City of Brisbane
Planning Commission Agenda Report

TO: Planning Commission   For the Meeting of August 28, 2008

FROM: John Swiecki, Principal Planner, via William Prince, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Sierra Point: Design Guidelines Amendment DGA-1-08; Proposal by the City of Brisbane to update and amend the *Combined Site and Architectural Design Guidelines for Sierra Point* in their entirety.

Request:

The City of Brisbane is proposing to update the *Combined Site and Architectural Design Guidelines for Sierra Point* in their entirety. A copy of the draft Guidelines dated August 2008 was provided to the Commission under separate cover and is also available for review at the City of Brisbane Community Development Department. This update, focused on strengthening Sierra Point's identity and the creation and enhancement of public spaces at Sierra Point, was authorized by the City Council in 2006.

Recommendation:

That the Planning Commission approve the *Combined Site and Architectural Design Guidelines for Sierra Point* dated August, 2008 per adoption of resolution DGA-1-08

Environmental Determination:

The project constitutes a planning study, which is statutorily exempt from CEQA review pursuant to Section 15262 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Background and Discussion:

The Sierra Point Design Guidelines were originally adopted in the early 1980's to facilitate the development of Sierra Point as a suburban office park. This vision for Sierra Point has remained unchanged for the past 25 years, although the Design Guidelines have been amended from time to time to address particular building sites or design standards. Approximately half of Sierra Point has been developed pursuant to the original master plan concept.

Over the past several years, concerns have been raised regarding the desirability of continued buildout of Sierra Point pursuant to the approved Master Plan. Concerns regarding the lack of vitality and slow pace of buildout were expressed when an extension to the Sierra Point Development Agreement was granted in 2005. City-sponsored placemaking workshops conducted in 2005 by Project for Public Spaces (PPS) highlighted concerns regarding the limited public spaces and community amenities provided at Sierra Point. A recurring theme in the various discussions was that with its bayside location and attractive setting, Sierra Point offers a great of potential which to date has not been realized. This stimulated

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considerable dialogue regarding what could be done to improve Sierra Point as both a community amenity and business destination. This ongoing dialogue coincided with renewed private development interest in Sierra Point.

The alignment of community concerns and renewed development interest created the opportunity to re-evaluate the future of Sierra Point, with particular emphasis on increasing its value and usefulness to the community, while achieving its potential as a vibrant employment center. The City Council hired Freedman Tung and Bottomley (FTB) to review and update the existing Design Guidelines. The major objectives of FTB's work program were to strengthen the public realm at Sierra Point, evaluate how pending and future private development relates to the public realm, and determine how this relationship could be strengthened to the benefit of both the public space and private development.

Over the past two years, FTB has engaged the stakeholders at Sierra Point, and held a series of work sessions with the Planning Commission and City Council to discuss their observations and preliminary recommendations. The results of these previous workshops form the basis for the draft Design Guidelines now presented for the Commission's consideration. Staff has attached the staff report and minutes from the June 27, 2007 Planning Commission/City Council workshop for the Commission's information, as the issues as discussed in the report serve as the foundation for the draft Design Guidelines.

On the basis of the direction provided at the June 27, 2008 meeting, the Sierra Point Biotech project was approved in June, 2008 with a parking structure and retail liner along the south side of Sierra Point Parkway. This retail liner has been designed to create a southern edge for the plaza and include uses which will also help activate this space.

As the optimal location for Sierra Point Plaza occurs on property that is under private ownership, there was extensive discussion regarding a potential land swap to implement the Plaza, and an application was received from UPC to establish a hotel/condominium development shifted northerly to establish the Plaza as proposed. The City Council direction at the June 27 2007 meeting was to allow the Planning Commission to have input on the concept of a land swap in the context of the overall buildout of Sierra Point. In an effort to allow the review process for the hotel/condo project to commence, on July 8, 2008 the City Attorney presented a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the City Council to allow the proposed hotel application on a portion of city-owned land to begin. This MOU did not constitute a development approval, nor did it imply that a land swap would ultimately be approved. Because residential use as a land use at Sierra Point is a controversial subject, the City Council did not approve the MOU. While it is unfortunate that the plaza and the residential aspect of the hotel were discussed in the same MOU, it should be understood that the plaza concept is not dependent on a condominium hotel project. This issue is further discussed in the following analysis section.

Analysis:

FTB will make a presentation at the August 28 Commission meeting regarding the draft updated Guidelines.

In summary, the Guidelines update includes three basic components. The first is to reformat and reorganize the document in its entirety to enhance usability, including the addition of graphics throughout. The second element is to update the Guidelines to reflect current site conditions, including both existing and approved development and infrastructure. This is incorporated into Chapter 2 of the draft document.

The third component involves substantive changes throughout the document to strengthen the sense of place at Sierra Point and enhance the public realm.   The following are recommended revisions of note:

- Refinement of the project objectives to address project identity, sense of place and public spaces;
- Modification of the Master Plan to incorporate an approximately 1 acre public plaza (Sierra Point Plaza) at the easterly terminus of Sierra Point Parkway at Marina Boulevard. Sierra Point Plaza will be the public focal point for Sierra Point, serving as a community gathering space activated by public, visitor and employee usage, and the interaction of the plaza with surrounding uses;
- Establishment of a vehicular and pedestrian system surrounding Sierra Point Plaza which recognizes and supports the design and function of the Plaza;
- Reconfiguration of buildings surrounding Sierra Point Plaza to address and support this focal point;
- Design Guidelines for Sierra Point Plaza, the surrounding streetscape, and buildings   which will frame the plaza;
- Recognition of Sierra Point Parkway as the key gateway into Sierra Point, and design guidelines for streetscape and landscape improvements to upgrade the appearance of this roadway in recognition of its gateway function;
- Establishment of a wayfinding program, a consistent program of signage and interpretation to help the public more easily navigate Sierra Point.

Land Swap

As noted previously, the City Council requested input from the Planning Commission on the land swap in the context of the Design Guidelines update. The suggested concept and location of the plaza is the result of design studies by FTB. The plaza is a major element of strengthening the public realm at Sierra Point and is meant to be a public benefit. The need to update the design guidelines for Sierra Point became obvious to staff, as much of the remainder of Sierra Point was being proposed for development, without the benefit of a strong public realm. It seems obvious to even to causal observation that the public realm at Sierra Point does not work well. There is no sense of place at Sierra Point. The organization of the public space lacks what is fundamental to good photography-good composition. There is no focus to the public realm at Sierra Point and the experience of Sierra Point is one of wandering around on vaguely defined pathways. Sierra Point needs a public space focal point. Good place making does not consist of cafeterias inside of work places.

Whether the hotel site was to be located a few hundred feet to the north, or remain as originally planned, makes no substantial difference, other than to allow for the possibility of a plaza
If the plaza is a good idea in and of itself, then one pertinent question would seem to be, what is the most desirable location? The only other alternative places to locate the plaza that would not require a land swap would be on the city owned parking areas to the north and southeast of the hotel site. Neither of these locations makes sense compared to the proposed location of the plaza. The proposed location is adjacent to the marina at the terminus of Sierra Point Parkway, the main circulatory spine of Sierra Point. This location allows the plaza to be surrounded on three sides by buildings large enough to provide protection from the elements, while having grand views to the east. Neither of the two other possible locations have the benefit of this synergy. While there are good views to the north, even with a hotel, those views would still be available to the public from the coastal trail, along the north side. There is no additional significant value from having those views available from a parking lot.

It should be noted that the design guidelines do not establish land use. Land use issues are addressed in the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. While the occupants of the condominiums would certainly help activate the plaza, they are not necessary to the plaza. Boat owners, office employees, hotel guests and

members of the general public would all benefit from a well defined pubic space at Sierra Point. The marina contains 500 boat slips and these users would benefit from a plaza and from the existence of adjacent retail shops and services. Regardless of what happens on the hotel site in the future, the design guidelines should support the concept of a plaza and the space necessary to establish it in the proper location. Staff believes the proposed location is the ideal location for a plaza. So do our consulting urban designers. Fred Kent's "place making" design group, PPS, would undoubtedly agree, as well. While the retail liner on the parking garage of the biotech campus makes sense as a stand alone row of retail spaces, it makes considerable more sense with the synergy that would be created by the plaza space.

As can be gleaned from the attached minutes of past meetings, the apparent minority opposition to the concept of the plaza is lacking in valid arguments on the question of whether the plaza makes sense from the standpoint of good design and place making.

Attachments:

June 25, 2007 City Council/Planning Commission joint workshop staff report and minutes
Resolution DGA-1-08

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City of Brisbane
Agenda Report

TO: City Council and Planning Commission via City Manager

FROM: William Prince, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Public Realm Design and Supporting Development at Sierra Point

MEETING OF: June 25, 2007

CITY COUNCIL GOALS:

1. To design infrastructure and public facilities to be as efficient cost effective and to contribute to the cohesion and character of the community.
2. To promote economic development that stabilizes and diversifies the tax base.
3. To develop plans and pursue opportunities to enhance open space.
4. To preserve and enhance livability.
5. To encourage community involvement and participation.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive presentations from staff and consultants, Greg Tung (FTB) and Tim Kelly (KMA), and conceptually approve the design for a revised public realm at Sierra Point, including the land trades necessary to establish and locate a new public park/plaza. In addition, provide direction to staff regarding City participation in support of a level of retail commercial development that will ensure the activation of the new public space.

BACKGROUND:

Peter Calthorpe, one of the new urbanism movement's founding members, identified a principle of fundamental importance to the planning of all communities when he stated, "The public realm is formative not residual." This simple, yet profound, statement recognizes the important role that the public realm has played in creating healthy communities and supporting civic life, from the days of the ancient Greek agora and the Roman forum to the establishment of the village greens, in the early towns of New England. To further emphasize this point, it is worth noting that in 1573, King Philip II of Spain issued the "Laws of the Indies," a series of ordinances regulating the design of

colonial cities in the New World. The Open Space Ordinance stated that "the main plaza is to be the starting point for the new town."

Lennard and Lennard, in their excellent publication "Livable Cities Observed" state that:

> "Urban public space is the single most important element in establishing a city's livability. A centrally located public space can function as the heart of the community generating positive energy and a sense of membership. In the streets and squares accessible to all the dialogue essential to a democratic society may flourish."

While a number of authors have noted the importance of the public realm to the development of healthy communities, the Lennards also observe that there appears to be a relationship between the lack of public space and increased social disorder (see attachment "A," Public Space Design and The Public Realm and the Good City). This concern further underscores the importance of providing public realm.

The second reading by Hedman and Jaszewski (see attachment "B," Fundamentals of Urban Design), argues that one of the consequences of modern architecture's radical departure from traditional architecture has been the neglect of urban design (the space between the buildings). The basic attitude behind the modern architectural movement was to do the extreme opposite, in every way, from traditional architecture. As the authors note,

> In the high excitement of the architectural revolution, when the symbols of an oppressive past were being jettisioned, something else at the heart and soul of urban design that constituted the acquired wisdom of great importance was also tossed out. Hidden in the belt courses, capitals and brackets was a concern for the definition and dramatization of exterior spaces. Encapsulated within traditional architecture was an attitude toward the street that viewed architectural expression as a form of urban theater. Individual buildings played well-defined parts in the larger drama, subordinating themselves according to the requirements of the role. What was lost was the understanding that urban design is a function of architecture.

This neglect for urban design, in much of modern architecture, has social consequences that are not often adequately appreciated. Winston Churchill once said that, "we shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us." Churchill recognized the important social role that architecture can play.

In the aforementioned reading, the authors also state that:

> "Space has a quicksilver nature that makes it an elusive quarry to capture and define. Holding space in place requires not only strong walls but walls that grip and hold slivers and chunks of space. This is accomplished by deep large scale indentations, bold sculptural projections and rich texture."

Further they state, that "light and airy buildings ultra-flat smooth facades and polished reflective surfaces are opposite in character to the masonry wall and do not define space well." Decoration, long viewed as a useless activity and a waste of material, now can be viewed in light of the requirements of spatial definition."

SIERRA POINT:

In the late 1970's, Sierra Point was planned as a suburban style commercial office park including hotel, convention center, restaurant and recreational uses. As part of the approval, the City required the dedication of the easterly 20 acres for a marina. The Design Guidelines for Sierra Point indicate that "the style of the architecture will be very contemporary with the design stressing the grandeur of simple forms." In addition, that "the same forms should be further articulated by creating exterior balconies, terraces and many corner office spaces which increase the tenants contact with the bay and the Brisbane Marina."

Of particular interest, the design guidelines also stress that "a rhythmic repetition of certain design elements is essential to maintain continuity of the dual office/recreational theme." Included in these repetitive design elements is the thought that "open plazas near the buildings along the Bay should be contiguous to public open space." Further, that "buildings should be grouped to create substantial plaza areas and to provide opportunities for office users to enjoy the out doors as well as to provide place for people to congregate."

Individually speaking, most of the buildings at Sierra Point have turned out to be above average for this "very contemporary" style of architecture (essentially Corporatism) exhibiting some interesting sculptural attributes. However, it is difficult to come to the same conclusion about the spaces around the buildings at Sierra Point. In fact, the arrangement of the buildings fails to adequately capture space for some of the very reasons cited in the reading material. Despite some sculptural interest, the buildings do not do a good job of defining space. Their smooth and somewhat curved surfaces and their location in the middle of the parcels let the surrounding space escape containment.

According to the design guidelines, "the buildings should be grouped to create substantial plaza areas." While substantial open areas do exists around the buildings, they are ill defined and fail to create desirable places to congregate. This seems in conflict with the basic idea that a plaza should be enclosed like an "outdoor room." The reading material suggests that the size, shape and floor configuration are important ingredients to the creation of successful plazas. One of the examples cited in the reading materials is the failed attempt to create "the modern equivalent of a Renaissance plaza" with the Boston Government Center Plaza. The excessive size of the space and the lack of sufficient enclosure from buildings surrounding the plaza are the problem. Although it is a completely different setting, this helps illustrate why the "open plazas" at Sierra Point don't really work.

One of the consequences of the "sculptures in the park" suburban office park model is that the placement of the buildings leads to a considerable amount of surface parking in front of the buildings, rather than hidden behind. Although one parking structure has been built, it is an uninteresting monolithic concrete structure that detracts from the character of the

existing buildings and creates dead space. The importance of designing parking structures (especially those in highly visible locations) that don't detract from the architectural character of the buildings and public space should not be over-looked.

Considerable attention is given in the Sierra Point design guidelines to landscape design. Although there has been some degree of success with the establishment of the landscape at Sierra Point, a combination of insufficient plant materials and a hostile micro-climate (wind, soil depth and salt air) have resulted in a less than fully satisfactory outcome. This should be addressed in the revisions to the design guidelines to set higher expectations from subsequent development.

As the City Council and the Planning Commission are aware, after several years of inactivity, there has been a renewed interest in the remaining development potential at Sierra Point. The City is currently considering development permit applications for a five building biotech campus with a parking structure, an 800 room resort hotel/condominium project, and the staff has been approached by developers about the potential for additional office, retail and residential development. Whether or not these particular developments go forward, at some point, Sierra Point will eventually build out.

While the establishment of the marina and other public amenities at Sierra Point represents a great accomplishment for the City, notwithstanding the remaining vacant land, there is a lingering sense of a lack of completion to the public realm. From the lack of a "sense of entry," at the west end to the absence of a "sense of arrival" at the Marina, Sierra Point and the Parkway spine still lack a strong "sense of place." Despite these problems, there is still time and opportunity to redirect the remaining build out of Sierra Point, to ensure that the public realm is "formative." All subsequent development at Sierra Point, and particularly in the Marina area, should be made to support and compliment the public realm.

By including the attached readings, staff has tried to provide the Council and the Commission with concepts and examples of how space can be defined and captured to create great public places. In connection with the general plan update, we have also discussed new urbanism and place making which incorporate many of same principals. In fact, as the last part of their contract with the City, the Project for Public Spaces (Fred Kent) made a preliminary assessment of Sierra Point and developed a draft of "10 Guiding Principals for Sierra Point" (attachment C).

Since last year, we have been discussing the evolution of a new public plaza or park. Whether you call it a green or a plaza it is important to consider the relationship between the space and the surrounding buildings. As the examples from the readings demonstrate, "plaza space should have the feel of an outdoor room and possess an intense three dimensional quality." While this is somewhat more of a challenge at Sierra Point, because of the desirability of maintaining a relatively open view to the east, the principles are still the same. The visitor should feel a degree of enclosure that provides protection from the elements and a sense of intimacy that invites and prolongs social gatherings.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

To help with the revisions to the Sierra Point design guidelines to enhance the public realm, the City has retained the services of Freedman, Tung and Bottomley, (FTB), a local urban design firm. FTB has developed revised design concepts for the public realm for Council consideration. These concepts can be further refined and incorporated into the design guidelines for Sierra Point. Once established, these guidelines would help to ensure that all subsequent development conforms to the intentions of the City.

In November of last year FTB provided a strategy, in the way of a set of draft goals for the update of the design guidelines (attached D). In addition, FTB provided some draft design concepts for a new public park/plaza near the Marina and for an enhanced Sierra Point Parkway, as the main spine through the district. Greg Tung, a Principal of FTB, will be at the meeting to further describe the design of these public realm areas and to discuss the important relationship, between the public park/plaza and the design of the buildings that may eventually surround that space.

LAND USE/ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS:

Another very important aspect of making a successful place making is to ensure that the uses in the adjacent buildings, especially at the ground floor level, support and activate the public space. To help understand the economics realities behind this issue, the City has retained the services of Keyser Marston Associates (KMA). Tim Kelly of KMA will also be at the meeting to review his firm's analysis of the degree to which various uses will serve to activate the new public park/plaza. His report (attachment E) recognizes that providing ground floor retail space is an important component in the success of the proposed new public space. Other possible uses, including residential, are also evaluated to provide information on the degree to which they would individually contribute to the activation of the public realm. The various uses and magnitude of development were chosen primarily for the purposes of illustration. Various levels and combinations of the land use mix would alter the outcome of the analysis.

One of the difficulties of sustaining retail businesses at Sierra Point is the relative isolation and the lack of a 24/7 resident population. Given the location, retail businesses can not expect much draw from the region and would be dependent on the population of local users. It is anticipated that retail development around the public space would take time to evolve. Certain uses are more likely to prosper in the early stages, until the demand for other uses can arise. In the early stages, it may be critical that the City its capacity as a redevelopment agency to help sustain a minimal level of retail activity around the plaza.

As part of the biotech project the staff and the applicants have discussed the possibility of the inclusion of a retail liner building in front of the proposed parking structure to make sure that it properly addresses the proposed park/plaza space with a complimentary architectural design and uses that would help activate the public space.

The EIR for the biotech project indicates that the proposed parking structure would have a significant visual impact at its current location. A retail liner in front of the parking structure would be one way to address that impact, as well as to create increased pedestrian activity for retail uses adjacent to the public plaza. It is anticipated that additional retail uses may eventually occupy the ground floor of the proposed UPC hotel and or the Opus building (discussed below under real estate matters).

It is also interesting to consider whether the proposed resort hotel could provide some sort of attraction, perhaps an iconic building, a small museum, or other public amusement, that could help create a draw from the region.

Finally it is worth noting the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) indicated the importance of programming the public space with activities. A new public square at Sierra Point could provide a new public focus for the activities already held as well as to provide a new venue for additional civic events.

