SUBURBAN HYBRIDS FOR CITY LIVING:
The Making of New Middle Class Family Neighborhoods in Central Cities

by

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Submitted to the Department of
Urban Studies and Planning in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the
Degree of

MASTER OF CITY PLANNING
at the
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

June 1995

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Abstract

Ever since the mass exodus of city populations in the post-Second World War period, central cities have desired to attract and retain resident middle class families in order to redress the social problems of disproportionately-large, poor populations, as well as the related insufficiencies in their residential tax base.

This has historically been met with little success in most cities, due in part to the countervailing trends of strong, pro-suburban traditions which have matched or engendered American middle class preferences during the past 150 years. It also speaks to the failures of central cities to produce comparative living environments which might target interested, but reluctant suburban families.

Recent projects employing this philosophy, have been attempted in several cities and have met with success. Accordingly, in this thesis, four case studies will be examined in which new masterplanned city neighborhoods have seemingly "hybridized" their city environments. All have achieved in their design certain physical attributes comparable to those found in the suburbs. The cases, including Dearborn Park in Chicago, Harbor Town in Memphis, Otterbein in Baltimore, and Battery Park City in Manhattan, involve particular policy objectives, varying degrees of hybridized design, and differing levels of public/private partnership.

This thesis -- by exploration of the characteristics of middle class family living environments, and of the salient physical design features of these case neighborhoods -- seeks to formulate in its conclusion a set of approaches which central cities might employ towards achieving similar goals in the future.

Thesis Supervisor: Professor John de Monchaux
Thesis Reader: Associate Professor J. Mark Davidson Schuster
Table of Contents

SUBURBAN HYBRIDS FOR CITY LIVING:
The Making of New Middle Class Family Neighborhoods in Central Cities

Abstract 2
Introduction The Need for the Middle Class in Central Cities 5

Part One: AN EXPLORATION OF MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILY LIVING
Chapter 1 The Middle-Class Ideology and Its Effect on Central Cities 9
Chapter 2 Trends Towards Suburban Living and the Socio-Physical Components of Suburban Life 15

Part Two: CONTEXTS, STRATEGIES, AND RESULTS IN CASE STUDIES
Chapter 3 Dearborn Park: Bolstering the Center Chicago, Illinois 36
Chapter 4 Harbor Town: Reviving an Urban Culture Memphis, Tennessee 55
Chapter 5 Otterbein Neighborhood: A Careful Blending Baltimore, Maryland 73
Chapter 6 Battery Park City: The Calm at Water's Edge New York, New York 91
Conclusion Suburban Hybrids in Practice: Lessons Drawn and Conclusions Made 108

Bibliography 115
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to vision-makers, some of whom I have never met

-- Kevin Lynch, Antonio DiMambro, Andres Duany, James Howard
Kunstler, and William Whyte, among others -- who have taught me
how to "look",...

...and to my professors, Dennis Frenchman, John De Monchaux, Gary Hack,
Kristina Hill, Larry Vale, Mark Schuster, Lois Craig, Larry Susskind,
and Langley Keyes who have taught me, in their own ways,
how to "see".

Above all else, this is for my parents.
THE NEED FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS IN CENTRAL CITIES

Since the days of Federal Urban Renewal, the agendas of numerous planning administrations in the United States have included schemes to attract middle class families as residents from the suburbs into the central city. During the 1950s and 60s, there was considerable optimism that this could be done on a large scale by the clearance of blighted areas. Yet, extensive government procedures produced controversial and scandal-ridden projects, and then only after great expense to the city’s poorer residents and older districts. Despite these costly efforts, few middle class families ever resettled in the city once they had left for the suburbs. In fact, even during these efforts the mass exodus of middle class families to the suburbs continued reaching at its peak in 1955 a rate of 4,000 families per day.¹

Yet most central cities still lack the strategies for bringing even small numbers of middle class families "back", or at least for retaining those families who migrate temporarily to the city for work or education. Although the reasons for the failed programs of the past can be as involved as the checkered history behind them, the motives for these activities is not. Quite simply, most American cities today are primarily populated by the very rich and the very poor. The small number of middle class families who do live there generally are either childless or are young, newly-established families without school-aged children. With such a small representation of middle class families resident in the population, the city’s foremost concern is for the resulting lack of tax revenues. The under-employed and low-income residents who are disproportionately concentrated in central cities, create a heavy public service burden on the city which can not be compensated through higher taxes on these users. Infrastructure and facility maintenance budgets are also severely stretched with low tax revenues, while many of the users of city expenditure are tax-payers in outlying suburban jurisdictions.

In addition to benefits to all city residents by augmentation of middle class tax revenues, there are the prospects for "spin-off effects": a term used here to describe the positive externalities generated by having middle class incomes and family lifestyles in close proximity to lower-income residents. Both economic and socio-political spin-offs are desirable, although they can

not always be conclusively demonstrated by researchers. Economic spin-offs would increase the number of jobs and the reliability of public services to low-income residents by way of proximity to upgraded neighborhoods. Social and political spin-offs, on the other hand, would increase the opportunities available to low-income residents for effecting political change and educational achievement, as well as augmenting the provisions of day-to-day sustenance such as banks, grocery stores and shopping alternatives.

Since the 1980s, a new motivation for increasing middle class residents has emerged: the hope that the momentum of the successes of downtown revitalization projects of the 1980s, might be sustained with, among other factors, resident consumers of city culture and commerce in neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. This is the goal to make cities more "livable" and exciting and, as the argument goes, to make them so on an 18-hour basis.

Each of these reasons and strategies for attracting the middle class, however, have suffered from the disadvantage of going against the trends of middle class preferences, both current and historical. And yet, recent studies are indicating that certain families would be interested in living in the city, and more who are currently living there would like not to have to leave.

If these studies can be trusted to indicate potential for real preference transformed into action, it is possible that a niche may exist in central cities, for middle class families -- who are always potential suburbanites in a sense -- to remain as residents. For central cities to retain or attract middle class families, then, there must be some effort to provide living alternatives which can adequately compete with suburban environments, at the risk of continuing to lose both the tax base and spin-off effects of middle class families to the suburbs.

Today, Suburbia has emerged almost as a distinct world from the city. Its amenities and services read like a text book case of everything that the city has not provided to families: good schools and efficient public services; family centered privacy in single family homes; access to nature, open space and recreation; and housing designed for contemporary living with an acknowledgment of --not a penalty for-- the car. Also standard to suburban living are rear decks and patios for entertaining outdoors and a variety of flexible spaces both interior and exterior which have been designed with the family of the late twentieth century in mind. In stark contrast, much of the city's housing was built more than a century ago in small, cramped spaces. In places where these houses were designed for families originally, there were incidents of current families re-use them space. But often the housing stock of cities consisted of small, quirky tenements and apartment houses,
converted lofts and Victorian townhouses, or tiny working-class homes that "needed fixing". Such places produced the "return" a certain type of household: a predominance of young singles and older couples without children at home. But rarely did families find such retrofitted environments suitable to their lifestyles and needs for space and convenience.

Several decades of rebuilding in central cities brought some areas of some cities back to prosperity, but not without the help of federal and state governments and not, more importantly, without the eventual return of middle class patronage in the form of suburban commuters and culture seekers. Urban renewal, urban homesteading, and a much-celebrated gentrification movement helped to turn the tide to the point that most American cities are no longer losing population today. Yet the social and fiscal problems of central cities have continued to increase. Not unrelated perhaps, is the fact that the suburbs have continued to grow as the unchallenged home of the middle class family, while few cities have been able to sustain any kind of sizable middle-class family population.

Currently, therefore, the central city for many middle class families is simply not a desirable option. And yet, it is precisely in the absence of such families that the much-touted spin-off effects -- social, economical, and political -- are lost. The possibility of living in the city for middle class residents, is equated to no more than an interesting short-term experience. The possibility, moreover, for them to invest in the family home in the city, cannot be treated seriously. Such long-term goals for middle class family and home stewardship is reserved for suburbs.

Even setting aside the city’s social problems such as public schools, tax burdens, exaggerated cost of housing, and racial disharmony, there are certain problems which seem to lead from those of a design nature. The physical lack of space is one deterrent that even potentially-interested middle class families would consider before making the move to living in a central city. Likewise, there is not a diversity of housing stock available for middle class families in the central city.

Although the sources and remedies of social problems in central cities such as crime and delivery of municipal services are broader than the scope of this discussion, central cities should not neglect the simpler capacity for enhancing physical aspects of living environments as opportunities to attract middle class families as residents. An approach which has been generally under-utilized is to provide among the central city’s residential options, a physical living environment which replicates the positive attributes of the suburbs. New masterplanned neighborhoods, particularly if developed from
scratch on vacant or underutilized central city land, offer an opportunity to attract middle class families by targeting their design to the preferences of this group.

Such an alternative approach has been attempted recently in the new neighborhoods built in several cities. Although, physically, economically, and socially there may be some differences among these examples, all are cases which show the elements of a hybridized suburban style, which have been created within the central city in order to attract middle-class families. Four case studies will be considered in which new masterplanned neighborhoods have been designed and developed in central cities with the expressed or implicit goals to augment or maintain a middle class family population. The cases studies will include Dearborn Park in Chicago, Harbor Town in Memphis, Otterbein in Baltimore, and Battery Park City in Manhattan. In each case study, the background of the central city's particular problems and its goals for wanting as a policy measure to have middle class family residents in the central city will be reviewed, as well.

From such information, this thesis seeks to move towards a theory which will unify these approaches through: 1) exploring and understanding the motivations of middle class family living environments and 2) analyzing some of the characteristics of case neighborhood developments which may be contribute to the success of future policy goals.
Delimiting a working description for the concept of "middle class" is a slippery task. For one thing, any definition in pure economic terms seems to change in time and by place and is based on the middle class' role within a broader economic context. What was implied as middle class in the early nineteenth century, for example, was often an indication of moderate wealth relative to a particular locale. In this sense, salaried suburban professionals in nineteenth century New York were of different middle class profiles and shared social values than, say, a dry goods merchant in a Western farming community. However, both would have been described as middle class by their contemporaries.

Similarly, a reliance today on narrower, perhaps even statistical definitions for middle class, presents another set of problems. Whereas in economic terms, middle class might be equated to middle income, this underscores the characteristics of middle class-ness identified in qualitative terms. Income descriptions are far too simple to capture the ideological sense of what middle class-ness implies.

Another starting point would be to define what middle class is not; for it is not simply the upper class with less money, nor is it a lower class with more. The upper class can be defined to be those who have inherited enormous capital and/or have achieved great wealth through extraordinary lifetime circumstances. The term "lower class", despite its unpleasant ring, is descriptive for those at the far opposite end of the socio-economic scale. "Poor", scarcely does better as a term, since its usual association is with quantity, as in "below a moderate income". In earlier industrial societies, the poor, both working and non-working families were universally referred to as the "working class". Yet this term cannot be of use not only because today, persons in every class work, but because the types of work available have become more segregated by barriers to entry, such as educational level and spatial mismatch of residence to jobs. This in turn has left a large number of inner city "workers", unemployable in practical terms.

In any event, the two terminological edges, will serve in helping to define the middle. Quite literally, the middle class can be said to be that broad social group between the upper class and the lower class, which constitutes every socio-economic variation in between. Not surprisingly, most
Americans today consider themselves middle class. In poll after poll taken in the United States, roughly eighty percent of participants consistently place themselves in this category. According to historian Loren Baritz, this is a phenomenon which has been observed throughout the twentieth century. Even during the late years of the Depression, says Baritz, when a third of all Americans had been for years unemployed and many had lost their homes, cars, and life savings, a Gallup poll in which a large representative sample of people were asked what "social class" they belonged to revealed that almost all of them -- 88% -- believed firmly, they said, that they were middle class.¹

This helps to illustrate the fact, that middle class can not be thought to be synonymous with middle income, since middle income alone does not define status, ideals, values, or affiliations. As Paul Fussell points out "...it is not riches alone that defines the classes." In his book Class, Fussell describes two families with the same incomes who are living in adjacent houses in the same suburb. In one family, the head of the household is a garage mechanic; a blue-collar worker. In the other, the primary wage-earner is an employee of a publishing house: a white collar "professional". After comparing the two families in detail from their domestic habits to their material possessions, he asserts that despite their identical incomes and residential locations, these families can be in different social classes. Social class, he concludes, "is less a function of money, than it is of style, taste, awareness and knowledge."²

The Social Psychology of the Middle Class

If such past and current polls are to taken seriously, then, a clear majority of Americans by their own description: 1) see themselves as middle class, and 2) apparently view a middle class status as something that is desirable to retain even when a low or complete lack of income and dwindling material possessions might indicate otherwise to an outside observer. Of course, it is also probable that, having similarly ambiguous definitions, many people naively over- or under-estimate their status. Yet to err towards the middle raises no eyebrows. To be middle class in the United States is to belong to the collective nationhood. It is to be at least as good as everyone else; to be mainstream. Moreover, since it may very well be a kind of self-conferred status, it would therefore have much to do with an


individual's own frame of reference in society. In the past century, obviously, these frames have expanded to include people who earlier would have been considered non-middle class, such as blue collar workers and salespersons. Whether this increase in real terms is derived from America's immigrant background and of the various incarnations of the American dream, is probably not in question. It is more important to realize that these values have become in the twentieth century the dominant values of the American culture itself. As Baritz summarizes:

"America's spirit and tone, its historical anthology and official aspirations, political bent, educational arrangements, the centrality of the business enterprise, as well as the dreams of many of its people, derive its psychology from the great imperial middle class."³

What then is an appropriate description of middle class? It is a group whose values system is derived from the belief that an individual's social status is static and therefore adapts a life outlook revolving around the notions of a) avoiding risk, b) planning for and investing in the future, and c) maintaining an expectation of personal, economic and social ascendancy in time. To be middle class, using this definition, is to have options, to be participant in local activities, and to exercise the vested personalized stake in the processes (political, educational) that govern one's life. Furthermore, it is to believe that those options both present and future will be derived from an adherence to a given system: economic, institutional, and cultural. In other words, this is a belief that staying in school will lead to a better job; that investing in home ownership will lead to security in old age; that acquiring the right material wealth -- clothing, furniture, machines, and residential location -- as one's income and responsibilities increase is to appropriately demonstrate one's claim to that status. When one considers that such systemic guarantees were hardly available in most of cultures from which the immigrants to America had come, it is clear that the American dream of individual security and material accumulation, and the freedom of choice in that process, has been unique enough to become something of a national credo:

"...the foundational values of American society and its capitalist economy -- profitable growth opportunities, a middle-class way of life, spatial and social mobility, and progress - all serve to highlight

³ Loren Baritz, p. xii.
newness over tradition, change over commitment, and luxuriousness and consumption over the civic importance of just distributions." 4

The Collective Impacts of Middle Class Residential Decision

To assign this belief system to most Americans, if accurate, is to also explain the precarious state of affairs which threatens the habitability of cities in their continuing states of neighborhood decay. For to accept this idea, is to realize that the quest for personal achievement and improvement inherent in the middle class' psychology, dictates that the best in a given set of alternatives be chosen as the middle class' residential preferences.

For much of this century, these preferences have gradually become for a suburban way of life, in a house that is owned by the family, with a yard that offers privacy, and a way of life that is supplemented by the newest technologies and the ubiquitous automobile. That these preferences developed is in keeping with the middle class psychology equating security with property ownership, whereby wealth is cautiously invested in a house or neighborhood appropriate also to one's current status. With the additional beliefs of self-improvement and the opportunities to "rise up", the American Dream of suburban home ownership was and is easily transferred to working class and newly-immigrated Americans as a necessary goal to be achieved in their rise into middle class.

In keeping with middle class conventions, the suburbs offer by virtue of their history and location, new houses with contemporary conveniences, a perception of safety, privacy, outdoor living, contact with nature, and freedom from the burdens of racial and class tensions commonly associated with the city. These come in stark contrast to the traditional problems associated with cities: crime, pollution, noise, expense, high density, lack of privacy, racial conflict and decaying infrastructure. For parents of children over five, the disadvantages become even more pronounced because of the statistical notoriety of urban public schools. And free amenities which come to be taken for granted in the suburbs are usually available in the city only as an added expense. Parking and the ability to use the car; use of recreational facilities, access to the natural environment, and the overall qualities of "new-ness" and convenience -- all are lacking in comparison to the suburbs.

Today, Suburbia has emerged almost as a distinct world from the city which used to dominate its culture. The location and consumption decisions made individually by middle class families have collectively exerted great changes in the quality of daily city life by comparison and have altered the economic leverage of the city. Downtown retailers were quick to follow the middle class in its exodus to the suburbs, as were employers and commercial services such as neighborhood banks. All of this changed the consumption and production options of the city. Even more detrimental to the central city, has been the loss of revenue in tax dollars that formerly supported the city libraries and schools, and any number of city institutions that had before 1945, been the “cutting edge” of mainstream culture.

This last point is of particular social importance because, although it is difficult to measure, it is nonetheless commonly experienced in its impact. Simply put, whereas the central city used to be the generator of new ideas, of popular and retail culture, and of countless modern conveniences, cities have now become the recipients of second-hand Suburban culture. It is suburban influence that dominates the culture of all Americans today. The “edge cities” of suburbia now are the incubators which grow and drive the American economy. From within them emanate the new ideas that shape culture. Whether these ideas arrive in the form of a computer chip or a mega-super market makes little difference. When aspects of modern life make their debut in the suburbs, particularly in the forms of commercial and popular culture, they frequently go no farther. Thus, the best and the latest of modern life remains sequestered in the suburbs, away from life in the central city.

The effect, then, is to cut the central city off -- not only in terms of standards of living and quality of life --but also in terms of access to the mainstream American culture. Although, this might be viewed as a good thing by urban elitists who prefer either the quirky, alternative lifestyles that a less than mainstream place attracts, or the eclectic array of boutiques on exclusive streets on which Information-age cities have come to depend. However, in everyday terms, the exotic and the quaint, the one-of-a-kind and the bizarre, are of more use to the occasional urban tourist, than they are for the lower and middle-class residents of a given urban neighborhood. For them, everyday life in the city is without the selection and quality found in a suburban grocery stores, or the variety and competitive pricing of the suburban hardware and home center. Walkability and eclecticism may sooner or later take a back seat to inconvenience, lack of quality and variety, unavailability, and expense, and city-living, for all of its advantages, may then exact a penalty -- simply in terms of daily routines -- which begins to
weaken its appeal to even its most committed, young, middle class residents as they age or begin to raise children.

All of this serves to humble the city into a sort of exotic and backward, poor relative of the prosperous mainstream culture that flourishes in the malls, and the supermarkets, and on the fields of countless little league games. Worse still, it cuts the urban culture's poorest off from larger society, and creates in the up-and-coming middle class families, the desire -- once the family's resources are secure -- to "move up, and out" of the city as quickly as possible. The values of middle class families could not stay internally consistent in such a place, when they could "get so much more for their money" out in the suburbs. To urban historian Robert Beauregard:

"....It is considered a bit eccentric, if not deviant, to remain in large cities, if one has the means to leave...the prevailing trends are obvious and made to seem irresistible."\(^5\)

The question remains however as to why such a group with so much stake in the system as its primary movers and shakers, would give themselves over to failure, instead of changing that environment to suit themselves? In the next chapter, this question is answered and three trends are presented which seek to explain the middle class' inevitable abandonment of the central city.

