

**Planes, Drains, and Automobiles:
A Case Study of Urban Renewal in Eastwick**

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CPLN 760
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April 13, 2005

Introduction

For centuries, urban design has been seen as a way to create special places. Examples of this can be seen in the Piazza del Campidoglio in Rome, the canals lined neighborhoods of Amsterdam, the Royal Crescent of Bath, and Battery Park City in Manhattan.

Although, these places are completely different, there are certain characteristics that they all share. It is these general characteristics of good urban design that help to make these places special. When it came time to design the redevelopment of the Eastwick Urban Renewal Area in the late 1950s, the consultants hired for the project wanted to create a special place by incorporating good urban design. Furthermore, they wanted this design to help encourage racial diversity. However, this occurred at a time when the generally accepted principles of urban design and the structure of the city itself were far different than they are today. These new ideas about urban design are certainly reflected in the product that occupies the far corner of Southwest Philadelphia today. The purpose of this paper is to outline the key design principles that guided the development of “New Eastwick”, and then longitudinally analyze them in order to determine whether they deserve merit because of their ability to help achieve the city’s social goals and withstand the test of time both physically and demographically. Because of the emphasis placed on analyzing the populace of Eastwick, this paper will primarily focus on the residential component of the design. Furthermore, while there were many controversies surrounding this Urban Renewal project, they will not be discussed in this paper.

First, I will outline the circumstances under which Eastwick was designated an Urban Renewal Area. This includes an assessment of blight, socio-economic characteristics, and the City of Philadelphia’s desire to redevelop the area. Second, I will outline, compare, and critique the three master plans created for the redevelopment project. Most importantly, I will analyze the urban design guidelines and vision that were developed for the new community. Third, I will analyze whether the original vision for this community was realized. In particular, it will be determined whether the radical design principles implemented were able to create a special place that is aesthetically pleasing, functional, and socio-economically diverse.

Old Eastwick

Eastwick is a naturally low-lying, swampy area in the far corner of Southwest Philadelphia (Figure 1) that comprises approximately 2,500 acres¹. To its east, it is separated from Center City and South Philadelphia by an agglomeration of heavy industry and the Schuylkill River. To its north are the dense rowhouse neighborhoods of Southwest Philadelphia. To its west lays Cobbs Creek, the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum, and more heavy industry. Finally, to its south lays light industry and the Philadelphia International Airport.

Before 1950, Eastwick was not heavily populated and was characterized by “small farms, trailers, scattered housing developments, and, by the mid-twentieth century, an assortment of auto junkyards and burning garbage dumps.”² By the 1950s Eastwick had an aging, dilapidated housing stock, much of which lacked private baths³; unpaved streets and sidewalks; inadequate sewage, water, and stormwater facilities; and a large rodent population. The lack of proper stormwater drainage was exacerbated by the fact that parts of the area lay 12 feet below the level of the Delaware River.⁴

In 1951, the Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia (RDA) described the area as “predominately open land.” The semi-rural character of the area earned it the name “The Meadows.” But while approximately 60% of Eastwick was uninhabited at the time, there was still a population of about 19,300 low- and moderate-income residents. Many of these residents worked in Eastwick’s 278 commercial businesses and 11 factories.⁵ “City planners, however, placed little value on this relationship between community and work, as a preliminary R[D]A plan simply noted that land use in Eastwick consisted of a

¹ The Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia. *Information Booklet, Eastwick Redevelopment Project*. Philadelphia, 1958. 2.

² McKee, Guian A. “Liberal Ends Through Illiberal Means: Race, Urban Renewal, and Community in the Eastwick Section of Philadelphia, 1949-1990.” *Journal of Urban History* 27 (2001): 547.

³ The Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia, 2.

⁴ McKee, 549.

⁵ Ibid.



Figure 1: Location of the Eastwick Urban Renewal Area⁶

confusion of residential, commercial and industrial uses mixed with vacant land.”⁷ It was this vacant land that was of primary concern to the city. 84% of these parcels were in tax delinquency.⁸

⁶ Leonardo, Joseph J. *Review of the Eastwick Urban Renewal Plan*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia City Planning Commission, 1982. 0.

Doxiadis, 5.

⁷ McKee, 549.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Despite the physical deficiencies of Eastwick, a strong community existed here before the bulldozers came in to make way for progress. This was a neighborhood characterized by high homeownership, racial integration, and economic diversity. While homeownership rates were high (72%), about 67% of the area's residents were eligible for public housing assistance.⁹ In addition, about 1,700 families had an average annual income of under \$4,500.¹⁰ Unlike most of Philadelphia at the time, Eastwick had a high degree of racial integration. While, the northwest section of the neighborhood contained about 1,700 households that were nearly all white, the rest of the area housed 2,188 white families and 1,127 non-white families. While there was not complete racial parity, this was still a very rare mix for the 1950s.¹¹ At the time, a Philadelphia Housing Association member noted that "most remarkable of all, Eastwick is an integrated community, with Negro and white living together without friction, but as neighbors and friends..."¹²

As was previously stated, the physical design of the old Eastwick community was extremely varied (Figures 2). While all the streets were laid out in the traditional Philadelphia grid, they had poor connectivity to the rest of the city and Delaware County. Small farms also interrupted the grid at times. The farms houses did not incorporate impressive architecture but they helped to create a rural atmosphere that is no longer present in Philadelphia. Despite the rural characteristics of the area, many of the detached single-family homes on large lots had minimal setbacks, which helped to bring a mild sense of urbanity to the area. Finally, Island Avenue was served by the Philadelphia Transportation Company's Route 36 trolley, which would later be incorporated into the present day SEPTA Subway-Surface Lines.¹³

⁹ McKee, 549.

¹⁰ The Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia, 8.

¹¹ McKee, 549, 551.

¹² McKee, 551.

¹³ Tomazinis, Dr. Anthony R. Personal Interview. 25 Mar 2005.



Figure 2: The Varied Landscape of Old Eastwick (cleared through Urban Renewal)¹⁴

¹⁴ McKee, 550.

Old Eastwick also had a large number of traditional Philadelphia row and duplex homes. Some of these blocks were preserved during the redevelopment of the community (Figure 3). Uniform architectural styles, uninterrupted buildings walls, small setbacks, narrow streets, front porches or small front yards, and the occasional corner store characterized these blocks. Many of the homes that still exist today also have rear-loaded garages that are accessed through alleys. Some even have decks above the driveways. Because of the ground level garages, the first floors are raised up, which helps to create separation between the public and private realms.

While many of the demolished homes were considered to be substandard for inhabitation, something of value was lost. Old Eastwick had something that is rarely seen -- a mix of rural and urban land uses. While the collision between urban and rural areas is commonplace throughout the United States today, Eastwick had a more pronounced clash of density. There were two extremes within this community -- the rural romanticism of Eastwick's farms, and the compact, community-fostering blocks of rowhomes. Unfortunately, this urban anomaly was to be wiped away by the wrecking ball. But even if Urban Renewal hadn't claimed Old Eastwick, development pressures surely would have led to the subdivision of its farms.

The Planning and Design of New Eastwick

The Eastwick Planners

In 1953, the Eastwick Planners released a preliminary development plan for the area. At the time, this was the largest Urban Renewal Project in the United States. It was originally estimated that the new community would house 45,000 residents in 4,100 apartments and 8,470 single family homes.¹⁵ Such a large scale project allowed the city to create something new and visionary. The city, along with its consultants, wanted to build a "city within a city." They believed that Philadelphia needed a community that was drastically different than any other that already existed in order for it to overcome the

¹⁵ McKee, 552-553.



Figure 3: Preserved Rowhomes and Duplexes in Eastwick

city's competitive disadvantages.¹⁶ It was during this era that white flight was beginning to proliferate throughout the Northeast and Midwest. Soon it became widely accepted that the design of Philadelphia's older neighborhoods was obsolete. Eastwick was

¹⁶ McKee, 553.

intended to set an entirely new standard of urban design that would help to stem the tide of residential, commercial, and industrial flight from the city.¹⁷

In addition to the desire to retrofit the city in order to increase its competitiveness and ability to retain white residents, there was also a need to house the low- to moderate-income population (mostly black) that was being displaced by other urban renewal projects in West and North Philadelphia. This, along with the election of liberal Democrats to the city government, prompted the notion that Eastwick could become a racially integrated community.¹⁸ By combining integration with design, Eastwick would have the opportunity to set a new standard for community building that would put the city in the national, and perhaps global, spotlight. Unfortunately, the fact that Old Eastwick was already integrated and incorporated fairly decent design was irrelevant. At the time, the only way for the city to obtain federal funds for urban renewal was to engage in slum clearance.¹⁹

The proposals for New Eastwick and the final product were based on design principles that were far different from those that contemporary planners and designers promote. New Eastwick was designed at a time when the physical structure of cities was drastically changing. The 1956 Federal Aid Highway Act was representative of the popular notion that cities should change to accommodate new technologies such as the automobile.²⁰ These beliefs were reflected in most of the physical development of the United States over the past fifty years. New Eastwick was no exception. The existing and proposed highways that formed its boundaries defined the community. New Eastwick's designers believed that the city form created during the age of the Pedestrian City was obsolete. They believed that the city should submit to the automobile by giving it a new hierarchy

¹⁷ Greenetowne Associates. *Eastwick Renewal Area*. Philadelphia: 1959. 3.

¹⁸ McKee, 553.

¹⁹ McKee, 555.

²⁰ "Interstate Highway System." *The Dwight D. Eisenhower Website*. 24 Mar 2005.

<<http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/dl/InterstateHighways/InterstateHighwaysdocuments.html>>

of streets that would allow for maximum efficiency of traffic flow and access to every area of the community, as well as the proposed highways and employment centers.²¹

The Eastwick Planners, headed by Henry Churchill, envisioned a community based on the Garden City principles of Ebenezer Howard. Churchill, like Howard, advocated design which sought to achieve good, clean living within the city. Churchill was an architect for the New Deal Greenbelt town program. His idea was to create a self-contained community that was comprised of interrelated residential, commercial, industrial, and community uses. The residential component would consist of a variety of market-rate, affordable, and public housing. The commercial component would include the largest shopping center in the city (at the time), as well as a few smaller commercial centers. The industrial component would provide for suburban-style industrial parks that would allow the city to compete with the suburbs for firms and jobs. This relationship of the industrial area to housing was extremely reminiscent of Howard's Garden City concept. Finally, the community component would allow for the linkage of parks, schools, and churches by a central pedestrian greenway.²² I was unable to find the plates of the Eastwick Planners' proposed site plans. But they are somewhat irrelevant considering that they were never approved.

