eventually came from both sides, however, when residents were made aware of the housing need and the economic and political difficulty of accomplishing their goals without

a substantial number of residential units in the plan. The community supported an increase in the net density of housing in designated areas in exchange for greater land area for open space.

#### Social Composition and Form of Tenure

Land use, unfortunately, is not a straightforward issue, as it holds implications for the second category of external aspects of any development, concerning the kind of people new development will bring to an existing community. The importance of social composition to residents of an established community was proven to the author throughout the SWC housing development project. Perhaps because the neighborhood was composed largely of minority peoples of limited income already threatened by the pressures of gentrification in a super-heated housing market, one of the first questions asked during the initial community meeting was, "Who will this development bring to our community?"

Because the character of a community is determined as much by the nature of its inhabitants as by the nature of its physical "stuff," changes or intensifications of the social composition of a neighborhood are almost always the subject of much discussion among existing residents in an area. It is interesting that concern about social composition occurs at all points along the socioeconomic scale. The relatively low income residents in the Chestnut Avenue neighborhood were just

as concerned about a change in the social character of their neighborhood as the wealthy residents of Newton proved to be when government-subsidized, moderate-income housing was proposed as part of a major development for Newton Corner. The concern is legitimate in both instances, again because it is the existing residents who feel the impact of any change in social composition, and must understand how and why change such change occurs, if at all.

Throughout the SWC development process, concern was expressed that (the range of) new residents be as similar as possible to the range of existing residents with respect to family orientation, socioeconomic "status", and racial mix. Such continuity of social composition seemed particularly important to a community in the shadow of extreme market pressure for housing. What this continuity meant in practical terms was a preference for low and middle-income housing over expensive, market-rate apartments or condominiums. The existing residents were also concerned that the family character of the neighborhood be strengthened, and requested that the majority of the units built be large enough to accomodate families with children.

For the developer, accomodating desires to assure a continuity of social composition can often be a problem, largely because the demand for real estate product from the desired group may not exist at a level necessary to minimize the developer's sales or "lease-up" risk. If that is indeed

the case, the developer must help the community understand why such a request is unrealistic, and propose alternatives that satisfy the underlying concerns of the community to the greatest extent possible. For example, a site organization that orients the desired social group adjacent to the concerned community and positions the "less desirable" group at a distance might enable the needs of both parties to be met. It is often the case that accommodating the desired "social continuity" may not enable the developer make as great a profit as another market might afford. When subsidies are required to meet a developer's need for a normal profit, the community must "go to bat" with public authorities to help the developer obtain such support. Otherwise, it may be impossible to assure that the desired socioeconomic group can be accommodated in the development.

A secondary concern related to new residents that often arises has to do with form of tenure. In the Southwest Corridor housing development planning process, the existing residents had very strong feelings that any new people be respectful and responsible toward the existing community as well as any new development. Because they had seen the ill effects of absentee ownership and poorly managed public housing throughout Jamaica Plain, members of the community attending our planning sessions were dead set on assuring responsibility for building and ground maintenance and general "safety" through owner-occupancy or some form of cooperative

ownership.

The desire of communities to participate in decisions about form of tenure stems directly from fears about the impact of new development and the accompanying users on the safety and well-being of their neighborhoods in addition to concerns about property values. It is a very real and important concern that is important for a developer to hear about and accomodate, not only to assuage the community, but to safeguard his considerable investment by assuring responsible control and maintenance of property for which the developer is directly responsible.

In the SWC situation, because the developer shared the same concerns that the community expressed about responsibility and ownership, this request was easily accomodated. Had it been necessary, however, for a different form of ownership (for financial reasons like the need to raise equity through a limited partnership. . .) the developer would not have been able to directly accomodate the requests. He could, however, have responded to the underlying intent in a number of ways. One would have been the organization of a tenant management corporation, with concerned members of the community on the Board of a management organization controlled by the occupants. Another response would have allowed the community to share in the selection of a management organization, and to formalize its requirements for maintenance, etc. through participation in drawing up the

maintenance contract.

### Image

Citizens of an established community are quite naturally concerned with how their community looks, both to themselves and to others. The "look" of new development or redevelopment in their neighborhood is a primary concern, particularly because the exterior appearance of such development will be part of their daily visual experience and will contribute to or detract from the overall image of their community.

"Image", however, is not easily defined. It can include a wide range of issues, from iconographic "type" (monolithic public housing "project" vs. suburban single-family homes) to material selection and color (grey pre-cast concrete vs. yellow clapboard with white trim). Despite the complexity of definition, talking about image(s) is often surprisingly easy, particularly when one is prepared with a wide range of visual material like photographs and slides.

In the SWC development planning process, discussions about image occurred right away, particularly with respect to "kind" of housing. People were very concerned that we wouldn't develop a "project". A short discussion revealed that what that meant was a featureless blocky building, four floors or more, with a small number of entrances shared by a great number of residents. In addition, the image of a "project" carried with it a great number of negative

associations, like irresponsible inhabitants, constant evidence of vandalism, and poorly maintained buildings and grounds.

Someone said, "We want townhouses, like over on Huntington," referring to the Mission Park development in a nearby neighborhood. Another said, "We want it to fit in." A third resident requested that the buildings not be too tall.

There were clearly limits to the size and scale of buildings that the community would approve. They wanted analogs, pictures to see, and eventually three-dimensional drawings and models of tentative ideas. They really didn't care much about details like colors and fixtures, but they did comment on scale, set-backs, roof lines, cladding materials, and the organization of parking and common land. It wasn't terribly difficult to arrive at a "model" that was acceptable to the "working committee," because the residents were more concerned that the image of the development not be certain things (high-rise, monolithic block) than that it be something in particular. Because someone was listening and responding to their fears, the road to a general consensus was a relatively smooth one.

### Density

Particularly in crowded urban areas, members of established communities have great concerns that new development will cause congestion, overload infrastructure and streets, block wind and sunlight, and negatively impact the

general "quality of life" in a community. This is perhaps the most difficult concern for developers to address in working with existing residents.

Some of these concerns about the impacts of increased density have been institutionalized as legitimate community concerns through a more or less standardized "environmental impact assessment." Impacts assessed usually include vehicular and pedestrian traffic and parking, service infrastructure (water, waste water...,) sunlight access and shading, wind, and ground water, and can further include building scale and massing. The environmental review process has expanded governmental control over development beyond traditional land use (zoning) restrictions. Environmental impact assessment is routinely required of all projects receiving federal or state assistance, or of projects exceeding a certain size. Though environmental impact reports are available to the public and are frequently reviewed in public hearings, the approval of development proposals in the public environmental review process is controlled by "professional bureaucrats" interpreting statutory guidelines.

It is often the case that such statutory guidelines and restrictions do not adequately reflect the legitimate concerns of community members. In the case of the Southwest Corridor development, no complete environmental assessment would have been required by law, yet members of the community were actively concerned about impacts of any development. In this

case, the community would have had no choice but to interject itself into the development process in some way in order that its immediate concerns be addressed.

Not only do statutory guidelines and restrictions frequently not reflect current community concerns, they are quite different from direct participation by a community in development decision-making. Not only are such laws administered by bureaucrats that usually have little interest in controversial community affairs, they are for the most part static and sluggish mechanisms of control. Though recent planning research and theory has articulated the obsolete character of most land use regulation mechanisms currently "on the books," changing to more responsive and non-segregational mechanisms (like the P.U.D.-planned unit development) has been painfully slow. Thus, members of an established area almost always raise concerns outside this formal process concerning the impacts of increased density on the quality of life in their community.

In many ways the issue of increasing density revolves around economics. Developers, like all profit-motivated business persons, usually seek to maximize the return on any investment made. This often means building as much as possible of the "highest and best use" possible on any given site, so as to achieve the maximum possible return on the investment in land. Conflict often develops with differing definitions of "highest and best use." The developer's

perspective is one of economic return on his investment measured in terms of the specific site. The perspective of residents and taxpayers of an existing community involves quality of life (defined in their terms). This includes a number of hard-to-define issues in addition to economic concerns, (though economists claim it can all be defined in terms of dollars.)

In an atmosphere of increasing public awareness and vigilance concerning the environment, neighborhoods, and quality of life, a compromise must be achieved between the developer and an existing community concerning increasing density and other important kinds of change. Perhaps a more appropriate perspective for developers would include the notion of compatibility as vital to the overall good of the any development, measuring success in terms of on-going community relations as well as economic return. In the long run, such an attitude might enable expectations for profit on any given site to be consistently realistic, taking both the benefits and risks of community activism into account. Likewise, communities might adjust their perspective to reflect the economic realities associated with addressing their concerns and fulfilling their wants. What seems most important is that communities understand is that they "won't get somethin' for nothin'." Responsible public policy (both official and unofficial) pays for itself, and communities that restrict density and development must understand the costs

associated with such policy, in terms of the the cost of housing, the financing of public amenities, and the level of taxation.

If residents of an existing community are in fact concerned about land use, social composition, form of tenure, image, and density, should they participate in the areas of development decision-making concerning these "external" issues? Each one of us has his or her own answer to this question, depending on our perspective on difficult issues such as human rights vs. property rights, community vs. privacy, etc. It is not my purpose to get caught up in this very difficult question. It is, however, my intention to understand the general concerns of all parties involved in such a question, to discuss a possible means of accomplishing such participation based on such an understanding of needs and concerns of various actors. With that in mind, it seems appropriate that existing residents could share decision-making responsibility concerning the issues discussed above with the sponsor of a potential development. Chapter Four discusses how such participation might be accomplished. Next, however, it is important to better understand what kinds of concerns and responsibilities a developer involved in a participatory development process might have.

### A Developer's Responsibility

In the average, non-participatory development process, a developer is responsible to himself, his<sup>or</sup> financial partners and lenders, and to any local, state, or Federal authority concerning any statutory regulations and laws pertaining to his individual development projects. The development industry has not yet "professionalized" itself to the point of having a code of ethics, a licensing procedure, or an internal system of regulation. Interestingly enough, developers have yet to be held "liable" for perpetrating evils on individuals or society in the ways doctors, lawyers, and architects are, except in their capacity as property owners liable for transgressions of "nuisance."

In terms of development decision-making responsibility, developers traditionally make most all decisions themselves, based on the recommendations given them by their consultants and their own knowledge about how to go about the development business. Local planning, zoning, and building permit officials officially enter the traditional process of development decision-making through the system of rules and procedures laid out in zoning by-laws, building codes, and design review requirements (which usually take the form of zoning legislation with little discretionary power.) Occasionally, depending on the political power structure, discretionary authority is "applied" through review processes, and the occasional powerful Mayor exercises substantial

influence through the approval and review process.

