A wholistic approach to neighborhood revivification.

e. moore
EXPLORING A WHOLISTIC APPROACH TO NEIGHBORHOOD REVIVIFICATION: The design of a diverse housing community in a rapidly evolving neighborhood.

Fletcher Place and Holy Rosary/Danish Church Historic Districts Indianapolis, Indiana

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thesis 1987
My sincere appreciation to all those who cared enough to be honest and who taught me to question even that which I believed I understood. Without you I might be foolish enough to think I had found the answers.
This thesis was divided into three sections for the purpose of researching it in a three quarter time frame. The following text also corresponds with those three divisions: exploration, application and evaluation.
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The first quarter was used to examine my own beliefs and preconceptions and to investigate other viewpoints. The opportunity to explore the issues from a multi-disciplinary approach would, I felt, lead to discoveries not afforded by a narrowly focused architectural perspective.
THESIS STATEMENT

There is an aesthetic quality of architecture which influences human behavior, elicits emotions, stimulates learning, promotes healthy social interaction and provides visual satisfaction.
The physical environment is perceived at many levels simultaneously: the visual forces of the built environment which can be perceived and discussed in terms of good and bad; the physiological functions, meeting and expressing the needs of individuals; and the sociological functions, encompassing and displaying the spirit of the community. These aspects of the environment always exist. It is the quality of their existence which is often in question. The limited vocabulary and constructs developed by architects and their critics does not successfully encompass all of these relationships found within the built environment. Architects have no measurement for human responses to the environment nor any for establishing aesthetic quality. Thus, current architecture fails to respond to these fundamental issues: how individuals and communities perceive the physical environment, what influences their perceptions, how their perceptions affect their behavior, and how does the environment affect the social interaction and growth of the community.

Contemporary environments do not generally satisfy man's psychological needs. They tend to either fall short of meeting one's sensory demands or they overstimulate the senses causing sensory overloading. This results in discouraging social interaction and suppressing motivation. The present rigid and inflexible approach to the built environment prohibits growth and change and also discourages human interaction. It is difficult to expect people to aspire to be self-renewing, creative individuals when their physical environments stifle their growth and suffocate their senses.

These physical, behavioral and psychological issues all come to bear on the central philosophical issue: when is a building or space deemed beautiful? Society, and architects as well, have no criteria by which to judge the built environment. The visual characteristics of aesthetic quality and the psychological aspects of aesthetic quality are in constant flux and they vary greatly from one culture to another and from one individual to another. There are many issues which influence the overall aesthetics of any environment.

The physical, psychological, philosophical, and other aspects of the environment all play an important part in determining the quality of the environment. Therefore, I believe that in order to establish aesthetic quality in architecture one must approach the problem with a multi-disciplinary perspective. Only then can one establish a wholistic approach to architecture which propagates a pro-life value system and a creatively cooperative motivational orientation toward people and other living things. (Leff, 1978, p.84)
THE SENSES

Perception is how we see and understand the world around us. There are many receptors which influence our perception. The most basic are the physical senses: olfaction (smell), gustation (taste), kinesthesics (pain, temperature, pressure, muscle movement), audition (hearing), and vision. Each sense functions at a different level. The older senses such as olfaction and gustation more directly influence our emotional responses while the newer, more developed senses like audition and vision are more objective and provide us with increased specificity of data. This explains why stimuli can be manipulated to obtain different emotional and intellectual responses.

Another factor which accounts for our variation of responses is found in our background. The degree to which each sense is developed varies greatly across cultures and between individuals. The United States, for example, has virtually cut off olfactory as a powerful communication channel. (Hall, 1966, p.47) Other cultures such as the Japanese take special care to assure that their living spaces are arranged properly for perception by all their senses. Thus, it is important to consider all the senses when designing a space and to consider as many of the cultural factors as possible.

MEMORY

Cross-cultural and individual differences in perception are further enhanced by the important role which memory plays in perception. According to Peter F. Smith (1979, p.21) perception is based on memory, because it is impossible to perceive phenomena which are not partially related to past experiences. As we experience things patterns are recorded in our brain as memory sequences. The more frequently something is experienced, the deeper it is etched in our memory. This makes it very easy to recall those things which we have experienced often. However, it also makes it more difficult to recall those things which are experienced only a few times. This occurrence has several ramifications on the design of the built environment.

