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Built for Profit: Sources of Form in the
Canadian Residential Built Environment,
1900 - 1960

by

Alexander F. Cross

B.A. Carleton University 1986

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Canadian Studies

Carleton University

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"Built for Profit: Sources of Form in the Canadian
Residential Built Environment, 1900-1960"

submitted by Alexander Cross, B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

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Thesis Supervisor

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Ottawa, Ontario

April 1994

Abstract

This thesis is about form of housing and communities. Twentieth-century Canadian history produced social needs relative to housing to which the various sectors of society responded. The built environment which resulted reflected the relative effectiveness of each of the sectors: the architectural and planning professions, social reformers, governments and private business.

It is argued that private builders and developers were able to seize control of the land development and house building industries so that the form of the built environment was decided by these business people and the housing consumers to whom they naturally catered. Businesses were single-minded and skilful at operating their companies, and willing to respond to mass housing and consumer demands. Architects were preoccupied with elite housing and professional concerns. Social reform was dominated by conservative forces. Governments were unwilling to act or take responsibility. As a result they lost the initiative for creation of the built environment to the business sector.

Progressive and conservative streams are identified in the whole process that created houses and communities. Their presence is demonstrated in a comparison of a highly designed

new town, Don Mills and a minimally designed subdivision, Elmvale Acres. The ascendancy of the conservative stream is explained in large part by the inherent conservatism of Canadian society.

Questions of appropriateness and morality are raised and solutions suggested.

relative to these needs and to the two streams.

1) The Need for Improved Design

In Ottawa and Toronto and in their surrounding areas, the evidence of the nineteenth century can still be seen in extant, neo-classical, vernacular buildings of stone, brick and wood construction. These buildings took their form, initially, from the accepted vernacular, based on the culture and learned building practices of the early settlers, from the climate and geography of Ontario and from the available materials, lime stone in Ottawa, brick in Toronto. They were, probably, the last buildings to derive their form from non-market-driven influences.

Urbanization and the establishment of a secure middle class brought styles based in history, tradition and the picturesque movement such as: Gothic Revival, Italianate, Romanesque, Second Empire and ultimately, the Queen Anne style. These styles came laden with values associated with the aesthetic theories of writers and critics such as John Ruskin, Viollet-le-Duc and A.W.N. Pugin, and house buyers demanded these styles for many of those reasons. Magazines, such, as *Godey's Ladies Book* disseminated the styles. The books of Andrew Jackson Downing and, later, George Palliser provided the plans and elevations, and the writings of such as Catharine Beecher promoted the lifestyle of the male-led,

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I would like to express my thanks to Kelly Crossman of the Department of Art History at Carleton University who supervised my work on this thesis. His enthusiasm, patience and wise counsel helped me to persist in a daunting task. In addition, I would like to thank Douglas Franklin of Heritage Canada who introduced me to modern and vernacular architecture which led directly to the subject of this thesis. Thanks also go to Charles Gordon of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology for opening my eyes to the social problems associated with housing form. The patience and understanding of the School of Canadian Studies made it possible for me, a mature student with health problems, to even consider this task. Special thanks go to Macklin Hancock, Tibor Gatszegi, Jean-Louis Lamarche and Ian Johns whose verbal history of the house-building business lifted the mists of time.

**Built for Profit: Sources of Form in the Canadian
Residential Built Environment, 1900-1960.**

Introduction

**The customer may not always be right but he's always
the customer.**

Popular Saying

**The Canadian residential built environment is all
around us. It is where we live our lives, and the importance
of its form, therefore, cannot be over-estimated. One would
think that anything so vital would have responded to Canadian
society's collective needs, that its creation would have been
placed in the hands of society's most trusted representatives
and that its design would have been done by society's most
talented professionals. Quite to the contrary, its creation
has been consigned by society, largely, to chance, to the
vagaries of popular tastes and to those whose main motivation
has been the accumulation of personal profits.**

**This thesis is about the sources of form of housing and
communities, those forces which have determined the shape,
style, configuration, the whole visual aspect of the Canadian
residential built environment. These sources or determinants
of form must be sought in Canada's history and in the nature**

and culture of the people who populated the country. In twentieth-century Canada, certain social needs arose relative to housing, which required attention of a more or less urgent degree. Some of these needs were, clearly, exigencies, and others would, more clearly, be termed wants; but for the purposes of this thesis, they will all be termed needs.

There was the need for quantities of housing units, necessitated by a growing population, in and around the cities, due to natural causes early in the century and by immigration at mid-century. Housing was also lost to demolition and condemnation as unfit for habitation. The need for improved design always ran parallel to health reform, but it was also necessitated by changing ways-of-life and the requirement of architecture to fit the mood of its times. Increased costs of construction labour and materials created a need for better methods and materials so that housing costs could be controlled. Stylistic and functional demands also called for better methods and new materials. There was a need for housing to be affordable, made necessary by the growing consciousness of living conditions in the cities and their surrounding areas and the realization that decent housing was beyond the reach of much of the population. An emerging affluent middle-class created a need for satisfaction of lifestyles and symbols of status. Urban renewal was needed to deal with the deteriorating

cities, caused by industrialization and urbanization of the population.¹ Finally, businesses needed opportunities to accumulate profits. In a free-enterprise system the creators of goods and jobs had to be healthy.

This thesis will argue that form of the residential built environment resulted from the fact that only some of the foregoing needs received effective responses from society. It will be seen that Canadian society, in its ordering of priorities, responded most effectively to the needs of private business for profitability and to the various demands of the housing consumers. Private builders were enabled to seize the initiative for control of the creation of housing in Canada, and these businesses, quite naturally, were influenced, inordinately, by the source of their profits, the middle-class house buyer. Therefore, the central theme of this thesis must be the overwhelming influence of consumer tastes on the form of the residential built environment, through their approval or withholding of approval of what the builders offered for sale to this anonymous market. Secondary to the theme will be the influence of taste makers and social reformers on the tastes of the consumers and the direct contributions, however minor, of governments and design professions to the form of the residential built environment (see Chart #1).

Chapter I will be an investigation of that built

Chart I

environment as an artifact created in response to the needs of Canadian society, and reflecting the character of that society. It will be shown that the form of the built environment is, largely, the result of two streams of process which exist in North America. For the purposes of this thesis, they will be termed modernist progressive and traditional conservative. The modernist progressive stream is characterized by supporters of the Modernist trend in architectural form. Politically its supporters range from progressive to radical. Garden cities, new towns, Arts and Crafts, modern architecture and material feminism will be seen to be movements advocated by the supporters of this stream. Many of its supporters were located to the left in the political spectrum, and they usually favoured planning, professional design and government involvement. The traditional conservative stream is, on the other hand, characterized by supporters of traditional forms in architecture. They were also supporters of a conservative view of politics and of laissez-faire relationships of governments toward business. Generally, supporters of the traditional conservative stream were not in favour of movements, but embraced teachings which coincided with their traditional and conservative view of life. As a result, they accepted the Beecher/Downing view of gender, independence and self-sufficiency. Their concept of the residential built

environment will be seen to be the single-family detached house, isolated on a large lot in suburbia, and housing a male-led, female-dominated household. It will be seen that the traditional conservative stream prevailed, because of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the main players in Canadian society and the basic conservatism and frontier mentality of the Canadian people.

The second chapter will deal with the responses of the main players: the architectural and planning professions, social reform, governments and private business, to the needs of Canadian society, already enunciated, relative to housing and communities. Their strengths and weaknesses will be shown, to explain the varying degrees of effectiveness of these sectors of society in influencing the form of the residential built environment. It will be seen that the architectural profession never effectively asserted the design prerogative in Canadian domestic architecture. Social reform was only partially successful in its efforts to bring about aesthetic, health, accommodation and lifestyle reform in the shape of Canadian communities. Governments abdicated their role of guidance in the shaping of the residential form, and its contributions to that form were often counterproductive to a useful and humane living environment. Businesses, in the course of operating profitable concerns, effectively took the design and production prerogative away

from the other sectors of society, and created the bulk of the built environment. They used better methods, a business-like approach, a sympathetic attitude toward consumer demands and an ability to marshall support of Canadian governments and their citizens to the business agenda. Since businesses were greatly influenced by the perceived tastes of their customers, the housing consumers, the large part of Canadian residential form came to reflect the requirements of only the middle classes of society. Good architectural principles and social responsibility to the collective society were often the casualties of this situation. Despite the faults in design, Canadian housing consumers were, generally, satisfied with the houses they bought.

Chapter III will take the opportunity, presented by the new town of Don Mills, in North York Township and the Campeau subdivision at Elmvale Acres, in Ottawa, to compare two contemporary developments, one of which was highly designed architecturally and professionally planned and the other which had no professional design and minimal planning. Don Mills was a product of the modernist progressive stream. Elmvale Acres was a product of the traditional conservative stream. Both were projects of private enterprise, and the ultimate goal for each was profitability; but one was the culmination of one hundred years of modern, professional

design and town planning, and the other was one more step in a tradition of American builder/designer entrepreneurship and suburbanism. Nevertheless, despite their differences, both had to respond, formally, to market-driven considerations. They were aimed mainly at middle-class markets and, therefore, each responded in varying degrees to the lifestyles and symbolism demands of that group. Don Mills and Elmvale Acres, clearly, accomplished much of what they set out to do. Nevertheless, both represented the continuing, relentless denial of solutions to certain Canadian housing problem, and, in this regard, they had much in common. Though Don Mills illustrated how much better the developments of the 1950s could have been, it still poses the question of what essential ingredients are missing from Canadian responses to housing needs.

The last chapter will deal with the many unresolved problems of Canadian housing form, despite the obvious satisfaction of much of the population with their living environment. It will be seen that the weaknesses of the architectural and planning professions have resulted in a built environment, the form of which reflects only a narrow societal taste and need, that of the middle-class. Stylistic and formal alternatives, such as group housing, have not been adequately considered. Government inaction and acceptance of the business agenda has made for a very poor performance by

town planners. Compact communities, a growing necessity, have not received sufficient support from governments. A plea is made for strengthening of planning against business which has always opposed any form of regulation. The morality of a built environment dominated by business and the middle-class consumer will be questioned. Business has, quite naturally, indulged middle-class formal and functional demands, but it has never been able to produce affordable housing for all Canadians. Possible alternatives to the past and present ordering of society's priorities will be put forward. Greater involvement of governments and the design and planning professions will be called for.

1) A Note on Sources

Much of Canadian history has been shared with the United States of America. Canadian geographer Cole Harris wrote, in 1966:

The majority of Canadians now live in the same environment as most Americans -the same shopping plazas, rejuvenated central business districts, suburban sprawl, high-rise apartments, amid turn-of-the-century housing, traffic jams and throughways.²

In a study such as this, it is impossible not to use American sources, such are the similarities between our two nations and the comparative dearth of Canadian studies. Care must be taken to use only that material which applies to both societies. In social reform the Canadian experience trails

the American in time. A more mature American architectural profession contributed more to aesthetic reform. In this thesis, it will be assumed, I think rightly, that American movements passed easily across the border and had a strong influence.

2) Scope

Chronologically, the scope of this thesis will be from 1900 to 1960. It is mainly concerned with form in the Ontario cities of Toronto and Ottawa where a common British ancestry has created cultural similarities. All forms of housing will be considered, as well as the surrounding communities and infrastructure of roads, community amenities and shopping centres.

3) Methodology

Form of residential architecture can be explained by aesthetic, functional or socio-cultural influences and these, probably, cover the useful methods of study. The research for this thesis turned up almost nothing in the way of a study to explain the form of twentieth-century, residential architecture based on aesthetic theory or architectural principles. Form as function is best covered by Christopher Alexander in his book *A Pattern Language* and in his collaboration with Serge Chermayeff in *Community and Privacy*,

where form is, strictly, explained by functional necessities. There is an abundance of work supporting the socio-cultural explanation for form in housing, starting with Amos Rapoport's book *House Form and Culture*, where he contends that the built environment is a result of vernacular imperatives such as: culture of the builder, climate and available materials and skills. Gwendolyn Wright in her book *Moralism and the Model Home* and Clifford Edward Clark, Jr. in his book *The American Family Home* both offer societal changes as the determinants of form. This thesis supports their view.

The socio-cultural approach to the study of form in popular style housing became logical to the author during an earlier investigation of vernacular architecture in Canada. It seemed that form could best be explained as springing from the culture of the people who build houses, or, more appropriately for an urban, twentieth-century society, from the culture of those who influence the builders of houses. In this thesis, the taste of the consumer is a large part of the culture since tastes, it is argued, are determined by what influences the consumer is naturally willing to embrace. Culture is modified by other factors, as is also argued in this thesis, even including government actions and the examples of professional design.

Research in this study began with a review of secondary

sources to establish support for or dissent from the thesis. Primary sources were then investigated, at considerable length, to provide the evidence in support of the thesis. This included, in addition to written sources, interviews with important players in Canadian housing, surveys on foot of the built environment and from long personal experience. The author has worked for many years in the construction industry.

Footnotes to the Introduction

- 1) Paul Rutherford, "Tomorrow's Metropolis: The Urban Reform Movement in Canada, 1880-1920". *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History* eds. Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan E.J. Artibise Carleton Library No.109, Toronto, 1979.
- 2) Cole Harris, "The Myth of the Land in Canadian Nationalism". *Nationalism in Canada*, ed. Peter Russell, Toronto: University League for Social Reform, 1966, p.39. I did an extensive study of American influences on Canadian architecture for the core course in the Institute of Canadian Studies and found them to be strong and pervasive. It would be surprising if Canada did not look like the United States. Support for this view can be found in *Progressive Architecture* editorial by J.M. Dixon (September, 1972) and *Architectural Review* (April, 1942), also in Nikolaus Pevsner *New Buildings in the Commonwealth*, ed J.M. Richards (London, 1961) pp.5-16.

Chapter 1

The Built Environment

The Canadian, twentieth-century, residential built environment, particularly that part represented by the developments at Don Mills and Elmvale Acres is the result of the responses of two streams of process which began in the nineteenth century. One stream, modernist and progressive, sprang from modern thought in the design of building, and the planning of towns and cities. The other issued from the North American tradition of builder/designers and the phenomenon of suburbanization, and is here referred to as a traditional and conservative stream. Although the two streams, occasionally, touched and left something of themselves in the other, they, mainly, flowed their independent courses. What was created by these streams is the artifact which remains to be studied and from which to draw conclusions.

Canadian society threw up certain social needs relative to housing and the two streams of process responded to these in varying degrees of effectiveness so that the form of the built environment tended to reflect one stream much more than the other. The built environment will be investigated

relative to these needs and to the two streams.

1) The Need for Improved Design

In Ottawa and Toronto and in their surrounding areas, the evidence of the nineteenth century can still be seen in extant, neo-classical, vernacular buildings of stone, brick and wood construction. These buildings took their form, initially, from the accepted vernacular, based on the culture and learned building practices of the early settlers, from the climate and geography of Ontario and from the available materials, lime stone in Ottawa, brick in Toronto. They were, probably, the last buildings to derive their form from non-market-driven influences.

Urbanization and the establishment of a secure middle class brought styles based in history, tradition and the picturesque movement such as: Gothic Revival, Italianate, Romanesque, Second Empire and ultimately, the Queen Anne style. These styles came laden with values associated with the aesthetic theories of writers and critics such as John Ruskin, Viollet-le-Duc and A.W.N. Pugin, and house buyers demanded these styles for many of those reasons. Magazines, such, as *Godey's Ladies Book* disseminated the styles. The books of Andrew Jackson Downing and, later, George Palliser provided the plans and elevations, and the writings of such as Catharine Beecher promoted the lifestyle of the male-led.

woman-dominated nuclear family, which would influence the form of the houses.¹ Platform frame construction based on the use of light 2" X 4" wood studs came into use, particularly in Ottawa, during the late nineteenth century, and small builders were ever-ready to materialize the houses from the plan books. Centretown, Sandy Hill and the north-eastern Glebe were filled with houses in these styles. The streets of central Toronto, the Grange and the Annex were similarly built-up to meet the demands of the house buyers.

In the mid-nineteenth century, an aesthetic reform movement arose in reaction to the historic styles and the machine-made aspects of housing elements and furnishings. It came to be known as the Arts and Crafts movement, and had its roots in the theories of John Ruskin and William Morris. The movement called for the setting aside of shoddy designs and production methods and replacing them with the hand-made craftsmanship of medieval times. An early manifestation of the movement was the Red House, built near London and designed for Morris by Philip Webb, in 1859. In accordance with Morris's aesthetic theories, it shunned historical architectural references, and looked past them to medieval craftsmanship. Structure and materials were to be truthfully rendered and ornamentation was to be only that which derived naturally from the structure of the building. With the establishment of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in

1887, the principles of the movement emerged as: simplicity of built form, attention to national and regional cultures, materials and climate, honest expression of materials and structure and a striving for user comfort, pleasure and convenience.²

Inspired by the Red House, British architects Philip Webb and Richard Norman Shaw developed an English Domestic Revival style which Shaw employed as the Queen Anne style at Bedford Park, near London, in the 1870s. This style was relatively free of revivalist characteristics and its frank expression, on the external elevations, of the functions of the rooms on the interiors, appealed to architects wanting a break with the past. American architects H.H. Richardson and Stanford White adopted the Queen Anne style, and modified it into the American Shingle Style, a rational architecture which greatly influenced Frank Lloyd Wright in the house he built for himself in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1889.

Arts and Crafts was a movement which constantly looked to the medieval past, but in its call for honest expression, simplicity of form and concern for the user, it was a sharp break with the past. When aesthetic reform in the Arts and Crafts movement ceased looking backward and looked to the future, a proto-modernism was born. British architects with roots in the past began using Arts and Crafts principles to produce houses that heralded a true modernism. Such were:

Charles Voysey, William Lethaby, M.H. Baillie-Scott, Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker. Sir Robert Lorimer, too, developed modern architecture based on the British vernacular. He was one of the major influences on Montreal architect Percy Eskine Nobbs.³

American Modernism in its early stages is synonymous with Frank Lloyd Wright. He was influenced, as was seen in the house he designed for himself in the Shingle Style, by H.H. Richardson and the English Domestic Revival. The Chicago Arts and Crafts movement also influenced him with its basic principles of aesthetics. Aside from these Wright would seem to be a self-made modernist and is, certainly, one of the pioneers of the world movement. While he was designing his Shingle Style house, he was formulating his first major contribution to American Modernism, the Prairie Style. This style, arguably the basis for the first truly modern house, would have few references to the past. The Japanese Pavilion at the 1893 Chicago Exposition provided Wright with his ideas for the wide sweep of eaves and the plan radiating from a central core. The emphasis on horizontality, open interior spaces, wide bands of windows, simple, organic ornamentation and easy relationship of interiors to the outdoors through numerous doors and terraces were all innovations by Wright. These, combined with massive chimneys, open planning and use of natural materials, would

find their way into the Ranch Style Bungalows of the 1950's. Aside from this, the Prairie Style had little further influence on popular housing. Wright's Canadian disciple, Francis C. Sullivan practiced architecture in Ottawa around the time of the First World War and into the 1920's. His Prairie Style house for Edward P. Connors, built in 1914-1915, still stands at 166 Huron Street as representative of the dozen or so houses he designed in Ottawa.⁴

The designs which Frank Lloyd Wright produced for *The Ladies' Home Journal*, beginning at the turn of the century, found their way to Canada and, no doubt, influenced at least the elite tastes. Of more importance to the residential built environment are his Usonian houses of the 1930s which would update the Prairie characteristics and present the middle-class house buyers with a house well suited to their emerging lifestyle requirements. Wright created this, the first modern bungalow, in 1936 and proposed to fill the suburban sprawl of "Broadacre City" with them. The city never got built (although its principle feature of individual houses on one acre lots was realized, somewhat modified, in the post-war suburban sprawl developments of the 1950s), but the Usonian design was influential in the ultimate Ranch Style Bungalow and other contemporary single-storey houses with open plans and expansive window walls. No doubt many of the ideas flowing through Wright's mind while he developed,

in 1936-1937, his ground-breaking Kaufmann house, called "Fallingwater", found their way into his Usonian designs. He recognized that changes were coming in the lifestyles of North Americans, and he designed for that less formal lifestyle and for the automobilization of the suburbs. Large, open living areas and small bedrooms were planned along with centrally located kitchens to suit modern families with their informal socializing and the housewife who insisted on participating in the socializing, while she worked. House were smaller so built-in closets and furniture and zoned activity areas were necessary. Wright devised innovative construction methods, such as concrete slab foundations, to further reduce the cost of these small houses. It was part of his interest, at that time, in the development of mass housing to meet the inevitable housing shortage. Outdoor living was emphasized and glass walls married the indoors to the outdoors. Better land use was accomplished by placing the blank sides of the house toward the street and to one side, close to the neighbouring boundary, thus presenting blind sides to traffic noise and prying eyes but creating private space on the open sides of the house. Not many Usonian houses were built before 1945, partly due to the rejection of the unique design by the Federal Housing Authority (F.H.A.), but Wright was preparing the housing industry for the Ranch Style Bungalows,

Split-Level and Contemporary houses of the 1950s, which would cover the North American landscape and in which the consumers would live their informal lifestyles.⁵ This was American Modernism's main contribution to the form of popular housing.

Just as Arts and Crafts principles influenced Frank Lloyd Wright, they also influenced the great pioneers of European Modernism, and just as Wright influenced the Europeans, they, in turn, influenced him. August Perret and Tony Garnier, the developers of modern reinforced concrete, both designed simple buildings with frank expression of materials and structure. Austrian, Otto Wagner employed iron and glass, stripped of ornamentation and with the structural elements clearly shown. Fellow Austrian, Adolf Loos designed buildings and interiors in unadorned cubic forms. In Germany, Peter Behrens worked with the industrial firm, A.E.G. to improve their over-all design from publications to buildings, and pointed the way to the Bauhaus. His Turbinen Fabrik, in Berlin, of 1908-1909, was a modern steel and glass building which pointed directly to the International Style. Also of great importance to the International Style was the work of De Stijl in Holland. Their emphasis on the straight line, clarity and order produced an architecture of flat roofs and plain walls. From out of the work of these modernist pioneers came the International Style architecture of Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier. These

architects would dominate professionally designed residential architecture in the important years after 1945. Gropius would direct the Harvard School of Design and Mies the Illinois Institute of Technology. Out of Harvard would come the designers of Don Mills, Macklin Hancock, Douglas Lee and John C. Parkin. Irving Grossman and Hart Massey would be indebted for their elite housing designs to the same European masters.⁶

Canadian Modernism was the recipient of architectural thought ranging from the Arts and Crafts movement to American and European Modernism. Modernism would be characterized by a rational architecture of metal and glass, open plans, revelation of structure and cubic forms, but it would not reach Canada until the 1930s.⁷ Arts and Crafts, however, did arrive quite early with Eden Smith, Percy Nobbs and Samuel Maclure. The work of these architects set high standards for the architectural profession. House design was an important part of the work of both Smith and Maclure, and Nobbs designed his own house in Montreal. Eden Smith is noted for the design inversion in his houses whereby the living spaces were placed at the rear and the kitchen at the street side.⁸ This layout would find use in the 1950s as a reflection of modern lifestyle needs, where the backyard replaced the front verandah as the important outdoor living area. It is not clear whether Smith was the direct influence in this. Percy

Nobbs, during the early twentieth century was the main advocate of a Canadian national architecture, in line with his Arts and Crafts beliefs. He was a prominent architectural theorist at McGill University and in the pages of the *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* (R.A.I.C.). Canadian architects of the first half of this century could not help but be influenced by the Arts and Crafts based design of these pioneers of modern design.

In addition to his formidable work in elite housing, Eden Smith was deeply involved in the two examples of Canadian social housing prior to 1960. He designed the row housing complexes for the Toronto Housing Company (T.H.C.) at Spruce Court and Riverside Court, in Toronto, from 1918 to 1920 and submitted designs for houses for the 1919 Federal Scheme. Much of what was built, under the scheme, at Lindenlea is not representative of Smith's work, but his designs for T.H.C. give an indication of what a built environment designed by professionals would look like.⁹

All of the architectural design of Eden Smith, Percy Nobbs, Samuel Maclure and Francis Sullivan was either elite housing, institutional buildings or social housing and, as such, had no direct influence on the vast bulk of popular style housing, which makes up the residential built environment. Even with the contributions of American and European Modernists, the housing consumer remained largely

untouched by the modernist progressive stream of aesthetic reform throughout this century and down to the present.

Aesthetic reform in the other stream, the traditional conservative stream, sprang from the Arts and Crafts movement, and was indebted, initially, to theories of high style architecture concerning the restraining of the excesses of Victorian picturesque architecture and the pointless symmetry of the classical revivals. The traditional conservative stream was, however, very much market oriented, and aesthetic reform had a different meaning for the housing consumer than for the professional designer. Consumers were far less interested in the theories of Arts and Crafts and Modernism than they were in houses which were comfortable to live in, had efficient heating and ventilation, were easier to keep clean, had many labour saving features, and which suited new demographic realities. There was, of course, a demand for aesthetic satisfaction. Not only was it suggested that Victorian houses were unhealthy, and functionally outdated, they were also seen by reformers as stylistically outdated. Plan books and magazines promoted housing forms which were the antithesis of Victorian formality and provided for the new middle-class lifestyles. All of these requirements found their expression in what Gwendolyn Wright has called "the aesthetic of simplicity" which resulted in the "minimal house."¹⁰

The "aesthetic of simplicity" called for simplification of the external appearance of houses and of their interior decoration and plan. Exterior decoration was to spring, organically, from the structural use of materials such as brick, stone and stucco. There were to be fewer projecting wings, a more rectangular, box shape, simple hipped or gable roofs and plain, grouped windows. Unornamented, light coloured walls and natural-grained wood surfaces were recommended for interiors. Floor plans were to be opened up, as floor spaces were reduced, in an attempt to control rising construction costs. Fewer rooms, arches instead of doorways, built-in furniture, folding tables and simple, rugged wicker or Craftsman furniture aided in the utilization of less space. House designs would become more standardized and appearances more uniform to further aid in the lowering of costs. The bungalow, with roots in British India, and the foursquare, with roots in America's colonial past, would become the embodiment of the "minimal house."

Craftsman Bungalows originated in California, but had their genesis in the bungalow form derived from the Bengal *bānglā* from British India. This Indian vernacular house form had wide eaves to shield the walls from the sun, an open plan for easy circulation of air and a close relationship of interiors to the outdoors, through numerous doors and verandahs. There was a natural migration of the form from

India, to Britain and then to the sunny climate of California. The Craftsman form of the bungalow was developed, while Arts and Crafts theories still had considerable influence, by California architects Greene and Greene and further developed by Gustave Stickley, after 1900. In the hands of Stickley, the Craftsman Bungalow style was disseminated to the rest of North America and became a popular, low-cost house. It was no accident that the Craftsman Bungalow, originating in California, gained such popularity. California was associated with the sybaritic existence, good living, informality and openness to nature.¹¹

Craftsman Bungalows (see Fig.1) met all of the formal requirements of the "minimal house." The natural decorative qualities of materials, such as: stone, shingles, exposed wood-beam ends and eaves braces and bands of stucco, were employed. Roofs were invariably gable-ended, and the rectangular shape of the house had few projections except bay windows and dormers in the roofs. Inside, the walls were plain and light coloured, relieved, occasionally, by stencilled bands of decoration. Wooden doors, trim, ceiling beams and furniture emphasized the natural grain of the wood. Floor plans were open, and fewer rooms were provided. These were often separated by arches rather than doors, particularly between living, dining room and kitchen. Furniture was built-in as much as possible.