\(^5\) Ibid.
Chapter 2

TRENDS TOWARDS SUBURBAN LIVING AND THE SOCIO-PHYSICAL COMPONENTS OF MODERN SUBURBAN LIFE

The suburbs were not invented in this century, but the middle class preference for a suburban way of life -- as the popular imagery of subdivisions and mass consumption have come to be seen -- was until the 1950s unavailable to a majority of the population. Wealthy families and a distinctively smaller number of families who made up the middle class at the time took advantage of this suburban preference much earlier, in commuter suburbs which appeared in the United States as early as 1820.

In New York, for example, in the wake of an industrial and commercial development boom following the Civil War, young middle class couples in New York found that they were unable to attain the kind of house they had grown up in, and which their parents and grandparents had for their families and servants. The prototypical Manhattan row house, in brick, with a basement, two or three floors and an attic, a large back yard, all set on a lot of 25 feet by 100 feet, was suddenly too expensive for the middle class family.

One idea was to divide the space, horizontally but the young couples found this socially unacceptable. The middle-class disdain against having anyone live above or below oneself -- sharing a horizontal surface such as a floor or a ceiling -- made apartment houses up to that point, unthinkable, and subdividing the single family house suggested a bohemian or working class life. Another solution was to split the cost of land and create multifamily buildings with common services. This too was unacceptable, as it would immediately point to the inability of each household patriarch to provide the privacy expected by his family.

In order to maintain the single-family house ideal, young families had only one choice which was to move out to the new suburbs:

"a 'Lonleyville', as young housewives called it -- a remote suburb reached by railroad or streetcar where land was cheaper.... yet despite the reservations of many women, who were to be left behind while
their husbands went into the city each day, affluent "lonelyvilles proliferated precisely in response to the row house crisis." 1

In this chapter, the trends which led to this suburban lifestyle are briefly analyzed. There are three main trends which have tended to work with technology in producing Suburbia to become the desired and mainstream form of American middle class life that it is today. The first trend is the long and well-documented American anti-urban ethic, born out of an intellectual distrust of city life for its supposed threat to democratic principles. The second trend is a distaste born from the experiences and conditions endured by families of all social classes in the industrial city. As such, these first two trends can be thought of as "Push Factors". The third trend, on the other hand, can be thought of as a "Pull Factor". It was essentially the lure of the post-Second World War suburbs, which under Federal Government sponsorship and the wide availability of new technologies, guaranteed and subsidized the long-held dreams of many families to flee the city.

**Trend One: the American Anti-urban Tradition**

Anti-urban feelings have existed as long as cities have. The nobles of classical Rome complained about the dirt and noise of their city’s crowded streets, and they escaped when they could to their country villas. But in the United States, an anti-urban philosophy was begun even before there were any problems to be seen in the cities.

Early American political thinkers such as Jefferson and Thoreau, extolled the virtues of an agrarian way of life, and believed there was a necessary connection between democracy and rural life which cities threatened to undermine. Jefferson once wrote that "the mobs of great cities add so much to the support of pure government as sores do to the strength of the human body". But Jefferson did not encounter in his lifetime the problems he so accurately feared for American cities.

Early America, was undoubtedly an agrarian society and a majority of its people lived in the countryside. The total population of the American colonies in 1770 was no more than four million. Of this, less than five percent of the populace lived in or around what could be considered urban

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areas. Actually, the early cities were large only by comparison with their rural surroundings. They were mainly "entrepots - coast-hugging trade centers...for the exchange of the raw wealth from the endless North American interior, for the luxuries and finished goods of Europe. [these early cities] were marked by the counting houses down by the wharves and, up on the hills, magisterial courts, churches, government houses, and mansions. " 2 Of the three major cities, Boston's population was fifty thousand, Philadelphia's was forty thousand. New York at less than 30,000 was more like a large town, contained entirely at the southern tip of Manhattan, just below Canal Street. 3

By 1820, fifty years later, not much had changed. The percentage of urban residents had risen by only two percent. At the time, there was little concern about the growth of cities, since it was expected that the sizes of cities would regulate themselves as people began moving westward. But the real tension between the countryside and the city began with the rise of the industrial city. Between 1830 and 1850, the population of the U.S. almost doubled from 13 million to 23 million. The bulk of this influx occurred in the cities as immigrants from Europe arrived to work in the new factories.

At around this time, flight from the city began in small ways. As early as 1820, over-crowding in cities like New York, had produced a small but steady exodus of middle class families from New York over to the "suburb" of Brooklyn, which at the time was more accessible by steam ferry than was the rest of barren Manhattan Island. Advertisements in magazines touted this first commuter suburb as the ideal place for young families with "pleasant surroundings, cheap land, and low taxes". 4 But as Manhattan developed, so did Brooklyn, and by the 1850s it was necessary to find "healthful surroundings" as far out as the new suburb of Llewellyn Park (1854) which was twelve miles outside of the city in New Jersey. Similar suburbs began sprouting up near every major city.

Meanwhile, the anti-urbanist movement was gathering steam as the architect Andrew Jackson Downing and feminist writer Catharine Beecher individually extolled the virtues of a suburban home to the upper and middle class. They were particularly interested in appealing to the young wife.

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whose duties of domestic nurturing for the family were seen to be undermined by the distractions of the city. What these two writers did was no less than to convert the agrarian ideal of Jefferson's into a push for the suburbs. This philosophy, as Margaret Marsh writes, was convenient to the middle class family since the head of the household needed a profession to support the family's status. Thus, "ownership of a suburban house, did not make a man a farmer, but it brought him closer to nature than an urban township did."\(^5\)

Downing's *The Architecture of Country Homes* went through nine printings. The popularity of his pattern books lay in their mixture of patriotic sermonizing, his lionizing of the familial responsibilities of his middle class patrons, and his rendered prints of Carpenter-style and Gothic-revivals, were as fashionable as his "villas in the Italian style" he designed. While readers thumbed through his catalogues looking for the dream home they hoped someday to have, Downing solemnly assured them that: "the solitude and freedom of the family home in the country...preserves the nation and invigorates its intellectual powers". From 1850 until the turn of the century, Downing's books were a standard feature on the shelves of many middle class families. For this he has been called one of "the most influential individuals in translating the rural ideal into a suburban ideal"\(^6\) and his contributions to the allure of suburban living could be matched only by Beecher.

Beecher, by contrast, was interested primarily in updating Jefferson's ideal of equal access to the means of agricultural production. Beecher's contribution was an appeal to the woman as the guardian of the family's status, which her husband had labored to achieve. The woman's role, as Beecher saw it, was to manage her husband's household in the retreat of the countryside as he did battle, far away, in the city's business district. In 1869, she published her prototype description and layout for the "American Woman's Home", which above all was a domestic space in the service of men and children.\(^7\)

The advent of the commuter railroads led to new suburban retreats such as Olmsted's Riverside outside of Chicago. Though their features and the social status of each town were different, all of them bore the marks of Downing's and Beecher's influences. As the urbanist Lewis Mumford wrote:

\(^5\) Ibid., p. xiii.


\(^7\) Dolores Hayden, p. 22.
The nineteenth century's suburban dream home in Downing's pattern books (above), was in stark contrast to the bleak, urban reality (below) of the Industrial City. (above: from Cottage Residences, Andrew Jackson Downing, 1842; below: Sol Eytinge's "The Hearthstone of the Poor", 1876)
"Who can doubt that suburban living is based on a Victorian template of patriarchal life, encouraged by all of the comforts and conveniences, the sense of internal space and peace, that brought the Victorian father back nightly to his snug household..."\(^8\)

By the turn of the century, the invention of the automobile would begin to increase the accessibility of such a suburban retreat. That this anti-urban bias which had been preached by Jefferson and Thoreau should find such widespread appeal among otherwise non-intellectual middle class families in the United States, was undoubtedly born out of a reaction to the rapid rise of the industrial city, as well, which is the focus of the second trend.

**Trend Two: Experience in the Conditions of the Industrial City**

In the century between 1850 and the Second World War, cities in the U.S. grew at a rate never before seen in history due to industrialization. Economist Richard Knight writes that up until the Industrial Revolution there had been one predominant type of city, notably the imperial or mercantile city which presided over empires of colonial towns or the trading networks of their hinterlands. According to Knight, the early industrial cities, by contrast, could be described as historical accidents because their impacts were not predicted nor could they have been foreseen. As "shapeless masses formed by a thousand hands" there was no attempt to control them, partially because people generally believed that in a nation that believed itself to be rural, nature would take the best course. To them, "temporary" city problems in a country with so much open space would inevitably ease themselves as city dwellers left the congestion, perhaps migrating to the unsettled western parts of the country. \(^9\)

But the problems did not take care of themselves because as the cities grew, more and more people were drawn to them. Immigrants from abroad and from rural areas flocked there to seek their fortunes, and by the end of the nineteenth century, two-thirds of Americans were urban residents. Most of these residents had little choice in where they lived. Their housing choices were dictated by economic limitations, the shortage of accessible land, and the

\(^{8}\) Ibid, p. 44.

necessity for most people to be able to walk (or take the street car) to their jobs. 10

The result of this rapid growth and booming population in the Industrial city was that cities became places of chaos, pollution, and crime. Above all, intense, residential crowding and the lack of family privacy were facts of life for many city dwellers. Many lived in dark, airless tenements, or in cramped apartments carved up in houses which had been designed as single family dwellings in earlier times. Needless to say, conditions in the nineteenth century city were horrific even by the standards of the day. In tenement buildings, units could be no more than one room lacking air and light, heating and plumbing. Whole families did their cooking, eating, sleeping and child-rearing in them. Devastating fires were common. Disease epidemics spread easily through dense neighborhoods so that tuberculosis, cholera, diphtheria, and influenza claimed as many lives as did the industrial hazards in factories. Streets without sewers overflowed and flooded into buildings when it rained. Animals being taken to market were driven through the streets at night. Food sold in neighborhood markets was often spoiled or adulterated. Even sleeping in the city parks at night to escape the summer heat of the neighborhoods, could not relieve the noise, the pollution, the odors, and the filth that was present everywhere. 11 12

Even among families who were fortunate to have their own houses, one in five had to take in boarders. Street crime was always a potential problem, despite the modern belief that the city today is more dangerous. Urban scholar Raymond Vernon writes that: "most major cities in the U.S. in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contained areas in which law and order were simply not applied, and in which anarchy and gang rule was allowed to go unchallenged. 13

The influx in immigration and urban xenophobia played a role in the tensions in neighborhoods. Slums were being filled with immigrants from southern Europe and elsewhere. From 1903 to 1910, almost one million


12 Dolores Hayden, p. 20.

immigrants arrived each year in New York alone. Southern Italians, Jews from Eastern Europe and the Austro-Hungarian Empire fleeing oppression in their native lands, had little money and few choices when they arrived, and despite any previous status, were instantly flung to the bottom of the American social structure. Millions of poor farmers also arrived in the cities, willing to take any work they could find. Meanwhile, poorer black families seeking to escape the racism and poverty of the rural south emigrated to northern cities, to find that conditions there were not much better.

To make matters worse, the Depression and World War II brought a halt to residential construction for almost fifteen years. This not only made crowding a problem for a whole generation of young families who had to double-up, it increased the wear and tear of residential stock that was already seriously deteriorating. The result of this chaos and discomfort for the urban family was often disdain for the city. Author James Howard Kunstler perhaps best sums this up with his description: "...lacking the historic and civic, amenities that usually made cities more livable in Europe, American cities grew so rapidly through industrialization, that as soon as they attained any size at all they very quickly became disgusting." 14

Some have argued that the city's working poor and its pre-war, yet-to-become middle class families endured this congestion, expense and discomfort because the city represented their only hope for upward mobility. Economic necessity to live close to work and a lack of viable alternatives gave most people no choice but to live through the hardships of such an environment. Moreover, these city conditions were for some families an improvement over the endless and dire poverty that was also prevalent in the countryside. Yet, the desperation engendered by the gritty, over-populated, unsafe, and unhealthful industrial city, enhanced their desire to leave it when the chance arose. This desire to flee the city was what many saw as the first step towards becoming middle class. Eventually, as the next section shows, that opportunity would present itself in the form of the post-World War II suburban subdivision.

**Trend Three: The Suburban Dream Becomes Widely-Available**

The third trend was made possible by the prosperity of the existing and new middle classes, as well as the widespread application of many of the century's new technologies such as the automobile and mass construction

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techniques within the housing industry. The sudden availability of the suburban dream was made possible by the monumental policy efforts of the Federal Government's housing finance and highway construction programs. All of these factors combined to make moving to the suburbs affordable and easy, and in short, an irresistible opportunity for the middle class that had never given up the dream of living there.

The federal commitments to help relocate the city's middle class family population to the suburbs had begun just prior to the Depression. At stake was a policy issue of giving Americans more access to home ownership. The anti-urbanism of policy makers was not hidden. They openly expressed their dislike of the city and saw their mission as one to solve the city problems of over-crowding. President Herbert Hoover believed in suburban home ownership, as he once said, "To own one's home is a physical expression of individualism, of enterprise, of independence, and the freedom of spirit." 15 But even Hoover did not advocate large scale federal subsidies as a means to move massive amounts of the populace into the suburbs.

Up to that point, ownership was difficult for most families. As late as the 1920s, homeowners usually carried at least two non-amortizing mortgages for terms of no greater than five years, with high down payments. Hoover's belief that Americans ought to live in and own their own houses, outside the city was shared by the Roosevelt Administration which followed. That many of the administrators and policy makers were committed to new construction outside the city was probably due to the cultural bias of their own middle class status. With the creation of the Federal Housing Act, in 1934, the federal government's commitment to the suburbs over the city was clear. The programs of the Federal Housing Administration and its associated Veteran's Administration programs were designed to provide loan guarantees primarily for the new construction of single family housing. Multi-family housing and housing in urban neighborhoods was generally excluded. At the same time, the government made a great effort to assist commuter travel as a variety of federal agencies poured over $100 billion into street and highway projects.

By this time, some of the older issues like urban crowding were lessening as people began to accept these conditions as part of living in the city, instead of viewing it as an anomaly in the ideals of small town life. Still, much of the central city housing stock was from the previous century, and some had become uninhabitable. Houses once intended for single family dwellings in earlier times, had been divided and subdivided into small and

The desires of middle-class families to own their own detached houses in the suburbs was encouraged and promoted in the U.S. by financial institutions, developers, and the Federal Government (left). Above, the American middle-class's belief in self-definition was to be fully expressed, ironically, in the suburban Dream Home of a prescribed "style." (pictures from Housing: Symbol, Structure and Site, Cooper-Hewitt Museum Collection, 1990)
cramped living quarters. The central city's old neighborhoods contained housing which had been used and re-used for generations. Not in a few cases did the retrofitted and often crumbling structures lack the necessary investments for maintenance, let alone the "modern conveniences" or open-air spaciousness that the new suburbs delivered.

"Much of the city's residential stock was functionally obsolete...the plumbing couldn't handle the washing machines and the wiring couldn't handle air conditioners and television."\(^\text{16}\)

As the suburbs began to blossom, other disparities between the old central city and clean, new Suburbia began to show themselves. One difference was the issue of cost. Louis Schlivek, in his book *Man and Metropolis*, gives a contemporary account of his own dilemma of choosing a residence in New York City versus the suburban home in 1948. The economic issues coupled with the need for adequate living space forced him to make a practical decision in favor of the suburbs:

"...With our first child on our way we began to look for more space...[but] we could find nothing [in New York City] to meet our needs in any neighborhood at a price we could afford. Instead, what we did find was ad after ad urging us to buy a house in the suburbs. We weren't interested in living in the suburbs, and had not planned on buying a home, but the terms made us rub our eyes in disbelief. It was impossible to resist at least going out to take a look. Imagine, a six-room house with a yard of its own which could be "carried" -- amortization, taxes, insurance -- for a monthly payment lower than the rent on our one bedroom apartment."\(^\text{17}\)

The economic advantages of moving out of the city made the rapid growth of the suburbs all the more understandable. With the prosperity of the postwar economy, the huge pent-up demand for housing which had grown during the lean years of the Depression, and more than 10 million returning war veterans, the floodgates of the exhausted city were opened to the new Suburbia. The resulting growth of the suburbs was enormous and

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\(^{16}\) Irving Welfield, p. 89.

In this century, the middle class family’s suburban ideal had never before been so available nor so thoroughly anticipated as it became in the years following World War II. ("Dream Home", cover of the New Yorker, July 20, 1946.)
was like nothing the housing industry had ever seen. In the year proceeding the war alone (1946) there were 1,023,000 housing starts; in the following year, 1,268,000, and by 1950 the record number of houses constructed per year reached almost 2 million. Within the next twenty years the suburban population doubled from 36 to 74 million people.18

During that time, the bulk of the urban middle class moved "up and out" to the suburbs. The suburbs in turn, took on the quality of the middle class themselves, so that eventually the middle class and suburban life came to be seen as one and the same idea. With their relocation, the families who had individually decided to leave the city, had collectively and inadvertently created two new cultures. One was the city's "left-over" culture which was to grow ever more marginalized with respect to the suburbs. In contrast, the new suburban culture became the mainstream culture, and into it went the newest and the latest of American culture, including the majority of young, middle class families.

In summary, the three trends have had an inter-related effect in the creation of the suburbs as the living environment of middle class families. An historically-based anti-urbanism was translated into various middle class media by intellectuals and by the institutions which sought to capitalize on a suburban culture. This included the advertising industry, the railroads and car manufacturers, and the proponents and developers of new-town ideas. It was the experience of living in the city itself that led many to develop the conventional middle class wisdom that cities were bad places. This meant that little convincing would be necessary, given the unusual and uncomfortable conditions of industrial cities, to prompt people to leave it. This resulted in increased population pressures and a greater demand for housing due to greater family income and optimism about future prosperity. The introduction of newer technologies, like the automobile, enabled the home environment to be distanced from the unpleasant surroundings of a working city.

In short, the first trend instilled the belief that cities were bad into the middle class value system and "pushed" that the suburbs were better; the second "pushed" with its verification that the city was bad; and the third provided the opportunity to translate desires into real options, ensuring that the prospect of a suburban life would "pull" the middle class into their newly-defined home. It was also the results of the revolution in housing

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development methods, such as mortgage financing and government policies which ensured that suburban expansion could take place.

Today, these trends explain why the middle class developed a preference for the suburbs, particularly in the years before and following the Second World War. However, the results that followed also exerted their influence of suburban preference for two reasons. One, is that it continued to encourage by peer example that the acceptable and right thing to do was for the middle class to remove their families from the city. Second, it set into place, the pattern which dictated that the suburbs were the best place where successful, middle class families should live. These elements extended to and were later emulated by the working-class families as they eventually, too, rose into the middle class.

