RESIDENTIAL FABRIC AS MEMORABLE CITY FORM:
A Study of West London and Bath

by
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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores the idea of an 'intermediate order' in city form, one that lies between texture and monument, as an attempt to explain the form of London. Unlike Paris, London does not have a grand order of boulevards, plazas and monuments. On a map, it is the imprint of the residential squares of West London that is legible. Texture and monument are defined in the context of the ideas of Rossi, Rowe and Smithson. A definition of the intermediate order was proposed as one wherein a primarily residential fabric provides the legible, articulated urban spaces that give order to the form of the city. An analysis of two examples, West London and Bath helped clarify the characteristics and value of the intermediate order. The development of the Bedford estate of Bloomsbury, was analyzed to reveal typical ordering systems and the urban qualities of its organization and architecture. The study concludes that the intermediate order is essential for an understanding of cities like London, and for showing that residential environments can create public spaces and memorable city form.
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Anand, his wife Rupa, Rahul their son, my brother Amit and his fiance Susan, for their
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Introduction

On experiencing the extraordinary residential squares of London (Bedford, Fitzroy, Belgrave, etc.) and Bath, I observed that this beautiful, ordered environment is the ideal way to live in a city. An urban, civic life was encouraged in these uniform, modest terrace houses and squares with their shared gardens. By foregoing their front garden, the community got something more. Commonwealth Avenue in Boston is a good example too, because the rows of houses look out on a shared park in between that runs for miles, right in the city. Even the name 'Commonwealth' is appropriate. At Bath, the ensemble by the Woods - Queen Square, the Circus, and Royal Crescent - revealed that it was possible to create stunning architecture and urban spaces from groups of houses alone. I had believed until then, that it was only for the public realm, that memorable spaces and architecture were created.

This thesis explores the relationship between precincts with residential squares and the form of the city. Traditionally, two principal orders characterize the form of a city, 'textural' which is primarily made up of housing and one that is a foil to the 'monumental order', which is a clearly articulated network of public spaces and significant buildings. Nolli's plan of Rome (18th century) illustrates these distinctions between the two orders, by identifying the monuments through the floor plan while leaving the urban fabric shaded, as an unarticulated mass. The large scale monumental order as seen in the grand axes of Paris or King's Way, New Delhi, is missing at
London and Bath. And yet, the gridded order of the West End in London and the figural quality of the squares, and the fact that there are so many of these squares (over fifty in West London), has substantial bearing on the form of the city. Therefore, even though these residential squares do not fit either ‘texture’ or ‘monuments’, yet they do contribute to the order of the city.

The idea of an intermediate order between 'texture' and 'monument' was proposed, and this was defined as one wherein a primarily residential fabric provides the legible, articulated urban spaces that give order to the form of the city.

The analysis of the two examples, West London and Bath helps clarify the characteristics and value of the 'intermediate order'. Only in studying both case studies did the idea of the ‘intermediate order’ actually emerge. I searched for underlying principles to explain the coherent, humanly scaled and almost casual urban spaces at London and Bath, which are so very different from the institutionalized, heavy handed, interventions such as one finds in Le Corbusier's Chandigarh.

The aim of the study is to clarify the effect of the residential fabric on the form of the city - its ability to give order to the city and make it memorable. Further, it is essential to identify those special qualities of West London and Bath which give to the 'intermediate order' its distinct character and legitimacy (beyond simply being a gray area within the overlapping of the 'textural' and 'monumental' orders).
The thesis does not however, involve itself in a detailed analysis of West London or Bath in the manner of Bill Hillier's morphological studies of movement patterns, encounters and visual relationships of urban space. Nor does it attempt to pin down ideal proportional relationships in terms of the ratio of 'figure' to 'ground' or building height to street/square widths, or even the various dimensions for blocks and house lots, in the search for an ideal urban space. I feel it is better to get a general sense of the scale and character of the area, as it is impossible, if not dangerous, to replicate exactly these forms in alien contexts.

The thesis begins by sketching out a theoretical background for the ideas of the 'intermediate order'. Aldo Rossi's framework for the city is discussed, as are Rowe's observations on the relationship of 'texture' and 'object'. The terms 'monument' and 'texture' are defined with the help of various examples. Smithson's idea of a city as made up of fragments is discussed in the context of Bath. A case for an 'intermediate order' is made and a definition is offered. Finally, a matrix that compares the three orders and their formal characteristics, is explained with examples.

The following two chapters discuss the case studies of West London and Bath respectively. For London, a topographical development of the city is discussed first, followed by the principal features of the West End in the

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context of London. Next, the Bedford Estate of Bloomsbury is discussed against the background of the story of the Great Estates and an understanding of the principles of Georgian town planning as identified by Summerson. The last section discusses the essential characteristics of the intermediate order as revealed by the estate planning in the West End.

The final chapter on Bath begins by explaining the development of the form of the city from Roman times. This is followed by an analysis of the main elements of the ensemble designed by the Woods: Queen Square, the Circus and the Royal Crescent. The last section places Bath within the 'intermediate order' and makes a case for it being a memorable city of fragments.

While there exists an overwhelming amount of material on London and Bath, I found few studies that discussed the form of the two cities. Rasmussen's book was one of the only useful studies of the urban history of London from a formal point of view. I worked directly with maps and drawings as much as possible. At Bloomsbury, I studied the forces on the site and the different stages of growth, trying to recreate some of the planning decisions. Maps of West London at fifteen-year intervals enabled me to have a better sense of how the West End developed. There are superb maps of London - the well known one by Rocque (1746) is elegantly drawn, with the blocks shaded; another by Horwood (1799) is richly detailed and shows every house in the block; one of the few aerial maps is

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the ‘Balloon View’ (1851); and the fascinating Booth’s ‘Poverty Map’ (1889), which shows superimposed on central London, the different social classes, from criminal to wealthy, differentiated by seven colors.\(^3\) The drawings prepared by Shane were immensely useful, especially the one of the Estates, Interstices and Contour in Central London which shows very clearly the adjustments of the regular and the irregular to the context; and the figure-ground/ground-figure’s which reveal the gridded order of West London.\(^4\)


Fig. 1 Urban Fabric and Monuments. An analysis of Nolli's plan of Rome by Pancrai et al.
Chapter 1.0
‘Texture’, ‘Monument’ and the Intermediate Order

1.1 Definitions of ‘Texture’ and ‘Monument’

Traditionally, the form of a city has been explained as comprising essentially two different orders: texture, which is the housing that makes up most of the city; and monuments, which comprises the public realm of religious, civic and state institutions and gathering open spaces. A drawing that illustrates this idea perfectly is a plan of Rome by Giovanni Battista Nolli, engraved in 1748. Here Nolli identifies the many monuments of Rome - churches, and piazzas as ground floor sections, drawn in detail and markedly distinct from the urban fabric which is left unarticulated and simply rendered as poche.\(^5\) Often, these monuments and public spaces are regular, symmetrical and designed as compared to the irregular pieces that make up the remainder of the city.

It is the purpose of the monumental order to give an identifiable, visual structure to the city.\(^6\) In a certain sense this order becomes the diagram of the city. Examples of the monumental order are Washington D.C., with the axis of the Mall, the Capitol and the Lincoln Memorial; Paris with its

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Fig. 3 Other monumental orders - Paris, Washington and New Delhi.
grand boulevard from the Louvre to the Arc de Triomphe and further to La Defence (5 miles long!); and New Delhi’s classical arrangement with the President’s house at the climax of a grand avenue, the Kings Way. These places hold meaning for the citizens and help them locate themselves in the city and, more importantly, order their lives. It is the monumental order that is responsible for making the city memorable.

Although our discussion is limited to the built form of cities, we must recognize the value of powerful natural features such as rivers, lakes and mountains that also have a role in determining the character of the city and serve to orient their citizens to location and the passage of time (the changing seasons).

In the essay, “Crisis of the Object: Predicament of Texture”, Rowe and Koetter explain an aspect of the relationship between texture and monument as follows: “...the solid and continuous matrix or texture giving energy to its reciprocal condition, the specific space; the ensuing square and street acting as some kind of public relief valve and providing some condition of legible structure; and just as important, the very great versatility of the supporting texture or ground. For, as a condition of incidental make up and assignment, this is not under any great pressure for self-completion or overt expression of function; and, given the stabilizing effects of public facade, it remains relatively free to act according to local impulse or the requirements of immediate necessity”.  

relationship between texture and monument, are “the debate between solid and void, public stability and private unpredictability, public figure and private ground.”

Rossi does not refer to texture and monument in his treatise, but develops a somewhat different categorization to describe the overall structure of the city. *Area* or *sector*, is the residential district or urban quarter; *Primary elements* are those that serve as nuclei of urban development, and comprise of monument, street plan and city center. Primary elements are also those that persist in the city’s evolution. They are responsible for the configuration of the city. Rossi also refers to these Primary elements as ‘Permanences’. ‘Area’ and ‘Primary elements’ are for him, the two principal artifacts of the city. Therefore, for Rossi, monuments or the monumental order are a subset of a larger group, and he explains - “Monuments, signs of the collective will as expressed through the principles of architecture, offer themselves as primary elements, fixed points in the urban dynamic.”