Fig. 1 Craftsman Bungalow
1 1/2 storeys. Ottawa South,
note use of stone and stucco,
exposed beam ends battered
columns.

Fig. 2 Craftsman Bungalows,
single storey, Brantwood
Ottawa, note battered columns.

Fig. 3 Craftsman Bungalows,
1 1/2 storey semi-
detached, Ottawa South.

To accommodate the intense California sun, roofs had wide overhanging eaves, and the roofs, often, swept down over verandahs. Battered foundations and verandah support columns gave a ground-hugging appearance, and aided in the feeling of a closeness to nature. Stoops were often included in the verandah or porch entrance steps to further encourage outdoor use by the inhabitants. A strong feeling of horizontality developed from the wide eaves, sweeping roofs, low foundations and bands of stone, shingles or stucco. Many of these characteristics would find their way into the Ranch Style Bungalow.

The Craftsman Bungalow came in a number of formal variations. There were side-gabled one and one-half storey versions and front-gabled single-storey versions. The side-gabled one and one-half-storey variant was, usually, a detached house, but there were semi-detached versions and even row houses in this form (see Fig. 2, 3 and 4). Two-storey Craftsman Bungalows were built, but they always looked inappropriate in a housing form which was supposed to hug the ground. The front-gabled single-storey version had most of the features of the side-gabled one and one-half storey variant such as : low-pitched roofs, porches and verandahs and ground-hugging horizontality, but they were, usually, built to save costs and, consequently, were often lacking in quality. A

Fig. 4 Craftsman Bungalows,
Row Houses, Ottawa
South.

Fig. 5 Early Ranch
Bungalow, Burbank
California, 1912
(The American
Bungalow,
Clay Lancaster).

Fig. 6 Colonial Revival
Foursquare House,
Glebe, Ottawa,
note classical porch,
multi-paned sash type
windows.

hipped-roof version grew out of the single-storey bungalow and showed up, initially, as wartime housing in the 1940s (see page 34).

It has been pointed out that the Craftsman Bungalow was an ideal form for the sybaritic atmosphere of sun-bathed California. The style migrated, easily, to Vancouver which had a similarly moderate climate. More remarkable was its adoption in other parts of North America where the climate was less moderate. Sybaris does not adequately describe Toronto, but the residential streets of that city attest to the popularity, from 1900 to 1920, of the style. Craftsman Bungalows in the detached, gable-ended, one and one-half storey variant with verandahs and prominent dormers appear in great numbers on early twentieth-century streets in Toronto, as do the gable-fronted single-storey variety with front porches. The former was much in demand with middle-class people who could afford it, and the latter was a low-cost alternative for the working classes. It is in Toronto where the Craftsman Bungalow is adapted to the row house and semi-detached configuration. This style, so apparent in Toronto, appears only occasionally in Ottawa, where it is seen in its one and one-half storey version in Ottawa South and in its one-storey version in the early twentieth-century development of Brantwood, located between Main Street and the Rideau River. It is likely that the Ottawa house buyers

could not be persuaded that the bungalow was appropriate for the city's "sub-Arctic" climate. Certainly, the style was popular in the Beach district of Toronto, where the lifestyle was associated with leisure and recreation on the nearby beach and Lake Ontario. This surely says something about the attitude of Torontonians to their city beside Lake Ontario and about the mentality of Ottawans and their frigid winters.

The Craftsman Bungalow Style, in all of its variants, appealed to housing consumers whose tastes had been conditioned to its unique form by such taste makers as: *Ladies' Home Journal*, *House Beautiful*, *House and Garden*, *Keith's Beautiful Homes Magazine* and Gustave Stickley's *The Craftsman*. 's always, plan books proliferated such as: *Jud Yoho's Craftsman Bungalows*, *Frederick T. Hodgson's Practical Bungalows for Town and Country* (1906), *Radford's Artistic Bungalows* (1908) and *H.L. Wilson's Bungalow Book* (1910) to mention only some of them.¹² Plans from these books were easily available to builders or self-builders. If they wished, completely factory-built bungalows were available from: Sears, Alladin, Gordon-Van Tine, Hodgson, Mershon and Morley and many others. The taste makers and social reformers had delivered their message of simplicity, natural materials and closeness to nature, and the bungalow had found its niche in the market place from 1900 to the 1920s. After that time the popularity of the style quickly faded.

However, out of the Craftsman Bungalow would come the Ranch Style Bungalow. Clay Lancaster points out that a "Ranch Bungalow" was built near Burbank, California, in 1912 (see Fig.5). Its roots in the Craftsman Bungalow are unmistakable.¹³

The "minimal house" was also embodied in the prodigiously occurring foursquare house which began appearing on the streets of Toronto and Ottawa, around 1900, in various stylistic forms such as: Colonial Revival, Prairie, Tudor and Arts and Crafts. Like the Craftsman Bungalow, the foursquare house appealed to the aesthetic of simplicity. It had all of the functional conveniences, and its Colonial Revival version was associated with colonial times and social status. This was a two to two and one-half storey house, shaped like a square, symmetrical block and capped with a pyramidal or hipped-roof. Sometimes, it would feature a centrally located door indicating a Georgian central hall plan. This door might be under an open porch or a verandah, in which case the door might be located toward one side. The roofs would usually have dormer windows to provide natural light in the attic storey. Colonial Revival variants would have entrances with classical columns supporting pediments and classical door surrounds. Windows would be multi-paned and double hung (see Fig.6). Doors would be centrally located and windows balanced symmetrically on the facade. The Prairie variant

would feature roofs with wide, overhanging eaves. Decoration would be simplified and very modern. Exterior walls would be broken up into plain-surfaced rectangular panels, and borders would emphasize horizontality. Windows were arranged in wide, continuous bands. Arts and Crafts and Tudor influenced variants would feature verandahs or open porches, half timbered detailing, natural materials and open eaves with exposed rafter ends (see Fig. 7).

The form of the foursquare house was, certainly, not something new. It had been the favoured form of Georgian style houses in North America for hundreds of years. Its Colonial Revival version had been popular ever since it was introduced, by McKim, Mead, White and Bigelow, shortly after the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 and then disseminated by *The American Architect and Building News*, in 1898, and later by the *White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs*. This dissemination helped to shape consumer tastes for a style rooted, supposedly, in a stable and secure colonial past, a past free of urban problems and industrial blight. Alan Gowans thinks that an instinctive folk sense for symmetry also helped to popularize the Colonial Revival foursquare house.¹⁴

The foursquare house appealed to the emerging twentieth-century housing consumer. Once again, media and plan book taste makers and the social reform movement had

Fig. 7 Foursquare Houses, Ottawa South, in a variety of styles, note Tudor detailing Craftsman Bungalow at right.

Fig. 8 Foursquare House, Elmvale Acres, Ottawa, popular in Campeau subdivisions of 1950s, note suggestion of a jetty. Sheltered entrance is a Campeau amenity.

Fig. 9 Colonial Revival variations. Dow's Lake area, Ottawa. from left, garrison house. Cape Cod Cottage. another garrison house and Dutch Colonial on the right with gambrel roof.

promoted this efficient, capacious, rationally designed house with its minimalist character and modern kitchens, plumbing and heating system. Larger families or those with boarders would favour its considerable floor space. It would always be found in urban settings, whereas the bungalow was very popular as a vacation home as well as a town house.

As the minimalist reform in aesthetics took effect, foursquare houses, in all of their variations, appeared in the Glebe and the areas of Ottawa South and Ottawa West developed between 1900 and 1920. They also appear in the Lindenlea area, developed under the 1919 Federal Housing Scheme and designed to suit the Arts and Crafts tastes of the government architect W.D. Cromarty and planner Thomas Adams. Toronto followed the trend, as might be expected. Whereas, the Craftsman Bungalow lost its popularity toward the end of the 1920s and ceased to be a contributor to the built environment, foursquare houses never, really, ceased to be built, although they would have been too expensive for most buyers during the 1930s. They occur, in quantity, in the housing developments of the 1950s including Campeau's Elmvale Acres (see Fig.8).

Colonial Revival houses came in forms other than the foursquare, which so dominated the first two decades of the twentieth century. Of almost equal popularity were the sub-types including: gable-ended and gambrel-ended two storey

houses, referred to respectively as garrison houses and Dutch Colonial Revival, and the single or one and one-half storey gable-ended house later referred to as the Cape Cod Cottage (see Fig.9). The popularity of these houses began in the 1920s, no doubt fuelled by mass-circulation consumer magazines, the *White Pine Series* and building material catalogues such as *Building With Assurance*, put out by the Morgan Woodwork Organization (see Fig.10).¹⁵

Garrison Colonial Revival houses invariably occurred in two-storey, gable-ended forms and had white clapboard upper storeys with a jetty or overhang of the lower storey. Often, the lower storeys were constructed of field stone or, if the budget was tight, of brick. Bay windows were popular, and the roofs often had dormers. Shutters beside the windows were de rigeur (see Fig.11). Dutch Colonial Revival houses had most of the garrison features, but they always had gambrel-ended roofs, and the dormers were usually a shed type. The eaves were usually flared or bell-cast.

Two-storey gable-ended Colonial Revival houses appear in Ottawa and Toronto, from the 1920s, but never in great quantities. Nevertheless, even in the 1950s the gable-ended and gambrel-ended houses maintained a degree of popularity, so tenacious was their hold on the middle-class taste for stability, security and status. A whole development of Colonial Revival houses was constructed, in the late 1950s,

1.

Fig. 18 The Ubiquitous Hipped-Roof Bungalow. Initially designed for Wartime Housing Ltd. The floor plan is typical of the many thousands built up to 1950s. (from The Architectural Forum, December, 1940).

Fig. 19 Hipped-Roof Bungalow Variation. Elmvale acres, Ottawa. Campeau built this house narrow end and broad side to the street and often "flipped" them in mirror image for variety.

Fig. 11 Garrison Colonial Revival House, Applewood Acres, Ottawa. Campeau built more expensive houses on this street where he happened to live.

Fig. 12 A Row of Colonial Revival Houses, Elmvale Acres, Ottawa. The tenacity of this style is obvious.

Fig. 13 Cape Cod Cottage. Alta Vista, Ottawa, note classical detailing. serene setting.

in the Manor Park area of Ottawa. Garrison houses appeared in most Campeau developments of the 1950s, and their popularity continued on undiminished into the 1960s (see Fig.12).

Probably, the most prolific house in the long "minimalist house" aesthetic reform movement was the Colonial Revival variant called the Cape Cod Cottage. *Architectural Forum* says that it resulted from a search for an economical replacement for the foursquare, which was becoming too expensive by the 1930s. The Cape Cod Cottage had clear roots in the architecture of colonial New England. Normally, one or one and one-half storeys with gable-ends, they were constructed of wood sheathed in clapboard. Detailing if any, favoured the classical revival with return eaves, freize boards dividing the upper from the lower storeys, classical door surrounds, multi-paned windows and shutters (see Fig.13). The Cape Cod Cottage had a nostalgic appeal due to its media promotion, during the 1930s, as the white, vine covered cottage of colonial times, set among sand dunes and exuding a sense of peace and security. However, *Architectural Forum* points out that this did not transfer successfully to housing developments where the form was, generally, criticized as monotonous, when constructed in continuous rows.¹⁶

The Cape Cod Cottage, according to *Architectural Forum*,

accounted for two-thirds of houses built between 1930 and 1949. That is an American estimate, but it could very well apply to Canada. With the beginning of World War II, the government agency Wartime Housing Limited (W.H.L.) adopted the Cape Cod Cottage as the housing form for the thousands of houses which it would build between 1940 and 1947 (see Fig.14).¹⁷ Selection of the form probably had little to do with market appeal. Economy of construction was likely its main attraction to the W.H.L. The upper storey provided a poorly-lighted, sloped-ceiling, cramped space for two bedrooms and some closet space. The floor space of the main floor was problematic, and compromises with proper traffic flow had to be made. There was traffic through the kitchens and living rooms in order to reach bathrooms, dining rooms and bedrooms. In the late 1940s, the Levitts used the Cape Cod Cottage in their first Levittown and made considerable improvements by increasing the floor space. The houses sold well to the consuming public, even though they received a great deal of criticism from aesthetic critics and sociologists (see note 16). It was adopted by the builders of many, if not most, of the post war housing developments. Cape Cod Cottages, with the hipped-roof bungalow, dominate the house form in most of the housing developments around Toronto in the late 1940s and early 1950s (see Fig.15). Campeau's first houses were all of this style, and they were

Fig. 14 Cape Cod Cottages, Wartime Housing Ltd..
(from The Architectural Forum, December, 1940).

WARTIME CANADIAN HOUSES. 1. Narrow lot type built in Toronto for \$3,200 exclusive of lot. 2. Square, frame house with one bedroom and bath on first floor, two additional bedrooms upstairs; at \$3,800 plus land, a mark for U. S. builders to shoot at. Same arrangement in stuccoed brick but with fireplace omitted and upstairs rooms to be finished later by owner; this type is often sold with land for less than \$2,500. 4. Plan for factory-fabricated unit which may be built and rented by the government, designed for high salvage value at the end of the emergency.

Fig. 15 Cape Cod Cottage,
Monarch Park Subdivision,
Toronto. This 1 1/2
storey house would have
a very cramped upper storey.
Note the hipped-roof
bungalow at left-
a constant companion
to Cape Codders in
the early 1950s.

Fig. 16 Cape Cod cottages,
Elmvale Acres,
Ottawa. The house
to the right has a
shed dormer at
the rear.

Fig. 17 Cape Cod Cottages
N/W Quadrant,
Don Mills. Houses
have more generous
eaves, better detailing
and probably better
floor plans.

included in most of his 1950s subdivisions (see Fig.16). The Cape Cod form, considerably modernized and professionally detailed, appears in large quantities in the earliest-built quadrant at Don Mills (see Fig.17). It would, gradually, be phased out as a dominant form in housing developments by the Ranch Style Bungalow in its numerous variations, around 1955.

A variant of the single-storey, gable-fronted Craftsman Bungalow occurred in great numbers as one of the designs produced as wartime housing, in the 1940s. This house was invariably of brick on a high foundation and with a hipped-roof, although it often had a gable over the front living room window. They first appear in an article in *The Architectural Forum*, of December, 1940, by F.W. Nicolls, Director of Housing for the Canadian government (see Fig.18). It dealt with "Wartime Housing in Canada", and Nicolls said this bungalow had been built since the beginning of the war.¹⁸ The design provided a comfortable six-room, two-bedroom house with a well-lighted basement for additional rooms if desired. Gone were the natural materials and verandahs of the Craftsman Bungalow. These brick bungalows were much influenced by the trend to modernism, and any decoration was faintly classical or, perhaps, Art Deco. Hipped roofs and gables with return eaves and, sometimes, a decorated frieze gave a classical feeling to these solid family homes. Thousands were built from 1939 to 1959, and

1.

Fig. 18 The Ubiquitous Hipped-Roof Bungalow. Initially designed for Wartime Housing Ltd. The floor plan is typical of the many thousands built up to 1950s. (from The Architectural Forum, December, 1940).

Fig. 19 Hipped-Roof Bungalow Variation, Elmvale acres, Ottawa. Campeau built this house narrow end and broad side to the street and often "flipped" them in mirror image for variety.

the built environments of cities like Toronto and Ottawa are still filled with them. This house form is important because it appears, much modified, in 1950s subdivisions throughout Ontario (see Fig.19). A house form originating in "the aesthetic of simplicity," and modified for the needs of the 1940s, found a useful position in the housing developments of the 1950s, because it adapted well to a narrow lot and continued to appeal to the housing consumer.

The first house built by Robert Campeau, in 1949, was a Cape Cod Cottage, similar to those built by the thousands by W.H.L., but finished on the outside in a rough grey stucco. He would build many more and a version of this basic house would appear in his developments of the 1950s. However, Campeau could see that tastes were changing. The Levitts were changing from Cape Cod to Ranch Style Bungalows at the second Levittown in Pennsylvania, in the 1950s. Campeau very quickly expanded his offering of styles to include a variety of Ranch Style Bungalows and Split-Level houses. It was part of the business response to the housing consumer, to follow the trend to the latest styles. As housing became more plentiful and the seller's market turned to a buyer's market, attention to the demands of the consumer became necessary for business survival. Campeau's market was the Canadian family. This was the male-dominated family which had consigned women to the home which she came to dominate

and where she became the ultimate consumer and important decision maker. Her conditioning had started one hundred years previously in the campaigns of Catharine Beecher and Andrew Jackson Downing who had extolled the virtues of housewifery and the single-family detached house in the suburbs. Later, the movie industry, controlled by men, had been her chief source of entertainment, and for fifty years it had convinced her of the appropriateness of the self-sacrificing housewife, and had moulded her tastes for the clean, cosy, efficient bungalow or cottage. Most of all, her mind was the province of the popular and housing magazines which, too, had preached their insidious message for more than fifty years. Aesthetic reform ran parallel to health reform and lifestyle changes so that tastes in house styles can be seen to be a response to the insistent messages coming out of reform movements and the media.¹⁹

The influence of the media can be seen in the decline of the Colonial Revival style, the rejection of Modernism and the ascendancy of the Ranch Style Bungalow during the 1940s and 1950s. California and colonial New England had been the important sources of housing styles for the first four decades of the twentieth century. It could have been European Modernism, but the middle class were not inclined to the cerebral. Few had ever heard of the Bauhaus or Le Corbusier's Dom-ino House (see Fig. 20) or read about them in

**422. LE CORBUSIER. Perspective drawing
for Domino Housing Project. 1914**

Fig. 20 Le Corbusier's Domino House.
This house heralds true Modernism.
Non-bearing walls could be of glass
and interiors could be an open
plan (from History of Modern Art.
H.H. Arnason)

the *R.A.I.C. Journal*, in the 1930s. The middle-class consumers read magazines like *Better Homes and Gardens* and went to the movies. If the Canadian middle class had even read *Canadian Homes and Gardens*, the situation might have been somewhat different. This was a quality magazine, aimed at an elite readership. The featured houses were architect designed for well-off Canadians, and, even in the early 1940s, modern architecture was featured. Prominent Canadians were interviewed in their houses and gardens. Articles featured professionally designed renovations suitable for letting-out to contractors. *Better Homes and Gardens*, on the other hand, interviewed movie stars in their Colonial Revival houses, and its advertisements were dominated by food and appliances and materials for the handyman. Its articles dealt with handyman home projects and gardening tips. *Better Homes and Gardens* is still prominent on the newstands and *Canadian Homes and Gardens* is only a distant memory.

Accepting the fact of consumer dictatorship on housing form and the influence of the media on consumer tastes, it is not surprising that the post war built environment starts with Colonial Revival houses and moves quickly to Ranch Style Bungalows and Split-Level houses. A perusal of the housing and consumer magazines of the 1940s and 1950s, such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, shows a process at work of propagating a uniquely North American faith -that of the happy, consuming

housewife surrounded by her family in a Colonial Revival house filled with the bounty of America's farms and factories. The deprivations of the war and depression were fast disappearing, and the "dream house," thanks to free enterprise and F.H.A. and N.H.A., was at last in reach, with its glowing fireplace, chintz, hooked rugs and sparkling dishes of the advertisements; a house in which the housewife could cook and consume the divine dishes offered up in each magazine issue's recipe section and cooked on the gleaming appliances, also insistently proffered. Up to 1945, consumer tastes were formed by the magazine's offering of Colonial Revival with gambrel-ended roofs and dormer windows or gable-ended with an overhang at the front of the second storey, called a jetty. Window shutters were *de rigueur* and, sometimes, a field stone front wall on the first storey, if the budget could afford it. Certain impressions would spring to mind after perusal of an issue between 1941 and 1945: bay windows, lace, antique furniture, knotty pine, bevelled panelling, multi-paned windows, flowered wallpaper and bookshelves beside fireplaces. This was the "dream house" that Canadians clasped to their hearts in the uncertain years of depression and war (see Fig.21).

By 1945, there was a noticeable change in the pages of *Better Homes and Gardens* as the magazine turned to Modernism and the Ranch Style Bungalow. Now, curtainless window walls

linked the interiors to the outdoors. Gone were chintz and wallpaper. Walls were now painted and against them was set the inevitable plywood furniture. Room dividers and activity centres were featured. This was the heyday of the handyman. Weldwood advertisements for richly veneered plywood appeared in each issue, and suddenly, everything was built-in as Wright had planned it in his Usonian houses. Vinyl asbestos or cork tiles and plain mahogany veneer doors appeared in every picture. Now, the impressions would be entirely different: plywood, thermal glass, plain, curtainless windows, rambling, open floor plans; indoor, painted-brick walls, colour schemes, venetian blinds, console radios, storage units, angel stone, floor to ceiling windows in wide sweeps, tile floors, kitchen bars, decks, chrome furniture, textured plywood walls (but never panelled), entrance hall planters, ribbed-glass side lights, Roman brick (emphasizing horizontality), louvers below windows and sectional furniture, tables, bookcases and sideboards that looked like they might have been made in the basement workshop (see Fig.22)20.

It can be seen that the Ranch Style Bungalow was promoted by the media to the consumer as a form which would compliment the new lifestyles they wished to lead. Architect Royal Barry Wills, in the *Architectural Record* (May, 1945), called for house form to be an expression of how people live.

It's the Windows and Woodwork

of *Ponderosa Pine*

that give your home this charm and livability

are right for every home...every climate!

Courtesy Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company
Manufacturers' Television Station

Fig. 22 The 1950s "Dream Houses"
from the pages of *Better
Homes and Gardens*, 1959.

Function of the interior space was to dictate design, and Ranch Style bungalows fulfilled this requirement. Even Frank Lloyd Wright's contributions to this style, through the interior layout of his Usonian house, were largely functional. He wanted to design a house that would be affordable and suitable for the lifestyles he could see were emerging. Nevertheless, Joseph Hudnut, Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Design, in the same issue of *Architectural Record*, emphasized aesthetics, when he called for a new deliberate aesthetic to be devised, based on the new technology of window walls, light roof trusses, laminated beams, and plywoods.²¹ Certainly, new technology, much of it developed during the Second World War, helped make The California Ranch Style Bungalow a practical form for the diversity of climates all over North America. In particular, the window manufacturing industry had made great progress in the design of picture windows and sliding window walls. There were, in addition, inexpensive tar and gravel roofs to suit the lower pitch of ranch house roofs, strong, cheap plywoods, and laminated wood beams to span wide areas. All of these innovations were used in the new California Ranch Style Bungalow.

North Americans, as usual, had looked to California for its new style to suit the life of the 1950s. California had responded with a house that was based on the Craftsman

Bungalow but greatly updated by technology to suit the current lifestyles. Lester Walker, in his book *American Shelter*, credits architects in the San Francisco Bay area with reviving Spanish colonial house forms in their Second Bay Region architecture, of the 1930s. This in turn, he claims, influenced architect Cliff May who developed the California Ranch Style. Walker says:

In the 1950s almost any one-storey, close-to-the-ground, rambling house was called a California ranch house. Having the ability to move freely about the house, without steps, into large private porches and patios from almost every room was living the good life.²²

Clearly, function and the aesthetic of technology were largely the essence of the Ranch Style Bungalow (see Fig.23).

The forms of the subdivisions of Robert Campeau, in Ottawa, are a culmination of what began fifty years earlier in the reform called the "aesthetic of simplicity" and they are typical of what was being built all over North America. This is not surprising, because Campeau freely copied the house designs that he saw at trade expositions and in visits to subdivisions in Canada and the United States.²³

Originality, presumably, never bothered Campeau. He was the consummate businessman whose only interest was to operate a profitable company, and whatever was current with the housing consumer was what he offered. His first large development, Elmvale Acres in the east end of Ottawa, illustrates what he did at all of his developments up to 1960. Ten or twelve

2809-A

YOU CAN BUY THESE PLANS. SEE PAGE 166

Patio doubles area in smallest of Idea Homes

You'll find spaciousness— in less space than you'd think— in this smallest of the six Idea Homes. It achieves as much in living as larger plans; but with lower cost and square footage.

Living expands through view and use of fenced-in patio garden.

ARCHITECTS	Mithun and Associates
OWNERS	Mr. and Mrs. P. O. M. Co.
LOCATION	Bethesda, Washington
AREA	1,218 sq. ft.

Living, dining, kitchen, family room, and master bedroom are lined up on one side of house so each can share patio. See page 176 for suggested orientation of this Idea Home.

Fig. 23 Ranch Style Bungalow. Function and the aesthetic of technology are apparent. (from Better Homes and Gardens, 1959).

designs were offered, and to achieve variety he "flipped" identical designs by placing them side by side but in mirror image. Roofs were mixed on the same basic rectangular box and different wall cladding was used to further variety. The same twelve basic designs were used at every Campeau development, and were selected for their marketability. What did not sell could be seen on a few of the earliest streets in the development but were notably absent on streets deeper into the development. Automobiles made their dominant position felt in the inclusion of driveways on each lot to accommodate their parking. Gradually, garages were added to the larger houses, particularly, the Split-Levels, and eventually to every house. The prewar 25ft. by 100ft. lot was increased to 50ft. width to accommodate the garage. Often the garage took the form of a carport. As lots, once again, became narrower, due to rising land costs, the garage was located at the front of the house, where it eventually came to dominate the facade.

The styles offered at Applewood Acres, Elmvale Acres and Bel Air Heights were mainly single-storey bungalows, Split-Levels and versions of the Cape Cod Cottage. Bungalows were available in hipped-roof and gable-ended types, set either broad side or narrow end to the street. These suited consumers who wanted a rambling plan or considered two-storey houses to be contrary to the modern trend (see Fig.24,25).

Fig. 24 Bungalows, Narrow End to the Road
Elmvalle Acres, Ottawa
Note the same basic house in
mirror image, one with hipped-roof
and one with gable end.

Fig. 25 Bungalows, Broad Side to the Road.
Applewood Acres, Ottawa.
The centre house is about as close
as Campeau came to a sprawling
ranch house in the early 1950s.

Those still favouring tradition were offered the Cape Cod Cottages which Campeau constructed in one and one-half storey houses, with or without dormers. They also came in two-storey versions with broad shed-type dormers at front and rear creating the full second storey (see Fig.26). Campeau was quick to adopt the Split-Level house, when it appeared in the architectural journals in the early 1950s (see Fig.27). It was a response to a middle-class lifestyle change in which families wanted isolated activity zones within the home.²⁴ For large families, Campeau offered a hipped-roofed foursquare in a vaguely colonial style (see Fig.28). A few garrison style Colonial Revival houses were offered in every development as a testament to the lingering attraction of secure times past (see Fig.11). In the later stages of Elmvale Acres, a style appeared which Virginia and Lee McAlester have called Contemporary. Built broadside to the street, they featured wide sweeps of glass and broad roofs that swept down over a carport (see Fig.29). People in Campeau's inner circle claimed that the Greenberg brothers, of Minto Construction, copied everything that Campeau made a success of.²⁵ This is entirely possible, because the subdivisions of Minto were very similar to those of Campeau.

Almost from the beginnings of Levittown, there was criticism of what the merchant builders were doing to the rural landscape and there was pressure for all builders to

Fig. 26 Cape Cod Cottages
Elmvale Acres.
Ottawa, with and
without dormers.

Fig. 27 Split-Level Houses,
Bel Air Heights, Ottawa.
The ranch house zoned
for active families.