A final aspect that must be addressed is the creation of the new suburban culture which has came to be so different from that of the city today. This is necessary because far from having a quality of its own, the potato fields and horse farms which became the new subdivision, had no inherent culture to offer. Instead, suburban culture was created on "a blank slate" by the middle class families who settled there. In turn, this culture became synonymous with middle class culture, and:

"...an era of backyard barbecues, cocktail parties, power mowers, washers and dryers, PTA pride, and Girl Scout goings-on blossomed.... sales of lawn and porch furniture soared...bicycles sales jumped...shopping centers sprang up to encourage more spending in glamorous settings, and...in families seeking a higher social status, wives dreamed of sophisticated entertainment in their bright, new. fully automated and electrically equipped houses."19

**Pieces of the Dream: the Socio-Physical Aspects of Suburban Life**

In this final section, the elements of a suburban lifestyle, and by extension, of middle class families, are examined. Not intending to be an exhaustive categorization of these elements, it is intended as a starting point for analyzing the socio-physical qualities of suburban living and suburban hybrid neighborhoods in the central city. There are five broadly-defined categories: Newness; Contemporary Convenience; Access to Outdoor Living; Family-Conducive Privacy; and Community. Without considering the issues of housing costs and the provision of public services, many of the

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19 Ibid., p. 63.
characteristics of the suburban lifestyle might be said to have some or all of these characteristics

**Newness** is that feature which was and is in many of the suburban family environments in complete contrast to the city. Newness and by extension the qualities of contemporary lifestyle ensure that the best, the easiest, and the most up-to-date qualities of living can be had among the options that one chooses for the home. It implies that structures are sound and that mechanical systems are neither in need of maintenance nor hopelessly out of date. This would entail that plumbing to support the operation of a washer/dryer be adequate, that water temperatures stay regulated in showers, or that disposals work and toilet basins refill. Included among those options, of course may be a preference for things which include retrofitted antique fixtures or furnishings, if that is desired in the family's home life. The importance of this concept in relation to many city environments is that, a general newness in family environments is lacking in the cities. This helps to explain the situation that, whereas for gentrifiers, the qualities of old homes or historic neighborhoods may offer a unique and desirable living environment, it does not suit everyone. Thus, in great contrast to the predominately old, and often deteriorated city environments:

"...all of the postwar suburbs proclaimed the advantages of newness, an American tradition especially attractive to the young. Newness promised freedom from crust, dirt, prior owners, and vandals, and offered material objects and social relations that people could embrace as their own from the start."  

Related to newness is **contemporary convenience**. For example, contemporary "object" conveniences may be the latest devices for energy efficiency, lighting design, or personal care (such as whirlpool baths). On the other hand, "non-object" contemporary conveniences entail such aspects of modern life as provisions for parking in garages; the capacity for wiring in a house to support electric components such as personal computers, microwave ovens, air conditioners, or multi-piece entertainment centers. Finally, it would include the aesthetic qualities in living environments that are relatively modern preferences. Natural light, for example, which was not always possible based on density or inadequacy of materials or construction methods, has come to be expected in newer homes. In a review of the most significant "breakthrough" changes in residential designs during the 1950s, Joseph Mason, former career editor of numerous building journals, wrote that:

20 Loren Baritz, p.197.
"[among] the bold new concepts that were exciting and significant,...were window walls and glass areas planned for the view and for good sun control....and new geometric housing shapes that caught the eye and opened the house to views and orientations..." 21

Similarly, access to outdoor living, can be said to be a broad category which includes not only backyards and gardens, but also porches and decks, indoor-outdoor rooms (rooms which extend into outdoor space), and access to the natural environment. Olmsted spoke of suburban neighborhoods as "detached dwellings with sylvan surroundings yet supplied with a considerable share of urban convenience". 22 Some of these urban features which traditionally gave access to the outdoors, were balconies, terraces, and formal courtyards. However, the suburban contribution to these features was to give them more of a natural, informal look. Thus one of the suburban versions of an urban terrace is an unfinished, weather-treated "deck" with an exposed post-and-beam structure; far less formal and much more naturalistic. Often the combination of these structures as an extension of interior spaces, provided in the suburban house the quality of an "outdoor living room". Similarly, indoor-outdoor spaces are achieved with strip windows, glass gable ends on roofs, or patio houses and the traditional screened-in porch.

Outdoor areas became an obsession for many middle-class home owners, with the backyard becoming one of suburbia's icons. But the sizes of typically large backyards devoted to lawncare can also be a maintenance nightmare. The use of such open spaces associated with the family's activities can certainly also include gardening areas, play areas for children, or simply places to recline or sunbathe. As landscape architects Girling and Helphand summarize:

"At the heart of the suburban ideal is the promise of living within green open spaces. One of the reasons that people move to the suburbs is a desire for more personal space and an expansiveness not found in urban congestion and density. An equal desire is for a private domain of house and lot, a combination of built and natural space, that one could call one's own, care for, and transform...." 23

21 Joseph Mason, p. 70.


Ebeneezer Howard's Garden City diagram from 1898 (below) described the ideal country/city community of 32,000 residents, on 6000 acres, which was to be economically and socially comprehensive and interdependent. Modern garden cities such as this suburban new town outside of Houston (left) however, are typically never as efficient in their mixture of land uses, management of environmental resources and transportation options, in their jobs distribution, or their connectivity to other communities. Instead, the emphasis is inadvertently placed on private consumption and selective seclusion.
Related to such natural areas which families can claim for their own uses in suburbia, are the living spaces devoted to family-conducive privacy. Whereas, in suburban design, the front yard is a setting primarily for landscaping or display, the private activities of the family’s life are a focus of backyards, patios, decks, and porches and in rooms which open up to them, such as the kitchen or family room. Family entertaining, also a private middle class affair, was shifted to the back as well, since in this location nature and privacy could be combined to become “the real focus of family privacy....where large picture windows and sliding glass doors opened out onto a patio or a backyard with its own barbecue.” 24 Much like the outdoor living room, these areas are often located to the rear of the house. Mason, again, notes that in the new design of the suburban home:

"Family living shifted...as living rooms were moved to the side or back where they overlook terraces or patios. At the same time, 'family rooms' grew in importance -- usually available to the kitchen and opening upon an outdoor terrace." 25

Other instant images of suburbia are related to this sense of family privacy. One is the idea of creating a family environment that revolves around children and childhood. Certainly the swing set or the backyard wading pool as well as the presence of certain types of family-oriented recreation - bicycling, roller skating, baseball -- are also related to this imagery. One of the earliest suburban family communities, Radburn (1928), went to "great lengths to provide for its children. There were tennis courts, baseball fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, tot lots, nursery schools...houses faced the park, so children could always be kept in view." 26

Finally, the sense of community bred into suburban life is actually a strong middle class characteristic that has taken on an added dimension. Cities also have community sense, of course, but their qualities are somewhat different. Whereas the urban community looks to issues of diversity, cultural stimulation, or mutual security, the suburban community sense looks to the model of small town participation and custodianship. The iconic qualities of

26 Margaret Marsh, p.152.
PTA meetings, of the family-oriented country club or neighborhood swimming pool, of adolescent employment by cutting lawns or baby-sitting neighborhood children, of scouting and little league, and of the car-pool, are all illustrative of this different kind of community sense than the type that central cities are known to support. Perhaps, the facts of suburban community size (smaller) or history (less established) provide keys to understanding this difference.
Summary: Two Worlds of Modern Urban Life

Federal policies in response to a severely pent-up demand for housing during the Depression, encouraged and paid for the building of highways out of the cities into the surrounding countryside. Similar policy measures made FHA guarantees available for mortgages, and subsidized payment in the form of tax incentives. For the cities, the net effect of these policies was something akin to opening the floodgates for an anxious middle class --- many of whom were the newly-made middle class through the prosperity of the post-war period. The growth of the suburbs, therefore, was rapid, and the exodus of middle class families increased greatly each year, so that one point in 1955, families were leaving the city at a rate of 4,000 families per day.\footnote{Baritz, p.196.}

The city had been abandoned and left to newer immigrants or poorer families who had no choice. The stores and offices of the middle class, followed them to the suburbs so that the conditions of their former city neighborhoods -- with fewer services and a poorer population -- began to crumble. Several decades of rebuilding brought some areas of some cities back to prosperity, but not without the help of federal and state governments and not, more importantly, without the eventual return of middle class patronage in the form of suburban commuters and culture seekers. Urban renewal, urban homesteading, and a much-celebrated gentrification movement helped to turn the tide somewhat to the point that most American cities are no longer losing population today. Yet the social and fiscal problems of central cities have continued to increase. Not unrelated perhaps, is the fact that the suburbs have continued to grow as the unchallenged home of the middle class family, while few cities have been able to sustain a sizable population of middle class families at all.

The suburban dream has served the middle class well. For many of the urban poor, however, this dream has offered little short-term promise for themselves or for their children. The costs of suburban housing have usually been out of reach for a working person's budget and, in any event, there is a necessity to live close to central city for transportation and public services.

Therefore the central cities should not neglect the simpler capacity for enhancing physical aspects of living environments as opportunities to attract middle class families as residents. An approach which has been generally under-utilized is to provide among the central city's residential options, a
physical living environment which replicates the positive attributes of the suburbs. New masterplanned neighborhoods, particularly if developed from scratch on vacant or underutilized central city land, offer an opportunity to attract middle class families by targeting their design to the preferences of this group.

Such an alternative approach has been attempted recently in the new neighborhoods built in several cities. Although, physically, economically, and socially there may be some differences among these examples, all are cases which show the elements of a hybridized suburban style, which have been created within the central city in order to attract middle-class families. Four case studies will be considered in which new masterplanned neighborhoods have been designed and developed in central cities with the expressed or implicit goals to augment or maintain a middle class family population. The cases studies will include Dearborn Park in Chicago, Harbor Town in Memphis, Otterbein in Baltimore, and Battery Park City in Manhattan. In each case study, the background of the central city's particular problems and its goals for wanting as a policy measure to have middle class family residents in the central city will be reviewed, as well.

In the next section, four case studies will be examined in which new neighborhoods targeted to middle class families are currently or recently being "suburban-hybridized" in different degrees. Each has a variation on their agendas and methods for developing such middle class neighborhoods. These include Chicago's Dearborn Park, built on the former railroad yards of the South Loop; Memphis's Harbor Town, which capitalizes on a riverfront location and distinctive design adjacent to downtown; Baltimore's Otterbein neighborhood, which uses a combination of preservation homesteading and garden-townhouse in-fill; and finally New York's Battery Park City, which at the opposite extreme from, say Memphis, is a new type of opened up, amenity rich environment that is as generous in its family provisions.
"A healthy city must be a good place to live...
It must be attractive to families with growing children,
as well as to young unmarried people and older couples....
Areas near the central business district, offer special potential
for rebuilding with much of the housing suited to families with moderate incomes."

-- from the Chicago Comprehensive Plan, 1966

**BOLSTERING THE LOOP**
Dearborn Park, Chicago, Illinois

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Chicago has been called the most American city. Perhaps it is. For much of its history Chicago has played out an American ritual of neighborhood settlement followed by waves of new immigrant invasion and succession. In responding to these pressures, members of its vanguard developed the modern city planning movement while simultaneously perfecting the garden suburb.

H. L. Mencken dubbed the city "the Middle Empire" because of its commercial strength. But the city also represents something of a middle-passage -- an adolescence, perhaps -- in the development of the American metropolis. With the enclave-scale of a New York neighborhood and the unfettered, automobile scale of Los Angeles, the city of Chicago is both. The constant mobility of people in both locational and socio-economic terms helped to make Chicago the veritable melting pot as much as New York, and perhaps more so because it amalgamated newcomers with optimism of the midwest pioneers. "Make no little plans..." warned Daniel Burnham, the Zeus in Chicago's pantheon of architects. Chicago never did. For a century or more, this city was the quintessential core-oriented Industrial City, with the constant pace of a cutting edge boomtown. Viewed as such, Chicago was to
The sprawling City of Chicago is divided into 12 neighborhood planning districts. The shaded Central Area is the location of the Central Business District (the Loop) and home to the new South Loop neighborhoods, principally Dearborn Park and Central Station. Other traditionally middle-class family neighborhoods nearby include Lincoln Park and Lake View (district 5) and Hyde Park/Kenwood (in the lower part of district 8). (Chicago Central Area Plan, 1983)
the nineteenth century what Los Angeles has become in this century: a culture identified by its tremendous infusion of mobility and sense of progress.

The Chicago "Loop" -- which refers to the elevated railway lines encircling the central business district -- is the central business district of the city. As such, it is both the commercial as well as psychological epicenter of the city. The Loop today has remained as the central focal point of the region; where most of Chicago's important institutions -- its financial and securities world, government offices, theaters, museums, and department stores, and its prized architecture -- are located and for which the city is known. But this role is constantly threatened by the city's burgeoning edge city economies which offer competitive employment and retail opportunities, and by the popular perception that the Loop is unsafe after working hours.

True to its rapid growth, modern Chicago is a vast place. Covering 227 square miles not including its suburbs, the city spans 33 miles along the coast of Lake Michigan. Considering that this is almost three-and-a-half times larger than all of Washington DC. (69 sq. miles), and more than five times the size of Boston (43 sq. miles). The city's population in 1990 was 2.8 million and it's metropolitan population was nearly 6.1 million. In the ranking of the largest U.S. cities after New York and its recent nemesis, Los Angeles, Chicago places third. But it has also lost much of its family population to the suburbs, and there are areas in Chicago that resemble an evacuated war zone: empty lots and the remains of neighborhoods that have crumbled through years of use and current neglect and the poverty of its remaining residents.

To its credit, Chicago has maintained a strong tradition of residential neighborhoods close to downtown. But the locations of these neighborhoods, as well as their salient demographic characteristics, became firmly fixed in the city's formative years. As the quintessential core-dominated, industrial city of the nineteenth century, Chicago was shaped first by the location patterns of railroad and industry which could outbid all other uses for selection. Residential areas, which at first located west of downtown, and then to the south, faced repeated pressures to relocate as the city's population and industrial activities increased. Eventually the patterns prevailed so that north of the Loop became the most desirable and most expensive residential area, an arrangement which continued northward along Lake Michigan to the most desirable suburbs. Only the Far South and the western suburbs such as Riverside and Oak Park offered anything comparable in other directions, and to the east lay Lake Michigan.
Historically, the central business district of the Loop developed only to the north of Congress Parkway. Today, the South Loop is being developed for the first time since it was envisioned by Daniel Burnham in his famous plan of 1907. Adjacent to Dearborn Park, to the immediate north, is the former print industry district, which had become derelict and abandoned by the 1970s. Since then, with the success of Dearborn Park, the old buildings of Printer’s Row have been restored and transformed into the South Loop’s upscale loft district, with ground floor restaurants and shops. (Thrush Development, 1994)
In early Chicago - a frontier town utterly without historical and social topology - there were no hills to contest, no ancestral areas to claim. Nor did the ubiquitous street-grid offer importance to any particular area in itself. Instead, the places Chicagoans chose to live were a function first of wherever could be afforded in what industry and business did not choose, and second of where a handful of elite families had set the residential pattern for their own convenience.

For one thing, the early Chicagoans -- pioneers and self-improvers as they were -- wanted free-standing houses with space. In the flat prairie, this was not impossible:

"Chicago developed at a time when the detached suburban house was the new mecca of the middle classes. There was none of New York's pressure from lack of space... to the north, west and south, flat open space stretched as far as the eye could see." ¹

Originally, this type of house could be had in the central city. Proximity to the Loop for business or social reasons was the only requirement made of those with the most choice. On Prairie Avenue, no more than 10 blocks south of the center of the Loop, the families of wealthy merchants and capitalists built what was considered in the mid- to late nineteenth century to be the residential Fifth Avenue of the midwest.

But what was good for residence was frequently favored too by commerce. In the new industrial city, whenever competition ensued over an urban location, industry was sure to prevail. Accordingly, as the Loop grew in size and importance, the West Side, the River North side, and the South Side were transformed into peripheral support districts to serve the central district's activities.² This was intensified by the railroad network. Chicago's first railroad entered the city in 1850, and by 1856, the areas surrounding the Loop had become the focus of ten separate rail trunks which stretched in every direction out through the midwest. Grain arrived from the plains for conveyance and processing. Lumber arrived for transport and for Chicago's new furniture-making industries. Cattle and hogs arrived from everywhere and by 1856, the Union Stockyards at the city's southern border were surrounded by scores of packing houses.

¹ Mark Girouard, Cities and People (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 316.
² Interview with William Martin, Urban Planner, Chicago Central Area Committee, 1995.
The home of the Illinois Central Railroad was directly south of the Loop. From 1860 until 1930, it had acquired much of the land between the Chicago river to the west and the lakefront to the east. Similarly, industrial support plants and printing factories had edged up to downtown and formed an entire Printing District. The South Loop, as it now was known, became dominated by the massive rail yards and passenger depots at Dearborn Station and Central Station. The once prestigious avenues and residential areas along its edges became support areas for warehouses. As the railroads declined, the area between it and the stockyards to the south, became the territory of prostitutes, gamblers, and the general vices of the downtown racketeers.

The proximity of such activities grew intolerable to the Prairie Avenue elites. Before the turn of the century, the families of the Near South abandoned their Prairie Avenue homes one by one, and left to build new mansions along the lakefront of the near North side in what was to become the Gold Coast. The social geography of Chicago changed from that point on for most of this century. The North side became the favored residential area. To the North developed the Gold Coast for the elite families. Lincoln Park, which had been the former city cemetery, farther out along the rail lines and up the shore of the Lake: the suburban towns of Evanston, Winnetka, and Lake Forest. To the west there were the towns of Riverside and Oak Park. And in the far south, miles away from the activities of the Loop, the suburbs of Kennwood and Hyde Park. Between 1895 and 1930, deluxe apartment buildings in the manner of New York began appearing along Lake Shore Drive and near Lincoln Park. With them came a new acceptance of the luxury high-rise, which predominates on the North Side today.

Near the turn of the century, the social geography of Chicago had been changed permanently. The North side became the favored residential area; the South Side quickly slipped into decline. The result was "a shift away from the business center away from the fashionable neighborhoods north along the lakefront and at the edges of the city."  

Around the same time, the Commercial Club - a group of Chicago business leaders -- commissioned the urban planner and architect Daniel Burnham to find ways to re-organize the city. In his Plan for Chicago of 1907, Burnham suggested that the city open up with broad tree-lined boulevards radiating from a central civic space. He also stressed the importance of the lakefront as a cultural amenity for the city. More important, he called for

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Congress Street to be the main axis leading from Lake Michigan out through the city and for the central area to surround and lead into it by radiating avenues. The Plan was officially adopted by the City in 1907, but except for a good deal of street widening and the creation of recreational park system between the city and the lakefront, most of the Plan was never carried out.

Fifty years later, the Chicago Central Area Committee (CCAC), an independent civic organization formed to serve as a catalyst for defining a vision for the Central Area. In its mission statement, was the pledge of "translating the vision into physical plans, and ensuring that the necessary actions are taken to implement those plans." One of the first projects undertaken by CCAC and its planning consultants was to reconsider the Burnham Plan again as a starting point for future development.

