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Chapter Six

Planned Communities

What differentiates the culture of the planned community from other cultures of urbanism is its exclusive focus on the complete, well-designed, and self-contained unit of human settlement. Planned communities of all sorts – ranging from neighbourhood units to towns and complete cities – are united by a common, optimistic purpose. All are asking, and attempting to answer, the same question: can the ideal human settlement be planned coherently and all at once, as a separate, distinct entity? Advocates of the planned community working in the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries thought so. Many believed that planning for complete communities was necessary to ensure the quality of the environment. It was the only way to control the whole range of factors influencing planning outcomes.

The builder of the American planned community needed to move well beyond Plato's *Republic* or Thomas More's *Utopia*. Planner C.B. Purdom gave a seemingly simple answer to the question of human settlement in 1921, stating that new towns 'should be planned to make convenient, healthy, and beautiful places to live and work in'. But, Purdom went on, 'We want something more than an obvious reply, we want an illustration in detail of what is meant' (Purdom, 1921, p. 11). It was the laying out of urbanism completely that was the essential role fulfilled by the planned community, and that has proved to be the principal source of both its innovation and its downfall.

Planned communities, as defined here, are not innately anti-urban. In fact, in defining American urbanism, they play an essential function – articulating a level of urban intensity that remains especially appealing to the American population. Yet the biggest problem for the planned community has been its relationship to the existing city, a problem not initially recognized. Olmsted, Sr., was able to think of the metropolitan area as both city and peripheral settlement, conceiving of both as part, at least theoretically, of the whole metropolitan package (Rybczynski, 1999).

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Figure 6.1. Planning by discrete unit. This scheme of 'satellite towns' by Raymond Unwin and reprinted by Nolen showed distinct areas separated by open spaces. (*Source*: John Nolen, *New Towns for Old*, 1927*b*)

This allowance has mostly eroded, and the planned community is commonly interpreted now as evidence of giving up on the city – a celebration of the rural and a denunciation of the truly urban. Undeniably, the planned community seemed to have fewer problems when defining its relation to nature, and some have said that the most important legacy of planned communities in the form of garden cities is their ability to 'frame a discourse about "nature"' (Luccarelli, 1995, p. 207). This paradigm lies at the heart of the critique that the planned community is anti-urban, although Walter Creese effectively countered this in his classic study *The Search for Environment* (1992). Proponents of planned communities have not really been interested in ruralized suburbs devoid of urbanity. John Ruskin, one of the patrons of the Garden City movement, wanted 'no festering and wretched suburb anywhere, but clean and busy street within' (Ruskin, 1865). There was much more of a careful balance between the urban and the rural required. Two of the most prominent figures in the history of the planned community, Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin, were acutely aware of the difficulty. Unwin stated: 'It is not an easy matter to combine the charm of town and country; the attempt has often led rather to the destruction of the beauty of both' (Unwin, 1909, p. 164).

Planned communities have an ostensibly appealing set of qualities: self-contained, usually picturesque, holistically conceived and implemented, often with an acute appreciation of the details of urban form. They varied in their social intent:

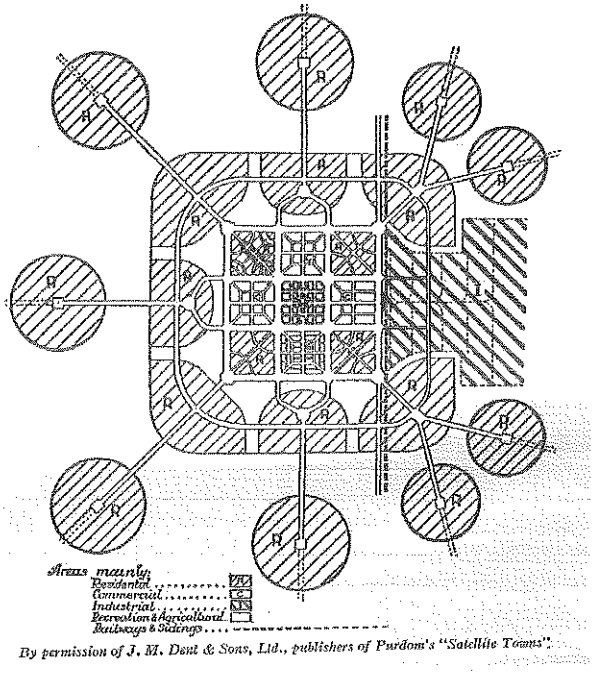

Figure 6.1. Planning by discrete unit. This scheme of 'satellite towns' by Raymond Unwin and reprinted by Nolen showed distinct areas separated by open spaces. (*Source*: John Nolen, *New Towns for Old*, 1927*b*)

early planned communities like Riverside, Illinois, a railroad commuter suburb, were driven, despite Olmsted's view of it, by bucolic tendencies and a desire to escape the industrial and immigrant-thronged city. Later ideas about the planned community were concerted efforts to create better living conditions for all classes, especially the working class. Despite these efforts, it is difficult to escape the fact that the planned community is often missing two fundamental qualities of urbanism – whatever their initial intent, they are generally lacking in social mix; and, because they are internally focused, they tend to have poor linkages to the existing city. Again, these failings do not make all aspects of the planned community anti-urban, but they do signify that the planned community is not a complete solution, but merely one particular aspect of defining American urbanism.

Not all pre-World War II planned communities are noteworthy (although, compared to today's development types, the vast majority may seem so). According to planning historian John Reps, company towns, industrial villages, and the huge number of towns 'puffed into life by American railroads' added almost nothing to our knowledge about the proper planning of communities (Reps, 1965, p. 414). Even suburban development organized around public transit was, in general, not in the form of coherent, nodal communities consciously planned. Warner's study showed that the streetcar suburbs surrounding Boston in the late nineteenth century were essentially street layouts, not communities and neighbourhoods organized to promote public life. The tendency for commercial development was strip oriented and centreless, and institutions like schools were often located according to land price rather than accessibility. Residents were forced to construct their own community life from a set of spatially disaggregated social functions. On the other hand, peripheral communities of the kind that developed outside of Boston between 1830 and 1870 were fully mixed in population and services. These were not residential suburbs, but budding cities possessing their own industrial potential, motivated by a desire to 're-create the conditions of Boston' (Warner, 1987, p. 19).

What is of interest, then, are the planned communities that stand out, and although they represent a small percentage of the total amount of building activity over the century, there are many. The majority are generally thought of as suburbs rather than complete towns. The condition for inclusion here is that, first, the community must have *some* qualities of urbanism or the potential to foster urbanism; and second, the development must have been purposefully designed, not improvised. These conditions mean that most suburban development will be excluded, since most of it was improvised rather than designed – even starting in the eighteenth century (see, Fishman, 1987) – and most shows little concern for the principles of diversity, connectivity, mix, public realm, and the other parameters of urbanism.

Whether or not the planned community exhibited qualities supportive of American urbanism is a matter of degree. The discussion presented here highlights those planned communities that seemed to exhibit the most *potential* for urbanism, if they did not contain it outright. This means that the relevance of the type of settlements built by the community builders in the mid-twentieth century – those analyzed by Weiss (1987), for example – will vary widely. Many of those communities included provisions for maintaining uniformity in social terms by establishing uniformity of design – unvarying building lines, standard lot sizes, and tight architectural control – and thus it is difficult to think of these developments as contributing to the definition of American urbanism. What is important to recognize is that there were differences between large-scale private residential subdividing and the building of complete planned communities with a view to larger ecological, social and humanitarian purposes. Either end of the spectrum could be defined as 'community building', and both could have strong, if not exclusive, profit motivations, but they did not all have the same degree of potential for urbanism.

This is not a distinction that is usually made. In Weiss' analysis, community building is distinguished on the basis of being large-scale and long-term, having singular control by one developer, employing deed restrictions, successfully enticing public agencies and private utilities to work cooperatively for the benefit of the community and the developer, and integration of all levels of the development process – brokerage, financing, insurance and construction (Weiss, 1987, p. 46). My distinction is focused on the degree to which the planned community was able to exhibit the qualities of urbanism. And, because of my focus on urban form and pattern, I allow a much greater parsing between the different brands of community building put forward. For reasons that will be discussed, the Country Club District of J.C. Nichols can not be equated with other automobile-dependent postwar suburbs, despite the similarities in purpose.

Some of the personalities discussed in this chapter have already been encountered as activists, planners or architects in either the incrementalist or urban plan-making cultures. Thomas Adams, for example, was not only a well-known garden city planner in Britain, but was also head of the culminating plan-making event of the City Efficient era, the *Regional Plan of New York and its Environs*. Henrietta Barnett, who helped build the planned community Hampstead Garden suburb, was also a settlement house reformer who engaged in incrementalist reform. There are also specific planning ideas that link incrementalist, plan-making and planned community cultures, most notably the neighbourhood paradigm, which is pervasive in all three.

Just as there are strong linkages between the incrementalists and the urban plan-makers, there are also strong linkages between the urban plan-makers and

the community planners. When urban plan-makers made their plans for existing cities, they sometimes thought in terms of completing a settlement – creating a 'new town in town', not unlike the way Bedford Park in London, essentially a network of streets, created a complete planned community within its urban context (Stern and Massengale, 1981). Yet the difference can be made clear. Incrementalists and urban plan-makers – the high urban intensity end of the urbanist grid – did not seek an alternative kind of city. They took the established patterns of settlement as more or less givens. These patterns could be modified and added to, but not re-drawn from scratch. Designers of the planned community thought in terms of establishing a new pattern of urbanism. They were largely utopians, and their schemes were mostly focused on the complete formation of new human habitats from the ground up, taking the form of a complete neighbourhood, suburb, village, town or city.

Planned community culture was also intricately tied to regionalism, although, as I will discuss in the next chapter, the two cultures evolved quite differently. There was a fundamental difference between the idea of placing settlements in the region, and designing cities internally. The two objectives are complimentary but there is a significant distinction in terms of scale and orientation. The regionalists' vision was broader and their ideas about natural context were pre-eminent. The community planners complemented the larger framework that the regionalists provided, but their focus on the internal design of cities led them down a different path. Sometimes this meant that they did not hesitate to alter the landscape to suit the needs of their designs, for example by exaggerating the features of their sites. This was something natural regionalists in the vein of Ian McHarg would have been less likely to do.

The implications of designing complete communities on a clean slate – *tabula rasa* – are significant. Planned communities do not operate within the same rules and processes of urbanism that generate, spontaneously, traditional urban form. This means that the elements comprising the planned community can be conceived of simultaneously. There may be a progression in implementation, but the plan itself is conceived in total at one point in time. In so doing, the hope is that more or less 'pure' ideas about optimal city form will have a greater chance of being realized. Concepts like boundaries, edges, centres, separation vs. interconnection, cohesiveness and internal immersiveness seem less relevant to urbanist cultures that deal with the existing urban realm, because the existing city is pre-established and therefore constraining. If a planned community is being established, the problems of organizing the elements of urbanism in a way that meets specific objectives becomes, at least theoretically, controllable, and therefore attainable.

The great advantage that planned community advocates had, of course, was their ability to think holistically and organically. They had the luxury of being able to consider the interrelations of parts and the interconnectedness that was

required in a way that was much less intrinsic to other planning cultures. They could think about the human domain as the arrangement of the whole of life, not just one component of it. Urban plan-makers were often found focusing narrowly on one element of urbanism, for example on transportation systems. This inevitably meant that planners honed in on the need for wheeling traffic through town rather than on how it might affect a range of other dimensions of urban life. The planned community had the advantage of considering all elements in synchronized fashion.

This is why advocates of the planned community at times seem so heroic. Unwin expressed an understanding of the complexity of urban form and the interrelatedness of elements that has impressed more than one generation of planners. But when urban plan-makers attempted to apply Unwin's notions to the existing city their ideas seemed by comparison crude and narrow. It was the ability to think holistically in planned community development that permitted a sophisticated conceptualization about urbanism, and that opened the way for Unwin to declare his concern for the 'pattern of life' (Creese, 1967, p. 22) more than half a century before Christopher Alexander wrote about patterns as an approach to urban design.

Planned Communities – A Typology

To the American city planner, the idea of conceiving of a human settlement holistically generally conjures up the image of the garden city. Indeed we are now into the fifth generation of garden city development (Birch, 2002). Many planners consider Ebenezer Howard to be the pivotal figure in the development of the profession. Sussman (1976) compares garden city planning as a breakthrough in city-building analogous to the impact of Copernicus on astronomy, and Peter Hall (2002, p. 88) calls Howard 'the most important single character' in the intellectual history of twentieth-century urban planning. Coincident with this, there have been an inordinate number of histories on the garden cities movement.

But the focus on holistic settlements and what they mean for American urbanism requires a broader perspective than garden cities, important as they are. In the historical development of American urbanism, new town development began long before garden cities arrived on the scene. The history of planned communities in America can be said to begin with the first colonial settlements, such as Williamsburg and Jamestown. In the 200+ year history of the U.S., there has been a wealth of planned settlements, conceived of as complete cities, towns, villages or neighbourhoods. Despite this interest, the vast majority of urbanism in the U.S. was not thought of in terms of the complete planned community. After the 1920s especially, subdivisions consisting of single-uses on vast tracts of land, or

street layouts for the accommodation of the automobile were the primary methods of 'community' expansion.

The typology of planned communities has been broken down in different ways by different authors. Often there is a distinction made between the utopian settlements of the nineteenth century, industrial villages, railroad towns and later streetcar suburbs, and finally the automobile suburbs of the 1920s. One useful typology of the suburban planned community – a locational distinction that applies to most of the new planned communities discussed here – was developed by Stern and Massengale (1981). It divides planned suburbs into six categories: railroad suburbs (e.g., Riverside and Lake Forest, Illinois); streetcar and subway suburbs (e.g., Forest Hills Gardens and Shaker Heights); industrial villages (e.g., Pullman and Letchworth); resort suburbs (e.g., Coral Gables); automobile suburbs (e.g., Country Club District and Mariemont); and recent suburbs. My concern is not exclusively suburban, so the typology below is somewhat modified, consisting of five types: colonial towns and frontier settlements; railroad and streetcar suburbs; utopian communities and company towns; automobile suburbs, and garden cities, villages and suburbs.

Although the focus is on American development, some attention is given to England since it was particularly influential here. My purpose is to provide a brief overview of the different types of planned communities – broadly defined as holistic settlements – that were a part of the American experience. This is a broad survey; it is obviously not a complete history of any of these ideas, only an outline of the main developments and the ideologies behind them. As throughout, I focus on those concepts that can, in some way, be tied to the lineage of American urbanism.

Colonial Towns and Frontier Settlements

John Reps (1965) wrote the definitive study of the development of colonial towns and frontier settlements in America, *The Making of Urban America*. One indication of the degree of importance of these settlements is how they have continued to hold interest for subsequent city building. Frontier towns and villages became the models that many of the earliest planners in the U.S. looked to. 'How-to' manuals on urban planning often began with chapters on the history of town development that included the American colonial town. John Nolen (1927*b*), for example, opened his book *New Towns for Old*, with a discussion of the glories of the New England town, which he admired for its 'diversity'.

Williamsburg, established in 1699, is admired as an example of colonial town planning at its best: a high degree of order and formality oriented on an axial plan; attention to the third dimension; and the achievement of something intimate and serene, not portentous. The New England small town is more admired for its

integration of town and country. The basic pattern of land development was a small village surrounded by agricultural land known as the 'common fields'. Communal ownership of land ensured that the needs of the community were placed ahead of individual needs, but it also ensured that the town remained intact and bounded, a compact village design completely distinct from the surrounding countryside. This was not a condition that arrived fully formed all at once – it was years in the making, sometimes fifty or even one hundred years – an indication of the strong code of conduct at work in moulding development form. Internally, the New England village was organized around a village green that was fronted by buildings of civic and religious importance. The greens could have a wide variety of shapes and were relatively small. Few were square or rectangular (Arendt, 1999).

One of the most important characteristics of the new town in America was the predominance of the central square. Spanish colonial town planning required them, William Penn established them for Philadelphia, James Oglethorpe for Savannah, and hundreds of courthouse squares embodied the physical expression of the central role to be played by community life. The documentation of the wide variety of courthouse square arrangements – the Harrisonburg square, the Shelbyville

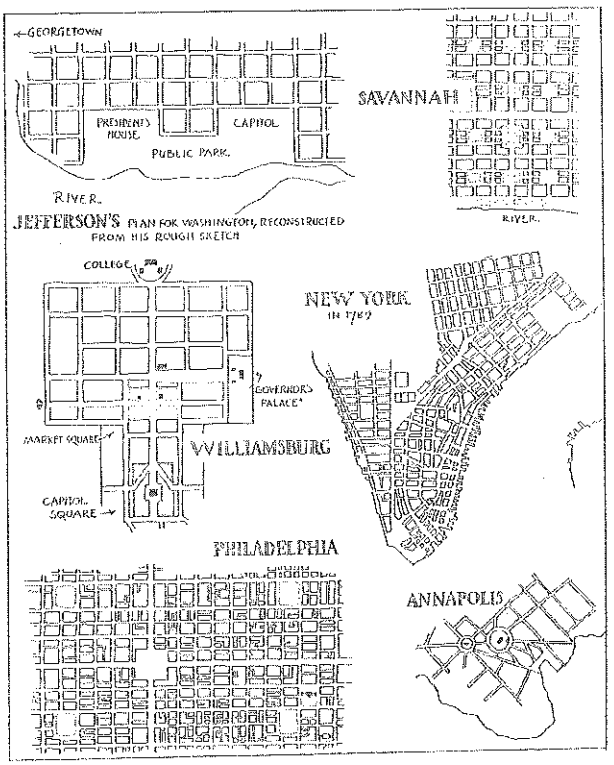

Figure 6.2. A few planned colonial towns published in an essay by Elbert Peets. (*Source*: Elbert Peets, 1927)

square, the Lancaster square, to mention a few – testifies to the attention paid to civic space. As the primary organizational feature of the new town, the square had strong symbolic importance. A study of hundreds of courthouse squares in Texas revealed its dominance, articulated in numerous subtly different ways, but always the commercial and civic focus of the planned settlement (Veselka, 2000).

By the late period of Colonial America, the 'rectilinear urban habits' of Americans were well-established (Kostof, 1991), and thus the application of a grid across the unsettled territories of the U.S. in 1785 by Thomas Jefferson can be seen as a logical extension of the grid culture of U.S. town planning. But while the colonial grid had a strongly socialized notion of land value, in which land became valuable only after a building was placed on it, the unimproved grid that became the basis of nineteenth-century expansion was focused on land speculation and consumption (Marcuse, 1987). It was one difference between planned and unplanned settlement.

Railroad and Streetcar Suburbs

How the concept of a 'suburb' contributes to American urbanism is a complex matter. If Fishman's definition of a suburb is used – that the suburb, the 'bourgeois utopia', was an exclusive middle-class development that excluded industry and lower-class residents (Fishman, 1987) – then it is, on the face of things, not particularly useful for defining American urbanism in a positive way. It defies too many of the core values of urbanism – diversity and connectivity in particular. There is no avoiding the fact that most suburbs were residential enclaves, set apart ideologically and physically from industrial villages or towns meant to decentralize the congested city. They were satellites dependent on the central city and they purposefully shunned the integration of places of employment for the working classes. They were, in a word, exclusive.

Ostensibly, then, American urbanism should reject suburbs on the grounds that they are too often homogeneous socially and economically. However, this would be a mistake for the simple reason that suburbs designed as complete planned communities hold valuable lessons. Suburbs were (and are) the predominant American version of organized decentralization and should be studied for the rich legacy of design principles they hold. One approach to bringing suburbs into a discussion of urbanism then is to focus primarily on their structural components. As in the case of urban plan-making, the ability to draw connections rests on the ability to disassociate from the social rhetoric. The connection between suburban development and American urbanism will rest on issues having to do with human functionality and design coherence.

From this perspective, it is the degree to which peripheral human settlement was internally integrated that is of relevance. How 'internally integrated' is defined, and

how it varies, constitutes the bulk of the discussion here. If such developments were designed as complete communities, rather than as expedient groupings of housing units – single-family detached or otherwise – there would be reason to explore them and assess their relevance to American urbanism. It is not just about excluding sprawl. The proliferation of row houses in places like Back Bay in Boston and Society Hill in Philadelphia were suburban geographically, but do not constitute the kind of holistic growth by planned community to be included in this discussion.

It is not my intent to recount the historical lineage of suburban development. A large literature on suburbia and its meaning can be cited to get a better sense of its history and variation, notably Kenneth T. Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (1985), Mark Baldassare's *Trouble in Paradise: The Suburban Transformation in America* (1988), and Robert Fishman's *Bourgeois Utopias* (1987). These studies are particularly focused on the social and political ramifications of suburban exclusivity, rather than the significance of their design and the implications of their pattern and form for defining American urbanism.

There are two main types of suburban planned communities that are relevant: transit based suburbs and automobile based suburbs. In the first group, it is logical to begin with the communities that were connected to railroads in the mid-nineteenth century. Although Kenneth Jackson's history of suburban development begins with a commuter suburb linked by Ferry boat, Brooklyn Heights, and there were several Staten Island suburbs developed in the early 1800s, the main course of American transit-based suburban development first arose in the form of railroad communities. The population of these suburbs was not insignificant. Chicago was described in 1873 as a city 'more given to suburbs than any other city in the world', where 'the number of suburbs of all sorts contiguous to Chicago is nearly a hundred'. These were serviced by the more than 100 trains that entered and departed the city daily (Jackson, 1985, p. 93).

An admirable quality of railroad suburbs was that they were intrinsically compact – residents needed and wanted to live within a fifteen minute walking radius (or 'pedestrian shed') of the rail station. Since railroad commuting was expensive and time consuming, communities developed 'like beads on a string': discontinuous, separated by green space, and relatively distant from the city centre (Jackson, 1985, p. 101). Development was, in a sense, coerced into a compact form that allowed accessibility to the rail node. This created the 'railroad village' – limited in size, compact in form, walkable, and within easy reach of the surrounding countryside (Fishman, 1987, p. 136). And, because suburban residents commuted to the city daily to satisfy needs that could not be satisfied by a village centre, the outward expansion strengthened rather than depleted the city. As Fishman put it, 'For a brief moment, the railroad tracks held city and suburb in precarious equilibrium' (Fishman, 1987, p. 137).

There is no doubt that railroad suburbs were mostly exclusive places, but there was also some degree of social mix. Alongside the dominant, elite class, there were also significant numbers of lower-income people, the 'supporting minions', who lived in railroad communities and found jobs servicing the elite. Many of them lived in small dwellings near the railroad station or town centre. This fact meant that the nineteenth-century railroad suburb was actually more heterogeneous than the typical suburb of the late twentieth century (Jackson, 1985).

Despite this, class segregation was a strong element of transit based development. Warner's study of streetcar suburbs (1870 to 1900) showed how much class segregation was part of the system of urban expansion (Warner, 1962). By 1900, the streetcar transportation system in Boston had produced a divided city. Where previously 'streets of the well-to-do lay hard by workers' barracks and tenements of the poor', now the affluent were moving out. Low-income groups did reach the streetcar suburbs, 'by sheer enlargement of their numbers', but, in many cases 'they could occupy them only by destroying much of what the suburb had achieved' (Warner, 1962, pp. 19, 161). In other words, the hidden cost for low-income renters who infiltrated the streetcar suburbs was a worsening of their environmental conditions. Needless to say, the infiltration of low-income tenants was not generally planned, it happened by dividing up buildings into multiple units.

But they were sometimes exemplary, focused, designs – one reason why the railroad suburb of the late nineteenth century has been referred to as the 'classic stage of suburbia' (Fishman, 1987, p. 134). Lake Forest, Illinois, platted in 1857 and designed by landscape architect Almerin Hotchkiss, is a good example. It was a planned picturesque model but its organization around a railroad stop gave it a particular configuration – a central station, a town square, and a surrounding commercial centre. It was a city in a park for wealthy commuters, but its form was not only beautiful, it was efficient and functional.

Railroad suburbs were often associated with the 'planned picturesque'. The picturesque aspect had roots in the landscape paintings of the Northern European Renaissance, English gardens, and Chinese and Japanese landscape gardening (Barnett, 1986). In England, John Nash was among the first to apply the principles of the picturesque to urban design, notably his design for Regent's Park in London, commissioned in 1811 by George IV. In America, picturesque suburbs in the nineteenth century bore some resemblance to model industrial villages in England. There was also a close connection with Andrew Jackson Downing, who was encountered in chapter 4 in the context of promoting village improvement. By the end of the nineteenth century, almost every major city had an outlying subdivision consisting of a curvilinear, picturesque layout. Some were mechanical repetitions of romantic features; others, in the hands of an expert designer like Olmsted, were skilfully planned (Reps, 1965). The more ruralized developments, like Glendale,

Ohio and Llewellyn Park, New Jersey, consisting of organic street patterns and large lots, have little connection to American urbanism.

Riverside, Illinois, begun in 1869 and designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., may have a stronger connection to American urbanism than the earlier groupings of country estates in suburban parks. Olmsted, together with Calvert Vaux, laid out sixteen suburbs in his career, but Riverside was his most famous. It was to be a rural antidote to the congested city, but it is not at all a typical American sprawling suburb. This was a relatively cohesive community (in physical planning terms) linked by railroad to the urban core of Chicago. Riverside's self-containment was balanced to some degree by its direct link to the industrial city. But, as in all affluent transit suburbs of the time, this was a paradox. Its seemingly perfect merging of nature and city – its internal tranquillity – was wholly dependent on the mayhem of the industrial city it was trying to escape.

There were two indications of urbanity at Riverside – inclusion of a commercial component, and the ample provision of public space. Olmsted wrote that suburbs should not 'sacrifice urban conveniences' like 'butchers, bakers, & theatres', but integrate them within rural conditions (Olmsted, 1870, p. 294). At Riverside, this careful balance was achieved by means of a quaint village-like commercial district adjacent to the train station – not part of the original plan but added early on – a model repeated in many of the earliest planned railroad suburbs. In addition, the emphasis on public space reflected Olmsted's insistence on promoting what he called the 'life of the community' (Fishman, 1987, p. 130). Public areas (including streets and roads) constituted one-third of Riverside's total area (Rybczynski, 1999), not including the generous front lawns that were too public to be part of private family life. Front lawns, by creating the 'illusion' of a park, belonged to the community (Fishman, 1987).

By the late nineteenth century, as the rail system expanded to include streetcars and subways, suburban living came within reach of the middle class. The trolley or electric streetcar, rapidly adopted by American cities from the late 1880s, was particularly important because it opened up the city for people of modest means. It also strengthened the central business district, since trolley lines invariably converged at a central point and radiated outward from there. The great department stores of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are testaments to the increasing importance of this centrality.

Streetcar suburbs of the era are well-known. Roland Park in Baltimore, laid out initially by George Kessler, typified the ideal of a suburban enclave of houses meant to instil the feeling of being in the country, while still conveniently linked by rail to downtown. Another well-known example of the transit-linked planned community was Shaker Heights in Cleveland, Ohio. Started in 1916 by the Van Sweringen brothers, it became an affluent district with strong design control. In

1929, the brothers developed a Georgian-style shopping centre attached to the rail station. Shaker Heights is interesting because of its extreme attention to detail, and the explicit way in which the Van Sweringen brothers attempted to strengthen a moral ethic through their control of every detail of the physical environment.

