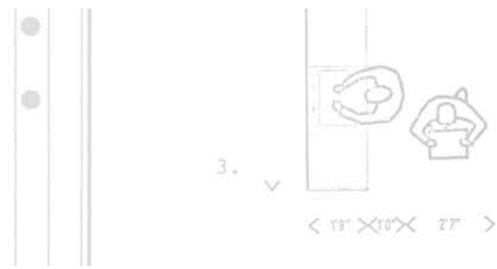
POLICY AND DESIGN FOR HOUSING
Lessons of the Urban Development Corporation 1968-1975

Part 2 Two developments, then and now

The UDC researched with housing residents to develop a "Low-Rise High-Density" prototype, of which Marcus Garvey Park Village was the first manifestation. Roosevelt Island was also unique, creating a new-town in-town on the former Welfare Island. Here we juxtapose these two projects' original plans and photographs with new research and new photo essays that address resident experience thirty years later. This section of the exhibition also features a film of present-day interviews with UDC architects.

Developing Housing Criteria



Developing housing criteria and fitting user needs

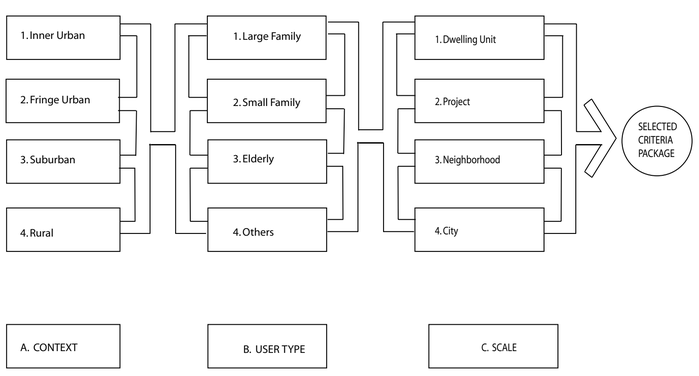
Housing is usually measured by quantitative standards such as dollar cost, size and density, while neglecting social and long-range economic variables. Public assistance programs often stress minimum first-cost expenditures without considering the life-cost implications for a development. The unresponsive products stand tall and strong but lack the qualities of home and community.

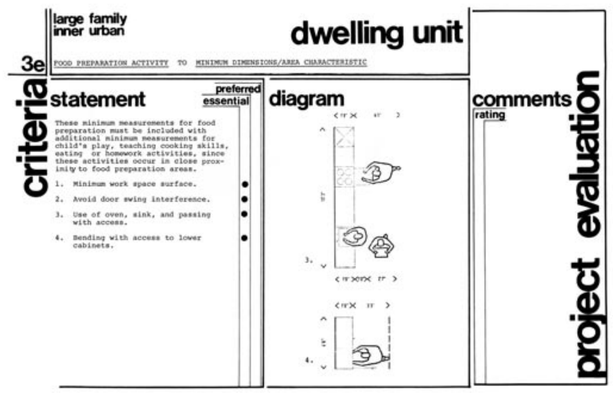
The UDC evolved criteria to guide staff and consultants in achieving such qualities and increasing the overall livability of the housing that it built. UDC synthesized housing criteria developed in the U.S. and Europe and evaluated several then-current housing developments to determine the "fit" between their users' needs and the environments that the buildings provided. Of particular concern was how buildings served special user groups such as large families and the elderly.

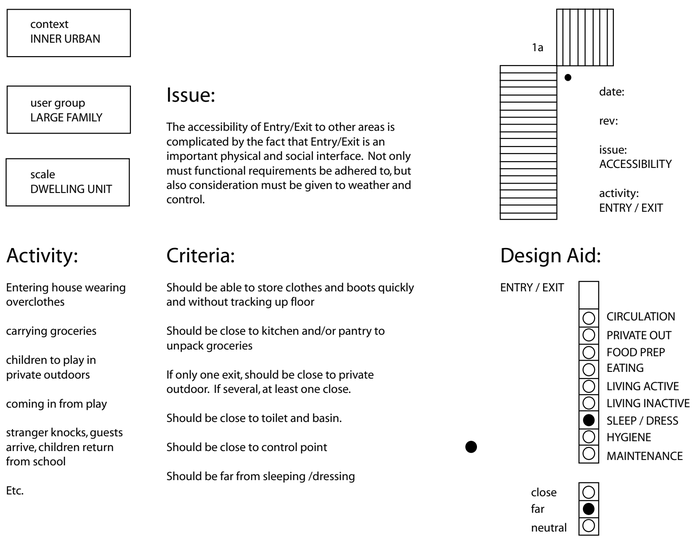
After the UDC staff and representatives of the communities involved completed site selection, general planning analysis and programming, criteria for the projects were established. Matrices for elements such as context (inner urban, suburban, rural), user type (large family, small family, elderly) and scale (dwelling unit, project, neighborhood, city) were developed and used to inform the design and review processes.

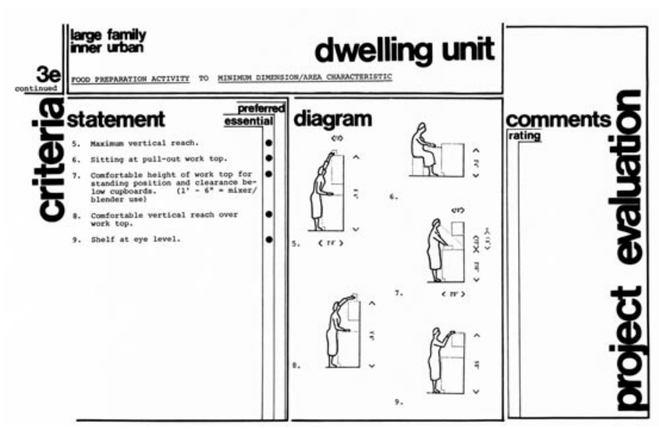
The most important and concrete manifestation of the analysis was embodied in the Low-Rise High-Density (LRHD) housing prototype described in the next panel.

Please see study table for the full article: "Housing Criteria drawn from Human Response," by T. Liebman, J. M. Kirkland, A. Pangaro.





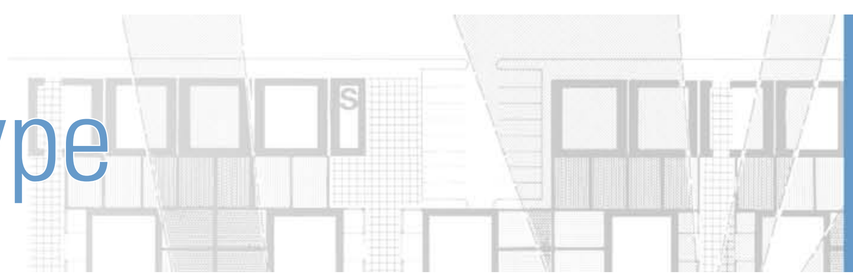


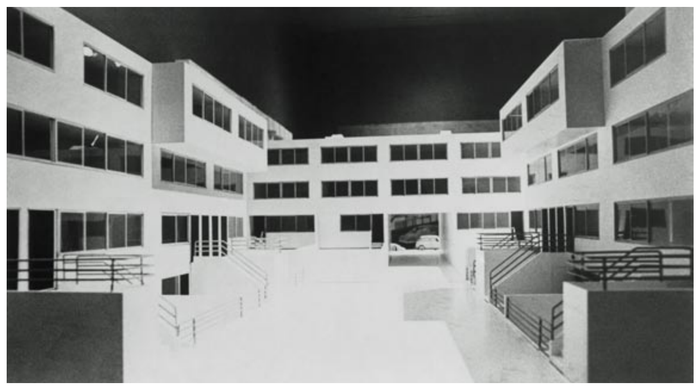


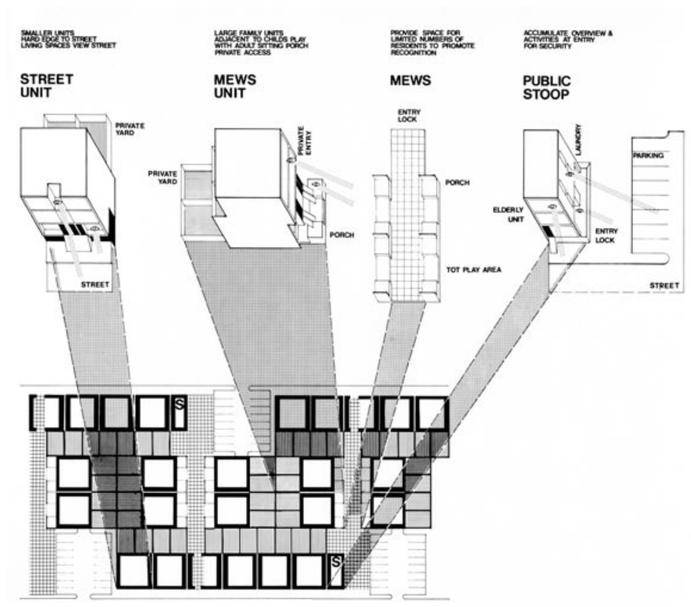
The formulation of the criteria begins with the housing criteria framework (at top). The user/site/context matrices are developed (as bottom) relating issues to specific activities, yielding the actual criteria.