In 1973, the CCAC working in conjunction with the City of Chicago's first comprehensive plan since Burnham released Chicago 21: A Plan for the Central Area. In it was a set of strategies designed "to reverse the decline of the Loop as a retail and entertainment center." Among many suggestions made, the most unique was a call for the creation of a South Loop New Town to be developed on vacant railyards. This turned out to be the consummate achievement of Chicago 21 and it lead to the creation of Deerborn Park: an entirely new residential community built on land formerly occupied by rail yards which sought to bring resident families back into the Central Area.

According to William Martin of the CCAC, the Chicago 21 Plan came about because, "at the time, there was a lot of suburban flight... With everyone moving to the suburbs and forgetting that downtown ever existed... there was a need not only to bring not only singles but families back to the Central Business District" 4

The ambitious plan drawn up for the "South Loop New Town" on 650 acres of unused railroad property south of the Loop, projected that its would support a resident population of 120,000 persons. The CCAC created a separate limited dividend development corporation. They sold shares and raised money for the initial planning and design. Later they took the name of the Dearborn Park Corporation and acquired 51 acres for development for 7.3 million, and were given a commitment from the city to provide millions of dollars of infrastructure.

Described again and again in the popular press as the "suburb in the city" Dearborn Park is only one of several developments in the South Loop

Promotional rendering (above) of the “Prairie Home” single-family house in Dearborn Park. Below, the South Loop as it appeared in the late 1970s. At center are the abandoned railyards and industrial lands which became the family-oriented neighborhood of Dearborn Park. The elevated expressway through the site is today’s at-grade boulevard, Roosevelt Road, which separates Dearborn One and Two. (upper: MCL Development, 1993; lower: Brian J. L. Berry, ed., Transformation of an Urban System, 1976)
area, which hybridize the physical form of the suburbs for family neighborhoods. It is perhaps the most notable, however, because it is earliest and has consistently purposeful embodiments of what was called for in the Chicago 21 Plan: the creation of moderately-priced, family-oriented neighborhoods set along the edges surrounding the center of the Loop. Just as Burnham had called for in his plan, the center of the city would be bolstered by its residents, close by, and on all sides.

Two separated sections comprise the single neighborhood of Dearborn Park, although at first glance they would appear to be from separate developments due to their phasing almost a decade apart from one another. Dearborn One, as it is called, shows the signs of 1970s planning in its flat-roofed, contemporary houses and in its walled-in separation from city streets beyond its edges. Dearborn Two, in contrast, is far more open and less densely-built. Although, both phases constitute the Dearborn Park community, their physical differences are apparent and are derived from the development environments existing when they were created.

The entire development of Dearborn Park is only two Chicago blocks wide from east to west, and extends no more than six blocks in length from north to south. Each phase spans three blocks in length, being physically separated from one another by Roosevelt Road, formerly an elevated expressway ramp which was brought down to an at-grade boulevard at the start of the second phase. Taken together, the two phases fit neatly into an envelope bounded by the existing Chicago Street grid.

Dearborn One was begun in 1974. With over 1,200 residential units and a series of consistent-looking buildings with unadorned Modernist facades, the appearance of Dearborn One today is that of a neatly-planned, low-rise Olympic Village at the center, surrounded by 70s-style high-rises. Because its development occurred at a time when all of the land surrounding the site was either railroad yards or the as-of-yet unrenovated factories and warehouses of Printer's Row, the cautiousness of its developers and planners is reflected in its design. In some respects, this part of the neighborhood has the quality of being a walled, though porous fortress. It has one means of entrance and egress, at the intersection of State and Ninth Streets. The State Street edge is formed by two and three story townhouses behind landscaping and fences. As if guarding this entrance, two high-rise buildings -- one of which is a high-rise for the elderly -- flank the entranceway from State Street into the development area. Wrought iron-fencing and masonry buffers such

* Chicago's street grid is made up of uniformly square blocks, each of which is one-eighth of a mile in length and width
as brick walls and the windowed sides of the buildings surround the rest of the site. In this sense, one can imagine how this gives a total reassurance of security which would have offered to early skeptics in its overall design.

Dearborn Two, began its construction in 1989. In contrast to the first phase, Dearborn Two is distinguished by being entirely low-rise and garden-like, with a mixture of single family houses, townhouses, and stacked townhouse flats. With an edge at Roosevelt Road for its northern boundary, it extends south for three city blocks to 15th Street. Although it too has one vehicular entrance point from State Street at 14th Street, the boundaries of the development are softer. Rows of new, single family detached houses front State Street with no more than a low ornamental railing and electronically locked gate into each front yard. The organization of the site is set by two internal streets running the length of the project area, and parallel to the city streets outside of its boundaries. The second phase, which shows a fuller evolution of the ideas used in the first will be the principal focus for this discussion hereafter.

The area of Dearborn Two is approximately 27 acres. At both its northern and southern ends are open parks. The north park has the feel of an open village green. It is the setting for a public elementary school and a playground at its northern edge, and is edged by a row of trees, overlooked by houses from three sides. Roosevelt Road which is the boundary of the site to the northernmost side to the "green", is conveniently masked by the placement of the school, while also providing a service area behind the school, up against the roadway. The south park is more formal, with a playground and a walkway system linking the residential clusters surrounding it on three sides. At the southern end, in stark contrast to the new development surrounding it, the park is visually unbounded and opens onto a figurative no-man's land of the undeveloped "south" South Loop and beyond. Both the unclosed southern end, and the poised alignment of interior streets to the theoretically-connectable city grid, are reminders that the potential for further development into the southern "frontier" beyond the park, as well as the possibilities for making connections to the rest of the city, are future scenarios for development.

Several housing types exist within Dearborn Two, indicative both of the variegated target markets and of the influence of separate development companies which have built here. These housing types range from rows of townhouses and walk-up condominiums flats, to variations on the single family detached house. All of the units are for-sale properties -- there are no rental units built as such -- and several, if not all of the styles built, represent somewhat innovative prototypes for residential buildings. Three companies
have been responsible for the construction and marketing of their own residential units: MCL Development, Ogden Development, and the Thrush Corporation.

MCL, the largest residential builder in the city, has been responsible for three areas on the site which together comprise more than half of the developable area. Each of the three MCL areas has its own building type which includes, respectively: 92 attached townhouses, 34 "Prairie Style" detached single-family houses, and 36 "Chicago Homes" detached single family houses. Ogden Development and Thrush Development, on the other hand, concentrated solely on attached townhouses. Ogden's Metropolitan Mews, is a garden style complex of 48 townhouses built around three interior courtyards. Similarly, Thrush Development's Federal Square consists of smaller, stacked townhouses in buildings clustered around a series of landscaped pedestrian and parking courtyards. The latter, in particular, has paid close attention to its landscaping elements as part of its marketing point of "new age" living with "efficiency and the environment".

Both the efforts to attract the target audience through physical design and the attempts to provide functional mainstream amenities to sustain those communities are evident in Dearborn Park. One of the advantages to having several developers engaged in building new homes on the same site, is that the quality must be attractive not only to the suburbs, but within the city and within the site between developer models. In Dearborn Park, where construction was supposed to happen in phases, the demand for housing had to be competitive with the current market's alternatives. This provided higher quality to buyers, particularly in the newness of features, and interior lifestyle. Contemporary features in MCL's very traditional-looking homes, for example, read like the equipment for a high-tech laboratory: "two-zoned central air conditioning"; a "50 gallon, high recovery, gas hot water heater"; individual digital key pad security system with magnetic contacts at all doors and windows"; "a gas-fired furnace equipped with humidifier", and -- the simple conveniences of -- "pre-wired telephone and cable television outlets in all rooms".5

By contrast, the selling point for Thrush's Federal Square townhouses assure buyers of the "new age of living" which "defines a commitment to reexamine every aspect of living in the '80s...with a focus on efficiency and the environment". Accordingly, Thrush's modern life takes place in a home where "wood casement windows, aluminum clad with argon gas between two panes of low E glass reflect 70% of the interior heat back into the room

The Plan of the Dearborn Park's second phase, south of Roosevelt Road: A single entrance from State Street (A) leads into the development. In a village green (B) at the northern edge, is the South Loop Elementary School (C), a public school which has been successful despite the controversies over who it was to serve. MCL's "proposed phase II" (D) has now been built with single family detached houses with yards, reminiscent of the old Chicago balloon frame houses in older neighborhoods. Near the center is the site of MCL's Manor Homes (E); imposing 35-4500 sq. foot, single family detached houses with garages and shared yards. Thrush Development's Federal Square (F), features innovative townhouses in a garden setting, marketed by their environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient designs. Townhouses by Ogden and MCL, in intimate garden settings around courtyards, comprise the remainder of the residences (G). Towards the southern edge in the center, another neighborhood park (H) provides formally-landscaped walkways and a playground.

(diagram from MCL Sales Brochure, 1994)
during the winter”. It also provides a homelife in which residents can program their thermostats according to their activities schedules "to reduce energy costs by 25%.” From a softer perspective, Thrush highlights its patios and private backyards on plan diagrams as "just like the 'burbs!". Also made clear to the buyer are the benefits of over 200 trees planted around their townhouses for noise abatement, absorption of heat and carbon monoxide, and not least, a habitat for "birds to sing and control insects."6

The design and layout of the houses, although they are necessarily smaller than their suburban counterparts, are not spared the conventions of living spaces expected by contemporary standards. Many of the MCL models contain 3 or 4 bedrooms. They are available with an "optional finished lower level" (the club basement), private back yards and detached two-car garages. Townhouses by the same company feature 2 bedrooms, 3 full baths, a family room, a country kitchen with deck, a fenced-in backyard, an a garage with roof top deck. Some of the models go beyond the conventional in order to make innovative use of city space. The "terrace homes" also by MCL are essentially a townhouses continuing a 22-foot wide duplex over top of a single level homes. The lower level is described by the company sales offices as a ranch flat (1,200 sq. feet) while the duplex on top is considered "a colonial" (1,800). The first level living space is created from expanded space on one floor, since the standard city townhouse has a 13-to 16 foot width. And though each "house" provides two to three bedrooms, "super" kitchens, private decks, and attached garages, the overall look of the structure from the outside is one of a large single townhouse. This ensures that the future-value of the buyer's investment is not subjected to the possible problems of outdated style.7

As an extension of the home, outdoor living is provided for in a variety of ways. Yards are an important feature of MCL’s Chicago homes, and although they are generally quite small, their practical utility is discussed as if they were large suburban lawns. In its seasonal newsletter to homebuyers, MCL gives residents tips on gardening and insect control. In a section called "Frequent Question from our Buyers", the company assures customers that upon request, "a gas line to the terrace, yard, deck or patio is certainly available to enjoy the warm summer night barbecuing."8

7 Interview with Irma Sokolnicki, Sales Manager, MCL Sales Office at Dearborn Park, January 1995.
8 MCL newsletter, 1994.
MODEL HOME GRAND OPENING!

PRESENTING AN OLD-FASHIONED NEIGHBORHOOD OF PRIVATE SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES. FROM $279,900.

The time has come for a timeless idea. Introducing The Chicago Homes at Dearborn Park. Here, you'll find thoughtful amenities from a simpler day. Gated front yards, private back yards, detached 2-car garages. And traditional Chicago architecture.

There are 16 distinctive styles. Choose 3 or 4 bedrooms. An optional finished lower level may serve as an extra bedroom, a home office, guest quarters, exercise room.

Visit now! There will be a limited number of Chicago Homes...and they're moving quickly. From $279,900.

Entrance at Fourteenth and State Streets, turn right on Plymouth and proceed north to Sales Office. Open daily 10-6; weekends, 11-6. Please phone (312) 408-0200.

THE CHICAGO HOMES
AT DEARBORN PARK

Advertisement showing single-family detached "Chicago Homes" viewed from outside the boundaries of Dearborn Park on State Street. As a security feature, residents control access to their front yards from inside the house, through a connected intercom system built into the electric front gate. (MCL Development, 1994)
Single-family detached houses in Dearborn Park: MCL's Manor Homes (above) with garages beneath and MCL's Chicago Homes (below) on single lots. (Photos by Author, 1995)
Additional outdoor space is acquired by using decks and balconies. Free-standing garage roofs in most of Dearborn Park are built flat so that decks can be constructed across their surfaces. Back porches, often in addition to the garage deck, extend from the rear of houses, from kitchens and family room. In both cases, and even when it conflicts with the themed-historicism of brightly painted Victorian style framehouses (MCL's Chicago Homes), decks are built using unpainted, weather-treated lumber: the practice commonly used for building porches onto new suburban homes. Even on the stolid-looking, dark brick townhouses of the Ogden Company's development area, many homeowners have exercised their option to have a wooden deck, instead of the developer's standard exterior balcony which would seem to better fit the buildings' character.

By the same token, contemporary convenience for these developers is extended almost automatically to include the car and its storage for each household. Practically every residential unit in Dearborn Park, as if by right, has at least one dedicated parking space, either in attached garages built under the house, in spaces set in courtyards, or in free-standing garages in back-yards off alleyways. Many garages are double vacancy. Even in the cases of smaller units, such as in the case of stacked townhouses units, parking is provided. In Metropolitan Mews, for example, which is built around an interior courtyard off State Street, thirty-six of the 48 condominiums units have garages, while the other twelve are assigned parking within the courtyard.

According to Chicago city planner Rafael Leon, who has been involved with the planning of residential development in the South Loop area, security never seemed to be a problem in Dearborn Park, even though precautions were taken. The first phase was designed to be quite secure with its single entrance on 9th Street, but that was primarily due to recommendations from security consultants from Boston. In the second phase, although it was also given a single entrance, the decision was made to open up the edges to face out to the city, instead of "turning in on itself". These characteristics may not be permanent in either phase as development continues, Leon says. "I suppose you could eventually open up the streets to the grid again. In streets that end up as cul-de-sacs in Dearborn Park, the city still maintains the right-of-way. We may be able to punch through someday and open them up. "

At one time, the skepticism about how successful Dearborn Park could become was a natural reaction based on the stigma which had surrounded

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9 Interview with Rafael Leon, Assistant Commissioner for the Community Development Division, City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, 1995.
Single-family house in Dearborn Park with garage off rear alley (above); Close-up of suburban-style back porch and a deck over the garage (below) (Photos by Author, 1995)
the South Loop for nearly a century. Developers were wary about building anything at first there, much less low density residential neighborhoods for families who might never come. That families within a broad range of buyers did respond was indicative of the quality of what was built and its sensitivity to the needs of its users. Also, since the city's living environments had never been updated for families -- a market segment which was traditionally ignored in new central city construction, anyway -- there was an untapped opportunity of potential buyers who had never been tried. Sociologist Gerald Suttels concurs that this was the practical application of an idea that was generally accepted to be theoretically good. Only by providing middle-class families with the living environment competitive to their other options could Chicago's "avowed purpose of producing family life... into this mile-square tract at the southern boundary of the business district" attract the widespread support and successful outcomes that it did 10

Today, there are a number of residential projects under construction in areas surrounding Dearborn Park. In the time since Chicago 21 was issued, the residential population in the South Loop, due to the precedent set by its lead, has grown from nothing to almost 10,000 residents. More importantly, the desire to increase residential population of the central area is seen to be critical to the sustained desirability if the Loop in general. In the Central Area Plan of 1983, the city articulated these goals:

"Downtown housing is a vital element in the future of the Central Area. It can extend the retailing beyond the present 9 to 5 schedule, enliven pedestrian activity with more people walking between their home and office, enhance the use of the city's downtown recreational facilities, and, perhaps most important, establish the stability of a participatory neighborhood in the downtown -- a neighborhood that would be characterized by pride of ownership." 11


Dearborn Park is such a neighborhood, and by its example, it has brought the South Loop closer to uniting the Chicago envisioned by Burnham’s plans. A local real estate magazine article sums up the transformation of this area which was once a grimy center of industry and decay: "The bottom line, perhaps, on all the talk of the South Loop is that it has attracted a resident who differs radically from the young, trendy, mobile, appreciation-oriented north side buyer. The South Loop buyer moves there, often with a view to staying for an extended period of time: to enjoy the area’s advantages, and to raise a family close to work and culture..."\textsuperscript{12}

Chapter 4

REVIVING AN URBAN CULTURE
Harbor Town, Memphis

"...Harbor Town was and is a gamble...
Its success hinges on the willingness of Memphians to forego established housing patterns and suburban expansion for a different kind of life...
The developer believed that he could prove the viability of downtown Memphis for a larger, more mainstream market;...that with the right design features, this market would respond favorably to the site's proximity to the downtown."

— the Urban Land Institute Project Reference File, 1992

When single family houses began construction in Harbor Town in 1989, they were the first to be built in Downtown Memphis in 100 years. The Maria Montessori School opened its doors in Harbor Town in 1992 to 130 children. It was the first downtown school in 70 years. And in that same year, the Harbor Town Marina on the Wolf River inlet opened as the first such recreational facility in the city. Memphis, the only major city along the Mississippi to turn its back to the river, was indeed reviving its central city with the critical piece that had been lacking from its previous efforts: downtown neighborhoods. The development of Harbor Town, situated 200 yards from Downtown on Mud Island, was the linchpin that set this and several other residential projects into action.

Memphis began as a river town built high on protective bluffs, and made prosperous by the trade of cotton and lumber from the rural hinterland. The bluffs at this site were once the location of a fort built by the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto in 1541, but the modern city was not founded there until 1814. Due to the swampy land to the north and south, and a flood plain on the opposite side of the river, the city had no choice but to expand east for most of its history. This trend began with large gracious homes built
Harbor Town is located on Mud Island, adjacent to Downtown Memphis (above). Formed near the turn of the century by accumulations of silt in the Mississippi River, the low-lying island remained inaccessible for development until dredging and filling raised it above the 100-year floodplain, and a bridge connecting the mainland was opened in 1987. Today, Mud Island's Harbor Town offers a suburban setting (left) which is less than 200 yards across the Wolf River Channel to the streets of Downtown Memphis.

(map and photo from Harbor Town sales brochures, Henry Turley Company, 1994)
along the Poplar Street corridor and in downtown in the Vance-Pontatoc neighborhood such as described in William Faulkner's book, The Reivers. After the Civil War, the city was slow to recover, but reconstruction and immigration from rural areas brought in new development by the turn of the century. But the early neighborhoods which led from the parkways had already begun their dismantling, as the middle and upper classes headed to the "suburban" areas of Annesdale Park and Overton Park. Planners from Chicago and St. Louis carried the City Beautiful movement into the city. Under their guidance was begun the construction of a new parkway system fanning out from the river, and linking as it progressed, most of the city's public amenities: its parks, a zoo and a horse racing track.

Consequently, the boosterism of city officials enthused with the promise of a lucrative "new South", plunged Downtown into one grand scheme after another. By and large, the projects undertaken were destructive to the old central neighborhoods. Between 1900 and 1920, developers cleared extensive sections in central Memphis to make way for new office buildings, hotels and stores, most of which never materialized. Shortly thereafter, the city tried to modernize its physical and social structure on the basis of a comprehensive plan done in 1923. The plan tried to transform the central city from a disparate collection of commercial, civic, and dying residential areas into a functionally integrated central business-civic center. Interestingly, Mud Island which had been considered a nuisance by public officials, was described for perhaps the first time as an opportunity for the city, albeit in the form of yet another municipal park. More importantly, this plan called for riverfront residential neighborhoods and commercial areas; an idea which was to take sixty years to take shape.

