

## Here Is a Postwar Job for Pittsburgh ... Transforming The Hill District

From *Greater Pittsburgh*, July-August 1943. An article by  
George E. Evans, Member of City Council

Much is being said and written these days about postwar planning and development and there is no doubt but that private industry is confronted with the greatest problem it has ever faced in preparing to furnish employment for returning soldiers and for the re-employment of defense workers in peace-time industry. Doctor J.P. Watson, in his recent article in the *Pittsburgh Business Review* of May, 1943, says:

*The number of people to be reabsorbed into the peacetime economy will surely be something of the order of twenty millions: some say twenty-five. At the best-known expansion rates in past booms, the absorption of this number might require six to seven years - if anyone could conceive a boom expansion rate continuing for six or seven years. If private enterprise should outdo its past records, there would remain in all probability a big part of the load to be carried.*

It will be unquestionably necessary for a certain amount of government participation in this readjustment of our economy

One place in which the Government's action can be effective is in remedying the interior decay of our cities, and in no other city is there greater need for such action than in the City of Pittsburgh. Let private industry go to work with every resource at its command, but still there will be an important part which must be borne by Government. Farseeing men are studying this problem now and are advocating the preparation of postwar plans by local government agencies to be completed and placed on the shelf for immediate action when the crisis arrives.

Senator Wagner has recently introduced into the United States Senate a bill (S-1163) known as "The Neighborhood Redevelopment Act," which has for its objective the elimination of cancerous areas in the cities.

The Hill District of Pittsburgh is probably one of the most outstanding examples in Pittsburgh of neighborhood deterioration; beginning as it does just across the proposed new cross-town boulevard and within a stone's throw of the large office buildings on Grant Street, it extends eastwardly a distance of a mile and a half and has an average width of well over a half mile. Altogether it contains an area of about 650 acres, of which it is estimated that 500 acres could be reclaimed. There are 7,000 separate property owners; more than 10,000 dwelling units and in all more

than 10,000 buildings. Approximately 90 per cent of the buildings in the area are substandard and have long outlived their usefulness, and so there would be no social loss if they were all destroyed. The area is criss-crossed with streets running every which way, which absorb at least one-third of the area. These streets should all be vacated and a new street pattern overlaid. This would effect a saving of probably 100 acres now used for unnecessary streets.

The project would absorb all of the area lying between Fifth Avenue and Bigelow Boulevard, Tunnel Street and Herron Avenue, including the north side of Fifth Avenue out as far as Robinson Street; making it possible to widen Fifth Avenue and make it into a fine thoroughfare. This whole area lies so close to the downtown triangle that if it were properly planned and landscaped it should make one of the most desirable residential sections in the City of Pittsburgh. It is difficult for one to estimate what the increase in land values would be when the project would be completed. It is probable that the increase would eventually amortize the entire cost of the project. Probably no other city in the country has an area so well adapted for such an improvement. There would be no displacement of manufacturing plants or important industries; practically the whole area being residential. The land is now assessed at \$12,000,000.00 and the buildings at \$18,000,000.00. Of course the buildings would be a total loss. It is estimated that the job could be done for a total cost, including public utilities and public improvements, including land and building costs, of \$40,000,000.00.

Senator Wagner's bill provides in Section 4:

*There is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriate, funds to carry out the purposes of the Act not to exceed \$1,000,000,000.00 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1944.*

Senator Wagner says, in his statement on the introduction of the bill (S-1163):

*This bill provides a method whereby the Federal Government can assist states and localities, in assembling large tracts of land as a necessary preparatory step toward the sale or lease of such land for development or redevelopment. This is primarily a private enterprise bill, in the sense that it recognizes that most of the development and redevelopment will be by private enterprise.*

*It recognizes, however, that some cooperative or supplementary public enterprise will be necessary to make the program comprehensive.*

And he goes on to say:

*This is not a postwar bill. The problem with which it deals must be met forthrightly before the war is over, in order that industry and finance, as well as State and local governments, may be prepared and ready to act when the war is over.*

Senator Wagner's bill proposes that a loan may be made for the above mentioned purposes not to exceed ninety-nine years to cities or instrumentalities of cities without pledging the faith or the credit of such cities.

It is the opinion of this writer that a finance plan might be worked out by which local private financial institutions could safely participate by investing in the earlier maturity bonds – say those maturing in less than fifty years and the Government taking those maturing between fifty and ninety-nine years. A similar plan is already used for financing of housing projects by the Federal Housing Agency, and Senator Wagner proposes that this activity shall be placed under the supervision of the National Housing Agency, thus preventing the creation of a new national agency. If the project embraced simply the purchase of the land alone, there would be no problem involved, but as there must be approximately \$18,000,000.00 worth of old buildings destroyed, this loss must be absorbed somewhere. But it is the opinion of the writer that in the long term this loss would be made up by increased land values in a material way, and certainly social and economic benefits to the City would be far greater than any material benefits.

The value of the elimination of these disease ridden slums, where practically half of the crime, juvenile delinquency, tuberculosis, police cases, syphilis (actual recent survey shows 52 percent of all syphilis cases in the City originate in this area), would be impossible to estimate in dollars and cents.

The heavy tax delinquency (\$1,400,000.00 January 1, 1943) far exceeds that of any other section of the City, and yet that section requires a greater proportionate expenditure of tax funds. The area now has a population of approximately 40,000 and estimating the coverage under the new plan at thirty families per acre, there could be placed within the same area, with ample space, air, light, playgrounds, landscaped area,

a population of 60,000. This should have the effect of checking the trend to the suburbs by furnishing decent, comfortable homes for those of our citizens who prefer urban to rural living.

If this plan could be worked out, it would be most desirable to begin immediately the acquisition of the land so that it would be actually in the possession of the local government agency when the war ends. The acquisition of large numbers of properties, such as this, is no little job, as the writer knows from hard experience in land acquisition, but it is entirely feasible.

Of course the project would not be undertaken all at one swoop but would be divided into five sections, synchronized with a master plan of the whole area, and one section completed at a time. What an opportunity this would be for the investment of idle capital in a sound, safe long-term investment and what a stimulation to private industry in the field of home building. It is probably true that the largest single opportunity for private industry expansion after the war is in the field of residential construction. I hope that the business interests of Pittsburgh will study this proposal from every angle, as the writer has done, and I feel sure that the conclusion will be that it is sound financially and socially.

## Asking The Question: Improvement or Displacement?

Anthony Robins

## Part I: Neighborhood Changes

"We will continue bringing down the monuments to hopelessness and replace them with homes on a human scale." U.S. Vice President Gore, Public Housing Summit, 1996.

Two essays opened this scapbook. Ms. Lovette spoke of a rich community full of resources, comradeship and pride while the 1946 Councilman claimed that to deplete the same community would be of no social loss. How do we come to understand these two different views of The Hill District? The desire for a place one can call home is deeply rooted in the psyche. For Americans, a home embodies the promise of individual autonomy and of material and spiritual well-being that many people sought in coming to this country. In addition to its functional importance and economic value, having a place to call home has traditionally conveyed social status and political standing. It is even thought to promote thrift, stability, neighborliness, and other individual and civic virtues.

Consider three statements taken from the popular press:

- "Once you get used to a place, it's hard to let it lose" (Perlmutter, 1997).
- "... The Civic Arena is sitting [where] my living room [was] ..." (Perlmutter, 1997).
- "I remember when they first built the projects. I still remember where every place was. You don't forget ... It stays with you always" (Perlmutter, 1997).

These three statements were taken from Hill District residents who were displaced. Their homes were demolished. The land was bulldozed. They were not permitted to return to their community. The statements share a common denominator: loss. These statements ask us to consider, what does it mean to lose a home? What does it mean to be forced from that place (home) without choice? What is the impact of displacement?

Displacement may be seen as one end in a spectrum of housing outcomes that are determined by the motives of the various agents in the housing market and the balance of power among these agents. Some households stay in their housing or move by choice or for nonhousing reasons. These households have sufficient power in the housing market to stay or move

according to their own motives. Some households are trapped – they wish to move but lack the power to do so because preferred housing is unavailable to them. These households have only the power to stay. Displaced households lack even the power to stay. Their housing becomes unavailable to them, either because it is uninhabitable or unaffordable or because others who control occupancy require them to leave (Palen and London, 1984).

Let us contrast displacement with the term "relocation." Relocation is defined as moving to a new place (Webster, 1994). It implies moving by choice (i.e., the move is voluntary). However, it is not a term that specifies who makes the choice to move. In the urban renewal setting, relocation – which is fairly neutral – is actually a euphemism for displacement. The important difference between the two is power: displaced individuals do not have power of choice.

One can think about this problem in this way. When an individual is displaced, he/she experiences rupture out of one's control. Fullilove (1996) has argued that such loss has important psychiatric implications. Specifically, the rupture of connections to a beloved place can lead to nostalgia, disorientation and alienation for an individual. Consider the following three cases.

### Case 1 – What happens if one individual is displaced from a community?

In the first instance, imagine that a single person has been forced to move. Though this experience is traumatic for the individual, it is possible to reconnect to the community that was left behind. A sense of home – the center of one's universe – can be kept by visiting the place that was once home. It is reassuring to him that the place is still there. Some relationships can be maintained from a distance.

### Case 2 – What happens if people are moved from a community?

Now let us compare individual displacement with a neighborhood being uprooted. A neighborhood-based community is made up of many people, connected to the place and each other. It fulfills our needs as social beings by allowing people with common interests to interact with each other in the same physical area. Within these boundaries, there exists a socio-spatial relationship that can be measured. When the neighborhood is uprooted, relationships are lost and social-spatial patterns changed. For example, a neigh-

bor who could walk next door to borrow a cup of sugar or ask if her neighbor would watch "little Johnny" is now forced to find other means or do without. There is a rupture of the people and their spaces. The impact is greater on the group than on an individual. Ousted residents must reestablish community in a new place. Yet, these people can revisit the place where they once gathered or communed. The buildings and spaces are still in tact.

### **Case 3 – What happens if the people are moved and the land is bulldozed?**

In the final case, imagine that after the people moved, the buildings were eradicated. When the buildings are razed and the geography reconfigured, a hole is left. There is no place to come back to visit. People are left with a void. Where "little Johnny" once played is now a freeway that does not allow such toying around. Jenny's favorite reading spot in her big yellow house exists only in her memories. Ms. Anne's street where she walked and skipped as a child is gone. The land has been changed for other uses. "Little Johnny," Jenny and Ms. Anne cannot return to their favorite places or enjoy engaging activities there that once brought so much joy. They are deprived of their physical pasts. They cannot return to their homes.

### **What are the effects of Urban Renewal on a Community?**

From the mid 1950s to late 1960s, throngs of residents in the Lower Hill section of Pittsburgh's Hill District were forced to relocate to other areas of the city. City leaders with seventeen million dollars in grants razed buildings in a 100-acre area and demolished the Lower Hill. The plan was to create a cultural Acropolis. And the Lower Hill, because of its close proximity to downtown, was thought the appropriate site. The placement of theaters, music venues, and a Civic Arena in this location were to benefit the city (Toker, 1986; Volk, 1998).

Demolition began in 1956, displacing 1551 mostly African American families and 413 businesses. The \$22 million, domed Civic Arena opened in 1961. Glistening in isolated splendor amid expressways and parking lots, it turned out to be something of a civic incubus. For the African American community, this austere silver dome is a highly visible symbol of their displacement. It is a momento of old-style renewal, indifferent to the housing needs and preferences of

low-income families. As a result of this development, the fabric of the physical city was thoroughly damaged and marked the point of decline for The Hill District (Toker, 1986; Volk, 1998).

In the 1990s a new spate of reorganization efforts is poised to alter the community's geography. There is vast demolition that is occurring in the housing projects in Pittsburgh's Hill District. Public housing is being leveled to make way for new communities made of mixed incomes and races, forcing some low-income residents to move to other communities (Cyganovich, 1998; Burgess, 1998). City government forces these individuals to move without having power to decide if such a move is appropriate for their needs. They are pushed out of their spaces to occupy the unknown. They are cut off from the tribe and placed with strangers. Their community is ruptured.

An important lesson that needs to be learned is that the pain of rupture and displacement has lasting adverse effects on the community and should inform housing policy. When displacement is used to empower, it does more harm than good. In cities around the country, a determined effort is underway to confront the problems of our most distressed public housing through the 1993 Urban Revitalization Demonstration Act, also known as HOPE VI (Vliet, 1997). The principles guiding the legislation evolved from the 1992 Commission on Distressed Housing and the 1992 Cleveland Foundation Commission on Poverty. Both reports made a break with traditional, top-down approaches to combating poverty. As a result, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Public Housing Authorities, residents, and local community leaders are coming together to challenge the traditional purpose of public housing and its relationship to the families it is supposed to serve (Vliet, 1997).

Yet, if these encouraging changes are actually to bring about the lasting transformation in these communities that everyone intends, neither ambitious construction efforts nor top-down policy changes will be enough. Rather, sustainable success will be made possible by strengthening communities and harnessing the determination of the residents of public housing – key resources that many observers do not even figure into the equation of change.

Building new and vibrant communities from the most distressed public housing projects takes more

## Grappling with Displacement

Terri Baltimore

In January, 1997, I received a notice from the Graduate School of Public Health/Center for Minority Health. It announced a presentation by Mindy and Robert Fullilove. The topic was "The Effect of Displacement on People In Their Communities." The flyer was sent to me by Angela Ford, of the Center for Minority Health, and I circulated it at the January Collaborative meeting. I was intrigued by the subject. In the months prior to their presentation, activities around HOPE VI abounded in The Hill. On the surface, it appeared that the potential for people to be displaced seemed real. And yet, in The Hill talk of displacement was minimal to non-existent. I went to the presentation hungry to hear something that might be useful in The Hill District. But, I did not hold out much that the talk would offer anything concrete.

Since the Fulliloves were affiliated with Columbia University, I assumed that they would be speaking from a theoretical perspective. I expected that they would be talking to their fellow academics and they would be offering little in terms of speaking to community folks and their needs.

I made my way to the presentation, only to find that several members of The Hill District Community were there: Eric Hearn, Housing Opportunities Unlimited, Ron Wilson, Allequippa Terrace Residents Council, Louella Ellis, Allequippa Terrace Residents Council, Ken Thompson, Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic/Hill Satellite, Vaughan Stagg, Matilda Theiss Child Development Center and Margaret Madison, Matilda Theiss Child Development Center. In addition to the people from The Hill, the presentation was attended by John McCormick, the United Way staff person assigned to work with the three community collaboratives. Despite The Hill District representation, the lecture hall was dominated by students.

I was surprised when the Fulliloves were introduced. They were a married, African-American couple. They were casually dressed and seemed quite

comfortable playing off of each other in their presentation. And contrary to my pessimistic expectations, they delivered a talk that spoke eloquently about abandoned communities and the overlooked resources that existed in them. They talked about the history and values that got lost when communities were allowed to systematically deteriorate.

The presentation was a powerful combination of stories, experiences, slides, research data and vivid details about the complex impacts of displacement. They each described how their childhood homes dis-

appeared and they expressed how that affected their abilities to recall people, places and things connected to their childhoods. They talked about how hard it was to participate in conversations about childhood remembrances because they could not recall the details of their respective communities. The loss of touchstones, buildings, places was connected to their inability

to remember details about that part of their lives. The names and faces of friends and neighbors vanished. Experiences tied to those places vanished.

The destruction of their childhood homes, and communities, was not an experience peculiar to the Fulliloves. They illustrated with slides and statistics, how displacement was a phenomenon in the United States and around the world. They tied together the destruction of communities (tearing down buildings, people moving out of neighborhoods, creating pockets of isolation within communities) with public health issues like HIV and AIDS.

Their personal stories stirred my own sense of being disconnected from the community where I grew up. The first house I lived in was 300 block of Paulson Avenue. The row of houses on Paulson Avenue was destroyed by fire. The buildings were gone. Community was gone. Gone too, were the close knit members of my extended family and my "neighbor family."

A church parking lot now occupied the place where

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH'S  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
and  
CENTER FOR MINORITY HEALTH

*cordially invites you to attend*

"The Effect of Displacement on People in Their Communities"

*presented by*

MINDY AND ROBERT FULLILOVE  
School of Public Health  
Columbia University

Friday, February 7, 1997  
130 DeSoto Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15261  
A115 Lecture Hall  
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

*Light refreshments will be served*

ten families supported and taught each others and their children. The Fulliloves made me recall the lessons I learned there and helped me understand what happened when the places we called home vanish. It made sense that faces and experiences weren't clear. It made sense to me why I couldn't remember some details of my childhood. And why my boyfriend, whose family home and neighborhood remained intact, could recall the smallest of details of his life.

It made sense that when those buildings and people disappeared, a part of my identity, my grounding and memory went with them.

I recognized that all of the elements related to place were important. Although I knew the area as East Liberty, city planners have changed its designation to Lincoln-Lemington. The Fulliloves' discussion made me realize that the act of renaming the area was an act of disconnection. In the minds of the city fathers, my old neighborhood ceased to exist.

In addition to touching me with ideas about disappearing communities, they touched a nerve when they discussed "empowered collaboratives." The Fulliloves defined "empowered collaboratives," as opportunities for people to work together, to have a voice in the decisions of the community. Empowered collaboratives provided opportunities for each member to contribute their talents and expertise in assessing the community and contributing to its life.

The more the Fulliloves talked, the more it seemed apparent that they were in the wrong venue. They needed to be in the community, places like The Hill, as well as in the university.

The more they spoke about looking at communities, and understanding and respecting the value of what existed there, the more it seemed they should be in The Hill District. The more they spoke about the necessity of removing negative labels "disadvantaged and distressed" from communities like The Hill, the more their message seemed ill-placed at Pitt.

As I sat listening to the Fulliloves, several questions

turned over and over in my mind. "Why weren't they talking to people in The Hill? Why weren't they talking to the people who had the most likely chance of being displaced from their homes and communities? Was anyone else interested in having the Fulliloves in the community?"

When the talk concluded, I stuck around for the reception. At the reception, I spoke with some of the folks from The Hill District. Angela Ford, Ken Thompson and Vaughan Stagg all agreed that we needed to pursue the idea of bringing the Fulliloves to the attention of the community.

During a followup conversation with Angela Ford, I learned that the Fulliloves had expressed to Dean Mattison their interest in returning to Pittsburgh.

In the late spring, we began to actively engage other community members in a discussion on bringing the Fulliloves to The Hill. Residents and agency representatives attended the initial organizing meeting on June 18, 1997. What happened next? The members of the planning committee worked diligently to pull off Dr. Fullilove's visit to Pittsburgh. The flyers were circulated. The press releases sent out. The meeting spaces secured. The child care providers recruited. Refreshments and snack bags assembled. The press conference was set. The community reception organized.

Dr. Fullilove had a very busy day. In the morning, she spoke at Allequippa Terrace. The event organizers were surprised at the turnout. No one expected so many people to turn up at 10 in the morning for a program. But, they did.

The provocative flyers that were distributed made many people curious. Even after Dr. Fullilove was introduced, and she assured folks she could not tell them where they would be moving, most stayed. They stayed to hear about displacement and what it does to the mind, body and soul.

Many people were willing to acknowledge their fears and to share memories of that community. The residents broke up into small groups and talked about

**Hey, Do You Know  
You Are Moving?  
How Do You Feel About It?  
Come Out And Talk About It!**

**FOOD,  
PRIZES AND  
INFORMATION FORUM**  
Child Care Available  
Mindy Thompson Fullilove, M.D.  
African American Woman  
**Thursday, July 24, 1997**

10:00 to 11:15 am - Wadsworth Hall, Burrows Drive  
Free Food/Door Prizes - Child Care Available

2:00 to 4:00 pm - Boys and Girls Club, Somers Drive  
Free Food/Door Prizes - Child Care Available

5:00 to 6:00 pm - A Reception will be held at the  
Hill House Kaufmann Auditorium  
Refreshments will be served

**FOR INFORMATION CALL 683-9158**

## Part II: Starting a Conversation

the memories that they wanted to take with them.

At lunch time, Dr. Fullilove met with the event organizers. Over lunch, she told us that this day was not enough. That if we wanted to capitalize on the energy and interest, we had to be prepared to stay together for the long haul. Little did she know that we had already talked about what to do beyond July 24 at our second planning meeting on June 18.

After lunch, she spent the afternoon in Bedford Dwellings. The crowd was smaller, but the sentiments were the same – people here were fiercely proud of living in and coming from The Hill District. They eagerly shared what that meant to them.

In the late afternoon, Dr. Fullilove participated in a press conference. The conference was followed by a community reception.

At the reception, she had a chance to reunite with an old friend, Councilman Sala Udin. Councilman Udin had met the Fulliloves in San Francisco. He told how they met when he introduced her at the reception.

For several months following the July 24 visit, the community members were struggling with how to stay together, what our mission would be and how to bring both Fulliloves back to Pittsburgh.

By the end of 1997, we had a name. In a letter, sent to Sala Udin following her visit, Mindy Fullilove suggested the name "Coalition for a Healthy Urban Habitat." The name was adopted by the planning committee. And the group embarked on a year long odyssey that included: a series of teach-ins, reading and research, a partnership with Carnegie-Mellon University, a community conference, and a conference for community organizers.



*Top: Mindy speaks at Wadsworth Hall, Allequippa Terrace, July 1997*

*Bottom: Participants in the "Do You Know you're Moving" meeting, July, 1997*

*Feelings About Moving* was a coloring book volunteers used to work with Hill District residents' children while their parents attended the "Do you know you were moving?" meeting.

*Feelings About Moving*

Kids have different feelings about moving from one place to another. Circle the feelings you have about moving:

|                      |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| happy                | missing my old school     |
| sad                  | missing my old teacher    |
| scared               | missing my old classmates |
| worried              | liking my new home        |
| lonesome             | liking my new school      |
| excited              | missing my old bedroom    |
| confused             | missing my old play area  |
| tired                | liking my new classmates  |
| missing my friends   | liking my new bedroom     |
| missing my old house | liking my new play area   |

wondering if new kids will like me

wondering if old kids will forget about me

wondering what else will change

wondering who else will move

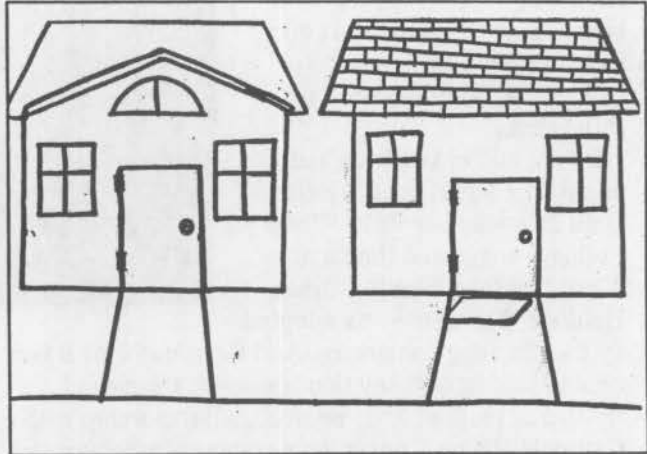
wondering if I will have to move again

I also feel \_\_\_\_\_.

I can talk to \_\_\_\_\_ about my feelings.

I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ questions about moving.

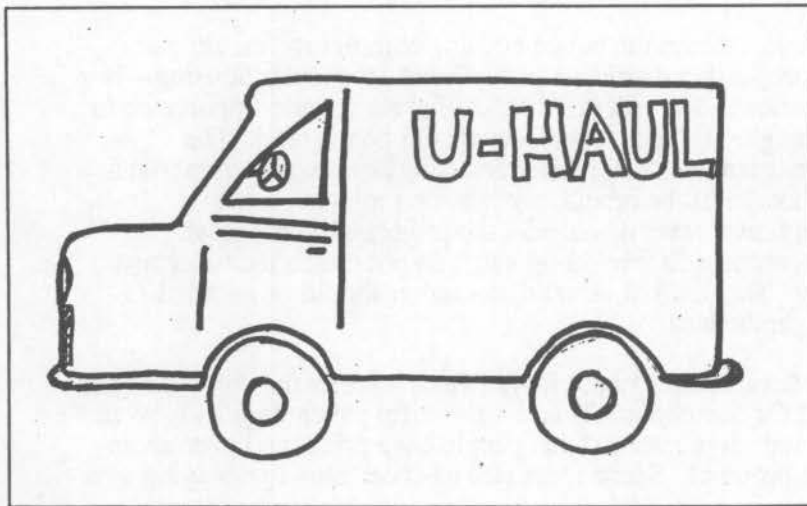
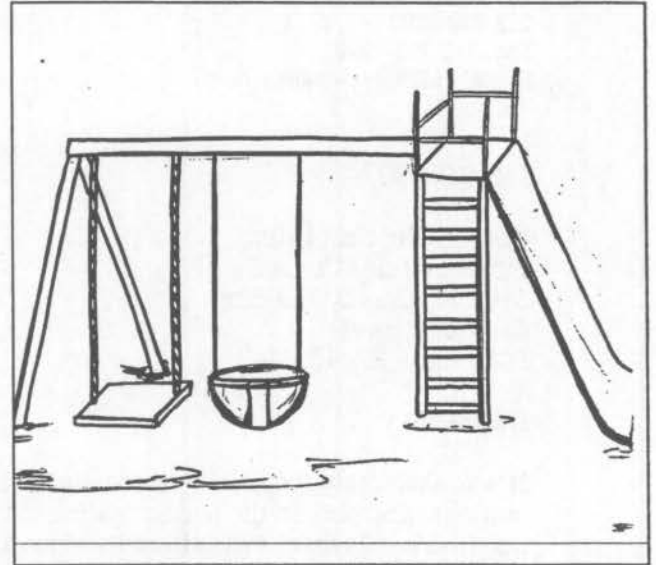
I know it is okay to have feelings about moving from one place to another.