He further states: "As the core of the hypothesis of the city as a man-made object, primary elements have an absolute clarity; they are distinguishable on the basis of their form and in a certain sense their exceptional nature within the urban fabric; they are characteristic, or better, that which

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8Ibid, p.62.
10Ibid. p.52.
characterizes a city. ...If one looks at the plan of any city, these immediately identifiable forms leap out as black spots."\textsuperscript{11} Although the examples Rossi often gives are monuments like the Theater at Arles and the Palazzo della Ragione in Padua, he stresses that monuments are not the only primary elements. The plan is also a primary element, equal to a monument like a temple or a fortress. Here the plan essentially means the layout of streets and blocks - planned or unplanned (emerging without conscious planning). Rossi quotes Lavedan as follows: "whether it is a matter of a spontaneous city or a planned city, the trace of its plan, the design of its streets, is not due to chance. There is an obedience to rules, whether unconscious in the first case or conscious and open in the second. There always exists the generating element of the plan."\textsuperscript{12} And finally, the nucleus of a planned city is itself also a primary element.

The concept of the Study Area is defined by Rossi as those urban areas that have physical and social homogeneity. Residential or dwelling areas that display "consistent modes and types of living are realized in similar buildings,"\textsuperscript{13} like the large workers housing estates in Holland, fall under the Study Area.

Therefore, for Rossi the dwelling area or residential fabric has a certain character, and contributes to the form of a city only in so much as a city is made up of many constituent parts, the dwelling area being one of them.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid. p.99.
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid. p.100.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid. p.64.
Nothing more. Rossi does not entertain the idea that the residential fabric could actually become a primary element, let alone attain the level of a monument with the quality of 'permanence' which is of such value to him.

Admittedly, as compared to the traditional categories of 'texture' and 'monument', Rossi does expand the definition with a more inclusive category, namely 'primary elements'. In this category is included 'plan', which is illustrated with examples of two Roman towns, with its all powerful grid. Would Savannah and New Ebenezer, with their modulated grid made up of a residential fabric, fit this category?

Further, it is understood that 'texture' has no figural quality at all, that it is simply anonymous fabric. How then, beyond being a foil for the monumental set-pieces can the fabric actually contribute to the formal structure of the city? What is the relationship between these two orders? Is there any overlap possible between them?

In the case of the town of Bath, the large scale composition by the Woods - Queen Square, the Circus and the Royal Crescent, makes for a powerful ensemble. It has figural quality, is clearly legible in plan, reads volumetrically, and is tautly controlled experientially. And yet, all three elements are completely residential!

Smithson explains that Bath does not really have a town plan in the sense of
cities like Karlsruhe or baroque Berlin with their pre-determined form. Instead, Bath is a "scatter of events", the above mentioned elements being the most evocative, there being many other lesser squares, crescents and promenades. Thus, Bath falls more within the 'picturesque tradition', with these events carefully positioned in terms of interval and measure, the powerful classical architecture somewhat leavened by the beautiful setting of gently rolling hills. Does Bath then just follow another tradition of town planning?

At Bath, the strongest impression of the city is of the urban residential architecture without monuments. 'Texture' attains a certain memorable quality.

1.2 A case for an Intermediate Order

As has been stated before, the form of a city can be explained as comprising two principal orders: 'textural' and 'monumental'. 'Textural' is essentially made up of housing and provides a foil to the 'monumental order', which is a clearly articulated network of public space and significant buildings. However, these categories are not always useful, in that they cannot fully explain some cities like London or Bath.

London does not have a grand scale, monumental order like the mall in

Washington D.C. or the grand axis of Paris. London does have some monuments - St. Paul's, Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament, and it has Regent Street and the Embankment. However, none of these are related to each other, so as to create a clearly legible, planned order for the city. Yet, the West End of London is planned in a sense. There is a basic formal, gridded order of streets and blocks, and there are the beautiful residential squares that have a figural quality easily read on a map. There are over fifty such squares in an area that is over four times that of the Old City. The West End, though mainly residential, cannot be described as 'textural' because of it's formal order and figural quality. Nor does it belong to the 'monumental order'. As the West End is not the public realm, it has few public institutions, monuments or grand 'set-pieces'. Also the West End is not composed and it does not have a predetermined form. There is much adjustment to circumstance in terms of existing roads, villages and landscape features, in the West End estates. Therefore, how would one describe the form of London and that of one of it's major constituent parts, the West End?

The form of the city of Bath too, is difficult to grasp using the concepts of 'texture' and 'monument'. Most of the city is residential. There is one grand set-piece - the ensemble of Queen Square, the Circus and the Royal Crescent by the Woods. While this contributes to giving the city a legible, formal structure, the ensemble is fully made up of houses. None of the urban open spaces in Bath have any public institutions on them! Moreover, the Woods' ensemble, though composed in a sense, is very powerfully related to the topography and history of Bath. So here too we have a difficulty in understanding the form of Bath through 'texture' and 'monument' alone.
I would like to propose that there is an 'intermediate order' as distinct from those of 'texture' and 'monument'. This order is something more than simply an in-between zone, a mere overlapping of the two principal orders. *The 'intermediate order' is defined as one wherein a primarily residential fabric provides the legible, articulated urban spaces that give order to the form of the city.*

London and Bath are the primary cases through which I argue the case for an 'intermediate order', and these are discussed in chapters two and three respectively.

*Matrix of Comparative Orders:* In the following section - 1.3, I have put the main characteristics of the three orders in the form of a matrix. The 'textural' and 'monumental' orders are explained with reference to general examples such as Rome, Paris, Delhi and Washington, D.C. The 'intermediate order' is explained specifically for West London and Bath, individually. This would enable fixing as precisely as possible, the characteristics of this somewhat elusive 'intermediate order'.

The characteristics used to study the orders are primarily formal: legibility, figure-ground, hierarchy, composition, scale, adjustments, uniformity, growth, material and construction. However, I do include the valuable ideas of meaning, significance and memorability.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>TEXTURAL Order</th>
<th>INTERMEDIATE Order #1</th>
<th>INTERMEDIATE Order #2</th>
<th>MONUMENTAL Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXAMPLES</td>
<td>ROME, PARMA, OLD-DELHI, PARIS, MANHATTAN, ISFAHAN</td>
<td>WEST LONDON</td>
<td>BATH Also, Edinburgh, Savannah, New-Ebenezer, Jaipur</td>
<td>ROME, NEW-DELHI, PARIS, WASHINGTON D.C., ISFAHAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMAL STRUCTURE</td>
<td>solid, anonymous fabric, undifferentiated tissue, irregular, asymmetrical</td>
<td>general, gridded order; 'looser structure' balance between regular &amp; irregular, an informal monumentality?</td>
<td>'scatter of events', picturesque design in terms of 'measure' &amp; interval of events</td>
<td>a clearly articulated network of public spaces and significant buildings regular, symmetrical, axial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEGIBILITY/ FIGURE-GROUND</td>
<td>a foil for the monumental order; a backdrop 'ground' poche 'solid'</td>
<td>some figural quality, 'the squares as fine geometrical figures on the map'</td>
<td>strong figural quality, especially the circus &amp; crescent, (distinct forms),</td>
<td>'figure' 'diagram of the city'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAIN, SIZE OF PIECES</td>
<td>fine grain, smaller pieces</td>
<td>fine grain</td>
<td>fine grain</td>
<td>larger, set-pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIERARCHY</td>
<td>limited hierarchy</td>
<td>the squares give a degree of hierarchy to the precinct, different sizes of squares, also larger houses along the squares, 4 grades of houses</td>
<td>many different squares, crescents, promenades of varying scale and formality</td>
<td>well developed hierarchical order, defining the status of public institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPOSITION</td>
<td>not-composed - process of accretion, organic</td>
<td>composed to a lesser degree, only a basic grid master plan for the estates multiple centers</td>
<td>only the Woods' square, circus &amp; crescent complex is composed; lesser squares form multiple centers</td>
<td>composed - axes, vistas, grand avenues &amp; plazas, monuments unique, 'set-pieces'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADJUSTMENTS</td>
<td>extraordinary capacity to adjust to circumstance - topography, monuments...</td>
<td>estates adjust to stream beds, roads, villages (ref. Shane's drawings)</td>
<td>adjusts to topography - hills, vistas, landscapes</td>
<td>no adjustments, heavy handed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### MATRIX OF COMPARATIVE ORDERS II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>TEXTURAL Order</th>
<th>INTERMEDIATE Order #1</th>
<th>INTERMEDIATE Order #2</th>
<th>MONUMENTAL Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COHERENCE / CONSISTENCY</strong></td>
<td>coherent at the level of the district, but extremely varied individual pieces</td>
<td>very coherent, due to large estate development &amp; management, built in only about 150 yrs</td>
<td>coherence due to the same materials &amp; technology, and architectural vocabulary, and main elements built in 50 yrs! (demonstrates possibility of coherent structure of fragments)</td>
<td>coherence from designing the complete ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNIFORMITY, REPETITION, (standardization)</strong></td>
<td>limited uniformity, yet coherent</td>
<td>substantial uniformity - due to similar scale, materials, proportions</td>
<td>as above</td>
<td>as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FORMAL ELEMENTS</strong></td>
<td>streets &amp; blocks</td>
<td>streets, blocks &amp; squares, few public buildings - church, market primarily residential</td>
<td>streets, blocks &amp; squares primarily residential</td>
<td>more imposing streets, blocks &amp; squares; and monuments, parks, honorific buildings, public institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MATERIALS &amp; CONSTRUCTION</strong></td>
<td>can vary a lot</td>
<td>materials and details remarkably uniform</td>
<td>well crafted, materials and details remarkably uniform</td>
<td>precious materials, and every detail designed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GROWTH / CHANGE</strong></td>
<td>unlimited growth possibility, can expand without losing its structure</td>
<td>can grow to a certain degree without losing structure</td>
<td>can expand to a certain degree without losing structure</td>
<td>contained, limited growth possibility, size specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLIC / PRIVATE</strong></td>
<td>private realm</td>
<td>semi - public; no public buildings on the squares</td>
<td>semi - public; no public buildings on the squares</td>
<td>largely public realm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PURPOSE / ROLE / FUNCTION</strong></td>
<td>functional - providing housing</td>
<td>ornamental, adding to the quality of the city</td>
<td>ornamental, adding to the quality of the city</td>
<td>Symbolic/Ritual: related to birth, marriage, death-the stages of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEVELOPMENT PROCESS</strong></td>
<td>private or public</td>
<td>private estates &amp; their landlords</td>
<td>private landlords, and speculative builders</td>
<td>government, church, monarch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEANING / SIGNIFICANCE</strong></td>
<td>localized meaning, not significant for the entire city</td>
<td>holds meaning for a significant portion of the city</td>
<td>residential fabric is a principal aspect of Bath, together with the 'Aqua - sulis' - the spa</td>
<td>holds meaning for the entire city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEMORABILITY</strong></td>
<td>less memorable</td>
<td>memorable, yet not as an image for the city like the Mall in Washington D.C.</td>
<td>memorable, clear image of the city (level of permanences, Rossi)</td>
<td>the vehicle of memorability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. 7 Map of London, 1843.
Chapter 2.0
The Intermediate Order, Case #1: WEST LONDON

