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## The generators of diversity

Classified telephone directories tell us the greatest single fact about cities: the immense numbers of parts that make up a city, and the immense diversity of those parts. Diversity is natural to big cities.

“I have often amused myself,” wrote James Boswell in 1791, “with thinking how different a place London is to different people. They, whose narrow minds are contracted to the consideration of some one particular pursuit, view it only through that medium . . . But the intellectual man is struck with it, as comprehending the whole of human life in all its variety, the contemplation of which is inexhaustible.”

Boswell not only gave a good definition of cities, he put his finger on one of the chief troubles in dealing with them. It is so easy to fall into the trap of contemplating a city’s uses one at a time, by categories. Indeed, just this—analysis of cities, use by use—has become a customary planning tactic. The findings on vari-

ous categories of use are then put together into "broad, overall pictures."

The overall pictures such methods yield are about as useful as the picture assembled by the blind men who felt the elephant and pooled their findings. The elephant lumbered on, oblivious to the notion that he was a leaf, a snake, a wall, tree trunks and a rope all somehow stuck together. Cities, being our own artifacts, enjoy less defense against solemn nonsense.

To understand cities, we have to deal outright with combinations or mixtures of uses, not separate uses, as the essential phenomena. We have already seen the importance of this in the case of neighborhood parks. Parks can easily—too easily—be thought of as phenomena in their own right and described as adequate or inadequate in terms, say, of acreage ratios to thousands of population. Such an approach tells us something about the methods of planners, but it tells us nothing useful about the behavior or value of neighborhood parks.

A mixture of uses, if it is to be sufficiently complex to sustain city safety, public contact and cross-use, needs an enormous diversity of ingredients. So the first question—and I think by far the most important question—about planning cities is this: How can cities generate enough mixture among uses—enough diversity—throughout enough of their territories, to sustain their own civilization?

It is all very well to castigate the Great Blight of Dullness and to understand why it is destructive to city life, but in itself this does not get us far. Consider the problem posed by the street with the pretty sidewalk park in Baltimore, which I mentioned back in Chapter Three. My friend from the street, Mrs. Kostritsky, is quite right when she reasons that it needs some commerce for its users' convenience. And as might be expected, inconvenience and lack of public street life are only two of the by-products of residential monotony here. Danger is another—fear of the streets after dark. Some people fear to be alone in their houses by day since the occurrence of two nasty daytime assaults. Moreover, the place lacks commercial choices as well as any cultural interest. We can see very well how fatal is its monotony.

But having said this, then what? The missing diversity, con-

venience, interest and vitality do not spring forth because the area needs their benefits. Anybody who started a retail enterprise here, for example, would be stupid. He could not make a living. To wish a vital urban life might somehow spring up here is to play with daydreams. The place is an economic desert.

Although it is hard to believe, while looking at dull gray areas, or at housing projects or at civic centers, the fact is that big cities *are* natural generators of diversity and prolific incubators of new enterprises and ideas of all kinds. Moreover, big cities are the natural economic homes of immense numbers and ranges of small enterprises.

The principal studies of variety and size among city enterprises happen to be studies of manufacturing, notably those by Raymond Vernon, author of *Anatomy of a Metropolis*, and by P. Sargant Florence, who has examined the effect of cities on manufacturing both here and in England.

Characteristically, the larger a city, the greater the variety of its manufacturing, and also the greater both the number and the proportion of its small manufacturers. The reasons for this, in brief, are that big enterprises have greater self-sufficiency than small ones, are able to maintain within themselves most of the skills and equipment they need, can warehouse for themselves, and can sell to a broad market which they can seek out wherever it may be. They need not be in cities, and although sometimes it is advantageous for them to be there, often it is more advantageous not to. But for small manufacturers, everything is reversed. Typically they must draw on many and varied supplies and skills outside themselves, they must serve a narrow market at the point where a market exists, and they must be sensitive to quick changes in this market. Without cities, they would simply not exist. Dependent on a huge diversity of other city enterprises, they can add further to that diversity. This last is a most important point to remember. City diversity itself permits and stimulates more diversity.

For many activities other than manufacturing, the situation is analogous. For example, when Connecticut General Life Insurance Company built a new headquarters in the countryside be-

yond Hartford, it could do so only by dint of providing—in addition to the usual working spaces and rest rooms, medical suite and the like—a large general store, a beauty parlor, a bowling alley, a cafeteria, a theater and a great variety of games space. These facilities are inherently inefficient, idle most of the time. They require subsidy, not because they are kinds of enterprises which are necessarily money losers, but because here their use is so limited. They were presumed necessary, however, to compete for a working force, and to hold it. A large company can absorb the luxury of such inherent inefficiencies and balance them against other advantages it seeks. But small offices can do nothing of the kind. If they want to compete for a work force on even terms or better, they must be in a lively city setting where their employees find the range of subsidiary conveniences and choices that they want and need. Indeed, one reason, among many others, why the much-heralded postwar exodus of big offices from cities turned out to be mostly talk is that the differentials in cost of suburban land and space are typically canceled by the greater amount of space per worker required for facilities that in cities no single employer need provide, nor any one corps of workers or customers support. Another reason why such enterprises have stayed in cities, along with small firms, is that many of their employees, especially executives, need to be in close, face-to-face touch and communication with people outside the firm—including people from small firms.

The benefits that cities offer to smallness are just as marked in retail trade, cultural facilities and entertainment. This is because city populations are large enough to support wide ranges of variety and choice in these things. And again we find that bigness has all the advantages in smaller settlements. Towns and suburbs, for instance, are natural homes for huge supermarkets and for little else in the way of groceries, for standard movie houses or drive-ins and for little else in the way of theater. There are simply not enough people to support further variety, although there may be people (too few of them) who would draw upon it were it there. Cities, however, are the natural homes of supermarkets and standard movie houses *plus* delicatessens, Viennese bakeries, foreign groceries, art movies, and so on, all of which can be found co-

existing, the standard with the strange, the large with the small. Wherever lively and popular parts of cities are found, the small much outnumber the large. Like the small manufacturers, these small enterprises would not exist somewhere else, in the absence of cities. Without cities, they would not exist.

The diversity, of whatever kind, that is generated by cities rests on the fact that in cities so many people are so close together, and among them contain so many different tastes, skills, needs, supplies, and bees in their bonnets.

Even quite standard, but small, operations like proprietor-and-one-clerk hardware stores, drug stores, candy stores and bars can and do flourish in extraordinary numbers and incidence in lively districts of cities because there are enough people to support their presence at short, convenient intervals, and in turn this convenience and neighborhood personal quality are big parts of such enterprises' stock in trade. Once they are unable to be supported at close, convenient intervals, they lose this advantage. In a given geographical territory, half as many people will not support half as many such enterprises spaced at twice the distance. When distance inconvenience sets in, the small, the various and the personal wither away.

As we have transformed from a rural and small-town country into an urban country, business enterprises have thus become more numerous, not only in absolute terms, but also in proportionate terms. In 1900 there were 21 independent nonfarm busi-

In retail trade, this tendency has been growing stronger, if anything. Richard Nelson, the Chicago real estate analyst, examining the postwar trend of retail sales in some twenty city downtowns, has discovered that the large department stores have typically lost trade; the chain variety stores have stayed about even; and the small and special stores have increased their business and usually have also increased in number. There is no real competition outside the cities for these small and various city enterprises; but it is relatively easy for the big and standardized, in their natural homes outside the city, to compete with what is big and standardized within. This happens, incidentally, to be exactly what has occurred in the neighborhood where I live. Wanamaker's, the big department store formerly located in Greenwich Village, has gone out of business here and established itself in a suburb instead, at the same time that small and special stores in its immediate former vicinity have increased by the score and flourished mightily.

nesses for each 1,000 persons in the total U.S. population. In 1959, in spite of the immense growth of giant enterprises during the interval, there were 26½ independent nonfarm businesses for each 1,000 persons in the population. With urbanization, the big get bigger, but the small also get more numerous.

Smallness and diversity, to be sure, are not synonyms. The diversity of city enterprises includes all degrees of size, but great variety does mean a high proportion of small elements. A lively city scene is lively largely by virtue of its enormous collection of small elements.

Nor is the diversity that is important for city districts by any means confined to profit-making enterprises and to retail commerce, and for this reason it may seem that I put an undue emphasis on retail trade. I think not, however. Commercial diversity is, in itself, immensely important for cities, socially as well as economically. Most of the uses of diversity on which I dwelt in Part I of this book depend directly or indirectly upon the presence of plentiful, convenient, diverse city commerce. But more than this, wherever we find a city district with an exuberant variety and plenty in its commerce, we are apt to find that it contains a good many other kinds of diversity also, including variety of cultural opportunities, variety of scenes, and a great variety in its population and other users. This is more than coincidence. The same physical and economic conditions that generate diverse commerce are intimately related to the production, or the presence, of other kinds of city variety.

But although cities may fairly be called natural economic generators of diversity and natural economic incubators of new enterprises, this does not mean that cities *automatically* generate diversity just by existing. They generate it because of the various efficient economic pools of use that they form. Wherever they fail to form such pools of use, they are little better, if any, at generating diversity than small settlements. And the fact that they need diversity socially, unlike small settlements, makes no difference. For our purposes here, the most striking fact to note is the extraordinary unevenness with which cities generate diversity.

On the one hand, for example, people who live and work in Boston's North End, or New York's Upper East Side or San

Francisco's North Beach-Telegraph Hill, are able to use and enjoy very considerable amounts of diversity and vitality. Their visitors help immensely. But the visitors did not create the foundations of diversity in areas like these, nor in the many pockets of diversity and economic efficiency scattered here and there, sometimes most unexpectedly, in big cities. The visitors sniff out where something vigorous exists already, and come to share it, thereby further supporting it.

At the other extreme, huge city settlements of people exist without their presence generating anything much except stagnation and, ultimately, a fatal discontent with the place. It is not that they are a different kind of people, somehow duller or unappreciative of vigor and diversity. Often they include hordes of searchers, trying to sniff out these attributes somewhere, anywhere. Rather, something is wrong with their districts; something is lacking to catalyze a district population's ability to interact economically and help form effective pools of use.

Apparently there is no limit to the numbers of people in a city whose potentiality as city populations can thus be wasted. Consider, for instance, the Bronx, a borough of New York containing some one and a half million people. The Bronx is woefully short of urban vitality, diversity and magnetism. It has its loyal residents, to be sure, mostly attached to little bloomings of street life here and there in "the old neighborhood," but not nearly enough of them.

In so simple a matter of city amenity and diversity as interesting restaurants, the 1,500,000 people in the Bronx cannot produce. Kate Simon, the author of a guidebook, *New York Places and Pleasures*, describes hundreds of restaurants and other commercial establishments, particularly in unexpected and out-of-the-way parts of the city. She is not snobbish, and dearly likes to present her readers with inexpensive discoveries. But although Miss Simon tries hard, she has to give up the great settlement of the Bronx as thin pickings at any price. After paying homage to the two solid metropolitan attractions in the borough, the zoo and the Botanical Gardens, she is hard put to recommend a single place to eat outside the zoo grounds. The one possibility she is able to offer, she accompanies with this apology: "The neighborhood

trails off sadly into a no man's land, and the restaurant can stand a little refurbishing, but there's the comfort of knowing that . . . the best of Bronx medical skill is likely to be sitting all around you."

Well, that is the Bronx, and it is too bad it is so; too bad for the people who live there now, too bad for the people who are going to inherit it in future out of their lack of economic choice, and too bad for the city as a whole.

