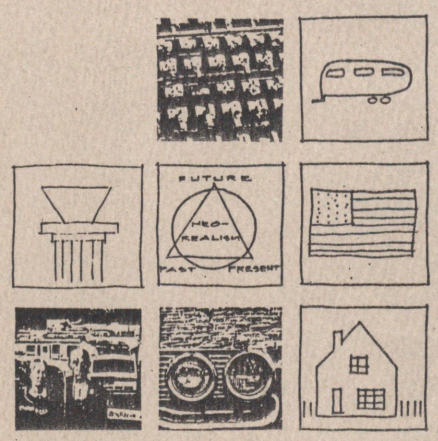
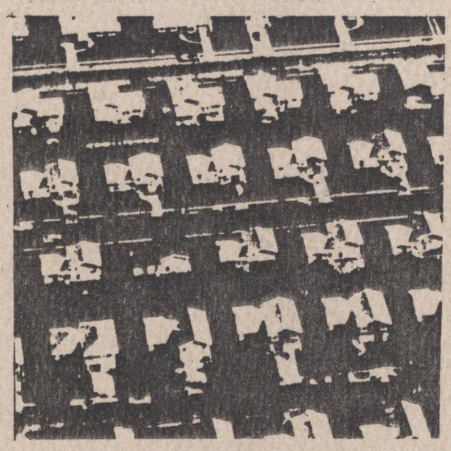
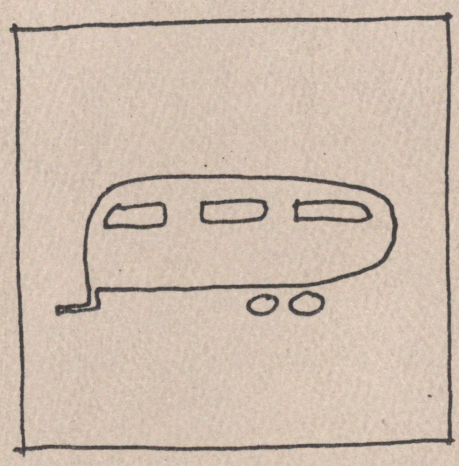
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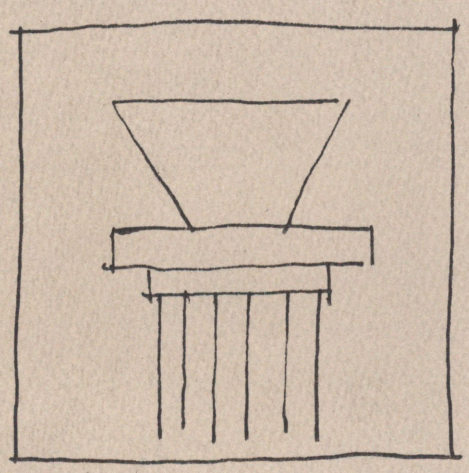
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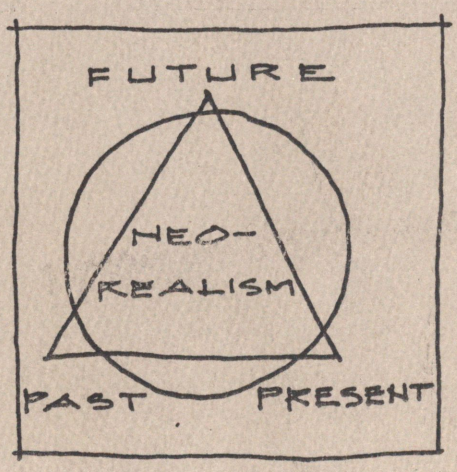
THE CONTEXT OF AN ARCHITECTURAL PHILOSOPHY

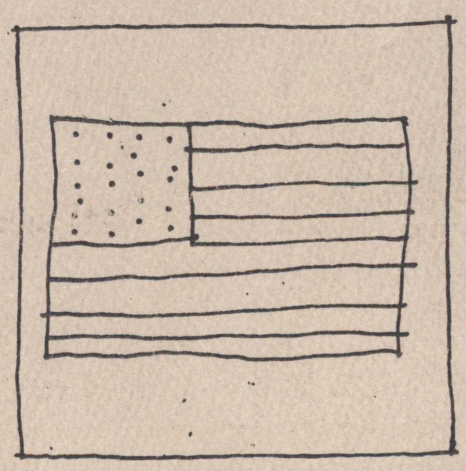


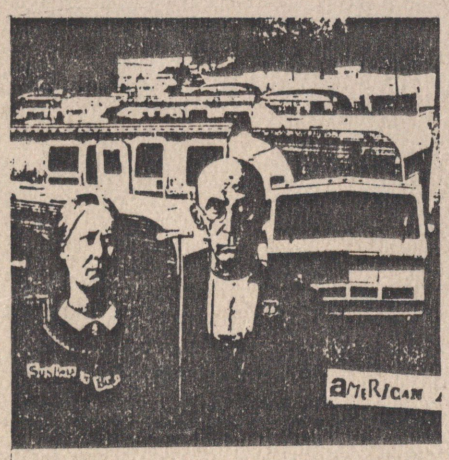


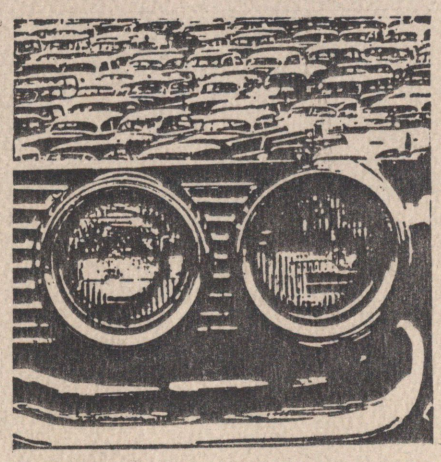


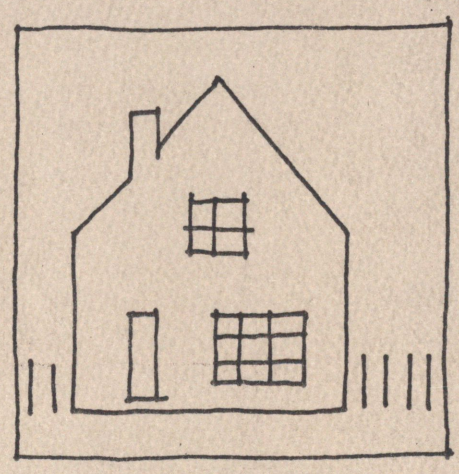












AN INQUIREY INTO ARCHITECTURE AS AN EXPRESSION OF FUNCTION, STYLE, OR CONTEXT

DAVID JAMES MENDRO

Montana State University Library, Bozeman

FUNCTIONAL SUBURBS

THE CONTEXT OF AN ARCHITECTURAL PHILOSOPHY

by
David James Mendro

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of

BACHELOR OF ARCHITECTURE

Approved:

_____
Advisor

_____
Thesis Coordinator

_____
Director, School of Architecture

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

June 1986

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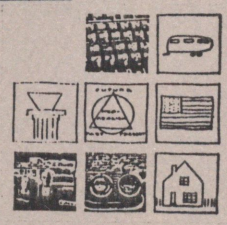
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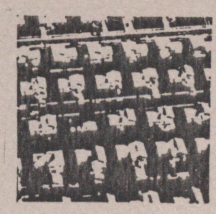
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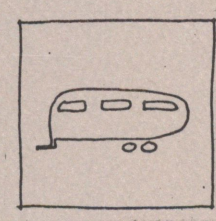
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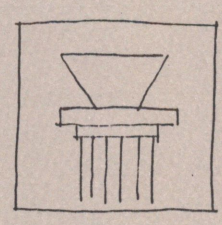
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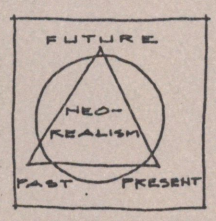
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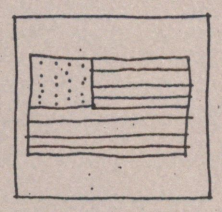
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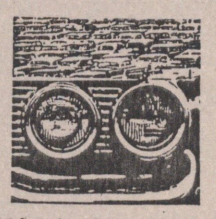


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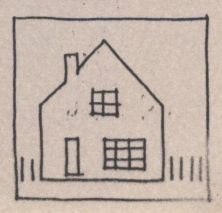
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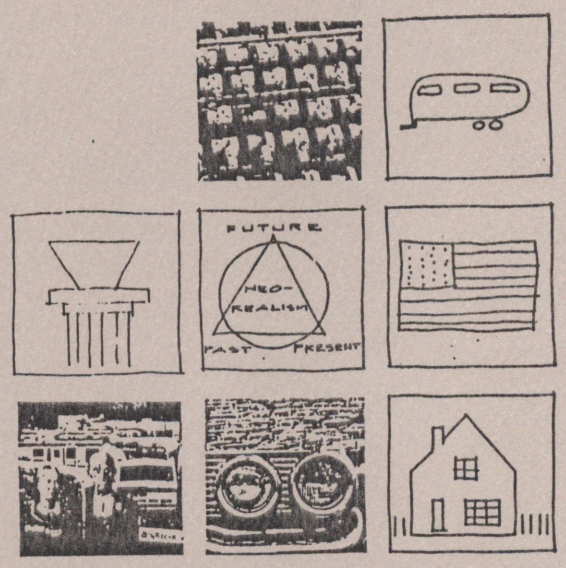
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TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF ARCHITECTURE



PREFACE

A SEARCH FOR A METAPHOR

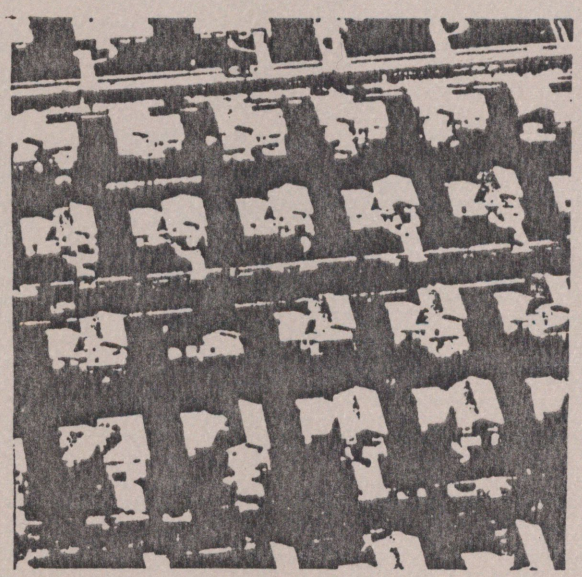
At the onset, I would like to explain the beginings of the thesis which I have since defined as a search for a philosophy of architecture. Its inception is found in a discussion between myself and fellow students concerning a sketchbook.

This sketchbook, of which I am the distinguished owner, greatly disturbed and offended my colleges. I was informed, quite emphatically, that its size and especially its contents were less than appropriate for an *architectural* sketchbook — maybe an art majors — but definetely not an architects. To their astonishment, I took this as an compliment. (I consider myself an artist whose medium is architecture, as opposed to, an architect whose medium is building.

Larger than the common and universally accepted size of the architectural sketchbook: my sketchbook can be best described as a collage of everything that was happening in my life at the time — from architectural sketches and design work to items having to do with artwork and poetry, letters to my sister, and reminent notes from weekly happy hour sessions. Made apparent by the large doses of pity and sarcasm of my peers; I found that I had committed a sin against what can be considered as the "architectural fraternity". My standard defence to the blatant defiance of what was supposed to be a collection of aesthetically correct stylized pink and turquoise architectural (and only architectural) renderings was the old cliche "design is a

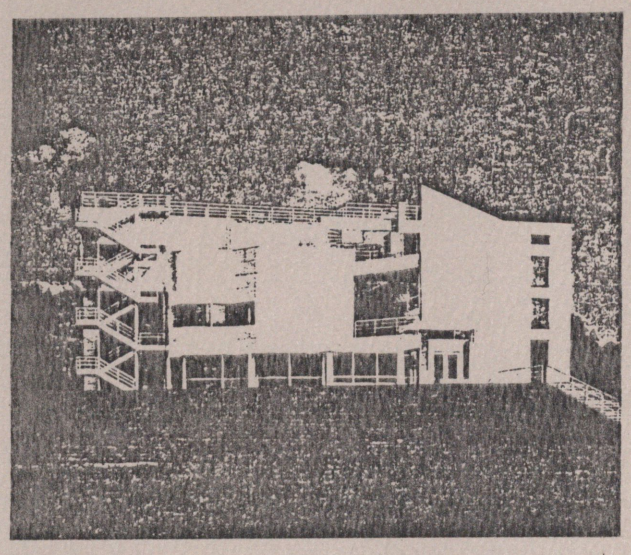
way of life", which would leave me wallowing in their abstract disgust.

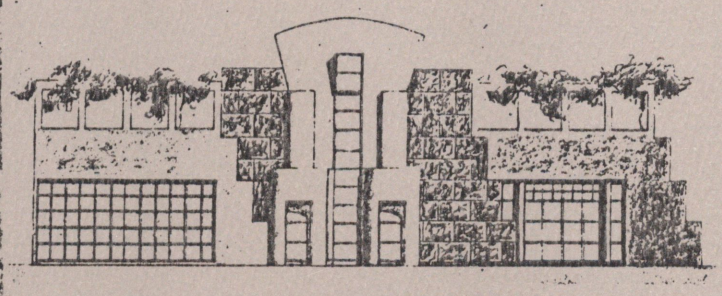
In the end, through the unanimous censorship by my peers, I was allowed to keep my sketchbook within their critical view only if it was refered to not as an architectural sketchbook, but as just a scrapbook (which I found to be more appropriate anyway). I could not understand how the art of architectural design and life's experiences can be divided into two seperate catagories— to me art is an individuals own *expression* of his life and world, the context about him.....



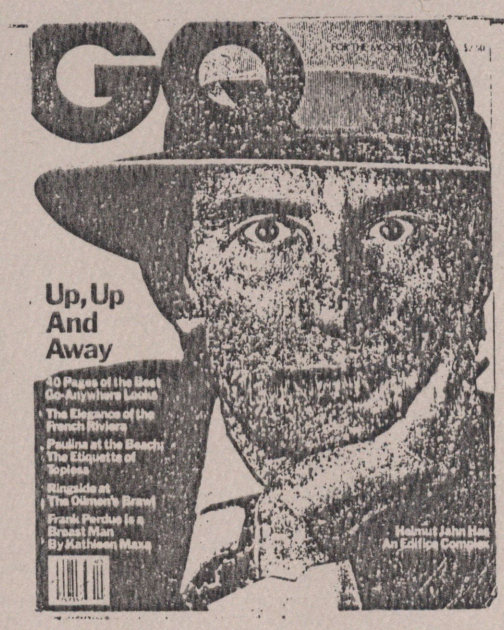
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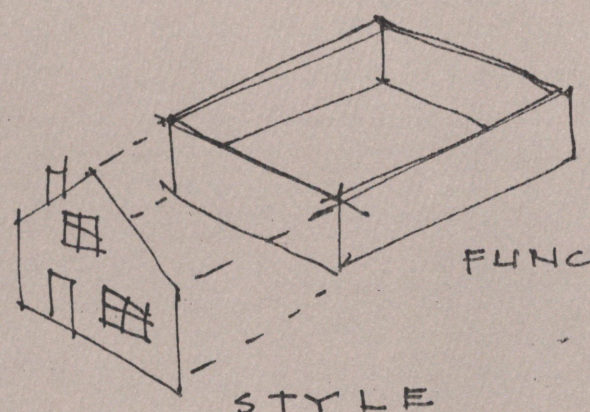


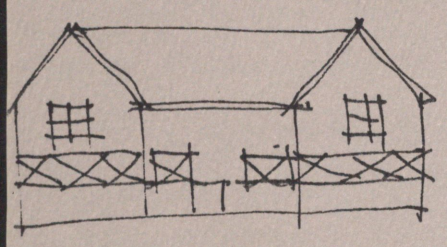
FUNCTIONAL SUBURBS: THE FINAL CODA OF THE MODERNIST ERA

I have taken the temporary role of a visionary — and an admittedly biased one (myself being a "product of the suburbian way of life") — when I predict that the final coda of the modernist era will be "functional suburbs." However, after investigation of the current situation of the art of architecture this statement becomes less than prophetic and more the logical conclusion of what once was an socio-artistic movement and which has long since been reduced to meaningless style.

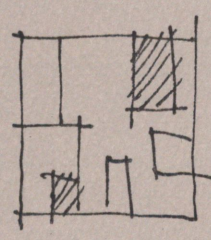
Modernist architecture and most of its so called "post-isms" have evolved into a cultural position analogous to that of elevator music. As an art form, current architecture is about as socially integral and relevant as a Barry Manilow ballad. Architectural design has become background music to a society which no longer regards it as nothing more than a functional necessity. Its current theory and practice is as meaningful to people's lives as top-forty music — which they seldom really *listen* to or truely appreciate. Not that all architecture has to be an "artistic statement" and "socially enlightening"; there's a place for "ugly and ordinary" architecture just as their is a place for popular music. But architecture, like music, can be much more than that — it has to if it is to survive as an *art* form.