Automobile Suburbs

By the 1920s, suburbs were growing at a much faster rate than central cities. Again, the degree to which this suburban development contributes to a definition of American urbanism rests on the extent to which it was planned with some consideration of the conditions of urbanism, rather than being developed as unplanned, speculative, single-use extensions. The situation was mostly the latter. The 1920s era automobile suburbs were basically tighter versions of present-day sprawl. The so-called 'infill suburbs', which became working-class, close-in suburbs around every major urban area during the 1920s and 1930s, had few amenities, were not pedestrian-oriented, and, with zoning sanctioned by the U.S. Supreme Court, were single-use and homogenous. As a result, most of the automobile suburbs that began to proliferate in the 1920s are not likely to be useful to the refinement of a definition of American urbanism.

While the unplanned automobile suburb characterized the vast majority of development occurring in the 1920s and beyond, there were some examples of planned automobile suburbs that were qualitatively different. A highly regarded example is Mariemont outside of Cincinnati, Ohio, planned by John Nolen and developed by Mary Emery in 1923. It was significant as a philanthropic venture, designed specifically for the industrial worker as an alternative to industrial squalor. It was one of the first suburban developments consciously to accommodate the automobile by providing parking areas and garages, but that did not detract from it. It was a mixed use, mixed income community of rentals and owner-occupied housing, with a central community green, integrated community facilities, and a centrally located commercial district. Most units were grouped into duplexes or rows of attached units, and the development benefited from the involvement of numerous well-known and skilled designers. It was not a co-partnership in the manner of the English garden city – Mary Emery recognized that Americans were far too individualistic for that – but it did nevertheless have a strong communitarian basis through its emphasis on civic amenities.

By the early 1920s, many automobile suburbs were much more exclusive, heavily marketed by developers who were mostly interested in profit-making or fame. As I have argued, such developments may be useful for defining American urbanism, in that they offer lessons about successful planning and design. Examples of beautifully designed and planned automobile-oriented suburban areas include

Figure 6.3. Mix
Mariemont. Ap
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Park neighborh
center. (*Source:*
Nolen, *New To*
Old, 1927*b*)

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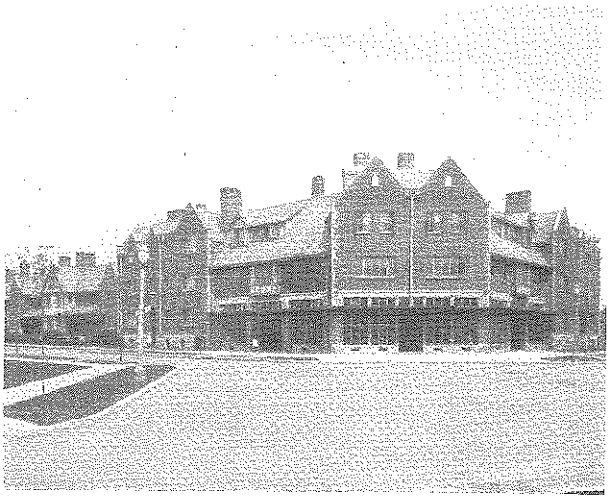

Figure 6.3. Mixed uses at Mariemont. Apartments and shops in the Dale Park neighborhood center. (*Source*: John Nolen, *New Towns for Old*, 1927*b*)

Highland Park outside of Dallas, and Coral Gables outside of Miami. Coral Gables was laid out in 1921 by developer George Merrick, who wanted to create an artistic, aesthetically cohesive suburb of Miami. This meant that every detail was attended to, from the careful zoning restrictions to the design of lamp posts. There were residential areas and country clubs, tennis courts, bridle paths, parks, and places for business and industry. Like the other suburbs of this genre, it was to be a relatively complete town.

Another highly regarded automobile suburb is Jesse Clyde Nichols' 1922 Country Club District outside of Kansas City. It was laid out with all the right planning principles – an integrated commercial area, interconnected streets, no unnecessary removal of trees, and no needless disregard for topography. Most importantly, there was a mixture of housing types that included 6,000 homes and 160 multiple-family buildings ranging from walk-ups to 10- and 12-storey apartment flats (Jackson, 1985). In addition, civic spaces were carefully planned for and distributed throughout the development, giving the place a park-like quality inspired by the usual motivation of wanting to provide plenty of space, light and air for the community. Unfortunately, covenants with racial restrictions were initially tolerated in Country Club District, a not uncommon phenomenon that puts a serious blemish on many noteworthy examples of the American planned community.

Utopian Communities and Company Towns

The lineage of new, model communities in the U.S. has to include the nineteenth-

century phenomenon of utopian communities. One of the most interesting facets of utopian community building is its cyclical regularity. Barkun (1984) has documented four periods of intense utopian building in the U.S. – the 1840s, the 1890s, the Great Depression, and the 1960s. Berry documented the correlation of utopian community building with economic downturns or 'long-wave' crises. Utopian communities are, in his view, 'critical reactions to the moving target of capitalism' (Berry, 1992, p. xv).

The fact that 250 of them were constructed in the U.S. in the 100 years between 1820 and 1920 (Schultz, 1989), meaning that they did not remain utopian, testifies to their significance. Utopian settlement was promoted through literature. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward, 2000–1887*, published in 1888, was the most noticeable work, but there were many others. Historian David Schuyler counted 100 utopian and dystopian novels in Great Britain and another 150 in the U.S. written in the 1880s and 1890s (Schuyler, 2002). These books consisted of visionary proposals for a peaceful world that produced harmony between nature and humankind.

Along with literary figures like Mark Twain, Dean Howells, and Edward Bellamy, utopians constructed a new type of American urban culture. That culture is significant for defining American urbanism because of the way it explicitly connected the quality of the physical environment with quality of life. Over the course of the nineteenth century, American utopians developed a sense of the city as a 'total environment' capable of producing 'better culture' (Schultz, 1989, p. xiv).

According to Kostof (1991), however, most utopian towns were mundane in terms of town design. In fact the degree of importance attached to the physical plan and form of the town varied. Many were formed as religious commonwealths and are much more significant for their social experimentation and moral agenda than their lessons in urban design and town planning. At one end of the ideological spectrum, communities in the nineteenth century were established to challenge the prevailing capitalist system, and the towns created were laid out as communistic social settlements. This meant, in many cases, simple grids with 'loose assemblages of buildings' (Kostof, 1991, p. 168). An example is New Harmony, Indiana, a utopian community started in 1814 by one communal sect, the Harmony Society, and later settled by a second group under the leadership of philanthropist Robert Owen. It is, and always was, a very small town. There is one traffic light, and from this intersection it is possible to see the entire settlement. Yet it was the physical reflection of small town urbanity, like 'a small section cut out of a city,' as one contemporary put it (Schultz, 1989, p. 10). Like other small utopian settlements, its beauty lies in its elegant simplicity.

There were some short-lived attempts to implement the 'phalansteries' of Charles Fourier, collections of attached buildings similar to those found at Versailles

and populated by mixes of races, classes, sexes and ages (Kostof, 1991). But the Mormons had the most success in applying their town planning ideas on a larger scale. Their designs were equally ideological, but simpler. They implemented a grid arrangement of strict geometric proportions, derived from descriptions of cities in the Bible (in Numbers 35 and Leviticus 25). Streets were extremely wide (132 feet), lined with half-acre lots and houses set back 25 feet. Certain centrally located blocks were designated for churches and public buildings. The simple egalitarianism of these 'Cities of Zion' (Reps, 1965, p. 264) was directed at shunning the sinful ways of American society, and preparing for a new social and religious order. It is somewhat ironic that the form they chose was identical to the one seen as most befitting of commercialism.

One utopian ideal that should be reviewed because of its later influence on Ebenezer Howard is James Silk Buckingham's model town of Victoria, described and illustrated in his 1849 book *National Evils and Practical Remedies*. Buckingham was influenced by Robert Owen, although, interestingly, his model was rooted in capitalism, not socialism (Kostof, 1991). This meant that the economic laws of land price and accessibility applied, and the wealthy were situated where they would have the greatest access to economic and cultural goods, i.e., at the centre of town. The layout called for concentric rows that were square, not round, with rows of buildings that gradually diminished in size toward the periphery. Buckingham was a politician and a philanthropist and his idea was to provide a decent living environment for the 'unfortunate' (Eaton, 2002). Thus lower-income housing was situated close to green open space, whereby the poor could have better access to nature.

Buckingham's model town lies somewhere between the socialist model of utopian settlement and the phenomenon of the industrial village. As a second category of the ideal city, model industrial towns were blatantly focused on the promotion of capital accumulation, however beneficial they might have been for workers. There were company towns constructed to help workers (and thus companies) almost as soon as industrialization began. In this way town planning became secularized to emphasize the cooperation of workers for the good of the company rather than the good of the religious community. Despite their fame (or infamy), well planned company towns were rare. Most industrialists were far more interested in the beauty of their factories than of their workers' living environments. Industry-based housing developments have been described as 'improvisational, squalid settlements' (Kostof, 1991, p. 168) that coexisted uneasily with the gleaming factories and estates of their owners.

The exceptions to this are of interest. In Europe, model villages first started to appear in the wool manufacturing centres of Yorkshire. Creese labels these early industrial era settlements as 'The Bradford-Halifax School', so named for

the concentrations of villages in a triangular region near Leeds in north central England. The first was Copley, begun in 1844, but the more famous and much larger town was Saltaire, started by Sir Titus Salt about six years later and intended for a population of 4,356. Despite Salt's paternalism, the town has been heralded for its use of the medieval tradition of districts, its high density, and its effective integration of building style and grid layout (Creese, 1992). The social contract of the industrial town of Saltaire is represented by the close proximity of church and factory, and the strict controls Salt placed on his tenants.

Later in Europe, industrial towns were modelled after garden cities. These included the Krupps family town established outside Essen, Margarethenhöhe, and the garden city at Hellerau, outside Dresden. In a way that was not the usual *modus operandi* of the nineteenth-century industrial capitalist, a few patricians made the effort of constructing a holistic environment that they considered to be wholesome, morally uplifting, and a better place for workers to live. In return, such places were believed to be conducive to increased worker productivity. Nelson P. Lewis, the engineer-planner encountered at the forefront of early twentieth-century plan-making, reported that the towns were run at a financial loss that was offset by an increase in worker efficiency, a direct result of the improvement in living conditions (Lewis, 1916). Thus the industrialists' goal of providing better living conditions must be seen for what it was – a business decision.

Two other European examples were particularly well-known in the U.S.: Port Sunlight, near Liverpool, started in 1892 and developed by the soap manufacturer W.H. Lever; and Bournville, near Birmingham, started in 1895 and developed by the chocolate manufacturers, the Cadbury brothers. From the standpoint of conceptualizing American urbanism, these towns and villages are important as examples of industrial decentralization. Both were greatly admired by later American city planners. Their disadvantage, of course, was the singularity of their purpose. In the U.S., company towns like Tyrone, New Mexico, a copper-mining settlement, rose and fell based entirely on the strength of one industry.

Of interest are the numerous design innovations experimented with in these early model industrial villages. Port Sunlight was 'highly influential' in making popular the picturesque, with its irregular street plan and neo-vernacular architecture (Kostof, 1991, p. 73). It was also an early instance of the 'superblock' arrangement in which houses faced an interior greenspace rather than the street, popularized in the Radburn scheme 36 years later. Port Sunlight included housing for a range of incomes that, through its design, minimized the distinction between single-family and multiple-family dwelling types. The towns included housing on both sides of the streets that served to 'characterize and punctuate' space rather than simply delimit it (Creese, 1992, p. 122). Bournville was also successful in maintaining social diversity by limiting how many of the company's employees could make their

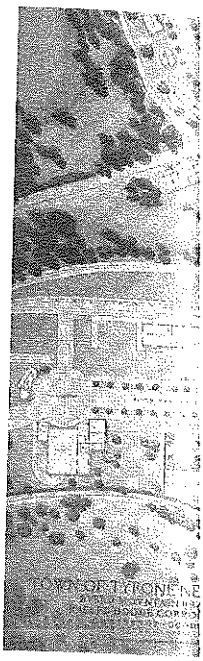

Figure 6.4. Bertram G
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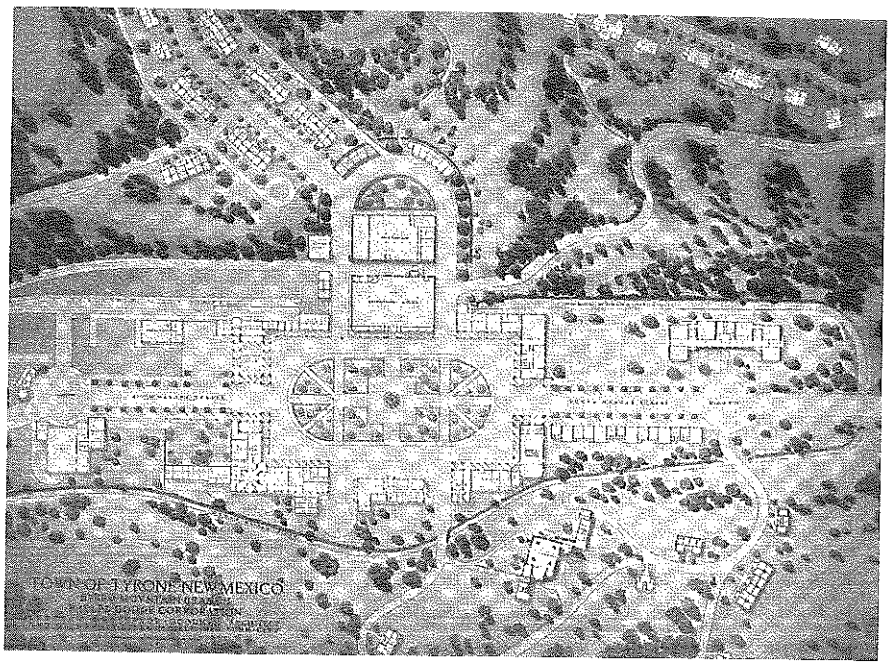


Figure 6.4. Bertram G. Goodhue's 1915 plan for Tyrone, New Mexico. (*Source*: Thomas Adams, 1935, *Outline of Town and City Planning*, 1935)

residence there. George Cadbury believed it should be limited to one-half of the town, to avoid the closed-in feeling of other industrial villages (Eaton, 2002).

A well-known early example of the company town was Lowell, Massachusetts, planned in 1822 as a neat arrangement of factory buildings and modest houses. But the most famous company town in the U.S. was unquestionably Pullman, built 10 miles south of downtown Chicago in 1881 by George Pullman, founder of the Pullman Palace Car Works. Initially, the town seemed to be a model of corporate philanthropy: housing, clean factories, stores, and recreational facilities together forming a model industrial environment for the good of the workers, their productivity, and, of course, company profits. But following the depression of 1893, Pullman laid off employees, cut wages, and failed to reduce rents or cut the cost of services. Jane Addams weighed in on the situation and concluded that personal benevolence – the Pullman model – was inferior to her settlement house model which was based on 'cooperative effort' directed at social justice. She likened the tragedy of Pullman to the fate of King Lear (Addams, 1912).

Strictly as a town planning model, Pullman is interesting because of the attention paid to the third dimension: the design of its buildings was given as much consideration as the layout of streets and spaces. It was a simple grid plan, but the

architect, Solon Berman, created a sense of enclosure by lining the gridded streets with multi-storey row houses. Pullman also included well-designed civic spaces, including a market square. Of course, the provision of these spaces was tempered by the fact that they were all company owned, a condition that made it seem less like a real town and more like an exercise in pure social control. Gans (1967*a*, p. 183) described Pullman as a 'beautiful and efficient reformatory . . . for people who had done nothing wrong'.

Subsequent company towns were somewhat less paternalistic than Pullman, although they were also susceptible to worker unrest that undermined whatever impression of social harmony was trying to be obtained. Kohler, Wisconsin, founded in 1913 and designed by Werner Hegemann and Elbert Peets of *Civic Art* fame, was an improvement over Pullman in that the town was incorporated and governed by its residents, not the company. By the 1920s, there were company towns being built to satisfy the industrial workers of the factories burgeoning in response to Fordist production techniques. Ford himself was involved in creating 'village industries' meant to unite factory worker and agricultural labourer (Mullin, 1982). Many of these were built with the automobile in mind, signifying not only the capitalist's desire to create an automobile-dependent society, but a greater recognition of the American worker's need for independence and individuality (Stilgoe, 1988). By 1930, there were over two million people living in company towns that spanned the entire U.S. (Crawford, 1996).

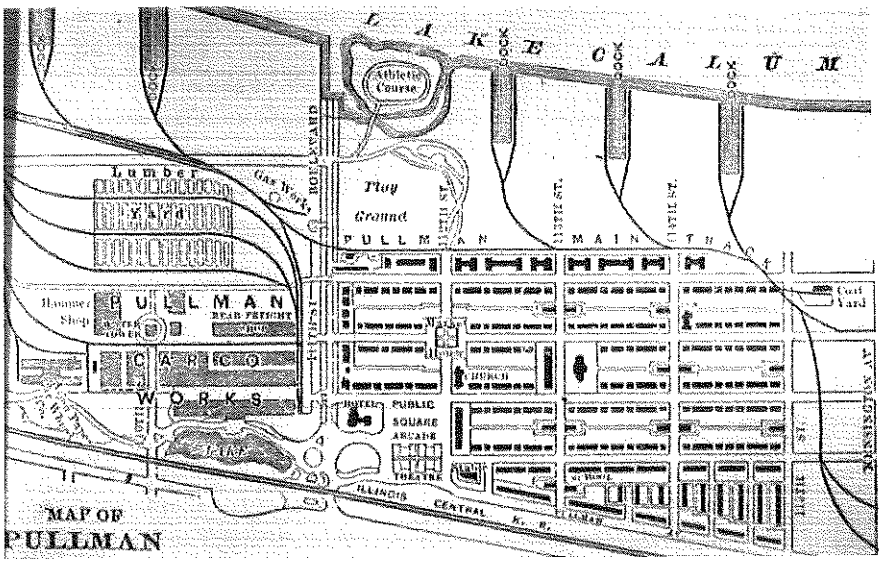


Figure 6.5. Plan of Pullman, Illinois, showing housing, commercial areas, community center, and factories. (*Source: Harper's Monthly Magazine*, 1885)

Garden Cities and Garden Suburbs

Although there is strong overlap among many of the planned community types listed thus far, garden cities can be separated out along one important dimension: they had an overt social purpose that revolved around the need to improve living conditions for the working class and the poor. The kind of planned community that emerged in the 1910s and 1920s that was explicitly modelled on Ebenezer Howard's garden cities, and took the form of garden villages and suburbs, might later have become affluent, but the intention to integrate housing types and provide for a range of community needs accessible to all residents made garden cities, villages and suburbs distinct from the more speculative developments of the same period.

Garden city type developments existed prior to Howard. Before he published his famous book in 1898, *To-Morrow: a peaceful path to real reform*, others had proposed ways to better integrate human development and nature, a sort of 'back to the land' movement for the nineteenth century (see Lewis, 1916, p. 300). Nelson Lewis claimed that garden cities predated Howard by an entire generation, and cited the workingmen's colonies developed by the Krupps family outside of Essen starting in 1856 as the logical precursors.

The lineage of garden cities based directly on Howard begins with the three 'true' garden cities: Letchworth, Welwyn Garden City and Wythenshawe (Hall, 2002). Beyond these there were garden city-like developments that could be labelled garden villages or garden suburbs. Numerous European developments and spin-offs from the garden city ideal, notably the English garden cities proposed in Patrick Abercrombie's post World War II Greater London Plan, had influence in the U.S. Unfortunately, despite a number of interesting translations of garden city principles by philanthropic organizations like the Russell Sage Foundation, the garden city paradigm was significantly downgraded and parts of it used to legitimize all manner of suburban extension.

The garden city ideal was thus translated into a variety of forms and contexts. Initially, the aesthetic principles were based on Ruskin, as articulated in his 1865 treatise, *Sesame and Lilies*, then augmented with the socialist ideals of William Morris, and later translated by Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker into a number of garden city-like developments. Ruskin-Morris principles were a merger of socialism and design, a spirit of cooperative craftsmanship in keeping with Morris' contention that beauty comes from within and works outward. Regardless of architectural style, garden cities were inspired by the same set of goals – the need to create a healthy alternative to the industrial city that could also provide a full range of daily life needs, ready access to nature, and 'a full measure of social life' (see Lang, 1996, p. 123).

Many of the precursors of Ebenezer Howard's garden cities have already been

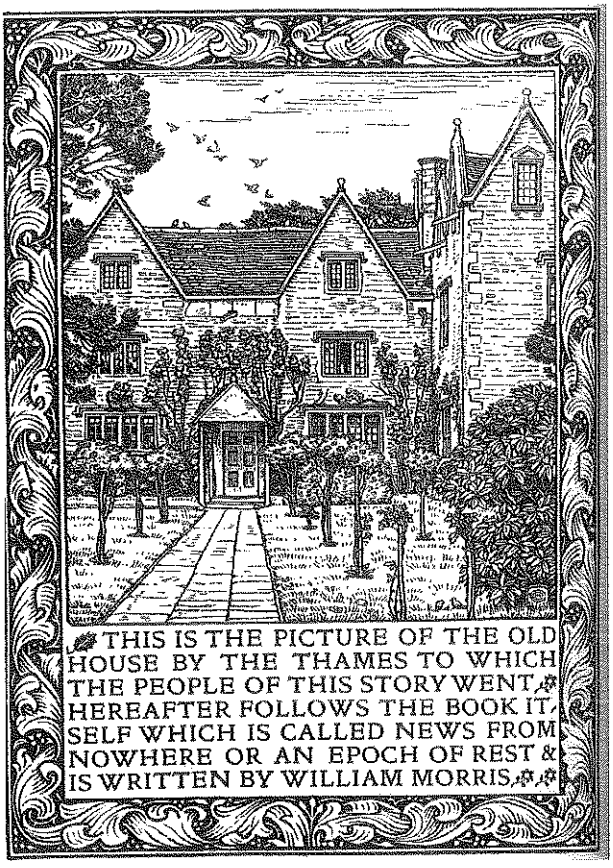


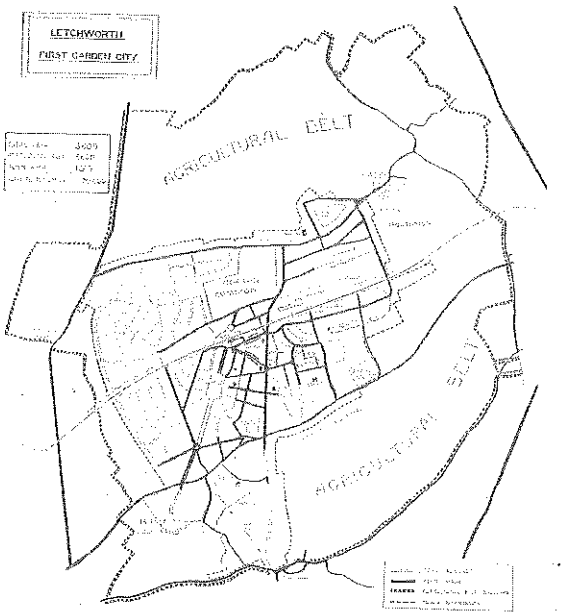
Figure 6.6. Frontispiece from one of the influential writings of William Morris, *News from Nowhere*, first published as a serial in the Socialist magazine *Commonweal* in 1890.

discussed, for example, Port Sunlight and Bournville. Both developments were extremely influential in garden city design, and, as testament to this, were the locations of the first two garden city conferences held in 1901 and 1902 respectively. Other influences included the picturesque landscape design of Frederick Law Olmsted – it is believed that Howard visited the town of Riverside outside of Chicago – and the Australian city of Adelaide laid out by Colonel William Light in 1836. The latter was laid out on a grid pattern with a central square and parks and smaller squares for public functions distributed throughout.

It is difficult to disassociate suburban development, particularly commuter suburbs, from garden cities if one takes a generic view of what garden cities are. Certainly Riverside and Llewellyn Park, categorized as romantic suburbs, were attempting to merge the best of town and country. But the kind of merger envisioned by Howard was structurally very different, since it was predicated on co-partnership – housing cooperatives in which there was to be no private ownership of land. Additionally, garden cities in the Howardian sense integrated

industry along with housing, commercial and recreational functions, and thus were not meant to be dependent on the central urban core as most American suburbs were. A more inclusive definition, which many garden city advocates were not adverse to, was also used. In the 1913 book *Garden City Movement Up-to-Date*, the distinction was made as follows: garden cities were self-contained towns; garden suburbs provided a way for the growth of existing cities to be along 'healthy lines'; and garden villages, such as Bournville and Port Sunlight, were 'garden cities in miniature, but depend upon some neighbouring city for water, light and drainage' (Culpin, 1913, p. 6).

Development modelled explicitly on Howard's garden city paradigm began almost immediately after the publication of his book, in the early 1900s. In 1903, the First Garden City Company purchased 3800 acres near London to build a self-contained town complete with industrial, commercial and residential functions. Letchworth, laid out by Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, was followed by two others: Welwyn and Wythenshawe. In the U.S., the Garden City Association of America was formed in 1906 by Howard, church leaders and businessmen intent on carrying the garden city message forward, but they did not produce any viable projects.



DIAGRAMMATIC PLAN OF LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY.

This plan of Letchworth Garden City, showing the relation of the Town Area to the Agricultural Belt, illustrates the main features of Mr. Ebenezer Howard's proposals.

Figure 6.7. Diagrammatic plan of Letchworth Garden City, 'showing the relation of the Town Area to the Agriculture Belt' and illustrating the main features proposed by Ebenezer Howard, according to this 1913 publication. (*Source*: Edwart G. Culpin, *The Garden City Movement Up-To-Date*, 1913)

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The first garden city development in the U.S. was the Russell Sage Foundation's philanthropic quest to build a model garden suburb for the working classes at Forest Hills Gardens, located in Queens a short distance from Manhattan and conveniently connected by rail. The 142-acre development designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Grosvenor Atterbury is deemed particularly significant because it was here that Clarence Perry, while a resident, conceived of his unique articulation of the neighbourhood unit. Forest Hills Gardens had, in fact, a neighbourhood structure to it and Perry believed good design could contribute to the development of a 'neighbourhood spirit' (Perry, 1929). Housing units were arranged in small groups rather than blocks, a strategy meant to emphasize the difference that 'scientific principles' of town planning could have on rectifying the drudgery of the endless Manhattan grid. The impact of this extended beyond Perry. The neighbourhood plans sponsored by the City Club of Chicago in 1913 were also directly influenced by it, particularly the first and second prize designs (Stern and Massengale, 1981).

Street layouts and building designs at Forest Hills Gardens were innovative. Olmsted laid out the streets in such a way that, although gridded, they were kept quiet and slightly curvilinear – in direct contrast to Manhattan. The intent of its backer, the Sage Foundation Homes Company, was to promote a better standard of residential design that merged, as with all garden cities, the benefits of town (in this case New York City) and country. There was a concerted effort to mix housing types and therefore classes, and the designers successfully placed high-density apartment buildings on the same streets as single-family houses. However, critics note that, despite a desire to provide for people of middle income, the reach did not extend to day labourers.

True garden cities were more radical. They were intended to prevent land speculation by ensuring that increases in land value went to the community as a whole, not the individual – a concept picked up by CIAM, which advocated the same radicalism. Garden city advocates struggled with maintaining the purity of the idea. As one contemporary put it: 'a garden city or suburb is not simply a pleasant town or suburb with a few gardens within it' (Lewis, 1916, p. 302). It was instead meant to counter 'purely commercial enterprises' along a completely new model of urbanism. As one proponent put it 'The garden city stands . . . as the preventative, not as the palliative' (Culpin, 1913, p. 6). This goal was not achieved. In Europe, where it would seem to have a better chance of success, any radicalism exhibited by John Ruskin, William Morris or Ebenezer Howard was kept in check by the 'bureaucratic tendencies' of Fabian Socialism (Lang, 1999, p. 123).