Because people remember things which they experience more often it is possible to develop archetypes – images which trigger the recollection of a past experience. Thus, certain images are associated with various types of buildings or spaces. This generally works in the designers favor, assisting in evoking desired feelings from the public. However, it can be detrimental to the public. If strong memory patterns are reinforced too much the probability of recalling the less predominant patterns is close to zero; resulting in a stagnation.

Due to the nature of learning it is very dangerous to limit the mind to only known or experienced phenomena. By introducing the mind to new experiences one expands the learning capacity of the brain cells which in turn stimulates a desire for more input. This makes it very important to find a harmonious existence between the familiar and the untried.

One method of approaching this dilemma is supported by further research of Peter Smith. Because memory patterns are perceived in a certain direction, each depending on the experience involved, it is possible to change the direction of the perception, virtually creating a new pattern. This is possible by inserting a new element or experience into the remembered pattern. Through its own novelty the new piece becomes the starting point, changing the direction of the pattern.
WHOLISTIC APPROACH

It is important for architects to understand both the subtleties of the senses and the significance of memory in perception. The human being is very complex and so is the environment in which he lives. Just from the limited information discussed above it should be apparent that the environment has the potential to greatly influence the development of the human being. Edward Hall (1966, p.4) suggests that this relationship is so dominant that with man being able to create his own total 'world' or biotope that he is actually capable of determining what kind of organism he will be.

In order for architects to comprehend the complexity of the relationship they need to understand all aspects of the complexity — ecological, sociological, psychological, biological, aesthetic, climatological, etc. Only after one approaches the problem from all of these avenues can the whole situation be analysed. One strong analogy for this wholistic viewpoint is found in medicine. No longer can science look to only synthetic drugs to cure the patient. The patient's state of mind and attitude toward life are sometimes more important elements in the process of healing and in the final prognosis. In life all things are related and must be approached from a wide perspective.

The utilization of a wholistic approach for the basis of all environmental decision making would result in a more understandable and yet, a richer and more complex built environment. When designers, architects and builders base their decisions on a full range of understanding they are more likely to choose solutions which enrich the total human and his culture. Those who design environments based solely on the dynamics of their forms or solely on the ease of traffic flow have neglected and probably weakened the complexity and richness of life.
The environment should be designed in such a manner as to solicit the participation of all the senses. While the visual aspects of a space are very important, it is the way a place smells or sounds which will evoke an emotional response within the user.
A pattern of memory may be represented by this engram figure:

Part of this pattern becomes emphasized by repeated perception:

This now means that attention has an increased probability of following the emphasized route to the detriment of that part less 'incised'.

So element 'x' diminishes in probability until its chances of excitation virtually disappear.
Represented in engram notation, a memory pattern may be represented as follows:

![Diagram](image)

The arrow represents the normal way of perceiving the array.

If a new building is inserted into the complex, with elements from a different cognitive schema, not only is the pattern changed, but so is the mode of perceiving the visual array.

![Diagram](image)

Engram flow probability

The new insert, by its novelty, is the starting-point of perception and so modifies perception of the whole gestalt.
In the book *Self-renewal* John Gardner discusses the ideas of innovation, renewal and rebirth. He suggests that a renewal system which continually reforms is far greater than one which is interested only in curing specific ills. The idea is a basic one which can be applied at various levels, but is probably most important at an individual level. The attitudes and approaches of self-renewing individuals are ones that are basic to an innovative society, for the truly self-renewing man does not leave exploration of the full range of potentialities to chance. (Gardner)

It is important that architects and designers understand and design for the self-renewing, creative individual. If one does not design for the creative individual they are likely to inhibit their creativity. John Gardner characterizes the creative individual as one who: 1. has an openness which allows him to achieve a heightened awareness of some aspects of life by ignoring other, routine matters, 2. does not suppress or refuse to face his own emotions, anxieties, or fantasies, 3. exhibits independence, questions assumptions, 4. shows flexibility—changes directions and shifts strategies, and 5. imposes order on experience and is willing to work hard for long hours. It takes thoughtfulness and an openness to provide a good environment for the creative mind because too many 'rules' or accepted ways of doing things tend to suppress it. The two largest enemies of creativity are boredom and lack of motivation caused by psychological and environmental repression.