Greenetowne Associates

In 1959, Greenetowne Associates created another site plan for the first residential phase of the community bounded by Grovers Avenue, the Reading Railroad freight line, 65th Street, and Island Avenue (Figure 4). It consisted of 1,954 for sale single-family homes and 126 apartment units on 363 acres.²³ The plan also included a small amount of preserved housing along the northern boundary of the site and space for commercial and community uses, which were to be internalized within the development. Phase I was designed in a way that would also internalize the housing component, allow for high-speed automobile access on the periphery, and break the monotony and uniformity of

²¹ Doxiadas Associates, Inc. *A Proposal to the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia to Purchase and Develop All the Land Located in the Eastwick Redevelopment Area*. Philadelphia, 1959.

²² McKee, 552-553.

²³ Greenetowne Associates, 9.

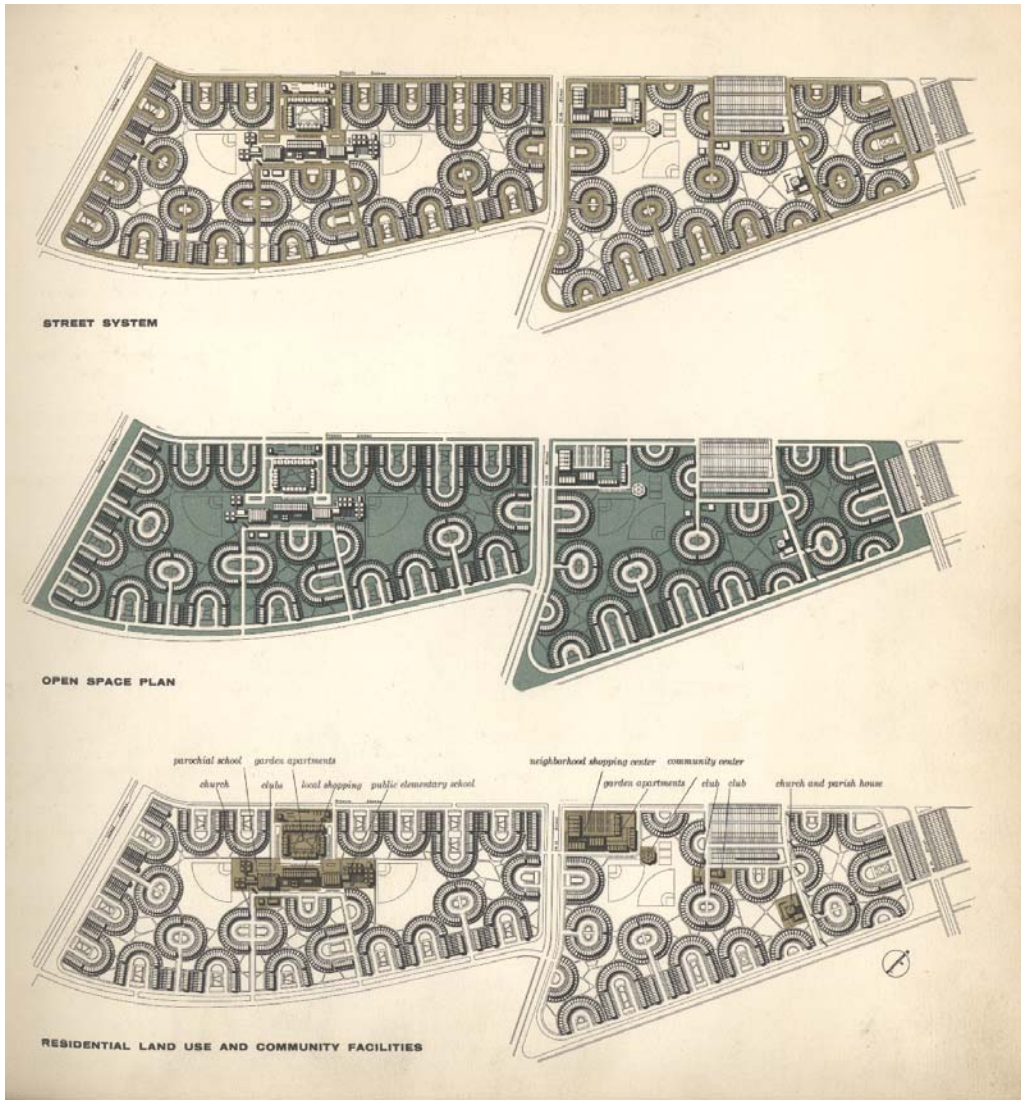
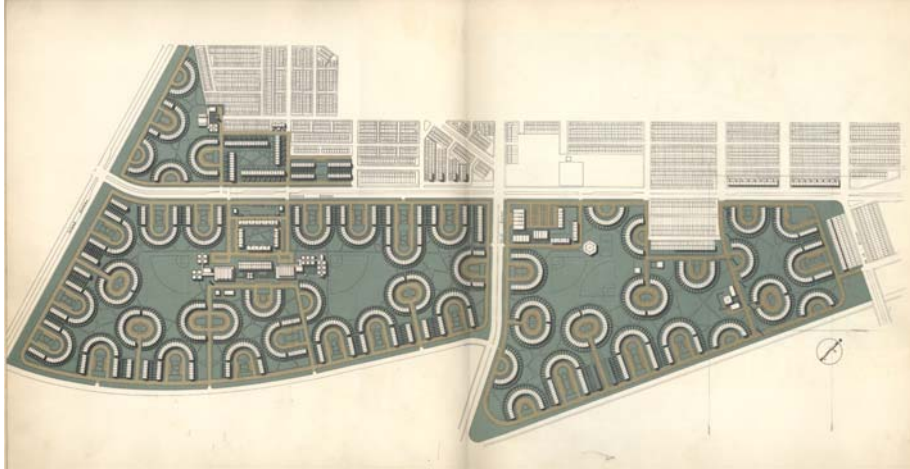


Figure 4: Greentowne Associates Plan for New Eastwick²⁴

²⁴ Greentowne Associates, 5-7.

Southwest Philadelphia's rowhouse blocks.²⁵ Essentially, this meant creating a subdivision that was characteristic of post-World War II suburban growth.

However, the density and design of the community differed from those of the typical suburban subdivision. The basic feature of this design was two superblocks consisting of circular rows of "wedge" homes situated around a cul-de-sac or horseshoe court that spurred off of an arterial road (Figure 5). The plan provided for a net density of just over 25 units per acres.²⁶ Each cluster of homes contained a dense grouping of about twenty to forty rowhomes. The layouts of these homes are very reminiscent of the Royal Crescent in Bath, England. However, the two differed in that the homes of New Eastwick were grouped around a "generous" parking lot instead of an open area. The idea was that the parking lot would be the meeting space of the community.

The clusters were separated by passive and active open space. While an ample amount of trees were provided for in the open spaces and planting strips adjacent to the streets, the landscaping scheme was not a prominent or innovative feature of the plan. But the plan did link commercial and community uses to the residential areas via a pedestrian esplanade. These commercial and community uses were intended to be a focal area of the community (Figure 6).

The dwelling units were characterized by a modern rowhouse design (Figure 7) that had large glass windows on the front and back to allow for the utilization of natural light. Some of them incorporated a lower level garage that was to be accessed through the front of the structure. These homes were also designed to have a deck over the driveway. Others provided parking through a carport situated in the front of the structure. By using front loaded parking, the homes had to have a larger setback than the typical Philadelphia rowhouse. Some of the units had split level designs, while others didn't. But all of them had a total of three levels in one form or another. Despite the variety of floor plans

²⁵ Greenetowne Associates, 3-4.

²⁶ Greenetowne Associates, 9.



Figure 5: Greenetowne Associates' "Wedge Rowhouse" Configuration²⁷

²⁷ Greenetowne Associates, 8, 12.

