2015

Seeking Home

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SENIOR INTEGRATIVE PROJECT: INDEPENDENT STUDY

ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES
CONNECTICUT COLLEGE
2015

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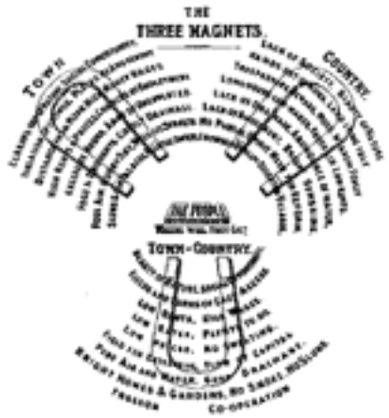
Seeking Home

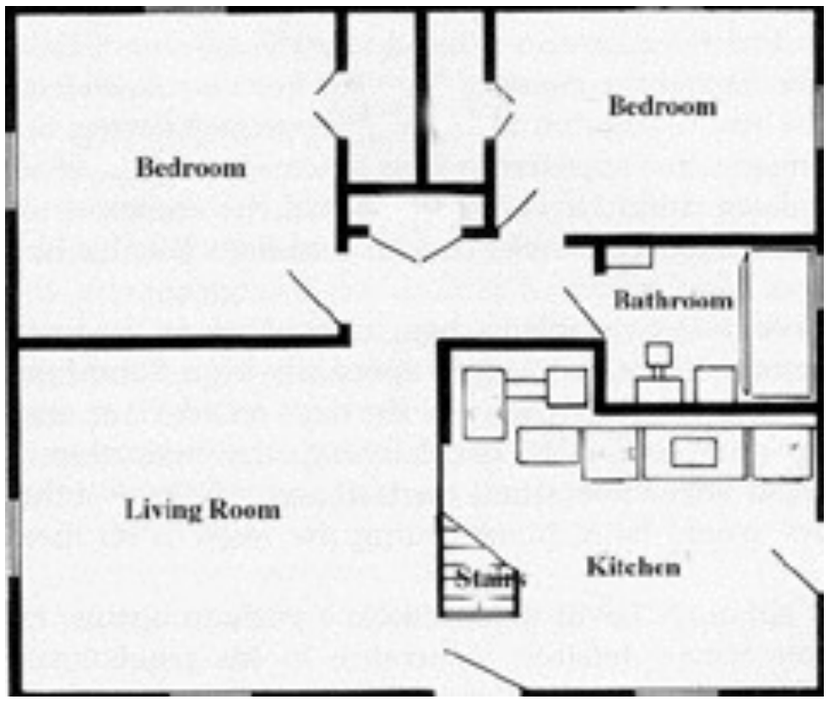
Unit 1

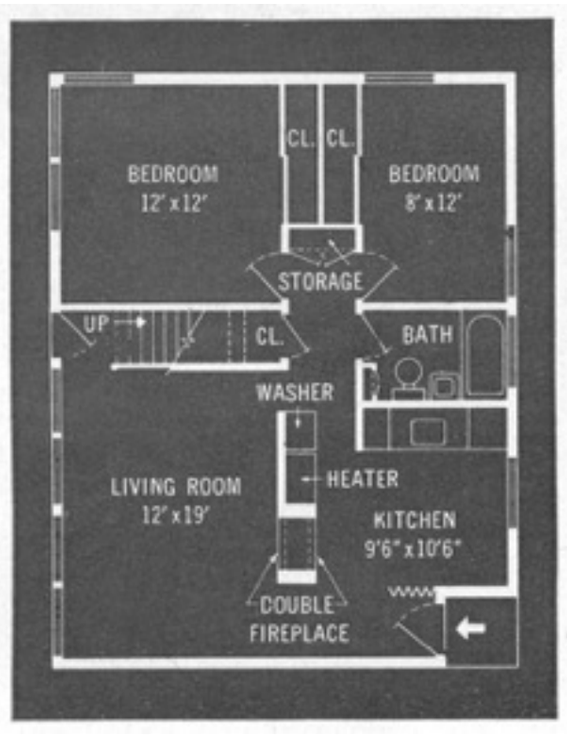
What can we learn from the sprawling way America built its suburbs? What in a suburb is America and what is accident? What can and should we preserve, then what must be fixed?

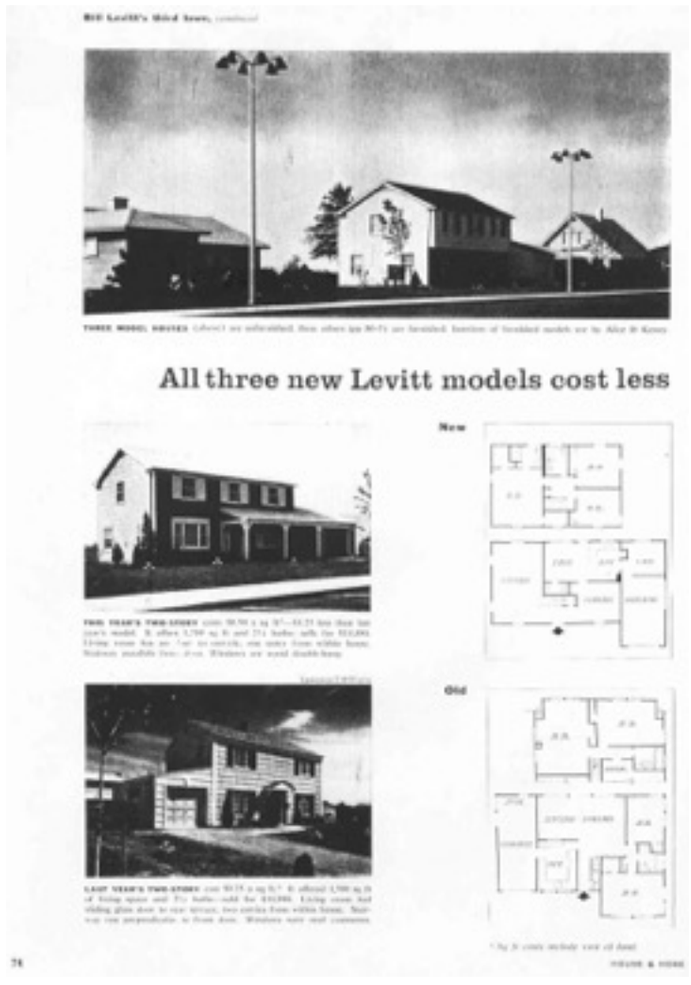


Simple idea going complex

There’s no order






All three new Levitt models cost less

Thought-through and constantly revised

Design dictates society

Cul-de-sac, Dead-end, Through Street

Enclosure
Street is play space
Domain of children

Gated Community

Stronghold for suburban values
Lifestyle, security, prestige
Programming aims for community

Roadside Retail

Decorating sheds?
Evolution from filling station to one-stop-shop
Turnover is encouraged by design

Cul-de-sac, Dead-end, Through Street

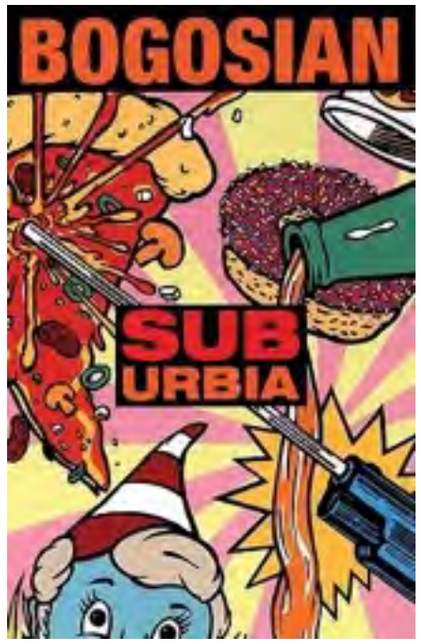
Gated Community

Roadside Retail

It’s about the kids

It’s about who’s
out there

It’s about you



People have a lot of feelings about the suburbs

Unit 2

Can this research impact the redesign of the Fort Trumbull neighborhood?