Out of this architectural dilemma shines its visionary analogy — the gathering force, the catalyst of all that has become

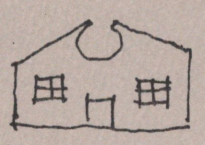




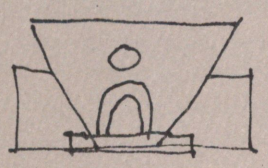
THE ENGLISH HALF TIMBER
W/ REAL GENUINE
SIMULATED
WOOD GRAIN



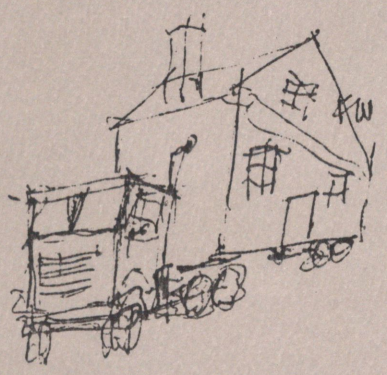
THE DE STIJL —
A MODERN CLASSIC
TO THE DAY



THE JOHNSON



LE DOUX CLASSICAL
PASTICHE
(THE "MODERN" ABSTRACTION)

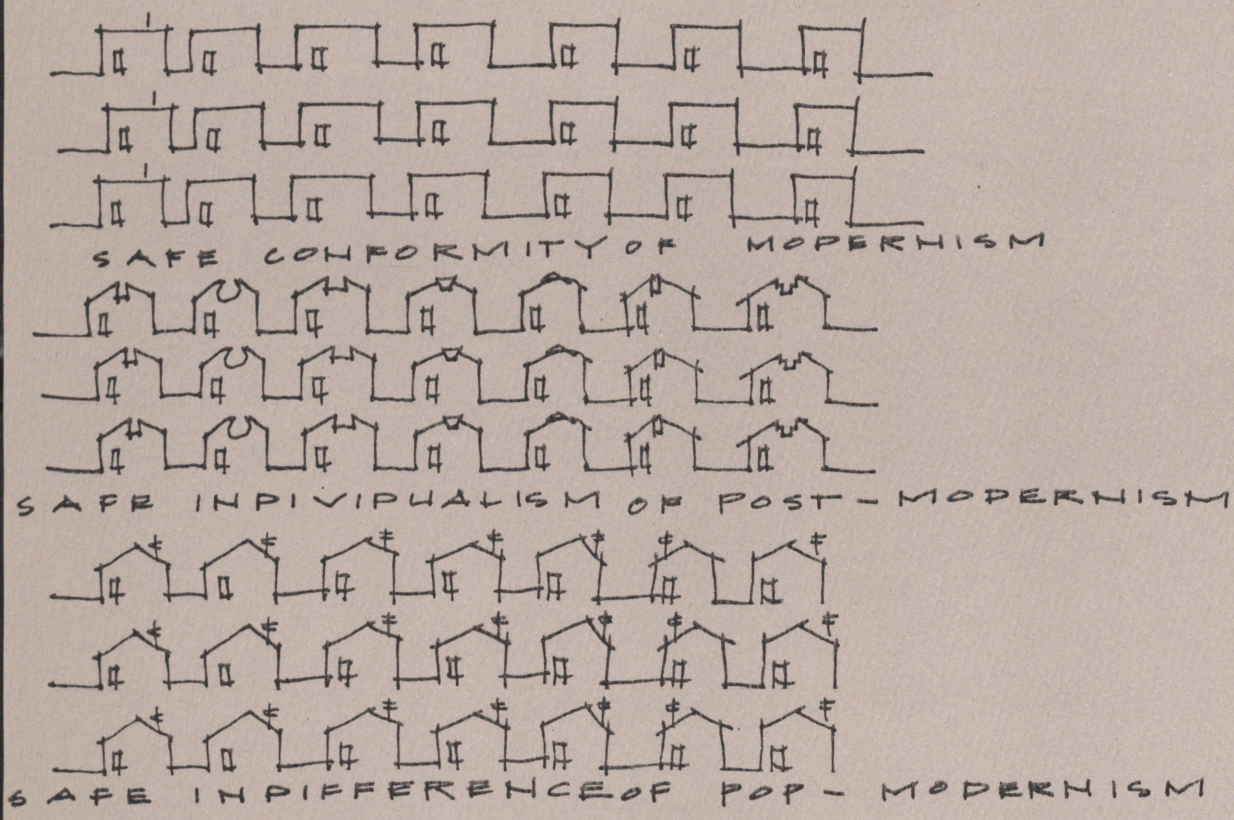


FUNCTIONAL SUBURBS
CAN BE ROLLED OUT
TO ANY SITE ANYWHERE
AND BE INSTALLED BY
ANONYMOUS CREWS
— NO DESIGN OR
CRAFTSMANSHIP
NECESSARY —

modernism — functional suburbs. Precast white boxes of pure function and reason provide the "safe conformity" of modernism — found in the International Style, Kmarts and fast food franchises throughout the nation. Easily attatchable and removable style applicay provides the "safe individualism" of modernism's "post-isms" — found in eclecticism as style, the automobile industry, and designer jeans. And finally, functional suburbs as a whole provides the "safe indifference" of pop-modernism — found in pop art, the commercial strip, and urban sprawl.

Safe, stylish, easy to use, functional suburbs can be assembled by unskilled and uncaring builders (no design or craftmanship required) and installed anyplace, anywhere (no context necessary). Style facades can be ordered through Sears catalog or can be bought from the architect as an original "Johnson", "Graves", or "Venturi". Its all genuine simulation guaranteed to "look good" in its two dimensional design process, its 2-D meaning, and especially in two dimensional prismacolor elevation renderings. Form doesn't have to follow function anymore — it has STLYE.

But wait, there's more! It can all be justified by the aesthetics of a "thin art"[2] and all the academia wowness of the modernist credo and of an art unto itself — given to the ignorant masses as a gesture of good will by those of a self acclaimed and self exiled upper echelon, who have become the contexturally ignorant arbitours of pure aesthetics and meaningless style — those more concerned with the design of art than the art of design.



The nature of our culture is such that if you were to look for instruction in how to do any of these jobs, the instruction would always give only one understanding of Quality, the classic. It would tell you how to hold the blade when sharpening the knife, or how to use a sewing machine, or how to mix and apply glue with the presumption that once these underlying methods were applied, "good" would naturally follow. The ability to see directly what "looks good" would be ignored.

The result is rather typical of modern technology, an overall dullness of appearance so depressing that it must be overlaid with a veneer of "style" to make it acceptable. And that, to anyone who is sensitive to romantic Quality, just makes it all the worse. Now it's not just depressingly dull, it's also phony. Put the two together and you get a pretty accurate basic description of modern American technology: stylized cars and stylized outboard motors and stylized typewriters and stylized clothes. Stylized refrigerators filled with stylized food in stylized kitchens in stylized houses. Plastic stylized toys for stylized children, who at Christmas and birthdays are in style with their stylish parents. You have to be awfully stylish yourself not to get sick of it once in a while. It's the style that gets you; technological ugliness syruped over with romantic phoniness in an effort to produce beauty and profit by people who, though stylish, don't know where to start because no one has ever told them there's such a thing as Quality in this world and it's real, not style. Quality isn't something you lay on top of subjects and objects like tinsel on a Christmas tree. Real Quality must be the source of the subjects and objects, the cone from which the tree must start.

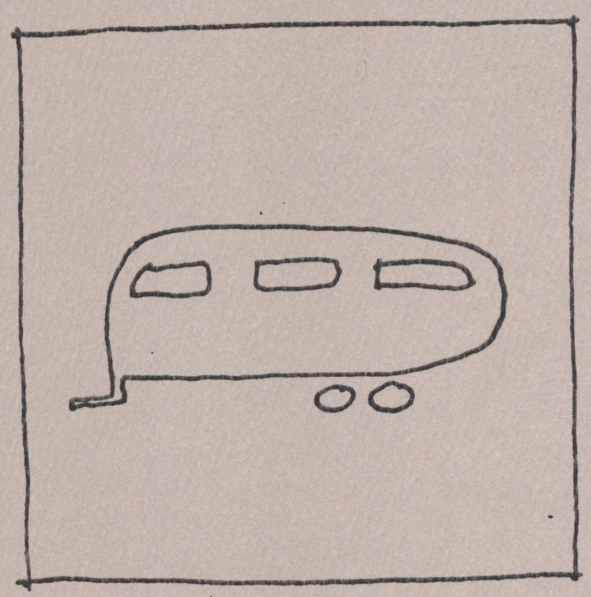
ROBERT M. PIRSIG

It is from the "context" of this somewhat exagerated analogy (which is, however, more plausible than I would like to think) that have developed the belief that there is a need for discussion of current architecture, its theory and practice, the ideology and process it is based on, and its present relation, as an art form, to American culture today. This is done in the hopes of creating a philosophy* of architecture which will provide goals and give direction towards finding solutions to what I see as a troubled and failing art. The discussion will be formed on the premis that architecture can be explained as an *expression** of function, style, or context:

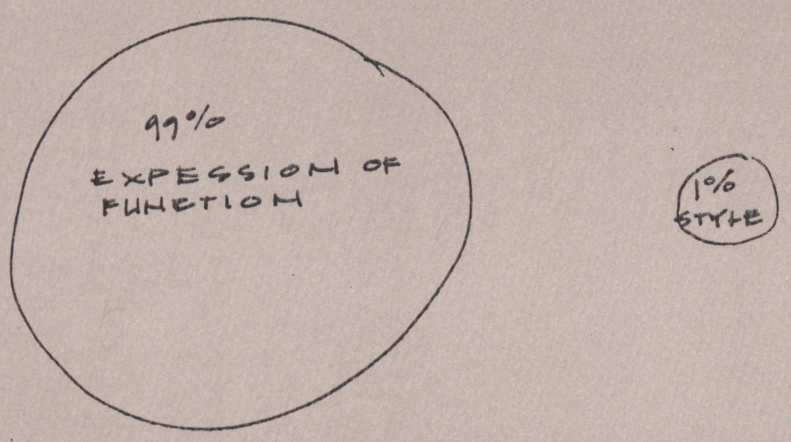
Architecture as an expression of function is the realm of the laymen and the majority of practicing architects — those who are concerned with and must work within the constraints of the client, economics, and the practicalities of everyday life. It is that which consists of ninety-nine percent of all building — 99%. Oppisite to the expression of function, and ignored by it in varying degrees, is the expression of style — that which consists of the theory, teachings and practicianors concerned with the high art and aesthetics of architecture. Thus, there are two poles of architectural design: one which is the expression of function, economics, and everyday life — and the other which is the expression of the theory and pure aesthetics of architectural style unto itself. Architecture as an expression of context — the true art of architecture — and its creators are found someplace between these two poles, someplace inbetween the 99% of building and the 1% of design.

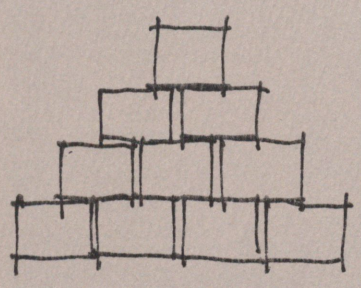
* THE TERM PHILOSOPHY IS USED SPECIFICALLY — V.S. OTHER TERMS SUCH AS CREDO OR MANIFESTO. PHILOSOPHY DEFINED AS BASIC CONCEPTS, PRINCIPLE AND UNDERLYING FORM V.S. MANIFESTO WHICH IS A SINGLE RIGID END PRODUCT OF SUCH FORMS AND, AS WILL BE DISCUSSED, IS THAT WHICH IS A MAJOR CAUSE OF THE STAGNATION & FAILURE OF ARCHITECTURE TODAY.

* EXPRESSION DEFINED AS THE OBVIOUS RESULT, END PRODUCT OF A PROCESS OR SYSTEM OF THOUGHT.



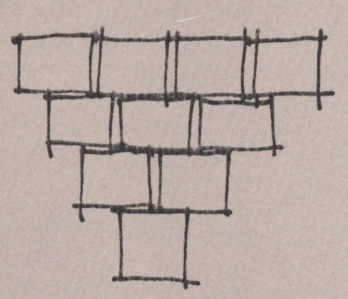
AN EXPRESSION OF FUNCTION





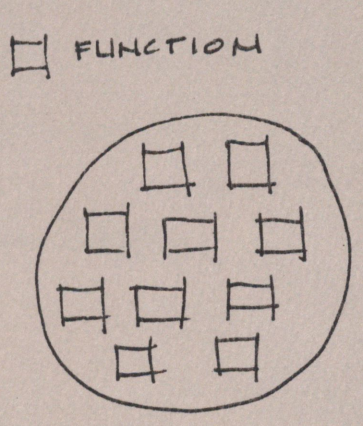
NON-CONCEPTUAL
PROCESS

(BEGINS WITH
FUNCTIONAL
CONSTRAINTS)

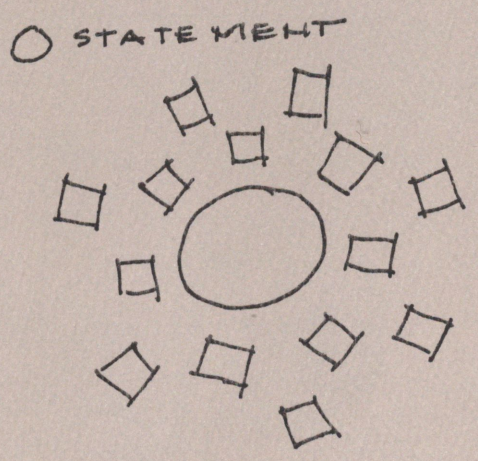


CONCEPTUAL
PROCESS

(BEGINS WITH
EXPRESSED
STATEMENT OR
PRINCIPLE)



EXPRESSED
FUNCTION



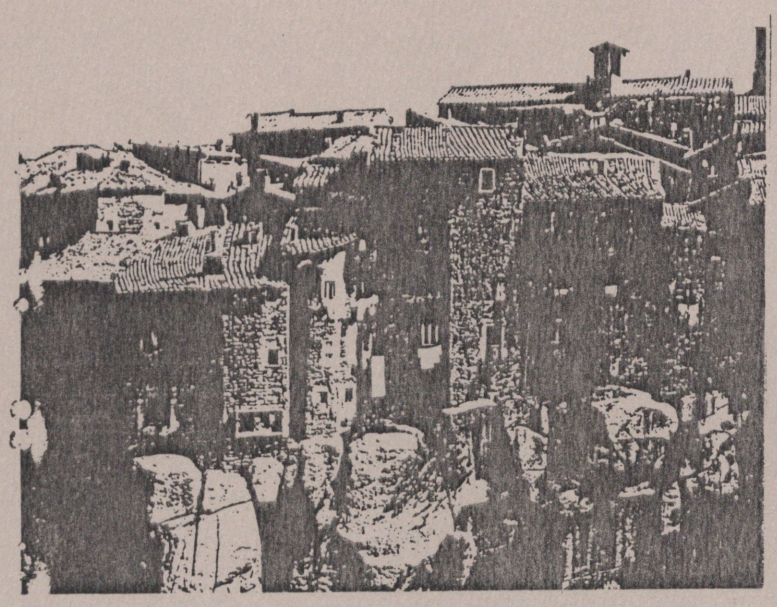
EXPRESSED
STATEMENT

NONCONCEPTUAL ARCHITECTURE

Architecture as an expression of function will be discussed first, and seperately, because: unlike stylist and contexturalist expressions functionalism is not the product of a preconcieved process of design, but finds its expression through the non-conceptual, organic process.

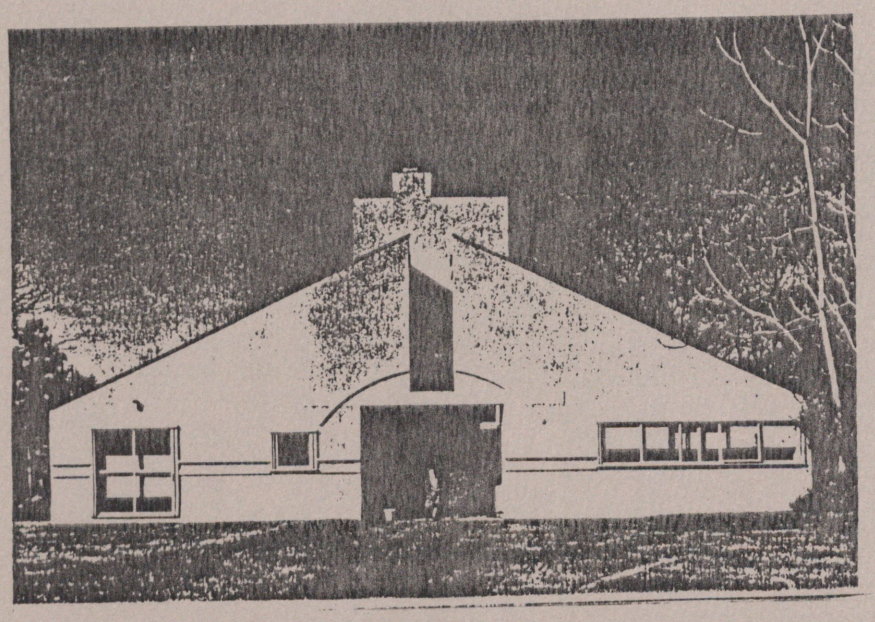
Most all of what consists of man's built enviroment — 99% of all building — is an expression of function. Mobile homes, the suburbs, the commercial strip and urban sprawl are the most reconized functionalist expressions — that from which entire cities are built. It is an architecture of a totally organic process based soley on the *fullfillment of function*. Thus, the end product is the result of the means; the means being a design system derived out of the fullfillment of the building program and the needs of a single architectural problem. The final design of as a whole statement or aimed expression, but is more the result of a ulitarian process. Building function, economics, and the practicality of everyday life are the basis for the organic process of functional architecture.

Thus, to the functionalist, architectural design is conceived of as more of a job than artistic expression. He is not making an individual artistic through his work, he is performing a job — fullfilling a function. His method is organic and open minded. The functionalist will use a style if it fits the function, but he has no preconceived philosophy or manifesto. There are many successful qualities of architecture that is an expression of function in which even conceptual



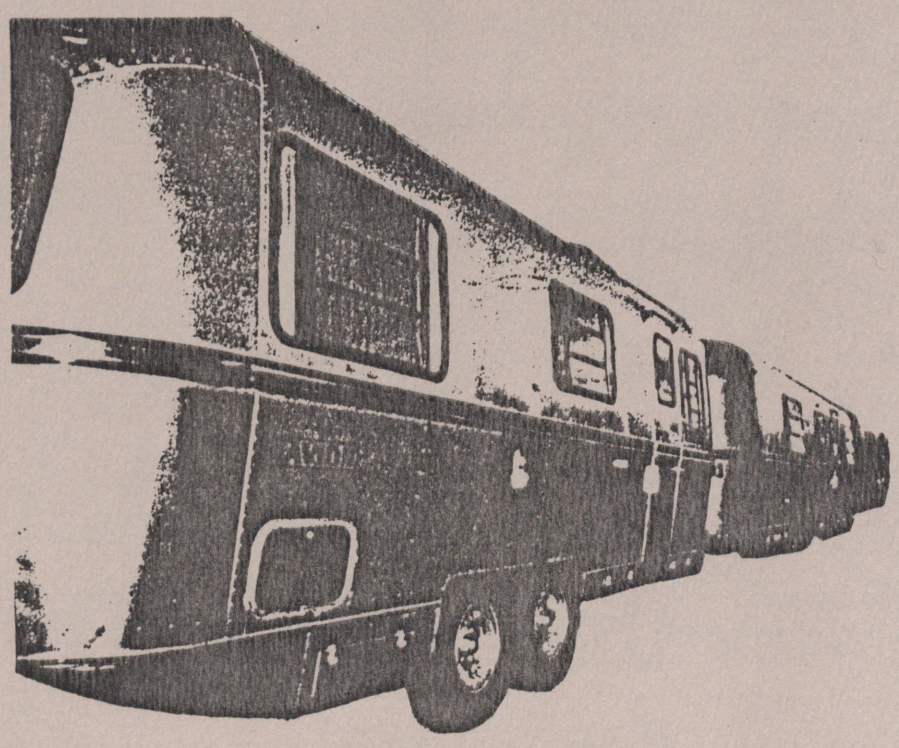
THE NONCONCEPTUAL EXPRESSION:

ARCHITECTURE PERIVED FROM THE COMPLEXITY & CONTRADICTION INHERENT TO THE ORGANIC PROCESS



THE CONCEPTUAL EXPRESSION:

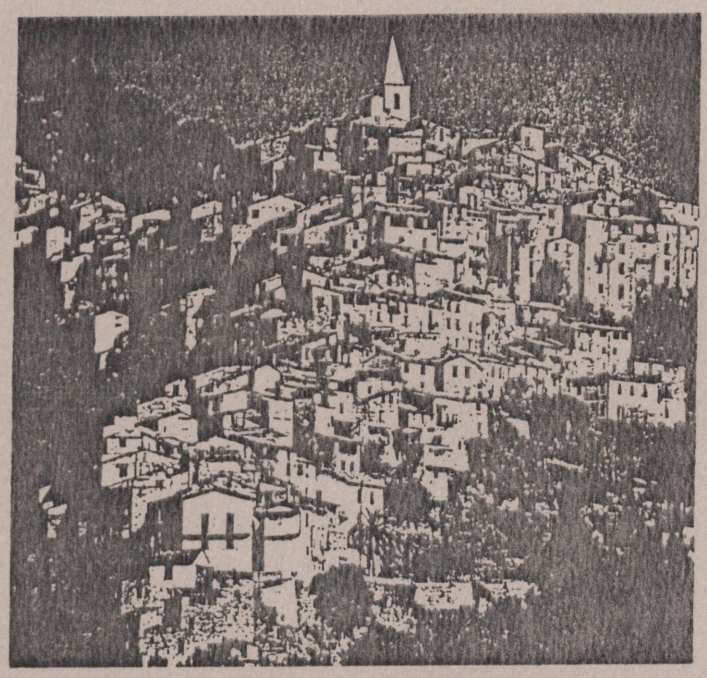
ARCHITECTURE DERIVED FROM STYLIZED AMBIGUITY

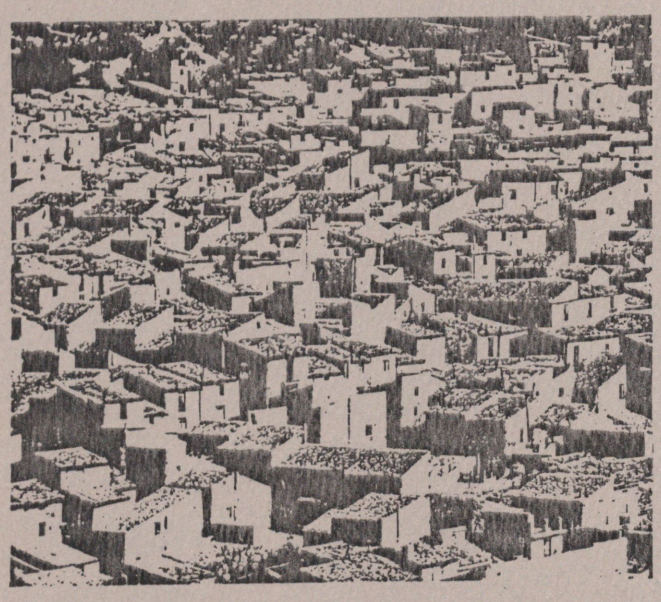


THE AIRSTREAM TRAILER

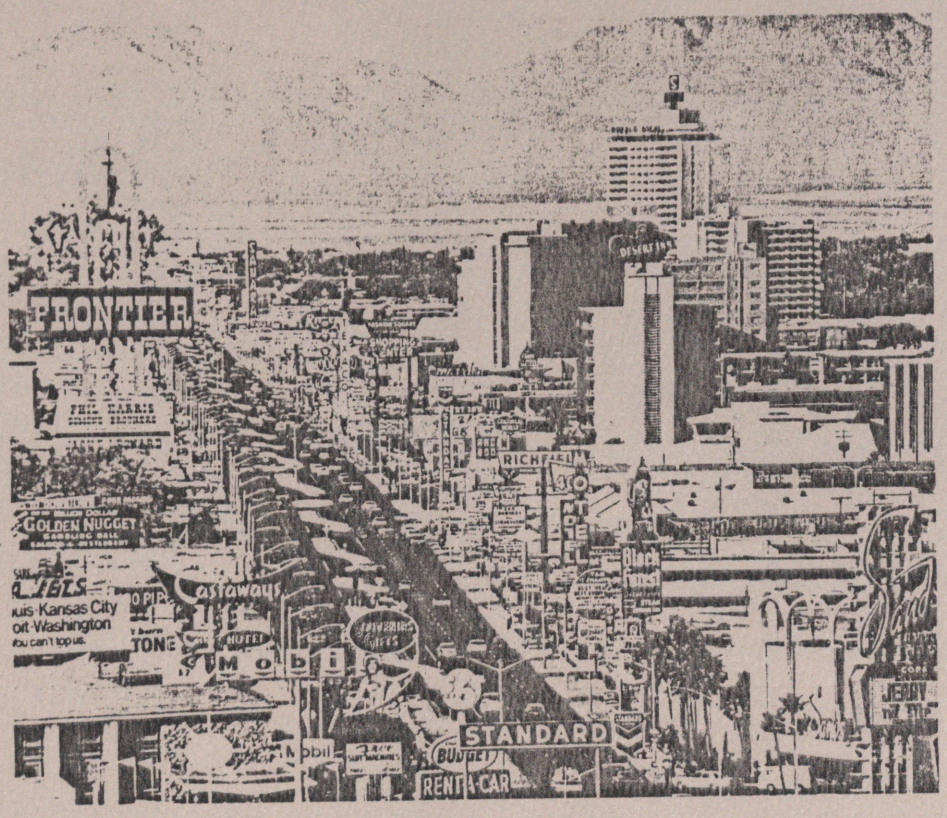
artists acknowledge and sometimes attempt to imitate. However, it is capture the qualities of the organic functionalist process because it is not derived out of a preplanned system of thought. And this is one of its good qualities; although functionalism seldom stress the individuality of the building or its creator, it does many times aquire an individual quality and sense of fit out of the program and constraints of the building, its function, and the client — unlike stylist's strategic ignorance of them in favor of some higher artistic calling or manifesto. Thus, architecture that is an expression of function is more in touch with the people's and clients needs, wants, priorties, and everyday lives. Working within these constraints often produces an architecture an architecture which is paticularly indigenous to the building program, its function and its context. An example would be the use of building methods, materials, and imagery which are common to a paticular region. Thus, functional constraints can produce an architecture which has a whole unity (though not conceived as such during the design process) not unlike that of conceptual architecture — through the expression of function. The following are examples of architecture that is an expression of function:

The first example is that of airstream mobile housing and its mobile community. Derived from the fullfillment of functional constraint and needs; the airstream trailer aquires the unity of purpose and imagery associated with the architecture of transportation, and its aesthetic. It is a beautiful expression of





THE ITALIAN HILLTOWN



LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

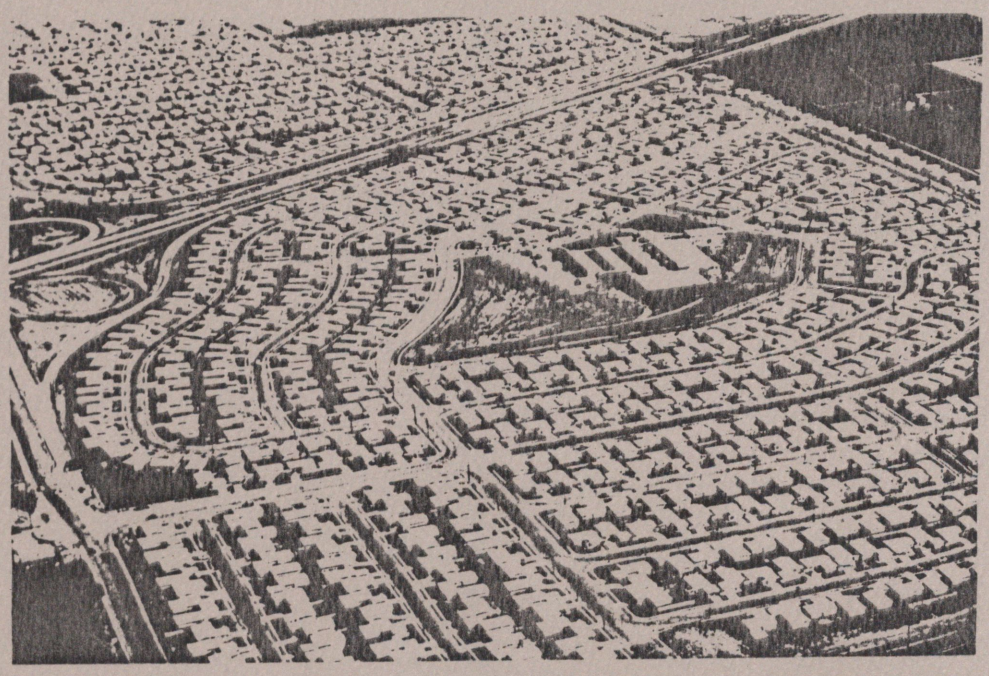
the function of mobile architecture, as well as, the needs and desires of a mobile society infatuated with change and travel.

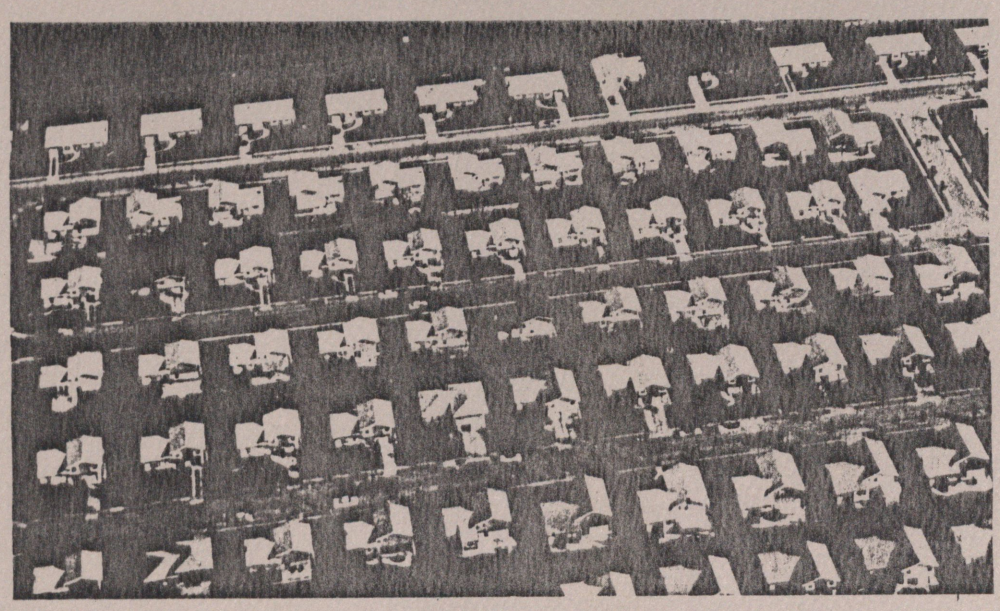
Another often cited example of functionist architecture is the architecture and planning of the Italian hill town. The functional constraints of needs, utility, and materials have resulted in an architecture which is highly sympathetic to both man and nature. Thus, it is completely indigenous to its region and culture. The organic planning of the Italian hill town has an inherent appropriateness, a sense of fit, and a whole unity which is derived out of common needs and function.

A last example of the successful qualities of the functionalist expression is the architecture and planning of Las Vegas, as reconized by Robert Venturi. Venturi is one of a small number of contempory architects who acknowledge the more successful atributes of venacular architecture and its expressed function — qualities which have all but been ignored by the pure, rational utopianism of modernist architecture and planning. In his book Learning From Las Vegas, Venturi reconizes the commercial strip and urban sprawl of this conceptually unplanned city as a complex order: " It is not the not the easy rigid order of the urban renewal project or the fashionable 'total design' of the megastructure. It is, on the contrary, a manifestation of an oppisite direction in architectural theory..."2 Venturi concludes that the Las Vegas urban plan provides for the needs of the modern American. Its is the manifestation and honest expression of the importance of

THE CURRENT AMERICAN CULTHRAL PRIORITY LIST:

1 AUTOMOBILE
2 RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT
3 TV / SATILITE PISH
4 KITCHEN APPLIANCES
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ARCHITECTURE



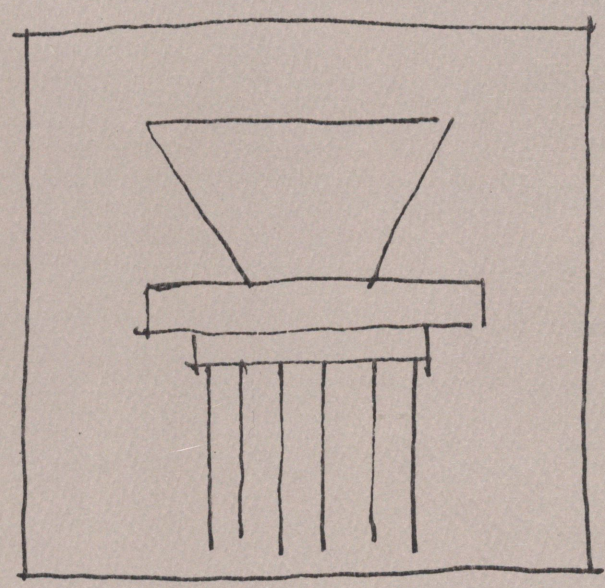


URBAN SPRAWL

the automobile, the iconology, and the symbolism inherent in American culture.

But, functionalist architecture also results in many less than successful qualities — which are far more reconized by conceptual architects — qualities which are best defined as safe indifference. Largely due to the aesthetics of economics and a society which has been ignored by the practitioners of the high art of design; it is the acceptance of mass produced mediocratity by a culture which knows no better, and wants no better, from an art form which is low in importance and priorty. (As seen in the television satilite dishes, cars, recreational vehicles and various other status symbols displayed in the yards of mobile and suburban homes across America) Thus, much of current building is less the expression of function and nothing more than functional necessity accepted with indifference and resignation. This is a terrible waste — architecture, being a social art, has the potential to enhance and be a meaningful part of people's lives.

Thus, the lesser qualities of functionalism also can be found in the architecture of what many describe as "anyplace, anywhere" — the urban plan of the commercial strip and urban sprawl that has become commonplace throughout the United States. Although it does, sometimes, successfully expresses the function and needs of society, as Venturi discerned from Las Vegas; much more of the time, urban sprawl expresses the apathy of both architects and developers, and the people of a culture which holds little regard for the existing natural enviroment, or the built enviroment, as well as, any form or vision of meaningful, long lasting architecture.



AN EXPRESSION OF STYLE OR CONTEXT

CONCEPTUAL ARCHITECTURE

It is most appropriate to discuss and compare architecture of stylistic expression and that of contextual expression with one another, as they are both conceptual (unlike the functionalist process). It is in the conceptual process, as well as, its results, that architecture as an expression of style and architecture as an expression of context can be distinguished. Thus, the discussion will now take a comparative form based on these two systems of architectural design — one which is concerned with the design of art and one which is concerned with the art of design — and will result in an arguement for the latter. which creates architecture as an expression of context.

ABSOLUTE ART V.S. CONTEXTUAL ART (ECLECTICISM AS STYLE V.S. GENUINE STYLE)

In approaching this discussion it is best to first define what I have termed as architecture as an expression of style and that of context before going into the actual design process and architecture of these two systems of thought. To do so, an analogy to another art form and language can be used: that of the musical forms of classical and jazz as seen within the context of America today. These are musical forms which are considered much more conceptual and artistically orientated than the more "pop" musical forms.

Classical music — which is also defined as absolute music — is analogous

to architecture as an expression of style, in its entirety. Classical music, as an absolute art form, is just that: it is an art form concerned with the abstract monothematic forms and aesthetics of music unto itself. Composition, theme and variation, and ornamentation are terms commonly used to both create and define classical, absolute music. As such, the music is composed and performed within a style derived from the art of a foriegn culture of the distant past. Thus, classical music is most accessible to its practitioners and those who are familar with and have studied the forms and meanings of what is a high art—which is more of an expression of art unto itself, than an expression of current American context.

The creation of absolute music relies on two basic participants: the composer and the performing artist. The composer either developes a composition based on the paticular forms and elements of the classical musical style, or arranges the composition of a past composer's musical style. The performing artists take the composer's sheet music. and, as an anonymous group, perform within the given composition and its style. Thus, the classical composer and artistic performer are judged by the aesthetics of absolute music itself, and their *technical ability* to create within a monothematic art form. What results is intellectually reasoned and rationalized conformity, in sake of, any true idiosyncracy or contextual meaning and expression.

Jazz music, on the other hand, can be seen as being analogous to architecture as an expression of context. Jazz was

originally derived and created from its American heritage and context. As an art form, it is based on the 32 bar pop song which is the format for common popular music as well. This format becomes the basic form in which individual artists are free to perform their own style of music according to their individual philosophy, experiences, and emotions. Thus, as an art, jazz takes on both the intellectual and the intuitive forms of its creator. and is derived out of the American context.

The making of jazz envolves creating artists, not performing artists. The musicians do not read music — they create it through an intellectual, as well as, intuitive process done within the basic format that the jazz form provides. Thus, jazz music is flexible and dynamic, able to contain a wide range of philosophies and individual artists. Jazz artists are judged by both their technical and intuitive abilities to create within an multithematic art form — an art form which encourges idiosyncracy and true originality through the expression of an individuals art, his culture, and his context.

The modernist architectural movement was founded on architecture as an expression of context and the multithematic philosophy analogous to that of jazz music. The modern movements founding and leading contextual artists — Richardson, Sullivan, and Wright in America, and Berhens, Mackintosh, Corbusier, and Alto in Europe — were the idiosyncratic creators of genuine style (a cultural metaphor), which is the true art of architecture.

The International Style and its current "post-isms"— being expressions of style— are dominated by absolute art and its monolistic process analogous to the classical music art form. The composers — the manifesto and teachings of the Europeans Gropius and Mies van der Roche, and "the importation of this ready made style"[3] through the rose colored Corbusier spec.'s of their American accomplice Phillip Johnson. And today's modern, turned "post"-modern performers — the Five White Architects and the many others of a stylistically blinded designer following. The modernist International Style; which has been the dominate force in the architecture of the past sixty and some odd years, and its current post-isms, are the absolute art of meaningless style performed by those who are infatuated with eclecticism as style (the "cultural alibi"[4]) and the superficial expression of style.

One can aspire to create architecture the way Billy Holiday and Jimi Hendrix created music.....

MANIFESTO V.S. PHILOSOPHY (THE ART OF PERFORMING V.S. THE ART OF CREATING)

I have now defined architecture that is an expression of style, or of context, as the result of two processes — one which produces eclecticism as style (the "cultural alibi"), and one which creates genuine style (the cultural metaphor). The discussion will now center on the comparison of and differences between these two processes, one being a manifesto and the other being a philosophy of architecture.