Fig. 28 Foursquare House,
Elmvale Acres, Ottawa.
Done in a vaguely Colonial
style with a suggestion
of a jetty.

improve their planning and design. Campeau, eventually, offered better house designs in some areas. Minto produced design award-winning houses (see Fig.30). In 1958, William Teron developed Lynwood Village, in Bells Corners, near Ottawa. Like the Campeau and Minto developments, there were Ranch Style Bungalows and Split-Level houses, but, to these, Teron added Contemporary houses in large quantities. Teron employed skilled design staff, while Campeau continued to use a design draftsman to detail his borrowings (see Appendix A and B). Aside from the professionals working at Don mills, there was probably not a single professional architect involved in the design of the residential built environment which was being constructed in Toronto and Ottawa. That situation would change with the looming shortage of land and the necessity for all of these builders to shift their attention to multiple housing, in the 1960s.

2) The Need for Healthier Houses

The year 1900 arrived, in Ottawa and Toronto, on a tide of reform and idealism which had built up during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Social reform arose in the 1880s as a result of the headlong rush toward industrialization and urbanization. Cities grew rapidly due to industrial expansion and the waves of immigration. In the

Fig. 29 Contemporary House, Elmvalley Acres, Ottawa

Fig. 30 Ranch Style Bungalow much modified by Minto Construction. Campeau and Teron were also building larger, better designed houses.

Fig. 31 Row Housing McCarthy Road, Ottawa. Campeau's first venture into multiple housing, in 1960s. The resemblance to Chatham Village is unmistakable.

preoccupation with building factories and railways little attention was paid to the amenities of life. An awareness of urban problems gave rise to the social reform movement which concerned itself with aesthetic and health reform, municipal inefficiency and corruption, and poor town planning. Above all there was a realization that much of the housing was not adequately healthy.

Health reform, like aesthetic reform was reflected in house design. The germ theory of disease was published in North America in 1883, and it was followed by a frenzy of tenement and public health reform, in the 1890s. Reformers called for personal cleanliness, clean water and air, and sunlight in the home. Victorian buildings were seen as sources of disease just as much as they were seen to be aesthetic and lifestyle anachronisms, so that health reform proceeded along the same path as aesthetic reform and parallel to lifestyle reform.

The Modernist trend in aesthetics called for removal of decorative woodwork and plaster, and in the process made houses easier to clean and paint. In the 1930s, as the Modernist movement in Europe was beginning to influence North American architectural thinking, even what was basically an aesthetic change was often justified as a health reform. The May, 1931 issue of the *R.A.I.C. Journal*, while reporting on Le Corbusier's remarkable quote "The house is a machine for

living in.", also noted his lament. "Our old houses are like old coaches filled with tuberculosis." Emile Venne, in an article in the July, 1935 *R.A.I.C. Journal* called traditional architecture not only, aesthetically, a worn out and romantic living in the past, but he also suggested that microbes collected in the decoration of the old buildings. In the April, 1937 *R.A.I.C. Journal*, William Lescaze wrote. "It is absurd that we of the 20th. Century should waste our time, our energies, our health, within the meaningless and bad copies of past civilizations".²⁶ Consumers would not accept the Modernist's stark aesthetic view, but they would accomplish the same hygienic reform in their "minimal house." The abundant windows and open spaces of the Prairie houses and Ranch Bungalows not only served an aesthetic purpose, but also made them light and airy. Smaller families and lifestyles which demanded more freedom for women complimented the move to smaller houses with fewer rooms and simpler plans. They were easier to keep clean. *House and Home* writer Mary Gay Humphries demanded a house that was so efficient it could be "...cleaned with a hose".²⁷

Once begun, health awareness was impossible to stop. Domestic reformers would insure that parents saw themselves as guardians of their families' health. Henceforth, the middle-class consumer would demand, as a matter of course, that their houses be properly heated, have clean, abundant

water, fresh air and plenty of light, and be easily maintained in a healthful condition. Designers and builders were required to insure that housing form catered to those demands. Nobody had to recount these demands to the builders of Don Mills and Elmvale Acres. A healthy living environment, striven for in the Craftsman Bungalows and foursquares, with as equal vigour as in the houses of the elite, was, by 1945, an automatically acknowledged element of design.

3) Need For Urban Renewal

With the arrival of the twentieth century, it was obvious to the reformers in the United States and in Canada that slum conditions of crowding and substandard housing needed to be dealt with. Decent housing was needed in quantity and in areas removed from industrial blight. Modernists and Traditionalists differed sharply as to the solution. Whereas, many Americans saw the solution in a movement of the population to the suburbs, some Americans, like Jane Addams, saw mitigation of the evils of the tenements as the answer.²⁸ Canadians such as J.S. Woodsworth, G. Frank Beer, J.J. Kelso and W.F. Burditt looked for salvation in urban renewal. The cities, certainly, were in need of renewal, but one of the problems was the crowded living conditions. Britain, too, had a need to relieve this

pressure on its cities, and the result was the Garden City Movement of Ebenezer Howard. He proposed the building of new, self-sufficient towns in the open countryside, limited in size by a perpetual greenbelt of farmland. Central to Howard's proposal was that the new towns were to have the characteristics of the city without, of course, the problems. They were to have a healthy living environment but also "... a full measure of social life..."²⁹ Essential to these cities was local employment in commerce and industry. The Garden City of Letchworth (1903) and Welwyn Garden City (1920) were built and proved to be remarkably successful endeavours. People were well housed in an uncrowded, planned city close to natural surroundings. Industry came to the two garden cities sufficiently to provide local employment. Howard was even responsive to the material feminists who were calling for co-operative housekeeping and communal apartment buildings. He included co-operative housekeeping at the two garden cities. They were called Co-operative Quadrangles, and they included kitchenless apartments with common facilities for cooking and laundry. They remain, to this day, however, an isolated experiment.³⁰ Letchworth and Welwyn were the only two garden cities actually built and with all of their excellence in design and planning, they still did not solve the problems they set out to solve. Large cities like London continued to grow, uncontrolled, and

the most needy members of society were still confined to the slums by the lack of affordable, decent housing. The automobile came to the garden cities and ended their isolation from the large cities. Automobiles also had to be accommodated in what were intended to be walking cities. Britain solved its housing shortage between the wars, at least for the middle-class, with strip developments of semi-detached houses along major roadways, the inhabitants of which commuted by automobile or public transport to employment and shopping in large urban centres.³¹

The garden city idea did not find a large following in North America where suburbanism was the preoccupation of businessmen and governments. Urban renewal in Canada, consisted of two small projects in Toronto, by the Toronto Housing Company, at Spruce Court and Riverdale Court. They were designed by Arts and Crafts architect Eden Smith. Reformers in Canada such as Woodsworth, Beer, Kelso and Burditt were vigorous and eloquent, but in the end their efforts were more words than any concrete action. Nevertheless, when a garden city advocate came to Canada, there was some attempt at better town planning. Thomas Adams had been an associate of Ebenezer Howard and the designers of Letchworth, Raymond Unwin and M.H. Baillie-Scott, before he came to Canada as planner with the Commission of Conservation, in 1914. Except for the level of quality which

he encouraged in Canadian town planning. Adams' mission was ill-starred. He designed a few model towns, such as Temiskaming, in north-west Quebec, but his Lindenlea project was a poor demonstration of garden city principles. It was more a village in size, had no local employment or active social environment, and was not isolated from the larger urban centre of Ottawa. Lindenlea was part of a larger social failure, the 1919 Federal Housing Scheme. Its total of 6,244 houses built was inadequate to the housing need, and none were affordable to those most in need. In Britain, the 'Homes Fit for Heroes' program produced 750,000 houses in the 1920s and 1930s, in contrast. What attempts were made by governments in North America to renew the cities centred on the City Beautiful movement. In Ottawa, the Federal District Commission was created to beautify the city. It built parkways and parks, but did nothing to alleviate substandard housing.

The United States, at this time, had a few garden city advocates such as Clarence Stein and Henry Wright. Their ideas were much influenced by Raymond Unwin and Frederick Law Olmsted. After experimenting with innovative high-density housing at Sunnyside Gardens near New York, in 1924, they set out to build a true garden city at Radburn, New Jersey, in 1928. In plan, Radburn was, really, a great advance on any garden city which had been built. The superblock concept was

introduced. Housing was clustered around culs-de-sac which ran off a collector street which circled the block. Each block had central park and recreation areas and pedestrian pathways separated from road traffic. Radburn was planned in neighbourhoods of sufficient size to support a school and other services but small enough to be identified with its inhabitants. Restrictions were placed on the movement of the automobile so that it could not reach all parts of the community. The arrival of the Great Depression insured that Radburn would be a financial failure, and there never was local employment. Radburn became a bedroom suburb despite the planning efforts of its creators, Stein and Wright. Nevertheless, it influenced Humphrey Carver in his advocacy of neighbourhood planning and affected much of what Macklin Hancock did at Don Mills.

The ideas of Stein and Wright carried on in the Greenbelt towns of the 1930s: Greenbelt, Maryland, Greenhills near Cincinnati and Greendale near Milwaukee. All have greenbelts and eschew dependency on the automobile, but none have local employment. Clarence Stein's final project was Baldwin Hills Village in Los Angeles, in 1941, which had all of the Radburn elements, but was a financial success.

Aside from Radburn, the most innovative project of Clarence Stein and Henry Wright was Chatham Village, built on a hillside near Pittsburgh in 1932. It was a low-rental,

row-housing community planned on a superblock. Well-designed row-housing was not a new idea, certainly in Europe, but Chatham Village was the model for much of the high density housing at Don Mills and later for Campeau in Ottawa (see Fig.31). However, all of these efforts by Stein and Wright were social housing. They were creating communities rather than operating successful businesses. As Clarence Stein said "Experience at Chatham Village demonstrated,... the fallacy of the American faith,... in what is call "home ownership".

32

Garden cities were intended to relieve the crowded cities and allow urban renewal to succeed. There was little of this in North America, and the first major project in Toronto, Regents Park, did not take place until 1947. The Garden City movement in Britain produced very little until after World War II when the New Towns Act 1946 made huge amounts of British government money available for the building of housing estates following the precedent of Letchworth and Welwyn. This program was, largely, the result of Labour Party housing policy in the newly elected government of Clement Attlee and the destruction of housing by wartime bombing, but the new towns of Britain unleashed a tide of innovative town planning and architectural design which would affect designers everywhere. Tapiola in Finland, built between 1952 and 1970, was indebted to the British new

towns and went on to be a model for emulation on its own. Sweden's Vallingby new town, begun in 1953, was a showcase for Swedish modern architecture which had an influence on Don Mills. The garden city idea attracted the hearts and minds of Europe and North America's best planners, designers and dreamers, but what would mainly shape Canada's built environment would spring from consumerism, suburbanism and private entrepreneurship.³³

There have always been suburbs because people have seen them as an escape from crowded living conditions, deteriorating health standards and rising crime. Cities, certainly in North America, have not always been thought of as bad places to live, but the industrialization of the nineteenth century produced crowded and unsanitary living conditions in the major cities of both Europe and North America. Improvements in railway transportation after the American Civil War and the invention of the electric streetcar in 1887 coincided, conveniently, with people's urge to escape the deteriorating cities, and provided the means for people to live away from their places of employment in the city.³⁴ Suburbs were predicated on the city remaining as a place of employment, but suburbanites felt little concern for the state of the city, which they could escape from at day's end. In any event, cities could, therefore, decay, because few people had much concern for their future as a place to live.

Progressives like Jane Addams knew that the suburbs were not the answer to the problems created by the decline of the cities, but hers was only one of the contrary voices. Most people saw the suburbs as an escape from the city to a place which had the characteristics of the country but with none of its toil, a place of natural beauty, peace and leisure.

The first American suburbs had neither the characteristics of the city nor of the farm. They had few city conveniences, and were insulated from the realities of country life. Quite naturally, they were places of escape for the affluent, and were characterized by single-family detached houses, wasteful land use and isolation, not only from the distant city but also, internally, from house to house. The first of these picturesque, affluent suburbs was Llewellyn Park, created in 1856, just outside of New York City on a convenient railway line. It was a place of natural open spaces, curvilinear streets and restrictive by-laws, and appealed to an upper class that wanted pleasant residences far from their offices in the threatening city and far from the polluting industries, the source of much of their wealth, and the working classes and immigrants who fuelled those factories. Llewellyn Park would define the form of future suburbs both architecturally and socially. Here, streets curved to follow the natural contours of the land, and

natural open spaces were preserved in the centre of the community. Residents could buy a large lot and retain Alexander Jackson Davis, the designer of the suburb, to create a house in the romantic picturesque style for which he was famous and for which Llewellyn Park had been created. A gatehouse reminded intruders of the community's exclusive nature.³⁵

The next great suburb to be built was Riverside, near Chicago, in 1868. It was much like Llewellyn Park, but its designers Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux believed in creating a suburb with all the advantages of a natural site but including the conveniences of a city. As a result, Riverside had a picturesque layout of curved roads, parks and spacious homes, but also had an area for shops and a three-storey hotel.

Llewellyn Park and Riverside put forward a way of life based on residence in the countryside in a community insulated from country realities and dependent on the city for employment and services. Despite the attempt at Riverside to provide city amenities all future suburbs would be the same, mutant urban transplants in the suburbs, running from the city but dependent upon it. Many more affluent suburbs would follow such as: Garden City and Lake Forest near Chicago, the Westchester County suburbs of New Rochelle and Scarsdale and Tuxedo Park, all near New York. Being the creations of discriminating financiers, they would emphasize,

in their conception, art and ideals of living surrounded by natural beauty. In this regard they would differ from the middle-class suburbs which would try to emulate them.

With the advent of the electric streetcar in 1887, the middle-class suburbs began to appear. A newly affluent middle class, already conditioned by decades of the family reform literature of Beecher and Downing and the advertisements of land developers, builders and even the public transit companies (see Fig.32,33,34), began to see the suburbs and rural life as their goal.³⁶ These, often indiscriminating, buyers wished to emulate the lifestyles of the rich, but were not quite sure how to go about it. There was a multitude of self-interested manufacturers and land developers and pattern book designers who were eager to help them in their quest for the "dream house". An early builder/developer was Samuel Eberly Gross who, in the latter two decades of the nineteenth century, assembled land, near Chicago sold 40,000 lots and built 7000 houses. His subdivisions included lots fully serviced with water, gas and sewage lines and train stations for commuting to the city. In his advertising, Gross offered the consuming public not just a structure on a plot of land but a way of life in a model community. Nevertheless, regardless of the appeal, S.E. Gross was beginning the process of marketing a commodity to an anonymous mass market. He was not alone. Fernando

Fig. 32 Advertisement for Golders Green near London (from Dunroamin by Paul Oliver etc.)

Fig. 33 Dawes Park Estate, near Toronto. Dovercourt Land Co. also developed Lawrence Park (Toronto Daily Star, July 17, 1914)

DAWES PARK ESTATE

ON DAWES ROAD

PRICES
ranging from

\$20⁰⁰ PER FOOT

\$25⁰⁰ DOWN

\$10⁰⁰ A MONTH

A few minutes walk from Danforth cars

DAWES PARK ESTATE

KEY TO YOUR OWN HOME

\$20⁰⁰ UP

Dovercourt Land, Building & Savings Co., Limited

82-85 King Street East

Gentlemen: Kindly send me plan and full particulars of Dawes Park Estate.

Name

Address

Established 1885

DOVERCOURT LAND BUILDING & SAVINGS COMPANY LIMITED

W. S. Dinnick President

82-85 King St. East Toronto

LARGEST OWNERS & DEVELOPERS OF REAL ESTATE IN CANADA

Nelson, in San Francisco, was also a large builder/developer, but they were exceptions. Most land developers did just that, develop land and sell it to builders or individuals, and most builders were small, building perhaps a dozen houses in a year. Their common characteristic was that they viewed land and the buildings that went onto it, increasingly, as a commodity for sale at a profit.³⁷

The separation of the functions of land assembly and house building was normal in North America, with the exception of government involvement in housing during the two world wars, until the appearance of the Levitts and, slightly later, Robert Campeau and the Greenberg brothers in Canada. The Ottawa suburbs of Hintonburg, Mechanicsville and Britannia were land assemblies in which Ahearn and Soper, owners of the Ottawa Electric Railway Company (chartered in 1891), had an interest. They were investors in the Ottawa Land Association's 1895 land assembly at Hintonburg. Their Holland Avenue line ran through the middle of West End Park, an amusement park meant to draw ridership to the Hintonburg area. The park at Britannia was built for the same purpose. Numerous land assemblies were developed along the Britannia streetcar line up to 1915. All were grossly speculative, and very little of a permanent nature was built on them, except summer homes, until the 1940s.³⁸

Toronto suburbs developed in a similar fashion,

following the main electric streetcar lines along Lakeshore Boulevard and Dundas Street to the west, along Yonge Street to the north and along Kingston Road to the east. This latter line is illustrative of the process. Development began, just east of the exclusive Hunt Club golf club, in Scarborough Township, along the Kingston Road streetcar line. Begun in 1915, the line reached Westhill in the late 1920s and along its route were the communities of Birchcliff and Scarborough Bluffs. They were laid out on a grid pattern of streets about two blocks long running at right angles to Kingston Road, down to the bluffs overlooking Lake Ontario and in the opposite direction to Danforth Avenue in the north. The only exception to the grid was where the land sloped toward the crest of the bluffs, and here the streets curved to follow the topography. The communities are notable for the diversity of styles of house although Craftsman Bungalows of one, one and one-half and two storeys are common (see Fig.35). There is no sign of duplication of designs which would indicate a single builder. It can be assumed that land was assembled, laid out in blocks and subdivided into lots for sale to small builders and self-builders. Some standard size lots were not built on until the 1940s. House styles are coincident with what was popular at the approximate time of their construction and available in plan books and, no doubt, in the average small builder's

Fig. 35 Houses in Birchcliff on the Kingston Road Streetcar line, Craftsman Bungalows and a hipped-roof bungalow probably built much later.

Fig. 36 Lawrence Park Advertisement, for People of refined taste (Toronto Daily Star).

People of refined taste, who love suburban life, but want to feel that they are protected by high class restrictions as to their surroundings, should immediately invest in

LAWRENCE PARK

Toronto's most beautiful landscaped suburban residential district. Go through it when motoring up Yonge street "north," or stop off at Glen Grove Ave. when going on the Metropolitan Railroad.

**Dovercourt Land, Building, and
Savings Co., Limited**

24 Adelaide St. E.

TEL. M. 7250

repertoire. Several blocks north from the Kingston Road streetcar line were the communities of Dentonia Park, Birchcliff Heights and Scarborough Junction. These were fringe communities characterized by single-storey bungalows, commonly self-built, and unfinished tarpaper shacks and roofed over basements. Like the Richmond Road in Hintonburg and Mechanicsville, the Kingston Road and, indeed, all of the Toronto streetcar lines, were lined with neighbourhood stores purveying almost everything needed by the residents. In the areas close to Kingston Road, a middle-class society enjoyed a suburban lifestyle, cooled by breezes from Lake Ontario and with access to its water and beaches by wooden stairs constructed down the side of the cliffs at three separate locations.³⁹

The Toronto upper middle-class suburbs of Kingsway Park and Lawrence Park, developed during the 1920s and 1930s, had much of the art of Llewellyn Park but little of the idealism. Both were developed as exclusive suburbs by self-promoting entrepreneurs Robert Home Smith and W.S. Dinnick respectively. Llewellyn Haskell, at the early American suburb of Llewellyn Park, allowed himself the luxury of dabbling in such philosophies as "correct living" and "perfect existence on earth" and as Jackson says, the development of land "...based on a philosophy that transcended mere money-making".⁴⁰ For Home Smith and

Dinnick, the developed land was a commodity for sale to the housing consumer at prices reinforced by the appeal of their advertisements to a self-styled Toronto elite (see Fig.36). In their advertising, they appealed to the Anglo-Saxon middle class of Toronto. Home Smith's motto, "Angliae par Anglia procul", a bit of England far from England, was materialized in the half-timbered house designs he offered and in the Tudor-styled Old Mill Restaurant which was always a focal point of the community, Dinnick often referred to Lawrence Park as the Hampstead Garden Suburb of Canada and he offered house designs in what his advertising called the "English country house style". Clearly, the two entrepreneurs saw their fortunes in attracting a newly-affluent middle-class consumer who was perceived to favour the lifestyle of the English countryside. Both developments were land assemblies in which the clients were expected to buy their lots and build their own houses in line with a restrictive covenant which dictated type, material of construction and value. In each, the automobile was a vital factor as a commuting means, despite the fact that Lawrence Park was serviced from the beginning by the Yonge Street transit line.⁴¹

Ross Paterson says that the housing developments which appeared after World War II were a refinement of developments from the earlier years of the twentieth century such as: Kingsway Park, Lawrence Park and Westdale (Hamilton). There

would, certainly, seem to be many similarities with what happened before and after World War II, but also some marked differences. Land became a commodity in the hands of Home Smith and Dinnick and would continue to be so. The suburbs retained their desirability as an escape from the deteriorating city. The form of these suburbs, since land and housing was viewed as a commodity, would continue to be the result of attempts by entrepreneurs to appeal to the anonymous housing consumer. The Tudor architecture of Kingsway Park stood for status in the buyer's minds. It was a place where they could live their upper middle-class lifestyles. Not surprisingly, the Tudor style was the chosen style for the upper classes during the 1920s and 1930s - the period when Kingsway Park was being developed. Canadian, upper-class tastes were still influenced, inordinately, by the British mother country. It is, equally, not surprising that the lower middle-class suburbs, such as Birchcliff in Scarborough Township would have a preponderance of Craftsman Bungalows and foursquare houses, since the magazines were filled with them, just as Hintonburg would have a preponderance of foursquare houses. Streetcars created the suburbs, but accommodating the automobile would continue to shape suburban form. Kingsway Park and Lawrence Park were dependent on the automobile until public transit reached them in the 1920s. It can be argued that the automobile was also

vital to the existence of the strip developments such as Kingston Road. Tetlow and Goss, writing about strip development in Britain say, "Whereas the tramcar and motor bus were significant for extending residential development along radial roads, the motor car produced the infilling of the wedges of land between the main radial roads".⁴²

Although, Don Mills was constructed by fairly small builders, the period after 1950 was marked by the emergence of the mass house building firms such as Campeau and Minto, who combined the function of land developer and house builder. In the 1920s and 1930s builders were small, without exception, and the development of the land was a separate function. At Lawrence Park, Dinnick built six houses. Two were for his personal use and the other four were models which he sold. He was not in the house-building business and neither was Home Smith or the numerous land assembly firms who developed the streetcar suburbs. Home Smith, Dinnick and the other developers were involved in gross speculation in land. It took forty years to finish Kingsway Park and twenty-five to finish Lawrence Park. Campeau and Minto would consider five years a normal period to develop and build their subdivisions.

All of the 1920s suburbs were serviced by local stores along the routes of the streetcar lines. These created a strong sense of community, because the businesses were well

patronized by the local people, and still are. By the time of the 1950s suburbs, shopping centres were a novelty too compelling to resist. Suburbia depended on planned concentration of retail stores in shopping centres. Consumers demanded the shopping centre, because it was perceived to be modern and was a novelty in the 1950s. The first shopping centre to open in Canada, according to Kenneth Jackson, was the Dixie Plaza, near Toronto, in 1954.⁴³ Regional shopping centres like Yorkdale, in Toronto, soon followed along with roadside motels and fast-food restaurants.

Kenneth Jackson says "By 1927... there was one motor vehicle for every five people in the country (U.S.A.) For the next three decades only Canada could join the United States in that claim."⁴⁴ Suburbia was not possible without the infrastructure of roads, expressways and bridges, which governments supplied. The suburbs by the 1950s were no longer serviced by streetcars lines, but were, rather, located at the off-ramp from an expressway. Automobiles shaped the form of the suburbs, and added the ever-present garage to the North American home. Town planning which favoured sprawl and segregation of land uses, encouraged automobile travel and the paving-over of the landscape, not only for roads, but for parking areas at every institution or shopping centre, to accommodate the swarms of automobiles.

Leland Roth has said, "... after the Second World War Broadacre City became a sprawling reality around every major urban area".⁴⁵ All development, between 1945 and 1960, was done in suburbia. A few suburbs like Thorncrest Village, constructed in Etobicoke, in 1948, showed good planning, but most lacked planning or were the result of subverted planning. Business controlled the construction of the built environment and shunned the planning and regulations necessary for the creation of new towns. They preferred suburbs as did their customers, but the looming land shortage would force a rethinking of land settlement patterns.

4) The Need for Accommodation Reform

In Canada, there was a perennial shortage of affordable housing, throughout the first half of the twentieth century. This was a result of the inability of business to build housing which was both affordable for the collectivity and, also, profitable to build. It was also a result of perennial inaction by governments who were unwilling to get involved in the provision of housing.

If a modernist progressive process had prevailed, governments would have acted in concert with professional design and planning to produce social housing of the required form. However, a traditional conservative process was in force, in which business would not build social housing and

governments would not act to encourage them to do so.

People would be housed, regardless of how inadequately, and during the early years of the century communities of sub-standard houses sprang up around cities like Ottawa and Toronto. Richard Harris, writing of Toronto in 1907, says that, "...shacktowns ringed the entire city, from Swansea in the west to Woodbine race track in the east." The form of the housing in these fringe developments would be, characteristically, self-built single-storey bungalows and gable-fronted one and one-half storey houses, all of frame construction. Typically the communities would have houses in varying stages of completion, from roofed-over basements to houses which were the result of one or more additions to the original structure. Ottawa was similar, and typical was the development, of the real estate firm of Morisset and Morisset, at Bellevue Park, west of Merivale Road and south of Carling Avenue in 1911. There, three hundred lots were sold to poor French-Canadians who self-built houses into what became essentially a shacktown.⁴⁶

Very little housing was built during the 1930s depression years or during the Second World War so that a housing shortage, of crisis proportions, existed for even the middle classes. The end of the war enabled the attention of Canadians to be focused on the problems of housing shortage, community planning and urban renewal. Now, as never before,

governments were ready to act. This action, ultimately, would consist of market-place responses to the demands of the consuming public, and it would happen, mostly, in suburbia. The previous half century had refined the suburbs, entrenched the private builder and enshrined consumerism so that these would guide all action on housing.

The Curtis Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, set up in 1941, called for massive construction of new houses, when the war ended, and also recommended government subsidization of rental housing. This latter recommendation was ignored when the National Housing Act (N.H.A.) of 1944, was set up to construct new houses, repair existing houses, improve living conditions and expand employment.⁴⁷

Wartime conditions have always seemed capable of producing the means for funding actions deemed necessary for national defence. Such a case was the creation of Wartime Housing Limited (W.H.L.) where Federal funds were found for a crown corporation to build rental housing for soldier's families and defence workers. Jill Wade has described how the corporation built 17,190 inexpensive houses, in a Cape Cod Cottage form, between 1941 and 1944. Despite this impressive performance and the recommendations of the Curtis Report the Liberal government, in 1944-1945, promoted a post-war program of home ownership and a free-enterprise solution to the house construction problem, rather than

allowing the crown corporation to remain as a major contributor to the supply of needed housing. After being permitted to build an additional 17,000 units, W.H.L. was cancelled in 1947. The government refused to be involved in competition with private business in the supply of housing. Conservative mandarins, such as W.C. Clark, Deputy-Minister of Housing, were opposed to "socialist" measures to alleviate the housing shortage. Private builders, though unable to build inexpensive housing, succeeded in eliminating any competition which might try.⁴⁸ The methods used to deal with the housing shortage in Canada were typically North American, and reflected the conservative, free-enterprise nature of Canadians.