Memory Map

Precedents
New Bedford
Belfast

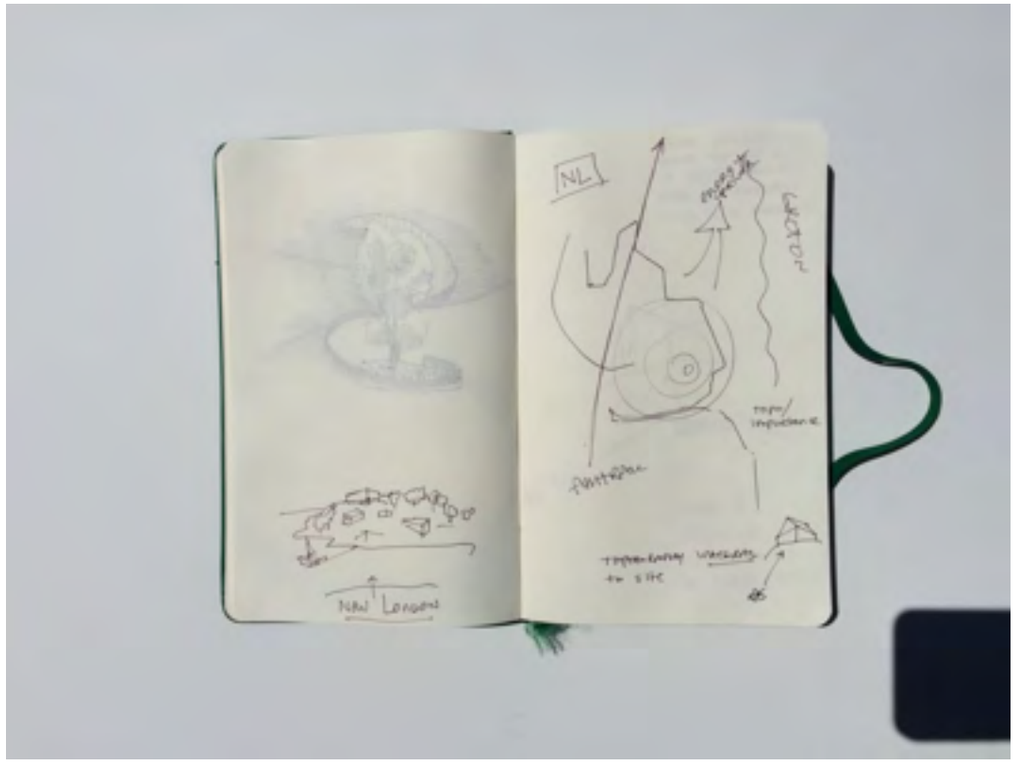
1934

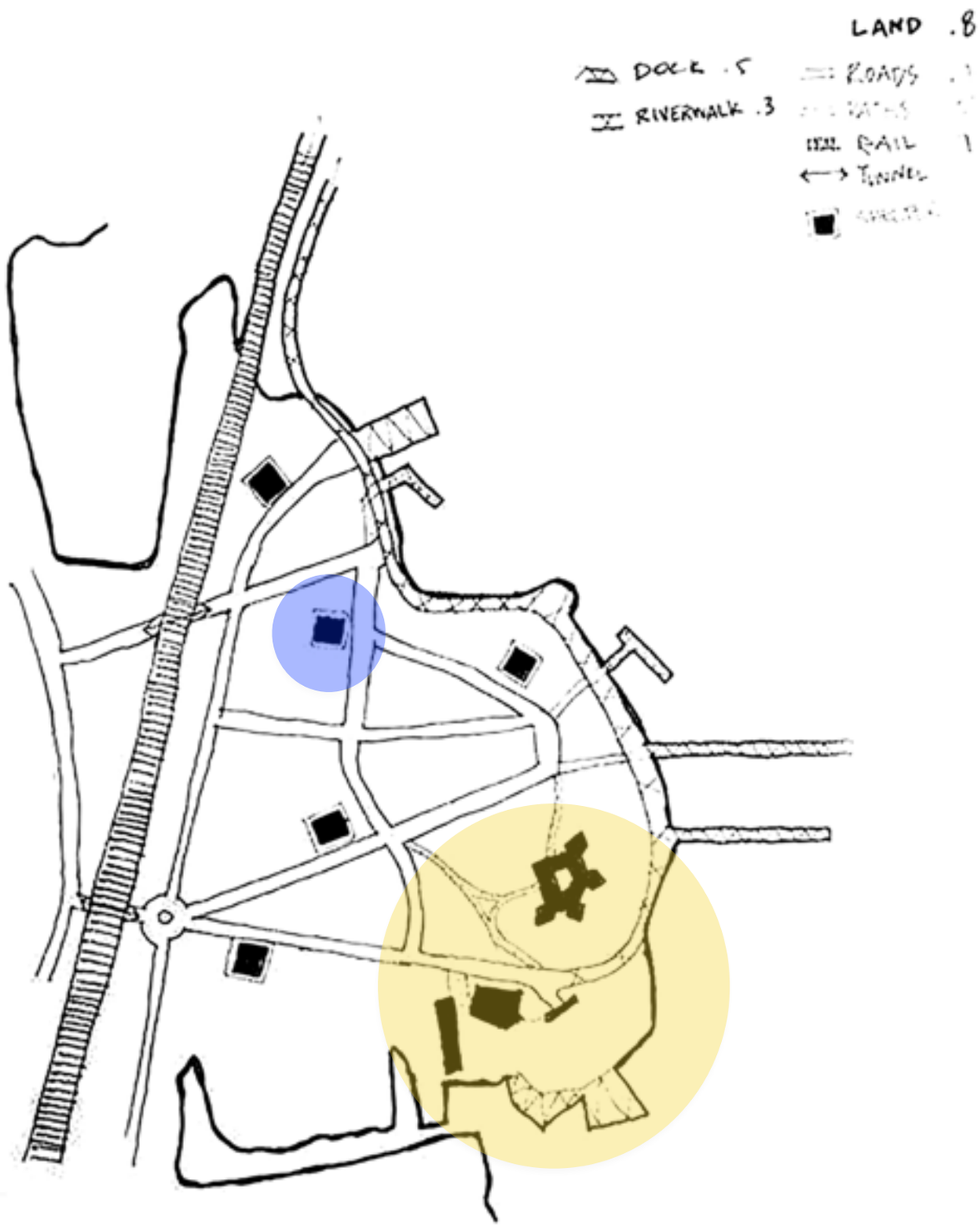
1951

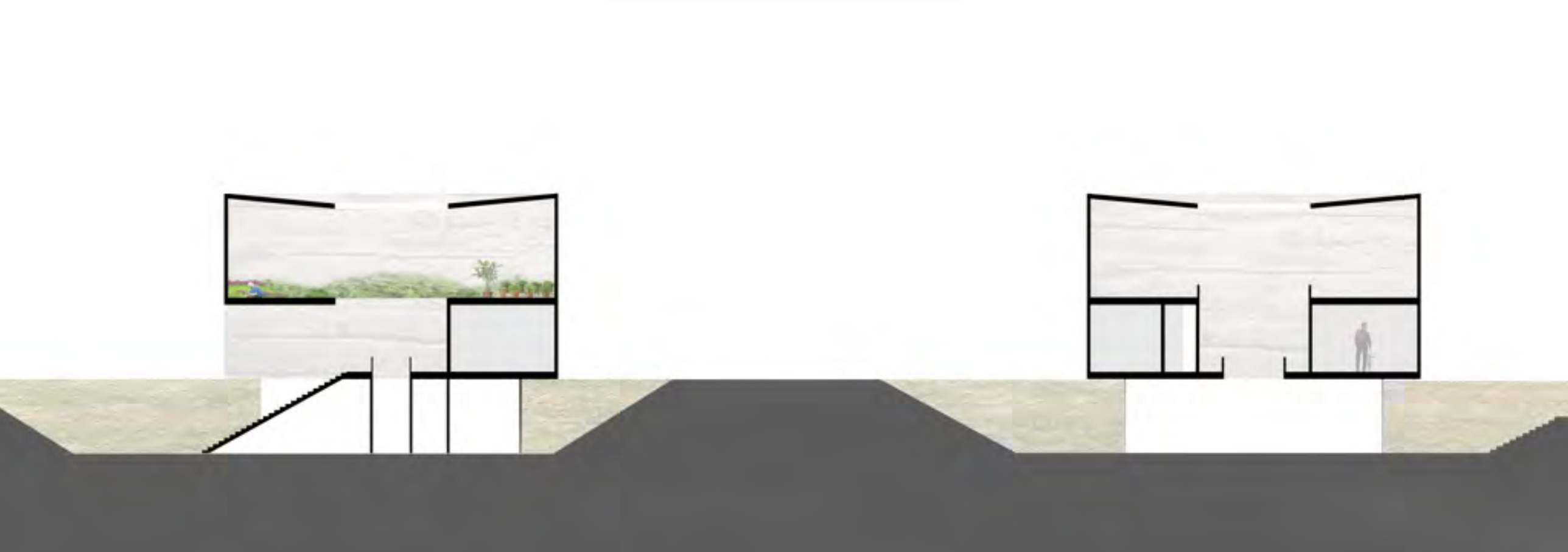
2006

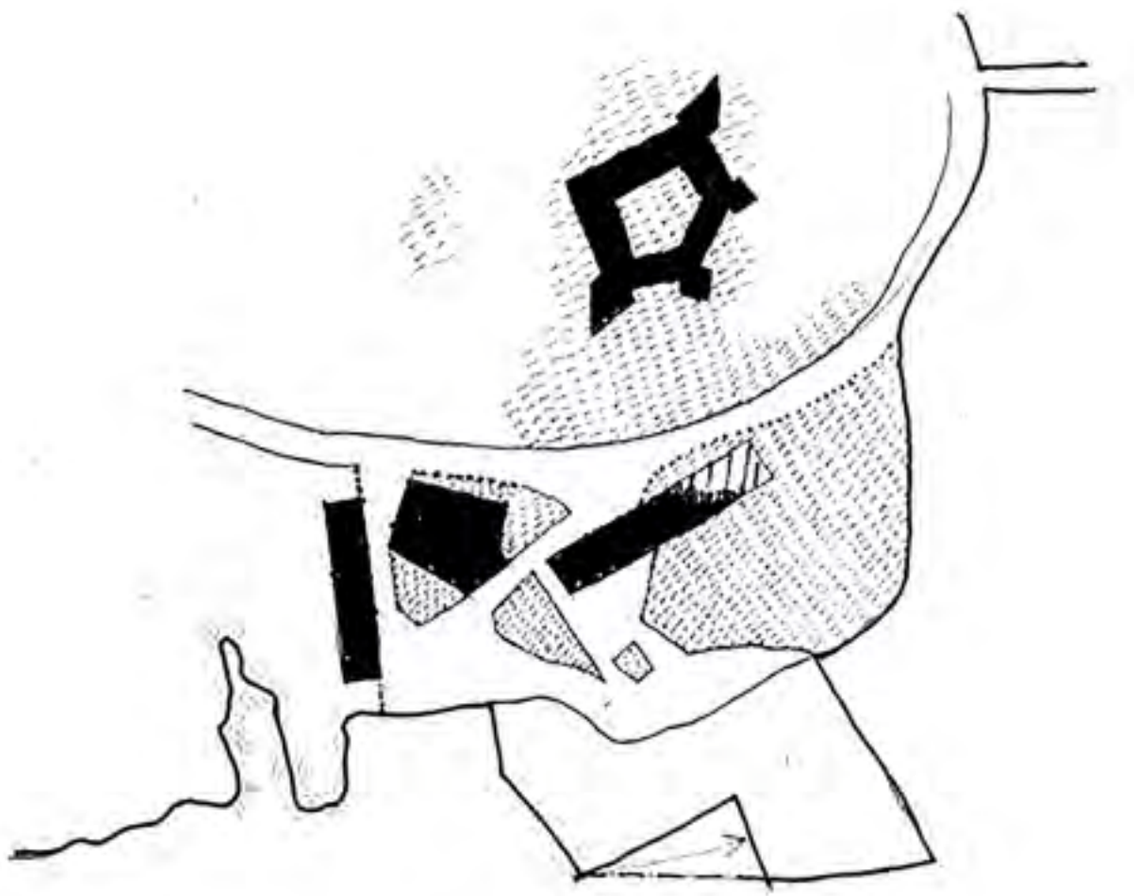
2010

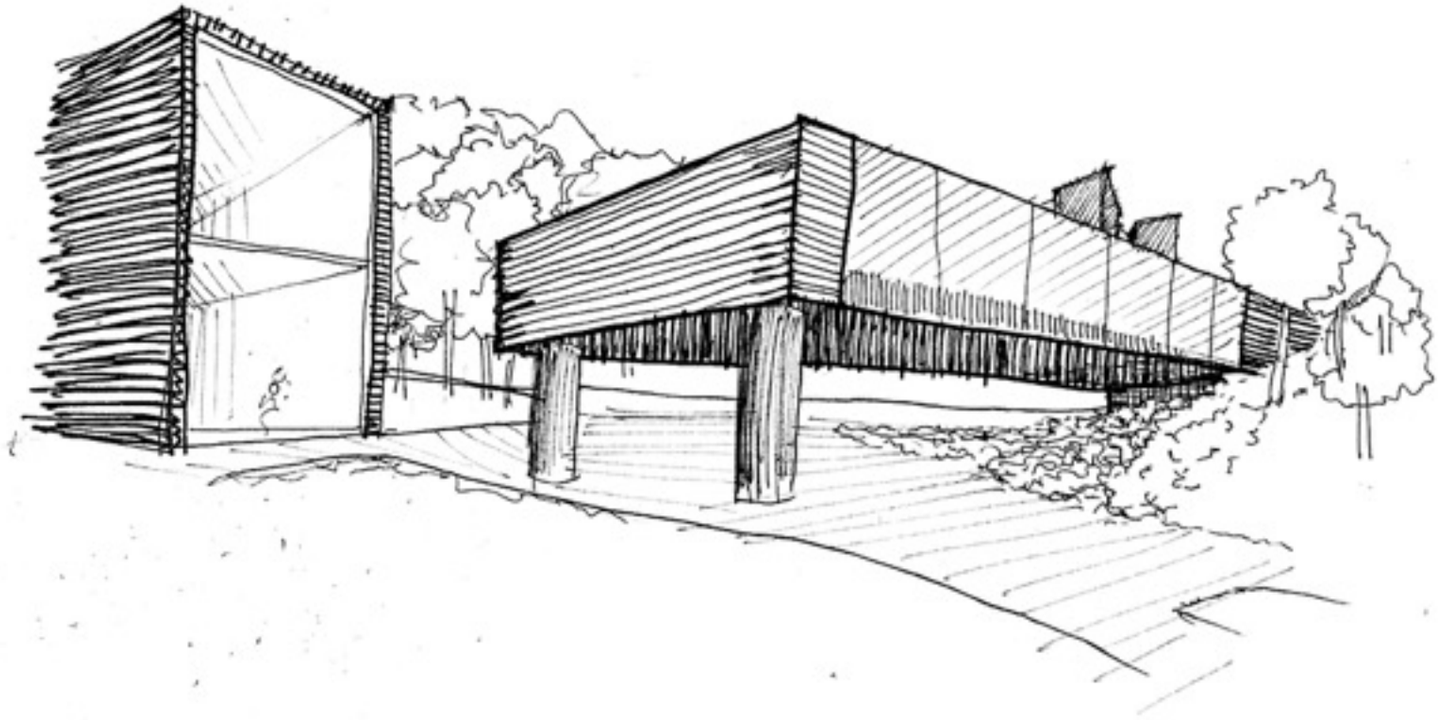

Sun + water
highlighting
these 2 areas
as most important
notably


NL
New Lenses


LAND .8
DOCK .5
RIVERWALK .3
ROADS .1
RAIL 1
TUNNEL







Thank you!

Questions? petertresnan@gmail.com

Seeking Home

Designing Suburbia

and seeking Arcadia

in Post-War America

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Introduction

What can we learn from the sprawling way America built its suburbs? What in a suburb is America and what is accident? What can and should we preserve, then what must be fixed?

With this project—the collected topical writings about the suburbs—I will present an overview of the suburban condition as it is and as it relates to issues relevant to my curation. I will examine historical, economic, social, architectural, anthropological, and aesthetic aspects as they relate to to the American suburb, suburban sprawl, and the suburban ideal. From there, I will present a design for Fort Trumbull, New London, Connecticut, with inspiration from my investigations into the American suburb at large. In this, the various facets of the suburban experience will be deconstructed and considered in a critical light, then pieced back together in a more thoughtful way, some elements amended, some preserved, and some forgotten. In the end, suburban sprawl will be dissected, elements withdrawn from their context as Levittown was from its own, and will be applied into a design for Fort Trumbull.

Looking Back

"I view great cities as pestilential to the morals, the health, and the liberties of man"

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO BENJAMIN RUSH, 1800

Conceptions: The Suburb, its City, and Impressions

A system of roads. Patches of grass. Houses made of ticky-tacky, strewn.

A group of people, together called the family, form the basis for a structure of timber, poured concrete, and a patch of grass. The elements of the house, disparate in purpose though whole in intention, become the elements of the family, disparate in purpose though whole in intention. They are as much a shelter as the house is. The family shelters a bond, the house shelters a family. The family shelters a home.

Families can be counted by the houses on the streets in the neighborhoods in the outskirts of the cities. From above, they look abstract, like paintings of their era. Zeitgeist.

The suburbs are universal, though they have a unique form in the United States. Suburbs began as fringes, where the mystery of nature—and, thus, God—lured artist and wanderer alike. They were distinctly unlike busy, loud, dirty, inhumane cities. "One-by-one," Dolores Hayden writes in *Building Suburbia*, "American middle class families chose to reside at the edge of the city rather than in the center."[1] In nineteenth century New York, Brooklyn became a loci for the upper middle class to reside in a pastoral setting, relying on a ferry across the East River to both deliver and distance them to and from the city.[2] The suburbs were navigated by foot, horse-and-buggy, as they needed to be. It was a divine necessity to follow city streets to their

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[1] Hayden, Dolores. *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003. 21.

[2] Hayden, 25.

edges, to find virgin land, find something greater, sublime and picturesque. Then, it was necessary to claim it and build on it. Expansion was noble and dignified.

Today, suburbs are experienced uniquely in a car. Driving from place to place, home to store, driveway to parking lot, one notices the incongruity of programs: zones were contrived in planning circles, in the spirit of modernism, to organize everyday life. Living would be separate from work, work would be separate from shopping, shopping would be separate from living. The system was rational and kept things and people in their place.

American sprawl was inspired, in part, by the Levitt Brothers. Alfred and Bill Levitt, architect and salesman respectively, came up with a scheme to provide housing to meet a wave of veterans returning from World War II. Funded by their father, Abraham, the family saw an opportunity to purchase a plot of land on Long Island for a nominal sum. The land, on the south shore in Nassau County, had belonged to potato farmers. After a crop failure in 1946, they were quick to sell their land to the Levitts, who had the capital and the vision to create a neighborhood which would combine elegance, high-impact interventions, and ideological, social engineering.[3]

Their idea was revolutionary; it was a business, but it was also a beckoning call for a future America, where people were celebrated. The problems of the home were decidedly theirs, and it was their responsibility to fix whatever about their house needed fixing: a shaggy lawn, an awful front door. It was the problem of the family, of the house, and even though it

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[3] Kushner, David. *Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon, and the Fight for Civil Rights in America's Legendary Suburb*. New York: Walker &, 2009, 46.

was a flaw, it was a mark of inhabitants, of life within, of a family beyond an unsightly front door.

Kenneth Jackson defined the suburbs as a community of middle-class commuters' residences.[4] Before his definition, however, "geographers asserted that the American suburb had 'evolved' beyond being a 'bedroom suburb' for workers who commuted."[5] They noticed that the suburbs started to host a workforce, employers were finding reason to bring their operations to the periphery.

In *Suburban Nation*, a prescriptive text by Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, they describe the suburbs as "a national landscape that is largely devoid of places worth caring about."[6] A suburb can be understood by five criteria they list: housing subdivisions, shopping centers, office parks, civic institutions, and roadways connecting these elements.

A housing subdivision is an area produced by a developing organization that builds roads and domestic houses. It is zoned specifically for living, so within its boundaries are first and foremost homes. It is designed to form a community, and as such, will often include community facilities, such as pools, community centers, and family-oriented programming. The name of a subdivision will be an honorific, if fabricated title evoking peace, tranquility, purpose, and legacy: Summerfield, Colonial Gardens, Quail Hill. These names represent the com-

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[4] Jackson, Kenneth T. Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. 78.

[5] Hayden, 16.

[6] Duany, Andres, and Elizabeth Zyberk. *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*. New York: North Point Press, 2000. XX.

munity, but in effect, title the land. Their developers and, then, their residents will call it their neighborhood, although neighborhoods traditionally house mixed uses, and rarely are solely residential.

A shopping center can be a strip mall, a shopping mall, or a big-box retail outlet. Like the housing subdivision, they serve a singular purpose: retail. Their sizes vary from human to airplane-hangar, and their parking lots are often grossly disproportionate to the use seen in an average day, due to developers accommodating for a projected need of parking on their busiest shopping days, despite their infrequency during the year.

Civic institutions do house multiple functions; a school can become a fair ground on the weekend, its fields a sports arena on Friday nights, and ballrooms at the end of each school year. Their planning in the suburban landscape, however, is wayward, is large, is infrequent, is unadorned, and is under-funded. Seen as drains to the economy, they are placed in intermediary areas (though they largely impact social circles among children and, thus, parents), and their awkwardness in program means they must be a catch-all, contributing to their large size. They are designed with a constant reminder that they bring with them parking lots, bus routes, and uncommon hours of operation. This all greatly contrasts their presence in a traditional neighborhood, where they are loci for social life and are invested in as community aggregates.

Finally, roadways stitch together the four components. They are exclusively for driving, a program underlined by the impression given by those who walk on the side of a highway. This impression is given due to the danger associated with walking on the side of the road and the inferred social class, one where the individual cannot afford to purchase their own vehicle

to use the road as it is intended. Thus, the roads are designed for a car-driving population. Most vehicles on suburban roadways are single-driver, and thus create much clutter.[7]

Together, these components create an environment called Suburban Sprawl.

In *Building Suburbia*, Dolores Hayden offers a more ideological basis for an American suburb. She coins it a "triple dream," of house, yard, and neighborhood.[8] She speaks formulaically, as certain suburban planners have conceived of their product, but her speech evokes a history of land and ownership with deep history. Nineteenth-century suburbs were seen as an opportunity for social engineering, in Kenilworth, IL[9] and in New Brighton, Staten Island, New York.[10] The same form that Hayden states bluntly was experimented with, its boundaries pushed, and form evolved into something which shared the original intent of placing architecture in nature and allowing humans the luxury to identify with both, to claim ownership of domestic architecture—as people always have—and nature—which, in this populist direction, was new.

A suburban definition starts with an urban one, and a city is a system of lines and ideas. Lines are visible and invisible—they can be found in the height of a building or the line of its bricks. Lines can join together to form a solid object, blocking out in two dimensions what

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[7] The Municipal Art Society of New York demonstrates this in three images: the space that 50 people take up when on foot, when in public transit, and when in separate vehicles. The first requires half a New York City block. The second one and a half. The third requires four blocks.

[8] Hayden,11.

[9] Sies, Mary Corbin. "George W. Maher's Planning and Architecture in Kenilworth, Illinois: An Inquiry into the Ideology of Arts and Crafts Design." The Substance of Style: Perspectives on the American Arts and Crafts Movement, 1996, 418.

[10] Hayden, 48.

builders have considered in three, symbolizing a material, an object, a reason for being. At points, the visible lines can no longer meet each other—at this point, they become joined by lines of the lived experience. The paths we take from work to home to the grocery store to home again. These invisible lines exist around the physical lines, only insomuch as we can see and imagine. The fundamental reason for these lines, however, is the idea. Our daily lives are full of ideas, no matter how banal or forgettable. The idea to stop at a corner store on the way home alters an entire system of lines and gives us a new direction. Sometimes, these ideas are so big, the finalize themselves concretely, as a building or a plate of food or words on a piece of paper. These physical lines began as ideas sometime a while before, then the idea was shared. The more the idea spread, the bigger it became, the more potential lines it grew. Some of its lines were imagined—walking to the place where the idea would be made tangible, imagining its finalized form. Finally, the one idea grew big enough, had enough potential lines to become a real thing. And from it, new ideas would form, new lines would be drawn, and in this the ur-

Fig. 1: Lebbeus Woods, *Terrain 1-10*, 1999. Electrostatic print with felt-tipped marker, ink, and colored pencil on paper, 19 ⅜" x 23 ⅜". Museum of Modern Art

Fig. 2: Daniel Libeskind, *Micromegas*, 1979. Silkscreen on paper, 26 x 36 ⅛". Robert K. and Barbara J. Straus Family Foundation

ban ecosystem of lines and ideas is perpetuated.

The suburb responds. It is busy work to constantly see lines, to experience lines, and to come to the ideas behind them. It can be overwhelming: with these lines come noise, traffic, people, people, people digging at the lines, trying to figure out which is the most important. The best way to escape this cacophony is to experience nature: God never designed a perfect line. And it's true, every city has some green space, be they flowers lounging beneath a window sill or a park of rolling hills, cascading for miles north and south.

But why only experience this natural world when you go to a park, if you can experience it every morning on your way to work? Better yet, because you get to experience it everyday, you get to claim a little bit of it.

The suburban ideal was always present as this: in American suburban sprawl (the primary type of sprawl this paper will deal with), these ideals have been preserved. The vehicles for their preservation are many, and they are encompassed in three themes: the family unit, the domestic shelter, and the automobile. In the family, each individual plays a unique role in the family dynamic, which is its primary unit to which it is loyal. Intra-family relationships are patterned, directed by media, friendships, and values passed down through generations. This family lives in a dwelling, typically distant from neighbors, though visible. This dwelling space has certain communal areas, though the parents and children will have at least one area to consider their own. It sits on a bit of grass that is maintained by the family or by outside labor and reaches the extents of the property. The lot is often divided into thirds parallel to the street, with the house in the middle third. They are the only ones that live in this home. Their connection to other families is through the automobile, which resides on the property. Each family

has at least one, though there are often more, occasionally outnumbering the people in the family. It becomes an extension of the shelter and enters the realm of domestic space. The most geographic movement a suburban person will make is by car. It connects the family with the greater system of school, work, retail, and homes that have come into the routine of the family. It bridges public and private spaces, but in the process does what it can to reject the presence of a public sphere, hiding in cars, behind fences, and in malls.

And thus, a suburb lives. Its form is much more capillary than that of a city, with sinuous curves oozing into all bits of developable land. Where a city would naturally border itself off at the threat of barbarians, the suburb fumbles for agoraphobic vastness. It does serve its purpose of housing Americans, and to its Americans, the suburb is a dear thing. It is good.

And yet, it is replete with problems. Anything good that is invested in *will* have problems, and critics. But, what of these critiques is accurate, what should be adopted? What of the suburbs can we leave behind and grow from, and what has unprecedented value?

The American sprawling suburb is a unique typology for a built environment, and its impact on the American is further distinct. Considering its successes and failures, there are lessons to be learned of the suburbs, as things to preserve and things to forget.

An Erratic Timeline of Personally Significant Moments in the Development and Design of a Suburb

The idea and urge to live outside the city is nothing new. The Roman Emperor Hadrian had constructed a villa in Tivoli, outside Rome. The sprawling plan boasted a large house and idyllic landscapes, distinctly unlike the Roman city. The intent was to heighten nature's best qualities. In one moment, a rectangular pool reflects the sky, centralizes the plan in a momentous way, and provides a place where water, greenery, rock, and sky can exist harmoniously in one plane, which can be strolled around leisurely, to appreciate the space and all it conflates.

In the Villa of Livia, a vibrant garden paints the walls. Flora of different habitats and colors enshrine the occupant with the opulence of nature. The goal to heighten nature was evinced by the fact that these flowers would not, in fact, live together harmoniously were this garden real, nor would they all be all in bloom simultaneously. Nature was used as an object of beauty and an ideal, and this idea of the perfection of nature was bound together by the fact that, while painted to appear as if it was in a vast, open space, it was in fact a room of four concrete walls. Nature was the inspiration, but manipulated by the artist and owned by the homeowner. They needed nothing more of it.