DESIGN PROCESS	CONTEXT	
	SPIRIT OF PLACE	PRAGMATICS AND SPIRIT OF FUNCTION
BASIC UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY & PRINCIPLES DUALIST ORGANIC SYNTHESIS OF BOTH INTELLECT & INTUITION, TECHNOLOGY & HUMANISM IMAGINATIVE FLEXIBLE DYNAMIC ARCHITECTURE AS AN INDIVIDUALS ARTISTIC EXPRESSION ORGANIZATION	ARCHITECTURE AS AN INTERPITATION AND EXPRESSION OF ITS TOTAL SETTING — THE CONTEXT OF THE ENVIROMENT (GENIUS LOCI) SPACE — LITERAL 3-D CHARETERISTICS REGIONALISM SITE CHARECTER — HUMANISTIC QUALITES HISTORY CULTURE (A CULTURAL METAPHOR) "WHAT DOES THE BUILDING WANT TO BE?"	ARCHITECTURE AS AN EXPRESSION OF BUILDING FUNCTION AND ITS SPIRITUAL FUNCTION WITHIN SOCIETY, CULTURE, ETC. CLIENT IMPORTANT AS "FUNCTION GIVER" MORE IN TOUCH WITH BUILDING NEEDS BUILDING TYPOLOGY "FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION"
MANIFESTO OR CREDO WHICH MAKES THE ARCHITECTS WORK PART OF AN UNIVERSAL STYLE AND ITS BINDING PRINCIPLES INTECTUALLY REASONED & RATIONALIZED CONFORMITY FORMAL STATIC RIGID CONSTRAINED COMPOSISTION	FORCES ARTISTIC IDEALS ON CONTEXT AND SITUATION "ART THAT STANDS ON ITS OWN INDEPENDENT OF CONTEXTURAL SETTING" (A CULTURAL ALIBI)	ARCHITECTS EXPRESSION OF THEMES & VARIATIONS OF STYLE — INDEPENDANT OF STRUCTURE & FUNCTION WHICH ARE FULLFILLED BUT NOT EXPRESSED "MEDATATION ON ARCHITECTURE"

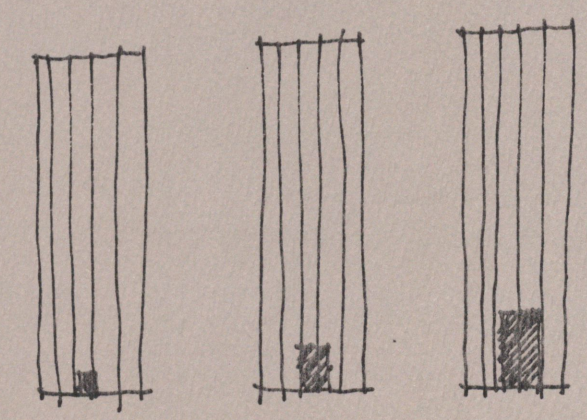
STYLIST CONTEXTUALIST

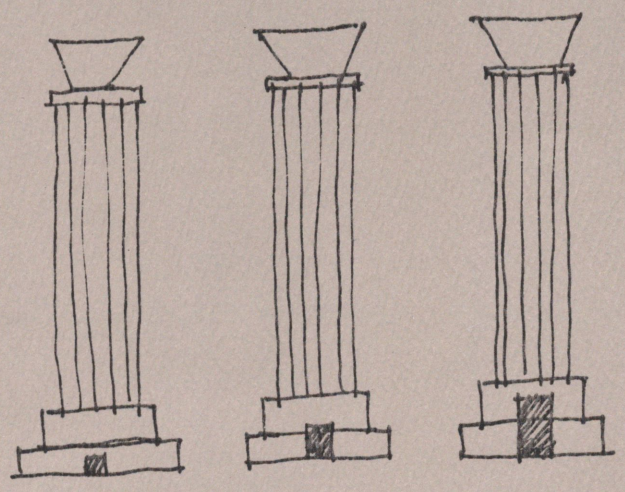
This will be done in order to define the basic ideals and concepts of these systems of thought, and to provide the terminology necessary to critique actual architectural works as expressions of style or context. At the onset, I would like to define context (being used in the broadest sense of the word) as the totallity of the influences on the art of architecture and its creators — as the "spirit of place"[4] and the spirit of function.

The stylist's design process follows the basic form of the monothematic manifesto. His work is done within an expressed artistic style and its binding principles. As stated before: the expression of style results in intellectually rationalized absolute art and "safe individualism". Although the manifesto is originally derived from an architectural philosophy; the stylist uses the credo for its superficial aesthetic value and for theme and variations of the style itself. In doing so he looks backwards with subjective academicism to the art of the recent or distant past and abstracts it into style. Thus, the stylist's architecture becomes isolated — art for arts sake — neither expressive of the philosophy or culture of the architecture it stylizes, or those of the culture in which it is built. The stylist process becomes "meditations on architecture"[5]. It is more of an expression of an individual designer's inability to work within the context and realities of his own culture, therefore, architecture as an expression of style is more of a cultural by-product than an artistic, cultural expression.

The stylist designer, through his

MODERN TURNED POST-MODERN
BUILDING TYPOLOGY
(ONE STYLE FITS ALL)

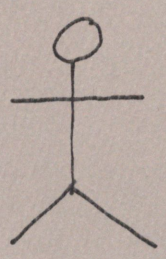




monistic thesis, forces his artistic and academic ideals on the context and situation. As such, his work is "art that stands on its own independent of contextural setting and history."[6] This accepted ignorance of context and certain realities also allows the designer to express the themes and variations of monothematic style *independent* of function, which is fullfilled, but not *expressed*. Thus, any expressed individuality of the artist, his culture and the spirit of place, and, building typology and the spirit of function, is lost to the expression of style.

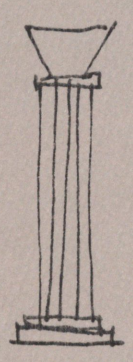
The contextualist's design process finds its basic form in a creative dualistic philosophy. His work is an individual artistic expression of both intellect and intuition. It is a synthesis of artistic, as well as, humanistic and functional requirements in the form of an architecture of total unity. It is what Venturi defines as the "difficult whole"[7] — as compared to the simplistic unity of eclecticism as style. The contextualist's work is dynamic, idiosyncratic, organic and open to change. He rejects rigid academic manifestos and has a profound dislike for any kind of superficial eclecticism or style. His system of design is based on organization, not composition, implying the acknowledgement of context, in its totallity, as the major inspiration of his art which is an expression of it. Thus, the contextualist, through his dualistic thesis, finds art as an expression of his total contextual setting: the spirit of place — what Christian Norberg-Shultz defines as Genius Loci —

THE INTERNATIONAL STYLE EXPRESSION



(ABSTRACT UNIVERSAL MAN)

THE POST-MODERN STYLE EXPRESSION



(ABSTRACT ANATOMICAL MAN)

THE CONTEXTUAL HUMAN EXPRESSION



(REAL SPIRIT OF MAN)

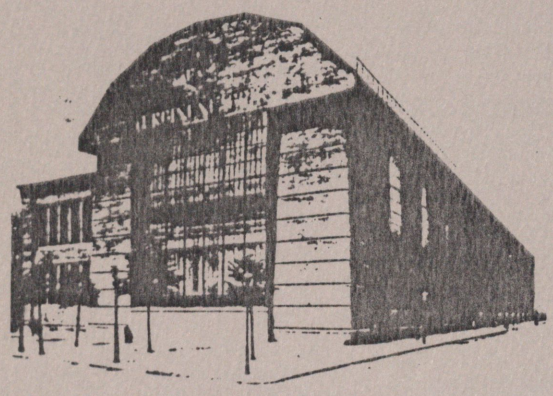
as well as, building typology and the spirit of its function.

To the contextualist, the spirit of place is many things: it is his interpetation of influences that range from the physical to the metaphysical, from the topographical setting to the social setting. Acknowledgement of the spirit of place is what Khan meant when he asked "what does the building want to be?". Christian Norberg-Shultz defines the basic aspects of the spirit of place, or Genuis Loci, as "space" and "charecter".8 Space is the literal three dimensional elements and organization of a place. Charecter is the humanistic socio-psychological qualities, the "atmospher" of a place. The spirit of place — in its forms of space and charecter — is that which distinguishes one culture, region and place from another. Spirit of place is that which the contextualist interprets and expresses in his architecture which becomes a cultural metaphor.

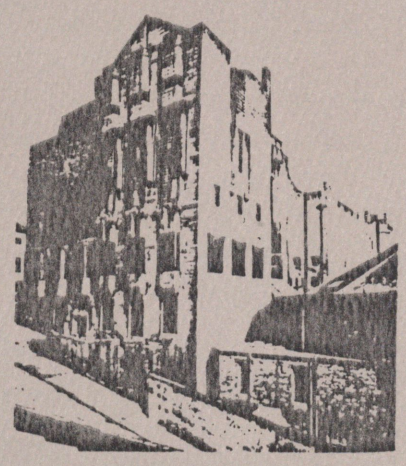
The other influence of the contextualist is that of building typology and function. These influences are interpreted as the spirit of function. It is that which embodies the building's meaning, its position, within culture and context. Sullivan's statement that "form follows function" is derived out of this philosophy. To the contextualist, function and form are integral to the total work of architecture and its expression. Thus, there is direct dialog between the architect and client, whose needs form and function givers. It is through the expression of the spirit of function that the contextualist's art becomes a metaphor of architecture's function, and the life of its culture and user.

EARLY MODERNISM:
(AN EXPRESSION OF CONTEXT)

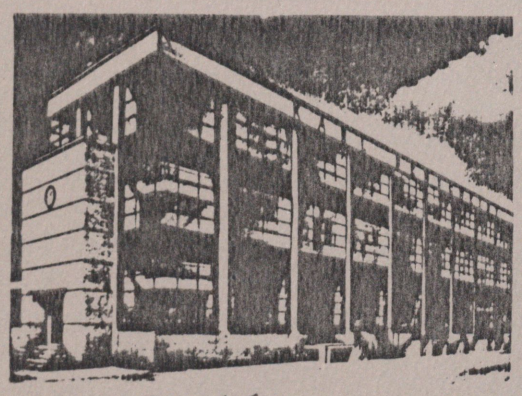
EUROPEAN:



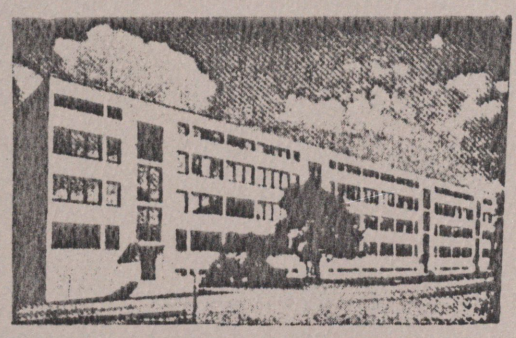
BEHRENS



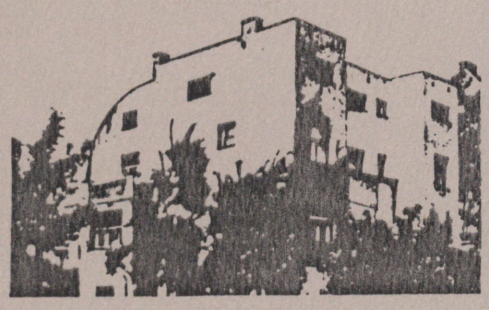
MACKINTOSH



GROPIUS



MIES

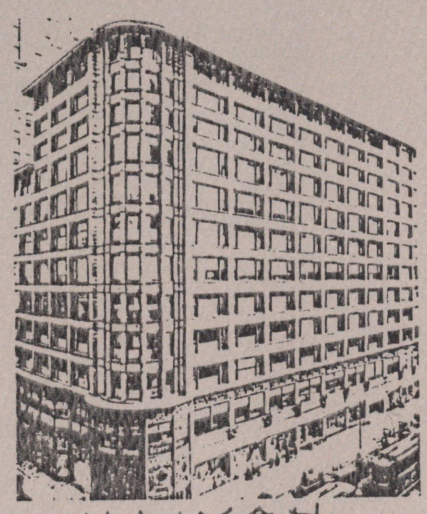


LOOS

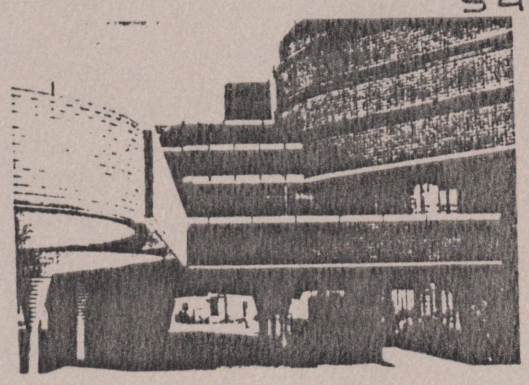
AMERICAN:



RICHARDSON



SULLIVAN

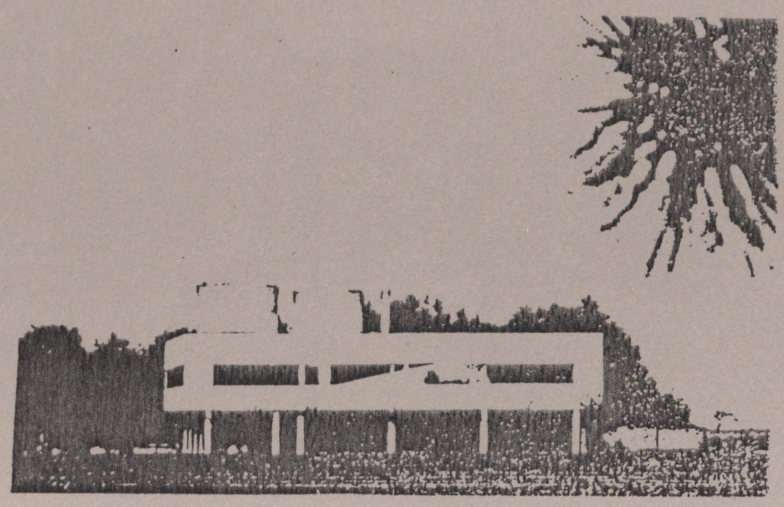


WRIGHT

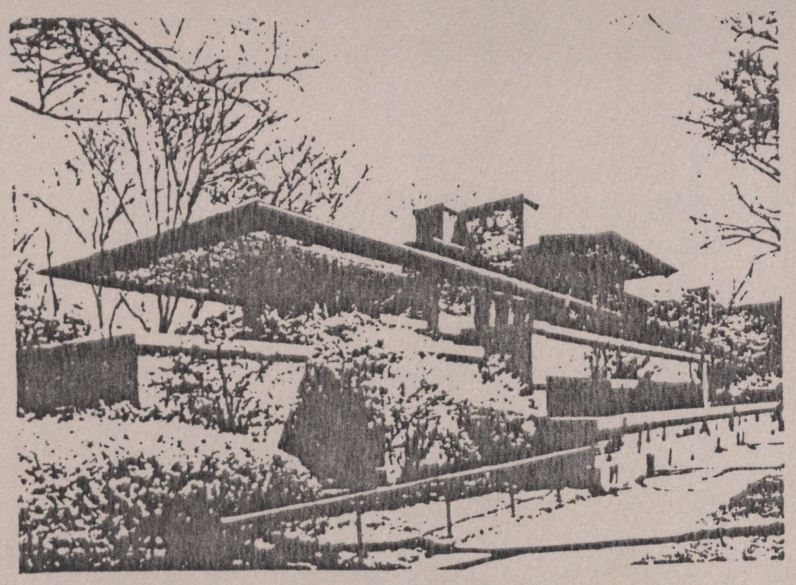
CURRENT ARCHITECTURE
AS AN EXPRESSION OF
STYLE OR CONTEXT

The discussion will center on a critique of modern architecture and its current "post-isms". The following architectural works were specifically chosen for the purpose of expounding the methodology of what I have defined as architecture as an expression of style v.s. that of context (the architectual expression v.s. the human expression, manifesto v.s. philosophy, monism v.s. dualism, conformity v.s. ideo-syncracy, static superficial eclecticism v.s. dynamic traditional, as well as, progressive responsiveness, a cultural alibi v.s. a cultural metaphor)— that which is the difference the method of the stylist and of the contextualist. As I have stated before, the international style and its current "post-isms" are the expression of style. However, the modernist inspir-ation behind these stylistic abstractions originally began as an architectural philosophy and an expression of context— concepts reconized by the true post-modernists of the past, and those of today.

In looking back to the architecture of the early modern movement: its arch-itectural leaders clearly embraced the new forms and aesthetic freedoms of the machine age— as did the modernist successors of the international style and late modern-ism. But, unlike its later stylistic suc-cessors; the early modernist methodology also embraced what I have defined as the contextual expression. It is an ex-pression of the spirit of place, the age

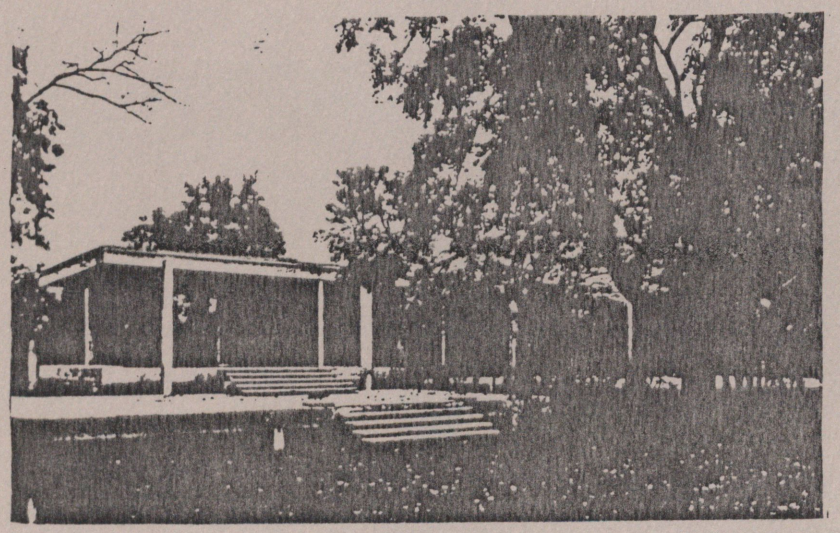


LE CORBUSIER VILLA SAVOYE

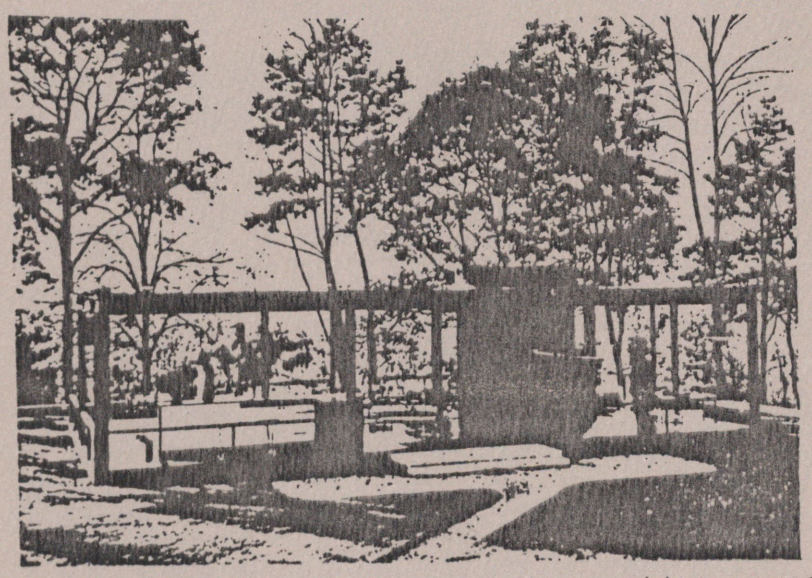


WRIGHT ROBIE HOUSE

THE INTERNATIONAL STYLE
(AN EXPRESSION OF STYLE)



MIES FARNSWORTH HOUSE



JOHNSON GLASS HOUSE

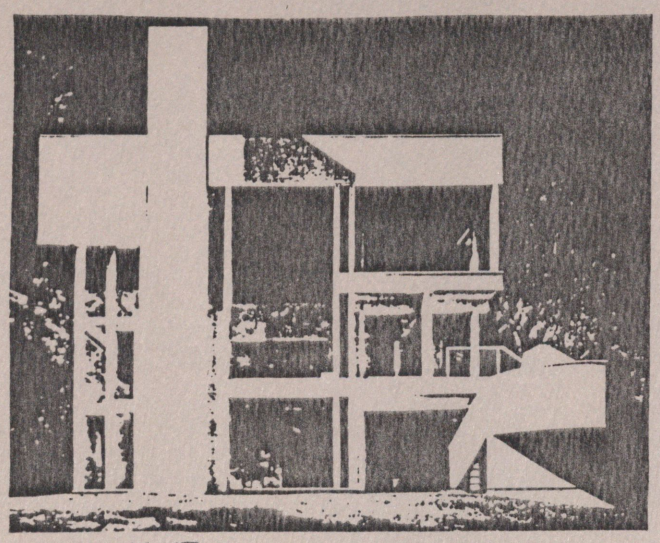
and culture, as well as, the spirit of function of architecture within culture.

