

CNU IX Plenary

THE NEIGHBORHOOD: MODELS FROM THE EDGE TO THE CORE

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Moderator: Raymond L. Gindroz, Urban Design Associates

**Speakers: Brian Shea, Cooper, Robertson & Partners
Kent Barwick, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, Municipal Arts Society
Darren Walker, Abyssinian Development Corporation**

CNU IX: From Neighborhood to Region

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The neighborhood. What a concept. What a concept. It's described in the Charter and in all of our writings and thinking about it as mixed income, mixed use, containing all of the activities of daily life. Compact. Pedestrian scale. Interconnected networks of streets making it a center of life for its residents and for the community. In the face of the sprawl images that we saw last evening and this morning -- in the face of a pattern of development throughout our country in which we have single use subdivisions, single use office parks. Not only single use subdivisions, single income, single class subdivisions in which we are emerging from an area of single income, that is to say, very low income projects for warehousing the poorest of our populations. The neighborhood is a radical concept. It represents a dramatic change of direction for all development patterns in this country. And I would argue that there is no other concept more central or more critical to the theory and practice of new urbanism. I would also argue that our focus on the neighborhood is in large part responsible for the success of new urbanism in reaching more and more audiences.

The neighborhood. It suggests neighbors. It suggests neighborliness. It suggests streets that you can walk down. It brings into everyone's mind -- whether they live in a neighborhood in a small town or in the center of a giant city like New York -- it brings together very specific images of streets lined with houses, corner stores, parks, places where you know your neighbors or more importantly where you have a structure for getting along famously with lots of people you don't know. So, therefore, the neighborhood is a central element in new urbanist theory and practice. It seems to me in greenfield developments when confronted with policies and practices for single use development, the model we propose is the neighborhood. When we are working in revitalizing suburbs such as the gray fields images that you have just seen, the model is the neighborhood to bring back interconnectedness, neighborliness, mixed use, walkable environment, with all of the functions of daily life within walking distance. Certainly, in working with HUD, one of the Congress' most important collaborations, certainly in working with HUD

on developing design programs and training programs for the Hope VI program, the concept of the neighborhood has been central and radical for HUD policy. Let's not build projects. Let's build neighborhoods. Promote mixed income developments on the sites where projects once stood. Create an environment in which public housing residents, moderately subsidized units, market rate units and people buying them can all live together as a community. The neighborhood -- the concept of the neighborhood -- is central to that and I would argue further that as we move into the 21st century and try to continue to understand the future of our down towns and continue to talk about 24 hour a day, seven day a week down towns, down towns by definition are neighborhoods. They're no longer single use central business districts. They are mixed use areas where people live, work, play, shop and where the cultural center of the cities are. So, this notion of what a neighborhood is is central to our thinking. Now it seems to me that it gives us a great responsibility then to understand what neighborhoods are.

We are working in an environment that forgot what neighborhoods were -- forgot how to build them. So, central to an urbanist's work, both as an organization and on the part of individual practitioners, is a careful study and analysis of neighborhoods. We rely heavily on precedents. We try to understand what works and what doesn't work. We're not interested in inventing new forms. We're interested in building great neighborhoods. What is the right dimension for a front yard in the center of Louisville, Kentucky? What is the right detail for how a curb is handled in a neighborhood shopping district? What is the proportion of space for a neighborhood in Queens? So, for many of us (certainly in our practice in Urban Design Associates), an important part of our work is to go out, photograph, document and measure these neighborhoods. Try to understand what works and what doesn't work. Tomorrow there's an Educators Task Force lunch -- with a mixture of sociologists, anthropologists and designers trying to understand the impact of various qualities of physical design on the quality of life in a community. What can we do to create the best kind of frameworks to help in the creation of social capital for the stability and future of neighborhoods? We are very concerned about dimensions. What's the right block size?

So, it is fabulous for us to come to New York City with probably the richest collection of neighborhoods in the world. So much to learn. So this session -- going back to the comments last night on the two parts of this program -- both learning from CNU and learning from New York -- this session is a little bit selfish for those of us not from New York who are members of the CNU. This session will focus on learning from New York and New York City neighborhoods. Not only is there this incredible rich inventory of neighborhoods that we saw in the kind of transect on the train line coming down the Hudson yesterday from being out in the country with very small towns into the dense core of the city. Not only is there this rich collection of different and diverse

neighborhoods, but it has been the subject of much study and much thought. Jane Jacobs' admonitions about short blocks continue to be a focus of much of our work. What are the right dimensions? How does it work?

So, let's look at New York neighborhoods and see what the lessons are. Now, you might think: new urbanism/New York City. Houses with picket fences. Skyscrapers. How does this all work? It seems to me that one of the most fascinating things about the city is that there are five boroughs. That there is this range from the edge of the city to the core. So, we're going to look at three case studies. We're going to look at the edge. We're going to look at the middle. We're going to look at the core.

Brian Shea is going to talk about Forest Hills -- some of Olmstead's work and Radburn. So, we're going to begin at the outer edge looking in. What lessons are there to be learned from this? Kent Barwick is going to talk about the ferry districts in the middle. And Darren Walker is going to talk about Harlem.

Now, we've been seeing a dichotomy between the built city and the region. Between existing neighborhoods and suburban expansion. I am going to ask you to look at these neighborhoods in a slightly different way. They were all suburbs at one time when they were built. The ones at the outer edge at the turn of the century, the ferry districts much earlier in the 19th century. Harlem, perhaps the most perfectly designed of all suburbs for the city of New York.

So, let's look at them the way in which they were built, the way in which they have survived and the issues that they faced as they moved forward. Brian Shea, our first speaker, is an urban designer. He is a partner at Cooper Robertson, an extraordinarily gifted urban designer who has been involved in new towns, campus plans and down town plans all over the country. And one of the most striking things about meeting Brian is that he always has these little books in his satchel. These little books with plans of precedents and places and one that's in every book I've ever seen that Brian carries around in his plan sketches is of Forest Hills Gardens. So, please welcome Brian Shea.

