To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Timothy Paul Ezzell entitled "New Urbanism and Nazi Germany: A Comparative Study of Neotraditional Community Design and the Third Reich." I have examined the final paper copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Planning with a major in Planning.

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New Urbanism and Nazi Germany:
A Comparative Study of Neotraditional Community Design and the Third Reich

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science in Planning
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Timothy Paul Ezzell
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Table of Contents

Chapter Page

Introduction....1

I. A New Germany Must Rise....7

II. Dreamland....48

III. Comparison and Recommendations....97

Bibliography....119

Vita....125

List of Figures

Figure Page

1.1. The Bauhaus School, Dessau 12

1.2. Modernist Housing Development, Frankfort 12

1.3. A Portion of Speer's Proposed North-South Axis for Berlin 19

1.4. Proposed Arch for Central Berlin, as Sketched by Adolph Hitler in 1925 20

1.5. Schematics of Speer's Proposed "Super Train" 22

1.6. Speer's Zoning Scheme for Berlin 24

1.7. High Density Residential Development Proposed for Danzig 27

1.8. Proposed View of Hermann Goering-Werke 29

1.9. German Vernacular Worker's Housing 33

1.10. Site Plan for Village of Ramersdorf 33

1.11. Proposed Plan for Peenemünde 42

1.12. Speer's Model of Peenemünde 42

1.13. Alternative Site Plan for Peenemünde 44

2.1. The Seaside Town Code 65

2.2. Arial View of Seaside, Florida 68

2.3. Seaside's Proposed Town Center 68

2.4. Map of the Celebration Development 74

2.5. View of Duany's Transect Concept 86

2.6. Another View of the Transect 86

3.1. View of Laguna West Development 101

3.2. Proposed View of Wellington Neighborhood 103

3.3. The Krier Cottage, Seaside 104

Introduction

At the 1937 Paris exposition, representatives of Nazi Germany erected a grand pavilion to display the accomplishments of their regime. The award winning neoclassical structure, designed by Albert Speer, brimmed with the shiny wares and Teutonic art of the Third Reich. It stood as a temple to German fascism, and its altar was a "Podium of Honor." There, above a raised dais, hung Rudolf Hengstenberg's *Comradeship*. The painting depicts a group of carpenters and other tradesmen constructing a house. Directing the workers were a smaller group of engineers and foremen. At the center of this enterprise stood the leader, the architect, watching over his charge with dapper authority. The state-sponsored canvas was no doubt intended as an allegory of class harmony, yet it was also highly representative of the Third Reich. In Hitler's Germany, the design professional emerged as a central figure who not only designed the built environment, but also helped direct the social and economic elements of the community. Architects and planners imposed enlightened guidance on a troubled and foundering state and, in the process, were to restore strength, purity and harmony to a nation racked by decades of Weimar mismanagement.[1]

To students of the Third Reich, the prominence achieved by Nazi designers should come as no surprise. Adolph Hitler was, by his own admission, an architectural dilettante. In his youth he had aspired to become a designer, only to be thwarted by his

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[1]Dawn Ades, et al., eds. *Art and Power: Europe Under the Dictators, 1930-45* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 110.

lack of technical skill. Perhaps to compensate for these failures, he later surrounded himself with architects and portrayed himself as "master builder of the Third Reich." Under Hitler, state architecture became far more than an agent of civic expression. It became a means of uniting the German people while strengthening their culture and promoting their government's ideology.[2]

Half a century later, the architect again stepped forth to redeem society from a generation of misguided policies and plans. This time, however, the movement began in the United States and found its origins amidst the unlikely streets of a beachfront resort development. The traditional design principles set forth in Seaside, Florida soon inspired a new school of planning known, somewhat incongruously, as New Urbanism. This collection of architects and planners came to prominence in the 1990s as they sought to restore an American urban fabric devastated by decades of suburban expansion. Reviving traditional design values, new urbanists seek to recreate and improve upon the communities of an earlier era. In doing so, they hope to reduce the congestion, pollution, and banality associated with modern suburbs. New urbanists also believe good design can alleviate social ills, and promote their plans as a means of increasing social capital while reducing crime and despair. By developing new, sustainable communities, these reformers attempt to contain the evils of sprawl and, in so doing, "reshape the American Dream."[3]

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[2]Robert R. Taylor, *The Word in Stone: The Role of Architecture in the National Socialist Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 16-25.

[3]Peter Katz, *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1994), xlii. Katz's book is probably the most extensive survey of new urbanist

Since the completion of the first phases of Seaside in the early 1980s, New Urbanism has exploded in popularity. Much of this growth can be attributed to a mountain of praise lavished on the community and its builders by the popular press. Critics, ranging from the Prince of Wales to *Time* and *Travel and Leisure* commended the town and its designers in the early 1990s. This level of attention spawned similar developments across the nation, many of which achieved similar acclaim.[4] Followers of the movement, flush with success, came together in 1993 to form an advocacy group, the Congress for the New Urbanism. Since organizing, proponents of the design school have become increasingly visible and outspoken. Today new urbanists exercise considerable influence over policy decisions at all levels of government and are often heralded as the future of American urban development.[5]

At first glance, it would seem that these two design movements have nothing in common. Indeed, Nazi planners and new urbanists are worlds apart in terms of their professional environments and ideological beliefs. Nazi designers were steeped in the racial nationalism of their age and committed themselves to the creation of a greater German state. Employees of the Third Reich, they aspired to strengthen the Nordic race and reinforce their native culture. Their work reflects the militarism and fanaticism of Hitler's regime and his romantic vision of German folk life. New urbanists, in contrast,

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communities in print.

[4]*Ibid.*, 3.

[5]Michael Leccese and Katherine McCormick, eds., *Charter of the New Urbanism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999), 5-8, 49-52.

are a diverse and tolerant lot. They come from a variety of backgrounds and express a desire, at least in principle, to improve the lives of the entire community, regardless of race, age or income. Their vision is broad and increasingly global and their designs reflect a sense of nostalgia and clean efficiency. Whereas Nazi plans are loaded with the rhetoric of race and power, new urbanists espouse the rather benign concepts of harmony and sustainability.

Yet a closer examination of these seemingly disparate design schools reveals many disturbing similarities. Both groups appear to trace their roots to the turn of the century garden city and city beautiful movements. Nazi planners and new urbanists also promote similar design values. Both, for example, rely heavily on vernacular architecture and traditional urban forms in their plans. Furthermore, they also share a common sensitivity to ecological and environmental concerns. Nazi planners and new urbanists also express a belief, in varying degrees, in architectural determinism and advance the conviction that the built environment can influence human and social behavior.[6] Finally, and perhaps most importantly, both schools are fundamentally anti-modern and anti-industrial. Indeed, in many respects, each of these movements appears to be a manifestation of the same urban reform impulse that inspired Robert Owen's New Harmony or Charles Fourier's Phalanxes.[7]

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[6]A thorough discussion of the concept of architectural determinism, sometimes referred to as environmental determinism or spatial determinism, can be found in Barbara Phillips, *City Lights: Urban and Suburban Life in the Global Society*, 2nd Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 472-477, 485-489.

[7]For a good overview of early American reform movements, see Mark Holloway, *Heavens on Earth: Utopian Communities in America, 1680-1880* (New York: Dover, 1966).

Yet, one must ask, are any similarities between these movements meaningful or merely coincidental. A confirmed new urbanist would no doubt dismiss any analogous beliefs or characteristics as inconsequential and would probably deem the comparison repugnant and sensationalistic. The growing acceptance of new urbanism among planners and design professional however, and the rising influence of these ideas on all levels of public policy seem to make such a comparison not only necessary, but desirable. This study will undertake such a comparison and will attempt to determine the extent of any similarities, their nature, and their significance or lack thereof. To accomplish this, the work will examine the histories of both movements and their ideological origins. It will also examine the design schemes of both groups, paying special attention to elements which appear to be similar in form or function. The study will also review each school's approach to issues such as transportation, economic development, town placement, housing, zoning, community facilities, environmental impacts, and land use regulation.

Having said this, it should be made clear that this work is not an attempt to equate or associate new urbanists or their initiatives with the unspeakable horrors of the Third Reich. Nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed, the author finds much that is commendable in new urbanism and he applauds the awareness generated by the movement. In their enthusiasm for reform, however, new urbanists may have overlooked a number of disturbing historical precedents to their movement. In addition, the acceptance of new urbanist design principles has often occurred with surprisingly little criticism and debate. It is hoped that this study will kindle further discussion on the

Chapter I

A New Germany Must Rise

As a young man in Vienna, Adolf Hitler once expressed a brief, yet significant interest in the living conditions of that city's working-class residents. For four nights the future fuhrer explored the blue collar neighborhoods of the Austrian capital, making note of the workers' homes and their access to light, air, parks, and playgrounds. He came away with a dim view of their crowded tenements and resolved to reinvent housing for the masses. Within days he sketched plans for blocks of clean, efficient townhouses to shelter the working poor. Of course, little came of these plans at the time. Hitler, barely out of his teens, was little more than scrawny, impoverished daydreamer with no access to capital and no hopes for implementation of his schemes. Decades later, however, as the crude and, at times, demented sketches of his youth surged to fruition, the German dictator revived his interest in urban renewal and launched a series of audacious programs to revive and redevelop the communities of the German Reich. These initiatives, though deeply rooted in the racial nationalism of Hitler's regime, established a firm precedent for subsequent neotraditional architectural and community planning movements.[1]

The roots of Nazi neotraditionalism lay amidst the perceived decadence and decay of Weimar Germany and the rise of urban industrial culture. Alarms first began

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[1]Robert R. Taylor, *The Word in Stone: The Role of Architecture in National Socialist Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 27-28.

sounding around the turn of the century, when critics bemoaned the living conditions of the urban poor. Berlin grew at an alarming rate during these years, nearly doubling its population between 1890 and 1910. Yet, though the city's population rose precipitously during this period, the municipal boundaries remained fairly static. As a result, the German capital soon boasted one of the highest population densities in Europe. On average, 52.6 persons inhabited each building in Berlin, a figure nearly seven times higher than that of London. To make matters worse, just twenty-one percent of these structures claimed more than one or two heatable rooms. Most of the city's working class were packed into so-called rental barracks. Modeled after eighteenth century army barracks, these simple, five story structures provided a minimal level of shelter while encouraging the development of disease, vice, and crime.[2]

The results of this squalor, which also prevailed in other German cities, became apparent just prior to World War One. When called to military service in 1913, just forty-two percent of the young men of Berlin were found fit enough for military service. This statistic, far lower than that of rural residents, provoked an outcry among both German patriots and social reformers. The city, long considered a source of moral and social decay, was also a source of physical decline and a threat to state security. Such fears seemed to be confirmed by the nation's crushing defeat in the Great War. Prussian thinkers, struggling to explain the loss, cited the city as one source of the military disaster. Among these was Oswald Spengler who, in his apocalyptic tome *Decline of the*

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[2]Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 31-33.

West, described the destructive consequences of urbanization. Writing in 1918, Spengler lamented "Now the giant city sucks the country dry, insatiably and incessantly demanding and devouring fresh streams of men, till it wearies and dies in the midst of an almost uninhabited waste of country."[3]

Yet, even as the German people voiced concerns about the perceived effects of urban growth, their government enacted policies which seemed to embrace the modern city. During the Weimar years of the 1920s, Germany's postwar government undertook a massive building program designed to modernize and improve the nation's cities. Much of the construction focused on housing, and was designed to eliminate much of the squalor associated with nineteenth century urbanization. These policies may have also been an attempt to reduce unrest and the growth of radical groups among the urban poor. Weimar authorities built 15,000 housing units in Frankfurt alone, and more than 14,000 new homes in Berlin. No doubt this construction improved the living conditions of many city dwellers. To many Germans, however, this level of investment in the nation's cities signaled an official endorsement of city life and a lasting commitment to urban growth.[4]

Worse still, in the eyes of many Germans, was the architectural style chosen for much of the development. Weimar officials, eager to break with the past, encouraged the use of modern and, at times, controversial designs. Modernist architects such as Walter

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[3]Hall, *Ibid.*, 33.

[4]Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard, 1985), 102-104: For information on civil unrest in postwar Germany and its impact on Nazi thought, see John Toland, *Adolf Hitler* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1976), 93-121.

Gropius, founder of the trendy Bauhaus school, and Bruno Taut soon found a willing patron in the state and produced a number of bold plans for Weimar projects. Gropius, Taut, and their peers saw their designs as a means of rejecting their nation's militaristic heritage. "The old forms," Gropius proclaimed in 1919, "are in ruins, the benumbed world is shaken up, the old human spirit is invalidated and in flux toward a new form." "A new order," he believed, was in the making - an order to be heralded, and facilitated by new and radical designs (see figure 1.1).[5]

Bruno Taut, for his part, was even more vocal in his rejection of the past:

> "Oh, our concepts: 'space,' 'homeland,' 'style,'! To hell with them, odious concepts! Destroy them, break them up! Nothing shall remain! Break up your academies, spew out the old fogies, we'll play catch with their wigs! Blast! Blast! Let our north wind blow through this musty, threadbare, tattered old world of concepts, ideologies, systems! Death to the ideologues. Death to the stuffed shirts! Death to titles, dignitaries, authority! Down with everything serious![6]

This rhetoric probably appealed to the artists and poets of Berlin's bohemian coffee houses, but most German citizens found such words profoundly disturbing. Despite their nation's recent humiliation, the majority of Germans remained deeply loyal to their nation and its traditions. Almost immediately critics began to assail the new style. To many, these structures represented the perceived decline pronounced by Spengler. "This tendency in art," one critic declared, "could never occur except in this age of deterioration." Still others saw modernism as a sign of cultural or racial decay. The designs were denounced as "foreign" and "un-German." Opponents also attacked the

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[5]Lane, *Ibid.*, 45.

[6]Lane, *Ibid.*, 46.

radical leanings of many modern architects and denounced their craft as "a seedbed of communists." In the minds of many Germans, modernism was inexorably tied to bolshevism and part of a concerted effort to undermine the state and its institutions.[7]

Among those suspicious of the new architecture were the Nazis. By the mid-twenties, Germany's National Socialists were a rising political faction who wasted little time in denouncing the Weimar government's modernist projects. Such buildings, they claimed, "prepares the way for bolshevism" and would result in the "proletarianization and nullification of the German man." The Bauhaus was "the cathedral of Marxism" which "damned well looked like a Synagogue." Modernists structures were "oriental boxes" which were "repugnant to good taste." Nazi critics compared Weimar housing developments to "prison cells" and labeled them "an instrument for the destruction of the family and the race (see figure 1.2)." To counter these destructive forces, Nazi thinkers called for a return to traditional designs. In 1931 architect Paul Schultze-Naumburg proclaimed, "Around us a new Germany must rise, which can find a home in dwellings embedded in foliage, whose government buildings no longer look like factories, nor its churches like movie houses, but instead bear the signature of the majesty and the power of the people."[8]

Nazis also voiced concerns about Germany's cities. Like other traditional German thinkers, they were alarmed at the nation's rapid urbanization. To most Nazis, the metropolis was a loathsome place, the "melting pot of all evil . . . of prostitution, bars,

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[7]Lane, *Ibid.*, 76-81.

[8]Lane, *Ibid.*, 155, 161-167.

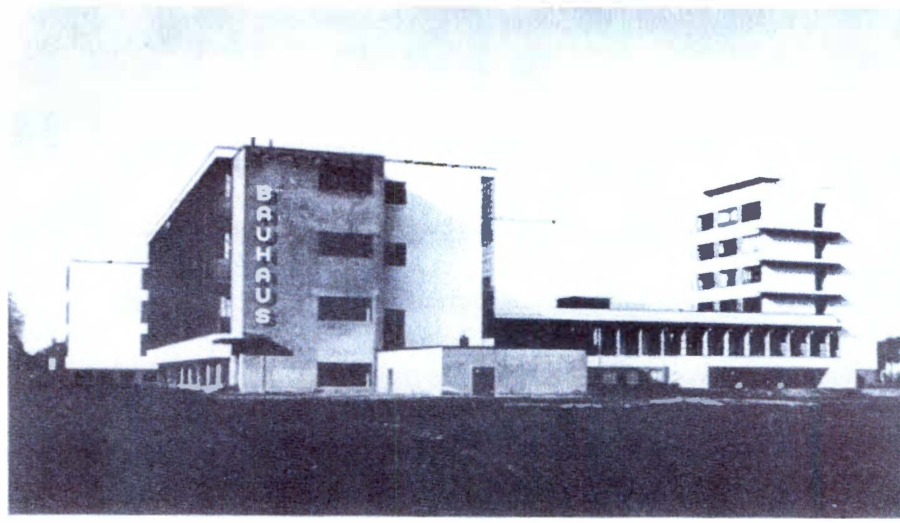

Figure 1.1. The Bauhaus School, Dessau.

Source: Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard, 1985), 28.

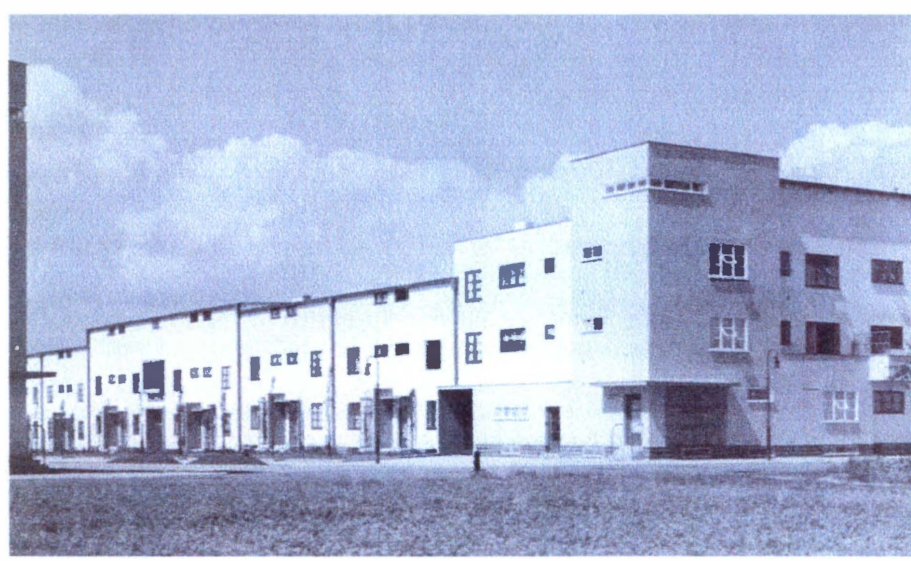

Figure 1.2. Modernist Housing Development, Frankfort.

Source: Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard, 1985), 28.

illness, movies, Marxism, Jews, strippers, Negro dances, and all the disgusting offspring of so-called modern art." Many officials also raised concerns about the health hazards of the city, and expressed fears about the impact of urban settlement on Nordic fertility. Germany, they feared, was in danger of becoming "a race without young people." "The urban population," one critic noted, "was condemned to barrenness, to a voluntary sterilization."[9] Still others expressed fears of urban racial and cultural corruption. Alfred Rosenberg, considered the Nazi party's philosopher, condemned the "racial chaos" found in large cities which threatened to "annihilate" native Aryans. Many also feared urbanization would undermine German culture. "The metropolis," an art critic noted, "is always the enemy of true culture." He then added: "out of asphalt and tenements only pipes grow."[10]

For his part, Adolf Hitler also expressed disdain for modern cities. Much of his contempt focused on the aesthetic decline he perceived in Germany's urban centers. Cities had "lost the character of cultural sites" to become "mere human settlements." Many towns, in his view, had become "masses of apartments and tenements and nothing more." Such cities, Hitler believed, established a poor legacy for the German state. "If Berlin were to suffer the fate of Rome," he declared, "posterity would think the characteristic expressions of our culture to be the department stores of some Jews or the hotels of some businessmen." Most disturbing to the Fuhrer were the lack of "community

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[9]Elke Pahl-Weber and Dirk Schubert, "Myth and Reality in National Socialist Town Planning and Architecture: Housing and urban Development in Hamburg, 1933-45," *Planning Perspectives* 6 (1991): 165.

[10]Taylor, *The Word in Stone*, 251-253.

monuments" which would could serve to unite and inspire the people. The end result of this banality, Hitler predicted, was "the total indifference of the big-city dweller to the destiny of his city."[11]

Much of the anti-urban sentiment expressed by the Nazis was rooted in the "Blood and Soil" (*"Blut und Boden"*) movement which enjoyed popularity among Germans in the 1930s. This ideology was based largely on the writings of Richard Walter Darrè, who served from 1933-1942 as Hitler's Minister of Food and Agriculture. Darrè, an authority on animal husbandry, believed that the native German race, the *Volk*, was descended from hardy and ancient peasant stock. Germany's peasant roots, he believed, were the source of the nation's cultural and military strength. Because the nation's peasant roots were so strong, any attempt to remove the true German from the rural landscape would yield disastrous results. To restore and preserve national strength, Darrè advocated the creation of a "peasant aristocracy" who would live and work in an idyllic rural setting. The country village thus, in the eyes of many Nazis, became the model environment for the propagation of the Nordic race.[12]

Inspired by Darrè, some Nazis began to call for the complete deurbanization of the state and a repatriation of the German people to countryside. Party philosopher Alfred Rosenberg called for the "destruction of the world's major cities" which were "hotbeds of anti-social activity and criminality." Some Nazi military and civil defense planners

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[11]Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 263-267; Albert Speer, "Die Baten des Fürhers," in *Adolf Hitler. Bilder aus dem Leben des Fürhers* (Hamburg: Cigaretten/Bilderdienst, 1936), 72-77.