In Europe different methods resulted in a different built environment. Britain, for instance, chose to build New Towns and the result was adequate quantities of professionally designed affordable housing. Since it was, basically, social housing, government regulation insured affordability and a mix of forms, such as row housing, which facilitated the production of sufficient quantities at affordable prices. Housing was seen as a social need in Europe. In Canada, it was seen as a commodity.

Housing in Canada, up to 1960, was mainly single-family detached houses on large suburban lots, and was, understandably, affordable for only the middle and upper classes. It

was built for a homogeneous, reasonably affluent middle-class.

As a result of the National Housing Act, housing did get built-460,000 units between 1945 and 1950 alone, according to John Sewell. It was built by small builders, and, though impressive, it did not meet the housing needs of the Canadian nation. Humphrey Carver, pointed out that the housing goals of the government would never be met by the small builders who were attempting to meet the demand. He called for the creation of a large-scale housing industry, and for a government-financed program of public housing to encourage the growth of large house-building companies.⁴⁹ Public housing did not get any attention from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (C.M.H.C.), which was set up to administer the N.H.A., but government financing did stimulate the growth of the great housing corporations such as Campeau, Minto, Bramalea and Markborough. These took the solution of the housing shortage in hand so that it was solved, at least for the middle classes, within a decade. Growth was so great at this time that huge areas were subdivided and built upon and the phenomenon of mass housing appeared. This required the assembly of vast tracts of land, and was aided by government legislation which permitted insurance companies to finance land development. Companies such as E.P. Taylor's Don Mills Development Corporation and

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the later Erin Mills Development Corporation were the direct beneficiaries of this legislation. Capital from a number of sources was extended on such a scale that mass production, which had previously existed only in factories, could be used in the production of houses. James Lorimer believes that Federal policies and attitudes toward business created the tax laws which placed the ownership of land around the major Canadian cities, firmly, in the hands of a few large corporations. Suburbanization was accomplished on these lands which surrounded Ottawa and Toronto.⁵⁰

All of the foregoing, of course, meshed quite favourably with Robert Campeau's aspirations to become a huge house builder. He was aware of what the Levitts had been doing at Levittown, Long Island, since 1947. This family had employed American-developed, factory production-line methods to build a huge housing development. The Levitt methods were copied by all large, North American builder/developers including Campeau. All builders came to share the reputation of a company whose developments, the Levittowns, were synonymous with mass housing, American housing entrepreneurship, free-wheeling development and monotonous suburban sprawl. Campeau, like the Levitts, was in need of a reliable supply of serviced land in huge quantities, on which to build his houses. Municipalities could not afford to provide it on such a large scale so Campeau developed his own

land and covered it with houses. It was only much later that he discovered that he could have been as financially successful through just the development and sale of land. But Campeau did not see himself at that time as anything but a housebuilder, and it was that vision which so emphatically shaped the form of the Ottawa suburbs.⁵¹

5) The Needs of Changing Lifestyles

During the years leading up to 1900, changes came about in society which dramatically altered middle-class lifestyles. Demographic changes altered the make-up of the household. Families became smaller as relatives tended to live on their own and as parents had fewer children. Servants were harder to find so fewer houses needed to accommodate them. Houses, as a result, could be smaller. Women, increasingly, found occupations outside the home, so they needed houses which were more easily maintained. An affluent middle class was emerging that increased the demand for dwellings to purchase. The population was more active and required greater mobility, so that means to move the people needed to be devised.⁵² In what way would society respond to the needs created by these changes?

If smaller houses were needed, what was to replace the huge Victorian house? Would it be apartments or individual houses? Women were demanding more freedom from household

chores. Would that freedom be attained in a co-operative housing arrangement with communal services or in a house equipped with the latest in appliances and designed for efficiency? What form of house would the emergent, affluent middle class demand, and where would they want it built? What effect would consumerism have on people's choices in housing? What means would be needed to satisfy people's demand for increased mobility, and what effect would it have on the form of communities? The answers depended on whether people chose a modernist progressive way or a traditional conservative way.

Both ways existed in the decades leading up to the twentieth century. Conservative reform saw the needs, but was selective about which they supported. Progressive reform sought basic wide-ranging change. Catharine Beecher and Andrew Jackson Downing, ultimately, represented conservative reform, and they simply wanted to influence the organization of the household and the settlement pattern. The material feminists came out of the progressive reform movement, and they wished to revolutionize the family and housework and to move the cities. Conservatives settled for the "American dream house" while the radicals looked for something quite different.⁵³

Reform of the North American household, probably, dates from Catharine Beecher's *Treatise on Domestic Economy, For*

the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School, dated 1841. Kenneth Jackson says that industrialization removed men and their work from the home and placed them in the factory, thereby creating two spheres of work--the man's and the woman's. Beecher accepted the woman's place in the home, and her books asserted women's moral superiority over men. Concurrently, she accepted their natural subservience and dependence on men. Gwendolyn Wright says that Beecher advocated the rationalization of the domestic sphere, so that women could control the home without the help of servants or of husbands. The isolation of woman was institutionalized, and it was all to take place in the single-family detached house in suburbia that Downing, so persuasively, advocated.⁵⁴

Beecher and Downing were aided in their advocacy by architect Gervase Wheeler, who, in his 1855 pattern book titled *Houses for the People in Suburb and Country*, set down arguments for the single-family detached house that would stand up even today. Houses were to be self-contained entities, reinforcing family cohesion, while providing for the needs of individuals. Each room was to have its role: the wife's bedroom for her personal retreat, the front parlour for family gatherings and visitors, the dining room for family interaction, stairs to second floor bedrooms off limits to all but the family, the entrance hall separating private from public areas and large front lawns as a status

symbol. It all sounded like a rehearsal for Crestwood Heights.⁵⁵

While the ideas of Beecher and Downing were establishing a firm place in the hearts of the North American middle class, a movement was gaining strength which would create a way of life complimentary to those ideas. Abundant industrial production and the never-ending inventions of the latter part of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century created a movement toward a consuming public. Popular magazines and the advertisements of the manufacturers persuaded North American society that a better life depended on the possession and use of manufactured products such as household appliances, soaps, canned goods, mass-produced furniture and plumbing fixtures. Homemade products were portrayed as old fashioned and substandard. Consumerism was well suited to the changing society and women, although trapped in the home, were seeking more freedom from household drudgery. An ethos of personal possessions, opposed to any sense of communal property was, almost inadvertently, created.

Thomas Jefferson believed that American society's stability was based on the private home, and he struck an early blow for dispersed communities, when he designed the new frontier territories in individual farms rather than compact villages. Gwendolyn Wright believes this land

settlement pattern influenced Beecher and Downing in their reverence for suburban life, and, as a consequence, their writings extolled the virtues of the individual house on a large rural lot as a haven from the evil city.⁵⁶ This suburban pattern was well established in North America, by the time that Ebenezer Howard was offering his first Garden City as an alternative. North American tastes were formed by fifty years of advocacy of low-density housing, removed from centres of industry and commerce (and hence from centres of employment), with an individualistic rather than collective character, and with a homogeneous population—either middle class or working class, but rarely both. So pervasive was the suburban ideal that Frank Lloyd Wright often proposed land settlement patterns that were grossly wasteful uses of land such as his Quadrangle Block plan (1901) which featured four similar houses on a two acre suburban block, and his Broadacre City which had houses on one-acre plots.

Dolores Hayden has written extensively on the other stream of North American social reform, material feminism. This movement, from the turn of the century, owed much of its substance to the communitarian socialist experiments of the nineteenth century such as The Shakers, Amana Congregationalists and Fourierists. Material feminists criticized industrial capitalism and its separation of men's work from women's work. They wanted recognition of women and

their labour and release from the entrapment of the home. This depended greatly on new forms of housing which would facilitate equality and freedom for women. It was obvious that this needed to be some form of group housing and, for this reason, material feminists were always interested in improvements to the urban environment and its stock of high-density housing. They considered suburbia and its isolated houses as anathema to women's interests or, indeed, to a progressive society. Automobile dependency so typical of suburbia, could only be another impediment to women's freedom. Perhaps their most radical proposal was the call for communal kitchens, laundries and child care, and they argued that the communitarian socialist experiments proved the practicability of these methods.⁵⁷

There were many reformers who supported these aims, and working models were actually tried. Frances Willard of the women's Christian Temperance Union and Melusina Fay Pierce called for co-operative housekeeping and wages for housework. Charlotte Perkins Gilman wanted apartment hotels where cooking, cleaning and socializing were done outside of the individual's dwelling unit. Her ideas were put into practice by Ebenezer Howard in his Co-operative Quadrangles at Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City. Le Corbusier saw the logic of communal services, and included them in his *La Ville Radieuse*, in 1935. Books and magazines were remarkably

progressive on these subjects at the turn of the century, and there was much support amongst the progressive writers. Despite this, the progressive stream failed and the conservative stream prevailed.

Apartment buildings in renewed cities did not get built. Instead Canadian society chose the single-family detached house in suburbia. Co-operative housekeeping was never a viable option. The "American dream house", filled with labour-saving devices and the isolated housewife, was effectively promoted by the tastemakers and conservative reformers. Tenancy had always been considered slightly immoral in North American society so the newly affluent spent their money on homeownership. Consumerism and personal property took precedence in a society where an affluent middle class was an important factor to the business people who were creating the built environment. Governments spent their money on an infrastructure of expressways, bridges and parking areas rather than public transportation, because suburbia was triumphant over the "evil city". All of this dictated the form of the residential built environment so that it came to be characterized by detached houses, each with its full compliment of appliances, with a garage, to store the inevitable automobile, that would eventually dominate the facade of the house, surrounded by unused lawns and fronted by roadways, often, of four lanes in width. This would be

the form of Elmvale Acres and, to a large extent, Don Mills also.

6) Summary - The Built Environment

It has been shown that the needs of Canadian society, for improved design, healthier houses, urban renewal, quantities of affordable houses and attention to the demands of changing lifestyles, were responded to most effectively by traditional conservative forces, up to 1960. This was quite natural, considering the nature of the most effective forces in Canadian society. Like Canadian society in general, they were very conservative in outlook, admired individual effort and private enterprise, took a traditional view of the family, the household and gender. The influential housing consumer had embraced a materialistic consumerism, the conservative stream of social reform and found common cause with private business. Governments accepted the predominance of business interests over all other considerations, and exercised a laissez-faire attitude toward regulation of the house-building and land development businesses.

Up to 1960, the Canadian residential built environment was exemplified by the single-family detached house, in poorly-planned communities with few amenities, in suburbia. Only one new town had been attempted, at Don Mills. The question was whether this land settlement pattern would solve

society's housing problems. The built environment was, largely, a result of the Federal Government policies which placed the creation of housing in the hands of private business. This coincided with the consumer again assuming a position of power and importance in the plans of builders and manufacturers. N.H.A. mortgages were available, the economy was buoyant and every middle-class family would aspire to homeownership. Builders had to produce a marketable product, especially as the housing shortage was being alleviated. That so much of what was produced was mediocre and poorly planned was an indication of the tastes of the consumer and the influences they embraced. The Canadian middle class were housed, but the poor were still left waiting at the gate.

By 1957, the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects predicted a doubling of the size of several large Canadian cities. It forecast a growing demand for land suitable for housing, and saw a looming shortage. Land waste was catching up to the developers, as the single-family detached house swallowed up 70,000 acres of countryside each year. It had become obvious that higher density housing had to be looked at.

This was the shape of the Canadian residential built environment, in 1960. It was the result of our history and the responses of society and the roles performed by the dominant players. Now it is time to look at those players.

Footnotes to Chapter I

- 1) There is evidence of the presence of plan books in Ottawa, early in this century. In the Parks Canada library are pattern books of Dustman, William T. Comstock and C.N. Caspar, all well-known authors of house plans for sale. Originally, these books belonged to D.A. Hewitt an employee in the chief architect's office of the Department of Public Works of Canada. His name appears on the books and is dated 1909.
- 2) Peter Davey, *Architecture of the Arts and Crafts Movement* (London, 1980)
- 3) Kelly Crossman, *Architecture in Transition: From Art to Practice, 1885-1906* (McGill-Queens University Press, Kingston and Montreal, 1987) pp.86-93, p.125.
- 4) Martin Birkhans, *The Life and Work of Francis C. Sullivan, Architect, 1882-1929*. M.A. Thesis (University of Toronto, 1964).
- 5) John Sergeant, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses: The Case for Organic Architecture* (New York, 1974)
- 6) H.H. Arnason, *History of Modern Art* Second Edition, (New York, 1977). Also Mitchell Beazley ed., *The World Atlas of Architecture* (London, 1984). p. 356. and Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (New York, 1985), pp. 42-49.
- 7) Alexander F. Cross, "Witness to the Passing of Victorian Architecture", *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada*, 12, No.1 (June, 1987).
- 8) Annmarie Adams "Eden Smith and the Canadian Domestic Revival", *Urban History Review*, XX1, No.2 (March, 1993), pp. 104-115. Eden Smith started his practice in 1895. Percy Nobbs arrived in Canada in 1903. Samuel Maclure started his practice in 1890.
- 9) Sean Purdy, "This is Not a Company: It is a Cause: Class, Gender and the Toronto Housing Company 1912-1920", *Urban History Review*, XX1, No.2 (March, 1993) pp. 75-91. Also *Construction* (March, 1919) p.87 and (April, 1921) p.96.

- 10) Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913* (Chicago, 1980) P.232, and *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (New York, 1981). Also Clifford Edward Clark Jr. *The American Family Home 1800-1960* (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1986) PP. 195-216 and John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, *The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History* (London, 1967). These are good studies of the aesthetic and health reform movements in the housing of the United States. There is no reason to believe that the same reform movement did not also affect Canada. Paul Rutherford supports this in his book *Saving The Canadian City: The First Phase 1880-1920* (University of Toronto Press, 1974). Also useful are various articles in Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise *The Canadian City, Essays in Urban History* (Carleton Library No. 109, 1979) and *The Usable Urban Past: Planning and Politics in the Modern Canadian City* (Carleton Library No. 119, 1979). Aesthetic reform in Canada is not well covered anywhere, but Michael Simpson deals with some issues in his *Thomas Adams and the Modern Planning Movement: Britain, Canada and the United States, 1900-1940* (London, 1985).
- 11) Clay Lancaster "The American Bungalow" in *Common Places* ed. Dell Upton and John M. Vlack (University of Georgia, 1986) and Anthony King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (London, 1984)
- 12) King, pp.140-148, also Robert Schweitzer and Michael W.R. Davis, *America's Favorite Homes, Mail-order Catalogues as a Guide to Popular Early 20th-Century Homes* (Detroit, 1990). Ada Louise Huxtable, in her book *Kicked a Building Lately?* (New York, 1976) offers reasons for why factory-built housing never accounted for a large percentage of the housing stock - labour unions, lifestyles and tastes. I agree. The tastes and needs of consumers are simply too wide to encompass in a few designs.
- 13) Lancaster, p.89
- 14) Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, 1984), and *The White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs* ed. Russell P. Whitehead and Frank Chouteau Brown, also Alan Gowans *The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture 1890-1930* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986) p.179.

- 15) Lee Valley Tools, *Homes and Interiors of the 1920s*, originally *Building With Assurance* 2nd Edition, Morgan (Chicago, 1921). This building supplies catalogue offered Colonial and Bungalow house plans and all of the necessary millwork such as: stairs, door surrounds, mouldings, spindles, doors and windows to detail these houses in the correct style.
- 16) *The Architectural Forum* (March, 1949) pp.101-106, "The Cape Cod Cottage".
- 17) Catherine Jill Wade, *Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947: Canadian Housing Policy at the Crossroads* M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, July, 1984).
- 18) F.W. Nicolls, "Wartime Housing in Canada" in *The Architectural Forum* (December, 1940) pp. 493-496. These houses are still providing comfortable, easily maintained accommodation for thousands of Canadians. Unfortunately, many people are putting a second storey onto them and ruining a truly traditional Canadian house.
- 19) The traditional form of house owed much to the ascendancy of conservative reform as exemplified by Catharine Beecher and conservative journalists such as Edward Bok of *Ladies' Home Journal*.
- 20) *Canadian Homes and Gardens* (January / February 1940 to April, 1945) and *Better Homes and Gardens* (August, 1940 to March, 1949).
- 21) Clifford Edward Clark Jr., p.201 cites *The Architectural Record*.
- 22) Lester Walker, *American Shelter: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Home* (Woodstock, N.Y., 1981).
- 23) See Appendix A, Interview with Jean-Louis Lamarche, March 9, 1992.
- 24) "Split-levels set the sales pace" *"House and Home"* (December, 1952) pp.117-119. This was the age of Dr. Benjamin Spock and parents who had taken his advice were now reaping the consequences of indulging their children. Escape from the young people was a necessity and the split-level house was designed for separation of activities. Stylistically, the house was still very much a Ranch Style Bungalow.

- 25) Michael Babad and Catherine Mulroney, *Campeau, The Building of an Empire* (Toronto, 1989) pp.58-59.
- 26) E.H. Blake, "the New Interest in Architecture, *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* (May, 1931) quotes Le Corbusier. Also Emile Venne, "The Modern Trend in Domestic Architecture", *R.A.I.C. Journal* (July, 1935) and William Lescaze, "Why Modern Architecture"?, *R.A.I.C. Journal* (April, 1937).
- 27) Gwendolyn Wright, p.126.
- 28) Gwendolyn Wright, p.116.
- 29) Frederic J. Osborn, *Green Belt Cities* (New York, 1969)
- 30) Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods and Cities* (Cambridge, Mass. 1981) pp.230-237.
- 31) Paul Olivier, Ian Davis and Ian Bentley, *Dunroamin: The Suburban Semi and its Enemies* (London, 1981).
- 32) Clarence S. Stein, *Toward New Towns for America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966).
- 33) Heikki von Hertzen and Paul D. Spreiregen, *Building a New Town: Finland's New Garden City, Tapiola* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973)
- 34) Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York, 1985) Jackson, covers the history of the early ferry suburbs around New York which were followed by railway, streetcar and, finally, the automobile suburbs.
- 35) Jackson, pp.76 to 81.
- 36) Olivier, Davis and Bentley in their book *Dunroamin* show how, in Britain, between the wars, the middle-class moved to the outskirts of the major cities, facilitated by the streetcars or subway systems. Like their North American counterparts they were seeking a residence close to their employment but in the open spaces of the suburbs, with the opportunity of home-ownership. All of this was offered to them in the advertisements of the estate agents and transit companies.
- 37) Gwendolyn Wright, p.40 and Clifford Edward Clark Jr., p.97.

- 38) Bruce Elliott, *The City Beyond: A History of Nepean, Birthplace of Canada's Capital, 1792-1990* (Nepean, 1991). pp.175-202.
- 39) Michael J. Doucet, "Politics, Space and Trolleys: Mass Transit in Early Twentieth-Century Toronto" in Stelter and Artibise *Shaping the Urban Landscape* pp.356 to 381. Also S.D. Clarke, *The Suburban Society* (University of Toronto Press, 1966) pp.38 to 45. As a resident of Birchcliff and the Scarborough Bluffs in the 1930s I can speak from first hand of the communities and their forms. I can also remember, vividly, the unfinished shacks and roofed-over basements, which people called home, at Scarborough Junction in the fringe.
- 40) Jackson, p.77.
- 41) Ross Paterson, "The Development of an Interwar Suburb: Kingsway Park, Etobicoke", in *Urban History Review*, XIII, No.3 (February, 1985) and Karina Bordessa, *A Corporate Suburb for Toronto: Lawrence Park, 1905-1930*, M.A. Thesis York University (Toronto, 1980).
- 42) John Tetlow and Anthony Goss, *Homes, Towns, and Traffic* (New York, 1968) p.70. My family's first house in Scarborough Bluffs was on Cliffcrest Drive, a half-mile walk to the Kingston Road streetcar.
- 43) Jackson, p.259. James Lemon in *Toronto Since 1918: An Illustrated History* (Toronto, 1985), however, disagrees and claims that Lawrence Plaza in Toronto opened in 1953, p.107.
- 44) Jackson, p.162
- 45) Leland M. Roth. *A Concise History of American Architecture* (New York, 1979) p.257.
- 46) Richard Harris, *The Growth of Home Ownership in Toronto, 1899-1913* Research Paper No. 163, Centre for Urban and Community Studies (University of Toronto, July, 1987)p.18, also Bruce Elliott p.204.
- 47) O.J. Firestone, *Residential Real Estate in Canada* (University of Toronto, 1951) Firestone gives a thorough run-down of the various pieces of government legislation. I can personally attest to the preoccupation of the Canadian public, in the post-war years, with the possibility of a return of the Great Depression and massive unemployment.

- 48) John C. Bacher and J. David Hulchanski, "Keeping Warm and Dry: the Response to the Struggle for Shelter Among Canada's Homeless, 1900-1980, *Urban History Review*, Vol XVI, No.2 (October, 1987) p.157
- 49) John Sewell, "Where the Suburbs Came From" in *City Magazine*, Vol.2, No.6 (January, 1977) p.22 also Humphrey Carver, *Houses for Canadians: A Study of Housing Problems in the Toronto Area* (University of Toronto, 1948)
- 50) James Lorimer, *The Developers* (Toronto, 1978).
- 51) Herbert J. Gans, *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community* (New York, 1967). Also "Biggest New City in the U.S. " *House and Home* (December, 1952).
- 52) Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism* covers the changing society in great detail.
- 53) Wright and Hayden cover the conservative reformers and material feminists in detail.
- 54) Wright and Jackson deal extensively with Catharine Beecher.
- 55) John R. Seeley, R. Alexander Sim, E.W. Loosely, *Crestwood Heights: A Study of the Culture of Suburban Life* (University of Toronto, 1956). A not so fanciful 1950s suburb north of Toronto is dissected sociologically.
- 56) Jackson p.48 and 62, Wright p.10 and 37. Canada, too, was settled as an agricultural frontier rather than in compact industrial villages.
- 57) Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism 1790-1975* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976) and *Redesigning The American Dream: The Future of Housing, Work and Family Life* (New York, 1984) also Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1977).

Chapter II

Responses to Needs

The responses of the various sectors of society involved in the creation of the twentieth-century residential built environment to needs, resulted in the form of that built environment. Professional architecture, reform movements, governments and business were all part of the response, but some sectors dominated what resulted at the expense of others, so that collective needs of society as a whole received insufficient attention. Collective needs were usually associated with the lower classes, and included needs for quantities of affordable housing and for urban renewal, since the lower classes were, frequently, unable to escape to the suburbs. Needs for better designed and healthier houses became truly collective needs, when they were adopted by the middle classes as well as the lower classes. Private were the needs for profit opportunities by business and the satisfaction of lifestyle demands by the middle classes. These were the players.

1) The Architectural Profession

For various reasons, the architectural profession

failed to effectively assert the design prerogative in residential architecture at a time when North American society was in a state of reform, and the built environment was growing rapidly. Although architects contributed to the design of houses and communities, the control of design was seized by private builders and developers who designed and constructed the residential built environment to suit their own agenda. What effort there was by the profession to act in concert with governments to respond to the collective needs of society was weak and lacking in concentration due to a variety of factors. Just as the great expansion in building at the end of the nineteenth century was gaining momentum, the architectural profession found itself distracted by esoteric theories of craftsmanship and by the City Beautiful movement, mired in organizational concerns and problems of official recognition, suffering from ambiguous attitudes toward mass housing, standardization and small house design and out of touch with emerging consumerism. The profession, largely marginalized, became a contributor to the formation of consumer tastes and confined to elite and institutional design. Standardization of materials, mass production methods and replicable house designs were required to meet the need for inexpensive, well-designed houses in quantity for a rapidly growing population. However, as Gwendolyn Wright has said of the American architects of the

1890s--they were wrapped up in their own self importance and "...moved even farther away from concern with the small house as an architectural problem or a social need,...."¹ She says that in the 1890s, architects esteemed what the Ecole des Beaux-Arts embodied: authoritative control, order, monumental scale and the formal and social status quo. Professionals seeking contracts could much easier sell civic grandeur to municipal officials than housing, and even those architects who were interested in the simplicity of the Arts and Crafts were, by their very nature, opposed to production-line methods or standardization. Even Thomas Adams lamented the preoccupation with Beaux-Arts City Beautiful schemes and said "When the city planning movement takes the form of creating civic centres, wide boulevards, extensive parks and parkways, it is apt to overlook the problem of the individual home."²

Architectural sensibilities at this time could be described as fragile and this condition was largely the result of their failed efforts to attain official recognition of the profession from governments. The Ontario Association of Architects was begun in Toronto on March 21, 1889, partly in response to the overwhelming influence of the American profession on Canadian design and the predilection of Canadian institutions for architectural competitions in which the prestige of American architects was, too often, the deciding factor in the winning award. Although the

association was incorporated by the Ontario legislature in 1890, it lacked real power and did not attain the desired statutory registration until 1931.³ An insurrection within the association by a group of young architects created the Architectural Eighteen Club of Toronto, in January, 1899. They objected to the preoccupation of the O.A.A. with exclusive status, and advocated other means, such as education and heightened standards of professionalism, to improve the position of architects in Ontario. Similar sentiments were being expressed in the more mature profession in Britain.

The profession in the United States was also experiencing problems where the American Institute of Architects, formed in 1851, was still struggling for official recognition. In both the United States and Canada a conflict continued over the right of builders to call themselves architects. The profession got little support from the media. Magazines such as *Ladies' Home Journal* and *The House Beautiful* featured designs by architects such as Raymond Unwin, Charles Ashbee, Frank Lloyd Wright and others, but they were not in thrall to the profession. Gwendolyn Wright says that Herbert Stone of *The House Beautiful* was opposed to professional control of house design, and that it was all part of his support of the Progressive Movement in American society which was offended by the excesses of wealth and the

architects who catered to that wealth. The consequence of the architectural profession failing to win a decisive victory in the turn-of-the-century registration battles has been a continuing non-exclusive status in housing design.⁴ Master builders, engineers and draftsmen design many buildings, and merchant builders continue to ignore the profession.

Architects did not, unfortunately, help their own cause, when it came to attitudes toward small house design, standardization and replication of designs, emerging consumerism and the materialism of business. Robert Gutman points out that, in the nineteenth century, architects were also builders, but by the end of the century, in order to improve their image as a profession, they tried to distance themselves from building contracting and business. He says that, even up to the present time, the profession has felt that its ideals are threatened, when architects become too closely associated with business and become businessmen rather than artists. Architects object that their colleagues who do, for example, stock plans "...violate the ideal definition of the architect's role,.... and... compromise the norms of professional conduct...".⁵ Gutman is speaking of the profession in 1950 when it was being drawn, inexhorably, into the sphere of influence of the merchant builders, but, in 1900, architects still retained some of their illusions

about architecture as art, and they shunned the business connection.

Professional architects had, occasionally, shown a mild interest in small house design, but it seems their hearts were never truly in it. Gwendolyn Wright mentions the 1884 competition, sponsored by the *American Architect*, for an affordable dwelling, but the issue, pointedly, did not become a crusade. Architects, clearly, saw themselves as designers of individual homes, as artists and virtuosi, not plan factories. She points out that, despite the endorsement of European architects, such as Hermann Muthesius, of standardized housing units, American architects still refused to have their designs mass produced. Prefabrication of houses has been put forward, at various times, for over one hundred years, as a solution to the housing shortage, and has been tried and rejected repeatedly. Architects opposed prefabrication, just as they had opposed mass production of their designs, arguing that creditable architecture could never come from such methods.