# Part II: Starting a Conversation

## A Coloring Book



The Community Research Group  
The New York State Psychiatric Institute, Unit 29  
722 West 168th Street  
New York, NY 10032

Dr. Mindy Fullilove  
212-740-7292  
Fax: 212-795-4222  
E-mail: mf29@columbia.edu

July 30, 1997

Councilman Sala Udin  
Pittsburgh city Council  
510 City County Building  
414 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Sala:

It was absolutely wonderful to see you last week. Bob sends his warmest regards. Our work has focused on the understanding the denatured inner city, that is, those neighborhoods that have suffered serious loss of housing and economic infrastructure. We would be happy to put our expertise at your disposal. I enclose some recent publications to bring you up-to-date on what we are doing.

I promised to write a list of those principles in the planning document I have reviewed that I believe to be sound. I take this from "Hope VI Planning Grant Report: Bedford Dwellings Addition, January 1997." The planning grant lists 10 principles which guided the process (p.11). While all are important, I would highlight the following:

- involve the existing residents in the planning process;
- integrate public housing units into the neighborhood;
- restore the street grid;
- bring back the street and the porch as a focus of community life;
- respect the historic and social context.

The current street grid, for example, isolates the public housing community, creating a virtual wall. The separation of people into districts—public housing, regular housing—is very destruction for social interactions. The Hill is a district of great historic importance to African Americans and to Pittsburgh. Its "look" and form should be restored. The developers' concept of using a "pattern book" taken from existing houses is an important idea. Also, the whole neighborhood must be rebuilt, not just the projects. If the neighborhood looks whole—like it was never damaged—the project will be a great success. There are, for example, some split level houses that do not match the older row house concept of the community. That kind of visual dissociation should be avoided. I could go on, but hopefully you get the idea.

The plan is problematic, in my view, in three major ways. First, it labels the community as "distressed" and therefore slated for demolition. This is a powerful psychological blow to residents, which must be countered. It is essential that people have pride, and even more so if they don't have much to be proud of. Second, the Hill has been slowly decaying over

## Part II: Starting a Conversation Reflections

several decades. People there have already suffered from displacement, and know that community is lost when people move. The moves that are proposed are very serious. They are likely to further weaken the community. The plan is virtually silent on this point. Finally, the plan does not propose a one-for-one replacement of housing. That means some people will be forced out of the neighborhood. As councilman for the area, I am sure that you are already quite concerned about the deconstruction of your district.

I think that a "Coalition for Healthy Urban Habitat" might be created out of the group that organized my visit. They are all aware and concerned. In the swirl of politics that surrounds a project of this size, many of the principles may be lost. Some of the bad outcomes might get worse. A coalition can provide badly needed advocacy for the residents of the projects and for all the people who care about the Hill.

In addition, I recommend that the City of Pittsburgh, as whole, should become invested in the success of rebuilding your district. This project is an interesting one, from the perspective of urban planning, architecture, urban ecology, etc. It would provide excellent teaching materials for school children. I think everyone should participate in the revitalization of the area, as a symbol of on-going investment in the survival of Pittsburgh.

I could go on and on, as I have lots to say on these subjects. Rather than talk your ear off, perhaps you could let me know if these ideas make sense to you. Also, let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Actually, I fervently hope you arrange to keep me involved as I am fascinated by the potential for great good, and the threat of terrible harm.

Sincerely,


Mindy Thompson Fullilove, MD  
Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry and Public Health  
Columbia University and New York State Psychiatric Institute



*Maurice Falk Medical Fund Minority Fellows Program Kick-off: 1998 Fellows introduced. Don Mattison, Robert Fullilove, and Mindy Fullilove at reception at the Hill House to announce the Fellowship.*

MAURICE FALK MEDICAL FUND 3315 GRANT BUILDING PITTSBURGH, PA 15219-3295

MEMORANDUM

TO: Center for Minority Health Advisory Board  
FROM: Phil Hallen   
DATE: January 12, 1998  
RE: Grant to Establish the Falk Fellows Program of the Center for Minority Health

I am pleased to announce prior to a general press release, that the Falk Medical Fund has awarded a grant of \$93,220 to establish a program of visiting scholars and researchers and to be known as the Falk Fellows of the Center for Minority Health. In addition to funding the initial Falk Fellows, Drs. Mindy and Robert Fullilove, the grant provides for administrative staff support and for research and development of a Minority Health Information Hotline.

This grant grows out of a long association between the School and the Falk Medical Fund and creates a flexible program to bring nationally known researchers, scholars and community activists to the Center for varying periods of time to teach, continue their research and work with community organizations.

The Fellows who will inaugurate the program are Drs. Mindy and Robert Fullilove of Columbia University. They have lectured at the Graduate School of Public Health several times and are well known in the School and within the public housing community where their research and teaching activities will focus.

The Falk Fund's purpose in awarding this grant is to (1) increase the visibility of the Center within the University and to position it as the place for university-wide coordination of all research projects related to race and minority affairs in health, (2) to make the Graduate School of Public Health a nationally recognized location for scholarship and research in minority health issues, and (3) to create outreach to Pittsburgh's minority community in issues of health information and referral.

The Falk Fund has previously supported fellowship programs in community psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh, Meharry Medical College and the American Psychiatric Association, as well as minority post-doctoral fellowships at the American Sociological Association and the Social Science Research Council.

## Part I: Comments on Urban Design

Mindy Fullilove

These are comments on the UDA HOPE VI plans for Bedford Dwelling Addition (Bedford HOPE VI Revitalization Plan, 1997). The plans are designed to address the problems associated with substandard public housing. The project will demolish existing public housing and rebuild a mix of public and private structures. In addition to improving the housing stock, the plan will decrease both the concentration of very low income families and residential segregation in The Hill District of Pittsburgh. The Hill District, the plan notes, has lost approximately 40% of its overall housing stock, and suffers from economic and social isolation from the rest of Pittsburgh. Yet, the area is the closest residential center to downtown Pittsburgh.

Specifically, the plan proposes to demolish all buildings at Bedford Dwellings Addition (27 buildings, 460 units) and replace them with 185 new on-site units and 475 off-site units. 260 of the new units are designated as public housing. The planners state, "... the proposed mix of 260 new public housing units and 100 Section 8 certificates will satisfy the needs and preferences of the 340 households which currently reside in Bedford." (p. 30)

Rationale for demolition:

- Bedford Dwellings is a "distressed community" by four parameters: relative density, total delinquent rent, drug crime rate, and modernization need;
- The design of Bedford Dwellings is flawed, for example, the streets do not connect to the local grid;
- Current plan lacks green space, community meeting



*Left above: Housing projects slated for demolition*



*Left below: New construction*

## Part II: Starting a Conversation Coalition Meeting, 2/13/98: What's Up with HOPE VI?

places, shopping.

Plan to "build on strengths and eliminate weaknesses":

- Restore turn-of-the-century street grid to create "human scaled, interconnected streets";
- Increase parks and green space;
- Anchor the community with new housing opportunities;
- Support commercial revitalization along Centre Avenue;
- Create a Campus of Learners;
- Rebuild the neighborhood in character with the community;
- Create marketable addresses that link the strengths of the neighborhood to the city;
- In the future, continue to build on strengths and eliminate weaknesses.

Image and Character:

- Design blocks to support urban house/street connection
- Provide new houses based on the traditions of the neighborhood, with lawns and porches
- Attention to needs/wishes of residents:

The plan has been developed in two stages. Stage 1 will build off site. Residents will be relocated to new housing prior to demolition of Bedford Additions. The plan recognizes the wishes of residents to remain in the area. The plan states, "In fact, a condition for resident support of this proposal was that the Housing Authority commit to provide a housing unit in the immediate vicinity of Bedford Dwellings for any household which needs it." (p. 31) The plan also notes that residents interviewed in a project survey favored renovation over demolition by a margin of 3 to 1.

## Part II: Comments on the Self-Sufficiency and Community Building Work Plan

Robert Fullilove

These are comments on UDA's economic plans for Bedford Dwellings. The Self-Sufficiency and Community Building Work Plan is an integral component of the HOPE VI revitalization project. Its objectives focus largely on economic development strategies, the development of job opportunity, educational, and employment programs for community residents, and the creation of strategies to support residents in becoming actively involved in community life and development.

The plan envisions a collaboration of public, private, and community-based agencies to create and support self-sufficiency programs. Community residents are to be actively involved in goal setting for this effort and in identifying problems and barriers to achieving these goals. Computer and Internet technologies will be utilized to support these efforts and will be a principal focus of many of the education and training initiatives that the plan envisions.

Because a significant portion of the families in the Bedford community are currently receiving social services, "The Bedford Self-Sufficiency Program will rely on a basic case management and advocacy model to help residents transition to economic self-reliance."

All households will participate in a "family assessment" that will identify employment, housing, and family stability issues for each resident. This information will serve as baseline data for measuring each individual's progress towards achieving the goal of self-sufficiency (pgs. 7-9). An advocate will be assigned to each family/individual to assist in obtaining needed services and to assist in the achievement of an appropriate level of self-sufficiency.

A set of impressive employment goals has been set as part of this segment of the plan. The proportion of "employable" residents between the ages of 16-60 will increase by 60% over the first five years of the plan, 50% of public housing residents will be placed in jobs and will sustain employment for at least 18 months, and at least 25% of those who are already employed will move to higher paying jobs. "Residents will be encouraged to use computer technology to develop career plans, research career and occupational alternatives, assess skills and interests, inform [themselves] of current job openings, and develop resumes and to write letters to potential employers." Barriers to employment – most notably those involving transportation – will be part of a plan to enhance employment opportunities.

### Economic Development

The plan has an aggressive set of objectives for economic development of the Hill District, as well. In addition to strengthening and revitalizing current District businesses, new businesses (with accompanying job opportunities for District residents) will also be developed. Strategies to attract new ventures will be undertaken as well as strategies to encourage current businesses to remain. Along list of potential partners in this venture is provided.

### Community of Learners

The Community of Learners is aimed at improving educational opportunity to children and adults in the District. It will rely heavily on both computer technology and on providing residents with access to the internet to achieve its goals. Plans include the improvement of the physical plant and technological capacity of a number of area schools (McKelvey and Milliones) as well as the creation of important initiatives to improve parent involvement in educational and curricular reforms at these institutions. Adult educational opportunities are also highlighted and include providing access to seniors, as well.

### Community Building

The community building component focuses on efforts to increase the involvement of residents in community governance and to enhance the sense of community pride. Of particular significance are the plans for a governance structure that emphasizes the incorporation of new residents into such a structure. "Until new housing units are ready for occupancy, it is anticipated that the Bedford Dwellings Tenant Council and its various committees, including the newly established network of building captains, will continue to represent the concerns of public housing residents. Upon initial occupancy of the new housing, a new resident association will be formed to represent the interests of all renters in the community, including but not limited to public housing residents."

The plan envisions the involvement of other stakeholders and other organizations that are concerned with the health of the community. Thus, community building activities will be supported so that voluntary groups, neighborhood lock associations, and other groups can take on such projects as the development and maintenance of community gardens, the sponsorship of cleanup projects, the creation of community social events, and the construction and supervision of play areas for young children.

## Teach-ins and Community Organizing

Robert Fullilove

Why hold teach-ins? Our intent in using this particular strategy was to create the conditions for a dialogue between our group and members of the Hill community about their experiences and perceptions of the changes in their neighborhood.

The Hill's transformation by the HOPE VI process was, ostensibly, designed to be a collaborative process between residents, developers, builders, and city government. This ideal has not been fully realized. In our early visits to Pittsburgh Hill residents described the "apathy" and the indifference of their neighbors in the face of the impending transformation of the community. They wondered aloud whether anything could be done to "wake people up" and get them to be actively involved in the process that would determine their fate. Teach ins provided us with a unique opportunity to create a consciousness of place, of community, of dislocation, and of the psychological impact of all of these factors.

The use of teach-ins in our Pittsburgh project reflected a return to the "old school" notion of how to do community organizing. We wanted and needed to have community input: what were the views and perceptions of residents about the impending changes in the Hill's housing patterns? What were they planning to do, individually and collectively, about the loss of housing and community landmarks? In a series of five meetings we not only solicited comments from community residents about what they perceived to be happening with them, but also we tried to use their comments to create a shared vision of what was happening to the neighborhood and what it was possible to do in the face of these changes.

Our objective was ambitious. In order to create the foundation for such conversations, we were trying to teach participants a new language about spaces and places and emotion. Moreover, we wanted this language to become the medium for our communication with each other and for our discussion of strategies and tactics for the organization. We wanted meeting participants to evolve from a vague sense of unease and ennui about the changes in their neighborhood. We wanted them to name their feelings and their perceptions of what was happening to them. We wanted them to have the capacity to articulate what they wanted from a community campaign to improve their neighborhood, and we wanted them to have the language to make their feelings, emotions, and needs known.

## Part II: Starting a Conversation Coalition Meeting, 3/27/98: Why Teach-in?

### The Teach-ins as Process

In order to master a new language it is essential that the learner have the opportunity to practice it. The "language of place" requires that people understand how their feelings, perceptions, and emotions are affected by the spaces that they move through. This language also requires that its speakers have words to label what they feel and what they see when they are in a particular place.

To provide practice in labeling their emotions, we asked participants in our teach-ins to react to and to discuss a host of different images. We showed them photos of buildings; some were new and familiar, others were neighborhoods in states of disarray. We also used images of new neighborhood developments as well as images of people moving through the spaces that they occupy in daily life. We asked participants to talk about the emotions that these images invoked.

This effort to link the familiar world to a new way of speaking and thinking is tied to three principles we have developed in working with communities:

*First principle: assist people to understand displacement.* Displacement is an increasingly common experience for the human family that carries with it the potential for serious psychological effects. Person-place relationships are important factors in understanding people, their mental health, and the manner in which they live in the places they occupy.

As is true with many experiences that are traumatic, those exposed to this kind of dislocation trauma may not have language to describe what they feel. The language we use to describe person-place experience is not well evolved; we take our relationships to the immediate physical environment for granted. People may enter a place and feel immediately that they are at ease or highly uncomfortable and not be at all aware that it is their experience of the space that causes these emotions. Creating this awareness was the principal objective in our teach-ins and is a critical first step in helping people understand (and ultimately cope with) the impact of dislocation and displacement.

*Second principle: finding the means to help people understand space and place.* It is essential that we understand the particular rules that govern how groups of people [families or communities, for example] use space, move through it, and create rules governing the actions of themselves and others within a space. "Mapping" a space, therefore, is an essential

activity for the organizer. This process consists of identifying "important" places and developing a concept for how people use it and move through it.

As is noted elsewhere in this report, having community residents walk around their neighborhood and map their impressions using a "community burn index" was precisely this kind of exercise. In addition to asking people to see their neighborhoods with "new eyes" and to use new labels to describe what they see, they were asked to share their impressions with others from other communities. In a community such as the Hill, which has lost so much of its housing and its neighborhood landmarks, it is critical to create a new consciousness of the place by having participants realize, as one Hill resident put it, "It wasn't always like this. There was once a neighborhood here."

*Third principle: empower people around the issues affecting space and place.* We seek to create "Empowered collaborations," that is, relationships between people and organizations that will resist the problems of loss of place or of drastic change in the nature of a place. It stresses the need for folks to act communally and to seek the assistance of others to preserve their communities, and by extension, their way of life.

One of the most difficult challenges faced by a community that is being transformed by developers and bulldozers is the ability to retain a sense of cohesion. In our work we have tried to create opportunities for connecting the Hill to the rest of the world. In providing Hill residents and their neighbors with opportunities to learn and to work with each other, the foundation for productive personal and political alliances was created.

Teach-ins are not designed to turn out huge crowds; they are not – to use a term that was prevalent in the 1960s – "mass meetings." They are, however, an opportunity to acquaint decision makers and concerned neighborhood leaders with the tools to become active participants in a planning process that was designed for them. As one teach-in participant noted, "You can't tell people what you need until you know how to ask for it."



## Is My Community Dead?

Mindy Fullilove

We met at Hill House, members of the Coalition, Bob, Anthony and I. We were discussing ways to begin to build our understanding of the community, through a series of community Teach-ins. I proposed that we do a mapping exercise and described "The Community Burn Index," which I had developed.

Here is what I explained:

*The Community Burn Index is modeled on the "Burn Index," used by physicians to gauge the seriousness of injuries from burns. The burn index specifically assesses the degree of injury to the skin and does so by examining the depth and breadth of the burn. The skin has three layers of tissue. If the top one or two layers are injured, the skin can regenerate. But if all three layers are burned, the skin cannot grow back in that spot. That is called a "third degree" burn. Repair requires transplantation of skin from another part of the body. When assessing the depth of the burn, the doctor is asking, "How many layers of the skin were damaged? Are there third degree burns?"*

*The skin covers the entire body. It serves many protective functions, such as keeping germs out, as well as regulatory functions, such as keeping water in. If the skin is destroyed over a large part of the body, germs can easily invade and water will quickly leak out. When assessing the breadth of the burn, the doctor is asking, "How much of the skin suffered third degree burns?"*

*In estimating the burn index, the doctor calculates the proportion of the skin that suffered third degree burns. The burn index guides treatment and predicts survival. As the index goes higher, the likelihood that the patient will live gets lower and lower.*

*What does this have to do with communities?*

*Houses and other structures are the "skin" of a community. If the structures are destroyed, the community is burned. Consider each demolished house as a "third degree burn." Consider how many blocks have lost one or more houses. The "community burn index" is the proportion of all blocks that have third degree burn. In The Hill District, the number is very high.*

At that point, Tamaneka Howze shuddered. "Are

## Part II: Starting a Conversation Coalition Meeting, 3/27/98: Why Teach-in?

you saying my community is dead?" she asked me.

There was an awful moment of silence. I had to ask myself if that was what I was saying. I had no answer. I knew that The Hill wasn't "dead" in the way a person dies. The Hill is made up of many people and many memories, and certainly the community lived in its remaining residents, and the hearts of its ex-patriots. But I also knew that The Hill of "Wiley Avenue Days" was lost to us forever.

Everyone in the room sat quietly.

"Is this idea too upsetting?" I asked. "We don't have to do this mapping. We don't have to use the 'community burn index' concept if it feels wrong or overwhelming."

Della Wimb's firm voice calmed us all. "We had to face the pain when Mindy first talked about displacement. This is the same pain – facing what we have lost. We can do this, and we must, if we are to create a better future." Everyone agreed. The first Teach-in would be on the Community Burn Index.

## Mapping the Neighborhood

Mindy Fullilove

As planned at the March 27th meeting, the first Teach-in was organized around the Community Burn Index. Participants gathered in the community room at the Dolores Howze Treatment Center. We broke the group up into teams with about 5 members. Each team had a section of the map and instructions to look at each building, house or lot and inspect it. We were interested in getting information about its condition, its interesting features, and its contribution to the neighborhood, whether positive or negative. All of



this information was recorded on the map section. Each group had a Polaroid camera and took pictures as they circulated.

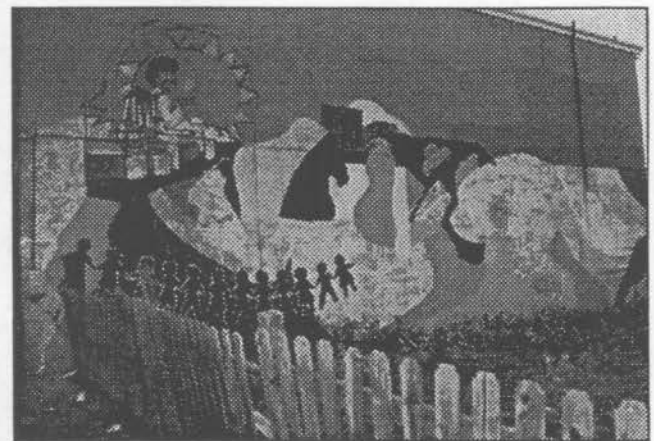
When they had completed their inspection, the groups returned to the Dolores Howze Treatment Center and worked on a second exercise, "The Healthy Urban Habitat: What's In/What's Out?" In the interim, a small group assembled the data from all the maps on a poster-size map of the 12-block

## Part III: Creating a Language of Place

### Teach-in #1, 4/18/98: Community Burn Index

area. We used bright strips of tape to indicate building condition, resources and dangers.

Everyone gathered together to examine the map. Large blue X's stood out, because many of the buildings that had existed when the map was made were now gone. People commented on many small observations they had made. Residents of a group of new houses, for example, had not yet planted their front lawns, giving a sense of temporariness to the area. Little abandoned streets were found tucked away throughout the area. A working factory was pointed out, in what looked like an abandoned building. Murals decorated buildings, giving charm to the area. Historical buildings, including the New Granada

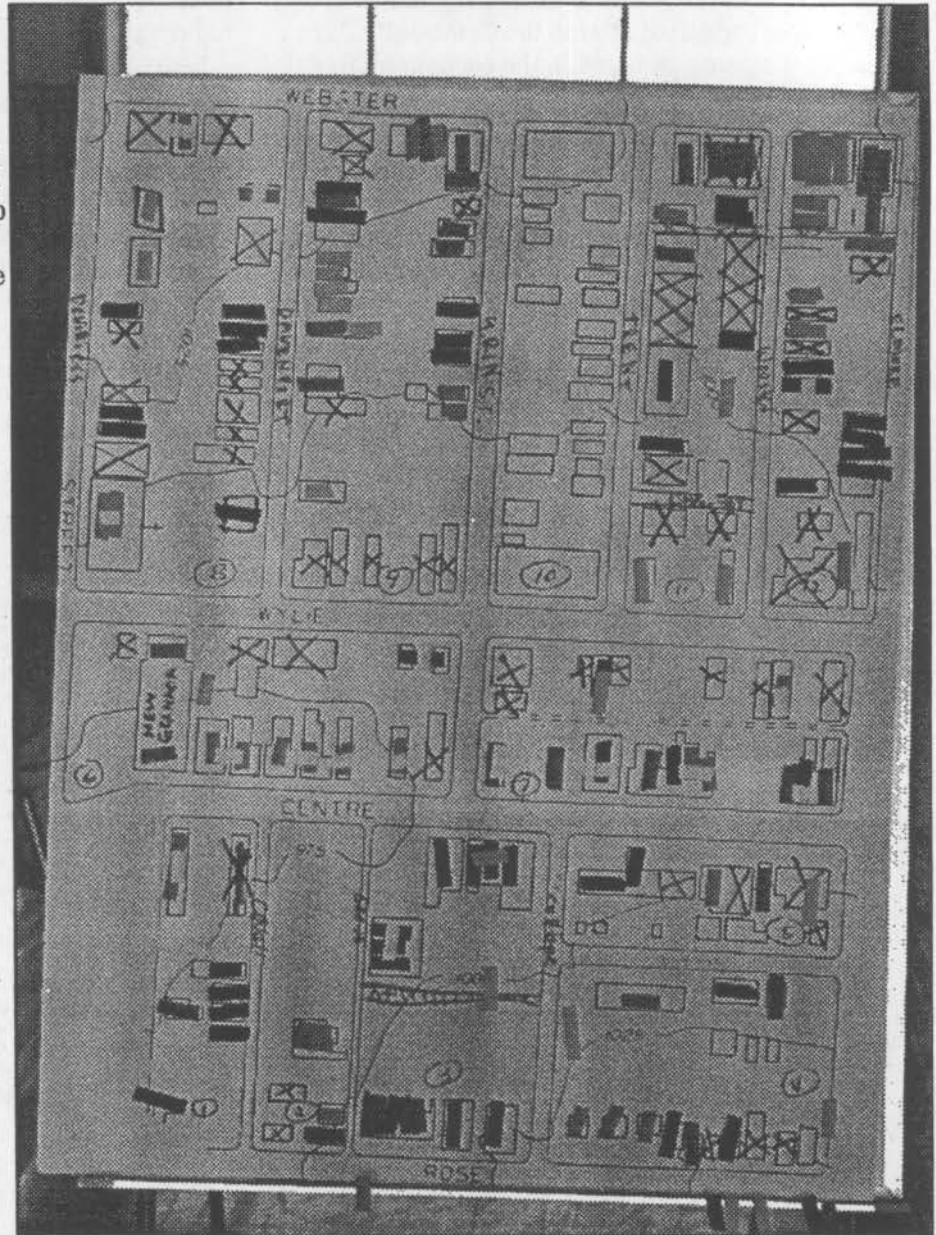


Theater/Pythian Temple, gave the area character and charm. Lots, strewn with garbage and hypodermic needles left by intravenous drug users, posed a danger to the area. In general, the wide-open spaces with neatly shorn grass gave an open air feeling at great odds with the urban character of the stores and row-houses.

One interchange stands out in my mind. A woman who lived in one of the housing communities destined to be demolished said, "The developers tell us not to be sentimental about where we live." I replied, "But of course you should be sentimental about where you live - it's your home!" A smile crossed her face: it seemed my remark had vindicated her own thoughts on the matter. She nodded in assent.

