The Suburbanization of the Inner City:

Urban Housing and the Pastoral Ideal

by

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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
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Abstract

This dissertation examines the influence of vernacular suburban architectural and
eighborhood design on new inner-city housing developments in Detroit,
Michigan, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The central research hypothesis of
the dissertation is that the widespread pastoral ideal of American culture is acting
in concert with the weak land market of inner cities to produce a reshaping of
these places in the image of the American vernacular suburb. I call this shift
inner-city suburbanization.

This dissertation offers a needed new perspective on the study of American
urban revitalization. Most current debate concentrates on the alleviation of
economic and social problems in inner cities, a focus which leaves the physical
dimensions of the situation underexamined, while urban design theory advocates
a different physical vision from that which many distressed urban neighborhoods
are actually experiencing. The result has been a lacuna of academic research on
the form of inner cities while significant decisions are being made in the world of
practice. This dissertation attempts to bring these two worlds closer together.

The dissertation begins with an introduction that frames the central research
questions of the study. It continues with a review of the role of the suburb, the
inner city, and of low-income housing in the history of American urbanism in
Chapter Two. Chapter Three provides operational definitions of vernacular
suburbia and of the process of inner-city suburbanization to produce a
suburbanization index. In Chapter Four case cities are selected and case
neighborhoods are selected within these cities. The index is then applied to new
developments in the case cities to produce a portrait of the inner-city
suburbanization process there. Chapter Five investigates the causality of inner-
city suburbanization by examining the histories of three developments in each
city in more detail. Chapter Six concludes by discussing the significance of the
phenomenon, the dilemmas that it raises for design and planning professionals,
and the prospects for future research. The study includes two appendices with
additional data.

Thesis Supervisor: Lawrence J. Vale
Title: Department Head and Professor of Urban Studies and Planning
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...I drive and then I take... say, all Third Avenue, and then you see all these buildings are burned, and you see the people on the streets, and sometimes just seeing some neighborhoods, you feel depressing... and then when I come to my house, it's so different. It's just like living in Long Island.

- Resident of Charlotte Gardens, Bronx, NY, quoted in Plunz (1990)
Chapter One

Introduction

Charlotte Gardens: an inner-city suburb

In October of 1986, the first homes in a new single-family subdivision called Charlotte Gardens went on sale. Neither pretentiously oversized nor unworkably miniscule, the new houses were perfect for the aspiring working-class families moving into the neighborhood. With their sizeable front and back yards, the new houses offered both privacy and room for expansion with features like swimming pools and rear decks. And while the new homes did not have their own garages, there was plenty of room in the side yard for one or two cars to be safely parked off the street. At a cost of only $55,000 per unit, the houses of Charlotte Gardens were a bargain, especially in the overheated housing market of the 1980’s. All 89 houses were quickly snapped up, and the new neighborhood was on its way.

Fifteen years later, Charlotte Gardens had fulfilled the promise of its optimistic early days. Planning professionals surveying the neighborhood saw “...a prim neighborhood of shady trees and manicured lawns, lace curtains, sprinklers, and gardens, neighbors walking their dogs and baby strollers coursing along smooth sidewalks...” (Grogan and Proscio 2000). In short, the planners saw a successful suburban neighborhood. From their description, one may infer that they associated many positive values with this type of environment. The planners appreciated that Charlotte Gardens was a peaceful, quiet neighborhood. It also appeared to be a safe, supportive neighborhood in which to raise a family, and it was a place that was valued, and consequently well-maintained, by its homeowners. In its manifestation of these values Charlotte Gardens was seemingly little different from thousands of other suburban neighborhoods across the United States.
Although a visitor dropped in the middle of Charlotte Gardens might be expected to think initially that he or she was in a typical suburban community, a short walk in any direction would quickly divest our visitor of this notion. To the west, the visitor would find a large park whose shoddy maintenance and litter are telltale signs of big-city problems, not suburban idyll. To the east, a walk of a few blocks would lead our visitor not to a suburban highway, but to the rumbling superstructure of an elevated subway line. And on all sides, the visitor would find the peaceful houses of Charlotte Gardens surrounded by bulky apartment buildings which one would never expect to find in the suburbs. The seemingly suburban community of Charlotte Gardens is located in the inner city, not the suburbs. Charlotte Gardens is a paradoxical development, an inner-city suburb.

A writer describing suburban decline asked readers to “picture the South Bronx, circa the late 1970’s, transplanted to the leafy suburbs”. (Lindgren 1995). What the writer failed to note is that precisely the opposite transplant has already occurred: the South Bronx is now in part composed of leafy suburbs.

Although it is similar to a typical suburb in appearance, Charlotte Gardens also differs in many ways. Most importantly, it is located in the heart of the South Bronx, an inner-city neighborhood which was once one of New York City’s most troubled and one which became a national symbol of urban blight. This rather ordinary neighborhood of single-family houses, which would be so typical in the suburbs that it would be beneath notice, is a bizarre anomaly in the dense, if somewhat decayed, urban fabric of the South Bronx. Charlotte Gardens’s design is unique not for any inherent distinctiveness but because of its spatial location in an environment where suburban housing and neighborhood design would not be generally expected.

Charlotte Gardens also differs demographically from typical suburbs. The majority of American suburbs are inhabited by whites, many of whom relocated there from neighborhoods in older cities in a vast population shift that began in large numbers after World War II and continued into the 1970s. The South Bronx,
once an immigrant European neighborhood, became almost entirely Puerto Rican and African-American during this period. In keeping with the ethnic makeup of its surroundings, Charlotte Gardens is a Hispanic development, whose working-class homeowners appear to enjoy their ranch homes and leafy yards as much as their white counterparts might in Long Island.

Figures 1.1 and 1.2. Charlotte Gardens is a bucolic suburban environment (left)… which is surrounded by dilapidated tenement neighborhoods (right). It is a new type of development… an inner-city suburb.

As one might expect, Charlotte Gardens is also far from typical in the way in which it was developed. Most suburban subdivisions are built on ‘greenfield’ sites that were undeveloped before they were built up with housing. Charlotte Gardens had been densely built up with rowhouses and apartments by the end of the 19th century, but its land became available once again by the end of the 1970’s through the process of neighborhood decline. The abandonment and arson of many buildings in the South Bronx became a matter of almost national shame during the 1970s, and the redevelopment of hard-hit areas like Charlotte Gardens became a public relations priority for New York City’s government. As one of the first redevelopments, Charlotte Gardens was constructed as a municipal vote of confidence in the future of the South Bronx. Ironically, its creation was directed by Edward Logue, a leader of previous ‘urban renewal’ movements designed to eradicate urban blight in the 1950s and 1960s. The form of Charlotte Gardens was useful for both functional and symbolic reasons. Functionally, it was extremely cheap—its houses were prefabricated, could be
trucked to the site almost intact, and could be quickly assembled (Plunz 1990). Charlotte Gardens could never have been constructed independently of local real estate conditions. Land values in the neighborhood had dropped substantially, so assembly and rebuilding by the city was relatively inexpensive, although it took the action of a special authority headed by Logue to accomplish development. Symbolically, a neighborhood of new single-family houses was the strongest possible visual countermeasure to the bleak landscape of decaying tenements that it replaced. Such a landscape, was proposed half-seriously by Robert A.M. Stern in a project prepared for the 1976 Venice Biennale (Stern and Massengale 1981: 92). Stern called this project the “subway suburb”, and described it as

(an) uncharacteristic way to develop the land in blighted, marginal areas of the city... accommodating the automobile in the new development (and) provid(ing) housing at the densities of new moderate-priced suburban development in the outlying area...

The decline of the South Bronx did not last forever. Although its population has not recovered, the Bronx is no longer losing population- it has stabilized at a new, lower level. It has seemingly permanently dedensified, and this dedensification has been physically encoded in the new housing developments which have been built there. Land values have to some degree recovered, and the extremely low-density experiment of Charlotte Gardens has not been repeated elsewhere in the Bronx. Multistory apartments, however, are also a thing of the past. In the 1870s, the South Bronx was first built up with row houses, and a hundred and thirty years later, the rowhouse has returned as the housing typology of choice in nearby neighborhoods like Mott Haven, Melrose, and East Tremont. Each rowhouse provides a small back yard and front yard, the latter of which is often used for parking the family car.

*The puzzle of inner-city suburbanization*

I first heard the Charlotte Gardens story in the early 1990s when I was an architecture student and urban planning intern in New York City. The development was not only surprising to me, it was also somewhat horrifying. Why
would a city encourage such low-density housing in such an urban area, three blocks from a major subway line? Was the suburban design paradigm so dominant that it was the only conceivable future for blighted urban neighborhoods? How many other Charlotte Gardens were being constructed? At the same time, I recognized that Charlotte Gardens, despite its, to me, problematic form, represented an advance over the rubble-strewn lots and burned-out tenements of the 1970s. It was certainly better than nothing. The question was, how much better?

As I gained experience of other cities the example of Charlotte Gardens began to seem less and less anomalous. Stern's polemical prediction seemed to be coming true in cities across the United States. In Buffalo, I saw new tracts of single-family homes being built along the major avenues leading into the city's downtown. In Philadelphia, I saw freestanding twin houses built on cul-de-sacs replacing dense row house neighborhoods a short walk from a major subway line. In Camden, the hard-hit industrial city across the river from Philadelphia, I saw an urban waterfront revitalization project consisting of condominiums surrounded by parking and fenced off from the rest of the city. In Cleveland, I saw suburban-style 'tract mansions' selling for hundreds of thousands of dollars abutting the empty lots of that city's Hough neighborhood. In Detroit, perhaps the city in America hardest-hit by urban decline, I saw almost unbelievable subdivisions of single-family homes occupying self-contained suburban superblocks amidst the mostly vacant blocks of former city neighborhoods. Across the Northeast and Midwest of the United States, in the hardest-hit neighborhoods of declining industrial cities, I saw a new urban housing paradigm emerging: something which I called the inner city suburb. I decided to make the exploration of this phenomenon, which I called inner-city suburbanization, the subject of my dissertation.

At first the phenomenon appeared to be quite simple. I saw the application of suburban design standards, both architectural and urbanistic, being applied to
new housing developments in declining cities. But the more I looked at this phenomenon, the more complicated it began to appear. Not all declining cities were experiencing suburbanization; Boston, for example, had experienced much neighborhood decline but had rebuilt these neighborhoods in a relatively dense manner that did not appear to be very suburban. Nor were all the housing developments in declining cities being rebuilt in a suburban manner. Philadelphia had a downtown so dense and prosperous that it was difficult to imagine inner-city suburbanization occurring only a few blocks away. Even in Detroit, a development of urban row houses was being constructed adjacent to the downtown. Finally, many cities, especially smaller ones, had residential neighborhoods near their downtowns that were rather suburban in appearance to begin with. Even New York City had never replicated the Levittown-like appearance of Charlotte Gardens. It was clear that inner-city suburbanization was not a universal phenomenon; otherwise, it could hardly have escaped notice to the degree that I saw that it had. But nevertheless, its occurrence in many cities indicated that it was a significant force in these places and one that was therefore worthy of future investigation.

Inner-city suburbanization was puzzling to me for another reason. How was I to interpret this phenomenon? My reaction to Charlotte Gardens had been, overall, quite negative. In other cities, however, my opinions were altered. The incredibly bleak landscapes of Camden and Detroit far outmatched the South Bronx in their poverty, desperation, and physical decay; could one justifiably criticize any new housing development in these tormented places? And yet my urbanistic instincts were still troubled, even in the most desperate places. How could a gated development, forever isolated from its surroundings and blocking off access to the water, possibly be viewed as a contributory gesture to revitalization? Even if these developments were considered to be good examples of revitalization on paper, they were, at the least, poor urban design. I found that inner-city suburbanization troubled me not only because of its design but because of the conflicting instincts that it aroused in me as someone who considered himself to
be an architect, urban planner, and perhaps above all an urban designer. I recognized that many of these developments were conceived in a spirit of optimism toward the city; that they were probably inhabited by people who valued their homes and perhaps their neighborhood; that they replaced areas that had been, in all likelihood, derelict wastelands. Yet I had difficulty reconciling the built product of these processes with my ideals of what an urban neighborhood should look like. The ambiguity of inner-city suburbanization, more than anything else, argued for further study of this phenomenon, not only as an examination of the possible future form of blighted American inner-city neighborhoods, but as an examination of the professional values being applied to urban revitalization by the professions most involved in its design and implementation.

Finally, I found that where I would expect to find a substantial literature on inner-city suburbanization, I found very little. Although urban decline and revitalization were widely covered, much of this literature dealt with areas that were either temporally or spatially distinct from the developments that I was seeing. Much of the literature on revitalization dealt with the urban renewal movement which had ended in the 1970s, and with the Modernist projects that had been constructed during that period. The housing that I was observing had all been constructed during the 1990’s and was therefore not treated by this literature. There was also a substantial literature on public housing revitalization because of the major Federal HOPE VI program in this area during the 1990’s (see HUD 2000a for an overview of this program), but the projects that I was observing were not public housing, nor were they built according to the design principles advocated by that literature. There was also a substantial literature in existence about the community development corporation movement, a decentralized housing production mechanism that had grown up in the wake of urban renewal, but this literature studied the organizational and policy aspects of the movement rather than analyzing the physical output of the organizations.
Why was there so little discussion of inner city suburbanization? I concluded that part of the reason lay in the nature of the housing being constructed. The housing that I saw was not being built by any one major government program like urban renewal or HOPE VI. While much of the new housing that I saw was subsidized, the funding sources were diverse and the projects were often initiated at the city level. In addition, some of the housing that I was seeing involved private financing. The housing was thus the result of a diverse set of programs and was therefore not being studied by those interested in specific urban revitalization policies. The design of these projects was generally mundane. None of the projects that I saw were of particular architectural interest.

While they excited my notice because of their anomalous location and because of their particular spatial configurations, I recognized that, much like the majority of vernacular suburban development, they were uninteresting to design theorists. Thus, a gap in interests had led a lack of research in the literature. Most scholars interested in the inner city were not particularly interested in design, and most scholars interested in design were not particularly interested in the inner city. The major intersection of those two areas was perceived as being in the area of public housing revitalization, an area which was both the result of a single Federal policy (HOPE VI) and which conformed to a popular design ideology among urban designers (New Urbanism). Despite the lack of coverage of the phenomenon that I perceived in the literature, my personal experience led me to believe inner-city suburbanization was more prevalent than the literature would lead one to expect, and that it was worthy of further exploration.

The central hypothesis of this dissertation is therefore that the neighborhood transformation of Charlotte Gardens is far from unique. Rather, this dissertation hypothesizes that the inner-city suburbanization manifested by that development heralds other similar transformations that are currently occurring in troubled urban neighborhoods of declining cities across the United States. Many older American cities have been losing population for decades, and most of these cities have experienced net losses of housing in tandem with their population
losses. The results, seen in hollowed-out cities across the northeastern and midwestern United States, are neighborhoods with thousands of vacant houses and lots. Cities like Philadelphia and St. Louis have neither the economic resilience nor the population influxes of New York, and their decline has been correspondingly harsher and more persistent. What will be the physical fates of these cities’ hard-hit neighborhoods? This dissertation explores those physical shifts occurring in redeveloping inner-city neighborhoods in declining cities toward neighborhood and housing forms that emulate a suburban model.

Background
At its heart, the suburbanization process is a product of urban decline. Urban decline is perhaps the most troublesome face of the deindustrialization process which has relocated or closed thousands of firms and jobs in America’s older cities. This process has been most severe since the end of the Second World War. Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, this process has almost ceased. In many cities, the great majority of industrial establishments have already closed or relocated. With the closure of the factories, the retail and housing that once supported and housed factory workers have become superfluous. In the majority of older cities, despite the transformation to a service-based economy, there are no longer sufficient jobs for the inhabitants of the poorest neighborhoods. Many cities are receiving new immigrants, but this influx is highly variable, and so many older cities’ poorest neighborhoods are slowly but inexorably depopulating.

In some cases urban depopulation has been advantageous. Many inner-city houses were densely and cheaply built with housing that at best was exploitative and that at worst was miserable. Few other American cities had the incredible crowding of New York City’s tenements, but they each had their own versions of squalor. In Boston, three-apartment ‘triple-deckers’ crowded families of six or more in each apartment. In Chicago, cheap wooden single-family houses were packed as tightly as they could be built, with minimal outdoor space. Uncrowding
these neighborhoods was a major concern of early housing reformers, and in many cases, population decline is the sign that these goals are being accomplished.

Other poor neighborhoods have experienced a different sort of depopulation. As inner city residents in poor neighborhoods have left, their houses have been abandoned, often by landlords unable to re-rent the apartment at a high enough rent to provide a financial return. In a seemingly unstoppable sequence of degradation, these houses, once empty, have fallen easy prey to vandals and arsonists. Their depredations have quickly transformed once-habitable houses into stripped, burned-out shells. Entire inner-city neighborhoods have been degraded by this process, leaving only those residents too old, too poor, or too attached to relocate.

Inner cities are perceived as frightening places. The stereotype of an inner-city neighborhood is one of shabby or abandoned houses, with shattered windows gaping, graffiti covering the walls, and potentially hostile youth gathered at street corners. A sense of menace is palpable, and the average American does not linger long in such a place. While some inner city environments are indeed like this, the reality in many American cities is exactly the opposite. Many American inner cities are peaceful places. Most of their houses are gone, collapsed or burned and then demolished by the city. Their foundations have been filled and planted with grass, which is neatly mowed. Trees once confined to back yards flourish in the new open spaces. Remaining city streets, often crumbling, cut across wide expanses of green. Signs of human habitation are few, except for the occasional resident cutting across the fields to a remaining house. In their emptiness, America's inner cities are increasingly coming to resemble the open spaces that we usually associate with the urban fringe.

The openness of these neighborhoods makes them fertile ground for new development. Close to the central business district, the locations of these
neighborhoods are considered advantageous by potential residents who are not deterred by the often disturbing surroundings. There is little demand for space, and property prices are consequently lower than other parts of the city- or the suburbs. Having watched so many of these neighborhoods decline, city governments are often eager to facilitate redevelopment, to the extent that heavy subsidies for development are often possible. And despite the loss of large-scale federal funding for redevelopment, a host of new nonprofit development agencies focused on housing have proved extremely competent at producing tens of new housing units per organization per year. In short, despite the long-term economic change, abandonment and decay that has laid them low, many of America’s inner city neighborhoods seem poised at the edge of a new era of redevelopment. As in the South Bronx, the old is making way for the new.

Figure 1.3. Amidst the blighted urban landscapes of cities like Detroit, empty blocks that once held houses are making way for new, suburban-style developments. The photograph above shows empty blocks in the upper left adjoining new developments in the right and lower center.

As we saw in the South Bronx, however, these redeveloping inner city neighborhoods are not necessarily reassuming their old form. Instead, the design not only of many new houses but of many entire new neighborhoods is reflecting a changed vision of the inner city. Tracts of single-family homes reflect both a resident interest in homeownership and the influence of funding mechanisms that
encourage the production of such housing. More generous house lots reflect residents' concern for privacy, security, and parking space in an era when urban public transportation has declined and automobile ownership is often essential for getting to work. Where multifamily housing is built, it often reflects the same generous space standards, with large yards and parking lots. New open spaces, be they playgrounds, community gardens, or traditional parks, reflect amenities, sometimes originally created through decline, that are appreciated by residents and that also reflect an effort to improve upon the mediocre open space standards of the original neighborhoods. Redesigned streets reflect a desire for increased privacy or for separation from the dilapidated context of surrounding neighborhoods.

Although the historic neighborhood form of America's declining inner cities are diverse, ranging from freestanding wooden houses in Cleveland to brick rowhouses in Baltimore to multistory apartments in New York, these neighborhoods are experiencing a common transformation. Through all of these urban design shifts previously described, America's redeveloping inner city neighborhoods are emulating a lower-density, even suburban neighborhood model. Familiar to all Americans, residential suburban neighborhoods are the often homogenous tracts of single-family housing, or increasingly of attached condominiums or garden apartments, that occupy the perimeter areas of American cities. These houses share several important characteristics. Suburban houses, even if built relatively densely, are always designed to provide private outdoor space, almost always including a front and back yard, as well as off-street parking for one or more cars. This parking is mandatory because automobile transportation is dominant in the suburbs, often to the exclusion of all other forms. The neighborhood design of suburbia reflects this orientation toward the car with residential subdivisions that difficult to navigate on foot, both because they are large in scale and because wide, curving suburban streets facilitate automobile passage. The resulting suburban neighborhoods are segregated from each other as well as from other land uses. Shops, offices, and
industries are located across pedestrian-hostile roads or are widely separated from residential areas. Interchange between the different components of the suburbs is only by automobile.

Although suburbs have been constructed around American cities since at least the middle of the nineteenth century, those that are most familiar, and that have established the popular vision of the suburb, are the suburban tracts that were built in large numbers beginning after World War II. The construction of these tracts coincided with large-scale automobile ownership, the availability of financing mechanisms which made suburbia affordable to most middle-class Americans, and the development of a massive homebuilding industry dedicated to providing every American household with a single-family home. Although there have been some modifications to both the suburban neighborhood and the suburban house since 1950, the basic principle of a dwelling surrounded by green and accessible by car has persisted both in the public mind and in the reality of the suburban landscape. It is this suburban image that the new inner city is seeking to emulate through the inner city suburbanization process, and it is the postwar suburb that this study will therefore refer to as 'the suburb'.

The housing and neighborhood features of suburbia are extremely common, in large part because they are popular with millions of Americans, especially those with young children to raise. Other features of suburbia not visible in its physical design offer advantages equally as valuable as the peace and quiet of its residential neighborhoods. Suburbs are often politically independent of their core city, and as such they regulate their own land uses as well as provide their own local services like police, libraries, and most importantly, schools. The political structure of suburbia offers a relatively fail-safe guarantee of safe, stable, functional school districts, as well as the likelihood of growing property values. These protections are essential commodities in a society where most cities are no longer able to offer adequate school systems and where rising housing values are an essential means of gaining equity for homeowners.
Inner-city suburbanization: good or bad?

One can see that the values of suburbs fall into at least two categories. The first comprises the inherent physical qualities of suburbs as places which offer, among other features, peace and quiet, green space, and adequate parking. The second comprises the superior public, or social, services that suburbs offer, schools and land use control being perhaps the most important. Whether the tail is wagging the dog or vice versa, these two sets of values, physical and social, are closely associated and doubtless both contribute to the popular public image of the suburban environment in the United States.

These values indicate the advantages that could be perceived in the suburbanization of the inner city. If substantially transformed, urban neighborhoods can offer most of the physical advantages of the suburbs plus a few of their own. Streets can be closed and changed into cul-de-sacs, housing can be rebuilt at lower densities, new open spaces can be created- and these neighborhoods, unlike suburban ones, are convenient to the central city. If sufficiently isolated from their problematic context, the disadvantageous location of inner city neighborhoods is thereby transformed into an advantageous one-dependent, of course, upon the continued vitality of the central city. Automobile access is essential in buffering inhabitants of new developments from the often dysfunctional inner city neighborhoods surrounding the development.

The social values of suburban environments are more difficult for inner cities to emulate through environmental transformation. Though altered in form, suburbanized inner city neighborhoods remain part of their central city, and consequently are unable to develop local services on a level to compete with suburban municipalities. The same demographic trends, however, that are benefiting gentrifying urban neighborhoods might also benefit a suburbanizing inner city neighborhood. Many urban families either do not have children or pay for private school education, and they can therefore forego participating in the
generally problematic public school systems. In addition, increasing numbers of middle-class residents are members of racial minority groups. Middle-class African-Americans and Hispanics, like their white counterparts, value the amenities of suburban housing and can also afford them, but may feel more comfortable than a typical white household in purchasing property in an inner-city location whose neighborhoods are inhabited mainly by racial minorities.

Inner city suburbanization appears to offer both benefits and disadvantages. As previously indicated, inner-city suburban neighborhoods are quite pleasant places. Many new inner city neighborhoods, like Charlotte Gardens, are stable and well-maintained environments that bear no resemblance to the desolate, abandoned neighborhoods that they replaced. Filled with new residents who are proud of their homes, America’s new revitalized inner-city neighborhoods can be seen as bright spots amidst the troubled landscape of urban decline and disinvestment.

At the same time, an observer can find much to critique in the suburbanization of the inner city. The new architecture of these neighborhoods is often dissimilar to its context, and even to the most casual observer, does not seem to ‘fit’ with surrounding neighborhoods. Altered street systems prevent easy pedestrian passage through the new neighborhoods, isolating them from their surroundings. While this isolation may be desired by residents, street reconfigurations inhibit future connections to restored surrounding neighborhoods. Although mass transit networks in inner cities are often poor, encouraging automobile ownership might be perceived as a destructive policy for the survival or restoration of mass transit in inner city neighborhoods.

These competing qualities make inner city suburbanization a compelling subject for study. Suburbs are clearly popular environments, yet they are often criticized as monotonous, designed for a single type of user and inhospitable to the needs of older or younger inhabitants. The required automobile access of suburbia is
convenient for most, but not all users, and widespread automobile use causes heavy traffic, leading both to quality-of-life and environmental problems. Placed as they are within the physical context of a declining urban neighborhood, inner city suburban developments avoid some of the problems of suburban developments while replicating others. They also raise serious questions as a function of their location within cities. While suburbs often have no alternative to mass transit except the private car, cities usually have existing transit networks whose usage is hardly encouraged by the development of automobile-dependent housing. Urban neighborhoods are often varied, pedestrian-friendly places, with small blocks, local retail uses, and streets that are pleasant and interesting to walk on. These urban environmental qualities are absent in the self-contained, automobile-oriented housing developments of inner city suburbia. Isolated from nearby neighborhoods, inner-city suburbs may therefore fail to contribute to the revitalization of their surrounding blocks.

At the same time, the development of suburban housing in inner cities offers new opportunities for residents of inner-city neighborhoods. New housing in inner cities is often subsidized, therefore making it affordable to residents who would be unable to relocated to the suburbs. Amenities like lawns and off-street parking are often almost unknown, especially in the dense rowhouse neighborhoods of many older cities, and their provision in new housing is therefore likely to be welcomed. Nor should the economic and symbolic value of an owned single-family house be underestimated. The financial benefits accruing to homeowners through mortgage income tax deductions, and the pride of owning property, thereby participating in the ideal of the ‘American dream’, are doubtless substantial for residents who have not been able to consider ownership before. Cities, too, benefit from the physical and symbolic reoccupation of derelict land with stable communities. If these communities are inhabited by middle-class homeowners, so much the better, for it is precisely these types of residents which cities have lost in large numbers and whose return is often cited as necessary for the eventual revitalization of declining cities. One might therefore expect cities to
welcome the development of new housing communities in derelict inner cities irrespective of their form.

*Planners, architects, and inner-city suburbanization*

At another level, the ambiguity of inner city suburban development can be seen as a function of the value systems used to evaluate the phenomenon. Assessing whether inner city suburbanization is 'good' or 'bad' necessitates an evaluator's application of certain normative values to the phenomenon in order to reach a judgment. While investigating the extent and future prospects for inner city suburbanization is one major motivation for this dissertation, a second is the recognition that any evaluation of this phenomenon is complicated by the contrasting value systems of the two professions of urban planning and architecture that play major roles in the design and creation of urban space. The differing value systems of these two professions are united in the field of urban design, which this study views as a profession that incorporates values from both urban planning and architecture. Although the combined value system of urban design is perhaps the one best equipped for evaluating the suburbanization of the inner city, it is also responsible for reconciling the differing value systems of the professions from which it is derived.

Urban planning is not a particularly judgmental profession. A central tenet of current urban planning theory and practice is the valuation and even prioritization of resident wishes in the planning process over those of the planner. As a planner coordinating the production of a Chicago regional plan recently said, "We will have an open and democratic planning process... the citizens themselves will shape the plan." (Mamoser 2002) Some planning theorists go so far as to downplay any normative role at all for the planner in favor of a mediator role. If we allow for the above values to define the planner’s value system, how might a planning professional following these values evaluate inner city suburbanization? Assuming that inner city suburbanization is both a product of neighborhood resident desires and is appreciated by development residents post-construction,
a planner would be expected to evaluate it positively. If, however, resident interpretations of inner city suburbanization were to be more ambiguous, for example if some residents were to resent a development while others favored it, the planner would then be placed in a mediator role between these factions, and his or her evaluation might therefore be neutral. This ambiguity is often required of planners involved in typical greenfield suburban development, where one group of residents might advocate change while another resents the loss of existing open space and the increased traffic that new development would bring. Inner city neighborhoods are environments with substantial negative indicators and one might therefore expect both a greater public sentiment for change and an advocacy for this type of development on the part of many planners.

Though urban planning theory supports the advocacy and mediation of neighborhood resident desires, in practice the profession has not entirely sacrificed a normative stance on development form. Another regional planning organization in Chicago, which presents development alternatives “to enable people to see what can occur if we make particular choices”, already believes that continued suburban growth will lead to future problems like suburban decline and traffic congestion (Mamoser 2002). This indicates that the planners are likely to be providing development alternatives in a less than perfectly impartial manner. One general sentiment popular among many planners, manifested most recently as the smart growth movement, advocates among other things the concentration of new greenfield development in order to preserve existing open spaces. In cities, smart growth favors the reuse of existing urban or ‘brownfield’ sites for new development. While planning values like the preservation of open space dovetail neatly with the popular desires like environmental preservation, other values, such as concentration of development, are not necessarily as popular with the public. The planning profession therefore confronts the possibility of internal value conflicts in its responsibility to the public versus its own normative values. The possibility therefore exists that the phenomenon of
inner city suburbanization, even if it conforms with resident desires, may not be evaluated positively by some urban planners.

The profession of architecture differs from the planning profession in that its normative values are much stronger. As designers, most architects have a normative stance on design. Architects may not all agree which type of architectural design is most appropriate for a project, but few architects would say that they have no preference whatsoever. These preferences, however, are often very contentious. A major dialogue in architectural theory during the twentieth century has been between advocates of abstract, or modern design, versus those of representational, or historicist design. While both schools of thought have achieved a high level of recognition amongst theorists, architectural practice has been a different matter. Residential architecture in the United States has been dominated by vernacular practice, which has tended to heavily favor historicist styles of a fairly uniform type. This vernacular suburban architecture has met with dismissal on the part of many architectural theorists, who dislike the reductive and conservative design of most vernacular suburban buildings and therefore ignore them. The majority of vernacular suburbia is not even designed by architects (Dunham-Jones 2000). Some architects, such as Robert Venturi, have embraced the vernacular, attempting to incorporate vernacular features into their designs. As inner city suburban architecture shares many design features with vernacular suburban architecture, one would expect many architectural theorists to have little interest in this type of design. This disinterest, in fact, is likely to have contributed to the paucity of literature treating suburban development.

Urban design, as has been previously mentioned, is a field which can be considered a hybrid between urban planning and architecture. Urban designers are concerned with design at a scale larger than that of the individual building. This concern can take the form of an interest in the design of public space, in the design of neighborhoods, in the design of a city block, or in the design of an
entire city. While urban designers, like architects, are responsible for developing designs and therefore must have something of a normative stance on design, the larger scale of the design being constructed means that the public generally plays a substantial role in the design process as well, and that consideration of the public benefit to be derived from a project is important. Urban designers must therefore strike a balance between the wishes of the client, their own beliefs as designers, and the beliefs of the greater public who will be impacted by the design.

Because of its partial inheritance from architecture, urban design has maintained a stronger normative stance than the planning profession. The most persuasive normative recent theory in urban design has combined elements of both urban planning and architecture. This movement, known as the New Urbanism, generally advocates both the concentration espoused by planners and the historicist architecture advocated by a minority of architectural theorists. It also completely rejects both the realized design of vernacular suburbia as well as the bureaucratic standards that essentially require its construction. At a larger scale, New Urbanists believe that sprawl is “essentially self-destructive... it consumes land at an alarming rate, producing insurmountable traffic problems and exacerbating social inequity and isolation.” (Duany et. al. 2000). The architectural design of vernacular suburbia is also rejected. The formal vision of the New Urbanism has been realized in a series of constructed projects, which have created walkable residential communities, albeit in locations that are often remote from urban centers. New Urbanist design principles have also been applied to the redevelopment of public housing projects across the United States that were originally built according to Modernist design principles. While not all urban designers espouse all of the principles of New Urbanism, few argue with the movement’s vision for residential neighborhoods which are denser, more walkable, and contextual with their surroundings. One might therefore expect many urban designers to reject the prospect of inner city suburban development,
which negates many of the features of urban neighborhoods in favor of the vernacular suburban model rejected by the New Urbanists.

As someone who considers himself an urban designer, I naturally felt substantial ambivalence about the phenomenon of inner city suburbanization. Although this dissertation is primarily intended as an effort to describe the nature, extent, and causality of this phenomenon, it is also intended to explore the dimensions of the conflicting values that make a single interpretation of the phenomenon of inner city suburbanization impossible from an urban designer’s perspective. Below I describe the structure of the dissertation and the way in which the dissertation will explore the questions I have described above.

Methodology for the study
The prospect of investigating the potential phenomenon of inner city suburbanization presented substantial difficulties. Although it was clear from my anecdotal observations that many new inner-city housing developments bore similarities to housing that I typically associated with the suburbs, how was I to transform this observation into an empirically-based study that would sufficiently demonstrate the occurrence of this phenomenon? Although I could hypothesize several reasons why inner city suburbanization might be occurring, how was I to categorically research the causality of this phenomenon? Finally, how was I to think about assessing this phenomenon, given the competing value systems that I have previously described? The answers to these three questions form the subjects of the three core chapters (Four, Five, and Six) of this dissertation.

In order to begin to answer these questions I had to address several methodological questions. Some of these questions were related to case selection. I had observed inner-city suburbanization occurring in what I perceived as declining cities, but a universal study of new inner-city development in all cities was impossible given the limited temporal and financial resources at my disposal. How was I then to select appropriate case ‘declining’ cities for the
study? What did the term ‘declining city’ mean? Within those case cities, I had observed inner-city suburbanization occurring in certain neighborhoods that I qualitatively perceived as ‘inner city’, while also observing very different development trends occurring elsewhere in the city. Which neighborhoods should I look at? This question was also linked to definitional issues. My initial descriptions of my research were met again and again with requests to clarify the terms that I was using. Since declining cities and inner city neighborhoods were obviously not the same thing, how was I to define what the term ‘inner city’ meant? For that matter, what did I mean by the term ‘suburb’? Although most people have a certain image in mind when they use all of these terms, quantifying their definitions was more difficult. My invented term of inner-city suburbanization had its own definitional problems. Was I looking for absolute physical indicators, derived from some quantification of the form of vernacular suburban development, or was I looking for instead for relative shifts whose direction indicated a change toward a vernacular suburban physical model? I also confronted issues having to do with the scope of my research. I had already ascertained that I could not examine all declining cities. But once I had ascertained those housing developments which to me indicated inner-city suburbanization, what level of detail could I study them in? Should I examine the social and economic indicators of these developments as well? Should I perform sociological research examining the opinions and perceptions of the residents of these new communities? Should I examine the impact of these developments, whatever they were, on their surrounding communities? Should I examine, or even test, policy measures designed to address the positive or negative aspects of these communities? Before I even began, it was clear that I would have to restrict my research to produce a study that would be cogent while also attempting to be comprehensive.

In order to answer my three primary research questions about the prevalence, causality, and interpretation of inner-city suburbanization, I was obliged to define several of my terms before I began my research. I was influenced somewhat in
this task by the fact that many of the terms I was using were either poorly defined or inconsistently defined in the literature. While this inhibited me from using easily transferable definitions, it did give me some freedom to create definitions that were applicable to my research. In previous work I had already confronted the ambiguity of the term ‘declining city’, which I linked to the term ‘urban decline’ (Ryan 2000). As I was interested in changes in housing, I created my own definition of urban decline as population loss combined with housing loss. The term ‘inner city’ was more problematic. Some authors had defined inner cities according to income and racial categorizations (Jargowsky 1993, Wilson 1996), while others had used the term but had not defined it clearly. I decided to define the term ‘inner city’ according to the same indicators that I was using to define urban decline- population and housing loss- both because I was performing a physical study and because I wished to remain consistent. While this definition might not define the same geographical areas that other authors’ indicators had, I felt that my indicators were likely to provide a more accurate site for my research than the socioeconomic indicators used by other authors. Having defined these two terms, I knew how I would find the places where I would look for evidence of suburbanization.

Methodology: definitional questions
Now that I knew where I would be looking, how did I know what I would be looking for? Chapter Three of the dissertation explains the definitional questions that I undertook to clarify the aims of the study. Answering these questions necessitated confronting the ambiguous term ‘suburb’, which like inner city, I found to be rather widely used but loosely and inconsistently defined in the literature. I was aided in this task in two ways. The first was that my research was concerned with the physical attributes of residential suburban development alone, and that I could therefore ignore a wider search for the meaning of the term ‘sprawl’, which is generally considered to describe the form and consequences of suburbia at a larger scale. Instead, I could look for specific
physical indicators that were characteristic of suburbia. I was also aided in that a
careful physical definition of suburban form had already been created by the
architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, the two architects who
were perhaps most responsible for New Urbanism and who remain two of its
principal theorists and practioners. In their interest in providing an alternative to
what they called ‘conventional suburban development’, these two architects had
done what few researchers had attempted previously: they had carefully defined
the physical attributes of vernacular suburbia through the creation of an
oppositional model (New Urbanism). By inverting their definitions of New
Urbanist neighborhood form, I was able to create an equally clear definition of
what I meant by the term ‘suburb’.

Although I had defined the terms ‘inner city’ and ‘suburb’, I still had to confront
the meaning of my central term of ‘inner city suburbanization’. Most importantly,
was inner city suburbanization an absolute or a relative measure? My answer to
this question was determined by a preliminary examination of some of the cities
that I was considering as cases. Many of these cities had very different
vernacular housing types. Some older, east-coast cities were built primarily of
attached single-family row houses at densities of up to 30 units per acre. Many
Midwestern cities were less dense, built mainly of freestanding one- and two-
family houses at around 12 units per acre. In the context of these differing
neighborhood types, absolute measurements like unit density and lot coverage
were clearly going to produce different results. An absolute measurement of
suburbanization was therefore unlikely to produce meaningful findings in both
cities. This was reinforced by my observations of new development in these
cities. Midwestern cities had some housing developments which literally
resembled typical suburban development, while even the lowest-density
developments in some eastern cities, which had a much lower density than
typical rowhouse neighborhoods, looked to be about the same unit density as the
pre-redevelopment Midwestern neighborhoods that I had seen! What I was
seeing in both cities were relative shifts in densities rather than absolute ones. This led me to define inner city suburbanization in part as a relative shift.

Some features of inner city suburbanization, however, seemed to me to be more absolute. These were design features like the configuration of neighborhood streets, the placement of buildings on their lots, the treatment of parking areas, and the architectural style of buildings. Some new developments, for example, featured cul-de-sacs, and I decided to interpret design features like these as _absolute_ indicators, whose appearance, irrespective of the relative shifts of other indicators, I would interpret as signs of inner-city suburbanization.

**Methodology: prevalence**

Having clearly defined the terms ‘inner city’, ‘suburb’, and ‘inner city suburbanization’, I was able to lay out a clear methodology for researching the prevalence of inner-city suburbanization. _Chapter Four_ describes my selection of case cities and neighborhoods, and my investigations of new housing developments in those neighborhoods. Using the variables of population and housing change, I selected two cities- Detroit and Philadelphia- which were both large and experiencing declines in both of these categories. Although they were similar in terms of their decline, these cities occupied different geographical areas of the country- Philadelphia in the Northeast and Detroit in the Midwest. They also had predominantly different housing typologies- Philadelphia was a rowhouse city, while Detroit was predominantly built up with detached housing. These two became the case cities for the study. Within these cities, using the same variables of population and housing decline, I was able to select for those census tracts which I had defined as ‘inner city neighborhoods’, or those tracts which were experiencing large declines in both population and housing. These tracts comprised the case neighborhoods which I would examine for evidence of suburbanization.
Once I had established my case neighborhoods, it remained to examine the housing developments which had recently been constructed in those neighborhoods, and apply the inner city suburbanization criteria which I had established in Chapter Three to those developments. I examined both relative and absolute indicators in order to provide a portrait of suburbanization in the inner cities of Detroit and Philadelphia.

Methodology: causality

Reseaching the causality of inner-city suburbanization also presented a challenge. Chapter Five describes this process. Given the occurrence of suburbanization in multiple cities, and given that the phenomenon was appearing in diverse forms and types of housing, it was unlikely to be attributable to a single policy or actor, unlike, say, HOPE VI public housing redevelopment, which is in large part the result of a Federal government program applied to many different places. Yet the very occurrence of the phenomenon of suburbanization in multiple cities and in different types of housing implied that it was neither the product of an anomalous development condition in one place nor one of conditions specific to a single housing type or housing developer, but of a common force or set of forces that were acting in multiple places. The literature on the causality of urban decline and on suburbanization (in its original sense) provided an indication of the difficulties that I would face in reaching a conclusive determination of the phenomenon’s causality. While there was widespread agreement that both urban decline and suburbanization are occurring, there was still a wide variety of opinions in the literature on what exactly is causing these phenomena. In the case of urban decline, explanations ranged from macroeconomic change to white racism to the growth of suburbs. And as I had previously found (Ryan 2000), the difficulty of defining the phenomenon of urban decline was in part responsible for the difficulty of attributing it to a single cause or set of causes. The causality of the phenomenon consequently remained undetermined. While inner city suburbanization was clearly a more limited
phenomenon, as well as one that could be more closely defined, the possibility remained that it was due to an equally broad range of factors.

Nevertheless I believed that researching the causality of inner-city suburbanization was important, especially given that some aspects of the phenomenon seemed problematic. Understanding why this phenomenon was happening would allow for more informed recommendations. If, for example, suburbanization was the result of deliberate policy decisions, the possibility existed that recommendations could be made to change these policy measures. If suburbanization was the result of community wishes or of macroeconomic market shifts, there was less likelihood of changing the phenomenon and analysis could perhaps shift to attempting to reconcile conflicting imperatives. Researching this causality, however, promised to be a challenge. Not only was I looking at two different cities, the housing that I was looking at had been produced by a variety of actors, from Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to city agencies to private developers. Each development was different, and completely understanding the story of one development would have been a dissertation on its own. Nevertheless, I believed it was important to survey the causality of the developments that I saw in order to provide a picture of the uniformity of the suburbanization trend, rather than analyze it through the lens of a single development, none of which could necessarily be said to be ‘typical’ of the phenomenon.

I therefore decided to undertake a relatively limited analysis of causality, focusing on one major housing developments in each city, and examining additional information on two or three more developments. I intended to obtain most of my information through secondary material and through limited interviews of those players whom the secondary evidence had indicated were influential in the decision-making process of the developments. I selected case developments through my preliminary observations of each city. I had observed a spectrum of change in each city, ranging from developments that were less than one-third the
density of the historic context to development that were equal to or even exceeded historic densities. Some, but not all, of these less-dense developments were also suburb-like in appearance. For my primary case developments I selected those that were toward the ‘suburban’ end of the spectrum, for two reasons. First, I could study economically diverse developments—both market-rate and subsidized—within this limited scope. This allowed me to examine the different set of institutional players behind each development. Secondly, I believed that studying developments which seemed more ‘suburban’ would provide the clearest picture of the forces causing low-density design than studying developments which were not clearly manifesting suburban characteristics. I also believed that understanding the most ‘suburban’ developments to follow the suburban model.

_Methodology: interpretation_

Finally, how was I to interpret this phenomenon? _Chapter Six_ describes the often problematic process of evaluation. As I have previously described, my initial personal attitude toward inner-city suburbanization could best be described as ambivalent. Theory, as I have indicated, did not make my path much clearer, because there were conflicting theories both within and between the two professions from which I would be deriving my theoretical approaches. Choosing one of these theories and analyzing inner-city suburbanization from within that framework would have been a convenient, if somewhat simplistic, way to analyze the phenomenon. Such a device is often used by theorists who wish to project a singular image of complex phenomena (see Boyer 1983 for a typical example). Approaching a complex phenomenon through the lens of an ideology also aids research in that one can select only those facets of the phenomenon for observation which conform to one’s particular theory (see Sandercock 1998 for a typical example of this approach). Yet researching a complex phenomenon through single theories also allows one to provide a clear interpretation. Would I be reducing the impact of my study if I could not come out with either strong condemnation or strong praise of inner-city suburbanization?
As I considered the prospect of how to approach the analysis of inner-city phenomenon, I recalled that my personal ambivalence was one that was inherent to the profession of urban design. In other words, the dilemma that I was confronting reflected not only conflicting design ideologies, a value conflict which has been characteristic of architecture since at least the beginning of the twentieth century, but a conflict of values that stemmed from urban design’s dual responsibility to the professions of both architecture and urban planning. From architecture, urban designers have a mandate to produce a good design—although different values might be employed to produce that design. From urban planning, urban designers have a mandate to realize the vision of the public, although even in planning this mandate may conflict with planners’ normative visions. While both professions confront internal value conflicts, these conflicts are even more apparent in the hybrid field of urban design. My evaluation of inner-city suburbanization was bound to reflect these conflicts. As such, however, I realized that this conflict, rather than confusing my evaluation, was likely to clarify the issue of the conflicting responsibilities of urban designers. A conflicted interpretation was therefore a truer depiction of the field’s theoretical approach than a singular approach would have been. I decided that I would therefore not attempt to produce a single evaluation, but would recognize that my evaluation contained potentially conflicting viewpoints and consequently recommendations that incorporated both of these viewpoints.

Structure of the dissertation

Chapter Two briefly reviews the historical context of the suburbanization and the urban decline and revitalization movements in the United States. The chapter describes the history of suburbanization and divides historical residential suburbia into five phases: early suburbs, railroad suburbs, streetcar suburbs, prewar suburbs, and postwar suburbs. Postwar suburbs are by far the most numerous and this form of suburb continues to the present day. The postwar suburb embodies many of the physical and other social characteristics that many
Americans think of as being typical of suburbia such as curving streets, automobile dependency, and location well outside the city center. The suburban definitions created in Chapter Three are therefore based on postwar suburbia rather than on the other models. Decline and revitalization are interrelated processes, and the history of these two phenomena reflects this interrelationship. There have been two major phases in urban revitalization. The first began around 1940 and was characterized by the introduction of Modernist design policies, the large-scale intervention of the Federal government in urban revitalization, and the beginning of large-scale deindustrialization in the industrial cities of the Northeastern and Midwestern United States. The second began around 1975 and was characterized by the end of Modernist design influence, the decentralization of the government role in revitalization, and the beginning of a substantial shift to a service-based economy in American cities. The chapter closes with descriptions of recent trends in decline and revitalization and places the inner-city suburbanization process in the context of this third period.

Chapter Three addresses the definitional problem of what the terms inner city, suburb, and inner-city suburbanization actually mean. Although the first two terms are widely used by both professionals and laypeople they have multiple meanings. In order to both define and measure what inner-city suburbanization means, it is necessary to have measurable definitions of both 'inner city' and suburb. Inner cities are defined as neighborhoods which have lost a certain amount of housing and population. Suburbs are defined by inverting the neighborhood definition produced by the New Urbanism movement. This design philosophy rejects what it calls 'conventional suburban development' in favor of a neighborhood model that more closely resembles that of prewar suburbia. Inner-city suburbanization is thus defined as a process wherein a historic urban neighborhood model experiences shifts toward what is called a vernacular suburban model. The study creates seven variables with which to measure the degree of inner-city suburbanization and combines them into a suburbanization index.
Chapter Four applies the methodology created in Chapter Three to produce a portrait of the extent of the suburbanization phenomenon in the case cities. I examine the universe of American cities and divide them into four categories ranging from ‘growing’ to ‘steeply declining’ according to their changes in population and housing units from 1950 to 1990. I then select Detroit and Philadelphia as case cities which represent the largest cities in the two ‘declining’ categories. I then undertake an examination of neighborhood change in these cities according to shifts in the same indicators (population and housing change) in order to select case neighborhoods within which to examine housing developments. In order to produce a clear definition of the terms ‘suburb’ and ‘inner city suburbanization’ I undertake a brief examination of the literature that has confronted this question, as well as an examination of the New Urbanist literature. I apply the definitions given in the literature to provide definitions for these two terms. Finally, I measure the suburbanization indicators of developments in the inner city neighborhoods of both cities in order to provide a portrait of the prevalence of inner-city suburbanization in Detroit and Philadelphia.

Chapter Five investigates the causality of the suburbanization process as manifested in two or three case developments in each city. The chapter is comprised of three parts. The first briefly reviews the recent history of urban decline and revitalization in each case city and examines recent policy and planning initiatives that are likely to have influenced the developments studied. The second examines individual developments in each case city. In Philadelphia I concentrate upon a single large housing development, Poplar Nehemiah, constructed mainly through the city Office of Housing and Community Development, and include additional information from two other large housing developments, Ludlow Village and the Cecil B. Moore Homeownership Housing, that were developed as partnerships between city agencies and community development corporations. In Detroit I examine three housing developments.
Two of these, Clairpointe Woods and Victoria Park, are single-family housing developments constructed by the private sector with differing levels of public subsidy. The third Marketplace Court, is a multi-family housing development built by a private developer with limited public subsidies. In the third section of this chapter I bring together the individual cases to produce a depiction of the common causes for inner city suburbanization.

Chapter Six concludes the dissertation by evaluating the phenomenon of suburbanization, and indicating future research directions. Inner-city suburbanization is viewed through the frame of urban planning theory as a positive phenomenon which benefits both its direct residents and those in surrounding neighborhoods through the realization of resident desires and through the positive transformation of neighborhood image. Suburbanization is also viewed as a positive political outcome for city agencies, who benefit from the implementation of city policies and from the imagistic benefits of new development. Suburbanization is also viewed through the frame of architectural theory as a negative phenomenon which negates the urban architectural values of the existing neighborhoods in favor of an acontextual, reductivist architecture that imitates negative models already established in vernacular suburbs. Suburbanization is also criticized for its detrimental effects on larger urban systems like street grids and mass transit networks. These two policy frames set the stage for the next section of this chapter, which suggests strategies for action. These strategies are viewed through an urban design frame, which attempts to reconcile the competing demands of the previous two frames and suggests a moderation of some of the more extreme negative changes seen, while recognizing that the positive values resulting from this transformation should be continued in order to maintain positive momentum for urban revitalization in declining cities. Some future research directions that are suggested include the study of additional declining cities, and the extension of the research in the existing case developments to include studies of the...
socioeconomic consequences of this development, as well as sociological studies of the perceptions of residents who live in the developments.
Chapter Two

The Historical Context of Inner-City Suburbanization

Introduction
This chapter places the phenomenon of inner-city suburbanization within the larger context of twentieth-century American urbanism. It does this by briefly examining the histories of two major urban phenomena that have impacted the form of the American city: suburbanization and urban decline. The chapter then briefly examines the history of housing efforts for the poor in American cities in order to provide an architectural context for the developments that will be examined in Chapter Five. Finally, the chapter introduces the concept of inner-city suburbanization by providing a hypothesis for this phenomenon based in current urban trends in American cities.

The first section of the chapter examines the phenomenon of suburbanization. Suburbanization began in the United States in the nineteenth century with the growth of industrial cities and of the transportation technology that allowed people to live outside those cities while working in them. By the late nineteenth century the suburb had begun to develop both a distinct cultural meaning based on its role in American society and a distinct neighborhood form based on a pictorial representation of a rural setting. Both the cultural import of suburbia as well as its physical form would grow more widespread as cities grew larger and as more Americans gained the means to escape them. The section also discusses the differences between the physical form of prewar and postwar suburbs and closes with an account of the growth of postwar vernacular suburbia and of the maturation of the cultural image of suburbia that became associated with this form of development.

The second section of the chapter examines the phenomenon of urban decline. Urban decline, as manifested through extensive population loss in residential
neighborhoods, did not begin in earnest in the United States until the second and third decades of the twentieth century. After that point it occurred simultaneously with suburbia was older cities both declined and suburbanized. Newer cites did not experience such severe decline. Though it began before the extensive suburban development of the postwar era, urban decline often became causally associated with suburbanization as many of the economic and demographic shifts which accompanied decline were tied to the decentralization of people, commerce, and industry. Urban decline became perceived as a major policy problem after the Second World War and over the next thirty years the federal government embarked on a series of ambitious programs designed to alleviate the problem. The chapter discusses the somewhat troubled history of these efforts as well as the more decentralized revitalization strategies which succeeded these programs after about 1975.

The third section of the chapter discusses the history of efforts to provide adequate housing for the poor in American cities during the twentieth century. As industrial cities grew larger, housing conditions for the poorest city dwellers often became intolerable. Scattered private efforts to improve housing for the poor developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in many American cities, but the federal government did not make a major commitment to addressing urban housing problems until the Depression. After the Second World War major federal housing programs were developed, often in tandem with efforts to address urban decline. Large-scale housing programs for the poor struggled for about thirty years, after which they were replaced by decentralized programs which for the most part remain to this day. The chapter briefly discusses the design of some low-income housing efforts in order to provide an architectural context for the case developments that will be examined in Chapter Five.

The fourth section of the chapter provides the background for a hypothesis for inner-city suburbanization. The section analyzes existing broad physical trends in
American cities in order to propose a location for inner-city suburbanization within the broad spectrum of changes currently occurring in American cities. This has the dual purpose of hypothesizing that inner-city suburbanization is the natural and inevitable product of a certain set of physical changes in American cities. Inner-city suburbanization is proposed as only one of a number of important physical trends occurring in American cities, but one that is not insignificant. This section sets the stage for the definition of the terms required to research the phenomenon of inner-city suburbanization in Chapter Three.

Suburbanization in the United States
As a nation founded in the English tradition and with an open frontier for the first three hundred or so years of its history, Americans have always treasured the open countryside. The American preference for the small town with a close connection to nature has been well-documented and was widespread in American society even before the existence of large cities (White and White 1962, Campanella 2001). This preference can be thought of as a pastoral ideal (Marx 1964). As American cities grew rapidly during the nineteenth century nature grew ever more remote as cities grew and the countryside receded. The ideal of living in proximity to nature, however, remained.

The history of suburbia has been well-documented (Jackson 1984, Fishman 1987, and Stilgoe 1988 provide excellent accounts, among others) and will therefore not be reviewed here in detail. This section will concentrate on describing the formal aspects of suburban neighborhood and architectural design.

Suburbs distinguished themselves from cities through their architecture before they did so through their neighborhood design. The first suburbs, however, were little different than the city in either way. Brooklyn Heights, often credited with being New York City's first suburb, was a gridded neighborhood of row houses whose design was indistinguishable, except through its location, from that of
Manhattan. By the 1840s and 1850s, however, distinct suburban architectural typologies had begun to emerge, based in part on the pattern books developed by Andrew Jackson Downing and others (Downing 1968). Most suburban houses were designed as ‘villas’ and were intended for the upper middle class, a democratizing shift from the eighteenth century when they were intended only for the gentry. Unlike the suburban estates of the eighteenth century, however, these villas were often designed to be grouped together in communities, an idea first conceived by the English in the late eighteenth century (Fishman 1987). Both the class structure and spatial relationships of these houses were innovative, although their architectural inspiration was less so, being derived from historic styles like the Gothic, Italianate, or Classical. This lack of architectural innovation could be attributed both to the generally historicist leanings of the nineteenth century as well as the relatively small proportion of housing being built in the suburbs at the time.

Technology influenced the growth of suburbia from the beginning. Brooklyn Heights was made reliably accessible because of the invention of the steam ferry, and the mass manufacture of housing components made the ornamental profusions found on Victorian houses widely available and relatively cheap. The invention of rail transportation was also a major boon to the expansion of cities and suburbs. Steam railroads, operating over relatively long distances, made the development of suburbs like Philadelphia’s Chestnut Hill and Main Line (named, of course, after the train) feasible. Railroad suburbs remained an upper-middle-class phenomenon in part because of their expensive ticket prices (Warner 2002, pers. comm.), although elevated steam railways in extremely dense cities like New York became quite important components of urban transportation. The development of cheap and frequent electric streetcars and subways at the end of the nineteenth century was a huge boost to urban development, expanding cities outwards in all directions. Warner (1962) provided a good description of the development of these neighborhoods in Boston, calling them ‘streetcar suburbs’. Until about 1920 these forms of transportation provided the primary means of
getting to and from cities and suburbs, after which the most recent transportation innovation, the automobile, the began to play an increasingly dominant role.

While suburbs began to establish an independent architectural typology from that of the city as early as 1830, the neighborhood design of the majority of early suburbs was similar to that of urban neighborhoods. Most suburbs were built on urban grids until well into the twentieth century. This is not to say that the site planning of these neighborhoods was identical to that of suburbia. In Chestnut Hill, for example, a railroad suburb that became a part of Philadelphia after 1854, villas were located in splendid isolation, displaying a spatial separation from the street and from each other that was definitely not of the city, though Chestnut Hill was politically a part of Philadelphia. The role of political separation in defining suburbs will be discussed further in Chapter Three. This relatively distinct site planning was also seen in many streetcar suburbs. Warner (1962) credited the relative lack of row houses and profusion of detached dwellings in Boston’s streetcar suburbs to social preferences. The typology of the detached house built on a city grid consequently became a major feature of American urban form. Cities which experienced a large amount of growth during the early twentieth century, like Brooklyn (NY), Detroit, or Los Angeles, spread for miles in this fashion.

Figures 2.1. and 2.2. While both Oak Park, Illinois (left) and Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania (right) developed as railroad suburbs in the late nineteenth century, they did so on urban grids. The primary residential typologies of both neighborhoods are single-family detached houses. Both images copyright United States Geological Survey.
The fact that many suburbs were built on urban grids mirrored the fact that many settlements which were originally considered suburbs became urban as cities expanded physically and politically in the nineteenth century. Many of the neighborhoods which are now an integral part of the cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, for example, were once suburban. Most of Boston’s ‘streetcar suburbs’ are now part of the city, as is Brooklyn Heights in New York, Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia, and innumerable other former suburbs. These neighborhoods are now historical suburbs, though their remaining housing often provides an indication as to the neighborhood’s former status, as in Chestnut Hill. Other suburbs, like Oak Park in Chicago and Brookline in Boston, were never annexed politically to their central cities. Today, despite their proximity to downtown and their sharing of many of the economic and social attributes of their central cities, they are still, at least politically, suburbs. The question of what constitutes a suburb for the operational purposes of this dissertation will be addressed further in Chapter Three.

As early as 1850 a distinctive suburban site design typology began to emerge that presaged the later commonplace neighborhood form of suburbia. This neighborhood design was characterized by curving streets and an integration of houses with the landscape. Riverside, Illinois, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1869 (Stern and Massengale 1981: 24) was the most famous example, though it would not be prove to be influential for some time (see Figure 2.3). Inspired by the picturesquely-designed cemeteries and parks of the era, curvilinear suburbs announced not only through their architecture but through their landscape design as well that one was in a realm completely distinct from that of the city. In an era before land use zoning, their neighborhood design also served as an effective promise that the area would forever resist urban expansion.

Although we are wont to view the curvilinear landscapes of a few early suburbs like Riverside as leading in a teleological fashion to the ubiquitous curving streets
of suburbia, curvilinear design constituted only a minor portion of suburban neighborhood design until the Federal Housing Administration, influenced by architects like Clarence Perry, began to encourage such design for Federally mortgaged housing in the 1930s. Southworth and Ben-Joseph (1993, 1997) have described how the spread of boilerplate municipal street standards based on such design made the curvilinear landscape ubiquitous in residential suburbia after World War II. What began as the inspiration of a landscape architect became encoded as a set of standards whose widespread application quickly resulted in a landscape that was just as homogeneous as the urban grid had been before it (see Figures 2.4 and 2.5).

![Figures 2.4 and 2.5](image_url)

**Figure 2.3.** The curvilinear landscape of Riverside, Illinois (left half of above photo) contrasts strongly with the gridded streets of contemporary neighboring suburbs. Although Riverside was designed in 1868, suburbs would not widely adopt curvilinear street patterns until after the Second World War. Photograph copyright United States Geological Survey.

Unlike suburban neighborhood design, suburban architecture was less a function of regulation than of changing construction techniques and architectural fashions. From the beginning the popular media played an important role in the dissemination of suburban imagery and house designs (Stilgoe 1988). Downing’s *Architecture of Country Houses*, an early pattern book for low-cost suburban villas, has its descendants in the House Plan guides widely available in suburban supermarkets today. The widespread nature of suburban architectural design
had a homogenizing effect on the American landscape. Many popular designs spread to all parts of the United States. Today, architectural types like the bungalow, the cape, and the raised ranch can be found everywhere. Each, in its day, was promoted as the ubiquitous solution to the problem of the suburban house; in 1918 Theodore Roosevelt described the bungalow as “the architecture of an entire nation.” (Jackson 1984) This homogenization obscured the original vernaculars of different parts of the United States that developed according to climatic variations and historical factors (McAlester and McAlester 1984), although even today one may still discern variation in suburban architecture in different parts of the country, from the adobe subdivisions of Santa Fe and Phoenix to the colonial cul-de-sacs of suburban Boston.

Figures 2.4 and 2.5. Although ‘urban’ grids were decried as monotonous, curvilinear suburban streets are not necessarily less so. The map at left shows a 1920s grid in Los Angeles, while the map at right shows a 1990s pattern from South Florida. Both maps copyright Mapquest.com.

The architecture of suburbia has continued to evolve. Suburban houses built in the 1990s were built with designs as distinct from those of the 1970s as those houses were distinct from their predecessors. The site planning of suburbia has evolved in two major ways. Single-family houses have steadily increased in size, while the size of the average single-family house lot has continued to shrink. The National Association of Home Builders (2001) reported that from 1987 to 2000 the average size of single family homes rose from 1,905 to 2,270 square feet.
The average lot size shrank from 17,600 to 12,910 square feet. The increase in home sizes has been caused by the rise in the percentages of homes with amenities like two-car garages, two stories, four or more bedrooms, and central air conditioning. While the cause and effects of these changes are beyond the scope of this study, it is worthwhile to note that these economic realities might influence new construction in urban areas. Consumers would seem more likely to demand larger homes while accepting smaller lots. Both of these trends are, as we will see, consistent with the causes of inner-city suburbanization examined in Chapter Five, as well as with design movements like the New Urbanism, which advocate exactly the same thing.