There are environments which smother creative impulses and there are environments which permit their release. When an environment is viewed "as an arena for creativity and self-expression rather than a deterministic physical set imposing the patterns of behavior on an era," (Antoniades, 1980, p.274) it is possible to establish a scenario for the creative, self-renewing individual. An environment with great diversity, allowing freedom of choice and flexibility, and encouraging maximum interaction between people and their surroundings is much more likely to stimulate the creative individual than a rigid and imposing environment.

This is an idea of significant consequence in a society which is becoming highly specialized and focused. Too often people are encouraged to follow a single, accepted path. They are not encouraged to explore their full potentials. Intentionally or by rote, individual creativity is often suppressed and suffocated. People suffocate each other by not asking enough questions, by not encouraging learning. Environments suffocate people by discouraging participation, intellectually and physically.

Instead of striving for meaning, purpose and commitment this society finds itself forever in pursuit of that unattainable, static state of 'happiness.' If the environment were to open up and become more flexible and participatory it might encourage some individuals to be less inhibited and to permit the release of creative impulses. The best place for the process to begin is in the home, at the individual and family level, laying the cornerstone for society as a whole to adopt a self-renewing approach. Such a wholistic system of growth and rebirth, once established, would perpetuate itself, continually reforming a healthy society.
homes are broken,
a child's laughter hushed;
the sweetness of our dreams,
the roar of the circus
mute the screaming voice within
The home is a staple of the American society yet it is not an easily defined term. 'Home' holds different connotations for different people. Depending on one's eco-social status the home may fulfill many different roles. One's images of home are also greatly influenced by one's ancestral background and the legacy of home which has been passed from generation to generation.

Throughout the years the meaning of home has changed. This change has been directly proportional to the changes which have occurred within society itself. This is a very basic idea within the concept of a home. Webster's Dictionary lists home as "the unit of society formed by a family living together." Thus, 'home' is not merely a place of dwelling but is an integral ingredient of society.

American culture has always been concerned more with the individual rather than the family unit. As time has progressed the importance of the individual has been reinforced to an even larger degree. The individual is expected to be responsible for himself at a very early age, breaking family ties and establishing his own 'family' unit. Previously this unit has consisted of a spouse and offspring but even this is changing. It is becoming acceptable to remain alone and unmarried or to have a single parent household. Hence, this unit of society called home has become smaller and smaller, challenging the idea of family living together.

Historically the family unit has consisted of many people: a large nucleus family and many members of the extended family. This filled the home with a richness and diversity of peoples and ideas, encouraging comradery and friendship among and between the generations. Any more this is not the case. The small nucleus family which now comprises the home is very homogeneous and inward or self-oriented. The home is only important for enhancing that which may be directly related to the individual's growth, well-being and advancement.

The most potent manifestation of this is in man's physical grouping of homes. There are now separate and distinct categories and groupings of homes separating the elderly from the young, brother from sister and children from parents. There are singles complexes, elderly complexes, adult complexes, single parent complexes... Very soon home will no longer exist because society will not have any family units living together.

Home is beginning to lose the potency of its definition as a unit of society. Society's definition of home is approaching its definition of house. In its conquest for individual growth society is destroying the relationships which enrich and enhance the individual's growth. Perhaps man is adapting to too great of an extent. The home, when it consists of the family unit living together, enhances and enriches the conditions of life. When the home no longer consists of the family unit living together it becomes maladaptive and destroys the fabric of life which holds the meaning of existence. Society can not afford to sever the ties which bind it together.
HOUSING ISSUES

- Relationship of housing to jobs and social services must accommodate those with limited transportation and they need to be convenient to all.

- Unit design needs to be flexible and varied to address the needs of diverse household types.

- Both spatial privacy and spatial community needs must be provided for.

- Regulation of the automobile must be carefully planned and easily understood.

- A large percentage of the units must be affordable to those who are currently living in the neighborhood.

- The ultimate goal is to have all units owner occupied.