2.1 London - the scattered city

The city of London has often been described as an example of a ‘scattered city’ model, as compared to the ‘concentrated city’ model such as Vienna or Paris. London was the largest city in the world, in terms of size, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Several reasons have been offered. In continental cities like Paris, growth was restricted due to fortifications, whereas London was able to extend beyond the walls without any worry of safety; or that the favoured dwelling type in London was the single family house as compared to apartments or flats in Europe; and thirdly, that building sites in London were leased for long periods of time, often over 99 years, and this discouraged speculation and favoured expansion. There were other reasons too, but obviously there was no single, overpowering reason, but a host of reasons working together.

Topographically, the location of London is very important to the form of the city. The inland location as well as the absence of mountains or any other impediments, allowed for growth in all four directions. Historically, the site of London was not only determined by the natural, geographic conditions, and the fact that it was a great seaport, but that it was also a

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main junction of roads to the interior parts of England; this system of roads was set up by the Romans.

The city developed with London as the commercial city and Westminster as the seat of the government (Canterbury, being the ecclesiastical capital). The city of London grew westwards and southwestwards towards Westminster. The river Thames providing one edge and the parks - Regent’s, Hyde, St. James and Green Park defining the framework for the first stage of growth. Also, the palace of St. James and the houses of the royalty along the river, all helped set up future patterns of growth.

The convents that owned large tracts of land outside the City, were abolished by Henry VIII, and this land was opened up for development. Many villages grew, and as Rasmussen explains - “around every little village the buildings crystallized into a borough and that development was to continue, so that London became a greater and still greater accumulation of towns, an immense colony of dwellings where people still live in their own houses in small communities, with local governments, just as they had done in the Middle Ages.” 16

Some interesting figures that shed light on the reality of London are as follows:

In the year 1801 the population of the City of London was 1/6 that of the new ‘greater’ London; whereas in the year 1700, it had been between 1/3 -

1/4! The population of London increased by 4 to 5 times between 1600 and
1801, to 900,000. While London accounted for 10% of the total population
of England, Paris had only the low figure of 2.5% of the population of
France.  

2.2 Fragments of an ideal urban order

London lies between two convoluted hooks in the River Thames. The hook
to the east is called the Isle of Dogs. The old, walled City is located between
the two hooks. The growth of London proceeded westwards along the
straighter part of the river, towards Westminster, which was the seat of
government. The West End development is roughly bounded by the City to
the east, the River Thames to the south, Regents Park to the north, Hyde
Park to the west and Westminster, Green Park and St. James Park to the
south-west. The New Road from Paddington to Islington, that runs just
south of Regents Park was important in spurring development towards the
north-west, where earlier only fields lay.

In general, the structure of London can be explained as follows: the City as
the business district, the West End as the upper-income district, the East End
as the working-class district and the middle-income district lying fully south
of the River Thames.

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What makes the West End special? How is it different from the other parts of the city?

a) It looks ordered. It looks planned. There is a greater degree of coherence here than elsewhere in the city. There is a rough grid of streets, blocks and squares, a sense of geometric order - the rule of the 'straight line'. And yet, this order is not insistent in the sense of Cerda’s strict pattern in Barcelona. The fit with the surrounding city is so good that it appears almost seamless.

b) The squares are immediately legible - as "fine geometric figures in the map" (see the figure-ground drawing), and also, as experienced, because they are so numerous they set up a rhythm.

c) The overall layout seems more spacious, the precinct is more aerated with the squares and back gardens, and also there is a finer mesh of streets.

d) The streets are wider, and have a hierarchical order ranging from the main framework - Oxford Street, Portland Place/Regents Street, Tottenham Court Road, the New Road; the second order-streets like Harley Street that leads into Cavendish Square; smaller side streets and finally the culs de sac within the mews.

e) The figure-ground makes it clear that there is a general uniformity in the size of the pieces or the blocks themselves, and this lends a certain coherence to the West End. On the other hand, in the City, the pieces are considerably varied in size and somewhat random in arrangement; while in the East End, the South End and further reaches to the west and northwest, not only are the pieces totally of another kind - more row houses rather than blocks, but they are arranged in an adhoc way, without any fixed orientation or gridded order.

f) Most importantly, it is Regent street that gives the entire West End a legible
quality. Actually, it is more than the street alone, it is the entire plan of 'metropolitan improvements', designed by John Nash, which included the Regent Park and St. James Park layouts, Trafalger Square and parts of the Strand among other reconstructions. Summerson says that, "the whole of this immense plan, which gave a 'spine' to London's inchoate West End (and) had a far reaching effect on subsequent northward and southward expansion." The elements that reinforce this legibility are - the 100 foot wide Portland Place/Regent Street, Park Crescent and Park Square as the gateway into the Park, the Quadrant - a beautifully curved building that allows repositioning of the street on axis with the Carlton House and Pall Mall, and the hook where the street curves at Langham Place.

g) The clear topographical differences between the West End and the parks and the river Thames also help clearly define the boundaries of the West End development.

What are the qualities that give the West End its coherence and natural yet ordered character? What are the design principles at work here?

a) Estate size and Control: Of the thirty-five estates in the West End several were exceptionally large, these being the Crown, Harley/Portland, Bedford, Grosvenor, Portman and Cadogan estates. These large parcels of land made possible large scale planning, with a central authority - the landlords themselves, through their Estate offices.

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b) 'Little New Towns': The powerful landlords with their large properties worked not only with the market forces, but more importantly with an aim to embellish, to add to the quality of the city. They proposed a fully planned settlement - a New Town, complete with housing of different grades, a parish church, a market, a square with garden, promenades and more, as can be seen in the Bloomsbury Square (1660) and St. James Square (1665) developments, which were the first of their kind after Covent Garden (1631). This substantial control resulted in the order apparent in the layout, and for the comparative uniformity in the architecture and details. However, there were many difficulties too, such as the many different speculative builders involved, the long time span over which the estate was developed often in fits and starts, in keeping with the economy of the times, and sometimes the property was added to, changing the boundaries.

c) Response to circumstance: It is essential to recognize that most of the West End was once farmland, simply fields stretching for miles; and these formed the underlying structure for the residential precinct itself. Perhaps more visible is the irregular development that came up along the old, stream beds that feed directly into the river Thames. Existing villages were often respected, as were the older roads and cow paths. The new residential quarters developed responding to these contingencies. A drawing by Shane illustrates this relationship between the regular and the irregular (see Fig. ). The irregular pieces actually allow the regular, ordered pieces to work at a much lower level of intensity (in terms of axes, vistas and the like), and still be read powerfully.
In the Renaissance square, Lotz explains there was a "conscious attempt to create uniformity and to make the new harmonize with the old; ... they preferred to reconcile the new with the old, to preserve whatever could be preserved. In so doing, they did not bind themselves to any rigid scheme. The urge to create new forms was always tempered by respect for what already existed. Reverence for the historic past explains why old Italian squares are hardly ever alike." While this observation pertains to circumstance as built forms, I believe the argument holds true even in the context of West London, and explains to a large degree the variety, richness and naturalness of its urban form and spaces.

d) Variations of the Grid, the Block and the Square: There is a basic uniformity to the West End grid of streets, blocks and squares. At Bloomsbury, a typical block is about 450 feet long. The variations are within a narrow band with not larger than say, twice in size. In contrast, at the later developments at Hampstead, the blocks are more than three times longer and have no cross streets. A glance at the Davies map of the West End (Fig 11) makes absolutely clear the fine network of streets and the uniformity of the grain of blocks. The squares vary roughly from Russell Square, the largest at 690 by 673 feet and Tavistock Square at 540 by 360 feet.

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Fig. 16 Chronology of London squares.

Fig. 17 St. James Square, 1665.

