

# OUTSIDERS

BY  
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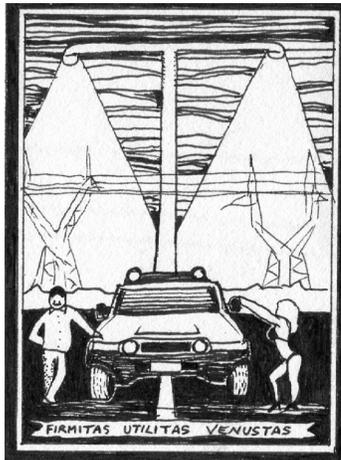
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*L'absurdité est surtout le divorce de l'homme et du monde.*  
- "L'Étranger" - Albert Camus

## Abstract

**T**he question of 'what's wrong with the suburbs' comes with a list as long as your arm. Lamentations of 'nothing to do', 'no-where to go', resound from a growing public. The rapacious rate of suburban development today is disheartening, and none too threatening for the future of Canada's people. The ubiquity of our automobile suburbs has brought a sweeping uniformity to the built environment across our once great nation. Drawn out of Garden City and New Town initiatives, suburbs have evolved into the singular most unsustainable building method in history, and indeed are widening their influence to a global scale. The question of 'what can become of the suburbs' is a much more fitting consideration. The awkwardness of the suburban environs could be likened to a young teen: unsure, flippant, aggressive, and ill prepared; and for these we can forgive them. It takes time to refine character. How best to guide their development? Has the damage been done and we've entered into the relationship too late to have any impact on the outcome? Or, can we intervene and train it back into a healthy, productive and inspired place to be? This thesis will defend how to put an end at once, to the 'nowhere' of the suburban utopia, and a beginning to place, purpose and posterity.

## Acknowledgments

Special thanks to my thesis advisor, Federica Goffi, whose unfailing support brought this to completion. She helped me be less concerned with finding the 'right' answers but instead to clarify the questions and in many cases simply re-state them. I have come to realize the eternal struggle in architecture in securing places of worth and wisdom. It is important to start early and stay the course.

So many colleagues have carried my weight and suffered my divided attention these past years. You know who you are and how much I appreciate your generosity of spirit and studio supplies.

Above all, thank you to my dear wife, who has been long awaiting these extended months to be over, mothering alone with me at the keyboard. I lament the lost time together, and long to repay it in kind. I look forward to building up a home of our own with our little girl.

## Preface



**A**t the advent of this research, we owned a house in a Trenton, Ontario, suburb, a few minutes drive from the military base. It was an imperfect house, but met our needs. My wife, a farm girl, didn't have much time for it, herself spoiled by the hundreds of acres of field and forest her childhood provided. What followed was my interest in the suburban ideal which in my short lifetime has spread beyond expectation. I wanted to study these places and get to know why people choose to live here. I grew up on a country road as well; donkeys and an old drive shed were our neighbours, the rest were seasonal cottagers and none-too present. What I discovered in the year we lived in 'the burbs' is that this is the kind of place you can forget your front door key in the latch overnight or leave the house vacant for weeks at a time without incident. Where mothers walk their babies and dogs happily on crisp Sunday mornings. These are tiny houses, ours just 750 square feet on a lot 50 by 80', built in the 1940's to house returning soldiers. It is the closest thing to Canada's *Levittown*, NY (more on this later). The 'neighbourhood' was laid out by reigning methods of the day: one house plan, copied a thousand times over. To this day, most houses remain unchanged: single storey, raftered roofs, white vinyl siding, black asphalt shingles, and small porticos

that push out from the front doors. They are altogether uninspiring. However, as people pass by and move through the streets you detect a quiet comfort in their gait. This is a prime example of a working town suburb, and it can't be forgotten that the early suburban designs were exacted as efforts to house legions of people in respectful, affordable housing. What this research hopes to achieve is an understanding and establishment of how to take the suburbs one further, how to make homes from houses, and to guide a community to enlightened socio-political ends.

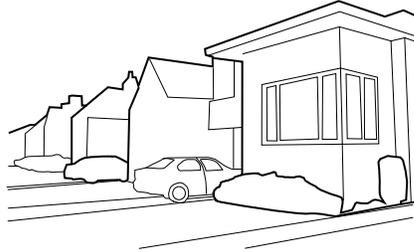
This writing includes a collection of personal anecdotes of "life in the suburbs". The names have been changed, but the accounts are real. As presented, they are at the mercy of this author's poetic license and for that I do apologize. I hope they meet with the real authors' approval and perhaps, delight. We argue that they are stories that must be told, and need a place to be told, for it is in their telling that we may reveal ourselves in the world.



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## Introduction



*In these days of strong party feelings and of keenly-contested social and religious issues, it might perhaps be thought difficult to find a single question having a vital bearing upon national life and well being on which all persons, no matter of what political party, or of what shade of sociological opinion, would be found to be fully and entirely agreed... There is, however, one question in regard to which one can scarcely find any difference of opinion. It is well-nigh universally agreed.., that it is deeply to be deplored that the people should continue to stream into the already over-crowded suburbs, and should thus further deplete the country and city districts.*

What you have just read, is an excerpt from Ebenezer Howard's intro to *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, published in 1898. For the sake of the present argument and crisis, the "city" has been replaced with 'suburb'. What the reference draws forth, is that despite an odd hundred and twenty years of development we are still dealing with the same issue: where do we put people to equitably and elegantly find homes in relation to work, and how do we do this harmoniously with Nature and with Man. The sheer amount of research and development that has brought us to where we are today is staggering, and despite revolutions in social, political and technological reform, we are still, largely, not getting it right.

The short history of nearly everything North American, is that we came, saw and conquered, and through time and scientific inquiry we created and commissioned ever sophisticated means of living. City centers became powerhouses; bustling, unsanitary and expensive, then exploded outward and moved waves of middle-classes beyond; to cheaper, airy, and expansive lands on the urban frontiers. The force was to plant and grow the desires for both life in the country and life in town and eliminate the errors of both. Such was the seed-germ of the modern day suburb, incubated by the desire for *more of the best*, It inevitably spoiled into the fruitless place we know today.

People forever find themselves torn between two lifestyles of: *doing everything yourself or having everything done for you*. Suburban life was intended as a balance and-negotiation between these poles. It has become the impudent child between two incompatible parents, Town and Country. In turn, the family divided and then further divided the lots and house sizes, the joie de vivre, and with it confidence. The hope of suburbia, receded inward, cheapened and compromised, and the child stood alone, vying for support from either. We have victims of negligent parenting in the suburbs, who have not found vision, and are needing a helping hand. This study proposes the best course for rehabilitation is revealing the strength within. Where the suburbs become both orphanage and nursery, self sufficient and self nurturing, establishing identity by the vitality and versatility resting latent in the people and their place; resting and awaiting escape from the 'din of everyday life'.

The problem of the suburbs is double edged. First, there is the problem of the people, and second the problem of the place, which emerged first and from where will be discussed in the following chapters. It is likely they came through together, and it is together we will bring them back. Back to life by stirring up the ethers within each. The prevailing *modus operandi* today is private ambition for material gain, not public ambition for a spiritual one. It is this *modus* that we will attack directly, how by design, planning and

policy we can better regulate and limit private desires of consumption and better institute, educate and enforce 'shared living' to it's greatest capacity, from the darkest recesses of the private dwelling to the blinding light of the public sphere. This thesis argues that the spatial conditions in the suburbs today are failing their residents. We will review the challenges facing suburban development, unpack the aspiring qualities of town and country life, understand the utopian principles that inspired the suburban dream, and analyze the particular characteristics of one of our local suburbs found in Barrhaven, south of Ottawa. We will re-configure the Barrhaven plan to bring suburban dwellers, who have been too long forgotten out on the frontiers, back in harmony with Man and Nature and argue that while the suburbs have failed us, we will not fail them. Town- Country living will be defended as an optimal condition for the conditioning of Man.

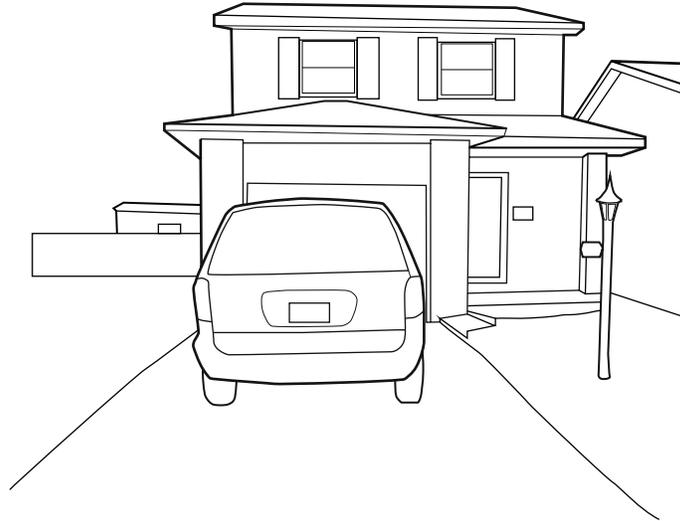
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We will approach the reading not linearly, nor chronologically, but circularly, or more specifically, as if tracing an inverse omega, a beginning from an end if you will. The trajectory will pass through theory to history, then practice to proposal. We will start in the here and now ('to-day'), identifying the present condition and conditioning we find ourselves in, both philosophically and physically. We will dig down into from whence we came, the roots of the modern day suburb, where they came from and how they lost their way (yesteryear's "to-morrow"), and return back to our starting point, but before reaching it, stopping short. Here we rest, before resurgence, for perspective of how to proceed. All considered, we will develop a strategy of enlightened planning, one to-ward realizing to-morrow to-day and 're-place' the nowhere of the Utopian vision lost in the suburbs with 'now-here'.

## Chapter 1: To-day



## Ajantha



**S**its on her front step with three kids at play. She is on her phone texting. There is only so much you can get out of three three year olds. Two girls together, and one boy on a tricycle. The two young girls approach me as I wander up and she calls them back, the road not too far away. Or perhaps on account of a strange man present and unexpected. Her license plate bears her name, a black SUV, no more than two years old. When I first arrived, she was sitting in the sun on her front step. The SUV takes up most of the driveway of her townhouse. She operates a daycare from home, and her husband travels on Enbridge contracts. She emphatically approves of her neighbours and had less to say of the rail line a hundred feet away. She is forty something, likely a mother herself, but without closer inspection of the children can't be definitive. A smaller frame, thin, with a long black braid draped over her shoulder, wearing loose fitting clothing and looking comfortable, but bored.

## Chapter 1

### 1.1: Between Fact and Fiction

*If you believe with all your heart in Jesus, you can hang rattlers and copperheads around your neck without fear. If one strikes you all the same, accept it as a sign from the Lord and find peace in whatever follows.*

E.O Wilson, *In Search of Nature*

**W**e live our lives on neighbouring levels of fiction. On one, we assume that we are who we say we are, and those around us know us and can verily identify us as persons with a given character, vocation and history. We are individuals. On another, we make friends, form partnerships, work and live alongside one another, we share, we give, we take. We are social creatures. This is our nature and our condition. On another still, we place our bodies and our family's bodies in particular places to carry out particular acts of daily life. We live as a physical component in a system of parts. This is our conditioning; our 'environment'. Our lives can be simple stories, predictable, pleasant, and linear.

Some part of our consciousness believes however, that there is mystery folded into layers within our bodies, minds, and environments, waiting to be deciphered. That, for example, we can be more than we are, that our lovers have been brought into our lives, and that the lives we lead and the places where we find ourselves are sacred and alive. We are hopeless victims caught between pragmatism and poetry, between objectivity and individuality, science and art. These fictions give comfort, hope, purpose, and meaning. They are why we live and choose to live. They are beauty, and grace, and desire and peace. They are human constructs. E.O Wilson, in his book, *In Search of Nature*, explains that the roots of our anthropocentric culture are, "difficult to explain by conventional means: that human beings possess a species specific nature and morality, which occupy only a tiny section in the space of all possible social and moral conditions" (Wilson, 1996). It is quite simply, difficult to see ourselves and the world for what it is. We prefer to see it as we please.

Wilson further attests to the depravity of our world view and suggests we are missing out:

*To be anthropocentric is to remain unaware of the limits of human nature, the significance of biological processes underlying human behavior, and the deeper meaning of long-term genetic evolution. That larger perspective can be gained only by moving back from the species, step by step, and taking a deliberately more distanced view (Wilson, 1996).*

We must learn to see through fiction to fact, and coalesce the best of both. This study rests on the belief, that we are, in fact, living sub-standardly, on all levels individually, socially and environmentally, and that we perpetuate fictions of a *quality of life* to forget our woes about the facts. The following chapter will look at the theoretical framework for why this may be so. It's a hard reality to face, you don't wake up in the morning feeling invigorated by a fake life. Most of this fiction has been built up and set in place so you *can* feel invigorated each day, that's why we have "Folgers in your cup", and the spiritual insight of Deepak Chopra on your bed-side table. We don't want to be reminded of the facts, for instance, laid out by Paul Hawken et al. in *Natural Capitalism*, that "since the mid-eighteenth century, more of nature has been destroyed than in all prior history; in the past fifty years alone, the human race has stripped the world of a quarter of its top soil and a third of its forest cover. In total, one-third of all the planet's resources have been consumed within the past four decades" (Hawken et al., 1999). Just by coincidence, it had taken all of human history until around 1800 for the world population to reach one billion. During the 20th century alone, the population grew from 1.65 to 6 billion. In 1970, there were roughly half as many people in the world as there are now. These facts don't make us jump out of bed. If they do, then I suspect you are already on the right track, and already living an active life. If they don't, it is still a good step. It may just turn your perspective so slightly, that lying there feeling miserable may be the best thing to do. It is the revelation through facts, not fiction, that this author believes is the course to achieve the greatness of human potential, and the trigger to ignite us to action. It is truly our gift of consciousness, and only this, that will help us out of this mess. First to be conscious that you are a biological product, a single

member of a species, insignificant by numbers, then to acquire a given skill set that can exact an effect on the building up of the world, and finally, to harness the humility and nobility found in self-correction by collective audit. Am I doing a good job, does it need to be done, what do you think, and how can we do this work better?

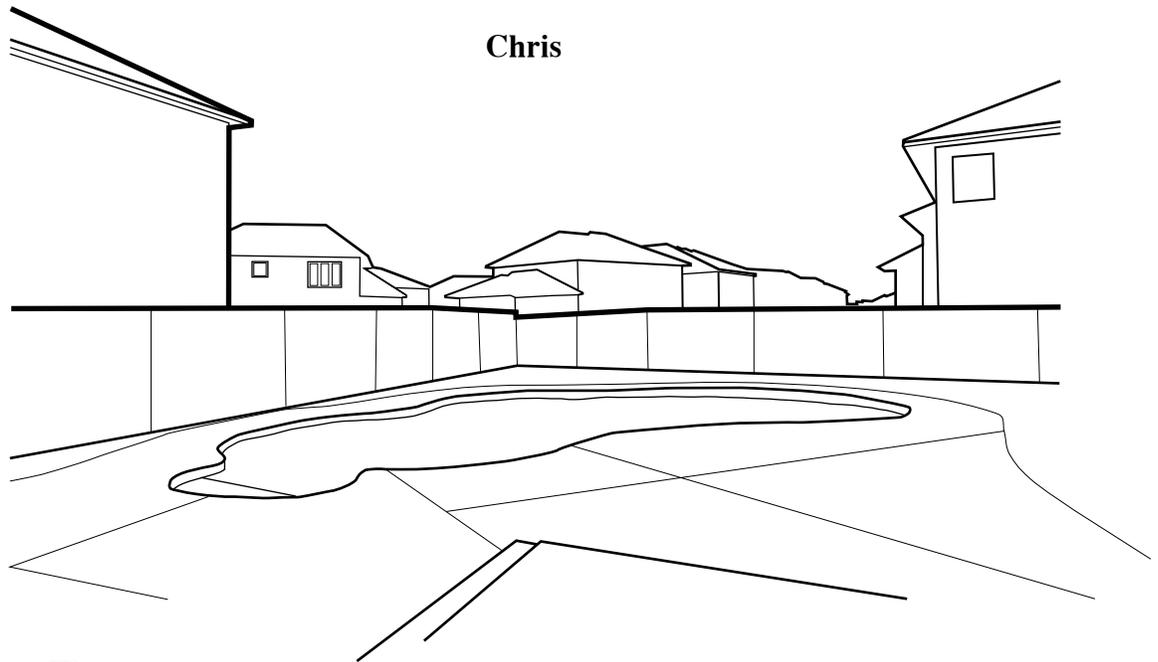
The degree to which we live our lives in fiction is nebulous. It's difficult to fully understand that practically every breath you take is devoted to self-preservation and not to the goodly deeds you had hoped to achieve. Every morsel of food, drink, warmth, entertainment, charity, security, every dollar devoted to these requirements, every moment spent lusting after a new outfit, admiring someone else's, dreaming of your new car, home, family life, retirement, financial situation, virtually every moment of your time compounds into simply, an effort to sustain better and better standards of *your* life. This includes your friendships, your children, your deepest love, your passion, your inherent sense of self. We are so absorbed into this fiction, that we feel more alive by meeting these requirements for life, to the point of awe, pleasure, ease, and fulfillment out of meeting and seeing them met more readily. Our icons are not celebrated for their God given talents, but for their impossible paychecks. Guy Debord, as a member of the Situationists in 1977, wrote a book titled the *Society of Spectacle*. In it he argues the post-modern world has us drifting further and further afield from ourselves, or a consciousness of self. We are trapped in a fixed state in oscillation, "bouncing between two planes of imagined reality" (Debord, 1977). He suggests how this condition came to be, and by his poetic account, and the help of leading into the next chapter, deserves to be quoted here from *Society of Spectacle* at length:

*Separation is the alpha and omega of the spectacle...The modern spectacle... depicts what society can deliver, but within this depiction what is permitted is rigidly distinguished from what is possible. The spectacle preserves unconsciousness as practical changes in the conditions of existence proceed. The spectacle is self generated, and it makes up its own rules: it is a specious form of the sacred. And it makes no secret of what it is, namely, hierarchical power evolving on its own, in its separateness, thanks to an increasing productivity based on an ever more refined division of labor, an ever greater communion of machine governed gestures, and an ever widening market. In the course of this development all community and critical awareness have ceased to be; nor have those forces, which were able by separating to grow enormously in strength, yet found a way to reunite. (Debord, 1977)*

Debord claims we've been so successfully indoctrinated into these styles of life that the value of the public collective is lost almost entirely. Self preservation is the very fuel that keeps this economy churning and tugging along. It is the ringing motto of our commercial reality. Martin Heidegger argued in his essay, *The Question Concerning Technology*, that even beyond human contact, our world view can only see through the lens of opportunity. Nature as resource. It has become an unspoken, unknown, conviction, a subliminal autonomous inauthentic state of being, wherein we cannot truly "dwell" harmoniously, not physically nor spiritually, in present time nor eternally. This struggle reveals itself in the question 'what can I make of this?'; the subject individual, the predicate control, the object nondescript. What can I make of this: afternoon, this body, this romance, this career. Erich Fromm offers outright criticism in *Architecture: Presence, Language and Place* saying:

*Contemporary man is certainly passive most of his free time. He is the eternal consumer. He takes in drinks, food, cigarettes, lectures, sights, books, films; everything is devoured, swallowed. The world has become one large object of his desire, one large bottle, one large breast. Man has become the eternally expectant and disappointed suckling* (Norberg-Schulz, 2000).

Our relationship to the world of Man and the natural Earth is fundamentally a philosophical concern. It defines and defends our behavior. It reveals truth, a truth that breaks through fiction and enlightens facts of a consciousness of our time. Human intervention into the natural world is the question of life at its most basic. How do we fit in? From Abbé Laugier's *primitive hut*, it has been central to architecture throughout its discipline. It is a question that has never been more of a paramount concern. We must act and give good counsel for the answer, through architecture and sociology, and act swiftly to reform the conditions and conditioning of Man.



**R**aised two boys in Barrhaven who now live on their own less than a ten minute drive away in Half-Moon Bay. Her golden lab rests quite comfortably on a neighbours yard. She's owned two houses in Barrhaven both in ear shot of the tracks, but hasn't lost sleep over it remarking it's just a part of living here, you get used to it, and then you don't even notice it anymore. Her boys are both married and made their homes nearby enjoying the merits of a familiar place, among them: the local hockey arena and ball diamond. Both work either in town or within a short commute. She moved here originally for the schools and wouldn't change a thing. Exclaiming it's the best place to raise kids, Chris has nothing but praise for the place. She says only a quarter of the original families from 25 years back still live in the area. We talked transit and she rolls her eyes at the discussion of light rail, claiming its been nothing but argument in council since the idea was first brought to the table. She explains, that for commuting, you need to hit the right windows to avoid traffic into town. Congestion in Barrhaven proper is particularly bad, consuming the bulk of commute time just getting to Prince of Wales and turning left to downtown. She looks forward to the opening of the Strandherd bridge to connect to the sister suburb Riverside South across the Rideau river. She recalls her husband leaving at 7:00am to get to work on time, but its been so long since, she can hardly remember. Today, she enjoys the mature trees of her neighborhood and the larger lots compared to the newer developments in Chapman Mills. Traffic is slower here along Pickwick Drive, and despite no sidewalks she doesn't seem to mind the neighbourhood walk. She likes her neighbours and doesn't see herself moving for a good long while. Chris is in her late 50's early 60's, and cheerfully waves to passer-byers on the street.

## 1.2: Between Private and Public

*"Psychic nourishment should not be confused with superficial stimuli?"*

Christian Norberg-Schulz

**T**hrough all reformations of culture, society and religion in recorded history, architecture has maintained a fairly constant trajectory: to create places of significance for people to use. While the integrity of the discipline still maintains a public imperative, the nature of the 'public' or *res publica* has fundamentally changed. In her seminal book *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt defends a study of the central dilemmas facing modern man. She defines three activities that contribute to the so called *vita activa*: Labor, Work, and Action. Of Labor she wrote, it is, "the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities for life process. The human condition of Labor is maintaining life itself" (Arendt, 2006).

Work, "is the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, ...Work provides an 'artificial' world of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings. Within its borders each individual life is housed, while this world itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all. The human condition of work is worldliness" (Arendt, 2006).

Of Action, she is less definitive, but hazard to say, and helped by her instruction, action is the materialization of, "great speech or great act". Such events, are written into history, incite true inspiration, and by Roman sensibility, bring one closer to the gods. It is an experience of divine revelation, and one where humans truly "appear". The human condition of action then, is becoming 'fully human' or making manifest our greatest potential. In her own words, "action is what distinguishes us as individuals, the conduit to be in the world, to natality, to memory, and to history" (Arendt, 2006).

The opportunity for "human appearance", by Arendt's account, can be enabled by a built context. The *res publica*, or public space was made possible in traditional architecture, in our agoras, and plazas, and halls of assembly. Arendt argues these spaces have been displaced by a secular and privatized world.

She corresponds the activity of labour and work with two fundamental states of being, respectively titled: *animal laborans*, and *homo-faber*. She explains the ambitions of the *homo-faber*, are for permanence and stability, and argues they are overshadowed in the modern context by that of the *animal laborans*, saying:

*in our need for more and more rapid replacement of the worldly things around us, we can no longer afford to use them, to respect and preserve their inherent durability, we must consume, devour, as it were, our houses and furniture and cars as though they were the 'good things' of life which would spoil uselessly if they are not drawn swiftly into the never ending circle of man's metabolism with nature (Arendt, 2006).*

Kenneth Frampton in his essay *Labor, Work and Architecture*, calls his reading of *The Human Condition*, a "formative experience", and he draws from the Arendtian view, a foundation and relationship to architecture. The rise of a private and secular world view had direct implications for the design and building of our world. Out of mind and into sight as it were. Philosophical constructs precede physical ones. He argues:

*Hegel brought primacy of thought over being... and then with Neo-Hegelianism, primacy of the existential world over the world of ideas. The progressive emphasis given to the realm of the unique individual and the gradual eclipse of the ancient humanist ideals led eventually to a total devaluation of the agora and by this agency to the primacy of private over public and to the progressive rejection of the city as a way of life." (Frampton, 2002)*

The nature and configuration of the "city" so called, will be discussed in the following chapters, but consider the intention and significance of the 'city', not solely as a physical entity, but as well in the formation of men. We will look to unravel the essence of the *res publica* beyond the composition 'city', and its significance in the 'placing' of Man.

Frampton defines the distinction of the efforts of the *animal laborans* and the *homo faber* for the practice of architecture and bring us back to the roots of the discipline. The Oxford English dictionary reveals the "ambiguity" of the term *architecture* in the Arendtian view. First, as "*the art or science of constructing edifices for human use*", and second, "*the action and process of building*". The first, of course designates architecture as work, and the second as labour. The designation, "*for human use*", alludes to the creation of a specifically human world, whereas, "*the action and process of building*", implies an unceasing act, ever incomplete (Frampton, 2002).

The act of architecture it seems, is bound to both the world of the *homo faber* and the earth of the *animal laborans*. It is both a desire and a biological imperative, like that of the obsessive making of a robin and its nest, it knows simply, it must be done.

And what of the *homo faber* devoting themselves to art and science, the empirical pursuit of perfection. One wonders if this 'work' is a mere pulse of life as well, if building up the "world" and the deciding of how it should be done, is equally as incessant. A yearning that never sleeps. How can one distinguish between the powers of title and powers of territory? Are they not one and the same? Do we merely take one thing and call it another.

Arendt's philosophy is taken to heart in architectural circles, by the belief that human behavior *can* be conditioned by careful, quantifiable and inspired spatial design. By her theory, the *human condition* therefore, is not immutable. It is capable of responding to a given environment, and given such an environment so perfectly exacted, and by the motive of the human in question, one could be set free, blossom, ignite, dismantle from nature and be born anew into a world beyond. *Human Appearance* by Arendt's testament requires a given set of conditions: (i) a person, ready, able and willing to speak or act, (ii) an arena to house such activity (iii) and a present group of people or a single person (one could assume) ready, willing, and able to hear, respond or record. The larger the group, of course, could enable a wider discussion, and one with potentially opposing narratives.