NEIGHBORHOOD MODELS AT THE EDGE: RADBURN, USONIA, AND FOREST HILLS

Brian Shea, Cooper, Robertson & Partners

Thank you. My technology is as old as the suburbs and neighborhoods you are about to see. They are paired slides, but they are different slides, so I hope you can see them. Neighborhoods at the edge. It's difficult to understand the edge as a concept in New York. We

are now over 8 million people. Manhattan had over 1 million people by 1880. Brooklyn by 1900 and Queens by 1930. H. A. Downing, Calvert Grove, Olmstead, Olmstead's son, Grossman, Atterbury, Clarence Stein, Louis Mumford, Henry Wright, Charles Norton who led the RPA plan of 1929. We're going to see them all, hopefully, if this bus tour doesn't take us along.

On that side of the room. That is a marketing brochure drawing from Radburn -- 1928. But on it are the concentric rings of the outer edge as they conceived it in 1928. In the lower corner is the Llewellyn Park -- 1857 -- one of the first planned suburbs in the country. As we swing into Brooklyn and Olmstead's work, we've hit the 1880s in New York. As we go up to Forest Hills, we hit 1910, 1920 in New York. As we swing up to Radburn, we complete the cycle 75 years later in Radburn.

For good or worse, Llewellyn Park has set an image of what the residential ideal should have been in the 1850s, 1860s of Calvert Grove and Andrew Jackson Downing. It was a villa park. It was an attempt to reconcile the country and the city. It was to reconcile the family's desire for a home in a natural setting with knowing the issues of the urban environment while you can still have access to the amenities of the city. It was one of the first carefully planned studies of the neighborhood as an extraordinary environment, natural features and the response to natural features. But it is a plan type. It's a state of mind and it has set the image and the symbol at the time for what a quality neighborhood and a quality of life should have been in the city. Olmstead, among others, rejected that idea.

Brooklyn had a very different idea about what a suburb and what a neighborhood should be. Before Prospect Park hit in the early 1860s, it was the third largest city in the United States. They thought a grand park was necessary to compete with Manhattan's Central Park. What they were really after were new residents to populate the horse car suburbs. And what was true doing it was the value created by Olmstead's Prospect Park. In over five years since the park opened, over \$100 million increased the value of the land in and around the barren farmland of Flatbush when it hit. Olmstead and Grove also had other ideas about shaping Brooklyn which had to do with the parkways -- the first parkways in America -- which helped shape every neighborhood along their length.

So, we're first going to look at Park Slope, which was the third great Gilded Age suburb of Brooklyn in the 1880s. The park was finished in 1873 and that was the neighborhood of Park Slope. You will always find in New York that names of neighborhoods mean something. Park Slope is the neighborhood that slopes down from the park. It's a very identifiable sense of place from that point of view. It's also greatly influenced by the ideas of Olmstead from Prospect Park

and his parkways. He was the great advocate of the suburb as the most attractive, most refined, most soundly wholesome form of domestic life. One of my favorite quotes from him is that: "I never lose the opportunity to ruralize all our urban population and urbanize all or rural population." He knew the impact of the railroad and what that was going to mean to the cities, particularly New York. And in his studies for Riverside, Illinois which were then transferred to Brooklyn, the parkways and the park and also his great plan for the Bronx which was never carried out. This notion of combining in a new way in an expanding city parks, parkways, transportation systems and uses and neighborhoods in a very different way so that there is a seamless whole that's made and there is a very new idea in a plan about a city. Park Slope is one of the great neighborhoods of the city. It uses the traditional form of New York: 180 foot to 200 foot wide by 600 foot long block. It has the main street in the middle which is all retail, all mixed use, all the institutions of the place. It is also equally distant from -- in that time -- horse car lines, railroad lines and now subway lines. The great issue and great distinction of Park Slope is the study of the row house as a building type. Three story, four story, five story -- whether it's one family, two family, three family or multiple tenants, it was the great invention of the time and it set dimensionally the quality, character of the entire neighborhood. And as a building type, it was used to organize the form and design of that neighborhood. On a typical block in Park Slope, you will have upwards of 40 to 60 units an acre which would be a combination of single family row houses, up to multi-family row houses and combining with apartments, churches and institutions within one block. And it creates the great mixed use environment that Park Slope is.

South of the park when the parkways were developed came and started the Olmstead idea of a new kind of neighborhood and new kind of idea about residential living. And these are the neighborhoods south of the park. Prospect Park South, Ditmus Park and others. They had a very good idea about the neighborhood. The row house was not the building type to be emulated. Here, the whole notion of using the typical urban grid but in a very different way to blend country and city in one place. Usually designed by landscape architects with the help of the developer. On the typical New York format of a 200 by 600/800 foot block. The lots are typically 100 to 120 feet deep and about 50 to 60 feet wide. On them were placed single family homes -- small to large variety. And you'll see as we go through. And the whole notion of creating a total environment of landscape, streetscape and single family houses was their special concern.

The first one is in Prospect Park South developed about 1899 to 1900 and the whole notion of the exploration of the house in a freestanding setting. The controls were quite rigid here. Houses always would have a south facing lawn. Unfortunately, now they are garages and driveways. They always had to have a 39 foot setback from the street because in these neighborhoods, the idea was the grand expanse of open space to address the issues that they

found in Prospect Park Slope of dense row house conditions. So you'll find this extraordinary exploration of the idea of the house sitting on landscaped malled streets working within the flexible grid system of Brooklyn, and you will see the exploration of this idea of street section and street design even to the detail of an eight foot sidewalk mall trees set back to the front line of the front yard to make the streets seem bigger and to make the landscape corridor seem of a larger scale.