Garden suburbs settled for the accomplishment of other social goals. Hampstead Garden Suburb, developed in 1907 by Henrietta Barnett, the wife of Samuel Barnett of Toynbee Hall settlement house, was successful at deliberately mixing housing types – and thereby deliberately mixing social classes. It also provided housing

specifically for the aged and the infirm. In this is reflected the social goals of Toynbee Hall and later Hull House – the idea of bringing upper-class residents into the inner city to mix socially with people of different income levels and social needs. The ultimate goal was to build tolerance: 'to break down the barriers between classes, or at least to bring about a more kindly feeling between them' (Lewis, 1916, p. 303).

In their review of the Anglo-American suburb, Stern and Massengale (1981) describe Hampstead Garden Suburb as 'the jewel of the suburban crown', a 'complex and subtle' composition that demonstrated the legitimacy of the suburban development in England. But others have interpreted it as confusing. The layout is considered too informal, with curving streets and culs-de-sac. There is also an Edwin Lutyens component reminiscent of the City Beautiful. A vast central square is described by Peter Hall as 'dead' space that seems to be 'a dummy run for the approach to the Viceroy's Palace at New Delhi' (Hall, 2002, p. 108). These same Grand Manner qualities are present at Letchworth, and have been the basis of that community's critique as well.

In any event, the garden city model was having a clear impact on all types of planned developments in the U.S. in the decades immediately following Howard's treatise. In England, there were fifty-eight garden city-like developments underway by 1913 (Culpin, 1913). In the U.S. it was during the First World War that housing projects were beginning to show the garden city influence, coinciding with what Mumford termed the start of 'modern planning'. Because of a housing shortage in industrial towns, the U.S. government under Woodrow Wilson created a programme for building workers' housing near munitions and shipbuilding factories.

The goal was to support the war effort, but one development, Yorkship Village (later renamed Fairview) near Camden, New Jersey, has been described as 'a product of the best and brightest minds in the progressive housing, architecture, planning, and housing reform movement' (Lang, 1996, p. 143). The design inspiration was the garden city as articulated by Parker and Unwin, who were known for their ability to translate social ideals into planned communities. Yorkship Village was designed by Frederick L. Ackerman who thought of his garden village plans for wartime housing as the 'more rational and more humble' counterparts to the Columbian Exposition of 1893. Rather than magnificence, the goal was simply 'better conditions of living' (Ackerman, 1918, p. 86).

Housing advocates, who were influential at the time, sought an improvement in the living environments of industrial workers. In England, where housing projects influenced by garden city ideals and intended for industrial workers flourished in the 1910s and 1920s, this took the form initially of suburban limited-dividend housing developments like Hampstead Garden Suburb. The estates were essentially picturesque row houses in carefully planned arrangements that produced a very different environment from conventional working-class housing. They succeeded

at positioning high-density housing in such a way that, instead of the old terraced housing and long rows of identical dwellings, had a village-like feel (Lang, 1996). Government sponsorship was critical. The London County Council (LCC), whose work was directly influenced by Howard and Unwin, built a series of transit-linked housing estates for the working classes between 1900 and 1914, such as Totterdown Fields (1903–1909) and Norbury (1906–1910).

These developments had an effect on American planners, largely through the dissemination of garden city material in the main journal of the American Institute of Architects. Under sponsorship of editor Charles Whitaker, Frederick L. Ackerman made an excursion to England in 1917 to photograph and document new garden city developments, and these were subsequently published in the *AIA Journal*. Through lobbying by both Whitaker and Ackerman, garden city planning subsequently made its way into U.S. federal housing policy. Two federal agencies, the Emergency Fleet Corporation and the U.S. Housing Corporation, were involved with the construction of thousands of units of wartime housing in more than 150 developments and towns.

Direct involvement in the construction of planned communities was abruptly ended in 1919, largely because U.S. government involvement was deemed too

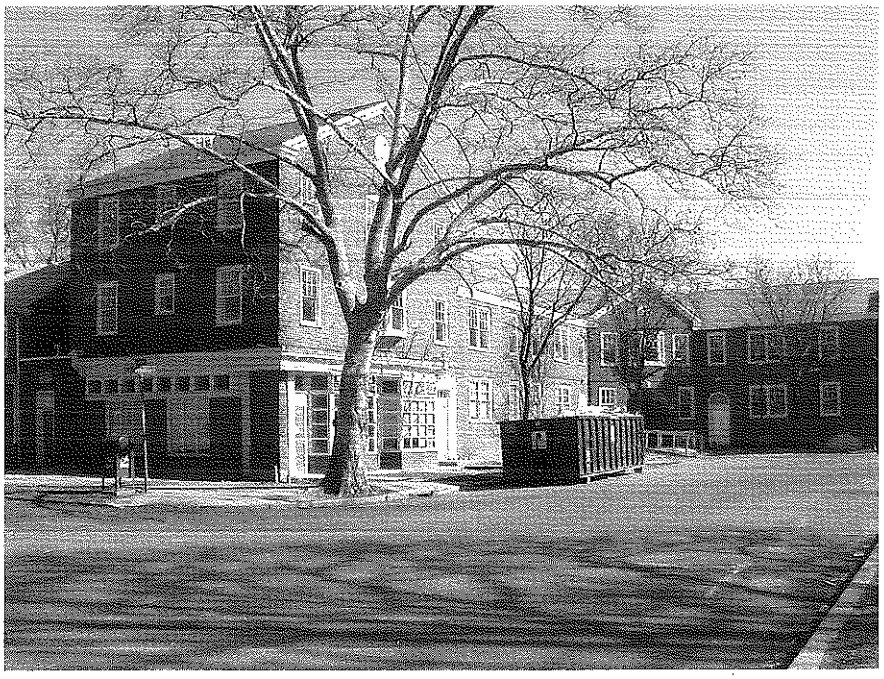


Figure 6.8. Mixed commercial and residential uses at Yorkship Square, Yorkship Village. (*Photograph*: Sandy Sorlien)

socialist. A handful of high quality garden city-like communities were constructed, totalling 25,000 housing units (Jackson, 1985), but the federal government complained that they were of too high a quality (Scott, 1969). Since private housing development was not paying this kind of attention to community-building, it is not surprising that the federal government was unhappy with the way these quality, planned communities made the rest of private housing look (Lang, 1996). For example, in Bridgeport, Connecticut and Wilmington, Delaware, housing was provided within walking distance of industrial sites and neighbourhood services. The designs were modified picturesque, with irregular street layouts, Sittesque enclosure and attention to the street vista. There were public spaces, a central village green with commercial areas and community facilities that together formed a quality living environment that few industrial workers could dream of at the time. The planners paid attention to mixing income levels by providing a range of housing types, from clustered row houses and apartment buildings to single-family housing. At Yorkship Village, the housing was arranged in 243 different groups consisting of 27 housing types in 70 combinations (Stern and Massengale, 1981). The neighbourhood unit concept conceived by settlement housing leaders like Jacob Riis, Jane Addams and Mary Simkhovitch, and later articulated more explicitly by William Drummond and then Clarence Perry, was also present in Yorkship Village.

The next phase in planned community culture with direct links to garden cities was the work undertaken by the Regional Planning Association of America. Their new community ventures, many of them planned and designed by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, produced some of the most well-known planned communities in the U.S. Their first was Sunnyside Gardens in Queens. In 1924, Clarence Stein, a self-described 'disciple' of Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin, suggested to Alexander M. Bing, a wealthy developer, that he fund the building of a garden city there. Four years later they created Radburn, less a garden city than Sunnyside Gardens but significantly more influential. In either case, the garden city ideal was severely compromised because, according to Stein, 'the purchase of the property could not be financed quickly enough to prevent the land being subdivided and thrown into the speculative market' (Stein, 1951, p. 21).

Yet these American versions of garden city ideals were innovative and instructive. At Sunnyside, Stein and Wright developed 'the theoretical basis of land and community planning' that they subsequently applied to Radburn, N.J., Chatham Village outside Pittsburgh, the Greenbelt Towns, and Baldwin Hills in Los Angeles. Sunnyside Gardens was developed by a limited dividend company organized by Bing in 1924, and consisted of 1200 housing units on 56 acres, constructed between 1924 and 1928. The site was convenient for workers, linked by rapid transit to Manhattan, and ultimately successful at proving what Bing

and other garden city advocates wanted to prove – that development according to sound planning principles could be not only economically viable but could also provide residents with open, green spaces without public subsidy. They drew from Raymond Unwin and his famous 'Nothing Gained by Overcrowding' doctrine that showed that open spaces – called 'green commons' – could be preserved at block centres with no additional cost per lot. They were also able to show that garden city principles could be adapted to a dense urban grid.

Again Sunnyside Gardens succeeded at the deliberate mixing of housing unit types for reasons of social integration. There, the integration was achieved by making the block rather than the individual lot the unit of development. Within this framework, single-family housing sat next to two-family residences and apartment buildings. A possible source for this innovation was Port Sunlight, which used an array of eclectic styles to build rows of houses that could barely be delimited one from another, transforming rows of cottages into streets of mansions (Creese, 1967). Planned community designers knew that the merger of housing types required the right streetscape – cohesive, with a close relationship between building and street. Stein's approach at Sunnyside Gardens in the 1920s was to create combinations of rows of single-family, two-family and multi-family dwellings, which, he claimed in his book *Toward New Towns for America*, did not cause 'social difficulties' (Stein, 1951. p. 35). The social integration goals at Radburn were the same.

It is significant that Stein perceived no demonstrable problem of social incompatibility. He wrote, 'In spite of the speculative operators' fear of such indiscriminate grouping, and the zoners' preoccupation in keeping dwellings of similar types together, we found this did not cause sales resistance'. Their success with overriding the tendency of zoning to require strict segregation was due to the fact that the land was zoned industrial rather than residential. Therefore, said Stein, 'we were free to design for community and aesthetic objectives' (Stein, 1951, p. 30).

Figure 6.9. A comparison of the planned communities system of streets and a conventional system, one requiring policing, the other providing safe, inner block paths. (*Source*: Clarence Stein, *Toward New Towns for America*, 1951)

Radburn, which was intended to be a 'complete garden city' for 25,000, was unluckily started just prior to the stock market crash of 1929. Its principal backer, Alexander Bing's City Housing Corporation, was financially ruined shortly after the crash. In the attempt to follow Howard's ideas more closely, Radburn was supposed to be surrounded by a greenbelt and to include industry – a town meant for both living and working as Howard intended. These basic garden city ideas had to be dropped, and Stein concluded that new towns required active government involvement, since a private corporation has 'only a gambling chance' of succeeding (Stein, 1951, p. 67).

Aside from the financial innovation needed to make the building of a garden city in the American context work, Radburn was an attempt to work out the problem of the automobile. In so doing, its main design significance was the development of 'The Radburn Idea' as Stein called it: the superblock (Stein, 1951, p. 38). There were previous examples. Clarence Stein noted that superblocks were built by the Dutch in Nieue Amsterdam (New York) as early as 1660, and that the cul-de-sac was prevalent in early American colonial villages. The superblock could be found in Cambridge and Longwood, Massachusetts even in the early nineteenth century. The success of culs-de-sac was demonstrated at New Earswick in England, where they were used to encourage build-out on irregularly shaped lots. Culs-de-sac were also sensitively handled at Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Separation of different means of communication (i.e., separation of pedestrian and automobile traffic) had already been worked out by Olmsted in Central Park in the mid-nineteenth century. According to Dal Co, the 'real model for Radburn' was Olmsted's Plan of Central Park, since it was there that the separation of traffic was introduced in the American consciousness (Dal Co, 1979, p. 241). At Radburn, the solution to the unsafe environment created by the automobile was a separation of the pedestrian and automobile, creating superblocks of houses turned inward, away from the street. Variations on this idea are longstanding. For example, limited vehicular access to service lanes behind rows of houses, with parks and sidewalks between house fronts, was seen in Louisville, Kentucky in the nineteenth century (Arendt, 1999). Other translations of the basic idea include Stein and Wright's Chatham Village near Pittsburgh, laid out in 1931.

Following a 95 per cent drop in residential construction in the early 1930s, the federal government's attempt to restart the homebuilding industry by promoting so-called Keynesian suburbs fell far short of the planned community principles of earlier decades. Encouraged through zoning and facilitated by the freedom of the automobile, development at the periphery marched to the tune of separation and segregation. In the rare instances of planned community building, developments of the 1930s and 1940s took on a very different character from the pre-Depression era projects. FDR's Greenbelt Town Program lasted only 3 years (1935–1938), and

has been described as 'one of the most curious chapters of American urban history' (Kostof, 1991, p. 80). The programme was overtly intended to apply Howard's garden city principles, creating low-cost housing and local economic cooperatives. But by that time the translation had taken on a completely different feel from that envisioned by Unwin and Parker, with little attention given to principles of social and land-use diversity, walkability, protection from the automobile, and attention to the civic realm.

The three Greenbelt towns that were constructed, Greenbelt, Maryland (which was an adaptation of Radburn's superblock structure), Greenhills, Ohio, and Greendale, Wisconsin, all have the look and feel of a more conventional suburban development. In addition to these projects, Stein's plan for Hillside Homes, a self-contained arrangement of five-storey apartment buildings around open courtyards, was an early Public Works Administration project that won the admiration of Catherine Bauer. Though it integrated commercial and recreational activities, its modernist-style housing blocks created a feeling of 'towers in a park' efficiency and urban disconnection characteristic of later urban renewal and high-rise public housing schemes.

Figure 6.10. Plan of Radburn, New Jersey, showing houses facing inward onto parks that connect throughout the development. (*Source*: Clarence Stein, *Toward New Towns for America*, 1951)

Baldwin Hills Village, developed in 1941, is another adaptation of Stein's 'Radburn Idea', this time applied in Los Angeles. Here the break with traditional urban diversity is complete – superblock, complete separation of pedestrian and auto, and 'park as community heart and backbone', all of which was crystallized into a 'functional unity' (Stein, 1951, p. 169). From Baldwin Hills Village, there sprang numerous developments that could more generally be viewed as suburban development with a nod to garden cities. They were severely watered down, and the single-use, monolithic suburban developments that they amounted to were a far cry from Howard's, Unwin's, or even Stein's ideas about community development.

This brief overview of garden city-inspired development reflects a gradual deterioration of garden city principles. By mid-century, development in the U.S. was less about the planned community and more about unplanned suburban sprawl. At the same time, planned community developments that did continue following World War II seemed further and further removed, as a physical planning matter, from the pre-War garden city models. Two new towns of the 1960s – Reston, Virginia and Columbia, Maryland – were experiments in planned community design that seemed particularly detached. They consisted of development in small units (neighbourhoods), an emphasis on leisure amenities, and the inclusion of pedestrian paths linking residential areas and village facilities (Merlin, 1971).

Both Reston and Columbia had strong social objectives, motivated by a desire to build socially diverse, non-segregated societies. Columbia was started by James Rouse in 1967 as an 'open community' with all the right intentions. It was to house a diverse population in terms of race, income and age. It was also to be a community fully mixed in use, providing places to work, live, shop and recreate within easy proximity. In short, these developments had all the same components of the idealized planned community of the pre-World War II era, but the environment that was created turned out to be significantly different from the planned communities of the 1910s and 1920s. This can be attributed to principles of design. The later communities were products of the design, style and spatial logic of modernism. They are characterized by separation and hierarchy rather than a more fine-grained urbanism. Their buildings were designed in a dressed down style that looked as if they were all built by the same architect at the same time. And the commercial components were automobile based, so much so that they were transformed into auto-oriented strip malls by the 1990s. Jane Jacobs thought of them as antithetical to the nature of cities: 'very nice towns if you were docile and had no plans of your own', she commented (Jacobs, 1966, p. 101).

Connections

The fundamental goals of the planned community are amazingly consistent across

a number of time periods and even ideologies. Fishman has compared the urban plans of Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier and found that they shared three goals – the need to offer an alternative to the nineteenth-century city, the belief in modern technology, and the sense that communitarianism – the 'brotherhood of man' – was attainable and close at hand (Fishman, 1977, p. 10). A similar comparison of utopian ideals was made by Wilson who found essentially the same commonality among Lewis Mumford, Frank Lloyd Wright and the Resettlement Adminstration (Wilson, 1983). Translated into the physical goals of the planned community, this has meant that the need for communal facilities, civic spirit, social integration, proximity to nature, recreational facilities, public transportation, and easily accessible daily life needs have all been part and parcel of the planned community ethos.

Yet not every expression of the goal of civic spirit and the need for community facilities turned out to be a model of good urbanism. The physical manifestations presented vastly different environmental experiences. Catherine Bauer's planned community concept included mixed income, mixed use communities in the form of compact settlements, but the modernist form she advocated would not be likely to be considered a positive force in American urbanism. Industrial decentralization in post-war America brought plenty of talk about the need for the well-planned community, including a whole slew of 'scientifically analyzed' and rationally allocated components of the dispersing metropolis. But the effects could not have been more different. It may be true that mega-cities like Los Angeles were growing by 'dispersed and discrete clusters' and even nodal communities that considered the relationship between residence and workplace, but that hardly guaranteed a noteworthy contribution to American urbanism (Hise, 1996, p. 261).

James Rouse also exemplified the common planned community ideals of civic spirit and functional communitarianism. Rouse regretted that 'there is little or no physical definition of community', but instead 'an irrational scattering of the institutions . . . with the result that people live in a kind of negative, impersonal, depersonalized massiveness' (Christensen, 1977, p. 299). This statement could have been made by Jane Addams, Raymond Unwin, or even Jane Jacobs. But while the frustrations and goals were the same, the physical manifestation of identical principles has taken very different forms. Reston, Virginia has virtually identical principles to New Urbanism, yet the look, feel and experience of it is not something New Urbanists would seek to emulate. Why is that so? What makes planned communities qualitatively different? The discussion that follows, first under 'Connections' and then 'Conflicts', attempts to sort this larger, difficult question out.

Many planned communities were established in response to the conditions of existing cities that were found to be unacceptable and either too difficult or too

intrinsically flawed to change. In Europe, initial responses to the industrial city took the form of long, impersonal straight streets replacing the more intricate, enclosed urbanism of the medieval city. There were compelling reasons of public hygiene and traffic flow, but the impersonality of the changes was oppressive to many. It is one reason why the messages of Sitte, Howard and others who promoted the intimacy of the complete planned community were taken seriously.

Later, suburbanization suffered the same problems of monotony and impersonality. Virtually all garden city advocates disliked the suburbs as much as they deplored the congested industrial city. Even before the automobile had significant effect, Parker and Unwin were denouncing the idea that housing should stand 'alone in the middle of its own little plot' (Creese, 1992, p. 190). Once the automobile opened up suburban land conversion at a previously unknown rate and scale in the 1920s, investors cavorted with public utility operators to encourage expedient forms of suburbanization – developments that lacked coherence, diversity and a public realm. The financial gain of the subdivision was dependent on large land holdings that, for the most part, were not organized as communities. In the U.S., this situation was overwhelming, but the idea of the planned community as antidote never died.

Beyond the idea of communal objectives (interpreted as social control and thus problematic), what is the basis for the continued relevance of the planned community in American urbanism? One basis could be the innovation of their designs. Intimately scaled buildings, seamlessly integrated housing types, ways of handling traffic, public spaces with charm and pedestrian focus – all can be regarded as valuable lessons in civic design appropriate for American urbanism. And the success of design principles implemented in the planned community can be easily assessed. Compared to interventions in existing cities where a myriad of factors are already at work, planned communities are more transparent when it comes to understanding what has been effective and what has not, what conditions seem to correlate with success and non-success, what design principles seem to produce the best human environments.

Treatment of the automobile was particularly important in this respect. An early lesson was provided by Olmsted who had insisted that, in the suburban planned community, 'all that favours movement should be subordinated' (Rybczynski, 1999, p. 292), a sentiment echoed by contemporary urbanists who have emphasized the importance of 'slow urbanism' (Moule, 2002). Many planned communities from the 1920s onwards shared the goal of accommodating the automobile but not allowing it to dominate at the expense of urban quality. Thus the way in which parking lots were integrated in Country Club District, or garages incorporated in Chatham Village, offer very valuable models of automobile accommodation that keep its disruptive tendencies in check.

The fact that design quality did not translate into a rejection of high density is also significant. Some suburban planned communities were able to achieve extraordinarily high densities – Saltaire housed 90 people per acre – but still put residents in close proximity to the surrounding countryside. One could argue that it is only in the context of the planned community that such a relationship could be worked out.

The planned community will only be valued, however, if there can be an acceptance of the legitimacy of peripheral development. It will be necessary to think in terms of decentralized urbanism rather than suburban escapism. This is not the natural inclination. Ever since Sinclair Lewis' *Babbitt* (1922), a commentary on the middle-class suburb and its social expectations, the intellectual *avant-garde* has ridiculed suburbs for being sterile, trivial and elitist. Overcoming this will require a keener appreciation of the examples where planned communities were able to achieve socially justifiable objectives, or where the quality of the planning and design is worth studying, or where it was possible to achieve social integration, good design, access to daily life needs and housing for the working classes in one settlement.

Some would view the mere attention to design inherent in the planned community as important to emulate – in a world of market-driven approaches to urbanism, the conscious sitting, arrangement, and planned form of all elements of human habitation can seem inspiring. It has been argued that it was the self-consciousness of suburban design – what Fishman calls 'suburban style' – that made the suburban idea take off, not Jeffersonian 'antiurbanism that had somehow lain dormant in the American urban soul' (Fishman, 1987, p. 121). Applied holistically and made consistent with urbanism, the appeal is potent.

Attention to design extended far. The focus on detail found in a planned community like Shaker Heights, where the Van Sweringen brothers controlled everything from roof lines to pavement colours, and where dark coloured mortar could not be used without written consent (Stilgoe, 1988, p. 245), can, from one perspective, be viewed as something positive. It is a recognition of the impact individual decisions can have on the whole community. When compared to the magnitude of inattention Americans have been putting up with in their own landscapes, the attention to detail seems gratifying. The unfortunate downside is that strong attention to design quality correlates with affluence. This essential dilemma – between design quality and affordability – lies at the heart of much of the criticism of planned communities.

It is also possible to assess the planned community in design terms by looking at the doctrine of appropriateness, which the planned community was often good at responding to. Mumford called it 'the element of charm', and used it to distinguish good design from bad (Fishman, 2002, p. 65). A review of Hampstead Garden

Suburb published in *Town and Country Planning* (Rasmussen, 1957) reflected on the principle of appropriateness and the ability of Unwin to recognize it. The example given was of the seeming divergence between enclosure and open space – between, in essence, town and country. Unwin successfully included both. A similar success had to do with the hierarchy of street types Unwin and Park advocated, ranging in width, pavement type and purpose, depending on varying contexts within the community.

One of the most controversial aspects of the planned community is the notion of self-containment – the organization of human settlement into discrete units. Even if the planned community is constructed over a period of time, the incrementalism that may exist is subsumed by an overarching, holistic conceptualization of form. This implies not only internal coherence but external delineation.

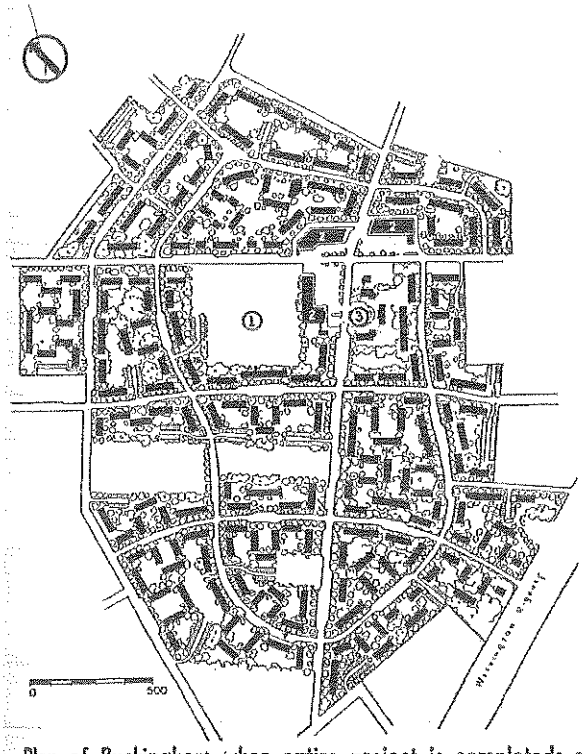
From the perspective of the planned community advocate, self-containment is simply a condition of thinking organically. Unwin, in his quest for harmonic relationships among urban elements, likened city design to William Morris wallpaper (Creese, 1967), but there was a distinct advantage to thinking in these terms that was not limited to neat harmonies that looked good on paper. The mark of a good town design, Arendt (1999) states, has to do with the clarity, comprehensibility, and functionality of the design. Thinking holistically meant that any one element of urbanism was less likely to dominate – not the streets, not the buildings, not the recreational spaces. Specialization could undermine the principle asset of the planned community, i.e., its ability to approach the city as a system of integrated conditions that require balance.

The search for organic integration stimulated a certain innovativeness in planned community design. The critique that the planned community was packaged and lacked innovation cannot be universally applied, for it was in the context of holistic community planning that the search for new ideas about what the best human settlement forms and patterns could be took place. Groupings of dwelling units, mix of housing type, the relation between two- and three-dimensional design, the incorporation of neighbourhood greens, the handling of cars, the creation of new types of streets – all of these were explored fully by planned community advocates. Holism motivated the emphasis on street pictures and changing viewpoints, in turn forcing the designer to think in terms of context – building placement, typology, relation to other buildings and to the street.

Somewhat ironically, it was the quality of being self-contained that gave the planned community the quality of being urban, since self-containment implied the need for internal diversity. The underlying logic of many planned communities, in contrast to unplanned settlement, was one of creating diversity through design. But it was a controlled diversity. This was brought out in a recent analysis of Forest Hills Gardens, which detailed how the laying out of all the elements of community

– paving, sidewalks, landscape, utilities – preceded the marketing for individual houses. This practice not only positioned the public realm ahead of the private, but helped to establish a 'comprehensive aesthetic' that elevated standards for quality and character and allowed diversity in design which may have had some effect on social diversity (Klaus, 2002, p. 165).

This control was necessary because promoters of the planned community lacked faith in the ability of cities to emerge well on their own, especially when controlled by land markets and government regulation. Any semblance of order or convenience found in an unplanned place was, Unwin (1909, p. 2) believed, due purely to chance. It was not thought possible that, in modern, twentieth-century society, the order and convenience of the planned community could occur spontaneously and naturally. It was the planner's job to rise above mere aggregations of people and produce something, consciously and explicitly, of beauty. Unwin believed that, in



Plan of Buckingham when entire project is completed; a neighborhood unit of 2,000 families almost completely self-contained. "Through-traffic" is shunted around the community. Local services and recreational requirements are provided at points of greatest convenience and safety. 1. Proposed School Site and Playground; 2. Shops; 3. Community Center.