The primary premise of a participatory development process is that the developer shares certain significant decisions with other people or groups. He or she could do this for a number of reasons, many of which have already been mentioned or implied above.

Some developers might invite participation because of a fundamental community orientation. This includes many non-profit "community-based" development corporations, whose charters often describe a commitment to a specified community constituency. The objective of such organizations is to identify and respond to the needs of its constituency. These organizations rank community satisfaction as primary in their measure of success.

Profit-motivated development organizations might invite participation because they are concerned that their development be accepted and supported by the surrounding community. They could see participation in the decision-making process as a good way to "get the community on board," particularly if the project must go through a lengthy approvals process. Because of the increasing complexity of the approvals process, this is probably the most prevalent reason for a non-community-based developer to invite a community to participate in making important development decisions. Developers might see value to community input in a number of other areas, like identifying a target market or

positive publicity and marketing, but these are most likely secondary to the need for support through the approvals process.

Community participation can take a number of forms, ranging from superficial "review" responsibilities to more substantial forms of involvement, such as community involvement in "program" generation, land use selection, or building type selection (Chapter Four discusses a full range of possibilities for involvement.) Each developer must decide how much decision-making responsibility he or she is willing to share, based on his assessment of the risks and rewards of such involvement. As can be expected, every case is unique, and differing degrees of participation have their own levels of risk. With that said, how might one begin to understand the risks of various kinds of participation, and how might these risks be mitigated?

It is obvious that the major risk involved with sharing decision-making responsibility is risk of losing control over the decision-making process. Unless a participating community is in some way willing to and capable of assuming financial or legal responsibility for development decisions, the developer remains the party responsible for such decisions, however they are made. It is seems fair that developers should always reserve final authority or "veto power" unless a community is indeed able of assuming full responsibility for certain decisions. Yet up to the point of such final authority there

is a great deal of room for participation in making decisions, and ways a developer can control choice within the decision-making process.

The principal method of maintaining control over a joint decision-making process is by narrowing the range of such choice to a reasonable number of (more or less) equally acceptable alternatives. This requires foresight, a little homework, or both on the part of the developer, who should do enough preliminary alternative generation and screening in advance, if necessary, in order to understand what general alternatives are not acceptable (and why). In this way the developer is capable of steering discussions and negotiations away from undesirable alternatives should they come up in the discussion. It is often desirable to allow choices to "come up" in discussion rather than "present" acceptable alternatives as such in a "multiple choice" fashion. The latter technique, though perhaps more straightforward, can trivialize the whole idea of participation. If a more structured approach to joint decision-making is preferable to open discussion, a developer can establish a "baseline" alternative around which other alternatives can be discussed and negotiated. (It should be noted that such discussion and negotiation, done well, requires extreme patience, diligence, and sincerity - one cannot overstate the importance of good negotiation skills in engaging in such a participatory process.)

In addition to losing control over decisions, a developer is often concerned about losing time. Group decision-making can be a lengthy undertaking even under the best of circumstances, but particularly if the process for doing such is poorly organized. In the Southwest Corridor process, we spent approximately six months getting from the initial introduction of the problem to the end of schematic design, meeting every other week for approximately three hours. I would guess that, had we been better organized, we could have accomplished the same tasks in half the time. It is important to establish a realistic schedule that the parties involved approve of, and make every possible effort to stick to it.

In general, developers are probably more willing to allow community participation in planning decisions (and perhaps some general policy) rather than in construction and day-to-day management decisions, in much the same way as general partners relate to limited partners in a limited partnership. If what to develop is in some way decided jointly, how to do it is probably left up to the developer, except where legal requirements for permitting and adherence to building codes or hiring practices oblige the developer to follow statutory guidelines.

### Future Users in Development Decision-Making

Though it is not the focus of this work, the place of the future user (if not the same as owner) in development decision-making should be mentioned. If members of an existing community are concerned with "external" aspects of future development, what are the primary concerns of future users, and what opportunities exist for their involvement in development decision-making?

Future users of a development are probably interested in every aspect of the buildings and communities they may occupy, for business, retail, or residential purposes. Unless they undertake building for themselves, they will be selecting space built "speculatively", on the basis of the neighborhood or community context, the appearance and size of the building(s) to be occupied, the cost of leasing or purchasing the space, and the internal organization and appearance of the space. Most users of speculative space come to the development after it is substantially planned on the exterior, though often the interior organization is flexible to some degree, such that individual users can make certain decisions about the internal organization and finishes. Almost all speculative office space is leased as a shell, and finished on the basis of the user's needs and preferences. Speculative residential space is often less flexible, for a number of reasons. Ideally, if future users can be identified before interior planning and design is accomplished, the user could

share in design decision-making with the developer and his consultants, or purchase "raw" space and undertake the responsibility for "finishing" it himself. Accomplishing this ideal in residential development has been difficult, though a number of interesting methodologies for doing so are available. One such method, utilizing "supports" and "infill" was developed by N. John Habraken, and is being utilized in Holland and in China. In those developments, the "developer" has been closely linked with future residents throughout the development process - in one case the developer was a cooperative society formed for the purpose of creating housing for itself.

In this country, residential condominiums are beginning to be offered as raw space in very expensive housing developments, where the future resident can afford to hire an architect and complete the space independent of the developer.

Unfortunately, though the techniques exist, most choice in residential development in this country occurs only at the level of different "models" or entirely different developments.

### The Design Professional's Responsibility

The design professional's responsibility for development decision-making is limited by the fact that his or her long-term involvement with the development is minimal. He or she does not have to live with the development on a day to day basis in the way an existing community and the actual users do, nor is he or she financially responsible as developers and owners are. The design professional is responsible for the environmentally sound and safe design of buildings, but is really not a primary decision-maker in the fundamental choice of what a development is to be. In making decisions about the fundamental nature of a development, his or her responsibility is that of an "expert consultant," who knows what relevant choices exist for any given situation and what it means to make certain decisions.

After these fundamental decisions are made, the design professional undertakes the responsibility of giving functional and formal coherence to the basic building program established by the primary decision-makers in the conceptual design phase of the development process.

In too many instances, primary decision-makers allow design professionals to take primary decision-making responsibility, usually at considerable risk, often without realizing it. This can occur when a developer doesn't really know what he or she is doing, or when design professionals are unable to frame choices and consequences such that developers

and other primary decision-makers can comprehend alternatives. Unfortunately, both these circumstances arise all too frequently. An example of such confusion of responsibility arose in a development case study I was involved with earlier this year.

A Boston area developer acquired an un-used school building in a working-class neighborhood to convert into condominiums. He went to his architect and asked him to design some one and two-bedroom condominiums in the building shell, but hadn't established a target market. The architect designed some very interesting and spatially sophisticated units, which the developer, himself a sophisticated upper middle-class person, liked very much. Once the condominiums were completed, the developer had a very difficult time leasing the units with loft-style bedrooms, open kitchens, and full communication between all spaces. He blamed his architect for designing units that couldn't be marketed in that neighborhood. His architect blamed him for not telling him specifically what to design. The architect found himself in the position of making what should have been the developer's decisions for him. The confusion of responsibility cost both parties their relationship, but really cost the developer, who sat on the project month after month, until it finally rented up. If the developer had taken responsibility for the important decisions about what to build and left the responsibility of giving form to his specific

program to the architect, the story would have ended happily.

The specific roles of the professionals involved in a participatory development process are discussed in much more detail in the following chapter. In summary of the above discussion of decision-making responsibility, however, we saw the opportunity for the developer and existing community to share the role of primary decision-maker in deciding the nature of a development, though the developer can mitigate the risk of losing control by focusing choice to within equally acceptable alternatives. Once the general nature of the development has been decided, the developer assumes full responsibility for manifesting the general plan, with the design professional taking responsibility for giving functional and formal coherence to the plan, and for design details and structural integrity. The full range of opportunities for involving the community in the development process will be seen in Chapter Four, after a complete discussion of professional roles and skills in Chapter Three.

### CHAPTER 3: ROLES AND SKILLS FOR A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

If earlier discussion has begun to establish an understanding of decision-making responsibility in a participatory development and design process, what (new or redefined) roles can be established for the professional actors involved, and what skills and attitudes, new or established, are necessary to fulfill such roles? This chapter discusses the professional players in a participatory process and focuses on redefining roles in order to fully accommodate the potential for the allocation of decision-making responsibility discussed in Chapter 3. It also examines the range of professional skills necessary to undertake these redefined roles, and compares such skills with currently accepted professional norms in an attempt to assess what major hurdles stand between today's standard practice and an environment where authentic participatory development and design is possible.

#### Developer: The Leading Role

Today's average real estate development organization is most likely made up of energetic and individualistic entrepreneurs with some training in business and a orientation toward the bottom-line. The developer is considerably more sophisticated than was the case fifteen years ago, before high interest rates, participating mortgages, and a heightened public awareness of environmental and political concerns made

the development business an extremely complicated affair. This developer is most likely a charming and skillful negotiator, interested in originating exciting and profitable projects but minimizing risk wherever possible. It is also likely that the development entrepreneur of the '80's is not interested in holding onto projects forever, probably because he or she needs to "cash out" in order to get the next project rolling. Nor is this developer committed to neighborhoods, communities, or even "metropolitan regions." He or she often goes where the potential short-range profits are highest, constantly uncovering new territory and with it, new opportunities for profitability.

Today's developer likes to work in privacy, lining up all the pins by night such that when the ball finally starts rolling one morning, there are no "loose cannon" about, threatening to blow the project out of the water. Absolute control is a primary objective, with working under wraps seen as an expedient means of maintaining such control in a complex and adversarial development environment.

In contrast, the developer interested in involving members of an established community in a participatory development process acknowledges a different path to the successful bottom line, or in the case of a non-profit community-based developer, has a different definition of success. He or she is interested in working with the community, listens to and gains strength from the community, and is open and forthright

with that community throughout the development planning process. He is committed to creating a development that will be well integrated into the existing community, not merely accepted but supported by the existing residents of the area. He or she is sincerely interested in the long-term success and vitality of his project and the community, and is willing to let others enter the decision making process not under coercion, but because he or she acknowledges the understanding and concern of those already in the community about their future, which he wants to become a part of.

