ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA

A MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT
HAMMOND, INDIANA

THOMAS JOHN VAVREK
MAY 1993
ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA, A MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT. SUBMITTED AS A BACHELOR OF ARCHITECTURE DEGREE THESIS DESIGN AT BALL STATE UNIVERSITY. COPYRIGHT 1993, THOMAS JOHN VAVREK.

THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBERS, A.E. SONNY PALMER AND DAVID L. MACKEY.

A.E. SONNY PALMER

DAVID L. MACKEY
GREETINGS...

In many ways, this thesis represents a crystallization of concepts and theories I have developed over the last five years. I do not mean to claim all of the concepts in this text as original. However, for myself, the end result, the design is exclusive. My own conclusions come from a variety of sources including personal observations. In this light, I have attempted to assimilate much of the theory surrounding capitalism, the economy, and the arts. The development of my arguments and their conclusions are represented in the following pages. From the article, Rationale and Reasoning to each analysis of the buildings, I have tried to show an evolution of ideas. Consequently, as they relate to architecture, the ideas become more refined as one progresses through the book. This refinement is ultimately reflected in the masterplan and the three buildings.

At this time, I would like to thank Sonny and Dave for their inspiration for helping me to guide this project through the rough spots. Additionally, I would also like to thank my Mom and Dad, Patti and Mike, John and Rhonda, for their unconditional love and support through my five years at school. Thanks Alot.
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To whom it may concern:

What is culture?

For me, "culture" is a very abstract notion, which could come to mean a number of things. On one level, it speaks of history. More specifically, the history of a particular group of people, their traditions, customs, and their contributions to the rest of the world. This definition of "culture" is quite tangible in terms of the past. The clues of the characteristics of a particular culture have already been laid out. For example, I am American; and, I know that American "culture" has its own folk tales, national heroes, and customs which set it apart from other cultures. However, the definition of American culture is still far from complete.

There exists a desire to define culture in terms of today. Culture is an ever-evolving, changing thing. In this regard, it becomes difficult to provide a precise definition. For instance, my vision of America may be similar to the vision of other people; but, it is not the same. I am an individual. I have my own thoughts and concerns. Subsequently, I could say that this is one of the characteristics of American culture.

Hence, America is a conglomeration of different people from different backgrounds. I believe to preserve American culture, it is important to realize this "differentiation." Consequently, I do not agree with the "melting pot" concept. As different people, we can (and have been able to) bring many points of view into solving many complex problems. This is one of the major things that separates American culture from other cultures. This is why America is still the greatest country in the world.

However, many people may not agree with me. I do not
expect them to. This side of "culture" is hard to define because a consensus is impossible to achieve. This is what makes "culture" an abstract notion and the realization of the strengths of our nation difficult to convey. T.J.V., Muncie, IN

do not understand it. Factory workers complain about losing their jobs; for which they were paid astronomical amounts to perform the most menial task. Reality is that these tasks can be done overseas for a fraction of the cost. Yet, they complain, not realizing that their company can not remain competitive with the burden of paying their wages. Their company is international and, so are their jobs. But, because of the image of the "American" corporation, foreigners are the bad guys; and, American companies should look after their own. Capitalism on a global scale does not make any allegiances. The entire world is its playground.

Yet, this is just one issue. Moral degeneration is another. Change is difficult to handle. Especially to those who are not used to it. Though, in one way, I do not understand why people can not get used to it. The 20th century has been full of changes. I would imagine that they would be used to them. But, I guess this is not the case. Personally, I am full of optimism for the future of society. I have hope. I refuse to give up. T. Vavrek, Muncie, IN.

To the editor:

The consequences of the "information age" are almost impossible to quantify. We can make assumptions based on trends, but sometimes these are as good as a blind guesses. No one knows what the future holds. However, what I do know is that the emergence of the information age has met with a lot of resistance.

Pop culture has become high culture, our economy started to operate on a global level, computers and instant communication have revolutionized the way we work, and life has become more fast paced than it ever has been. The basic way in which we were taught to live as an "industrialized nation" has changed. In fact, some suggest the industrial age and its mentality are dead. However, many people are pessimistic. This is a problem.

Any time a dramatic change occurs, society is usually a few steps behind it. The same thing happened during the transition into the industrial age. Back then, some people adamantly held on to the past; but, of course, the past was never revived. Consequently, they fell behind the way side. Unwilling to adjust, they were forced to drop out and accept defeat. Nowadays, there is the same anxiety about the new. People
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If we were to compare our lifestyle in the 1990's to that of the 1960's we would notice a marked difference in the way that we live, communicate, and work. Along with this we would also note the differences which have recently led us to believe that "traditional" America has been under attack. Drug use, a growing number of non-traditional families, and an uncontrollable, irresponsible media are widely regarded as the cause for the disintegration of America. Add to this list the loss of many manufacturing jobs and many American corporations to the hands of foreigners, the general disposition of America has been anything but optimistic. With the recent election America has cried out for help. And a growing sentiment has been fabricated around the notion of a better future for our children. There is a sense that the American dream or the American spirit is being lost. The outcome of the 1992 election probably had less to do with partisan politics than with the salvation of the American spirit. We see it all around us. The status of the American Spirit is constantly in question. Our morality as a nation is not clear. In the last decade alone we have witnessed a boom in the number of talk show programs which are constantly probing at our moral consciousness. Week after week, day after day we are bombarded with messages in advertising which at one time were considered tasteless or vulgar. We have also witnessed the commercialization of the arts in which the market value of a piece far outweighs the message. It is fair to say that we have experienced the cheaping of our culture through the proliferation of capitalism and its everlasting need to make a profit. But letting our culture ride hand in hand with capitalism has led us to question who we are as a nation.

Many things in our culture have taken on the temporal
quality associated with capitalism. Consequently, objects or expressions which once possessed inherent meaning now find themselves bearing no meaning at all. The work of Robert Venturi is often seen as driving force behind this realization. Historically, his works served as a catalyst for many artists and architects to acknowledge diversity and the vernacular as a legitimate outlet for expression. Venturi insisted that the pursuit of some metaphysical idea no longer had to be the driving force behind expression. It was simply reduced to responding to ones surroundings and realizing that universal truths are non existant in a diverse world. Essentially, Venturi could not have established a more positive thesis. However, as many artists began to interpret his work and the work of others they found that expression not bound to ideas was easily accessible, and unfortunately, easily exploitable. Everything which we granted meaning was now plunged directly into the world of capitalism. High and pop culture merged, but so did our spirit, morality and capitalism. Of course, it woule be naive to claim that the arts and architecture were completely divorced from capitalism before this time. However with the emphasis taken off "idea", everything was reduce to the status of a simple fetish. Everything was meaningless. Through its commercialization, the arts became a tool of capitalism.