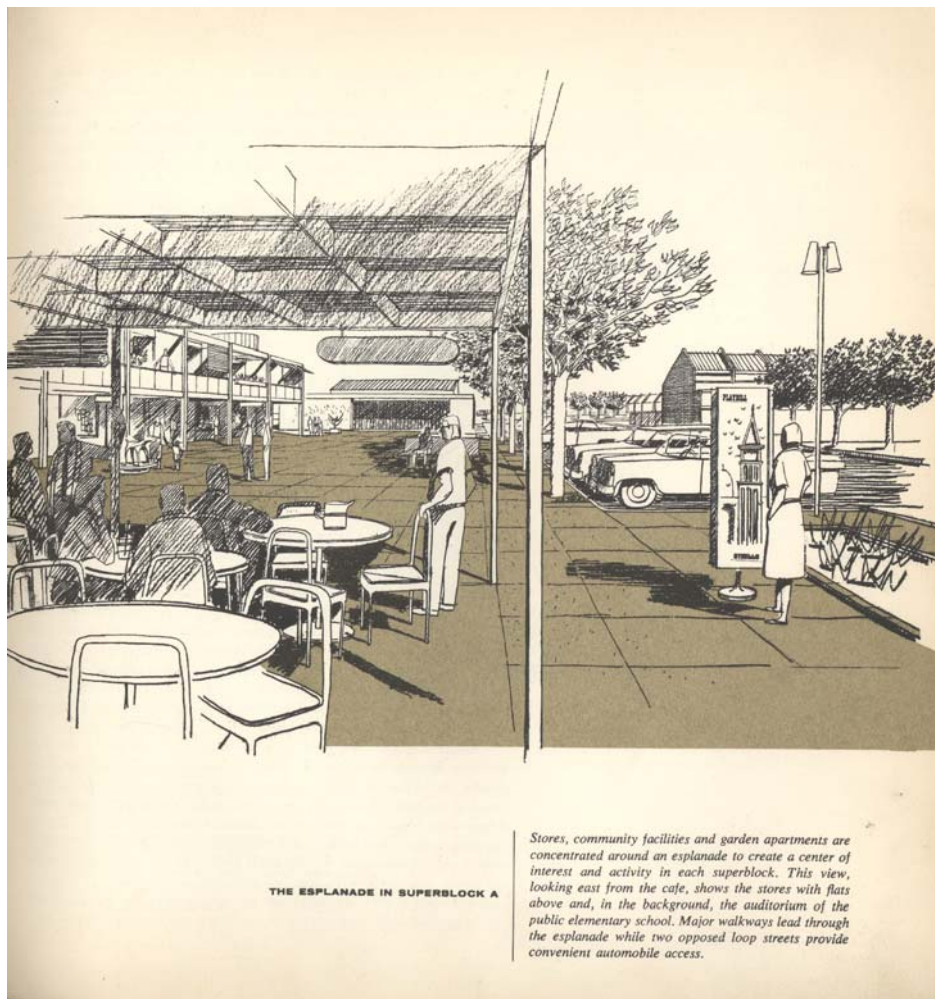
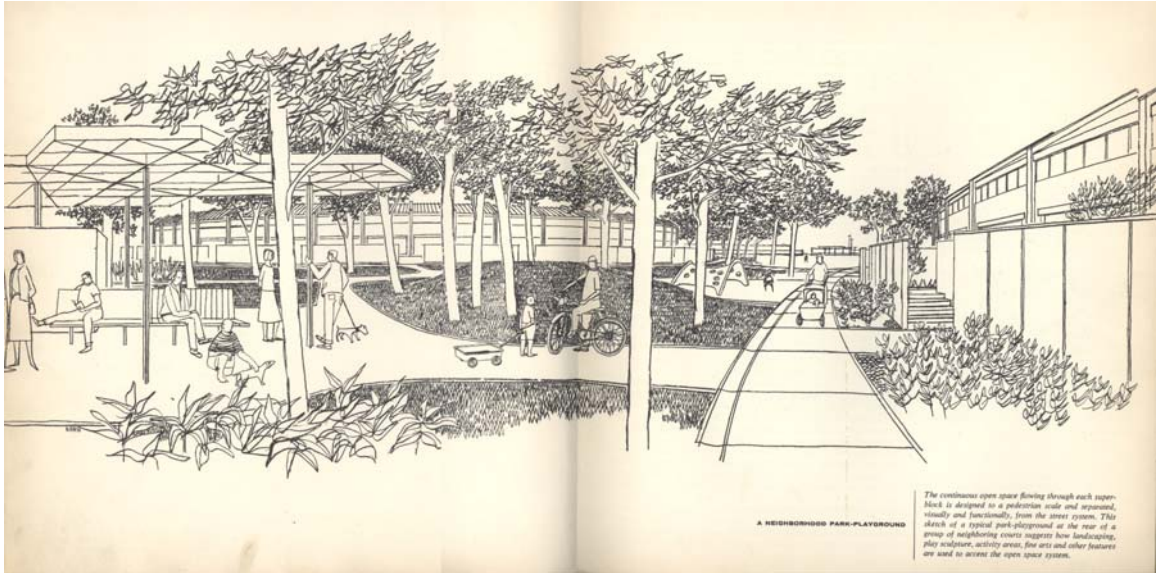


Figure 6: Greentowne Associates' Community and Commercial Centers²⁸

²⁸ Greentowne Associates, 14-15, 17.

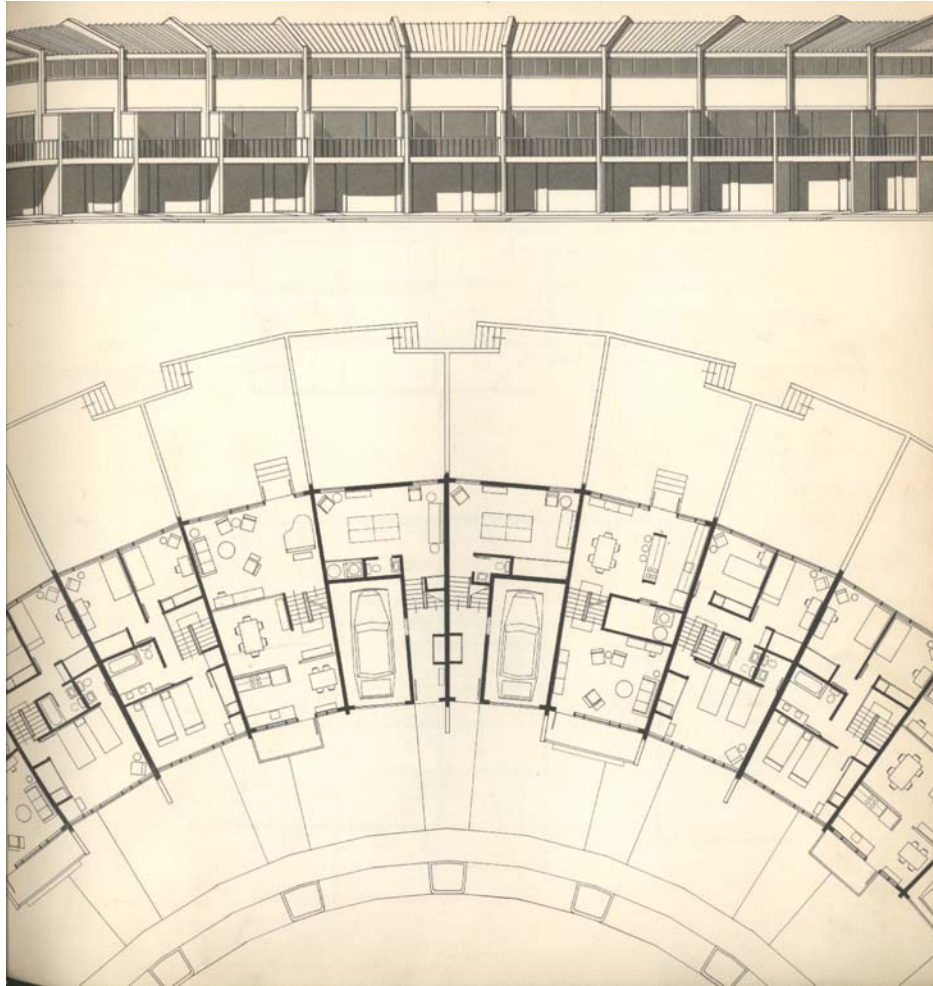


Figure 7: Floor Plan and Front View of a “Wedge Rowhouse”²⁹

proposed by Greenetowne Associates, the units all had similar facades and only a trained eye would be able to identify significant differences.

There were many inherent problems with Greenetowne’s design. First, there was a hard transition between the existing rowhouse community and the new development. This created a strong distinction between the two areas, thus making it harder for the new construction to blend into the existing urban fabric. Secondly, the two superblocks were separated by an extension of 70th Street that was a wide arterial road. This design makes pedestrian crossing very difficult. As a result, the eastern superblock is cut off from the commercial and community facilities located in the western superblock. Thirdly, the

²⁹ Greenetowne Associatates, 21.

hierarchy of streets and the internalized design of the community created connection problems within the community, and also between it and the surrounding areas. Because Phase I is bounded by arterial roads, pedestrian access to the neighborhood and amenities to the north were extremely diminished. As a result, the automobile becomes the most convenient mode of transportation for accessing this area. However, this district was not designed to handle the same amount of automobile use as Phase I. This could lead to an overburden of traffic and diminution of quality of life in the existing community or the isolation of Phase I because of a lack of adjacent facilities. Finally, the large setbacks necessitated by the front-loading of cars created an unattractive streetscape. It also reinforced the fact that humans are at best equal to automobiles in this community.

Doxiadis Associates

The master plans that the Eastwick Planners and Greenetowne Associates developed were never implemented. Edmund Bacon, who headed the Philadelphia City Planning Commission at the time, rejected them because he did not approve of their designs. Instead, he invited the international firm Doxiadis Associates, Inc. to develop the master plan.³⁰ The head of this firm was Constantinos Doxiadis, a world-renowned architect, engineer, and planner. Many of the basic ideas of the previous plans were incorporated into the new plan that was proposed by Doxiadis in 1959 (Figure 8).

Their plan was also based on the idea of a self-contained community that puts automobiles on an equal level with pedestrians through the same hierarchy of streets. It also created clusters of houses that were intended to create “a small community of 40 or 50 families...[that] is...a living entity with its own character and spirit, composed of a good number of elements which contribute to community life and atmosphere.”³¹ While this plan proposed uses for the entire redevelopment area, it only provided detailed site plans for the first residential phase. Phase I was intended to be the model for the rest of the redevelopment area.

³⁰ Tomazinis, Dr. Anthony R. Personal Interview. 25 Mar 2005.

³¹ Doxiadis, 11.