Figures 2.6 and 2.7. Two local architectural vernaculars that have persisted as styles for today's suburban homes are the colonial (left) and the Spanish revival (right). Illustrations copyright aol.com.

As suburbia became the residential environment of an increasing number of Americans, Federal housing policies encouraged increases in suburban construction. The Housing Act of 1934 and the Veterans Readjustment Act of 1944 were both major stimuli for the privately-financed construction and purchase of suburban housing. There has been much debate over whether these policies were a cause or an effect of the American preference for suburban living. While some critics have argued that these policies imposed suburban standards on the American public (Kunstler 1993), others have argued that existing social desires caused policies that favored those desires (Gordon and Richardson 1997). While the long history of suburbanization that predated those policies might support the latter argument more strongly, the causality of suburbanization is still somewhat unclear. The tortured struggle to provide public housing in the
United States and to provide so-called ‘affordable’ housing in wealthy suburbs today provides another argument that social desires often influence policies more strongly than the other way around (Bauer 1957, Vale 2000).

Exclusivity was a primary goal of suburban development (Fishman 1987). Suburbanites wanted to escape not only noxious and unpredictable urban uses, but unwanted urban populations as well. Spatial separation and the restriction of suburbs to ‘high-class’ development was an effective means of achieving this goal. Additional reinforcements for suburban exclusivity came with the creation of zoning in the 1920s and its spread throughout the United States in subsequent decades. Zoning was attractive to suburbs because it provided small municipalities with the power to at least partially control changes to their built environment. The 1926 landmark United States Supreme Court case Village of Euclid vs. Ambler Realty Company, which established the legality of zoning, was motivated by the desire of that ‘village’ (which was really a suburb of Cleveland) to restrict the spread of industrial uses. Through zoning, undesirable land uses could be forbidden, as could housing with densities above certain thresholds. For the most desirable suburbs, zoning could be used guarantee their exclusive social nature in perpetuity. In recent years, however, some suburbs have found that they are not immune from formerly urban ills like poverty and financial crises. The poorest suburbs like Highland Park, Michigan and East Cleveland, Ohio suffer from the same ills as their central cities but have fewer resources with which to cope with them. Suburban decline is beginning to be recognized as a major policy problem (Orfield 1997, Lucy and Phillips 2000).

As suburbia has grown its deleterious large-scale effects have become more apparent. ‘Suburban sprawl’, as the spread of suburbia is called, has been accused of destroying open space, obliterating indigenous landscapes, creating massive traffic problems, and draining cities of their population, resources, and vitality (Downs 1994, Duany et. al. 2000). Other critics, however, have downplayed these concerns (Gordon and Richardson 1997). Despite the
controversies over the costs and benefits of sprawl, the continuation of permissive land use regulations combined with an apparent market preference for suburbia, has lead to its unabated continuation throughout the United States. There are signs, however, that even fast-growth, permissive regions are beginning to recognize unabated sprawl as a problem (Calthorpe and Fulton 2001).

Suburbia was never exclusively a residential enterprise. Retail establishments, offices and even some corporate headquarters have also relocated from cities to suburban areas, forming automobile-oriented complexes with many of the economic attributes of cities, but a radically different physical form (Garreau 1991, Rowe 1991). In many American cities the historic core has become almost irrelevant as the majority of metropolitan activities have relocated to the periphery. Newer cities like Fort Lauderdale and Phoenix are at the extreme of this decentralization trend, with downtowns that are notable, as highway signs in these places remind motorists, only as the “site of historic and cultural facilities”.

The American move toward suburbia has not been ubiquitous. The revival of many downtowns and older urban neighborhoods, discussed in the next section, indicate that at least some middle-class Americans prefer older urban neighborhood environments to those of the suburbs. The next section discusses the phenomenon of urban revitalization and decline in American cities.

Urban Decline and Revitalization
Just as there have always been settlements at the peripheries of cities that could be considered suburbs, cities themselves have always been regarded as being in some sense problematic. The rapid growth of the industrial city in the nineteenth century not only spurred the creation of the modern suburb but created a host of physical, social, and economic problems. The societal imperative to address some of these problems was one of the primary impetuses for the creation of the city planning profession at the beginning of the twentieth century. Since this
origin the planning profession has been closely associated with the resolution of urban problems.

Early city plans such as Burnham et. al.'s Plan for Chicago (1909) were aesthetically inspired by the European Beaux-Arts movement and concentrated on physical interventions like new roadways, parks, and monumental civic buildings. While many early city planners were architects, landscape architects like Charles Eliot and the Olmsted firm also played a major role in the development of the profession (Brown 2002, forthcoming). As might be imagined, most early city plans were responses to problems of city growth rather than city decline. Rapidly growing cities badly needed intelligent planning for the design of amenities like new public roadways and parks.

City planning soon began to concern itself with the problems of poverty as well. The effort to provide appropriate housing for the poor was one component of city planning that would survive the economic transition from urban growth to urban decline. Calls for housing reform grew stronger during the early decades of the twentieth century, moving from private experimentation with model tenements (Plunz 1990) to consistent calls for government intervention in low-income housing production (Bauer 1934). The results of these efforts will be discussed further in the next section.

City planning efforts were given added impetus by the Great Depression, a crisis which slowed the growth of cities and forced the federal government to become involved in wide arenas of policy that had formerly been left to the private sector. Public housing construction blossomed after the Depression, especially in cities like New York which were well-prepared to take advantage of new federal programs. Under the leadership of Robert Moses New York also became a national leader in highway and parks construction during this time, foreshadowing the national application of these efforts after the Second World War.
Through the end of the 1930s the design philosophies of urban improvement efforts continued to be inspired by the Beaux-Arts movement, but this was soon to end. Design philosophies influenced by the European Modern movement would gain dramatic momentum after the Second World War. These designs were developed beginning in the 1920s by architects like Le Corbusier and other members of the Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) (Mumford 2000). The new architectural and urban design principles advocated by Modernists included the separation of automobile from pedestrian traffic, high-rise, ahistorically styled architecture, and the fetishization of automobile-based transportation. After the war these design principles would serve as the basis for many postwar downtown and neighborhood redevelopment plans and would influence the design of much of the nation’s public housing.

During this period policymakers in some American cities also began to sense that their cities were declining. Many industrial cities had developed their economies primarily on the basis of a single commodity such as textiles or machine parts. As these industries matured, their location in industrial cities often became less competitive due to the age of their facilities or because wage or plant costs were lower elsewhere. Many industries relocated and many of those that did not went out of business. These changes occurred across the northeast beginning as early as 1940 (Gittell 1992). As the economic bases of older industrial cities changed, moved, or disappeared, those cities became less desirable as places to live. Residents who could not find new jobs relocated or joined the ranks of the underemployed poor. The negative changes experienced by industrial cities became known as the phenomenon of urban decline. This somewhat hard-to-define term (Bradbury et. al. 1982, Ryan 2000) communicated several different things; a quantitative decline in indicators like population or income; a quantitative increase in negative indicators like crime and other social problems; and perhaps most importantly a qualitative sense that these cities were becoming less and less attractive places to live. The postwar public dialogue
around the issue of urban decline has been discussed in detail by Beauregard (1993).

Cities confronting urban decline had to deal with many extremely difficult problems. Among other things, they were often saddled with large, obsolete manufacturing facilities for which there was little demand. They had to confront the abandonment of their principal commercial arteries as retailers followed residents to the suburbs. They had to confront the growing problems of the people, usually minorities, who had moved to the city for economic opportunities but had found little work, and the abandonment of homes, sometimes by the thousands, as middle-class residents fled to the suburbs. They had to confront the sometimes severe fiscal problems brought on by the increase in resident poverty and the departure of their largest taxpayers. With all of these problems, the older cities of the northeast and midwest were soon asking the federal government for help.

The federal government responded in 1949 with a policy that would have radical consequences for urban downtowns. Housing advocates and developers joined forces to persuade Congress to pass the Housing Act of 1949. This bill provided for generous federal subsidies for condemnation, clearance, and reconstruction of areas that had been determined to be blighted. Cleared sites were sometimes but not always built up with low-income housing (O'Connor 1999). Other redevelopment occurred to provide room for new commercial, manufacturing, and institutional facilities. The Housing Act provided the impetus for what became known as the urban renewal movement. The 1950s and 1960s became an era of widespread clearance in American cities as cities leveled acres of old buildings for highways, new government facilities, office parks, and modern apartment blocks. By the end of the 1960s almost every sizeable American city had new downtown facilities, highways, and housing as a result of the housing act, highway act, and urban renewal programs.
Highways also contributed to the changing landscape of American cities. The rapid growth of automobile usage after the war led to calls for the construction of modern roadways, and the passage of the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 provided federal backing for the construction of limited-access highways between American cities. Older cities like Boston felt that their economic future was dependent upon these highways and argued, generally successfully, to have them routed directly through their centers. Euphoria over this new construction, however, soon soured. Cities like New York rammed expressways directly through dense urban neighborhoods, spurring exoduses from already unstable places. The destabilization wrought by these huge roadways often increased, rather than reduced blight (Caro 1976). Other forms of redevelopment were often not much more successful. Cleared sites in the downtowns of cities like Cleveland, OH and New Haven, CT sat vacant for years before new uses were found for them. Other cities like Boston destroyed stable immigrant
neighborhoods and vibrant urban commercial districts, replacing them with sterile plazas and high-rise housing unaffordable to former residents (Gans 1966).

While most poor residents were powerless to halt the destruction of their neighborhoods under urban renewal, the increasing threats to historic neighborhoods and significant urban spaces led to a predictable revolt against widespread urban renewal. Jacobs (1961) was an early advocate for the preservation of older residential and commercial neighborhoods in the face of widespread clearance. The continued construction of freeways through urban centers provided a locus for protests. In the late 1960s and early 1970s simultaneous ‘freeway revolts’ halted construction of highways through the downtowns of Boston, New York, New Orleans, and San Francisco. At the same time, changing federal funding priorities led to a severe diminution in downtown and neighborhood redevelopment activities. Federally-funded urban renewal ground to a halt, and the movement garnered increasing criticism from both academics and journalists (Anderson 1964, Worthy 1976).

City planners played a key role in the urban renewal movement and ended up taking much of the public blame for its failure. Even the most enlightened and well-intentioned planners, like Philadelphia’s Edmund Bacon, sanctioned the destruction of eighteenth-century neighborhoods for office towers, shopping malls, and expressways (Bacon 1967). In response to these criticisms, city planners revised their professional stance to spend more attention on the concerns of neighborhood residents.

A new wave of downtown redevelopments in the 1970s occurred on a more modest and sensitive scale. Reflecting the negative connotations that were by then connected with the term urban renewal, many of these developments were instead called urban revitalization. In general, these developments paid more attention both to the existing built environment as well as to the preferences of the private market (Frieden and Sagalyn 1990). These developments often used
historic buildings as a centerpiece of a new development and featured retail options that provided a new twist on the standard shopping options available in suburban malls. Downtown developments like Baltimore's Inner Harbor and Boston's Quincy Market became iconic tourist attractions in their own right, while revitalizing both their immediate vicinity and the overall image of the city.

At the same time, a renewed appreciation for the charms of historic neighborhoods brought growing waves of middle- and upper-income residents into downtown. These residents were drawn less to the flashy towers of the urban renewal projects than to older neighborhoods that had previously been viewed by planners only as clearance sites. This phenomenon, called somewhat disparagingly gentrification, had both admirers and critics. Admirers appreciated the ability of gentrification to revitalize formerly derelict neighborhoods, pumping new residents and capital into cities while preserving many of their most attractive features (Berry 1985). Detractors criticized the displacement of lower-income residents and the perceived collusion of the real estate industry and city government in facilitating gentrification (Abu-Lughod 1994, Smith 1996). Others noted the limited ability of gentrification to reverse larger-scale trends of decline in cities (Berry 1985). Gentrification was very much linked to the real estate market and therefore took a temporary setback in the early 1990s, but by the late 1990s it had returned in full force, improving values in even the most depressed neighborhoods of certain cities (Wyley and Hammel 1999). As we will see in Chapter Five, gentrification and inner-city suburbanization are not unrelated phenomena.

By the end of the twentieth century, the record was mixed on urban revitalization. Some cities indeed seemed to have revitalized. Cities like Boston and San Francisco were at least as competitive, if not more so, than their suburbs for the location of both housing and employment. Downtowns across the United States had gained population in a resurgence of downtown living (Sohmer and Lang 1999). Others, as we will see, had a more mixed record. Many large cities such
as St. Louis continued to lose population, while others like Kansas City had little success in redeveloping their downtowns or their declining neighborhoods. Other cities, many of them declining continued to sprawl, leading to a variety of problems there (Brookings 1999, Southern California Studies Center 2001).

The relationship between suburban sprawl and urban decline remains a contentious one. As we saw, cities began suburbanizing approximately one hundred years before they began to decline. Nevertheless, the coincidence of suburban sprawl and decline, especially after the Second World War, led many observers such as Mumford (1961) to believe that they were causally related, with suburban sprawl causing urban decline. There was substantial confusion about the relationship of the two phenomena. Urban planners, who played a rather ambivalent role in promoting or at least allowing for suburban sprawl, viewed decline as problematic and have also tended to attribute decline to sprawl (Calthorpe and Richmond 1992, Downs 1994, Nelson and Milgroom 1995, Kelbaugh 1997). Developers, on the other hand, credited the social desire for the suburbs as causing sprawl, and saw decline more as a consequence of this action. Even today (2002), a definitive association between decline and sprawl has not been conclusively demonstrated (Downs 1999).

Inner-city suburbanization represents a paradoxical combination of urban sprawl and urban decline. On the positive side, it could be seen as representing a solution to urban decline through the building of development that is usually associated with suburban sprawl in a ‘new’ location- the inner city. On the other hand, it could be seen as exacerbating urban sprawl by wasting urban land.

_Housing the Poor_

The economically marginal status of low-income populations in the United States was not accompanied by physical marginalization, as was the case in European countries like France where the poor lived at the city edge. In the United States, the poor were most often confined to close-in, relatively dense districts of poor-
quality housing like New York’s Lower East Side. In a country where the ideal of the single-family home has always been preeminent, those who have been unable to afford that ideal have had to make do with an often indifferent and unresolved public attitude toward an appropriate means to house the poor. Despite a long tradition of almshouses, settlement houses, and other institutions for the poor (Vale 2000), the majority of poor before the twentieth century lived either in self-constructed or in low-quality privately-constructed housing.

Housing for the urban poor was as architecturally diverse as the urban conditions within which it was located. In New York City, tenements for the poor consisted of 4- to 5-story walkup apartment buildings. These were tightly packed and inhabited, creating some of the densest urban neighborhoods on earth (Plunz 1990). In other cities, the typologies of housing for the poor varied according to the architectural vernacular of the city. In cities like Chicago and Boston, slum housing was often constructed in the form of freestanding wooden multifamily apartment buildings. Other cities like Philadelphia and Baltimore housed the poor in narrow, single-family rowhouses. Of course, many nineteenth-century poor lived in informal housing constructed by themselves. This housing is poorly recorded and little is known about it today. In addition, the poor also inherited housing from the middle class through neighborhood succession (Burgess 1925). Homes in Roxbury that are today considered slum housing were once the homes of upwardly mobile middle-class tradesmen in the late nineteenth-century (Warner 1962). In older cities like New York City this neighborhood succession began as early as the mid 19th century. Greenwich Village, built for a middle class population, was New York’s African-American ghetto of the time. Neighborhood succession continues today, with many inner suburbs now being abandoned by their original populations and becoming both poorer and more minority in composition (Orfield 1997, Lucy and Phillips 2000). The dynamism with which urban populations have shifted have meant that the environmental quality of many poor neighborhoods is tied not only to the inherent quality of their vernacular architecture, but also to overall neighborhood economic health.
Tenements and shanties were early forms of architecture of the poor. Another distinct architecture of poverty began emerging through the construction of government-financed public housing projects beginning in the 1930s through the 1960s. Although these projects went through several distinct design phases (Plunz 1990), they shared a stylistic and spatial distinction from surrounding neighborhoods which increased over time. Public housing projects were both social and architectural experiments, the social novelty of these buildings being directly reflected in their novel appearance. While the novel appearance of these buildings initially symbolized their almost utopian aims, mirrored in the successful lives of the “selective collective” housed within them (Vale 2000), the increasing placement of the very poor within housing projects combined with their increasingly alienating architectural design eventually led to their stigmatization as places of crime and despair.

Figures 2.9 and 2.10. While early New York City public housing developments like the Williamsburg Houses in New York City (left) had a relatively humane low-rise scale, later postwar projects (right) exemplified what Plunz (1990) called the “spatial pathology” of separation from the street and muted, institutional architecture. Illustrations from New York Housing Authority (1944).

While public housing design varied across the country, it was often characterized by minimalist brick construction and site planning that treated the city block as an acontextual space, ignoring all surrounding site features. Spatial relationships
between public housing buildings grew increasingly minimal, leading to what Plunz (1990) called "spatial pathology". The scale of public housing often ignored context as well. Many high-rise public housing buildings were constructed in cities like Newark or Baltimore with little tradition of such construction. Even in cities like Boston or Atlanta, where public housing was usually low-rise, the spatial pathology of public housing usually set it well off from surrounding neighborhoods. Within public housing complexes, spaces were also poorly defined, leading to a lack of boundaries between public and private, and parking and play space. This spatial indistinctness, combined with poor maintenance on the part of housing authorities, led to the spaces between and within public housing becoming increasingly unkempt and unsafe. Within buildings the situation was often little better, with exposed hallways and stairways that became locations for illicit activities. The poor maintenance also meant that features like elevators were often unusable. Even the poorest of the poor found other places to live, and abandonment of units grew. For a variety of reasons, many of which were linked to their physical form, public housing projects were failing.

The policy response to the failures of public housing was at first muted. Writers like Bauer (1957), Jacobs (1961) and Newman (1972) contributed to the criticism of Modernist design by pointing out the social, economic, and public safety deficiencies of modernist public housing design. The Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis was demolished, but nothing replaced it, and other demolitions did not follow for some time. In the early 1970's, government policies changes and funding for new public housing ground to a halt. Much of the money formerly dedicated to the construction of new public housing was transferred to Section 8 vouchers to assist the poor to live in existing housing units or housing units built by the private sector. Modernist design itself also fell out of public favor during this period. Construction of new public housing ceased almost entirely and existing complexes were left to the often indifferent maintenance of city-based public housing agencies.
The widespread reconsideration of public housing design did not begin until the early 1980's, when cities, including Boston, began redeveloping public housing on their own (Vale 2000 and 2002, forthcoming). In 1992 a federally appointed commission recommended that the nation’s most distressed housing projects be reconstructed and redesigned in a new federal program. The “HOPE [Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere] VI Urban Demonstration Program”, as it was called, began in 1993. By 2002 it is projected to have spent over four billion dollars to demolish and rebuild 96,000 public housing units in 129 different distressed housing projects (HUD 2000a).

Under the HOPE VI program, the design of public housing was radically reconceived (Epp 1996). In many cases, tall towers were demolished and replaced by townhouses facing recreated street networks. Housing units were given individual street entrances, hopefully endowing residents with more of a sense of ownership of their surroundings and improving the security and maintenance of outdoor spaces. Where existing buildings were not demolished, they were often altered with the addition of historicist features like gables and porches, again in attempt to personalize the anonymous nature of the original structures.

The neotraditional leanings of HOPE VI were formally linked to New Urbanism in a 1996 HUD publication and with the HUD Secretary’s signing of the Charter of the New Urbanism that same year (Weiss 2000, HUD 2000b). Applicants for Hope VI funds are awarded points based on their compliance with design strategies encouraged by HUD. The incentive created by this point system has meant that the designs of all HOPE VI redevelopments have been influenced by New Urbanist principles. These principles, which will be explained later in this section, have again linked public housing redevelopment to a wider design movement, much as the Modernist designs did in the 1940s and 1950s.
The superficial resemblance of the redesigned public housing to vernacular neighborhood urban architecture did not mean that all the features the original neighborhood were replicated. Unit density, for example, usually dropped precipitously. The Orchard Park housing project in Boston, for example, originally contained 774 housing units, about the same as the original neighborhood. Redevelopment of the project under HOPE VI lowered this number to 578, of which 166 were infill units located off the original project site (Shumaker 2001m HUD 1996a). This left a total number of 412 units on site, a unit density of only 53% of the original neighborhood. While a ‘traditional’ neighborhood urban fabric was reestablished, the unit density of vernacular Roxbury neighborhoods was not.

In addition to the new public housing being produced by HOPE VI, much low-income housing production in inner cities has occurred through the agency of Community Development Corporations, or CDCs. CDCs are nonprofit organizations focusing mainly but not exclusively in housing production. They have been increasingly successful during the 1990s, gaining in both number and productivity. A National Community Development Initiative (NDCI) survey found...
that CDCs in 25 sample cities produced over 90,000 units of housing between 1991 and 1997 (Walker and Weinheimer 1999). This outnumbers the 61,000 new units produced by all HOPE VI projects between 1993 and 2000 (HUD 2001). The NDCI found New York to be by far the largest producer of CDC housing, with at least 21,595 estimated units produced. Detroit, on the other hand, produced only 759 units of CDC-sponsored housing during this time. Much of the funding for CDC housing construction has come from the federal government. In 1995 alone, national CDCs received over $600 million from HUD for the construction of low-income housing (Walker and Weinheimer 1999). Although the institutional history of CDCs has been well-reviewed (Stoutland 1999, Rusk 1999, Grogan and Proscio 2000), there has been limited study of the architecture and urban design of this housing (Plunz 1990, Campos 1999), despite the fact that CDCs are producing more low-income housing than HOPE VI.

Figures 2.13 and 2.14. Housing built by Community Development Corporations (CDCs) is architecturally diverse but generally imitates vernacular styles. Two examples are these small cottages in Detroit (left) and these twin homes in Boston (right).

By 1990 all three of the trends described above had become well established in American cities. Suburbia was the leading ideal for American middle-class housing and was nearly ubiquitous outside of older cities. Many of these older cities, on the other hand, continued to decline, losing residents, housing, and jobs, and gaining increasing numbers of vacant buildings, land and social
problems. Housing efforts for the poor had succeeded in alleviating some of these problems through the reconstruction of some, but not most, urban neighborhoods.

The next section will show how these three trends have set the stage for inner-city suburbanization. With the suburb become the dominant American housing paradigm, it would not be surprising to expect that many city dwellers desired suburban housing. With the continued decline of many cities, larger and larger amounts of vacant land were becoming available for redevelopment without the displacement of residents that had been required in the urban renewal era. And with the continued decentralization of housing production through programs like the Community Development Block Grants, one might expect local organizations to have become both more responsive to citizen desires as well as less responsive to design paradigms imposed from above. The door was open, in other words, for the construction of housing derived from vernacular suburban models to be constructed in the vacant land of the inner city. Section Four places inner-city suburbanization within the context of the trends described above and hypothesizes the place of inner-city suburbanization within the spectrum of urban change.

A hypothesis for inner-city suburbanization

The above three sections described a selective qualitative historical context for the phenomenon of inner-city suburbanization. These three events—suburbanization, urban decline and revitalization, and low-income housing production—were selected because I saw them as likely influences on inner-city suburbanization. Of course, many other events occurred in American cities at the same time. Some cities did not decline and thus avoided the cycle described. Cities built many kinds of housing besides that designated for the poor. Nevertheless, the events described above influenced a great number of American cities, especially the older cities which were already large before 1950.
Chapter Four examines the universe of larger American cities in some detail in order to select the case cities to be studied.

Before examining real cities in Chapter Four to see if inner-city suburbanization is happening in them or not, it is important to be clear as to the circumstances under which inner-city suburbanization might occur. This clarification is important because inner-city suburbanization is only one of many physical phenomena that might be occurring in any city at any given time. To examine what these different circumstances are, this section examines a generic city in a rather abstract manner. This section creates a scenario in which the generic city is sequentially presented with a series of choices. These choices are somewhat teleological in that they are designed to get to the point where the city has the option to undergo inner-city suburbanization or not. Other choices are not followed up as closely; they are presented as dead ends in the tree of choices, though in reality they are not.

This scenario is, of course, completely artificial. No real city is ever presented with the binary choices that the generic city has. In reality, the choices shown in the scenario are not really binary (nor are they necessarily choices), but can occur at many points along a broad range. For example, cities experience population change in many different ways. In this scenario, however, the generic city is presented with two options, to retain its population or to lose it. This degree of abstraction is necessary in order to cogently present the place of inner-city suburbanization within the spectrum of changes that real cities experience.

Nor do the types of choices shown below necessarily occur throughout a city at the same time. One part of a city might be growing while other parts decline. This is readily apparent when one compares downtowns to declining areas, or gentrifying neighborhoods to abandoned industrial districts. The land uses and physical patterns of cities are diverse and this is reflected in the kinds of changes
that occur in them. The choice tree shows only a highly simplified, abstracted version of these different types of changes.

The choice tree begins with a couple of assumptions. One is that the city being described is an older city which is already centralized. The timespan of the choices is irrelevant, although real cities have been undergoing this process since about 1950. The only thing that is critical is the sequence of the choices. Until one decision has been made the next cannot be. We can see that after five choices inner-city suburbanization is produced as one of the two outcomes. Each choice, and its consequence, is described after the diagram, and an attempt is made to illustrate each choice with an example.
Figure 2.15. The 'choice tree' above shows, in abstract form, the sequence of events necessary for inner-city suburbanization to occur. These events are represented as binary decisions made by a generic 'city' at bottom.
The first set of options that the generic city has is either to remain centralized, or decentralize. What do these choices mean? Centralization is described as having four variables, though it actually has countless more than that. These are the land area of the city; the density of population and housing in the city; the degree of automobile dependency in the city; and the degree of racial and/or ethnic segregation in the city. Manhattan is perhaps the epitome of centralization in the United States. It is a relatively small island, yet it houses almost two million people; the majority of its inhabitants do not own automobiles; and many, thought certainly not all, of them are ethnically and racially diverse, in part because of the variety of housing found in its neighborhoods.

If the generic city remains centralized, nothing happens. The conditions which held previously remain the same. In reality, no American city has remained completely centralized; Manhattan has a smaller population now than it did in 1910, before it was even completely developed. If the generic city decentralizes, many changes occur. First, the city expands in area as residents move outward to occupy additional land. Second, assuming that the new settlements are lower density and that the population which relocates is not completely replaced by immigration, then the city dedensifies overall. Third, if the previous two consequences hold true, automobile dependency will be increased, at least in the newer, lower-density areas of the city. Fourth, lower-density settlements allow for, though they do not guarantee, greater spatial separation between different cost housing and between different class and racial groups, if they choose to segregate. All four of these consequences can be seen to be true in a city like Detroit, which will be examined in detail in this dissertation.

As indicated above, the older neighborhoods in a decentralizing city have two options. One is to retain their level of population, either through increased immigration or through retention of their original one. In reality, this rarely happens. Decentralization is a powerful force that tends to draw population out
from all neighborhoods, and consequently the historic densities of these neighborhoods are generally not matched. Even the Upper East Side of New York, with far taller buildings today than it had in 1910, contains fewer people now than it did then (Demographia.com 2002). The second choice, to lose population, is far more common. The creation of new housing opportunities with additional amenities, often at a lower cost, at the city fringe leads to the depopulation of older neighborhoods. Even Cambridge, Massachusetts, a relatively desirable city, has a smaller population now than it did fifty years ago, and the Boston region has not decentralized as extensively as some other cities. More common are neighborhoods like Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine, a formerly dense neighborhood whose population is down about 70% from its historic high in 1930 (Scheer 2001).

Although many changes may occur in an older city neighborhood which is losing population, the choice tree shows only that change related to the generic city’s number of housing units. An older city neighborhood losing population can either to retain housing units in the face of this loss or lose them. In reality, both of these options often occur.* A city which retains its housing units may do so because there is enough demand for them to keep them occupied by other people. Or, in the absence of demand, the average vacancy rate of housing in the city could rise somewhat. Cities which lose housing units may do so in at least two different ways. They may lose them when two or more units are combined to create one unit. This uncrowding can happen in wealthy neighborhoods as single-family houses that have been subdivided into apartments are recombined to create a single housing unit. Cities may also lose housing units through destruction. If an empty housing unit is not combined with an existing one then it will remain empty. Empty units can be sealed up and maintained, but in reality they are often destroyed due to weathering and

* Sample data for the city of Boston which illustrates many of these options in a more concrete manner is included in Appendix B. Boston is a good sample city because it has experienced both growth and decline in different areas, and in different ways.
vandalism. They thus disappear from the city’s housing stock and leave behind a parcel of vacant land.

There two obvious options for vacant land older city neighborhoods: they can remain vacant or be redeveloped with new uses. Land can be left vacant because it has little value, or because its owner is holding it intentionally vacant for it to attain a higher value, and for other reasons as well. Many older cities have thousands of vacant parcels which were formerly occupied by housing that was lost. Vacant land may also be redeveloped for a variety of different purposes. It may not have a building built on it again but instead be intentionally transformed into public open space like a community garden; or it may be annexed to an adjoining house to become part of its yard. Vacant land may also be reused as the site for new buildings.

In reality, vacant land that is being redeveloped with new building can experience a series of changes related to different attributes like its land use, ownership, etc. The choice tree shows only those changes that are related to the unit density of the new development. One option is for the land to be redeveloped at a density that is equal to or higher than that of the housing which originally occupied the site. Residential buildings adjoining an office district, for example, may be destroyed so that office towers can be built on the site, or apartments may go up on land that once held single-family houses. This option would not intuitively seem to be a common occurrence on land that was first been abandoned due to a lack of demand, but it is conceivable. The second option is for land to be redeveloped at a lower density than that of the original housing. It is this option that provides the opportunity, though not the guarantee, for inner-city suburbanization.

We can thus hypothesize that inner-city suburbanization can occur under the following set of circumstances; an older city decentralizes; it loses population, then housing, in its older residential neighborhoods. That land becomes vacant
and is then redeveloped for new housing at lower densities than that of the original. Even under these circumstances, however, it is possible that the result will not be inner-city suburbanization. We will see in Chapter Four what the different outcomes of this chain of choices are in the case cities that are examined.

The next chapter will clarify the hypothesis for inner-city suburbanization by defining the terms that are necessary to investigate the prevalence of inner-city suburbanization in real cities. How do we define the constituent elements *inner city* and *suburb* of the term inner-city suburbanization? How do we define the term *inner-city suburbanization* itself, and which variables can we use to measure the degree to which inner-city suburbanization is occurring? Answering all of these questions is necessary in order to study the phenomenon of inner-city suburbanization further.
Chapter Three

The Nature of Inner-City Suburbanization

Introduction
This chapter establishes the means by which the phenomenon of inner-city suburbanization can be measured and therefore researched in actual cities. Although we have seen both anecdotal and hypothetical evidence for inner-city suburbanization in the two previous chapters, the extent of its prevalence remains to be demonstrated. This chapter provides the background for such an investigation by creating a qualitative and quantitative definition of inner-city suburbanization.

This chapter has four sections. The first two involve defining the constituent terms inner city and suburb. Both of these terms are broadly used, often without a clear definition. The study defines inner cities as census tracts within cities that have lost a certain amount of both population and housing units within a certain period of time. The term suburb is used even more broadly and is equally difficult to pin down. The study acknowledges that many types of neighborhoods could be called suburbs and defines suburbs according to the physical form which they took after the Second World War. The study labels neighborhoods which meet this definition as vernacular suburbs.

The third section of the chapter examines the New Urbanism design movement. New Urbanism is a hybrid architecture-physical planning philosophy, much like the earlier Modern movement. New Urbanism is in large part predicated on a rejection of both Modernist design as well as vernacular suburban physical design. Although it rejects vernacular suburban design, New Urbanism has become the first theoretical architectural movement to explicitly acknowledge the vernacular suburb. The study uses the neighborhood definition created by the
New Urbanists in order to create an equally clear definition of vernacular suburbia which has both quantitative and qualitative components.

The fourth section of this chapter combines the information from the above three to create a combined qualitative-quantitative definition of inner-city suburbanization. The study defines inner-city suburbanization as having seven components, five of which are quantitative and two of which are primarily qualitative. The quantitative components are the following: reductions in housing unit density and lot coverage; homogenization of land uses, building typologies, and tenure status. The qualitative components are neighborhood patterns which resemble those of vernacular suburbia and architecture whose site planning and style is similar to that of vernacular suburbia. This definition is subsequently applied to case developments in Chapter Four.

What is an inner city neighborhood?
The term ‘inner city’ has a single popular meaning which is comprised of two components. The first is spatial: as befits the word ‘inner’, inner cities are generally understood to be neighborhoods that are close to a city’s downtown. These neighborhoods are generally older and denser than other parts of the city. The second component is socioeconomic: inner cities are generally understood to be neighborhoods with severe social, economic, and physical problems. These components are closely associated and neither, if considered alone, appropriately defined what an inner city neighborhood is. In general, the socioeconomic component tends to predominate; thus neighborhoods which are close to downtown but are wealthy, like San Francisco’s Telegraph Hill, are not considered to be inner city neighborhoods. On the other hand, neighborhoods which are relatively far from downtown, like New York City’s South Bronx, but are very poor are generally thought of as inner city neighborhoods.

‘Inner cities’ may thus be thought of as urban neighborhoods which are generally, but not always, close to the urban core, but which always have higher than
average numbers of socioeconomic problems. The geographic connotation of the term 'inner city' is becoming increasingly historical as neighborhoods that are increasingly far from city centers begin to experience similar socioeconomic problems. Nevertheless, the widespread use of the term justifies its use as a convenient label for the kind of neighborhoods that the study will be examining.

Inner city neighborhoods have been variously, and loosely, defined in the literature. Many authors use the term 'inner city' synonymously with words like 'ghetto'. Where they have been defined, inner cities are generally demarcated by the economic status of their inhabitants rather than by their physical characteristics. Wilson (1987), for example, defined ghettos as 'poverty areas' where over 20 percent of residents were below the poverty line. Wilson uses the terms 'ghetto' and 'inner city' interchangeably. Jargowsky (1997) defined inner cities similarly. His careful study established what he called 'ghettos', 'barrios', 'white slums', and 'mixed slums' as neighborhoods with varying dominant racial characteristics, but which were all 'high-poverty', i.e. with over forty percent of their residents above the poverty line. Jargowsky's threshold was established by results of an earlier study which had made qualitative measurements of poor urban neighborhoods around the United States (Jargowsky and Bane 1991). The socioeconomic indicators used by these authors to define inner cities reflect their predominant academic affiliations in the realms of sociology and public policy, but they certainly do not preclude other ways of interpreting inner cities. Jargowsky emphasizes this through his reinforcing of his socioeconomic definition with qualitative physical indicators.

One might imagine that physical definitions of inner cities, ghettos, or however they might be termed might have been developed during the urban renewal era. This period, as we saw in the previous chapter, was the one during which urban redevelopment was primarily funded by the federal government under the provisions of the national Housing Act of 1949. Yet even this law, which provided for hundreds of millions of dollars to be spent clearing distressed neighborhoods,
did not provide a careful definition of the areas to be cleared, as Greer (1965) noted. Greer concluded that the terms ‘slum’ and ‘blight’ only “represented the parts of town that the observer finds distasteful... in different ways.” This subjectivity had already been made painfully clear by Jacobs (1961). For his purposes, Greer defined ‘slums’ only as “the poor housing in which live the poor members of society”, and ‘blight’ only as “land use(s) (which are) not as profitable as some alternative...”

Nevertheless, every community which wished to received urban renewal money was required to in some way designate those neighborhoods which it viewed as problematic. As described in Lindbloom and Farrah’s *Citizen’s Guide to Urban Renewal* (1968), any neighborhoods which contained two or more of the following “environmental deficiencies” was potentially eligible for clearance funding:

- “Overcrowding or improper location of structures on land”;
- “Excessive dwelling unit density”;
- “Incompatible types of uses”;
- “Obsolete building types”;
- “Detrimental land uses”;
- “Unsafe, congested, or poorly designed streets”;
- “Inadequate public utilities or community facilities”;
- “Other equally significant deficiencies”.

What is perhaps more impressive than the very attempt to define a vague concept such as blight is the fact that such an impressively funded program was dependent on such subjective variables. In practice, of course, the terms above were, as Greer hinted, applied only to those areas which city officials did not like.

Another, more recent effort to define a distressed neighborhood was made by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) when it developed the HOPE VI program to rehabilitate “severely distressed” public
housing. HUD’s definition, which applied only to public housing, included four sets of variables, two of which, “barriers to managing the environment”, and “physical deterioration of buildings”, reflected physical characteristics of public housing. While HUD’s definition was comprehensive, it was nonetheless criticized by Vale (1993), who argued that the thresholds created artificial barriers which inhibited addressing the problems of less ‘distressed’ housing projects.

Finally, inner cities have been defined most recently in a physical sense by Duany et. al. in their self-published Lexicon of the New Urbanism (2002). This publication, which will be referred to again below, provided a clear physical description of the ‘inner city’ which we will see was congruent with the case neighborhoods examined in Chapter Four. According to Duany et. al., inner cities were:

- medium-density, late 19th century neighborhood fabric, often composed of rectilinear street grids served by alleys. The buildings are often good-quality row houses or small-lot houses of 1870-1930 vintage... the inner city is vulnerable to, if not synonymous with, urban blight. The worst areas display widespread abandonment and brownfields, poverty rates of 40% or more, and hypersegregation of minorities.

The literature showed the term ‘inner city’ to be far from a scientific definition. Instead, it was a widely used term with a generally accepted, but unspecific and persistently subjective, meanings. This lack of a fixed definition led to different interpretations, different uses, and, in the case of the urban renewal program, serious problems. Despite these difficulties of subjectivity, for its purposes this study created a new definition of the term ‘inner city’. This was done not because the most recent commonly accepted sense of the term reflected in Wilson and Jargowsky was seen as inaccurate, but because a quantifiable measure was necessary in order to select case neighborhoods in which to study housing developments. Reflecting the common sense of the term inner city as having both geographic and socioeconomic attributes, my new definition had both physical and demographic components. I did not include socioeconomic
characteristics like a high percentage of residents in poverty and a high percentage of minority group members as part of this definition.

I therefore defined 'inner city neighborhoods' as \textit{those neighborhoods that had lost 20\% or more of both their housing and population during the period 1970-1990.} These inner city neighborhoods were labeled \textit{severely distressed}, mirroring the use of this term in the HOPE VI program to describe public housing.

This definition reflected my interest in researching the physical transformations of declining urban neighborhoods rather than reflecting an effort to provide an authoritative definition of the term 'inner city'. It did not establish that the neighborhoods which met the definition of 'inner city' as defined were matched by qualitative impressions of inner city neighborhoods. However, both of the two case neighborhoods examined in \textit{Chapter Five} were commonly acknowledged by interviewees to be what they considered inner city neighborhoods. The other components of this definition reflected what were considered to be reasonable thresholds. 20\% was considered a reasonably large degree of change for the period of twenty years being examined. 1970 was selected as a threshold because census-tract level data before that year was inconsistent due to large-scale redrawing of tract boundaries between 1960 and 1970. The 1970-1990 period also fortunately happened to be the period during which much urban decline occurred. 1990 was selected as an end threshold because the study wanted to examine recent change, i.e. change which had occurred since that date.

The research found inner cities to be a relative term. The neighborhoods that were found to be severely distressed in the two case cities were quite different physically, reflecting their different vernacular housing construction. They were also different geographically- some were much farther from the city center than others but they did share many socioeconomic characteristics. In general they were very poor, and the majority of their inhabitants were minority group
members. This dominance of the socioeconomic connotation was consistent with the qualitative sense of the meaning of ‘inner city’ that was discussed above.

What is a suburb?
Like the term ‘inner city’, the term ‘suburb’ has a common popular connotation but no strict definition. This term, and its cognates ‘suburbs’ and ‘suburbia’, has geographic, physical, social, and economic connotations. The geographic connotation of ‘suburb’ is perhaps most important, denoting an area located beyond the city limits. Suburbs are not ‘urban’, but neither are they ‘rural’- they are instead, for the most part, low-density carpet of residential, commercial, and even industrial areas located around cities. Many of the social, economic, physical connotations of suburbia are related to the residential portion of suburbia, which is the largest in area and also the most historic. However, most of the land uses found in cities can now also be found in suburbs.

Many of the scholars who have studied suburbia have concentrated on one or another of its aspects, leading to specialized definitions. The broadest definitions of suburbia came from urban historians. Jackson (1985), after reviewing the difficulty of defining the term ‘suburbs’, emphasized that nevertheless “one may ... generalize about the American residential experience.. similarities among American residential patterns are much more numerous than are differences...” Jackson defined suburbia as an area distinguished by four characteristics: non-farm homeownership residential; middle- and upper-class residents; separation from the workplace (i.e. the center city); and low densities (relative to the center city). Jackson’s definition neatly included geographic, social, economic, and physical elements. While broad, Jackson’s definition still had limitations. Non-residential components of suburbia were omitted from his definition, despite the fact that commercial and industrial functions are also widespread in the suburbs (Rowe 1991, Garreau 1991). Jackson also emphasized the single-family, homeownership component of suburbia at the expense of other forms of housing arrangements. While the majority of residences in the suburbs are indeed single-
family houses owned by their residents, suburbs also contain many rental apartments and other types of ownership units like condominium townhouses. Finally, Jackson’s sociological definition of suburbia as a place for upper- and middle-class residents was somewhat inaccurate. Many suburbs, for example those of Atlanta, now serve as gateways for poor immigrant families, a function which was once performed by urban neighborhoods alone.

Fishman (1987) fundamentally agreed with Jackson by defining the suburb as “a residential community beyond the core of a large city”. Fishman emphasized that suburbs remained culturally dependent on the central city, and that they shared a common physical form: “a distinctive low-density environment defined by the primary of the single-family house set in the greenery of an open, parklike setting.” While the components of Fishman’s definition are certainly to be found in existing suburbs, his definition shared some of the limitations of Jackson’s. Many suburbs are no longer dependent on their central cities for most functions. In sprawling cities like Phoenix or in declining cities like Detroit few traditionally ‘central-city’ functions remain downtown. Even thriving cities like Boston have experienced a steady decline in the center city’s percentage share of the office market and residential population. Fishman correctly, however, emphasized the single-family house as a powerful imagistic component of suburbia. The single-family house is not only statistically significant as comprising a major proportion of suburban dwellings, but has powerful symbolic importance as well. The single-family house sitting in a green lawn has as much, or more, iconic power than its geographic setting amidst highways and shopping malls. Stilgoe (1988), studying the origins of the American suburb, agreed with Jackson and Fishman in emphasizing the importance of suburbia’s visual appearance in establishing its image. According to Stilgoe, suburbia is difficult to tabulate but is nevertheless instantly recognizable.

The broad definitions of suburbia created by urban historians was useful in providing a basis for a historical examination of suburbanization, but did not
provide grounds for a physical definition of a suburb. In order to do that, the
temporal location of suburbia needed to be clarified. As American cities have
been suburbanizing since the nineteenth century, many different neighborhoods,
at different points, have been considered suburbs. Some of the different forms of
these suburbs were discussed previously in Chapter Two. Because of the long
time period during which suburbs developed, one can distinguish between
several different types of suburbs. Below are five types of suburbs which I loosely
derived from historical data.

*Early suburbs.* These were the first suburbs to form around American cities. They
were little different in density and form from their center cities and most were
politically annexed during the nineteenth century. They were common around
1830. Examples: Brooklyn Heights, New York; Northern Liberties, Philadelphia.

*Railroad suburbs.* These suburbs formed because of the invention of the steam
railroad around 1840. They were accessed by railroad. They were often socially
exclusive and lower density than their center cities. They were sometimes but not
always different in neighborhood form from center cities. Many of these suburbs
remained politically separate from their center cities. They were common around
1870. Examples: Chestnut Hill (later incorporated into Philadelphia); Riverside,
Chicago; Glendale, Cincinnati.

*Streetcar suburbs.* These suburbs democratized the suburban concept because
they were accessed by relatively cheap horsecar and electric streetcars. They
were working, middle, or upper-class and were somewhat lower density than
their center cities. They were somewhat more linear in their neighborhood form
but usually reflecte a similar grid pattern to their cities of origin. Some of these
suburbs remained separate from their center cities while others occurred within
the city or were annexed to it. They were common around 1910. Examples:
Somerville, Boston; West Philadelphia, Philadelphia; Shaker Heights, Cleveland.
Early automobile suburbs. These suburbs reflected the increasing popularity of the automobile and were primarily accessed via auto. They were generally middle-class and were lower density than their center cities. They were sometimes but not always different in their neighborhood form from the center city. Many of these suburbs remained separate from their center cities. They were common around 1930. Examples: Grosse Pointe, Detroit; Mariemont, Cincinnati, Palos Verdes, Los Angeles.

Postwar suburbs. These suburbs reflected the large-scale societal move out of cities and were thus very numerous. They were middle-class or exclusive and were almost exclusively accessed by auto. They were lower-density than their central city. Most of these suburbs remained separate from their center cities, especially in older, ‘inelastic’ cities (Rusk 1995). They were common around 1960. Examples: Southfield, Detroit; Framingham, Boston; Bethesda, Washington.

The postwar suburb, through its ubiquitousness, has become that category of suburb which we most commonly associate with the term. Postwar suburbs, however, are themselves diverse environments. Southworth and Owens (1993) described several variations of postwar suburban development form at the level of both the community and the neighborhood. At the community level Southworth and Owens described street patterns that they called “interrupted parallels”, “loops and lollipops”, and “incremental infill”. Southworth and Owens’ terms were among the first to attempt to create a typological classification of postwar suburbia, and their article confirmed what was already an anecdotal certainty: that postwar suburbia had a particular, and unique, neighborhood form. Perhaps their most important finding, however, was that postwar suburbia, despite its seemingly monotonous nature, was far from physically or temporally homogenous. Large areas of land take a long time to develop, and rural land was often extensively developed with roads before the postwar suburban period arrived. The result for many localities was a patchwork of development types,
united in their low densities and automobile dependency, but diverse in their ages and formal natures.

Much like the biological concept of the species, the categories of suburbs distinguished above were not hard and fast- they blurred together at their edges. This made it difficult to establish a definition of the suburb that included every component. Political separation, for example, was often inaccurate, especially in fast-growing cities of the Sunbelt where political annexation remained commonplace. Cities like Houston, which still have undeveloped land at their edges, were almost completely composed of suburbs of the different types above within a single political jurisdiction. Very old cities like Boston, on the other hand, had communities at their edges which have gone through all of the above phases. Brookline, a town outside of Boston, has been a railroad, a streetcar, and an early automobile suburb at least. It would have been and perhaps meaningless to try to force it into any one category.

It was thus something of a relief to escape from this definitional nightmare into an examination of the physical nature of suburbia. Irrespective of its exact nature, suburbs, especially postwar suburbs, had a distinctive physical form which was unmistakably ‘suburban’. I used this form of suburbia as the benchmark for what I considered ‘suburban’. The postwar suburb was also a particularly accurate form of suburb with which to measure inner-city suburbia because inner-city suburbs were recent forms of development, arriving in the era of the automobile suburb. Charlotte Gardens, perhaps the earliest inner-city suburb, was only constructed in 1985.

In order to construct a physical definition of the suburb I closely examined the phenomenon of New Urbanism. This highly organized design movement provided the means to construct a definition of vernacular suburbia that was then applied to the inner-city developments studied in *Chapter Four.*
The New Urbanism
Architects have for the most part ignored suburbia. This is primarily because the
development of suburbia has been for the most part a vernacular movement.
Although some early picturesque suburbs were designed by landscape
architects, much of the neighborhood design of postwar suburbia was the result
of generalized street standards rather than careful design (Southworth and Ben-
Joseph 1997). The architectural design of early postwar suburbs like Levittown
was more the result of construction efficiency than architectural design. The
result was a landscape that, at least to the upper echelons of the design
profession, displayed very little of interest. These esthetic concerns resulted in
the disappearance of suburbia from the architectural agenda (Dunham-Jones
2000).

Widely constructed but minimally influenced by architectural theory, suburbia
became by far the largest vernacular building movement in the country. Although
previous writers like J.B. Jackson (1997) and Gans (1967) had begun to explore
the meanings and resident perceptions of vernacular suburban environments as
early as the 1950s, Robert Venturi (1972) was the first well-known architect to
advocate the acceptance, and even the embracing, of vernacular, automobile-
oriented architecture. His Learning from Las Vegas, written in 1972 after a studio
project there, was a paean to the commercialization and messiness of the
suburban retail strip. Although Venturi’s fetishization of roadside signage never
captured the attention of architectural theorists, the acknowledgement that
suburban landscapes were an exciting and integral part of the built environment
was nevertheless an important contribution.

Venturi’s architecture was one of the first stirrings of what would become known
as the postmodern movement in architecture. Postmodernists rejected the
antihistorical nature of modernism, promoting instead the application of
contextual and historicist elements to buildings (Jencks 1987). Although the
postmodernist movement, too, would fall prey to the changing fashions of
architecture, an offshoot of this movement which would become known as the New Urbanism would survive, in part because it transcended architectural style to encompass elements of not only other professions like urban planning and transportation engineering, but environments like the vernacular suburb that theoretical architects had essentially left for dead.

The earliest promoters of what would become known in the 1990s as the ‘New Urbanism’ were the husband-and-wife team of Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. These Miami architects gained initial fame with their design for Seaside, a small resort town on Florida’s Gulf Coast, in the early 1980s (Duany 1991). While Seaside was tiny and would not be completed for years, it quickly became influential in academia while slowly becoming more influential in practice.

What Duany and Plater-Zyberk called the New Urbanism constituted a rejection of the neighborhood form and architecture of suburbia. The New Urbanists claimed that the suburban built landscape was bad for a variety of different reasons and that the solution was essentially to return to the form of the prewar automobile suburb. This, claimed the New Urbanists, would both restore a sense of community that was missing in postwar suburbs as well as alleviate their visual blight. It would also, they claimed, open the door for the restoration of mass transit by reducing automobile dependency. (For studies of individual New Urbanist projects, see Katz 1994, Dutton 2000, and Lyndon 2000.)

Although New Urbanism began with the proposition of static models for good neighborhood form (such as Seaside) the movement has grown larger and more flexible over time, encompassing political and economic attributes as well as multiple scales of physical design. Most recently (2002) Andres Duany has begun promoting the idea of what he calls a transect, a term borrowed from ecology, which describes an ideal ‘cut’ across multiple environments from rural to urban. In doing so, Duany is proposing that New Urbanism, rather than being a
development form which is appropriate only for small towns or neighborhoods, is in fact appropriate for all levels of development, from rural “preserves” to “urban cores”. The transect is a questionable concept on at least two counts. In the first place, it is not necessarily consistent with other forms of New Urbanism. The existence of low-density residential developments within the transect raises the question of how “New Urban” these districts can really be. Second, the transect proposes an ideal density gradient which is very far from reflecting reality. Edge cities, for example, are density nodes located somewhere in Duany’s “sub-urban” category, but which are both higher in density and larger in size than what Duany shows. And, as we will see, the increasingly low densities of many inner city areas are not shown in the transect. Inner-city suburbanization, as a whole, is a concept inconsistent with the transect notion.

Figure 3.1. The ‘transect’ proposed by Andres Duany in the Lexicon of the New Urbanism (2002) proposes ideals for a complete spectrum of development from dense, mixed use urban centers to protected rural preserves. It excludes increasingly common features of metropolitan areas like edge cities and, as this dissertation shows, inner-city suburbanization.

New Urbanism has also expanded its institutional status, attempting to become, like the Modern movement before it, a ubiquitous force in American planning and architecture. Organizations and conferences have grown up dedicated to the movement (see Leccese and McCormick 2000) and increasing numbers of
developers are also paying attention to the fact that New Urbanist developments seem to sell. New Urbanism, as we will see, played a role in many of the development stories examined in Chapter Five. New Urbanism has, of course, spawned much debate. Many builders claim that Americans want suburbs, not New Urbanist developments. Others claim that the New Urbanism is simply another version of the suburb. Others criticize the often historicist architectural design of New Urbanist developments as being dishonest.

While it is beyond the scope of this study to come to a comprehensive assessment of the New Urbanism, it is clear the movement has made important contributions to the study of suburbia’s physical form through its carefully laid-out proposition of a design alternative to what Duany et. al. (2002) called “conventional suburban development”. Below are listed several of the design components of the New Urbanism, as defined in Duany et. al. (2000). These components range from large-scale features such as mixed land uses, to smaller neighborhood design features such as narrow streets. The importance of these terms in establishing a definition of what I call vernacular suburbia and consequently of inner-city suburbanization will be discussed subsequently.

**Design features of the New Urbanism**

- **Mixed uses**
  
  Commercial and residential areas should be balanced to reduce the distance between housing and shopping/jobs. This includes placing community facilities like schools, houses of worship, and public buildings in close proximity to residences.

- **Connectivity**
  
  Residential neighborhoods should maximize their connection to compatible land uses through roads and pedestrian networks. Streets may curve, but they may not curve randomly and cul-de-sacs are avoided if possible.
- **Site design sensitivity**
  Natural features such as hillsides, vegetation, and waterways should be emphasized rather than obliterated by new development.

- **Neighborhood hierarchy**
  Neighborhoods should include density and land use gradients as one moves through a neighborhood. Duany (2002) calls this hierarchy a ‘transect’ and has described it as a gradient from dense urban space to rural space.

- **Transit orientation**
  Neighborhoods should be designed so as to permit and encourage the development of mass transit systems, even if such systems are not implemented when a neighborhood is constructed.

- **Narrow streets**
  Streets should be designed for pedestrians rather than automobiles and excessive widths should therefore be discouraged, as overly wide streets encourage speeding and are more dangerous for pedestrians.

- **Traditional architectural design**
  Buildings should maintain traditional site planning and architectural features, including relatively high densities, streetfront, pedestrian orientations, and ancillary uses.

- **Hidden parking**
  Parking should not be placed at the front of buildings, either commercial or residential, but should be placed in the back, either in mid-block parking lots or in alleyways.
The contrast between New Urbanist design features and those of typical suburbia can be seen in Figure 3.2 below, which shows both neighborhoods together. The New Urbanist neighborhood is on the bottom half of the diagram.

Figure 3.2. A new urbanist neighborhood (bottom) is shown in contrast with a vernacular suburban neighborhood (top). Note the disconnectedness and segregation of uses of the vernacular neighborhood.

The design features of New Urbanism can be clearly seen in those New Urbanist developments which have been constructed. The photographs on the next page show aerial views of two well-known New Urbanist developments in Seaside, Florida, and Kentlands, Maryland. Both of these developments were designed by the firm of Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Company. Both have been substantially completed are considered to be paradigmatic New Urbanist developments (Southworth 1997).
These photographs show some of the primary design features of the New Urbanism. In both neighborhoods, small retail and commercial uses are located amidst residential uses. Radial street networks lead from neighborhood centers into residential areas, and although there are loop streets, there are no cul-de-sacs. It is difficult to discern the site design sensitivity of the developments from this scale, but some natural features like woods clearly remain. Both neighborhoods have also established a hierarchy of densities. At Kentlands one can see apartment blocks, dense single-family housing, and more spacious single-family housing spreading away from the village centers. These village centers would be good locations for transit stops, although none have yet been established. Although it is difficult to discern in the photographs, both developments have narrower streets than surrounding communities. While parking is provided for all uses, it is nowhere formally dominant. Finally, the architecture of these communities is modelled after local historical models, as can be seen in the photographs below. Note the site planning of the Kentlands housing, where houses are arranged in a manner which is more typical of an urban setting than a suburban one.
The design features described by the New Urbanists, predicated as they are in a rejection of postwar suburbia, can be easily transformed to create a definition of postwar suburbia as careful as that created by the New Urbanists. It is this second definition that creates what I call vernacular suburbia. Like the New Urbanism, this definition is comprised of physical elements only, although we have seen that there are many social and economic connotations to suburbia as well. Although postwar suburbs are diverse, the definition created below encompasses the physical features of most of them.

Design features of vernacular suburbia

- **Single-use developments**
  Residential, commercial, and industrial uses are constructed in separate, homogenous developments, and different types of uses within a land use category, such as single-family and multifamily, or retail and office, are also constructed in separate and homogeneous developments.

- **Disconnected developments**
  Residential, commercial, and industrial uses are physically separated and are generally mutually accessible only by automobile. Different types of land uses within a land use type are also separated and generally mutually inaccessible.
by pedestrians. Within developments, through traffic is discouraged in the form of curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs.

- **Insensitivity to the natural landscape**
  Natural features such as hills, watercourses, and vegetation are often ignored and destroyed through the development of vernacular suburban development.

- **Lack of neighborhood hierarchy**
  Similar land uses and housing unit densities extend across multiple developments, creating homogenous areas which end abruptly at unsettled land or at other land uses.

- **Automobile orientation**
  Developments are designed to be accessible by automobile alone and are not necessarily oriented pedestrian access or toward the development of mass transit networks.

- **Wide streets**
  Streets are correspondingly designed to ease automobile and other motor vehicle access and are not designed for ease of pedestrian crossing or pedestrian comfort in general.

- **Seemingly unregulated architectural design**
  Architectural design may be of any style and is not necessarily pedestrian-oriented.

- **Parking in front**
  Parking is a prioritized use of space in the front of a house or a building, either as a one-, two-, or three-car garage, or as a parking lot of any size.
The two photographs below show two examples of typical vernacular suburbia—one outside of Detroit, Michigan, the other outside of Orlando, Florida. Note that these suburban areas are very much mixed-use, containing both residential and commercial uses.

Figures 3.7 and 3.8. Vernacular suburbs contain diverse land uses, but they are segregated by wide roads and acres of parking. They are overwhelmingly automobile-dominated environments. At left is Troy, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit; at right is suburban Orlando, Florida. Both photographs copyright Mapquest.com.

These vernacular suburbs, both created since 1990, have different land uses neatly segregated by parcel. Both are what Garreau (1991) referred to as edge cities. Apartment complexes, offices, shopping malls, and single-family housing are all located in their own areas. A lack of hierarchy among uses is evident with each use extending homogeneously across the site until it ends abruptly and another use begins. Different uses are connected only by major roads and are otherwise isolated. Wide arterial roads and large areas of surface parking reflect the overwhelmingly automobile orientation of these areas. Neither streets nor buildings have been laid out as part of an overall plan. Buildings consequently bear little relationship to the road or to each other.

The majority of vernacular suburbia is residential. Both photographs above show multi-family housing located near offices and retail. These are, however,
relatively concentrated areas. Other parts of vernacular suburbia are much lower density and display the familiar curving roads and cul-de-sacs of the residential landscape. Figures 3.9 and 3.10 show typical examples of this residential landscape from the air and on the ground.

Figures 3.9 and 3.10. The neighborhood design of postwar residential vernacular suburbia is characterized by curving loop roads and cul-de-sacs. Houses are often quite large with variable yards. The photograph at left shows a development in West Bloomfield outside of Detroit; the photograph at right shows a house in a development in North Andover, Massachusetts. Both developments were constructed after 1990. Photograph at left copyright Mapquest.com.

These photos show many of the site planning features typical of vernacular residential suburbia. The developments shown have only one land use, single-family houses. They are connected to neighboring roads via only a few curving streets. Most roads are curving cul-de-sacs. Construction of the development has removed essentially all of the original forest and little natural context remains. There is no hierarchy of land uses visible either in either photograph- both are a continuous carpet of single-family houses. Access to these neighborhoods is by automobile alone, and long driveways, reflect the prominently located garages at the front of houses. Both of the developments shown above are higher-end developments where houses sell in the neighborhood of $400,000 to $500,000. The value of these suburbs is reflected in their large houses rather than large lots- as we saw, lot sizes have been steadily decreasing in suburbia. The
architectural style of the houses in North Andover could best be described as Colonial Revival.

The above definition of vernacular suburbia provides a language with which the phenomenon of inner-city suburbanization can also be defined. The major difference between the two phenomena is that one is essentially an object (vernacular suburbia) while the other is a process (inner-city suburbanization). Why the difference?

Inner-city suburbanization is defined as a process rather than as an object because it is occurring in many different types of urban environments. This will be seen most clearly when we examine the case cities and developments but a hint of it can be seen in the two photographs below, which show typical residential neighborhoods in Philadelphia and Detroit.

Figures 3.11 and 3.12. Typical Detroit neighborhood houses (left) are freestanding and built in a variety of styles, in this case bungalows. Typical Philadelphia houses (right) are attached and almost always built of brick, with relatively flat roofs. Photograph on right by Daniel Campo.

These photographs show very different types of urban housing. Philadelphia's is row housing, built end-to-end with no side or front yards. Row housing is high density, with up to 50 units per acre. Detroit's housing, on the other hand, is detached. Although some of the houses are two-family homes, the density of this neighborhood is much lower, about 12 units per acre.
Although both of these neighborhoods would be considered ‘urban’ in their own contexts, placed in each other’s contexts their impressions would be very different. In a Philadelphia environment, Detroit housing would seem to be very much out of place, and quite low density. To the casual passerby it would seem reminiscent of the outer edges of Philadelphia or even the suburbs, rather than of a typical Philadelphia neighborhood. Yet in Detroit, this same housing would seem unbelievably dense.

We can now see why inner-city suburbanization is better considered as a relative process rather than as an absolute neighborhood or housing form. A Philadelphia neighborhood that was rebuilt at half its original density would still be twice as dense as an urban neighborhood in Detroit. A Detroit neighborhood rebuilt at half its original density, on the other hand, would become less dense than Levittown, a typical postwar vernacular suburb. Does this mean that the rebuilding of one neighborhood constitutes suburbanization and the other does not?