As we work our way south, something very different happens. We get more affordable housing, smaller scale on 40 and 50 foot wide lots. This becomes the replacement for the row house in Brooklyn -- the narrow front facing house on a typically 40 or 50 by 100 foot lot. On narrow streets. The notion and the rhythm created by these houses -- developers here are now to mass produce housing and they are very proud of affordable housing in a massed produced way in these quality neighborhoods. You find extraordinary variety of streets, extraordinary variety of building environments in Ditmus Park in these areas of the city. On that side, an entire neighborhood to address the problem of being cut in half by a railroad corridor which one cannot get over or under. The neighborhood is divided by a series of malled cul de sacs which lead to a malled main street. And all of the neighborhoods focus on their own cul de sac street and then they all focus on the malled main streets.

Welcome to Queens. We're going to talk a lot about Forest Hills Gardens. This is the next swing up in terms of exploration and dates. We're now into the railroad suburb running from Bronxville, Scarsdale, Garden City. Forest Hills Gardens became the model railroad suburb for New York, and in its plan and design explores this as a type. Queens is a challenging place. That's the drawing of the borough of Queens. It's our largest borough: 100 square miles. It's bigger than Manhattan, Staten Island and the Bronx combined. It started off as small villages so the issue is that Queens has never had a central place and it's always been a growth over time of a series of villages. It's also the urban/suburban crashing point of Long Island, suburban Long Island and New York City. It's also the crashing point where the suburbs end and transportation by automobile begins and it happens right in the middle of Queens where the subways stop. Queens is also the place where bridges and highways have really dictated the form of the borough as a whole.

Queens Boulevard. Turn of the century and what it is today. Speaks tremendously about Queens as it grew. It has now reached and hit over 2 million people for the first time. It is ethnically one of the most rich and diverse boroughs in our city. In it all functions around the main street of Queens Boulevard. Queens Boulevard has very special issues from Forest Hills Gardens. It was there before Queens Boulevard was there and Forest Hills Gardens in a way is

the walled village or walled town. Once you are outside Queens, you are in a different world, but that is the heart of the Queens now right outside the front door of Forest Hills Gardens. We think of a few dates in mind. Brooklyn was really roaring in the 1860s, 1870s. Queens starts to get roaring about 1910. That's when the tunnels by rail are connected from one island under the East River to Manhattan. Also in 1910 and 1909 is the opening of the Queens Borough Bridge and street cars are able to get from Manhattan out from Queens. 1917 the subway hits. 1936 we have the first Grand Central Parkway, the first highway in Queens and Triborough Bridge and our infamous La Guardia Airport. In 1880, Brooklyn has 1 million people. Queens has 55,000. In 1920, Brooklyn has 2 million people. Queens has a half a million. And it has finally reached 2 million today. Forest Hills is an interesting issue. In 1990, 75% of the lot area of Forest Hills which is the planning area in which the Gardens sit, has 110,000 people. 75% of the land area of Forest Hills is residential. It has a median average income of \$100,000 to \$217,000 which is very high for the City of New York. In 1990 the population distribution in Forest Hills: 75% white, 13% Asian, 10% Hispanic, 2% black. When you compare that with the City of New York as whole in the recent census: 34% white, 10% Asian, 32% Hispanic and 24% people. So, Forest Hills has a very special unique profile.

Forest Hills was built as a suburban land development by the Russell Sage Foundation. It was started in 1910 and it was well underway by 1916. If we look at some of the documents that were first printed of Forest Hills, it is quite interesting to discuss the business plan and the design plan and then the codes.

First, about the business plan. The conception of Forest Hills Gardens. It has a business purpose. It was to be a suburban development within the city on the new railroad line at Forest Hills stations, nine miles and 15 minutes from Penn Station. It was to be a business investment. It will be conducted strictly on business terms for a fair profit to give men of limited means a chance to live in healthful surroundings away from the crowded city streets at a fair price. Now, they were looking for moderate incomes of \$1,800 to \$2,000 a year and \$25 a month to purchase a home, mortgage or have rent paid. The education purpose was quite supreme to this organization. They thought of themselves as an educational model for the development community not only of New York but nationally. We need better and more attractive housing for persons of modest means. We want to demonstrate that there is more tasteful way to organize the neighborhood and that we could encourage by good design its imitation elsewhere nationally. And finally, if we can do that, we'll also secure income for the foundation.

We going to go through the plan a little bit. It's one of the unique plans in New York because it is not on the New York grid. It also uses the ideas of Olmstead (we're dealing with

Olmstead's son here) and we are looking at how the two fuse into one great sense of place created by this mixing of the grid ideas, building types and open spaces.

First, a little bit about the plan we will go through. It's all about Olmstead and his ideas. First, the whole structure of the place is organized about the big main streets of Forest Hills. You can see the prong that goes out. Those are called the greenways, and they were connecting from the railroad station at the bottom on axis straight through to this fork of greenways and they were tying in the upper corner to Forest Park which at the time was the borough's biggest and largest park. So, you're going from city to nature within the compactness of one neighborhood. It also anticipated the city grid of New York, so two big north/south streets were incorporated and put in place. 80 feet wide in their right of ways. The greenways 70 feet wide. But, to give you an idea, the city streets have 44 of the 46 feet of pavement. The greenways have 18 to 20 feet of pavement. And they have essentially the same right of way with everything given over to the landscape. These are unusual avenues for Olmstead because what he wanted to do was to say you could do something more profound than the normal grid of New York. The great quality of these streets you can see. This is the greenway and it sets the whole -- wow five minutes left. We're going to go fast. The local streets which are in between these main streets are really what give great character to Forest Hills. And they give the small scale intimate quality. They were to be small. They would be never more than 300 to 400 feet long. They were always to bend to limit one's views. And this is where all of housing and organization takes place. Olmstead's open space ideas were to go from square of green, to school, finally to the big park and experiment with interior parks in the interior blocks. Never went over very well in Forest Hills and they became housing sites. The greenway takes you up and through to public parks. The grid is quite interesting. Every block is different because of the street plan. No block is the same and they vary in length, width and what is incredible is what Adderbury (?) did with the architecture in exploration of building types and architectural codes and standards. The whole place was designed -- the whole place was controlled by Adderbury, his crew and the members of the foundation.