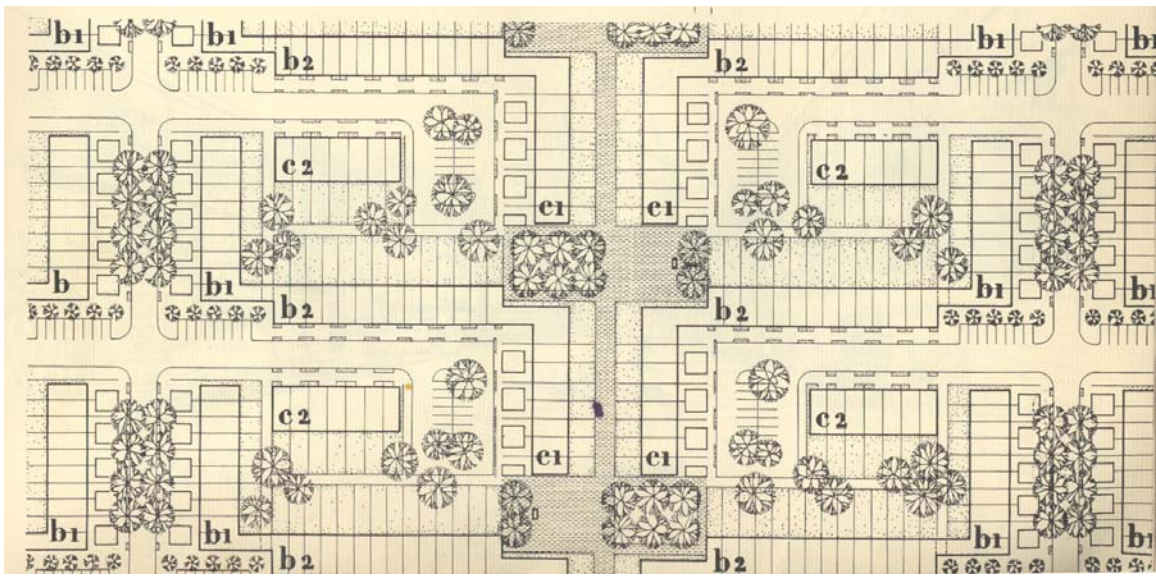
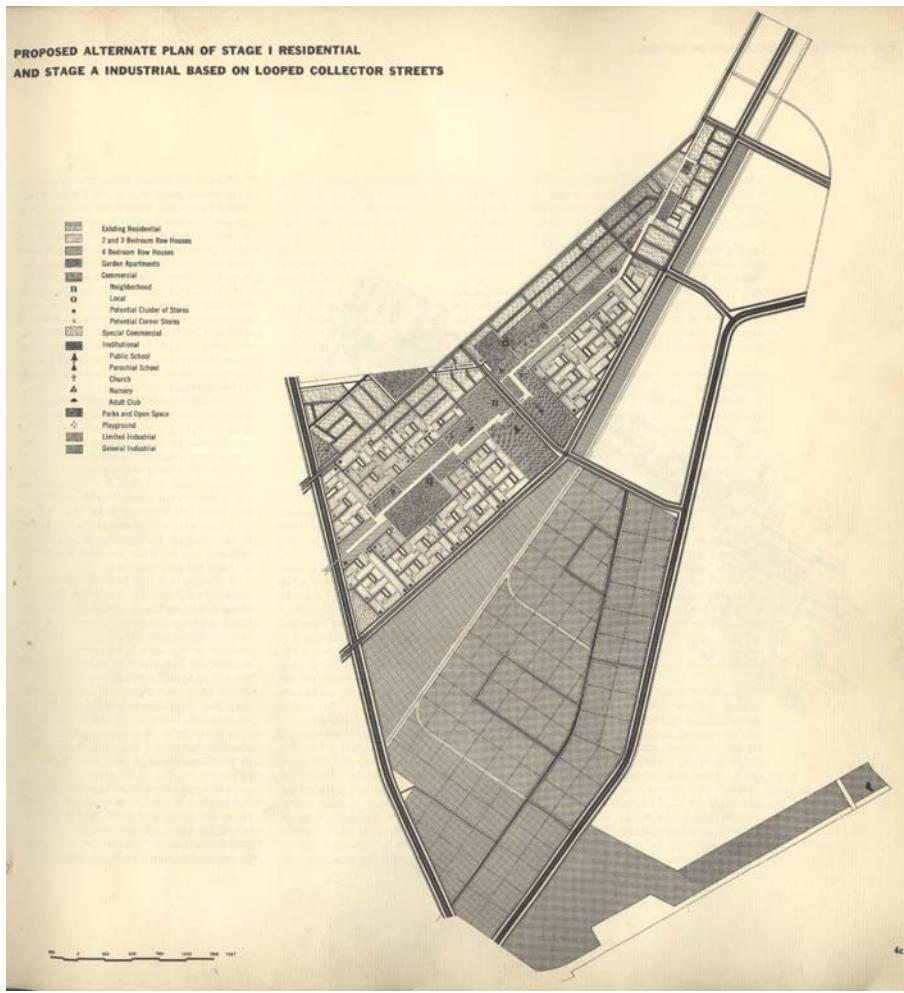


Figure 8: Doxiadis Associates' Plan for New Eastwick³²

³² Doxiadis Associates, 4c, 12c.

Phase I of development was intended to yield 2,244 single family units and 196 garden apartments. Combined with the 1,962 units to be preserved, Phase I was intended to have a total of 4,402 dwelling units. The single family units were projected to sell for between \$10,000-14,000. The garden apartments were projected to rent for between \$65-100 per month. At the time, these prices were low enough to attract lower-middle income residents.³³ While the city was concerned with creating a racially mixed community, Doxiadis was more concerned with creating an economically mixed community.³⁴ Later, it will be determined which idea prevailed.

Missing from Doxiadis' plan was Greenetowne's idea of rows of "wedge" homes surrounding circular cul-de-sacs and horseshoe courts. Instead, it incorporated streets that met at 90° angles that terminated at rectangular cul-de-sacs with parking in the middle. As a result, homes were designed to fit onto rectangular lots. The plan also had more internal collector roads that led to the arterials. This created better internal automobile connections within the community. Just like the previous plan, Doxiadis' design failed to fully maximize the potential of the trolley line running down the middle of Island Avenue.

Doxiadis' plan internalized community and commercial uses, which included schools, churches, nurseries, adult clubs, playgrounds, and playing fields. It provided significantly more space for these uses than the previous plans. It also created the opportunity for other community and commercial uses along Island Avenue and 70th Street (Figure 9). The corners of Island Avenue and Lindbergh Boulevard were to be designated for automobile accessible shopping centers, schools, and a local library branch.

Open space within the development was also reconfigured and more emphasis was placed on a grand pedestrian esplanade that would connect the entire renewal area (Figure 10). Unlike the previous plans, this esplanade provided overpasses that would create safer and

³³ Doxiadis, 10-10a.

³⁴ Tomazinis, Dr. Anthony R. Personal Interview. 25 Mar 2005.

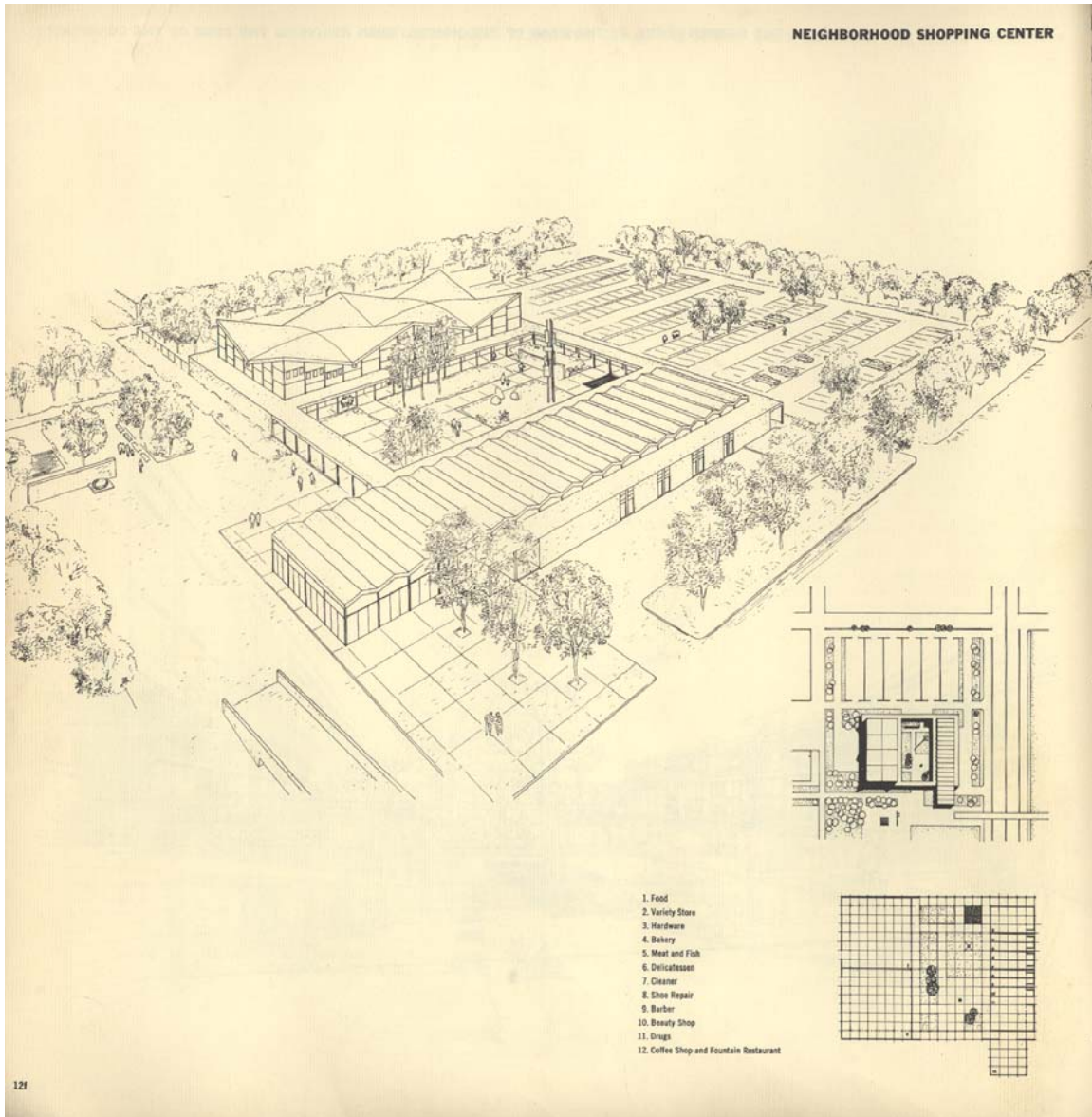


Figure 9: Doxiadis Associates' Plan for a Neighborhood Shopping Center³⁵

more efficient crossing of the north-south arterial roads. But like the previous plan, the landscaping scheme was a not a prominent feature of the design.

Doxiadis Associates utilized an architectural style that was very similar to that designed by Greenetowne Associates (Figure 11). While split-levels were utilized, this was done more infrequently. Front-loaded garages and carports were other prominent features that

³⁵ Doxiadis Associates, 12f.