The criteria are expressed in sheets that inform both the design process, and the subsequent review.

Low-Rise High-Density Prototype







Model of the prototype, top
Low Rise High Density Prototype Elements, above
Organizing Issues for the Low Rise High Density prototype, below

Developing the Prototype, 1973

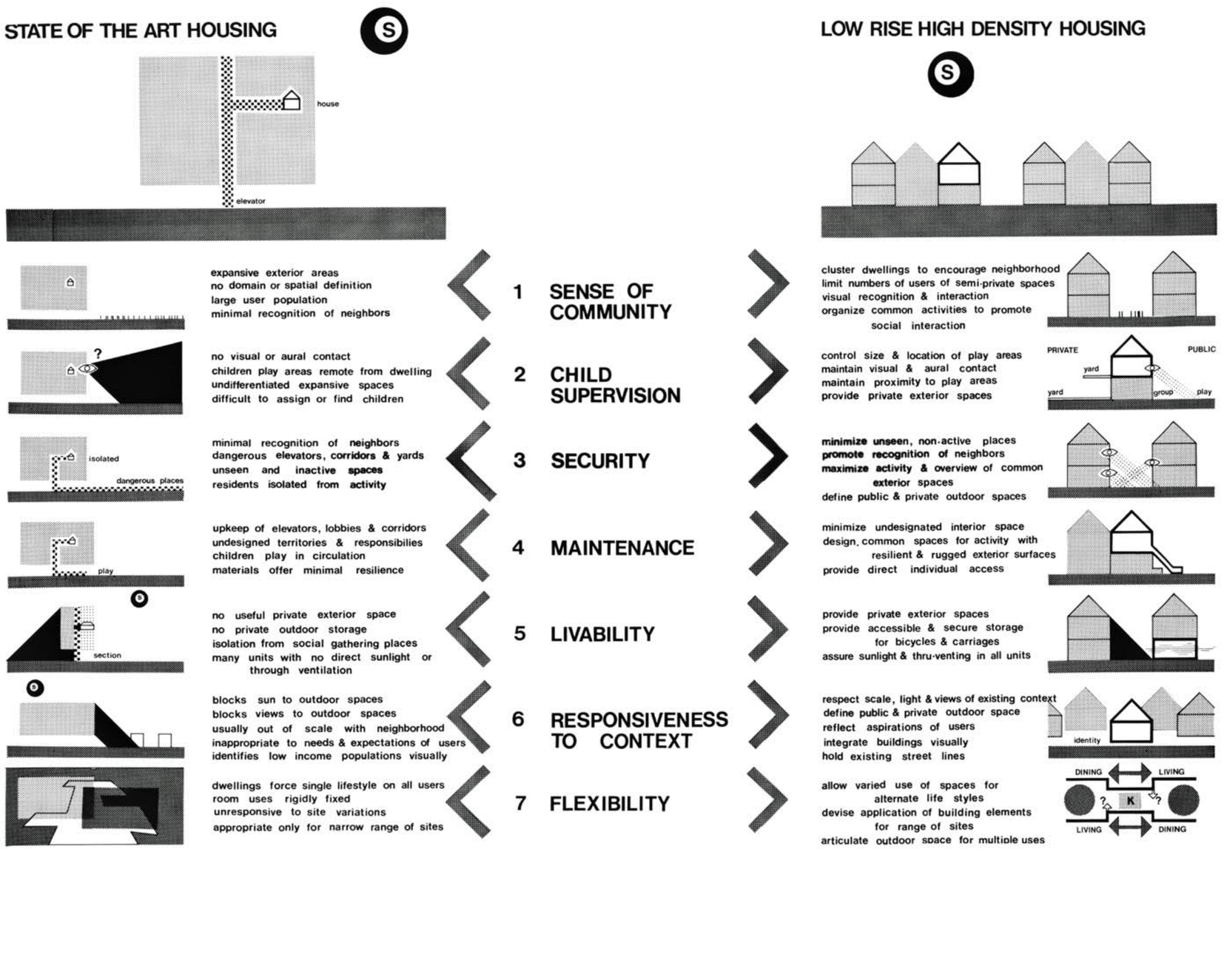
The UDC developed the Low-Rise High-Density (LRHD) prototype as a response to certain dysfunctional aspects of urban high-rise public housing for families where high-rise density was mandated by land costs - mainly in New York City. These included the difficulties young children had in elevator-dependent buildings, the lack of private open space, anonymity of double-loaded corridors, the un-usability of often generous open space, and the destruction of the brownstone/ small apartment building scale and fabric of traditional New York streets by use of superblocks.

The UDC and its architects tried to alleviate some of these problems by employing skip-stop elevatoring and single-loaded corridors with natural light and views of adjacent open space. The aim in developing the LRHD prototype was to achieve close to then current high-rise public housing densities in a low-rise walk-up configuration. The LRHD prototype was based upon the typical 200 by 800-foot New York City block.

The goals were to:
- Group dwellings on the block to preserve the street profile and create a sense of neighborhood.
- Arrange for many private entrances to open directly off the street or block-through mews.
- Control the size and location of young children's play spaces, allowing surveillance of children as well as access to and from the dwelling.
- Minimize unseen non-active places and promote easy recognition of neighbors through limited access, and casual surveillance over, entry to housing clusters.
- Provide private exterior space for as many units as possible and critically locate semi-private spaces such as stoops.
- Provide at least two separate living spaces within the larger family units to allow separation of different activities.

The prototype consisted of four main elements: the street unit with shared stoop; the mews units with individual entrances for larger families; the mews itself as a small-scale safe midblock space; and the public stoop near the community laundry and limited off-street parking.

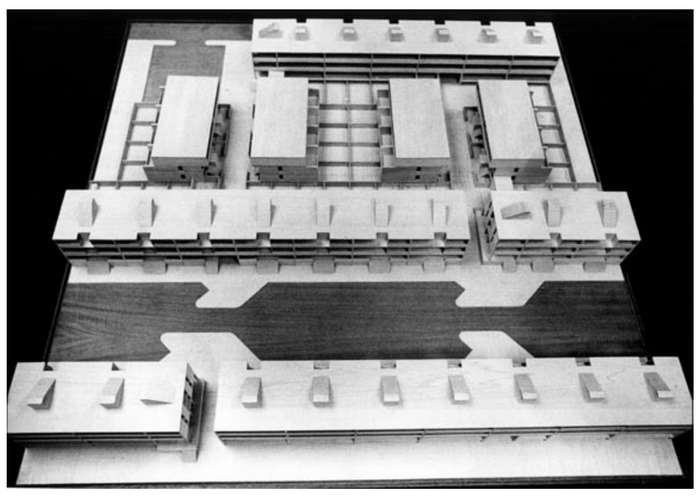
The New York State Urban Development Corporation: Theodore Liebman, Anthony Pangaro, J.M. Kirkland
The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies: Kenneth Frampton, Peter Wolf

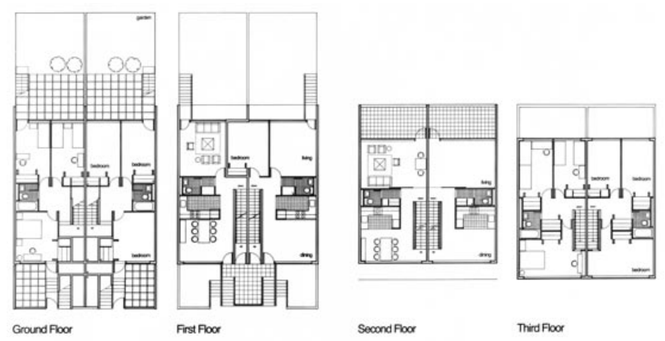


Marcus Garvey Park Village

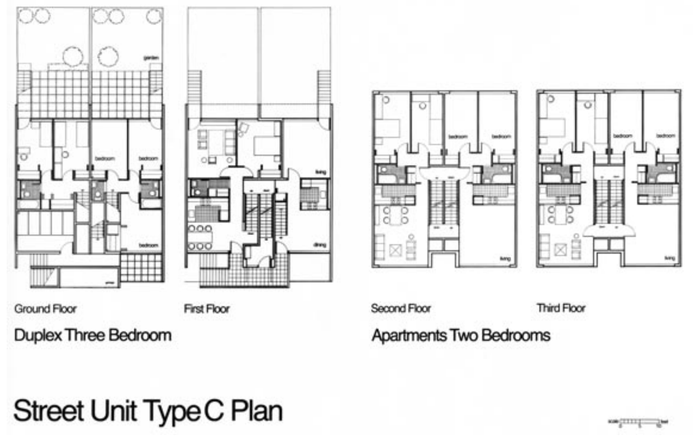
Individual Entries | Mews | Street Wall

1975





Mews Unit Type A Plan



Street Unit Type C Plan

Top, a scale model showing the intersecting in-block mews that make up the development of Marcus Garvey Park Village.