It can be seen that the architectural profession had little or no interest in what was happening in the housing fields of North America. The minds of architects were occupied with professional problems and prestigious commissions. Being so far out of touch with the needs of the housing market, they had little knowledge of changing

lifestyle requirements or, if they did, had little interest or sympathy for them and, certainly, no interest in satisfying them. They would offer advice from the loftiness of their professional position but few practical solutions to the pressing needs of mass housing. The high architectural principles that the profession enunciated were hardly understood by the average house buyer, and since it did not address common needs, the profession spoke, largely, to itself. A vacuum was created, by the absence of a strong, interested, participating architectural profession, into which the builders rushed as they learned how to design houses. These designer/builders were in touch with the changing lifestyle needs of the house buyers, eager to satisfy their demands, sympathetic and inexpensive. Americans and Canadians knew what they wanted in their "dream houses" and the builder/designers greeted the materialization of the dream with enthusiasm. The North American economic system of the early twentieth century required an affluent consuming public, and the employers wanted a complacent work force. Two interests coincided in the creation of a mildly pecunious consuming middle class which soon began to dictate to its creators. The architectural profession would not cater to this consumer dictatorship. That was left to the business sector.

Even if the profession did not control the design of

the built environment, it did, however, make a very important contribution by setting good, highly visible examples in elite design and social housing, by involvement in official plans, through creation and dissemination of architectural theories and new methods and as "captive architects" in the employ of builders and developers and plan book producers.

Amos Rapoport has said that only five percent of the world's built environment has involved professional architects or engineers in its design and construction. Whether this percentage is important or not, one thing is clear, other than the involvement in elite design, professional architects are involved, directly, in only a small part of the residential built environment.⁷ It is difficult to accurately assess the indirect influence of architects on popular housing form. However, there is little doubt that Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian houses had a considerable effect on the form of Ranch Style Bungalows after 1945 and on the lifestyles lived within the houses. Kenneth Jackson says "Wright's Usonian style of the 1930s emphasized one-story homes with low-slung roofs, carports, and generous amounts of glass. This model for the "ranch" houses would continue to characterize suburban development after World War II."⁸ His open plan encouraged the housewife to participate in the family's activities, even when busy in the kitchen. Usonian moveable glass walls and grade-level

floors created the ambiguity between indoors and outdoors that influenced the 1950s backyard, patio lifestyle and the multi-million dollar industry in barbecues and charcoal. Wright's cost-reducing elimination of paint and plaster helped to encourage the use of natural materials such as cedar and redwood, brick and stone both inside and outside of the house (see Fig.37).

It is difficult to visualize the evolution of the Craftsman Bungalow to the Ranch Style Bungalow without considering the contribution of the Pasadena architects, the Greene brothers. Deryck Holdsworth credits them with "...the popular translation of the bungalow style...."⁹ Equally as important as their influence on the form of the Craftsman Bungalow is their little-remarked-upon Arturo Bardini Bungalow, in Pasadena (see Fig.38) which heralds the form of the Ranch Style Bungalow, with its low-pitched roof, gable ends and easy relationship to the outdoors.¹⁰ No doubt they were influenced by the Spanish Colonial architecture in California, but the Bardini bungalow is, surely, the link to the Ranch Bungalow of the 1950s.

In the consideration of further indirect influences of architects on popular housing form, credit must be given to Richard Norman Shaw, Philip Webb, C.F.A. Voysey, M.H. Baillie-Scott and Ernest Newton who through their contributions to the English Domestic Revival influenced the

*Figure 13. Arturo Bandini Bungalow, Pasadena, Calif., designed by Greene and Greene.
(Restoration drawing by the author.)*

Figure 14. Plan of the Arturo Bandini Bungalow (Drawing by the author.)

THE AMERICAN BUNGALOW

Fig. 38 Early Ranch Style Bungalow by
Greene and Greene, Pasadena, California
(from *The American Bungalow*, by Clay Lancaster).

Arts and Crafts movement and Frank Lloyd Wright and H.H. Richardson.¹¹ The path to twentieth-century tract housing is, perhaps, too convoluted to establish direct links to these architectural pioneers, but there can hardly be any doubt that their work signalled the change of direction in housing design which led to modern housing forms, however debased.

It must be pure conjecture to suggest what influences Canadian architects, such as Eden Smith, Percy Nobbs, W.E. Noffke and Frank Sullivan, have had on Canadian popular architecture. Certainly, builder/designers obtain many of their ideas from observing the professionally designed houses of the elite. Their clients, the housing consumers, are interested in emulating the lifestyles of the upper classes. The works of these architects provide a note of grace in their virtuosity which, surely, has not gone unnoticed. Kingsway Park and Lawrence Park, both with substantial professional design involvement were a benchmark toward which all builder/designers could measure their own efforts, although the evidence shows that few tried. One who did was the developer of Thorncrest Village, in Etobicoke, in 1948. While developers and builders were creating dozens of uninspired, monotonous copies of miniature Levittowns around the fringes of Toronto, Marshall M. Foss was developing Thorncrest Village to a plan by E.G. Faludi. Houses were

individually built, and many show signs of professional design. Faludi included a centrally located community centre with tennis courts and club house and much green space.

Don Mills is the clearest example of strong, direct, professional influences on tract housing design. Here, in 1953, Macklin Hancock planned North America's first New Town and assembled a team of bright, young Canadian architects, many of whom had received their training in Europe or with Gropius at Harvard. It was an oasis of civility in a professional wasteland. At Don Mills, the architects were introducing Ranch Style Bungalows, Split-Level Bungalows and Cape Cod Cottages with modern detailing, while, all around, builders were producing 1930s versions of the Cape Codder and the ubiquitous hipped-roof bungalow. There is a marked change in what was offered in tract housing developments in Toronto and Ottawa after Don Mills set a better example. As has been pointed out earlier, Macklin Hancock was offering row housing, influenced by Chatham Village and European Modernism at Don Mills, at least five years before anything similar was done elsewhere in North America. When multiple housing was, finally, adopted out of necessity by the developers, architectural services would become necessary for every builder who wanted to participate in this market. There was no room for design error in multiple housing.

Another contribution of professional architects is in

the design of social housing. It is generally held to be true that private business will never be able to build the needed social housing. Only governments, not bound by a need to make a profit, are capable of building social housing, and when they do, the profession is called in to do the design. A linkage between government initiated projects and professional design always exists. Social housing in Canada began with the Toronto Housing Company in 1912 and continued with the 1919 Federal Housing Scheme. Eden Smith did the design for the Toronto Housing Company and submitted designs along with Burke and Horwood for the 1919 program.¹² Thomas Adams was involved in the planning and design of Lindenlea under the 1919 scheme and architect F.E. Belfry, representing the government, checked and approved each house plan.¹³ That nothing much happened during the 1930s and 1940s in Canadian social housing, and that the provisions of section 9 of the National Housing Act for loans to limited dividend companies for the construction of rental housing did not bear fruit until the 1960s, does not alter the fact that every time governments or institutions decided to act, the architectural profession was involved in the design. The suggestion of what the form of the residential built environment would be if governments and architects had acted in concert is unavoidable.

Like social housing, town planning in Canada has had a

tenuous and uncertain progress, until the advent of Don Mills, but here, too, professional design made a contribution. There is a long history of Canadian town planning in the twentieth century, dating back to the Commission of Conservation of 1909 and its hiring of Thomas Adams in 1914. Although lack of legislative support for his plans and a predilection, by municipal officials, for City Beautiful projects prevented Adams from realizing all but a small part of his intended program, he left an indelible stamp on town planning in Canada. Other Canadian town planners, such as Noulan Cauchon and Horace Seymour, were similarly frustrated and saw their ideals broken on the rocks of Canadian conservatism and frontier mentality.¹⁴

Laissez-faire was the key word in town planning, with few exceptions, until Don Mills and the 1960s when municipalities started to hire professional planning directors in response to the rapid suburbanization of Canada. Politicians continued to commission and then set aside town plans, but after 1960 housing developments, such as Kanata near Ottawa, showed a clear maturity, as a result of professional planning. It was, probably, more a case of the developer, William Teron, being willing to involve professional planners like Macklin Hancock than of politicians insisting on better planning.

Many new materials and methods of construction find

their way into general use in construction, because architects see their worth and design them into buildings. Robert Gutman believes the effect of architectural experimentation and discovery on prefabrication, urban design, new materials, minimum housing standards and social aspects of housing has been important.¹⁵ The career of Frank Lloyd Wright is highlighted by innovations in housing design methods and materials. Illustrative is Fallingwater where he introduced an extreme cantilever construction and, although it presented structural problems initially, it became the main feature of the house, and inspired modern design from that time forward. Not only have such organizations as the Underwriters Laboratories, founded at the Armour Institute in Chicago, in 1893, and the Building Research division of Canada's National Research Council produced fire regulations and building codes, they have also investigated new methods and materials, and given them the stamp of official acceptance.

Unfortunately, many of the better methods and materials which architects put forward never receive wide acceptance due to the caution and conservatism of builders and their clients. Burchard and Bush-Brown say that "Many individual inventors, including several architects, tried out their dreams for a mass-produced house, almost universally without success."¹⁶ The history of twentieth-century residential

architecture is littered with failed or faltering initiatives.¹⁷ Still, one would need to ignore such developments as large span beams which enabled open plans to be designed into houses. Where architects can specify something new and get it accepted by a client or legislated by government, it can become an important form influencer.

The field where architects made their greatest contribution to the form of the residential built environment, and received the greatest criticism from their fellows, was in the production of replicable designs for the popular and homes and gardens magazines, for plan books (or stock-plan services) and for the factory-built housing industry. Work for magazines, oddly, was always considered acceptable and even Frank Lloyd Wright submitted designs to *Ladies' Home Journal* and other magazines, but he always expressed concern that the buildings be exact copies of his designs or that their construction be supervised by him. Raymond Unwin and Charles Ashbee were contributors to *The House Beautiful*. Indeed, there is a long history of plans being published in magazines, from *Godey's Lady's Book*, between 1842 and 1896, to the present-day services of Associated Press and King Publishing.¹⁸ In Canada, the *Contract Record and Engineering Review* published a weekly house plan in each issue during the 1920s. Select Home Designs is a regular contributor of Home of the Week to the

Ottawa Citizen. Regardless of the acceptability of this kind of work, architects did have some cause for concern about the mass production of plans. Robert Kennedy points out that designs used in magazines were, frequently, treated as a commodity, not to prepare people to build, but to sell magazines and newspapers.¹⁹ Nevertheless there can be no doubt that magazines and newspapers performed a valuable service in disseminating the house designs of professional architects and that these had a strong influence on what was built.

Much less acceptable to the profession was the work which architects performed for pattern books, although it was, initially, quite acceptable, even necessary. As early as the eighteenth century, English architects, such as James Gibbs, provided books of plans which provided the designs for elite housing in the North American colonies and were the source of the Georgian style. As American society matured, architects like Andrew Jackson Downing produced home-grown pattern books such as *Cottage Residences*, in 1842, and *The Architecture of Country Houses*, in 1850. This beginning was followed, throughout the nineteenth century, by many imitators so that by the twentieth century plans were readily available from many sources such as lumber dealers and the multitude of plan services. The names in this business are famous: Palliser, Sears-Roebuck, Comstock, Hodgson, Dustman,

Clyde S. Adams and Scholz. Not all of them employed professional architects, but today most stock plan services do. Indicative of the profession's continuing problems with small house design is their opposition to stock plan employment of architects, despite it being the main means by which architects are involved in speculative housing design. Robert Gutman says the profession views these plan-book architects as paid mercenaries who violate the norms of proper, professional conduct.²⁰

Stock-plan services have always been used by builders.

Gutman says:

The design for most speculative housing built in the United States before World War II came from pattern books or arose out of the cumulative experience of the speculative builders and developers themselves.²¹

Smaller firms, according to Gutman, did not even employ their own non-professional design staff but, rather, used stock plans which they, frequently, redrew to meet municipal approval.

Much has changed, since 1960, so that now architects are employed on the staff of large builders like Campeau and Minto to cope with the problems of multiple housing design. The building industry has a special term for these "lost souls" who have become architects in the service of builders. They are referred to as "captive architects," but in the early part of this century even these were infrequently

employed. Ned Eichler has written:

...few merchant builders used architects or took them seriously. Plans were drawn by a draftsman or a building designer who specialized in such work. Their role was largely technical and limited to putting builders ideas and decisions in a form suitable for bidding, construction and government processing.²²

This situation held true for Campeau in the 1950s and still holds true for the majority of builders who do not engage in multiple housing. They have very little contact with architects outside of stock-plan services, trade magazine articles and the brief encounters when they hire an architect for a special project or when their non-professional designer (often the owner himself) simply runs out of inspiration. Most of the time, the form of houses offered by the smaller builders is a decision of their own sales and marketing departments. Decisions are based on what the sales people feel will sell, what they know other builders are having success with and what new ideas seem promising from magazines and plan books.²³

Robert Gutman believes that eighty percent of the residential built environment is done by merchant builders, and it has been shown that they employ, overwhelmingly, non-professional design. The architectural profession lost the initiative for the design of the residential built environment to the private builders, and society has lived with the result in a love/hate relationship ever since.

Professional designers became mere contributors and very much marginalized so that architectural principles were not prominent in the design of the residential built environment. Housing became shelter rather than an architectural statement and the priorities of the market place replaced high art as the form influencer. To a large extent, architecture has remained the art of the establishment.²⁴

2) Reform and the Sociological Response

Housing, at its most basic, is shelter for humans and their possessions, and needs to be available in sufficient quantity, affordable to the collectivity and, ideally, of good design and located in communities where humans can lead protected, healthy and contented lives.²⁵ Through the latter part of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, reformers worked to achieve the realization of this type of housing. It is illustrative of Canadian society that they were more successful in achieving improved aesthetics, healthy living environments and middle-class lifestyle needs than they ever were in solving affordability and sufficient quantity in housing. This is, arguably, mainly due to the fact that aesthetics, hygiene and lifestyles were middle-class concerns, and affordability in quantity has always been a lower-class concern.

As has been explained in Chapter I there were two

streams of social reform in North America. There was the conservative stream which favoured traditional forms in housing and private market methods of producing and selling the houses. This stream also favoured the "escape to suburbia" solution to urban renewal problems and a suburban lifestyle based on the single-family detached house with its male-lead, female-dominated household. The other stream was radical reform, and found its strongest expression, relative to housing, in the material feminist movement. This movement advocated group housing, government involvement in its creation and distribution, urban renewal, and co-operative housekeeping. Interestingly, both streams favoured improved design in housing which also encompassed a healthier living environment.

Social reformers are often the heart of a society, and they are usually the avant-garde in thinking about societal problems and their solutions. The social reform movement in Canada was that sector of society which identified the whole range of housing needs and conveyed them to governments, the design professions and the business community. These sectors in turn, responded in varying degrees of effectiveness to the range of needs, and, thereby, contributed to the form of the residential built environment. A system, which might have worked, failed, because the design profession was largely, ineffective in matters of popular housing, and because

governments were unable or unwilling to act on reform's recommendations. As a result, only specific, selected reforms received any attention, and these were the reforms which the builders perceived to be in demand by their customers, the housing consumers. All other reforms received much less effective responses or fell entirely to the wayside for most of the twentieth century. The form of the built environment was distorted in favour of business concerns and consumer demands, because the creation of the built environment was in the hands of private business. Social reform succeeded as an arbiter of lifestyles and land settlement patterns, because these conservative reforms were effectively promoted to the middle classes.

Aesthetic reform had its beginnings with the Arts and Crafts movement, which traditional conservatives evolved to the "minimal house", exemplified by the Craftsman Bungalow and the foursquare house. Middle-class people supported this reform, because it coincided with their new lifestyles and requirements for a healthy living environment, which the houses facilitated. Business also supported the "minimal house" but for different reasons. They were seeking ways to remain competitive and still attain profitability. Smaller, simpler houses were easier to build and less costly.

Conservative lifestyle reforms and the suburban land settlement pattern were effectively promoted to the middle

classes so that the nature of the household favoured the single-family detached house, filled with private possessions and located in suburbia. Households were structured to a model formulated by Catharine Beecher and promoted to the populace for one hundred years. Magazines such as *Ladies' Home Journal* also promoted the domesticity of women. North American manufacturers supported consumerism with higher wages for their middle-class employees and advertisements encouraging them to buy their products with the extra money. Consumerism was, in reality, more a means to corporate profitability than to a better life for people. The lifestyle put forward by consumerism was needlessly wasteful, where each house had several appliances, infrequently used. Much of the population was excluded from the middle-class lifestyle by the inability to afford it. Unrealistic standards of cleanliness and household skills were imposed on women by consumerism, and it further confined her to the home and its isolation.

It might be questioned why the North American people so readily accepted the promotion of consumerism and suburbia, and it can only be explained by the basic conservatism of the people. The messages of Catharine Beecher and the manufacturers would strike a chord in conservative minds which could find no argument with a self-effacing woman, no fault with the consumption of industry's bounty and nothing

unusual about wanting to escape from a deteriorating city to spacious isolation in the country. That the conservative agenda prevailed is indicative of the conservative nature of North American society and its attitude toward gender, independence, the frontier and personal enterprise.²⁶

Of course, not everybody was of a conservative mind, and not everybody agreed with conservative reform. Radical reformers believed that the city could be saved and made a good place to live. They believed that the household could be reformed so that women would not need to be isolated and burdened with house work. They knew that affordable housing for the needy could more easily be provided by restoring the existing stock in the cities.

Humphrey Carver said "...60 percent of all urban housing in Canada (in 1948) is now more than a quarter of a century old and was built according to standards accepted before the first Great War".²⁷ Within a short period, the row houses, which had once housed a respectable working class, were in a state of disrepair. Those who could afford it had fled the city and left it to the poor. City centres became areas of empty streets and deserted office buildings after the workers had gone home. Where housing still stood, these areas had become places of cheap rooming houses and run-down apartment buildings. The city need not have deteriorated. Material feminism and its successors had a

program for keeping cities vital, but it depended on governments remaining interested in the city as a place to house the population.

Material feminists would have had governments invest in restoration of the urban housing stock and make it available to the workers in the city. Housing co-operatives, as a means to this end, have become a potent reality in the last two decades of the twentieth century, but they were rejected for most of the century. As to revolutionizing the household, they would have had co-operative or communal restaurants, laundries and day-care facilities. These are reforms which are still being striven for. Most late twentieth-century co-operative housing developments do not have any of these facilities.²⁸

Suburbia was not the only means for people to live a private, secure life, and gender did not need to be an affliction for women or men. Material feminism's program would have made the city a palatable alternative to suburbia and the detached house, but they never had a chance of succeeding. The forces arrayed against their program included banks, builders and manufacturers all of whom had an interest in either land, house construction, materials or consumer products. Conservative governments were hostile toward even moderately socialistic ideas, and they understood business interests without difficulty. Magazines which had

supported household reform around 1900, such as *The House Beautiful*, later became more conservative and preoccupied with women's suffrage. Reformers such as Woodsworth and Kelso encountered so much apathy that their efforts were more talk than any concrete action. Finally, the single-family detached house received a decisive boost in the U.S.A. with the 1931 Herbert Hoover Commission report on *Home Building and Home Ownership* which gave this housing form its official approval.

The third in the triumvirate of reforms which the middle-class consumers embraced was health reform. Paul Rutherford has described the Canadian city of the turn of the century as characterized by drab houses, dirty streets industrial and commercial blight, indiscriminate location of railroad tracks and corrupt or incompetent governments. There was general public apathy, until the disease generated by these conditions became a middle-class concern. Terry Copps argues that action became possible, when it was realized that "...health problems affected the entire society, not just the working class." Rutherford points out, further, that "Charles Hastings (Toronto's Medical Officer of Health in 1917) warned that disease did not respect social standing, that an epidemic born in the slums could easily spread to the suburbs."²⁹ It became obvious to the upper classes that disease had to be dealt with at its source.

Actions were taken by cities like Toronto and Ottawa to improve sewage disposal, abolish outhouses, demolish or renovate substandard houses and provide clean drinking water.

This discovery by the upper classes of the slums and disease had important consequences for the form of housing and communities down to our present time. Zoning by-laws were initiated which provided for densities suitable to prevent crowded living conditions and land-use regulations to prevent undesirable uses in residential areas, such as polluting factories. The by-laws were aimed at urban problems, but were, probably, most effective in new developments. Such by-laws helped to shape Elmvale Acres and Don Mills, two developments remote in time and space from the deteriorating cities which spawned the regulations. Low density housing and single-dimensional communities were one devastating result.

The result of the prevalence of the conservative stream of reform is summed up by Dolores Hayden:

We have not merely a housing shortage but a broader set of unmet needs caused by the efforts of the entire society to fit itself into a housing pattern that reflects the dreams of the mid-nineteenth century better than the realities of the late twentieth century.³⁰

Residential form does not conform to the changing demography of single parents, women who support families, a burgeoning population of senior citizens and the disabled. Suburban sprawl does not fit with a world of diminishing resources of

land and materials. City centres have decayed, and have never realized their true potential as living space rather than as commercial space- a reality represented by the proverbial windswept plazas. A society so preoccupied with meeting middle-class demands, quite naturally has had little time for lower-class needs for affordable housing and urban renewal. Reform, ultimately, served the needs of the classes who knew how to enunciate their demands, and had the means to see them met. Canadian society was very conservative, and did not see the needs of the lower classes as worthy of attention, even when the state of lower-class housing was critical. It was only when middle-class safety was threatened that any action, however feeble, was taken. Certainly, the reformers came from the middle and upper-class ranks of thinkers and wives of professional men. Their sincerity is not open to question, but perhaps their sense of urgency did not match that of those in need.

3) Governments and the Political Response

In many European countries, governments took the initiative, during the twentieth century, to design and produce adequate housing for their people, and they were successful in varying degrees. Governments have the inherent power to direct events within their jurisdictions and can, therefore, produce the required living environment for their

people if they and the people have the will. Such was rarely the case in Canada. There was little will to act in partnership with professional design and private business to produce an ideal residential built environment, one in which there was adequate quantities of affordable well-designed houses in liveable communities created by good planning and foresight. Canadian governments, in the belief that the building of houses and communities was best left to business, were almost always reluctant to act and, consequently, abdicated responsibility for direction of the production of housing and communities into the hands of private builders and developers. When governments did act, it was usually through political expediency, often counter-productive and, frequently, simply, in support of private initiatives. Governments were left to provide social housing, and in this they were a failure for much of the twentieth century. Regulation was something they could not ignore but, even in this, they failed. Town plans and building and health codes were legislated but hardly ever heeded. Zoning by-laws were usually heeded, but were often counter-productive.

Conservative Canadian society always assumed that the meeting of market demand was the concern of private business and that government interference in anything so profitable was highly improper. It was expected that entrepreneurs would assemble land and subdivide it, and small builders

would erect houses for sale to those who could afford them. It had always been so. The only government involvement was to be the provision of the infrastructure of roads and piped services and the zoning by-laws which, it was thought, would insure the necessary quality of form. This situation was highly satisfactory to a conservative people, which favoured a laissez-faire attitude from its governments. Certainly, governments contributed to the form of the built environment, but they were guided in their actions by the conservative atmosphere that prevailed in Canadian society. This government involvement included financing, planning, regulations, building research and provision of infrastructure.

Canadian governments were involved at various times, throughout the twentieth century, in the direct and indirect financing of housing. This involvement could have brought with it requirements for socially beneficial actions by those receiving the government help, and, through this, the form of the residential built environment would have been influenced. Governments were always reluctant to spend public funds on housing, which they considered to be a private matter between bankers, builders and householders, so there was little involvement for the first half of this century. The first involvement of the government, certainly, produced excellent design, but it was on such a small scale that the benefits were minimal. In 1913, the Ontario Housing Accommodation

Act, the result of appalling urban housing conditions which could not be ignored, provided for guarantee of the bonds of the Toronto Housing Company. Rental housing was provided for 300 families in the Spruce Court and Riverside Court apartments. The design was done by Eden Smith in a high quality Arts and Crafts style and, even today, these apartments are an attractive living space for working-class people.³¹ Fear of social unrest spurred government expediency in the 1919 Federal Housing Scheme which provided 25 million dollars in loans to provincial governments for erection of housing, at cost, for workers' and soldiers' families. Once again architects and planners, such as Thomas Adams, were involved so that quality of form should have resulted. Unfortunately, houses were poorly constructed and responsible officials, such as those of the Ottawa Housing Commission, provided very poor administration.³² Nevertheless, Lindenlea, a product of the scheme, offers an enticing glimpse of what housing development form could be with cooperation between governments, architects and builders.

Nothing much happened in government-financed housing until the Dominion Housing Act, of 1935, and this ill-starred government effort did little more than provide financing for middle-class home ownership at a time of desperate need for affordable rental housing. It was

intended as an unemployment relief measure, and the provision of housing or affordability was incidental. It in no way influenced quality, form or type of housing stock. The D.H.A. was a glaring example of the sort of policy put forward by conservative mandarins such as W.C. Clark and David B. Mansur who, according to Hulchanski, eschewed any government involvement in social housing.³³ They knew they had the support of the government and the higher classes in Canadian society who believed that poor people failed because of a lack of character rather than through the failure of the economic system. It was, in fact, the beginning of a permanent involvement in the provision of housing by the Federal government.

Wartime Housing Limited, created in 1941 and destroyed by a business-oriented Liberal government in 1947, illustrates the ability of a government to influence not only the availability of low-rental housing but also the form of houses and whole communities. Unfortunately, it took a wartime crisis to spur this kind of action by politicians and bureaucrats. It might have been expected that the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, set up, in 1946, to administer the National Housing Act of 1944, would extract from businesses, which used government financing, some social benefits for the Canadian people. Needed rental housing did not result, because government policies favoured home

ownership. Cheaper housing was also a casualty of Federal policy which, according to James Lorimer, created huge land development corporations rather than the large house building contractors that Humphrey Carver had said were necessary to solve the housing shortages of the 1940s.³⁴ Improved form of houses and communities was also a concession not wrung from the Campeaus and Mintos of the 1950s, either because the governments were in accord with what was being built or because they were, simply, happy to see houses of any form being built.

While the Federal Government was preoccupied with providing financing for middle-class home ownership, builders, lacking any direction, were creating suburbia and cities continued to deteriorate. They need not have decayed because the 1949 amendment to the N.H.A. provided for limited dividend companies to produce low-cost housing. Despite this, as Bacher and Hulchanski point out, "...the level of production (of social housing) would remain at a token level until the passage of the 1964 N.H.A. Amendment." They lay the blame, to a large extent, for the delayed action on "The highly conservative Alberta and Manitoba governments (which) prevented any public housing from being built until the 1960s."³⁵ The point is, of course, that without forceful government action there was little chance that social housing would ever be a part of a Campeau subdivision or of Don

Mills. While neighbourhoods were levelled to make space for projects like Regents Park, the urban renewal and renovation of Victorian structures, which would have saved them, was delayed by government inaction.³⁶

Just as financing could be a useful tool by governments to influence form of the built environment, so too could town planning, but, like financing, governments never utilized this power very effectively. The failed mission of the Commission of Conservation and, town planner, Thomas Adams and the difficult career of Horace Seymour are indicative of the conservative forces in Canadian governments and business which managed to insure that this tool of government was so ineffectively used.