And if the Bronx is a sorry waste of city potentialities, as it is, consider the even more deplorable fact that it is possible for whole cities to exist, whole metropolitan areas, with pitifully little city diversity and choice. Virtually all of urban Detroit is as weak on vitality and diversity as the Bronx. It is ring superimposed upon ring of failed gray belts. Even Detroit's downtown itself cannot produce a respectable amount of diversity. It is dispirited and dull, and almost deserted by seven o'clock of an evening.

So long as we are content to believe that city diversity represents accident and chaos, of course its erratic generation appears to represent a mystery.

However, the conditions that generate city diversity are quite easy to discover by observing places in which diversity flourishes and studying the economic reasons why it can flourish in these places. Although the results are intricate, and the ingredients producing them may vary enormously, this complexity is based on tangible economic relationships which, in principle, are much simpler than the intricate urban mixtures they make possible.

To generate exuberant diversity in a city's streets and districts, four conditions are indispensable:

1. The district, and indeed as many of its internal parts as possible, must serve more than one primary function; preferably more than two. These must insure the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different purposes, but who are able to use many facilities in common.
2. Most blocks must be short; that is, streets and opportunities to turn corners must be frequent.
3. The district must mingle buildings that vary in age and condition, including a good proportion of old ones so that they vary

in the economic yield they must produce. This mingling must be fairly close-grained.

4. There must be a sufficiently dense concentration of people, for whatever purposes they may be there. This includes dense concentration in the case of people who are there because of residence.

The necessity for these four conditions is the most important point this book has to make. In combination, these conditions create effective economic pools of use. Given these four conditions, not all city districts will produce a diversity equivalent to one another. The potentials of different districts differ for many reasons; but, given the development of these four conditions (or the best approximation to their full development that can be managed in real life), a city district should be able to realize its best potential, wherever that may lie. Obstacles to doing so will have been removed. The range may not stretch to African sculpture or schools of drama or Rumanian tea houses, but such as the possibilities are, whether for grocery stores, pottery schools, movies, candy stores, florists, art shows, immigrants' clubs, hardware stores, eating places, or whatever, they will get their best chance. And along with them, city life will get its best chances.

In the four chapters that follow, I shall discuss each of these four generators of diversity, one at a time. The purpose of explaining them one at a time is purely for convenience of exposition, not because any one—or even any three—of these necessary conditions is valid alone. *All* four in combination are necessary to generate city diversity; the absence of any one of the four frustrates a district's potential.

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## The need for mixed primary uses

CONDITION 1: *The district, and indeed as many of its internal parts as possible, must serve more than one primary function; preferably more than two. These must insure the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different purposes, but who are able to use many facilities in common.*

On successful city streets, people must appear at different times. This is time considered on a small scale, hour by hour through the day. I have already explained this necessity in social terms while discussing street safety and also neighborhood parks. Now I shall point out its economic effects.

Neighborhood parks, you will recall, need people who are in the immediate vicinity for different purposes from one another, or else the parks will be used only sporadically.

Most consumer enterprises are just as dependent as parks on

people going to and fro throughout the day, but with this difference: If parks lie idle, it is bad for them and their neighborhoods but they do not disappear as a consequence. If consumer enterprises lie idle for much of the day they may disappear. Or, to be more accurate, in most such cases they never appear in the first place. Stores, like parks, need users.

For a humble example of the economic effects of people spread through time of day, I will ask you to think back to a city sidewalk scene: the ballet of Hudson Street. The continuity of this movement (which gives the street its safety) depends on an economic foundation of basic mixed uses. The workers from the laboratories, meat-packing plants, warehouses, plus those from a bewildering variety of small manufacturers, printers and other little industries and offices, give all the eating places and much of the other commerce support at midday. We residents on the street and on its more purely residential tributaries could and would support a modicum of commerce by ourselves, but relatively little. We possess more convenience, liveliness, variety and choice than we "deserve" in our own right. The people who work in the neighborhood also possess, on account of us residents, more variety than they "deserve" in their own right. We support these things together by unconsciously cooperating economically. If the neighborhood were to lose the industries, it would be a disaster for us residents. Many enterprises, unable to exist on residential trade by itself, would disappear. Or if the industries were to lose us residents, enterprises unable to exist on the working people by themselves would disappear.

As it is, workers and residents together are able to produce *more* than the sum of our two parts. The enterprises we are capable of supporting, mutually, draw out onto the sidewalk by evening many more residents than would emerge if the place were moribund. And, in a modest way, they also attract still another crowd in addition to the local residents or local workers. They attract people who want a change from their neighborhoods, just

Please remember, however, that this factor of users spread through time of day is only one of four necessary factors for generating diversity. Do not think it explains everything by itself, even though it is an essential factor.

as we frequently want a change from ours. This attraction exposes our commerce to a still larger and more diverse population, and this in turn has permitted a still further growth and range of commerce living on all *three* kinds of population in varying proportions: a shop down the street selling prints, a store that rents diving equipment, a dispensary of first-rate pizza, a pleasant coffee house.

Sheer numbers of people using city streets, and the way those people are spread through the hours of the day, are two different matters. I shall deal with sheer numbers in another chapter; at this stage it is important to understand that numbers, in themselves, are not an equivalent for people distributed through time of day.

The significance of time spread can be seen especially clearly at the downtown tip of Manhattan, because this is a district suffering from extreme time unbalance among its users. Some 400,000 persons are employed here, in a district embracing Wall Street, the adjoining law and insurance complexes, the city's municipal offices, some federal and state offices, groups of docks and shipping offices, and a number of other work complexes. An undetermined but considerable additional number of people visit the district during working hours, mostly on office or government business.

This is an immense number of users for a territory sufficiently compact so that any part of it is readily accessible on foot from almost any other part. Among them, these users represent a tremendous daily demand for meals and other goods, to say nothing of cultural services.

Yet the district is miserable at providing services and amenities proportionate to the need. Its eating places and clothing shops are pitifully inadequate in number and variety for the demands on them. The district used to have one of the best hardware stores in New York, but a few years ago it could no longer make ends meet, and closed. It had one of the finest, largest and longest established food specialty stores in the city; it too has recently closed down. Once upon a time it had a few movies but they became sleeping places for the leisured indigent and eventually disappeared. The district's cultural opportunities are nil.

All these lacks, which may seem on the surface to be frivolous,

are a handicap. Firm after firm has left for mixed-use midtown Manhattan (which has become the city's main downtown). As one real estate broker put it, otherwise their personnel departments can't get or keep people who can spell "molybdenum." These losses, in turn, have badly undermined the district's once supreme convenience for face-to-face business contacts, so that now law firms and banks are moving out, to be closer to clients who have already moved. The district has become second-rate in its very function—providing managerial headquarters—which is the foundation of its prestige and usefulness and its reason for being.

Meantime, outside of the big offices that form the breathtaking skyline of lower Manhattan is a ring of stagnation, decay, vacancies and vestigial industries. Consider this paradox: Here are plenty of people, and people moreover who want and value city diversity badly enough so it is difficult or sometimes impossible to keep them from scooting away elsewhere to get it. And here, cheek-by-jowl with the demand, are plenty of convenient and even empty places for diversity to grow in. What can be wrong?

To see what is wrong, it is only necessary to drop in at any ordinary shop and observe the contrast between the mob scene at lunch and the dullness at other times. It is only necessary to observe the deathlike stillness that settles on the district after five-thirty and all day Saturday and Sunday.

"They come in like a tide," the *New York Times* quoted a saleswoman in a clothing store. "I always know when it's a few minutes after noon." "The first group floods the store from noon to just before 1 P.M.," the *Times* reporter went on to explain. "Then there is a short breathing spell. A few minutes after 1 P.M. a second group spills in." And then, although the paper did not say so, a few minutes before 2 P.M. the store goes dead.

The business done by consumers' enterprises here must be mainly crammed into some two or three hours a day, some ten or fifteen hours a week. This degree of underuse is a miserable inefficiency for any plant. A certain number of enterprises can cover their overhead and make a profit by exploiting the midday mob operation to the hilt. But there must be few enough so that each reaps a capacity mob at that time. Restaurants too can live

on lunch and coffee breaks, instead of lunch and dinner, if there are relatively so few that they do a quick-turnover business in their too few bonanza hours. How does this add up to general convenience and amenity for those 400,000 workers? Badly.

It is no accident that the New York Public Library gets more anguished telephone calls from this district than from any other—at lunchtime, of course—asking, “Where is the library branch down here? I can’t find it.” There is none, typically enough. If there were, it could hardly be built big enough for the queues at lunchtime and perhaps at five o’clock and hardly small enough for the trade at other times.

Aside from the mob-scene enterprises, other retail services can and do manage by keeping their overhead abnormally low. This is how most of the interesting and civilized and unusual places which have not yet gone out of business manage to exist, and the reason why they are in singularly decrepit and decaying lodgings.

The business and financial interests represented in lower Manhattan have for several years, in cooperation with the city, been working hard at preparing plans and starting work to regenerate this area. They have proceeded according to orthodox planning beliefs and principles.

The first step in their reasoning is good. They face the fact of trouble, and also face its general nature. The planning brochure prepared by the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association says: “To ignore the factors that threaten the economic health of lower Manhattan is to accept a continuing exodus of long-established businesses and activities to areas in which they can find better working conditions and a more agreeable and convenient environment for their employees.”

The brochure indicates, moreover, a glimmer of understanding about the need to spread people through time of day, for it states, “A residential population would stimulate the development of shopping facilities, restaurants, places of entertainment and garage facilities which would prove highly desirable for use by the day-time working population as well.”

But it is only a poor glimmer of understanding and the plans themselves are an exercise in cures irrelevant to the disease.

A residential population is, to be sure, introduced in the pro-

posed plans. It will take up a lot of territory, in the form of project buildings, parking lots and empty land, but in people—as the brochure itself states—it will amount to only about 1 percent of the number of persons in the daytime population. What Herculean economic power that little band is to exert! What amazing feats of hedonism must it accomplish to support “the development of shopping facilities, restaurants, places of entertainment . . . highly desirable for use by the daytime working population as well!”

The new residential population is to be, of course, only part of the plan. The other parts will intensify the present trouble. They will do so in two ways. First, they are aimed at bringing in still more daytime work uses—manufacturing, international trade offices and a huge new federal office building, among others. Second, the land clearance planned for these additional working places and for the housing projects and the associated highways will clear out—along with empty buildings and decayed work uses—much of the low-overhead service and commerce that does still exist to serve the working population. Facilities already too meager in range (and number) for the working population will be further subtracted, as a by-product to adding *more* working population and an utterly meaningless number of residents. Conditions already inconvenient will become intolerable. The plans, moreover, will foreclose the chance of reasonably adequate services ever being developed, because no room, at economical rents for the incubation of new enterprise, will exist for them.

Lower Manhattan is in really serious trouble, and the routine reasoning and remedies of orthodox planning merely compound the trouble. What could be done to ameliorate *effectively* the district's extreme time unbalance of users, which is the root of its trouble?

Residence, no matter how introduced, cannot help effectively. The daytime use of the district is so intensive that residents, even at the highest densities possible, would always be ineffectually small in their proportionate numbers, and would preempt territories of a size utterly disproportionate to the economic contribution they could render here.

The first step in planning the infusion of new potential uses is

to have a practical idea of what the infusion must accomplish if it is to overcome the district's root trouble.

The infusion would obviously have to result in the presence of maximum numbers of persons at the times when the district needs them most for time balance: midafternoons (between two and five o'clock), evenings, Saturdays and Sundays. The only possible concentrations large enough to make any difference would consist of great numbers of visitors at those times, and this in turn has to mean tourists together with many people of the city itself, coming back over and over again in their leisure time.