- The units must be efficient in terms of energy and maintenance.
Traditionally the street side of a dwelling is the more formal or public side. Symmetry and symbolism acknowledge the ascent from the street to the front door. The entry off the side signifies the more private or secondary entry.

Beyond the formal front are interwoven rooms/spaces centered around the hearth. The asymmetry and the introduction of a second angle show a new attitude and relationship to the backyard.

The formal lineal qualities of the front and the informal relaxed qualities of the interior spaces work together to create interest and variety and to maintain a cohesive neighborhood appearance.
DWELLING REQUIREMENTS

a. shelter
- protect from elements
- keep in conditioned air
- filters unwanted pollutants

b. security
- provides sense of security
- protects from intruders - visual, aural, and physical
- at family level and multi-family level and still connects to community

c. comfort
- provides enough space
- has qualities of 'coziness'
d. convenience
- is easy to care for
- is well organized
e. self-expression
- is flexible, changeable
- has opportunity for personalization

f. socialization
- provides places for interaction
- has rooms to gather
- has places to meet

g. status
- accommodates symbols of status
- shows signs of ownership
The purpose of the second quarter was to utilize the information gathered during the first quarter and apply it to an architectural project. The process included project and site selection and analysis, study of precedents, and development of urban, site and unit concepts.
PROJECT SELECTION

The vehicle to explore and to test my thesis statement will be a housing project. I have chosen this project because housing is an environment which is intrinsic to the growth and development of a small group of people. A housing project is a community unto itself and it is also part of a larger community with which it interacts daily.

It is my belief that today's standards for housing are very poor. This is true even in the housing of the wealthy which is very poorly designed but with many plush and shiny finishes. Many homes are not designed at all. They are only a kit of parts put together by a developer or builder. Generally, a developer and/or architect lays out a project with only one criteria - profit. No consideration is given to the person who will call the house a home. The essentials are provided and depending on the target market a given number of amenities are added.

The aesthetic quality for which I will be striving is not one which is found in ornate and expensive finishes or fancy appliances. It is my desire to make homes for peoples which respond to their individual and cultural needs; to their physical and psychological needs. It is my desire to make environments which stimulate growth and motivate thought. Designing a small community of twenty to thirty dwelling units allows me to look at these ideas in depth and to apply them to individual homes.
Fletcher Place and Holy Rosary/ Danish Church Historic Districts

Indianapolis, Indiana
SITE LOCATION
Abstract model of site and neighborhood indicating important landmarks, paths and barriers.
Block configuration showing vitality of alley system. Large blocks divided one or more times by small alleyes.
Figure/ground showing texture of neighborhood. Linear houses, most with garages to the back alley. Large commercial buildings along Virginia Ave. Large religious building north of site.
Basic environmental conditions: Strong northwest winds during the winter months with cooling summer breezes from the southwest. Panoramic view of city to the northwest. Low-rise buildings allow maximum daylight exposure. Minor amount of noise and exhaust pollution from traffic on East Street.
Bounded on the west by clean industry, Eli Lilly. Catholic Church and Youth Organization to the north. Single and double family, detached residential units bound the south and east sides. Stevens St. and McCarty St. are the major neighborhood connectors. Virginia Ave. the main route into the city and East St. the major route out.
EXISTING SITE

View of site from northeast corner.

View of site from southeast corner.
1980 CENSUS: BLOCK STATISTICS

Number of people .................. 2038
  black ...................... 396
  asian ...................... 6
  spanish .................... 42

78.8% WHITE
2% ASIAN
2% SPANISH
19% BLACK

under 18 yrs .................. 380
over 65 yrs .................. 180

73.6% 18-65 yrs.
8.8% OVER 65 YRS.
18.6% UNDER 18 YRS.

Number of housing units .......... 585
  single family .............. 370
  10 or more units ............ 93
  mean # rooms .............. 4.5
  owner occupied ............ 200
  mean value ............... $13,500
  renter .................... 308
  mean rent ................. $115
  1.01 or more persons/room ... 29
  lack complete plumbing for
    exclusive use ........... 55
  persons/unit ............. 2.5
  one person households ....... 175
Characterized by variety of Bungalow style cottages and houses. Proportion, shape and size varies from unit to unit. All have front or side porch. Houses of wood construction, some have masonry porches. Condition of each dwelling varies from excellent to extremely poor.
Dwellings are all very close (5-15ft). Large and small dwellings are found on same block.