Fig. 18 Belgrave Square, 1825
(Cubitt and Basevi).
2.3 The development of the estates: the case of Bloomsbury

The Great Estates
There were over thirty-five Estates in West London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These varied greatly in terms of land holdings. The principal ones were: Portland, Portman/Cavendish, Bedford and the Foundling Estates (from east to west), and the Grosvenor Estate and the Crown to the south. The Marylebone Estate, with an area of 543 acres was recovered by the Crown from the Duke of Portland and transformed into Regents Park. The Bloomsbury Estate of the Bedford’s was 112 acres and the Foundling Estate was 56 acres. All were very sizable pieces of property and very close to the City and Westminster.

There is a fascinating story full of scheming and intrigue behind the amassing of vast property by several powerful families. Marriages were especially arranged to increase strategic landholdings as, for example, in the bizarre story of Mary Davies and the Grosvenor Estate. 20

In earlier times the land of the Estates was the property of the Convents. After Henry the VIII abolished the convents, much of the property was given to favored courtiers and soldiers in return for military service or contributions to the war efforts. Also, in some cases, property was given on long term leases for the purpose of developments that would embellish the city, as can

be seen in the case of Henry Jermyn, the Earl of St. Albans, for the St. James Square development, and the Earl of Bedford for the Covent garden piazza.

The Covent Garden story

Covent garden piazza was the first residential square in London and it was enormously influential. Also, it was the first development by the Bedford Estate, and helped set a reputation for innovation and high standards repeated thirty years later at Bloomsbury square, and another century later at Bedford square. And finally Covent Garden was the first prototype of a contained town - a 'little new town'.

Inigo Jones was appointed as architect. He designed a large piazza surrounded on two sides by houses, linked together by an arcade. The center-piece was a church. Rasmussen explains that the Earl of Bedford probably had the Place des Vosges in Paris (1610), as his model, when he decided to build his aristocratic square. John Evelyn, in 1644, suggested Church Square in Leghorn as a prototype too.21

This development was immensely successful. However, the estate made a mistake by granting permission for a market to be held in the piazza. Over a period of time this market became permanent, with independent structures. The grandeur and magical atmosphere of the earlier piazza was lost to the smells and noise of the marketplace. The upper-class residents began to move out to other residences in the West End.

21Rasmussen,S.E. London... p.166.
Most importantly, Covent Garden became the model for residential square design over the next two hundred years, and that is for a large number of squares - almost 150 in all. In the fifty years following Covent Garden, 13 squares were planned, including Bloomsbury, St. James, Soho, Red Lion and Leicester squares.

**Principles of Georgian Town Planning**

Summerson identifies the cardinal principal of Georgian town-planning as the creation of urban units containing accommodation for all classes. Further, he says that the Bloomsbury square and St. James square schemes showed three clear development principles: 1) The Aristocratic lead - the presence of the landowner's own house in his square; 2) Complete unit of development, comprising square, secondary streets, market, and, perhaps, church; and 3) Speculative builder, operating as a middle-man and building the houses.

*a) Urban units accommodating all classes*: For the Foundling Estate development, the architect, Cockerell, suggested, "that there shall be such principal features of attraction in the Plan as shall not be too great for a due proportion to the whole but yet sufficient to draw Adventurers to the subordinate parts and these subordinate parts be so calculated as to comprise all Classes of Building from the first Class down to Houses of Twenty-five pounds pr. annum without the lower Classes interfering with and

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diminishing the Character of those above them, ...". 24

A study of Booth’s Poverty Map of 1889 is very telling. A color classification is used to signify the economic status of the residents of Central London. Seven colors are used - ranging from yellow (wealthy) to black (criminal, very poor). For Bloomsbury, Booth shows the following:

- **Wealthy (yellow)**: Bedford, Gordon and Tavistock squares, most of Russell square, Gordon, Taviton, Endelseigh and Upper Montague streets.
- **Middle-class (red)**: Most of Bloomsbury is colored red, including Woburn and Torrington squares and most streets.
- **Working-class (pink)**: All the mews, a few of the side streets and much of the property south of Great Russell street.

The remaining four categories - purple (mixed, some comfortable, others poor); light blue (standard poverty); dark blue (very poor) and black (the lowest grade, semi-criminals), are not present at Bloomsbury at all. 25 Yet, Bloomsbury was more homogeneous than most estates, including the Foundling Estate. Also, while the earlier Bloomsbury Square development included people from all social classes, the Estate later changed its strategy and focused on the middle class segment only.

Much of the lower class housing (earlier the mews and servants quarters) was sandwiched within blocks of first and second rate houses in surprising configurations. All the residents could share the same address - Bloomsbury

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or St. James, but could live according to their means: along the main square (Bedford Square), or the smaller squares (Gordon), or along the strip squares (Torrington Square), or the principal streets (Montague Place), or side streets (Store or Tavistock), or in the mews (Gower mews).

The Building Act of 1774. To establish rules for construction, the London houses were categorized under the Act. There were essentially four categories or 'rates'. A 'First Rate' house was over £850 in value and greater than 900 sq. feet in area, while a 'Fourth Rate' house was valued at less than £150, and occupied less than 350 sq. feet. The Building Act enabled the standardization of speculative building. Summerson is of the opinion that this standardization was good because it "...laid down minimum standards for working-class urban housing ...."26

b) Aristocratic Lead: It was often the nobleman as landlord or estate owner who took the lead in developing his estate. In many cases he himself had a grand house on the estate that became the focus of the development, as for example Lord Bingley’s house on Cavendish square and Bedford House on Bloomsbury Square. These aristocrats were often connoisseurs and patrons of the Arts, and paid attention to the visual character of the development. Not only did they set high standards, but they also had the wealth to maintain a long term view in the planning and management of the estate. Olsen explains that these estates not only built new towns, but they also helped carefully maintain these, and undertook renewal and redevelopment when

necessary. The Estate tried to keep in touch with changing tastes and needs of their tenants, as is seen in the introduction of plate glass windows and stucco.

c) Complete unit of development: The idea that these early estates in the 17th century were planned to be self-contained towns is somewhat surprising. It was unusual to find this kind of attention given to the planning of residential quarters. The Square with the largest houses around it formed the heart of the scheme. This was not enough by itself, and smaller, less expensive streets were also planned together with a parish church, a market and sometimes a cemetery. There was a careful grading of all the houses and streets, revealing a certain hierarchy - an ordering system. The residential quarter was a well defined precinct.

Rasmussen explains that there was another pattern at work in the West End. Instead of building along existing arterial roads, these town-units were planned within a grid of roads. A sort of rough grid of 1.0 km square was formed by the three main roads running east to west: the New Road (Marylebone), Oxford Street (the old Roman road to Bath) and Picadilly; and several less clear roads running north - south towards the river: Regent Street, Tottenham Court Road and Southampton Road.

It is interesting that Rasmussen in a 1978 appendix to his classic book,
London, the Unique City, written in 1934, compares these 'New Towns of the Past' to 20th century examples such as Milton Keynes.  

*d) Speculative builder as middleman.* Between the landlord and tenant, there was the builder who actually constructed the houses. Summerson explains that there were two kinds of speculative builders - those who speculated in land and houses, and those who speculated only in houses. The former included financiers, while the latter were mainly building craftsmen. The bigger speculators would acquire a piece of land, either freehold or leasehold, divide it into plots and build at their own expense or let them to smaller speculators. The smaller speculators would only take out a lease on a few plots, build the houses and sell the lease with the house.

The development of Bloomsbury

The Bedford Estate development of Bloomsbury was chosen for the following reasons:
- It is typical of Georgian town planning in that it includes Bloomsbury Square as a contained 'little town', and Bedford Square as a uniform square (both were innovations in the West End). The Estate also includes Gower Street which was criticized in the 19th century as dull, monotonous and typical of the worst in Georgian planning.

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29Ibid. pp.405-61.
• The time span covered by the Estate, 1660-1850 mirrors almost precisely the time period of the development of the Georgian West End.
• It has the largest number of squares of any of the estates. Today, of the original nine only five remain. The squares vary in size and shape, as do the urban blocks and streets.
• Bedford Square is the best preserved 18th century square in London.
• Bloomsbury is comparatively well documented in Olsen’s - Town Planning in London, Byrne’s new monograph on Bedford Square and the insightful writings of Gideon, Rasmussen and Summerson.
• Of all of the West End, I know and enjoy Bloomsbury the most.

There were essentially two phases in the building history of the Bedford Estate in Bloomsbury: the first before 1776, restricted to the area south of Great Russell Street and comprising of the Bloomsbury Square little town; and the second phase beginning with Bedford Square and continuing up to 1860, when Gordon Square was completed. Two hundred years in all, from 1661 when the first formal plan was imposed on the estate to the completion of Bloomsbury.

The Russell family acquired the two estates of Bloomsbury and Figsmead in 1669, through the marriage of William Russell, the son of the Earl of Bedford and Lady Vaughan, the daughter of the Earl of Southampton.

The principal innovations of the estate were as follows:
• The development of Bloomsbury Square as a 'new town', the first of its kind along with St. James Square.
• Bedford Square, as the first square in London since the Piazza in Covent Garden to be planned and built as a unit. Today it is important as the only intact 18th century square remaining in London.
• Large portions of northern Bloomsbury were built by two talented builders - Burton and Cubitt. It was Cubitt who organized all the building trades under one builder's domain, thereby revolutionizing the building practice of 19th century England.