Above, examples of the two basic types of apartments in Marcus Garvey Park Village, the Mews Unit and the Street Unit.

At right, a rendering looking from one of the mews onto the street.

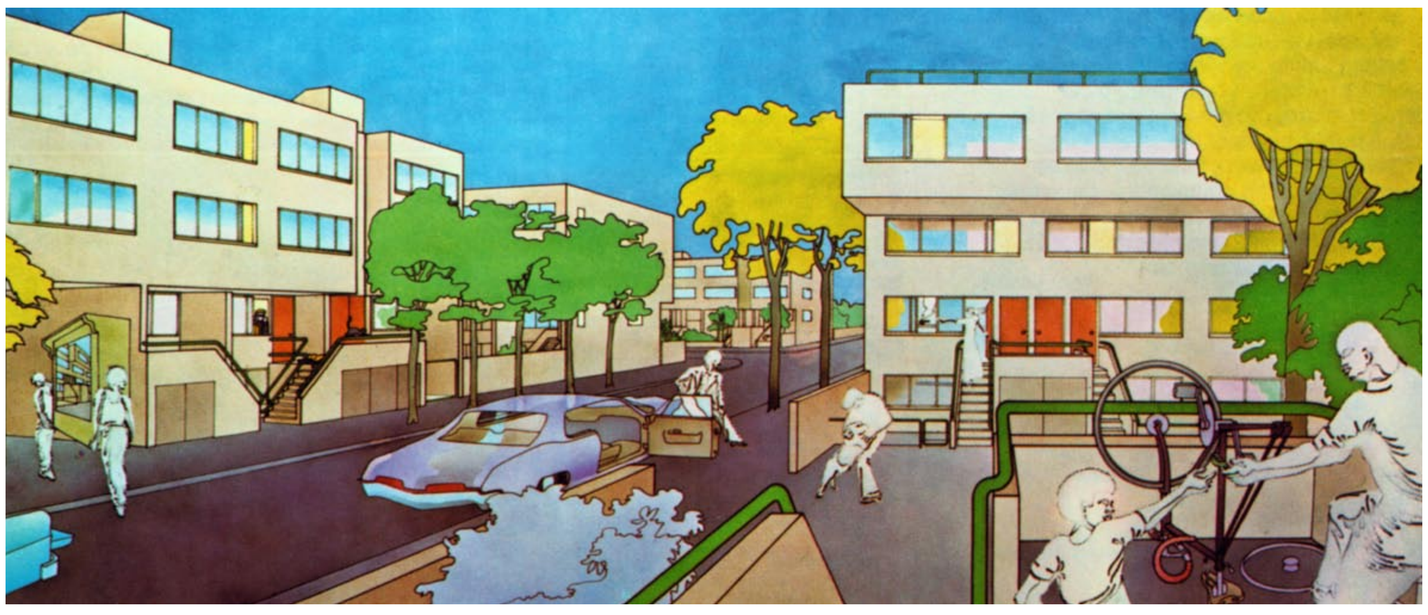
Brownsville, Brooklyn, NY 1975

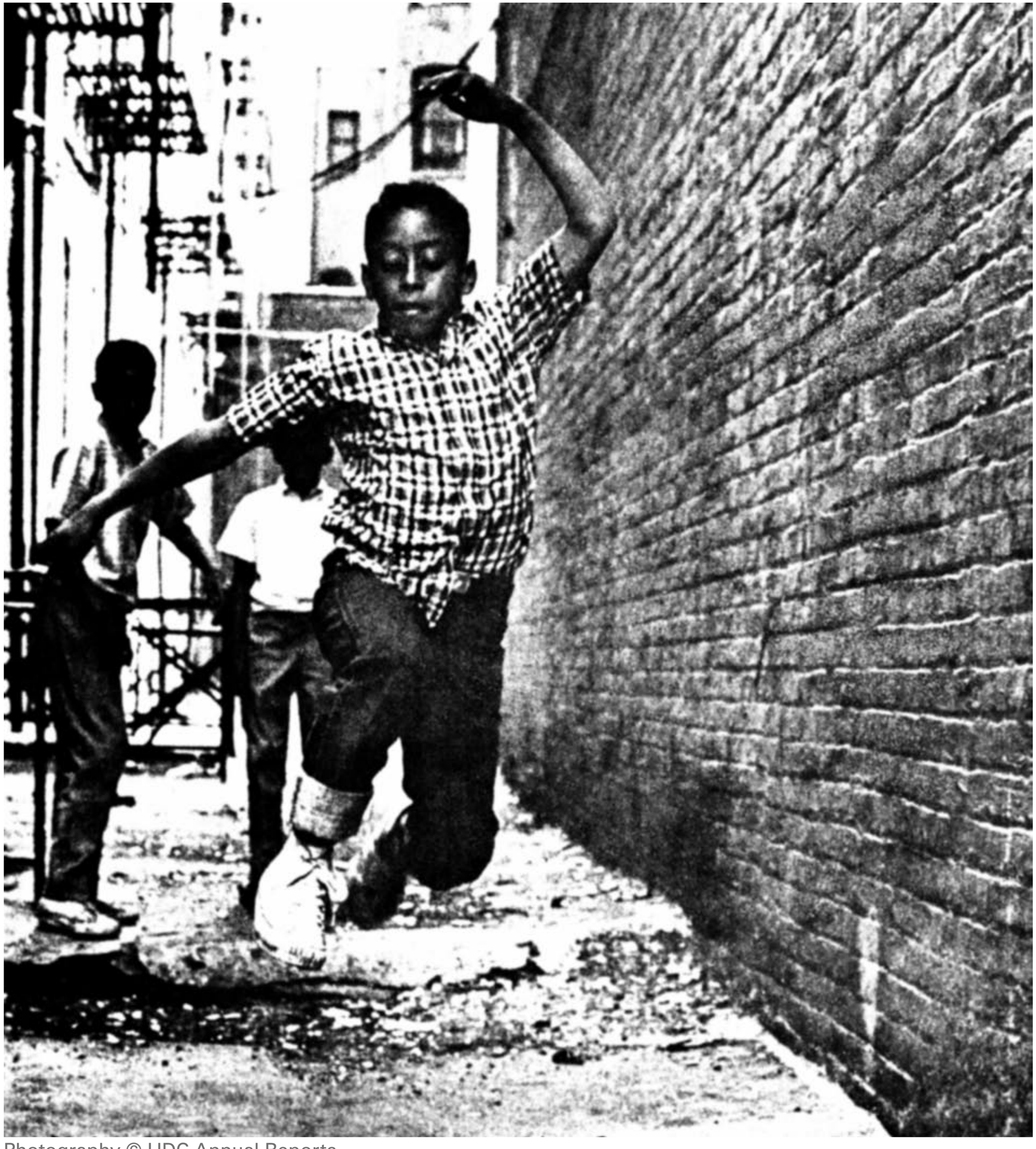
Based on the LRHD prototype, Marcus Garvey Park Village, a 626-unit, 10-block infill project, was built in the Ocean Hill/Brownsville section of Brooklyn. Site conditions forced some modifications to the LRHD prototype: an elevated IRT track bisected the site so all parking is not dispersed, but located beneath and beside it for acoustical reasons; and many blocks were partially occupied by existing structures, requiring a change of the street unit/mews unit relationship. Nevertheless, the basic four prototype elements of the LRHD –- the street unit, the mews unit, the mews, and the public stoop –- are maintained.

The Marcus Garvey Park Village design provides limited stair access and open space as in the prototype, i.e., all the larger family units are duplex-over-duplex so the stair up is a maximum of 1-1/2 stories. These all have direct access to a private back yard or a large private terrace. With the exception of the 2-bedroom units that use a public stair, there is private front door access from the street or the mews throughout. To accommodate local neighborhood needs, a stretch of 2-bedroom units was built atop newly built retail space along the adjacent commercial street and atop the development's community facility.