The developer in a participatory process is the initiator and sponsor of the planning process. He acts as information source, financial technician, and joint decision-maker (with the community.) He establishes the limits within which he can responsibly allow other actors to enter the decision-making process, and orchestrates the host of consultants and advisors who contribute to the development plan. Finally, he manages the implementation of the plan as developed with the participation of the community.

In addition to the obvious skills of financial analysis, technical understanding and general managerial abilities, the most important traits of a developer interested in participatory planning are the ability to (not only listen but) hear and the ability to be flexible. It is also of utmost importance for a developer to understand a potential development situation well enough to be able to set the limits

beyond which he or she is unable or uninterested in pursuing the development opportunity. That in itself requires considerable preliminary analysis and/or knowledge gained from experience, and can often represent substantial risk.

The responsibility of the developer to set the boundaries for joint decision-making poses some interesting problems, particularly for the profit-motivated developer. Because it is the developer who usually bears the financial risk and must respond to market demand, it is his responsibility to ensure that the participatory planning process yields a strong and marketable product. (One increasingly common exception to total developer risk is the public-private partnership, in which a public authority shares financial risks and rewards with a private development entity.) The objective is to create room for authentic and meaningful participation without putting one's interests as a developer at risk. Allowing participation could mean that some decisions, jointly made, might not maximize profit. Framing the opportunity for choice such that each alternative could result in equal profitability would be a good solution. This might be difficult to achieve, however, or might trivialize "participation" to the level of a multiple choice quiz.

In the Southwest Corridor Housing development project, the developer attempted to organize real choices that resulted in equal numbers of housing units at roughly similar costs. The developer began by analysing the capacity of the site,

making certain realistic projections about the target market, and established a rough number of units based on his requirements for splitting overhead, etc. That "unit count" remained relatively fixed, though the physical organization of the development changed considerably through the planning process. When it became apparent that the community was strongly in favor of reserving a much larger area for recreation than had been originally anticipated, the development team generated alternatives that met the requested recreation needs yet had a higher net density in areas designated for housing than the original idea suggested. The need for increased capital expenditure for the recreation facility was met by changing the targeted income mix to include some market rate units in place of moderately-priced units which the community desired. The compromise was a success, and demonstrated the necessity for creative flexibility on all "sides" throughout the planning process.

Today's developer has most of the "hard" skills necessary to successful involvement in a participatory process, with perhaps the exception of the ready ability to analyse the financial implications of a number of alternative development scenarios simultaneously at an early conceptual stage. Perhaps the more important shortcomings of the average developer, however, involve "soft" skills and attitudes about cooperation, conciliation and disclosure.

One of the most important soft skills involves the ability to uncover and analyse community sentiment about development before taking the risk of investing a considerable sum of money for site control. That involves much much more than checking zoning restrictions, reading design review ordinances, and talking to public officials (both elected and bureaucratic) about official short- or long-range plans for growth and development. It entails considerable sleuthing amongst brokers, real estate lawyers, and most importantly, key members of the community where a potential development site is located.

Equally important among "soft" skills is the willingness to listen to and communicate with ordinary people with respect and attention. A hurried, condescending, or contemptuous attitude toward members of the community is crippling to the developer who wishes to undertake significant change in a community without confrontation. Also critical is an up-front commitment to cooperate and negotiate in good faith with community members. Strong interpersonal and negotiating skills can be learned, but do little good if the necessary commitment to cooperate and build consensus is absent. Such commitment involves recognition of the positive good of community involvement, not just in terms of the romanticism of "responsible development", but with a recognition of the potential marketing attractiveness of community support and positive publicity. In addition, such cooperation can lead to

real savings in carrying costs associated with a more expedient approvals process.

### Planners and Architects: Dual Roles

Good planning and architectural professionals are essential to a successful participatory development and design process. The need for a skillful and creative understanding of potential physical organizations appropriate to any given development idea cannot be over-emphasized. Yet design professionals occupy a peculiar niche in a process that attempts to make complicated information both available and understandable to laypersons (a term which unfortunately is often applicable to the developers themselves as well as community residents.) As discussed in Chapter Two, though design professionals select and organize information, they are not legitimate decision-makers at the stage of conceptual design, unless through the desire or default of those more rightfully in the drivers' seat. The fact that they control information through selection and presentation makes it very difficult to resist injecting their personal values into the decision-making process in the preliminary stages of physical planning. This dilemma greatly complicates the already-difficult process of design, perhaps making the roles of architects and planners the most difficult of all the actors in a participatory development and design process.

My involvement in the SWC housing development project

brought a number of these problems home to some degree, even though my own professional education was largely oriented toward a typological understanding of form, a "systems" approach to design, and took place in an environment that purged one of every last drop of ego! I previously mentioned my first instinct to hoard all decisions about site organization, etc. for myself, explaining how complex design was, leaving others a mere advisory role in the early stages of development planning. When, with a little help from a valuable friend and mentor I acknowledged that such behavior as a consulting design professional was in no way encouraging real participation, I realized that my previous education and experience had not prepared me for a truly inclusive approach to preliminary design, though I did have some appropriate fundamental tools in the way of design methodology under my belt. Working with those tools and the advice of a few respected teachers and colleagues, I tried to piece together an ad hoc method of getting the community meaningfully involved in the preliminary design process. As suggested in the introduction, my frustration led to selecting the topic for this thesis.

The approach I organized to engage the participation of the community in the project involved exploring the preliminary ideas and objectives of the primary decision-makers (community members and the development sponsors), exploring, illustrating, and explaining possible typological

alternatives and their characteristics, and advancing only when they had made selections to pursue based on their own values and priorities, not mine. Site design and building typology/density selection were accomplished in this manner in working group meetings open to the entire immediate community, as described in Chapter one.

Design professionals undertake different kinds of roles at different points in a participatory design process. In the preliminary stages of decision-making, designers contribute their ability to generate and elucidate responsible physical options. They should do this without expressing their own values to the fullest extent possible, yet produce real options of functional and environmental excellence from which the legitimate decision makers can select ideas to pursue based on their own systems of value, not those of the designer(s).

Later on in the design process, after the fundamental decisions about what the development is to be have been made, it becomes no longer possible for the untrained to make decisions about physical aspects of the development. The planner and/or architect must then assume the role of decision-makers with respect to formal (aesthetic) organization and technical details, continuing, however, to work within general preferences and guidelines established by the primary decision-makers.

The role of design professionals proposed in the previous paragraphs is an ideal seldom achieved in today's professional environment. Though it receives a fair amount of lip service amongst architects and planners, those same professionals are rarely equipped with the skills of analysis and communication nor the professional attitudes necessary to act as "experts" without indulging their own value systems through the control and manipulation of information to their clients. This comes about in part because of "professional" education which imparts an attitude of superior values, a highly specialized and exclusive professional "language", and an orientation toward "subjectively satisfying objects" rather than an emphasis on analytical skills, a morphological/typological understanding of form and formal systems, and excellent communication skills utilizing language common to "everyman". Another great problem, perhaps less the result of professional training than a personality trait common to many architects, is "design ego."

The most important design knowledge/skill critical to a successful participatory design involves a clear understanding of and ability to manipulate a full range of different building typologies at different densities. At the level of clearly distinct typologies, choice for the untrained is both apparent and accessible. As will be further discussed in Chapter Four, pure (building) types (though hopefully never actually built) are easily understood because they are

abstractions, without all the confusing details that one, particularly if untrained, gets caught up with when attempting to deal with actual buildings in comparing alternative forms. The unfortunate confusion of associations when details of actual buildings and their contexts are "in the picture" makes the use of "real" models less desirable than typological diagrams at the stage of conceptualization.

Working with untrained decision-makers utilizing typological alternatives at the preliminary design decision stage is distinctly different from grinding away in isolation on a "unique and distinct" design concept based on a couple of client interviews. To many designers the simplification of basic decisions about site and building organization through the use of typological models (in order that laypersons can enter the decision-making process) threatens their status as "creative" professionals. Yet this level of decision making does not really attack the meat of the creative work in the design process, which remains in the later stages of design at which time the formal decisions involving scale, proportion, facade etc., and the highly rigorous technical decisions of sound architectural practice are made. In these latter areas, decision-making responsibility remains primarily in the hands of architects and their consultants, who hopefully continue to work closely with both existing residents and future "users" in order that their work reflects the aesthetic preferences of the citizens living with the development.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

Chapter Four discusses a full range of possibilities for engaging community participation in a development and design process. The chapter is organized in three parts, paralleling the major phases of a typical development process.

Part One examines the Pre-Design Phase of the development process, and includes Market Analysis, Specific Site Selection, and the Selection of Planning and Design Professionals.

The subject of Part Two is the Design Phase. It offers general ideas about community participation in various phases of design decision-making, including "conceptual" design, "design development," and the final stages of detailed design and specification writing. (Part Two does not contain a methodology for community participation in design - that is the subject of Chapter Five.)

Part Three surveys the "realization" phase of the development process, looking for opportunities for community involvement beyond the design phase up through and including property management.

## PART ONE

### Market/Area Analysis

Any real estate development project begins with a market. In many instances, market analysis occurs without reference to a specific site, but in the context of a region, a city, or a district or community within a city or town. Usually, real estate developers are attracted to areas that have strong economies and significant demand for real estate product. A general understanding of an area, then, often precedes the selection of a particular "market niche" or physical site. At even this basic level of development activity, one can identify specific developer attitudes and procedures important to community participation in the development process.

#### SPECIFIC MARKET/AREA ANALYSIS ACTIVITIES

- analyse economic trends
- analyse transportation/access in the area
- understand general real estate demand
- analyse the type of market
- understand other new development activity, both in planning stage and under construction
- ANALYSE TYPES AND DEGREES OF COMMUNITY CONCERN ABOUT GENERAL AND SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Most items on the above list of specific areas of analysis to be undertaken at the most preliminary phase of any development project are relatively standard - in fact the list is based on an outline of the development process presented in a lecture on "Managing the Development Process" given by Hank Spaulding, Executive Director of MIT's Center for Real Estate Development. The last item, however, is often overlooked, or

considered unimportant with respect to other areas of analysis toward understanding the characteristics of a region. Yet identifying and understanding community concern about development is a very important aspect of preliminary analysis for any intelligent developer, whether or not he or she is sympathetic to the notion of community participation in the development process. Understanding the history of an area with respect to concern about development could be the key to narrowing down site selection within a region or city, especially for developers who wish to avoid an area where they will be questioned, challenged, or even blocked. It only makes good business sense to be as fully aware of the social and political atmosphere in the community in which one wishes to do business as one is of more commonly defined "business-related" factors like the cost of capital, the availability of capable contractors, or the market price for a square foot of developable land.