Whatever it is that attracts this infusion of new people must also be attractive to people who work in the district. At least its presence cannot bore or repel them.

This new putative use (or uses) cannot, furthermore, replace wholesale the very buildings and territories in which new, spontaneous enterprises and facilities, stimulated by the new time spread of people, can grow with the freedom and flexibility of accommodations they will need.

And finally, this new use (or uses) ought to be in accord with the district's character, certainly not at cross-purposes to it. It is the character of lower Manhattan to be intensive, to be exciting, to be dramatic, and this is one of its greatest assets. What is more dramatic, even romantic, than the tumbled towers of lower Manhattan, rising suddenly to the clouds like a magic castle girdled by water? Its very touch of jumbled jaggedness, its towering-sided canyons, are its magnificence. What vandalism it would represent (what vandalism the present project plans represent!) to dilute this magnificent city presence with the humdrum and the regimented.

What does exist here to draw visitors at leisure hours, for instance on week ends? Over the years, unfortunately, almost every unique appeal to visitors that could possibly be rooted out of this district by plan has been rooted out. The aquarium, which used to sit in Battery Park at the tip of the island and was the main attraction of that park, has been removed and rebuilt in Coney Island, the last place it was needed. A strange and vital little Armenian neighborhood (*there* was residence that counted because of its uniqueness as a tourist and visitor attraction) was rooted out lock,

stock and barrel for a tunnel approach, and now the guidebooks and the women's pages of the newspapers send visitors over to Brooklyn to find its transplanted remnants and extraordinary shops. The excursion boats, the trip to the Statue of Liberty, have been surrounded by less glamor than the checkout line in a supermarket. The Parks Department snack bar at the Battery is about as appealing as a school cafeteria. Battery Park itself, in the most stirring location of the city, riding into the harbor like a prow, has been made to resemble the grounds of an old people's home. Everything thus far inflicted on this district by plan (and everything more which has been proposed by plan) says in the plainest terms to human beings, "Go away! Leave me alone!" Nothing says, "Come on!"

So much could be done.

The waterfront itself is the first wasted asset capable of drawing people at leisure. Part of the district's waterfront should become a great marine museum—the permanent anchorage of specimen and curiosity ships, the best collection to be seen and boarded anywhere. This would bring into the district tourists in the afternoon, tourists and people of the city, both, on week ends and holidays, and in summertime it should be a great thing for the evening. Other features of the shoreline should be the embarkation points for pleasure voyages in the harbor and around the island; these embarkation points should be as glamorous and salty as art can make them. If new sea-food restaurants and much else would not start up nearby, I will eat my lobster shell.

There should be related attractions, set not at the shoreline itself but inland a little, within the matrix of streets, deliberately to carry visitors farther in easy steps. A new aquarium should be built, for example, and it ought to be admission-free, unlike the one at Coney. A city of almost eight million can support two aquariums and can afford to show off its fish free. That public-library branch which is needed so badly should be built, and it should be not only the usual circulating branch, but also the specialized library center for all marine and financial lore.

Special events based on all these attractions should be concentrated in evenings and week ends; inexpensive theater and opera ought to be added. Jason Epstein, a publisher and student of cities,

who has thoughtfully considered the experiments of European cities for clues helpful to lower Manhattan, suggests a permanent one-ring circus, like the one in Paris. This, if it were done well, would be far more effective as sheer economic support to the long-term business value of this district than the dreary additions of more manufacturing plants, taking up the room, contributing nothing the district needs to maintain its strength (and depriving of their presence other parts of the city that really need manufacturing plants).

As the district livened up during evenings and week ends, we could expect some new residential use to appear spontaneously. Lower Manhattan does contain numerous old houses, run down but fundamentally attractive, of just the kind that have been rehabilitated elsewhere when life broke out. People in search of what is both unique and alive would ferret them out. However, residence in such an area as this must necessarily be a manifestation of district vitality, rather than a cause of it.

Do my suggestions for additional uses based on leisure-time attraction seem frivolous and expensive?

Consider, then, the expected cost of the plans prepared by the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association and the city for more working places still, for the housing projects and parking lots, and for the highways to take the project people out of the district on week ends.

These things are to cost, their planners estimate, *one billion dollars* of public and private money!

The extreme condition of currently unbalanced spread of people through time of day in lower Manhattan illustrates a number of sobering principles that apply equally to other city districts:

No neighborhood or district, no matter how well established, prestigious or well heeled, and no matter how intensely populated for one purpose, can flout the necessity for spreading people through time of day without frustrating its potential for generating diversity.

Furthermore, a neighborhood or district perfectly calculated, it seems, to fill one function, whether work or any other, and with everything ostensibly necessary to that function, cannot actually provide what is necessary if it is confined to that one function.

Unless a plan for a district which lacks spread of people through time of day gets at the cause of the trouble, the best that can be done is to replace old stagnation with new. It may look cleaner for a while, but that is not much to buy with a lot of money.

It should be clear by now that I am discussing two different kinds of diversity. The first, primary uses, are those which, in themselves, bring people to a specific place because they are anchorages. Offices and factories are primary uses. So are dwellings. Certain places of entertainment, education and recreation are primary uses. To a degree (that is, for an appreciable proportion of their users), so are many museums, libraries and galleries, but not all.

Primary uses can be unusual sometimes. In Louisville, since the war a great sample shoe market, for bargain, odd-lot shoes, has gradually grown up in about thirty stores concentrated on four blocks of one street. Grady Clay, real estate editor of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, and a leading city design and planning critic, reports that the group has about a half-million pairs of shoes on display and in warehouses. "This is in the inner gray area," Mr. Clay writes me, "but as soon as the word got around, customers began flocking in from all over, so that you see Indianapolis, Nashville, Cincinnati shoppers, plus a good Cadillac trade. I have been thinking a bit about it. Nobody could have planned this growth. Nobody has encouraged it. The biggest threat, in fact, is the expressway which will cut diagonally across. Nobody at City Hall seems at all concerned about it. I hope to stir up some interest . . ."

As this suggests, you cannot tell from outward impressiveness or other signs of putative importance how effective a primary use is, as an attractor of people. Some of the most impressive *looking* are ineffectual in performance. For instance, the main building of Philadelphia's public library, stuck in a monumental cultural center, draws fewer users than three of the library's branches, including an attractive but, unostentatious establishment inserted among the downtown shops of Chestnut Street. Like many cultural enterprises, libraries are a combination of primary use and

convenience use, and work best as either when they combine these attributes. In size and appearance then, and in its stock of books, the main library building is more significant; but in its role as an element of city use, the small branch is more significant, belying appearances. It is always necessary to think of performance in terms of users when trying to understand how primary mixtures work.

Any primary use whatever, by itself is relatively ineffectual as a creator of city diversity. If it is combined with another primary use that brings people in and out and puts them on the street at the same time, nothing has been accomplished. In practical terms, we cannot even call these differing primary uses. However, when a primary use is combined, effectively, with another that puts people on the street at different times, then the effect can be economically stimulating: a fertile environment for secondary diversity.

Secondary diversity is a name for the enterprises that grow in response to the presence of primary uses, to serve the people the primary uses draw. If this secondary diversity serves single primary uses, no matter what the type of use, it is innately inefficient. Serving mixed primary uses, it can be innately efficient and—if the other three conditions for generating diversity are favorable also—it can be exuberant.

If this spread of street use spreads a variety of consumer needs or tastes through time of day, all sorts of uniquely urban and specialized services and shops can make out, and this is a process that builds upon itself. The more intricately mixed, and therefore efficient, the pools of users are, the more services and shops there can be that need to sift their clientele from all sorts of popula-

Shopping centers that serve only residential primary use, for example, have a trouble similar to that of lower Manhattan, but in reverse so far as time is concerned. Thus many such shopping centers have been closing up in the mornings and staying open in the evenings. "The way things are now," said a shopping center executive quoted in the *New York Times*, "you could shoot a cannon down the mall of any shopping center at mid-day and not hit a soul." The innate inefficiency of serving a single primary use is one reason (in combination with several others) why so few shopping centers are able to support any but standardized, high-turnover enterprises.

tion, and in turn the more people are drawn. So it is necessary here to make still another distinction.

If secondary diversity flourishes sufficiently and contains enough that is unusual or unique, it seemingly can and does become, in its accumulation, a primary use itself. People come specifically for it. This is what happens in good shopping districts or even, to a humble extent, on Hudson Street. I do not wish to minimize this occurrence; it is vital to the economic health of city streets and districts, and to cities as a whole. It is vital to city fluidity of use, to great choice, and to interesting and useful differences in character among streets and districts.

Nevertheless, secondary diversity seldom becomes quite a primary use fully "in its own right." If it is to have staying power, and the vitality to grow and change, it must retain its basic foundation of mixed primary uses—people spread through time of day because of fixed reasons. This is true even of downtown shopping, which is there, basically, because of other mixed primary uses, and which withers (even if slowly) when these become seriously unbalanced.

I have mentioned several times in passing that primary use mixtures must be *effective* if they are to generate diversity. What makes them effective? They must, of course, be combined with the other three conditions that stimulate diversity. But in addition, the primary mixture has to perform effectively itself.

Effectiveness means, first, that the people using the streets at different times must actually use the *same* streets. If their paths are separated from one another's, or buffered from one another's, there is no mixture in reality. In terms of city-street economics, mutual support among differences is then a fiction, or something to be seen merely as an abstraction of adjoining different uses, with no meaning except on a map.

Effectiveness means, second, that the people using the same streets at differing times must include, among them, people who will use some of the same facilities. All kinds of people can be present, but those who turn up for one reason at one time must not be sorted out in some totally incompatible fashion from those who turn up for another reason. As an extreme example, where the new home of the Metropolitan Opera in New York is to share

a street with a low-income public housing project across the way, the juncture is meaningless—even if there were a place here for mutually supported diversity to grow. This type of hopeless economic contretemps seldom turns up naturally in a city, but it is frequently introduced by plan.

And finally, effectiveness means that the mixture of people on a street at one time of day must bear some reasonably proportionate relationship to people there at other times of day. I have already made this point in discussing the plans for the lower tip of Manhattan. It has often been observed that lively downtowns are apt to have dwellings fingering into them and close beside them, and night uses these residents enjoy and help support. This is an accurate observation so far as it goes, and on the strength of it many cities are expecting miracles from residential projects downtown, in the fashion of the lower Manhattan plan. But in real life, where such combinations have vitality the residents are part of a very complex pool of downtown day, night and week-end uses in reasonable balance.

Similarly, a few thousand workers dribbled in among tens or hundreds of thousands of residents make no appreciable balance either in sum or at any particular spot of any significance. Or a lone office building amid a large grouping of theaters amounts to little or nothing in practical terms. In short, with primary mixtures, it is everyday, ordinary performance in mixing people, as pools of economic mutual support, that counts. This is the point, and it is a tangible, concrete economic matter, not a vaguely “atmospheric” effect.

I have been dwelling upon downtowns. This is not because mixtures of primary uses are unneeded elsewhere in cities. On the contrary they are needed, and the success of mixtures downtown (or in the most intensive portions of cities, whatever they are called) is related to the mixture possible in other parts of cities.