REAL ESTATE MATTERS:

In order to create a new public space at Sierra Point it will be necessary for the Council, acting as the redevelopment agency, to authorize a land trade with both UPC and Opus.
In concept, the southerly portion of the parcel owned by UPC that is currently designated for hotel development would be traded to the City, in return for a portion of City owned land to the north of the UPC parcel, so the potential resort hotel could move to the north and make way for the new public space. The western portion of the parcel received in the aforementioned transaction would, in turn, be traded to Opus for their current leasehold of the triangular parcel at the easterly end of Sierra Point Parkway adjacent to the Marina.
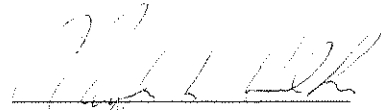
Opus's current leasehold entitles them to develop approximately 50,000 square feet of commercial retail in up to two stories. In return for giving up this leasehold, Opus would acquire the westerly portion of the land received from the UPC trade, on which they could build a multi-story building that would compliment the new public space.

There are advantages for all parties to participate in this trade. In addition to the City acquiring the appropriate location for a new the public space near the Marina at the eastern terminus of Sierra Point Parkway, it would also protect the public view from the new public space across San Francisco Bay, in perpetuity. Both UPC and Opus would gain more valuable location next to a new public space. Further, the trade with Opus could include ownership in fee, rather than in leasehold, and the potential to go up higher and capture more views than their current interest provides.

The staff has had preliminary discussion with the other parties regarding the real estate trades that would be necessary to create the public space. Subject to further Council direction, we have a conceptual agreement from both. At this point, staff is looking for direction from Council to further negotiate the details of the trades.

FISCAL IMPACTS: To be determined

(signature)

Community Development Director

(signature)

/City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

A. (Excerpts from) Livable Cities Observed, S. Lennard and H Lennard

B. (Excerpts from) Fundamentals of Urban Design, R. Hedman and A. Jaszewski

C. Project for Public Spaces, 10 Guiding Principles/Themes for Sierra Point.

D. Goals of Urban Design Update, Freedman Tung and Bottomley

E. Keyser Marston Associates, Tim Kelley Memorandum of June 2007

LIVABLE CITIES
OBSERVED

Suzanne H. Crowhurst Lennard
Henry L. Lennard

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Chapter Two

Public Space Design

Urban public space is the single most important element in establishing a city's livability. A centrally located public space can function as the "heart" of the community, generating positive energy and a sense of membership.

In the streets and squares, accessible to all, the dialogue essential to a democratic society may flourish. When community members frequently pass through a traffic free urban space running errands, going shopping, going to work or school, they recognize other frequent users of the space, and exchange greetings, which in time develop into conversations. Spontaneous social contacts are the seeds from which a sense of community evolves.

As a garden requires sunlight, rainfall, and soil rich in humus and minerals, so also, public urban spaces require certain physical conditions if the community spirit is to thrive.

While many factors contribute to society's growing incivility and violence one factor is generally overlooked—the messages conveyed in the physical environment of our cities, particularly in the streets and public spaces.

Most European cities are fortunate in their heritage of public spaces. Those founded during or before the Middle Ages, when the market place was the center of the city's social and economic life, and the foot was the primary means of transportation, were built to a human scale of moder-

ately high density, mixed-use buildings wrapped around the central market place. Streets were intimate and lively, facilitating social contact, and the market place with its dominant buildings (cathedral or town hall), its sense of enclosure, focal points (fountains), surrounding shops and businesses with private apartments above, and the variety of events that took place there in addition to the market (entertainers, religious and community festivals) generated a civilized public social life.[1]

The market was the primary function of most medieval cities, and the city grew in direct response to the market's success. The spatial requirements of the market were so diverse that they generated a market place that was often far from square. Some market places are doughnut shaped, such as Freiburg's Münster Platz that wraps around the cathedral; some consist of two or three interconnected irregularly shaped squares, such as Padua's Piazza dell'Erbe, Piazza dei Fiori and Piazza Signoria; and others are widened streets visually closed at each end, such as Ravensburg's Marienplatz.

Most fortunate of all, Venice, unchanged since 1500, still retains this physical fabric of mixed-use buildings encircling neighbourhood public squares (campi), and these campi still generate civilized discourse and the most durable community spirit of any city in Europe.

During the Renaissance and Baroque periods the

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art of creating public spaces was lost.[2] Indeed, the profession of city planning gained its first momentum under the aegis of absolute rulers by destroying market places and the fine textured organic structure of cities, and replacing them with geometric arrangements of streets and avenues designed for royal processions and marching armies. The etoiles created at major junctions were not "places" for social life, but neither were the symmetrical geometric spaces in front of a palace or other monumental government building.

As modern transportation needs took priority further damage to the urban fabric took place. Buildings were torn down to widen streets for cars and market places were usurped for vehicular parking. These changes were inimical to the use of streets and squares for public life.

It was not until the 1970s that these trends began to be reversed, and social life in public began to revive. By then, however, many European cities struggling to rebuild after the war had accepted modern functional planning precepts and created, as far as was possible, single function commercial or administrative zones in the center of the city and housing estates on the fringes.

German cities were some of the first to rid their main streets and squares of vehicles, and by 1990 hundreds of cities and towns in Western as well as Eastern European countries had restored their finest urban spaces as traffic free places to provide a setting for the social life of their citizens.

Some towns have only recently restored their public places or created new urban places at the heart of their city. Oxford's Gloucester Green was a shabby market place behind the main shopping street until the '60s when the market was banished to the edge of town and the space was transformed into a dreary bus depot. In 1992 Gloucester Green was rebuilt as a gracious and sociable square enclosed on two sides by new shop/house structures accommodating cafes and restaurants that reach out into the square, surmounted by three stories of balconied apartments. The market has been invited back and once again enlivens the square.

Because of the pressures under which North

American cities developed they are not well endowed with urban public places. The earliest New England settlements were built around a public space, a common grazing area, but rather than being transformed into a truly urban space when the settlement developed into a city it was either used for construction, or retained as a park.

Some East Coast cities such as Philadelphia, or Savannah, Georgia, were laid out on a grid plan that included green parks. These again, were never true urban public places accommodating the city's social and economic exchange, but rather, oases of nature where one could escape from urban life. Rittenhouse Square, though accessible and usable, does not meet the criteria of an authentic urban space. Nor do the central plazas of the early Spanish colonial cities in California retain the urban quality of their Spanish antecedents: Sonoma's gracious square is a park; San Diego's is dormant in a tourism inspired reconstruction of the early settlement.

For the majority of North American cities land plans were drafted without consideration of the city's social and economic activities, and no special urban spaces were deemed necessary to accommodate social life, markets or community festivities.[3] As soon as the automobile industry took hold even the Main Street was no longer usable for social life in public.

After the Second World War millions of Americans visited Europe and discovered the pleasure of social life in the outdoor cafes and on the piazza. A yearning began to be felt for this way of life, but North American cities did not begin to create public places until a few economically successful developments set a precedent (e.g. Ghiradelli Square in San Francisco; Boston's Faneuil Hall and Baltimore's Harbor Place, both by architect Benjamin Thompson and developer James Rouse; and San Antonio's Riverwalk).

In the professional and academic worlds of architecture, landscape architecture and urban design, and in cities and neighbourhoods across North America people are trying to grapple with this new problem—how to create an urban "heart" for their community within their city's rigid grid plan.

PLATE 7. The Heart of the City
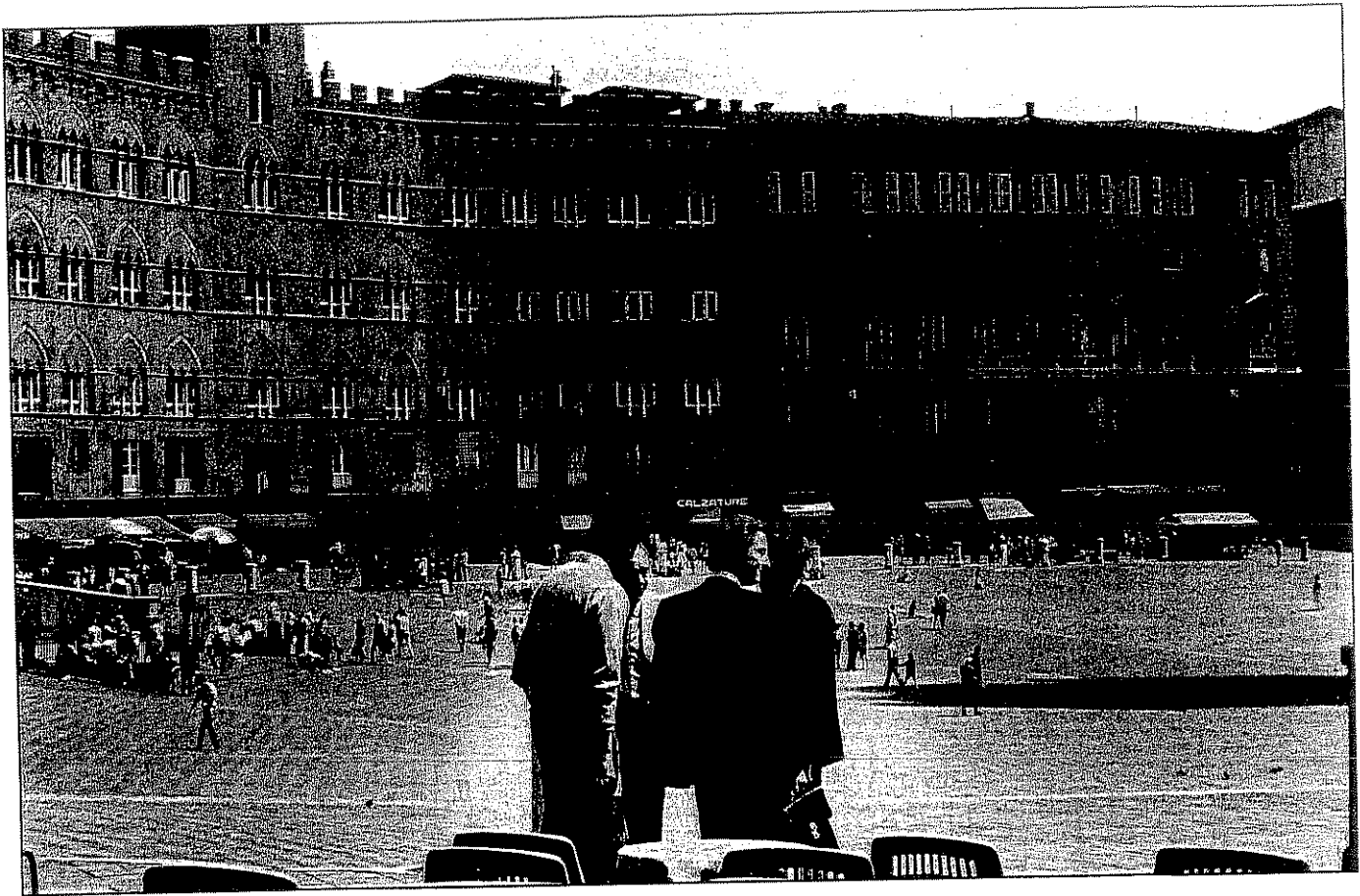
Piazza Il Campo, at the heart of Siena, is one of the world's finest public places for community life, throughout the day, and late into the night.

PLATE 8. Theatrical Spaces

The marble encrusted Basilica San Marco, Venice epitomizes the theatrical backdrop to life on the Piazza.

Salamanca's Plaza Mayor is one of the world's liveliest and most successful urban spaces.

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PLATE 39. *Essential Features*

Tübingen has one of the prettiest settings for their thrice weekly farmers' market, on the triangular Markt, surrounded by medieval half timbered buildings.

At almost every market there are adjacent cafes and restaurants. At Munich's Viktualienmarkt beer gardens extend throughout the market, and serve as meeting places for local workers, inhabitants and weary shoppers.
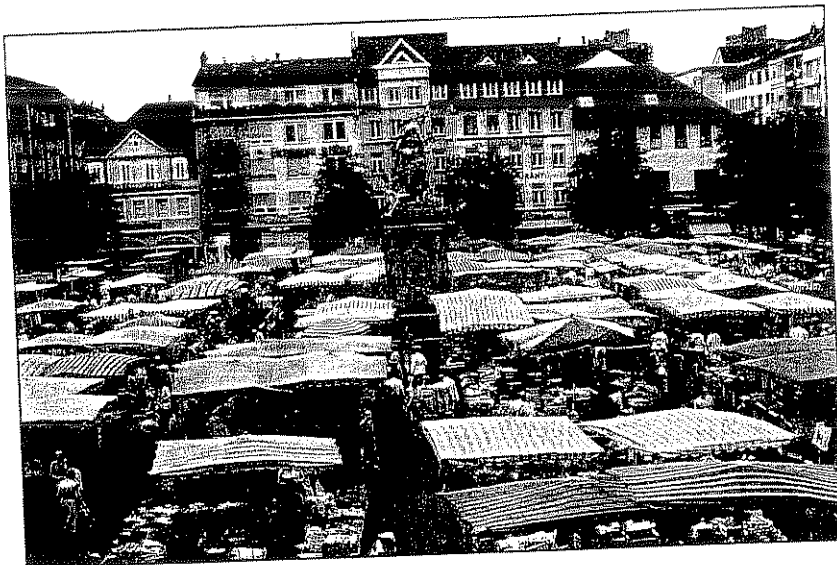
Mannheim's extensive market is well organized and very appetizing, with produce handsomely displayed, often in wicker baskets.

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PLATE 37. *Daily Farmers' Market*

The daily market plays an important role in the economic and social life of Freiburg-im-Breisgau. On the north side of the cathedral farmers and growers sell their own produce; on the south side are wholesalers and craftspeople.

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Chapter Five

The Public Realm and the Good City

History

Throughout most of the history of cities public places have made a significant contribution to the life of the cities' inhabitants. People came together for social and civic reasons. Later, public places also assumed the function of markets.

The social, economic and religious life of cities happened in its squares and streets, in the places adjacent to the cathedral or important civic buildings, and on the streets where people lived, and where shops and workshops were located.

With the advent of the automobile, squares and streets became receptacles for the movement and storage of the car, making public places useless for social and civic functions. This trend was reversed during the past thirty years, when cars were excluded from central parts of hundreds of European cities and towns. Nonetheless, the automobile is still an important presence and burden on the streets of most European, as well as North American cities.

Public places were neither as abundant, nor as significant in American cities and towns as in Europe. At the turn of the century there was still a great deal of public life in some North American cities, and in the main street of smaller towns and villages. There still were places where everyone had the opportunity to see and meet everyone else living in their town.

Significance

Yet, for a long time, the significance of public urban places and their role in making public life possible, has been ignored by those responsible for the form of the modern city. It is only recently, when cities all over the world were threatened by the loss of the public realm, that the subject has been rediscovered by scholars, political leaders and professionals in Europe and North America.[1]

The term "public realm" is now used frequently, and loosely by urban professionals. Without comprehending its nature or significance, even the promoters of the new world wide computer network promise that "cyberspace" will function as "electronic agoras", replacing the public realm of cities.

The terms public domain, public realm, public life are here meant to refer to the social processes among city inhabitants that occur in public places. It is in the public places of cities, its squares and streets that are accessible to all of the city's inhabitants, where all can see and hear each other; where persons different from one another, and present in the public places for diverse purposes, can come together! In the public realm, many perspectives on the common world may be found; within the public realm, young and old may learn about, and from each other.

The public realm is the opposite of the private world of the family, of closed societies or clubs; in

these groups there is the amplification of one point of view; its members speak with one voice. "Being seen and heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. This is the meaning of public life, compared to which even the richest and most satisfying family life can offer only the prolongation or multiplication of one's own position."[2]

Among the most moving experiences of some city dwellers are those that occur in the public places of their cities, when participating in religious ceremonies, or civic celebrations or festivals. The inhabitants of certain cities look forward to the great occasions of public life from childhood onward. In other cities, especially in North America, there is little tradition of occasions and shared community events that occur in their public places.

The recognition of the desire for, and benefits of public life have led to efforts to create public plazas in North American cities, based on a shallow and sanitized model of public life.

The public domain does not mean absence of unpleasantness and conflict. Indeed, coming to terms with the presence of different, strange, and sometimes troublesome people is essential to a viable and creative public life.

The public domain involves a tension between strangeness and familiarity, activity and idleness, purposeful and purposeless behaviour.[3]

Urban populations throughout the world are becoming more diverse. It is in the public domain that young and old, well to do and poor, people with differing ethnic backgrounds, residents and tourists come together. Withdrawing from such encounters, into a familiar world of people similar to oneself abets the inability to be with human beings different from ourselves.

This withdrawal into the familiar world is responsible for the creation of suburbs and urban sprawl. While the absence of common ground is disadvantageous for the humanity of all, it is especially disastrous for children and youth, who are left without places for learning how to relate to

other human beings, whether older adults, strangers, or persons unfamiliar in dress, or ways of behaving.

For those interested in the varieties, nuances and pleasures of life in public much can be learned from the observations of great writers. Goethe and Howells describe the ambience of the Venetian campo, Baudelaire observes the Parisian in public, and E.T.A. Hoffmann delights with a detailed account of transactions, encounters and intrigues among the vendors and customers of Bamberg's daily farmers' market observed from his window overlooking the square.

People Watching

Human beings require and depend on contact with other human beings. It is self evident that to be in the presence of other human beings is reassuring! Perceiving their presence—through looking, hearing and touching—enables all to experience themselves as less alone.

Other people become a source of wonderment and fantasy. What are their origins, purposes and possible future relationships? At times they challenge familiar beliefs regarding how one should act or look. Despite such critical reactions the onlookers become reconciled or even appreciate the fact of such differences. As Barbara Ward writes: "This is the essence of what Doctor Johnson and James Boswell felt to be the greatest gift of cities—'the whole of human life in all its variety'—the possibility of mixing cultures and experience and even dimly perceiving, under all the quirks and oddities of human behavior, an underlying shared humanity."[4]

Often, persons watch others together with friends and acquaintances. Observing together creates a bond among the onlookers and a basis for an interchange of comments and judgements. Both men and women survey passers-by as potential partners or simply enjoy watching attractive or interesting individuals. Older people are reminded of themselves when observing the young, or perhaps pass moral or aesthetic judgements on them. But whatever the reaction, observation of life in public serves as a catalyst for memory and

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Significant Conversation

The dialogue is one of the ultimate expressions of life in the city; the delicate flower of its long vegetative growth . . . and if provision for dialogue and drama, in all their ramifications, is one of the essential offices of the city, then one key to urban development should be plain—it lies in the widening of the circle of those capable of participating in it . . . In a sense the dramatic dialogue is both the fullest symbol and the final justification of the city's life. For the same reason, the most revealing symbol of the city's failure, of its very non-existence as a social personality is the absence of dialogue—not necessarily a silence, but equally the loud sound of a chorus uttering the same words in cowed if complacent conformity...

From Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*. pp. 116-118

fantasy.

Persons sit or walk in public in order to be seen, to display particular attire, and thus to impress an imagined or real audience. They wish to be identified as a member of a group, or try out a special role.

Meeting in Public

Public places offer many opportunities for informal and unplanned meetings of friends, neighbours, coworkers, and acquaintances of all kinds. Depending on the types of public spaces that exist in a city or town, public life is facilitated or inhibited. In the Venetian campo, those living in the area adjacent to the campo shop, take coffee, buy newspapers, while other Venetians living elsewhere pass through the campo on their way to work. In this urban space persons encounter each other many times during the day. When persons who know each other meet, they greet each other and if time permits, brief conversations ensue. Here, even casual acquaintances become familiar figures in one's everyday life while the unique geography of Venice brings about multiple casual meetings in the course of each day.