If governments in Canada chose not to use town planning as a powerful means of regulating the form of the built environment, they did use their power to legislate zoning by-laws. Throughout this century, governments have legislated and regulated land use and siting and mix of building styles. These have had the required effect but not always the desired effect. There was good reason to prevent the practice, common at the beginning of the twentieth century, of locating housing close to incompatible structures such as polluting factories. Unfortunately, this has also prevented the mixing of compatible structures such as small stores, restaurants and small offices in residential areas,

and has contributed to the monotony and isolation of suburbia as well as increasing the amount of travel from homes to places of employment and shopping. Regulating the mix of housing styles has prevented the mistakes of the first Levittown, where every house was devastatingly identical, but it has also created streetscapes without any unifying elements and an utter chaos of unrelated styles. Worse perhaps, it has encouraged unimaginative builders to achieve a mix of styles by applying pointless ornamentation and incongruous mixtures of elements such as mansard roofs on single-storey bungalows.

Zoning by-laws, administered by conservative bureaucrats have also stifled innovation. They prevented the Federal Housing Authority in the U.S.A. from accepting the unique design of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian houses until after 1945. Progressive housing architect Robert Anschen complained, in the May, 1953 issue of *House and Home*, that the F.H.A. would not permit him to locate his living rooms at the rear of houses for a long time. Affordability was dealt a blow when Macklin Hancock was prevented from including two-bedroom houses at Don Mills by a municipal by-law which permitted only three-bedroom houses. Ian MacLennan has said that getting subdivision agreements approved by municipalities was so difficult that it discouraged builders from attempting anything innovative in housing or community

design.³⁷

Government regulation of the form of communities has laid down a broad framework within which private builders could take initiatives in design. Unfortunately, instead of encouraging good design, it caused developers and builders to ceaselessly lobby governments to set aside official town plans and ordinances which restricted their free actions. Under the Planning Act, of 1946, municipalities were required to set up planning boards to designate areas of development and the form of the developments. Planning boards have never been effective, because plans are continually subverted. Municipal officials are eager for growth and, in Ontario, are notoriously conservative and oriented toward free enterprise.³⁸

Despite its poor performance in the provision of housing for all Canadians, the Federal Government has contributed to building research through its agencies, the National Research Council and Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Canada has a national building code which has helped to make Canadian construction one of the best in the world. C.M.H.C. regulations, concerning minimum lot sizes, set-backs and percentage coverage by buildings on the lot, dictated an end to crowded residential areas. Unfortunately, they also dictated the single-family home and wasteful use of land. Nobody, however, would suggest that the Canadian

middle classes are not well-housed and the envy of much of the world.

N.H.A. financing was the deciding factor in the solution to the post-World War II housing shortage and, latterly, in the inclusion of group housing in almost every housing development after 1964. It was government's main contribution which had an influence on the form of the built environment. But, could not governments have been much more effective, if they had used their considerable power to intervene in the formation of the residential built environment? The twentieth century is nearly finished, and much of the population cannot afford proper housing, largely due to the government's inability to control land prices. Form of houses and communities is still, inordinately, influenced by the profit-making concerns of private business, and governments accept this situation as normal. A built environment has resulted, but it is certain that a larger role by government, probably in concert with the other sectors, would have made it look much different.

4) Built for Profit, The Business Response

Responding, willingly, to the demands of an anonymous market and in single-minded pursuit of profits, private business took the initiative for the creation of the Canadian residential built environment. It was amply aided by the

architectural profession which was preoccupied with art and recognition, by the reform movement which accepted consumerism and supported a conservative view of the household and by governments which were cooperative and pliable and reluctant to act. Business was successful in the appropriation of this task of social importance, not only through the compliance of the other sectors of society but, because, firstly, it took a business-like approach, pragmatic, single-minded and well-organized. Secondly, business was willing to respond to market demand and consumerism, and was skilful at reading the anonymous market. Lastly, it knew how to marshal support for its private agenda from governments and the Canadian people. That business might not be entirely qualified for the assumption of such an important task seemed not to have concerned a very conservative society.

Private business is singularly adept at employing business methods to the accomplishing of a task. This is not the province of governments or art.³⁹ There might have been concern that the creation of something as basic as shelter was in the hands of less thoughtful people, but part of the success of business has been its ability to proceed undiverted by any considerations but those of operating a profitable business. Certainly, no practical businessman would have allowed himself to be diverted by considerations

of aesthetics or retention of natural elements in the landscape, unless they were perceived to be a sales tool, and certainly never by considerations so esoteric as architectural theory or so socially responsible as affordable housing. It is not that they were heartless; there is ample evidence that Robert Campeau and the Greenberg brothers were anything but. However, they were single-minded in the pursuit of their perceived purpose--the operation of a profitable business. For the private builder, the ever-present decision as to what form or style of house to build must be handled in a pragmatic fashion. There is little room for sentiment or social conscience. William Michelson, commenting on an interview of fifteen developers, says:

Decisions about what type of housing might be built on a site were a function of the setting and the cost of land, in light of how much a client might be expected to pay for housing built there.⁴⁰

The experience of one builder illustrates the process. Bernard Garand of Garand Homes, in Ottawa, explained that the process of design begins with the size of the lot and a "target" market relative to cost. Based on knowledge of what floor plans "work", they develop a shell which fits the plan. They then apply architectural elements to the exterior to suit current tastes, and this might be influenced by plan books or magazines. Garand started as a small builder, in 1962, with no training but an aptitude for house building.

One of his sources of house designs was the plan books produced by Scholz Homes.⁴¹

A survey of other Ottawa builders has shown that they get their design ideas, not only from plan books, but from magazines and trade publications, from observation of what other builders are finding success with (plagiarism), from non-professional designers and from "captive architects". Kenneth Jackson writes of the early American house-building industry in "...which most residential structures were put up by builders who took the plans out of a portfolio". Robert Gutman thinks that "...most speculative housing built in ... the United States before World War II came from pattern books...." or from the experience of the builder. Weaver and Doucet refer to the Canadian situation in which "Most of Westdale's (Hamilton) builders operated as family combinations without their own design facilities. They used standard blueprints with a demonstrated popularity."⁴² Dell Upton says that builders do not, slavishly, follow the designs in plan books but, in fact, depart significantly from them. Design draftsmen in the employ of the builders change the designs to suit the decision-makers and detail them on paper for the construction crews and for government and lender approvals. Trade publications, the other source of printed inspiration, include *Builder* magazine, an American publication which enables North American builders to stay

abreast of all important developments in housing.

In his early years, Robert Campeau did not use architectural services in any way. According to Ian Johns, Campeau did not trust professionals, and would not have willingly, given them a free hand with design. The only professional involved in a Campeau subdivision in the 1950s was the Ontario land surveyor who laid out the streets to maximize the number of lots which would fit onto the land. His design department consisted of Jean-Louis Lamarche a graduate of Hull Technical School's general drafting course. Some designs came out of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation plan books which Lamarche modified to suit Campeau. Others came from house-builder brochures that Campeau collected on his trips to conventions and housing developments in the U.S.A. As the company grew, so did the design department, but the first architect to be employed was Peter Dobbing, in 1965, followed by Tibor Gatszegi, in 1969, and Chris Beshara shortly after. It coincided with Campeau's move into multiple housing, on McCarthy Road, in which he had no choice but to use professional designers.

William Teron, like the other builders, did not, initially, employ staff architects. Ian Johns did his design and he was a graduate agronomist who had learned his architecture in the design office of James Strutt, in Ottawa. James Strutt was a true Modernist, a disciple of Frank Lloyd

Wright and who had visited Taliesin. According to Johns, Teron's method of selecting designs was much like that of Campeau. He would build a few houses to test the market and then make whatever changes were needed to attract buyers. It was simply good business practice. The initial contact with the architectural profession was in the early days of Kanata, when Teron invited some of Canada's best architects to Ottawa, where, as Johns says, "He would pick their brains and then send them home."⁴³ Amazingly, among this group were Arthur Erickson and Irving Grossman. Macklin Hancock had a great deal of influence on the form of Kanata, so he, presumably, stayed longer than others. This flirtation with the profession was all part of Teron's desire to be seen as an innovator, but Johns believes it simply showed what a superb marketing man and promoter he was. Design, no matter how good, was only accepted when the market was amenable to it. Mature tree groupings, existing land contours, green lawns and earthy colours were put forward by Johns and accepted by Teron as a marketable commodity, even before Campeau. That the built environment looks as good as it does is a tribute to the non-professionals such as Ian Johns and Jean-Louis Lamarche and, no doubt, to the good judgement of the decision makers, Campeau and Teron.

The pragmatic attitude of Campeau and Teron toward architects was general throughout the house construction

industry. Ned Eichler says that "Few merchant builders used architects or took them seriously." Architects according to Gutman, were considered to be prima-donnas who put themselves above the practical process out of which came marketable housing. Nevertheless, many architects decided to become involved in the lucrative house-building industry that was emerging in the 1950s, and became "captive architects" in the employ of building contractors or the proliferating plan book industry. The profession feared that these "lost souls" were in danger of becoming indistinguishable from businessmen, but the A.I.A., momentarily pragmatic, urged its members "...to plan houses to fit the potential occupants...."⁴⁴ However, employment with builders was not all compromise with architectural principles. Ned Eichler's house-building firm employed such architects as Robert Anshen who, among his many innovations, developed the "atrium house". The multiple housing of Peter Dobbing and Tibor Gatszegi, regardless of its marketability, shows knowledge of excellent precedents, taste and sophistication.

Practical selection of design was only part of the pragmatic business approach to housing. The houses needed to be built quickly, efficiently and within permissible costs. To do this, builders were quick to adopt better methods and materials as they became available, from the balloon frame of 1883 to the mass-production methods of the Levitts in 1947.

Architects universally condemned the example of Levittown, but people lined up to buy the houses. These methods helped to solve the housing shortage of the 1950s and embarked businessmen, like Robert Campeau, on the road to riches and fame.

In the early 1950s, the trade publications, such as *House and Home*, were filled with articles about prefabrication of houses. Campeau tried prefabricating wall and floor sections as did most other large builders. They just as quickly abandoned the systems, when they were found to lack the promised economies or ran afoul of the trade unions. Prefabricated roof trusses, did, however, survive and are used everywhere in the North American mass housing industry. Factory-made kitchens and bathrooms were also adopted because they were cost effective. Once again architects showed very little interest in prefabrication.

Builders immediately saw the advantages of electric tools on the building sites and adopted methods which would have been frowned upon in 1940, such as nailing machines and glues to secure wall and floor sheathing. Horse-drawn scoops were quickly replaced by engine-driven back-hoes for digging foundations. Lathe and plaster, likewise, only survived for a short period after 1945, and was replaced by faster, quicker gyproc panels in the system called drywall. The adoption of better methods was always facilitated by the

steady intercourse between builders and the manufacturer's representatives, most of whom were members of the home builders associations. A vigorous exchange of ideas within trade associations has always been one of the strengths of private business.

Private builders and their sub-trades and material suppliers have always been cognizant of the advantages of organization. As early as the 1880s, in Ottawa, they recognized the value of organizing to protect their interests from organized labour, the architectural profession and their clients. The first Ottawa Builders' Exchange was established in 1889, and after many setbacks emerged as the Ottawa Construction Association in 1949, with its own builders exchange and plan-viewing facilities. At this time, in 1951, the Ottawa Carleton Home Builders Association was created with national and provincial associations. The various associations lobby governments on behalf of their members, hold conferences and monthly meetings, compile information on the latest materials and methods, conduct training sessions in construction and safety methods, marketing and business practices, organize local home shows and hold competitions for design excellence.

It is this latter activity which illustrates the single-minded purpose of the private builders. Home builders associations conduct annual competitions for excellence in

housing design. The stated purpose of these housing design awards, like thoroughbred racing, is the improvement of the product. There is no doubt that the organizers of the Housing Design Awards for the O.C.H.B.A. sincerely believe that this is the purpose of the awards, but it is, in fact, much more complicated. Although improvement of design is certainly a goal, other considerations such as industry prestige and sale of houses are at least as important. The design awards evening, a Hollywood Oscar-like extravaganza is, ostensibly, arranged so that winners can receive their awards, but is, perhaps more importantly, an opportunity to dazzle the consuming public and persuade them that the product offered by the O.C.H.B.A. membership is of highest quality and design. Winners are allowed to use their prize-winning status in their advertisements, thereby suggesting to the house buyer that their product has some special qualities. Quite naturally, the O.C.H.B.A. exists to serve the interests of the home builders, so it is not surprising that the housing design awards are used to further those same interests. In as far as the awards influence the decision of buyers, a question of ethics could be raised, but many of the winning designs are truly excellent and most range from good to simply mundane. The home builders are, actually, quite good at what they do. Canadian households are well-housed and this is due, largely, to the collective

talents of the home builders. (See Appendix C).

Lack of basic quality is a charge which cannot be fairly levelled at the home builders. The phrase "ticky tacky" was coined to describe the 1950s housing developments, but, to be accurate, it should have been aimed at lack of inspired design, not at lack of basic quality. Campeau always received a great deal of criticism about the form of his housing developments, and it was well-deserved, but he should never have been accused of producing poor-quality housing. He came from a respectable, hard-working but, probably, intellectually deprived family, and his tastes were hardly high style, but he tried to produce the best house within his abilities. Ian Johns says that William Teron received much good comment, at Campeau's expense, on his development at Lynwood Village, but the structures were, if anything, less sturdy than those built by Campeau. Teron paid attention to aesthetics, retention of trees, and each house came with an established lawn. Campeau levelled the landscape in his developments, and provided a one-inch caliper tree in a bare-earth front yard. In fact, Campeau, to all accounts, was committed to quality and customer satisfaction. His attitude toward customers and his handling of careless sub-contractors are legendary.⁴⁵ Today, as house construction and land costs have risen, builders have not resorted to reducing the quality of their buildings but,

rather, have, like the modern chocolate bar, reduced the size in order to remain competitive.

Not only were the private builders efficient in the way they conducted their business, they also listened to their customers and learned. It was one of the three keys to their success in dominating the construction of housing. There has always been a demand for housing, all through the twentieth century and, particularly, after 1945. There was a market, that is, if the price was in line with market levels and if the product responded to the consumer lifestyle expectations of the time. Success for the house builder, whether big or small, always depended on their ability to accurately predict the tastes of the anonymous market.

The housing shortage of the early 1950s did not relieve builders of the need to produce an acceptable product, and when the demand for houses was being met, an understanding and promotion of the market became necessary. Campeau hired, Joe Johnston as his sales manager, early in the 1950s, and he led Campeau's marketing effort for over thirty years. He knew that the housing consumer had deeply-ingrained attitudes toward house styles and facilities, and assumed that these influenced their purchasing decisions.⁴⁶ House builders have always been quite aware of this and, even today, agonize, at great length, over what the anonymous market is seeking to satisfy its lifestyle expectations and psychological needs.

That the house builders were successful is attested to by the many succeeding styles which have been offered over the decades and the fact that the public has never failed to buy, when they need a house and are in a position to buy.

Almost every builder, large or small, has a marketing department, even if it is a single person. At the beginning of each construction season, it is normal for the marketing department to meet with management and between them to decide what form their offering of houses will take. There is nothing unusual in this, because it is normal business practice, regardless of the type of industry involved. The only significance here is that at each of these meetings, the form of the residential built environment is being decided. At these meetings a great deal of plagiarism takes place, of the designs with which the marketing department knows its competitors are succeeding. Plans and styles of a general nature are selected and given to the design department where the marketing decisions are detailed and translated into actual drawings suitable for construction. Design department, even in fairly large builders, usually include only a design-draftsman who is skilled in finding plans in plan books, trade magazines, such as *Builder* or in his or her own experience. Larger firms, of course, employ "captive" architects; but a formal survey of six Ottawa builders, and an informal survey of several more, indicated that the

marketing department made the plan and style selections, and non-professional staff committed it to paper (see note 42).

Marketing departments are aided by the sales and marketing (SAM) committees of the various Canadian home builders associations, who conduct surveys, observe national and international trends and report to their membership. These surveys, to establish what prospective buyers are likely to want in a home, usually indicate that the customers are more concerned with kitchen size, number of bathrooms, window types and colour selections. Nevertheless, styles are still recognized as a potent factor in consumer selection of houses. A whole industry exists to study and respond to trends in housing styles and facilities. Many universities conduct research into design of the living environment, and they have an association called the Environmental Design Research Association (E.D.R.A.).

At a recent conference of the E.D.R.A. a paper was delivered by Jack A. Nasar, from Ohio State University, Department of City and Regional Planning, detailing research that he had conducted into the "...connotative meanings (which) the public infer from various popular house-styles".⁴⁷ The results bear out one's strongest suspicions. People surveyed found a farm house with an inviting verandah and a Tudor house most desirable. A Colonial style mansion with imposing front columns and

pediment and the Tudor house reflected well on the leadership qualities of the inhabitants. Sixty-five architects were also surveyed, and their responses were completely different from those of the general public. Nasar remarked on another survey where:

The public judged "Vernacular" styles (from popular magazines) as the more meaningful, coherent, clear and pleasant: And architects judged "High" styles (from professional magazines) as the more meaningful, coherent, clear and pleasant.⁴⁸

Clearly, the market for popular style housing has a rationale, all its own, to which builders must successfully cater.

In order to cater to the market, it was always necessary to be a follower, never a leader. Developers that Michelson interviewed stressed that they felt their duty was not to lead public opinion but, rather, to respond to it.⁴⁹ The builder had to be competitive as to price and provide the form of house which suited the current consumer tastes, no matter how bizarre they might be. In both of these they were successful.

Finally, private builders and land developers derived much of their success in controlling the creation of the residential built environment from their ability to muster the support of governments and Canadian society for the business agenda. It has not only been accepted that private business is more efficient and capable to construct the built

environment, but also that free enterprise, exploitation and profitability for business are, beyond question, good for the nation. That this is so is, once again, explained by the basic conservatism of Canadian society.

After 1945, the solution to the North American housing shortage was placed into private hands by conservative governments. Robert Kennedy says that the F.H.A. in the United States put the building of houses into the hands of speculative builders, and that they did a poor job of providing proper housing for the nation. In Canada, according to James Lorimer, the C.M.H.C. administered the N.H.A., similarly, in support of a private house-building industry. As has been explained previously, the Canadian government had an alternative opportunity, and ample experience, to be directly involved in the provision of housing through Wartime Housing Ltd. Rather than using direct financing as the means of government involvement, they chose indirect financing, and left house construction to the private sector.

The private sector has always felt that housing provision should be left, exclusively, to private business, and governments have, amazingly, always agreed. For the first half of the twentieth century, provision of housing had been an informal relationship between small builders and their clients. After 1945, it became an unofficial

partnership between governments and large developers and builders. So comfortable did this unofficial partnership become that governments were seen to support the agendas of business often against the interests of the people who had elected them. Governments, for instance, were usually willing to amend official plans where they interfered with the plans of developers and builders. It has been commonly held that an easy relationship exists between governments and developers almost as though both had compatible agendas.

Governments built the roads and bridges which made suburbia possible. Before the boom years of subdivision development, in the 1950s, municipal governments built roads and sewers and paid for them under local improvement taxes. It was only when municipalities could no longer finance such huge developments that private business had to assume the responsibility and pass on the cost to the house buyer. John Sewell has pointed out the example of the need for a highway link between the new town of Don Mills and the City of Toronto, in the 1950s. Even though the chairman of the Metropolitan Government could not get the developers of Don Mills an extension of Eglinton Avenue, involving a costly viaduct, he was able to push forward the construction of the Don Valley Parkway. Providing infrastructure benefits private business, but it is perilous for governments. The Regional Municipality of Ottawa Carleton was warned by its

treasurer, in the 1960s, that it was in danger of bankruptcy, if it tried to extend services to the proposed South Urban Community. Politicians, reluctantly, applied lot levies on new houses, in order to avoid this eventuality.

A built environment resulted from the domination of the housing industry by private business which, it seems, has proven manifestly acceptable to its inhabitants. There is, nevertheless, a nagging feeling that it might have been much better with a more balanced sectoral involvement. The housing was not affordable for many, and its form was monotonous, wasteful and short-sighted; but the middle class seemed satisfied, and in a market demand system, that was all that counted anyway.

Footnotes to Chapter II

- 1) Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism* p.205.
- 2) Michael Simpson, p.74.
- 3) Kelly Crossman deals, in detail, with the subject of statutory registration of the Canadian architectural profession.
- 4) Gwendolyn Wright, p.212. The State of Illinois, in 1897, was the first to require a licence to practice architecture, probably, as a result of the prestige of the architectural profession after the Chicago World Fair of 1893.
- 5) Robert Gutman, *The Design of American Housing: A Reappraisal of the Architect's Role* (New York, 1985) p.2, 23, 44.

- 6) Wright, p.68,78,273. Also Kenneth Frampton p.112,114.
- 7) Amos Rapoport, *House Form and Culture* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1969).
- 8) Kenneth Jackson, p.185.
- 9) Deryck W. Holdsworth, "House and Home in Vancouver, Images of West Coast Urbanism 1886-1929" in *The Canadian City, Essays in Urban History* eds. Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan, E.J. Artibise, Carleton Library, Number 109 (Toronto, 1979).
- 10) Clay Lancaster, p.91.
- 11) Mitchell Beazley ed., *The World Atlas of Architecture* (London, 1984) p.356.
- 12) *Construction* (March, 1919) p.87.
- 13) Jill Delaney, "The Garden Suburb of Lindenlea, Ottawa: A Model Project for the First Federal Housing Policy 1918-24." in *Urban History Review*, Vol.XIX, No.3 (February, 1991) pp.151-165.
- 14) Michael Simpson, pp.116-117. Also Elizabeth Bloomfield, "The Ubiquitous Town Planning Missionary: The Careers of Horace Seymour, 1882-1940" in *Environments* Vol.17. No.2 (1985) pp.29-42 and Sara Elizabeth Coutts, *Science and Sentiment: The Planning Career of Noulan Cauchon*, Masters Thesis, (Carleton, 1982).
- 15) Robert Gutman, p.28
- 16) Burchard and Bush-Brown, p.260.
- 17) These include Grosvenor Atterbury's failed initiative for a nailable concrete and the faltering initiative of Ottawa architect James Strutt's "Rhombi Technology" for construction of houses by "...an industrialized process which permits mass production of low-cost, safe and culturally acceptable human shelter anywhere in the world."
- 18) Wright, *Moralism*, p.138.
- 19) Robert W. Kennedy, *The House and the Art of Its Design* (New York, 1953) p.335 The influence of homes and gardens magazines is very real to me. In 1960, *Better Homes and Gardens* had a decisive effect on the Ranch Style Bungalow that I had built.

- 20) Gutman, p.44. He lists the main companies involved in stock-plan services. Some of these companies such as Sears-Roebuck and, more recently, Scholz Homes also produce factory-built houses. There are also many companies who are, strictly, factory-built housing producers. On a tour of New England Homes in Greenland, New Hampshire, in 1992, I discussed their designs with the sales manager, and he made it clear that the marketing department decided what would be produced. I suspect professional designers are used on a consulting basis.
- 21) Gutman, p.15.
- 22) Ned Eichler, *The Merchant Builders* M.I.T. Press, (Cambridge, Mass., 1982) p.86. Henry Fliess supports this in quotes in "The Architecture of Housing" by James A. Murray in *Canadian Housing: A Reader* ed. Kamal S. Sayegh (Waterloo, 1972) p.126.
- 23) An Ottawa builder, Urbandale Homes, uses an architect regularly to give the finishing touches to its house designs. However, a marketing person at that builder has told me that house designs are a marketing department decision.
- 24) Norris Kelly Smith, *On Art and Architecture in the Modern World: A Collection of Essays* (University of Victoria, B.C., 1971) p.77 Under an essay titled "The Metaphor of the State" Smith says "...the buildings which have traditionally been regarded as works of architectural art have invariably been bound up with an organized social group, an established institution." Middle-class families are, obviously, not considered to be established institutions. Architects design houses, largely, for upper-class and noble families, palaces for monarchs, temples for the priesthood.
- 25) Humphrey Carver, *Houses for Canadians: A Study of Housing Problems in the Toronto Area* (Toronto, 1948) p.23. Carver details the characteristics of good housing as dwellings and communities which provide: protection, content, air and light, services and possess character.
- 26) My assumption is that there was little difference between United States reform and Canadian reform. Paul Rutherford as editor of *Saving the Canadian City: The First Phase, 1830-1920* (University of Toronto, 1974) says in the introduction, p.XIV, that significant

influences in urban reform came from the U.S.A. What worked there was bound to work in Canada. Nevertheless, Canada had an active social reform movement, certainly since the time of the Commission of Conservation, in 1909. See also, Rutherford's "Tomorrow's Metropolis: the Urban Reform Movement in Canada 1880-1920" pp.369-370 and 381 and John C. Weaver "Tomorrow's Metropolis Revisited: A Critical Assessment of Urban Reform in Canada, 1890-1920" both in *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History* ed. Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise, The Carleton Library No. 109 (Toronto, 1979). That Canadian society is very conservative is an accepted fact by many scholars. The frontier attracted immigrants who desired less government, unbridled freedom of action, opportunities for self-advancement through personal effort and a climate of Social Darwinism. These are all typical characteristics of conservatives. I am firmly of the belief that the waves of disgruntled British conservatives who fled the Labour Government after World War II decisively moulded the character of Canadian society. There were likely similar waves earlier in the century.

- 27) Carver, p.13.
- 28) It is not only government reluctance to provide that prevents the introduction of communal services to co-operative apartments. Sharon Chisholm, planner with Ottawa's public housing agency, City Living, says there is no demand for communal housekeeping. She points out that tenants of City Living aspire to the middle-class "American dream house" on a huge suburban lot. They, too, would like to, at least, try suburbia, so successfully has the way of life been promoted. Interview, February 26, 1993.
- 29) Paul Rutherford, *Saving* p.XVI and XIX, Wright, p.117. Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal 1897-1929* (Toronto, 1974) p.140 (source Rutherford p.406). I can testify to the poor living conditions in Toronto even in the 1950s, when I drove a young woman friend home to her slum dwelling in my shiny new 1951 Meteor. It was quite a contrast. I can remember going to the home of a friend from my office who lived in Cabbagetown. The interior of the house was tidy but permeated with the sickening smell of rotting wood and plaster and faulty plumbing. He was clean, honest and intelligent, but his dwelling was a disaster. So much for environmental determinism.

- 30) Hayden (1984), p.14.
- 31) Sean Purdy, "This is Not a Company; It is a Cause: Class and Gender and the Toronto Housing Company, 1912-1920 "in *Urban History Review* Vol.XXI, No.2 (March, 1993) pp.75-91. The buildings are now an affordable housing co-operative.
- 32) Ottawa Housing Commission files at Ottawa Archives contain ample evidence of the dissatisfaction of house buyers under the 1919 Housing scheme.
- 33) J. David Hulchanski, "The 1935 Dominion Housing Act: Setting the Stage for a Permanent Federal Presence in Canada's Housing Sector " *Urban History Review* XV, No.1 (June, 1986) also Andrew Eric Jones, *The Beginnings of Canadian Government Housing Policy 1918-1924* Carleton University Centre for Social Welfare Studies, Occasional Paper #1/78.
- 34) James Lorimer, *The Developers* (Toronto, 1978) p.77. also Carver pp.63-64. Lorimer says it was a misdirection of tax incentives which resulted in the land around Canada's largest cities falling into the hands of a few corporations. If he is correct, the final result has been high land costs and a trend toward, not only, higher density housing but also to the so-called "monster houses" of the 1980s and 1990s.
- 35) John C. Bacher and J. David Hulchanski "Keeping Warm and Dry: The Policy Response to the Struggle for Shelter Among Canada's Homeless, 1900-1960" in *Urban History Review*, Vol.XVI, No.2 (October, 1987).
- 36) There are examples of government assisted co-operatives such as the Don Vale Co-op which have taken Victorian inner-city housing and developed it into affordable housing.
- 37) John Sergeant, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Houses*. Also Ian MacLennan, "The Architecture of Urban and Suburban Development" in *Canadian Housing*, ed. K. Sayegh (Toronto, 1972) p.130. Interview Macklin Hancock, March 2, 1993. When I built my Ranch Style Bungalow, in 1960, I had intended a post and beam construction. C.M.H.C. made me change it to a modified post and beam where only the roof was beamed and the walls were conventional framed construction. In 1990, when I applied for a building permit for an addition, the 48' centres for the roof beams again caused consternation, and I was forced to hire a structural engineer to check and sign the plans.