The Bloomsbury Square development was laid out between Holborn Street to the south and Greater Russell Street to the north. By 1775, when construction began on Bedford Square, the essential framework of streets that formed the boundaries of the Estate were in place: Tottenham Court Road to the west, Southampton Road to the east, and the New Road to the north.

Development first grew on the western edge of the estate, along Tottenham Court Road, for two main reasons:
• Development in the Portland Estate had already reached the New Road and was exerting pressure on the Bedford Estate.
• The Duke of Bedford wished to keep his views towards Hampstead and Highgate open and therefore delayed in developing the property in front of his house. Pressure from the Foundling Estate forced the issue, and he decided to move, around 1800.

Later, there was pressure from the northern Euston Square developments across the New road as well as the need to fortify against the lower class
neighborhoods of Somer's town to the north-east.

An analysis of the three Estate master plans of 1795, 1800 and 1830, shows the following: 31

**1795:** The area north of the museum is developed while the gardens in front of the Bedford House are retained. Curiously, there are two paths that cross over the garden so as to connect the west side of the estate with Southampton road. Note: the property just south of the New Road belonged to the Duke of Grafton (Southampton Estate) and another strip just north of Bedford Square, along Tottenham Court Road belonged to the city.

**1800:** The 'Plan for intended improvements' shows that Bedford House and its large garden estate have disappeared totally and in its place are Russell Square, on axis with Bloomsbury square, and the largest square in the West End (690 by 673 feet) and another square - Tavistock, and to end the sequence, Euston Square to the north - bisected into two by the New Road. The intervening blocks and grid of streets are simply outlined, left unarticulated.

**1830:** There are several changes from the earlier plan, all of them north of Russell Square, as follows: the introduction of Gordon Square, as symmetrical to Tavistock square and about the same size; and two smaller, strip squares - Torrington and Woburn, toward the west; also, the London University building is in place, along Upper Gower Street, changing the

character of the residential precinct once and for all.

It may be observed here, that the property itself was not a fixed entity at all, as for example, the Bedford Estate acquired the property to the north, adjacent to the New Road, from Southhampton Estate and another piece to the west, adjoining Tottenham Court Road, from the city. Therefore, besides changes in the estate master plan due to changing economic cycles or demand, there was also this reason that the boundaries changed.

*How were the number of squares, their size and their disposition - that is their location - determined? Who drew up the master plans?*

The estate often hired an architect who provided the elevations that were to be strictly followed by the builders, as was the case with Cockerell at the Foundling Estate. However, it has not been established whether the Bedford Estate had architects draw up its masterplan, as these drawings are unsigned. As regards the number of squares and their location, one principle to keep in mind is that houses fronting a square or a major street could charge more rent, and were therefore more desirable for the Estate. Also, the Squares were considered the main attraction for future tenants.
1658
THE DEVELOPMENT OF BEDFORD ESTATE IN BLOOMSBURY - I.

BLOOMSBURY SQUARE 'LITTLE-TOWN' BEGAN 1660, IN THE AREA NORTH OF HOLBORN STREET. THE FOCUS WAS BEDFORD HOUSE AND MONTAGUE HOUSE. THE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDED A CHURCH AND MARKET. NO SIGNIFICANT BUILDING ACTIVITY FOR A CENTURY!

1777
THE NEW ROAD TO PADDINGTON, AS WELL AS SOUTHAMPTON ROAD (TO THE NORTH AND EAST RESPECTIVELY) ARE ALREADY IN PLACE, EVEN THOUGH THERE IS LITTLE DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN GREAT RUSSELL STREET AND THE NEW ROAD. CONSTRUCTION ON BEDFORD SQUARE BEGAN IN 1775.

1791
DEVELOPMENT ALONG TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD ONLY, AS DUKE OF BEDFORD AVOIDS CONSTRUCTION THAT WOULD SPOIL THE SPECIAL VIEWS FROM HIS HOUSE TOWARDS THE NORTH, TO HAMPSTEAD AND HIGHGATE.
THE DEVELOPMENT OF BEDFORD ESTATE IN BLOOMSBURY —II.

PLANNING OF THE ESTATE - RUSSELL AND TAVISTOCK SQUARES SHOWN, ALONG WITH A REGULAR GRIDDED STREET LAYOUT.

1802

1815

ALL FOUR SIDES OF RUSSELL SQUARE ARE COMPLETE. LAYOUT SHOWS PLANNING FOR OTHER SQUARES: EUSTON, BRUNSWICK AND ANOTHER ON UPPER GOWER STREET. MAINLY THE WORK OF JAMES BURTON.

1833

CUBITT RAPIDLY BUILDS NORTHERN BLOOMSBURY. TAVISTOCK, GORDON, TORRINGTON AND EUSTON SQUARES ARE COMPLETED. LONDON UNIVERSITY HAS A STRONG PRESENCE. THE ESTATE APPEARS FULLY DEVELOPED.

1845

OXFORD STREET FINALLY CUTS THRU THE SLUMS OF ST. GILES AND CONNECTS DIRECTLY WITH HOLBORN STREET. THIS WAS PLANNED BY PENNETORNE (NASH'S ASSISTANT), UNDER THE 1839 METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS ACT.
Fig. 25 The West End in context of London, figure-ground by G. Shane.
2.4 Lessons in Urban Architecture

Rasmussen very clearly warns against “all pattern-made recipes for town planning”, and emphasizes that “we cannot learn the right size of neighborhood, or the right pattern of layout, but we can learn all about different social groups”. So, why then am I looking at West London? What exactly do I hope to uncover? What could the value of this study be, especially today?

To answer questions such as why the estates were planned this way, or what the relationship was between the landlord, the builder and the leaseholder, it is necessary to understand historical evidence. It is also important to understand as a designer, issues such as how the layout works, what the general dimensions of the streets squares and blocks are as an attempt to grasp in a tangible, grounded way, the true quality and value of this extraordinary environment.

What are the lessons that are valuable to us as designers today?

1) Flexibility in planning: The planning process at Bloomsbury was one of adjustment to circumstance and piece-meal development rather than one that was a predetermined vision of the whole estate. In fact, it was often outside pressures that spurred the development of the estate, for example, the

32 Rasmussen, S.E. London... (1967 Ed) p.435.
building of the New Road and Southampton Row, the Euston Square development to the north and the growth of the Foundling Estate.

There is no strong, formal plan to this estate. Bloomsbury and Russell squares are on axis, Bedford Square is subtly related to Russell Square via Montague Place (views from one to the other), and Tavistock and Gordon Squares are asymmetrically situated on either side of the central axis of Bedford Place that runs from Russell to Euston Squares. There are eight squares in all, and only Tavistock and Gordon are similar in size. All are different - Russell Square being the largest square in West London, and Torrington Square being simply a narrow strip of a garden. The housing blocks, themselves vary a lot in type and dimensions. Yet, Bloomsbury is a well defined precinct, with a character of its own. There is a strong history and myth about Bloomsbury and perhaps the strong sense of place also owes something to the famous literary figures who lived there.

Or is it only today’s undiscerning eye that cannot easily tell the differences between the different parts of Bloomsbury? Or perhaps, as compared to the vast gap between Georgian and Modern architecture, these differences seem minor. If one imagined Belgrave Square with its diagonally placed mansions and stucco architecture, or even Fitzroy Square with its stone clad facades by the Adam brothers, as placed within the Bloomsbury ensemble, no doubt the whole would seem less cohesive and more fragmented.

2) The fine grain, and small scale of the development: The size of the squares and the blocks are unique, especially when compared to the German
Siedlungen, the Viennese Hofs and Cerda’s extension of Barcelona. (Refer to the drawing comparing the fabric of London with Barcelona and it is apparent how large Cerda’s blocks are).

3) The Facade as an Urban Element: An important aspect of Georgian architecture was the simplicity and restraint of its facades. Individual expression was reserved for the interiors of the houses - with their colorful, decorative ceilings, richly patterned wall paper, decorative drapes and carpets and more - a complete contrast to the austere, unpainted brick exteriors with very little decoration. Often only the entrance porch was articulated along with the cornice lines at the roof.

Mumford explains that "if the uniform facades of the square concealed differences of political opinion and religious faith, there was perhaps extra need in the seventeenth century for just this kind of arbitrary class cloak to conceal their emerging disparities, rivalries, and enmities: gentlefolk showed a common class front that politely concealed their ideological and party differences." 33

One of the earliest attempts to unify a row of houses into a single, palatial facade was at Grosvenor Square, in 1727 by Shepherd. However, this was not fully successful because he was able to acquire only a part of the row, and his facade was asymmetrical and to one side of the block. Almost

Fig. 28 Aerial view of Bloomsbury (1940’s) - Bedford Square at lower right, Russell Square to the upper right, and the British Museum at the center. Note the plentiful gardens within the blocks themselves.
Fig. 29 Adjustments: the ordered estates and the irregular development along stream beds and old roads. Analytical drawing by G. Shane.
immediately this idea was carried through successfully by John Wood at Bath, for the north side of Queen's Square. Here, Wood employed a grand order of engaged Corinthian columns and pilasters, two stories high, sitting on a rusticated base. The central portion was crowned with a pediment. The facade resembled a great, Palladian villa, instead of being simply a grouping of a row of houses. 34

Finally, at Bedford Square a completely uniform square was achieved - with the central pavilions emphasized by being painted white, and having a pediment, pilasters, and a rusticated first storey in stone. Also, the end pavilions were articulated by being brought forward slightly from the plane of the houses. Further, the roof was set back and its span was broken, that is, there were two roofs, as shorter spans meant a reduced height, thereby allowing the roof not to be seen from the street. A uniform cornice binds the whole. The rhythm of the doors and windows is perfectly uniform. Of course there are minor variations and differences, as it must be remembered that all four sides were not built by the same builders.