William Morris was an architect and designer in London in the late nineteenth century. A vanguard of what would become the Arts and Crafts movement, his presence in architecture was made seminal by his philosophical ideas driving his urge to move away from the city. He was largely inspired by John Ruskin, who shared with fellow architect and ideologist Augustus W.N. Pugin in a distaste of the industrial city for being dirty, aesthetically offensive, unwel-

coming, and evil. Instead, he favored the medieval city, whose spires rose high above the city, elegantly, reminding urban people of their presence under God. Morris carried through Ruskin's ideas with a new inspiration, born in the same Christianity but more tangible to urban life. He urged for honesty of materials and construction, decoration inspired by the medieval era, and a socialist philosophy that building things should inspire the worker and be joyful. He also saw the city as a sinful place, and in 1859, built himself a house outside his city of London. The building was designed in collaboration with architect Philip Webb, though the idea to build such a house was long in Morris' mind. In a poem he wrote just prior to the start of construction, he wrote,

> Many scarlet bricks there were
> In its walls, and old grey stone;
> Over which red apples shone
> At the right time of the year.

The house was intended by Morris to be the base of his artistic career, wherein he would both live and work, commuting to London or elsewhere when necessary. He sought to create a home outside the "evil" city, where he could be inspired by nature and deliver it to London.[11] The red brick and slate roof referenced local materials and created a warm aura which could make the house a spectacle—the spectacle, however, was that there was nothing spectacular about it. It sat humbly on and in its site, outside the busyness of London, to be seen by few. It was a haven, away from the world, wherein he could live peacefully with nature.

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[11] Kaplan, Wendy. The Arts & Crafts Movement in Europe & America: Design for the Modern World. New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson in Association with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2004. 31.

Around this time, the Garden City movement was gaining traction in London. The movement responded to much of what Morris was as well; the city was dirty, drunk with disease, dirt, and sin. Ebenezer Howard conceived of three "magnets," one the town, another the country. The third was his invention, the "town-country," combining the best aspects of the two to create a new type of urbanism. Considering Hadrian's pastoral Villa with hyper-urban London, the movement's logical splice came with a form. Garden cities were few but did expand globally, from Milton Keynes, England, to Forest Hills, New York. They are unique for the lining of greenery throughout the urban fabric, seemingly wherever a patch of grass could be laid.

This idea of "green"-ing the city was admired, and in New York City, architect Richard Morris Hunt sought to integrate some of its principles into the city. In 1893, he founded the Municipal Art Society to beautify parks and public buildings with murals and sculptures. In 1902, the Society initiated the "Block Beautiful" program to plant trees along the city's blocks. This was the first major introduction of nature into the urban fabric since the planning of Central Park in 1853.

The integration of country into town was a major focus for the seminal modernist architect, Le Corbusier. A Swiss working across Europe, he devised a "Plan Voisin" for Paris, wherein towers rising out of the earth would line the streets in a rationalized grid. At their feet would be parkland. His theory was sprung out of a phobia of the urban street, "full of people,"

where "death threatens… at every step between the twin kerb-stones."[12] The radicality of the plan lay certainly in the theory, and pushed to extremes in his intentions to construct his new city in the center of Paris, demolishing existing buildings and completely disregarding urban fabric, history, and vernacular—a trademark of modern architecture.[13] The plan was implemented by various municipal governments, one of which being the City of New York. Construction of Plan Voisin-inspired public housing projects began across the city, in the Bronx, Queens, and lower Manhattan noticeably. Their grounds were bucolic, paired with playgrounds to invite family investment into the public realm. The plan's achilles heel was parks commissioner Robert Moses, who notoriously only maintained parks in wealthy and/or white neighborhoods of New York. The importance of maintenance is evinced by the Pruitt-Igoe public housing project, in St. Louis, Missouri. Pruitt-Igoe was similarly inspired by Plan Voisin, and was widely regarded a failure due to neglect from the governmental agencies designed to maintain the complex.[14] Its demolition was disseminated through video, and was adopted as a symbol of the universal "failed modernism of the 1950s."[15]

While these reaches were all grandiose and certainly unmodest theoretic proposals, there was much occurring in America that was evolving America's suburban fabric in a more

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[12] "Plan Voisin, Paris, France, 1925." Fondation Le Corbusier. Accessed December 26, 2014. http://www.fondationlecorbusier.fr/corbuweb/morpheus.aspx?sysId=13&IrisObjectId=6159&sysLanguage=en-en&itemPos=2&itemCount=2&sysParentName=Home&sysParentId=65.

[13] Ibid.

[14] *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth*. First Run Features, 2012. DVD.

[15] Balters, Sofia. "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth: An Urban History." ArchDaily. July 29, 2011. Accessed December 26, 2014. http://www.archdaily.com/153704/the-pruitt-igoe-myth-an-urban-history/.

physical way. In 1896, Sears, Roebuck and Co. was founded, offering mail-order houses. Their concept was to deliver to potential clients a catalog listing various houses of numerous styles, sizes, and amenities, eventually growing to also offer mortgages to help potential buyers afford their products so that the buyer could choose which house suited his family's taste and location, and construct it himself or with help. This model of mail-ordering a house eventually grew nationally and new companies formed. With it came a more individual, equally unregulated means for purchasing land—Dolores Hayden presents an image of a woman seated on the side of a highway in front of a sign that reads "Lots $250.00 Water Sewers Gas."[16] Those who "put in sweat equity" on a Sears, Roebuck and Co. home were not only happy with their homes, but experienced a transcendental pride for their home.[17] Their "triple dream" of house, yard and neighborhood was rooted in an individualist, capitalist, American work ethic.

These manifestations of the nature/urban hybrid all harken back to a dichotomy first seen by Hadrian, and presumably by the first residents of Uruk, our world's first city. Brendan O'Flaherty states in *City Economics* that "[c]ities could persist… only if their advantages offset the disadvantages."[18] But certainly, these few examples show how people want more. The urge to go outside the city is admirable; the idea to combine the city with what is outside it is novel. From there, all else is theory and experimentation. Further ideologies were applied to this

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[16] Hayden, 112.

[17] Ibid, 113

[18] O'Flaherty, Brendan. City Economics. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005. XI.

framework: Bill Levitt said "no man who has a house can be a communist… he has too much to do."[19]

The thread which unites these moments together is a simple desire to introduce nature and the city to each other. In some places, a birch insignificantly sways in an asphalt grid; in others, brick is built on bog. However they ideologically link, they create an ex-urban form, the suburb. These ideas and investigations into an exurban way of living each lead up to the American invention; as a result, the American model of a suburb has global influence, a land of immigrant ideas for lifestyles that each find common ground in the paved driveway.

[19] Ibid, 135.

Post-war America, enter Suburbia

> The American Dream is as real as any tax deduction, in that it, too, drives the housing markets.

SOCRATES, “THE BUELL HYPOTHESIS,” REINHOLD MARTIN, LEAH MEISTERLIN, ANNA KENOFF

Boom

The Baby Boom

The return of veterans after World War II played into a turbulent history of population demographics. Prior to America's involvement in World War II, the Great Depression impacted all aspects of American and global society. One of these many impacts was a baby "bust," wherein the American birth rate fell significantly. Because many Americans, particularly men, were fighting in Europe away from their families for extended lengths of time, this trend continued if not grew more intense. When veterans returned, however, there was a sharp growth in the American birth rate: a baby boom.[20]

Population trends were shifting well before the postwar baby boom. During the twentieth century, there was a decrease in overall mortality, as a decline in communicable disease among infants and children overlapped with an increase in the quality and access of sanitation, clean drinking water, and food supplies.[21] In the 1930s, European sulfonamides entered the American medical canon, which were the first drugs that could treat various bacterial infections inside the body.[22] In America, the drug took hold and began entering mass production for mass distribution. This led to the creation of penicillin in the 1940s, still widely used today.[23]

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[20] Klein, Herbert S. "The Baby Boom and Bust and the New New Immigrants, 1945–1970." In A Population History of the United States, 155-184. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 158.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid, 160.

[23] Ibid.

There were also medical innovations which greatly improved simple quality of life, such as the polio vaccine. These factors conflated to reduce mortality by 8.2% each year from the 1930s to the 1950s. Through another lens, in 1900, infectious disease accounted for 32% of all deaths. By 1950, it accounted for only 5%.[24]

Returning veterans were greeted by a lively economy which favored young adults as never before. The Depression prior to the war had created a lull in the labor market, and the war halted that.[25] Upon veterans' return, the market was eager for their return. Veterans, and all postwar employees, saw much greater employment and social mobility than before the war.[26] Wages were also higher than normal across industries. The G.I. Bill, signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944, gave veterans many benefits in society, such as access to free higher education, and also reduced rates on the sale of homes. The latter was highly significant for veterans, who wanted to start a family upon their return, in part due to the trauma experienced,[27] in part due to social conventions wherein relationships prior to marriage were strict.[28] [29] Along with higher wages and reduced home purchase rates, the lower- and middle-classes had greater access to credit, increasing their buying power.

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[24] Ibid, 159.

[25] Ibid, 160.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Lembecke, Jerry. PTSD: Diagnosis and Identity in Post-empire America. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013. 191.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Klein, 160.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a psychological phenomenon wherein those who have experienced an event that inspired terror or extreme fear have a variety of stressful bouts of imagined reincarnations of the event. Though it is often associated with veterans and martial contexts, it extends to anything which inspires fear or trauma. Its language only emerged after the Vietnam War, but symptoms date back to the turn of the century and outside a militaristic context.[30]

Industrialization's greatest impact on the American landscape was the railroad, as it provided a glimpse into unimaginable futures while reminding Americans of their human mortality and limitations. Great speed and uncontrolled, capitalistic growth on the railroads yielded accidents, which were often physically harming and psychologically damaging to passengers. A common injury to the back, nicknamed "Railway Spine," left victims with a strange gait and spinal pain. The violence of the accident, the throwing of a body and whiplash, certainly created physical damage.[31]

Simultaneously, certain victims would exhibit symptoms of "hysteria." In the Victorian era, hysteria was a bout of irrationality in action and thought. The diagnosis was limited to women, as the disease's cause was surmised to be that the womb, an organ believed to be un-

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[30] Lembecke, 192.

[31] Ibid.

attached to anything else in the body and, thus, prone to movement throughout, would end up in a patient's throat, causing throat problems, or in their arm, causing muscle spasms. This "wandering womb" was observable in the behavior of someone suffering hysteria.[32]

As Railway Spine became more universal, published in newspapers mass-produced and distributed due to new innovations in printmaking, it became apparent that this "wandering womb" was observable in victims of a railroad accident. Curiously, however, was that it was observable in victims both female and male. Perplexing doctors, convinced that the gender binary limited hysteric symptoms to women, its presence in men was not understandable, and thus, open to hypothesis.[33]

In the early 1880s, French psychiatrist Jean-Michel Charcot spearheaded a new consideration on the implications of the mind on these accidents. He theorized that the terror these accidents instilled could create another layer of damage to the victims, causing psychological and imagined trauma after the actual traumatic event. These dreams, flashbacks, and imaginations looked much like hysteria in women and men. Charcot theorized that the event could have caused a "brain lesion," or a (hypothetically) observable injury to the brain, which would cause the hysteric behavior. This was debunked when patients, put under hypnosis, still suffered the symptoms when trigger words or phrases were said.[34]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

A student of Charcot's, Joseph Babinski, was skeptical of Charcot's theory and methodology. He was concerned that the "shell shock" doctors were expecting and wanted to see out of veterans was influencing the behavior of their patients, that the power of suggestion was skewing results as they unconsciously sought to emulate their doctors' hypotheses. His argument was considered assured by evidence of veterans of the First World War who exhibited hysteric behavior and martial terror, though they had never seen active duty.[35]

The theory was borrowed by Sigmund Freud to more accurately explain hysteria in his female patients. Freud noticed that patients would always remember the cause of their symptoms and when the first appeared, but perhaps only when under hypnosis. He saw this as proof that suggestion is not purely the answer; rather, he combined Babinski's suggestion theory with his own psychoanalytical approach.[36]

In studying hysteria in women, Freud noticed the roots of their behavior trace to traumatic sexual experiences when they were youths. The amount of patients exhibiting hysteric behavior was disproportionate, however, to the rate of actual cases of the same sexual deviance.[37] Freud states that, because of these "imagined" scenarios, they were fantasies that his patients created as youths that scandalized them, were suppressed, and came back as memories during hypnosis.[38]

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[35] Ibid, 192.

[36] Ibid.

[37] This language is loose, as it is unsure whether we are talking about reports of sexual deviance (incest, rape, molestation), which are inaccurate suggestions of the actual rate of these acts.

[38] Ibid, 193.

From there, psychologist W.H. Rivers connected Charcot's and Freud's strands of the theory into one. Lembecke summarizes how Rivers thought repression of something to the subconscious was related to shell shock but that it was conflict between fear and duty, not something sexual, that soldiers and veterans repressed; it was that conflict, Rivers said, that caused the Freudian 'flight to illness.' Likewise, it wasn't sexual fantasies that reemerged as memories, but men's fantasies of the martial experiences and accomplishments they thought were expected of them that came as out as false memories of those things having actually happened. In a sense, Rivers put social in the place where Freud had sexual, opening the way to understanding how the demands of soldiers could generate physical symptoms of shell shock prior to exposure to combat, and the role played by culture as the consummately social ingredient in that process.[39]

While the language was still not developed, Rivers had identified a now accepted reason for the presence of irrational behavior in the wake of a traumatic event. World War II, however, rendered fewer veterans with these symptoms than observed in the First World War, from which Rivers grew this theory. Reasons for the decrease in shell shocked behavior are many; doctors were better prepared for war, the world was acquainted with modern military practice, and films and magazines like *Look* and *Life* brought images of "home" into the American household. The War was also seen as entirely justifiable, the "Good Fight," to liberate European death camps and get vengeance for the attack on Pearl Harbor. Still, "images of veterans with lives torn up by the war" ebbed in the public spotlight as the joie de vivre attitude and

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[39] Ibid.

media flowed, and vice versa.[40] Certain fringe members of society who didn't immediately re-integrate into the world, such as the Hell's Angels motorbike gang, were often overlooked, and occasionally satirized in popular culture.[41]

Perhaps most influential in the oversight of those suffering from postwar trauma was the booming economy in the United States. The economy, sleepy during the war, awoke into a tiger economy, as war-postponed construction was restarted, the G.I. Bill offered veterans free education and reduced rates on homes built in the postwar housing boom. Rosie the Riveter's iconography was reversed to "justify her reassignment to the kitchen."[42] Thus, a workforce closed-off to women, was reenergized and growing, giving men returning from war many options for what to do with their lives, however prescribed by social convention.[43]

The greater social mobility in postwar America afforded returning soldiers ample opportunity to find work, which expedited the home-buying process. This process was glorified in popular culture and became the mainstream. The resulting groupthink washed over realities of the troubled psychological state of many soldiers, as the benefits of living in postwar America—having a wife, starting a family, return to American values of land ownership and capital growth, a strong American mainstream—were so good, they could push out the bitter realities that plagued life behind closed doors. What started as a promise to give Americans what they really wanted—a home, separate from their neighbors, to call their own—became a place to

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[40] Ibid, 204.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid,193.

[43] Ibid.

hide family secrets, where problems were sunk just below the surface, so the image of America played through television sets could be emulated in every household.

Most relevant to family-starting, however, was the widely available, mass-produced housing. The impacts of postwar demographic changes only underscored the relevance that innovative housing typologies would have on America. The nation would host a baby boom that offered an opportunity to change the way we design, and thus, the way we live. This in tandem with other postwar changes, those benefitting veterans and crippling them, had significant impact on our landscape. A new face for the nation was created, and it was rooted in ideologies, history, business, and three men.

Making a Suburb

Before the Levitt brothers presented the world with Levittown, suburbs had rarely been invented, planned, and constructed. They were piecemeal, outlying houses which would cluster naturally around a piece of infrastructure connecting the suburb to a city or village. The suburb was a pleasant way for a family and working people to live in a peaceful, bucolic area while still having access to the city, thus financial and occupational mobility. In *Building Suburbia,* Hayden regales of the railway suburb, a suburb of small, single- or multi-family homes amalgamated around a railway terminal. In this, they could appreciate all the aspects of living outside the city while maintaining access to it. She also recounts nineteenth-century Brooklyn, a suburb of Manhattan, accessible by ferry. Overall, a suburb was an organically growing form; its seed was an infrastructural element which linked it to an urban area, and it blossomed when individuals wandered beyond the city limits and found themselves in the same place at the same time. A suburb was agreed upon. It was the essence of a community.

The Levitts saw a chance to create a new model of suburb, which would sprawl out from a point relative to nothing: it was born in a vacuum, to be insular. For veterans returning from Europe, the trauma of war, long periods of time away from family and loved ones, and general distance from America, its culture, its politics, and its society, created a longing.

After success in the planning of a suburb in 1929 in Rockville Center, Long Island, the Levitts' financial stability suffered during World War II, as building halted across the nation. Realizing returning veterans would need housing, they devised a "suburban community of several thousand homes, with its own shopping centers, churches, swimming pools, parks, and

recreational facilities."[44] They purchased land in Island Trees, Long Island, where a parasite killed farmers' potato crops. The land, thirty-five hundred acres, was sold to the Levitts in 1946. It was swiftly renamed Levittown.

The Levitts did indeed construct several thousand homes, designed by Alfred to be quickly constructed, even going so far as to alter—and defy—building codes in the town of Hempstead. In May 1947, they announced their plans to build rental homes for returning veterans, and building was fervently underway in 1948.