Nearly 40% of the units in Marcus Garvey Village are the larger 3-, 4- and 5-bedroom units. Non-residential uses include a community facility, a day care center, and neighborhood shopping. The housing density is 50 units/acre, including the non-residential uses and parking.

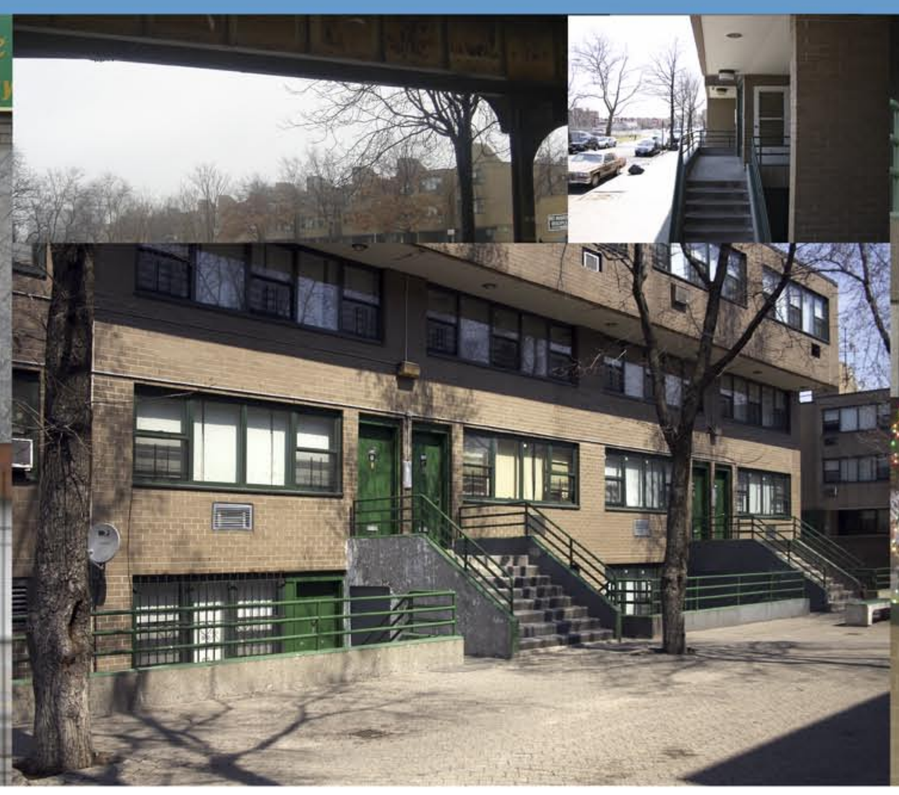
Architect: The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies: Arthur Baker, Kenneth Frampton, Peter Wolf
Associate Architect: David Todd & Associates





Photography © UDC Annual Reports

Experience of Marcus Garvey Park Village, 2004



Research Method

A team of five students, working with Professor Susan Saegert from the Environmental Psychology Department at the Graduate Center, CUNY, used a variety of approaches to study residents' experience of Marcus Garvey Park Village. These included: Preliminary Research, Surveys, In-depth Interviews, Second Interviews, & Final Analysis

29 residents surveyed and 2 interviewed.
Primarily African-American
Primarily female heads-of-household.
Mean family size: 5
Respondents primarily in their 30s or 60s.
Over 80% were originally from Brooklyn
50% previously lived in low-rise buildings
Most received a rent subsidy.

Brownsville is mainly residential 1-, 2- and 4-family homes with housing developments. Commercial areas with factories and ware-houses. The **73rd Precinct** covers 10 housing complexes including Marcus Garvey Village, a 1.8 square mile area inhabited by 85,343 people.

During the drug epidemic the design of the Mews made it difficult to police:
"The insular nature of Marcus Garvey Village made the investigation particularly challenging -- and dangerous. The apartment buildings open into private courtyard areas, shielded from public access and view, where the defendants routinely conducted their business." –www.usdoj.gov

Appreciation for the Built Environment

What did the designers want MGPV to be like?
This was built "like something nice for the kids but not for them to break... I like the colors... I like the shape, but not the people."

Safety:
"They thought there would be "no crimes, I mean, they never thought people would do that. They thought there'd be no illegal transactions."

Privacy:
"I think they were looking towards people's privacy with terraces, front yards, backyards."

Community:
"It's a nice family area, close-knit, enjoyable... the courtyards are good for children."

"I think they were looking for closeness with neighbors and to be a community setting, but in the end, I don't think that's what they got."

"Satisfaction" is complex and often contradictory. "Satisfaction" must be measured as a trend over time in relation to changes in demographics, maintenance, management, and a deterioration of infrastructure.

Most respondents were **more satisfied** with Marcus Garvey Park Village than with their previous homes. Most respondents thought the designers were successful.

Space, Privacy & Community

We found **spaces of exclusion** including:
Parking lots
The Marcus Garvey Village community center
The Marcus Garvey Village playground
Mews away from respondent's own homes

Residents said there was not enough space in bedrooms.

"The walls are too thin. You can hear people everywhere."

"All I say is 'hi' and 'bye' and that's it."

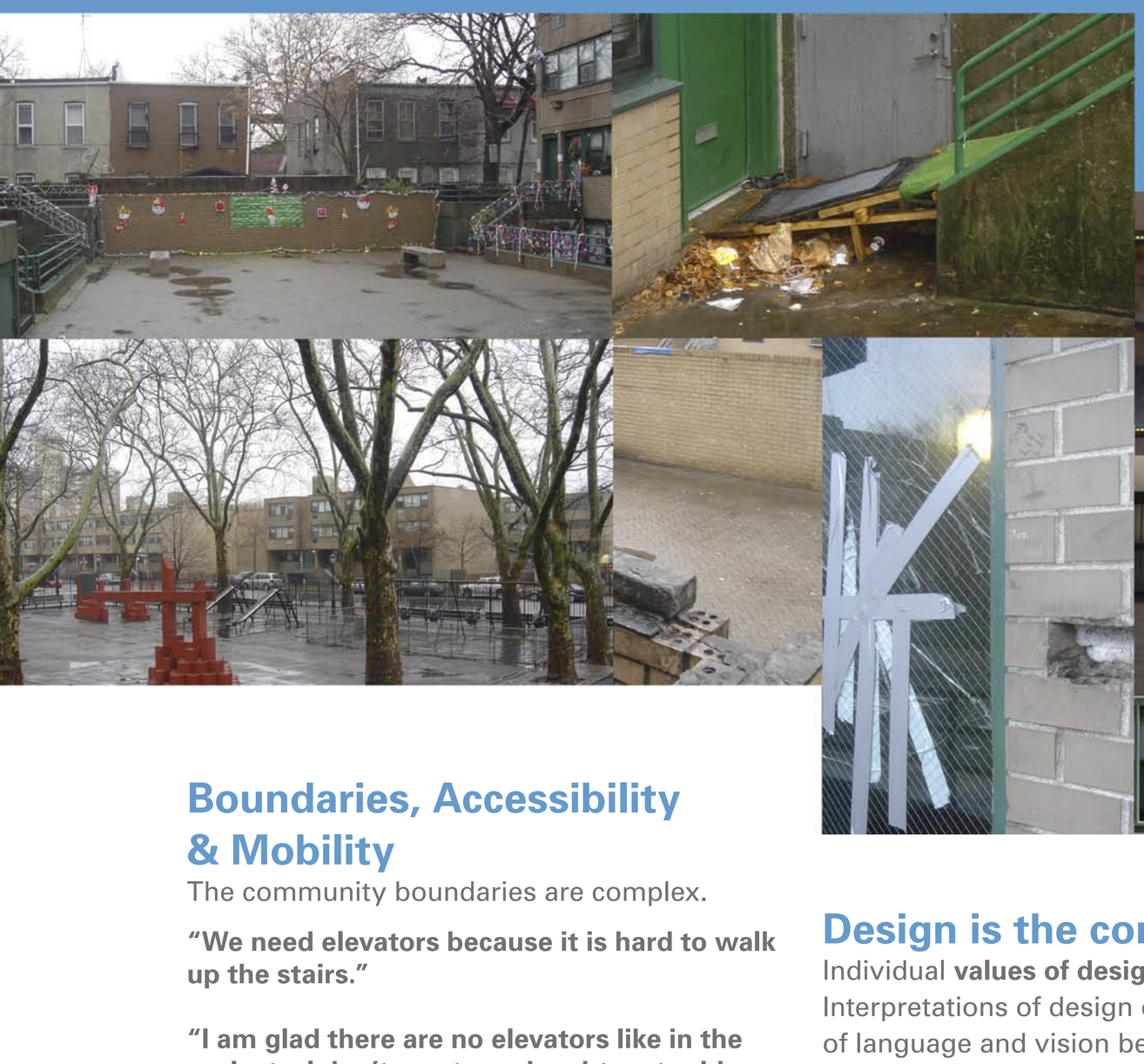
Lack of privacy causes people to withdraw from community interaction and become territorial.