Meanwhile, urban renewal programs in the 1950s were particularly damaging to the central city. Officials elected on campaign promises to reverse the economic decline of the central city, began an aggressive renewal program which placed little faith in rehabilitation of older neighborhoods and buildings. Ambitious plans for the transformation of Beale Street from a decaying community center for black life into a tourist attraction also included a riverfront expressway, high-rise apartments, and a huge covered commercial mall. To accomplish the task, massive clearance was begun with little regard to historic buildings or the residents being displaced.

In the end, only the fortuitous designation on the National Register had prevented two small blocks of original buildings on Beale Street from being demolished. Surrounding it, lay almost 120 flattened acres. The clearance area, according to historian Christopher Silver "looked like
bombed-out Berlin", and remained that way for years afterwards as the city tried unsuccessfully to revitalize the activities it had killed off.¹

The timing of these failures coincided with the start of a difficult period in Memphis in terms of the already strained race relations in the central city. In 1968, the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King on the balcony of a downtown hotel was followed with riots and the destruction of property. The following year, a busing order handed down in a school desegregation case, resulted in large incidents of "white flight" out of the city neighborhoods. Moreover, the completion of a modern expressway circumventing downtown -- yet another of the well-intentioned urban renewal projects -- served mainly to expedite this residential outflow.²

At one point, there were no more than 500 residents of the downtown area. Much of this population consisted of college students and adventurous loft dwellers who worked, primarily, in the downtown medical complexes. But this scattered population could not sufficiently provide a market for the services expected in a livable urban neighborhood. Main Street, which once served as the shopping mecca for the entire mid-south was on its "last leg". It was effectively killed for good when its was remade into a pedestrian mall in 1977. Even at present, it supports no more than a handful of discount stores.

Until the impetus started by Harbor Town, downtown was simply not a place to live except for some rundown public housing areas. Midtown, the Victorian Village and Central Gardens were residential neighborhoods in the central area, in which gentrification had taken place earlier. But these were located too far from downtown to have any effect on its quality of life. Downtown to most Memphians was a place of crime, of bad schools, and of poor city services. Memphis, it seemed had survive too long without a downtown neighborhood, for Memphians to believe that downtown living was even possible. With neither the tradition, nor the amenities to support downtown neighborhoods, the problem for Memphis remained that it was still imperative for central city, residential renewal to happen somewhere.

The idea for a neighborhood on Mud Island was first suggested to the city by the Philadelphia firm of Venturi-Ross-Scott-Brown in the late 1970s. Mud Island had been a feature of the downtown landscape since its formation at the turn of the century by an accumulation of silt in the river bed. Still, the

¹ Christopher Silver, "Revitalizing the Urban South," (Journal of the American Planning Association, winter 1991) p. 76.
low-lying sandbar had been seen as useless to developers because of its frequent flooding and its lack of accessibility. The Port of Memphis saw it as a nuisance to river traffic, and at one point considered its complete removal. The city fielded proposals from time to time which generally resulted in plans for parks and zoos, a football stadium, and even a downtown airport, which it did become for a short period of time, until the height of an adjacent federal highway bridge limited that use. One proposal for a river-oriented museum and educational theme park was eventually built as a tourist attraction at the southern tip of the island in 1982. Automobile access was still not possible, however, since the decision had been made to connect the theme park to downtown via a monorail system. It was not until the city and downtown promoters had successfully lobbied the state to build the $10 million bridge from Downtown in 1987, that development of Harbor Town could proceed.3

When news of Harbor Town's development became known in the late 1980s, it was greeted with skepticism even at a national level. Everything about its development, so the press and suburban developers said, was headed against the conventional wisdom about where people wanted to live and the kinds of homes they might live in. It took the conviction of several developers to gamble that if homebuyers would try something new, the quality of the neighborhood had to be unique and the location would have to offer something special. In Memphis, Turley was convinced, that spot would be the river, and the neighborhood would have the design quality and established feeling provided by a neo-traditional community.

Turley hired RTKL Associates of Baltimore to produce the design, the engineering and the landscaping for the site. He also created his marketing and research group to determine how to approach potential buyers. Today, in less than ten years since its planning was begun, Harbor Town has achieved the unbelievable feat of making a family neighborhood in downtown Memphis, by attracting a variety of middle class residents, including families with children. Moreover, the success of Harbor Town has spun off to other downtown residential projects, including South Bluffs -- a $100 million, 450 unit residential neighborhood of single family homes on the mainland, along downtown's side of the riverfront. Moreover, the population living in downtown Memphis which had never topped 500 people as of 1977, now boasts a population of over 5,000 people -- a figure which is expected to double in the next two years, as continued development such as Peabody Place and the Gayoso House projects proceed.

3 Interview with Henry Turley, developer of Harbor Town.
Today, Memphis is a city of 610,000 residents which makes it the largest city in Tennessee. As a regional center for transportation and health care, nearly one million people comprise the total metropolitan area. And, although some 50,000 people work in the professional and government offices of downtown, the efficient highways leading out to the eastern suburbs, have created the mixed blessing that 60% of the metropolitan area can live within a 15 minute drive from downtown. Unlike larger American cities, therefore, Memphis has not had an easy time at building a residential population downtown -- much less one comprised of middle class families. Neither its meager retail and cultural offerings, nor its supply of downtown employment have offered compelling reasons for Memphians to live in the city. Moreover, there have rarely been the kinds of environment comparable for those willing to exchange a suburban lifestyle for residency in the city.

From the very start, then, Harbor Town was intended to be a family-oriented "suburb-in-the-city". Earlier attempts to bring residential neighborhoods downtown had succeeded mainly in the adaptive re-use of older commercial buildings turned into condominiums. These fared better than skeptics expected, but as essentially high-rise apartments they were seen never to attract Memphis families.

Harbor Town's designers were conscious of these problems when they began. But aside from their knowledge of the local market, the developers of Harbor Town took their faith in the project from a consultant's study years earlier which stated that a neighborhood on the island, would have the potential to become a "Germantown on the River." The association of theses elements made a strong impression on them because of its paradoxical implications. Germantown, a suburban jurisdiction outside the city to the east, was the quintessential middle class suburb for Memphis. It was widely esteemed as a desirable location for families and children, and had experienced an explosion of residential development during the 1970s and 80s. The idea stuck, however, and by the time that Henry Turley and his development consortium hired RTKL Associates of Baltimore to do the masterplan for a neo-traditional neighborhood, it was understood by everyone involved that a family-environment next to downtown was to be Harbor Town's goal.4

Harbor Town began construction in 1988 and became an overnight success. Today, there are over 500 single family homes and 350 apartments built and 98% occupied by a residential population of almost 2500 people. As

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4 Interview with Ann Dillard, Interim Executive Director for the Memphis Center City Commission, January 1995.
development progresses, the population is expected to increase to 6700 by the end of 1996.5

Harbor Town's Residential areas are grouped into three "districts": the Village, Garden, and Marina districts. The Village District at the northern end of site features 200 rental apartments, with a community health club that features a swimming pool and tennis courts. The Garden District, serving as the central family residential section, is a mix of residential lot sizes containing 41 townhouses, and 477 single-family detached houses. The Marina District, at the southern end of the neighborhood and closest to downtown has the greatest mixture of uses. In this area are condominiums, townhouses, a 217-slip marina, a yacht club, a 120-room inn, a private elementary school, and the site of a planned retail and commercial core. Separating the districts throughout the site is a linear park system in a "U" configuration, with 9 wetland ponds, mature trees, a jogging trail, and sitting areas.

Formal parks are the terminus of three main boulevards entering the development from Island Drive along the riverfront on the west side of the neighborhood. Island Drive is bordered by a 100-acre public greenbelt park, overlooking the Mississippi River. On the other side, along the eastern edge of the island, the Wolf River channel flows into a still-water harbor, and separates the island from Downtown.

Harbor Town is approximately a ten-minute walk to the center of the downtown via a proposed entertainment area. One enters Harbor Town via the arching Auction Street bridge from downtown. En route is the Great American Pyramid, a 1,321 foot stainless steel structure housing a 22,000 seat arena and exhibit hall. The Pyramid, which came to symbolize the first of many new projects of the city's current revitalization efforts, is a visible from virtually anywhere in Harbor Town as a reminder of downtown's proximity. Adjacent to the Pyramid, is the Pinch District -- an entertainment and historic district which has yet to attract development as the city had hoped.

According to John Dudas, Vice-President of Belz Enterprises which co-developed the project, Harbor Town's appeal is derived because of its riverfront setting, partly because of its masterplanned and neo-traditional design, and because it is "different".6 The riverfront setting is unusual for any neighborhood in the Memphis region, because so much of the shoreline


6 Interview with John Dudas, Vice President for Belz Enterprises, Memphis, January 1995.
Earlier plans for Mud Island, shown in Harland Bartholomew’s 1923 elaborate civic center plan for Memphis (above), envisioned the island as a formal city park in front of the working waterfront. (Revitalizing the Urban South, Silver, 1991). RTKL’s 1988 Plan for Harbor Town (below) features a neo-traditional neighborhood in three districts - (l to r) the Village District, the Garden District and the Marina District - separated by a greenbelt of a 1.2 mile nature trail, with nine ponds and a wildlife sanctuary. (RTKL Associates, 1988)
A rendering (above) shows the proposed commercial strip in the Marina District. Originally proposed as a neighborhood center, it was reconceived as a regional shopping area and tourist attraction. (Henry Turley Company, 1993) Below, RTKL’s schematic plan shows the system of boulevards leading from the Mississippi Riverfront into the neighborhoods. The bridge connection to Downtown, the Pyramid and the location of the "Pinch District" as an entry-way to Downtown, are also shown. (RTKL Associates, 1988)
is made up of flood plain. The neo-traditional design of its streetscape and design code is an amalgamated version of "more stringently authentic" designs by the firm of Duany/Plater-Zyberk. As such, the individual houses on lots are custom built to a community design code, with the approval of a standing design review board comprised of architects and a community-appointed commission.

However, unlike the stricter Neo-Traditional design and style codes of such new neighborhoods as DPZ's Georgetown-inspired Kentlands (outside of Washington, D.C.), Harbor Town's housing style is more varied. Earlier plans and marketing brochures loosely claimed that houses would be inspired by a regional style of "old Memphis" or "old Mississippi riverfront towns", but this was largely a marketer's fictional appeal to history. With more than 20-approved architects and builders on an "approved" list who custom design for buyers of neighborhood lots, the resulting housing along the streets is an ambiguous mixture of "turn-of-the-century-style" homes. This ambiguity is a positive feature of the development, because it permits the neighborhood to achieve an evolved look, and encourages creativity among the builders in manipulating the design code to various configurations.7

In fact, Harbor Town does have the feel of a streetcar suburb of 75 years ago -- even boasting the inclusion of authentic 1890 lampposts. Lot sizes are small, and dense lines of houses sport mandatory front porches kept close to the street edge. But after these generally consistent themes, Harbor Town features styles, which derive inspiration from just about any period or place. On a corner lot fronting Island Drive for example, stands the dream home of one owner and his architect: an octagonal house with a spy-glass cupola reminiscent, not of old southern river towns, but of ocean view mansions in Newport, Rhode Island. Across the street, in a series of six, award-winning "shot-gun houses", more contemporary creations are found in cathedral-ceiling, A-frames, with modern windows set in the triangles shaped by their roof peaks.

Such diversity is an overall benefit, because it encourages a mixture of styles throughout the neighborhood. More important, is its challenge to designers to incorporate contemporary conveniences into houses, which otherwise would not exist in a "real" turn-of-the-century town. Several model homes in Harbor Town have been innovative in their responses to this, as well as to the restrictions placed on them by the design code and the scarcity of space that is characteristic to any downtown property. National

Many of Harbor Town's houses are exemplary by the scaled-down "urban" approaches used for making innovative and well-designed living spaces. Contemporary and densely built by design and necessity, yet carrying with that all of the formal iconographies of the traditional suburban home, several of Harbor Town's more than 20 separate designers and builders have received national recognition for their work. Shown above is the Harbor View Cottage designed by architect J. Carson Looney which won Southern Living's Best Small House Award in 1993 for "packing maximum comfort and living space onto a 36 foot-wide lot". The house includes three bedrooms, two-and-a-half bathrooms, and built-in bookcases, fireplaces, and walk-in closets. The house's second-floor balcony, as well as its ground-floor back deck and screened porch, afford its residents commanding views of the river. The car is provided for in the carport on the side of the house, and a side-yard behind the carport and a small backyard provide additional settings for outdoor homelife. (photo from Southern Living, February 1993)
recognition for the ingenuity of space-efficient, modern city homes in Harbor Town has been the source of many design and home builders awards.

For example, in a 1994 competition with more than 700 entries from around the country, the Builder’s Choice Design & Planning Award sponsored in conjunction with the American Institute of Architects announced:

"The top award goes to a tiny house in Memphis that sums up, in 1,650 feet square feet, the key themes of this year’s competition. It’s a modern house in a pedestrian-friendly, neo-traditional setting. It’s cost-conscious design gives new life to affordable everyday materials, An not one foot square goes to waste."8

In 1991, Professional Builder Magazine’s award found much the same rationale in its decision that the: "House of the Year is a Home for the 1990s" stating that "this narrow, modest-sized home, incorporates innovative features to enhance livability, while addressing many of today’s most pressing constraints: affordability, land availability, and energy use...with home-buyer preference trending [sic] more and more to quality, permanence, and stay-at-home livability...this 1750-foot Memphis row house on a 30 foot-wide city lot, embodies features that will mark the housing design and layout well into the 1990s."9 Still, other awards were given for the Shot-Gun style design mentioned previously for "on its narrow 25 foot by 110 foot lot, it maximizes living space and wastes no room on hallways. Double-decker porches and side courtyard extend living outside, and an attached garage backs up to alleyway for street access".10 This newness and contemporary designs are critical elements in Harbor Town’s hybrid style.

Access to nature and the outdoors in Harbor Town is comparable to the suburbs. This is due in part to the neighborhood’s location on a previously uninhabited island. Yet with full-scale development underway and a projected population of almost 7000 residents by 1996, the site’s ability to provide recreational access and contact with nature would not have been automatically guaranteed. The ambitious landscaping plan, instead is at the heart of this provision. Over 20% of the site is dedicated to communal open space, with 15% more including the streets. There are three formal parks


9  Professional Builder and Remodeling magazine, (January 1991) p. 16.

10  Ibid., p.17.
Single-family detached houses (above) along broad, newly-planted streets in Harbor Town have, in some places, the look and feel of a young suburban subdivision. Yet, closer inspection (below) reveals the more urban features in the prerequisite neo-traditional layout of shallow front yards, street-oriented porches and balconies, and an emphasis placed on streetscape and sidewalks as places — not only for cars — but for reinforcing community with passing pedestrians. (Photos by Author, 1995)
designed to be the focus for communal activity. Settlers Point Park contains a formal Victorian pavilion overlooking the Wolf River. Nursery Park is a landscaped green mainly designed for children surrounded by views of small-lot houses. Similarly, Christmas Tree Park is an open square designed to be a meeting place for neighborhood events. Bordering the neighborhood the city-owned Mississippi Greenbelt Park along the river, with an uninterrupted view since the opposing Arkansas shoreline is an undevelopable flood plain for more than a mile inside the levee. From this vantage, visitors to the park can watch tow boats, riverboats and barges gliding silently down the river -- day and night -- and unimpeded views of western sunsets. A community boating facility on the Downtown side of the island is provided (in addition to the Wolf River Harbor's marina slips). A recent article in the community newsletter announced that rowing lessons would be offered by a former coach who is a resident, with an aim to organizing a neighborhood crew team.11

The edges the neighborhood and the interior wetlands spine were designed to keep the naturalistic feel of the former island. Along the linear parkland loop that swings through the interior of the site in a U shape, wetlands were preserved as amenities. A nature trail used by joggers and as a seating area winds under mature trees and vegetation. Among the six ponds included in the wetlands, is a sanctuary for birds, and several small varieties of fishing stock. The system which is maintained by gardeners, functions for residents as though it were a natural ecosystem, with hidden control over the negative natural accompaniments such as weeds and mosquitoes. The physical appeal of this is evident. In the spring edition of the neighborhood's newsletter, families of ducks and geese were included in the ongoing list of new families to the community. A small story in the same edition reminded neighbors to "look for youngest of these family members -- the new ducklings -- when passing over the footbridges."12

As an extension of this environment, outdoor life is naturally provided in the private outdoor spaces of the lots or buildings. Without exception, all of the units in Harbor Town give outdoor access through a yard, patio, deck, or balconies. Many owners have access to all of these within their property. The same newsletter features a section called Environmental Update, which informs residents that "the wetlands area will be reclaimed this spring and wild flowers planted....with every effort made to eradicate poison ivy." Similarly, understanding the interest residents have in their individual yards is shared in the newsletter's feature "Maintaining Your

11 Ibid. (in spring issues, 1995).
12 Ibid.
The Pyramid in Downtown Memphis looms gently over Harbor Town's streets (above), while nearby parks (below) wind quietly through the neighborhood. (Photos by Author, 1995)
"Garden". One issue featuring gardening advice, also suggests that a "'Lawn of the Month' committee might be fun if neighbors are interested".13

Perhaps more than any other aspect of Harbor Town's suburban qualities is the sense of dedication residents have to engender a sense of community. Much like a new subdivision neighborhood in the 1950s, which experienced the excitement of starting a neighborhood from the ground up, the newsletters and postings on a community board in the neighborhood's sales/neighborhood center are indicative of this enthusiasm. Residents leave notes about "canine courtesy rules" or announce a meeting to get involved in lobbying the city to honor its service commitments: ("Now is the time to get involved, if you are concerned about the completion of Island Drive!").

Related to this are more conscious attempts that encourage a sense of community action. The Homeowners Association is interesting from this respect because, unlike many others, it offers equal inclusion and participation to renters so that "everyone in the community has a vote". The Association, with elected officers, also organizes a Neighborhood Watch program of citizen patrols, and has in the past sponsored a speaker series by the Memphis Police Department on security issues and self defense. Finally, judging solely from announcements in the newsletter, social events are used to foster community spirit, by endorsing such activities as a Mardi Gras parade ("Search your attic for outrageous carnival costumes, and bring a devilishly delicious desert to share!"), or a Christmas tree lighting (Please join us at Christmas Tree Park on Sunday at 6:00 PM....entertainment will be furnished by the Maria Montessori School children who will lead us in caroling. Coffee, hot chocolate and cookies will be served by a surprise master of ceremonies!).14

Conceivably some of the activities will be short-lived. The participation of residents in trying out new activities in the early stages of the neighborhood will possibly lead to the establishment of certain traditions at the expense of others. Accordingly, some of the events described by the developer as ongoing activities, as though they had been long-standing traditions, is a situation which is sometime contradicted by the announcements of the newsletter. For example, despite the developers' marketing description of a "popular Saturday morning Coffee Club which meets each week in the gazebo of Settlers Point Park", the newsletter reports

13 Ibid.
14 Ibid. (newsletter quotes are from various issues during 1993-1995)
in one of its issues that: "Due to low participation we will no longer be hosting the coffee club...we thank the 6 to 8 residents who did enjoy the coffee and New York Times." Yet, in short, all of these activities suggest the optimistic verve of a new Suburb which is fueled by the desire to become part of an eventually-established community.