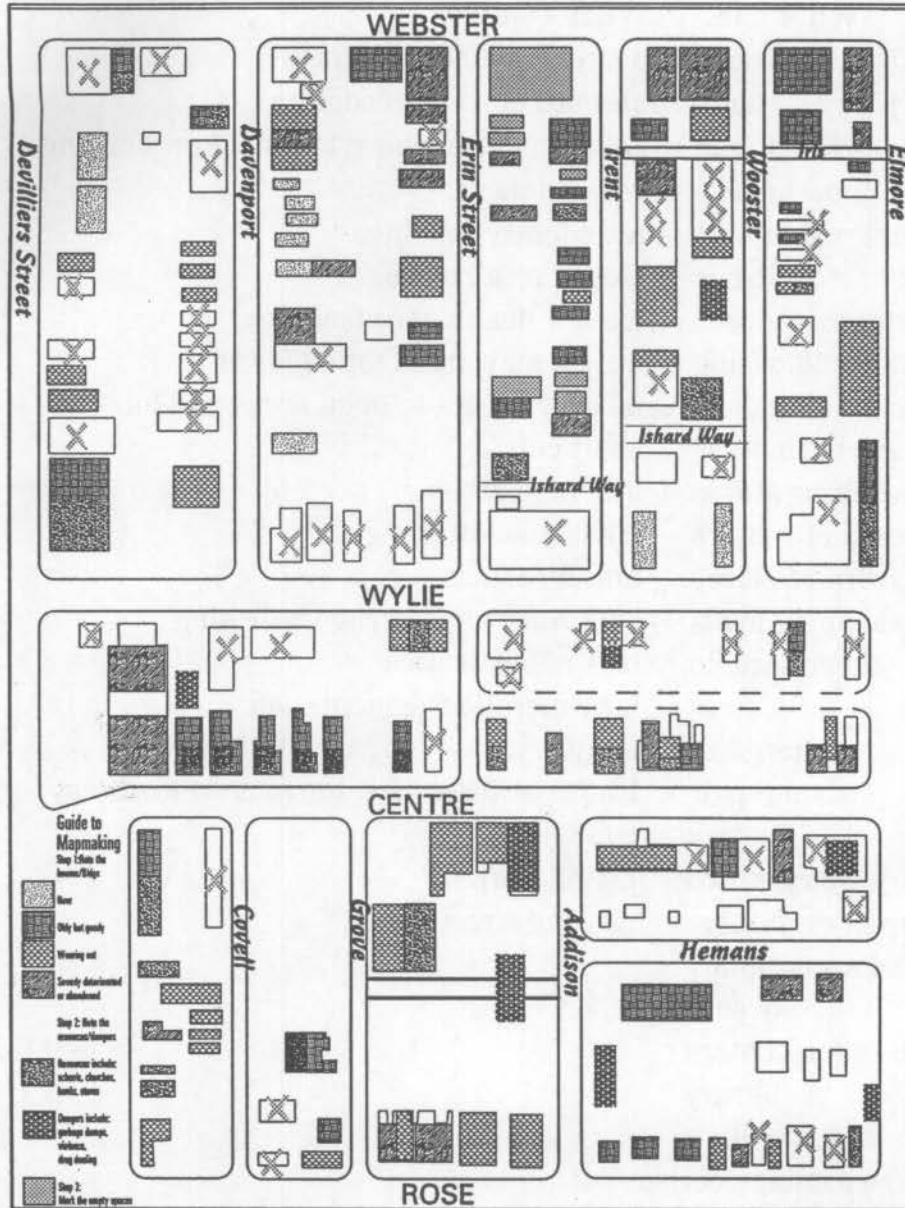
Michel Cantal-Dupart, our guest from Paris, asked to make some remarks. He emphasized that this was a community of working people and that people living in The Hill District worked in other parts of the city.

"How did they get there?" he asked. "You must find the paths to the rivers." The older people present immediately began to explain the connections and pathways, such as the incline that had connected Cliff Street to the Strip District. Many of the connections have since been lost, isolating The Hill District from the rest of Pittsburgh.



# Part III: Creating a Language of Place

Teach-in #1, 4/18/98:  
Community Burn Index



The photograph on the opposite page depicts the map that was created at the end of the first Teach-in. The schematic version on this page was generated by Rich Brown to provide participants with a portable version for studying.

## Envisioning a Healthy Urban Habitat

| What's in?                               | What's Out?   |
|--|---|
| churches                                 | poorly illuminated streets                            |
| jitney stations                          | absence of trash receptors                            |
| taxi stations                            | cheap materials used to build new buildings           |
| new houses                               | vacant lots   |
| green areas/gardens (flowers/vegetables) | abandoned buildings                                   |
| trees                                    | lack of retail stores                                 |
| corner stores                            | too few health care facilities                        |
| subsidized housing                       | unsafe play areas for children                        |
| barber/hair salons                       | no easy access to open areas and lots (no short cuts) |
| new businesses                           | lack of porches                                       |
| clothing stores                          | inadequate policing                                   |
| banquet centers                          | nuisance bars   |
| hardware stores                          | substance abuse/drug trafficking                      |
| shopping malls                           | lack of businesses                                    |
| supermarkets                             | bureaucratic fragmentation                            |
| theatres                                 | trash   |
| pharmacy                                 | traffic patterns (i.e., too narrow for 2-way traffic) |
| shoe repair                              | permit parking  |
| bakery                                   | missing street signs                                  |
| jewelry stores                           |   |
| trash containers                         |   |
| disabled accessibility                   |   |
| day care                                 |   |
| recreation centers                       |   |
| library                                  |   |
| job centers                              |   |
| public park/sport complex/swimming pool  |   |
| block clubs                              |   |
| restaurant                               |   |
| substance abuse treatment/prevention     |   |
| medical clinics                          |   |
| mental health clinics                    |   |
| home ownership                           |   |

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MEMORANDUM

To: Pittsburgh colleagues  
From: Mindy Fullilove, MD *Mindy Fullilove*  
Re: Preliminary list of M. Cantal-Dupart's ideas  
Date: April 22, 1998

M. Cantal-Dupart (hereinafter Cantal) promised to send us a report. In the interim, here are some ideas that Bob and I gleaned from our conversations with him.

1) Map of The Hill District

There should be maps of The Hill District in important places, like Hill House. This immediately raises the question: what is the Hill District? I attach two maps--one from the Wylie Avenue calendar, the other from city planning--which provide an interesting contrast.

2) Visualizing The Hill District with a model

Cantal suggested that a model of The Hill District would really help people visualize what is going on. He suggested that the model should be big enough so that people could run a finger through the streets and detailed enough that they could find their houses. Bob proposed that this model should be prepared for display at the Heinz Architectural Center when Cantal comes back in October/November.

3) An athletic trail on the lost streets

There are small roads that were closed as part of urban renewal. Traces of these streets exist and could easily be developed into an athletic trail, to be highlighted with cultural and historic trail markers (Josh Gibson played here, etc).

4) Trail to the river

The path(s) to the river must exist in the memory of older residents. This and the athletic trail project would be excellent activities for teens.

5) Historical/current photographs

Cantal would like to use a series of historical/current photographs of The Hill District for his talk. Each set should represent exactly the same location as it appeared 40-50 years ago and as it looks today. I think he was very inspired by the photos that we saw at the McCain home. Lester pointed out that the Roosevelt Theater is now something else, I believe the Triangle shopping center. Cantal took home with him a picture of the Roosevelt Theater identical to one at the McCain's. I suggested it would be a good present for his significant other, but he said, "No, that's for me."

6) Journalists on the first flight

Cantal proposed that USAir bring journalists from France to Pittsburgh on the first USAir flight, Paris-Pittsburgh, which will take place in October. Overall, Cantal fell in love with Pittsburgh and believes that it is a great site to develop for tourism. Cantal specifically suggested that journalists interested in social issues be invited to examine the parallels between Pittsburgh and Paris. He has friends working for the major dailies who would be interested.

7) House portraits

Cantal proposed that the historic houses be photographed and their stories collected. A display could be prepared for the Juneteenth celebration and the July street fair.

He probably has many more ideas by now, but these certainly give a us food for thought and material for action.

## The Language of the House

Mindy Fullilove

Remembering the conversation in the first Teach-In, in which a woman had complained that the developers had told her "not to be sentimental," I wanted to emphasize the intensity of emotions that we have towards our homes and other spaces we occupy.

Christopher Alexander, an architect in Berkeley, California, has pointed out the profound importance of place in supporting us as we live our lives. He wrote,

The specific patterns out of which a building or a town is made may be alive or dead. To the extent they are alive, they let our inner forces loose, and set us free; but when they are dead they keep us locked in conflict. (*The Timeless Way of Building*, p. 101)

To introduce these ideas, two exercises were presented.

### Exercise 1: A Day in the Life...

Here are the directions we gave participants:

*Examine these pictures. In what ways does the environment help or detract from the activities depicted?*

In 1994 there was a contest that asked women to photograph their day. Sure that I had an interesting life, took pictures of my day. I didn't win the contest, but the pictures provide an interesting record. It was shortly after that day that I decided to begin the study of the "psychology of place."

## Part III: Creating a Language of Place

Teach-in #2, 5/28/98:  
Language of the House

Here are some of the shots from that day:



1. The morning started with teaching post-doctoral fellows in the Public Psychiatry program at NYS Psychiatric Institute (PI). The class met in one of the elegant rooms at PI. I (looking up at the camera) was teaching about "Personal Geography."

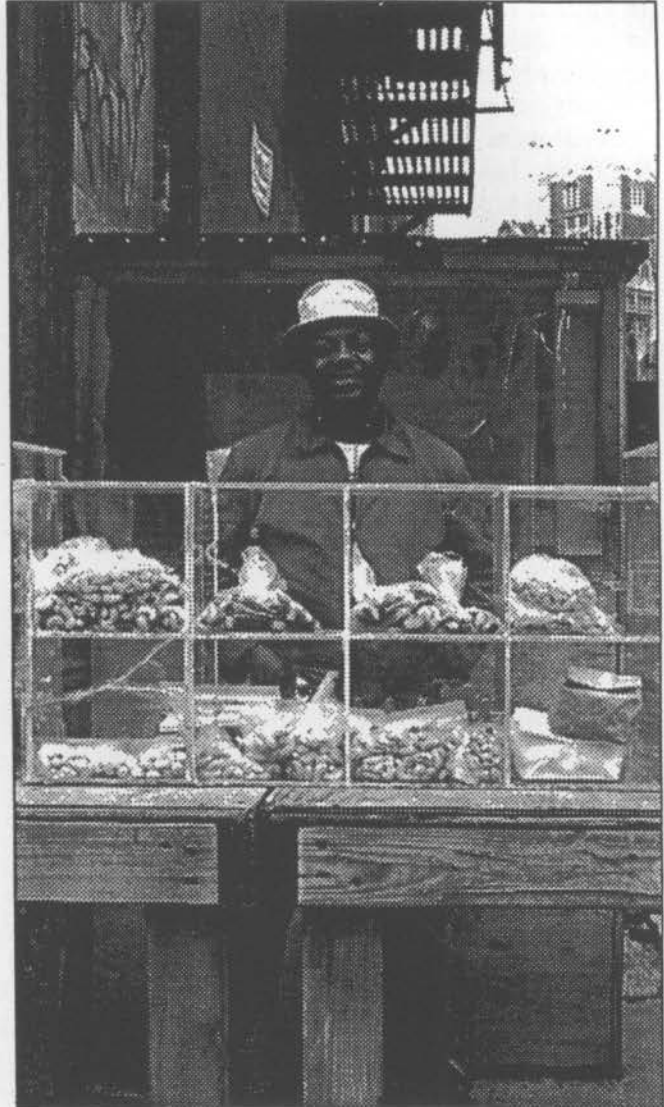


2. After teaching, I had to go to the nearby community of Central Harlem, where I was engaged in research. The Harlem community has suffered the loss of 30% of its housing infrastructure. Garbage piled in front of abandoned buildings is a common sight.





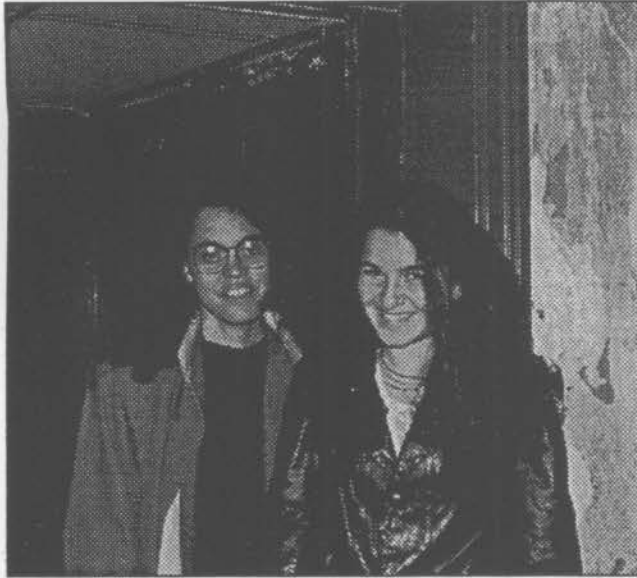
3. A plastic bag in a tree, a pet peeve of mine, is a problem that results from poor garbage collection and threatens urban trees.



4. Stopping for peanuts from a friendly man. When I gave him a copy of the picture, he said joyously, "Look at me, trying to make something of myself."

## Part III: Creating a Language of Place

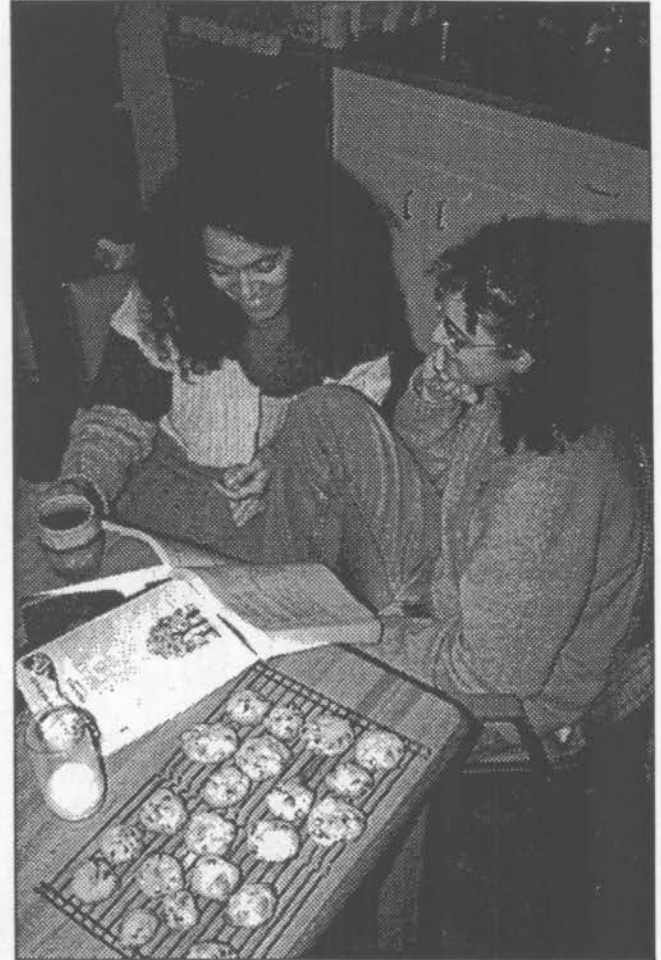
Teach-in #2, 5/28/98:  
Language of the House



5. In the afternoon, Julie Karasik, a high school student preparing for the Westinghouse Science Talent Search, came by for her regular meeting with me. Julie and I met on the way in and came up the elevator together. The dingy elevator is typical of the struggle for decent maintenance in the building where my offices are located. My offices are NOT at Psychiatric Institute.



6. Home in the evening, doing dishes, after a dinner cooked by husband Bob. We had just survived a brutal winter that featured 18 snowstorms. Our house was poorly insulated, and it was difficult to keep the temperature above 55. We renovated in the summer of '94 and this is one of the last pictures of the old kitchen.



7. Later, Bob made chocolate chip cookies, his specialty and a family favorite. We often eat cookies but this picture of me sitting with daughter Molly was staged for the contest. The props include: the chocolate chip cookies, the glass of milk, an article about plastic bags in trees (I was very proud that the New Yorker had acknowledged my pet peeve), Molly listening attentively, and Molly's science book.

## Exercise 2: One Best House

Here are the directions we gave participants:

*Think back to your childhood. Try to remember whose house was the "best" house. Probably, as a little child, the best house was the one where the adults were kind to you and played with you a lot. Often, the one best house served great food and made everyone feel welcome. As an older child, the one best house might have been an interesting place, where there was room to explore, and games to play. As a teen, the one best house might have been the one where people listened to your ideas and respected your needs. As an adult, you might find that the one best house is the one where you can relax and enjoy the company of others without worrying, or, at least, it's a place where you can share your worries with others who want to help. The Best House is one we remember fondly. We think, "I'd like my house to be like that!"*

Mrs. Thelma Lovett, a woman who lived in The Hill for almost all of her 70 years, told us at the Teach In, "I'm proud to say that my parents' house was the one best house. Everyone just liked to come there. My parents were wonderful people. In those days, we were very formal. I don't think I ever heard my mother call my father anything other than 'Mr. Williams.' But the formality did not hide the love and concern that they always felt for us. When you walked in the door of that house, you just felt good."

Another participant remembered, "My friend's house was the best. His parents were really wierd. The house was big and spooky. We liked to play in the rooms in the attic - it was like a haunted house. We had a really good time there because nobody bothered us. It was cool."

Another participant remembered his uncle's house as the best house. Although the house was small, it had a wonderful backyard with lovely bushes and great shade trees, perfect for the neighbors to gather and make barbecues. The many wonderful afternoons of cooking and storytelling made that place the best house.

Common to every "Best House" story is that it is a place of welcome. It seems, no matter what age, no matter how rich or poor we are, what we want is to

feel at home. The One Best House might be small, it might be grand, but it satisfied important needs for acceptance and nurturance. Teens, of course, prefer the "cool" house where they can be independent, while younger children like the houses with good food and good games. But though the needs are different, the point remains the same: the One Best House is a center of satisfying human contact.

## Spatial Emotions

Mindy Fullilove

# Part III: Creating a Language of Place

Teach-in #3, 6/11/98:  
Spatial Emotions

Mindy Fullilove made opening remarks:

I am convinced that we feel good when we live and work in places that are "alive" – to use Christopher Alexander's term – and that support our needs. We can tell if places are working by "tuning in" to our feelings and by assessing the match between a space and the activities that go on there. The basic idea is simple. It is easy to do any task if you have the right equipment and the right space. An ironing board that is at the right height makes it easy to iron. A chair at a table makes it easy to eat or write. By contrast, sawing in a small closet would be very difficult. Notice that we might enjoy ironing with the right equipment, but we would feel very annoyed trying to saw without enough room. In general, we feel good – we feel more alive – when the spaces are working with us, not against us.

In order to explain this further, I will introduce three important concepts: situation, configuration, and congruence.

### Situation

Definition: interpersonal episode.

Explanation: People who live in a neighborhood interact with each other. They neighbor, police, supervise, entertain, exchange, relate, and avoid. These interactions, and thousands of others we might list, are the "situations" of community life. People are always in one situation or another.

### Setting

Definition: location.

Explanation: Settings are the locations for the activities of our lives. We may think of our house as a setting, but it is important to remember that the house is set in a block, the block is set in neighborhood, and so on. Thus, there are many levels, each of which may be considered as the setting.

### Configuration

Definition: arrangements of physical objects, such as furniture in a room or rooms in a building.

Explanation: Physical objects are always laid out in relationship to each other. We can think of this as it applies to situations or to settings.

### Congruence

Definition: agreement or correspondence in character and qualities, conformity, accordance, harmony.

Explanation: One way to think about congruence is to imagine two triangles that are the same size. We would say they are congruent. We can say that laughing is congruent with feeling happy. We can also apply this concept to the fit between people's activities and their spaces: Because a flat table provides good support for writing, we can say "table" and "writing" are congruent. We can test for congruence by asking ourselves the question, "Does the setting fit the situation?" If they are well suited, we can say they are congruent, or that there is a good fit. If they are mismatched, we can call that incongruent, or a bad fit.

### Applying these concepts

How does all this apply to The Hill District and other urban areas? An urban area is a configuration of buildings, streets, and open space. In the best of all possible worlds, the configuration of the urban setting would be congruent with the situations of the people who live there. For example, in urban neighborhood, people must buy their food. A supermarket can provide good quality at a reasonable price. Thus, a supermarket is congruent with residents' shopping needs.

We can use the "goodness of fit" test of congruence as a way judging urban planning. Simply put, plans for buildings or parks or roads should specify settings that are congruent with the activities of people living in that area. Planners often come up with ideas for changes in a neighborhood, but they don't necessarily live there or know the situations that area residents find themselves in. Planners' ideas for buildings may not fit the space needs of residents.

Planners, for example, have built apartments with one bedroom in places where people have large families. Planners have designed galley kitchens for people used to farmhouse kitchens that have plenty of room for friends and family to gather. Planners have designed housing projects for families with no play areas for children. None of these incongruent projects would have happened if residents could have studied the plans and assessed the "goodness of fit" between the settings specified in the plan and the sit-

uations in their lives. As The Hill District is rebuilt, it is essential for people to be aware of, and to talk about, the congruence between setting and situation.

After the opening remarks, here are the directions we gave participants:

*Study these pictures. Is the activity congruent or incongruent with the place where it is going on? How do the pictures make you feel? What might make for a better fit?*



## **The Millers' Porch**

Anthony Robins

One of my favorite places to go as a little boy was a big white house that sat in the middle of the neighborhood – the Millers' house. It had a large porch that seemed to stretch forever. There, I met my friends. We played games. We sat and talked about things. It was the gathering place – a happy place filled with smiles and belly rolling laughter. For many of us, it was there that we made plans and dreamed of becoming doctors, teachers, stunt men, astronauts, lawyers, and movie stars. The porch was where we sat and ate cool watermelon and let its sweet juices run down our faces. Ms. Miller would tell us stories or teach us a new game. We would spend hours there. Often, we would have to be beckoned home by our mothers who thought we had well spent our time. It was a safe place that welcomed all the children of the neighborhood.

When Mr. Miller enclosed the porch and remodeled the house – giving it a more contemporary look – something happened. The children stopped coming. They did not gather at the Millers' porch anymore. Friends who lived in opposite directions of the Millers' whom once met on the porch did not meet anymore. New social groups formed as a result. Because these groups did not mingle, suspicion and distrust were engendered. Friends became estranged. The strangest part is that no one understood at the time what was happening. Yet, everyone knew they were experiencing some phenomenon that was unpleasant and uncomfortable. No one gave language to their feelings. We went on with our lives as if the porch never existed.

As time went on, I found other places to play and hang out. I would never feel the same about the Millers' house although I couldn't explain why. These feelings would be buried deep within me not to erupt until years later. Almost two decades later and several thousand miles away from the Millers' concrete porch, the strangest thing happened during a teach-in on the configuration of space and its relationship to our emotions. Those feelings I experienced as a child surfaced. However, this time I was able to give language to what I felt about the enclosed porch. I was able to understand that when Mr. Miller changed the structure of the house, he changed the function. The house no longer welcomed the children. The renovation served as a wall that hindered their coming over to visit. More important, I learned that to every space

is attached some emotion. When the porch was taken away, the children experienced (unbeknownst to them) grief as if they had lost a loved one. The happy place became a place of sadness.

# The Orange Chair

Elbert Gray

Something about that orange chair ... I walked into the room with a young lady that I work with who followed closely behind. As we entered the room, there was a quiet hush. All eyes came up from what they were doing and focused on me. (When I think about it that was very odd.) I could feel the eyes watching me as I went to get to a chair. I felt a little tense. Thoughts began to rush through my head. "Could my fly be open or something?" As I'm lowering my bottom into a chair, everyone began to laugh. Without thinking, I jumped up from the chair and stood a moment being a little confused. Did I do something wrong?

Mindy, then, shared that she had made a prediction. She predicted that the next person to enter the room would sit in the orange chair. I hadn't paid much attention to the color of the chair, but I felt that it was the place I needed to sit. Thinking about what had just happened, I joined in the laughter. When everyone had quieted down, she asked, "Why the orange chair?" With some thought, I gave a response. "The orange chair felt closer to the circle. It gave me a feeling of warmth. The orange chair brought me closer to everyone."

This "orange chair" experience happened as a result of my attending a teach-in at the Dolores Howze Treatment Center. I was encouraged to attend by the National Council for Urban Peace and Justice, my employer. Because this workshop focused on spatial relationships and emotions and my job is about connecting the conscience with emotions, it was thought that this would be a great event to participate in for enrichment.

At the teach-in, Mindy Fullilove shared pictures of Pittsburgh's Hill District. These pictures were past (shots taken during The Hill's heyday) and present (current shots). The groups of pictures showcased different things. The past pictures showed exuberance, life, and self-efficiency, and just simply old fun. The pictures included shots of neighbors with fine houses. The "now" pictures showed decay and loss. Empty lots and dirty needles were themes found in this set of pictures. While the past pictures were feel-good pictures, the "now" pictures brought about feelings of emptiness and devastation. The outlook doesn't look very bright.

In its heyday, The Hill District was self-efficient. All resources required were nested there. People would

stop off in Pittsburgh en route to New York (for example, jazz greats like Duke Ellington, Lena Horne or Stanley Turrentine). There were lots of eateries and clubs for your entertainment (Crawford 1 and 2, the Roosevelt, Grenada). The Hill District was the place to be. It was culturally rich. During the great migration of Blacks from the South, The Hill was the first place many settled. In addition, The Hill offered many opportunities. In its heyday, trade and bartering was the rule of the day. Willie Lynch was still alive and well. Yet, we thrived.