[12]Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, 153-154.

also called for resettlement of the population, though for more concrete reasons. "The dispersal of large cities," one wrote, "achieves increased security against hostile aerial attacks by breaking up the building fabric." By scattering the nation's population, and presumably its industries as well, these officials hoped to make the Reich less vulnerable to air attack in the inevitable war to come.[13]

Most officials, however, took a more pragmatic approach to the question of urban development. The majority of Nazi leaders, including the Fuhrer, viewed the modern city as a necessary evil. Large urban centers, though vile, served as centers of trade, government, and culture. More importantly, especially to Hitler, they also symbolized the power and prestige of the state and the "greatness and wealth of the community." Hitler admired the classical ruins of Athens and Rome and lamented the temporal nature of the modern metropolis. "Works," he contended, should be "built for eternity" and not "for the need of the moment." Only in this way, could they become "the outstanding symbol of national community."[14]

Thus Nazi policy makers were faced with two contradictory and seemingly irreconcilable goals. On the one hand, they felt compelled to provide an idyllic rural environment to house the German people. Their attachment to the Blood and Soil movement required they supply traditional peasant communities to house the *Volk*. At the same time, however, they were also charged with creating grandiose cities to

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[13]Pahl-Weber and Schubert, "Housing and Urban Development," 165; Curiously, some Soviet planners in the 1930s also proposed the deurbanizatiojn of the state. Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 284-285.

[14]Taylor, *Word in Stone*, 251-252; Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 265-266.

accommodate the Fuhrer's ministries and display the might and stature of the Reich. In order to accomplish these disparate and conflicting goals, German planners undertook a two-pronged approach to urban development. First, they would encourage the development of a limited number of large, fairly specialized cities. At the same time, they also retained their commitment to blood and soil design principles. The creation of peasant communities and a "peasant aristocracy" remained a priority for state policy makers. Traditional German communities would, therefore, be created in conjunction with, and at times even within large urban centers.[15]

The first of these goals, the creation or renovation of Germany's large cities, was probably the project closest to Hitler's heart. Throughout his tenure, Hitler showed considerable personal interest in the development of these monumental projects. In fact, in the final weeks of the Third Reich, as Soviet troops converged on Berlin, Hitler could be found in his hall of models, shuffling plaster buildings around as yet unrealized cities.[16]

In order to minimize the further urbanization of the state, Hitler ordered limits placed on municipal populations. Berlin was to be the largest city in Europe, with a population of five million. Two other major cities, Hamburg and Vienna, would each have their populations limited to two million residents. Other German cities would presumably be much smaller. In addition, many cities would have specialized titles and purposes. Berlin, renamed Germania, would become Capital of the Reich; Nuremburg ,

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[15]Stone, *Word in Stone*, 255.

[16]Toland, *Adolf Hitler*, 848.

the City of Party Rallies; Hamburg, the City of Foreign Trade and Stuttgart, the City of Germans Abroad.[17]

The most important of these urban projects, by far, was the redevelopment plan, or "remodeling" (*Umgestaltung*) for Berlin. For decades, Hitler had considered the German capital an unworthy home for his seat of government. His favorite terms for describing the city were "decadent" and "nigger-loving." Other Nazi leaders agreed with this assessment. finding the metropolis full of Jews and modern, cosmopolitan architecture. They longed for the city of Goethe, long since ruined by generations of liberal reformers. Gerdy Troost, widow of the party's first official architect summed up their feelings, stating Berlin had become "intolerably remote from the *Volk's* way of life.[18]

Hitler entrusted this mammoth redevelopment to Albert Speer, who succeeded Paul Ludwig Troost as Hitler's personal architect. Named General Building Inspector for the city in 1937, Speer undertook dramatic plans for rebuilding the German capital. Speer called for a monumental city of enormous public buildings and grand Baroque boulevards. Much of the development would be based along two axes, one running North to South, the other East to West. They would intersect near the traditional city center, near the Brandenburg Gate. Along these boulevards, which were as much as 140 meters wide (459 feet), would rise a series of colossal edifices, each devoted to a

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[17]Taylor, *Word in Stone*, 251, 258.

[18]Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* {New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1992), 277; Taylor, *Word in Stone*, 259.

different facet of the Nazi state. Among these would be an imposing new chancellory, a massive palace for Reichs-Marshall Hermann Göring, and a triumphal arch, one hundred meters tall (328 feet), designed by Hitler himself. Capping the eight billion dollar project would be the "eighth world wonder," the Great Hall of the German People. This giant domed arena, with a capacity of 180,000, promised to tower over the city skyline and dominate the accomplishments of lesser nations (see figures 1.3 and 1.4).[19]

Practically all of these grandiose structures were to be constructed in a rather stark, neoclassical style. Hitler favored classical architecture because it hearkened back to the great empires of antiquity. Such structures, he believed, reflected a sense of timeless power and would inspire the German people to emulate this heroic past. "It is better to imitate something good," he wrote, "than to produce something new but bad." The neoclassical style also appealed to the Fuhrer's attachment to the so-called "ruin value theory" of architecture. According to this idea, originally propagated by Speer, the significance of a structure was determined, in part, by its potential value as an archeological ruin. Hence, a major design criterion for Speer's buildings was their suitability as overgrown wrecks a thousand years hence.[20]

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[19]Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 199-200; Leon Krier, ed., *Albert Speer, Architecture: 1932-1942* (Brussels: Aux Archives D'Architecture Moderne, 1985), 75, 115; Alan Balfour, *Berlin, The Politics of Order: 1737-1989* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 70-106. In addition to Keier's Speer monograph, thorough and complete analysis of the Berlin plan can be found in Stephen D. Helmer, *Hitler's Berlin: The Speer Plans for Reshaping the Central City* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985) and Lars Olaf Larsson, *Albert Speer: Le Plan De Berlin, 1937-1943* (Brussels: Aux Archives D'Architecture Moderne, 1983).

[20]Balfour, *Berlin*, 72; Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (New York: MacMillan, 1970), 93-94; Alex Scobie, *Hitler's State Architecture: The Impact of Classical Antiquity* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1990), 93-96.

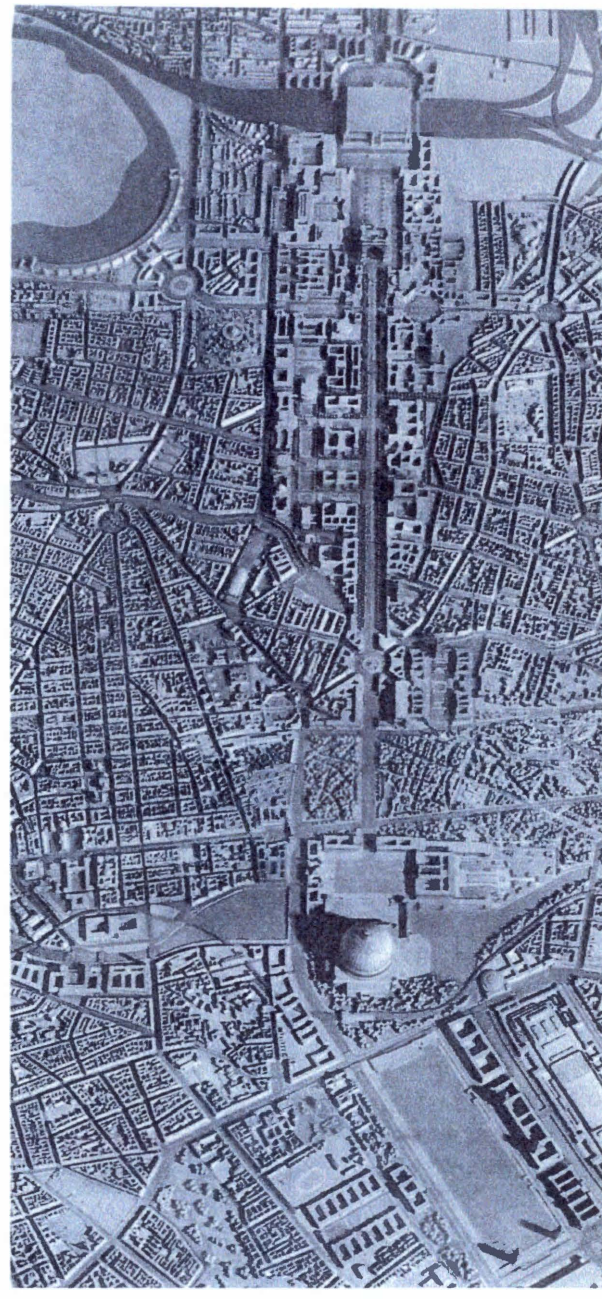

Figure 1.3. A Portion of Speer's Proposed North-South Axis for Berlin.

Source: Leon Krier, ed., *Albert Speer, Architecture: 1932-1942* (Brussels: Aux Archives D'Architecture Moderne, 1985), 55.

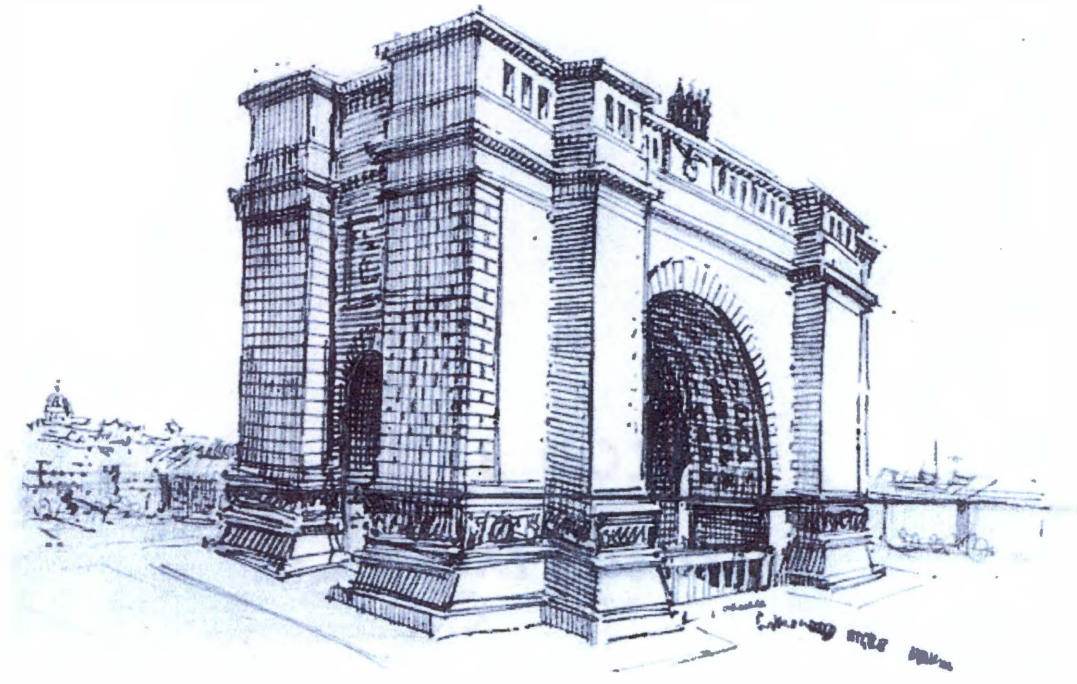

Figure 1.4. Proposed Arch for Central Berlin, as Sketched by Adolph Hitler in 1925.

Source: Leon Krier, ed., *Albert Speer, Architecture: 1932-1942* (Brussels: Aux Archives D'Architecture Moderne, 1985), 49.

Germans would be able to travel to their capital by virtually every means possible. Massive superhighways, known as *Autobahns*, would extend to the city from all corners of the empire. Templehof airport, newly expanded and remodeled, would also welcome newcomers to Berlin. The most dramatic entryway into the city, however, would be via rail. Mammoth "super trains," designed by Speer would convey passengers into the city. Operating on a six meter gauge (19.7 feet), these two-story trains would boast panoramic dining rooms, movie theaters, and batteries of anti-aircraft guns (see figure 1.5). Speer placed massive train stations at either end of his monumental north-south axis. Visitors to Berlin, already awed by the scale of the rail terminal, would step out of the station to be overcome by the grandeur of the city before them.[21]

Although most of Speer's plan was never built, his elaborate schemes have since raised considerable interest among architects and planners. Today, most critics view the Speer plan as little more than a bloated version of Haussman's Paris. Speer himself, looking back on his ideas, stated that they were "lifeless and regimented." "The entire conception," he wrote, "was stamped by a monumental rigidity" adding "our plan completely lacked a sense of proportion." Perhaps Speer's father summed up the plan best when, upon seeing his sons designs for the first time, stated: "You've all gone completely crazy."[22]

Some modern observers, however, have praised some of the more innovative features of the Speer plan. In particular, they cite his imaginative approach to zoning and

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[21]Krier, *Albert Speer*, 56-57, 117, 119.

[22]Speer, *Third Reich*, 188-189.

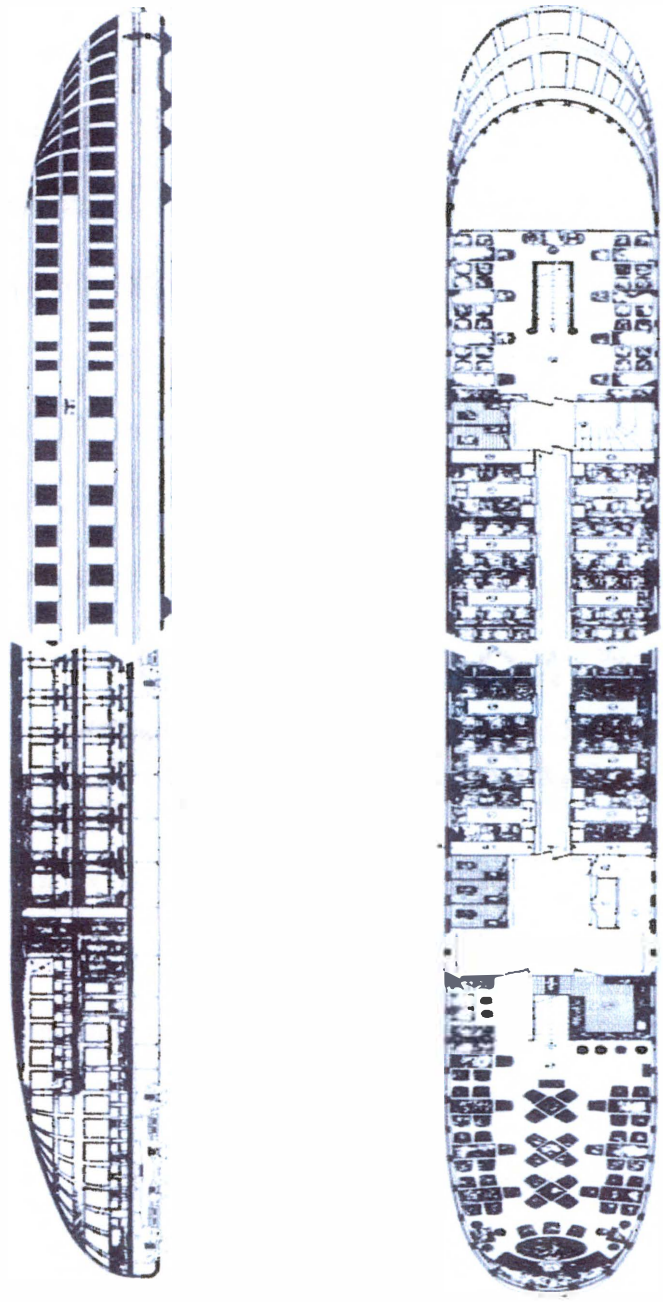

Figure 1.5. Schematics of Speer's Proposed "Super Train."

Source: Leon Krier, ed., *Albert Speer, Architecture: 1932-1942* (Brussels: Aux Archives D'Architecture Moderne, 1985), 119.

land use controls. One leading critic has praised Speer for avoiding "the banal abstraction of modern industrial urban planning" and instead creating "an intelligent and highly practical form of zoning." Rather than impose strict zoning districts, to be determined by use, Speer proposed establishing series of parallel linear strips of development extending out from the city's historic center. The central strip of each of these series would be comprised of a major thoroughfare flanked by a dense mixed use development consisting of multi-family housing, commercial and retail structures, government and cultural facilities, schools and office space. Running along either side of this central artery would be successive, parallel strips of housing, all divided by minor, linear streets. These housing strips would decrease in height and density as they grew further from the center. Finally, at the periphery of the series would be a strip of green space, designated a forest, garden or park. At the other edge of the park would begin another strip of low density housing and the beginnings of another linear development series (see figure 1.6).[23]

Speer's plan called for the bulk of Berlin to be organized in this manner. Only heavy industry, with its potentially destructive effect on the population, would be segregated into a distinct and separate zone. The benefits of Speer's scheme are quite obvious. No resident of the city, regardless of income, would be more than a ten minute walk from a major traffic artery with shopping, banking, employment, and access to mass transit. At the same time, all citizens also have convenient pedestrian access to schools, public parks and recreational facilities. Other, less obvious benefits might also accrue from this land use strategy. The placement of various densities, and presumably income

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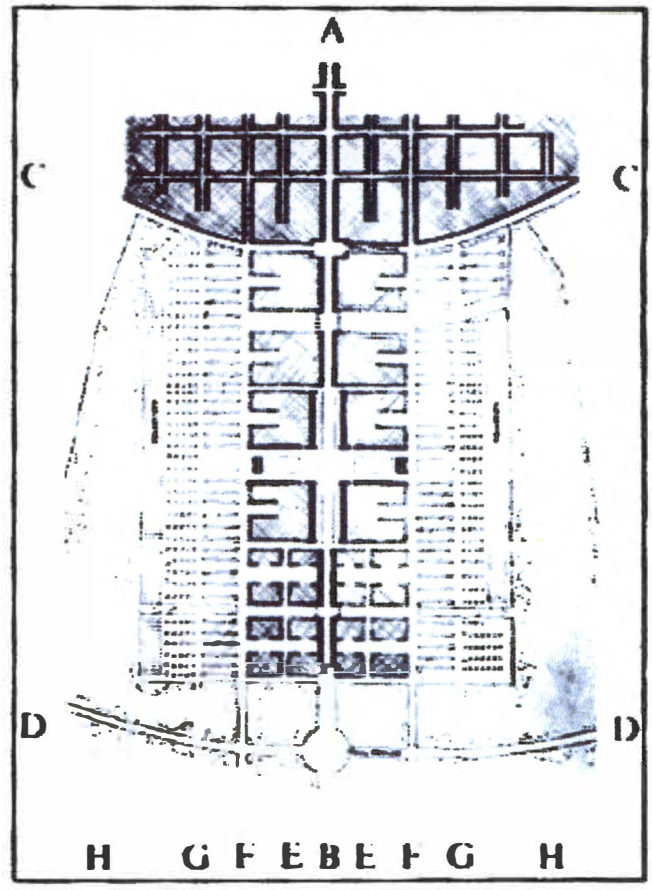
[23]Krier, *Albert Speer*, 47; Larsson, 172-209.



DISTRICT URBAIN TYPIQUE
TYPICAL URBAN DISTRICT

CENTRE HISTORIQUE	A	HISTORICAL CENTER
AVENUE METROPOLITAINE	B	METROPOLITAN AVENUE
BOULEVARD PERIPHERIQUE	C+D	PERIPHERAL BOULEVARD
ZONE A FONCTIONS MIXTES	E	ZONE OF MIXED FUNCTIONS
Habitations, Administration, Culture, Education, Commerce, Services divers		Housing, Administration, Culture, Education, Commerce, Services & Trades
ZONE D'HABITATION A DENSITE ET HAUTEUR DECROISSANTE	F+G	HOUSING ZONES OF DECREASING HEIGHT AND DENSITY
FORETS-JARDINS-PARCS	H	FORESTS GARDENS-PARKS

Figure 1.6. Speer's Zoning Scheme for Berlin.

Source: Leon Krier, ed., *Albert Speer, Architecture: 1932-1942* (Brussels: Aux Archives D'Architecture Moderne, 1985), 47.

levels, within a close distance to one another, would promote class interaction and relieve potentially destructive tensions. Such intermingling would not only reduce the threat of a Marxist uprising, it would also strengthen the unity and, hence, power of the German *Volk.*[24]

Another similar planning scheme came into use in other, less significant German cities such as Hamburg. Again, the goal of German authorities was to reduce the ruinous influences of the city upon the Reich's urban population while, simultaneously, strengthening the peasant blood of the *Volk.* As in Berlin, officials attempted to create "ordered paths" of urban habitation. In Hamburg, planners advocated the development of "local group settlement cells" which attempted to recreate the elements of small, medieval towns within the larger city. These cells would be divided by a series of parks and greenbelts. Combined, they would form a ring around the existing old city.[25]

Thus Nazi planners hoped to recreate the ideal German living space, the medieval peasant town, within the confines of the Reich's major cities. An important element of these "settlement cells" was the use of traditional architectural styles. This was especially true for urban housing developments where the pitched roofs of the National Socialists prevailed over the flat roofs of the Weimar era. To the Nazis, the peasant home remained "the mirror of racial character" and replicating this environment became a priority for architects and urban planners. As a result, even the largest big-city housing projects assumed the rather incongruous style of the humble Bavarian cottage. White

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[24]Krier, *Albert Speer*, 47; Larsson, 172-209.

[25]Pahl-Weber and Schubert, "Housing and Urban Development," 166, 183.

stucco walls, exposed wooden beams, and steep pitched roofs all became characteristic of many residential developments (see figure 1.7).[26]

Despite these efforts to reform the urban metropolis, however, most Nazis retained their aversion to major urban centers. The rural hamlet, with its "growing youth green gardens [sic]" and its "wide open sky" remained the ideal home for "the body of the people." German planners remained especially fond of the medieval town, which they believed represented "the small town in its most beautiful expression." In an effort to recreate these villages, Nazi officials embarked on a sweeping program to build or redevelop smaller communities throughout the Reich. Developed on a variety of scales, these communities all shared a commitment to blood and soil design principles. At the same time, however, they also displayed a surprising number of architectural and urban planning elements found in the plans for Berlin and other major German cities.[27]

The most ambitious of these projects involved plans to construct several new industrial towns. Part of Hitler's First Four Year Plan, these towns were intended to increase the industrial capacity of the nation while stimulating economic growth in remote or underdeveloped regions. While a number of these so-called "new towns" were proposed, only two were actually built; the "Town of the Hermann Goering-Werke" (present day Salzgitter) and the "Strength Through Joy Automobile Town" (today known as Wolfsburg). Designed by Peter Kolb, under the supervision of Albert Speer, these communities were to be models of Nazi design and fascist harmony. Hitler himself

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[26] *Ibid.*, 179.