I have been dwelling on downtowns for two reasons in particular. First, insufficient primary mixture is typically the principal fault in our downtowns, and often the only disastrous basic fault. Most big-city downtowns fulfill—or in the past did fulfill—all

four of the necessary conditions for generating diversity. That is why they were able to become downtowns. Today, typically, they still do fulfill three of the conditions. But they have become (for reasons that will be discussed in Chapter Thirteen) too predominantly devoted to work and contain too few people after working hours. This condition has been more or less formalized in planning jargon, which no longer speaks of "downtowns" but instead of "CBD's"—standing for Central Business Districts. A Central Business District that lives up to its name and is truly described by it, is a dud. Few downtowns have reached (yet) the degree of unbalance to be found at the lower tip of Manhattan. Most have, in addition to their working people, a good many daytime shoppers during working hours and on Saturdays. But most are on their way toward this unbalance, and have fewer potential assets than lower Manhattan has for retrieving themselves.

The second reason for emphasizing primary mixtures downtown is the direct effect on other parts of cities. Probably everyone is aware of certain general dependencies by a city on its heart. When a city heart stagnates or disintegrates, a city as a social neighborhood of the whole begins to suffer: People who ought to get together, by means of central activities that are failing, fail to get together. Ideas and money that ought to meet, and do so often only by happenstance in a place of central vitality, fail to meet. The networks of city public life develop gaps they cannot afford. Without a strong and *inclusive* central heart, a city tends to become a collection of interests isolated from one another. It falters at producing something greater, socially, culturally and economically, than the sum of its separated parts.

All these considerations are important, but I have in mind here a more specific economic effect exerted by a strong city heart upon other districts.

The peculiar benefits that cities afford to incubation operate, as I have pointed out, most efficiently and surely where the most complex pools of use form. From such incubators of enterprise spring economic youngsters that may—and in real life do—later transfer their power to other parts of a city.

This movement has been well described by Richard Ratcliff, professor of land economics at the University of Wisconsin. "De-

centralization is a symptom of degeneration and decay," says Ratcliff, "only if it leaves a vacuum behind. Where decentralization is the product of centripetal forces, it is healthy. Much of the outward movement of certain urban functions occurs as they are pushed out of the center, rather than as they respond to a pull toward outlying locations."

In a healthy city, notes Professor Ratcliff, there is a constant replacement of less intensive uses by more intensive uses.\* "Artificially induced dispersion is another question. It holds the danger of loss in total efficiency and productivity."

In New York, as Raymond Vernon has noted in *Anatomy of a Metropolis*, the intensive developments of parts of Manhattan Island for white-collar work have been pushing manufacturers out into the other boroughs. (When city manufacturers get big and self-sufficient enough they may go to suburbs or little towns, which depend economically too on the powerful incubating effects of those wonderfully productive places, intensive big cities.)

Uses crowded out from incubators of diversity and enterprise are of two kinds, like other city diversity. If they are crowded-out secondary diversity, serving people drawn by mixtures of primary uses, they must find other places in which secondary diversity can flourish—other places with mixtures of primary uses, among other factors—or else languish and probably die. Their movement, if they are able to find congenial places, can represent opportunity for a city. They help heighten and speed the formation of further complex city. This is one of the influences, for example, from outside Hudson Street that has been affecting us. This is where the skin-diver equipment people come from, and the print and framing people, and the sculptor who took over an empty store. They are enterprises bubbling over from more intensive generators of diversity.

Although this movement is valuable (if it is not lost for lack of sufficient economically fertile ground), it is less significant and basic than the movement of primary diversity crowded out from intensive centers. For when primary uses, such as manufacturing,

\* This process can go to extremes and destroy itself, but that is another aspect of the question, which I shall deal with in Part III of this book. We can ignore it for the time being.

for instance, boil over and outward from pools of use that can no longer contain everything they generate, these can become ingredients of primary mixture in places where the primary use of work is desperately needed. Their presence can help create new pools of primary mixed use.

One land-use economist, Larry Smith, has aptly called office buildings chess pieces. "You have used up those chess pieces already," he is said to have told a planner who was trying to revitalize an unrealistic number of spots with dreamy plans for new office buildings. All primary uses, whether offices, dwellings or concert halls, are a city's chessmen. Those that move differently from one another must be employed *in concert* to accomplish much. And as in chess, a pawn can be converted to a queen. But city building has this difference from chess: The number of pieces is not fixed by the rules. If well deployed, the pieces multiply.

In city downtowns, public policy cannot inject directly the entirely private enterprises that serve people after work and enliven and help invigorate the place. Nor can public policy, by any sort of fiat, hold these uses in a downtown. But indirectly, public policy can encourage their growth by using its own chessmen, and those susceptible to public pressure, in the right places as primers.

Carnegie Hall, on West Fifty-seventh Street in New York, is a striking example of such a primer. It has worked remarkably well for its street in spite of the serious handicap of too-long blocks. The presence of Carnegie Hall, which brings intensive use to the street by night, generated in time the presence of another use that needs night business—two motion-picture theaters. And because Carnegie Hall is a music center, it generated the presence of many small music, dance and drama studios and recital rooms. All this is mixed and woven with residences—two hotels and many apartments close by, which have all kinds of tenants, but notably a great many who are musicians and teachers of music. The street works by day because of small office buildings, and large office buildings to east and west, and finally because the double-shift use is able to support secondary diversity that has, in time, become an attraction too. The time spread of users is of course stimulating to restaurants, and here is a whole gamut: a fine Italian restau-

rant, a glamorous Russian restaurant, a sea-food restaurant, an espresso house, several bars, an Automat, a couple of soda fountains, a hamburger house. Between and among the restaurants you can buy rare coins, old jewelry, old or new books, very nice shoes, art supplies, remarkably elaborate hats, flowers, gourmet foods, health foods, imported chocolates. You can buy or sell thrice-worn Dior dresses and last year's minks, or rent an English sports car.

In this case, Carnegie Hall is a vital chessman, working in concert with other chessmen. The most ruinous plan that could be devised for this entire neighborhood would be to destroy Carnegie Hall and replace it with another office building. This was precisely what was about to happen, as an accompaniment to New York's decision to take all its most impressive, or potentially impressive, cultural chessmen out of play and segregate them in a planning island called the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Carnegie Hall was saved by a hair, owing to stubborn citizen pressure politics, although it will no longer be the home of the New York Philharmonic, which is going to decontaminate itself from the ordinary city.

Now this is a pitiful kind of planning, which would blindly destroy a city's existing pools of use and automatically foster new problems of stagnation, as a thoughtless by-product to pushing through new dreams. Chessmen—and in downtowns night-use chessmen that can be located by public policy or public pressure—should be placed to fortify and extend existing vitality, and also to help balance up, in strategic places, existing time unbalances. New York's midtown has many places with intensive daytime use that go ominously dead at night, that need precisely the chessmen being taken out of play at Lincoln Center. The stretch of new office building centering on Park Avenue between Grand Central Station and Fifty-ninth Street is such a territory. The area just south of Grand Central is another. The shopping district centering on Thirty-fourth Street is another. Many a once vital district, having lost in the past a mixture of primary uses which brought attraction, popularity and high economic value, has declined sadly.

This is why projects such as cultural or civic centers, besides

being woefully unbalanced themselves as a rule, are tragic in their effects on their cities. They isolate uses—and too often intensive night uses too—from the parts of cities that must have them or sicken.

Boston was the first American city to plan for itself a decontaminated cultural district. In 1859, a Committee of Institutes called for a "Cultural Conservation," setting aside a tract to be devoted "solely to institutions of an educational, scientific and artistic character," a move that coincided with the beginning of Boston's long, slow decline as a live cultural leader among American cities. Whether the deliberate segregation and decontamination of numerous cultural institutions from the ordinary city and ordinary life was part of the cause of Boston's cultural decline, or whether it was simply a symptom and seal of a decadence already inevitable from other causes, I do not know. One thing is sure: Boston's downtown has suffered miserably from lack of good mixtures in its primary uses, particularly good mixing in of night uses and of live (not museum-piece and once-upon-a-time) cultural uses.

It is said, by those who have the problem of raising money for large cultural enterprises, that rich people will contribute much more readily and heavily for large, decontaminated islands of monuments than for single cultural buildings set in a city's matrix. This was one of the rationalizations which resulted in the plans for New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Whether this is true about fund raising I do not know; it would not be surprising, however, since the well-off who are also enlightened have been informed by experts for years that project building is the only worthwhile city building.

Among downtown planners and the businessmen's groups who work with them, there is a myth (or alibi) that Americans all stay home at night watching TV or else attend the P-TA meeting. This is what they tell you in Cincinnati when you ask about their downtown, which is dead by evening and consequently half-alive by day. Yet Cincinnatians pay some half-million visits a year to the generally expensive night life across the river in Covington, Kentucky, which has its own kind of morbid unbalance. "People

don't go out," is one of the alibis also used in Pittsburgh to explain its dead downtown.

Downtown, the Pittsburgh Parking Authority's garages are operating at only between 10 and 20 percent of capacity by eight o'clock in the evening, except for the central Mellon Square garage which may reach 50 percent if something is doing at the hotels. (Like parks and consumer shops, parking and traffic facilities are innately inefficient and wasteful without time spread of users.) Meantime, the parking problem three miles from downtown in a section called Oakland is something fierce. "No sooner does one crowd move out of that place than another moves in," explains an Authority official. "It's a headache." It is also easy to understand. Oakland contains the Pittsburgh symphony, the civic light opera, the little-theater group, the most fashionable restaurant, the Pittsburgh Athletic Association, two other major clubs, the main Carnegie library, museum and art galleries, the Historical Society, the Shriners' Mosque, the Mellon Institute, a favorite hotel for parties, the Y.M.H.A., headquarters of the Board of Education, and all the major hospitals.

Because Oakland contains a high disproportion of leisure-time, after-work uses, it is unbalanced too, and Pittsburgh has no good place, either in Oakland or in the working downtown, for generating intensively its principal metropolitan secondary diversity. The standard stores and the lowbrow diversity, such as it is, are downtown. What higher-brow commercial diversity does exist has mostly chosen Oakland as apparently the better bet of the two places; but it is bloodless and marginal because Oakland is far from the effective pool of use that a metropolitan heart should be.

Pittsburgh's instrument for getting into this twofold unbalance was a real estate operator, the late Frank Nicola, who fifty years ago, in the City Beautiful era, began promoting a cultural center on the pristine meadows of a dairy farm. He had a good start because the Carnegie library and art center had already accepted a gift site from the Schenley land holdings. Downtown Pittsburgh in those days was not, in any case, an attractive place for such

The other alibi, offered rather proudly by businessmen, is that "We've got a downtown something like Wall Street." Apparently they haven't heard Wall Street's neighborhood news about its difficulties.

establishments because it was unrelievedly grim, smoky and sooty.

Now, however, downtown Pittsburgh is potentially attractive for leisure use, thanks to the massive cleaning up led by the businessmen's Allegheny Conference. And theoretically, the downtown's one-shift unbalance should soon be partly remedied by a civic auditorium and the later addition of a symphony hall and apartments, all immediately adjoining downtown. But the spirit of the dairy farm and of culture decontaminated from the city still reigns. Every device—arterial highways, belts of park, parking lots—severs these projects from the working downtown, insures that their juncture will remain an abstraction on maps instead of a living economic reality of people appearing at different times on the same streets. American downtowns are not declining mysteriously, because they are anachronisms, nor because their users have been drained away by automobiles. They are being witlessly murdered, in good part by deliberate policies of sorting out leisure uses from work uses, under the misapprehension that this is orderly city planning.

Primary-use chessmen cannot be strewn hither and yon in a city, of course, taking into account only the need of spreading people through time of day, and ignoring the particular needs of the uses themselves—what will be good locations for *them*.