The practicality of the Levitts' plan was indebted to an entirely mystical sensation that had defined the American way of life for decades; the American Dream. In the Buell Hypothesis, a film script imagining a socratic dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon, transplanted Greek philosophers, Socrates argues that the American Dream is borne of an American preconception that they have a right to the land which defines the United States of America, having seized it through conquest and having been passed down through generations. As such, each American deserves a piece of American soil—as much as this can be validated by the legal definition of land ownership, wherein anyone who owns land owns it from the core of the earth to the farthest reaches of space, it is less mystically supported by the various government and private sector ventures aiming to provide housing to Americans.[45] For Socrates and Glaucon, they consider first and foremost the mortgage, and the subsequent foreclosure which occurred after

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[44] Kushner, 140.

[45] Martin, Reinhold, and Leah M. Meisterlin. *The Buell Hypothesis: Rehousing the American Dream*. Uncorrected Draft ed. New York, N. Y: Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, 2011.

the financial crash of 2008. With the structures created to ensure Americans can, indeed, get their share of American soil, the American Dream is dreamed by all, and these banks and government loans exist simply because of something so intangible as a dream.

The Levitts identified this dream, too, as their building block upon which to build their sprawling empire of suburban sprawl. They entered the market when America's markets were at their most tumultuous, at the end of the economic boom of the 1920s and the ubiquity of credit, through the Great Depression which reminded America of the impermanence of ownership but the permanence of the Dream, through to the focus of this study, the post-War America which saw a booming economy, piqued nationalism, and an overflow of opportunity. They focused their efforts on returning GI's, who would require housing in order to fulfill their share of the American Dream with a piece of the housing market.

While the market for the housing was certainly present, the Levitts spared no expense to make it as universally attractive as possible. This manifested in different ways: father Abraham Levitt scrutinized the landscape, from the parks to peoples' lawns; Alfred always revised his designs, anticipating the next conquest; and Bill, the salesman, tirelessly maintained a public relations campaign of capitalism, Americanism, and purity. Each directly related to issues in American and global society of the time: capitalism was what veterans were fighting for in Europe, Americanism was their rallying cry. Domestically, purity was inspired by nature, but showed to have a racial connotation as well. An integrated neighborhood was seen as unattractive, was agreed upon by Levittown residents and the national media, and was made legal by the Federal Housing Administration, who published in 1936 an *Underwriting Manual*, at one

point mandating "if a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that its proportions shall continue by the same social and racial classes."[46]

An indispensable ingredient to this suburban invention was the road and the vehicle. Ford had long had an operation in Detroit which perfected the assembly line and interchangeable parts, enabling mass production to make his vehicles rapidly and cheaply. The system itself was used by the Levitts in the construction of Levittown. It was adopted by the Levitts as a prime way to blend nature with everyday, exurban life, but it also harkened to one of the most relevant things to their eventual clientele: American capitalism. Ford's wealth would become a precedent for Levittown in terms of production and advertising. But the Levitts were not only influenced by Ford's business model, but they bought into it themselves, as a prerequisite for being able to live in and use Levittown was to own a car. Were it not for Ford's revolutionary manufacturing process, Levittown would be impossible.

Robert Moses would enable the final and most inevitable component of this experiment by painting Long Island and the tri-state area black with asphalt. Moses was the City of New York's Parks Commissioner, though through his acquisition and manipulation of power, became a builder, urban planner, and industrialist. His impacts are numerous, and include the creation of bridges and roadways out to Long Island. His tenure saw the construction of 13 bridges, which brought Manhattan into a regional context through a modern lens. By bridging New York to the land around it, he enabled more workers in the city to live outside the city, in Long Island, Westchester, New Jersey, Connecticut, and further afield. Most notably on Long

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[46] Ibid.

Island, he designed a system of parkways, two-lane roadways mostly running east-west which gave drivers an option more scenic than Interstate-495, opened in 1940 as part of the Government's Interstate Highway Act. These pastoral roadways were designed specifically for the everyman and his family's vehicle, given their small scale, though Moses also designed similarly attractive overpasses, stone arch bridges which kept the traffic restricted to family vehicles. While this created a more pleasant driving experience, its latent function was to keep trucks and buses off the parkways, buses which would carry urban blacks out to the state parks he designated across the Island. This, together with the creation of the Levittown-style suburb and its FHA-allowed restrictions, perpetuated the occurrent phenomenon of white flight, wherein more mobile classes, largely white, would move out to the suburbs. The invention of the suburb was, thus, made for and accessible to a specific racial and socio-economic market.

Levittown was a solution to an impending crisis, and it availed. Evidence exists in the speed at which Levittown was fully occupied, and its influence on the American landscape. Its successors were limited by its creators, though that had no impact on its ability to provide for America a new landscape which learned from the dichotomy of nature and the city. The Levitt's rendition of this grafted urbanism cannot be considered empirically right or wrong, good or bad, but it certainly won favor from the American people.

Designing Levittown

Levittown was united, if haphazardly, into stitched together sub-communities. The Levitts never drafted a master plan for the site when planning Levittown; they built it incrementally, leading up to the whole. Dolores Hayden suggests that this was not simply oversight; the Levitts were unable to handle urban-scale development. The result of their overzealous approach was building Levittown with no sewage—each individual house had a cess pool. There was no integration between sub-communities and other sub-communities or their highways, and there was no plan for trash removal. As these needs arose, the Levitts designed his houses to be at the expense of the homeowner, paid for in dues.

The physical landscape of Levittown was much more considered. The Levitts united their communities with leisure and civic infrastructure. During the summer, community swimming pools were an inexpensive way to provide relief from heat and communal gathering which affirmed the unity of Levittown. In the winter, since the space was unused, it meant that the community spent pennies on maintenance for three quarters of the year. The community would come together in the summer, and the bonds would keep them warm through the winter.[47]

Also central to Levittown's plan was the placement of schools. They were dropped at the center of communities, a planning theory that has been revered by suburb-critics such as

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[47] Hales, Peter Bacon. Levittown: Documents of an Ideal American Suburb. Accessed September 16, 2014. http://tigger.uic.edu/~pbhales/Levittown.html.

Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Andres Duany[48] as it celebrates what are a community's strongest assets—knowledge, the youth, and the wellbeing of both. The schools, however, were not nearly as controlled as the rest of Levittown—the Levitts absolved themselves of nearly all responsibility in the formation and endurance of the school, though they certainly reveled in the good it did.

Surrounding these civic icons was the meat of Levittown, the housing. The carpet housing that defines Levittown was not produced by any revolutionary means, as mass production of houses was inspired by the Ford process in River Run, Michigan, and was experimented with by Sears, Roebuck & Co., and other mail-order housing companies at the turn of the twentieth century. It was the Levitt's control of the landscape that made Levittown decidedly unique. To bolster its status as a garden community, "ornamental trees and shrubs, as well as four fruit trees, went with each house."[49] Abraham Levitt was notorious for driving around Levittown, surveying the lawns of houses to determine whose needed a visit from their commissioned landscapers—whether or not the homeowner liked it, or could afford it.[50] What this fostered, though, was an aura that the Levittown house and land was the family's life blood, and should be invested in. A Levittown house could always be upgraded and improved, which is what residents did. The houses were sold to first-time buyers for a nominal $6,990, and with an unfin-

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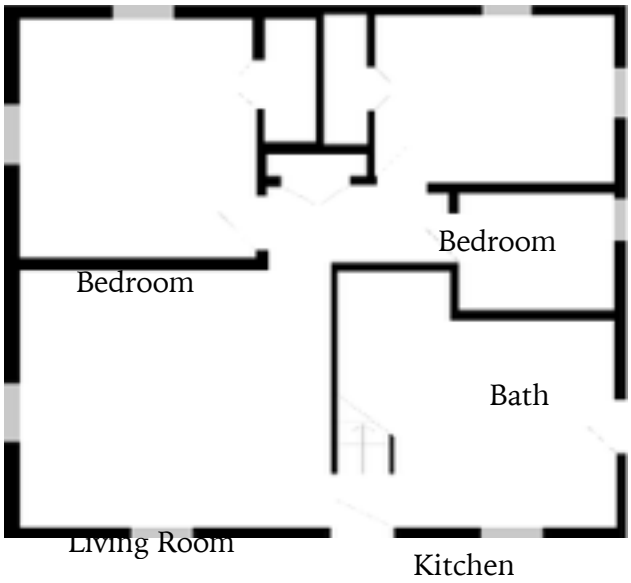
[48] Hales.

[49] Hales.

[50] Kushner, 145.

ished attic and doors suggesting growth, so they had the liquidity and space to expand. Many families added garages, whether they were for a car or for the family workshop.[51]



The Cape Cod was the first house designed for Levittown. It was designed by Alfred Levitt, who had some formal education in the arts, but was otherwise an entirely self-taught architect.[52] The design was rational: for example, the kitchen and bathroom were abutted so as to keep all the piping close together, reducing the cost of the home. He ensured, however, that there were certain inalienable luxuries to American life: the main floor did not allow a basement, but instead, embedded in the concrete foundation was copper wiring to heat the floors in the winter. It also borrowed from architectural symbology; the Cape Cod was a revivalist construction, harkening to Colonial architecture. The front stoop would allow children a place to sit when playing outside, the family a place to pose for family pictures, and passersby a place to connect historically the Levittown house to further Colonial architecture, with porticos and front steps. The rooms were oriented with the housewife in mind: the living room and kitchen were oriented towards the street, where the children would be playing.

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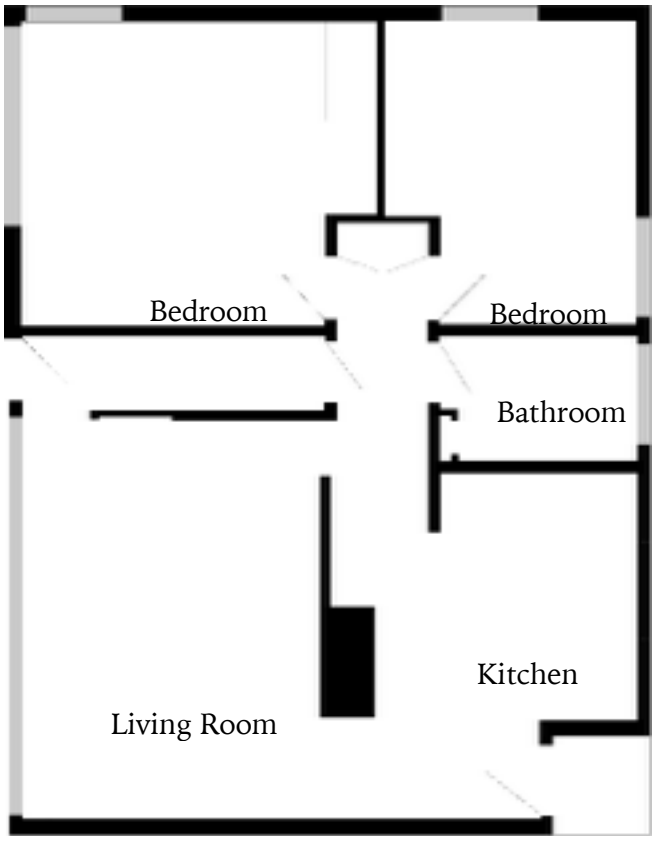
[51] Hales.

[52] Kushner.

This way, she could work around the house or relax in front of the TV, never losing sight of her children. This would prove crucial for suburban street communities.



The next hallmark design for Levittown was the Ranch. It references the ranch houses of California from the beginning of the twentieth century, with one floor, shallow roofs, and a carport, which unified living space, the space around the house, and the vehicle as part of the domestic realm.[53] Alfred Levitt's ranch design was a reconfigured version of the Cape Cod with certain modern amenities. In this, the shared living room/kitchen orientation was rotated, reflecting changing patterns in children's play moving from the front yard to the back.[54] The entry was offset to the side, which helped preserve the future organization of the attic as bedroom space, but was really moved simply to provide easier access to the driveway. Generous picture windows opened the living room onto the backyard, blurring interior and exterior—a much more mature architectural expression than any found in the Cape Cod design. This unity of space was continued by the double fireplace, blurring the boundary of the kitchen and living rooms. Certain aspects

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[53] Emily Chace Morash, "The End of the Arts & Crafts Movement" (lecture, ARC460: The Arts & Crafts Movement in America, New London, CT, November 19, 2014).

[54] Hales.

of the Cape Cod are maintained—proximity of kitchen to bathroom, an unfinished attic—but they have clearly been revised.

The Levittown oeuvre expanded over time as more Levittowns were injected across the world, yet they all follow in the shadow of the original Cape Cod. The Levitt design can be revered for its economics of space, lineation with heritage, and impact on American living and design. What the Levitts created would further construct an ideology of America, if not what America is: it is a suburban nation, experienced by car, where some must stay at home and maintain the domestic order while others must go beyond their front stoop, procure an income, keep coal in the domestic fire to allow for the shell of a house to continue to nurture life, however benign. And to do this requires cut-throat design and constant revision. It requires excellence, and the Levitts delivered this excellence to America *en masse*.

Suburbs: Where they rip the trees out and name the streets after them

POST ON CITY-DATA.COM BY STEELCITYRISING ON FEBRUARY 15, 2008

Race & Gender in the Suburbs

A designer exists because his client needs him; as such, each design responds to the needs of a client. For Levittown, the client was a fleet of unhoused Americans, weary from war, ready to establish roots and enjoy America's postwar prosperity. Their invention was driven, though, to a market of individuals in a moment in history that reserved a set of prejudices that would adversely impact the female and African-American populations of America. Through elimination and forced submission, Levittown's target market was white American men. African Americans were entirely excluded from the pool of potential residents, and women were treated as inevitable nuisances to be accommodated. This was highly controversial for both identities, and would become a point of departure for critiques of not only Levittown but America as places of prejudice and injustice.

During World War II, women were inspired by the image of Rosie the Riveter. With a dearth of men in the workforce—thus, of workers—women were called upon to take their place and assume jobs normally limited to men. The rallying cry was only interim, as once the war was over and men returned, eager to re-enter the workforce, women were ushered out of their employment, back into their roles in the household, largely hidden from society. This move was aided by the same advertising which had created Rosie the Riveter, which now reversed her call to "justify her [and the American woman's] reassignment to the kitchen."[55] African Americans, before the War, were migrating by and large from the rural South to the urban North. This was seen statistically, as percentages of African Americans in urban centers grew

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[55] Lembecke, 95.

from before the Great Depression through to the War. The move would eventually catalyze urban renewal and much of postwar urban planning ideology, notably in the work of Robert Moses. For both women and African Americans, however, the war altered their experience in society. The Levitts, primarily Bill, were savvy enough to see these conditions for women and African Americans as opportunities to influence the eventual Levittown.

The role of women had a large influence on the design of Levittown and its architecture. In the plans of Levittown Cape Cods, the first houses Levittown would offer, the living room and kitchen are oriented towards the street. In their Ranches, a later design, the living room would orient towards the backyard. In either case, this orientation was to allow anyone inside the house to have consistent surveillance of children playing. Knowing the housewife would spend her days inside the house, either preparing food in the kitchen or relaxing in the living room, Alfred Levitt, Levittown's architect, organized the home to allow the woman the most convenience, while also solidifying her role within the house as a preparer and warden, the "domestic goddess," as Roseanne Connor would later label the position in the television show *Roseanne*.[56] This dominion was decidedly quite isolating, as the family car often went to work with her husband, and she was stuck at home alone all day. She would have to walk or carpool if she wanted to leave the home and go shopping, see a friend, or simply experience something outside of her house, off her street.[57] Sometimes, she went "crazy": Florence Rowane remembers of her motherhood in Bethpage, New York, during her lonely hours when the kids were at

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[56] Roseanne. United States: Carsey-Werner Distribution, 1988. Television.

[57] Hayden, 138.

school and her husband at work, she took to abuse of diet pills to fill her time and keep herself entertained.[58] Despite her own limitations, the housewife was a mother and the protector of the home and its people. Hayden notes that parents, specifically in cul-de-sacs but observable throughout the suburbs, become nurses.[59] This is a clear extension of the role women assumed as nurses during World War II, be they at home or on the front lines. In its final form, as Dolores Hayden would point out, the "single-family suburban house implies isolation, lacking physical and social context. For women, the dream is house plus neighborhood sociability."[60] A woman's role in the house, community, and society were predetermined, designed by many hands, and the suburban world, from the roads to the linoleum tiles, were designed to affirm the placement of the housewife inside the house.

African Americans were most impacted by the lack of access they had to owning a piece of Levittown, which began with the barriers to own Levittown's property—put simply, African Americans were legally barred from becoming first-owners of a Levittown home. As David Kushner puts it, "Levittown was conceived and built as an all-white community by William Levitt without any concern of the social implication involved. From the beginning all Negro applicants were turned down on the sole basis of color."[61] This decision by Levitt to package the suburb as all-white was a selling feature for eventual Levittown residents: "cried one woman… 'This is America! I came here to be free. Now I have to live with Negroes! This is

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[58] Rowane, Florence. Personal interview, October 18, 2014.

[59] Hayden, 58.

[60] Ibid, 8.

[61] Ibid, 122.

America!'"[62] There was diversity in the suburb, but it extended only to religion and (European) ethnicity. In 1960, Levittown, New York had not a single African American resident.[63] The suburban purge of African Americans paired with an increased presence of African Americans in cities, and governments perpetuated this by drafting FHA loan policies which discriminated against non-whites and redlining of African American neighborhoods. As a result, black and female-led households rarely received bank or government loans at the rates of white, male-led households.

Women's role in society was increasing, both in the workplace and in the household, which impacted women in the home and in society. In 1929, women comprised 29% of the college population. By 1947, their presence rose to 41%. At the end of the nineteenth century, women represented less than one fifth of the workforce, and by the 1980s, 60%.[64] Activism, though, did grow consistently. Women's suffrage in the 1920s represented a major milestone for the integration of women into society, as their voice now impacted the political face of the nation. After the war, a more socially-oriented feminism took force, and women fought for more equal pay in the workforce. In the early 1960s, the invention of the birth control pill enabled women to have complete control over their fertility.[65] The result was a new oversight of existing gender roles in society which undermined much of what the Levitts and conservative social perspectives had assumed.

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[62] Ibid, 129.

[63] Hayden, 160.

[64] Population History, 176.

[65] Ibid, 177.