Figure 6.11. Plan of Buckingham, Virginia, outside of Arlington. Designed by Henry Wright and admired by Clarence Perry because it was a 'completely self-contained' neighbourhood unit for 2,000 families that 'shunted' through-traffic. It also included a school site and playground, shops and community centre. (Source: Clarence A. Perry, *Housing for the Machine Age*, 1939)

an earlier time, there existed very different impulses that acted as a 'natural force' to produce towns of beauty 'where additions were made so gradually that each house was adapted to its place, and assimilated into the whole before the next was added' (Unwin, 1909, p. 14). In the twentieth century, Unwin argued that the traditional impulses of city building had been lost, and only the consciously planned community could get them back.

The planned community was an expedient way to achieve quality – a human settlement that is simultaneously beautiful, efficient, ordered, healthful, and able to instil reverence among its inhabitants. For lack of a better phrase, it is the physical manifestation of *pride of place*, a self-consciousness about community building that advocates found difficult to replicate in existing cities. It parallels the sense of pride that the Laws of the Indies attempted to regulate by forbidding the entry of Indians into their new towns until they were 'complete': '. . . so that when the Indians see them they will be filled with wonder and will realize that the Spaniards are settling there permanently and not temporarily' (Reps, 1965, p. 30). The history of the American suburb has been approached as a history of how people came to recognize their communities as distinctive places (Schaffer, 1988), but the planned community consciously sought this recognition from the start. The question is whether community self-consciousness necessarily implies exclusion, or whether it can be viewed as something more positive.

The act of 're-tribalizing' (Ellin, 1996), replicating by finite, complete units, is a very different proposal from growth by extension and spread. Unplanned sprawl is one basis of contrast, but as an ideology, a clearer distinction can be made with the linear city. Metropolitanism was more a result of agglomeration economies than deliberate planning for largeness, but the lineal city of Ciudad Lineal devised by Arturo Soria y Mata in the late nineteenth century was intended to be an infinitely expandable urban form. The lineal city extended along transportation routes in a way that ran counter to the notion of expansion by internally focused, discrete, cohesive units. The incomplete application of this concept in the form of strip malls and arterial based development can not be blamed on Soria's conception, but the distinction can nevertheless be made.

Why not, as Catherine Bauer advocated in 1934, control decentralization in such a way that outward growth is organized into complete, socially and economically diverse communities? This could be accomplished in more than one way. Savannah's system of cell-like expansion by plots of housing and public buildings clustered around a public square can be every bit as admired as Perry's neighbourhood unit paradigm as a method of organized decentralization. Both claim the idea of self-containment, centrality of functions, and the need for spatial definition.

It has been argued that growth by unplanned metropolitan enlargement has a serious downside – dismal environmental conditions, long commutes, stress

on community facilities, and various other incivilities that Jane Jacobs, according to Mumford (1968), chose to ignore. The idea has a long history – that once a city reaches a certain size, it is time to colonize a new one, not just keep expanding the old one. Suburban development has evolved under this logic, but not always in the manner of the planned community. Suburban sprawl is more an embodiment of capitalism, while the planned community was often conceived as a rebuttal to it.

For over a century Americans have been experiencing first hand the implications of growing by spread rather than by organized unit. The peripheral, unplanned, subdivision growth that was already occurring in the nineteenth century was easily degraded. And the very qualities that people were attempting to find at the periphery – quiet, closeness to nature – were undermined as the popularity of the idea spread. It was the 'tragedy of the commons', and planned community proponents were inspired to avert it. What they were asserting was that the degradation intrinsic to unplanned spread could only by avoided through the mechanism of the complete planned community.

Containment and organized decentralization implied certain rules about urbanism. In many cases it warranted a nucleus of some sort, since the centre could have symbolic, civic, social, cultural and economic value. For Ruskin, the centre was the public version of the sacred family home. Perry's neighbourhood unit scheme embodied this, as only neighbourhood institutions of public value were to be located at the centre. Unwin's *Town Planning in Practice* devoted a chapter to urban centres, tracing the Greek agora, the Roman forum, and other examples of 'the splendour' of centrally positioned public buildings and meeting places (Unwin, 1909, p. 175). In this there is an affinity with the City Beautiful, although central spaces in the planned community had a very different scale. Unwin recognized that re-creation of spaces like the Roman forum was 'hardly possible,' but used them to emphasize his point that a plan – even at the community scale – needs a centre.

In addition, the containment aspect of a planned community was tied to some notion of surrounding, boundary-defining green space. This was true of company towns like Pullman, where the countryside was the primary tool of containment. It did not have to be belt-like. Henry Vaughan Lanchester's 1908 proposal for green areas wedged between urban spaces was used to confine the lateral spread of development and got a boost when Thomas Mawson reprinted it in his 1911 book *Civic Art*. But the more accepted idea was Howard's permanent green belt of open and agricultural land encircling the city, a notion that was to become part of the British new towns scheme in the 1940s, and growth control in the U.S in the 1980s and 1990s.

The virtues of boundaries were extolled by John Ruskin in *Sesame and Lilies*. As later conceived by Unwin, boundaries which could be formed by boulevards, playing fields, or belts of parkland served two purposes. First, they ensured

the careful use 'of every yard of building space' within the boundary. Second, a boundary theoretically puts a stop to sprawl, and Unwin was as aware of this in 1909 as we are today. The way he put it, boundaries prevent 'that irregular fringe of half-developed suburb and half-spoiled country which form a hideous and depressing girdle around modern growing towns' (Unwin, 1909, p. 154). Potentially, a boundary functions as a constraint, engenders a tightening up of development and motivates more careful planning. Perry went so far as to view the 'menace' of the automobile as 'a blessing in disguise' because, by creating boundaries of traffic arterials, it made self-containment in the form of the neighbourhood unit more logical and necessary (Perry, 1929, p. 31).

Externally, containment implied that roads linking self-contained communities should not be allowed to swell with peripheral development, but instead should remain as linkages only. Once established, they should retain their quality as parkways – roads freed from development pressure because that development was to be channelled into the adjacent planned communities. To do otherwise would undermine the integrity and viability of the planned community. This is one of the most pervasive ideas of American urbanism, and is found in the work of Frederick Law Olmsted, the City Beautiful, the European garden cities, and Benton MacKaye, among others.

The contained, bounded settlement has also been thought of as having a particular size, beyond which it loses its organic quality and its ability to control the more destructive impulses of human development. Boundedness is the Aristotelian concept of the city (Fishman, 2002), and it implies that there exists a proper city size. What that size was supposed to be is debatable, but there are some interesting regularities. Leonardo da Vinci, Ebenezer Howard and Jane Jacobs all used a population of 30,000 to define the optimal self-governing district (Mumford, 1968). Tony Garnier's Une Cité Industrielle was designed for a population of 35,000. At a smaller scale, the rule of 10,000 has been used often. James Buckingham's model city of Victoria was built for a population of 10,000, as were Tugwell's Greenbelt towns. Christopher Alexander advocated for communities of 5,000–10,000, beyond which 'individuals have no effective voice' (Alexander *et al.*, 1977, p. 71). Almost 20 years after its groundbreaking, the first garden city, Letchworth, had a population of 10,313, and one observer declared that it had reached the status of 'normal community' (Purdom, 1921, p. 27). Perry's neighbourhood unit was meant for less than this number, but later uses of the neighbourhood unit, such as in the British new towns, were based on a population of 10,000 (Goss, 1961). New Urbanists today use the same number to define the optimal population for a neighbourhood, as does Leon Krier, with his notion of the urban village (Krier, 1998).

The integration of non-residential elements was deliberate and embraced as an important component of the planned community. In some planned communities,

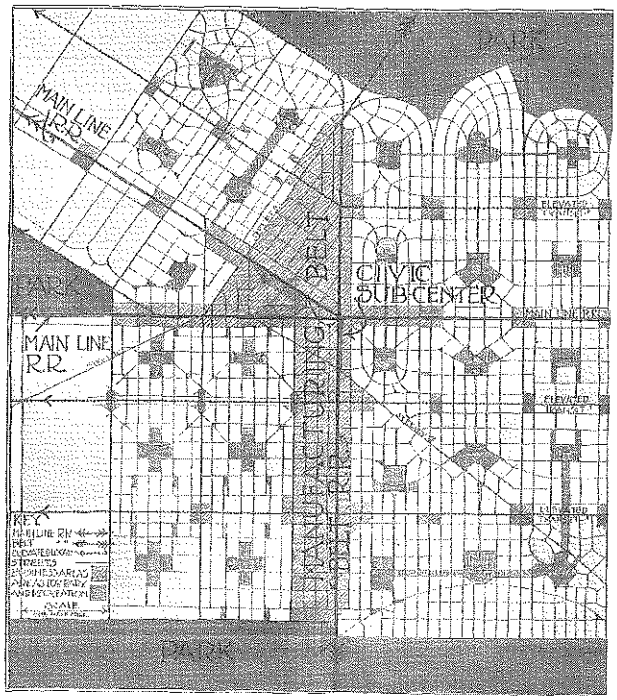


Figure 6.12. An original transit oriented development. William Drummond proposed this neighbourhood unit plan in the 1913 City Club of Chicago competition intended to 'stimulate interest in the more intelligent planning of the outlying portions of large cities'. (*Source*: Alfred B. Yeomans, *City Residential Land Development*, 1916)

commercial areas were less celebrated and more a matter of necessity, for example at Roland Park, where commercial buildings were relegated to one block and given the same building typology and style as the residential units in an effort to lesson their impact on the intended park like character (Stern and Massengale, 1981). Yet even developments that were mostly residential paid attention to the spatial logic of accessibility by positioning the planned community in proximity to industrial sites and existing community facilities, as at Bridgeport, Connecticut. However, the merit of addressing the service needs of decentralized self-contained communities has been downplayed since the facilities and services being provided were exclusively for local residents. Some view the provision of such services as merely facilitating the exclusivity and separation of the upper and middle classes, at least initially. These were not services that contributed to urban complexity in a way that would have pleased Jane Jacobs. Still, a broader view would make note of the connection between facility provision and shared, collective space as a beneficial social goal, even if one is referring to the Central Square of Lake Forest or the shops of Shaker Heights.

Self-containment has also been intertwined with the concept of the neighbourhood unit, which became the logical building block of the planned community. It was essential to Howard, used in Forest Hills Gardens, developed more explicitly by William Drummond in his design for the City Club's 1913 contest

(Johnson, 2002), taken further by Perry in 1923, and applied to Radburn in 1929 by Stein and Wright. Perry's analysis of Forest Hills Gardens in which he identified five factors of good neighbourhoods, is revealing for how closely it connects to the self-contained planned community concept in general: clear boundaries, a connected street system that promotes internal accessibility, land uses that support community functions, a central area with community facilities, and neighbourhood parks and recreation. Within cities, the conceptualization of self-contained units as a basis for urban organization extends way before Perry. Leon Battista Alberti's Renaissance ideas about the provision of recreational spaces for each district of the city can be viewed as a kind of neighbourhood planning statement (Alberti, 1485). Lewis Mumford saw the neighbourhood as an organic, natural outcome of urban growth, naturally occurring in great cities like Venice and Paris. Perry's neighbourhood unit, in other words, was a restatement of a centuries-old way of thinking about

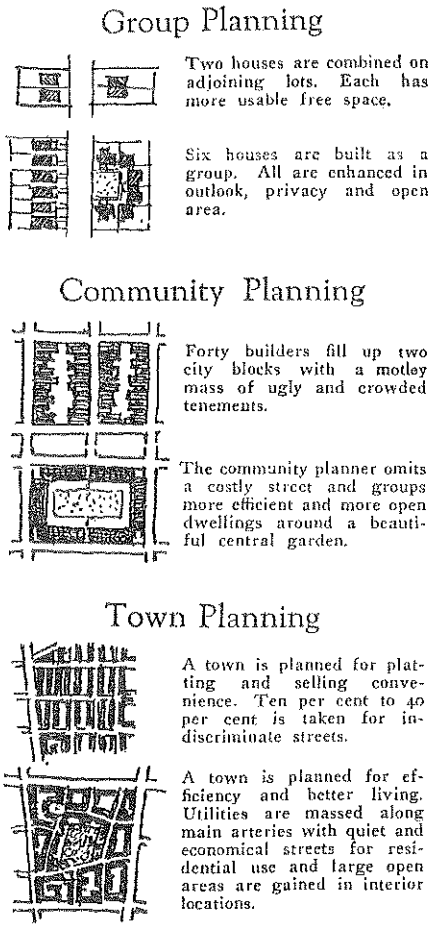


Figure 6.13. Planning at three levels, emphasizing the necessity of orderly plans and grouped housing for maximum efficiency and convenience. (*Sources*: Henry Wright's article in *Survey Graphic*, 1925, entitled 'From Roads to Good Houses', and reprinted in Karl B. Lohmann, *Principles of City Planning*, 1931)

urban arrangement. Perhaps this was a factor in the rapid acceptance of Perry's neighbourhood ideal. As implemented at Radburn and Baldwin Hills Village, it quickly became standard planning dogma, promoted by planning textbooks (Dahir, 1947), government regulations, chambers of commerce, and social service agencies starting in the 1930s (Patricios, 2002).

It is important to note that the planned community was almost never seen to exist in isolation – it was seen as part of a hierarchical system that extended in two directions. Internally, there were neighbourhood units, superblocks and culs-de-sac, as at Radburn, and externally, there were neighbourhoods, villages and communities, as at Columbia, Maryland. Howard's garden city diagram embodied these linkages on a conceptual level – a hierarchy consisting of a central city of 58,000 surrounded by six satellite cities of 32,000. Radburn had its own system, consisting of enclaves, blocks, superblocks, neighbourhoods, towns and regions, all nested and grouped to form the next higher level in the hierarchy (Patricios, 2002). It was this nested hierarchy of the self-contained planned community that connected it to a regionalist planning culture. The regionalists recognized that the more development spread outward in the form of unplanned growth, or, to use Patrick Geddes' phrase, in the form of a 'conurbation', the more the healthy proximity between people and nature was compromised. What was needed was for 'component parts' to be combined in 'coherent containers' (Mumford, 1968). Theoretical justification was not hard to find. Multinucleation was supported by the economic logic of Christaller's central place theory, and by R.D. McKenzie's hierarchical system of smaller cities grouped around larger ones (McKenzie, 1933).

As with planned communities more generally, it is where the self-containment of the neighbourhood overstepped its bounds to include an effect on social control that the self-contained, hierarchical neighbourhood unit became problematic. Critics like Jane Jacobs and Herbert Gans based their critiques of the neighbourhood unit on the notion of social control, which, at various times, was an overt goal of neighbourhood proponents. The problematic nature of these social objectives as they materialized in the redevelopment era was obvious: neat arrangements of living environments according to explicit, mindless ideas about healthy neighbourhood social structure. In fact, neighbourhood units and superblocks applied to public housing during the 1950s and 1960s had little to do with existing social structures (Moore, 1969).

Now, the self-contained planned community is sometimes seen as an anachronistic form of escape not unlike previous forms of suburban development. Self-segregation reflects a deep alienation with 'the urban-industrial world' that the middle-class suburbanite helped to create (Fishman, 1987). But the change from peripheral settlement that contributed to the localization of life to suburban development that disregarded this completely might be seen as a fundamentally different and more radical break. Suburban development in the form of the planned

community had an enclave status, but at the very least, it functioned properly for the residents who inhabited it. Within reasonable distance, they could enjoy the main functions of daily life – shopping, schooling and civic and social engagement. Ever since the independently planned shopping centre became viable – demonstrated during the interwar decades by places like Suburban Square in Philadelphia and Hampton Village in St. Louis – shopping and planned residential development became separated (Longstreth, 1997). Conventional suburban development that was not in the form of the planned community therefore excluded daily functions. It worked to spread out, compartmentalize and individualize daily life in a way that was categorically different from what the planned community had been trying to achieve.

The value of the planned community is only appreciated if viewed in light of this contemporary, unplanned suburban growth. When compared to the post-World War II spread of edge cities and 'technoburbs' (Fishman, 1987) – where industry and commerce followed residential growth in a way that was not well planned – then the planned community, even if peripherally located, seemed to have something significant to offer. It was the lack of any viable, pedestrian level commercial function in suburban development that constituted the main difference between orderly decentralized growth in the form of planned communities and single-use, homogeneous, unplanned sprawl. The contemporary reality of sprawl is so far removed from the idea of a compact, diverse and walkable community organized around a coherent centre that even the unplanned streetcar suburb seems exemplary in comparison. Warner (1962) lamented the physical fragmentation of community life in streetcar suburbs in which facilities and services were separated, but in nineteenth-century Boston these elements were still within walking distance. Residents were forced to construct their own communities out of a spatially dispersed set of destinations, but that dispersion seems miniscule compared to today's sprawling and fragmented settlement reality.

Taking this same point of view allows communities like Shaker Heights to be valued as precursors of the transit oriented development, not as socially unjust models of exclusion. It requires a re-interpretation of social justice, such that the provision of a sidewalk and a transit stop take on social value in a way that would never have been imagined in a previous time period. And, if the form of development can be valued in terms of human functionality, it may be possible to overcome the once dominant social goals that we now find objectionable. Whether the planned community can be incorporated in the historical lineage of American urbanism rests on whether the overt social purpose of exclusivity can be extracted.

One problem for the planned community has been its focus on relating physical and social goals. In an earlier time, the overt social agenda of the planned community advocate was a more accepted ideology, although it always stood in

Figure 6.14. Baldwin Hills Village, 'showing the contrast between the development according to the Radburn Idea and the typical speculative development to the north and south'. (*Source*: Clarence Stein, *Toward New Towns for America*, 1951)

stark contrast to the other basis of American settlement – what Sam Bass Warner, Jr. calls 'privatism' or the pursuit of individual wealth (Warner, 1987). In the era of the planned communities of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, privatism was tempered by a strong insistence on communal objectives. This was pronounced in the garden city model of development, where the landlord and the community were one and the same.

Where the planned community was simply responding to the associative needs of individuals rather than attempting to engineer socially, the critique that planned communities were mostly about social engineering is tempered. That is, where the ideal of community was a dependent rather than an independent variable, where extant community existed and was looking for a design conducive to it, the planned community could not really claim to be engineering something. There are examples of this. Klaus (2002) compared the early residents of Forest Hills Gardens to those of Celebration, Florida, finding similar faith in the communitarian abilities of the planned community. Both groups of residents saw themselves, at least initially, as pioneers looking for a way to nurture the communitarian spirit. They were, in other words, predisposed.

In one sense, the early planned community advocate should be appreciated for even getting the social implications of human settlement on the table. The broad-minded thinking of Geddes, Mumford and Henry Wright, in which the sociological

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implications of planned communities was taken into account, is now standard, but was originally considered 'crack-pot' (Churchill, 1994, p. 247). The problem was that planned communities, as with the neighbourhood unit, became proposals for an alternative social structure. In a manner similar to City Beautiful ideology, there were social and moralistic overtones. Yet it is important to note that Howard's notion of the social community was based on collective ownership, not on specific physical forms (Ward, 2002).

Thus the same arguments used to justify disassociating the City Beautiful from its rhetoric apply here. The case was made that Beaux Arts Classicism can be appreciated without needing to endorse absolutism. Similarly, the domestic ideals of mid-nineteenth-century writers who made the suburban ideal popular, like Catherine Beecher (*A Treatise on Domestic Economy*) and Andrew Jackson Downing (*Cottage Residences*), and who glorified the individuality of home and the sanctity of family life, do not need to be adhered to in order to appreciate the utility of the planned communities they helped to inspire. In reality, some motivations behind the planned community will seem valid and even honourable, while others will not. The culture of the planned community has always been one of mixed messages and motivations. For example, residents of streetcar suburbs resisted annexation because, on the one hand, they saw the importance of localized communal association, but on the other they had a desire to remain free of poor immigrants (Warner, 1962). To the extent that the first does not *necessarily* require exclusion, it is possible to see a significant difference between these motivations.

American urbanism must find a way to appreciate and legitimize the design achievements of planned communities in a way that is free of 'bourgeois anxieties'. There can be little other recourse since the anxieties many earlier planned community residents felt amounted to a hatred of people unlike themselves (Fishman, 1987, p. 154). One way to counter this is to work decisively to ensure there is a social mix where none existed before. Social mixing occurred 'naturally' in pre-industrial cities. With the onset of industrialism, provision of a range of housing unit types became a matter of necessity – the company town of Lowell had to include housing for single women while Kohler had to include housing for single men. Garden city-inspired development may have included flats for single tenants, bungalows for the elderly, and cottages for the middle class. In Bournville George Cadbury combined low-density housing and smaller detached housing for workers, and Pullman provided a range of housing types. The bourgeois of early suburban enclaves often provided housing for all incomes if only for the purpose of housing their employees, or later, to house workers in industries that had moved out to the periphery.

But planned communities had the option of providing or not providing, specifically, for social integration. The planned communities selected here often

did provide for a diverse social structure by carefully mixing a variety of housing types. The deliberateness of providing for a range of social needs is important to emphasize since there is a general perception that the planned community has always been exclusively for the wealthy. Histories of planned neighbourhoods in particular tend to stress social homogeneity as a prevailing idiom (see Banerjee and Baer, 1984). It is true that entities as entrenched as the Federal Housing Administration attached restrictive covenants to promote social homogeneity in various types of planned developments. But despite the policies of the FHA, the importance of social heterogeneity was in fact recognized, and was actively being promulgated by many planned community advocates.

In dense urban environments like Manhattan, social mixing could be achieved through the provision of quality public spaces, and Olmsted's pride in accomplishing social integration in Central Park was justified. But the planned community could not engender diversity on the basis of density alone – it had to accomplish this objective more deliberately. Company towns paid attention to it for philanthropic and practical reasons, but moving beyond individual commitment to social mixing usually required governmental support. It was through public backing that planned communities like Yorkship Village were at least initially able to retain their affordability. This simple reality and the inability to effectuate it is what has most compromised the planned community ideal.

Conflicts

Whereas some will view the planned community as an embodiment of civic spirit, functionality, beauty, and plain common sense, others will see it as escapist, exclusionary, and controlling. Where one observer will see the planned community as logical and reflective of the best of human endeavour, another will see it as nothing more than an insidious quest to find the most bankable version of that elusive quality known as charm. Where some will see an efficient reliance on past urban forms, others will see repetition and expediency. Instead of branching out and devising new, more responsive city forms, some interpret the application of planned community elements as demonstration of ignorance at the multiplicity of forms available (Lynch, 1966).

The problem the planned community has is rooted in its low intensity, high order nature. Even the City Beautiful at least took the existing city as its starting point. The planned community starts with a *tabula rasa*, which can be seen as an unrealistic attempt to freeze human activity patterns. Any effort that involves the laying out of city form according to abstract principles of geometry can be interpreted as an attempt to oversimplify the true nature of cities.

Perhaps this underlies the reason why the planned community is so prone to

misapplication. It was a common complaint of garden city advocates that the term 'garden city' was being co-opted by faux garden city knock-offs. One contemporary complained that whenever there was a need to claim good planning practice the term 'garden' was tacked on. 'This confusion is serious, because the term "garden city" has a precise meaning that is possessed by no other term' wrote Purdom (1921, p. 15). But it has always been difficult for the exquisitely conceived planned community to retain control over its design. The seriousness of this problem lies in the piecemeal extraction of elements, epitomized by suburban design as it evolved after World War II. The design by Olmsted at Riverside, for example, with its curvilinear streets and wide front lawns, did not translate well into an automobile-dominated, large-scale suburban form. Nevertheless, the extraction of this motif was readily misapplied in the suburbanization that came a century later. Largely this was a matter of the vast increase in scale, but it was also a function of attention (or inattention) to detail, massing and layout.

This is not to say that there is something innately wrong with curvilinear form found in suburban development. Interestingly, according to Kostof (1991), organic street patterns were historically associated with communities of mixed classes and incomes, in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages. And organic, curvilinear form was historically not limited to low-density suburban development. Curved features were a significant part of many great cities, including Athens and Rome. What matters is how the elements of connectivity and context were handled, how elements of form were treated in relation to street pattern and curvature. The problem for American urbanism has been a remarkable insensitivity to these contextual considerations.

Radburn is the classic example of inappropriate extraction. Its culs-de-sac and superblocks, posited in one of the first functional street plans in the U.S. in which roads were arranged hierarchically, may only work well in the context of a self-contained community where street patterns are interconnected and part of a complete circulation system. Such a system required paying careful attention to the way in which cul-de-sac access tied into the rest of the development. Integration of elements was everything, and the designers of Radburn saw it as the basis of their innovation. What was new at Radburn was the combination of design proposals to form a 'new unity'. Because of these clear examples of success, the superblock was labelled an 'admirable device' by Mumford (1951, p. 11), one that he believed should have been picked up on even earlier in town planning. But without an integrated system, the use of elements like culs-de-sac produced sub-optimal development. Reston, Virginia's appropriation of Radburn concepts is often given as an example. There, open spaces were too large, densities were too low, and the connectivity of the system failed.

Another example of piecemeal adoption of elements was experienced when the Federal Housing Administration promoted suburban development through

manuals like *Planning Profitable Neighborhoods* (1938). The pamphlet ensured the adoption of curvilinear street arrangements, promoted as being low-risk, but did so without the necessary integration of street and pedestrian networks and attention to scale requirements that were essential (Kostof, 1991). The legacy of Radburn is that the practice of adopting innovative design features piecemeal became standard practice (Birch, 1980*a*). Because of the unfortunate misapplication of selected ideas, Radburn is often cited as being a major contributor to suburban sprawl (Van der Ryn and Calthorpe, 1986). Had housing developments appreciated the importance of integrated, holistic design rather than street layouts with uniform setbacks, side yards and lot widths, the banality of the post-war landscape may have been lessened.

Even if it were possible to adopt elements more completely, some critics see a fine line between the 'new unity' of planned community innovation, and anachronism. One reason is that the scientific wisdom of planners working from the perspective of the complete planned community can become outdated even very soon after proposals are made. This was particularly true of the way the automobile affected planned community design. The 'scientific principles' Olmsted, Jr. applied at Forest Hills Gardens quickly became unscientific when the design inadvertently channelled heavy traffic through town (Stilgoe, 1988). Similarly, critics question whether it is possible for the planned community to generate a certain type of urbanism unless the transportation system upon which that urbanism has been based is also copied. According to this view, elements of the planned community are tied to the transportation system that produced them, 'and can no more escape this dynamic than a creek can escape the watershed it is part of' (Marshall, 2000, p. 33). Now, in the face of globalized consumer networks of activity, the planned community and its localized networks seem illusory. Ironically, the ability of such local systems to succeed may in fact be dependent on how externally linked they are. The question is, to what degree does a Starbucks in a planned community – globalized capital in an environment dependent on localized social networks – create a disjuncture of sorts?

This relates to the fact that the commercial component of the planned community has always been difficult to maintain. Riverside, Illinois went bankrupt in part because of its failed commercial aspect. Howard's first garden city, Letchworth, was in grave financial straights from the start, and Howard's detailed schemes of public financing proved unworkable. Howard was unrealistic about the commercial component of his cities. Letchworth developed only one-eighth of the shopping area Howard envisioned, which was really all a community of the size of Letchworth could be expected to support (Barnett, 1986). Later developments like Baldwin Hills Village fell victim to budget cuts, and the public facilities and commercial areas that were considered essential components had to be omitted. Such communities,

lacking a commercial component, began to look a lot less like towns and a lot more like dormitory suburbs. In the end, planned communities that have been able to achieve a healthy mix of land uses, including especially a mix of housing unit types, are those in which some form of socialization of land value took place. What this means is that the importance of the planned community for American urbanism extends beyond design to matters of policy structure and financial organization. Early garden city proponents understood this. Their developments were not just plans and design, they were 'creative organizations' (Purdom, 1921, p. 45) that possessed dynamic energy in pursuit of an ideal.