Today, as downtown expands, it robs us of the black culture. The community has been culturally ravaged and raped of culture. We have nothing physically, emotionally, or spiritually to attach ourselves. It is difficult to identify with our culture when everything is gone. How can one have an identity without being able to identify with culture?

I left the teach-in filled with lots of questions and strange feelings of loss. What could I do personally to bring back some of the life and vibrancy to The Hill? How could I advocate for change? How could I act as a go-between for the unheard and the "powers that are"? I felt a sense of loss – similar to the loss of a loved one (a grieving process actually). This best coins the emotions I felt after seeing a thriving community come to a complete standstill.

This teach-in got me more in touch with my feelings and emotions and their impact on visual messages. Overall, the workshop enlightened me. It awakened my spirit, feelings and emotions and how they relate to the things I can see and feel.

## Nested Places

Mindy Fullilove

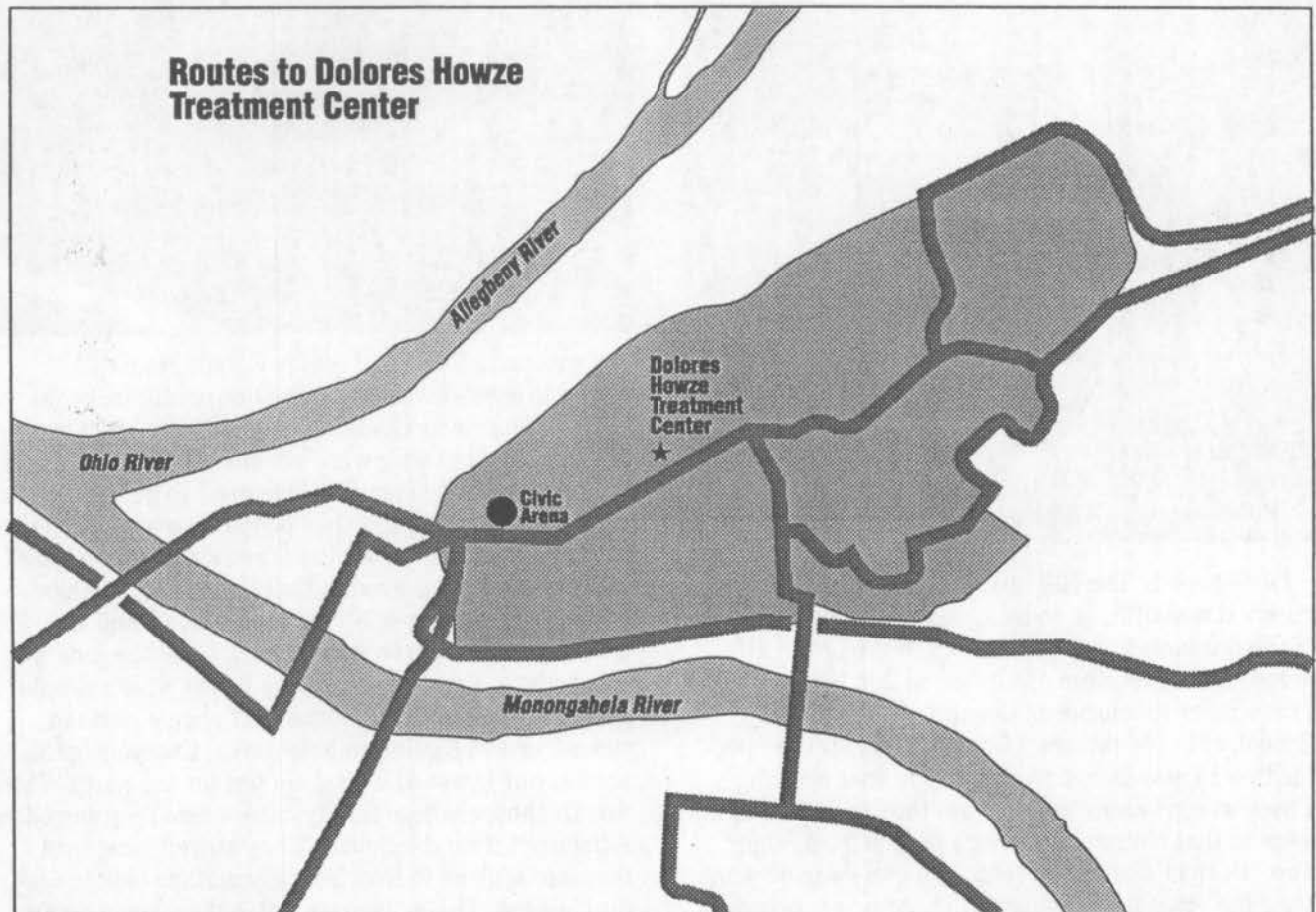
# Part III: Creating a Language of Place

Teach-in #4, 7/9/98:  
Nested Places

Looking at the configuration of a city teaches us that buildings are nested within blocks, blocks within neighborhoods, neighborhoods within the city. There are pathways and stories as we move within the complex unity of the city.

### Part 1: My Route

How did you get here today? Each participant drew his/her route to the the Teach In, held at the Dolores Howze Treatment Center.





## Part 2: My Building

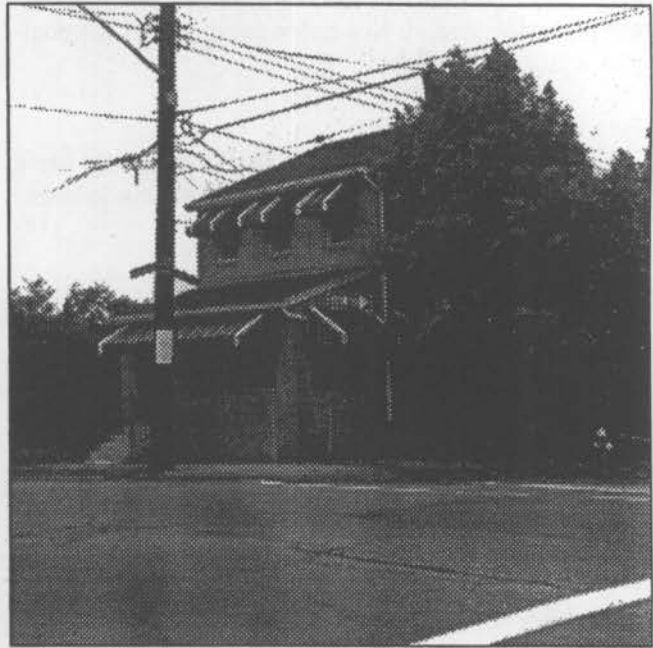
In this part of the Teach In, members of the Coalition for a Healthy Urban Habitat were asked to select buildings that had meaning for them. The chosen buildings were photographed, and each was described, in turn. The following comments are a synopsis of the remarks.

### Della Wimbs, Bethel AME Church



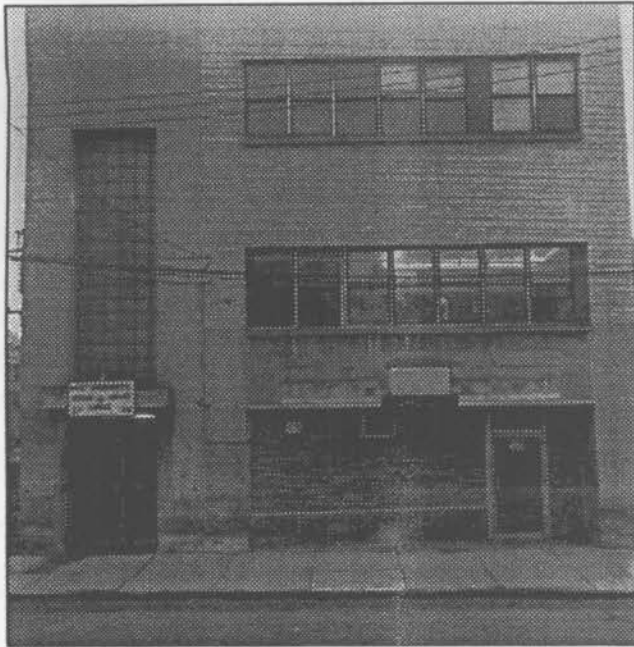
I was born in The Hill in 1930, and The Hill is all I know. It was difficult to pick. My sister had a picture of the original church, which was in the Lower Hill, across the street from our house at 207 Wylie Avenue. I have many memories of the church – of Sunday School, of the Nightingale Choir – and I still see people that I know from 50 years ago in that church. There weren't many people from the Lower Hill that went to that church. They were people from Sugar Top, the light skinned people. You can imagine who sang the solos in that church. There was a woman who cleaned the church who used to come to our house and get a couple of us to go with her. I guess she was scared to go alone, and we were too crazy or too excited about the few pennies she would give us, to be afraid. I don't remember when the church was torn down – probably with all the other demolitions.

### Edna Council, Ms. Edna's House



My name is Edna and this is Edna's House. I moved in when I was 5 and the house still looks the same today. I was close to the school but still I was late every day. There were houses on either side that are gone, a candy store that we used to go to. Excuse me if I get emotional. Other people live in it now but it's still my house. I had the other children thinking I was rich because I lived in that house. My mother would work hard to keep the house clean and she would starch and iron my clothes. I told the kids we had a maid. Our house was the house where people gathered. This was the house that people came to when there was going to be a party. Everyone gathered at our house and then set out for the party. This was the house where family came when they moved to Pittsburgh from the South. They stayed here until they had a place to live. And my mother took in foster children. The house was full, but we were family and we had good times. I'm glad this wasn't one of the houses they tore down. I think I would have put a plaque up that said, "This was Edna's house, a house full of love and a house full of memories."

George Moses, Union Hall



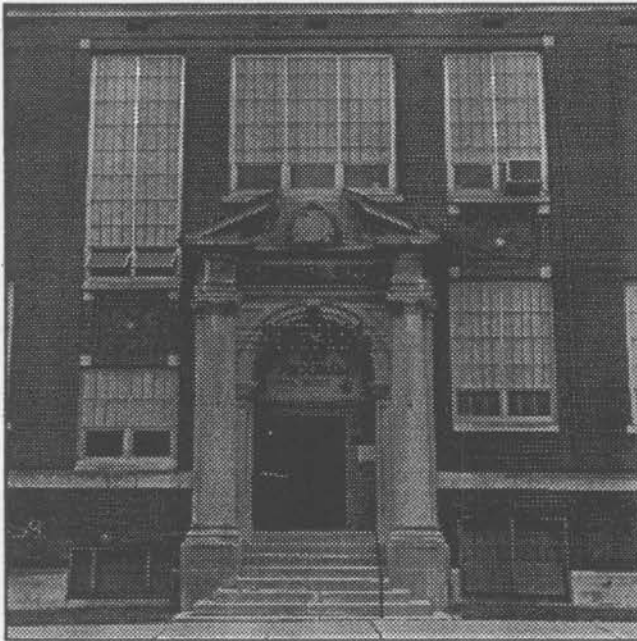
The building I chose is located at 2155 Centre Avenue. It's called the Union Hall. It has three stories, with a basement, and back in the 1950s and 60s this was the spot to be. Centre Avenue, things were happening, and Union Hall was part of it. On the first floor was Taylor's, run by Jewish folks, and they sold the best cornbeef sandwiches in town. They did everything for the neighborhood – cash a workingman's paycheck for free, give people credit. It was big fun at Taylor's. Downstairs in the basement was a pool hall. Go in there with your full suit, and come out with your shorts. There were sharks in that pool hall, 9 ball, 8 ball, whatever, they'd take your money. I'd see people go in with a briefcase full of money and come out with no money. But they didn't let you leave without something. They'd buy you a libation as you left. The upper two floors were rented out for receptions, cabarets, whatever. My mother's club always had functions there. I would run errands up and down the stairs and watch the ladies dancing. It's a sturdy building and it's standing today. The Masonics use it. I'm glad it's still there because it has a lot of good memories for a lot of folk. Everything is torn down around it, but it's still standing.

Neal Locust, Pythian Temple



I can't say I picked this building. This building picked me. I just started working for The Hill CDC and it was brought to my attention that we want to restore this building. We have a web site and I was asked to implement the web page. The building is actually both the Pythian Temple and the New Granada Theater, which is a landmark building. The Pythian Temple is located on Wylie Avenue, and the New Granada is located on Centre Avenue. It was built in 1927 by black construction workers as a hangout. I say a "hangout" because men came there with their families on Sundays. In order to support the building, they rented it out for functions. On the first floor was a dining room. On the second floor was a ballroom, and on the third floor were the offices. The Knights of Pythian, the group that built the building, lost it in the 1930s due to hard times. The new owner moved the Granada Theater to the first floor of the site, and renamed it the New Granada Theater. I never saw it in its glory days, but I can imagine whoever was here how much fun they had. Imagine jazz greats such as Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Ella Fitzgerald. The theater closed in the 1960s. Later, social service agencies moved into the Pythian Temple. There is no great cultural center in The Hill at present. I would like you to close your eyes and don't focus on what the Pythian Temple/New Granada Theater looks like now, but imagine what it could be tomorrow.

Terri Baltimore, Kay Club



I picked this building because this was the first place I knew in The Hill. I'm from East Liberty and I can find my way around East Liberty like the back of my hand, with my eyes closed, in my sleep. But I didn't know anything about The Hill. When I got here, the only two people in the building were the secretary and me. We'd come every day, go to our office, answer telephone calls, lock up the building and leave. One day we got curious about what else was in the buildings. We decided to see what our door keys opened. They opened everything. That's how I found out about the Kay club. We went into all the rooms, we went down in the basement and saw the old pictures. That's when I realized this wasn't just the place where I worked – it was a building with life. I worked here in the hottest summer of my life. I thought of it as a place full of people and I always wondered what it must have been like in other summers, when it was full of children. I left The Hill in 1989 and went to work in the Mon Valley. I came back in 1992. For me, this building feels like home. Wherever I work in The Hill, there's always this some thing that brings me back here, whether it's the Dolores Howze Treatment Center, or the Teach-ins we've had here.

Carmen Bray, Hill House



This is where my history starts on The Hill. I've been here for three years working in public relations for Hill House. The building is new, built in 1972. It was the realization of a dream of merging several community services, to meet new needs as the population changed and more services were needed. It was built by African American contractors. I am always amazed when I look at old pictures how much everything around the building has changed. In the 1970s there were houses across the street. Then there was a Shop and Save. Then the new shopping center was built. It keeps changing but Hill House has been steadfast. I've learned a lot here. Within the Hill House, we have a family concept, and I guess it's like any family that has its good times and bad times. I'm not from this area. I got this job just out of college. Hill House gave me the opportunity to grow up from the college grad to the young professional. There will always be a place in my heart for Hill House.

## 7222 Kelly Street

Terri Baltimore

# Part III: Creating a Language of Place

## Teach-in #4: Reflections

Every time I went to a meeting in Homewood, I always gave myself a little extra time to make a pilgrimage to the 7200 block of Kelly Street. At 7222 there was a series of white buildings that represented my time as a member of the Nation of Islam. In those three white buildings were the mosque, the school, the import store and offices. In those white, stucco buildings, I bonded with my sister friends. I learned the meaning of community. I experienced the isolation of being different. I understood that being bound to duties because of my sex was unacceptable.

But last summer, the unexpected happened. I rounded Kelly Street and found those three buildings being demolished. I was shocked. They were always supposed to be there, connecting my now with my then.

For a long time, I just stood across the street, anchored to the sidewalk. I felt myself being washed over by voices, faces, names, memories from a life time ago. I felt an incredible mix of sadness, grief, loss. The tears came. The questions came. Why? When? How? Who?

I realized that I was watching a part of my life disappear. Then I realized there was something to do about it. As a part of the Coalition for a Healthy Urban Habitat, I understood from the Fulliloves that there were tangible ways to respond to just such a moment. Save the moment. Document the memories. Get a piece of the history.

One block away there was an all purpose store. I bought a disposable camera and clicked away. I talked with the guys who were taking the building down. They told me the buildings were structurally unsound and could not be saved. The construction men were kind enough to let me inside to take pictures. I picked up pieces of wood and tile. I walked around to the back of the building and stood for a while. During my vigil, I was joined by another former member of the Nation of Islam community. We exchanged pleasantries and reminisced. Where was so and so? When was the last time you saw such and such? Haven't we changed since those days?

The brother that joined me asked me why I was taking pictures. I told him about my experiences in the Hill District and with the Fulliloves. And my need to have a part of that place with me for good. We stood for a while longer. Then I went on to my meeting.

## A House is Not a Home

Mindy Fullilove

# Part III: Creating a Language of Place

Teach-in #5, 7/23/98:  
A House is Not a Home

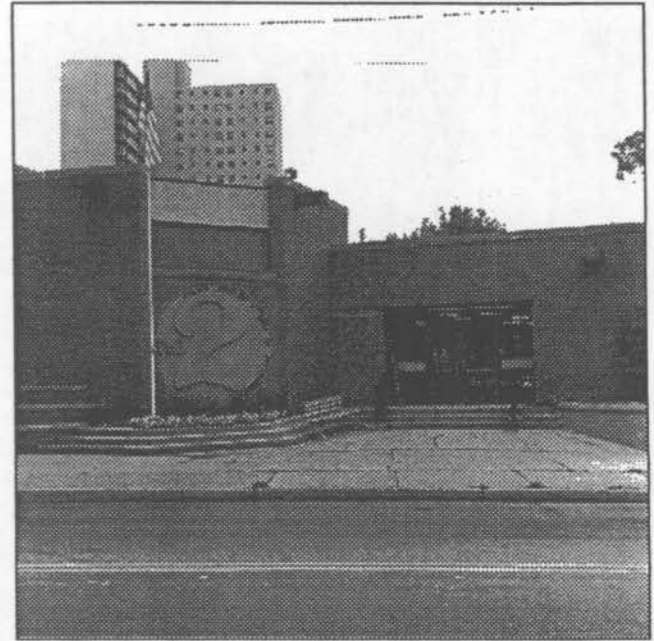
We live not just in houses, but in the urban habitat of churches, jitney stations, green areas, corner stores, subsidized housing, barber salons, etc. We can compose a healthy urban habitat by knowing what we need and what we like, keeping in mind always the congruence between situations and configurations.

It takes many kinds of structures to make a neighborhood. In the fifth Teach-in, we looked at pictures of parts of The Hill. A lively discussion accompanied each photograph, as the group grappled with whether or not what we were seeing made sense to the neighborhood.



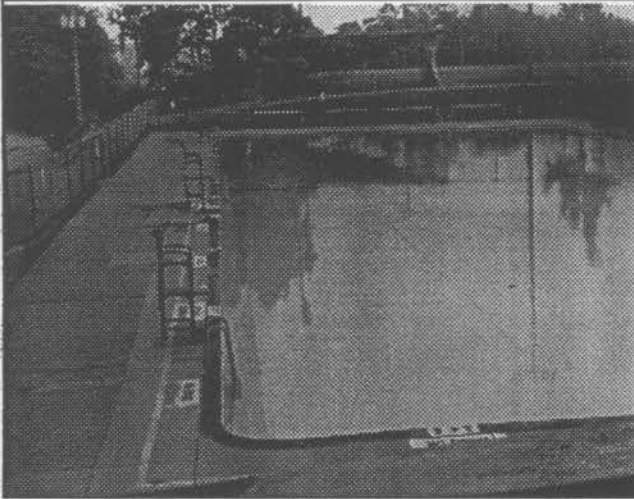
This started with the first picture, a shot of a statue called "The Phoenix," by Thaddeus Mosley that stands across from the police station. One participant voiced the opinion that that was the most phallic and the most useless piece of art she'd ever seen. No one disagreed about the first point. As to whether or not it was art, there was a great deal of discussion, which led to the question, "What is public art? What do we need in a neighborhood?"

The police station, with its windowless exterior, was also a subject of great discussion. This police station is relatively new, and a great change from the older, and seemingly friendlier, police station. What should a police station look like? How should it welcome citizens? What is its role, as a building and as a site for services?



The picture of the trees was an important picture. One participant noted, "There used to be lots of trees all over The Hill. It was green and shady. Many of them were fruit trees, and you could gather all kinds of good food if you knew where to go."





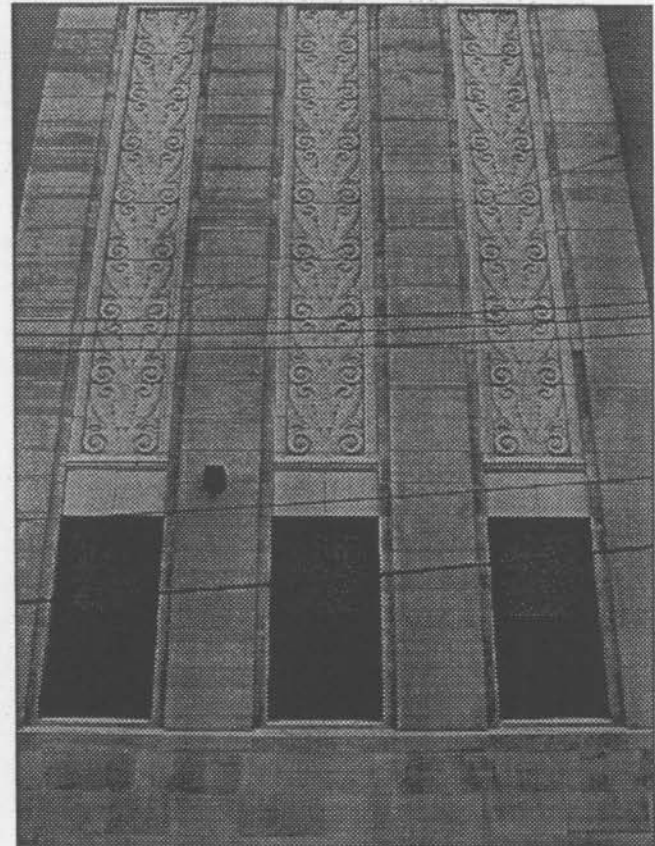
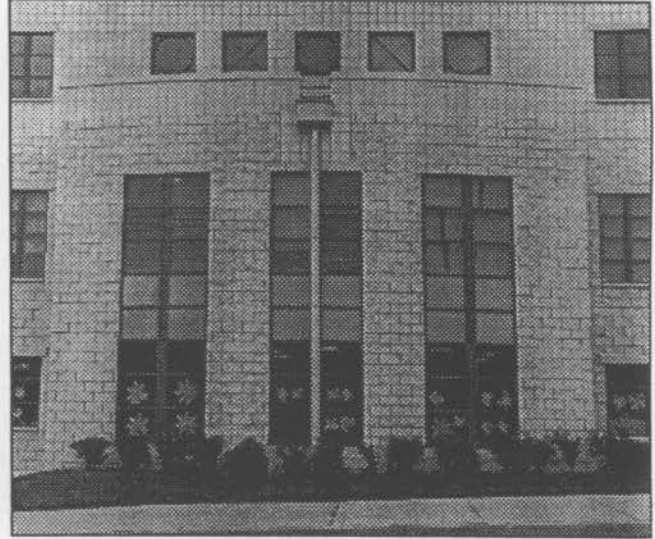
The Ammons Swimming Pool was a site of happy memories. The discussion led to thinking about how many places there used to be for children, and how few there were in the present time.

The Triangle Shops are a new shopping center, located across the street from Hill House. The Triangle Shops include much-needed outlets such as a sandwich shop, a bank and a pharmacy. Yet the large parking lot and adjoining vacant lots give a slightly desolate air to the area.

New construction dominates the lower section of The Hill District. This construction is revitalizing the area, creating new housing, and filling in empty spaces. The new construction, which repeats design elements from building to building, is in contrast to the individuality and charm of the historic buildings that dot the area.

Hill City Building provides services for seniors, as part of the Hill House Association. The windowless, concrete exterior is cold and somewhat dismal, belying the warm intent of the people inside.

The bright, cheery decorations in the windows of Williams' Square (shown at right, top) are framed by the white stones of the facade to create a dignified and welcoming border with the street. Many of the formal buildings of The Hill District, including schools and churches, use white building stones. Many are adorned with ornate sculpture. The repetition of white throughout the community is reminder of the sacred and special places that give the neighborhood great dignity.



# Part IV: Conference, 10/8-9/98: The Power of Place

## CONFERENCE PURPOSE

### THE POWER OF PLACE: WHAT MAKES A NEIGHBORHOOD HOME

is a conference for those who work in and care about urban planning, architecture, public health, and social services. It will explore the impact of the dramatic changes intended by forthcoming public housing reform and offer participants strategies for responding to these changes in an active manner.

The conference will begin with a keynote address on Thursday evening by French urban architect Michel Castella-Dupart, followed by workshops on Friday led by Drs. Mindy and Robert Fullilove, Falk Fellows at the Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh and faculty members of Columbia University in New York City.

Participants will help the Coalition for a Healthy Urban Habitat in its efforts to inventory the physical features of the Hill District. The information collected will provide the Coalition for a Healthy Urban Habitat and the City of Pittsburgh with an accurate representation of the place Hill residents call home.

The strategies and techniques that participants engage in can be applied to all neighborhoods and will give people the tools they need to envision the futures they want for their neighborhoods.