Public places are chosen as well for prearranged meetings of relatives, friends, neighbours, fellow students, co-workers and members of one's social circles. Time and place of meeting is arranged in advance, or individuals may seek out public places knowing that they will meet there the persons they wish to see at certain times during the day.

For many persons, especially the young, such contacts and meetings would be difficult or even impossible were it not for usable public places, especially since private housing is often not adequate to accommodate each family member's acquaintances and friend. The availability of a place to meet encourages the getting together of old and young, of friends and neighbours, office workers, laborers, housewives and the retired. Relationships suffer if there are not adequate places for their enactment. Meeting others in public reinforces a sense of place, a sense of ownership and identification with the preferred public place, so that in a sense it begins to belong to the permanent users.

Significant Conversation

Being in public promotes significant conversation with other human beings. Conversation reinforces involvement with others and provides opportunities for the transmission of information. In these conversations in public, information is exchanged about each other's lives and about persons known to those engaged in conversation. Many intimate details about family life, work situation, state of health, finances, plans and hopes of all kinds become public knowledge among permanent users of public spaces. Information exchange helps maintain kinship and friendship networks and thus cements the social bonds among members of a community.

Indeed, as the social philosopher Hannah Arendt explains, it is only by speaking about the world to one another that "we humanize what is going on

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Dialogue and Humanness

When... we read in Aristotle that *philia,* friendship among citizens, is one of the fundamental requirements for the well-being of the city, we tend to think that he was speaking of no more than the absence of factions and civil war within it. But for the Greeks the essence of friendship consisted in discourse. They held that only the constant interchange of talk united citizens in a *poles.* In discourse the political importance of friendship, and the humanness peculiar to it, were made manifest. This converse (in contrast to the intimate talk in which individuals speak about themselves), permeated though it may be by pleasure in the friend's presence, is concerned with the common world, which remains "inhuman" in a very literal sense unless it is constantly talked about by human beings. For the world is not humane just because it is made by human beings, and it does not become humane just because the human voice sounds in it, but only when it has become the object of discourse. However much we are affected by the things of the world, however deeply they

may stir and stimulate us, they become human for us only when we can discuss them with our fellows. Whatever cannot become the object of discourse—the truly sublime, the truly horrible or the uncanny—may find a human voice through which to sound into the world, but it is not exactly human. We humanize what is going on in the world and in ourselves only by speaking of it, and in the course of speaking of it we learn to be human.

The Greeks called this humanness which is achieved in the discourse of friendship *philanthropic* "love of man," since it manifests itself in a readiness to share the world with other men. Its opposite, misanthropy, means simply that the misanthrope finds no one with whom he cares to share the world, that he regards nobody as worthy of rejoicing with him in the world and nature and the cosmos.

Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, N.Y., Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. 1968. pp. 24-25.

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in the world and in ourselves." "For the world is not humane just because it is made by human beings, and it does not become humane just because the human voice sounds in it, but only when it has become the object of discourse."

Sometimes, conversation in public is disparaged as merely "gossip." However, gossiping about persons also expresses a communality of interest, concern, or curiosity about those gossiped about—while it serves to increase the awareness of their lives.

Engaging in conversation with a wide range of other people increases competence to communicate with young and old, intimates, casual acquaintances, or strangers whatever their social backgrounds, or viewpoint.

When we are brought together with a variety of others we practice our social interactive skills—of being able to make contact and communicate with a wide range of people, among them many with

whom we do not ordinarily associate in the other domains of everyday social life.

Models of Social Life

Behaviour is learned through observation and participation. The public realm provides a great many examples and models on how persons relate with those of different social backgrounds, those of different temperament; and with the physically and mentally well or disabled.

It is especially important for children to be exposed to a diversity of people, to observe a range of models of how people relate, and to learn from the skills and flexibility from those they observe.

It is not well understood how many people are required to provide suitable models for the socialization of children. Social skills of talking, initiating and maintaining contact, negotiating

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PLATE 23. *Learning Social Skills*

Behaviour is learned through observation and participation. It is especially important for children to be exposed to a diversity of people, to observe a range of models of how people relate. This way they learn the social skills of talking, making and maintaining contact, negotiating differences, and taking pleasure in social relationships. (Campo S. Barnaba, Venice, above. Siena, Italy, below.)

F-1-23

PLATE 24. *The Rhythm of Social Life. Developing a Sense of Community*
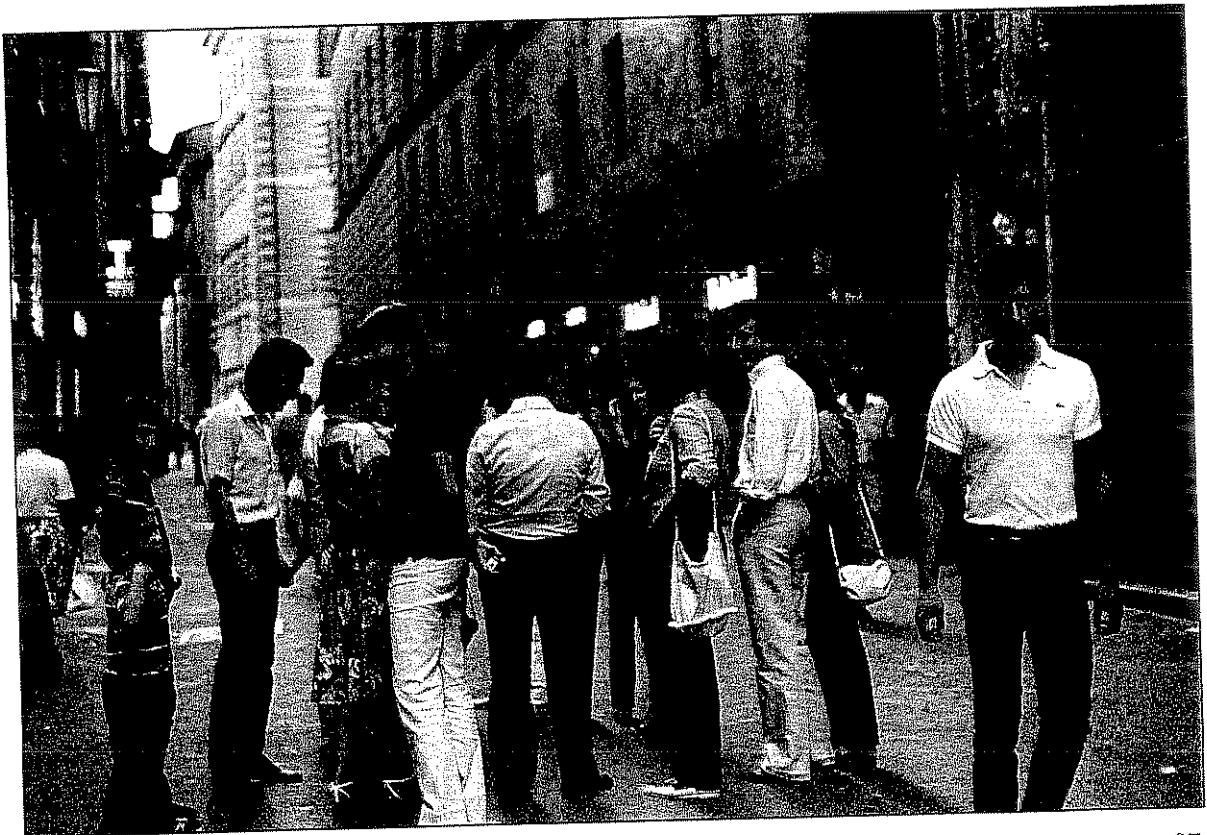
Social life on Salamanca's main square, Plaza Mayor has a daily rhythm. As the day rolls by different groups in the community dominate. At noon the men fill the square, gathering in groups that eddy back and forth, before disappearing for lunch.

Being in public promotes significant conversation with other human beings. The exchange of information about each others' lives and about mutual friends helps to maintain kinship and friendship networks, and thus cements the social bonds among community members. (Campo S. Bartolommeo, Venice, below. Campo S. Polo, Venice, right.)

F-1-24
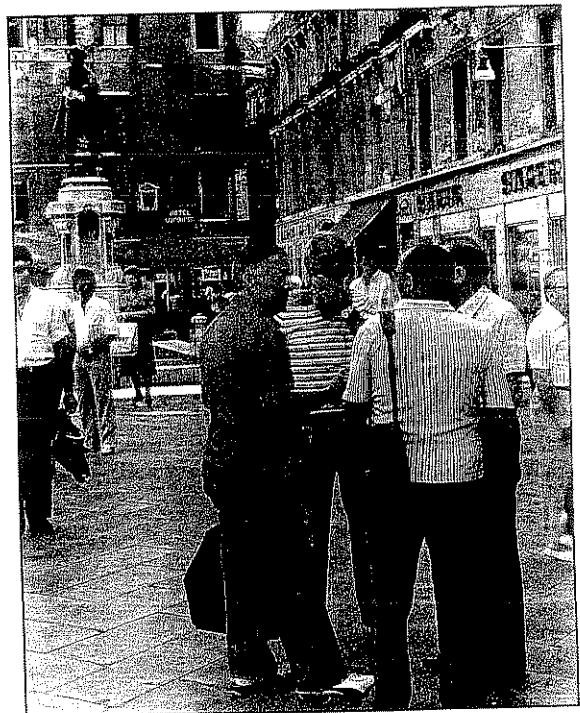
The Daily Rhythm of a Public Place:
Plaza Mayor, Salamanca

Early in the morning Salamanca's Plaza Mayor is relatively quiet: men, women and students pass through the plaza on their way to work or school, some stopping at one of the cafes for coffee, a sweet roll, and conversation. During mid-morning housewives shopping for fish, meat, cheeses and groceries in the enclosed market just east of Plaza Mayor continue their shopping in the drapery and hardware shops on the west side of the square, or take a coffee break with friends.

By noon the square begins to fill with the men of Salamanca: they arrive singly or in groups, very quickly forming larger clusters as they become engrossed in conversation. Some groups stroll back and forth, pausing occasionally as the discussion becomes more intense. Others gather around the benches, or at the main entrances. By 12:30 the voices have risen to a crescendo; but as men drift home for lunch and siesta, those remaining in the plaza are mainly the tourists.

The plaza comes to life again around 5:00 p.m.. Now the main actors are mothers pushing prams, toddlers and little children. The children are beautifully dressed, with shiny shoes, freshly pressed pants or long ruffled skirts. They play, talk, and laugh, or run around the square, and some are treated to ice cream by their aunts and grandmothers sitting at the cafes. As the evening begins young working fathers appear on the scene, sometimes alone pushing a pram, sometimes in the company of their wives and other family members.

By 8:00 p.m. the crowd is at its peak, with people of every age and background. Men and women in about equal numbers, babies,

children, elderly people, students and tourists intermingle. People in wheelchairs have easy access to the plaza, and many can be seen at this time; but most dramatic is the "baby parade" of dozens of baby carriages.

During dinner time, (which, in Spain, only begins after 9:00 p.m.) the plaza empties out again, only to take on a new character around 11:00 p.m.. Around midnight the plaza belongs to young people, full of energy, singing or dancing in groups around the square.

At midnight one summer evening in the center of Plaza Mayor a choral group of young men gathered in a circle to chant a hymnal into the dark night. At the same moment, beneath a lamp at a corner of the square, ten teenage girls were dancing a tight formation Spanish dance, throwing back their heads flicking their wrists and stamping to the accompaniment of the fast rhythmic clapping of the surrounding women.

Fascinating, too, was a group of young men, students from the Music Academy, dressed in medieval style black velvet jackets and dubloons slashed with yellow linings, and large soft black velvet berets. One wore a calf length velvet cloak with a shawl of blue and white ribbons, and most carried a medieval style musical instrument—mandolin, drum, pipe, tambourine or guitar. After playing together in the plaza they were preparing to spend the rest of the night carousing and serenading beneath the windows of their women friends. Indeed, anyone who happened to be in the plaza at 8:30 a.m. the next morning could see the small band stumbling home, exhausted and a little drunk, but still full of song.

differences, taking pleasure in social relationships, cannot be acquired only from one's family, especially not from families who are already deficient in their verbal and social repertoire.

Major social problems are directly linked to the impoverishment of the public realm; to the absence of good models of relationships and to the lack of practice and skills in human discourse. Poor and problem prone people concentrated in large scale housing projects do not have the opportunity to observe more effective ways for the socialization of children, or to experience and practice social relationship skills.

F-1-25

FUNDAMENTALS OF URBAN DESIGN

Richard Hedman with Andrew Jaszewski

APA

F-1-26

BACKGROUND

Architecture and urban design are frequently discussed as if they had nothing to do with each other when in fact they are inseparable. When we talk about one, we are also talking about the other, conscious of the fact or not. Failure to recognize the linkage between architecture and urban design is to invite confusion if not chaos. Yet each day countless architectural decisions are made with little or no awareness of their urban design consequences. In this day and age, when architecture comes in so many shapes and flavors, this is a high-risk undertaking, and our towns and cities are not better for it.

Everywhere cities, towns, and suburbs find it difficult to secure coherent and satisfying patterns of development. While individual buildings may be attractive or exciting in themselves, the cumulative effect is disappointing. There is no sum of parts adding up to a greater whole. Strong organizing patterns are missing. Exterior spaces around buildings are weak, uneventful, and without clear form or character. Remaining older buildings look like urban

Historic buildings often are treated with all the respect of leftovers. Instead of proud reminders, these small buildings have been transmuted into pitiful remainders.

leftovers: lost, unattached fragments of a now alien past. The net effect at its worst is of a fractured disjointed world of divisions without connecting seams, a world offering residents no identifiable center other than the buildings in which they live.

There are many possible causes for the difficulty communities are encountering in achieving some degree of design coherence. The divisive impact of the auto and the continuing flood of innovations in materials and construction are both obvious factors that immediately come to mind. As important as these issues are, they fail to explain the underlying lack of design order. However, the auto and new building technologies would by their nature amplify and exagerate any fundamental changes in how architects go about designing buildings—and consequently how cities and towns are built.

There was a time not too long ago when architecture seemed to take care of urban design requirements without the need for some kind of urban design overview. There was built-in sensibility that ensured a reasonable degree of order and harmony within the built environment. But that state of affairs has changed to such a degree that architecture often contributes to the disorder and disharmony of the urban environment. Imbedded within contemporary design, there appears to be a strong and virulent strain of antiurbanism. The origins of this negative attitude are to be found in the beginnings of modern architecture.

In the mid-1950s architectural history was presented as a slow, evolutionary process, one style growing from another in small increments. The pendulum moved ever so slowly from the formal to the romantic, then back again for another cleansing dose of classical formality. Architectural history unfolded this way from the earliest structures of Egypt and Crete, and each subsequent architectural phase was firmly rooted in the previous era. Then suddenly and unnaturally, the entire evolutionary process was presented as coming to a shuddering halt early this century. History stopped and modern art and architecture appeared, pure and independent of past history.

Modern art and architecture did not appear suddenly by themselves but were the end product of powerful stresses within society generated by accelerating industrial development and a changing economy. A boiling revolutionary fervor sweeping through the intellectual centers of Europe gave direction to the work of an emerging new generation of artists and architects. Traditional patterns of architecture and city building were viewed by this new
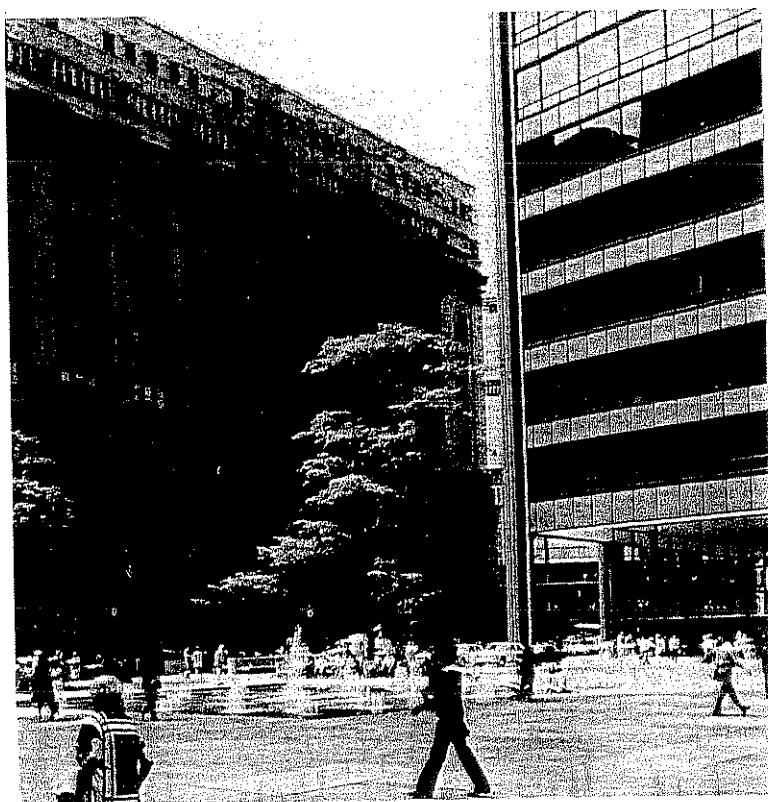
The buildings in the background represent the "outmoded" architecture of the past. To the right stands the "new" architecture, raised off the ground on slender piers and presenting a tight no-nonsense image of structural honesty. While neither stands comfortably next to the other, the new needs the old to help define and enrich the space before it.

generation as synonymous with an oppressive and uncaring society, to be discarded and replaced by new forms based on modern rational and humanistic thinking. A whole new beginning was called for; architects would create a new architecture that would solve the social problems of the cities.

Creating a totally new architecture proved simple once the basic concept was grasped: Do the extreme opposite—in every way—of what prevailed. If windows were vertically shaped openings spaced at intervals along a wall, the new revolutionary window would be a continuous ribbon of glass. If buildings sat in repose on the ground, they were lifted onto columns or nestled into the earth. Where buildings were packed tightly together defining the street with precision, the new world would build freestanding towers in park-like settings. Where turn-of-the-century buildings were piled high with great pastry-chef concoctions, the new architecture would have no ornamentation. Its form would be derived from the internal functional and structural requirements of the building. A rigorous sys-

tem of analysis evolved that became a powerful weapon in the rout of traditional architecture. In the process of rejecting the past, modern architecture became the inversion of past values. The new method of rational (scientific) analysis was and remains an invaluable tool. The problems that have emerged in subsequent years stem not from the methodology but the narrowness of its application.