Looking at this criticism through a historical lens it is striking how quickly the design of the planned community could become 'outdated' in light of technological changes. Virtually every planned community type was linked to some technological improvement, first steam-ferry networks, then railroads, then horsecars, then streetcars, then automobiles. Yet the view that technological change automatically renders a previously conceived development type unusable seems extreme. It would be inconceivable to claim that the urban system of Europe, much of it put into place before the Industrial Revolution, is now obsolete because of its association with various outdated technologies. What is required of the planned community may simply be that it pays attention to multiple determinants and requirements of urban form – some technological, some artistic, some social.

There is also the question of adaptability. The finality of the design and spatial-geographical principles of the planned community are seen as unduly rigid. Forest Hills Gardens, according to Stilgoe, is an example of a planned community that was unable to absorb change, and therefore new requirements – parking lots, for example – proved disastrous, marring its 'jewel-like perfection' (Stilgoe, 1988, p. 238). But adaptability is also about the ability of inhabitants to appropriate the urban artefact they inherit. Unfortunately, sometimes this was blocked. There are examples where control in the planned community conflicted with residents' needs, for example when they wanted to hang their laundry in the street at Saltaire but were prohibited by Sir Titus Salt (Creese, 1992). On the other hand, it could be argued that it was the lack of control that undermined residents' needs in the first place, for example when back-to-back housing eliminated space for laundry hanging altogether.

Americans are not very happy with being the objects of social control. Stilgoe argued that the 'corporation-owned, worker-inhabited company town, whatever its physical appearance, grated on the nerves of visitors and inhabitants alike' (Stilgoe, 1988, p. 238). This was due to its 'company town' stigma and its inability to respond to American individualism. There was a distrust of the planned company town in the same way that there was a distrust of big government and socialism, and by the 1920s, the ideal of the American 'do-it-yourselfer' took on the patriotic tone of

American capitalism and free enterprise. Even designers of the planned community were aware of the problem of overt social control. Atterbury, the architect of Forest Hills Gardens, complained that the term 'model' community attached to it a 'sanctimonious atmosphere' that at least he was not intending (Atterbury, 1912, p. 317). Richard Ely's 1885 'social study' of Pullman showed sensitivity to this when it brought out the fact that not one of its 8,000 residents dared to openly give their opinion of the town. Clearly the experience at Pullman emphasized the danger of attempting to squelch the American spirit. Where great industrialists may have thought of the planned company town as a logical extension of corporate control, their experiences with unhappy, discontented workers quickly undermined the idea of the worker engineered for happiness and contentment. The planned community offered the promise of security and harmony, but it shunned the reverse, equally magnetic values of adventure, expansion and desire.

It is curious how seriously the social goals of the planned community have been taken by some planners. One planner writing in the 1940s bragged that only 3.2 per cent of the families of one planned community failed to take part in community life, since 'it was an unusual family that was not observed to grow and expand in community mindedness in such an environment' (Tylor, 1939, p. 182). But there was always a danger that this thinking would backfire. During the New Deal, communitarian goals were criticized as being socialistic. The Greenbelt communities were labelled a 'dangerous communist experiment', and even the socialist tendencies of the cooperative grocery stores they contained were debated (Easterling, 1999, p. 172). Social cohesion goals could be viewed as 'social cleansing' (Schubert, 2000, p. 135). It may be easy to overlook the social naiveté of Progressive Era planners, but Nazi admiration of garden cities and neighbourhood units (Schubert, 2000) has been seized upon by critics as evidence of the insidiousness of claims about social cohesion in the planned community.

It is true that the planned community endorsed social mixing, but that mix was selected from an incomplete socioeconomic strata. Forest Hills Gardens is an interesting case in this regard. It was one of the most tightly controlled planned communities, and its social goals were explicit. A brochure advertising the Gardens declared: 'The Gardens is NOT and never will be a promiscuous neighborhood' (Stilgoe, 1988, p. 228). The owners believed they could obtain this goal by requiring character references for prospective tenants. In spite of an innovative blending of housing unit types, and the fact that the developers were sensitive to the need for income diversity, there was an explicit attempt to create a community that was white, middle-class, Protestant, homogenous, and 'congenial'.

There are two central ironies present in the social control critique of the planned community. First, the planned community was usually conceived of not as limiting to the individual but as a conduit for freedom – freedom from the tyranny of the city,

from social pressures, from financial worries, from want of the basic needs of daily life. It was the reason garden city advocates were often hostile to the City Beautiful movement, since Burnham's planning approach was viewed as intolerant of freedom and the rights of the individual (Manieri-Elia, 1979). According to proponents of the planned community, there was greater affinity between the planned community and the freedom envisaged by social utopias popularized in the nineteenth century than between the planned community and the City Beautiful. Social utopias were generally conceived of as embodying not only religious, political and economic freedom, but sometimes also sexual freedom (Meyerson, 1961).

Second, the main alternative – private suburban construction not organized into planned communities – did not engender greater freedom. What was realized instead was that pursuit of private gain often directly conflicted with the communitarian basis of the planned community. Unwin put it this way: 'our towns and our suburbs express by their ugliness the passion for individual gain which so largely dominates their creation' (Unwin, 1909, p. 13). In the U.S., the relinquishing of control to private speculation did not produce a freer interpretation of the American spirit, it only homogenized it. The idea that mass production of housing without benefit of community planning was somehow more in line with American individualism is an incongruity that even detractors of the planned community recognize. The potential antidote, then, was the aesthetically controlled planned town in which individualism was tamed, and cooperation coerced into finding its expression.

The communal goals of the planned community are especially seen as contradictory to the modern, technologically-enhanced world of far-flung social networking. Local communities of propinquity, according to some critics, have become irrelevant, and trying to get them back is another example of anachronistic thinking much like the idea that pre-automobile urban forms are viable as real places. The notion of the 'community of place' is, critics contend, a pre-automobile, pre-internet relic, and in the cold light of non-proximal modes of community, shared space seems superfluous. David Brain has rebutted this by pointing out that the real issue is loss of civility rather than community. While proximally-based community may not be as important, our capacity for public life, our ability to 'maintain a sense of order and trust in impersonal relations', and our 'embedding' of personal communities in a larger framework are all dependent on 'the durable construction of the features of a common world' (Brain, 2005).

Webber's non-place urban realms challenged the social and economic validity of neighbourhood organization, the building block of the planned community (Webber, 1963). Gans' study of Levittown (1967*a*) and Banerjee and Baer's study of neighbourhood perceptions (1984) reached similar conclusions. Critics maintain that planned communities are an exercise in abstraction, where the essential elements of the complexity of the city are sorted out, abstracted, and frozen for

easier manipulation and management. They argue that cities, towns and even neighbourhoods cannot be recreated by extracting certain key variables and reapplying them. There can be no re-creation of urbanity by applying numbers and thresholds. The human settlement process must be conceived of in terms of complex systems of organization and not, as Jacobs termed it, a 'two-variable system of thinking' (Jacobs, 1961, p. 435). Jacobs pointed out that the 'multiplicity of choices and complexities of cross-use' cannot possibly be pinned down by the community planner and distilled into holistically conceived settlements.

Critics have questioned the legitimacy of the fully arrived planned community, articulated all at once. The organized complexity of urban development described by Jane Jacobs is, in contrast to the planned community, believed to be a process of gradual, incremental, emergent complexity, and can be impeded (if not completely undermined) by the attempt to build it single-handedly at one point in time. Despite claims that the element of time will eventually foster a new, naturally evolved urbanism, the planned community requires commitment to policies regarding schools, land use and retail that are fixed (Herbert, 1963).

This is one way in which planned communities are interpreted as being anti-urban, a point which planned community proponents are unwilling to concede. In the anti-urbanism debate about planned communities, garden cities were often regarded as the worst offenders. They could never accommodate the wishes of some people to be 'in the very hub of things' (Lewis, 1916, p. 307). The idea of a communal village, even with an urban face on it, is seen by some as intrinsically ruralist (Harvey, 1997). Almost immediately upon their proposal, garden cities were considered monotonous, dull, and lacking in the sociability requirements that were readily satisfied in cities. When the attempt was made to legitimize garden cities in terms of public health by citing statistics on infant mortality in cities, critics countered that the answer should be to clean up the city, make it compact but healthy, and not proliferate the 'monotonous diffuseness of garden cities' (Lewis, 1916, p. 308).

In Britain, Thomas Sharp was one of the first and most prolific critics of what he believed was an anti-urban ideology underlying the garden cities movement. He found their 'little dwellings crouching separately under trees' to be 'mean and contemptible'. What he advocated, instead, was 'sheer, triumphant, unadulterated urbanity', which he believed garden cities were attempting to undermine (Sharp, 1932, p. 163). Garden city advocates resented the charge that 'in a garden city the garden comes first and the city comes afterward' (Lewis, 1916, p. 308), but their rhetoric could easily be interpreted that way. The Garden City Association of America explicitly pushed for 'a good home in a country community' (Scott, 1969, p. 90).

Planned community culture cannot deny its tradition of denouncing the existing metropolis. Ruskin, for example, once proposed that New York City

should be levelled and not rebuilt, and advised that people should 'make the field gain on the street, not the street on the field' (Lang, 1999, pp. 19, 43). In fairness, Ruskin loved cities, but only when they looked like works of art. Industrial, commercial, technological, mercantile cities – all were to be subordinated to art. The city was meant to concentrate 'within its sacred walls the final energies and the lofty pleasures' of man, a 'treasure-house' of the best humankind had to offer in artistic and cultural terms (Lang, 1999, p. 35). Ruskin, therefore, was unwilling to appropriate the messy diversity that inevitably coincides with cities.

The neighbourhood unit is associated with anti-urbanism as well. Creese (1967) pointed out that the neighbourhood idea has roots in rural society, drawing on the agrarian village admired by garden city advocates and articulated in plan and form by Parker and Unwin. Ruskin and Morris based their critique of industrialism on the 'fracturing of the agrarian sense of communal interdependence', which, it was hoped, the neighbourhood unit would re-establish (Miller, 2002, p. 100). Clarence Perry had a definite bias against big cities, and his 1939 book *Housing for the Machine Age* is full of anti-urban rhetoric. In the first few pages he includes a quote which says 'The city has done things to us . . . city people are more nervous and more of them go insane'. Perry then lays out his plan for rectifying 'how ruthlessly the city has disrupted the family nest' by ensuring that new housing is constructed as part of a neighbourhood unit: 'dwellings set in the environment that is required for the proper development of family life' (Perry, 1939, pp. 23–24).

The anti-urban critique is not limited to garden cities and picturesque suburbs. And it extends beyond the suburban focus of Perry. The planned industrial town has been interpreted as anti-urban because of its strained economic structure. The merger of factory and town was seen as an artificial alliance that did not mirror true urbanity. Cities are made up of complex interactions from a diverse set of enterprises, not just a factory, housing, and services for factory workers. What is missing is reciprocity. The industrial town subsumed the social life of the town, combining urban life and economic productivity in such a way that the city was, in a sense, annulled. People, housing and services existed as a direct function of work productivity, not as a function of their own needs for investment or production of capital (Dal Co, 1979). Thus there was no system of growth outside of the factory.

Anti-city feeling in the planned community has always been a matter of degrees, since planned communities were not all of one type. The garden city interpretations of Yorkship Village and Greenbelt, Maryland can be contrasted. Greenbelt was aimed at deconcentration in the form of planned communities, but the focus was explicitly on escaping the city, and then later, to paraphrase Tugwell, tearing down the slums and making them into parks (Arnold, 1971). The difference in intention with wartime industrial housing is significant. In Yorkship Village, for example, the mix of housing types, land uses, the attention to picturesque elements and

the distribution of civic space show an affinity for urbanism that deconcentration specialists seemed to lack. This was not true of all planned communities, nor is it necessarily a condition of location. The fact that a new community was sited away from an existing city did not automatically make it anti-urban. Sometimes the location of the planned community was more a function of financial necessity, a matter of needing to build on cheap land, and cheap land was usually more available at the periphery. This was the case for Nichols' Country Club District, built on land that was, at the time, beyond the municipal transportation system.

Why should starting anew be labelled 'unurban' (Krieger, 2002, p. 52)? Lewis Mumford was certainly willing to have an open view of what was urban and what was not. He defined the garden city as the 'antithesis of the suburb', not rural, but instead 'the foundation for an effective urban life' (Mumford, 1968, pp. 39–40). It certainly was not Ebenezer Howard's intention to be anti-urban. He was trying to find the proper balance and proportion between nature and city. Garden city proponents were aware of the need for both urban density and vitality; they were attempting to achieve it minus the negative externalities. C.B. Purdom, writing in 1921, argued that, for the garden city, 'concentration up to a point is the essence of its being' (Purdom, 1921, p. 48).

The architecture of the planned community did not help it detach from its anti-city stigma. Revival of Gothic medieval style associated with many early planned communities was considered 'dishonest' (Lewis, 1916). Invoking the picturesque English landscape meant that there was an emphasis on the creation of scenic effects and thus more attention was being paid to visual landscapes and scenery, to vistas markers and rural imagery, than to the 'authentic' elements of urbanism. A planned community like Forest Hills Gardens, Stilgoe notes, was not just 'pretty as a picture . . . It *was* the picture' (Stilgoe, 1988, p. 232). The bourgeois culture of the suburb with its traditional architectural forms and village plans was particularly hated by the modernists. The response produced an 'adversary culture' (Trilling, 1979) where churches could look like factories and houses like office buildings, in an attempt to find an egalitarian architecture for the proletariat (Stern, 1981).

Planned communities often emphasized curvilinearity and open spaces – two elements that are not generally regarded in the U.S. as being hallmarks of urbanity. In fact, the winding roads of the picturesque suburb were conceived in response to the urban grid. The value of this design idiom is that it can be both landscape-responsive (i.e., context-sensitive) and an effective way to break up the monotony of the gridiron. As already discussed, the problem is more a matter of the way it was interpreted in subsequent suburban design. In the hands of large suburban developers, winding roads that were too long and too winding lost their functionality and conflicted with the urbanistic goal of connectivity.

The planned community has been critiqued for tending to water down urbanity.

Sometimes this goal was explicit, a deliberate attempt to 'ruralize the town and urbanize the country', in the words of the Spanish utopian planner, Arturo Soria y Mata (Eaton, 2002, p. 145). There are examples of skilful balance – the small, urbanized parks incorporated into Forest Hills Gardens, for example – but this balance has always been difficult. The problem of the 'urban compromise,' as David Schuyler calls it – the successful merger of town and county – is how to bring greenery and open space into the city (Jackson, 1985). In such noble planned communities as Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb, the City Beautiful components of their designs have been interpreted as inappropriate injections of green space in inappropriate places (see Hall (2002) and Stern and Massengale (1981), who use the same critique but for different places).

The town-country merger ties into the final, most problematic aspect of the planned community: its social exclusivity. Even when sought, there is a question whether social integration was ever actually achieved. In Radburn, a survey in 1934 found no blue-collar workers anywhere in the development (Schaffer, 1982). Forest Hills Gardens was similarly white, middle-class and Protestant. Although it was intended to be a planned community for residents of modest income, land costs and the high quality of design and building materials quickly priced homes beyond the means of labourers. For American urbanism, there may be an opportunity to transform the integrative designs of the planned community into something more successful in social terms. But again, this is likely to be achieved only with deliberate effort, most likely requiring public involvement.

The way in which low-income groups were eventually accommodated – through the dividing up of buildings into smaller units, or the subdivision of lots, or the inhabitation of accessory units – is essentially the same approach used when the inclusion of lower-income groups is deliberate. The difference was how the community as a whole was coordinated, how the requirements of the public realm were to be maintained, how city services and facilities were to be provided. These collective elements are what drove costs beyond the reach of the poor.

It should not be the case that low-income groups can only infiltrate if, as Warner (1962) described the low-income settlement of nineteenth-century streetcar suburbs, the environment is degraded in the process. Yet this is precisely what Stein and Wright had in mind when they economized their developments after Forest Hills Gardens so that subsequent communities would not suffer the same, gentrified fate (Mumford, 1951). It is a planning truism that the 'bright side' of places that lack planning amenities is that they are a source of affordable housing (Ewing, 1990). For the planned community that had social goals in mind, this is an intrinsic paradox that worked to undermine even the most socially utopian communities. In this sense, the failed utopias of the nineteenth century did not fail because of economic weakness, but rather economic success.

Then as now, the planned community required a long-term commitment to community needs way beyond the short time frame of land investors and real estate developers. This has always made the planned community a tough financial sell as well as an unlikely provider of affordable housing on its own. For one thing, the planned community, whether it was Letchworth, Reston, or Kentlands, required a lot of funding for land and infrastructure up front. As the developer Alexander Bing admitted, the planned community would never succeed if built on 'the sole object of profit making' (Bing, 1925, p. 172).

Chapter Seven

Regionalism

To a greater degree than the three planning cultures reviewed so far, regionalism is already an amalgamated culture. In stern defiance of the plan-making approach that had come to dominate in the 1920s, the regionalism of Patrick Geddes, Lewis Mumford, Clarence Stein and Benton MacKaye was a synthesis of other traditions and ideas that had come before, and it attempted to fashion a new ideal that was simultaneously pragmatic, idealistic, and dedicated to reform. Mumford had described plan-making in *The Culture of Cities* (1938, pp. 389–390) as 'the belated mopping up after the forces of life have spilled over: never catching up with its opportunities, committed to drifting with the current, never tacking to catch a breeze'. The regionalists were to take a different approach to defining human settlement. They were not limited to multi-jurisdictional organization or clustered, multi-nucleated development. The source of their ideology was deeper.

This chapter outlines the low-intensity/low-order section of the grid by reviewing the regionalist approach to American urbanism, with particular focus on the defining work of the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA). The regionalist perspective in America is rooted in the work of Geddes and the RPAA, which crystallized as the enigmatic movement that was 'partly romantic-poetic myth and aspiration, partly cultural revolt, and partly realistic response to the possibilities and challenges of a new technology' (Lubove, 1963, p. 83). The regionalist movement had two distinguishing features. First, it rejected the large metropolis, and thus had a distinctly different outlook to cities than the urban plan-makers. Second, it was deeply connected to the notion of the ecological region. This latter quality meant it was a forerunner of the environmental planning movement, working its way from Geddes and MacKaye, towards a transformation through the work of McHarg and, finally, aligning itself with present-day environmentalism.

Regionalism is the flip side of the planned community perspective. The two have always been intertwined for one obvious reason: the planned community

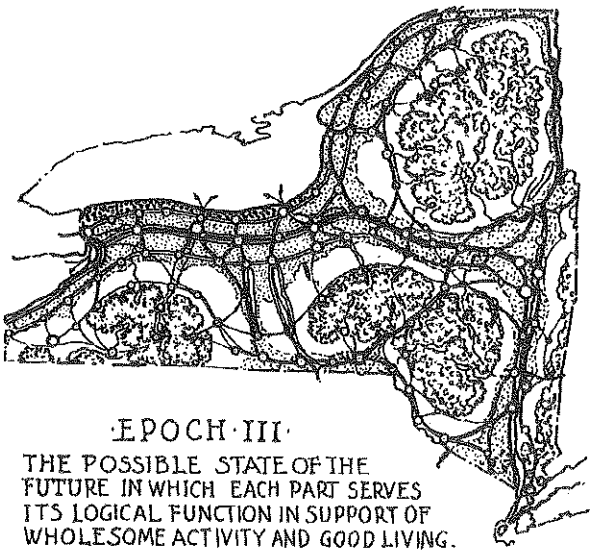

Figure 7.1. Urban development, according to the regionalists, is most importantly framed by natural land features. (*Source: Report of the New York State Commission of Housing and Regional Planning*, 1926)

was and is almost always discussed in terms of a regional context. From Ruskin on, regional planning has been about patterns of villages, towns and cities set in protected open space. Anyone advocating the development of self-contained units of human settlement knows that these units must be positioned geographically – that it is necessary to think of them in terms of an integrative framework. On this point there is little disagreement, and the idea has been operative since the regionalist perspective applied to city planning came to fruition roughly 100 years ago. From the regionalist point of view, the planned community was the best, most efficient way to accomplish a regional re-distribution of population and industry, all of which had become much too concentrated.

But how far should regionalism go? At one end is the view that true regionalism requires a new framework for civilization. At the other, regionalism is viewed simply as a more efficient and equitable way to manage resources. Against these two competing concepts, regionalism has been at the crossroads of one of the most significant divisions in planning culture. The primary conflict is not only about scale, but about social and economic structure. The tension was present in the famous exchange between Mumford and Adams following the New York Regional Plan Association's 1929 *Regional Plan of New York and its Environs*. Adams encapsulated the critique when he suggested that Mumford wanted to 'untie the traffic snarl in Times Square by rerouting the movement of wheat' (Adams, 1932, p. 207). The division was analyzed in the book *The American Planning Tradition* (2000) edited by Robert Fishman, where the views of Adams and Mumford are contrasted as representing the 'metropolitanists' vs. the 'regionalists'. The former was tied to

metropolitan restructuring and governance, and the need to reorganize sprawl as a network of concentrated, walkable centres oriented around transit. The latter was more concerned with fitting urban development into its natural regional context. The conflict was fundamental and was not, as Sussman (1976, p. x) writes, 'a pious point of professional ethics', but rather a fundamental clash over political and social ideologies.

There are other interpretations of this essential division. One focuses on the split in the lineages of Olmsted versus Burnham; the former seen as radical and the latter as pro-business, one cutting across the grain of American society and the other working within it (Simpson, 1976). Johnson (1988) interpreted the division as the difference between progressive reformers and 'meliorist' reformers, one concerned with remaking the structure of society, the other seeking only to remedy its consequences. Yet another manifestation was reflected in the rejection of true garden cities in favour of (or in acquiescence to) garden suburbs. This transformation was seen in Unwin's 'great apostasy' of 1918–19 in which he embraced the satellite suburb as a more realistic alternative to the self-contained garden city (Hall, 2002, p. 182). To Mumford, whether suburb or satellite, both were drops in the bucket. What was needed was to change the shape of the bucket (Mumford, 1927).

But there are also strong connections. The three planning cultures of regionalism, plan-making and planned communities have all been intertwined, leaving out, for the most part, the incrementalist view. One indication of the connection is that its leadership overlapped significantly. Clarence Perry, for example, was a member of the RPAA but was also a key player in the RPA's *Regional Plan of New York and its Environs*. Members of the RPAA were strong supporters of the garden city movement. On a personal level, there was a great deal of interaction, including long correspondences between regionalists and planned community proponents.

In spite of the overlap, there are important reasons for treating regionalism as a separate culture. First, regionalists have always had a perspective that could be characterized as being from the outside looking in. The regionalist emphasis tends to be less about the specifics of internal urban form and more about urban positioning within its natural, regional context. As a result, regionalists tend not to be as closely tied to design, which makes their connection to plan-makers and community planners that much more important. Geddes' background as a biologist turned sociologist and geographer, rather than a designer, meant he was more inclined toward discovery and empiricism than design of the new (Hall, 1975). His concern was more about understanding society and its place in nature as a basis of planning. Second, the planned community and regionalist perspectives, once tightly connected, developed in very different ways, and over time became more separate. Developed in sync, planned communities went one way, regionalism another. Seaside, Florida is a lineal descendant of planned community culture, but

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the outcome of regionalism is exemplified by the work of McHarg and others who tended to be more focused on natural ecology than the internal configuration of planned communities. This is not to say that regionalists in the McHarg tradition were not involved in the creation of planned communities – McHarg's Woodlands community outside of Houston is one example – only that their focus on the qualities of urbanism was subordinated.[1]

The existence of a 'natural regionalism' has been broken down further. McHarg and Steiner trace two traditions of the 'organic' in American planning: landscape architecture and planning. The first they see evolving from Olmsted, and the second from Geddes, Mumford and MacKaye. A third strain, that of 'naturalist-scientist-conservationist' includes Howard and Eugene Odum, as well as Rachel Carson. All of these traditions, Steiner and McHarg write, come together in the work of McHarg, who stands as the 'heir and propagator' (McHarg and Steiner, 1998, p. 85). But the regionalism described here, the one that forms an important urbanist culture that can be used to define American urbanism, is the regionalism rooted in nineteenth-century concepts and evolving out of the work of the RPAA.

History

Looking at the world from a regional perspective is surprisingly old. As a formal structure, it has been traced back as far as the eighteenth century, when the natural and cultural geography of Europe seemed particularly suited to regional differentiation. A number of definitions evolved, ranging from a focus on human economy and cultural distribution to the identification of natural boundaries. These precepts were formulated much earlier than Geddes and Howard. Hall (2002) points out that the idea of towns of limited population surrounded by agricultural green belts is a recurrent theme found in the writings of Ledoux, Owen, Pemberton, Buckingham, Kropotkin, More, Saint-Simon and Fourier, all of whom were influential before 1900.

The liability of thinking in regionalist terms emerged almost simultaneously. One geographer summed up regionalism as 'trying to put boundaries that do not exist around areas that do not matter' (Kimble, 1951, p. 159). It is the fluidity of regions that has made them problematic as working concepts. Already when the New World was opening up for exploration, the cultural differentiation of Europe was eroding. These changes in regional definition have meant that the concept of regionalism is constantly being redefined. In the past century, it has shifted from European regional geography to what has been termed metropolitan regionalism – the idea that issues like housing, transportation and the environment, and the political governance of each, must be treated as an interconnected, multi-jurisdictional whole. This was a concept embraced by urban plan-makers. Olmsted's

concept of linking parks into complete park systems, an approach also advocated by Burnham, was a regionalist, ecologically-motivated concept. Eliot and Baxter's regional parks proposal for Boston at the turn of the nineteenth century also had the essential elements of regionalist thinking – wanting to integrate city and country through a series of parkways and stream systems that flowed from country to city in the greater Boston metropolitan area (Scott, 1969).

This tradition, which focuses on the greater area surrounding a metropolis, is much different than the social reform movement started by Patrick Geddes in the early twentieth century and carried through by the Regional Planning Association of America in the 1920s. The doctrine of 'anarchistic communism based on freed confederations of autonomous regions', as Peter Hall described it, was a much more ambitious project, in geographical, social, and intellectual terms (Hall, 2002, p. 143). It was not simply an efficient new pattern of organized decentralization or an ecological approach to metropolitan parks planning. It was a project for social change involving a consideration of the social, political and economic implications of thinking and planning regionally.

Much has been written about Geddes' brand of regionalism, the relationship between Geddes and Mumford – see especially *Lewis Mumford & Patrick Geddes: The Correspondence* (Novak, 1995) – and the group that formed to implement his ideas. I will not recount this story, but highlight what is necessary in order to understand its relevance to American urbanism. To begin with, regionalism today bears limited resemblance to the Geddes variety. Importantly, however, it carries on the tradition, also consistent with Geddes, of the multi-nucleated settlement system, of the clustered, decentralized metropolitan region, and the idea of conceptualizing urban issues in regional terms.