For African Americans, resistance to assumed social order in the suburbs was seen nowhere so poignantly as it was in Levittown, Pennsylvania. There, a Jewish, socialist family, the Wechslers, aided new African American neighbors, the Myers's in navigating the civic unrest their presence would provoke. Upon the arrival of the Myers family, the all-white Levittown community responded with hostility. Property damage and organized actions were instigated by groups such as the Levittown Betterment Committee, who united under the common goal to urge, by force if necessary, the Myers's out of Levittown.[66] The situation also attracted the attention of the Ku Klux Klan, whose presence was noted one morning—the first day of a new school year—when a cross was burned on the Wechsler's lawn.[67] The action rose to a fever pitch, all occurring under the public eye. Along with the national actions of civil rights activists such as Martin Luther King, Jr., the resolution was founded in Washington, D.C., where the Constitution of the United States and the Federal Civil Rights Act were engaged. The historic appeal barred the Levittown protesters from harassment, threatening, destruction of property, and intimidation of all African Americans, starting with the Myers's.

The front lawn became a testing ground for social order in suburban America. Designed to maintain societal paradigms, the stage it created on which the model family lived would become shared with a concurrent production of revolution, questioning, and change. The plights of women and African Americans in the suburbs would inspire neighbors when one household stood out and stood up for itself, and would form the new society when their singular actions

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[66] Kushner,142.

[67] Ibid.147.

became catalyst for large-scale protest. The suburb became an actor and an audience for national movements and social change.

Suburban Forms: Cul-De-Sac, Gated Communities, Roadside Retail

Regionalism is an ideology that approaches problems through a lens of contextual analysis to determine the best solution, rather than a central system of administration.[68] In architecture, it results in forms and styles that emerge from local conditions, such as climate, economy, religion, landscape, or culture. Its complement is architecture which is designed without any context in mind, and placed on a site with no concern for local conditions. The American suburb is built on a hybrid of these two; buildings can be dynamic and respectful to many factors specific to the site, and others can be wayward and formulaic, derived from conditions entirely separate from those of the community the building will enter. This section will consider buildings as they exist in the suburb in relation to their surroundings and the community they share. Certain buildings of sprawl do good work to respond to context, or create one if it did not exist previously. Others are slapdash efforts to build a shell of a building, whose context to the community will be defined by the institutions within. The fabric of suburban sprawl is weaving, and within it, roads, buildings, and institutions must either respond to their context, create one for themselves, or absolve themselves of this responsibility in an effort to grow a business and a suburb. This shows itself in numerous ways throughout the suburbs, such as in the cul-de-sac, in gated communities, and in roadside retail.

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[68] "Regionalism." : Definition of in Oxford Dictionary (British & World English). Accessed November 10, 2014. http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/regionalism.

The Cul-De-Sac, the Dead End, and the Through Street[69]

The design of the cul-de-sac renders two possible forms: a bulb or a dead end. This is contrasted by a through street, where the street connects two others, allowing passing traffic to use the street whose final destination does not necessarily exist on the street. The dead end is simply a road that ends abruptly, while a bulb, the quintessential form, ends in a circle, with or without an element of landscape marking the center. The reason for the bulb's success is varied: for one, it gives children of the cul-de-sac a communal play area. It also allows for the most direct and indirect sunlight, as it creates a larger area uncovered by foliage. Houses on the cul-de-sac encircle the bulb, meaning all activity on the circle is highly visible. More, the design of the home often gravitates around this central area, exemplified in the Cape Cod design in

[69] All images come in this chapter come from Google Maps, 2014.

Levittown.[70] This typology, be it a bulb, a dead end, or a through street, has a tremendous impact on children growing up on the street or cul-de-sac. Within the community composed of those living on the street, those living on a bulb have a territorial relationship with the street growing from a shared ownership of it, and they are concerned with protecting it and caring for its appearance and the community it creates. While this can occur in any street community, the design of the bulb cul-de-sac engages this community in unique, highly successful ways. This will also cause alarm when something or someone unfamiliar to the community happens in the bulb. People or cars passing through catch the attention of those in the houses and children playing in street, either passively and actively. The design of a bulb, with the center of action surrounded by houses, ensures that surveillance—whether actual or perceived—prevents unwanted people and behavior. In this, the community further defines itself against a perceived threat of anyone or anything foreign to the community. The community of street neighbors is further strengthened and isolated from the greater area when one house has a specific amenity, such as a pool or a playset. The presence of this unique, bonding loci erases the need of community facilities for those who can use the house's facility: when a neighbor has a pool, the family and friends of each family member no longer need to use a community pool if they want to go swimming. In this way and through others, the community is strengthened, and informal relationships become formalized through language, as adult neighbors become aunts and uncles. The reason for this comes directly from the aforementioned shared ownership of the street. In Hochschild's research, someone who grew up on a bulb told Hochschild that, "It's

[70] It should be noted, however, that the original Levittown on Long Island is largely devoid of bulbs and dead ends.

kind of implied that if the children are in your yard, it's your responsibility to watch them. If they are in the street, everyone watches them."[71] This surveillance extends from the protection of children from harmful encounters to the protection from deviant behavior. In 1975, Michel Foucault wrote in *Discipline and Punishment* of a prison designed to have the guards at its center, and cells encircling it. Those within the cells could not see if there was anyone inside the guard stand due to its design, however the guard stand could see fully into each cell. The result was a perception of those within the cells that the guards could be observing them at any given time, and a perceived surveillance resulted.[72] The behavior of the prisoners would, thus, reflect that of the behavior of someone being monitored constantly. This design philosophy is present in the design of the bulb, in reverse: children's play occurs in the center, and all eyes of those inside the houses could be directed inward at any given point. The same person raised in a bulb said, "I felt like I had a dozen parents on this street because if I got in trouble, I had to hear about it a dozen times."[73] The cul-de-sac, thus, promotes good behavior among children growing up, playing, being children on the street, encircled by friendly, concerned parents and surrogate-family members.

Children are so drawn to play in the dead end and bulb because it reduces vehicular traffic by design, resulting in more uninterrupted play for children. This design dictates where

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[71] Hochschild Jr., Thomas R. "Cul-de-sac Kids." Childhood, 2012, 229-43. Accessed October 19, 2014. http://chd.sagepub.com.peach.conncoll.edu:2048/content/20/2/229.full.pdf html. 234.

[72] Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.

[73] Hochschild, 236.

play is to occur: by contrast, a through street's higher traffic volume encourages children to play inside or in their backyards, and when children play out of sight of anyone else's parents or other children, their interaction with street neighbors is limited. The bulb, then, becomes a playground for children. Parents invest in their children's play on the bulb, too, by purchasing toys that can be used on the bulb, such as a basketball net or hockey equipment—in Hochschild's research, he noted that two-thirds of all bulbs she examined had at least one basketball hoop. Beyond children's play, the bulb and its limited traffic create a perfect environment for street parties, tag sales, and regular communal get-togethers. These gatherings of street neighbors embrace the cul-de-sac, bring not only children, but also families together, and formalize the street community.

The Gated Community

The gated community derived from, as Dolores Hayden states, "heightened inequality and growing social problems"[74] within suburban and urban lifestyles. A desire to preserve a suburban community under an umbrella of certain traits—singular in race, of a certain social

[74] Hayden.

class— "help[ed] reproduce existing forms of exclusion and difference."[75] Many argue that the demand for gated environments is driven by fear of crime, and a desire for privacy and limited contact with other social groups and thus for heightened security. In the United States, security was a driving force behind gating off communities, and the gates were often encircling communities of retired home buyers and those seeking specific amenities, such as easy access to a golf course or pool.

The form of a gated community responds to three basic functions: lifestyle, security, and prestige. Lifestyle impacts the opulent greenery in its experience, often very green and abundant, with houses spaced far apart and grand. Within the community, a schedule of programs operates to appeal to certain groups within the community, particularly younger children for whom school is less time-consuming and the retired. Security often manifests in limited entrance portals, which are often furnished with a security booth and guard. Limiting access ensures that no one without due cause can enter the community, and even so, they require approval of entry from someone inside the community. Prestige is largely superficial, as communities are often represented with an arcadian name, houses often exaggerate a historic suburban architectural typology. Gated communities packaged as homes in relation to a golf course, a pool, "special sporting facilties and those specifically targeted at retirees" flies in the face of the argument that the gates provide security, but rather suggests "new forms of settlement forged through market processes that seek to satisfy the niche demands of groups of con-

[75] Hayden.

sumers."[76] Despite this central element with the potential to socialize all members of the community, it decreases interaction between residents overall, and exceedingly from their regional context.

Roadside Retail

As automobiles rose as a primary means of transit for the suburb, new building design standards and typologies arose to meet changing architectural and economic demands. Overall, modernism's stripping of ornament from the building responds to the velocity at which a car will pass a house, decreasing the importance of the facade as an aesthetic surface that will receive scrutiny from passersby. It is seen in Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye, whose front facade is stripped of all applied ornament, as anyone who would see the facade would be unable to appreciate it considering they would see it from a speeding automobile. In America, on the sides of arterial roads, and through a windshield, properties abutting a road would change dramatically with new types of buildings and an increased frontage, as if architecture should fear the road. In place of architecture, large signs hover near the curb, identifying the building for the shops it contains: Robert Venturi would call this a "decorated shed," as the building itself would have no identity were it not for its accompanying iconography. Stores fill into boxes that line highways and main roads; in the event the store changes, all that needs to change is the sign on the road. The building is a shell for the corporation within.

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[76] Walks, Alan. "Gated Communities, Neighbourhood Selection and Segregation: The Residential Preferences and Demographics of Gated Community Residents in Canada." Town Planning Review 85, no. 1 (2014).

Gas stations were one of the most critical new typologies to enter the suburban landscape. As vehicles became more accessible to all classes, thanks largely in part to Henry Ford's model of production and subsequent nominal fees for such a large piece of family infrastructure, fuel to keep the cars running had to be easily accessible at any given time. Thus, the gas station on the side of the road became necessary. Dolores Hayden recalls the gas station prior to the advent of Ford's frugal automobile: "The earliest filling stations evolved from livery stables that supplied gasoline through a hose and funnel… Pumps got more sophisticated, as did filling stations."[77] With the planning of the suburbs, gas station design adapted to provide not only gas but other quick, necessary and unnecessary goods, such as groceries and coffee, with a shop adjoining pumps on the lot. They were designed to provide easy visibility, to draw the attention of the passersby. The organization of the gas station formalized and expedited a process that was and is ritual in the suburban experience, adding to its experience to create a user-driven experience of everyday necessity in the suburban roadways.

[77] Hayden, 160.

The strip mall is of particular interest as a building type. Strip malls unify in one singular building multiple stores, which may or may not align with a certain theme. Each unit within the strip mall is handled individually, and tenants thus only own or rent a cell within the structure: the whole of the property, of the parking lot and the structure, are owned and operated by a landlord. Thus, the ability to complete all of one's shopping at a strip mall is only circumstantial, if the right stores happen to be in the same jurisdiction. Commonly, strip malls are not considered a desirable location; this was planned. Legislation was passed specific to the strip mall typology that enacted the phenomenon of "accelerated depreciation." The real estate value perpetually decreases over time linking back to tax code, in an effort to produce many of these edifices and have the spaces turn over frequently and eventually, the structure would decrease in value so much, it would be sold and redeveloped as something new. At the time of construction, this values shoddy materials and work ethic. Their shabbiness is not accidental; it is failure by design.

While this is a small selection of the various typologies unique to American suburban sprawl, I find they are the most poignant, omnipresent, and thus impressible on the landscape and the suburban dweller. Their existence is as forged as the original suburb was, but over

time their development has grown to create unique typologies that have been molded to fit the holistic experience of the automobile-dependent suburb.

Homes: the Poetics of Space

Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* entered this collection of essays in an attempt to understand the home as a sentimental, living being. It arose from my own experience driving past our old home, as I would often do from 2010 (when I started driving) to 2011, when a nostalgia wrestled its way from my mind to my actions. Driving at ten miles per hour, I would crane my neck out my window, gazing in through the three front-facing windows. Sometimes, a light would be on in the hallway upstairs, which would illuminate the room I slept in from at least 2003 till we left in 2005. In my voyeurism, I could see in the faint light my equally faint memories, of planning my future in the house, of sitting on my bed watching TV, pretending I was reading for a book report. When we moved, I was elated, then heartbroken, then confused, then complacent. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross may identify some of the stages of loss in my juvenile actions. In 2010, though, I saw through the window the same dark oak ceiling, a hint of the room down the hallway which my dad had added a skylight to—often, though, I only imagined it on my ride home thereafter. And this ride home would commence with the drive down the rest of the block, where I'd ridden bikes, where Sean West killed a snake, where a renter's son was our friend for a summer, where I heard the word crap for the first time. As I navigated the home from my mind, strapped in my seatbelt, I moved freely around a rolodex of frozen moments in time, frozen by feeling that defined these insignificant anecdotes of life. But however insignificant, they were endlessly validated by the memory of the blue carpet in the living room, of watching *Free Willy* while I ate Rugrats® Easy-Mac. I navigate not the house, but parts of it, separated by time and memory, brought together by goal-oriented intellectual thought.

The house—my home was architected by an eight year old, built of the sturdiest materials: the five senses.

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> In every heart there is a room
> A sanctuary safe and strong
> To heal the wounds from lovers past
> Until a new one comes along
>
> "AND SO IT GOES" BY BILLY JOEL

First and foremost, the home is a shelter, distinct from the land it sits on. Henri Bachelard, in his text *The Poetics of Space,* states, "we should consider two principal connecting themes: 1) a house is imagined as a vertical being. It rises upwards. It differentiates itself in terms of verticality. It is one of the appeals to our consciousness of verticality. 2) A house is imagined as a concentrated being. It appeals to our consciousness of centrality."[78] Bachelard is saying that the home is necessarily unlike the land, because it resists nature's elements and defies the expansive horizontality of a landscape by creating a new space with definable limits. It provides inhabitants with a physical barrier between them and rain, wind, sun, all vital yet potentially dangerous parts of nature. More, in it being a singular object, it has a sense of belonging and presence to it. Its presence is certainly undeniable when one experiences a home, and as such, it shall have a center in abstract terms of how it is used: the center is where people occupy it and where they come together. Beyond the house, space between houses heighten its purpose as a shelter: within its walls, we are safe, and when another home is observable outside a window, a sense of community is created. This sense adds another layer of shelter, of

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[78] Bachelard, Gaston, and M. Jolas. *The Poetics of Space*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994. 17.

people united and interdependent on protecting each other. Proximity of homes to one another, thus, embellish a sense of protection on someone within a home. When there is a vastness between houses, the sense of protection weakens and we experience an embellished sense of our proximity to danger. Thus, the role of the house as shelter becomes all the more critical in that it insulates the family as the primary engine of protection from the dangerous parts of the world beyond exterior walls.[79] This space between houses also creates privacy, perhaps another preventative measure from danger but certainly undermining the singularity of the family within the house.

Privacy, and its resultant comfort, is adopted from seventeenth century Dutch society, as boundaries between public and private became fixed.[80] Houses were divided into different functions, and it became womblike, insular, decidedly unlike the world outside the house. This gave the house a trait which fulfilled a human need for intimacy and solitude. Warm construction materials, brick and stone, made the house cozy, safe, like an embrace. The house broke its rigid right angles and became something enshrouding.

Practically, however, the home has a decided organizing methodology. Orthogonal lines create rooms which connect with hallways and staircases. The rooms serve various functions, each disparate yet together form a whole, called “home.”

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[79] Smyth and Croft, 92.

[80] Bachelard, 15.

Gerry Smith and Jo Croft, in agreement with Bachelard, point out, however, that one of the home's most magnificent functions is to serve as a vessel for memories.[81] Its rigidity is abstracted by the memories locked in its distinct spaces defined by its architecture and mentally altered by the specific experience which created the memory. "A house that is lived in transcends Cartesian geometric space."[82] Over time, memories accumulate within the house, concentrating in certain areas, sporadic in others, eventually covering the house in one set of memories. "If [a house] has a cellar and a garret, nooks and corridors, our memories have refuges that are more clearly delineated."[83] Considering the concentration of memory within the house versus the numerous other spaces in which a person creates locational memories, the home becomes an incredibly dear, unforgettable space. More, these memories come to symbolize the "act of living to its best parts."[84]

This ability to literally house memories is so unique to the house as a place for living, it cannot be designed: it is simply inevitable. Spills and stains occasionally become permanent; in this, the line between architecture, lines designed by someone divorced from the household, and humanity blur, and the house is a palimpsest of one-time construction and endless life upon which renovation, stains, paint, et al change the design of the house for the occupier, visitors, and strangers: "That's where the grape juice was spilled, right after he fell from the coffee table he was standing on when he was reciting the Pledge of Allegiance which he had just

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[81] Ibid, 38.

[82] Smyth and Croft, 28.

[83] Ibid, 29.

[84] Ibid, 82.

memorized."[85] The house as a vessel for memories made it a private museum, wherein people "gathered together 'gloomily and secretly like wretched animals.'" Consider, for example. Le Corbusier's hallmark quote, "the house is a machine for living."[86] The home is boiled down to its most direct function, overlooking its capacity to be an emotional vessel.

Consider the teenager's bedroom. Walls strewn with posters, curated images of friends, daily phenomena, the floor a catchall, a desk collected with things deposited and overlooked, nonetheless important. Whether its contents are entirely curated, entirely coincidence, or a swash of both, they reflect moments of the teenager's day to the teenager, and exhibit these artifacts to all those who enter. As such, these tangible things serve to illustrate who we are on an intimate level, some more significantly than others. An image reverently tucked into the lip of a mirror and its frame is intentional and its depiction important, be it a deceased relative or a best friend. A sweatshirt on the ground near a hamper has been worn: where it was worn, with whom it was worn, what smells and stains it bears, if just taken at face value, are merely hypotheses, but they do lead us to consider the nature of its wearer. Bachelard speaks to this: "we cover the universe with drawings we have lived. These drawings need not be exact. They need only to be tonalized on the mode of our inner space."[87] Literally, the teenager covers their

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[85] Tresnan, Patricia. Personal interview, December 4, 2014.

[86] Cohen, Jean, Le Corbusier, and John Goodman. *Toward an Architecture*. Los Angeles, Calif.: Getty Research Institute, 2007.