The modern office building provides an example of the new kind

The design of this tower ensures that the tower will never be an integral part of the surrounding city. The suburban base suggests that it should not be in a city.
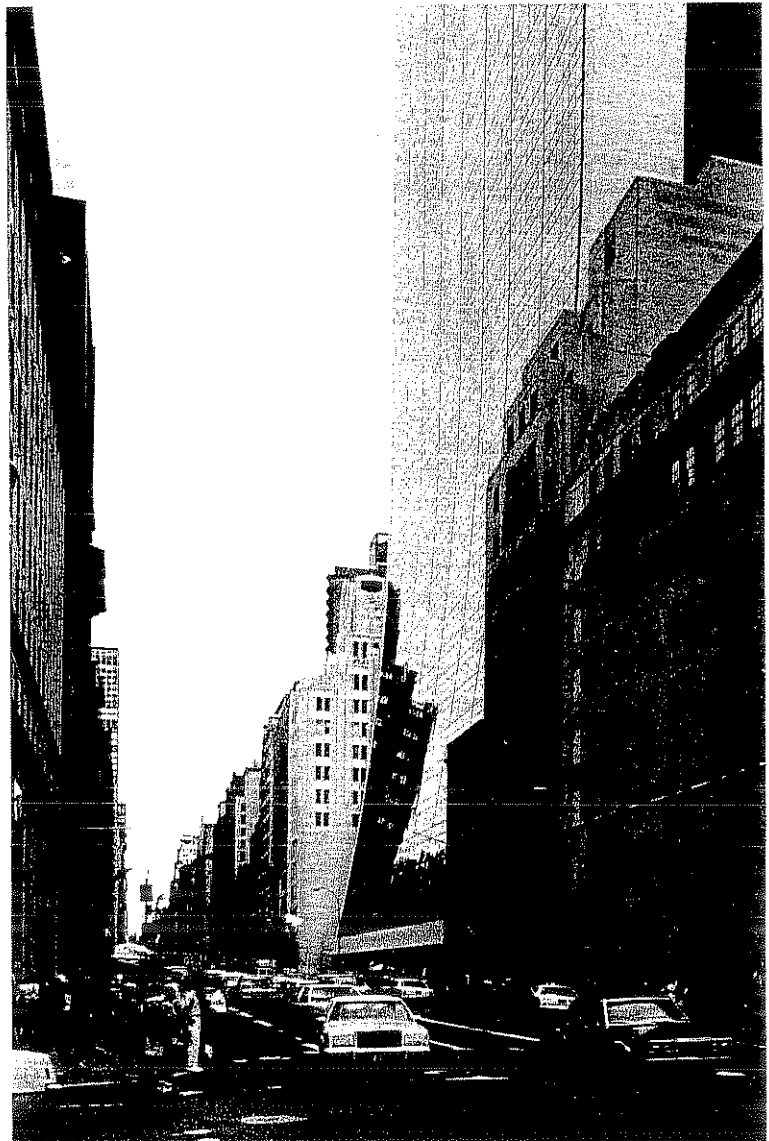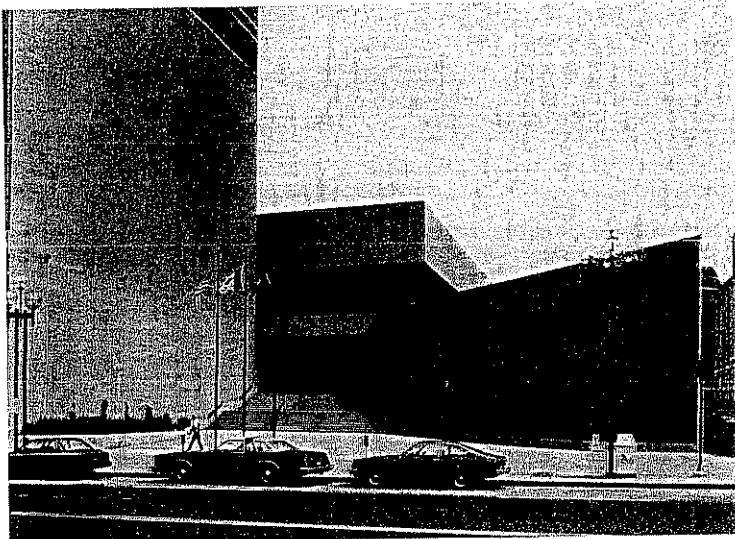
A suburban ambush of an urban street corner. Instead of enriching the street, this space offers only blank inhospitality.

of architectural thinking. Logically considered, an office building is nothing more than a number of flat floors stacked one on top of the other. The size and shape of the floors is determined by analysis of the potential users' needs and the ease of subdividing the floor space. The shape of the building results from stacking the floors, with the number of floors determined by the size of the budget. The top of the building is flat for the simple reason that a flat roof best expresses the flat floors beneath. The exterior is clad in prefabricated modules of identical size and shape because they are most efficient. There is no rational basis for making one window larger than another. Step-by-step functional logic dictates the parameters of design. The architect merely has to fill in the blanks, and he has the wonder of wonders: the box-top office tower. The problem with the analysis is that it focuses exclusively upon the internal functional concerns and ignores the role of the building in the cityscape or in the definition of street space.

The revolutionary birth of modern architecture has left a lasting imprint upon the architectural profession. The moral disdain early modernists displayed toward traditional styles manifests itself today in the disregard so many architects show for the existing buildings surrounding their projects. The lack of respect for older buildings combined with an emphasis upon an internally focused analysis encourages the design of buildings that relate only to themselves. Revolution has been translated into a kind of ritualistic con-

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trariness; there is constant pressure to be new and different and to visually reject the validity of surrounding development. The net effect is an antiurbanism that is expressed in many subtle and not so subtle design mannerisms, well suited for almost anything but building cities.

In the high excitement of the architectural revolution, when the symbols of an oppressive past were being jettisoned, something else at the heart and soul of urban design that constituted acquired wisdom of great importance was also tossed out. Hidden among the belt courses, capitals, and brackets was a concern for the definition and dramatization of exterior space. Encapsulated within traditional architecture was an attitude toward the street that viewed architectural expression as a form of urban theater. Individual buildings played well-defined parts in a larger drama, subordinating themselves according to the requirements of the role. What was lost was the understanding that *urban design is a function of architecture.*

At the very moment in history when design principles for securing cohesive urban development were needed, they were rejected out-of-hand.

As seen on this city block, the rapidity of stylistic change coupled with a self-centered design approach is turning many downtowns into architectural zoos.
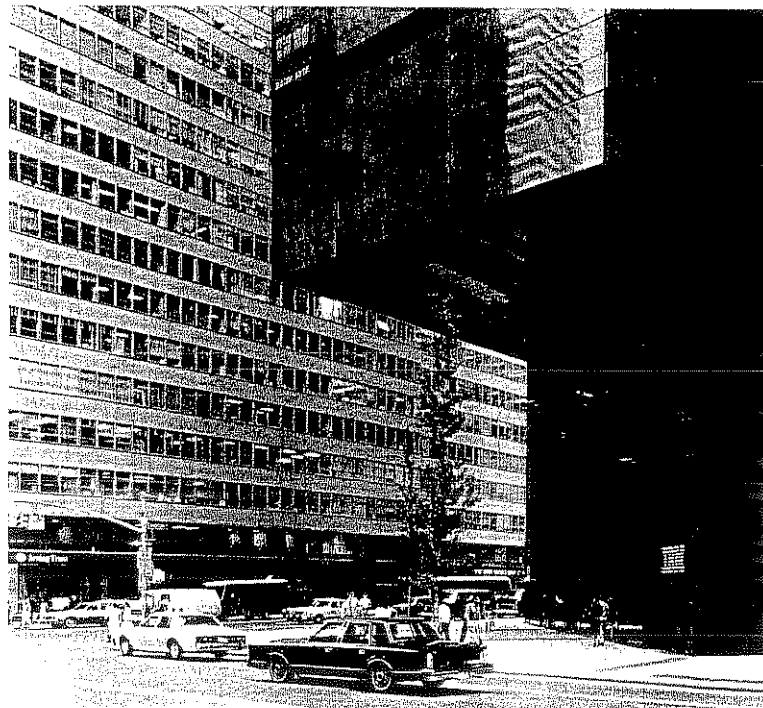
F-1-32

Architecture today is very much a creature of fashion. As neckties widen and narrow and hemlines rise and fall, so architectural enthusiasms crescendo, wane, shift, and change. Where in previous eras the changes were in the detail, now they are in major aspects of form and character. A phenomenal number of stylistic flurries have drifted across the architectural scene during the past 20 years. Such a rapid shift in styles makes the achievement of any sense of cohesiveness, order, and true contrast extremely difficult. Needed are some external constraints that only urban design considerations can supply.

One ray of hope has been a recent interest among a few architects in relating their designs to the contextual setting. Compared with the vast army of architectural rationalists practicing their trade the trend is so miniscule that it could drift off the page of the magazines as quickly as it appeared. To the degree that the new contextualism represents an attempt to contrast and stand out from other contemporary designs, rather than to correct urban design deficiencies, it will be as transitory as other fashion movements.

The nature of the architecture in use at a given place and time dictates the kind of city that can be achieved. A suburban-styled architecture, for example, cannot yield an urban city. The long, low, horizontal lines that characterize most suburban architecture are limited in the kind and size of space they can define effectively. If the work of local architects is wildly dissimilar, achieving any kind of coherent design may be impossible. Architectural characteristics thus have a major impact upon the city that can be built. Failure to respect the limitations of the architecture or to alter its nature is to court disaster. The urban design objectives a community selects for itself contain implicit rules for the architecture required to accomplish them. The planners, urban designers, and city managers who do not understand this cannot defend their communities from well-intentioned—even attractive—but nevertheless damaging projects.

Achieving good urban design does not require that every decision maker becomes skilled in design analysis. It does demand that the people involved in important design decisions know what to look for, the questions to ask, and have at least a rough idea of the criteria to consider. This book is addressed to setting out fundamental directions for achieving a more cohesive and satisfying environment.

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Space has a quicksilver nature that makes it an elusive quarry to capture and define. If the cage is not tight enough, it quickly seeps out and dissipates. Holding space in place requires not only strong walls but walls that grip and hold slivers and chunks of space. This is accomplished by deep, large-scale indentations, bold sculptural projections, and a rich texture.

We can find basic space-defining principles imbedded in the masonry walls that frame so many of the world's great spaces. Masonry construction imposes a stringent order on the builder: the higher the building, the thicker the supporting walls needed and the larger the span the greater the effort required. The force of gravity is apparent throughout. Weight is unambiguously carried down to the ground, and the uppermost brick is joined to the ground by the visible structural response to the demands of gravity. The building's weight and mass are delineated by the joinery's intricate pattern and the subtle effect of minute differences in the alignment of the parts.

Light and airy buildings, ultraflat smooth facades, and polished reflective surfaces are opposite in character to the masonry wall and do not define space well. Decoration, long considered a useless activity and waste of material, now can be viewed in light of the requirements for spatial definition. Decoration has a function to the degree that it helps hold and define space, and it can be used, for example, to offset the light-reflective surface of a glass curtain wall and produce a building that works well with its more traditional neighbors to define street space.

CAPTURING, DEFINING SPACE
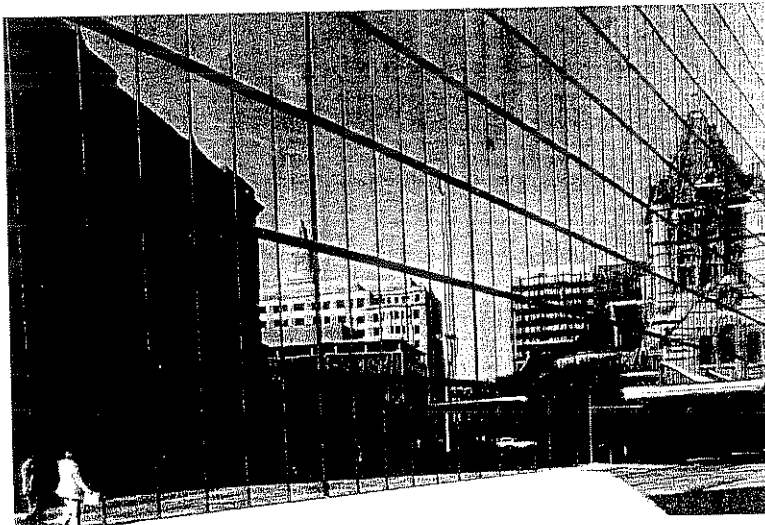
A taut reflective glass facade provides interesting optical effects but has no value for defining space or imparting a sense of scale. The inability to see into the building and sense the activity within creates an alien inhospitable setting. Such facades are at their best surrounded by lush landscaping or rising from a light cluster of contrasting buildings.

F-1-34
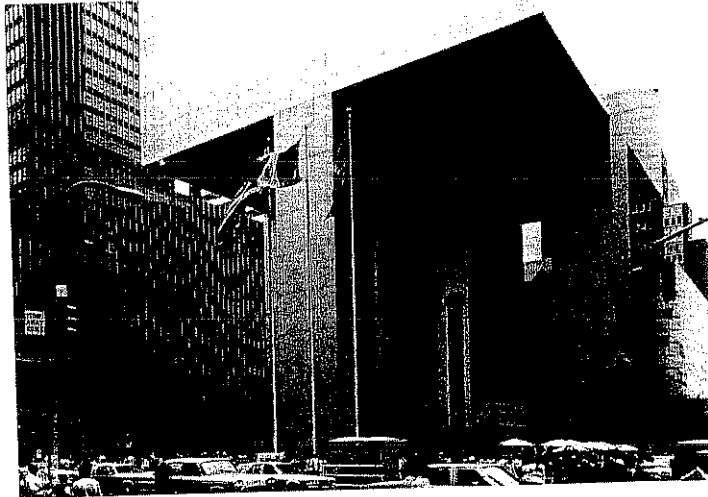
At the turn of the century, decoration had become an end in itself for many architects. The modernist revolution, with considerable justification, threw out this approach. But unfortunately, the revolutionaries elected the opposite extreme; affecting a bare undecorated look and overlooking the functional role of decoration in defining and enriching the quality of space.

PLAZA SPACE

Plazas are first and foremost urban spaces. They differ from parks and squares in that the emphasis is on creating a volume of space by architectural means—trees and landscaping generally play a small or nonexistent role in plaza design. Plazas come in many shapes and sizes and serve many purposes. They can be quiet dig-

The gymnastics this building performs have an evident effect on the character of surrounding space. However, the space lacks a central focus; no clearly defined place is created by the effort.
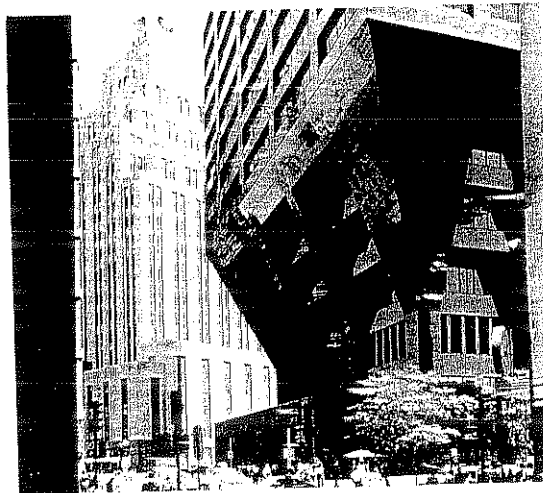
nified places to sit in the sun and enjoy a leisurely cup of coffee. They may be designed to dazzle people with a moment's grandeur at the entrance to an important sector of the city or to provide room for the daily crush of people to sort out their individual destinations. Busy or calm, functional or symbolic in nature, there is one thing a plaza should never be: an urban nonevent. Yet, all too many of the so-called plazas built during the past 15 years are just that. Instead of contributing to the enrichment of the city, unsuccessful plazas add to its fragmentation and dilution and rather than enlarging the opportunities for public enjoyment they merely consume space. There is nothing innately good about a plaza. Creating a successful plaza space requires a special set of conditions and if those conditions cannot be met, an alternate design objective should be considered.

Plazas built within the tight confines of a medieval street pattern benefit from the strong spatial containment and drama that accompanies a sunny open space that is reached only by narrow and deeply shaded streets. The visitor does not gradually proceed into such a space; he enters it in one step as he would enter a room. Because the space is an exception to the general pattern of tight narrow streets, it acquires special significance. Few places in urban America afford the opportunity to create dramatic entry sequences as do the narrow streets of ancient cities. More often the plaza will be entered from one or more wide streets. Additionally, if the surrounding buildings are office towers of recent vintage, they are unlikely to contain and define the street space because of the miscellaneous setbacks common to such buildings which erode potential contrast between plaza and street. These design problems should be dealt with in the decision to create a plaza.

Modern streets are most often open-ended linear arrangements and when street space is defined it remains part of a continuum. Plazas, on the other hand, are discrete spatial entities that focus inward. Plaza space should have the feel of an outdoor room and possess an intense three-dimensional quality.

Spatial Quality Factors

The quality of spatial containment is controlled by seven interrelated factors: size, shape, continuity, height of frame, floor configuration, architectural characteristics of the surrounding buildings, and sculpture.

After years of letting suburban-styled development erode its urban character, San Diego opted for an injection of instant urbanity. Instead of a typical bland shopping mall, Horton Plaza promises a complex sequence of spaces and pedestrian walkways reminiscent of medieval Perugia.

"The design of the center started as a typical suburban shopping center dropped into the heart of downtown, walled and fortified to protect it from the dangers of its urban setting. Outcries from the local design professionals and political bodies led to a change of architects and subsequently the design which has continued to evolve."—Michael Stepner, assistant planning director
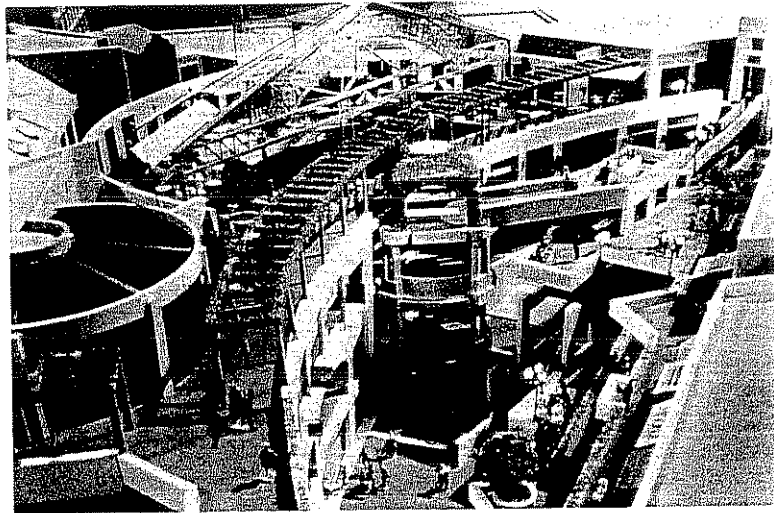
Size

The larger the plaza, the more difficult it becomes to create an intense three-dimensional effect. Thoughtful observers have suggested a maximum size of approximately 200-by- 500 feet. Beyond these dimensions space begins to overwhelm the individual and spatial definition is very difficult to attain. These dimensions were arrived at from observation of important European plazas created in earlier eras when architecture was more cohesive and decision making was centered in a few skilled hands. The poor space-defining qualities of much contemporary architecture and development suggest that wisdom may lie in more modest objectives, say 200-by-275 feet. The optimum size of a plaza is also linked to the height of the sur-

The size of a plaza is the size of the space, not just the area of fancy paving. To think of the space as not including the abutting streets is to invite error.
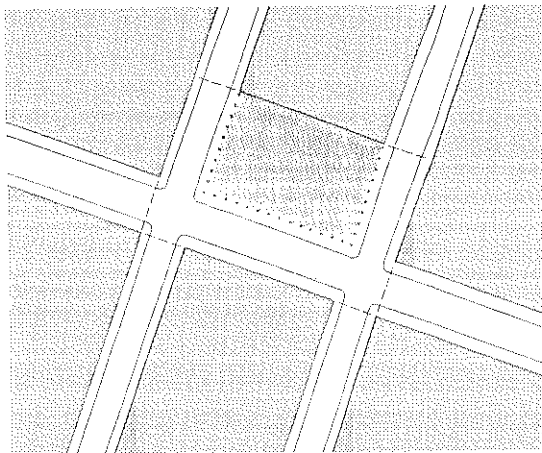
rounding framing buildings; generally the width should not exceed height by a factor of 3:1, however under certain conditions this may be pushed to 4:1 and still work.