4) Uniformity and urban order: Peter Collins, in an insightful essay called "Standardization in Urban Space", mentions that the principal quality of urban space is that it be contained, and he stresses the need to differentiate between "the standardization of structural elements which enclose spaces,

and the standardization of structural elements assembled to create objects."\textsuperscript{35} The latter, he illustrates with the example of Westmount Square in Montreal by Mies van der Rohe. Here, Collins says, "the buildings are objects which do not form the plaza, but stand on the plaza; and the plaza itself is not defined as a space, but as a podium or mini-Acropolis."\textsuperscript{36} On the other hand, at the Place des Vosges, in Paris, the plaza is a contained space. He explains further, that once the inner perimeter is established, there can be substantial flexibility with the interiors. In Paris, in the early seventeenth century, the best way to achieve complete uniformity for the facades of the plaza was to follow a legal technique known as \textit{restrictive covenant}, whereby one side of the square was built, and "by legal constraints, oblige every purchaser of the remaining lots to make the facades identical."\textsuperscript{37} Today, the appearance of Place des Vosges is unchanged, the public environment remains intact, whereas the interiors have been modified as a response to changed use. At Bedford Square, there are no longer any residences as all of the houses have been converted to offices or an institutional use.

In summing up, Collins asks valuable questions: "Why did people find such pleasure in an orderly, symmetrical space? Do ordinary people experience the same pleasure today?" His opinion is that "symmetrical space was valued for its intellectual quality. Wherever you moved in it, you were always

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid. p.84.
\textsuperscript{37}Ibid.p. 85.
aware of its unity, its geometrical perfection.” Similar to Paris, the West End in London, too has irregular streets and blocks that help increase the intensity of the symmetrical urban spaces adjoining them.

5) Anti-monumentality: From the earliest Bloomsbury Square development, we can see that important buildings like St. George’s Church and the market, work within the block, within defined street edges. They are not isolated elements at all, these buildings are more ‘ground’ than ‘figure’. Later, with the conversion of Montague house into the British Museum, one sees a surprising row of houses enveloping the museum, to the west and east, and in part to the north and south too (these sides serve as entrances to the museum). On the west, a row of ten uniform houses form one of the sides of Bedford Square. Sir Robert Smirke designed the imposing classical museum (1823-1847). While it does have strong presence, it is less so than were it free standing, unenclosed by row houses. Olsen explains this as simply due to a practical, profit making attitude - for the estate to have as many houses fronting the square or main streets as possible. This preference for a kind of anti-monumentality is perhaps a characteristic of Georgian architecture. As Anderson points out, even the internationally known London theaters were low-key and worked within the block, as for example the theater at St. James Square or the Covent Garden Opera House, whereas, their counterparts on the continent are imposing, free standing monuments, like the Grand Theatre, Bordeaux.

Further, the modest scale, simple materials - from St. James Square to

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38Ibid. p.85.
40Anderson, Stanford, in a discussion with the author, April 19,1991.
Gower Street, restrained ornament and details - no opulence, every building fitting in within the block; no axes, grand boulevards, geometric relating of one square to another.

6) *Fine balance between privacy and the public realm:* The estates are integrated with the city’s network of streets and blocks; and yet they retain a certain privacy and a secluded character germane to a residential neighborhood and the typical British reserve in social life. These estates deal more with the subtle hierarchy between the public and private realms, than the later housing developments like West Kilburn suggest.

7) *Adjustments:* Allowing the irregularities of the topography, older streets or paths, existing villages or settlements to remain; in fact enable the regular, symmetrical planning within the estate design to gain strength from the contrast. It is this contrast that allows for a less intensely formal solution in the planning of the squares.

8) *The simple, urban architecture:* The value of background buildings in creating a coherent environment is clearly the lesson of the West End. There is an overall uniformity, yet revealing surprising subtlety in detailing and ornament, ranging from unified facades, pilasters, pediments and other vocabulary from the classical, monumental orders; to the stripped down, basic level of the mews and side streets. The full richness of personal expression was left for the interiors. According to Rasmussen, “in the eighteenth century while continental architecture made every effort to symbolize massive strength the English style chose the smooth and light, the

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41 Refer to Rasmussen, especially the chapter on Domestic architecture; also V.S.Pritchett’s essay gives many insights into the social life of Londoners.
elegant and simple. Georgian England shows how pleasant mass-produced houses can be when the model is carefully designed and is adapted to the materials used." 42

9) Urban Articulation: The building vocabulary dealt effectively with details such as corners of buildings and streets, passageways, sidewalks, gardens, street furniture and more.

10) Socially mixed blocks: There were three to four ‘rates’ of houses, all within one block. First rate houses faced the Square, second rate houses were on the streets leading into the Square, third rate ones on the side streets and sometimes even the fourth rate ones sandwiched within the block itself.

How is the residential precinct made urban, as belonging to the city?

The estate development enabled an ideal balance between a sense of the community and neighborhood and at the same time a belonging to the city. This was done in the following ways:

1) Connected to the city: The West End squares are part of the city’s network of streets and squares. There is free access through all the precinct (at least today).

A local example is the renewal of Boston’s ‘D-Street’ project, wherein an attempt was made to break down the big scale development into smaller, digestible pieces, and to simultaneously tie the project into the neighborhood.

2) Public and community functions included in the ensemble: The parish

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church, market, theater, garden, memorials, cemetery and institutions like a library or cultural society, were often included in the planning of the estate.

An example in Boston is that of Bulfinch's Tontine Crescent which included within the row houses: the Boston Public Library and the Massachusetts Historical Society, a garden with a memorial urn dedicated to Benjamin Franklin, as well as a church and theater as part of a complete development.

3) **Different communities provided for:** The four grades of houses ranged from the lower middle class to the upper middle class.

4) **Offers choice and variety:** There were houses on the main square, on a smaller square, on side streets and even contained within the block itself. And yet all could enjoy the same ‘address’, Bloomsbury or St.James’!

5) **Integration of pedestrian and vehicular:** Although the estates had only single family houses they managed an intimate scale and remained a very walkable neighborhood.

6) **Estate management:** The Estates were willing to maintain and renovate the precinct, to keep it up to date with the needs of the day - be they stucco exteriors or plate glass windows. The staggered leases also reflect a certain urban sophistication in the means of control and the landlord-tenant relationship.

7) **Allowing for change in use:** All the residences on Bedford Square, for example have been converted to another use, ranging from professional offices to educational institutions. West London retains a sense of vitality and of being very much a part of the city, whereas at Bath one is always aware of the city being preserved (pickled as it were).
Fig. 35 Birds eye-view of Bath: the legible set-piece of the Woods - Queen Square, the Circus and the Royal Crescent.
Chapter 3.0
The Intermediate Order, Case #2: BATH

3.1 The Development of Bath

Mumford, in his classic book The City in History, praises Bath as being a city with design qualities not surpassed by even the best examples in Paris, London, or Edinburgh. This is high praise indeed. For him, "the excellence of Bath shows the advantage of a strict discipline when it is supple enough to adapt itself to challenging realities, geographic and historic."43

Let us first examine the geographic and historic circumstances of Bath: Bath, around A.D. 40, was a Roman town. It was connected to London by road, being one of five important, interconnected Roman towns in England. It was then known as AQUAE SULIS - 'the waters of Sulis'. The word 'Sulis' refers to an ancient Celtic shrine.44

The town was located very carefully, at a place where the River Avon could most easily be crossed. Also at this spot the hills on either side of the river were not too steep, nor was the valley floor too wide or marshy. Further, the river was easily navigable to this point. Moreover, this is where the hot springs were located, which in many ways was the raison d'être of the town.

43 Mumford, Lewis. The City in History. (1963), a description of plate 37.
Fig. 37 Development of Bath: 1728-1750, and 1750-1775.
Cunliffe says that the "wall put up by the Romans continued to be used in Saxon and medieval times as a defense and though now irrelevant and largely gone its ghost is still present in the street pattern and the building lines... It is very rarely that one generation sweeps away the boundaries of it predecessors - rather they are preserved like scar-tissue embedded in the city's growth."45

1720: The town was still enclosed within the medieval wall and it even retained the old street patterns. Outside the walls to the north, the first signs of eighteenth century expansion were beginning to be seen.

In the early eighteenth century, the town grew rapidly - to over three times the size of the medieval town in an astonishing fifty years!

1728 - 1750: Growth was mainly towards the north and north-west, onto the slopes of the seven hills that characterize the beautiful setting of the city. There were other extensions to the town, southwest towards the Quay and also towards the east where John Wood I built the North and South Parades.

1750 - 1775: The main set-pieces - the Circus and Crescent were completed by Wood II, as were much of the 'Upper Town', north of the Old Town.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Bath became very popular as a spa or health resort. The curative properties of its waters were renowned. The town attracted the wealthy and upper-middle class, mainly from London. They would visit Bath for the 'season' which was only a few months in the year. The vibrant social life soon became the primary reason for visiting the

45Cunliffe, Barry. Preface The City of Bath.
town, hence the many promenades, the 'parades' and 'walks', to see and be seen in public, the assembly rooms and more.