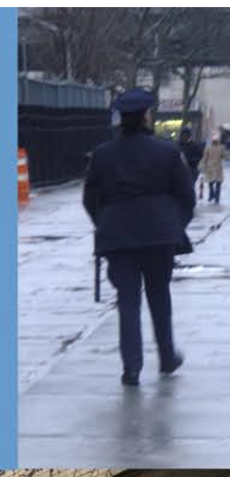
There is also evidence of **positive territoriality**: feeling comfortable enough to leave possessions in one's own space.

"I became an architect because I grew up in Marcus Garvey."

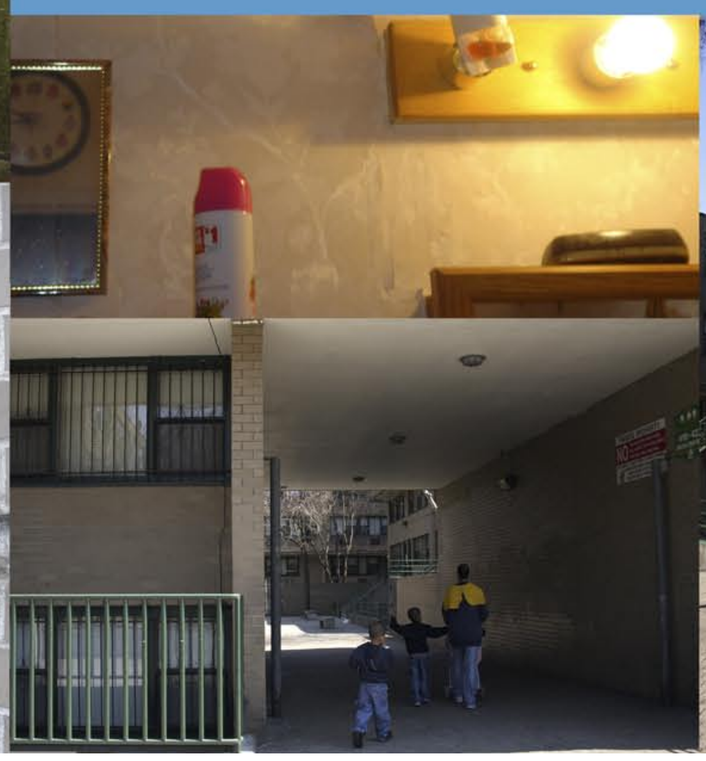
"We used to play outside on the streets and in the mews with no one watching us except from the windows. Now no one considers doing that."

Does Design Matter? Yes, but...





The Graduate Center, CUNY Environmental Psychology Research Team
Grace Campagna
Jennifer Gieseking
Kimberly Libman
Dorian Luey
Lauren Tenney



Boundaries, Accessibility & Mobility

The community boundaries are complex.

"We need elevators because it is hard to walk up the stairs."

"I am glad there are no elevators like in the projects. I don't want my daughters to ride them."

Mews versus the Street: Children and Supervision

Part of the design included **lines of sight** so adults could watch their children play outside. The mews have been effective for social interaction and children's play.

"I never let my children play outside."
- Street-side resident

"This is the best mews in Marcus Garvey."
- Mews-side resident

Management, Maintenance & Security

"Sewage comes up through the basement and plumbing. Roofs have leaked for years. There are no fire exits or roof access."

Management "patches" the social infrastructure through a culture of surveillance and constraints, rather than developing structures to support community interaction.

Design is the context for social interactions.

Individual **values of designers or researchers do not necessarily match those of residents.** Interpretations of design directly follow these values; therefore there needs to be an agreement of language and vision between the groups.

Satisfaction with design is based on a complex matrix of socioeconomic forces, physical wear and changes, and demographic alterations and population shifts over time. To be valid, data collection must be performed longitudinally and therefore consider multiple data points and take into account people's experiences in other housing developments.

Resident responses indicate that **the design is beneficial for self-expression**.

There was greater sense of investment in the community by those who live on lower levels and have their own "front door," compared to those who live in apartments off of stairwells, possibly reflecting a desire to be involved and a sense of ownership.

Design can better enable a sense and experience of community if adequate, active and sustained social programming (such as Americorps) were in place.

Housing developments with limited budgets for maintenance need to be constructed with high-quality, durable materials. **Oversight of maintenance and management quality are key.**

Extended family interaction in kitchens and dining areas, and the importance of possessions, are constrained by small apartment size.

Economic policies, such as supporting a mixed-income population, would eliminate many of the problems faced in low-income housing projects and developments.

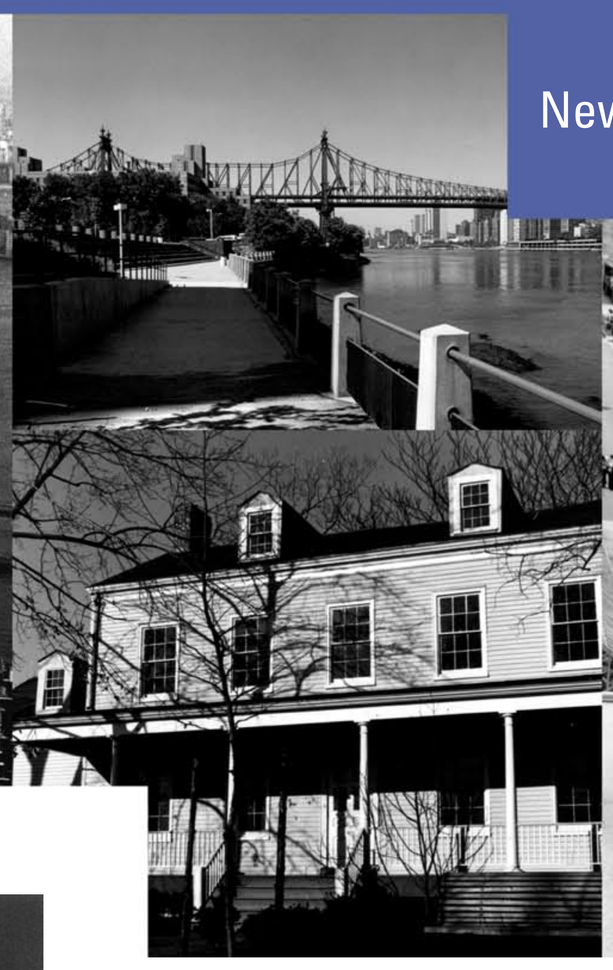
The built environment alone does not equal community.