This study argues that it does not, and that the experience of the same types changes in different urban environments, so long as they are beyond a level which remains to be determined, constitutes inner-city suburbanization. With this in mind, we can examine the seven constituent changes that are proposed to measure the phenomenon. The quantitative changes are relative; the qualitative changes are absolute. The quantitative changes measure shifts from a historic neighborhood pattern to a redeveloped one. The qualitative changes describe the degree to which the new neighborhood patterns are visually suggestive of those of vernacular suburbia as described above. The quantitative changes are the following: the degree of reduction in housing unit density; the homogenization of land use mix; the homogenization of building typology; and the homogenization of property tenure status, and the degree of reduction in lot coverage. The qualitative changes are the following: the presence of vernacular suburban neighborhood design patterns; and the presence of vernacular suburban architectural styles. Each of these characteristics is described below.
Seven characteristics of inner city suburbanization

1) Large reductions in housing unit density
The reduction in the number of housing units per acre of new inner-city residential developments from that of historic housing.

Most new inner city residential developments are significantly less dense than the historic housing (that which formerly stood on the site.) Charlotte Gardens in the South Bronx represents an extreme case of dedensification (it is measured later in this chapter).

2) Homogenization of building typology
The degree to which the building typology of new inner-city housing developments is more homogeneous than that of the historic housing.

Vernacular suburban neighborhoods are generally composed entirely of one type of development. Residential suburban neighborhoods are generally entirely single-family homes, multifamily apartments, attached condominiums, etc. Urban neighborhoods, in contrast, are often a mix of apartments, rowhouses, two-family, and single-family houses.

3) Homogenization of tenure status
The degree to which the property tenure (homeownership or rental) of new inner-city housing developments is more homogenous than of the historic housing.

Property tenure types are usually segregated in vernacular suburban neighborhoods. Single-family housing developments are often entirely owner-occupied, apartments are often entirely rental, etc. In contrast, urban neighborhoods often contain a mix of rental, ownership, and sometimes cooperative units, sometimes even within the same building.
4) Homogenization of land use mix
The degree to the land use mix of new inner-city housing developments is more homogeneous than that of the historic neighborhood.

Vernacular suburbs are characterized by a segregated mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses, whereas urban neighborhoods are often a mix of these uses. Commercial and residential uses are often found in one building in urban areas, with, for example, apartments located over stores. This is almost never the case in vernacular suburban neighborhoods.

5) Change in street designs
The degree to which new street networks in inner city developments resemble the wide, curvilinear, streets of vernacular suburbia.

Suburban streets are characterized by wide, curvilinear residential streets, cul-de-sacs, and other features (Southworth and Owens 1993). These street layouts symbolize the bucolic, antiurban nature of the suburban landscape. Urban street grids are traditionally rectilinear grids, although there are both multiple variations of this form and multiple exceptions to it.

6) Suburban site planning
The degree to which the lot coverage (percentage of a building lot is less than that of the historic housing.

Vernacular suburban residential neighborhoods are generally characterized by buildings standing in yards. The size of houses and lots, and their ratio, varies somewhat by the socioeconomic status of the development. Duany et. al. (2002) described a spectrum of densities, where suburban houses surrounded by yards on all four sides are defined as ‘edge yard’ dwellings. Denser, more urban houses built up to at least one side lot line are defined as ‘side yard’ dwellings, where yards are located along only one side of a house, and houses attached on
both sized are called ‘rear yard’ dwellings (i.e. rowhouses). Many older houses in Detroit re edge yard types, and the rowhouses of Philadelphia are of course rear yard types. Postwar suburban houses, or apartments, of course, are almost always of the ‘edge yard’ type.

7) Suburban architecture
The degree to which new inner-city housing is designed in a vernacular suburban architectural style.

Suburban architectural typologies differ greatly from older urban architectural typologies. Although these styles have changed over time, there are distinct stylistic differences between, say, a late nineteenth-century rowhouse and a modern suburban tract home. These differences are tied to materials, fenestration, and architectural features like gables, bay windows, etc.

Each of these seven variables can be applied to any new housing development, whether it is in an inner city or not, as long as the development replaced a former dwelling and/or neighborhood. They would be inapplicable in a suburban development that was constructed on land that was formerly agricultural or otherwise undeveloped. Together, they provide a combined quantitative and qualitative indication of the degree of inner-city suburbanization.

Once a development has been measured, how can its degree of inner-city suburbanization be compared with those of other developments? To do this the study constructed an index of inner-city suburbanization. The index is simply the sum of the five quantitative indicators for a development. Each is assigned equal value, with a maximum of one. The neighborhood design variable is also crudely qualified, as will be explained below. The maximum score for any development would therefore be six. Since each indicator is a rate of change, negative scores are also possible. This would be the case for a development that was urbanizing rather than suburbanizing. The qualitative architecture variable is not part of the
suburbanization score, reflecting the fact that inner-city suburbanization, like any type of physical change in cities that involves design, is in part a qualitative phenomenon.

The inner-city suburbanization index
The formula for the inner-city suburbanization score is the following:

\[ \Sigma (S) \]

where \( S = \text{percent value of a characteristic} / 100 \)

The highest possible suburbanization index is 6.

A sample suburbanization index calculated for Charlotte Gardens follows. A sample block bounded by Charlotte Street, Boston Avenue, 172nd Street, and Seabury Place was used for the calculation. Formulas are given below the characteristic.

1. Reduction in housing unit density 98%

\[ 100 - \left( \frac{\text{New Housing Units/acre}}{\text{Old Housing Units/acre}} \right) \times 100 \]

New HU/acre = 6.76
Old HU/acre = 287.5
Charlotte Gardens’s density is far less dense than the historic development, giving about as close to a full dedensification score as can be imagined.

2. Homogenization of building typology 0%

\( \frac{\% \text{New Housing Type} - \% \text{Old Housing Type}}{\% \text{Old Housing Type}} \)

New HT = 100% units in single-family homes
Old HT = 100% units in multifamily buildings
Although the redeveloped Charlotte Gardens was homogenous, the historic sample block was also homogenously built up with multifamily tenements. On this count the development thus scored zero.

3. Homogenization of property tenure status 0%
New TS = 100% homeownership
Old TS = 100% rental

Although the historic Charlotte Gardens neighborhood was completely rental tenements before redevelopment, rental status alone does not communicate ‘suburban’. The homogenous nature of the sample block both before and after redevelopment means that its score on this count was zero.

4. Homogenization of land use mix 0.12%

-New mixed-use - %Old mixed-use
New mixed-use = 0%
Old mixed-use = 12%

The sample Charlotte Gardens block was almost entirely residential before redevelopment, and completely residential afterwards. Its score is thus low.

5. Shifts to suburban street pattern 0%

- %New street pattern
This measurement has only five percentage values: 0, 25, 50, 75, or 100.
0 reflects no change in the street design of the development.
25 reflects the removal of all alleys.
50 reflects the removal of all alleys and moderate changes to through streets.
75 reflects the removal of all alleys and substantial changes to through streets.
100 reflects a complete alteration of the street system.
Charlotte Gardens, though it radically rebuilt the neighborhood, did not alter the existing street system. Even the name ‘Suburban Place’, shown in the cover photograph, preceded the development!

6. Shift to suburban site planning 70%

Lot coverage is used as the variable to indicate a shift to a lower-density living pattern.

100- [(New lot coverage/Old LC) * 100]
New LC = 19.2%
Old LC = 63.7%
The single-family ranch houses of Charlotte Gardens covered far less land than the dense historic tenements, giving a high site planning score.

7. Degree of suburban architecture N.A.
This is a qualitative variable and can only be discussed, not measured, though the radical typological differences between the new and historic architecture of Charlotte Gardens clearly indicate a shift from ‘urban’ tenements toward ‘suburban’ single-family housing.

The six $S$ values for Charlotte Gardens are 0.98, 0.0, 0.0, 0.12, 0.0, and 0.7. The sum of these $S$ values, and therefore the suburbanization index for this development, is 1.8 out of a possible 6. Somewhat surprisingly, despite its obviously suburban appearance, and despite the dense, obviously urban nature of the historical neighborhood, the suburbanization index of Charlotte Gardens is rather low, indicating that the index may have some limitations. These limitations will be discussed in the following chapter.

The suburbanization index is, of course, merely an abstraction. It does, however, provide a convenient, though incomplete, means of quickly comparing the difference between the environments created by new and old housing developments. Of course, this index can be applied to any situation where redevelopment has occurred. Urban growth could be measured as well as inner-city suburbanization.

The definition of terms laid out in this chapter provides the means with which to both determine and measure the case neighborhoods and developments that will be examined in Chapter Four. This Chapter also describes a methodology for selecting the two case cities of Detroit and Philadelphia. By the end of Chapter
Four, a portrait will have been created of the prevalence of inner-city suburbanization in those two cities.
Chapter Four

The Prevalence of Inner City Suburbanization

Introduction
The previous three chapters described the inspiration and aims of this dissertation, the historical contrast of recent inner-city and suburban development in America, and a definition of the term inner-city suburbanization, as well as an explanation of how that term would be measured. The next three chapters constitute the core of this dissertation and are intended to address the three research questions framed in Chapter One. Chapter Four addresses the question of where, and to what extent, inner city suburbanization is occurring in the two case cities of Detroit and Philadelphia. Chapter Five investigates the reasons for the suburbanization phenomenon occurring in those cities. Finally, Chapter Six makes the triple inquiry of whether or not the inner-city suburbanization phenomenon is really significant; how it should be evaluated by architects, planners, and urban designers, and finally, how these evaluations might guide future design and policy action in America’s inner cities.

This rather lengthy chapter describes the nature and extent of inner city suburbanization in Detroit and Philadelphia in four sections. Section One describes the methodology for the study’s selection of case cities and neighborhoods to be examined. In Section Two the study examines population and housing shifts within the two case cities in order to select the case neighborhoods to be examined. Sections Three and Four examine development trends within the city of Detroit and Philadelphia from 1990 to the present (2002), and apply the suburbanization criteria described in Chapter Three to measure the prevalence of inner-city suburbanization in both cities. The chapter concludes by comparing the inner-city suburbanization phenomenon in the two case cities, setting the stage for Chapter Five's investigation of the causality of inner-city suburbanization through the examination of case developments.
Population and housing change in large American cities

This section provides a methodology for the selection of case cities and neighborhoods by examining population and housing change in America's largest cities. As was described in 'a hypothesis for inner-city suburbanization' in Chapter Two, large declining cities, and the distressed neighborhoods within those cities, have the most potential to be the locations for inner-city suburbanization. This section therefore examines the universe of large American cities in order to select two which have lost significant amounts of both population and housing.

American cities are dynamic environments whose numbers and mix of population and housing are constantly shifting. The change experienced by cities is only a piece of the larger portrait of social, economic, and physical change occurring in their metropolitan areas, and at a greater scale, in the United States as a whole. The types of change occurring in cities is at first overwhelming, threatening to make any analysis of change difficult. Different parts of a city may be simultaneously growing, shrinking, changing in social composition, or remaining static. The complexity of change in cities makes it difficult to reduce these myriad events to a single conceptualizable portrait. People nevertheless create such simplified portraits of cities, perhaps due to some human desire to be able to grasp even the most complex of events. These simplifications are widespread in the popular press and in common parlance. One such simplification is the conception that a city is declining, 'on the way down'. Conversely, a city may be widely perceived as rebounding, or 'on the way back'. While these conceptions can be linked to quantifiable events, they are not necessarily closely so. We may find proclamations of urban rebirth in cities which are steeply declining statistically, or proclamations of urban distress where many indicators show a healthy city. Such simplified conceptions of cities' well-being are mirrored in popular conceptions of other large, complex entities, such as the state of the national economy.
While it is easy to discount popular conceptions of cities as oversimplifications, these images are powerful and often have a wider influence than statistical facts. Cities that can do little about negative statistical indicators can undertake other actions to alter their popular perception, creating a new image out of the ruins of an old one (Vale and Warner 2001). Cities such as Baltimore and Cleveland have been notably successful in improving their popular images in the face of statistical decline, mainly through large, charismatic downtown redevelopment projects (Burgess et. al. 2001). Many authors have contributed to this reductivist formula for urban analysis. The plethora of recent works proclaiming urban rebirth can be though of as part of this school (see Gratz and Mintz 1998, Hudnut 1998, and Grogan and Proscio 2000 among others). In similar fashion, a ‘decline school’ in the 1960s and 1970s warned of the large-scale decline of cities (Gottehrer 1965 and Bradbury et. al. 1982 are typical examples). In contrast to the reductivist school, only a few authors, such as Beauregard 1993, have cautioned against creating singular portraits of trends such as decline or rebirth in cities.

Nevertheless, this study operated on the premise that urban change was quantifiable. This aim of this section was not to create a unitary portrait of urban change, but to show changes in two specific variables- population and housing change- in large American cities. This data demonstrated that population loss was a major theme in large American cities, especially among those that experienced significant growth before 1950 ('older cities'). While many older cities lost population, far fewer experienced similar significant losses in housing. As indicated in Chapter Three, I combined these two variables to those cities that sustained significant losses in both as ‘severely distressed’, a term I considered to be synonymous for my purposes with the term ‘inner city’. As we will see, population loss alone was insufficient to describe those cities and neighborhoods which were potential locations for inner city suburbanization.
The table below shows population figures for the 20 largest American cities in the years 1950, 1980, 1990, and 2000. These figures are centered around the top 20 1980 cities in order to show how cities moved in and out of this range. Cities that moved into the top 20 cities from 1950 to 1980 are shaded gray in the 1950 range, while cities that sustained a net population loss over the entire period are shaded gray in the ‘change’ field.

Table 4.1. Population figures for the 20 largest American cities 1950-2000, ranked by 1980 order
Source: United States decennial census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>7,891,957</td>
<td>7,071,639</td>
<td>7,322,564</td>
<td>8,008,278</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>3,620,962</td>
<td>3,005,072</td>
<td>2,783,276</td>
<td>2,896,016</td>
<td>-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>1,970,358</td>
<td>2,966,850</td>
<td>3,485,398</td>
<td>3,694,820</td>
<td>+88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>2,071,605</td>
<td>1,688,210</td>
<td>1,585,577</td>
<td>1,517,550</td>
<td>-27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>596,163</td>
<td>1,595,138</td>
<td>1,630,553</td>
<td>1,953,631</td>
<td>+227%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>1,849,568</td>
<td>1,203,339</td>
<td>1,027,974</td>
<td>951,270</td>
<td>-51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>434,482</td>
<td>904,078</td>
<td>1,006,877</td>
<td>1,188,580</td>
<td>+174%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>334,387</td>
<td>875,538</td>
<td>1,110,549</td>
<td>1,223,400</td>
<td>+266%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>106,818</td>
<td>789,704</td>
<td>983,403</td>
<td>1,321,045</td>
<td>+1137%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>949,708</td>
<td>786,775</td>
<td>736,014</td>
<td>651,154</td>
<td>-32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>408,442</td>
<td>785,880</td>
<td>935,933</td>
<td>1,144,646</td>
<td>+180%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indianapolis</td>
<td>427,143</td>
<td>700,807</td>
<td>731,327</td>
<td>791,926</td>
<td>+85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>775,357</td>
<td>678,974</td>
<td>723,959</td>
<td>776,733</td>
<td>no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memphis</td>
<td>396,000</td>
<td>646,356</td>
<td>635,230</td>
<td>650,100</td>
<td>+64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>802,178</td>
<td>638,333</td>
<td>606,900</td>
<td>572,059</td>
<td>-29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
<td>637,392</td>
<td>636,212</td>
<td>628,088</td>
<td>596,974</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose</td>
<td>Not in top 100</td>
<td>629,442</td>
<td>782,248</td>
<td>894,943</td>
<td>&gt;794%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>914,808</td>
<td>573,822</td>
<td>505,816</td>
<td>478,403</td>
<td>-47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>375,901</td>
<td>564,871</td>
<td>632,910</td>
<td>711,470</td>
<td>+89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>801,444</td>
<td>562,994</td>
<td>574,283</td>
<td>589,141</td>
<td>-26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

American cities experienced dynamic population shifts during the 1950-200 period. Eight of the 20 largest cities were replaced between 1950 and 1980. (These cities’ 1950 populations are shown in gray in the leftmost column.) The eight cities that moved out of the top 20 did so not only because other cities gained population, but because they also lost population. In similar fashion, 10 of the 12 cities that remained from the top 20 1950 cities lost population by 1980. These cities were, from large to small, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore, San Francisco, Washington, Milwaukee, Cleveland, and Boston. Los
Angeles and Houston were alone of the 20 largest 1950 cities that gained population to 1980.

Between 1980 and 2000, seven of the 10 cities which lost population to 1980 suffered further net losses in population, while the other three (New York, San Francisco, and Boston) reversed these declines to gain population during this period. New York and San Francisco did so to the extent that by 2000 their populations were larger than they had been in 1950. Chicago lost additional population between 1980 and 1990 but regained some population between 1990 and 2000. Only six of the 20 largest 1980 cities lost population consistently between 1950 and 2000. From large to small, these cities were Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore, Washington, Milwaukee, and Cleveland.

The population losses of these cities were reflected in the changes in their relative population densities. While a city's population density is obviously determined by both its area and its population, most older cities have experienced little change in their boundaries in decades. Rusk (1993) called these inelastic cities. Looking at the top 10 1950 cities in the next table, we can see that their population densities were almost entirely dependent upon their population shifts. Rusk considered all of these cities to have zero elasticity except for Los Angeles, which he considered to have low elasticity. Included here for contrast is the city of Houston, which Rusk considered to be highly elastic, expanding its area 237% between 1950 and 1990 in tandem with its rapid population growth.
Most of the largest 1950 cities were less dense in 2000 than in 1950. Since their municipal boundaries did not expand (except slightly in Los Angeles), this density shift was primarily attributable to population loss. There were two exceptions. New York City was slightly more dense in 2000 than in 1950 because of its slight net population gain, and Los Angeles having gained significant population within its 1950 boundaries was almost twice as dense in 2000 than it was in 1950. The 2000 population density of Los Angeles surpassed that of Detroit, Cleveland, and St. Louis, and was nearly equal to that of Baltimore. Houston, on the other hand, expanded its municipal boundaries as it gained population. Despite a 227% population gain, Houston therefore had a slightly lower population density in 2000 than it had in 1950.

While city population changes reflected the overall movement of persons, they did not necessarily provide a complete picture of the changes occurring in urban neighborhoods. Other types of change, such as increases in poverty (Jargowsky 1997), have also been used in tandem with population loss as indicators of urban distress. This study used the indicator of housing loss in addition to population loss. Housing loss, a variable which is rarely included in indices of decline, was used because the core of this study was an examination of physical change in urban neighborhoods. I also saw housing loss as an important indicator because it provided a clearer link to other qualitative indicators of neighborhood-level

### Table 4.2. Population densities of ten largest 1950 cities in 1950 and 2000

*Source: United States decennial censuses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Name</th>
<th>1950 population</th>
<th>1950 density (pop/sq. mi.)</th>
<th>2000 density</th>
<th>2000/1950 density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>7,891,957</td>
<td>25,046</td>
<td>25,925</td>
<td>104%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>3,620,962</td>
<td>17,450</td>
<td>12,747</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>2,071,605</td>
<td>16,286</td>
<td>11,233</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>1,970,358</td>
<td>4,370</td>
<td>7,873</td>
<td>180%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>1,849,568</td>
<td>13,249</td>
<td>6,858</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>949,708</td>
<td>12,067</td>
<td>8,059</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>914,808</td>
<td>12,197</td>
<td>6,056</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>856,796</td>
<td>14,046</td>
<td>5,625</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>802,178</td>
<td>13,065</td>
<td>9,317</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>801,444</td>
<td>16,767</td>
<td>12,172</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>596,163</td>
<td>3,726</td>
<td>3,619</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
health. Abandoned or derelict buildings, for example, are one of the most obvious indicators of neighborhood problems, but these indicators rarely appear in studies of inner city problems. Lest one underestimate the power of physical change to communicate urban health, one should consider the plethora of new buildings like sports arenas and convention centers that so often serve as symbolic indicators of the health of downtown areas.

Below we can see the numbers of housing units in the top ten 1950 cities in both 1950 and 2000. The rapidly expanding large city of Houston was again included for comparison. Unitalicized cities marked in gray did not lose housing units during this period.

Table 4.3. Housing units in ten largest 1950 cities in 1950, peak year, and 2000. (source: United States decennial censuses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th># units, 1950</th>
<th># units (peak year)</th>
<th># units, 2000</th>
<th>2000 units/ 1950 units</th>
<th>2000 pop./ 1950 pop.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>1,106,119</td>
<td>1,214,958 (1960)</td>
<td>1,152,868</td>
<td>104%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>599,495</td>
<td>685,629 (1980)</td>
<td>661,958</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>698,039</td>
<td>(2000)</td>
<td>1,337,706</td>
<td>192%</td>
<td>188%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>522,430</td>
<td>553,199 (1960)</td>
<td>375,096</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>277,880</td>
<td>305,530 (1970)</td>
<td>300,477</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>270,943</td>
<td>282,914 (1960)</td>
<td>215,856</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>263,037</td>
<td>(1950)</td>
<td>176,354</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>229,738</td>
<td>278,489(1990)</td>
<td>274,845</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>222,079</td>
<td>(2000)</td>
<td>251,935</td>
<td>113%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Houston)</td>
<td>191,661</td>
<td>(2000)</td>
<td>782,009</td>
<td>408%</td>
<td>328%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Housing unit figures told a somewhat different story than population figures. First, no city lost as many housing units proportionally as it did population, and not all cities that lost population also lost housing units. New York City and Los Angeles, the only two of the top ten 1950 cities to gain population, had 32% and 92% more housing units respectively in 2000 than they did in 1950. Boston and Chicago, both of which lost population between 1950 and 2000, also had more housing in 2000 than they did in 1950, although Chicago was still down somewhat from its 1960 peak. The remaining six top ten 1950 cities lost both population and housing from 1950 to 2000. These six cities fell roughly into two categories. The
first category, which I called *moderately declining cities*, lost only a slight amount of housing on average (2%), while the second category, which I call *steeply declining cities*, lost a substantial amount of housing (30%). Steeply declining cities lost more population, on average, than moderately declining cities (52% vs. 29%). According to these categories, Detroit, Cleveland, and St. Louis were steeply declining cities, while Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington were moderately declining cities. These cities are tabulated on page eight.

What do these figures tell us about housing unit loss in large cities, and by extension, about the potential for inner city suburbanization to be occurring in these cities’ distressed neighborhoods? First, although it was not shown by this data, housing unit change in cities was localized (this trend was extrapolated from the two case cities discussed later in this Chapter.) In other words, a city may have gained housing units in certain neighborhoods while losing them in others, and a net gain of units did not mean a city gained housing units in all neighborhoods. The South Bronx, for example, sustained a large net loss of population and housing units in recent decades (Birch 2001), during which New York City’s population and housing grew to record levels. While all of the sample cities, except perhaps Los Angeles and Houston, lost housing units in certain neighborhoods, the balance between gain and loss was clearly different in different cities. Cities in the middle of the spectrum, such as Philadelphia and Baltimore, lost housing in certain neighborhoods but gained nearly as many units in other neighborhoods. At the other end of the spectrum, few neighborhoods in steeply declining cities gained any housing units at all, and whatever gains these cities may have had have was heavily outmatched by losses elsewhere in the city.

Large amounts of housing loss have tremendous consequences for a city’s physical environment. This can be clearly seen in a photograph of St. Louis in 1993 (see below). In some areas where most of the buildings have vanished,
even the street grid seems to be evaporating. Distressed neighborhoods such as these are prime locations for potential inner-city suburbanization.

![Severely distressed neighborhood in St. Louis, 1993](image)

Figure 4.1. Severely distressed neighborhood in St. Louis, 1993

Photo copyright U.S. Geological Survey

Given their different trends in population and housing change, the 10 largest 1950 cities had different potentials for inner city suburbanization. Steeply declining cities, with their large losses in populations and housing, were clearly the most likely places for inner-city suburbanization to occur. Declining cities, cities losing population only, and cities gaining both population and housing had, respectively, decreasing potential for being the location for inner-city suburbanization. Of course, localized severe housing and population loss could conceivably occur in any city, meaning that inner city suburbanization could conceivably occur even in cities like Houston or Los Angeles, where population and housing unit growth was rapid.

I categorized the top ten 1950 cities and their potential for being the location for inner-city suburbanization in the following table. Remember that this table only assesses the likelihood that a city will have neighborhoods in which the conditions are possible for inner-city suburbanization occur. It does not assess the probability of inner city suburbanization occurring in these places, nor does it predict inner-city suburbanization. The second column describes the probable distribution of inner-city suburbanization in that city. All American cities would fall
into one of these four categories and their suburbanization potential could therefore be assessed in future research.

Table 4.4. Inner-city suburbanization potential of top ten 1950 American cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Ten 1950 City</th>
<th>Potential as location for inner city suburbanization</th>
<th>Likely distribution of inner city suburbanization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steeply Declining Cities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>Highly likely</td>
<td>Widespread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Highly likely</td>
<td>Widespread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>Highly likely</td>
<td>Widespread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Declining Cities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Fairly common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Fairly common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Fairly common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cities Gaining Housing Only</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Localized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Localized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Growing Cities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>Rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>Rare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table provided a clear rationale for the selection of case cities. One or more steeply declining cities were obviously appropriate cases, but declining cities were also possible choices. Cities that gained housing only or growing cities had less potential as locations for suburbanization and were therefore less desirable as cases. Cities that gained both population and housing were the most undesirable as cases. While selecting a steeply declining city such as Detroit as a case was an obvious choice, there were also good reasons to select one of the declining cities as an additional case. The declining cities happened to differ from the steeply declining cities in two ways. First, they differed locationally: the three declining cities were eastern seaboard cities which were settled relatively early, while the steeply declining cities were located in the Midwest and were settled somewhat later. Second, these two groups of cities differed in their predominant vernacular housing types. The declining cities had more rowhouses than detached houses (rowhouses were by far the predominant unit type in both Philadelphia and Baltimore), while the steeply declining cities had housing stocks composed principally of freestanding single- or two-family homes, with
rowhouses comprising only a tiny percentage of total housing (see table below).

Selecting a declining city as a second case offered the opportunity to widen the scope of the study geographically and typologically, as well as to examine the prevalence of inner city suburbanization in two large American cities experiencing different amounts of decline.

Table 4.5. Types of housing stock in declining and steeply declining top ten 1950 cities, 1980
(source: 1982 Annual Housing Survey, United States Census Division)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Philadelphia</th>
<th>Baltimore</th>
<th>Washington</th>
<th>Detroit</th>
<th>Cleveland</th>
<th>St. Louis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total units</td>
<td>688,300</td>
<td>305,800</td>
<td>279,800</td>
<td>461,500</td>
<td>251,000</td>
<td>201,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 1 detached</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 1 attached</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 2+4 units</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 5+ units</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given these conditions I selected Detroit, Michigan and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as the two case cities for the study. Detroit and Philadelphia were the two largest cities, respectively, in the steeply declining and declining city categories, and as of 2000 they were both among the top ten largest cities in the United States (10th and 5th). The following section describes how I examined neighborhood change from 1970 to 1990 in these two cities, thereby selecting the case neighborhoods for the study.

*Population and housing change in Philadelphia and Detroit: overview*

The study examined neighborhood change in Detroit and Philadelphia in order to select those neighborhoods which had the highest potential for inner-city suburbanization to occur. Using similar criteria to those used to select the case cities, the study used decennial census data to select for *severely distressed neighborhoods*, which for the purposes of this study were considered to be synonymous with declining neighborhoods and with inner cities. Tracts which had lost more than 20 percent of both their population and their housing stock from 1970 to 1990 were considered to be severely distressed, and these tracts therefore became the case neighborhoods within which new housing developments were examined in Sections Three and Four of this chapter.
The dates 1970 and 1990 were chosen for several, interrelated reasons. The first, most practical reason was that 2000 tract-level data was unavailable at the time of the study. The second reason was that I wanted to separate the study of neighborhood change in Section Two from the development studies in Sections Three and Four. 1990 was a convenient threshold because it was a date by which much neighborhood decline had already occurred, and since I hypothesized inner-city suburbanization to be trend dependent upon decline to occur, it was also a convenient threshold after which I could examine development activity in declining neighborhoods. I therefore somewhat artificially temporally divided the examination of decline and development. Of course, population decline continued in the case cities after 1990, as we saw above. 1970 was chosen as a lower threshold for two reasons. The practical reason was that the census bureau redesignated ('retracted') the geographical limits of many tracts between 1960 and 1970, making time-series comparisons at the tract level before 1970 extremely difficult. Fortunately, neighborhood decline only began in earnest in the 1960s (Wilson 1996), which reinforced 1970 as a convenient starting date.

As we saw in Chapter Three, neighborhoods which lost significant population and housing generally did so because they experienced what is often called severe neighborhood decline. Neighborhood decline is a complex phenomenon with diverse causes but whose consequences are generally consistent. (Bradbury et al. 1982 provide a good overview of this phenomenon as it was manifested in the 1970s.) These declining neighborhoods share many physical, social, and economic characteristics. Socially, declining neighborhoods are generally inhabited by people who are members of minority ethnic and racial groups. These populations often suffer from high rates of social pathologies such as crime, disease, and family breakdown. Economically, distressed neighborhoods have relatively low amounts of economic activity, leading to high rates of unemployment among residents (Wilson 1996).
Physically, severely distressed neighborhoods are characterized by large numbers of vacant buildings and vacant lots. A variety of theories have been proposed to explain the reasons for residential abandonment in declining neighborhoods. These theories were well summarized in Featherman (1976), in a study of the early stages of abandonment in Philadelphia. Some of these theories included uncertainties resulting from racial transition in neighborhoods; the ‘filtering’ of the worst units to the bottom of the market; inadequate public services; irresponsible absentee landlords; and the burdens of code enforcement. Featherman, however, found that there were different reasons for abandonment in neighborhoods where abandonment levels were relatively low. These reasons included a depressed real estate market, which made it difficult to quickly dispose of properties; changing family situations such as relocation or death of older homeowners. Once abandoned, Featherman found that properties were quickly vandalized, thereby discouraging renovation by the absentee owner. Finally, as more and more properties became abandoned and blighted, neighboring properties would be also abandoned as a consequence of the growing blight.

Government responses to abandonment are varied (Cohen 2000) but generally follow the same pattern. Vacant buildings are eventually seized by the city for nonpayment of property taxes, and severely dilapidated buildings are demolished in a piecemeal fashion, creating a vacant lot. The resulting patchwork urban fabric can be seen in the photographs of Detroit and Philadelphia neighborhoods in this chapter. Given the depressed economic conditions of declining neighborhoods, demand for redevelopment of these vacant lots is often low, and cleanup and maintenance of the lots becomes a city expense. Many abandoned lots are never rebuilt with housing. They may be annexed by the owners of nearby remaining houses for yards or parking, or become new public parks, playgrounds, or community gardens. In areas of severe decline, however, there are far too many vacant properties for reuse as open space or as redevelopment
These cities are therefore saddled with thousands of vacant lots which produce no tax revenue and whose maintenance, however minimal, is a public expense. Philadelphia is a typical large city with severe abandonment problems. As a consequence, the city estimated that it had approximately 27,000 vacant residential structures and 15,000 vacant lots citywide in 1995 (Pennsylvania Horticultural Society 1998). The fate of these vacant properties is an increasingly major policy issue in Philadelphia, and in other cities with severe vacancy problems like Detroit.

Figure 4.2. Cities with high levels of abandonment like Detroit (above) face severe challenges in reusing their vacant buildings and land. Will inner-city suburbanization be the answer to the problems of these cities? Photo copyright Alex MacLean; from Daskalakis et. al. (2001)

Neighborhood population and housing change in Philadelphia 1970-1990
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, experienced significant population loss in recent decades. Between 1970 and 1990 the city of Philadelphia lost a net total of 363,032 people, dropping from 1,948,609 to 1,585,577. This loss comprised 19% of Philadelphia’s 1970 population. This citywide population loss was not, however, matched by citywide housing loss. At a citywide level, Philadelphia
gained rather than lost housing units during this period, but the gain (676 units) was minute. The total housing stock thus rose from 674,233 units to 674,899. Between these samplings, however, Philadelphia reached its peak housing figure of 685,629 units in 1980. Over the 1980 to 2000 period the city consistently lost housing, losing 10,730 units by 1990 and a further 12,941 units by 2000. This loss, however, was still much smaller in a relative sense than the city's population loss, as we will see below.

The study examined Philadelphia's population and housing change at the level of individual census tracts from 1970 to 1990. The following maps illustrate this change. For the purposes of discussion the study divided Philadelphia by census tract into five 'macroneighborhoods', which corresponded to commonly used terms in the city. For convenience's sake, downtown, or Center City, was grouped with the 'north' macroneighborhood. These macroneighborhoods are shown on the map below.

![Figure 4.3. Philadelphia's five 'macroneighborhoods': North, South, West, Northeast, and Northwest. These divisions correspond to commonly used terms in the city. Boundaries are shown in red and the municipal boundary is shown in black.](image)
Below we can see how Philadelphia's population changed at the tract level from 1970 to 1990. The map and table below show and tabulate this change.

### Figure 4.4. Population change in Philadelphia, 1970 to 1990

Dark gray indicates >20% population loss; light gray 5-20% loss; white +/-5% change; light red 5-20% gain; dark red >20% population gain. Data from United States decennial censuses of 1970 and 1990.

### Table 4.6. Population change by census tract in Philadelphia, 1970-90

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total population loss</th>
<th>363,032</th>
<th>19%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total 1990 tracts</td>
<td>365</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 20% loss (severe)</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-20% loss (moderate)</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+/-5% change (stable)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-20% gain</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 20% gain</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No data</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The preponderance of dark gray on the map communicates the severity of Philadelphia's population decline during the 1970-1990 period. Almost half of the city's census tracts lost over 20 percent of their population. An additional 30 percent of tracts lost between five and 20 percent of their population, leaving fewer than a quarter of the city's tracts with minimal population losses or actual population gains. Geographically, the overall picture of severe population loss
was relieved in only a few areas. Nine of the tracts in Philadelphia’s downtown (also called Center City) gained population, reflecting the rise in downtown living reported by Sohmer and Lang (1999). Population gain was otherwise almost entirely restricted to the periphery of the city. Northeast Philadelphia, the most recent area of the city to have been developed, had eleven tracts gaining significant amounts of population, while far northwest and far southwest Philadelphia also saw some gains. Some isolated tracts also gained limited amounts of population amidst declining areas. The presence of institutions such as the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University, whose student populations probably expanded during this time, were responsible for some gains. There were also aberrant areas of population loss. Two tracts experienced severe losses due to the closure of residential institutions there, and Center City also experienced some losses, most likely because of the expansion of the city’s business district at the expense of residential areas.

Population loss was especially severe in the tracts to the north and south of Center City, with almost all tracts in these areas losing more than twenty percent of their population. The far north of the city fared somewhat better. Although many tracts in the far north and near northeast areas of the city lost population, the losses of these tracts, at 5 to twenty percent of their population, was not as severe as those areas closer to Center City.

Philadelphia’s population changes can be abstracted, as shown in the diagram on the following page. Population change in the city can be divided into four categories, each of which is experiencing different types of change in a different physical environment.
The innermost zone was one of growth. In Philadelphia, this zone is called Center City and is the location both of the office core and of the wealthy residential neighborhoods around downtown. The gentrifying fringe in Philadelphia is located on the sharp border between the downtown growth zone and the next zone, which is one of severe population loss. This transition occurs within just a few blocks in Philadelphia's dense urban fabric. The zone of severe population loss is the location for severe housing loss and consequently for inner-city suburbanization. As we will see below, however, severe housing loss is not always coterminous with population loss. Beyond the zone of severe population loss is a zone of lesser population loss and population stability. In Philadelphia these neighborhoods date from around 1920 to 1940. Beyond these neighborhoods are the outer growth neighborhoods of Philadelphia. These are the lowest-density areas of the city and much of their development resembles that of the suburbs beyond the city limits. In Philadelphia, these four population zones also signify different demographic characteristics. The growth zones are generally white, although downtown is more diverse than the outer fringe. The decline zones, however, are mixed. Much but not all of the zone of steep decline
is African-American, though some steeply declining neighborhoods are white and others Hispanic. The lesser decline belt is generally one of racial transition from white to black, although some stable lower-income white neighborhoods occupy this zone.

These diagrams would be different for every city, but some similarities can be seen in the Detroit data that follows. Of course, individual characteristics influence each city. Philadelphia happens to have a large, stable population downtown; it also happens to have stable low-density areas at the fringe. Detroit, as will be seen, has neither of these areas.

We will now examine Philadelphia's housing unit change. The map and table below show this change during the same period of 1970 to 1990.

![Figure 4.6. Housing unit change in Philadelphia, 1970 to 1990](image)

*Figure 4.6. Housing unit change in Philadelphia, 1970 to 1990*

Dark gray indicates >20% housing unit loss; light gray 5-20% loss; white +/-5% change; light red 5-20% gain; dark red >20% housing unit gain. Data from United States decennial censuses of 1970 and 1990.
Table 4.7. Housing unit change by census tract in Philadelphia, 1970-90

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total housing gain</th>
<th>676</th>
<th>&lt;1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total 1990 tracts</td>
<td>365</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 20% loss (severe)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-20% loss (moderate)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+/-5% change (stable)</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-20% gain</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 20% gain</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No data</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severely distressed</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall stability of the number of housing units in Philadelphia in 1970 and 1990 was mirrored in the city's tract level figures. The numbers of tracts that experienced extreme housing growth or decline were exactly equal, each totaling about one-seventh of the total number. Somewhat more tracts lost moderate amounts of housing than gained moderate amounts, and the largest group of tracts experienced little change in their numbers of housing units.

As with population growth, many tracts which gained housing units were located either in Center City or at Philadelphia's periphery. Large areas of the Northeast gained housing. Similarly, many tracts in the Northwest or far Southwest of the city also gained housing units. Almost all tracts in Center City either gained housing or remained stable. Overall, housing unit stability at the neighborhood level was common in Philadelphia.

In contrast to population decline, housing unit decline was concentrated in only a few parts of Philadelphia. 53 tracts lost severe amounts of housing, and almost all of them were located near Center City. North Philadelphia had the majority of these steeply declining tracts: 31, or almost 60 percent of the total. West and South Philadelphia were much more stable and had together only 16 severely declining tracts. The remaining six severely declining tracts were scattered through Northeast Philadelphia and there was a sole declining tract in Center City. Northwest and far North Philadelphia had no severely declining tracts.
How were population and housing loss related in Philadelphia? Severe housing loss was closely correlated with severe population loss, but not the reverse. 48 of the 53 tracts which lost over 20 percent of their housing also lost over 20 percent of their population. I categorized these 48 tracts as severely distressed. While these severely distressed tracts comprised 91 percent of the those tracts that had severe housing loss, they comprised only 28 percent of those tracts that had severe population loss. These 48 tracts, shown in the map below, were the case neighborhoods which were examined in Section Three for evidence of inner city suburbanization.

![Figure 4.7. Severely declining Philadelphia neighborhoods](image)

What can we say about Philadelphia’s limited interrelationship between population and housing loss? While the dependence of housing loss on population loss was unsurprising, the lack of a reverse relationship indicates that Philadelphia’s population loss may not all have been of a similar nature. North Philadelphia’s population loss appeared to be closely linked to housing loss, either because population was directly displaced through the destruction of housing or because the loss of population in that neighborhood resulted in the
abandonment and destruction of housing units. The high numbers of vacant units in North Philadelphia (see map below) indicated that the second scenario, that of neighborhood destabilization through the abandonment of housing, was the more accurate.

Figure 4.8. In 1999 Philadelphia had about 27,000 vacant structures (above). While much of this vacancy was concentrated in North Philadelphia’s severely distressed neighborhoods (compare with Figure 4.6), the high levels of vacancy in South and West Philadelphia may foreshadow the spread of severe neighborhood distress to those areas. Map copyright Philadelphia Mayor’s Office of Information Services; from Saidel et. al. 1999.

The two measures of severe population and housing loss did not perfectly reflect qualitative notions of what would constitute an inner city neighborhood. Center City’s one severely distressed tract lost both population and housing through the expansion of the city’s Central Business District. The construction of large office buildings in that area in the 1970s and 1980s no doubt necessitated the destruction of many houses and displacement of much of the area’s population. Other tracts in Northeast Philadelphia lost major institutional facilities (a prison and a mental hospital) which caused their losses in population and housing. The majority, however, of tracts which showed up as severely distressed were in neighborhoods that would have registered as ‘inner city’ through other indicators.
The differential declines of Philadelphia’s macroneighborhoods merit a brief discussion. Only North Philadelphia had a large number of severely distressed neighborhoods, although West Philadelphia and South Philadelphia also lost large amounts of population. 29, or 55 percent, of North Philadelphia’s tracts were severely distressed, compared to only seven (20 percent) of West Philadelphia’s tracts and nine tracts (35 percent) of South Philadelphia’s tracts.

The reasons for North Philadelphia’s higher levels of distress were unclear. While clearance for urban redevelopment has often been cited as having caused displacement in poor neighborhoods, the relatively limited scale of post-1970 redevelopment in North Philadelphia indicates that redevelopment was unlikely to have been responsible for the majority of the losses seen. In other neighborhoods such as near Northeast Philadelphia where population loss was not closely associated with housing loss, population loss may have been achieved through the uncrowding, but not the abandonment, of existing units. Uncrowding could have occurred either through children leaving the household or through the replacement of larger households with smaller ones. Social factors may also have played a role. Both North and West Philadelphia had large black populations with significant levels of poverty, but their levels of housing loss were very different. Lower-income white areas in South Philadelphia and near Northeast Philadelphia were more stable, losing large amounts of population without losing large numbers of housing units. Whatever the reasons for these different rates of change, North Philadelphia was clearly the city’s loss leader, with the largest concentration of severely distressed census tracts in the city. According to the study’s criteria it was therefore the macroneighborhood with the most potential for inner-city suburbanization. Section Three will show that this expectation was accurate.

*Neighborhood Population and Housing Change in Detroit 1970-1990*

Detroit, Michigan, experienced enormous population and housing decline in recent decades. Between 1970 and 1990 Detroit lost a net total of 483,508
people, shrinking in size from 1,511,482 to 1,027,974. This loss was higher than Philadelphia’s in both absolute and relative terms. Detroit lost over 100,000 more people during the same period than did Philadelphia, and its 1970-1990 loss comprised 32% of its 1970 population whereas Philadelphia’s 1970-90 loss comprised 19% of its 1970 population. Detroit also lost a substantial number of net housing units during this period- 118,895 units, or 22% of its 1970 total.

Discussion of neighborhood change in Detroit is complicated by the city’s lack of clearly defined neighborhoods. This is a product both of Detroit’s flat topography and of its street layout, which is a nearly uniform grid. To distinguish between different areas of the city I divided Detroit into four macroneighborhoods bounded by major radial streets. Unlike in Philadelphia, these boundaries are not commonly used as neighborhood demarcations by residents. Detroit’s macroneighborhood boundaries are shown in the figure on the following page. The radial streets used for boundaries are, from west to east, Grand River, Woodward, and Gratiot Avenues. I designated the area south and west of Grand River as West Detroit; to the area between Grand River and Woodward as Northwest Detroit; the area between Woodward and Gratiot as Northeast Detroit; and the area south and east of Gratiot as East Detroit. The two “island municipalities” of Highland Park and Hamtramck are shown bounded in black in the center of Detroit and were not included in this analysis. The existence of tracts outside the municipal limits in the Detroit maps reflect the fact that Detroit comprises only a portion of its county, the level at which tract maps are generated.
Figure 4.9. Detroit's four macroneighborhoods: West, Northwest, Northeast, and East. Neighborhood boundaries are shown in red and Detroit municipal boundaries in black. Note the two 'island municipalities' of Highland Park and Hamtramck between Northwest and Northeast Detroit.

On the following page we can see how Detroit's population changed at the tract level from 1970 to 1990. * The map and table show and tabulate this change.

* Between 1970 and 1990 many of Detroit's census tracts were retracted as a result of the city's severe population decline. The total number of tracts in the city shrank 30 percent from 460 to 319. This contrasted with Philadelphia, despite population loss there was little retracting. Detroit's retracting resulted in substantial changes in tract boundaries from 1970 to 1990. In most cases larger numbers of 1970 tracts were combined and redivided to make a smaller number of 1990 tracts. For example, five 1970 tracts would be combined into three 1990 tracts which would share the outer boundaries of the 1970 tracts, but be redrawn inside that common boundary. This made it impossible to compare tract-level data without combining the data from the retracted tracts. To compare 1970 and 1990 data in retracted areas I combined all 1970 tract data within the common boundaries of the tracts and averaged it out over the number of 1990 tracts. The results for each of these tracts were thus common to the group of tracts from which their figure was derived. The averaging process may have led to erroneous gain or loss data for tracts within tract groups.
Population change was almost ubiquitous in Detroit neighborhoods. Over half of Detroit's tracts lost over 20 percent of their populations, and an additional quarter of all tracts lost between five and 20 percent of their populations. Only 19 percent of the city's tracts maintained or increased their populations, and only two percent, or seven out of over 300 tracts, increased their populations by 20% or more. As in Philadelphia, population growth was concentrated in neighborhoods near the city limits. In Detroit, however, the limited numbers of growing edge tracts did not form spatially cohesive areas. Downtown growth was also limited-
only three tracts near the center of Detroit showed significant population gains. Population loss was most extreme in a large, spatially coherent belt that surrounded the center of Detroit. Severe population loss tracts extended from downtown all the way to Detroit's east and west city limits, and almost completely surrounded the island municipalities of Highland Park and Hamtramck. Beyond the belt of severe population loss was a belt of lesser decline, interrupted in only a few spots by stable or growing tracts. The map and table below show this change during the same period of 1970 to 1990.

Figure 4.11. Housing unit change in the city of Detroit, 1970 to 1990
Dark gray indicates >20% housing unit loss; light gray 5-20% loss; white +/-5% change; light red 5-20% gain; dark red >20% housing unit gain. Data is from United States decennial censuses of 1970 and 1990.
Housing loss was also widespread in Detroit's neighborhoods, though not so much as population loss. Over one-third of Detroit tracts lost over 20 percent of their housing units, and an additional quarter lost over five percent. Approximately one-quarter of the city's tracts were stable, and the remaining 14 percent grew by five percent or more. Housing unit growth was limited and scattered. In east and northeast Detroit housing growth was limited to downtown tracts, a single tract along the Detroit River, and a few tracts near the city limits. Stable tracts were for the most part limited to areas near the city limits. In northwest and west Detroit, a few isolated tracts significantly increased their numbers of housing units amidst large steeply declining areas. The outer portions of Northwest and West Detroit were mostly stable, with scattered tracts gaining housing units in these areas.

Detroit's severe housing loss was also located in a broad, consistent belt around downtown. Less steep declines of between five and 20 percent were mostly found outside of this belt. The overall picture of housing change was one of concentrated losses around the city center declining in the north toward the city limits, and of scattered growth which was limited to parts of the downtown, the near Northwest, and the outer Northwest and West of the city.

As in Philadelphia, severe housing loss was closely correlated with severe population loss, but not the reverse. 111, or 93 percent, of Detroit tracts which lost severe amounts of housing also lost severe amounts of population. These severely distressed tracts comprised, however, only 63 percent of those tracts
which lost over 20 percent of their population. The map below shows the location of these severely distressed tracts.

![Map of severely distressed Detroit neighborhoods]

**Figure 4.12. Severely distressed Detroit neighborhoods**

It can immediately be seen that Detroit had far more severely distressed tracts than Philadelphia, and that these tracts were more widely distributed in Detroit than in Philadelphia. This different picture was primarily due to the more widespread nature of housing loss in Detroit. In Philadelphia, widespread housing loss, and consequently neighborhood distress, was limited to North Philadelphia. The two cities had roughly equivalent percentages of severely declining population tracts (55% vs. 46%), but Detroit had over twice as many severely declining housing tracts (37% vs. 15%). As a result Detroit had far more severely distressed tracts than Philadelphia in both an absolute and a proportional sense. Despite having fewer total census tracts and a smaller population than Philadelphia, Detroit had over twice as many severely distressed tracts (111) than Philadelphia (47), comprising a much higher percentage of Detroit’s total tracts (35%) than Philadelphia’s (13%). Because of its severe decline, Detroit therefore had a much larger number of neighborhoods which had the potential for inner city suburbanization.
Why did Detroit lose so much more housing, over a wider area, than Philadelphia? The scope of this study did not allow for a complete investigation, but Detroit’s different demographic and physical characteristics may have played a role. Between 1970 and 1990, Detroit underwent a massive demographic transformation, changing from a predominantly white city to a predominantly black one. By 1990, the city’s population was over 70 percent black. During those two decades, Detroit experienced extensive white flight and the abandonment of many of its homes and businesses. Its severe population losses—one-third of the city’s 1970 population was gone by 1990, and probably two-thirds of its population was exchanged during this time—may have led to more instability in Detroit’s neighborhoods. Detroit’s higher rates of population loss may have resulted in more abandoned housing units.

Detroit’s city form may also have contributed to its steeper decline. It differed physically from Philadelphia in that its cityscape was mostly undifferentiated, uninterrupted by topographical features like rivers, valleys, or hills. This uniform urban landscape, built up with an equally uniform grid, no doubt contributed to the weaker identity of Detroit neighborhoods compared to Philadelphia, where river and creek valleys both separated and distinguished neighborhoods from each other. Detroit’s housing stock was also both newer and different in architectural nature from Philadelphia’s. As we saw in Table 4.5, Philadelphia was primarily a rowhouse city, especially in its older neighborhoods, while Detroit was mostly developed with freestanding single-family or two-family houses. The predominant materials of these houses were also different. Philadelphia’s rowhouses were almost entirely brick, while much of Detroit’s housing was constructed of wood.

Abandoned freestanding wooden housing stock is more vulnerable to a variety of problems that make it less durable than an abandoned brick rowhouse. Freestanding housing is vulnerable not only to weathering but also to vandalism.
and arson, both major problems for Detroit in the 1980s (Chafetz 1990). This doubtless contributed to Detroit’s higher rates of housing loss. The relative lack of boundaries between Detroit’s neighborhoods may also have resulted in the more rapid spread of decline. Of course other factors, like more active city demolition programs, could also have contributed to the higher rates of housing loss seen in Detroit. A closer examination of abandonment data would be required to illuminate the reasons for the differences in housing losses between the two cities.

The following two sections describe the prevalence of inner-city suburbanization in the distressed neighborhoods of Detroit and Philadelphia.

*The prevalence of inner-city suburbanization: overview*

Despite severe losses in population and housing in the distressed neighborhoods of Detroit and Philadelphia, many new housing developments were constructed in these neighborhoods from 1990 to the present (2002). This construction was the result of multiple forces, fiscal and institutional. Much housing resulted from the continued efforts of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide funds or otherwise encourage the development of new housing in distressed urban neighborhoods through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and other programs. A second force was the increasing capacity of nonprofit organizations, generally known as Community Development Corporations (CDCs), to use HUD and other funds to construct new, often affordable, housing in urban neighborhoods. A third force was the growing realization on the part of the private sector that a market existed for new development, both housing and otherwise, in distressed urban neighborhoods.

The methodology for Sections Three and Four was as follows. All new housing developments in Detroit and Philadelphia which totaled over 20 units in size and which was constructed after January 1, 1990 were tabulated. The locations of this housing were then mapped against the severely distressed neighborhoods
defined in Section Two, and those developments which lay outside of those neighborhoods were excluded for analysis (except in limited cases in Detroit.) Developments smaller than 20 units were excluded both in order to reduce the study number to a manageable size and because these developments were generally too small to make significant design decisions at the neighborhood level. Rehabilitations, renovations, and additions were also ignored since these developments did not make exterior design decisions.

The sources for the development data were diverse. Detroit development data was compiled from the City of Detroit Department of Buildings monthly records; the City of Detroit Planning Department; the Michigan Capital Fund for Housing; and press reports from the Detroit News, the Detroit Free Press, and Crain's Detroit Business. Philadelphia development data was compiled from the Office of Housing and Community Development, and the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (PACDC). This process is described in further detail in the Afterword. While in both cities the study attempted to be comprehensive, the diversity of source, and the size of the cities, meant that comprehensiveness could not be guaranteed.

The prevalence of inner-city suburbanization: Detroit development summary

The map below shows new housing developments in Detroit built since 1990. Developments were mapped over severely distressed neighborhoods, and are tabulated on the following page. In the table, developments located within severely distressed census tracts were shaded in gray. These shaded developments were measured and examined in the subsequent section for evidence of inner-city suburbanization. Developments were dated in chronological order by year of building permit. Italicized developments were located in 'island' non-distressed tracts, described later. Developments were also subject to an initial qualitative survey, described later. The results of this survey (Y or N) were labeled in the 'S' column.
Figure 4.13. New housing developments in Detroit, 1990 to 2001
Developments are mapped over severely distressed census tracts, shown in yellow. Developments of over twenty units in size and built before 1990 are excluded.

Table 4.10. Large (>20 unit) housing developments in Detroit since 1990
Developments shaded gray are in severely distressed tracts; island tracts are italicized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Development</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>#DU</th>
<th>S?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Park Manor</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Puritan &amp; Dexter</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newberry Homes</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>31st Street &amp; Jackson</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tri-Centennial Village (Habitat for Humanity)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>25th Street &amp; Ash</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kercheval Place</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Belvedere &amp; Kercheval</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puao Plaza</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Myrtle &amp; Second Avenue</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis Villa</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>106 Harper Ave</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradby Townhomes I</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1800 Robert Bradby</td>
<td>Townhouse</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodward Place at</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2500 Woodward Ave.</td>
<td>Townhouse</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brush Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagley Houses II</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>16th Street &amp; Porter</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Anne’s Cooperative Apartments (Bagley)</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>18th &amp; Howard</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petoskey Place</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Petoskey Ave &amp; Collingswood</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush Park Senior Hsg.</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Brush St. &amp; Alfred St.</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uptown Row</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>870 Lothrop</td>
<td>Townhouse</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Village</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Townhouse</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagley Street</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1365 Bagley Street</td>
<td>Condominium</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>Condominiums</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship Meadows III</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>965-1001 Leland St</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildred Smith Manor II</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1301 West Forest</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brightmoor Homes</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>14438 Braile</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Units</td>
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<td>------</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>Creekside Housing (Habitat for Humanity)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>440 Conner St.</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islandview Housing</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1044 Townsend St.</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wabash Homes (Corktown)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1746 Wabash</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>Clairpointe of Victoria Park</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>620 Clairpointe St.</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pablo Davis Elder Living Center/ D.J. Healy Apartments</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>9200 West Vernor Highway</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilgrim Village</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Puritan &amp; Petoskey</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morningside Commons (U-SNAP-BAC)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>4267 Wayburn</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>40+</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagley Houses I</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>18th Street &amp; Porter</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildred Smith Manor I</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1303 West Forest Avenue</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta W. King Village</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Wabash &amp; Myrtle (MLK Blvd.)</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ariel Square</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>109 West Euclid St.</td>
<td>Condo</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shore Pointe Village at Grayhaven</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>152 Keelson Drive</td>
<td>Townhouse</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windward Court at Harbor Town</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>3400 East Jefferson</td>
<td>Condo</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakewood Manor</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Lakewood &amp; Kercheval</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethany Presbyterian Village</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>8737 14th Street</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden Manor</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>18040 Coyle</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Street I</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1458 Field Street</td>
<td>Two-family</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campau Farms in Elmwood Park</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2198 Prince Hall (Campau Farms Circle)</td>
<td>Townhouse</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grayhaven</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1 Keelson Drive</td>
<td>SF condo</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Park Estates</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1701 Seward (Estates Drive)</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brightmoor Homes (Habitat for Humanity)</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>14322 Auburn St.</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ida Young Gardens</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>2250 East Vernor</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketplace Court</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>940-1003 Leland Street</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Odean Butler Apartments (Elmwood VISION III)</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3100 East Vernor</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship Meadows II</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>940-1003 Leland Street</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith Manor</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>15321 Archdale</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>McGirney-Bethune Apartments</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>16850 Wyoming Street</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis Manor</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>19200 Shiawassee Rd.</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Freud &amp; Piper</td>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle Drive Commons</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1450 Robert Bradby</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverfront Towers</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>West Jefferson &amp; 3rd St.</td>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>N</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A total of 50 housing developments were found to have been completed in Detroit between January 1990 and December 2001. Of these 50 developments, a total of 30, or 60 percent, were constructed in severely distressed neighborhoods. Since distressed neighborhoods comprised only 35 percent of Detroit's total number of census tracts, this meant new developments were almost twice as likely to be built in a distressed tract than in a non-distressed one. The relative abundance of new housing in distressed neighborhoods could have been due to the availability or low cost of land in distressed neighborhoods or to specific incentives to construct in those places, such as the Detroit Empowerment Zone*.

The methodology for measuring the suburbanization of housing developments was as follows. All developments were subjected to an initial visual qualitative assessment through field visits. The criteria used in this assessment are described below. This assessment was intended to prevent the repetitive measurement of developments that were unlikely to show evidence of suburbanization. Developments which qualitatively resembled suburban housing were subsequently measured using the suburbanization criteria described in Chapter Three. A housing development which was not qualitatively suburban was also measured to provide a 'control' for the qualitative assessments.

_Detroit Developments: qualitative analysis_

The qualitative assessment of developments was comprised of the following criteria. Two aspects of the developments were examined: the development's neighborhood-level design and the site-level design of individual buildings. These criteria were generally consistent with each other. The following five major points were examined:

* Empowerment Zones were created by the Clinton administration in 1994 and were designed to leverage private economic investment, including new home development, in distressed urban neighborhoods. Detroit was one of the six cities initially designated as an empowerment zone. *
- Did the development appear to have preserved the original street grid of the neighborhood? If the street network had been altered, how?
- How did the development relate to the street? Were there fences, plantings, or other major barriers between buildings and the street? How far were buildings from the street?
- How did automobiles access the development? What was the placement and distribution of parking with respect to the buildings? Did parking inhibit pedestrian access to the site?
- What was the quantity and nature of open space on the site? Was open space bounded by buildings or was it designed as a barrier or neutral zone between the development and the street? How was open space apportioned to each individual building of a development?
- What was the architectural style of the individual buildings of each development? Were these buildings reminiscent of typical suburban structures?

13 out of the 30 developments in Detroit’s severely distressed neighborhoods were judged to be qualitatively suburban. This comprised 45 percent of the new housing developments constructed there. 15 developments were not qualitatively suburban, and too little data were available for two developments (Puao Plaza and Genesis Villa) for a qualitative determination to be made.

The percentage of qualitatively suburban housing developments in non-distressed neighborhoods was similar. Ten out of 20 developments, or 50 percent, were judged to be to be qualitatively suburban, while ten developments were not. The two photographs below show typical qualitatively suburban and non-suburban developments.

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The HUD website (www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/ezec/about/ezecinit.cfm) contains detailed data on this still-growing initiative.

** For a discussion of what could be considered to comprise ‘typical’ suburbia please see Chapter Three.
Qualitatively, inner-city suburbanization in Detroit seemed to be occurring in
distressed and non-distressed neighborhoods with approximately equal
frequency! This was somewhat surprising as I had initially thought that the large
amounts of vacant land in Detroit would have served as a suburbanizing
influence on new development. This did not appear to be the case. Why? I
hypothesized four possible reasons.

First, it was conceivable that my hypothesis was wrong, and that large amounts
of vacant land played little role in influencing development form. In this scenario,
inner-city suburbanization did not seem to be dependent upon an inner-city
location at all!

Second, it was conceivable that most of Detroit's non-distressed neighborhoods
were newer (as we saw, they were primarily located at the outskirts of the city),
and thus were lower-density to begin with. This would have meant that
qualitatively suburban developments in non-distressed neighborhoods were
being built in a contextual manner.
Third, it was conceivable that my inner city hypothesis was correct, but that the criteria used to establish neighborhood distress were inaccurate. This would have meant that the locations of qualitatively suburban developments were a truer indicator of neighborhood distress than the loss criteria I had used.

Fourth, it was conceivable that my qualitative impressions were inaccurate and that they would not necessarily correspond with the measured quantitative indicators.

Although all of the above possibilities were conceivable, I concluded that the second and third were the most likely to be playing a role in my findings. Detroit’s outer edges were developed for the most part after World War II, in some cases as late as the 1960s. Although they were built on grids, the residential neighborhoods of these areas were quite low in density and resembled the vernacular suburbia being built in actual suburbs at the time. The retracting that I had found could also have played a role in skewing the figures for neighborhood distress within a limited area. To attempt to correct for this problem I decided to include developments in ‘island’ non-distressed tracts, or those tracts which were surrounded by distressed tracts, in my analysis. These tracts can clearly be seen on the previous map. Four of the seven ‘island’ developments were qualitatively suburban.

_Detroit Developments: quantitative analysis_

In order to measure developments, I examined both current and historical building information. The most current development could only be assessed through site visits and measurement of these developments was not possible. Other new developments were measured using aerial photography and historical Sanborn Map Company maps from the Rotch Library collection at MIT. Historical maps dated from 1951, the latest date for which these maps were available.
1951 was also a date well before Detroit began to experience major decline, but by which most of its ‘historic’ development had already occurred.