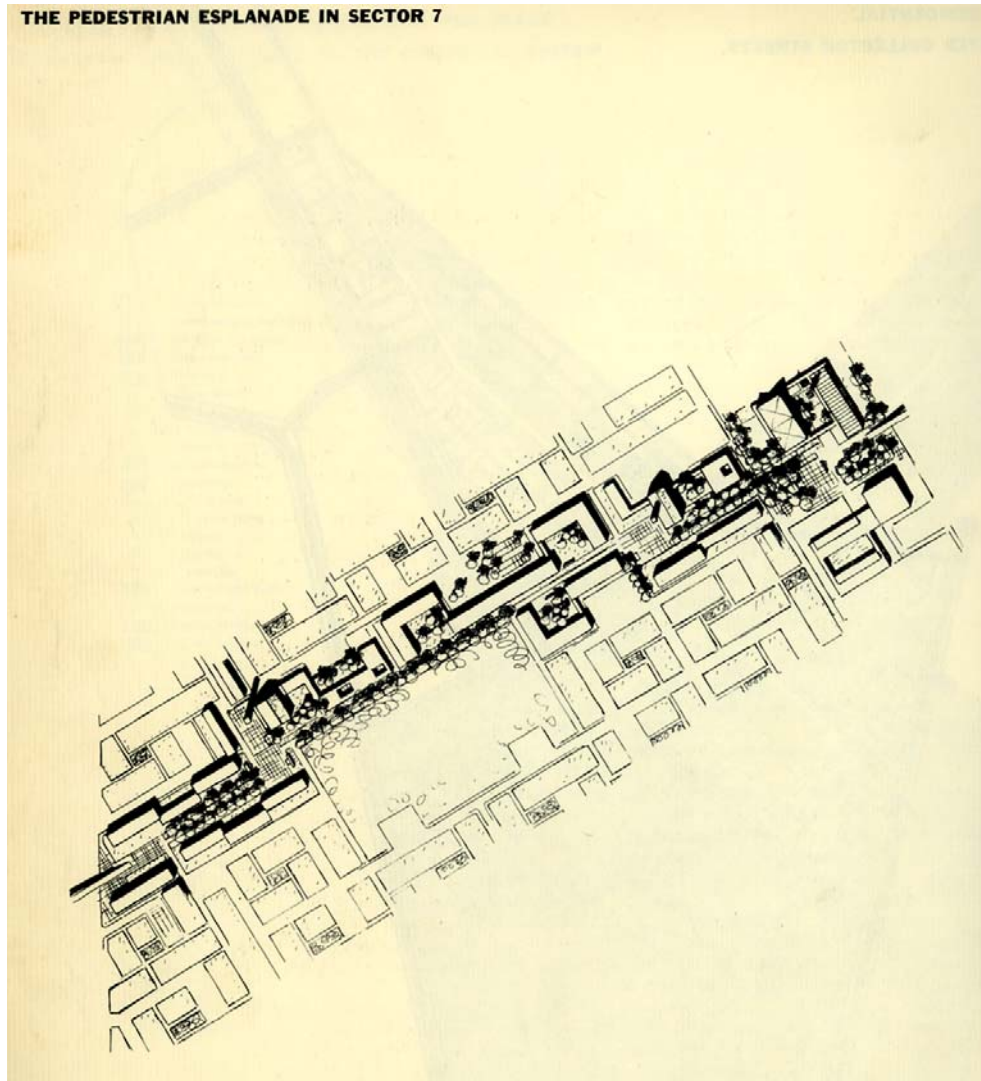


Figure 10: Doxiadis Associates' Pedestrian Esplanade³⁶

were borrowed from the previous design. The use of large amounts of glass on the façade was also incorporated into the home designs. This design element reminded Constantinos Doxiadis of homes in his native Greece, which has similar latitude to that of Philadelphia (thus sunlight hits the ground at the same angle).³⁷

Another feature of the layout was a gradual change in architecture as you moved from north to south. Those homes abutting the preexisting rowhouse areas were similar in

³⁶ Doxiadis Associates, 4d.

³⁷ Tomazinis, Dr. Anthony R. Personal Interview. 25 Mar 2005.

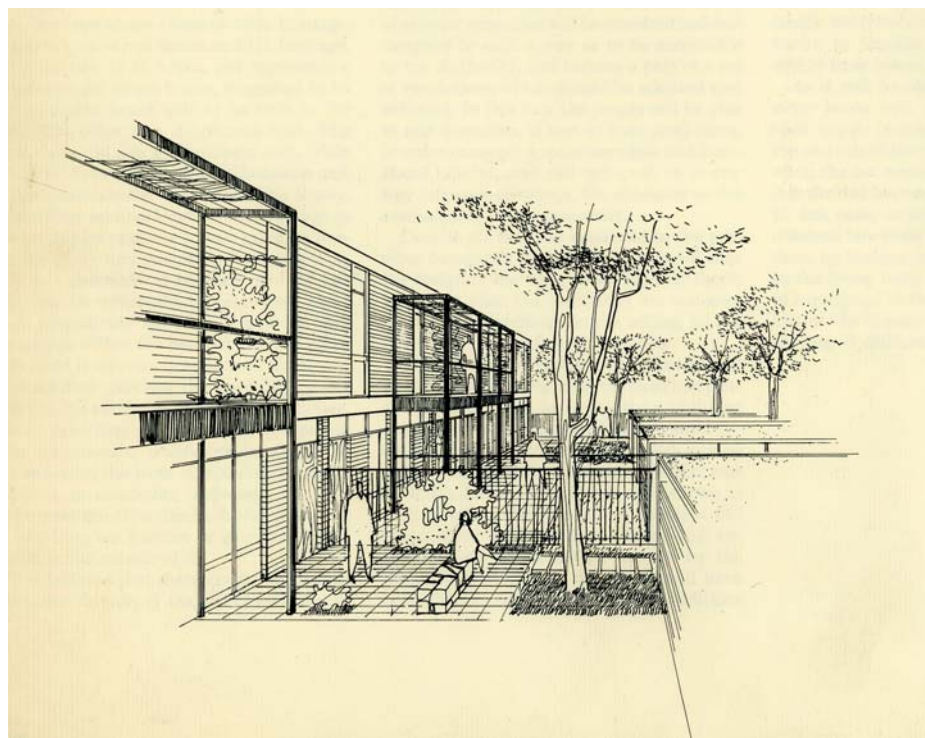
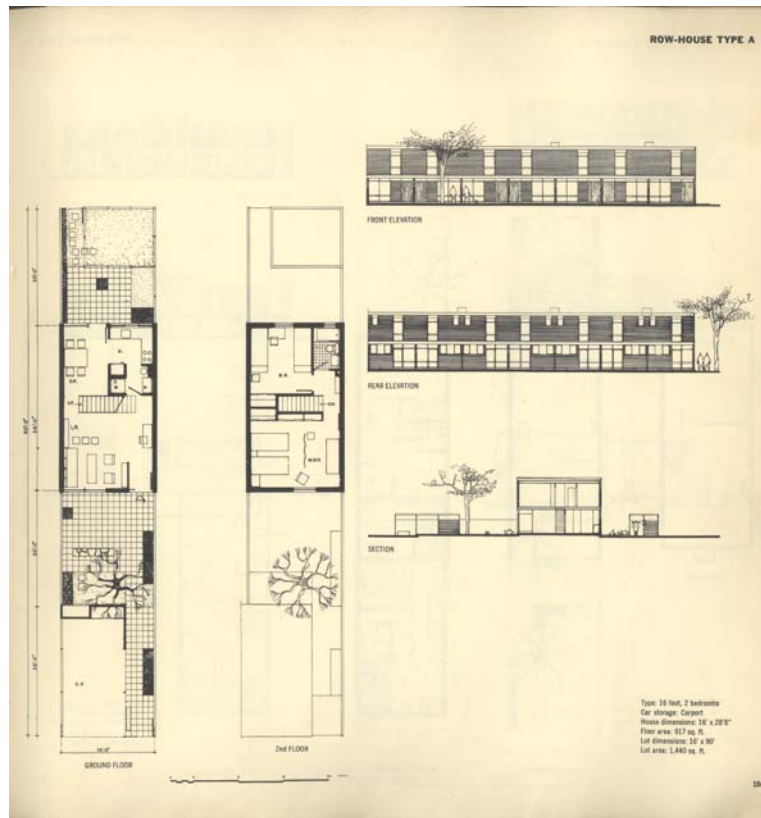


Figure 11: Doxiadis Associates' Rowhouse Prototype³⁸

³⁸ Doxiadis Associates, 10b-10c.

design. But as you move further away from the established neighborhood to the north, the designs deviate more from the traditional Philadelphia style. Additionally, the plan also stipulates that any mid- to high-rise housing constructed should be done in an area that does not provide views of the concentration of heavy industry along the Schuylkill River or impede the flight path of planes landing or taking off at the airport.

While Doxiadis' plan was considered to be the best of the three, it still had many design flaws. Most of these can be linked to the concept of treating cars and people equally. The primary feature of the plan is access and parking for automobiles. While there are many internal connections for the car, there are very few for pedestrians. Because of the many cul-de-sacs, navigating the community as a pedestrian is difficult if you are not on the esplanade. Furthermore, because the neighborhood is surrounded by arterial roads, there is very little pedestrian connectivity with the surrounding areas. As a result, the intersections of the arterial roads are zones that are destined to be dominated by the automobile. However, the automobile and pedestrian connections with the neighborhood to the north are significantly better than those of the previous plans. Once again, the design did not take full advantage of the existing trolley route on Island Avenue because development was not focused around it.

The provision of parking diminished the physical attractiveness of this community just as it did in the previous plans. The problem is that parking facilities are the most visible component of the plan. Because of this, the buildings themselves become a subordinated feature of the community's design. Building setbacks determined by the provision of parking in the front helps to reinforce this subordination and create massings that are not human scaled.