It's a simple portrait, a group of people present in a safe arrangement, and allowed freedom and opportunity. It's a lovely notion, and not one that seems all too unrealistic or uncommon. Many of us could testify to our own experience of *human appearance*, from the real halls of legislative assembly or simply in deep conversation with an old friend.

It is not the potential that is the problem, we've had it all along. The problem instead is that the modern condition has replaced and confused the space of the *public*, with that of the *social*. Where human affairs of a private nature were kept separate from the *polis*, today, these same private affairs are discussed openly. By *social media* today, your breakfast choice becomes a matter of great discussion, meanwhile you hide details of your political persuasion by quiet whispers over dinner with your wife. It is this confusion that we are deprived. The authentic *polis*, is the seed germ of the 'work' of architecture and it cannot grow without it. It is what put our cities and their centres in place; their plazas, squares, halls of assembly and houses of government. A place for people to convene and debate. It is the 'public' in architecture, wherever that may be, that we must protect. Frampton worries that it may already be too late:

*This metamorphosis of the city into something physically unrecognizable as the entity city, through dispersion and attenuation, inevitably vitiates the 'city' and divests it of all public significance. The secular triumph of modern materialism is thus made physically manifest, the city is dispersed and evacuated of all 'civilized' public content. (Frampton, 2002)*

Is there space for an authentic *polis* in our contemporary plans and master plans? Or has it been all but erased and replaced? Can humans appear in the Modern world?

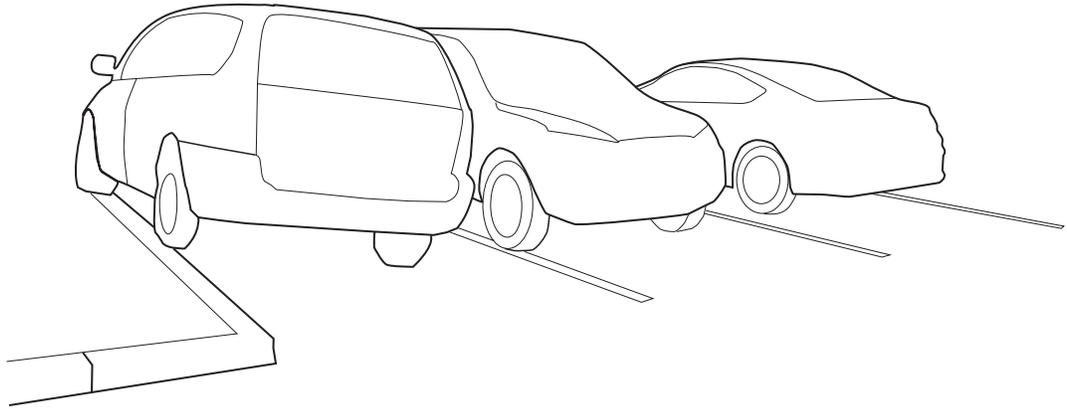
Arendt presupposes exaltation by one avenue: through the eye of the public needle. By her and Frampton's estimates, this opening is getting progressively smaller. Her framework, however, excludes two widely accepted and polar paradigms of thought: i) that the human body *is* a work of God and personal destiny *is* pre-ordained, versus ii) we *are* organisms of biological design and *are* no more exemplary than a dish of mold. Both suggest that *human appearance* by our own accord, is not possible, and never has been.

Arendt also precludes that man or woman can be exalted through labor alone, or individually. Those who make such a lofty claim could ne'er have worked a long hard day, "piling tired on tired", to borrow from F.L Wright (Huxtable, 2004). She must not have known the communion with God or Nature by the reverence of digging potatoes from the earth, after toiling with blight and bugs through the long months of summer. *Human appearance*, by her account, is made near impossible for all modest labourers, the farmer plowing the fields, the welder aloft a sixty storey high-rise, the cashier at your local hardware store, and of course hermits. What should be made clear is that, these people too have the potential to "appear human", and potentially have. Theirs could be an uplifting, inspired and connected life, even absent from a public arena. But they would not be living the *vita-activa*, as Arendt defines it. They would by her estimates need still to participate in a public forum. The configuration and placement of the public forum needs then to be clarified. Frampton explains that the private realm too, includes spaces for public reception: the foyer, the hearth, the "living room". Here, in these spaces, open and critical debate might ensue. The argument is not that these spaces aren't designed into our modern plans, although often they are not, but that the programme of these spaces has fundamentally changed. Furthermore, even space, commonly regarded as 'public': our parks, streets, markets and plazas. These instead have been converted into places of recreation, parking lots, and passageways, reduced to mere social gathering places, places devised to fulfill mere biological needs: rest, relaxation, leisure, entertainment, and transport. Frampton leads to Luis Barragan, whom he credits the loss of the private-public relationship to the hands of the social. Barragan suggests that human beings are in need of a "half-light", the kind that imposes, "a tranquility and enables one to live and work in a more concentrated manner" (Barragan, 1967). The idea of 'half light' implies both a shift in the *looking at* and *making of* the world. Barragan might be suggesting to leave room for the unknown; that which can't be seen clearly. This must be the keystone to the 'polis' and the *vita activa*.

Collective and critical debate is the kind that allows people to have their voice heard while giving credit to opposing views, and through the 'not knowing', we find narrative, compromise, and possibly communion. Barragan suggests we might find peace. He pairs this with 'concentration'. A 'pure being' if you will; allowing one to act deliberately and often, with complete resolve. Practice makes Perfect; the proverbial, 'left and right hand', that don't know the other's involvement. Not resting on accomplishment or failure, but ever focused on a commitment to honorable activity; incessant. We are led back once again from *the human to the animal*, from fabrication to labor, world to the earth, from the pursuit of the public to the betrayal of the private in cycle. Instead of setting them at odds, we should look to pair them in harmony: where one can see the other, a reflection within itself where they become one. Perhaps our only hope is living a conscious duality, both human and animal, and celebrate them equally; the sacrifice in labor and the service in work.

Unlike the Greeks, who despised the individual or private domain or *idion* (as in idiocy), the Romans, valued the interdependence of both realms. Arendt conceives of the private realm, as "the darker ground", that not only nourishes the public, but also establishes its experiential depth (Frampton, 2002). The *polis*, where they intersect, exists under Barragan's, "half light", the darkness of animal life brought to the light of public human life. The rise of the social, Arendt defends, "has had the ultimate effect of impoverishing both the public and private spheres ... the dissipation of the agora reflects that mass society whose alienating force stems not from the number of people but from 'the fact that the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them'"(Arendt 2006). The existential world shadows the world of ideas and as such has created a system operating in 'half darkness'. By Arendt's testament, the rise of the modern world marked the "triumph of the *animal laborans*" (Arendt 2002). It seems we are more mushroom than sunflower. This should not break our confidence; we have always been this way, this fact predates history. There is though some strength in knowing it.

## Jane



**B**ought their first house on the outskirts of Lindsay, Ontario, a few months ago. Her husband, a baker, and their two children await another baby. With the growth of her family, she grappled with the 'type of life' to provide her children. She had earlier tried to convince her partner of a century home in need of some serious repairs. She loved the creaky, uneven floors, the peeling paint. Her hubby reasoned her down, worried of budgeting, the health of his family, and their lack of skills. Along a dirt path, from their now home, they can walk to her parents. A walk to town would take upwards of 30 minutes, a downside in her opinion. You can tell she's an old fashioned soul, her eyes twinkle when she talks of living in the country. She imagines herself living on a small farm, hanging laundry on the line in the sunshine. She is early 30's, optimistic but practical.

### 1.3: Between Humans and their Work

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*We have studied and much perfected of late, the great civilized invention of the division of labor; only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labor that is divided; but the men: Divided into mere segments of men - broken in to small fragments and crumbs of life; so that all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin or the head of a nail.*

John Ruskin, "On The Nature of the Gothic Architecture", *Stones of Venice, Volume II*, 1853

**E**choed through the ages from Karl Marx in 1848, to John Ruskin, to William Morris, to Guy Debord in 1964, is heard the lament for the worker from the socialist sympathizer. The machining of man is at its fruition. It is an undeniable and indelible reality. However little effect these sympathies had on the making of an economic system, what holds, is the importance of being conscious of your given role. It is vital to recognize it, not for the sake of rousing a social revolution, but for training the ability to distinguish between labor and work in your own life, rousing first a personal revolution. It is well and good to spend the majority of our time meeting biological requirements, it is inescapable. There simply isn't enough time in the day to invest yourself otherwise. Those lucky enough to be true "workers" by their vocation, manage to contribute, sometimes daily, to the *building up of the world*, the work of *homo faber*. It is the building of the world no doubt, that is part of the problem. It is the definition of the *type* of world that must be in absolute clarity. So infrequent is the creation of the *type of world* that lends itself as a platform for *human appearance*. By and large, most of the designing and building that has stamped itself on the earth over the past many centuries is effectively meaningless. It is a mere relief of desire, a fulfilling of biology, the craving abated. Designers and builders are both committed to their pay cheques from clients that in turn are committed to theirs. Each and all fall victim to the confines of codes, by-laws, budgets, and popular taste, that often prevent what truly should be done: the careful and deliberate making of a *world* that is durable, useful and delightful while preserving man in the world, equitably and elegantly.

The durability in our built environment today is questionable, its use, insignificant, and beauty, by the effect of our propensity for land speculation, is found few and far between. Core beliefs in these principles are not disseminated often, nor enforced, as very little of the built world today is under the auspices of architecture to begin with.

It stands however, regardless of who is in power, that we are in direct control over the world we create. The dilemma therefore, is putting an appropriate maker in the appropriate position, for the appropriate end. The Dutch sociologist Frederick Polak wrote:

*through his images of the future, we come to know man, who he is and how he wishes to be, what his thoughts are, what he values most highly, what he thinks is worth striving for, and whether he thinks is attainable....Certain types of men hold certain types of visions, subject to their temper and spirit; tell me what your vision of the future is and I will tell you what you are (Frampton, 1992).*

We must move towards giving all men and women positions of power in the workplace, however great or small, that brings about will to create, (and thus accountability) to the making of the world (however great or small). *Worldliness* doesn't need to represent the world at large as we know it, and indeed our vision of the world has been radical transformed in the past few generations. Standardization for instance, a common strategy today, assumes a cookie-cutter solution for all conditions, social, geographical, cultural and otherwise. Such was the failure of the Modern movement, the so called, 'système internationale'. We have come to believe in the post-Modern framework, that while this may be the practice, it is simply not a reality; one 'world' here, does not necessarily relate to a 'world' there. We have lost perhaps, the ability to know the 'world' altogether. Ours is "distanceless", as Heidegger suggested, our concerns are all the same. The *revealing of the world* as Polak suggests, come from the *building of it*. This should be performed as locally as feasible, reduce the 'worldly' experience to that of the everyday, to immediacy; see it take effect, and learn from its production. We must work towards a small world.

Frampton remarks on the effect of machine and standardized production on the design process, arguing that:

*Increasingly buildings come to be designed in response to the mechanics of their erection, or alternatively, processal elements such as tower cranes, elevators, escalators, stairs, refuse chutes, gangways, service cores and automobiles, that determine the configuration of built form to a far greater extent than the hierarchic and more public criteria of place. (Frampton, Modern, 1992)*

The type of work we can accomplish thereby is confined and predetermined by the existing system. This has long been a debate within architectural circles, and it will likely never come to rest. Despite, the firmly established technoindustrial economy of today, we still can't deny William Morris a century later, the unfailing belief that, "through craftsmanship comes the liberation of the soul" (Morris, 1888). He witnessed the beginning of a certain rift between worker and their work, claiming, "when anything has to be renewed ... the only question asked is how little it can be done for, so as to tide us over our responsibility and shift its mending on to the next generation" (Morris, 1888). Our method of making undeniably ties us to the type of world we create. Our method enlists a piecemeal approach, where there is rarely a connection from the inception of the idea, to its implementation or use. We don't know where the work came from nor where its going. Gianni Vattimo in his *Transparent Society* argued that, "the post modern world disassociates and disorients its inhabitants from both their history and their future" (Vattimo, 1992). We are lost in time and distracted from such primary questions, as, 'is this work important, who does it help, is it needed, and how long will it take effect?' Embedded in our method of making is a latent danger, that we won't know when to start or when to stop.

## Don



**D**escribes his time spent in Markland Woods, a Toronto suburb developed in the 1960's. His parents bought their 1500 sq.ft. home new for \$25,000 in 1963. His father, a high school teacher, and mother, a happy home-maker and part-timer, secured the house as part of an upward social climb. The neighborhood was designed for the small family, with the signature gentle curve of the suburban street. The houses, by his memory were varied, and stood squarely to the sidewalk with pride. Markland Woods was designed to a perfect circle, with Mill Street and Bloor at intersection at its center. At the time, Mill Street was cut off to the west by the creek that would today separate now Scarborough from the rest of Toronto. He remembers a high school, middle school and elementary school all within walking distance from the scant 1000 homes in the neighborhood. A church and commercial plaza are clear markers in his memory. He speaks fondly of his summers fishing golf balls from the creek that ran through the community's golf course, jumping in and finding them with their feet. They would sell them to players for a nickel a piece, enough for fifteen black balls. The kids would hide under the bridge until the course warden rode past overhead. He recalls that most of his friends hailed from the neighborhood nearby, but one in particular was a TTC ride to Islington and a few subway stops away. His parents spent 5 nights a week on average at home with the kids when they weren't partaking in the monthly bridge game or some other modest entertainment. They had one car, a Pontiac *Strato-Chief*, that could take them the 2 or 3 kilometers down Bloor to a more expansive grocery. His backyard faced the back of the IGA. Errands to and fro demanded a jug of milk for Mom, and a pack of cigarettes (with written consent) for Dad. His was a typical childhood of a boy about eight, wide eyed and adventurous, exploring the half acre woods between school and home. He made no mention of school, or home, only the mystique and excitement of youth.

#### 1.4: Between Landscape and Landmarks

*The past fifty years have radically transformed the metropolitan centers of the developed world. What were still essentially nineteenth-century cities in the early Fifties have since become surrounded and partially penetrated by megalopolitan development; that is to say, by the techno-commercial infrastructure of the auto-route, the strip and the shopping mall, together with the random distribution of high-rise structures, set amid a seemingly endless proliferation of free-standing suburban dwelling. In this way, traditional city form, capable of combining many different uses within its continuous, densely woven urban fabric, has found itself superseded by an economically optimizing 'motopia'.*

Frampton in *Labour, Work and Architecture*,

We are all familiar with the suburban communities to which we refer. Some of us were born there, others moved there, but by their current design, we all die there. Something is amiss. It's difficult to put a finger on exactly, endless conurbations of single family houses packed tightly together, all but to accommodate the family's two or more vehicles filling the front drive, a small fenced yard front and back. Houses back onto one another with private yards in between. Side walls have few to no windows. Back yards are used to store excessive stuff we don't need and in many cases become refuse heaps. The homes are typically 1500 to 3000 sq.ft, made increasingly of plastic products, and take after a weird conglomeration of architectural styles. By most accounts they are offensive. Humphrey Carver, suggests in his book, *Cities in the Suburbs*, a list of lamentations arise from such environments:

*The Lament of What Isn't There, the expression of a shadowy intuition that Something is Missing. The search for what is missing is a corollary of the other two laments. The lament of Confusion speaks to the lack of a system, method or rationale, the lament of Uniformity (or Monotony), suggests that there is no system of variations, hierarchies, degrees. There are no proportions, contrasts and no harmonies...Where is the plot, the theme, the climax? What does it all lead up to? (Carver, 1992).*

These are model towns that have swept the world by storm and infiltrated the building industry, spreading like a bad cough. In Frampton's view, "It seems as if mankind, by approaching en masse a basic consumer culture, were also stopped en masse at a subcultural level" (Frampton, 2002). In a few generations, we have jeopardized the significance

of people tied to their land, their culture and their built history.

Jonathan Hale in his book, *The Old Way of Seeing*, speaks to the lost art of vernacular building in the opening paragraph, "There was a time in our past when one could walk down any street and be surrounded by harmonious buildings. Such a street wasn't perfect, it wasn't necessarily even pretty, but it was alive. The old buildings smiled, while our new buildings are faceless" (Hale, 1994).

More than 75% of Canadians choose the suburbs as their home. It is a framework that has met with popular demand. How is it these places come to be, and inhabited by so many despite such vacancy? People it seems have innate standards and can recognize when something is awry. Hale describes his own experience walking around Belmont, Massachusetts taking pictures of Neo-Colonial houses, only to be set upon by the police by the order of two separate calls. He later went on to photograph the *Jonathen Stone House* in another neighborhood nearby only to be invited in and welcomed warmly. He concluded that the polar reactions to his presence in these two similar neighborhoods was that there was obvious reason to photograph the old house, and an equally obvious reason not to photograph the others. Simply, "the older house is beautiful and the newer ones not, the owners knew they were dull", so he could only be up to no good (Hale, 1994).

This is not only a design problem from house to house, to neighborhood to neighborhood, but a systemic one as well, as suggested by Carver, "mass scale planning was a Modernist paradox, and did away with traditional urban lifestyles and street patterns...and produced bland, often poorly constructed buildings. The push laid Modernism open to the abuses of developers, who left people's needs behind in the rush" (Carver, 1992). Wants are relative, needs are relation; a relation to yourself, your family, your tribe, your history, your land, your future.

We were made individuals by our material age, and as such, have arguably little relation to 'us' as a people, as a community. Arendt says, that "we no longer attach the connotation of deprivation to the word privacy" (Arendt, 2002). Further, as our homes are established for us, we have no interest in the soil, in the material from which they are built, the type of dwelling conceived, nor its method of construction. We don't build as a people, with collective value, for collective goals. We are utterly detached from the place-making of our very homes. How could we justify in perfect confidence buying a home far too large for needs, exclusive to our neighbors, constructed of materials that are categorically fake, in questionable assemblies, from a repeat design, reliant on a 'grid' for all utilities, 30 kilometers from your place of work, and devoid of any connection to landscape, culture and history. Sounds like a poetic place to build a nest. Gaston Bachelard, in *Poetics of Space*, discusses the importance of finding a home by the "nest egg", "and so when we examine (and build) a nest, we place ourselves in the origin of confidence in the world, we receive the beginning of confidence, and urge towards cosmic confidence". This he suggests is the condition of genuine dwelling. A physical and spiritual relation through place, and that place in relation to all else, the soil, the sun, and the universe. Dwelling to Heidegger, is a topic of great concern for the modern context, "To be authentic is to recognize the gravity of the task to which one is delivered over and to take full responsibility for one's life. Authentic *Dasein* (loosely translated to Being), means living resolutely, coherently, and with "sober joy"(From Guinon, 1983). Implicit in *authentic* living is a consciousness of time and place. Karsten Harries explains in his book *The Ethical Function of Architecture*, that "our dwelling(s) should speak to us of mortality." He articulates further, "....the difficulty human beings, and especially we moderns, have accepting death, also means inevitably we have difficulty in dwelling" (Harries, 1997). The suburbs offer a place to live, but not dwell, somewhere between sensation and distraction, irresolutely, with no coherence and in 'drunken stupor'.

Can we tie ourselves to a place in time in our present condition, and how can we better do it? Critics and philosophers all seem to have an opinion on this point. Gaston Bachelard called this ability, "topoanalysis" which is, "the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives" (Bachelard, 1994). Christopher Bollas speaks to the psychic power of our buildings in his essay *Architecture and the Unconscious saying*, "Each Venetian child learns to draw a map from home to school as this is a city where one can easily become lost. These children's maps show how striking buildings are important markers for one's basic sense of orientation" (Bollas, 2000).

Guy Debord refers to a "*psycho-geography*, the study of the exact laws and precise effects of the geographical environment..acting directly on the affective department of individuals", where the Situationists thought urban ideology as one devoted to reshaping the subject, to, in fact, "envisioning an empty subject modeled by the influence of the surroundings" (Debord, 1977). Christian Norberg-Schulz in his book, *Presence, Language and Time*, explains that, "the environment becomes meaningful when it offers rich possibilities for the occurrence of different and repeated situations... In a chaotic and mobile world the relations between objects tend to dissolve and meanings become transitory" (Norberg-Schulz, 2000).

As we devote ever more space to the *animal laborans*, we displace more and more significance to the environment we live in. Our truly is a "transitory" environment, our 'big box' stores built over night, city populations built every year on the urban fringe. No where else is impermanence so plain and clear than in the suburbs. Speculative building by by-law enforcement translates into :build fast, all the same. The rate of suburban construction in turn exacerbates the suburban environment and the significance of these places, or lack there of. This depravity fills up the lives of its inhabitants and might explain why so few commit to living there for any great length of time. The average is 3-5 years (Gallagher, 2013). From stimuli to nourishment, how can we make a purse out of a pig's ear?

Hale suggests the fix is easy, and is simply a measure of patterns, "the medicine will be a hammer and saw. It won't be necessary to change the style of the house, but only to re-arrange a window here and there, over a door, add some trim...they could be brought alive. The result won't be Fallingwater, but it will be a house you can look at, and perhaps even, photograph"(Hale, 1994). Others suggest, it will take a more radical paradigm shift. Norberg- Schulz laments, "we need to pause and rethink our trajectory before taking further steps, to rethink the rationality of modern industrial civilization; to rethink and compare the present physical spaces, social cultures and lifestyles as compared to what they used to be..."(Norberg-Schulz, 2000).

The suburbs were first designed as *Garden Cities*, early as 1820. In their early trials they embodied a lovely sentiment on a lovely scene. The history of how they came to be so devoid of spirit, is an illusive one, but stemmed from an incomplete understanding of the country and the town they wished to emulate. Certainly, their failure has been a gradual one and due to an assortment of stressors, namely: problems of population, of personal wealth, of price, of policy, pretension and propulsion. The root causes include all of: biology, culture, technology, and administration. Frampton laments that, if we have any chance at fixing the problem of sprawl, it will be in,"a post-facto compensatory way" (Frampton, 2002). For the sake of the lives of 75% of Canadian residents, the land on which they rest, and their future stories, these measures must be taken sooner rather than later. It's time to clean up the mess we made.



## Veronica



**S**peaks gleefully about her imminent return home to Bologna. Her excitement is unrestrained, child-like. She talks of the constancy of the place, often seeing the same grocer after many years away, resolved in their work, centered, satisfied. Old faces ask after her welfare, in earnest and care, and listen intently to the answer. A question is no mere formality, but of interest and honesty, like a prayer to find you in God's keeping. Her children are welcomed home by shopkeepers and passer-byers alike, as if they never left, altogether knowing and not knowing the particular affairs of their company. They are *familia*, not known but familiar, strangers but family. She speaks of long walks along the coast, everything beautiful. The kind of beauty that resonates harmony, perfect and impossible, known only by being among it. The kind of beauty that puts airs beneath your feet for hour long treks to the neighboring town. The kind of harmony that bleeds from the landscape into its inhabitants, inspiring grace into conduct. When someone says they'll be there Thursday at 3:00pm, they'll be there at 3:00pm Thursday. Constancy in the place and the people. She speaks of her people with utter admiration and complete respect. They are reliant, candid, and full of life. She speaks of the city with divine reverence, like a canvas under the hand of a master, emergent and colorful.

## 2.1: Town

*We take our two feet and move around in it (the city) and come to count on it. The only reason anyone does this much, is that useful or interesting or convenient differences, fairly near by, exert an attraction.*

Jane Jacobs, *Death and Life of Great American Cities*

**H**uman settlement had forever been a product of practicality and poetry. Space to meet the necessities of life, and space for exaltation. Architecture at its essence gave purpose to place. Architecture was the edifice, and by Oxford's definition, "*a large and stately building*", such as a church, palace or fortress, both permanent and public. The word edifice, from edify, means not only "*to build*", but also, "*to instruct, to educate, to establish, to strengthen*", and from the Latin verb, *edificare*, from *aedes*, "*building, or earlier hearth, and fire*", and *ficare*, "*to make*", altogether, 'work being made public' (Frampton, 2002). The hearth of course wasn't always found in the domestic realm. Villages were once measured by the number of fires they contained, a shared source of food, heat and human contact. The hearth was the first public meeting ground, it was both security and sanctity. Fire has always incited mystery. It was fire that conjured up spirits, Moses in the desert, the spirit of Gitche Manitou brought back to earth. Fires were symbolically and systemically the centrepiece to primitive communities. At our earliest, we were publicly conditioned.

Early settlements generally responded to a reading of the landscape and its resources, which explains why most straddled a river bank, perched a hill for better visibility, or sat atop fertile or sacred soil. Frampton instructs that, "historically, a balance of labor and work manifested in urban communities... Traditionally, the private dwellings followed the siting of the common hearth, and were built haphazardly, by unskilled hands, ...they were cellular in character and dynamic, but clearly distinguishable from the static public form within its midst. (Frampton, 2002).

Humphrey Carver recounts the shifting influences on city design, in *Cities in the Suburbs*, and reminds us of the difficulty in imagining a city without a center, "The Greeks devoted their highest talents to erecting at their rocky summit, the Acropolis, and on it the Parthenon, temple to a heavenly plane. Medieval Christians defined the center by their cathedral churches. The city was a place of refuge, protected from the outside and centered upon a sacred place.." (Carver, 1962).

With the Renaissance and Reformation life became more provocative and understandable. The city would no longer focus on a single mystery of religion, but would reflect life reborn in many narratives and by many wonders. The exterior world was welcomed in, and the city walls opened. Carver points out that, "portraits of Renaissance characters show, not saints and abstractions of human qualities, but lively adventurers and rascals" (Carver, 1962). The town transformed into a center of merchants and princes, and the market-place became a new focus of attention. The city was opened up with piazzas, squares, and vistas, "setting the stage for the city as theatre" (Carver, 1962). While the world view had fundamentally changed, the physical entity of the city remained for the time finite by introspection. With the sudden rise of mechanization from the mid- 1600's onward, the finite city, as it had been in Europe over five hundred years previously, was overthrown in the space of a century. Frampton instructs, that innovations as Abraham Darby's mass production of cast-iron rails, from 1767, and Jethro Tull's seed drill cultivation of crops in rows, adopted after 1731, and Richard Trevithick locomotive on rails in 1804 radically transformed the configuration of the city (Frampton, 1992). The first public rail service between Stockton and Darlington in 1825, was followed by rapid development of a completely new infrastructure building 10,000 miles of track by 1860 (Frampton, 1992). Long distance navigation and further colonization of the Americas, Africa and Australia and the rise of the *New World* in the early 1800's, precipitated the, "military, political and economic obsolescence of the traditional European walled city" (Frampton, 1992).