[27] *Ibid.*, 166.

Figure 1.7. High Density Residential Development Proposed for Danzig.

Source: Gerhard Fehl and Tilman Harlander, *Hitlers Sozialer Wohnungsbau, 1940-1945: Wohnungspolitik, Baugestaltung und Siedlungsplanung* (Hamburg:Hans Christians Verlag, 1986), 212.

decreed that the Wolfsburg development, built to manufacture the Volkswagen, would be the "happiest and most beautiful [town] in the world.[28]

Although the Nazi new towns were much smaller than Berlin and the other major German cities, they shared many of the same design considerations. Each of them, for example, payed homage to the Nazi penchant for classicism and monumentality. Herman Goering-Werke featured a long central mall which held the town's stadium, public and political buildings and, at its apex, an imposing tower. The latter served as the local *Stadtkrone*, a "central structural focal point designed to enhance the state." Wolfsburg boasted a strikingly similar plan with, as its central element, an "Acropolis." This neoclassical civic complex was a blatant attempt to draw parallels between the classical empires and the Nazi state. The German version, however, possessed no Parthenon and, instead, held party offices, a theater, a cultural center, and a "great hall" for public events (see figure 1.8).[29]

In both cities, residential neighborhoods were located at the periphery of the community, several blocks from the busy town center and far from the local industrial plants. As in Berlin, citizens were within walking distance of park space and recreational facilities and had easy access to major transportation routes. There workers could board mass transit for their daily commute or, better yet, drive to work in their shiny new, state

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[28]John Robert Mullin, "The Impact of National Socialist Policies Upon Local City Planning in Pre-war Germany (1933-1939): The Rhetoric and the Reality," *Planning Perspectives* 47 (1981): 44.

[29]Mullin, "Impact of National Socialist Policies," 44; Taylor, *Word in Stone*, fig. 77.

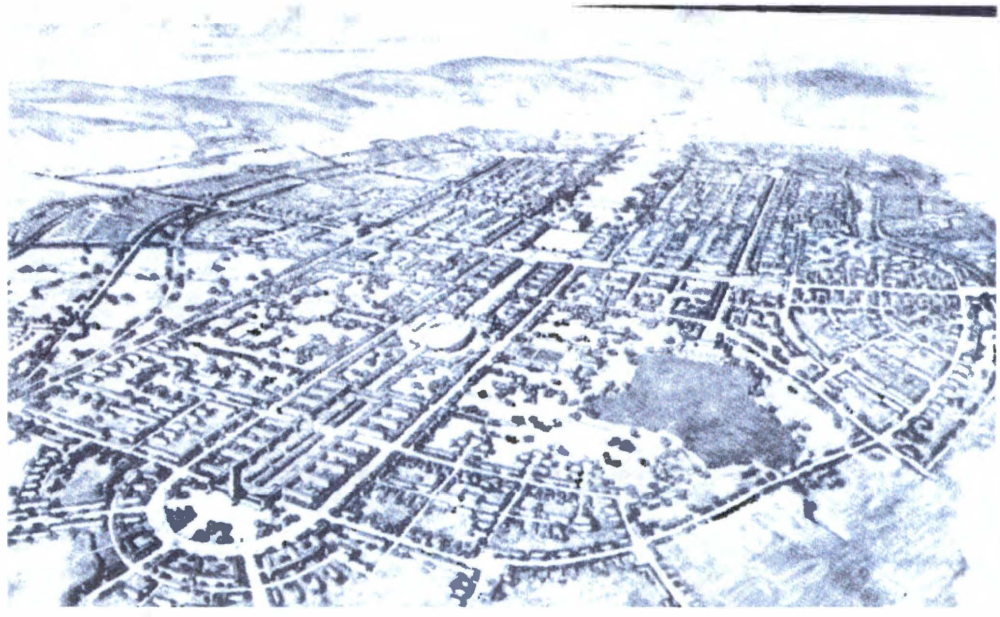

Figure 1.8. Proposed View of Hermann Goering-Werke.

Source: Robert R. Taylor, *The Word in Stone: The Role of Architecture in National Socialist Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), Figure 77.

subsidized, Strength Through Joy cars.[30]

Nazi planners also established a large number of peripheral suburban communities on the outskirts of many well established cities. These residential enclaves, known as *Heimstättes,* represented an attempt by German planners to reconcile their goal of deurbanization with the realities of a modern industrial state. They also reflected an effort on the part of some Nazis to strengthen the blood of the urban dweller and restore a measure of "health" to the cities. Ideally, according to one official, these villages would be populated with "good human material." "The biological selection" of these "new peasants" would be based on "hereditary, race-hygienic criteria." Among these were the "applicant family's ability and willingness to give birth" and their "frequency of birth."[31]

Connected to the adjacent city via modern highways, these communities housed large numbers of urban industrial workers. Yet, despite their proximity to the metropolis, these neighborhoods maintained the illusion of rural domesticity. In part, this feeling was maintained through the clever manipulation of the landscape. Trees and other natural elements were often left standing. Additional trees and vegetation were also planted to reinforce the sense of nature. In many cases, planners also made use of curvilinear streets, often running through lawns and gardens, to give the impression of a remote country lane. Homes, often quite small, were usually provided with generous lots and

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[30]*Ibid.*

[31]Mullin, "Impact of National Socialist Policies," 38; Pahl-Weber and Schubert, "Housing and Urban Development," 165.

setbacks to enhance the bucolic setting. Most homes also came with small gardens, where residents were encouraged to plant flowers and vegetables. Such plots not only contributed to the country atmosphere, but also helped maintain the all-important tie between citizen and soil.[32]

Homes in these developments were constructed in the German vernacular style. Most were typical "Hansel and Gretel" houses, built of white stucco, with steeply pitched roofs, small windows, and exposed wooden beams. Nazi authorities expressed special concern over the qualities of the structure's roof lines. Flat roofs, a sure sign of cultural and social decay, were strictly prohibited for residential use. Ideally, authorities declared, roofs should have a slope of between forty-five and forty eight degrees. In addition, the roofing material ought to be "derived from the earth, quarries, or fields of the landscape" in order to tie the structure "with its soil." Thatch and the "warm red and red-brown of baked tiles" seemed to have been the roofing material of choice for most builders. Some homes also boasted features which would seem out of place in the idealized peasant village. One white-collar *Heimstätte* outside of Hamburg, for example, boasted air-raid shelters in the place of the traditional stable.[33]

One of the earliest, and most successful of these developments was the village of Ramersdorf, located on the outskirts of Munich. Completed in early 1934, the village contained 150 single family homes situated, for the most part, along strips of landscaped

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[32]Mullin, "Impact of National Socialist Policies," 38; Taylor, *Word in Stone*, 232; Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, 210-211.

[33]Taylor, *Word in Stone*, 230; Pahl-Weber and Schubert, "Housing and Urban Development," 185.

park land. The site plan for the community also featured a number of community buildings, including a church. Touted as "the new farmstead" which would "lead Germans back to the soil," the suburban neighborhood was prominently featured in Nazi propaganda. Members of the press, from both Germany and abroad, were paraded down the rustic streets and proudly shown "the German dwelling of the future." Nazi leaders even erected an exhibition hall in the village, so visitors could view their rustic future (see figures 1.9 and 1.10).[34]

Despite the success of the Ramersdorf project, many German leaders remained committed to the goal of deurbanization. To these leaders, steeped in the blood and soil ideology, Ramersdorf was no more than a model for future rural developments. Despite the Reich's substantial investment in urban renewal, a "return to the soil" remained the dominant theme in Nazi propaganda. In keeping with these policies, state planners also proposed the construction of two additional types of rural housing settlements, the *Kleinsiedlung* and the *Nebensiedlung*. The first, and least rural of these, the *Kleinsiedlung*, consisted of privately held homes sited on small agricultural lots. These modest farms, limited to just a handful of acres, were not intended to produce crops on a large scale. Instead, they reflected the Nazi's idyllic view of peasant life, and provided a place where German families could till the soil and achieve self-sufficiency.[35]

Thoughtful planning was to be an important element of these rural villages. These

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[34]Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, 210-211; Taylor, *Word in Stone*, 232.

[35]Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, 211; Mullin, "Impact of National Socialist Policies," 38.

Figure 1.9. German Vernacular Worker's Housing.

Source: Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* {New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1992), 279.

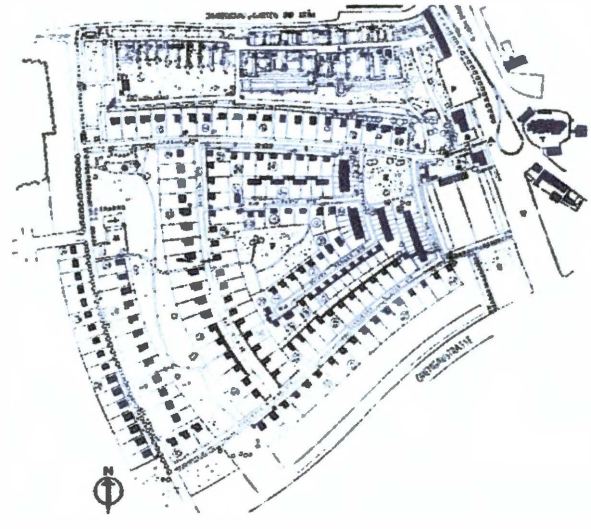

Figure 1.10. Site Plan for Village of Ramersdorf.

Source: Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard, 1985), 28.

would provide "homes for the working man as they never existed before, with generous and centralized planning everywhere." Franz Gutsmiedl, author of *Kraft durch Freude Gestaltet das Schöne Dorf* (Strength Through Joy Creates the Beautiful Village) and a leading advocate of rural resettlement, argued that new developments should follow a set pattern. New communities, he believed, should be attractive and well-ordered, with a centralized core of public facilities. This core would serve as the heart of the village, and would contain a village square and a meeting house for public gatherings. As in Ramersdorf, individual homes would be built in the German peasant style. Most houses were quite small, often containing less than six hundred square feet of living space, much of which was crammed upstairs, under the steeply pitched roof. The small dwellings were offset, however, by the generous lot sizes which allowed for substantial gardens.[36]

In keeping with the rural setting, most homes also boasted a number of outbuildings. Stables and barns were to be constructed adjacent to the tiny cottages. Flat roofs, the bane of Nazi designers, were also to be banned on most of these structures. The Labor Front for Proper German Farm Buildings, however, did begrudgingly permit their use with animal sheds, storehouses or milksheds. Curiously, these rural homes relied on outdoor privies rather than indoor toilets. This was no doubt an attempt on the part of designers to cut costs and ensure authenticity. No doubt it also created a bond between Germans and the soil which most party leaders never imagined.[37]

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[36]Adam, *Art of the Third Reich*, 280; Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, 208.

[37]Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, 208; Taylor, *Word in Stone*, 230; Mullin, "Impact of National Socialist Policies," 40.

The outbreak of war, however, ensured that these communities of small peasant farms were never fully realized. The German government did, however, erect a substantial number of similar rural settlements known as *Hitlerdorfs* (Hitler Villages). One hundred fifty of these communities were built throughout Germany during the1930s. The construction of these settlements served a dual purpose, providing both jobs and housing for the urban poor. This was especially true during the early years of the Third Reich, when unemployment and poverty remained fairly high. *Hitlerdorfs* were, in most respects, very similar to the *Kleinsiedlungs* planned by the Nazis. They were rural, planned communities designed to resettle the urban working class. They also featured small, vernacular homes constructed in the idealized peasant style. The main difference lay in their respective lot sizes. Unlike the multi-acre mini-farms of the *Kleinsiedlungs*, *Hitlerdorf* homes generally sat on lots roughly a quarter of an acre in size. Although such lots were still quite generous, especially by German standards, they failed to fulfill the National Socialist goal of peasant self-sufficiency. In fact, most of these villages were constructed near rural industrial sites to house workers and their families. Hitler could free the *Volk* from the cities, but, it seems, he could not free it from the factories.[38]

Nazi planners would no doubt argue that the *Hitlerdorf* represented a transitional development between the suburban *Heimstätte* and the rural *Kleinsiedlung*. These remote factory villages were no more than a step towards the unity between German blood and soil. The ultimate expression of this goal would be the third and final form of Nazi

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[38]Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, 208; Taylor, *Word in Stone*, 230; Adam, *Art of the Third Reich*, 280-285.

settlement, the *Nebensiedlung*. The most rural of the intended settlements, these communities would consist of vernacular cottages surrounded by larger farm lots. These small private farms would be connected to towns and cities via modern highways, allowing residents to work on "both farm and factory." Among the perceived benefits of these hamlets were increased food production and agricultural self sufficiency. On them, Germans could come to know *Schönheit des Siedlens* (the beauty of homesteading) and revel in *Siedlerfreuden* (settler joy) and *Siedlergluck* (settler prosperity).[39]

As with the *Kleinsiedlung*, however, these farm settlements were never fully realized by the state. Large numbers of these rural homesteads never materialized in the German countryside. In large part, this was deliberate, for these rural homesteads were intended for lands far beyond the borders of the German Reich. These settlements, as well as the more densely populated *Kleinsiedlung*, were part of a broad Nazi population policy known as *Bevolkerungspolitik*, sometimes referred to as "Imperialism by Demography." In addition to the stated goals of partial deurbanization and increased farm production, this policy also called for the conquest and settlement of new territory . This expansion of the state, it was believed, would benefit the Reich in a number of ways. First, it would greatly increase the nation's supply of agricultural and industrial resources. Such growth would also create a defensive buffer zone between Germany and its neighbors. Lastly, and most importantly for the Nazis, this new empire would provide much needed *Lebensraum* (living space) for the German people.[40]

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[39]Mullin, "Impact of National Socialist Policies," 38.

[40]*Ibid.*

Most of this conquest was to take place in Eastern Europe, where fertile lands lay in the hands of undeserving Slavs, Poles, and Russians. The new Nazi empire would stretch deep into present day Russia, extending to the Caucasus Mountains in the south and the Ural Mountains to the east. From the late thirties into the early years of the war, Nazi officials worked feverishly developing plans for the settlement and transformation of this new territory. This was to be Germany's frontier, a vast open plain where the *Volk* could live, prosper, and expand. Bolstered by this *Lebensraum*, the German people could dominate the continent and finally achieve their racial destiny.[41]

The indigenous populations of this conquered territory would be addressed in a number of ways. About half the native population, including all Jews, Gypsies, and other so-called undesirables, would be exterminated in the Nazi death camps. A smaller number of Russians, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians would be resettled in the Far East, in a remote, dependent Siberian state. The remainder of the population, a limited number of residents deemed to possess nordic racial characteristics, would be allowed to remain. Over time, these persons would be "Germanized" and integrated into the conquering *Volk*. In addition to destroying most of the native population of the East, Nazi planners also insisted on eliminating much of the indigenous culture. Practically all local architecture was to be destroyed. In Poland, for example, officials ordered that all architectural blemishes be destroyed. Specifically cited among these offending elements were, not surprisingly, flat roofs. One proclamation demanded that "everything ugly,

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[41] John Keegan, ed. *The Times Atlas of the Second World War* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 91.

unclean, [and] aimless" be removed in order to establish an authentic and worthy "German" environment.[42]

Throughout the conquered landscape a new settlement pattern would then emerge. Peasant farms and villages, similar to the *Kleinsiedlung* and the *Nebensiedlung*, would extend across the countryside. These would be inhabited by racially fit German settlers along with a handful of Germanized Russians and Poles. Primarily agricultural communities, these farms would promote self sufficiency among the *Volk*. They would also produce an agricultural surplus, much needed to feed the urban population of Hitler's vast new empire. Carefully dispersed among these Tyrolean hamlets would be a smaller number of regional towns. These towns were intended to serve a number of functions. First and foremost, these were seen as trade centers, sites where agricultural products from surrounding farms would be collected, processed, and shipped to the cities of the Reich. As retail and commercial centers, they would also distribute manufactured goods to the hinterlands. These towns would also be cultural and political centers and would contain facilities to entertain, educate, and unite the population. Lastly, these regional centers also served a strategic purpose. Each would house an army garrison, charged with defending the greater Fatherland from the barbarian hordes to the east.[43]

Given the importance of these regional towns, it is not surprising that German planners gave considerable thought to their design and location. The proper placement of these regional centers became an imperative concern among Nazi officials. To assist in

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[42]Keegan, *Atlas*, 91; Taylor, *Word in Stone*, 84.

[43]Keegan, *Atlas*, 90-91.

these matters, they turned to Walter Christaller, a noted German geographer and the author of Central Place Theory. Christaller's theory, established in his 1933 dissertation, attempted to explain patterns of urban settlement and the market forces which shaped them. According to Christaller, cities and towns exist in hierarchy within a given region. A community's status within their regional hierarchy is determined by the level of goods and services available in the town. Towns centrally located within the region, and therefore most accessible to the population, are likely to have the greatest range of these goods and services and reside at the higher end of this hierarchy. Surrounding towns would be proportionateley smaller and would achieve a lesser status.[44]

Nazi officials, who wanted to settle their new frontier in an orderly, productive and efficient manner, appointed Christaller to the Reich's regional planning board. There he helped produce a number of proposed settlement policies which reflected the tenants of Central Place Theory. His goal, in keeping with the Blood and Soil ideology, was to provide for rural settlement while maintaining a proper balance between cities, towns and villages. Industries, he believed, should be decentralized to prevent them from dominating any town or settlement. Areas unsuitable for agricultural use would be converted to forests or used for industrial sites, thus reserving the best land for the *Volk*. Other physical factors, such as mountains, rivers, and mineral deposits would also play a role in the selection of town sites. Wherever possible, Christaller recommended the use of existing infrastructure and advocated the adoption of traditional town sites and

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[44]For a complete explanation of Christaller's rather complex theory see Stefanie Ohnesorg, "Christaller's Central Place Theory and How it was Applied in Regional Planning in the Federal Republic of Germany" (M.A. Thesis, University of Waterloo, 1986), 26-82.

borders. Settlements would be tied to regional towns and cities by rail and via a network of secondary roads and high speed *Autobahns*. As a rule, most settlers would live within forty kilometers (25 miles) of a regional town or city.[45]

The heart of this plan were the new regional towns, which would serve as the administrative and trade centers for most settlers of the eastern empire. To the Nazis, these towns assumed a classical quality. Like the fortified Roman towns which came centuries before them, these communities were to be the military, cultural, and political outposts of the next great global power. The design of these towns, understandably, was a matter of critical importance to German officials. In keeping with the Roman model, German planners preferred a uniform model for these remote settlements. These regional centers were intended to have a population of about twenty thousand persons. The Nazi government commissioned architect Heinrich Eggerstadt to design this new type of town, under the supervision of Albert Speer. Officials also authorized a test community be built according to Eggerstadt and Speer's specifications. The site of the model town was to be Peenemünde, an isolated site on the Baltic Sea which was home to the German rocket and missile program.[46]

Physically, the new town of Peenemünde would have resembled the Roman outpost it was built to emulate. Like a Roman town, Peenemünde was formal, square, and well ordered. The community would be strictly zoned according to land use activities

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[45]Ohnesorg, "Christaller," 124-138; Keegan, *Atlas*, 91.

[46]Krier, *Albert Speer*, 192-193; Gerhard Fehl and Tilman Harlander, *Hitlers Sozialer Wohnungsbau, 1940-1945: Wohnungspolitik, Baugestaltung und Siedlungsplanung* (Hamburg:Hans Christians Verlag, 1986), 235-238.

and functions. The core of the town was a large square composed of six rectangular housing blocks situated, in groups of three, on either side of a long, straight central corridor. This was, for the most part, worker's housing and consisted of either high density apartments or townhouses. Each of these housing blocks surrounded a large forested park. The corners of the blocks would contain retail businesses and "handcraft workshops." The central avenue, extending from the town's monumental entranceway to a climactic apex, would also contain businesses and would form the community's axis. At the end of this boulevard, overlooking the Baltic, Eggerstadt placed the town's political and cultural center. This structure, resembling a neoclassical temple, provided the necessary *Stadtkrone*, or focal point, for the town (see figures 1.11 and 1.12).[47]

Outside of this massive square of housing, whose perimeter resembled the walls of a fortified town, lay other facilities and land uses. The local rail station, or *Banhof*, was conveniently situated just outside the town, adjacent to the community's formal entrance. A straight road, connected to a nearby *Autobahn* also led to these gates. Potentially noxious facilities, including mechanized industries, water treatment plants, and hospitals were placed away from the town's core. Schools and athletic fields, which required substantial open space, were also located away from the community's center. Further afield, Eggerstadt and Speer designed a series of medium density neighborhoods which would house mangers, skilled workers, and government officials. Beyond these, extending into the hinterlands, were the farms and agricultural settlements which would

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[47]Krier, *Albert Speer*, 192-193; Fehl and Harlander, *Hitlers Sozialer Wohnungsbau*, 235-238.