17 of the 23 qualitatively suburban Detroit developments were eligible for measurement (the remaining six were in non-distressed tracts). Of these 17 developments, 13 were located in distressed tracts and four developments were located in island tracts. Not all of these 17 developments, however, were actually measured. Eight of the 13 distressed tract developments and all four of the island developments were measured. Three distressed tract developments (Grayhaven, Shorepointe, and Pablo Davis Elder Housing) were not measured because they were built on greenfield sites; i.e., they did not directly replace historic development, and two (St. Anne’s Apartments and Bethany Presbyterian Village) had no available site plans. One qualitatively urban development in a distressed neighborhood (Woodward Place at Brush Park) was measured as a control. This development was measured for change over two periods, 1896 to 1951, and 1951 to 2002, because of the degree of change that had already occurred in that neighborhood before 1951. These measurements are tabulated on the following page. (Measurements for each development are provided in Appendix A.)
Table 4.11. Quantitative inner-city suburbanization measurements for Detroit housing developments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Name</th>
<th>Density (Du/acre)</th>
<th>Density Score</th>
<th>Land Use Coverage</th>
<th>Unit type</th>
<th>Tenure type</th>
<th>Site Planning (Lot Coverage)</th>
<th>Street Pattern</th>
<th>Architecture/Notes</th>
<th>Index Score</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Qualitatively suburban developments located in severely distressed neighborhoods</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradby Townhomes</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>1.0 (all streets altered)</td>
<td>Townhouse style</td>
<td>3.37</td>
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<td>Clairpointe of Victoria Park</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1.0 (all streets altered)</td>
<td>Single-family home</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta W. King Village</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1.0 (all streets altered)</td>
<td>Garden apartment</td>
<td>4.03 (H)</td>
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<td>Campau Farms</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>-0.43</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>1.0 (all streets altered)</td>
<td>Garden condominium</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Butler Apartments</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.5 (alleys removed)</td>
<td>Garden apartment</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
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<td>Virginia Park Estates</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>1.0 (all streets altered)</td>
<td>Single-family home</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle Drive Commons</td>
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<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1.0 (all streets altered)</td>
<td>Garden condominium</td>
<td>2.36 (L)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria Park</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.75 (most streets altered)</td>
<td>Single-family home</td>
<td>3.65</td>
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<td>Bethany Presbyterian Village</td>
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<td>No site plan available</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Anne's Cooperative Apts</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No site plan available</td>
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<td>Shore Pointe Village</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Greenfield site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greyhaven</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greenfield site</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.J. Healy Apartments</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greenfield site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodward Place at Brush Park (1951-2001)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.0 (no streets altered)</td>
<td>Urban townhouse (control development)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woodward Place at Brush Park (1896-2001)</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>-4.28</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>-0.72</td>
<td>0.0 (no streets altered)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-3.62</td>
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<td><strong>Qualitatively suburban developments located in island tracts</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketplace Court</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>-0.99</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1.0 (all streets altered)</td>
<td>Garden apartment</td>
<td>2.90</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.5 (all alleys removed)</td>
<td>Garden apartment</td>
<td>2.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendship Meadows III</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1.0 (all streets altered)</td>
<td>Garden apartment</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship Meadows II</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1.0 (all streets altered)</td>
<td>Garden apartment</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit average</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>3.06 (A)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
As we saw in the qualitative analysis, inner-city suburbanization was not a ubiquitous phenomenon in Detroit's declining neighborhoods. Qualitatively suburban developments comprised only about half of all new developments in those neighborhoods. Nevertheless, a substantial number of developments qualitatively indicated inner-city suburbanization. The quantitative measurements of these developments on the whole bore out the hypothesis that these developments differed significantly in form, land use and ownership patterns from the historic residential neighborhoods that preceded them.

Scores. The average suburbanization score for the 12 developments measured was 3.19 out of the maximum of 6. A score of 6 would have signified a complete change from the historic condition (and would have been impossible, since the neighborhood would have had to dedensify to zero units per acre), while a score of zero would have indicated a net absence of change in the indicators. A negative score would have indicated a densification or diversification in the indicators. Of these 12 developments, Alberta King Village had the highest overall suburbanization score of 4.03. Victoria Park had the next highest suburbanization score of 3.65. Circle Drive Commons was the lowest-scoring qualitatively suburban development with a 2.36, The control development of Woodward Place had the overall lowest suburbanization scores: 1.52 for the change between 1951 and 2001, and extremely low –3.62 for the change from 1896 to 2001.

Unit density. Most new developments were lower density than the housing that formerly occupied the site. Density reduction scores ranged from a low of –0.43 (Campau Farms) to a high of 0.9 (Virginia Park). The average density score was 0.25. Woodward Place had two negative scores, with the change from 1896 a very low –4.28, and the change from 1951 a –0.12. A negative score, it should be remembered, means that the new development, although it may have been qualitatively suburban, was higher density than the developments which preceded it. Three qualitatively suburban developments (Marketplace Court,
Campau Farms, and Circle Drive Commons) also had negative density scores, and all were multifamily apartment developments. The remaining nine qualitatively suburban developments, however, were lower density than the developments which preceded them on the site.

*Land use.* The land use mix of new developments was generally only slightly more homogenous than that of the neighborhoods those developments replaced. Land use homogenization scores ranged from a low of 0, scored by three developments, to a high of 0.38 (Marketplace Court). Note that land use scores, as with unit type and owner type scores, reflect differences in percentages and therefore cannot be negative. A higher score means that the previous neighborhood was more mixed-use than the new development. Nine of the 12 qualitatively suburban developments were less diverse in terms of their land use than the development which preceded them, while the remaining three were already homogenous before redevelopment. The average land use score was only 0.12, reflecting the fact that the historic neighborhoods were mostly residential and that their land use mix was therefore already quite homogenous. Marketplace Court, which had the highest land use score, was only 19% commercial before redevelopment. The control development of Woodward Place scored a maximum of 1.0 in the change from 1951, and a lower 0.38 in the change from 1896. Both of these scores reflected the historically high mixed-use character of this neighborhood close to the downtown.

*Housing unit type.* The diversity of housing units in Detroit’s vernacular neighborhoods was generally replaced by homogenous developments with only one unit type. Unit type homogenization scores ranged from a low of 0.20 (Clairpointe) to a high of 1.0. The average unit type score was 0.77, reflecting large reductions in the diversity of new units, although not necessarily in the *type* of units constructed. Woodward Place scored high in this category, with scores of 0.29 (1951) and 1.0 (1896). Unit type shifts were relative and did not reflect a typological change. The high scores, however, reflected the fact that whatever
the type of units in Detroit's new housing developments, they were far less diverse than the unit types in the historic neighborhoods which preceded them.

Tenure type. As one might have expected from their reduced unit diversity, the diversity of tenure type was also lower in the new developments than in the historic neighborhoods. The average tenure type score was 0.51, and scores ranged from a low of 0.10 (Clairpointe) to a high of 0.94 (Alberta King Village). Woodward Place scored lowest of all the developments measured, with scores of 0.0 (1896-2001) and 0.06 (1951-2001). These scores reflected the historically low diversity of unit, and tenure types in this neighborhood, despite radical swings in the form of tenure. In the late nineteenth century the Woodward Place neighborhood was an almost wholly homeownership development of single-family houses. By mid-century it had shifted to an almost entirely rental neighborhood before being redeveloped with ownership units as Woodward Place. Woodward Place's low scores indicated the danger of stereotyping urban neighborhoods as diverse in all of their aspects. In fact, many dense historic urban neighborhoods, as we saw in Charlotte Gardens, were no more diverse in terms of their unit types than suburban neighborhoods. The fact, however, that no qualitatively suburban development scored zero indicates that all of the historic Detroit neighborhoods had at least some diversity of tenure (either a few rental or a few homeownership units) while all of the new housing developments had very little diversity.*

Lot coverage. Every new development reduced its lot coverage through redevelopment. Lot coverage reduction scores ranged from a high of 0.72 (Alberta King Village) to 0.14 (Clairpointe). The average lot coverage score was 0.48. In other words, new developments on average occupied only half as much of their lots as previous developments. This statistic, combined with an average unit density reduction of 25%, was the clearest quantitative physical indicator of

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* Homeownership and rental rates generated for the historic developments were only estimates and therefore should not be taken as authoritative. This is described further in Appendix A.
Detroit’s shift toward lower-density development. Woodward Place, on the other hand, scored only 0.05 in its change from 1951, and a negative −0.72 in its change from 1896, indicating that the new development had an increased lot coverage. Woodward Place was the only development to increase its lot coverage through redevelopment.

*Street patterns.* Almost every development surveyed greatly altered its neighborhood street pattern. Street pattern shift scores averaged 0.92, reflecting distinct changes in the neighborhood design of new developments. Since street redesign was only loosely quantifiable, developments were assigned only five values: 0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75, and 1.0. Only Woodward Place scored a 0. A score of 0.5 indicated that no major streets were closed and/or redesigned, but that mid-block alleys were eliminated. Ten of the 12 developments measured eliminated both streets and alleys, and only Woodward Place preserved its original street layout in its entirety. A few general trends were evident. The first and most obvious was the elimination of alleys, which appeared to be a vanishing aspect of neighborhood design in Detroit. This was likely the result of the desire to ease automobile access through the provision of parking lots or garages in the front of developments. This design feature, of course, was in keeping with that of the majority of vernacular suburbs. A second general trend was the elimination of intermediate streets (and therefore multiple blocks) in favor of loop access roads with only one or two entrances to the development. Except for Woodward Place, none of the developments studied preserved the rather finely grained original Detroit street grid, and in developments like Victoria Park the closure of adjoining streets created serious impediments to pedestrian travel to and from adjoining neighborhoods. A third general trend was the widening of roads adjacent to the developments. These widenings, seen in Alberta King Village, Marketplace Court, and Victoria Park among others, were part of a larger-scale automobilization and suburbanization of Detroit’s neighborhoods. This shift will be discussed more fully at the end of this section.
Architecture. The shifts in architecture which occurred through redevelopment were harder to generalize. All of the new developments were built in vernacular architectural styles which, like many suburban buildings, were of minimal architectural interest. Although the site planning and densities of these redevelopments were inconsistent with historic patterns, all of the new developments were built in vaguely historic styles, including brick facing or wood siding; punched windows with mullions; and gabled dormer windows or doorways. Despite these historic details, the new developments resembled their historic contexts very little. Some developments, such as Clairpointe and Bradby Park, reflected their higher cost through slightly more detailed ornamental features, and larger unit sizes. Clairpointe houses, for example, had profusions of gables and Palladian windows, a stylistic feature common in 1990s suburbia. While the architectural nondescriptness of the new developments might be attributed to the fact that their neighborhood architectural contexts were generally weak, it is more likely that architectural detail and contextuality were not major concerns for the designers of these buildings.

A few developments seemed to especially exaggerate the trend toward architectural banality. The neighborhood context of Virginia Park was rather distinguished and included sizeable two-family and ornate multifamily dwellings. This context was rejected, however, for both the neighborhood design and site planning of Virginia Park, and the rather blandly-designed houses could hardly have differed more from their neighborhood context. Other developments, including some like English Village and Kercheval Place that were not closely examined, were designed far more carefully. Woodward Place attempted to address its historic context at both its neighborhood design and the architectural level. Its surrounding neighborhood of Brush Park was once one of the most distinguished in Detroit containing many of the city’s oldest and largest single-family houses. Woodward Place’s prominent location at the very northern edge of the Detroit CBD, on one of Detroit’s major streets, probably also contributed to the higher architectural level of this development.
Detroit Developments: narratives

The rather abstract measurements described above take on new life when they are examined in the context of individual developments. Below I describe six Detroit developments: Virginia Park Estates, Victoria Park, Clairpointe, Alberta King Village, Marketplace Court, and Woodward Place. These narratives, which describe the design and other characteristics of these development, provide a prelude to Chapter Five’s examination of the causality of inner-city suburbanization in Victoria Park and Clairpointe. They also cover a spectrum of development types, including single-family houses, apartments, affordable housing, and high-end homeownership units. Each narrative discusses the connectivity, pedestrian/automobile orientation, neighborhood design, and architecture of the development.

Virginia Park Estates

Virginia Park was one of the most iconically suburban of the developments studied. It also had one of the highest suburbanization scores (3.42) of any of the developments. Virginia Park was a subdivision of single-family houses with large yards located on a loop road amidst a declining urban neighborhood. The suburban appearance of Virginia Park was all the more ironic because the neighborhood which it replaced was dense for Detroit. The historic neighborhood’s unit density of 27.75 units per acre was the highest of any of the historic neighborhoods measured. At 2.8 units per acre, Virginia Park, on the other hand, was one of the lowest-density redevelopments. With this dedensification of almost 90 percent, combined with its other changes, Virginia Park could be considered to be the epitome of inner city suburbanization in Detroit.

Virginia Park’s extreme suburbanization had major consequences for its relationship to its urban context. The development de-emphasized connections with surrounding neighborhoods in favor of an internally focused site design. The
street grid which formerly overlaid the site was demapped and a single road, Estates Drive, was laid out in its place. Estates Drive was a loop road with a single connection on the west to Rosa Parks Boulevard. The entire development was surrounded by a fence and the development's houses faced inward to the loop road, backing onto the surrounding neighborhood.

Like all of the developments studied, Virginia Park was an automobile-oriented development. Emphasizing the automobile orientation of the development, houses in Virginia Park Estates all had attached two-car garages with wide driveways. In contrast, the historic surrounding neighborhoods had garages located along alleys. The lack of connectivity to the surrounding neighborhood made pedestrian access difficult except via the single entrance onto Rosa Parks Boulevard. Although this street had bus service, Rosa Parks Boulevard was a six-lane divided roadway with little of interest to the pedestrian.

*Figures 4.16, 4.17, 4.18, and 4.19*

![Location of Virginia Park in Detroit](Image copyright Mapquest.com)

![Aerial view of Virginia Park](Image copyright Mapquest.com)
The internal street design of Virginia Park reinforced the development's automobile orientation. Estates Drive is a wide, curving road, wider than most nearby urban streets, with the exception of Rosa Parks Boulevard. Estates Drive was divided as it entered the development, creating a location for decorative plantings and signage at the entrance. At its corners, Estates Drive widened to create three semicircular paved areas with small planting areas in their centers. These paved areas, which somewhat resembled cul-de-sacs, appeared to serve little function except to distance houses on corner lots somewhat from the main roadway.

Virginia Park was a homogenous residential environment. The development was composed of 45 single-family houses and there were no commercial or community facility uses built with the development. The development also contained two parks, Rosa Park North and Rosa Park South. These parks were only accessible from within the development, and although they may have been public, their private, 'for residents only' message was clear. Suburban single-family home iconography was obviously explicit in the site planning of the development. along their ends, Virginia Park homes faced the street along their sides. While both Virginia Park Estates and surrounding neighborhoods had deep front yards, there was about twice as much space between homes in Virginia Park as in surrounding neighborhoods, and Virginia Park's lot coverage
was much lower (about 13%, down from about 28%). There were no fences between houses, and all houses along the interior side of Estates Drive backed onto large, undivided lawn. Architecturally, houses in Virginia Park were constructed in variants of a vaguely Colonial style with prominent gables, brick facing, and front porches.

Victoria Park
Two other single-family home developments, Victoria Park and Clairpointe of Victoria Park, bore many similarities to Virginia Park Estates. Victoria Park’s suburbanization score was higher (3.65), but Clairepointe’s was lower (X). These differences reflected the new developments less than they reflected differences in the characteristics of the historic neighborhoods which they replaced. Clairpointe, for example, was historically a homogenous neighborhood, and therefore, despite the significant dedensification (70%) that occurred through redevelopment, its score was lower.

Victoria Park was one of the largest of all the new developments studied, and it was the largest composed entirely of single-family houses. With one of the lowest unit densities of the developments surveyed (3.1 DU/acre), Victoria Park consumed an enormous amount of land- the greater amount of ten city blocks. Due to this large size, the development contained a larger amount of neighborhood-level design changes than many of the other Detroit developments.

The neighborhood design changes wrought by Victoria Park were not as radical as those of Virginia Park, but they were larger in scale. An entire neighborhood of ten blocks was closed off and fenced, and a single entrance created along the western edge of the development, connecting to a redesigned Dickerson Street. This street was a wide, divided, automobile-oriented street, designed to provide an imposing gateway to the development. Dickerson Street provided for easy automobile access to Jefferson Avenue, a major regional artery three blocks to
the north, and to the strip commercial facilities found there, as well as to other new developments like the gated Greyhaven development located two blocks southwest of Victoria Park. The reshaping of Dickinson Street in the interest of the automobile was an excellent example of the suburbanization of the inner city extended beyond the level of individual developments in Detroit.

*Figures 4.20, 4.21, 4.22, and 4.23*

Victoria Park was surrounded by a fence with no entrances except at the main gate. This fence was supplanted in some places by vegetation and in other
places by earthen berms. Pedestrian access to the development was obviously impossible except via the main gate. As in Virginia Park, houses faced the interior streets and had deep back yards backing onto the fence and the surrounding neighborhoods.

The single entry to Victoria Park was gated, but was not manned on the dates that it was visited. A guard did, however, patrol the streets of the development in an automobile. Within the development, the formerly rather long city blocks of the neighborhood were reshaped into cul-de-sacs that ran halfway down the block. Three of the six formerly through streets ended in this way, while two streets running around the interior perimeter and one street in the center of the development ran through. The new streets ran along the beds of the old ones, preserving their original block dimensions.

Victoria Park was an entirely residential neighborhood. Its residential character was consistent not only with the surrounding neighborhood but with the structures that formerly occupied the site. The historic neighborhood was about three quarters single-family houses, but these houses contained only half of the neighborhood’s units. Victoria Park’s homogenously single-family nature gave it an extremely high unit type score of 0.96. As the historic neighborhood had almost no commercial uses, however, its land use score was extremely low (0.04). The only historic commercial developments had apparently served local retail needs. The existence of a residential neighborhood with diverse unit types, but very little commercial or industrial uses, was a relatively common condition in the historic Detroit neighborhoods examined.

As in Virginia Park, the houses of Victoria Park were designed in a rather nondescript vernacular suburban style, with attached garages and various styles and types of facing materials. On the whole, they were remarkable less for their architecture, which was typically banal, than for their neighborhood context amidst a severely distressed neighborhood. The large size of Victoria Park large
allowed for the creation of an entirely new neighborhood context in which the surrounding neighborhood was invisible. Within Victoria Park one might imagine oneself to be in a typical Michigan suburb rather than in Detroit. Victoria Park thus altered an already relatively low-density, homogenously residential urban neighborhood model in favor of an antiurban, obviously suburban one. Chapter 5 discusses the particular reasons for the suburban design of Victoria Park.

Victoria Park succeeded in replicating a vernacular suburban environment nearly perfectly. The complete enclosure of the development negated the decayed urban realm outside the walls. The urban street grid was converted to a system of loop roads and cul-de-sacs. Despite the design attention paid to features like Victoria Park’s fence, gatehouse, and streetscape, the development’s internal public space was little more than a large expanse of grass and as such did not encourage diverse outdoor activities. In its lack of attention to a public realm Victoria Park also resembled vernacular suburbs, which often prioritize the private realm of the house over the public realm of the citizen.

Clairpointe of Victoria Park

Clairpointe of Victoria Park, as its name implied, was a single-family home development located near Victoria Park. Seven blocks to the west, the development was three city blocks long and only one city block wide, giving it a long, narrow shape very different from Victoria or Virginia Park, which were both more or less rectangular. Despite these site constraints, Clairpointe also substantially transformed its neighborhood environment to produce a site design that also recalled vernacular suburbia, if not quite as convincingly as in the previous two developments.

Index score. Despite its suburban appearance, Clairpointe’s total suburbanization score (2.72) was in the lower half of the Detroit housing developments measured. This lack of agreement between qualitative and quantitative indicators signalled that while the presence of high scores was likely to indicate qualitative
suburbanization, the presence of lower scores did not necessarily indicate a lack of qualitative suburbanization. Clairpointe’s relatively low score was the result, as previously mentioned, of the development replacing a neighborhood which had already been almost entirely composed of single-family houses. The significant changes resulting from the construction of Clairpointe were in density and lot coverage reductions as well as in neighborhood and housing design, but not in shifts in land use, unit type, or owner type. Despite the lack of change of the latter indicators, the suburban appearance of Clairpointe signalled that not all of a development’s suburbanization index components needed to change radically in order for a neighborhood’s qualitative appearance to become suburban.

Clairpointe’s neighborhood was constructed relatively late. Sanborn maps from 1951 showed the neighborhood still only partially built up. This late date was due to the neighborhood’s location far from the center of Detroit, less than half a mile from the suburb of Grosse Pointe Park. The vernacular neighborhood fabric was one of small single-family Cape-style houses. Many postwar suburbs such as Levittown were built up with houses similar to these, but with neighborhood designs different from Clairpointe’s urban grid. As Detroit was quite large, many of its outer neighborhoods were built up during the first major period of suburban expansion in the 1950’s or 1960’s.
Like Virginia and Victoria Parks, Clairpointe deemphasized connections with surrounding neighborhoods in favor of an internally focused site design. Streets formerly extending through the site were demapped or shifted to allow for a new road, Clairpointe Woods Drive, to be laid out. The development was located in two discontinuous sections, both of which had similar site designs. Clairpointe Woods Drive was located in the bed of the former Clairpointe Street, which was relocated to the west to serve as a through street. Clairpointe Woods Drive
ended in cul-de-sacs on both its north and its south ends connecting to Clairpointe Street through a single entry along the west of the development. The development was surrounded by a fence on its eastern side while a low earthen berm was built along its western side to visually screen the development from the road. Clairpointe Woods Drive was no wider than neighboring streets, but it was somewhat redundant given the presence of Clairpointe Street running parallel only a few yards away. The roadway redesign was clearly intended to give the development a secluded atmosphere within its relatively constrained site. Clairpointe Woods Drive widened into cul-de-sacs at both its north and its south ends, providing space for a small grassy park at its southern end. While neighboring streets were straight, Clairpointe Woods Drive curved slightly, giving it a somewhat sinuous appearance.

Pedestrian access into Clairpointe was limited to a single entrance along Clairpointe Avenue, although it was unfenced along its western edge. No entrances were provided at the southern end where the development faced a public park. Only the east side of Clairpointe Woods Drive had sidewalks.

Clairpointe was composed of 41 single-family houses. Suburban single-family home iconography was explicit at Clairpointe although the site was cramped between the access road and the surrounding neighborhood. All houses in Clairpointe had attached two-car garages, unlike surrounding neighborhoods which had on-street parking or parking in alley garages. These highly visible garages emphasized the automobile-oriented nature of the Clairpointe development. Although the houses were large, Clairpointe's average lot coverage was much less than the surrounding neighborhood (12% vs. 42%), a shift explained by the larger front and side yards of the new development.

Architecturally, Clairpointe was the most elaborate of the three single-family developments described. Houses were constructed in variants of a vaguely Colonial style with prominent gables, brick facing, and small front porches. These
houses were larger than either Victoria Park or Virginia Park, and they were significantly larger than the single-family houses which formerly occupied the site. Despite the additional attention paid to their design, it was difficult to characterize the Clairpointe houses as being architecturally sophisticated. They were typical examples of upper-mid-range suburban houses that were rare within the city of Detroit, but that were extremely common in surrounding suburbs.

Clairpointe’s constrained site served only to emphasize the development’s almost desperate desire to separate itself from its surroundings. Clairpointe provided such relatively cramped suburban space standards in part because it used half of its site area for a relatively redundant access road, and for open space to buffer the development from a through road. At the same time, the development failed to utilize the limited open space created for the benefit of its residents. The southern cul-de-sac was a barren grassy space at the time of research (Fall 2001), although it was intended to be more heavily landscaped when the development was completed. Although it made every attempt to distance itself from the neighborhood which surrounds it, Clairpointe did not provide a compensatory private realm in its place.

Alberta King Village

Alberta King Village, unlike the previous three developments analyzed, was a multifamily housing development consisting of several garden-apartment-style buildings loosely organized around the periphery of a large block. This development, as well as Marketplace Court, a description of which follows, was convincing evidence that multifamily housing could contribute to inner city suburbanization as much as single-family home development, despite the higher unit densities and larger buildings of this type of development. In fact, King Village had the highest overall suburbanization score of any of the developments studied. Surpassing the three previous single-family home developments. As will be seen, this high score was less the result of dedensification than of substantial
shifts in the diversity of unit types, owner types, and in site planning from old to new.

Figures 4.28, 4.29, 4.30, and 4.31

Location of King Village in Detroit
Aerial view of King Village

Image copyright Mapquest.com

Typical King Village streetscape
Typical King Village units

Like the previous three developments, King Village de-emphasized connections with its surrounding neighborhood in favor of an internally focused site design. The street grid which formerly overlaid the site was demapped and a single interior loop service road was created. Because of these changes, King Village received a street pattern score of 1.0. The loop road connected to Martin Luther
King Jr. Boulevard on the south side of the development through two driveways. Martin Luther King Drive, like Rosa Parks Boulevard, was another example of a widened urban street which deurbanized a wide stretch of cityscape. Although the interior access road of King Village was not wider than neighboring streets, the previously mentioned end-in parking made its effective width much wider. The western end of the interior drive was effectively a large surface parking lot. The interior drive curved to reflect exterior site conditions but did not appear to have been purposefully designed in a picturesque manner, unlike the previous developments of Virginia Park and Clairpointe.

King Village was composed of garden apartment buildings containing 120 one, two, and three-bedroom apartments. The unit density of the development was high compared to the single-family developments (8.1 DU/ac), and because of the correspondingly low historic density of the site King Village’s density score is only 0.13. There were no commercial facilities, although there was a community center on the site with facilities for residents. A park was located behind this community center, although it was not clear whether it was for neighborhood residents or residents of the development. The development was unfenced, and housing units backed onto surrounding streets with balconies and deep rear yards. The lot coverage of King Village (11%) was the lowest of any of the developments studied, including the single-family home developments. This led to King Village’s high lot coverage score of 0.72, the highest of any of the developments measured.

The automobile orientation of King Village was clear. Pedestrian access to the surrounding neighborhood was possible through the back doors of ground floor units, but there were no sidewalks connecting the interior space of the development to surrounding streets, except along the driveways to King Boulevard. There were no garages, but the interior court provided a plethora of surface parking spaces for residents, indicating that automobile access was expected for even affordable housing in Detroit. Although bus service ran along
Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevards, these streets were wide and moderately hostile to the pedestrian. The interior court of this development was pedestrian-unfriendly due to the large amount of space provided for parking.

King Village was not composed of single-family homes, though the interior facades of units were designed to emphasize the individual nature of each dwelling. King Village instead replicated the equally common suburban prototype of the garden apartment, with buildings surrounded by ample green space on both their front and back. As King Village faced urban streets, it suffered somewhat from having its rear entrances appear to be somewhat like its entrances. This confusion was probably reduced by the fact that much access to the development was by automobile. The rear facades were attractively designed with wide balconies for both upper and lower units. King Village units were designed in a vaguely colonial style, with prominent gables, brick facing, and small entrance porches.

King Village's generous open space standards permitted a substantial withdrawal from its surrounding neighborhood at the same time as they permitted a large interior open space to be created. That being said, these open spaces were designed in a far less creative manner than they might have been, turning these spaces into barriers rather than amenities. While King Village did succeed in providing substantial privacy and isolation for its residents, it did not provide a compensatory private realm which residents might have enjoyed in the stead of the public realm which was abandoned.

**Marketplace Court**

Marketplace Court was also a multifamily development, built at the highest density (12.6 Du/acre) of any of the six developments described in this section. Despite it being higher density than its historic neighborhood, Marketplace Court appeared to be qualitatively suburban from its site planning and design. Its
overall suburbanization score was 2.90, placing it in the middle third of the developments surveyed.

Although it was dense, Marketplace Court was less diverse than its historic neighborhood. This neighborhood had been a relatively mixed-use neighborhood with a high percentage (19%) of its parcels occupied by commercial units. Marketplace Court, in contrast, was entirely residential development, resulting in a high (0.38) land use score. The unit mix of the historic neighborhoods was also diverse with a mix of single-family and two-family houses. Marketplace Court replaced this mix with an entirely multi-family apartment complex, giving it a high unit score of 0.70. This mix was also reflected in the development's ownership score of 0.36.

*Figures 4.32, 4.33, 4.34, and 4.35*
Marketplace Court’s most distinguishing characteristic was its contrast of a relatively high unit density with relatively low lot coverage. Its low lot coverage (26%) gave Marketplace Court a lot coverage score of 0.55, among the highest of all the developments measured. While we are accustomed to finding a combination of high density with low lot coverage in Modernist tower blocks, it is perhaps more surprising to find the same features in a low-rise apartment complex like Marketplace Court. This contrast can be explained by the high unit capacity of multifamily buildings, which left much of the rest of the lot for open space and parking. Although the site planning of Marketplace Court was not as self-consciously antiurban as many Modernist public housing complexes, the site planning of these two types of development was not dissimilar. The contrast between apparent and real density was also seen in other Detroit multifamily complexes. Campau Farms, another multifamily development, contained 42% more units than the previous developments on the site but covered 42% less of its lot! The demapping of through streets also contributed to the low lot coverage of the multifamily developments as the area of the street was added to the buildable area of the lot.

Marketplace Court’s site planning was dominated by the withdrawal of its buildings from the street. This withdrawal was doubtless in part a response to completely automobile-oriented nature of the surrounding neighborhood. Unlike many of the other developments studied, no historic neighborhood fabric
bordered Marketplace Court. Mack Avenue, the development’s south border street, had been widened to a rather astonishing 150 feet and served as a major east-west artery and entrance to Interstate 75. While Marketplace Court was conveniently located, the heavy traffic and antiurban character of Mack Avenue did not encourage residential development along it to face the street. This contrasted with the historic pattern on other boulevards like Woodward Avenue, a busy artery which was once relatively firmly bounded by urban fabric. The placeless surroundings of Marketplace Court meant that it was not out of character with its context. More surprising, perhaps, would have been a development that attempted to bring the freeway-like character of Mack Avenue back to an urban, pedestrian-oriented scale.

Marketplace Court was bordered by a low black fence which prevented easy pedestrian passage across the development. Vehicular entrances were located on the east and west sides of the development at midblock, accessing an interior perimeter road off of which parking is located. While every unit was therefore close to a parking space, the majority of units were deprived of a view of anything but a sea of parking. The two buildings on the northern edge of the development, however, did have an interior court which received good sun exposure. This site arrangement was not repeated to the south, presumably because of space constraints where the lot narrowed. A small community building and management office was located at midblock and was surrounded by a loop access road.

Marketplace Court displayed the tradeoffs of increasing density while maintaining the imperatives of easy automobile access and withdrawal from surrounding streets. The result was a development with the most poorly configured open spaces of any of the six developments studied, but one that did, like the other qualitatively suburban developments studied, succeed in neatly segregating itself from a context, a context which in this case had been entirely transformed into an automobile-oriented environment by redevelopment.
Woodward Place at Brush Park

Woodward Place at Brush Park was a ‘control’ development that did not appear qualitatively suburban. Its quantitative measurements in large part supported this qualitative assessment as a development that was an example of urbanization than suburbanization. As will be seen, the qualitative aspects of Woodward Place played a major part in defining its urban character.

Woodward Place was located at the northern edge of the Detroit CBD in a neighborhood called Brush Park. This neighborhood was an early high-income district of Detroit and, although it was always politically part of the city, it developed physically in a manner that would be considered “suburban” today. Because of its location to the CBD, the district lost prestige and became a mixed-use, mostly residential district in the first part of the twentieth century. With Detroit’s later decline, Brush Park slid into a state of semi-abandonment. In recent years, however, Brush Park’s proximity to downtown, to the major street of Woodward Avenue, and to two recent professional sports stadiums, has once again spurred a resurgence.

Figures 4.36, 4.37, 4.38, and 4.39
Typical Woodward Place streetscape Typical Woodward Place units

These historical trends were clearly visible in the Woodward Place’s quantitative measurements. Reflecting the area’s shift from a quasi-suburb to an urban district, and then to a revitalized urban district, Woodward Place’s overall suburbanization scores were very low. Its score over the 1896 to 2001 period was by far the lowest of any of the developments sampled, reflecting the area’s net urbanization during that period. Since 1951, however, Woodward Place’s neighborhood has suburbanized slightly, giving it a score of 1.53. This score, however, was still the lowest of any of the developments studied, indicating that whatever changes have occurred through the development of Woodward Place were not as radically different as those of other developments. The majority of Woodward Place’s score was generated not by density or lot coverage changes but by reductions in land use and tenure diversity.

Although it was low-rise, Woodward Place will be denser when eventually completed than in either of the previous two periods sampled. Its density score from 1896 was an extremely low -4.28, reflecting a low 1896 unit density of only 1.6 DU/ac. Its density score from 1951 (-0.12) was also slightly negative. Much development occurred in the Woodward Place area between 1896 and 1951, primarily the conversion of single-family homes into multifamily rooming houses.
and the redevelopment of lots that had previously been occupied by single-family houses with multifamily apartment buildings.

Woodward Place’s status as a wholly residential development gave it high land use homogenization scores (1.0 from 1951 and 0.38 from 1896). These scores reflected the fact that by 1896 the neighborhood was already somewhat mixed-use. In the days before zoning small commercial and industrial establishments could locate legally in back yards or along alleys, giving even single-family districts like Brush Park a somewhat mixed-use character. By 1951 the neighborhood was entirely mixed-use, with commercial and industrial uses outnumbering residential ones. Brush Park was the only neighborhood sampled which attained this level of mixed-use character, and this character was no doubt due to the neighborhood’s proximity to the rapidly developing Detroit CBD.

Woodward Place also differed significantly from past developments on its site in its homogeneity of housing unit types. All of Woodward Place’s housing units were located either in 5+ unit buildings or in single-family attached rowhouses, a relatively rare housing type in Detroit. This unit mix differed entirely from that of 1896 and somewhat from that of 1951, giving Woodward Place unit type scores of 1.0 (1896) and 0.54 (1921). The lower score for 1951 reflected the construction of multifamily apartment buildings which contained the majority of the housing units in the sample area. The 1896 score again indicated the urbanization of the district since that date.

Woodward Place’s owner type scores reflected the rapid shifts that occurred between 1896 and 1921, when the district shifted from one that was entirely homeownership to one that was almost entirely rental. Since both of these districts were relatively homogenous, however, these changes scored very low, giving owner type scores of 0.06 (1951) and 0.0 (1896). The 1951-present owner type score would shift if a large apartment building currently (2002) vacant on the Woodward Place site was ever rehabilitated as rental housing.
As with its density scores, Woodward Place’s lot coverage scores reflected the sharp changes that occurred between 1896, 1951, and 2002. The development’s 1896 score was −0.72, the only negative score of any of the developments measured. This score reflected an increased lot coverage (39%) in 2001 over that of 1896 (23%). Lot coverage in 1951, however, was slightly higher (41%) than in 2001, resulting in a lot coverage score of 0.05. Woodward Place’s 2001 lot coverage of 39% was again the highest of any of the developments sampled, indicating that lot coverage, among other factors, was an important element contributing to the qualitative assessment of a development as urban rather than suburban.

Woodward Place’s neighborhood design also contributed to the development’s urban character. All of the streets and alleyways which made up the sample block were preserved by the new development, and new alleyways were added in order to access the garages located under the multifamily units. Despite the provision of parking for each unit, the houses resolutely faced the street, although they were sheltered from busy Woodward Avenue by a planted berm. Nevertheless, Woodward Park contrasted strongly with the other developments studied, which on the whole shrank back from public streets rather than addressing them through their site design. The architecture of Woodward Place, as mentioned previously, also attempted to address, though rather conservatively, the exuberant brick architectural character of the surviving Victorian-era single-family houses that were still scattered throughout the Brush Park neighborhood.

*Detroit Developments: lessons*

The individual studies of qualitatively suburban developments in Detroit told much about the nature and extent of the inner city suburbanization process in that city. This section discusses some general lessons derived from the individual studies examined above.
Many Detroit developments literally resembled vernacular suburbia— they were ‘suburb-like’. This could be seen in the qualitative analysis, where developments were screened whether or not they featured suburban attributes. Because Detroit was historically a low-density city, it was relatively easy to recreate suburban environments within formerly urban neighborhoods, as in Victoria Park.

**Inner-city suburbanization is a relative process.** As it was described in Chapter Three, inner city suburbanization in Detroit was defined as a relative process, not an absolute one. This process encompassed more than dedensification alone. As we saw, some of the new Detroit developments had unit densities higher than their original neighborhoods. Nevertheless, most developments experienced a dedensification relative to that of the original neighborhood. Even those developments that did not experience dedensification differed in significant ways from the developments previously on the site, as will be discussed below. The issue of a new development’s characteristics relative to its historic context will be even more relevant in the study of Philadelphia, a city with much higher ambient residential densities, and where even large amounts of dedensification do not promise to produce the kind of qualitatively suburban developments seen in Detroit.

**Measurements did not tell the whole story—design mattered.** Qualitative assessments of suburbanization were not necessarily matched by quantitative statistics. Clairpointe had a relatively low suburbanization score, yet it was visually identical to vernacular suburbs on the urban fringe. However, because Clairpointe replaced an already low-density, homogeneous residential neighborhood, its suburbanization score was low. Similarly, Marketplace Court was denser than its historic neighborhood, giving it a high score, yet it visually resembled suburban condominium developments. Measurements did not always communicate the same messages as design. The lack of agreement between these indicators reinforces the need to examine both types of indicators when
examining a phenomenon like suburbanization which is in large part a design-based phenomenon.

*Historic urban neighborhoods were not all mixed-use environments.* Clairpointe demonstrated that many historic Detroit urban neighborhoods were almost completely residential, with little mixed uses. Although our ideal of an urban neighborhood may be one where different types of dwellings are mingled with commercial and other uses, this ideal was uncommon in Detroit in 1951. Although the neighborhoods examined are not a perfect sample, no neighborhood, except for Brush Park, had more than 20% of its parcels dedicated to commercial or other land uses. Most neighborhoods examined were primarily, or even completely, residential. Nevertheless, the qualitative impression of these neighborhoods as 'urban' persists. This indicates that many of the characteristics which guide our perception of what is 'urban' are derived from neighborhood-level and development-level design features. The role of these specific design features in creating qualitative impressions will be discussed later in this section.

*The grain of new developments was coarser.* Although many Detroit neighborhoods were not particularly mixed-use, almost all of them contained a substantial diversity of types of residential units. In the Detroit of 1951, at least in the neighborhoods studied above, it was rare to find a block that did not contain at least one, or more, two-family houses. Even the Clairpointe neighborhood contained several such units. Whatever the unit types chosen for new Detroit developments, this diversity of units within developments appears to be a thing of the past. Lynch (1981) noted similar changes in his studies of city form. Why has this diversity vanished? Although this topic will be explored more fully in Chapter 5, some hypotheses can be put forth here. One is that the grain of Detroit development has shifted; all of the developments studied here were conceived as single entities, although they may have been constructed in phases, as in Woodward Place and Victoria Park. Was this the case in the past? Although the
historic phasing of development was not studied in the neighborhoods examined, it seems difficult to believe that development occurred in an entirely incremental, parcel-by-parcel manner. Research on the process of historic vernacular residential development in Boston indicated that it occurred in increments of small quantities of parcels, with construction occurring on perhaps three or four houses per year (Warner 1962). If the Detroit construction process was similar in the early twentieth century, the result would have been small clusters of houses designed as local developers saw fit, perhaps as single-family, perhaps as two-family. A second possibility is that developers chose to construct diverse types of dwellings within single developments, perhaps to appeal to multiple markets. Whether or not this occurred, the built result in Detroit was, as Warner described it, a ‘weave of small patterns’. This weave produced diverse unit types within the larger predetermined framework of the Detroit grid block system. In contrast, the larger grain of the new developments produced large-scale change with little diversity of unit types except within the framework of multifamily apartments, where one- or two-bedroom apartments might be interspersed. Two-family houses, however, were not provided within any of the new developments, and only in Woodward Place did unit diversity taken a form in any way similar to that of the past, when multifamily and single-family dwellings coexisted on the same block. The result of this lack of unit diversity was a more monotonous built environment, especially when combined with the larger-scale site planning changes previously described.

*Individual developments were not the only changes to suburbanize the urban fabric in Detroit.* Larger-scale site planning shifts were observed in several cases and might have impacted the design of developments in those neighborhoods. All five of the qualitatively suburban developments described were located along urban streets which had been widened. The result for many of the development neighborhoods was an urban context which was already well underway to being reconfigured for the automobile. There was substantial precedent for this type of change in Detroit. One of the city’s largest urban renewal-era redevelopments,
Lafayette Park, was predicated on the near-total elimination of the urban street grid and on the placement of buildings in classic modernist fashion rather loosely throughout the greatly enlarged parcels. The adjoining area of Elmwood Park, in which four of the surveyed developments were located, was also designed in this fashion. No original urban context remains (2002), and the street network has been reconfigured to favor the automobile over the pedestrian with wide, winding roadways. Pedestrian activity in these neighborhoods is correspondingly low. In this sense the suburbanization of individual developments could be seen as a natural response to an environment which had already been reconfigured away from an urban setting.

Design features played a major role in the perception of new developments as ‘suburban’. A natural design response to the suburbanization of an urban environment might be to advocate higher unit densities. Indeed, some of the developments studied were much lower density than the previous neighborhoods. On the whole, however, dedensification among the developments was only moderate. Detroit was never a particularly high-density city. Although the highest historic unit density was almost 28 units per acre (in the Virginia Park neighborhood), the historic unit density average for the neighborhoods examined was only 12.8 units per acre, less than twice the unit density of Levittown, NY with its unit density of 7.3 units per acre (Plunz 1990). The major physical difference between the new developments and the historic housing was in their neighborhood-scale and site-level design. All of the multifamily developments studied were designed to 1) withdraw from public streets; 2) prevent through pedestrian passage; and 3) prioritize automobile access and parking. The result were developments which either actively repelled through pedestrian access with fences or at least discouraged it with large expanses of neutral green space as in King Village. Pedestrian access was probably a low-level consideration in the design of the developments examined. The great majority of access to new developments was doubtless by automobile, and the developments were correspondingly designed to facilitate this access.
While this feature is doubtless advantageous for residents, the result, for the pedestrian, was a hostile and unappealing built streetscape.

*Inner-city suburbanization was widespread in Detroit, but not ubiquitous.* Though the sample size of developments measured was small, the majority of housing developments in Detroit’s distressed neighborhoods were not qualitatively suburban. A few such as Woodward Place were clearly the opposite: developments that consciously attempted to establish ‘urbanity’ in a neighborhood which had been experiencing decline. Many other developments, however, effected the opposite change- a suburbanization of the inner city. Whether in partnership with larger-scale deurbanizing changes or in isolation, the developments studied altered the city environment toward a more homogenous, automobile-oriented, pedestrian-hostile end. This change was manifested both in quantitative indicators like unit density and lot coverage and in the design of these developments. Thus, although the inner city of Detroit is in many places being rebuilt with new housing, the scale and form of these neighborhoods is in many cases very different from that of the past.

Part Three of this chapter describes the nature and extent of the inner city suburbanization process in Philadelphia, a city with many similarities to Detroit, but also significant differences. The subsequent chapter will examine the causes of the inner city suburbanization process through an examination of specific developments in Detroit and Philadelphia.

*The prevalence of inner-city suburbanization: Philadelphia development summary*

The figure below shows large (over 20 unit) new construction housing developments constructed in Philadelphia since 1990. Development addresses were mapped over severely distressed neighborhoods. These new housing developments are tabulated afterwards. Developments located *within* severely
distressed census tracts are shaded in gray. Developments are organized chronologically by date of construction.

**Figure 4.40. New housing developments in Philadelphia**

Developments are mapped over severely distressed census tracts, shown in yellow. Developments of over twenty units in size and built before 1990 are excluded.

**Table 4.12. Large (>20 units) Philadelphia Housing Developments built since 1990**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Development</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Bldg type</th>
<th>#DU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rowan Homes I and II</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1900 block Judson St.</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Homes</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1401-35 South 16th Street</td>
<td>Snr hsg</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludlow Village IV</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Cecil B. Moore and Franklin</td>
<td>Twin hsg</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisville Seniors</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1700 block Edwin St.</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecil B. Moore Housing</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1800 block Jefferson</td>
<td>Twin</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisville IV</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Ridge Avenue</td>
<td>Twin</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APM Taino Gardens</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>600 West Dauphin Street</td>
<td>Twin</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisville V Vineyard Place</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>17th and Ridge Ave</td>
<td>Twin</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norris Square Apartments</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2121-37 North Howard Street</td>
<td>Rehab</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralston/Mercy-Douglass House</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>3817-19 Market Street</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poplar Nehemiah Houses</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>N. 13th and Poplar</td>
<td>Twin</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludlow Village III</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Cecil B. Moore and Franklin</td>
<td>Twin</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Court II</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>800-812 S. 16th Street</td>
<td>SFA</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCRP Lillia Crippen Townhouses</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>6th and Berks Streets</td>
<td>SFA</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Court I</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1432-42 Christian Street</td>
<td>SFA</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YCDC Yorktown Arms</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Jefferson Street</td>
<td>Apt</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nehemiah West Philadelphia Interfaith Action Housing</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>46th and Market</td>
<td>SFA</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A total of 49 new housing developments were constructed in Philadelphia between January 1, 1990 and the date of research (March 2002). These developments comprised a total of 2,508 housing units. This inventory was the best available synthesis of the sources available and appeared to represent the majority of new housing constructed during this period (new construction data from Philadelphia's Department of Licenses and Inspections was unavailable).
As new unsubsidized residential construction was rare in Philadelphia during this period (New York Times 2/17/02) and the data therefore shows mainly subsidized construction.

Of the 49 developments constructed, 29 (59%) were constructed in severely distressed neighborhoods. This 59% comprised 53% of the total number of new units constructed. Distressed neighborhoods comprised only 13% of Philadelphia’s total census tracts, and new development was therefore over four times as likely to occur in distressed tracts than in non-distressed ones. Many of the other new developments constructed were built near these distressed tracts. Some possibilities for the relative scarcity of new housing in Philadelphia’s stable neighborhoods were factors like less land availability, or insufficient land markets in those neighborhoods. In contrast, distressed Philadelphia neighborhoods were likely to have more available land, lower land prices, and to be influenced by both organizations, like CDCs, and public policies which encouraged the development of new housing.

Because Philadelphia’s housing was much higher density than Detroit’s, I did not perform a qualitative screening of developments for suburban visual characteristics. Instead, I measured all of the new housing in distressed neighborhoods for which data was available. The table on the following page shows the resulting inner-city suburbanization scores.
### Table 4.13: Quantitative measurement of suburbanization of new inner-city housing developments in Philadelphia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Density</th>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Unit type</th>
<th>Owner type</th>
<th>Lot Coverage</th>
<th>Street Pattern</th>
<th>Index Score (Total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.69 (H)</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>3.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>.77</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.54</td>
<td>1.0 (H)</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.70</td>
<td>1.0 (H)</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.92 (H)</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.75 (H)</td>
<td>4.56 (H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.67</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.66</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.13</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.37</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>1.0 (H)</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.41</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0 (L)</td>
<td>0.0 (L)</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.71 (L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.0 (L)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.59</td>
<td>1.0 (H)</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.65</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.0 (L)</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.18</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.34</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0 (L)</td>
<td>0.0 (L)</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>.07</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>.23</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.43</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>2.52 (A)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Philadelphia Developments: quantitative analysis

Scores. The average suburbanization score for the Philadelphia developments measured was 2.52 out of 6. Of the 16 developments examined, the Poplar Nehemiah houses had the highest score with 4.56. The Ludlow Village IV development had the next highest score with 4.22. The Lillia Crippen Townhouses scored lowest with 0.71. 13 developments were not measured because there was no data available.

Density changes. Density reductions were ubiquitous among new Philadelphia inner city developments; all except one of the new developments were lower density than the buildings which had historically been located on the site. Density reduction scores ranged from a high of 0.77 in the Cecil B Moore Homeownership Zone housing to a low of zero in the Universal Court development. (A zero score means that the new development had the same unit density as the historic development.) The average density reduction score was 0.43, meaning that new Philadelphia developments were almost half the density of their predecessors. The average historic density score (dwelling units per acre) for the developments sampled was slightly over 40 units to the acre. Although new developments were quite dense, they were even less so than the historic developments. New developments averaged 28.4 units per acre, and the highest density development, the Jardines del Borinquen, was a quite high 48.2 Du/acre. The lowest-density new development in Philadelphia, Ludlow Village III, was 14.0 units per acre.

Land use. New Philadelphia developments were much more homogeneous in their land uses than the historic developments, Land use homogenizations cores averaged 0.40. As all the new developments had one land use (residential) only, this figure indicates that many historic Philadelphia residential neighborhoods were quite mixed-use, with at least 20 percent commercial or industrial parcels by number. This figure is unsurprising given the density and design of many of
the historic neighborhoods examined. At 40 units per acre, Philadelphia's dense rowhouse neighborhoods could easily support local retail and neighborhood services interspersed with housing. Many stores were observed located on the corners of streets, and major streets were often entirely commercial on the ground floor in 1951. Philadelphia was formerly a major industrial city, and many small industrial uses such as garages or workshops were also found intermingled with rowhouses in 1951. Several new housing developments, were found to have been located on these former industrial parcels, as these parcels offer some of the few opportunities to redevelop reasonably large parcels of land in the dense urban fabric of Philadelphia. (Another consequence of this extreme density has been to make large-scale urban redevelopment difficult in Philadelphia except in cases of severe decline.) Three developments (Francisville V, the Poplar Nehemiah Houses, and the Johnnie Tilman townhouses) scored 1.0 for land use homogenization, indicating that their historic neighborhoods had been completely mixed-use. Similarly, three developments had land use homogenization scores of 0.0, indicating that their historic neighborhoods were already completely residential.

Unit types. New Philadelphia developments were even more homogeneous in terms of their housing unit types than they were in terms of their land uses. Although Philadelphia residential neighborhoods were and are often visually monotonous, the tight network of row houses of 1951 contained a diversity of housing unit types. While few of the neighborhoods sampled were built up with multiunit apartment houses designed for that purpose, many of rowhouses were large enough to be easily convertible into apartments. The average unit type homogenization score in the developments examined was 0.58, indicating that on average, the historic Philadelphia rowhouse neighborhoods sampled had about 30% of their residential units in the form of converted to apartments. Some developments were extremely diverse. Universal Court II had the highest unit type score of 1.0, indicating that the historic development had been a completely heterogeneous mix of row house and apartment units. Three developments (the
West Diamond Street townhouses, Lillia Crippen Townhouses, and Los Balcones) had unit type scores of zero. Meaning that these developments replaced neighborhoods that were already completely homogeneous. Two of these historic neighborhoods were completely single-family houses, but the third development replaced a rowhouse neighborhood that had been completely converted to apartments.

*Tenure types.* The diversity of unit types in Philadelphia’s historic neighborhoods also translated to a diversity of tenure types. As with unit types, the new developments examined substantially homogenized this tenure diversity. Philadelphia’s neighborhood pattern of row houses had historically provided for many homeownership opportunities—even the working poor could afford a tiny rowhouse. Equally so, the conversion of larger rowhouses to apartment provided for rental units, presumably of lower cost, to coexist with ownership units in almost all of the neighborhoods examined. This diversity of tenure patterns was replaced in the new developments examined by homogenous rental or ownership patterns. The average owner type homogenization score in the developments sampled was 0.60, indicating that about 30 percent of the units in the historic neighborhoods had been available as rentals. (Of course, many single-family houses might also have been converted to rental units in 1951, but the status of these units was unavailable and they were therefore assumed to be homeownership units.) All new developments were more homogenous than the historic neighborhoods that they replaced. The highest owner type score (0.92) was found in the Poplar Nehemiah development, reflecting the high historic diversity of that neighborhood. At the other extreme, two of the three developments with unit type scores of zero also scored zero on their owner type changes, indicating that the historic neighborhoods were equally homogeneous in terms of their ownership patterns.

*Lot coverage.* Just as new developments in Philadelphia’s inner city neighborhoods were less dense than their predecessors, they also covered less
of their lots. The average lot coverage score was 0.42, showing that new developments covered on average less than 60 percent of the lot area of their predecessors. Of all the suburbanization changes measured, this reduction in lot coverage was obviously the most apparent physically. Historically, the Philadelphia residential neighborhoods measured had a very high lot coverage of almost 70 percent. This lot coverage was translated architecturally into rowhouses which fronted directly onto the street, occasionally had narrow side alleys, and which reserved their limited open space for backyard courts which fronted onto equally narrow pedestrian alleys. New developments, in contrast, covered only 40 percent of their lots on average, and some covered far less: the Cecil B Moore development covers only 22 percent of its lot. Only one development (Universal Court I) matched the historic lot coverage of its predecessors. This reduced lot coverage had clear site planning and architectural implications for the new developments. Newly available open space was used for hitherto unknown front and side lawns as well as parking, and houses could be rearticulated as standalone structures with decorative open space rather than rhythmic articulations comprising a streetwall. The result was a dramatic contrast of new development with surviving historic fabric (see photos in the development case studies following this section).

*Neighborhood design.* Despite the significant changes seen in the other suburbanization characteristics measured, new Philadelphia developments did not significantly alter their existing historic street patterns. The average street pattern score was only 0.16, and 11 of the 16 developments examined made no changes whatsoever to their surrounding street patterns. Only the Poplar Nehemiah development scored as high as 0.75 through the closure of several alleys and two through streets, and even this development did not completely alter its street pattern. The persistence of Philadelphia’s rectilinear grid street system in the developments studied can be attributed to the rather limited scale of the new developments examined. The historic density (about 40 DU per acre in the examples measured) of residential development in Philadelphia had two
consequences for redevelopment. First, because of the high density of residential development in Philadelphia, even the most blighted blocks are rarely completely empty. Site assemblage at the block scale is therefore difficult, and multiblock developments are a problematic proposition. Only a few new developments extended beyond more than one or two blocks. Secondly, this limited land availability translated into relatively discrete new developments which, although they were lower in density than their predecessors, did not occupy many blocks and could therefore not consider street closures. The Jardines de Borinquen development, with ninety houses, only occupied parts of two blocks. Only the largest developments like the Cecil B Moore and the Poplar Nehemiah houses were able to consider street closures, and even these developments could not consider the closure of the major numbered north-south streets or the equally important east-west streets, both of which are important for circulation. Philadelphia’s small-scale grid system, with its distributed circulation, therefore encouraged the retention of streets in redevelopment, and the neighborhood change in Philadelphia has therefore not yet translated to significant street closures.

Architecture. The architectural shifts found in Philadelphia’s new inner-city housing developments were often significant and were even more distinctive because of the architectural homogeneity of the city’s residential districts. As mentioned above, some of these shifts were a consequence of the reduced lot coverage and resulting newly available space of new developments. Other shifts were related to the use of new domestic spatial configurations, cladding materials, and decorative features. (These shifts will be seen with respect to specific developments later in this section.) While the internal construction of these new developments was also doubtless different from the historic pattern, it is not germane to the suburbanization phenomenon and is not discussed here. Changed exterior domestic materials, however, reflected shifts not only in construction but had decorative and semiotic value as well. Many new developments reflected shifts in the exterior cladding of houses through their use
of vinyl siding designed in imitation of wood siding. While this material was doubtless used in part as a cost-saving measure, its use has particular significance in Philadelphia because of the overwhelming prevalence of brick cladding in the city’s rowhouse neighborhoods. Vinyl siding not only conveys an appearance of ‘difference’ but also recalls the housing of the urban fringe, where vinyl siding is a common exterior material. Taino Gardens and Ludlow Village IV were among the housing developments to use this new material. Other architectural features found in some new developments, like pitched roofs, gables, and front porches, had semiotic value, distinguishing these developments from their surroundings which lacked these features and recalling the vernacular dwellings of the urban fringe where these features are common. Other developments such as the Moore and Poplar housing maintained brick cladding, at least on the front of the dwelling, as a contextual gesture. Still other developments (such as the Jardines de Borinquen), particularly those developed by CDC’s in the heavily Latino neighborhoods of eastern North Philadelphia, used materials like stucco to both announce the difference of the new dwellings and to consciously recall the domestic architecture of the Caribbean countries where many Latino Philadelphians have originated (Vitiello 2000).

*Philadelphia Developments: narratives*

The substantial changes wrought by the inner-city suburbanization process in Philadelphia can be better understood by examining a few developments in detail. Below I will discuss three housing developments- the Poplar Nehemiah Houses, the Cecil B Moore Homeownership Zone Houses, and the Ludlow Village IV development- in further detail. These developments exemplify many of the most significant aspects of suburbanization in Philadelphia. This section, however, will only discuss the aspects of these developments which are related to the quantitative and qualitative measurement of suburbanization. These projects will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter in order to uncover the reasons behind the changed urban and architectural design of new Philadelphia inner-city housing.
The Poplar Nehemiah houses were a recently (2001) completed housing development in the southern section of the North Philadelphia neighborhood. Because of its large size (176 units) the Poplar development was able to significantly reshape the neighborhood in which it was situated, including closing neighborhood streets and establishing a new, radically dedensified housing pattern. Although it did not literally resemble vernacular suburbia, the Poplar Nehemiah housing had the highest suburbanization score of any of the new housing developments (4.56) and it could thus be considered the apex of inner-city suburbanization in Philadelphia.

The high suburbanization score of Poplar Nehemiah was in large part the result of the development’s replacement of a mixed-use neighborhood with many single-family and multi-family rowhouses, as well as scattered retail and manufacturing facilities. This historic neighborhood was quite dense, at just over 50 units per acre in 1951. The Poplar development, in contrast, consisted of single-family houses, generally attached as twins but occasionally built as isolated units (‘twingles’) where site conditions required it. It was built at a much lower density than the historic pattern, at just over 14 units per acre. The homogenous character of the development gave it high land use, unit type, and owner type homogenization scores (1.0, 0.52, and 0.92 respectively), and the first and third of these scores were the highest for any of the developments studied.

The neighborhood design of the Poplar development strongly differentiated the housing from its context, though it did not completely isolate it. Two short east-west through streets were transformed into cul-de-sacs, a neighborhood design feature unknown in the historic neighborhoods of Philadelphia but one that was used widely in the nearby urban renewal-era development of Yorktown.
(Yorktown is discussed in detail in Chapter Five.) North-south streets were not altered, no doubt because these streets are important transportation arteries (13th Street carried a trolley line until recently).

The Poplar development was significantly more automobile-oriented than the typical Philadelphia rowhouse, which historically had no off-street parking spaces except for larger houses with rear alley garages. Both the neighborhood and site-level design of Poplar supported this orientation, especially the two new cul-de-sacs of the development, which with their limited pedestrian accessibility encouraged automobile usage. At the site planning level, each housing unit had an off-street concrete ‘parking pad’ large enough to hold two cars. These pads also necessitated the existence of several curb cuts per block so that cars could access the pads. The resulting streetscape was radically different than the traditional Philadelphia rowhouse block (see below). The development’s automobile orientation was the more ironic given the proximity of Broad Street, a major artery under which ran one of the city’s two subway lines (a station was two blocks from the development at Broad and Girard Streets.) The appropriateness of universal parking in what must have been at least a somewhat transit-dependent neighborhood was debatable at best. Despite its accommodation of the automobile, the Poplar development was still relatively pedestrian-friendly, with wide sidewalks, street trees, and abundant on-street parking.
Despite its minimalist nature, the architecture of the Poplar houses had several distinguishing features. The limited lot coverage of the Poplar homes provided them with relatively large yards and they were freestanding on three sides. This gave the houses a green setting which is rare in the surrounding neighborhood. The houses also featured porches which projected into the front yard and provided the front of the house with additional articulation. Porches were generally unknown in Philadelphia rowhouses (except in West Philadelphia) so this feature was highly distinctive. The front cladding of the Poplar houses was brick as a contextual gesture, but the sides of the houses were clad in vinyl.
siding, another relatively unusual feature. The other exterior architectural features of note were the houses’ pitched roofs and gables, many of which faced the streets. These features were also novelties in Philadelphia's older neighborhoods. Most nineteenth-century rowhouses had roofs which sloped toward the rear of the house, making the roof invisible from the street. Their combination of architectural features gave the Poplar houses a unique appearance when viewed in the context of the typical Philadelphia rowhouse.

*Cecil B Moore Homeownership Zone Houses*

The Cecil B Moore Homeownership Zone houses comprised the largest new housing development constructed in Philadelphia since 1990, with an eventual total of 297 new and renovated units. The development was designed to have several phases, and as of May 2002 only the first of an eventual three phases had been designed and completed. Though they were neither as spatially coherent nor as architecturally unified as the Poplar development, the design of the Moore houses incorporated additional architectural features which gave them additional interest. Their suburbanization score of 3.55 placed the Moore houses lower than the Poplar houses but still over one full point above the Philadelphia suburbanization average.

The Cecil B Moore homes altered neighborhood density more than any other development studied, with a unit density score of 0.77. This score was the reflection both of a low overall unit density (about 15 units per acre) and of a high historic unit density (about 70 units per acre - the highest of any neighborhood measured). This high density was the product of the historic development of that area of North Philadelphia with relatively large rowhouses (see below). These houses were easy to convert to apartments and this had been done in large numbers by 1951.

The Moore homes’ land use score was quite low (0.20), reflecting the historic residential character of the area of North Philadelphia in which the houses were
built. This part of North Philadelphia was far from railroad lines and the waterfront and therefore never had the small industrial uses which pervaded many other neighborhoods. Local retail uses were common in 1951 but were entirely eliminated in the Moore development. The Moore homes' unit and owner scores, however, were quite high (0.8), reflecting the historic diversity of units resulting from the large-scale conversion mentioned above. The new development changed the neighborhood back into a single-family homeownership development, eliminating the rental units that had comprised the typical neighborhood fabric since before 1951.

![Existing rowhouses in the Cecil B. Moore Houses neighborhood](image)

The Cecil B. Moore development did not effect the same level of neighborhood design changes found in the Poplar Nehemiah homes. Unlike the neighborhoods closer to Center City, alleys were not a common historic feature of this part of North Philadelphia. Instead, small secondary streets cut between the blocks bounded by through streets, creating small interior blocks. These blocks were not altered by the development of the Moore homes except where one block of an east-west street (Sharswood) was eliminated and reoriented to extend an existing north-south street (Gratz). Nor have any cul-de-sacs yet (2002) been created in the Cecil B Moore homes. Thus, although the Moore homes differed architecturally from their surroundings, they were seamlessly linked to their rowhouse context by the street system, and the new blocks could therefore be easily traversed by pedestrians.
At the site level, the Moore homes differed significantly from the historic pattern. Although many of the existing rowhouses in the neighborhood were actually built as twins with five-foot-wide pedestrian alleys, the historic lot coverage was still quite high (over 70 percent). As elsewhere in Philadelphia, the historic rowhouses had no front yard and only a shallow back yard. The new houses covered less than a third of the area covered by the historic rowhouses. As in the Poplar Houses, this additional lot space was used to provide front, side, and deeper rear yards (see below).