Dwellings typically have one or more additions to the back. No driveway, vehicular access from alley.
PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Holy Rosary Catholic Church and Catholic Youth Organization. Active church and organization, part of community's Italian heritage.

Old Horace Mann Public School. Newly renovated into 22 apartment units.
DESIGN CONCEPT

CORE METAPHOR:
Unexpected combination of ideas or images; an incongruent alliance that nonetheless works and produces a whole that is conceptually different and more meaningful than either of the parts.
URBAN CONCEPTS

ZONING

- each piece is part of the whole...

... each piece is whole.

QUADRANT

- encompasses all functions of daily urban living...

- dwelling

- work

- leisure
SITE CONCEPTS

PLAN

Connection of existing commercial buildings with existing park location by movement system. Front facades responding to neighborhood, interior walls correlate with other psychological and social issues.

EAST ST. ELEVATION

Simple treatment; emphasis on creating urban wall to address East Street and Eli Lilly.

GREER ST. ELEVATION

More open; connects interior with surrounding neighborhood. Park opens up to neighborhood and to Catholic Youth Organization.
SITE ORGANIZATION

Visual forces influencing site

Early site organizations
PRECEDENTS

ROW HOUSES
Typically zero-lot-line, owner occupied units. Each owner being responsible for his/her own property. No large open areas.

COURTYARD HOUSING
Generally rental type units with maintenance personnel responsible for grounds. No privacy and no personalization.

COMBINATION HOUSING
Separate units, owner occupied, all owners responsible for courtyard care and for own front yards. Each unit maintains separate identity and some privacy while gaining large community space.
Home should encompass individual and family with feelings of warmth and security. It must also promote self-renewal by encouraging and stimulating personal and intellectual growth. It should provide a sense of stability and permanence yet, it must be open, flexible and free.
Street facade relates to the public formality of the street while interior spaces and forms respond to many different social issues and relationships.
POSSIBLE UNIT TYPES:

1. **large**
   - two adults
   - one adult

2. **2 mi.**
   - one adult
   - one elderly
   - (young couple)

3. **two bdrm**
   - two adults w/one child
   - one elderly and one adult
   - two elderly
   - two adults

4. **two bdrm**
   - two adults w/2 children
   - two adults and one adult w/one child
   - two adults w/no child
   - [possibly one bdrm attached to one bdrm plus]

5. **large one bdrm or one bdrm plus**
   - two adults and one adult w/2 children
   - two adults w/2 children and one adult w/one child
   - two adults w/three children and one adult
   - two adults w/three children

[three bdrm, possibly closed off]
PORCH

Porch as a concept. It can be a gate, a wall, a walkway or a room.

Meaning found in relationship to other spaces, inside and out.
sequence

spatial experience of movement between spaces (as opposed to the seepage of one space to another)

juxtaposition of elements

- new meaning/significance for traditional element
- element has more than one use

interior/exterior spaces

an intentional connection creating interaction between interior and exterior spaces.
The final project can only be evaluated on the basis of its ability to express the underlying thesis ideas. Thus, this section is a presentation of the final project followed by a discussion of its successes and failures.
The existing commercial and park areas were expanded and connected to reinforce the vitality of the inner block.
The major site planning ideas are portrayed in this sketch. The importance of the porch is emphasized and extended into the movement system for the block. The landscaping becomes a series of screens to insure privacy while reinforcing the connection to the open space. The connection of the park and the commercial area acts as a spine to help the community to form a relationship.
Section/perspective of pedestrian walk

Pedestrian walkway with lighting and varied seating height provides place for interaction as well as access between park and homes and commercial plaza.
Greer Street elevation of units just south of park.

Very simple elevations relating in scale, rhythm and variety to existing. Wood frame construction with clapboard siding.

Interior block elevation of same units.

Elevations relate to interior organization of units. Small appendages, reminiscent of the many additions added to older homes, create outdoor spaces.
UNIT ISOMETRIC

Isometric of five northeast units - view from north alley looking toward southeast.