Geddes is singularly important because of his direct influence on the emerging discipline of urban planning. He first had an impact through his lectures in Boston in 1899, and his writing of *City Development* published in 1904 (Boyer, 1983). His ideas were French in origin, based on the writings of the geographers Elisée Reclus (1830–1905), Paul Vidal de la Blache (1845–1918), and the French sociologist Frederic Le Play (1806–1882). The people that Geddes admired were those who wrote about the interrelationship between society and the natural environment. Paul Vidal de la Blache, the 'father of French human geography', for example, wrote encyclopaedic works on the environmental context of human activity (*Columbia Encyclopedia*, 2001). Geddes admired Le Play for his model of interaction between 'Place, Work and Folk', which Geddes, a botanist, expressed as 'Environment, Function, and Organism'. In his system, 'environment acts, through function, upon the organism: and the organism acts, through function, upon the environment' (Geddes, 1915, p. 200) . He extended this thinking in a number of synthesizing diagrams, some of which seem quite convoluted. What he was seeking was synthetic thought, and

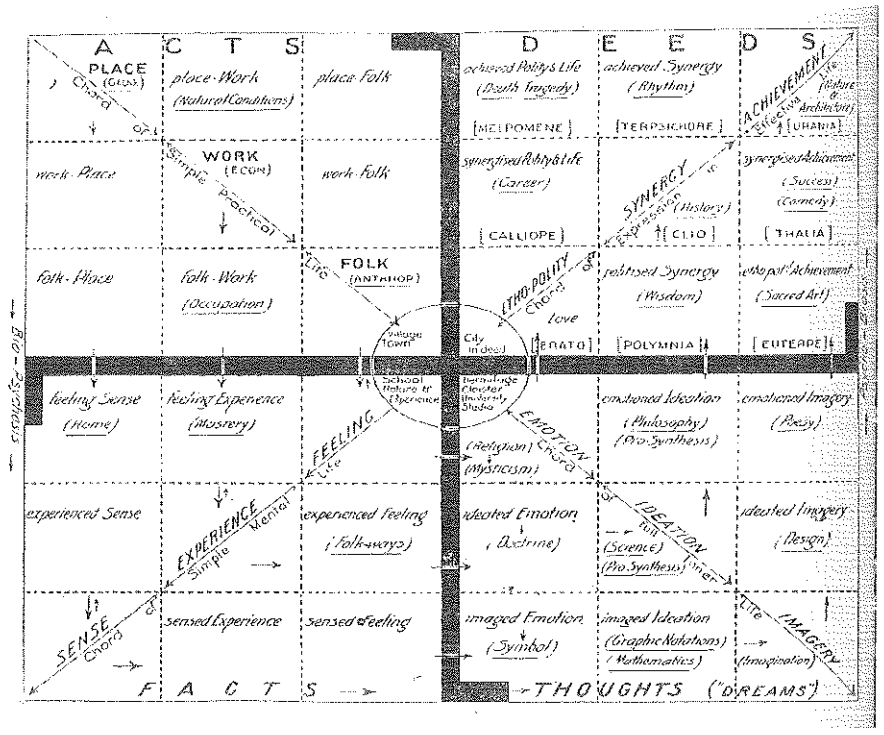
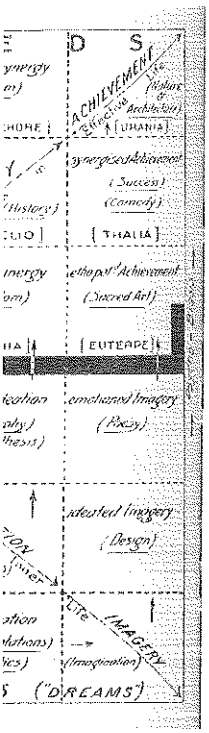


Figure 7.2. One of Geddes' intricate synthesizing diagrams. (*Source*: Patrick Geddes, *Cities in Evolution*, 1915)

synthesis relied on finding some underlying principle of unity in the relationship between human activity and the natural environment.

One of the most important principles guiding Geddes and the other regionalists was the notion of human cooperation. They envisioned a world guided not by Taylorist labour discipline, but by a sense of social justice, mutual aid, and communitarian spirit. In this thinking there was a connection to Reclus, who studied the history of human cooperation in, for example, the Greek *polis* and the medieval city. Given that these reformers were writing at a time when science was paramount, the radicalism of their views must be appreciated. Frederick Taylor's science of industrial management, in which workers were reduced to automatons, was embraced by both Lenin and Henry Ford, but it contrasted sharply with the communitarian individualism of Geddes and his regionalist associates.

This group also rejected the Darwinian idea of survival of the fittest. Tolstoy, for one, interpreted Darwin's 1859 *On the Origin of Species* to mean that Darwin's view of nature was 'might makes right' – that the 'struggle for existence' rendered morality irrelevant or indeterminable. That this was actually the point Darwin was trying to make has been long disputed. The implication for Geddes and other



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anarchic communitarians was that the Darwinian struggle was interpreted not as might makes right but rather that cooperation and mutual aid bring success, not elimination (Gould, 1997).

The Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921), another strong influence on Geddes, challenged the Darwinian view that struggle for existence leads to combat. In his book *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, published in 1902, Kropotkin argued that struggle leads to cooperation, a condition that Darwin also recognized, but that Darwin's successors, notably Thomas Huxley, squashed (interestingly, Geddes studied zoology under Thomas Huxley in the 1870s while at the Royal School of Mines in London). Evolutionary success, Kropotkin argued, was not about might, but about building on the natural tendency to find mutual support, a fact observed in nature as well as human social organization (Gould, 1997).

From the idea of the communal spirit and the existence of mutual aid as a natural, even Darwinian concept, comes the Kropotkin-Geddes emphasis on human-scaled production systems and decentralization of political governance. These are regionalist principles. To move this agenda forward, Geddes pushed the idea that human settlement should be analyzed in the context of its natural region. Kropotkin was advocating the same – analyzing human society in the context of nature. Views of nature and views of social reform were thus highly interconnected. What emerged was a nineteenth-century 'back to the land' movement that would free society from the oppression of authoritarianism. This was the tie-in to anarchism, the repudiation of established modes of authoritarian control, whether in the form of capitalism, the church, or the state. The mechanism for accomplishing this was to be the communitarian spirit of humankind. At the time, there was plenty of optimism that this was possible, and that the revolution was at hand. Reclus (1891), the son of a minister, believed that religion was finally becoming 'detached, like a garment'.

Replacing this authoritarian oppression would be an egalitarian society that was in close association with nature, and this was the essence of regionalism that Lewis Mumford transferred to the Regional Planning Association of America. Mumford did this via French regionalism. In France, disciples of Rousseau had formed groups in the mid nineteenth century that celebrated local French regional culture. In part they were protesting against centralized government, but what started as a romanticized celebration of local customs grew by 1900 to exert real influence on French regional structure with the establishment of the Fédération Régionaliste Française. This demonstrated to Mumford that a regionally decentralized governance and cultural life was entirely possible (Lubove, 1963). Regionalists of the RPAA believed this would happen through localization of production supported by transportation and social service planning.

In the view of Reclus and Geddes, the industrial city and the problems it

was causing for human and natural environments was only being intensified by government and capital. Communism, in the form of a centralized, omnipresent state, was not the solution. There is a connection then to Proudhon, the leading left intellectual of France during the nineteenth century, an inventor of socialism, but someone who advocated decentralization and mutualism – power at the local level. Geddes, Reclus and Kropotkin were part of Proudhon's idealism. What was needed, they believed, was the establishment of harmonious, mutual aid societies, not centralized bureaucracies. Note, therefore, that the anarchic views of Geddes, Reclus and Kropotkin were not about violent overthrow, but instead about the establishment of small communities of consensus. In the reliance on cooperative spirit, government was simply not needed. Instead, positive environmental change was to be accomplished through the action of millions of individuals (Hall, 2002). In this there is some connection to incrementalism.

An egalitarian society needed to be in harmony with nature. This harmony, Geddes believed, must be based on a clear understanding of the cultural landscape – the 'civic survey', as Geddes termed it. The civic survey was more than a survey. It was a 'quasi-mystical' means towards reconstruction of social and political life (Hall, 2002, p. 149). Town planning required 'a synoptic vision of Nature to enable a constructive conservation of its order and beauty' (Geddes, 1915, p. v). In other words, town planning was dependent upon knowledge of the large-scale, regional complexities of the landscape and the human response to that landscape. How people behaved and responded to the conditions of the natural environment was to be understood at different scales, but the regional was paramount. Geddes' views on this were quoted in the opening pages of Mumford's *The Culture of Cities*: the city 'embodies the heritage of a region', as a kind of 'sign manual of its regional life and record' (Mumford, 1938, p. 7).

This was not the type of understanding nurtured in conventional schools and, like Reclus, Geddes believed in the value of a 'rustic' (rather than a 'bookish') schooling experience. Similarly, methodology in town planning became a vital concern. The civic survey was not just data accumulation, it was required to advance a holistic understanding of cities, set in their natural regions, and understood from a 'high' vantage point. Geddes regarded Aristotle as the originator of this idea, as the founder of 'civic studies', in which 'large views in the abstract' depended upon 'large views in the concrete' (Geddes, 1915, p. 6). It is easy to see why Geddes thought Burnham's approach extremely limited. It lacked the 'fuller study of civic', ignoring not only social and cultural life, but the 'spiritual possibilities' of cities as well (Geddes, 1915, p. 189).

One method Geddes used to accomplish deeper understanding of human activity and its relation to nature was the 'Valley Section', a concept diagram that served to integrate multiple conceptions, conditions, and time periods of human

settlement. It was a heuristic device that was so compelling to later regionalists in the RPAA that they applied the idea to New York State and mapped a relief model of three regions consisting of plains, plateau and highlands, upon which the regional dispersion of people would occur. The value of these maps was that they could be used as tools for achieving synthetic thought. They would create a holistic understanding in which the 'Folk-Work-Place' scheme of Vidal le Play could be revealed. With his emphasis on past forms of civic life and traditional occupations, Geddes proclaimed the arrival or, more accurately, the rebirth, of a society embedded in its natural regional environment.

By comparison, the Industrial Age, which Geddes called 'Paleotechnic', was crude. The early phase of the industrial city was marked by slums and squalor. What Geddes was hoping for was a new industrial age giving rise to the Neotechnic city, which he believed was already an incipient industrial order that was beginning to replace Paleotechnic disorder. He used imagery like 'houses and gardens' and adjectives like 'wholesome and delightful' to describe this new order. It would be tied to the land, communal, egalitarian, and accomplished by developing a clear understanding of the difference between the 'Inferno' and 'Eutopia' (Geddes, 1915, p. 40).

Geddes had a tendency to ramble, both in speaking and writing, yet his ideas were powerful and he had an immense following. Mumford was especially affected, and much has been written about their long correspondence and relationship (Novak, 1995). In the 1920s, the regionalist ideas spun by Geddes in the earlier part of the century were organized and recast in the form of the RPAA, a New York-based group rarely exceeding a membership of twenty, and whose core members consisted of Mumford, Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, Frederick Lee Ackerman, and Benton MacKaye.

According to Lubove (1963) the origins of the RPAA can be found in the post-World War I housing crisis, which confirmed the necessity of community planning as an antidote to speculative city-building. Stein, Wright, and Ackerman, who have already been encountered in the context of the planned community, were thoroughly involved in postwar planning projects. All three can be characterized as garden city architects, and all had relative success in accomplishing garden city-like development projects. MacKaye's influence marks a different stream, one which set the stage for the evolution of regionalism towards environmentalism.

The group was officially formed in 1923 when it met with Geddes in New York and developed a programme consisting of the following: a plan for regionally-based garden cities; the establishment of a better relationship with British planners; projects to support MacKaye's Appalachian Trail; coordination with the American Institute of Architects' Committee on Community Planning in an effort to instil regionalist thinking; and surveys of important regional areas, such as the Tennessee Valley (Hall, 2002). The core of the AIA's Committee, formed two years earlier,

were Stein, Wright and Mumford. The RPAA was thus essentially a splinter group from the AIA that combined forces with, most notably, MacKaye. Through his descriptions of folklands and wilderness trails, MacKaye was the conceptual link between his own conservation movement and the community planning emphasis of the AIA Committee (Thomas, 1994). The quintessential regional planning project – the Appalachian Trail – had been spelled out by MacKaye in the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* in October, 1921.

Alongside the conservationist perspective infused by MacKaye, the architects of the RPAA were, according to Lubove (1963), primarily concerned with affordable housing. Throughout the 1920s, they focused on ways to promote quality housing and planning and do so at a minimum cost. One of the most important publications in this regard was Henry Wright's 1929 *Some Principles Relating to the Economics of Land Subdivision*, in which Wright worked out the most efficient (i.e., cost saving) means of land development. Later cost-conscious proposals included Wright's *Rehousing Urban America*, published in 1935. Because of this focus, they conducted meticulous analyses of wasteful land use practices, and they insisted on techniques that would save infrastructure costs. One strategy was to promote the block rather than the lot as the primary increment of community planning because it eliminated wasted space. Speculative building practices, they argued, were tied into the increment of the lot – a highly wasteful and cost inflating ritual. This, incidentally, was a strategy carried through by CIAM in the 1930s and beyond.

Intellectually, the group was influenced not only by Geddes and the French regionalists, but by a number of American intellectuals of the era. These included sociologist Charles Horton Cooley for his perspective on the significance of primary social groups, the economist Thorstein Veblen, who was a strong critic of the way in which *laissez-faire* economics and big business were influencing American culture, and the philosopher John Dewey for his theories about knowledge and the processes of inquiry. To these can be added the philosopher Josiah Royce, who advocated 'informed provincialism' in the Jeffersonian tradition, and Frederick Jackson Turner, the famous historian who provided an historical perspective on Royce's view of localism (Thomas, 2000). The conservationism running through the RPAA was inspired by Emerson, Thoreau, and George P. Marsh's *Man and Nature, or Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action*. Published in 1864, it was, according to Mumford, the first scientific study of environmental degradation (Dal Co, 1979).

The definitive statement of the group was the 1925 *Survey Graphic* collection, called the 'Regional Planning Number', which Hall (2002) regards as one of the most important documents in the history of city planning. It was a proclamation where, following on the wisdom of a 'long-bearded Scot', the group of 'builders and rebuilders' pinned their hopes on a new concept, or at least a new articulation of an old concept – the Region (*Survey Graphic*, 1925, p. 129). They believed in technology

as a means for accomplishing this new pattern of regional settlement. But they were not technocrats, nor were they advocating technological determinism. MacKaye's definition of planning was that it should be guided by nature. Planners could be successful if they allied themselves with 'the amateur revealer of life's setting', or, in other words, understood human life. Dal Co (1979, pp. 214, 257) characterizes this purity of thought as representing 'the final search for a reconciliation between the world of ethics and the world that was becoming technical', where the reconciliation could be attempted in a way that was 'uncontaminated by the terms of politics'.

This emphasis equated regionalism with the protection of indigenous, regional cultures against nationalist, homogenizing trends. Mumford (1931) quoted Proust from *Remembrance of Things Past* to explain where the indigenous culture came from: 'the rich layer imposed by the native province from which they derived their voices and of which indeed their intonations smacked'. The southern regionalists, under the leadership of Howard W. Odum, pushed the idea that the celebration of local, vernacular culture would be undermined by cities because of their concentrated power and wealth (Odum, 1945). This way of thinking guaranteed that the celebration of provincialism would mean the rejection of the metropolis. In MacKaye's terminology, it was the protection of 'Indigenous America' from 'Metropolitan America'. The latter was an outcome of the consumer-based economy that, perversely, tended to consolidate in the large metropolises of America.

The 'fourth migration', as Mumford called it, was the decentralized movement outward from the city centre that was already occurring, and which the Regionalists wanted to seize upon as an opportunity to produce a more humane settlement pattern. The first migration wanted land, the second industrial growth, the third financial and cultural concentration, and the fourth wanted to expand outward. Metropolitan concentration and congestion was thus becoming obsolete because of a rash of decentralizing inventions – the car, telephone, radio and power sources – a technological revolution. The decentralizing of the metropolis could easily be accomplished by taking advantage of these new technologies. The automobile, the telephone, electricity – all of these inventions could be used not to concentrate population and goods into 'Dinosaur Cities', as Stein called them, but instead to distribute them regionally (Stein, 1925).

This strategy required a new brand of economic thinking, and Stuart Chase (1888–1985) provided it. Chase was a prolific writer interested in many topics, including economic theory, consumer rights, comparative culture, and semantics. He was active in organized labour, and was critical of the advertising and pricing policies of manufacturers. He was particularly active in consumers' rights at a time when the nation was transforming into a mass consumer economy. Later, Chase was very influential in FDR's New Deal programme, and the title 'New Deal' derives from his 1932 book of the same name.

In Chase's view, government needed to play a strong role in economic planning. Private enterprise was not only wasteful, but unable to coordinate 'a million cogwheels' that needed to be 'aligned and oiled'. All of these industries pursuing their own specializations needed coordination in the form of master planning for the economic region – in short, planning for a geographical area large enough to be self-sufficient economically. The interrelations of industries needed to be closely followed and planned for, but this did not mean Marxism. It was instead 'orderly control' of industrial expansion and new investment, for the purpose of limiting the wastefulness of hit-or-miss economic activity that produced the megalopolis as well as environmental degradation (Chase, 1925).

Howard's garden cities fit nicely into this regional scheme for orderly growth although, as Lubove (1963) emphasizes, garden cities were not the only option. In fact MacKaye hardly even mentions garden cities in his great regionalist manifesto, *The New Exploration* (1928). With the holistic basis of the garden city, in which industry was placed alongside town and country to form the perfect, self-contained community, the regionalists understood that the garden city foot the bill for regional dispersion. MacKaye expressed his own version of Howard's regional dispersion diagram in his book, translated in terms of different types of metropolitan 'flows', the best of which channelled growth into 'intertowns'. The diagram looks remarkably like Howard's, but reflects a deeper concern with process, the movement of goods and people, and the interactions and patterns created (Lubove, 1963). But there was something added – conservationism. The American version of regionalism, exemplified by MacKaye in particular, thus

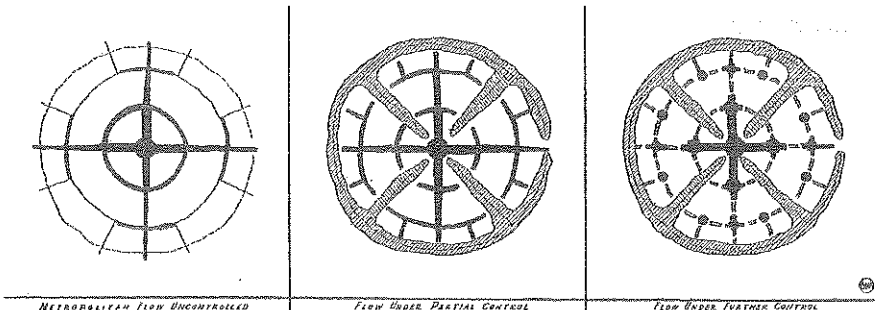

Figure 7.3. The control of metropolitan flow, by Benton MacKaye. On the far right, growth in the centre is controlled by the addition of 'intertowns'. (*Source*: Benton MacKaye, *The New Exploration*, 1928)

expanded Howard, Geddes and Kropotkin and added the necessity for natural resource protection explicitly (Hall, 2002). It was, as Mumford called it, the 'New Conservation'. What was being emphasized by the American regionalists was the need to balance human activity and nature by keeping settlement at the proper scale and level of self-sufficiency – good environmental practice combined with Thoreau's self-reliance and individualism, all coming together in medium-sized, regionally distributed towns (Mumford, 1925).

The conservationist ethic was visualized in regional mapping projects. Henry Wright's portfolio of maps, published in 1926 in the Report of the Commission of Housing and Regional Planning set up by New York State Governor Alfred E. Smith, a report with 'roots in the rich loam of premetropolitan life' was a precursor of McHargian overlay analysis (Sussman, 1976, p. 31). Here were maps of soil deposits, water supplies, rainfall, and economic and agricultural activities, all overlaid to show composite areas favourable to more versus less agricultural production. Composite maps showing areas more suited to reforestation were published to provide a regional framework for future development.

Again, the regionalists bet their money on new technologies. Wright's maps were organized in terms of three 'epochs' – economically independent and regionally distributed towns dependent on water power; growth concentrated in valleys dependent on steam power and rail systems; and the current, third epoch in which new technologies – cars, roads, and electric transmission lines – 'will lend themselves to a more effective utilization of all the economic resources of the state and to the most favourable development of areas especially adapted to industry, agriculture, recreation, water supply, and forest reserve'. Similarly, MacKaye's 'Townless Highway', an idea first published in *Harper's* in 1931, was about leveraging technology – cars – to deconcentrate and consolidate population in clusters that did not spill out from cities in an unplanned manner (Mumford, 1968). It was a more practical proposal than Stein and Wright's – forcefully simple, not unlike the Appalachian Trail. But, unlike the Trail project, and despite its commonsense simplicity, the Townless Highway never caught on.

The RPAA dissolved in the early 1930s at the same time, ironically, as Roosevelt was putting his regionalist plans into play. At their last meeting in 1933 at a week-long conference on regionalism held at the University of Virginia's Institute of Public Affairs, Roosevelt, then Governor of New York, delivered an address on his regionalist agenda. But when, as President, he put this agenda into practice via the Tennessee Valley Authority act, the regionalist vision faltered. In fact the demise of the RPAA has been linked to the 'extraordinary failure' of Roosevelt's attempts at regional planning (Hall, 2000, p. 26). The National Resources Planning Board (NRPB) was Roosevelt's main public relief agency, and through it planning on all levels, including regional, was significantly advanced, at least bureaucratically. It

produced 370 major reports at all levels of planning activity, from bridge building to agriculture (Hancock, 1988). In 1933, under the New Deal, eleven regional planning commissions were established, but because they lacked control over implementation, their regional planning accomplishments were small. Ultimately, the New Deal association with members of the RPAA was the source of the latter's demise since it had the effect of muting its creative message (Sussman, 1976).

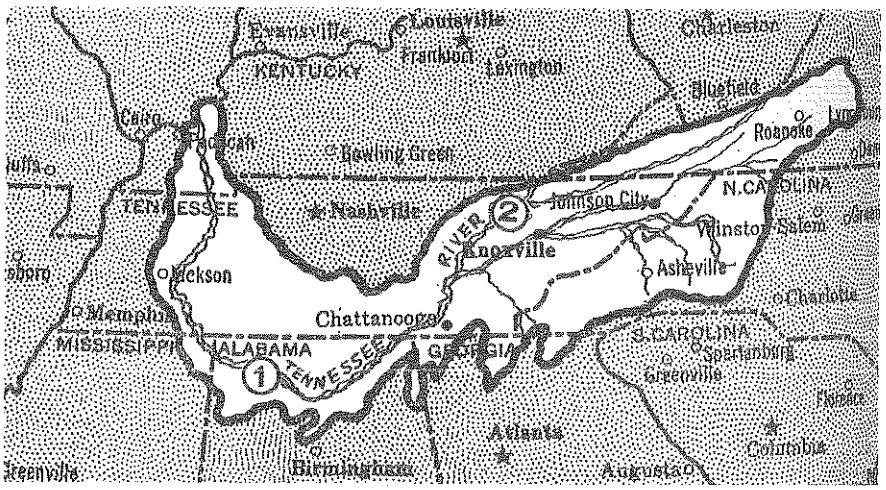

Figure 7.4. The Tennessee Valley Region, showing Muscle Shoals (1) and Cove Creek (2) site of Norris Dam. (*Source*: Thomas Adams, *Outline of Town and City Planning*, 1935)

It was the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), established in 1933, that was imbued with implementation authority (Hancock, 1988). Although the TVA is sometimes cited as the hallmark of regional planning in the U.S., it cannot be pointed to as a successful model of regionalism, at least not as the RPAA envisioned. Its main preoccupation was with dam building and promoting industrial and economic activity in the region. As a result, the TVA by 1960 had become one of the country's biggest polluters (Thomas, 2000).

Originally, the regionalists had high hopes for the TVA. Chase (1936, p. 287) considered it to be 'the promise of what all America will some day be'. But critics described it as a state-sponsored extension of monopoly capitalism. A similar interpretation by Thomas (2000) is that the TVA allowed Corporate America to capture the 'middle ground' – the very domain the regionalists were trying to use to implement their vision. The settlement patterns – indeed the regional culture – of

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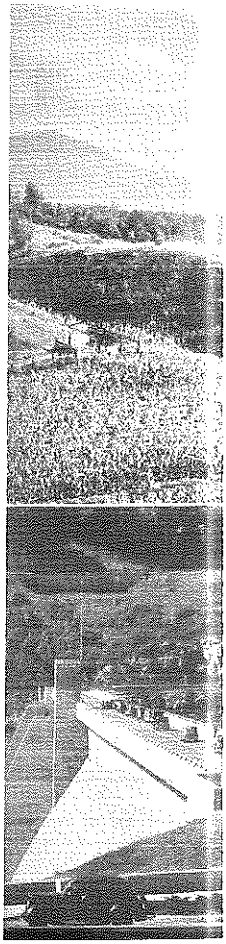

Figure 7.5. The top pho
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thousands of people in the TV area were disrupted. There were vestiges of RPAA's 'organic territorial' structure, but the Tennessee Valley was more about developing resources for human use than creating regional structure (Friedmann and Weaver, 1979). Its experiments in redistributing population in the form of new regionally dispersed towns was also a failure. One town constructed, Norris, Tennessee, was small and largely insignificant, and the displaced population fell between the cracks. Amazingly, there was no organized system of resettlement in the region (Hancock, 1988).

In Europe the ideas of the RPAA fared better. This was clearest in London, which famously executed its Regional Plan under Patrick Abercrombie following World

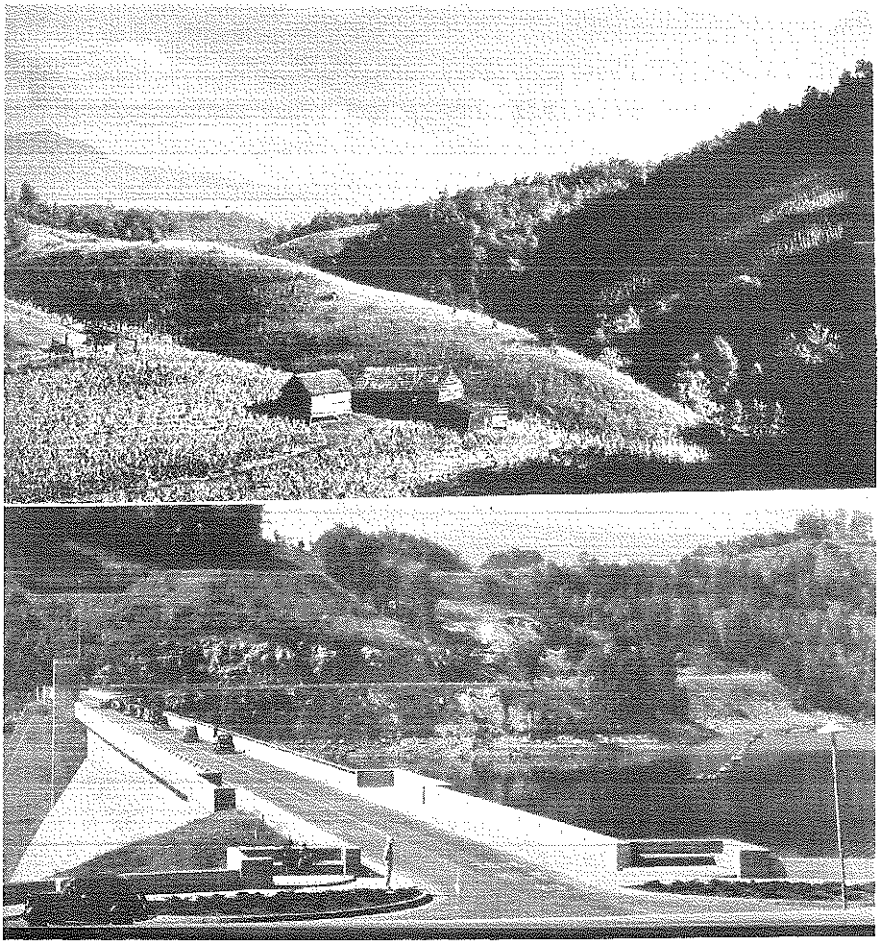


Figure 7.5. The top photo of an Upland area in Tennessee was, according to Lewis Mumford, 'potentially the scene of a more intensive settlement that will conserve rather than blot out the natural foundations for a good and durable social life'. The bottom image is of the top of the Norris Dam, a TVA project. (*Source:* Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*, 1938)

War II, consisting of a green framework with eight new towns contained within it. Mumford thought the regional plan for the rebuilding of London exemplary, a mature outcome of Howard's garden cities model. There were other European examples. In Stockholm, Vallingby and thirty other satellite communities were constructed as part of the 'regional city' idea promulgated by the RPAA.