[87] Bachelard, 72.

room with drawings of themselves. Symbols of preference are inevitable, however accurate they are to the true nature of the person.

I offer you my room for study. In my room, I have a large, wing-back chair. The chair used to sit in a house we formerly lived in, where my dad would sit on weekend nights, drawing, with the television on, drinking scotch. Though it boasts a floral pattern, it gives an overall impression of dark green. It was given to our family through a grand-relative. It ended up in my room when it did not match my mom's decorating scheme for the living room, and now it collects odds and ends—sweatshirts, papers, books.

Above it, to the left, is framed a large-scale painting I did in middle school. Copied from a Hopper, though hardly as pleasing to look at, I look at it each morning when I wake up. The juvenility of the painting simultaneously reminds me that, in this room, I am the child of a mom and dad who celebrated my achievements and aimed to culture me, but also sought to hold onto my youth, frame it, and hang it on a wall, so as to preserve it as long as paper holds acrylic. To contrast this framed painting, past two doors and a dresser is a mural I painted in high school using house paint. It depicts an androgynous figure, shirtless, with ribs exposed, hair stylized to evoke a skyline, and beds flying in the background. The image is a reflection of what were the some of the most important themes in my life at the time: as a mural, they are themes made timeless. In this is a paradox, where the wall has frozen in time a set of thoughts, beliefs, and ideas, while the room which enshrines it is constantly changing, constantly observing me as I grow, returning to it however frequently. I am able to view the mural and reflect on

it and who I was, and how similar or dissimilar the boy who painted it is to the boy looking at it in the moment.

This room is defined, however by the bed. A sleigh bed my mom bought when I was eight or nine, I have since outgrown it, though it is certainly aesthetically pleasing. This bed's first home was our previous, and as such, it anchors the current bedroom in the same aura that the previous one had. The childlike sense of security, untroubled freedom, and content with self are still tangible in the roughness of the wood, in its warm color. It only helps that its head and foot board extend above me, swathing me in a sense of smallness which is carried through with the remaining collections of things in the room, from inarticulate tchotchkes to cards received to drawers with keepsakes and incriminating evidence. In my bedroom, I am aware of the gist of things, I know what harbors what, the history of things, and how I have felt in that room. To this day, when I lie in my bed, I remember an October evening some six years ago, sitting with a friend, enjoying each other's company. Simple things become cherished memories which are evoked by functional objects, never considered to be holders of memory.

Here lies the beauty of the simple dwelling. Its universality, the significance of its contents, the familiarity the family has with the home's quirks and rough edges, transform what could be nothing spectacular in plans and sections into a magical world wherein a laugh is immortalized at the dining table. Small, insignificant acts speak volumes of familial history, cultural and social identity, companionship, and love. Unlike a building of miraculous architecture of whatever program, which is only accessed on rare occasion and with specific intention, the

home is a catch-all for the wayward moments of life, when there is nowhere to be but there. The home defines the family because the family has made the home theirs.

Suburban Arts

The creative arts, in their predisposition to find inspiration in all things, have much to say about the suburbs. Perhaps it is the nature of the artist to rebel against the conventional which renders much of its response in the negative, but this only serves to coax the tender moments wherein the suburbs are appreciated for their good along with their faults. Still, as the suburb is an evocative landscape, it is fair to look upon the arts as a place where its intricacies evoke a response out of creative types, a response worth examining. The works of Green Day, Malvena Reynolds, Eric Bogosian, and Stephen Shore are critical of and responsive to the experience of life in the suburbs, whether they were experienced or observed by the artist.

Music

In the lived suburban experience, there is no musical output so ingrained in suburban life than the garage band. These bands, often formed of groups of friends with some level of musical talent and opulent creativity and inspiration, are often portrayed in either negative or dear lights, as rebellious kids testing the system or creative, expressive children of men and women with something to say. Either way, the common thread is each have a space to play their music. In this way, the formation of a garage band is an extension of the American Dream, as this group has a place to own, or at least call their own. Their space, however, is fringe space. The suburban garage is, more often than not, used as storage for tools and utilities, if it is used at all. It is nice, but its necessity to the homeowners is unsure. What is sure is that the garage band is born in suburbia. In the layout of the space a band will occupy, they are faced with four walls, one of which opens up to the street. If this door is open, the band has

itself a proscenium stage for an audience if performing. If creating, however, it has a window of inspiration. Much like nature was articulated by artists such as Morris and Ruskin through their designed spaces, the band is able to experience suburban nature through the open garage door. Naturally, then, it will influence their musical content. In all ways, the garage serves as the womb for the band to grow, and the outside world is what they are being protected from.

In Oakland, California, the band Green Day traces its roots to similar spaces and suburbs. Of particular note is "Welcome to Paradise," released in 1994 from their third and first largely successful album, Dookie. The song narrates the experience of leaving home, and experiencing suburban life without a family. In the first verse of the song, the narrator is "whining" about leaving home. His fear has left him trembling, and he feels lonely. With the chorus, we are told about the neighborhood in which he "calls home." Cracked streets and broken homes speak to deviance and dysfunctional families plaguing the neighborhood, which some call "slums" and others call "nice." As the song progresses, he describes instances of police violence, leading him to question why he is there. This is the same neighborhood he has lived in since he was with his mother, however his distance from his family is making the neighborhood more intelligible to him, and he appreciates it more. This in mind, the second chorus can be read as more of an endorsement of the neighborhood, proclaiming its function, be it for a dysfunctional population. After an interlude which deconstructs, then reconstructs, then flourishes in a crescendo, the narrator tells us he is elated, "laughing." Here, we can read laughing as either joy for his new life, or as a bit of craziness, as if his acceptance is delusion. Regardless of whether it is genuine appreciation or a captive psychology from being "stuck in the suburbs," we see that this neighborhood does have significant impact on not only the subur-

banite's perception of their suburb, but can itself shift and shape they way they perceive it, forcing appreciation, disgust, or lunacy over eyes which would see it clearly for what it is.

While Green Day presented a view of the suburbs from the inside, Malvena Reynolds presented her impression of the suburbs from an outside, largely speculative perspective. In her ditty 'Little Boxes," she sees the suburbs as "little boxes made of ticky-tacky," identical and made of shoddy materials. She then, however, considers the people who live in these boxes, and does so in a cyclical narrative. She notes that the families are comprised of adults who attended university to be placed into "boxes" of "doctors, and lawyers, and business executives," all of whom are largely the same as they all seek to follow the American Dream of economic climbing. Their children, however, are not necessarily trapped by Reynolds' standards in the same cycle—rather, attending university and sorting themselves in occupational boxes places them in the suburban cycle. The suburbs are not an end-all-be-all, there is a way out. If one does not exit the cycle, they will join the suburban masses who, like their buildings, are made of little substance.

Theatre

Suburbia by Eric Bogosian, is a play which investigates the lives of suburban kids after they've grown up. The play takes place in the parking lot of a 7-11, a ubiquitous hangout spot, in my experience, for the suburban teenager. The handful of characters, having gone to public high school together, are now in their early- to mid-twenties, at different stages and overlaps in life. The central action of the play is the return of an old classmate who has made it as a rock musician, who was previously an integral part of the group, however, since his fame and, thus,

distance, he returns to find confusion, missed connections, and frustration, often pointed at him. His character underlines the change in class the suburbs has represented, where it originated to elevate suburbanites out of the city, it now traps people in the suburb while the city is the locus of energy and the object of desire for many.

The role of immigration, xenophobia, and whiteness is also highlighted by the owner of the 7-11. An anti-hero, he represents the "undesireables" of suburbia, the immigrant, who works the lowest-paying jobs, is of questionable immigration status, and creates friction with the teenage bracket: his business is their leisure, much to his chagrin. The film version's actor, Ajay Naidu, states how in New York, ethnicity is assumed, and so an actor does not need to worry about being typecast as an actor of their race, but this does not hold for non-cities: "In New York, race is a nonissue, but travel to Middle America and you become keenly aware of race. So I've had the experience of bigotry. My character could easily become a stereotype, and that's what I don't want."[88] In the end, however, he plays the integral role of life-saver.

An actor of a film rendition of *Suburbia* comments ""If you grow up in the suburbs, you feel so trapped, especially since the suburbs don't admit to being a prison. On the surface they seem so nice. Yet there's emptiness and desperation, and many people just don't know how to get out."[89] He speaks to what his characters feel, the "social disjunction and isolation have resulted from the automobile-based suburban lifestyle, are not only still problems but are bigger problems than ever before, since the last decade has seen the apparently unstoppable spread of

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[88] Horwitz, Simi. 7-Eleven slackers: the ensemble of 'subUrbia' on the aimless characters of Eric Bogosian's play. Back Stage East, 19305966, Vol. 47, Issue 38.

[89] Ibid.

gigantic "exurbs" with vast wastelands of interchangeable malls. Lacking a piazza or a zocah or any other outdoor space designed for social gathering, the 7-11 parking lot seems to be as good a spot as any."[90] On his inspiration for the play, Bogosian spoke of the time he spent in suburban Woburn, MA: "I don't think there was anybody who was wealthy… You would just go there [outside a local 7-11] for hours and stand there… You would just stand there and stand there."[91] Bogosian would go on to speak of the occasional action that would happen in the parking lot and its store, from threats of death to scarring fights: regardless, the taken for granted parking lot became a locus for social life, where people would get together, important things would happen, and a social life would perpetuate itself circulating around this parking lot.

It is of note that the play focuses on one single night in the lives of a group of friends. Entire lives can be surmised from one evening—less than that, considering the time they spend off-stage. In this, he suggests a suburban strand of information-acquisition, wherein lived experience supplements or is supplemented by rumor and word-of-mouth to paint the holistic identity of a person. More, it illustrates how, despite there being one set location in a place where an inaccessible automobile defines geographic mobility, people can come and go and experiences can materialize out of nowhere. In the suburbs, life seeks life—similar to the city,

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[90] Brooke, Allen. "Heartbroken Wrecks." New Criterion 25, no. 3 (2006): 40.

[91] Kleinfield, N.R. "THEATER: Bogosian Takes a Trip to the Dead End in 'suburbia'" New York Times, May 22, 1994. Accessed November 20, 2014. http://go.galegroup.com.peach.conncoll.edu:2048/ps/retrieve.do?sgHitCountType=None&sort=RELEVANCE&inPS=true&prodId=AONE&userGroupName=connc_main&tabID=T004&searchId=R1&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&contentSegment=&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&currentPosition=1&contentSet=GALE|A174436227&&docId=GALE|A174436227&docType=GALE&role=.

where people attract people. Though foot travel is inconceivable in the suburbs, presence is fluid. People may come and go.

Art

The visual arts of the 1960s responded to the increase in sprawl and a new American consumerism through controversial means. The medium of photography was a unique tool for artists to document the new America as it enabled artists to capture everyday life exactly as it is in a given moment, showing the dynamism of unimportant parts of the day, the home, and of life. It also became much more ubiquitous and accessible, so there is much photography taken in the postwar period for non-artistic purposes, such as to document moments in a family history and to celebrate glorious achievements relative to a family unit. As such, artistic explorations of suburban life for the sake of interest in the suburbs is unique, but plays into a greater realm of photography which takes place within the suburbs. One artist who explored this niche of suburb-inspired art was Stephen Shore, who found "subject in anything no matter how 'normal' it appears."[92] A travelling photographer, Shore's work does encompass global reaches, but some of his most poignant are of America, of American interiors, people, and places. Shore travelled America into its "woebegone regions," escaping his home of New York City to see the distinctiveness of the American landscape.[93] In his travels, he documents an America that is nothing special. The subjects he photographs are not desirable because they are

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[92] Shore, Stephen. "Unassuming Observations." Aesthetica 61 (2014): 38-49. Accessed November 2, 2014. http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=76f28333-01f3-4193-a98e-9616f2f39c13%40sessionmgr114&vid=5&hid=113, 38.

[93] Aperture; Stephen Shore and Luc Sante, 73.

so often accessible to an American audience. The singularity of Shore's work is described by Luc Sante as similar to that of an archer: like the archer must at once focus on both the arrow and the target, Shore and the photographer must focus on his picture plane and the subject.[94] The dynamic relationship forces empathy between Shore and his landscape, and thus, the everyday is heightened to sacred. We must question, then, what inspired Shore's scenes. Some are quite complex, with plays on foreground and background, perspective, and color. Other images come across as point-and-shoot photos, largely similar to those taken by an everyman with a camera. This contradiction is evident in his American Surfaces and Uncommon Places series. It seems that the importance behind these objects comes in their context, how Shore sees them. The viewer is forced to consider why they were important enough to be placed in a gallery setting along with the rest of Shore's work. The more the image is viewed, then, the more dear the composition becomes not of the picture, but of these objects in a constructed, American space. It becomes clear that this TV was placed where it was so its family could view it; who, then, is the family? What are they watching? Who else comes to watch the television? The questions Shore's work provokes pry into the everyday life of an American space, be it urban or domestic, sheltered or agoraphobic. The structure of domestic space, which is often taken for granted by those experiencing it, are destabilized by Shore's lens, and we see them with fresh eyes as vernacular constructions structured with high intensity and pragmatic thought, not as tokens of everyday life and remnants of days, people, and space.

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[94] Ibid, 74.

In Shore's Minor League series, in which he photographed minor league teams of America, his players are, as described by Schjeldahl, "would-be knights of the diamond…" depicting the "animate cousins of the streets and buildings which… he had discovered out in Nowhere-in-Particular, U.S.A."[95] Shore elevates the minor leaguers to the major leagues by freezing the moments of their swings in time, taking away any knowledge of their skill, technique, or identity. In a way, he is empathizing with the players and boosting their morale, arguing that they truly are successful athletes, though they only play for a minor league. And through this empathy, he prevents his argument convincingly by showing matter-of-fact imagery. In this, Shore's work is unified by the sensitive caress of his presence on the American landscape, presented to his audience as blank images. In this way, Schjeldahl author states that "Shore is a definitively cool artist, not because he withholds his emotion but because he incorporates his emotion in his choice of subject and moment, then alienates it with frigid objectivity."[96]

Shore's photographic intimacy is heightened by his fluid choices of color. Colors in his photographs are warm, and as Shore notes in his essay, *Form and Pressure*,[97] this color carries with it the culture of the time the photo was taken. Schjeldahl further notes that the photographs "had to be in color, for one thing, because the subjects were places where people lived, and color is life's hormonal register."[98] The use of color adds a new layer of action to the photograph; it becomes a place where action is still happening in an imagined part of the mind.

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[95] Apeterure: Alone with Baseball: Stephen Shore's Minor Leagues, 22.

[96] Schjeldahl, *Alone with Baseball*, 21.

[97] Shore, *Form and Pressure*, 48.

[98] Schjeldahl, *Alone with Baseball*, 20.

Somewhere just outside the picture plane, life is occurring. Were the images in black and white, the action and subjects would be too static and lifeless. Shore understands that color adds a complexity that imitates life and gives it an endearing, human quality.

Shore is a photographer, and, in speaking to the nature of his work, is unlike the painter, who starts with a blank canvas and builds up. Rather, Shore starts with the world and organizes it into a picture plane.[99] In this, Shore sees the banal, the everyday moments taken for granted in American landscapes, and deconstructs them into their simplest parts. We see in Shore's work complexities of form that are broken down into elements of perspective, color, and spacing. In this, he glorifies the simplicity of America by appreciating its complexities and presenting them in a dear, pleasant manner.

By pictorially organizing the disorganized roads, buildings, and people of the American West in cities and domestic space, he is as Schjeldahl argues, a "definitively cool artist" who deconstructs the world around him into tangible elements, respects his subject, honors it and its context, and then deconstructs it again by presenting it in a gallery, on glossy paper, and through a computer screen. The visual elements of the American suburb are just as easily appropriated in pictorial form as the subject was for its owner in Shore's Post-war, suburban America.

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[99] Shore, *Form and Pressure*, 46.

A Light

Fort Trumbull Yesterday, Today

> All I ever wanted was to pick apart the day
> Put the pieces back together my way
> DAYLIGHT, AESOP ROCK

Fort Trumbull is a nineteenth-century military fort, sitting on a peninsula just upstream of New London. Its prominence, however, has allowed for its name to be given to the peninsula as a neighborhood. A neighborhood it once was, but is no more.

The Fort Trumbull neighborhood has been present in New London through the city's milestones. Along with a wastewater treatment plant, the historic Fort structure, and Coast Guard edifices, it was home for many New London residents.

Its stance as a neighborhood was unquestioned, but its quality was shoddy. In talking with a New London resident, I learned that the houses on Fort Trumbull were not well kept, and the neighborhood was always lower- and lower-middle class.

In 2000, pharmaceutical company Pfizer sought to expand its Groton operation, and looked to the Fort Trumbull neighborhood to build a research campus, housing, and other amenities for its employees. At full realization, there was to be built a "hotel, fitness center, restaurant, and office space, and housing," along with an expanded marina system.[100]

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[100] Kathleen Edgecomb, The Day, Nov 14 2000, NLDC defends its rejection of marina proposal

This plan was accepted by the City of New London, having been pushed through by the newly-formed New London Development Corporation. Stephen Percy and Jane Walsh recount Pfizer's sentiment on the development:

> Standing on Fort Trumbull's battlements on a crisp, sunny October morning in 1997, George Milne, president of Pfizer Central Research, pointed at the former New London Mills site. Turning to Connecticut College president Claire Gaudiani, he said, "you know, Claire, I can just see the Pfizer ferry going back and forth from that point of land to our site in Groton[101]

This excitement was not shared by Fort Trumbull residents, aware that this meant their land was well within the scope of the plan, and would require demolition. Suzette Kelo, a resident whose house was on desired land, put up a fight against Pfizer and the City. Along with her protest, the Coalition to Preserve Fort Trumbull Neighborhood organized actions to avert the demolition of houses for private gain. Among political action, they organized information-disseminating tours of Fort Trumbull, which impacted public opinion of the neighborhood:

> Taking a stroll with the Coalition to Preserve Fort Trumbull Neighborhood this morning opened my eyes. The neighborhood should definitely be saved.
> "The Italian Architecture will never be replaced if destroyed. The shingles, tile blocks and masonry are awesome. Leave these buildings alone. New London, preserve your heritage[102]

Despite public outrage and solidarity with residents determined to stay put, families did move. For those who remained, Pfizer and the City used eminent domain to evict stragglers in an

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[101] From *The Day* Stephen Percy and Jane Walsh January 9, 2000 How City's Pfizer Project came about, and next step needed

[102] email from Elaine Sloan to the editor of the Day, Feb 24, 2000

event that would underscore the perceived evil of the tactic. The case was of such paramount importance, Susette Kelo brought the case to the Supreme Court, who would narrowly vote to allow the use of eminent domain, citing the proposed financial gains the City of New London would experience from Pfizer's relocation as "benefitting the greater good." Settlements were not tremendously cruel, either—the New London Development Corporation offered a total $2.7 million to eleven property owners, and Susette Kelo herself received $123,000.[103]

With that, the New London Development Corporation owned Fort Trumbull and was ready to proceed with plans to build for Pfizer. By 2005, the site was razed, save certain buildings. In 2008, a major economic downturn spiraled the country and world financial markets into depression. Soon thereafter, Pfizer declared that they would cancel their plans to move to the Fort Trumbull neighborhood and instead expand operations in Groton.