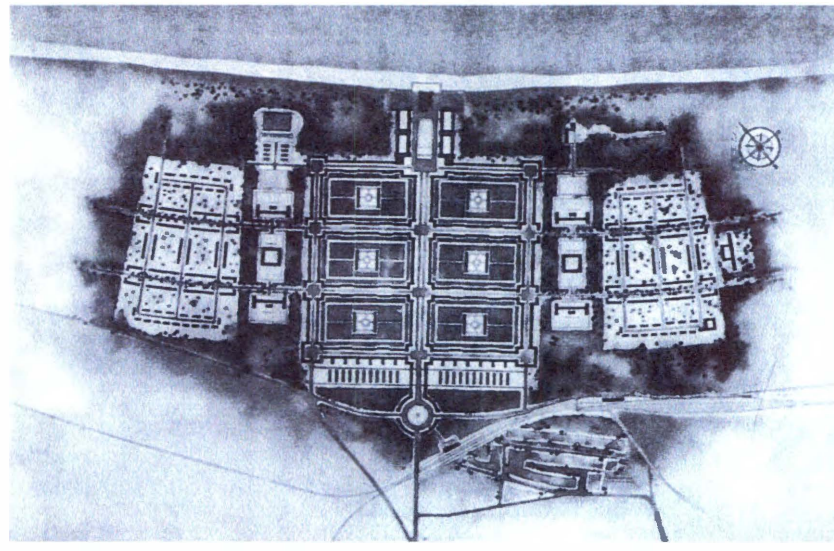

Figure 1.11. Proposed Plan for Peenemünde.

Source: Leon Krier, ed., *Albert Speer, Architecture: 1932-1942* (Brussels: Aux Archives D'Architecture Moderne, 1985), 47.

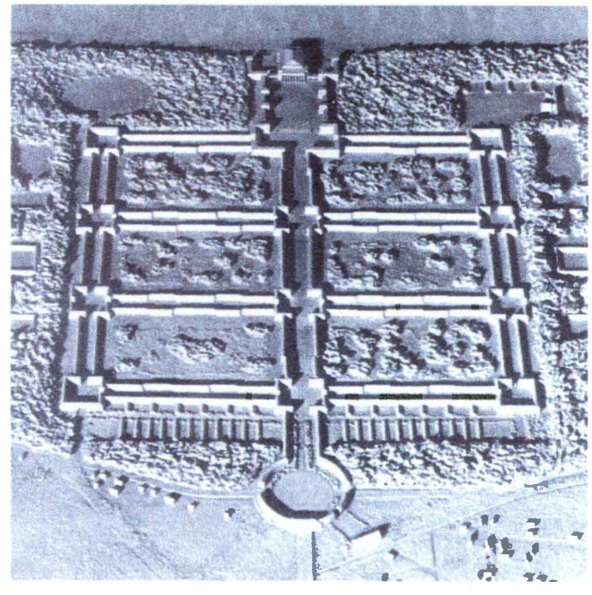

Figure 1.12. Speer's Model of Peenemünde.

Source: Leon Krier, ed., *Albert Speer, Architecture: 1932-1942* (Brussels: Aux Archives D'Architecture Moderne, 1985), 47.

come to epitomize the German frontier.[48]

An alternative design for Peenemünde, submitted at about the same time as Eggerstadt's proposal, reflects similar design principles. Drawn by architect J. Schnieder, this plan also features a formal entrance followed by a dominant central corridor. This plan also includes strict zoning, a cultural and political complex overlooking the Baltic, and blocks of worker housing overlooking large, forested parks. This alternative plan, however, differed in many respects. For one, Schnieder's design, while symmetrical, was largely radial and thus lacked the classical militarism of Eggerstadt and Speer's plan. In addition, the Schnieder plan included a number of amenities suggesting that Peenemünde might become a seaside spa or resort community. Included among these features were an oceanside restaurant and coffeehouse, inns, and, in a nod to their Roman forebears, indoor public baths. As a center of rest and recreation for the *Volk*, the town would also boast a hospital, a convalescent home, and a youth hostel (see figure 1.13).[49]

Conspicously absent from the Peenemünde plans were provisions for a church or any form of public worship. Although churches were included in some early community plans, including the model village of Ramersdorf, later designs pointedly omitted the structures. Many in the Nazi party, including such luminaries as SS chief Heinrich Himmler and Reichlsleiter Martin Bormann, expressed hostility to any form of religion, including Christianity. The church, they believed, competed with the state and party for the people's loyalty and need for moral guidance. Christianity was especially reviled,

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[48]Krier, *Alert Speer*, 192-193.

[49] Fehl and Harlander, *Hitlers Sozialer Wohnungsbau*, 235-238.

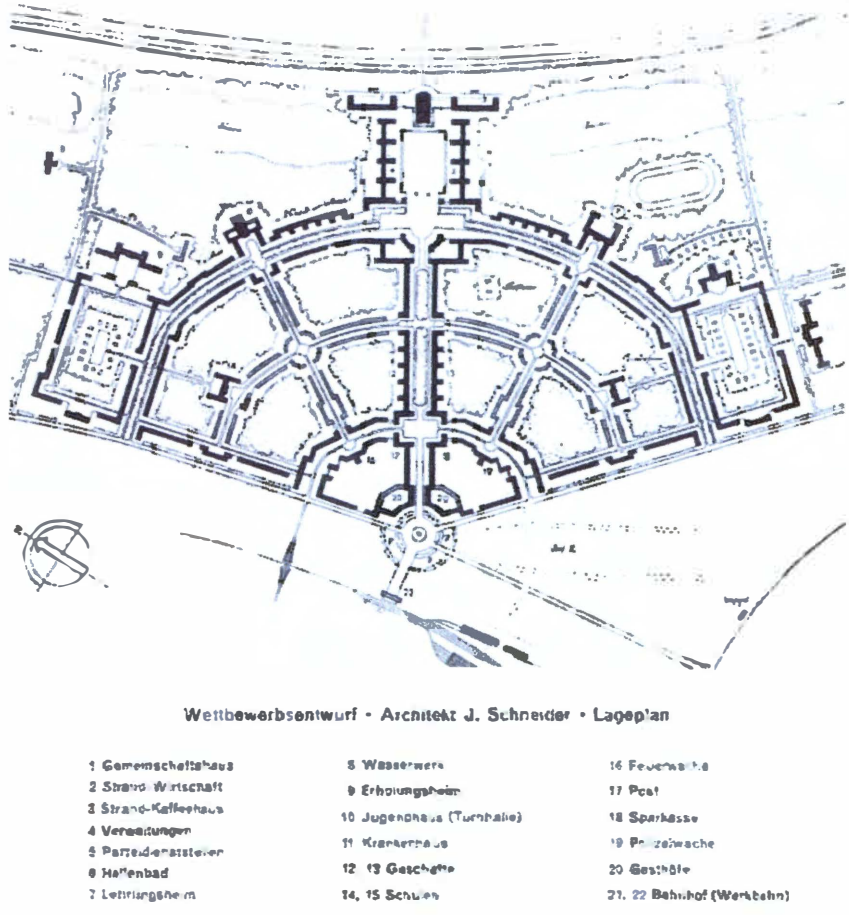

Figure 1.13. Alternative Site Plan for Peenemünde.

Source: Gerhard Fehl and Tilman Harlander, *Hitlers Sozialer Wohnungsbau, 1940-1945: Wohnungspolitik, Baugestaltung und Siedlungsplanung* (Hamburg:Hans Christians Verlag, 1986), 212.

since it encouraged weakness through the virtues of compassion and charity.[50]

Although German authorities demolished few existing churches, they built almost none and often refused to repair those damaged by allied bombs. Rather than invest in churches, Nazi leaders encouraged the development of civic or party-related structures to foster a sense of community and encourage patriotic virtues. One such structure was the *Volk* hall, a "community building" designed for local rallies and party spectacles. Every town was to have such a structure, preferably located near the community's center. Ideally, the *Volk* hall would overlook a town square, which could host outdoor events. Extensive plans were made for new *Volk* halls, but existing structures, including churches, were sometimes pressed into service.[51]

In some towns, other types of structures would serve the function of community building. In the case of Peenemünde, the monumental "cultural center" would play host to municipal and party rallies. The most extreme of these secular meeting houses were a collection of outdoor amphitheaters known as *Thingplätzes* (thing places). A favorite of *Volkish* fanatics, the *Thingplätze* would be the "outward embodiment of the National Socialist ideology's concept of community." They were designed not only as a throwback to the Roman era, but also to remind Germans of their ancient tribal past. Like their Teutonic ancestors, Germans would sit in the forest and take part in native rituals. Most

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[50]Speer reports that Himmler once objected to plans for a new Reichsbank because the building's hallways, intersecting at right angles, formed a cross. Bormann, for his part, argued for the destruction of all churches in the renovation of Berlin. Speer, *Third Reich*, 141-143, 198; Taylor, *Word in Stone*, 209.

[51]Taylor, *Word in Stone*, 173-175.

of these performances were fairly predictable, plays or party speeches, but some bordered on the profane or absurd. In any case, ordinary Germans showed little enthusiasm for watching *Faust* amid "sacred" rocks and trees in the winter air and the *Thingplätze* movement soon died.[52]

As in the case of most of the Reich's building plans, the model town of Peenemünde and the regional centers of the East never came to fruition. The war and ensuing defeat prevented their construction. Yet these towns share a striking number of characteristics with development plans for much larger German cities. Indeed, there are a number of consistent features found throughout virtually the entire range of German urban and rural developments during the Nazi era. Combined, they embody a Nazi style of community design. These distinguishing features include the presence of a strong central axis, a sense of monumentality, easy access to auto and rail transportation, the use of neoclassical or vernacular architecture, strict use of zoning, and the ready availability of parks and community facilities.

The *Volk* halls and cultural centers of the regional towns, for example, are simply scaled-down versions of Speer's Great Hall of the German People. They also served the same functions as the Berlin goliath, hosting party events and promoting unity among the *Volk*. His monumental north-south axis is also repeated, on a much smaller scale, in towns and villages throughout the empire. All, notably, feature a *Stadtkrone* of some sort, be it Hitler's triumphant arch or the tower at Herman Goering-Werke. Virtually all communities and cities also exhibit ample and convenient parkland. Even the modest

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[52]*Ibid.*, 210-218.

Hitlerdorfs and suburban villages, such as Ramersdorf offered residents public recreational space. Strict and, at times, innovative zoning was evident not only in the large cities, but also in small regional towns such as Peenemünde.

An examination of the plans also shows that German planners were keenly aware of logistical, economic, and geographic realities. Economic development and employment concerns were demonstrated in most development projects. Some undertakings, such as the construction of Wolfsburg, were specifically designed around this goal. Even rural residents, expected to benefit from farm surpluses, had industrial employment opportunities in nearby factories. In order to further ensure prosperity, officials also paid special attention to the location of proposed developments. Communities were to be spaced at well defined intervals in an effort to most effectively take advantage of regional market areas. Transportation networks were also designed to facilitate economic growth. The automobile assumed a central role in the Reich's transportation planning. Autobahns and secondary highways were to connect all population centers of the Reich. Most towns would also have rail service, larger cities would possess airports. All citizens, regardless of class or station, would have access to Hitler's grand empire.

Yet, with all the Reich's towns' promised to offer, it is important to remember all they lacked. Few new churches were planned, many towns had no houses of worship save for temples to the nation and party. Residents had virtually no role in deciding their style of domicile. Personal choice and individual expression were unheard of. Good taste lay in the eyes of the state and its architects. Worse still was the human cost of Hitler's

grandiose plans. Millions of non-Germans, including Jews, Slavs, and Gypsies, would be murdered for the sake of a racially pure empire. Robbed of their homelands, millions of others would have lived as virtual slaves in subjugated, dependent states. Rather than constructing a vision of harmony and community, the Nazis would have created a landscape of tyranny and monotony.

Chapter II

Dreamland

Seaside, Florida, widely hailed as the genesis of new urbanism, began in 1946, when urban wealth encountered the rural South. In that year a Birmingham department store magnate, J.S. Smolian, purchased eighty acres of remote, undeveloped beachfront property on the Florida Panhandle. He paid a princely one hundred dollars per acre for the scrub and weed-filled parcel. Pundits, even within his own family, deemed him a fool for the purchase. Yet Smolian was unfazed, for he had a vision for this property. It would become "Dreamland Heights," a summer vacation retreat for his six hundred employees. Smolian's dream, however, was never realized. Instead the land lay largely vacant and undeveloped for much of the next thirty years.

Then, in 1978, Smolian's grandson, Robert Davis, inherited the sandy lot. Davis, a generation removed from his grandfather's busy shelves, soon created his own vision for the land. He would build a model American town, a community espousing the best, cutting-edge ideas in urban design. His creation, Seaside, has since revolutionized the way planners view their communities. During the 1990s, Davis and his architects have been showered with awards and accolades for their breakthrough town. Ironically, at the same time, J.S. Smolian's Birmingham store sat empty and abandoned. His Pizitz store closed in 1988 and has since cast a large vacant shadow over the city's struggling

downtown.[1]

Smolian's store fell victim to post-war suburban expansion. The downtown retailer simply could not compete with newer, suburban mall-based stores. Suburban growth was also on the mind of his grandson. Robert Davis, a Harvard-educated real estate developer, was the at the forefront of a new community design movement, known as "new urbanism." New urbanism arose in the 1980s as a reaction against the suburban explosion of the twentieth century. Its followers, mostly architects, blame suburban design and growth for a host of modern urban, environmental, and social ills. According to these reformers, everything from urban crime to teenage obesity can be linked to poorly conceived suburban "sprawl." Their proposed remedy is a restructuring of American communities and the reintroduction of traditional commercial and residential development patterns. By doing so, the movement's leaders hope to restore vitality and viability to the nation's "built legacy."[2]

New urbanism, despite the claims of its supporters, is anything but new. The roots of the movement go back more than a century, to the urban reform movements of the 1880s and 1890s. At that time, critics on both sides of the Atlantic looked with utter dismay at the poverty and filth associated with early industrial cities. Reformers, charged with Victorian benefaction, proposed countless schemes to redeem communities from disease and sin. Notable among these was a shorthand clerk turned crusader named

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[1]Steven Brooke, *Seaside* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican, 1995), 13; *Birmingham Business Journal*, June 29, 2001.

[2]Brooke, *Ibid.*, 13-14; Michael Leccese and Katherine McCormick, eds., *Charter of the New Urbanism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999), 7, 64.

Ebenezer Howard. By all appearances, Howard was an unlikely crusader. A modest man of modest means, he was an "elderly nobody" who might easily have been dismissed as "a negligible crank." Yet Howard's ideas would revolutionize community design and transform him into an icon of British eccentricity.[3]

In his 1898 book *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (originally titled *Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform*), Howard proposed an alternative to the expansive industrial cities of his day. Rather than pack working class residents into dense cities, Howard proposed housing them in a system of newly built "garden cities." These towns would surround existing industrial cities, and would be linked to them by rail. A wide agricultural greenbelt would separate the new towns from the central city. This farmland would provide food for urban residents and employment and revenue for the smaller town. More importantly, this open space would serve as a valuable buffer against the vice and grime of the city.[4]

Howard envisioned his towns holding about thirty thousand residents each. As one city reached its population threshold another would be built until they surrounded the core city like the spokes on a wheel. His model town, which he allowed might vary given local topography, was also wheel shaped. The hub of the town consisted of a large public garden, surrounded by a ring of municipal buildings. Among these were a town hall, a library, a hospital, and a theater. These structures, in turn, were encircled by a much larger central park. Beyond these lay concentric rings of tree lined housing, along with

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[3]Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1965).

[4]Howard, *Ibid.*, 52-53; 58-65.

another circular park, known as the "Grand Avenue." At the edge of the town, at the onset of the agricultural belt, Howard designated sites for factories and rail stations. He was less specific regarding the location of markets and retail stores, but presumably they would also be located within easy walking distance for most residents.[5]

Howard's ideas were well received by the British public. yet despite their popularity, just two garden cities, Letchworth and Welwyn, were built in Great Britain. Still, his proposals had a profound influence on town planning in the years prior to World War II, particularly in the United States. Depression era towns such as Radburn, New Jersey and Norris, Tennessee displayed many of the attributes of Howard's garden city, including greenbelts, convenient park spaces, and ample provision for local pedestrian traffic. In many cases, these projects were the products of federal New Deal agencies. Norris, for example, was a development of the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Resettlement Administration also engaged in townbuilding, and constructed three communities based, loosely, on Howard's Garden City concept. Greenbelt, Maryland; Greenhills, Ohio; and Greendale, Wisconsin all represented federal efforts to "demonstrate in practice the soundness of planning and operating towns according to certain garden city principles."[6]

Following World War II, Howard's influence on British planning became even

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[5]Howard, *Ibid.*, 52-57; Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 31-33.

[6]Clarence S. Stein, *Toward New Towns for America* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1966), 118-119.

more pronounced, as the construction of so called "new towns" became official government policy. Britain's post-war Greater London Plan, for example, called for the creation of a greenbelt, five miles wide, around the existing city. Beyond this would be a succession of new communities, some as much as a hundred miles away, which would house low income families cleared from London's slums. Eventually, British authorities built twenty-eight new towns around the capital and other cities. Yet, though these grandiose plans generated considerable excitement among many government officials, their modern, international appearance left some cold. Post-war developments, intended to reflect Britain's progress, lacked the warm traditional style of Letchworth and Welwyn. Journalist Bill Bryson, for example, described his impressions of the new town of Milton Keynes, built forty-nine miles from London:

> "The town itself was a strange amalgam of styles. The grassless shady strips along the centers of the main boulevards gave them a vaguely French air. The landscaped light-industrial parks around the fringes looked German. The grid plan and numbered street names recalled America. The buildings were the featureless sort found around any international airport. In short, it looked anything but English."[7]

This spate of new town construction sparked debate over just what constituted a "real" town. "Balance" and "self-sufficiency," it was believed, were requirements for genuine town status. American planner Thomas McDade, for example, defined a town as "a development of substantial acreage of land under direction of a single entity in relation to a master plan." In addition, he argued that a viable community "provides for

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[7]Marion Clawson and Peter Hall, *Planning and Urban Growth: An Anglo-American Comparison* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1973), 202-205; Bill Bryson, *Notes from a Small Island* (New York: Avon Books, 1997), 152.

and interrelates" a full complement of land uses including residential, "for [the] complete life cycle," institutional, commercial and industrial. Dennis O'Harrow, another American planner, cited even more detailed requirements for the autonomous municipality. In a 1964 article entitled "New Towns or New Sprawl," he contended that a "self sufficient" town must be able to "contain and support" the following facilities and activities:

- a commercial center
- a reasonable range of cultural activities (short of grand opera and such)
- a reasonable range of recreational facilities
- sufficient medical and health facilities to include a general hospital and a psychiatric clinic-hospital
- all necessary public facilities, such as schools, water, complete sewage treatment, etc.
- a range of residential facilities to accommodate all economic classes
- a range of residential building types, from the free-standing house to the apartment building (though not necessarily five acre lots, nor high rise flats)
- employment opportunities for at least ninety percent of the labor force.[8]

Yet, while planners and builders in the United Kingdom worked towards these goals, Americans increasingly moved away from the new town concept. Following the

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[8]James A. Clapp, *New Towns and Urban Policy* (New York: Dunellen, 1971), 56-57.

war, community planners in the United States instead pursued different development patterns. Some, faced with unprecedented post-war housing pressures, engaged in a frenzy of suburban expansion. Still others, disenchanted with the recent past, embraced modernism. Inspired largely by the work of Le Corbusier, modernists advocated a fresh start for America's cities and began building high density, high rise housing on newly cleared urban land.[9]

These seemingly divergent development patterns wrought havoc on the post-war urban landscape. Affluent and middle class urbanites fled American cities *en masse*, ensconcing themselves in a seemingly endless expanse of suburban tract housing. Shopping, services, and infrastructure soon followed, abandoning the central city to the urban underclass. Increasingly, the poor found themselves crowded into high rise housing projects segregated from the rest of society. Attempts at urban renewal did little to improve the situation, as modernist designers attempted to impose Le Corbusier's vision on established cities and neighborhoods.[10]

The ensuing chaos provoked a torrent of criticism by disaffected urbanites. Among the earliest, and most vocal of these was Jane Jacobs. Jacobs, a resident of Greenwich Village and an editor for *Architectural Forum* , became disillusioned with post war changes taking place in and about her city. She soon expressed her misgivings, first in *Fortune* and later in her 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* Jacobs waxed nostalgically for the bakers and shopkeepers of her downtown

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[9]Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 207-212, 126-132.

[10]*Ibid.*

neighborhood, and condemned the planners who threatened to banish them in their pursuit of strictly zoned land uses. She blasted the designs of the modernists as "clumsy" and "vulgarized" and their towering structures as "a great, visible ego" reflecting "someone's achievement." Jacobs also railed against proponents of suburban garden cities. Howard, she asserted, was little more than a "spinner" of "powerful and city-destroying ideas." His vision, she argued, was "paternalistic, if not authoritarian," and would ultimately help destroy the "intricate, many faceted cultural life of the metropolis."[11]

Having rejected the garden city and the modernist tower as models for urban development, Jacobs instead proposed a return to the largely unplanned city of the past. Diversity, she proclaimed, was the hallmark of a great city and the key to urban vitality. Mixed land uses, a variety of structures, and a heterogeneous population, elements discouraged by strict planning and zoning, were essential to the health of the metropolis. High densities were not only permissible, they were desirable. "Things have changed," she wrote, "since the days when Ebenezer Howard looked at the slums of London and concluded that to save people, city life must be abandoned." In addition, Jacobs also championed the use of sidewalks, the construction of neighborhood parks, and the adoption of short city block units. She also called for the "attrition of automobiles," but fell short of blaming them for urban disintegration. Instead, she heaped blame upon city planners, who did "not know how to plan for workable or viable cities . . . with or

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[11]Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 17-23.

without automobiles."[12]

Jacob's attack on the planning profession coincided with an increased awareness of ecological concerns. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, first brought widespread attention to the increasing degradation of the nation's natural environment. Though mostly concerned with pollution from chemicals and pesticides, Carson's book called national attention to the impact of public policies on the environment. Inspired by Carson, planners also began to look critically at the possible repercussions of existing development and housing patterns.