Many areas of the country (the world, even) have reputations as either receptive or contentious with respect to new development. Boston and San Francisco, for example, are known to be relatively difficult areas in which to gain approvals for development. It would be ridiculous for a developer to attempt to do business in such an area without fully understanding the history of, the pertinent regulations concerning, and general public attitudes toward development and redevelopment. Going even further, it would be equally

unwise for a developer to consider entering such a market unless he or she was ready and willing to understand and accomodate the concern of citizens and authorities in the community.

The public attitude toward development is to some extent reflected in specific legal constraints or requirements controlled by redevelopment authorities and planning boards. Such constraints, however, are usually just the tip of the iceberg with respect to community concern about development activity, are almost always "behind the times," and frequently too general to aid in understanding specific sites. Moreover, because official constraints are for the most part codified, they represent "fixed" restrictions and requirements devised and controlled by professional bureaucrats. As such they are much less likely to cause problems along the already difficult road to project approval.

Often elected officials, such as mayors or city council representatives represent more current public attitudes toward development, which have yet to be codified in zoning or design review legislation. Boston's Mayor Ray Flynn is an interesting example. He is actively pursuing policies and legislation to restrict downtown development in favor of neighborhood development in response to an "electoral mandate" to strengthen the neighborhoods through economic and real estate development. Such elected officials can in some sense be seen as the community "one step removed." The ability of

elected officials to coherently represent a number of individual constituencies or neighborhoods, however, is limited. It is for that reason that developers must ultimately approach and understand the citizens themselves.

This can happen at even the most preliminary stages of inquiry as to development possibilities in an area. The key to a successful reading of community concern lies in identifying people in the community that have leadership roles or who wield influence in some way or another. Individuals such as this can be found in religious and civic organizations, local business councils, neighborhood oriented social service agencies, or as unaffiliated yet active and involved individuals who command respect in the community. In most cases, one such person leads to another, so that once one has "broken the ice," one is made aware of a number of influential people who might be helpful in understanding the real nature of the area. Local planning boards are usually receptive to inquiries about recent development experience in the town, and are often a good place to start when exploring a new community.

In the case of the SWC Housing Development project, the lead developer (though already a member of the community) approached the heads of important public service agencies even before contacting the public planning agencies. These were individuals embedded in the community, active in day-to-day goings on, whose agencies were strongly committed to serving

the community. The service agency directors were further able to identify key citizens who for some reason or another would be able to exercise influence over other community members. Through the existing network of community leadership, the developer was able to understand the nature of community concern and to organize an inclusive planning process around that understanding. Perhaps more importantly to the eventual success of the planning process, however, was the very fact that important community people were contacted at a very early stage in the process. Just that brief contact alone was the beginning of a number of positive working relationships between the developer and the community that proved extremely helpful throughout subsequent development planning.

#### Specific Site Selection

Development activities at the site selection phase of the development process routinely include a number of operations related to establishing a fair land value (and that of any existing property on the premises.) This includes evaluating the state of existing infrastructure (if any exists), assessing locational advantages and disadvantages, understanding current zoning and design control regulations, and coping with the problem of financing the eventual land acquisition. It is important to extend the kind of investigation concerning community sentiment around development that was hopefully undertaken in the earlier phase

of market/community analysis. At this phase, however, the inquiry should happen at a much more specific level, directed towards understanding the attitudes of the specific community(-ies) adjacent to any particular site under consideration.

A proper assessment of the range of community feeling about development is very important in establishing land value, similar to an understanding of allowable F.A.R. for any particular site. Selection of a controversial site could result in substantial diminution of eventual project value, particularly if community dissent resulted in interminable delays, extensive re-design expenses, perhaps even an eventual down-zoning. Understanding what a community will permit (perhaps even support) before taking the significant step of land acquisition will contribute to arriving at the proper land value, a more streamlined approvals process, diminished overall financial risk, and perhaps fewer sleepless nights.

In some cases, assessing public sentiment and gaining early credibility and support within the community could be instrumental in obtaining favorable zoning variances, re-zoning, or critical environmental approvals often necessary before final land acquisition is acceptable within a developer's risk structure. Such rezoning rarely occurs, however, before some degree of preliminary design has been undertaken.

## Selecting Design Professionals

Before it is possible to begin the very important Design Phase of the development process, the developer must first undertake the important task of interviewing and selecting design professionals to assist in generating alternatives and providing technical expertise in the preliminary design process. Because the design phase is that within which the most important fundamental decisions affecting the future of the community will be made, it is important to find planners and architects both sympathetic to and knowledgeable about including lay persons in the design process. It is also important to find professionals who are well respected in the community, not just within their respective professional groups, but within the community at large. Professionals who have previously demonstrated a sensitivity toward community feelings and priorities, and whose previous work has been well-received by the public at large will naturally improve the development team's ability to gain trust and establish positive working relationships on every front.

Perhaps equally important, however, are the personal communication skills of individual design professionals to be involved in the participatory design process. The ability to listen to what individuals and groups are really saying is crucial if one is to utilize their values in making design decisions. In addition, the ability to explain complex situations clearly and in common language is equally

necessary, in order to be able to present physical alternatives and their many qualities and ramifications to people not familiar with physical planning or architectural problems and processes. Though one would think all design professionals would have such communication skills, it is not always the case (professional elitism and specialized vocabularies characteristic of all the "professions" are partly to blame for this unhappy situation.)

In addition to the problem of specialized professional jargon is a situation that can only be described as class bias among designers. As most architects are upwardly mobile, upper middle-class persons, it is not surprising to discover that many have great difficulty dealing with people and preferences that do not reflect the values they aspire to. This is the cause of a fundamental problem in communicating with ordinary people, particularly from different socioeconomic or ethnic/cultural backgrounds than the design professional.

For that reason it is extremely important for a developer to carefully evaluate the design professionals he or she is considering working with in light of the need for open-minded professionals with good interpersonal communication skills. In view of the frequency with which communication between designers and users or existing residents fails, it is often advisable for a developer to share the task of selecting design professionals with members of the community he or she

will be working with. In that way, at least some of the more obvious pitfalls of communication can be avoided from the start of the design process.

## PART TWO: DESIGN

### Conceptual Planning/Design

The conceptual design process itself can be broadly organized into two stages - a preparatory stage involving only the developer and design professionals, and a joint decision-making stage which can include the community in addition to developer and designers. The first stage involves doing the basic "legwork" necessary to fully understand the physical and "legal" potential of the chosen development site. The opportunity to involve an existing community in conceptual design decision-making comes after this preliminary work is accomplished, and can continue through conceptual design into some levels of design development.

### Preliminary Work

The legwork begins, in typical fashion, with the preparation of an analysis of the particular site and its immediate and broad context. It should consist of an easily understood graphic set of documents explaining the existing site and any physical, social, or economic aspects of the site and its surroundings that may have a bearing on the potential development. Often it is the case that the designers charged with preparing such analyses need local help in understanding and interpreting information about a site's context, particularly with respect to social and/or economic aspects of the existing community. The designer's role is augmented by

the developer's investigative work, which is often in the form of "market studies" as well as demographic, land value, and political data. The development team should be prepared to be confronted by the community with aspects of the site context they may have neglected to notice or include in their analysis when first sitting down with the community. This occurs because the selection of information, even at the early stage of context analysis, is often governed by the values of the individual(s) directing the analysis.

Important aspects to include in the analysis include:

- surrounding land uses
- the scale and density of existing physical fabric
- the type and distribution of open space
- pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns in the community
- the socioeconomic status of residents in the community (includes ethnic/religious backgrounds & income levels)
- quantity, location, and type of retail and institutional service in the community
- any significant physical features, positive or negative, of the particular site in question

It is important that, when presented to the community, the analysis be presented as a beginning in understanding the site and surrounding community. This invites comment from the community, and helps to uncover aspects of the area the development team may have missed or interpreted as unimportant. Presenting even the site analysis as an open study to be shaped by the community establishes the coming planning/design process as sincerely participatory.

This preparatory stage also gives the developer an opportunity to understand and establish the limits, if any, he

or she must impose on the participatory process, with the aid of his design consultants and some preliminary financial analysis. Most likely such limits would reflect the developer's bottom-line, perhaps in the form of a minimum size for the development, in square feet of leasable space or number of units. Such limits might also reflect a developer's capacity or prior experience. Hopefully these limits reflect a realistic early understanding of community sentiment regarding the selected development site. Such limits essentially establish the developer's "BATNA" with respect to negotiating with the community. "BATNA" is a negotiating term meaning "best alternative to a negotiated agreement." In the context of this discussion, it means the point beyond which the developer is no longer willing to continue to pursue the particular potential development, or the point at which he must invoke his or her right to develop within the legal restrictions pertinent to the particular site (the as-of-right development) without the participation of the community.

It is possible, and often necessary, in this preparatory stage to begin to generate and evaluate alternative conceptual plans for the development site for purposes of understanding a range of options for the site before establishing limitations to community participation. This could result in a decision to narrow or focus the range of choice based on possible strong convictions of the developer or obviously unreasonable and superfluous alternatives. (An example would be the

elimination of low density, single-family housing as a development alternative for an overwhelmingly urban site.) It is best, however, if any such decision to narrow the range of alternatives is saved for early meetings with the community, so that all participating can understand why certain alternatives are unreasonable or superfluous and be involved first-hand in their elimination as potential solutions.

#### Involving the Community in Making Conceptual Design Decisions

Once a developer and his consultants fully understand a development site and situation, it is possible to include members of an existing community in the process of deciding what will be developed on the site. This is perhaps the most meaningful part of the development process for an existing community to be involved in, as it is the point at which the broad and important decisions are made about the form of growth and change in the neighborhood. Community involvement in this part of the design process can occur at varying levels, from the level of reviewing and approving preliminary plans to a more substantive position as co-decision-maker with the developer. Varying degrees of community participation have various "risk and reward profiles," each level unique with respect to each equally unique development prospect and community context. Quite obviously, a "review" role is probably not very satisfying for a community interested in

participation, but entails very little risk on the part of the developer. In contrast, community participation involving the right to select among designated schematic design alternatives is much more satisfying to a neighborhood group, but could involve more risk in terms of money and almost certainly more time for a developer.