Mayor's Committee on Human Resources, Center Avenue Office, 1967

Maurice Falk Medical Fund  
3111 Grant Building  
Pittsburgh, PA 15261

THE POWER OF PLACE:  
What Makes a Neighborhood Home

A conference on October 8 and 9  
Carnegie Museum of Art  
4400 Forbes Avenue



### THE POWER OF PLACE: What Makes a Neighborhood Home

OCTOBER 8 AND 9, 1998  
CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART  
4400 FORBES AVENUE

YOU ARE INVITED TO A CONFERENCE  
SPONSORED BY:

- Center for Minority Health, University of Pittsburgh
- Coalition for a Healthy Urban Habitat
- The Heinz Architectural Center, Carnegie Museum of Art
- Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

Co-sponsored and funded by the Maurice Falk Medical Fund as part of the Falk Fellows Program at the Center for Minority Health, Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh.

\* Exact photo by Lloyd Hays. "The 7th Floor of the Hill", 1971. Photo shared by Don Sprague.





## What You Do in a Neighborhood

Carl Redwood, Sr.

Good morning. I'm not much of a story teller. I do a lot, but I don't say a lot. What I'd like to say to you, - have you ever heard of Hill City Youth Municipality? How many people have heard of that? Those of you that haven't heard of it might be too young to know about the part I'll tell you. Hill City was formed back in the late 30s, early 40s. It was one of the things that happened during the war. The director, Mr. Hart McKinney had to go away to the war, went to Europe, and talked about what he had done in Pittsburgh. It was written up in the Reader's Digest and things like that.

I think that he was the founder of an organization that became the first full service facility in Pittsburgh. Hill City was located on Bedford Avenue at 2038 Bedford Avenue and in 1949 I was lucky enough to be

hired there as one of the workers. We had to do something about what was happening in our neighborhoods then because right after the war things were a lot different than they had been during the war. So we said, "We'll open Hill City up again." And "Hill City" meant a "city in the Hill." That

meant that we had to start from scratch. That meant we had to have an election, just like the city had. We elected a mayor, we elected council, we elected judges, we elected alderman, we elected all the people that you need to run a city.

These were young people. The mayor must have been about 18 or 19, and all the rest of them were younger than 18. But that didn't stop us, we kept going. We kept going. And this was what we built on every year, or every election year, we had elections. All the people who were involved in Hill City had to learn their job, in whatever position they got. And most of them carried it out very well.

But not only that, Hill City meant a lot to the whole community. In-house we had a broad section of people who did things that we do "in house," like cooking, we had a cooking teacher, we had a charm teacher, we had a dance teacher, we had a Hill City band with a good teacher who taught the kids to play instru-

ments, as well as be in the band. We had majorettes and we marched in all the important parades that were held in the city of Pittsburgh and that was before 1955 so you know that for a long time we were in the forefront of those kinds of activities.

There were nursing classes, they were people who worked with people in the community. We had block clubs and people from Hill City helped form block clubs. That was working with adults. We had baseball teams, that was working with teenagers and kids below teenage who were in the Little League. Hill City had the first uniformed baseball team in the Hill District called "Farmers". Farmers was a department store located on Centre Avenue and he came up and suggested that we wear his name on the uniforms and he would buy them for us. And so we wore his name on the uniforms and for about two years the Hill City team was known as Farmers.

After that time the Little League from Williamsport accepted us as members of the Little League. We were able to have four teams in the Hill, the Firemen, the Hill City who were formerly known as the Firemen, the Elks, the AmVets, and the Pirates, and the Dodgers were the Little League that was formed out of Williamsport. So you see we

worked with everybody. We worked with the parents. We worked with the kids.

We had other things going on in the community, one of which was the junior crime prevention clubs. In the junior crime prevention, we met in the schools. Each school in the Hill District had a junior crime prevention club. At each club meeting - I was the director of the clubs - and each club meeting we would talk to the kids about cleanliness, the neighborhoods, how to go about helping people in the neighborhood, and how to be a good citizen and you had to do things that wouldn't bring disgrace to the neighborhood. They had a card that said that.

On this one particular day I'd like to talk about when I took 40 children between the ages of 9 and 12 on the trolley car to Highland Park. Each of them had their own fare in their hands, got on the trolley, got their transfer like they knew they should get it because they were taught that, got off at the stop we



were supposed to get off, and on the next trolley to get to Highland Park. We stayed in Highland Park until almost dark, got back on the trolley, came back to the Hill and I marched with each of them past their homes that evening, and I did that that week for each crime prevention club and that meant for 5 schools. That was early in the years that I was director. I never missed one meeting in all those years that I worked and I worked from 1949 until 1960. The crime prevention clubs were my idea of what you should be doing in the neighborhood and how all the kids should be involved.

Thank you.

## **Displacement and its Antidote, Neighboring**

Mindy Fullilove

In order to build the Civic Arena, the City Fathers of Pittsburgh bulldozed a community, destroying homes, stores, schools and churches and scattering the residents of the area to the four winds.

It was called "urban renewal" and was billed as an effort to revitalize the city.

But the residents of the Lower Hill lived a different reality. They suffered an enormous loss, one that could never be repaired. The complex and intangible entity called "community" existed in the connections among human beings but depended on the matrix of buildings to give them form and substance. To put it another way, one does not simply have a friend. One has a friend that lives "just down the block." One does not simply say hello to the news vendor. One says hello to the news vendor in passing the newsstand on the way to work. It is this specificity of connections that is almost always overlooked in thinking about "renewal." Interpersonal connections are not generic linkages, like plumbers' tubing. Rather they depend on the repetitions of specific crossings, situated in very particular life spaces.

In the aftermath of displacement, people suffer terribly. As a psychiatrist, I have come to think of three major categories of loss that people routinely describe.

The displaced are disoriented. The landmarks that guided them, almost unconsciously, are now gone, and they must renegotiate everything, from groceries to shoe repair.

The displaced are nostalgic for the past. They remember the way things "used to be" and they long for that way of being. The neon lights, the street signs, the places to go – all that has disappeared is mourned. This mourning takes on a particular character. Because many of the people survive, it often seems silly to sweat the "small stuff." "At least we have each other," people say. It seems somehow trivial or illegitimate to miss your corner store, or the shoe shine boy. In fact, in order to understand the magnitude and meaning of the loss we must recast our understanding of what is lost as not simply a house or a store, but rather the whole net of living, the matrix of interdependence, that made life possible and joyous in a particular place, at a particular time. In the aftermath of the bulldozers, this is difficult, if not impossible, to rebuild.

Finally, the displaced are alienated. The fact that

"outsiders" could take the homes and land of "insiders" makes outsiders a species of enemy. It creates a rupture between those of us "here" and those "over there." Displacement creates a profound sense of suspicion that lingers and colors later relationships. "They did that, what will they do next?" is the question that always hangs in the air.

What I want to propose is the antidote to these painful emotions of disorientation, nostalgia and alienation. The antidote, I wish to suggest, is neighboring.

I like to use "neighbor" as a verb, as an action that we can take. I neighbor when I take soup next door. I neighbor when I chat over the fence in the backyard. I neighbor when I shovel snow on either side of my house. I am neighbored in return when I am given a cheerful "hello," or someone asks, "What do you think of the weather?" We neighbor each other when we get together to gossip about Mrs. So-and-So's broken door, which brings down the look of our street.

Jane Addams, founder of Hull House in Chicago, was one of the greatest neighbors America has ever had. As a young woman of privilege, she longed to live a life of meaning. This story of neighboring began in 1887, when 27 year-old Jane Addams embarked on a lifetime of adventure. In that year she and Ellen Gates Starr moved to an old mansion in the middle of the Chicago slums. Addams and Starr believed that democracy was not solely a matter of voting, but more a matter of interdependency and cooperation. In this idea, she followed in the footsteps of her father, a pioneer who helped settle Illinois and later was a friend and supporter of Abraham Lincoln. Addams thought that people of money and influence had an obligation to work together with the poor and the immigrants in order to create a just and functional society.

The fact that "settlement houses" were really residences has been obscured with the passing of time and the shift in functions of those venerable institutions. But Addams and Starr, like others in England and around the US, went to live among the poor in order to learn what was needed to improve their conditions. Hull House welcomed other residents, most often middle or upper class women concerned to be service in era that offered women few opportunities to realize such an ambition. One of the first projects, which was a model for many later efforts, was a sur-

vey of the area residents, designed to learn about their backgrounds, occupations, living conditions and health problems. The survey – in its conception and methods a forerunner of modern sociology – helped the settlement house team understand their new neighborhood: an area of remarkable ethnic diversity, where poor people were packed together in overcrowded, unsanitary living conditions.

Hull House began to tackle these problems in ways great and small. The residents believed fervently in solutions as diverse as the need for art and the need for clean streets. Perhaps because of the breadth of their vision, Hull House became a dynamic and powerful institution. Within five years of its founding, it had outgrown the original homestead. Addams and her co-workers added a suite of buildings that eventually ringed a city block. Every week 5,000 of the neighborhood's 50,000 residents came to Hull House for activities, classes, and social events. Hull House became a leading intellectual center in the United States, providing a window into the problems of the era, and a laboratory for testing solutions. Addams and her co-workers developed a complex mix of support, education and advocacy to address the array of problems that beset the neighborhood. The lessons of Hull House – from the need for child labor laws to the respect for immigrant cultural traditions – helped shape the nation through the early part of the 20th Century.

The lessons shaped Addams' own life, as well. On the eve of World War I, Addams announced that she was a pacifist and could not support the war effort. She had heard too many stories of war from her neighbors to believe that any good could come from fighting. She was vilified for her stand: J. Edgar Hoover was to call her "the most dangerous woman in America." She did not waver, however, going on to found the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. In 1935, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts. At her death in 1937, thousands of mourners thronged the streets around Hull House, grieving the loss of a woman whose compassion and resolve had done so much to help her neighbors. Though the Hull House complex was destroyed during 1960s urban renewal efforts, Addams' vision remains to guide the nation, still struggling to care for the poor, to welcome immigrants, and to realize the promise of democracy.

Addams' work was great, I believe, because she fought for her neighborhood, she tried to help her neighbors. A neighbor is an important person for each of us, but a neighbor is also an accident of fate. The profound act in neighboring is the commitment to help the person next to you, not because of who they are, but because of where they are. In the era of global travel and economic connections, we have more neighbors than ever before, and an ever deeper need to help our neighbors.

By neighboring, we overcome displacement. We create welcome, we set landmarks, we provide reassurance. In the 1950s, the City Fathers in Pittsburgh and many other US cities set in motion the displacement of inner-city families. As we come to the end of the century, we find ourselves in desperate need of displacement's antidote: neighboring. In the life of Jane Addams, America's greatest neighbor, we can find a model for a way of life that will lead us out of pain and suspicion, and into interdependence and cooperation, the true roots of American democracy.

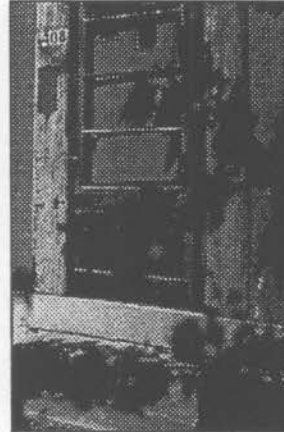
## Mapping Exercise

## Part IV: Conference, 10/8-9/98: The Power of Place

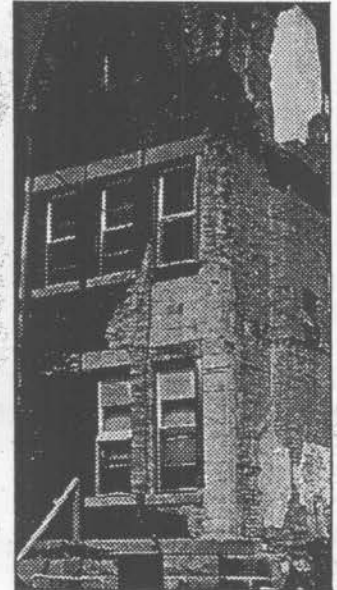
In the afternoon, conference participants went to The Hill to map sections of the community.



*Louise, George and Angela mapping a section of The Hill*

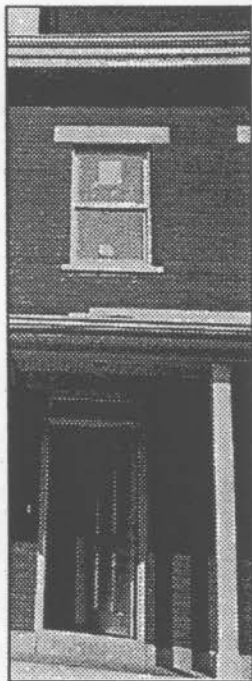


*3. Wearing out*



*4. Severely deteriorated*

### Guidance Photos



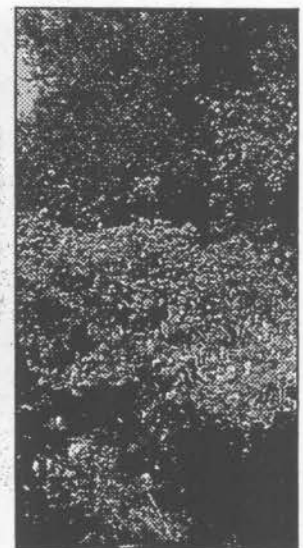
*1. New (but made to match)*



*2. Oldy but goody*



*5. Abandoned*



*6. Vacant lot with plants*

All photos of Manchester except for 5 (East Orange, NJ).

# The Obligations of Neighboring

Terri Baltimore

The following were the closing remarks for The Power of Place Conference:

My name is Terri Baltimore and I am a member of the Coalition for a Healthy Urban Habitat. The Coalition has been around for approximately one year. We are a group of people who live and work in the Hill District. I would like to ask the members of the coalition to stand and be recognized: Edna Council, Della Wimbs, Lois Cain, Angela Howze, Tamanika Howze, Neil Locust, Rebecca Webb, Carmen Bray, George Moses and Maureen Jones.

For over a year, we have worked along with the Fulliloves to help residents, providers and other interested parties to pay close attention to what the proposed changes in the Hill District mean. Our activities have included: holding a day of meetings with Mindy Fullilove and residents in both Allequippa Terrace and Bedford Dwellings. We held a series of meetings, known as Teach-ins that covered topics related to displacement, loss, what constitutes a healthy community, places and buildings of importance in the Hill District.

Our very first teach in was the Community Burn Index, the very experience you had today. There are some key things that I hope you will carry away from this conference.

Through the mapping exercise, you have seen first hand a community on the cusp of revolutionary change. With change comes some very strong emotions. And we hope you have had every one of them.

**Frustration.** A community, home, is more than bricks and mortar, new buildings and reconfigured streets. Community is connection to places, to people, to memories. People in The Hill District know exactly what that means. But people outside of the neighborhood have a hard time understanding why Hill residents proudly proclaim The Hill as home. That they don't have to apologize for it. It is simply home.

**Anger.** Members of The Hill community, and some members of the Coalition are angry that they cannot get people to see the treasures in the community. Several months ago I was on a bus traveling from Oakland to town and encountered Australian tourists on the bus. They were admiring the buildings and speculating on the past of the areas they were passing through. Like a nebbly Pittsburgher, I engaged them in a conversation about The Hill. They got it. Most

Pittsburghers don't understand that The Hill is not just a blighted neighborhood.

**Grief.** Hill residents have lived through a previous renaissance that decimated the community physically and emotionally. For current and former Hill residents, there is a deep sense of loss. They have seen the results of progress and it left them mourning streets that were amputated. It left them with only memories of friends and loved ones scattered all over Pittsburgh. And until recently some did not recognize that what they were feeling mimicked the feelings endured at the death of a loved one.

**Confusion.** We know that change is coming but what we do not know is exactly what change may mean. Will a revitalized Hill District mean a better place to live for all? Or will it mean that some people will remain and others will leave? We do know those who leave, by their choice or by circumstances, may not be welcomed into new neighborhoods and towns as has been evident by a growing N.I.M.B.Y. We do not know what will happen to the people who leave, who will face displacement and homelessness.

**Fear.** We do not know what will become of the residents who will not survive all of this change. We are afraid that the repercussions of change will devastate part of the community. And very few people are openly discussing what responsibility we all have in seeing that the least harm is done in this process.

**Hope.** Today we have begun a dialogue that cannot be denied or ignored. Now we are all aware that we have a responsibility to each other. What happens in The Hill District does not happen in isolation. If we do not recognize our role in this community today, we will recognize it when it may be too late to alter the outcome.

Today you have been given a gift, a chance to begin to know the Hill District in an intimate way. That gift comes to you with expectations. Whatever job you have, however you describe yourself – teacher, planner, resident, provider, student – you have an obligation to learn about the area and the people. You have an obligation to plan with, not for, the people in The Hill. You have an obligation to know in your head and your heart what makes a community whole and healthy. You have an obligation to put yourself in the place of a Hill resident and ask yourself – what would I do if this community was my home? You have an obligation to act.

## After School Enrichment

Louise Sturgess

## Part IV: Conference, 10/8-9/98: The Power of Place Action Report

Every third Thursday, September 1998 through June 1999, employees from Pittsburgh Mercy Health System team with Miller Elementary School students for an after-school program. This year, the Mercy staff suggested the theme: "Our City, Our Home." They invited Pittsburgh History & Landmarks to outline lesson plans for the ten sessions and teach most of them. Through slide shows, walking tours, neighborhood mapping exercises, and art activities, students are learning about the city, their community, and their family. They record historical facts on a giant time line, and tape photographs of their experiences on the time line too. Building on the skills introduced by Drs. Mindy and Robert Fullilove during the "Power of Place" Conference on October 9, 1998, students made a giant map of the blocks surrounding Miller School and color coded the places worth saving, as well as vacant lots, green spaces, and areas of new construction.



MEMO

To: Pittsburgh Colleagues  
From: Michel Cantal-Dupart, Architect-Urbanist  
Paris, France  
Re: Six Priority Issues for the Renaissance of The Hill District  
Date: 10/11/98

The following issues are central to the renaissance of The Hill District. You should use these guidelines for two purposes: 1) to develop activities sponsored by the Coalition for Healthy Urban Habitat or other groups, and 2) to assess the relevance and potential contribution of proposals made by others. Proposals that do not address these priority issues should be reviewed with caution, as they may detract or, worse still, create new problems.

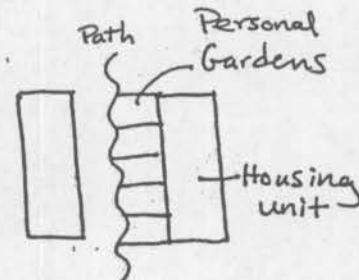
1. Creating a strong street facade

First, it is essential to guard the corners of streets and avenues. The houses and stores on these corners have a particularly powerful influence on a community. Strong, well-designed corners protect the intermediate spaces, and create an attractive vista. Second, it is important to keep the variety of house facades, as this variety gives depth and appeal to the streetscape. Uniform, unvarying design is visually deadening and detracts from the public space.



2. Personalize units in the housing projects

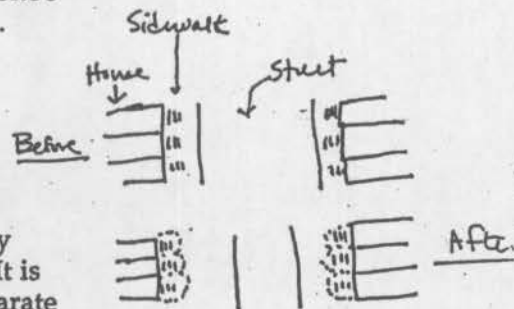
Some of the units in the housing projects have gardens or are personalized in other ways. This is an important way in which people put a "stamp" on the things that they value about the places that they occupy. This tradition is very important in creating a sense of ownership and in creating an interesting public space and should be encouraged as a way of creating a sense of belonging, a sense of community, and a sense that one's neighborhood is worth protecting and maintaining.



3. Separate the houses from the street

Some houses have stairs intruding into the street, without the protection of a front yard.

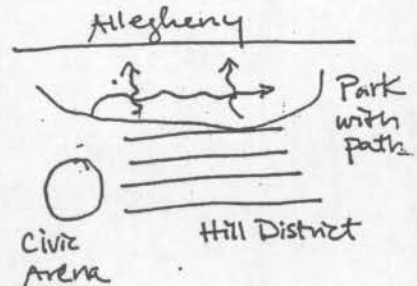
Space to enclose these house fronts can be created by widening the sidewalk, and narrowing the street. It is important to understand that there is a need to separate the personal space that is created by one's home from the public spaces that are created by sidewalks, streets, and avenues.





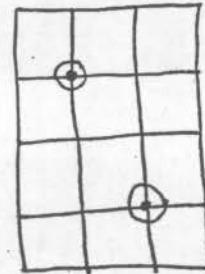
4. Access to the river

The hillside down from Cliff Street used to be a vital connection between The Hill District and The Strip District. There used to be an incline and numerous steps to connect the two areas. These connections have been obliterated with time. The creation of a hillside park with crisscrossing paths would reopen the lost connection. During my last day in Pittsburgh, Dr Robert Fullilove and I walked along Bigelow from the Hill down to the Civic Center and counted numerous traces of old stairways and pathways that connected the Hill to the river and the numerous places where community residents worked. These accessways are obliterated by the highway and have contributed to the isolation of the Hill from much of the city's current growth and development.



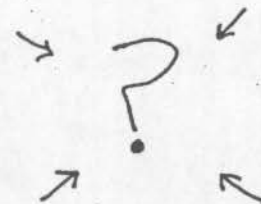
5. Create market centers

One feature of urban life that gives neighborhoods great vitality is the presence of strong market centers. These centers offer products that are a unique creation of the community's artists and artisans and should be created at various points throughout The Hill District. One obvious point is the intersection of Centre and Kirkpatrick, while another is the cluster of stores near Hill House. These and others should be developed to serve the community and to attract others to visit.



6. Attract people from around the world

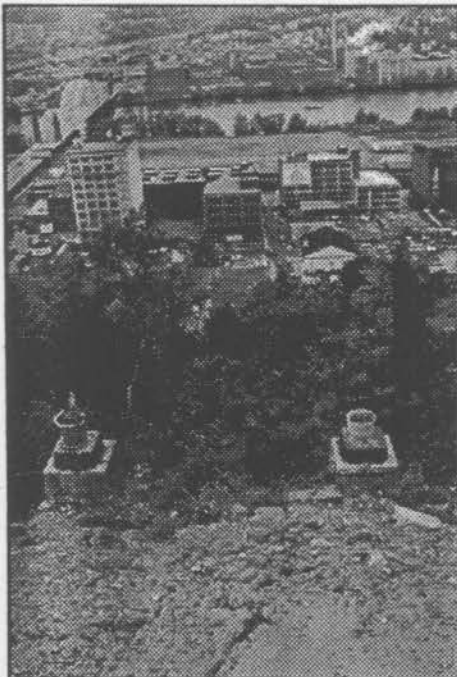
Successful neighborhoods attract people from all over the world. They are drawn there for specific kinds of things, like the presence of a stadium, a museum, or a particular kind of shopping. What is it that would bring people to The Hill District? Finding and developing this attraction will create a momentum essential to the area's renaissance.



## Access to the River



*The Civic Arena and downtown, seen from The Hill*



*Former site of an incline, once connecting The Hill with the Strip District*

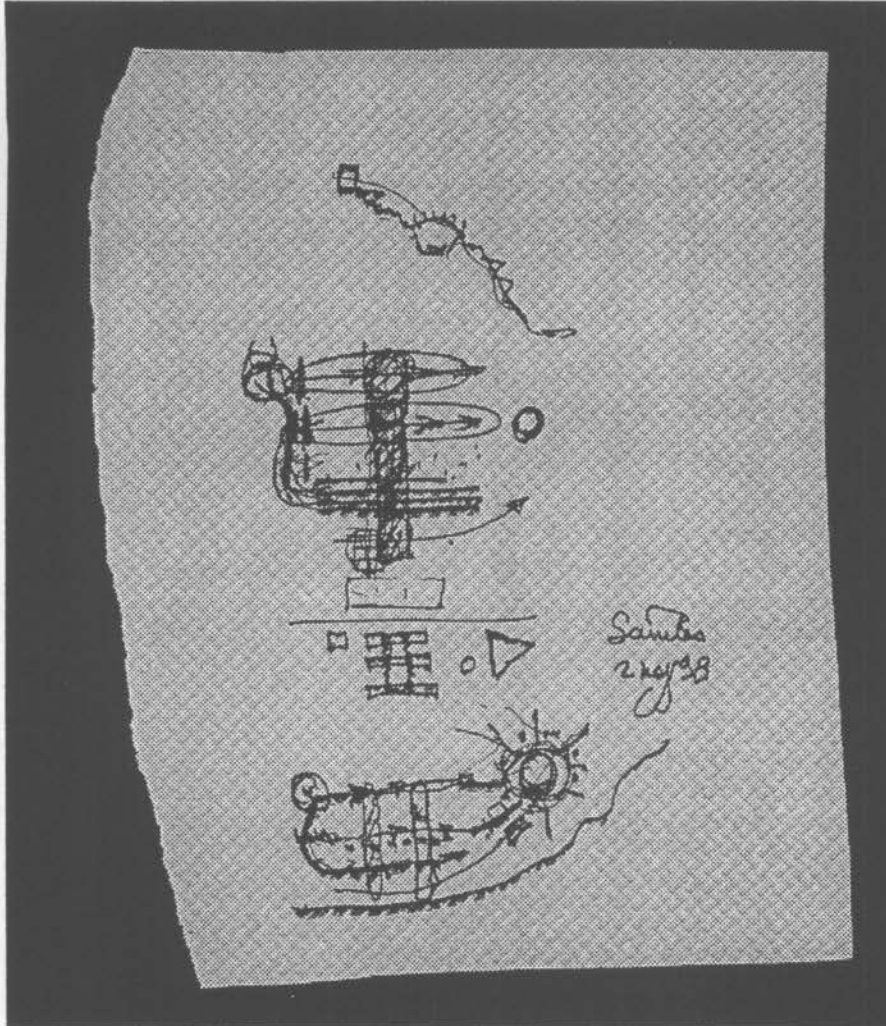


*Neglected city steps*

**A Conversation with the Fulliloves,  
Saintes, France, November 2, 1998**

Michel Cantal-Dupart

**Part V:  
Some Answers  
and More  
Questions**



Michel Cantal-Dupart took Robert and Mindy on a tour of "Pittsburgh in France." He showed them many places that had structural problems/concerns/solutions similar to those in Pittsburgh. Over breakfast one morning, he drew a series of designs on a placemat. The text and maps presented here are an explanation of the designs.