Massing emphasizes variety of units and reinforces edges and corners. Exterior spaces are shaped by interior spaces. Landscaping provides additional privacy.
DWELLING UNITS

Five townhouse type dwelling units were designed and then repeated on the site to equal nineteen units. Two apartment type units were designed and repeated to make six apartments above the carports. These combined with the four existing units make a total of twenty-nine units.

Several basic premises hold true for all of the townhouse type units:

Each unit has more than one porch. As discussed earlier the idea of the porch is important to the whole project. The porches establish many distinct relationships with the interior and the exterior. The front porches are more formal porches from which to watch the world go by and to buffer the front rooms from the street. The side porches are less formal and are generally placed in a specific relationship to an adjacent space. The back porches are even more informal, typically uncovered they serve as a patio for outdoor activities. The second floor porches are all together different. They have more of an atmosphere of an outdoor room. There are also subtle differences between the porches which are attached to the unit and those which wrap around it.

The entry sequence for each unit is carefully planned in order to clearly define movement from one zone to another and to establish points of interaction. All of the entries into the units occur on porches, thus the arriving party has already passed through one zone. Just inside the front door of each unit is an entryway, a point of arrival. From the entry most open into a hall, not a corridor. Here is a circulation area which also functions as an interaction node.

In each unit there is an important relationship between the kitchen and rest of the living spaces. This relationship was established because of the role which the kitchen has played throughout history as the gathering place and the 'hearth' of the home. The contemporary kitchen is often too small and poorly located to encourage gathering or to allow more than one person to fix a meal. Mealtime and meal preparation are important times for family bonding.

All of the layouts demonstrate good deal of flexibility. Moveable walls, large doorways and interior windows allow the residents to modify the relationship of one room to another. It is possible for the first floor of the units to be completely open or for one or more areas to be closed off.

The bedrooms in these units are arranged to provide a maximum amount of privacy, create a gathering point and to function with only one full bath per unit. Because the bedroom is often the only room where one can have complete privacy it is important to assure that it is maintained but not at the cost of long, narrow corridors. The sharing of one bathroom also increases the need for privacy; thus, the introduction of dressing rooms.

All of the units have stair access to an unfinished attic space. These can be used for storage or they can be finished to create additional living space.
UNIT 1

Unit one is special because it is oriented toward the south. Being an end unit it has three exposed sides. This enables the back porch to be moved to the side and it provides excellent conditions for attaching a sunroom to the living room. This unit has two average size bedrooms.
living room

first floor plan

second floor plan

Unit 1
UNIT 2

Unit two is a smaller unit with one large bedroom and one smaller bedroom or den. This would be a less expensive unit because of its size, yet it still contains the basic ideas as the larger units.

UNIT 3

This unit is very similar to unit two only slightly larger. It also has two rooms upstairs. The second room has been designed as the children's room and it has a large sleeping loft. The loft would provide children some privacy and at the same time give them a play area. This unit also has a sunroom which opens onto a back porch.
bedroom with sleeping loft

Units 2 and 3

second floor plan
Unit four is the largest unit having three bedrooms all of good size. The first floor probably best exemplifies the kitchen as the 'hearth' of the home. All of the rooms have a positive relationship to the kitchen. Unique to this unit is a library, located between the dining room and the living room. A semi-private space is created for reading or conversation between two people.
living room and library

second floor plan

first floor plan

Unit 4
UNIT 5

This unit has several unique qualities. The overall approach to this unit differs from the other units. Only one bedroom is provided in the tower section while the second floor could be used as a studio or an office or be finished into bedrooms. The first floor plan is one which functions better when it is open but which can be closed off. It has a side porch which is more secluded than the others' front porches. It is the only unit with a second floor porch.
dining room and kitchen

third floor

second floor plan

Unit 5
The apartment units were designed with another premise in mind. There are many older residents in the nearby neighborhood who can no longer afford to keep up their big old houses and there are a number of young people just beginning to work who can not afford large homes. The units over the carports were designed for these people. The first unit was designed for a roommate situation. The bedrooms and private baths were placed at opposite ends of the apartment for maximum privacy. The second unit is very small but would allow someone to have their own apartment fairly inexpensively. There are only a total of six of these units on the site and priority would be given to people already living in the neighborhood or to relatives of the families which own one of the new townhouse type units.
COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Bar and Restaurant - view of southwest corner