In order to attract the types of people needed to begin this momentum, the developers knew that they would have to be creative in their marketing efforts. Since Harbor Town would be an exception to the development trend of Memphis, one of the strategies used by Henry Turley’s marketing team, was to target prospective homebuyers from out-of-town. They reasoned that these buyers would not have the pre-conceived notions or biases against downtown that Memphians had held. Since it was difficult to convince real estate agents of the sales potential of the island, the developers had to be aggressive in providing video tape "info-mercials", tours of the site and flexible open-house hours just to get suburban realtors to bring their clients in to look at the neighborhood.

Since a large part of the development effort was to be focused on families with children, the developer had to anticipate their needs. A poor reputation for public schools in the central city would be an insurmountable objection for such families, so the developer wanted to provide an on-site school as an alternative. The agreement with the Montessori school to locate in the neighborhood and to begin operating early in the process was, therefore, a critical part of this effort. But other, blunter strategies were included to ensure that families would even look. For example, homebuyers were offered a lot price concession of $1,200 per child, and alterations in the lot’s features, such as providing a backyard fence in areas near streets or water, were sometimes negotiated or installed free of charge.\(^{15}\)

Both of these strategies seemed to be successful. Twenty-five percent of Harbor Town’s current homeowners were relocated from another area of the country, and thirty-two percent reported to have at least one child under 18 years as of 1994.\(^{16}\) Nevertheless, according to Urban Land Institute researchers, "the developer underestimated the appeal to families with children....the private school and the special promotions to families [were] factors, but it was the project's design that ultimately proved most

\(^{15}\) Interview with Carol Schumann, Marketing Manager for the Henry Turley Company, January 1995.

important." Additionally, surveys taken by the developer in early 1994 revealed Harbor Town's homeowners to be a diverse middle-class population, with 16% of respondents described as executives, 18% of respondents were classified as professional, and 21% of respondents were reported to be employed in medical occupations. The age distribution showed a strong segment of "family raising" ages represented in adults, in that 63% of adults among homeowners over 18, were between the ages of 18 and 45.

The development of Harbor Town was a radical departure from the trend in depreciation which Downtown Memphis as a living environment had faced. The fact that housing was developed at all next to downtown was its first contribution. But the additional benefits that will accompany this development because of the middle class family, home-owning community that has been achieved, holds the promise a revival of a city culture which had all but disappeared. As a "suburb within downtown", Harbor Town fulfills in physical, design, and social terms the kind of new middle class family communities that any city would desire to have.


A CAREFUL BLENDING
Otterbein Neighborhood, Baltimore

"...The execution of a successful project such as Otterbein is quite complex.
The transformation of a neighborhood requires
careful and sensitive rehabilitation efforts by both the city and its new residents.
The participation of residents is beneficial
since it makes them more aware for standards and guidelines,
and a continuing neighborhood involvement..."


Baltimore's Otterbein offers a different conceptualization of the new
central city neighborhood, for two reasons. One is that it was never an empty
site or the location of an obsolete industrial land-use. Another is that it
represents the adaptive reuse of older city elements existing on site and used
as assets to guide new in-fill construction and contemporary features of a
newer masterplanned community. The location of Otterbein, in fact, had
supported a residential neighborhood since the earliest years of the city itself
--albeit in various degrees of habitability. The Old Otterbein Church, for
which the neighborhood is named, was built in 1758 and still stands on
Conway Street at the neighborhood's northern edge. Spanning an area of
roughly four blocks by six blocks, the district lies one block west of the city's
Inner Harbor basin and two blocks south of the central business district.

Inside the neighborhood, more than 100 eighteenth and nineteenth
century homes stand in unified streetscapes with almost 200 newly
constructed townhouses. An additional 300 units in high-rise buildings
buffer the area along its eastern edges. The central location and commanding
view of the waterfront which make it a desirable location for middle class
families today, held a similar appeal for the neighborhood's earliest residents
two centuries before.
Baltimore is an independent city, which implies that its governance and tax base can not be derived nor rely on support from any larger jurisdiction such as a county government. The competition for residential tax base and the fiscal isolation engendered by its prosperous suburban counties, is further exasperated by the city’s proximity to Washington, DC, and its residential suburbs. Both cities, which are roughly 40 miles apart, were formally combined into one market area - the fourth largest in the nation - by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1990. Still, Baltimore has been steadily benefiting from its southern neighbor as commuter lines increasingly carry Washington “urbanites” who are attracted to living in Baltimore’s lower cost neighborhoods. (map by Greater Baltimore Alliance, 1994)
Starting with Baltimore's first settlement in 1729, many of the merchants, traders, bankers and sea captains, whose livelihoods depended on proximity to the bustling port built their homes in this area. Yet, far from being exclusive to this mercantile class, the families of the tradesmen, freed black workers, and craftsmen lived here as well. The city in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century was segregated less by race and economics than by occupation, and the clean-lined homes of Otterbein reflect, in their varied sizes and quality, the diversity that existed in the community. For example, on the same streets as the brick mansions of sea captains, were situated the simpler, eight-foot wide dwellings and workshops of craftsmen. Later additions to the neighborhood such as the Marburg Tobacco factory (1887), attest to the industrial advantages the neighborhood was to later possess, situated as it was between the wharves, and the B&O Railroad's Camden Station (1857) to the west.\(^1\)

Like other city neighborhoods, however, Otterbein went into decline after World War II. By the 1960s, it showed only faint vestiges of this prosperous past. Newer, fashionable neighborhoods had long before drawn the city's middle class away, along the central Charles Street corridor, and ever outward and northward from the waterfront. The neighborhood was vacated in many places and greatly deteriorated. Two centuries of residential migration and succession, the expansion of manufacturing plants into its boundaries, and later, the general exodus of population and jobs from the city as a whole, had all taken their toll on the neighborhood. Most damaging, perhaps, was the 1960s Urban Renewal plan to raze and clear the neighborhood for the construction of an expressway into downtown Baltimore. This resulted in the final stages of divestment and abandonment. By the 1970s, Otterbein had become a no-man's land of derelict, windowless houses surrounded by vacant lots and chain link fencing. Except for the rats and the homeless squatters who took up residence there, the neighborhood was thoroughly dead.

At the same time, however, downtown Baltimore was undergoing large-scale renewal. Its Charles Center project had been successful in jump-starting a downtown building boom. Nearly 33 acres along the Inner Harbor basin had been cleared for redevelopment, and the final plans for a shopping and entertainment complex were being reviewed (the future Harborplace). Downtown, it would later be understood, was transforming itself for the

Computer-generated elevation and map of the current Harbor West planning area adjacent to Downtown Baltimore.

The Otterbein Neighborhood can be seen in the center as, roughly, the low-rise area between the Inner Harbor and the new baseball stadium. (Baltimore City Planning Department, 1989)
coming service economy despite the decaying neighborhood which surrounded it.

The perennial issue of retaining middle class families remained as important as ever. The steady growth of the suburban counties was amplified by the heralded opening of the new town of Columbia, less than 15 miles from downtown. In response to these social pressures, the city had begun trying a variety of approaches to prevent the further flight of its middle class. One solution was the development of its own new-town, in-town: a public-private venture to be called Coldspring which broke ground in 1971.

Located on a 375-acre tract of land in the rugged northwest ravines of the city, the ambitious planning for Coldspring was intended to offer contemporary housing for 3,500 to 4,000 families using competitive advantages of both suburban and urban elements in its design. Moshe Safdie, the Israeli architect known for his "Habitat" buildings, was hired to design a cost-efficient cluster of 124 townhouses connected by a series of decks. On the interior sides of each cluster facing the deck, Safdie gave the houses a traditional urban appearance to serve as an elevated streetscape, while on the opposite side, patios, decks, and small yards opened to a "suburban" rusticity of the surrounding terrain. Parking was hidden under the decks, and landscaped walkways connecting each house to the deck with planters and benches were provided to encourage neighborhood socialization on the simulated "city street".2

Shortly after completion of the first phase, the Coldspring project was celebrated as a success: full occupancy, a waiting list for new units, and reports from city officials that the demographics of the new residents were, indeed, those of a racially-integrated, professional middle class.3 The additional development of 300 units, however, never came to pass, due to the high construction costs for the site, and the difficulties in keeping the housing prices economically attractive to erstwhile suburban homebuyers. As if looking for alternative methods, the city turned its sights, instead, to the central areas surrounding downtown, where neighborhoods of worn but solidly-built housing were slipping into further deterioration and abandonment. Baltimore's next task, it was clear, would be to use these old buildings as assets towards achieving the residential policies it had previously set. In an unexpected way, the lessons learned from the development of Cold


3 Ibid., p.123.
Spring as a community and its suitability for middle class families would play a role in the city's future programs.

In 1973 Baltimore introduced its Homestead Program in which the city would arrange to sell vacant, habitable structures to new residents for as little as one dollar. A homestead applicant chosen by lottery, would agree to make the necessary investments in order to satisfy certain renovation required in order to make the houses livable. The applicant would also agree to inhabit the house within 6 months of purchase for a minimum occupancy of eighteen months. When two years from the date of sale had passed, and following the city's inspection of the renovations, the resident was handed title to the property, and the property was officially entered back onto the city's tax rolls.

As one of several redevelopment areas chosen, the Otterbein neighborhood was selected in 1974, and signaled a rebirth for this community. The timing for this neighborhood was perfect. Despite the plans for the expressway construction, Otterbein's unique location and the efforts of preservationists persuaded city officials to push the expressway plan further west of the neighborhood to save it. Still, the 200 remaining buildings that had survived the vandalism and general neglect in the years of the clearance threat, were seen by many to be too disparate to form a coherent neighborhood on their own. Developers lobbied the city to tear them down in order to redevelop the area from the ground up. The city's planners, however, decided against it. Under a unique master plan it was determined instead that the neighborhood would be renewed, not only by restoring and incorporating the historic, older buildings, but also by extending their scale and architectural qualities into new construction for the development of a new, family-oriented neighborhood with contemporary amenities.

In the summer of 1975, 104 of the habitable old houses in the planning area -- in varying degrees of disrepair -- were sold by the city to homestead applicants for exactly $1.00. Following this, the first new construction was begun in 1978 and continued through 1986. Included in the construction were 100 new townhouses, a high rise, and condominiums. Eventually, the neighborhood saw the restoration of 110 additional row houses, the renovation of an old school, a church, and a several industrial building to include 38 additional residential units. The Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond relocated from another part of the city to the neighborhood's western boundary. There its low-lying mass, formed an expansive and attractive visual buffer for the neighborhood from the new expressway which was, in fact, built on the other side. Harbor Way West, a high rise of 56 condominiums was constructed in 1985 north of Barre Street on the northern
boundary. Two separate high-rises for the elderly were built along the edges of the neighborhood, along the eastern boundary of Light Street which, in turn, abuts the waterfront recreational area.

Today, Otterbein is very much alive. The amenities which have grown up around through Baltimore's renewal projects, its designation in 1980 as an historic district ensuring that the design standards of its redevelopment would be kept, as well as its proximity to the Harbor and Downtown, make it a popular residential choice for Baltimore families, downtown workers, and graduate students of the nearby University of Maryland Medical and Law schools. Adjacent communities -- some privately gentrified, others, Homestead areas themselves -- have helped to anchor the neighborhood's success in a larger residential context. It has also lured Washington, D.C. commuters who are attracted to living in Baltimore's comparatively lower-cost neighborhoods, with easy access to "neighboring" D.C., 40 miles to the south, via expressways and the commuter rail service abutting Otterbein.

But a very significant attribute of the neighborhood is contained in the efforts made by its planners to ensure that it would be a viable, practical alternative for middle class family life in the city. By capitalizing on its positive urban features and adding in features of both mainstream quality and contemporary utility, Otterbein's residential environment offers a unique suburban hybrid blended with the aesthetics of a nineteenth-century streetscape.

Perhaps due to lessons from the Coldspring project combined with the desire to preserve Otterbein's historic elements, the general characteristics of its redevelopment are those of its dual qualities: of old and new, of urban and suburban. As such, parts of the neighborhood are modern and exhibit new, retrofitted construction. Simultaneously, its nineteenth century pattern of density, its high-quality of public realm spaces and streetscape, and its location adjacent to the city's downtown, make it undeniably urban, as well. Several studies by consulting firms helped to forge the city's redevelopment guidelines. But the discussions which created the masterplan and guided the development process, are most illustrative of the planning goals.

From the outset, there were two very different types of residential construction which needed to be addressed. First, the new construction of townhouses would come under a set of prescribed controls regulating height, scale, materials, detailing, and density to conform to the overall character of older buildings. Height limits, for example, were set at three stories to maintain the neighborhood's nineteenth century skyline. Similarly, roof pitch, building frontage width, and fenestration patterns designed for new
A typical block plan prepared as part of Otterbein's redevelopment strategy shows the mixture of renovation and new in-fill construction. Both old and new buildings line up to create consistent street walls, with strict design controls for the fronts of buildings: height, roof pitch, fenestration, paint color and masonry materials are all proscribed in the design guidelines. Behind buildings, and accessible through common pathways, are open areas for parking courts, common landscaped area, and individual backyards. Also visible in this plan is evidence of the "city in a forest" concept, the concave areas for on-street parking, and extended footprints indicative of the encouragement given to new residents to make contemporary additions and backyard areas in the rear of each house, in order to provide more space, light, and opportunities for "outdoor living".

(Otterbein Homestead Area Guidelines for Exterior Restoration, LDR Inc., 1984.)
Renderings from the redevelopment Guidelines for Otterbein, show the renovation and preservation of the fronts of buildings to historic nineteenth century standards (above)...

...while the addition of opened-up, contemporary structures with decks, patios, gardens, and privacy elements is encouraged for the rear (below). (Otterbein Homestead Area Guidelines for Exterior Restoration, LDR Inc., 1984.)
buildings were meant to suggest -- not to imitate - the qualities of the original, predominantly Federal and Greek Revival style townhouses. Aside from these external, "in-view-from the street" aesthetics, the layout (front/rear) and internal features of the new houses were unrestrained to accommodate contemporary living.

A greater challenge, however, was to hybridize the historic townhouses for modern living given the constraints of earlier construction and architecture. One solution -- and, as mentioned, one that was applied equally to the new buildings -- lays in the dual design strategy. The fronts and backs of buildings would become substantially different, both in aesthetic and functional purposes. Like the townhouses of Coldspring, the fronts of all Otterbein houses -- both old and new -- were to be urban in appearance, and would relate to the streetscape and public spaces, as well as to their context with neighboring buildings. The backs of the houses, however, were to be clean-lined, modern and functional, lending the relaxed and more informal quality of suburban backyards.

The informal, suburbanized backyard would serve two purposes in Otterbein. The first was to allow homeowners the opportunity to express their own living style, and to provide practical outdoor convenience, since this opportunity would not be as freely available in the front yard of the house. The second idea was to encourage renovators of older houses to "open up" the older houses, to increased light and air in order for maximizing livability. This would serve to attract homeowners -- both current and in the future as the housing stock changed hands -- who might otherwise feel stifled by a total historicism approach. It was, of course, also based on the practical realization that Otterbein, with its newer construction and older buildings from various historical periods, would seek less to be a comprehensive historic district, as it would to be a quality setting with traditional motifs.

Rather than using a set of strict guidelines for the transformation of old houses, the planners decided on a combination which included an information strategy. Through a series of meetings and manuals, therefore, renovations were suggested and encouraged for making rear additions, building porches and terraces, installing new windows, landscaping and lighting backyards, and for coordinating the process with neighboring owners.

Much like the prototype of the suburban front yard, the formal front of each building would be oriented towards display. In suburban design, the front yard is setting to display the grand front of the family's house. No real "living" takes place on it, save the maintenance of the yard or of the car in its
driveway. The real activities of family's daily life are focused to the privacy of backyards, patios, decks, and porches and in rooms which open up to them, such as the kitchen or family room. People like the freedom to enjoy their outdoor areas and this construction ensured that homeowners, who need private outdoor areas, could use the back of the house to unwind or entertain. Making it easier for residents to de-formalize the backs of the house, then, served to compensate both for the limitations of Otterbein’s small backyards as compared to the sprawling yards in suburbia and the restricting "publicness" of the front of the house. Many design and structural ideas to maximize the enjoyment of backyards were considered. Residents were advised with informational guidelines on how to take into account the effects of sunlight, air movement, prevailing breezes, and acoustics, when they were organizing their landscaping choices.

Designs of gardens, decks, and shared backyards placed emphasis on comfort, convenience, and privacy. But to Otterbein's planners, the division between indoor and outdoor living was seen to be less distinct than it had been for earlier generations living in the older houses. This goal was essentially to incorporate, through the renovation of backs of the house and portions of the house, which could not be seen from the street, various design features which were intended to make the interior living space more on par with contemporary standards available in newer house. Designers insisted that, "...rear walls [should] be punctured to create more openness indoors...skylights may be added to provide more internal light....Roofs can be altered and terraces can be added to create more outdoor living space" 4

Related to providing for a contemporary lifestyle was the necessity of including space for the automobile. The car, the plan states, would have to be recognized as an important part of the modern residential life. The plan called for the majority of parking to be on-street so "as not to use up valuable land internal to the blocks." Nevertheless, internal parking along mid-block alleyways and block interiors would be provided, but its would be kept to a ratio of 1:3 spaces per unit. The design emphasis, in preserving the pedestrian potential of the neighborhood, would be to minimize the appearance of parking. Interior parking would be handled with a variety of landscaping concealments: brick walls, hedgerows, wooden fencing.

Street parking would occur in concave strips along the street edge. This was achieved by narrowing the streets at their ends and extending sidewalks into small plazas. Additionally, this design would help to serve non-parking

Renderings from Otterbein's redevelopment guidelines provide examples of how to increase light and air by replacing older areas hidden from view at street level with new additions (below); and for utilizing the placement of such buildings to provide privacy and alternative "outdoor rooms". (*Otterbein Homestead Area Guidelines for Exterior Restoration, LDR Inc., 1984.*)
A schematic rendering of opened-up, contemporary backyards and public through-block passage ways (above)... and the resulting built form as it typically appears today (below). Note in the photo, the parking areas concealed behind brick walls, as well as the landscaped patio, back porches and small balconies extending from the townhouses. (above: Schematic from Otterbein Homestead Area Guidelines for Exterior Restoration, LDR Inc., 1984.; below: Photo by Author, 1995)
To make the old neighborhood amenable to modern life, concave parking strips accommodate cars in narrow streets and "woonerfs" as part of the publicly-financed streetscape (above); while resident-renovators are encouraged to add skylights, and replace interior "dark space" with new additions and rear terracing (left). (Otterbein Homestead Area Guidelines for Exterior Restoration, LDR Inc., 1984.)
related functions to contribute, rather than take away from, the public realm. First, narrowing the ends of streets with extended or closed plazas would slow the movement of traffic for the safety of pedestrians and children at play. Second, it would provide a clearer orientation of the street for pedestrians, indicating by the expansion of widths, places for street crossings and socializing. Third, it would ensure a neater street appearance, by having cars tucked into spaces, concave and flush to the perceived street edge, and consequently keeping parking consistently behind a visual boundary line.