## Note à Bob et Mindy

Michel Cantal- Dupart

J'exprime les trois petits croquis à partir de planches.

- La planche 1, c'est le plan de Pittsburgh avec les différents quartiers sur lequel j'ai porté le Civic auditorium, le Pittstadium et le triangle de la cathédrale du savoir ainsi que le périmètre du domaine universitaire puis je marque les ponts qui franchissent l'Allégheny river et Monogahéla river.

Il est remarquable de voir la concentration des ponts sur les deux rivières, entre Point park et le Civic auditorium par rapport à ceux qui sont en amont. C'est la conséquence historique de la présence d'industries sur les rives qui ont longtemps empêché le franchissement. Mais les industries évoluent, il faut repenser les liaisons interquartiers suels capables de renforcer l'idée de ville globale, alternative à une ville communautaire, renfermée dans ses quartiers.

- Sur le plan 2, je renforce la 5 th Avenue. Voilà une avenue qui joue un rôle interquartier fantastique. Elle débute au coeur du centre puis elle limite Bluff et Crawford puis Terrace village, West Oakland, South Oakland, Central Oakland et North Oakland pour aller se perdre dans le quartiers Est de la ville. Il faut remarquer que District Hill, Middle et Upper ne sont pas irrigués directement par cette avenue. D'autre part, à partir de cette colonne vertébrale, on rejoint assez facilement la rive droite de l'Allégheny et la rive gauche de Monongahéla river.

- Le croquis 3 montre comment le Hill est assez bien desservi, du centre vers les faubourgs mais de mon point de vue, il a perdu des racines, les chemins, les funiculaires qui le reliaient aux deux rivières. C'est l'expression de la coupe qui figure sur mon croquis entre les bâtiments du haut et les quartiers Strip district et Polish hill. Cette coupure étant renforcée par la tranchée intermédiaire de Bigelow boulevard.

Il faut reconquérir ces pentes pour retrouver les << chemins de traverse >> qui étaient les chemins du travail, les chemins de l'intégration.

- Le croquis 4 donne l'esprit de ce qu'il faudrait faire. La géographie ne facilite pas les choses mais déjà la restitution des traces qui existent sur les pentes et qui composeraient un parc dont il ne resterait qu'à mettre les passerelles organiserait un jardin. Aujourd'hui cet espace en friche est la porte ouverte à toutes les délinquances. Je propose en priorité pour exemple le chemin qui descend de

Kirkpatrick road. C'est le chemin qui vers le Sud rejoint South side flats.

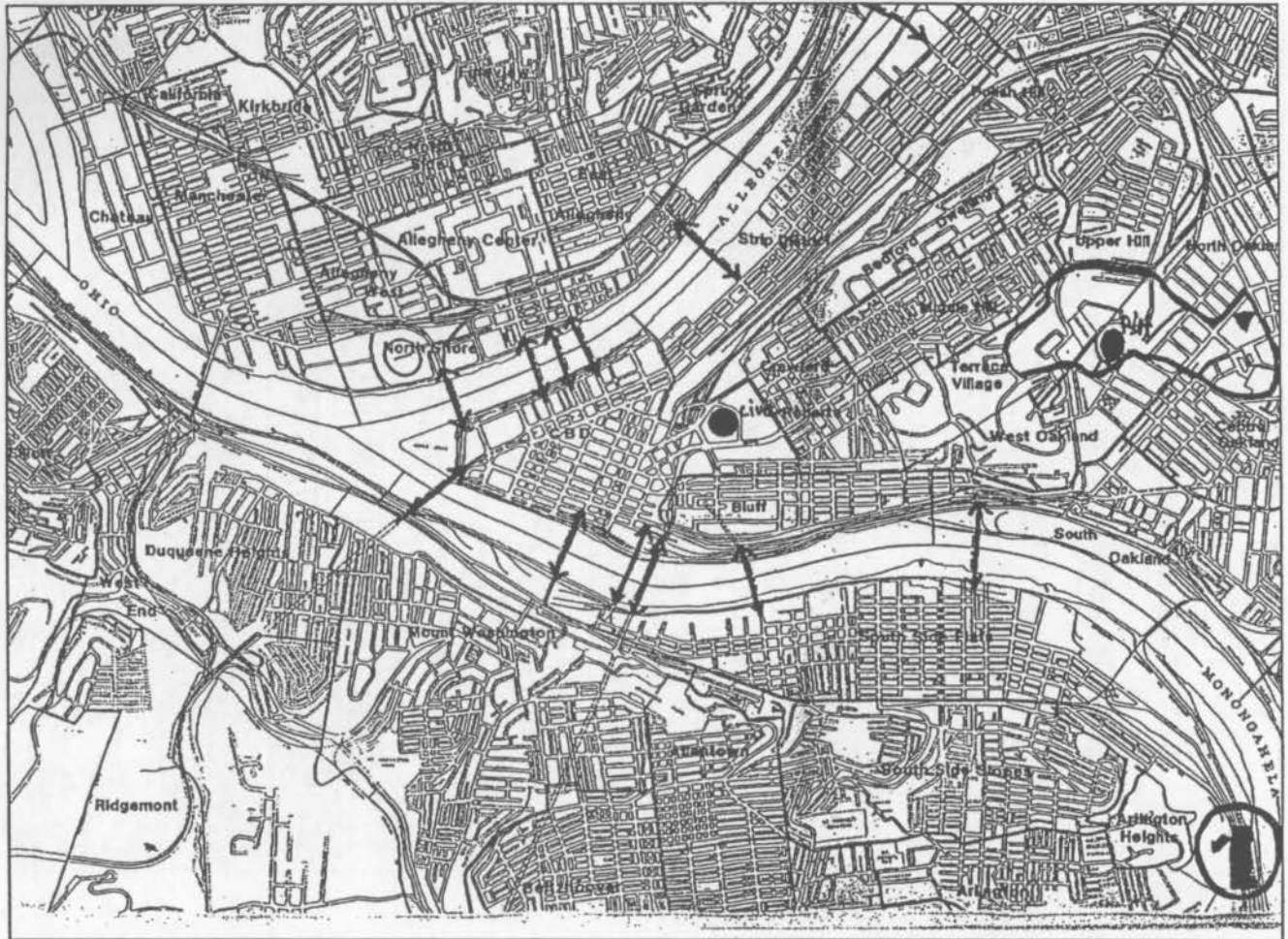
# Part V: Some Answers and More Questions Reflections

## Note to Bob and Mindy

Michel Cantal-Dupart

(Translated from the French by R. Fullilove)

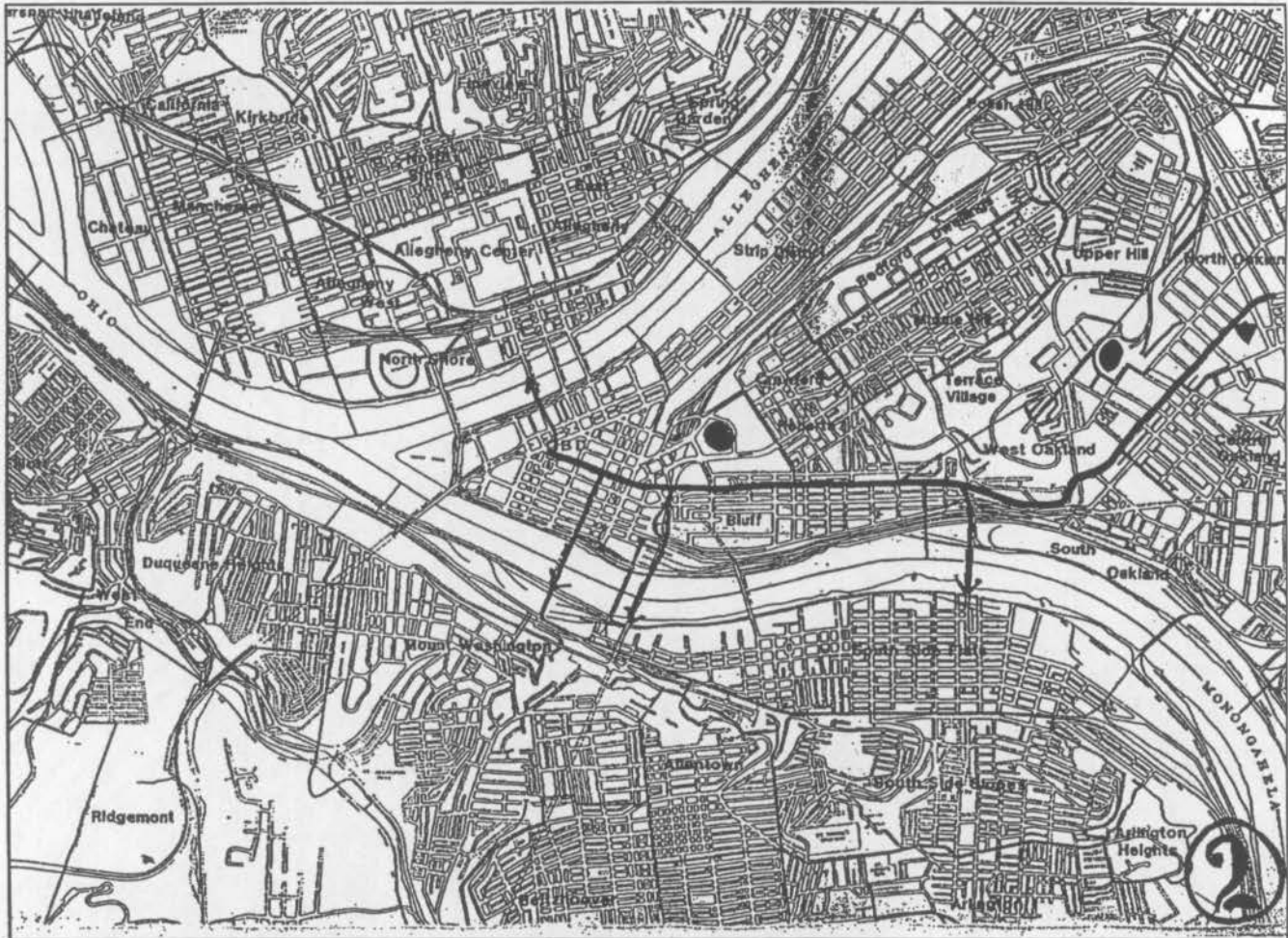
I'll describe the content of my three hand-drawn sketches using four actual maps of Pittsburgh.



Map 1 represents different neighborhoods on which I've highlighted the Civic Arena, Pitt Stadium and the triangle that marks the perimeters of the University campus including the Cathedral of Learning; I have also highlighted the bridges that traverse the Allegheny and the Monongahela rivers.

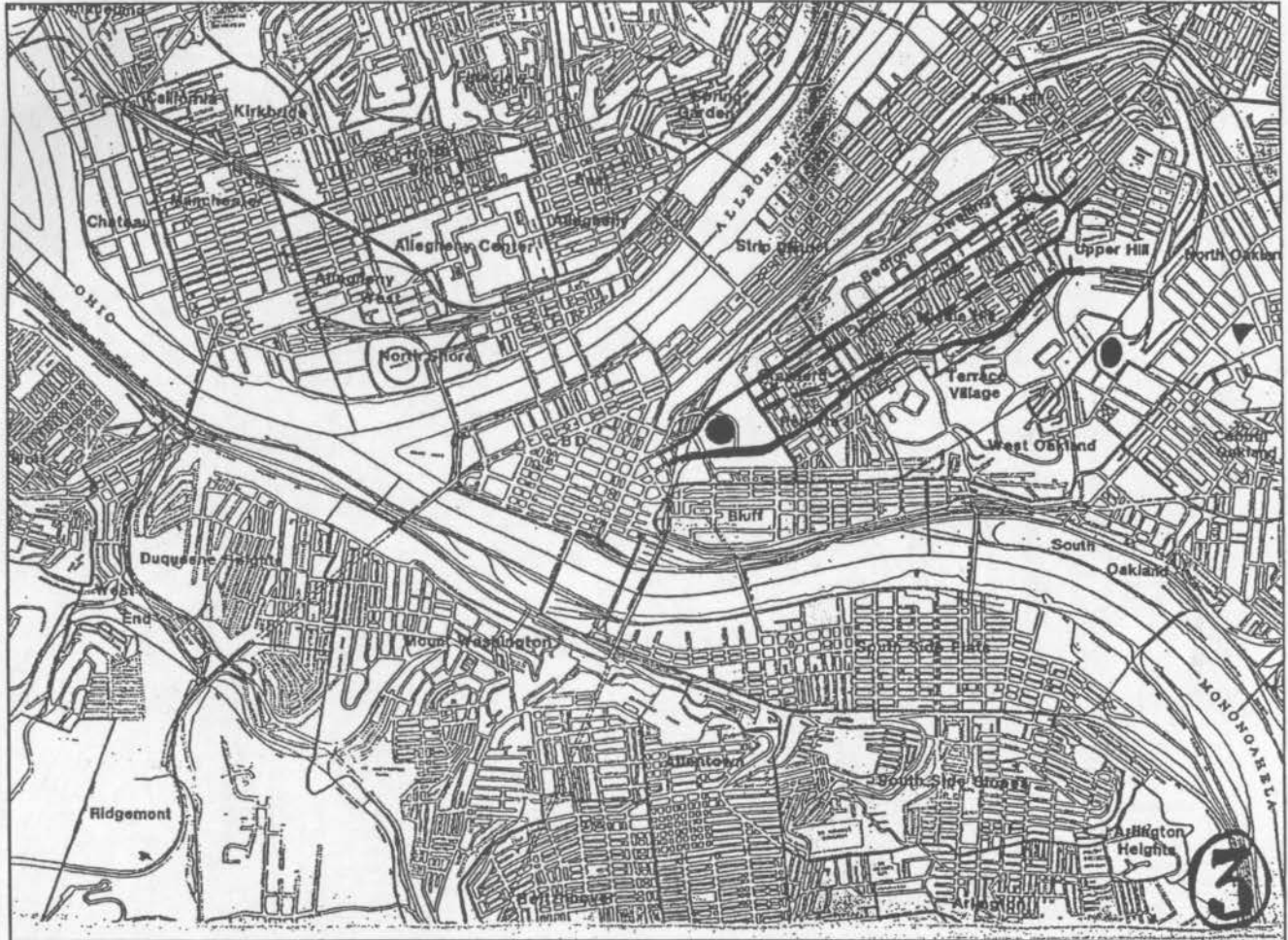
It is remarkable to see the concentration of bridges on these two rivers between Point Park and the Civic Auditorium; they stand in sharp contrast to those upstream. Historically, this is because the heavy industrial development along the banks of these rivers limited the building of other bridges. But industries evolve and we must now rethink how to link communities in order to strengthen the creation of a unified city [ville globale] as opposed to a city of

multiple neighborhoods, each isolated one from another.



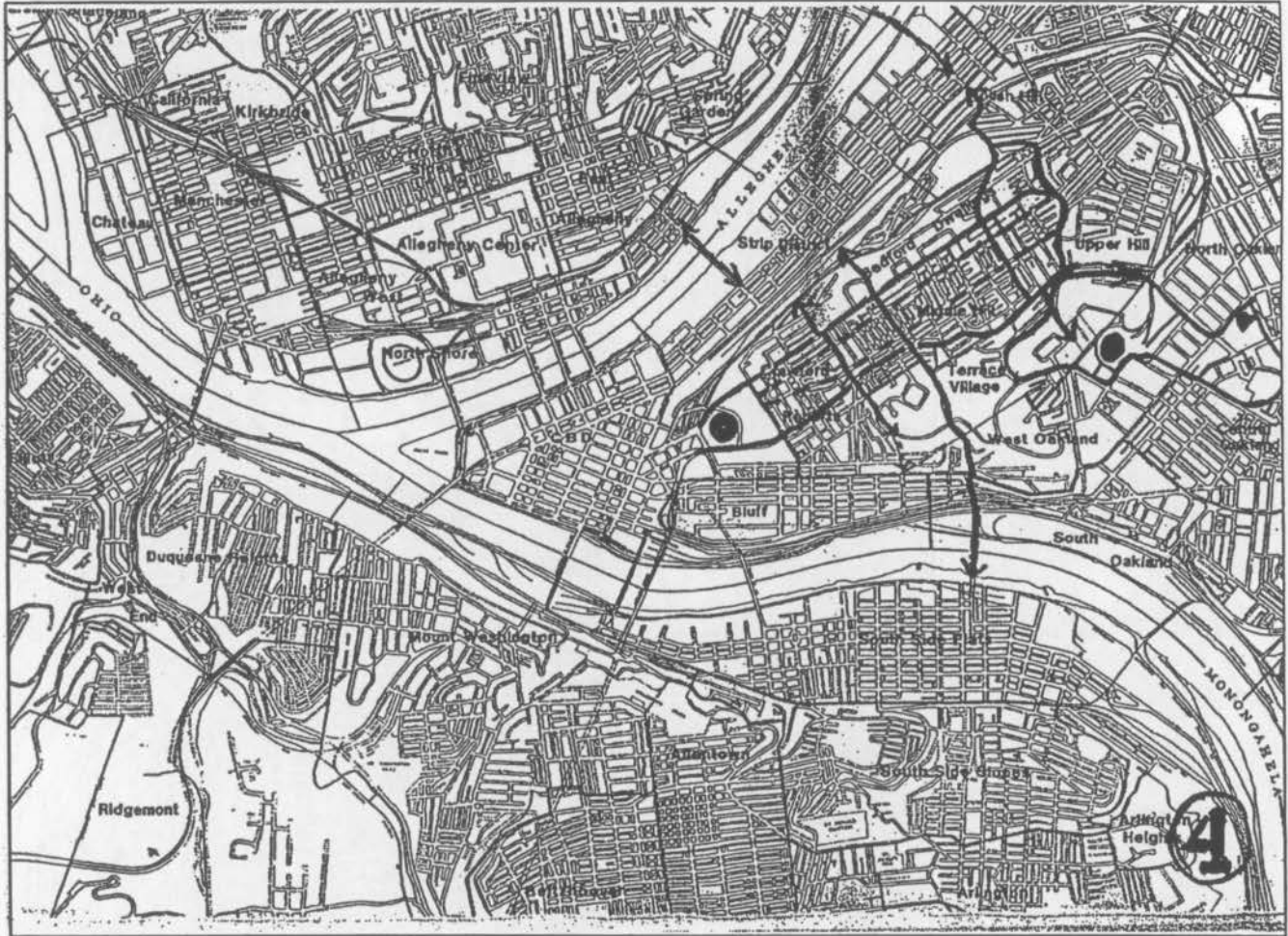
On map 2, I have highlighted 5th Avenue. Here is an avenue that plays the role of an inter-neighborhood link beautifully! It begins in the center of The Hill and cuts across Bluff and Crawford then Terrace Village, West Oakland, South Oakland, Central Oakland, and North Oakland to lose itself in the neighborhoods east of the city. Please note that The Hill District – that is the Middle and Upper Hill – are not served directly by this avenue. On the other hand, this avenue is the spine that easily connects the right bank of the Allegheny and the left bank of the Monongahela.

# Part V: Some Answers and More Questions Reflections



Map 3 shows how The Hill's neighborhoods are reasonably well connected to each other and to the suburbs. However, The Hill has lost its roots, its footpaths, and the system of tramways that connected it to the two rivers. It is what I attempted to show in my original sketches: viz. How the buildings at the top of The Hill are cut off from the neighborhoods of The Strip District and Polish Hill that lie below. Note as well how this sense of being cutoff [coupure] is further reinforced by Bigelow Boulevard.

It is critical that we re-establish the pathways along these slopes that linked the working folks from The Hill to the rest of the city.



Map 4 embodies the essence of what must be done. The geography of The Hill complicates things but already the restitution of the traces of what once existed on these slopes is there in the form of a park which needs only the building of a few foot bridges [passerelles] and the creation of a garden. At present this undeveloped space is open to all sorts of mischief [délinquances]. Thus, I would propose first and foremost a path which would go down Kirkpatrick Road as it is the Southward connection to the Southside Flats.



## The Hill Rebuilds Itself

David Lewis

The Urban Laboratory at Carnegie Mellon University is an interdisciplinary outreach program, offering urban design services to neighborhoods and communities in the Pittsburgh metropolitan region.

In the summer of 1998 a request came from Ms. Terri Baltimore of the Coalition for a Healthy Habitat. She asked whether the Urban Laboratory could field an interdisciplinary team to work with the citizen members of her organization in the Hill District.

The Hill District is in rapid transition. The construction of Crawford Village has encouraged new commercial, office and residential development. Two HOPE Six projects, one centered on Bedford Dwellings and the other on Arlington Heights, are in the process of design. While many Hill residents welcome these developments, others are fearful of dis-



placement, and yet others wonder what the longer-term impacts might be.

Graduate students from the Heinz School and final year undergraduate students from the School of Architecture formed six teams, starting work at the end of August 1998. Each team engaged in a three-stage study: Analysis and Program; Urban Design Recommendations; Individual Projects within the overall urban design recommendations.

Citizens worked with the students at every stage. Early on in the program the Coalition for a Healthy Habitat organized a "teach-in" for Hill citizens. The teach-in included Drs. Mindy and Robert Fullilove from the School of Public Health at Columbia University, Dr. Anthony Robins from the Graduate School of Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh, and Tracy Myers from the Heinz Architectural Center at the Carnegie Museum.

Students from the Urban Laboratory asked the citizens to create a "map of memories." A huge sheet of

## Part V: Some Answers and More Questions Action Report

white paper was pinned to the wall, and a thick black line was drawn across it to represent Centre Avenue from downtown to Oakland. Before long the map was filled with a rich mixture of places, memories and hopes. And the more the citizens described what they drew on the map, the more the students understood the intersection of deep tradition and aspiration for the future.

As a result of this and further meetings, and individual interviews with citizens, the students on each of the six teams were able to develop their own individual themes. One team, for example, emphasized an approach to economic development in the Hill that would provide the maximum entrepreneurial opportunity for the Hill's own citizens.

Another team emphasized transit as a strategy to

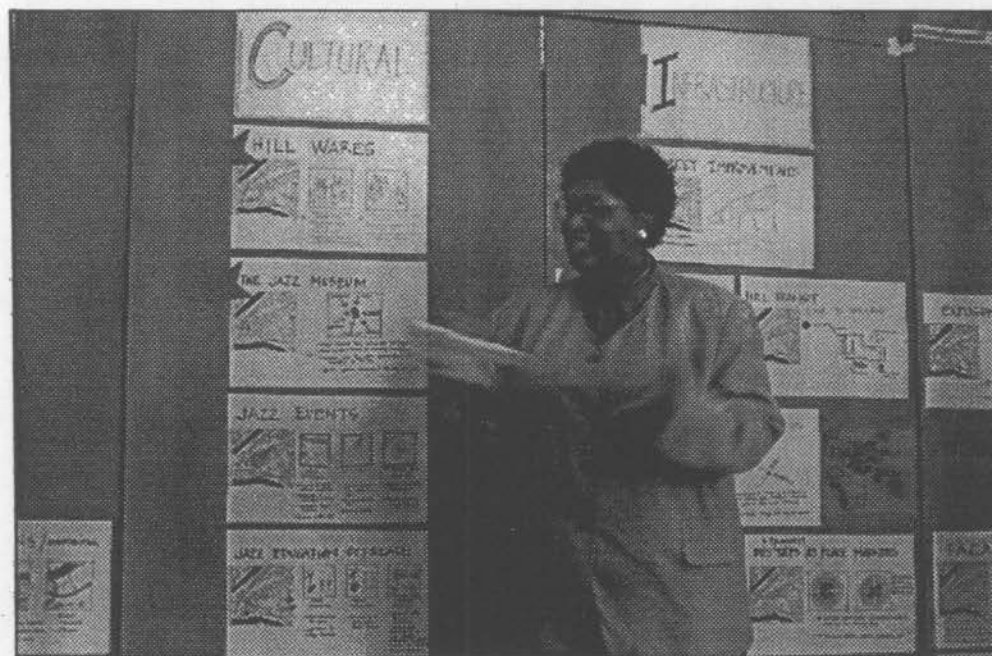


link citizens in the Hill with job opportunities in the region, and to bring visitors to the Hill from other



parts of the metropolitan region to shop and to attend cultural events. Yet another team emphasized building on empty sites as a means of creating density and hence commercial markets in the Hill. And yet another, not surprisingly, picked up on the Hill's rich cultural history, particularly in music, jazz and gospel.