The building types. The single family home is dominant. They are on every block, but they are not what Forest Hills is about. They only represent 50% of the total dwelling units of Forest Hills Gardens. But they are extraordinary in their nature and character. What was inventive here was the grouping houses. They were single family houses which were grouped. They were saving land, making small blocks, putting more houses on smaller pieces of land. This is the extraordinary invention of Forest Hills of the grouping of houses around the common shared front yard. And you'll see them everywhere through Forest Hills. And they have predominant locations, and they make special places within Forest Hills Gardens.

The next is the exploration of the row house -- very different in Brooklyn. No row house block in Forest Hills could be over 250 feet wide. They make an extraordinary complex and extraordinary models to bring back and utilize today. Very inventive. They also have a very domestic scale and they can fit in with single family housing very easily.

Finally, there is the apartment building. And these were great buildings placed on very highly visible sites and they became some of the great integration between single family homes and the larger apartment buildings on the main street simply along the railroad lines. The most expensive land on the railroad line was the station. This was anticipated right away and therefore most density residential and mixed use was placed there.

If we were to walk through just one quadrant -- the notion of going from square, mixed use town square shops, offices in, through to the greenway, to row houses, cross axis of private single family circles up to the apartment cross axis at the corner up to the school. This is an extraordinary environment as you walk through -- the notion of developing these great row houses that front on the greenway. Streets that pass through these row houses into very small, intimate single family but still grouped single family courtyards. The idea was to achieve a higher density and use less land for housing and more for open space and design. But extraordinary character and skill given to these row houses.

And finally to the apartment tower at the end of the greenway and the school. This is done in various ways with townhouses around parks. It's also done in neighborhoods where the experiment with the small cul de sac streets but in a very different way around housing groups and done in a very intimate nature.

Radburn -- very fast. You can't ignore Radburn in thinking about neighborhood design in New York. It was the great experiment in 1928 and 1929 in New Jersey. The whole notion of taking a very different idea about a plan for a town with the same goals to make it safer, orderly, convenient, more spacious, bring people closer to nature and have it cost less. The thought was that it was going to be two square miles. Population of 25,000. It was designed as super blocks. There was a big boulevard placed around the super blocks. There were five plan elements as an idea: a super block, specialized roads, separation of the pedestrian and the auto, houses turned around. Front doors became back doors, back doors became front doors and the park was the back bone of the neighborhood. Some of the propaganda slides from the original brochures. Separation of cars and autos and the notion of having a continuous greenway linking all the greens. The key is the super block. Cul de sac courtyards. All the backs of the houses, garages, kitchens and services face drives. Living rooms and bedrooms face the greens. Private greens take

you into the common greens of the center of each block. These blocks are huge. They are 40 acres each. That would be six to eight blocks of a typical Brooklyn neighborhood. This is just the walk through from courtyard and cul de sac through these sequence of homes which are comfortable walks as you approach the major town greens which are in the center of each of these blocks.

The issue is that, I think, we can learn from these suburbs ways of approaching development not only on the edge of New York (but also in the case of Forest Hills example of the railroad suburb), how we can use that model as a great model for urban infill in our cities in walking distances to transit, business and cultural centers and now as we can see how they can be utilized now in the middle of the city in areas which are now vacant and open particularly around our river fronts. Thanks.

Moderator: Raymond L. Gindroz

Thank you Brian for that tour de force of a presentation of the realities of development and the results. This question of open space, amenities for a neighborhood. How does it work? It's more than streets and houses. What is it that gives special identity and character to neighborhoods? What is it beyond the fabric of houses and the services that serve those houses that gives each and every neighborhood its unique quality and character. We're very pleased that Kent Barwick, President of the Municipal Arts Society, Executive Director of the Waterfront Alliance, has agreed to speak to us about the ferry districts. Now, Brian obviously is a designer, an urban designer. I asked Kent what he was in this, and he said, well why don't you call me a dilettante or maybe a civic advocate, but certainly he is force of nature here in New York. Kent.

PARKS, WATERFRONTS, AND NEIGHBORHOOD LIFE IN THE MIDDLE

Kent Barwick, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, Municipal Arts Society

Well, before Clarence Stein and Calvert Grove of the Battery Park City Esplanade, before really anybody there was the Dutch, and the Dutch had a terrific eye for one thing which were harbors. They were pros. This is a very early 18th century map. They recognized right away the sheltered nature of a great harbor, close by the principal east/west oceans currents, fed by a great collection of rivers, at least one of which they hoped would reach the Indies. Out of this great harbor through ingenuity and greed began square rigger sailings on schedule -- a new thing in the world. And with the development of the Erie Canal, New York which had entered the 19th century as one of the smaller of the Atlantic Coast cities became gradually and certainly by mid-century, the great city of North America and by end of the 19th century, arguably, the greatest city in the world. And out of the tiny Dutch harbor grew this extraordinary collection of cities,

the principal one being New York, but also Newark, Elizabeth, Hoboken, Brooklyn. Extraordinarily, this great civilization -- this great city -- lives side by side with the great Hudson River Estuary, one of the great natural systems in North America. Today, these two systems lie side by side but largely out of touch with one another. But these things are changing. It changed most dramatically for the worst, really, when after all of these 300 years of shipping right off the coast of Manhattan or Brooklyn, container shipping changed the dynamic and forever, or at least so far, changed where the port was. The port is now located out of sight at Port Elizabeth and Port Newark. More on that later perhaps. What we, of course, inherited are the scenes of neglect, the waterfront left to rot, waterways choked with refuse and so-called floatables. Sad urban essays of a once distinguished, noble and principled system left in ruins. I hope those of you who are able to see this slide can see there the Canadian geese gathered among the rotting piers. As the waters have cleaned up with the Clean Water Act (and they have cleaned up dramatically), life has come back to the harbor: shellfish, birds, fish -- an outstanding rebound. Despite 300 years of doing everything we could to destroy the harbor, it lives.