Case Study: Boston Government Center Plaza. The plaza around Boston City Hall represents the first major American effort to create the modern equivalent of an Italian Renaissance plaza. The centerpiece Boston City Hall, by Kallmann, McKinnell and Knowles, is prototypical of a good space-defining building. It demonstrates that modern styling is no impediment to the objective of defining space. Regrettably the concept fails to come off successfully in spite of the excellence of the city hall design. The size of the space created around the city hall is the chief culprit.

The plaza is large enough to engulf both piazzas San Marco and Del Campo on the Cambridge Street side and unless there is more infill, they could also be repeated on the east side. Perhaps it was thought that somehow the street space was not part of the plaza space, or that the inward pressing curve of the great arching Center Plaza Building (c) on the west side of Cambridge Street would compensate for the excessive size of the space, but even the city hall's massive form (a) is not enough for the vastness of the space. The
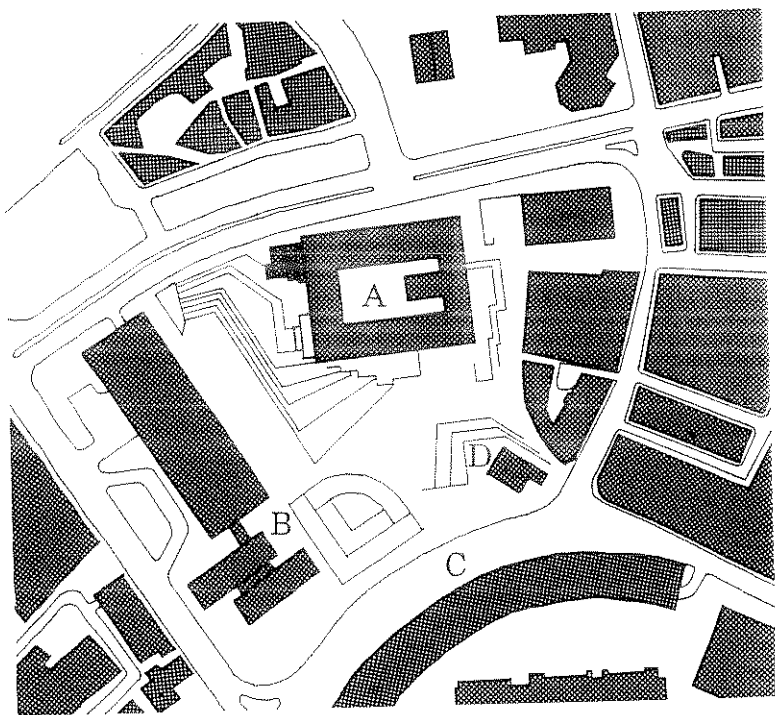
The piazzas San Marco of Venice and del Campo of Sienna can almost be fitted twice into the open space around Boston City Hall.
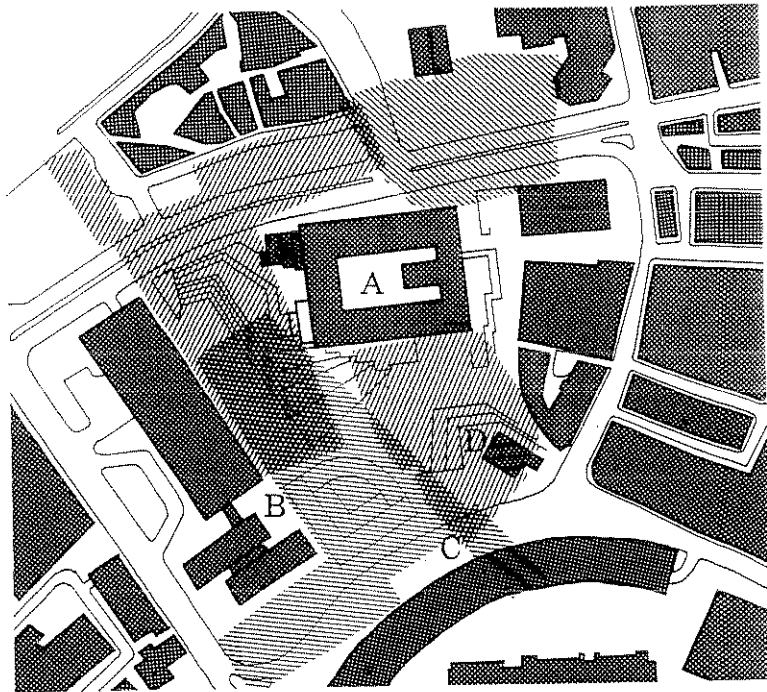
Adding perimeter buildings around the plaza would bring the area down to spatially workable dimensions.


F-1-39
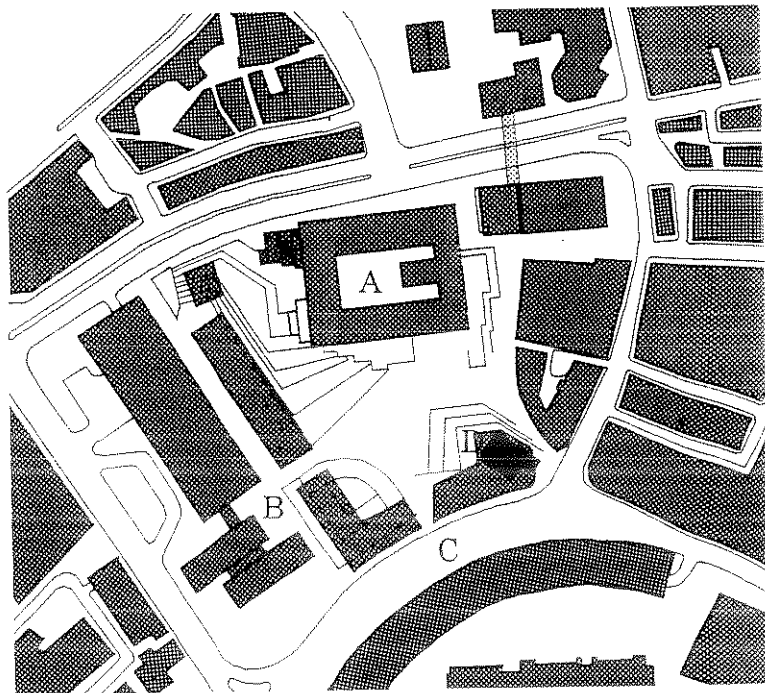
unfortunate configuration and character of the J.F.K. Federal Office Buildings (b) with their own little suburban plaza spaces, and the small bump of the "T" System stop (d) that is neither a building nor a nonbuilding, contribute in their own ways to weakening the already overextended space. The sunken fountain area in the northwest corner offers pleasant relief to the uncomfortably large plaza space but does nothing for the space.

The problem at least has the virtue of being correctable if the citizens of Boston retain the initial vision and follow through at some future propitious time. There is sufficient room for another building or linear concatenation of buildings to fit around the edge of the plaza to reduce its size to more amenable dimensions. Simultaneously, the new plaza frame would provide a needed covered walkway for inclement or sultry weather. A truly exciting space could be achieved with careful attention to the architectural nature of the new frame and other adjustments to close the gap on the north side of the city hall.

Height of Frame

The buildings composing the frame generally should be of a uniform height that does not vary more than 25 percent. The more uniform the frame, the easier it becomes to suggest the presence of an invisible ceiling to define the height of the space. While there is no maximum height prescription, allowing for a generous amount of sunlight to the plaza surface is essential for human use and enjoyment. Very large towers can overwhelm a small-scale frame that is not high or visually strong.

The uneven height of buildings framing the square yields a poorly contained space. The cluster of low buildings on the right side permits otherwise contained space to "leak" out.
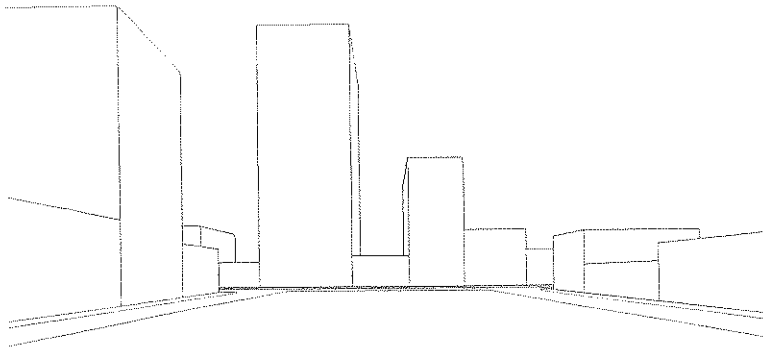
F-1-40

Under certain conditions the 1:2 height to width ratio needed to effectively define street space may be stretched to a 1:4 ratio in the design of plazas. This can be done when the frame is exceptionally uniform in height with only narrow interruptions. An adjacent tower element is needed to serve as a kind of spatial tent pole to offset what otherwise might appear as low and wide proportions.

Shape
The shape of a plaza should permit the space to be experienced, in its entirety, from any point within. Simplicity of form—one that can be easily comprehended—is also a desirable quality. People's impres-

The nearly uniform height coupled with a 1:3 ratio of building height to width give strong definition to the enclosed space of the plaza.
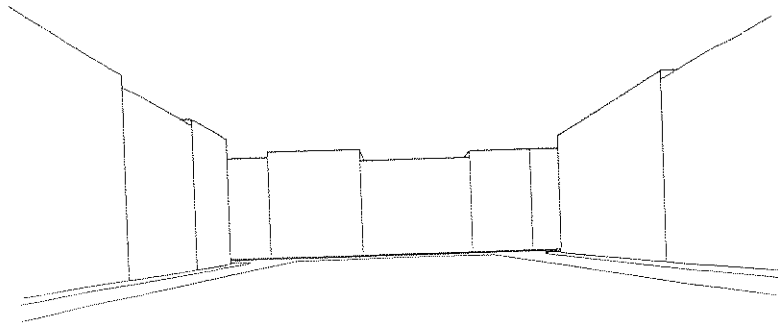
A tall tower that is almost as high as the plaza is wide facilitates the containment of space by a frame as low as 1:4. The tower functions as the main tent pole to the space increasing the average height-to-width ratio.
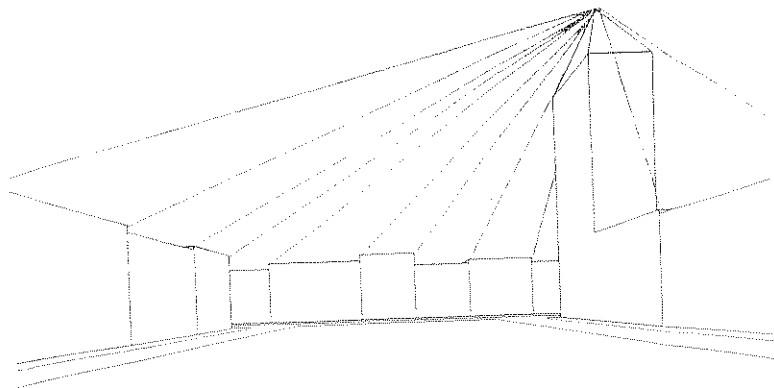
sion of the whole depends in part on the mind's ability to complete the forward picture with an image of what they know to be behind their backs. A form that facilitates the easy assembly of a total impression, such as a simple easily recognizable shape, is most effective in this regard.
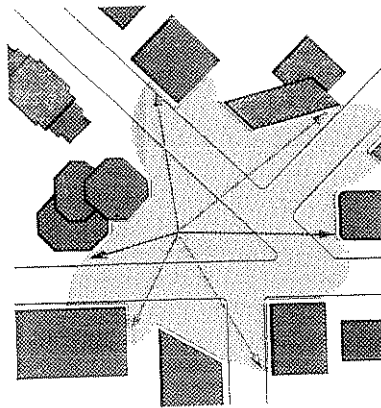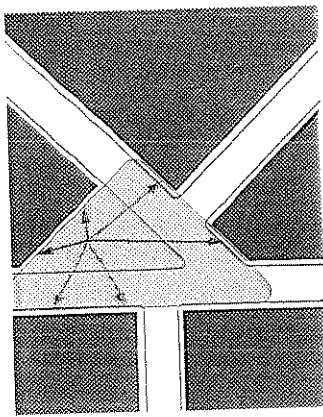
Left: A simple, easy to comprehend space.

*Right: An amorphous, complicated, and ill-defined space.*

   The alignment of the defining walls can help compensate for critical gaps in containment. Concave curving walls that wrap around and cradle a central volume are particularly effective at containing space; their use could help offset the deficiency in a plaza that cannot avoid a serious gap in the plaza frame. Michaelangelo solved the problem of the missing fourth wall (a) of the Campidoglio by canting the flanking sidewalls inward (b) at the mouth of the opening to give the plaza form a positive grip on the space. Skewing opposed walls at angles to each other (c) can initiate dynamic tension between them that also helps compensate for other problems.


A   B   C

F-1-42
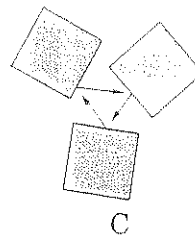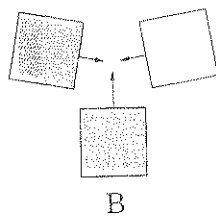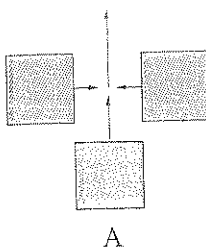
Floor Configuration

Where the individual buildings are strong and their design inter-
action is paramount, then a flat plaza floor that offers minimum im-
pedance is desirable. If, on the other hand, the buildings suffer from
a degree of discord or there is a serious breach in the frame, then
the careful sculpturing of the plaza floor can be used to counter-
balance the deficiencies. Dropping the plaza floor down a few steps
from the building plane introduces a powerful set of lines circum-

*The crescent is among the most ef-
fective of space-defining forms, cap-
turing space within the embrace of
its curve.*
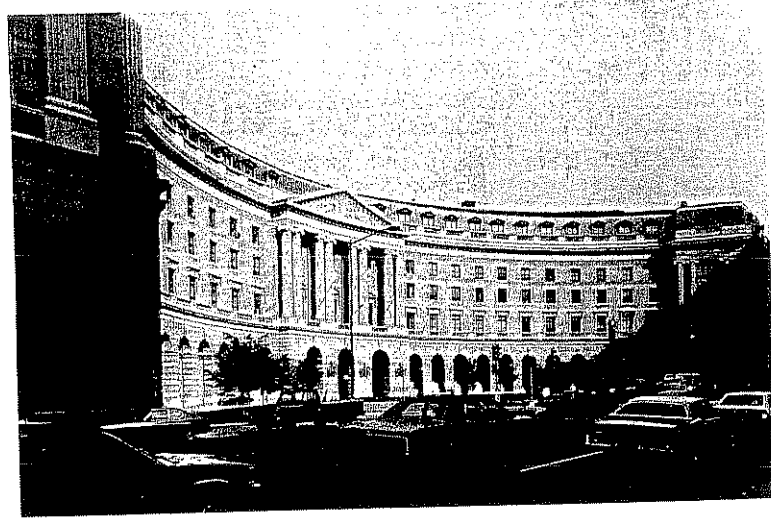
*The concave side of the Center Pla-
za Building, away from Boston
City Hall, much more effectively
contains space than the convex side
facing the larger plaza.*
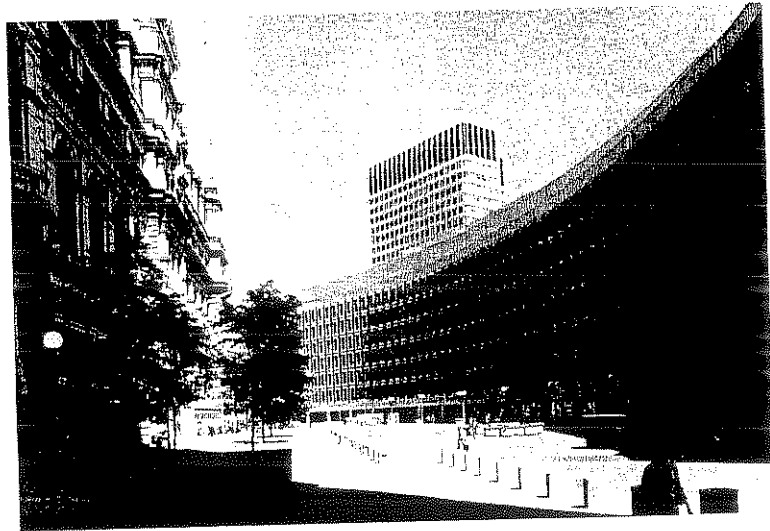
scribing the central space and provides an extra set of defining lines. Sculpturing the floor to create a bowllike form turns the floor into a space container that reinforces the action of the walls. In doing this it is important not to divorce the sculptured portion of the floor from the perimeter. There must be a continuum on all sides. When a section of the plaza is simply dropped down without transition, the spatial proportions of the sunken part are determined by its walls, not the buildings framing the space above. On the upper level the sunken plaza often has a deleterious effect on the clarity of the space.

Case Study: Piazza del Campo. Of all the plazas in Italy, the Piazza del Campo generates the richest, most stunning sense of space. The remarkable thing is that the buildings framing the plaza, except for the gothic Palazzo Publico, are fairly straightforward masonry buildings, lacking the deeply carved features that help define space. Pride being what it was in Renaissance Italy, this may not have been of choice but of economic necessity. Whatever the reasons, the Sienese came up with a brilliant solution that did not require dazzling architecture to create a vibrant space. Instead of attempting to build the typical level plaza, they used their hillside location to advantage by creating a vast reservoir of space held in place by the strong wall of the Palazzo. The embracing curve of the uphill wall and the shallow bowl carved in the floor are the primary sources of this plaza's powerful sense of space. It is a remarkable
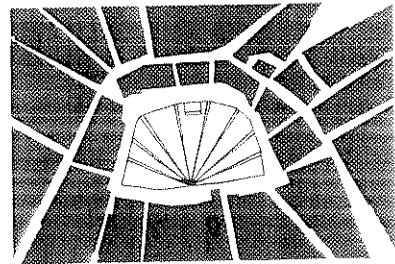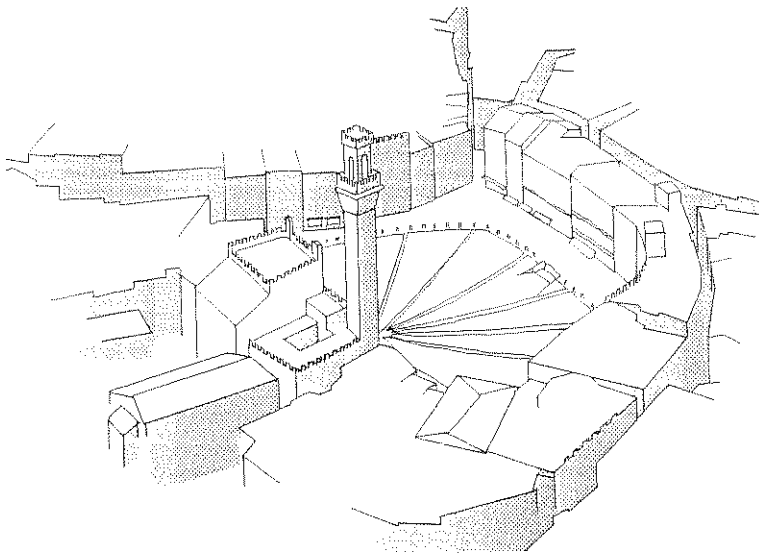
demonstration of how plaza shape and floor configuration can help offset the limited space-defining capacity of the buildings.