Architecturally, the Moore houses were quite distinctive. As can be seen from the photos below, the new houses had forms and materials that were not commonly found in the surrounding neighborhoods. The houses had pitched roofs and street-end gables steeper than those of the Poplar development, giving them a somewhat Victorian appearance. Small front porches with gables reinforced the gabled image. The polychromatism of Victorian housing was accentuated by the diverse materials used to clad the houses. Brick cladding was used for the street facades, but vinyl siding was used on the gables and on the side walls of the houses. Brilliant blue front doors and porch columns added to the colorful nature of the houses. Some of the Moore houses also featured single-car garages in their basement levels, a feature obviously unknown in the historic rowhouses and one that was also rare among the new Philadelphia developments studied, doubtless because of its cost. Due to problematic subsurface soil conditions in the Moore homes area, this feature was not planned to be included in future phases of the development. Except for their design as twins, the Moore houses would not have been out of place in the residential district of a much smaller city. But in the context of North Philadelphia, they were quite distinctive, and even extraordinary.
Ludlow Village IV Houses

The Ludlow Village IV housing development was much smaller than the two developments discussed above, containing only 25 houses and occupying the entirety of a city block. Even at this scale, the Ludlow development significantly transformed the urban environment through the distinctive site planning and architecture of its component houses. The Ludlow houses' suburbanization score of 4.22 was the second highest of any of the developments surveyed. Because of its limited size, the Ludlow development was a more easily replicable development than the previous two, each of which required substantial public
sector funds and institutional efforts. The Ludlow development established a very different paradigm, one for a, incremental, low-density reshaping of blighted north Philadelphia blocks.

As with the previous two developments, the Ludlow houses were substantially lower in density than the historic developments. Their density score of 0.66 showed that the historic block held about 75 units to the Ludlow houses’ 25. As in the Moore homes neighborhood, many rowhouses had been converted to apartments by 1951 in the Ludlow neighborhood, producing a higher unit density than might otherwise have been found with rowhouses alone. Land use, unit type, and owner type scores were all high (0.73, 0.94, and 0.84), reflecting the historic neighborhood’s status as a mixed-use neighborhood with diverse commercial and industrial units and many converted rowhouses.

*Figures 4.50, 4.51, 4.52, and 4.53*
The most distinctive neighborhood-level design feature of the Ludlow development was the widening of Franklin Street for one block to create a planted mall in the center. This widening occurred at the expense of the Ludlow IV block, but provided a pleasant organizing feature for the development. The creation of the Franklin mall was undertaken in conjunction with the construction of the Ludlow III development located across Franklin Street. Despite these alterations of the neighborhood block pattern, the confining of the Ludlow developments to one block each allowed the pedestrian character of the blocks to be maintained.

Architecturally the Ludlow houses were quite distinctive, both when compared to their neighborhood context and to their companion development Ludlow III, completed in 1999. The neighborhood context was one of four-story brick rowhouses (see below), with little outdoor space, similar to the Moore houses area. Ludlow III (see below) was designed to stylistically recall this housing. Ludlow III houses were three-story and faced in brick, but they had side yards, shallow front porches, and front yards that were not found in nearby row houses.
The Ludlow IV houses were quite different stylistically. They had only two stories, and had pitched roofs and front-end gables, as well as wraparound porches on their fronts and sides. In addition, they had no brick cladding whatsoever but were clad in vinyl siding. While the Ludlow III houses attempted, despite their different site planning, to recall their context architecturally, the Ludlow IV houses made no such effort. They recalled instead the typical vernacular wooden housing of Detroit, a type which was rare in not unknown in Philadelphia. Only the design of the Ludlow IV development as twin houses prevented an even closer approximation of this urban model.

Philadelphia Developments: lessons

Inner-city suburbanization was common in North Philadelphia, but no developments were 'suburb-like'. The quantitative measurements for Philadelphia showed that inner-city suburbanization was occurring in some, but not all of the large new housing developments being built in the inner city. 11 of the 16 developments measured had overall suburbanization scores above 2.0. Of these 11 developments, six scored above 3.0, while only two scored above 4.0. The remaining five developments had very low suburbanization scores, indicating that in form and heterogeneity they were almost identical to the historic developments which previously existed on the site. No new developments,
however, literally resembled suburban housing in the way many of Detroit’s did. Some of the reasons for this will be discussed below. Large developments had more potential to alter their neighborhood designs. Only two developments in distressed neighborhoods had over 100 units, and both of these developments (the Cecil B. Moore houses and the Poplar Nehemiah houses) had high suburbanization scores.

The grain of development was coarser in new Philadelphia developments. Two generalizations held true for all developments, whether or not their total suburbanization scores were high. No new developments contained mixed types of units or tenure types, and none contained commercial uses. Thus the net effect of all developments, whether or not they were lower density or occupied less of their lot, was to produce a more homogenous cityscape, one where the grain of development was larger than the highly differentiated urban pattern found in most of the historic neighborhoods. This homogeneity was especially regrettable given the relatively high density of some of the developments studied—enough to support neighborhood retail in the pattern of the historic neighborhoods. The relatively small scale of most developments, however, meant that intact historic streets with surviving neighborhood retail were never far from the developments. Redevelopment on a larger scale, however, as in the Poplar houses, was lower-density and also tended to produce barren retail environments because of the projects’ lack of inclusion of commercial activities.

In Philadelphia, most CDC developments were too small to effect neighborhood design changes. The size of the housing developments observed in Philadelphia merits some discussion as this scale, as previously noted, had substantial bearing on the potential for neighborhood design changes in Philadelphia’s dense environment. Not counting the two largest developments mentioned above, the average development size for a new housing complex in Philadelphia’s inner city was only 30 units. (Remember that the study only examined housing developments of over 20 units.) This relatively small number
was probably related to the limited capacity of the community development corporations (CDCs) responsible for the production of most of this housing. In contrast, the large Poplar and Moore developments were primarily city-organized and -funded, and required several years to develop and construct. CDC projects were more limited in scope and were therefore presumably more achievable within a limited budget and timeframe. On the tight blocks of North Philadelphia, 30 units often occupied less than one block. The result of this relatively small-scale housing production was that most new housing developments in Philadelphia were too small to make neighborhood-level design changes. Many of the smaller projects measured were located on one block only, and street closures, widenings, etc. were therefore outside of the design scope of the project. Given these conditions, one can predict that neighborhood-level design changes will be unlikely to be found in Philadelphia except in the case of large-scale projects. If past patterns continue, there will be only a few of these projects in the inner city at any given time.

Philadelphia’s density inhibited the assembly of large sites. The lack of larger-scale neighborhood design changes was also tied to the high durability and existing density of housing in Philadelphia. With up to 100 houses per block, some houses were likely to be remaining in even the most blighted of conditions (the Ludlow neighborhood photo shows a typical condition). The difficulty of site assemblage doubtless also contributed to the limited scale of most new housing developments in Philadelphia. It was probably also the reason why quite a few new housing developments were located on the site of former industrial uses. Despite the likely cleanup costs, the large sites occupied by industrial uses made site assemblage, and therefore housing production, more feasible.

Although new Philadelphia developments were not suburb-like, they featured lower-density amenities. At the site level, none of the developments measured were suburb-like, qualitatively resembling suburbia in the way of many Detroit developments. Yet many possessed site planning and architectural features that
were characteristic of low-density neighborhoods more than they were of Philadelphia. Though the historic pattern of residential developments in the neighborhoods studied was universally comprised of rowhouses, many housing developments were built as twins rather than rowhouses. None, however, were designed primarily as single-family detached dwellings. The design of houses as twins permitted additional site features like lawns, parking pads, and porches that gave many of the new housing developments a distinctive appearance amidst the uniform rows of brick housing that surrounded them. Contextuality was also not a concern of many of the architectural designs observed. While brick was used on many developments, others used siding materials such as vinyl or stucco in order to distinguish the houses from their context rather than making them fit in. Many of the massing decisions observed, like front-end gables and pitched roofs, were also anticontextual.

Despite the limited degree of neighborhood changes observed, the uniformity of the Philadelphia inner-city residential environment, and the anticontextual site planning and architectural designs of many of the new developments, gave the new neighborhoods a distinctly different appearance, one that did not literally resemble a vernacular suburb but one that in many cases shared many of its attributes. Even the least dense of the new developments, however, was over twice the unit density of Levittown, resulting in neighborhoods that were closer in appearance to typical historic urban neighborhoods in cities like Detroit rather than postwar suburbs. All of the new neighborhoods maintained pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, street trees, and on-street parking, and the lack of closure of streets except in a few cases meant that the easy pedestrian permeability of the Philadelphia grid was preserved. Inner-city suburbanization, in Philadelphia, did not seem to threaten the transformation of the inner city into a replica of a vernacular suburb. It did, however, demonstrate that the rowhouse was no longer a desirable model for development, and that the accommodation of the automobile, and the homogenization of the neighborhood fabric, were the
wave of the future, even amidst the highly transit-dependent blocks of North Philadelphia.

The Prevalence of Inner-city Suburbanization: conclusions and lessons
This section concludes the examination of the prevalence of inner-city suburbanization by summarizing the lessons from the phenomenon as observed in Philadelphia and Detroit. Detroit and Philadelphia were very different cities, yet in many ways their new inner-city neighborhoods were suburbanizing in similar fashions. While only some of the new developments studied were suburb-like, many were suburbanizing, indicating that the suburbanization trend was widespread in the inner-city neighborhoods of both cities. This trend was all the more interesting given that Detroit and Philadelphia’s inner-city residential neighborhoods were very different places, with different housing types, neighborhood patterns, and vernacular architecture. The first section describes findings from the historic neighborhoods, the second describes findings from the new developments, and the third describes findings from the suburbanization research and process.

The historic neighborhood fabrics of Detroit and Philadelphia were distinctly different. In Detroit, inner-city neighborhoods were composed almost entirely of detached housing, most of it single-family, with some multifamily housing interspersed and with occasional districts of apartment buildings. Philadelphia, on the other hand, was almost universally composed of attached rowhouses, designed as single-family, but many of which, especially the larger houses in neighborhoods like the Moore homes, had been converted into small apartment buildings. None of the Philadelphia neighborhoods featured the larger apartment buildings, designed for that purpose, that were seen in some of the Detroit neighborhoods studied.
The table below provides comparative figures for the suburbanization measurements performed in Detroit and Philadelphia and provides a basis for the discussion that follows.

Table 4.14. Inner-city Suburbanization in Detroit and Philadelphia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Detroit</th>
<th>Philadelphia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average suburbanization score</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average historic unit density</td>
<td>12.8 DU/acre</td>
<td>66.0 DU/acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average new development density</td>
<td>9.2 DU/acre</td>
<td>28.4 DU/acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average historic % mixed-use</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average historic % diverse housing</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average historic % diverse tenure</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average historic lot coverage</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average new lot coverage</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Detroit was historically a much lower density than Philadelphia. Detroit had an average historic density of only 12.8 units per acre to Philadelphia's 66. Philadelphia, in other words, packed over five times as many dwellings onto an average acre of residential land than Detroit did. Given this much denser fabric, it was unsurprising that the new developments measured in Philadelphia were almost twice as dense as the historic Detroit neighborhoods examined. While Detroit was on the whole a newer city than Philadelphia, it was always a lower-density one. Even in 1950, when both cities had substantial amounts of undeveloped land within their boundaries, Philadelphia had almost 1,000 housing units per square mile more than Detroit (4,713 Du/sq. mi. in Philadelphia to 3,742 in Detroit.) These differences could be clearly seen in the historic neighborhoods examined.

Detroit's housing also occupied less land than did Philadelphia's. Detroit's houses, on average, occupied less than half of their lots, while Philadelphia's occupied almost 70 percent. The consequence of this reduced lot coverage was increased open space around each housing unit and a consequently more open cityscape. Attached dwellings were unknown in the Detroit neighborhoods examined. Even apartment buildings were freestanding, although their open space was limited. Houses, whether multifamily or single-family, were also

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always freestanding, with limited front and side yards but sometimes sizeable
backyards. Lot coverages did not seem to correspond with neighborhood age in
Detroit. Clairpointe, which was one of the newest historic neighborhoods
examined, had an average lot coverage of 42%, a figure close to that of many
older neighborhoods. The lowest historic lot coverage seen in Detroit was in the
oldest neighborhood measured, the Woodward Place neighborhood of 1896,
where lot coverages were only 23%, a figure close to that of the new
developments measured! The low density of nineteenth-century Woodward Place
indicated that, at least for Detroit’s upper class, the low-lot coverage, single-
family detached dwelling, which we saw was a primary feature of suburbia, was
an early preferred housing type. Philadelphia, though also a city of single-family
dwellings, was not one where private open space was a common amenity. No
historic neighborhood had lot coverages below 60%. One may conclude that the
differences between the Detroit and Philadelphia lot coverages- approximately
the difference between 45 and 60 percent- is the point where detached dwellings
become impossible and dwellings must become attached to raise lot coverages
any higher.

Philadelphia’s historic neighborhoods were more mixed-use than Detroit’s.
Philadelphia, on the average, was a much more mixed-use city than Detroit in the
neighborhoods examined. Philadelphia’s average land use score of 0.40 was
over three times the average Detroit score of 0.12. These scores meant that on
average, 20% of the structures in the Philadelphia neighborhoods examined
were non-residential, while only 6% of the structure in the Detroit neighborhoods
were. These differences were probably attributable both to the density and to the
age of the neighborhoods examined. Philadelphia’s neighborhoods were so
dense that even small neighborhood areas could probably easily support retail
uses, as well as support a diverse mix of small industrial uses. Detroit
neighborhoods were lower density and built at a later date when streetcar transit
and automobiles were shaping city form rather than pedestrian-scaled walking
distances. Detroit neighborhoods were not only lower density, they were more
differentiated, with more or less homogenous residential neighborhoods bounded by major arteries where the majority of commercial uses were located. A few older neighborhoods, such as Brush Park, were more universally mixed-use, but most of the Detroit neighborhoods examined conformed to this differentiated pattern, a precursor of the even more highly differentiated land use patterns found in today's suburban communities. This differentiation was due more to functional requirements than to zoning, as Detroit did not enact a zoning ordinance until 1940 (Thomas 1997). Nor were industrial facilities in Detroit interspersed in residential neighborhoods to the degree that they were in Philadelphia. Many of Detroit's industrial facilities were located in discrete industrial areas in the form of large automotive plants, some of which had already located in the suburbs by the 1920's. The historic Philadelphia neighborhoods were thus much closer to the stereotypical mixed-use urban neighborhood than those of Detroit.

*Detroit's historic neighborhoods had a more diverse housing stock than Philadelphia.* Though Philadelphia had more mixed land uses in its historic neighborhoods than Detroit, Detroit had a higher diversity of dwelling types within those neighborhoods. Detroit's dwelling type score was 0.77 to Philadelphia's 0.58, indicating that almost 40% of dwelling units in the Detroit neighborhoods examined were of another type than the dominant unit. In Detroit this dominant unit was generally the single-family detached house. In Philadelphia this number was somewhat lower: almost 30% of units were found in apartments rather than in single-family attached houses. Given that almost all apartments were found in converted rowhouses, this figure indicates that only about ten percent of the residential buildings in the historic Philadelphia neighborhoods were converted rowhouses. Detroit contained a much higher diversity of dwellings. Most of the neighborhoods examined contained single-family detached houses, two or three-family houses, and different types and sizes of multifamily apartment buildings. While the apparent monotony of Philadelphia's unit types was in part an artifact of areas sampled (West Philadelphia, for example, has a much higher
percentage of apartment buildings but was not a heavily sampled neighborhood),
it is also likely that the relatively low density of Detroit afforded more flexibility for
developers to construct diverse units, while the tight scale and the overwhelming
rowhouse precedent of Philadelphia seemed only to promote further extensions
of that fabric.

Philadelphia seemed to have a higher diversity of tenure types. Despite its less
diverse assortment of unit types, Philadelphia had a higher diversity of tenure
types than did Detroit. Philadelphia's tenure type score was 0.60 to
Philadelphia's 0.51, indicating that 30% of Philadelphia units were rental while
only 25% of Detroit's were (in almost all cases, rental units were in the minority
and homeownership units were in the majority). How might this discrepancy be
explained? A likely reason lies in the prevalence of two- and three-family
detached houses in Detroit, a unit type which did not exist in Philadelphia.* These
houses likely had a higher percentage of owners than did the Philadelphia
multifamily units. Whatever the exact percentages of owners/renters in the
multifamily housing of historic neighborhoods, the differences in tenure diversity
can be attributed to the strongly different residential patterns found in the two
cities.

The inner-city suburbanization process had different results in the two cities. We
would not necessarily expect the results of the suburbanization process to have
been the same, and indeed they were not. Instead, a similar process was seen
operating in both cities. A similar process, inner-city suburbanization, operating
on different physical fabrics, produced different results. These results, however,
were more akin to each other than were the original historic urban fabrics of the

* For these houses the study assumed that one of the units was owned while the others were
rented, an arrangement which existed in Boston in those types of units, though not all owners
lived in their multifamily units there (Warner 1962). In Philadelphia, the study assumed that all
rowhouses which had been converted to apartments were composed of rental units, and in both
cities, the study assumed that all single-family dwellings were ownership units. There is little
doubt that some of these assumptions are inaccurate, and a more detailed study would no doubt
be able to uncover patterns that were in some cases different from those that this study assumed.
two cities. New developments in Detroit and Philadelphia were both lower density, more homogenous, and occupied less of their lots. In addition, both cities featured neighborhood design changes that accommodated the automobile and introduced architectural iconography which, if it was not always necessarily suburban-like, was certainly less than the ‘urbanity’ found in the previous historic neighborhoods.

**Philadelphia is dedensifying more than Detroit.** Although both Detroit and Philadelphia are becoming lower-density cities through their new inner-city development, they are not dedensifying to the same degree. Philadelphia is dedensifying more- its average new inner-city development is only 43% as dense as what it replaced. Detroit, already much lower density, is not dedensifying as significantly- new developments are about 70% of the historic density. Philadelphia, however, remains a much denser city than Detroit- its new developments were still over twice the density of Detroit’s historic average, and over three times as dense as new Detroit developments. Detroit’s relatively smaller density loss may in part be attributed to the high proportion of multifamily dwellings among the developments measured. These developments were relatively dense, and some, as we saw earlier, exceeded their historic densities. Where Detroit built new single-family houses, however, they were very low density- around three to four units to the acre. This level of dedensification- about 75%- was on par with Philadelphia’s least dense developments, which were around 14 units per acre. Had Philadelphia built as high a proportion of multifamily dwellings in its new developments as had Detroit, its average dedensification would no doubt have been less.

**Detroit’s new developments had very low lot coverages.** Although Detroit’s new inner-city developments did not dedensify to the extent that Philadelphia’s did, they reduced their lot coverages more. On average, new Detroit developments covered less than half the lot area of historic developments, whereas Philadelphia developments, though they had lost more unit density, had about
two-thirds of the lot coverage of the historic developments. There is no easy explanation for the lack of correspondence between density and lot coverage, but it again may lie in the differences in housing types seen in the two cities. Multifamily apartments can cover less of their lots while maintaining a high unit density, a quality that was used to great effect by modernist architects. Most of Philadelphia’s new housing was built in the form of single-family houses, and as the average unit density of these developments was still quite high, one might expect that the lot coverage of these development would not be as highly reduced. In Detroit, on the other hand, the relatively high density apartment complexes built there had higher unit densities, but lower lot coverages.

Almost all the new developments were homogeneous. New developments were homogeneous in terms of its land use, unit type, and tenure type. In this sense inner-city suburbanization in Detroit and Philadelphia seemed to be taking almost exactly the same course. The developments measured were not diverse; they never contained commercial uses, they rarely contained different forms of dwelling units, and the consequently rarely had differentiated types of tenure within them. It is clear that the new large developments homogenized urban neighborhoods. Given that much new development in both cities was occurring through the construction of larger (over 20 unit) housing developments, this trend seems to be likely to continue. Absent a return to the differentiated, diverse grain of development seen in the historic neighborhoods, there is little promise for a return to the differentiated cityscapes that seen in the historic neighborhoods. The consequences of this shift appeared to be mixed in the case cities. In Philadelphia, many developments, as note, were small enough that there were still mixed-use areas nearby. The larger developments, however, produced islands of solidly residential uses that were uncharacteristic of the historic fabric. In Detroit, the large expanses of the new developments severely inhibited pedestrian travel both through their design, as previously noted, and by reducing potential places to walk to. Where many of these developments were combined, the result was a desolate streetscape.
Neighborhood design changes were more widespread in Detroit. Neighborhood design changes were easy to observe but hard to measure. The historic neighborhood fabrics played major roles in shaping the new developments that were built within them. This historic palimpsest, especially in Detroit, “hampered and obstructed” (Lynch 1981) the imposition of completely new neighborhood designs. Detroit in general had a relatively low-density, irregular grid, could easily accommodate the automobile and some cases was designed for it. Philadelphia, on the other hand, had a tight, nineteenth-century grid that was heavily dependent upon mass transit and pedestrian movement. Philadelphia’s city form was far more resilient than Detroit’s- it was difficult to violate or remove, whereas Detroit’s grid was routinely reconfigured or even completely removed to accommodate new developments. The Detroit street network appeared to be far less robust. This lack of robustness could have been a consequence of the far greater unit density of Philadelphia, which appeared to make clearance and reconfiguration more difficult, as previously noted.. It also may have been a consequence of less severe decline, or of institutional or development processes that were not immediately evident from a physical analysis. It was apparent, however, that even in its severely distressed neighborhoods Philadelphia did not have the large expanses of vacant lots which characterized regions of Detroit. The low densities and abundance of contiguous abandoned lots clearly seen in Figure 4.1a show the higher potential for large-scale neighborhood change in Detroit.

The architecture of new developments was dramatically different than the historic pattern in both cities. While neighborhood level design changes were much more dramatic in Detroit than in Philadelphia, site-level and architectural changes were equally dramatic in both places. Detroit’s architectural changes were in large part determined by the neighborhood changes which occurred. With the advent of large, undivided blocks accessed solely by automobile came housing developments with large yards and abundant off-street parking. New Detroit
developments were not spatially constrained—their lots were large and buildings could occupy the site in many different ways. The site plans seen varied from the simple repetitive frontal placement of the single-family home developments to the loose courtyard arrangements of the multifamily homes. Architecturally, Detroit’s historic neighborhoods were diverse environments, with no one predominant style that could be taken as a ‘signature’ of Detroit. This lack of context was mirrored in the new developments, many of which were designed in a style that could only be called generic suburban. This style had vaguely colonial elements, with pitched roofs and brick and vinyl siding cladding. Beyond that it was difficult to make distinct conclusions about the styles of the new Detroit developments except that they resembled typical suburban developments constructed across the country. Philadelphia had a much stronger vernacular context. In the context of the regimented brick rows of Philadelphia’s historic housing, simple site planning and architectural decisions like small front yards, porches, gables, and vinyl siding had strong impacts on the streetscape. These design decisions also, by rejecting the overwhelming contextual references of the rowhouse neighborhoods, made strong references to an architectural version of the other, the vast landscape of later urban and suburban dwellings surrounding the rowhouse neighborhoods of Philadelphia. Since much housing within Philadelphia’s city limits is built in a lower-density fashion, the addition of porches and gables to dwellings was not literally a suburban reference. These features did, however, seem to indicate an intention on the part of the designer to evoke other residential environments and structures than the rowhouse. The author, at least, has little doubt that this perceived reference was the suburb, and Chapter Five will investigate this issue further.

“Urbanity” is a relative concept. The suburbanization process in Philadelphia produced housing that in density, at least, was somewhat similar to what would historically have been considered relatively dense housing in Detroit. If we apply Duany’s transect concept to the two cities, we can see that they would have very different transects. Detroit’s housing transect would stop at around 15 units per
acre, while Philadelphia’s would move up to around 60 units per acre. Other cities, of course, would be more or less dense depending on their relative housing stocks. Despite their absolute similarities, the relative impacts of the “low-density” new housing of Philadelphia and the “high-density” historic housing of Detroit were completely different. One violated its context and introduced what were suburban amenities for North Philadelphia, while the other formed a context and provided what was considered the urban fabric of Detroit. These comparisons reiterate the point to which concepts of “urban” and “suburban”, while based in absolute values, are also to some degree relative concepts.

This closes the chapter on the extent of suburbanization in Detroit and Philadelphia. We have seen how the suburbanization phenomenon impacted new developments in the inner city neighborhoods of both cities: both cities constructed different development models from those that were historically constructed there; and both cities were moving toward a lower-density, automobile-oriented, more functionally and visually homogenous future through the process of redevelopment. The major question that remains to explored is the question of why this phenomenon was happening. What were the cause or causes for the imposition of suburban design and functional norms on housing located in some of the densest city neighborhoods of the very different cities of Detroit and Philadelphia? The next chapter explores this question by examining case developments in both cities. Although Chapter Five focuses primarily on one development in each city, it augments these studies with supplementary data from two other developments in each case. These cases provide answers to why the suburban ideal is becoming the ideal of the inner city as well.
Chapter Five

The Causality of Inner City Suburbanization

Introduction

The previous chapter described how the phenomenon of inner-city suburbanization was occurring in a widespread fashion in the severely distressed neighborhoods of Detroit and Philadelphia. This chapter addresses the equally significant issue of why this inner-city suburbanization is occurring. To do this, the study examined several new inner-city housing developments in the case cities in further detail. Narrowing the scope of the study to individual developments allowed the study to examine individual issues that contributed to suburbanization, such as specific decisions made by different players in the development process, as well as to examine the motivations for those decisions.

While all of the developments examined in this chapter were clear examples of inner-city suburbanization, they were economically and typologically diverse, ranging from completely subsidized semi-attached housing in Philadelphia to completely market-driven detached housing in Detroit. Each development was also the product of a unique combination of circumstances, ranging from the impacts of policies and laws which governed development, to the personal motivations of the individuals who contributed to each development process. This chapter presents the broad phenomenon of inner-city suburbanization as being the sum of the design decisions of the multiple actors who participated in the different development processes examined. While every development examined was the result of a different process, they all contributed to inner-city suburbanization.

Examining individual developments was critical to the study because inner-city suburbanization had multiple and diverse causes. Some of these causes were common to both cities while others were unique to the particular case city. In both cities, inner-city suburbanization was the physical response to the poor land...
market of inner-city neighborhoods. Depressed property values and a consequent lack of market confidence in the future of these neighborhoods led actors in both cities to conclude that lower-density development was the optimum solution for redevelopment. In Philadelphia, lower densities were perceived as making new assisted housing both more marketable and more effective in meeting expected housing standards, while private developers in Detroit saw suburban-style housing at extremely low densities as answering a market need for this kind of housing. Both cities consequently saw lower-density housing with suburban attributes as improving the land market in inner cities. We may thus attribute the desire to improve the land market in inner cities as the most fundamental cause of suburbanization.

Suburbanization was also encouraged because a diverse set of actors—residents, policymakers, and developers—all stood to benefit from it. In Philadelphia, disadvantaged community residents were eager to obtain housing amenities like lawns and parking, while in Detroit, middle-class African-Americans desired new homes without having to leave the city. While these groups were eager to live in suburban-style housing, even those community residents ‘outside the gates’ had little objection to such housing being constructed because of its potential to improve the neighborhood.

Policymakers in both cities encouraged suburbanization. In Philadelphia, housing officials created a policy mandate for suburbanization through the publication of policy documents and through their strong role in the planning and design process for new inner-city housing. In Detroit, officials from the mayor down were desperate for new middle-class housing in the city and were therefore eager to facilitate whatever proposals might come their way. These proposals came from the third group that stood to benefit from inner-city suburbanization in Detroit—the private sector.
Entrepreneurial developers in Detroit believed, correctly as it turned out, that there was a strong market for new, suburban-style housing within the city limits. Upon the success of the initial suburban development of Victoria Park the private sector became the strongest advocate for inner-city suburbanization in Detroit. In Philadelphia, however, the private sector remained uninterested in constructing in the inner city due to market failure—new housing in North Philadelphia could not make a profit.

Design and planning professionals played significant but somewhat ambivalent roles in the inner-city suburbanization process. In Detroit, architects protested the suburban nature of one project but were overruled. Other architects generally cooperated with the overriding mandate to produce low-density housing with suburban attributes. Planners in both cities, especially Detroit, were both relatively powerless and relatively uncritical, at least initially, of inner-city suburbanization. Philadelphia planners for the most part recognized the needs for lower densities and cooperated with housing officials. Detroit planners initially supported suburbanization but became critical of it upon a regime shift in city government.

Ideological stances toward inner-city suburbanization were limited. The vernacular suburb was pragmatically viewed for the most part as a popular form of habitation and therefore a desirable one. Most actors seemed to be opportunistic, believing that different forms of housing were appropriate in different areas and that suburban form was not particularly problematic in inner cities. Design and planning professionals were the only actors with strong ideological objections to inner-city suburbanization. Some were opportunistic, others advocated the New Urbanist approach, while still others objected to suburbanization but expressed confusion as to what constituted a correct approach to redevelopment.
This chapter begins with a brief overview of the housing development process in inner-city neighborhoods. Since the developments examined were diverse, the picture created is a general one. Following this introduction, the body of the chapter examines several development stories in Detroit and Philadelphia. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the similarities and differences between the development contexts of the inner cities of both cases.

The Philadelphia section examines three large housing developments that were planned and constructed from 1994 to 2002 in the North Philadelphia neighborhood: the Poplar Nehemiah Houses, the Ludlow Village Houses, and the Cecil B. Moore Homeownership Zone Houses. (Later phases of the latter two projects are still in construction as of May 2002.) Philadelphia encouraged inner-city suburbanization in North Philadelphia, its hardest-hit inner-city neighborhood, despite a dense urban pattern and the proximity of the neighborhood to the healthy central business district. The suburbanization process was largely motivated by fiscal imperatives. Since land values were low and redevelopment expensive, the city decided that redevelopment would have a greater impact with lower-density housing. Lower densities would provide additional amenities to residents while consuming more land. This was seen as spreading the positive impact of redevelopment over a wider area. The Poplar Nehemiah houses, whose construction began in 1995, were the flagship development of the city's new approach to redevelopment, and their design history is described in detail. The other two housing developments were smaller in scope but confronted additional issues inherent in suburbanization.

The Detroit section examines three interrelated housing developments which were planned and constructed after 1990 in the east side neighborhood of Jefferson-Chalmers. Two of these were constructed and one was not. These developments were called Victoria Park, Clairpointe of Victoria Park, and Victoria Woods. Suburbanization in Detroit was encouraged by a partnership of private developers and city officials who, for different reasons, supported the
construction of new housing in the inner city. The Detroit developments were comprised of suburban housing models transplanted to urban sites. Victoria Park was the first and largest of these developments and set the stage for a variety of changes in the Detroit housing market. Its design process is discussed in detail. The other two developments were progeny of Victoria Park and illustrated the potential for privately-sponsored suburbanization as well as the limits of such a process in Detroit.

The development process in inner cities: a brief overview
Housing development in a typical inner city neighborhood differs from development in other parts of the metropolitan region in several ways. These differences are linked to the economic, social, and physical issues particular to inner city neighborhoods. Perhaps the most important difference is that much housing development in inner cities is not a profit-driven enterprise. In many cases it is impossible for housing construction to occur without subsidies. As a result, government assistance is critical for most inner-city housing. The market for inner-city housing is also different from other areas. Buyers who can afford market-rate housing are likely to select stable or newer neighborhoods over inner-city neighborhoods because of the dilapidated condition and negative environmental variables of housing in these areas. Many potential buyers or renter of inner-city housing are poor and are therefore unable to afford housing priced at market rates. Other potential buyers are willing to live near dilapidated housing if they can obtain new housing with desirable amenities. We will see in the case studies that these desirable amenities are those traditionally associated with suburban housing. Since much inner-city housing is subsidized, construction is generally as cheap as possible. Subsidized houses therefore feature fewer amenities than would be found in market-rate housing and often, as we will see in Philadelphia, have a somewhat minimalist architectural aspect. Market-rate housing, however, is competing for customers with housing elsewhere in the metropolitan area and is therefore designed to be comparable with that housing in many ways. In Detroit, as we will see, this means that market-rate housing
often has a suburban aspect to it. Below I describe each of the above aspects of inner-city housing development in turn.

The land market in inner-city neighborhoods is often severely depressed. Values are very low for vacant lots, existing buildings, and for new construction. Values can be depressed for several reasons. Vacant lots often require substantial work, such as repair of sewer or electrical lines, removal of rubble, or environmental decontamination, in order to be buildable. This can add thousands of dollars cost to construction on these lots. Existing houses are often dilapidated and in need of substantial repairs. The value of new houses, which would potentially be much higher in other neighborhoods, is lowered by the adjacency of nearby dilapidated properties.

Both Philadelphia and Detroit suffer depressed markets in their distressed neighborhoods. In Detroit, existing houses in good repair in depressed neighborhoods often sell for as low to $30,000 or $40,000. In parts of Philadelphia, values are so low that rehabilitated housing is worth less than it costs to restore it. In the Germantown neighborhood, for example, housing which cost $70,000 to restore in 2000 sold for only $40,000. Similarly, new housing in North Philadelphia which cost over $100,000 to build had a value of less than $50,000 (Heavens 1997). Where new housing is worth less than it costs to construct it, private developers are unable to make a profit and can only operate in the presence of subsidies. The necessity for subsidies is a major limiting factor in the production of new inner-city housing—subsidies are not always available, and they often come with a variety of conditions that make them more difficult to use than traditional financing.

The funding mechanisms for subsidizing the construction of new inner-city housing are diverse and it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss them in detail. Unsubsidized housing construction financing is relatively simple—banks will lend money to a builder or owner to construct housing, which is then
generally repaid over 15 or 30 years in the form of a mortgage. Where subsidies are involved, the process is more complex. Subsidies can occur at every stage of the development process. Vacant sites, if owned by the city, can be sold for a token amount, essentially subsidizing the cost of land purchase for the developer. Site improvements can also be subsidized, with government paying for items like cleanup and new infrastructure such as utilities and streets. Finally, direct construction costs can be subsidized, with government absorbing some or all of the cost of building new houses. All of these subsidies occurred to some degree in the construction of Victoria Park.

Subsidies can be recovered to greater or lesser degrees. New housing can be sold or rented at market- or below-market costs. Selling housing at market value will not necessarily recover all costs. In Philadelphia, the Poplar Houses sold for only $40,000, meaning that at least $60,000 in housing construction subsidies alone were lost. The cost of condemning the site from previous owners and preparation of the site for construction were additional costs that were not recovered. On the other end of the scale, the Clairpointe development was entirely profit-driven and involved no subsidies. The developers purchased the land from the city, paid themselves to prepare the site and sold the housing at a profit. The other developments in this chapter fell somewhere between these two extremes of extreme unprofitability and moderate profitability. Rental housing can be subsidized even after construction. Public housing, for example, is provided at rents far below that of the market. These rents are so low that they can repay only some of a development’s operating costs (Vale 2002, pers. comm.).

Other subsidies are unrelated to individual housing units and can instead be linked to individuals. Section 8 certificates, issued by the Federal Government, are issued to individuals and are designed to subsidize the costs of their living in market-rate (and presumably market-produced) rentals, rather than living in housing units whose cost was directly subsidized by the government.
The source of many of the largest housing subsidies in the United States is the Federal government, but others come from state and city sources. Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), for example, were first created in 1974 and are disbursed by HUD. CDBGs take the form of direct cash grants to municipalities for the construction or rehabilitation of housing. All three of the Philadelphia developments studied were primarily funded through CDBG funds. Cities may also pay for housing-related costs out of their own operating budgets by issuing bonds. Many of the site costs for Victoria Park were absorbed by the city of Detroit through the issuance of bonds. Other HUD subsidies, such as Economic Development Initiative funds, are linked to geographically bounded areas which meet certain criteria of economic and physical distress. Within these areas, additional funds are available to subsidize new housing. The Cecil B. Moore homes in Philadelphia were partially funded by these means.

Just as ordinary land market mechanisms do not function in many inner-city neighborhoods, ordinary purchasing mechanisms do not either. As the average inner-city resident is generally much poorer than other residents of the metropolitan area, these individuals are often unable to purchase housing, even at the depressed prices of the inner city. Purchasing homes in the inner city was historically subject to additional difficulties, such as banks refusing to offer mortgages in 'blighted' areas (a practice known as redlining). In the last two decades, however, spurred by measures like the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977, banks have been required, among other responsibilities, to offer more mortgages in low-income neighborhoods (Federal Financial Institutions Information Council 2002). These measures have made funds more available for residents of inner-city neighborhoods so long as they can meet requirements for a mortgage.

Inner-city neighborhoods have also suffered from the departure of many residents who have had the option to leave. Patterson has described such departures as causing 'social isolation', as remaining residents lost exposure to
ordinary patterns of economic and social well-being (Wilson 1987). There have been two means, however, by which higher-income residents have been interested in returning to inner-city areas. The first is by means of gentrification, where the perception or reality of rising property values leads higher-income households to invest in property in neighborhoods, generally historic and with attractive housing stock, which may be primarily lower-income. Gentrification has been extensively studied and is the subject of some debate as to its positive or negative attributes (Smith 1996, Wyley and Hammel 1999).

Another case where higher-income residents choose inner-city neighborhoods is linked to the creation of completely new built environments within these areas. I call this phenomenon, for lack of a better word, 'enclave settlement'. Enclave settlements, sufficiently isolated from their surrounding inner-city context and often designed in a completely different fashion, are able to attract higher-income residents who would not otherwise be drawn to the inner city. Both Victoria Park and Clairpointe are clear examples of enclave settlements. While much inner-city suburbanization is comprised of enclave settlements, this phenomenon dates back to at least the 1950s, when urban renewal built many new middle- and upper-income developments designed in enclave fashion in the midst of depressed urban neighborhoods. These enclaves, unlike the ones studied in this chapter, were not all built in suburban fashion. Lafayette Park in Detroit, for example, contained tall towers which were more urban than those found in Detroit's vernacular neighborhoods. Philadelphia's Yorktown, in contrast, followed a clear suburban model. These historic enclave settlements have been successful in retaining their middle-class or lower-middle-class residents while surrounding neighborhoods have declined. Consequently, Yorktown was explicitly cited as a model for future subsidized housing developments in North Philadelphia (OHCD 1993). Enclave settlements differ from gentrification in that gentrification appears to be almost entirely a market-driven activity. In contrast, most of the enclave settlements, both historic and current, examined involved
substantial public subsidy, although there is evidence that market-financed enclave settlements in Detroit have a vigorous future.

It is not easy to make generalizations about the architectural output of the inner-city housing development process. Public housing was historically stigmatized for its forbidding, minimalist appearance. Recent subsidized housing has avoided the individualistic aspect of older public housing in favor of a contextual appearance. Nevertheless, subsidized housing, since it is built under severe cost constraints, is obviously rather minimalist, with features like basements and garages often lacking. The use of ornamental features like brick and wood siding are reduced, and materials like vinyl tile are used in place of more expensive ceramic tiles. The architectural results are generally quite modest, producing housing with minimal details and a reductivist appearance. For these and other reasons, subsidized housing is rarely architecturally innovative- a shift from the public housing of mid-century, which often made architectural innovation an explicit goal, albeit within limited budgets. Higher end-housing, however, can be indistinguishable from housing produced elsewhere. The Victoria Park and Clairpointe houses, for example, were designed along the same lines as mid-range suburban house models, and they are thus indistinguishable from their suburban counterparts in both appearance and, in the case of Clairpointe, in cost.

The causality of inner-city suburbanization in Philadelphia

Inner-city suburbanization in Philadelphia is closely linked to the latest chapter in the physical transformation of the city’s North Philadelphia neighborhood to a lower-density environment. West and South Philadelphia, the other two areas of the city where large numbers of severely distressed neighborhoods are located, received far less new housing in the 1990s than North Philadelphia, and their transformation was consequently much less. North Philadelphia was the location for all three of the case housing developments discussed in this chapter.
Public policy actions have played a major role in the transformation of North Philadelphia. Over the past sixty years the majority of the city’s expenditures on housing were consistently focused on this neighborhood, the city’s major black ghetto. This focus persisted despite steady changes in housing funding and policies. Housing efforts in North Philadelphia began in the 1940s with the construction of some of the city’s first public housing projects there. They continued in the 1950s, with the great majority of urban-renewal-funded housing demolitions and public housing construction being located there, in the 1960s with the majority of Model Cities monies being spent there, and into the 1980s with the majority of the city’s CDBG funds being spent there (Philadelphia City Planning Commission 1985, Adams et. al. 1991). Despite the city housing director’s caution in 1993 that Lower North Philadelphia (the area south of Lehigh Avenue), had received the lion’s share of the city’s monies for subsidized housing up to that point, the neighborhood’s continued severe needs justified a continuation of the historic focus (Kromer 1993). After 1993, when the city’s Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) began implementing its explicit policy to lower the density of new subsidized housing being constructed in the city, North Philadelphia was naturally the neighborhood where these planning efforts occurred.

The low-density policy pursued by the city in North Philadelphia after 1990 was not arrived at de novo but had substantial precedent in housing developments constructed there before 1990. Chief among these was the Yorktown middle-income housing development, built with urban renewal monies in the 1960s. This development embodied both two ideals which were appealing in the 1990s. The first was a physical ideal of a low-density neighborhood which completely transformed the existing environment and spread change and investment across a larger area. The second was a socioeconomic ideal of housing which was owned by working families. Unlike public housing, Yorktown’s working-class housing displayed an admirable stability in the face of considerable surrounding decline. North Philadelphia’s public housing, on the other hand, embodied a
discredited socioeconomic ideal of concentrated, largely nonworking poor, and it was therefore not cited as a model for the future development of North Philadelphia.

Early public housing in Philadelphia, however, did feature several of the same design innovations later used both in Yorktown and in the three 1990s developments examined. The 1990s developments differed, however, in their use of a twin housing model, a housing type that had not been built in North Philadelphia before 1990. Twin homes addressed the needs of both residents and city agencies. They offered lower densities (Poplar was built at 14 units per acre, approximately half that of Yorktown), more open space, and off-street parking, while selling for more than row housing would. Twin housing also consumed larger amounts of land than row housing, achieving the city’s goal of making a wider impact. They also provided the closest realization of the suburban ideal that had yet been created in North Philadelphia.

The suburbanization of North Philadelphia can be thought of as having three phases. The first was the mid-century development of low-density housing which served as partial precedents for the post-1990 twin house developments. The second was the creation of two policy documents in the 1990s by OHCD which explicitly envisioned a lower-density housing model for lower North Philadelphia. The third phase was the actual development of the new housing complexes designed according to these policies. The design process for the twin house developments integrated this policy framework with the desires and concerns of area residents and market realities. Each of these phases will be discussed in turn.
Introduction to North Philadelphia

Figure 5.1. Map of North Philadelphia, showing the case housing developments and severely distressed census tracts. The boundary of North Philadelphia is shown as a dashed line. Lower North Philadelphia comprises that area below Lehigh Avenue.

Parts of North Philadelphia, which the Philadelphia City Planning Commission considers to be that part of Philadelphia north of Spring Garden Street and south of Roosevelt Boulevard, were developed as early as the eighteenth century as the growing city spread north along the Delaware River. At this point North Philadelphia was politically separate from the city, but it, along with the remainder of Philadelphia County, was incorporated into the city in the Consolidation Act of 1854. The urban development of North Philadelphia did not begin until the mid-nineteenth century, when the city grid was extended northward and built up with a dense mixture of residences and industry. Both the Lehigh and Pennsylvania railroads built lines across North Philadelphia, spurring the massive industrial development of the neighborhood. Industrial facilities were built both along the railroads and within the residential neighborhoods which comprised most of North Philadelphia's land. Apart from Fairmount Park on the neighborhood's
western edge, very little of North Philadelphia was dedicated as open space. Instead the land was developed with a dense network of two- to four-story brick rowhouses. By the 1920s North Philadelphia had been developed far enough north to be contiguous with Germantown, a nineteenth-century railroad suburb. By about 1930 all of North Philadelphia (shown in dotted lines on the map above) had been completely developed.

Though parts of North Philadelphia had originally been wealthy, the neighborhood became increasingly poor, and black, as the twentieth century progressed. Blacks began settling in lower North Philadelphia in large numbers in the 1920s and by 1950 the nonwhite population of lower North Philadelphia (south of Lehigh Avenue) comprised almost half its total population. From 1950 to 1980 the population of lower North Philadelphia became increasingly dominated by minority group members so that by 1980 the neighborhood was almost 90% nonwhite. Housing abandonment spread in lower North Philadelphia in parallel with a 55% population loss between 1950 and 1980. Many blacks leaving lower North Philadelphia moved northward into upper North Philadelphia and Germantown. This population shift happened in such large numbers that by 1980 upper North Philadelphia, almost entirely white in 1950, was almost 80% nonwhite. After 1950 Hispanics, mainly Puerto Ricans, also began settling in lower North Philadelphia in large numbers (City Planning Commission 1985).

Public Housing

In response to the growing poverty and needs of North Philadelphia, the city selected the neighborhood as the site for several public housing projects in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Two of Philadelphia’s earliest housing projects were located in North Philadelphia: the Glenwood Homes, constructed at Diamond and 22nd Streets, and the Richard Allen homes, constructed at 11th and Poplar Streets. In the racially-segregated era of the 1930s, these projects were explicitly intended to house black tenants, reflecting the growing concentration of black residents in North Philadelphia. These two projects were completed by 1941.
Both of these projects were inspired by zeilenbau thinking borrowed from Germany. Streets were closed and transformed into pedestrian passages and open spaces were created at the center of superblocks where residents were encouraged to congregate. Despite the generosity of open space, the housing structures, designed mostly as garden apartments with a few high-rises, were stark and functional, with few amenities surviving the strict budgetary constraints of the Housing Authority (Bauman 1987). (The Allen Homes would be one of the first two Philadelphia public housing projects demolished under the HOPE VI program in the 1990s.)

Upon the passage of the Housing Act of 1949 millions of additional federal dollars were made available for slum clearance and public housing construction in Philadelphia. As part of the larger East Poplar redevelopment project, another public housing project, the Spring Garden homes, were added to the roster in 1952. Like the Allen Homes, the entire East Poplar redevelopment (which included the middle-income Penn Towne apartments) was premised on the closure of all streets except major through streets and the orientation of townhouses, whether they be moderate- or low-income, along green walkways and open spaces designed for community gatherings. Unlike the Allen Homes, the Spring Garden homes were kept low-rise to conform to the rowhouse landscape of lower North Philadelphia. Louis Kahn, a Philadelphia architect who would achieve later prominence for his monumentally designed buildings, also participated in the greening of North Philadelphia with his mid-1950s design for the Temple urban renewal area plan. This plan, with its wide streets, cul-de-sacs, and parks contrasted strongly with the existing neighborhood design of North Philadelphia, and created, according to Bauman (1987), “an incongruously nonurban environment in the heart of the city.”

Both the East Poplar and Temple plans contained seeds of the suburbanizing transformations that would occur in the 1990s with the Poplar Nehemiah houses and others. The well-publicized failure of public housing to achieve its social
goals (Bauman 1987, Vale 2000, HUD 2000a) should not obscure the original physical intentions of the projects. While this housing did not emulate vernacular suburbia (an evolving concept from the 1930s to 1950s), these public housing projects distinctly rejected the urban grids and tightly built houses that characterized North Philadelphia in favor of lower-density dwellings closely connected to green space. The design failure of these projects has not been attributed to their lower densities so much as with their failure to provide residents with defensible space and with an appropriately domestic housing model. The Yorktown project would achieve both of these goals and consequently have much greater success.

**Yorktown**

Public housing was not the only new housing constructed in Philadelphia during the urban renewal era. In 1952, the 173-unit Penn Towne Apartments were constructed for middle-income tenants in the East Poplar neighborhood (Bauman 1987). Somewhat to the north, an even larger planned community called Yorktown was laid out between 1950 and 1960 on a site bounded by 13th and 11th Streets on the east and west and Oxford and Girard Streets on the north and south. The site, located in the middle of lower North Philadelphia, was at the time built up almost completely with rowhouses, most of which were in dilapidated condition. Once the site was officially declared a slum, two-thirds of acquisition and clearance costs, which totalled over $5 million, were paid for by the Federal government under Title I of the National Housing Act of 1949. The site was vacated by 1958 and the construction of 635 new houses was complete by the early 1970s (Office of Housing and Community Development 1996). In all of these respects Yorktown was a typical urban renewal project- expensive, large in scale, completely reshaping its neighborhood, and a long time- over twenty years- in the making.

In other ways, however, Yorktown was differed significantly from the stereotypical urban renewal image of isolated towers of public housing for the very poor.
Yorktown, in contrast, was designed to provide homeownership opportunities for the lower middle class. Units were sold for between $10,500 and $14,000, mainly to working-class African-Americans. The design of the community was also distinctly different from typical urban renewal projects. Yorktown was a low-rise development of rowhouses located in staggered rows along cul-de-sacs carved from the Philadelphia grid (see site plan below). The city grid, however, was preserved, providing easy access through the site, while the cul-de-sacs provided seclusion from the through streets. Yorktown thus maintained the relationship of houses to the street, a relationship which was lost in many urban renewal projects. Homes, while built as rowhouses, featured deep front and back yards as well as garages on most models. While the architectural designs were undistinctive, the pitched roofs and generous site plans strongly differentiated the houses from other neighborhoods in North Philadelphia.

Figures 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4. The staggered cul-de-sacs and short rows of Yorktown houses can be seen in a site plan (above). Yorktown streets are configured as cul-de-sacs (left, next page), while houses are built in a style that might be best described as rowhouses crossed with suburban homes (right, next page).
Though it is composed of rowhouses, Yorktown today looks, and feels, suburban. This differentiation from the context of North Philadelphia was perceived in a positive light by residents in a 1995 city survey (Office of Housing and Community Development 1996). A resident emphasized that her home was “in Yorktown, not North Philadelphia”. Yorktown’s distinctiveness was noted both in terms of the community’s affinity with the suburbs- “suburban style housing” and “a suburb within the city” were two comments- and in terms of the sense of community created through its distinctive physical form- “neighbors look out for children”, “cohesiveness of spirit”, and “a sense of family and community” were some of the comments received. Residents also appreciated the area’s physical amenities- “less traffic, large yards, play areas” and “no corner stores” were noted as benefits. The last comment indicates that Yorktown, like the typical suburb, is an automobile-dependent development. Over 75% of respondents indicated that they used automobiles to shop, either because of a paucity of local shopping options or because of the auto-oriented nature of nearby retail.

Yorktown’s most significant achievement is that, unlike the majority of urban renewal projects, it is today perceived as a success both by its inhabitants and by the outside world. Houses have gained in value, though not tremendously- the median sale price in 1991 was $54,000, and by 1997 houses there sold for $60,000 to $70,000 (Philadelphia Inquirer 11/12/97). Though low in comparison to the suburbs, Yorktown’s average house value was much higher than the
median sale income of tracts directly adjoining the development (Adams et. al. 1991). To city housing policymakers studying Yorktown in 1996, there was little doubt that the community’s stability was due in large part to its design features. Yorktown possessed physical amenities that attracted, and retained, people who might otherwise have left the inner city. Yorktown is one of the rare Modernist inner-city developments where physical determinism seems to have succeeded, and the new developments constructed in the 1990s took the lesson of Yorktown to heart.

Three policy documents for North Philadelphia

Three policy documents which were issued in the 1980s and 1990s had a bearing on the Philadelphia case housing developments. The first was the North Philadelphia Plan: A guide to revitalization, issued by the City Planning Commission in 1985. The second and third were issued by the Office of Housing and Community Development in 1993 and 1996, and were entitled respectively Home in North Philadelphia and Learning from Yorktown.

The North Philadelphia Plan was significant because it is the most recent areawide plan to have been issued for North Philadelphia. It thus presumably reflected the vision of the City Planning Commission for this large area of the city throughout the 1990s when much new housing was being planned and constructed there. The plan was ambitious, documenting both the extensive problems and opportunities that existed, and attempting to resolve recommendations to a fine level by focusing on several smaller locations within North Philadelphia. Unfortunately, this document suffered from the shortcomings of many large-scale plans in that it was not closely linked to implementable actions by either the public or the private sector. The North Philadelphia Plan did not, for example, accurately forecast or recommend the construction of any of the three housing developments studied. Given that these developments were initiated only five years after the plan was issued, we can see the North
Philadelphia Plan as an excellent documentation of the neighborhood, but a poor guide for future action there.

The second and third documents were shorter than the Plan, being little more than pamphlets. They also differed in that they were issued not by the city agency responsible for planning, but by the city agency responsible for coordinating the development of subsidized housing construction in Philadelphia. Home in North Philadelphia was issued in 1993 and was both a response to housing plans that had already been announced in lower North Philadelphia, as well as an statement of the city’s desired form for new housing. Home explicitly advocated low densities in lower North Philadelphia, suggesting an area-wide housing density of 10 units per acre. This suggested density was much lower than Yorktown, built at about 28 units to the acre (OHCD 1996), and even lower than the Poplar Nehemiah Homes built after the issuance of the plan. The major beneficial consequence of dedensification, according to the plan, was that lower-density housing would both “generate more benefit to the acre” and “produce results over a broader area”. The plan briefly considered the design consequences of dedensification, arguing that “site plans and building prototypes for sales housing (should) include driveways and open space where practical and desirable”. Home in North Philadelphia was influential both because it advocated a specific strategy and because it was issued by the same agency that was responsible for implementing the strategy. Home did not need any exhortatory power; it merely codified OHCD’s policy on the form of future housing in lower North Philadelphia.

Learning from Yorktown was issued in 1996 and was also written by OHCD. This plan was primarily a research document which focused on the Yorktown community. The plan both reviewed the history of the development and recapitulated the results of a limited survey administered to Yorktown residents during the fall of 1995. The basic conclusion of the study was that Yorktown was a successful community which had maintained its desirability. The implicit
conclusion of the study was that Yorktown possessed features which would be desirable to replicate in future developments in the area. The study questioned, however, whether the resources existed to carry out such large-scale transformations again in the absence of a substantial federal commitment. As Learning from Yorktown was also issued by the agency responsible for funding and influencing new assisted housing construction, it could be seen as bolstering the recommendations of Home by providing a successful precedent for low-density homeownership housing in North Philadelphia. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the three developments whose stories follow replicated several of Yorktown’s features.

**The Poplar Nehemiah Houses**
The Poplar Nehemiah Houses are a homeownership development of 176 houses completed in 2000. As the largest housing development in North Philadelphia since 1990, the Poplar Houses was the first development constructed under the housing policies established by the city in 1993. The design process for the Poplar Houses provides a fascinating window into the causality of inner-city suburbanization because of the incremental nature of the decision decisions made. Faced with an existing high-density, rowhouse environment and an imperative to rebuild at a much lower density, the committee charged with determining the form of the Poplar development had to resolve a myriad of issues, each of which incrementally impacted the suburban nature of the development. The result of this design process was an interesting hybrid between vernacular suburbia and the Philadelphia rowhouse which had, as we saw in Chapter Four, the highest suburbanization score of all the Philadelphia developments measured.
The design process for the Poplar houses took place between 1991 and 1995. In 1991 the project was first suggested to the city by a community group. By 1995 outstanding interior design issues had been resolved as construction of its first phase of the project began. The development of the Poplar houses was a complex process, and its design was only part of the story. Nevertheless, design was a critical component of the project policies which were formulated by a team during 1994, and only after design issues had been resolved could other components of the project move forward. The design of the Poplar houses was not entirely a result of team decisions—many features of the project which influenced its design were determined beforehand. For example, features like the all-residential and all-homeownership nature of the development were the result of funding requirements and were therefore never a part of the design discussions.

The design discussions which determined the form of the Poplar houses were comprised of four phases. The first consisted of the initial designs created in 1990 and 1991 by the Poplar Enterprise Development Corporation, the community group which initiated the project. The second phase consisted of the preliminary decisions made by the city in 1992 and 1993 before OHCD committed to funding the project. The third and most important phase, in 1994, consisted of a formal design decision process carried out by a Project
Development Team (PDT) throughout 1994. The fourth phase in 1995 and afterwards consisted of the resolution of minor design options that occurred during the construction process of the development’s different phases.

In October 1991 HUD approved an application by the Poplar Enterprise Development Corporation (PEDC) of Philadelphia for a Nehemiah Housing Opportunity Grant totalling $3.075 million. This grant, which would cover only a small part of the total construction costs, was the generator of the Poplar Nehemiah project. The grant was itself the result of a two-year partnership process between the Poplar Community Development Corporation (a neighborhood-based CDC in the area) and Philadelphia Neighborhood Enterprise, the local office for the Enterprise Foundation, a nationally-based affordable housing developer. HUD agreed to provide $15,000 in forgivable loans to each low- or moderate-income homeowner (an income of below 80% of the city’s median household income was required) who was approved for a mortgage on one of the new houses. In January 1992 PEDC testified before OHCD asking for assistance in funding the development of the proposed 205-unit housing complex. Already, in September 1991, Mayor Wilson Goode had stated a commitment of over $8 million in city money (mostly from CDBG funds) to support the development. The mayor’s commitment was somewhat premature. As the director of OHCD would later note, it “supported… ventures which had not been derived from comprehensive neighborhood plans, had not been substantively reviewed by City planning and development agencies… and were not authorized by City Council.” (Kromer letter to Blanks, April 6, 1993)

Several characteristics of the Poplar project were determined by the funding structure of the Nehemiah grant. The Poplar development was required to be an entirely residential, homeownership housing development, since the purpose of the Nehemiah program was to increase low-income homeownership. In addition, one of the programmatic requirements for the grant required that the housing take the form of “detached dwellings, townhouses, and condominium projects.
The terminology of these parameters implied a somewhat anti-urban bias, although rowhouses were considered to be ‘townhouses’. The preliminary design produced for PEDC reflected a relatively dense rowhouse arrangement, with contiguous rows of up to six houses depending on the land available. Several back streets were shown as alleys providing access for rear parking, and several new alleys were also contemplated. An apparently public open space was also provided at the end of one block, forming an elongated central green at the core of the development area.

There is little indication that this preliminary design was ever seriously considered by OHCD. There was no explicit discussion of this design during the 1994 team meetings which determined the project design. The central green space, a core conceptual feature of the original design, did survive to be included in the development as constructed. OHCD felt that the rowhouse design for the project was problematic because of its marketability, and that more study needed to be done to see what types of houses would have value in the Poplar neighborhood. The director of OHCD justified delaying the onset of the project on this basis (Kromer, April 6 1993). The release of the Home in North Philadelphia report in July 1993 codified the city’s position on marketability: redevelopment in lower North Philadelphia would be only supported at much lower densities than the extant fabric. Kromer noted in his April 1993 letter that OHCD was “…now focusing on a smaller, lower-density first phase which will enable us to test the market potential for sales housing in Poplar…” In September 1993 the Enterprise Foundation, co-developers for the project, agreed to the city’s lower-density approach, citing a desire to conform to the policies described in Home.

With the city believing that housing form was closely related to housing value, the suburbanization of the Poplar development was at its most fundamental level the result of financial imperatives. Rowhouses were perceived to be financially unsustainable; only lower-density housing was believed to have values high
enough to merit the public expenditures that would be required for the project. OHCD felt obliged to encourage low-density development both to receive the highest financial results per unit and to spend public funds in the most responsible manner. Thus, by the time committee design discussions began in earnest in 1994, one of the most important design decisions for the Poplar Nehemiah houses had already been resolved. The project would be not only completely residential and homeownership, but it would be low-density, at a stated level of 10 units per acre (OHCD 1993).

To obtain land for the Poplar development, other regulatory agencies in the City participated in the development process. The regulatory standards used by these agencies may also have influenced the design of the project. In order to obtain land for the Poplar houses swiftly, the city’s Redevelopment Authority (RDA) committed to using urban renewal legislation to condemn land. In September 1993, the RDA applied to the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) to certify the Poplar neighborhood a ‘blighted area’. Three urban renewal blight criteria were declared to be applicable to the Poplar area: the presence of “unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate, or overcrowded conditions”, the presence of “faulty street or lot layouts”, and the presence of “economically or socially undesirable land uses”.

The urban renewal criteria used to condemn land for Poplar were dated by 1993, having clearly been designed to portray dense, overcrowded, mixed-use neighborhoods as slums. The historical nature of these standards forced some peculiar interpretations to be appropriate in the half-deserted Poplar neighborhood of 1993. For example, the city cited abandoned lots and buildings as ‘unsafe and undesirable uses’. Other condemnation standards displayed an antiurban bias. The ‘faulty street layout’ clause allowed the Redevelopment Authority to problematize the existing physical configuration of neighborhood streets. Not only were these streets problematic under the urban renewal legislation, but the application noted that ten streets in the neighborhood were
narrower than 30 feet and were therefore also illegal under the current Philadelphia zoning ordinance. In addition, one of the through streets in the Poplar area was “not fully aligned, nor offset by the minimum of 125 feet as required by the Code”. To add to the problems caused by these ‘faulty’ streets, the urban renewal petition noted that over 400 properties in the area were legally unbuildable because they were smaller than the minimum area of 1440 square feet required by City zoning, though the application did not specify what that minimum size was (Wilds 2002, pers. comm.).

While the urban renewal and other city standards were not directly responsible for the low-density form of the Poplar houses, it is clear that the intentions of these standards were to produce a built environment different from that which characterized much of Philadelphia. Under the standards applied in 1993 for the Poplar development, the dense network of streets and rowhouses that characterized the majority of older Philadelphia neighborhoods would have been impossible to construct. The inability to replicate historic urban environments under existing city regulations is a common complaint of the New Urbanism movement, and Philadelphia’s street and zoning standards shared this problem. Therefore, even if the city’s explicit policy had not been to construct a low-density housing in North Philadelphia, replicating the existing rowhouse environment in the Poplar neighborhood would probably have been difficult under the 1993 standards. These standards, however, have since been altered to allow for more clustered development in association with open space (Wilds 2002, pers. comm.).