However, such arbitrariness is unnecessary. I have spoken admiringly from time to time about the intricate, underlying order of cities. It is part of the beauty of this order that success for the mixture in itself, and success for the peculiar and specific elements of the mixture, are apt to be in harmony rather than contradiction. I have given some examples of this identity (or correspondence) of interest already in this chapter, and have touched on others by implication: e.g., the new work uses planned for lower Manhattan will not only increase that district's fundamental trouble, but at the same time will burden the new employees and officials with an economically dull and an inconvenient city environment. Now I shall give an illustrative example of the quite complex ill effects that can arise when this innate order of city vitality is flouted.

We might call this the case of the courts and the opera. Forty-

five years ago, San Francisco began building a civic center, which has given trouble ever since. This particular center, placed near the downtown and intended to pull the downtown toward it, has of course repelled vitality and gathered around itself instead the blight that typically surrounds these dead and artificial places. The center includes, among the other arbitrary objects in its parks, the opera house, the city hall, the public library and various municipal offices.

Now, considering the opera house and the library as chessmen, how could they have best helped the city? Each would have been used, separately, in *close* conjunction with high-intensity downtown offices and shops. This, and the secondary diversity they would help anchor, would *also* have been a more congenial environment for either of these two buildings themselves. The opera, as it is, stands related to nothing, enjoying the irrelevant convenience of its nearest neighboring facility, the Civil Service Employment waiting room at the back of City Hall. And the library, as it is, is the leaning wall of Skid Row.

Unfortunately, in affairs of this kind, one mistake leads on and on. In 1958, a location had to be picked for a criminal courts building. The logical spot, it was well recognized, would be some place near the other municipal offices, for the convenience of lawyers and of the services that attach to lawyers' neighborhoods. But it was also recognized that the courts building would be bound to catalyze, somewhere in its vicinity, a secondary diversity of bail-bond houses and un-chic bars. What to do? Put the courts close to the civic center or in it, so they would be near some of the buildings with which they need to work? But the environment of the criminal courts is nothing to encourage near the opera! The nondescript rattiness nearby is already unsuitable enough.

Every alternative solution to such a ludicrous dilemma must be poor. The solution chosen was to place the courts at an inconvenient distance, but the opera was saved from further contamination by life other than "civic," whatever that may mean.

This tiresome muddle arises not in the least from contradictions between demands by the city as an organism and demands by various specific uses, nor do most planning muddles arise from any such contradictions. They arise chiefly from theories which

are in arbitrary contradiction with *both* the order of cities and the needs of individual uses.

This point of unsuitable theory—in this case esthetic theory—is so important and so consistently frustrating in one form and another to proper city primary mixtures, that I shall pursue the implications of this case a little further here.

Elbert Peets, an architect who for many years was a consistently dissenting member of the Washington, D. C., Fine Arts Commission, has stated the conflict well, and although he is speaking of Washington his remarks apply to this trouble in San Francisco and to troubles in many other places too:

It is my feeling that wrong principles motivate important aspects [of current Washington town planning]. These principles have developed historically and have acquired so much support of habit and vested interest that the busy people guiding Washington's architectural growth doubtless accept them without question—which, however, we must not do.

Briefly, what is happening is this: the government capital is turning away from the city; the government buildings are being concentrated together and separated from the buildings of the city. This was not L'Enfant's idea. On the contrary, he made every effort to amalgamate the two, to make them serve each other. He distributed government buildings, markets, seats of national societies, academies, and State memorials at points of architectural advantage throughout the city, as if with the definite purpose of putting the impress of the national capital on every part. This was sound sentiment and sound architectural judgment.

From the Chicago Fair of 1893 came the architectural ideology that sees a city as a monumental court of honor sharply set off from a profane and jumbled area of "concessions." . . . There is no evidence, in this procedure, of feeling for the city as an organism, a matrix that is worthy of its monuments and friendly with them . . . The loss is social, as well as esthetic . . .

Here, one might say offhand, are two opposed esthetic visions, a matter of taste, and who can quarrel with taste? But this goes deeper than taste. One of these visions—the sorted-out "courts of honor"—contradicts the functional and economic needs of cities and of their specific uses too. The other vision—the mingled city

with individual architectural focal points intimately surrounded by the everyday matrix—is in harmony with the economic and other functional behavior of cities.

Every city primary use, whether it comes in monumental and special guise or not, needs its intimate matrix of “profane” city to work to best advantage. The courts building in San Francisco needs one kind of matrix with its secondary diversity. The opera needs another kind of matrix with its secondary diversity. And the matrices of the city need these uses themselves, for the influence of their presence helps form a city’s matrices. Furthermore, a city matrix needs its own less spectacular internal minglings (“jumbles” to the simple-minded). Else it is not a matrix but, like housing projects, it is “profane” monotony, working no more sensibly than the “sacred” monotony of civic centers like San Francisco’s.

To be sure, any principle can be applied arbitrarily and destructively by people who fail to understand its workings. L’Enfant’s esthetic theory of focal points interdependent with the everyday city matrix surrounding them could be applied by trying to strew primary uses—especially those capable of monumental appearance—without regard for the economic or other working relationships that they require. But L’Enfant’s theory is admirable, not as an abstract visual good in isolation from function, but rather because it is capable of being applied and adapted in harmony with the needs of real establishments in real cities. If these functional needs are considered and respected, esthetic theories that glorify sorted-out and isolated uses, either “sacred” or “profane,” are impossible to apply.

In city districts that are predominately or heavily residential, the more complexity and variety of primary uses that can be cultivated, the better, just as in downtowns. But the chief chessman that is needed in these districts is the primary use of work. As

The New York Public Library at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street is an example of such an architectural focal point; the old Jefferson Market Courthouse in the center of Greenwich Village is another. Every reader, I am sure is familiar with individual monumental focal points in a city matrix.

we have seen in the examples of the park at Rittenhouse Square, or Hudson Street, these two primary uses can dovetail nicely with one another, the streets livening up with workers at midday when they go dead from the dwellings, livening up from the dwellings in the evening when they go dead from the work.

The desirability of segregating dwellings from work has been so dinned into us that it takes an effort to look at real life and observe that residential districts lacking mixture with work do not fare well in cities. In an article on Negro ghettos by Harry S. Ashmore in the *New York Herald Tribune*, a Harlem political leader was quoted as saying, "The whites are likely to ease back in here, and take Harlem away from us. After all, [Harlem is] the most attractive piece of real estate in the whole area. We've got hills and views of both rivers, and transportation is good, and it's the only close-in area that doesn't have any industry."

Only in planning theory does this make Harlem an "attractive piece of real estate." From the time of its white middle- and upper-class beginnings, Harlem never was a workable, economically vigorous residential district of a city, and it probably never will be, no matter who lives there, until it gets, among other physical improvements, a good, healthy mixture of work stirred alongside and among its stretches of dwellings.

Primary work uses in residential districts cannot be produced by wishing for them, any more than secondary diversity can be. Public policy can do relatively little that is positive to get working uses woven in where they are absent and needed in cities, other than to *permit* and indirectly encourage them.

But attempts at positive lures are not the most pressing first need in any case, nor the most fruitful way to spend efforts in gray areas that need vitality. The first problem is to make the most of any work and other primary-use chessmen where they already do exist in failing residential districts. The sample-shoe market in Louisville, although it is a strange example, cries out for such opportunism. Much of the borough of Brooklyn does, and some of the Bronx, and indeed, inner gray areas in almost all big cities.

How do you use the existing presence of working places opportunistically, and build from this? How do you weld them in to

help form, with dwellings, effective pools of street use? Here we must make a distinction between the typical downtown and the usual residential district in trouble. In downtowns, lack of sufficient primary mixture is usually the most serious basic handicap. In most residential districts, and especially most gray areas, lack of primary mixture is usually only one handicap, and sometimes not the most severe. Indeed, it is easy to find instances in which work is mixed with dwellings, yet to little avail in helping generate diversity or vigor. This is because most city residential districts also have blocks that are too large, or they were built up all at once and have never overcome this original handicap even as their buildings have aged, or very commonly they lack sufficient population in sheer numbers. In short, they are deficient in several of the four conditions for generating diversity.

Instead of worrying about where enough work is to come from, the first problem is to identify where, in residential districts, it does exist and is being wasted as an element of primary use. In cities you have to build from existing assets, to make more assets. To think how to make the most of work and dwelling mixtures, where they exist or give promise of existing, it is necessary to understand the parts played by the three other generators of diversity too.

However, I shall anticipate the discussion in the next three chapters to say this: Of the four generators of diversity, two represent easy problems to deal with in curing the troubles of gray areas—aged buildings are usually already present to do their potential share; and additional streets where they are needed are not innately difficult to acquire. (They are a minor problem compared with the large-scale land clearance we have been taught to waste our money on.)

The two other necessary conditions, however—mixtures of primary diversity and sufficient concentration of dwellings—are more difficult to create if they are lacking. The sensible thing is to begin where at least *one* of these two conditions already exists or can be fostered relatively easily.

The hardest city districts to deal with will be residential gray areas that lack infusions of work to build upon, and that also lack high densities of dwellings. Failing or failed city areas are in

trouble not so much because of what they have (which can always be regarded as a base to build upon), but because of what they lack. Gray areas with the most severe and the most difficult-to-supply lacks can hardly be helped toward vigor unless other gray-area districts that do have at least a start toward primary mixture are nurtured, and unless downtowns are reinvigorated with better spread of people through time of day. The more successfully a city generates diversity and vitality in any of its parts, of course, the better become its chances for building success, ultimately, in still other parts—including, eventually, those most discouraging to begin with.

It should go without saying that streets or districts which do have good primary mixtures and are successful at generating city diversity should be treasured, rather than despised for their mixture and destroyed by attempts to sort out their components from one another. But unfortunately, conventional planners seem to see in just such popular and attractive places only an irresistible invitation to employ the destructive and simple-minded purposes of orthodox city planning. Given enough federal funds and enough power, planners can easily destroy city primary mixtures faster than these can grow in unplanned districts, so that there is a net loss of basic primary mixture. Indeed, this is happening today.

# 9

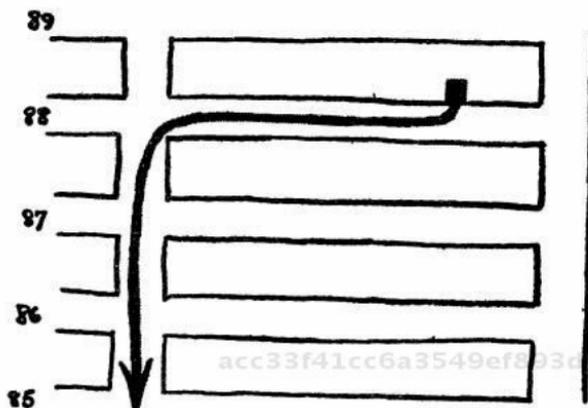
## The need for small blocks

**CONDITION 2:** *Most blocks must be short; that is, streets and opportunities to turn corners must be frequent.*

The advantages of short blocks are simple.

Consider, for instance, the situation of a man living on a long street block, such as West Eighty-eighth Street in Manhattan, between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue. He goes westward along his 800-foot block to reach the stores on Columbus Avenue or take the bus, and he goes eastward to reach the park, take the subway or another bus. He may very well never enter the adjacent blocks on Eighty-seventh Street and Eighty-ninth Street for years.