38) Once again, I must speak from experience. When, in the 1960s, the planners at the Regional Municipality of Ottawa Carleton produced the draft of the Regional Official Plan, they called for development on government-owned land in Carlsbad Springs and privately-owned land in Kanata. The land South of Ottawa was designated as farmland. There were good planning reasons for this, but the southern lands were owned by such builders as Campeau and Urbandale. It is my belief that they had the regional politicians instruct their planners to completely reverse the designations so that the southern lands became the development area and Carlsbad Springs was placed in limbo. I led the fight which took this to the Ontario Municipal Board. In the end, Conservative Minister of Housing, Claude Bennett, overruled the O.M.B. and signed the developer's version of the Official Plan into law.

39) Artists knew better, but Canada had a prime minister in Brian Mulroney who believed that a country could be run like a business. People requiring affordable housing have long been the victims of this misconception. Bacher and Hulchanski have said:

There is no possibility of finding a way to make it profitable for the private sector to serve the extremely poor. Assistance for the destitute is social need which cannot be translated into market demand. p.161

40) William Michelson, *Environmental Choice. Human Behaviour and Residential Satisfaction* (New York, 1977) p.61.

41) Interview with Bernard Garand, Garand Homes, Ottawa. January, 1992. He built his own house with a cathedral ceiling in the most modern design and, when he wanted to sell it, found nobody wanted to buy it. From that time, he only built, for sale, what he was sure the market would buy.

42) Jackson, p.128, see also Gutman p.15, Doucet and Weaver p.123 and Dell Upton, "Builders' Guides and Plan Books" in *Housing, Symbol, Structure, Site* ed. Lisa Taylor (Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York, 1990) p.86-87. Upton explains the difference between pattern books and plan books. Downing's books were pattern books and the emphasis was on the external style and few details were given. Palliser introduced plan books which offered construction drawings by mail order. We use plan books today. Surveys mentioned include Garand Homes, Holitzner Ltd, Aselford-Martin, Urbandale Construction,

Longwood Corporation and Valecraft Homes, all in January, 1992. As a member of the Judging committee of the Ottawa Carleton Home Builders Association, I have had ample opportunities to discuss design motivation with the members.

- 43) Interviews: Ian Johns, February 11, 1992, Jean-Louis Lamarche, March 9, 1992, Tibor Gatszegi and Don Ewanovich, March 6, 1992.
- 44) Eichler, p.86. Also Gutman p.23,24 and 27.
- 45) Interviews: Ian Johns, Tibor Gatszegi, Don Ewanovich. It is said that Campeau in response to a customer's complaint about a plaster wall, asked for a hammer; and drove it repeatedly through the wall and then had it, immediately, replaced. His brother, termed by one interviewee as "a real bastard", noticed a sub-contractor doing drywall work that did not meet Campeau's written specifications. He waited until the contractor had done several houses, and then made him replace all of the walls. As for other builders of the 1950s, I have walked through many developments in Toronto; and most are deadly boring, but the houses are, without exception, sturdy and liveable.
- 46) Interview with Joe Johnston March 8, 1992
- 47) Jack L. Nasar, *Architectural Symbolism: A Study of House-Style Meanings* a paper presented to the Environmental Design Research Association conference in Pomona, California (May, 1988). Bryan O'Connor, Marketing Manager of Urbandale Construction Ltd., in Ottawa, attended this conference to help him develop more effective housing consumer surveys. He gave me this paper and copies of surveys done by himself in Ottawa.
- 48) Nasar p.6.
- 49) Michelson, p.61.

Chapter III

A Tale of Two Developments

In the previous chapters, it has been shown that a residential built environment resulted from the natural ascendancy of pragmatic, single-minded and well-organized private business which responded effectively to the tastes of the housing consumer--the predictable but anonymous market. It was a built environment which reflected the contributory and secondary influence of professional design and governments and the selectiveness of social reform. The result might have been decisive so that a single-dimensional artifact would have emerged for the investigation of this thesis. However, a development did happen, at Don Mills near Toronto, which makes possible the exploration of a built environment in which there is a strong element of professional architecture and planning. It is possible to look at one part of the Canadian residential built environment, which resulted from New Town methods, as represented by Don Mills, and to compare it to another part which resulted from the ways used to create the American suburban subdivision, as represented by Campeau's Elmvale Acres, in Ottawa.

The two are not the same thing, because they were conceived with quite different intentions in the minds of the businessmen who made them happen. Both share only the fact that they were profit-motivated ventures in the construction of speculative housing, the fact that they were both means for the creation of a residential built environment and the fact that all of the prospective buyers were conditioned by the same taste makers and lifestyle expectations. In these respects, they can be compared. The intention of E.P. Taylor, at Don Mills, was to assemble land for servicing and subdividing into lots for sale to many small builders. He also intended that a community would be built which would support his long-term interests in shopping centres and commercial properties. To this end, Don Mills required careful planning so that a community, with lasting appeal to the consumer, would be produced. Robert Campeau's intention was to assemble land for servicing and subdividing into sufficient lots to meet his requirements for serviced lots onto which he could build houses for sale. His plan involved no lengthy commitment but rather a quick turn over of houses and land so that profits could be realized with the least delay.¹ The comparison of these two, quite different, developments will be done under the headings of: land settlement patterns, planning concepts, architectural influences and social structure.

1) Land Settlement Patterns

In Chapter I, it was suggested that two streams of process, each quite different, resulted in the residential built environment which was described in that chapter. One stream, Modernist and progressive, was rooted in the Garden City Movement of Ebenezer Howard and the other, traditional and conservative, in the American traditions of builder/designer entrepreneurship and the suburbs. Each had its own defining characteristics. Typical of the Garden City Movement was its foundations in British accommodation reform, its formal debt to European architectural Modernism, its dependence on professional design and town planning, its toleration of social alternatives such as material feminism and mixed housing and its concern for urban renewal. On the other hand, the traditional conservative stream rested firmly in the conservative-oriented reform movement of Beecher and Downing, in the American tradition of non-professional designer/builders and exploitive attitudes toward land development, in the traditional American male-led and female-dominated household and homogeneous communities and in a general revulsion for city life.

The Garden City movement produced two towns, Letchworth, in 1903 and Welwyn, in 1919, which included all of the features associated with this type of development. Greenbelts defined the ultimate boundaries of each town.

There was local employment. The towns were compact so that inhabitants could walk to the town centre, to shops, and to places of employment from their homes. Schools and churches were located within parkland in the inner parts of the town. Neighbourhoods, based on a school and five thousand people, created identifiable communities within the city. Ebenezer Howard, the creator of the Garden City movement, wished to create "towns in the country" with all of the attractive features of an urban environment, such as work opportunities, varied social life and modern amenities, and the advantages of the rural environment, such as proximity to nature, fresh air and sunlight. To create such towns required modern professional planning and controls. As a result, this movement, and its successors, always attracted the foremost thinkers in European Modernism and town planning. Trains and automobiles, enabling people to live far from their employment, conspired against further Garden Cities, but the idea inspired Radburn in the U.S.A., the new towns of post-World War II Britain, Tapiola in Finland, the Swedish new towns and, finally, Don Mills.

Alternatively, the American entrepreneurial/suburban stream produced the many suburban developments which started with expanses of housing in the fruit groves around Los Angeles and spread to the rest of North America, culminating in Levittown, on Long Island, in 1947. These developments

had roots in Llewellyn Park and Riverside, but lacked their planning or professional design. American middle-class suburbs were randomly-located collections of houses wherever a demand and available land presented an opportunity for a profitable venture. Further growth depended on these same opportunities being present. These were not self-contained towns but rather parts of, or additions to, existing municipalities. Employment was always remote, and required an infrastructure of railways or highways to support it. The automobile, ultimately, defined the form of these suburbs so that they were a collection of widely dispersed dwellings. Parkland was sometimes legislated by the municipalities, and this is where schools were usually located. Since there was no planning process involved, the available land was subdivided into the maximum number of lots which could be accommodated within municipal by-laws. Opportunism rather than planning, as the concept of development, encouraged market-driven design so that consumer tastes dictated housing form. Such a process created North American suburbia and, finally, Elmvale Acres.

Don Mills was the design creation of Macklin Hancock, and was influenced by the American new town experience at Radburn, New Jersey, in 1928, the British new towns, built after 1946 and to a lesser extent by the new towns in Sweden. Hancock acknowledges his debt to his professors at the

Harvard School of Design, Walter Gropius, Sir William Holford and Hideo Sasaki and to Clarence Stein and Henry Wright through their "Radburn Idea." It is to be expected that Don Mills would contain many of the ideas from the Bauhaus, British new towns and European and American Modernism. He also said that the philosophies of his parents guided much of his thinking. His father was a landscape architect and the family owned a horticultural nursery in Cooksville, Ontario.²

Elmvale Acres was the design of Robert Campeau and his draughtsman Jean-Louis Lamarche who had been hired, in 1955, directly from a general course in draughting, at the Hull Technical School, to work on the project. Designs came from magazines and from Robert Campeau's observation of the designs of other builders. It is known that Campeau travelled to the U.S.A. for ideas which, in true merchant builder fashion, he had Lamarche modify and detail on drawings suitable for approvals and for the crews at the jobsite. The work of the Levitts was well-known in the house building industry and by 1955, Campeau had, at least, two Levittowns which he could inspect. Plan books, produced by C.M.H.C. were available to everybody, as, in fact, were the plan books of practically all of the producers in the U.S.A. Don Mills, it seems, was the one project which did not influence Campeau. Jean-Charles Paradis, the right-hand man of Campeau, admitted that they had very little knowledge or

interest in that project.³ Regardless of the disparate influences in each of the developments the designers had to bear in mind that the houses had to appeal to the tastes of the housing consumers, and the plan had to accommodate the automobile.

2) Planning Concepts

The intentions of the businessmen who conceived the two developments is evident in the planning concepts. Profound differences can be seen in the planning for employment of residents, green spaces, neighbourhoods, accommodation of the automobile and stylistic theme for houses, schools and the town centre.

Macklin Hancock has written:

...it became apparent to the company that to carry out their operations on the intended scale would be, in effect, the creation of a new town. A planning approach was adopted which was similar in many respects to that of the satellite town developments in Great Britain. The program was set up to build the new town of Don Mills by the balanced integration of industrial, residential, commercial, educational, religious and civic activities.⁴

A new town required an industrial base to provide local employment and, thereby, to reduce dependency on the road infrastructure. The town was also to be self-sufficient in local services and shopping, and local employment was all part of this self-sufficiency. The site of Don Mills lent itself to industrial development with convenient railway lines and

proximity to markets and road transport. Before construction of the houses had begun, Don Mills already had a firm, compatible, industrial base.

Elmvale Acres was conceived as an almost totally dependent suburb of the City of Ottawa and as such had a strictly residential base. Residents were expected to find employment in the city and to commute there by bus and automobile on the extensive roadways which would be built to suit it and other developments. A shopping centre was provided at Elmvale Acres, but, like the one at Don Mills, it provided limited services and little choice or variety.

Continuous green space was a planning concept at Don Mills and was intended, not only as a buffer between the industrial and residential zones but, also, as a "...green lung weaving through the community."⁵ It was also, conveniently, integrated with the pathway system which was another part of the planning concept (see Fig. 39). Don Mills was located on a plateau overlooking scenic valleys and waterways; and Hancock planned the green space to take the fullest advantage of this. Higher density housing was sited with a view of the valleys, as much as possible, because of the greater number of residents who could benefit. Hancock's plan for the green spaces and, indeed, for the areas to be built on, required a respect for the existing topography so that there was a minimal disturbance of existing land

Fig. 39 Plan of Don Mills
(Journal R.A.I.C. January, 1954).

contours and trees.

Roadways were expected to follow the land contours and natural features of the land.

Green space at Elmvale Acres was legislated as part of the subdivision agreement with the municipality as it would have been at Don Mills if it had not been a part of the planning concept. Being unplanned, its location contributed very little to the benefit of the residents, unless good fortune had placed their lot so that it backed onto the green space. It was, invariably, combined with the property around the neighbourhood school to increase its usefulness and apparent size. Schools were also combined with the green space at Don Mills for the same reasons.⁶ The practice of Campeau was to level the topography of the area to be built upon so that it became a featureless plain. The network of roads, housing lots and green spaces were then planned onto this plain by an Ontario land surveyor to maximize the profitable use of the land. Whereas roadways at Don Mills curve and wind in a sinuous pattern, the roadways at Elmvale Acres were laid out in a modified grid plan with only a few curved portions as a concession to aesthetics. Don Mills was planned with T intersections of all roadways, as a safety measure, but at Elmvale Acres cross-road intersections appear frequently (see Fig. 40).

The complex of green spaces, pathways and roads at Don

Mills were planned to reinforce neighbourhood units, within the overall town, based on an elementary school. Children were to be able to walk not more than one-half mile to their school. Neighbourhood stores were planned to contribute to the feeling of community which Hancock hoped would develop because of the plan.

Whereas Don Mills was planned as a town which could be subdivided into neighbourhoods, Elmvale Acres was a subdivision and the subdivision was the neighbourhood. The subdivision was sufficiently large that it required several elementary schools, but there was little attempt to relate the schools to a neighbourhood identifiable by arrangements of green space, roadways and pathways.

Traffic separation began, first, as a planning consideration due to the rising importance of the automobile, at the time that Radburn was planned. It became a preoccupation for Macklin Hancock at Don Mills. Like Radburn, Don Mills was planned with 'superblocks' whereby automobile traffic was separated from pedestrian traffic by a system of pathways within the green spaces. Automobiles were excluded from these areas so that children would be able to walk to school and play without potentially dangerous encounters. Pathways were planned to pass under roadways, where they met. Where it was not economically feasible to physically separate pedestrians from automobiles, a hierarchy

of roads was established. A ring road carried all heavy, high-speed traffic around the residential neighbourhoods. Within the neighbourhoods, it was planned that short, roadways, restricted to slow-moving traffic would carry pedestrians to the "cultural focus," the school or community centre, where pathways did not connect to the houses. The pedestrian's safety was pre-eminent over all other considerations in the planning at Radburn and Don Mills. It was acknowledged that travel to the town centre or to other sectors of the town required the use of the automobile, since it was necessary to cross heavily-laden traffic areas.

At Elmvale Acres, there was no separation of traffic and little hierarchy of streets. Houses faced directly onto residential as well as the more heavily travelled collector streets. There was no planning in place to prevent residential streets from carrying through traffic, except that collector streets made a more direct route between areas of major traffic generation. Pedestrians shared traffic-laden streets if they wished to forego use of the automobile for trips to schools, the shopping centre or other sectors of the subdivision.

The owners of Don Mills required that the town maintain a contemporary appearance for an extended time. Their interest was in the long-term prosperity of their shopping centres and commercial buildings in the town, so it was

desirable that the houses maintain their attraction to a class of prosperous consumers.⁷ To accomplish this, Hancock assembled Canada's best and brightest Modernist architects to design the houses at Don Mills. Strict controls were maintained to insure a high standard and adherence to the contemporary look which was desired for Don Mills. The shopping centres, commercial buildings and factory buildings were designed by high-profile Modernists like John C. Parkin.

No such considerations disturbed the plans of Robert Campeau. His intentions for Elmvale Acre were all concentrated on short-term profitability. Every dwelling was for sale and, when this transaction was completed, Campeau could move on to his next profitable venture. This is not to say that Campeau left Elmvale Acres with dissatisfied home owners. He always stood, firmly, behind his standards of quality and customer satisfaction.

3) Architectural Influences

Don Mills and Elmvale Acres are what their residents have made of them, first by their influence as consumers upon the thinking of the planners and designers and later by the changes they wrought over the years to what was built. Macklin Hancock was affected by the pressure to conform to consumer tastes, as much as Robert Campeau, and tried to accommodate the demands. The automobile had to be

accommodated if the house buyers were to be satisfied in their lifestyle demands. Hancock built the ring roads and the pathways. He provided carports and garages on the houses and parking lots around the town centre and institutions, so that Don Mills was more an American new town than a British new town.

The Don Mills houses had to be contemporary in style to suit the demands of the Don Mills Development Corporation, but their design also had to be tempered with what people were willing to buy. They had to conform to the lifestyle expectations of the 1950s so kitchens had to be convenient, basements needed to be suitable for recreation rooms and workshops, houses had to provide zones of activity to suit growing families and people wanted outdoor activity areas such as patios. People's tastes had been conditioned by California and colonial New England, so that these styles had to be considered in design. These demands, and more, were all met at Don Mills and Elmvale Acres, but there was a major difference at Don Mills. Macklin Hancock was willing to let professional architects have the free hand which Robert Campeau would never have given them in the 1950s.

Hancock has said "The Don Mills houses grew out of my contact with Gropius." He explained that the design which Walter Gropius and his architectural company, The Architects Collaborative, had done for the housing development called

Five Fields, near Boston, in 1951, was a major influence on Don Mills.⁸ His associate, Douglas H. Lee, Chief Architect at Don Mills, was also a product of the Harvard School of Design. Their predilection was, quite naturally, for modernist design, so the architects they assembled to work with the many small builders who built Don Mills were of the same school of aesthetics.

Hancock explained that, initially, he looked to the School of Architecture at University of Toronto for his professional designers. The first to come was George Hassig, a Swiss, who eventually brought many of his friends with him. He was matched with Greenwin Construction who immediately grew from producing four houses per year to fifty houses. His designs include small gable-ended Ranch Style Bungalows with long, low roofs sweeping down over a carport (see Fig. 41). Next came James Murray, a friend of Hassig, who was strongly influenced by Swedish Modern architecture. Hancock teamed him with Henry Fliess, a German Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, and between them they designed the first modern row housing in Canada, South Hills Village at Don Mills (see Fig. 42). They went to see Chatham Village in Pittsburgh, but the strongest influences came from British new towns and Swedish Modernism. Henry Fliess also took the Cape Cod Cottage which everybody was building at the time, including Campeau, and improved the detailing and designed wider, more

Architect, James Murray

Builder, Greenwin Construction Company

Fig. 41a, 41b Ranch Style Bungalows, Don Mills
designed by George Hassig and James Murray.
(Journal R.A.I.C. January, 1954).

Fig. 42 Don Mills
South Hills Village
Row Housing designed
by James Murray and
Henry Fliess.

generous eaves so that a modern house emerged (see Fig. 17). He also designed the Contemporary Style houses for Don Mills and these reflect the profound influence of Five Fields (see Fig. 43). Michael Bach, from Sweden, was involved in the design of most of the low-rise apartments at Don Mills (see Fig. 44). Later Irving Grossman returned to Canada bringing his experience with the London County Council in the design of Roehampton New Town to Don Mills. Other architects involved were Robert Calvert, a noted Modernist, Howard Chapman and James Krang.

Much of the housing at Don Mills, particularly the earlier design, seems very plain and small. Hancock says that the plain designs were done by Murray, Finess and Chapman, and C.M.H.C. had a limit on the price and size of houses eligible for N.H.A. loans. There was a limit of one-thousand square feet of floor area until the later portions of Don Mills were begun. When larger, more exotic houses were designed they were done by Michael Barn, Irving Grossman and James Krang.

Robert Campeau, with different intentions from F.P. Taylor's and a different view of design from that of Macklin Hancock, would never have considered using architects in such a free manner let alone permitting them to do original design. He never trusted architects, and at this stage in his career, he was interested in the tried and true designs

Fig. 43 Contemporary House.
Don Mills, designed
by Henry Fliess under
influence of Five Fields.
(Journal RAIC, January, 1954)

3 Bedroom House

Architect, Henry Fliess

Builder, Capital Construction Company

Fig. 44 Low-Rise
Apartments, Don Mills

Fig. 45 Row Housing at
South Hills village,
Don Mills by
Murray and Fliess.
Note unique split-
level design.

Fig. 46 Row Housing
South Hills Village,
Don Mills, showing
rear view.

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with demonstrated appeal to the consumers. This was in accordance with the American builder/designer tradition under which he worked, and their source of design was plan books, builder magazines and plagiarizing of competitors' designs.

There was to be a broad population mix at Don Mills and, therefore, there needed to be a broad range of housing to suit working-class as well as middle-class residents. A mix was planned of single-family detached housing and high-density housing. Unlike any other residential development in Canada at that time, Don Mills included row housing, low-rise apartments and, later, high-rise apartments. The mix was in proportions of forty-five percent single-family detached and semi-detached and fifty-five percent high density or group housing.⁹

Row housing would not appear as part of the mix in any developments in North America for almost ten years after it appeared at Don Mills.¹⁰ The units designed by James Murray and Henry Fliess for South Hills Village were of a unique split-level form (see Fig. 45). Viewed from the entrance, they were single-storey houses in a row, but viewed from the rear they presented a two-storey elevation, very reminiscent of council housing in Britain but with a plain Swedish Modern influence (see Fig. 46). Of all the housing in Don Mills, the row housing, semi-detached and low-rise apartments showed the closest relationship with European Modernism.

At Elmvale Acres, there was only single-family detached housing. In the minds of the housing consumers who were likely to be customers of Campeau, Row or group housing was still associated with the slums in the cities, Macklin Hancock might have been scared-off by such consumer attitudes, which he was surely familiar with, but he was planning a town and row housing and apartments were part of a proper comprehensive plan.

Both Don Mills and all of the developments of Robert Campeau suffered from municipal by-laws. As part of his desire to have a mix of population, Hancock wished to include two-bedroom houses at Don Mills. He was prevented from doing this by a North York zoning by-law which required single-family detached and semi-detached houses to have three bedrooms. A 1952 by-law for the area did not include land use for multiple housing. It would seem that Hancock was successful in having that by-law changed.

At Elmvale Acres, Robert Campeau had similar problems, but he, presumably, was not able to get the by-laws changed, or perhaps was not interested in any changes. Campeau was required to sign by-law number 121-55 "for... the use of land and the erection or use of buildings... in Elmvale Acres." as part of his subdivision agreement with the City of Ottawa.¹¹ It stated that in area "B" the commercial centre could be built with passive businesses such as banks and restaurants.

In area "A" could be built single-family dwellings, duplexes and semi-detached dwellings and essential buildings such as fire stations, parks and churches. The result of this by-law was that the shopping centre was awkwardly located in the extreme north-east corner of the development, and the inhabitants of Elmvale Acres were required to use their automobiles or walk a long distance for almost every service they were in need of. Multiple dwellings were not permitted. Minimum street setbacks required a twenty foot lawn in front of every house; and no more than ten to fifteen percent, depending on the type of house, could be occupied by the structure. Regardless of Campeau's good intentions or lack thereof, he could do nothing but create wasteful suburban sprawl, isolation and homogeneity in his developments up to the 1960s. Multiple dwellings would be permitted by the City of Ottawa 1964 comprehensive by-law, but in all other respects it, too, contained the same restrictive land-use regulations.

The strict architectural controls at Don Mills are immediately apparent in the stylistic unity of each of the four quadrants which make up the town. Variety was achieved by siting and colour changes. Houses in the earliest, north-west quadrant show a decided predilection for gable roofs, and these are sited with the gable to the front or to the side for variety (see Fig. 41). In the later, north-east

quadrant, houses favour the low-pitched, gable roof and windows are much larger, reflecting the characteristics most associated with Contemporary Style houses (see Fig. 47). By this time C.M.H.C. had changed its rules to allow larger houses and the design was done by Henry Fliess, under influences from Five Fields and by Michael Bach who favoured Swedish Modernism, according to Hancock. Once again, there is a pervasive sense of stylistic unity throughout the quadrant.

Variety, at Elmvale Acres, is much less controlled and there is no sense of stylistic unity. Municipalities at this time were reacting to the monotonous similarity of the first Levittown which had endless rows of nearly identical Cape Cod Cottages, so Campeau was required to have a mix of styles on every street. Once again, this was dictated by the municipal officials who approved his subdivision plans. Cape Cod Cottages, Ranch Style Bungalows, Split-Level and four-square houses jostle for space on every street. Like Don Mills, similar styles are sited alternatively broad side or narrow side to the street. There was much use of applied ornamentation and colour contrasts at Elmvale Acres to achieve variety.

The differences between Elmvale Acres and Don Mills are not so much stylistic differences as they are the treatment of those styles. Both developments show the influence of the

Fig. 47 Contemporary Houses, N/E. Quadrant, Don Mills.

Fig. 48 Siting of Houses at Don Mills is carefully planned.

Fig. 50 Cape Cod Cottages Cottages with gable end to road for a change. Also Hipped-roof Bungalows. Monarch Park, Scarborough.

California Ranch Style Bungalow and the Cape Cod Cottage. Don Mills is, however, much less indebted to historical styles so that there are no four-squares or Colonial Revival Garrison houses as there are in Campeau developments. In a Campeau development there is always the sense that any style might show up, provided it had saleability. At Don Mills there is always a sense of control and of a stylistic masterplan. At Elmvale Acres the houses are sited in straight lines with front walls the same distance from the road. Streets at Don Mills curve and houses are sited carefully to give a random appearance. The hand of the professional planner is always apparent (see Fig. 48).¹²

4) Social Structure

Macklin Hancock never planned Don Mills as a middle-class enclave. Modern town planning, with its roots in the Garden City Movement and the New Towns, held population mix as one of its most sacred tenets. He wanted the lowliest worker at the nearby industries to be able to live close to the source of employment just as much as he held the same hope for the middle-class executives.¹³ A variety of single-family detached housing was planned for a broad range of incomes, although municipal by-laws of North York prevented the construction of two-bedroom houses. Semi-detached, row housing and walk-up apartments were

provided for those on lower incomes or those who preferred renting rather than home-ownership. Hancock says the central area of the town, where the high-density buildings are located, has a density of 150 people per acre which is comparable to the Swedish new towns. The use of a variety of architects and builders facilitated the construction of such a diverse community.¹⁴

There can be not much controversy about the mix of people in Elmvale Acres when it was built. To live there, one needed to be able to afford a single-family detached house, and that pretty well restricted residence to the middle classes. Row houses and apartments would not have attracted middle-class housing consumers to a Campeau development. This situation would, curiously, change in the 1960s due to a number of factors, not the least of which would be altered middle-class attitudes.

5) Doing Better Things at Don Mills?

The fact that Don Mills was a new town, where private business agreed to be guided by professional planners and designers, and that Elmvale Acres was a suburb, where private business shunned any such professional guidance, clearly indicates that they are two quite different entities. However, it might be fairly asked if there are any similarities and, if so, how significant they are in the

assessment of the built environment. Being a new town, Don Mills naturally had a greenbelt to insure its integrity as a separate town from its surroundings. For the same reason, it was important to have local employment and a high degree of self sufficiency. These were not important to a suburb such as Elmvale Acres and their lack cannot, therefore, be a criticism. The probability that a new town is a better land development pattern than a suburb might be persuasively argued, but Elmvale Acres, as a suburb, cannot be criticized for not having the features of a new town, when they were never intended.