Such an appearance of the streetscape and the buildings as coherent street walls was an important consideration for the planners. This was not only out of concern for urban design and attractive city neighborhoods, but also in the attraction of middle class families. Otterbein's comparative advantage to the suburbs, in physical terms, rested in its streetscape and design character, and its proximity to the downtown and its waterfront. According to Baltimore city planner, Don Duncan:

"Baltimore could not compete with its suburbs [back then]...there was so much to overcome and it was more than just a perception. If you weren't interested in the education of public schools, you would still have to give people parking and security, patios, backyards and so on...Existing family neighborhoods that were already established were too pricey for most suburbanites....[but] Otterbein worked because it was something they didn't have out there [in the suburbs]. The overall look of the neighborhood was kept consistent and made it an identifiable place. And the Inner Harbor was so different...well, that really made it special and gave the project a chance..."5

Another factor in the "competition" was the quality of life available inside the home. Older homes in Otterbein were built before electricity, and those which had retrofit it later, relied on wiring that was by now old and faulty. The possibility of a modern life dependent on refrigerators, washing machines, and computers was not easily sustainable in many city neighborhoods. Plumbing was another problem, as was energy efficiency, and the inconvenience and required special maintenance associated with old housing facilities.

Because of this, there was the endeavor to infuse "newness" into the neighborhood. This would, the planners reasoned, ensure that the neighborhood would become and remain competitively attractive with

5 Interview with Donald Duncan, Chief, Urban Design Division, City of Baltimore Department of Planning, January 1995.
Baltimore's Inner Harbor, as an entertainment and recreational focal point for the city, and with nearly 7 miles of public waterfront promenades, serves as a unique "front yard" for Otterbein (above), while community-based amenities such as the swim club (below) provide residents with daily, mainstream recreation within their neighborhood. (Photos by Author, 1994).
newer suburban environments. Energy saving devices and insulation were required in the building code, as were standards for plumbing and electrical wiring. But most renovations, were simply made by suggestion, in ways similar to the guidelines for the treatment of backyards and rear buildings. Under a section of the design guidelines called "modern conveniences" homeowners were advised not to wait, but to upgrade their houses during renovation. For example, the guidelines advised: "During rehabilitation, it is most desirable that central air conditioning be installed". They also anticipated such issues as radio and television antennae which would be restricted visibility from the street. Instead, the more up-to-date alternative of connection to cable television -- being made available for the first time in the neighborhood -- was suggested.  

Encouragement for the installation of contemporary conveniences in rehabilitated houses was seen as a necessary strategy to upgrade their immediate and future desirability. Additional newness features include gas heat and central air conditioning, insulated exterior doors and windows, skylights, and cable and telephone pre-wiring. Kitchen amenities, often available in older houses only through retrofitting, come newly installed with warranties: name-brand appliances, no-wax resilient floors, a self-cleaning gas-cooking range, a dishwasher, built-in microwave, garbage disposal, and generous cabinet and storage space.

Construction of new houses, however, would have the impetus of the market to provide such standards. Since Otterbein's inception, various construction projects have added new residential units to its area and along adjacent areas. While all exterior design is required to be conforming to the neighborhood, a reliance on the market to produce modern interior and exterior conveniences has been successful. An advertisement for new townhouses currently being constructed at the boundaries of the neighborhood illustrates this fact. Consisting a series of townhouse with a nineteenth century appearance, evidence of the installed "newness" behind older-looking facades has followed Otterbein's goal. Marketing brochures elaborate on the ready-to use amenities of modern living, all contained within the historically-themed house in a vibrant city neighborhood.

"Get the best that city living has to offer.... now there's an unique opportunity to get the modern conveniences of a new home with the

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7 Ibid.
grace of old-style architecture... These uniquely-styled, all-brick homes have 3 bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths, 1 or 2 car garages, and custom decks.\(^8\)

Interestingly, Ryland Homes, the development company responsible for this particular project, offers its buyers a warranty -- "the ten year home buyer protection plan" -- which would seem to indicate the company's strength in the market and belief in the quality of its product. This is not a trivial point for Baltimore, considering that Ryland, as the largest suburban home builder in Maryland, has entered the central city residential market for their very first time with this project. Their success, then, bodes well not only for the stability created in part by Otterbein's success, but also for the acceptance of the central city as a site new residential development in itself. It reinforces, substantially, the case for hybridized design of urban communities.

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\(^8\) Ryland Homes, Inc., from brochures for Montgomery Square development, Baltimore, 1994.
Chapter 6

THE CALM AT WATER'S EDGE
Battery Park City, New York

"Competing with the suburbs is important...
New York must get in the trenches and realize that we are in an economic war...
Given an equal chance, I think people want to stay in New York.
The problem is that we haven't always given them an equal choice...
...and I think that's what our job is."

-- Alexander Cooper, urban designer and creator of the Master Plan for Battery Park City

As the newest neighborhood in Manhattan, New York's Battery Park City offers still another perspective on the masterplanned, middle class neighborhood. That this celebrated development should be considered at all as a place for the middle class is an arguable point. Certainly, it was not specifically planned to serve as such. Original schemes intended to set aside subsidized residential units for moderate and middle-income families, but after several years of debated development strategies, such dedicated programming was never truly realized. Its location in Manhattan is, after all, a place which to many Americans represents the antithesis of family life.

And yet, New York is different than other places in the United States. As such, its middle class families are more varied in income, by profession, and in the lifestyle they choose than in other places. This is not simply an issue of scale. As the nation's largest metropolis, New York is more than twice as densely populated as any other American city and supports not one, but two central business districts, each of which has its own global prominence. This has a great impact on the kinds of professionals who work in New York.
Battery Park City in its context to the City of New York. Other New York areas that have served middle class families during the second half of this century include: parts of Greenwich Village and the Upper West Side in Manhattan; Cobble Hill, Park Slope, and Boerum Hill in Brooklyn; Forest Hills and the eastern part of Queens; and much of Staten Island. (Dual City, John Mollenkopf and Manuel Castells, 1991)
The financial district of Lower Manhattan, for example, hosts five of the six largest banks in the United States, the country's two major stock exchanges, and most of the world's dominant securities and investment banks. Midtown's corporations, on the other hand, involved in book and magazine publishing, television, theatrical production, retail, advertising, and fashion businesses, are the giants among their industries worldwide. Scattered throughout the city are the headquarters of several of the world's largest corporations. One hundred of the Fortune 500 industrial corporations alone are in New York. For these reasons, to say nothing of the academic and artistic communities which thrive here, New York is different from other cities in the United States.

Yet the city's need for its middle class families is among its most important policy issues. As Kenneth Lipper, an investment banker and former deputy mayor of New York (1983-85) forecasts, one of New York's direst challenges in the coming century will be to "keep the middle class from defecting." Viewing the situation in 1989, he writes of the implication created by the city's demographic and income disparity purely from a tax base perspective:

"... Of New York's seven million legal and many more illegal residents... only approximately 10,000 households pay 20% and 190,000 pay 50% of the 2.6 billion personal income tax... and who are these precious vital 200,000? They are the bankers, brokers, executives, television or theatrical people, lawyers, doctors, publishers and journalists. Their talents and computers allow them to live anywhere; they are in New York by choice. But if the city's drug and crime problems are not contained soon, many of these people are out of here. And even a modest exodus, would cloud New York's future." ¹

Like other cities, then, New York must constantly appeal to the middle class family. The memory of the city's near bankruptcy in 1975 is for its planners and policy-makers, too clearly illustrative of the consequences if it does not. Certainly the public involvement in the improvement of residential environments is no exception. The creation of Battery Park City beginning in its earliest days in 1968, was and is as much a contributor to this strategy, regardless of whether it was made to implicitly appear so. The 92-acre site along the Hudson River shoreline in Lower Manhattan, was created with landfill from the excavation from nearby skyscrapers -- most notably, the

Median household income in New York in 1988. The Upper East Side area in Manhattan stands out as the bastion of wealth it is known to be. Battery Park City/TriBeCa in Lower Manhattan, the East Village/Stuyvesant Town/Murray Hill areas, and the Upper West Side are shown to be roughly middle to upper income areas for Manhattan. Comparable areas inside New York’s boundaries include the suburban-style neighborhoods in Staten Island and the eastern parts of Queens. (Siegelman in Dual City, John Mollenkopf and Manuel Castells, 1991)
World Trade Center complex which is directly behind it. Filling began in 1970 and took six years to complete.

In the late 1950s, David Rockefeller, Vice-Chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank, had organized the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association in an attempt to revitalize the Wall Street area. The organization held among its goals -- not only the preservation of downtown - since this was a time when many real estate analysts predicted that businesses would be leaving en masse for midtown- but also the more ambitious notion for creating a 24-hour commercial and residential district which might make use of the abandoned waterfront. In 1960, in a move that was indicative of his commitment, Rockefeller built a new skyscraper headquarters for Chase downtown - the largest single real estate development to occur in Lower Manhattan since before World War II. At the same time, in the midst of city-wide discussions on devising a scheme for landfill developments along the city-owned piers, Rockefeller and his group urged the Port Authority of New York to build a World Trade Center. When the decision was made to build that complex on West Street, at the land's end of the southwestern downtown, ideas were immediately brought forward to use the enormous amount of landfill to be made available.

In 1968, the Battery Park City Authority was formed by the State Legislature of New York as a public-benefit corporation. Its mission was to organize the development of the landfill site and to create on it a residential and commercial community. Since that time, the Authority has been responsible for awarding each parcel in the plan to private developers who build under its strict design guidelines. The Authority is the organizer and arbiter which ensures that Battery Park City develops along these guidelines.

Meanwhile, in 1979 more than ten years after the original development plan of 1968 had been produced, the site remained vacant. The Authority opened the process for new proposals and decided to accept as its comprehensive masterplan, the plan by the architecture firm of Cooper, Eckstut Associates.

The 1979 plan made important changes from the earlier version. The new plan criticized the livability of the superblock concept proposed earlier, which had called for a single megastructure of residential "pods" built onto a retail/circulation spine running the entire length of the site. Battery Park City, it was noted, was a paradox because of this, since although it contained the most expensive and profitable real estate in the world, no one was interested in developing the site. The negative perceptions of the site for
developers, the plan stated, were due to the expensive and overly complicated megastructure concept.

In stark contrast to this, the new proposal recommended familiar elements of traditional New York neighborhoods at the streetscape level. It would use the city's indigenous block system, a mixture of land-uses and density, and one of its most desirable residential forms, the mid-rise apartment house, for its foundation. It would also provide abundant open space in the form of parks, recreational spaces and playing fields, and the 1.2 mile long waterfront Esplanade.

The plan held immediate appeal to developers and designers, due largely to its high degree of public amenities as well as its familiar interpretations of traditional, older New York neighborhoods. Ironically, this also became a source of criticism, since higher associated cost and a stronger quality environment would make the residential environments more expensive and more desirable, effectively shutting out the affordability to residents of lower income.

Related to this problem, was the fact that the originally-promised public-sector commitments to provide subsidies for lower-income housing did not occur. Several critics, however, have gone on to suggest that this situation and the eventual demographics of the all-market-price neighborhood were adversely determined in part by its design rationale; one which they consider to be flawed. Urbanist M. Christine Boyer typifies the proponents of this view. According to her, the organizing principles behind Battery Park City's "historically constituted and structured composition...is a nostalgic longing to repossess and return to New York's heyday - the interwar period when the city emerged as an international financial capital in both style and substance". Disdainfully, she sees this as a negative element for New York in that:

"In order to appeal to the tastes of white-collar workers and upper-middle class consumers ... Battery Park City's design code is exemplary for having so concentrated New York landmarks: the look of prewar apartment houses, combined with views and atmosphere of Brooklyn Heights, reproductions of Central Park lampposts and 1939 World's Fair benches, and inspirations drawn from [well-heeled] Grammercy Park as well as the great landscape inheritance of Olmsted's parks."2

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The Plan of Battery Park City. On the left is the land-use plan, showing two residential areas to the north and south of a central commercial, office and retail center. On the right is the open space plan, showing the Esplanade and public park areas throughout the site. The open space shown in the North Residential area was eventually redesigned to include a far greater percentage of parkland and recreational open-space than is shown in this plan. The street system designed to connect into the existing Manhattan street network can be seen, as can the connection between the World Trade Center on the other side of West Street through to the Battery Park City’s commercial center, central Esplanade plaza and marina. (Battery Park City Master Plan, Alexander Cooper Associates, 1979).
Boyer and her colleagues are misguided in their wholesale attacks of the neighborhood based on its aesthetics or because of its lack of housing options for a broader base of lower income groups. As the largest and one of the oldest cities in the country, New York is a site of endless inequities with regard to income and housing choices. But it is also a city continually losing middle and upper-middle class families to decaying and crime-threatened neighborhoods, with grave consequences to its upkeep and provision of services. In contrast to the complaints of its critics, consideration must be given to the unlikely fact that Battery Park City even exists. As essentially a brand new, atypical and large-scale environment for New York -- one which offers an optimistic alternative for families who might otherwise abandon the city altogether -- there is nothing short of a blessing to the city by its success.

As the critics suggest, Battery Park City may not appear at first glance to be the ostensibly middle-class family and suburban/hybridized neighborhood of the other cases studied here. Still at a different extreme from the situation in most American cities anyway, it represents the distinctly Manhattan version of a suburban-hybrid family neighborhood. More importantly, this development stands alone as the newest middle to upper-middle income neighborhood in the context of dense, desirable, and highly-priced residential New York. Its overall design and amenities serve as a kind of "closest-in" suburb and functions -- or has the potential to -- in much the same way as do the other cases studies here. As urban scholar Richard Plunz notes:

"Manhattan's edges are its 'suburbs'. Battery Park City seems destined to follow this mode; a suburban edge for Manhattan, and a target for suburbanites from farther out, who want a reduced version of what the interior of Manhattan is, and the pleasures of a two-minute walk to the water." 3

Dominating these features is the open space and the public streetscape. The Plan of 1979 and others have boasted that 70% of the Battery Park City site is made up of open space.4 The actual breakdown of spaces is not only of

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4 Alexander Cooper Associates, Battery Park City Draft Summary Report and 1979 Master Plan (Battery Park City Authority, New York, 1979), p. 64.
plazas and park land. The Esplanade quite rightly makes up a generous 30% of the site, while 21% of the site is dedicated in the form of building courtyards, plazas and residential parks. However, 19% is comprised of streets, avenues and right-of-ways and their associated street art structures and street arcades. Needless to say, the sheer degree of openness in any form that is equally accessible to all residents of the neighborhood is unusual in Manhattan's high-priced real estate market.

The layout of the site itself, suggests that the residential neighborhood is "edged" to the sides of the business neighborhood, in a microcosm of suburb to city. This is strengthened by the overall landscaping scheme, designed to be moved along as a set of experiences. From North to South, these parks follow a continuum from lesser to greater formality to the Central commercial plaza, and then again from formal to informal moving southward. The cumulative effect of this landscaping is not only to link the neighborhood's residential buildings and gathering spaces, but to infuse these elements with a pattern of shared gardens: formal, informal, and recreational -- which offer the range of suburban and urban settings that are collectively, superior to the high-maintenance backyard.

Typical of the formal garden is the center of the neighborhood, in the commercial area surrounding the World Financial Center. A broad, paved plaza looking onto a marina leads into a vast, glass-enclosed forum. Here the elegant Winter Garden with its seventeen, forty-foot palm trees, is a gathering place - a year-round, climate-controlled "mixing chamber" for residents and visitors. It is the setting for frequent, public arts and entertainment programs. At the far end of the spectrum is South Cove, a naturalistic landscaped pier at the southern tip of the development. Adjacent to the old Battery Park, the rocks and wildflower landscape is a "secluded place deliberately set apart from noise and activity". Finally, Hudson River Park at the north end, is an 8-acre recreation area designated for more active uses. Here, open to light and air, are basketball courts, a softball field, two large sunny lawns, public boating facilities, a picnic pavilion, and a children's playground.

Throughout the neighborhood, there is an emphasis on providing outdoor living. Orientation of streets and provisions of arcades protect pedestrians from winter winds while permitting summer breezes from the south to circulate along the avenues. Streets are tree-lined to create a shady, park-like atmosphere in the summer. On one side there is an all weather arcade, and on the other, a 40-foot wide linear park, to provide for both winter and summer movements. Finally, there are seating and play areas for river vistas from pocket parks and plazas all along the 1.2 mile Esplanade course.
One of the things that makes Battery Park City feel like the suburbanized edge to the city is its physical separation. West Street, the compromised site of the notorious West way battle, is an at-grade, 8-lane expressway. Because the highway once marked the edge of Manhattan to the expressway, Battery Park City landfill was created beyond that edge. For better or worse, Battery Park City is physically isolated from the continuity of the regular street pattern of New York, which is "connected", really, only on the map. But the impact of the highway as a psychological barrier, in turn creates a separation from the rest of the city which makes life there unique.

Sigurd Grava of Columbia University writes of this isolating feature: "The West Street chasm is enough to deter all but the most purposeful passerby... so that Battery Park City is an enclave. The major issue, in the opinion of most urban analysts, is the current exclusivity or isolation of the development. This is the case in a physical as well as in a social sense." 5

Such a specialized and separated character from the larger city has had its advantages for the families who settle here. As Grava points out, "there are attractions for the outsider in Battery Park City, but once the Esplanade has been walked, there is little to keep him here." 6 And yet this is precisely its appeal for family residents. Privacy and a retreat from the crowded city streets of New York is expensive and usually unattainable for residents of any social class. However much of Battery Park offers these very amenities as part of its public space, and in turn provides an alternative for living in the city.

Battery Park City actually has the feeling of being a "new town". There is the freshness of the new planted landscaping, and there are the sights of health enthusiasts doing daily jogs along the river front, and of young parents watching over small children in the parks. The children in the neighborhood are especially indicative of this new town quality. Battery Park City's designers originally underestimated the appeal that the neighborhood would have for families with children, so that many of the facilities for them are being added now, years later. This was due to the fact that planners had conceived of the homes for busy downtown workers, but they had not been optimistic that these residents would remain to raise their children there. Part of their skepticism, was that New Jersey's suburbs directly across the river from Battery Park City, had been made more accessible with the PATH

5 Grava, in "Battery Park City: Between Edge and Fabric" in Battery Park City Urban Design Studio exhibit catalog, p.11.

6 Grava, p.10.
commuter trains leading directly to the World Trade Center. Given the option, planners presumed, most families would leave when the first child was ready to begin school. Ironically, the Wall Street financial crises of the late eighties proved them wrong. Many of the professional couples who had moved to Battery Park City to be closer to their jobs, found themselves with less than sufficient security to move out to the expensive suburban towns they had anticipated. So as their apartment babies of Battery Park City were starting school, some families decided that they would stay.7

Today, there are nearly 600 children in the neighborhood, although the facilities for them are lacking. Most of the children attend Public School 234 in TriBeCa which is perhaps the closest existing city neighborhood to Battery Park City. This school was never intended to meet the need of Battery Park's children, and is now experiencing unexpected overcrowding. In 1994, for example, more than 90 students over the 500 student capacity were attending classes there. Moreover, the projected enrollment for the start of 1995 school year is for 700 students. Children must also leave the neighborhood for junior high school.