The Final Product

In 1961, ground was broken for Towne Gardens, which was Phase I of the redevelopment. It was part of a joint development proposal between Reynolds Aluminum Corporation and the building firm of Samuel and Henry Berger. Together,

they created a subsidiary called New Eastwick Corporation (NEC). By 1966, however, only 503 new houses had been sold. This can be attributed to the difficulties of creating a racially integrated community. Originally, racial quotas were implemented to help achieve the goal of integration. But this was soon halted when the courts ruled them to be illegal. Even without litigation, this practice would have been stopped because it was feared that if too many black families (meaning over 20% of all families) purchased homes then the demand among white families would decrease. This would spoil the initial goal of creating a racially mixed community.³⁹

In order to limit the amount of black families that could buy into the New Eastwick neighborhood, the price of homes were slightly raised. This was done with the belief that this would price out more black families. NEC was right. By the late 1960s the pace of construction increased, and by 1970, 1,654 housing units had been built.⁴⁰ Construction would continue through the 1970s, and by 1982, more than 4,200 new dwelling units (2,000 single-family homes and 1,300 apartment units), three shopping centers, three churches, two schools, a library, parks, playgrounds, and the pedestrian esplanade had been completed. In all 15 million cubic yards of fill were used to make the area suitable for building. The city had also built about twenty miles of new streets, and new water lines and sewers.⁴¹ As of this time there were approximately 18,000 people living in Eastwick. While this was far short of the 50,000 that had been originally estimated, the redevelopment project has added a significant amount of lower-middle income units to Philadelphia's housing stock. Furthermore, from 1970 to 1990, Eastwick was only one of three areas in Philadelphia to increase in population.⁴²

Eastwick reached a peak population of about 19,000 in the 1990 census.⁴³ By 2000, the population decreased 5% to about 18,000.⁴⁴ As of 2000, there were approximately 8,000

³⁹ McKee, 561-562.

⁴⁰ McKee, 563.

⁴¹ Leonardo, 1-2, 13.

⁴² McKee, 563.

⁴³ United States Census Bureau. "P001. Persons: Total. Census Summary File 1 (SF-1) 100-Percent Data. Blocks Groups Comprising Eastwick Urban Renewal Area." *American Factfinder*. 1990. 26 Mar 2005. <<http://factfinder.census.gov>>

housing units in the Eastwick Urban Renewal Area.⁴⁵ Currently, Eastwick's homeownership rate stands at 67%.⁴⁶ While this is lower than the homeownership rate before redevelopment, it is still higher than that of the City of Philadelphia.⁴⁷

The completed product of Phase I resembled Doxiadis' plan very closely (Figure 13 and 14). For the most part, the architectural styles and building massings are very similar to those in the plan (Figure 15). While the street layout, configuration of houses, and provision of multi-family housing in the plan differed slightly from what was actually built, these differences did not affect the holistic design of the community. The biggest distinction between the concept and the final product was the pedestrian esplanade. The idea that Doxiadis developed was very radical for its day, thus the City Planning Commission and the developers did not embrace this component of the design.⁴⁸

As a result, it was not built according to Doxiadis' plans. First, the northeast corner of Towne Gardens is not connected to the esplanade. This was a result of a change in the alignment of Lindbergh Boulevard. Instead of continuing straight where Eastwick Avenue now exists, it curves to occupy the right-of-way of the proposed esplanade. This also resulted in the bisection of Towne Gardens by a major arterial road. Secondly, financial constraints prevented the construction of pedestrian overpasses at 70th Street and at Island Avenue.⁴⁹ Finally, the esplanade that was built is less of a focal feature than it was originally intended to be. Not only does it not provide a direct route through the community, but it is also scarcely used, and of mediocre design (Figure 16). As a result of the esplanade's design flaws, many makeshift trails have materialized (Figure 17).

⁴⁴ United States Census Bureau. "P001. Total Population: Total. Census Summary File 1 (SF-1) 100-Percent Data. Blocks Groups Comprising Eastwick Urban Renewal Area." *American Factfinder*. 2000. 26 Mar 2005. <<http://factfinder.census.gov>>

⁴⁵ United States Census Bureau. "H003. Housing Units: Total. Census Summary File 1 (SF-1) 100-Percent Data. Blocks Groups Comprising Eastwick Urban Renewal Area." *American Factfinder*. 2000. 26 Mar 2005. <<http://factfinder.census.gov>>

⁴⁶ United States Census Bureau. "H004. Occupied Housing Units: Owner Occupied. Census Summary File 1 (SF-1) 100-Percent Data. Blocks Groups Comprising Eastwick Urban Renewal Area." *American Factfinder*. 2000. 26 Mar 2005. <<http://factfinder.census.gov>>

⁴⁷ United States Census Bureau. "H004. Occupied Housing Units: Owner Occupied. Census Summary File 1 (SF-1) 100-Percent Data. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania." *American Factfinder*. 2000. 26 Mar 2005. <<http://factfinder.census.gov>>

⁴⁸ Tomazinis, Dr. Anthony R. Personal Interview. 25 Mar 2005.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