In addition to varying levels at which a community is involved is the issue of the varying means through which community sentiment and preference is expressed. The structuring of "community groups" is in itself a good thesis topic. It is a very complex issue, which at the most profound level of inquiry has to do with defining "community" and the nature of power in social groups. Suffice it to say that each community is unique with respect to its degree of organization and internal power structure, which means that each and every development situation is unique. No hard and fast rules exist, only a range of general techniques to be "appropriated" for individual sites and situations.

Because of the importance of the schematic design in defining the shape of development within an established community, Chapter Five is devoted entirely to a methodology for involving an existing community in this phase of the design process. Successive phases of the design process, however, do not seem as vital to community control over local development. Moreover, they do not easily lend themselves to active participation by non-designers. For these reasons, a

community's role in design development and design details and specification decision-making will most likely be minimal.

### Design Development

The "design development" stage of the design process involves transforming the diagrammatic and somewhat abstract schematic plan into a much more detailed picture of real buildings. This involves making very complex and often largely "intuitive" decisions about the scale of buildings and their component elements, the formal organization of facades, the relationship between exterior form and interior organization, and the specific selection of materials, colors, and shapes that will somehow all work together to provide a pleasant and harmonious work of Architecture (capitalization optional).

In short, design development is about transforming a diagram into a useful and meaningful building. It involves using both rationality and intuition in an every-changing formula that no designer could honestly or accurately describe. The complexity of decision-making at this stage of the design process will probably always inhibit much meaningful involvement by more than a very few designers on any one project, much less the involvement of those untrained in architectural design.

Aside from the expression of "aesthetic" preferences before the designer goes to work, the only probable opportunity for the participation of lay-persons (including

the developer) in design development decision-making is that of review and approval. It must be noted, however, that some communication can occur with respect to general aesthetic preferences, but seldom is it meaningful when more than a few are involved in expressing such preferences, for quite obvious reasons.

#### Design Details and Specifications

As in most any endeavor, it is very difficult to continue to involve a number of people in decision-making as one moves from the general to the specific. This is particularly a concern in today's litigious atmosphere. The topic of professional responsibility comes up in reference to design details and specifications because such details constitute the bulk of a designer's "legal" liability. Particularly with details concerning structural integrity and life safety, involving non-professionals in this stage of design decision-making is assuredly not good practice. All this is said aside from the high probability that members of an existing community are not the least bit concerned with the small details of architectural and engineering practice.

### PART THREE: REALIZATION OF THE PLAN

Once a participatory development process has been successful through the schematic design phase, its sponsors must receive approval and support in a number of ways before actually building. The proposed development must be approved by any broader community development or design review authority, zoning officials, and be accepted by financial lenders and grant-makers, if any. It is at this stage of the process where strong community support can be rewarding for the developer. Where many potential projects stall in the approvals process, a development plan that has been carefully crafted with the existing community it will impact will probably move smoothly and quickly through the approvals process, riding on the strength of the immediate community support won through diligence and patience throughout the planning process.

#### The Approvals Process

Though in many ways the most important kind of approval for the potential development - that of the immediate neighborhood - is in hand at this stage, it is usually not an "official" approval. Moving through the necessary channels of authority is still necessary, though support of the immediate community is important in securing official approvals. The degree to which official development policy and bureaucratic practices respect the "will of the people" depends on a number

of things, including the size and complexity of the larger community, the nature of the presiding political structure (both official and unofficial) and the degree of activism and organization within individual neighborhoods. While every situation is unique with respect to power structure, having the support of the "impacted" community will greatly oil most approval machinery.

Because development in many towns and cities is controlled by a general development plan, often administered through design review and environmental impact assessment requirements in addition to the more traditional zoning controls, any major development plan must be reviewed in the context of this plan. Often a conflict arises between an area's official development plan and policy and the proposed development. This usually occurs when mid- or long-range development plans and policies are drawn up without reference to specific neighborhoods or sites, or change therein. Much of the static, segregational zoning legislation now in place in this country is an example of general land use and development controls that reflect no understanding of the potential of individual sites within a community in an atmosphere of change. In some parts of the country, Boston for example, the state of zoning regulations is so archaic and out of touch with the present reality of individual neighborhoods that every development proposal necessitates a re-zoning or variance hearing. This not always happens because

proposed development plans are unreasonable or out of scale, but because the zoning bureaucracy has been (and still is) incredibly slow to incorporate the reality of change in neighborhoods and changing land use theory and practice.

In the instance of the Southwest Corridor development proposal, the zoning restrictions reflected no understanding of the lot sizes, such that prevailing set-back requirements prevented much of anything being built on individual lots as then subdivided. To build anything remotely resembling an urban neighborhood would require re-zoning or a variance.

In any case, going through a re-zoning or variance process can be quite difficult without the support of abutters. A developer who has the support of not only abutters but a large part of the neighborhood immediate to the development site stands a much better chance of a successful zoning hearing than without that extensive support. When "impacted" residents stand up at such a hearing and pledge their support for a development project, it is difficult to reject it on the grounds of endangering the welfare of the community.

In some communities, the (political) power structure can impede the approval of even the most well supported development proposal unless residents of a community can be activated and organized to vocally support the proposal. In Boston's prestigious Back Bay neighborhood, residents pledged to support then Mayor Kevin White in the coming re-election if

he "facilitated the approval" of a well-supported proposal on a prime city-controlled development site. Votes do count, even in the most chaste political environment. They got their development!

### Financing the Development

Though the opportunity for active community participation in securing financing for a development is limited, there is one aspect of financing where community support is critical. That concerns the use of local, State, or Federal subsidies in the form of grants, low-interest loans, or mortgage guarantees. Particularly in today's climate of limited Federal commitment toward subsidizing housing and industrial development, competition is fierce. Because such competition exists, the presence of string community support can make a big difference for a developer applying for subsidy support, particularly when the distribution of limited subsidy funds occurs in a highly politicized climate.

Subsidy was key in the Southwest Corridor development process. Because the plan included moderate-income and some low-income housing, we needed Community Development Block Grant money at the City level, and rental and low-interest mortgage subsidy from the State. We were able to use direct community support in putting pressure on subsidy sources, in effect saying,

"We the people want our share of available subsidy money, and we want it allocated for this project which we helped plan and which we support."

Community support alone is not enough for obtaining subsidy funds - in every case the need for such subsidies and the overall financial credibility of the proposal must be well documented. But commitment to the community as demonstrated by a developers inclusion of community participation in planning the development is an additional reason for supporting the proposal with public subsidy, particularly when many "subsidized developments" (particularly housing) are unwanted by existing neighborhoods.

In some communities, local banks have shown a willingness to support projects that enjoy strong community support, in part for the sake of positive community relations. Bankers might, however, perceive less risk in proposals substantially accepted by the community, either because approvals will be easier or because leasing and sales may occur more quickly due to positive community sentiment. In the Boston area, for example, the Shawmut Bank has been extremely supportive of community-based development organizations. They understand that the such development sponsors are committed to both individual projects and the neighborhoods in which they operate, not out for the "quick buck."

### Community Participation in the Construction Process

There is no significant opportunity for involving an existing community in the construction of a new development other than utilizing local contractors, subcontractors, and labor in the construction itself. This can, however, be an area of interest in working class communities that see employment opportunity as a significant reason for supporting potential development. Particularly when unemployment is high, the jobs new development projects bring to an area are very important for the workforce, and are often seen as a "bargaining chip" in the approvals process, particularly when construction unions lobby in the favor of new development.

Some communities now have local labor requirements, which ensure that a certain minimum percentage of construction labor for area development must come from the local workforce. Boston has such a law in force, which has helped to assure some immediate connection between physical growth and the prosperity of working-class city residents.

Sweat equity in residential development should be mentioned as an opportunity for community involvement in realizing development plans, though it relates more directly to future residents in much the same way as "user" participation in the design process does. However, when existing residents of a neighborhood who rent their homes are interested in buying into a new development in their area, the opportunity to build equity through the contribution of labor

is more directly tied to the subject at hand, which concerns the existing community. "Early" sweat equity, when future residents contribute to the early stages of construction such as rough framing, etc., is only practical when equity laborers already live in close proximity to the development site - they are "existing" residents as well as future "residents". ("Early" sweat equity has always seemed to me to be a more realistic use of untrained resident labor anyway, since teaching people how to accomplish simple framing and foundation work is much easier than using such labor for the careful tasks of finish work. There must be a lesson here!)

#### Marketing a Development

The participation of an existing community in the marketing phase of a development process poses some interesting, if difficult to document, possibilities. An example may illustrate the potential of word-of-mouth marketing through the involvement of local citizens in planning a development.

Recently a Boston-area developer acquired a very well located site in an affluent suburban neighborhood, intent on developing luxury condominiums. Though the location of the site ensured some substantial degree of success, he wasn't exactly sure what to build in terms of unit sizes, amenities to include, etc. So he went about defining his project by tapping directly into what he understood his market to be -

affluent empty nesters. He did this by organizing a "design committee" of well-to-do middle-aged ladies from a nearby country club, and essentially asked them what they would want in a luxury condominium. His architect slaved for the design committee for quite some time, but the developer knew that by the time the ladies had accepted a series of designs, every person in the nearby country club would have heard everything about his new luxury condominium project, and that an even larger network of affluent groups would be alerted as to the magnificence of the project. Needless to say, he sold out before going into construction.

A less Machiavellian word-of-mouth marketing process occurred in the Southwest Corridor housing development process. As people in the neighborhood heard that some new, affordable housing was going to be built on Chestnut and Lamartine Streets, the development corporation began receiving calls asking what the houses would cost and when they would be ready. Partly because truly affordable housing is non-existent in any Boston neighborhood, residents participating in the planning process were anxious to let their friends and relatives know about the possibility of available housing. Some existing residents who were currently renting their homes were anxious to get a line on one of the new homes for themselves, long before a coherent development plan existed.

### Community Involvement in Property Management

Because communities are concerned about the on-going appearance and maintenance of property in their neighborhoods, residents often urge developers and building owners to include various requirements related to on-going property management for their developments. In the Southwest Corridor process, existing residents felt that a high degree of individual ownership would in some way ensure proper maintenance and care for the buildings and grounds, and strongly advocated homeownership for any new housing. In some cases, members of an existing neighborhood can negotiate with a developer for land covenants, which bind all future owners of a property to certain obligations in the way of maintenance, etc. In the case of rental property, residents can try to influence the form and content of management contracts to reflect their concerns about the future of the new development.