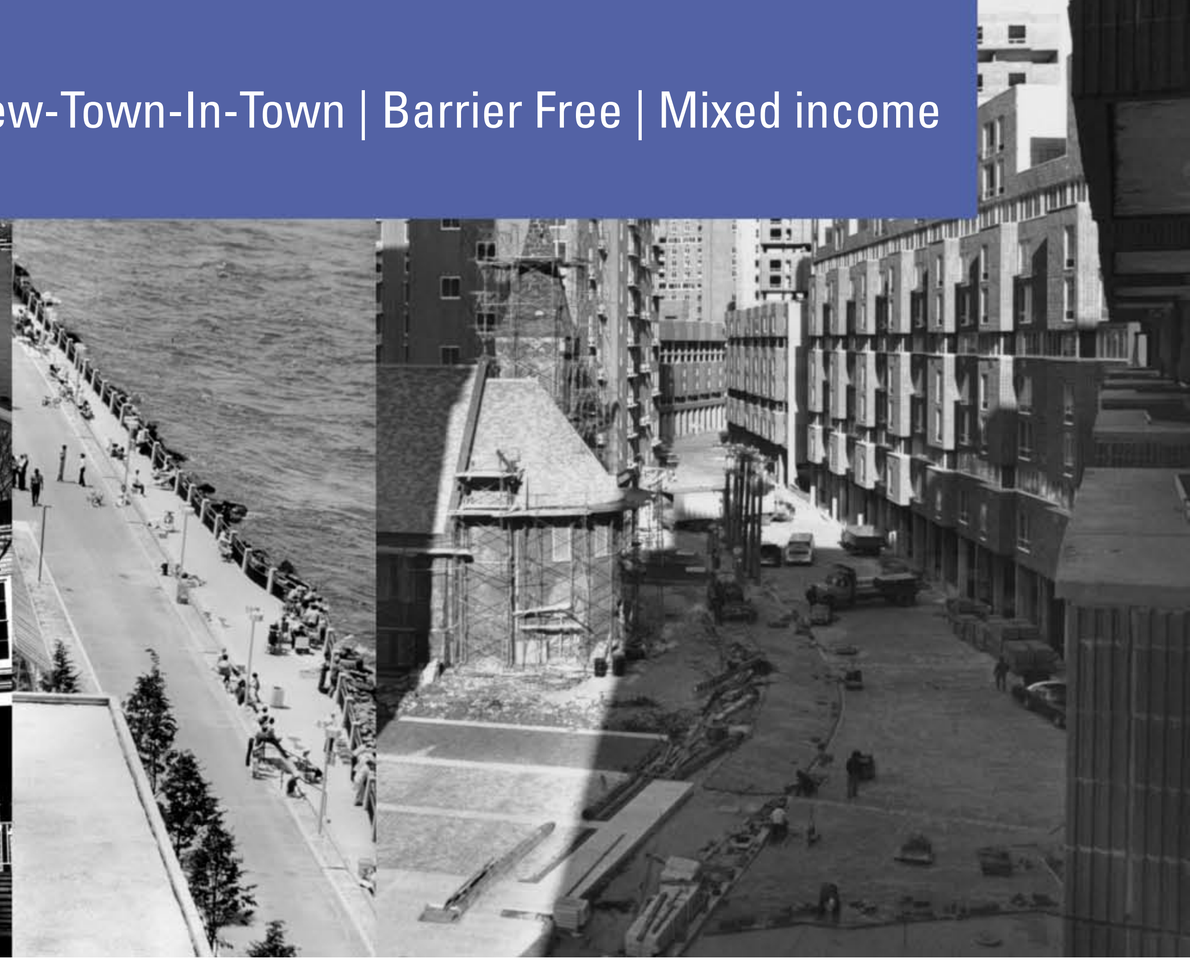
"Management patches, they don't fix."

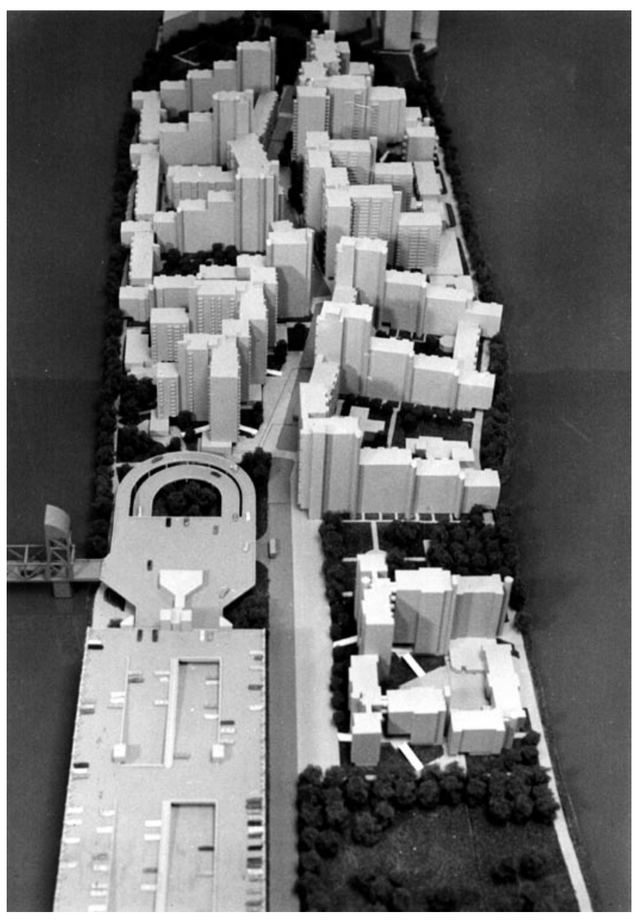
"This was built for people to own their place eventually, like a co-op, because it's shaped like a house."

Roosevelt Island Master Plan

New-Town-In-Town | Barrier Free | Mixed income







Above, model of Master Plan as modified, 1971

Though the Master Plan was not fully built, the first phase of construction, begun in 1971 and completed in 1975, included 2,100 dwelling units in Northtown.

- 365 units of Market-rate Housing
  Johansen & Bhavnani (Rivercross)
- 410 units of Middle-income Housing
  Johansen & Bhavnani (Island House)
- 400 units of Middle-income Housing
  Sert Jackson & Associates (Westview)
- 1,003 units of Low/moderate-income Housing
  Sert Jackson & Associates (Eastwood)
- Blackwell House restoration // Giorgio Cavaglieri
- Chapel of the Good Shepherd restoration // Giorgio Cavaglieri
- Sports Park // Prentice & Chan, Ohlhausen
- Aerial Tramway // Lev Zetlin, with Prentice& Chan, Ohlhausen
- Motorgate Parking Garage // Kallmann & McKinnell
- AVAC Garbage Transfer Station // Kallmann & McKinnell
- Fire House // Kallmann & McKinnell
- 4 mini-schools accommodating grades K-8, commercial spaces, and other community facilities were incorporated into the buildings.

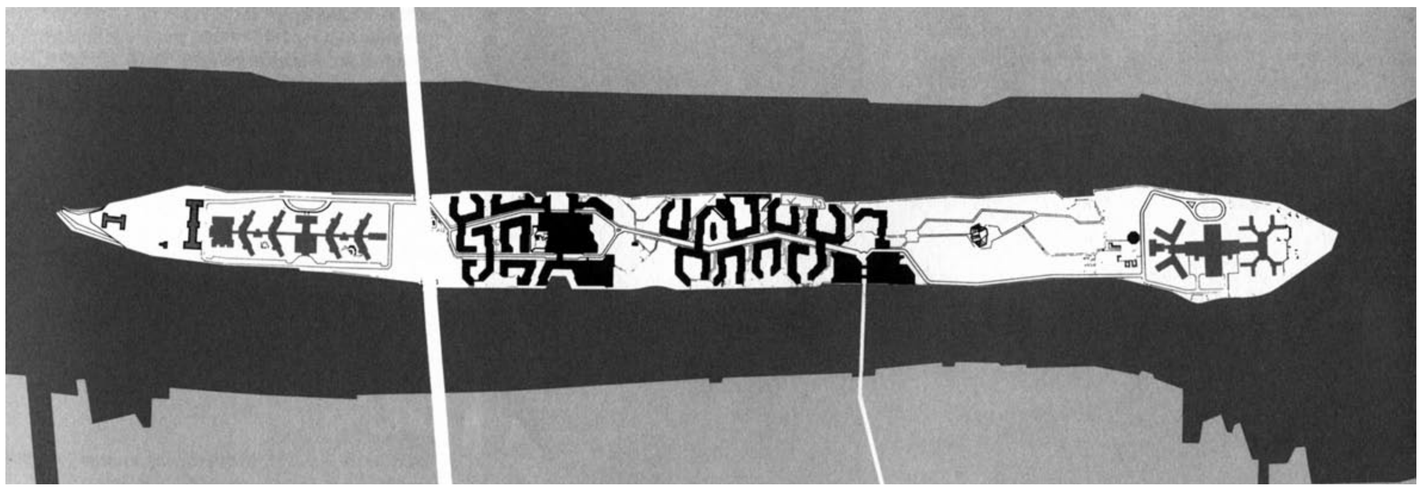
At right, original proposed Master Plan by Philip Johnson, 1969

Roosevelt Island, NYC, NY 1971-75

Roosevelt Island (formerly Welfare Island), a two-mile long narrow Island in the middle of the East River, housed a typical array of 'undesirable' 19th century institutions: a prison, orphanage/ workhouse, insane asylum and hospitals. Most of these were abandoned by the mid-20th century, offering the City of New York, utilizing the UDC, a unique opportunity to develop a socially and economically integrated community on a site convenient to midtown Manhattan.

The Master Plan by Philip Johnson organized the Island into a series of lateral zones to foster a sense of community amongst the residents: high-density housing clusters alternating with large open areas for recreational use. The Island Town was planned for 5,000 dwelling units - both market-rate and publicly-assisted, using a variety of Federal and State subsidy programs - for people with a wide range of incomes and social needs. Schools, day-care centers, and other community amenities were incorporated within the buildings. The New Town was barrier-free, providing the disabled with access to all public spaces. An innovative centralized pneumatic garbage collection system was used to eliminate the need for garbage trucks on the Island. And, it was car-free, with non-polluting electric buses providing free service from a large central parking garage to points on the Island. Several existing structures were designated as landmarks and restored for community use. An aerial tramway was designed to convey residents to Manhattan via a 3-minute ride, the first tramway to become a significant component of an urban transportation system.