The liberal-national revolutions of 1848 in France and Russia resolutely led to the, "wholesale demolition of ramparts and to the extension of the city into its already burgeoning suburbs" (Frampton, 1992). Coupled with advances in health and nutrition, the city became a veritable "megalopolis" to quote geographer John Gottman, the likes of which had never been seen before. London's population multiplied by 6 fold from around 1 million in 1801 to 6 and a half million in 1901, Paris from 500,000 to 3 million in the same period, and New York from 33,000 to 3 and a half million (Frampton, 1992). Carol Christensen in her book *The American Garden City movement*, cites that, "since the first federal census in America was taken in 1790, only 5 percent of the population was urban. In 1840, one in twelve, to 1860, one in six, 1880, one in four, 1900, one in three, and by 1920, one in two"(Christensen, 1986). Today over 85% of people in Canada and the U.S call 'urban' environments their home (Gallagher, 2013).

By the 1890's, exploitation of the city center was made possible by long span steel members and the *Chicago Frame* seen in the erection of high rise buildings, the invention of the passenger lift, the underground railway, and by commuter rail transit. Suburban growth at the time was an appropriate response to house a mass immigration of new urbanites. (Frampton, 1992).

The result of the densification of the city lead to a whole host of problems. Camillo Sitte, who in 1889, in his *City Planning According to Artistic principles*, criticized the emergent traffic ridden 'open city' of the late 19th century to that of the tranquility of the medieval of Renaissance urban core. Sitte notes that, "during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, public squares were often used for practical purposes...they formed an entirety with the buildings which enclosed them. Today, they serve best as places for parking vehicles and they have no relation to the buildings which dominate them... In brief, activity is lacking precisely in those places where, in ancient times, it was most intense, near public structures (Frampton, 1992).

Carver explains that, "two qualities of successful cities give shape and definition. One is the quality of the system in the arrangement of parts within the whole. The other is the intrinsic quality of the town scape and the landscape (Carver, 1967). Both, by our present condition have been compromised. By the symbolic breaking down of the city walls, our towns and cities spread out thinner and thinner becoming what Frampton describes as, "incapable of embodying a collective human idea of the entity 'city'...and have become progressively indistinguishable from 'nature', which it continues to invade without pause" (Frampton, 2002).

The makers of American cities, as James Howard Kunstler criticizes in the *Geography of Nowhere*, had their planning wrong from the beginning saying:

*The great cities of Europe... (had an) over-arching civic consciousness with which the buildings and spaces were tied together as an organic whole, reflecting the idea of civilization as a spiritual enterprise. The American grid on the other hand was primarily concerned with the squares of private property that lay with the gradients, not with the gradients themselves, or how the two related to one another. This dictated a way of thinking about community in which private property was everything, and the public realm, namely, the streets that connected the separate pieces of private property counted for nothing (Kunstler, 1993).*

Public streets by American design by the turn of the 19th century had been fundamentally re-tooled to accommodate the motorcar, possibly the single most influential factor in the reshaping of great cities across the planet. The availability, opportunity and popularity of roadways took hold, first in the form of horse drawn transit services seen in tram-ways in Paris and London in the early 1800's and advanced by fascination and competition to the personal motorcar, first available in the late 1860's. Earlier versions had been powered by steam, electricity and peanut oil, but stock was put in diesel and petrol as the rest were cost prohibitive. Such was the beginning of the deferral to road infrastructure. By rote, building design still orients the public face of the building to the road, despite the shift in road use.

Where a road once accommodated markets, deliveries, social exchanges, protests, etc., it took on a new function: to accommodate increasing speeds of an increasing amount traffic. Why then do we face the road at all, or keep it central to urban design. It no longer services the pursuit vital public life.

Jane Jacobs is no friend of the 'auto-route city', and made it abundantly clear in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Her book was a recourse to her experience living in New York city and her study into how the integrity of the urban fabric had been mishandled and ruined. Her testimony remains still an undeniable rulebook for the practice of urban planning to generate exuberant diversity in city streets. She claims the street is the definitive axis of access to cities, suburbs and towns alike. They are the through-ways, and the feature. The stage to which all elements of a established site refer, whether we like it or not. They are how you get in, around and out. They cannot be ignored, they are here to stay. Jacobs explains, that, "It is futile to try to evade the issue of unsafe city streets by attempting to make some other features of a locality, say interior courtyards, or sheltered play spaces safe instead....no normal person can spend his life in some artificial haven, and this includes children...Everyone must use the streets" (Jacobs, 1961).

She sees the quality of street design as the primary indicator of the potential for a given neighborhood and the success of civic life. Jacobs outlines the 4 indispensable conditions to street vitality. They are as follows:

1. The district, and indeed as many of its internal parts as possible, must serve more than one primary function; preferably more than two. These must ensure the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different purposes, but who are able to use many facilities in common.
2. Most blocks must be short; that is, streets and opportunities to turn corners must be frequent.
3. The districts must mingle buildings that vary in age and condition, including a good proportion of old ones, so that they vary in the economic yield they must produce. This mingling must be fairly close grained.
4. There must be a sufficiently dense concentration of people for whatever purposes they may be there. This includes dense concentration in the case of people who are there because of residence.

In her words, "liveliness and variety attract more liveliness; deadness and monotony repel life. And this is a principle vital not only to the ways cities behave socially, but also to the ways they behave economically"(Jacobs, 1961). Biologist E.O Wilson agrees, stating, "Life of any kind is infinitely more interesting than almost any conceivable variety of inanimate matter. ...No one in their right mind looks at a pile of dead leaves in preference to the tree from which they fell (Wilson, 1996). Jacobs charges to first: foster lively and interesting streets. Second, to make the fabric of these streets as continuous a network as possible. Third, to use parks, squares and public buildings as part of this street fabric; use them to intensify and knit together the fabric's complexity and multiple use. They should not be used to island off different uses. Fourth, to emphasize the functional identity of areas large enough to work as districts, districts large enough to be counted as a force in the life of the city as a whole. People who are connected to their city district, and by great numbers are a voice to reckon with. Jacobs argues that the word "neighborhood" is harmful to city planning and has come to sound like, "a Valentine". She cautions that, "sentimentality plays with sweet intentions in place of good sense" (Jacobs, 1961). The 'ideal' of neighborhood is often projected on us, and too often we are told how to live and move around the places we inhabit. We must understand that we can take back the power to mediate and enact the type of neighborhood we wish to be apart of and build it by our collective contribution, political or otherwise. Jacobs explains that:

*a district has to be big and powerful enough to fight city hall. To be sure, fighting city hall is not a district's only function, or necessarily the most important. Nevertheless, this is a good definition of size, in functional terms because sometimes a district has to do exactly this, and also because a district lacking the power and will to fight city hall, and to win, when it's people feel deeply threatened, is unlikely to possess the power and will to contend with other serious problems. (Jacobs)*

Your place is your property and your power. We all too often forget this. Our cities should always be whirring, alive with expectation and wonder. It is the palaces, and fortresses, great parks, and markets, these attractions, that bring people to a given place for a

reason, then of course it is the people that fill it up. Life begets life. There is gravity towards it. Architecture is at the heart of great cities, where people come together and marvel at humanity. It is the eyes on the street, the hustle and flow of activity. So many of our public centers in our cities have been threatened and pushed out. We must fervently defend and negotiate between the forces of development and civic vitality. Cities are about people. How they treat people and people treat them in turn. They are the markers and exemplars for our "cities in the suburbs", our satellite communities and our towns. They need to be definite, placed, identifiable, filled with life, and model the best of Man's living 'work'.



Oma

**C**ame to the farm in the 1957. Prior to, she had spent over ten years working jobs as a house keeper and at a school for the deaf, helping her family establish themselves in Canada. They had packed up shop and moved from the Netherlands after the war in 1952. Like many Dutch emigrees, they made their best efforts in a new tongue to tie themselves to the Dutch Canadian community through local churches. It was by all extents a fresh start, many having to abandon their old lives entirely losing in the move; former credibility in training, profession, and status. Many of them settled into farm life by apprenticeships and strong community ties. In many cases, she explained, it was all but the only way to make it, exchanging labor for land or livestock. They found themselves in an old country mansion, an estate home built sometime around Canada's Confederation. She lived with her parents there and they all worked the farm together. She later nabbed a gentleman to be her beau, and brought him into the mix. Her late husband John, a former merchant in Holland, looked on a new career as landowner and dairy farmer. With the birth of 4 boys and two girls over the years, they had a busy life, making ends meet with hard work and long hours, nothing short of Dutch tradition. The house supported her and her husband, her parents, and later as one passed on, another move in, her father in law the last of his generation. Her home has never housed fewer than three generations under one roof. Her eldest son went on to manage the farm converting it to a cash crop operation, with beef cattle, fresh eggs and hay among other things to supplement. She now has over 30 grand children, some of whom live with her and her son, some of whom work on the farm this day. She recalls pulling buckets of water out of the well twenty feet from the house, hoeing her garden to no end, a baker dropped off the day's goods. They stored meats in the town freezer some 15 kilometers away. Her boys fixed up cars in the old blacksmith shop beside the house, stone chimney standing proud as the day it was finished. She loves her home, and ardently defends her position as head chef and matriarch. The farm today carries 300 acres, small by modern standards. Her kitchen is always busy, muck being dragged in, babies gurgling, a fishing program on the t.v. Her's is a simple but proud life, focused on the task at hand, fulfilling the day's chores without pause until her ankles swell demanding a strict regimen of tylenols.

## 2.2: Country

The demographic of country residents fall more or less into three categories, those that have taken stock in the land or born into it, those that have a family member in the business, and then a third folk; those persons that hail from no common discernible origin, people that are drawn there, persons of all creeds and credit that find in the country something beyond permanence and utility. A sentiment known in the bones, a relation, a balance, a whole. There is a mysterious magnetism in green fields and open country that is undeniable. There are 3 versions of the 'spirit' of the country that we can come to know: *green space*, *the farm*, and *nature*. These could be read as three conceptual variations each with successively less human intervention.

### Green Space

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Too little is known of the wonders of nature, and those too distanced from it, say in city streets, slowly lose that connection all together. We are gifted with abundant wilderness in Canada, but despite this, all too often, what we come to perceive as natural is in fact the furthest thing from it. Our manicured lawns and meticulously maintained parks, are what we have come to admire and celebrate as nature. We honor not nature *per se*, but 'nature tamed'. What else could explain the overwhelming propensity for lawn care. Ne'er a neighbor would leave their grass uncut, but risk spreading gossip like wild fire. Tidiness has become a mark of civility and respect. Disorder breeds chaos, and chaos hearkens back the days of old, when spirits lurked in dark forests, and what was unknown was feared. Snakes hiding under leaf cover, wild dogs prone to attack. We demand everything on the straight and narrow, manageable and understood, long, unobstructed views. We indeed have very little access to wild areas in our day to day, so the discredit is understandable.

Wild areas that are nearby are strictly avoided, embankments, off parkland paths, these are the hiding places of predators (human or otherwise) waiting to strike. The mystery and thrill of our parkland and green space has been all but removed by the over-handling of 'natural stock'. We add to our built space elements of 'nature', it is true of course that trees, shrubs and grass exist in nature, but psychologically and indeed ecologically they don't function to any meaningful extent. The treatment of green space is a resounding testament to our distance from nature. Too many lawns and back yards stand barren, patiently waiting a lawnmower. On a practical level, we make chores for ourselves, we fill up our weekends, we are distressed when they don't get done, and irritated by our neighbors unfailing ability to overshadow you with their green thumb. We spend enormous amounts of money on lawn care merchandise, and fuel to keep them going. Our children resent us for spoiling there sunny afternoons. Our taming of nature is also a reflection of the taming of ourselves. Again we are caught up in a human construct of what your property should look like. It is a wonder anyone partakes in this fiction at all. It is a small part in a much bigger fallacy of the people we hope we can be. We can despite our training, create wild spaces right here at home, and how much the better for it we'd be. It could breed variety and adventure into our daily lives. Biologist, E. O Wilson recalls his own childhood in the Florida pan-handle admitting, "It is a wonderful thing to grow up in southern towns where animal fables are taken half-seriously, breathing in to the adolescent mind a sense of the unknown and the possibility that something extraordinary might be found within day's walk of where you live." (Wilson, 1996).

## The Farm

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*The Glory of the farmer is that, in the division of labors, it is his part to create. All trade rests at last on his primitive activity. He stands close to Nature, he obtains from the earth, the bread and the meat. The food which was not, he causes to be. The first farmer was the first man, and all historic nobility rests on possession and use of land. Men do not like hard work, but every man has an exceptional respect for tillage, and a feeling that this is the original calling of his race....And the profession has in all eyes its ancient charm, as standing nearest to God...*

Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay of *Farming*

The face of agriculture has changed dramatically since the time of Emerson's writing. The bucolic idealism that went with it has been marred as well. But, if agriculture is to be revered in our current day, and I believe it should be, we are all complicit in how our farm industry is managed. Where Jefferson's "cultivators of the earth" were once the pillar and post of the American West, farming has become one of the few businesses that offer the unique experience of buying product at retail and selling it back at wholesale. Never has there been a market to match such unpredictably. Farmers are truly working against odds. Fluctuations in grain and livestock prices are so dramatic that there ain't much use of a broker to manage their accounts. The separation of producer and consumer in the grain market for instance is so divided that no meaningful discussion emerges from their meeting. Farmers today as producers are experts in putting seeds in the ground and making them grow profitably. Consumers on the other hand, can't see the corn for the soda. Farmer's markets are likely the closest thing we have for farm to table options and can bring the average person in closer contact to the idea of 'living off the land' through conversation with the farmer themselves (if they indeed sell their own produce), but on the whole, the staging of traditional market space, and the demonstration of 'natural living', seems a meager and transient relationship at best. The dream of the New World was to unite society and agriculture in mutual respect. This was explicitly stated in Jefferson's address to Congress and heard through to Wright's Living City in Broadacre. The farmer

has since been alienated further from society by advances in industrial and technological processes, to the point that their product and their target market is undefined. Society, despite being physically surrounded by agriculture, particularly in Canada, doesn't see half of the produce find it's way directly to grocery shelves, nor do they have a pressing interest to engage the farmer, or participate in cultivation.

The farmers I've met, despite their thankless troublesome jobs are some of the kindest, self-less persons you can find. *Salt of the Earth* they say. We need engage farmers directly as individuals and as a system, to open up conversations of the kinds of foods and products we desire, need and can source, and open up a secondary direct market for farmers to find revenue. Too many farms are forced into producing crops they don't manage directly, in such great quantities and for unknown ends. By the unpredictability of the markets, the only option for farmers is simply to grow more (and from a lessening variety). This in turn pushes our forests and wild spaces closer to extinction and demands greater inputs of fuel and machinery. Agriculture as a result has become widely recognized as one of the greatest contributors to carbon emissions. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report estimated that agriculture alone accounts for about 10-12% of global greenhouse-gas emissions, and emissions from this sector are expected to rise by up to half again by 2030. Agriculturally-induced change in land use, such as deforestation, overgrazing, and conversion of pasture to arable land, presently accounts for a further 6-17% of global greenhouse-gas emissions. (Friel et al., 2009). No, farming ain't what it used to be. We must take back farming for local markets, ennoble farmers in their work by diversifying opportunity, actively take part in the management of our land by engaging farming directly, and do our best to limit the land devoted for human consumption and preserved by our best efforts Nature in a natural state.

## (Real) Nature

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*Standing on the bare ground, my head bathed in the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space, all mean egoism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball. I am nothing. I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulates through me; I am part and parcel with God.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*

Man has always danced around his position in nature, largely to blame by the self-aggrandizing influence of religion. As masters or stewards of the earth, we could claim dominion over it, and thereby the closest popular theory got to 'living naturally', was the agrarian version, one of cultivation. There is of course a natural world that exists beyond us. This seems like an obvious thing to mention but we are all too ready to ignore it.

We have knowledge of an earthly system that churns and turns beneath us. It is fiercely studied, published and stacked on the shelves of our university libraries. Everything from the quarks and leptons of quantum physics to behavioral patterning of the common water rat. Our study into nature could be read as merely another human probe for the benefit of resource management. But despite our best efforts, it is safe to posit, that we will never fully understand the depth of complexity of the ecosystem that we are a part of and at our present 'rate of living' it's likely we will never have the chance.

There are two streams of thought regarding man's position in nature, as described by biologist and author E.O Wilson in his book *In Search of Nature*:

1. Exceptionalism - That mankind stands apart from nature, has the capacity to predict and prepare for conflict, and can think itself out of present or pending catastrophe.
2. Environmentalism - that mankind exists within nature, and is a part of an ecosystem, and its actions and reactions can influence the course of that ecosystem to a greater or lesser degree.

He offers up a description of *humans in nature* as they once were stating plainly:

*The brain evolved into its present form over a period of about 2 million years, from the time of Homo Habilis to the late Stone Age of Homo sapiens, during which time people existed in hunter-gatherer bands in intimate contact with the natural environment. Snakes mattered. The smell of water, the hum of bees, the directional bend of a plant stalk mattered. The naturalist's trance was adaptive: the glimpse of one small animal hidden in the grass could make the difference between eating and going hungry in the evening. And a sweet sense of horror, the shivery fascination with monsters and creeping forms that so delights us today ...could keep you alive until the next morning.*

Because it is so hard to find in our 'built space', the 'authentic natural world' can only be appreciated by plunking yourself down in it, walking off the trail and straight into unknown territory, no compass, no provisions, no clothes. Shed your creature comforts and go back-woods camping as far from the human establishment as you can manage, laboring to get yourself out there. The more strain the better. Give it a couple days and you'll start to get it. The desperation in nature, the anxiety, you come to grips with your own mortality, and when and if you do, you start to see the beauty. This is what Heidegger was touching on, his so called "Dasein", or authentic living. You begin to dwell, when you have no-where to go, and nothing to do, but sit and witness the natural world struggle for survival before your very eyes, outside of time and place. As Emerson suggested it might, "all mean egoism disappears..I (you) am (are) part and parcel with God." Suddenly, all you fancy, your worries and ambitions disappear, and you are left with a reflection of how the earth operates without you, by *absolute necessity* and with a graceful *beauty*. Real nature should be close at hand, to disappear into for a time and return anew. It is the quiet workings of the earth that puts us face to face with our mortality.

The 'world', that collection of human artifice, struggles to do this for us, and in most cases it fails. Both social and public life, any engagement in fact, with the 'world' is a ringing and constant comparison of how alive we are. It is in nature that we find a space of contemplation, Arend's *vita contemplativa*, distinct and separate from all else. A place to commune in confidence with the cosmos. If town is the place to come alive, nature is the place for it to die. And to live and die daily, there is no greater gift.



Jan

Moved to Barrhaven in 1998 from middle Quebec with her parents. Her mother was a hospital administrator, her father a funeral director. Her dad has since passed on and she sees her mother these days at a retirement home nearby. Jan commutes to Merrickville forty minutes away to sell hats and her hubby travels to Stittsville for work, a thirty minute journey one way. Her daughter and son-in-law recently married, and recently moved back in with her, waiting to find a place of their own. He is an electrical apprentice, and her daughter works at a hair salon in town. They are looking for a house in the range of \$250,000-\$275,000. Jan is encouraging patience in the decision, remarking that with the extra \$25,000 you get a lot more. Jan is in and around fifty, and likes to stay in when she has the chance. She works four days a week as her Sundays fill up with regular participation in their local Pentecostal church. Her mother lives next door to the church filling up her Sunday's further. Her home backs onto Greenbank Avenue, a 70km/hr road currently four lanes and widening. A train crossing sits a stone's throw away. The train now slows to 10km/hr when passing after a recent collision that killed five people and injured a dozen. To boot, the crossing gates recently failed and failed again prompting the city to park two service vehicles at each crossing to make sure everything goes smoothly. She thought, when they first bought the place, as she did at her cabin up north, that the train would feel like it was running through her living room, but after the first few days after moving here she didn't even notice it. She lives in a cul-de-sac off Henfield Road in a house built in the 1980's. Her's is one of about five in the cul-de-sac built by the same builder, all in more or less the same two storey, brick clad, *Neo-Gothic-ish* style. She explains the city is widening the road to accommodate a higher volume of traffic and running it through a tunnel beneath the rail line to eliminate future incident. Such traffic doesn't bother her so. She has a wide lawn granted by the cul-de-sac despite her pool, and a mature hedge to drown out the din. She loves it here. As we are speaking a young mother scampers alongside her boy on a bike. Jan is all smiles and brimming with neighborliness. She reveals more than I ask after. Her hair is cut short with long bangs drawn to the side of her face, portions dyed in the fashion of today. She is 5', 6", full figure, jeans and a light jacket for a nine degree day. She was out walking on a Friday afternoon to stretch her legs and get out of the house.

## 2.3: Town-Country

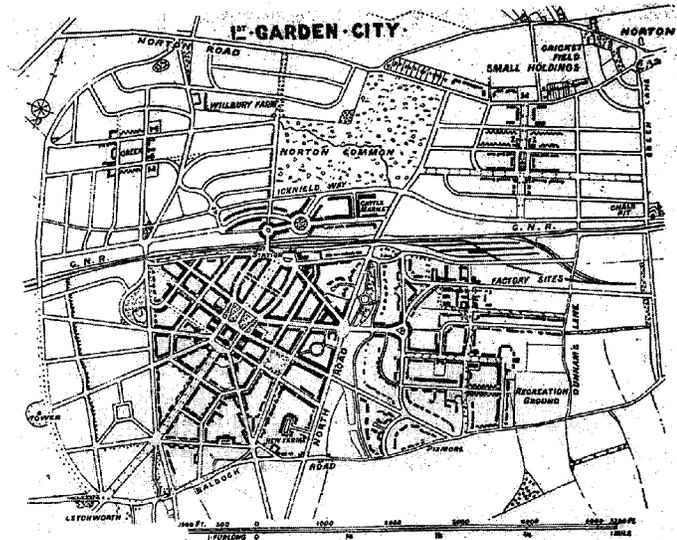


Illustration 2: Master Plan of *Letchworth Garden City*, Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, (1904)

*The uncorrupted behavior which we admire in animals and in young children belongs to him, to the hunter, the sailor - the man who lives in the presence of Nature. Cities force growth and make men talkative and entertaining, but they make them artificial.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Unquestionably, the dominant image motivating suburban planners has been that of a lost and much beloved earlier age. They found their models for the future in the small towns of the past. At their purest, they longed to return to the innocence, simplicity, and aesthetic appeal of the small town while still retaining the economic and technological benefits of urban life. In so doing, they put themselves in a paradox as; they carefully sought to prevent change while garnering its benefits. Such ambiguity in the vision of suburban design could explain its ill resolve. No time has been wasted in seizing the opportunity of this popular trend in England and America, who waged a friendly competition in the making of the 'Garden City movement'. Indeed Chicago, IL and Christchurch NZ, among others preceded English "Garden Cities", at least in title.

Joseph Arnold reminds us in his book, *The New Deal in the Suburbs*, "as long as mankind has been building cities, wealthy families have been escaping the resultant dangers and discomforts" of the city... Suburban estates surrounded the Sumerian city of Ur, Imperial Rome, Renaissance Florence and Elizabethan London (Arnold, 1971). By the 1820's American real estate firms were advertising suburban houses for middle-class incomes. Indeed the earliest suburbs were reserved for those who could afford it. Nineteenth-century architects and planners, among them, Alexander Jackson Davis, who devised a decadent suburban plan in *Llewellyn Park*, 1853, in the burroughs of New Jersey, serviced by both a ferry and steam rail-car (Arnold, 1971). Similar suburbs were sculpted around New York City in *Terrytown* and *New Rochelle*, outside of Philadelphia in *Swathmore*, *Villanove* and *Radnor* along the Pennsylvania main line. Boston had 83 commuter stations outside of the city by 1850. Chicago saw the development of over a 100 new "communities" by 1873 (Arnold, 1971). *Riverside* in 1869, was a suburban layout drafted by Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux's, of *Central Park* fame in 1858 (Carver, 1967). A large public park as landscape was quite a novelty and nothing like it existed before in America. Previously, English parks had set the standard by a lineage of men including William Kent, Capability Brown, Udevale Price and Humphrey Repton starting in the early 1700's. The 'scene' of the Neoclassical country house set within an irregular landscape, was derived from such 'caretakers' as Capability Brown and Uvedale Price, partners in undying imagination for the estates of the British aristocracy. They made famous sprawling, ostentatious, landscaped grounds, staging surreal "vistas" for an 'augmented and romantic experience of nature' (Harbison,1991). By the 1800's, the *English Parks Movement* sought to project the "landscaped county estate into the city" (Carver, 1967). Humphrey with architect John Nash, laid out *Regent's Park* (1812-1827), and later *St. James Park* in London. It wasn't long before 'augmented' living was available to even lower classes. This sort of landscape became a cultural necessity, and it was not far to the conception of residential enclaves in park-like settings"(Carver, 1967).

American architects and planners left less room for poetry in their schemes and focused from the outset to prepare the suburbs for droves working class people. *Riverside* was linked to downtown Chicago by a railway, and later in 1882, by a steam-powered cable-car. Here nearing the end of the 19th century, we recognize the transition of idyllic fancy for the elite, to ideal utopias for the working class, and truly at the time, this was moving further from dream-scape to reality in answering the call of a housing crisis.