In some cases, strong neighborhood associations want to be actively involved in assuring proper management and maintenance of property in the community. Creating a management board of overseers that includes representatives from the existing community as well as new residents could provide some degree of influence, depending on the powers given such a body. It is difficult, however, to give a great deal of control over the management of a property to those who neither live on the premises nor have any financial responsibility with respect to the property. More common are

tenant management organizations, wherein the developer or owner of a rental property contracts with a management organization controlled by the occupants of the building(s) to accomplish maintenance, rent collection, etc. This gives rental residents a certain degree of control over their environs, yet is a contractual responsibility to provide responsible management and upkeep as stipulated in the management agreement. The use of tenant management organizations has met with some degree of success in Boston Housing Authority property, particularly with the "Bromley/Heath" housing project just a block from our Southwest Corridor Housing Development site.

## CHAPTER FIVE: A PARTICIPATORY DESIGN METHODOLOGY

This chapter addresses in depth the most important area of development decision-making for community participation - the "conceptual" or schematic design phase. It attempts to organize a design methodology that enables the meaningful and substantive involvement of non-designers in the process of deciding the fundamental nature of a potential development project. It begins with a discussion of conceptual design as "diagramming," presents the idea of using building "types" as the primary vehicle for organizing schematic design decision-making, and develops a general design methodology for transforming community issues into a schematic physical plan. The methodology is then "illustrated" in an "example" schematic design process using the Southwest Corridor Housing Development situation as source material.

At the conceptual stage of determining what a building organization "is" or "shall be", most designers utilize diagrams (doodles?) that can usually be understood as pure types or combinations of pure types. These diagrams are the designer's means of generating and evaluating design alternatives at the simplest, most unencumbered level.

Some, but not all, design professionals are trained to understand physical form as organizations of variations of pure types (variants). Because all but the most eccentric forms can be seen as variants or assemblages of variants at

different scales and densities, conceptual design can be looked at as a process of selection. In such a process the designer "selects" types from the full range of known building types and transforms them into variants that respond to the individual needs and requirements of the particular design problem at hand.

How a particular designer selects and manipulates types into variants depends on a number of things:

- knowledge of types and their inherent qualities
- how the designer understands/interprets the problem
- his /her own general system of values and priorities,  
AND/OR  
the existence of some set of agreements about selection and transformation established by or with other individuals (often other designers)

Because a designer must naturally rely on his or her own background and values to make decisions in the process of selection and transformation, it is difficult to ensure that the values of others more directly affected by the outcome of the process are guiding the decision-making.

James Siddall discusses the importance of understanding and incorporating other's values into the design process in an article entitled "Value Theory as a Vehicle for User Participation in Design:"

"Prescription of correct values is the key to successful design. . . .Designers cannot assume that users will make rational choices paralleling those of the designer."1

Siddall reflects the hope of concerned designers that because they are "trained professionals," they can substantially give

up their own values in order that those of others be somehow "absorbed" as a basis for the complex process of design decision-making. While many designers try to do this, few actually succeed, probably because to do so is fundamentally contrary to the way in which we, as human beings, select and control information. (An interesting discussion of the vast problem of information processing can be found in a 1976 thesis entitled The Architect's Role in Participatory Planning Processes.<sup>2</sup>) Because all selection and manipulation of information is shaped by our own personal knowledge and experience, it is impossible to engage in any form of decision-making without relying on our own individual "databases." Because this situation exists as a real and fundamental obstacle to the adoption of other's values for use in design decision-making, I believe the process of making decisions must be modified. To be sure that the values of clients, community, or users are really the basis for design decision-making, those parties must somehow be put in the position of making those decisions themselves. To accomplish this, there must be a means of sharing basic design information (the designer's knowledge of building form and qualities) with those whose values are to control the decision-making process.

The following methodology for conceptual design attempts to relate the designer's understanding of physical form to the

non-designer's everyday understanding of image and function. It works from a number of important premises about the built environment.

The first is that the built environment can be examined on many levels/scales, from the scale of building materials (hand dimensions) to the scale of geographic regions. One can focus on built artifacts at any level, and understand lower and higher levels as either subdivisions of higher level forms or aggregations of lower level forms.

The second important premise is that the most important and commonly understood level for discussion among untrained groups is the level of building, where one can easily identify a relatively small number of "pure" types. A pure type is an abstraction that represents a generic "kind" of building in its most simple and essential form. An example would be a "rowhouse type." We all understand what a rowhouse is as an abstraction. We know of the "rowhouse type" because we have seen rowhouses in many places in many parts of the world, all of which have certain essential qualities, but all of which are actually different. The idea of the "type" embodies the essential qualities that make a rowhouse a rowhouse. These basic qualities are probably very few in number, but are indeed essential in understanding the fundamental nature of a rowhouse with respect to other basic building types like the "detached house" or the "point highrise." Given the "type," we can imagine an entire world of specific variants. While we

have not seen the abstract "pure type" (because it probably doesn't exist outside of an intellectual construct) we have seen "variants" of the "type."

From these basic building types, the higher environmental level of streets and blocks are created through aggregation/combination with the support of various infrastructure systems (roads, utilities, etc.). Likewise, within the level of "building" one can understand lower levels as either subdivisions of buildings or as "units" in their own right. The building level is important because it is a primary component of image in the environment - buildings are the vehicle through which ordinary people (untrained in form-making) most frequently discuss the built environment. Furthermore, buildings and their aggregation to blocks and streets is what is most important to an existing community participating in the design of new development or redevelopment in their neighborhood. (The lower level of room cluster or dwelling unit, usually "internal" to the building, is important to the user of the building rather than the surrounding community - as has been mentioned before, this thesis is not directly concerned with that level of design participation.)

A third premise important to this methodology is that use is secondary to form. This means that most building forms are largely adaptable to various kinds of use (meaning residential, commercial, institutional use, etc.) Use can be

understood as interpretation of form, though it is true that specific building types do have intrinsic qualities and characteristics that can be related to use. This point of view is somewhat different from the traditional way of looking at the relationship between use and form, particularly in light of current zoning and building permitting processes in this country. The value of this attitude has largely been confirmed, however, with the last twenty years of adaptive reuse and innovative rehabilitation of functionally obsolescent or under-utilized buildings. It is an attitude that recognizes and facilitates on-going change in the built environment, without necessitating demolition and reconstruction with changing use.

Any reasonable design methodology rests on a firm understanding of the relationships between building types, their intrinsic and secondary qualities, image, and use. Any reasonable participatory design methodology enables ordinary people to easily grasp and understand these relationships, with the help of design professionals. As has been argued earlier, it is the responsibility and role of the design professional to organize such information so that it is readily accessible to laypersons participating in a planning/design process.

I believe that a participatory planning and design methodology is composed of two distinct things. First there is an ordering system delineating relations between form,

image, use, and other characteristics. Second, there is a procedure, or range of alternative procedures, for utilizing the ordering system. In the following pages I will develop a general design methodology, utilizing an ordering system and a procedure for moving through design decision-making with such an ordering system. It is meant as a model for designing with individuals or groups lacking a professional understanding of building forms and their qualities. At the end of the Chapter, I work through a design example, using the Southwest Corridor situation as "source material."

### The Ordering System

To meaningfully communicate with persons not trained in design, design professionals must be able to relate those person's concerns and desires into form as directly as possible. That can only be accomplished by being explicit about the relations between use, image, cost, density, (etc.) and form before the fact of a decision-making process is at hand, in order for design professionals to avoid wherever possible the value-laden task of interpretation. I believe this can be accomplished with what I will call an ordering system. Such a system would be relatively "universal", containing a broad range of information about building forms that represents professional design knowledge and experience. An ordering system could take many forms, however I imagine it as a matrix, or series of matrices, that attempts to explicitly relate general environmental issues and qualities with building types.

The design professional would be responsible for its original organization, though it could be modified by others (designers and non-designers alike) to suit specific circumstances, regional building materials and practices, and a general design problem context. Because such an ordering system represents in a sense the sum total of the designer's general knowledge about image, use, form, etc., a design professional would probably modify such an information constantly, as his or her knowledge of form, image, and use

relations grows with experience.

What would an ordering system as outlined above look like? The following pages present one example of how one might organize the relations between building types and their respective ranges of qualities and characteristics. It is a series of simple matrices demonstrating the intrinsic and secondary qualities of building types, organized by qualities such as use, possible forms of ownership, scale, the form of adjacent open space, etc.

ORDERING SYSTEM MATRIX

BUILDING USE

TYPE	RESIDENTIAL	OFFICE	RETAIL	INSTITUTIONAL	LIGHT INDUSTRY	HEAVY INDUSTRY
SINGLE FAMILY	YES PRIMARYLY SINGLE OCCUPANCY	POSSIBLE (VERY SMALL)	POSSIBLE ("BOUTIQUES")	POSSIBLE (VERY SMALL)	POSSIBLE ("COTTAGE")	NO
ROWHOUSE	YES PRIMARYLY ONE/TWO FAMILY	POSSIBLE (VERY SMALL)	POSSIBLE ("BOUTIQUES")	POSSIBLE (VERY SMALL)	POSSIBLE ("COTTAGE")	NO
WALK-UP BLOCK (SINGLE ENTRANCE)	YES MULTI-FAMILY	YES	FIRST TWO FLOORS ONLY	YES	POSSIBLE	NO
MID-RISE BLOCK (ELEVATOR)	YES MULTI-FAMILY	YES	FIRST TWO FLOORS ONLY	YES	POSSIBLE	NO
HIGH-RISE	YES MULTI-FAMILY	YES	FIRST TWO FLOORS ONLY	YES	POSSIBLE	NO

ORDERING SYSTEM MATRIX

BLOCK/STREET ORGANIZATION

TYPE	HIGH STREET DEFINITION	LOOSE STREET DEFINITION	DENSE COURT ORGANIZATION	OPEN COURT ORGANIZATION	OPEN BLOCK ORGANIZATION
SINGLE FAMILY	USUAL AT AVERAGE TO HIGH DENSITIES	AT LOW DENSITIES	POSSIBLE, BUT UNUSUAL	NO	NO
ROWHOUSE	YES	UNUSUAL: LOW DENSITIES	POSSIBLE HIGH DENSITIES	NO	NO
WALK-UP BLOCK (SINGLE ENTRANCE)	IF IN URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD	NO	NO	NO	YES IN SUBURBAN SETTINGS
MID-RISE BLOCK (ELEVATOR)	IF IN URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD	NO	NO	NO	YES IN SUBURBAN SETTINGS
HIGH- RISE	IF IN URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD, WITH "BASE BLOCK"	NO	NO	NO	YES IN SUBURBAN SETTINGS