Modernism began as an artistic expression and response to the industrial revolution. With the advent of the machine age came tremendous cultural upheavil. The machine had ensued a break with social and artist tradition. It was the age of a totally new society and aesthetic. Derived out of the new philosophies, methods of construction, and materials of the industrial era; early modernism is an expression of the freedoms and spirit of modern man in his new world. This contextural methodology can be discerned in the work of the two great early modernist form givers: Le Corbusier and Wright.

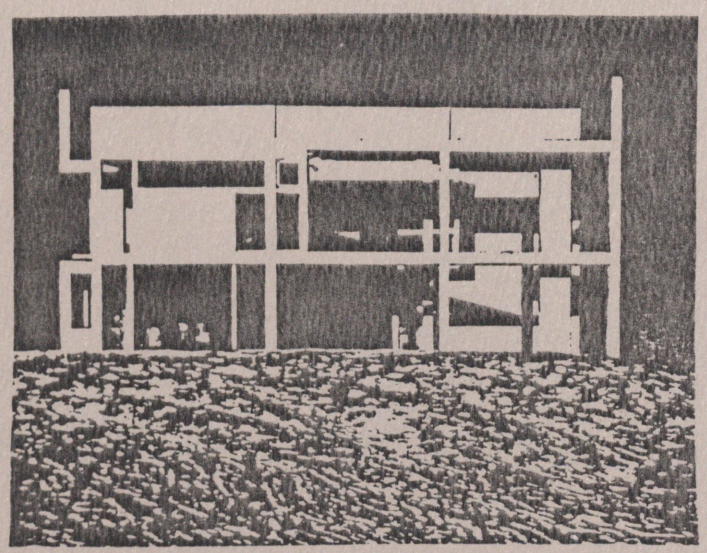
Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye is an expression of European cultural ideals brought about by the problems of the industrial age. Social reform was to be found through modern architecture as a metaphor of the machine aesthetic and its inherent rationality and purity. Thus, Villa Savoye became what Le Corbusier described as a "machine for living". Its pure geometric, sculptural forms were indigenous to the new age of modern man, as well as, the "Romantic Classical"[12] ideals of his medditerrian heritage. Villa Savoye was to provide for and express the needs of the modern man.

Wright's Robie House also embraces the machine age aesthetic, but, is an expression of American cultural ideals. Wright rendered the Robie House's machine-like lines with organic symbolism capturing what Vincent Scully defines

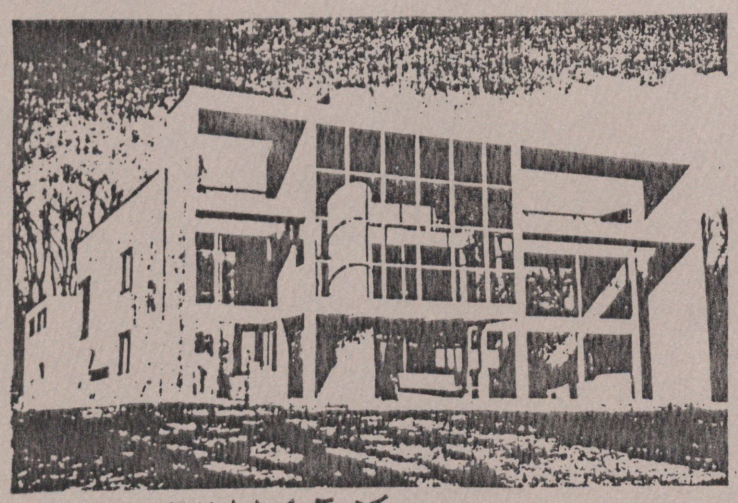
LATE MODERNISM
(AN EXPRESSION OF STYLE)



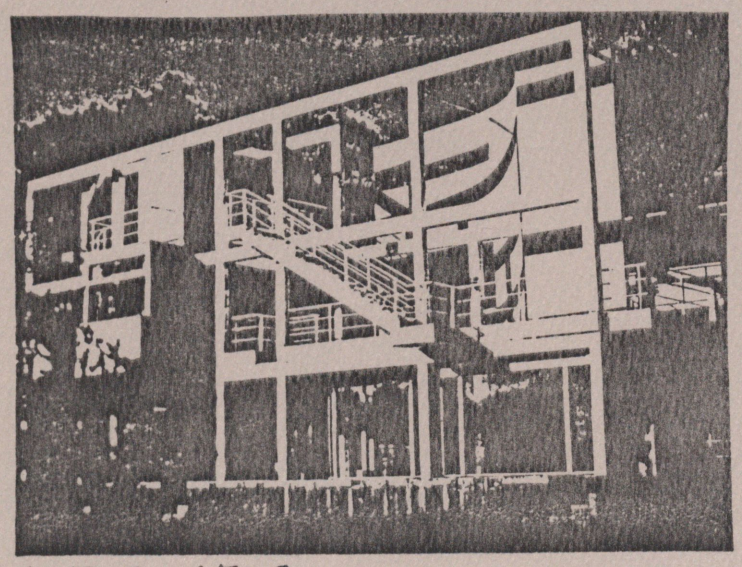
MEIER



EISENMAN



GWATHMEY



GRAVES

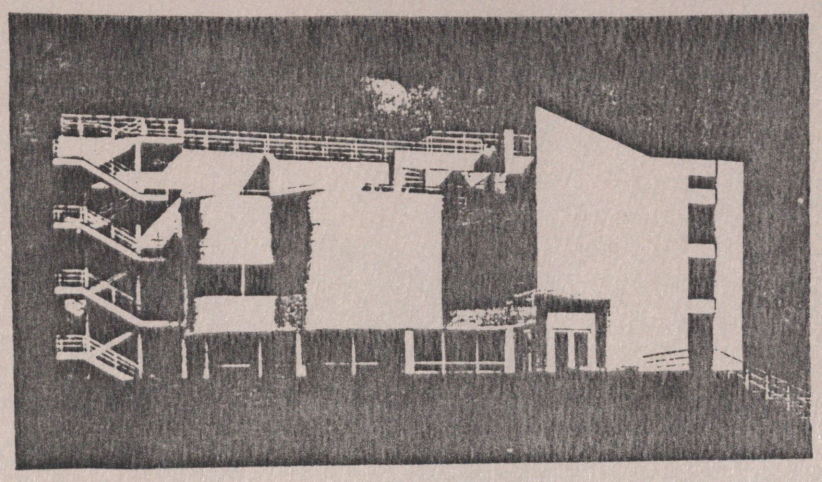
as "American democratic mythology"— the metaphor of individuality, movement, change, power, and western heritage found in the creation of a capitolist industrial culture.

Thus modernism, as seen in the early works of Wright and Le Corbusier, was originally an expression of the spirit of place and the spirit of function. However, through the stylization of early modernism as found in the later forms of the modern movement; the expression of context and its inherent qualities of ideosyncracy, typology, appropriateness, and true human expression were lost to an architecture not of contextural, but, of stylistic expression.

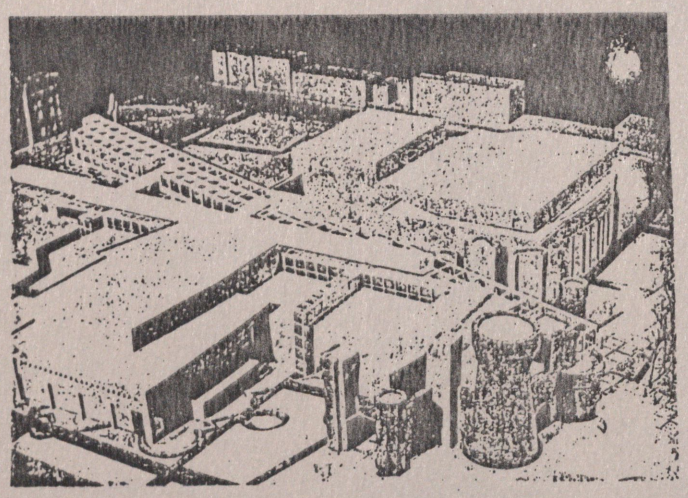
Through the impetus of the European architects Walter Gropius and Mie van der Roche, and their American accomplice Phillip Johnson, early Europeon modernism was stylized and transplanted to America in the form of the International Style. Thus modern architecture became an expression of style, ignorant of the philosophies and meaning behind Europeon modernism of which it was derived, and at the same time, rejected the American modern movement and context. Because of this, the international style is a methodology that derives its meaning out of the aesthetics of architectural style unto itself.

This can be exemplified by comparing Mies van der Roche's Farnsworth House and Johnson's Glass House to early modernist works. Whereas Le Corbusier and Wright found meaning in the expression

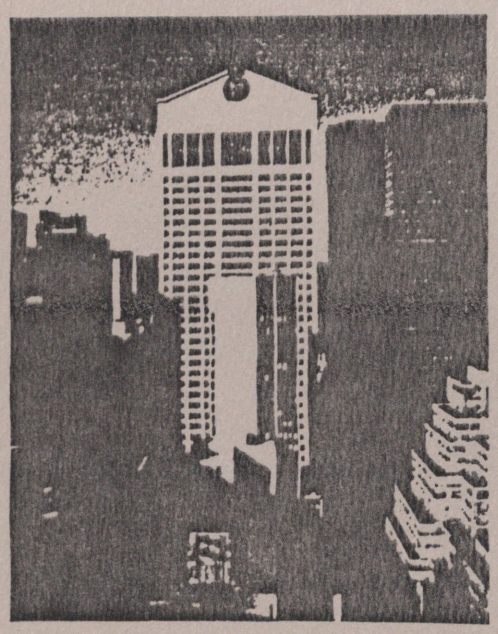
"POST"— MODERNISM
(AN EXPRESSION OF STYLE)



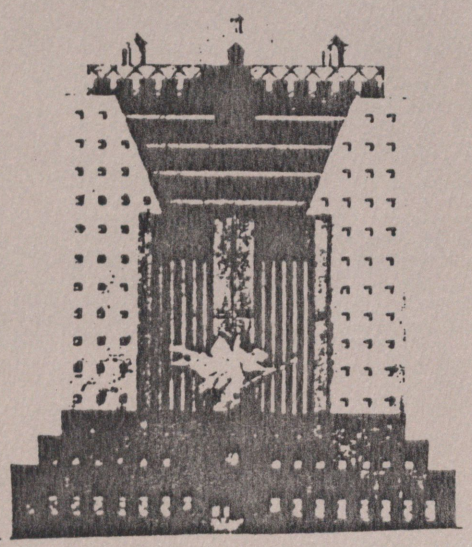
MEIER



EISENMAN



JOHNSON



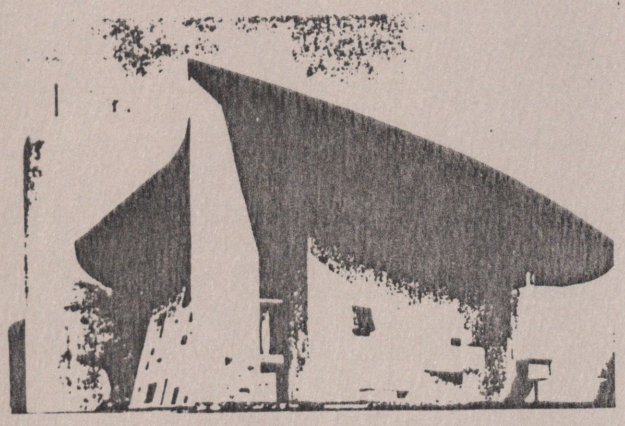
GRAVES

of context; Mies and Johnson find meaning in the expression of themes and variations of style itself. Thus the Farnsworth House and the Glass House loose any meaningful expression of the spirit of place and of function. They were created and justified by the terms of the international style and a stylistic methodology unto itself.

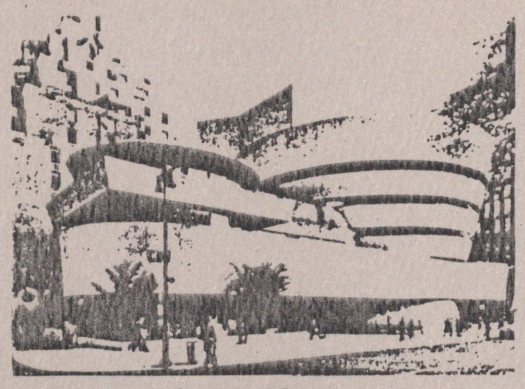
It is this stylistic methodology that late modernism (the international styles "second coming") and its current post-isms (which are, in actuallity, only a continuation of the failing modern movement) are derived from — a methodology of "meditations on architecture." Is The late modernist methodology, as seen in the work of the Five White Architects, attempted to rejuvinate the failing modernist movement with a slight academic change in stylistic inspiration (to that of le Corbusier's early work). In doing so, the architecture and the architect became so meaningless and abstract, as Tom Wolfe points out, that they were givin numbers instead of names — House I, House II, House III, ...the 5 architects... so on, and so forth...

And, although the "post-modernists" have swithed to a stylistic motif of the even more distant past, as seen in the works of the modernists, turned "post"-modernists, Johnson and Graves; it is still architecture of a monistic methodology which finds meaning through the expression of style as absolute art. Although they profess to have recaptured the human meaning and expression that was lost to modernism; in actuality, elcectic stylization of the past does not

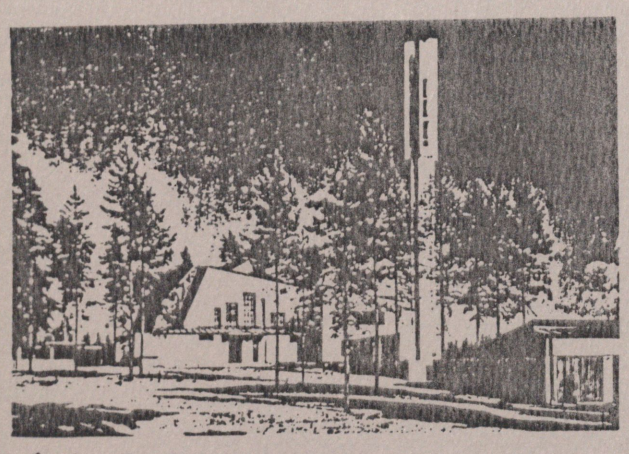
POST-MODERNISM
(AN EXPRESSION OF CONTEXT)



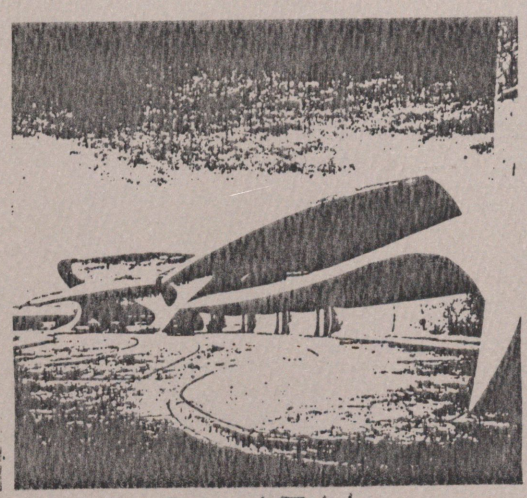
LE CORBUSIER



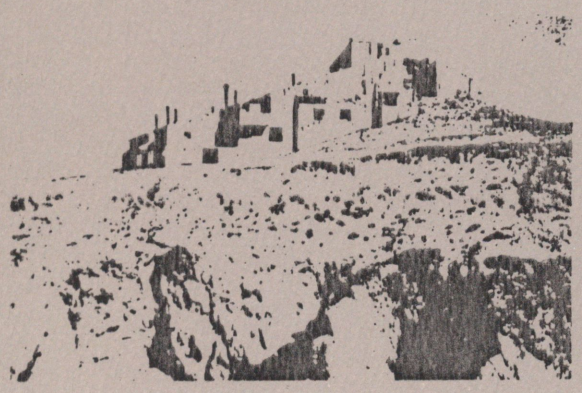
WRIGHT



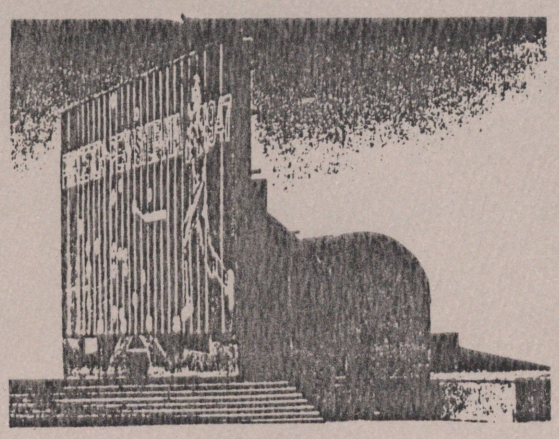
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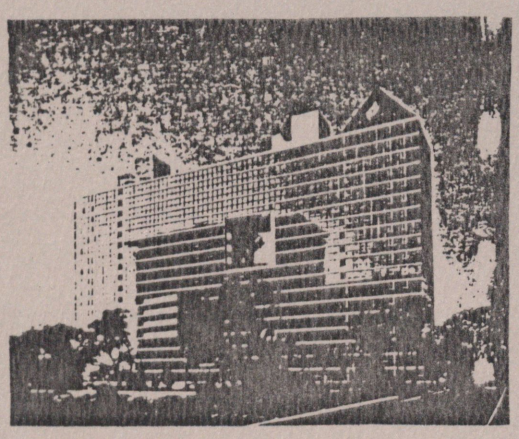
SARRINEN



MOORE



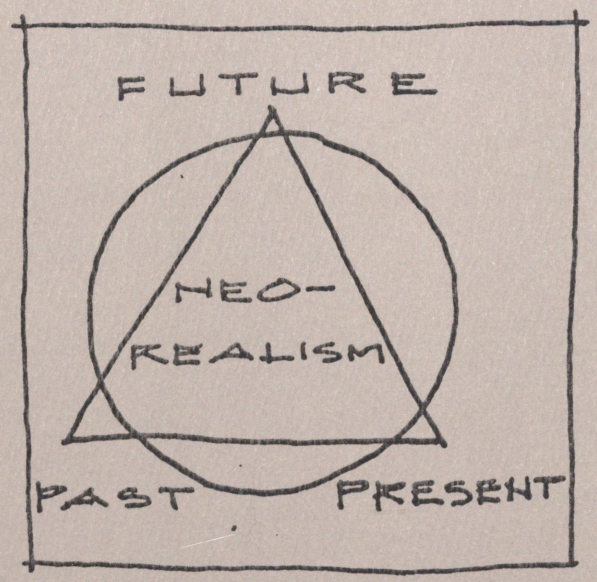
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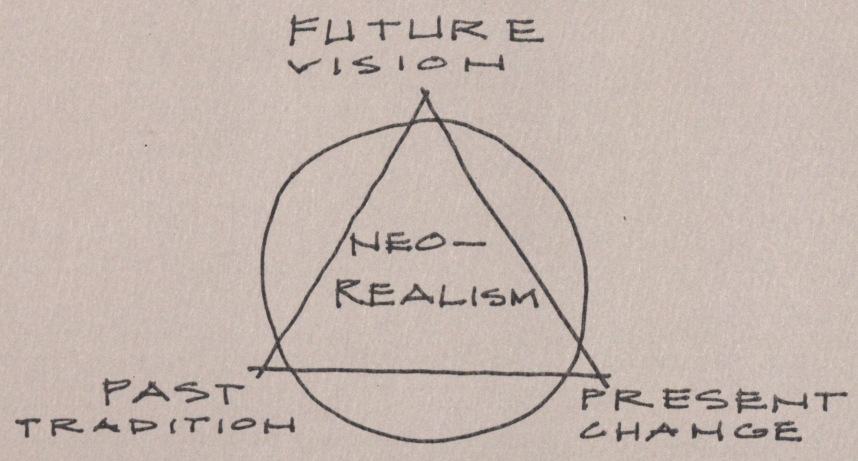
ARCHITECTONICA

produce human meaning, just as eclectic use of the column does not produce its meaning within the whole of a Greek temple, or the spirit of place and function found in its original context.