Continuity

Clarity of form and closure are weakened when continuity of the plaza frame is broken by wide roadways or other openings. The streets that breach the frame also invade the floor of the plaza, and if the traffic is heavy it will disturb the perception of the frame, subdividing the space with a moving partition of vehicles. Any roadway entering the frame becomes a part of the plaza space, and to think of the plaza as somehow separate from the roadway will yield a muddy concept and cause design errors. The number and size of openings that can be tolerated in the plaza frame is contingent on the strength and unity of the architecture. In some circumstances dense, large-scale landscaping can help close wide openings to more manageable proportions.

Case Study: United Nations Plaza. With the construction of the Bay Area Rapid Transit system, a major plaza was called for at the point where the main axis of San Francisco's Beaux Arts civic center met the major commercial spine of the city. A plaza at this location could never be a tightly defined space, as Market Street was 120 feet wide and the intersecting civic center axis (Fulton Street) was 140 feet wide. The only realistic choice was to direct efforts toward the creation of a "formal place"—something short of a true plaza. A powerful monumental sculpture was needed to overcome the fragmented nature of the frame and provide a central focus. It had to be tall enough to assert itself as the central element of the space and be near but not on the central axis of the civic center so that it would be visible from city hall but still permit processions to proceed on axis. A remnant sculpture of the preearthquake city hall,
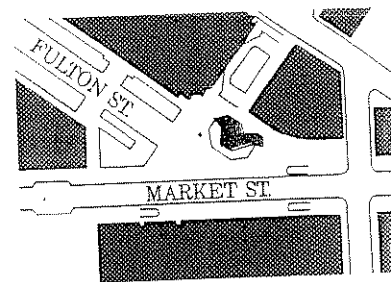
United Nations Plaza,
San Francisco
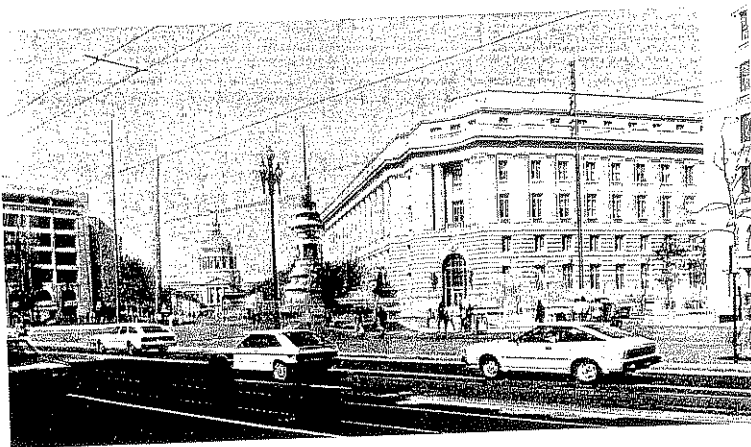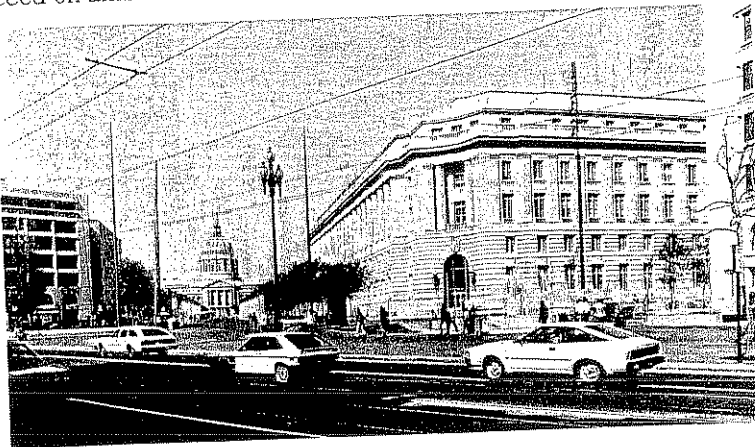
A photomontage shows how a nearby sculpture group, called the Pioneer Monument, would look in the plaza as compared to the existing black obelisk. With the monument in place, the clutter of poles becomes more noticeable.

Photographs by Hartmut Gerdes,
Square One Film + Video.

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now located at the wrong end of a one-way street, fit the spatial requirements and the character of the civic center very well, but the project architects rejected it in favor of designing a modern fountain of a sculptural nature. As built, the fountain consisted of large irregular blocks of granite carefully yet seemingly randomly arranged around the fountain basin. People are invited to climb and sit on the many levels to enjoy the water effects. The bulk of the granite blocks are built toward the outer edge of the plaza, with only a single irregular obelisk of polished black granite gloomily marking the spot where something taller and more grand should stand. The fountain is capable of many special water effects—or would be if the automatic controls were turned on. Unfortunately, it does not do what was needed: It does not address the plaza's spatial problems or provide a central focus for the plaza; its irregular form detracts from the clarity of the space; and its character is not sympathetic to the Beaux Arts architecture of the civic center.

Architectural Characteristics

The qualities of architecture needed to define space within a plaza are similar to those needed to define street space and need not be repeated here. There are, however, additional requirements stemming from the larger size of space being defined. The objective might be described as creating a three-dimensional graph by which the visitor can reference his movement across the plaza and comprehend the volume of the space. The most important lines of this graph are not upon the pavement but in the air, and are the implicit lines and planes projected into space by the surrounding buildings. Increments of height may be indicated by boldly drawn belt courses circumscribing the space at different levels. The axis lines projected by deeply recessed doorways and windows serve to subdivide the space into sectors. Out of the corner of the eye people are aware when they reach the centerline of a formally conceived facade and when they pass to the other side. The vertical plane defined by the juncture between abutting buildings also provides a measure of space and distance. The aggregate effect of many such features is the means by which people "read" space. Lines marked on the pavement can help reinforce the axis lines of the architecture, but cannot do the job alone for the simple reason that the pedestrian angle of view of the pavement becomes so extremely oblique that any patterning becomes quickly indecipherable.

Modern architecture turned away from the formally composed
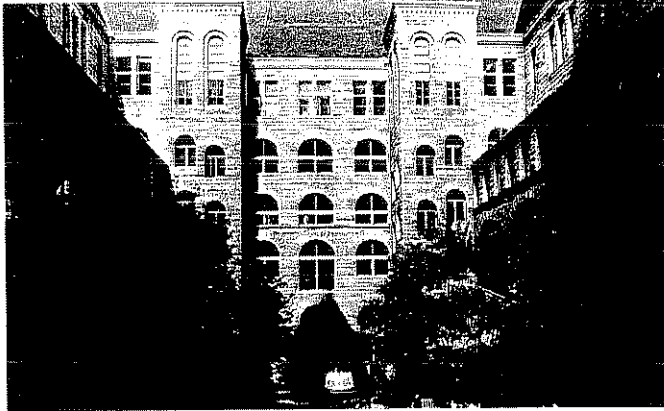
The courtyard of H.H. Richardson's Alleghenry County Courthouse is an exceptionally clear and lucid space that is defined by powerful architecture.
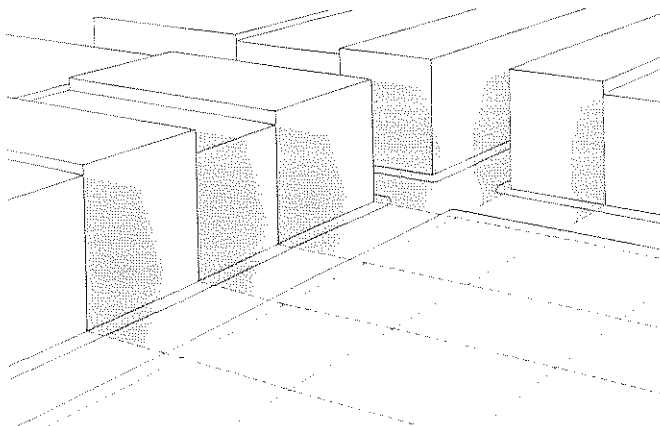
Vertical divisions between the facades of a row of buildings provide a scale with which to measure the space. This applies to streets as well as to plazas.

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design to the formality of mechanical repetition. When the emphasis is dispersed over many small modules, the power of axis lines to subdivide space is drastically weakened. The shift toward two-dimensional facade designs also reduces the ability to accurately determine the alignment of an axis. When plazas are created in conjunction with a building, then the design of the building must address the spatial definition problems of the plaza. When a plaza is proposed, the ability of all the facing buildings to define space must be considered.

Case Study: Saint Mark's Square. In seeking a suitable symbol of Venice's growing power and wealth, the original Piazza San Marco was doubled in length to 570 feet, creating serious problems in spatial definition. A number of important changes had to be instituted to compensate for the expanded size: The image of Saint Mark's Basilica was strengthened by wrapping a new facade around it which increased its width and formed deeply recessed and sculpted archways to project a powerful visual axis that helps organize the plaza space. Great visual unity was required to counteract the entropic effect of the distances involved, and to this end a facade of uniform effect was wrapped around three sides of the plaza. The unity of the frame helps underscore the exceptional nature of the basilica. Disengaging the 324-foot-high campanile from the frame to which it was once an integral part strengthened the campanile's role as the tent pole for the space and improved the unity of the frame.

Unlike Siena, Venice solved its spatial problems by architectural means. Fortunately, it could afford to do so without compromise.

The visual axis established by the deep arched entry portals to the Basilica San Marco are important organizing elements for the visitor.
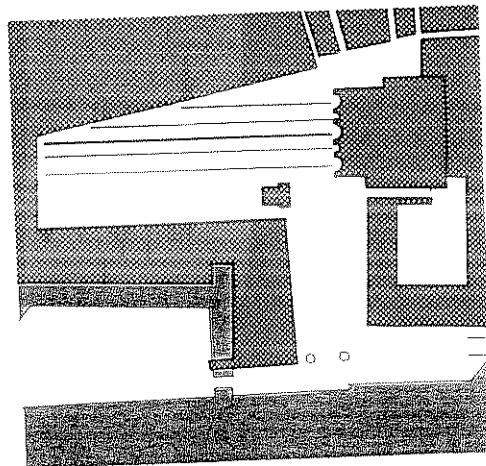
While the resultant plaza verges on being too large to provide a truly comfortable feeling, the brilliance of the composition is more than enough compensation.
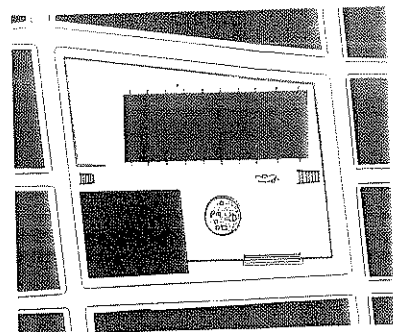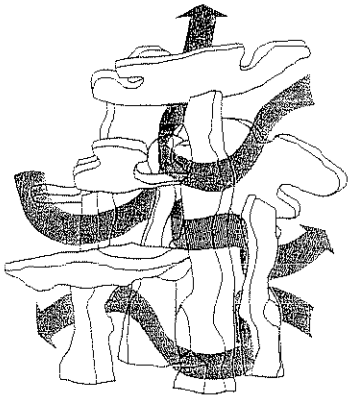
Sculpture

Where the space-defining qualities of the framing buildings are weak or where wide roadways make containment difficult, the right use of large-scale sculpture can render victory from chaos. The great virtue of sculpture is its ability to capture and hold space and to provide a central organizing focus to a space. To do the job, the size and proportions of the sculpture must be appropriate to the space, and it needs to be positioned where it will generate the maximum tension in relation to its setting. The nature of the design problem must guide the selection of the sculpture: A low horizontal sculpture will have little effect on space except in its immediate vicinity, and solid monolithic forms do not grasp and hold space as well as more open forms. For most situations, a vertical composition through which space can move and flow and which captures some of that space within will be part of the prescription.

Case Study: The Chase Manhattan Bank Plaza. The Chase Manhattan Bank Plaza enjoys an exceptionally high degree of spatial containment compared with most American plaza building ventures. Entered from one of the narrow streets that approach it, the plaza appears as a definite surprise. When it was carved out of the dense Manhattan real estate, the plaza exposed building facades that were not designed to be seen in the way they are now presented and this deficiency was not helped by the way the raised part of the plaza podium acts to disengage opposite buildings from direct participation in the plaza.

In the 13 years before the Jean Dubuffet sculpture was installed, the Chase Manhattan Bank Plaza clearly lacked focus. The bank building placed its design energies into a soaring verticality and little into generating any spatially organizing forces. The sunken circular court with a sculptured floor by Isamu Noguchi had no effect on the larger volume. The sunken court may have appeared more significant on plans and when looking down at scale models, but its primary value is to let light into a lower level. The initial excitement of entering the space was quickly replaced by an anticlimactic reality: it was a dull, uninteresting space.

The installation in 1972 of Dubuffet's abstract sculpture of four

Photograph by Arthur Lavine.

trees fulfilled the original plans. The sculpture succeeded by itself in changing the spirit and quality of the space to a remarkable degree. High and open, space moves through, in, and around the parts of the sculpture. The nature of its form effectively captures and holds the space around it, while its unique appearance provides an arresting central focus to the plaza.
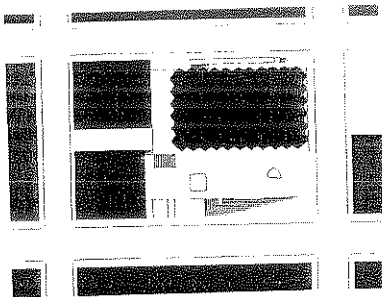
Case Study: Bank of America Plaza. The Bank of America Plaza is located at the intersection of two streets which are several times wider than those that lead into the Chase Manhattan Bank Plaza. The plaza is on the north side of the 778- foot-high office tower, which allows little sunlight to reach its surface. Strong winds frequently scour the plaza, so grandeur rather than amenity was perhaps the best that could be achieved. In its original form, the plaza contained a sculpture and a low fountain that spilled water so carefully over its edges that it was difficult to tell if it was water or plastic. The fountain has since suffered reincarnation as a kitsch garden planter, but the sculpture, popularly dubbed "the banker's heart," remains intact. The black stone sculpture shows poorly before the dark granite background on the sunless plaza floor, and the low solid
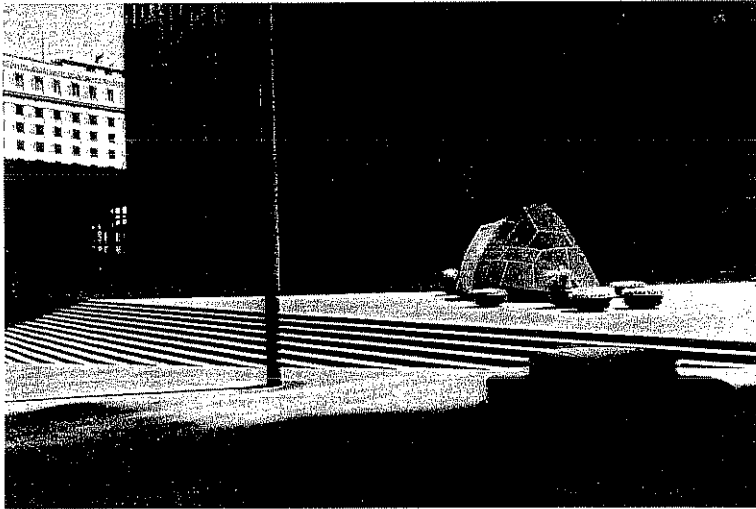
Sunlight visits the cold windy Bank of America Plaza only in the late afternoon. Then, and only then, does the dark sculpture appear to any advantage.

Space slides up, over, and around the sculpture but is not enhanced or activated by the sculpture's presence.
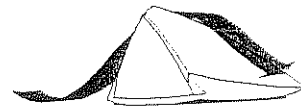
form of the sculpture does little to enhance the space about it. The end product is an essentially blank and poorly defined space that is little used or enjoyed. Installation of a large-scaled, light-colored sculpture of a nature that will hold and vitalize the space about it could recapture some of the windswept spaces around the base of the building for lively uses and attractions, and instill needed life into the space.

Flagpole Sculpture. Every now and then an attempt is made to use flagpoles as a sculptural element to enhance the spatial qualities of a plaza. Both the flagpole and the flag are visible from a distance, usually out of the plaza, and the splash of color can be delightful. In the plaza the flag is mostly out of sight and from its appearance the modern pole could be a utility pole. Looking down on a small model, the World's Fair Toothpick style flagpole gives the impression that it will contribute to spatial definition, but too often it tends to clutter vision rather than define space.

The equal realization of all seven factors that contribute to good spatial definition is an unlikely event. Fortune seems to conspire to demand a delicate balancing act, compensating for weakness in one area by developing extra strength in others. One of the designer's most difficult tasks is being able to step back and coldly examine weaknesses in the concepts that he has had a part in creating. Too often the excitement over the glory of the inner visions blinds him to the reality of what is actually proposed.

Applying the Factors

PPS

PROJECT *for*
PUBLIC SPACES

[DRAFT]

10 Guiding Principles/Themes for Sierra Point

1. Link Uses to Create a Synergy: Existing uses include entertainment. hotel. corporate headquarters. offices. nature trails, marina. dining. convention, waterfront.

2. Location. Location. Location: Sierra Point is too lovely to function solely as an office complex or commercial park. It is near the airport. the mountain, a park and the Bay and enjoys great views. What uses could be introduced to make Sierra Point more of a destination? Could Sierra Point become a special event venue (for weddings, with a catering hall in the park next to the waterfront, run by the hotels), a retreat center, convention, a dining destination?

3. Create Pedestrian Friendly Streets: with sidewalk "experiences," such as retail storefronts, continuous sidewalks with lighting and landscaping, crosswalks. bumpouts, etc. Link the trails and Baywalk to the streets.

4. Create a Pedestrian-Scaled Environment. with pedestrian-scaled buildings. built to the street. with storefronts. entrances and signage. Orient buildings to the street. create a continuous street wall: go beyond the tower in the sea of parking.

5. Improve Linkages to Central Brisbane: through bike paths. signage. shuttles. buses from the train station.

6. Reduce the Width of Streets: Streets are over-designed for the amount of traffic they carry (four lanes with turning lanes) and are unpleasant to walk along. Instead. turn Sierra Point Parkway and Marina Avenue into landscaped boulevards, with planted medians. wide sidewalks. street trees. lighting.

7. Make the Most of Parking: Explore opportunities to share parking among uses. hide parking behind buildings and create a "park once" environment where people can access other destinations and services on foot.

8. Provide Amenities: for office workers, hotel guests and hotel residents. Convenience retail for example. (Art galleries. a movie theater)

9. Expand Water Related Uses: how can other water related uses be accommodated here. such as boat launch. kayaking, youth sailing, jet skiing. wind surfing and the rental of equipment and materials for each of the above?