And people come. They come. Young people in kayaks, school kids in rowing boats. Even the Sopranos come. Every kind of New Yorker is drawn to the water's edge. And with this change -- the astounding change -- you know for most of the history of Manhattan, the idea was to live -- that's why Fifth Avenue was where it is -- to live as far away from the sink holes, the pests, the sex and the sin as you could. That was as far away from the waterfront as you could, and that's changing. And as it has changed and as the market has changed, we as a city face extraordinary large scale opportunities which a number of you I am sure understand and hope to participate in. The 30th Street Yards, the rest of Penn Station -- a great area where some people hope to put the Jets, others the Olympics. The area just south of the United Nations -- one of the great sites -- probably the greatest and most valuable urban site in America today, certainly in terms of the dollars necessary to develop it along the water's edge. The old Gas House District available now for redevelopment. Up in the old 70th Street Yards, there is still a great struggle to move a highway out of what will be a 25 acre park. And in Staten Island, Fresh Kills Land Fill, which is one of the two manmade objects you can see from space (the other being the Great Wall of China) has just been closed and is now available. So, there's a rich set of opportunities here for planning -- for new communities.

But we want to look today very briefly at some old communities. This is City Hall the night the Erie Canal opened with a great fireworks display. I wanted to show it to you both for those who are politically minded in a city whose every elected representative voted against the Erie Canal. But at the time of this wonderful drawing, the face of City Hall was marble, but the back was plain brownstone because the city did not extend nor can anyone image that it ever would

extend above City Hall. But to the east, there was already a great city -- a great set of cities and these are the ferry districts. Because New York was tied together at the very beginnings -- actually the first ferry in Brooklyn was in the 17th century at Fulton Ferry (I think it's 1642). But by the time the Erie Canal opened as you can see in this view looking from Manhattan's shores toward Brooklyn, the ferry districts, urbanized districts filled with undesirable foreigners that astounded and shocked the Dutch and English farmers, had already established themselves. By late in the century these had grown to be quite populous cities. This is Fulton Ferry later on -- and even the development of the Brooklyn Bridge still did not diminish the number of people who traveled by ferry and as you can see, along the Brooklyn edge of the water -- we'll look at this more closely -- a great urbanized city. Also notice, of course the obvious, that the river was the highway of the day. Just choked, not only with international commerce, but with ferries and steamers and all kinds of life of the city grew out of this river. The reason I'm showing you this slide -- this is 1910 -- and even in 1910 the districts all went right to the water and every block went to the water's edge. There was a wharf or a pier at basically the end of every street. Even in 1948 Cecil Beaton came to New York, and I don't know whether somebody pulled his leg or he actually measured it, but it was determined that there were 1,000 miles of piers and wharfage in New York Harbor -- all incidentally gone.

These ferry districts have been sorely changed, first as more bridges came in and they jumped over these districts and as tunnels were built they tunneled under the districts. Many of the areas became industrial leaving us of course today with a great legacy. This is the wonderful new mapping system that we have in New York. It belongs to the city and they are going to share it with the public and we are just going to move up here. I hope you can see. What I want you to see is not only the water's edge, but how much vacant land there is -- occasionally brown fields. We'll look at this more closely. We're starting here with Red Hook -- with Gowanus. Notice how the whole waterfront area has been divided from the rest of the city by the elevated Gowanus Expressway. Moving up along to the piers 1 through 10. One through 5 with Ray Gindroz's help and many others will be the great Brooklyn Bridge Park. The inner bridge area and over to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. There is the Navy Yard North. See that the fabric of the city unlike that map of 1910, has totally disappeared at the water's edge up to Greenpoint and New Town Creek and just a little beyond New Town Creek and the tip of Governor's Island.

Let's look at some of what's actually at the water's edge. For one thing, brown fields, the wreckage of what was once a great industrial city. This is a city that still has an extraordinary amount of manufacturing including a lot of new manufacturing that Ron Schiffman and others have been documenting. It will shortly be released, but the old 19th century black arts are with us still and they are already sorely impacted by municipal facilities which is frankly an outrage as

well as lost economic opportunity. Once grand and quite elegant, extraordinarily beautiful but derelict industrial structures, highways, as I say, that divide community from community, tank farms. This is the Gowanus. We saw it from the air before. We see what it does underground. It's the Berlin Wall of New York.

The communities that have been separated for so long (and this happens to be Red Hook) but I think one of nature's gifts, the present administration was not necessarily friendly to these communities and marked them for more and more facilities like municipal garbage facilities and that provoked reaction from some of these communities which you see here, it says "forget about the trash mayor." But it also forged an alliance between communities from the Bronx, Queens to Brooklyn -- communities that have been savaged and fight back and also to join together and became a sufficient force to overturn some of the city's most thoughtless plans. You see now an area -- another section of Red Hook -- and one of the wonderful Civil War warehouses at the edge. Yet the infrastructure is crumbling, the piers are falling in, the old street railways are all but gone, but there is new life. There are artists, new people making alliance with old people. So there is an extraordinary renaissance, and it needs to be fed and it needs to be informed. There are great opportunities that planners can see. I want to point out an obvious one -- this is New Town Creek right across from the UN -- right across from the extraordinary development site that I showed you. Here's the Long Island Railroad one-half block from New Town Creek timed by boat potentially from New Town Creek to the United Nations in about four minutes. So, you can see people are beginning to understand and explore the possibility of new connections and that's great. Planners can see that. Here we're looking over the area of Brooklyn Bridge Park and you can see the impact of some of the 1950s planning. You can see loss to former industry. But you can also see how a great network of green coming down along the bridge can be turned and connected into what would be a great network of green at the water's edge. Here's Greenpoint. The traditional community. You can see it comes this far and then it's totally cut off. The lumber yard here has one of the best views in the world -- the only park in this community is about a block and a half back. On a summer's night like tonight if you were to go out there it would be jammed with old people and young people with no view of the river. But, this is all changing. The lumber yard's for sale. I think it's \$50 million.