Therefore, we have on one hand topographical factors like the hilly landscape, the river Avon, the fossilized pattern of the medieval town built as it were onto the earlier Roman town, and on the other hand: the ancient Celtic past, overlaid by the Roman, and then Anglo-Saxon history, and finally the rich tapestry of eighteenth and nineteenth century English social life of which Bath was the high point.

All of this formed the rich material with which the Georgian city developed, the foil for the strict discipline of the architecture. In the next section we will see how the main elements of the city - the grand composition by the Woods was able to forge profound links between the two - the designed and the circumstantial.

3.2 The Woods legible set-piece

Bath is one of the few places in the world where one can see and feel the power of past form very clearly. A sense of coherence still remains, not only in the monumental squares and terraces, but in the very fabric of the town with its undulating landscape of hills and valleys. This topography balances the ordered, formal architecture - one cannot sense the grid of the streets very clearly, as the city blocks are loosely fitted together, almost effortlessly accommodating the hills and the curving river. The most memorable places
of Bath have less to do with monuments, churches or civic institutions (with
the exception of the Roman Baths) and more to do with the architecture of
houses grouped together in an extraordinary variety of ways - along streets,
promenades, squares (of all shapes and sizes), a circus and the sinuous
crescents.

The three main elements of the Woods contribution - Queen Square, the
Circus and the Royal Crescent are the earliest examples of the attempt to
unify different houses under a single, monumental facade. It is this grouping
that gives legibility to the city, not only in plan but also in a wonderfully
experiential way too. Moreover this strong figural quality is achieved by
buildings that are completely residential (with the exception of the Assembly
Rooms, which were similar to a cultural club with game rooms and a banquet
hall). Let us examine the individual elements that make up this ensemble:

**Queen Square (1729 - 36):**
The north side row of houses are grouped together in one great, palatial
facade with a rusticated base, two stories high pilasters, a central pediment
with engaged columns and articulated end pavilions. This is very similar to
developments in West London of that time, especially Shepherd's
unsuccessful facade at Grosvenor Square. The west side arrangement,
originally had a house set back from the street and two wings defining the
entrance, similar to a proposal for Cavendish Square. From Queen Square,
Gay Street runs north with uniform rowhouses, leading directly into the
Circus.

![Fig.39 Queen Square drawing by Wood.](image-url)
The Circus (1754-70):
The Circus is much more than an improvisation on a type, as was Queen Square. There are three streets that lead into the Circus, and these terminate in a view of buildings. There are no through views, no escape vistas. The space is powerfully contained. This feeling of enclosure is accentuated by the three facades which are uniform and incomplete in themselves, as the ends of buildings are not articulated with pavilions. Nor do the elevations have a center or a focus. The eye sweeps from one to the other and completes the circle without pausing at the breaks where the streets enter. Another subtle but superb detail is the way the houses on the approaching streets are set back, again not allowing the eye to see beyond the width of the enclosing Circus itself. The facades do not have entrance porches, and the roof is stepped back, allowing the cornice lines of each floor to emphasize the horizontality and therefore the dynamics of the form itself. The Circus has very little external impact despite its large size - a 1000 feet circumference, a 318 feet internal diameter and only a 42 feet height.

The Circus is not simply about shape; it is more complex. Summerson points out several of the references for the Circus: the elder Wood's fascination with Roman monuments (the often repeated story of the Coliseum turned outside in); his being an amateur antiquarian and borrowing from Inigo Jones' restoration of Stonhenge, which also had three entries into the outer bank of the monument (and could be connected to Bath's Druidic - Celtic past); and also the rond-point in the French garden tradition of
LeNotre, and Mansart's circular Place des Victoires of 1686.

John Wood I, had three obsessions: an enthusiasm for revived Palladian classicism; an esoteric interest in Celtic prehistory, especially Stonehenge and nearby Stanton Drew; and Freemasonry with reverence for the sacred architecture of the Jews. Mowl hypothesizes that for Wood - "if all classical architecture derived from the Jews then the glories of both 'Roman' Bath and an imagined pre-Roman Celtic Bath of the Druids had a common ancestor. Thus by recreating Bath in the forms of pure Palladianism, Wood could celebrate both Romans and the Celts in the most appropriate cultural patriotism and with Biblical warranty." Therefore, the Circus refers to 'Sol Rocks' a Sun Temple set up by King Bladud, and the Royal Crescent as a temple of the Phoenician moon goddess Onca - the first crescent phase!

The Royal Crescent: (1767-75):
Brock Street goes northwest from the Circus to the Crescent. The Crescent itself is a dramatic semi-elliptical block of thirty houses with a uniform facade. Approaching from Brock Street, you can see the other end of the crescent but you cannot see the curve. The experience of the majestic sweeping curve of houses is breathtaking, especially because the space opens out as the ground slopes away into a grassy meadow with beautiful views.

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across the valley and towards the river. The sequence is extraordinary, beginning at Queen Square on a simpler, more familiar note, then leading into the powerful enclosure of the Circus, and then up Brock Street, allowing for a change in mood and then the sweep of the Crescent, the explosion of space with a dramatic view: amazingly calibrated sequence with a gradually increasing tempo, with each element related and yet so different. The articulation here is different from the Circus. There is a high base that supports a giant order of two-story high ionic columns. Here too, like the Circus, there is no central or end articulation at all. Nothing to hold the eye. Every little bit adds to the power of the whole.

Summerson suggests that the form probably developed from the Circus, a more elliptical 'Circus', closer to the original Roman Coliseum. The need for a road cutting through yielded semi-ellipses; by omitting one, what remained was the Royal Crescent.

Finally, Summerson summarizes the achievement of Woods ensemble as follows, "taken together, the Circus and the Royal Crescent with Gay Street and Queen Square form a highly original complex of urban architecture. Nowhere in Europe had anything with quite this same freedom and invention been executed. In England the influence of these things was naturally very great, Bath having become, by the middle of the eighteenth century, nearly as important a center of artistic leadership as London. The idea of blocks of

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49Summerson, The House and the Street ...
p.391.
50Ibid. pg. 392.
town-houses presented as monumental unities was immediately accepted. The Circus, it is true, was rarely imitated until Dance, followed by Nash, took up the theme for its merits as a way of dealing with a traffic-crossing. But the Crescent had a glorious career."\(^{51}\)

At Bath, the Woods ensemble is what gives legibility to the city form, holding the disparate elements, the squares and crescents, together in much the same way that Nash's Regent Street gives a spine to the West.

### 3.3 A memorable city of fragments

Why is Bath an example of the intermediate order? What if the Woods' ensemble - Queens Square, Circus and Royal Crescent were seen as a set-piece belonging to the monumental order? And the rest of the city as being just 'texture', a foil for this monumental order. Would that not explain the form of the city of Bath?

Firstly, the Woods' ensemble is quite deliberate, it is composed in a sense perhaps closer to the Baroque planning tradition than anything we have seen in West London. Could we compare it to the Place des Vosges in Paris and say they are similar? It is not easy to identify the differences in design approach, but I believe that the following differences are significant:

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\(^{51}\)Ibid. p.392.
1) At Bath there are multiple centers, not one only. The Woods' ensemble may be the most powerful, but there are many other crescents, squares, and public streets. These work at different levels of intensity, and set up something of a rhythm.

2) The Woods' ensemble is very closely related to place - the topography and the history of the place. It is not something that is forced into the fabric of a place, as with the Place des Vosges.

3) As mentioned earlier, the uniqueness of each Italian square comes from their individual response to their particular situations. At Bath, the position of the Royal Crescent, and the special angle which it relates through Brock Street to the Circus are unique responses to a special circumstance. Also there is a special balance between the regular and irregular, city and country, architecture and landscape.

4) Wood's ensemble is fully made up of residential buildings and this is different from most monumental orders which are made up of public buildings. However, I admit that the Place des Vosges is also made up of residences.

5) The Woods' composition is at a much smaller scale than the Place des Vosges. It is also more closely related to the scale of the surrounding fabric. There are no striking contrasts at Bath; the differences seem subtler.

6) Bath seems more 'natural', it fits more easily into its surroundings and feels more humane than for example Kings Way, New Delhi or the Mall in Washington, D.C. This observation is very hard to pin down or quantify, but I believe it is of significance.

Secondly, the rest of the city of Bath also does not fit easily into the 'texture'
category because there are so many other urban spaces that have strong figural qualities too - the Crescents (Camden & Landsdowne), the Squares (St. James, Laura Place, Sydney gardens, Southcot place & Portland Place). Literally dozens of other open spaces of varying geometric shapes and sizes (similar in a way to West London's over 50 squares). Therefore, the rest of Georgian Bath is not a solid, anonymous fabric, undifferentiated tissue nor irregular, organic accretions.

Besides the fact that the Woods' ensemble does not easily fit into the 'monumental order' nor does the rest of the eighteenth century city fall under 'textural order', there are other reasons why Bath is a city that belongs to the 'intermediate order', as follows:
1) All the different urban spaces - the squares are semi-public, that is public open spaces created by private housing.
2) The public buildings of the city are not located on the above mentioned urban spaces. Therefore there is this strange segregation between public buildings and public open spaces.
3) Public buildings are rarely free standing, imposing 'objects'. They are mostly found to fit within the row of houses or a block.
4) Overall, the city is of a fine-grain, residential scale and comprises of mainly rows of houses and when there are blocks these are modestly scaled. The city is very walkable.
5) A meaningful relationship between 'solid' and 'void'. It is not all 'ground' or all 'figure' (i.e. formalized voids and solids as set-pieces).
6) Bath has a certain structure, a sense of being defined but not to the degree where growth and change is not possible.
Location of urban spaces.