10. Make the Most of the Park: Get the community involved in the design. programming and management of the waterfront park through a visioning/design charrette. Developers should pay assessment to support the development. use and programming of the waterfront park.

City of Brisbane
Sierra Point Urban Design Update

Goals of Urban Design Update

1. Strengthen Sierra Point Parkway as the public realm "spine" of Sierra Point
    A. The identify of development investments will benefit from a stronger boulevard streetscape sequence
    B. Create the destination boulevard or parkway address for Sierra Point
    C. Use enhanced street lighting, signage, median and understory planting to strengthen boulevard feel of spine.
    D. Extend a version of these improvements to Marina Boulevard

2. Create a focal point of arrival at the culmination of Sierra Point Parkway
    A. Create a definitive Main Street development block as destination; or
    B. Provide an enclosed public green space as a destination
    C. Connect this destination to an open space network

3. Create activity at the focal public space
    A. Activate the public realm with ground floor retail activity
    B. Cluster retail uses in order to strengthen and contribute to a focal center
    C. Create a critical mass of retail development
    D. Provide easy-access curbside public parking at central public space to enhance "coming and going"

4. Focus and contain activity within public place
    A. Provide street walls composed of attractive facades with windows to enclose space
    B. Define appropriate massing and height for enclosure of public space

5. Preserve and/or enhance the view corridor at end of Sierra Point Parkway in order to "connect to the Bay"
    A. Recognize Bay views as appropriate terminus for corridor view
    B. Create a landmark or identity marker to identify or accent Bay views
    C. Frame view corridor with paired bookend buildings to focus attention on Bay as natural asset
    D. Seize opportunity to catalyze the marina as an "Embarcadero" use

6. Determine best opportunity or use for keystone site (trapezoid site) at terminus of Sierra Point Parkway
    A. Catalyze development opportunity at focus site to inject life into public space
    B. Create phasing plan for development of remaining parcels according to size, area, access and development potential. Phasing should create logical sequence of development to take advantage of site reconfiguration and/or land swap opportunities.

FREEDMAN
TUNG AND
BOTTOMLEY

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   C. Frame view corridor with paired bookend buildings to focus attention on Bay as natural asset
   D. Seize opportunity to catalyze the marina as an "Embarcadero" use

6. Determine best opportunity or use for keystone site (trapezoid site) at terminus of Sierra Point Parkway
   A. Catalyze development opportunity at focus site to inject life into public space
   B. Create phasing plan for development of remaining parcels according to size, area, access and development potential. Phasing should create logical sequence of development to take advantage of site reconfiguration and/or land swap opportunities.

FREEDMAN
TUNG AND
BOTTOMLEY

F-1-55

KEYSER MARSTON ASSOCIATES.

ADVISORS IN PUBLIC/PRIVATE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

ADVISORS IN:
REAL ESTATE
REDEVELOPMENT
AFFORDABLE HOUSING
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SAN FRANCISCO
A. JERRY KEYSER
TIMOTHY C. KELLY
KATE EARLE FUNK
DEBBIE M. KERN
ROBERT J. WETMORE

LOS ANGELES
CALVIN E. HOLLIS, II
KATHLEEN H. HEAD
JAMES A. RABE
PAUL C. ANDERSON
GREGORY D. SOO-HOO
KEVIN E. ENGSTROM
JULIE L. ROMEY

SAN DIEGO
GERALD M. TRIMBLE
PAUL C. MARRA

To: Clay Holstine

Bill Prince

John Swiecki

From: Tim Kelly

Date: June 21, 2007

Subject: Sierra Point

Purpose

The City is considering the development of a public realm/open space project at the eastern end of Sierra Point, on a site bordered on the north and south by undeveloped, privately owned properties. These properties are planned as a biotech campus by Slough, and a hotel/residential project by UPC. The public realm parcel is bordered by existing development to the west, and by land under lease to Opus, and the Sierra Point Marina, to the east.

To assist the City, Keyser Marston has prepared an assessment of the benefits of providing retail space as a component of the public realm; the elements necessary to create successful retail; the merits of residential development (which is currently not permitted at the Point) in supporting retail and providing benefits to the public realm; and the total amount of retail space likely to be supported by development on Sierra Point at buildout.

Organization

This memo contains the following sections:

- Summary of Findings – Outlines the key conclusions of the analysis.
- Evaluation of the Need for Retail Space – Discusses the benefits of retail space bordering the public realm.

- Key Elements of Retail Space – Describes the key factors that would affect the success of the retail space under consideration.

- Merits of Including Residential Development – Discusses the diversity and potential financial benefits provided by residential development.

- Retail Space Supported at Buildout – Estimates retail sales and square footage that would be supported by all Sierra Point development at buildout.

Summary of Findings

Providing ground floor retail space is an important component in the success of the public realm/open space. At the same time, in the long term, as development occurs on Sierra Point, the public realm can become a destination drawing users who will patronize the businesses in the retail spaces. There will be increasing support for retail from employees and hotel visitors as Sierra Point builds out. The users of the retail space are expected to evolve with development. At the outset, tenants might include small-scale office and commercial enterprises such as child care, real estate offices, or health clubs. Later on, more traditional businesses including cafés and specialty shops might occupy the spaces.

To ensure the success of retail, it is necessary to provide a pedestrian-oriented environment, which will be done at Sierra Point by the public realm. In addition, since tenants are likely to change over time, it is important to design spaces so that "true" retail and food establishments can be accommodated in the long run.

It is estimated that Sierra Point at full buildout of commercial development could support up to about 30,000 square feet of retail space, including food establishments. It should be noted that most of the retail that would be supported by office and hotel uses is typically internal to private development unless the City requires that the space be developed around the public realm as a condition of entitlement. It will be necessary to locate these businesses with the intended retail cluster in order to have a sufficient concentration to form a successful retail district.

Although not currently permitted on Sierra Point, residential development is essential to boost the viability of the retail space and encourage the success of the public realm. Residential in combination with hotel development would create a 24/7 environment that office uses alone cannot produce, particularly on nights and weekends. Diversity of support from various land uses is important to the success of the retail space.

In addition to residential development providing a mix of uses to support retail sales, the City should be able to negotiate, as a condition of residential entitlements, land dedications for public spaces and financing of improvements and maintenance of the public spaces by the private sector. Private financing for the public realm as a condition of residential entitlements would help to make the desired public realm project become a reality.

Residential buildout of 400 to 800 units could support about 3,000 to 7,000 square feet of food and retail space as well as service related businesses.

Evaluation of the Need for Retail Space

Local-Serving Retail

Given Sierra Point's separation by Highway 101, limited historical demand for retail space, and expected levels of employment and population, supportable retail development in the area will most likely be local-serving.

Synergies between Public Realm and Retail

The public realm provides a setting where retail spaces will be visible, accessible, and convenient for pedestrians. The human scale of local-serving store fronts and the activity created by clientele will help support a vibrant open space. In the absence of pedestrian activity generated by a series of small businesses, the public realm might not achieve its intended public benefits if fronted by three large scale users and an open water front.

Just as retail spaces will help to activate the public realm, this open space will be a draw for local shopping trips. The public realm is intended to become a destination in itself, and the attractive outdoor area will draw users eager to enjoy fresh air, sunshine, and views of the Bay. These users will in turn be potential patrons for retail.

Growth of Support for Retail Space

It is anticipated that support for more traditional retail tenancies in the retail space will grow as Sierra Point develops. Over time, residents and new hotel guests could come to the area, as well as additional office workers. Increased residents, visitors, and employees will improve retail viability.

Challenges to Expanding Retail Opportunities

Although retail space is vital to activating the public realm, and will be supported by various factors including a destination location and the expected increase of local clientele, attracting customers from beyond Sierra Point is a challenge. Shoppers are

unlikely to cross Highway 101 to make local purchases, and as such the retail should not be expected to expand beyond the relatively small cluster under consideration.

Key Elements of Retail Space

Importance of Pedestrian Activity

The scale of local-serving retail, and the nature of customer visits, favors development in clusters offering different types of services within one area that is attractive and accessible to pedestrians. In Sierra Point's setting of wide streets, large areas of surface parking, and long distances between buildings that are set back from circulation, it is particularly important to concentrate local retail spaces in one focused, pedestrian-friendly area where multiple errands can be run after a single car trip. The planned public realm is an ideal environment for pedestrian-oriented retail.

Evolution of Businesses in Retail Space

Users in the retail spaces are expected to evolve as Sierra Point develops. Before the Point builds out, spaces might be occupied by small-scale businesses such as real estate agencies, health clubs, child care centers, or copy services shops. These will activate the public realm although they are not traditional local-serving retail stores. In the long run, with more employees and residents requiring local services, traditional neighborhood retail such as cafés, restaurants, and specialty shops might move in.

Regardless of the nature of initial renters, the buildings lining the public realm should be developed to allow full-scale neighborhood-serving retail when needed. Spaces should provide adequate space dimensions and ceiling heights, access to utilities and deliveries, and ventilation for restaurant uses, for example.

Concentrating Sierra Point Retail

Most of the retail supported by office and hotel development, described below, would typically be internal to private development. Businesses serving the biotech campus or hotel should be encouraged to locate within the retail spaces at the public realm, in order to create a sufficient concentration of retail to form a successful node. For example, a company health club or hotel restaurant could fill ground floor retail spaces, while at the same time increasing their potential client base.

Merits of Including Residential Development

Diversity

Office park environments do not create opportunities for retail districts such as the one being contemplated on their own. Residential and hotel development in combination with

office development would boost the viability of the retail space by creating a 24/7 environment with activity on nights and weekends. Diversity of support from various land uses is important to the success of the retail space.

Potential Financial Benefits

A further advantage of residential development is that the City should be able to negotiate private sector financing of benefits for the public realm in exchange for residential entitlements. Public benefits financed by the private sector might include the following:

1. Dedication of private land for public parks;
2. Private funding of public park land improvements;
3. Private funding of infrastructure and transportation improvements;
4. Private funding of annual park maintenance;
5. Private funding of annual municipal services.

Each of these, or a combination thereof, could be used to make an attractive, destination public realm project a reality.

Retail Space Supported at Buildout

At buildout, Sierra Point is expected to contain approximately 3 million square feet of office space and 800 hotel rooms. Although not currently permitted, residential development is essential to support planned retail space, and KMA has evaluated scenarios with 400 and 800 units, to see how residents would affect supportable retail square feet. As shown on Table 1, office and hotel development could support up to approximately 30,000 square feet of retail, inclusive of food establishments. Table 2 shows supportable retail based on 400 to 800 residential units of 3,000 to 7,000 square feet, plus additional space for personal services.

Although the anticipated 12,000 office workers are a significant factor generating retail sales, it is important to underline that support from office employees will be concentrated during the daytime and on weekdays, whereas residential customers would be present in the evenings and weekends as well.

These estimates are not based on specific projects and as such are broad in nature.

Table 1
Office and Hotel Buildout Spending Potential
Sierra Point Public Realm Project
Brisbane, California

06/21/2007

At Buildout

Office Space - 3,000,000 SF

I. Annual Retail Spending Potential				
Employees	@ 1 per 250 SF			12,000

	Weekly Spending[1]	% Capture[2]	Total @ 48 weeks/yr
Lunch/Dinner	$48	25%	$6,912,000
Grocery	$44	5%	$1,267,000
Specialty	$60	5%	$1,728,000
Total Retail Spending			$9,907,000

II. Supportable Retail SF		
Avg. Sales Volume	$500 per SF [3]	19,814 SF
	Rounded	19,800 SF

Hotel - 800 rooms

	Est. Annual Spending[2]
Hotel Restaurant	$2,000,000
Dining outside Hotel	$2,000,000
Specialty Store	$500,000
	$4,500,000

Avg. Sales Volume	$500 per SF [3]	9,000 SF
	Rounded	9,000 SF

[1] Per ICSC Research Quarterly Expenditure Summary, Spring 2004. 2003 amounts escalated at 4% per year over 4 years.

[2] Based on KMA experience.

[3] Based on the HdL Companies 2007 Retail Store Taxable Sales Estimates, KMA experience.

Table 2
Residential Buildout Spending Potential
Sierra Point Public Realm Project
Brisbane, California

At Buildout

Residential Condos - 400 units

Income per HH $150,000
Total HH Income @ 400 units $60,000,000

I. Annual Retail Spending Potential

	% Spending[1]	% Capture[2]	Total
Lunch/Dinner	3.4%	25%	$510,000
Grocery	5.7%	25%	$855,000
Specialty	5.1%	10%	$306,000

Total Retail Spending **$1,671,000**

II. Supportable Retail SF

Avg. Sales Volume $500 per SF[3] 3,342 SF

Rounded **3,300 SF**

Residential Condos - 800 units

Income per HH $150,000
Total HH Income @ 800 units $120,000,000

	% Spending[1]	% Capture[2]	Total
Lunch/Dinner	3.4%	25%	$1,020,000
Grocery	5.7%	25%	$1,710,000
Specialty	5.1%	10%	$612,000

Total Retail Spending **$3,342,000**

Avg. Sales Volume $500 per SF[3] 6,684 SF

Rounded **6,700 SF**

[1] Spending percent per California Retail Survey, Eureka Group 2006.
[2] Based on KMA experience
[3] Based on the HdL Companies 2007 Retail Store Taxable Sales Estimates. KMA experience.

F-1-62

JOINT CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

JUNE 25, 2007

BRISBANE COMMUNITY CENTER/LIBRARY, 250 VISITACION AVENUE, BRISBANE

CALL TO ORDER/FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Waldo called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. and led the flag salute.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers present:	Barnes, Bologoff, Conway, Richardson, and Mayor Waldo
Planning Commissioners present:	Hawawini, Jameel, Maturo, and Chairman Hunter
Planning Commissioners late:	Lentz (arrived at 7:37 p.m.)
Staff present:	City Engineer/Public Works Director Breault, City Manager Holstine, Police Commander Macias, Community Development Director Prince, Administrative Services Director Schillinger, City Clerk Schroeder, Marina Services Director Warburton

CONSENT CALENDAR

A. **Sierra Point Landscape and Lighting District**

1. Adopt Resolution No. 2007-21 preliminarily approving the Engineer's Report for Fiscal Year 2007-2008
2. Adopt Resolution No. 2007-22, a resolution of intention to order and levy the collection of assessments pursuant to the Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972 - Fiscal Year 2007-2008

CM Richardson made a motion, seconded by CM Barnes, to approve the Consent Calendar. The motion was carried unanimously by all present.

JOINT MEETING WITH PLANNING COMMISSION

City Clerk Schroeder noted that all members of the Planning Commission were present except Commissioner Lentz.

NEW BUSINESS

    A.   **Consider conceptually approving the design for a revised public realm at Sierra Point, including the land trades necessary to establish and locate a new public park/plaza and provide direction to staff regarding City participation in support of a level of retail commercial development that will ensure the activation of the new public space**

        1.   **Overview of Urban Design Principles**

City Manager Holstine said the purpose of this meeting was to obtain conceptual direction from the City Council and Planning Commission regarding the public realm at Sierra Point and the level of retail development to help activate that space. He clarified that no specific development proposals or Sierra Point land uses were being discussed.

Community Development Director Prince showed slides depicting views of Sierra Point and pointed out its major features. He noted that public spaces should be planned and used to set a tone for development, but the trend in development over past decades has led to a marginalization of the public realm. He showed examples of successful public plazas that serve as active and attractive community gathering places.

Community Development Director Prince said Sierra Point was planned in the mid- to late 1970's as a suburban-style office park with hotels and recreational areas, including a 20-acre marina at the eastern edge. The design guidelines, updated in 2001, reflect this emphasis on the twin themes of offices and recreation. Community Development Director Prince noted that the City has worked to maintain view corridors, public access, and open space as part of the Sierra Point development, and the design guidelines call for grouping buildings together to create plazas and outdoor gathering areas. He observed that the architecture and buildings at Sierra Point reflect a corporate style, but little has been done with the space between the buildings, which can be transformed into a vibrant public realm.

Community Development Director Prince stated that the City of Brisbane has been investigating ways to create more attractive and viable public spaces, and this effort has included placemaking workshops, presentations from planning experts, hiring the urban design firm of Freedman, Tung & Bottomley to assist with designing the public space at Sierra Point, and engaging the services of Keyser Marston Associates to provide advice regarding the economic aspects of the development.

Community Development Director Prince said some land trades will be necessary to create a

public space in the area identified by Freedman, Tung & Bottomley and the staff. The first trade would entail moving the Universal Paragon Corporation (UPC) hotel parcel to the north and developing a plaza in the southern portion of the site. He noted that Opus currently leases a parcel slated for commercial retail development toward the east, and after the trade with UPC, he proposed trading the western portion of the plaza space for Opus' triangular-shaped leasehold parcel on the eastern side. He added that the specific details of the land swaps still need to be negotiated.

2.   Proposed Sierra Point Urban Design Concept

Community Development Director Prince introduced Gregory Tung, Freedman, Tung & Bottomley, and invited him to discuss the design concept in more detail.

Mr. Tung noted that he made an extensive presentation to the City Council last November regarding the urban design of Sierra Point. He talked about the development of industrial parks, which are large-scale, single-use areas separated from residential and commercial areas. He said industrial parks tend to be inwardly focused, with large setbacks, surface parking lots, and greenery surrounding central office uses.

With more communities becoming built out, Mr. Tung observed, interest has shifted to creating workplace districts and office parks that foster more human interaction and connection. He said modern office parks are expected to provide a mix of uses, including casual outdoor spaces, residences, shopping, restaurants, and entertainment. He cited the Mission Bay development in San Francisco and new office developments in Emeryville and Yuba City as examples of this concept. Mr. Tung stated that including retail uses can help activate public spaces and attract people.

Mr. Tung showed a map of the existing building footprints at Sierra Point and pointed out that the area has considerable open space that has not been utilized. He provided a drawing showing what a built-out Sierra Point could look like. He reviewed the six urban design goals identified last year: strengthen Sierra Point Parkway as the spine of the public realm, create a focal point of arrival at the entry, create activity at the focal public space, focus and contain activity within the public space, preserve and/or enhance the view corridor to the Bay, and determine the best opportunity or use for the triangular keystone site at the terminus of Sierra Point Parkway.

Mr. Tung said he talked last November about creating either a main street as a public space or a green, open area, and most people seemed to prefer the green concept. He showed conceptual drawings of possible configurations of the public plaza, surrounding buildings, roadways, and curbside parking areas. He noted that the Sierra Point design guidelines can be used to provide pedestrian-scale development consistent with this overall scheme.

3.   Presentation on Economics and the Public Realm

Tim Kelly, Keyser Marston Associates, discussed the economic aspects involved in the creation of a successful and viable public realm at Sierra Point. He emphasized the importance of having retail uses to support and activate the public realm, and having a public realm that creates a setting with a sense of identity that attracts customers to the retail uses. Mr. Kelly advised that for retail uses to be successful, they must be concentrated in one area, located in an attractive and active public realm setting, accessible, pedestrian-oriented, and properly designed.

Mr. Kelly discussed current market conditions affecting Sierra Point. He noted that Sierra Point's location on the east side of Highway 101 isolates it from the rest of town, so the offices and businesses at Sierra Point will have to support the retail uses. He said Sierra Point has the potential of supporting 3 million square feet of office space and 800 hotel rooms at maximum build-out. He estimated that this space could house as many as 12,000 employees and 300 guests on a daily basis, which is sufficient to support retail and service businesses. Mr. Kelly emphasized that these levels of activity are based on maximum build-out, not the phased approach that development is likely to take.