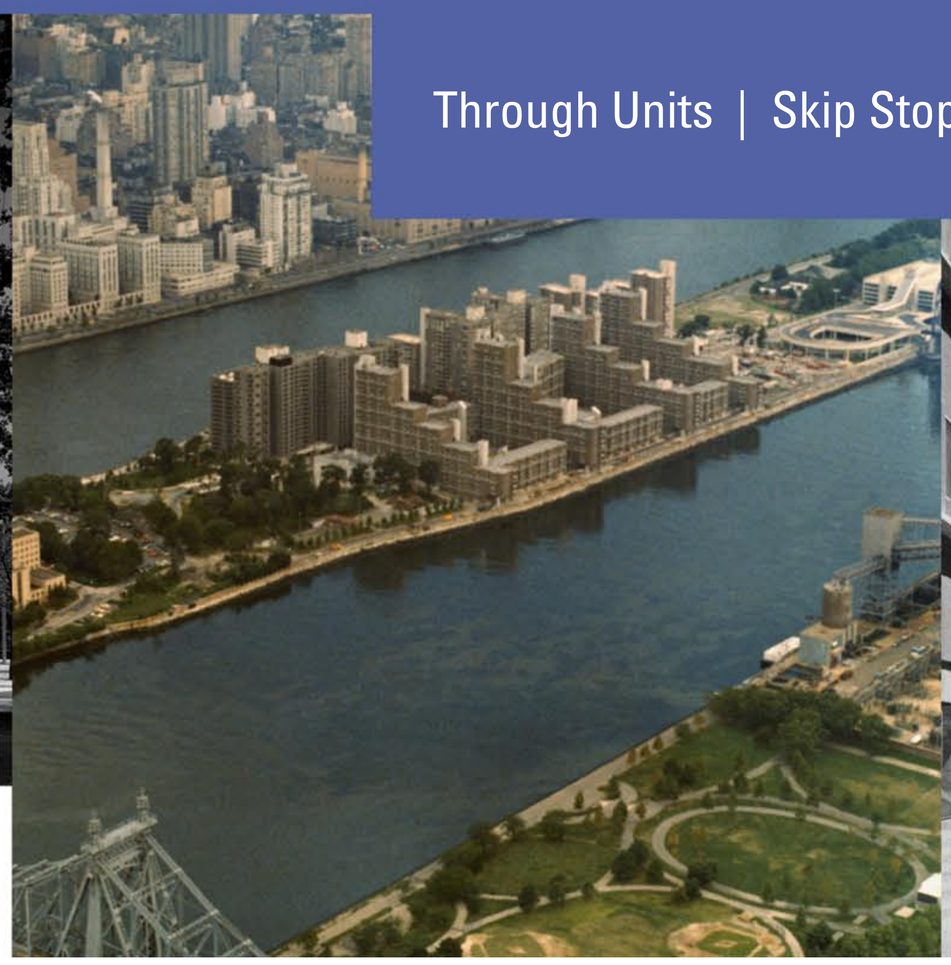
Only the first phase of construction was built by 1975 in conformance with the Master Plan. The UDC's financial difficulties prevented further construction for more than a decade. When construction did resume, the UDC was a very different organization and the original Master Plan was no longer followed.

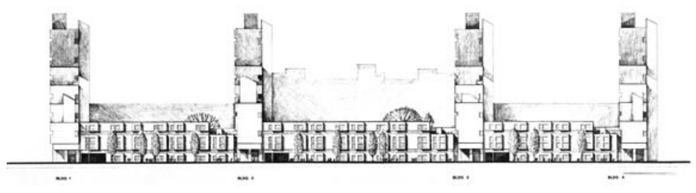


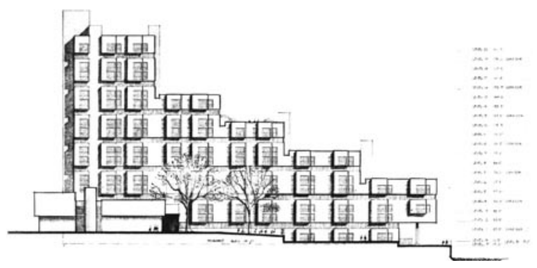
Eastwood, Roosevelt Island

Through Units | Skip Stop | Covered Arcades

1974







Roosevelt Island, NYC, NY 1974

The Eastwood complex is comprised of 1,000 dwelling units for people of low/moderate income, located in ten interconnected buildings forming three rectangular courtyards. Each courtyard contains community facilities: a mini-school, a center for the elderly, and an outdoor amphitheater. Ground-level apartments have private outdoor areas within these courtyards.

The three tallest buildings run north-south along Roosevelt Island's narrow Main Street. They provide a continuous covered arcade to protect residents in inclement weather and offer gathering places for social encounters. The four east-west buildings step down toward the river, allowing many apartments to have expansive views. Three low buildings that overlook the river enclose the courtyards along the riverside promenade. The center building along Main Street, for the elderly and the handicapped, contains fully accessible dwelling units, predating such stipulations in the New York City and New York State building codes. The other buildings are organized with enclosed glass corridors on every third floor to provide pleasant and safe walkways between elevators and residents' apartments. Studios and one-bedroom apartments are located on the corridor levels. Apartments for larger families, having 2, 3, and 4 bedrooms, are located on floors one level above or below a corridor. Thus the larger apartments extend completely through the building, providing cross-ventilation and multiple views. Each apartment contains an internal stair leading to its front door at the corridor level.

Recent research, shown next panel, indicates that most tenants are very satisfied with their dwelling units. However, residents are concerned that the original subsidy programs are due to expire in the near future and they may no longer be able to afford to live on Roosevelt Island.

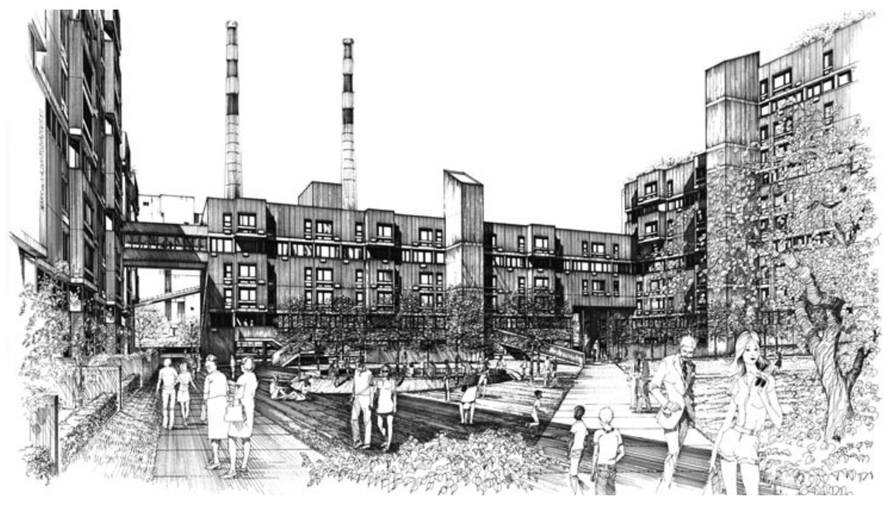
Architect: Sert, Jackson & Associates // Structural Engineers: Paul Weidlinger Associates // Mechanical Engineers: Cosentini Associates

At top, a scale model of the whole Eastwood complex.