As Carl Marx had predicted, capitalism would create diversity but at the same time create instability and ephemerality. A sense of instability at the spiritual level has been the crux of the current search for morality in America. The arts, traditionally symbolic of culture and people, are now used to sell and market. It could be argued that the commercial nature of the arts is symbolic of our culture, itself. It is true that, indeed, commercialization is. However, commercialization is only one part of a culture whose spirit did not evaporate the moment that capitalism took hold of those things we considered meaningful. Indeed, if commercialization was synonymous with culture, human spirit as well as society, itself, would self destruct. Commercialization, the tool of capitalism, would atomize society by fierce competition as well destroy all that is sacred. The human spirit would be reduced to that of a fetish.

On the other hand, it could be argued that a sympathy to the vernacular in America is enough to be reflective of our culture. However, this could be challenged at two levels. One is that it goes against the grain of a major component of American culture—capitalism. No change can be inherent to a philosophy which looks to the existing for a sympathetic response. For example, an architect may look at a site of land which is approximately 20' x 50' and notice the juxtaposition of the other houses around this site. To design his house he realizes that if his house is not situated in such a way, observant to the juxtapositions of the neighboring houses, his house will be out of place. The notion of creating a house which is in place becomes of prime importance to him. He may also look at the form, color, implied philosophy and other elements to create something which may seem original, but is ultimately an extension of the existing. Change, which is an essential ingredient in capitalism, has not occured. Of course, depending on the circumstance I would adamantly approve of the architects decisions. Hopefully, the integrity and the character of the original neighborhood was preserved and enhanced by the introduction of this new house. However, to use this philosophy as a general rule can be stifling. Reliance on the vernacular could only produce a philosophical
situation in which there would be no escape. We could never continue to build upon our culture if we do not allow ourselves the necessity of having a direction. We would be endlessly caught in the now rather than being able to strive for the future. In a sense, we would be grinding our gears.

Secondly, reliance on the vernacular creates a contradiction. We know that many of the things which we once considered meaningful have recently been exploited. Exploited in such a way that they start to lose any such value. For example, we know that one of the works of Mies were intent on perfecting the idea expression for steel. Because of the attraction of economy, many developers began to build buildings that looked like Mies, but had not relationship to his ideas. Today, many people associate the works of the imitators with the works of Mies, himself. Consequently, it does not take a lot of effort to find the "They are all just cheap, glass boxes" argument. However, this is just one example, there are many more. Nowadays, trying to find an application for elements in a meaningful way becomes a task upon itself. Meaningless elements cannot provide meaning - so we assume. Of course, we can judge architecture spatially, or in an emotive way, or even a technological way. Yet, there may still be a situation in which elements have meaning. This potential might be held within the realm of capitalism.

Before this however, it is important to point out the connection between capitalism and the individual. As might be expected, in an economic system where personal gain is regarded as top priority, individualism has been encouraged to prosper. In many regards, one of the primary components of the American dream is the glorification of the individual. Freedom of choice and expression have paved the way for this sentiment. Through self betterment, it is believed that the individual can make strides in improving his own situation. And this realization has found itself a quasi sacred place in the heart of all Americans. It has made the American dream accessible to all. Obviously, this sentiment could not have occurred without capitalism. And capitalism should be venerated as an essential ingredient to all that is American. However, with capitalism comes the contrast of the dream of self betterment - the realization of the self serving individual. Although the concept of self betterment could be applied to the spirit or the mind, it is most often associated with money.

Money carries with it the stigma of only being a representation of wealth. However, those who hold money really hold certain degree of social power. Each dollar is representative of the many laborers who have striven to give the U.S. dollar its value. With money comes the ability to control the free choice of others. We are able to hire people to serve us. Whether this represents a worker at McDonald's or a private servant, we can control the freedom of others by creating a social hierarchy. Although this situation may be temporary (depending on the length of the work shift), we are able to command the control of another human being. It sets up a master/servant relationship. Obviously, with more money one is able to have; the more control on the destiny of others can be obtained. So, capitalism, for its ability to create individual freedom, can also create the ability to imprison the freedom of its proponents. It is in such a way that capitalism can be destructive to the well being of America. It is a paradox. But in regard to the deterioration of the American spirit it is a tragedy.

Related directly to money is the concept of symbolic capital. Symbolic capital pertains to the concept that the symbolism held by paper money, itself, can be transferred to material objects. It is within this framework that the arts in America have recently been commercialized. As mentioned earlier, architecture and the arts today are devoid of any meaning. Architecture is no longer expressive of the human spirit. If a comparison is made, however, it would reveal a human spirit which is sick and twisted. If we were to look back at the house designed for the 20'x50' plot we would discover that the resulting architectural expression can be read as that of a proponent of capitalism, itself. From the choice of the materials to the selection of the architectural elements, the house is a perception of the owners status in the world. It is a representation of the individual. The house, as an expression,
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becomes an example of what has been called symbolic capital. It represents the transfer of money into a tangible expression of wealth. Essentially the house is created using architecture elements which have no meaning except that of symbols of wealth. So the house may invoke a greek portico, colonial sashes, and vinyl (wood grain simulated) siding if these elements are representative of success for the client. However how one measures symbolic capital is different for everyone. The client using the Greek portico may be cogniscent of Italian Villas and is in great admiration for the wealth which they emulated or he may have seen the architectural expression in a movie, or maybe his neighbor has a greek portico so now he wants one. If the latter case is true the portico may come into fashion and soon everyone will want one. The whole point is that the portico today has absolutely nothing to do with the human spirit. It has been reduced to that of a simple decoration. The architecture is worthless in terms of sustenance. However, it is extremely successful in terms of capitalism. As Marx stated capitalism would create a situation which would create diversity, instability, and ephemerality. The portico is pure fetish and its value in terms of symbolic capital will continue to change. It may be in fashion one year and out of fashion the next. It is a temporal statement. The same trend can be seen in all of the arts today. Like mentioned earlier the arts have become more dependent on what can sell. The arts are an expression of our culture in terms of capitalism; therefore, their present condition is justified. However, artistic expression is meaningless on any level than that of capitalism.