Mr. Kelly said the office use at Sierra Point will generate enough demand to support 20,000 square feet of retail space, and hotels will support another 10,000 square feet, for a total of 30,000 square feet. He noted that food will account for about 80 percent of the demand, with retail filling in the remaining portion. He commented that many office buildings and most hotels provide food internally, so one of Sierra Point's biggest challenges will be getting people to patronize the restaurants in the space around the public realm. Mr. Kelly added that there would not be enough business at Sierra Point for a private-sector developer to construct a free-standing shopping center. As a condition of development, he recommended that the City of Brisbane require developers to help create the space around the public realm.

Mr. Kelly said that because development will take place in phases over time, there may be an evolution in the types of retail tenants. He noted that at the beginning, there might be limited food services, but other uses like childcare facilities, health clubs, and professional services could help activate the public realm. As the office and hotel uses are built out, the retail space could transition to more cafés, restaurants, and specialty stores.

Mr. Kelly acknowledged that including residential uses at Sierra Point would require an amendment or addition to the General Plan. He said residential use adds a very positive element for retail by providing a mix of uses and activity during evening hours and weekends. He noted that residential uses can also result in land dedications, private financing of parks and other improvements, and ongoing contributions for maintenance and municipal services. He added that Sierra Point could probably support 400 to 800 residential units.

CM Barnes asked about the possibility of putting buildings closer to the park, and having parking and a public plaza within the cluster of buildings. Mr. Tung said this concept was considered but

rejected. He noted car-free piazzas in Europe usually have dense residential populations around them, providing a reservoir of people to support the businesses and services. He pointed out that Sierra Point is much different, with high-rise buildings in various locations on the site. Mr. Tung added that because of its isolation, the development at Sierra Point will be primarily accessible by car.

Mr. Tung said the best model for Sierra Point would successful town square spaces such as that found in Healdsburg. He emphasized the need to provide convenient parking and vehicular access to stores and restaurants.

Mr. Kelly commented that having parking in front of retail businesses is considered an amenity.

Mayor Waldo invited questions from Planning Commissioners.

Commissioner Lentz asked about services and attractions for children. Mr. Tung responded that this level of detail can be determined later and negotiated in development agreements. He noted that an open space can be programmed to include a tot lot, for example. He said the initial mix of uses might include childcare, which could be tied to a play area.

Mr. Kelly stated that his office is located in Golden Gateway Commons, which includes a park, and one of the tenants is a childcare facility. He said the Hills Brothers development in San Francisco includes childcare as well.

Commissioner Hawawini noted that in order to be successful, Sierra Point should have 24-hour, seven-days-a-week attractions. Mr. Tung said an active public realm is a key element in generating activity. Commissioner Hawawini recommended thinking beyond retail uses and grassy areas. He observed that residential uses would help create a viable atmosphere. Mr. Tung emphasized the importance of a mixture of uses that can evolve over time. He said Brisbane can direct what happens by carefully planning and creating a nucleus that expands and provides a setting for future success.

Commissioner Hawawini acknowledged that retail uses will drive the economics, but pointed out the need to have other uses that will contribute to a 24/7 level of activity. He suggested after-hours uses such as a soccer field, tennis courts, and volleyball courts.

Commissioner Jameel expressed support for incorporating public spaces as a focal point of development, like many European and Asian cities. He recommended having more of an integrated theme for Sierra Point as a whole. He suggested reconsidering the notion of a huge parking lot and instead using some of that space for other facilities. He questioned whether retail uses would succeed without a residential component.

Commissioner Maturo asked how the proposed one acre of green public space and the

surrounding building density compares to a place like Union Square in San Francisco. Mr. Kelly pointed out that Union Square, unlike Sierra Point, is located in the heart of San Francisco and is surrounded by blocks of dense development. He noted that Sierra Point is characterized by lots of open space, an unobstructed view of the Bay toward the east, and spread-out office buildings; he said this setting will not produce the same level of activation and people as a place like Union Square. He emphasized the need to enclose and contain the public realm and expressed his opinion that one acre would be an appropriate size. He said the programming of the space is also a determinant of how active the space will be.

Community Development Director Prince noted that one acre is equivalent to 43,560 square feet, and urban plazas should be enclosed by buildings of an appropriate size and scale. He pointed out that the uses and activities in the surrounding buildings will also help activate the space.

Commissioner Maturo asked if the residential units would be in addition to or in place of hotel rooms. Mr. Kelly said 400 to 800 residential units could be provided in addition to the hotel rooms, but the exact number would be a policy decision for the City. Commissioner Maturo asked if 12,000 employees would be enough to support the retail uses and the public space. Mr. Kelly pointed out that 12,000 employees is the estimated population at build-out. Before then, he noted, there will have to be services such as childcare, health clubs, and other facilities until there are enough people to support retail. He stressed the importance of planning and designing the development to ensure that the desired build-out takes place. He said that if Sierra Point has an identity and a sense of place, 12,000 people would provide enough demand for retail uses.

Chairman Hunter asked about the average size recommended for retail spaces. Mr. Kelly responded that there will probably be only a few small retail businesses, especially at first. He said there will need to be bigger spaces, over 12,000 square feet, in the interim, and there will eventually be a blend of large and small uses.

Chairman Hunter observed that downtown Brisbane has some very small retail spaces that are occupied. In terms of models, he noted that Embarcadero Center in San Francisco has a mixture of small shops and large retail uses. Mr. Kelly said the eventual build-out scenario will have more retail, but there will not be much demand for retail at the beginning.

Mayor Waldo asked if Councilmembers had any questions. He noted that there were several members of the public who wished to speak.

To put the size in perspective, CM Conway estimated that the Community Park is approximately 2.2 acres, and Brisbane Shopping Village has 15,000 to 20,000 square feet of retail space.

CM Barnes asked about the impact of the Sierra Point development on Marina fees, and whether the Marina would add any economic activity to the Sierra Point development. Mr. Kelly stated that he did not consider Marina impacts in his economic analysis. He said he did not think the

development would increase boat fees. He added that the Marina is a nice amenity that can help create a sense of place.

CM Barnes asked for clarification as to whether the 400 to 800 residential units would be in addition to existing hotels and the project 3 million square feet of build-out development. Mr. Kelly noted that the exact land uses and mixes would be up to the City to determine. He said his point was that adding any component of residential, in addition to hotel rooms, would make the district more viable. CM Barnes also asked if the South San Francisco portion of Sierra Point was considered in the economic analysis and Mr. Kelly noted it was not.

CM Richardson said one of the pictures showed a focal point in the middle surrounded by a grassy area. She observed that most of the other examples of public places showed open space without any obstructions. Mr. Tung noted that Italian piazza examples were open space in a dense urban setting, different from Sierra Point. He said there are different types of open space, and the City would need to decide what design and character would be best suited for the needs of the surrounding businesses. He commented that hardscape features tend to dominate in urban settings, and open areas work better in less dense places. He recommended a combination of green space and paved areas, with the relative amounts depending on the desired programming.

CM Bologoff stated that he did not own a boat, so he did not use the Marina, and the City already had a good park, so he mainly used Sierra Point for its walking trail. He noted the Baylands and the downtown area will provide plenty of shopping, and he questioned whether people from Brisbane would patronize the retail uses at Sierra Point.

4.   **Next Steps**

Community Development Director Prince welcomed feedback from the City Council regarding the public space at Sierra Point and the proposed land trades. He clarified that the purpose of the land swaps was to keep the eastern part of Sierra Point open for the public.

Mayor Waldo proposed taking public comments before the Council discussed the issues.

Michael Warburton, Executive Director, Public Trust Alliance, said his organization works with communities and land trustees to preserve land for the overall benefit of the general public. He commented that there should be more to a public realm than retail and high-rise development. He questioned the appropriateness of such a development, given the threat of rising sea levels due to climate change and the site's susceptibility to liquefaction. He emphasized Brisbane's responsibility as a land trustee to act in the best interests of the public.

Jonathan Scharfman, Universal Paragon Corporation, noted that Mr. Kelly indicated that the proposed development would support approximately 30,000 square feet of retail after the build-out of 3 million square feet and the addition of a residential component. He asked how the

demand for retail space would change if no residential uses were included.

Mr. Kelly responded that he would need more time to estimate this impact. Mayor Waldo proposed coming back to this question at the end of the public comments.

Linda Salmon, Brisbane, expressed support for the proposed land swaps and for allowing some residential use. She said she would prefer to have a hotel with an enclosed shopping area built well above sea level. She commented that transportation is a critical element that seems to be missing from the proposal. She suggested thinking about a ferry landing connecting Sierra Point with South San Francisco, San Francisco, and possibly the airport, with links to a light rail system going through Brisbane.

Ms. Salmon talked about the possibility of adding residential units near the Radisson Hotel or converting office suites in the Hitachi building to residential use. She recommended changing the huge parking lots to smaller parking structures. She said she would like to see more green area, and more pedestrian and bike circulation throughout Sierra Point.

Ms. Salmon stated that she did not like the concept of massing buildings over the plaza because the tall structures could block the sun and make the public space too cold.

Alex Felsteiner, Local 2, Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, said the union wholeheartedly supports the idea of a vibrant public space at Sierra Point but has concerns about any residential use. He noted that the current General Plan considers residential use unsuitable for the site because of noise impacts from the airport and nearby freeway, and because of the seismic instability of the site. He commented that a luxury condominium tower marketed primarily to Pacific Rim business people, as proposed by UPC, could present a serious threat to the small-town, mixed-use character of Brisbane. Mr. Felsteiner encouraged the City to carefully consider the consequences of allowing residential use.

Owen Lee, UNITE Here, commented that residential use would create a huge profit-making opportunity for the developer, and the City needs to make sure there are public benefits as well. He noted that future development at Sierra Point will have major cultural, social, economic, and environmental impacts that need to be considered thoroughly. He advocated a rigorous review process with plenty of public input to ensure that all issues are taken into consideration.

Tom Heinz, Brisbane, recalled that at the presentation last November, one of the commissioners noted that the public usually gets involved in development projects near the end of the process. He noted the City appears to have already made deals with developers without an opportunity for public input. Mr. Heinz expressed opposition to any land swaps and questioned the benefit of creating a public plaza that will be used primarily by Sierra Point employees. He said most employers provide coffee and food for employees, so the retail uses are not likely to succeed. He added that he uses Sierra Point primarily to walk his dogs.

Mr. Heinz commented that the rhetoric in the staff report seems to be focused on justifying the proposed land swap. He observed that the concept of creating a public realm was never mentioned as part of the review of the Baylands development. He expressed his opinion that the City should not trade public land with Bay views for an interior parking lot surrounded by a few trees and tall buildings. Mr. Heinz expressed his opinion that the concept of capturing space in a plaza is appropriate for a dense urban area, but not an open place like Sierra Point. He noted that Frank Lloyd Wright said, "A building should be free to cast its own shadow."

Mr. Heinz said Sierra Point should have been planned as an overall concept in the 1970's instead of in a piecemeal fashion. He noted that the City has emphasized the need for the Baylands development to be integrated with the rest of Brisbane rather than fragmented, and this should be applied to Sierra Point as well. Mr. Heinz urged the City not to bend over backwards for UPC or any developer.

Dana Dillworth, Brisbane, commented that Emeryville and Mission Bay should not be cited as examples of good planning because nanotechnology and pharmaceutical industries are not necessarily clean and safe uses. She pointed out that Sierra Point sits on top of an unregulated former dump site, and facilities like childcare would not be allowed if the area had to comply with the regulations in effect today.

Ms. Dillworth questioned the benefit of the land swap. She said the land along Highway 101 would be more appropriate for tall buildings and hotels. She noted that building a small public park at Sierra Point does not offset the potential impacts of the development. She recommended acquiring and preserving open space with available funds instead of allowing the developer to maximize profits at the expense of the community.

Ms. Dillworth commented that a convention center would be a better way of attracting people to retail uses than creating an unsafe residential use. She noted that a wind or solar energy plant should also be included. She expressed concern about the proposal to close the road in light of the already limited emergency egress from the site. She urged the City to redo the Sierra Point plan with public benefit as the paramount objective.

Michelle Salmon, Brisbane, requested an accurate map showing the areas proposed for the land swap. She asked who owns the land leased by Opus.

City Manager Holstine responded that Opus leases land from the Redevelopment Agency under a 90-year lease with about 60 more years remaining.

Community Development Director Prince clarified that the purpose of the land swap is to push UPC out of the way to create a great public space. He pointed out the triangular parcel at the end of Sierra Point Parkway the City wants to use for a public plaza. He said by pushing the UPC

hotel north and trading that land for land leased by Opus, the eastern portion of the site with unobstructed Bay views would be left open.

CM Conway suggested having the Planning Commission review the concept, take public comment, and come back to the City Council with a recommendation.

John Christopher Burr, Brisbane, commented that the materials presented by the staff and consultants are confusing to the public, as people are questioning the concept of trading a fee interest in land for a limited leasehold. He said Sierra Point was originally owned by Southern Pacific, a company with abundant resources, but Southern Pacific never developed the site. He expressed his opinion that the City should not force development of this unsuitable land.
Mr. Burr noted that constructing freeway on- and off-ramps cost a fortune. He objected to a small town like Brisbane subsidizing giant corporations in this manner. Mr. Burr said the City should admit its past decisions were bad and avoid compounding them now by continuing in the same direction.

Mr. Burr noted that the proposed development concept is inconsistent with the General Plan approved by the voters. He said changing the General Plan would require a new Environmental Impact Report (EIR), and he questioned the need for such an amendment.

Mr. Burr stated that the landfill at Sierra Point was filled with heavy industrial medical waste, and the toxic substances have never been removed. He urged the City not to convert this dump into an attractive nuisance. He pointed out that many of the first responders to the 9/11 attacks were not warned about hazards and did not wear protective equipment, and the result has been death and chronic disease due to their exposure to toxic substances. Mr. Burr noted that the Association of Bay Area Governments' (ABAG's) own maps show that Sierra Point can never be made safe.

Mr. Burr said Policy 74 in the General Plan requires that real estate speculators design and build roads and infrastructure to meet City standards at their own expense. He questioned who will pay for the costs of reconfiguring the roadways and infrastructure at Sierra Point.

Mr. Burr cited a declaration from James Hansen, a climate change expert and head of NASA's Goddard Space Institute, predicting impacts from future sea level increases of 6 to 70 meters. He urged the City to review the chart and take these issues into consideration.

Terry O'Connell, Brisbane, asked for clarification as to the size of the proposed public space compared to the existing Community Park. Mayor Waldo stated that the Community Park is approximately 2.2 acres, and the Sierra Point public space would be about one acre.

Ms. O'Connell said the maps in the meeting packet and the legend for the conceptual drawing are largely unreadable. She recommended that the City provide a plan of the entire site showing the

entities that own each parcel. She questioned whether the developer would be able to build bigger and higher buildings as a result of the proposed land swap, and she urged the City to impose some definite limits.

Michael Schumann, Brisbane, stated that he had great concerns about trading the northern piece of land for the hotel portion. He said the resulting piece would be narrow and walled off, and he suggested that the hotel be redesigned to the make the open space more friendly and accessible. He proposed not pushing the hotel so far north reconfiguring the layout to provide more public space.

Linda Salmon indicated that she supported the land swap and had visited the site to see what portions were involved. She noted that Brisbane has adopted a density transfer program that UPC should use. She said that in talking with UPC, she suggested that UPC purchase the quarry and create an ecological preserve in exchange for a bigger and higher building at Sierra Point.

CM Richardson expressed support for CM Conway's idea about referring this matter to the Planning Commission for further discussion and public review before the City Council makes a decision.

CM Conway made a motion, seconded by CM Richardson, to refer the matter to the Planning Commission as proposed.

CM Barnes asked if delaying a decision will affect the City's ability to implement a public space at Sierra Point. He clarified that the idea of residential use at Sierra Point came from the citizens who participated in the public placemaking workshops and visited the site. He said he thought the idea of an active space was a good idea that has worked well in other parts of the world for hundreds of years.

CM Barnes questioned the need to send the whole matter back to the Planning Commission. He suggested instead that the City Council provide direction to the staff to explore the possibility of land trades. He said that like many citizens, he would like more specific information about the proposed swap and its benefits for Brisbane.

CM Conway observed that the details of the land swap and the specific pieces of the development will be worked out as proposals come to the City, but the basic concept needs to be fleshed out. He advocated sending the matter to the Planning Commission for further consideration and public feedback.

CM Richardson asked how delaying a decision would impact the process. City Manager Holstine said the goal of this meeting was to obtain general direction regarding the proposed concept for the public space and the level of retail. He suggested that it might be helpful to have the Planning Commission look at details such as the location, design, and activation of the public

plaza and formulate recommendations for the City Council. He advised that the City is currently processing the Slough Estates biotech campus proposal, which includes some retail, so the retail issue needs to be resolved as soon as possible so that planning process can proceed.

CM Barnes suggested that the City Council provide direction to the staff regarding the land trades and the possible configuration of the public square while the Planning Commission determine the amenities, features, design style, and architecture. He noted the decision about whether to proceed with a public space should be made by the City Council, and the Planning Commission can help work out the details.

CM Conway expressed support for the concept of a public space. He said he felt review by the Planning Commission would be helpful to clarify the details being considered.

CM Barnes said the first question is whether the Council supports the concept of a public space, and the second question would be whether the staff should explore land trades to make that possible.

Councilmembers indicated they were in favor of the concept of creating a public space.

CM Conway proposed giving direction to the staff to explore land trades and retail, and to refer further consideration of these issues to the Planning Commission.

Community Development Director Prince said he expected the Planning Commission would be able to complete this assignment in one focused meeting.

Councilmembers expressed support for including retail in the mix of uses at Sierra Point.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Waldo made a motion, seconded by CM Richardson, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was carried unanimously by all present and the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m. with no announcements.

ATTEST:

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Sheri Marie Schroeder
City Clerk

RESOLUTION DG-1-08

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF BRISBANE
RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE
CHANGES TO THE SIERRA POINT COMBINED SITE AND ARCHITECTURAL
DESIGN GUIDELINES

WHEREAS, the City of Brisbane proposes to amend the Sierra Point Combined Site and Architectural Guidelines in their entirety, such application being identified as DG-1-08; and

WHEREAS, on August 28, 2008, the Planning Commission conducted a hearing on the application, at which time any person interested in the matter was given an opportunity to be heard; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission reviewed and considered the staff memoranda relating to said application, the plans and photographs, the written and oral evidence presented to the Planning Commission in support of and in opposition to the application; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the project represents a planning study which is statutorily exempt from further environmental review pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21084 and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15262.; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City of Brisbane hereby finds that the proposed amendments are consistent with the 1994 General Plan, including Policies 15, 113, 229, 230, 231, 233 and and Program 113a; and the Brisbane Municipal Code, including Chapter 17.18, SP-CRO Sierra Point Commercial District.

NOW THEREFORE, based upon the findings set forth hereinabove, the Planning Commission of the City of Brisbane, at its meeting of August 28, 2008, did resolve as follows:

The Planning Commission recommends that the City Council adopt the updated Sierra Point Combined Site and Architectural Design Guidelines, dated August, 2008.

ADOPTED this twenty-eighth day of August, 2008, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:

_____
THERESA MATURO
Chairperson

ATTEST:

_____
WILLIAM PRINCE Community Development Director