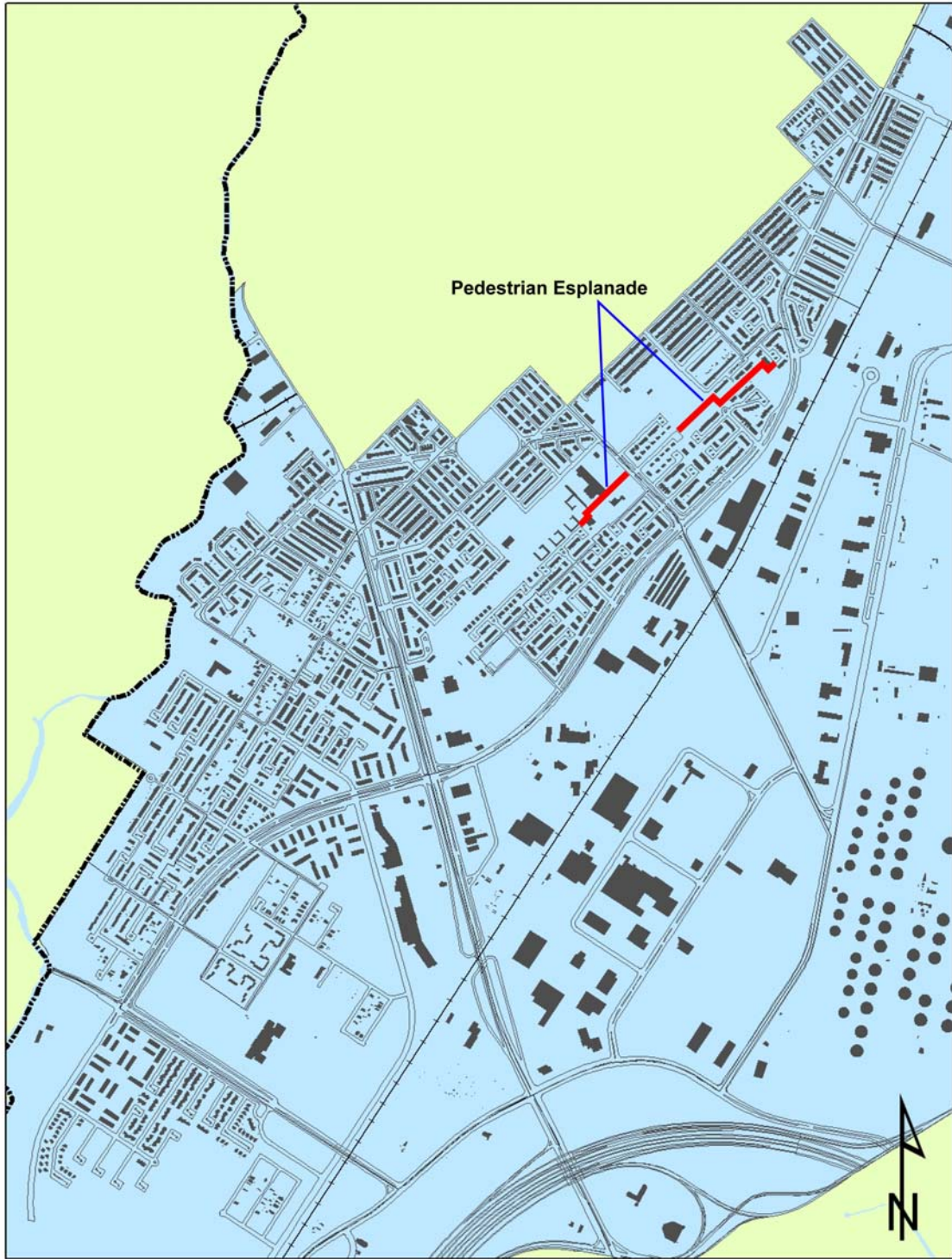


Figure 13: Building and Street Layout of New Eastwick

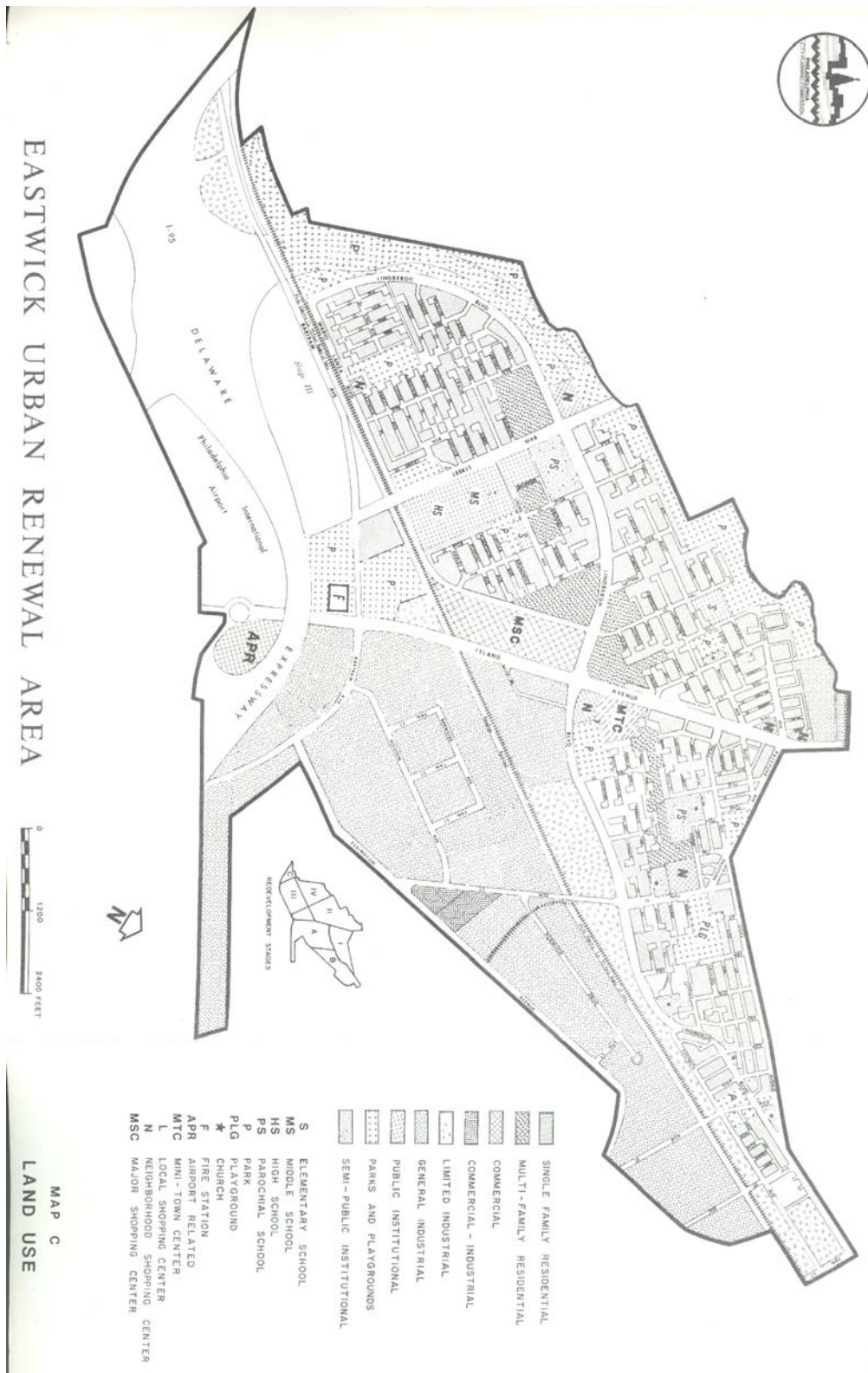


Figure 14: Land Use in New Eastwick⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Leonardo, 11.



Figure 15: The Building Typologies of Towne Gardens



Figure 16: New Eastwick's Pedestrian Esplanade



Figure 17: Makeshift Pedestrian Walkways

For the most part, the subsequent phases of development built west of Island Avenue did not closely follow the design guidelines provided by Doxiadis Associates. Although it has a similar street grid, this part of New Eastwick lacked the internalized community and commercial uses that are characteristic of Phase I. It also did not include any form of a pedestrian esplanade. In terms of building typologies, the area west of Island Avenue is extremely varied (Figure 18). This is in part attributed to a greater number of garden apartments and public housing units (which are extremely ugly). But while a few of the single-family homes resemble those east of Island Avenue, most of them do not. Instead, they resemble something reminiscent of a suburban subdivision.

Design Evaluation

From a design standpoint, Eastwick has many elements that detract from its beauty and functionality. Just about all of them are products of the way the design accommodates the automobile. While the community was intended to give residents “free choice of



Figure 18: Single Family Homes West of Island Avenue



Figure 18 (continued): Public and Multi-Family Housing West of Island Avenue.

entrance or exit, based solely on his feeling and temperament, and not on the physical advantages offered to one or the other manner of access”⁵¹, this is certainly not the case. New Eastwick was planned in a way that gives the automobile more physical advantages than the pedestrian. Wide streets allow for faster driving speeds, while the layout of the street grid does not provide direct routes for pedestrian travel (Figure 19). In addition, the parking areas (all of which are in front of the buildings) create massings and scales that diminish the pedestrian experience and architectural charm (Figure 20).

The community is also bisected by two major arterial roads, Island Avenue and Lindbergh Boulevard. As a result, the community is split up into three residential quadrants that are separated by wide, high-speed arterials, which discourage pedestrian crossings (Figure 21). Their point of intersection could be a major focal point of the community. But instead, it is a zone that is dominated by the automobile, and characterized by strip commercial land uses (Figure 22). I feel that the opportunity was squandered to take advantage of this central location, as well as the trolley line running in the median of Island Avenue, in order to create a dense transit boulevard. Such an area would have been more capable of bringing together the residential areas of Eastwick. It would also help to increase transit ridership, decrease automobile dependency, create more of a community identity, and provide the opportunity to preserve more land for natural open space. Furthermore, such a transit boulevard would have increased the feasibility of creating a transit connection to the airport.

The same could be said of 70th Street where the neighborhood shopping center is located. Instead of building a shopping center that is separated from the road by a sea of parking (Figure 23), a smaller Main Street area could have been built. This would have created a more aesthetically pleasant corridor. It would have also discouraged residents from driving to this shopping area. This would encourage more people to utilize the pedestrian esplanade, which could have been an impetus for its upgrade and expansion.

⁵¹ Doxiadis, 11.



Figure 19: Pedestrian Path Interrupted by a Cul-de-Sac



Figure 20: Housing Subordinated by Driveways and Parking Lots



Figure 21: Housing Separated by Lindbergh Boulevard



Figure 22: Auto-Oriented Uses at the Intersection of Lindbergh Boulevard and Island Avenue.



Figure 23: Suburban-Style Neighborhood Shopping Center on 70th Street

Another problem with the design of New Eastwick is that too much land in Towne Gardens was devoted to internalized institutional uses and open space. Much of the land set aside for institutional uses remains unused to this day. As a result, parts of the area are separated by huge plots of soggy land that lacks any sort of landscaping (Figure 24). A large amount of the area devoted to active recreation is also in the same condition (Figure 25). Many of the ball fields and tennis courts are in disrepair. This is most likely attributed to the municipal budget. It seems as if the plan allocated more open space than the city could afford to maintain. These swaths of unattractive barren land subtract from the overall ambiance of the community.

But Eastwick does have many inherently good design features. First, it allows for easy automobile access. This makes Eastwick a very attractive area to live in for employees of nearby industries and the Philadelphia International Airport. The surrounding arterial roads also provide convenient connections to University City and Center City Philadelphia. Second, the internalized open spaces and institutional uses help bring



Figure 24: Barren Land Intended for Community Uses



Figure 25: Poorly Maintained Recreational Areas



Figure 26: Cul-de-Sac in the Towne Gardens Development

residents together and foster a sense of community. The same can actually be said of the parking areas within the cul-de-sacs because of the density of housing that surrounds them (Figure 26). Third, some of the landscaping has grown in well over time, which helps to enhance the aesthetics of the community (Figure 27). Forth, for what it's worth, the pedestrian esplanade provides access for some residents to the neighborhood shopping area on 70th Street, as well as a quaint place to sit outside on warm, sunny days (Figure 28).

The final positive design feature is probably the best of them all — architecture. The typologies of New Eastwick represent a severe departure from the traditional Philadelphia rowhouse style. In terms of functionality, the homes appear to be very solid buildings. While it's hard to tell if the brick face is structural or ornamental, they give the impression of a very durable structure, even 30 years after they were built. The designs of the homes also allow for modern amenities that are not often available in the older homes of Philadelphia. These include large glass windows, decks, garages and



Figure 27: Mature Street Trees on Lindbergh Boulevard West of Island Avenue



Figure 28: A Nice Place to Sit Along the Pedestrian Esplanade

carports, and front yards. Owners also have the ability to add additional home improvements such as a furnished basement.

In terms of style, the buildings blend in almost seamlessly with the neighborhood to the north (Figure 29). While the homes in the south are almost completely different from those in the north, there is a very subtle, organic transition that adds to the physical attractiveness of the community. While the style of architecture incorporated in some of the homes do not represent a paradigm shift in Philadelphia's building typologies, they certainly set a well needed precedent for deviating from the city's traditional rowhouse style.

Conclusion

Overall, the developers have accomplished the city's and planners' goal of creating a "city within a city." However, at times it feels like a suburb within a city. But the original goal was to create a close-knit, racially integrated community. As was stated previously, the internalized public spaces have helped to foster a sense of community. But more importantly, census data show that New Eastwick has become a racially mixed community. As of 1990, about 65% of the community's population was white, while 33% of it was black.⁵² From the view of those working on the redevelopment plan fifty years ago; this would constitute a complete success. But as we look at the racial composition in 2000, we find that it is 41% white and 53% black, thus indicating true diversity and achievement of the city's original goal.⁵³

When we examine income distribution within Eastwick, we come to the conclusion that this is also an economically integrated neighborhood, thus indicating the achievement of Doxiadis' goal. 45% of the community's households earn under \$40,000 per year,

⁵² United States Census Bureau. "P006. Persons: White, Persons: Black. Census Summary File 1 (SF-1) 100-Percent Data. Blocks Groups Comprising Eastwick Urban Renewal Area." *American Factfinder*. 1990. 26 Mar 2005. <<http://factfinder.census.gov>>

⁵³ United States Census Bureau. "P003. Population: Population of One Race. Census Summary File 1 (SF-1) 100-Percent Data. Blocks Groups Comprising Eastwick Urban Renewal Area." *American Factfinder*. 2000. 26 Mar 2005. <<http://factfinder.census.gov>>



Figure 29: Existing Homes in the North (above) Compared to New Homes Directly to the South (below)

which makes Eastwick a predominately middle- to lower-income area. In addition, 40% of households earn \$40,000 to \$74,999 per year, while the remaining 15% earn over \$75,000 per year.⁵⁴

As of today, we can say that Eastwick is a true success. It has become the racially integrated “city within a city” that it was intended to be. In addition, it is also an economically integrated community. But because creating such a neighborhood in a notoriously segregated city is such a challenge, we are now left with many questions about Eastwick. What part did design play in fostering integration? Will the diversity of this community stand the test of time? Or are we already seeing a shift in socio-economic characteristics?

While design has played a role in the integration of Eastwick, it is not the only reason for the success of the community. Eastwick’s success also hinges upon policy, politics, and the site’s locational value. The redevelopment plan was conceived at a time when millions of dollars of federal money were available to finance large-scale slum clearance and redevelopment projects. This was joined with the rise of a liberal Democratic administration that sought to achieve “liberal ends through illiberal means,” and the site’s access and proximity to regional employment centers.