There are many different forms of symbolic capital. We most readily see symbolic capital represented in the clothes that we wear and the cars that we drive. Subsequently, our own personal selection begins to tell just as much about our own personal values as does our status in society—or does it? In America there is no direct correlation between the symbolic capital we possess and the actual values we emmulate. Symbolic capital is considered a fetish in that it ignores the underlying sense of direction and morality which must be possessed by the architectural expression if it is to be forward looking and prepared for the future. Symbolic capital is temporal and in constant flux unlike the American spirit which is constantly evolving and building upon the past. Capitalism has been the mainstay economic system in the United States for more than 200 years. Capitalism transforms money into symbolic capital. The cultural framework for the United States has to be recognized as one of diversity and of freedom of choice. In this cultural framework the spirit of the individual has been given the opportunity to flourish while the spirit of the whole is only recognized in times of crisis. The downfall of the Soviet Union and communism has lead us to question our own social morality. If we can not look to an archenemy for the definition of our morality who or what can we look to? Who can we look to for a justification for our own existence as a nation? I propose that we can look toward the spirit of our nation for the guidance that we need to address these questions.

Capitalism has prospered in the United States for years. However, it has only recently been regarded as a major threat to our existence as a society. There are many reasons for this. The first of which is the collapse of the Soviet Union of communism itself. During the time of the Soviet Union, Americans were able to unify and justify their morality and beliefs by regarding them as contrary to those of repressive communism. The Soviet Union provided us with a way to define who we were. Consequently, the destructive nature of capitalism was eclipsed by the existence of a common bond between all Americans. We were not evil communists. All efforts we gave were toward the preservation of the good or America. In addition, until recently, the economic structure of the United States was much different.

Our major corporations provided us with a means to communicate who we were to the entire world. All of our corporations were located in America, were for America, and helped maintain the American dream of self betterment. Our corporations and our economic well being were synonymous. If the corporation performed poorly it was directly reflected in our own living condition. So public sentiment formed in which we strove
to work the best for our corporations. For if not we didn't, we could not reap the benefits of prosperity. The corporations provided Americans with a means to pull together. We were reliant on one another and the American spirit was felt by all. Unfortunately, this is not the case today. Through the emergent global economy the American corporation ceased to exist. The betterment of the individual is no longer reliant on the betterment of the whole. Individualism is gaining an edge on our need to function as a society. It is undermining American Spirit in terms of unity.

I believe that in a country which lends itself to diversity, it is impossible to pinpoint what "American Spirit" is. We may be able to look back at the constitution and pick out key notions of liberty, justice, and freedom and apply these to the definition. However, these notions are abstract representations of concepts which we constantly debate. Notions of liberty, justice, and freedom have been evolving since they were first used in the United States. This is not to say the basic concepts have changed. Surely, they have not. Yet, to use these terms in a definition of American Spirit could only lead to more questions. It is difficult to say whether or not American Spirit could ever be defined. Because of this, it is often hard to prove that it exists. During the recent war it seemed clear that American Spirit was alive. Patriotism was at a high and the nation felt unified. However, after the war ended this patriotism quickly dissolved. Two months after the war ended, it became a faint memory. And shortly after that, the nation was being torn apart by the Los Angeles riots. Could there be some truth to the idea that under a common demoninator we unify, and under diversity we fall apart? Diversity is one of the cornerstones of America. Yet, we cannot feel compelled to help each other under situations in which our diversity shows itself as a constant. The belief in an American Spirit which is evolving and all encompassing is one which I personally choose to believe. American Spirit does not dwell alone in white anglosaxon America in which the husband works and the wife stays at home baking cookies. American Spirit is an abstract concept much like justice, liberty, and freedom. We know
oh man, like people will be yelling

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when it is present; however, beyond that a more coherent definition is hard to quantify. Yet, I do believe that it is possible to tap into the American Spirit in a less exact sense using the arts and architecture.

This process does not rely on the use of the mainstay American Flag. Although, it is true that the American flag has become synonymous with all that possesses the American Spirit. The flag, like notions of justice, etc. is a constant. No matter how spirit changes it will remain the same physically. In architecture, we could look toward Washington D.C. for a share of monuments and buildings which have taken on the same character. But how is spirit addressed on a more practical level? Is it present in our homes, our communities, our cities? How aware are we of it? I propose that the American spirit is found in all these places. However, unlike the capital and the flag, the expressions used in our communities are in constant flux. It is in these places that spirit is seen at a more personal, adaptable level. It is in these places that the meaning of American Spirit exists and is constantly refined and updated. Much has to be said for the relationship of spirit and capitalism. Fashion, commercialization, and self-interest constantly challenge us to define who we are. If we say there is no connection between American Spirit and these elements then we would be negating the existence of a spirit which is in constant change. If we agree there is a connection, we cannot put confidence in creating a definition based on these elements alone. Capitalism is a part of our culture. Probably, inseparably linked to American spirit. At best, to grasp what American spirit is on a cognitive level could only lead to frustration. It is not something we could ever see it is something we must feel.

In terms of art or architecture this could lead to problems. Because each profession is set in a physical reality we are forced to fall back on sensory perception. Emotion as well as other...
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cognitive skills are necessary in an expression of American spirit. However, if we really can not define what it is, how can we translate it into built form? The answer to this question can be found in two ways: one is to associate the concept of “collage”, another is to take cues from the existing environment. The term “collage” has recently been thrown around as a catch phrase for deconstructivist, postmodernist thought. As a concept, “collage” has lots of potential in translating the concept of flux. Flux or change is something which pervades American spirit in such a way which contributes to its undefinable nature. This quality will probably always be inherent to American spirit as long as there is diversity in society. Unlike the more typical two dimensional application, I feel that collage must be applied in a three dimensional, spatial level. In some of the most dense communities in our nation and in others, collage or the experience of flux is very common. Even on a functional level we can observe how in a suburban environment, front lawns are converted by youth into baseball diamonds and into elements of status for owner who carefully manages his lawn. It is much more than a space being multifunctional. Depending on the prescribed function the parameters of the space changes. Is the baseball diamond going to take up one, yard and a bit of another, or is it going to take up two? or three? No one knows except for the users who, in a sense, represent the unknown variable. Because of this, correlation between user and a spatial program becomes obsolete. However, this is only one example on only one architecturally definable level. The application of collage to space could produce an endless variety of experiences, emotions, and settings. Most importantly, by using collage, I as a designer, am not addressing what American Spirit is directly. Yet, I can address diversity, freedom of choice and unity, while alluding to the more conceptual American ideas of justice, liberty, and freedom. It is a very powerful concept.