A new development at Queens West which brings me -- we were invited to instruct you. I think it's the other way around. We're hoping you are going to instruct us because one of the issues here -- there are obvious physical issues -- we have to rebuild to use the water to get communities out on the water. We've got to rebuild the totally destroyed infrastructure which is victim of clean water. We've got to get the municipal functions off the water. The city has been using the waterfront as a place to store stolen cars, police cars, everything the city needs to store is

stored at the water's edge. You've got to reclaim the water's edge. You've got to get through the hundreds if not thousands of miles of chain link fence. Archeologists will find that this is the product of the 20th century in New York. We've got to connect communities back together. This is a proposal which until last night was a little dream that we put forward, which is just to start local ferry service. Here's Manhattan. Here's Staten Island. There is an express ferry that we underwrite at a cost of \$60 million that runs back and forth every hour. I hope you've taken it. It's one of the great things to do in New York. Remember the poem: "We were very drunk. We were very merry. And we drove back and forth all night on the ferry. Do it tonight." But for the rest of the community, there is no way to hook on, so we're proposing starting local ferry service with smaller boats that would go in a loop this way and a loop this way. And as I say, this was just one of those visionary ideas put forward by groups like ours, but last night with the leadership of the elected officials from the ferry districts we got the first money to plan such a system. So, when you come back next year, I hope part of it will be in operation.

While these are severe problems, the main thing that's missing is that we don't have good models in our city and our region of what waterfront development is. We have the Jersey Gold Coast model which you see here which has been good for the tax base maybe some New Jersey cities. But what it has done is to wall the communities off behind it. Or we have the 1930s Bob Moses idea. Corlears Hook -- for those of you who remember Moby Dick in college. This is where Ishmael says call me Ishmael and walks from Corlears Hook around the city and talks about the communities and shacks and the energy of the city. Well, that's all gone. There's nothing wrong with great parks, but there must be some more urban model than Miami Beach high rises or endless stretches of park. And this park, particularly in the lower East Side is harder to reach because there's no way to get over the highway. Of course, we can look elsewhere. This happens to be Barcelona. We're hungry for models. We are grateful for people like Ron Schiffman who led delegations of New Yorkers to the *[inaudible]* which is woods which we have along our neighborhood can be made community valuable assets.

But we need your help. We need the Congress of New Urbanism's talents and energies to help the communities that are far from unsophisticated. Most of the communities that we just been looking at Red Hook, Williamsburg, Greenpoint -- they've already gone through the process of developing goals. There just aren't really any -- the city isn't providing nor is it easy to get good architects and planners and landscape architects to help. Olmstead had a vision for New York, and it was a simple, broad vision. It was that we had two geographic features: the Atlantic Ocean and the Palisades. The trick was to tie those two features together into a network of parks and parkways. In our time, we have another more elementary vision to provide access to the wonders of the city and that is to recognize the need above all for access.

When the grid system was laid out in 1811 in New York, even the 1811 people recognized that somehow the commissioners had neglected to provide any squares or parks. Where are the squares of parks said they. And the commissioners excused themselves by saying, well the river will be our park. But, that has been a promise long deferred. Ray was mentioning earlier the need as we plan new communities for the right dimensions, and everything is in the details. But there is a critical need here first for the right intentions. Magnificent as this city is, extraordinary as this opportunity is -- I meant earlier to quantify it. I'm always nervous about quantifying particularly in a room full of people who know so much more than I do, but I've been yet to be challenged, so maybe this will be it. There is more land available right now at the water's edge in New York Harbor -- some 760 miles of land in two states, 12 counties. There's more land available now for redevelopment than at any time in memory of anybody in this room. More than was available for urban renewal. More than was disclosed of by Moses. But it's rapidly changing. The opportunity is slipping away with the pace of development even as we identify it. If we don't create this basic opportunity to recapture the river, then these young guys who when this photograph was taken were eight and they are probably 11 today and will probably be 19 by the time there is a chance to get to the river. We will have lost probably the greatest opportunity in the history -- in the lifetime of anybody in this room. So we have a magnificent asset and extraordinary opportunity. We have a faltering public will and a lack really of the professional energy and talent we need to join with the communities that are coming alive to make it work. Thank you.

Moderator: Raymond L. Gindroz

Our next speaker is Darren Walker who is going to talk about Harlem -- both its original design and various things that are going on now. Darren comes from Texas, actually with a background in banking and law. He is a Chief Operating Officer of the Abyssinian Community Development Corporation in Harlem. He has been very much involved in the redevelopment and the sort of, I guess, second renaissance of Harlem or continuing renaissance of Harlem and is here to tell us both about Harlem and about what is going on now. Darren.

REVITALIZING THE CORE: A HARLEM RENAISSANCE

Darren Walker, Abyssinian Development Corporation

When my friend Carrie Shea called me about the Congress for New Urbanism, I said to her, why would I possibly be interested in the Congress for the New Urbanism? Aren't they involved in doing these projects in Boca Raton and Seaside, Florida and Portland, Oregon in places that are very different from Harlem? And in fact, she said, take a look at the website, and I

did. What I found was that this organization is doing an extraordinary work that impacts our work on the ground in Harlem and in fact I found out that I'm a new urbanist. I think what happens is that we all live our lives through the filter of the media, and it's very easy to take a look at a newspaper article and come away with a one dimensional perception of what an organization or a community for that matter is really like.

So, I'm here today to talk about something I'm very passionate about which is Harlem. I really don't need this technology stuff, but I think they said that I have to have something visual. We can show some slides, but what I really want to talk about is our experience to date in Harlem and some of the things that we've learned that we think can be useful and that can inform the process nationally.