There are two high schools in Battery Park City, but they do not serve the typical student. One is Murray Bergstrom, a technical school, and the other is the elite Stuyvesant High School, which relocated to its new "campus" in Battery Park City in September 1992. It was the first new high school to be built in the city in a decade. However, as the city's magnet school for students gifted in math and the sciences, entrance is by city-wide examination and is highly competitive. It was therefore, not intended to be a solution to the needs of the new neighborhood. Schools have increasingly become one of the largest issues in the neighborhood, intensifying with the arrival of more people with young children. The Battery Park City Parents Association has been asking the city to address the problem, and discussions are underway to find a location for new schools within the neighborhood.8

Perhaps the nicest benefit for parents of small children in Battery Park City, is its openness and the perception of comparatively safer streets. The continuity of parks, and open space affords children the opportunity to "run ahead" of their parents during play, or to learn to ride a bike without the dangers of traffic. Unlike other neighborhoods in Manhattan, where

7 Interview with Matthew Monahan, Director of Public Affairs, Battery Park City Authority, New York, February 1995.

The Esplanade (above) reverts to a naturalistic setting near the tip of the neighborhood at quiet South Cove. Above its trees, the old campanile of Pier A's Water Rescue Station, marks the beginning of a restored Battery Park, containing Castle Clinton, and the ferry terminals for Staten Island and Brooklyn. (Photo courtesy of Carr, Lynch, Hack and Sandell)

Neighborhood children with their parents hunt for Easter Eggs in South Cove park. (Photo by Author, 1993).
organized after-school or community center play, or the rooftop "play deck" is a child's only outlet for play, Battery Park City 's openness and separateness allows children the opportunity to begin exploring on their own. The necessity of having to escort the children everywhere in New York to play in a park or to visit with their friends, is greatly diminished by this closed environment, thus freeing up the adults' time as well. With the help of watchful doormen in quieter, less traveled streets than other parts of New York, children can usually go outside and start playing in the small parks right at the base of their building.9

This demographic shift in family composition has also had an influence on the kinds of apartment units developers have been building. The residential units from the earliest area of development were usually in the form of studios and one-bedroom condominiums. The planning of late has called for and produced 2 and 3 bedroom apartment rentals, particularly in the newer North residential area.

As the population increases steadily, the opening of new retail stores is a frequent topic of conversation among the residents. In a New York Times article on downtown living, a six-year resident and president of the homeowners association described the changes she would like to see to make the neighborhood "like a real New York neighborhood with a bakery and some specialty shops, and places where you can go for hamburgers and coffee at 2 in the morning." Whereas South End Avenue has restaurants, coffee shops, beauty parlors, video stores, banks, two supermarkets and an Asian grocery store, large supermarkets are still missing from the area. Some local supermarkets in TriBeCa allow residents to set up charge accounts and will deliver to their homes. There are also upscale shopping and restaurants in and around the World Financial Center, and a underground mall in the World Trade Center. Still, many residents say, they prefer to go "uptown", out of the neighborhood, for better prices and selection.10

Battery Park City's figurative detachedness from the rest of New York's leads to complaints of isolation from the larger community. Yet it is also this isolation which contributes to its suburban, new town feel. One of the benefits is that residents get to know their neighbors; a sense of neighborly community that is often lacking in other parts of New York. A New York Times writer marveled that: "Ten years ago, residential Manhattan all but

9 Interview with Teresa D'Amico, Battery Park City Residents Association, 1995.

Open playing fields (above), a high school, a community pavilion, and a playground in the new North Residential Area add to the recreational opportunities available to residents. The Esplanade (below) and its many parks contribute to Battery Park City’s open feeling. With almost 70% of its total land as open space, residents are never far away from outdoor recreation or from the experience of relaxing by Manhattan’s waterfront. (Photos courtesy of Carr, Lynch, Hack and Sandell)
ceased below Chambers Street, human life all but disappeared after banks and brokerage houses closed for the day.11 The interactions between residents are the sure sign of community -- not just high-rise dormitories - that is there today. The Battery News, for example, is a community newspaper intended originally for the residents of Battery Park City, and later enlarged to cover all of Lower Manhattan below Canal Street. Through its classified advertisements people publicize "yard" sales and child care services, as though they were living, not by the dark canyons of Wall Street, but in a suburban town. At Halloween, residents of Battery Park City organize trick-or-treating routes among themselves, to ensure that safety, as well as the inclusion of interested neighbors, are met. Similarly, the Battery Park City Parents Association organizes activities such as Christmas caroling and tree lighting, a summer "block party", and an Easter Egg hunt. The intramural softball and volleyball leagues, and the youth baseball leagues which meet on the fields of North Cove park, further integrate the residents into the larger community just as they would in suburban settings. The only aspect of suburbia that is missing from these activities, is the dependence on the car (and it does not appear be missed).

That Battery Park City also appeals, to a decidedly upper-middle class contingency mixed among its middle-class professionals, will not be argued. Census data indicate that median household income for Battery Park City was more than twice the median income for the New York MSA in 1989. Meanwhile, 46% of families in Battery Park City had incomes greater than $100,000 in 1989 versus the MSA median family income of just $37,515, But there are sizable numbers of families below that figure, including 5% who are below the MSA median. More importantly, the bulk of the employment for Battery Park City is focused around commission-oriented professions in the finance industry, such as insurance, real estate and the stock exchange. These professions, when compared to the income-sources of truly upper class populations in enclaves such as the Upper East side, are arguably middle-class professions. That they can be lucrative at times, is indicative of their location in the market with the highest concentration and demand for such skills.

The real case made for Battery Park City as suburban-hybrid is in its provision of an environment where the middle-class lifestyle has emerged and is flourishing. There can be no doubt of this, regardless of whether these were the original planning goals. Battery Park City holds attraction as a middle class, family neighborhood in the sense that its new and well-designed environment competes with the suburbs to keep middle class families as residents in New York City; in the sense, that it is more open, and

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11 Ibid.
The 92-acre site of Battery Park City (above) was created by landfill excavated in the construction of the World Trade Center complex behind it. (Photo courtesy of Carr, Lynch, Hack and Sandell) A tugboat returns from its workday on the Hudson River (below). As the front-porch to Battery Park City, the Esplanade offers a residential experience that accentuates positive urban experiences. (Photo by Author, 1993)
generously available in its exterior park and recreation areas than any neighborhood Manhattan has provided in this century; and finally, in the sense that with one edge "semi-attached" to the city's fabric, and another oriented to the open space of parks, clean air and open water, Battery Park City is at the periphery of New York, as its "closest-in" suburb.
Places communicate to their users. The physical patterns that evidence particular ways of life communicate to other current or potential users. What is more, they speak in language that is often difficult to codify, but can be nonetheless well-understood. Consider the analogy of music. Some music lovers may know exactly what comprises a certain style of music: why tonality makes one feel a certain way, why a steady beat can frame a different mood. But most people, it is safe to assume, do not know exactly what it is that they like about a melody, other than that it communicates something to them. What this suggests is that music, as a series of elements and groups of patterns, produces a certain common language which communicates to the listeners of that style.

Similarly, living environments hold particular, perhaps instantaneous, meaning which resonate information. Socio-physical elements of Suburbia inform and reassert the values of the persons who use it, just as the same elements create a different language in the inner city. Yet, as the middle class is generally the undisputed resident of the suburbs, suburban living, and by extension mainstream American culture, has become its only language.

In a similar quest to make environments more livable, the New Urbanism movement, which has produced such new suburban towns as Kentlands and Laguna West, taps into these pattern languages in order to make a suburban environment more urban. The opposite route -- exploring ways to make the city more suburban -- has rarely been tried. Making the city more suburban however is to realize that urban environments cannot communicate to middle class families the way that suburbs can. But if cities want to attract middle class families, and if, among all of the other city problems, the socio-physical aspects of the living environment they provide for this group does not sufficiently communicate the same language, the efforts will be doomed to failure. Indeed, the legacy of countless urban renewal projects attest to this.

Of course, the city should never become completely suburban. Urban culture has its own positive features which needs to remain urban to function as such. Moreover, middle class families are not immune to the
charms of city life. But they will not give up the stronger daily claims of the
suburbs as a penalty for enjoying urban uniqueness. What is needed instead
is a hybrid form which, in a sense, accentuates the positive features of urban
living and suburbanizes the negative. In either direction, the mixing is a
hybrid and for either the decaying central city or for the sprawling, inefficient
suburb, such hybrids are positive contributions to the variety of living
environments. Yet, the suburbs do not suffer from being unable to sustain
the middle class as residents, whereas the city does. And as such, the issue of
hybridizing its environment is all the more pressing.

Reviewing the Cases

The four cases examined in this thesis were intended to show a range
of objectives, methods, and socio-physical design solutions used to create
successful suburban hybrids for city living. If it is taken as given, that these
cases have been successful as evidenced by their critical acclaim by planners,
on their popularity as living environments, and on their desirability based on
the continued response by the market to develop similar projects around
their margins, it will now be useful to highlight the broad-brush elements of
the cases.

First, the natures of these places are somewhat different from one
another, and within that context, each city's goal is somewhat unique to its
past, its economy, and its present desirability. As a global metropolis, New
York nonetheless has a variety of motivations for keeping such status
through the characteristically achievement-orientation of its middle class
population. Chicago, on the other hand, as a formerly gritty, industrial city
has had a successful shift to a high-powered service economy recently. It
wants to keep the quality of life and diversity of choices which had existed in
the central Chicago Loop. Baltimore, as a large industrial city without
corporate headquarters to guarantee its future prosperity, is precarious in its
attempts to continue its renaissance transformation of the past two decades.
Memphis, finally, is a smaller city that has struggled unsuccessfully for years
to remake itself into a vibrant place of urban culture.

Within this context of city-wide objectives are placed the site-level
goals. New York, with no inexpensive land to develop near its central areas,
found a way to invent such land through landfill, essentially a blank slate for
development. Chicago, with all of its central area developed north of the
central Loop, also saw an opportunity to use abandoned industrial land left in
the wake of a changing economy stretching to the south of the city for miles.
Baltimore, which demonstrated its policy interest in developing prototype
homes for middle class families with its futuristic Coldspring project, turned eventually back to its old housing stock as an asset with a combined homesteading/new construction approach to supplement the efforts of downtown rejuvenation. Similarly changing its perspective about a previously ill-perceived local feature, Memphis's downtown renewal effort comes from the opposite direction the 1980's renewals by relying on downtown residential activity first, to transform downtown's culture and commerce.

Interestingly, and perhaps only by coincidence, all of the cases exhibit the phenomenon of a middle class "doubling back" to new neighborhoods which stand today on the sites of the cities' original residential areas of a century or more before. Although neither Mud Island nor Battery Park City's land existed at the times of their cities' founding, the early city's families, nonetheless lived near the waterfronts where downtowns stand today. Baltimore's Otterbein had a long residential history until just before the Second World War. Chicago's South Loop was home to families just up until the turn of the century. Perhaps these locations are not by accident. Though it may seem coincidental, these were the same areas that served as the favorable spots before the Industrial city and all of its problems displaced earlier residents.

In each of the cases, planning played a significant role in pulling together resources and the private market actors. As the most public at one extreme, Otterbein was a public renewal program in the form of homestead auctioning and of strict design review for private-market in-fill. Its site and nature was also defined, more or less, by its value as an historic area and its pre-existing public infrastructure. At the opposite extreme, Harbor Town is a private venture by developers who, to the city's windfall, had been personally committed to the future of downtown Memphis. The city itself, perhaps because it was not in the position to attempt such an risky scenario that Memphians would actually relocate in the center city, had little to do with the large elements of the plans for new neighborhoods.

Meanwhile, both Battery Park City and Dearborn Park were each the types of newer "public-private" partnership led by the comprehensive planning of an authority of some kind. In both case, a central development agency presided over the collective activities of development. In the cases of Battery Park City, the Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) was and still is a "public-benefit corporation" created by New York State to serve as an authority over, essentially, state-owned land. The Dearborn Park Corporation, by contrast, was a "limited dividend development corporation" initiated, surprisingly, by private-sector leaders. One similarity between the
roles of both the BPCA and the Dearborn Park Corporation, as well as in that of the Otterbein planners, was that each followed a pre-agreed upon plan in conjunction with the city, and proceeded development as the arbiters and managers of private company bidders in the construction of that plan. This is important because it ensured that development was done according to a community understanding and agreement of what it was to be done. It also ensured that development would be of a sufficient scale to become large enough to support its own function as a district, finally that it would be in keeping with the changes and trends for the area it would effect.

Each of the cases, therefore, relied upon design guidelines and master planning concepts to ensure that the neighborhood developed as planned. These developments did produce positive tax bases and populations in their cities without the problems of residential displacement and destruction of older neighborhoods, that were characteristic of new neighborhood developments under Urban Renewal. In fact, far from damaging the city, there was an addition to the city's housing stock on under-utilized industrial property. In the case of Memphis, for example, the change in residential population brought on by new projects such as Harbor Town, took the residential population of downtown from 500 in 1977 to almost 7,000 today.

**Pieces of the Dream Revisited: Hybrids in the Case Sites**

At the end of the second chapter earlier in this document, an effort was begun to classify and categorize some of the socio-physical elements of Suburbia in order to contrast them with what exists in the city. While not meant to be an exhaustive list, those qualities -- Newness, Contemporary Convenience, Access to Outdoor Living, Family-Conducive Privacy, and Sense of Community -- were described in terms of how they support or improve the quality of family life in the suburbs. Now, they can be applied to the cases presented here as well.

All of the neighborhoods, needless to say, include the qualities of newness throughout, due to their recent construction. Still, structural features, insulation and warranties, and the new designs of windows, lighting fixtures, and the general freedom given to the resident from faulty wiring, inadequate plumbing, and smaller spaces for bathrooms or kitchens, can all be seen in the case study residences. Even Otterbein's older buildings, after they had been gutted for interior reconstruction, were essentially exquisite old boxes to encase the modern, open, and up-to-date layouts made for the life within. Along with newness has been the ability to shape and reshape the family
house so that it is better suited to modern household functions. The innovative designs of the River View Cottage in Harbor Town with its ingenious maximization of small space demonstrates this, as do the creative approaches used by Ogden in Dearborn Park to essentially invent new forms of stacked townhouses, in order to suit the changing demographics of household age and size.

Even Battery Park City, despite its small apartment living, gives newness to its resident in the form of cleanliness and well-maintained green spaces through the neighborhood. An ironic counter-trend to this in all of the cases, perhaps, is that all of sites contain residences which appeal in their exterior design to be that of an older style -- even if that style is a fictitious one: the "turn-of the century" look of Harbor Town, the Olmstedian lampposts and 1930's apartment building style of Battery Park City; and the Chicago frame-row, and faux-Prairie school designs of Dearborn Park. Only Otterbein's older exterior is understandable. But to be fair, it too is idealized and sanitized beyond what a real nineteenth century neighborhood could have provided.

Contemporary conveniences of course are among the major selling points of new homes, so it is not surprising that there should be many present in these cases. To begin with, all make room for the car with garages, carports, dedicated spaces in courtyards, or guaranteed on-street parking. All consider that climate control in the form of central air conditioning and gas heat should be standard. Bathroom features from the adjoining walk-in closets, to the adjustable massage showers, whirlpool tubs, Jacuzzis and steam baths are also important additions. Windows for light and air are important, too. One of Otterbein's chief attributes for contemporizing its houses was the frequent encouragement to install skylights, terraced rooms, and selective demolition of dark rooms and spaces -- all for the sake of admitting more light and air into the house. Finally, most of the developers' range of offering in the market contains flexibility of spaces so that a home office, a guest room, finished basements or an exercise room are possibilities as well, as indicators of the constant opportunities for change inside the home.

Access to outdoor living receives emphasis in all of the cases studied. They are most generously provided for in Harbor Town, which has perhaps the greatest natural setting. Similarly, Battery Park City's vistas of the Hudson River from along its Esplanade and its various parks and playing field are some of its most memorable features. Because of high land costs, balconies are standards for apartments, and all else must take place in the shared space of its Esplanade amenities. Harbor Town, as would be expected from its dramatic island setting, makes use of such access not only in its
celebrated landscaping and exercise trail route, but through its almost exaggerated application of neo-traditional porches, postage stamp yards. Related closely to outdoor living is family-conducive privacy such as the award-winning designs in Harbor Town and Dearborn Park which have been commended for good uses of space and comfortable "urban" living.

And finally, sense of community, is something that can be witnessed by the degree and focus of the community's programmed activities as well as the organizations that arise on their own as a hallmark of middle class life. All of the cases there is a considerable number of neighborhood socializing activities. Sometimes these activities are chartered by a larger authority "to get people involved and make them build roots in the community" through personal attachment. Scott Walkup of Memphis' Planning and Neighborhoods Division says of his work with groups organized around security issues or neighborhood clean-up days; "We set 'em up, then get out of the way and let 'em fly".  

At other times, the genesis of such activities as the Otterbein's Runners Club, or Harbor Town's frequent parades, coffee hours, neighborhood days, and picnics. All of the neighborhood have studied contain Homeowners or Residents associations. Otterbein and Harbor Town offer variations this since, Otterbein's Resident association was eventually given political standing as a neighborhood council. Harbor Town's Homeowners Association is unusual because every resident, including renter, can equally participate and vote. Battery Park City and Dearborn Park also each have Parents Associations. Harbor Town, on the other hand doe things vicariously through it Maria Montessori Schools. All of the neighborhoods have Newsletters. Otterbein has a swimclub, provides service such as parking sticker registration days, sponsors a citizen patrol of volunteer residents using marked cars and walkie-talkies, neighborhood clean-up days, outdoor concerts."

In addition to these suburban features which have been found on site, there is one more critical piece, it would seem, that makes the site what it is to outsiders. All of the case studies neighborhoods enjoy in a larger context: accentuation of central city benefits. This means that residents are well-situated with regards to professional jobs, central city amenities, culture, diversity, and the accessibility to other parts of city and region through

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1 Interview with Scott Walkup, Planner, City of Memphis Housing and Community Development, January 1995.
transportation. Arguably, without this all of these developments would not have successful. As Henry Turley, developer of Harbor Town says:

"The thing that people who move in out there [at Harbor Town] want is something they can't get in the suburbs. They want complexity ....Some [suburban] people won't come downtown, because they see people who are different on the street at night and think it's dangerous -- They say 'danger', but what they really mean is 'it makes me feel uncomfortable' ... But now that's different from fear or actual danger -- only, they're not used to thinking that it is. They don't like feeling uncomfortable because they think something's wrong with that, so they go around saying to themselves that downtown is a dangerous place."\(^2\)

Therefore, based on what has been lacking in the past for families in cities, and in what currently exists in the suburbs, cities need to reinvent their living options for families who would otherwise be more at home in the suburbs. Central cities should encourage the development of new neighborhoods with physical hybrid-suburban features in order to attract and keep more middle class families at home...in the city.

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