Besides for collage, another concept which become important in relating the American Spirit is taking cues from the existing environment. Earlier, I had mentioned how I felt that using the vernacular could only result in creating an expression which is chained to the present. I still believe this is true. But, by using the existing environment as a way to understand the status of American spirit, one can make many gains in understanding how such an application can be made to architecture and the arts. For example, beyond symbolic capital possessed in commercialization of the built landscape one can find a representation of our time held within the concepts of ephemerality, disjointedness, and lack of direction. Although these might be read as negative concepts, it is an important realization that these qualities are inherent to a capitalistic society. But, one may ask, what about the rest of our society, our spirit? It is true that diversity and freedom of choice are clearly evident in the architecture. But, what about unity? I would argue that unity is found in American Spirit and this realization must be acknowledged to create an architectural expression for America. But, the question of how to express American Spirit remains largely unanswered.

Consequently, it becomes necessary to look at an urban landscape which was created in America. I feel it is best to look at an urban landscape other than a rural or suburban simply because of the concentration of people as being relative to a more coherent representation of America. But, this is beside the point. The important side of this argument is that I am looking at the existing environment for clues of how American Spirit is expressed.
"America is the greatest poem ever written."
—Walt Whitman

The Site

My project is a redevelopment of a two city block area in the northern part of Hammond, IN. More specifically, in a section of Hammond referred to as Robertsdale. Chicago is one mile to the west, Lake Michigan is one half mile to the north, and East Chicago, IN is five miles to the east. The part of northwest Indiana that this project is located in is referred to as "The Calumet Region." Technically, "The Calumet Region" refers to those areas which are drained by the Calumet River System, of which Hammond is a part of. However, over the generations the "Calumet Region" has come to represent a much larger geographic area. Today, the "Calumet Region" refers to that area in northwest Indiana which is characterised by its overwhelmingly blue collar, industrial nature. Surprisingly, it is an area much unlike any other part of Indiana. Besides for being industrially based instead of agrarian based, the Calumet Region is optimized for its ethnic diversity.

Around the turn of the century, its heavy industry, as well as its close proximity to Chicago made it a magnet for immigrants from all over the world. The region populated fast. And, within a 10-15 year period, most of its cities were established. However, until this time, the region was relatively unpopulated. Numerous swamps, lakes, and sand dunes made farming unfeasible. It was not until various industries saw its potential as a portal along Lake Michigan did interest in the area finally take root.
Deciding Details

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Consequently, the Calumet Region does not share an agrarian history with the rest of Indiana. It developed much differently. Unfortunately, in the past, this has caused a strained relationship. In fact, at one time, the Calumet Region sought to succeed; but, the movement failed. Yet, the people of the Calumet Region still consider themselves independent, if not at least different, from the rest of Indiana.

I chose my site on the grounds of ethnic diversity; not because it is located in an area different from the rest of Indiana. My project straddles two major U.S. highways: U.S. 41 or Calumet Avenue and U.S. 20/12 or Indianapolis Boulevard. These are two important routes that traverse north/south and east/west, respectively. In addition to being major U.S. highway systems, they also serve as a link between the Calumet Region and Chicago. My site is to the east and south of the intersection of these two important routes. Combined with a secondary road, this national cross road forms a five arterial intersection. And, because of its significance, the locals refer to it as “five points”, a name which is exclusive to this area, alone, and is known past the boundaries of Hammond.

**Brief Description**

As mentioned before, this project is a redevelopment of a two city block site. Housing, commercial, and recreation spaces are included. The project includes a number of specific functions including such things as a strip mall. However, ultimately only three were looked at in detail: one of the apartment complexes, the superstore (Walmart), and the shopping mall. Each one of these
buildings respond to a number of site specific factors which help the project adjust to its site. Such things include an observance of the city grid, the current locations of commercial and residential areas, and a perception of the site as potentially marketable.

The masterplan, alone, contains 2 apartment complexes, 1 superstore, 1 shopping mall, 3 parking structures, 3 parking lots, a series of linear arcades (shops), various other housing, 2 bridges, a number of parks, and an accommodation for 2 major U.S. highways. All facilities can be easily accessed by utilizing the parking lots, parking garages, and bridges.

Design
My project contains housing, commercial space, as well as recreation space. However, unlike a conception based on conventional urban planning methods, my project can not be defined into "zones." There really is no "residential zone", "commercial zone" or "green zone." Instead, the "zones" are conglomerated into one. This is a reflection of my intention to express complete integration. For example, in "apartments #1" the individual units or blocks represent housing; however, they are surrounded by "park" in the form of green space and catwalks, and are additionally juxtaposed over commercial space. The end result is a situation in which the separation between zones is blurred and consequently meaningless. My intention to express complete integration evolves from my view of American Spirit. That is, a desire to create a sense of cohesion.

This desire could be approached at two levels. One addresses a much broader concern; the other addresses a concern
which is exclusive to the site. In terms of the site itself, one might notice that it is composed of three distinct areas defined by both Indianapolis Blvd. and Calumet Ave. In sense, these two highways act to cut up the site both physically and psychologically. Both of the roads are four lane highways that cater to high density, semi-truck traffic. It is extremely dangerous to cross these roads on foot. However, the residential areas which are divided by the roads are not demographically different. In fact, the locals consider themselves as belonging to one larger neighborhood, referred to as Robertsdale. Needless to say, part of the desire for connecting these residential neighborhoods came as a natural concern for the context. I addressed this by including a series of underground bridges which traverse each of the roads.

Additionally, by playing with the composition of buildings and other architectural elements, I sought to psychologically connect the site over the roads.

For example, the signage for the mall crosses into the road; and, “apartments #1” actually jut into the street. Because they are strong statements, both of these elements serve to break the psychological barrier a four lane highway usually creates. They introduce an element on the landscape which contrasts to the road in psychological strength; consequently, they blatantly ignore the traditional division between road and building. The end result is a suggestion that the road is not the premiere feature on the landscape. Hence, its impact on the human psyche is lessened.