The 'ideal town', found earlier in the socialist-industrial works of Le Duc, Fourier and Godin, had crossed the pond from France, once to try the hand of Americans like Robert Owen at *New Harmony* in Indiana, and back again landing in the hands of the British. The chocolate entrepreneur George Cadbury followed suit at *Bournville* in Birmingham in 1879 and legendary soap manufacturer W.H Lever at *Port Sunlight* near Liverpool (Frampton, 1992). Beyond accommodating the laboring masses, the matrix of squares and streets found in the cities at the time were no longer suitable for the needs of a growing urban middle class. No longer satisfied with the scale and texture of the occasional green square-delimited on all sides by streets and continuous terrace.

Horse-drawn car in the 1830's developed into the horse drawn omnibus and later more efficient designs represented the first mass transit found in the rail-car. Horse drawn suburbs handled more immediate residential areas, while the railroad suburbs were even further out. Transportation was segregating economic classes into different residential areas where the poor were confined close to the urban core and the wealthy had the means to afford residence further afield. (Christensen, 1986). It was the class divide that brought the *Garden City* movement up to speed and it was from this point, and his own experience watching Chicago rebuild on a blank slate after the *Great Fire*, that Ebenezer Howard's plan for *Rurisville* came to be.

Kenneth Frampton explains, "the *Garden City* visions can by no means be detached

from the early English Gothic revival in the 19th century, whence came the work of A.W.N Pugin and his essay *Contrasts* in 1836" (Frampton, 1992). This led the way to other socialist thinkers, reacting to the harsh realities of the modern world seen charging forth at unrestrained speeds. The philosophy of Pugin and Ruskin was readily adopted by a new generation of craft-oriented academics. But from craft work, Morris became increasingly diverted to more public and political concerns. This motion was precipitated by his interest in the works of Karl Marx, thenceforth his own philosophy and writing took on a socialist agenda. 1885 saw Morris' essay *How We Live and How We Might Live*, and then his "Utopian romance" *News From Nowhere*. Frampton explains, "above all there was his Utopian vision of 'Nowhere', a land where the state had withered away according to Marxist prophecy and where all distinction between town and country had disappeared". Further, "there was within Morris' theory and practice the ameliorative suggestion of the garden city as a form of settlement to be based on the craft guild or cooperative, as a means for achieving not only work, but also evolutionary social reform and re-education..." (Frampton, 1992).

F.J Osborn, a colleague of Howard's through the Garden City projects, attests to Howard's motivation in the preface of *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Reform*:

*Bellamy's Looking Backward, could be the seminal works to which Howard roused his charge. It's two basic assumptions, that technological advance could emancipate men from degrading toil, and that men are inherently cooperative and egalitarian. Howard's own outlook possessed the same esprit, in which there was no proletarian resentment or class bitterness, and not a trace of nostalgic anti-urbanism, anti-industrialism, or back-to-the-land-ism.*

Osborn goes on to list the essential elements of the plan.: moderate-sized industrial and trading towns in close contact with a surrounding agricultural countryside, each a healthy, well-equipped and coherent community; zoning of area within each town for ready access between homes, workplaces, shops, cultural centers; limitation of density to safeguard light, gardens and recreation space, civic design aiming at harmony rather than

standardization; and unified site-ownership coupled with leaseholds, reconciling public interest with freedom of choice and enterprise (Howard, 2003).

Frampton framed Howard's vision as, "social policy combined urban dispersal with rural colonization and decentralized government. As a complement to the cooperative movement, propelled by the Arts and Crafts movement, it advocated that such a city should service its revenue from a balanced combination of industry and agriculture. He postulated trade union backing for the financing of housing, co-operative ownership of land, and comprehensive planning. It was to be restricted from further growth by an isolating green belt. . Howard was committed to free enterprise within the limits of social control..." (Frampton, 1992).

The distinguishing feature from earlier plans was that 'Rurisville' was intended to be an independent, self-sustaining city unto its own production little beyond its needs, His vision for the satellite city was meant to be simply, a city in a garden. Each would be 6000 acres of which only 1000 acres would be used for a town of 32,000 people complete with its own industries, shops and institutions. 5,500 building lots averaging 20 by 130 feet showed the intent of the city standard in a garden, not a glorified village. By Howard's testament, the Garden city was meant to be no more than a schematic. Like other Utopian plans before him, it was laid out as a circle. Radiating boulevards from its center divided the city into 6 wards or neighborhoods. At its center was a group of public buildings including a town hall, theatre and library, enclosing a small park. Surrounding this center was a 'crystal palace' galleria, shopping center and winter garden. A larger park encircles this center. The six wards face inwards to an open space 420 feet wide. Within these belts of parkland, six four-acre sites are reserved for schools and their playgrounds and gardens without other sites reserved for buildings of religious significance. The factories and workshops are laid out around the circumference and served by a ring railway. This rail line was the clear demarcation for the growth boundary. Workers would look out over the produc

-tive farm and orchard land, contributing to the esteem of the workplace and the tying of industry to agriculture, or could be potentially read as a symbolic gesture tying the modern world back to Nature. The plan has residents looking first inward to their social institutions and while the plan indeed embraces both town and country, it holds together as a "centripetal community" (Carver, 1971) Each city was to be regionally located as a satellite settlement and linked to a major center by means of a railway. The rail line however, was reserved for objects rather than men, under the assumption that all needs would be met in the city proper, and no journey to work would be necessary.

Howard's aims speaks to the holistic, less Utopian vision for the Garden city. While Howard admitted his plans only schematics, it was clear he thought the plan feasible, and so pursued them. They were incorporated into the layout of the first garden city, Letchworth in Hertfordshire (begun in 1903), planned by engineer Raymond Unwin and colleague Barry Parker.

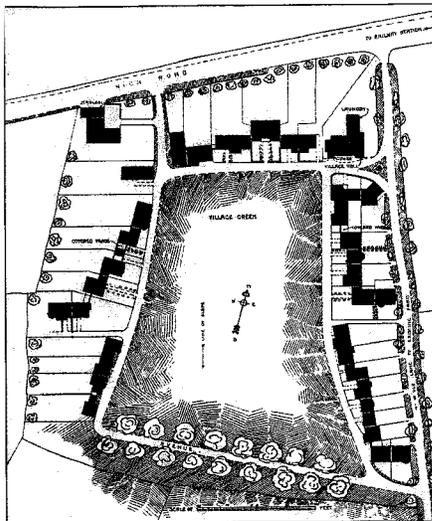


Illustration 3: Idealised village green, Raymond Unwin, for an unidentified site, published in the *The Art of Building a Home* (1903)

These imaginary, irregular towns took hold on the western world in full force. Unwin showed that vast amounts of money had been wasted in duplicating unnecessary street and in robbing people of garden space, under the false notion that crowding houses together would reduce their costs: he thus documented that standard of twelve houses per acre which he had introduced into Letchworth. Unwin in *Cottage Plans and Common Sense* (1902) and later *Nothing Gain by Overcrowding* (1912), Unwin outlines his "quad-rangle" building lots with no more than 12 houses/acre. At the periphery were co-operative dwellings, between 2, 4, or 6 families in each (See Illustration). The cottages were modest, around 506 ft/sq, but in Unwin's words, "the essential thing is that every house should turn its face to the sun, whence come light, sweetness and health" (Unwin, 1919). The domestic interiors were to meet all necessary requirements, with furniture fit into the plan. Each cottage would opened onto a shared village green, divided into gardens or lawn. Unwin did away with "that wretched prefix back", claiming their only end is the "accumulation of litter..where it finds a resting place to rot, instead of being promptly disposed of" (Unwin, 1919). Cottages shared hot baths and laundry and each arrangement a communal center. Wide avenues for "glimpses of open country from all parts of town", and an overall civic design so that everybody could have the fullest life possible (Unwin, 1919).

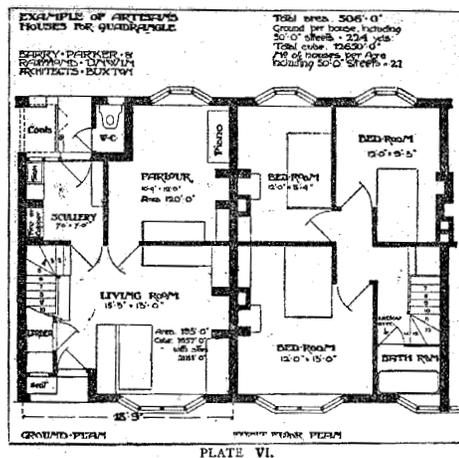


Illustration 4: Typical Cottage Layout, Raymond Unwin, From *Cottage Plans and Common Sense*



Illustration 5: Plans for New Earswick suburb, Raymond Unwin, from *Nothing Gain by Overcrowding*, 1912

The *First Garden City Limited*, quickly acquired a site in the rural area of Hertfordshire, 34 miles from London, which was to become *Letchworth*, the first garden city in 1903, followed by the sister city *Welwyn* in 1914 only 21 miles from London. The greenbelts that surrounded the two cities have been incorporated in larger belts through national planning policies. Today, *Welwyn* is home to 43,000 residents and *Letchworth*, 33,600 people. The planning policies limiting the growth of these cities have apparently been effective (Carver, 1962). Such was Unwin's design, he was explicit in this saying:

*It is not fair to borrow of the future and build for the present only. It is not enough for a municipal authority to copy the house and arrangement which satisfies the average builder or speculator. Only the very best that is known and can be devised to-day is likely to stand the test of time; and this must be based upon the permanent and essential conditions of life and health, not on passing fashions or conventions established by the speculative builder (Unwin, 1919).*

The shortcomings of a collective agenda in an individual's world were starting to show. Later, the *Hampstead Garden Suburb* in 1907, by Frampton's analysis, was read as a testament to, 'Unwin's failure to resolve this implacable dichotomy, that is to reconcile medieval nostalgia with bureaucratic control (Frampton, 1992). Howard I'm sure, forever gentlemanly, would have defended Unwin ardently, reminding his own *Garden City* was only a schematic.

The two major shifts have occurred since the time of Howard's writing: slum housing is not what it used to be and has been more or less abated in our major cities in Canada, and while there still exists a general rural exodus of young people lost to these same cities, the rural housing issue is less a concern, and the opportunities for gainful employment in the country districts has improved. The greatest problem of the 21st century is not 'how to house the people', it is how to keep the people living to a standard they have become accustomed to. I call it a problem, not an issue, of course, because, like Howard's time, it demands immediate attention. Unlike Howard's luxury of *carte- blanche* building, today

it is imperative that we work with the infrastructure we have in place, and improve upon it. One of the best virtues of the *Garden City* design, is the strict boundaries placed upon them for growth. A physical line defined by the outer ring-railway proposed for each settlement, asserted as finite and permanent. By strict policy, and a board of members committed to the cause by local government, the city would neither grow nor recede in number nor prosperity. This is where our philosophy for town planning has failed us today. Our cities today are combustion engines, not grandfather clocks, needing constant inputs to stay alive.

## Maria



**P**edals through an intersection of the agricultural park between Baseline and Carling. Dressed for the cool wind with wind breaker, thick pants and hobo-gloves, helmet on head. She advised my squeaky brake situation, indicating that my brake pads are too high and rubbing the tire. Later confirmed by help of an *Allen key*. Clearly a veteran biker. She has lived in Canada for twelve years and stays among other reasons because of the bike network in Ottawa. She was returning from a visit with her friend in "the projects", and biking to her home downtown. She moved from Iran and was aloft on these 30km roads, a look of relief on her face, eyes smiling out, chuckles in every syllable. Maria is late thirties, alive.

## 2.4: Other Stories of No-where

-

*Through his images of the future, we come to know man, who he is and how he wishes to be, what his thoughts are, what he values most highly, what he thinks is worth striving for, and whether he thinks it is attainable....Certain types of men hold certain types of visions, subject to their temper and spirit; tell me what your vision of the future is and I will tell you what you are.*

(Frederick Polak from his *Future of Man* in 1971)

Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, of 1492, has become a standard reference for architectural discourse from Ledoux at Chaux, Fourier's phalanstère, Godin's Familistère in Guise, and Robert Owen's New Harmony, Indiana. *Utopia* is a recurring and impending theme and it's of interest to draw out similarities in each proposal to More's original text. His utopia was staged on a crescent shaped island, 200 miles long, with a harbor nestled in the center. 4 cities were built to a more or less standard design, that were situated at least 24 miles from the nearest neighbor, close enough that a man could not reach it in one day by foot. The cities would contain no more than 6000 people each with no inclination to increase the size of town for the people considered themselves more as tenants, less landlords. The buildings in the cities as written by More, "are so uniform that a whole side of a street looks like one house... and the houses carry great quantities of glass"(Carver, 1971). The Utopians, and of many different interpretations, were staunch socialists of perhaps collective capitalists and as part of their daily affairs involved themselves in common activity: for dinner in a common hall, for festivity and celebration, for general meeting and otherwise (Carver, 1971). The jurisdiction of every city extends at least twenty miles, which is enormous by real-world standards, and "where they had much more ground...they built, over all the country, farmhouses for husbandmen, which are well contrived, and furnished with all things necessary for country labor". Inhabitants are sent, by turns, from the cities to dwell in them (Carver, 1971). By More's influence, the Utopian model became widely accepted and perpetuated as a collection of finite cities, that honored (and often mandated) social

engagement, where no property was wholly your own, your time in effect was not your own, your children in fact were not your own. Transit was by your own two feet. Economy was self-sustaining, public, and circular, there was effectively no growth. Labor and Work, Town and County were shared and swapped.

Utopia from Greek means both *no place*, and *good place*, the former defining it as foolish and unattainable. The latter has been Utopia's real contribution to society as an aspiration concerned with improvement not perfection (Christensen, 1987). Every utopia devised since and including More's is an implicit criticism of the civilization that serves as its background. Lewis Mumford explained that, "each (vision) is an attempt to uncover potentialities that existing institutions have either ignored or buried under an ancient crust of custom and habit" (Christensen, 1987). J. P. Godin's *Familistère*, for example, was a complex that comprised his factories and three residential blocks that shared a crèche, a kindergarten, a theatre, a great hall, schools, public baths and a laundry among other amenities. The world Godin hoped to improve must not have honored its children in cleanliness and respectability, nor offered access to entertainment for the working public, and it seems no ready access to laundry and baths. Other plans from the early and mid 18th century found in Ledoux's *Salt Works at Chaux*, Fourier's *Phalanstère*, Robert Owen's *New Harmony* and a host of other examples in industrial England and America all to some degree acted as examples of social housing and esteemed collective life for workers as a model of social reform. These plans addressed those issues pertinent and temporal, namely the living conditions, and the relationship of man and his work. Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (1848) advocated, "the gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country by a more equitable distribution of the population over the land", planning wrapped up in radical social reform" (Frampton, 1992). For better or for worse, social reform has direct effects on how Man settles on the earth.

**Andy**

**C**urses, "that cars really only have a use when you can go fast in them." He squeezes his blistering and cracked vinyl steering wheel in angst and regret. Regret most lucidly, for not turning left onto Riverside instead of crossing the \*\*\*\*ing bridge.

#### 2.4: Other Stories of Somewhere: *New Towns and the Frontier*

*The 'American anti-city' consensus is an unbroken tradition of ambivalence towards the city extending from Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright and Lewis Mumford.*

Morton and Lucia White, *the Intellectual and the City*

The *Garden City* model fit well within the American mindset. *Radburn*, New Jersey, 1929, and the Levittown projects in New York and Pennsylvania after WWII, were clear indicators of what Morton and Lucia White called a long tradition of distrust of the city in America (White and White, 1977). The transition from *Radburn* to *Levittown* is a striking one, and speaks loudly of the shifting system of values in the American population. Where *Radburn* celebrated the quaintness and quiet of garden suburb precedents developed in the bloom of the 1920's, *Levittown* in contrast, was an unrestrained precursor to rising machine-standard production of the 'roaring' 40's. America of course was desperate at the time to bring soldiers home to a home, and perhaps can be forgiven they didn't anticipate the lasting and indelible effects the 'Levittown standard' had on the building industry. *Levittown* was an icon of what branded, commercial standardized capitalism could offer. After the ribbon cutting at *Levittown*, New York, some 1400 homes were sold in the first three hours (Christensen, 1987). While London's garden suburbs were digging in, their American counterparts were investing and testing their native context while discovering the prolific implications for a bull market. One that pushed exploitation of labor, production to the limit. What we have today, by contrast is something of a measured balance of both; the curvilinear quiet streets of *Radburn* housed in dreary monotony.

Clarence Perry brought the sentiments and sensibilities of the *Garden City* scheme at *Letchworth* back to the U.S in the 1920's. His was the first definitive description of a completely self-contained community with a surrounding urbanized territory, a community of 5000 people on an area of 160 acres.

His model plan was based on 4 general principles as follows:

1. An elementary school should provide the focus of each neighborhood, the school being designed for general community uses as well as for children. At a housing density of about ten families to the acre the school would be accessible to about one thousand children without any having to walk too far.
2. Interior streets of the neighborhood should not be attractive to through traffic but useful only for reaching the school, churches, and community park at the heart of the neighborhood. Each neighborhood unit would be separated from the surrounding city by the main traffic streets and the organizing principle of roads (arterial, collector, local, cul de sac)
3. Shops and apartments should be at the outside corners of the neighborhood area where the main intersections and heaviest traffic are found.
4. 10 per cent of the land should be reserved for parks and recreation.

One can easily recognize Perry's lasting influence in our suburbs today. Enter Clarence Stein, an American architect of the ilk of Lewis Mumford, Stuart Chase and others that formed the *Regional Plan Association of America* (Christensen, 1987). Stein was an advocate of the *Garden City* theory, but found it difficult to translate the same spirit into an American context. Perry anticipated that North American cities would most likely grow gradually, and not by Howard's satellite cities, likely based on the increasing popularity of the personal motorcar. He sought to accept the new phenomenon instead of banish it to the boundaries. (Christensen, 1987). Stein designed *Radburn* with Henry Wright, for a New Jersey suburb in 1929. *Radburn* differed from the classic garden city in several ways, namely, that common public landholding was rejected in favor of individual ownership (Carver, 1967). Stein's plan was to accommodate 25,000 people, and before the financial ruin of the 1930's, managed to make clear some notable, central and aspiring qualities of community and the building of them. It was a plan for a town turned outside in, with living and sleeping rooms faced towards gardens and parks, and service rooms faced towards streets. It is a town in which roads and parks "fit together like the fingers of your right and left hand" (Carver, 1971). One of Stein's most noteworthy books, *New Towns for America*, attributes the idea of "the house turned around" to his colleague Henry Wright and recalls

Wright's own recollection as a young man in Ireland:

*Passing through an archway in a blank house wall on the street, to a beautiful villa fronting upon spacious interior gardens. That archway was a passage to new ideas. The privacy of the home looks out upon the landscape, the garden is a place of social enjoyment, not a place shut away from view (Stein, 1957).*

*Radburn* could be called one of the last great attempts at bringing the garden suburbs to life. *Radburn* was effectively stopped in its tracks in 1929 with the collapse of the stock market. This period of inactivity could likely account for the gradual abolition of meaningful places in the minds of city planners. Both the intent and the idea of the city and its suburbs were indeed changing and under significant social and financial strain, and by the by the allure and mystique of the garden suburbs was to be all but forgotten. What emerged was a standard of building that has been difficult to ignore and resist. When the automobile entered the scene it became, in Leo Marx's, "machine in the garden" and henceforth made a mockery of the suburban ideal. Afterward, all the elements that had gone into creating "an illusion of dreamy timelessness: the rambling wooded streets, the fanciful houses with their storybook turrets and towers, the deep lawns and elaborate gardens - were unmasked as mere stagecraft" (Kunstler, 1993).

F.L Wright heralded in the *Living City*, "the road is a symbol of individual freedom. Cars aren't simply contemporary or modern, they represent democracy itself... Such freedom would certainly lead to even distribution over the land." (Huxtable, 2004)) Such vapid exaggeration in Wright's phrasing hints at the staggering of the *Garden City Movement*. Wright foreshadowed the disappointment of suburban development long before it started failing. It is the fate of any suffering theory to fall back into the hands of idealism. The "machine in the garden", in Leo Marx's phrasing, confirmed the undeniable obsession with personal automation that glorified and revered the road in a new sacred light. So much so, the intellectual couldn't resist its powers. Both idealists, Le Corbusier and Wright while they didn't agree on much else, were both fervent auto-philies. In each of their Utopian

schemes, *La Ville Radieuse* and *Broadacre*, vehicular traffic was core to the plan. Wright had expressed some of his ideas in *The Disappearing City*, published in 1932, in which he took a stand against traditional urban congestion in favor of, "a semi-rural, decentralized society in which every individual would have an acre of land to own and farm, and the unit of construction would be the single-family house" (Frampton, 1992).

Le Corbusier's vision on the other hand, answered what he saw as the problem of the *Town Country* model, ideas raised out of a romantic and dainty scale. Le Corbusier scorned the family home in his *The Home of Man*, referring to the, "universal waste land of garden cities", and "the easy hypnosis of satellite towns" (Carver, 1971). The suburbs he argued would drain the metropolitan center leaving "the ancient city empty." Le Corbusier endorsed the metropolis as a vertical city; more efficient in the allocation of space and incost and resources than the reigning suburban trend. One can't forget the influence of the *Narkomfin* project drafted by Moisei Ginzburg and his team behind Le Corbusier's theory. The *Narkomfin*, was a *tour-de-force* architecture for social housing. The complex was completed in 1932 and was internationally revered by architectural critics as a Modernist wonder. Le Corbusier famously visited the building and similarities between it and his own *Unité d'Habitation*, 20 years later cannot be denied. The design was a multi-storey residential complex, with a double-loaded corridor that ran the center servicing apartments on either side. Private quarters were basic but respectable leaving only enough space for *existence-minimum* living to borrow from "Grete" Schütte-Lihotzky' *Frankfurt Kitchen* at Ernst May's *Neue Frankfurt*, 1926. Laundry and hot baths of the *Narkomfin* were shared, the apartments were modest, and large common areas and an internal esplanade would connect inhabitants and enable chance, informal encounters as part of the 'social condenser' experiment. The *Narkomfin* unfortunately met with a short celebration, and fell out of favor with the rise of the *Stalinist* regime.

Le Corbusier's utopia was perhaps too lofty or ill timed as well. Had he made more friends and tucked away his conceit, more of his genius could have been incorporated into the building up of the world today. While his only suggestion in dealing with the suburbs was to wipe the slate clean and start anew, his influence in founding the principles of strong, core, civic design can't be denied. Le Corbusier, "returns to the ancient and intimate facts of the city: to man, woman, and child on their feet"(Carver, 1971).

Wright in juxtaposition, argues that, "Man would be a fool to live in a rented city, surrounded by politicians who are 'promise merchants': and lawyers who are parasites. The American rebels against the city" (Wright, 1958). Wright's Broadacre is suburban sprawl *par excellence*. It is a plan, of course, based on the mobility of the "Usonian" in his car (Huxtable, 2004).

Wright's pursuit of the American frontier, was naturally inspired by his youth working to exhaustion on his uncle's farm in the summers, "piling tired on tired", but this nonetheless started a love affair with the American prairie. He admits, in the *Living City*, "every inch of height there on the prairie was exaggerated. All breadths fell short. So in breadth, length, height and weight, these buildings belonged to the prairie just as the human being himself belonged to it (Wright,1958). No doubt encouraged in his romanticism from his time with Louis Sullivan at the birth of his career, it's ironic to note, that despite such proximity to *the tall building artistically considered*, why later he so ardently refused the city as a way of life. Could the bad blood between him and Sullivan be blamed? Had they parted on more amicable terms, the world might not have been crippled by such low density sprawl. Of course, Wright can't be fingered exclusively. The rise of the single family home came long before him. No doubt, the single detached dwelling has remained an icon in living standards through history. They represented physical claims to land and title. They were objects of freedom and democracy, those pinnacles of human pursuit. It is not for this thesis to discredit the ambition for private home ownership, but no justification can

be made for its dominion over our built space. This building unit and the plan it fits within has been long proven to disrupt and displace public space. Where private dwellings were once haphazardly built in reference to the *res publica*, they are now haphazardly built in reference only to themselves. The shoddiness of the private realm historically was excusable as significance and care was paid to the public edifice at its core, nobody cared what they looked like. By Wright's forecast, "Broad acre... would haphazardly built itself" This denotes a clear shift from the Medieval condition, where building of homes for biological gain was a mere activity in a greater system. Wright's Broad-acre was a system in itself.

Did Wright wish to do away with the public altogether? His efforts, in "de-constructing the box" suggested otherwise. His placed of the hearth as central to the home, standing proud to welcome in the public reveals his commitment to securing public space within the private realm. If it were these qualities that were carbon copied, cut and pasted into the millions of ranch style bungalows and split-levels that we have created since, there would be less of a cause for concern. However, the welcoming of an open foyer, the honor bestowed on the public by grand entrance, and the direct connection to the hearth have been all but removed in the standard middle income home. And indeed, even if included these design features couldn't enable the same function, the t.v's too loud. Public space implies that all are welcome and welcome to act and say what they please. You would be hard pressed to find a willing homeowner to act as test subject.

Wright and Corbusier, were each fierce evangelists of different worlds to be. One the vertical line, the other the horizontal. One recalls Adolph Loos in his essay *Ornament and Crime* in 1908 provoking, "the first ornament invented, the cross, was of erotic origin. The first work of art, the first artistic act, which the first artist scrawled on the wall to give its exuberance vent. A horizontal line: the woman. A vertical line: the man penetrating her" (Loos, 1908). How near Loos was to describing each man, Wright in his hopeless romance with his women of three marriages, and Corb to his self love, not to mention his keeping ready company with prostitutes.

The world in the end treated eroticism as it does Utopian vision, with resistance and denial. What emerged as the city form, was something nearer to their intersection, as Frampton describes, "the high rise downtown and the low-rise suburb became the signature format for urban expansion in America" (Frampton, 1992). Loos could be interpreted as giving metaphor to Man's exploitation of Nature, triumph of the *homo faber* as vertical and, over the *animal laborans* as horizontal. While the quote doesn't imply good feelings necessarily, the birth of the suburbs could be seen as a conjugal meeting of the vertical and horizontal. Indeed, the suburbs have long been treated as a fresh start.