These examples contrasted sharply with the situation in the U.S. There, regional planning was reinvented as 'regional science', a scientific approach that stressed industrial location, economic modelling, and the establishment of growth centres for depressed regions, concepts which did not coincide well with the earlier regionalism of the 1920s and 1930s. The RPAA had sought social, ecological and economic balance, not economic stimulation policies organized around commerce and transportation systems.

The story of post-war urbanism was the rise of the 'centreless city', as Jackson put it, and as Harris and Ullman were able to capture in their 'multiple nuclei model' in the 1940s (Jackson, 1985, p. 265). With its muddled edges and haphazard pattern of land use, the centreless city was the antithesis of what the regionalists were hoping for. They might have agreed with whatever shift away from dependence on the central city occurred, but the realization of Geddesian 'ink-stains and grease-spots' made a mockery of the organized decentralization that was so essential to regionalist thinking. It seemed more akin to Wright's Broadacre City proposal, 'the climax of anti-urbanism', a settlement pattern that was 'everywhere or nowhere' as Wright described it himself (White and White, 1962, p. 209; Grabow, 1977, p. 116).

In addition, the regionalist perspective clashed with post-war city planning that took the form of downtown redevelopment. Whether the renewal was focused on rehousing urban slum dwellers or stimulating downtown economic development, neither of these post-war emphases were consistent with the regionalist view. Catherine Bauer, who had been a member of the RPAA, thought in terms of regionally dispersed, well-planned communities not unlike the Abercrombie model. But as the urban re-housers and the downtown redevelopers joined forces to carry out their urban renewal projects, the regionalist vision became increasingly marginalized. It could not have been otherwise, since developing housing on inflated inner-city land was completely antithetical to regionalism.

Jane Jacobs' attack on urban renewal did not exonerate the regionalist strategy, which she also disliked. Instead, regionalism began to define itself in a variety of different ways, from the economic modelling approach of regional science to systems of governance. By the time these regionalist perspectives came to dominate in the 1970s, the original conceptualization of regionalism by MacKaye, Mumford, and Stein was barely noticeable. For example, the book *Regional Planning*, published in 1983, made no mention of any members of the RPAA whatsoever, despite including a historical overview (Lim, 1983). Instead, the book defined regionalism

on the basis of governance structure: supra-state regional planning, city-county consolidations, tiered government structures, councils of government, and special-purpose districts.

Thus, the definition of regionalism has changed dramatically over the past century. Devolving from the regionalism of the RPAA to systems of governance, the presence of regionalism today is sometimes defined as *ad hoc*, composed of a loose coalition of interests (Porter and Wallis, 2003). Not surprisingly, the capacity of government to address issues from a regional perspective is limited. The result has tended to be a focus on economic development rather than regional equity and environmental resource protection. *Ad hoc* groups lack an institutional framework, but even more profoundly, policies are formulated without benefit of a regional identity. Ironically, regionalism is often equated with the lack of local identity and self-determination, exactly the opposite of what the early regionalists were intending.

Connections

For practical reasons, it was regionalism defined as metropolitan coordination that took hold in the American planning consciousness. This occurred in part because that brand of regionalism was well connected to other cultures via Daniel Burnham, Thomas Adams, and John Nolen. Their legacy was a recognition that some elements extend out from a central place and connect at the intra-urban scale. Various types of 'systems', especially natural systems and transportation, were to be planned with this regional interconnection in mind. It started with the recognition, posited initially by Olmsted, that natural systems in a metropolitan region were cross-jurisdictional. For early planners like J. Horace McFarland, long-time president of the American Civic Association, it meant that cities should have more power, transformed into city-states that could self-manage. The unifying urban schemes of the 'Greater San Francisco' movement of 1906 were not dissimilar to New York's system of borough's and Boston's metropolitan planning board set up by Nolen and others (Scott, 1969).

Yet this way of thinking was, according to regionalists aligned with the RPAA, missing the point. Since regionalism as defined by the RPAA asked 'not how wide an area can be brought under the aegis of the metropolis', but instead how population can be distributed, metropolitan regionalism had profoundly dissimilar goals from the RPAA. More radically, the regionalist idea of a reconstituted central metropolis relied on changing the very processes of change, not just technological change within the same underlying system. This included scrapping the existing divisions of government, promoting common ownership of land, and reorienting the entire land development apparatus to reflect human, not capitalistic purpose.

American urbanism has been caught up in the sustained need to work out a

perspective that encompasses both centralizing and decentralizing objectives. In addition to the Olmstedian tradition of emphasizing regional connections within the metropolis, there is a need to consider placing human settlement patterns in their natural, regional context. One of the most prolific themes in American urbanism is that a decentralizing population requires a method of organization. This was something emphasized by the ecological planning of McHarg, and in the framework of regionalism, the insistence that deconcentration be organized continues. Mumford put it succinctly in his essay 'A Brief History of Urban Frustration', that the regional scale of the city means that there should not be a single domineering centre, but a 'network of cities of different forms and sizes, set in the midst of publicly protected open spaces permanently dedicated to agriculture and recreation'. The metropolis would be *primus inter pares*, 'the first among equals' (Mumford, 1968, p. 219).

One of the appeals of regionalism and the reason it is an important component of American urbanism is its rejection of rigid rules and planning bureaucracies that seem unable to see the big picture. Just as Mumford stressed the importance of being able to perceive the future, not as 'the glorified extension of the dying present' but as emergent forms and trends, the best of American urbanism has tended to emphasize the importance of future direction (Wilson, 1983, p. 113). But this in turn brings up the central issue of pragmatics, the cause of failing to embrace the regionalism of the RPAA more fully. A key debate is whether the radicalism they proposed can be moulded into something more aligned with American political realities and still retain its integrity and value. Fishman wonders if the 'opening generation' Mumford had hoped for, to usher in the regionalist perspective, has finally, with a new, inclusive and more realistic voice, arrived (Fishman, 2001, p. xxi). Yet there is also the interpretation that, rather than appearing pragmatic when compared to the regionalism of Geddes, Mumford and MacKaye, the new regionalists appear equally quixotic. The goals of regionally distributed affordable housing, tax-sharing on a regional basis, mass transit, and regional growth boundaries may seem the most workable, but to date not even these less radical strategies have been particularly successful.

While American urbanism is not likely to be based on the establishment of new political and economic structures, on one crucial point there is agreement – that the underlying processes that created metropolitan degradation in the first place are themselves subject to change. This has the flavour of John Dewey and the pragmatists, and the regionalists, especially Mumford, made this point repeatedly. Like Dewey, there was a sense that any statement of knowledge only possesses this status provisionally, contingent upon whether it provides a better basis for human action.

This perspective coincided with the idea that new forms of human settlement

may be entirely possible. Mumford optimistically hoped that these changing processes would foster an evolution of pattern more in line with human needs. Change would not simply be a matter of redirecting the existent urban trajectory, but would be more fundamental. This is a perspective that has been articulated recently by James Howard Kunstler (1993, 1996), whose books explore the theme that the 'fiasco of suburbia' is based on social and economic systems that are subject to change, and therefore the notion that sprawl as an urban form is somehow inevitable is a false premise.

It is hard to imagine how American urbanism could accommodate the radical change in social and economic structure advocated by the RPAA. There are continued calls for adjustments to land development, planning, and regulation canonized in conventional planning practice, but conventional structures are where urbanism is likely to dwell, at least in the short term. A different kind of connection to regionalism could be the way in which the RPAA operated – as idealists, as debaters, as innovators. It is this sense of vision and idealism that has a place in American urbanism. Regionalism as originally conceived can be thought of as a mode of thinking, a method, a spirit of engagement, a forum. In fact the RPAA rejected entrenched, bureaucratized regionalism in favour of optimism, proaction, and creative visioning. It was meant to be evolutionary, not stagnant. The prime objective was to 're-educate' rather than 'diffuse the existing stereotypes' (Mumford, 1951, p. 17).

Because the city was a 'collective personality' with its own unique character, the requirements of a diversified, versatile planning approach were intrinsic to good urbanism (Mumford, 1968, p. 17). The early regional planners thought that bold visioning required detachment from standardized patterns. Mumford knew that a model like the British New Towns program could, if stereotyped, eliminate 'the very richness and variety of concrete detail that is inherent in the notion of a city'. The trick was, and still is, the ability to differentiate between a fresh and inspired idea and an idea that will sour. This Mumford seemed to know. In the early 1960s he was already writing about the 'grave liabilities' of the office park and the shopping mall.

The question is whether American urbanists can effectively emulate the informality and intellectual stimulation of the RPAA. Perhaps this is what con-stant innovation requires, but the transference to urbanism implemented via bureaucratized planning is obviously a different model. The RPAA deliberately rejected the word 'organization' and instead used 'association', because they wanted to remain 'unstructured and unconcerned' about official policy-making. They wanted to be a flexible group that respected each other's individuality (Lubove, 1963). The attitude MacKaye (1928, p. 227) sought was one 'not of frozen dogma or irritated tension, but of gentle and reposeful power'. That this attitude prevailed is reflected

in the fact that the RPAA had no unanimous views about what, for example, the characteristics of the planned community should be in terms of optimal size. Nor was there any agreement on what the size of a region should be. MacKaye thought in terms of continents and Stein in terms of states, but there was no consensus on the definition of a region other than in the most abstract of terms (Sussman, 1976).

In addition to a potential connection to the outlook and approach of the regionalists, American urbanism can draw from their methodologies. This includes the language of 'visualization' and, relatedly, the power of community 'visioning' in the planning process. It is an emphasis on discovery and intimate understanding of human landscape, as laid out by Geddes and MacKaye. It was technical, but it was also instinctively artistic. MacKaye's emphasis on 'visualizing', in which he urged 'the new explorer' to 'speak softly but carry a big map' and Geddes' valley section survey techniques were part of a new tradition of inventory and understanding that moved across scale and time (MacKaye, 1928, p. 227). Almost everything had meaning and was looked at creatively for potential new insights. The early regionalists made use of participant observation, something relatively unknown at the time. They engaged in these innovative practices because, they believed, if this ability was cultivated properly, more could be visualized. Looking deeper at a forest revealed the food cycle; looking deeper at a landscape revealed its water cycle.

They were building on the idea that, in regionalism, vantage-point and perspective is critically important. A high vantage-point made sure that their knowledge was geographically broad, whether it was from the perspective of MacKaye's Appalachian mountaintop or Geddes' Outlook Tower. Only from high up could the natural framework of cities be perceived. What is particularly intriguing is how this perspective did not limit understanding to generalities – there was an emphasis on detail as well, a linking of the macro and the micro that is enviable and difficult. Geddes mapped the landscape meticulously, looking for interrelationships over time and space. The result has been described as a synoptic 'implosion' in which detailed surveys, embedded in a historical trajectory, were supposed to foster a kind of crystal ball reading of the future (Easterling, 1999).

All of this emphasis on survey, inventory and artistic perspective is important to the development of American urbanism because it focuses attention on exploration and discovery of human settlement rather than, exclusively, invention. MacKaye defined planning in precisely these terms: 'planning is discovery and not invention', an idea he promoted as a 'new exploration'. The important implication of this is that it places heavy weight on historical and present conditions, 'the potential now existing in the actual' (MacKaye, 1940, p. 349). The crystal ball reading of the future was there, waiting to be discovered by an artistic but also technical reading of existing conditions. The critique of this is that it can be self-limiting. Regional

study, Kimble (1951) argues, is a personal portrait, a work of art, and although illuminating, rather limited in terms of scientific rigour and definitive analysis. It is possible that this criticism stems from the fact that the regional survey of Geddes had a radical social and political purpose.

American urbanism requires a counter-response to the celebration of innovation and novelty at the expense of context and historical tradition, a price that has taken a toll on American cities. This may not have been how the RPAA would have described their actions, especially given their acceptance of technological solutions. But the regionalist emphasis on discovery over invention, on finding new ways to visualize, is closely linked to the idea that innovation must be tempered and must work within an existing language of urbanism. Leon Krier has articulated the idea most cogently. He argues that tradition and progress are not in conflict, that there is no *zeitgeist* that dictates that urbanism must only have the mark of a particular point in time, but can and should instead 'transend the particularities of its age of creation'. There is no disconnect between being original and being traditional, because traditional architecture and urbanism are simply 'an inventory of genetic capacity' (Krier, 1998, pp. 71, 187). This is a clear affirmation of the artistic historicism of Geddes and MacKaye.

The emphasis on regional survey is yet another version of a theme that has pervaded all urbanist cultures – the importance of localism and sense of place. Here the theme has a regionalist twist. The ecological planning of McHarg, the landscape studies of J.B. Jackson, the architectural explorations of Scott Brown and Venturi, and the 'everyday urbanism' of Chase, Crawford and Kaliski all converge on the notion of rooting ideas in particular places with particular traditions. It is the basis of the movement in architecture known as 'critical regionalism', a phrase adopted by contemporary architectural historian Kenneth Frampton to describe an architecture rooted in local conditions, and recently adopted by some New Urbanist architects because of its local emphasis (Kelbaugh, 2002). Understanding the implications of place recalls the doctrine of appropriateness. Mumford knew the doctrine had been violated when he derided planning in the 1960s for producing 'the wrong type of development in the wrong place for the wrong purpose' (Mumford, 1968, p. 173). It was the emphasis on local knowledge that gave the regionalists the sensitivity to make this determination.

Another aspect of regionalism that is valuable for American urbanism has to do with the ability to traverse, and simultaneously consider, planning at the regional and the community level. The early regionalists seemed to be able to penetrate natural systems and the urban core simultaneously. They seemed able to move back and forth, and in fact interconnect with, multiple scales. Not everyone was convinced they could do it. Adams criticized Mumford as unrealistic for wanting to 'saddle' the Regional Plan with both a state-wide plan and a detailed city plan, two

responsibilities that Adams believed would be difficult to engage simultaneously (Adams, 1932). But the whole basis of the RPAA was an interconnection between human settlement and regional context, and this meant, at least conceptually, the micro and the macro scale. It was an integration of community planning and conservationism that naturally occurred at the regional scale, but that had connections to the planned community as well. This was not unlike Stein's earlier conception of the 'Regional City', an idea taken up more recently by Calthorpe and Fulton (2001). They stipulate that designing the region operates on similar principles as designing the neighbourhood – 'parallel features' that reinforce each other at different scales.

This multi-scaled approach was one manifestation of the importance of integration and connectedness that ran throughout regionalism. Other examples include Mumford's four 'migrations' which were not just temporally distinct phases, but were conceived as needing to operate simultaneously. Another was the emphasis on studying multiple dimensions of places as an integrative endeavour that was meant to counteract the tendency toward specialization. Geddes' surveys were focused on the interactions of people, place and work precisely as a way to avoid this tendency. MacKaye's argument for three 'elemental environments', the primeval, the rural and the urban, was based on their fundamental connectedness, whereby the loss of any one had serious consequences for the others. In practice, the RPAA regionalists used an integrative, teamwork approach to develop Radburn, bringing multiple interests together to formulate their plan. The strategy of synthesizing disciplinary interests was a forerunner to today's emphasis on participatory planning, and had a significant impact on the positive response Radburn enjoyed within the planning profession (Birch, 1980*a*).

A final aspect of regionalism that is relevant to American urbanism is the idea of evaluating urban patterns in terms of inefficiency and waste. For example, there is a parallel condition between the wastefulness of the large metropolis, the RPAA focus, and the wastefulness of sprawl, the more recent embodiment of inefficiency and waste. Both are, or have been, dominant development patterns conceptualized as catastrophic and in danger of collapsing the whole urban system. The regionalist distaste for the inefficiency, waste, environmental degradation and social cost attributed to the large metropolis can now be associated with a similar set of costs attributed to sprawl. Both amount to a basis for articulating what American urbanism should oppose.

Conflicts

Despite the strong positive role of regionalism in the development of American urbanism, there are also significant sources of conflict, largely rooted in the divergent notions of what regionalism is supposed to be. To begin with, there

are competing definitions of what a region is. This was previously viewed as an indication of flexibility, but it could also be seen as a source of conflict. RPAA regionalists defined the region as 'any geographic area that possesses a certain unity of climate, soil vegetation, industry and culture' (Mumford, 1925, p. 151). Now, a region is more likely to be defined as 'a large and multifaceted metropolitan area encompassing hundreds of places' (Calthorpe and Fulton, 2001, p. 15). This latter definition seems more aligned with Chicago School sociologist R.D. McKenzie, who predicted the demise of indigenous regional cultures in the wake of the emergence of the economic, functional region. No doubt this is coincident with the view that regionalism, as articulated by Geddes, Mumford, and Chase, was too radical and too socialist to be taken seriously. The conflict over regional definition is therefore rooted in the transformation of the regionalist approach to metropolitan regionalism, something quite separate from the brand of regionalism conceived of by Geddes and Mumford.

Another fundamental source of conflict stems from the fact that the regionalists were largely motivated by an outright rejection of large metropolitan areas. To the degree that environmental planning grew out of regionalism, the retention of the anti big-metropolis point of view can be regarded as an undercurrent that, some say, never went away, and that continues to stimulate conflict. Related to this, there is the perception that regionalism – or whatever part of it evolved into environmental planning – ignores the internal workings of large cities. It does this either because of a lack of caring or a lack of understanding, but in either case its focus on natural systems, despite claims towards multi-dimensionality and interconnectedness, excludes the existing city to some degree. On the worst occasions, this may even translate into a tendency to ruralize urban areas, or advocate low-density, rural development patterns that are indistinguishable from sprawl. On the other hand, the predominance of functionally defined regionalism has been criticized for being inconsistent with environmental processes (Spirn, 2000).

Yet it is often said that, despite their constant rhetoric about the evils of the metropolis, the regionalists were not anti-urban. Defenders of the RPAA have even called the claim that they were anti-urbanist the 'hysterical equivalent to political red-baiting' (Sussman, 1976, p. 29). Surprisingly, the regionalists made little effort to change this perception. In the film *The City* narrated by Lewis Mumford and shown at the 1939 World's Fair, the RPAA doctrine was elicited fairly crudely – the big impersonal metropolis was portrayed as bad, while small communities in touch with nature and village-like in social structure were portrayed as good. MacKaye's hometown of Shirley, Massachusetts, alongside Radburn, were presented in the film as models of good American urbanism. Given this kind of presentation, it is not unjustified to question the urbanistic commitment of the regionalists.

We know, however, that the contempt for the large metropolis was much

more nuanced than simply being a matter of anti-urbanism. Mumford strongly criticized the new towns of Reston and Columbia because they lacked urbanity, overemphasized green space, and underemphasized compactness (Mumford, 1968). And all regionalists were united in their focus on the idea that the experience of place is the essential starting point of regionalism.

The debate that underlies the contrasting perspectives on how the existing city is to be treated is about whether the underlying processes of change are seen as something that can be dealt with proactively. As discussed above, there was agreement that the processes that created the industrial city in the first place are themselves subject to change, but this was not universally interpreted as reason to hope for the emergence of an entirely new urban pattern. Plan-makers sought to channel goals through paths of least resistance – repair of the existing city in the form of infill, the establishment of nodes of transit-based development, and stemming the haemorrhage of people and services to the surrounding countryside. In this approach, the issue of metropolitan dominance and its changing status becomes somewhat moot. The quest to 'repossess and replan' the whole metropolitan landscape, involving a reformulation of 'the processes of life, growth, [and] reproduction' is obviously a much more involved proposal (Mumford, 1968, p. 83). Nearly everyone has agreed that it is holistic, but this holism is readily cast aside for being, as Jane Jacobs (1961) labelled it, 'far-flung'.

The RPAA regionalists abandoned cities in the sense they could not foresee turning them around or transforming them into settlements in line with human need. What they were searching for, instead, was the 'middle ground', a place halfway between pure provincial culture and the metropolis (Thomas, 2000). Perhaps it was more like the 'middle landscape' conceptualized by Leo Marx as the achievement of balance between humans and nature. Since the existing metropolis could not help accomplish this, it was necessary to turn to 'the healing order of nature' for help rather than the 'organized complexity' of the dense urban core.[2]

For Geddes, the contagion of the early industrial, Paleotechnic city, needed to be reversed. It was already creating unhealthy conurbations of dispersal and conglomeration – something similar to megalopolis, to use Gottman's later term. The city was still necessary, but it needed to be refashioned as something much more virtuous. The debate that has ensued is over the degree to which this reconstituted urbanity is in fact urbanism. In their discussion of 'The Intellectual Versus the City', White and White (1962, pp. 207–208) argued the opposite. They wrote: 'identifying the city's nodules of growth with Italian restaurants, Polish dances, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the New York Public Library is hardly a matter of cheering at the top of your lungs for the city'. According to this view, what was missing was the messy diversity tolerated and sometimes even relished by the incrementalists.

What, exactly, was to be done with this Paleotechnic city of slums? The abolition of the city outright was advocated by agrarian extremists like Frank Lloyd Wright and Henry Ford, but what the regionalists advocated was not the same. The regionalists claimed that they had tried to rebuild it in conventional ways, but the effort required the 'labor of Sisyphus' (*Survey Graphic*, 1925, p.129). The solution was redistribution, in direct defiance of the tendency for large metropolitan areas to grow ever larger and assume more and more regional control. This required radical thinking, but there was no point trying to make life, as Mumford put it, 'a little more tolerable' in the congested metropolis (Mumford, 1925, p. 151).

In this lies a direct conflict with the Regional City envisaged by contemporary regionalists like Calthorpe and Fulton. They have conceptualized the 'emerging region' as a revitalized central city coexisting with strengthened suburbs and preserved natural areas. This is metropolitan regionalism, and the regionalist disdain for it – i.e., the brand of planning exemplified by the 1929 *Regional Plan of New York and its Environs* – was fundamental to its ideology. The RPAA regionalists considered the Plan to be a descendant of the City Beautiful because it glorified the monumental city – inhumane, detached from nature, and socially regressive. Other efforts at regional coordination started in the 1920s, for example Philadelphia's Tri-State District and Chicago's Regional Planning Association, were viewed similarly.

These regional efforts were largely aimed at bolstering the industrial economy, and did not mesh well with the RPAA view that factories were to be relocated in the country and given spacious surroundings. The small workshops that cluttered the city were to be demolished to make room for 'slum gardens'. Kropotkin, in his book *Fields, Factories and Workshops: or Industry Combined with Agriculture and Brain Work with Manual Work* (1912), had advocated that industries be scattered 'amidst the fields'. The idea that people ought to be producers who produce for themselves, in factories out in the fields, in close proximity to nature and to a socially cohesive, decentralized system of settlement, is in obvious conflict with metropolitan boosterism.

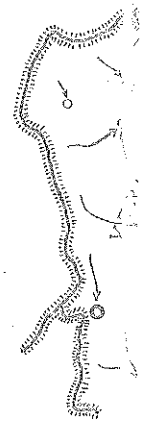
Perhaps what can be said, then, is that a regionalist like Geddes was not anti-city, just anti messy industrial metropolis – 'the slum of commerce'. Although New York City and London were prime examples, the metropolis to be avoided could be of any size. The distinguishing point was that the 'metropolitan world' attempted to standardize human beings and orient them around industry and commerce, in stark contrast to an 'indigenous world' that was organized as a 'quiltwork' of cultures and regional settings. Geographically, the RPAA regionalists saw the problem in two directions – the congested urban core and the peripheral spread. Cities of all types were to be unified, with definite geographic boundaries and 'no petering out in fattening, gelatinous suburban fringes' (MacKaye, 1928, p. 64). At the core, they were to be great and beautiful, like ancient Athens, Rome,

or Renaissance Venice. According to MacKaye, the distinction was one of being cosmopolitan vs. metropolitan: the former added to the world's variety, the latter to the world's monotony.

The key to the distinction was whether the city could sustain community. MacKaye sought the cosmopolitan city, which, quite unlike the metropolitan one, was a sort of grown-up village that was able to facilitate communal life in larger terms. The problem with the metropolis was that it was 'a standardized massing of humanity void of social structure'. True urbanism was thus being submerged not only physically by unbounded sprawl, but socially by the lack of common interest. Self-government was being replaced by large, impersonal bureaucracies, a further wearing down of communalism (MacKaye, 1928).

Few would disagree that the industrial city of squalor was something to be addressed. But Geddes and other regionalists deplored the industrial and commercial city even without the slums – the middle-class 'semi-slum', as well as the quarters of the wealthy which Geddes referred to as the 'super-slum' (Geddes, 1915). Mumford agreed, and criticized Friedrich Engels for thinking that dividing up the homes of the wealthy for the working classes and the poor would be an improvement. The standards of the 'pretentious residences' of the wealthy in the industrial city were, Mumford wrote, 'below those which were desirable for human life'. What was needed was not a reappropriation of property, but a 'revolutionary reconstruction of the entire social environment' (Mumford, 1938, p. 168). It was to be interpreted by later regionalists as going a step too far.

How far the urbanist should go to make the necessary changes depended on one's view of the nature of cities. RPAA regionalists were a low-order/low-intensity culture, but their sense of order was not embedded in the concept of emergence like the later incrementalists. For Jacobs, the city was the product of complex, but organized processes, and there was no escaping these. Geddes and the early regionalists believed in planning, and were prepared to fashion a new societal order through it. Geddes summed this up in phrases like, 'to unify is to see relations'. Jacobs might have been inclined to see this as an unhealthy attempt to undermine the complexity and diversity of a natural, urban organicism. The fact that Geddes disliked the 'grandiose designs of Mr. Burnham' every bit as much as Jacobs did, but was still able to appreciate their 'clearness of communication' shows how his belief in the planner's ability pervaded his world view (Geddes, 1915, p. 189). It also explains why the early regionalists were unable to interpret the disarray of big cities as anything other than pejorative. Large cities like New York were suffering from 'breakdowns' in housing, water and sewer systems, and street arrangement (MacKaye, 1928). The population they attracted and then sent to outlying districts, were nothing more than 'backflows' that submerged, in the case of New York, the quaint colonial villages of Harlem, Greenwhich and Chelsea.