Additionally, I positioned other elements on the site to create spaces which would unite the two sides of the road. This is clearly demonstrated in a number of instances on the master plan. First, and most obvious, are the four sets of posts and lintels connected to the mall which straddle both sides of Indianapolis Blvd. These “post and lintels” frame large rectangular volume that crosses both sides of the street. Thereby creating a spatial link. Another example is not so obvious or elementary. In order to create a strong suggestion of space to link two sides of the road, I found it necessary to create a sense of contrast to the image to the road, itself. Consequently, this sense of contrast is diametrically opposed to the character of the space created by the “post and lintels.” In other words, the unifying space does not reinforce the street— it counters it. In this way, once again, the perception of the road as an element which violently cuts through the landscape, is softened. For instance, notice how the side of Walmart that faces Indianapolis Blvd. and the huge sign of the shopping mall serve to frame a space which is skewed in relation to the street. Or, how the side of Walmart facing Calumet Ave. and the row of columns emanating from its corner serve to frame another space which is skewed to the street. These spaces
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ignore the road but, create a sense of spatial cohesion in addition to the effects of the other architectural elements and the bridges.

However, the reason for creating a sense of cohesion beyond the needs of the site still have not been defined. As hinted to earlier, a sense of cohesion has to deal with a perception of American Spirit. Traditionally, America has been thought of as a “melting pot” of different cultures. Unfortunately, as many have recently suggested, this perception could not be further from reality. America has always been a diverse nation. Many different people, from many different backgrounds, have come together to form that abstract entity called “America.” Because of this, diversity has been realized to be one of the defining characteristics of our nation. We are not one, homogenous nation, as the “melting pot” concept suggests. Instead, we are a nation of different people who are bound together by one common denominator -- America. With this in mind, another concept which has recently been coined comes into light. This concept is referred to as the “salad bowl” concept. The “salad bowl” analogy equates the diversity of a salad with the diversity of America. On one level, every item in a salad is able to retain its own identity; yet, on another level, the bowl defines each of these elements as belonging to one salad. Obviously, if this is an analogy for America, the different pieces of the salad are us, the salad bowl is the Constitution, and the end result, the salad, is America, itself.

For the same reason as expressing a “sense of cohesion”, creating a sense of diversity was also important. As was demonstrated above, the “salad bowl” model suggests that cohesion and diversity are indelibly linked. I believe that American Spirit is derived from both. Yet, the attenuation of diversity in my project stems from a number of concerns. One is, many have suggested, that most of our greatest social problems stem from a lack of sympathy for the natural diversity of people and their ideas. In this regard, I do not mean to imply that I am trying to solve any of the social ills of our society. I personally do not believe that architecture, alone, has that power. (If we can learn anything from LeCorbusier and Mies, it is that architecture can not solve society’s problems.) However, I believe that architecture could be considered a reflection of the times, a reflection of hope. After all, diversity has always been an asset for America. With the emergent global economy this is becoming even more apparent. On this optimistic note, I see the attenuation of diversity as an attenuation of American Spirit not as a solution to a problem.

On another level, I see the exemplification of diversity to be simply a translation of what already exists. If given the opportunity, it seems that people prefer to personalize or to create diversity in their environments. As support, many of the economically built subdivisions of the ‘70’s come to mind. Most of these subdivisions were conceived as being environments defined by
sweater $34
shorts $30
striped shirt $30

GAP

a collection built upon the basics that you know.
a number of very different houses, of some architectural quality, sited along a winding road. The image presented was pastoral, complete with views and nicely manicured lawns. In an architectural sense the spaces created were quite pleasant. However, the winding path, which gave the environment its character and also provided for some interesting sitings for the houses, was difficult to travel on. It created frustration because it was easy to lose one's orientation. Or else, because of its sinuous curves, travel took much longer than it would have on a straight road. Although it might have been successful in isolated cases, this type of radical disregard for convenience would be against the character of America at any other scale. Like it or not, convenience is here to stay. Fast food restaurants, fax machines, photocopiers, and computers, which get faster every year at processing data, speak of the desire for convenience. Many say that this attitude resulted out of the invention of the automobile. No doubt, this is the case. However, how can architectural diversity prosper in a society so bent on convenience?

For me the answer developed, in part, by looking at the city grid as a organizational device for a number of smaller urban neighborhoods or compositions. As far as design, this afforded me an almost limitless amount of freedom. The larger city grid provided the organization necessary for understanding orientation and getting around by car. Subsequently, I had been liberated from the immediate effects of the grid. Now defined as “cluster” along a much more expansive city corridor, my project was able to be organized purely by compositional devices. With convenience addressed, the stage was finally set to create diversity on a higher level.

Of course, there were other issues that needed to be resolved. One was the consideration for parking. For instance, even though a good part of my project is underground, I still decided on using parking lots where this type of convenience needed to be addressed. Such an instance occurred at the Walmart. Because many patrons of Walmart may only shop for a short period of time, gathering whatever they need, a parking garage would have been an absurd inconvenience. If a parking garage was used, it is probable that Walmart’s business would suffer. People who only come in for a few things would shop elsewhere. On the other hand, the shopping mall was considered in a much different light. Instead of using a parking lot, a parking garage was used. Consideration was taken that most patrons of the mall probably would stay for extended periods of time, as opposed to Walmart. Between these two different types of commercial facilities, a differentiation between levels of needed convenience was made. This was custom tailored to fit the needs of the businesses.

In addition to the realization of differing levels of convenience, a consideration was made for the convenience of the person inside the development. Hence, the density of construction on the site, as well as, the integration of mixed uses aided the ease of a person needing to move around the site, itself. Anyone can get anywhere without much effort.

In regards to understanding the site, itself, it is important to point out my reliance on “natural hierarchy” in composition rather than iconographic symbolism. The reason being purely philosophical. As mentioned in the article, Rationale and Reasoning, many believe that commercialization has bastardized meaning out of anything which carried traditional significance. For example, the Greek pediment, once exclusive to symbolizing justice, democracy, freedom is now used on car dealerships and fast food restaurants. Consequently, any inherent meaning it once possessed has been exploited. The Greek pediment is no longer able to evoke emotions or suggest a sense of hierarchy on a level past pure composition. Direct, architectural imagery can not be used. Hence, in the creation of this project, I relied on pure composition; not image and three dimensional space; not ornament.