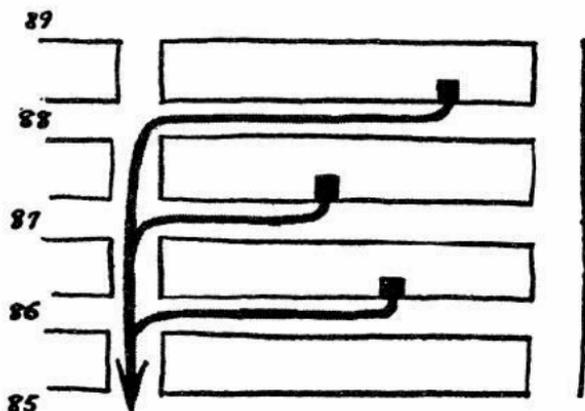
This brings grave trouble. We have already seen that isolated, discrete street neighborhoods are apt to be helpless socially. This man would have every justification for disbelieving that Eighty-seventh and Eighty-ninth streets or their people have anything to



do with him. To believe it, he has to go beyond the ordinary evidence of his everyday life.

So far as his neighborhood is concerned, the *economic* effect of these self-isolating streets is equally constricting. The people on this street, and the people on the adjacent streets can form a pool of economic use only where their long, separated paths meet and come together in one stream. In this case, the nearest place where that can happen is Columbus Avenue.

And because Columbus Avenue is the only nearby place where tens of thousands of people from these stagnant, long, backwater



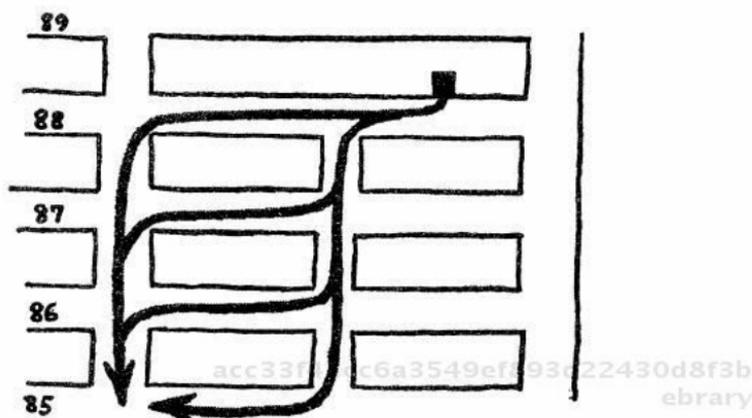
blocks meet and form a pool of use, Columbus Avenue has its own kind of monotony—endless stores and a depressing predominance of commercial standardization. In this neighborhood there is geographically so little street frontage on which commerce can live, that it must all be consolidated, regardless of its type or the scale of support it needs or the scale of convenience (distance from users) that is natural to it. Around about stretch the dismally long strips of monotony and darkness—the Great Blight of Dullness, with an abrupt garish gash at long intervals. This is a typical arrangement for areas of city failure.

This stringent physical segregation of the regular users of one street from the regular users of the next holds, of course, for visitors too. For instance, I have been going to a dentist on West Eighty-sixth Street just off Columbus Avenue for more than fifteen years. In all that time, although I have ranged north and south on Columbus, and north and south on Central Park West, I have never used West Eighty-fifth Street or West Eighty-seventh Street. It would be both inconvenient and pointless to do so. If I take the children, after the dentist, to the planetarium on West Eighty-first Street between Columbus and Central Park West, there is only one possible direct route: down Columbus and then into Eighty-first.

Let us consider, instead, the situation if these long east-west blocks had an extra street cut across them—not a sterile “promenade” of the kind in which super-block projects abound, but a street containing buildings where things could start up and grow at spots economically viable: places for buying, eating, seeing things, getting a drink. With the extra street, the Eighty-eighth Street man would no longer need to walk a monotonous, always-the-same path to a given point. He would have various alternative routes to choose. The neighborhood would literally have opened up to him.

The same would be true of people living on other streets, and for those nearer Columbus heading toward a point in the park or toward the subway. Instead of mutual isolation of paths, these paths would now be mixed and mingled with one another.

The supply of feasible spots for commerce would increase considerably, and so could the distribution and convenience of their

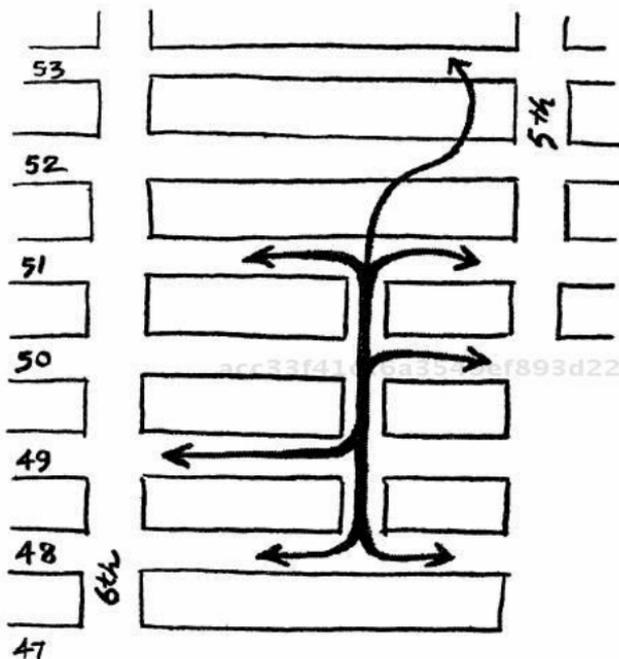


placement. If among the people on West Eighty-eighth there are a third enough people to support a newspaper and neighborhood oddment place somewhat like Bernie's around the corner from us, and the same might be said of Eighty-seventh and Eighty-ninth, now there would be a possibility that they might do so around one of their additional corners. As long as these people can never pool their support nearby except in one stream only, such distribution of services, economic opportunity and public life is an impossibility.

In the case of these long blocks, even people who are present in the neighborhood for the same primary reasons are kept too much apart to permit them to form reasonably intricate pools of city cross-use. Where differing primary uses are involved, long blocks are apt to thwart effective mixture in exactly the same way. They automatically sort people into paths that meet too infrequently, so that different uses very near each other geographically are, in practical effect, literally blocked off from one another.

To contrast the stagnation of these long blocks with the fluidity of use that an extra street could bring is not a far-fetched supposition. An example of such a transformation can be seen at Rockefeller Center, which occupies three of the long blocks between Fifth and Sixth avenues. Rockefeller Center has that extra street.

I ask those readers who are familiar with it to imagine it with-



out its extra north-south street, Rockefeller Plaza. If the center's buildings were continuous along each of its side streets all the way from Fifth to Sixth Avenue, it would no longer be a center of use. It could not be. It would be a group of self-isolated streets pooling only at Fifth and Sixth avenues. The most artful design in other respects could not tie it together, because it is fluidity of use, and the mixing of paths, not homogeneity of architecture, that ties together city neighborhoods into pools of city use, whether those neighborhoods are predominately for work or predominately for residence.

To the north, Rockefeller Center's street fluidity extends in diminished form, as far as Fifty-third Street, because of a block-through lobby and an arcade that people use as a further extension of the street. To the south, its fluidity as a pool of use ends abruptly along Forty-eighth Street. The next street down, Forty-seventh, is self-isolated. It is largely a wholesaling street (the center of gem wholesaling), a surprisingly marginal use for a

street that lies geographically next to one of the city's greatest attractions. But just like the users of Eighty-seventh and Eighty-eighth streets, the users of Forty-seventh and Forty-eighth streets can go for years without ever mixing into one another's streets.

Long blocks, in their nature, thwart the potential advantages that cities offer to incubation, experimentation, and many small or special enterprises, insofar as these depend upon drawing their customers or clients from among much larger cross-sections of passing public. Long blocks also thwart the principle that if city mixtures of use are to be more than a fiction on maps, they must result in different people, bent on different purposes, appearing at different times, but using the *same* streets.

Of all the hundreds of long blocks in Manhattan, a bare eight or ten are spontaneously enlivening with time or exerting magnetism.

It is instructive to watch where the overflow of diversity and popularity from Greenwich Village has spilled and where it has halted. Rents have steadily gone up in Greenwich Village, and predictors have regularly been predicting, for at least twenty-five years now, a renaissance of once fashionable Chelsea directly to the north. This prediction may seem logical because of Chelsea's location, because its mixtures and types of buildings and densities of dwelling units per acre are almost identical with those of Greenwich Village, and also because it even has a mixture of work with its dwellings. But the renaissance has never happened. Instead, Chelsea languishes behind its barriers of long, self-isolating blocks, decaying in most of them faster than it is rehabilitated in others. Today it is being extensively slum-cleared, and in the process endowed with even bigger and more monotonous blocks. (The pseudoscience of planning seems almost neurotic in its determination to imitate empiric failure and ignore empiric success.) Meantime, Greenwich Village has extended itself and its diversity and popularity far to the east, working outward through a little neck between industrial concentrations, following unerringly the direction of short blocks and fluid street use—even though the buildings in that direction are not so attractive or seemingly suitable as those in Chelsea. This movement in one direction and halt in another is neither capricious nor mysterious nor “a chaotic ac-

cident." It is a down-to-earth response to what works well economically for city diversity and what does not.

Another perennial "mystery" raised in New York is why the removal of the elevated railway along Sixth Avenue on the West Side stimulated so little change and added so little to popularity, and why the removal of the elevated railway along Third Avenue on the East Side stimulated so much change and added so greatly to popularity. But long blocks have made an economic monstrosity of the West Side, the more so because they occur toward the center of the island, precisely where the West Side's most effective pools of use would and should form, had they a chance. Short blocks occur on the East Side toward the center of the island, exactly where the most effective pools of use have had the best chance of forming and extending themselves.

Theoretically, almost all the short side streets of the East Side in the Sixties, Seventies and Eighties are residential only. It is instructive to notice how frequently and how nicely special shops like bookstores or dressmakers or restaurants have inserted themselves, usually, but not always, near the corners. The equivalent West Side does not support bookstores and never did. This is not because its successive discontented and deserting populations all had an aversion to reading nor because they were too poor to buy books. On the contrary the West Side is full of intellectuals and always has been. It is probably as good a "natural" market for books as Greenwich Village and possibly a better "natural" market than the East Side. Because of its long blocks, the West Side has never been physically capable of forming the intricate pools of fluid street use necessary to support urban diversity.

Going west from Fifth Avenue, the first three blocks, and in some places four, are 800 feet long, except where Broadway, on a diagonal, intersects. Going east from Fifth Avenue, the first four blocks vary between 400 and 420 feet in length. At Seventieth Street, to pick a random point where the two sides of the island are divided by Central Park, the 2,400 linear feet of building line between Central Park West and West End Avenue are intersected by *only two* avenues. On the east side, an equivalent length of building line extends from Fifth Avenue to a little beyond Second Avenue and is intersected by *five* avenues. The stretch of East Side with its five intersecting avenues is immensely more popular than the West Side with its two.

A reporter for the *New Yorker*, observing that people *try* to find an extra north-south passage in the too-long blocks between Fifth and Sixth avenues, once attempted to see if he could amalgamate a makeshift mid-block trail from Thirty-third Street to Rockefeller Center. He discovered reasonable, if erratic, means for short-cutting through nine of the blocks, owing to block-through stores and lobbies and Bryant Park behind the Forty-second Street Library. But he was reduced to wiggling under fences or clambering through windows or coaxing superintendents, to get through four of the blocks, and had to evade the issue by going into subway passages for two.

In city districts that become successful or magnetic, streets are virtually never made to disappear. Quite the contrary. Where it is possible, they multiply. Thus in the Rittenhouse Square district of Philadelphia and in Georgetown in the District of Columbia, what were once back alleys down the centers of blocks have become streets with buildings fronting on them, and users using them like streets. In Philadelphia, they often include commerce.