The Fort Trumbull plans were nixed. Fort Trumbull had been razed for nothing. To this day, the site is bare.

The politics of these events receive mixed reviews; regardless, concensus holds that the Pfizer debacle leaves an ugly stain on the City of New London's reputation. Truly, it is not entirely the city's fault—who could expect such a grandiose recession—but the choices made have a lasting impact on the city.

There is an opportunity to fix wrongs, to design a new future for New London.

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[103] Kathleen Edgecomb Dec 1 2000 Fort Trumbull coalition upset by NLDC

I learned about land and its history in the fall of 2013 while talking with a coworker. I was instantly fascinated, considering its intersections with resilience, design, and inequality. At the time, I had the opportunity to create a design. Upon completing it, I saw countless flaws in it: oversight, naivety, and immaturity. A year later, with increased knowledge and discipline, I attacked this design problem again. In considering this brief, I perpetually referred to the suburbs as a point of departure through the establishment of various axioms. With a curatorial eye, I maintained certain positive ideologies and amended negative ones. I will enumerate them here.

Suburban Axioms

Ownership of land

This is the single most critical aspect positive aspect to the suburbs. America is unique in that, as a land-owner in America, you own not only the surface, but each square inch of land down to the center of the earth, and every pascal of air as it reaches to the heavens, *ad infinitum*. This is, as I perceive it, America incarnate, and truly suburban. This is contrasted by the 1916 New York City zoning law, the first law of its kind, which limited air rights for building to preserve quality of life for all on the street.

The suburban model of ownership is highly individualistic, derived from American capitalism. The zoning law is much more populist, acknowledging that the common good serves all, and no one man has the right to supersede this for personal gain.

My response to the suburban method of land ownership informs the primary concept of my design, which is an increased awareness of the earth in two- and three-dimensions, as can be seen, dug up, and what can only be imagined.

Room for growth

I was not aware of the importance to this part of the suburbs until I spoke with Stephen Fan, professor of art history at Connecticut College. He argued that one of the reasons American suburban buildings, such as the Levittown Cape Cod, were so successful, was because they allowed room for growth, and encouraged it. The "stairs to nowhere" that led to an unfinished attic would have actually been a tremendous chore to build had the Levitts not provided it for their buyers. By providing this means to expand, and the space in the attic to finish for themselves, the Levitts enabled each homeowner to uniquely create the house for themselves and to allow their family to grow, to incorporate more bedrooms above. Were the home unable to expand, the family would move in knowing that, at some point, they may have to leave, as the house was limiting them. Instead, by giving them theoretically infinite room to grow, they would never need to move elsewhere.

The Cul-de-sac

As one section of this paper extrapolated in depth, the cul-de-sac provides many exquisite amenities, unparalleled by other forms. Noticing these, I sought to engage it in my design. Certain roads in the site plan have bulb cul-de-sacs, all of which provide a vista and, thus, invite visitors. They are echoed by the presence of the pedestrian paths which circumvent them, allowing greater privacy, be it for homeowners or teenage lovers seeking romance.

Site Axioms

I also drew considerable inspiration from the existing hardscape and landscape on Fort Trumbull and of New London, the Thames River, and the Long Island Sound.

Fort Trumbull

Fort Trumbull is the most unifying part of the site, so much as to lend its name to the land. In this, its presence has had impact on the earth; its shoreline has grown over time, illustrating how invested New London and other agents—the military, industrial corporations—have been in the site. As architecture, the fort is beautiful for its low hover yet stubborn prominence from sea. As one approaches the docks in New London, the fort is easily overlooked, as was intended; approaching it from the west, though, it is happened upon in a grand way, humbly speaking to the density of stone and land. It is essential and dynamic in its immobility.

The stone is supple but strong, and windows are carved out in oblong patterns through all faces. Its permeability is thus tantamount to its effect as a barricade from threat; as much as it is designed to protect New London from invaders and enemies, it is civil and humane. It is Goliath, but offers David a place on its shoulders. It is singular, but it comes from a population.

Shoreline and Docks

As mentioned, the peninsula's shoreline has been dynamic, ever encroaching on the river. God's staggered contour has been smoothed out by human intervention. The ultimate puncture of the river manifests in the docks, ejecting into the tide. They bridge land and sea, and are prime opportunities for use which have been underutilized.

Lookout

As a military standpoint, the site receives wonderful views up the river and out to the Long Island Sound. These privileged views are unique, as some are the best one can get before they are intercepted by land. Not only does it see the Sound, but it sees the Sound at a unique moment where its definition between contained body of water and expansive Atlantic is blurred. This position has historically been utilized, and once was a prime reason for New London's elite position as one of the epicenters for the whaling industry, on par with New Bedford and Nantucket. While the industry has died universally, New Bedford and Nantucket along with New London took to changing industries in different ways; Nantucket became a beach locale, New Bedford an agent of tourism for a look into the history of maritime towns. New London moved to more manufacturing means: Groton, across the river, hosts the first submarine base on United States soil; pharmaceutical company Pfizer also looked to Groton for its placement, eventually permeating into New London. Still, this peninsula has weathered strong as it has seen changing economies and industries ebb and flow through New London and Groton.

Personal Axioms

Along with suburban precedents and contextual analysis which inspired this design, there were certain further inspirations which have impacted the design's form.

The Hearth

I have been lucky enough to spend considerable time in Ireland. With a climate very similar to New England's (the name was lent in part due to the climactic similarities), the hearth plays a central role in Irish dwellings as loci for heating of the house, for cooking, and for domestic unity. The centrality is so humbly poetic and prophetic, as a place for the glorification of simplicity, where bare necessity meets chemical marvel. Our modern day has done away with its survivalist necessities, and its presence functions to unite the family under the spectacle of lighting a fire, but also, of unique light and warmth. In considering its role in the home, I focused on the uniqueness of light in the middle of the house—it is the only place where an organic light source creeps into the home's center, where life occurs in the most intimate way.

The form this centralizing light takes in my design is inspired in parts by James Turrell, and in others by Lebbeus Woods. James Turrell's primary medium is light, and some of his most poignant works are in architectural voids which reveal striking moments in natural light previously overlooked by patrons. His work enables a new perspective on the vista of the sky, a physical phenomenon of reflected light, taken for granted as simply "blue" with an occasional dog-like cloud passing underneath. Terrell creates a spectacle of the mundane through the absence of intervention, while his art is entirely constructed and architected.

In speaking of Lebbeus Woods, I primarily consider one work in Chengdu, China, in collaboration with Steven Holl and Christoph a. Kumpusch. In Holl's Sliced Porosity Block, a void was filled by Woods and Kumpusch will designed rods of light and staircases. The program is a space of non-program, with no reason for the stairs, lights, or void to be there: and the void is purely nonsensical, serving no architectural function without the rods and the staircase. An interaction with light, space, and humans is manipulated to create a dizzying experience, but magic lies in the light which fills the void.

From http://lebbeuswoods.files.wordpress.com/

Central Atriums

In visiting the Newport Mansions, I was taken by central circulation space in Chateau-Sur-Mer. A three-leveled void allows light and enables communication across three levels, defining its place as a social gathering area with no program other than socialization, greeting. It allows people to come together, conversation to ignite, whose flame is to burn in other rooms. Beyond the beautiful poetics of a void, I saw its social function as novel and sought to incorporate a void in a most social space, while still enabling intimacy.

My design seeks to employ the benefits and revise the shortcomings of suburban architecture and urban design to create a better suburban experience.

Site Analysis

Looking North: Gold Star Memorial Bridge, Coast Guard buildings.

Historic changes in Fort Trumbull:

1934, 1951, 1965, 1986, 1995, 2006, 2010

Precedent Studies

Belfast, Northern Ireland

As a cultural and aesthetic precedent, I looked to Belfast, Northern Ireland. A city once rocked by sectarian violence that is now re-establishing itself as a city with its own culture and vibrancy to offer. As a post-Troubles space, Belfast's cultural intent is to help residents reclaim the city as a peaceful space, shared between the previously sparring groups.

Fig. 3: suil iroh, *IMG_2055*, 2014. Digital photo. Flickr.

Fig. 4: xsphotos, *Urban Borders-Belfast.08*, 2008. Digital photo. Flickr.

New York, NY, USA

New York City is world-renowned as a cultural and financial capital, among many other things. One of the things New York does best is create interfaces between populations which would not interact otherwise; on public transportation, on lines at stores, and in public squares. In Union Square, throughout the year, people set up chess sets and invite any and all to play with them for competition and enjoyment. This intellectual, casual, and indiscriminate coming-together of strangers fosters a unique sort of community that does not create friendships, but mutual understanding and respect of others from different backgrounds.

Fig. 7: Eugene Nikiforov, *Game of Chess, Union Square, Manhattan*, 2013. Digital photo, Flickr.

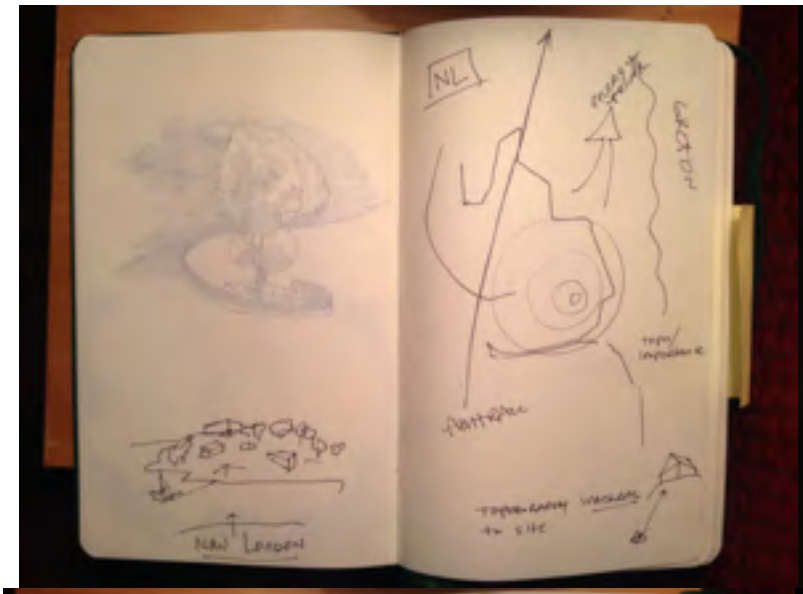
New Bedford, MA, USA

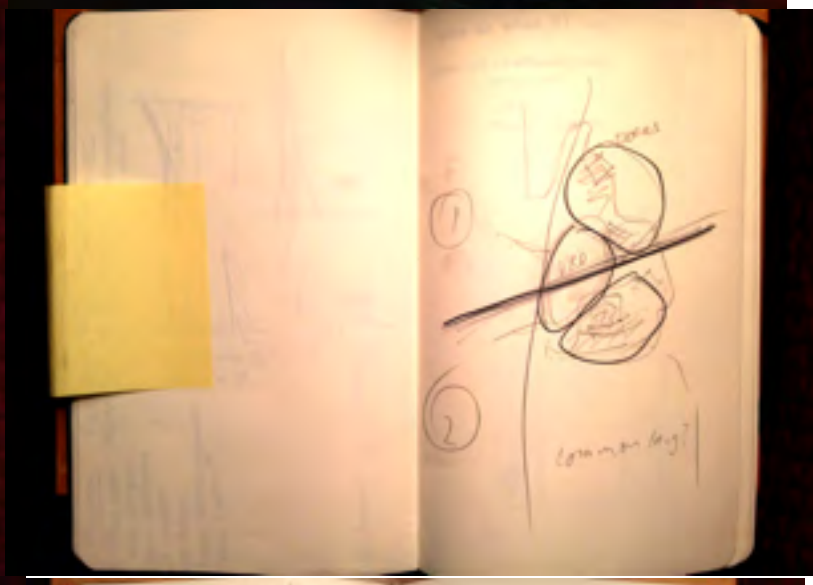
New Bedford, MA

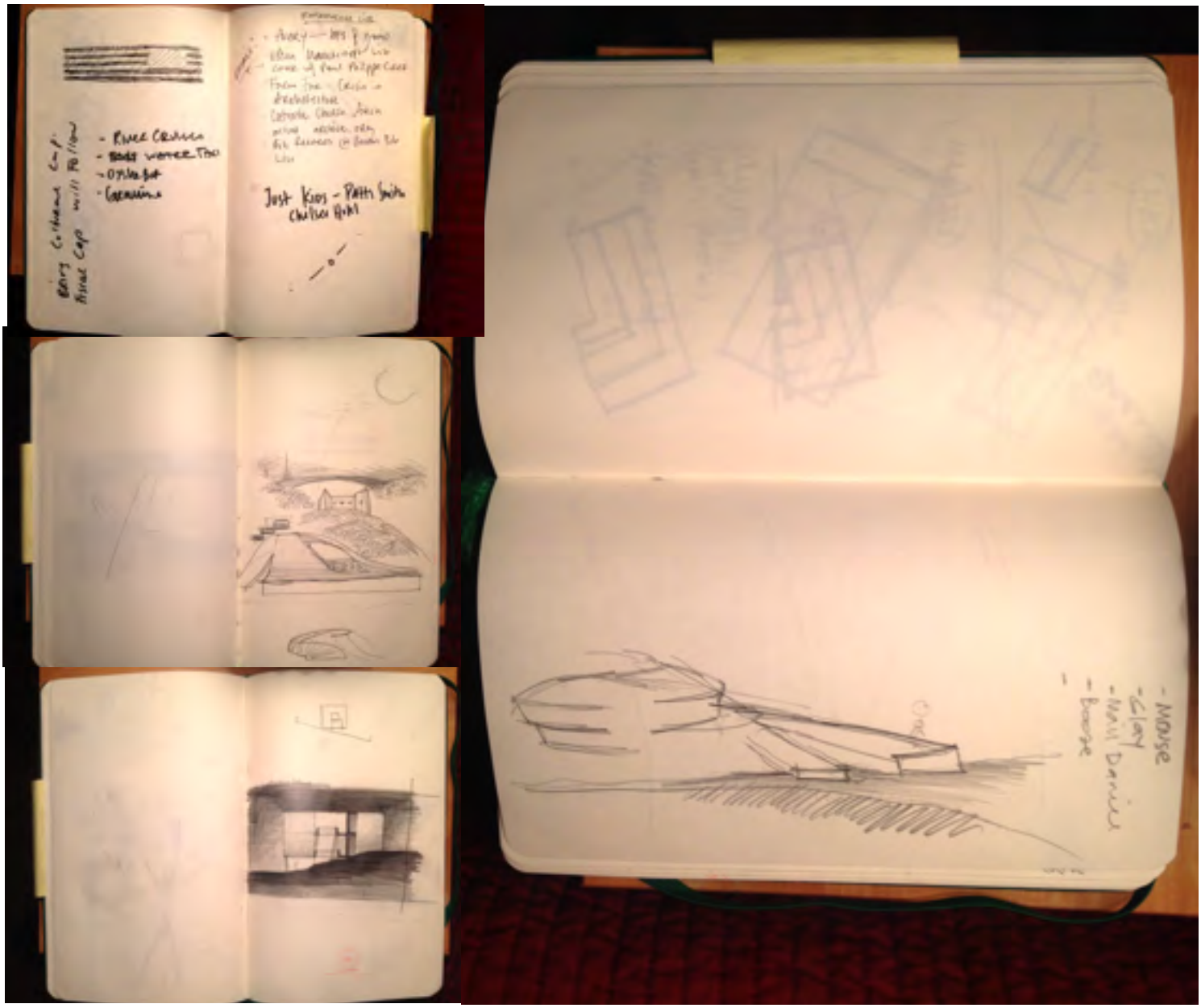
New London, CT

Design Development

Sketches






- River Crossing
Just Kids - Patti Smith
- Mouse
- Clay
- Mail Dannie
- Bowie

Street Plan

The basis for the grid is an extrapolation of the existing conditions, primarily the railroad and also the shore. The railroad itself responds to the flow of the river, so by mimicking the line across the peninsula, it then was intersected at regular 90-degree angles to form blocks. The scale of the blocks was kept small, as per Jane Jacobs' suggestion in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.[104] Once this square grid was established, elements of the existing road system were exhumed to not only break up the grid, but to allow some of its street history to reappear. Certain street lines were readjusted to terminate not within the grid, but in a cul-de-sac, honoring the benefits a cul-de-sac offers to suburban residents.

The plan also allows for a pedestrian bridge up to Bank Street, New London. It also moves south, where a large building complex combines high-quality entertainment with a hotel and docks that house river cruise terminals and a high-speed ferry to Long Island.

This final plan is a mesh of old and new, of reason and joie de vivre.

The site rendered itself as a three-phase area: the northern part of the peninsula, the southern part, and a bit in the middle. Two separate planes come together in a central hub, strung together through this central place of being and place to be.