The citizens came to the students' final presentations in December 1998, to ensure accountability. It was a rich meeting, at which the students were exposed to exciting inputs from the citizens, and the citizens were able to engage in rich debates among themselves. The tradition of the Urban Laboratory is to publish a final illustrated report. This will be ready in early May 1999 and will be available to all the participants through Terri Baltimore.



## Building Bridges

Tracy Myers

The window in the dining area of my apartment looks out onto a pedestrian bridge that passes over what is known as the East Busway, a sort of highway, for the exclusive use of buses, that makes possible speedy transit between the borough of Wilkinsburg and Pittsburgh's Downtown and Oakland areas. A modest structure, the bridge spans a physical space of probably no more than one hundred and fifty feet. The psychic distance one traverses in crossing this bridge is substantially greater: on one side lies the overwhelmingly white, middle-class neighborhood of Shadyside, and on the other lies East Liberty, a community largely of working-class African Americans.

The sharpness of this distinction – the seeming unbridgeability of this gap – were made explicit to me on the very day I moved to Pittsburgh. I had just pulled up in front of my building when I fell into conversation with a woman waiting in a car for her husband. On learning that I was newly arrived in the city, she gestured to the large grocery store across the street and warned, "Don't go there after dark." Seeing the look on my face that said, "Oh, don't be ridiculous," she elaborated: "The element ... Believe me, I know. I used to have a shop in that building right there, and I had to leave."

I wish I could say that my reaction to this exchange was to assail the woman with my righteous indignation at her blatant racism. After a two-day-long, four-hundred-mile relocation, however, I was too dispirited and exhausted to do moral battle. I just sighed to myself and thought, "For this" – this provincial, narrow-minded bigotry – "I left New York City?" The more profound corollary of this question, of course, was, "If crossing the street is inadvisable, how do I cross that bridge?"

In a city like Pittsburgh, reported to have more than seven hundred bridges, the notion of a connective structure that links places, domains, features that would otherwise remain separated is apt. The idea of connectivity in turn operates on numerous levels: one can be connected to people, to place, across borders, across languages – across races; one can be attached to ideas, to beliefs – to misconceptions. To further unwind the spiral of the notion of connection: it both requires and has as its goal communication.

It is at the intersection of these axes of connection and communication that I have been involved in the project documented in this scrapbook. As assistant

## Part V: Some Answers and More Questions Reflections

curator of architecture at the Heinz Architectural Center, Carnegie Museum of Art, my professional aim is to enlarge our community's understanding and appreciation of the built environment – meaning not simply the structures that comprise it, but the ways in which those structures impact and are affected by humankind and are generally implicated in the relationship between humankind and the built world. In an urban neighborhood, the relationship is typically extremely dense, involving diverse constituencies and stakeholders – citizens, activists and organizers, policymakers, architects and designers, preservationists – whose points of view and agendas may be at odds. This marvelous, babbling, exasperating complexity is inordinately interesting to me, and I feel the dissolution of neighborhoods like a personal wound. I was thus intrigued by the possibility of involvement, in whatever form, in an effort to repair a damaged community.

Late in the summer of 1998, the Coalition for a Healthy Urban Habitat agreed to be the client for an urban design studio conducted by the fifth-year architecture students at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). The students would study the Hill District in all its dimensions – its history, demographics, economic and commercial structure, physical configuration, transportation routes, potential for revitalization, etc. – and then, in small groups, devise master plans for the redevelopment of the Hill. These designs would be presented to the Coalition as a sort of framework within which it could think about its strategies for staking a claim in the political process through which decisions about the Hill's future are made.

The studio was conceived from the outset as a unique opportunity for the Coalition and the students to engage in a dialogue about what kind of physical environment a community needs – not what designers think it needs – to allow it to thrive. In order to encourage this dialogue, I was asked to act as a sort of translator. As an architectural historian, I of course understand the language of design; and as a former student of public policy, I am deeply sensitive to community concerns and attentive to the way in which they are voiced. In short, I am conversant in the two languages in which the project's participants speak, and it made sense that I was asked to translate them – to act, in other words, as a bridge

between the Coalition and the CMU students.

I was pleased to take on this role, for prior to this point, I had been primarily an observer. I attended the Fulliloves' teach-ins at the Coalition, listening closely, moved often to tears by the recollections and revelations of the Coalition's members. But I was a visitor to the Hill, and I am white, and I represent an institution that is often considered elitist. And so I just listened, and listened, and filtered, and digested, and listened ... until there was a way in which I could be – felt more entitled to be – active.

On reflection, though, it seems that the invitation to be a translator – a link, a bridge – between the Coalition and the students was motivated by an assumption that turned out to be inaccurate: namely, that they needed a translator. To be sure, there was a certain amount of discomfort among the students and the Coalition members at their first meeting: all but one of the students are white, all of the Coalition members who were present are black, and a critique of the white power structure's disregard for and depredation of the Hill District was implicit (sometimes explicit) in the stories told by the Coalition's members. But over time, some of the Coalition's members let their guard down; and the studio's presentations clearly revealed that some of the students heard, responded to, and truly attempted to incorporate into their designs what the Coalition's members shared with them. This happened completely independently of me. This small bridge – and to so characterize it is by no means to diminish it – was built not through my agency, but as a result of the Coalition's willingness to speak and the students' willingness to listen.

Throughout the time during which I was associated with this project, I felt very much that I was on the fringes. This is not bad, but instructive – not a defeat, but a challenge. Despite the warm, generous, and sincere embrace of those involved in the project, there are determinative differences between our worlds. I do not know what it is like to be involuntarily moved from my home and disconnected from all that is familiar, comforting, and meaningful. I have not had to watch parts of my neighborhood fall into ruin. Reading a wariness or mistrust in people's eyes that is based solely on the color of my skin is not part of my daily experience, although I now have an inkling of how hurtful this reaction, and how insuper-

able this mistrust, can be. What I do share with my partners in this project is the knowledge that it is possible to hear and to speak in new ways, and that learning to do so is the first step toward the kind of understanding that can make revitalization something more than an empty phrase.

Maybe now I can cross that bridge.

## Part V: Some Answers and More Questions Reflections

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21 November 1998

Anthony Robbins  
Graduate School of Public Health  
University of Pittsburgh

Dear Anthony,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for inviting me to last November 11th presentations. I have a much better sense of the Coalition's aspirations along with the goals of the School of Minority Health, the community, etc. I commend the students on a number of their ideas, although I depart from them on many others. The latter is why I kept a rather low profile at the presentation, as to not disrupt what was, for the most part, a good start. It undoubtedly provided a good framework for the healthy discussion which followed, thereby constituting a success.

Additionally, I am grateful to have had the chance to finally meet you, as well as Terry, Mindy, Larry and Lois (I hope I have her name right) and others, who all seem to be gracious people and great educators.

I would like to make a few comments which may or may not have a place in future discussions. I'll first take a step backwards, and mention that I have a reproduced Romare Bearden painting of Duke Ellington hanging in my apartment, and I know some kind souls in the Pittsburgh jazz community. So as far as, "Meanwhile.....get that jazz club up and running!" goes, I know a man by the name of George Heid, who might be worth talking to, and who has played drums for King James, Cecil Taylor and others. Furthermore, Gregg Vizza, the man for which I do architectural design for, was instrumental in the renovation of the Manchester Craftsmens Guild recording studio, and designed Audiomation Studios on the North Side. He could be helpful in bringing the discussed ideas of a radio station/recording facilities to fruition when the time comes.

Back to the subject at hand, I loved the idea of the vocational training facilities. Aside from their obvious and direct benefits, they also provide a unique form of equity more valuable than that which is monetary. By developing the skills to physically build their own community, it becomes far more than just a job. In partnership with one another, they invest themselves in the collective pride of their community. In essence, it is much like Habitat for Humanity's concept of "sweat equity."

Regrettably, I have to argue that many of the other proposals presented that day are too closely aligned with strategies of the past which laid the groundwork for gentrification. Unfortunately, it is easy to produce, often unknowingly, a formula for displacement which will be easily recognized by certain Renaissance III zealots. There are some protective mechanisms which should be considered to help secure the future stability of the Hill. Invariably, once any revitalization effort commences, so do the underlying forces of gentrification. In a number of cities, I've seen that once the community development projects begin to unfold, developers and city planners begin to circle like vultures. Soon, residents' homes are bought out from underneath them, either directly or through eminent domain. Having said that, the most pressing issues for the architect are as follows:

1. Any revitalization project will be dependent upon funding from city government; a government whose agenda will most likely lack the sensitivity needed to defend against gentrification. After all, in the eyes of some, gentrification is an attribute of success. How can the inevitable differences be reconciled in a way that decisions are made by those who know what is best for the Hill.
2. What qualities are essential to affordable housing? Building it is relatively easy; maintaining its affordability is where the challenge lies. Furthermore, how can the community become involved in the actual design process? This concept is imperative as a form of empowerment as well as an upkeep and maintenance incentive.
3. Diluting the potency of neighborhood crime must be a major concern for the designer. Here is yet another opportunity for architects and planners to reverse the course of the dangerous neighborhoods their predecessors helped create. I hope they're up to the challenge, perhaps the greatest an architect can face in his or her lifetime.

To be honest, there is a seemingly endless list of questions which future designers should be forced to consider and debate. How do we build new houses and stores, and renovate the old, without raising rents and property values to an unmanageable level? How do we ensure that the owner of an apartment building won't raise the rent every time he or she finds a tenant who can pay more? Should H.U.D. be involved? Habitat for Humanity? How can we encourage landlords to live amongst his tenants rather than manage from afar? Can we envision a housing prototype which would be more appealing to an elderly couple as opposed to college students, and vice versa? How can we develop a commercial district which would preference pedestrians over motorists, for those who don't own a car? Are there architectural solutions to crime?

Of course, there are no purely architectural solutions to any

## Part V: Some Answers and More Questions Reflections

of these questions. I'm only attempting to stay within the boundaries of what I know best, and I had expected the architecture students to take up some of these issues. I had a fundamental problem with the way the CMU studio was conducted. I saw no reason in having all seven groups spend five weeks developing master plan schematics. Looking back at the presentation itinerary, most groups identified the same areas which need the most attention. Most everyone focused on the same commercial blocks, the need for improved transit, the renovation of the Grenada and so forth. Without a doubt, consensus is important. Dissension is equally as important. Often times the best ideas come from conflicting viewpoints. Had I conducted the studio, I would have asked for a master plan from each group within a week's time. From there, each group would have focused on one area (commercial, transit, housing, etc.) for the next four weeks; and the result would have been a mostly agreed upon master plan with seven areas thoroughly studied, and presented with thought-provoking depth.

\*\*\*\*\*

A battle is currently being fought in an area of Cincinnati called Over-the-Rhine. O-T-R is like the Hill District in many ways, but is currently at that delicate stage where the community is losing control over its own fate. Not long ago, it was written off as a helpless "slum." However, enough alternative coffee shops and brew pubs have opened up, along with small art galleries and movie theaters, that O-T-R has become a fashionable area to dine or drink for the evening. It has become so alluring that the plans are in place for total upper-middle-income occupancy. This urban renewal, disguised as urban revitalization, has been partially paralyzed by a notable figure.....Buddy.

I don't recall ever learning Buddy's last name, but he operates a low-income housing rehab organization. Buddy is a thorn in the side of Cincinnati's city council. He has aggressively taken on the council almost single-handedly. Living on very little income, Buddy has managed to buy nearly fifty houses and apartment buildings throughout O-T-R. They are dilapidated and boarded up buildings which had become such a nuisance to their previous owners (whose tenants had moved out leaving them unoccupied) that they became available at very little cost. Many of the owners sold to him rather than selling to the city because they were slumlords who were cheating on their taxes. In any case, these buildings are strategically located in such a way that the bulldozers can't simply erase neighborhoods without a trace. Buddy, with an ever-changing army of volunteers rehabs these buildings one at a time. He either maintains ownership or sells to someone that won't raise rents beyond what is reasonable. Seven days a week he fights an amazing fight. I know that people like Buddy aren't easy to find, but it wouldn't hurt to brainstorm on incentives for a trustworthy individual, who has the means, to take ownership of vacant or

unwanted buildings in the Hill District.

Throughout the presentations it was clear that housing, let alone the deeper issues of affordability, was overshadowed by commercial development. When working on any complex design issue, I like to practice what I call "always working towards completion." In other words, working on multiple tasks simultaneously. This concept is difficult for me to practice when cooking breakfast, let alone working out a master plan. Yet, it is essential; and as long as the projects are well thought out and flexible, designers and builders can still move one step at a time. While commercial development is underway, nearby residential areas need to be strong or in the process of being strengthened. Otherwise, before the community can fully enjoy the new stores and benefit from the jobs created by those stores, someone will offer to buy their houses for twice what they're worth, and little by little they disappear. If the Coalition gets there before private interests, the residents may be living in priceless homes that they won't sacrifice.

The above scenario will soon be critical on Pittsburgh's North Side with the nearly-approved stadium projects. I would personally go to the edge of the earth to lure suburban residents back into the city, but the city's recent focus on high-end lofts and luxury townhouses is myopic. If a simultaneous effort to improve the habitat of those who already live in the city is not made, then suburban recruiting becomes futile. The proposed stadium complex includes a variety of shopping and amusement attractions. Nearby rowhouse residents are already being asked to relocate, and they have neither leverage nor bargaining chips. I have not heard of any plans to establish a multi-income community, but only the insertion of wealthier enclaves into poor communities. I guess Renaissance IV will deal with that one.

Finally, there is an element of urban design which architects don't like to talk about; the element of crime. I find it disconcerting that the sometimes unharnessed ego of architects permits them to act as economists, sociologists, politicians, and psychologists, but when the issue of crime is mentioned, they say that law and order should be left to legislators and police. The unspoken reality, the way I see it, is that architects are complicitous in the perpetuation of community-crippling crime.

Architects provide a stage on which life's events unfold. They provide a stage on which we raise families, on which we work, on which we educate and learn, and on which we play. In doing so, they create a stage on which crimes are committed. Of course, architects shouldn't be held as the gatekeepers of peace. Yet in the post-WWII American city, the prevailing attitude is that longer prison sentences and more police are the only solutions to crime. I simply don't understand what the long-term



## Part V: Some Answers and More Questions Reflections

goal of this system is, martial law? I guess it is an easy sell in terms of tax dollar allocation, in comparison to prevention-education-rehabilitation programs. One of the things that I think everyone felt really good about at the presentation was the collective presence of many articulate, confident and knowledgeable voices representative of nearly all of the components needed to produce creative, honest and viable solutions to the problems at hand. I have long maintained, often to the disdain of my peers and co-workers, that lending our knowledge of the built environment to those who really understand the dynamics of urban life, may be the most worthwhile contribution we could make.

In any urban design project there will be insurmountable budget issues and insurmountable zoning regulations. Zoning codes are usually revered as omnipotent doctrines. But battles have been fought and won, and sometimes these battles can make or break the new urban landscape. It is my contention that many of these regulations concerning property lines, setbacks, etc. are outdated and incongruous with contemporary city life. While walking through the city, we cross hundreds of invisible lines which, on a map, indicate changes in elevation, changes in ownership and changes in what is public vs. what is private. On a map somewhere, there is a dotted line which says, "You have to put your building ten feet to the left of this line; and you have put yours ten feet to the right." Years later you have an alley between these two buildings with our friend, the dotted line, running right down the middle. It doesn't matter that one day an elderly man will be mugged in this alley, it doesn't matter that one day a young woman will be raped in this alley, and it doesn't matter that one day an addict will overdose in this alley. What matters is that we respect the dotted line. We, the architects, create the stage; shouldn't it be us, the architects, who help defend it? Creatively? Too much energy is exerted on what color to paint the windows.

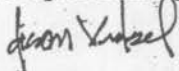
In the meantime...what can be done architecturally to address the issue of safety without an abundance of time or resources? Some of the students proposed to "densify" the area by building upon vacant lots to tie a street together. But before infill projects could possibly take place, vacant lots could be addressed through simple landscaping projects. With the help of school children, neighborhood residents and volunteers like myself, flowers and shrubbery could be planted. In doing so, one can define a vacant lot as an actual place, not just an extension of the sidewalk. In other words, take Project Picket Fence to the next level, without adding more fences, gates or walls. Eliminating a multitude of the Hill's "no-man's-lands" could effectively change the urban landscape beyond the realm of "beautification."

In the later phases, during the actual design of houses and buildings, attention should be turned toward design strategies which actually extend residents abilities to "self-police" their

surroundings. Although residents shouldn't be expected to make citizen arrests, they should be given the comfort of having an awareness of what is taking place around their home. Sufficient outdoor lighting, private entrances and yards, and the elimination of blindspots are but a few provisions which "architecturally enhance the senses" of those who live within.

Well, Anthony, I guess I've gone on a bit too long here. The social consciousness of the architecture community is something which is of great concern to me. It is reassuring to see where it has some practical application because, for the most part, it resides in the realm of theory. If you think any of these ideas will somehow be material to upcoming discussions, please let me know. There are a lot of publishings on architects who have devoted their careers to developing the urban context with incredible sensitivity, in both theory and practice. Again, please keep me informed of any new developments as I'm eager to see this project progress.

Respectfully,



Jason Vrabel

## Part V: Some Answers and More Questions Reflections

Date: Thu, 18 Mar 1999 16:14:59 -0500 (EST)  
From: Robert E Fullilove <ref5@columbia.edu>  
To: mf29@columbia.edu  
Subject: more, please (fwd)

----- Forwarded message -----  
Date: Thu, 18 Mar 1999 15:38:55 -0500 (EST)  
From: Jewish Women's Center of Pittsburgh <jwc@trfn.clpgh.org>  
To: ref5@columbia.edu  
Subject: more, please

Dear Dr. Fullilove-

I am one of the people who attended your talk to the needle exchange forum we held a couple of weeks ago in Pittsburgh. I would love to read more about your work-your talk and your wife's talk fascinated me. I'm a native Pittsburgher and I realize the truth of what you both had to say. Still, I do have a couple of questions. When we talk about substance abusers and say that they are a segment of society that deserves respect and so forth, can't a community make a decision that certain behaviors are undesirable, unhealthy and threatening to that community? That is, of course, there will always be drug users and of course, they don't deserve to die or go to jail because of their addiction. But addiction is not a way of life that is desirable (it seems to me, anyhow) because of the risks of disease, the lack of productivity etc. suffered by the user. And addiction, like any illness, has societal costs. Isn't it valid for a community to place a value on behaviors it finds desirable, and to discourage those it doesn't? Also, when you talk about new housing replacing old projects and this being the eviction of people from their homes-I'd rather live in a new, clean, functional space I can control than live in a filthy, dangerous place that is run by people who make it unpleasant to live there. Wouldn't you?

I realize these are not new questions for you and I'm sure I'm just missing the obvious. But I love my hometown and I want it to grow and be a healthy and welcoming place for all of us who live here. Your wisdom would be much appreciated!

Thanks-

Laura Horowitz  
Prevention Point Pgh.

# *Hill*<sub>scapes</sub>: *Envisioning a healthy urban habitat*

Final Report on the Maurice Falk Medical Fund Minority Fellows Program

*Presented by*

**Drs. Robert and Mindy Fullilove**

1998 Falk Minority Fellows  
The Center for Minority Health  
University of Pittsburgh

**Friday, April 30, 1999**

9:00 a.m. -- 10:00 a.m.

Faculty Commons Room  
Parran Hall, Room 109  
Graduate School of Public Health

**Synopsis:** Hillscapes is the report of one and half year's effort to envision a new future for Pittsburgh's Hill District. This effort was led by the Center for Minority Health and the Coalition for a Healthy Urban Habitat (a group formed specifically as an advocate for Hill District residents experiencing emotional and psychological stress related to displacement). The presentation will address the effects and public health implications of mass community displacement. It will be a powerful combination of research data, stories, experiences and vivid details.



Center for Minority Health

*Light refreshments will be provided.*

## Twice Baked

Anthony Robins

In my grandma's house, the kitchen table was the center of gravity. Everyone was drawn to the table and once you settled there, it was almost impossible to move away. Friends and neighbors (who dropped by) claimed that any time of day or night you could find the Hayes (my grandparents' surname) sitting around the table. Long after we finished eating, we would still be there – my mom, my brothers, sisters, and some friends and neighbors. The table would always be dressed with the finest southern cuisine – fried catfish, deep-fried chicken, cooked cabbage, yams, macaroni and cheese, black-eyed peas with ham hocks, corn-on-the-cob, collard greens mixed with a few mustards, corn bread and grandma's famous bread pudding with plump raisins. All the vegetables came from my grandfather's garden, of course.

Around the table we would tell stories, relive the day's events, explore new ideas, and compete for air time. It was here that we always brought our tales from school, sometimes funny tales about the kids in class or some victory and sometimes miserable laments. This place will always be a special place for me. It is difficult as I reflect. This place exists only in my mind and memories now. When the big house (that's what family members so lovingly called it) burned, an empty space forever was burned in my soul. Place, as I would learn much later, has particular characteristics that affect us mentally, physically, and even spiritually. It has power.

I remember sitting around the kitchen table and being on the edge of my seat as I listened to detailed play-by-play accounts given by the grownups of "unbelievable" happenings about certain neighbors. Miss Odessa comes to mind.

As long as I can remember Ms. Odessa Phillips (a fictional name given to a neighbor that lived down the street from my grandparents) lived in our neighborhood. Grandma spoke often of how she behaved or should I say misbehaved at funerals. There was a particular neighbor (Ms. Ida) who died and Miss Odessa went to the services. When it came time to view the remains, Miss Odessa decided to perform. I can hear grandma's voice now as she so vividly tells the story. "... boo-hooing and blowing snot everywhere. I could have died when she goes flying up to the front of the church wiping out all the plants and flowers and flung herself into that casket. Just a cry-

## Part V: Some Answers and More Questions Reflections

ing and screaming "Don't leave me Ms. Ida. Lawd takes me instead. I'm ready ..."

Grandma would pause for a moment. Shaking her head and giving a hearty laugh she says, "Hypocrite, 'Dessa didn't know that woman!" After a moment or so she continues to tell the story. "The brakes must have undone themselves 'cause the next thang I know Odessa came racing down the aisle knocking over the mothers' bench and deacon's row with the mortician running behind her like a madman. Next thang you know you had women and men piled up like mashed potatoes and casket like gravy crashed in the back of the church ... Odessa with her legs all open just screaming. I never saw people screeching and screaming like that ... ." I still laugh when I think about the story.

The number of people at the kitchen table often expanded beyond the nuclear family. The round shape would turn into a long oval with the addition of leaves as friends and extended family joined us. Early afternoon Sunday dinner – always big and festive – was a favorite time to have folks over for a potluck. Dressed in her long apron, my grandma would prepare one of my favorite meals – twice baked potatoes, a tasty dish which she prepared often. I consider this one of her signature dishes.

Grandma's house had a big fireplace in the kitchen wall. There she baked the potatoes. She would take pieces of light wood from the porch and start the fire in the wood stove. Often you would find a big cast-iron pot on one burner for rice, and the white-enamelled pot on another for some other tasty dish. There was also a gas stove where other relatives preferred to prepare their special dishes.

She would rub white potatoes with oil and bake them in the fireplace until they could be easily pierced with a fork. Grandma cut the potatoes into halves, lengthwise, and carefully scooped out the pulp, reserving the best shells. Then, she riced the pulp into a bowl and, while the potatoes were still hot, whipped in several tablespoons of sweet cream butter, a little milk, bacon crumbs, a cheddar cheese and salt. She beat in egg yolks and sour cream, whipping them into a puree. And, later she heaped the mixture into the reserved shells and placed them on a baking sheet. Taking more butter, she dotted each one and placed in the wood oven until golden brown. I remember the wonderful smells coming from the kitchen.

After several minutes, the dish was ready to be eaten, a delight to anyone's palate. I found that besides being a tasty treat, the dish became to represent something far greater in my life – a developmental process. The first baking would be represented by my schooling. The second baking would be the experience gained post classroom training.

This process was put to test when I took my first academic position – a postdoctoral fellowship at the Center for Minority Health, University of Pittsburgh where part of my training included working with the community. As a newly minted Ph.D., there were two major ideas that made up my thinking about science and scientific activities: (1) scientists should take the lead in the experiment or scientific activity and (2) all others that are not of the scientific community should follow the scientist's lead. By employing these simple rules, the outcomes of any project were due to be scientifically worthy.

In February 1998, I walked boldly into a conference room at the Hill House in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. With shoulders high, Ph.D. credentials in hand and a presence oozing with confidence, I took my place at the long rectangular shaped table as a newly minted scholar (the title bestowed upon me by the academy). I came to share my expertise and dictate the appropriate way of doing things (was I not the methodologist?). Like a potato, I had been baked sufficiently, however bland to the taste. In my case, I was dull and not prepared for what lay ahead. I needed seasoning (i.e., experience). Nevertheless, my ability and confidence were enough, I thought.

As the meeting came to order, the group began to share painful thoughts and experiences. The remarks seemed to have a common theme – the horrors of displacement. I would later learn that the Hill District had been razed of its buildings before leaving many residents displaced. Now, in the aftermath of its doom, the Hill District is witness to having its homes demolished and residents uprooted again. I continue to listen. I listened for twelve months.