With convenience, diversity, and cohesion taken into account, and a means for application revealed, a much broader picture begins to be painted. Theoretically, the picture could exceed the limits of the site and begin to address America, in general. But,
the picture is still incomplete. Other issues have to come into play.

One of these issues is a broader acknowledgement of the effects of the economic principles mandated by the abstract notion of capitalism. Although the effects of this system are undoubtedly many and varied, I have chosen to apply a couple of inherent, generalized concepts into view. Hence, a competition for attention (and its ancestor, advertising) and the volatile nature of a market economy have come into the forefront of my design.

In terms of competition for attention, I utilized a number of the principles of advertising. Such things as the use of illusion, pattern, color, and gimmick are given priority. The level of incorporation is so pervasive that any building on the site could be considered an abstraction of a billboard, advertising's greatest expression. The mall is a good example of this. Within the design of the mall, each one of the elements of advertising are translated into architecture. For instance, a series of blue, rectangular skylights dominate one portion of the design. They are clear expression of advertising. At night, light would emit from the mall itself, through the blue, tinted glass. From the perspective of a person driving along Indianapolis Blvd., an almost illusion-like series or pattern of glowing blue light would be seen. Obviously, this pattern becomes a proponent for attention. And, of course, gaining a person's attention is what advertising, the billboard, is all about. Another example is found at the east entry to the mall. This time, skewed perspective lines and converging angles create illusion. Additionally, pattern, another concept of advertising was carried through in the expression of the three large columns and the extended roof members in the large, skewed rectangular element. The total effect was based on the same principles used in a billboard.

Yet, another example of the notion of "competition for attention" can be found in the actual siting of the buildings themselves. As mentioned before, the apartments and the mall are sited over portions of the street to help negate the street's overbearing presence on the landscape. This is still true. However, another reason has to deal with a competition for attention. In a sense, I pitted each one of the buildings in a situation in which they are competing with each other. Of course, this is handled carefully so that chaos does not result. Yet, each one of the buildings could be read as aggressively attacking the street. The apartments are right over the street, the mall extrudes a sign and is attached to the post and lintel system, and the Walmart has a sign on the other side of the street from the apartments which is close to the size of the apartments, themselves. There is a certain amount of warfare between the buildings to see who can get the most attention. Indeed, it is appropriate to think of each one of the buildings as signs themselves — signs for attention.

The other "inherent, generalized " characteristic I chose to pursue in terms of capitalism was its volatile nature. Expressing something as volatile is not easy. Consequently, I opted to translate "volatile" into two more tangible concepts which could be understood architecturally: Namely, temporality and permanence. However, before I provide examples of the application of these two concepts I need to introduce the concept of "architectural collage."

The notion of architectural collage or montage was the method behind expressing temporality and subsequently, its foil, permanence. My definition of "architectural collage" has to deal more with the overlap of three dimensional space rather than of two dimensional elements or details. However, the word "collage" is used in conjunction with the word "architecture" to help reconcile a desire to introduce "ambiguous space" into my design. Ambiguous space is very important. On one level, I believe that it is an expression of change vs permanence. It suggests an area in flux, hard to define. Consequently, it would be difficult to tell which defined space it belongs to. Obviously, defined spaces suggest a higher level of permanence than then ambiguous spaces. It is important to understand this for its creates an inherent tension between permanence and temporality. Additionally, it can be interpreted as a direct translation of a volatile economy. On another level ambiguous space adds depth
to a participant's comprehension. The definition of space is no longer a matter of pure functionalism. The participant is free to define whatever he or she wants to. This is a positive thing. In one regard, the participant is removed from the bounds of function. This could feel somewhat liberating. In another regard, a participant may encounter a situation which prompts a "search for truth" or "a search for an understanding" which can be found in the "inbetweeness" of two or more spaces. Although, the latter point may be thought of in terms of pure metaphysics, it is important to understand the implication of free will, of choice, which may be felt on an intellectual or an emotional level by the introduction of ambiguous space. I see it as an opportunity to introduce a potentially sensual aspect to the architecture. Of course, I consider this an advantage. Finally, on the last level of the potential of ambiguous space is a realization of its compositional ability. Ambiguous space has the potential, compositionally, to create a link between many different spaces and functions. In a sense, it could be considered a replacement for the banal hallway. Of course, ambiguous space is compositionally neutral which adds to its flexibility.

With the conception of ambiguous space or architectural collage as an expression of the temporal, volatile nature of American economics along with the use of advertising techniques, the picture I have been painting of my interpretation of America is becoming clearer. However, it is important to point one last factor into my interpretation — myself.

As Whitman said, "America is the greatest poem ever written", I have taken on the responsibility to interpret the poem. However, I am a poet, myself. And, my poetic response to the things I see in the urban landscape and America, itself, is admittedly exclusive. However, I do not consider this with remorse. Instead, it allows me a higher level of interpretation sometimes beyond words.
SHARON STONE
WILLIAM BALDWIN
TOM BERENGER

YOU LIKE TO WATCH

SURVIVER

OPENS FRIDAY, MAY 21ST

AT THEATRES EVERYWHERE
THE MALL

The shopping mall is located along the north side of Indianapolis Blvd. It is nestled between the "five points" intersection and Apartment Complex #1. On the masterplan, the shopping mall is represented by a number of elements. These include a series of rectangular masses, a large, square mass which attaches to one side of the series of rectangles, a series of posts and lintels which traverse Indianapolis Blvd., and a large electronic sign which suspends from these lintels. No doubt, on the masterplan, the shopping mall is the most extroverted building.

The developed exploration of the shopping mall only represents a portion of the entire complex. The parking garage (represented by the large square mass on the masterplan) and the terminus at five points was not developed. However, the majority was developed and it is representational of the character of the entire mall.

The majority of the spaces of the shopping mall are located underground. Light from three rectangular skylights, the irregularly shaped middle section, and the top of the large, skewed rectangular element infiltrate into the interior. Entry to the mall is made in three places. One is at the terminus at "five points", one is from the parking structure, and the other one is located on the eastern end of the mall. The entry at the eastern end was developed. This entry is fortunate enough open out on to the same corridor which connects Apartment Complex #1 as well as the Walmart. Of course, this corridor contains another "shopping mall" along its perimeter. The eastern entrance to the mall is expressed in such a way that a participant's perception of the entry would be intensified. Converging site lines formed by the skewed wall planes of the larger rectangular element and the retaining wall serve to lead the participants eyes into the mall.