It can be shown that, where Don Mills proceeded according to its planners wishes, its similarities to Elmvale Acres were few but, where it departed from the plan similarities arise. Hancock's respect for topography and natural stands of trees is as notable as Campeau's bull-dozing of the topography. Time has been kind to Campeau's subdivisions as the residents gradually nurtured trees, lawns and bushes around their houses, but it must have been desert-like in the beginning when the only greenery was the token one-inch caliper tree in the front yard.

Allied to Hancock's regard for the topography was the use of superblocks for traffic separation and for the creation of continuous green space. It was a system used at Radburn whereby automobiles were prevented from penetrating

deeply into the block. The rear of all lots faced onto public green spaces and a network of pathways leading to schools, community facilities and neighbourhood shops. Where pathways crossed roads, they passed under them in short tunnels. The superblock system is quite apparent in the north-west quadrant of Don Mills (see Fig. 39). However, it was considerably diluted in the other three quadrants so that by the south-east quadrant, the last to be developed, the green space comprises a large area around the school, not unlike the green space in many other 1950s subdivisions, including those of Robert Campeau.¹⁵ Carl Fraser, a strong supporter of Macklin Hancock's planning concepts, was president of Don Mills Developments Ltd. at the time of the building of the first quadrant. He died in 1954 and was replaced by Angus McClaskey whose view of Don Mills was quite different. McClaskey was mainly interested in operating a profitable company, and it is likely that at this time Don Mills became, as Sewell says, a corporate plan rather than a planner's plan.

Don Mills, unlike Elmvale Acres, was planned to have a strong neighbourhood atmosphere and this can be seen in the north-west quadrant with all of the pathways and greenspaces leading to the cultural centre, the school. Hancock had planned that they would also lead to neighbourhood stores (in a British new town, they would also lead to a neighbourhood

pub). This was never to be, because no proprietors could be found for such local stores, even if they had been built. The local store had very small currency in 1950s North American society. Consumers were embarking upon their love affair with the shopping plaza so it is small wonder that this aspect of the plan fell by the wayside and with it a vital aspect of the neighbourhood concept.

Control of the automobile was also an important matter to a planner like Macklin Hancock, so a hierarchy of streets was successfully developed in the residential areas (see Fig. 39). At Don Mills, once again unlike much of Elmvale Acres, there is little point to driving on residential streets unless one has a reason for being there such as visiting a resident. The ring road, on the other hand, carries a great deal of through traffic, and to reach the town centre and shopping plaza, it is necessary to drive or walk through a sea of automobiles. Hancock had no choice but to accommodate this aspect of the North American 1950s lifestyle. The automobile is catered to, in Don Mills, much more than it was in any British new town.

It is a principle of good architectural design and modern town planning that houses be sited so that, as much as possible, they have bedrooms and sitting rooms directed toward the morning sun. At Don Mills, like all other developments of that time, siting relative to sunlight was

accidental (see Fig. 49).¹⁶ House siting, however, shows that attention was definitely paid to siting for an interesting streetscape and for visual and sound privacy. Siting at Elmvale Acres was purely accidental and depended entirely on the maximum exploitation of the land.

The effect of architectural involvement shows in every house and building in Don Mills, from the subtle detailing of the smaller, plainer Cape Cod Cottages and Ranch Style Bungalows of the north-west quadrant to the row houses of the south-west quadrant with their European Modern form. *Architectural Forum* said that the houses of Don Mills "...must conform to design standards more contemporary than anything Toronto has yet seen."¹⁷ A survey of other developments being constructed at the same time as Don Mills, in the Toronto area, shows how true that statement is. House styles were consistently stuck in the 1930s and 1940s. The ubiquitous hipped-roof bungalow and Cape Cod Cottages made up between ninety percent and one-hundred percent of what was built in these developments (see Fig. 50). Campeau introduced many new styles, and his developments were a vast improvement on the average Toronto subdivision. But with the possible exception of the small development in Etobicoke, called Thorncrest Village, planned by E.G. Faludi, only Don Mills showed such a pervasive influence of professional design.

Fig. 49 Village Homes,
Davis, California
showing north/south siting
(A Better Place to Live, by
Michael Corbett).

It can be seen that the professional involvement at Don Mills created a development quite different from what was being built elsewhere in Toronto or Ottawa. Don Mills compared quite favourably with new towns in Britain, Sweden and Finland except that consumer demands dictated an extraordinary, in terms of new towns, accommodation of the automobile. In addition, consumer embrace of the shopping plaza insured that local stores (and local pubs) would never be included. The domination of the business agenda ultimately diluted the superblocs, traffic separation and continuous greenspaces. Private ownership of the green belt insured that it would, sooner or later, be eroded, and it was. Don Mills never became a political entity, due to the town centre remaining in private hands. Nevertheless, it did show how much more humane and attractive a community might be with proper town planning. It also provided a show case for modern design in buildings, particularly in multiple housing, a show case which 1950s Canada desperately needed. Don Mills pointed the way to better housing developments, because it was the first of its kind in North America, and, most importantly, provided a good place to live.

Footnotes to Chapter III

- 1) James Lorimer, p.117, It is perhaps too diabolical, when Lorimer suggests that developers withheld land from the

market in order to raise its price. In my interviews with Tibor Gatszegi, I have learned much of the internal workings of the Campeau Corporation. He says that Campeau did not, habitually, withhold land from the market. Land was bought for his own use and used as soon as needed for accommodating houses. Sometimes, Campeau only made a profit on the land and used the house, built on it, in order to sell the land. In an interview I had with long-time Campeau executive, Jean-Charles Paradis, he told me that Campeau Corporation only learned, many years after it went into business, that they could have been more profitable if they had simply developed land. As for E.P. Taylor, he needed a well-established community with consumers ensconced in their homes as customers for his shopping centres. Delaying this event was not in his interests.

- 2) Interview with Macklin L. Hancock, March 2, 1993. He spent his early years in China where his father taught agriculture at the University in Nanking. Through my numerous meetings with Mack Hancock, I have formed the impression of a well-educated, urbane, cosmopolitan man from an establishment background. In contrast Robert Campeau, from impressions formed through the media, was a self-made man from the lower-classes of society with little formal education and whose ideas were formed in the narrow, local experiences found in a frontier mining town in Northern Ontario.
- 3) Interview with Jean-Louis Lamarche, March 9, 1992. Also interview Jean-Charles Paradis, November, 1993.
- 4) Macklin L. Hancock, Douglas H. Lee, "Don Mills New Town" in *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*, Vol.31, No.1 (January, 1954)p.3.
- 5) Hancock and Lee, p.6.
- 6) Locating the school in the green space was common practice in the 1950s. I did on-site surveys of subdivisions built in the early 1950s around Toronto and found that all of them followed this practice. If chance located your lot on the green space, you were still excluded from direct access by continuous, formidable fences. Survey based on developments in E.G. Faludi, ed., *Land Development in the Metropolitan Area of Toronto* (Toronto Real Estate Board, October, 1952). Included were: Glen Park Subdivision and Elmwood Park in Etobicoke, Woodbine Gardens in East York, Monarch Park and Clairlea Park subdivisions in Scarborough.

- 7) Sewell, p.28. E.P. Taylor was always concerned about the prosperity of his commercial properties. Sewell says he picked up land in the area of his York Mills Shopping Plaza, because he feared it would be subdivided into 25 foot lots, and an inferior housing development would not be able to support his shopping plaza.
- 8) Interview Macklin Hancock, March 2, 1993.
- 9) Hancock and Lee, p.5.
- 10) Robert Montgomery, "High Density, Low-Rise Housing and Changes in the American Housing Economy" in *The Form of Housing* ed. Sam Davis (New York, 1977). They point out that The National Association of Homebuilders in the U.S.A. did their first row housing in Louisville, Kentucky in 1960.
- 11) City of Ottawa, By-Law Number 121-55, Elmvale Acres, June 1955, and Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Number AZ-64, November, 1968.
- 12) Less apparent are the differences in construction methods. Campeau built all of his own houses and, therefore, could take advantage of the economies of mass production. He tried every method of prefabrication and rejected most of them, ultimately. The small builders of Don Mills (maximum of 50 houses per year) would have little incentive to abandon stick building as a method. Macklin Hancock makes the point that they still sold their houses competitively priced with other much inferior developments all around them.
- 13) Frederic J. Osborn and Arnold Whittick, *New Towns: Their Origins Achievements and Progress* (London, 1977) p.71. Also Hancock and Lee, RAIC Journal (January, 1954) p.6.
- 14) Interview Macklin Hancock, March 2, 1993. He has always maintained that a mix of people was achieved at Don Mills and takes great issue with John Sewell who argues that this was a major failing of the Don Mills plan. Brigitte Shim, "Don Mills, New Town" in *Toronto Modern Architecture, 1945-1965* (Toronto, 1987) p.36. She maintains that the Modern aesthetic at Don Mills attracted well-educated, medium-income, young professionals and that the mixed community never materialized. One is inclined to agree with Mack Hancock. I walked through the high density areas, and the residents looked like working-class people to me.

- 15) These were my observations after walking around the four quadrants. I could not see how anybody could avoid walking down streets, on which there was traffic, to get to the school and, this particularly, since all of the home-owners had erected impenetrable fences where their lots touched the greenspace. The parks, as I saw them, were largely unused and this seems typical of all subdivision greenspace. It would seem that no matter how diligently Mack Hancock might design for neighbourliness and control of traffic, the residents were unrepentant fence-builders, and viewed their homes as fortresses against the outside world.
- 16) Michael N. Corbett, *A Better Place to Live, New Designs for Tomorrow's Communities* (Emmaus, Pennsylvania, 1981). Corbett shows that a development can be designed with every house sited north to south. He planned the Village Homes area of Davis, California and also proved that one could plan so that it was possible to walk to schools, local stores and to any neighbouring house without walking on a roadway. It is doubtful if Mack Hancock would ever have been permitted to go as far as Corbett did, particularly in the 1950s.
- 17) *Architectural Forum* (June, 1954) p.147 see also note 6. Looking at the unappealing streetscape of the Toronto subdivisions, with their houses located in a straight line on arrow-straight streets on featureless plains, it is hard to see how they could have been built at the same time as something as attractive as Don Mills. Thorncrest Village was a much more expensive development than Don Mills and all the houses were individually designed. It, too, stood out from the rest.

Chapter IV

Consequences of the Responses

At the beginning of this thesis it was said that the creation of the Canadian residential built environment was left to chance, the vagaries of popular taste and to that sector of society whose main motivation was the operation of profitable businesses. An imbalance existed whereby other sectors of society were not adequately heard from in decisions affecting something as important as the place where Canadians live their lives. No doubt was cast on the fact that a large part of the population was satisfied with its homes, even if it was less enthusiastic about its communities, but questions persisted: should they be so satisfied and could not society have done much better, how effective was planning, how appropriate the guiding influences and motivations?

1) Planning's Poor Performance

It is probably an exaggeration to describe the built environment as declining city centres surrounded by sprawling, inhumane, automobile-dominated suburbs where people live desperate, socially-deprived existences, but

there is more than a grain of truth in it. Much blame can be placed on the poor performance of planning in Canada over the past eighty years.

Town planners have known how to design more humane and habitable communities since the time of Thomas Adams, Horace Seymour and Noulan Cauchon, but they have found their plans continually ignored and altered. The guiding hand of government, so necessary to the advancement of planning, was absent as governments usually followed the business agenda for creation of the Canadian residential built environment. Politicians, particularly the municipal "booster," were unwilling to stand in the way of any development. Growth was considered to be progress. Canadian society supported free exploitation rather than restrictive planning. It was all part of the tradition in a conservative, frontier-oriented population. Merchant builders had always been suspicious and fearful of professional planning and government regulation. The result was minimal planning so that form in the built environment was left largely to chance. To this very day official plans are made by planners and opposed by private business. Usually business has its way.

When the Canadian government chose the private, home-ownership route to solution of the housing shortage, in 1947, it committed the nation to suburban sprawl - the single-family detached house on a network of roads. Private

builders, acting on this mandate, responded to a consumer demand based on one hundred years of the Beecher/Downing tradition of separation, independence and isolation. What was acceptable in 1947, is, unfortunately, no longer something which can be given such benign approval.

Wasteful use of land and material resources is increasingly unacceptable in a time of diminishing resources and rising costs but, rather than conserving, Canadians have turned to the updated Victorian pile, the proverbial "monster" house. Although multiple housing has become a part of most housing developments, since 1960, row housing and attached houses are considered, by most Canadians, to be simply a temporary shelter on the way to a massive, detached house. As a result, a large part of what is built continues to be wasteful detached housing. Alarmingly, none of the housing being built is affordable to an increasingly large part of the population.

Strong arguments can now be made for more compact communities. Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk make compelling arguments for these communities which recognize the realities of late twentieth-century resources and the higher-quality life which can be experienced in them.¹ However, until the roles of governments and the professional planners and designers is enhanced against the power of business and the influence of consumer demands, there is

little possibility of any great change. As witness, there is the example of the South Urban Community in the cities of Nepean and Gloucester, near Ottawa.

A splendid demonstration plan has been produced for the town centre of the City of Nepean, based on the ideas of Duany and Plater-Zyberk (see Fig. 51). It will be a dense town of ten thousand people designed to the latest urban planning principles. A similar town centre will likely be planned for Gloucester. Unfortunately, the town centre may never be built unless as its planner Steve Sunderland says "...consumers decide to change what they want to buy."² In any event, the town centre if built will be a high-density community but most people believe that it will be surrounded by a standard 1950s suburb of ninety thousand people. Certainly, the people who own the land will not build a high-density, environmentally sustainable community until the housing consumer demands it-or the government legislates it.

Additional arguments are made against the continued building of the grass-bounded single-family detached house in such large quantities. Dolores Hayden argues, convincingly, that such housing "...reflects the dreams of the mid-nineteenth century better than the realities of the late twentieth century."³ She cites demographic trends, which are even more obvious ten years later, that show the decline of the nuclear family and the precipitous rise of single-parent

SOUTH
URBAN
ACTIVITY
CENTRE

THE
CORPORATION
OF THE
CITY OF NEPEAN

DEMONSTRATION
PLAN

176a

EDAW

Fig. 51 Nepean Town
Centre designed
by Corush, Sunderland
and Wright, 1993.

BY
JON
W.C.
DESIGNED
BY
SAN

families, singles households, aged people, childless households and the physically challenged wishing to live independently. These people need the sort of high-density housing provided by the co-operatives combined with compact communities and easily-reached services. The built environment is designed for Beecher/Downing, but the population is more in need of material feminism.

Lack of compactness in housing developments and remoteness of employment, shopping and services has made use of the automobile mandatory, just as the automobile, in symbiosis, made modern suburbia possible. The infrastructure of roads, bridges and parking lots is also wasteful of land and material. When the energy costs of commuting and the social problems of noise and pollution are taken into consideration, suburbia, with its remoteness, can hardly be justified as a land settlement pattern.

Town planners have tried to develop communities with a sense of neighbourhood identity, but the North American predilection for sprawling suburbs and home-ownership made this impossible. William Teron tried to develop Kanata as a community of small neighbourhoods, but found that the single-family detached house, which he had to build for the consumers, was the antithesis of any sense of communal life. What has emerged in the suburbs are loose communities of isolated houses, unfocused, impersonal and boring, where

consuming is the main activity. Ironically, the isolated household provides neither sound nor visual privacy, both of which, according to Ian Johns, could be easily designed into much more compact communities.⁴

2) Catering to the Undiscriminating Consumer

The built environment is a result of the private house builders being inordinately influenced by the tastes of their main customer, the middle-class housing consumer. As Ian Johns says, the built environment is merely a "...three dimensional manifestation of Canadian social values."⁵ If so, it reflects only the demands of a narrow cross-section of society and a class which might not be the most discriminating in its tastes. Consider that middle-class tastes in housing styles are based on a constant looking backward to traditional values and rarely a venturing forward to interesting stylistic alternatives.

Robert Woods Kennedy has characterized the middle-class as housing consumers who rarely use architects and have a conservative attitude toward innovation. Traditionalists, he says, lack personal security and seek reassurance in housing styles; styles remote in time and space. Cape Cod is equated, for the lower middle-class, with a past time of security, simplicity and a sense of assured place in uncertain times.

For the upper middle class, solid-brick Georgian symbolizes arrival. Modernists favour a style which expresses its time and which is functional. They are little in need of security through symbolism. The middle classes, uncertain about their status in society are also uncertain as patrons of design. It is small wonder that aesthetic reform, so well-launched during the 1930s, was derailed, in the 1980s, with the rediscovery, in conjunction with emergent post-modernity, of tradition by the housing consumer. James Murray says:

If the remote Georgians are viewed as an elegant, civilized, urbane society, the contemporary customer, unsure of his elegance, civilization and urbanity, may hope that by acquiring the appropriate stage setting, something of these qualities will rub off on him.⁶

As long as the dictatorship of the middle-class consumer continues, relative to the form of housing which builders produce, there is the danger that interesting stylistic alternatives will not see the light of day. Without advocating the proliferation of the International Style into every housing development, it is still reasonable to suggest that the continued, natural evolution of Modernism might have produced something useful in housing, perhaps an affordable dwelling. Can anybody say that Safdie's Habitat 67 was fairly tried as a housing form or that it could not have been successfully developed into joyful and economical living space? Has the court-garden form of housing, which displayed such splendid possibilities for good-living and

economy of land and materials, been fully developed? Good living to Ian Johns is expressed in housing which has sound isolation, visual privacy, sunshine, clearly defined private and public areas, some control over the behaviour of the inhabitants and elements of variety or surprise. He is describing well-designed group housing, but, to the average middle-class housing consumer, he is describing a slum. Clearly, until they expand their vision, the detached house in suburbia will never be replaced.

3) An Environment Designed By Business

Conservative politicians and businessmen have always wanted the Canadian nation to be "run like a business." Something as important as housing has been entrusted to the business sector, and this has made housing a commodity for the generation of profits, rather than a basic human need. Business methods are, without doubt, good for the operation of a business, and the success and efficiency of these institutions is important to the nation. However, when it comes down to providing adequate quantities of well-designed, affordable housing for all, business methods and motives leave much to be desired.

It has been shown that private business can never respond effectively to housing need, only to housing demand. Therefore, the morality of diverting inordinate

amounts of resources to the satisfaction of middle-class demand at the expense of lower-class need must be addressed. Lack of adequate government guidance of the housing market and involvement in matters of supply and design has insured that decent housing for the collectivity has remained the perennial, unmet need of the twentieth century. Still, business continues to insist that the provision of housing should be strictly a free-market concern, and the Canadian people and their representatives continue to support this view. Conservative attitudes toward the poor persist in denying the promising alternative of housing co-operatives the attention they deserve.

Private builders have always responded willingly to the demands of the middle classes for housing forms which satisfy their psychological needs, regardless of how bizarre. A sector of society so dependant on the approval of the market place cannot continue to be the sole arbiter of housing styles and forms. The ephemeral and faddish tastes of the moment must be subjected to a different forum and the judgement of whether they are environmentally acceptable, aesthetically appropriate or even morally justifiable. What is the morality of builders being allowed to cater to demands for "monster" houses in a time of looming energy shortages, when home-ownership is denied to increasingly large numbers of people, and when a failure of the economy makes mortgage

default a common occurrence? How appropriate is it for builders to indulge the consumer taste for decorative barge boards and Palladian windows on houses, in 1993? Such details are meaningless for our times, and will become land-fill when the housing consumers move on to the next style which catches their fancy. If housing which does not fit its times has the potential to create dissatisfaction in home owners, as Robert Kennedy suggests, is it right for governments and design professionals to stand silently by and allow business to continue its ill-considered course?

The developers and builders of the 1950s solved the housing shortage for part of the population within five years, but what of the cost? It has been shown that the Canadian government put the assembling and servicing of land and the building of houses firmly in private hands, in 1947. As a result, most of the land suitable for development around Canadian cities, is in a few private hands. Any attempts by governments to create public land banks have been defeated by cabals of politicians and private land developers.⁸ Now, governments and home-builders have the temerity to agonize over the inability of Canadian society to make home-ownership available to all of the citizens. Housing costs are more dependent on the price of serviced land, government imposts and the cost of money than they are on construction costs or design.⁹ The major obstacles to affordable housing seem

obvious.

So, despite the general satisfaction, or at least acceptance of the twentieth-century residential built environment, it would seem that all is not well. What might have been done? What might still be done?

4) The What If of Canadian Housing

The state of the built environment requires the substitution of the needs of society rather than consumer demand as the overriding consideration in housing design. To effect this change the imbalance between the sectors must be corrected. The strengths of the sectors need to be recognized and utilized. Governments need to adopt a less laissez-faire attitude and provide more guidance. The position of design must be strengthened and the standards and awareness of the housing consumer must be raised (see Chart II).

Efficient methods and single-minded purpose are the greatest strengths of business. Private builders should be encouraged to do what they do best, the materialization of housing out of raw land and plans. They should continue to accumulate capital, assemble land, provide serviced lots and design and build houses. However, these house designs should be subject to approval just as are subdivision plans. Private manufacturers should be encouraged to continue

An Alternative Method for Creation of a Built Environment

Chart II

researching better materials and methods with a government commitment to aid their research.

Governments must provide more active guidance to the housing industry. The needs of society could be identified through conferences with social reformers, economists and the public. These needs would be discussed with the planners and designers through their professional organizations. In particular, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (R.A.I.C.) should be reinvigorated for this purpose. This would lead to the commissioning by governments of town plans and reports on aesthetic trends and lifestyle changes. Town plans would be legislated into law and enforced on the housing industry. Aesthetic reports would be subjected to extensive discussion between builders, professional designers, governments and the general public much as official plans are now scrutinized. Out of this would surely come a higher standard of design. Governments would retain the sole right to approve official plans and subdivision agreements and create by-laws. By-laws could be improved if they were designed as compatibility regulations. Any land use should be permitted as long as it is compatible with its surroundings. One result of this might be the proliferation into residential areas of small specialized factories, requiring a high degree of human input, producing parts for huge, remote assembly plants. Local stores and services

could be blended comfortably into residential areas through careful architectural design. Governments would produce financial plans for the housing industry and provide the necessary financing. They would also strive to maintain a healthy economic climate for the industry. Finally, to insure the availability of land at reasonable costs, governments must develop publicly-owned land banks.

The status of professional architecture needs to be raised, so that architects approximate the position of influence of the medical and law professions. Doctors and lawyers are strong, because they control the accumulation of new knowledge in their professions. Architects should endeavour to seize control of building research, and this can only be done if they are willing to expend the necessary time and money to create the institutions. If they are to have public support in their endeavours, they must eschew such esoteric theories as those of the International Style. On the other hand they must resist the entreaties of Robert Venturi to give architecture to the "messy vitality" of common tastes, if there is to be any advance over the present situation.¹⁰

Above all, an attempt must be made to raise the standards of the public and their awareness of basic aesthetics. Rather than, as Robert Venturi would have it, descending to the lowest common denominator of public taste

for architectural inspiration, a serious attempt should be made to educate the public in the architectural principles which have stood the test of time. They should also be shown the possibilities of good living in all of the alternatives to the present way of life.

A new century is close at hand. Will anything have been learned from the experience of the twentieth century? An informed public, an elevated design profession and an activated government will help to insure that the twenty-first century residential built environment will not be consigned to chance, vagaries and profitability.

Footnotes to Chapter IV

- 1) *Architectural Record* (July, 1989). Also *The Toronto Star* (August 31, 1991). Duany and Plater-Zyberk are planning compact communities with narrow streets to slow automobile traffic, pathways and back-lanes to encourage walking, high-density housing and attractive town centres, mixed populations and a strong sense of community.
- 2) *The Ottawa Citizen* (April 17, 1993). Also Interview John Wright of Corush, Sunderland and Wright (June 14, 1993).
- 3) Hayden (1984). p.14.
- 4) Interview Ian Johns (February 11, 1992). Ian MacLennan "The Architecture of Urban and Suburban Development" in *Canadian Housing*, p.129. He says "Although most suburbs eventually provided the necessary community facilities: churches, shopping, schools (etc.)...., they have rarely been grouped together to form convenient and meaningful centres of community life. The historic village green or traditional market place gave way to disorder and lack of focus."

- 5) Interview Ian Johns.
- 6) James A. Murray, "The Architecture of Housing." p.128.
Also Robert Woods Kennedy, pp.18-21 and p.381.
- 7) Kennedy, p.403.
- 8) There is the local example of the publicly-owned Carlsbad Springs land bank being set aside by regional politicians in favour of the privately-owned South Urban Community, and against the advice of the Regional Government's planners.
- 9) Interview, Tibor Gatszegi March 6, 1992.
- 10) Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York, 1977). Also David Harvey, *The Condition of Post Modernity: An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990)

Appendix A

Jean-Louis Lamarche

Jean-Louis Lamarche joined Campeau Construction in 1955 as design-draughtsman for the Elmvale Acres subdivision. He was a graduate of a general course in draughting at Hull Technical School but had no experience with housing design. His draughting board was set up on a dirt floor in the basement of 525 Bank Street where Campeau had his headquarters. He recalls that designs for the houses were taken out of magazines and C.M.H.C. plan books or copied from the brochures of other builders which Robert Campeau picked up on his travels. Campeau would instruct Jean-Louis in the changes he was to make to the designs. To develop his skills, Jean-Louis consulted a book called Graphic Standards and visited the jobsite to see how the houses were put together. Designs were never conceived "from scratch". Campeau employed prefabrication in his early houses and winters were spent assembling the wall and floor panels. When bigger houses were built, Campeau turned to "stick building" with pre-cut studs but without pre-assembly. He also owned a company which made double-glazed windows for his houses.

Appendix B

Ian Johns

Ian Johns was a graduate agronomist who learned his housing design in the design office of architect James Strutt. He was house designer for Teron Homes between 1963 and 1967 when the Beaverbrook area of Kanata was being built. Johns claims his contribution to the appearance of Kanata was his advocacy of natural elements such as earth colours and natural materials like stone in the houses built there by Teron. He said that Teron tested the market before committing himself to a house design. Unlike Campeau, he used architects but only so far as they fitted into his plans. Johns said that he used such magazines as Progressive Architecture to find design ideas, but he never liked the C.M.H.C. plan books. He was well aware of what Macklin Hancock had done at Don Mills. Ian Johns is a well travelled, sophisticated man, and he is a strong supporter of higher density housing which he believes can provide a desirable living environment. He has no difficulty understanding why people are happy with their tract houses, but has more difficulty understanding why their children are not demanding something better.

Appendix C

Ottawa Carleton Home Builders Association

My experience with O.C.H.B.A. is associated entirely with the Housing Design Awards committee on which I chair the judging sub-committee. The members of O.C.H.B.A. are a strange mixture of personalities. They are undoubtedly talented at designing and building marketable housing, but their approach to awards for housing design excellence seems totally irrational. All members want the Awards Competition to help sell houses, but some are concerned that true excellence be the criteria while others are willing to manipulate the results outrageously. Fortunately, the judges are not easily manipulated. Some builders support an Awards Competition based on design excellence while others believe that the awards should be based on simply what sells best - the consumer as judge carried to extremes. One intriguing aspect of the Design Awards Gala Evening is that its entertainment value must at least equal the importance attached to the awards. In fact, some members object to the time spent on the awards and continually advocate elimination of the awards aspect and replacing them with dining, entertainment and dancing for the membership. Despite the irrational hucksterism, the design awards do continue and many deserving designs are recognized.

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