Fig. 46 No overlap between public spaces and public buildings.

Location of public buildings.
7) These urban spaces were seen as adding to the richness and quality of the city, and not simply as functional housing. The aim was higher.

8) The residential areas formed a very significant aspect of the city, that is as a spa-town, people came to stay (commerce, industry and even entertainment was somehow subsidiary, less important.).

9) The development of Bath was mainly a result of private initiative.

Although in many important ways Bath is very similar to West London, in the one sense that it is different is that here at Bath the urban spaces are much more powerful formally than anything in West London. Moreover, these urban spaces take on the role of making the city memorable, in a way that is as convincing as the 'monumental orders', in the grand cities of Vienna and New Delhi.
Conclusion:

The residential fabric as memorable city form

The thesis began by discussing the traditional explanation of the form of a city as comprising of two principal orders: 'textural', which is essentially made up of housing and also the one that is a foil to the 'monumental order', which is a clearly articulated network of public spaces and significant buildings. These categories do not explain fully cities like London or Bath which do not have a large scaled planned order or interventions like Haussmann's Paris or Cerda’s Barcelona. Also, while London and Bath have a looser structure and finer grain of blocks and streets, the presence of residential squares and a basic gridded order gives a figural quality and legible structure to these cities.

I proposed that there is an 'intermediate order' between those of 'texture' and 'monument'. This 'intermediate order' is defined as one wherein a primarily residential fabric provides the legible, articulated urban spaces that give order to the form of the city.

The matrix comparing the formal characteristics of the three orders clearly showed that the 'intermediate order' works towards many of the features of the monumental tradition - developing a formal structure, figural quality, uniformity and coherence over a large area, a basic hierarchy, and even compositional character to a degree. And significantly, in some aspects the 'intermediate order' is similar to the 'textural order' - the most important one
being - ‘adjustments’. These adjustments vary; they respond to topographical features, historical events and changing circumstances. What is perhaps of most value is how a balance is achieved between the different aspects - formal and informal, regular and irregular, figure and ground - so as to best maximize the situation.

An analysis of West London and particularly that of the Bedford Estate at Bloomsbury, reveals some of the important characteristics of the intermediate order:

1) *The figural quality of the squares*: each of the squares individually were ‘figures’. While they are not strongly connected in terms of vistas or axes, there is a subtle relationship established in some groups of squares, for example, Bloomsbury-Russell-Bedford squares, Grosvenor-Hanover-Cavendish squares, and Portman-Manchester squares.

2) *Multiple centers*: as there are so many squares, over fifty in the West End, they work as a ‘scatter of events’, and create an informal pattern.

3) *Flexibility in planning*: although not a pre-determined form, there is a general gridded order, which has the ability to adjust to circumstance, in this case, the changing needs of the estate and development over a long period of time. A hierarchy is evident in the estate, and this results from it being conceived as a ‘little town’, self-contained with a parish church, a market and houses of different ‘rates’.

4) *Non-monumentality*: public buildings like the church or market are not located on the square. Further, these buildings work within the block and street edges. These public buildings are not isolated elements, they are more ‘ground’ than ‘figure’.
5) The facade as an urban element: the simplicity and restraint of Georgian exteriors and a shared architectural vocabulary of mainly Palladian classicism gave a certain discipline and unity to the West End, and to Bloomsbury in particular. There is not a substantial difference between a ‘first rate’ and ‘fourth rate’ house facade. The first uniform square - Bedford Square, signified a move towards the monumental order.

6) Urban scale of the block: at Bloomsbury a fairly typical block is about 420 feet by 130 feet (as at Gower Street). In contrast, the later developments at Hampstead have blocks that are three times longer and have no cross streets. The West End blocks, allowed a much finer network of streets which related closely with the grid of other estates, and that of the city.

There were other aspects of the West End Estates that also contributed to the ‘intermediate order’, such as: socially mixed blocks, the inclusion of public and community functions within the residential precinct, and sophisticated estate management that covered planning, building maintenance, and rehabilitation.

The analysis of Bath confirmed these observations, especially those of multiple centers, and the lack of public buildings on the urban open spaces. Most importantly, it was the architecture of the Woods that showed the superb balance between discipline and an adjustment to context.
The Value of the ‘Intermediate Order’

When the Dutch architect Rietveld was asked about the way he would go about designing a new extension of a town, he said: “I think I first would fill the site with houses and then take some away where streets were needed.” Habraken who gives this example says “its naive poetry gives the essence of what urban space is about.”

I believe it is the special qualities of the residential fabric that gives the ‘intermediate order’ its legitimacy in the making of city form. It is the attraction of an environment that has humanly scaled urban space that is comfortable.

In his essay, “The House as the City” Robertson argues that “the essence of Savannah - as at Westover, and in East Hampton and Williamsburg - has to do with the primacy of residence within the larger complex. The city of squares is fundamentally a city of houses, around which the entire urban apparatus has been organized, and into which large hunks of nature has been artfully placed or left to remain. It is a place of supreme harmony and balance, both modern and timeless, which works; its architecture, the architecture of the city, is domestic and its purpose is the accommodation of individual lives as the key to collective civic life.” This description could very well be extended to West London or Bath.

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The considerable explanation of the topography and siting of London and Bath, as well as the story of John Wood’s use of the special landscape and history of Bath, only served to explain that the architecture was closely related to the context. That it was more than just interesting geometric forms. This fine tuned adjustment allowed the architecture to be fresh, without resorting to a grand scale, special materials or a different formal vocabulary. By itself this observation means little; however, the value of this response to circumstance is that it enabled a more urbane, uniform architecture - one of unity.

To work with adjustments, you need a strong discipline. Classical architecture had that discipline, a set of rules. I am however, less sure as to whether Modern architecture has such a discipline. Yet, these examples of the ‘intermediate order’ show the possibility of creating legible, ordered urban spaces, without the Baroque tradition of urban design and its axes, ‘rond-points’, and monumental scale.

Although, the residential squares of West London do not photograph well or provide an excuse for fancy architectural drawings, they do provide a beautiful, intimate and comfortable environment. In fact, West London and Bath show that even the ‘set-pieces’ can be architecturally modest and yet create memorable cities.
Suggestions for further research

1) It would be useful to analyze and define more precisely the ideas of 'texture' and 'monument'. For example in Rossi's distinction between Residential area and Primary area which includes - monument, plan, and city center, an ordered residential fabric can fall under 'plan' and hence be a primary element. Jaipur is an example, with its clear grid which contains mainly housing. By defining ‘texture’ and ‘monument’ better, a more precise understanding of the ‘intermediate order’ would be possible.

2) Other examples must also be explored to test and clarify the definition of the ‘intermediate order’. Two further examples are suggested: Savannah is similar to West London and Bath because it too has a formal order made up of the residential fabric. There is a distinct absence of monuments or a monumental order at Savannah. Here too, the grid remain neutral, without any strong axiality, focus or termination. There are critical differences also: at Savannah, there are public buildings on the square (the four small lots); the grid is repetitive and fixed (although there is a subtle variation in the sizes of the squares, which sets up a rhythm of A B C B A) and there is no adjustment to topography. Very clearly the city does not deal with the river front. And when there is a large square space kept for a cemetery, the city grid envelops it awkwardly. There is little of the richness, variety or almost casual quality of West London or Bath. Yet, this is clearly another

54 Refer to chapter 1.0 for definitions. This was pointed out to me by Prof. G.Shane.
Example of the 'intermediate order' as is New Ebenezer, Georgia.

3) The examples of West London and Bath are cities which have predominantly residential fabric. It would be useful to study examples with a clear 'monumental' and 'textural' order. Parma, is perhaps one such example. It has a clearly legible monumental order: a large square at the junction of two distinct streets - one running east-west and the other north-south. The fine grain fabric to the south belongs to the textural order. The larger figural voids to the northeast may suggest the 'intermediate order'. It is however, difficult to establish this based only on a figure-ground drawing. Many other aspects of the city must be studied too, as was seen in the examples of West London and Bath.

4) There is a need for graphic materials in terms of drawings and maps, that compare cities at the same scale. A precise knowledge of the sizes of squares, blocks and streets, would enable valuable comparisons - garden estate versus superblock versus highrise apartment towers. Leon Krier illustrates this point well by comparing various urban blocks such as Timagad; Quarter Les Halles; Kreuzberg, Berlin; and Karl Marx Hof, Vienna.

5) Although I do not believe in any ideal size or proportion for square, street and block, the work of Krier, Duany and Plater-Zyberk and Kleihues may be studied for clues to the lessons they have learnt from the past. Krier’s project for West Berlin, where he introduced a finer mesh, grid of streets and smaller squares similar to West London, is one such example.
It is important that we recognize the value of the 'intermediate order' in creating a high quality environment, such as in West London and Bath. There is a useful lesson in the making of intimately scaled public spaces with residential fabric. The simple Georgian architecture, modestly scaled and non-monumental, is one that adjusted to circumstance, and enabled fragments of ordered precincts to make possible a coherent city.
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