From this direction a bridge is encountered as soon as you enter. This bridge links the exterior of the mall to the first series of arcaded shops. Once inside the first arcade of shops the participant is confronted with a number of spatial experiences. To the left is a narrower, rectangular volume of space which is a continuation of the first arcade; to the right is a floor plane which
punctures into the main space or "the cage." The "cage" represents a place for corridor merchants to sell their goods. Conceptually, the wall of the cage would be made out of chain link mesh panels with spaces in between to allow for mall traffic. The desired effect is simply to define and highlight a space for selling. Anyway, once along the floor plane which "punctures" this "cage," one encounters a series of elevators. These elevators descend facing a skewed billboard overhead which is actually part of the larger, skewed rectangular element which cuts into the mall. From this point, the participant is on ground level and is able to access another arcade to the right or straight ahead.

The mall was conceptualized as a series of linked events similar to the Walmart. However, the organization of the mall is overtly linear.
GIORGIO ARMANI
OCCHIALI
Process/Theory

The design of the mall was considered a play on the linear notion of the conventional mall. In this regard, many of the exterior elements are an expression of this. The most dominant, is the large, skewed rectangular element which cuts into the mall, itself. This element was visualized as being representational of the manipulated linear path. And indeed, because of is scale, it is able to reinforce this notion. But, in addition to this overtly dominant element, there are other elements which reflect this notion. The east entry is a prime example. A number of skewed, linear planes collide to present a space which is overtly linear; however, the converging lines of the planes create a sense of visual excitement as well as suggest movement and hierarchy. This notion is repeated throughout the entire mall. In fact, it was
invaluable in creating the sense of a series of linked, linear events as mentioned above.

The composition of the mall was based on some formalized system. For example the Walmart was based on a tripartite organization. Instead, the mall was simply designed around a number of elements which respond to an imaginary datum line. In this way, I was afforded the maximum freedom in the design and consequently, the design expresses this. As mentioned before for the apartments and the Walmart, the mall represents a play on the notion of "billboard." They incorporated many of the techniques used in advertising to assimilate a design. The mall is no exception. However, because of the freedom allowed to an organization on a linear path, the mall represents the most aggressive expression of advertising. I mentioned earlier about the notion of building as sign. In the mall, the conflict between recognition of building as opposed to sign has been exaggerated. From the street, the mall does not read as one solid mass. Instead, it is read as a number of isolated parts. These parts represent a direct translation of "billboard." Pattern is seen in the repetition of the rectangular skylights, gimmick, illusion are represented by the large, rectangular skewed element which cuts into the mall. The entire conglomeration of parts, from posts and lintels of skewed planes, is one sign. As could be expected this sign is in competition with the other "signs" in the landscape. Hence, the portrait of a commercial strip is made clearer.
Description

The Walmart is represented by the two square masses on the masterplan that are nestled between Calumet Ave. and Indianapolis Blvd. Once again, the specific character of this building was dictated by the site. A realization of the precarious location between two major highways suggested that the composition be essentially non-hierarchical. Acknowledgement of the two highways and other elements on the masterplan facilitated the alignment of other elements within the composition itself. The end result is intrinsically attached to the site.

Entry to the Walmart can be found in two places. One is on the side facing the parking lot to the east located in the first rectangular mass nearest Calumet Avenue. The other entry is located below street level, off of an extension of the arcaded mall which nearly parallels Calumet Avenue. This entry is similar to the mall entrance to the apartments. In fact, it is an extension of the same mall. However, the Walmart, itself, is small considered with other buildings of its genre. It is only 100,000 square feet. Additionally, it is a multi-level facility. Areas for selling merchandise is allotted for on the first two levels. The third level is given
It liberates the SOUL.

We dance out our lives in its light.

The sun.

Revel in it with
over exclusively to storage.

Access between the first two levels is achieved through the use of escalators, elevators, and stairs. In addition, the second level opens up to the lower level through the use of an extended lightwell. This lightwell provides a physical, as well as, a psychological connection between both. Connection with the storage area is made through a series of exposed freight elevators. Connection between different sections of the store, itself, is made through the use of an interconnected series of events. For example, a person who enters on the second level finds himself on a bridge which shares its space with a display space. The display space shares its space with a light well, and so on...
Process/Theory

What seemed to be an easy solution with the apartments turned out to be a difficult problem with the Walmart. Namely, dealing with temporality and permanence. At the apartments, the representation of something permanent was relatively easy. The shells of the apartment blocks were well suited. On the other hand, with Walmart, there was no easily definable source for permanence. Of course, bathrooms, and mechanical spaces might qualify; however, these spaces were not flexible enough to evolve an entire store around. The problem became, “how can I achieve a certain degree of hierarchy in a building in which everything was subject to change?” Displays, departments, shelving are all subject to change depending on changes in the market. Flexibility is a must.

The conventional view of Walmart handles the temporal nature of its interior much in the same way that I handled the temporal nature of the interior of a rented apartment. In other words, they create a permanent shell which engulfs the temporal interior. At first, this might seem like the perfect solution. True, it takes care of the notion of a completely temporal space. However, the current model used for Walmart is far from perfect.

The interiors of Walmarts provide little in the way of creating memory. The creation of “memory” or the ability to remember or recall a particular place seems that it would be essential in a Walmart. Utilizing memory would be similar to the approach that Aldo Rossi uses in his architecture. But, it would not have any humanistic overtones. Instead, I would utilize memory through the use of creating a series of hierarchical devices on the interior. In this way, the interior could be organized on the principle of a series of events, rather than an homogenous grid. The assumption is that once a person experiences the Walmart, it would be easier to get around on subsequent visits. However, “what about temporality?”

The solution I devised was derived from a rethinking of the elements of shopping. One of the things which came to mind was the picture window or the display window. Traditionally, this was used to display the goods in a store. In a mall, it became an extension of the facade and in some cases inseparable to the notion of an advertisement. In Walmart, it simply had the potential to create hierarchy. This is not to suggest that I actually created “display windows.” What I did create were a series of display spaces. Of course, the notion of a display space might seem even more temporal than the location of different departments within
the store. In a way, it is. But, the actual elements contained within the display space did not concern me. Instead, I was concerned with the elements which actually defined the space for the display to occur. Once again, this could be considered an extension of the "shell" concept used in the apartments. The shells express a higher level of permanence than the space inside it.