These concerns were expressed fully in 1969 with the publication of *Design with Nature*. Written by Ian McHarg, a professor of planning and landscape architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, *Design with Nature* argued that planners should work in concert with the natural world and established a methodology for environmentally sensitive growth. "Clearly," McHarg wrote, "the problem of man and nature is not one of providing the background for the human play, or even ameliorating the grim city." "It is," instead, "the necessity of sustaining nature as a source of life." By doing so, he believed, "we can create the humane city" and "the choice of city or countryside will be between two excellences, each indispensable, each different, both complementary, both life enhancing."[13]

The issues raised by Jacobs, McHarg and others led to a reassessment of suburban

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[12]*Ibid.*, 7, 150-151, 218.

[13]Ian McHarg, *Design with Nature* (New York: The Natural History Press, 1969), 3, 19.

expansion and residential development patterns in the United States. Among the first of these was Christopher Alexander, a professor of architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. Alexander, Viennese born and Cambridge educated, rejected the "cardboard-like" architecture which prevailed at the time. Instead, he sought to restore the "organic order" present in traditional architecture. Such structures, he argued, have a "kind of rightness about them" that are "completely orderly and at peace with themselves." Alexander also embraced the concept of "self-governing, self-sustaining neighborhoods" and initiated People Rebuilding Berkeley, an attempt to foster "self-creating" communities in that city. These attempts at communalism ultimately failed, however, and led to a call for increased activism among urban designers. "In order for things to become more beautiful and alive," Alexander proclaimed, "it is necessary for people like myself to be directly involved in the act of construction rather than fiddling around on paper."[14]

Ironically, one of Alexander's strongest allies in this crusade would be Leon Krier, a so-called "paper architect" who, though widely read and published, had never actually designed a completed structure. Called the "Le Corbusier of our day," Krier emerged during the 1970s as the most outspoken critic of modernism. "The principal aim of industrial civilization has been to transform the most beautiful of cities into the worst enemies of man." "Industrialization," in his view, has "only facilitated centralization of capital and of political power" while destroying "those cities and landscapes which had been the result of thousands of years of human labor." Rejecting the "obsessive

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[14]Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 259.

emptiness" and "confused formulations" of modern architecture, Krier argued that "the form and quality of urban space can only be verified by historical models." The architect disdains modern structures and techniques, including curtain walls, flat roofs, and HVAC systems, in favor of traditional building styles and materials. Thus, among Krier's followers, neoclassicism and the "ageless mandala of the Roman camp" have become the model for community design and serve as "reminder[s] of the Empire's lasting hold, its beneficence, order, and its splendor."[15]

Krier also lashed out at suburban growth, which he blamed for the rise of the "industrial anti-city." "Suburban sprawl," he argued, "is based on a marriage of convenience and, lacking any roots, it repudiates heritage, traditions, and cultures." In Krier's eyes, the suburb is an insidious creature which "wants to conquer the world because it cannot be at peace with itself."

"The suburb without a city is like a cancer without a body," he wrote, adding:

> "A suburb built 100 miles away from a city will do everything to attack its victim: it will erect vast infrastructures and mobilize colossal machines in such a manner as to realize its objectives of destruction. The suburb strangles the city surrounding it and kills the city, tearing out its heart. A suburb can only survive, it cannot live. It can survive like a parasite, consuming both city and countryside. No city and no countryside, however rich and fertile, can survive besieged by a suburb."[16]

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[15]Leon Krier, *Houses, Palaces, Cities* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 7, 13, 19-20, 3-37.

[16]*Ibid.*, 104.

Krier also hurled invectives at modern planning and zoning. A "good plan," according to Krier, "is both of a formal and moral nature" and "fixes once and for all" building types, public spaces, and land uses. Zoning, he believes, "mobilizes" these "immovable and fixed values." It is "an instrument of industrial monopoly planning and is not democratic but totalitarian." The result is "simply a sum of buildings and functions" with no "body and soul" and the destruction of "Pre-industrial urban communities, of urban democracy and culture." "If we start dismembering a human body," he wrote, "we slaughter the individual," adding, "that is exactly what zoning does to the body of the city." Krier argued that zoned cities such as New York and Los Angeles were not, in fact, cities but mere "agglomeration[s] of buildings." "Venice," however, with its traditional design elements, "is a city and so it will remain even if inhabited by cats and fish." The architect then concluded with a final, classical pronouncement: "Just as Carthage was the first enemy of Rome, I have yet to repeat again: '*Ceterum censeo zoning essere deletium*'."[17]

Krier also waxed nostagically for traditional, pre-industrial urban centers. Such cities, he believed, are characterized by their densities and compactness. The major definer of such communities, he argued, are pedestrian distances. This primacy of foot traffic encouraged the development of "cities within the city." The urban quarter, which contains "all daily functions of urban life," becomes the crucial element of Krier's ideal

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[17]"In my opinion, Zoning must be destroyed." Krier's declaration is an allusion to Cato the Elder's famous dictum "*Ceterum censeo Carthago essere deletium* (In my opinion, Carthage must be destroyed.)." Interestingly, Cato, also known as Cato the Censor, was widely known for his outspoken opposition to new or nontraditional ideas. Krier, *Houses, Places, Cities*, 32-33, 102, 104-105.

city. These neighborhoods, "not exceeding 35 hectares (86 acres) and 15,000 inhabitants" represent, he contends, the optimal size for "rural or urban communities." In evaluating these quarters, the architect focused almost exclusively on examples from European cities. In fact, Krier's arguments were decidedly Eurocentric. To him, the continental city was "a place of privileges, civil rights, and liberties." In contrast, the American city, characterized by low density expansion, was "a place of damnation, but necessary for survival."[18]

Krier's angry rhetoric was more than an assault against planning. It was also a call for a radical restructuring of urban society. "Reconstruction" became the rallying cry for Krier and his followers. "The project which our generation must elaborate has to fight the destruction of urban society on all levels, cultural, political, economic." Architects, he commands, must "refuse" to "comply with the deficiencies of existing legislation and budgeting" and "recognize the value of pre-industrial cities." Krier's mission reflects more than a quest for urban renewal, it is an attempt to reverse the course of modernity and return to an "artisanal" order. "The enormous work which awaits our generation in repairing the damages and destructions of the last thirty years must be undertaken in a perspective of material permanence," he wrote, adding "Only with this project of reconstruction can we redefine our role as architects and establish the Authority of Architecture as Art [sic]."[19]

The extent of Krier's influence on modern designers is difficult to gauge. It is

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[18]Krier, *Houses, Places, Cities*, 30-31.

[19]*Ibid.*, 38-39.

clear, however, that a number of influential architects have accepted his call for reconstruction. As one critic noted: "There is every indication now that his influence, his arguments and strategies as well as his 'style' are firmly embedded in the architectural sensibility of the coming generation." "Krier," he noted, "is not only an architectural hero" but "the most important such hero today." Among this legion of converts was Robert Davis, developer of Seaside. Davis, educated at Antioch College and Harvard, established himself as an innovative builder in the Miami suburb of Coconut Grove during the 1970s. About the same time, he became exposed to the writings and theories of Leon Krier. Davis soon realized that his eighty beachfront acres, recently inherited, constituted the "ideal parcel of land for a sensibly designed town."[20]

Davis resolved to build a community based on Krier's design principles. He longed to create "an environment that would draw people out of their houses and onto their porches" and "an atmosphere of neighborliness" and "familiarity." In 1980 he met with his architectural mentor and hired Krier as a consultant on his new project. Krier offered advice on street scale, recreational facilities, and the siting of community facilities. In return, Davis granted Krier a building lot in the new town. For Krier, "Seaside was a dream come true." "I always said," he remarked, "I would never build unless conditions were right." Seaside offered Krier an opportunity to erect his first built structure, an environment which finally met his standards of community.[21]

Davis also found kindred spirits in Miami architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth

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[20]Brooke, *Seaside*, 14-15.

[21]*Ibid.* 18, 71-73.

Plater-Zyberk, of the firm DPZ. Like Davis, the married professional couple also subscribed to a number of Leon Krier's theories. They embraced traditional community design and espoused the value of vernacular architecture. They also shared his contempt for strict land use divisions imposed by zoning. "The new American city," in their opinion, is like "an unmade omelet: eggs, cheese, vegetables, a pinch of salt, but each consumed, in turn, raw." Town planning was "no longer a "humanistic discipline based upon history, aesthetics and culture" but a "technical profession based on numbers." "The planning profession, worshiping at the alter of zoning" reduced the American city "into simplistic categories and quantities of sprawl."[22]

Rather than rely on traditional zoning, Seaside's architects chose to regulate land uses through the use of the town's "urban code." This code, "physically based," clustered structures not by use, but by "volume, articulation and relationship to the street." Portrayed as a relatively simple, poster sized graphic, the Seaside code was intended to be a "graphic document" easily understood by "the citizen-buyer." The document proscribes strict guidelines concerning yards, porches, out-buildings, parking, and building heights among eight different allowed building types. These structure types included residential buildings, mixed use residences (residential and lodging, office and residential, and retail, residential and lodging), and workshops, the latter no doubt a concession to Krier's nostalgia for pre-industrial crafts and trades. The code also allowed for an unspecified "special district" which could be built, by an approved architect, under

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[22]Brooke, *Seaside*, 17-18; Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (New York: North Point Press, 2000), 9-11.

the strict supervision of "the Seaside administration."[23]

Far more restrictive than a conventional building code, Seaside's regulations also addressed many of the town's architectural and aesthetic features. Davis envisioned a town of cottages constructed in the Gulf Coast vernacular style. The town's code, while not dictating the architectural style, more or less prescribed it through its numerous specifications. Structures were required to be of wood-frame construction, built off the ground, with deep front porches, and square or vertical windows. The code further dictated that all homes had to be painted pastel colors with "approved contrasting trim," and shutters, if used, had to be functional. All residential yards were planted with native vegetation, not grass, and were enclosed in a picket fence unique to their street. Asphalt shingles were banned by the code. Tin emerged as the material of choice. Flat roofs were strictly banned from all buildings, garages and sheds and were allowed only "as a habitable deck enclosed by a continuous wooden balustrade (see figure 2.1)."[24]

In addition its urban code, Seaside also boasted a town plan. Also produced by Duany and Plater-Zyberk, this plan specified the location and nature of the development's streets, amenities, and community resources. In keeping with Krier's community design theories, the entire town was designed on a pedestrian-friendly scale. The "five minute walk," a distance of a quarter mile, became one of the plan's primary design principles. All of one's daily needs were to be within this distance, reducing auto

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[23]Duany, et. al., *Suburban Nation*, 176-177; Peter Katz, *New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1994), 4-6; Brooke, *Seaside*, 30-31.

[24]Brooke, *Seaside*, 19-21, 30-31.

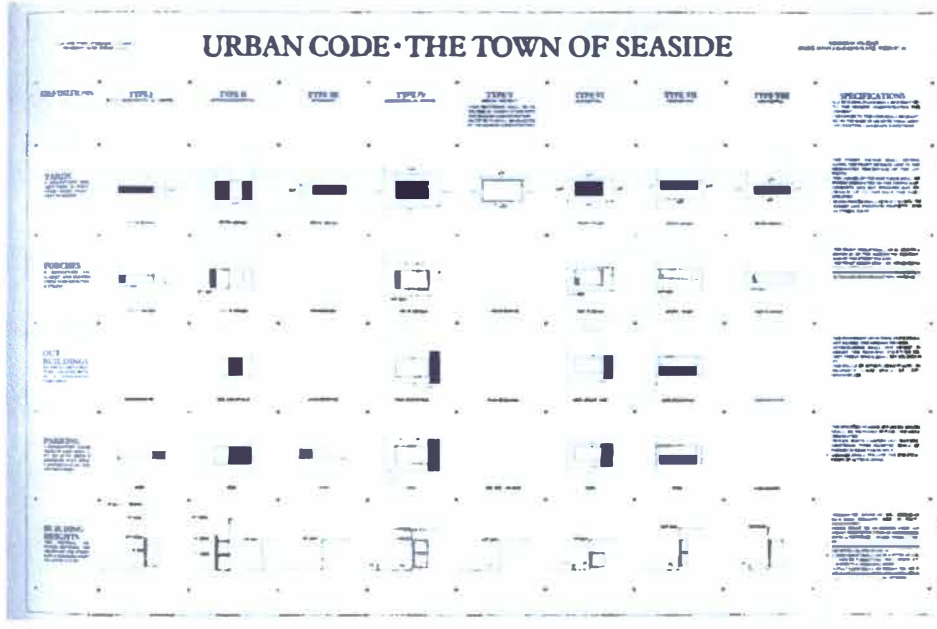

Figure 2.1. The Seaside Town Code.

Source: Steven Brooke, *Seaside* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican, 1995),

traffic and, presumably, increasing foot traffic and community interaction. Auto impacts were further mitigated through the application of on street parking, limited parking in commercial areas, and the judicious use of trees and landscaping in parking facilities.[25]

Krier's influence is also evident in Seaside's street grid, which is highly formal and, on a small scale, surprisingly baroque. The entire development is built along a coastal highway, C-30A, which serves as the spine of the plan. A "town center" serves as the anchor of the community and is intended to be a meeting space for local residents. Modeled after highly defined public spaces in cities such as Charleston, Savannah, and Venice, the center, with its village green, is Seaside's version of an Italian piazza. Public and community buildings surround the town center, including retail establishments, restaurants, a market, and a post office ("one of the most photographed post offices in the country and easily the most photographed building at Seaside"). Also in this complex is "Dreamland Heights," a mixed use facility named for J.S. Smolian's unrecognized vision. Eventually, this plaza will also include a central tower, as yet unbuilt, designed by Leon Krier.[26]

A major street, Seside Avenue, extends at an angle to the east of the town center. Krier's tower will serve as a visual anchor for this street. At the opposite angle DPZ sited a residential development called, in a neoclassical flourish, the Lyceum. This complex, not yet fully constructed, will consist of eight apartment buildings built around a central courtyard. These structures are connected, in Jeffersonian fashion, to one another and to

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[25]Katz, *New Urbanism*, 4, 13.

[26]Brooke, 107-111.

a central domed amenity by a system of covered colonnades. Between these formalized angles of development, looking straight from the town center, sits a similar development, Ruskin Place. Designed as an "artist's colony," it consists of studio/townhouses flanking another courtyard and is connected to the town center by a straight walking trail. One day, it will also be connected visually to Krier's tower by a line of sight running from his central monument, through the Ruskin courtyard and the Forest Street Park, to a modest church, also unbuilt (see figures 2.2 and 2.3).[27]

Lines of sight also play an important role in the design of residential streets. Most thoroughfares contained strong visual references, including gazebos, traffic circles, and small parks. Streets leading to the ocean terminate with ornate beachfront pavilions. These structures, known as "follies" in the Seaside lexicon, serve as formal portals to the coast and provide cabana facilities for beach-goers. Their main function, however, is as landmarks for residents and visitors.[28]

Seaside also boasts a "meeting hall," which, in the words of one community enthusiast, serves as "a real town hall." It is important to note, however, that Seaside, despite all the "town" rhetoric, is not, in any legal sense, a municipality. It is not incorporated, has no elected mayor or city council, and relies on Walton County for most necessary services. Furthermore, as a beachfront resort, it has only a handfull of full time residents. Far from constituting a political entity, Seaside is, instead, little more than a real estate development. In a legal sense the community is considered a common interest

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[27]*Ibid.*, 51, 93, 86.

[28]Katz, *New Urbanism*, 10; Brooke, *Seaside*, 101-106.

Figure 2.2. Arial View of Seaside, Florida.

Source: Steven Brooke, *Seaside* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican, 1995), 26.

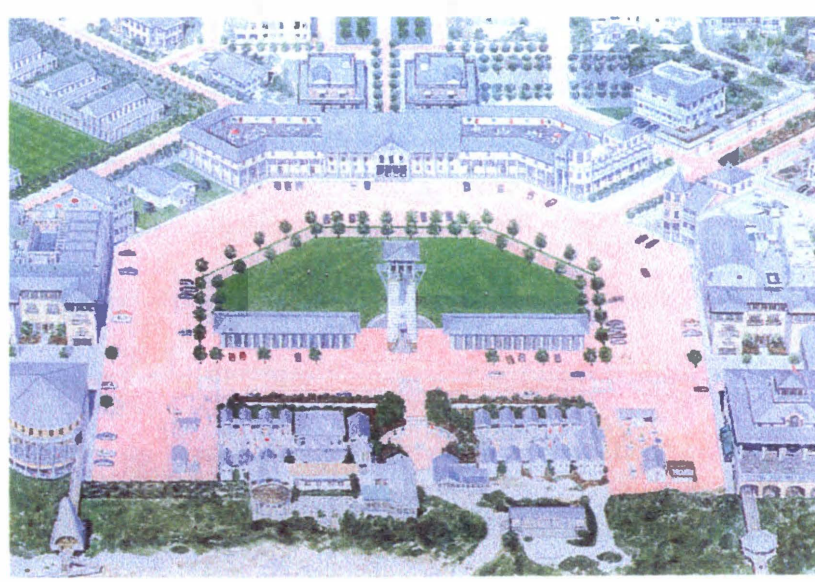

Figure 2.3. Seaside's Proposed Town Center.

Source: Steven Brooke, *Seaside* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican, 1995), 107.

development (CID) and is governed, in large part, by the developer and a homeowners association. Together, they determine the future of the community and enforce the plethora of covenants which regulate the use, appearance, and maintenance of Seaside properties. Although the homeowner's association has an elected board, its franchise is limited to property owners and its powers are severely limited by the developer and the parent corporation.[29]

Duany, for his part, defended the new urbanists' reliance on codes and so-called "private governments" as elements of control. He insisted that "codes are categorically democratic in the sense that law and orderly processes are as essential as the vote." Restrictions, he believes are "necessary because architectural harmony allows mixed use to be accessible." In fact, he even suggests that design controls accentuate the role of government. "The modicum of visual silence required of the private buildings," he contends, "allows the public buildings to be noticed." Duany further states that criticisms of private governments are "laden with irony and paranoia." Homeowners associations, he implores, "foster a sophisticated participatory democracy" and provide opportunities for "individual leadership." "Such associations," he concludes, "can be more fair and more responsive than the incompetent bureaucracies and tyrannical policies of many municipal governments."[30]

Most onlookers, however, overlooked these shortcomings as Seaside neared

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[29]Brooke, *Seaside*, 111; For an extensive discussion and critique of CIDs, see Evan McKenzie, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

[30]Andres Duany, "Our Urbanism," *Architecture* (December, 1998): 73-77.

completion in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Instead, the development was quickly hailed as "perhaps the most important new piece of architecture in the country." Dubbed "the new town with old ways," it was believed to "contain the seeds of a new land development philosophy that could change the way America lives in the 21st century." Critics, ranging from the American Institute of Architects to the Prince of Wales applauded the town's design concept. Yet, in the midst of these accolades, some criticism did emerge. Much of this focused on the community's status as a resort enclave, the expense of its homes, and its lack of full-time residents. In the words of one skeptic:

> "For all the purity of its planning, its grid of narrow streets, and its emphasis of pedestrians over cars, Seaside remains a niche town. It will never be more than a beautiful resort for people wealthy enough to pay $700,000 and up for a second home"[31]

Even a number of confirmed new urbanists expressed concerns about the viability of the Florida experiment. Robert Davis, for his part, admits that Seaside is "an idealized vision of a town" which lacks "a full complement of human activities." Yet, even though the community lacks meaningful employment opportunities, affordable housing, or a significant number of full time residents, Davis still believes its design concepts could "be translated to 'real' cities." Perhaps because of Seaside's obvious shortcomings, other new urbanists have answered Davis's call and attempted to apply these lessons on a much larger scale. Among these were a group of executives at the Walt Disney Corporation. Searching for development opportunities for Disney's vast holdings in Central Florida, these corporate officials made note of the creative, critical, and financial

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[31]Brooke, *Seaside*, 25-26; Catherine Collins and Douglas Frantz, *Celebration, USA: Living in Disney's Brave New Town* (New York: Henry Holt, 1999), 311.

success enjoyed by Seaside in the late 1980s and decided to embark on their own experiment in town building. The result of their efforts was Celebration, one of the most ambitious, well publicized and thoroughly scrutinized neotraditional developments to date.[32]

Unlike Seaside, which, when fully built, will only have a few hundred homes and apartments and about two thousand mostly temporary residents, Celebration was to be a "real town" with a permanent population, viable institutions, and profitable businesses. Disney officials estimated that, when completed, their town would house about twenty-two thousand residents in 8,065 dwelling units. Housing would be concentrated in four neighborhood villages contained within the development's staggering 4,900 acres. Celebration's plan also called for over eight hundred hotel rooms, two million square feet of retail space, more than three million square feet of office space, and even allotted room for a 1.7 million square foot "industrial workplace." In addition, the community would boast an impressive array of community facilities, including a hospital and health care center, a K-12 school, numerous parks and recreational facilities, and a fully developed downtown.[33]

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[32]Brooke, *Seaside*, 27.

[33]Andrew Ross, *The Celebration Chronicles: Life, Liberty, and the Pusuit of Property Values in Disney's New Town* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1999), 81; Collins and Frantz, *Celebration, U.S.A.*, 73, 132; Seaside has a charter school, built by Paramount Studios in return for filming *The Truman Show* in the town. The Seaside Neighborhood School, however, has only about 90 students in just three grades. Nearly all of these pupils live outside of the resort community. Celebration's school, in contrast, held a thousand students, eighty percent of whom were to come from the town. For more information on the Seaside school, see http://www.seasideschool.net/charter.htm.