The group that sat around this conference table would play a critical role in my second phase of career development (the second baking). This group would scoop out my insides and season them. They would rice my pulp into a bowl (i.e., the numerous meetings at the Hill House), while I was hot, whip in some sensitivity, awareness and understanding. They

would beat in the importance of listening. Gently they would heap out the mixture into my shell and place me in the neighborhood to bake again. I would become twice-baked. As grandma's dish was tasty to the palate, I would be tasty to the community (i.e., of service). My earlier way of thinking – I am the expert; I bring the methods and strategies; let me show you the way – changed. The group that sat at the table that cold February day put me back in the oven to be twice baked. I discovered that one cannot address a problem and be of service if you're not aware of the issues. For too long, academic types have dictated what the process and issues should be, oftentimes not addressing what is most critical to the community or the community's concerns. If the academy is to make a difference, we must first listen and then respond by lending a helping hand.

## Where do we go from here?

Terri Baltimore

# Part V: Some Answers and More Questions Reflections

There is no definitive singular answer for what the people in the community and the outside interests should do. However, as the planning for The Hill District moves forward, there is one thing that remains crystal clear – no one can forget the past.

When all of the plans are on the table, the residents, planners, providers and all Pittsburghers need to remember what happened to The Hill District when the focus was strictly on development. People were lost. A community was lost. Memories were lost. Hence, our goal should be not to repeat the past.



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## Contributors

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Carl Redwood, Sr., Life-long Community Activist, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Anthony Robins, Ph.D., Post-doctoral Fellow, Center for Minority Health at the Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh

Louise Sturgess, Executive Director, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

Jason Vrabel, Architect/Photographer, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

## Glossary

**Alienation:** feeling estranged or separate from others.

**Best House:** house identified by an individual as the "all time favorite" home to visit or live in.

**Community Burn Index:** a measure of the extent of housing abandonment and destruction in a neighborhood.

**Configuration:** the pattern of objects or people.

**Congruence:** agreement or correspondence in character or quality; harmony.

**Disorientation:** not sure of one's bearings.

**Displacement:** forced relocation.

**Distressed community:** term used by HOPE VI planners to determine which federal housing projects are slated for renewal/demolition.

**Empowered collaboration:** groups working together to inventory environmental problem/resources and find solutions.

**Goodness of Fit:** test of congruence between settings and situations.

**Healthy Urban habitat:** an urban environment that supports the well-being of people and other living creatures.

**Hillscapes:** portraits of The Hill District.

**HOPE VI:** 1993 Urban Revitalization Act.

**Market centers:** points of commerce within an urban neighborhood.

**Neighborhood redevelopment, revitalization, renewal:** modernization of an existing neighborhood designed to repair decay or economic decline.

**Nostalgia:** mourning for a lost home or place.

**Setting:** location or place.

**Situation:** an interpersonal episode.

**Street facade:** the vertical plane created by a row of house/building fronts.

**Teach-in:** community meeting for purposes of self-education.

**Urban design:** the process of configuring a city.

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- 20 BLOCKS COULD BE TORN DOWN
- HOMEOWNERS AND RENTERS COULD BE FORCED TO MOVE WITHOUT ADEQUATE COMPENSATION OR REPRESENTATION
- MAYOR O'MALLEY SAYS THAT "THE FIRST STEP IS COMING UP WITH A CONSENSUS PLAN FOR THE MIDDLE EAST NEIGHBORHOOD THAT THE CITY CAN GET BEHIND" YET CONCERNED RESIDENTS AND PASTORS ARE BEING GIVEN THE BRUSH-OFF BY ELECTED AND APPOINTED CITY OFFICIALS

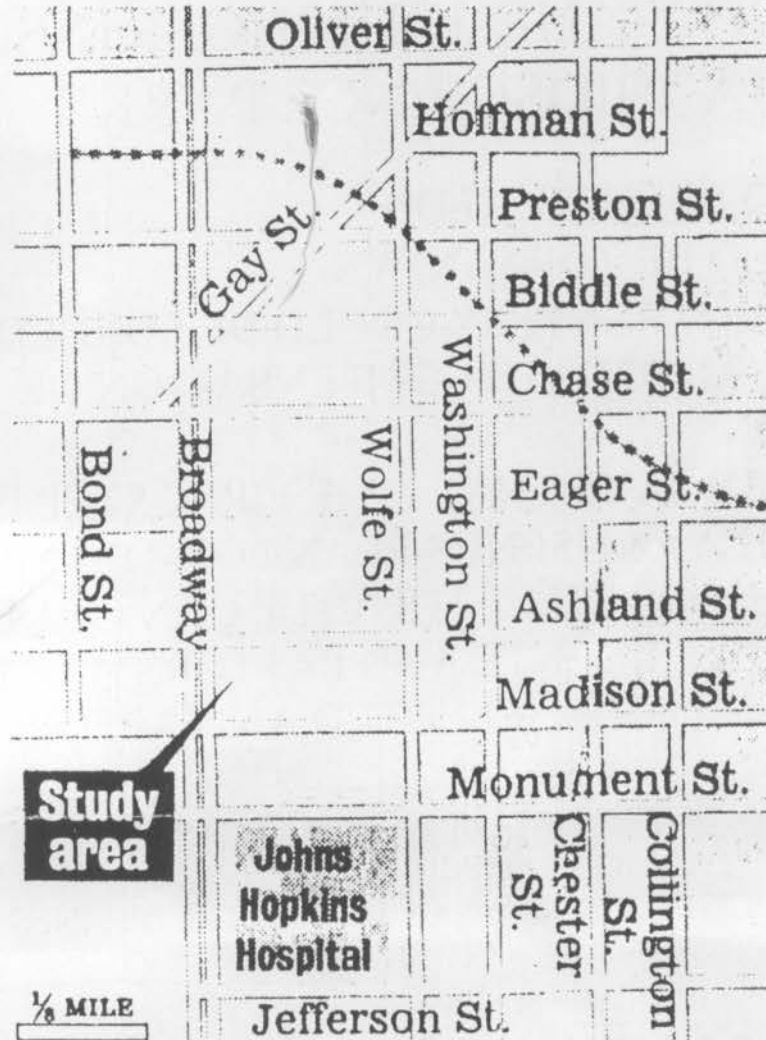
THE SAVE MIDDLE EAST ACTION COMMITTEE WAS FORMED TO HELP GET ANSWERS AND EXPRESS THE CONCERNS OF RESIDENTS, BUSINESS OWNERS, AND AREA CHURCHES

OUR VOICES NEED TO BE HEARD NOW 6PM  
JOIN US THURSDAY MAY 17, 2001  
AT THE GREATER NEW ST JOHN BAPTIST CHURCH  
1108 N. WOLFE STREET

The City and the Middle East Community Organization will be making a presentation on the proposal at the M.E.C.O. Center at 1100 N. Rutland Ave. May 21st. The May 17<sup>th</sup> rally is intended to show them the extent of the concerns in Middle East.

**Bring your neighbors to both meetings**

Sponsored by the Save Middle East Action Committee  
For more information call 410-563-2033



*“We want the sort of measurable, visible change and improvement that East Baltimore wants and needs.”*

**Mayor Martin O'Malley**

# Homeowners angered by Hopkins bids

Expansion project  
could require 200  
families to relocate

**'Do they think I'm crazy?'**

Medical institutions  
say market prices  
to be paid for houses

By ALEC KLEIN  
SUN STAFF

Already wary of their giant neighbor, East Baltimore residents are accusing Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions of trying to force them out of their neighborhood with low-ball offers to buy their homes.

As part of an ambitious redevelopment plan of the broader community, Hopkins confirmed that it needs to relocate 100 to 200 families for an expansion that targets about eight city blocks from Chester Street to Broadway, and Madison Street to Ashland Avenue.

Hopkins is considering using the land — an area dominated by vacant rowhouses and a smattering of small businesses, renters and homeowners — for parking space and a low-level building to house classrooms or a community-based clinic, officials said.

By redeveloping the area and offering subsidies for home-closing costs, Hopkins is encouraging more of its employees to live closer to its medical campus.

"Hopkins wants to be in control of the community, of everything," said homeowner Marietta Smith, 75. "They're just trying to push everybody out."

Smith said Hopkins offered \$500 for her vacant three-bedroom, two-bathroom rowhouse in the 800 block of N Wolfe St. "Do they think I'm crazy?" she said. "They... [See Relocate 4]

## Rehrmann trying to boost her recognition

Glendening's rival  
seeks to build on  
Schmoke's support

By LISA RESPERS  
SUN STAFF

When Harford County Executive Eileen M. Rehrmann took office at the end of an explosive growth spurt in 1990, she faced crowded schools and an overburdened infrastructure.

Blessed with a growing tax base, Rehrmann spent \$100 million to tackle those problems while managing to keep the county of more than 200,000 people financially stable.

As she travels the state to boost her recognition as a Democratic challenger to Gov. Parris N. Glendening — an effort bolstered last week by an endorsement from Baltimore Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke — many in her own back yard view her as an energetic and fiscally sound leader.

"She has had a logical and conscious plan for Harford County," said Harford Councilwoman Susan B. Heselon, a Republican. "She has kept this county operating in the black for eight years."

But critics say her accomplishments are overshadowed by an ambitious and sometimes vindictive personality. [See Rehrmann 5a]

One of two consultants whose market research indicated that the project could be successful cautioned that the plan was "very preliminary" and was contingent on financing and on continued strength in biotechnology and the local housing market.

"I want to underscore the fact that this is Phase I of this project," said John C. Brophy of Columbia-based Brophy and Reilly, who worked on the plan with Urban Design Associates of Pittsburgh. "Describing it does not make it so. It is a long way from happening."

The plan represents a significant departure from the previous effort to redevelop the area, which has suffered from decades of disinvestment despite the presence of the world-renowned Johns Hopkins Hospital and School of Medicine.

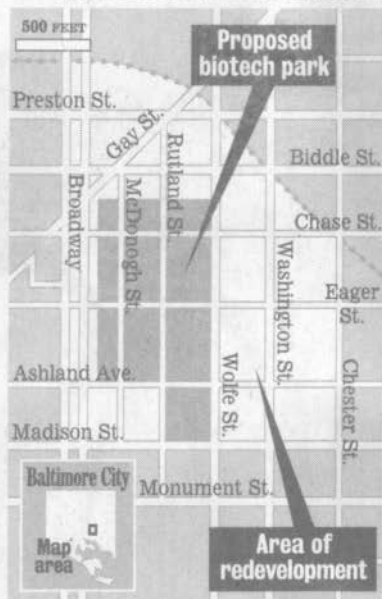
Seven years ago, the city, state and Hopkins created the Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition to revive the blighted neighborhoods around the medical campus. But the group's strategy of trying to shore up blocks by rehabilitating individual houses with millions of dollars in federal money failed to halt the physical deterioration of the east side, and its executive director resigned last fall.

Schwartz said a key difference is that the O'Malley administration's plan is "market-driven."

"It's not guesswork," she said. "It's not gut. It's feasibility analysis by professionals."

That analysis, which cost \$130,000 and was financed by the Abell and Goldseker foundations, found that of the 50 biotech com-

One of three possible configurations for a biotechnology park in the area of redevelopment.



SOURCE: Urban Design Associates  
SHIRDELL MCDONALD : SUN STAFF

panies nationwide responding to its survey, 88 percent expected to expand within five years and 58 percent would consider renting space near Hopkins.

It also found that if a biotech park were built, it could generate a demand for market-rate houses starting at about \$115,000 and rental units priced at \$450 to \$1,450 a month.

Of about 1,700 properties in the area slated for redevelopment — bounded by Broadway on the west, Chester Street on the east, Madison Street on the south and the sloping Amtrak rail line on the north — nearly half are empty lots or vacant houses, Schwartz said. Of the rest, she said, 515 are rental units, 340 are owner-occupied, 66 are small businesses and 10 are churches.

The city and its Housing Authority own 290 of the properties and Hopkins owns 96, Schwartz said.

Although the park would not be owned by Hopkins, Schwartz said, she left open the possibility that Hopkins could be a key investor. She said a need exists for "enor-

mous cross-fertilization" between research at the medical complex and potential tenants.

In a presentation videotaped for last night's meeting, a high-ranking Hopkins official said the opportunities and complexities created by the decoding of the human genome made cooperation between universities and industry in biotechnology increasingly important.

"Neither industries nor universities can succeed if they don't work together," said Dr. Elias Zerhouni, executive vice dean of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Zerhouni, who was not at the meeting because he was traveling overseas on business, said Hopkins ranks third among universities in the number of patents generated by its research, behind the University of California system and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He said Hopkins research had spawned 18 biotech companies, but that none had located in East Baltimore.

"There is no question in my mind this is an opportunity," he said of the biotech park.

Zerhouni was part of a 14-member steering committee for the project that was led by Schwartz and included the city's top economic development officials, Hopkins officials and community leaders.

If the East Baltimore biotech project comes to fruition, it would join a long list of research parks with a connection to a university. The Association of University Related Research Parks, founded in 1986, represents 290 members, and says 142 research parks in the United States are in various stages of development.

As for the financing, Brophy, one of the consultants, estimated that \$28 million in government financing would be needed for the park, mostly in acquisition, demolition and relocation costs. No cost estimates have been made about the housing, he said.

Schwartz said officials are "looking at all sources of city, state and federal funding, tax credits and pension fund investments."



At the meeting, officials emphasized how the community could also benefit. About a third of the jobs to be generated would not require a college degree, they said.

They also stressed the tentative nature of the plan and the community's opportunity to have a say in its development.

Paul C. Brophy, a consultant to the project, presented three possible configurations for the biotech park but said they could change based on the height of the buildings and "what would be better for the neighborhood."

A series of meetings between the consultants and small groups will be held next month, followed by a community-wide meeting in July, said Laurie Schwartz, deputy mayor for economic and community development.

Schwartz — who pointed out that the city would like to introduce legislation to the City Council in the fall specifying which properties need to be acquired to get the biotech park started — said last week's meeting reinforced her belief that no one in the Middle East community is "defending the status quo."

That includes Clark of the Save Middle East Action Committee, who complained that the community was shut out of early discussions but said he is hopeful that "the view of the people will be heard." In recent weeks, Clark said, several residents questioned him about his committee. "Why do you call it Save Middle East? Why do you want to save it?" he recalled being asked.

"We're not trying to save the deterioration" was, and is, Clark's answer. "We're trying to preserve what's worth preserving, with the recognition that things can't go on like they are."

# Neighborhood residents angered by Hopkins' purchase offers

[Relocate, from Page 1B]

made me an offer I could refuse. I was so mad."

Smith, now living in Northeast Baltimore, is repairing her rowhouse near Hopkins — her neighborhood since she was 8 years old — before she moves back. Now, she said, "I'm worried about this because I'm wondering what's next."

Hopkins, working through the Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition (HEBCAC), insisted that negotiations with residents remain open. Hopkins is developing guidelines for buying homes, though officials maintained that they will make fair offers based on market value and the condition of the homes. So far, Hopkins has been offering in the range of \$5,000 to \$8,000 for homes. Officials did not recall making an offer as low as \$500.

"I think the important thing is we're going to do this in concert with community organizations, and we want to do this in the most sensitive way possible, and we re-



LLOYD FOX: SUN STAFF

**Owner:** "They're just trying to push everybody out," says Marietta Smith.

alize it won't happen overnight," said Richard A. Grossi, chief financial officer of Johns Hopkins Medicine.

As part of the plan, Grossi said, Hopkins intends to build a community center on Chester Street.

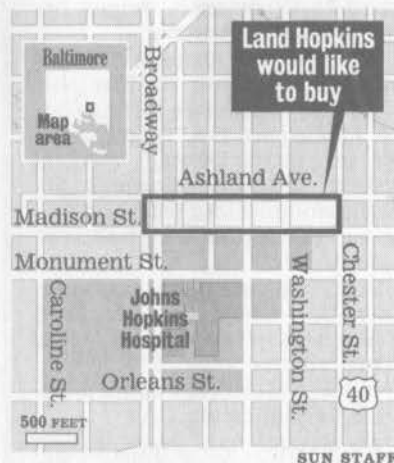
As yet, Hopkins has not offered homeowners money to relocate, although it is offering its services to help them move, said Lucille Gorham, director of the Middle East Community Organization.

"The biggest concern is for residents being displaced because of Hopkins' expansions," she said. Residents think they should be offered more for their homes, she added.

Hopkins also is talking to residents about the possibility of swapping mortgages, so owners can move to comparable houses in the area, Gorham said.

Until now, Hopkins has been a "passive buyer," acquiring properties through tax auctions or when approached by homeowners, officials said.

The institution's stepped-up efforts, however, have reminded longtime neighbors of Hopkins' earlier — and ignominious — expansion. In the 1970s and 1980s, Hopkins acquired dilapidated



SUN STAFF

properties in the area and failed to raze or rehabilitate them, straining relations with residents and inviting repeated violations of the city housing code.

This time, the medical institution vows things will be different.

HEBCAC — a partnership involving Hopkins, the city and residents — is spearheading a revitalization plan under which about 900 rowhouses throughout East

Baltimore would be torn down or repaired — one of the biggest rowhouse clearings in Baltimore since the early 1970s.

The redevelopment, under discussion since 1995, is expected to take as many as 15 years to complete. Announced in October, the plan would require demolishing about 400 rowhouses and rehabilitating 500, as well as redesigning streets and landscaping.

Most of the rowhouses to be rehabilitated are in the Hopkins-Middle East neighborhood. Among the other areas targeted are Patterson Park and the areas around Ashland Avenue and Oliver Street. Entire blocks would be leveled at sites throughout East Baltimore, including sections of North Port, North Dallas, North Gay and East Eager streets.

"What we hope to do is to redevelop East Baltimore so that it becomes a neighborhood of choice, people choose to live there," said Michael V. Seipp, HEBCAC's executive director. "The situation now is, you have several thousand vacant houses, and we had, until a year and a half ago, one of the highest crime rates in the city. So all those things tended to create a situation where people felt forced out of the neighborhood."

5/22/01

# City officials pressing ahead on plan for biotechnology park

[Park, from Page 1B]

has had a long history of contentiousness with the medical campus.

In a spirited and at times stormy meeting, many residents, concerned about the fate of their homes, interrupted presentations with catcalls and questions.

"We need to know what's going to happen to our properties," said Helen Champlin, one of more than 100 people who packed the auditorium of the Elmer A. Henderson Elementary School.

Others were openly skeptical that jobs and housing would benefit their neighborhood, saying other programs had little effect. "The empowerment zone did not empower East Baltimore," said John Hammock.

Some, however, argued that a biotechnology park was the best hope for reviving the battered community.

"I'd like to ask all of my neighbors who are here, 'What else?' We need an economic plan," said Harold L. Madison Jr., an east-side homeowner and businessman.

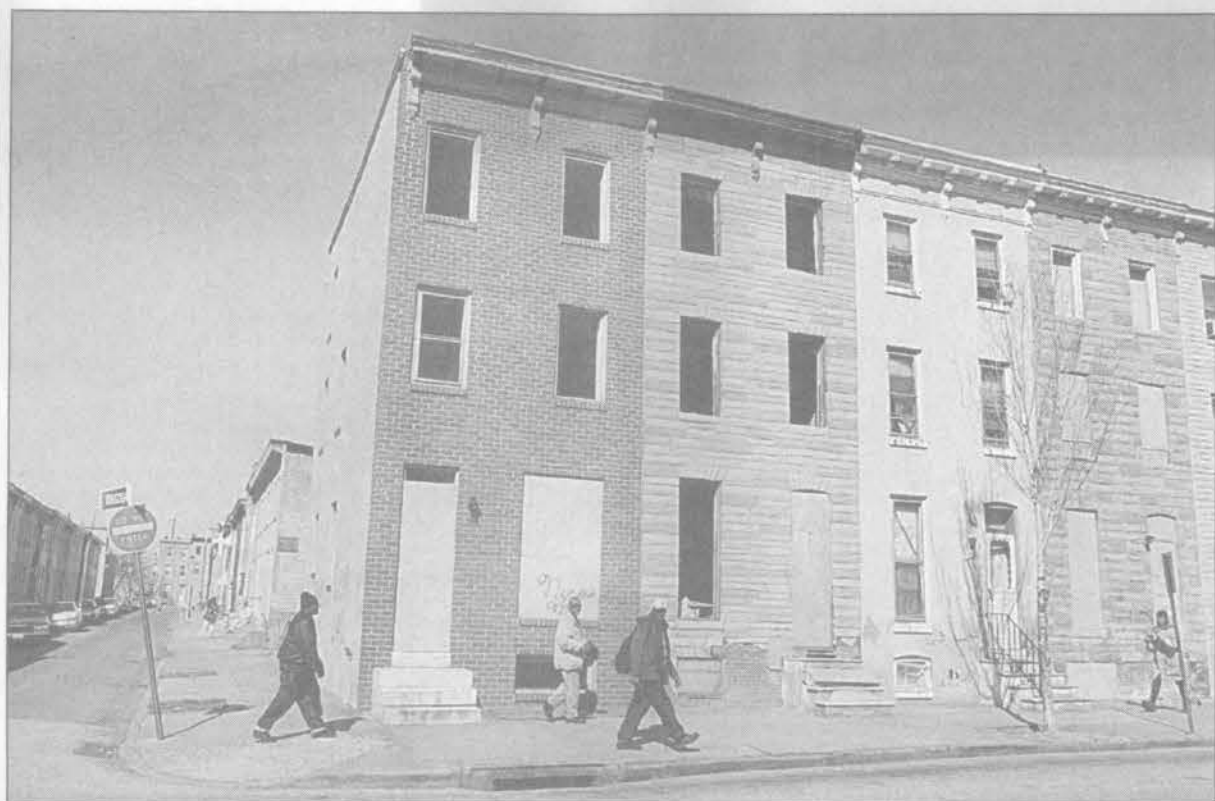
Del. Hattie Harrison, an East Baltimore Democrat, also spoke in favor of the plan.

"Let's get real with this thing," she said. "We have an opportunity to rebuild East Baltimore."

Before the meeting, some community leaders, while saying they did not have a position on the biotech park, had complained that they were not being kept adequately informed.

"There's a mistrust of the city, a mistrust of Hopkins, a mistrust of the process," said the Rev. Reginald M. Clark, pastor of the Greater New St. John Baptist Church and an organizer of the Save Middle East Action Committee. "We want to get where every stakeholders' rights are protected."

The project does not have an overall price tag, but an early estimate put the cost of the biotech park at \$65 million, including demolition, relocation and construction.



ELIZABETH MALBY: SUN STAFF

**Boarded-up buildings:** Johns Hopkins officials and supporters of the proposed biotech project say it could benefit nearby areas such as the 1800 block of E. Eager St., which includes these abandoned properties.

# Planned Hopkins biotech park draws guarded response from community

5/31/01

## Residents acknowledge area needs revitalization

By ERIC SIEGEL  
SUN STAFF

To many attending last week's meeting on plans for a biotech park north of the Johns Hopkins medical campus, what was most striking was the residents' reaction.

The mostly measured response — an apparent indication that serious action is needed if the decayed area is to be revitalized — has given rise to cautious hope that the city's preliminary plan could gain broad community acceptance.

"People didn't go away angry, they went away talking," state Del. Hattie N. Harrison, a Baltimore Democrat and a supporter of the project, said after a two-hour meeting at an East Baltimore elementary school.

The Rev. Reginald M. Clark, an organizer with the Save Middle East Action Committee, reached much the same conclusion.

"Most people agree that something needs to be done," said Clark, pastor of the Greater New St. John Baptist Church.

"I did not hear anything that would make me be in opposition," he added. "It piqued my interest. I'd like to hear more."

The tentative plan calls for 1 million square feet of office and laboratory space to be spread among several buildings for biotech firms that would be attracted by research done by Hopkins faculty. It also calls for up to 1,000 units of new housing in a blighted 50-acre area pockmarked by vacant lots and boarded buildings.

When completed in 7 to 10

One of three possible configurations for a biotechnology park in the area of redevelopment.



SOURCE: Urban Design Associates  
SHIRDELL MCDONALD: SUN STAFF

years, the park, which would be developed and managed by a non-profit corporation but would have close ties to Hopkins, could create up to 4,000 jobs.

Many details are yet to be worked out, among them the exact configuration of the buildings and the number of homeowners and renters who would be displaced by the project and how those people would be relocated.

Not everyone greeted the proposal with equanimity. In fact, city officials and their consultants had to scrap their idea to have a short general meeting and then break into smaller groups to allay the suspicion of many in the audience that the strategy being pursued was one of divide-and-conquer.

On several occasions, presentations were interrupted by shouted barbs.

"We've given up enough land to Hopkins," one woman screamed, an obvious reference to the medical complex's history of expansion in East Baltimore.

A number of people asked pointed questions. "How is it benefiting the neighborhood?" asked Shrene Burnett, who owns a home a few blocks north of the medical complex. "Who would this housing be for?"

Others, clearly supporting the project, had questions, too. Robert Harrison, head of the Oliver Economic Development Corp. and the son of Hattie Harrison, was among the most blunt. "Our east side is a mess. What are we going to do about it?" he asked.

A computer analysis of properties in the area shows that about two-thirds of them are valued at \$12,000 or less; owner-occupied homes, which account for about one in five properties, are typically valued at around \$20,000 or less.

Helen Montag, a special assistant for corporate affairs for the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, acknowledged that some of the negative reaction was not so much about the biotech park as about past transgressions, real and imagined, attributed to Hopkins.

"Given the history, I thought [the meeting] was pretty encouraging," Montag said.

The biotech park could benefit Hopkins in several ways, Montag said after the meeting. It would improve the neighborhood; offer faculty members an opportunity to become involved in companies within walking distance; and perhaps provide lab space that Hopkins researchers could rent, she said.