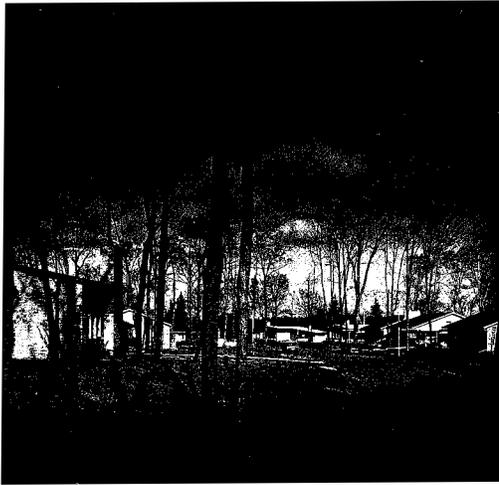


Illustration 6: The results of Broad acre - photo by Max Fleet, *Cities in the Suburbs*, pg.97

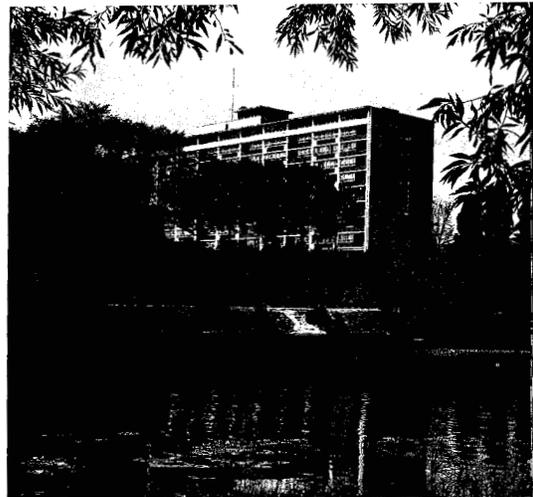


Illustration 7: The results of Ville Radieuse - photo by Bill Lingard, *Cities in the Suburbs*, p. 98

### Illustrative Interlude

Illustration 8

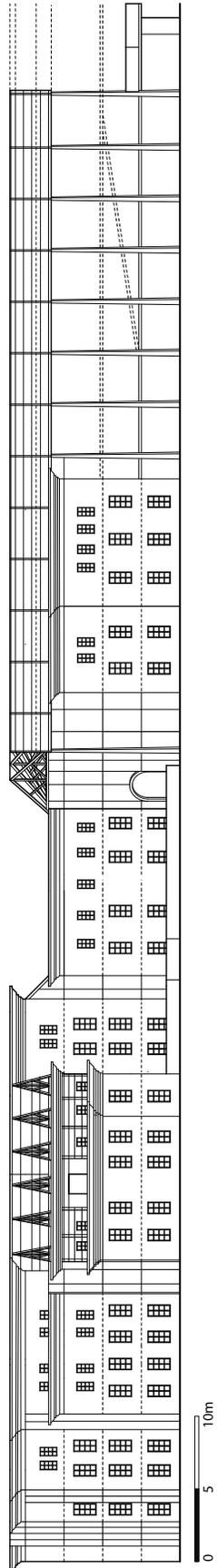




Illustration 9

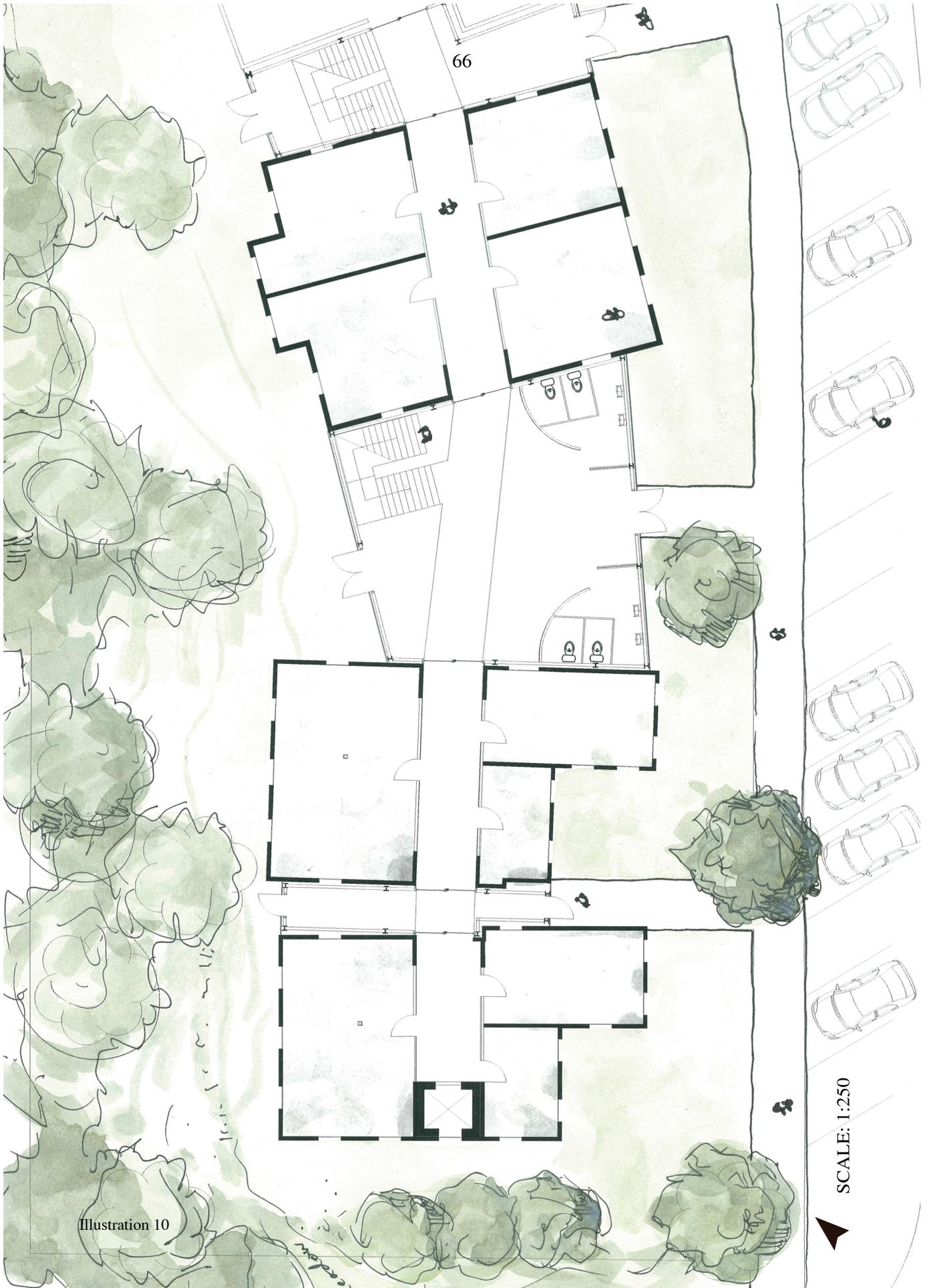


Illustration 10

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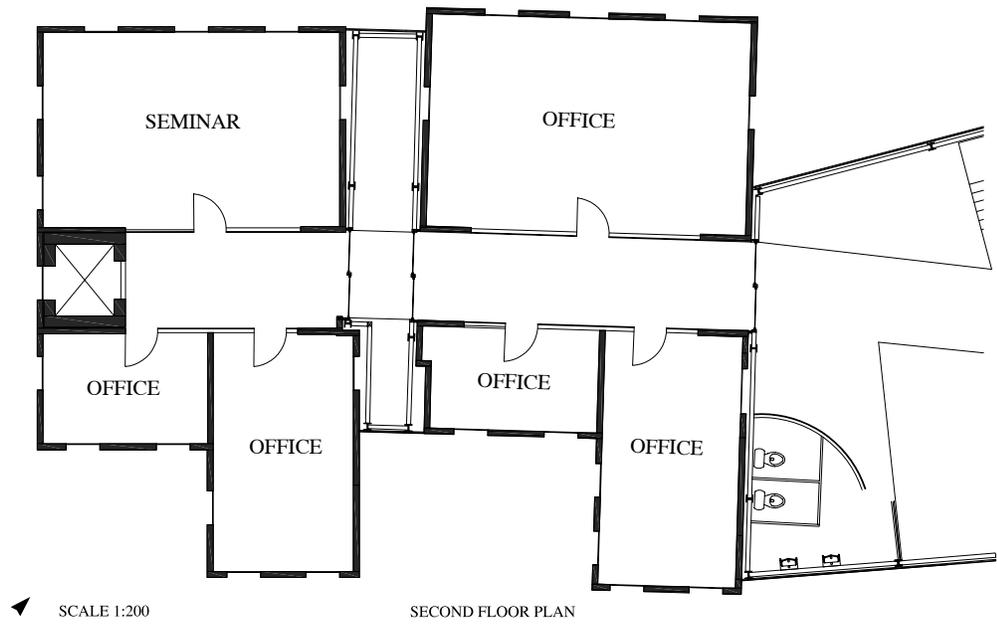
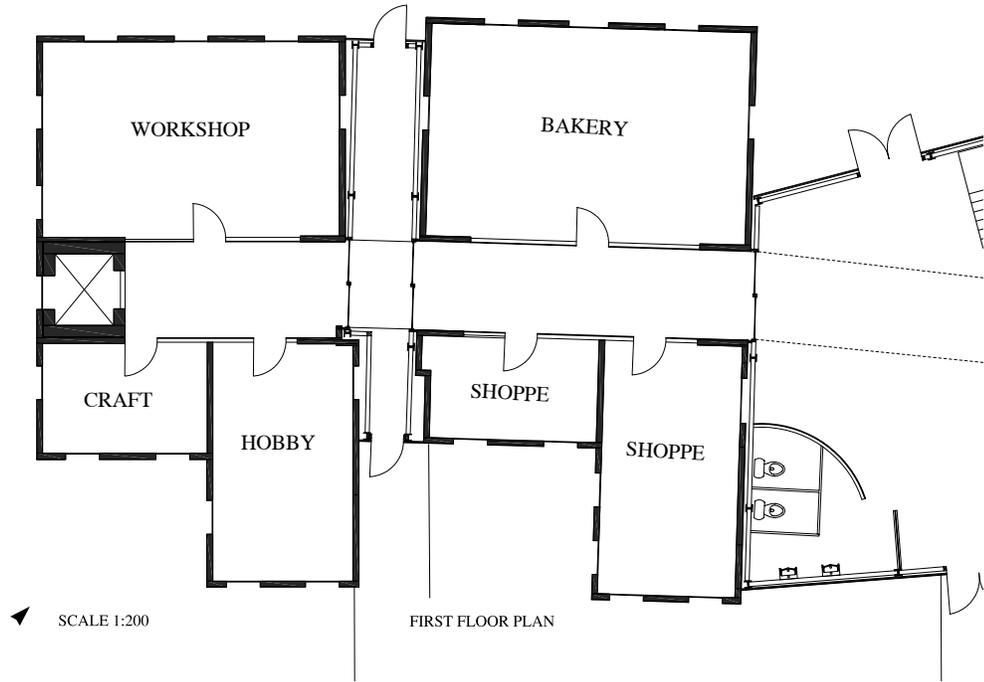


Illustration 11

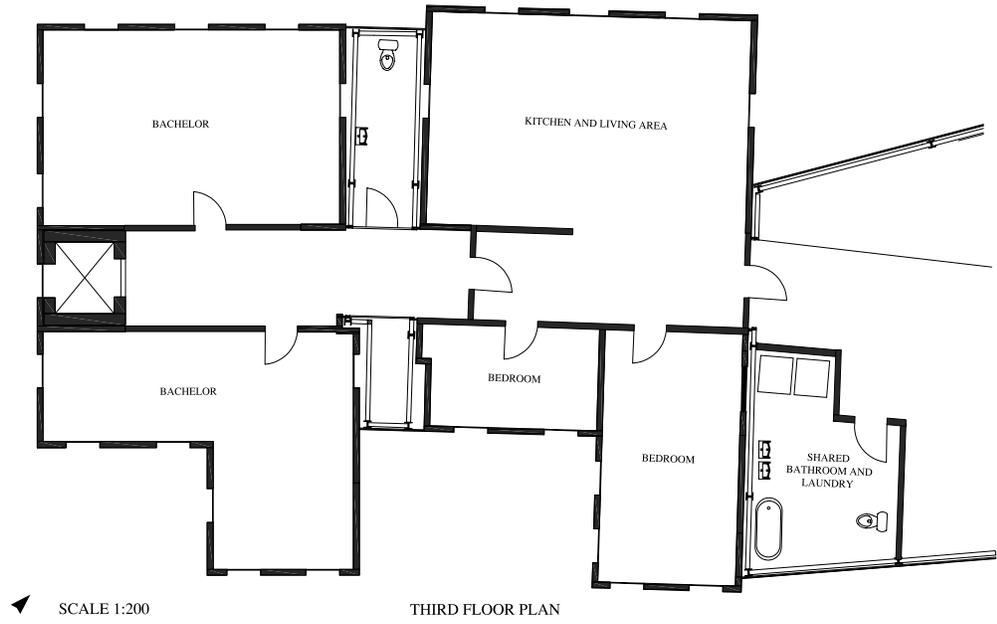


Illustration 12

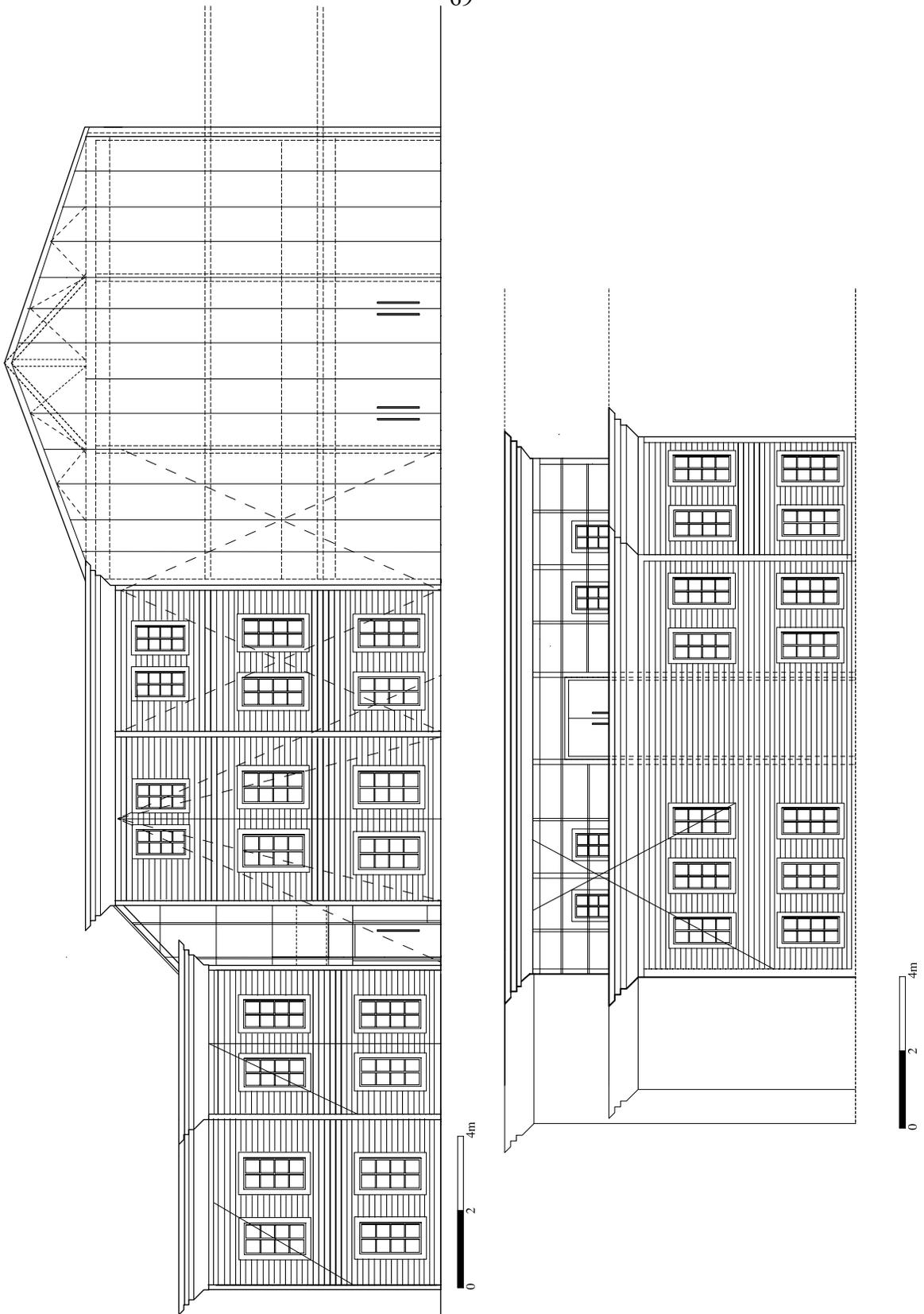
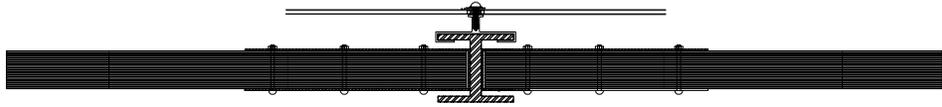
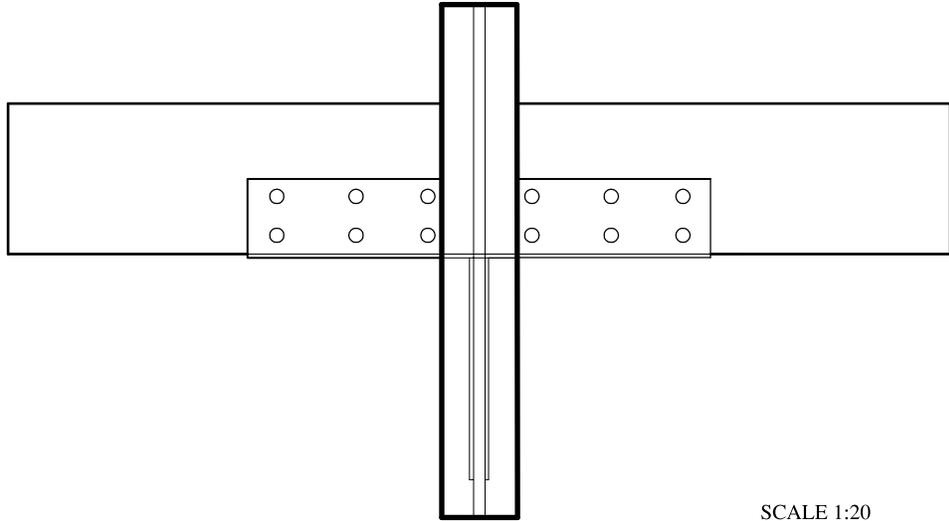


Illustration 13

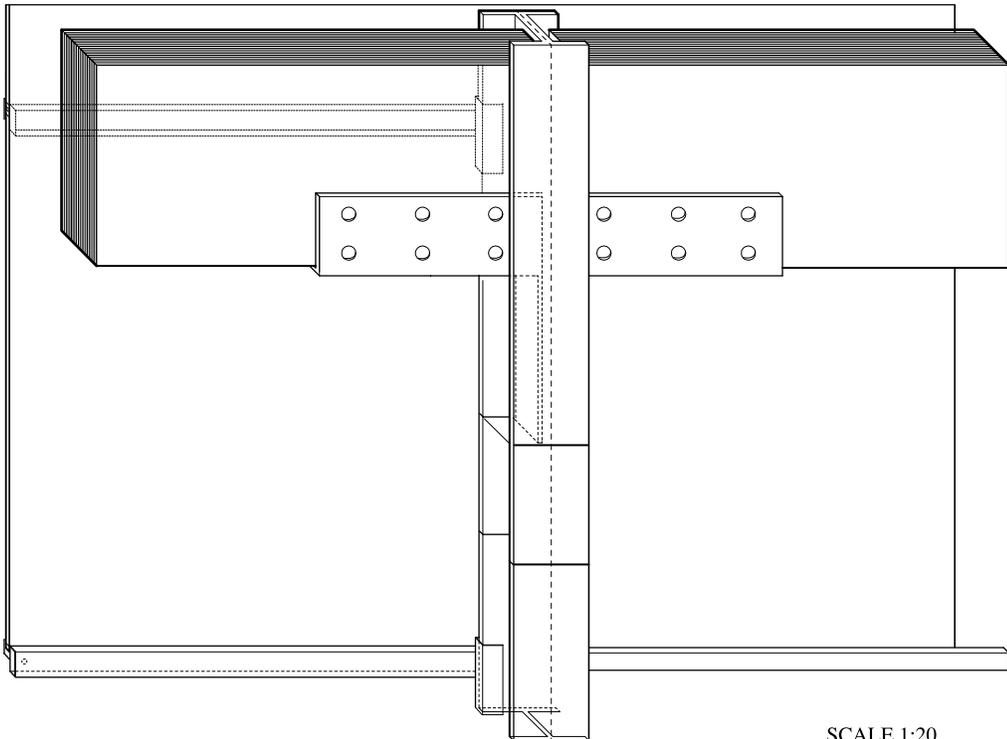
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SCALE 1:20



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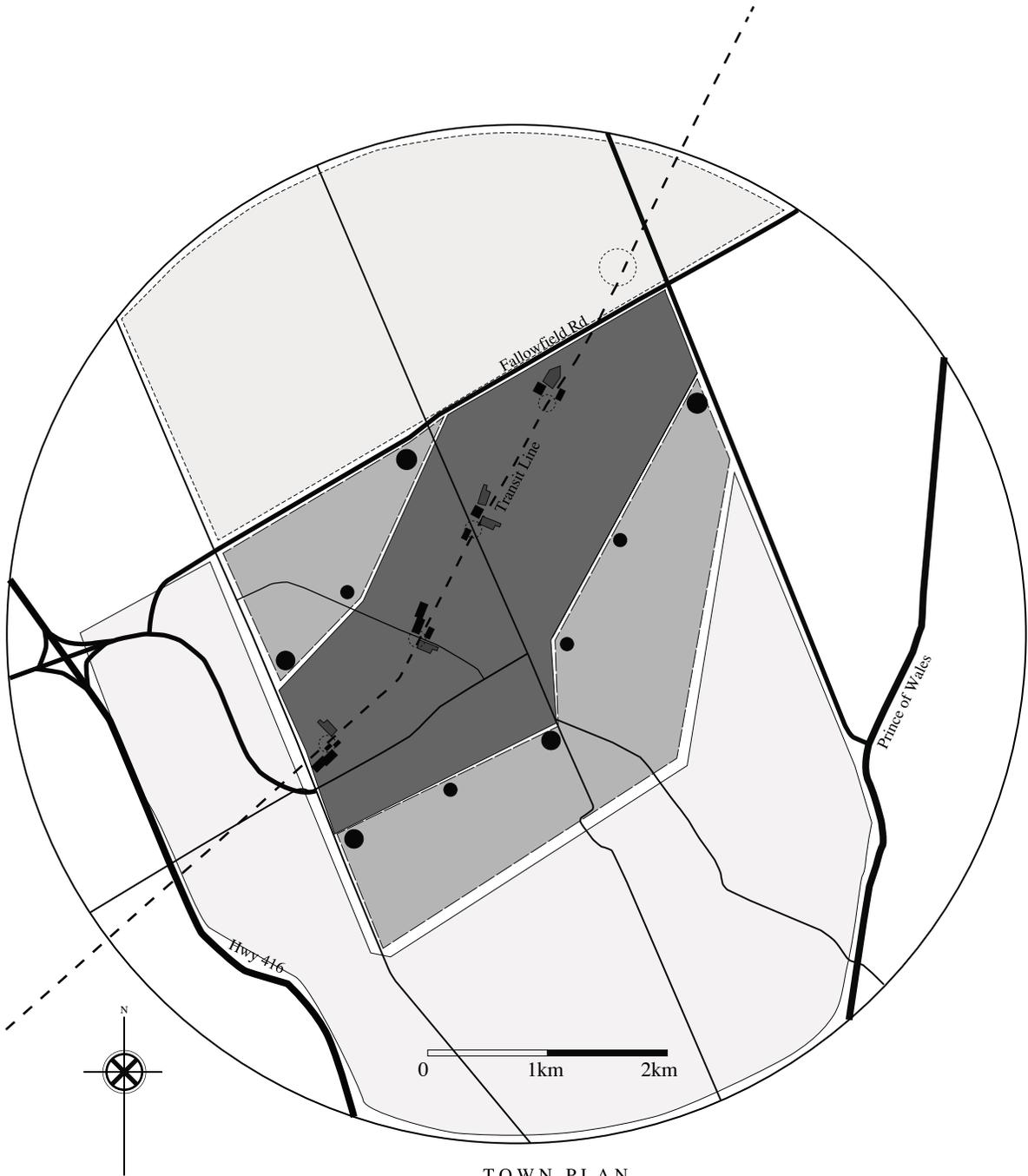
Illustration 14



TOWN PLAN  
BARRHAVEN .O.N.