Certainly these plans were far more ambitious than anything found at Seaside. In order to design this mammoth project, Disney held a competition among a number of leading architecural firms, including Seaside's DPZ. Disney, however, rejected Duany and Plater-Zyberk's plan, which one journalist characterized as "a pumped up version of Seaside." Instead, they opted for a design by New York architects Robert Stern and Jacquelin Robertson. Charles Fraser, developer of Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island, was hired as consultant and also played an important role in the design process. Stern and Robertson rejected the "doctrinaire" edicts of the hardcore neotraditionalists in favor of a less formal, more conventional community plan. Their somewhat relaxed interpretation of new urbanism resembled, in many respects, the Howard-inspired new towns and greenbelt communities built in Great Britain and the U.S. earlier in the century. It relied on a curved street grid and was bordered, in most neighborhoods by a golf course and thousands of acres of preserved wetlands.[34]

The plan submitted by Stern and Robertson was, no doubt, an affront to many dedicated new urbanists, as it violated many of the movement's principles. First, the very scale of the development negated Krier's concept of the "five minute walk" and made car travel a necessity for many residents. Disney executives also approved plans for the eventual construction of a large, open-air shopping mall which would attract more auto traffic. Residential densities, while higher than those in a typical suburban subdivision, were still lower than the neotraditional ideal. This was especially true of the

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[34]Collins and Frantz, *Celebration, U.S.A.*, 3-4, 49-53.; Ross, *Celebration Chronicles*, VI-VIII; Sonia N. DaSilva, "The Development Process of Celebration, Florida" (Master's thesis, University of Tennessee, 1998), 11-13.

development's upscale "estate homes" which sat on quarter-acre lots, small for a typical $800,000 home, but gargantuan by new urbanist standards. Curvilinear streets, condemned by DPZ as "chicken scratch" and "one of the great cliches of our time," ran throughout the town. In addition, Celebration contained a modest number of cul-de-sacs, which Duany and Plater-Zyberk consider "wasteful" and "disorienting."(see figure 2.4)[35]

Yet, despite these shortcomings, Celebration owed much to the neotraditional movement and was readily embraced by most new urbanists. While the development's scale was large and required some car travel, a great deal of emphasis was still placed on pedestrian traffic. Sidewalks extend throughout the community and most residents of the initial construction lived within ten minutes of downtown. While those living in outer villages might be reluctant to walk to the town's retail center, they still had easy access to safe foot travel in their own neighborhoods. Celebration's downtown, while perhaps more dependant on car traffic than preferred, nonetheless also provided opportunities for more viable and practical retailing and a wider range of recreational opportunities. In addition, the town also paid homage to the concept of variety, and placed housing of different types and expense within close proximity to each other.[36]

Architectural styles within the community also reflected celebration's neotraditional character. In Celebration, however, developers rejected a Seaside-style code in favor of a more comprehensive "pattern book." The idea of a pattern book was,

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[35]Collins and Frantz, *Celebration, U.S.A.*, 30, 53; Duany, et. al., *Suburban Nation*, 34, 107; DaSilva, "Development Process," 48-52.

[36]Ross, *Celebration Chronicles*, 81-83; Collins and Frantz, *Celebration, U.S.A.*, 30-31, 185.

Figure 2.4. Map of the Celebration Development.

Source: "Celebration, U.S.A.,"< http://www.xone.net/celebration/pic002.php> (March 3, 2002).

in itself, a throwback to a traditional building method. Architectural pattern books could be traced to the Renaissance, and were especially common in Colonial and nineteenth century America. In fact, many of the traditional building styles revered by new urbanists could be traced to these simple architectural guides. Celebration's hefty pattern book established guidelines specifications for a half dozen architectural styles: Classical, Victorian, Colonial Revival, Coastal, Mediterranean, and French Normandy. Elements of each style, including porch depth, and window construction were delineated in considerable detail.[37]

Stern and Robertson's pattern book also addressed issues of color, landscaping and location. Homeowners were required to choose exterior colors from an approved pallet of colors for each style. Repetition of home styles and colors was strictly regulated. Homes of a similar style or color could not be built within two or three doors of one another. Fencing, setbacks and driveways were all carefully defined to meet neotraditional standards. Front hedges and fences were limited to three and a half feet, for example, and a quarter of the front and side yards were required to be planted in non-grass material. "The landscape design of these areas," the book noted, "should include no more than two different species of canopy tree, two different species of ornamental tree, five different species of shrub or hedge, and four different species of ground cover." Interestingly, Celebration's planners dismissed Seaside's native plant requirement in

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[37]Ross, *Celebration Chronicles*, 87-88; Collins and Frantz, *Celebration, U.S.A.*, 65-66, 185; DaSilva, "Design Process," 39-40.

favor of largely green lawns, a fixture of the much maligned suburban landscape.[38]

As in Seaside, Celebration residents were also subject to a multitude of regulations imposed on them by their corporate government. Such ordinances are common in CIDs, and are usually well-intentioned efforts to protect and promote property investments. Celebration, for example, requires that household furniture not be kept on the porch, junk cars not be parked on the street, and yard sales be limited to one, per family, per year. Other rules, however, seem downright draconian and appear to infringe on personal liberties. Homeowners, for example, are required to have white blinds or curtains inside their homes. During elections, residents may post only one political sign, no larger than eighteen by twenty-four inches, for forty-five days prior to the contest. Citizens were also prohibited from posting "for sale" signs in front of their homes. Home builders, it is important to note, were not subject to this rule.[39]

These covenants are enforced by a "Celebration Resident Owners Association," which, according to promotional materials, is "a representative form of government similar to our federal system." In actuality, however, this "government" is far from democratic. Participation is limited to homeowners; renters have no voice. In addition, residents are limited to just one vote per property unit, regardless of the number of occupants of the home. The extraordinary power maintained by Disney's Celebration Corporation is also somewhat disturbing. The developer, for example, maintains

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[38]*Ibid.*

[39]One resident, chastised for her scarlet curtains, jokingly referred to them as "the big red menace," Collins and Frantz, *Celebration, U.S.A.*, 154-158.

complete control over the owner's association, essentially the town government, until the project is three-fourths complete - a threshold still not yet reached. Furthermore, no covenant can be changed or modified without the approval of the "owners of seventy-five percent of the total number of units within the properties and by the Celebration Company." The latter part of this phrase is especially telling, for as long as the developer owns any property of land in Celebration, it has full veto power over any changes in local government.[40]

New urbanist guru Andres Duany defended this level of control. Speaking to a journalist, he defended Celebration's corporate government, stating that the town:

> "is clearly governed by a corporation, rather than a government, and so what happens is that an American corporation is treating you as a customer. A customer is possibly treated better than a citizen in this country. If you look at the way Land's End treats you, they're open twenty-four hours a day. If you pick up the phone at Land's End and see who answers, or here in Celebration, compared to who picks up at Miami City Hall, and see what kind of illiterate hiring thing you get there - and I love minorities - but don't tell me it's the same quality of government. . . . If I show up at Coral Gables, I'm met essentially in an ugly room by an uninterested and harried bureaucrat who doesn't care, and then I have to wait two weeks for a first appointment, where my building is critiqued by four or five government architects who got their position because of friendship with the mayor. What happens here when I have my building? I make a call, Joe Barnes shows up a half an hour later, apologizing for being late, and this is a guy who went to Princeton and the University of Virginia who knows what he's talking about. Objectively, this is a very superior experience. And I know they're afraid of me because I'm a customer. . . . I must say, I'm very interested in being a customer rather than a citizen."

Duany then added, "In order to make a place real you actually have to control it. You

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[40]Ross, *Celebration Chronicles*, 229-230; Collins and Frantz, *Celebration U.S.A.*, 154-156.

have to manage it because there's a tendency for things to become false, to become literally artificial.'"[41]

Presiding over this Orwellian realm has been, by all accounts, a challenge for image-conscious executives at Disney. For the most part, the "Empire of the Mouse" has proven to be a benevolent dictator, overlooking minor transgressions and using gentle reminders, rather than harsh penalties, to correct aesthetic wrongdoers. Disney has, however, encountered its fair share of difficulties during its foray into municipal management. One of the most publicized, and most continuous of these controversies involved the issue of religious worship at Celebration. Originally, Disney's consultant, Charles Fraser, advised scattering church sites throughout the development. These houses of worship, he believed, would become focal points of residential neighborhoods and would help foster a sense of community. Corporate executives, however, balked at this plan. Uncomfortable with the notion of religious services on Disney property, company officials insisted on a single, ecumenical chapel for the entire development.[42]

For a time it seemed the church controversy might tear the fledgling community apart, as congregations of various denominations met in homes throughout the town. These groups, however, could not agree on conditions for joint worship. Nor could any single congregation afford the $300,000 price of the town's sole church lot. Compounding problems was Disney's insistence on a modest structure, seating only about 200 worshipers. This was grossly inadequate for a town of perhaps twenty-

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[41]Ross, *Celebration Chronicles*, 307-308.

[42]Collins and Frantz, *Celebration U.S.A.*, 162-163.

thousand, particulary one so close to the South's Bible belt. Fortunately, a powerful force from above, irresistible to corporate executives, resolved the impending crisis. Dorothy Disney Puder, Walt's niece, interceded and purchased the church property on behalf of the Presbyterian Church. Church officials further ensured the town's religious integrity by first ignoring Disney's design parameters and then denying the corporation any role in clergy selection.[43]

The resolution of the church dispute no doubt helped forge the ties of community in Celebration. Indeed, the resident's quest for religious autonomy indicates how quickly social bonds were formed in the town. The role of design in this process, however, is highly debatable. New urbanists, with their implacable faith in architectural determinism, would no doubt credit the community's design features as a major contributor to the development of social capital. Celebration residents, for their part, downplayed the role of such elements. In fact many of the design elements proved remarkably ineffective. The much-vaunted front porches, for example, which were supposed to promote neighborhood interaction, generally sat unused in the muggy Florida sun.[44]

Instead, most townspeople credited the people of Celebration rather than the plan for the emergence of neighborliness. Many residents had been lured to the new town by the promise of community. Their high expectations and their strong desire for social interaction, in their minds, outweighed the theories of the new urbanists in the process of town building. Local institutions, such as the school, the church, and civic groups also

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[43]*Ibid.*

[44]Ross, *Celebration, U.S.A.*, 211-213.

played a vital role. One Disney executive perhaps stated it best when he compared the town's successful operation to that of a computer:

> "The town plan is the hardware, the grid, the alleys, the streets, the setbacks, the architecture. That's all hardware. My concern is that as people come and try to get lessons from Celebration, they get all obsessed with the architecture. The architecture is about eight on the list as far as I'm concerned with what was experimental about this place. What was much more important to me was the software - the things that we tried to make it into a place, make it into a real town."[45]

In spite of these types of comments, supporters of new urbanism remain unshaken in their faith in design. They readily accepted the doctrine of architectural determinism and don the mantle of social engineers. As Andre Duany declared, "accepting this power and wielding it responsibly is the key to new urbanism's success." In an effort to further promote their gospel, 170 leaders of the neotraditional movement convened in Alexandria in1993 to form an advocacy group, the Congress for the New Urbanism or the CNU. Three years later, a larger group of 266 CNU members, mostly architects, met again in Charleston and drafted a manifesto, which became the *Charter of the New Urbanism*. In its preamble, members solemnly pledged to "dedicate [themselves] to reclaiming [their] homes, blocks, streets, parks, neighborhoods, districts, towns, cities, regions, and environment."[46]

Charter authors were quick to disassociate themselves from prior design movements. In their opening chapter, "What's new about the new urbanism?," architect

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[45]*Ibid*., 212.

[46]Michael Leccese and Katherine McCormick, eds., *Charter of the New Urbanism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999), III, 1-3.

and planner Jonathan Barnett attempted to portray the movement as an innovative and uniquely broad-based solution to the nation's urban woes. He described the Congress as groundbreaking in that it was "not just another professional organization, but a coalition of designers, other professionals, public and private decision-makers, and concerned citizens." Unlike earlier reform efforts, Barnett contends that "the new urbanism calls for new design concepts to meet new situations" and "recognizes that design and planning concepts cannot be separated from their implementation mechanism." Yet despite these claims of innovation, the charter is peppered with allusions to the past. A diagram by Ebenezer Howard, appears on one page; a quote from Jane Jacobs is on another. Leon Krier is unmentioned in the text, but illustrates essays by Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Andres Duany and also figures in the Charter's bibliography.[47]

Many of the twenty-seven "basic principles" put forth in the CNU's charter would seems quite familiar to students of Seaside and Celebration. Mixed uses, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, and the use of vernacular architecture and native landscaping are among the necessary elements discussed. Charter authors also called for parks, gardens, and shared public places, as well as "distinctive" civic buildings which would "reinforce community identity and the culture of democracy." A number of contributors further discussed the need for environmentally friendly measures, including "natural methods of heating and cooling" and respect for "the agricultural hinterland and natural landscapes."[48]

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[47] *Ibid.*, 5-10, 44, 78-79, 91, 167, 192.

[48] *Ibid.*, vii-xi.

Much of the document, however, is not aimed at the creation of new towns, as in Florida, but is geared toward the "reconstruction" of existing urban centers. In the words of the Charter, "the metropolitan area is a fundamental economic unit of the contemporary world. Governmental cooperation, public policy, physical planning, and economic strategies must reflect this reality." To facilitate this, contributors included provisions which addressed such topics as historic preservation, "economic health," and infill development. Authors also endorsed the need for "safety and security." Yet, though they stressed the fact that "streets and buildings should reinforce safe environments," Charter authors added that such considerations should not occur "at the expense of accessibility and openness."[49]

The CNU also confronted the issues of racial and economic equity and acknowledged the decline of urban social capital. "To achieve a prosperous and just society," the charter states, "economic, social, and physical diversity are essential elements for the long term success of every neighborhood and community." "Affordable housing," they contend, "should be distributed throughout [urban areas] to match job opportunities and avoid concentrations of poverty." Issues of age and physical ability were also addressed. "Children," the document claims, "are the group that suffers most under our current suburban land development patterns." "Our cities and towns," it continues, "should be scaled to their use" and they should be free to "access their environment . . . without depending on others to take them places by automobile." Similarly, the elderly would also benefit by having "many activities of daily living within

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[49] *Ibid.*, v-xi, 35-39, 109-112, 133-137, 173-176.

walking distance." Women would also be liberated by not having to "shuttle children to school and activities while doing most of the household shopping."[50]

Given their emphasis on foot travel, it should come as no surprise that transportation concerns play a major role in the CNUs agenda for urban redevelopment. Surprisingly, new urbanists acknowledge the necessity of car travel, stating "automobiles are a fact of modern life, and they are not going away." Yet they also insist that roads and streets "protect the pedestrian" with sidewalks and bike paths. These reformers also enthusiastically promote public modes of transportation. The CNU, for example, calls for a revamping of America's bus system. "Buses," they declare, "need to be faster, more frequent, more reliable, safer, and more comfortable using existing technology." New urbanists show particular enthusiasm for light rail transit systems, which fulfill their desire for clean efficient travel. "It takes fifteen lanes of highway," according to design firm DPZ, "to move as many people as one lane of track."[51]

Yet, no doubt, the popularity of streetcars among neotraditionalists is also tied to the movement's deep sense of nostalgia. Such is their enthusiasm that some designers have attempted the resurrect the concept of the "streetcar suburb." Chief among these is architect Peter Calthorpe, who has pioneered the development of the "transit-oriented development" or TOD. Calthorpe's model communities are designed in concert with tightly integrated mass transit systems. Each of his TOD's features a dense mixture of

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[50]*Ibid.*, 83, 89-93, 106-107.

[51]Leccese and McCormick, *Charter*, 60-63, 79-82; Duany, et. al., *Suburban Nation*, 95-96.

stores, offices and housing units clustered tightly around a central transit stop or station. Closest to the station would be a commercial district, composed of restaurants, shops, and offices, which would serve both residents and transit passengers. Just beyond this sector would be area consisting of various types of high- to medium-density housing. Apartments, condominiums, duplexes, and townhouses would occupy this space and would surround a variety of parks and community facilities. Further afield, a quarter-mile from the transit stop, would lie a third district composed of detached single family homes and large-scale commercial structures. Such a community, Calthorpe contends, could host 2000 homes, a million square feet of commercial space, and a wide range of community facilities in just 120 acres of developed space.[52]

Andres Duany recently proposed a similar development and land use scheme for use in large urban regions. Called a "transect," it is touted as "a new model for planning and coding the new urbanism." The transect has six distinct zones, which range from rural to urban. At the rural edge of this planning scheme are two zones, the "rural preserve," which contains protected land, and virtually no development, and the "rural reserve," which consists of "areas of environmental or scenic quality which are not protected but perhaps should be." Next comes a transition zone of development, known as "the edge." Located at the fringe of the city, this district is composed primarily of single family homes along with some civic buildings, such as schools or churches. This is followed by a "general" zone, which is "primarily residential, but more urban in character" with "a slightly greater mix of uses allowed." Lastly come the most urban

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[52]Katz, *New Urbanism*, xxx-xxxi.

zones, the "center" a primarily mixed use "town center" and, finally, the "core," which serves as a regional central business district.(see figures 2.5 and 2.6)[53]

To those not initiated in the newspeak of new urbanism, these varying sectors of use and development described by Duany and Calthorpe might appear to be a form of zoning. The proponents of these schemes, however, would vigorously deny such charges. Duany's land use concept has been praised as "the new paradigm for local land use regulations" with the advantage that "it can be implemented through the familiar legal framework of Euclidian zoning districts." These planning systems have, in the past decade, been applied to a number of American cities, often to critical acclaim.[54]

Duany's transect, though a recent idea, has already been applied in New York and Virginia. In Onondaga County, New York, DPZ created a plan for the City of Syracuse and its surrounding environs. This new code can be quite specific in its requirements. Developers, for example, may be required to build a "square" or "plaza" instead of simply allowing for "open space." While the New York rules don't mandate architectural styles, it does "suggest detailed requirements for frontages, facades, roofs, eaves, and other building elements." Interestingly, the Onondaga code is a somewhat compromised interpretation of new urbanist principles. It contains provisions for "special use" districts and exceptions for developments which "do not follow the intent of the code." A similar system, developed by DPZ for the Charlottesville region has met with similar difficulties. Municipal planners were especially resistant to the concept. As one proponent noted, "it

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[53]*New Urbanism News*, September, 2000.

[54]*Ibid.*

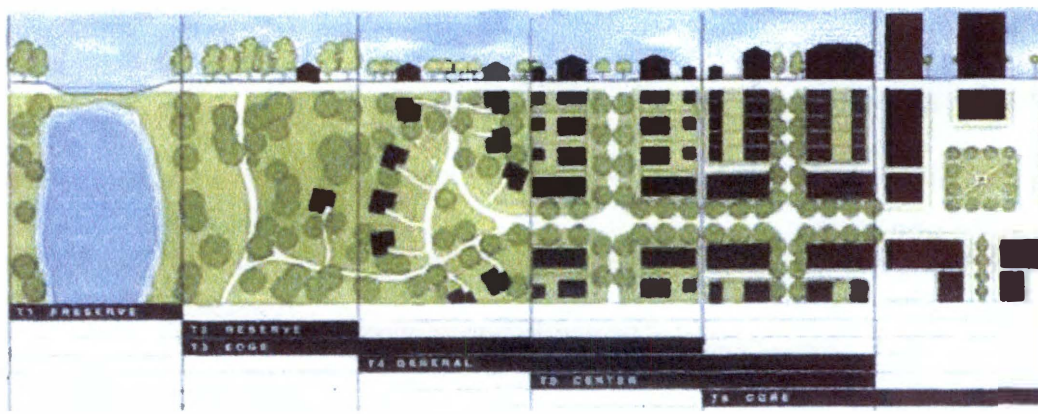

Figure 2.5. View of Duany's Transect Concept.

Source: "Transect Applied to Regional Plans," New Urban News, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co., <http://www.newurbannews.com/transect.html>(March 3, 2002).

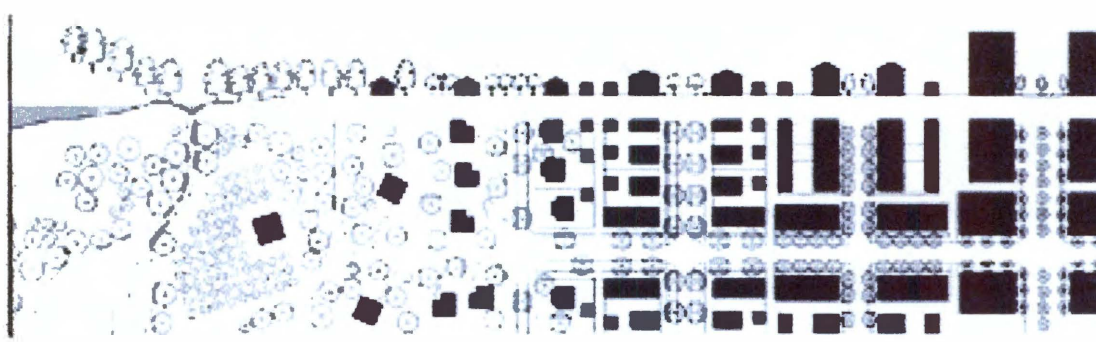

Figure 2.6. Another View of the Transect.