Grocery and Deli - view of south side
Day Care Center - view of west side

The southwest commercial corner of the project supports small service oriented businesses. Day care is a pressing need in any community. By using an existing house for the facility and by designing it at a residential scale the children will feel more at home. The bar and restaurant are intended to appeal to the strong Italian heritage of the neighborhood as are the grocery and deli. The bar and restaurant should draw from outside of the neighborhood while the grocery and deli will be frequented mostly by locals. All three commercial ventures will be able to benefit from their proximity to Eli Lilly.
Inexpensive, do-it-yourself bookshelf.
CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most pressing question one should ask at the completion of a thesis project is: Does the body of thesis work adequately support the initial thesis statement? In this case the initial thesis statement read as follows: There is an aesthetic quality of architecture which influences human behavior, elicits emotions, stimulates learning, promotes healthy social interaction and provides visual satisfaction. The first part of this statement is rather simple to prove for it is not difficult to find evidence of 'aesthetic quality' in architecture. However, in order to prove that it influences human behavior, elicits emotions, etc. many avenues besides architecture need to be explored.

This search proves to be an ongoing process; one which is not now complete nor one which can be complete. By its very nature it can not be conclusive. There are just too many areas of life to study and there is new information published every day on these areas. However, through my search I have found some evidence which corroborates my belief that architecture does have an influence on human behavior and human development. To what extent and to what degree it can be controlled will be debated among architects and scientists for some time.

I did find it difficult to believe, in its entirety, the statement which Edward Hall made claiming that man has total control over what type of organism he will be. There is not enough understood about the relationship between man and the environment. At best I believe that man, through the built environment, can open up the potential for things to occur. Man can remove the barriers which stifle and hinder the senses and the mind but it is still up to each individual to respond to his own creative impulses.

Through designing a small community I feel that I have exhibited the ideas implicit in my thesis. The basis for designing the community was that a place could be created where individuals would feel protected yet they would be invited to interact with the environment and the community. This would then allow them to have enough self-confidence and self-worth to take risks, to move on a creative impulse. The idea is not to maintain such an inward focusing, protected community that individuals become complacent and apathetic but to establish a strong base which allows and encourages individuals to ask questions and seek answers. This is evident even in the conceptual site plan which is enclosed yet very connected to the larger community.

PROJECT

Architecturally, I believe that, my thesis project is highly successful. Certainly there are some connections and many details which are unresolved; yet, I feel that I have achieved the over all quality for which I was striving. The initial organizational concepts which I proposed are still clearly visible; thus, understandable. The project is ordered, yet it has maintained a complexity through its variety. There appears to be a sense of spatial ordering, inside and out, which flows smoothly and which has clear boundaries. There are also a diversity of spaces and elements which encourage exploration.
However, there may be too much variation. It is important to design a complex environment for we are complex beings, yet there is redundancy and confusion in making simple things too complex. If the overall design were ordered one more time it would become simpler and more fluid. It would also exhibit a stronger, more detailed indoor/outdoor relationship. The relationship between the houses and their rear yard space needs to be more developed. On the inside there are three dimensional qualities which need to be further developed. Each room needs to be perceptually evaluated.

The individual units reinforce basic sociological ideas about family. They provide privacy and they celebrate interaction. They are also designed to fulfill some of the special needs of non-traditional families. By providing the opportunity for a heterogeneous community to develop there is greater likelihood that more ideas will be exchanged and more interaction will occur at various levels. This is very satisfying to me, personally, because I feel that it is crucial for people of all ages, economic backgrounds, races, etc. to interact and to learn from each other. This is especially vital for children who learn by observing the world around them.

CLOSING STATEMENT

Perhaps the strongest indication of my feelings toward the project lies in my realization that I could not decide which unit I preferred, I like them all. It is personally quite satisfying to be at the end of a long project and to find that I actually like it. It is one thing to espouse architectural rhetoric and quite another to sincerely feel that a project is good.


Arnheim, Rudolf, *The Dynamics of Architectural Form*.


Gardner, John, *Self-renewal*.