 1999	 1999 COMMERCIAL	 GREEN BELT
 2011	 2011 COMMERCIAL	 IN PROGRESS

Illustration 15



TOWN PLAN  
**BARRHAVEN REDUX**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  TRANSIT HUB  |  2050 CIVIC      |  GREEN BELT            |
|  PARKING SILO |  2050 COMMERCIAL |  WILD FOREST AND FIELD |

Illustration 16

The Wilderness City of To-morrow



Illustration 17



Illustration 18

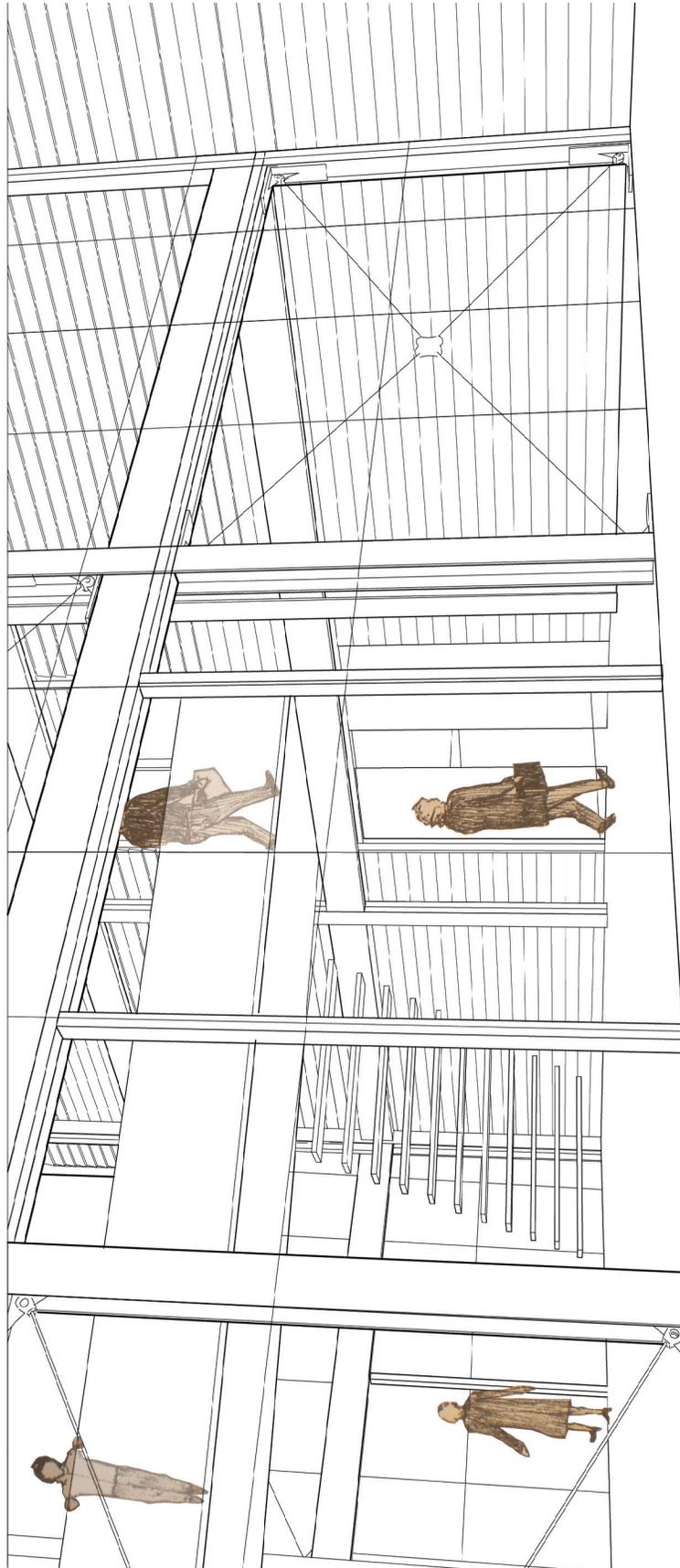


Illustration 19

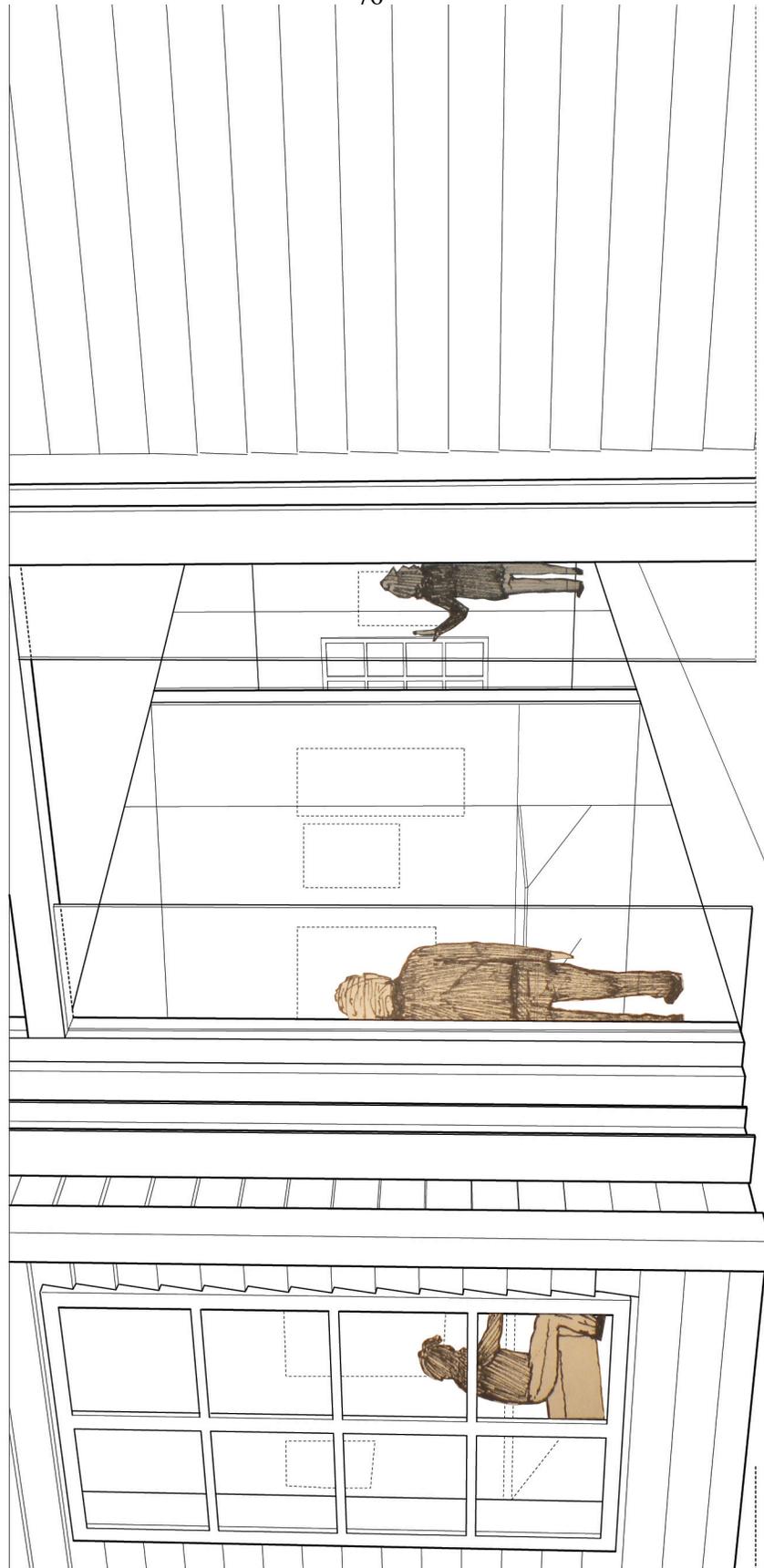


Illustration 20

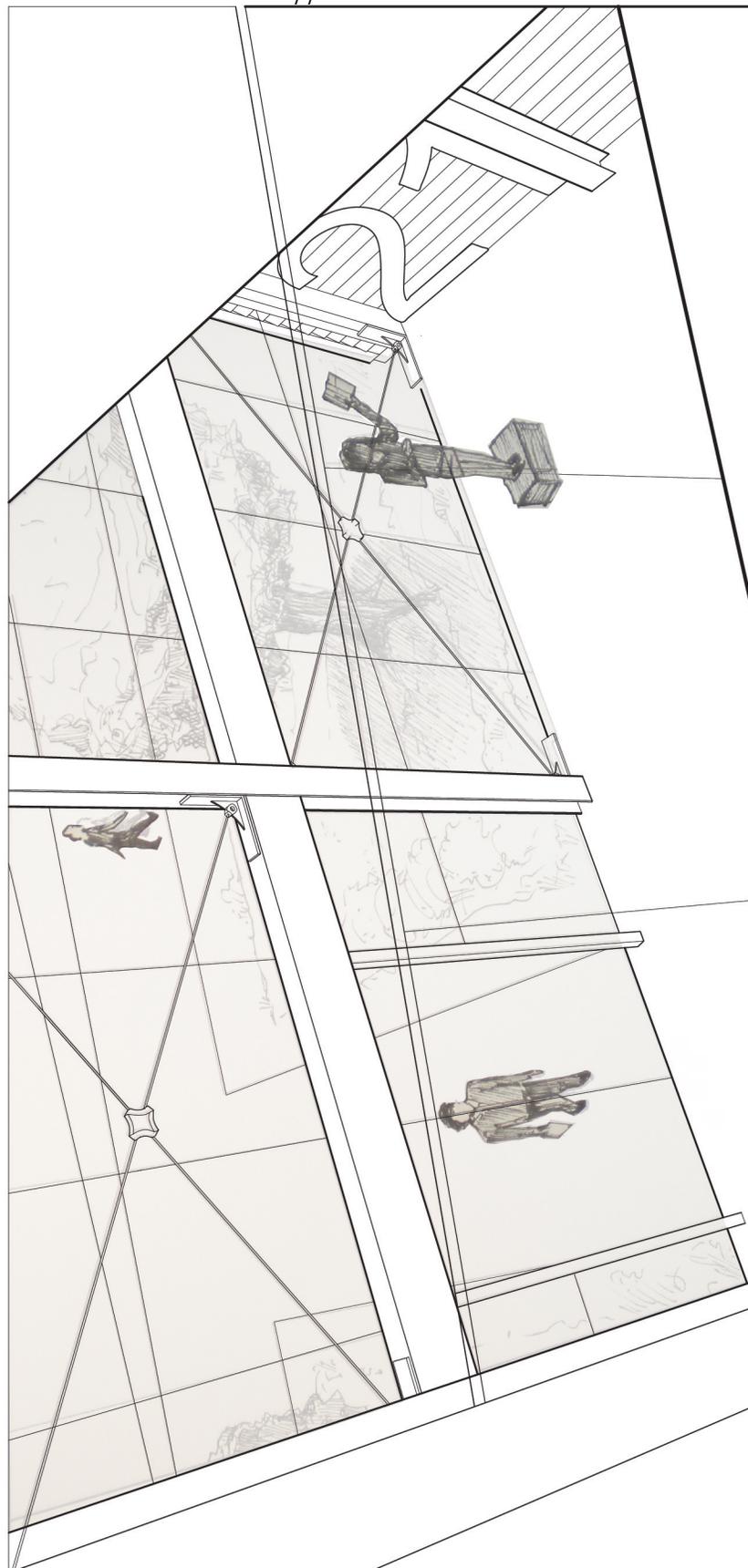


Illustration 21



Illustration 22

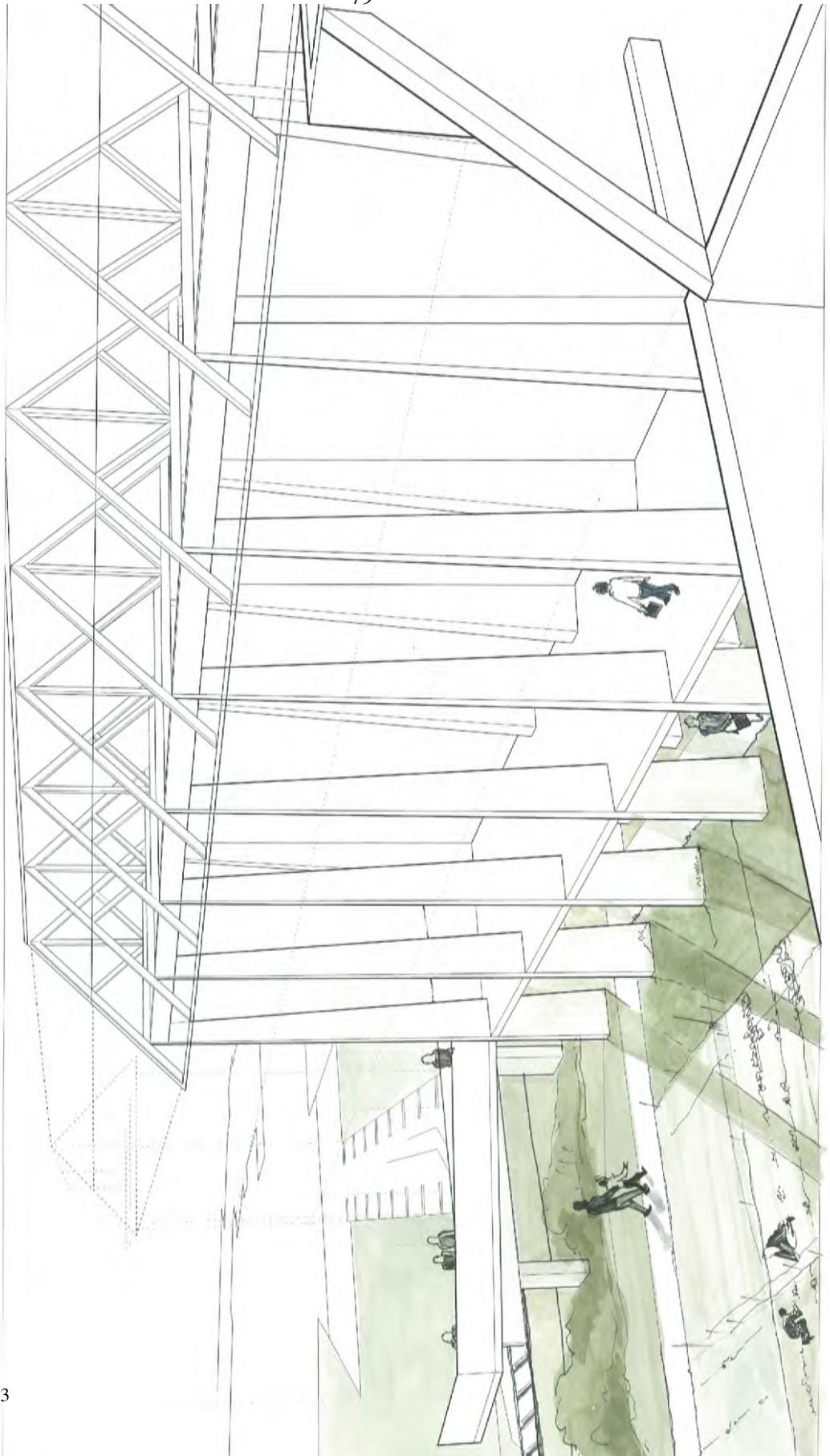


Illustration 23

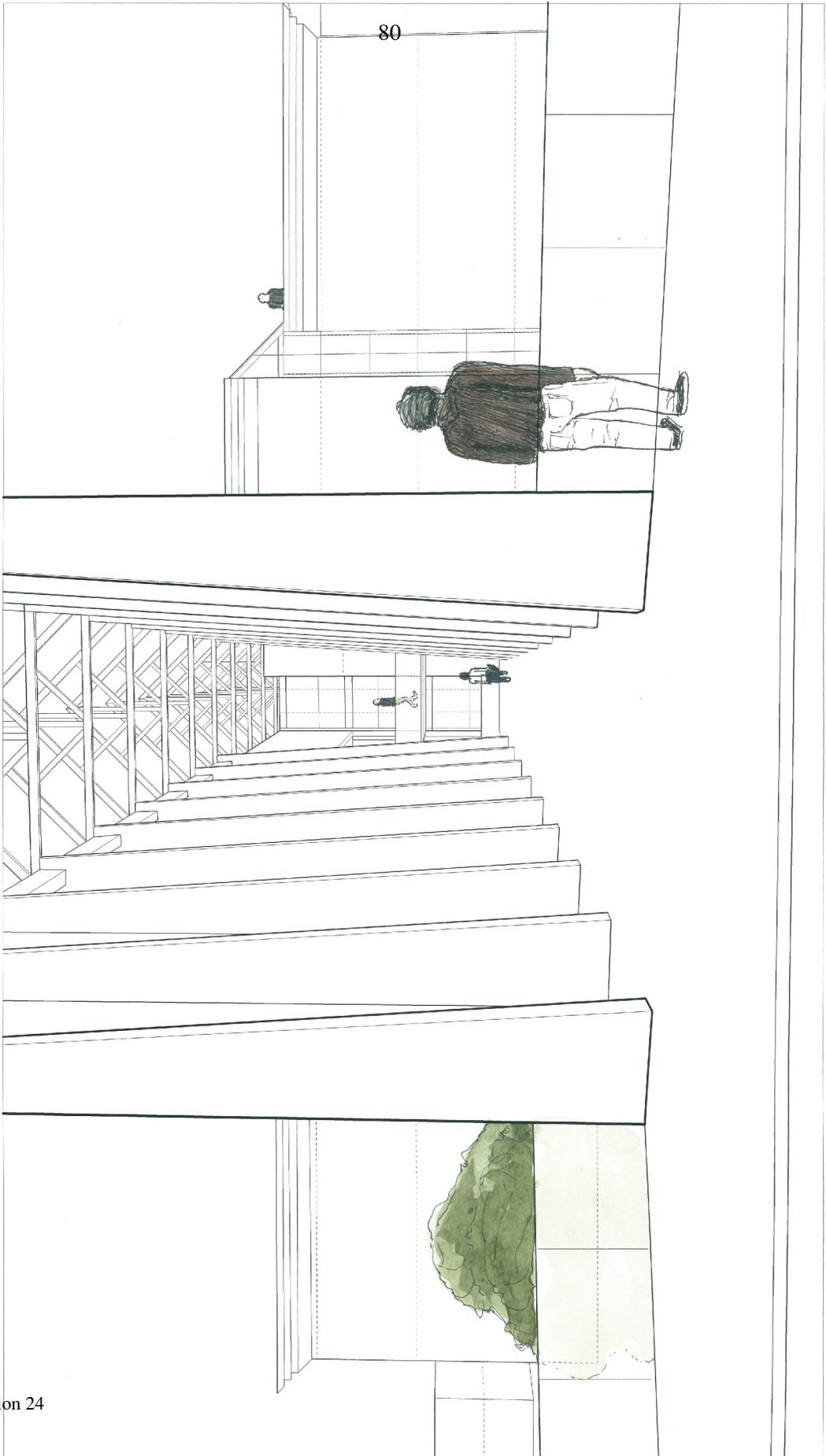


Illustration 24



Illustration 25

**Chapter 3**

-

**Now-Here**

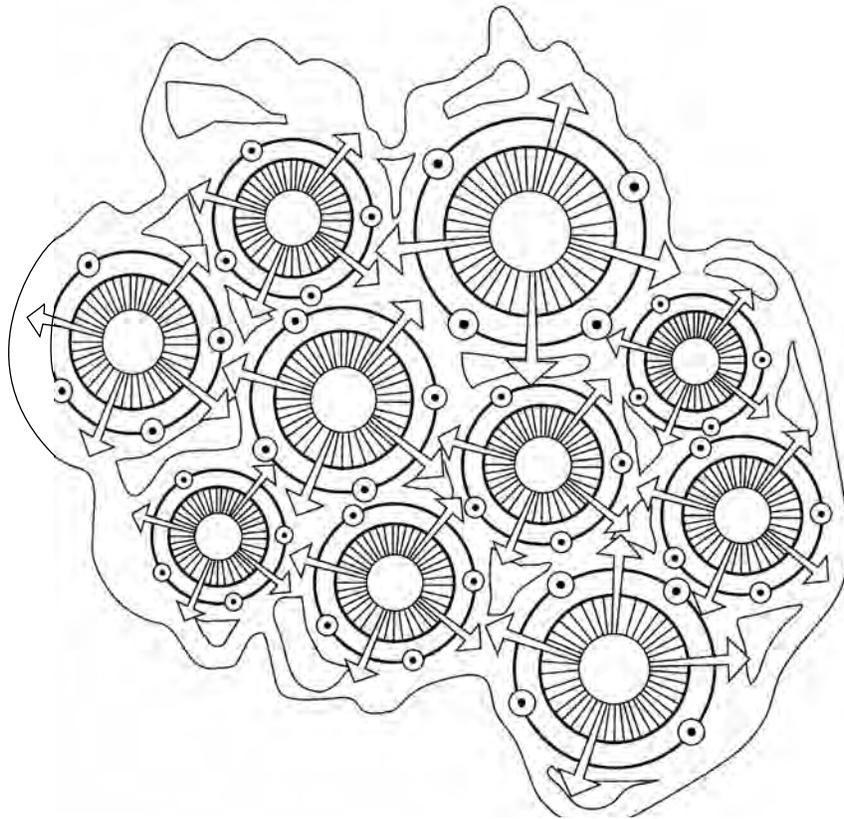


Illustration 26. *Wilderness City* schematic, Brian Avery (diagram to illustrate city cells coalescing),

## Chris



**A**pproached the bus stop on Sherway, a hobble in his step. I spun around on my bike and asked after the neighborhood, myself lost, looking for a given dead end street. He is also unsure of its whereabouts. His face lit up to happily meet a stranger. He recently moved back in with his parents, who had also recently up-sized their house. They used to live 3 streets over. Chris is a frequent user of the bus service, and usually takes the 170 to Barrhaven center, and transfers to get downtown. All told it takes 45 minutes. He advises ways to shave off a couple minutes here and there, namely to go to the transit hub behind Canadian Tire directly. The bus breathes heavy as it speeds around the bend, and we part ways. Chris climbs aboard and I try to keep pace, tiring quickly.

### 3.1: Strategy

*The future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created - created first in mind and will, created next in activity. The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths to it are not found but made, and the activity of making changes both the maker and the destination - John Schaar*

**T**his project's design methodology is squarely rooted in sustainability. While an environmental mandate may beg for criticism, we must come to grips with the fact the very 'greening' of anything, let alone architecture, has become a bud of ridicule. Its aims are Utopian and unrealistic. This is the bigger problem than the lack of 'greening' itself, that the concept is just that, a concept and not a practice, one that falls in and out of fashion. This author demands it be not a choice but an absolute requirement.

We have made forays into sustainable design in the past forty years, most of it the re-discovery of ancient principles, newly quantified with all the bells and whistles. One wonders, however, if the 'greening' of buildings is but another victim of the *Jevens Paradox*, where savings in energy and material simply free them up for later use, typically in more intensive scenarios. For example, the Energy Conservation Act of 1975 demanded the fuel efficiency of vehicles to be improved. It did. However, with an increased efficiency of 34%, fuel consumption still increased by 9% by 1990. Technological advance by our stupefaction, merely relieves us from negative feedback. We cannot 'grow green', what we need if anything is 'degrowth'.

Despite the gods of Technology hard at work, and the seeming improvements to our building practice, in the northern hemisphere, we have forgotten it seems, that earth has always held heat on southern slopes, rain has always run down hill, and edibles have always grown in fertile soil. We needn't be told by science. Why now, in the age of the scientific revolution, an age of proof, we need be reminded at all. Have we moved so far away from basic design principles to satisfy popular tastes and tendencies that we've forgotten their implications? We have lost our knowledge of materials despite a material age.

We move in mis-direction, forgetting simple facts of what is good and true in finding a place to live, or how to build it. Instead we reach for both the superficial price of the city, and the purchase of land. We ask 'where will I and my people be best situated to receive the greatest benefit for the least effort'. Such a statement could explain the 'urban summoning' heard now for almost two hundred years, and the resistance to laborious work in more recent years. The benefits of urban living have morphed over time of course, but by simple math, we still equate more people with more opportunity; bigger crowds mean bigger purses. We have become a population of people that prize minds over bodies, and more over less. It is an element of the human condition that is inescapable. Hazard to say that any creature anywhere, provided the opportunity would take more: more space, more resources, and some for later. In many cases, this behavior is entirely unconscious. Consciousness, a luxury available to the higher orders of animals, including humans, only comes into play it seems, when the pursuit and consumption of that space and those resources amounts to the detriment of their own survival. I fear this is the point we are fast approaching. E.O Wilson helps us to keep ourselves in perspective:

*Darwin's dice have rolled badly for Earth. It was a misfortune for the living world in particular, many scientists believe, that a carnivorous primate and not some more benign form of animal made the breakthrough. Our species retains hereditary traits that add greatly to our destructive impact. We are tribal and aggressively territorial, intent on private space beyond minimal requirements, and oriented by selfish sexual and reproductive aims (In Search of Nature, p.178).*

It may be fine time to reach 'beyond beyond' after all. We *can* live as conscious, selfless creatures. We have all been witness to it. We can write rules and follow them, its as easy as infrastructure. We simply need new rules and new aims. Our success in *human settlement on earth* will truly be the result of small efforts daily. Slogging policy day in and day out, enforcing it diligently, raising hope, setting standards, proselytizing. One can see the irony of arguing for a socialist environmental agenda; you're simply replacing one cultural platform for another. The only difference is you can't measure the benefits of one.

How much better off you are from lending out your lawnmower, only to have them return it weeks later without so much as a thank you. Or soaking yourself to the bone in a downpour, bicycling 30 minutes from home only to use up 2 sick days you had put aside to spend with your family on a road trip to Georgia. It really is no wonder it hasn't taken off: equitable living is more work, it's tiring, expensive, annoying. Sustainability is not an easy exercise. Ease doesn't even factor into it. Within our cultural paradigm, it is so foreign a concept that given the option, you would never choose it, in fact it can be all together deplorable. There are two possible directions, to the point of sustainability, this tiresome and expensive compromise: *to give up the work* (i.e not opt in to the perpetual pursuit of personal property), or *to work towards giving up*. Giving up means all of: your efforts and property, that lawnmower, your gas, or your time, Lord knows we have enough of it, it is simply misspent or inappropriately allocated to meaningless ends. You could be 20% more sustainable if you simply drove into work less one day a week. That added day, could mean rest, recreation, returning something to your neighbor, loving-up your family, growing-up your own garden vegetables, honing a craft. Translation, it frees you up to become the better version of yourself, that you know you can and want to be.

*The Work-Less Party* out of Vancouver, holds as its slogan "Workers of the World Relax!" Their platform among other directives, mandates a 32 hour work week. Their key themes and goals: *Horizontal, direct democracy, environmental stewardship, transitioning economies, de-growth*. The first demands grass roots political leadership, a commitment to community participation in the political process, the creation of local accountability, legislated proportional representation. *Stewardship* is guided by the 'seven generations' philosophy, ending environmental exploitation in forestry, energy, fisheries, and agriculture and demanding tighter controls on construction and development. *Transitioning economies* requires de-colonization and the support of local economy, local and alternative currencies, building community capacity and problem-solving, and facilitating community driven sus-

tainable development. *De-growth* demands a reintegration of economy and ecology, an-  
 How much emphasis of quality of life over quantity of consumption and encourages less  
 time at work and more time for family, community and society.