I set out to create hierarchy in the interior in two ways. One was to create spaces which were varied and in some sort of natural hierarchy to one another. Another way was to create display spaces which would set apart from the regular selling spaces. So, in the interior I included elements which defined space only for display. Such elements include the vertical slab or wall which cuts through the third story and a skewed floor plane which defines a place on top of it for displays to occur.

One of issues that led me to challenge the contemporary notion of Walmart was the need for storage. Walmarts and store like them rarely expand horizontally if a new department is added or new merchandise comes in. Instead, they resort to piling merchandise in a vertical fashion. Hence, many times merchandise is actually stacked to the ceiling. This translates into about 20 feet. However, Walmart still operates in a horizontal fashion. Display space for products is becoming more and more limited. My conception of Walmart realizes this. The store is organized in a vertical direction as opposed to horizontal. The exposed freight elevators reinforce this notion.

Walmart is the king of single user commercial architecture. Hence, Walmart is sited in a position in which it has the best access to both roads. Its signage which faces the mall and the apartments, is almost as large as the street elevation of the apartments, themselves. Its scale challenges the "residential" scale of the apartments. Indeed, although the Walmart seems the least aggressive in terms of attacking the street. It is important to realize the hierarchy involved in its siting, alone.
Perfect back flip, with a twist.

Tanqueray
Imported English Gin, 47% Alc. Vol (94 proof) 100% Grain Neutral Spirit.

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Description

The "Apartments #1" is one of two apartment complexes which was represented on the masterplan. The other apartment complex is located along Calumet Avenue, whereas Apartment Complex #1 is located along Indianapolis Boulevard. Although they are portrayed in the massing plan as very similar in character, it is important to point out that each one would evolve differently. The main reason for this is that the evolution of each apartment is influenced by each particular siting. Each apartment is site specific and designed accordingly. Consequently, under a higher level of scrutiny, the composition of Apartment Complex #1 would reveal itself as intrinsically attached to its site.

The conceptual plan for Apartment Complex #1 affords for 30 - 39 one or two bedroom apartments. They are organized into two specific zones. The zone, closest to Indianapolis Blvd, contains 18 - 21 apartments. The other zone contains 9 - 12 apartments. The interior of all the "apartments" are purposefully left unfinished. The tenant is responsible to complete the apartment. Because the shell of the apartment may be made of tinted glass, the location of windows on the interior would be flexible. Interior walls may be placed directly over the glass for the desired effect. Most of the apartments are joined by arial walks or bridges which are exposed to the exterior. The use of "bridges" is predominant in zone #1. Here, the bridges would conceptually join all of the apartments to a series of elevators and stairways. These vertical circulation devices would serve to link the apartments with the surrounding park on the ground level and would, furthermore, link the apartments and the park to the mall.
which is located on the lower level. The mall is actually an arcade of shops which traverse the lower, western side of the complex. They are visible from the interior and continue along the eastern side of the underground bridge which crosses Indianapolis Blvd.

Along this "arcade" is one of the main entrances to the mall. This entrance in addition to an entrance from an underground parking structure (not shown) feed into a circular plaza which is located within the complex, itself. This plaza serves as a terminus for the elevators and stairways from zone #1. Consequently, the circular plaza acts as the device which integrates the apartments, park, and mall together. An electronic billboard is located at the eastern tip of the complex. With fluctuating colors, pattern, and images, this device serves to add a level of visual interest to the apartments from Indianapolis Blvd. as well as from the apartments, themselves.

**Process/Theory**

A number of issues came to mind while developing this complex. One was the realization of the difference between temporality and permanence. As mention in my article, *What's this?*, temporality is an expression of the nature of our economy, capitalism. Consequently, an exploration of this concept in a higher level of detail seemed appropriate. In this instance, the difference between temporality and permanence was easily resolved. Each apartment block is considered to have a high level

**CONCEPTUAL FLOOR PLAN**

ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA

MAY 1993
of permanence — more specifically, each apartment block shell. Temporality occurs inside and outside this shell. The apartments, themselves, are left unfinished so that each new tenant may personalize his or her own space. This is an acknowledgment of the trend for tenants to move after a relatively short period of time. On the exterior the “bridges” share their space with nature. Nature, itself, is inherently temporal. However, in addition, the bridges, themselves, form varying degrees of ambiguous space. As was mentioned earlier in the magazine, ambiguous space exemplifies temporality.

Beyond this concern for “temporality”, I also addressed the notion of building as sign or billboard. As mentioned earlier, the apartments were created to compete for attention just as a billboard on a contemporary commercial strip does. It aggressively attacks the road physically as well as demonstrating the major characteristics of advertising such as pattern, color, illusion, and gimmick. Obviously, pattern is expressed through the repetition of the apartment blocks, color and gimmick are found in the electronic billboard, and illusion is expressed in the “floating effect” of the apartments, as well, the inverted, battered sides of the apartments blocks in the center. But, these are only a few examples, there are more. However, I feel that the issue of convenience and economy should be examined.

Economy and convenience are another symptom of a capitalistic society. In the apartments, I chose to address these issues in a number of ways. One was affordability. The sensibility of building an apartment complex like this was tackled by making it exteriorized. The shells of the complex are the only elements, besides the lower level, which need to be built to resist the weather. The “bridges” and the skeletal frame, which the apartments blocks would set into, would be made out of conventional steel elements. No great interiorized, expensive space would be necessary. On the other hand, it could be argued that the electronic billboard and the cantilever extending over into the street would be costly to build. This might be true. However, these elements are considered investments to attract tenants and make the apartments a “highly fashionable” place to live. Consequently, capital could be gained from higher rents.

Obviously, higher rents would discriminate against people who are of a lower income. In a project which has, to this point, taken an “Isn’t America great!” stance, this seems like the ultimate contradiction. However, it must be understood that the
apartments are an extended interpretation of individualism. People can design any kind of apartment they want, the apartment blocks are physically separated from one another, and each apartment affords a very different view. The apartments express a heightened awareness of the individual, which was mentioned in my article Rationale and Reasoning as being a paradox of our society. It suggests the constant pull between the rights of the individual vs the good of society. Considered unfortunate or not, it is a characteristic of our society just as the very positive notion of diversity is.