ORDERING SYSTEM MATRIX

AVERAGE BUILDING HEIGHT

TYPE	1-3 STORIES	4-10 STORIES	11+ STORIES
SINGLE FAMILY	YES		
ROWHOUSE	YES	SOMETIMES 4	
WALK-UP BLOCK (SINGLE ENTRANCE)	YES	SOMETIMES 4/5	
MID-RISE BLOCK (ELEVATOR)	NO	YES	
HIGH-RISE BLOCK	NO	SOMETIMES 8-10	YES

ORDERING SYSTEM MATRIX

ADJACENT OPEN SPACE

TYPE	PRIVATE	SEMI-PRIVATE	SEMI-PUBLIC	PUBLIC
SINGLE FAMILY	YES, DIRECTLY RELATED TO UNIT	YES, IF BLDG. IS SUBDIVIDED	IF BLDG. USED AS COMMERCIAL	RARELY
ROWHOUSE	YES, DIRECTLY RELATED TO LOWER UNIT	YES, IF BLDG. IS SUBDIVIDED	IF BLDG. USED AS COMMERCIAL	RARELY
WALK-UP BLOCK (SINGLE ENTRANCE)	NO	NO	POSSIBLE IF PHYSICAL SEPARATION	YES
MID-RISE BLOCK (ELEVATOR)	NO	NO	POSSIBLE IF PHYSICAL SEPARATION	YES
HIGH-RISE	NO	NO	POSSIBLE IF PHYSICAL SEPARATION	YES

ORDERING SYSTEM MATRIX

IMAGE: EXTERIOR PERCEPTION/ARTICULATION OF DWELLING UNIT

TYPE	ALWAYS	POSSIBLE	USUALLY NOT	VERY UNCOMMON
SINGLE FAMILY	YES UNLESS SUBDIVIDED			
ROWHOUSE	YES BY ENTRANCES			
WALK-UP BLOCK (SINGLE ENTRANCE)		(WITH MASSING OR BALCONIES)	YES	
MID-RISE BLOCK (ELEVATOR)		(WITH MASSING OR BALCONIES)		YES
HIGH-RISE				YES

ORDERING SYSTEM MATRIX

IMAGE: THE CAR

TYPE	ADJACENT		REMOVED
	FRONT	BACK	
SINGLE FAMILY	YES IN DRIVEWAY OR GARAGE	YES WITH LONG DRIVEWAY	NO
ROWHOUSE	POSSIBLE (WITH SETBACK)	USUAL (WITH ALLEY)	POSSIBLE (CLUSTERED)
WALK-UP BLOCK (SINGLE ENTRANCE)		NO	ALWAYS (SURFACE OR UNDERGROUND)
MID-RISE BLOCK (ELEVATOR)		NO	ALWAYS (USUALLY UNDERGROUND)
HIGH- RISE		NO	ALWAYS UNDERGROUND

ORDERING SYSTEM MATRIX

POSSIBLE FORMS OF OWNERSHIP

TYPE	FEE SIMPLE	CONDOMINIUM	COOPERATIVE	RENTAL
SINGLE FAMILY	YES (INCLUDES YARD AND PARKING)	POSSIBLE		POSSIBLE (OWNER ABSENT)
ROWHOUSE	YES (INCLUDES YARD, SOMETIMES PARKING)	POSSIBLE	POSSIBLE	POSSIBLE (OWNER ABSENT OR PRESENT)
WALK-UP BLOCK (SINGLE ENTRANCE)	NO	YES (COMMON OWNERSHP. OF STRUCTURE AND GROUNDS)	YES (COMMON OWNERSHP. OF EVERYTHING)	YES (OWNER ABSENT OR PRESENT)
MID-RISE BLOCK (ELEVATOR)	NO	YES (COMMON OWNERSHP. OF STRUCTURE AND GROUNDS)	YES (COMMON OWNERSHP. OF EVERYTHING)	YES (OWNER ABSENT OR PRESENT)
HIGH-RISE	NO	YES (COMMON OWNERSHP. OF STRUCTURE AND GROUNDS)	YES (COMMON OWNERSHP. OF EVERYTHING)	YES (OWNER ABSENT OR PRESENT)

ORDERING SYSTEM MATRIX

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION COST OF BASIC SPACE

TYPE	LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
SINGLE FAMILY	POSSIBLE IF VERY SMALL LOT	YES	POSSIBLE IF DIFFICULT OR LARGE SITE
ROWHOUSE	POSSIBLE UNLESS LARGE UNITS	YES	UNUSUAL
WALK-UP BLOCK (SINGLE ENTRANCE)	YES	POSSIBLE IF DIFFICULT SITE	NO
MID-RISE BLOCK (ELEVATOR)	POSSIBLE WITH SMALL SITE	USUALLY	UNUSUAL (DIFFICULT SITE)
HIGH-RISE	NO	POSSIBLE IF CHEAP LAND	YES

ORDERING SYSTEM MATRIX

AVERAGE BASIC OPERATING/MAINTENANCE EXPENSE

TYPE	LOW	AVERAGE	HIGH
SINGLE FAMILY		POSSIBLE (VERY TIGHTLY BUILT)	YES
ROWHOUSE	POSSIBLE (VERY TIGHTLY BUILT)	YES	POSSIBLE (INDIVIDUAL HEATING SYSTEMS IF 2/3 UNITS)
WALK-UP BLOCK (SINGLE ENTRANCE)	YES	POSSIBLE (INDIVIDUAL HEATING SYSTEMS)	
MID-RISE BLOCK (ELEVATOR)	YES	POSSIBLE (INDIVIDUAL HEATING SYSTEMS)	
HIGH-RISE	POSSIBLE (DEPENDS ON HEATING SYSTEM TYPE)	YES	POSSIBLE (DEPENDS ON HEATING SYSTEM TYPE)

### Procedures: Using the Ordering System

The procedure for using the ordering system is local, specific to each project and participating group. It represents the dialogue between the professional and the non-professional, enabling individual's and group's understanding of function and image to relate to the design professional's knowledge about form. It must also somehow bring specific information about the site being planned into focus to help provide a specific context for discussion and decision-making.

If a fairly complete ordering system exists, the procedure for translating community (and other) issues and concerns into building form can originate almost anywhere in the spectrum of use-image-density-building type, (etc.) - one can, for instance, arrive at building types through the selection of qualities, uses, etc. desired. It is important that the procedure be flexible because people not trained in understanding and manipulating form do not themselves know where to start in a design process - they just know what their general concerns are in terms of image, function, or some other everyday kind of criteria. In general, a procedure for translating community or development issues into a schematic plan with the aid of an ordering system would occur as follows.

The design procedure begins once an ordering system is in hand, a "working group" is assembled, and preliminary meetings and discussions between the developer and the community group

have occurred, from which has emerged the issues and concerns of both parties important for the eventual physical plan. The working group is composed of the developer, his or her design consultant(s), and the community group formed (by whatever means) for purposes of participating in the schematic design process. As mentioned earlier, the ordering system is organized by the design professional(s) on the basis of his or her (their) general understanding of building types and their various qualities.

The first step of the procedure is to review the ordering system with the working group, to familiarize participants with the concepts involved, and to allow participants to modify or add to the ordering system based on their own interpretation of physical forms and their relationships to the issues at hand. The modification is done in open discussion and negotiation between all parties involved. The design professional's prime responsibility is to clarify information and point out latent relationships or possible conflicts or problems with proposed modifications, but not to control modifications or additions - that is the responsibility of the developer and the community group, who are the primary decision-makers in this process.

Once the ordering system is modified and generally accepted, the discussion turns to the issues and concerns at hand. If the ordering system is fairly complete, most issues and concerns are represented in some fashion or another in the

matrix of relationships, such that participants can see how building types are related to such issues. No matter what issues come up first in the discussion, or what eventual priority can be established for the concerns, the matrix demonstrates what building type(s) can best accommodate the topic at hand. As the group works through the issues, the choices of building type and the trade-offs between issues become apparent. At some point the discussion and negotiations, which should be controlled by a competent moderator, reach a point where decisions must be made about priorities among issues in order that some selection(s) can be made. It is possible that several building types or a mix of types may be appropriate to the issues and concerns as they have been worked through.

In any case, the eventual selection of type(s) allows the process to continue at a second level of decision-making, concerning secondary formal qualities important for the development, like the form of parking, the degree of articulation of dwelling units, the specific organization and density of the block, etc. That can be accomplished through the generation and selection of alternatives. The design professional is responsible for demonstrating alternatives, and the primary decision-makers would select from the range of alternatives generated by the designer. The working group proceeds in this way until decisions are made about the secondary qualities the group agrees are important to discuss

jointly.

From this point on, it remains the perhaps unique professional skill of the designer to make the necessary transformations of pure building types to reflect specific site conditions, assure formal coherence, and inject life into the schematic plan or "diagram". He or she knows the building type(s), general information about scale (height and degree of unit articulation), general setbacks, the preferred organization of access and parking, and has a feeling for the desired exterior materials of the buildings. The kind of information the designer now has to work with corresponds to a complete design program (with the exception of criteria for interior (unit) organization, which will eventually come from the developer and/or the eventual user, if known.) The drawing up of a schematic plan based on this information completes the participatory conceptual design process.

### Using the Methodology in the SWC Process

Let us see how a conceptual design procedure using the "matrix" ordering system described at the beginning of this chapter might have worked in the Southwest Corridor Housing Development planning process. As was described in Chapter One, community residents brought up a number of issues and concerns at the first large meeting. Issues related to housing included:

- any housing should be affordable
- no absentee owners
- buildings should be of a small scale, to fit in with the existing neighborhood as much as possible
- no "housing projects"

The first issue is one of cost. Since our matrix includes relations between relative cost and building types, we could have selected a range of types that had low relative cost as a first cut at building type selection. We would have come up with "low-rise block" as the type with the lowest relative basic cost, followed by "rowhouse" and then "single-family" and "mid-rise block."

The second issue, indicating a desire for owner-occupancy, would lead us to the matrix describing relations between ownership of "unit", adjacent open space, and parking with building type. We would have seen that the "single-family" and "rowhouse" types usually allow direct ownership of the dwelling unit, adjacent open space, and parking. Other types would allow condominium or cooperative ownership of the dwelling unit and non-adjacent parking, but no direct

ownership of adjacent open space (if any.)