Conrad Schmidt, the founder of the *Work-Less Party* of Canada, in his documen-  
 tary, reveals Canadians have never been more 'manufactured'. We have been made work-  
 ers by our system, a Marxist and Ruskian nightmare. European productivity in the early  
 1970's, was two thirds that of America, Today, their productivity is the same, but the GDP  
 is still the same today as it was then. They have caught up in their ability to produce, with-  
 out the production. Americans trade their gains in productivity for more and more stuff,  
 Europeans trade gains in productivity to live their lives. Working less has been a trend  
 in European countries since the 1970's. In Denmark, the average work week today is 37  
 hours with 6 weeks paid vacation a year. It is legally 35 hours per week in France with 4-6  
 weeks vacation. Similar statistics exist in Austria, Germany and most notably in the other  
 Nordic countries who incidentally, have the highest rating of 'life satisfaction'. In America  
 and Canada, life quality is now equated with a rising propensity for consumption. We, on  
 average, work 9 weeks more than the average European, and have twice the emissions per  
 head. We need to consider real life style changes. There has to be potential in human be-  
 ings to plan for posterity. Not the *Krispy Kreme* feel good version when we use a reusable  
 grocery bag, or buy a hybrid car. Henry David Thoreau spoke of a connectedness to life in  
 saying, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essen-  
 tial facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach and not, when I came to  
 die, discover that I had not lived...I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life.  
 " (Thoreau, *Walden*). Such an experience I believe is possible for every conscious human.  
 We are hopelessly out of practice in achieving it. Thoreau believed the wilderness to be the  
 conduit, and it's a good place to start. We have to perceive life, in whatever corner you find  
 yourself, from out of the wild, look back at yourself, be conscious, make deliberate choices

that are at first good, truthful, and harmonious. This is a state of mind that is not advertised nor sold, nor popular. It is hard to imagine even finding it. Our human condition is delicate balance between the transcendence of the natural world and the exultation of a public life. Somewhere between Thoreau and Arendt, between landscapes and landmarks we will find a way, or at the very long last *try* to find a way, and when one of us falls off the path, another is there to pull you back on. We have to live naturally, collectively and publicly before we can ever live individually. We are at our tipping point at a cultural and economic level. Architecture must contribute to our transformation.

It follows that this project devote itself to creating an arena for individuals to make great of themselves by the aid of others. This is conjuring of the project in spatial arrangement, in the allocation of programme, and their coming together, all under one roof. *Comunitas* is a shared agreement. We sit at one table, stand in one room, and dance under one roof. It is based on the mandate of local governance, collective living, self-sustainability, and de-growth. If there is any hope for the future of the human condition it will be precipitated by the built environment. As such it will be the work of civic and urban planning, a dramatically reformed economic system, and an architectural profiling that will lead us through. We need much tighter controls for development, and civic bodies with teeth. The manifesto for such a system has already been laid out by great social, philosophical and architectural minds far gifted than my own. This project manifests as a micro-cosm of these great theories, the example, the spark to get things going. We need far more and far better organized communities to bring the virtues of reformed living to the fore, and by popular demand re-tool the arrangements of the micro-cosm into successive scales. We need to 'replace' the medieval walls around our cities and suburbs, make them finite, and concentrate on establishing places of meaning that nourish our lives psychically, and motivate us physically to sustain and perpetuate a 'not-so-peaceful path to real reform'. Indeed, we don't have the luxury of space and time available to us as Howard did in his day. Our social reform

today, many would agree, should be committed to measures that bring us to a collective contribution toward net zero waste per capita, period. This means, less travel, less embodied energy in our products, creating vibrant communities to keep us closer to home, and thrilled to be there. It means replacing a product driven market with a service based one. It means working less, and playing more, driving less and walking more, taking less and giving more, watching less and participating more, wasting less and creating more.

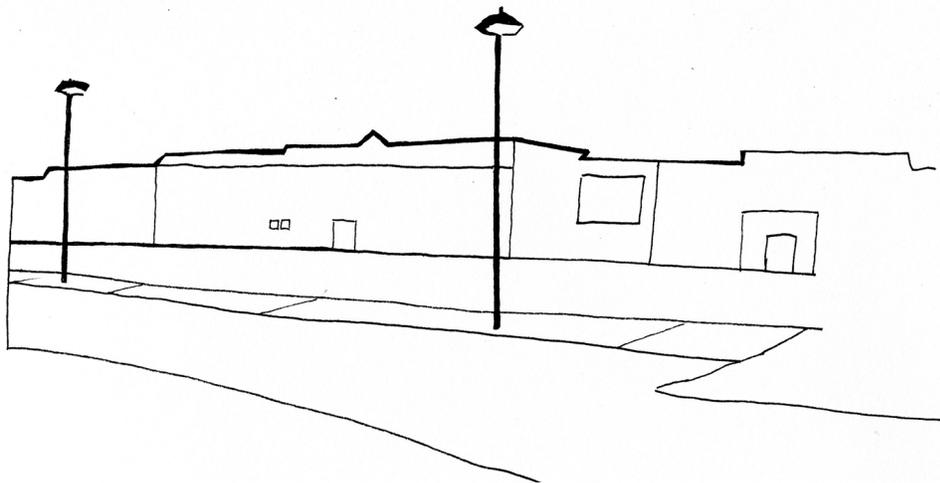


Illustration 27: German Shopping Mall on a Sunday - sketch inspired from Workless Party Docurama

### 3.2:Site

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**B**arrhaven is a suburb located 20 kilometers southwest of the city of Ottawa, beyond Nepean. It was formerly part of the city of Nepean prior to amalgamation with the city of Ottawa in 2001. So despite have it's own 'handle', it is actually Ottawa. This fact, while proven on paper, doesn't reside in the heart, minds nor language of Barrhaven residents. Why might this be so? They see themselves as outsiders, separate and distinct, unto their own. The greatest challenge has already been met. By the labeling and placement of Barrhaven as suburb, its residents already connect with the idea of a particular place. They want an identity, or might already feel they have one. Despite the depravity of this suburban environment, humans still manage to reveal their potential. It can't be forgotten that as a city in the suburb, we are first and fundamentally housing people. It is not the housing however that we need to focus on today, unlike the initial *Garden City* plans, but the people. Ebenezer Howard knew the potential of people, and took advantage of his time and place to imagine a housing scheme to better let their potential thrive.

We have an existing housing scheme, but one that missed the mark of the *Garden City* aims. Ours today, are not self-contained, but continue to spread out. They are not self-sufficient; as the better part of the working public commutes to work in the city center beyond. It is not intimately tied to agriculture, but is separated from it by 4-6 lane traffic. It's green belt is a singular green belt, to the north, and defined prior and seperately from this suburb's conception. It has no physical connection to the outside by mass public transit, and it doesn't provide work locally. It does not house a varied assortment of building types and programmes. There is no *res publica*, or public space save the expansive parking lots, and concrete sidewalks that follow major roads, that lead to manicured parks. It has no discernible civic order for man's sake, and takes little advantage of the natural site it selected.

Despite all this and the distance it holds from the certain principles of Howard's *Ruris-ville*, one of the indicators of the "likeability" of this place, to use the parlance of our time, is clearly that Barrhaven is the fastest growing suburb of Ottawa. It was first established in 1965 by the incentive of Mel Barr. After the plan for a horse track fell through to competition. Ol' Mel was growing tired and played it safe, building first a single tract of houses along the south side of Fallowfield road abutting the green belt boundary. He cashed in in the 70's and sold the land. Developers followed suit, building more of the same modest, affordable single family homes for middle income commuters. Not until 1991 did the town get its first sizable store, a grocery within a 5 minute drive for most residents. Since '91, the town has exploded into a 90,000 resident powerhouse with 10,000 more to come by 2025, nearing 10% of Ottawa's population. Barrhaven was designed in the spirit of countless other suburban plans where developers name their neighborhoods after the things they replace: *Meadowlands*, *Stonebridge*, *Cresthaven*, *Orchardview*, *Fallowfield* among others. Driving through at 80km/hr, you'd be hard pressed to spot a meadow, a stone bridge, an orchard, but see perhaps the occasional crest, *soft-scaping* at its most profitable.

The naming of the neighborhoods speaks to the vapid promise or false hope of their design. What rose colored glasses are marketers wearing by showing such neglect for the intelligence of the target market. You can't not notice the guise. The promise of "so much more" or the dream of a 'parkland paradise'. If we distilled down the Utopian salesmanship what you are left with is simply one word: cheap, cheap land, cheap license, cheap material, cheap product, cheap advertising, cheap shot. And then by an about face, proclaim the promise of "so much more". The average resident knows this or learns it anyway, by the mere evidence of their stay of only 3-5 years. This contemporary plan, is certainly of the times, and definitely temporary.

Leigh Gallagher revealed in her book, *The End of the Suburbs*:

*that couples are marrying later and having smaller families" by 2025, she says, "the majority of suburban households are expected to have no children. Teenagers are increasingly opting to go without driver's licenses. Millennials, despite financial struggle and standing witness to the housing crisis, say they prefer to live in urban environments. Boomers are reconsidering their large houses and landscaped yards. The price of sprawl has become increasingly undeniable. Moderate-income families have seen their transportation costs balloon to more than a quarter of their income. Cities have discovered that low-density developments fail to pay for their own infrastructure. More recently, a new study of economic mobility suggested that sprawl, and its accompanying lack of transportation options, prevented access to higher paying jobs (Gallagher, 2013).*

All this could predict either a great exodus from the suburbs or a desperate need for suburban renewal. One such critic however harsh could be found in Glasgow, to quote writer Gavin Stamp, the "essential structural inadequacies of these estates: low density, incoherence, absence of true urban character, and....nothing of architectural merit: their inhabitants are "condemned to live without hope in a spiral of decline", and they should therefore be bulldozed back to "parkland", wipe them out, and bring their long-suffering inhabitants back to the real city where they belong (Glendinning and Page, 1999). Its hard to disagree with him, but for the sake of realism it might be advisable to aim instead for what Glendinning and Page presented in their book, *Clone City*, calling for, "peripheral regeneration,"(Glendinning and Page, 1999). The problem they claim in their own words is that, " here in the outer zone, the heart of the area of private freedom, the problem is very different: one of complete fragmentation. Here the mixed community or urban village theme is more tenuous, being applied in the form of atomized, car -borne living, the reality is one of an overall extreme of unstructured openness, combined with subdivisions of the most minute and disorienting kind" (Glendinning and Page, 1999). Why, on a practical level would we ever demand and settle for this?

The first version of Canada's National Housing Act was introduced in 1935, and was foundational in the forming of the now suburban state. It was less committed to the *building of communities or neighborhoods*, than it was to *the building of houses*. And rightly so, it was the Housing Act after all, and the country was emerging from an era of rampant financial dis-chord, explosive unemployment and general instability. The Housing Act was part of a social revolution to give families the opportunity to build equity in their homes. A financial safety net and a start to individual freedom (Carver, 1967). A market study of Barrhaven conducted in 2013 by Shore, Tanner et al., based on current data, showed that Ottawa is typically among the top three cities in Canada in terms of income. Barrhaven has become even more affluent than Ottawa as a whole. The overall average household incomes in 2011 *City of Ottawa \$98,000.vs. Barrhaven \$126,061*. The Housing Act, apparently, in the case of Barrhaven, need not apply. The average value of property in Barrhaven is \$469,395 and still, as a remnant of the Housing Act days, 9.1 of 10 are owner occupied, with 95% of all housing units as *single family* or so called *ground oriented* dwellings. It was no surprise that the study determined that these housing characteristics limit economic growth and diversification. The study recommended to increase the variety, tenure, and wider costs of housing as they are significant contributors to economic growth. The study plainly advised: 1. More mid and high-rise towers. 2. More small units for the rapidly growing number of single and two-person households. 3. More rental units of all types" (Shore, Tanner et al. 2013).

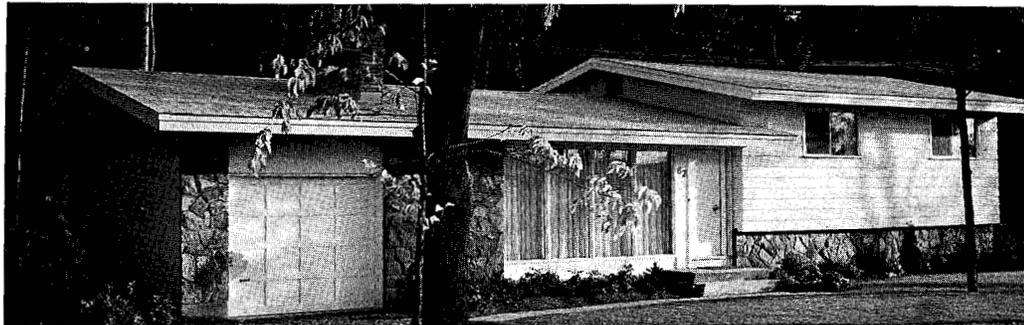


Illustration 28: Standard split-level single family house, Photo: Max Fleet from *Cities in the Suburbs* p. 97

### 3.3: Site Specifics - Getting out and Staying In

*Efficient, convenient, and rapid transportation in and out of Barrhaven are extremely important for its transition into a diversifying and growing community. At present, at least 33,700 or 75% of Barrhaven's total labour force works outside.*  
(Shore and Tanner,2011)

Life in the suburbs compared to any other living condition is faced with issues of 'what to do when we are there', and 'how to get out when we need to'. Town or Country life respectively and in contrast can satisfy desire for entertainment nearby, in the shows on Broadway or the horse in its stable. Getting out is made particularly easy in the city by the benefits of mass public transit, and in the country, we have the horse in its stable. Barrhaven suburb therefore has a lot of work ahead of it to satisfy both. This chapter will look at the inherent limitations in the suburbs, and offer suggestions for stepping over them.

The question of 'getting out' of Barrhaven has been waylaid for the time being. The new *Confederation* light rail line represents a \$2.13 billion investment, the largest in Ottawa's history, and will connect Westboro to Gloucester. Thirteen stations are to be built on a 12.5 kilometer line (10 km above ground, 2.5 km below), that runs through downtown. As Ottawa continues to grow, we need a sophisticated transit system that will move people, quickly, efficiently and affordably. Public transportation, at current, is at near capacity in the downtown core, and our highways are at near capacity during peak hours, the time for that transit system is yesterday. A \$2.13 Billion investment may sound like an impressive undertaking to move a scant 100,000 people that live in the 4 wards along the rail corridor. By contrast, Barrhaven houses 100,000 people as well, has an existing rail line that bisects the town, runs past the VIA station at Fallowfield, through the industrial park at Hunt Club, crosses the OC light rail service (which runs to Bayview and a future intersection of the new inner-city line) 20 metres from the existing Confederation stop at Heron Road, passes by the major transit hub at Hurdman, through the industrial park downtown and ends at Tremblay station, where all trains services to and from Ottawa meet. 2 VIA trains run the

rail through Barrhaven daily, one in the morning and one late afternoon. CN trains are infrequent enough to not be noticed. There is enormous potential for a light rail service to Barrhaven center. The projected cost for the development, according to the local municipal authority, would be in and around 40 million, 2% of the cost of the Confederation line. It will not be tabled however until 2038, when the Confederation line is handed back to the city and presumably the bill will be paid. I say we get the 'train' rolling now.

For those that find themselves staying in there is a long list of Barrhaven businesses ready to satisfy every want and need, and this list gives some insight to the place in question:

1 for 1 Pizza - 1000 Sushi Islands - A Gym Tale - Accel Music Studios - Act 2 Consignment Fashion - Active Health Institute - Advanced Massage - Advance Physiotherapy - Algonquin Travel - Allstate Insurance - Angel Beauty Spa - Ageluccis Restarant and Bar - Anika Arts and Flowers - Appletree Medical Clinic - Aqua Dental - Artistic Dental Deisgn - Baizana Insurance Brokers - Bark and Fitz (retail health food) - Barley Mow Pub - Barr Haven Barbers - Barrhaven Auto Center - Barrhaven Barber Shop - Barrhaven Crossing Dental Center - Barrhaven dental associates - Barrhaven Dental Care - Barrhaven Dental Centre - Barrhaven Family Chiropractic - Barrhaven Hearing Clinic - Barrhave IDAPharmacy -Barrhaven Ink Plus - Barrhaven Market - Barraven Massage Therapy -Barrhaven Music Academy - Barrhaven Optometric - Barrhaven Orthodontics an Periodontics - Barrhaven Petro-Canada - Barrhaven Physiotherapy and Sport Clinic - Barrhaven Psychological Services - Barrhaven Soure for Sports - Barrhaven South Dentistry -Barrhaven Sports Medicine -Barrhaven Travel and Cruise Centre - Barrhaven Vac and Sew - Barrhaven Veterinary Hospital - Barrhaven Vietnamese Restaurant - Barrhaven Village Square Dentists -Beauty Nails - Bed Bath & Beyond - Beer Store - Bell World Barrhaven -Benjamin Moore Paints - Bialik, Dr Mark MD Pediatrician - Bioped - Black'sPhotography - BMO Bank of Montreal -Book stop - Boomerang Kids - Booster Juice -Boston Pizza -Bouclair-Brad Reynold's Insurance- Bradley Hiscock McCracken - Brett, Dr. Peter Family Dentistry -Broadway Bar and Grill Barrhaven - Brown's Cleaners (3 locations) - Buck or 2 Plus - Bulk Barn - Canadian School of Dance - Canadian Tire - (and gas) - Capital Orthodontics - Cappuci Hair - Caress Electrolysis Ltd. - Carters Oshkosh - Cedarview Animal Hosital -Cedarview Guardian Pharmacy - Cedarview Physiotherapy and Wellness -Chapman Mill Animal Hospital - Chapman Mills Dental - Chillies Indian Restaurant - China Star Chinese Food - CIBC Banking Center - CIBC Barrhaven - Cineplex Galaxy - Clouthier, Delia Audiologist - Clubhouse - Co-operators (2 locations) - Colonnade Pizza - Cornerstone Montessori - Creppin Realty Group - Cruiseshipcentres -Curves-Dairy Queen-DC Diagnostics-Dean Ryan Landscaping/ maintenance - Dentistry @ Cedarview2 - Desouza, Dr Eleanor MD - Dexter's Den Dog Daycare and Grooming - Dollarama - Domino's Pizza - DTSM driving school -EB Games - Edible Arrangments - Edward Jones Investments (3 locations) - Esso on the Run - Esso Self Serve - Evolution Chiropractic - Extreme Pita - Fallowfield Pharmasave - Family Physiotherapy - Farm Boy -Fiamma Ristorante - Fido - First Aid Plus - First Choice Haircutters (2 locations) - Five Guys Burgers and Fries - Food Basics - Fran Jewellery - Fukumoto, Dr. Neil - Future Shop - Gabriel Pizza - Gamma Dynacare Labs - Geovector Managment Inc. - Gill, Dr. James W. MD - Gloval Pet Foods - GNC (General Nutution Cnetres) - GO4GREEK - Golden Restaurant -Goodfellow Cleaners - Goodlife Fitness - Goodlife Fitness Women's CLub - Grae Expectations - Greco Lean and Fit Center/Martial Arts - Green Street Pharmasave - Greenbank Animal Hospital - Greenbank Chiropractic cneter - Greenbelt Family Health Team - Greenfiel's Pub - Guava's Shawarma - H&R Block - Hakim Optical - Hallmark - Hap py Camper's Trailer Sales and Rentals -Hasimoto, Mriko Margaret MD, Healthy Feet Foot Clinic - Healthy Steps Peorthic Clinic - Herbal Magic -Home Depot - Hummingird Medispa - Hummingbird Music - Icons Hair Studio - Indigo Books - International Musiland - Itan Studios (tanning) - Jack May Chevrolet BuickGMC - Jaques Robert Real Estate Lawyer - Jamacan Me Crazy Coffee Company - Jockvale Massage Therapy Clinich - Joe's Pizza Palace - Johnny Canuck's Bar and Grill - K2 Martial Aets - Karara-Indian Takeout - Kardish Health Food Center - Kelly Funeral Home- - Kelsey's - KFC- Kiddie Kobbler

- Kiwi Kraze -Kou's Tae Kwon Do School - La Porto a Casa (restaurant) -Laser Esthetics - Lasting Impressions Hari Salon - Laurier Optical - LCBO - Le Look Hair Studio and Esthetics - Leanra Competer-Baed Education center - Liddle, Dr. JaneMD Pediatrician- Limelight Chiropractic and Natural Therapy - Linda Young Insurance Brokers - Little Caesar's Pizza - Little Scholars Montessori Daycare (3 locations) - Liu's Cuisine -Loblaws - Locke, Dr. Sherry L Family Dentistry - Lotus Chinese Food - Lovely Nails - Lucky Panda Fine Chinese - Lyra Dry Cleaning - M&M Meat Shop - Mac's Convenience Store - Magicuts (2 Locations) - Mark's WorkWearhouse - Marktplce Family Chiropractic - Marketplace Medical Center - Marlene L GrntCGA - Math and Science Tutoring Center - McDonald's Restaurant (3 Locations) - McSweeny and Associate Consulting - Megacity Promotions - Metro Strandherd Crossing -Milano Pizzeria - Moneymart - Moutaingoat Yoga - Mr Mozzarella - Nagpal Dr. Sandeep MD - NASA Food Centre - Neighbourhood Cellular - Nepean Family Health Group - Nepean Massage Therapy - Nepean School of Music - Nestle Toll House Cafe - Nice One Nails - Nile Bakery - Nippon Sushi - Nufrotune restaurant -Nygard Orthotics Barrhaven - Ottawa School of Piano - Over the Top Computin - Overtime Sports Repair - Oxford Learning Centre - Palm Beac Megatan - Payless Shoes - Pennington's 14+ - Pet Valu - Pete and Gus Meat Market - Petrocan - Petsmart - Pho Haven - Pho Hoa Nam Vietnamese Noodle House - Pho Thi Fushion Restaurant - Pier 1 Imports - Pillars Hair Salon - Pinelopi's Greek Kitchen - Pizza Hut -Pizza Pizza - Play House Learning Centre - Play it Again Sports - Posture Pro Chiropractic - Powell, Diedre S. Barrister and Solicitor - Pretsige Tailors - Professional Physio Plus - Professional Physiotherpahy - Pure Hair Design - Queensbury Detal - Quickie Convenience (3 Locations) - Quizno's Subs -Randall's Decorating Center - Remax Affiliates Realty Lts., Brokerage - Red Wagon Studio graphic design services - Reitmans - Renew hair and Esthetics - Rexall Pharma Plus Drugmart -Rideau Valley Health Center - Rikochet Resale - Rogers Plus - Rogers Wireless -Rorker, Dr Micheal A Orthodontist - Ross' Your Independent Grocer - Royal Bank (3) - Royal Lepage Team Realty, Brokerage - Royal Oak -Saly Beauty Supply - Salon Silk Hair Salo - San Marino Pizza - Scotiabank (2) - Selina's Studio (Dance/Sing/Act) - Senators Physiotherapy and Massage Clinic South - Serenity Salon and Spa - ShwarmaHeaven - Hear and Tan - Shell - Shopper's Drug Mart -Simplee Hair practic - Southpointe Dental - Spa 808 - Spencer, Dr. Nigel, MD - Sportchek -Spud's Potato Bar and Poutinerie- Staples the Business Center - Star Fashion Cleaners - Star Nails - Starbucks's Coffee Company (3 locations) - State Farm Insurance- Jarrett Thomson - Stonebridge Golf and Country Club - Strandherd Crossing Medical Centre - Strandherd Dental Clinic - Standgerd Guardian Pharmacy - Strandherd Montessori School - tronger You - Subway (2 Locations) - Sunoco/Horizon - Swiss Chalet - T-Nails Professional Nail Care - Taing Jewellers - Tanda Shoes -TD Canada Trust (2 Locations) - Telus Store - The Cash Store -The Source - Thimbles Cafe - Tim Hortons (3 Locations) - Topper's Pizza - Toys on Fire - Trade Secrets - Tween and Hickory -Ultramar - Univeral Driving School - UPS Store - Ventura Boulevard Tattoo Studio - Walmart - Wamberra, Dr. Ivan Orthodontist - Wan's Chinese Food - Weight Watcher's - Wendy's - West End Wellness Centre - Willy's Pizza - Windo Coverings by Wayne Chaif -Winner House Chinese - Winner - Wizard's Tower- Woodroffer Family Dental - Works - Wolrdcrest Management Inc. - Worldcrest Realty Incs., - Wray, Dr. Roger MD - Wright, Bradley H Lawyer -Your Retirement Coach.

This list includes a disproportionate number of hair and body parlors, just over half of all businesses are health care related, and there are as many fast food joints as sit down restaurants. If present businesses can correlate demographics, than one could deduce Barrhaven residents don't take much care of themselves, drive too much, care far too much for their looks and have more money than they know what to do with.

While every flight and fancy is met for the individual, what is lacking in Barrhaven, as market studies suggest, are public spaces for community building, spaces for small start up businesses, play spaces and creative laboratories, space for adult education, workshops, eclectic merchandising, basically, anything public and non-corporate (city branding included) that supports the *betterment*, not *complacency* of their citizens and thus the vitality of their neighborhoods.

### Site Specifics - Property/Value

*Americans don't need piazza's, they should be at home watching television.*

Robert Venturi, in *Complexity and Contradictions*

**S**kyscrapers and vertical cities, while one of the most eccentric, are none-the-less the most appropriate reactions to *the problem of over-population*. They however, lead to densification with real estate prices inflated to unmanageable thresholds, thus perpetuating the Jeffersonian *problem of land tenure as freedom*. We are forever beholden, from priest to prince to property. We are being pulled in opposing directions, between self want and collective need. Jeffersonians self-proclaim their right to a piece of land and stake their claim on property. We are thought to be more man with than without property, this hasn't changed since the Roman agora, we still have no rights without it. No vote, no pride, no prestige. You don't really own your property however, only you pay to live there, some more some less. You are in effect paying for the rights and priviledges of a public citizen only today we don't garner any of the benefits. We are by and large being duped by politics as business. It's fascinating to weigh the difference between cost and value in balance, where depending on the person in the right or wrong conditions, one inevitably outweighs the other. Your reaction as a result, can go one of two ways: to dissatisfaction, in feeling short-changed that you're not getting what you paid for, or, to elation by the possibility present in the place in question, where the streets are alive with the sound of music.