In February 1994 the architectural firm of Kise, Franks, and Straw (KFS) were selected as consultants to produce the area plan for the Poplar development. To determine the policies that would guide the design of the development, a Project Development Team (PDT) met from March to October 1994 on a weekly or biweekly basis. The PDT was composed of both city and community representatives: RDA, OHCD, PCPC, PHS (Pennsylvania Horticultural Society)
comprised the city representatives, while ESIC (Enterprise Social Investment Corporation) and Poplar Enterprise Development Corporation (PEDC) represented neighborhood interests. KFS also sent representatives to the meetings. Design at the neighborhood and site level was the chief issue discussed by the team. As a result of the team meetings KFS produced a plan for the Poplar area in February 1995 which was nearly identical to the housing development as it was constructed. The following section discusses the key design decisions made by the team during this period, and the reasons given for these decisions as recorded in the PDT meeting minutes.

*Table 5.1* clarifies the timing and relationship of the project development team’s design decisions by itemizing the decisions and the dates on which they were discussed. The table is followed by a discussion of individual design decisions.

*Table 5.1. Design Decisions of the Poplar Project Development team, 1994*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design component</th>
<th>Design decision</th>
<th>Dates discussed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street and block design</td>
<td>Eliminate alley streets</td>
<td>4/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parallel parking along major streets</td>
<td>8/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide cul-de-sacs</td>
<td>4/19, 4/28, 5/12, 5/25, 6/9, 7/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing type</td>
<td>Twin houses</td>
<td>4/19, 4/28, 5/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to houses</td>
<td>Front entrance facing street</td>
<td>4/19, 5/12, 5/18, 7/8, 8/19, 9/21, 9/22, 9/29, 10/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobile access</td>
<td>Individual driveways</td>
<td>4/19, 5/4, 8/19, 9/21, 9/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance of house from</td>
<td>5 to 10 feet</td>
<td>4/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architectural image</td>
<td>Gabled, pitched roofs</td>
<td>4/19, 5/18, 10/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials of house</td>
<td>Brick and stucco facades</td>
<td>4/19, 5/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal site planning</td>
<td>Number, location of rooms, amenities</td>
<td>5/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood open space</td>
<td>Form and location of open space, relationship to</td>
<td>4/19, 4/28, 5/4, 5/12, 8/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neighboring houses</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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**Street and block design**

Three street and block configuration issues were discussed. Two of these decisions produced physical features not previously found in the neighborhood, while the third rejected a feature usually associated with lower-density environments. The first decision, to eliminate back streets and alley streets, was
resolved quickly by the team and was not raised again. Security and sanitation problems were cited as the reasons why back streets were undesirable. In keeping with this decision, the design for the first phase of the project eliminated three back streets and several smaller alleys that ran through the interiors of blocks. The second street design decision dealt with the orientation of parked cars on the major north-south streets running through the development. Angled parking was proposed by the architects as a possibility but was rejected by the City Planning Commission on August 3rd. The Commission believed that angled parking would interfere with cars pulling out of driveways and that it was therefore “not desirable”. The third street design issue was perhaps most significant, as it involved a substantial departure from historic Philadelphia neighborhood designs. This design change transformed two of the shorter east-west through streets into cul-de-sacs. This idea was suggested to the architects on April 19 by the team as a measure which would “enhance security and privacy” in the development. There was little dispute about the desirability of the cul-de-sacs, although questions about their appropriate dimensions were raised in subsequent meetings. The cul-de-sacs were designed as true dead-ends; the team “considered and dismissed” the idea of connecting the end of the first cul-de-sac through to the north-south through street. Although no reason was given for this decision, it is likely that team members believed the privacy of units on the cul-de-sac would be compromised by such a connection.

**Automobile access**

Since back streets and alleys were to be removed in the redesign of the Poplar neighborhood, automobile access to the houses was from the front. The low density of the developments provided plenty of room for off-street parking. Off-street parking was also a statutory requirement in the zoning code. The team considered several parking alternatives: shared rear parking, individual front yard parking, front-accessed rear parking, and private side yard parking. The first two of these alternatives were associated with rowhouse-type houses, and the second two were associated with twin house types. The form of off-street parking
was thus dependent on the form of housing chosen. Twin housing was chosen relatively quickly (see housing type below), and side yard parking pads were quickly chosen as the preferred location for cars. The PCPC questioned the numbers of curb cuts that would be required for individual parking, but it was agreed on May 4th that houses would have individual driveways with shared curb cuts to access the side yards. The location of parking would come up again when the location of front doors was decided upon (see access to houses below).

**Housing type**

The team initially considered many housing types, ranging from rowhouses to single-family detached housing. Twin houses immediately attracted positive interest from the team, and by mid-May twins had been agreed upon as the dominant housing type for the development. No explicit reason was given, but the twins apparently provided an appropriate compromise between density and cost considerations. In order to study the visual impact of different housing types, KFS presented a range of housing types found in different Philadelphia neighborhoods to the team. The housing models preferred by the team were those found in the East Falls and Mt. Airy neighborhoods. These were early twentieth-century ‘streetcar suburbs’ in which the majority of houses were either detached or twins. Single-family detached housing also appears to have been seriously considered as an option. On April 28 the team asked the architects to consider single-family detached housing, apparently as the result of interest at OHCD. The architects found, however, that the low density of this option would significantly increase per unit infrastructure costs, and single-family detached housing was not discussed again after May 4. While single-family houses would have more literally replicated the suburbs, the decision to break up the standard Philadelphia rowhouse block by providing twins was nevertheless a significant step in creating a more suburban image for the Poplar houses.

**Distance of house from street**

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On April 19 the team agreed that houses should have a ‘modest setback, 5 to 10 feet from the sidewalk’. This provision for a front yard significantly differentiated the Poplar houses from nearby rowhouses, which had minimal setbacks from the street. The team’s stated aim of providing these setbacks was to enhance the privacy and security of houses while leaving adequate space for a back yard. The presence of a front yard accentuated the difference of the Poplar houses from their context and reinforced the suburban image that they sought to present.

*Architectural image*

The team also agreed on the type of image that the houses should present. At its second meeting in April the team declared that the houses ‘should not look like public housing’, a preference which translated to the new housing having pitched rather than flat roofs. (The minutes noted that the Richard Allen Homes, a HOPE VI public housing project adjoining the Poplar site, would soon have pitched roofs as well!) The decision to have pitched roofs was a clear rejection of the low-rise modernist architecture which characterized most of Philadelphia’s housing projects, many of which were near the Poplar neighborhood. The pitched roof decision also differentiated the Poplar houses from adjoining rowhouses, which generally had flat roofs sloping toward the rear of the house. In May the team also asked the architects to consider façade variations to reduce the uniformity of the block streetfronts. Another image issue was linked to the dispute over where the front entrances should be located. In its last meeting the team requested to KFS that the house elevations be refined “to imitate the appearance of a single house”. This final decision was a clear statement that the team favored a single-family detached house model, even if financial exigencies had required twins.

*House materials*

Brick, stucco, and imitation wood siding were the façade options considered by the team on April 19th. Residents selected brick and stucco as preferred façade materials and the issue was discussed only once again on May 18, when as part of the issue of providing variety to the street, KFS suggested providing two or
more façade treatments- an all brick front and a brick-and-stucco front. It was agreed that the sides and backs of the houses would be stucco. As constructed, all houses were built with brick front facades and stucco side and rear facades. The decision to use brick was a contextual decision since historic rowhouses in the Poplar neighborhood were built of brick. The Ludlow houses would later use house materials to reject their nearby context, but the Poplar houses did not take this step.

**Access to houses**

The issue of where front doors would be located on the houses was the thorniest design issue discussed and was a subject of nearly continuous discussion during the later team meetings. The door location issue was also the only design decision where community and city preferences diverged significantly. The issue ended not with a compromise, but with the city successfully insisting that entrances would be located on the fronts of houses. The location of the front doors polarized the design team because it brought the debate between the suburban and urban nature of the houses down to a single, easily visible issue. Despite their significant departure from their context, so long as their entrances faced the street the Poplar houses could be still be thought of as urban. Having the houses completely reject the street was a step that the city agencies on the team would not take.

The location of front doors was a design issue that could not be discussed until the issues of parking location and housing types had been resolved. On May 12 OHCD suggested that driveways have an entrance to the kitchen in order to “ease the unloading of groceries”. According to a Philadelphia planner, however, this suggestion did not indicate an OHCD preference for a relocated front door, but rather an agreement with the concept of an additional, side door (Wilds 2002, pers. comm.). By mid-July the team was evaluating unit plans. Team members from the Enterprise Foundation suggested the idea of side doors at the July 19 meeting as a way of introducing some variety into the types of units available.
ESIC recognized, however, that placing entrances on the sides of the houses would reduce the useable side yard space or require more space between houses, reducing the density of houses. ESIC therefore recommended that side doors be used minimally. On August 16th the City Planning Commission weighed in against side entrances, also citing the likelihood of entry porches infringing upon side yards. Paradoxically, the PCPC noted that the open, “somewhat-suburban” character of the development would be lessened by side entrances. After July 19, however, ESIC apparently altered its position against side doors, perhaps as a result of meetings with the community. The unit plans which were approved by ESIC in August had side entrances, and on September 21 the PCPC sent a letter to ESIC which again rejected the use of side entrances.

In a September 21 letter the PCPC cited two major reasons for promoting front entrances. The first cited defensible space concerns. As described by Newman (1972), defensible space advocated the placement of entrances and windows facing public space in order to promote higher levels of activity and watchfulness, and presumably public safety, in those areas. Jacobs (1961) had earlier praised the “eyes on the street” provided by vernacular urban housing. The PCPC was also concerned that side entries would give “undue prominence to the automobile” by forcing cars to be located further into the front yards of houses. This would also, said the PCPC, increase the possibility of vandalism to cars.

Other members of the team soon weighed in on the dispute. On September 22 the Horticultural Society discouraged side entrances, citing defensible space concerns for the ‘village green’ open space along 13th Street (see below). The PHS also believed that side entrances would reduce the ability of homeowners to “create a pleasant and attractive arrival zone for themselves and for visitors.”

Also on September 22, the Poplar Enterprise Development Corporation sent a letter to the team testifying that the community favored side entrances. Residents cited several reasons for this preference. The first was that houses ‘felt bigger’
when entered from the side. The second was that side entrances permitted split-level plans with an entry half-way between a finished basement and the first floor. PEDC also argued that side entrances were in fact more contextual as "front porches are not a prevalent feature in this neighborhood... (side entrances) will help to maintain the character of West Poplar." PEDC also felt that side entrances offered more privacy, made front yards more usable, and provided space for a bay window on the front of the house. Finally, PEDC argued that front steps would not serve a social function in some areas, as people would not want to sit facing Twelfth Street and Cambridge Street. These border streets faced vacant commercial space along Girard Avenue and the vacant (in 1994) Richard Allen Homes.

PEDC consulted with members of the Philadelphia Police Department, who did not agree with the defensible space concerns cited by many team members. On September 29 a representative of the local police district testified that side entrances "(did not) pose a security issue". The officer suggested that features like outdoor lighting, motion sensors, and window guards could adequately address the security concerns raised by side entrances.

The side entrance versus front entrance dispute was not resolved until the last PDT meeting on October 6th. At this meeting, RDA, OHCD, and PCPC reiterated their "strong opposition, at both the staff and director level, to an all-side yard entrance site plan", and vowed that "(they) would only support a plan similar to the preliminary plat plan that featured mostly front entrances". The adamant position of the city apparently won the day and on October 12 the PEDC board voted to approve the preliminary plan with front entrances.

*Interior space planning*

Interior design issues were nowhere near as contentious as the entrance location dispute, although interior site plans could not be resolved until entrance locations were finalized. The team reached early agreement on several interior planning
options such as the overall size of the house; the location and type of bathrooms; the location of amenities like the washer/dryer, furnace, and storage shed; and the location of the kitchen and master bedroom. The location of stairs was left unresolved until after October 6 due to the entrance location dispute.

**Neighborhood open space**
The first plan proposed by PEDC and ESIC in early 1992 featured a neighborhood open space, or ‘village green’, located along 12th Street. This open space was transformed by KFS in its April 19, 1994 site plan into a rectangular square occupying the end of one of the city blocks. The location and size of the open space were not altered through the design process, but there were several discussions on the type of landscaping, amenities, and maintenance that would be appropriate for the park. The neighborhood residents on the team and the horticultural society representative played a strong role in determining the form of the open space. Security concerns dictated the planting of low shrubs and the absence of seating from the finished park. Maintenance of the green and the cul-de-sac open spaces was not taken on by the city but was funded by a homeowner’s association and administered by Philadelphia Green, a nonprofit foundation.

**The Poplar design process and the causality of suburbanization**
The Poplar design process was characterized by an overall consonance of vision between the major actors. No one contested the low-density paradigm which had already been established by OHCD, and almost everyone agreed on basic concepts like the housing type, architectural image, façade materials, and both the presence and form of the open space. The location of the entrance was the only design issue which polarized the team members, and the city, which controlled the funding for the project, got its wish despite strong community wishes to the contrary. While the rest of the design process was the product of both community and city desires, the front entrance dispute clearly demonstrated that the city’s imperatives would be realized in the project. The entrance dispute
was as much about image, esthetics, and ultimately urbanity as it was about the security which was so often cited as the crux of the problem.

Figures 5.6 and 5.7. The April 1994 version of Phase I of the Poplar development (left) contained twin houses facing the street and a neighborhood open space. The February 1995 final design (right) was similar except for the transformation of a street into a cul-de-sac. (Illustrations courtesy of Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development and copyright Kise, Franks, and Straw Architects)

While the street-facing front doors of the Poplar houses were a vote for the urban nature of the houses, many of the other design decisions made favored suburban attributes. Explaining the causes of these decisions goes far toward explaining the suburbanization of the Poplar neighborhood. While we might say that the overall inner-city suburbanization of the Poplar neighborhood was contributed to by the construction of the Poplar houses, what were the causes of the suburban attributes displayed by those houses?

The design decisions of the Project Development Team were responses to many of the conditions that existed in the Poplar neighborhood. Perhaps the easiest way to break down the causality of inner-city suburbanization in the Poplar neighborhood is to reexamine the six inner-city suburbanization conditions that were described in Chapter Three and applied to developments in Chapter Four.
Together, these conditions explain the causality of inner-city suburbanization in the Poplar development.

1) Density Reductions. Density reductions were recommended by OHCD in the *Home* report while the Poplar project was in its early planning stages. This report provided a rationale for a low-density policy in the Poplar neighborhood and was never seriously questioned. It should also be noted that the city zoning encouraged lower-density zoning than existed on the site.

2) Homogenization of building typology. Although diverse types of units were initially considered, the committee chose a homogenously twin-house neighborhood for reasons of economy and because the unit type chosen promoted the established ideal of low density (Wilds 2002- pers. comm.).

3) Homogenization of land use mix. This characteristic was pre-determined by the conditions of the Nehemiah grant. This grant provided funds for housing construction only and did not fund mixed-use buildings.

4) Shift to a suburban street pattern. The design decision to build two cul-de-sacs was made by the team early in the design process and appears to have been promoted by OHCD more than by residents, ESIC, or KFS. Cul-de-sacs were suggested, as mentioned previously, to improve privacy and security for the houses on those streets. It should be noted that the street standards in place in the city discouraged the existing street pattern and provided an additional rationale for the transformation.

5) Shift to suburban site planning. The directive to built at a low density established that the Poplar houses would occupy relatively little of their site. The team decision to build twins allowed for many lower-density amenities to be provided. Many other design decisions, like the placement and depth of driveways, the depth of front yards, and the locations of entrances, were resolved
in committee. As we saw in the front door debate, some decisions that would have contributed additional suburban characteristics, such as reducing the relationship of the house to the street and further prioritizing the automobile, were ultimately rejected by the team.

6) Degree of suburban architecture. The team was very aware of architectural image issues and image decisions were made quickly. Most architectural decisions served to differentiate the houses from their context, while one decision was clearly contextual. As twins with off-street parking and front lawns, the Poplar houses were obviously distinct from nearby row houses, but the decision to provide brick facades visually related them to the rowhouses. Almost all other architectural decisions, including the pitched roofs, gables, and front porches of the Poplar houses, were intended to differentiate the Poplar houses from their context, including both historic rowhouses and Modernist public housing.

The resulting “semi-suburban” character of the Poplar houses was apparent to all of the parties involved in the design decisions. Both visually and historically, the Poplar houses represented the most significant incorporation of suburban attributes into Philadelphia inner-city housing that had yet occurred. The two developments described in the following sections illustrate some additional dimensions of the development-level decisions that contributed to inner-city suburbanization in lower North Philadelphia.

Cecil B. Moore Houses

Around the time that the Poplar CDC was applying to HUD for the Nehemiah grant which would eventually generate the Poplar houses, another Nehemiah application was made by the National Temple CDC, a neighborhood group located in an area of North Philadelphia to the northwest of Poplar. While Poplar was built relatively quickly, it would be four years before the city would consider funding the Temple Nehemiah project because of organizational problems in the CDC. By 1995 the Nehemiah funding had been withdrawn but the city had
committed to funding the project nevertheless, so additional sources of funding had to be found. These funds came from an Economic Development Initiative grant which OHCD received from HUD in April of 1997, creating the Cecil B. Moore Homeownership Zone. This program, initiated by the Clinton administration, provided Federal money to construct homeownership housing within areas designated as ‘homeownership zones’ that met specific economic and physical distress criteria (OHCD 1996, HUD 1996b, and OHCD 2002). Housing would be funded anywhere within this zone where land was available. Unlike the Nehemiah grant, which was intended to create low-income homeownership opportunities, the Cecil B. Moore houses could be sold to households earning up to 20 percent more than the city’s median household income. The zones were intended by HUD to encourage middle-income homeowners to invest in distressed neighborhoods. With the homeownership zone funding in place, OCHD committed to constructing 214 new houses and rehabilitating 82 more existing houses.

Following the precedent of the Poplar houses design committee, a project development team was convened for several months in 1995 to establish design policies for the Cecil B. Moore houses, which at the time had not yet been funded. This team’s composition was similar to the Poplar team and included several community residents. Although minutes for this team’s meetings were not taken, the team’s recommendations of this team were published in a “Neighborhood Housing Strategy for the Cecil B. Moore Area” in February 1996.

The Cecil B. Moore site confronted the project development team with conditions that were quite different from the Poplar site. The Moore houses’ ‘site’ was much more dispersed, and included several blocks of existing rowhouses that were both physically intact and historically distinguished. Total site clearance was therefore out of the question, even had there been adequate funds to construct housing in the entire Zone. This meant that the continuous new neighborhood fabric created by Poplar would not occur in the Moore project. Because of its
dispersed nature, the new Moore houses would in many cases adjoin existing row houses, which were up to four stories in height and often quite large. Many of the houses in the Moore area had actually been built as ‘twins’, with five-foot alleys between pairs of rowhouses. The team therefore had to confront the design issue of introducing a new, lower-density housing typology into this urbane setting.

Despite the somewhat different site conditions, the Moore team reached design conclusions that were quite similar to the recommendations of the Poplar team. In its final report the team emphasized the following design decisions:

- New housing would be low in density and would generally take the form of twin houses. It was important to provide houses which were relatively inexpensive to construct. Twins also allowed for “contemporary amenities such as yards and off-street parking.”

- The existing rowhouse fabric should be preserved where groups of buildings with “significant architectural merit” existed, or where there were “existing strong blocks” of occupied homeownership houses.

- Where there was sufficient land to acquire entire blocks, streets should be “eliminated and redesigned to provide more generous sites for new houses and to help reduce densities.”

- Neighborhood and building designs should “contrast with the older deteriorating fabric of the area and project a new image for the community.”

- Where there was sufficient room to construct new houses, these houses should be set back from the street and have side yard parking, porches, and rear yards. These twins should have pitched roofs, again to “contrast with the existing fabric.”
Many of these recommendations were similar to those decided upon by the Poplar team. The emphasis on low density was repeated, likely as a result of both the city’s extant (by 1995) low-density policy for Lower North Philadelphia, as well as resident desires. Residents clearly sought to differentiate the new houses from extant rowhouses, despite the architecturally distinguished nature of many of these houses and the fact that the Homeownership Zone was committed to restoring over 80 rowhouses. While features like yards and side parking could be seen as the natural byproducts of a lower-density twin form of house, the emphasis on different architectural imagery - pitched roofs and front porches - showed the residents’ wishes to, as they said, “provide a new image” for the community. This desired image was clearly not urban in the Philadelphia sense: there can be little doubt that the residents desired to produce a neighborhood fabric similar to that of a much lower-density neighborhood. While the built product of the process could not be called suburban, like the Poplar houses it was nevertheless a significant step in that direction. The ideal house, at least for the residents participating in the team meetings, was one that was very different from the rowhouses typical of the neighborhood. The two drawings below show the architectural image of the project determined by the team design process.
Figures 5.8 and 5.9. The proposed Cecil B. Moore houses (left) produced by the 1995 design process were much smaller and lower in density than the existing rowhouses. The collective effect of these houses was a very different kind of neighborhood (right). Illustrations courtesy of Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development. Left drawing copyright Urban Partners, Inc. and right rendering copyright Kise Straw and Kolodner.

In the section above it is interesting to compare the street relationships of the rowhouses at top left and bottom right with the new houses in the center. The new houses, as recommended by the design process, are shorter, with pitched roofs, street trees, front yards, and back yards with patios. Off-street parking is not shown in the section nor is the fact that the houses are actually twins, not single-family. Nevertheless the analogy to suburban neighborhood and housing form is clear.

As constructed, Phase I of the Cecil B. Moore houses differed slightly from the houses shown in the section above (see photographs in Chapter Four). As the project team had foreseen, the lack of a large contiguous site did not allow for the creation of cul-de-sacs and a ‘village green’ as in the Poplar development. One change reflected contextual considerations: high gables were added to the houses to better match the height of the twins with those of nearby four-story rowhouses. Other house features like bay windows and garages contributed to the ‘new image’ of the Moore houses.

As at Poplar, the Moore design process reflected both the preexisting imperative to build at lower densities and the strong desire of neighborhood residents to
have the new houses look different from the existing context. The form and
design of the Moore houses provided desired amenities for their buyers and, just
as importantly, provided an suburban image which, to the residents on the
project team, was synonymous with success.

Ludlow Village Houses
The architectural designs of both the Poplar and the Moore houses represented
compromises between the conflicting desires to differentiate the houses from
their surroundings while retaining enough contextual features to allow the new
houses to relate to nearby rowhouses. The Ludlow Houses, a relatively small
housing development constructed between 1998 and 2002, represented a more
ext of the Ludlow Houses were similar in virtually all respects save their radically
different architectural designs. The contrasting nature of these designs
underscored the critical role of architectural design and style in determining the
image of new housing in North Philadelphia.

Phase III of the Ludlow Houses was planned and constructed between 1996 and
2000, while Phase IV was planned and constructed between 1998 and 2002.
Both of these phases were constructed as twin, homeownership housing
developments with front porches, side yard parking, and sizeable back yards.
The two phases faced each other across a street that had been widened with a
planted mall as part of the overall development plan. Both phases sold for
approximately the same amount (between $42,000 and $45,000) and were
available for sale to first homebuyers who met income guidelines of less than 80
percent of the Philadelphia metropolitan area’s median income (Wilds 2002,
pers. comm.). Despite their programmatic similarities, the two phases as built
could not have appeared more different, as the photographs on the following
page show.

The Ludlow III houses were clearly designed to emulate the row house stock of
the surrounding neighborhood. Their brick and red stucco facades are similar, if
not identical, to the brick bearing wall construction of nearby historic rowhouses (see below). The Ludlow III houses also imitated the three-story heights and almost-flat roofs found in these rowhouses. The result is a development which resembled a rowhouse block with half of its houses removed. Ludlow IV made none of the contextual gestures of the previous phase. Where Ludlow III was three-story, Ludlow IV had only two. Where Ludlow III was rectangular in shape, Ludlow IV was L-shaped, providing a nook for a wraparound side porch and entry to the house. Where Ludlow III had a flat roof, Ludlow IV had a pitched roof with front and side gables. Where Ludlow III was red brick, Ludlow IV had white vinyl siding.

Figures 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, and 5.13. Phase III of the Ludlow Village houses (left above) is designed to resemble adjoining rowhouses (right above), while Phase IV of Ludlow (left, next page) has architectural features not commonly found in Lower North Philadelphia. Nearby developments like Taino Gardens (right, next page) have similar acontextual features like gables, pitched roofs, and vinyl siding.
While the overall esthetic effect of Ludlow III was of a development that in style, if not in density, was trying to be contextual, the overall effect of Ludlow IV was of a development trying to distinguish itself from its context as much as possible through architecture. None of the architectural features found on the Ludlow IV houses were commonly found in North Philadelphia and they consequently did not resemble any of the historic housing found there. Like the Poplar and Moore houses, the Ludlow IV houses did not appear literally suburban. Nevertheless, they incorporated stylistically many of the features that, especially in the context of North Philadelphia, were reminiscent of suburban housing.

Why did Ludlow IV make such distinctive design changes from its contextual predecessor, created under the same institutional arrangements? Unlike the Poplar houses, where many design decisions were made by committee, much of the architectural design in Ludlow IV was left to the architecture firm of Buell Kratzer Powell (BKP) which designed the development. This firm was different from the one which designed Ludlow III. There were two possible motivations for creating a distinctly different design.

The first reason was the community's desire for a different architectural image than the previous design. According to the architects, the mandate for housing with "more suburbanlike" qualities came directly from the community group spearheading development, the Ludlow Development Corporation (LDC). This
group played a stronger role in the development process than did the CDCs of the other two housing developments studied, mainly due to the determination and stability of its leadership. The personal preferences of the chairperson of LDC were therefore influential in the design process.

The second reason may simply have been that BKP wished to differentiate their design product from the previous project. In this the architects were well-served by their choice of materials and design for Ludlow IV, which were particularly cost-efficient at the same time as they radically changed the appearance of the houses from the previous phase. The product differentiation seems to have been successful—BKP have been commissioned again for Ludlow V, the next phase of the development, which will begin construction in late 2002. Yet at the same time, the LDC is apparently interested in housing that looks “more like the older neighborhood fabric” than Ludlow IV (Wilds 2002, pers. comm.). Ludlow IV may have gone too far in projecting a suburban image for the community.

The majority of changes wrought to the Philadelphia neighborhood landscape by the Ludlow houses were unrelated to their architecture and were caused by the same factors that brought them about in the previous two development examined. The low density, homogenous single-family nature of both phases of Ludlow were the consequence of the policy and funding decisions guiding the project, though like the previous two developments these features were consistent with community wishes. The most striking spatial feature of the development as a whole was the widened mall of Franklin Street, a feature that was found neither in the previous two developments nor in the Philadelphia vernacular landscape as a whole. This feature was intended by the community group to “differentiate” the Ludlow project from its surroundings, something which it achieved quite successfully. The mall also introduced an openness into the development which was quite in keeping with the low densities of the houses. Architecture, however, played perhaps the most key role in determining the suburban image of Ludlow. While Ludlow III may have been more suburban in
many ways, its architectural style placed it firmly in the context of its rowhouse surroundings. The architecture of Ludlow IV was, compared to the previous phase, a brutal acknowledgment of inner-city suburbanization. It explicitly rendered as architecture the changes that the project’s low densities and homogeneous nature had already made. The success of this move will be seen in the form taken by future phases of the Ludlow Houses.

Conclusions-Philadelphia

Suburbanization in Lower North Philadelphia was caused by the combined actions of different actors in the housing development process. Motivated by different reasons, these actors together advocated for and produced lower-density twin housing with significant neighborhood- and architectural-level design changes from the historic context. At the most basic level, inner-city suburbanization occurred in the new housing developments of Lower North Philadelphia because everyone wanted it to occur. Although there were some minor disputes over the degree of suburbanization, no one among the many actors involved questioned the basic goal of transforming dense, mixed-use rowhouse neighborhoods into tracts of low-density housing with acontextual architectural features. Without this consonance of vision among the diverse parties, there is little chance that the changes seen in the above developments could ever have been realized.

The policies which dictated that the city would push for lower-density construction in lower North Philadelphia were established by the 1993 publication of the Home in North Philadelphia discussion document. The 1996 publication of Yorktown expanded this policy mandate by showing a successful precedent for housing which had significantly transformed its neighborhood design and established a new housing prototype for the area. These two plans reflected OHCD’s strong preference for low-density housing, and this preference was enforced through OHCD’s major role in financing and organizing the development of all three of the case developments examined.
The homogeneous nature of the new housing was essentially mandated by the funding requirements of the subsidies that paid for the new housing. Both Poplar and Moore were specifically designated as homeownership projects and none of the three developments had funding for commercial components. Finally, the cost exigencies of the developments mandated that designs be standardized, allowing for very little differentiation in the unit types of the developments.

The majority of neighborhood-level and site-level decisions were established through collaborative action between government and community representatives. Major neighborhood-level design changes like the village green and the central mall of Ludlow were initiated by community groups, reflecting these groups' preference for open space and features that would organize and differentiate the new developments. Other features like the cul-de-sacs of Poplar were the result of joint government-community actions.

Architectural features were also generally reached through joint actions. Communities, especially in Moore and Ludlow, displayed strong preferences for the new housing to stand out from the surrounding rowhouses. This preference likely reflected both a desire for additional amenities and the sense that only through the establishment of a strong new image could these communities escape the decline which had devastated surrounding neighborhoods. The sense of community felt by residents of Yorktown was evidence that strong spatial and architectural differentiation could indeed build social bonds within a new housing community in North Philadelphia. In the case of Ludlow, the architecture firm designing the development also had major role in establishing the new image of the development.

Despite the major changes seen in all three of the developments studied, inner-city suburbanization in Philadelphia faced significant constraints. Large, contiguous sites were difficult to obtain; only in Poplar did the city have a
relatively free hand in neighborhood design. Despite the derelict state of the neighborhood, this freedom was only reached through significant condemnation because the density of housing on the site meant that every block had a few remaining houses. The high density of Philadelphia’s historic blocks—sometimes up to 60 units per acre—meant that even a radically dedensified block, as in Poplar, which was less than one-quarter of this density—was still about twice as dense as Levittown, the epitome of postwar vernacular suburbia.

Philadelphia’s neighborhood design was also somewhat resistant to major site changes. North-south through streets were major traffic arteries and could not be closed off. This left a maximum dimension of about 400 feet from east-to-west which precluded the level of neighborhood design changes that were seen in Detroit. Finally, the overwhelming context of brick rowhouses influenced the design of most new housing, though not all, giving even the Poplar houses a lightly contextual appearance.

Philadelphia’s hardest-hit city neighborhoods are due to experience even more significant transformations in the next few years. The city’s Neighborhood Transformation Initiative is committed to spending tens of millions of dollars to demolish, clear, and redevelop vacant rowhouses in the inner city. The experiences of the three developments studied show that significant transformations are indeed possible, though it is likely that they will never produce a literal replication of vernacular suburbia, even in lower North Philadelphia. The single-family detached house, that iconic symbol of suburbia, has so far remained a forbidden object in the Philadelphia inner city. As of this writing OHCD remains committed to not funding these houses because of cost constraints.

Finally, the role of the private market should be noted. In contrast with the developments studied in Detroit, the private sector played no role whatsoever in the decent transformations of lower North Philadelphia because of the chronically
low value of housing. Would housing which transformed its environment more radically, as in Detroit, have more value and begin to make privately-funded development in the Philadelphia inner city profitable? For the time being, the answer to this question will have to remain unknown.

The causality of inner-city suburbanization in Detroit

The story of inner-city suburbanization in Detroit, like that of Philadelphia, can be viewed through the story of a single neighborhood. All three of the case developments examined in this section were located in the far East Side neighborhood of Jefferson-Chalmers. Jefferson-Chalmers, and Detroit in general, had several physical characteristics which led to it being a very different environment for inner-city suburbanization than North Philadelphia. As we saw in Chapter Four, these differences led to Detroit having much more literally suburban developments.

Some of the differences between the neighborhoods were geographic in nature. While North Philadelphia was the sole location of inner-city suburbanization in Philadelphia, Jefferson-Chalmers was far from unique in Detroit. This was both because it was a much smaller neighborhood, comprising only eight census tracts to North Philadelphia’s 54, and also because Detroit was a more severely distressed city, which meant that Jefferson-Chalmers’ distressed tracts comprised a much smaller percentage of the total—less than ten percent—in Detroit. Jefferson-Chalmers was consequently only one of the several distressed Detroit areas in which qualitatively suburban developments were located.

Detroit was, on the whole, a much newer city than Philadelphia, with the majority of its growth occurring during the twentieth century, and within Detroit Jefferson-Chalmers was one of the city’s newer neighborhoods, located at the eastern edge of the city and built up for the most part between the World Wars. Its neighborhood pattern, however, was as typical of Detroit as North Philadelphia’s was of Philadelphia, comprised mainly of freestanding single and multiple
dwellings located in a rather casual grid pattern (see neighborhood map in next section).

Detroit’s steeper decline and different urban fabric might lead one to believe that the inner-city suburbanization process would be different in that city, and indeed it was. Inner-city suburbanization in Detroit occurred by an entirely different process than it did in Philadelphia, though we will see that the causes of this process were actually quite similar. Suburbanization in Detroit occurred almost completely outside of a policy framework, both because the city did not have any effective policies in place and because the process in Detroit was in large part motivated and executed by the private sector, though the public sector also played a substantial role.

Inner-city suburbanization was also a more contentious process in Detroit. The physical transformations wrought by the process were much greater, creating gated enclaves which had very little to do with their surrounding neighborhoods. Their exclusive physical nature made them easier to criticize on those grounds. Race and class also played a role in the problematization of suburbanization in Detroit. Unlike in Philadelphia, the Detroit developments were not affordable housing. They were expensive and affordable only to the middle class. And while both the surrounding neighborhoods and the new developments were almost entirely purchased by African-Americans, the fact that the majority of the actors creating the developments were white made them easier to criticize on grounds of exclusivity and exploitation.

Inner-city suburbanization in Detroit can be thought of as having two phases. The first phase began in 1991 and lasted about five years during the planning and development process for Victoria Park, the first of the case developments examined in this chapter. Although there was substantial precedent for Victoria Park as a typical development deal, there was little precedent for its formal nature as a self-enclosed enclave of suburban-single family houses. The creation
of Victoria Park was more or less single-handedly responsible for the second phase of suburbanization, which began around 1996 and has continued to the present (2002). The second phase was initially comprised of the ‘follow-up’ developments inspired by Victoria Park. One of those developments, Clairpointe, is the second case development examined in this chapter. The second phase also involved a substantial questioning of the benefits of suburbanization, brought on again mainly by Victoria Park but by other developments as well. One of those developments, a proposal called Victoria Woods which was planned for a riverfront public park, is the third case development examined in this chapter. The exclusive design of inner-city suburban developments came under criticism and led to a cooling of political enthusiasm for this type of development. Ironically, the more extreme nature of suburbanization in Detroit may therefore have discouraged its progress, at least temporarily.

Introduction to Jefferson-Chalmers

In many ways the Jefferson-Chalmers area of Detroit’s east side was typical of many Detroit neighborhoods. Like much of Detroit it was not particularly old, dating back only to the early twentieth century, and like much of Detroit it was relatively low-density though not suburban. Also like many Detroit neighborhoods, it had a relative lack of distinct physical character, leading to its being named, like other parts of Detroit, after the intersection of two of its major streets. Finally and most tragically, like much of Detroit Jefferson-Chalmers experienced almost unbelievable disinvestment and decline during the 1970s and 1980s.
Although Detroit was founded by the French in the early eighteenth century, the city did not experience extensive growth until the beginning of the twentieth. Much of this growth was tied to Detroit’s being the home of the automobile industry, whose factories mushroomed in and around Detroit after 1910. Detroit’s population grew in tandem with the auto industry, rising from less than 300,000 in 1900 to almost 1,600,000 by 1930. The city’s population would peak in 1950. During that time much of Detroit’s physical growth occurred and the city spread out in all directions.

While Philadelphia built rowhouses, Detroit built single-family detached homes. Even during the nineteenth century rowhouses were almost unknown in the city. Instead, the city favored single and two-family houses like many other Midwestern cities. Brush Park, examined in the last chapter, was a typical nineteenth-century upper-middle-class neighborhood in Detroit and was built at the surprisingly low density of about two dwelling units per acre. The average density of developments would rise somewhat to about thirteen units per acre (see Table 4.14), but with its commitment to the detached dwelling Detroit never
developed in a high-density fashion. As the 1941 Federal Writers’ Project said of Detroit, then at the peak of its growth, “the city has no plans to construct a subway and there is little indication that it would ever pay its way if constructed” (Federal Writers Project 1941, 232). There was something appropriate in the fact that this Midwestern version of Los Angeles was where the powerfully suburbanizing force of the automobile came into being.

Jefferson-Chalmers was located at the eastern edge of Detroit along the shore of the Detroit River. Beyond it lay the wealthy suburbs of the Grosse Pointes, home to many of the wealthiest citizens of the region. Because of its relatively distant location from the city center, Jefferson-Chalmers did not develop extensively until the 1920s. Like the rest of Detroit, however, it developed quickly and by World War II the outer reaches of the neighborhood were built out. Jefferson-Chalmers therefore had a relatively brief life as a built-out neighborhood; it would only exist in this form for about twenty-five years before it began to decline.

As one might expect, Jefferson-Chalmers was not a particularly high-density environment. In 1950, the area where Victoria Park would later be built averaged only about 13 dwelling units per acre, slightly higher than the historic (1950) average found for Detroit. This density was about twice that of postwar vernacular suburban developments like Levittown. The development of Jefferson-Chalmers was contemporaneous with that of early automobile suburbia and as such it shared many characteristics with that neighborhood form. (The fabric of Grosse Pointe Park directly to the east, for example, was almost identical to that of Jefferson-Chalmers.) Residential, commercial, and industrial uses were relatively segregated, with streetfronting commercial uses located in long strips along major avenues while residential areas occupied the blocks behind. Industrial uses were mainly confined to railroad corridors and occupied large, relatively contiguous blocks of land in a fashion quite unlike the older scattered-site industrial facilities of North Philadelphia. The houses of Jefferson-
Chalmers also made substantial accommodation for the automobile: most were built with off-street garages.

Figures 5.15 and 5.16. Although the housing stock and neighborhood design of the Detroit neighborhood of Jefferson-Chalmers (left) and the suburb of Grosse Pointe Park (right) are not that different, Jefferson-Chalmers has experienced extensive disinvestment and decline, while Grosse Pointe Park has remained prosperous.

Jefferson-Chalmers differed substantially, however, from postwar vernacular suburbia. Its neighborhood block pattern was pedestrian-friendly, being built as a grid of rather long north-south blocks. Commercial uses were located on in relatively close proximity to residential areas and were pedestrian-accessible. Though it accommodated the automobile, the neighborhood also provided for mass transit. Jefferson Avenue was a major trolley route which linked the neighborhood to downtown. Jefferson-Chalmers was also much denser than the developments that would be built in the 1990s (Victoria Park was less than four units per acre). Finally, the neighborhood contained a diversity of unit types, from apartments located near the major east-west streets to the mix of two-family and single-family homes that made up most of the residential blocks. Like much of the rest of Detroit, Jefferson-Chalmers represented a hybrid between a late nineteenth-century streetcar suburb and the automobile-dependent postwar suburbs.
Jefferson-Chalmers was never one of Detroit's wealthiest neighborhoods. Its proximity to a major Chrysler automobile plant and other manufacturing facilities meant that many of its homes were designed for the working class. Nevertheless, Jefferson-Chalmers was relatively well-placed. Unlike many other neighborhoods, it was not lost in the anonymous grid of Detroit due to its location in a relatively small and distinct area. Its convenient location along Jefferson Avenue made it both easy to get to and accessible to downtown, while its location along the Detroit river provided a location for a few mansions of the wealthy during the boom years of the 1920s. Finally, its proximity to the extremely exclusive suburbs of Grosse Pointe gave it some of that area’s cachet. Many of these features would again be seen as advantages Jefferson-Chalmers when redevelopment began in the 1990s.

The industrial development of Jefferson-Chalmers planted the seeds of the demographic change that would envelop the neighborhood after 1940. During World War II the defense industry located a number of facilities nearby (Flies 2002, pers. comm.). Like other industrial cities, Detroit received an influx of black workers from the South during the war years to fill a shortage of manufacturing jobs. Although black Detroiters were initially confined to a few small neighborhoods on the city’s northeast side, they began to expand outward after 1940, in part because of the increasingly distributed work opportunities available throughout the city. As Detroit was an overwhelmingly white city at the time, the diversification of its neighborhood was not an easy, nor peaceful, transformation. Sugrue (1996) has expertly described the hostility with which whites met black expansion into their neighborhoods during this time, laying the groundwork for the racial divisions that would devastate Detroit in the 1960s. Jefferson-Chalmers, like other Detroit neighborhoods, began to change and experienced an influx of black residents along its western edge during the war. After World War II the area’s black population grew rapidly. Tragically, the simultaneous deindustrialization of Jefferson-Chalmers at the same time left the area with only about half of its industrial plants and jobs by 1960 (Sugrue 1996: 149). The 1967
Detroit riots, among other events, accelerated white flight from the city and most of the neighborhood’s remaining white residents left during the 1970s, although some remained along the boundary with Grosse Pointe Park.

After 1950 Detroit's population growth began to reverse itself. While some of this loss was due to uncrowding, the city also experienced a massive surplus of housing as hundreds of thousands of whites relocated, along with the automobile industry, to the suburbs. This immense population exchange greatly destabilized city neighborhoods and left many dwellings vacant. In a vicious cycle that has been well described by Chafetz (1990), abandonment in Detroit neighborhoods led to their subsequent destabilization, leading to additional abandonment, etc. As described previously, Detroit residences were particularly vulnerable to weathering and arson because of their detached nature and wooden construction. Jefferson-Chalmers was unable to resist this tide of negative change, losing over 20 percent of its housing units to abandonment and eventual demolition between 1970 and 1990 (see Figure 4.10). While some areas of the neighborhood maintained their stability, other parts became virtual wildernesses, with only occasional surviving houses amidst empty city blocks of weeds. Public policies were able to do little to stop this decline and in some cases may even have accelerated it, as we will see in the Victoria Park discussion.

Despite the grim state of the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood in 1990, significant positive change was on the near horizon. The majority of abandonment and destruction had already happened and the vast empty tracts of land were beginning to be seen as “opportunities to remake the city”, as one city official said. The neighborhood’s locational advantages remained and were strengthened by the adjacency of the stable, prosperous Grosse Pointes. It was this depressed environment that the first case development of Victoria Park would transform so radically. Victoria Park would be a pioneering development in several ways. It would be not only the first single-family housing development to be built in Jefferson-Chalmers in many decades, it would be the first in the entire
city of Detroit in almost forty years. It would also be the first residential project in Detroit that sought to directly emulate every design aspect of vernacular suburbia from its neighborhood form to its architecture. Finally, it would be one of the first developments to appeal to a growing demographic market in Detroit whose housing interests had previously gone unmet: the African-American middle class. The construction of Victoria Park would be, as one developer said, “a major leap of faith” in the belief that new market-rate housing was actually a realistic prospect in Detroit. It would prove to be a very successful gamble.

**Victoria Park**

Victoria Park, built between 1992 and 1995, was a 157-home development located near the corner of Freud and Dickerson Avenues on the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood. It was two blocks south of Jefferson Avenue and less than ten blocks from the border with the suburb of Grosse Pointe Park. As the first new single-family home development in Detroit in several decades, Victoria Park was a powerful symbol of residential revitalization in the city. As we saw in the previous chapter, the form of Victoria Park emulated that of vernacular suburbia in a literal fashion. The development was surrounded by a fence and planted berms and accessed via a single, gated entrance. Inside, homes were located on wide, curving streets, many of which ended in cul-de-sacs. Architecturally, the homes were identical to those found in suburbia, with attached two-car garages, grand entranceways, brick fronts, and the profusion of gables popular on suburban houses of the 1990s.

The suburban character of Victoria Park was very different from that of the case developments examined in Philadelphia. Whereas those developments could be seen as hybrids of typical affordable housing with vernacular suburban housing, Victoria Park was literally intended to be suburbia. Though they were located in Detroit, the homes were built by suburban developers and builders for a market that otherwise would have been considering housing in the suburbs. Its similarity was thus both physical as well as institutional. The factors that led to the
suburban aspect of Victoria Park were therefore identical to the factors that led to the development itself. Unlike the Poplar development, there were few points of debate on the suburban nature of Victoria Park. As one city official said, “We created a site plan, and of course it was suburban.” To most of the actors involved in the creation of Victoria Park, its similarity to vernacular suburbia was what one called “the entire story” of the development’s success.

**Origins**

Although Victoria Park is today (2002) less than ten years old, its beginnings have become somewhat apocryphal. By all accounts the development was in large part inspired by a boat trip on the Detroit River, a wide and attractive body of water connecting Lake St. Clair with Lake Erie. During the 1920s many luxurious apartment houses were built eastward along its shore, where Detroit met the wealthy suburbs of the Grosse Pointes. Pleasure boat trips along this channel have long been a favored activity of Detroiter, and it was on one of these boat trips in the summer of 1990 that Garry Carley, vice president for the Michigan-based Standard Federal Bank recalled thinking that this underdeveloped eastern riverfront was “a great place to do single-family housing”. In 1992 the Detroit News described a similar origin for Victoria Park on a boat trip where Carley, a building society official, and the developer of Greyhaven, a riverfront housing development under construction at the time, considered the idea.

Whatever the exact nature of its founding boat trip, Victoria Park’s creation proceeded very quickly. This rapid progress was in large part due to the pro-development attitude of then-Mayor Coleman Young, who in 1990 was nearing the end of his legendary 20-year tenure in office. Young had demonstrated little respect for traditional urban planning but had shown himself to be extremely responsive to deal-oriented development planning, producing major downtown projects like the Joe Louis Arena, the Renaissance Center, and the Riverfront Apartments as a result. Victoria Park was thus conceptually accessible to Young...
as another development deal involving a direct partnership between the mayor's office and the private sector. According to Carley, soon after he had mentioned the idea to the Mayor's office he was told that there was "land that they wanted to propose for a project" in the Jefferson-Chalmers area. When asked why the mayor had been so responsive, Carley replied that he thought "the Mayor was happy to hear that there was a banker interested in the city."

There is little doubt that this assessment was correct. By 1990, Young had achieved some notable downtown redevelopment successes and was about to embark on two major industrial redevelopment schemes to keep Chrysler and General Motors automobile plants from leaving Detroit (Thomas 1997). What he had thus far failed to achieve, however, was a notable neighborhood redevelopment success. Since Young's tenure had begun in 1973, Detroit's residential neighborhoods had experienced only a wearying cycle of white flight, abandonment, and arson. The city had shrunk inexorably while its neighborhoods disappeared. By 1990 Detroit's population had fallen to just over 20% white, a drop from well over 50% in 1970 (United States Department of Commerce 1977 and 1994). Relations with the overwhelmingly white suburbs had been damaged in no small part because of Young's flamboyant and sometimes confrontational political style, making cooperation with the private sector more difficult. Even if Young did not care much about the suburbs, however, he needed a neighborhood success. The suggestion of a housing development in a blighted city neighborhood was thus extremely well-timed. Thisfortunate confluence of private and public interests is likely to have to the Victoria Park proposal getting off the ground swiftly before anyone had even decided what the development would look like.

Victoria Park was the suburban child of urban renewal. The large site, covering most of twelve city blocks, was available because of an urban renewal plan which had been designated in 1974. The plan had intended the area for rehabilitation rather than clearance, reflecting the changed priorities of the late
urban renewal era (Keyes 1969 provided an account of this process as it unfolded in Boston.) The plan, however, was not successful. A city official who had been involved in this process says that it, “like many HUD programs, was designed to fail.” The original intent to provide rehabilitated housing to low-income tenants resulted in abandonment rather than upgrading when tenants could not maintain their homes. The city official described this process as “using the home as a bank account.” In other words, money that could have gone into upgrading housing was instead spent on operating expenses, and when the home became unlivable, tenants simply moved on to other housing. Whether or not the HUD program was structurally flawed, low-cost housing was abundantly available in the Detroit of the 1970s and 1980s as the city sustained massive population losses. Like many other neighborhoods, there was simply little demand for the housing in Jefferson-Chalmers and so, the official said, “the urban renewal program became one of acquisition and clearance.” By the late 1980s the great majority of the land which would comprise Victoria Park was vacant and in city ownership.

While the large numbers of vacant housing units in Jefferson-Chalmers made it sadly typical of many Detroit neighborhoods, in other ways the neighborhood was atypical. As described above, amenities like the river and the Grosse Pointes were not far away. There were also promising signs of redevelopment. In both the immediate and more distant vicinity of the Victoria Park were what one developer called “good focal points” for the neighborhood. Immediately to the west was a garden-style rental apartment complex called Jefferson Village which had been built for low-income tenants in the 1980s, and immediately to the north was the recently constructed Golightly Vocational Center (Gage 2002, pers. comm.) which enjoyed a positive reputation due to its activist principal. There was also precedent for middle-class development in the area: the gated Greyhaven development was already under construction on an artificial island along the river.
History

Despite the site’s urban location and amenities, the dominant vision of Victoria Park’s planners was of a suburban community. According to Carley, “We thought that if we brought the suburban concept here, then people would want to live here too.” Existing redevelopments had also established a precedent for a suburban prototype. Both Jefferson Village and the Golightly Center were built on superblocks surrounded by parking and extensive green space, and the new school was also surrounded by a fence. Redevelopment along Jefferson Avenue, had transformed it into an eight-lane roadway to the suburbs lined with auto-oriented strip commercial developments. These developments thrived while the street’s pedestrian-oriented retail withered. (Ironically, suburban Grosse Pointe Park would successfully maintain its street-oriented retail.)

By all accounts the suburban form of Victoria Park was to a large degree influenced by Carley, who insisted upon the large and wide housing lots, the surrounding fence and plantings, and the curving streets and cul-de-sacs that provided Victoria Park with its suburban flavor. The majority of the other players involved in the creation of Victoria Park either had little objection to or actively supported its suburban form. This support ranged from Coleman Young himself, who had apparently supported a “town within a town” concept for the area before Victoria Park was created, to the multiple city officials, developers, and builders who constructed the development. At the time of the development’s construction, few voices were raised in protest and those voices were uninfluential.

The conceptual plan for Victoria Park did not emulate vernacular suburbia. The architect who designed the plan described it as having attached single-family houses in a townhouse configuration. Densities were about two-third of historic densities, which would translate to approximately eight dwelling units per acre. The existing street grid was preserved, and houses were located close to the street. Upon the presentation of this design to the development team, the architect said “I was told that they wanted suburban houses.” The initial plan was
abandoned and Victoria Park was redesigned to the form that it took as built. Although the architect did not personally favor the design as built, a city official who worked on the project said “he was told what to design.” The architect was quick to credit the development team with the form of the development as built. The differences between the designs reflected dilemmas which will be discussed later in this section and in the next chapter.

The transformation of the Victoria Park site into one that closely approximated suburbia was designed to attract builders as well as buyers. The development plan for Victoria Park was simple. The city agreed to donate the site, which it already owned, and pay for certain site improvements. Private builders were invited to come in, construct houses on the site, and sell them for market value. The major challenge was thus to attract private builders to the development. Although the city required a certain number of minority-owned builders to participate, finding these builders was not the major issue. Suburban builders were extremely doubtful that houses built in Jefferson-Chalmers could generate a profit. According to members of the development team, it took several months to persuade builders that the development was a viable option.

The reluctance shown by builders in getting involved in Victoria Park was less a reflection of their avarice than of their total inexperience in building in Detroit. This was true even of the city-based minority contractors, who comprised at least five of the around 20 builders. At the time of Victoria Park’s development, Detroit had experienced very little new single-family housing construction in decades. Consequently, no suburban builders had ever built single-family housing in Detroit. Builders thus feared losing the construction cost of the house if they could not find a buyer. Standard Federal Bank therefore agreed to provide construction mortgages for the development and to make builders immune from loss until houses were completed. Given the risk-adversity of the real estate industry, especially in the recession of the early 1990s, Victoria Park was a substantial gamble. As a developer said, “he really put his neck on the line on
this one.” Carley’s strong faith in the potential of the development was critical to its being constructed. The builders’ doubts underscore the extent to which the construction industry had ceased to believe that unsubsidized residential development was possible in Detroit.

The means by which builders were persuaded to participate in Victoria Park was creative and was derived from the suburban building industry. To allow both small and large builders to invest and to test the market for the houses, the Southeast Michigan Builder’s Association (check name) was persuaded to mount its 1992 Home-a-rama” in Victoria Park. Home-a-ramas were a suburban institution designed to attract buyers to subdivisions by building several model homes. Multiple builders would each construct a model home on a subdivision lot to show to the general public. This process was designed to generate both buyers for the model homes and to generate demand to fill up the rest of the subdivision. Victoria Park’s home-a-rama opened in June 1992 and was a resounding success. Even before then, however, demand had been strong. Most of the 70 or so homes in the development’s first phase were committed before the home-a-rama had even opened. The burst of market confidence not only reassured the public-private development team that they were on the right track, it quickly attracted other banks, who “wanted in” to Victoria Park once they realized the size of the pool of previously untapped first-time homebuyers in Detroit.

The city of Detroit was a full partner in the development of Victoria Park, not only donating the site but contributing considerable financial subsidies to the project. Although the site was vacant, its streets, sewer lines, and other infrastructure were old and had been poorly maintained during the area’s decline. The city therefore agreed to pay for the cost of preparing the site for construction. This translated to both clearing building sites by removing any existing debris that remained as well as reconstructing the public ways and the infrastructure that lay underneath. The costs of this work eventually exceeded over $17 million,
translating to an extremely high cost per house of over $125,000. This compared unfavorably to suburban builders’ usual estimate of spending only 20% of construction cost on site preparation. Nevertheless, the development team agreed that the cost of site preparation was worth the expense. One developer believed that “it took this much city money get this done… and after (Victoria Park’s success) we wouldn’t have asked for subsidies any more.” Another believed that the higher taxes generated by the new houses would eventually pay off: “Victoria Park taxes are triple those of other houses in the neighborhood, and with those, we are moving in on paying off the subsidy.” Despite these subsidies, builders were still skeptical: “The builders wanted more… they were worried that the houses wouldn’t sell.” Builders asked for several thousand dollars cash payment per lot from the city, “…but the city couldn’t give it to them… they got additional site improvements, which were remissible.” As a final contribution the city agreed to pay a share of the costs of constructing the houses’ foundations, further reducing builders’ expenses.

Not everyone believed that Victoria Park was worth the cost of construction. The City Council in particular was skeptical. Described by one city official as “socialist” and “preferring that all housing in the city be for the poor”, members of the Council were upset with the amount of city money required to complete the project, and dragged their feet approving funds for the project, despite the Mayor’s strong support for the project. In mid-1991, the council shifted over $2 million designated for Victoria Park to community groups throughout the city (Detroit News 1991a). This raised the ire of Mayor Young, who said that the project was “seriously threatened” by the council’s reluctance to approve money. The council was eventually won over by executive political pressure.

With the home-a-rama completed, development of Victoria Park proceeded quickly. Many of the developers who constructed model houses went on to build additional houses, and although Standard Federal Bank had committed to approving mortgages for all eligible Victoria Park buyers, the bank soon
experienced competition for these mortgages. By 1995 the last houses in the development were being completed. Most houses ended up selling for $100,000 to $125,000, resulting in profits for the builders and the satisfaction of a sold-out single-family home development for the city.

**Buyers**
Unlike the Philadelphia case developments, Victoria Park was not intended for low-income homebuyers. Who were the homebuyers? The demand for Victoria Park showed that by 1992 a substantial number of African-Americans had both the desire and the means to live in large homes in a suburban setting, albeit one inside the city of Detroit. There were multiple reasons for this demand. Because of past racial tensions in the Detroit areas, many surrounding suburbs were not particularly appealing; as a black builder said, “a lot of African-Americans feel they’re not wanted out there.” According to this builder, most area blacks still live in Detroit today: “there are suburbs where blacks live, but I couldn’t say that there are any black suburbs.” Existing suburban communities were not only uncomfortable but remote: “Why would I want to have to drive half an hour to visit my family and friends?” Therefore, most African-Americans in Detroit would live in the suburbs only if obliged to for work reasons: “If they’re way out there, then at least they’re making a whole lot of money.” In this context, it was unsurprising that most of Victoria Park’s purchasers came from inside the city of Detroit, and that “something like 98%” of them were black, with mixed marriages and a few Asian families making up the difference, according to a developer. According to this developer, Victoria Park was in fact more racially homogeneous than its surrounding neighborhood, which as previously noted still contained substantial numbers of white residents in the blocks bordering Grosse Pointe Park.

Coming something as a shock to everyone involved, the buyers for Victoria Park were surprisingly wealthy. According to a planner, the original houses were too small and “there was a push from the market to make them more upscale”. Houses which were originally planned to be priced for between $65,000 and
$120,000 were soon selling for between $90,000 to $150,000. The city was as surprised as the developers by the surge in demand. As a city official described at the time, “We have all been taken off guard by the willingness of people to snap up the property... we were thinking the market would not be quite as rich.”

Today (2002), houses in Victoria Park sell for over $300,000, reflecting the truth of a developer’s comment that “the first people who got in to (Victoria Park) got an amazing deal.” Thus while Victoria Park had originally been intended as affordable (though middle-class) housing, it soon became, in both perception and reality, a rather high-end development. The surprising financial capacity shown by Victoria Park’s buyers had two effects. Builders, said a developer, immediately began to inquire “where’s the next site?”. Doubters on the City Council, however, wondered “Why the city should put money in, when people already have money?”

**Causes**

Many justifications were given for the suburban form of Victoria Park. Garry Carley believed the most important justification for a suburban development in Jefferson-Chalmers was that it met the demands of the market. “We didn’t do this because we wanted a suburban development, but because people wanted... all the different features (of the houses)... this is what you get in the suburbs.” According to Carley, “If you were to go (to the suburbs) and build a house the way it was fifty years ago, people wouldn’t buy it... houses are built the way they are because people want them that way.” The demand for the homes indicated that there were indeed Detroit residents who were eager to live in suburban homes.

As in the suburbs, everything in Victoria Park, according to the development team, was designed to appeal to the market, from the boulevarded entrance drive to the development off Jefferson Avenue (created by widening an existing city street) to the two-car garages and “sexy great rooms and master bedrooms” of the houses. The fence and plantings were described as having at least three...
purposes: to "provide the development with an identity" by distinguishing it from its blighted surroundings; to "carry on the idea of the school" next door, which was also surrounded by a fence; and to address security concerns. Analogies to suburban imagery also provided justification for Victoria Park's design. Members of the development team said "these fences are all over the suburbs too", and as for the planted berms, "many suburban sites are surrounded by (them)". The development's cul-de-sacs were described as being created for esthetic as well as safety reasons. As a developer described, referring to the rather long blocks of the local grid, "we wanted to break up the streets so they wouldn't be runways... long streets with a hundred houses in a row aren't desirable". Nor could cul-de-sacs become speedways: "people can't go so fast on shorter streets." Another component of Victoria Park's neighborhood design were its building lots, which were created by combining three existing lots into one. This created approximately 70-foot-wide lots roughly equivalent to many suburban lots, and allowed front-loaded garages. As a developer explained, "People didn't want (the old lots) because they had to park behind their house," which raised both climatic and safety concerns. The developer continued, "I would never support a house in this city without an attached garage... people have them in the suburbs, so why not here?"

Consequences
Victoria Park's success set the stage for multiple transformations in the Detroit housing field. First, it convinced developers and builders that there was a market for further new housing, especially suburban-style, in Detroit. Second, it spurred, or at least preceded, a renaissance of the values of existing housing in Detroit. Third, it persuaded at least some city officials that subsidizing what one official called "loss leaders" was well worth the cost. Fourth, it forced a previously passive planning department to confront the costs and benefits of inner-city suburbanization. While Victoria Park may have been a loss leader, it also immediately became the standard against which all other Detroit housing would be compared for the next ten years. In many ways, as the Detroit News (1991b)
said, it was “the most significant construction in Detroit since the Renaissance Center in 1977”.

New developments were quick to follow Victoria Park. The similar, suburb-like development of Virginia Park was begun in late 1994 and several other developments were proposed around the city. Two of those developments, Clairpointe of Victoria Park and Victoria Woods, are discussed as the second and third case developments for Detroit. Although they had demanded substantial subsidies for Victoria Park, developers quickly became more accommodating when they observed the development’s success.

On all sides it was agreed that Victoria Park had transformed the image of Jefferson-Chalmers from an abandoned wasteland to an area worthy of substantial investment. Although the project’s architect disowned the design of Victoria Park as constructed, he was quick to admit that “everything stepped up in Detroit after Victoria Park... there was a major market transformation in the city.” He noted that this transformation had not only spurred additional construction, it had boosted the values of existing homes in the city substantially, making it possible to obtain loans on houses that banks had previously considered to be risky investments. “Part of the goal of Victoria Park was to have it make sense for people to invest in the neighborhood”, said a former city official. A planner agreed that the positive impact of Victoria Park “was starting to ripple” outward to areas beyond the immediate periphery of the project. He added that “Residents in the area were pleasantly surprised- values shot up for other homes (in the neighborhood) too. People began investing in (existing) homes and it created a market where there wasn’t one before.” A builder who had participated in the construction of both Victoria Park and Clairpointe noted that “the Victoria Park neighborhood had the highest appreciation rates in the Detroit area”. While this was not completely true, sales prices in the far east of Detroit increased over 80% from 1996 to 2002, an increase which outpaced all but four neighborhoods in Wayne County (Detroit Free Press 2002a).
What did urban planners have to say about Victoria Park? Although the city’s Office of Planning and Development had played a major role in managing the development of Victoria Park, it had little to say about its form. According to one planner, the department “never really took a stand” on what it wanted to see in Victoria Park. This passivity was in part the result of the department’s two-decade marginalization under Coleman Young, who had little interest in procedural planning and therefore ignored it. This attitude shifted dramatically, however, when Young retired in 1993 and Dennis Archer took his place. According to a developer, the department’s new planning director felt that Victoria Park “was the wrong thing to put in the neighborhood” and that consequently, “there would be no more of this kind of development.”