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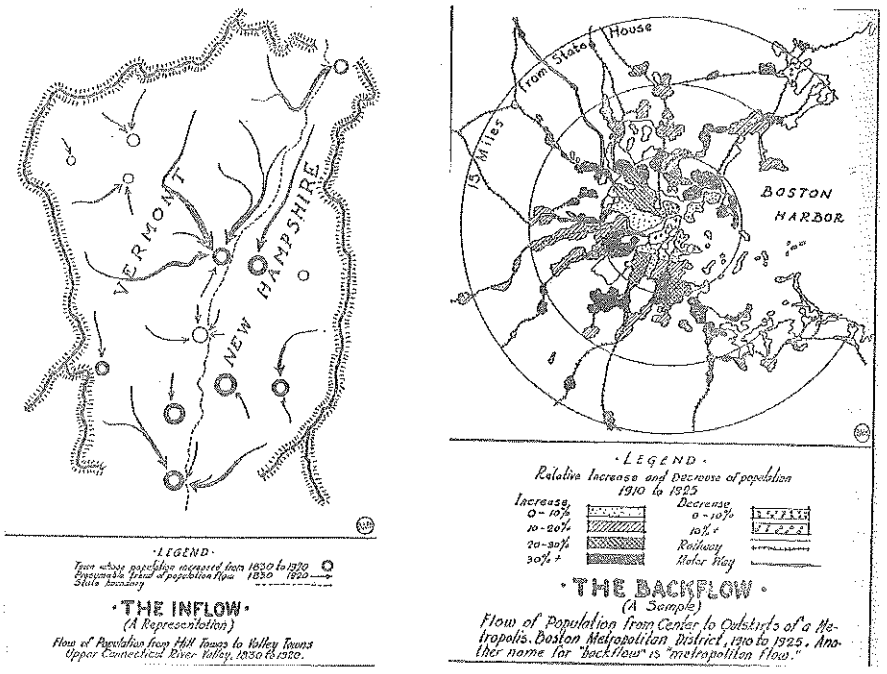


Figure 7.6. The 'flows' conceived by Benton MacKaye. The 'inflow' of people from 'hill towns to valley towns' in the Upper Connecticut River Valley occurred between 1830 and 1920. The 'backflow' was the movement of people from the city centre to the outskirts, here illustrated for the Boston Metropolitan District, 1910 to 1925. (*Source*: Benton MacKaye, *The New Exploration*, 1928)

Unlike the high-order plan-makers, the regionalists were more interested in affecting social relations than in imposing grand schemes for physical order. Some have observed that this made the conservationist ethic of the regionalists conservative – in addition to conserving natural resources, human and social values were to be conserved as well (Guttenberg, 1978). They wanted to preserve nature, but also pre-industrial social arrangements, and the importance of the small social unit came up repeatedly in regionalist writing. For MacKaye, Mumford, Chase and Stein, it was exemplified by the New England colonial village, not really the collective socialism espoused by Kropotkin, Geddes and Howard. In comparison to European notions of communitarianism, the American version seemed particularly sentimental. MacKaye was advocating the systematic development of 'outdoor community life' along the Appalachian Trail in which 'communal farms and recreation camps' would bring forth a heroic sense of volunteerism and willingness to work for a common cause (Thomas, 1994, p. 275).

There is still evidence of this view, and the natural merger between localism and ecology is one way in which regionalism and environmental planning (and, more

directly, environmental ecology) are linked. Murray Bookchin has been particularly effective in integrating decentralist, populist idealism with ecology (Marshall, 1992). He is now calling for a libertarian municipalism or 'new politics' that seeks better democratic representation at the local, neighbourhood level – a populist, decentralized and localized approach that has all the overtones of the early regionalist agenda. Today, the anarchic tradition of Kropotkin lives on through the merger of decentralism and ecology.

These notions conjure up the old liabilities of the planned community. The regionalists were complicit in the idea that self-contained human settlements like garden villages and neighbourhood units could be the catalysts for social regeneration. In a glaring way, the implicit moral structure of this project contrasted with the conflicted morality and cultural diversity of the city. The regionalist answer was a physical framework for social interaction, graphically represented on the cover of the *Survey Graphic* 'Regional Plan Number' (1925) which showed a happy family strolling in the countryside near a hydroelectric dam. Social structure was embedded in an environmental consciousness, not unlike the planned community, but viewed from a much wider scale. Here was the neighbourhood concept projected onto the region. Components of neighbourhood, like schools, were associated not only with a surrounding population, but with 'the surrounding world of nature' (Mumford, 1925). This wider perspective seemed to coincide with the fact that regionalists were preoccupied with integrating nature and the machine. This is similar to the phenomenon Dolores Hayden (1976) wrote about in *Seven American Utopias*, where utopians hoped to synthesize idealism that was both pastoral and technological. Industry was to be refashioned better to integrate with the communitarian spirit of settlement form.

In metropolitan America, however, no such synthesis between humankind and nature was possible. This imbalance, which absorbed the regionalists and was explicitly outlined by MacKaye in *The New Exploration* (1928), came to epitomize the antithesis of environmental conservation. The value of the large metropolis in environmental terms was a perspective that was lost on the early regionalists. Some see this legacy as unremitting. Contemporary urbanists perceive a failure on the part of environmentalists now to value urbanism as a cultural product. This is evidenced in the use of the notion of the 'ecological footprint', interpreted as a blanket reprimand on cities for 'stomping' on the environment. This is damaging to urbanism because the environmental perspective has the force of 'science' on its side. This distinct advantage is something of which the early regionalists were fully aware. Geddes' civic survey was a scientifically-derived understanding of the land; it was not knowledge gained by public participation. Geddes' views on this were blunt: 'whether one goes back to the greatest or to the simplest towns, there is little to be learned of civics by asking their inhabitants' (Geddes, 1915, p. 8). He offered

a synthetic, creative approach, but he thought that any romantic rejection of the Industrial city, as in the writings of Ruskin and Morris, was ultimately ineffectual and must instead be supported by a scientific rebuttal.

Again we come back to the enduring problem of how to articulate successfully the proper relation between the city and nature, between the urban and the rural. It has always been popular to proclaim, as Lewis Mumford did, that 'urban and rural, city and country, are one thing, not two things' (Mumford, 1956, p. 382). Yet Americans have always had a hard time finding the right balance. Anselm Strauss (1968) identified this as the essential dichotomy of American life and thought, and the division has been described as 'potent'. It does not necessarily suggest anti-urbanism as I have argued, but it does suggest a conflictedness in American and Western European culture, described by Tony Hiss as 'mental baggage' that originated as early as the industrial revolution (Hiss, 1991). According to Harvey, it was the rise of capitalism that spawned a new relationship between people and nature in which the two were separated, and nature began to be seen as a commodity (Harvey, 2000). Progress came to be equated with environmental degradation.

The failure to work out the proper balance between the urban and rural can also be seen in design terms. According to Lawrence (1993), there have always been four primary traditions of nature in the city: tree-lined boulevards, large city parks, residential squares, and the suburban house-and-garden. What is unfortunate about these traditions in the American context is that only two ever really took hold – large city parks and the suburban garden. Not only are these two types the most individually experienced and the least civically-oriented, but their predominance is reflective of the American inability to establish an urbanistic articulation of nature (Kunstler, 2001). Kunstler argues that this was picked up from English culture. Lawrence (1993) explores how the conversion of urban open space from public square to private green in London during the eighteenth century not only represented the ruralized conception of wealth and status, but formed the basis of suburban living later on.

That cities should be contextualized within nature was not disputed. But should nature be contextualized within cities? On this question there continues to be disagreement. A key issue is whether nature in cities is meant to fulfil a civic purpose, or whether nature is fulfilling its own purpose that exists outside the realm of urban civics. The regionalists answered this by postulating that nature forms an encompassing framework, a 'green background' that was to frame development in direct contrast to any pattern framed by human infrastructure (Hall, 2002). Within the city, parks were to provide a spiritual connection to natural beauty. Parks were a matter of living up to the ideals of a republic, the refinement of taste and culture, a vision of what society in American terms could be (Schuyler, 1986). Human healing and restoration were the domain of nature, not the built environment.

Because of their disdain for the industrial metropolis of their day, the regionalists have been implicated in the problem of wanting to green the city, to 'do the city in', as Jane Jacobs would say. Geddes was one of the first to promote the greening of the city. From his Outlook Tower he conducted an 'Open Spaces Survey' of Edinburgh and calculated 10 acres awaiting reclamation as gardens. Thus Geddes' solution was to bring nature into the city. As he put it, 'make the field gain on the street' so that cities would cease spreading like 'ink-stains and grease-spots' (Hall, 2002, p. 154).

The regionalists of the Geddes-Mumford-MacKaye variety had a nuanced understanding of urbanism, but nature was definitely the driving force. The integration of the urban and the rural was not conceptualized as dichotomously as by Olmsted, where urbanity was to be completely shut out from nature, but the philosophy was nevertheless one of urban subordination. Planning was a process of understanding the limits imposed by nature. Some would argue that this subordination reflects a deep ambivalence about the place of cities in America more generally, an indecisiveness that can be witnessed most dramatically in the creation of the American capital (Schuyler, 1986). Washington was a city that made no provision for industry, poor people, or commercial enterprise, and was thus not really a city at all, but a monument. On this there is agreement shared by cultures on the low-order end of the grid – the incrementalists and the regionalists.

The subordination of the urban to the rural meant that the delimitation of the region was to be based on natural rather than political geographies. This was necessary in order to facilitate the local (regional) production of goods and limit economic transaction to intra-regional exchange. This perspective led Benton MacKaye to conceptualize everything in terms of natural systems, likening city planning problems to water engineering and flood control. He made prolific use of natural imagery and analogy. Roadways were to be dams to control sprawl. Open spaces were levees that would control metropolitan infringement. The metropolis, whether large or small, was 'a leaky or ruptured reservoir' (MacKaye, 1928, p. 174). These metaphors fuelled the idea that valued components of cities had naturalistic as opposed to intrinsically urbanistic qualities.

For environmentalists, the richness of environment – essentially its 'complexity' – is derived from the ecological structure of regions. For urbanists, complexity found in the city can be appreciated from a cultural and exchange point of view. By focusing on complexity in natural systems and ignoring urban complexity, ecologically-oriented regionalists have tended to overlook the needs of urbanism, or so it is has been argued (Duany, 2002). Such regionalists lack principles for its internal arrangement, only focusing on prohibiting its extension outright. Their scale is too large, despite the fact that the regional framework of centralized places, open space and infrastructure is meant to inform smaller scale urban design issues

in a kind of fractal, nested way. Regionalists like MacKaye seemed to think in highly integrative terms, relying on the region to link specialists – engineer, economist, landscape architect, town planner. But the idea that plans and visualizations could be united on the basis of their attention to the whole (the region) set the stage for the neglect of urbanism. MacKaye's dynamic and visionary approach seemed to leave out the community scale when it came to actual implementation. The *New Exploration* was the visualization of three processes having to do with natural resource conservation, control of commodity-flow and the development of the environment, but there was no working out of the qualities of urbanism.

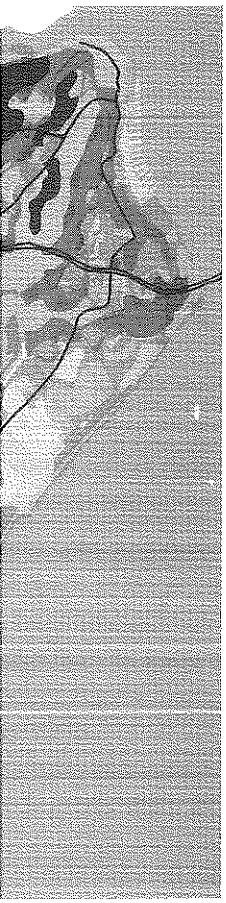
Paralleling the broader focus of regionalism, environmentalism in planning has been seen as damaging to urbanism by its perpetuation of 'urban discontinuities' – the requirements of maintaining continuous green spaces in such a way that the urban fabric, which requires its own system of connectedness, is violated. It is a system that favours natural connectivity and thereby, according to Andres Duany (2002, p. 254), 'cauterizes the urban pattern'. Regionalists today might reject this characterization, but there is a history to it. It is a manifestation of the view carried forth by Mumford and the RPAA that the only hope for New York City was that it become externally rather than internally focused – that its salvation lay outside of itself. This was the basis of McHargian ecological planning, which directed attention on regional settlement frameworks often to the exclusion of the urban qualities *within* the framework. It is telling that one of the people to whom McHarg dedicates his famous book *Design with Nature* (1969) is Lewis Mumford. Somehow the idea of bringing culture into reciprocal relation with nature, a concern of Mumford's, did not translate in the conservationist version into a concern for the crucial ingredients of good urbanism. The neglect of the specific conditions of urbanity is something Mumford later corrected in the 1960s, but by then the environmental movement was heading in a different direction (Luccarelli, 1995). By the 1960s, regional plans were likely to be 'hydra-headed', consisting of multiple alternatives leading in different directions. The regional plan became entirely open ended, facilitating a kind of 'planned sprawl' that neglected the importance of human-scaled design principles (Thomas, 2000).

We are now left with office parks, shopping centres and housing pods interspersed amid McHarg's preserved natural areas. In the 'utter absence of a corresponding proposition' for urban areas, some maintain that environmentalism-as-regionalism has done nothing to heal a damaged urban realm (Duany, 2002, p. 254). Ecological methods are purported to find the 'optimal fitness' of human uses according to the requirements of the land, and ecological planners state that their methods can be used to address development issues in urban environments (Ndubisi, 2002). What seems to be missing is design – the realization that urban form, context and pattern, and the 'details' of urban environments, play a fundamental role in making places

Figure 7.8. A composite map resulting from McHargian overlay analysis of areas suitable for conservation, recreation and urbanization. The coloured map (shown in grey tones here) indicated land uses showing 'unitary, complementary and competing' values. (*Source*: Ian McHarg, *Design with Nature*, 1969. Reprinted with permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)

humanly viable or not. This is why the environmentalist perspective is critiqued for failing to show how to accomplish goals like 'housing sustainability' in more concrete terms.[3] It is not simply a matter of making cities dense and compact, with lots of green space inserted for fresh air and light. Inattention to the importance of details can quickly spell disaster for quality urbanism.

Nature and the city were kept apart by Olmsted. His parks were ameliorative, not in the sense of beautifying the city, but in offering escape from them. Wilson points out that Olmsted would have thought the idea that parks and boulevards could create a beautiful city completely farfetched: 'The grand old man of landscape architecture . . . never hoped to beautify the entire city through some aesthetic ripple effect. The city was harsh and hard, and parks and boulevards were



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alternatives to it' (Wilson, 1989, p. 38). Thus what Olmsted had in mind for Central Park was a complete absence of human structure. The park's human elements – a zoo, statues, buildings, flower gardens, cafes – were not what Olmsted had wanted (Fisher, 1994). There was a clear distinction between altering the elements of nature for the purpose of maximizing beauty and a feeling of tranquillity, and altering nature to fit the language and context of urbanity. The latter view did not apply.

The possibility of the conformance of nature to urbanism was not part of McHarg's way of thinking either. In McHarg's 'The Place of Nature in the City of Man', he developed a 'simple working method for open space' that relied on conceptualizing nature in purely biological terms, where the 'city of man' is 'a natural urban environment speaking to man as a natural being and nature as the environment of man' (McHarg, 1964, p. 12). In discussing the superiority of the ecologist over the green belt advocate, McHarg stressed that nature could not be defined within a belt, because nature is not uniform. Clearly, the idea that there could be a contextualized nature subservient to the proper workings of urbanism would have been considered antithetical to an ecological, regional planning in which cities are subordinated to natural processes.

The merger of design and ecology in a way that is more integrative than that experienced conventionally in the fields of environmental design and planning, should, at least theoretically, be a good thing for American urbanism.[4] The emphasis on the interrelationship between human, environment and process as a basis for planning and design is straight out of the RPAA manifesto, even though the members of the latter group did not regularly use the term *ecology*. There will still be scepticism as to whether the regionalist focus on 'the natural and social processes of a specific region' (McHarg and Steiner, 1998, p. 91), can be used as the fundamental basis for planning cities. Ecological planning emphasizes that humans be 'in tune with natural processes', but again the question is, what does this dictum mean for city form specifically, and is there ever a point at which the needs of urbanism trump environmental systems? Failure to answer the first question indicates an answer of 'no' to the second.

Related to this, there is the question of whether localism can properly address questions of urban form. In fact the call for a renewal of localism, articulated by Emerson and Dewey, seized upon by Mumford, and moulded into a planning agenda by the regionalists, has been viewed as an explicit rejection of the American city (White and White, 1962). While it is no doubt a good thing to reject, as the critical regionalists in architecture have done, standardized form and seek instead a sensitivity to local climate, material, building methods and geography (see Kelbaugh, 2002), the idea of focusing on local regional traditions can tend to leave out the urban realm. This is because the emphasis in localism is on folk, rural culture as opposed to urban culture – craft over haute couture.

Urbanists may also wonder how, in the wake of an increasingly homogenized landscape of big box development and chain stores, local urban vernacular tradition can be relied on as a basis for urbanism. In some cases where the onslaught of theme commercialism is dominant, it may be necessary to rely on urbanistic values that are rooted in broader, non-local urbanistic traditions. But this may conflict with the way regionalists and others of the ecological planning school have envisioned things. In the midst of badly damaged urbanism and mass consumer culture, the only local traditions that can be relied on come from the rural and natural – requiring a response *not* rooted in urbanism. Steiner said exactly this when he noted, in reviewing McHarg's emphasis on localism, that 'developing values from a local perspective *based on regional bio-physical processes* differs from importing values from outside the region' (McHarg and Steiner, 1998, p. 89, emphasis added). The antidote to importing ideas from outside the region is to use 'natural ones'.

The political and economic requirements for maintaining localism have passed through several stages. Geddes was aligned with the anarchic communitarianism of Kropotkin, but the regionalism of the RPAA 'personified the idea of an administered society' (Lubove, 1963, p. 63). Their nemesis was the real estate speculator, the banker and the administrator who greased the wheels of speculative practice. The same gatekeepers are criticized today, but because of the entrenched bureaucratic planning apparatus now in place, American urbanists are more cautious about the potential of administratively-based solutions and more open to the idea of market-based ones. However, there has always been widespread belief that urbanism in America cannot succeed without some degree of public involvement. Given the fact that the regionalist brand of reform was never able to impact American financial systems, there is reason to back the approach.

Since the heyday of the RPAA regionalists, thinking has changed in regard to the relationship between market-based economies and urbanism, and what distinguishes good urbanism from bad urbanism has been re-assessed accordingly. It is safe to say that the commercial gridded city is no longer disdained in the same way or with the same fortitude – a reinterpretation that Jane Jacobs helped implement. This is not to say that speculative practice is beloved, just that the circumstances have changed. The regionalists detested the gridded city of the New York Commissioner's Plan of 1811 because of its focus on promoting commercial speculation. Now Manhattan's brand of urbanism is more appreciated. It is interpreted positively for helping to promote urban diversity, via factors identified by Jane Jacobs as connectivity, short block sizes, mixed uses, and variation in building age.

Can regionalism make the shift to market-based solutions? The early regionalists, where they were involved directly in city-building, would have approached the idea of market based solutions through the mechanism of providing 'object lessons',

not as a matter of celebrating free market exchange. The regionalists wanted to produce positive models of community planning that exceeded the regulatory approach of Lawrence Veiller's brand of housing reform. They were deeply concerned about affordability, and their focus on costs may have been one reason why some regionalists seemed to neglect human-scaled design issues. When Stein rejected the proposal to clear streets of congestion by building overhead streets, the rejection was based on costs, not on the ill effects such a proposal would have had on the pedestrian environment. The standardization of housing was something notoriously remiss in terms of design. Before long, regionalists had become patrons of the 'aggregated cruciform plan type' – towers in a park (Mumford, 1995, p. 25).

The narrow interpretation of cost as economic efficiency, for example in *Some Principles Relating to the Economics of Land Subdivision* (Wright, 1929), produced problematic conditions like superblocks, low interconnectivity, dendritic street systems and automobile dependence that, ironically, in the long run have added costs. Now, the contemporary view of waste in terms of the 'costs of sprawl' is not the same as the regionalist view of waste. The regionalist concern with 'reducing building costs at every possible point' meant that increasing housing supply overrode other concerns having to do with the civic realm (Lubove, 1963, p. 60). Maintaining a quality urban realm could require capital expenditure incompatible with cost-cutting in the short term. Now there is increasing agreement that a broader interpretation of costs would better serve the longer-term goal of social integration. Whereas the regionalists were primarily addressing the living environments of the poor and middle class in direct fashion, the alternative approach is to affect all income groups concurrently. The goal would be simultaneously to limit sprawl and revitalize depleted urban neighbourhoods by finding ways to mix housing unit types effectively throughout the region.

But the economic perspective of the early regionalists was not confined to cost cutting. The hope of the regionalists was to seize the technological revolution and change its course of direction so that the economic system would be re-organized within economically confined regions. This idea went far beyond the enlistment of regional governance. It required a rechannelling of economic activity away from its global course, toward localized production and distribution systems. Even though the regionalists thought of themselves as being only 'mildly socialist' (Sussman, 1976) – tame in comparison to Florence Kelley and Jane Addams – it was an economic approach clearly not in keeping with basic American parameters. As a result, the relationship between economics and regionalism has changed. Regionalism now does not reject profit motives and industrial specialization. It seeks, instead, coordination of governmental units as a way of reducing social and fiscal inequities. It is a regionalism devoted to revenue sharing and coordinated

infrastructure planning, fair-share housing, and a variety of strategies to level the playing field across a metropolitan region (see Orfield, 2002). The RPAA would have snubbed it, but even the RPAA had to admit that Radburn – a satellite suburb of New York – represented a severe compromise in the realization of radical political goals. Not only did Radburn lack a greenbelt, but it was developed on land that was in effect serving as a greenbelt for New York (Easterling, 1999).

Regionalism as a political approach is still critiqued not for being insensitive to localisms – so often the basis of critique in other planning cultures – but instead for making the domain of governance too large. To some critics, this simply reflects the fact that regionalism is too unwieldy, making it unsurprising that only Portland has so far embraced an effective regional planning strategy. Having more and more regional government is viewed as being untenable. Jacobs espoused this view in her critique of regionalism. She saw it as 'escapism from intellectual helplessness', where problems are treated from larger and larger scales rather than addressing the small-scale issues necessary for maintaining urban diversity (Jacobs, 1961, p. 410). A similar critique has emerged in the form of favouring municipal fragmentation as a way of ensuring both local control and local variety (Monkkonen, 1988; see also Anas, 1999). Many small, overlapping governmental units are not only an intrinsic part of our history, but the attempt to overcome the local focus of these entities could be counter-productive.

Another defeat is that, in American urbanism now, there seems to be an unwillingness to expend energy on trying to change the political economy of sprawl – the root cause of big box blight, asphalt landscapes, struggling main streets, and all the other characteristics of the degraded American urban and suburban realm. The early regionalists would not have been afraid to take these issues on. They rejected globalized economies even before globalization had become the dominant paradigm of urban economics. In fact, the disdain for the metropolis, the 'mother of cities', was based on the fact that such cities had an international reach. MacKaye analyzed New York as the 'mouth' of interior regions, similar to Cronon's analysis of Chicago as 'Nature's Metropolis' (Cronon, 1991). What was abhorred was the reach of the metropolis, a kind of precursor to the notion of the 'ecological footprint' in which the impact of the city is measured in terms of the resources it consumes and the wastes it generates (Wackernagel *et al.*, 2002).

Today's regionalism is grounded in the pragmatism of environmental impact statements and a much more technically derived notion of the ecological footprint. Like Geddes' civic survey, it has a scientific basis, but it is less intuitive and, some would say, less sentimental. Perhaps it can be viewed as the logical evolution of a regionalism that started with the need to discern regional particularities and indigenous cultures, but came under the influence of the regionalism of systems analysis. The brand of regionalism that emerged, under the leadership of economists

like Walter Isard was, as Thomas notes, the antithesis of early regionalism. Instead of celebrating embedded regional culture, the regionalism of systems analysis was about finding a generalized model that could eliminate 'the multitude of detail that confuses any one specific situation' (Thomas, 2000, p. 52).

That perspective alone has not been particularly relevant to promoting the goals of urbanism. There is a real conflict, still, about whether American urbanism needs to involve itself with finding out what the appropriate economic model of human consumption should be. While there is a committed interest in consumption at the local neighbourhood level, the need to make the grain of retail activity small-scale and pedestrian-oriented has largely come to be seen as detached from the question of production source, but only because of the inability to change that source. The emerging view in much of American urbanism is that the form of the city does not have to be dependent on the source and method of production, nor exclusively on how the distribution of goods and services is carried out. American urbanism is about the materiality of human living, and a refocus on underlying processes to the exclusion of normative ideas about that materiality would seem to contradict that interest. The question is whether matters of street life, human scale, and pedestrian environment can be combined with a concern for globalized economies or economic dependence on the hinterlands. To the early twenty-first century urbanist, the credo of consuming locally, of rejecting the economy of commercial mass consumption is completely sound – but does it constrain the normative ideal? And where would that lead? The early regionalists took the broader view and felt compelled to reject the metropolis – the 'bewildering mass' (MacKaye, 1928, p. 11). Now the dense metropolis is one of the brightest spots American urbanists have.

If American urbanists insist on procuring certain urban forms independent of the means of production and consumption, they expose themselves to the critique of being, somehow, 'inauthentic'. MacKaye's critique of the system was that ends were being distorted to fit pre-determined means; that instead of industry being called upon to help achieve culture, culture was being made to 'echo the intonations of industry'; oil paints were not being made to produce art, but art was being made to advertise oil paints. It all amounted to the 'unnatural tendency of the metropolitan process' (MacKaye, 1928, p. 71).

Marshall's book *How Cities Work* (2001) offers just this kind of interpretation. He criticizes New Urbanism for failing to understand how cities work and attempting to proscribe a form at odds with the underlying processes of urbanism. Marshall does not align himself with the regionalist critique, because, while the regionalists also used the authenticity argument, their criticism came from a different direction. The Marshall authenticity critique is about form following function; the regionalist authenticity critique was about the need to adapt means in order to achieve particular ends. Thus there is variation about whether economies and

transportation systems are viewed as givens or adaptable means.

Both perspectives are perplexing when it comes to defining American urbanism. Manipulating a process in order to generate a certain urban form seems as elusive as reproducing a certain form irrespective of process. The idea that urban form must intrinsically match the underlying processes that generate it is a mindset that was translated by the modernists to mean that 'antiquated' urban places with small streets should be wiped clean in order to make way for large-scale rehousing projects and high speed expressways. The obsession with corresponding to the needs 'of our time' and to 'new rates of speed' was used to rationalize destruction. In the rush to be modern, pedestrian routes in the form of streets were the 'heritage of past eras' that could 'no longer fulfil the requirements of modern types of vehicles (automobiles, buses, trucks) or modern traffic volume' (Sert, 1944*a*, pp. 74, 162).

The question is whether the reproduction of certain urban qualities irrespective of the processes that generated them in the past can be validated by other means. Peter Hall asked a similar question when he wondered, 'in the new urban landscape of technology-led deconcentration, what exactly is the role of the traditional city?' Some will see it as a matter of wanting to save appearances, 'Disney-style parodies of the places they once were' (Hall, 1989). Some will see it as a matter of compromise. Others will see it as wanting to retain workable urban forms and patterns that can be validated by other means, for example, through the principles of complexity, diversity, mix and connectivity.

Notes

1. Duany (2002) has made this point.
2. Compare Mumford (1968, p. 83) to Jane Jacobs (1961).
3. See, for example, a review by Harold Henderson of Frederick Steiner's *Human Ecology: Following Nature's Lead* (New York: Island Press, 2002) in *Planning*, March, 2003, Volume 69, no. 3, p. 38.
4. See Steiner (2002) on the issue of integrating environmental design vs. planning.

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