Despite the fact that Eastwick is a community where the pedestrian is subordinate to the automobile, its design allows for very efficient access to jobs at neighboring industries and the airport. The Garden City-like relationship between residential and industrial uses makes Eastwick a very desirable place to live. The suburban-style attributes of the community such as cul-de-sacs, garages, and front yards also helped Eastwick to compete with new suburban development in Delaware County at a time when the city and its layout were being written off by the middle-class.

⁵⁴ United States Census Bureau. “P052. Households: Household Income. Census Summary File 3 (SF-3) 100-Percent Data. Blocks Groups Comprising Eastwick Urban Renewal Area.” *American Factfinder*. 2000. 26 Mar 2005. <<http://factfinder.census.gov>>

Because Eastwick's proximity to employment centers will not change any time in the foreseeable future, we can make the conclusion that its design will play a huge part in maintaining its diversity and success. A study conducted at the University of Pennsylvania at the time of redevelopment concluded that the higher the percentage of black families living in a neighborhood, the lower the white demand for housing in that neighborhood.⁵⁵ Good design could give white families an incentive to remain in the community.

When we take another glance at the demographics of the area, we can begin to determine whether Eastwick's design is able maintain racial integration. It has already been shown that the percentage of white households significantly decreased between 1990 and 2000. But when we look at racial composition at the block group level (Figures 30 and 31), we find that the block groups west of Island Avenue are becoming the most homogenous. This may be attributable to the location of public housing in this area. However, we see that this area is still maintaining its economic diversity and population of lower-middle class residents (Figure 32).

Meanwhile, the area east of Island Avenue is maintaining its racial and economic diversity. This happens to be the Towne Gardens development, the section of Eastwick that most resembles Doxiadis' original concept. This is further evidence that the design helped to create a socio-economically integrated community.

The future, however, is a mystery. There are many forces that will determine the fate of Eastwick. The biggest one will most likely be employment. Without nearby employment, Eastwick will go into decline. If the population west of Island Avenue continues to become more racially homogenous, it will be harder to reintegrate it because its design leaves a lot to be desired. However, the barrier created by Island Avenue may prevent Towne Gardens from being affected by the loss of diversity to it west.

⁵⁵ McKee, 554.

After thorough analysis, Eastwick appears to be an extremely unique case. However, whenever anyone is designing a new community, it must be treated as a unique case. The design of a community cannot be determined before the area is comprehensively studied. It is very easy for an urban design student to criticize the Eastwick development project because it does not adhere to the principles of New Urbanism. But until they take a look at the circumstances under which New Eastwick was built, they will not realize that the design was very appropriate for the time and place in which the project was built. This was a time when a New Urbanist design would have fared poorly in the market. At the time, the majority of home buyers desired a product that was not urban. Instead, they wanted a home on a quiet street with a front or rear yard, and a garage or driveway. In order to compete with suburban municipalities for residents and tax base, the city had to provide such a product. If they hadn't, white families wouldn't have been attracted to the community, and the goal of creating a racially diverse community wouldn't have been achieved. Another selling point for Eastwick was its proximity to employment. Because of the community's propinquity to the Philadelphia International Airport and industries, as well as its Garden City-like relationship between home and work through efficient access, New Eastwick was able to provide additional competition to suburban locations.

If the Eastwick redevelopment occurred today, we would most likely see a completely different product. Perhaps it would have been built in a New Urbanist style that was focused upon a transit boulevard. Perhaps it would have had a different relationship between home and work. But while the case of Eastwick is inapplicable to other locations, lacks features from the original plan, and may not be considered a "special" place; one thing is for sure: it was the right design for its time and place.

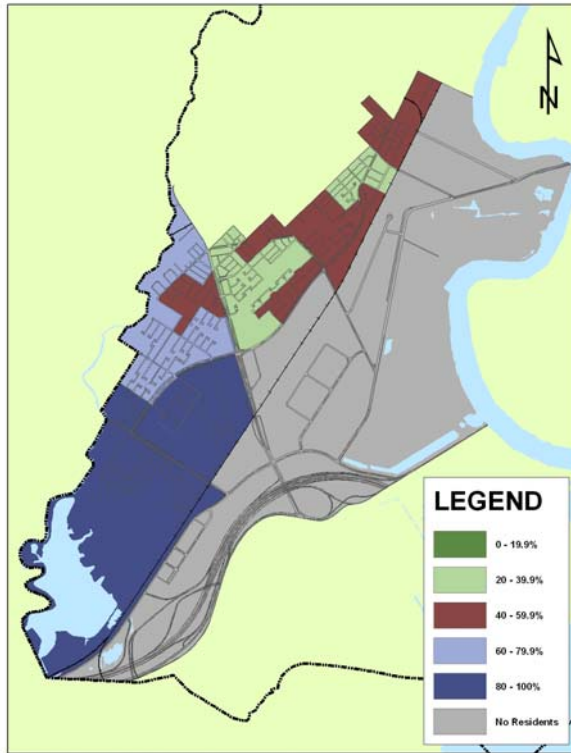


Figure 30: Percentage of Black Residents by Block Group – 2000

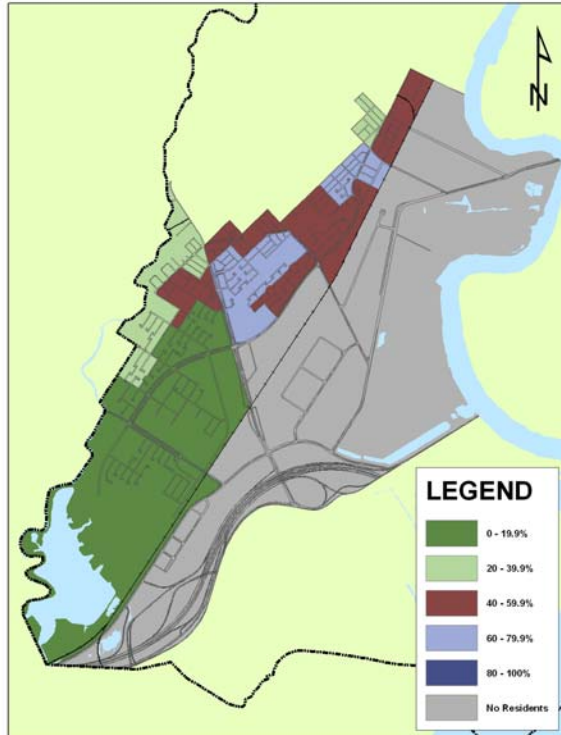


Figure 31: Percentage of White Residents by Block Group – 2000

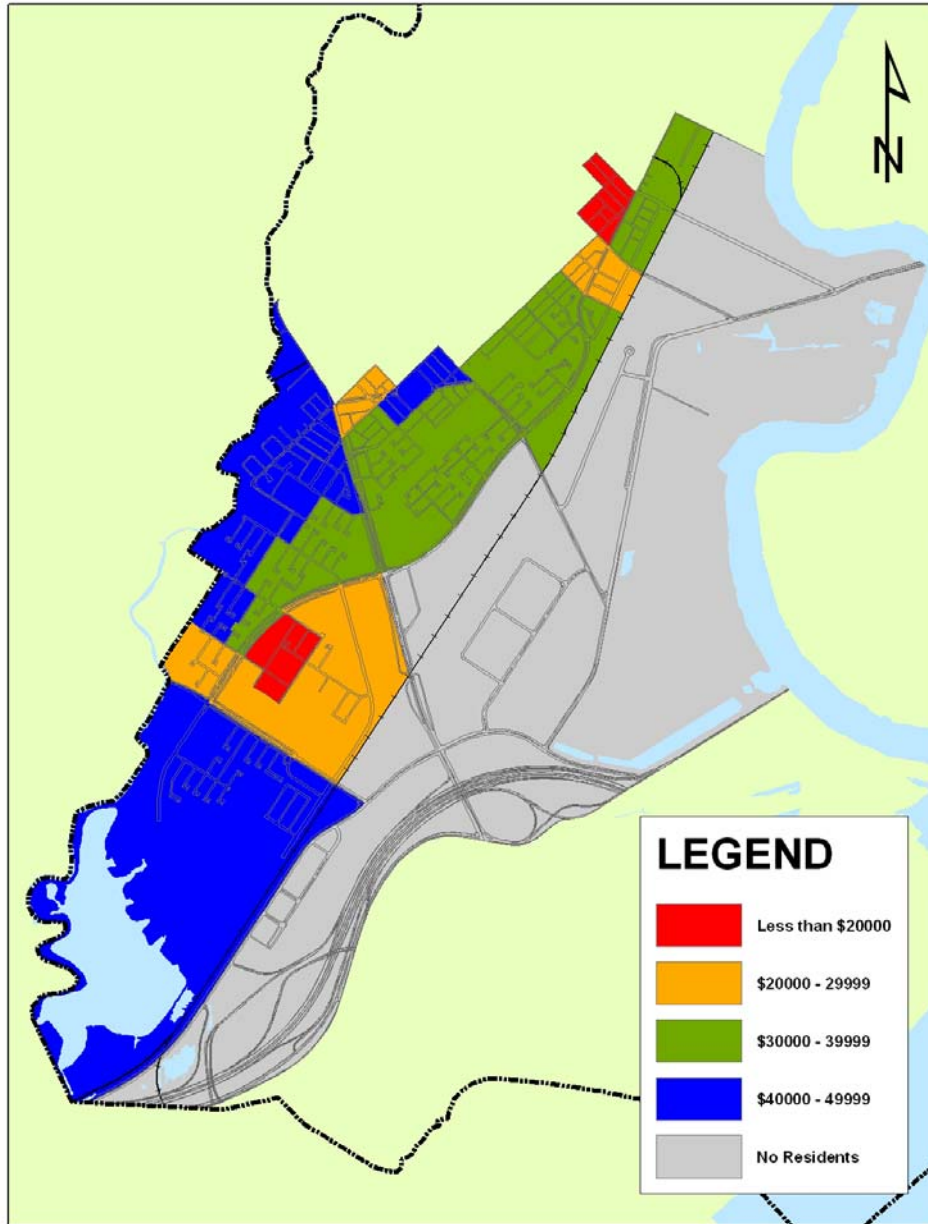


Figure 32: Median Household Income by Block Group - 2000

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