Source: Smartcode, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co.<http://www.smartcode.org> (March 3, 2002).

is so simple, it is viewed by some suspiciously." At least one local planner, however, failed to see the simplicity of the code, finding the new rules "very confusing and hard to grasp."[55]

Calthorpe, for his part, has also enjoyed success and acclaim with his TOD concept. His most acclaimed work, today, is a 1991 master plan for the Jackson-Taylor neighborhood in San Jose, California. Once the site of expansive fruit orchards, it spent most of the recent past as home to a number of dingy warehouses and food processing concerns. Calthorpe's firm produced a plan to transform the seventy-five acre site into a vibrant mixed use community. An estimated 1,600 housing units, in densities ranging from twelve to fifty units per acre, were placed throughout the proposed development. Offices, retail establishments, and public facilities were also located within two or three block of the new residences. Provision was also made for mass transit, a necessary element in Calthorpe's designs. An old rail line, running diagonally through the site, became the core element of the redevelopment. Adapted to light rail use and supplemented by bus service, it provides the mobility necessary for a viable neotraditional neighborhood.[56]

Duany's regional transect plans and Calthorpe's California urban TOD

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[55]*New Urbanism News*, September, 2000; DPZ integrated the transect into their copyrighted "Smartcode" which the firm sells for $100 and licenses to communities for $6,500. Licensees are eligible for $2,500 "seminars" and may change the plan themselves. They may also engage DPZ, at additional cost, to "tailor it, prepare a corresponding Regulating Plan and to implement it politically over a series of meetings." Licensed users may not, however, "engage a third party to make changes and revisions to the code." For additional information, see DPZ's Smartcode site at http//www.smartcode.org/.

[56]Katz, *New Urbanism*, 192-197.

redevelopment reflect the diverse nature of the neotraditional movement. New urbanists have succeeded in creating a rich movement adaptable to a wide range of circumstances. Yet regardless of the scale or nature of the development, a number of common features are apparent in the plans of these seemingly disparate communities. Among the most evident of these is a pronounced preference for highly formalized designs. Even Celebration, with its curvilinear street grid, boasts many formal elements. This is especially true in the community's downtown, where public buildings and open spaces were carefully and aesthetically sited. Lines of sight and the placement of monumental structures, such as Seaside's proposed tower, also reinforce the traditional Baroque nature of the plans.

Public facilities, which figure prominently in most neotraditional plans, appear to be one of the great strengths of the movement. Schools, day-care center, town halls, and health care facilities are all readily available to most residents. These communities also offer ample and healthy recreational opportunities to citizens, with plenty of athletic fields, bike paths, and playgrounds for locals to use and enjoy. Churches, however, appear to be less abundant and religious facilities appear to be a sensitive issue among neotraditional designers. This may, in fact, be a reflection of the immaturity of these communities. Over time, congregations may develop and erect houses of worship. Yet it may also be a reflection of an overly sensitive culture obsessed with political correctness. Also notably missing from these developments are cemeteries, as if those fortunate enough to live in these developments are somehow immune to death.

New urbanist developments also share similar attitudes towards transportation

issues. Most remained dedicated to the concept of pedestrian-friendly streets and neighborhoods. Sidewalks are a universal feature of these communities, and residents generally have easy access to parks and community facilities. Bicycles and mass transit are also included in most plans. This is especially true of Calthorpe's TOD, where mass transit is the central element of a neighborhood's design. Many have argued, however, that this pedestrian environment is merely an illusion and that neotraditional developments are as dependent on auto traffic as a conventional suburb. In fact, some analysts believe new urbanist developments might actually contribute to car traffic. They point out the disparity between the community's high housing costs and the low-wage employment opportunities that exist in nearby businesses. As a result, residents generally must commute to better paying jobs in other towns or cities in order to pay their rent or mortgages. At the same time, local shops and restaurants often face labor shortages, and are required to recruit workers from less affluent, and sometimes distant towns.[57]

One must also question the economic viability of these communities. Issues of work appear to be a secondary to designers of neotraditional communities. Many of the movement's leaders, perhaps influenced by Leon Krier's rejection of industrialism, embrace a rather nostalgic view of the urban economy. Andres Duany, for example,

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[57]DaSilva, "Development Process," 49; New urbanists also appear to have mixed feelings regarding mass transit. Though most new urbanists support the use of public transportation, only a handful actively incorporate it into their projects. One recent study, for example, found that only thirty-two percent of surveyed new urbanist developers consulted with local transit officials prior to construction and a scant sixteen percent cited public transportation as an "operational component of the planning process." Jerry Donn Roberson, "Public Transit in New Urbanist Communities" (Master's thesis, University of Tennessee, 2001), 112-119.

displays an almost implacable faith in neighborhood "mom and pop" stores. "A small corner store," he believes, "does more than a social club to build the bonds of community." Such shops, "stocked with touching precision to match the neighborhood's needs," mark the "first step to a true mix of uses." These small scale stores, usually with an upstairs housing unit (presumably for the shopkeeper) are a common characteristic of DPZ's developments. Also common are "studio" homes. Designed for artists, these units combine housing with workshops and sales space. It is difficult to imagine, however, a potter who could afford a $700,000 beach cottage.[58]

Recently, however, new urbanists appear to be taking these economic concerns more seriously. Celebration, for example, features "Celebration Place," an 109 acre office park which, when completed, will boast up to one million square feet of work space. The town's ample shopping and health care facilities also provide sources of potential employment. Riverside, a development in Atlanta, contains apartments mixed among shops, cafes, and a quarter-million square feet of office space. Yet, in spite of these efforts, new urbanists have made no efforts to integrate their efforts with large scale industrial or manufacturing concerns. This may simply be due to a lack of opportunity, but it may also be a reflection of their own anti-industrial bias.[59]

The question of economic viability may also be tied to the issue of location amongst new urbanists communities. Although the topic of regional design figures prominently in new urbanist literature, discussions of community placement are

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[58]Duany, et. al., *Suburban Nation*, 187-190; Brooke, *Seaside*, 93-95.

[59]DaSilva, "Development Process," 29-31; Duany, et. al., *Suburban Nation*, 187-190.

conspicuously absent. No mention is made of market regions or the application of location theories to new developments. In part, this can be attributed to the importance of infill projects to many of the movement's adherents. These individuals, seeking to reestablish decayed urban markets, face a set of challenges largely unforeseen by place theorists. New towns, such as Seaside or Celebration, however, are largely oblivious to these concerns. Their placement seems more connected to the availability of developable land than to any rational placement of population centers.[60]

New Urbanists have also been criticized for their views regarding public participation in the planning process. Movement leaders hail public involvement as an essential element in the planning process. "Citizen participation" according to DPZ's Duany and Plater-Zyberk, "has proved to be the most effective way to avoid mistakes." Yet despite such statements, many new urbanists also express considerable misgivings concerning the public's role and influence. In a recent interview in *Planning* magazine, Andres Duany acknowledged difficulties in working with the public. "When you have to consult with everyone," he lamented, "virtually in every instance they're against affordable housing, they're against mixed use, and they're against high density." He then confessed "the public process, if you run it honestly, comes out against smart growth."[61]

New Urbanists, however, seem unfazed by the lack of public enthusiasm for their

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[60] Duany, et. al., *Suburban Nation*, 186-187; Leccese and McCormick, *Charter*, 15-28.

[61] Andres Duany, et. al., *Suburban Nation*, 226; Martin Zimmerman, "Is New Urbanism Growing Old: An Interview with Andres Duany," *Planning* 67, no. 6 (June, 2001), 11.

cause. Rather than bow to the public, they often choose to disregard its protests as the rumblings of the uninformed and unenlightened masses. "A mob often decides against its best interests" Duany lamented, adding "the citizens will close the drawbridge, oppose mixed use and economic variety in housing, so we must fight them." He then declared: "I am not the sort of planner that does what the citizens dictate. We are not secretaries to the mob." In an effort to reconcile their stated desire for public participation with their complete lack of confidence in the hoi polloi, these urban reformers have, in effect, limited the public's influence over the planning process. First, they have de-emphasized "legally mandated public hearings" in favor of pre-design "workshops" and "charettes." Secondly, they also strive to limit the public's ability to alter completed plans. "Master plans must be enacted in principle as quickly as possible," Duany warns, boasting "our plan for Stuart, Florida was presented at four p.m. one day and was law four hours later."[62]

The most vocal criticism, however, has been levied at the lack of diversity present in neotraditional communities. Although new urbanists commit themselves to addressing questions of equity, they have demonstrated little success in attracting minorities or accommodating the poor. Their developments, in the words of one critic, have turned out "to be rather elitist settlements with average income levels much higher than in the surrounding areas." For example, residents of Laguna West, a new urbanist project near San Diego, boast incomes two-thirds higher than those in neighboring communities. Real estate prices also tend to be disproportionately high. The average cost of one of Seaside's

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[62]Ross, *Celebration Chronicles*, 78-79; Duany, *Suburban Nation*, 180-181, 226-227.

modest homes, for instance, was $503,500 in 1996. As a result, minority populations in these developments tend to be quite low. In the 2000 census, for example, Celebration reports an African-American population of just 1.7 percent.[63]

These price and income thresholds place new urbanists beyond the means of most minority home buyers. Even those with the means to afford such a residence often decline. Some cite an unwillingness to live in a perceived "all-white" community. Still others are turned off by the traditional architecture. This was especially true of Celebration, which contained a large number of plantation-style Greek revival homes. Lastly, some might see a lack of value in the smaller, yet more expensive homes. "Blacks," one Celebration resident wryly noted, "are smarter with their money, they work hard for it, they want a big lot, and a good sized shelter, and don't want to plop down $300,000 for something so small." This is a sentiment no doubt shared by many white home buyers as well.[64]

Leaders of the new urbanist movement have dismissed these charges of elitism. Andres Duany, for his part, attributes the lack of minority residents to his belief that "ethnic groups prefer to live with their own kind." He adds that "one can encourage all types of minorities to live in any New Urbanist [sic] community, but only a Stalinist would hold this as an attainable ideal." Still, followers of the movement have, in recent years, undertaken attempts to spread the neotraditional gospel to the less affluent. The

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[63]Peter Gordon and Harry W. Richardson, "A Critique of New Urbanism" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, Pasadena, California, November, 1998); *Census of Population, 2000* .

[64]Ross, *Celebration Chronicles*, 268-270.

centerpiece of their efforts is the Hope VI program, a housing initiative undertaken by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).[65]

An attempt to redefine and revitalize America's public housing, Hope VI is an effort to replace "severely distressed public housing" with new, functionally designed communities based, in large part, on new urbanist design principles. Existing high rise projects are destroyed and replaced with neighborhoods "designed to human scale." These new neighborhoods, composed of single family homes, townhouses, or small apartment buildings, are built within an intimate grid of streets and alleyways. In typical fashion, all homes are required to be "close to the street, with front windows and porches." Civic buildings, retail structures, and public parks are included in the complex and are placed within walking distance of residents. In a controversial move, designers are not only attempting to include mixed uses, but also a variety of residents. Hope VI communities will not only house the urban poor, who will live in heavily subsidized units, but also a number of middle class homeowners. In an effort to maintain the integrity of the neighborhood, and preserve property investments, residents are "carefully screened and rules are strictly enforced."[66]

To date, HUD has spent almost 4.3 billion dollars on more than 300 Hope VI planning, demolition, and revitalization grants. New urbanists, not surprisingly, praise the program as a long awaited "step in the right direction." Others, however, have voiced

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[65]Andres Duany, "Our Urbanism," *Architecture*, December, 1998, 73-77.

[66]U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "About Hope VI," Overview, August, 2001, <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/hope6/about/>(November 5, 2001); Leccese and McCormick, *Charter*, 95.

concerns about the project. They point out, for example, that though 97,000 distressed housing units have been demolished, only 61,000 have been built to replace them. Furthermore, it is unclear how many of those new units are allocated to the truly needy. According to one 1999 study, only four new low-income residences are produced for every ten units destroyed. Displaced residents are left to find other sources of subsidized housing, usually in other low-income neighborhoods. This leads some critics to conclude that "Hope VI may simply be moving concentrated poverty around while, at the same time, reducing the total number of public housing units." They further note that while "the physical improvement of public housing is a very important goal . . . achieving this while reducing the total number of public housing units is absurd."[67]

Yet, in spite of these concerns, new urbanism continues to grow in popularity and its influence, at all levels of government, appears stronger than ever. This acceptance is likely due to a number of factors. The nostalgia of the movement and the promise of community is no doubt appealing to a population increasingly harried and often disconnected from family and social ties. The lure of an easy solution to the nation's urban and environmental woes is also quite alluring.

Yet credit must also be given to the new urbanists themselves, who have done a masterful job at marketing their mantra of urban reconstruction. They are, in a sense, architectural propagandists, and even speak in the parlance of a fellow traveler. "You have to create your own enemy," Andres Duany once remarked, adding "you have to

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[67]HUD, "About Hope VI," Grants Awarded; Russell Krauter, "Mixed Results and Mild Confusion," *Michigan Poverty Law Project Newsletter*, Issue 8, Summer 2000, <http//www.mplp.org/materials/Newsletter/00Summer/hopeiv.htm> (November 5, 2001).

simplify your enemy and you have to attack your enemy on your terms." Although he denounces modern developers as "snake-oil salesmen" he promotes the profitability of new urbanism to them in order to "induce the beast to swallow its own poison." The Cuban-born designer summarizes his strategy with an allusion to his own past: "Instead of exhausting ourselves with endless frontal attacks, we capture the radio stations and the revolution is won. No bloodshed, exactly what Castro did."[68]

It should be surprising that Duany, a Cuban emigre, should compare his movement to Castro's much maligned revolution, but it isn't. New urbanism is an ideology brimming with contradictions. It purports to be new, yet it embraces the past at every turn. It promises to liberate, yet it is laden with covenants and restrictions. It seeks to revitalize America's cities, but its greatest successes, Seaside and Celebration, were new, suburban developments. New Urbanism professes a mission to house the poor and afflicted, however most of its communities are filled with the wealthy. The movement aspires to serve all races, yet its consumers are overwhelmingly white. Its porches sit unused, its residents drive to work, and its low-income housing projects shelter a growing number of middle class taxpayers. Such glaring inconsistencies would discredit most movements, but new urbanism continues to thrive. Driven by hope and propelled by promise, the dream of community endures.

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[68]Duany, et. al., *Suburban Nation*, 100; Ross, *Celebration Chronicles*, 77-78.

Chapter III

Comparison and Recommendations

In the late 1970s, during the final years of Albert Speer's life, a small cadre of architects undertook a program to rehabilitate the image of Hitler's former architect and redeem his creative legacy. At the forefront of this movement was Leon Krier, the guru of new urbanism and high priest of neotraditional design. In an essay on Speer, Krier praised the German's body of work as "the architecture of desire." Although he reproached Speer for "his unrepenting belief in industrial civilization" Krier lavished praise on the ex-Nazi's classical designs, which he feels were "condemned by the Nuremberg Tribunal to an even heavier sentence" than their creator. Speer, he believes, was "a born form-giver . . . graced by an extraordinary ability to think in four dimensions, to conceive structures in space and time, in parts and total." Because of this, Krier believes Speer was able "to bring almost any problem to its implacable solution, brushing aside technical and moral objections." Speer's, downfall, in Krier's mind was not aligning himself with fascism, but rather believing "that a powerful and prestigious cultural elite, upholding the highest standards of style and good taste, would be able to impose quality on industrial mass production."[1]

It is not surprising that Krier would attempt to "exorcize" Speer's work and

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[1]Krier goes on to remark "Auschwitz - Birkenau and Los Angeles are children of the same parents. They are reifications of social place less ness, of the incapacity to give human work and commonwealth dignified and pleasing forms." Later, Krier also recalls the "good sides" of "Hitler's socialism," including the Reich's "advanced social legislation," the "astonishing development of German civic spirit," and the Nazi's "admirable love" for "the landscape and for classical architecture." Leon Krier, ed., *Albert Speer, Architecture: 1932-1942* (Brussels: Aux Archives D'Architecture Moderne, 1985), 217, 222, 227.

reputation. In many respects, the two appear to be kindred spirts. Both are Europeans who revile the modern transformation of their native landscapes. Both are confirmed classicists and firm proponents of Greco-Roman design. Both men built their reputations largely on unrealized designs; grandiose cities and structures which exist only in plaster, on paper, or in the imaginations of their would-be creators. Yet, despite these similarities, important differences between these two men remain. Krier, while extreme in his views, is no proponent of racial nationalism. Nor does he share Speer's faith in industry and technology. One could also argue that Speer, with his tacit acceptance of modernity, is, in some respects, the more pragmatic of the two architects.[2]

A similar relationship exists between the design schools propagated by these noted architects. New urbanism and Nazi community design share much in common. Their design elements, intent, and underlying principles are, in many respects quite similar. In addition, they also share a common lineage, and are products of the same, turn-of-the-century movements. At the same time, however, it is important to remember that these design schools are products of vastly different individuals operating towards dramatically disparate goals. These differences become evident during the course of a comparison, and also merit careful consideration. Only then, after a full examination of these similarities and distinctions, can any possible or meaningful relationship between these movements be established.

First and foremost, both Nazi officials and new urbanist planners hold a steadfast conviction that architecture and design can influence and help shape human behavior.

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[2]*Ibid.*, 217-219.

This belief, known as spatial determinism or architectural determinism, is at the core of all their planned developments. In the case of the Nazis, designs were intended to strengthen the *volk* and reinforce the political and social culture. New urbanists, on the other hand, see design as a means of building community, increasing social capital, and combating social evils, such as crime, poverty, and racism. Because of this mutual acceptance of spatial determinism, the architect enjoys a special role among both groups. The designer determines more than the structure of buildings, he also helps create the structure of society. He therefore achieves a level of primacy among professionals and, in the process, validates the "authority of architecture."[3]

Given this common belief, it is not surprising that the community designs of the new urbanists and the Nazis exhibit a number of similar physical elements. Both, for example, rely on highly formalized street grids in their developments. Such Baroque elements are readily visible in both Seaside and the rejected resort proposed for Pennemünde. Both plans feature long straight boulevards, streets set at right angles, and carefully placed lines of sight. Similar features could also be found in the Nazi designs for Berlin and Hermann Goering-Werke or for virtually all of DPZ's town plans. Also common to the plans is the use of monumental structures which serve as architectural focal points. Such edifices, known as *Stadtkrone*, were an essential feature of the National Socialist town. Towers, clocks, statues and the like not only improved local aesthetics, but also enhanced the power and prestige of Hitler's regime and paid tribute

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[3]Leon Krier, *Houses, Palaces, Cities* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 30-31.

to the nation's heroic past.[4]

Similar structures can be found in many new urbanist communities. Krier's proposed tower in Seaside would be one vivid example. Another might be obelisks incorporated into Calthorpe Associates' design for Laguna West or DPZ's plan for the "village" of Windsor, under development near Vero Beach, Florida. These monumental structures, however, are significantly different from Hitler's *Stadtkrone.* Unlike the Nazi monuments, these towering structures serve no political purpose. They promote no regime except that of the developer. Nor are they like the classical spires they attempt to emulate. These monuments commemorate no victory or act of civic sacrifice. They recall no local or national hero. They are mere visual icons, designed to improve local aesthetics and enhance all-important property values. They provide the illusion of a past without the burden of time and sacrifice (see figure 3.1).[5]

They also provide an important classical element to the civil landscape. While neoclassicism is usually associated with Nazi urban design, its elements can also be found in many new urbanist plans. Krier's cottage in Seaside resembles a Greek temple. A Roman barber might feel at home in the town's tiny post office. The presence of a public gathering space, often referred to as a "piazza," also harkens back to classical

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[4]Steven Brooke, *Seaside* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican, 1995), 26; Gerhard Fehl and Tilman Harlander, *Hitlers Sozialer Wohnungsbau, 1940-1945: Wohnungspolitik, Baugestaltung und Siedlungsplanung* (Hamburg:Hans Christians Verlag, 1986), 235-238; John Robert Mullin, "The Impact of National Socialist Policies Upon Local City Planning in Pre-war Germany (1933-1939): The Rhetoric and the Reality," *Planning Perspectives* 47 (1981): 44.

[5]Peter Katz, *New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1994),18-23, 74-75.

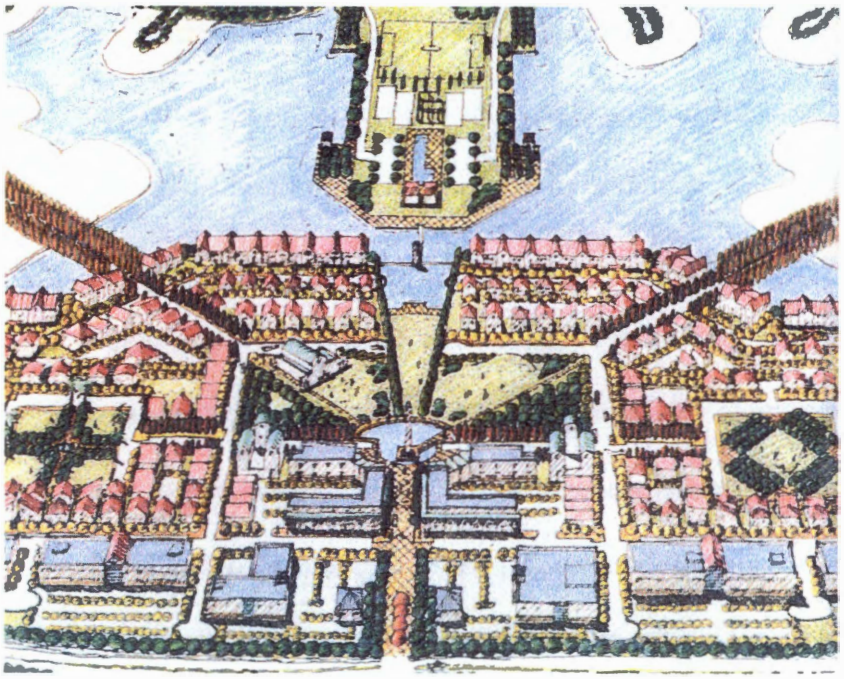

Figure 3.1. View of Laguna West Development.
Source: Peter Katz, *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 18.

community design and recalls the Greek agora or a Roman forum. Town plans, viewed from a macro level, even appeared to be based on ancient settlement models. Speer's plan for Pennemünde, for example, is striking similar to the square, fortified Roman *Castra*. Interestingly, a handful of new urbanist proposals also assume this form. DPZ's plans for the Florida community of Wellington, for example, feature a number of neighborhoods which strongly resemble the Roman model (see figures 3.2 and 3.3).[6]

In addition to classicism, both schools also rely on vernacular architecture in their designs. This is especially true in their plans for small to medium-sized communities. Both movements are highly nostalgic, and each attempts to recreate their vision of an idyllic local village. For the Nazis, this generally meant small stucco houses with steep, thatched roofs. New urbanists, depending on the region, gravitate towards bright coastal cottages and imposing colonial facades. Yet, though both schools emphasize local architecture, their motives differ considerably. For the Nazis, the Tyrolean style was a reflection of the German race, and its use was intended to strengthen racial qualities and racial identity. The goals of the new urbanists, on the other hand, are much more benign. Their affection for "authentic traditional" design appears to be mainly aesthetic, part of an ongoing crusade against the dark forces of "kitsch" and popular culture. Yet, like their German predecessors, they are also deeply nostalgic and no doubt harbor similar,

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[6] Alex Scobie, *Hitler's State Architecture: The Impact of Classical Antiquity* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1990), 93-96; Katz, *New Urbanism*, 16, 105, 108.