Nor do long blocks possess more virtue in other cities than they do in New York. In Philadelphia there is a neighborhood in which buildings are simply being let fall down by their owners, in an area between the downtown and the city's major belt of public housing projects. There are many reasons for this neighborhood's hopelessness, including the nearness of the rebuilt city with its social disintegration and danger, but obviously the neighborhood has not been helped by its own physical structure. The standard Philadelphia block is 400 feet square (halved by the alleys-become-streets where the city is most successful). In this falling-down neighborhood some of that "street waste" was eliminated in the original street layout; its blocks are 700 feet long. It stagnated, of course, beginning from the time it was built up. In Boston, the North End, which is a marvel of "wasteful" streets and fluidity of cross-use, has been heroically unslumming itself against official apathy and financial opposition.

The myth that plentiful city streets are "wasteful," one of the verities of orthodox planning, comes of course from the Garden City and Radiant City theorists who decried the use of land for streets because they wanted that land consolidated instead into

project prairies. This myth is especially destructive because it interferes intellectually with our ability to see one of the simplest, most unnecessary, and most easily corrected reasons for much stagnation and failure.

Super-block projects are apt to have all the disabilities of long blocks, frequently in exaggerated form, and this is true even when they are laced with promenades and malls, and thus, in theory, possess streets at reasonable intervals through which people can make their way. These streets are meaningless because there is seldom any active reason for a good cross-section of people to use them. Even in passive terms, simply as various alternative changes of scene in getting from here to yonder, these paths are meaningless because all their scenes are essentially the same. The situation is the opposite from that the *New Yorker* reporter noticed in the blocks between Fifth and Sixth avenues. There people try to hunt out streets which they need but which are missing. In projects, people are apt to avoid malls and cross-malls which are there, but are pointless.

I bring up this problem not merely to berate the anomalies of project planning again, but to indicate that frequent streets and short blocks are valuable because of the fabric of intricate cross-use that they permit among the users of a city neighborhood. Frequent streets are not an end in themselves. They are a means toward an end. If that end—generating diversity and catalyzing the plans of many people besides planners—is thwarted by too repressive zoning, or by regimented construction that precludes the flexible growth of diversity, nothing significant can be accomplished by short blocks. Like mixtures of primary use, frequent streets are effective in helping to generate diversity *only because of the way they perform*. The means by which they work (attracting mixtures of users along them) and the results they can help accomplish (the growth of diversity) are inextricably related. The relationship is reciprocal.

# 10

## The need for aged buildings

**CONDITION 3:** *The district must mingle buildings that vary in age and condition, including a good proportion of old ones.*

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ebrary

Cities need old buildings so badly it is probably impossible for vigorous streets and districts to grow without them. By old buildings I mean not museum-piece old buildings, not old buildings in an excellent and expensive state of rehabilitation—although these make fine ingredients—but also a good lot of plain, ordinary, low-value old buildings, including some rundown old buildings.

If a city area has only new buildings, the enterprises that can exist there are automatically limited to those that can support the high costs of new construction. These high costs of occupying new buildings may be levied in the form of rent, or they may be levied in the form of an owner's interest and amortization payments on the capital costs of the construction. However the

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costs are paid off, they have to be paid off. And for this reason, enterprises that support the cost of new construction must be capable of paying a relatively high overhead—high in comparison to that necessarily required by old buildings. To support such high overheads, the enterprises must be either (a) high profit or (b) well subsidized.

If you look about, you will see that only operations that are well established, high-turnover, standardized or heavily subsidized can afford, commonly, to carry the costs of new construction. Chain stores, chain restaurants and banks go into new construction. But neighborhood bars, foreign restaurants and pawn shops go into older buildings. Supermarkets and shoe stores often go into new buildings; good bookstores and antique dealers seldom do. Well-subsidized opera and art museums often go into new buildings. But the unformalized feeders of the arts—studios, galleries, stores for musical instruments and art supplies, backrooms where the low earning power of a seat and a table can absorb uneconomic discussions—these go into old buildings. Perhaps more significant, hundreds of ordinary enterprises, necessary to the safety and public life of streets and neighborhoods, and appreciated for their convenience and personal quality, can make out successfully in old buildings, but are inexorably slain by the high overhead of new construction.

As for really new ideas of any kind—no matter how ultimately profitable or otherwise successful some of them might prove to be—there is no leeway for such chancy trial, error and experimentation in the high-overhead economy of new construction. Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings.

Even the enterprises that can support new construction in cities need old construction in their immediate vicinity. Otherwise they are part of a total attraction and total environment that is economically too limited—and therefore functionally too limited to be lively, interesting and convenient. Flourishing diversity anywhere in a city means the mingling of high-yield, middling-yield, low-yield and no-yield enterprises.

The only harm of aged buildings to a city district or street is the harm that eventually comes of *nothing but* old age—the harm

that lies in everything being old and everything becoming worn out. But a city area in such a situation is not a failure because of being all old. It is the other way around. The area is all old because it is a failure. For some other reason or combination of reasons, all its enterprises or people are unable to support new construction. It has, perhaps, failed to hang on to its own people or enterprises that do become successful enough to support new building or rehabilitation; they leave when they become this successful. It has also failed to attract newcomers with choice; they see no opportunities or attractions here. And in some cases, such an area may be so infertile economically that enterprises which might grow into successes in other places, and build or rebuild their shelter, never make enough money in this place to do so.

A successful city district becomes a kind of ever-normal granary so far as construction is concerned. Some of the old buildings, year by year, are replaced by new ones—or rehabilitated to a degree equivalent to replacement. Over the years there is, therefore, constantly a mixture of buildings of many ages and types. This is, of course, a dynamic process, with what was once new in the mixture eventually becoming what is old in the mixture.

We are dealing here again, as we were in the case of mixed primary uses, with the economic effects of time. But in this case we are dealing with the economics of time not hour by hour through the day, but with the economics of time by decades and generations.

Time makes the high building costs of one generation the bargains of a following generation. Time pays off original capital costs, and this depreciation can be reflected in the yields required from a building. Time makes certain structures obsolete for some enterprises, and they become available to others. Time can make

These are all reasons having to do with inherent, built-in handicaps. There is another reason, however, why some city districts age unremittingly, and this other reason has nothing to do, necessarily, with inherent flaws. The district may have been blacklisted, in a concerted way, by mortgage lenders, the way Boston's North End has been. This means of dooming a neighborhood to inexorable wearing out is both common and destructive. But for the moment we are dealing with the conditions that affect a city area's inherent economic ability to generate diversity and staying power.

the space efficiencies of one generation the space luxuries of another generation. One century's building commonplace is another century's useful aberration.

The economic necessity for old buildings mixed with new is not an oddity connected with the precipitous rise in building costs since the war, and especially throughout the 1950's. To be sure, the difference between the yield most postwar building must bring and the yield that pre-Depression buildings must bring is especially sharp. In commercial space, the difference between carrying costs per square foot can be as much as 100 or 200 percent, even though the older buildings may be better built than the new, and even though the maintenance costs of all buildings, including old ones, have risen. Old buildings were a necessary ingredient of city diversity back in the 1920's and the 1890's. Old buildings will still be a necessity when today's new buildings are the old ones. This has been, still is, and will be, true no matter how erratic or how steady construction costs themselves are, because a depreciated building requires less income than one which has not yet paid off its capital costs. Steadily rising construction costs simply accentuate the need for old buildings. Possibly they also make necessary a higher *proportion* of old buildings in the total street or district mixture, because rising building costs raise the general threshold of pecuniary success required to support the costs of new construction.

A few years ago, I gave a talk at a city design conference about the social need for commercial diversity in cities. Soon my words began coming back at me from designers, planners and students in the form of a slogan (which I certainly did not invent): "We must leave room for the corner grocery store!"

At first I thought this must be a figure of speech, the part standing for the whole. But soon I began to receive in the mail plans and drawings for projects and renewal areas in which, literally, room had been left here and there at great intervals for a corner grocery store. These schemes were accompanied by letters that said, "See, we have taken to heart what you said."

This corner-grocery gimmick is a thin, patronizing conception

of city diversity, possibly suited to a village of the last century, but hardly to a vital city district of today. Lone little groceries, in fact, do badly in cities as a rule. They are typically a mark of stagnant and undiverse gray area.

Nevertheless, the designers of these sweetly meant inanities were not simply being perverse. They were doing, probably, the best they could under the economic conditions set for them. A suburban-type shopping center at some place in the project, and this wan spotting of corner groceries, were the most that could be hoped for. For these were schemes contemplating either great blankets of new construction, or new construction combined with extensive, prearranged rehabilitation. Any vigorous range of diversity was precluded in advance by the consistently high overhead. (The prospects are made still poorer by insufficient primary mixtures of uses and therefore insufficient spread of customers through the day.)

Even the lone groceries, if they were ever built,\* could hardly be the cozy enterprises envisioned by their designers. To carry their high overhead, they must either be (a) subsidized—by whom and why?—or (b) converted into routinized, high-turn-over mills.

Large swatches of construction built at one time are inherently inefficient for sheltering wide ranges of cultural, population, and business diversity. They are even inefficient for sheltering much range of mere commercial diversity. This can be seen at a place like Stuyvesant Town in New York. In 1959, more than a decade after operation began, of the 32 store fronts that comprise Stuyvesant Town's commercial space, seven were either empty or were being used uneconomically (for storage, window advertising only, and the like). This represented disuse or underuse of 22 percent of the fronts. At the same time, across the bordering streets, where buildings of every age and condition are mingled, were 140 store fronts, of which 11 were empty or used uneconomically, representing a disuse or underuse of only 7 percent. Actually, the disparity is greater than this would appear, because

\* They are usually dropped from the plans, or indefinitely postponed, at the time when the economic realities of rents must be faced.

the empty fronts in the old streets were mostly small, and in linear feet represented less than 7 percent, a condition which was not true of the project stores. The good business side of the street is the age-mingled side, even though a great share of its customers are Stuyvesant Town people, and even though they must cross wide and dangerous traffic arteries to reach it. This reality is acknowledged by the chain stores and supermarkets too, which have been building new quarters in the age-mingled setting instead of filling those empty fronts in the project.

One-age construction in city areas is sometimes protected nowadays from the threat of more efficient and responsive commercial competition. This protection—which is nothing more or less than commercial monopoly—is considered very “progressive” in planning circles. The Society Hill renewal plan for Philadelphia will, by zoning, prevent competition to its developer’s shopping centers throughout a whole city district. The city’s planners have also worked out a “food plan” for the area, which means offering a monopolistic restaurant concession to a single restaurant chain for the whole district. Nobody else’s food allowed! The Hyde Park-Kenwood renewal district of Chicago reserves a monopoly on almost all commerce for a suburban-type shopping center to be the property of that plan’s principal developer. In the huge Southwest redevelopment district of Washington, the major housing developer seems to be going so far as to eliminate competition with himself. The original plans for this scheme contemplated a central, suburban-type shopping center plus a smattering of convenience stores—our old friend, the lonely corner grocery gimmick. A shopping center economist predicted that these convenience stores might lead to diminished business for the main, suburban-type center which, itself, will have to support high overhead. To protect it, the convenience stores were dropped from the scheme. It is thus that routinized monopolistic packages of substitute city are palmed off as “planned shopping.”

Monopoly planning can make financial successes of such inherently inefficient and stagnant one-age operations. But it cannot thereby create, in some magical fashion, an equivalent to city diversity. Nor can it substitute for the inherent efficiency, in cities, of mingled age and inherently varied overhead.