Existing within the international style and the late and "post"-modern context is the ideosyncratic work of the true post-modernists — Corbusier, Wright, Alto, Sarrinen, and other post-modernists of the past, as well as, Venturi, Moore, Arquitectonica and other more reconized post-modernists of the present. It is they who have found meaning in the expression of the spirit of place and the spirit of funtion — in the context of our culture and age. And it is their work which is a continuation of the contextural methodology behind the true art of architecture.



NEOREALISM



Architecture is the art which so disposes and adorns the edifices raised by man for whatsoever uses, that the sight or them contributes to his mental health, power and pleasure.

It is very necessary, in the outset of all inquiry, to distinguish carefully between Architecture and Building.

JOHN RUSKIN

You employ stone, wood and concrete, and with these materials you build houses and palaces; that is construction. Ingenuity is at work.

But suddenly you touch my heart, you do me good, I am happy and I say: "This is beautiful." That is Architecture. Art enters in.

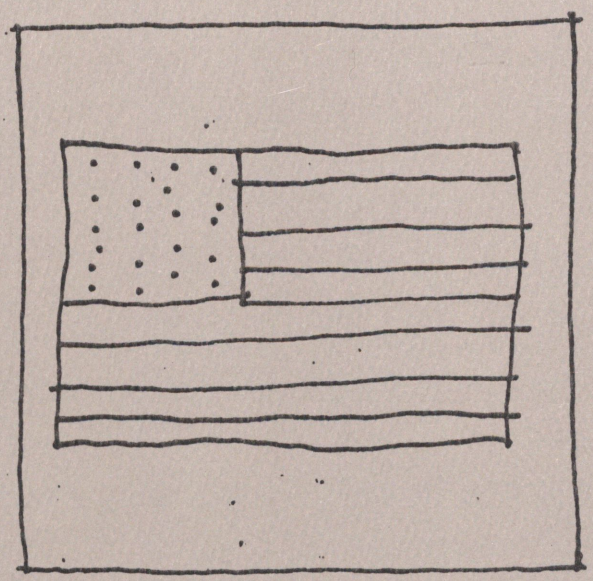
My house is practical. I thank you, as I might thank Railway engineers or the Telephone service. You have not touched my heart.

But suppose that walls rise towards heaven in such a way that I am moved. I perceive your intentions. Your mood has been gentle, brutal, charming or noble. The stones you have erected tell me so. You fix me to the place and my eyes regard it. They behold something which expresses a thought. A thought which reveals itself without word or sound, but solely by means of shapes which stand in a certain relationship to one another. These shapes are such that they are clearly revealed in light. The relationships between them have not necessarily any reference to what is practical or descriptive. They are a mathematical creation of your mind. They are the language of Architecture. By the use of inert materials and *starting from* conditions more or less utilitarian, you have established certain relationships which have aroused my emotions. This is Architecture.

LE CORBUSIER

AN INDIVIDUAL PHILOSOPHY OF ARCHITECTURE

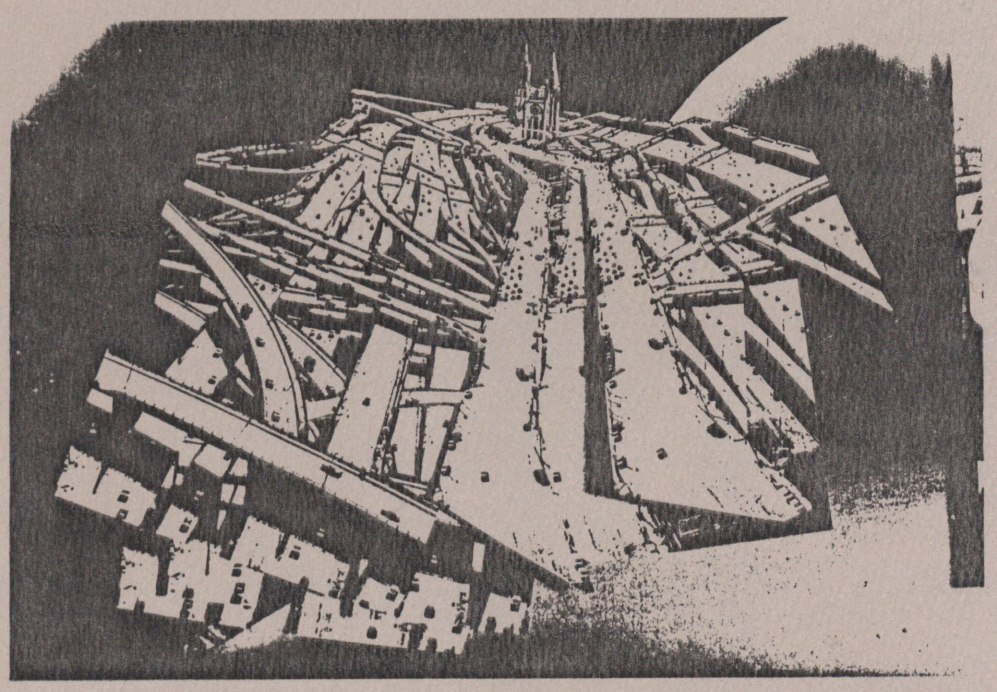
This thesis, which has been a theoretical seach, concludes as a statement towards a *philosophy* of architecture: a methodology that calls for a return to the individualistic, multithematic design process, and the return to architecture as an dualist expression of intellect as well as intuition, the rational as well as the organic—to an artistic philosophy that is representative and *expressive* of the complex forms indigenous to our world. And, above all, it is the recognization that architecture is inherently a social art and, as such, it is an art that finds its true meaning in the expression of the spirit of place and the spirit of function— the context in which we, as human beings exist. It is in the contextual expression of the human spirit — culture, time, place, function, people— that architecture comes to embody the traditions and integrity of the past, the change and progression of the present, and the vision and direction for the future. It is that which is the methodological difference between eclecticism as style, and genuine style— between those concerned with the design of art, and those concerned with the art of design. And, it is that which is the philosophy of the *art* of architecture.



THE NEW WORLD CONTEXT

THE AMERICAN AESTHETIC

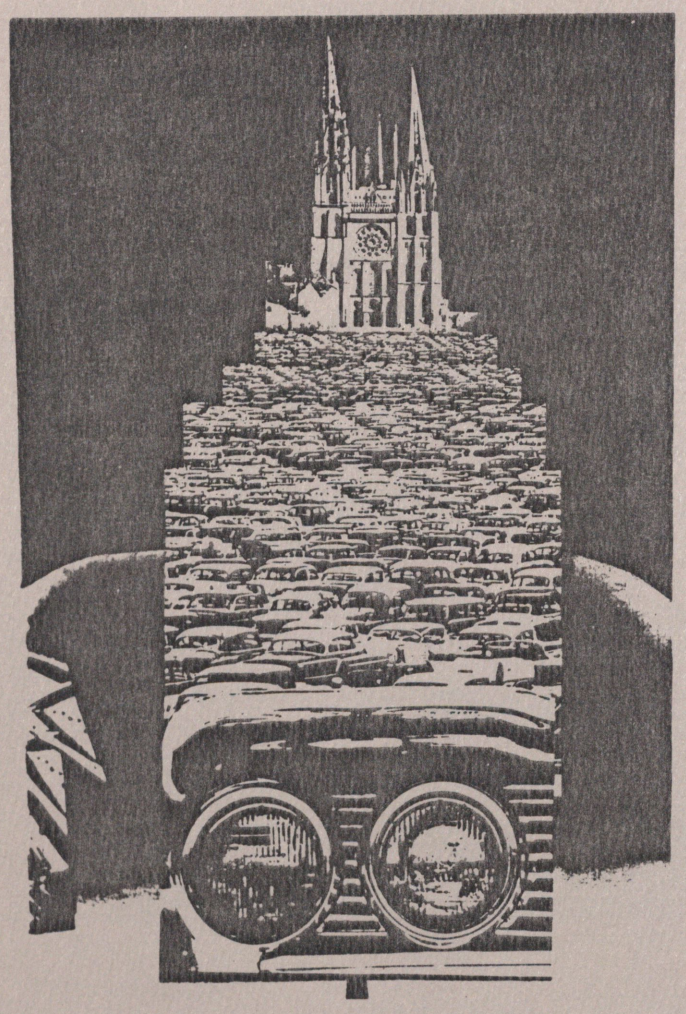
AS SEEN TROUGH THE WINSHIELD OF A 72' PINTO

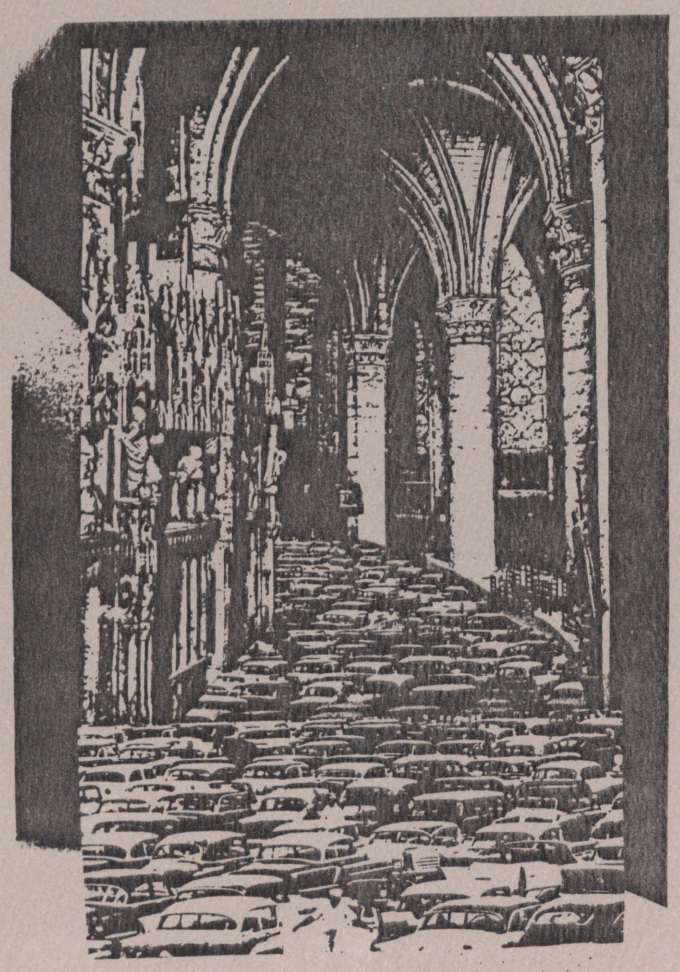


DEFINING AMERICANA

The disscusion, which has been the search for a philosophy of architecture, will now center on a brief investigation into the age in which I and the next generation of architects and artists are going to be creating— what I have defined as the "New World" context. Our culture is, once again, at a turning point: as evidenced by the art of architect's stagnation and loss of direction, and by the return of eclecticism as style. The stylist's search for appropriateness and permanence will never be fullfilled through the superficial imitation of contextual architecture of past and foriegn cultures. The contextualist realizes that appropriateness, permanence, and sense of place are aquired through the expression of his culture and age. These qualities are found in the spirit of place and the spirit of function — the context in which he and his fellow man exist. Thus, the contextualist will be the interpreter of the new age. His individual open-minded philosophy allows the imagination and forsight to work within the context of the New World, and to create architecture which is an expression of it.

In looking back at the context of American culture, as well as, its present and future state; one one can see distinct eras. From its inception, until the late 1800's, America was an agrian based culture. Society and individual life was based on agriculture and manual, home based industries— self reliance ensured survival. It was an arcadian age, as seen in the



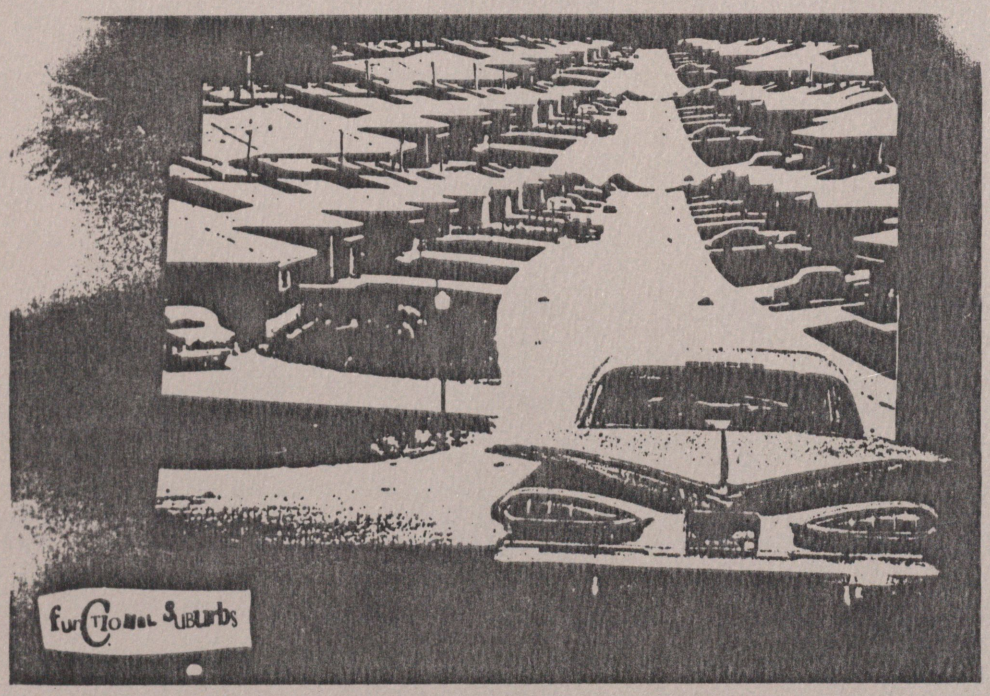


architecture of Thomas Jefferson and others of that time.

From the late 1800's, to this day, American culture has undergone the tremendous transformation into an industrially based society. With the coming of the machine age, society and individual life have become increasingly industrialized and specialized. Peoples existance now relies almost entirely on the machine. Today is the age of change, the age in which American culture has attempted to harness the new found power and mobility of a capitolist industrial nation. Much of current functionalist architecture is an expression of this "American democratic mythology".9

Looking into future culture: with the advent of the computer age and a new technological era; man will continue to struggle to gain control of the machine age. (As evidenced by the nuclear dilemma, and the threat of the computer eliminating the need for the architectural proffession.) It is this present and future context in which future generations of architects will inherit and create within.....

Today's culture of the machine age has found its metaphor in suburbia and the commercial strip (the mass produced components of urban sprawl), and in the towering skyscroper which rises above it (analogous to the church steeples of Europeon cities) — all of which is an expression of the virtues of capitolism and the democratic way of life. This is the American dream found in the sunbelt cities of the New World. L.A., Phoniex,





Houston, Dallas — these are the cities of the New World and its urban plan — a plan that is invading every city of the nation. Uninhibited by any strong historicism or traditional planning influence; the new sunbelt cities are the embodiment of current American culture, both good and bad. The architecture of the New World is an expression of that which distinguishes present American culture from any other, past or present.

The New World is the age which the early modernists foresaw and, in many ways, predestined. Their works expressed the dream of a new way of life for the modern man in a unprecedented, hedonistic age. All this was to be made possible by the machine age which was to change tradition in the name of the progress of man. In Broadacre city; Wright envisioned a society freed by the machine and the automobile. It was a society which lived in arcadian suburban developements of mass produced houses and parcels of land, of commercial strips and shopping malls. Le Corbusier anticipated mass transit systems and towering skyscrapers in his vision of the modern, Radiant City. Although the New World is far from these purist visions, much of the early modern prophecy has become the reality of our culture today.

America is a society infatuated with the democratic mythology and freedom in the forms of mobility and movement — its aesthetic and way of life. Mobile homes — mobile lives — instant cities — the true monuement

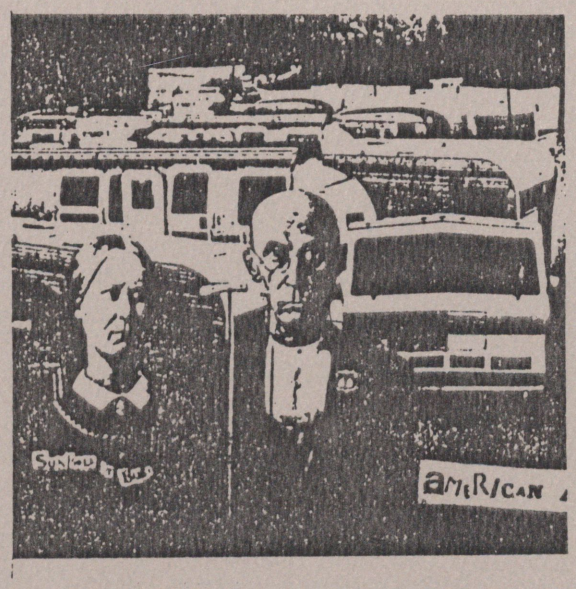
of the New World culture is not its architecture, but, the freeway. The freeway is the all encompassing expression of the New World and the American-suburbian way of life. It is the transportation systems, not the architecture, which have become the form givers and reconizable monuments of the New World cities.