Figure 3.2. Proposed View of Wellington Neighborhood.

Source: Peter Katz, *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 108.

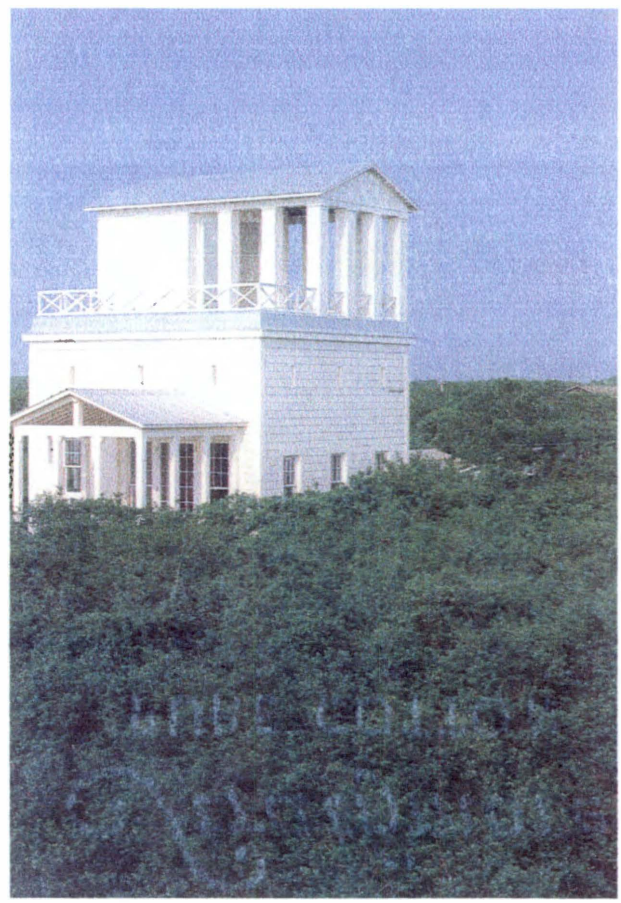

Figure 3.3. The Krier Cottage, Seaside.

Source: Steven Brooke, *Seaside* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican, 1995), 72.

preconceived images of the transcendent neighborhood and community.[7]

A full range of community facilities also appear to be integral to both schools of planning. Both new urbanist and national socialist community designs boast a full complement of academic, athletic, administrative, and health related institutions. Larger developments, such as Pennemünde, Hermann Goering-Werke, and Celebration include schools, hospitals, meeting halls, and an abundance of recreational facilities. Even modestly scaled projects such as Seaside have a significant number of community structures. The Florida "town," for example, enjoys a meeting hall, post office, and school (albeit a small one), even though it has few full time residents.[8]

Interestingly, though both design schools place considerable emphasis on community facilities, they also share a sense of unease concerning the inclusion of religious facilities. Churches, though considered a necessity by many urban residents, appear to be a source of discomfort for both Nazi and New Urbanist planners. German designers, as a matter of policy, regularly excluded houses of worship from their plans in the 1930s. Nazi officials wanted no institutions competing with the state for the loyalty of the *volk*. Many prominent new urbanist developments have also made few accommodations for worship. Seaside, now approaching maturity, still has no religious facilities to speak of. Celebration gained its sole church only after months of religious

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[7]Robert R. Taylor, *The Word in Stone: The Role of Architecture in National Socialist Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 230; Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (New York: North Point Press, 2000), 207-212.

[8]Brooke, *Seaside*, 107-111.

tension - and a whopping check from a Disney heiress. The new urbanists differ considerably, however, in the nature of their ecclesiastical discomfort. Their unease does not stem from a desire for absolute loyalty. It is, instead, the product of cultural hypersensitivity, an aversion to public controversy, and, perhaps, a touch of intellectual arrogance.[9]

In both types of communities, residents were intended to get to public facilities on foot. Both Nazi and new urbanist designers enthusiastically encouraged pedestrian transit and public spaces and facilities were carefully placed within walking distance of most homes. Sidewalks, crossing points, and other pedestrian friendly elements are also common to both schools. Concern for public health was almost certainly a major factor in the formation of these policies. Nazi officials, obsessed with the perceived decline in *volkish* strength, encouraged exercise and athleticism at every turn. Similarly, new urbanists have also assumed the mantle of health reform and blame suburban sprawl for "sedentary lifestyles" and "health problems that stem from inactivity."[10]

Although their views towards walking are similar, Nazis and new urbanists express differing opinions regarding the automobile. To Adolf Hitler, the car was a source of German liberation and a key element of his vast new empire. The *volk*, outfitted with shiny, efficient "strength through joy automobiles," would expand

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[9]It is important to note that some new urbanist developments, such as DPZ's Kentlands, in Gaithersburg, Maryland, prominently featured large churches in their town plans. Katz, *New Urbanism*, 31-45; Taylor, *Word in Stone*, 209.

[10]Michael Leccese and Katherine McCormick, eds., *Charter of the New Urbanism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999), III, 64.

eastward across the Steppes, achieving new levels of prosperity and independence in the process. New urbanists, writing much later, have a more sinister view of car travel. To them, the family car is a curse which has enslaved the masses to an endless regimen of short drives and commutes. Cars, they contend, encourage sprawl, destroy downtowns, harm the environment, alienate youth, and incite sociopathic behavior. [11]

Given their common beliefs in pedestrian-friendly public facilities, both design schools also share comparable views regarding the distribution of urban populations. Both advocate a strong, central city core surrounded by a pattern of varying levels of urban activity and residential density. Speer's zoning scheme for Berlin and Duany's transect are remarkably similar in their design and in their desired effect. They differ, however, in their structure. Speer's design called for a radial system, with strips of various densities extending out from the city center. Duany's transect, on the other hand, is more concentric in nature, with rings of development expanding, in decreasing levels, out from the urban core.[12]

Yet, while the two groups agree on this type of land use structure, they disagree on the question of zoning. Nazi planners, though innovative in their application of controls, nonetheless embraced the concept of zoning. Most towns, particularly new developments, were strictly zoned according to use and function. This was especially true of industrial uses, which were almost always zoned away from populated areas. New

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[11]Duany, *Suburban Nation*, 60-62, 116-123.

[12]Krier, *Albert Speer*, 47; Lars Olaf Larsson, *Albert Speer: Le Plan De Berlin, 1937-1943* (Brussels: Aux Archives D'Architecture Moderne, 1983), 172-209; *New Urbanism News*, September, 2000.

urbanists, however, decry zoning as a pariah to proper development and the root of urban evils. Zoning laws virtually mandate sprawl, they contend, and hinder attempts to "reconstruct" America's cities. New Urbanists oppose zoning in every form. They even see no need to segregate industrial uses from the community. "Modern production facilities are perfectly safe neighbors," they argue, adding "a comprehensive mix of diverse land uses is once again as reasonable as it was in the preindustrial age."[13]

Such statements leads one to suspect that new urbanists are as ill informed about modern manufacturing processes as they are about the quality of preindustrial life. This naivete, however, is representative of a more general lack of understanding of the modern industrial economy. New urbanists, steeped in nostalgia and anti-modernism, have thus far shown little interest in incorporating large scale industries into their work. At best, the economic activity of their "towns" is limited to small shops, artists' studios, and offices. Virtually no provision is made for blue-collar labor of any kind. As a result, the economic viability of their communities is highly questionable. Nazi planners, on the other hand, were acutely aware of economic development issues. German developments of the 1930s, even those in remote or rural areas, were almost always attached to some form of industrial complex. Some, such as the cities of Hermann Goering-Werke and Strength Through Joy Automobile Town were designed around major industrial employers.[14]

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[13]James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-made Landscape* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 263-264; Duany, *Suburban Nation*, 10-11.

[14]Mullin, "Impact of National Socialist Policies," 44.

German planners also recognized the relationship between location and economic viability. Nazi planners incorporated location theories, such as Christaller's Central Place Theory, into their development agenda. Market forces and community functions were always considered when planning new communities. New urbanists, on the other hand, have been oblivious to these forces. As a result, commercial ventures in neotraditional developments are often noncompetitive. Their much heralded corner stores, while nostalgically appealing, are inherently unprofitable and, in some cases, have to be subsidized by the developer. Retail stores often struggle for survival, beset by large scale regional and national rivals. Thus, a sense of economic unreality pervades the new urbanist mind-set and their rejection of modernism appears to include a denial of the fundamental laws of capitalism.[15]

Beyond these physical similarities, new urbanists and national socialist designers also share a number of common ideological beliefs. Indeed, their ties extend far beyond their mutual contempt for flat roofs. Both, for example, are intrinsically anti-modern. Hitler and his cronies rejected modernity. Their hatred of modern design, of course, was legendary. The Bauhaus was "the cathedral of Marxism." Modern housing was akin to a factory or prison cell. Yet, they also saw the destructive potential of modern life. The twentieth century city was a dank, dirty pit which sapped the strength of the sacred *volk*. It was a soulless conglomeration of structures and the breeding ground of Bolshevism

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[15]New urbanists contend that eventually, as communities mature, commercial spaces will become economically viable. Duany, *Suburban Nation*, 187-189;Catherine Collins and Douglas Frantz, *Celebration, USA: Living in Disney's Brave New Town* (New York: Henry Holt, 1999), 61, 323.

and revolution. Nazi officials attempted, with their Blood and Soil program, to reverse these forces. They sought to restore character to the Reich's urban centers, create authentic German communities, and reinvigorate their race and culture.[16]

New urbanists, for their part, also reject many elements of the modern world. Like the planners and architects of the Third Reich, they also show disdain for modern design. New urbanists espouse traditional architecture in all their code and design. Also like the Nazis, they maintain a nostalgic, idyllic view of the past. Just as the Germans saw the rural, medieval, Tyrolean hamlet as the perfect community new urbanists embrace a similar image of turn of the century America. Picket fences, clapboard siding, and friendly corner stores all characterize their vision of a functional neighborhood. If the Nazi village could serve as the setting of a Wagnerian opera, the new urbanist development could just as easily accommodate an Andy Hardy movie or an episode of *Leave it to Beaver*.

New urbanists and Nazi designers differ, however, on one important aspect of modernity - industrialization. German officials, though they reject many elements of the modern age, readily embraced the industrial order. Factories were an important element of Hitler's new towns; mass production was vital to his coming empire. As a result, production facilities were incorporated in most Nazi developments to provide employment for the *volk* and arms and consumer goods for the Reich. New urbanists, however, have thus far shunned large scale manufacturers. Radicals in the movement,

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[16]Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard, 1985), 155, 161-167.

such as Leon Krier, even call for the destruction of the industrial economy and a return to preindustrial society. Given his druthers, Krier would replace the world's factories with small shops run by artisans and craftsmen. Little wonder, then, that Krier would attack Speer for his belief that "Industry is right. There can be no going back."[17]

The greatest ideological differences between the two groups, however, lie in their attitudes towards race and nation. These concepts were, of course, central to the beliefs of the Nazi architectural elite, who were immersed in the rhetoric of "Blood and Soil." Their designs were intended to help purify the German race, strengthen the state, and enhance the power of the Party. To their credit, new urbanists reject these ideas. They have, at least in theory, expressed a commitment to design inclusive communities, open to all ages, races, and faiths. In practice, this mandate has been, at times, difficult to see. Most developments are far from diverse. Still, compared to the abhorrent practices of the Nazis, these shortcomings seems somewhat inconsequential.

Less clear are the new urbanist's attitudes regarding class. Nazis, for their part, feared the prospect of class conflict. Class strife, they believed, led to Bolshevism and radical revolution. They hoped to counter these forces through their emphasis on racial and national unity. Improved living conditions and employment opportunities, available in Germany's new towns and industrial cities, would also reduce socioeconomic tensions. New urbanists say little on the subject of class. They do, however, commit themselves to creating neighborhoods which, they hope, will "bring people of diverse

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[17]Leon Krier, *Houses, Palaces, Cities* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 7, 13, 19-20, 3-37; Krier, *Albert Speer*, 221.

ages, races and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community." Yet, despite this pledge, most neotraditional developments remain largely income specific. Residential plans, such as Seaside or Celebration, continue to be directed at affluent home buyers. Inner city projects, such as Hope VI communities, are aimed at those with low or modest incomes. Thus, as with the issue of race, a true diversity of residents has yet to be accomplished.[18]

In the sense that both Nazis and new urbanists attempt to create idyllic, strife free communities, they can be regarded as utopian movements. They thus carry on a long tradition of civic idealism which has persisted in the West since the middle of the nineteenth century. Speer and Duany are, in some respects, very similar to earlier visionaries like Charles Fourier and Robert Owen. Their towns and their designs share a sense of unlikely idealism with those of their predecessors. They are also similar to earlier movements in that they are also reactive. Just as nineteenth century utopianism was a reaction to the industrial revolution, Nazism and new urbanism can also be viewed as responses to social, cultural and economic change. Hitler's movement was born in the defeat and despair of post-war Germany. The Nazi's attack on the modernist designs of the 1920s were an assault on the failures of the Weimar regime.[19]

Similarly, the new urbanists may also be a reacting to a changing world. Like the Nazis before them, the new urbanists also perceive a world in decline. They serve an

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[18]Leccese and McCormick, *Charter*, 89-93.

[19]For a good overview of nineteenth century utopian movements, see Mark Holloway, *Heavens on Earth* (New York: Dover, 1966).

alienated constituency who no longer feels valued in its world or at ease in its environment. They are surrounded by kitsch and the mediocrity of the masses. They watch as their beloved downtowns waste away and stare in envy at the piazzas and urban centers of Europe. Worst of all, they sense the erosion of their professional status. This holds especially true for the architects who lead the movement. No longer independent artists, architects, they believe, were now no better than corporate technocrats whose work is "dictated by engineers, sociologists, fire-officers and the like." Little wonder, then, that they should promote communities which would emanate from their genius, enhance their station, and reflect their tastes and sensibilities.[20]

Utopia, it seems, is in the eye of the beholder. People want a perfect community, just as long as it is perfect for them. Germany's Nazis and today's new urbanists held radically different views of their ideal towns and cities. Yet, in achieving these divergent goals, they employ a number of similar designs and methods and espouse a handful of fundamentally similar ideas. Thus, the question arises. Are these similarities significant or meaningful? Are they indicative of a genuine relationship between these movements or do they merely suggest common artistic tastes or a common design heritage?

Certainly the evidence does not confirm the worst conspiratorial fears – that the new urbanists are modern day fascists hellbent on world domination. Nor are they long-haired ideologues seeking to overthrow the existing social order. Without question the movement has its share of radicals. Most movements do. The ramblings of Leon Krier do point to a revolutionary agenda, but they are so far removed from reality that one must

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[20]Krier, *Albert Speer*, 227.

question their impact on day to day development patterns and urban policy decisions. Only a raving lunatic would suggest that Hope VI or Seaside were concerted attempts to undermine the nation-state or overthrow the industrial economy. At worst, the new urbanists are errant and somewhat frustrated elitists out to impose their tastes and virtues on a benign and, for the most part, oblivious public. Far from a threat to the existing order, the movement has, to date, produced little of substance. In the words of one critic, the movement has generated little more than "Demonstration projects, international study tours, a pleasant living environment for a few thousand households, [and] well paid lecture tours for a small clutch of immodest architects."[21]

Yet, in spite of their failings, the new urbanists do have a point. There are costs associated with sprawl – costs which must be addressed in the future. Americans are too dependent on the automobile. Social capital is in decline. Portions of the environment are at risk. The loss of prime farmland is a potential disaster in the making and many urban centers are in desperate need of revitalization. Even many of their design considerations have merit. No reasonable person would question the value of pedestrian friendly streets or the desirability of neighborhood schools. Their ideas concerning community facilities, urban densities, and mixed use development will no doubt influence urban and residential design for some time to come.

Yet, despite their merit, these designs still hearken back to those of Hitler's planners and architects. The similarities which exist between these two design schools

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[21]Peter Gordon and Harry W. Richardson, "A Critique of New Urbanism" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, Pasadena, California, November, 1998); *Census of Population, 2000* .

are difficult to ignore, and for good reason. Any resemblance to the ideas of the Third Reich should be cause for concern and reflection. Nor should attempts be made to disassociate these designs from the Nazi regime, as though they were simply "good planning" or the work of a skilled artisan. Nazi plans, and their creators, were thoroughly steeped in the ideology of National Socialism and reflect the beliefs and ambitions of the Fuhrer and his followers. Their creations, no matter how appealing, should be subject to an intense level of scrutiny. Likewise, similar plans, such as those of the new urbanists, should also be thoroughly examined, to ensure their commitment to democratic principles.

It seems inevitable, however, that some observers will attempt to establish a correlation between these two design schools. New Urbanists should therefore take steps to distinguish themselves from this powerful and regretful precedent. Their movement, while free of the racial nationalism which characterized the German design school, none the less maintains a strident attachment to ideology which invites unwelcome comparisons. Similar design elements and corresponding attitudes towards spatial determinism also elicit such criticisms, as do their views regarding elected governments and the bureaucracy. Yet, despite these apparent likenesses, new urbanists could easily break free from this past by undertaking a few simple and much needed reforms. A handful of changes in their movement and their rhetoric would help diffuse future attacks and assist in the fulfillment of their stated goals. Thus, to assure the success of their movement, new urbanists should undertake the following recommendations.

Recommendations

First, new urbanists should undertake a commitment to particpatory democracy. They ought to abandon the elitist notion of private government and corporate rule. Instead, they should embrace the concept of public governance. In spite of its pitfalls and inconveniences, an elected municipal government remains the surest means of ensuring that property rights do not supercede individual liberties. They should also increase levels of public participation in the planning process, and consult with all interested parties – residents, developers, and interests groups, both before and after plans are developed. The possibility of plan amendments should not justify an absence of consultation and consideration.

Likewise, new urbanists need to fulfill their promise of mixed income developments. Thus far this idea, though boldly touted, has been little more than a hollow pledge. One need only look, for example, at Mt. Laurel, a DPZ-designed community near Birmingham, Alabama. Its builder states that they are "dedicated to creating a place where a diverse group of ages and income levels can live, work, and play together." The least expensive home in this community, however, is a $200,000 townhouse, making genuine diversity an impossibility. New urbanists have, to their credit, initiated the Hope VI program, which provides improved housing for low to moderate income families. Surprisingly, though, they have created few developments for the greater middle class. Although they decry middle class suburbs and condemn the

tastes of the petit bourgeoisie, they offer few concrete alternatives for this vital group.[22]

Related to the issue of economic diversity is the matter of economic viability. Local employment opportunities must exist if a pedestrian based, mixed income community can expected to succeed. To date, however, most new urbanist communities have little to offer job seekers but low paying service positions at local retail shops and health clubs. In this rare instance, new urbanists might actually gain positive knowledge from the Nazi experience. German planners went to considerable lengths to incorporate industries into their developments which carried large number of blue-collar and white-collar opportunities. Modern planners should also heed the Nazi's use of location theory in developing communities. Such a knowledge of market boundaries and consumer behavior might finally convince new urbanists of the futility of siting a nostalgic corner store within a few miles of a conventional supermarket.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, new urbanists should recall that the Nazi's fall from power came not from their evil, but their arrogance. Their unflinching belief in their own invincibility ultimately led to their demise. The new urbanists are similarly not known for their modesty. This holds especially true of the movement's leadership, whose hubris is approaching Napoleonic proportions. Yet, while this attitude might win them allies within their professional circles, it will gain them few friends among the public. Nor will their invectives, hurled at developers, regulators, and consumers, garner much support. Instead, new urbanists should reach out to these groups and attempt to build a

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[22]"The Town of Mt. Laurel," Town Center and Home Plans and Pricing, <http://www.mtlaurel.com> (February 3, 2002).

consensus among all interested parties.

Historian Peter Adam once wrote: "One can only look at the art of the Third Reich through the lens of Auschwitz." In the case of Nazi architecture that certainly holds true. One must look beyond the grand boulevards of Speer's Berlin to see that they lead to the crematoriums and death pits of Dachau. Followers of new urbanism would be wise to view the world through this glass as well from time to time – not to see their evil, for they have none, but rather to see the potential for wrong in what they do. Only when they genuinely recognize their connection to the past can they begin to create something that is truly new.[23]

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[23]Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich* {New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1992), 9.

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Vita

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Dr. Ezzell has taught at the University of Tennessee and performed research for the University's Energy and Environment Resources Center. He has also worked for *Nine Counties. One Vision*, a regional planning and visioning project based in Knoxville. He is married to Patricia Bernard Ezzell, of Kinsgport, Tennessee. They have two Children, William Bernard Ezzell and Sophie Lee Ezzell.

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