The director’s concerns were apparently based on cost as well as on aesthetics. Aesthetically, the new director felt that the enclave-like nature of Victoria Park “was too fenced-in... it prevented others from taking part” in the benefits of the development, such as a new park that was created. The planning department therefore decided not to support extensions to Victoria Park, saying that the cost “would simply be too high”. The director’s principled refusal was likely bolstered by Archer’s political desires to establish his own redevelopment credentials rather than continuing one of Young’s projects. Developers expressed some bitterness over the city’s decision to leave Victoria Park unexpanded. Although they did not directly criticize the planning department, they noted that the city was willing to spend substantial monies on housing elsewhere. In that vein, Archer would in 1997 and 1998 support the development of a nearby large-scale middle-class housing project which would cost the city “about 25 million dollars”, according to one developer. The project promised to reestablish some of the urban features, like a continuous streetscape, that had been removed in Victoria Park, though developers were skeptical. One, referring to the long blocks of the existing grid, said that the planners “didn’t learn their lesson about these straight streets.” The project remains incomplete as of this writing (2002).
The planning department had additional ideological ammunition with which to criticize developments like Victoria Park- the New Urbanism. According to developers, Mayor Archer's new director favored New Urbanist solutions for the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood rather than the vernacular suburban solutions seen in Victoria Park and other developments. To this end a developer-driven reshaping of the neighborhood north of Jefferson Avenue was rejected in late 2001 in favor of a New Urbanist solution which preserved existing street and lot configurations while adding new through streets and public spaces. This plan met with little developer approval. One developer commented, "If people wanted the old lots and houses, then why would the neighborhood have been abandoned?" Suburban developers felt instead that a solution similar to Victoria Park, with wider lots and "some cul-de-sacs", was most likely to meet market needs. To this end, the Builders' Association again committed to mounting a home-a-rama in Jefferson-Chalmers. This time around, however, the city administration was not so enthusiastic, and the event did not occur. Although it remains to be seen whether the insistence on New Urbanism will succeed, there are signs that developers are willing to make some concessions. As of 2002, a "traditionally-designed townhouse" development called Towne Square is planned along Jefferson Avenue on the site once envisioned as the expansion for Victoria Park (see site plan below).
In many ways inner-city suburbanization was a far more literal process in Victoria Park than it was in the Philadelphia case developments. Victoria Park was literally a suburban project in conception, design, and execution. Most of the actors involved in creating it had gained their experience in suburban housing developments. It was therefore unsurprising to find that the development was a faithful recreation of vernacular suburbia. The suburban form of Victoria Park was, as previously described, “the whole story” of the project. The swift rejection of the architects' initial contextual plan left little doubt that the powerful public and private players supported a suburban-style plan. The private side perceived an enclave-like suburban development as being critical to building builder and buyer confidence in the viability of the development. While Mayor Young’s personal views are not known, his office was quick to support the suburban form of the development as well. Actors who might have criticized a suburban development were weak or otherwise focused. The city council was apparently overruled by the mayor, while the planning department was focused on operational concerns and was therefore apparently uninterested or unable to formulate an alternative strategy. Community concerns were minor and were focused other things besides the exclusive nature of the development.
The design of Victoria Park played a major role in the project’s evaluation by the various persons involved in its creation. Support for the project’s suburban form was strong. To some, the dereliction of Jefferson-Chalmers justified its transformation into a suburban area. As one planner said, “This area is literally pheasant habitat... it can be whatever we want it to be”. Other city officials agreed, saying that Detroit could and should accommodate different densities in different areas. One official proclaimed, “We should build suburban housing where it fits... (density) is appropriate in the older core area of the city, but otherwise, no way.” On their part, developers seemed convinced that only suburban amenities, especially large houses on large lots, could succeed in persuading middle-class residents to return in numbers to the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood. Though residents were not surveyed, a Detroit builder agreed, saying that “There should be hundreds more Victoria Parks... people want these houses.”

Victoria Park got built because it met the needs of both the public- and private-sector players involved. Its construction required extensive cooperation between the public and private sectors. Only the public sector had the authority to release large tracts of land for development; only the private sector had the funds to ensure that housing could be constructed on that land. Where both of these agencies agreed that a suburban enclave was an appropriate form of development for vacant urban land, Victoria Park was built. The objections to the development were few and the forces compelling its construction were powerful. Although other vernacular suburban developments would follow Victoria Park, the powerful political ingredient of Coleman Young was not repeated. The next mayor had less interest in such projects or less authority to carry them through. The planning department became a more powerful player and objected to additional enclaves. The development community, having become reinterested in Detroit, was disappointed to find that the project was not so easy to repeat. Despite the private sector’s willingness to build housing again with fewer
subsidies, the city held its ground. Whether this heralds an end to or merely a lull in the inner-city suburbanization process in Jefferson-Chalmers remains to be seen.

It is worth commenting briefly on the dilemmas raised by Victoria Park, though this will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. The architect who designed Victoria Park was the most conflicted actor in the process. He admitted to not liking suburban environments and called Victoria Park “the worst project I’ve ever been associated with”. Despite these reservations, the architect recognized that Victoria Park had spurred a lot of benefits and that the majority of players had little problem with the development as it was built. He nevertheless admitted that the project had been good for the area and that “residents lined up to purchase these homes.” He concluded, “This project is a real dilemma for me... (it illustrates) the disagreement between architects and society as a whole.” When asked to propose an alternative, the architect admitted that there was no easy answer for the city: “Detroit is certainly not rural, it’s not a suburb, but it’s not really a city... what is it? I don’t know yet.”

Planners were less conflicted. The initial planning team that worked on the development had few criticisms, and only under an ideologically committed new director, operating under a new political regime, did the department voice criticisms of inner-city suburbanization. Politicians were more pragmatic, voicing concerns not with the project’s design but only with its cost and with its taking resources away from other constituencies in the city. Developers were least conflicted, in part because they displayed little affinity with design ideologies. If Victoria Park paid, then it was good. Since there was money to be made, allowing further Victoria Parks was also good. They were skeptical about other forms of housing design the area but felt that if they had a market, then they were good. This approach was simplistic but unbiased; no developer indicated a resistance to building in Detroit for its own sake, nor did they display a dislike of
The next two case developments illustrate additional dimensions of the suburbanization process in Jefferson-Chalmers. The first, Clairpointe, was an example of the scope of development that could occur without city subsidy, while the second, Victoria Woods, showed that there were limits to suburbanization.

**Clairpointe of Victoria Park**

Begun in 1996, Clairpointe was a 42-house development built along a stretch of Clairpointe Avenue in the southwestern corner of Jefferson-Chalmers. Like Victoria Park, Clairpointe's physical form reflected the institutional arrangement which created it. The development involved many of the same players who had created Victoria Park, although the city's role was much more limited. Though it was smaller, Clairpointe had many of the same design characteristics of Victoria Park. Its developers described it as "carrying on the Victoria Park development."

If Victoria Park was the child of urban renewal, Clairpointe was the child of Victoria Park. The development was planned and executed as Victoria Park was wrapping up construction, and many of the same players were involved: Standard Federal Bank financed the development's mortgages, while two of the builders, one suburban, one city-based, who had built at Victoria Park formed a partnership to develop the site. The site was a vacant city-owned strip of land which lay close to the Detroit River and to the undeveloped Maheras Park. Although the site was less contiguous than Victoria Park, being stretched along the avenue, its developer described it as "what was available" in the area.

Clairpointe reflected the new financial landscape of residential development in Jefferson-Chalmers after Victoria Park. The city did not subsidize the project, instead earning $200,000 (Crain's Detroit Business 1995a) from the sale of the land to the developer. The lack of city subsidies translated to a much higher sale
price for the houses: Clairpointe houses originally sold $150,000 to $230,000 and now (2002) sell for $275,000 to $300,000. (A few houses were still available as of this writing.) This high cost, which buyers were apparently willing to pay, reflected the enormous increase in housing values that had occurred in Jefferson-Chalmers since Victoria Park was constructed.

Like Victoria Park, Clairpointe was planned and executed by actors accustomed to operating in the suburbs. Reflecting their conviction that relatively large homes in a suburban setting were what the market demanded, Clairpointe was designed as closely as possible to emulate a suburban development, as we saw in *Chapter Four*. Absent city assistance in acquiring land, however, the site was substantially more limited than Victoria Park, necessitating some compromises on the part of both developer and buyers.

Clairpointe’s most significant difference from Victoria Park was that houses at Clairpointe were not completely isolated from their surroundings. The site backed upon a poorly-maintained alley shared by a row of houses on the next street. While this neighborhood was not extensively deteriorated, the houses were much smaller than those of Clairpointe and clearly housed a somewhat lower-income population. This proximity did not deter buyers, however. When asked why, a black Detroit builder replied, “When you live in Detroit, you get used to it... if (a dilapidated house) isn’t next door, then it’s two blocks away- it’s everywhere in Detroit.” The developer for Clairpointe agreed, saying that “people wanted that kind of house, and they accepted the neighbors to get the house. If there had been more Victoria Parks, people would probably have gone in there.”

Though Clairpointe was a small-scale development, it required political actions that were not to the liking of the City Council. Council permission was needed to strike the abandoned alley that lay behind the houses from the official city map. According to a developer, the Council was “fed up with street closings” after Victoria Park and took over two years to approve the closing. This led to
substantial financial difficulties as the developers were unable to legally sell the houses when the lots were not completely theirs. Although they built twelve houses “on the faith that the city would strike the alley”, the developers had to wait two years to sell them.

Who lived in Clairpointe? According to the developer, the market was similar to that of Victoria Park— an African-American middle class who had a surprising amount of money. “One guy walked up and paid cash for his house- he was a pipe fitter, and he’d been saving his money.” This same individual was credited with buying what the developer thought might be the most problematic lot in the subdivision. “It was (the lot) right next to the factory, but he wanted that one, he said he wanted quiet. He even built his driveway on the left to give himself more privacy.” The lot in question was located at the end of one of the development’s cul-de-sacs.

Clairpointe’s relations with its neighbors demonstrated the somewhat ambiguous attitude of the Jefferson-Chalmers community toward the enclave-type developments that being built there. According to the Clairpointe developer, “residents hated the Victoria Park fence- they thought it was insulting.” This may have been because the fence provided such an explicit image of exclusion from that development. At Clairpointe, however, “we built a four-foot fence in back, but the neighbors suggested that we change it to six feet high.” Although the developer did not have a reason for this neighborhood support for a stronger boundary, it is likely that residents were more amenable to its construction because they benefited from the Clairpointe fence (it fenced their back yards as well.) The fence was also popular with Clairpointe residents. According to the developer, “they’d like a fence in the front too,” but have not yet decided who should pay for it.

In some ways Clairpointe was a more compelling manifestation of inner-city suburbanization than Victoria Park precisely because of its limited nature.
Requiring no city funding and relatively little political cooperation, Clairpointe was more incremental and much less capital-intensive than Victoria Park. It was consequently unable to achieve the scale of environmental transformation that Victoria Park did, but this did not seem to hurt its marketability, even at its much higher house prices. As it was relatively easy to develop, additional suburban-style developments like Clairpointe would seem to be a distinct possibility, whether in Jefferson-Chalmers or elsewhere, assuming the continued existence of a market. The black Detroit builder had perhaps the final word on the potential for smaller-scale suburbanization, even down to a house-by-house basis. “My aunt is doing that [building a large, suburban-style house] in Dearborn. It looks funny to put a big new house next to an old one, but she’s got the house.”

**Victoria Woods**

Victoria Woods was a suburban-style housing development in Jefferson-Chalmers that failed. Its failure, however, was instructive in that it illustrated a clear threshold beyond which inner-city suburbanization was unlikely to go. Its failure also illustrated the differences in thinking between those individuals financing and organizing suburban-style housing in the inner city and those individuals who were responsible for living with its consequences. Finally, the Victoria Woods failure illustrated the potential of surrounding communities to play a role in determining neighborhood form, a potential which had been little exercised in Detroit.

As a development product, Victoria Woods was a well-conceived idea. It was planned to occupy a portion of city-owned land located along the Detroit River. Unlike the sites for Victoria Park and Clairpointe, however, the Victoria Woods site was already in use— as a city park. Called Maheras Park, the site had been owned by the city since the riverfront land was created in the 1920s, but had never been completely developed. In 1996, despite its spectacular views across to the Canadian shore of the river, the park was overgrown, with minimal amenities. It consequently received little use.
Like Clairpointe, Victoria Woods was also proposed by members of the development team that had participated in Victoria Park. Standard Federal Bank agreed to finance both construction loans and purchase loans for the houses (Crain’s Detroit Business 1996a). The development proposal involved transforming much of the park into single-family housing, which would then be sold off. The remaining park land along the river would be improved and receive new facilities.

The developers saw the creation of Victoria Woods as an amenity that would benefit the neighborhood. “It has long been our dream to have Maheras Park developed for single-family housing,” said one. The same developer saw Victoria Woods as “the ultimate extension of Victoria Park.” Later recalling the incident, this developer said, “(Victoria Woods) would have been a higher end subdivision, bringing back people from the suburbs... it would have had houses of an Indian Village type.” Indian Village is one of Detroit’s most valuable neighborhoods where houses now sell for $500,000 and up. The local citizens council agreed with the developers. Said its president, “We feel strongly that the Maheras area should be developed into single-family housing... everyone I’ve talked to is in full support of residential and commercial development. The Victoria Park area has done nothing but blossom.” (Crain’s Detroit Business 1996a) The president of the association also happened to be a Victoria Park resident.

Like the other two case developments, the construction of Victoria Woods hinged on public action. In order for the development to be constructed, planning commission action was required to rezone the land to permit single-family homes from an “open space” designation. The developers pressured the commission to rezone the land. “It is important that the planning commission have an alternative viewpoint of what can happen on this land,” said one. One citizen’s group, begged to differ. This was “a group of homeowners, mostly white as it turned out”, in a developer’s words, who felt that the city should instead designate the
park, and all of the other city-owned parcels along the river, as open space so that they would be forever protected. "(The park) is a hot point for community residents," said the group’s president. "The highest percentage of residents say they don’t want housing on park land."

The stage was set for a classic development protest, a showdown between rapacious developers and angry citizens intent on protecting their threatened neighborhood amenities. But in the Victoria Woods case the showdown never happened: the developers simply backed off. "(The community group) got a lawyer from the University of Michigan, so we just let it die," said one, recalling the incident. "We didn't have a war chest- it was just an idea. I'm glad they fixed up the park this way, anyway." The city has since renovated part of the park as playing fields, though the portion along the riverfront remains unimproved.

Victoria Woods was a somewhat audacious idea that promised to confront a persistent problem- the underfunding of city park land in a declining city- by removing the land from city jurisdiction altogether and converting it into private property. Unfortunately for the developers, at least some area citizens preferred the promise of accessible public space to the guarantee of a high-end housing development. Although the developers had a successful track record and had close contacts in the city administration, as well as support from the primary citizen group in the area, they preferred to abandon the idea rather than risk what threatened to become a lengthy and potentially expensive battle that would almost certainly generate some negative press as well as dissipate some of the positive consequences of the Victoria Park development. A controversy might also have potentially reduced the political support which had proved to be critical for the success of Victoria Park.

Race played a somewhat surprising role in the Victoria Woods controversy. Although developers sometimes credited racial politics with making development issues more complicated in Detroit, these politics were reversed in the Victoria
Woods situation. One of the primary developers was black, and the development was supported by a primarily black citizen’s council, headed by a Victoria Park resident no less. The citizen’s group, on the other hand, which opposed the development was “mostly white”, and they objected to a development, that, more than either of the other two case developments, had the potential to attract wealthy whites into the neighborhood. The Victoria Woods controversy was more of a class-based controversy than a race-based one, where relatively poor area residents saw themselves as being deprived for the benefit of wealthy homeowners. The fact that many of the poor were white, while many of the wealthy were likely to be black, did not lessen the severity of the problem. While there are no hard and fast conclusions to be drawn from this situation, it does illustrate the fact that the stereotype of rich white versus poor black so often projected upon Detroit, both by outsiders and by Detroiters as well, was not necessarily true.

Perhaps equally as importantly, the Victoria Woods failure illustrated a threshold for inner-city suburbanization. While significant neighborhood reshaping might be tolerated in the interests of revitalization in Detroit, the demapping of public parkland and the privatization of the city’s riverfront was likely to be problematic. More abstract features that would have potentially made Victoria Woods attractive to the city, like its additions to the tax base and the fact that the project did not require city subsidies, were of little interest to the citizen group protesting the development. Unlike the other two case developments, Victoria Woods did not have a relatively united constituency supporting it. Without that constituency, what would have been one of the more spectacular examples of inner-city suburbanization withered and died.

Conclusions: the causality of suburbanization in Detroit and Philadelphia
What happened

The two city neighborhoods in which the case developments were constructed shared certain characteristics but differed in others. Obviously, they were both distressed: this was the criterion which allowed them to be studied in the first place. Beyond that, both neighborhoods had experienced severe decline since at least 1970. As such both had experienced previous revitalization efforts, especially North Philadelphia. In 1990 neither neighborhood was a blank slate—both had previous developments, housing and otherwise, to examine. In north Philadelphia there was a long history of assisted housing, while Jefferson-Chalmers, being much newer, had fewer.

What was significant about the housing developments that occurred in both neighborhoods after 1990 was not that they were the first revitalization attempts in those neighborhoods, nor that the new developments were in many respects antiurban. What was new in both neighborhoods was the construction of housing that was to a large extent inspired by the suburban single-family house. In Philadelphia suburban single-family attributes were carefully hybridized with the rowhouse to create a new housing typology for the neighborhood. In Detroit the suburban house was literally transplanted to the inner city.

The analogy of the new houses to those found in vernacular suburbs was explicit and acknowledged by every player involved. Whether they liked it or not, each player who had been involved in the creation of the houses recognized that the city was trying out a radically new strategy. Perhaps like the founders of many new urban strategies, players in both Philadelphia and Detroit believed that this new strategy, at last, would bring success. In North Philadelphia previous efforts were seen as having been too high-density to succeed, while in Detroit developers felt that they had at last uncovered the key to awakening market interest in derelict neighborhoods.
Why it happened

The various players involved were also united in their reasons for what they were doing. Policymakers in Philadelphia, Developers in Detroit, and citizens in both places agreed that providing lower-density houses with suburban attributes was the best thing for the neighborhoods. Only this surprising consonance of vision, based in the social desires of residents, could have led to the large-scale physical transformations seen, residential transformations which were larger than any of those attempted in either city in the years before.

Inner-city residents felt that the physical attributes of suburban homes were desirable. In Philadelphia residents, mostly low-income, were adamant that their new homes resemble neither the modernist public housing of the past nor the monotonous blocks of rowhouses that surrounded them. In Detroit residents wanted suburban house amenities and were willing to pay considerable amounts of money for them.

What were those amenities? The amenities perceived by residents were both linked to the endogenous physical nature of the suburban house and the way in which that artifact interacted with its surrounding environment of dilapidated urban housing. Suburban houses seemed to offer two major amenities. The first was that they were new. New houses had at least three perceived advantages over older houses. In the first place they were, of course, new, and were therefore in better condition, with more modern amenities than typical older houses in the neighborhood. In the second place, since they were new, they offered the owner the ability to personalize their dwelling. This was especially the case in Detroit where homeowners could select from a variety of house models. Even in Philadelphia where houses were similar, the more flexible built fabric offered the potential for personalization of the environment in the form of front lawns, etc. Substantial personalization of this type was seen at Charlotte Gardens, where homeowners have added back decks, garden walls, etc. in the fifteen years since that development was constructed.
In both of these ways, of course, the new houses were very similar to those of suburbia. Vernacular suburbia, despite its seeming monotony, actually permits homeowners a surprising amount of personalization. Even the Levittowns are today diverse communities, with each house containing different plantings and painted different colors, with different additions, etc. Such a promise was undoubtedly appealing to residents of the new houses built, although further study would be required to ascertain this.

The attraction to suburbia and to the suburban house model was likely to be strong for residents of inner city neighborhoods. In both cities the great majority of neighborhood residents and of the case developments were African-American. African-Americans have long been confined by a variety of factors to some of the worst housing in American cities, and it is of little surprise that residents in both cities were eager to obtain better housing. The image of suburbia is inescapable in American society, and to residents of neighborhoods where the majority of housing was in poor condition the idea of brand new houses that were much like those in the suburbs was doubtless attractive. Nevertheless, the new houses also offered residents the opportunity to remain in the city. This seemed to be important in Detroit where at least some black residents with money felt that it was preferable to live in new housing in the city of Detroit rather than in new housing in the suburbs. Given the extent of suburban sprawl in Detroit, residents would probably have had to move a considerable distance outside the city to obtain equivalent housing.

A second major amenity that suburban inner-city housing offered was privacy. This was a substantial advantage of new housing designed at low densities, especially in Philadelphia where existing row housing was positively crowded, offering very little outdoor space and often relatively little indoor space. The new housing provided privacy at many different scales. At the scale of the house, privacy was available in the front yards, back yards and garages or parking pads.
At the scale of the street, privacy was available in cul-de-sacs, which prevented through traffic, turning the street into a shared public space for the houses around it. At the scale of the neighborhood, street reconfigurations discouraged, but did not prevent, through traffic as well as residents from outside the development from entering. There is little doubt that these amenities were valuable to residents. Clairpointe residents, for example, wanted a fence around their neighborhood. Poplar residents wanted front doors to face away from the street so that they might not have to face their surroundings.

Of course not all developments offered all of these amenities. Especially in Philadelphia the existing street and neighborhood network substantially constrained the degree to which the new housing could reshape the environment. At the very least, however, the new developments provided for a new house and for the house-scale amenities that the house could provide. At the other extreme, residents of Victoria Park lived in a sort of suburban fantasy, where reality would only begin to intrude once they had driven outside their gate. Although an examination of this issue was beyond the scope of the study, some indication that the amenities provided by the new house was above all the most important artifact was obtained through conversations with builders in Detroit.

New houses were also likely to be perceived as providing the owner with additional status, although this would require further research to demonstrate conclusively. Especially in the inner city, where the great majority of housing was older and deteriorated, the possibility of living in a brand-new house, and one that looked like one in the suburbs no less, was likely to be very appealing. The existence of deteriorated existing housing was also likely to discourage residents from desiring replicas of that historic housing. Residents of the Cecil B Moore area clearly perceived the image of existing row housing as bad, despite the high design quality of that housing. They consequently wanted the new housing to “stand out” as much as possible from that existing context, which they doubtless associated with many negative values.
What could not be ascertained was the degree to which the fact that the developments were new was more or less important than the fact that they provided suburban amenities. The presence of alternative inner-city models, however, indicates that replicating vernacular suburbia is likely to not be the only form of housing that residents of inner-city housing might find palatable. HOPE VI public housing projects, for example, are strongly inspired by New Urbanism, which rejects many of the design features of vernacular suburbia. In Philadelphia, other affordable housing projects, especially those built by and for Latinos, provided a very different neighborhood image than those built primarily for African-Americans. The possibility of cultural differences in housing image preferences is an intriguing one and also merits further research. Finally, the existence of the gentrification of existing historic neighborhoods, at least in Philadelphia, indicates that many middle-class residents, a group which undoubtedly includes some African-Americans, are interested in historic housing models as long as the neighborhood offers a reasonable degree of stability.

Other players
If we accept that the strong desire by inner-city residents was the primary motivator for the inner-city suburbanization observed in the case development, the other players who participated in the development process can be seen as merely facilitating this social desire.

Many of these players admitted this themselves. Developers in Detroit readily admitted their perception of a market had led them to suggesting the idea for suburban houses in Jefferson-Chalmers in the first place. The fact that not all of the developments could be built did not dissuade them from believing that people wanted the houses nonetheless. Policymakers in Philadelphia believed that redevelopment efforts built along the density of existing row housing would fail in part because people no longer wanted that kind of housing in lower North Philadelphia. To emphasize the point they cited Yorktown as a development
which had remained stable precisely because it provided the type of amenities that people wanted.

For the most part, other players agreed with the primary development motivators in both cities. Other government agencies in Philadelphia assisted in the construction of the case developments there, making only minor comments on their form. Both architects and planners cooperated in Philadelphia in designing and providing the housing that was built there. City officials in Detroit played a major role in facilitating Victoria Park, as they had in previous large downtown developments. While this cooperation was in keeping with the 'growth machine' hypothesis of Logan and Molotch (1987) that large development is required to 'keep the city going', officials involved in Victoria Park also seemed to genuinely believe that suburban housing was the best solution for the problem. Finally, while the architect of Victoria Park had serious reservations about the design of the housing, he too acknowledged that the demand for the housing to some degree justified its construction.

Although one might have expected the reaction of surrounding communities to be suspicious if not hostile, this did not seem to be the case for most of the case developments surveyed in either city. In fact, all three of the Philadelphia case developments were designed with substantial amounts of community input. In both the Poplar and the Moore homes resident input was obtained through resident members of CDCs sitting on the design committees, while in Ludlow resident input was filtered through the strong leadership of the community organization there. This inclusive process seemed to alleviate any concerns that neighboring residents might have had. The Detroit case developments, as we saw, were more exclusive in both an economic and physical sense. Nevertheless, neither Victoria Park nor Clairpointe's development history was characterized by neighborhood dissatisfaction. This is not to say that there were not some concerns, especially in Victoria Park, with issues of access to and through the development, and with the clearly exclusive design of the
development- but whether because of a relative lack of capacity or because neighboring residents saw a benefit in any new development, the developments were accepted by the community. Victoria Woods was a clear counterexample, arousing vociferous community opposition that was enough to derail the project. This was doubtless because of the development’s somewhat unusual threat to demap public space for high-priced private homes. Additional investigation of community reactions to suburbanizing or suburban-like new home developments would be desirable, especially in light of the likely continuation of residential redevelopment at lower densities in both cities.

Reactions and consequences
Conflicts were relatively limited in the specific case developments, although it is clear that Detroit is currently experiencing a conflict over the validity of enclave-type developments like Victoria Park. Only time will tell whether the seeming preferences of the market and the insatiable demands of the city ‘growth machine’ will lead to further Victoria Park-type developments, despite the current reservations of the planning department. The degree to which planners can formulate policies that seem to provide for viable development alternatives is likely to play a role in this debate. In Philadelphia, the goals of OHCD were legitimized and organized by the publication of policy documents which established both precedents and justifications for the type of housing development that the department wished to promote. This strengthened the ability of the department to promote more suburban housing, and little conflict was consequently seen in Philadelphia. Detroit’s ad hoc suburbanization process was both aided and made more vulnerable by its dependence on favorable political regimes in the Mayor’s office. The complete lack of policy documents gave neither developers nor planners any grounds on which to either support or criticise their respective positions.

The study of the case developments made it clear that the palette of designs for residential redevelopments in the inner cities of Detroit and Philadelphia
encompassed more than simply continuing in a contextual vein, or completely rejecting the historic context. In both cities, what was seen was a clear shifting of development densities in inner city neighborhoods to levels not seen there before. Many of Philadelphia’s inner city neighborhoods appeared to be moving more toward the density level of historic Detroit, with designs that sometimes attempted contextuality (albeit within the framework of a different development typology), and other times rejected context entirely. Many of Detroit’s inner city neighborhoods seemed to be moving toward the densities of vernacular suburbia. Of course, all of the shifts seen were guided by the specific economic constraints of the developments constructed, and shifts in these constraints could well augur shifts in the development types seen. Philadelphia, for example, did not experience any market-level construction in its inner-city neighborhoods. The threat of total deurbanization was greater in Detroit because of the suburban-level densities of new developments there, and the New Urbanist alternative, which promised some maintenance of historic neighborhood-level design features, was more powerful because of this threat.

In both cities the process of inner-city suburbanization seemed to have only begun. Philadelphia was about to embark on an extensive clearance campaign in its declining neighborhoods, while Detroit’s renewed inner-city market continued to be the source of conflict between the shifting ideologies of the city and the financial pragmatism of suburban developers. The future would thus seem to hold a spectrum of design choices for the revitalizing neighborhoods of Detroit and Philadelphia: what one might think of as ‘deep’ suburbanization, where new developments, like those seen in Detroit, emulated those of suburbia; ‘lighter’ suburbanization, like those seen in Philadelphia, where the existing context was equally rejected but where neighborhood design changes were not as extreme and where densities of new developments did not drop to those of suburbia; or contextuality, where developments emulated most if not all of the features of historic housing in the neighborhood. The following chapter, the final one of the dissertation, will discuss three issues: the significance of the phenomenon, both
for the case cities and for other declining cities in the United States; the ethical
dilemmas raised by the prospect and reality of inner-city suburbanization, and the
prospects for intervention by architecture and planning professionals.
Chapter Six

The Future of Inner-City Suburbanization

Introduction

The previous five chapters of this dissertation have been spent creating a hypothesis for inner-city suburbanization, investigating its prevalence in the case cities of Detroit and Philadelphia, and understanding its causality in those places. This chapter, the final one of the dissertation, explores three questions related to the future of inner-city suburbanization. The first is tied to its significance. Does inner-city suburbanization even matter? In other words, is it a significant enough trend that it should be addressed further, either by professionals or by academics? The second question is related to how we evaluate inner-city suburbanization. Is this phenomenon good, bad, or a little of both? Or are multiple, conflicting evaluations possible? The third and final question is related to action. If inner-city suburbanization is both a significant and problematic phenomenon, what should the policy response be, and how does one go about formulating such a response? This chapter discusses these questions not only to provide closure to the study but to suggest future directions for research and action in the professional and academic worlds that deal with inner-city redevelopment.

As we saw in previous chapters, the world of practice has already begun to address all three of these questions. The confrontation of inner-city suburbanization in practice, however, has not been framed by a holistic understanding of the phenomenon, nor has it always been directed by explicit policies. The actions that have been taken have therefore been somewhat ad hoc. For example, while Philadelphia’s John Kromer decided upon an explicit low-density policy, Detroit’s redevelopment actions were driven by developers on a case-by-case basis. Though they lacked a larger understanding of the situation, the development officials and others involved were well aware of both
the significance of their projects and of their evaluations of the projects. These "reflections in practice" provided important hints to how these questions should be addressed on a larger, more abstract level, and these practical reflections will be often referred to in this chapter.

The fact that these three questions were addressed through practice does not mean that reexamining them in the abstract is irrelevant. The most obvious rationale for a study like that performed by this dissertation is to examine the inner-city suburbanization phenomenon outside of the temporal and ideological constraints that limit the various forms of professional practice. While the professional world was ahead of the academic community in addressing inner-city suburbanization (as it often is), it is rare that that professionals are given the opportunity to produce the comprehensive, abstract, sometimes critical studies that are necessary to provide additional insights on physical urban phenomena. The goal of this chapter, as it was for this dissertation in general, is to close this examination of inner-city suburbanization with a measured and informed discussion of the meaning of the phenomenon. It is my hope that the findings provided will be valuable both to professionals confronting the prospect of further action in the face of decline and to those academics who wish to enhance the profession's understanding of the prospects of the American inner city.

Any analysis of the future of inner-city suburbanization must begin with an assessment of the phenomenon's significance. If the phenomenon is minor, then further study is perhaps unnecessary and little practical action probably need be taken. This chapter, however, argues that this is not the case. Urban decline is a widespread phenomenon in the United States and any inner-city redevelopment that occurs is therefore likely to be influenced by inner-city suburbanization. Although this dissertation has studied the occurrence of suburbanization in only two cities, it argues these cities are representative of others and that other declining cities, both large and small, are also likely to experience inner-city suburbanization as they redevelop these neighborhoods in the future.
While it is always worthwhile to study a widespread urban phenomenon, such studies gain additional significance when the phenomenon being examined is shown to be somewhat problematic. We can find both types of studies in the urban literature. Joel Garreau's *Edge City* (1991) was a noteworthy look at the phenomenon of commercial urban sprawl which viewed it as a more or less positive development. Jane Jacobs (1961), on the other hand, strongly condemned the urban renewal phenomenon that she examined in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. This study is widely viewed as among the most significant in recent urban studies. This chapter argues that inner-city suburbanization is not quite so easy to evaluate. It has both positive and negative attributes, and therefore can neither be roundly condemned nor euphorically welcomed. This chapter also argues that one's evaluation of inner-city suburbanization is in large part dependent upon one's professional background. In particular, this chapter argues that the professions of architecture and city planning, both of which were closely involved in the creation of the inner-city suburban developments studied, hold different viewpoints which are closely linked to deep-seated values within those professions and which influence those professions' perception of the phenomenon.

Policy actions are intimately linked to evaluations. Any action that is taken must in part be based upon the decision that a situation either is or is not problematic. The recent (mid-1990s) welfare reform efforts, for example, were enacted in part because welfare as it currently existed was perceived to be a failure. Similarly, the HOPE VI public housing redesign efforts were undertaken in part because the existing design of public housing was perceived to be a disaster. Any policy or design reaction to inner-city suburbanization will therefore also be likely based in the evaluations that have been made of the phenomenon. The conflicting evaluations of inner-city suburbanization, however, promise to make unitary action difficult. In Detroit we have already seen how differences in opinion over the goodness of low-density development have led to conflicting directives in that...
city. Although this chapter argues that the ambiguity of inner-city suburbanization is likely to lead to continued debate, it also argues that the reality of continued urban decline will force political support for suburbanization as the most plausible physical redevelopment technique in severely distressed neighborhoods. This chapter also emphasizes, however, that the negative evaluations of inner-city suburbanization need to be taken into account to encourage a more unified base of support for redevelopment policies that incorporate suburbanization.

The significance of inner-city suburbanization

The significance of inner-city suburbanization can be assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Chapter Four provided several different quantitative measures of the prevalence of inner-city suburbanization, while Chapter Five provided qualitative impressions of the importance of inner-city suburbanization in the development environment of the case cities. How do we transform these measurements and impressions into a depiction of the phenomenon’s significance?

Quantitatively, the significance of inner-city suburbanization can be viewed at several different scales. Using Detroit as an example, we will recall that 20 housing developments constructed in the city since 1990 were determined to be qualitatively suburban. These 20 developments contained a total of 1,866 housing units.

Seen in their largest context, that of the Detroit metropolitan area, these 1,866 inner-city suburban housing units comprised only a tiny minority of the new housing constructed. The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) (2002) reports that a total of 239,010 new housing units were constructed from 1990 through 2000 in the six-county region around Detroit. Detroit’s inner-city suburban housing was less than one percent of this metropolitan area total. At this scale inner-city suburbanization could not be
considered significant, since it comprises only a minute fraction of the new housing constructed in the Detroit area.

If we examine only the city of Detroit, however, the qualitatively suburban housing units become much more numerically dominant. According to SEMCOG, Detroit gained a total of only 3,625 new housing units between January 1990 and December 2000. The 1,866 qualitatively suburban units surveyed by the study comprised approximately half of these units. The initial apparent insignificance of Detroit's qualitatively suburban housing can thus be seen as a function of the large quantity of new housing built in the overall Detroit metropolitan area, most of which was suburban. When we examine this inner-city suburban housing in the light of the small amount of new housing built in Detroit, inner-city suburbanization quickly becomes a much more significant trend.

Quantitatively, the significance of inner-city suburbanization can only be assessed at the scale of the city as a political entity. There are two reasons for this. First, although cities are economically part of a much larger area, they are politically isolated for the most part. Although city limits are somewhat artificial, many social, economic, and physical trends both respond to and are influenced by them. These trends are quite meaningful at the citywide level, even if they are less noticeable at larger scales. No one would say, for example, that the terrific housing decline experienced by Detroit was irrelevant simply because Southeast Michigan as a whole gained housing units. Nor would one say that because many rural parts of the Detroit metropolitan area experienced little growth that the rapid growth in other parts was insignificant. Both cities and the changes experienced within them are extremely localized occurrences, and as we saw in Chapter Four, inner-city suburbanization is equally localized. Its quantitative significance therefore needs to be assessed as such.

Secondly, inner-city suburbanization, as we saw, is a relative phenomenon as much as it is an absolute one. It is therefore less meaningful to assess it in
comparison with the housing of a metropolitan area as a whole than with urban housing alone. As we saw, the differences between vernacular urban housing and inner-city suburban housing are often striking, just as the differences between a typical urban apartment building and a typical suburban single-family house are. It is this difference, as well as the resemblance of inner-city housing to suburban housing, that is significant, but this difference is only meaningful by observing inner-city suburban housing within a relatively limited context.

Of course, there are even smaller scales in cities than that of the municipal limits of a city. Downtowns, for example, are highly localized and hard-to-quantify concentrations of intense activity that experience very different types of change from other parts of the city. Similarly, as we saw in the case of Philadelphia, inner cities can experience extremely localized changes in close adjacency to gentrifying areas which are experiencing entirely different types of change. At the scale of the inner city neighborhood, inner-city suburbanization becomes even more quantitatively significant because forms of residential development that are fairly common in other parts of the city are often quite rare. Within Detroit’s inner city neighborhoods, qualitatively suburban inner-city housing comprised an even larger percentage of the total than it did in the city as a whole. It was therefore even more significant at that limited scale.

The quantitative significance of inner-city suburbanization is relatively easy to assess in Detroit because so much of that city’s new inner-city housing appeared suburban. The other case city of Philadelphia, however, presents some difficulties in assessing its significance quantitatively, primarily because none of its new housing was qualitatively similar to vernacular suburban housing. How do we then assess the quantitative significance of the inner city suburbanization trend there?

The lack of qualitatively suburban housing in Philadelphia’s inner city neighborhoods led to my decision to measure all housing in those
neighborhoods, whereas in Detroit only qualitatively suburban housing was measured. What did those measures tell us? Suburbanization scores in Philadelphia ranged from a high of 4.52 out of 6 for the Poplar Nehemiah Homes to a low of only 0.71 out of 6 for the Lillia Crippen Townhouses. The median Philadelphia score was 2.47, or a little less than half of what would be a “perfect” suburbanization score. While this score cannot be compared to that of Detroit as only qualitatively suburban developments were measured there (undoubtedly skewing its overall suburbanization score upwards), we may look at the relative significance of the Philadelphia developments with respect to each other. It is noteworthy that the two individually largest projects (the Poplar Nehemiah Homes and the Cecil B. Moore Homes), were also among the highest scoring, with rankings of first and fifth respectively out of 16 developments measured. These two large projects together comprised 35% of the total number of housing units built in the Philadelphia inner city since 1990, and as we saw in Chapter Five, both displayed significant suburban attributes (though their unit densities and neighborhood design were not suburb-like). On the basis of both the presence of these two projects as the two largest assisted housing developments built in the decade of the 1990s in north Philadelphia, and of their role as precedents for further development (as seen in the policy studies published by OHCD), we may say that inner-city suburbanization was significant in the Philadelphia inner city. As we will see below the qualitative impressions of these developments matched their quantitative significance.

Any qualitative assessment of the significance of inner-city suburbanization must be based at least in part on the perceptions of those individuals who have experienced it. Although this study did not undertake a comprehensive assessment of people's reactions to inner-city suburbanization, the research undertaken for the individual developments provided some guidance as to the impact of inner-city suburbanization in each case city.
This impact was, to say the least, substantial. The two major case developments studied for this dissertation were both, at the time of their construction, perceived as among the most, if not the most, important residential developments in the city. This importance was due not only to their scale (as we saw, both Victoria Park and the Poplar Homes were sizeable developments) but to their place in the development histories of the city. The Poplar houses were perceived, quite accurately, by the city’s Office of Housing and Community Development as being a flagship for the future of new housing design in North Philadelphia. Victoria Park was even more important because of the depressed state of housing construction in the entire city of Detroit at the time. In a city of over one million where the construction of new single-family houses had been relegated by many to the status of a historical event, the impact of a sizeable new, more or less market-rate housing development was not to be underestimated. Some sign of Victoria Park’s importance could be seen in the twenty or so articles covering it in the popular press during the years of its construction (see Bibliography). How many suburban tract developments have received similar attention?

The institutional commitment to these flagship projects in both cities was substantial. Philadelphia’s OHCD felt that the Poplar Homes were important enough to merit a substantial chunk of both present and future CDBG funding, essentially mortgaging the future of assisted housing for the next several years in order to support that development. Similarly, the director of OHCD felt that Poplar was important enough to merit two studies (Home and Yorktown) to provide a policy rationale and empirical evidence for the likely success of the project. In Detroit, Victoria Park was believed to be important enough to merit individual attention from the mayor, as well as the assignment of one of the mayor’s executive aides to oversee the project. The importance of Victoria Park was also reflected in the city’s large, and politically risky, financial commitment to the project, a commitment which seems to have backfired when a new administration came into office and criticized those same financial outlays.
Similarly, private developers, at least in Detroit, saw Victoria Park as the leading symbol of the turnaround of the residential real estate environment in the city. Although one would probably never be able to prove that Victoria Park contributed to the rise in housing values across the city, the perception of this having been the case was widespread enough in Detroit that it is significant nonetheless. In Philadelphia, however, the impact of the Poplar houses was limited to the North Philadelphia neighborhood, as the city experienced entirely different types of changes in other neighborhoods like Center City and gentrifying rowhouse neighborhoods. With these other neighborhoods ripe for development, private developers were unable or unwilling to afford North Philadelphia any attention during the 1990s.

Finally, among the citizens of both city’s declining neighborhoods, there was a clear sense that the two flagship developments represented a bright future for new housing in the inner city. Both the Poplar houses and the Cecil B Moore houses were guided by citizen advisory boards who were equally as supportive, or more so, of the provision of suburban amenities in the new housing as were the government officials involved. In Detroit, the rapid sales of Victoria Park also made the significance of this new type of development to middle-class African-Americans very clear.

There can be little argument that these flagship developments, at least, were extremely significant in their respective cities. The same case cannot be made, obviously, for each of the developments found that exhibited characteristics of inner-city suburbanization. Most of the CDC projects in both case cities, for example, were constructed with little fanfare, though they may have had high suburbanization scores. This, however, should not be taken as an indication that the phenomenon as a whole was not significant. The flagship developments, because of their high level of exposure, served as important symbols of the types of changes that were occurring in the inner city housing markets of Detroit and Philadelphia. Much like biologists like to emphasize the importance of “indicator
species” (large, highly visible animals or plants) in showing the health of an ecological habitat, the flagship projects symbolized the suburbanizing transformation of Detroit and Philadelphia’s inner cities. The generally high institutional, private sector, and public level of attention paid to these projects seems clear evidence that inner-city suburbanization, explicit or not, was qualitatively significant in the case cities.

Despite the study’s attempt to comprehensively investigate the phenomenon of inner-city suburbanization in the two case cities, it had obvious limitations. Perhaps most glaring was the fact that only two cities were examined. If only two cities were examined, how can we then say that inner-city suburbanization is a significant trend at a national level?

Although it was impossible within the limited scope of this study to examine the prevalence of inner-city suburbanization at a national level, there are two indications that such an examination would find the phenomenon to be prevalent in a number of different American cities. The first is simply that while Detroit and Philadelphia are only two cities, they are both among the ten largest cities in the country. Many smaller cities in both the Northeast and Midwest share their physical attributes, but in a lesser form. The smaller size of these cities creates critical differences that are likely to make them more vulnerable to inner-city suburbanization. In most cases the size of ‘urban’ neighborhoods in smaller, older cities is much smaller than that of either Detroit or Philadelphia, whose older neighborhoods extend for miles. Many of these smaller cities also suffer from steeper decline than the case cities because of their limited size and economic diversity. These cities are thus likely to have even less vernacular urban residential context than the case cities do. This, combined with the often weaker real estate markets of small declining cities, is likely to make inner-city suburbanization an even more powerful force in these places.
What cities would these be? Satellite industrial cities have been especially hard-hit by urban decline. The decay of cities like Camden, NJ; Gary, IN; East Cleveland, OH; and East St. Louis, IL has left them often unable even to maintain amenities like public libraries and sanitation services. For these cities, housing redevelopment in any form is likely to be seen as salvation. Other large declining cities are also likely to face inner-city suburbanization pressures. Cleveland's inner city, for example, has suburbanized somewhat with the construction of large suburban-like houses in its Hough neighborhood, while the evidence from other large cities like St. Louis and Baltimore is yet unclear and would require further research.

For other types of cities, inner-city suburbanization is unlikely to become a major force in the near future. Two types of cities seem especially resistant to inner-city suburbanization; those older cities with strong economies, like San Francisco and Boston; and those newer cities which generally have developed at very low densities. These older, more successful cities may have experienced some population decline but to have experienced only limited housing loss, which demonstrates both an increased demand for housing and the limited number of neighborhoods in which inner-city suburbanization would be possible (see Chapter Four and Appendix B for more Boston data). Newer cities, of course, are the classic Sunbelt cities, which have come to define an urban paradigm equal to that established by the older industrial cities of the northern United States. These cities were often built at relatively low housing densities of six to 12 housing units per acre, have received substantial Hispanic immigration in the last twenty years, and have relatively strong regional economies. All of these forces would discourage the widespread abandonment of housing that has characterized older declining cities. Los Angeles is a paradigmatic example of this newer type of city. As we saw in Chapter Four, Los Angeles has increased both in population and housing units, and consequently in density as well. In these cities inner-city suburbanization is likely to remain a relatively unknown, and insignificant, phenomenon.
In closing, we have seen inner-city suburbanization to be a significant force in the two case cities of Detroit and Philadelphia. These cities were selected to be representative of the declining industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest, and as such the author believes that the inner-city suburbanization trend shown to be operating in these two cities is symptomatic of a larger trend which would also be seen operating in smaller declining cities. Further research would be required to ascertain the prevalence of inner-city suburbanization in those places.

Within the case cities, inner-city suburbanization was shown to be both quantitatively and qualitatively significant. A large percentage of new developments in both cities scored high on the suburbanization index, and most of the diverse actors involved in the creation of the developments perceived these developments as symbolic of larger trends in the residential redevelopment of the inner city. The next section will examine the question of the evaluation of inner-city suburbanization. Although inner-city suburbanization may be significant, this determination is not enough to establish a course of future action toward the phenomenon. We must first address the question of whether inner-city suburbanization should be interpreted as a positive or a negative event.

_Evaluating inner-city suburbanization_

How is one to evaluate the phenomenon of inner-city suburbanization? The evidence from *Chapter Five* indicates that there is far from total agreement on the subject of whether or not inner-city suburbanization is a good thing. On the one hand, some politicians, in the case of Victoria Park for example, believed that “there’s nothing bad about” building enclaves of suburb-like homes in the inner city. On the other hand, the very architect whose firm contributed to Victoria Park believed that “it was the worst project (he’d) ever been associated with”. How could the same development inspire such differing, and conflicting, evaluations? And what do these conflicting evaluations say about the prospects of coming to overall evaluation of inner-city suburbanization?
This section of the chapter will argue that these conflicting evaluations, of which the above comments on Victoria Park were a glimpse, signify deep-seated differences in the value systems of the individuals involved in the construction of houses with suburban characteristics in the inner city. Despite the seeming modesty of these houses, they held enormous symbolic power, representing entirely different things to their diverse creators, some of whom viewed them as wonderful, and others of whom viewed them as deeply problematic. These different opinions, and the differences between value systems that these opinions hint at, mean that a unified evaluation of inner-city suburbanization is never likely to happen.

While many individuals, representing many different groups, contributed to the construction of the housing developments studied in Chapter Five, this section will concentrate on only two of those groups. As we have seen, the involved groups ranged from community residents, to elected politicians, to municipal staff, to private developers. This section will concentrate on the value differences between the architects who designed the buildings, and the city planners who provided the regulatory and institutional backing for the construction of the housing.

Why architects and planners? There are two reasons why considering the differing value systems of these groups with respect to inner-city suburbanization is important. First, architects and planners were the individuals most directly responsible for the design of most of the housing studied, though of course their specific contributions varied from project to project. Architects directly produced the designs for the houses, while planners maintained the regulatory environment, such as zoning, within which the houses were constructed. Of course, both groups were heavily influenced by outside sources. Although an architecture firm was responsible for Victoria Park, according to one source those architects were “told what to design”, indicating that they were hardly solely

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responsible for its design features. Nevertheless architects were primary participants in the inner-city suburbanization process, even if they were not alone. Planners’ roles also varied widely, ranging from strong to weak. Planners, for instance, played only an advisory role in the design and development of the Poplar Houses while housing officials coordinated and supervised the development process. Though their role was not always dominant, planners were nevertheless powerful, as we saw in the case of the problematic follow-up to Victoria Park. Without the cooperation of planners, the housing developments that were constructed would likely have been impossible.

The second reason is tied both to the historic relationship between the professions of planning and architecture and to the hybrid nature of this thesis, which is being written within an academic group containing members of both professions. The relationship between architecture and urban planning has been a constantly evolving one, with periods of closeness interspersed with periods of greater distance. Whatever the exact nature of this relationship, the two fields now generally operate separately both as academic disciplines and as professions, though they are often associated. As planning has grown more distant from architecture, incorporating aspects of public policy and social science into its training curriculum and practice, the hybrid field of urban design has developed, in part to make up for the focus on urban form that urban planning has to some extent abandoned.

Because of its responsibilities to both professions, this study is especially concerned with the way in which architects and city planners interpret the inner-city suburbanization phenomenon, and also with the way in which urban designers might interpret it. The discussion that follows will examine these professional interpretations, review the interpretations that were found in the case studies, and conclude with a theoretical evaluative viewpoint for the field of urban design.
Within the realm of architecture, suburbia is problematic. As we have seen, architects are at best ambivalent about the design of suburban housing. Dunham-Jones (2000) described how few architects concern themselves with the suburbs, and many suburban houses are designed with only token input from architects. Theoretical architecture has tended to concern itself more with signature projects, most of which have borne very little resemblance to the vernacular design of suburban houses. The result has been two design cultures, the architectural and the popular, which rarely clash but more often simply refuse to acknowledge each other, though occasional high-profile architects (most recently Frank Gehry) break through this divide to impact both worlds.

Both sides have legitimate grounds for criticizing the other. Criticisms of high architectural culture have focused on its aloofness, arrogance, and lack of concern with clients' needs (see Wolfe 1981 for an amusing account of this view), while architects, on their side, decry the simplistic and banal nature of vernacular suburban design. Neither side, however, is monolithic: the architectural community has historically had great disputes over the 'preferred' form of design, while the general public rather more peacefully acknowledges that there are many architectural ways to skin a cat.

In the light of the mutual lack of acknowledgement between architectural and popular culture, the attempt of the New Urbanist movement to accommodate both appears somewhat more noteworthy. New Urbanism acknowledges the public's taste for somewhat historicist architecture, albeit with many of the latest modern features, while imposing its own normative view of design at many levels, ranging from a more careful historical interpretation of architectural style to a significant redesign of the site planning and neighborhood form of vernacular suburbia. While New Urbanism refuses to engage the avant-garde, thus alienating many architectural theorists, it does attempt to engage the reality of the vast landscape of vernacular suburbia, thus drawing together architectural
and popular culture in a way that has not been attempted at such a scale since before the Modern movement.

Urban planners, on the other hand, have developed a far less normative approach to urban form and neighborhood design. The planning profession was closely associated with the urban renewal movement of the 1950s and 1960s that generally promoted Modernist design at the expense of vernacular neighborhoods, and the perceived failure of this movement both relieved planners of a great deal of legitimacy in the eyes of the public as well as convinced the planning profession itself that public opinions were equally as important as those of planners. The result has been a kinder, gentler profession, but one that has also increasingly felt its sense of mission slipping away as its core of professional knowledge has been increasingly delegated to other groups (Rodwin and Sanyal 2000 provide an excellent discussion of changes in the planning profession over the last few decades). Planning continues today with a focus both on public empowerment, and a reduced normative agenda focusing less on neighborhood design than on overall principles for urban development. The “smart growth” movement, essentially advocating concentrated development rather than continued urban sprawl, is a recent manifestation of planning’s reduced normative agenda (see Szold 2002 for a review of smart growth practices in New England).

What did the case developments show us about the architectural and planning professions’ interpretation of inner-city suburbanization? The record was somewhat mixed. In Detroit, architects disliked the suburb-like houses there, while planners both supported and criticized the same phenomenon. The Philadelphia developments were far less contentious, either because of their inclusive design process or because the products of these processes were less suburb-like than the Detroit developments. While the process may have been uncontentious, the professional reaction to the Poplar houses has not been unanimous. During a planning association’s tour of the Poplar and Ludlow
Houses in 2001, members expressed dismay at the degree to which Philadelphia’s new housing was imitating the suburbs.

If we look closer at the ethics of the two professions, we can see the potential for ideological conflict, both internal and external, within the two professions. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Code of Ethics (2002) includes the following professional obligations as part of the code:

- As a general obligation, architects should “maintain and advance their knowledge of the art and science of architecture, respect the body of architectural accomplishment, contribute to its growth, thoughtfully consider the social and environmental impact of their professional activities, and exercise learned and uncompromised professional judgment.”
- With respect to the public, architects should “…promote and serve the public interest in their personal and professional activities.”
- With respect to clients, architects should “…exercise unprejudiced and unbiased judgment when performing all professional services.”
- With respect to the profession, architects should “uphold the integrity and dignity of the profession.”

While this rather vague series of directives offers substantial leeway, as it was no doubt designed to do, it also offers some clear directives that provide architects with substantial ethical ammunition with which to select designs. First among these is the architects’ obligation to “advance... the art and science of architecture.” Architects are thereby empowered, and even obliged, via their professional education, to produce better architecture. The body which determines what this better architecture is is not described in the code, but in practice this determination has been left to the design and theory literature, including professional magazines like Architecture which routinely publish and give awards to what they consider to be the ‘best’ architectural projects. The code also gives architects the right to make their own determinations as to what good architectural design is by “exercising... uncompromised professional judgment.” Although the code also obliges architects to have a responsibility both
to the public and to the client, this responsibility leaves the architect with substantial empowerment. With respect to the public, the architect is rather vaguely urged to “...serve the public interest...”, while with the client the architect is again encouraged to “exercise... unbiased judgment...”

Overall, the AIA *Code of Ethics* provides architects with a clear professional mandate. Based upon *their* determination of what comprises good architectural design, architects are obliged to remain aware of public obligations while ensuring that the “integrity and dignity” of the profession remain intact. In practice, these ethics can play out in several different ways. Architects who believe that a client's request conflicts with their own idea of good design can reject those ideas with a clear conscience, at the risk, of course, of losing the commission. The integrity of the architect’s judgment and of the profession’s standing remain paramount. Yet architects are also obliged to serve the public, or at least not to produce designs that would in some way adversely affect that public. What if the public’s interest conflicts with the architect’s design?

The ethical responsibilities of planners, in contrast, are much less related to a notion of the profession’s artistic integrity and much more to a notion of public service. The American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) *Code of Ethics* (2002) includes the following directives. Unlike the AIA Code, the AICP Code includes no general directive, instead listing four sets of obligations to the public, to the client, to the profession, and to the planner himself.

- With respect to the public, first and foremost, a planner must “serve the public interest... which requires these [selected] special obligations [selected follow]:
  3) A planner must strive to provide full, clear and accurate information on planning issues to citizens and governmental decision-makers.
  4) A planner must strive to give citizens the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the development of plans and programs. Participation should be broad enough to include people who lack formal organization or influence.
5) A planner must strive to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of disadvantaged groups and persons, and must urge the alteration of policies, institutions and decisions which oppose such needs.

7) A planner must strive for excellence of environmental design and endeavor to conserve the heritage of the built environment."

- With respect to the client, the planner should provide “…diligent, creative, independent and competent performance of work…consistent with the planner's faithful service to the public interest.”

- With respect to the profession, the planner should “contribute to the development of the profession by improving knowledge and techniques, making work relevant to solutions of community problems, and increasing public understanding of planning activities.”

Overall, the AICP code assigns planners a clear public mandate, while the notion of responsibility to an internal sense of “integrity” is weak or absent. Predominant is the idea that the planner must inform, empower, expand, and above all serve the public. Only one mild directive, the last in the initial seven public responsibilities listed by the code, urges planners to “strive for excellence” in design. As with the AIA Code, the means by which design is determined to be excellent is not given, but one may assume that it is provided through the educational system or via the professional literature.

Both of these codes represent existing internal ethical conflicts within the architectural and planning professions. Architects, commanded to further the art of architectural design, are also commanded to serve their client and the public interest. Planners are strongly commanded to serve the public interest while also being encouraged to at least achieve “excellence” in design, even if it does not necessarily further the art. Even the notion of serving the public interest holds the potential for conflict. Who is to decide what the public interest is? What if the public’s stated preferences do not mirror the public interest as determined by the architectural or planning professional? While architects are presumably
empowered to interpret the public interest for themselves, planners are given additional responsibilities that could conceivably be especially problematic for them. These are to both “give citizens the opportunity to have a meaningful impact”, while at the same time providing “creative, independent… performance of work”.

Between the professions, the potential for ethical conflict is perhaps even greater, with architects driven by an overall imperative to provide good design, and planners motivated by an overall imperative to serve and empower the public. Yet what happens if both professions are involved in the production of a project which is broadly supported by the public, yet is roundly dismissed as poor design?

The inner-city suburban development of Victoria Park provided exactly these conflictual conditions. The recorded evaluations of the project from architects and planners closely reflected those that might have been predicted from an application of the above ethical codes to the development. Both professionals acknowledged their predominant ethical affiliations while also acknowledging that their secondary responsibilities conflicted with those predominant affiliations. Victoria Park’s architect described the project as “the worst I’ve ever been associated”, but admitted that “putting on my Detroit hat, the project (was) good for the area.” The architect quite accurately reflected that the project was “a real dilemma.” The planner who supervised the construction of Victoria Park, also reflecting his ethical obligations, felt somewhat differently. Most important to him was the fact that “people lined up to purchase” the homes, though he also acknowledged that some planners “felt it was the wrong thing to put in the neighborhood.” Reflecting the importance of community opinion over design ideology, the planner added that “design is not a religion- there is room for different styles.”
If we acknowledge that the phenomenon of inner-city suburbanization leads to ethical dilemmas for both planners and architects, and to potential ethical conflict between them, the question of resolution arises. How are the professions to resolve these ethical dilemmas, both the internal ones stemming from conflicting professional directives, and the external ones stemming from the larger-scale ethical differences between architects and planners? This question is an extremely difficult one that goes far beyond the particular urban phenomenon being studied, and a theoretical resolution is difficult. The case developments, however, provided at least three different ways of resolving these dilemmas in practice. The first was through repression. The second was through oscillation. The third was through hybridization. These means of resolving ethical dilemmas are similar to those found by Rein and Thacher (2002, unpublished) for resolution of value conflicts in policy issues like policing and welfare reform.

In the case of repression, one ethical directive was simply subverted and ignored by another, more dominant directive. This happened in the case of Victoria Park's design, where the architect's design clashed with that proposed by the developers. Although this architect believed that their design was problematic, he was overruled, and the developer's design was implemented. The result was the architect's dissatisfaction with the development, to the degree to which he essentially disowned it, thus ethically dissociating himself from what he saw as its illegitimate design.

This repression was not permanent, however. With the subsequent, and as yet unbuilt, New Urbanist-inspired successors to Victoria Park we can see the second principle of oscillation coming into play. In this case, a problematic ethical occurrence (the suburban design of Victoria Park) was simply reversed the next time around (the as-yet-unbuilt 'traditional' second phase), with the result that both sides will have at least one realized project which more or less conforms to their ethical values, with the hope that further projects might also do so. The principle of oscillation can be very clearly seen in the current disputes over the
larger-scale development future of the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood. This
dispute has extended to the point where there are actually two existing
proposals, one more or less promoting inner-city suburbanization, and the other
promoting a New Urbanist, historically contextual scheme, for the same
neighborhood. Again, both promoters hope for their scheme to be realized, and
even if it is not, with the principle of oscillation the potential exists for a different
resolution in the future. Rein and Thacher (2002, unpublished) called this
principle “cycling between different values over time”.

It is perhaps not coincidental that the above two dilemma resolutions were seen
in Detroit, a city where both the political and policy regimes appeared to be both
somewhat dictatorial and somewhat capricious. Lacking a strong policy
framework that could resist changes in regimes and establish a consistent ethical
framework, Detroit was unusually sensitive to regime shifts. Thus the repression
of architectural ethics, which was in no small part the product of Coleman
Young’s development-deal-oriented philosophy, was suddenly abandoned with
his retirement, opening the door for a sharp swing in political fortunes, in the
consequent ethical directives of the planning department, and in the design of
subsequent housing developments.

The hybridization resolution was manifested clearly in Philadelphia. It is perhaps
no coincidence that the visually hybridized development of the Poplar Nehemiah
houses was also the result of a hybridized design process involving architects,
planners, residents, politicians - in short, all of the players who were also
involved, to a greater or lesser degree, in the Detroit projects as well, but within a
process that provided for more empowerment of all of the parties concerned. As
we saw in Chapter Five, conflict was not unknown within this process; certain
issues, especially that of the door location, revealed the ethical differences that
were likely bubbling just under the surface, and provided the only clear view of
the true power relations extant in the process. The front door dispute was what
Rein and Thatcher would refer to as a “value floor”: despite the various
compromises made, this design feature represented the threshold of a key value (the 'degree of urbanity' of the project) that the institutional players were not willing to sacrifice under any circumstances, to the point to which they literally threatened to not fund the development if forced to surrender. Despite these differences, a product was produced that seemed to satisfy, or at least mollify, the concerns of all involved. In its production of a "best available solution" the Poplar process mirrored the process advocated for the resolution of complex public policy disputes by authors like Susskind and Cruikshank (1987).

The hybridization process was not perfect. Real-estate developers, for one, were absent from the Philadelphia design discussions, and it is likely that the desires of these players would have substantially altered the mix of ethical directives, as well as potentially confused the responsibilities of planners further by providing a public element that desired suburban amenities even more than the low-income residents present in the existing process, who appeared more or less satisfied with the limited suburban amenities that were provided.