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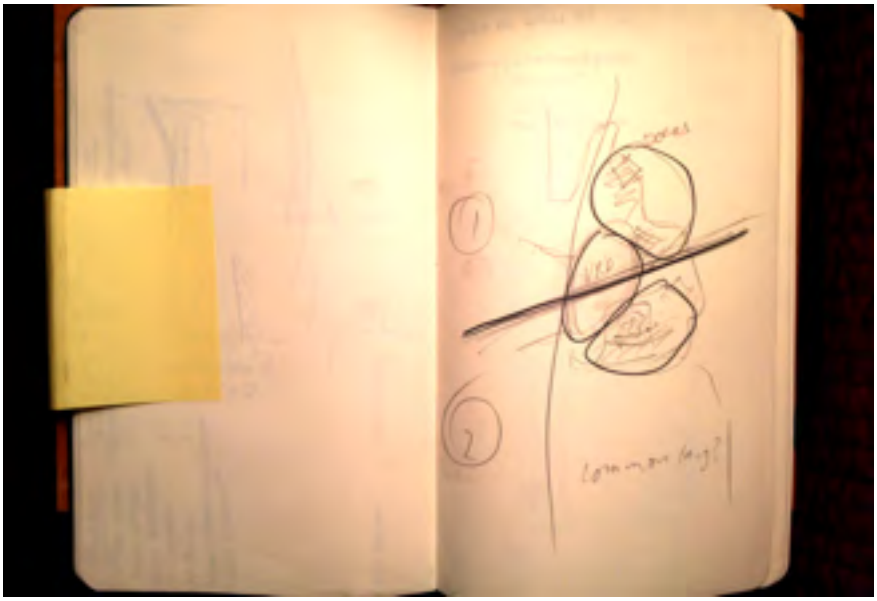
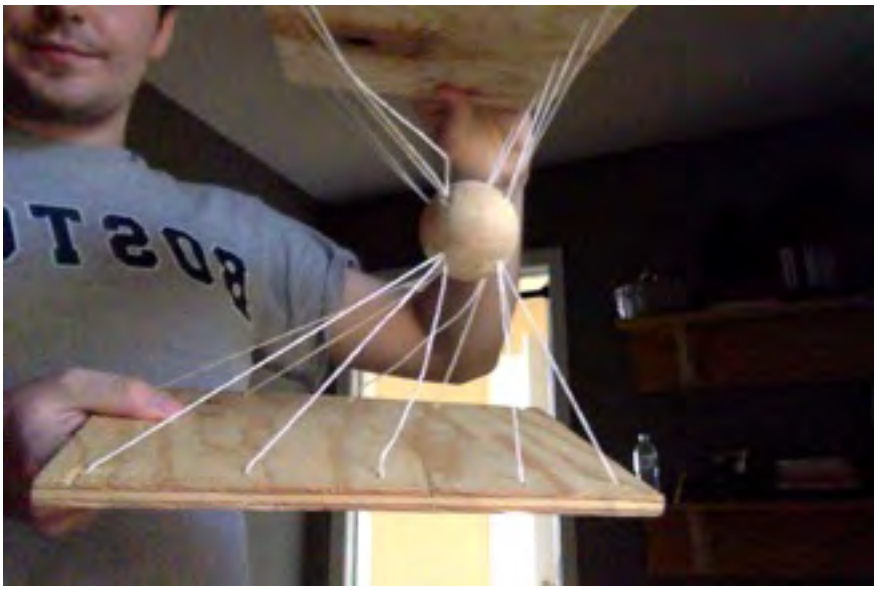
[104] Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House, 1961.

Concept: Three Parts to the Peninsula, Stitched Together.



Conceptual drawing



Conceptual model.

In designing around this, the northern part was chosen as the area for residential development—the shelters. The southern part was chosen for an entertainment complex. The middle part, where the grid truly thrives, would bind between the two, where commercial and natural development would occur, to bring the two populations together.

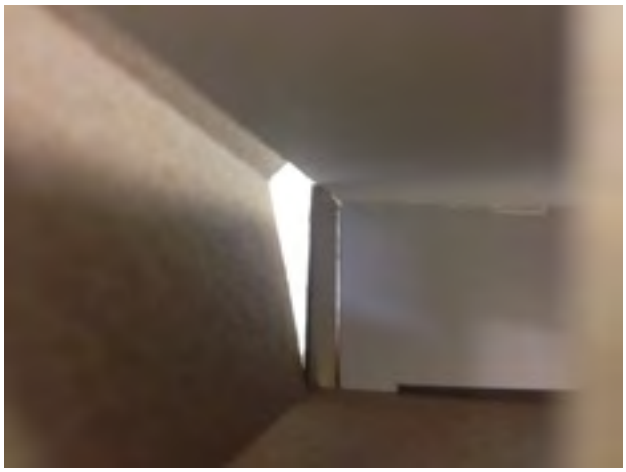
Draft Masterplan

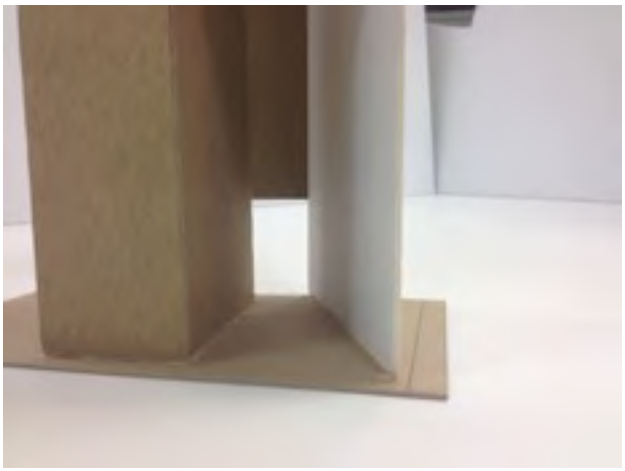
Final Masterplan

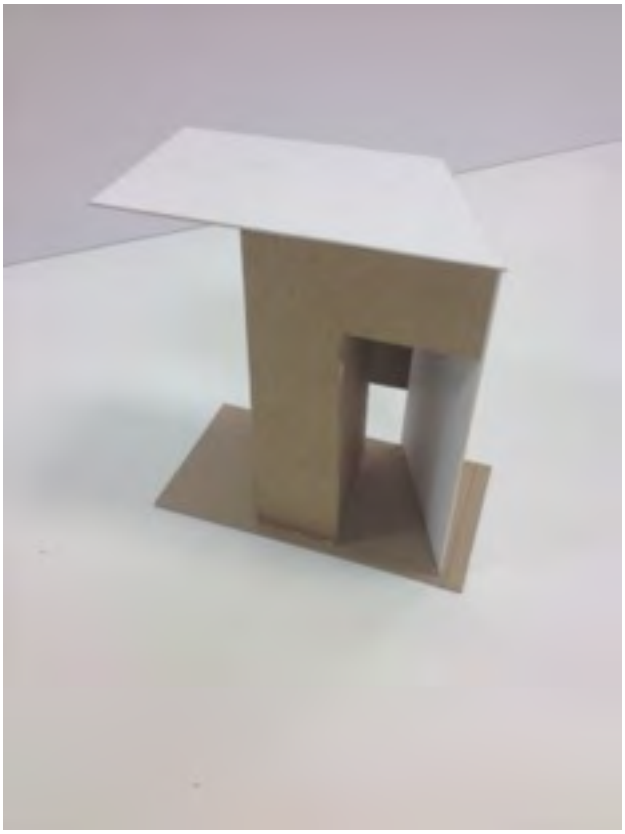
Shelters

The shelters will populate the entirety of the peninsula, though clustering in the northern area.

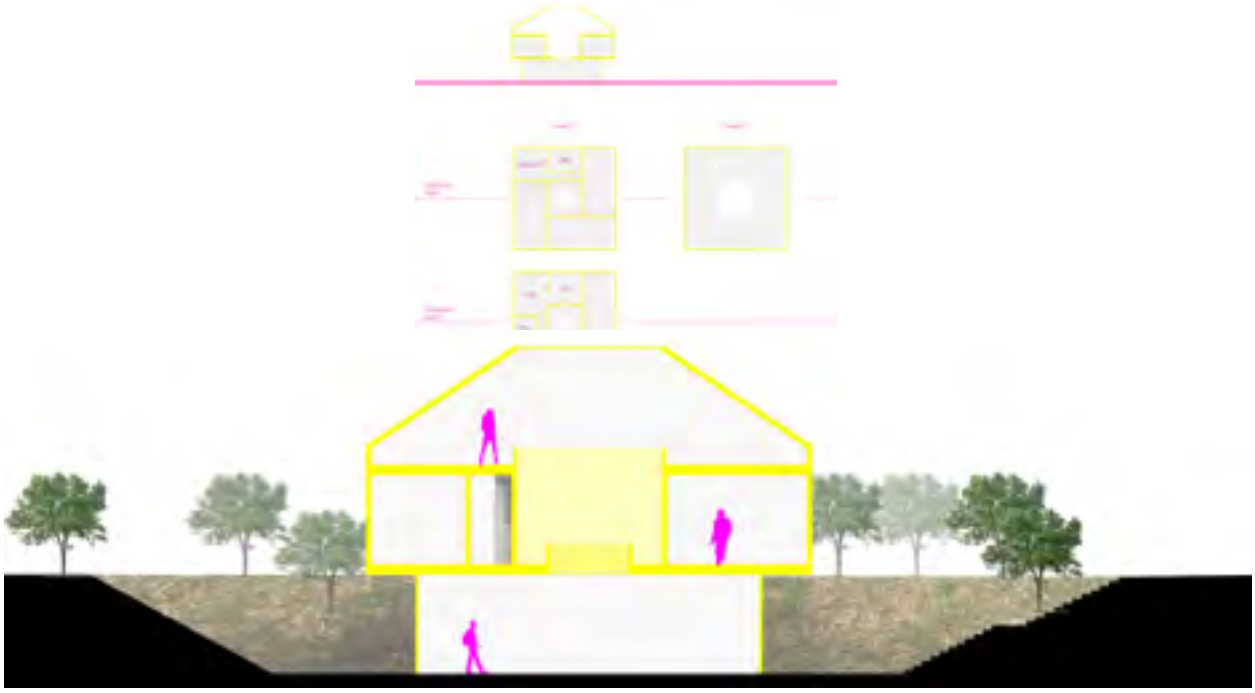
Study Models of Atrium to Shelters

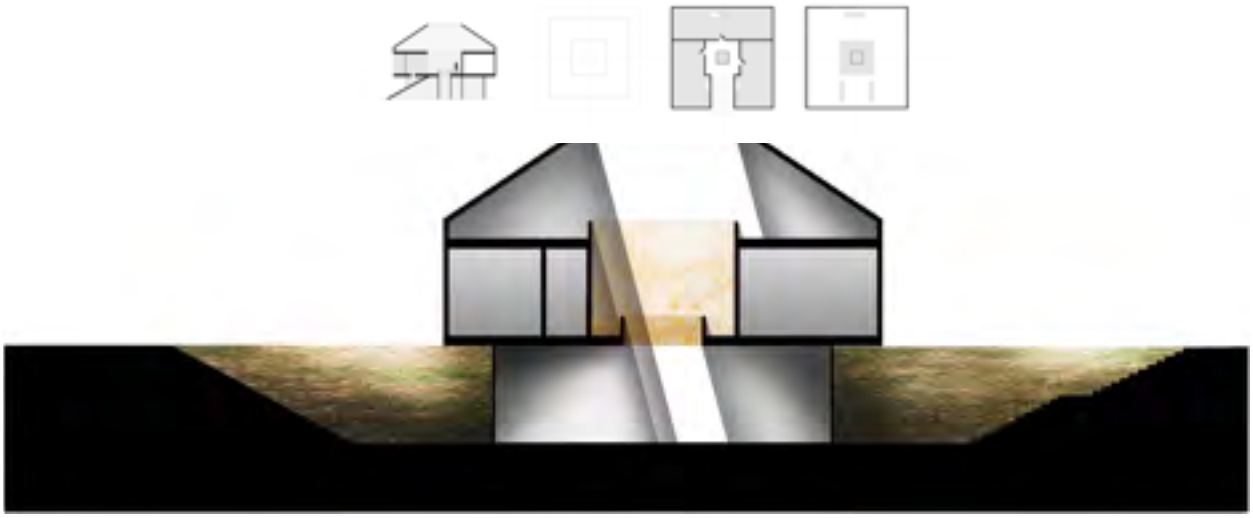






Shelter Drafts

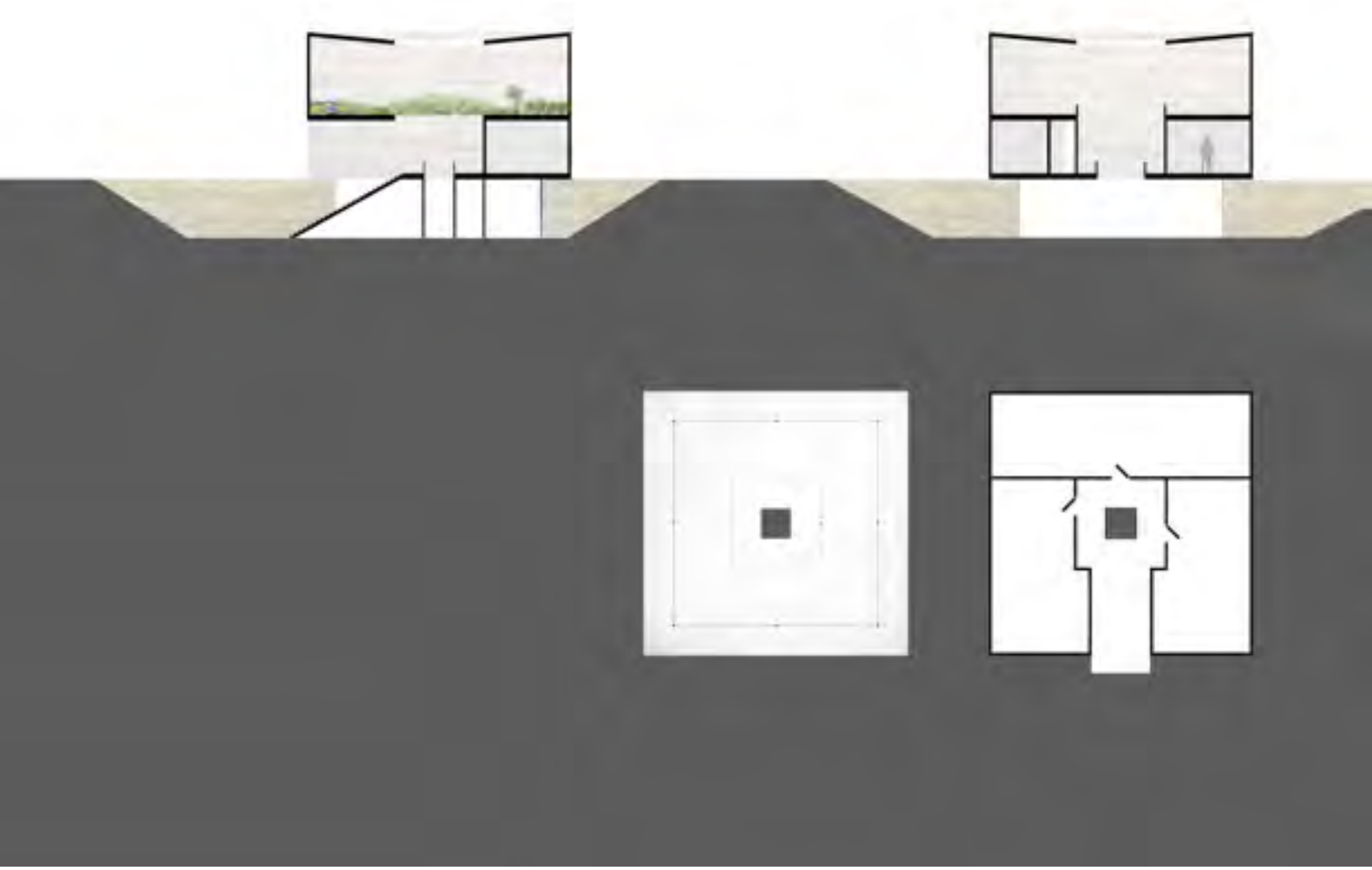




The Shelters are two- to four-family apartments of three stories. The entry floor is sunken, and is enclosed in glass. It leads up to a second living floor, with a central, outdoor atrium. The third is a system of roof-gardens for each unit, which may be adapted for future vertical growth of the dwelling.

The decision to sink the entry was made considering the way one approaches the shelters. To make someone aware of the earth, they approach the shelter only able to see the mass of the second floor. The glass atrium below, however, emanates light, pouring out into the foggy New England atmosphere, making one aware of something below. A grand staircase refer-

ences Roman temples, giving the shelter a clear front, and leads up to the central atrium. The



central atrium filters light through the building, centralizing it.

The goals of the shelter are to promote both community among tenants and a unity of those within the home. These tiers of community are referenced in the tiers of levels that one appreciates from within the building, particularly the atrium.

Locus

This entertainment complex, titled "Locus," sits on the southern shore of the peninsula, and will combine hotel amenities, ferry and river cruise facilities, and other higher-end entertainment facilities. In designing this, conversations with Beka Sturges, professor of art history and architectural studies at Connecticut College, suggested bringing in the middle- and upper-middle class clientele found in nearby Mystic, Waterford, Stonington, and farther reaches such as Long Island, Rhode Island, central Connecticut, and western Massachusetts with a series of programs. Such amenities will include retail currently distant from New London, such as a Whole Foods, a Barnes & Noble, and plenty of space for small businesses with similar markets.

Certain values are necessary to the Locus' design: docks projecting out into the harbor at the south of the peninsula; appreciation of the extreme topography present; layering of the design with central atriums and lightwells; and a denial-and-reward system responding to views out to the Long Island Sound. Openness is essential, as the site is rich in views, history, and relationships to existing hardscape and landscape. Further, it will complement the overlaps of passing consumer populations and permanent residents.

The dock features a ramp for light-use, from kayaks to small sailboats. Its positioning is to optimize views, and it incorporates itself into the landscape and paving. It flows with the topography, feeding up to the three-building complex, where programming includes a marina, a history museum, and a community center and restaurant (respectively).