One has to pay to live, it's a simple and hard truth. And rightly so, our tax rates may not be the envy of many, but our standard of living is. Through direct ownership, one verily has a vote in the management of the home he or she abides in and from there beyond o the public realm, in progressively smaller degrees: their cracking driveway, the street her cousin parks his car on, the stoplight that keeps him from enjoying his Mazda, and the stretching miles of road to work. It is true, that your mortgage payments pay for the dwelling and property on which it sits to the surveyed boundaries of the lot in question, and

about a third of your property taxes go toward public infrastructure within your municipality (the other two thirds to policing and education levies). Your income taxes, sales tax, and any other stipend you hand over to the government in part goes toward financing public infrastructure at a county and national level. To a certain extent, it is all your property, not necessarily within your grasp or immediate control, but you have the right to say how you'd like it handled (once every four years). According to Elections Canada, in 1867, the year of our nation', 73% of people cast a ballot. By 2011 only 61% cast a ballot. This may seem a marginal divide, however, it can safely be stated that our vote, in essence, our singular 'staging' for 'change' on a political level generally amounts to disappointment in the recognition that political representation is far too dispersed, politicians too few, on account of the Fewer Politicians act, the merger of municipalities and hence less representation per head, and the centralization of government

All properties in Ontario are assessed by the third party non-profit organization Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. They evaluate 4.7 million properties in Ontario alone. The evaluation of property is part of a top down hierarchy to determine who owes what to live where. The provincial government passes legislation, sets assessment policies and determines education tax rates. MPAC determines current value assessments and classifications for all properties in Ontario. Municipalities determine their budgets, set municipal tax rates and collect property taxes. The Assessment Review Board, an independent tribunal, hears assessment appeals They should, if they aren't already, be very busy. What we get for what we pay for in the suburbs, leaves a lasting bitterness.

Property is zoned according to its use and this decides the tax rate that will be applied to each. There are seven major property classes: residential, multi-residential, commercial, industrial, pipeline, farm, managed forests and optional classes or sub-classes that allow for mixed use. The Real Estate board weighs what MPAC tells them against what they think the market will handle. There are three common approaches for determining the

current value of any property: the *sales comparison approach*, the *cost approach* and the *income approach*. *Sales comparison* considers five main areas in evaluation: location, lot dimensions, living area, age of the property, all adjusted for quality of construction. The *cost approach* is simple: current value of land + cost of improvements - depreciation = value of property. The *income approach* analyzes future benefits as in a hotel, office or apartment building.

Given elements can also increase or decrease the assessed value of your property. These include: traffic pattern; proximity to a golf course, hydro corridor, railway or green space; and whether or not the property is located on a corner lot.

The home-buyer is at least three steps away from their product whether it is used or new. The realtor - MPAC - the city - and the developer. Buyers are often so under-educated in value assessment themselves, they scarce have questions, only what it is going to cost them to live there. It seems an appropriate strategy therefore to understand the qualifiers of value and the debts of cost at the outset of design and building, long before the buyer is involved. This is typically not the case. Designers, builders and the potential owners should be all complicit in understanding the differences between "value" and "cost". We have come to understand a little of value assessment, and much of the criteria is note worthy. Value of course can be reduced to the simple idea of: how much can I get from a given exchange. Cost, may or may not reflect this. Aesthetic quality, general well being, and how the residents feel about living there, namely, anything qualitative is rarely taken into consideration with price comparison. We must re-evaluate the top down price fixing that we are all accustomed to. In recent probes of Canadian property value for instance, it was estimated that inaccuracies in determining value can be as great as 30% off the mark. To keep the cost of living low, and the value high we must keep private living space small but effective, keep them in close proximity to all amenities, including: parkland, green space, and transit hubs. We must design mixed and multi unit-residential space with retail, and

other sub classes integrated within for income potential. We should share parking, demand less road, live closer together, share utilities as best we can, densify housing and all development to an appropriate and elegant degree, and let parkland go wild, all to lessen the cost of improving municipal infrastructure and maintenance. In short we must provide spaces where people do not want nor need to leave.

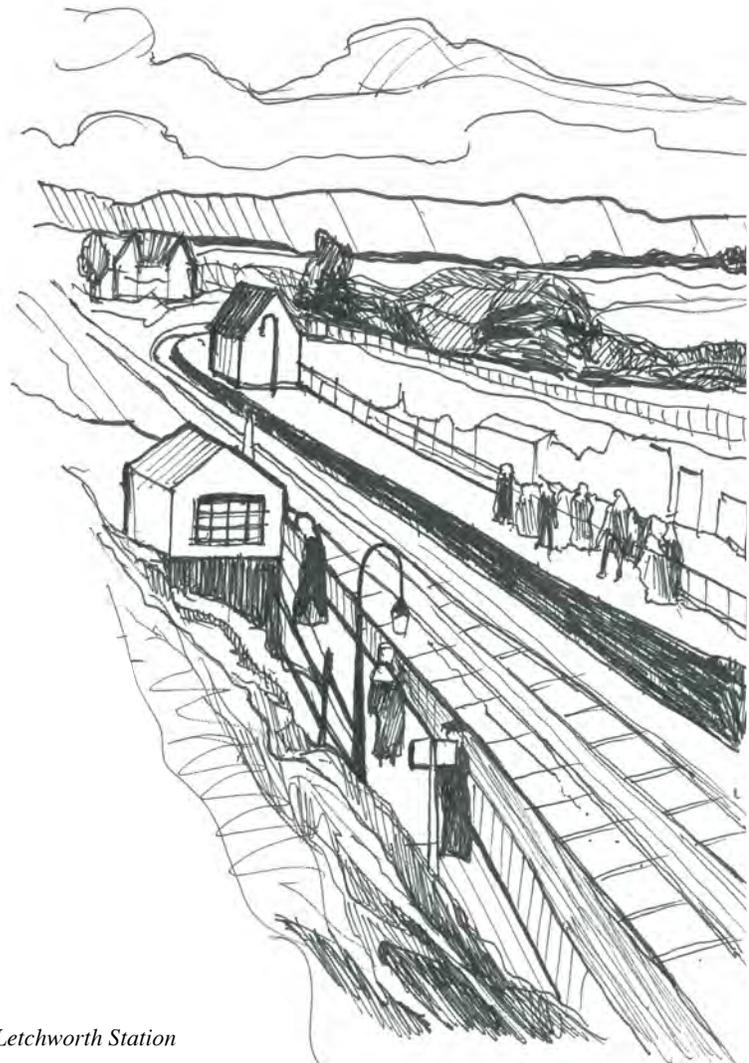


Illustration 29: sketch of Spencer Gore's *Letchworth Station*

### 3.4: Problem

*For the first time in history, people are systematically building meaningless places*  
Eugene Victor Walter, *Placeways*

**P**eople have long been at the mercy of planners. We look to them to know where we can live and how. We now can envision what a middle-income life looks like for instance, compared to those on extreme poles of the socio-economic map. Planning as a discipline has, in essence, become psycho-social mapping. We make assumptions that wealthy people live in large, noble houses on ample lots, while the poor live in apartment tenements or social-housing co-operatives. In plain terms, our dwellings and lifestyles can be measured in sizes Small, Medium, Large, and Extra-Large. ``

That is until you meet the inhabitants from any one demographic, and suddenly all assumption is washed away by the well spring of humanity. This study began with a gamut of assumptions, one namely that like people live like lives, if you've met one suburban dweller you've met them all. Inherent in this projection of reality is the problem of planning. That like people *want* to live like lives. These sweeping generalizations lend power and privilege to planner and policy makers, and a simple move of suburban design you've branded and persecuted an enormous number into a sect, a sect of middle class mentality, which in time they begin to relate themselves to. I make this much money, so I can live here and not there in such and such arrangement. We are conditioned into certain types of people, whether we are aware of it or not, by planning. So much of how we behave stems from where we live and where we come from. We can't have our homes and the neighborhoods that they sit within to be the sole criterion for statistical analysis of who we are. This is a distinction that should be clarified, that who we are and how we behave are two fundamentally different things. We can't allow Inhabitation to imply habituation. If we do, then there is no hope to emerge from our present condition. The Great Blight of Dullness in Jane Jacobs wording is indeed a surreptitious force, that seethes its way into our bones,

latent and heavy, lethargic. And there it sits, content by our defeat, we are ambivalent and stationed. The danger of succumbing to our conditioning that we become, ineffective powerhouses, alive and whirring, but with no force or function, a clutch that won't catch.

Implicit in Suburban planning is functional zoning. This is not an innocent instrument by Leon Krier's accounts, "it has been the most effective means in destroying the infinitely complex social and physical fabric of pre-industrial urban communities, or urban democracy and culture" (Frampton, 2002). By Stuart Brand's estimates, "zoning quells life, it sticks you in a place where nothing ever changes. Its time to look at zoning reform, based on given neighborhood credentials. Different locales, different "genius-loci", carry with them different potentials for place making. The strictures of top-down ruling have acted as impediments for efforts of renewal.

The trend for 'city planning' in the last many generations has seen municipalities' issue huge tracts of land to speculators and grant them free reign over design and construction. Councils love 2000 sq.ft single family dwellings on 1/16 acre lots. They all but justify and guarantee wider infrastructure. It is a plan for progress. It's no great surprise that the horror of many suburban plans comes by the approval of dedicated political representatives and public officials.

Pamela Blais, is a planner turned policy maker and in her book *Perverse Cities* she reveals that despite planner's best efforts in Canada to encourage mixed-use urban forms that would curb sprawl, down the hall of the same municipal offices, finance advisors were concocting instruments simultaneously that would encourage and subsidize sprawl...a situation was created, "in which planning and pricing policies were at loggerheads." She says, "the vast majority of population and employment growth is ... in outer suburbs, in the form of low-density single-use suburbs on former farms and natural areas. The amount of land required for each person and job has been increasing at a rate double that of population growth. She states that car ownership has increased to nearly 19 million in 2004 in Canada

and steadily over the past 40 years, and that transit use has stayed constant at 11 percent of all urban kilometers traveled. She advises, that for all of these reasons, "it is increasingly necessary to refocus and redouble efforts to address urban sprawl (by directing growth to central and accessible locations), and to improve the local living context." For decades now, planners have been trying to put an end to urban sprawl from the *ecosystem planning* movement of the 1970's, to *sustainable development* in the 1980s and most recently, "*smart growth*" governments. Had these efforts been successfully widespread in thought, word and deed, we could be living in dramatically different environments. She claims that , ultimately it is the result of four key decisions that shape urban development patterns: location, how much land, how much building and mode of travel. She claims that, "the prices charged for the property and related services rarely if ever reflect their actual costs. Moreover, they act precisely in a manner that encourages the overconsumption of land, building, and transportation and discourages the efficient use of these resources." Her charge and this author agrees, is to: Re-urbanize, Densify, Mix, and Create Centers. We will add one more tenet of 'De-growth' to compensate for what we have already lost. She instructs that urban density in Canada fell 33 percent since 1971, and to rein back sprawl, we need to think spatially about which we are proposing. The split-rate tax tactic in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1979/80 made the tax rate on land five times that applied to structures. What effect it had was, "a marked increase in commercial building activity in the center of the city compared to the suburbs and towns. By her account, "it is the decisions, made by developers, builders, homeowners, business owners, employees, families and institutions, made millions of times daily, that over time, determine the shape of our cities." The baton is not carried alone by planners, it seems they have much less influence than we give them guff for. We are all complicit in the bringing about a more efficient allocation of space and pass the baton in relay from designer to developer, to builder to home owner to public collective We are all in the same race, we need to be sure we are running in the right direction.

### 3.5: Suggestion

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*We must have infinite faith in each other. If we have not, we must never let it leak out that we have not...When I hear a grown man or woman say, "Once I had faith in man, now I have not, " I am inclined to ask, Who are you whom the world has disappointed? Have not you disappointed the world? There is the same ground for faith now that ever there was... The mason asks but a narrow shelf to spring his brick from; man requires only an infinitely narrower one to spring the arch of faith from.*

Henry David Thoreau - *Walden*

**B**rian Avery, architect and author of *Wilderness City*, devised in 1993, a housing scheme called ATH (Advance Technology Housing) to address the problems of suburban growth. He mandated most of what is central to more ecologically sound and more livable communities: smaller residences, walkable and varied mixed-use collectives. Avery's has been called a 'new-old' approach drawing from mixed-use communities made popular in Victorian, England. He remarks that the creation of suburban gardens, public parks and garden cities as we know them today, are all attempts, "like our famous fondness for pets, at keeping man in touch with nature". Avery's words suggest a poetic irony to our relationship with nature. Our attempts absurd. The 'world' is doing everything in its power to prevent it. It wants you to be human and concern yourself with human affairs. Nature was physically held back in Medieval times, a force to reckon with. Today, it is all but under our boot. We no longer contained it, we train and groom it. It has become our pet as well. However, Avery believes that:

*the myth and legend of dark forests and fearsome encounters still resides in the dark recesses of our minds (and) it is such a stubborn part of our culture that it cannot be ignored...Environment and Ecological suggest little of the real torment that afflicts us, for there are deep structures to man's existence which bind him to the natural world..the foot trodden paths that lead through the defensive gates to the social spaces at the heart of the town (Wilderness City, 2011).*

Nature must be allowed to infiltrate into the very core of human endeavor and be intimately tied to our daily life as Avery insightfully recognizes, from the "darkest

recesses of our minds". From the darkness and depravity of our private enclaves to the enlightenment possible in the *polis*, it must be ever present in all of the mind of the *animal laborans*, the *homo faber* and especially in momentum for the *vita activa*.

Suburbs have moved from being conscious to unconscious efforts, however small, to bring us in closer communion with Man and Nature. This was their primary target, and despite the listlessness of our modern equivalent, we argue that this can and still should be the aim.

The spatial arrangement that man devises for his home and the home of his tribe, has until modern times reflected the qualities of the site on which it sits. How near to a running stream, the warmth of the sun on good earth, the materials from which to build, were all criteria in man's settlement. The *meaning* that emerged from such a settlement was born of earth, of space and time. Barrhaven is young no doubt and still needs time to settle, but it already occupies space on earth. Our only hope is to make deliberate compensatory moves to re-connect this suburb with its earth and the space and time it occupies. We must bring it back to both the 'Country' and back to the 'Town' by careful manipulation, and gradual force, to re-'define' it as an inspired place to live. By Frampton's account, this is entirely possible, but it is the idea of feasibility that stands in our way. He decries, "what we lack is the political, legislative and cultural will to establish patterns of low-rise, high density settlements as a new and necessary form of development, and to outlaw contemporary forms of dispersed suburban development..."(Frampton, 1992). This is a difficult situation with no easy fix. We must dramatically change the built environment of the suburbs to return Man to harmony, and out of discord. Unlike Paul Ricoeur, in his essay, *Universal Civilization and National Cultures*, we argue that this "con-cord" of Man and Nature can and will succeed at a regional level not a universal one. The "universal" of the Modern and post-modern context should be rejected as *sin qua non*. We must instead, tie people directly to time and place with clear connection by a 'locale-ness' with systemic integrity.

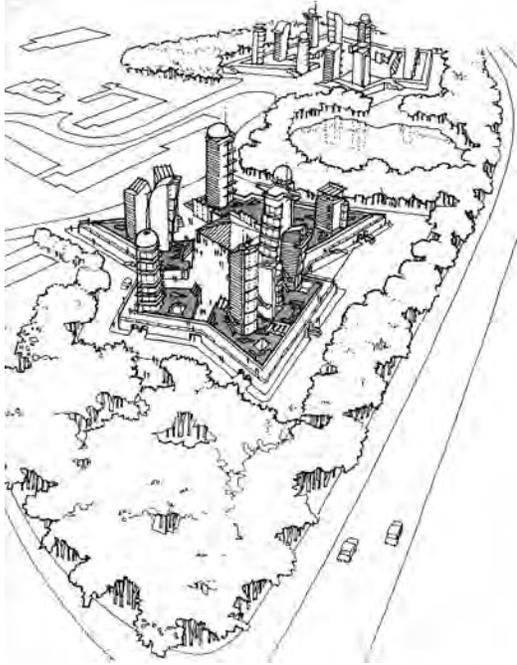


Illustration 30: Wilderness Hamlet: aerial view, 2000, from *Wilderness Cities*, Brian Avery

The following 're-built' proposal is a merger of many thoughts and influences and we have referenced a great deal of them in these pages. It is the projection of an 'ideal town' built in reverse. As Frampton advised, this is a "compensatory" approach and we will strike at the heart of the problem: at a dead end, on a nowhere street, in a nowhere town. We have no 'tabula rasa' from which to start, nor should we. We will make do with what we have been handed, a given set of conditions. This was a bedroom community, and we must sleep in the bed we made.

The first principles of Howard's 'Rurisville' seem to fit perfectly into the spatial conditions Barrhaven has found itself in. Like Letchworth, and Hampstead suburbs, Barrhaven is bisected by a rail line, surrounded by a green belt and in close proximity to agricultural fields. What is proposed is a radical shift in the allocation of space, a 're-placing' of the lost *res-publica*, a re-appropriation of lands from solely private to collective ownership, no more back yards, back alleys and so on, as Unwin demanded, but let's take his complaint one step further and do away with the "wretched prefix" 'side': side walks and side walls, and configure buildings to stand together in confidence with Nature and with the public on

all sides. We will replace the medieval walls, imaginary or otherwise, of the finite city so to work against physical boundaries. Barrhaven needs focus, it needs public 'centres' not shopping 'centers'. Residents need defined spaces that function on a neighborhood scale, servicing say 5000-8000 persons daily. These spaces must allow for work, education, and leisure that inspires residents to more involved, collective and "active" community life.

The project focuses in on a cul-de-sac in the older quarter of Barrhaven, that sits adjacent to the rail line, within walking distance to the existing commercial center and the agricultural boundary. This is a building complex intended as a model for future undertakings of 'suburban renewal'. This project specifically looks at one cluster of buildings but imagines more to come and act as neighborhood nodal points. What were private single unit domestic "dwellings", are now brought together. The space between now shared and supportive. It performs as a community of buildings that stand together, mutually beneficial, and operate in harmony both bio-climatically, socially, and economically, as F.L Wright inspired, "nature works on a method of all for each and each for all... The strain this is made on one point bears on every arch and foundation of the structure... There is a perfect solidarity. Nature is a subtle as she is strong" (Huxtable, 2004). This complex therefore is collectively owned, and locally administered. The hope here is that increasingly localized government be pursued, so that taxes set to work in the very neighborhoods from whence they came, and the public purse is directly accessible. City amalgamation be damned. A board is elected to manage the affairs of the building and its lands in public perpetuity. Property values and leases are intended to be offered at substantially reduced rates than current markets afford in an effort to democratize space, act as example of appropriate pricing and allow people to take back the land together at shared cost and by the benefit of collective ownership. Onus is put on the residents of the property to make it work. This could be seen as a potential weakness of the plan, but however inflated the ambitions, this author believes in the importance that the user be also owner. All public spaces are in fact,

but not treated as such. Here it should be made abundantly clear that 'this is yours' and you are accountable for it.

The project imagines a three to four storey structure built on the existing foundations of the houses it replaces, a reference to the evolution of human conditioning by spatial reconstruction. The mid-rise represents a balance and negotiation between both the merits of the horizontal individual plan and the vertical collective high rise. Floors will be divided between leased retail, social and office space on the lower floors and owned private domestic flats on the upper floors, as in a traditional urban format. This will guarantee perpetual activity (within reasonable hours) by the density of people, the mixture of use, and the varied schedules of the inhabitants as Jane Jacobs encourages. The land surface is reserved for public interest. The body elect will make the decisions as per the best interests of the immediate community. Community garden plots are encouraged and reserved on the sunny side of structures to optimize their performance. Resources in education and a bank of tools will help connect neighbors to cultivation and self-sustenance. The remaining green space within the development will be, by professional design, divided into minimally maintained parkland, and maximally protected 'wild space'. Native trees and shrubs are planted to encourage its return to a natural state and should connect neighborhoods seamlessly to tie the urban form together. Roof top gardens provide for the needs of the private owner to fill as much of the diet as the family palette allows. Private dwellings will exceed no more than 1000 sq/ft, with allowable exception for particularly large families. All flats are, as implied, single storey. Utilities are shared between owners, and supplemented by leased space beneath. This means, shared laundry facilities, hot water and energy. The second floor is retained for leased office space, allowing workers to be closer to home, but still committed to productivity in closed quarters. All work- from- home arrangements are encouraged. The first floor is retained for leased workshop, experimental 'open programme' space, where small start up businesses and personal craft hobbies to be developed.

Otherwise, this space is leased for community outreach, social programs, education, and space for study and private seminars. It is hoped that the 'open-programme' of these areas will empower the user back into confidence with themselves through creativity and the opportunity to do, as Brand suggests of "low road buildings", "almost anything they want." On the same floor, gallery and performance space is reserved for personal and organized presentations. Leased retail space on the main floor encourages the employment of locals for local gain. Products and services manufactured near-by (if at all possible). Retail is intended to service both the working force and private residents of the building, but also should aim to attract the immediate community to establish a local economy. One imagines a grocery, pharmacy, tavern, and religious space. The length of the building is tied together by a double loaded corridor that runs through the first two floors. Such immediacy to social interaction, was cemented in Le Corbusier's Unité and beforehand in Moisei Ginzburg's Narkomfin project. Here again, a "social condenser" made manifest in the suburbs.

As a regional community, many will still reference the metropolis of Ottawa, therefore the complex connects residents to a transit platform that runs light-rail service every 15 minutes to Ottawa's downtown, twenty kilometers away. It is the master plan of this project to optimize existing infrastructure and thereby place the rail as the central spine to which all develop first refers. No development will feasibly exceed 1200m from the line, reasonably walkable within 30 minutes. Anything existing beyond this boundary will steadily be removed and replaced in closer context and optimal density to the central spine. It is imagined that along and adjacent to the tracks, similar building complexes will arise. This space, rendered less desirable, by its proximity to the rails, will act as commercial, public and social space for each respective neighborhood, and thus create a barrier and threshold to the 'attraction' of a developing rail system. A small hotel near the platform, can accommodate visiting family, or colleagues in 'a quaint room in the garden'. The building connects to an elaborate network of trails and space to explore, linking neighborhoods to

nature, agriculture and intrigue, activity and escape within easy distance. Trails run through vast forests and meadows, that separate residential enclaves from high speed traffic at the periphery. Road infrastructure at these points are to be widened and speed increased. It is our intent to legislate a minimum separation of 50m between a residence and a 60km road and a 400m separation from any 100km road. Additionally, private parking near homes incurs lofty fees, and a sophisticated fee structure and system is designed to limit all driving in-town limits. Public parking at negligible cost (included in taxes) is offered as an incentive to park your vehicle further from home in sublimely sized parking silos sited at the periphery off collector roads. One of the greatest impediments to successful 'communities' is the ease and access of personal transport. Cars are useless unless you can go fast in them and they are near at hand. For those who commute or need a trip away, existing arterial roads are made more efficient by: removing all inappropriate traffic lights, increasing speeds, and reduced vehicular density. Any and all 'quick trips to the store' are made increasingly obsolete. Regular, reliable, electric, 20 passenger public transit vehicles circuit through residential quarters, silently and every few minutes delivering you to larger transit hubs, commercial centers or to your personal parked vehicle.

The mystery of wild forest at the edges and activity at the core, will incite and secure the identity of this suburb. It will function by its own energy to produce authentic individuals of a collective unit, built by the best of Man for the best of Nature, both Town and Country. This 'neighborhood unit' is a small part in working system, a microcosm within a microcosm, a city in miniature. The needs for the *animal laborans* met in shelter and sustenance, for the *homo faber*, space to create, and for the '*vita-activa*', community to encourage public and political demonstrations through lecture, arts, and debate. At the heart of this cul-de-sac, formerly a 'dead-end', is a mighty tree among rock and water, here is Nature embraced by Man. What was the "bottom of the bag" and once thought empty, one finds a remaining kernel of life.

**Post-script**

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**Andrew**

I recently discovered among my childhood school work, (that my mother felt inclined to keep), a report titled, "What is a Community?" I was 8 years old when it was assigned. The report was geared to help students research and identify indicators of different types of communities, namely how those in the city differ from those in town and country. A city child and a farm child would probably do different things. A city child, I noted could, "go to the park, go to the mall, take a subway, and go to plays". A farm child instead could, "play hide and seek in the corn, ride horses, feed cows, harvest vegetables, and pick apples." A later section had us pretend our family was moving to another community, and what kind of community would you like it to be? I stated, "I would like to move to the county (misspelled or misinterpreted) because it is peaceful, I hope there are lots of people to play with." While I didn't perhaps recognize the inherent contradiction, it reveals a desire, even in a young boy, for the best of both worlds. The teacher, Mrs. McDougall felt I deserved a score of 13/20 on the 20 odd page report, explaining in her notes, "very brief answers, some coloring to finish, I'm sure you have the ability to do more, and don't settle for less than your best!" Despite the grade, in deciding where to find a community, I have since proceeded to settle for less than my best as it were. I have since moved to the country, where my wife, baby and I have found a new home, in a single room school house built in 1893, a few miles from the family farm. It has a lot of character and leaves a lot of work to be done. Finding home, I've decided is about finding more "than your best", it is in knowing what you need, and giving up all else, it is the people, and their humanity that fill the space between walls. Architecture is the sacrifice in labor, in work, the building of nourishing spaces, and action, the service in the making of meaningful places. A home is an individual in a collective community. It can't stand apart from it. They must serve and celebrate one another, with humility and respect. This means "settling for less than your best," reserving space for your neighbor, the land on which it sits, and the generations of stories to come.

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