Due mostly to the ideological and academic ignorance of this context; the art of architecture plays a less than minor role in present American culture. Although architects, such as, Venturi and Architectonica have begun to reconize and express this context in their work; it has been the functionalist who, for the most part, has captured the New World spirit. Thus, the functionalist has taken the role of creating within the context of our age and culture, and creating what Americans really want and need. Meanwhile, the architects work has become the stylistic expression of "meditations on architecture" inherently absent of any expressed meaning, direction, or foresight for present, as well as, future American culture. Over 100 million people live in the suburbs of the U.S.— yet, the suburbs are virtually nonexistant in current architectural theory and its practice.....

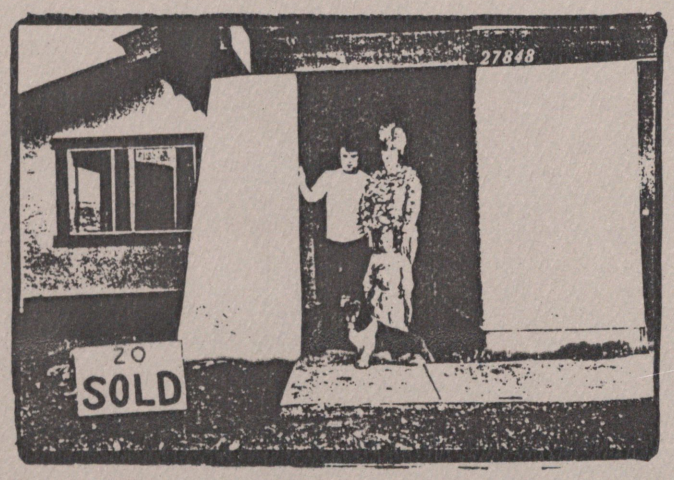
A THESIS:
IN SEARCH OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

A SEARCH FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM

Thus far, in this thesis which has been a theoretical study, I have defined an individual philosophy of architecture. The thesis will now make the transition from a theoretical exploration to the more traditional, pratical application of the philosophy before mentioned. The thesis will now focus on the theory of contextualism as the expression of spirit of place and spirit of function.— found in what I have termed as a search for the American dream. As such, the thesis will now center on an architectural program and project for the Californian suburbian. The search will begin with the expression of the spirit of function found in the suburbs— their meaning and position within present American culture— working towards the developement of a basic suburbian program. The thesis will then focus on the spirit of place of a city which is most expressive of the New World spirit and plan — L.A. — and a project site within this context. And, finally, the theoretical philosophy and traditional programing will culminate in a suburbian design project as *an expression of context.*



INSIDE THE SUBURBS



THE SPIRIT OF FUNCTION OF THE SUBURBS

As I have previously revealed in this thesis, which has now become a "search for the American dream", I, myself, am a "product of the suburbian way of life." Thus, I have many distinct images of what can be considered a paticularly American lifestyle and what I would define as an expression of the American dream — those aspects that make up the spirit of function of the suburbs.

I can still picture a suburbian father whom I rarely saw on weekdays. His two hours commuting time required that he leave the suburbs for work at 5:30 in the morning, and he could not return until after 7:00 that evening. He made such sacrifices to provide for his family and the good life — that which my parents saw, as do a majority of Americans, as being the suburbian way of life. Thus, our home became the all important expression of the fruits of their labor, and a place where much of their hard earned leisure time was spent. I can still recall images of my mom and dad in their bermuda shorts, on a summer weekend — installing the white granite rock garden in the front yard (as plagiarized from the lanscaping of the local Howard Johnsons) — or waxing our four door Ford Galaxy 500 for display in the front drive (to the "easy listening" music of Neil Diamond) — all of which was the expression of a lifestyle and the search for the American dream....

In a spiritual sense, the suburbs are the embodiment and ultimate

expression of a lifestyle which is immersed in what Scully defines as "American democratic mythology." The suburbs are not just housing, but, an integral part of a whole way of life and living. Its an expression of an culture and society which sees work as a 55 mph. necessity that provides for the good life of leisure, and the home and family, in the arcaidian life style. The suburbs are the expression of the modern and paticularly Western notion of work providing for hedonistic days.

Thus, the suburbs can be seen as the connection between the typical American's two worlds: that of work, function and necessity, and that of the leisure, arcadian family life. As such, the suburban home is the root, the total expression, of the suburbian and a American way of life.

Where does this aspiration, this image of the American dream originate, and, which way is it progressing? It is a compilation of both past and present sources of inspiration, of which, I have attempted to choose the most influencial and relavent case studies:

BROADACRE CITY

Frank Lloyd Wrights Broadacre City the father of, the precursor to what has become the typical suburban plan, lifestle and ideal. Perived out of the image of the agrarian society and heritage of American culture; it has fostered what has become the American dream in built form. Wright invisioned the democratic individual ownership of land and house seperated from the "urban crisis" of the city. Placed in the arcadian setting, Broadacre City was to provide for the new leisure family lifestyle of modern man, as made possible by the advent of the machine age and the automobile.

Designed in 1935, Broadacre City is the epitomy of all that has become today's typical American suburb. Mass produced house were placed on one acre plots which were arranged near major transportation arterials. The arterials became commercial strips providing shopping malls, hotels, gas stations and the other needs of the mobile suburbian society.

The architecture of Broadacre city was to be of the organic prarie style which was sympathetic to both the suburbian's needs and the region. This purest vision has since been transformed by popular society into the typical "ranch house" iconology — what Wright, himself, would later describe as: "a series of anonymous boxes that go into a row, on row, upon row." The single family dwelling unit; low hip roof, substantial chimney, open enterior plan, and broad accommodating carport have become the standard elements of houses to gas stations. It is that which has become the spirit behind the urban sprawl of the American suburb.

THE TYPICAL AMERICAN SUBURB

The traditional suburbian plan is steeped in the in the democratic image of individual ownership of both land and house. It is an expression of the typical American, his life-style, wants and needs. As Denise Scott Brown did in the study "A House is More Than a Home", I have broken down the common suburban plan into its functional, as well as, symbolic elements:

The basic plan: Single family dwelling units of 1200 to 1500 square feet, placed on a 60'x120' lot with a 25' front set back, and 10' side set backs.

The yard: Provides a face to the public and enhances the front of the house. Provides private family space in back.

The drive: Serves as a connection of house to the transportation arterial in which it has been ordered and placed. Also serves as display space for autos, recreational vehicles, and other status symbols.

The Style: Creates a backdrop for the lifestyle and tastes of the individual behind. From "Georgian London, with complete street signs, in Houston, to Japaneese Modern in Beverly Hills."10

The Garage: Expresses the auto's importance to the suburbian way of life by being integral with the building as the whole — is the main imformal entry.

The Front Door / Living Room: Livingroom serves as a formal display space (as viewed through the picture window.). As is the front door; used for formal and special occasions.

The TV / Recreation Room: Expression of the importance of the suburbian's

leisure time — and how he makes use of it. It is an informal, much used space containing the TV and other recreational facilities.

The Kitchen: Center of house and family life. Large, efficient, with all the mechanical amenities Americans have become accustomed to.

BALWIN HILLS VILLAGE

Designed by Clarence Stien in 1941; Baldwin Hills Village has since been considered, by urban planners and architects, as one of the most successful and progressive housing projects of the 20th century (its planning concepts are only now begining to be accepted by designers and the public). The project consists of what is now defined as a planned unit developement: attatched unit housing placed in a superblock, which focuses on communally owned and used park space. This was, and still is foriegn to the single family unit, front yard-side yard planning concepts of the common commercial suburb.

The Balwin Hills plan allows for much more efficient and aesthetic use of the land, a higher density of housing, and complete seperation of the pedestrian and the automobile; as compared to the typical suburban plan. Partly due to its progressive nature and the lack of precident, and mostly due to zoning and government codes; the Baldwin Hills concept has yet to be widely utilized by designers and developers. Thus, it still remains an experiment and is, in fact surrounded the freestanding housing of tradition L.A. suburban developements. But, if one considers the 100 per cent occupancy rate that Balwin Hills Village has had since it was built, and the waste of what is now becoming extremely precious land by the common suburban developement — Baldwin Hills Village is a progressive and successful planning concept. And, it is a concept which is finally begining to be accepted by developers and designers, government codes, and the public.

SPIRIT OF FUNCTION PROGRAMING GOAL

To preserve those aspects which are a succesful and meaningful expression of suburbian culture, its function and its user, while at the same time, providing progressive solutions to the problems and the less successful charecteristics of the suburbs.

Defining the good:

The following are the elements that, when taken as a whole, are a successful expression of the needs and wants of the suburbian culture:

A Metaphor of the American Dream:

- Suburbs are the embodiment of democratic mythology and thus, are the paticularly American expression of our society, culture, and lifestyle.
- The home as an expression of the fruits of the suburbian's labour and his status within society.
- The home as the connection between the suburban's two worlds: that of work and 55 m.p.h. necessities and that of the arcadian family atmosphere — the home as the root of the suburbans world.

Actual and Perceived Individuality:

- Ownership of own house and land which the suburbian can shape and change to his own needs and desires (ie painting and changing the style of the house — landscaping, carpeting and drapes, own mailbox and house number, and other individual expressions.)

Defining the Bad:

The following are the elements which express the less successful charecteristics of the suburbs.

Urban Sprawl — Urban Waste:

- The suburban pattern, which can be best described as urban sprawl, has lost all sense of place, community spirit, and identity to standadized, mass produced, monotonous and anoymous boxes placed on a virtually unplanned grid of streets. Thus, there is a lack of any sympathetic planning to the site or user, no coherent or hierchical order other than the basic street grid, and no prominent public and symbolic buildings, reference points or direction to the common suburban plan.
- The great suburban sprawl is both inefficient and aesthetically wasteful of the land and enviroment. (Over 100 million people live in the suburbs, and with the present population growth the suburban plan, in its present form, will no longer be enviromentally or economically feasible).

The Monotony of Mass Production and the Aesthetics of Economics:

- "The developers who built it [the suburbs] are, fundementally, no different from manufaturers of any other mass produced product: they standardize their product, package it, arrange it for easy distribution and easy financing, and sell it off the shelf as fast as they can." ||

TYPOLOGICAL USER AND BUILDING FUNCTION PROGRAMING GOAL

To create a progam for today's suburbian family.

Defining the User:

- Small or single parent families.
- Parents are 25-35 year old proffesionals who work and comute full time. Combined average income of $65,000/year.
- Average of 1-2 children of all ages.

Defining Building Function:

- Service spaces (both indoor and outdoor) that permit efficiency and the savings of time which is valuable to the working suburbanite.
- Served spaces (both indoor and outdoor) that provide and encourage a homelike leisure atmosphere and which will become a setting for the suburbanite's use of hard earned and precious leisure time.
- Provide for child care and design for their protection.
- Design must meet major code requirements.
- An urban plan and design that is sympathetic to both the user and the enviroment.
- Project must make use of building methods and materials which will be economically feasible and appropriate to the projected user.

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPENT (P.U.D.)

SUBURBAN HOUSING:

50 SINGLE FAM
50 SINGLE FAMILY ATTACHED HOUSING UNITS — 75,000 SQ FT
16 UNITS / ACRE (3.1 ACRES TOTAL)
2 STORY, 3 BEDROOM UNITS W/ GARAGE
25' x 100' LOT SIZE W/ 30' SIDE YARD BETWEEN ROWS
240 SQ FT PARKING / UNIT

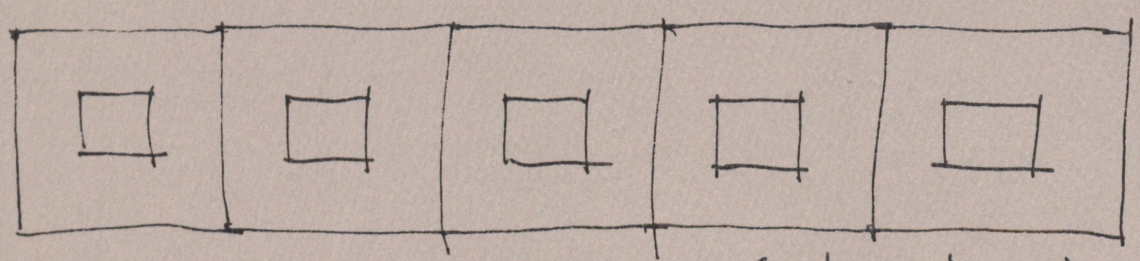
COMMUNITY / RECREATION CENTER:

CHILD CARE FACILITIES	2,000 SQ FT
MUTI	
MULTPURPOSE / MEETING FACILITIES	4,500 SQ FT
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES	3,500 SQ FT

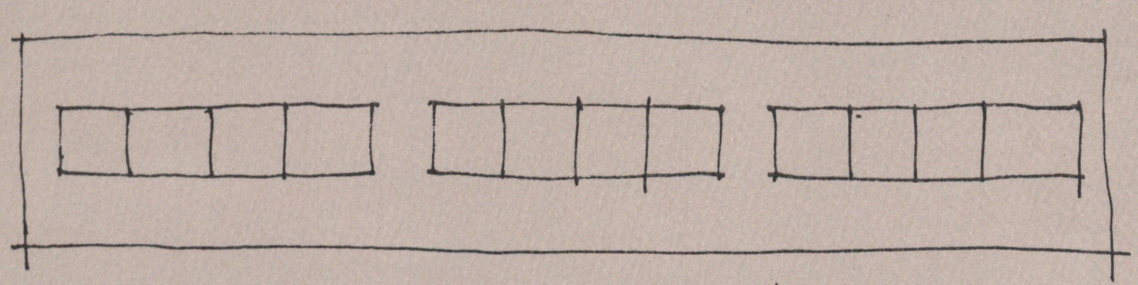
RETAIL / FUTEP

RETAIL / FUTURE EXPANSION:

PROVIDED SPACE FOR RETAIL	10,000 SQ FT
PROVIDE FOR FUTURE EXPANSION OF DEVELOPEMENT INTO A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES	50,000 SQ FT



TRADITIONAL ZONING (60' x 120' LOT)



P.U.D. ZONING (25' x 60' LOT)

THE SUBURBAN PROGRAM AND RATIONALE (AS DERIVED FROM THE PROGRAMING GOALS)

The basic overall developement type the project will follow is that of a planned unit developement. This modern, progressive developement plan was chosen over the traditional single family unit developement because it is more functionally, aesthetically, and economically successful and viable. The P.U.D plan consists of attatched single family dwelling unit housing and communally owned land, v.s. the detatched single family dwellings and individually owned land plots of the typical suburbian developement. Unlike traditional suburban planning, the P.U.D. plan also incorporates a variety of public and retail uses into the overall developement. The following is the basic rational for using the plan unit developement as opposed to the traditional suburban developement:

Function:

- Attached unit housing creates more efficient and better use of land. Large, usable, communal park spaces eliminate smaller unusable yards and especially side yards.
- Open land and park space can be completely separated from automobile traffic providing for children and pedestrian saftey.
- Greaty reduces the user's time required for care and upkeep of landscaping.
- Incorporated public and retail spaces better provide for the necessities of the suburbian.

Aesthetics:

- Both the attached buildings and the communal park space aquire unity and become much stronger aesthetically, especially in the relationship between them.
- Public buildings provide a focal point of the developement. As such, they act as a reference point giving coherent order and direction to the developement, as well as, its relationship to the surrounding urban plan.
- The sense of individual ownership can be transfered into the communal ownership of common park space.
- Perceived individuality can be preserved and enhanced through sympathetic design.
- Developement allows for preservation of the natural topography and charecter of the site.
- The symbolism found in communal ownership and the public buildings creates a strong community atmosphere and sense of place.

Economics:

- Provides more efficient and economical building method.
- Allows more units/acre and larger houses for less money.
- Reduces roads, utilities, and sitework.
- A variety of uses makes the developement more economically viable and stable.

SERVICE SPACES
EFFICIENT
STREAMLINE
THE MACHINE METAPHOR

SERVED SPACES
ARCADIAN
STATIC
PASTURAL
THE HUMAN METAPHOR

SERVICE SPACES:
FRONT YARD
GARAGE
ENTRY
KITCHEN/EATING
BATHROOMS
LAUNDRY ROOM

FRONT YARD:
240 SQ FT PARKING
GARAGE DRIVEWAY
LOW MAINTENANCE
LANDSCAPING

PROGRAMING THE SUBURBAN HOUSE

The building program is derived out of the spirit of function of the suburbs— as a metaphor of the American dream. It is a connection of the 55 m.p.h. working urbanite and his functional needs and necessities, as provided by the service spaces, and his more arcadian family orientated wants and desires, as provided by the served spaces. It is the acknowledgement of the pragmatic, as well as, the spirit of function found in American suburbian culture.

The Service Spaces:

The service spaces be a metaphor of what Le Corbusier described as a "machine for living." They will provide the basic pragmatic and functional needs of the suburbian. Streamline and efficient in design, form, and materials; the service spaces will be a dynamic active expression of the house in service of the modern American and his quest for leisure time and the suburbian way of life.

The Front Yard:

The sole purpose of the front yard is to enhance the street side of the house. It will provide parking, or more appropriately, display space for the suburban's automobile, recreational vehicles, and various other status symbols. The yard should require little or no maintenance.

The Garage:

The garage takes on the function of the

GARAGE : 500 SQ FT
SPACE FOR 2 CARS AND STORAGE
AND STORAGE
CONNECTION TO MAIN ENTRY

ENTRY : 60 SQ FT
LOBBY AND CLOSET STORAGE

KITCHEN : 150 SQ FT
FOOD PREPARATION AND
EATING SPACE
BUILT-IN EATING ACCOMIDATIONS
SPACE FOR NECESSARY APPLIANCES

2½ BATHROOMS :
MASTER BATH : 60 SQ FT
FULL BATH AND VANITY
BEDROOM'S BATH : 45 SQ FT
FULL BATH
SERVICE BATH : 30 SQ FT
LAUNDRY ROOM : 60 SQ FT

main entrance of the suburbanite returning from his mobile world. As such, it is the most used and most important entry from the street side of the house. Thus, the garage is an integral part of the house and should be expressed as, and connected to, the main entry.

The Front Door and Entry Space:

The front or streetside door is more symbolic than functional, as is the case in the typical suburban home. It will provide a less used, formal entry for guests and special occasions. As such, it should embody the symbolism found in the common "welcome" door matt. The entry space will serve as, and express, the transition between the mobile urbanite and the machine world to his more leisure human world.

The Kitchen / Eating Space:

The kitchen is the most important service space, both symbolically and functionally, and should be expressed as such. Used by the whole family, it is a eating, as well as, a meeting place. Efficiency orientated, it should provide for all of the modern appliances and conveniences.