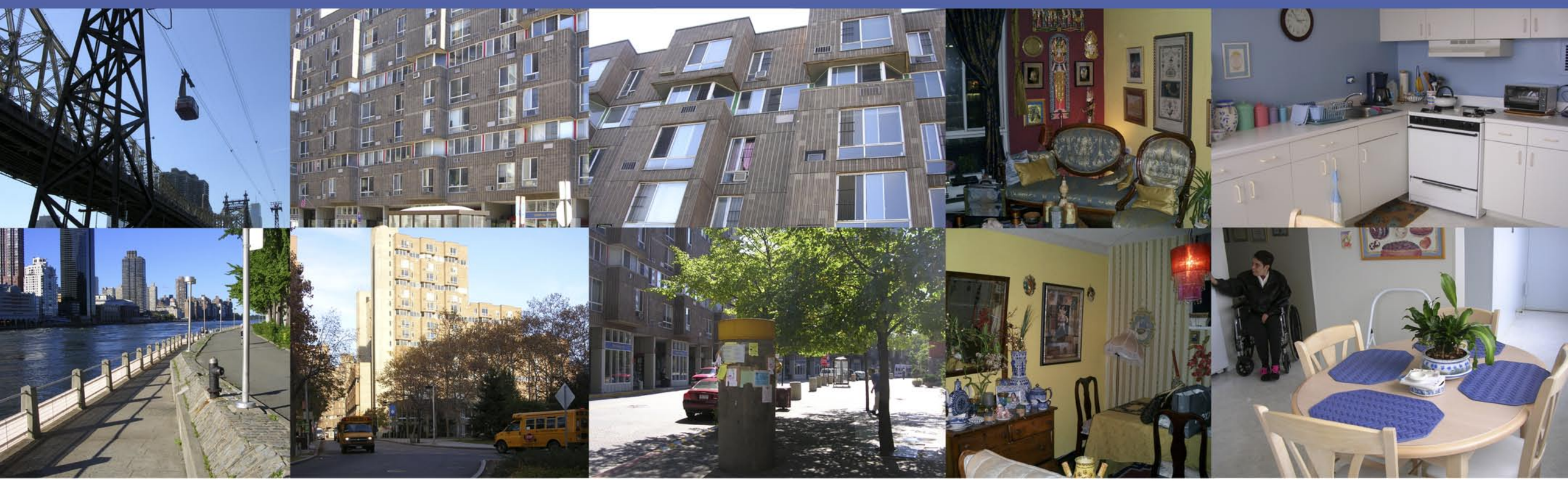
Middle, the East and South Elevations of Eastwood.

Above, prior to building Eastwood, life-size models of typical apartment rooms were constructed to see that furniture would fit comfortably, and to test how the rooms would feel to live in.

At right, a rendering of the courtyard looking toward the river.



Experience of Eastwood, Roosevelt Island, 2004



Research Method

A team of five students, working with Professor Susan Saegert from the Environmental Psychology Department at the Graduate Center, CUNY, used a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the UDC's successes and failures, 30 years later, from the perspective of Roosevelt Island's residents.

19 people interviewed,
approximately 1/2 male and 1/2 female
(11) Middle Aged
(4) Elderly
(4) Under 40

14 surveys, most people of middle-age
86% Female / 14% Male

Longevity of residence:
72% of survey respondents have lived on the island for more than 4 years
Time in Apartment: M=10.3 years
Time on Roosevelt Island: M=14 years

Monthly Housing Cost: M=$1342.00
Number of Adults in the Residence: M=1.93
Number of Children in the Residence: M=2.50

Household Yearly Income:
(n=2 or 14% < $10,000)
(n=2 or 14% $11,000-25,000)
(n=6 or 43% $26,000-50,000)
(n=3 or 21% $51,000-100,000)
(n=1 or 7% $101,000-200,000)

The Exterior of Eastwood Architecture and Aesthetic Quality

The **exterior appearance of buildings is very important** to more than half of the residents surveyed.

Regarding the exterior design of buildings on Roosevelt Island:
3/4 of residents surveyed like it somewhat
1/4 of residents surveyed do not like it

Interviews suggest that residents evaluate the appearance of buildings on these criteria:
The architectural form
The concept of design
Building materials
Quality of maintenance
The surrounding environment

Waterfront areas are prized by respondents.

Naturalness and openness can often enhance people's perceptions of aesthetic quality of the environment.

The Interior of Eastwood Two Case Studies

ALBA
Female, Puerto Rican, middle-aged
Has lived on Roosevelt Island for 7 years
This is her second apartment on the island.
Lives alone with her daughter, who has attended school on Roosevelt Island

Enjoys **community and safety**, allowing her daughter to walk home alone.
86% of survey respondents indicated that they feel safe (or very safe) in their homes

Alba noted how much she loved her **apartment's views**. The living room furniture is arranged to draw attention to her view.

MICHELLE
Female, Caucasian, middle-aged, high school graduate, physically disabled.
She has a two- bedroom unit, at the end of the corridor, in a single-loaded corridor section.

The apartment has plenty of **natural light** and good views. The two bedrooms and bathroom are somewhat small. However, the resident is satisfied with the apartment. She personalizes her living space with lots of plants, pictures, awards, and stuffed toys.

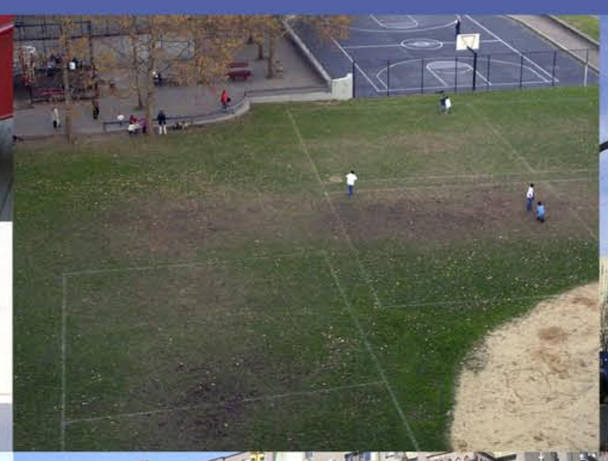
She noted the **accessibility** of the island for handicapped people.

"The design [of Eastwood] is simple, but I could tell that there is something special about it. I think the idea of courtyards is good, even though nobody is using those courtyards."

Fear of being pushed out?






The Graduate Center, CUNY Environmental Psychology Research Team
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Ongoing Issues

Public space
64% of respondents use the public spaces.
66% of these use the public spaces 1-2 times per month.

Transport
Of those surveyed: 86% use the subway
64% use bus // 58% walk

Expense of Amenities
Alba thought shopping on the island was too expensive, and so, prefers Queens.
64% of respondents take a trip of longer than 15 minutes to get to the grocery store.
18 of the 19 interviewees discussed the poor quality & high prices at the local supermarket.

Sense of powerlessness
“Albany controls Roosevelt Island.”
14% of respondents feel that the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) is meeting its responsibilities.
100% of respondents thought that RIOC should have a majority of residents on its board.

Fear of Being Pushed Out
Alba expressed a concern that the diverse character of the community is being eroded by rising rents.

16 of the 19 interviewees feel they are being pushed out by new, higher-income residents.

50% feel the island is changing but do not know for worse or better.
50% feel the island is changing for the worse.

Questions for the future of Roosevelt Island

How will the appearances of the buildings as well as the overall neighborhood change as rents continue to increase and higher-income tenants move onto the island?

Where will the lower-income residents who are being pushed out end up, and how will those who manage to remain on Roosevelt Island perceive the changes over time?

What are some things that could help the current community leverage more political power in the decision-making process over the future of the island? Issues at stake include day-to-day management, social and economic policies (especially those pertaining to housing), and new construction.

What would be the most effective way to give residents more influence in the operation of Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation?

How will changes on the island affect and be perceived by the hospital and disabled community?

What are some ways in which the diversity of the current community could be preserved?

Do residents conceptualize and experience Roosevelt Island differently as neighborhood or community compared to previous neighborhoods in which they have lived?

“We’ve lived here for 30 years, and we know we are going to have to leave in a year or so. We won’t be able to afford it.”

Home in its setting - Life in UDC developments

Marcus Garvey Park Village and Eastwood, Roosevelt Island

Ethel's and Michelle's Homes

The 33,000 units of housing built by the UDC created 33,000 homes for families. As we explore the architectural and social policies that built these units, we should be aware of the sense of "dwelling" and "home-making" that can be achieved in successful housing developments. Hence, in early 2005, photographer Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani visited residents of two UDC buildings: Ethel at Marcus Garvey Park Village and Michelle at Eastwood, Roosevelt Island.

Ethel has lived at Marcus Garvey Park Village for 27 years. She raised her children and grandchildren in her 3-bedroom apartment, which is full of inventions that make the place a home. Ethel works to rebuild the tenants' association, and her biggest concern is the failure of management to maintain the physical infrastructure of the buildings.

"I love it — You couldn't ask for more in terms of it being your own home. I come in my own door, I don't have to bother with anyone. The yard is there for the kids. It's just that it's kind of small in the dining and living rooms. With 6 children and 18 grandchildren, you need a big table." -Ethel

Michelle has lived in her present Eastwood apartment for four years, but has lived on Roosevelt Island for much longer, originally coming to an Island hospital after a debilitating accident. Her mother also lives on Roosevelt Island, as does her home attendant, Rosa.

"The most important things about the apartment are the comfort, the location, and my ability to get around the Island. It's very important, especially since I'm in a wheelchair. I pick myself up and go out — I feel totally comfortable in this environment." - Michelle

Marcus Garvey Park Village, 2005

Eastwood, Roosevelt Island, 2005