Harlem is in many ways a metaphor for America's inner cities and while Harlem is unique to the extent that it is in most people's eyes an icon of black America, it also in many ways has comparable problems and challenges to other industrial urban core communities. Places like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and Cleveland and Chicago who are working on the ground doing revitalization and redevelopment work will talk about the same challenges and problems that we find in Harlem.

The other thing I found in my work is that Harlem was in fact built by new urbanists. Harlem was laid out as a community with great access, with great public transportation, with beautiful open space, with lots of mixed use, with beautiful, aesthetically pleasing, pedestrian friendly streetscapes. And so, the question that I am always struck by is how did it end up looking the way it looked 10 years ago. The first time I came to Harlem after law school, and I got out off the train at 125th Street and this was in the mid-1980s, I was shocked and appalled that the city I had read about looked like a ghetto. And what struck me even more was that this beautiful community was a neighborhood on a tiny island that was experiencing an extraordinary economic real estate boom and that 15 blocks away there sat over 5,000 units of vacant, abandoned, boarded up, blighted buildings and that it seemed that no one cared. And so I was very struck by this even though I was going to be a lawyer, an investment banker which I had no passion for, but it paid off those student loans, so thank you very much. I found a way to get myself into Harlem and as Chief Operating Officer at Abyssinian I have the pleasure of having a job that I get very excited about every day, and I have never worked as hard as I do. So I always tell my friends who are still in the private sector, all the myths that they have about those of us who work for nonprofit organizations are wrong, because the hardest working people I've ever met worked for nonprofits.

So, I'm going to talk a little bit about Harlem and what I want to do is just show some visuals and hopefully be able to weave some stories about some of these visuals that tell some of the lessons learned by our organization and hopefully be able to learn from you during the Q and A.

Our organization is a nonprofit community based organization and one of our guiding principles is the belief is that for Harlem to be a sustainable neighborhood, we must redevelop it and revitalize it as a place where people of mixed incomes live. The Abyssinian Baptist Church, which is one of the oldest African American religious institutions in New York State, is really our institutional support and that church founded us and has made it possible in many ways to be able to do our work. This is a picture from 1936 of 125th Street with the great Apollo Theatre on the left. You see the street cars and you see -- it's hard to believe, but most of this retail corridor was commercial and retail, but a block away is where the residential neighborhood, the residential district begins. But Harlem started as a suburb. It was in the 19th century. I like to speak of Harlem as sort of the 19th century Hamptons. It was where people went on the weekend, and there were country estates and there were yacht clubs and boat clubs and all sorts of things for very fancy and affluent people. Alexander Hamilton and the old wealthy Dutch families had their country homes in Harlem. What changed that, of course, was the onslaught of public transportation and the L trains coming north from 96th Street to the Harlem River and ultimately up into the Bronx. And, of course, what it did was to transform Harlem into a community that changed very very radically. New institutions such as City College and Columbia University were built in Harlem or were relocated to Harlem and many new, beautiful, fine brownstones and mansions were built. The great Strauber's *[sp]* Row brownstone and townhouses that Stanford White built for wealthy families were constructed at the turn of the 20th century. This neighborhood was really planned in a very different way. It was planned with wide boulevards, with wider sidewalks, with low rise buildings, with esplanades and public squares that buildings and residential neighborhoods open on to. Of course, this was the doorway to a great house on Mt. Morris Park which is one of the beautiful parks of Upper Manhattan. These houses here all open onto Mt. Morris Park. They are beautiful, architecturally complementary houses that were developed for wealthy families. And on the avenues, the large multi-family buildings such as this building flanked the avenues and flanked the side streets which had no multi-family buildings. The idea was that you would have single family development on the side streets and the avenues would be developed for multi-family use. And there were, of course, large mansions such as this mansion. And beautiful large buildings such as this which was Duke Ellington's home on Edgecomb Avenue which looked out into the Harlem Valley and over the polo grounds which was

a beautiful public space where there were polo fields. Of course, today there is a quite unattractive public housing project.

There were beautiful institutions. The reason I am able to show these historic photographs is because these things all exist today. Quite honestly they don't look a lot different because one of the good things about the fact that Harlem suffered was that we did not experience the kind of razings and retrofittings that occurred in the rest of Manhattan that really destroyed much of the integrity -- the architectural integrity -- of the residential and commercial stock. So, we still have these great institutions. Many of the churches that exist today originally were synagogues and were changed when blacks moved into Harlem. There began around 1908 a large exodus of the white population because, of course, Harlem is known for many things, but it also is known for the first case of white flight. In fact, a real estate broker rented to a black family and within a matter of two or three years the character of the neighborhood -- certainly the racial composition of central Harlem -- had changed radically such that by 1920 Harlem had become a predominantly African American neighborhood. Certainly, central Harlem. Of course when people ask about the great Harlem renaissance, it's easy to understand why the renaissance happened. It partly was because of the environment. Imagine if you will having come to New York City from the rural South from a place where most black folks lived in shot gun shacks, on red dirt roads, in backwater, small country towns. To come to a place like Harlem and to live in an environment that, although it was not built for us, we inherited it. Of course, with that inheritance came the sort of uplifting that brought about much of the great art and literature and made Harlem a mecca around the world.

This is the Mt. Olivet Church today. It was, in 1905, one of the largest synagogues in New York City. One of our beautiful public libraries. And this is sort of quirky, but I put this in here to show how modern architecture can in fact be very very respectful of the environment. Now, this looks a lot larger than it actually is, but if you notice, there is a three story brownstone next to this new church, the Church of the Crucifixion. This church is not much taller or larger than that. It's a beautiful piece of architecture, and it really does fit very well into the context of the neighborhood. This was 125th Street and Seventh Avenue which is the great Hotel Teresa.