The Bathrooms / Laundry Space:

In many ways, these rooms should be equivalent to the kitchen space. They to should provide for the basic service needs of the suburban family and should allow for the modern conveniences. Thus, the bathrooms and laundry space should retain the effiency and symbolism found in the kitchen.

SERVED SPACES:
TV / RECREATION ROOM
LIVING / DINING ROOM
MASTER BEDROOM
CHILDREN'S BEDROOMS
BACKYARD

TV / RECREATION ROOM : 225 SQ FT
ACCOMIDATIONS FOR
ELECTRONIC CENTER
FLEXIBLE / INFORMAL
SEATING
ENTRY FROM PARK SIDE
OF HOUSE / PATIO

LIVING / DINING ROOM : 300 SQ FT
FORMAL LAYOUT / SEATING

The Served Spaces:

The served spaces should provide for, encourage, and be an expression of the suburbian's family and leisure life. Arcadian, static, and pastural through design, form, and use of materials; the served spaces will be derived out of the human metaphor (as compared to the machine metaphor of the service spaces). They will accomidate the suburbian in search of the American dream and hedonistic days.

The TV / Recreation Space:

The TV/recreation room is the most important and most used served space. It is the ultimate expression of the suburbian lifestyle. Like the kitchen, it is a place in which the whole family meets and uses. It comprises of all of the more informal recreational uses in which the suburbian spends a majority of his leisure time and is that which makes up his everyday life (the average American spends 5 hours a day watching TV). Thus, the TV/rec. space should provide for and be an expression of the suburban priorities and ideals: allowing for the new importance of technology found in the electronics of our age. The space should also act as a connection to and main entry from the park / recreation side of the house.

The Living / Dining Space:

Like the front door, this space is for formal and symbolic use. Used mostly for guests and special occasions; the living / dining space symbolizes the image and status of suburban culture that can be seen through the typical picture window. Thus, this

MASTER BEDROOM: 250 SQ FT
CHILDREN'S BEDROOMS (2): 240 SQ FT

BACK YARD:
100 SQ FT PRIVATE PATIO SPACE
100 SQ FT GARDEN SPACE
CONNECTION TO REC. ROOM

formal space should allow for the expression of the wealth and finer things aquired through the working suburbian lifestyle.

The Bedroom Spaces:

The bedrooms should provide a restful and relaxing atmosphere. The master bedroom's importance is expressed through its larger size and its service accomidations while the childrens bedrooms should be more efficiency orientated.

The Back Yard Space:

The back yard is an outdoor extension of the recreation space and is the connection to the more leisure, arcadian park side of the house. It should provide the space and privacy for the typical suburban recreational uses (barbecues, lawn furnature, etc).

COMMUNITY / RECREATION CENTER:
MULTIPURPOSE MEETING SPACE
CHILD DAY CARE CENTER
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

MEETING / GATHERING SPACE	
MULTIPURPOSE SPACE:	2,500 SQ FT
MOVABLE SEATING	
STAGE / STORAGE	
MEETING ROOM:	500 SQ FT
KITCHEN:	100 SQ FT
FACILITIES FOR MINOR	
FOOD PREPARATION	
RESTROOMS:	250 SQ FT
OUTDOOR AMPHETHEATER:	400 SQ FT
LOBBY:	150 SQ FT
PARKING:	10,000 SQ FT

DAY CARE CENTER	
CLASSROOM:	750 SQ FT
NURSUREY:	150 SQ FT
RESTROOMS:	100 SQ FT
OFFICES (2):	200 SQ FT
OUTDOOR PLAY:	2,500 SQ FT

RECREATION CENTER	
RECREATION ROOM:	400 SQ FT
WEIGHT ROOM:	400 SQ FT
LOCKER / SHOWER ROOM:	800 SQ FT
RACQUETBALL COURTS (2):	1,200 SQ FT
OUTDOOR POOL / DECK:	7,000 SQ FT
HOT TUB:	250 SQ FT
TENNIS COURT:	6,500 SQ FT

PROGRAMING THE COMMUNITY / RECREATION CENTER

The community recreation center is the focus of the suburban plan and community. As such, it will provide a sence of neighborhood and community spirit through the symbolism of a public building as a communal meeting place. The community / recreation center will provide for meeting and gathering space, child care and the functional necessities of the working suburbian family, as well as, the various leisure and recreational facilities which have become indigenous to the modern suburbian's life style.

The Meeting / Gathering Space:
This flexible multiuse space will provide both indoor and outdoor areas for group meetings, classes, parties, and other types of gatherings. It should be accomidating to the needs of both adults and younger people.

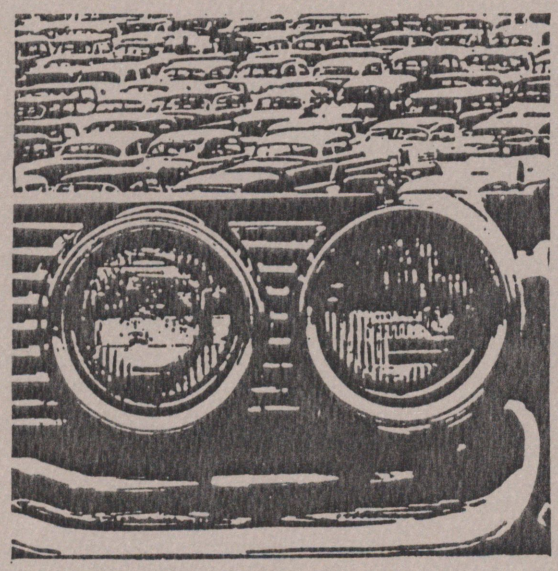
The Child Day Care Center:
The day care center will provide for the child care and educational necessities of the children of working parents. It will function as a day care as well as educational center for preschool and younger aged children. As such, it should be sympathetic, in design and scale, to the children and the day care supervisors.

The Recreation Spaces:
The recreational spaces, both indoor and outdoor, should be the equivalent of a "communal back yard". As such, they will provide and express the recreational uses which are an integral part of the suburbians leisure lifestyle.

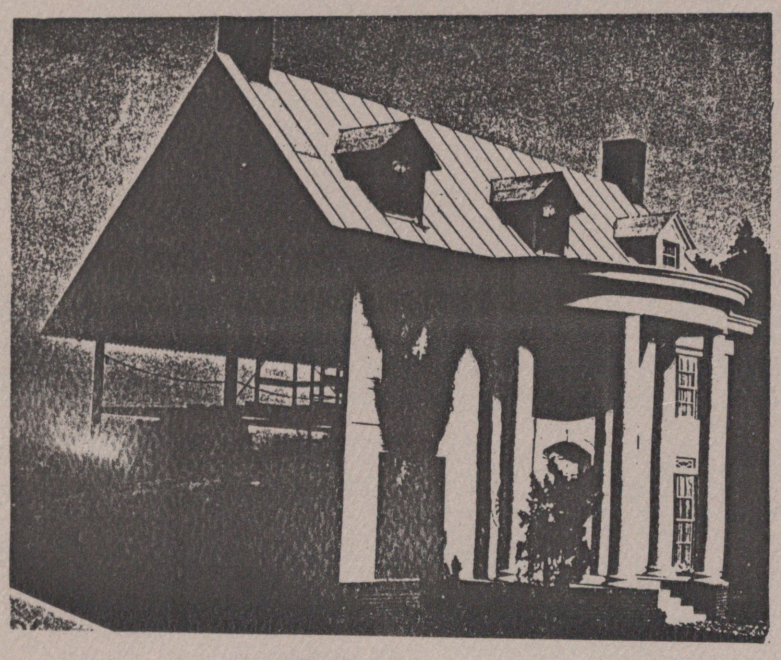
PROJECT SCOPE

Because this thesis is focusing on design theory and methodology, much of the more detailed programing has not been dealt with. Thus, I plan to select a site of an existing, traditionally planned, suburb developement that is of similar size and scope to the basic program I have defined, and, redesign it using the methodology and program of my thesis. In doing so, many of the economic feasibility, user compatibility, and other site requirement studies that determine such a developement will be considered fullfilled, as will the project's developer and its support. A site and developement will be chosen which will provide a strong basis for further exploration of my theoretical ideas in the form of an actual design project.

As for the project itself: the main focus will be on the overall developement plan and the design of the housing in detail. The other areas of the project (ie the community/ recreation center and the retail uses) will be developed only to a schematic level to allow for their position and presence in the overall project.



DESIGNING IN THE NEW WORLD



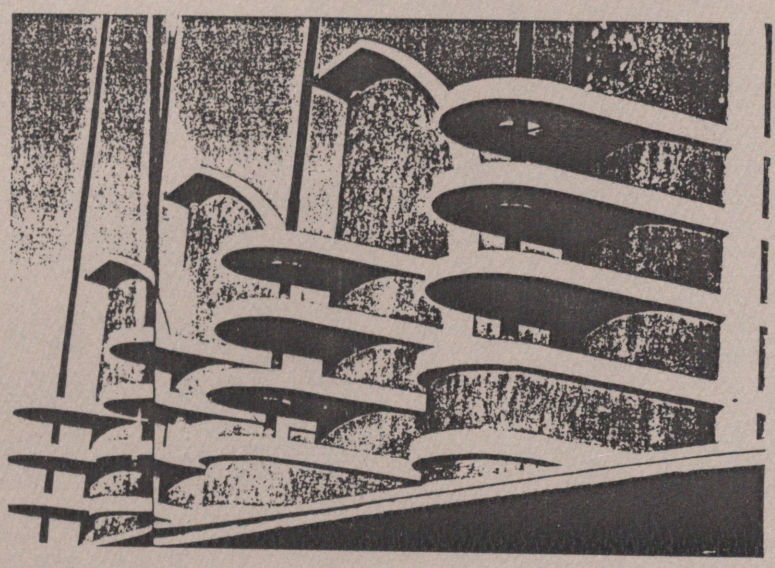


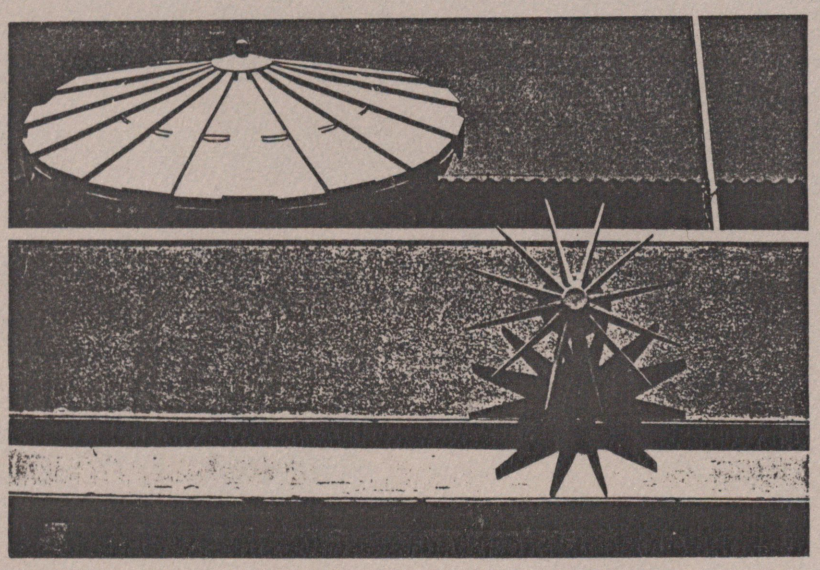
EVERYPLACE, EVERYWHERE

For those who are disposed to the study of culture, its art and its architecture, it is difficult to come up with a concise description of Los Angeles. The organic sprawl of L.A. cannot be bisected, disected, defined, termed, justified or rationalized intellectually. It is not of the purist vision found in the traditional thought and planning of the past, as well as, the present. L.A. must, instead, be viewed from more of an intuitive standpoint and must be accepted for what it is — an aglomeration of popular American culture, both good and bad.

From the Hollywood hills, to the sprawl of the suburban valleys, to the beaches: L.A. is a collage, a myriad of individual images, places, styles, and dreams bound within its everreaching counties. It is that which makes up the heart of southern California and that which I have before defined as the New World. If New York is considered the "melting pot", then L.A. can be considered the mold in which much of pop American culture is created. It is a place where people are allowed to live out their dreams with a freedom and intensity that is less tolerated in the serious, self consciousness of tradition.

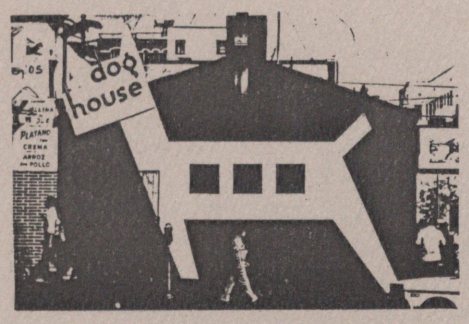
Since its beginnings, people from all parts of the country have steadily migrated to L.A. with an

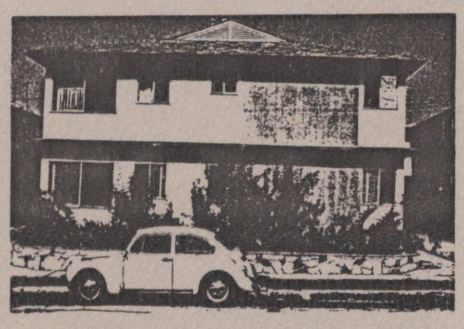


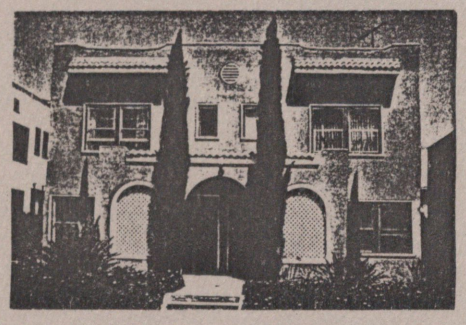


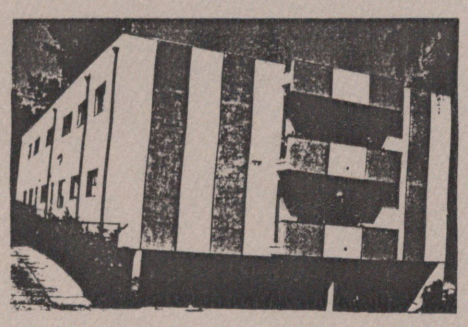
almost religous furor. (In fact, L.A. has in many ways has acquired the importance and the fantastic connotations of a sacred place within our time and culture). The auto-mobilized modern crusaders, who once followed Route 66, now follow the six lane freeways towards the mecca of the American west in search of their own vision of the American dream.

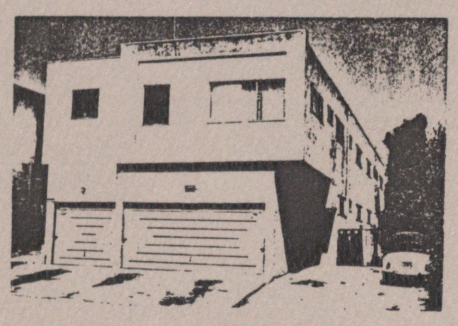
Thus, L.A. has become a place of popular notion, of the American dream and its manifestations of image, style, status, material wealth and those things which are an expression of the democratic way of life. Suburbia, the freeways, urban sprawl — life in the fast lane — L.A. is a place where much of that which is paticular to American culture, its image and its meaning, is born or more appropriately manufactured. It is the stuff of an image which is distributed throughout the country by the self perpetuating propaganda of sundrenched commercials, Hollywood movie sets, and by tourists with images of Disneyland's mainstreet still fresh in their minds — all part of the neverending chug of the New World machine. L.A. is a parade of trends, imagery and style (the expression of a mobile everchanging, eversearching, American populace) which the rest of the country, especially the west, can only follow in diurnal motion, as the moon follows the sun, with an intensity which is only a pale

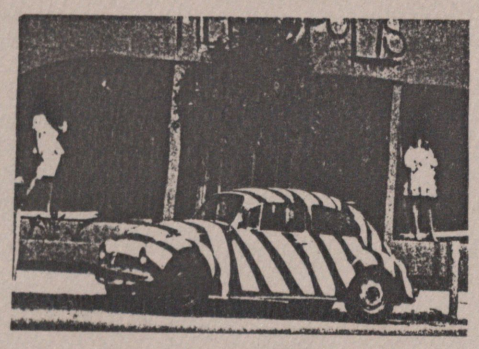








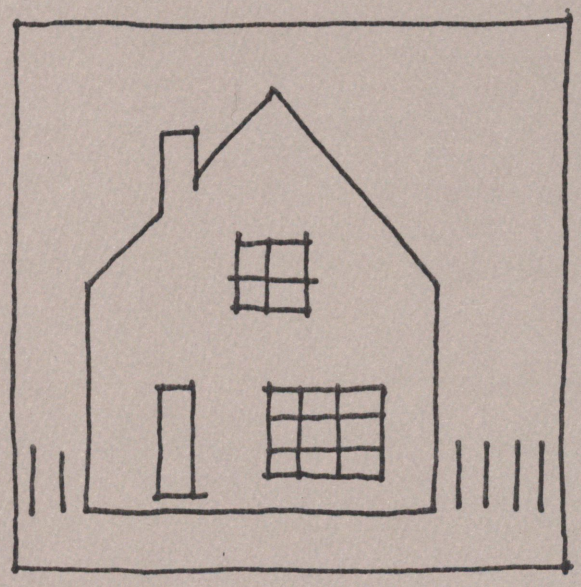




reflection of the original.

Because of its uninhibited sprawl L.A. is refered to by many as anyplace, anywere. I think a better description is everyplace everywhere. Created by a populace which, like pulp magazines and cable TV, is more intrested in image than with substance, in change as apposed to permanence: L.A. is a collage of style, image, and color transformed into the idiosyncratic, unconventional, and sometimes outrageous forms of popular expression. It is that which constitutes the New World venacular and that which gives L.A. its sense of place.

Thus, I have chosen L.A. and its context as the place for further exploration of my theoretical search and methodology in actual architectontic form and design practice. I have attempted to celebrate the imagery and diversity found in the popular culture of L.A. and its New World plan. I have done so through a methodology and architecture which is sympathetic to, and most importantly, an expression of L.A. — and what I see as its spirit of function and spirit of place with our present culture.



AN EXPRESSION OF CONTEXT

FOOTNOTES

1 Robert Venturi. Learning From Las Vegas, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1972), 87

2 IBID, 95

3 Wojciech. Rationalism and Romanticism in Architecture, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1982), 76

4 Christian Norberg Shultz. Genius Loci, (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), 1

5 Ann Colouguin, Michael Graves, (London, England: Architectural Monographs, 1979), 43

6 Wojciech. Rationalism and Romanticism in Architecture, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1982), 95

7 Robert Venturi. Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966), 53

8 Christian Norberg Shultz. Genius Loci, (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), 6

9 Vincent Scully. Modern Architecture, (New York: George Braziller Inc., 1984), 40

10 Denise Scott Brown, "A House is More Than a Home", (New York: Progressive Architecture, 8/86), 62

12 Vincent Scully. Modern Architecture, (New York: George Braziller Inc., 1984), 41

13 Ann Colouguin, Michael Graves (London, England: Architectural Monographs, 1979), 43

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