The third issue, that any housing be in scale with the existing neighborhood, would take us to the "Scale:Height" and "Scale: Unit Articulation" matrices. We see that the "single-family," "rowhouse," and "low-rise block" types fall within the one to three storey height range similar to the existing neighborhood. The "Scale: Unit Articulation" matrix suggests that a high degree of unit articulation exists with "single-family" and "rowhouse" types, but is only marginally possible with the "low-rise block" type.

The last major issue, that there be no "housing projects" like the nearby Bromley-Heath Public Housing, would probably eliminate the "low-rise block" type as a possible candidate for the development.

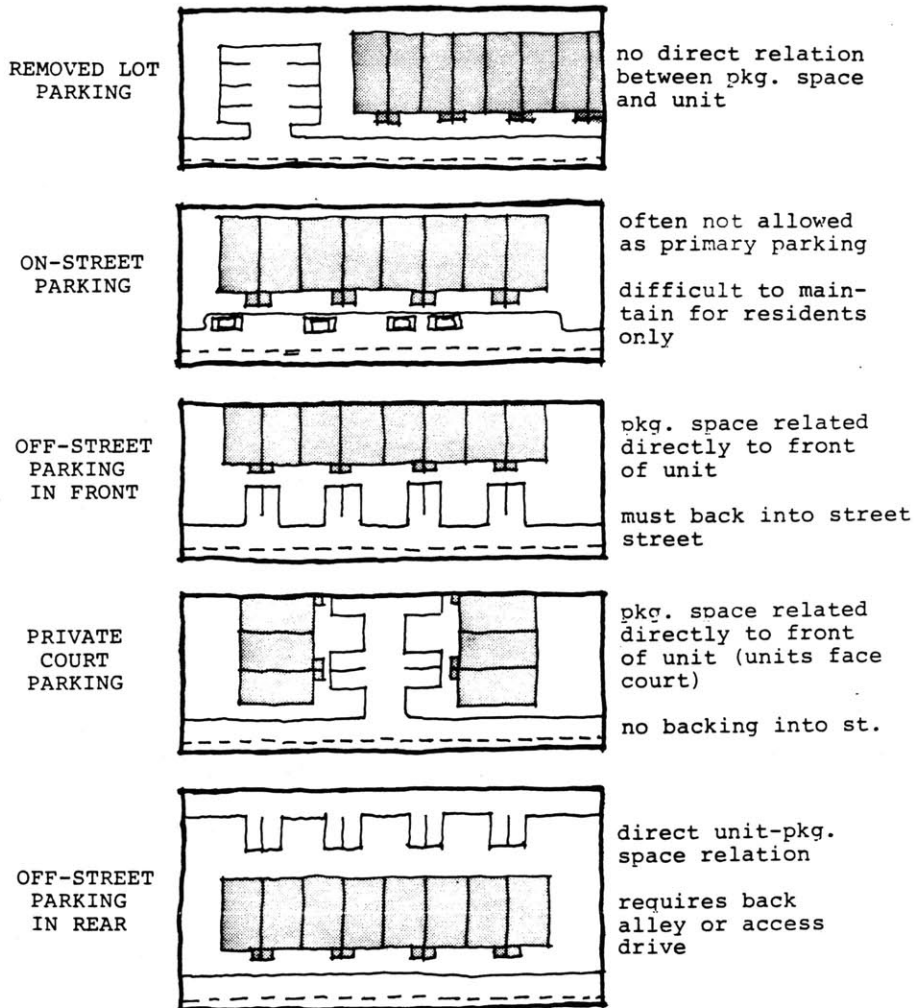
By the time we work through the issues, we find that only one building type responds to all the issues and criteria brought forth by the community - "rowhouse." The matrices have been very useful in demonstrating the relationships between the ideas of the community and building form.

Let us see how the proposed method for encouraging participation in the second level of design decision-making might have worked with the Southwest Corridor planning process. As a group, we had selected townhouses as an appropriate building type to pursue. But a number of decisions remained to be made before we had a schematic plan.

The important decisions had to do with:

- inclusion of public and/or semi-public open space
- form of access and parking
- street setbacks
- degree of unit articulation/massing
- general facade materials

A number of general alternatives are possible for each of these secondary qualities. They can be shown in the form of diagrams, with additional sketches or photographs to suggest "life" for the diagram. Access and parking alternatives, for example, could be demonstrated in the following simple fashion:



The working group could discuss these various alternatives, and decide among themselves which alternative(s) for the designer to pursue in drawing up a schematic design. It is still the designer's responsibility to put all the pieces together into a coherent plan, making adjustments and giving dimensions and scale to the organization. Final approval of a schematic design is the last primary responsibility the existing community shares with the developer in the design phase of the development process.

From this point on in the design process, the community's decision-making responsibility changes from one of primary decision-maker (with the developer) to one of review. The essential decisions concerning the nature of the development have been made by this point. From here on, the developer and the design professionals are responsible for all decisions about design development and details, as in traditional development practice. It is still important for interested members of the community to review and make comments about the developed plans, however the developer's need for control over construction details, scheduling, and cost make it imperative that the continuing role of community be only advisory.

NOTES

(1)

from James Siddall:

"Value Theory as a Vehicle for User Participation in Design," in Design Participation, Nigel Cross, editor  
London: Academy Editions, 1972, p. 92

(2)

from William David Martin:

The Architect's Role in Participatory Processes: A Case Study of the Boston Transportation Review, an M.C.P. thesis, M.I.T., 1976

(3)

These ideas are attributable to Professor John Habraken, whose lectures I have so often enjoyed at M.I.T. Many can be found in the following:

N. John Habraken:

Transformations of the Site,  
Cambridge: Atwater Press, 1983

N. John Habraken:

Supports: An Alternative to Mass Housing'  
New York: Praeger, 1972

## CONCLUSION

This thesis started with the idea that involving a community in the development process could be an effective means of easing the pains of growth and change in existing communities. It opened a discussion of why members of a concerned community might want to involve themselves in making decisions about specific development projects, and began to look at how that might happen. It also began to study the benefits and risks of such involvement from the point of view of developers.

The exploration for opportunities for community involvement in Chapter Four yielded a great number of possibilities for participation in many phases and stages of the development process, each with a different "profile" of benefits and commitment. The kinds of professional roles, skills, and techniques for participation mentioned in Chapters Three and Four and the design methodology developed in Chapter Five begin to constitute a realistic modus operandi to effect such opportunities. I think it is fair to conclude that the possibilities for community participation are in fact substantial and within our reach as development and design professionals.

If the skills, techniques, and methods for achieving the participation of an existing community in development decision-making are in fact attainable, whether or not to incorporate citizen participation remains as a matter of real

choice for developers and their consultants. How the development industry (can one yet say "profession" ?) will view the choice probably depends on the unique nature of individual development organization and the community context of each project it pursues. Some general comments can be made, however, about what kinds of developers and design professionals might opt for the choice of community participation in the development process, and why.

Most likely the banal distinction between Left and Right will ring true with respect to the choice of community participation. Hard-line, traditionally conservative organizations will most likely reject the idea of participation on the basis of traditional views of property rights and "laissez faire" business practices, preferring to fall back on the "as-of-right" zoning allowances for any given site as a basis for decision-making. One can imagine, however, a world of missed opportunities due to this way of operating. Happily, because real estate development in today's world requires increasing degrees of "entrepreneurial risk-taking," this older breed is dying off (in spite of our ultraconservative banking industry.)

The same can be said in the design profession. The conservative design "elite" will probably always consider their design knowledge both precious and privileged. To share even the conception of Architecture with the unwashed masses threatens their very existence, not to mention their hard-

fought status as "professionals."

A younger, more aggressive strain of developers has seen latent opportunities beyond the secure world of zoning by-laws and bureaucracies. It has reaped considerable profit by sitting out long and involved planning processes involving community groups in order to achieve zoning variances and get approvals for imaginative and ambitious projects. The Charles Square development in Cambridge, Massachusetts, developed by Carpenter and Company, is the result of such imagination and forbearance. The approvals process, involving long and often contentious negotiations with the city and the very active and influential "Neighborhood Ten" community group, took eight years. The financial reward for sticking with it, however, will be enormous. The group this developer represents is substantially motivated by profit, yet sees certain degrees of community participation as a necessary part of doing business in areas where citizens are environmentally aware and active. They approach the situation positively, but only because their estimation of the eventual reward for doing so outweighs the commensurate risk of time and money.

At the other extreme of the liberal-conservative development continuum is a relatively new phenomenon in real estate development - the community-based not-for-profit development organization. Such organizations probably represent the most fertile ground for the growth of community participation in the development process. Community-based

development corporations are springing up all over the country, in part because the traditional democratic process has failed to give concerned citizens the kind of influence they realized was vital to controlling growth and change in their own communities. These organizations are in many instances outgrowths of community-based social service agencies, with a mandate to serve the real estate needs of a specified constituency, which often includes peoples of lower income, or of disenfranchised racial and ethnic groups. These development corporations are usually controlled by a Board of Directors made up of local citizens, who measure the organization's success in terms of its community constituency's values and goals. The part of the community represented by the Board is participating in the development process in the most fundamental way, by controlling the process from within rather than from the periphery.

Nonetheless, these organizations still depend on the skills and methods for participation discussed in Chapters Three, Four, and Five, because they are controlled by a minority part of the community. Usually, however, this minority is motivated, because of its own community base, to respect the concerns of each specific neighborhood in which they operate as a matter of principle if not for more concrete reasons.

It follows quite logically that techniques and methods for incorporating community participation in the development process will for the most part be adopted and further

developed in the growing not-for-profit sector of the development industry. Though significant steps might be taken toward citizen participation in the for-profit sector, the interest and motivation there is at best intermittent, quite naturally related to specific projects rather than to fundamental organizational purpose and long-range goals as is the case in the not-for-profit sector.

After all, the thinking and exploration that went into the preceding hundred or so pages was motivated through an involvement with the world of not-for-profit development. It was a personally rewarding involvement, if only because I know that people like Hector, Antonietta and her twin little girls, Mr. Berardi and Mr. Rizza (and their gardens), Mary McCarthy, and the Chestnut Avenue baseball club will live happily ever after in their neighborhood beside the Corridor. In ten year's time, Change will have come and gone, but they will be left stronger, not weaker; richer, not poorer.

As for thinking and writing, the time spent will have been more than worth it if only one tiny step toward harmonious growth and change in our neighborhoods results. I think it's fair to say that there's a long stretch ahead.

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