Now, I'm going to go very quickly and talk about some specific things that we do and some of the things that we have inherited. This was one of the first public housing complexes that today remains and is a beautiful complex because it is low rise and it has been well maintained. This is what Harlem looked like 15 or 20 years ago. Most blocks looked like this. These are the Astor Row Cooperatives, one of the great historic streets in Harlem and almost 95% of the block looked like this. Together we worked with the Landmark Conservancy and Mrs. Vincent Astor

who came up for a walk and wrote a \$1 million check that made it possible for us to restore these beautiful porches which are rare and unusual in New York City. We have had to really really fight very hard to get the various entities that need to work collaboratively. This is something that we all face. The idea of collaboration in the inner city, where you have major impediments in the form of racism, of politics, of redlining, of lots of phenomena that in fact make it very very difficult to redevelop and revitalize.

This is Abyssinian House which is a great question for new urbanists: how do we feel about the homeless? This is a homeless shelter and this is what it looked like and we went to our local community board and said we have a huge homeless problem in our community. This was in 1986. They did not want to hear it, and homeless people were sitting on every one's stoops and doorsteps. Yet to get the cooperation of the various entities who were required to sign off on this project was a major lift and of course we would all like to eradicate homelessness, but given the current situation, it's not happening. Therefore we have to find ways how to house homeless families and in our neighborhoods and in ways that do not say this is a homeless shelter. The greatest compliment that we get is that people say we had no idea that this was a homeless shelter. And it's not just the physical. It is in fact the programmatic support that it takes to run this.

Here, the buzzer is going of with these large sanitation trucks backing up and they'd be backing into lots. They would just dump the trash. So people would get up in the morning, walk outside and there would be mounds of trash on vacant lots like this all over the community. We got together and really building on a block of I think was Robert Putnam talks about -- the whole social capital movement -- really got the local block engaged and this is what it looks like today. This hasn't been done because there was a huge check written by anybody. It was a collaboration, but it was really driven by the neighborhood residents who are responsible for this park, and it's just a beautiful, beautiful testament. There are all kinds of stories like this around Harlem of buildings that have been restored.

This is a very important home ownership project we did that was very very challenging to do because we could not convince the banks and the financing that was necessary that in fact people would desire to own a piece of Harlem and this is in the early 80s when this project first sort of was conceptualized and to get a banker to sit down and talk to you seriously about financing a home ownership project at that time was practically impossible. Of course, that's changed a little today, but I think in many cities across the country, this is a phenomenon that is a major challenge to revitalization.

This is a project that we are quite famous and infamous for -- our Path Mark 125th Street project. On many levels we are very proud of this project because what once was a huge vacant city, an entire city block, that really was a bunch of shanty towns now is a major service provider for inner city residents so that we don't have to shop at Bodega's. We don't have to experience price inflation that you experience when you go from 96th Street to 125th Street to buy anything. The thing that disappoints me, however, about this project is that on many levels it has not been a success. Yes, it's a success in terms of the services it provides. It has helped to revitalize the streetscape. Across the street from this was another urban renewal site that today is under redevelopment as a new retail center. Directly across the street and east was a huge parking lot that sat for 25 years. This project helped to generate the whole resurgence on 125th Street. The sad thing about this, however, is that we were not able to convince anyone that we could build a mixed use project with both retail and housing and that anyone would actually want to live on this -- what people saw as a huge city block above a supermarket. So we had to settle for a 65,000 square foot, one story *[inaudible]* material building that, while it serves a great purpose and has generated a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and a belief that it can be done in the inner city, so much more could have been done on this site.

The challenge for those of us who are doing this work in inner cities like Harlem is to educate and help those institutions: the banks, the equity investors, sometimes even our city government that communities can be desirable places to live. That they don't have to be places of dysfunction and only places that are metaphors for what is wrong with our communities. So, I am very very excited about Harlem. I invite any of you to come up who are interested in seeing it. If you want to come to Abyssinian to church on Sundays, we love having visitors and thank you very much for indulging me.

Moderator: Raymond L. Gindroz

Thank you very much, Darren, and thank you to all three of the speakers. As I understand it, the procedure is for you to have little pieces of paper if you want to ask questions. Well, there is a question to the rescue. Which is to Darren Walker. The question is this: how can you be critical of a 65,000 square foot supermarket. My community, Palo Alto, California, slightly different economic strata there, has an ordinance prohibiting supermarkets greater than 22,000 square feet.

Darren Walker:

The reason that I am critical, a little critical. I don't mean to be very critical is because I see the potential for so much more on this very large site. It is not to say that it's inappropriate or

that we don't like it. It's simply to say that given the scale of the site, given the FAR and buildable space, anywhere else on the island of Manhattan you would have had a much more mixed use development and were not able to achieve this. That's my criticism.

Moderator: Raymond L. Gindroz

We have two more questions for Darren. Perhaps you could take the two together although they are very different. One, is Harlem becoming a more diverse neighborhood and how do you feel about that?

Darren Walker:

I mean, I think that's the \$65,000 question that makes some people uncomfortable -- that makes people a little unsettled. I mean, at the heart of it, is Harlem going to remain a black neighborhood. I think that's the question, and the answer is: Harlem is going to remain a predominantly black neighborhood. Will it become a more diverse neighborhood and will its 1990 census of almost 100% of people of African descent change? Yes, it will. But what we also know in this country is that it is unlikely that Harlem is going to experience a huge onslaught of whites or other people, for that matter. The reality is in this country is that people live in neighborhoods with people look like them. While we theoretically and conceptually can talk about diversity and talk about the desire, when it hits the road it's a different story. So I do think, however, that there are people who are interested in Harlem. I think for the local community, the fear is displacement and the fear is will Harlem lose its integrity as a black neighborhood. In fact, what I find is that most people coming to Harlem -- whether they are black or white -- are interested in that very thing. The whites who are coming to Harlem are as interested in jazz clubs and African American culture as the blacks who are coming. And so, we see that as a positive thing and we want to encourage that.

Special thanks to Kathleen Kramer for transcribing this document.