Age of buildings, in relation to usefulness or desirability, is an extremely relative thing. Nothing in a vital city district seems to be too old to be chosen for use by those who have choice—or to have its place taken, finally, by something new. And this usefulness of the old is not simply a matter of architectural distinction or charm. In the Back-of-the-Yards, Chicago, no weather-beaten, undistinguished, run-down, presumably obsolete frame house seems to be too far gone to lure out savings and to instigate borrowing—because this is a neighborhood that people are not leaving as they achieve enough success for choice. In Greenwich Village, almost no old building is scorned by middle-class families hunting a bargain in a lively district, or by rehabilitators seeking a golden egg. In successful districts, old buildings “filter up.”

At the other extreme, in Miami Beach, where novelty is the sovereign remedy, hotels ten years old are considered aged and are passed up because others are newer. Newness, and its superficial gloss of well-being, is a very perishable commodity.

Many city occupants and enterprises have no need for new construction. The floor of the building in which this book is being written is occupied also by a health club with a gym, a firm of ecclesiastical decorators, an insurgent Democratic party reform club, a Liberal party political club, a music society, an accordionists' association, a retired importer who sells maté by mail, a man who sells paper and who also takes care of shipping the maté, a dental laboratory, a studio for watercolor lessons, and a maker of costume jewelry. Among the tenants who were here and gone shortly before I came in, were a man who rented out tuxedos, a union local and a Haitian dance troupe. There is no place for the likes of us in new construction. And the last thing we need is new construction. What we need, and a lot of others need, is old construction in a lively district, which some among us can help make livelier.

Nor is new residential building in cities an unadulterated good. Many disadvantages accompany new residential city building; and

No, the *last* thing we need is some paternalist weighing whether we are sufficiently noncontroversial to be admitted to subsidized quarters in a Utopian dream city.

the value placed on various advantages, or the penalties accruing from certain disadvantages, are given different weights by different people. Some people, for instance, prefer more space for the money (or equal space for less money) to a new dinette designed for midgets. Some people like walls they don't hear through. This is an advantage they can get with many old buildings but not with new apartments, whether they are public housing at \$14 a room per month or luxury housing at \$95 a room per month. Some people would rather pay for improvements in their living conditions partly in labor and ingenuity, and by selecting which improvements are most important to them, instead of being indiscriminately improved, and all at a cost of money. In spontaneously unslumming slums, where people are staying by choice, it is easy to observe how many ordinary citizens have heard of color, lighting and furnishing devices for converting deep or dismal spaces into pleasant and useful rooms, have heard of bedroom air-conditioning and of electric window fans, have learned about taking out non-bearing partitions, and have even learned about throwing two too small flats into one. Minglings of old buildings, with consequent minglings in living costs and tastes, are essential to get diversity and stability in residential populations, as well as diversity in enterprises.

Among the most admirable and enjoyable sights to be found along the sidewalks of big cities are the ingenious adaptations of old quarters to new uses. The town-house parlor that becomes a craftsman's showroom, the stable that becomes a house, the basement that becomes an immigrants' club, the garage or brewery that becomes a theater, the beauty parlor that becomes the ground floor of a duplex, the warehouse that becomes a factory for Chinese food, the dancing school that becomes a pamphlet printer's, the cobbler's that becomes a church with lovingly painted windows—the stained glass of the poor—the butcher shop that becomes a restaurant: these are the kinds of minor changes

“Dear, are you sure the stove is one of the 51 exciting reasons we're living in Washington Square Village?” asks the wife in a cartoon issued by protesting tenants in an expensive New York redevelopment project. “You'll have to speak up, honey,” replies the husband. “Our neighbor just flushed his toilet.”

forever occurring where city districts have vitality and are responsive to human needs.

Consider the history of the no-yield space that has recently been rehabilitated by the Arts in Louisville Association as a theater, music room, art gallery, library, bar and restaurant. It started life as a fashionable athletic club, outlived that and became a school, then the stable of a dairy company, then a riding school, then a finishing and dancing school, another athletic club, an artist's studio, a school again, a blacksmith's, a factory, a warehouse, and it is now a flourishing center of the arts. Who could anticipate or provide for such a succession of hopes and schemes? Only an unimaginative man would think he could; only an arrogant man would want to.

These eternal changes and permutations among old city buildings can be called makeshifts only in the most pedantic sense. It is rather that a form of raw material has been found in the right place. It has been put to a use that might otherwise be unborn.

What is makeshift and woebegone is to see city diversity outlawed. Outside the vast, middle-income Bronx project of Parkchester, where the standardized, routinized commerce (with its share of empty fronts) is protected from unauthorized competition or augmentation within the project, we can see such an outcast huddle, supported by Parkchester people. Beyond a corner of the project, hideously clumped on a stretch of pocked asphalt left over from a gas station, are a few of the other things the project people apparently need: quick loans, musical instruments, camera exchange, Chinese restaurant, odd-lot clothing. How many other needs remain unfilled? What is wanted becomes academic when mingled building age is replaced by the economic rigor mortis of one-age construction, with its inherent inefficiency and consequent need for forms of "protectionism."

Cities need a mingling of old buildings to cultivate primary-diversity mixtures, as well as secondary diversity. In particular, they need old buildings to incubate new primary diversity.

If the incubation is successful enough, the yield of the buildings can, and often does, rise. Grady Clay reports that this is already observable, for instance, in the Louisville sample-shoe market.

"Rents were very low when the market began to attract shoppers," he says. "For a shop about twenty feet by forty feet, they were \$25 to \$50 a month. They have already gone up to about \$75." Many a city's enterprises which become important economic assets start small and poor, and become able, eventually, to afford carrying costs of rehabilitation or new construction. But this process could not occur without that low-yield space in the right place, in which to start.

Areas where better mixtures of primary diversity must be cultivated will have to depend heavily on old buildings, especially at the beginning of deliberate attempts to catalyze diversity. If Brooklyn, New York, as an example, is ever to cultivate the quantity of diversity and degree of attraction and liveliness it needs, it must take maximum economic advantage of combinations of residence and work. Without these primary combinations, in effective and concentrated proportions, it is hard to see how Brooklyn can begin to catalyze its potential for secondary diversity.

Brooklyn cannot well compete with suburbs for capturing big and well-established manufacturers seeking a location. At least it cannot at present, certainly not by trying to beat out the suburbs at *their* game, on their terms. Brooklyn has quite different assets. If Brooklyn is to make the most of work-residence primary mixtures, it must depend mainly on incubating work enterprises, and then holding on to them as long as it can. While it has them, it must combine them with sufficiently high concentrations of residential population, and with short blocks, to make the most of their presence. The more it makes of their presence, the more firmly it is apt to hold work uses.

But to incubate those work uses, Brooklyn needs old buildings, needs them for exactly the task they fulfill there. For Brooklyn is quite an incubator. Each year, more manufacturing enterprises leave Brooklyn for other locations than move into Brooklyn from elsewhere. Yet the number of factories in Brooklyn has been constantly growing. A thesis prepared by three students at Brooklyn's Pratt Institute explains this paradox well:

Stuart Cohen, Stanley Kogan and Frank Marcellino.

The secret is that Brooklyn is an incubator of industry. Small businesses are constantly being started there. A couple of machinists, perhaps, will get tired of working for someone else and start out for themselves in the back of a garage. They'll prosper and grow; soon they will get too big for the garage and move to a rented loft; still later they buy a building. When they outgrow that, and have to build for themselves, there is a good chance they will move out to Queens, or Nassau or New Jersey. But in the meantime, twenty or fifty or a hundred more like them will have started up.

Why do they move when they build for themselves? For one thing, Brooklyn offers too few attractions aside from those a new industry finds are necessities—old buildings and nearness to the wide range of other skills and supplies a small enterprise must have. For another, little or no effort has been made to plan for working needs—e.g., great sums of money are spent on highways choked with private automobiles rushing into the city and out of it; no comparable thought or money is spent on trucking expressways for manufacturers who use the city's old buildings, its docks and its railways.

Brooklyn, like most of our city areas in decline, has more old buildings than it needs. To put it another way, many of its neighborhoods have for a long time lacked gradual increments of new buildings. Yet if Brooklyn is ever to build upon its inherent assets and advantages—which is the only way successful city

Cost of land, conventionally assumed to be a significant deterrent today to building in the city for expanding businesses, has been steadily diminishing in ratio to construction costs, and to almost all other costs. When Time, Inc., decided to build on an expensive plot of ground near the center of Manhattan, for example, instead of on much cheaper ground near the edge, it based its decision on a host of reasons, among which was the fact that taxi fares alone for employees' business trips from the inconvenient site would come to more, per year, than the difference in land carrying costs! Stephen G. Thompson of *Architectural Forum* has made the (unpublished) observation that redevelopment subsidies frequently bring the cost of city land lower than the cost of carpet for the buildings. To justify land costs higher than carpet costs, a city has to be a *city*, not a machine or a desert.

building can be done—many of those old buildings, well distributed, will be essential to the process. Improvement must come by supplying the conditions for generating diversity that are missing, not by wiping out old buildings in great swathes.

We can see around us, from the days preceding project building, many examples of decaying city neighborhoods built up all at once. Frequently such neighborhoods have begun life as fashionable areas; sometimes they have had instead a solid middle-class start. Every city has such physically homogeneous neighborhoods.

Usually just such neighborhoods have been handicapped in every way, so far as generating diversity is concerned. We cannot blame their poor staying power and stagnation entirely on their most obvious misfortune: being built all at once. Nevertheless, this is one of the handicaps of such neighborhoods, and unfortunately its effects can persist long after the buildings have become aged.

When such an area is new, it offers no economic possibilities to city diversity. The practical penalties of dullness, from this and other causes, stamp the neighborhood early. It becomes a place to leave. By the time the buildings have indeed aged, their only useful city attribute is low value, which by itself is not enough.

Neighborhoods built up all at once change little physically over the years as a rule. The little physical change that does occur is for the worse—gradual dilapidation, a few random, shabby new uses here and there. People look at these few, random differences and regard them as evidence, and perhaps as cause, of drastic change. Fight blight! They regret that the neighborhood has changed. Yet the fact is, physically it has changed remarkably little. People's feelings about it, rather, have changed. The neighborhood shows a strange inability to update itself, enliven itself, repair itself, or to be sought after, out of choice, by a new generation. It is dead. Actually it was dead from birth, but nobody noticed this much until the corpse began to smell.

Finally comes the decision, after exhortations to fix up and fight blight have failed, that the whole thing must be wiped out and a new cycle started. Perhaps some of the old buildings will

be left if they can be "renewed" into the economic equivalent of new buildings. A new corpse is laid out. It does not smell yet, but it is just as dead, just as incapable of the constant adjustments, adaptations and permutations that make up the processes of life.

There is no reason why this dismal, foredoomed cycle need be repeated. If such an area is examined to see which of the other three conditions for generating diversity are missing, and then those missing conditions are corrected as well as they can be, some of the old buildings must go: extra streets must be added, the concentration of people must be heightened, room for new primary uses must be found, public and private. But a good mingling of the old buildings must remain, and in remaining they will have become something more than mere decay from the past or evidence of previous failure. They will have become the shelter which is necessary, and valuable to the district, for many varieties of middling-, low- and no-yield diversity. The economic value of new buildings is replaceable in cities. It is replaceable by the spending of more construction money. But the economic value of old buildings is irreplaceable at will. It is created by time. This economic requisite for diversity is a requisite that vital city neighborhoods can only inherit, and then sustain over the years.