The above practical resolutions to the ethical dilemmas raised by inner-city suburbanization will be discussed further in the final section of this chapter as I consider future policy and design options. Below I will briefly consider the somewhat difficult ethical position of the urban design field with respect to the inner-city suburbanization phenomenon,

Urban design is not generally regarded as a profession in and of itself like architecture or city planning, but as a hybrid field that draws from both. Lang (1994) described urban design in the following way:

Whether (urban design) should be regarded as a discipline in its own right is an open question... urban design has been most closely allied with architecture and city planning by filling the intellectual and professional gap between them... as architecture reduces the domain of its concerns... and as city planning (deals) mainly with transportation and land use planning, to the extent that
it deals with other than social and economic issues, so urban design has become increasingly an entity on its own.

As a hybrid between architecture and city planning, urban design is, in Lang’s words, “at best a collaborative art”, with many responsibilities; above all, perhaps, to the principle of good design; to the political process within which urban design occurs; to the public whom urban design is intended to benefit; and to developers, many of whom fund projects which contribute to urban design. This challenging series of responsibilities is more difficult than that facing either the architect or the planner, both of whom to a large degree have withdrawn into relatively straightforward ethical realms: the architect to the realm of quality design (if the client pays for it), and the planner to the realm of public empowerment. Though Lang is not explicit about the complex ethical responsibilities of the urban designer, it is not hard to see how the multiple directives above could lead to substantial internal ethical conflict.

What, if anything, can be recommended for urban designers who are dealing with the prospect of inner-city suburbanization in their city? Urban policymakers (Rybczynski 1994, Cohen 2000, Rae 2000, Kromer 2001) have as yet failed to address the design issues inherent in severe inner-city decline, while architects like Andres Duany have promoted design ideals at the expense of reality. Duany’s transect of steadily declining densities fails to conform to a reality where low-density developments are being inserted amidst formerly urban blocks. Rather than a gradient, it appears that the new inner city is starting to resemble a patchwork quilt of surviving historic blocks, new, low-density suburban development, and the ever-growing areas of abandonment. The architectural response should perhaps be expected. Ignoring reality may sound somewhat shortsighted, but it is an effective way for coping with seemingly irreconcilable differences, especially when the nonconforming reality remains part of one’s professional province.
For those urban designers who choose not to ignore the prospect of inner-city suburbanization, there are other options. One is to simply accept it as the only feasible alternative, even if the thought of designing suburban housing for urban neighborhoods fills one with horror. As the former city planning director of Cleveland said, referring to the large suburban-style mansions being built in Cleveland’s Hough neighborhood, “It’s better than nothing, after all.” A third is to both accept the prospect of inner-city suburbanization and the responsibility of shaping its form, even if, in an ideal world, it would not be occurring. This third form of confrontation will be discussed in the closing section of this chapter. If one accepts both the significance of inner-city suburbanization and its somewhat problematic nature, what should one do about it?

Confronting inner-city suburbanization

How should the hypothetical urban designer, architect, or urban planner best confront the prospect of a housing development in the inner city with suburban characteristics? The urban designer is here proposed as the professional best equipped to confront this phenomenon because the other two professions, as we have seen, work within ethical frameworks which allow them to confront only certain aspects of the phenomenon without much ethical conflict. The architect can simply refuse the commission, as many architects do when asked to perform work that they are unwilling to; the planner can simply focus upon the public benefits stemming from the project and work to ensure that the development process is inclusive of all constituencies, equitable in its distribution of costs and benefits, and reasonably acceptable to all of the public constituencies concerned. The urban designer, on the other hand, cannot escape the fact that the imposition of vernacular suburban neighborhood and architectural characteristics into an existing urban neighborhood more or less directly contravenes many urban design directives. What, then, should this hypothetical designer do?

First, the urban designer should examine the development directives in order to evaluate the degree to which they conform or conflict with his or her own ethical
values. Perhaps the development as proposed is not especially problematic: it is limited in scale, for instance, or it does not differ significantly enough from either its context or from the designer's own vision of what would be appropriate to raise a flag. In these cases the urban designer can participate in the development process without significantly compromising his or her own ethical values.

In other cases, however, the development directives may appear to be problematic. For example, the directive may be for a low-density development in a row house neighborhood, such as the Poplar development, or for a development with equivalent densities, but designed in such a way that pedestrian access is difficult and automobile orientation is predominant. Many of the multifamily Detroit developments were designed in such a fashion. It should be noted that other situations development directives unrelated to inner-city suburbanization could also be proposed, for example a high-rise apartment tower in a neighborhood of small attached houses. These types of conflicts would be dealt with in other ways, and will not be discussed here.

Once confronted with a development directive that proposes housing units which are too low-density, too auto-oriented, too far from the street, or problematic in any of the many other ways which an urban designer might determine, the designer still has multiple options. He or she could simply withdraw from the process and absolve themselves of responsibility for it. In some cases, however, such as that where an urban designer works for a public agency, withdrawing from the process may not be feasible. In this case the urban designer could simply stick to his or her aesthetic guns, arguing resolutely for a different design alternative, no matter what the opposition. This alternative, however, might also be problematic because of the urban designer's responsibility to his or her superiors, who might be responsible for addressing additional political or economic directives. It might also lead to complete defeat if the urban designer faces overwhelming opposition that favors another alternative. If he or she
chooses to acknowledge these other directives as well the designer could simply surrender, participating in a process that he or she disagrees with internally, but does not acknowledge to others. Even in this situation the designer might take solace in the hope that the policy directives might oscillate in the future, allowing for the production of design alternatives that are more palatable.

The fourth option is for the urban designer to engage him- or herself in the development process and work toward a compromise solution. In this case, the designer would need to decide which minimum design features (equivalent to Rein and Thatcher’s policy “value floors”) he or she would require in order to be satisfied with the design. This determination could be made either before or after the receipt of design directives; in other words, the urban designer could have an explicit set of features which he or she would demand. More likely, however, is a more fluid process, whereby the urban designer works in a back-and-forth fashion with the developer or other actors to produce a hybrid design that satisfies at least some needs of both parties.

The illustrations below provide a hypothetical example of such a process. The initial design directive is based on Detroit’s Alberta King Village development, seen in *Chapter Four*. The series of drawings shows a process through which two conflicting design directives, one supporting on a low-density, garden-apartment-style, auto-oriented complex, and the other supporting on a high-density, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented complex, are accommodated by a single design with elements of both.

The initial design directive from the developer was for a low-density (eight units per acre), entirely residential complex of townhouse units organized as a superblock, with an internal parking lot. Units opened inwards toward the parking and back onto the street via relatively deep lawns. Vehicular access was only via driveways opening onto the primary road and pedestrian access through the complex was discouraged. This design is shown below.
The urban designer's ideal vision, on the other hand, would be for a higher-density (20 units per acre), complex of mixed apartment and two-family units, with parking either on the street or through rear alleyways. Buildings would face out to the street and would have relatively small yards. The neighborhoods street grid would be continued through the development and pedestrian access would be encouraged by sidewalks. The development also would contain retail along the primary street. This design is shown below.
Although the urban designer proposed this conceptual alternative, the directive for lower densities and for a completely residential complex turned out to be nonnegotiable because of political imperatives and funding considerations. The urban designer therefore proposed a third design, which is shown below.

![Figure 6.3. Hybrid design proposed by urban designer](image)

The third design lowered densities to eight units per acre and removed the commercial component of the project, but retained the existing street grid, kept some parking behind the structures, and maintained a diversity of unit types. Neither the urban designer nor the developer were completely satisfied with this design. The developer felt that people would not want to park behind their units for security reasons, and that per unit construction costs would be higher because of there were more detached houses. The developer also felt that the image of the development would be stronger if it were set off from surrounding streets, many of which had dilapidated houses. Neither was the urban designer completely satisfied. Unit densities, he believed, were far too low for this site, especially given the density that it had once supported. The designer regretted the loss of a commercial component to the development, which he felt would only encourage automobile use by residents. Finally, the designer disagreed with the
front-access parking to the units, which was not found in nearby neighborhoods and which he believed would lead to an automobile-dominated streetscape. However, both the designer and the developer were happy about those features of the design which conformed to their ideals of a successful housing development on the site. Both sides held some degree of power: because of his or her position as a member of the city's planning department, the urban designer's regulatory approval was needed for the site plan, and without the developer's private capital the project could not go forward. Recognizing that each was necessary for the other to make the project happen, the hybrid design was approved and constructed.

Hybrid designs like those shown in the imaginary process above may not be the most appropriate solution for every situation where urban designers and others confront inner-city suburbanization, nor will they necessarily be feasible in all of these cases. There will always be situations where design directives are non-negotiable, and conversely, there will also be situations where many urban designers will feel that their ethical imperatives do not permit them to accommodate suburban qualities in urban housing developments. Nevertheless, a hybrid process, if it is found to be acceptable to all of the parties involved, seems to hold promise for both acknowledging the reality of a changing inner city urban fabric and allowing the "integrity of the profession", whether it be architecture, planning, or urban design, to remain at least somewhat intact.

Concluding thoughts
Within its limited scope this dissertation has demonstrated that the urban fabric of steeply declining inner-city neighborhoods is changing through redevelopment. The suburban ideal, based in the notion that low-density, automobile-oriented development is a desirable way to build, is noticeably influencing the design of much new housing being built in the inner city. This change is not occurring because of a single Federal policy, or because a particular actor in the development process is imposing it. If, indeed, inner-city suburbanization is a
problem, there is no single actor to blame for it. The suburbanization of the inner city is occurring because a variety of actors, for a variety of reasons, are increasingly coming to the conclusion that housing with suburban amenities is, at least in some cases, preferable to housing that mimics or exceeds the density of the original neighborhood fabric.

Many of the forces leading to the suburbanization of the inner city do not seem likely to be reversible. Urban decline, though it has been known to decelerate or even reverse itself in cases, has not shown itself to be noticeably responsive to policy directives in steeply declining cities like Detroit or Philadelphia. The seemingly relentless loss of population and housing that these cities are experiencing is gradually convincing policymakers there that a lower-density future is the only realistic alternative for their inner city neighborhoods. The housing developments that we have seen in this dissertation constitute some of the first tentative, somewhat naïve experiments in what promises to be a major reshaping of the inner-city physical fabric. This new fabric will be one with far less housing, far more automobile usage, far fewer corner stores, more open space, and increased private amenities. This transition, however, is far from completed, and there are a variety of forms it could take as the process unfolds. Detroit could, for example, continue to redesign its declining neighborhoods as suburban enclaves, a strategy that would no doubt appeal to the many city residents who desire the suburban ideal. Philadelphia could take the same path in its Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, consolidating blocks of cleared rowhouses and redeveloping them as single-family detached enclaves. The private development market there would no doubt be responsive to such a strategy, and this interest would be a powerful incentive, as it was in Detroit, for further inner-city suburbanization.

Another course of action, however, would be both more difficult and somewhat more imaginative. The private market interest that we saw in the Detroit examples is a powerful force that has barely been harnessed in inner-city
development. The potentially unlimited capital of private developers could far
outstrip the Federal Government's rather token financial contributions to inner-
city redevelopment, contributions that, as we saw in Philadelphia, can pay for
only one or two large new housing developments per decade. It remains to be
seen whether the powerful force of private capital can be harnessed while still
preserving, or recreating, those aspects of historic urban neighborhoods that
architects and planners often find so pleasing. Is the delicate inner-city real
estate market strong enough to support something besides vernacular suburban
development? How affordable will these alternatives be? Would city residents
who desire the suburban ideal accept an even more modified version of this ideal
than the one produced by Victoria Park? Such a modified ideal, as we saw in the
example above, might include a reduced, but not eliminated street grid; housing
that was less dense, but not tremendously so; and perhaps most important, a site
design that acknowledges the reality of off-street parking while also
acknowledging the reality of the urban street. Cities like Cleveland are already
taking important steps toward this modified suburban ideal. Other cities,
however, are barely beginning to experiment with inner-city suburban
development, or have not yet even begun to do so.

Figure 6.4. Despite the suburban design of its homes (left), this inner-city suburban development
in the Hough neighborhood of Cleveland turned outward, as seen in the aerial photograph on the
right, rather than fencing itself off like Detroit's Victoria Park. Such conciliatory gestures, limited
as they may be, indicate some potential for the integration of suburban-style houses into inner-
city neighborhoods. Left photograph copyright Cleveland Neighborhood Link, right photograph
copyright Mapquest.com.
The primary responsibility, as this dissertation has tried to emphasize, for addressing the inner-city suburbanization phenomenon rests with the architecture and urban planning professions. Only these professions have the design skills and the understanding of the city to conceive of alternative visions of inner-city redevelopment. Only these professions occupy the political roles necessary to conceive and approve of a policy environment that can provide a predictable course for this development. While other players in the inner-city development process will probably continue to play their expected parts, architecture and planning professionals should attempt to step outside of their expected roles in order to influence the inner-city suburbanization process more productively. In doing so they might perhaps both take a closer look at the emerging ethical responsibilities of the urban design field, whose professionals routinely attempt to accommodate their normative design ideals with the reality of public service.

Only time will tell how the inner-city suburbanization process will play out in the declining cities of the United States. Perhaps urban decline will suddenly come to an end, or perhaps the New Urbanism will become so dominant so as to overwhelm all opposition. Equally as likely, however, is the possibility that the vernacular suburban ideal will continue to represent the preferred form of living for many Americans, that the decline of many inner cities will continue, and that the inner-city suburbanization process will continue to represent a challenge to the design professions. If this is the case, it is my hope that the research of this dissertation will be a contribution toward accommodating this phenomenon in the most positive way possible.
Afterword

A Note on Sources and Methods

This brief afterword describes in essay form the diverse sources and methods used to compile the information used in this dissertation. For further information please see the References section which follows the Appendices.

Performing the research for this dissertation presented substantial challenges, primarily because of the wide scope of the work involved. The overall challenge was to transform an anecdotal observation about city form, albeit one that I had made often enough to be convinced it was a trend, into an empirical study, within the constraints of an academic group where such studies, especially at the doctoral level, were rarely performed, within a field where design research was generally limited to promotional, or to equally anecdotal, and essentially unsubstantiated, observations, and within a poorly-supported funding environment for such studies.

The first problem was definitional, and Chapter Three describes the result of my research in this direction. Both ‘neighborhoods’ and ‘inner cities’ were poorly defined, but this issue was easily resolved by using the substitute of census tracts and changing indicators over time, a methodology well-developed in Jargowsky (1997). Suburbs, however, presented a different problem. Although the term ‘suburb’ was used widely in both the popular and academic press, and although studies of sprawl were high on the academic planning agenda, what exactly a ‘suburb’ was was far from clear. At first glimpse the definition seemed to be in the eye of the beholder; my assertions that new developments in inner cities seemed ‘suburban’ was met by assertions that these neighborhoods themselves were once suburbs, and that most urban neighborhoods could actually be considered suburbs of one form or another. While there was substantial truth to these assertions, they further convinced me that there was
indeed a popular conception of what a ‘suburb’ was, and that this popular conception was derived from the postwar suburb and no other. Although the suburban history literature (Jackson 1985 and Fishman 1987) agreed, these authors did not provide measurable characteristics that could be applied to other neighborhoods to test their ‘suburban-ness’.

In the text I emphasized the importance of the New Urbanist literature, especially that authored by Andres Duany and his associates at DPZ. Duany, operating under a conviction that “conventional suburban development” was problematic, was in the process of developing his ‘transect’ concept during the course of my research. This concept provided, for what seemed to be the first time, fairly quantitative measures of different types of metropolitan-area neighborhoods, from center-city to rural. This transect was described in the *Lexicon of the New Urbanism* (2002). Duany’s salesman-like promotion of the New Urbanism had also produced a voluminous literature on descriptions of the neighborhood and architectural design of this movement. These descriptions were easily reversed and thereby transformed into a definition of what I called ‘vernacular suburbia’.

My next challenge was to examine population and housing change in American cities, and in neighborhoods within the case cities. At the city level, this data was easily available in the Census Division’s *City and County Data Books*. At the neighborhood level obtaining and analyzing time-series information proved to be more difficult. (2000 census information was not yet available at the time of study, but this was not a problem given the scope of my research.) The digital tool of geographic information systems (GIS) proved invaluable in this analysis. Both 1990 tract-level data and 1990 tract maps were available for no charge over the internet from the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) web site. 1970 data, however, was only available digitally in aggregated form, and would have required consulting help to extract. Given my funding limitations it was more practical, and more timely, to transfer this data manually from existing city-level printed records (available at the Lamont Library Census Depository at Harvard
University) to a digital database, and then to map it against the 1990 data. I have previously described the complication of retracting, which necessitated some limited aggregation, and potential inaccuracies, in the Detroit data.

Once I had selected my case neighborhoods the next challenge was to examine the development activity which had occurred in those neighborhoods from 1990 to the time of research (approximately December 2001). This task proved to be the most time-consuming and difficult of all. The only comprehensive inventories of housing development available were those done by the city building departments, and these were only partially accessible. Detroit's building department summarized permit information and provided those summaries to a variety of city agencies including the planning department, where John Lowe kindly offered me full access to those records. Because of redundancies and missing information in the Detroit building records, I augmented my Detroit inventories with those assembled by the City of Detroit in their World Class City III publication, by the Michigan Capital Fund for Housing, and by a Crain's Detroit Business inventory (April 3, 2000). With these sources I was reasonably convinced that I was not missing any new residential projects in Detroit.

Philadelphia was a more difficult case. The city's Licenses and Inspection department seemed neither to have computerized any historical data, nor to have provided past permit information to other city agencies. According to L and I, historic building permit data was available only by address in manual files, making it logistically impossible to consult. I was therefore dependent on information provided by other sources. Fortunately, the City's Office of Housing and Community Development had provided extensive narratives of assisted housing development activity in the city's annual Consolidated Plan, and the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations had also provided excellent summaries of CDC development activity in their 2000 Annual Report. Although these inventories did not compile private-sector development activity, the extremely low levels of such activity documented in the popular press
(see NYT 2/17/02) as well as the relatively limited number of Philadelphia neighborhoods I was examining meant that I could also be confident of the comprehensiveness of my development inventory there.

In order to perform the qualitative assessment of Detroit developments, I field-visited most of the developments in that city. I also visited a substantial number of Philadelphia developments. Measuring the past and present conditions of the developments presented another challenge, one which was eased substantially by the generous decision of Margaret Depopolo and the Rotch Library at MIT to purchase complete sets of historic microfilms of Sanborn Map Company maps for both of my case cities, as well as two more (Cleveland and Baltimore). Sanborn maps were originally produced in order to provide information for fire insurance purposes, and they provide without question the best record of historical urban fabrics in the United States, including such features as dimensions, building heights, materials, and uses for most buildings. I was additionally aided in both cities by the presence of updated Sanborn maps in their central public libraries. Detroit’s built form had been updated through 1996, and Philadelphia’s through 2000. Both libraries kindly allowed me to take digital photographs of these maps. For the measurement of developments constructed after those dates, I was tremendously aided by the provision of detailed (one meter resolution) color aerial photographs on the web site of Mapquest.com. While urban form research was probably not on the mind of those who conceived of this idea, the photographs, which were both more readable and more recent than those provided by the United States Geological Survey, were extremely helpful.

Technology again proved to be useful in the development measurement process. Once I had scanned the historic Sanborn maps, I imported all of the files, development by development, into AutoCAD Map software. This software allowed me to digitally scale the maps to full size. I could then digitally trace each development and calculate the areas and lot coverages of the vector polygons.
that resulted. While the land use and other information was available simply by counting parcels, the area calculations would have been very tedious indeed, if not impossible, without design software.

My final source challenge was to unpack the development histories of the six developments that I had decided to examine in the case cities. While Philadelphia’s development inventory had been the more difficult, the publicly-assisted nature of its case developments meant that I could look to the city’s Office of Housing and Community Development for development information. With the kind help of Carolyn Brown, an assistant director, and Hope Yusem, a redevelopment officer, at the city’s Redevelopment Authority, and subsequently of Scott Wise, Director of Housing for OHCD, I was given access to a wide range of historical materials for the three developments I was examining. These included memoranda, committee notes, and past periodical articles. Most helpful of all was the fact that OHCD had participated in the meeting of a design committee for the Poplar Houses and had preserved minutes for each meeting. These minutes allowed me to research in detail the individual design decisions made for this development, and to understand the reasons for those decisions. There was also substantial information of a similar nature available for the Moore and Ludlow developments. While this documentation provided me with substantial information on the motivations of community members, time constraints prevented me from investigating community motives in more detail.

My case developments in Detroit had primarily been conceived and motivated by the private sector. This was made clear to me in my preliminary readings of periodical articles in the Detroit Free Press, the Detroit News, and Crain’s Detroit Business. The presence of the full text of these articles in the Dow Jones Information Service website, to which the Rotch library subscribed, made the search that much easier. Once I had a rough idea of the three development stories I contacted the major players by telephone. Steve Vogel, the Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Detroit-Mercy, had both worked on the
Victoria Park project and had done much thinking about the future form of residential development in the city. He kindly spoke with me about the project and suggested two additional names: Ron Flies, who had worked as Mayor Coleman Young’s executive assistant on Victoria Park, and Garry Carley, a former Vice-President of Standard Federal Bank who had financed the development. Both men exceeded my expectations in their generous donation of time and assistance. Flies organized a very helpful meeting which also included Robert Davenport, the project manager for Victoria Park from the Planning Department, and Bill Phillips, who had coordinated the construction process for Windham Realty. Carley took me on a driving tour of the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood and included Anthony Adams, a real estate developer who had worked with him on both Victoria Park and Victoria Woods, on the tour. I subsequently had an additional, very instructive meeting with Phillips, who had also coordinated the development of Clairpointe. Finally, I was fortunate in my serendipidous meeting of Karen Gage, a planner who was the development coordinator for the Jefferson-Chalmers area. Karen shared her perspective and brought me up to date on the development struggles in that neighborhood.

Field visits
I made several field visits to both cities, visiting Detroit in October and November 2001 to photograph developments and assemble my development inventory, and again in June 2002 to meet with the different players in the case developments. I visited Philadelphia in November 2001 and again in January, March, and May 2002 to photograph developments, meet city officials, and examine development files.

Software
The primary software used to produce this dissertation was the following:

- **Text**: Microsoft Word 97
- **Geographic Information Systems (census tract mapping)**: ESRI ArcView GIS 3.2a
Computer-aided design (development measurement): Autodesk AutoCAD Map 3
Photographic manipulation: Adobe Photoshop 5.1 and 6.0
Graphic illustrations: Adobe Illustrator 8.0 and 9.0
Appendix A

Details of Suburbanization Measurements

The following seven characteristics were used to measure the degree of suburbanization of the case city developments:

1) Density, measured in dwelling units per acre (DU/ac);
2) Land Use Mix, measured as residential (r), commercial (c), or industrial (i);
3) Dwelling unit type, measured as percent of units in single-family detached (SFD), single-family attached (SFA), 2-4 unit buildings, or 5+ unit buildings;
4) Ownership type, measured as the maximum potential units that are homeownership (O) or rental (R);
5) Lot coverage, measured as a percent;
6) Street patterns, measured qualitatively and quantified as null (0.0), partial (0.5), significant (0.75), or total (1.0) change.
7) Architectural shifts are qualitative and are not measured but are discussed under individual developments.

The formulae for generating the scores for developments are given in Chapter 3.

Notes on measurement.

A) The area of a development used for the density calculation is taken either from given figures, if available, or from polygons drawn to the centerlines of the perimeter streets of the development and to the property line of adjoining properties. If the development comprises less than several blocks, polygons are drawn to the perimeter of the blocks on which the developments are located and to the property lines of adjoining developments.

B) Owner type percentages are based on the following assumptions.
- Single-family houses are assumed to be owned.
- 2-4 unit buildings are assumed to have one ownership unit with the remainder rental.
- 5+ unit buildings are assumed to be all rental units.
- Units above stores are assumed to be rental units.
- For the purposes of calculating ownership changes, the following percentages are assumed for historic developments. For example, a site that was historically 100% comprised of 3-unit buildings is estimated to have had 33% ownership units and 67% rental units overall.

C) Lot coverage calculations use a representative sample of parcels from the old development. The area selected is noted for each development. Lot coverage calculations are based on individual lots and do not include street or alley areas.

D) The source of the aerial photographs used for Detroit measurements was www.mapquest.com. Photographs were one meter in resolution, full color and dated from approximately June 2000.
Section A. Detroit Developments

For the measurements of Detroit developments, ‘old’ refers to information derived from 1951 Sanborn maps of Detroit, while ‘new’ refers to information derived either from 1996 Sanborn maps or 2000 color aerial photographs. In new developments, measurements are taken from the entire development, and in old developments from a sample block or portion of a block.

Virginia Park Estates
1) Old density: 27.75 DU/ac
   New density: 2.8 DU/ac
   Score: 0.9
2) Old LU: 94% R, 3% C, 3% I (12% mixed-use)
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.12
3) Old Unit type: 72% 5+, 19% 2-4, 5% SFA, 4% SFD
   New Unit type: 100% SFD
   Score: 0.56
   Old owner type: 14% HO, 86% R
   New owner type: 100% HO
   Score: 0.28
4) Old lot coverage: 28.5%
   New lot coverage: 12.6%
   Score: 0.56
5) Old street pattern: urban grid
   New street pattern: single-entry curvilinear loop road with pseudo-cul-de-sacs. Western boundary street (Rosa Parks Boulevard) has been substantially widened, removing about 30 feet from western boundary of site.
   Date of street widening unknown.
   Score: 1.0

Total score: 3.42

Victoria Park
1) Old density: 13.4 DU/ac
   New density: 2.9 DU/ac
   Score: 0.78
2) Old LU: 98% R, 2% C (4% mixed-use)
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.04
3) Old Unit type: 4% 5+, 48% 2-4, 48% SFD
   New Unit type: 100% SFD
   Score: 0.96
4) Old owner type: 73% HO, 27% R
   New owner type: 100% O
   Score: 0.56

354
5) Old lot coverage: 28.5%
   New lot coverage: 12.6%
   Score: 0.56

6) Old street pattern: urban grid
   New street pattern: urban grid transformed to single-entry loop road with one
   through road and twelve cul-de-sacs
   Score: 0.75

Total score: 3.65

Bradby Townhouses
1) Old density: 11.8 DU/ac
   New density: 5.5 DU/ac
   Score: 0.53

2) Old LU: 100% R
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.0

3) Old Unit type: 54% 2-4, 46% SFD
   New Unit type: 100% SFA
   Score: 0.92

4) Old owner type: 74% HO, 26% R
   New owner type: 100% HO
   Score: 0.52

5) Old lot coverage: 44.3%
   New lot coverage: 26.7%
   Score: 0.40

6) Old street pattern: urban grid
   New street pattern: single-entry curvilinear road located off altered larger-
   scale street grid
   Score: 1.0

Total score: 3.37

Campau Farms
1) Old density: 11.2 DU/ac
   New density: 16.0 DU/ac
   Score: -0.43

2) Old LU: 94% R, 6% C (12% mixed-use)
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.12

3) Old Unit type: 46% 2-4, 54% in SFD
   New Unit type: 100% SFA
   Score: 0.92

4) Old owner type: 77% HO
   New owner type: 100% HO
   Score: 0.46

5) Old lot coverage: 45.34%
   New lot coverage: 26.3%
The sample historic block for Campau Farms and Circle Drive Commons was the same as these developments are contiguous.

6) Old street pattern: urban grid
   New street pattern: single-entry curvilinear loop road located off altered larger street grid, block has been consolidated, resubdivided and streets and alleys demapped
   Score: 1.0

**Total score: 2.49**

*Circle Drive Commons*

1) Old density: 11.4 DU/ac
   New density: 13.2 DU/ac
   Score: -0.16

2) Old LU: 99% R, 1% C (2% mixed-use)
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.02

3) Old Unit type: approx. 50% 2-4, 50% SFD
   New Unit type: 100% SFA
   Score: 0.5

4) Old owner type: 73% O
   New owner type: 100% O
   Score: 0.56

5) Old lot coverage: 45.35%
   New lot coverage: 25.2%
   Score: 0.44

6) Old street pattern: urban grid with alleys
   New street pattern: single-entry curvilinear loop road located off altered larger street grid, block has been consolidated, resubdivided and streets and alleys demapped
   Score: 1.0

**Total score: 2.36**

*Marketplace Court*

1) Old density: 11.5 DU/ac
   New density: 12.6 DU/ac
   Score: -0.09

2) Old LU: 81% R, 19% C (38% mixed-use)
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.38

3) Old Unit type: 35% SFD% 65% 2-4
   New Unit type: 100% 5+
   Score: 0.70

4) Old owner type: 68% HO
   New owner type: 100% HO
   Score: 0.36
5) Old lot coverage: 57.4%
   New lot coverage: 26.0%
   Score: 0.55
   Sample block was northeast third of block bounded by Livingstone (N),
   Russell (E), Brady (S), and Rivard (W)
6) Old street pattern: urban grid with alleys
   New street pattern: double-entry perimeter loop road with end-in parking, one
   entrance apparently usually closed, intervening grid has been demapped.
   Southern boundary street (Mack Ave) has been substantially widened to 150
   feet, removing approximately 80 feet from southern portion of site. Date of
   street widening unknown.
   Score: 1.0
Total score: 2.9

Friendship Meadows II
1) Old density: 10.7 DU/ac
   New density: 10.0 DU/ac
   Score: 0.07
2) Old LU: 10% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.10
3) Old Unit type: 35 DU SFD (61%), 22 DU 2-4 (39%)
   New Unit type: 100% 5+
   Score: 0.78
4) Old owner type: 38% R, 62% HO
   New owner type: 100% R
   Score: 0.76
5) Old lot coverage: 58.6%
   New lot coverage: 26.4%
   Score: 0.55
   Sample block was eastern half of the northern quadrant of the block bounded
   by Superior (N), Rivard (E), Alexandria (S), and Hastings (W). The same
   sample block was used for both Friendship Meadows developments as the
   developments are contiguous.
6) Old street pattern: urban grid with alleys
   New street pattern: single-entry drive with interior drive and end-in parking
   court. Join access with Friendship Meadows III development.
   Score: 1.0
Total score: 3.26

Friendship Meadows III
1) Old density: 11.5 DU/ac
   New density: 9.4 DU/ac
   Score: 0.18
2) Old LU: 26% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
3) Old Unit type: 8 DU in 5+ (12%), 36 DU in 2-4 (55%), 21 DU in SFD (32%)  
New Unit type: 100% 5+  
Score: 0.90
4) Old owner type: 68% R, 32% HO  
New owner type: 100% R  
Score: 0.64
5) Old lot coverage: 58.6%  
New lot coverage: 33.0%  
Score: 0.44  
Sample block was eastern half of the northern quadrant of the block bounded by Superior (N), Rivard (E), Alexandria (S), and Hastings (W). The same sample block was used for both Friendship Meadows developments as the developments are contiguous.
6) Old street pattern: urban grid with alleys  
Score: 1.0

Overall score: 3.42

Alberta King Village
1) Old density: 9.29 DU/ac  
New density: 8.1 DU/ac  
Score: 0.13
2) Old LU: 28% mixed-use  
New LU: 100% R  
Score: 0.28
3) Old Unit type: 6 DU in 5+ (4%), 66 DU in 2-4 (48%), 65 DU in SFD (48%)  
New Unit type: 100% 5+  
Score: 0.96
4) Old owner type: 53% max R, 47% HO  
New owner type: 100% R  
Score: 0.94
5) Old lot coverage: 42.3%  
New lot coverage: 11.8%  
Score: 0.72  
Sample block was eastern two-third of the block bounded by Magnolia (N), Vermont (E), Brainard (S), and Wabash (W)
6) Old street pattern: urban grid with alleys  
New street pattern: double-entry drive into central interior perimeter drive with end-in parking. Street grid has been closed and demapped except at perimeter. Southern boundary street (formerly Myrtle, now Martin Luther King) has been widened, removing approximately 50 feet from parcels at southern boundary of site. Date of street widening unknown.  
Score: 1.0
Total score: 4.03

D.J. Healy Apartments (Pablo Davis Elder Living Center)

This development was demapped from a public park and therefore did not replace any prior developments. It was not measured.

Grayhaven and Shore Pointe Village at Grayhaven

These two developments were built on a formerly unoccupied piece of land and therefore did not replace any prior developments. They were not measured.

Mildred Smith Manor I
1) Old density: 15.0 DU/ac
   New density: 12.0 DU/ac
   Score: 0.20
2) Old LU: 0% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.0
3) Old Unit type: 40% in 5+, 46% in 2-4, 14% in SFD
   New Unit type: 100% 5+
   Score: 0.92
4) Old owner type: 77% max R, 23% HO
   New owner type: 100% R
   Score: 0.46
5) Old lot coverage: 47.7%
   New lot coverage: 24.3%
   Score: 0.49
   Sample block was the entire site of the development, a block bounded by Lysander (N), Lincoln (E), Canfield (S), and Trumbull (W).
6) Old street pattern: urban grid with alleys
   New street pattern: The block was been closed on its east and north sides and attached to a larger superblock bounded by West Forest Avenue on the north. Interior alleys have been demapped and access has been shifted to a driveway that connects to an interior parking lot between the two apartment buildings.
   Score: 0.5
Total score: 2.57

Clairpointe of Victoria Park
1) Old density: 10.15 DU/ac
   New density: 3.1 DU/ac
   Score: 0.70
2) Old LU: 0% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.0
3) Old Unit type: 8 DU in 2-4 (10%), 70 DU in SFD (90%)
   New Unit type: 100% SFD
   Score: 0.20
4) Old owner type: 5% max R, 95% HO
   New owner type: 100% O
   Score: 0.10
5) Old lot coverage: 42.3%
   New lot coverage: 11.8%
   Score: 0.72
   Sample block was the northern end of the development, the block bounded by an alley behind Tennessee (E), Freud (S), and Clairpointe (E).
6) Old street pattern: urban grid with alleys
   New street pattern: The street pattern has been radically altered with the removal and reconstruction of Clairpointe Street on the former western side of the block and the construction of two new ‘double cul-de-sacs’ which provide access to the houses as well as a buffer between the houses and Clairpointe Street. Houses and garages face onto these interior streets.
   Score: 1.0
Total score: 2.72

*Helen Odean Butler Apartments*
1) Old density: 17.1 DU/ac
   New density: 14.7 DU/ac
   Score: 0.14
2) Old LU: 7% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.07
3) Old Unit type: 24 DU in 2-4(57%), 18 DU in SFD (43%)
   New Unit type: 100% 5+
   Score: 0.86
4) Old owner type: 57% max R
   New owner type: 100% R
   Score: 0.43
5) Old lot coverage: 61.4%
   New lot coverage: 27.4%
   Score: 0.55
   Sample block was the northern quadrant of the development block, bounded by E. Vernor Highway (N), Access Road (E), Waterloo (S), and McDougall (W)
6) Old street pattern: urban grid with alleys
   New street pattern: The block has been consolidated and the alleys removed. In addition, the street running along the southern boundary of the site has been demapped and the parcel now backs against Elmwood Cemetery. Access to the development is via a driveway off Vernor Highway which leads to surface parking lots between the buildings.
   Score: 0.5

360
Total score: 2.55

Woodward Place at Brush Park
Woodward Park was measured for three different periods: 1896, 1951, and the present (2001). The additional sample of 1896 was taken to show the change that occurred between that date and 1951. Brush Park was sampled earlier than the other development because the neighborhood had already experienced substantial decline by 1951, the date of the other samples.

1) 1896 density: 1.61 DU/ac
   1951 density: 7.62 DU/ac
   2001 density: 8.1 DU/ac (assuming final occupancy of currently abandoned 42-unit apartment building)
   (Score 1896-2001: -4.28)
   Score 1951-2001: -0.12

2) 1896 LU: 4 non-R parcels, 17 R parcels, 38% MU
   1951 LU: 11 non-R parcels, 9 R parcels, 100% MU
   New LU: 100% R
   (Score 1896-2001: 0.38)
   Score 1951-2001: 1.0

3) 1896 Unit type: 4 DU in 2-4, 17 DU in SFD
   1951 Unit type: 66 DU in 5+, 29 in 2-4 (“rooming”, assume 1 unit per floor), 4 in SFD
   New LU: 104 DU in 5+, 5 DU in 2-4, 1 DU in SFD
   (Score 1896-2001:1.0)
   Score 1951-2001: 0.54

4) 1896 owner type: 100% O
   1951 owner type: 3% O, 97% R
   New owner type: 100% O
   (Score 1896-2001: 0.0)
   Score 1951-2001: 0.06

5) 1896 lot coverage: 22.7%
   1951 lot coverage: 41.0%
   New lot coverage: 39.0%
   (Score 1896-2001: -0.72)
   Score 1951-2001: 0.05

Sample block was the northern half of the block bounded by Adelaide (N), John R (E), Winder (S), and Woodward (W).

6) 1896 street pattern: urban grid with alleys
   1951 street pattern: Growth between 1896 and 1951 occurred at the parcel level and no alterations were made to the street grid.
   2001 street pattern: Although the entire block except for two parcels has under single ownership, the block and alley system is being preserved for automobile access to garages for midblock units. Additional driveways have been added behind the Woodward Avenue units (and presumably the John R units when they are completed) which provide for automobile access to those

361
units. The block changes made by the Woodward Place development are the smallest of the developments sampled.
(Score: 0.0)
Score: 0.0
**Total score: 1.53**

Section B. Philadelphia Developments.

In this Section, ‘old’ refers to development information derived from 1952 Sanborn maps of Philadelphia, while ‘new’ refers to information derived from 2000 Sanborn maps.

The formula for measuring the unit type and tenure type of Philadelphia developments was changed slightly to measure homogenization instead of measuring change. This had already been done in the land use measurement by measuring the degree of ‘mixed-use’ as twice the number of commercial-use parcels. In other words, a development that had changed from 100% 2-4 unit buildings to 100% single-family attached dwellings was given a 1.0 value for change, but a 0.0 value for homogenization, whereas a development that had changed from 50% 2-4 unit buildings and 50% single-family attached to 100% single-family houses had experienced only 50% change, but 100% homogenization. Detroit developments were remeasured to reflect this change in criteria.

The formula for the unit type and owner type scores was therefore altered to \[
\frac{2 \times ((\text{lesser percentage old}) - (\text{lesser percentage new}))}{100}
\]
For example: old unit type 30% SFA, 70% 5+; new unit type: 40% SFA, 60% 2-4; Score = \(2(30-40)/100 = -0.2\). The new development is LESS homogenous than the old development.

**West Diamond Street Townhouses**
1) Old density: 64.0 DU/ac
   New density: 22.7 DU/ac
   Score: 0.65
2) Old LU: 25% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.25
3) Old unit type: 100% in 2-4 unit dwellings (2-4)
   New unit type: 100% in single-family attached (SFA)
   Score: 0.0
   Old ownership: 33% homeownership (HO), 67% rental (R)
   New ownership: 100% HO
   Score: 0.66 (2x lesser of percentages)
4) Old lot coverage: 69.4%
   New lot coverage: 33.4%
   Score: 0.52
Sample block was the entire development block at the southwest corner of Diamond and 16th Streets.

5) Old street pattern: urban grid without alleys. The street pattern was unaltered by the development.
Score: 0.0

**Overall score: 2.08**

_Eleanor Mills Houses_

1) Old density: 50.3 DU/acre
   New density: 43.7 DU/acre
   Score: 0.13
2) Old LU: 9% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.09
3) Old unit type: 32% 2-4, 68% SFA
   New unit type: 100% SFA
   Score: 0.64
4) Old owner type: 21.4% R, 78.6% HO
   New owner type: 100% HO
   Score: 0.42
5) Old lot coverage: 76.0%
   New lot coverage: 53.9%
   Score: 0.29

Sample block was the entire development area on Page Street between 17th and 18th Streets.

6) Old street pattern: urban grid without alleys. The street pattern was unaltered by the development.
Score: 0.0

**Overall score: 1.57**

_Francisville V (Vineyard Place)_

1) Old density: 38.7 DU/acre
   New density: 18.0 DU/acre
   Score: 0.53
2) Old LU: 100% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 1.0
3) Old unit type: 40% 2-4, 60% SFA
   New unit type: 100% SFA
   Score: 0.8
4) Old owner type: 73% HO, 27% R
   New owner type: 100% HO
   Score: 0.54
5) Old lot coverage: 79.0%
   New lot coverage: 34.6%
   Score: 0.56
Sample block was the entire development, bounded by Ridge, 17th, and Cambridge Streets.

6) Old street pattern: urban grid. The street pattern was unaltered by the development.
Score: 0.0

Overall score: 3.43

Jardines del Borinquen

1) Old unit density: 58.6 DU/acre
   New unit density: 48.2 DU/acre
   Score: 0.18

2) Old LU: 31% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.31

3) Old unit type: 55% 2-4, 45% SFA
   New unit type: 100% SFA
   Score: 0.9

4) Old owner type: 63% HO, 37% R
   New owner type: 100% R
   Score: 0.74

5) Old lot coverage: 64.0%
   New lot coverage: 47.5%
   Score: 0.26
   Sample block was a representative residential portion of the south end of the block bounded by 7th, Diamond, Marshall, and Norris.

6) Old street pattern: urban grid. The street pattern was unaltered by the development.
Score: 0.0

Overall score: 2.39

Johnnie Tillman Townhouses

1) Old unit density: 52.6 DU/acre (contextual)
   New unit density: 21.7 DU/acre
   Score: 0.59
   Since the historic site of the development was mostly occupied by industrial uses, the old unit type figure is derived from a measurement of historic residential developments in the immediate area. It is therefore labeled contextual.

2) Old LU: 100% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 1.0

3) Old unit type: 79% 2-4, 21% SFA
   New unit type: 100% SFA
   Score: 0.42

4) Old owner type: 21% HO, 79% R
   New owner type: 100% R
Score: 0.42
5) Old lot coverage: 74.5%
   New lot coverage: 26.3%
   Score: 0.65
   The sample block was the entire development block, bounded by Master, Germantown, Thompson, and Orianna Streets.
6) Old street pattern: urban grid with alleys.
   New street pattern: urban grid. All alleys were eliminated in the new development and replaced by parking lots for the new dwellings.
   Score: 0.5
Overall score: 3.58

*Lillia Crippen Townhouses*
1) Old unit density: 44.7 DU/acre
   New unit density: 26.2 DU/acre
   Score: 0.41
2) Old LU: 100% I
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.0 (it has changed, but is not more homogenous)
3) Old unit type: 100% SFA (contextual)
   New unit type: 100% SFA
   Score: 0.0
4) Old owner type: 100% HO (contextual)
   New owner type: 100% R
   Score: 0.0 (it has changed, but is not more homogenous)
5) Old lot coverage: 68.5%
   New lot coverage: 47.9%
   Score: 0.30
   Sample block is a representative sample of the southern end of the block bounded by Berks, 6th, Wilt, and Marshall Streets.
6) Old street pattern: urban grid. The street pattern was not altered by the new development.
   Score: 0.0
Overall score: 0.71

*Los Balcones*
1) Old unit density: 57.5 DU/acre
   New unit density: 37.9 DU/acre
   Score: 0.34
2) Old LU: 50% mixed-use (in parcels, 90% industrial in area)
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.5
3) Old unit type: 100% SFA
   New unit type: 100% SFA
   Score: 0.0
4) Old owner type: 100% HO
New owner type: 100% R
Score: 0.0
5) Old lot coverage: 65.1% (residential only)
   New lot coverage: 35.1%
   Score: 0.46
   Sample block is the entire development, located on the block bounded by
   West Norris, Howard, Berks, Waterloo, Hewson, and Mascher.
6) Old street pattern: urban grid without alleys. Street pattern was not altered by
   development.
   Score: 0.0
Overall score: 1.3

Ludlow Village III
1) Old unit density: 43.0 DU/acre
   New unit density: 14.0 DU/acre
   Score: 0.67
2) Old LU: 56% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.44
3) Old unit type: 27% SFA, 73% 2-4
   New unit type: 100% SFA (twin)
   Score: 0.54
4) Old owner type: 42% HO, 58% R
   New owner type: 100% HO
   Score: 0.84
5) Old lot coverage: 62.0%
   New lot coverage: 25.8%
   Score: 0.58
   Sample block is the entire development, bounded by Cecil B. Moore, Franklin,
6) Old street pattern: urban grid without alleys. Franklin Street was substantially
   widened and given a central mall as part of this and the Ludlow IV
   development.
   Score: 0.5
Overall score: 3.57

Ludlow Village IV
1) Old unit density: 54.7 DU/acre
   New unit density: 18.8 DU/acre
   Score: 0.66
2) Old LU: 73% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.73
3) Old unit type: 47% SFA, 53% 2-4
   New unit type: 100% SFA (twin)
   Score: 0.94
4) Old owner type: 42% HO, 58% R
   New owner type: 100% HO
   Score: 0.84
5) Old lot coverage: 75.8%
   New lot coverage: 33.9%
   Score: 0.55
   Sample lot is the entire development, bounded by Cecil B Moore, 7th, Oxford, and Franklin Streets.
6) Old street pattern: urban grid without alleys. Franklin Street was substantially widened and given a central mall as part of this and the Ludlow III development.
   Score: 0.5
Overall score: 4.22

Poplar Nehemiah
Poplar Nehemiah was located relatively close to the Philadelphia CBD and, much like Brush Park in Detroit, experienced at least two substantial transformations in its built form subsequent to its initial development with row houses. In 1920 this neighborhood was a dense, primarily residential area; by 1951 it had become a semi-industrial, partially vacant area, and by 2000 it had been completely redeveloped with housing. Measurements are therefore given for 1920, 1951, and 'new' (2000) states, but scores reflect changes from 1951 to 2000, as with all other measured developments. As no new developments were constructed between 1920 and 1951, 1951 unit density and lot coverage figures were the same as 1920 for residential parcels.
1) 1920 unit density: 50.4 DU/acre
   1951 unit density: 50.4 DU/acre
   New unit density: 14.9 DU/acre
   Score: 0.70
2) 1920 LU: 56.7% mixed-use
   1951 LU: 100% mixed-use
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 1.0
3) 1920 unit type: 100% SFA
   1951 unit type: 26.2% SFA, 73.8% 2-4
   New unit type: 100% SFA (twin)
   Score: 0.52
4) 1920 owner type: 35% R, 65% HO
   1951 owner type: 46% R, 54% HO
   New owner type: 100% HO
   Score: 0.92
5) 1920 lot coverage: 67.2%
   1951 lot coverage: 67.2%
   New lot coverage: 22.1%
   Score: 0.67
Sample block is bounded by Harper, 12th, Poplar, and 13th Streets and was formerly divided by Cambridge Street.

6) 1951 street pattern: urban grid with alleys.
   New street pattern: substantially altered. Alleys have been eliminated and two grid streets have been eliminated and transformed into cul-de-sacs.
   Score: 0.75

**Overall score: 4.56**

*Taino Gardens*

1) Old density: 44.0 DU/acre  
   New density: 20 DU/acre  
   Score: 0.54

2) Old LU: 19% Mixed-use  
   New LU: 100% R  
   Score: 0.19

3) Old unit type: 94.9% SFA, 5.1% 2-4  
   New unit type: 100% SFA (twin)  
   Score: 0.1

4) Old owner type: 91.7% HO, 8.3% R  
   New owner type: 100% HO  
   Score: 0.17

5) Old lot coverage: 60.0%  
   New lot coverage: 32.7%  
   Score: 0.46

Sample block is bounded by Dauphin, Fairhill, Susquehanna, and 6th Streets.

6) 1951 street pattern: urban grid without alleys. The street pattern was not altered by the development.
   Score: 0.0

**Overall score: 1.46**

*Universal Court I*

1) Old unit density: 42.3 DU/ac  
   New unit density: 42.3 DU/ac  
   Score: 0.0

2) Old LU: 100% R  
   New LU: 100% R  
   Score: 0.0

3) Old unit type: 45.5% SFA, 54.5% 2-4  
   New unit type: 100% SFA  
   Score: 0.91

4) Old owner type: 36.4% R, 63.6% HO  
   New owner type: 100% HO  
   Score: 0.73

5) Old lot coverage: 64.7%  
   New lot coverage: 64.4%  
   Score: 0.0
Sample block is entire development, block bounded by Christian, Broad, Carpenter, and 15th Streets.

6) 1951 street pattern: urban grid without alleys. The street pattern was not altered by the development.
   Score: 0.0

**Overall score: 1.64**

**Villas de HACE**
1) Old unit density: 57.4 DU/ac
   New unit density: 44.1 DU/ac
   Score: 0.23
2) Old LU: 40% mixed-use (by parcel, 90% I by area)
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.40
3) Old unit type: 42% SFA, 58% 2-4 (contextual)
   New unit type: 100% 5+
   Score: 0.84
4) Old owner type: 42.3% R, 57.7% HO (contextual)
   New owner type: 100% R
   Score: 0.85
5) Old lot coverage: 73.1%
   New lot coverage: 38.1%
   Score: 0.48
   Sample block is entire development, block bounded by Jefferson, 6th, Master, and Marshall Streets.
6) Old street pattern: urban grid without alleys. The street pattern was not altered by the development.
   Score: 0.0

**Overall score: 2.8**

**Gratz Commons**
1) Old unit density: 30.4 DU/ac
   New unit density: 28.3 Du/ac
   Score: 0.07
2) Old LU: 100% R
   New LU: 100% R
   Score: 0.0
3) Old unit type: 40% 2-4, 60% SFA
   New unit type: 42.8% SFA, 57.2% 5+
   Score: -0.06 (new development is less homogenous)
4) Old owner type: 40% HO, 60% R
   New owner type: 100% R
   Score: 0.8
5) Old lot coverage: 52.5%
   New lot coverage: 46.2%
   Score: 0.12
Sample block is bounded by Susquehanna, Gratz, Diamond, and 19th Streets.
6) Old street pattern: urban grid with alleys. The street pattern was not altered by the development.
Score: 0.0
Overall score: 0.93

Universal Court II
1) Old unit density: 61.8 DU/acre
    New unit density: 39.3 DU/acre
    Score: 0.37
2) Old LU: 28.6% mixed-use
    New LU: 100% R
    Score: 0.29
3) Old unit type: 50% SFA, 50% 2-4
    New unit type: 100% SFA
    Score: 1.0
4) Old owner type: 60% HO, 40% R
    New owner type: 100% HO
    Score: 0.8
5) Old lot coverage: 73.9%
    New lot coverage: 67.3%
    Score: 0.09
Sample block is entire development, block bounded by Catharine, 15th, Christian, and 16th Streets.
6) Old street pattern: urban grid with alleys. The street pattern was not altered by the new development.
Score: 0.0
Overall score: 2.55

Cecil B Moore Homeownership Zone Housing
1) Old unit density: 65.2 DU/acre
    New unit density: 14.7 DU/acre
    Score: 0.77
2) Old LU: 22% mixed-use
    New LU: 100% R
    Score: 0.22
3) Old unit type: 41% SFA, 59% 2-4
    New unit type: 100% SFA (twin)
    Score: 0.82
4) Old owner type: 60% HO, 40% R
    New owner type: 100% HO
    Score: 0.8
5) Old lot coverage: 70.9%
    New lot coverage: 21.7%
    Score: 0.69
Sample block is block bounded by Jefferson, 18th, Harlan, and 19th Streets and formerly divided by Sharswood Street, and now divided by the reconfigured Gratz Street.

6) Old street pattern: urban grid with alleys. Limited street reconfigurations occurred in the new development.

Score: 0.25

**Overall score: 3.55**
Appendix B

Suburbanization Measurements for Boston, Massachusetts

As part of the preparation work for this dissertation I studied neighborhood-level population and housing change in the city of Boston, Massachusetts. While Boston was only ranked as a 'possible' city for inner-city suburbanization, the variety of types of neighborhood change that occurred there were instructive and illustrate the changes that might be seen in more prosperous cities than those examined in this dissertation.

Below is sample data from Boston, a city which has lost population but has gained housing units since 1950. I examine change from 1970 to 1990 due to substantial changes in census tract geography before that date. I have corrected the data shown for the limited retracting that occurred (primarily splits in census tracts rather than redefinition of boundaries.) During this period Boston's population dropped from 641,071 to 574,283, but its number of housing units rose from 217,623 to 250,863 (U.S. Department of Commerce).

*Figure B.1 shows population change by tract while Figure B.2 shows housing unit change by tract.*
Consistent with Boston's overall population loss, many tracts lost significant population over the period 1970-90. 59 census tracts, or about 31% of all Boston tracts, lost over 20% of their population, while 21, or only about 10%, gained more than 20% population. Most population gain was restricted to the Central Business District during this period. Transitioning industrial areas like the Boston and Charlestown waterfront also gained significant population, in part because their original populations were small. Parts of the South End, Mission Hill, and Allston-Brighton also gained significant population. Population loss was especially concentrated in areas outside of the urban core. Large swaths of East and South Boston, Roxbury and Dorchester tracts lost over 20% of their population, as did areas of Roslindale further from the city center. A few close-in neighborhoods also lost significant population, including the North End, North Charlestown, and the Back Bay.

Figure B.2 shows housing unit change in Boston from 1970 to 1990. As might be expected from the overall city figures (a slight net gain in number of housing
units), more census tracts gained than lost housing. 41 tracts, or about 20%, gained more than 20% over their 1970 number of housing units, whereas only 17 tracts lost more than 20% of their housing units. Severe housing unit loss was concentrated in lower Roxbury, the oldest part of Boston’s African-American ghetto. Other parts of Roxbury and Western Dorchester also lost population, though not as severely as lower Roxbury.

Figure B.2. Housing unit change in the city of Boston, 1970-1990. Data from United States Decennial Census, 1970 and 1990. Dark gray indicates >20% loss of housing; dark red >20% gain of housing.

Severe housing loss was closely correlated with severe population loss in Boston, but not the reverse. When housing and population loss by tract are compared, we find that 16 Boston tracts lost over 20% of both their population and housing. This constitutes all but one of the tracts which lost housing. Only one-third of the tracts which lost over 20% of their population also lost significant amounts of housing. The first finding is perhaps to be expected, as a large loss of housing units necessitates a loss in population as well, barring increased
densities in remaining units. The second finding indicates that population loss may have multiple causes. In neighborhoods like north Roxbury, where both population and housing are severely declining, it is likely that the neighborhood is experiencing severe distress. In the remaining cases, population loss unaccompanied by housing unit loss may indicate an uncrowding of existing units through children leaving the home or through an influx of smaller households. This was likely the case in neighborhoods like the Back Bay and the North End, both of which have maintained their value and stability during this time.

If we take a closer look at those tracts which lost population and housing, we see again that different changes can produce statistically similar results using these two indicators. One of the two small declining south Boston tracts is comprised of severely distressed public housing which was being redeveloped in 1990. The losses in this tract may therefore be attributable to the timing of this event. The two declining tracts closest to the Charles River are the home of the Longwood medical complex and the Northeastern University campus rather than low-income residents. The losses in these tracts may therefore be due to development of housing for institutional uses. The remaining twelve tracts are all low-income residential areas in Roxbury or West Dorchester, where substantial housing loss and consequent land vacancy has indeed occurred (Medoff and Sklar 1994). Note that these tracts directly adjoin rapidly growing tracts. It appears that severe decline and rapid growth can occur in close proximity.

Boston shows that a city experiencing net population loss and housing gains can nonetheless experience localized changes in population and in housing stock. In the case cities, both of which have experienced net declines in population and housing stock, one can imagine severe localized losses of population and housing.

Below I describe the selection and measurement of a sample case development in Boston, MA, and comparison of that development with development previously
existing on the site. Although this development does not ultimately meet all the criteria of suburbanization, the aim of this example is to demonstrate the methodology rather than to verify my research hypothesis for this particular case development.

The sample development is found in the Lower Roxbury neighborhood of Boston in a severely distressed census tract (see Figure B.3). This development was selected because it is a well-known example of successful neighborhood revitalization under the auspices of a nonprofit neighborhood planning agency. The development actually consists of two separate phases called the Dennis Street Housing and Winthrop Estates. For the purposes of this study we will consider it to be one development. The land was not cleared for redevelopment but was reclaimed from vacant lots under the auspices of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) during the 1990's. Figures B.4 and B.5 show figure-ground images of the development area neighborhood in 1931 and 2000.

![Figure B.3. The sample development, Winthrop Estates, is located in a severely distressed census tract in Boston.](image)
Winthrop Estates was tested for suburbanization along the following indicators: severely distressed neighborhood context; large reductions in housing unit
density; homogenization of housing type to single-family homes; homogenization of ownership status to homeownership; homogenization of land uses to residential only; changes to curvilinear street patterns; changes in site planning; occurrence of suburban-style architecture. A previously constructed CAD model was used for the measurement of lots and buildings, and buildings were constructed from survey data and from 1931 Sanborn Map Company fire insurance maps.

1) Severeely distressed neighborhood context. This criteria was used to select this development and it therefore satisfied it automatically.

2) Large reductions in housing unit density. The rebuilt neighborhood in 2000 contained fewer buildings occupying less ground than did the neighborhood of 1931. This figure-ground reduction was mirrored in the development's housing unit density reduction. In 1931 the neighborhood was fully built out. In 2000, it is fully built out again, but at a new standard of development. In 1931, the six blocks contained a total of 480 housing units, or 36.7 housing units per acre (this figure includes interior street space). In 2000, the same six blocks contained a total of 158 housing units, or 12.1 housing units per acre. The development of 2000 was only 33% of the housing unit density of the area in 1931. This figure was skewed upward by the presence of surviving buildings which were built out more densely than the new buildings. When only new buildings are considered, the replacement rate was only 21%: 85 new housing units replaced the 407 units that were lost to arson and disinvestment.

3) Homogenization of housing type to single-family houses. In 1931 the Winthrop Estates blocks were mainly built up with triple-deckers (a common Boston apartment house type), and with apartments over stores. Only a small percentage of housing units were single-family homes. Of the 407 units that were lost between 1931 and 2000, 25 of them, or 6.1%, were single-family houses. Single-family homes occupied a somewhat larger percentage of the buildings in
the six sample blocks. Of 189 residential buildings in 1931, 25, or 13%, were single-family homes. In 2000 the neighborhood had fewer single-family homes than in 1931. 9 of 25 single-family homes survived, while all 85 new buildings were either rowhouses or attached “twin” two-family homes. The lack of construction of new standalone single-family home dropped the percentage of single-family houses to 5.6% of total housing units. The level of homogeneity of house type, however, significantly increased. The mix of single-family houses, triple-deckers, and mixed-use residential commercial buildings that was lost was replaced almost completely by two-family homes. Only nine of the new units were in rowhouses.

4) Homogenization of ownership type to owner-occupied status. While it was difficult to determine how many of the units in 1931 were owner-occupied, it is likely that the majority of them were not. Of the 407 housing units that were lost between 1931 and 2000, only 25 of them were categorized as ‘dwellings’, or single-family houses. The remaining 382 units were found in buildings labeled as ‘flats’ or ‘stores’. I estimated that approximately one unit in three was owner-occupied, giving 127 additional housing units. The homeownership percentage of the 1931 blocks was therefore at most only 37%. The new housing units were far more homogenous: 100% of the new housing units (85 in total) were owner-occupied.

5) Homogenization of land use mix to residential only. In 1931 commercial and industrial uses were almost all located on the two peripheral streets of the six blocks, Dudley Street and Blue Hill Avenue. This was not a result of zoning, as the land uses in this area were determined prior to the imposition of zoning districts. Rather, the location of commercial uses was likely a result of market imperatives to locate where one could be most easily found by customers. A few single-family homes and many apartments were also to be found along these major streets. Industrial uses were rare: there were only four industrial buildings, all apparently related to automobile repair. Commercial uses were more
common: there were 36 buildings labeled ‘store’. Only two of these stores were located on interior streets, both in three-story mixed-use buildings rather than in standalone commercial structures. By 2000 the majority of commercial structures were gone. 27 stores had vanished, while one of the four industrial buildings had been demolished and replaced by a vacant lot. One of the vanished stores had been replaced by another store by 1967, and the remainder had fallen victim to arson and disinvestment. They were replaced by housing and open space. Many of the remaining commercial structures were vacant or underutilized.

6) *Changes in street patterns to curvilinear streets.* None of the redevelopment in the six sample blocks changed existing street patterns. The street pattern of 1931 remained.

7) *Suburban site planning.* The percentage of lot coverage of new houses and of the buildings that previously occupied their sites was calculated for a sample block within the Winthrop Estates blocks. (This is the second block from the top within the red line.) In 1931, the buildings that would later be redeveloped had an average lot coverage of 39%. The average number of housing units per lot was 4.2. In 2000, the new buildings had a somewhat lower lot coverage of 31%. The average number of housing units per lot was 1, as each two-family house was built on two old lots. Although without photographic evidence it was difficult to determine how the space around the 1931 buildings was used, observation of surviving triple-deckers indicated minimal space between buildings, sometimes a distance of only a few feet, with back yards used for outdoor storage for the units above or sometimes a small yard. Front yards were minimal, and there was generally no space on the lot for storage of automobiles. The situation in 2000 was quite different. Each unit has its own private backyard space, and although front yards were often small, there was often space for an ample side yard and for off-street parking ‘pads’ (see *Figures B.6 and B.7*).
8) *Suburban architecture.* Determination of what was and was not ‘suburban’ architecture was a subjective exercise, and the architecture of Winthrop Estates could not be said to be definitely urban or suburban (see Figures B.6 and B.7). Certainly there was some overtly ‘domestic’ imagery, including front porches and gables, in the new houses. This may have reflect an attempt to render a bit of the pastoral ideal in these urban houses.

*Figures B.6 (above) and B.7 (below).* Images of typical two-family houses from Winthrop Estates. The architectural imagery of these homes, while incorporating typical suburban features like off-street parking, was not iconically suburban.

*Table B.1* (following page) summarizes the eight points of analysis from the case development.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Winthrop Estates</th>
<th>Formula/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Severely distressed neighborhood</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>(1990 hsg, pop / 1970 hsg, pop)*100 must &gt; 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit density reduction</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>100-[(New HU/ac)/(Old HU/ac)*100]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homogenization of house type</td>
<td>-6.1%</td>
<td>(%New HT-%Old HT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homogenization of owner type</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>(%New OT-%Old OT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homogenization of land use</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100-[(New mixed-use/Old MU)*100]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in street patterns</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Street patterns not altered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban site planning</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>100-[(New lot coverage/Old LC)*100]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban style architecture</td>
<td>inconclusive</td>
<td>Qualitative assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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